

The most influential people in Israeli art



Eva Illouz. / Photo by Emil

Salman

**By Galia Yahav and Ellie Armon
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*1. Susan Landau, 67,
Director and Chief Curator
of the Tel Aviv Museum of
Art*

2. Eva Illouz, 52, President of Bezalel Academy of Art & Design, Jerusalem

Prof. Eva Illouz is finishing her first year as president of Bezalel. She is the firstwoman to head the 106-year-old institution, which also now has a female vice-president, Tal Ben-Zvi. Illouz is in a particularly powerful and significant position, for Bezalel is the oldest and richest institution of art and design education in Israel, and has the largest annual enrollment of any school of its kind. Her influence on the institution cannot yet be gauged, but she has tremendous potential here. The expectation is that she will seek to refresh the ranks of the tenured faculty and aim to strike a better balance between men and women in the various departments.

3. *Rivka Saker, 63, art collector, senior director of Sotheby's Israel and founder of* **Artis**

Rivka Saker is a key figure in the Israeli art world, with great influence in Israel and even more so abroad. She serves as director of Sotheby's Israel branch, as a judge on various committees and on the boards of directors and boards of trustees of various institutions, including the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Bezalel Academy of Art & Design and the Israel Philharmonic. She was one of the founders of the Tel Aviv biennale ARTLV. She uses her extensive international

connections on behalf of Artis, which promotes Israeli art at home and abroad. The organization brings curators,

museum directors and art collectors from abroad to Israel and sponsors a scholarship competition for art studies at

Columbia University in New York.

4. Shalom Shpilman, 65, art collector

Shalom Shpilman, a venture capitalist, entered the field of art photography three years ago, and has since invested a great

deal of money in it purchasing hundreds of works by local photographers, supporting exhibitions, catalogs and projects,

endowing scholarships and awards, including the Shpilman International Prize for Excellence in Photography, which is

given in conjunction with the Israel Museum and includes an exhibition plus a \$40,000 scholarship. He has also put

together an impressive collection covering the history of international photography, which includes works by Nan

Goldin, Cindy Sherman, Jeff Wall and Man Ray, among others. Last year he opened the Shpilman Institute for Photography

5. Yigal Ahuvi, 60, art collector

Yigal Ahuvi, an accountant by trade, is a real estate tycoon and prominent art collector. Over the past decade, he began to accumulate a large number of Israeli and international works with the help of the

curator Sarit Shapira. He owns a villa on Hissin Street, one of the most beautiful buildings in Tel Aviv, which is slated to house the collection. For six years he has been a key partner and contributor to the Fresh Paint art fair, which draws a large audience. At the fair an award is given for Most Promising Artist; the award includes an NIS

40,000 cash prize and a solo exhibition.

*6. Sergio Edelsztein, 56,
founder and curator, Center
for Contemporary Art, Tel
Aviv*

Without question, Sergio Edelsztein is the most influential figure in Israel in the field of video art. In the 1980s he opened the Artifact Gallery, where video art was displayed alongside the plastic arts. In 1997 he founded the Center for Contemporary Art (CCA), and in 2002 he founded an international video-art biennial. He also founded the Fund for Video-Art and Experimental Cinema in Israel (with support from the Culture Administration and the Israel Film Council), as well as the Israeli Video Art Archive. For years, CCA's activity has compensated for the neglect of this medium by the country's

major museums.

7. Micha Levin, 70, head of the art department, Shenkar College of Engineering & Design

Prof. Micha Levin, a historian of modern and contemporary art and architecture, has held key positions in the field of art, including that of adviser on art to the mayors of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where he promoted public sculpture. He was the chairman and founder of the Artist Workshops in Tel Aviv and also served as chief curator and director of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. The Shenkar art department was inaugurated in 2008, headed by Prof. Larry Abramson, competition for the veteran institutions: Bezalel in Jerusalem and Hamidrasha School of Art near Kfar Sava.

8. *Eyal Danon, 40, director and chief curator, Israeli Center for Digital Art,*

Holon

At its inception a little over a decade ago, the Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon, founded by Galit Eilat, was an

interesting test case that placed a fundamental alternative in the center of the field. Today, too, under curators Eyal Danon,

Udi Edelman and Ran Kasmy-Ilan, the center is not afraid to stage an intellectual, critical and political discourse. At the

same time, it seeks to strengthen its bond with its surroundings, the city of Holon for example, a project in the Jesse

Cohen neighborhood. In addition to its many important exhibitions, the center also houses a video archive focused on art

from the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Balkans; runs a visiting artist program, an online magazine, an online radio

station, and more.

9. Eila Eitan, 38, public relations executive

Eila Eitan opened her PR firm in 2006 and has since been establishing herself as a major presence in the art world. Though affiliated with the service-provider sector, her reputation as a PR expert has come to signify quality. Among her clients: the Herzliya Biennial of Contemporary Art, ARTLV, the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, the Jerusalem Season of Culture, the Jerusalem Municipality, Tel Aviv Art Year, MoBY-Museums of Bat Yam, the Ein Harod Museum of Art and the Kupferman Collection.

10. Yaffa Braverman, 62, owner of the Braverman Gallery

From the time the gallery first opened in 2004, Yaffa Braverman has presented ambitious shows and installations by young artists. The gallery has moved to a different space, survived financial crises and, in recent years, since Adi Gura joined its staff, has managed to establish a number of outstanding young artists locally as well as abroad. These include: Nira Pereg,

Dana Levy, David Adika, Aharon Ozery, Uri Nir and Anna Yam. They are also notable for their work with Ilit Azoulay, who within a short time gained wide exposure and esteem, and for a production at the Israeli pavilion at the Venice Biennale by gallery artist Gilad Ratman.

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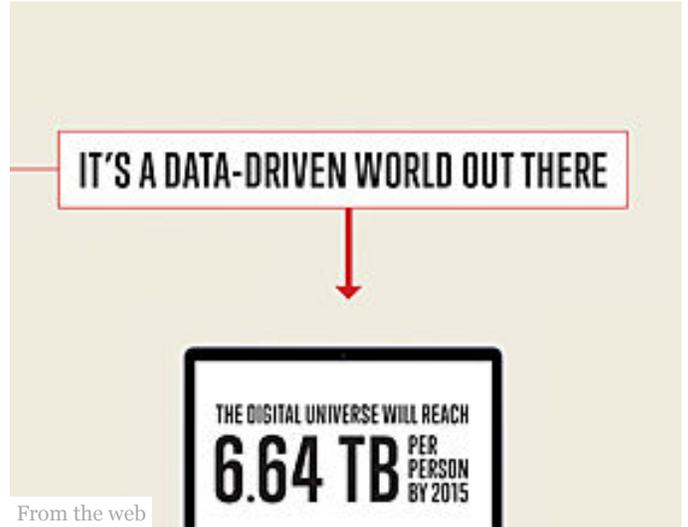
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