

Parrhesia is a group of Jewish and Palestinian activists, visual artists, industrial and graphic designers and photographers from Israel, aiming to construct a civil language; a language that respects, is humane and allows to sustain a dialogue, a method of communication that distinguishes itself from the power-driven language characteristic of government and commercial entities. Parrhesia, in conjunction with organizations aspiring for social change and human rights, helps to strengthen visibility by producing books, info-sheets, posters, presentations, internet sites etc., contributing to the effort to construct a channel that will sound the voices of those who are excluded from Israeli society and its discourse.

Parrhesia is currently working with human rights and advocacy organizations aiming for civic equality of Palestinians, economic and social justice in Israeli society, as well as major feminist organizations. In addition, the group creates independent artwork that deals with controversial issues that challenge the Israeli consensus, for example: 'The Way of Language' - a graffiti Arab-Hebrew dictionary sprayed on a main street in Jerusalem and Jaffo - a response to a streak of Arab words erased off major street signs in the cities; a street banner - 'Black Stain' - hanging in Haifa dealing with the October 2000 riots and the killing of thirteen Palestinian citizens of Israel and 'Shtukee' - a series of audio-visual interviews dealing with fertility and demography policies.

Parrhesia publishes the magazine Sedek (fissure) in cooperation with Zochrot [Remembering]. An English Abstract of the first issue is available as PDF. Sedek is published in Arab/Hebrew originally, the three issues available can be ordered in these languages at the Pardes Publishing House House in Israel.

Parrhesia is:

Ofer Kahana

Graphic designer, B.A. from Visual Communications Department, Bezalel Art Academy, Israel, was graphic editor of 'Kol Ha-Ir' newspaper in Jerusalem. Works as a freelance designer in educational, cultural, artistic and social change orientated projects. Lecturer on Design and Social Change at the Holon Institute of Technology. Three year training period in France, specializing in Social and Political Design. Completing his M.A. in the Communications Department, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Osnat Bar-Or

A photography teacher and a social activist, was the head of the Photography Department of Camera Obscura School of Art, Tel Aviv. A graduate of Mandel Leadership Institute in Jerusalem. Holds a B.A and M.A. in Photography from universities in the U.S. A winner of 'Teacher-Artist' scholarship for four years. Recently has finished a two year period of teaching photography in Kfar Kara' – a Palestinian village in Israel. Has shown solo and group exhibitions in Israel and abroad.

Hagar Goren

Artist. Graduate of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the Program for Young Artists, Bezalel Academy of Art, Jerusalem. Teaches Pilates. A volunteer for 'Physicians For

Human Rights' in Israel in the documentation of the association. Initiator and partner of new and alternative formats for creating social-oriented art, for example 'Sugia' and 'Re-Collection'. Winner of 'Young Artist' Prize, 1999; Scholarship to Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, 2000-2001; Klachkin Culture Prize given by the America-Israel Culture Foundation, 2005.

Hadas Kedar

B.F.A. from the Fine Arts Department, Bezalel Academy of Art, Jerusalem and M.F.A from Middlesex University, London. Student exchange at Cooper Union, N.Y. Has shown solo exhibitions in Israel, England and Germany (with collaborator Alex Schady). Promotes and participates in artist-run initiatives with an educational orientation, in alternative and public spaces in Israel and abroad.

Yankale Steinberg

Manages consultation services and supports educational and social initiatives. Promotes social and economic empowerment initiatives of excluded populations from Israeli society - foreign workers, women from marginalized groups. A lawyer specializing in economic and public law. A graduate of the Mandel Leadership Institute in Jerusalem and since 2004, acts as co-director of the Mandel Center for Leadership in the Negev.

Orna Ben Shitrit

Photographer. A graduate of the Photography Dept. at the WIZO College for Design in Haifa. Has participated in projects dealing with the documentation and restoration of the Jewish tradition in Izmir, Turkey and Venice, Italy. Documents and accompanies social change projects. Writes in the online magazine 'Maarav - Art, Culture and Media'. Teaches studio photography at the WIZO Academy in Haifa. A member of 'Block' - a group of artists from Haifa. Manages information system projects.

Tamar Meshulam

Graduate of the Industrial Design Dept. in Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem and the M.A. program of Humanitarian Design at the Design Academy of Eindhoven, Holland. Teaches at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design and at Avni Institute of Art. First prize winner of the Design 21 contest, in partnership with UNESCO, for the development of a game encouraging a dialogue between cultures.

Manar Zoabi

A performance and installation artist with BFA degree in art from Haifa University and one year of studies in the MFA program there. Part of the initiating and establishing team of Masar school of Nazareth - the first alternative school in the Arab community in Israel. She taught art in the program for Art Educators in Ara'ra and she teaches art in several frameworks in Nazareth. Her art works were exhibited widely in Israel and abroad in places such as in Vienna, London, Prague, Jerusalem, Beit-Lachem, Holon, Petach-tikva, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, and more. Her work Bidoun was part of the exhibition „Overlapping Voices. Israeli and Palestinian Artists“ in the Essl Museum in Klosterneuburg (Vienna).
Manar Zoabi lives in Nazareth.

Member until 2008: Tal Adler

Photographer, artist and lecturer. Received an M.A. in Fine Arts from the Art Academy of Vienna. Graduated from The Musrara School of Photography and the Post-graduate program of Bezalel Art Academy. Initiates and exhibits projects geared towards social change. Adler's Unrecognized project, that he worked on for four years, exposes the narrative of the Bedouin population in the unrecognized villages in the Negev Desert. Photography accompanied by a series of discussions workshops and lectures, was shown in Israel and abroad. This work was part of the exhibition „Overlapping Voices. Israeli and Palestinian Artists“ in the Essl Museum in Klosterneuburg (Vienna) 05/2008 - 10/2008. Adler was also curator of this exhibition.

See Adlers Homepage (Itemz)

cooperating partner in Vienna (Austria):

Ursula Hofbauer

Vienna-based artist and architect, has been working in and with public space in several exhibitions and art projects, amongst others: “Strange Views” (1999), exhibition project in the Vienna Prater with lettering on sidewalks, “Permanent Breakfast” (1999-2005), the everlasting breakfast in public space; Wine tasting with homeless people under a Viennese bridge (2002) and art projects with refugees (2004-2006). Lectures, publications and guided tours about the Permanent Breakfast project, gender and public space and Viennese landmarks. Dedicated to questions of democratic use, appropriation of public space and resulting designs.

List of Projects

Bayit, Sefer ("school", 1999-2002)

Photography project that deals with the architecture and visual text of schools, as they reflect in educational ideology and the relationship between the Israeli public-school system and the pupils. The project was shown in two solo exhibitions that took place simultaneously at the Herzliya Museum and at the Center for the Arts at Ein Harod. Concurrently, the project was published in 'Hakibbutz Hameuhad' publishing house. The book contains photographs and essays written by scholars from various areas including education, architecture, civil society, community and philosophy.

Bina (since 2004)

Graphic design for 'Bina Center for Jewish Identity and Hebrew Culture'. An ongoing fertile collaboration with a center that deals with education and activism, inviting an inquiry into the visual aspects of local culture and the clarification of the role of the artist as a commentator on words and ideas.

Who Gets Hurt? (Fall, 2004)

Visual material for a conference Celebrating five years to the Decision of the High Court of Justice against Torture in Israel. Invitation, poster, flyer, photo-illustration of torture positions

and an interactive exhibition. Posters with a word or a phrase typed on them summoning the audience to the problematics of the polemic of torture were shown on which visitors to the conference were invited to write a reaction on the poster itself. The posters were documented. An inquiry booth with an expert on torture was on site where visitors were invited to ask questions dealing with torture while both sides of the expert and the visitors was documented on video. In conjunction with the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel.

How Can We Afford This? (Summer, 2005)

Workshop and exhibition that took place in the Fourth Activism Festival in Lod. Occupied by a constant quest into the possibilities of incorporating activism into our lives: How can we afford to invest time and effort in social activism whilst we are struggling in order to make a living? How can we allow ourselves to be immersed in our personal issues while there is so much suffering, injustice and violence in our immediate surroundings? How is it possible to juggle between the need to earn a living, to allow ourselves a private life and to commit ourselves to social change?

Cabina (Winter, 2005)

Performance and interactive installation shown in the exhibition 'Playground', The New Gallery, Jerusalem. Slides of building sites, photographed in the Jerusalem vicinity, and testimonies of various workers of the building industry were screened and played in a tractor cabin that was placed in the gallery space. A situation-report of the chain of tasks and responsibilities in the building industry - from major decision makers to those who actually carry out decisions. The work resonates questions dealing with responsibilities of those who are doing their duty - whether a manager of a building site, an artist or a viewer.

Eastern and Arabic Visual Art in Israel (2005)

Documentation of the project that was led by 'The Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow' and 'Mossawa Centre - The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel' in which a meeting between Eastern-Jewish and Palestinian artists took place along with an exhibition that toured between seven community centers. Parhessia's documentation activities included photographs and written interviews that were then published in the online magazine 'Maarav - Art, Culture and Media'.

Indimage (Spring, 2005)

Visual identity for Indimage - Education In Mixed Jewish-Arab Cities. Logo, letterhead and publicity information for a mixed Jewish-Arab organization that deals with the revival of the Arab language and culture studies in the Israeli education system.

Black Stain (Fall, 2005)

Large banner tackling the October 2000 riots, when 13 Palestinian citizen of Israel were killed by the Israeli police. The piece was created on the occasion of 'The Holiday of the Holidays' in Wadi Nisnas neighbourhood in Haifa. In conjunction with Beit Hagefen - a Jewish-Arab Community Center.

From Here to Here (Fall, 2005)

Poster, catalogue, invitation and internet site for the 'From Here to Here' project: Jewish artists from Pardes-Hanna invited Palestinian artists from the Wadi 'Ara region and

cooperated in an open studio event. In conjunction with the initiator and curators Ilana Palada and Yael Zlait.

Thoughts About Surrender (Winter, 2006)

A project shown in the Hearat Shulaym event No.10, Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem. 'To whom and why will we never, ever surrender?' 'To whom and why we surrender every single day of our lives?' 'What can we do with feelings such as helplessness and weakness'? How can we struggle, create and survive without being drawn into the dichotomy of 'winners-losers', 'occupiers-surrenderers'? A video installation that deals with the concept of 'surrender' through the presentation of an associative collection of images and words. Participation of the audience took place in the form of 'round table' discussions.

Presentation for 'Physicians for Human Rights' (2006)

A comprehensive modular presentation that accompanies speakers of the association in various contexts. The presentation includes a reorganization of the narrative of the association with a focus on the visual aspects.

Master Peace Game (2005)

A game for intercultural dialogue, using social diversity for growth. With a story telling method, based on a visualization technique, the game facilitates connections between people of different backgrounds. Players are invited to express their perceptions about the concept of 'Home' and create visions towards a shared one. On their journey, while reaching new understanding, they gain a sense of togetherness. The game provides an experience of equality between participants as dominance is neutralized by interdependency. The resulting interaction can be seen as a model for an ideal multicultural society.

Local and Locality (2004-2006)

Two years of teaching photography to youth and women in Kfar Kara'a, a Palestinian village in Israel. The culmination of the project took place in the form of 'Week of Culture' that included a large exhibition of participants work, a wide collection of historic photographs of Kfar Kara'a, a contemporary photography exhibition showing the last remains of local Palestinian architecture as well as films, lectures and panel discussions. A series of postcards that will summarize the project, will be published in the near future. In conjunction with 'Artist-Teacher' Project, The Ministry of Culture and Education and the Fund for Initiatives in Education.

Index of Women for Peace Negotiation Teams (Spring 2006)

Design of the book promoting the Israeli law that requires women to be incorporated into the decision making processes on issues dealing with peace and security. The project includes graphic design of the book along with a curated chapter showing works by women artists that bring forth the unique qualities of women into public life. In conjunction with 'Women to Women' Feminist Center, Haifa.

Through Language (since Summer, 2006)

A graffiti Arab-Hebrew dictionary sprayed on one of the main streets of Jerusalem and Jaffa as a response to the streak of Arab words erased off major street signs in the cities. In conjunction with the 'Neighbourhood works' project and the Jerusalem Puppet Festival, Train Theater, Jerusalem. Curated by Sala-Manca Group. In Jaffa, the project was curated by Ayam

organization and relates to gentrification process that shoves out the Palestinian citizens of Israel out of Jaffa.

Drag Kings (Summer, 2006)

Photography of members of the transgender/transsexual communities in Jerusalem for a calendar celebrating the Jewish new year.

Shtoukee (Fall, 2006)

Parrhesia's site-specific installation in 'The Golem' project that took place at the Ma'abada - The Jerusalem Performing Arts Lab consisted of a series of audio-visual interviews and lectures of experts and specialists in the area of fertility, abortion and demography policies. Visitors to the event were invited to sit on the bar, order a disc containing an audio-visual lecture from the menu and watch it on a portable DVD player situated at the bar. Amongst taking orders and bringing out the 'dishes', Parrhesia's waiters were available to discuss with the visitors relevant issues.

Tourist Site for Wadi 'Ara

Design and visual editing of internet site promoting tourism and economic development of the Wadi 'Ara area - a Palestinian county in Israel.

Sedek ("Crack") a magazine about the Nakba

Design and visual editing of a new publication in Hebrew that deals with the Nakba (The Palestinian catastrophe of 1948) from the viewpoint of Israeli-Jews. A publication of 'Zochrot' (Remembering) Organization.

Initiative Projects and Consultation for Organizations

Courses in Social and Commercial Initiatives for Work Immigrants (Since 2003) A series of courses intended for immigrants of the African and Chinese communities in Israel. The aim of the courses is to develop the capabilities of the immigrants to control and improve their lives as individuals and as communities living outside their home countries. More than one hundred graduates, and twenty graduating an advanced course, leading individual projects. In conjunction with Mesila - the Center for Assistance and Information to Foreign Communities in Israel.

Economic Empowerment for Excluded Populations in Israel (since 2004)

Consultation, support, initiatives and participation in various projects that deal with economic empowerment for excluded populations: Social and Business Enterprise for Work Immigrants Women Cook Business - an institutional kitchen, in conjunction with 'Kol Haisha' (Voice of Woman) and 'Achoti' (My Sister). A woman initiative innovation center. Women Make Embroidery in Be'er Sheva and Kiryat Gat - in conjunction with 'Achoti' (Sister) and 'Comme-il-Faut' (a fashion design company). A woman initiative innovation center. Research and development in conjunction with the association for women's economic empowerment.