



Belle Shafir, *The definition that seeks to feel Alternatives*



G7MV8558, Plastic, gold, hair, acrylic, 10x7 cm

Cover: **G7MV8568**, Glass, paper, clay, acrylic, diameter 16 cm, height 3 cm

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G7MV8563, Glass, fibers, hair, acrylic, diameter 7 cm, height 10 cm



G7MV8576, Plaster, clay, copper, 30x15x2 cm

*The definition that seeks to feel Alternatives: Definition in search of feeling.
Definition in search of emotion*

Hagai Segev

Works of art made by artists are, in most cases, intended to form an individual identity defining the artist as an individual uniquely different from other human beings. Nevertheless, artists make use of the tools of art, which are based on a consensual language that lies within the borders of culture, and which is similar to the language used by other creative artists and read and understood by its audience. Acting within these existing rules, the artist attempts to create a kind of meta-language, or meta-spheres of expression that are personal and original. Belle Shafir also uses the tools of western art, yet, working within that language, she integrates images and means that have slowly developed from within her own personal life cycle.

Personal expression, so important and meaningful for every artist, is the element that expresses individual existence within the enveloping framework of society. The basis for understanding Shafir's work is her striving for personal expression while finding models, symbols and signs. All of her work, whether

sculpture, drawings or calligraphic pieces, testify to Shafir's ongoing efforts to define her individual and cultural presence simultaneously.

Images of embryos, nests and clusters of thickets, together with her invented calligraphy drawings, constitute Belle Shafir's attempt to use visual means to formulate the essential, most basic core that takes on meaning and presence with the passage of time. This occurs in a process moving from gestation to growth through development and the definition of an individual, particular identity, in the evolutionary process of all living creatures, whether human beings or animals. Breaking out of the bud is a foundation experience, shaping all events to which it gives birth when the significant moment is over.

Throughout her rich career of art-making, Belle Shafir has engaged the issue of growth and the place of the organism. What does the living creature experience? How do passages affect it and shape its existence? Shafir's conclusion is that the organism is affected in the most minute steps, in the very tiniest stages, barely noticed

belle 3, Ink on paper,
30x20 cm



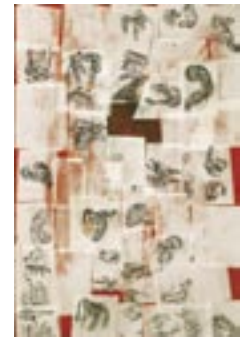
belle 1, Ink on paper/
plywood, 30x20 cm



by the human eye as they occur, even when most significant. Based on this fundamental conclusion, Shafir attempts to study these minor changes. In her research process, she gathers branch to branch, twig upon twig, to build nests. She adds line to line to build a drawing and then another drawing. One line on a page is followed by another and yet another to create a calligraphy of hieroglyphics whose deepest intent and meaning cannot be deciphered.

But there is no need to do so, since for Belle Shafir what is important is the act of making the piece, studying the core of the emotion, that very human emotion unable to be formulated through the means of verbal intelligence, because to define it would make the feeling disappear and fade away. Verbal formulation of emotions or of the sights of art constitute the loss of the innocence and primacy existing only in the spheres of unformed cognition. The embryo's turning in upon itself, repeated in infinite variations in Shafir's sculptures and objects, and, to a great degree in her calligraphic designs, is a turning in on oneself that bursts out. The internal contradiction in this definition is intentional and conscious. In their second stage, the embryonic structures burst forth onto the entire sheet of paper, flow over many pages in books, and continue onward

to cover the space in her sculpture installations. Objects that began life as minute formulations of specific points in time have become definitions of entire lives. The definition cannot be formulated, but can only seek to feel.



belle 2, Ink on paper/
plywood, 30x20 cm

belle 4, Ink on paper,
30x20 cm



G7MV8566, Plastic, metal, hair, gold, diameter 10 cm, height 20 cm

G7MV8552, Plastic, gold, 12x10x8 cm



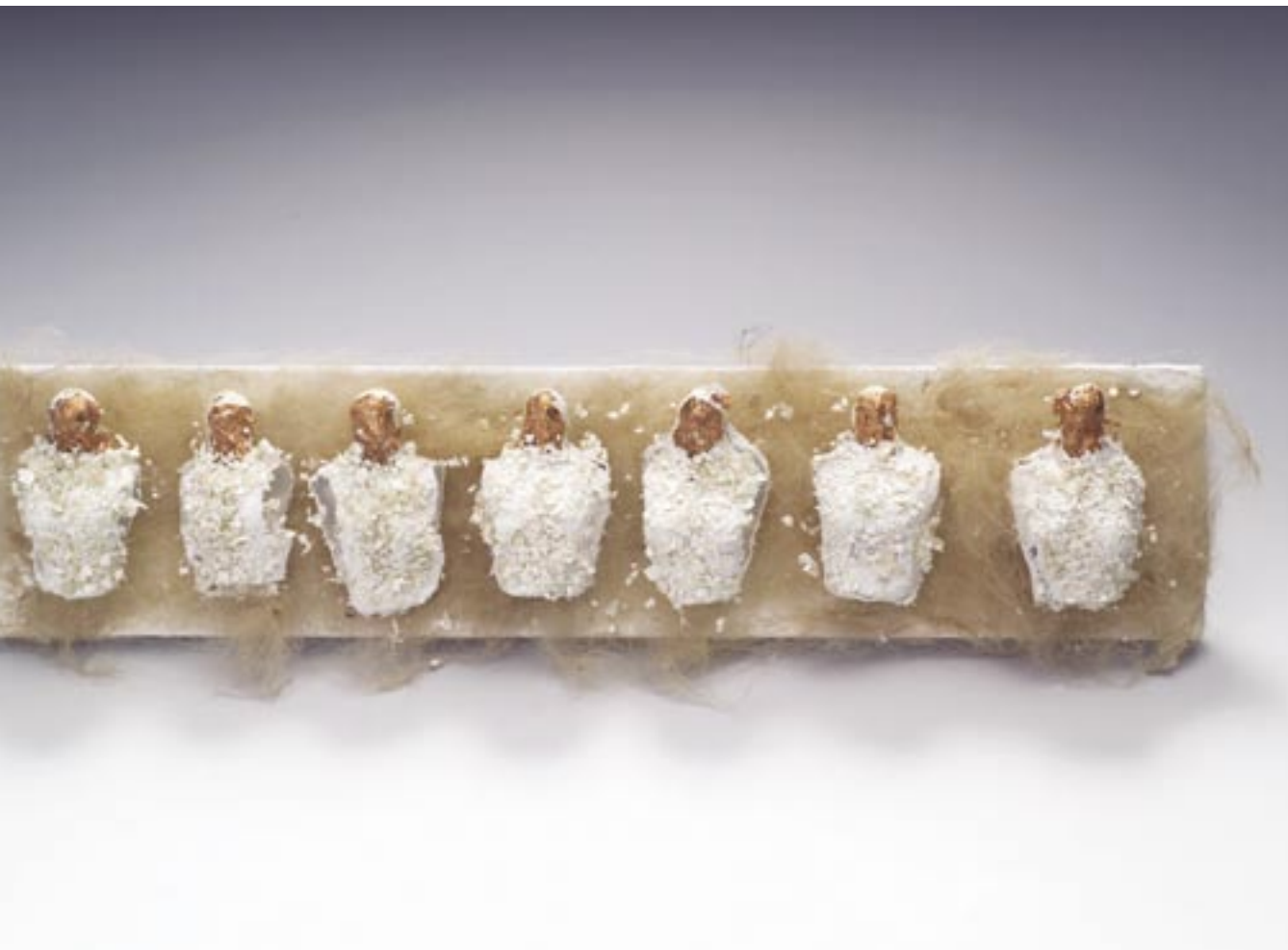
Biographical Notes

1953 Born in Germany. **1972** Emigrated to Israel. **1984-1988** Studied at the Avni Art College, Tel-Aviv. **One Person exhibitions:** **2005** “Close-up”, Artist's house, Herzlyia, Israel. **2003** “Venus verspinnt”, Gallery im b.i.b., Hannover, Germany. **2002** “Portraitscriptum”, Sarah Erman Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel; “The Path between a Maze, Sexual lust and Altar”, Seamgallery, Megadim, Israel. **1998** “Lapillus”, Many H. Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel. **1997** “Circle of consciousness”, The Constant Sculpture Gallery, Ramat-Gan, Israel. **1995** “Naturalis”, Artists' House, Jerusalem, Israel. **1994** Stadtmuseum Amberg, Amberg, Germany; “For the tree of the Field is Man's Life”, Petach-Tikva Museum, Israel; Galerie Maya Wildewuur, Hochhalen, Holland; Hazerot Ha Ikarim Museum, Kfar Tabor, Israel. **1992** Sarah Erman Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel; Arkaden Gallery, Regensburg, Germany; Museum Villa Stahmer, Georgsmarienhütte, Germany. **Group exhibitions:** **2005** “5th World Calligraphy Biennale of Jeollabuk-do”, Korea; “Red”, Municipality Gallery, Kfar-Saba, Israel; “Hues of colors”, Gallery Kampus, Holon, Israel. **2004** “Hues of colors”, Seamgallery, Megadim, Israel; “Moz – Muse II”, Gallery “526”, Lodz, Poland. **2003** “Displaced Self”, Installations, Sakshi Gallery, Bombay, India; “Carrier Carrying Carriage”, Design Gallery, Henkin College, Holon, Israel; **2002** “imaginaire féminin”, OPEN2002, Venice Lido, Italy; “Ambivalenzen”, Frauen Museum, Bonn, Germany; “ 2002 Flag Art Festival”, Seoul, Korea. **2001** “The Mudane Muse”, Janco Dada Museum, Ein-Hod, Israel; “The Mudane Muse”, Municipality Gallery, Rechovot, Israel; “Verfügungsgrün” Hochbunker, Köln, Germany. **2000** “Storytime”, Artist's House Gallery, Jerusalem, Israel; “Storytime”, Center Gallery, Nazareth, Israel; “Zur Wand reden”, Jüdisches Kulturmuseum, Veitshoechheim, Germany; “When you enter the Land”, Shfela Museum, Kfar Menachem, Israel; “Weaving a Connection”, Tel-Aviv University Gallery, Israel; “Wir borgen uns ein Museum”, Das verborgene Museum, Berlin, Germany; “The Mudane Muse”, Arad Museum, Arad, Israel. **1999** “Earth”, Um el Fachem Gallery, Galilee, Israel; “Six Set Up a Table”, Musrara 10 Gallery, Jerusalem, Israel; “Discourse”, Static Gallery, Liverpool, England; “Talking to a

Wall", Bad Kissingen, Germany; "A Harvest of Pomegranates", The Corine Maman Ashdod Museum, Israel. **1998** "The Israeli Woman Portrait 1948-1998", Yad-Lebanim Museum, Ra'anana, Israel; "From Madona and Golda to Mother Theresa", City Hall, Haifa, Israel; "Artists meeting" The Studio Gallery, Ra'anana, Israel; "KunstFormMensch", Rathaus Gerlingen, Germany; "Save the peace", Giv'ataym theatre, Israel; "The Garden-A Metaphor", The University Botanical Gardens, Jerusalem, Israel; "50 Anos Israel", Galeria d'Art Zero, Barcelona, Spain; "Storytime", Candid Gallery, London, and Static Gallery, Liverpool, England. **1997** "60 Years of the Blue Square", Eretz Israel Museum, Tel-Aviv, Israel; "Miniartura", Centro Arti Visive, Perugia, Italia. **1996** "Bitter, Sweet, Time, Putrification", Lybus Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel; "Healing The Breach II", Yadayim Artists' Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel; "Local code", The Tower Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel. **1995** The Tower Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel. **1993** "Sculpture in the Little Forest", Ra'anana, Israel. **1992** Yad-Lebanim Museum, Ra'anana, Israel; The Kibbutz Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel; "Tables", Hakikar Gallery, Jaffa, Israel. **Projects: 2004** Art Lectures and workshop, University of Wollongong, Australia. **2003** "Bildhauer-Symposium", Amberg, Germany. **2002** "Temple del l'Amore", Site Specific Sculpture, Arte Sella, Borgo Vasulgana, Italy. **2001** "Cyfuniad 2001", International Workshop with Residence, Liverpool and Plas Caerdeon, Wales, England. **1999** "The place where Art and Ecology meet", Britanni Forest, Jerusalem, Israel; "Kescher" International Artists Symposium, Kibbutz Lochamei Hageettaot, Israel; "Naked Venus", Site Specific Sculpture: Akerby Skulpturpark, Sweden; International Artist Symposium, KHOJ, India. **1998** "Altar", Women Festival, Haifa, Israel. **1997** "Zimun", International Artists Symposium, Artist's house, Herzlyia, Israel; International Artists Symposium, Wiesbaden, Germany; "Spiegele" Book, Frauenmuseum Bonn, XII. Kunstmesse Bonn, Germany. **1996** International Sculpture Project, Görlitz, Germany. **1994** "The Seer's Well", Site Specific Sculpture: The Grizedale Forest, Lake District, England; Site Specific Sculpture: The Kfar Tavor Gardens, Israel. **Documentation: 2005** Video documentation from "PvR videostudios", Kfar-Saba, Israel, film operator: Peretz (Frank) van Ralte, for the Gabriel Sherover Information Center for Israeli Art, video No. 446, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel



G7MV8561, Plastic, hair, 10x10 cm



G7MV8572, Plaster, hair, egg shells, 30x10x2 cm



G7MV8573, Plastic, plaster, clay, copper, 30x15x2 cm





G7MV8574, Plastic, plaster, clay, copper, 30x15x2 cm



G7MV8570, Styrofoam, hair, gold, acrylic, 19x10x2 cm

