Bringing the Dead Sea to Life
Art and Nature at the Lowest Place on Earth

Hadas Marcus
and Yossi Leshem
Debby Kaspari

Dead Sea, Jordan Shore Salt Swirls
Pastel on sanded paper
30 x 40 cm

Israel, Negev Desert, Field sketch

Hadas Marcus
and Yossi Leshem

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Art and Nature at the Lowest Place on Earth
The blue Sea of Death moves slowly
As a small cloud drifts above.
The tamarisk tree sways silently
And every line in the sand is beautifully carved...

From Hebrew song "Ein Gedi"
Lyrics by Eitan Peretz, music by Zvi Aharoni
Acknowledgements

This art book, and the remarkable seminar that produced it, were made possible through the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the Hoopoe Foundation, the International Artists for Nature Foundation (IAF), the Ministry of Regional Cooperation, the Dead Sea Research Institute, the Amman Center for Peace and Development (ACPD), Jordan, the Tamar Regional Council, the Taiwan Foreign Ministry, and another foundation which chose to remain anonymous. We are deeply indebted to these outstanding organizations for their generous support.

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We are deeply indebted to Tzachi Hanegbi, Mayor of the Tamar Regional Council, Dov Litvinoff, Minister of Regional Cooperation, as well as Dr. Yossi Draznin, Director-General, and Yael Rubinstein, Deputy Director, the Ministry of Regional Cooperation. All of these people mentioned here, and numerous others, including an anonymous donor, were instrumental in the realization of this extraordinary project.

Above all, this book would not have been published without the talented artists who ventured to Israel and Jordan, to learn about and defend the Dead Sea, whose future is in peril. They were inspired by the moving concerts given by seven-time Grammy Award winners saxophonist, and composer Paul Winter (and his consort), who delighted huge audiences. The endeavors and creative energy of these bold artists and musicians are truly remarkable, and are beneficial for the preservation of dwindling natural habitats and endangered wildlife.

We are deeply indebted to Debby Kaspari, Zev Labinger, and Sorrel Ritter for their serious commitment, vital feedback, and indescribable help in writing and editing this book. Sandy Kuttler, an expert tour guide, and Mira Edelstein of EcoPeace Middle East, shared their wealth of knowledge about the Dead Sea, and offered their generous assistance in the author’s research. We are grateful to泳人 Hiroshi Kato, Marco Mihale, Lisa Berin Boe, Vered Cohen, and many others, who were indispensable in the translation and final editing of texts in various languages.

Details from field sketch by Debby Kaspari

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Greetings

The Dead Sea is one of a kind and must be preserved for future generations. It is the place where people of the world come together to support some of the most unique habitats in the world. Bordering Jordan, the West Bank, and Israel, the Dead Sea is visited by a large number of tourists from all over the world seeking its unique landscape, fantastic flocks of birds, and its diversity of flora and fauna, among other things.

The ACPD (ACPD) in Jordan was established in 2006 to help overcome regional tensions and solve multidimensional problems through dialogue. The people of this region know about peace in their hearts, and we can influence the situation soon, it will be totally dead by 2050. It deeply saddens me to remember how the Dead Sea was thirty years ago, when the water almost reached the main road. Thirty years from now the Dead Sea will be a very interesting place. The only way we can succeed is to sit together around the table and find a solution. These artists remind us that we are the architects of our future. We are the ones who protect the places that we build for our children – our future.

General Mansour Abu Rashid, born in Irbid, is the founder of ACPD, an NGO that has a unique fingerprint in facilitating dialogue between the people of the Middle East. The ACPD has implemented numerous cross-border projects, workshops, and seminars that encourage positive engagement, understanding, and tolerance. Before founding ACPD, Mr. Mansour Abu Rashid served in the Jordanian Army Forces for 35 years where he held many positions, such as taking part in the Jordanian Delegation to the Multilateral Peace Conference in Madrid, and also as a member of the Monitoring Committee on the Peace Negotiations. Abu Rashid was appointed Head of Jordanian Military Intelligence in 1988, and he was directly involved in the signing of the 1994 Israeli-Jordan Peace Treaty.

The Dead Sea Land – the last place we have visited to describe this area. Life around this salty lake is very rich with a treasure trove of environmental wonders. Embracing the world heritage sites, and the lowest place on earth, the Dead Sea is a wondrous natural habitat for animals as well as for birds. It also has an abundance of flora, all living within human communities that have grown here, surviving over the centuries under extreme weather conditions. The lake, created by the Great Rift Valley, has been depressed for the past 60 years of its main artery, the Jordan River, and is slowly disappearing. Now it is time for us to intervene and take significant steps to replenish the sea level. The initiative of the Artists for Nature Foundation, the gathering together of Israelis, Jordanians, Palestinians, and artists from all over the world to record wildlife with paint and photography, is a welcomed event by Professor Leshem from all over the world to record wildlife with paint and photography. A well-known event by Professor Leshem with the SPNI, the Dead Sea Research Institute and the Hoopoe Foundation (SPNI) established in 2010 with the aim to strengthen all aspects of bird conservation in Israel. It places emphasis on education, the protection of birds and their habitat, research that will contribute to the first two aims as well as the promotion of activities in cooperation with our neighbors, the Syrians, and the Palestinians.

As such, this creative, international initiative exemplifies many of the main goals of the foundation. The Dead Sea is in its surroundings is a unique geographical phenomenon and a critical habitat for birds and other wildlife. Over 300 million birds migrate twice annually through this region, flying between their breeding grounds in Europe and Asia, and their wintering areas in Africa. The dramatic mountains surrounding the lake provide flowing streams with lush vegetation and cliffs for nesting birds, while also covering the updrafts needed for soaring birds. However, the Dead Sea is drying and it is our responsibility to protect this amazing arid landscape. We are proud to be an initiator of this important project. Art and music have the ability to bring people together and open their eyes to the beauty around them. It is also the hope that the participating artists from both sides of the Dead Sea, we will help raise the awareness needed to save the Dead Sea and bring the people of the region together for a shared cause.

The future of the Dead Sea does not stand alone, it is part of the entire regional water situation, which is depleting. What is needed is a holistic master plan for the entire area. The SPNI is working to envision such an plan that will address the criticalities of our water needs, including the Dead Sea. We all know that action is crucial to saving one of the world’s wonders, and it is very urgently needed. Unfortunately, it is not so simple. Every solution comes with a very high environmental price. Art and nature are excellent focal points for bringing people together to create a sustainable future. These endeavors will surely benefit the entire biological and cultural diversity of the region. Through this beautiful project and our ongoing conservation efforts, we are raising greater awareness about nature, while creating a healthier environment.

The Hoopoe Foundation of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI)
The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) was created in 1953 to conserve the integrity and diversity of Israel’s nature, environment, and historical sites. The SPNI is the leading NGO in Israel, and the oldest one in the Middle East. Their commitment has put it at the vanguard of other globally-recognized environmental organizations. The Israel Ornithological Center (IOC), established in 1980 as part of the SPNI, is involved in all aspects of conservation related to birds. Directed by Dan Alon, the IOC works together with the International Center for the Study of Bird Migration (ICSBM), founded by Professor Yossi Leshem, in conjunction with Tel Aviv University.

The Hoopoe Foundation

Named after Israel’s national bird, the Hoopoe Foundation of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) was established in 2010, thanks to a generous donation by Moshe and Racheli Yanai, the Gelfand Family Foundation, and other anonymous donors. The winning announcement for the national bird contest was made alongside Israel’s ninth President, the late Mr. Shimon Peres, at his residence in Jerusalem, as part of the state’s 60th birthday celebrations. The foundation strives to impart a love of birding in Israel with a strong emphasis on education, both formal and informal, the protection of birds and their habitats, and dedication to research. The Hoopoe Foundation realizes these goals through initiating joint activities that encourage regional cooperation between Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian people of all ages, from elementary school to adulthood.

The Artists for Nature Foundation (ANF)

Established in 1990, the Artists for Nature Foundation (ANF) brings together celebrated international artists to produce paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures inspired by and created in endangered environments. The events and donated art raise support and draw attention to the need for protecting these areas and species, and to raise nature appreciation and conservation. ANF is proud of its 16 successful projects spanning four continents and including over 130 artists who have garnered the organization international acclaim. The seminar at the Dead Sea, in cooperation with Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians, was similar to another highly successful event held in the Hula Valley, Israel in 2012.

Amman Center for Peace and Development (ACPD)

The Amman Center for Peace and Development is a non-profit organization established in 1999 by General Mousa Abu Rashid, former head of Jordanian Army intelligence, and one of the leaders of the peace process between Israel and Jordan in 1994. It is a unique organization that promotes dialogue in the Middle East in order to diminish regional tensions and confront multidimensional problems. The organization has implemented dozens of cross-border projects, workshops, and seminars that encourage positive involvement, understanding, and tolerance to overcome a sense of hostility and conflict. The Amman Center for Peace and Development focuses on strengthening the capacity of civil society and putting an end to disagreements by finding common solutions to the challenges shared by the region’s peoples. The Center initiates and leads joint projects for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. In many fields, topics include security, environmental education, nature conservation, agricultural development, youth and women’s activities, improvement of professional skills and health, and a special project - using barn owls as agents of biological pest control in agriculture. The ACPD, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, Tel Aviv University, and the Ministry for Regional Cooperation have cooperated since 2002.
To visit the Dead Sea (Hebrew: יָם הַמֶּלַח, Salt Sea, Arabic: البحيرة الميتة Al-Bahr al-Mayyit or Dead Sea), it immediately becomes apparent why it was chosen as one of the 28 finalists competing in the New Seven Wonders of Nature contest in 2011. The Dead Sea and its dramatic surroundings in Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Israel are truly unique - a misnamed body of water and an ecosystem like none other on Earth. The Dead Sea is neither a sea, nor is it “dead.” Its name is confusing because it is a landlocked (endorheic) body of salt water, thus making it a lake. And while no organisms we might normally expect, such as fish, can survive in its waters, some highly specialized forms of bacteria, algae, and fungi are found there, not to mention the teeming wildlife along its shores. One subspecies of fish, the Dead Sea Tooth Carp (Aphanius dispar richardsoni), can be found in freshwater springs in the surrounding areas, such as in Ein Feshka.

The Uniqueness of the Dead Sea:
When, as often happens in the rainy season, the sky is overcast with clouds, a dense haze obscuring the mountains, and a fleecy mist hovers over the water, the Dead Sea seems, indeed, worthy of its name: look where one may, no sign of life is visible, and no sound is heard save the dull monotonous surging of the waves.... But on a bright and sunny day the salt lake wears a far different aspect. The clear transparent waters then sparkle with a sapphire hue, and the mountains glow with variegated tints. All animated nature also seems to quicken into life, and flocks of storks and cranes may be seen flying overhead...

Colonel Charles W. Wilson, Picturesque Palestine (1881), vol. 3, pp. 199-201

The Lowest Place on Earth

And two seas are not alike; this one is sweet, saturating, pleasant to drink, and that one is salt, bitter.
Quran 35:12

To describe this otherworldly place is a challenge to even a skillful writer, one that necessitates the use of superlatives: the most, the lowest, the saltiest, the deepest, and so on. Widely known as the lowest point on Earth, it is the world’s deepest hypersaline (extremely salty) lake, reaching a maximum underwater depth of approximately 1,000 feet, or about 300 meters. The water, which changes color like a chameleon several times a day, contrasts sharply with the rocks along its edges glistening with crystallized salt. The Dead Sea is about ten times saltier than sea water, and it is the fifth saltiest body of water on Earth. Hence, it is impossible to drink the water, and natural buoyancy makes it extremely difficult to drown. The shoreline is approximately 1,380 feet (427 meters) below sea level, and this is continually dropping due to anthropogenic (manmade) factors.

Remnants of the past can be seen from the desolate western shores of the Dead Sea, as testimony to historical sagas, as well as biblical triumphs and tragedies. It is here that fire and brimstone rained on Sodom and Gomorrah, and at the nearby Ein Gedi Spring, David hid from King Saul. King Herod built an opulent palace upon the hilltop fortress of Masada, where nearly 1,000 Jews purportedly chose to die by their own hands in 73 C.E. rather than be ravaged and massacred by the Roman army. Nearly two thousand years later, Masada was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001.
For many centuries, the Dead Sea supplied the substances needed to make a wide range of products, from asphalt for Egyptian mummification to potash for fertilizers. Queen Cleopatra of Egypt amassed a huge fortune from it by the time of her death in 30 B.C. (Herodotus, Histories, Book II, chapter 71). We shall never know the extent of her wealth, but it was estimated that she had an annual income of $400 million in today’s dollars (Herodotus, ibid.).

Qumran is home to numerous small caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were fortunately discovered by young Bedouin shepherds in 1947. The abandoned shacks of the first Kibbutz Beit Ha’arava still stand where idealistic pioneers did back-breaking work as they washed salt from the soil to grow crops. The eastern shore of the Dead Sea is a major landmark in the biblical narrative, for it was here that Moses ended his epic journey. He gazed longingly upon the Promised Land, yet he died before he ever reached it. "From the plains of Moab unto Mount Nebo, the Lord showed him all the land" (Deuteronomy 34:1).

Very few landscapes in the world have the same mesmerizing power as this iconic, awe-inspiring site. The Dead Sea has kindled curiosity, ignited imagination, and aroused visual sensibilities for millennia. It is almost unfathomable that this strange playground, which draws tourists from all around the globe, was once regarded by 19th-century explorers with much fear and loathing. Spellbound by the mysterious singularity of the Dead Sea and its surrounding area, some audacious men led expeditions starting in the 1800s. The luckier ones lived to tell about their struggles with grueling hardships, while others succumbed to the nightmarish conditions for which they had naively come unprepared. Two such tragedies were the untimely deaths of Costigan in 1835 and Molyneux in 1847. A few explorers sensed impending doom and poetically recorded their experiences in finely illustrated books. Thus, early literary and artistic impressions of these excursions were often bleak and foreboding. In his book, Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea (1850), Lieutenant William F. Lynch described the Dead Sea as "a nauseous compound of bitters and salts" (p. 268). After making desperate attempts to navigate the hypersaline lake, Lynch admonished "it seemed as if the Dread Almighty frowned upon our efforts...no one can venture upon this sea and live" (p. 269). Another explorer named Charles W. Wilson, whose volumes entitled Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt (1881) featured engravings of "that silent mysterious lake...shrouded in gloom...and the moon’s radiance...over the burnished surface" (vol. 3, p. 154).

Yet the pendulum has swung, and this remarkable site is now sadly disappearing with shocking rapidity. Now, it is we, modern human beings, who threaten the Dead Sea’s survival, and not vice versa, as in the days of the early explorers.

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In 1982, the Bearded Vulture (Gypaetus barbatus) went extinct as a breeding species near Masada in Wadi Tze’elim, Israel. The late Mr. Shimon Peres, Israel’s 9th President, saw this huge raptor (called Peres in Hebrew) for the first time in 1944, while on an expedition in the Negev. Right then and there, he decided to change his name from Persky to Peres. Artist: Martin Rinik (not from this project).
explorers who were terrified of its many dangers. No longer seen as frightening or inhospitable, it is a popular year-round destination for people of all ages and nationalities seeking fun, adventure, and relaxation. Today, grownups romp like children as they smear themselves with black mud and pose for funny photos. Swimmers bob like apples in the viscous water as they float in a horizontal position. A jumble of languages and laughter resounds on the same stretch of beach. After washing themselves off, vacationers stroll on the promenade next to high-rise hotels in Ein Bokek in Israel, and along the northern shores in Jordan.

For generations, travelers have come from near and far to immerse themselves in the Dead Sea's salubrious and super-dense mixture of minerals against the dramatic backdrop of the Judean Desert to the west and Jordan's Moab Mountains to the east. Chronic pain-sufferers with skin and joint disorders flock here to be healed by the arid climate, oxygen-rich atmosphere, and the water's therapeutic properties. Highly concentrated salt cleanses bodily toxins, magnesium soothes unhealthy skin, and bromine calms the nervous system. Ostensibly, floating in the Dead Sea or slathering oneself with black mud alleviates conditions such as psoriasis, arthritis, rheumatism, eczema, and fungus. The lake's mineral properties are also revered for their beautifying properties, used by Cleopatra herself, which later spawned a lucrative market in cosmetic products.

The Dead Sea's legendary properties have long bewildered visitors to the site. Pliny the Elder claimed that even bulls and camels float in it (around 70 C.E.), and Titus tossed slaves shackled in chains into its waters (70 A.D.) to test if they would drown. In *The Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain called it “a funny bath” from which he emerged “coated with salt till we shone like icicles” (p. 596). James Joyce's *Ulysses* describes the photo of a chap “floating on his back, reading a book with a parasol open. Couldn't sink if you tried” (p. 73).

Two ANF artists recorded their personal experiences with the Dead Sea’s buoyancy. One of them, who had difficulty learning to swim as a child, commented:

> I was out of breath by the time I had managed to wade in far enough to sit back and let go, letting the mercurial liquid hold me up. I lay back, looked up and around, and relaxed. I contemplated where I was. Many meters below sea level and floating.

Nick Derry

The second artist gave her own careful advice:

> Enter the water slowly, balancing on the loose, salt-slick cobblestones of the seabed. Once you've reached knee-depth, squat and lean back, reclining against the surface, which will support you like a wet cushion…. Don't try to swim, and never, ever splash. The Dead Sea is a caustic brew of concentrated salts and naturally occurring chemicals. It will burn your eyes and nostrils. If it gets on your tongue it will taste horrible. Simply float on your back with your head held out of the water, as if you were a sea otter.

Debby Kaspari
Despite its barren appearance, the Dead Sea region is dotted on both sides with a number of serene little agricultural communities, villages and kibbutzim, alongside bustling tourist and mineral industries. Modern roads make for easy access: Highway 90 runs north-south along the Israeli and West Bank shores of the Dead Sea, and Highway 65 runs on the Jordanian side. In the Meggal Regional Council, close to the southwestern shores of the Dead Sea, there is the community of Dead Hetem, not far from Jericho. Situated north-west of the Dead Sea, Jericho is the world’s oldest continuously inhabited city, and today is flourishing Palestinian city with a population of approximately 24,000 residents. There are also a handful of kibbutzim and communities in this area, namely Jalufa (also popular seaside tourist Almog, Beit Ha’arava, Mitzpe Sha’ren, and Amir). Further south, in the Tarut Regional Council, a lush nature reserve and the first SPNI field school created in Israel are located at Ein Gedi, on the shores of the Dead Sea and on the eastern side of the Judean Desert, not far from Kibbutz Ein Gedi. Approximately eighteen miles or thirty kilometers away, a stretch of high rise hotels are clustered on the southwestern end at Ein Bokek near the community of Neve Zohar. These hotels are equipped to accommodate the many thousands of guests seeking recreation and healing treatments. The enormous unspoiled spread of the Dead Sea Biosphere lies far south.

On the opposite side, in Jordan, luxury hotels, spas, and resort activities are mainly found in the area of Sweimeh, located on the northern side of the Dead Sea. Small communities are situated further south, mainly in the South Ghors Municipality. Amongst these are the villages of Ghor Safi, the phosphate capital of Jordan, Chor al Haditha, where the majority of sinkholes have recently emerged on that side of the Dead Sea, Ghor Fifa, a farming village, and Potash City.

The Dead Sea is home to a unique array of animal and plant species which have adapted to thrive in this hypersaline environment. Many of these are unique to the Dead Sea and are of significant conservation importance. For example, the Balsam gourami (Halopterus balfouri) is endemic to the Dead Sea and is one of the few fish species that can survive in its hypersaline waters. The Balsam gourami is one of the many fish species that have adapted to live in the unique environment of the Dead Sea.

The Great Rift Valley

In his hand are the deep places of the earth:
and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

Psalm 95:4-5

The Great Rift Valley

The Great Rift Valley is important not only in terms of its geological and biological significance, but also for landscapes which defined human evolution, culture, and religious history. Palaeoanthropological and archeological discoveries of early hominids such as “Lucy” (Australopithecus afarensis) were made in Afar, Ethiopia, and this region was the passageway from which our prehistoric ancestors made their long trek out of Africa to populate Europe and Asia. According to geophysicist Professor Zvi Ben-Avraham, director of the Negev-Dead Sea Research Center, this region is a “landmark which defined human evolution, culture, and religious history. Its geological and biological significance, but also for landscapes which defined human evolution, culture, and religious history. Palaeoanthropological and archeological discoveries of early hominids such as ‘Lucy’ (Australopithecus afarensis) were made in Afar, Ethiopia, and this region was the passageway from which our prehistoric ancestors made their long trek out of Africa to populate Europe and Asia.”

The Leopard (Panthera pardus) was painted by Walter Ferguson (1930-2015), a highly versatile artist, zoologist and naturalist, who wrote and illustrated numerous books and exhibited worldwide. He was deeply concerned about the precarious situation of natural habitats and wildlife in Israel. Ferguson was an artist, zoologist and naturalist, who wrote and illustrated numerous books and exhibited worldwide. He was deeply concerned about the precarious situation of natural habitats and wildlife in Israel.
Bird Migration in the Great Rift Valley

Then God said, ‘Let the waters team with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens’.

Genesis 1:20

Tens of millions of birds pass through twice annually, as well as scores of raptors, such as one million Honey Buzzards (Pernis apivorus), and the entire world population of Lesser Spotted Eagles (Aquila pomarina), about 1,200,000 of them. As the birds navigate this arduous migration route each autumn and spring, an optimistic visionary, Professor Yossi Leshem hopes to stand guard for their survival, and thus they should be free to pass from region to region undisturbed. He and many other ornithologists strongly support the efforts to inscribe the entire Great Rift Valley as a transnational serial UNESCO World Heritage Site in order to protect this crucial migratory flyway.

For now, however, only individual sites, such as the Kenya Great Rift Valley Lakes, have been granted this coveted status. The Great Rift Valley spans 21 nations, many of which have ethnic, cultural, and religious differences that prevent their peoples from cooperating toward the shared goal of protecting vulnerable wildlife. Thus, tragically, countless birds perish due to unregulated hunting practices, destruction of stopover sites, and so forth. Leshem and his colleagues are driven to study, conserve, and advocate for even the smallest bird species that pass along the African-Eurasian flyway twice a year, Israel, just as they pass through the enormous Great Rift Valley is blessed with 6,500 bird species, an unbelievable number considering the country’s diminutive size. This region, now often deployed as a place stanched by bloodshed from never-ending strife, gets less media attention for its fame as a mecca for bird lovers. Even the casual observer in the Jordan Valley can spot flocks of large birds overhead in sometimes staggering numbers. To name a few examples, approximately 600,000 White Storks (Ciconia ciconia) pass through twice annually, as well as scores of migrants, such as one million Honey Buzzards (Pernis apivorus), and the entire world population of Lesser Spotted Eagles (Aquila pomarina), about 1,200,000 of them. As the birds navigate this arduous migration route each autumn and spring, an optimistic visionary, Professor Yossi Leshem hopes to stand guard for their survival, and thus they should be free to pass from region to region undisturbed. He and many other ornithologists strongly support the efforts to inscribe the entire Great Rift Valley as a transnational serial UNESCO World Heritage Site in order to protect this crucial migratory flyway.

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Despite its deceptively barren appearance, the Dead Sea ecosystem is home to many other species year-round. In addition to migratory species, many birds from this region are at the edge of their distribution such as the Striated Scops Owl (Otus brucei), the Sooty Falcon (Falco concolor), and Tristram’s Grackle (Onychognathus tristramii). Others are restricted to this unique area, such as the newly described Desert Tawny Owl (Strix hadorami). Typical birds around the region include the Dead Sea Sparrow (Passer moabiticus), White-Crowned Black Wheatear (Oenanthe leucopyga), Fan-Tailed Raven (Corvus rhipidurus), Arabian Babbler (Turdoides squamiceps), and Little Green Bee-eater (Merops orientalis).

Two of the most easily visible mammals are the Nubian Ibex (Capra nubiana), called simply “yael” – a common Hebrew name for girls in Israel, after the heroic Yael in the Old Testament. Ibex are known for their unfailing surefootedness, playful antics and the impressive curved horns of the elder males, which can be heard crashing in ritual fights around mating season. The Rock Hyrax (Procavia capensis), resembling an enormous guinea pig or woodchuck, is actually more closely related to an elephant than a rodent, and is taxonomically considered a partially-hoofed mammal (paenungulate).

Among the resident birds, Tristram’s Grackles (Onychognathus tristramii) are a common and approachable starling named after Henry Baker Tristram (1822-1906), an English clergyman and avid ornithologist, who travelled throughout the Sahara, Palestine, and Lebanon, as he collected and identified thousands of specimens. He was enchanted by these black grackles with orange wing patches, and their song, “a rich musical roll… of amazing power and sweetness.” In 1865, together with other naturalists and explorers, he initiated the creation of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), a scientific society which investigated the physical aspects of the region. Along the highway (Route 90, Israel), one can see the inscriptions PEF carved into a huge limestone rock showing the water level in 1913 and 1917, some 13 feet (four meters) above the highway, bearing sober testimony to the extreme degree of the lake’s recession. In 1884, Tristram published The Survey of Western Palestine: The Fauna and Flora of Palestine, thus contributing a vast body of zoological and botanical knowledge about the Dead Sea area.

Common reptiles in the Dead Sea area include the Painted Saw-Scaled Viper (Echis coloratus), a poisonous snake, and the Mole Viper (Atractaspis engaddensis). The Sinai Agama’s (Pseudotrapelus sinaitus) light-brown coloration is well camouflaged with its surroundings, except during mating season, when the male’s throat, head, and sides turn bright blue and the female’s head turns orange.

The Ein Gedi Spring has the densest concentration of tropical plants in Israel, some of which are extremely rare. Sadly, flora in this lush oasis has been severely diminished due to human encroachment, which has led to the diversion of part of the reserve’s water for agriculture. Regarding scientific society which investigated the physical aspects of the region. Along the highway (Route 90, Israel), one can see the inscriptions PEF carved into a huge limestone rock showing the water level in 1913 and 1917, some 13 feet (four meters) above the highway, bearing sober testimony to the extreme degree of the lake’s recession. In 1884, Tristram published The Survey of Western Palestine: The Fauna and Flora of Palestine, thus contributing a vast body of zoological and botanical knowledge about the Dead Sea area.

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typical flora, trees include the Desert Tamarisk (*Tamarix tetragyna*) and the Acacia (*Acacia raddiana Savi*), which are quite common throughout the area. Few plants in the world have been branded with as much notoriety as the legendary *osher* or the so-called “Apple of Sodom” (*Calotropis procera*). The large fruit of this flowering plant was described by the Roman Jewish historian Josephus as bearing a deceptively attractive appearance, as if it were edible, “but when plucked with the hands, dissolve into smoke and ashes.” The plant has been the source of “much speculation and debate” because of the mystery of its fruit, which is “visually empty,” and its alleged connection with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Klinger* p. 56). The Desert Broomrape (*Cistanche tubulosa*) is a cone-shaped spike covered in thick yellow flowers, which despite its resemblance to an independent flower, is parasitic on other plants at the roots.

There are some fascinating stories about the co-relationships between the flora and fauna of the Dead Sea basin. For example, the Acacia Strap Flower (*Loranthus acacia*) is a semi-parasitic plant that sucks water and minerals from its host; the three species of acacia trees found in Israel. This parasitic plant is pollinated by Palestine Sunbirds (*Cinnyris osea*), providing them with a major food source. The red fruits and sticky seeds of the Acacia Strap Flower are distributed by these small, agile birds to the hosts. In the late 19th century, the Palestine Sunbird was observed exclusively around the Dead Sea and south into Yemen, where this plant was found. However, as agriculture developed in Israel, and gardens and parks were planted throughout the country, abundant food sources became available, and thus the birds greatly expanded their range.
The Dead Sea is shrinking at an alarming rate, as the water level drops more than 3.3 feet (one meter) each year. The recession on the Israeli shoreline is so extreme, that in order to reach the northern basin of the lake, tourists are driven on a tram behind a tractor about 1.2 miles (nearly two kilometers), whereas once they could literally enter the water a few steps from the changing rooms. While these are simple, observable facts, the causes for this accelerating trend, and possible solutions for reversing it, are far more complex. The famous Israeli songwriter Yankele Rotblit - best known for “The Peace Song” (1969) - recently composed “Who Killed the Dead Sea?” to mourn the lake’s deterioration. He is justifiably angered by our irresponsible stewardship, lamenting how the Dead Sea has dried up, the leopards are extinct, the nearby spring water is sold in plastic bottles, structures are devoured by sinkholes, and Lot’s wife weeps near the hotels.

A Rapidly Receding Natural Wonder

The Dead Sea is like a creature in distress: a living organism ensnared by human need, or greed, depending on one’s vantage point... For millennia nature ran the show, and the Dead Sea’s vicissitudes were part of an exquisite ecological web. Only in recent times, indeed for hardly more than half a century, has its destiny been isolated from its environment, and to see it now is to have one’s capacity for empathy tested. The view is of a bruised landscape and the situation challenges us to redefine our relationship with the natural world. Caged, the Dead Sea is at our mercy, as politically and environmentally charged debates and initiatives thunder from all corners of the region.

Beyond its historical and religious importance, the Jordan River is the main artery supplying urgently needed water for agriculture, irrigation, and human consumption to Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. The Jordan River has been severely degraded by excessive water diversion, sewage treatment, pollution, and inappropriate development. Of the 1.3 billion cubic meters of water annually that would naturally flow down the Jordan River to the Dead Sea, over 90% is diverted for other purposes, mainly agriculture to feeding burgeoning populations and exports. Thus, the river’s annual flow has been diminished to a mere 70,000 cubic meters in recent years, one of the main reasons for the Dead Sea’s current shrinking.

The once pristine Jordan River—the same Lush, flowing body of water that has deep religious significance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—has been drained almost dry during the past half-century, leaving a foul dribble of smelly, sewage- and agricultural runoff, with only 2% of the river’s original flow. While this ecological disaster occurred for seemingly justifiable reasons, irreparable damage has been caused by water being continuously siphoned away from the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee (Kinneret). A number of dams and canals erected by Syria and Jordan further divert water to their rain-starved countries, thus interrupting the natural hydrological cycle that previously kept the Dead Sea at an even level. The Sea of Galilee has been so overpumped to provide water in response to marked population growth in Israel, that water quality and aquatic life are impacted. Together with the recent drought years and climate change, the Sea of Galilee has dropped to an extremely low level, and the border of the Dead Sea has been reduced to a thin trickle.

Professor Alan Tal, a prominent Israeli environmentalist, aptly coined the term “hydrological awkwardness” to describe how water distribution is mismanaged, affecting the Dead Sea like a simple cause-and-effect diagram. He bemoans how we have “just about killed the Dead Sea. It will take extraordinary human measure—courage, water intervention and positive regional cooperation—to save it!” in The Land’s Fall (2016).

Tal takes a sobering look at the detrimental consequences of population expansion in Israel and her neighboring countries. Pollution of natural water systems has rung a death knell for the parched Dead Sea, which has shriveled by one third of its original size. As Tal remarks, “Such crass and colossal interference with the natural hydrological cycles of the region produced ‘unexpected consequences.’ Other detrimental factors, such as ‘the scorching desert climate—over time—caused massive evaporation, leaving a salty trough of minerals’” (pp. 23-24).

Among the main reasons for the Dead Sea’s decline are the two enormous chemical plants ingeniously juxtaposed against the stark terrain on the southern basin of both the Israeli and Jordanian shores of the lake, where a massive reservoir of artificial evaporation ponds and dikes are clearly visible. In 1931, Moshe Homsy, a Jewish Russian mining engineer from Siberia and an ardent Zionist, signed a formal agreement with the British Mandatory administration which led to the creation of the Palestine Potash Ltd., the forerunner to today’s Dead Sea Works, the forerunner to today’s Dead Sea Works. From then on, the industries were exempt from most environmental regulations and were given carte blanche for their use of water from which they harvested salt, magnesium, potassium, carnallite, bromine, and potash. These huge multi-billion dollar enterprises export the minerals they extract, all over the world to use in fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics.

If they were only an eyesore, these factories would be less worrisome. But they do far more harm than just wanting the landscape. Today the Dead Sea Works and the Arab Potash Company are seen as amongst the main culprits for the demise of the Dead Sea, and the destruction they are causing must be immediately addressed if there is any hope of saving it. The massive amounts of water that these companies pump out to fill the evaporation ponds in order to extract primary potash and bromine, has been linked by scientists to approximately 40% of the decrease in water levels. According to the environmental organization EcoPeace Middle East, this is partly due to the Jordanian and Israeli industries’ use of an outdated, water-intensive method to harvest minerals from the Dead Sea. It seems implausible and unethical, yet these companies have never been required to pay for the water, thus significantly catalyzing long-term damage and exhaustion of this natural treasure. A convincing way to give them the incentive to switch to a more sustainable way of extracting minerals, such as those used in desalination (membrane technology), would be to tax them for the water they use. As far back as 1997, Anara Aiko, the prophetic father of the Israeli environmental movement, stated: …(W)e conservationists set out to fight against the Dead Sea Works, which destroyed expansive landscapes in the Judean Desert… the southern basin no longer exists at all, only an old map…the entire network of hotels does not stand on the shores of the Dead Sea at all, but rather on the shores of artificial salt pools… Strong companies know how to circumvent incumbrant laws, The lassion has not yet been learned. Everything must be done in order to prevent the Dead Sea Works from being above the law…

And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well-watered everywhere. Genesis 13:10

Smokelasts discharge thick billows of ash into the still air, caught between the mountains on either side of the rift valley. It looks like something Stalin built on the Slavaya, a glorification of the machine, industrial man pinning a recalcitrant Mother Nature to the ground. Haim Watzman, A Crus in the Earth (2007), p. 68
Sinkholes are collapsed areas of earth that appear when underground salt is dissolved by freshwater intrusion, as the result of a continual drop in sea level. As the briny water level of the Dead Sea rapidly recedes, fresh groundwater wells up and dissolves layers of salt, forming large underground cavities, above which sinkholes are created. Aerial footage taken of the Dead Sea in 1980 recorded a coastline with not one single sinkhole. Sadly however, today that same coastline is riddled with thousands of them and resembles a multi-colored Swiss cheese, with huge green, blue, and brown chasms gaping in the landscape, some filled with briny water, others completely dry. Sinkholes do exist elsewhere, and sometimes claim innocent victims, yet, nowhere do they pop up as quickly and abundantly as along the Dead Sea. In Hebrew, the word for sinkholes translates as "swallowers" (bol'anim), and they have literally gobbled up buildings, roads, and bridges along the coastline.

As the water level of the hypersaline lake continues to plummet, this disturbing trend is exacerbated and multiplied almost daily. Despite warning signs everywhere to not trespass in the unsafe zones, some imprudent visitors still ignore them. Sinkholes are a major threat to the lucrative tourism industry, and could cost it many millions of dollars. They affect the distressed residents of the Dead Sea area even more, creating menacing hazards and ruining their livelihoods (especially date palm groves), not to mention endangering wildlife. Sinkholes have demolished property at Ein Gedi beach and at the Mineral Beach Spa belonging to Kibbutz Mitzpe Shalem on the western shore, devastating the local economy. Could this be Nature's revenge for slaying the Dead Sea? Ironically, however, these odd cavities in the earth also provide new brackish water and wetlands for birds and other wildlife.

In 2017, it was estimated that there were 5,500 sinkholes on the Israeli side of the Dead Sea and another 1,000 on the Jordanian side. While there have been no death or human casualties yet, a few unpleasant incidents have occurred. With the burgeoning of sinkholes in the area, other unaware people and animals might not be so lucky in the future. The eminent Israeli geologist/biologist Eli Raz has made it his life mission to investigate sinkhole formation in the Dead Sea's threatened ecosystem. Like the inquisitive girl in Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland who tumbled down a rabbit's burrow, Raz's insatiable curiosity nearly cost him his life. He fell into a deep sinkhole that opened up suddenly near his home in Kibbutz Ein Gedi. Fortunately, Raz emerged unscathed, although he was dehydrated and badly shaken after being trapped 14 hours until his eventual rescue. Despite this harrowing experience, he is still conducting his research. A team of scientists, including Eli Raz, have demonstrated that the ongoing sharp decline in the Dead Sea's water level has accelerated the formation of sinkholes. They explain that this is caused by the interception of the freshwater supply from the Jordan River and the maintenance of large evaporation ponds by the Dead Sea mineral industries in Jordan and Israel.

In addition to the emergence of approximately 6,000 dangerous sinkholes, much of the marginal shallow floor of the Dead Sea has been exposed along its receding landscape. These catastrophic changes wreak havoc on the natural ecosystem, and are economically detrimental to both infrastructure and tourism in the region.
... and the sea descends below sea level, so my bones float over water like trees... this sea, smaller than its myth, smaller than your hands, is a crystalline isthmus.


Possible Solutions and Future Concerns

EcoPeace Middle East is a regional environmental organization involved in conflict resolution and regional cooperation in the Jordan River and Dead Sea Projects. Manager, are also the organization’s three co-directors, and Mira Edelstein, Gidon Bromberg, Nada Majdalani, and Munqeth Mehyar, as well as the Dead Sea, which depends on the river for water.

The vision is to rehabilitate the Jordan River, to transfer 500 million cubic meters of water from the Sea of Galilee back to the Dead Sea, and to turn the Jordan Valley into a bi-national nature reserve that will draw tourism for both its inherent beauty and its religious significance. This vision can be realized, but it depends on whether the leaders of the countries will allow the Dead Sea to come back to life - just as the title of the book before you suggests. That was the goal of the artists’ seminar.

Possible Solutions and Future Concerns

Some people are more fortunate than others - and so are some bodies of water. In March, 2017, the same week that the seminar was taking place, newspapers worldwide featured articles about three rivers (one in New Zealand and two in India) that had been granted “legal personhood.” But this is highly unlikely, and they continue to be degraded for the reasons discussed in this book. It is no mystery why the Dead Sea is disappearing so rapidly, but finding workable solution, one that would also guarantee to preserve the integrity of the lake, is challenging. The first thing that needs to be done, and strongly recommended that the industries be taxed for water use.

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The Christmas tree is a pillar of salt, it would be counterproductive to only dwell on the past. Although the Dead Sea’s mightier river for many years: the proposed construction of a canal called the Red-Sea–Dead-Sea Convergence (or Red-Dead). This elaborate project, which is expected to cost billions of dollars, proposes the construction of desalinization and hydropower plants, located along the course of the pipeline that will transport the low-grade brine to the Dead Sea. However, the project has been viewed with profound skepticism and dissatisfaction from those who question the potentially adverse effects of mixing water from the two sources, which may lead to uncertain results. Environmentalists fear that doing so could irreversibly change the chemical composition of the lake, drastically altering the water's white 
gypsum, thus destroying its fragile ecosystem as well as its therapeutic properties and tourist appeal. It could also lead to an explosion of algae blooms similar to those found in dead zones in the world’s oceans.

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In recent years, creative arts and the humanities have joined the sciences in making significant contributions to environmental awareness. Both visual art and music move us on a visceral level, expressing a sense of urgency to salvage what is left of our natural surroundings and its wildlife. They help us to develop place attachment (topophilia) and a deeper affinity with other species (biophilia), while awakening individuals and communities to the detrimental impacts humans have on the planet.

The Artists for Nature Foundation (ANF) is a small organization based in the Netherlands, that was established in 1990 by Ysbrand Brouwers. The foundation uses diverse styles of works in many different media, created by renowned artists mostly on location in endangered habitats, as a vehicle to reveal the urgent need for nature conservation.

For each of the sixteen projects that have been realized thus far by the ANF, artists have traveled to some of the planet’s most stunning and remote places. While in these locations, the artists capture the beauty of these unique sites, and their endangered wildlife, before they are wiped from the face of the Earth by habitat destruction, deforestation, climate change, invasive species, pollution, industrialization, urban development, hunting, and a myriad of other problems.

Artists for Nature (ANF) and the Dead Sea Seminar

On the Dead Sea trip, my artwork focused primarily on the habitat. Our group included some great field artists – painters who can draw or complete a watercolor sketch in a matter of minutes. They mostly were painting birds. I was so impressed with what they can do! But I saw no need to compete with them. I can paint an impression of the landscape in oils. That is my strength, and I realized that was how I could make a contribution to the trip that was unique.

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James Coe
Dead Sea Shadows
Oil on linen
51 x 76.5 cm
Metzukei Dragot, Israel
(view toward Jordan)
James Coe
Dead Sea Shadows
Oil on linen
51 x 76.5 cm
Metzukei Dragot, Israel
(view toward Jordan)

Some highlights of the seminar were the breathtaking mural depicting the biodiversity of the Dead Sea, art workshops for the children that inspired hope for harmonious relations in the region, and unforgettable performances by the Paul Winter Consort. The closing of the seminar coincided with the 9th annual Eilat Bird Festival and Champions of the Flyway, an international bird conservation event organized by the Israel Ornithological Center and the SPNI.
An extraordinary part of the seminar was the unforgettable learning and social experience it provided for Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli children. This should be compulsory today, as the very future of our Earth is threatened by the depletion of natural resources, loss of species and wild places, and climate change. Hands-on environmental education is one of the best ways we can instill a responsible attitude for the well-being of the planet, as it nurtures youngsters’ innate curiosity about the natural world, what Rachel Carson described as their “sense of wonder.” Thus, the artists working together with the pupils from the region provided an invaluable lesson not only in outdoor appreciation, but also in accepting one another as individuals, despite any hostility and political tensions that may exist in the region.

The seminar group included participants not only from Israel and Jordan, but also from the United States, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Taiwan, Spain, France, and the UK. Shortly after the participants had crossed the border into Jordan to begin their collaborative project, about 160 Jordanian pupils joined the artists for workshops and lectures. Upon their return to the Israeli side of the Dead Sea, the artists repeated the educational program for a combined group of Israeli (Bedouin and Jewish) and Palestinian pupils from Jericho. At the end of an intense day of enjoyable activities at the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve, the group traveled further south. There, the children stood holding hands together on the shore to form an environmental sign with their bodies that pleaded: \textit{SAVE THE DEAD SEA}.

Pupils from the region formed a human sign in the hopes of preserving this natural treasure.

It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood.

Rachel Carson, \textit{The Sense of Wonder} (1956)

Palestinian pupils from a school in Jericho, with artists Nick Derry from France and Zev Labinger from Israel. Photo credit: Yossi Leshem.


Educational Projects: Children Learning Together
A number of the ANF artists worked with groups of schoolchildren from local schools in Jordan and Israel, others were brought by bus from Jericho in the Palestinian Authority, and one group of Bedouin children from the Negev joined them as well.

The aim was to show ways of looking at nature, how working together and cooperating in creating a work of art is exciting, and how being in nature and making observations gives an insight into the natural world.

We selected objects from the immediate vicinity - a leaf, a pebble, a feather - then we placed them on a large single sheet of paper. The children began to draw around them while being mindful of their placement and relationship to the other drawn shapes and objects. It was a terrific day!

Bruce Pearson, Vice President of ANF

Jordanian children's kinetic drawing exercise. Photo credit: John Foker

Acyrylic on Board 1.5 x 3 meters Studio Tuvia Kurtz

Background for the Mural

Tuvia Kurtz is well known for the countless stamps and posters he has illustrated. He is equally adept at painting plants and animals, antiquity sites and military airplanes. Tuvia was called upon to create two large panels measuring 1.5 x 3 meters when joined together, depicting a realistic landscape of the Dead Sea, with the color of the lake a bright cerulean blue, and featuring some typical vegetation. During the seminar, the artists worked as a team to finish the mural by painting a variety of indigenous wildlife, such as nesting or migrating birds, mammals or reptiles native to the Dead Sea region. Here is the mural, before the artists began (an almost empty landscape), and after they had completed it:

About the Mural

Tuvia Kurtz

The artists collaborating on the mural. Photo: Adi Bashan

The artists collaborating on the mural. (צילום: עדי בשן)
A poster painted jointly by artists from around the world at a seminar held on both sides of the Dead Sea in Israel and Jordan, March 16th - 27th 2017.

Design by Liron Bar-Chochva, Jerusalem Fine Art Prints

BRINGING THE DEAD SEA TO LIFE THROUGH ART AND MUSIC
Seven-time Grammy Award winner, soprano saxophonist Paul Winter pays homage to many species' distinctive voices and the beauty which they infuse in our lives, from whales, to wolves, to birds. His astounding composition of “Earth Music” entitled Flyways was inspired by a flight over Israel in a motorized glider, in which he was accompanied by thousands of White Storks. The piece is a musical celebration of the migration of half a billion birds along the Great Rift Valley. From Eurasia through the Middle East to South Africa, and back. Flyways chronicles this extraordinary journey, merging ethnic music of the places over which the birds fly, with actual avian voices, including cranes, eagles, bee-eaters, thrush nightingales, and many others.

At the Dead Sea seminar, the Paul Winter Consort played a newer composition entitled Music of the Birds before 620 people at the YMCA concert hall in Jerusalem. Winter also gave smaller solo performances for the children in Jordan and Israel, and before a large audience in Eilat. In Yuval Dax’s beautiful film Bringing the Dead Sea to Life with Art and Music, Winter declares: “It’s like the universal feeling that people have about children, and the same should be with our feelings toward nature. It’s something that has to be preserved in any way that we can.”

The Paul Winter Consort

Paul Winter playing at the Dead Sea shore.

Photo credit: Sorrel Ritter

Debby Kaspari
Crowned Sandgrouse
Israel, Field sketch

Quentin Budworth
The Paul Winter Consort performing in Jerusalem, 2006

Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1910)
References and Further Reading

Various contemporary endeavors have served as effective wake-up calls to save the Dead Sea’s vulnerable ecosystem. This form of advocacy has drawn extensive media coverage to the area, as a means of inculcating awareness about the dismal plight of a vanishing treasure. In the hope of averting an environmental catastrophe, and as a last-ditch effort to save the rapidly receding endorheic lake, some highly unusual efforts have been made. For example, photographer Spencer Tunick shot over 1,200 nude men and women at the Dead Sea, posing in the water or next to sinkholes. Israeli artist Sigalit Landau immersed a 19th-century black bridal gown in the Dead Sea, and other objects such as a violin and a bicycle, until they were transformed into sparkling white statues. Furthermore, a group of experienced swimmers (swim) in mid-November, 2016, wearing specially designed protective masks and snorkels - a masochistic feat, since swallowing even a sip of the water could result in severe brain damage.

While these bold ventures certainly deserve praise, more detailed education about the topography, geography, and indigenous wildlife of the Dead Sea region is of utmost importance. Much effort is being made to significantly expand Dead Sea research in all its multidisciplinary aspects. Therefore, the Dead Sea Research Institute was established close to Masada in cooperation with the Tamar Regional Council, the Ministry of Regional Cooperation, and the Ministry of Science under the auspices of Tel Aviv University and Ben-Gurion University.

Throughout our visit, one impression recurred as we traveled. It was the way the Dead Sea was always glimpsed lying far below, absolutely still and hazy, between a fantastic range of geological structures and colors of the valley. Bruce Pearson

The Dead Sea and the Judean Desert, raise childhood memories of family trips, adventures with friends and nature tours, striving to get a glimpse of leopards that have since vanished, and searching for elusive Strix owls.

The landscape of the Dead Sea changes not only from year to year, but also throughout the day, and the extent of its natural resources is still not fully understood...
The southernmost part of the Dead Sea is a starkly obvious example of man’s exploitation of valuable natural resources. Witnessing firsthand the drastic drops in water levels in the north and the scale of the operations to extract the highly lucrative potash in the south, makes the realization of our impact upon this very special place only too evident.

Rosanne Guille

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Rosanne Guille
We go into a small nature reserve along the Dead Sea where that particular and typical bird is supposed to breed. Indeed, lots of nests, but from last year… it is too early. We all go into the bushes, dreaming of some sparrows. Excited.

Laurent Willenegger
Nick Derry
Crowned Sandgrouse
Watercolor and pencil on paper
21 x 30 cm
Israel, Field Sketch

Ascher Tyson
Bulbul on Pipe, Ein Feshka
Oil on paper
59.4 x 42 cm
Israel
Juan Varela
Bonelli’s Eagle Nestlings
Pencil and watercolor on paper
27 x 37 cm
Israel

חואן וורלה
גוזלי עיט ניצי
עיפרון וצבעי מים על נייר
ישראל

Juan Varela
Bonelli’s Eagle Nestlings
Watercolor on paper
50 x 70 cm
Israel

חואן فاريלה
عش عقاب بونلي
ألوان مائية على ورق
ישראל
I have been connected to the Dead Sea since 1973 (45 years ago), when I studied the biology of the Bonelli’s Eagle for my MSc thesis. Back then, these raptors were nesting in almost every wadi on both sides of the Dead Sea. When the entire group of artists sat in front of the Bonelli’s eagle’s nest and painted the adults and the chicks, I suddenly felt 26 years old again! In order to convince decision-makers and the public at large about the importance of preserving the Dead Sea, two parallel channels must be at work: one is a channel to the brain through science, and the other is a channel to the heart and soul through painting, music, and dancing. At the seminar we attained this dual goal.

Professor Yossi Leshem, one of the seminar’s organizers
Early wakeup, driving through the night. As we stand in front of a little pond in the desert at sunrise, we wait for drinking sandgrouse. Expectations and hot coffee! All the birdwatchers arestrained, where are they? A group of sandgrouse just landed, but it is now invisible…. What cryptic birds!
John Foker
Swifts - Evening
Print and collage on paper
35 x 44 cm
Jordan, Studio

Debby Kaspari
Blackstart
Pencil on paper
22 x 20 cm
Israel, Field sketch
All the while, as I sat on the edge of the valley overlooking Ein Gedi, I was surrounded by a loose and noisy flock of Fan-tailed Ravens. Like all Ravens, the Fan-tailed is supremely agile in the air - ceaselessly tumbling and diving, floating and drifting, soaring and gliding as they ride the strong updrafts along the valley walls.

Bruce Pearson
Nick Derry
Little Green Bee-eaters
Acrylic on paper
39 x 60 cm
From hotel in Jordan, Studio

Debby Kaspari
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater
Pencil, watercolor, and pastel on paper
26 x 20 cm
Israel, Field sketch
Incredible migration time. A bush nearby is hiding a Rüppell’s warbler, a rarity for all of us! Moving within three bushes, that bird is a perfect subject, always around, sometimes very close, ideal for drawing from life!
Brin Edwards
Blackstart
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 16 cm
Israel, Ein Gedi

Juan Varela
Out of the Sand, Desert Partridge
Watercolor on paper
35 x 45 cm
Israel

Laurent Willenegger
Little Green Bee-eater
Watercolor on paper
40 x 50 cm
Israel, Plein air
I have found half a barrel filled with water – a good place to be in the desert. Tristram’s Grackles have taken water, then sparrows, and though flighty, the Fan-tailed Ravens have returned frequently to take small amounts at a time... They are aware of my presence. The wind is howling through the wire fencing behind me and sounds almost biblical. An ancient and beautiful sound against the landscape of the Judean Desert. Pale salmon, bright naple, and sienna. Soft sandstone, small pebbles, and some scattered rock. Completely barren, stunning!

لى

على عثرتُ على نصف برميل مملوء بالماء، مكان جيد أجلس فيه في الصحراء. وفد إ
الماء زرزور أسود وتبعه بلابل، ورغم تحليق الغربان قصيري الذنب هنا وهناك،
عادت في كل مرة لجرعة أخرى.... كانت عارفة بوجودي. الريح تصفر عبر سور
الأسلاك ورائي وبدت كأنها من أول الخلق. نغم قديم وجميل على خلفية صحراء
يهودا. لون السلمون مُشرق، بنيّ أصفر،. حجر رملية لينة وأحجار الوادي وعدد
من الصخور المنتشرة. قفر نهائي، مُذهل!
This is the first time in my life that I have been outside Europe. The textures, sounds, buildings, people all seem very different. Amazing - bird species that are so exotic to me are commonplace here: Laughing Doves, Yellow-vented Bulbuls. The most eye-catching are the tiny Palestine Sunbirds buzzing around the hibiscus and rosemary... I position myself next to a rosemary bush. A male obliges, flitting close by, a vision of blue iridescence and blur of wings. A female perches nearby, all subtle greys and browns. The formal arches and columns and standard citrus trees in the garden complement their movement and color.

John Foker
Brin Edwards
Sand Partridges
Oil on canvas
30 x 60 cm
Israel

Amir Balaban
Griffon Vultures
Pencil and watercolor
25 x 35 cm
Israel, Field sketch
The intensity of the light in the valley can bleach the colors of the exposed landscape, but there are wonderful hues and tones in the shadows. An Egyptian vulture in full sunlight passing along the shadows of the valley wall in the middle of the day provided an opportunity to quickly explore the colors and shapes of bird and landscape.

Bruce Pearson

Egyptian Vulture
Watercolor and pencil on paper
30 x 42 cm
John Foker
Sweeping through Jordan
Oil on board
30 x 45 cm
Studio

ג'ון פוקר
בתעופה בירדן
שמן על לוח
סטודיו

John Foker
Sand Partridge
and Scorpion
Oil on board
30 x 45 cm
Israel, Ein Gedi

ג'ון פוקר
קורא ועקרב
שמן על לוח
ישראל, עין גדי
Zev Labinger

Barbary Falcon, Wadi Tze’lim
Watercolor on paper
60 x 80 cm
Israel, Studio

זאב לבינגר
בז מדברי, נחל צאלים
צבעי מים על נייר
ישראל, סטודיו

Fan-tailed Ravens
Watercolor on paper
30 x 21 cm
Wadi Zarqa Ma’in, Field sketch
Jordan

זאות קצרי-זנב
עורבים קצרי-זנב
ألوان מائية על וرق
ואדי זרקא-מעין, צויר בשטח
ירדן
Laurent Willenegger
Blackstart, a Daylong Companion
Watercolor on paper
40 x 50 cm
Israel, Ein Gedi, Plein air

Bernd Pöppelmann
Hoopoe
Acrylic on paper
35 x 40 cm
Studio
John Foker
Little Green Bee-eaters, Perched
Pastel on paper
18 x 42 cm
Jordan, Field sketch

ג'ון פוקר
שרקרקים גמדיים, במנוחה
פסטל על נייר
ירדן, צויר בשטח
Zev Labinger
Tristram’s Grackles, Wadi Tzelim
Oil on canvas
50 x 70 cm
Israel, Studio

Nick Derry
Tristram’s Grackles
Watercolor on paper
50 x 70 cm
Israel, Studio based on field sketches
John Foker
Palestine Sunbirds in the Hotel Garden
Oil on board
20 x 45 cm
Jordan, Studio
Laurent Willenegger
Tristram’s Grackles in the Desert
Watercolor on paper
40 x 50 cm
Israel, Plein air

James Coe
Desert Pedestal - Laughing Dove
Oil on linen
30.5 x 40.7 cm
Israel, Wadi David, Studio
John Foker

Hoopoe Sweeping
Through Print and Collage on Paper
30 x 20 cm
Jordan Studio

No Borders for Bee-eaters
Print and Collage on Paper
18 x 42 cm
Jordan Studio

Birds

ציפורים

الطيور

No Borders for Bee-eaters
No حدود على النمل
No حدود في طيرانه
No حدود

Print and Collage on Paper
طباعة و كولاج على نَيْر
طباعة وكولاج على ورق
طباعة وكولاج على ورق

18 x 42 cm
18 x 42 cm
18 x 42 cm

Jordan Studio
يرדן، ستوديو
يرדן، ستوديو
يرדן، ستوديو
Other Flora and Fauna

Other Flora and Fauna

Kائنات حية ونباتات أخرى
Zev Labinger
Tamarisk Bloom
Watercolor on paper
50 x 40 cm
Israel, Field sketch

Anne Shingleton
Old Palm, Kibbutz Ein Gedi
Pastel on colored paper
32 x 49 cm
Israel, Plein air
As our days of working together as artists/naturalists around the Dead Sea passed, a secret world of life that I had no idea could exist there, unfolded for me. Wherever there was water, there was life in rich variety and abundance: beetles and praying mantises, salt-tolerant shrubs and trees, small birds, frogs and fish in freshwater spring pools, bats and owls, hundreds of kinds of birds and many, many visiting migrant species of all dimensions.

Anne Shingleton

In سياق أيامنا المشترك كفنانين/علماء طبيعة حول البحر الميت، عالم سري لمملكة الحيوان التي لم أفكر أنها موجودة هناك، تجلى أمام أمي. حيث كانت الماء، كانت الحياة في أنواع غنية ومتنوعة: الخنافس وفرس النبي، والشجيرات والأشجار مقاومة للملح، الطيور الصغيرة والضفادع والأسماك في برك المياه العذبة، والخفافيش والبوم، الطيور الجارحة وأسراب الطيور المهاجرة بأحجام مختلفة.

آن شينجلتون
I was struck by the angular beauty and distinctive patterning of this beetle passing close to where I was sitting on a hillside overlooking the Dead Sea. I steered the creature onto a small canvas panel and for a while hemmed it in with smooth plastic boxes, bottles and painting tools. Crouching close to the ground and as near to eye-level as possible, I studied the insect's movements and made these drawings.

Bruce Pearson

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Bruce Pearson
The sun was fading and the sky was getting hazy. Jordan glowed pink in the distance, on the other side of the sea that was shimmering silver and blue. The sinkholes just below were set like turquoise stones in dull bronze. A ragged-looking fox slunk by - it cast a quick glance in my direction as it hurried along, its piercing yellow eyes seemingly on fire in the gathering dusk.

Nick Derry

The الشمس تتلاشى والسماء ضبابية. تلألأ الأردن ورديا في المدى، من الجهة الأخرى للبحر الذي لمع فضيا على أزرق. والبالوعات في الأسفل تُشبه أحجارا فيروزية وسط برونز باهت. ثعلب مجزل مرّ بجانبي، نظر إليّ على عجل وواصل طريقه، فيما عيناه الصفراوان اللامعتان كأنهما تستعلان باللهب في ضوء المغيب.

ניק דרי
In this very inhospitable and dry-looking gorge, there are scruby bushes and hardy little flowers dotted around amongst the boulders and small pools... Here in this huge expanse, what seems to be lifeless at first sight opens up slowly when you just sit and watch a while. I decided to study a tiny area of plant life for at least an hour, and was rewarded by seeing countless beetles and insects scurrying about.

Rosanne Guille
Esther Tyson
Female Nubian Ibex and Kid
Oil on paper
59.4 x 84 cm
Israel

Early morning and the colors intermingle. The wall in the hillside, standing on the last remnants of sunlight and light of dawn. One by one the females lead their kids on well-trodden paths down the edge of the hill into the valley below.

Esther Tyson
Female Nubian Ibex and Kid
Oil on paper
10 x 10 cm
Israel

Rosanne Guille
Female Nubian Ibex and Kid
Oil on canvas
25 x 25 cm
Israel

In a late spring, the sunlight at the peak is bright and clear. The shadows are long, and the image of the ibex is almost like a silhouette. The colors in the scene are vivid and contrasting, creating a sense of depth and movement.

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This large wasp-colored Hornet just landed beside me in the water. I rescued it on the end of my pencil, though very careful not to get too close! It looks like it could cause a very nasty sting!

Ad Van Liempt
'Negev' no. 3
Oil on canvas
65 x 65 cm
Israel, Studio
I discovered three strong ibex climbing on a slope. Later they ascended, quietly crossed a road and grazed on a sparsely grassy area... I was able to observe and portray them in numerous sketches, and take photos with my small digital camera. In the afternoon I did a color study, and back home I tried to recreate that experience in my oil paintings.

גילהיתי שלושה יעלים חזקים מטפסים במעלה מדרון. מאוחר יותר הם ירדו, חצו בשקט דרך ועצרו לרעות באזור של עשב דליל... יכולתי להתבונן בהם ולרשום כמה רישומים, וצילמתי תמונות במצלמה הדיגיטלית הקטנה שלי. אחר הצהריים רשמתי תיאור צבעוני, ובשובי הביתה ניסיתי לשחזר את הנחיות זו בציורי השמן שלי.
A hyrax passes by, forced by tourists on either side, seemingly oblivious to all the people... He stops a few meters beyond me, stands still, and gives a side glance as if to say, “There’s someone sitting there and painting??!” Made me smile.

אסתר טיסון

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Rosanne Guille
Female Nubian Ibex on the Dead Sea Shore
Watercolor and acrylic on paper
38 x 56 cm
Israel

רווזאן ג'יל
יעל נובי, נקבה, על שפת ים המלח
צבעי מים ואקריליק על נייר
ישראל

Flora and Fauna
Anna Kirk-Smith
The Lowest Lunchbox on Earth
Cardboard box, mixed media, tape with detritus from Dead Sea shore
24 x 18 x 27 cm
Israel, Ein Gedi, Field work

אנה קירק-סמית
קופסת האוכל הנמוכה בעולם
ארגז קרטון, טכניקה מעורבת, סרט עם שפוכת מחוף ים המלח
ישראל, עין גדי, נוצר בשטח
Esther Tyson
Esther Tyson
Water Pipes, Wadi Zarqa Ma'in
Oil on Paper
42 x 59 cm
Jordan

ascoṭ’ Ṭaisūn
אסתר טיסון
צינורות מים, ואדי זרקא-מעין
שמן על נייר
ירדן

Rosanne Guille
Rosanne Guille
Griffon Vulture over the Dead Sea Works
Charcoal on paper
60 x 60 cm
Israel

רווזאן ג’יל
אמין股权投资的
ציפורי קבש מעל מפעלי ים המלח
פחם על נייר
ישראל
John Foker
Drawing from Bus
Pen on paper
15 x 18 cm
Jordan, Field sketch
ג'ון פוקר
ציור מהאוטובוס
עט על נייר
ירדן, צויר בשטח
الرسم من الحافلة
قلم حبر على ورق
الأردن، رُسمت في الطبيعة
Anna Kirk-Smith
The Unholy Dove
Mixed media painting with collage on paper
Israel, Studio

This poor bird bears on its shoulders a weighty symbolic history. This piece depicts the anthropomorphic daily contemplations of doves and their activity at Wadi Zin.

Aנה קירק-סמית
היונה 'הלא קדושה'
ציור בטכניקה מעורבת עם קולאז' על נייר
ישראל, סטודיו

אנה קירק-סמית
הentlich מושב בתופעת היסטורית סמלית. האיסור מתאר את יום-יום האמנויות של הפנינים ברואו קינן שלהם בנהר צין.
On one of our first painting days in Jordan, we came upon an enormous water diversion structure in Wadi Zarqa Ma’in, one of many that have been built at the bottom of mountain canyons. Walking from below, the river bed was entirely dry. But as we climbed up past the structure, all of a sudden there was a river running down! It was surrealistic. Such a poignant reminder of how literally the life-lines of the Dead Sea are being severed and yet these are also life-lines to the parched Jordanians.

Zev Labinger
Some examples of the graffiti (loosely translated):

“Who owns the rain?” (in Arabic), from the book ‘Watershed – The Role of Fresh Water in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict’ by Professor Malin Falkenmark, a renowned water scientist.

“Hope” on the rock in the foreground (in Arabic).

“If there is a political will for peace, water will not be a hindrance. If you want reason’s to fight, water will give you ample opportunities.” (in Hebrew) Uri Shamir – Israeli Professor of Hydrology

“When you drink the water, remember the spring.”

(Chinese Proverb written in Arabic).

Anna Kirk-Smith

فيما يلي أمثلة للجرافيتي بترجمة حرة

“مَن هو مالك المطر؟” ـ بالعربية ـ من كتاب “مسألة المياه العذبة في الصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني” لمؤلّفته بروفيسور مالين فلاكنمارك باحثة مشهورة في شؤون المياه.

“الأمل” على الصخرة في الواجهة (بالعربية)

“إذا وُجدت الإرادة السياسية لتحقيق السلام، لن تكون المياه عائقا. وإذا أردتَ أسبابا للحرب، ستعطيك المياه أسبابا كافية” (بالعربية)

أوري شمير ـ بروفيسور للهيدرولوجيا

“عندما تسبح في الماء لا تنس الينابيع”

(مثل صيني مكتوب بالعربية)
Layer One: The Overview

A wooden urn (relieved of its previous inhabitant) shows the past and present impacts of industry and tourism on the Dead Sea ecosystem.

Bruce Pearson
Dead Sea evening light
Watercolor and oil pastel on paper
60 x 42 cm
Israel, Ein Gedi

A wooden tray with sand and mixed media maps
26 x 26 x 4 cm

Anna Kirk-Smith
Prepared Obituary
Wooden urn with mixed media/collected objects
27 x 27 x 25 cm
These date palms had died, their roots deprived of water by the sink holes beneath them.

Brin Edwards

أشجار نخيل ميتة بعدما انحرفت المياه عن جذورها بسبب البالوعات التي انفتحت تحتها.

برين ادواردز
It was a bit overwhelming. Storks, Black Kites and Cattle Egrets were flying in constantly, as tippers and trucks moved back and forth. Months later, I still wonder about the long-term health implications for the birds, now that this large land-fill site has become a regular migration stop-over.

John Foker

كان مُدهشا حقّا جدا. طيور اللقالق والحدأة السوداء وأبو قِرْدان حامت حولنا باستمرار في حين سارت شاحنات النفايا ذهابا وإيابا. وانا على بُعد أشهر لا أزال اتساءل عن الآثار الصحية على الطيور للمدى البعيد، إذ أن مدفن النفايات هذا تحول إلى محطة رئيسة في مسار الطيور المهاجرة.

جون بوكر

Nick Derry

Plastic Bags and Fan-Tailed Ravens
Mixed (including monoprint and pen)
70 x 50 cm
Jordan, Wadi Ma’in Zarqa, Studio

ניק דרי

שקיות פלסטיק ועורבים קצרי-זנב
טכניקה מעורבת (הכוללת הדפס מונו ועט)
ירדן, ואדי זרקא-מעין, סטודיו

نيك ديري

أكياس بلاستيكية وغربان قصيرة الذيل
تقنية مُدمجة (تشمل طباعة مونو ورسم بالقلم)
الأردن، وادي الزرقاء ـ معان، ستوديو
Nick Derry
Black kites, white storks and cattle egrets
Mixed media (mostly collage)
on cardboard
60 x 78 cm
Bernd Pöppelmann
Tirza Garbage Site
Oil on linen
60 x 80 cm
Studio

ברנד פופלמן
מטמנת תרצה
שמן על פשתן
60x80 סמ''ע
סטודיו

براند فوفلمان
مكب نفايات ترتسا
زيت على الكتان
60x80 سم
ستوديو
This piece looks at the ‘dump experience’ where birds thrive on human waste. It also celebrates its surprisingly supportive conservation role, while questioning the perception of an ideal natural habitat...

Anna Kirk-Smith

This piece examines the ‘dump experience’, where birds thrive on human waste. It also celebrates its surprisingly supportive conservation role, while questioning the perception of an ideal natural habitat...

Anna Kirk-Smith
Brin Edwards

Storks at a Rubbish Tip

Oil on canvas

50 x 120 cm

ブライン・エドワーズ

ゴミ場でのストーカー

オイルフィンISHED

50 x 120 cm
During the seminar, after the exciting opening night concert following the Paul Winter Consort, we drove the following day to the Jordan crossing at Sheikh Hussein Bridge in the Bet Shean Valley. On the way, we stopped at the first garbage dump about seventy kilometers north of the Dead Sea, in the heart of the Great Rift Valley. The landfill is a stopover site for thousands of White Storks and Black Kites that congregate there at the height of their spring migration. We decided to stop there in order to emphasize how, just like the Dead Sea which has been severely damaged by technological development, White Storks in all the Palearctic regions have found an alternative to feeding in natural habitats — landfills. It was a unique and memorable experience for our group of natural historians, who immediately whipped out their brushes, sketchbooks, binoculars, and telescopes and got busy sketching and painting. You can see here the superb results of their work...

Professor Yossi Leshem

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Professor Yossi Leshem
Laurent Willenegger
Swallows and Barbary Falcon along Dead Sea
Watercolor on paper
40 x 50 cm
Jordan, Plein air
Anna Kirk-Smith
*Out of the Ordinary*
Acrylic on paper
42 x 59 cm

Jordan

Debby Kaspari
*Overlook to Dead Sea from Zara Mountains*
Pastel on sanded paper
26 x 21 cm

Jordan, Plein air
The evening sun as it slipped behind the Israeli cliffs, which resemble a gargantuan and historic beast, gives one a feeling of utter privilege to be here.
James Coe
Afternoon Shadow
Oil on linen
33.5 x 48.5 cm
Israel, Studio

ג'יימס קו
צל אחר-הצהריים
שמן על פשתן
33.5 x 48.5 ס"מ
ישראל, סטודיו

John Foker
Dead Sea Collage
Mixed media on paper
35 x 25 cm
Jordan, Field sketch

ג'ון פוקר
קולאז' ים המלח
טכניקה מעורבת על נייר
ירדן, צויר בשטח
The Dead Sea, huge and strange. Special and electrical light, metallic. Sudden the gray sky opens and the water is shining.

Laurent Willenegger
Shining Water of the Dead Sea
Watercolor on paper
50 x 40 cm
Israel, Plein air

ים המלח, עצום ומוזר. אור מיוחד וחשמלי, מתכתי.  לפתע נפתחים השמיים האפורים והמים מנצנצים.
Debby Kaspari
Gordon Wadi River
Pastel on sanded paper
20 x 27 cm
Plein air

Brin Edwards
Wadi Zarqa Ma'in in Jordan
Gouache on paper
39.5 x 17 cm
Field painting
The dramatic arid landscapes were subtly colored in hues of tan and gray, with very little vegetation. I found myself wishing I'd brought a grayer, more high-key palette. We were on a schedule, however, there was one upside to keeping a rapid pace: it forced me to paint more loosely.

Debby Kaspari
Sensitive balances are changing fast. Evidence was in the white bands of salt around the edges of the Dead Sea, like the rings in a bathtub, demarcating the fall of the sea level by a dramatic meter each year and the worrying appearance of dangerous sink holes along the coast of the Dead Sea.
Anna Kirk-Smith
Watching the Tide Go Out
Mixed media in sketchbook
29.5 x 84 cm

Zev Labinger
Dead Sea from Wadi Zarqa Ma’in
Watercolor on paper
40 x 50 cm
Jordan, Plein air
There is no such thing as untouched wilderness in this part of the world. Every place, no matter how far out, had been trampled, manipulated, or built upon. Our history is there, all over. You may think you are in a remote spot, but then you notice old stonework or rocks that have been moved by humans.

James Coe

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ważיAEA

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James Coe
Rosanne Guille
Dead Sea Shore
Pencil on paper
20 x 30 cm
Jordan, Field sketch

John Foker
At Wadi Zarqa Ma'in
Mixed media on paper
25 x 90 cm
Jordan, Field sketch
Esther Tyson  
Wadi Zarqa Ma’in  
Oil on paper  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Jordan

Ad van Liempt  
'Dead Sea Project' no. 5  
Oil on paper  
41 x 29.5 cm  
Jordan, Plein air
Ad Van Liempt
'Dead Sea Project' no. 13
Oil on paper
41 x 29.5 cm
Jordan, Plein air

Ad Van Liempt
'Dead Sea Project' no. 16
Oil on paper
41 x 29.5 cm
Israel, Plein air

Ad Van Liempt
'Dead Sea Project' no. 20
Oil on paper
41 x 29.5 cm
Israel, Plein air
These twelve days made a tremendous impression on me. Colors and structures in the ever changing light led to a surprisingly fast production of works. There was not a single moment in which I wondered how this would end. At home in my studio I started a new series of paintings, all on canvas, with those typical colors and structures in un-Dutch light. These paintings became increasingly abstract. However, the works retained recognizable and natural elements, strongly affected by the landscape in Israel and Jordan.

Ad van Liempt

Bruce Pearson

هذه الأثنى عشر يوما تركت لدي انطباعا كبيرا ... الألوان والمباني في الضوء المتغيرّ طيلة الوقت، سرّع وتيرة الإنتاج بشكل لا يُصدّق. لم أتساءل ولو للحظة متى ننتهي من العمل... في البيت وفي الستوديو، بدأت سلسلة جديدة من الرسومات، زيت على كتان، في الألوان والأطياف المألوفة في الضوء الغريب عن موطني هولندة. تحوّلت الرسومات إلى تجريدية، أكثر فأكثر. مع هذا، حافظت الرسومات على العناصر الطبيعية المعروفة، مع تأثير كبير للمناظر في إسرائيل وأردن.

إد فان ليمبت

بروس بيرسون

Ad van Liempt

Bruce Pearson

'Negev' no. 8
Oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm
Israel, Studio

'Edge of the Sea'
Watercolor and pencil on paper
42 x 30 cm
Jordan, northern end of Dead Sea
Debby Kaspari
Cliffs in Wadi Zarqa Ma’in, Jordan
Pastel on sanded paper
27 x 21 cm
Plein air

Laurent Willenegger
A Raven above the Wadi Zarqa Ma’in
Watercolor on paper
40 x 50 cm
Jordan, Plein air
Something that Laurent Willenegger said is deeply engrained in my memory. "You just have to look and paint the landscape as it is. For instance, the sky at the edge of the horizon over the sea—its green, isn’t it?!!" Just as the sky over the Dead Sea changes colors, so too, the sea itself redefines the ‘wonders of nature’ that must be preserved at all costs.

Yuval Dax
It was a joy to be painting a landscape fresh to my eyes, so different from the lush green fields of home. With the Dead Sea spread before me… I could almost sense geologically, the vastness of the shifting tectonic plates ever moving apart, and the constant swirling of the sun around our precious planet. A more encompassing view, and a very humbling experience indeed. That afternoon I was spurred by the fast changing sun’s rays of late evening, into working quickly trying to capture the momentary sublime beauty of the Jordanian mountains glowing in opalescent colors beyond the cobalt waters.

Anne Shingleton

Artist's Statement

The sun is what nourishes the earth, and it is always changing: a constant reminder of the ephemeral nature of all life on this planet. It is this idea that I attempt to convey in my paintings, and my hope is that they convey the same sense of wonder and awe that I feel when I am painting.

Anne Shingleton

Jordan at Sunset

Oil on prepared board

40 x 40 cm

Studio

יוזמה וPerspectives

It was a joy to be painting a landscape fresh to my eyes, so different from the lush green fields of home. With the Dead Sea spread before me… I could almost sense geologically, the vastness of the shifting tectonic plates ever moving apart, and the constant swirling of the sun around our precious planet. A more encompassing view, and a very humbling experience indeed. That afternoon I was spurred by the fast changing sun’s rays of late evening, into working quickly trying to capture the momentary sublime beauty of the Jordanian mountains glowing in opalescent colors beyond the cobalt waters.

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40 x 40 cm

Studio
בעקבות הנمور והבومة של הנגב. ישתנה הנוף של ים המלח כל יום ו bütün יום, ומדברים האנשים הקשורים ל_NATIVE_BIOME ו-/native. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 בנגב, מחיפה. האמנים火车站 بن-native.
Amir Balaban, Israel
Amir Balaban, born in Jerusalem, has practiced wildlife art from an early age. He has written and illustrated a book entitled The Galin and produced Nature Hallucinations exhibitions, and videos that are an integral part of wildlife conservation projects. Amir is chairman of the Galin Bulbul Wildlife Art Gallery located in the JerusalemBird Observatory. He is also the director of the urban nature department at the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI).

James Coe, USA
James Coe studied biology at Harvard University and painting at Parsons School of Design. He has spent more than thirty years melding art and science as a naturalist, field guide illustrator, and landscape and wildlife artist. His pocket Golden Field Guide: Hidden Wildlife was acclaimed a "Year in the Life" when it was published in 1994. In 2011 Coe was chosen as Master Wildlife Artist in the AIA/IPW Art of the Wild Show at the Leigh Yawkey Museum in Wisconsin.

Quentin Budworth, England
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John Fokes, England
John Fokes created his fine art degree and became a founding member of Breakpear Artists Cooperative in a Community Center in County Durham, where he shares a studio and have worked collaboratively since 1993. John is a member of Society of Wildlife Artists and was Artist for Nature Illustration award winner at the 2013 Annual Exhibition of the Mal Art Gallery, London.

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Brin Edwards has a a BSc in Biology and an MA in Ecology, he spent twenty years as a freelance natural history illustrator working for many UK and European book and magazine publishers. Brin is particularly interested in the effects of light and using it in a stunning way in his works. He is a member of the Society of Wildlife Artists and is the EYF prize in 2016.

Rosanne Guille, Sark, Channel Islands
Rosanne Guille was raised on the Channel Island of Sark. She studied Illustration at Beresford and Cardiff College of Art and Design London. Then he took several watercolor painting classes at St. John’s wildlife and its wildlife is in its original habitat around the world. Rosanne has illustrated the BBC Wildlife magazine, Wildlife Painting, and has worked accepted into the annual exhibitions of the Society of Wildlife Artists and the Royal Minster Society.

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James Coe studied biology at Harvard University and painting at Parsons School of Design. He has spent more than thirty years melding art and science as a naturalist, field guide illustrator, and landscape and wildlife artist. His pocket Golden Field Guide: Hidden Wildlife was acclaimed a "Year in the Life" when it was published in 1994. In 2011 Coe was chosen as Master Wildlife Artist in the AIA/IPW Art of the Wild Show at the Leigh Yawkey Museum in Wisconsin.

Quentin Budworth, England
Quentin Budworth is a socially engaged based artist and musician. He studied Art History, specializing in film, photography, and communications. In 1993, Quentin set up a street theater company called The Gringred Artic 1993, and after that a new legendary musician named Tomelial. From 2000-2003, Quentin was lead artist for Creative Partnerships in England, working on projects in all schools in the UK. Quentin is currently working on a project for the City of Culture which has taken him around social and print media by storms, featuring prominently across the globe.
Debby Kaspari, USA
Debby Kaspari paints wildlife and landscapes, mostly in pastels. A designer and illustrator for over 30 years, Kaspari has created the plates of Birds in Art, Art and the Animal Kingdom. She is the first artist to ever receive Harvard's Charles Bullard Environmental Award for Nature, and her work has been exhibited worldwide, including in the prestigious Birds in Art show at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum. Kaspari is one of the organizers of this project, and the past Artists for Nature project, co-authoring the book entitled Drawing Inspiration from the Animal Kingdom.

Kazuyo Nomura, Japan
At the age of 12, Kazuyo Nomura received an award for drawing and painting. In 1982, Nomura received a scholarship to attend the Tokyo National College of Craft and Design. Nomura has won numerous awards, including the Grand Prize in the 1999 Wildlife Artists Undergraduate Award. Nomura specializes in pastels and watercolor, and her work is currently on display at a variety of galleries, royal palaces, and museums.

Biographies: About The Artists
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Debby Kaspari, Israel
Debby Kaspari is a wildlife artist and botanical illustrator. Her work is currently exhibited at the Shmuel Halkin Gallery in Ramat Gan, Israel. She was one of the first artists in the Shmuel Halkin Gallery and has also exhibited at the Jerusalem Museum of Natural History. Kaspari’s artwork is characterized by its delicate and detailed illustrations of plants and animals. In addition to her art, Kaspari is also a writer and has published several books and articles on natural history.

Esther Tyson, England
Esther Tyson is an artist and illustrator. She has been an art teacher at the Royal College of Art in London for over 20 years. Tyson’s artwork is known for its precise and detailed depictions of wildlife. She has worked on several projects related to conservation and environmental issues. Tyson’s artwork has been exhibited at the Art Renewal Center Salon in NYC and has been featured in numerous books and magazines.

Juan Varela Simó, Spain
Juan Varela Simó is a wildlife artist and conservationist. He was born in 1960 in Spain and has been working in the field of wildlife conservation since 1980. Varela Simó’s artwork is known for its realistic depictions of wildlife, and he has worked on several projects related to conservation and environmental issues. His artwork has been exhibited in many countries, including the United States, Canada, and many European countries.

Esther Tyson
Esther Tyson has exhibited in the USA, Canada, and many European countries. She has been a member of the Royal Institute of Art and has been a finalist in the Birds in Art competition. Her work has been featured in many books and magazines, including the Art Renewal Center Salon.

Professor Yosi Leichter, Israel
Yosi Leichter is a professor in the Department of Biology at the Weizmann Institute of Science. He has been involved in the study of bird migration since 1957 and has conducted numerous research projects on bird migration. Leichter has also worked on the nature magazine of the Wildlife Foundation. He is involved in a variety of activities related to bird migration research, including educational activities and cooperation with the Palestinians and the Jordanians. Leichter led a regional project using Ben-Dov and篙es and was an editor and writer of the Israeli Wildlife Magazine. His research for his doctorate, which was conducted in cooperation with the Israeli Air Force, resulted in a decrease of 76% in the number of collisions between birds and airplanes and has saved the national budget over one billion dollars, not to mention the lives of the animals.

Laurent Wildengger, Switzerland
Laurent Wildengger is a wildlife artist and illustrator. He was born in 1960 in Switzerland and has been working in the field of wildlife conservation since 1980. Wildengger’s artwork is known for its realistic depictions of wildlife, and he has worked on several projects related to conservation and environmental issues. His artwork has been exhibited in many countries, including the United States, Canada, and many European countries.
Biographies

Hadas Marcus, Israel

Jewish Marcus, the main author of this book, is a lecturer in English at the Academic College of Tel Aviv and the Academic Academy College. As a scholar of education and culture, she is a leader in environmental and nature conservation. At the Be'er Sheva Center for Animal Ethics, she has given talks at numerous international conferences and published several articles and book chapters dealing with environmental education and animal welfare. Hadas resides in the Jezre'el Valley, Israel.

Sorrel Reiter, Israel

Surrounded by wildlife and natural beauty in South Africa, Sur nel established an early connection with nature. She studied at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in zoology and botany. She has written several books, which have received excellent reviews. Sornel is deeply concerned with the protection of nature and wildlife. She is the founder and director of the SPNI (Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel) event at the Dead Sea. Sorrel’s passion is raising awareness of the imminent dangers of climate change and she has given over 60 lectures on the topic.

Renate Zöller, Germany

Renate Zöller has worked as a journalist and author. She has written numerous articles and books, which have been translated into several languages. Since 2018 she has lived in Moscow and Prague, where she received her journalism degree. Renate has published works in various newspapers and magazines. She has also published several books, which have received excellent reviews.

Paul Winter, USA

Paul Winter’s musical journey embraces world cultures, as well as wildlife, vision, in which he refers to as “Earth’s symphony of life.” His early love of all animals, a college basketball star, which toured 25 countries of Latin America for the State Department and performed the first-ever jazz concert at the White House in 1962, to his later ensemble, the Paul Winter Consort, his concert tour and recording projects have taken him to 72 countries and wilderness areas on six continents. Winter has received an album of the year award from the Grammy Awards. Since 1986 the Paul Winter Consort has been artists-in-residence at the world’s largest cathedral, which has inspired over 200 events. They have developed a unique genre of “Earth Music,” which celebrates the creatures and cultures of our magnificent planet.

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Biographies: About The Musicians

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Paul Winter playing the soprano saxophone. Photo credit: Ancho Gosh / JINI Photo

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