ɔf Tel-Aviv port.
the other hand, got interested in
afts at a very early age — sure
ı, at the expence of my duties at
It must have had a therapeutic
ance for me because it enabled
have the comfort I was probably
; as a fatherless child during
l War II when my father
eered to fight the Germans in
and fell into their hands as a

e were great days, that molded
sraelis
birth of the State of Israel followed
ot envolved in Hashomer-Hatzair
movement. There and then I dis-
d all those wonderful things that
me run to this very day-roots,
e life in the commune, love for
ıd and social values.
low do we bridge the gap though,
en such an energetic, earthly and
al start and your present artistic
nark?
coincidence.
le serving in the army I was severly
led and was forced to spend a long
at a rehabilitation center.
therapy there, under forced cir-
ances, recreated the link to my in-
ndency for expressing myself thru
afts. I realized then, that there
be a more professionally defined
e for me. It was a tremendous dis-
for me, which was followed by a
d stage thereafter.
s one of the founders of a kibutz in
egev, when I was twenty, A friend
a sculptor and a student of the
and noted Israeli Sculptor Rudi
an, opened my eyes. Art became so

have in common inspite of mentality, language and geographical barriers.

Some Jews around me there were inhabited or even scared to demonstrate their identity, because of bitter memories no doubt. I on the other hand felt very differently about my Jewish identity — I was constantly aware of it like never before and took such pride in it — for the first time ever. I was a Jew who belonged to a definite people and to a source. I was so confident so as not to make anybody repeat the mistake of regarding me as a stranger or worse as a refugee.

Israel meant so much more to me, and just before the six days war I felt an anxiety, the kind of which I had never experienced before, similar only to the one we must have all gone thru at the initial stages of the Yom-Kippur-War...

Q: Speaking about wars and the Yom-Kippur-War in particular apart from your share as a citizen and a soldier, tell me about your particular contribution as an artist.

A: My unit paid its very bloody share, holding part of the Bar-Lev line on the Suez Canal the day the war broke out. I was requested to design a monument in memory of the fallen. I was very lost at the beginning because I felt I shouldn't allow any personal interpretation to get in my way.

The story was very painful, complicated and partially so obscure, so unbelievable in terms of all past and heroic experiences. It was so very different this time! The shock was so great, the aftermath so unfamiliar-and so many shocking truths had to wait for their turn to unfold...

predictions, real comradship is created. It is an uninterrupted experience and a very worthwhile one. Such an experience makes me believe that nowhere else could I operate as a designer and as an artist like I do in Israel.

Q: Since seven years now you have been chairman of the gold and silversmithing department of the "Bezalel" academy in Jerusalem — how do you view and interpret this position.

A: I am indeed privileged to be among the first to lay the foundations to a new concept, and the task is tremendous. I feel like a conductor of a great orchestra-it isn't a one-man-show-it is a project of twenty skilled teachers and sixty students. It is a process of very personal attention to each student by teachers who are designers sculptors and painters.

We strive to the unity, in the wider sense, of art and design. We work in the workshops, we travel to the Sinai desert to experience new forms and a link to the monumental and physical dimensions of that particulr part of the country. I personally regard the desert as the sailor regards the sea. Its a bug with me. I'm somewhat of a wanderer, who was lucky to get even as far as Burma and Thailand. It was there, that I drew the parallel lines between their tribal art and our own traditional Yemenite art.

Q: Coming back from Burma to our Jewish context, how do you explain your interest in Jewish ceremonial art rather than in Jewelelry per se?

A: Just as an architect does not have to become necessarily a patient in order for him to design a hospital....

Q: Yet, why as a non-religious Israeli do you design ceremonial objects.

isn't that the Austrian royal symbol? What an absurd-that unclean bird becoming part of a holy Jewish ceremonial object....just two out of numerous other examples.

Q: If the concept has been that distorted do we, after all, have somewhat of an authentic Jewish ceremonial art?

A: I am afraid there is still no such clear and evident concept around, or rather let me put it this way. Art is in the object and Judaism is in the content. Jewish art in Europe (and in our context) was directly inspired by the Renaissance and the Baroque. In the orient it was inspired by Arabic and Moslem concepts. Mark Chagall is primarily a surrealist who deals with Jewish subjects.

There is, in other words, no leading force yet in art which can be defined as The or A Jewish style.

Q: Has your show at the Jewish Museum in New York City got a particular meaning to you?

A: Very much so.

I regard it as a mission in that Judaica can be regarded as art, where artistic values can be implemented in the design of Jewish ceremonial objects.

If I succeed in proving my point there is a chance that others will follow and join in dusting the a long neglected course.

My own students at the jewelry department of the Bezalel academy in Jerusalem are still disinterested in the subject because they were brought up on the notion that Jewish ceremonial art is for religious designers only. Such are very very few, and we are therefore commited to do something about it...

Joram Rozot