



Culture and Masks: Israeli Museums and Galleries Reopen with Fanfare

By **Simona Shemer**, NoCamels June 03, 2020

The works of Jeff Koons in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Courtesy

In recent weeks, Israel has eased pandemic restrictions to allow large portions of the economy — libraries, malls, restaurants, hotels, bars, national parks, and beaches — to reopen after nearly two months of coronavirus lockdown.

They are opening back up to a changed world: one where dividers are placed at checkout counters, temperature checks, limits to the number of people allowed inside a space, and masks and hand sanitizers at every corner.

While cultural establishments such as museums and art galleries have been using the lockdown to hone in on their virtual offerings, like guided tours and webinars, they are also beginning to open their doors to the public.

NoCamels features six museums and galleries that will welcome patrons this summer with new exhibits.

Tel Aviv Museum of Art

The Tel Aviv Museum of Art held its opening event on Monday, June 1, saluting medical teams in Israel and inviting them to view the museum's flagship exhibits.

The museum closed its doors in March, just days after the opening of "Jeff Koons: Absolute Value – From The Marie and Jose Mugarbi Collection," the acclaimed American artist's first solo exhibit in Israel. The exhibit will reopen on Tuesday, June 2, with Koons' pop-art sculptures from different parts of his career spanning the last three decades on view in the museum's largest exhibition space, the 850-square meter gallery in the Herta and Paul Amir Building.



Jeff Koons, Balloon Dog (Orange) (1994-2000) at Tel Aviv Museum of Art.
Photo: Elad Sarig

Alongside Koons' works are exhibitions by international artists like William Kentridge, Rachel McLean, and Raymond Pettibon, solo exhibitions by Israeli artists Karen Russo and Daniel Tsal, as well as group exhibitions of international art, and exhibitions from the museum's Israeli art collection.

The reopening of the museum includes a virtual exhibit in New York City's Time Square, held in conjunction with the Israeli-owned New York gallery ZAZ10TS. The exhibit, which is a tribute to Israeli art, will also be broadcast on the museum's social media pages.



The Tel Aviv Museum of Art will exhibit Israeli art in New York City's Times Square.
Photo by Zdravko Cota

The museum will offer a new voice guide app for visitors who want to practice social distancing and tickets will be sold online.

"Jeff Koons: Absolute Value – From The Marie and Jose Mugarbi Collection," Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Now until October 2020, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturdays from 12pm to 6pm, Thursdays from 3pm to 9pm and Fridays from 10am to 3pm.

Design Museum Holon

The Holon municipality declares face masks to be the new "cultural heroes" (Hebrew) of the era, and will be on display in the gardens of the Design Holon Museum as part of an outdoor exhibit called "Face: Safe" from June 10. The exhibit features masks created by several designers, artists, and groups that reveal their own design-oriented version of the "new normal."

Participating designers include multidisciplinary artist Mimi Ziv, a lecturer at Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art, Meital Kapta Elyakim, a coordinator at the Association of the Deaf in Israel, Franklin Tavares, a Brazilian-born fashion designer based in Tel Aviv, and Prof. Tamir Shafer, head of the Visual Communication Department at the Holon Institute of Technology.

"In the new reality that we have embraced, as masking becomes a must, it was clear that the masks would ignite the imagination of designers, fashion houses, and creative people around the world," said curator Rafi Vazana, "Making lemonade out of lemons has become a motto, and designing masks created an occupation for designers around the world and gave them the opportunity to create something unique, with a personal motto and aesthetic."

The museum itself has yet to reopen.

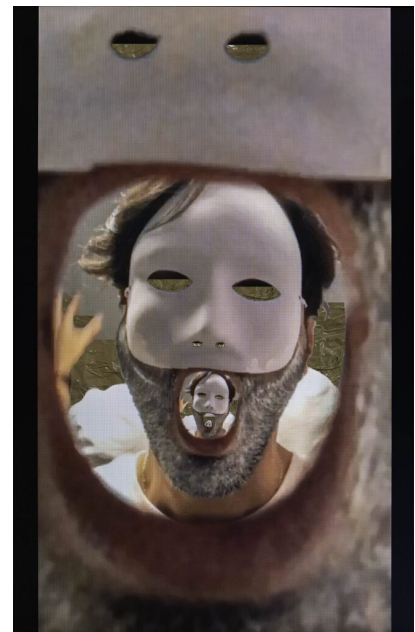
Face: Safe, Design Museum Holon Gardens, June 10 – August 31, 2020

Bat Yam Museum of Art

The Bat Yam Museum of Art will reopen on June 6, with a solo exhibition by artist Eli Petel entitled "Since Measurements Began." The exhibit was originally scheduled to open on March 19, but was shut down along with the rest of the museum just two days prior when a general closure was announced in Israel due to the coronavirus crisis.

In the exhibit, Eli Petel delves into the inseparable link between interior and exterior, and the realization that they are one. The first move he initiated upon entering the space, was opening up these obstructions of the museum building, which is often described as a Brutalist floating pavilion constructed in 1961. He tore down the dry board partitions and reopened the windows.

The exhibit is comprised of about 30 works that can be called photographs. Mostly taken in the street, in the market, or in the studio, the photographs capture mundane moments and sights devoid of an aura, including mud and filth accumulating around a drain, banana peels in various stages of rotting, or the metal grille on the studio door. Every detail and manifestation is valuable and requires accuracy and attention, Patel says.



Mask by Eli Petel. Courtesy.

"Since Measurements Began," Bat Yam Museum of Art, June 6 – October 10, 2020, 10am-4pm

Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art

The Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art reopened May 18 with an exhibit that had first opened just before the museum had shuttered as part of the country's coronavirus lockdown. "Portrait Time II," a group exhibit focusing on portraits and their significance, is comprised of seven solo exhibitions by Leonid Balaklav, Iddo Markus, Jan Rauchwerger, Aharon Shaul Schur, Elie Shamir, and Michal Mamit Worke, and a show of Portraits from the Collection. These exhibitions, which originally planned to close in June, will now be on display through August 2020.

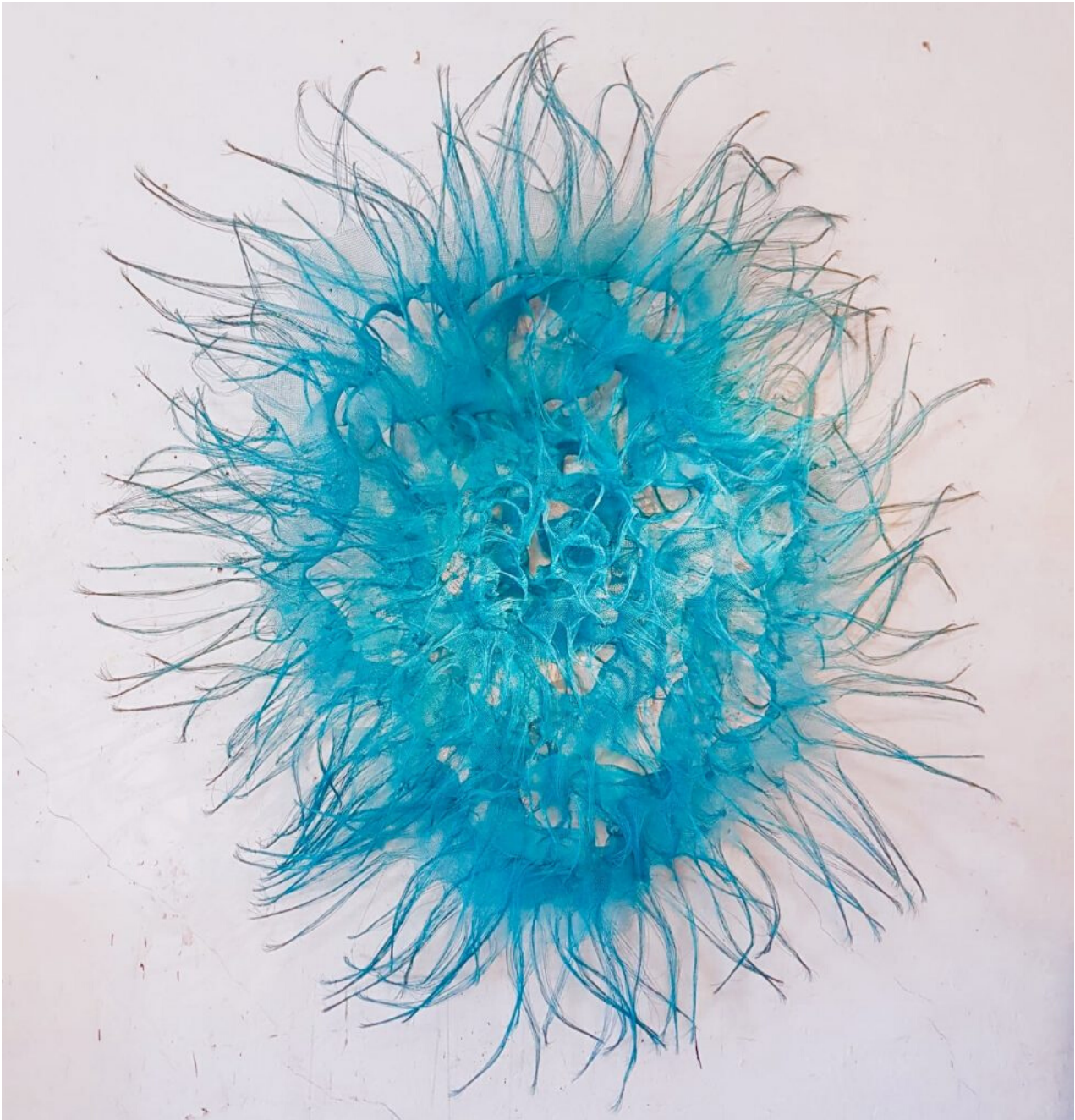


A portrait by Elie Shamir, part of "Portrait Time II" at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. Courtesy.

"Portrait Time II", The Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Now until August 2020, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 10 am. – 2 pm. and Tuesday and Thursday, 4 pm. – 8 pm.

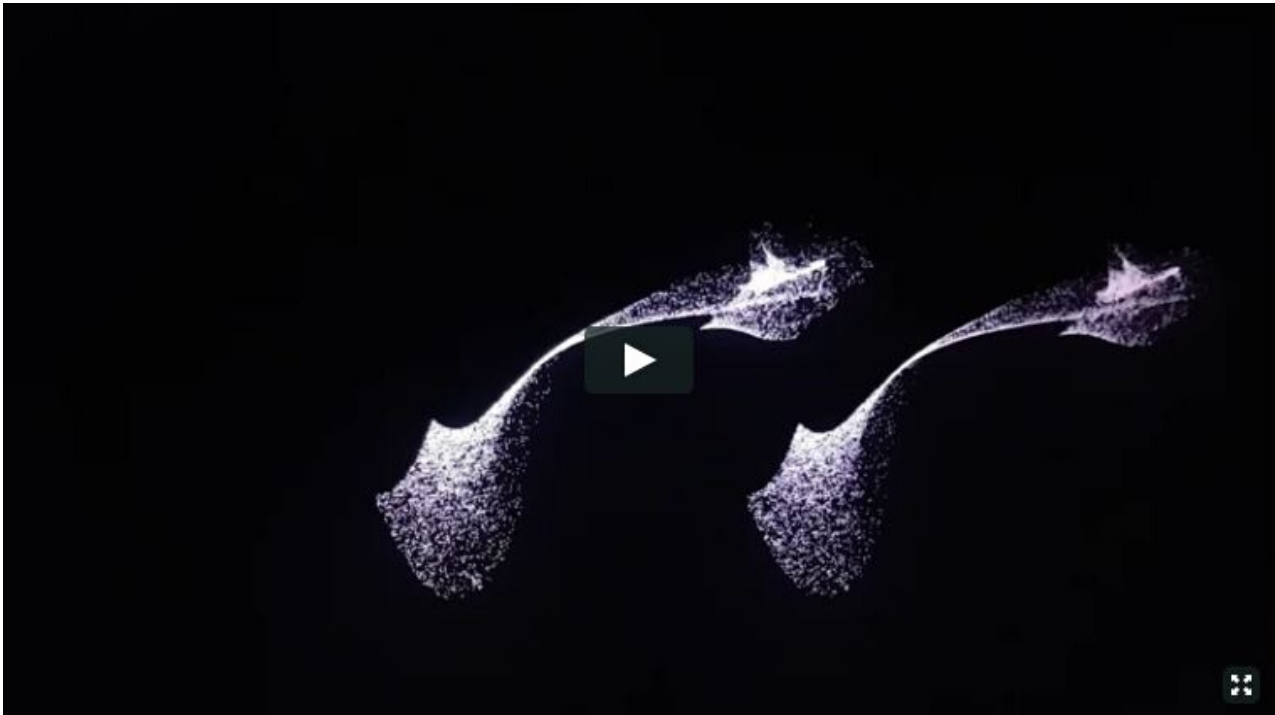
Galerie Charlot

Galerie Charlot was created by Valérie Hasson Benillouche in 2010 in Paris to promote innovative contemporary art practices. Particularly sensitive to emerging art forms, Galerie Charlot focuses on the relation between art, technology and science. In May 2017 Galerie Charlot opened a second space in Tel Aviv-Yafo



Blue Sun by Ron Aloni, part of the "Data Thread" exhibit at Galerie Charlot. Courtesy.

As the gallery slowly reopens, it focuses on digital art with an exhibition that first opened in February by Ron Aloni and Antoine Schmidt called Data Thread. Data Thread is a reflection on digital art, questioning the notions of "palatability" in various artistic forms and practices. The exhibit aims to find the link between the artists. Schmitt's pixels create movement, ripples, and a ripple through generative artworks using new technology tools. Ron Alon's metal segments are punctuated with weaving forming endless knots.



Body double, Video by Antoine Schmitt, Part of "Data Thread" exhibit at Galerie Charlot. Courtesy.

Tel Aviv-based artist Ron Aloni sculpts organic forms sometimes linked to the marine or astral universe and through weaving, creates forms that are both aerial and whose presence reflects a force. His sculptures, which are wall-mounted, suspended, or simply placed on the ground, have colors linked to metallic material and fluorescent. Parisian-based artist Antoine Schmidt creates installations that address the processes of movement in all of their modalities.

"Data Thread – Ron Aloni – Antoine Schmitt, Galerie Charlot, Saturdays, 11am – 3pm, Now until June 27, 2020

Tower of David Museum

Jerusalem museums are taking their time to reopen. The Tower of David Museum located in the Old City will reopen on June 17 with a new exhibition that will take visitors through a musical journey of the last 150 years in Jerusalem. Visitors will be able to enjoy all the open spaces including the courtyard of the citadel and the moat.



David's Citadel (King David's Tower) at the Tower of David Museum. Photo by Naftali Hilger

There is a new audio guide for the Kishle excavations that will allow people to delve into Jerusalem's history and discover the foundations to King Herod's palace.

The museum recommends that visitors check its website for the most up to date details and opening times.