

Position Paper

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1. Significant fact: the reluctance of the issue of Jewish-Israeli identity to disappear from the cultural agenda in Israel for the past one hundred years.

2. Throughout history, the Jew, willingly or not, remains conscious of his Jewish identity.

3. The Jew, and the Israeli in his wake, carries with him the bleeding wound of his national and religious identity.

4. The weight of Jewish self-identification is greater than in other national and religious belief systems.

5. Israeli and Jewish artistic expression is proof of the greater interest in the question of national-religious identity than is to be found in art outside of the Israeli and Jewish spheres.

6. As much as Israeli art tried to extricate itself from the religious-national identity content these same issues surfaced and affirmed their presence.

7. There is no “new” Jew: Israeli art, since its inception, has conducted and continues to conduct a dialogue with traditional Jewish art.

8. In consequence modern, Israeli, secular art has, in retrospect, proven the necessity for Jewish content: Arie Aroch and Jewish tradition, Avraham Ofek and Jewish legends, Moshe Gershuni (the early works and the minimalist) and the Zohar.

9. The last thirty years are proof of the return of the youngest generation of Israeli artists to Jewish themes and subjects.

10. While Judaism trickles down into Israeli art, it also separates it from the “place.” The indeterminate heavenly “place” takes precedence over the national-territorial place. The more Israeli art becomes Jewish, the less it becomes “Israeli.”

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