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Art and museology in the
formation and consolidation
of national identity:

Case of Israel

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RESUMEN: La formación de estados nación llevó consigo a la construcción de identidades nacionales que garantizasen su pervivencia, consolidación y legitimidad. Diferentes factores definen y moldean estas identidades. Es dentro de estos elementos formadores donde cabe plantearse sobre el rol del arte y la museología como agentes constitutivos de la identidad nacional. El arte como expresión humana individual y colectiva, y el museo como institución difusora de la cultura y conservadora del arte de un país. La herencia histórica, el orgullo nacional y el poder blando explican la función del museo dentro de los estados. Además, de la variedad de países que existen, el presente trabajo se centrará en un estudio teórico y empírico del caso de Israel. Del impacto que el arte y la museología han tenido y siguen teniendo en la construcción de la identidad israelí.

PALABRAS CLAVE: identidad nacional, arte, museología, legitimidad, Israel.

ABSTRACT: The formation of nation states led to the construction of national identities that guaranteed their survival, consolidation and legitimacy. Different factors define and shape these identities. It is within these formative elements where it is possible to consider the role of art and museology as constitutive agents of national identity. Art as an individual and collective human expression, and the museum as an institution that disseminates culture and preserves the art of a country. Historical heritage, national pride, and soft power explain the museum's role within states. In addition, from the variety of countries that exist, this study will focus on a theoretical and empirical research of the case of Israel. Precisely, about the impact that art and museology have had and continue to have on the construction of Israeli identity.

KEY WORDS: national identity, art, museology, legitimacy, Israel.

D) INTRODUCTION

With the arrival of the nation states, came the concern of their survival. This idea when building a State has manifested itself in the **national identity**. An identity that means a self-perception within a community and that not only takes into account blood lineage or territory but also other factors such as religion, tradition, language or even political ideologies. Understanding, therefore, the national identity as a unifying element and guarantor of a State is key when it comes to understanding the factors that build this identity. The possible impact of **art and museology** in the formation of national identities will be studied in the present investigation and will be specified in the case of the State of Israel.

Art has accompanied the human being from its remotest origins, either functionally or aesthetically, but, ultimately, as an expression for oneself and for the community. Consequently, with a broad spectrum towards new territories and cultures, the arrival of Nation States, the development of archeology and the creation of institutions, museums appeared. They have welcomed artworks of all kinds, with a strong desire for conservation, on the one hand, and dissemination, on the other.

Taking this into account, art as an expression of the culture of a country, its traditions, desires and projections, as well as the museum as an institution that protects culture and national feelings, will be probed on its true extent in the formation of national identities. More specifically, it will be analyzed the scope of art and museology in the shaping effort of the **Israeli identity**. A relatively new state (1948) that, due to both its characteristics and its surroundings, requires a strong identity shared by all its citizens.

The **methodology** used in this study has firstly consisted in a review of the different theories of international relations as well as in the reading of a wide variety of academic and scientific articles on art, museology, its scope inside and outside a state, the construction of nation states, national identity and its elements. A review that will inspire my conclusions on the scope of these elements in the national identity of any state, and specifically on the case of Israel.

Secondly, the case study on Israel is essentially due to my stay there for five months (October 2021 to February 2022). This academic opportunity has been thanks to the **international mobility** facilitated by my university, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas in Madrid, and the destination university called Reichman University in Herzliya. This unique and completely enriching experience, at a not only educational level but above all at a personal

one, has allowed my case study to be empirical. In other words, as a result of my stay in Israel I have been able to specify my analysis in this country in such a way that the theoretical can be proved in a practical manner. To this aim, I read the history of ancient and modern Israel, its geopolitical situation, as well as the Jewish religion and its traditions. All this academic review has been complemented by the reading of *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl, father of modern Zionism and that breed not only the Jewish sentiment but also the foundations of the contemporary Israeli state and identity.

Therefore, once I had a general idea of the formation of a national identity, the role that art and museology could play in this process, as well as a general vision of the meaning and creation of the State of Israel, I proceeded to analyze Israeli art, its museums and its identity. For this I read different articles, books and even news that were combined with the classes I took at Reichman University. From the seven subjects that I had the wonderful opportunity to attend, I want to highlight three of them: “Israeli Politics and Society” by Chaim B. Weizmann, “Nationalism, fascism and populism” by Alberto Spektorowski, and “Liberty and Responsibility: exploring the foundations of the modern open society” by Dr. Amichai Magen. Its content, its classes and the material that was offered to me was totally inspiring and useful for my research.

Finally, there I was able to experience Israeli art and visit some of its museums. These were: Ein Harod Museum, Eretz Museum, Israel Museum of Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, Tel Aviv Museum of Art and The Bible Land museum. From their visit along with all the previous information I had on the matter, I was able to differentiate different elements that contribute to the dissemination and care of Israeli identity. My conclusions will be present in the “practical analysis” section following the ideas of the reference author Stephen Shulman. From all this research, I will conclude on how art can or cannot effectively influence in the construction of national identities and, precisely, its influence on the State of Israel.

II) LITERATURE ANALYSIS

i. What do we understand about National Identity?

a. The term

Identity is a concept that can often lead to confusion or overuse. On the one hand, we can find the personalistic and individualistic view of the concept of identity as personal identity. That which focuses on the existing self of Descartes (Descartes, 1641) or on the self of the empiricist John Locke as a substance in relation to a specific place and time. A personal identity far removed from that which is the object of analysis in this paper, but which to a large extent converges and coexists with national identity. A personal identity that in its interaction with others leaves its arbitrariness to mold and soak in its environment, influencing and forming the national identity. Kierkegaard, however, does not speak in any way of collective identities but only of the identity of the individual person; in spite of this, he recognized that personal life translates in some way and at some point into civil, as happens with identities (Habermas, 2007).

Beyond this brief initial reflection on personal identity, collective identity defines what and who we are simultaneously with the definition of what and who others are. The social being of each person and belonging to a group implies the acceptance of a set of elements considered common and, therefore, defining of that collective identity intrinsic to that progressive imaginary that we will come to call nation (Grotenhuis, 2016). Thus, with the emergence of the nation-state and the postulate of the self-determination of peoples, national identity emerges as a feeling and self-perception of national community and social body; and, in short, it draws the aspiration of people to be self-governed by the members of their community and not by the others (Álvarez & Vila, 1992). In other words, national identity is about identification, self-understanding and commonality, the essence is how people identify each other and themselves in social relations and how they shape their communities (Grotenhuis, 2016).

With this last point in mind, national identity and self-identification play on the selective and dichotomous, on the contraposition of what is ours as different from the other (Taylor, 2010). Moreover, following the constructivist approach of scholars such as Río Ruiz, we can affirm that identity is constructed and reconstructed within social exchanges, thus being able to relate the term identity with that of otherness, as well as with the counterposition of this identification-differentiation that the different national identities imply (García Martínez, 2008).

b. The formation

When talking about the formation of national identity, it is important to return to the constructivist approach that postulates identity as a social, cultural, political, ideological and historical construction (García Martínez, 2008). In short, the negation of a natural identity. Identity is a network that is built on the basis of the representations of individuals, on those personal identities that seek recognition and legitimacy in the social context in which the individual finds himself (Grotenhuis, 2016).

The formation of national identity is a process that varies according to the nation-state in which we find ourselves; however, according to Shulman, national identity has three basic elements that will define it in one way or another. These are: *civic identity* (citizenship, territory, will and consent, political ideology, political institutions), *cultural identity* (religion, language and tradition) and *ethnicity* (ancestry and race) (Grotenhuis, 2016). As can be seen, national identity is explicitly multifaceted and, therefore, its formation and characterization will depend on the presence of these elements in a given geographical framework.

Nevertheless, what seems clear is that each national identity draws from different contexts where these elements are present to a greater or lesser extent. Some of the most fundamental to highlight are race and ethnicity, tradition and language, and will and consent. Firstly, it is important to note that race refers to physical differentiation with respect to others, while ethnicity is more related to self-identification than to biological one (Grotenhuis, 2016). Despite the ideological use of race that some regimes, like the Nazi one, we should keep in mind that the beyond-ideology or political use meaning is regarding physical differentiation. Secondly, language is the verbal expression of identities, convictions and beliefs, whereas traditions express the same in a non-verbal manner. And finally, regarding willingness and consent, national identity requires a positive commitment by people to identify themselves as citizens. Identity is a conscious and explicit norm of belonging (Grotenhuis, 2016).

ii. Art and museology's correlation with national identity

Identity is a universal concept visible in all cultural, behavioral and social disciplines. It extends from philosophy, and personality psychology to sociology. The question of identity is a basic issue in nation building and its close relationship with nationalism. Differentiation, self-establishment and recognition are three basic components in the process of identity formation. (Therborn, 1997) and, in what is known today as, identity politics. These identity politics are based on differentiation, on the separation of the potential "us" and the environment or the

other (Therborn, 1997). That is to say, policies that focus on the dichotomy that differentiates between the discovery of the self and the experiences of the other (Therborn, 1997).

This basic conception of identity and identity-related policies allows us to understand the perspective of identity which praises its fluidity. This is advocated by post-modern theories which argue that identity is a continuous process of formation (Annus, 2011). Precisely, it is what Richard Jenkins expresses as “the synthesis of the definition of the self in relation to the definition that others have of myself” (Annus, 2011); or what Stuart Hall has also called the “meeting point” where similar and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions converge (Annus, 2011).

In this way, understanding *identity as social construct* (Grotenhuis, 2016) help us to define social boundaries in response to changing social contexts, to create common points to tackle the challenge of nation-building. Therefore, national identity is fluid and malleable and a most significant agent of building stable, secure, inclusive and fair states. Bearing this in mind is essential when trying to find the correlation between art and museology with national identity.

The question of identity usually refers to the question of culture, but we must not forget that while *culture* is a generally unconscious process, which is received as an inheritance, as a result of the socialization of the individual; *identity* is a norm or sense of belonging with a fluctuating, conscious and explicit character that defines the individual (García Martínez, 2008). Within culture, art is that individual expression of the artist that in some way seeks to provoke the viewer, in particular, and society, in general (María & Rubio, 2013).

As it is often the case in social and human sciences, the definition of art is subject to debate. Its manifestations, intentions and development, in spite of covering a shared purpose as a form of human expression, follow different paths depending on where we are. In this paper we will follow the definition of Western fine art. This is because there are certain contrasts between the small-scale societies where, in general, strong institutions dealing exclusively with art have not yet developed, nor have the art been sufficiently professionalized. Notwithstanding the sophistications of Indian, Chinese, Iranian or Japanese art, of much earlier tradition than Western art and with unique forms (Bao et al., 2016). Furthermore, in the West, art has an aesthetic character, but at the same time a highly functional one. This character can be either an indicator of the power or status of its owners, or a pedagogical tool. In addition, it is worth noting the not only quantitative but also qualitative modification of art with the arrival of new techniques and materials. Although it is important to have an idea of the definition of art, the philosophical debate on what art is and what it includes is not the object of this work. Rather,

the definition of art is key insofar as it facilitates a better understanding of its scope in the construction of the "I" and the "we" of identity (Johnson, 2013). Thus, despite the variety of literature on the subject, two fundamental authors stand out: on the one hand, Immanuel Kant and, on the other, John Dewey.

Kant, for his part, presented in his work *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) that art influences the "phenomenon of being" insofar as it not only has the capacity to affect our emotional and perceptive system, but also insofar as it allows us to understand art and, consequently, to understand ourselves. This is what he termed as the "empirical conscientiousness" where we become aware of ourselves as we experience ourselves (Johnson, 2013). Kant's epistemic conception, which sharpened the importance of the intellect as can be seen in *Critique of Judgment* (1790), thus neglects the transformative power of art. This latter conception of art has been developed by some later authors, among them the American philosopher John Dewey. This author could be considered as a post-modernist and he placed art at the core of the self-development. For Dewey, art is a perfect way of experience that optimizes "our sense of meaning" (Johnson, 2013). Therefore, from these two conceptions of art, this paper will focus not so much on its abstract version of creating something aesthetic to produce a certain sensation of pleasure, but rather in its transformative and socio-political function.

This transformative power of art cannot be understood, therefore, without its capacity for social penetration. This has been extensively studied by Walter Benjamin¹. This author presented how history modifies not only the existence of human collectivities, but also the way and manner of perceiving (Benjamin, 1989). He continues his line of thought by insisting that art makes it possible to bring certain circumstances spatially and humanly closer, but even more, it tries to overcome the singularity of a certain event under its reproduction (Benjamin, 1989). In this way, through the reproduction of a past or present reality, or even through the illustration of possible future realities, once transformed as collective, Benjamin defends its capacity to orient the masses (Benjamin, 1989).

From its earliest manifestations, the artist is an agent representing or changing the society in which he finds himself, helping those who receive his work to free themselves from

¹ Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) grew up in a prosperous Jewish family. He attended to philosophy and sociology classes at Freiburg and Berlin universities. After his doctoral dissertation *The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism*, he started to put into practice art theories. After some years he finally became a renowned academic until his academic life was stopped by the consequences of the outbreak of the World War. His theories were highly influenced by the historical moment, a post-Kantian tradition, the Romanticism and Goethe's novels like *Elective Affinities*. He also approached to several concepts like the "crisis of arts" for the "crisis of experience" (Osborne & Charles, 2020).

the usual relations of all levels of life (María & Rubio, 2013). From a more contemporary point of view and useful for the study of how art is an active force in states' national identity, we can affirm that the artist, and therefore artworks -whether artifacts or performance-, in their intellectual or creative process emancipates socially with the aim of instructing and making passive spectators active (María & Rubio, 2013). Thus, if art during Modernism (1900-1930) was a regime of representation, in Post-Modernism (mid twentieth century, 1970) it is a matter of overcoming that previous regime of representation by becoming aware of how, in Rancière's² words, “the aesthetic realm is common to both the arts and the political” (Rancière, 2010).

Today, especially since the avant-garde movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries³, there is a growing awareness of how the new social and political situations contribute to the creative process of artists, who at the same time realize that the effect of their work no longer belongs to those who create it. A work of art thus becomes an instrument of action and social penetration (María & Rubio, 2013). Some authors, such as Zelizer⁴, argue that art by nature has a strong power of transformation, not only individual but also social (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010). Moreover, going back to Walter Benjamin's ideas, the technical reproducibility of the artistic work modifies the relationship of the masses with art. This progressive behavior is characterized by the fact that the taste for looking and for living is intimately and immediately linked to the attitude of the one who gives his opinion as an expert (Benjamin, 1989). This linkage is an important social clue. Namely, the more the social importance of an art diminishes, the more the critical and fruitive attitudes are dissociated among the public (Benjamin, 1989). Thus, Benjamin suggests that from the conventional one

² Jacques Rancière, philosopher born in Algeria in 1940. He was educated among the collaborators of L. Althusser, with whom he published *The Concept of 'Criticism' and the Critique of 'Political Economy'*, as part of the collective volume entitled *Lire le Capital* (1965). Since 1969 he was appointed professor at the University of Paris VIII. Ten years later he distanced himself from his mentor and dedicated himself to research on the cultural revolution, the history of the proletariat movement and, ultimately, the social and intellectual emancipation. In 1995, he made an aesthetic turn, where he reflected and investigated the aesthetic system of art (Etchegaray, 2014).

³ The avant-garde movement emerged as a reaction to the previous order, characterized not only by its reactionary and somewhat elitist character, but also by being an artistic movement where space was left for tradition and modernity. The avant-gardes are usually divided into two waves, one that spans from 1847 to 1945, although with different nuances depending on the authors (Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism or Dadaism) and a second that takes place in the second half of the 20th century (Informalist, Rationalist or New Creation Art such as Pop Art) (Álvarez Esteban, 2014).

⁴ Viviana A. Zelizer is a professor of Sociology at Princeton University. She has published several books and has studied topics regarding consumption practices, the place of money in life and intimacy as well as other topics related with economic ethics (Princeton University, 2017).

can enjoy without criticizing it, meanwhile the truly new it is criticized with aversion (Benjamin, 1989).

More contemporary viewpoints present art as cultural expression and identarian ingredient; and museums as spaces for exhibition and cultural education. This is manifested in the capacity of art to produce subjectivities and in the spirit of a museum, as Andrés Carretero argues, to be the explanatory thread of its own identity and cultural structure (Zubiaur Carreño, 1999). Thus, in these liquid times where national identity becomes increasingly fluid and contingent (Bauman, 2003), art and museums become an active part in the delineation or perpetuation of identities. This is so because, although national identity is still related to something intrinsic to a nation, from a constructivist viewpoint and therefore followed in this paper, identity is not something abstract that is formed with the mere sum of the elements mentioned in the previous section (II.ii.a) but a projection into the future. It is in this projection where the role of museums or art in the presentation and shaping of national identity can be observed more actively (Zubiaur Carreño, 1999).

iii. Israeli museums as a symbol of historical heritage, soft diplomacy and national pride

Having understood the formative process of national identity, and its correlation with art and museology, it is important to briefly mention how Israel is empowering both its artists and its institutions and museums in the survival of historical heritage, soft diplomacy and national pride. Thus, in this attempt to bring the history of the people of Israel closer to modern Israeli society, museums present different narratives in which they introduce certain necessities of a contemporary democratic system. This is due to the generalized tendency to resolve issues such as memory, identity or history from new and revised ways such as the museums and the art they collect (Wróblewska, 2019).

An example in this contemporary museology would be the case of Poland. In 1989, with the fall of the communist regime and the opening to freedom of expression, the funding of institutions, including cultural ones, and ultimately, the possibility of self-government, led at the same time to rethink the way of presenting their memory and identity (Wróblewska, 2019). The same thing happens in the formation of the State of Israel. Its proclamation as such in 1948, as will be explained later, led to the parallel creation of museums that not only compiled the history of the Israeli people or their cultural heritage, but also promoted a feeling of unity among the population and allowed for closer ties with third countries (Wróblewska,

2019). Nowadays, the priority in current Israel museology is to discuss its national pride as a nation built itself while sharing its historical heritage. No longer as a freezing experience but as a common and dynamic one (Wróblewska, 2019).

In this sense, Joseph Nye spoke to a different form of power, soft-power, that seeks the attraction of others to your attitude by fostering empathy, desire or self-identification (Muscat, 2020). So as culture both reflects the values of a society, policies and practices towards it would be a tool for soft-power. Within these practices we find the promotion of art and museums as international and even diplomatic agents, reaching an influence sometimes greater than the government itself (Muscat, 2020). This is so insofar as the specific narratives presented through exhibitions, museums manage to highlight certain values such as creativity or dynamism that have resonance abroad.

It is important, therefore, to refer to the value of museums in its capacity to build unofficial political relations. The museum in fact, following the ideas of Christine Sylvester, political scientist, is a highly political institution that assumes a certain power and as such can promote national pride as well as a country's international relations (Muscat, 2020). And it is in its power to foster national sentiment, soft-power and cultural heritage that three paradigms can be distinguished: *comtemporalization*, *social* and *interdisciplinary* (Wróblewska, 2019).

First of all, *comtemporalization* refers to the adaptation of heritage to the language to the current expectations of those to whom it is addressed (Wróblewska, 2019), either the international society or the Israeli citizens themselves. Next, the museum in its *social* paradigm must present narratives that address the reality of the country, that is, the different social backgrounds and cultural and personal identities (Wróblewska, 2019). Later on, some of the major museums in Israel will be presented and we will be able to draw conclusions about the type of backgrounds that are reflected and the scope of this social paradigm in the type of Israeli identity that is intended to be constructed. And thirdly, the *interdisciplinary* paradigm makes museums creative places, where issues such as history, traditions or religion are raised in a fresh and dynamic way, in accordance with democratic points of view (Wróblewska, 2019).

To conclude this section on the scope of museums as instruments of national pride, historical heritage and soft-power, I would like to emphasize that museums, as indicated in the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) Code of Ethics, have the capacity to engage society, empower communities, care for heritage and build peace. In other words, museums are in the position to promote concrete national standards of good practice and liberal democracy (Aksoy, 2017).

III) CASE STUDY: ISRAEL

i. Contextualization

a. Formation of the state of Israel

1. *Ancient Israel*

The history of the State of Israel must be briefly differentiated into two historical moments: on the one hand, Ancient Israel, whose origin and reference is found in biblical texts; and on the other hand, Modern Israel, which is the one I will focus on in this paper. As far as Ancient Israel is concerned, it is important to take into account the archaeological evidence that demonstrates the existence of man in that land since the Paleolithic period and that during the Neolithic period the human settlers of those lands began to cultivate grain and other crops, as well as the construction of small population cells such as Jericho, which dates back to 7,000 BC.

The formation of the State of Israel and the reference to this remote epoch makes sense insofar as the origins of the modern State of Israel are conditioned by that first relationship of the land with Judaism. That is to say, the modern state of Israel cannot be understood without the ancient state of Israel at the hand of a nascent Judaism. This is very important when understanding the construction of what we now know as Israel.

Therefore, the history of Ancient Israel could be read from the Old Testament. Despite the religious content of this book, it is important to highlight that its stories have turned into a secular history with a modern methodology. Here it is important to highlight that the history of Palestine (which included the kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the Iron Age), is different in many respects from the Old Testament's history of Israel.

Very succinctly, the origin of Israel, according to the Old Testament, is found in the Period of the Patriarchs, more specifically, with the first patriarch Abraham. Thereafter, his grandson, Jacob, son of Isaac, had 12 sons who would give rise to the so-called 12 tribes of Israel. In their Exodus from Egypt due to Pharaoh's persecution, they lived in the desert for 40 years, until they settled on the banks of the Jordan River, conquering Canaan. This conquest was followed by the complete seizure of the Palestinian territory, distributing it among the 12 tribes of Jacob⁵.

⁵ Jacob will be called Israel after fighting Penueel (face of God). This has relevance because the reference to the Twelve tribes of Israel, are those related to the Twelve Sons of Jacob. This "fight", in the Old Testament has relevance because it is the first time in which Jacob sees himself face to face with God, giving him after his victory the name of Israel. In fact, this geographical parable will constitute the territory of Israel or Heretz (Rocha, 2016).

After Jacob's death, his son Joshua initiated what is known as the period of the Judges. Despite the difficulties of being able to sufficiently protect the tribes, during the reign of David, Israel is described as prosperous, reaching its decline after the reign of Solomon and its division into two: Israel and Judah (Lemche, 2010). The former was crushed by the Assyrians, while the kingdom of Judah survived 140 more years until it was definitively eliminated by the neo-Babylonian empire with Nebuchadnezzar (Lemche, 2010). This is how ancient Israel and the Jewish community survived the exile until the Persian king, Cyrus, allowed them to return to Jerusalem around 538 B.C.E (Lemche, 2010). It was then when they rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem and continued their day to day life first, under the Persian rule and later, under the Macedonians and the Romans.

This is the story that has traditionally been followed regarding Ancient Israel. This narrative, which follows the literality of the Old Testament combined with certain archaeological discoveries, raises certain doubts in part of the academic and research world. These are posed by the critical school of history and other contemporary ones, which focus on the actual possibility of the Exodus from Egypt, as well as on the real wealth that could have been achieved with King David, justifying their arguments on the insufficient archaeological evidence. This is important to keep in mind as new historical researchers present what could and did happen in Ancient Palestine at that time. However, I will not focus on it because what we are trying to study and investigate in the present work is the Israeli identity, not the Palestinian one.

Therefore, as can be seen from the reading of history combined with the interpretation of the biblical text of the Old Testament, key to Jewish and Israeli society, we can understand the importance that the land of Jacob, son of Abraham, has for the entire idiosyncrasy of the Jewish community, but above all for Israeli society. Being thus, the land where for the first time the father of Israel, met the God they follow and accounts for their faith and religion.

2. Modern Israel

Once we have been able to understand and analyze the origin of ancient Israel, as well as its social and religious meaning, I will briefly present how the State of Israel has been definitively formed. To do so, I will talk about Theodor Herzl as the main ideologist of modern Zionism (a key ideology in the construction of the State of Israel); about the Six-Day War and the definitive formation of this new Israel, ending with a brief mention of the different institutions that compose it.

Understanding the ideas put forward by Theodor Herzl⁶ in his book *The Jewish State* is key to understand part of the political thought behind the definitive formation of the State of Israel. Precisely, Theodor Herzl sets out in an organized and systematic way what the Jewish problem was, its causes, the previous solutions that had been given, the plan he proposed, the need for institutions, and the territory where it should be established, *Palestine or Argentina?* (Herzl, 1896b). Moreover, he talks about the Jewish Company, the Jewish Society and the Jewish State. In this section, he talks about the organizational structure of the country regarding the working system, the way of acquiring funds, the human capital, the small habits, the flag, the army or the advantages of migrations (Herzl, 1896). Parallel to this great work, still influential in Israeli society and identity (see Theodor Herzl's museum or the organizational structure of the country itself), we find different events that will prepare the ground for the definitive establishment of the State of Israel as such in 1948.

In Herzl's conviction that the “Jewish State is a social necessity” and that, as such, it will come into being, we find that justification of the State for the Jewish community as a matter of “freedom and humanization” (Herzl, 1896). He claimed that if the novel does not become action, action may become novel (Herzl, 1896). And so, hand in hand with his work, Herzl met with different authorities of the time in his tireless search for a territory where the Jewish community could settle. Among them we highlight Mauricio Güdemann who would bring her close to the Rothschilds, Bismark, Max Nordau, David Wolffsohn, Claude Montefiore, the poet Ben Ami, or even the Sultan of Turkey (Bein, 2004). Among these figures, it is worth mentioning Nathan Birbaum, who introduced the word "Zionism" in all this back and forth of negotiations, dialogues and internal quarrels (Bein, 2004).

Two Congresses should also be mentioned: the first one in Basel and the one of Reconciliation before Herzl's death. In the first of these, on August 29, 1897, a "modern" revision of the movement took place. They established the congress as a permanent institution, founded the Zionist Organization and created a Program known as the Program of the Zionist Movement (Bein, 2004). Afterwards, Herzl announced "In Basel I founded the Jewish State". While, in the Reconciliation one in 1904, Herzl tried to restore unity to a movement that over the years was breaking up due to discrepancies like the democratic aim of the Zionist movement or the importance of religion in the future state (Bein, 2004). This was the last conference to

⁶ He was born in 1860 in Budapest, in 1878 he moved to Vienna after the death of his sister. There he studied law and combined his studies with writing. He married in 1889 and had three children. He was a correspondent in Paris, and it was there, under the cosmopolitan influence of the city, nights under the solemnity of Wagner and the commotion of the Dreyfus affair, that he wrote *The Jewish State* (Herzl, 1896a).

which Herzl attended before his death. He already solemnly announced "You will see: you will arrive to my homeland". On July 4, 1904 Herzl had died (Bein, 2004).

After all this movement in search of a land, or rather the Promised Land, for the Jewish people, and after the two World Wars, the matter will progress. Thus, Palestine after the fall of the Ottoman Empire came under British control after the First World War (Mahler & Mahler, 2010). In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration announcing its intentions to facilitate the territory of Palestine as the home for the Jews. In 1922, the League of Nations recognized the British mandate over this land, while approving and facilitating the formation of the Jewish state and the various waves of migration of Jews to Palestine (Mahler & Mahler, 2010). In the face of the great migratory waves, the Arab-Palestinian population feared for their country, and attacks from both sides began. Consequently, in 1936 the British decided to establish a royal commission to investigate the Palestinian situation, known as The Peel Commission. It recommended dividing the country into two: one Arab and one Jewish; a recommendation that was rejected by the Arabs in view of the novelty and extreme uncertainty of the situation (Mahler & Mahler, 2010).

The waves of Jewish immigrants to Palestinian soil were massive, and even more so after the painful and terrible consequences of the Second World War and the Nazi Holocaust for the Jewish community. Despite Britain's attempts to control the growing instability in the region, in 1947, they ceded the control of Palestine to the United Nations (Mahler & Mahler, 2010). In November of the same year, the United Nations again suggested and recommended the division of the country into a Jewish and an Arab one; again, with a non-successful result (Mahler & Mahler, 2010). During all these endless events, the Jewish population that was arriving, began to organize itself forming certain political-social structures as well as economic institutions. This is what is known as the pre-Jewish state or The Jewish Yishuv⁷ (1918-1948) which was headed by the Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion (Shapira, 2018).

On May 14, 1948, Great Britain officially left Palestine, ending its mandate. The same day David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the official creation of the State of Israel and became its Prime Minister. The following day, the United States was already recognizing the new state. Therefore, the political history of the modern State of Israel could be synthesized in the following phases: the arrival on Palestinian soil and The Jewish Yishuv under The British Rule (1918-1948), what is known as The Smaller Israel (1948-1967) with a strong statist

⁷ Yishuv means community in Hebraic.

vocation, the Six-Day War (1976) with its successive calling for national unity and the transition to a Greater Israel marked by the difficulties of a hostile neighboring environment, until the present day (Shapira, 2018).

b. 5 waves of immigration

5 waves of immigration

Israel as the result of its history, became the center of the Jewish world. It has experienced five waves of immigrants, or “Aliyah”⁸. Since the 1880s organized groups from all over the world started to arrive to Israel, all of them with the willing of arriving to a common land and forming a society. A Jewish society who had been scattered around the world since the past diasporas and catastrophic consequences of the Holocaust. The first of these waves took place between 1882 and 1903. It involved the entry to Israel of between 20,000 and 30,000 people coming essentially from Russia. The main characteristic of this group of migrants was their lack of a leadership, as well as the preparation of the *Heretz* land, also known as the Land of Israel, for an agricultural settlement (Weizmann, 2022).

The second wave took place between 1904 and 1914, with a total of between 40,000 people, also Russians, who for the first time gave some form to the political system with parties, organizational thinking and leadership. In this second wave, without going into too much detail, Hebrew was established for the first time as the common spoken language. Then, between 1919 and 1923, the third aliya took place, with some 35,000 people coming essentially from Russia, and they brought with them the creation and establishment of numerous institutions of diverse backgrounds but maintaining the social character. The fourth aliya, between 1924 and 1928, brought with it a total of 80,000 middle class Polish people who began to develop a strong trade system and to leave behind the agricultural settlements. At this time, the Jewish community in Palestine tripled from a total of 60,000 to 170,000 people. Finally, the fifth aliya between 1930 to 1939, Jews arrived with liberal professionals from Germany and Austria, they brought European and liberal ideas to the country and brought the Jewish population from 18% of the total Palestinian population to 31% (Weizmann, 2022).

Israel as a multi-cleavage society

This is important because within the Jewish society we find different cleavages. These are deep, resilient and persistent social divisions with political consequences. The first example

⁸ The Hebraic meaning of Aliyah is ascent or rise, however, for generations Aliyah means “immigration to Israel” (Nefesh B'Nefesh, 2008).

was introduced with Karl Marx's class struggles and ameliorated with Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan in 1960 (Ram, 2018). These cleavages usually respond to critical socio-political changes and impact on political outcomes. Until 1970 Israel has been considered as a rather homogeneous nation under the Zionist and Judaism staple (Ram, 2018). However, during the 70s the most challenging ideas evolved, and the antagonism came into the open (Ram, 2018). Within these cleavages we find: the Jewish-Arab, the ethnic cleavage and the religious-secular cleavage.

The intra-Jewish cleavage, also known as the ethnic cleavage, is due to the different migratory waves of Jews coming from different backgrounds and countries with diverse economic levels. This cleavage may include the differences between the Ashkenazi⁹, Ethiopian, Russian, Germans or Moroccans (Ram, 2018). Nevertheless, this cleavage is a political one and not an identity one. This is important to keep in mind, because although it may influence the political and the electoral results, it is really a cleavage that, fortunately, does little to affect that national identity as an Israeli. This is interesting, as one can see how ethnicity does not necessarily condition national identity (Ram, 2018). They are all Jews, some Russians, some French, some Americans and some Indians or Iranians, but regardless of their country of origin they are all Jews. They all share the willing of a Jewish state to which identify themselves.

The Arab-Israeli and the religious-secular cleavage play a different role when talking about identity. This can be understood from the very formation of the state of Israel itself and it poses a greater risk than the ethnic cleavage. On the one hand, a large part of the Arab-Palestinian population that already inhabited that land, rejects the Jewish state and the Israeli identity; and on the other hand, the secular religious cleavage, also worries because many believe and understand the State of Israel as a Jewish State and therefore Judaism as the key to its survival (Weizmann, 2022). This will be more developed in the next section about the "Current Situation".

⁹ It is important to highlight the difference between *Sepharadi* migrants coming from Spain and the Mediterranean area, and *Ashkenazi* migrants from northern and central Europe. They will contribute differently to the socio-political organization of the country, and the differences between them, regarding status will continue to be present in the contemporary Israeli society (Arian, 2005).

c. Current situation

Contemporary Israeli identity

The shaping process of the Israeli identity involves the confluence of different ethnic, religious and social groups. Migratory flows, as well as the high Arab presence, encourage these difficulties. In particular, it is important to highlight the impact of immigration or Aliyah on a collective and common identification (Arian, 2005). As it was mentioned *ut supra*, the differences within society increased during the 70s, this concern will led to what President Reuven Rivlin called the “Four Tribes”. This is very worthy to mention due to the perfect reflection of the current Israeli identity and the reasons behind disparities.

Four tribes

Religious differences not only between Jews and Arabs, but also between secular, observant and ultra-Orthodox Jews condition the degree of collective identification among the inhabitants of Israel. This situation, also known as the religious cleavage, is crucial to analyze because it damages the Israeli national identity and the international conception towards it.

The presence of Arabs, due to the former situation of country before the Jews arrival in the twentieth century, is not a trivial matter. Nowadays, despite being considered a minority, they reflect quantitatively 20% of the total population of Israel and still are an important part of the population with whom land is shared (Steiner, 2016). In this section, however, far from detailing the socio-political problems that these divergences entail, I will present the features and meaning of the "Four Tribes". This term was coined in 2015 by former President Rivlin in his concern about the increasing social dichotomies and willing for a "new" form of partnership.

In his speech, Rivlin spoke of an ideal, of a new ethos that would bring together the cultural and ethnic richness of Israel (Steiner, 2016). This ethos is interrelated with a new form of common identity that can to some extent overcome cleavages and facilitate coexistence. This discourse is important to keep in mind because it is a way of remembering the importance of identity in the dismal consequences that uprooting or non-self-identification with the community can generate in a democratic state of law.

With the “Four Tribes”, Reuven Rivlin refers to the four groups that live on Israeli soil and whose coexistence deserves sufficient attention when establishing a proper domestic and foreign political agenda (Steiner, 2016) These four groups are: the ultra-Orthodox, the Arab, the national and the secular Jews. This distinction responds not only to the evident diversity

but also to the growing departure from the feeling of unity that guided and shaped the State of Israel since its inception. This can be seen at schools where half of the students in primary education are Arabs and ultra-Orthodox. That is to say, primary education is composed by two of the groups or tribes that do not subscribe to the foundational Zionist vision of the State of Israel and that at the same time are excluded from the mainstream Israeli discourse (Maria & Rubio, 2021).

Within this ideal, the former president highlights four fundamental elements: the will to guarantee a security where each tribe can live according to its traditions; the contribution to the survival of the Israeli state and society as a responsibility; the principles of equality and equity; and finally, the creation of a “new Israeli character” where all tribes can feel identified (Steiner, 2016). This “Israeli character” seeks to blend social variety within the unity of identity. Precisely, a new form of identity that wants to overcome the challenge that pose the different identities of the country by making a more flexible supra-identity. An identity that at the end could efficiently give way to an understanding and better governance of the Israeli State (Steiner, 2016)

ii. The role of art and museology in the formation of Israel’s national identity

Having differentiated the historical framework and the identity situation of the State of Israel, in this section I will combine what has been previously explained with the role art and museology in the construction of the Israeli national identity. An identity which is key for the long-term survival of the state of Israel and its democracy.

Israel has worked hard on its internal legitimacy. To this end, the formation of a common identity has to be taken into account as its main focus. The way identities are created is largely through the search for and representation of commonalities or symbols with which the citizens of a given territory can identify. These symbols are usually found in forms of artistic expression. That is to say, Israeli art and Jewish art appear for the first time; confirming what we saw in section II about how art fulfills a social function (María & Rubio, 2013) of building an autonomous community on the part of the subjects involved (María & Rubio, 2013). This is what I introduced at the beginning regarding art a tool within soft-power

A. Israeli Artists

If we attend to the definition of art, it is the conscious use of the imagination in the production of objects intended to be contemplated or appreciated as beautiful, as in the

arrangement of forms, sounds, or words. Within this process we find seven main forms of artistic production: painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, music, cinema, and theater. This research has just focused on the visual or rather plastic arts (painting or sculptures) due to their frequent exhibition in museums, the second object of analysis.

Thus, among the main Israeli painters with international renown are Monashe Kadishman, Nachum Gutman, Ziona Tagger, Liora Roseman or Reuven Rubin. The latter has played a fundamental role in outlining the international conception of Israel to the outside world. With his well-known style as "Eretz Yisrael" and his numerous exhibitions in Jewish museums and art festivals around the world, Rubin was able to transmit an image of a country in formation and during its first steps in the global world.

The world-renowned Bauhaus school of architects. This is important because, despite having emerged in Germany between 1919 and 1933, it is a hallmark of Israeli identity, cosmopolitanism and avant-garde (Bauhaus Center Tel Aviv, 2022). To this end, the Bauhaus Center and School in Tel Aviv (Bauhaus Center Tel Aviv, 2022) was established in 2000 by Dr. Asher Ben-Shmuel, Shlomit Gross and Dr. Micha Gross. Its main objective is basically the public recognition of the White City as a unique architectural and cultural site. It does this not only on a local level, but also on an international level by connecting Tel Aviv with Berlin through architecture, from a past exchange of human capital and ideas that has present effects in the main city of the country.

In addition, it has a series of collaborations with different organizations worldwide, highlighting the Research Partners Around the World like the European Cultural City Initiative AVEC (*Alliance de Villes Europeennes de Culture*); as well as Partner Organizations Around the World like Docomomo (International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement), the International Council on Monuments and Sites, the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies or the cooperation and projects supported by Kulturstiftung Leipzig, Deutschland (Bauhaus Center Tel Aviv, 2022).

B. Israeli museums.

Israel has around 200 museums, making it the country with the most museums per capita in the world (Fleming, 2020). The reasons why the state of Israel has such a large number of museums can be found in its very construction, as well as in the enormous ethnic and religious variety that reside on its soil. Each museum has its own content and its own way of exhibiting it. Many of them are adapting to what is known as the "New Museology" of the 21st century, creating

new forms of socialization, while others reaffirm the identity, history and memory of the Jewish and Israeli people (Wróblewska, 2019). When analyzing the possible social influence that each of these museums can have, it is essential to bear in mind that this will depend largely on the source of funding. That is to say, the budget a museum has, and the origin of that budget will determine the narrative and, therefore, the audience to which it is directed. However, far from that, in this paper, only those museums that have been able to contribute and contribute the most to the formation and consolidation of the common Israeli identity will be the subject of a more in-depth analysis.

1. Ein Harod Museum (1943)

The first museum in Israel is the Ein Harod Museum, also known as the Mishkan Museum of Art, established in 1937 in a Kibbutz as a workshop of the painter Haim Atar. At first it was nothing more than an "Art Corner" but later became a museum with two rooms and in 1943 a new one was created to make an art bookstore (McAuley, 2015). As we can see the creation of this first museum, went hand in hand with that fifth aliya starring liberal professionals, architects, musicians and professors or academics. This museum is interesting when it comes to understanding the influence of art in the construction of an identity self with the community, in this case with the emerging Israeli community. Thus, during the Second World War until the very independence of the State of Israel in 1948, Atar left aside the previous trend of exhibiting art reproductions, and decided to present only Jewish art. All this was justified by the urgent need to preserve the memory of the Jewish communities that were being persecuted and destroyed in Europe (McAuley, 2015).

Figure 1

Ein Harod Museum



Note. By Ein Harod Museum, 2015, *Museum Heritage* (McAuley, 2015).

It is important to take into account how, in this attempt to bring together the artistic creations of the Jewish community dispersed around the world, he left aside the traditional secular character of the Kibbutz of the time for a clear and explicit attachment and respect for the Jewish world in general. So that, faced with the dispersion and uncertainty of a possible Jewish state, Atar wanted to embrace the sensibilities of as many people as possible. Continuing along these lines, this is how the author advocated:

The Mishkan Museum of Art seeks to pool our nation's artworks and thereby share the values of Jewish life destroyed in the diaspora with the children and youth growing up in Israel and bring to life before their very eyes the Jewish atmosphere their ancestors have created in their communities overseas (McAuley, 2015) This museum was the first to reflect the feeling of the pre-state Jewish community, seeing in its evolution how in its origin it was defining more its main purpose of exhibition as that community moved towards the state itself. To conclude with this museum, it is important to take into account how it has set a cohesive precedent for the Jewish people around art. However, over the years other museums will be created that will make more evident this attempt to embrace an Israeli-ness in harmony with the changes and demands of the society of the moment.

2. The Eretz Museum (1958)

Thus we go to the Eretz Museum¹⁰, opened in 1958. It is an archaeological and historical museum located in Tel Aviv. This one presents in a multidisciplinary way present and past cultural material. As on its own website one can find the museum "displays the connection between matter and spirit and presents Israel's many and varied voices" (MUZA, 2020). This museum differentiates between different cultural fields - archaeology, ethnography, applied crafts, art, photography, and documentation of Israeli society - with the aim of connecting contemporary Israel with the past. It is interesting to note how in its origins it only included the purely archaeological, and in recent years it has developed a new way of making the viewer a participant and part of the museum and the history or content it presents. There is an initiative called Tel Aviv Biennale of Crafts and Design (MUZA¹¹, 2020), aimed at adding new content

¹⁰ **Eretz Yisrael** in Hebrew means the Land of Israel; precisely, this is how Zionism addresses the Jewish homeland to be established in the general area of Palestine. During Ottoman times, Eretz Yisrael and Eretz Hakodesh (both meaning the Holy Land) were used to designate the area surrounding Jerusalem including areas from the Litani river in the north to modern Eilat. Under the British mandate, Eretz Yisrael came to designate the area of the Mandate, Palestine - Eretz Yisrael (Isseroff, 2005).

¹¹ MUZA: abbreviation used in the official website of the museum, meaning: the Eretz Israel Museum Tel-Aviv.

to the past one. This attempt follows the unifying spirit not only with the country's past, but with contemporary diversity.

Figure 2

The Eretz Museum



Note. *The Eretz Museum* located in Tel Aviv (MUZA, 2020).

3. The Israel Museum (1965)

This is the Israel Museum. Located in Jerusalem, next to the Knesset, the Museum of the Holy Books and the Supreme Court, this museum was founded in 1965 and is considered one of the leading museums in art and archeology. This museum includes the Bezalel National Art Museum, the Samuel Bronfman Biblical and Archaeological Museum, the Shrine of the Book, a Youth Wing, and The Billy Rose Art Garden (The Israel Museum, 2022). The Shrine of the Book keeps the Dead Sea Scrolls in a pagoda-like dome building which is reminiscent of the ancient jars' shape where the scrolls were found in 1947 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007). The Archaeological Museum shows finds from excavations in Israel. One can find a reconstruction of the gates to the ancient city of Hazor, and some fine Palestinian ceramics. The Bezalel Museum is devoted to various ethnographic and religious Jewish objects like Hanukkah lamps and costumes. Finally, the display in the Billy Rose garden consists of modern and abstract sculpture (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007).

Having seen the main rooms of this important museum, it is necessary to analyze the evolution and extent of its contents based on the current circumstances. In this way, it can be seen how the content of this museum has gone from being purely historical archaeological to socially integrating. This is clearly visible in the Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education. It offers a wide variety of programs attended by more than 100,000 children every year with activities that bring them closer to Israeli art and the different Israeli communities; at the same time they

try to encourage an intercultural understanding between Jewish and Arab students (The Israel Museum, 2022). This is a great novelty since this museum represents the main cultural institution of the State of Israel for its material wealth and ethno-social importance, having emphasized -and continuing to emphasize- any form of Jewish-Israeli artistic expression, leaving aside other voices also present in the same soil.

Figure 3

Israel Museum of Jerusalem



Note. By Gidi Avinary, 2017, *An aerial view of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel.*

4. Yad Vashem Museum (2005)

Yad Vashem, also known as The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, presents a different narrative from the previous ones. Precisely, this overwhelming and spectacular museum with 4,200 square meters shows the history of the Holocaust. More specifically, the story of the Shoah from a uniquely Jewish perspective (Yad Vashem, 2022b). It was inaugurated in March 2005 and it has become the house of a new form of collective memory which is called "global memory" (Goldberg, 2012). It emphasizes the experiences of the individual victims through testimonies, personal possessions and original artifacts.

Before it came to this, Yad Vashem was a memorial site established by an Israeli state law in 1953. It focused on collecting, researching and publishing experiences and testimonies about the Holocaust. Its importance was so that it was established on Herzl Mount in memory of the father of modern Zionism. A mount which is also a national military cemetery and the official burial ground for the nation's great leaders (Goldberg, 2012). As the years go by, the

more guilt and horror towards the atrocities committed during World War II and the Holocaust led to an increase of donations and budget. This enable it to become the museum and memory institution that it is today. With an architecture that, thanks to the hand of Moshe Safdie (Yad Vashem, 2022a), traps you and speaks to you; immerses you and revives you. A completely new museum that does not have just an artistic or archaeological spirit but that connects with the history and that really represents the pain and final grief of the victim. It introduced the rise of the Nazi regime continuing with the persecution of Jews throughout Europe, and displays the "final solution" until the liberation and progressive recovery of the Jewish community after the war (Goldberg, 2012).

This institution is crucial in the Israeli national identity. It is a harmonizer of the shared feeling of the Jewish community that suffered the greatest genocide in history. Yad Vashem has no equal either nationally or globally. Its opening was a huge event internationally, being more a political than a cultural ceremony (Goldberg, 2012). It is, in fact, a key diplomatic instrument to gain support in the face of a hostile neighboring environment. An instrument, therefore, of national identity and international legitimacy.

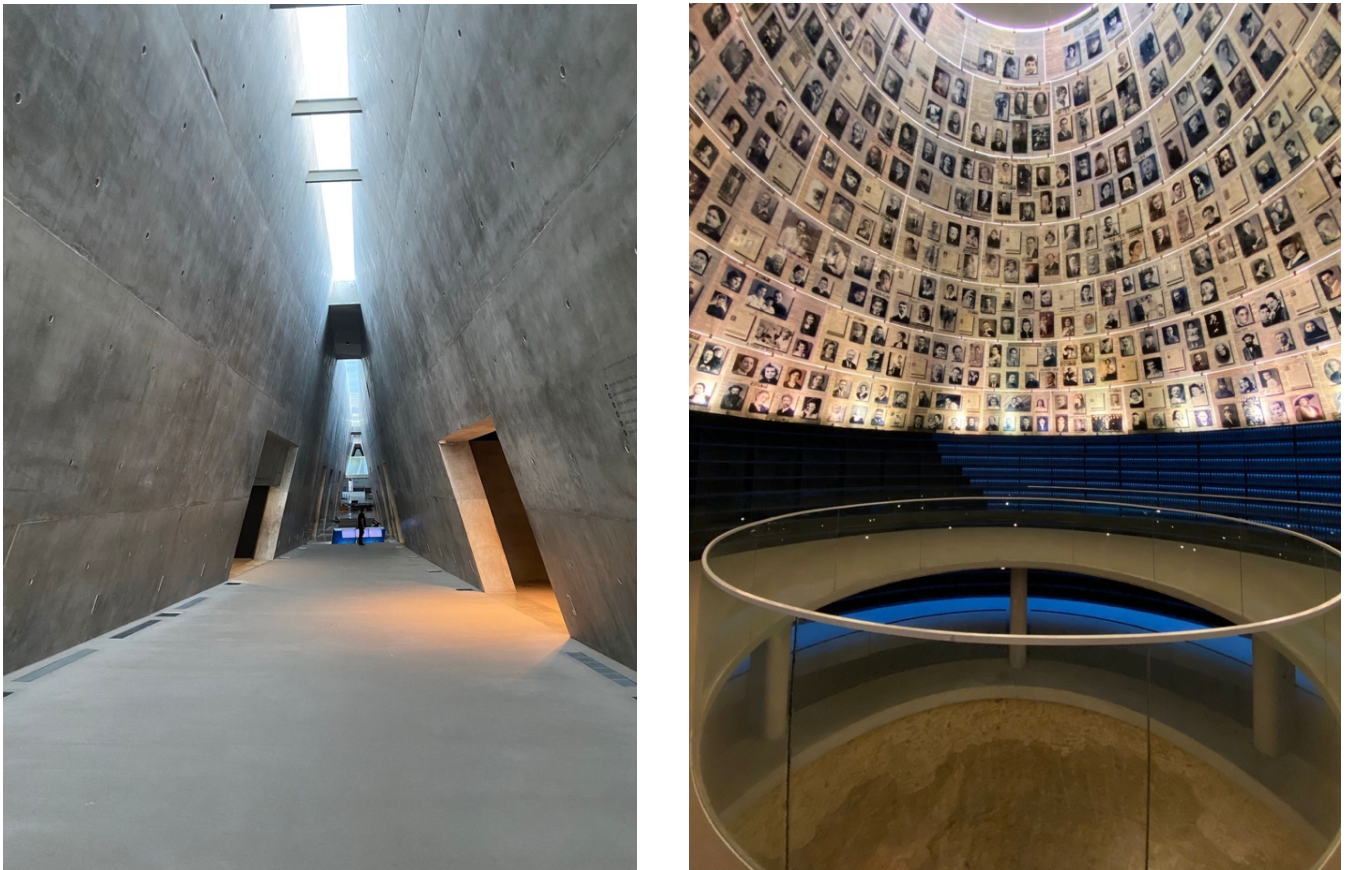
The Herzl Mount as a recall to modern **Zionism**, the name of Yad Vashem¹² as a connection with the **Jewish religion**, the shared space of the building with the graves of the some of the fathers of the State of Israel as a reminder of **political coexistence** beyond ideologies, the videos in Hebrew as a symbol of **unity** among the Hebrew community... A set of small details that make a great institution not so much memoristic and expository, but rather identarian and diplomatic.

Because teaching the history of the Holocaust is a way to learn how prejudices and discrimination can let into murder. This effort has to be hand to hand with the transmittion of Jewish history and culture, trying to gain respect of their heritage on an "equal footing" than other cultures (Aksoy, 2017). Yad Vashem as a museum and as a World Holocaust Remembrance Center is key as an antidote to ignorance, racism, prejudices and discrimination. And as the International Council of Museums highlighted, the safeguard of cultural and historical heritage is critical in preventing cultural and ethnic cleansing as well as in fostering reconciliation and social cohesion (Aksoy, 2017).

¹² *And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name, "Yad Vashem", that shall not be cut off (Isaiah, chapter 56, verse 5).*

Figure 4

Yad Vashem Museum



Note. By J. Blanco García, 2022, *Photographies of the Yad Vashem Museum*. Jerusalem, Israel.

5. Tel Aviv Museum of Art:

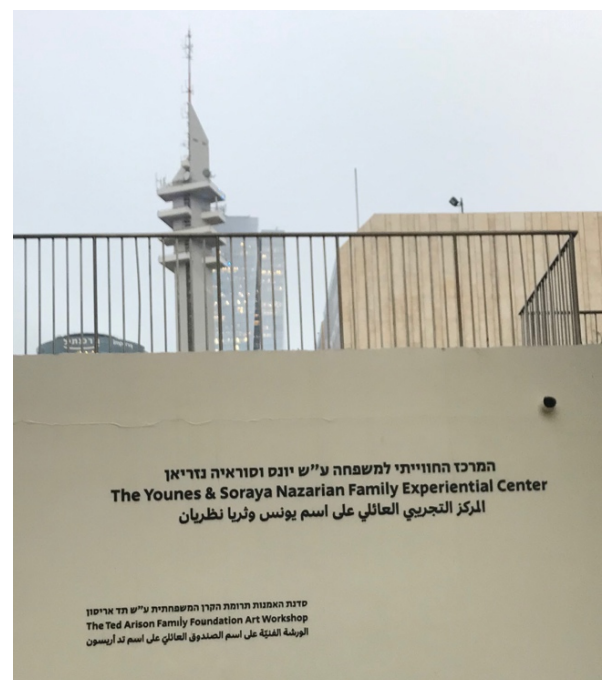
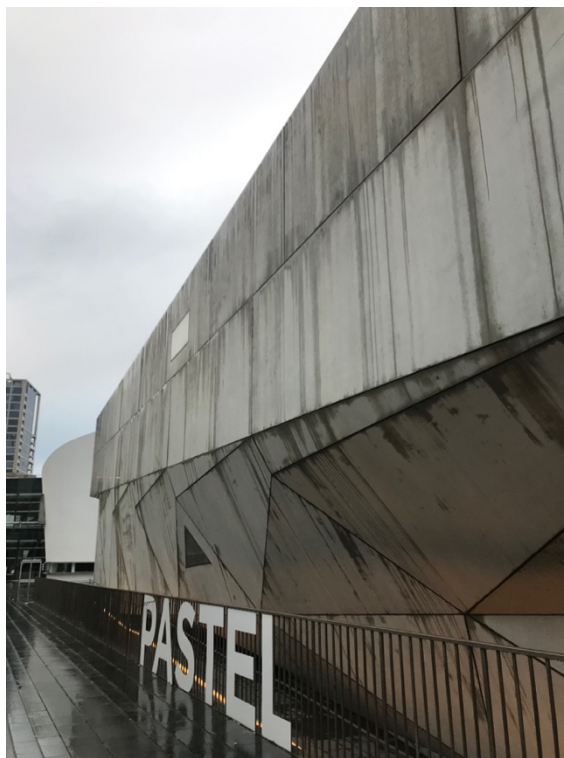
The **Tel Aviv Museum of Art**. It was founded in 1932 and is dedicated to the preservation and display of modern and contemporary art from Israel and abroad (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2022). It is important to take into account the origin of this museum in order to understand the scope of its role as an agent of change and construction of common views. Thus, on April 2, 1932, Meir Dizengoff the instigation of the city's first mayor, envisioned Tel Aviv as a vibrant metropolis full of cultural entities. The first collection with which this museum opened featured the exhibition of 34 local artists such as Sionah Tagger, Reuven Rubin, Anna Ticho or Avraham Melnikov (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2022). From 1948, date of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, the museum began to consolidate thanks to the various donations received and opened its local scope to a much more international one. Thus with "New Horizons" in 1948 emerging local artists presented

completely innovative ideas that were highly influential in the history of modern art in Israel inside and outside the country (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2022).

In the following years, with greater international recognition, exhibitions again focused on Israeli artists with examples such as "The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art" by Sarah Breitberg-Semel in 1986 (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2022). Moving into the 21st century, the museum's operations were clearly aimed at opening up international art as well as giving a voice to previously voiceless groups, such as women. Like the other museums, it has a section on education in art in the Younes & Soraya Nazarian Family Experiential Center (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2022). And this is how the Tel Aviv Museum of Art has finally become the main player in the Israeli art world, with a multidisciplinary approach that seeks to create a meeting place and point of connection between local and contemporary international art (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2022). A place where there is no longer an exclusively Jewish-Israeli narrative, nor a memorial, but a purely artistic and avant-garde one that seeks to incorporate new narratives that can influence the national narrative. In short, a space where one can observe the role of the museum as a molder of identities, an identity that is eroded by differences but that the museum tries to make of them richness and affinity.

Figure 5

Tel Aviv Museum of Art



Note. By J. Blanco García, 2022, *Photography of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.* Tel Aviv, Israel.

6. Other museums

Once a tour of the main museums of the country has been made, there are many others of great material value, but above all ethnic-identity. Among them are the Bible Land Museum, Herzl Museum, the Israeli Children's museum, or the recently inaugurated Museum of the Jewish communities. The first two maintain the historical archaeological character of a traditional museum, where visitors can connect with the legacy of their ancestors and, in the case of the museum of Theodor Herzl, with the figure who materialized the idea of what is now their nation-state, their home. As for the last two, the Israeli Children's museum and the Museum of the Jewish communities, they are also of great relevance, but not so much in terms of their content, but rather in terms of their new form of representation. These museums reflect what is known as "New Museology" by seeking to integrate the public and even a particular audience such as children, in a narrative where the museum is no longer self-explanatory but seeks to correlate heritage with identity and education (Piekarska-Duraj & Törnquist-Plewa, 2018).

iii. Art and museology as a legitimizer of Israeli identity beyond the borders

a. Legitimacy and strength

As we have seen in some parts of the previous section, art and the museum have been and are key not only in the configuration of identity, but also when it comes to gaining a foothold in international society. The participation in patronage activities beyond the borders, the display of artifacts from foreign artists, the donations of works from other countries, the visits of tourists from all over the world and the courtesies at a governmental or diplomatic-cultural level are fundamental elements when it comes to Israel making a space for itself in the international society.

Four thousand years of Jewish heritage, more than a century of Zionism and more than fifty years of modern statehood have contributed to create a culture that seeks to forge its own identity, while preserving the uniqueness of the different communities (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008). The impact, therefore, of art as an expression of Israeli culture is completely conditioned by the migratory nature of the country's population. With this, as a state composed mostly of immigrants, its art and creative expressions have absorbed the varied cultural and social influences. To this end, it combines tradition and innovation and strives to remain between Israeli particularism on the one hand, and universalism on the other (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008).

The State of Israel has been a member of the United Nations since 1949 and maintains relations with most countries in the world. After nearly 50 years of struggle and conflict, Israel is trying to reach the stage of normalization. By signing peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan or pacts trying to reach a peace agreement with Palestine, Israel is trying to get on well with their neighbors. Moreover, contacts and vis-à-vis relations are being established with countries of North Africa and the Persian Gulf. Therefore, Israel has full diplomatic relations with 151 countries, 58 of which established (or re-established) ties thanks to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

Nowadays, the Israeli government is emphasizing the role of culture, science and economics as important means by which to establish and improve relations with the countries of the world. As I mentioned before, museums are a form of international soft power that alongside with other institutions may influence outside the border. Precisely, museums usually employ techniques of public diplomacy, sending messages in manners that allow recipients to form their own conclusions (Muscat, 2020).

Thus, the museum emerges as a consummate agent of soft power—that is, a subtle peddler of influence, promoting an agenda of its own devising. The Israeli Foreign Ministry views these as *the state's calling card* (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). As of 1994, it issued a new directive mandating increased cultural, academic and scientific activity in the international arena based on several objectives like enhancing the peace process and cultural ties with the Arab neighbors, strengthening ties with artistic circles, expanding educational activities or improving the cultural life in Israel. (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

Bearing in mind these goals, Israel is now concentrating on its scientific and cultural excellence. Consequently, the Foreign Ministry has played a very important role in artistic and *museistic* affairs as a driver of attention of Israel intellect and creativity. Art and cultural ties are seen as the path to peace. By striving for a mutual exchange of culture and heritage with their Arab neighbors, opportunities of cooperation and better coexistence can arise. For this purpose, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have the Division for Cultural and Scientific Affairs with substructures like the Arts and Literature Department, The Department for Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, the Iberian Institute and the Management and Budget Department (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

The Israeli executive has been committed to the incorporation of cultural and scientific activities and exchanges as the central pillar of the country's international relations and, more specifically, as a fundamental element for a definitive peace process. This is so because the culture of a country, whether is manifested by artworks (films, paintings or novels) or by

institutions (*cultural attachés* or museums), allow citizen socialization and political cooperation (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). Consequently, this section will briefly review some examples of artists and museums that have contributed to the improvement of Israel's interstate relations and to the legitimacy of Israeli identity beyond the borders.

b. Art beyond the borders

Israeli art beyond the borders has a lot of manifestations. This is visible not only through the international recognition of many of its artists, but also through its great variety of museums and cultural-partner institutions. The main museums that operate in Israel play a fundamental role in the construction of the country's identity. However, I wonder about their role in bringing Israeli life and culture outside the country. To try to resolve this question, I will briefly review some of the museums that exhibit Israeli art or history outside Israel. This will underline the social dimension of museums as cultural bridges as well as bridges between different countries. Thus, highlighting their role as national unifiers but also as international legitimizers.

First of all, we must understand that Israel is a Jewish State. By this I mean that, despite the fact that most museums connected with Israel are Jewish museums, we must not lose sight of the fact that Israel is a State that is based on Judaism as a race and as a religion. Thus, there are many museums around the world that create a space for the remembrance or empowerment of Jewish communities. Among them we could highlight the Jewish Museum of New York, the one in Amsterdam, Istanbul, Munich, Manchester, Oslo, Paris, Brussels, San Francisco, Riga, San Pablo, Sydney or Berlin (Goldberg, 2012). I highlight the latter, because it is one of the largest museums that speaks and reflects the life and history of Jewish society; keeping important institutional links and collaborators with Israel, essentially with the Yad Vashem Institution of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Jerusalem (Yad Vashem, 2022).

On the other hand, as for the museums of other communities that we can find in Israel, there are not that many. Some of them would be the museum of Russian art, the Yehiel Nahari Museum of Far Eastern Art, the Yemenite Jewish Heritage Center and Museum, Wilfrid Israel Museum (about Asian art), The Arab Museum of Contemporary Art and Heritage or the *Umm al-Fahm Art* Gallery. Consequently, one can see how there are some museums aimed at displaying art from specific countries whereas others such as the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, that it has been already explained above, welcome the artifacts and creations from important and well-known artists from all over the world. As an example, right now there is an exhibition in this museum of Yayoi Kusama (1929, Matsumoto, Japan) who is one of the most important

artists of our time. Kusuma's career to date traces her work in Japan, the United States, and Europe, being the first time that she has the first major exhibition in Israel (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2021). As one can see, this is a great advance not only for the artist but also for the country as it's being one of the biggest hosts after the EE.UU.

Regarding other communities in Israel such as the Arab one and the relation with other Arab countries, there are two galleries, already mentioned, the Arab Museum of Contemporary Art and Heritage or the Umm al-Fahm Art Gallery. Both try to enhance the presence and recognition of the Arab community in Israel as well as closing ties with the Arab world. The latter which is in the Arab city of Umm el-Fahem is the first gallery in Israeli soil that tried to give voice to those who were left aside during the settlement and post-war period (Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery, 2022). It has a very ambitious project, *Between vision and reality*, and it highlights the importance of the gallery as a social and cultural meeting place with workshops, gallery talks and displays from local and international artists.

However, the Mediterranean Biennale has the most important role regarding the convivence of the Arabs and other non-Jewish Mediterranean communities. It was inaugurated in 2010 as a model of multicultural cooperation and dialogue between different communities and groups. It offers a venue to discuss issues such as art as a bridge between cultures; art's relevance in today's consumerist society; and restoring art to the public (The Mediterranean Biennale, 2021b). Entitled as "Living Together – Crossing the borders", they introduce art as a tool that shortens distances and expands possibilities, they create a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences (The Mediterranean Biennale, 2021). As a result of one of this Biennale fairs, in 2015 the Arab Museum of Contemporary Art in Sakhnin, AMoCA, was established. It holds over 200 contemporary international and local artworks, showcasing artists from Mediterranean and Arab countries (Colton Valentine, 2015). The opening exhibition was titled HIWAR which means dialogue in Arabic and which definitely is a political statement. They want to engage dialogue as a personal and collaborative action, and, precisely, to create a meeting space between Jews and Arabs by forms and projects of contemporary art. It holds artists like Marina Abramovi'c, Huda Jamal, Almagul Menlibayeva o Runi Zarawi (The Mediterranean Biennale, 2021a). Therefore, an initiative that actively and openly seeks to improve relations within and between Arabs citizens and neighbors.

IV) PRACTICAL ANALYSIS: Quantitative research

i. Definitions

To carry out this practical analysis, I have taken as a reference the work and classification of **Stephen Shulman**¹³, Ph.D. at University of Michigan in 1996 (Southern Illinois University, 2021). Shulman's elements and components of national identity were developed in response to the civic and ethnic dichotomy that Hans Kohn¹⁴ introduced during the 1940s. Khon distinguished an ethnic national identity in Eastern Europe and a civic national one in Western Europe. His model presents opposed frameworks with connotations attached of liberal versus illiberal, modern versus traditional or civilized versus non-civilized.

Nevertheless, Shulman criticized Khon after finding from several surveys conducted in Europe and Northern America that this dichotomy East/West as ethnic/civic was not that evident. Consequently, he decided to develop a new model which presents national identity as explicitly multifaceted (related with the constructivist approach). In this sense, people have multiple identities that are dear to them and that influenced their national identity (p.128). For this author, national identity is built of three main elements that I mentioned at the beginning of the research (chapter II, i, b) which are civic identity, cultural identity and ethnicity. It is a model that leaves space for diverse and contextual understandings of national identity (p.128). This is crucial when applied to Israel's identity as to build the state there has to be a bottom-up process where people agree on a shared sense of identification, self-understanding and commonality (p.128). Bearing this in mind, I will now define and explain in more detail these three elements and their components.

¹³ Professor Stephen Shulman teaches courses in international relations, international political economy, American foreign policy and ethnic politics in Southern Illinois University. His research interests focus on the sources and consequences of nationalism and nationhood, especially on how they relate to foreign policy and international affairs. His area of specialization is Ukraine. Precisely, from January to June 2002, Shulman was a fellow in Ukrainian Studies at the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University.

¹⁴ Hans Kohn was a renowned Prague-born Jewish historian of the late 19th century. His main contributions consist of the demonstration that the emergence of nations is a contemporary phenomenon. In addition, he talks about how the elements that this phenomenon collects such as language, religion or common descent are linked to the appearance of modern societies. Elements that will become constituents of a social group to which they will belong, with a new loyalty that supplants those of the past (Gabayet Jacqueton, 1999).

a. Civic identity

This element is crucial when building national identity as it is considered the basis of the nation-state. People in upcoming nation-states are well aware of their power as the legitimate soil of the nation-state. The Declaration of independence, the first elections or the first institutions are examples on how people expressions about national politics reflects their belief in an elementary form of **citizenship**.

Territory is the second component in Shulman's model and is a more complex one. This is due to the whole history behind the Jewish community spread all over the world as well as to the new migration patterns. According to the official website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel is a small and narrow country on the southeastern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. The Land was known by many names like *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), *Zion* (one of Jerusalem's hills which came to signify both the city and the Land of Israel as a whole), Palestine (derived from *Philistia* and first used by the Romans), the Promised Land, or the Holy Land. However, most Israelis today call the country simply as *Ha'aretz*, the Land (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). It is surrounded by Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Over 7.8 million people live in Israel today (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010), but there are also those who migrated and live outside the country. Israel is still their home territory and most of them still see themselves as belonging to this territory. This will be really important when understanding the influence of art and museums as approach forces between emigrants and their national identity.

Will and consent are essential to building national identity as without a positive expression of will, there won't be a common sense of identity. People need to want and agree that *oneness*, that sense of belonging to the same community. And once they consent, they will start building up the nation with **political ideologies** as legitimizers and **political institutions and laws** as identity reinforcers. These two features are also components of the civic identity and have a crucial importance as will ensure Israel's national identity in the long run. There are many different ideologies that have had a crucial role when building nation-states. Some examples could be liberalism as a political ideology that boosted the French Revolution in 1789, Confucianism or even Nazism. In Israel, the main political ideology is modern Zionism.

Most state building programs since decolonization onwards, have been built on the political ideology and political institutions of European/Western nation-states like the division of powers, parliamentary systems or electoral codes. The discussion on what is the best institutional system for a country according to the type of needs of a type of society and

individuals, is a question already discussed by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau. The type of government and institutions of a country will condition what Plato called tyranny. Or rather what Hobbes regarded as necessary for the existence of a civilization of any kind; indeed, it will be the civil laws that will in some way outline the laws of nature. Or as Goldsmith states to build a state it is necessary to establish a society to “make rules that aim at peace and common benefit” (1988, p.140).

Within that "covenant" or that Israeli institutional system, we can find a series of "welfare institutions" or what they called Kupat Holim, which came hand in hand with the second aliya (1904-1914). In addition, this second migratory wave founded parliamentary and religious institutions. Years passed, and Zeev Jabotinsky in his contributions to modern Zionism, which he developed earlier, insisted on the need for a series of institutions at the educational level that would focus on the Hebrew language as well as on Hebrew culture and the implementation of this renewed Zionism.

The main institutions of the State of Israel based on its division of powers are the parliament or Knesset, the Government or cabinet of ministers, the judiciary and the State Comptroller (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000). The main function of the Knesset is legislative. Its functions begin once the general elections are concluded, which will also determine its composition. The judicial system, for its part, is headed by the Supreme Court as the ultimate appellate jurisdiction nationwide and followed by other courts in charge of different matters such as the District Court, Magistrates' Court, Special Courts and the Religious Courts (Weizmann, 2022). Along with this group of courts, it is worth mentioning the Attorney General within the judicial branch. The main function of the State Comptroller is to oversee and inspect the executive branch of Israel's governing administration. Furthermore, according to provision 6 of the Basic Law of the State Comptroller, it is specified that *in carrying out his functions, the State Comptroller shall be accountable only to the Knesset and shall not be dependent upon the Government* (Basic Law: State Comptroller).

Finally, the last institution to be highlighted is the executive, that is, the Israeli Government. Its internal regime is set forth in the Basic Law of The Government. Among its main functions are the administration of internal and external affairs, including security matters, as well as other broad political powers, including the authority to act in any matter not delegated by law to another authority. The government generally rules for four years, although this period may be shortened by the resignation or death of the prime minister or by a vote of no-confidence. It is noteworthy that in 72 years there have been a total of 35 governments

(Weizmann, 2022). In addition, the ministers must follow the guidelines dictated by the Prime Minister without confusing this figure with that of the President, who has more purely representative and symbolic functions over and above party politics. This institutional system is more complex than the description I have just given here, however, as it is not the object of study of the present work, it will not be detailed in more detail. A general idea of its functioning and structure will suffice to better understand how *political ideology* manifests itself in the *institutional political system*.

b. Cultural identity

The second element that Shulman presents in his model is cultural identity. It is especially relevant in the process of building a national identity in a fragile or newborn state like Israel. Cultural identity is focus on the cultural values and practices as the ways in which one sees the ethnic or cultural groups to which one belongs (Schwartz et al., 2008). Within the concept of cultural identity some scholars have included other terms like independence and interdependence, familism, communalism or filial piety (Schwartz et al., 2008). In sum, cultural identity is a special case of social identity that highlights the importance of values either cultural or personal ones as well as of those elements which have helped over to transmit it over the time.

Bearing this in mind, the reference author, Shulman, includes as components within the cultural identity: religion, language and tradition. **Language** is crucial in it laid the basis of national consciousness by unifying the channels of communication and exchange of information (Anderson, 1983b). This creates the possibility of a new form of imagined community as languages were seen as the personal property of specific groups (Anderson, 1983a). In this line, **religion** also produces a similar effect on societies. As the sociologist Nathan Glazer and the American academic and politician Patrick Monynihan defended in their common book, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, there are some forms of social identification based on social realities like religion which have in common the fact of being an effective force for social mobilization. Moreover, as the essence of a nation is a matter of self-awareness and self-consciousness, tangible characteristics such as language and religion are significant to the degree to which they contribute to this notion or sense of the group's self-identity and uniqueness that makes it a nation (Connor, 1978). Precisely, religion is crucial in Israeli identity as the state of Israel is the solely Jewish¹⁵ state of the world and most of the Israeli citizens

¹⁵ Judaism is a monotheist religion whose origin is explained throughout the Torah (Judaism sacred text). In the Talmund there are a set of teachings as well as interpretations of the Jewish Law. Shabbat (from Firday's sunset

explain their settlement in that land on religious grounds as it was explained at the beginning of the study. Here is important to highlight that despite “Jew” has traditionally referred to people who followed Judaism, nowadays, many Jews are “Jews by choice”. The latter kind of Jew is because Judaism is not a proselytizing religion and this Jew’s sense come from a personal commitment linked to birth and family traditions (De Langue, 2000).

Regarding **tradition**, what do we understand about this concept? Is tradition the same as custom? Why is tradition important? Determining the scope and definition of a term that includes a lot of different features within it, is not an easy task. However, it is not an impossible one. For a better understanding of what tradition is and why it is part of cultural and national identity, I will follow the thoughts of Eric Hobsbawn¹⁶. Traditions are rather recent in origin and sometimes even invented. Precisely, the invention of tradition means the answer that societies give to novel situations bias by old situations (Hobsbawn, 1983). It is important to distinguish tradition from custom as the latter cannot afford to be invariant. Moreover, Hobsbawn describe custom as *what judges do*, whereas tradition as the *ritualized practices around a substantial action*. He argued that the decline of custom led to the change in tradition as there are *habitually intertwined* (Hobsbawn, 1983).

Once we have differentiated the meaning of these two similar concepts, it is important to see the influence on the construction of national identities. As tradition give responses to new challenges by using old ones (Hobsbawn, 1983), they can either symbolize social cohesion or membership of communities, legitimate institutions, either inculcate a belief or value systems. Traditions lead us back to the social contract that Hobbes developed when dealing with civilization and nation building matters. Indeed, whatever the historic or other continuities set in the modern concept of “*Israel*” and “*the Israeli*”, these concepts *must include a constructed or “invented” component* (Hobsbawn, 1983). As Hobsbawn and some constructivists considered, these constructs are what make up a modern nation (Hobsbawn, 1983). In this sense, symbols or fitted tailored discourses like the ones from the Israeli museums and artists, help in the nation building and identity formation.

until Saturday’s nightfall) is their rest day for prayer. There are different groups in Judaism like the Orthodox Judaism (with the Hasidic subgroup), the Reformer, the Conservative or the Re-Constructivist Judaism (De Langue, 2000).

¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawn, British historian of Jewish origin; born in Alexandria, Egypt and died in London, United Kingdom, he is considered one of the most influential thinkers of this century. Among his main ideas, it is worth highlighting how the nation state is built based on the context and the importance of traditions. Among his works it is worth mentioning: *The Age of Extremes*, *The Age of Capital* or *Uncommon People* (Vázquez Larrea, 2016).

c. **Ethnicity**

Shulman also includes ethnicity as an element of national identity. This is very interesting as some sectors of the international community believe that this element is the main spoiler of the nation-building processes (Grotenhuis, 2016). Even more, it has been largely considered ethnic identity as a dysfunctional competitor of national identity. However, as Max Weber concluded those human groups that share a belief in a common descent, are ethnic groups. And he followed this statement arguing that the idea of nation is apt to include the notions of common with the sentiment of solidarity of ethnic communities (Connor, 1978).

Consequently, ethnicity, with its two main components -race and ancestry-, is a crucial factor in the construction of a national identity. Ancestry and blood determine who belongs to a nation (Grotenhuis, 2016). Nevertheless, following the constructivist idea mentioned above, ethnicity is also the result of a deliberate process (Grotenhuis, 2016). The initial difficulties when establishing the State of Israel were due to the Palestinian society who was already living there, and the Jewish population scattered all over the world¹⁷.

Race as a component of ethnicity is quite complex. In racial and anthropological terms, the term “Jews” has always denoted a grouping of people who define themselves in terms of biological descent (Kramer, 2001). The origin of this notion is religious founded in Deuteronomy xxxiii, 4 (Kramer, 2001). Precisely, Israel Friedlaender¹⁸ stated that the fundamental belief which bears the entire structure of Biblical and post-Biblical Judaism is that Jews are the common descendants of Abraham. He continued arguing that Palestine is the land of the Jewish people because it is the Promised Land and belong to Israel as inheritance (Kramer, 2001). Consequently, race and ancestry -which in Israel society is Abraham and the congregation of Jacob- are crucial in Jewish culture and Israeli identity.

ii. **Tables of analysis**

Once we keep all these terms in mind and the precisions regarding Israeli society, I will provide some quantitative data that I have been able to collect thanks to my stay in Israel for five months. As a result of the terms mentioned and defined in the previous section, I have developed some tables that study the presence, in one way or another, of these concepts in the

¹⁷ Hebrew word of “catastrophe” and commonly used to refer the Jewish killed by the Nazi Regime and collaborators during the Second World War (Mémorial de la Shoah, 2005).

¹⁸ Israel Friedlaender (1876- OO) , Polish Jew who dedicated his life to the academic life in a time when modern Zionism enthusiasm was gripping Jews students hearts and minds. He also began his career as translator and introduced Hebrew language and History courses in some Western universities. He is remarkable in his public influence when gathering the Jewish community in its first attempts to develop a State (Khon, 2008).

main museums of the country. Despite the possible difficulties posed by this task of trying to frame such abstract terms in a building and its artworks, it is possible to observe many of them in their exhibitions, narratives or artists. Consequently, after a visit to/of these museums, it is useful to extract some conclusions that will help us to understand the scope of museology and art in the formation and consolidation of the Israeli identity. For a better understanding of them I will present them in a table which can facilitate the understanding of the content.

In order to be able to draw more accurate conclusions and to make use of my own stay in Israel, I will apply the following method: first, I will give one point equally to each of the components (Citizenship, Territory, Will and consent, Political ideology, Political institutions and laws, Religion, Language, Tradition, Ancestry and Race). In this way, each table can obtain a maximum of ten points and a minimum of zero. This method is based on the ideas proposed by Shulman who distinguished the different elements and components of national identity. Thus, having had the opportunity to conduct an empirical analysis of them, by visiting some of the major museums in the country and paying attention to the possible presence of these factors, I will be able to conclude about the impact of art and museology on Israeli nationality, under my spectatorial eye and preliminary research on the subject.

a. MUSEUM OF ISRAEL

In the Museum of Israel located in the city of Jerusalem, one can distinguish the following components that according to Shulman conform national identity.

Elements of national identity	Components	Presence in the museum
Civic Identity	Citizenship	X
	Territory	X
	Will and consent	
	Political ideology	
	Political institutions and laws	
Cultural identity	Religion	X
	Language	X
	Tradition	X
Ethnicity	Ancestry	X
	Race	X

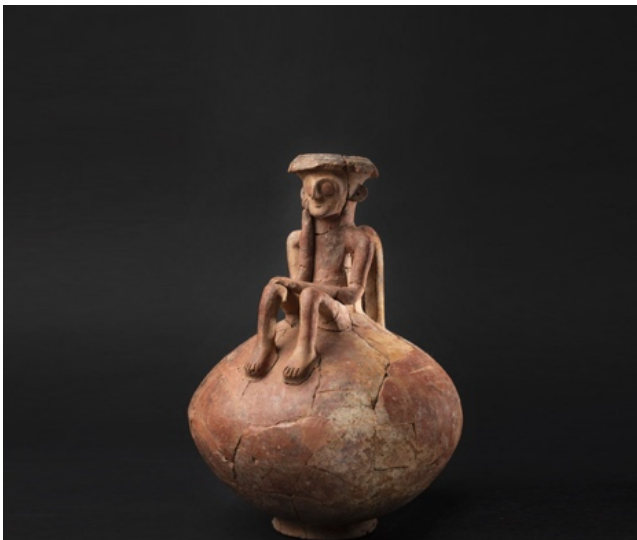
The Israel Museum has a **punctuation of 7 out of 10**. This is so because despite featuring and making a presentation on its history as well as having numerous temporary exhibitions of

national and foreign artists, it did not show the components of will and consent, political ideology and political institutions and laws. This museum, despite being one of the main cultural institutions of the country, does not show a clear Zionist ideology, nor does it expressly present elements related to will and consent or to the laws and political institutions of the country. This is so because, as already mentioned in the theoretical section of the study, this museum has given entry to new narratives that incorporate other voices that converge within Israel itself. By this I mean all those special programs to promote intercultural understanding between Arab and Jewish and other Israel's communities.

Unlike these weaker points that lack representation within the museum, it is interesting to note how other elements related to religion, tradition, race, territory or citizenship are widely and repeatedly present in some of its works such as *The Thinker from Yehud*¹⁹ or the exhibition entitled *Hear, O Israel: The Magic of the Shema* (the opening of the Jewish declaration of faith).

Figure 6

The Thinker from Yehud



Note. By The Israel Museum of Jerusalem, *The Thinker from Yehud*. Jerusalem, Israel.

¹⁹ It was discovered in the Israeli city of Yehud, north of Ben Gurion Airport. It is considered one biblical archeological figure. The jug on display was uncovered in the tomb of a Canaanite warrior. It was deposited along with other burial gifts like pottery and weapons (Biblical Archeology Society, 2020).

b. ERETZ MUSEUM

Eretz Museum is located in Tel Aviv and it is one of the three largest museums in Israel. It presents different exhibitions that connect the matter and spirit of past and present Israel. In my visit I could differentiate the following elements:

Elements of national identity	Components	Presence in the museum
Civic Identity	Citizenship	X
	Territory	X
	Will and consent	X
	Political ideology	X
	Political institutions and laws	
Cultural identity	Religion	X
	Language	X
	Tradition	X
Ethnicity	Ancestry	X
	Race	X

After seen the importance of this museum in the construction of national identity at the theoretical part and following the same structure and experience as in the previous museum analysis, the conclusions are the following. Firstly, the Eretz Museum has **a punctuation of 9 out of 10** in his role of preservation and consolidation of national identity. This is mainly because it presents a wide variety of exhibitions that refer to Jewish society, the Hebrew language, its artists and its landscape. In addition, by hosting the Biennials in its center one can find narratives beyond the Jewish and Israeli. One can find Palestinian, European, American or African artists; as well as photo exhibitions such as *Photomenta*, where I was able to observe images taken by photographers from different areas of the Mediterranean. Its aim is to offer a meeting point with the other through art, and therefore, providing a glimpse not only of citizenship, territory, tradition or language, but also of will and consent. A fundamental element in creating a broad sense of national pride in such heterogenous country.

Secondly, from its own name, one can draw its connection to the territory, but also to their ancestors and ethnicity. Eretz, as I mentioned earlier, is the way Zionism has traditionally addressed the Jewish homeland. A name that involves a reference to the Zionist political ideology, as well as to the Jewish religion.

Finally, I would like to highlight the absence of any political institutions and laws neither in the narrative of the museum nor in the exhibitions, being therefore the only element absent in the museum.

c. TEL AVIV MUSEUM OF ART

This museum located in Tel Aviv presents a wide range of exhibitions from Israeli and foreign artists. De su visita pude contemplar la presencia de los siguientes elementos:

Elements of national identity	Components	Presence in the museum
Civic Identity	Citizenship	X
	Territory	X
	Will and consent	
	Political ideology	
	Political institutions and laws	
Cultural identity	Religion	
	Language	X
	Tradition	X
Ethnicity	Ancestry	X
	Race	X

I was able to observe this from the different exhibitions that were on display at the time (January 2021). There is a more cosmopolitan open style and a strong narrative related to *civic identity* is not present. This is because, unlike the Eretz or Israel museum, there is no overview of Israeli art and history based on a specific ideology, such as Zionism or Judaism. This museum focuses on two types of art: Israeli and European. It displays modern and contemporary art, so it is not often for this museum to bring visitors closer to the Israeli ethnicity and ancestry.

The Tel Aviv Art Museum, with exhibitions such as the one I had the opportunity to visit by Yayoi Kusama, *A Retrospective*, or the new immersive one entitled *On the Edge: New in the Contemporary Art Collection*, generally presents a more disruptive, social and highly dynamic art. This kind of art contrasts and coexists at the same building with great European works from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

In conclusion, following the rating presented by Shulman, I have rated the Tel Aviv Museum of Art a **6 out of 10**. Despite its exhibitions do lack many elements related to civic identity and beyond its punctuation, I believe that the role of this museum is crucial in bringing together the different voices that coexist in Israel. But even more in its work as a soft-power tool or unofficial public entity.

d. BIBLE LAND MUSEUM

This small museum is located in Jerusalem next to the Israel Museum and the Knesset. It is a museum that offers a journey through the history of Israel from the biblical texts. In this museum I was able to learn about the different people and cultures that had populated Ancient Israel. This is due to its attempt to present the inhabitants and ways of life of this land until the arrival of Judeo-Christian monotheism through the reading of the biblical texts, in particular the Old Testament. From my visit I was able to distinguish the following elements:

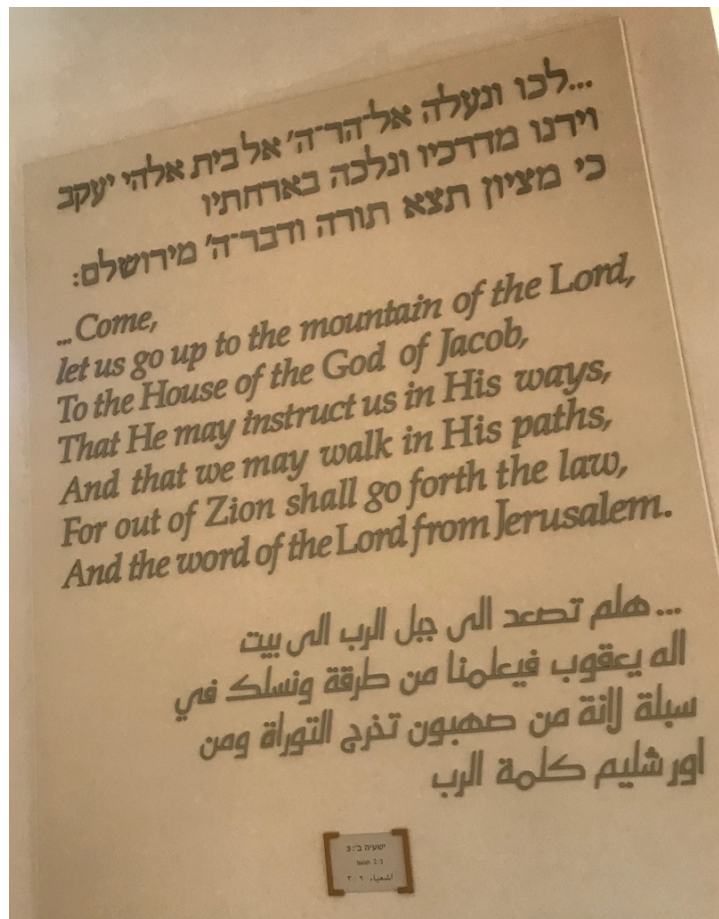
Elements of national identity	Components	Presence in the museum
Civic Identity	Citizenship	X
	Territory	X
	Will and consent	X
	Political ideology	X
	Political institutions and laws	
Cultural identity	Religion	X
	Language	X
	Tradition	X
Ethnicity	Ancestry	X
	Race	X

This museum therefore presents a mark **of 9 out of 10**. As in the Eretz museum, the only element I could not distinguish was the one concerning Israeli political institutions and law. In fact, in this museum despite its small size I could clearly observe the relevance cultural and ethnic elements in the formation of a national identity. This is possible because of the combination of biblical literature and archaeological discoveries in its displays. However, this museum also try to adapt to the new forms of museology by presenting not only the historical heritage of Israel but also current social issues. This is what I introduced at the beginning called the *comtemporalization* of museums.

This paradigm is very relevant because in the Bible Land Museum one can be observed how in the midst of the narrative about the inhabitants of ancient Israel and Jerusalem (see figure 7), the Jewish religion or the formation of the first temple, there are artworks from contemporary Israeli artists. These pieces usually deal with current issues and social demands. Consequently, this is how one can see that, despite being a museum that deals mainly with the ancient history of the country and that seeks to protect and transmit the roots of current Israeli identity, it also seeks to meet different social claims and situations.

Figure 7

Bible land museum narrative



Note. Blanco García, 2022, *Bible land museum narrative*. Jerusalem, Israel

e. YAD VASHEM

Yad Vashem is one of the most important museums in Israel, not only for its cultural, historical and identity value, but also for its democratic significance. This museum or World Memory Center, apart from not leaving the spectator indifferent, has a fundamental importance in the

formation and consolidation of the Israeli identity. From my visit I was able to observe the following elements:

Elements of national identity	Components	Presence in the museum
Civic Identity	Citizenship	X
	Territory	X
	Will and consent	X
	Political ideology	X
	Political institutions and laws	X
Cultural identity	Religion	X
	Language	X
	Tradition	X
Ethnicity	Ancestry	X
	Race	X

Its importance is such that it is one of the most important institutions in the country. It is clearly evident the attempt to make this museum a place where the past and shared history of the Jewish community is part of the current Israeli identity. A history that unites in pain but also in the consolation and national pride of having achieved the land and further State that they longed for.

In a perfect description to how the Jewish people lived through the Holocaust, the visitor can understand and differentiate how this is part of their current identity. An identity that in the museum is shown not only in the narrative of the Shoah or in the testimonies of some of the victims, but also in the explanation of the daily life of the Jewish people before the creation of the State of Israel. A life with its traditions, religion, language and ancestors and that despite the pain of persecution, as Herzl foresaw, would unite reach the Promised Land. And it is from the visit that one can learn that despite the hardships, the State of Israel was an aspiration and its survival a duty. A survival that cannot be understood without a national identity and that Yad Vashem, both as a museum and as a Memory Center, knows how to demonstrate from the beginning to the end. With all this in mind, its score is **10 out of 10**.

V) CONCLUSIONS AND PERSONAL OPINION

The phenomenon of the formation of national identity is a process influenced by different factors. A process that seeks the identification of the individual with the community in which he or she lives. The importance of identity in the survival of nation-states and the search for methods to adapt and protect it within them has also become one of the elements to be taken into account at the institutional level of different countries. Therefore, taking the constructivist approach, we can affirm that identity is constructed and reconstructed according to social experiences, and here, the role of art and museology in its formation.

Therefore, once the formation of identity has been analyzed, the conclusions one can draw regarding the role of art and museology is that they effectively have the capacity to engage society, empower communities, care for heritage and build peace. Art, as an expression, and the museum as an institution that embraces art, move from a mere aesthetic character to a more functional one as it has already been discussed. It is in this character where one can realize that, as I said before, they enhance and even create our sense. A sense that distinguishes the self from the other but also the us from them, a way of not only perceiving what one is but also what the community in which one lives, grows and develops is. They are no longer only elements that express but also mobilize. A mobilization that is developing even more with the New Museology I have already mentioned. An attempt of art to be social and close, claimant and revolutionary; and an attempt of the museum to be an unofficial political institution.

Having understood the whole socio-political scope of art and museums, and having analyzed the history and social formation of Israel, the conclusions in this regard could be the following. In the first place, the enormous heterogeneity of the country inherent to its formation as well as its legitimacy produce a fragmented society. A fracture that, as I mentioned before, in Rivlin's words, gives rise to the four tribes of Israel. Four tribes or social groups that, despite the apparent homogeneity of the Israeli Jewish community, will bring to light the enormous differences not only between them and the Arab community but also among themselves. Orthodox Jews, secular Jews, moderate Jews... different branches of Judaism, different ways of living as a Jew and different ways of understanding a State. All this enormous variety will therefore manifest itself in the importance of creating an identity or a new sense of belonging that will help and facilitate coexistence within the country.

And it is in this concern that the state of Israel is promoting its identity, its values, and its history within and beyond the country with museums and its artists. Israel has become aware of the importance of these elements as factors of historical heritage, soft diplomacy and national

pride. A way of bringing together the different communities that inhabit this territory, that share the same soil and that perhaps differ in religion or the way they lead their private lives, but that are ultimately within the institutional framework of a territorial political system. Moreover, this attempt to legitimize the state of Israel is visible not only in its actions inside but also outside of it. Its ministries of culture and sports, foreign affairs and tourism enhance its artistic legacy and diffuse it beyond its borders. A mission that has been recognized as central to giving legitimacy to the country abroad and improving coexistence with the surrounding countries. However, this does not remain in the exclusive hands of the public administration but in the fundamental role of institutions and independent artists who, with their works, whether or not they are about Israel in themselves, are able to carry a part of their nation to the outside world.

In all this process, one can see the clear importance of the public and private sectors within Israel, but also that of the Jewish communities outside of it. These try to make a place for themselves in other countries through the establishment of historical or heritage museums in order to make themselves known and facilitate socio-political relation. This bilateralism inside and outside Israel in the protection and dissemination of Israeli identity has been studied as a result of research and visits to some of the main museums in the country. After an analysis of their characteristics, their formation, as well as their correlation with Israeli history or culture, I have been able to draw different conclusions from the visit to these museums.

The first is the true materialization of the importance of art and museology in the Israeli identity. Finding not only 200 museums within the country but also a great variety of cultural and artistic activities in the streets of the different Israeli cities (see Annex). The second one is, that from Schulman's reference tables on the elements that build a national identity, among all the museums that I had the opportunity to visit (Eretz Museum, The Israel Museum of Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, the Tel Aviv museum of art and The Bible Land Museum) the one that most reflected the Israeli identity is Yad Vashem. As I have already mentioned, it is a place where history is remembered, religion is recovered and the memory of their ancestors and victims of the Shoah is respected. A museum, which has become one of the Israeli institutions of reference and that only collect the voice of the Jewish people victim of the horror of the Holocaust.

Thirdly, I wanted to emphasize that in all the museums a clear *social* and *contemporization* paradigm can be observed. This is visible in the different exhibitions that include not only Jewish or national artists, but also artists of all religions and from all over the world, sometimes insisting on bringing artists who can facilitate or accelerate a process of improvement in Arab-Israeli relations. A series of discourses, styles and narratives that make

museums progressively leave aside their purely historical facet and start their facet of writing history and not compiling it.

Finally, from academic, doctrinal and scientific reading as well as from my experience in the State of Israel, I dare to confirm and extol the value of art, and with it the value of museums. A value that can be used as a propaganda or weapon, but also as a source of critical, educated and renewed thought. To be able to mold the identity of a country is indeed complicated. However, from my point of view, art, by approaching the viewer, by softening him in his experience with the artworks and differentiating him from others, has the capacity not only to confirm identity patterns but also to delineate its horizons. Horizons that can be understood and appreciated by visiting the museums that a country holds and the works or narratives it contemplates. Because museums and artists bring closer, incite, move and teach alternative realities to which the spectator is not accustomed. And it is in that experience in which the spectator, and consequently, the society really know and even experience the different in which it can indeed be affirmed that art and museology affect the construction of identities; and in this case, of the Israeli identity.

ANNEX: TEL AVIV'S STREET ART AND IDENTITY.

In this appendix I would like to present a brief reflection on street art in Israel, but particularly in Tel Aviv. Anyone who has had the opportunity to visit or live in this city could highlight the importance of its street art. This coastal city, facing the Mediterranean covers the facades of many of its buildings with graffiti and murals of all kinds. Their abundance, creativity and originality make the streets of Tel Aviv an authentic street museum. The museum, traditionally understood as a building that embraces, preserves and exhibits different artistic and narrative works, can nowadays go beyond that. Museums no longer are necessarily walled off fortresses from the outer world, while keeping its art safe inside (Jagodzińska, 2011).

As has already been commented throughout the study, art is a form of social expression in which artists show their perception of society, as well as the collective feeling of the place where they make their works (Arthur, 2015). Within the art, I have focused on the plastic art exhibited in museums; however, it is worth reflecting here on the street art of Tel Aviv and its influence on the Israeli identity. This street art, which makes the museum no longer a building but rather the different neighborhoods of the city and its streets (Jagodzińska, 2011), has become so widely accepted and liked by Israeli citizens and visitors that it has become an inseparable part of the environment of this city.

The popularity of this type of art as well as its different manifestations are driving the academic research on them to increase as well. Street art is understood as "any art developed in public spaces" and includes murals, graffiti stencils and sticker art (Gadsby, 1995). In Tel Aviv most of these artistic expressions take the form of graffiti. Despite its traditional illicit nature, graffiti has become another representation of Israeli identity (Arthur, 2015). These have usually been identified with a subculture carried by young people who generally seek either to question the dominant culture or to hint at the culture inherited from past generations. In fact, this collective identity of young Israelis, and in particular of those from Tel Aviv, may show not so much a rupture but rather a duality between identification with and contestation of the country's dominant culture (Arthur, 2015).

This type of art and in particular graffiti is undeniably connected to identity as it gives young Israelis the ability to self-identify with other young people also from there but from different backgrounds (Erickson & Roberts, 2007). On numerous occasions, from the streets of Tel Aviv you can ask yourself social questions or simply enjoy the colors, liveliness and dynamism of these works. Thus, as I mentioned with the museums, graffiti through visual aesthetics create a space for open public debate between the state and the citizens (Arthur,

2015). A debate within everyone's reach, which does not understand entrance tickets or online reservations, but the most purely mundane of a walk through any of the streets of the city.

Nevertheless, these street murals are so famous and highly valued that there are tours where you can not only learn about the life of the author, the technique used or the time when he did it, but the context and the social incitement the artist wanted to produce with it. This is extremely enriching because it makes these artists a name and from their art a story. The one I am going to highlight here is Binsky. This street artist has a website and social networks, but mostly a lot of graffiti all over the city. His style can be related to the figures of Art Spiegelman, illustrator of the first and famous graphic novel MAUS, as well as to the vivacity of the American cartoonist Keith Haring, who insisted on “how drawings have become vocabulary”. Many of his graffiti have been exhibited or even captured in other forms such as stickers. Some of this author's graffiti that I was able to observe are the following:

Figure 1

Binsky graffiti



Note. By Blanco García, J. *Binsky graffiti*. Tel Aviv, Israel.

Figure 2
Binsky stickers.



Note. By Blanco García, J. *Binsky stickers.* Tel Aviv, Israel.

Along with this artist we find many others that I will not dwell on now as many of them remain anonymous. With this appendix, I want to highlight graffiti as an integral part of the daily life of a political community, in this case the Israeli one. An agent that, in my opinion, leaves more aside the purely aesthetic and functional to give voice and make politics but above all of its

capacity of identification for the young people of the country. Artists demonstrate with their colors their common anonymity, their disruptive figures, their patterned audiences and their variety of size the heterogeneity of the society itself. See with the following examples:

Figure 3

Other Tel Aviv Graffiti's examples



Note. By Blanco García, J. *Other Tel Aviv Graffiti's examples.* Tel Aviv, Israel

Note that it is not the only city where there is this type of art, finding many other examples such as this one in Eilat, Israel:

Figure 5

Eilat Graffiti



Note. By Blanco García, J. *Eilat Graffiti.* Tel Aviv, Israel.

Finally, I would like to highlight here how this type of art is progressively doing a fundamental work as an act of identification of and with a new lifestyle and ideas (Arthur, 2015). Moreover, this is something crucial when building new realities like gender equality or peace with their neighbors. One of the most relevant examples in this issue could be seen in the *Path to Peace Wall*. This wall separating Israel from Gaza in *Moshav Netiv HaAsara*, adorns its cement with colorful graffiti and ceramic pieces with messages of peace. This is an example of art as a social agent. As an agent that represents and seeks to have an impact on the feelings of society, one of the most beautiful and useful uses of art. This wall that I had the opportunity to see and to contribute with a small ceramic piece on it, is a wall that brings together the Israeli society in its will of "staying optimistic and having hope for a peaceful future".

Figures 4

Eilat Graffit



Note. By Blanco García, J. *Path to Peace*. Moshav Netiv HaAsara, Israel.

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