



POWERFUL VOICES:

The Continued Rise of WOMEN in the ARTS

AMERICA
-ISRAEL
CULTURAL
FOUNDATION



Rotem Reshef. Time Traveler.
Diluted acrylic and mixed media
on six scrolls of canvas.
September 5, 2017 - January 15, 2018



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BRINGING FEMALE PERSPECTIVES AND VOICES

"AICF holds a special place in Israel's history, enriching the lives of thousands of artists, including many of the most significant female voices in the arts. Though we are a merit based funder, we champion diversity and work to include artists from all walks of life who best represent Israel's creative spirit. As a new Board member and proud alumna, I'm thrilled to be supporting AICF and the incredible work we continue to do year after year. I hope you'll join us in supporting not only more women artists such as these, but all of our grants and programs."

-Yael Alkalay

Board Member and former AICF grant recipient



**Viola Navot, 13,
from Sha'ar Efraim
Violin & Piano
(Grant Recipient)**

Was there a performance that you gave or attended that was especially powerful?

I will never forget the first concert I played with a professional orchestra. AICF held auditions for young musicians and provided us with the opportunity to play a movement from a concerto with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. I was tremendously excited while I sat waiting to play, listening to the orchestra open and knowing that this opening was for no one else but me.

What do you think makes a musician especially good?

The ability to bring something new to the piece without taking away from the composer's original intention.

Miri Lapidus, 17, from Jerusalem Classical Dance (Grant Recipient)

Do you remember your first performance?

Yes, I was about 9 years old and I remember the feeling that the stage was where I belonged. I was very excited by the audience members watching me. Even with a million eyes looking at me, I find performing enjoyable. As the years go by, training has become more and more intense, which means that I have to fight to be the best at what I do.

What do you feel is the value of dance in our culture and society?

Dance and movement are a part of life and it's important that we keep exposing dance and developing it throughout the world. We might find technological replacements for various things in today's society but I believe that dance is an organic art form and can only be produced in its truest form to convey honest emotion and humanity.

Don't listen to anyone that tells you that you don't have what it takes to be an artist. I learned early on that I need to believe in myself and to never give up until I'm the best and strongest dancer I can be.



Gal Varon, 19, from Kfar Safa, lives in Berlin Bassoon (Grant Recipient)

What do you like most about playing?

I will always continue to work on my abilities as a soloist, but I do love playing with an orchestra and performing with groups of musicians. My most exciting moments as a musician come from sitting in the midst of the orchestra, being surrounded by percussionists and wind players and not even playing at all. It's such a powerful experience.

What is the place of music and art in our society?

Music is a privilege. It's a universal language and something that is beyond all of us. Next year I will attend a music academy in Berlin funded by Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said. At the academy, the goal is to use music as a way to bring people together. It brings together a small group of artists to educate them to be excellent musicians but to also to be excellent human beings. It's a rare opportunity that brings us together to study, live and play together.

How did you use the AICF grant?

I have been a recipient of the grants since the age of 14 and AICF has always played a critical role in my success. Being a musician includes many expenses from lessons, to instrument maintenance, classes, and travel. I am moving out of my parents' home for the first time and I will be on my own in Germany. It is reassuring to know that I have the financial support from AICF to make that possible.

Empathy Takes the Stage

**Michal Uziel, 27,
from Ramat Hasharon
- Theater (Grant Recipient)**

What makes an excellent actor and performer?

Empathy. If an actor doesn't feel and isn't emotionally sensitive, then they have nothing to contribute to the stage. Being empathetic to a character and being able to show a range of emotion is key. Professionalism and dedication are also crucial. Taking time for research and self discovery are two things that an actor should be naturally drawn to. Lastly, persistence is fundamental, do not give up on yourself.

What is the value you see in theater?

Theaters start out with a goal to communicate a message. When there is depth and meaning behind the work that demonstrates that what the creators are trying to convey, it can be extremely powerful.

How was your audition for AICFP?

The audition was an amazing experience. It didn't feel like an audition. I found myself simply enjoying the process and was unusually relaxed. I think that's why I got the grant, because I was able to be myself in the audition. When I got the acceptance letter I was shocked but at the same time I felt that my hard work paid off. It was a huge win financially and also helped to increase my confidence as a performer.



Do you remember experiencing art that affected you deeply?

Hanoch Levin's Requiem (Ashkava) was a big influence. I saw it for the first time when I was 16. I was a very dramatic teenager, and this piece gave me the freedom to embrace my emotions and helped me feel understood. Because I could relate to someone else's pain, I wasn't alone in the world. Someone could create something that helped me and took me through on an emotional journey.

When I got into acting school I made the commitment to give people that same experience.



Romi Avidan, 28, from Kfar Vradim, lives in Haifa - Visual Art (Grant Recipient)

When did you realize you wanted to be a professional artist?

From a young age, art has been an outlet and a way to truly express myself. It helped me develop a creative way of thinking and to look at the world differently.

How do you know when a piece is done and that you are ready to release it? Making art and getting feedback must feel very personal.

When creating art, you put your soul on display for everyone to see. The piece is never really done. It continues to develop even as the viewer interacts with it. This is the critical part of the work. Whether the piece is good or not, the viewer and I both judge it. I am the harshest judge of my own work. So the decision has to be made at some point, to throw it out into the world and see what happens next.

How do you see art today in the context of our society and everyday life?

Art can't be disconnected from the world today. It needs to get a message across, either socially or politically. Art can also be a vehicle to think differently and to read between the lines. My recent piece was political and I think that's inevitable with the realities we face in Israel.

How was your audition/interview for AICF?

It was really pleasant. They didn't offer their opinions but instead asked a lot of questions that made me think. They also asked whether I wanted to continue with my art after graduation. My answer was yes before even realizing it myself. It's the air I breathe..

What did the grant enable you to do?

I was able to buy a video camera for the first time in my life. I would not have been able to afford one otherwise. The camera enables me to not depend on anyone else to help with my work.

Encouragement from a young age starts with family & AICF. Every \$2500 grant helps foster generations of artistic excellence in Israel.

**Maya Amir, 27, from Tiberias,
currently in Basel, Switzerland -
Mezzo-Soprano (Grant Recipient)**

Why are music and art important?

This is what we live for. This is our way to express our feelings and versatility. It can bring people and cultures together. When I meet people from countries that Israel doesn't have great relations with, I find that through art that there are no borders. Music makes the world more global.

As a performer, what do you want your audience to take away from your show?

I want my audience to get deeply excited by my music. I want to be able to get a message across through the melodies. Audiences should have a powerful experience through ranges of emotion and stories. When I attend concerts as an audience member, I want to leave as a different person. Music changes me by giving me new perspective and inspiration.

Your wildest dream?

I'd love to perform with great orchestras and to sing all of my favorite pieces. The program would showcase everything I can do in the best possible way. On stage, I would have the freedom to reveal who I really am, in a more real way than in my day to day life, through several characters.

What makes a singer stand out in your opinion?

Personality is the key. It's a combination of a beautiful voice, strong technique, theatrical abilities and passion about one's work. The audience can feel that.



There are no borders: the arts unite us

**Hadas Cohen, 28, Ma'ale Adumim,
lives in Herzliya - Fashion Design
(Grant Recipient)**

Is there any aspect of fashion design that interests you particularly?

I am interested in how we communicate a message through fashion. I am fascinated by how protest groups, musicians, creators, and other movements use fashion to make an impact. Fashion can send a clear message or start a public discussion. When I create designs, I keep these things in mind.





**Noga Shaham, 17, Born in Tel Aviv
lives in Ra'anana
- Violin (Grant Recipient)**

What do you think makes a musician particularly good?

I ask myself, "Would I come back to listen to that person? Did I experience something through their music that I wouldn't have experienced otherwise?" There are a lot of musicians who can play music well but don't have their own unique signature. That is what turns a musician into a unique artist and one that people will want to go see and support.

Can you share about one of the musicians who inspire you today?

My aunt Rinat Shaham, my dad's sister, is an opera singer. I often wonder if I would be able and willing to embrace the lifestyle my father Hagai has in this field, and what it will be like for me as a woman and part of a new generation of female artists. Rinat is an example of a female musician who puts her career first and, I'm inspired by the way she has prioritized her career.

What is the value of music in the world?

I think that music is a pure language. Music itself is something that is not tainted by politics or arguments, and therefore doing it professionally is a privilege. Music is a service to the public. The fact that I am able to provide joy for people is a great thing, a gift. It involves a lot of hard work but it's worth it.

What advice would you give musicians who are just starting out?

The most important thing is to be on your own path. Everything that happens is another step in your journey and your career is made of the accumulation of all milestones, big and small. When I don't succeed at something, I know it will make me stronger the next time and it will make future successes even more rewarding. It is important to not compare yourself to others. This is easier said than done since it's such a competitive field but we need to enjoy the journey and remember why we're doing it.

Nurturing Israel's Cultural Ambassadors

What drew you to art and what has been keeping you going?

My older sister is a dancer, and I saw how supportive my family was toward her by encouraging her to stay on her artistic path. From a young age, I wanted to continue to be exposed to art and to excellent teachers. I think that at times I felt that it was easier for me to express myself visually than verbally.

How was your experience auditioning for AICFP?

It was a fascinating conversation and I was incredibly excited to meet the people who interviewed me. There were several people who I'd known from the industry and who I admire. I was happy to show them my work and to get feedback. A rare opportunity.

What do you think about the fashion industry today and where would you like to see it going?

I think there is much more knowledge about how clothes are made today in the industry. I'm glad we're starting to talk about who fashion serves and who it destroys. I want Israeli fashion to flourish and I'd love to see manufacturing return to Israel and to see new factories and sewing workshops being created. This would create more work opportunities in Israel and people would be able to make a living off of fashion.



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PERSPECTIVES
FROM OUR
NEXT
GENERATION
OF ARTISTS

Prayer for Homeland
Oil on Wood, 2016
by grant recipient Najwan Zoubi

