

Object Lessons

By Angela Levine

Designers of jewelry, fashion, furniture and graphics join sculptors, painters and photographers in the mammoth theme show "Objects," a dialogue between art and design mounted simultaneously at three venues: the Jenco Dada Museum, Ein Hod; Herzliya Museum; and the Municipal Museum, Kfar Sava.

Although intermingled, the exhibits fall into two main categories: objects produced by designers who stick to their field of specialty and show off its beauty (like those contributed by fashion designer **Danny Bar-Shay**, jewelry designer **Shay Lachover**, and furniture designers **Arik Ben-Simhon** and **Yaacov Kaufman**); and works by artists and designers trying their skills out in a different medium.

In the latter group, **Arie Ofer**, whose specialty is jewelry design, produces a winner with a simple but effective sculpture, a giant iron cube supported by a sheaf of twisted metal (at Herzliya). At the same gallery, the beauty prize goes to fashion designer **Jerry Melitz** for his fanciest collage painting in which the image of Jesus is framed by dressmaker's patterns.

Among the more amusing fantasy products are posters by **Victor Frosdig** (design curator of the Museum of Israeli Art, Ramat Gan) extolling the virtues of "Cronomestic" household products for the make-believe firm of Integrated Value Products (at Ein Hod); and a "Clothes hook" sculpture by **Israel Hadany** (at Kfar Sava) which looks at its best in a catalog photograph, where clothes and cloths are hung from it.

A strong presence at all three venues is fun (rather than utility) furniture whose inspiration derives from two main sources: the Surrealist tradition of the unexpected and shocking; and Pop Art objects from the '60s. Among the more appealing works in

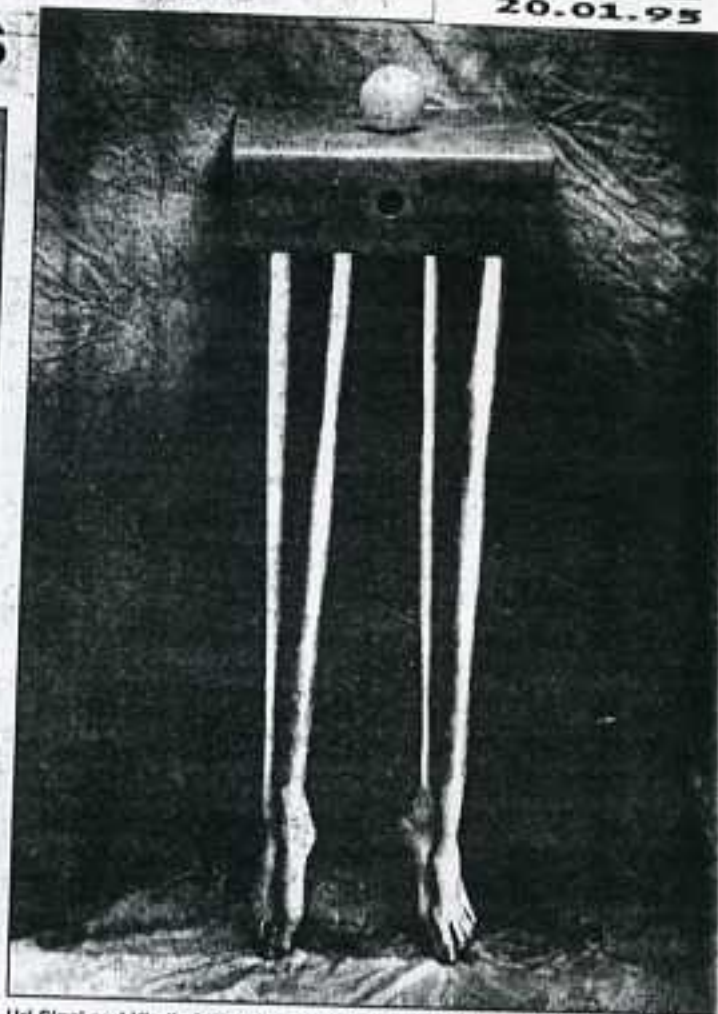


Rachel Giladi: wall relief (Herzliya Museum)

two categories are "Student's Seat," by **Hana Herschenberg** and **Hans Pallada** (at Ein Hod); **Dudu Gerstein's** coffee table with matching flower vase assembled from painted wooden cut-outs; and **Aaron Ben Arieh's** crisp line in children's furniture, including a tube of endearing crocodiles cut from industrial tires (both at Kfar Sava).

Outstanding among the surreal exhibits appropriately exhibited at the Dada stronghold of Ein Hod is a gallows fashioned by **Uri Lifshitz** from a metal coat-hanger; and "Service," a sinister pair of wall sculptures by **Uri Sinal** and **Vladimir Benderski** in which silvered nether limbs and genitalia decorating a brace of wooden night tables recall fetishist images of women by English pop artist **Allen Jones**.

Lampshades receive inspired treatment, especially **Lid Gad Charney's** spooky



Uri Sinal and Vladimir Benderski: wall relief (the female half) (Jenco Dada Museum, Ein Hod)

"mummies" contrived from wrapped bandages (at Herzliya); and **Ayala Sperling Safari's** "Morning Glory," a trio of giant sea-fronds made from soft pleated cotton (at Ein Hod).

Architecture is the springboard for several unusually expressive works, like **Michael Trupper's** swimming-pool scenario carved from wood; and **Yigal Ozer's** "mood" paintings based on unrealized architectural projects (both at Kfar Sava).

Among works incorporating objects associated with industry or commerce is **Rakefet Kanaan's** elegant "working" laboratory of live, dead and ornamental fish (at Ein Hod); and **Avi Shulam's** thought-provoking installation "Ritual in a Closed Circle" (at Herzliya). Making a pleasant, if lighter, impact are **Moshe Amar's** "Pilot" paintings inspired by the successive marketing campaigns of a well-known Jaffa bakery (at Ein Hod).

A piquant offering comes from **Yoram Kupermintz** (at Kfar Sava): making fun of the local tendency to lift ideas from international art journals, Kupermintz shows two hard-edged pattern paintings, each enshrining the title of a well-known art publication.

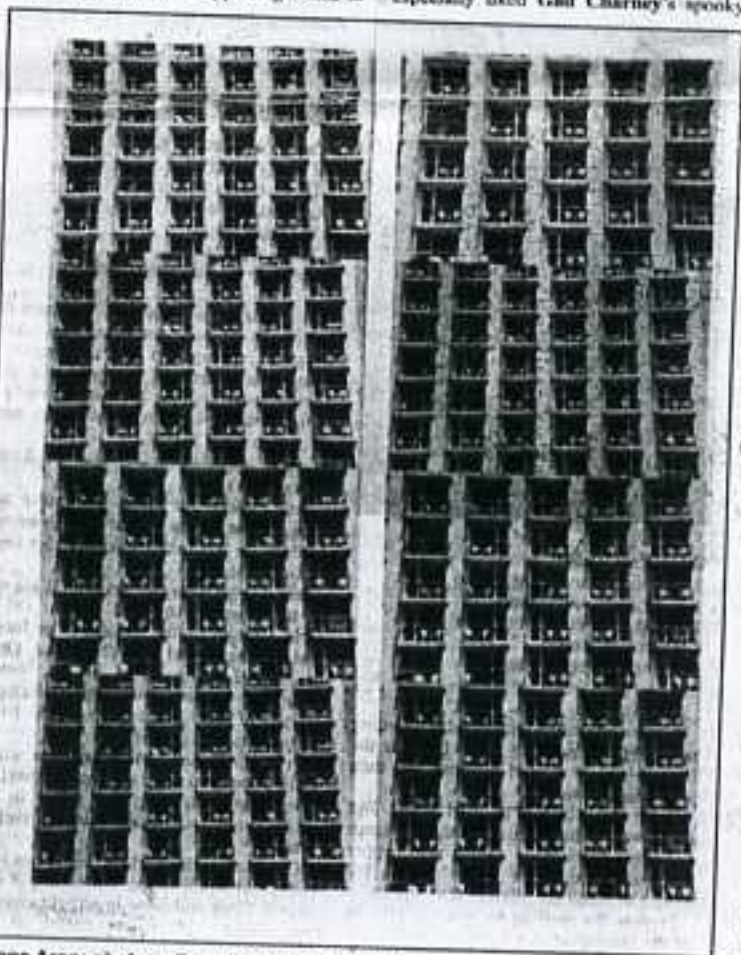
Video art, surely the clearest case of art intertwined with design, is insufficiently represented. The few staid computer paintings by **Reuben Kohn** (at Herzliya) are not half as exciting as the battery of "live" electronic images and sound-effects he produced at an exhibition in the Dada-Janco Museum in the late '80s.

Despite the lively appeal of many individual exhibits, one comes away from this presentation questioning its value. Setting aside the disturbing fact that curator **Tzofia Dekel's** 55-person selection is not linked to any objective criteria, the *raison d'être* of the whole presentation is questionable. The links between art and design, or between artist and designer, are complex and subtle, and it is fruitless to attempt to pinpoint or unravel them. (Ein Hod show till March 18;

Herzliya till January 28, afterwards at Ein Yano Museum, Kfar Sava show till January 22, afterwards at Ashdod Museum).

SEPARATE ONE-PERSON exhibits are also showing at two of these venues. A view of the Jenco-Dada Museum is "There are no Black Bees" by **Inga Foma Cocco**. These cleverly crafted, sometimes charismatic works encompass two types: wall hangings: small papers stained with dark color washes having the cloud imprint of an insect or fragment of honey-comb as their central image; or wooden frames holding torn, stained sections of wire netting. In addition, appropriating products (and ideas) employed by the German artist-guru **Joseph Beuys**, **Foma Cocco** shows large and small wooden chests filled and stained with wax, paraffin and honey drippings. Till February 28.

FEMINIST AND conservationist message radiate from **Rachel Giladi's** sculptural installation "Counting," which makes exclusive use of objects taken from her domestic environment, like paper bags, nylon stockings and disposable diapers. Message and metaphor aside, I was captivated in particular by Giladi's erotic installation "Late Night Party," where a forest of crushed and dented paper cups swinging gently from fine wires evokes both a celebratory mood as well as the specter of a hangover on the morrow. Autobiographical fragments are incorporated into a set of striking photo-collages by **Yvona Aron**, a ballet dancer and choreographer in her youth. A staccato rhythm permeates all of Aron's imagery, whether the photographs tell hotel facades from below, or look directly at window displays of stockings or shoes. Striking dynamic effects are achieved by the simple ruse of combining several different views of the same subject in one picture, alternating upright prints with inverted ones (Herzliya Museum). Both shows till January 28.



Yvona Aron: photo-collage (Herzliya Museum)