



MANDEL מנדל

קרן ג'ק, ג'וזף ומורטון מנדל - ישראל

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation - Israel

**Address of Professor Jehuda Reinharz at the Inauguration of the
Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Campus and Building of the
Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem**

November 10, 2022

(Translated from the Hebrew)

President of Israel Mr. Isaac Herzog and First Lady Mrs. Michal Herzog,
Chairman of the Bezalel Board of Directors Mr. Dan Meridor,
Bezalel President Professor Adi Stern and Executive Director Mr. Dor Lin,
Honored friends and guests,

At the beginning of the last century, the idea of establishing a school of art was a radical one. Indeed, the very phrase, "school of art," was an anomaly.

Previously, artists such as painters, sculptors, and architects would learn their trade in ateliers, under the tutelage of a master artist in their particular discipline. They would come to the master artist's studio, and he would place a model at the front of the room – perhaps a human model, or a still life arrangement. The apprentices would draw or paint or sculpt, and the master artist would correct their work. Alternatively, he would allow them to join a team that planned or painted or constructed a particular project, which he would sign. For centuries, this was how young people learned to become artists, at least in the West.

Art had no "pedagogy," its teaching had no "curriculum," and no-one could define the various components in the education of an artist, or say what was mandatory and what was optional, or what philosophical ideas underpinned the aesthetic worldview of a given atelier, and in short, why things were done one way and not another.

People such as Boris Schatz and his colleagues, who founded Bezalel, were pioneers. Not just in terms of how they thought about art and about making art (although that is certainly true), but also in their understanding of what accompanies the making of art: the pedagogy necessary for training artists, the space within which art exists, and the community with which it interacts. For the contemporaries of Schatz and his colleagues, the founders of Bezalel, the concept "school of art" – as an institution with an ordered pedagogy and a broad understanding of what the artistic endeavor should ideally comprise – was nothing less than a revolution.

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Schatz's vision went beyond the walls of the school itself. His vision was not simply of an "institution." It was a broader vision for community, employment, the city, and shared life within it, as made possible via, and in the light of, artistic work. The Bezalel School of Art was intended to foster financial independence and local collaborative manufacturing in the pre-state Yishuv, while encouraging handiwork and joint artistic endeavors. And just as the school was supposed to advance the Yishuv, so the Yishuv needed the school – since, according to Schatz, no community can be built without art, and no city can exist without an institution that nurtures art and artists.

Close to 120 years have passed since Bezalel's founding, and the institution has seen many changes. It closed for a short period at the end of the 1920s, and then reopened in 1935. Multiple generations of teachers have passed through its gates. The curriculum has expanded, the number of students has increased, and the subjects taught now include fields that Schatz could not have imagined (such as visual and material culture, screen arts and animation, and so on). But one aspect has remained constant since the earliest days of the school: The perception of Bezalel, now an Academy of Arts and Design, which sees itself as a central component of life in Jerusalem and Israel that plays a vital role in the shaping of the city, of its environment, and of the community in which it exists – via art.

This new building, at the entrance to which we stand today, and the campus where it has been constructed – both of which are named for Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel – are Bezalel's fourth home since its founding. From the house of the Ethiopian empress in the Abyssinian neighborhood where it began, via the Artists' House to which it moved, to the large building on Mount Scopus overlooking the slopes of the Judean Desert, where it has resided most recently – all of its homes have faithfully served the mission of this institution, each in its own way.

But this building, designed by the geniuses at SANAA, is perhaps the apotheosis of Schatz's vision. And Mort Mandel, though he never read Schatz's writings, knew it and felt it. When he was given the opportunity to support the construction of the Academy's new campus here in the heart of the city of Jerusalem, he did not hesitate. He understood that the city of Jerusalem's gift to Bezalel, this priceless piece of land, is part of that same historic reciprocal process. And that in return, Bezalel's gift to the city is cultural, artistic, and intellectual flourishing that conforms to the vision of its founder, and that will renew the spirit of the city and of the country as a whole.

And indeed, we expect that here, in the city center of Jerusalem, we will have a vibrant urban campus whose design echoes the blurring of boundaries between internal and external, between old and new, and between art and city life. Schatz's pedagogy takes on its ultimate form here, and we at the Mandel Foundation are proud to make such a transformative contribution to the city and to art, and thereby to be part of this movement toward the future – the future of Jerusalem, and the future of Israeli art.