In 2016, AICF continued to honor its 77-year tradition of investing in Israel’s top young artists and move forward in new directions.

On November 29th we awarded 386 grants to artists across the fields of Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Arts. We are also expanding our focus to include Design in 2017. Further, we strengthened our audition processes to ensure we are working with the finest talent. Our alumni network continues to expand and at present boasts 2000+ artists who link to each other and help the organization continue to provide for the next generation.

From an organizational perspective, our Board in Israel (Amuta) added six new members, considerably strengthening our leadership and fundraising activities in Israel. We also have created “Tarbut,” a group in the US cultivating the next generation of leadership that shares our passion for the AICF mission.

Finally, our Gala this year will pay special tribute to Vera Stern and her AICF legacy. The Gala will feature an amazing ensemble of classical music icons. In establishing a new fund in Vera’s name, AICF will not only recognize AICF’s past but also help plan for an exciting future.

Thank you all for being part of such a vital and celebrated legacy. Through your passion and perseverance, AICF continues to be a critical source of support for developing Israel’s most cherished asset – her culture.

Kol hakavod!

Joseph E. Hollander, President
Scott Mortman, Amuta Chairman

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**The First Three Steps to Creative Success:**

**Excellence Grants**

**Enrichment Programs**

**Competitions and Prizes**
How long have you been playing the piano?
I have been playing for nine years.

How does your family feel about your interest in music?
My family doesn’t have a classical music background. My parents don’t play, and my siblings started to play later. I brought classical music into our home. Today my parents do listen to classical music, they take me to every competition and audition, and they seem to enjoy it.

What does music and playing mean to you?
When I play I feel freedom. I see it as a way to express aspects of my personality that don’t usually surface in daily life. I see my practice room and even places where I perform as laboratories - I like to try new things and take risks. I try not to play on auto-pilot but to live in the moment. The beauty in music is that it stimulates the imagination, associations and feelings. It allows you to build your own world, and to make the piece your own. I don’t play to please other people; I play because I love it. This is the place where I belong.

Over 6,000 musicians have been supported by AICF, including 1,237 pianists since the Sharett grants began in 1954.

The Israel Philharmonic received direct support from AICF for 63 years, and over 70% of the orchestra are former recipients.
Tribute to Vera Stern
Yesh Cochavim

By Rabbi Shira Stern

My mother was a force of nature, unwilling to be constrained by conventional attitudes and assumptions. If you told my mother that something was not possible, it was music to her ears, because she’d find a way to accomplish the task, the project or the predicament. Fill the concert hall with people to support a cause about which she was passionate? No problem. Did the soloist back out at the last minute? She’d make some calls. This may have contributed to her belief that almost anything was possible, if she put her mind to it.

Mom could move worlds, but she could also move people; if my mother knew you were not feeling well, or in the hospital, she’d “pop in” to check up on you. For our mother, life was all about showing up.

Above all, Mom loved the young musicians, artists and dancers who received AICF scholarships. But she knew that did not always provide for the more basic needs, like a safe place to live, furniture, medical care and a home-cooked meal once in a while. She would cut out reviews from the newspapers and cry with happiness at their successes. She called them “her kids,” and they knew they could count on her when they needed something.

She loved this Foundation, and appreciated from the bottom of her heart your generosity that was the life-blood of the AICF, enabling the good work to continue.

She’d be glad to see new faces today, and Michael, David, and our families all look forward to celebrating the success of AICF for years to come.

Excellence Grants
AICF promotes artistic excellence in music, dance, theater, film/tv, and art/design.

Individual Grant for Study in Israel: $2,500
Help young artists pursue an education with the best teachers at the finest institutions. AICF’s goal is to provide 500–600 scholarships per year.

Study-Abroad Grant: $10,000
Help artists move to the next level by studying with masters in their fields of specialization at top institutions abroad. Our goal is to provide 50 study-abroad grants per year.

Named Grant Fund: $100,000
A donor may establish a named grant fund. The donor is invited to discuss the desired field of art and other details with AICF.

Photo credit: Amit Mahalel
18,000+ artists have been nurtured by AICF.

Over $160 million has been granted since 1939.

AICF is particularly proud of our impact on the Israeli jazz community. As journalist Andrew Gilbert wrote, "When it comes to jazz, Israel is the source of an almost miraculous outpouring of talent."
Theater
Amir Goldman, 24, Tel Aviv, Current Recipient

How did your family feel about your decision to become an actor?
My mother was an actress. She studied where I study now, at the Kibbutzim College. She is a graduate of the first class, so in a way we are coming full circle. Some of the teachers, who are still teaching, taught her as well. I often show her what I am working on, and she is an excellent critic. She supported my decision to study acting, but with some ambivalence, since she knows the difficulties involved firsthand.

What do you especially enjoy in theater?
My expectation from theater - as an audience member and as an actor - is to be transported to another world, to be able to believe what is happening, to be touched, to laugh. I want it to evoke something in me, to be in the here and now and leave the day-to-day thoughts behind.

What type of characters do you enjoy playing?
The characters I like portraying most are actually not my typecast, which is the innocent, sensitive, nice guy. I like the villains. There is a sensitivity underneath those characters, but it requires some digging.

How do you work on characters?
Going in and out of character is a complex thing. On the one hand, you are acting a role which is not you, but on the other hand, when you work on a character, you necessarily work on things that are in you. It is you on stage, not a character. It is another person, but it is also you. I try to work from within, to see where my truth and the character intersect.

How do you envision your future in the field?
My aspirations are quite humble. I want to work on roles that interest and challenge me, whether in film, television or theater, and to make a living off of it.
1,127 Theater Artists have received AICF grants.

The Cameri, Gesher, and Habimah Theatres, the Acco Theatre Festival, and ensembles such as Tziporela have been partners of AICF programs and grants.

Enrichment Programs

These programs provide training, coaching, feedback, master classes and guidance for our grantees, helping to prepare them for a distinguished professional career.

Enrichment Program: $30,000
The cost of a program, each of which benefits 10-20 of AICF’s top artists, is $30,000.

Continued Enrichment: $60,000-$90,000
2-to-3-year gifts will support each program throughout its duration, assisting in the professional development and launch of AICF’s top artists into the cultural scene.
Dance

Shai Ottolenghi, 17, Modi’in, Current Recipient

What are some of the things you especially like about dancing?
In classical ballet, I love the confidence in what I am doing. When I do something, I am confident that it is the right action in that moment, and I know exactly where to send each body part. In modern dance, I feel less committed to structure and I recognize the ways in which I can be free within the technical demands of the piece.

What is your process when you work on a piece?
Even though dance has a major physical aspect, I also concentrate on what is happening in my head when I dance. Sometimes I tell myself imaginary stories, especially in classical ballet which is more fiction-based. I feel that I need to fill it with a story to give it the substance that elevates it to the art form that it is.

How do you see your future in the dance world?
My dream is to be able to dance until I am relatively old. Dancers’ careers are usually very short. At a certain point, the body naturally becomes rusty or worn out, and it is challenging to maintain the abilities you developed. That said, if you take care of the body properly, you can potentially dance even after you are 60 years old. Accomplishing that seems to me like the ultimate honor and fulfillment of being a dancer, and there are good examples, of course.

“The contribution of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation to the lives of so many artists is unique. In the most fragile times of our lives as young artists, we found support, understanding, and caring that made a huge difference in our careers.”

Ohad Naharin, Artistic Director, Batsheva Dance Company
1,038 Dancers have received direct support from AICF. They have gone on to start or perform with major ballet and modern dance companies all around the world.

Competitions and Prizes
Named Giving Opportunities

AICF prizes are esteemed internationally. Receiving an AICF prize leads to global recognition for many young artists.

The Aviv Competitions: $300,000
AICF’s prestigious Aviv Competitions recognize top classical musicians who are ready to launch a professional career. AICF’s Aviv Competitions, held at the Tel Aviv Museum, would be named in honor of a donor for three biennial competitions.

Dance Competition: $210,000
In the field of dance, no competition currently exists to recognize top-level Israeli performers in modern dance and ballet. A new, biennial AICF dance competition would be established in the name of a donor for three competitions.

Prizes: $150,000
Annual awards in the fields of theater, visual arts, and film/tv would facilitate the recognition of top artists, to be awarded at a public ceremony. A new, annual AICF prize would be established in the name of a donor, payable over three years.
Visual Arts and Design

Limor Tamir, 39, Hadassah-Neurim, Current Recipient
Yaniv Amar, 29, Ramat Gan, Current Recipient

How did you start working together?

Yaniv: We’ve been working together for four years. We got to know each other at Shenkar school (“Shenkar - Engineering. Design. Art”). We started working on our first collaborative project “Plisha” (Invasion) a year later. We “invaded” a deserted space around the school’s Art Department and worked there. We later developed the concept of “Plisha” further in other spaces.

Limor: I’ve always wanted to work in collaboration. The image of the artist who works in solitude didn’t quite fit my nature. Since we started the “Plisha” project, we have been in search of interesting locations to work on. Such spaces accumulate plenty of memories and substance to create with. We have completed three works already, and are now working on the fourth.

What drew you to this kind of work?

Limor: For as long as I can remember, I’ve been drawn to color and shape. When I was younger, I didn’t view art as a profession, but as years went by, I realized that I couldn’t deny my passion for art. I would find myself painting at night, until four in the morning because I wanted it so much. Since I started studying at Shenkar, making art turned into a lifestyle, and I can’t imagine myself doing something else.

Yaniv: In my last year of studies at Shenkar, I realized that everything I had done in my life can belong to this category called “art,” whether it was building a treehouse, crawling into caves, traveling in Israel or collecting items. Being an artist is not a choice I made; art is an essential part of my existence.

What does being an artist mean to you?

Limor: Art is a language that enables communication. Collaborative work, particularly, allows me to tell the stories I want to tell in a bigger way.

Yaniv: It is important to me to keep and explore the Israeli identity through my work. I live in and am part of this culture, so I want to study and understand it more deeply.

How do you work together practically?

Limor: We are constantly in action; while we work on one space, we work on getting other spaces. We are in and out of meetings all the time, making it happen. The time we dedicate to this doesn’t really exist. We create it, we borrow it. The grant we received from America-Israel Cultural Foundation gave us the opportunity to go further and bigger, with a whole year to dedicate to work, exploration, learning and improving.
AICF has given individual support to almost 3,000 visual artists and designers, who represent Israel in nearly every major museum in the world.

Sharing Israeli Culture with the World

AICF's Israeli Artist Network (IAN) helps Israeli artists build their online presence and reach new audiences, showcasing Israel’s positive image internationally.

- Celebrating the global success of thousands of artists
- Connecting the world to Israeli culture
- Highlighting Israeli artist events worldwide
- Discovering the talents of AICF’s emerging artists
- Linking Israeli artists living around the world to each other
- Access to biographies, interviews, and works of art

The Israeli Artist Network
ראעי - רשת האמנים הישראליين
Promoting the excellence of Israeli culture