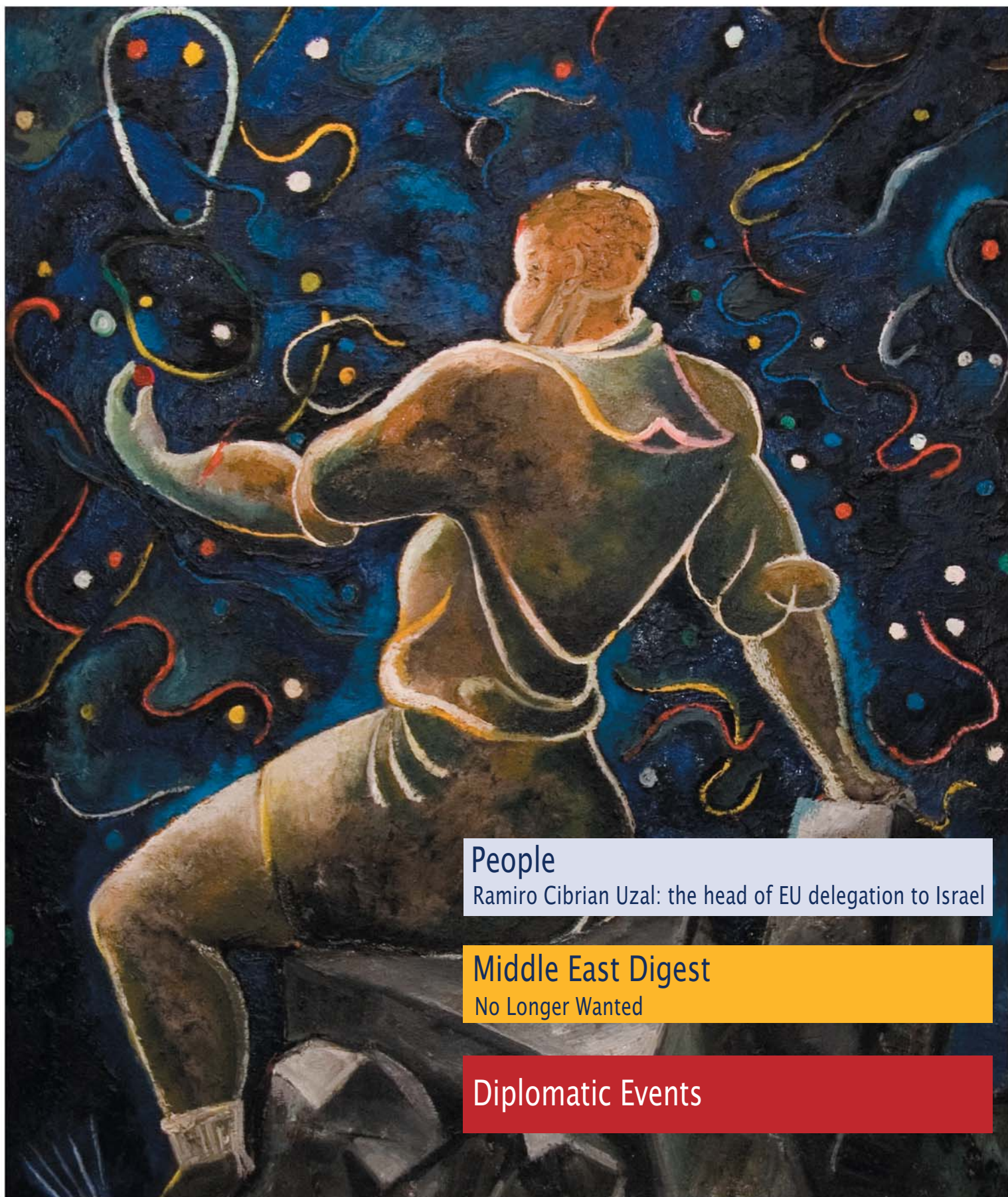




The Diplomatic Club

August 2007 **Magazine**



People

Ramiro Cibrian Uzal: the head of EU delegation to Israel

Middle East Digest

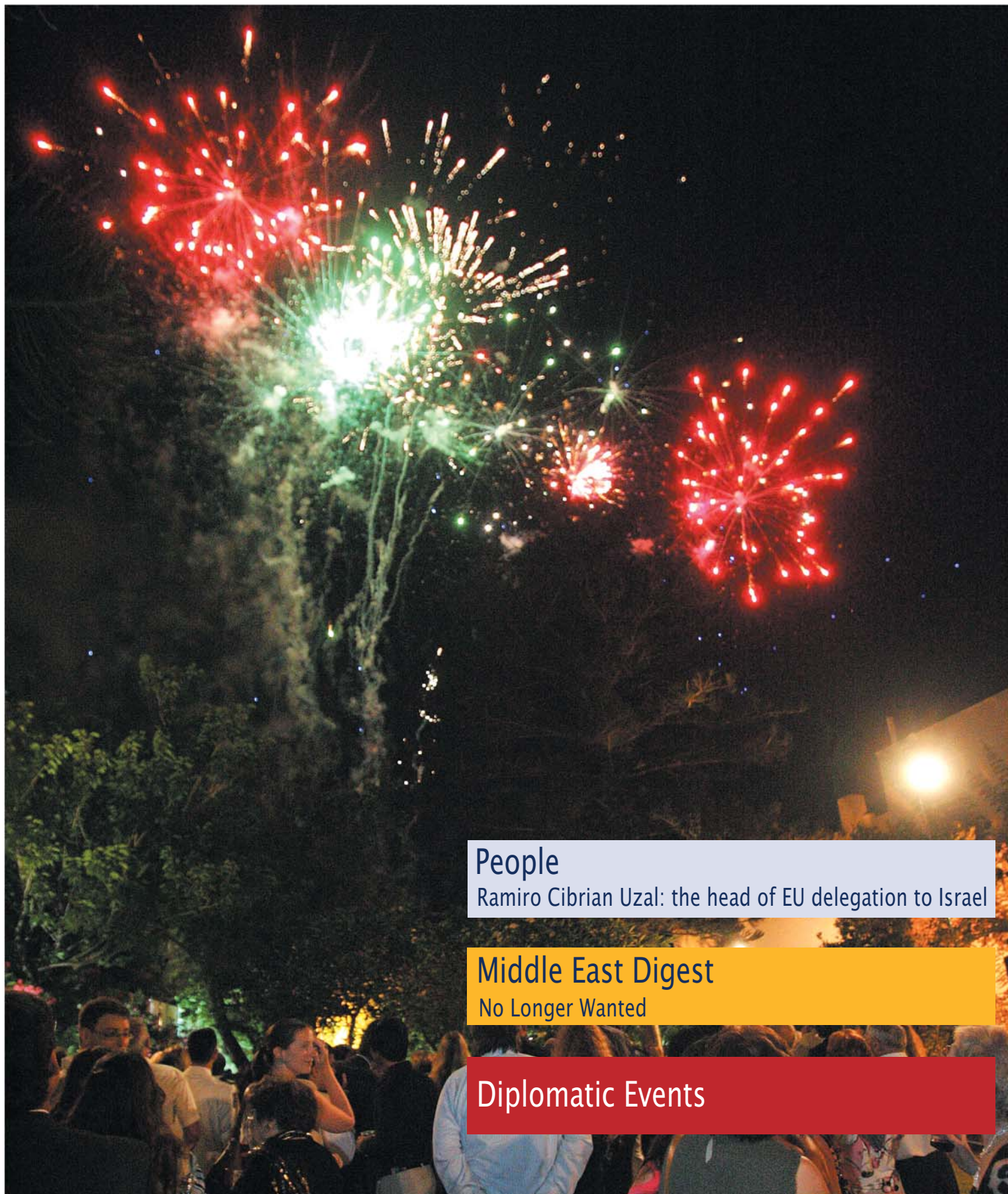
No Longer Wanted

Diplomatic Events



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On the cover:

Bastille Day Celebration

Dear Members,

Like every year in the diplomatic community, summer is the time of changes. So we are happy to welcome all new diplomatic staff to Israel. And to wish our regular members a fruitful year starting straight after the summer break.

As always, the Diplomatic Club is happy to help all his members with adjusting with life in Israel. Whether by sending you the Medical Directory, by opening channels to insurance deals or by offering you discounts in many shops, theatre and concert halls, air tickets and duty free boutiques, not to say anything about the phone deal the Diplomatic Club has secured for its members to shield them from the steep rise in the costs of international phone calls these last two years, the Diplomatic Club is here to help you.

As the summer is now over, it is time to go back to work. And the Diplomatic Club will work harder than ever to bring its members new and improved services .We would like to draw the attention of our new members and remind our regular ones a special offers and rubrics that available on our site:

www.diplomacy-club.com under the rubrics Discount schedule, Real Estate, Car Services and Second hands.

Please note the opening of a new site “Mall – on -line” will provide additional service for the convenience of the diplomatic corps, easy shopping and TAX REFUND according to the law of state of Israel.

The Diplomatic Club and staff wish you a successful academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Verdel
General Manager
And the Editorial Team

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Ramiro Cibrian Uzal

The head of EU delegation to Israel: "Resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is our top priority"

By Ksenia Svetlova

The desk of Ramiro Cibrian Uzal, the head of EU delegation to Israel, is always filled with papers and letters, that need to be read, written or signed. Between all this paper avalanche a few books with Hebrew letters and notebooks also could be found. Once a week ambassador goes to Gordon ulpan in Tel Aviv to study Hebrew along with repatriants from Russia, Ukraine, USA and Argentina. Hebrew is his sixth language, a recent addition to Spanish, English, French, German and Czech. Learning the language, he believes, is substantial to understanding the culture and the mentality of the country one serves in, he says. Cibrian-Uzal took up his position as the Head of the European Commission Delegation to the State of Israel on 1 January 2005. Mr. Cibrian-Uzal arrived to Tel Aviv from Brussels, where he served as Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Vladimir Spidla in the last months of 2004.

During the 2.5 years of his service here, perhaps some of the most turbulent years in Israel, he worked with two prime-ministers, witnessed one unilateral disengagement, one war and a whole lot of ups and downs in Israeli-Palestinian complicated relations. He believes that despite the obstacles the ultimate goal-conflict resolution – can be achieved and that Europe can contribute plenty to this process.

Why is it so important for Europe to participate in Arab-Israeli peace process and to take a role of a broker, a very demanding and difficult role?

Middle East is very important to Europe, because of our geographic proximity, as well as our cultural and historical ties. We believe that this conflict needs to be resolved and that we can contribute a lot to it.

The Middle Eastern region is, unfortunately, very rich with conflicts. Recently, Lebanon and Iraq were also added to the list of "crisis zones" in the area. How high is Arab-Israeli conflict on EU agenda?



I can assure you that not only that is very important, but it is actually on the top of EU external relations agenda. At a summit meeting in December 2003, EU leaders adopted a security strategy that determines an Arab-Israeli conflict to be the top of our concerns. Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Valdner and High Representative Javier Solana are traveling to the region on the regular basis, we are very involved in the political process, as well as in establishing dialogue between civil societies on the both sides, we are also contributing economically – reinforcing and supporting the Palestinian and Israeli economies. After signing the free trade agreement Israel now has an access to most advanced markets in the world for its goods, as we believe in practical steps that can strengthen the economy. And we are willing to do more, if we will be asked to and if the task will be clearly formulated to us.

In Israel many are convinced that Europe has always been more pro-Arab,

then pro-Israeli and are not entirely convinced that active engagement of EU in Arab-Israeli peace process will serve Israeli interests. What would you say to them if asked directly?

If any one, from any side is looking for a biased mediator, they will be disappointed, because EU is very much prepared to be objective, fair and to take into consideration all the legitimate rights and interests of all the parties, just as anybody else. We have demonstrated beyond any doubt that we are a capable and unbiased broker, that we are a friend of Israel, and of Arab countries. Also the polls and surveys we conducted prove and support my personal feeling - that during the last few years there is a moderate, but gradual and positive change among the Israeli public towards the European role in conflict resolution sphere.

In fact, a few accusations from a Palestinian side were heard during last few months, concerning Europe's

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economical and political boycott of HAMAS government and then of unity government.

Our position on ties with HAMAS, any ties – political or economic – is clear. In spring of 2006 the Quartet has established the three guiding lines which HAMAS has to comply with – it's the recognition of Israel, and of previous peace treaties that were signed between the PLO and the State of Israel, and the rejection of violence. As long as our demands are not met, we will not change our policy towards HAMAS.

However, quite a few European politicians, including Luiza Morgantini, the vice-president of EU parliament paid visits to Gaza in the last few months, and met with Ismail Haniya. A few HAMAS ministers were also invited to visit the EU countries. Don't you think that these actions somehow ruin the effect of EU official firm position towards HAMAS? Don't you see some duality of positions inside EU?

In democracies, such as EU and USA the parliamentarians who are elected by their voters, and they feel that they are in a special position and have a direct responsibility to their people and are free to do as they please. I want to make an analogy to the United

States and their position on Syria. Surely, you know, that the American government isn't involved in any sort of negotiations or political contacts with Damascus. At the same time, Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, undertakes a trip to Syria and meets with the Syrian president. What does it say about the official American position? It remained unchanged, just as our is towards HAMAS. EU officials of all levers are obliged to our declared line of the 3 Quartet conditions.

As for the members of HAMAS who visited EU countries – I cannot say that any member of HAMAS is denied of visa to EU, that would be an exaggeration, however I can guarantee that Ismail Haniya and the members of his cabinet were never invited to EU countries, and I do not believe that any of them will change their position on this matter, as it will negate all the previous policies.

You said earlier, that EU is putting a lot of efforts to resolve the conflict. So does US and some other brokers, regional and international who are contributing to the success of the peace process. If so many international players are interested in the same very thing, then how come 60 years later the

conflict still hasn't been solved?

Probably, because it's one of the most complex and difficult conflicts that the world is dealing with. And still, I believe that if there is a will, there is a way. My mission here is to say: If you are ready to end this conflict, Europe is here to assist you with that and to do all what it takes to resolve the situation.

During the 2.5 years of your service in Israel, you witnessed a lot of violence and brutality, wars, death, rockets and suicide attacks. How do you feel about living in such a tense area.

Well, naturally I wish for this conflict to be over, however, because of my personal background I'm used to this kind of unrest. I come from the Basque country in Spain, where we also had violence and bombs and explosions. One cannot say he is used to this kind of life, but I'm not shocked, since I have a similar experience in my country. I find Israel a unique and very interesting place. The people are very friendly and warm, and the country is very beautiful.

Do you practice your Hebrew a lot with the people that you meet?

I try to. I meet a lot of Israelis in different



occasions. I have been lately to Sderot, after a Qassam rocket has killed a young woman from there, *zibrona le braba* (God bless her sole). I visited the city many times and observed the damage that was done by the rockets and spoke to the mayor, Eli Moyal. It's very tragic what's going on there. And still, I'm sure then when you try hard enough, eventually a solution can come. I hope that it will happen soon...

Mr. Cibrian-Uzal was born in 1949 in Spain. In 1972 he married Maria Eugenia Goili. They have one daughter, Lucrecia, born in 1973 in New Haven, USA, where Mr. Cibrian-Uzal was from 1972-1975 a graduate student at Yale University. Mr. Cibrian-Uzal holds university degrees from the Madrid Polytechnic University and from Yale. In 2003 President Vaclav Havel awarded him the Medal of Merit of the Czech Republic, and Charles University of Prague its Memorial Medal.

During the academic year 2003-2004 Mr. Cibrian Uzal was a European Union Visiting Scholar at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Previously, from 1998 till 2003 he served as Ambassador and Head of the European Union Delegation to the Czech Republic. In those years, the Czech Republic was finalizing its preparations for EU membership, and successfully completed the negotiations to join the European Union, becoming a full member on May 1st, 2004. While serving in Prague, Mr. Cibrian-Uzal was one of the best-known "public faces" of the European Union in the Czech Republic.

Mr. Cibrian-Uzal joined the European Commission in 1988 and has served in its Directorates General for Environment, International Trade and External Relations. As an EU official he has represented the European Union in numerous environmental, nuclear safety, non-proliferation and international trade negotiations, both at bilateral and multilateral level. The Kyoto Protocol, the IAEA Protocol on Extended Nuclear Safeguards, and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) are some of the major international activities in which Mr. Cibrian-Uzal has been involved. He has also represented the EU at several G-8 working groups and at the Committee on Trade and Environment of the World Trade Organization.

Mr. Cibrian began his career as an international civil servant in 1980 in the Department of International Safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency of Vienna, under the leadership of Hans Blix. From 1976 to 1980 Mr. Cibrian-Uzal lived and worked in Madrid, where he *inter alia* lectured on political sociology at the Universidad Complutense. He has published scientific and general information articles in specialized journals and mass media newspapers, and lectures regularly at the Summer Courses of the Basque Country University. ●



The European Union

The European Union (EU) is a *sui generis* supranational union, made up of twenty-seven European countries. It was established as the European Economic Community in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome and has undergone many changes since, most notably in 1992 by the Maastricht Treaty. Since 1957 new accessions have raised the number of member states, and powers have expanded. As a result, the EU can be described as both a supranational and an intergovernmental body.

The combined economy of the EU is the largest in the world with a nominal GDP of €11.6 (US\$ 15.7) trillion in 2007. The EU has a single market between member states with a common trade policy, a Common Agricultural/Fisheries Policy, and a regional development policy. It introduced a common currency, the euro, which has been adopted by thirteen member states. Since 1993, the EU has developed a limited Common Foreign and Security Policy, and cooperation in police and judicial matters.

Important EU institutions and bodies include the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, including the European Council, the European Court of Justice and the European Central Bank. Citizens of EU member states are also EU citizens. EU citizens directly elect the European Parliament every five years. EU citizens can freely invest, live, travel, and work in other member states (with some temporary restrictions on new member states). Passport control and customs checks between most member states were abolished in the Schengen Agreement.





No longer wanted

By Ksenia Svetlova

Just one month ago Rabia Hamed (33), one of the leaders of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades on West bank and an official in Palestinian preventive service was on the run. Being wanted by the Israeli security services, his was hiding in different locations to escape arrest and jail time or death in shooting battle.

Two weeks ago Rabia was standing in the offices of the preventive services (Al-Amn al-Wiqai) in Ramallah with dozens of his comrades, giving up his personal weapon and signing the agreement that was carefully phrased by the Israeli and Palestinian officials – no violence in return to wiping your name off Israel's "most wanted list". Today he is involved in the work of "Al-Amn al-Wiqai", where he spends his days, and, according to the agreement – also his nights. For the first time in his grown life Rabia is walking the streets of Ramallah without his weapon and comes every night

to the same location, the headquarters of the service in one of city's central districts, where he is obliged to spend the night. It's been only two weeks since the agreement was launched, and the rumor on the Palestinian street says it is already in trouble. The level of trust in the integrity of the Israeli side between the now "non-wanted" members of FATAH and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and their family members is almost non-existent, or better say, equal to this of the Israeli families, who are worried that the militants would not fulfill their part of the agreement and eventually return to their previous occupation. The Palestinians are blaming Israel for ongoing military activity in Ramallah and Nablus – raids, arrest and house demolitions. The Israelis quote various studies and figures proving that most of the "pardoned" men soon would acquire arms again and return to terrorist activity. And still, as fragile and problematic

as it is, in this very moment the agreement is still relevant. The question is – for how long?

Sitting in a comfortable chair in one of Ramallah's news agencies, Rabia seems to be enthusiastic to share his personal story. Dressed in stylish striped shirt he pulls a sleeve to show the marks left by a bullet. The scars seem quite fresh. "I was shot 6 times by the Israelis in January this year, just 7 months prior to the agreement", he explains.

He was born in a village of Silwad in the West Bank and joined the ranks of FATAH while still a child. "Back then joining FATAH was part of growing up, a kind of an adolescence ritual. We were deeply committed to the vision and dream of Abu-Ammar (Yasser Arafat) and we will keep up with this dream until we fulfill it". Rabia was first arrested when he was 15 years old. He ended up in Kziot correction facility and served 10 months. "I was just a kid back then, and just like many of my peers I participated in the first Intifada, which is often called "Intifadat al-Hijjar", the intifada of stones. Still a minor, I was sentenced for 10 months in jail for throwing stones at the Israeli soldiers, a bit of a harsh, punishment, don't you think?", he poses a kind a rhetorical question. After this arrest many more were to follow. In 1994 when a preventive service was created in the West Bank, following the signing of Oslo agreements, Rabia joined the service, leading the military training of the recruits. He was part of the young leadership of FATAH and an official in the Palestinian preventive security service, headed by the all-mighty Jibril Rajoub. Who knew back then that soon the peace process will collapse and Rabia, just like many other FATAH and Al-Aqsa brigades officials will become wanted by the Israeli security services. According to Rabia, after the outbreak of the intifada in September 2000, the offices of the service were destroyed and burned by the Israeli army, so then he decided to come back to his native village of Silwad, located in B territories and to work in a family business. Very soon he was paid a visit by the Israeli officers and put in jail again, this time for three months. "Till this day I don't know why I was arrested. I was living in Silwad, working in our shop from sunrise till the midnight and stayed away from the politics. But since before the intifada I was an official in preventive service and a FATAH leader, I was already suspicious to them (the Israelis –K.S.). It was always like that – anyone who hold an official rank or is a leader – is a suspect. Unless he is a big shot politician, of course. Abu-Mazen is a FATAH leader,





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Abu-Ala is a FATAH leader, and they don't get arrested! But this is life..." Rabia continues with his story and explains that he spent the intifada years between the Israeli jail and his shop. "In 2003 I was approached by one Israeli officer who demanded I would sign a "hudna" – ceasefire on behalf of my village. I told him that this is ridiculous - I'm in no position to sign any ceasefire with anyone, we have a political leadership for that purpose. And in fact a ceasefire was signed back then. Abu-Mazen just turned the first Palestinian prime-minister at that time. In 2005 I received a strange phone call from the army again – they were telling me to show up at their office at the checkpoint immediately. I decided that it wasn't safe for me to do that – I didn't want to end up in jail one more time, so I went underground. An attempt was made by the Israelis this year to sign a similar agreement with the wanted, but it didn't go well. By January 2007 my hideout has become known to the army and I was shot 6 times in my chest

and arms. Since I was afraid I would be caught again, I have been to a hospital only for one hour for the surgery, and then transferred to one of my friends houses." "So why did you sign the current agreement, if you don't find the Israeli side trustworthy and credible?", I ask. "This decision was made by our political leadership, and although we don't trust the Israelis, we trust our leaders. This is what is best for our nation now, and we believe that this step is necessary for our future Palestinian state", he answers. Rabia believes that there are many problems with the agreement that need to be solved. "I know a family in Nablus where one of the brothers was pardoned, and the other one is still wanted. So what will happen if the Israelis will show up at their house to look for the second brother? Will the first brother just watch it casually? Another thing – there is an ongoing reality of arrests and raids in our cities, why does it happen? If we want to build trust, the handling of the Palestinian affairs should be entrusted to Palestinians. We have our

security services and all the motivation in the world to make things better". Being a member of FATAH military wing, I wandered what the man has to say about the decision of Salam Fayad's government to leave out the world "muqawamaa" – the resistance from the political program. Apparently, he didn't have anything any problem with that. "The Palestinian government doesn't have a part in a military struggle and resistance, it's obvious. This is why we don't have any problem with that. But it doesn't mean that on the nation level we will stop the resistance against the occupation, this is our basic right. I believe that we do have the right to resist the military occupation. It is entirely different from hitting the civilians, which we all condemn", he says. "Do you feel safe now, knowing you are not longer wanted?" – I ask him at the end. "No. Officially I'm no longer wanted, but I know that it can change any minute. Time will tell what will become of this agreement" he concludes. ●

Ambassador's Intensive Internet Course

The Diplomatic Club is opening an Ambassador's Intensive Internet Course starting 9th of October, 2007.

The lessons will take place once a week, for 4 academic hours from 9:00 – 12:30.

At the Chamber of Commerce Building (next to the cinematheque): 84 Hahashmonaim St. Tel Aviv.

Course will include 20 academic hours (5 meetings)

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Diplomatic Events

Cooperation of the Middle Eastern Democracies By Olga Tyomina

Democracy is one of the best inventions of modernism. It is very useful and it gives people a chance to develop, to participate in the political and social country life, to feel free and protected inside the community one lives in. The Middle East is not the most democratic place on earth, yet it keeps close to its traditions that are not always democratic and free, and their regimes are mostly religious and conservative. The only two real democracies in the region are Turkey and Israel. Both countries are struggling with the representatives of the old Orthodox structures from inside. Israel gives freedom to media, allowing people to talk and to act as they want. New bills will allow secular marriages on the territory of the country and after this hopefully transportation and important organizations will start working on Saturdays, even if the Orthodox layer of the country will be against it. While Israel is getting more and more secular, Turkey is developing and supporting Islam's positive image. Since Kemal Ata Turk, who separated religion and government and proclaimed secularization of the country, it is the first time when an Islamic oriented party came to power.

As a result of the last elections that took part in Turkey, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) won. Five years ago in 2002, when it collected 34% of the voices and came to power, it was new and unknown. People chose it as an experiment trying their chance to get rid of the corruption and stagnation that their country was facing. During these five years the AKP, with its head Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, made important economic reforms, created new jobs for people, improved the health care system thus making it more accessible and started many new social programs such as building houses for poor people and

providing school children with free textbooks. Their pro European and pro EU party program gives way for development and shows the direction for further steps to a better, more stable future and to the cooperation between the East and the West.

As we could see during the elections on July 22nd, people appreciated and understood all this and chose the AKP party again with 47% voices. Now the

party is renewed with new people, new forces have joined and it is ready to continue its work and lead Turkey to further development. This exact party gave the Western world a hope and the Middle East an example that Islam and Democracy can work together, that an Islamic country can be democratic and that dialog and cooperation are necessary tools for future development.

As the ambassador of Turkey in Israel, Namık Tan expressed at the conference in IDC, Herzeliya, where the elections results were discussed, Turkey and Israel, that have historical, cultural, economical and military connections should and will continue their dialog and cooperation in all spheres and will remain each others stable allies in this troubled region.



Turkish Ambassador Namık Tan at the IDC Conference in Herzeliya.



Belarus Day Celebration

Left: Belarus Ambassador Igor Leshchenya with Cameroon Ambassador Henri Etoundi Essomba at the Belarus Day Celebration at the David Intercontinental Hotel, Tel Aviv.

Right: Belarus Ambassador Igor Leshchenya with Minister of Education Yuli Tamir at the Belarus Day Celebration.

U.S.A Independence Day Celebration

U.S. Ambassador Richard H. Jones, Knesset Speaker Dalia Itzik, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Ambassador Jones' wife at the USA Independence Day Celebration.



Diplomatic Events

Canada Day Celebration

The event took place at the Diamond Theatre in Ramat Gan in the evening. It was a reception with approximately 400 guests. The reception started at 7:30 pm with food and drinks. During that time, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni gave a speech to the guests, thanking Canada for their friendship. Then we all moved into the theatre where Internal Security Minister, Avi Dichter gave his speech. Absorption Minister Ze'ev Boim attended the event as a guest. The Ambassador also gave a speech with his wife, Mrs. Clara Hirsch standing next to him. After that, we sang Hattiqvah and the O'Canada anthems, the concert began. It was an hour and a half concert. All the music was written by Canadian composers.

Two composers, one Canadian and one Israeli, organized the concert. Their names were Aharon Harlap from Israel and Sid Robinovitch from Winnipeg, Canada who came to Israel to attend the event as our featured composer. We wanted to highlight our cultural ties with Israel by having a Canadian-Israeli team of composers. The musicians and two singers, a soprano and a mezzo soprano, were all Israelis. After the concert, we had our raffle, a return ticket to Canada donated by Air Canada. The winner of the raffle was the President of Shenkar College, Prof. Amotz Weinberg. All the guests were then invited for coffee and dessert in the reception area.



Bastille Day Celebration

Bastille Day Celebration took place on Thursday, July 12th (because the 14th was on a shabbath). Close to 2000 guests attended the traditional reception of the French Ambassador to Israel, Jean-Michel Casa.

M. Casa, who's been in Israel for 8 months now, was the former French ambassador in Jordan. Among the guests, we had lots of politicians (Yaakov Edri, minister of Integration, Yaakov Benizri, minister of Health, Zeev Boim, former minister of integration); MK's (Colette Avital, Ronit Tirosh), mayors (Ron Huldai, Haim Avitan, mayor of Hadera) journalists, artists and members of the French community living in Israel.

Up, clock wise: The French Ambassador, Jean-Michel Casa, and his cook, Bernard, cutting the cake which shape is the map of France

The French ambassador, Jean-Michel Casa, and his wife, Isabella, together with the Mayor of Tel Aviv, Ron Huldai

Mr. Casa (on the left) together with Yaakov Edri, Israeli minister of integration, and Ronit Tirosh (MK from Kadima)



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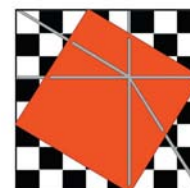
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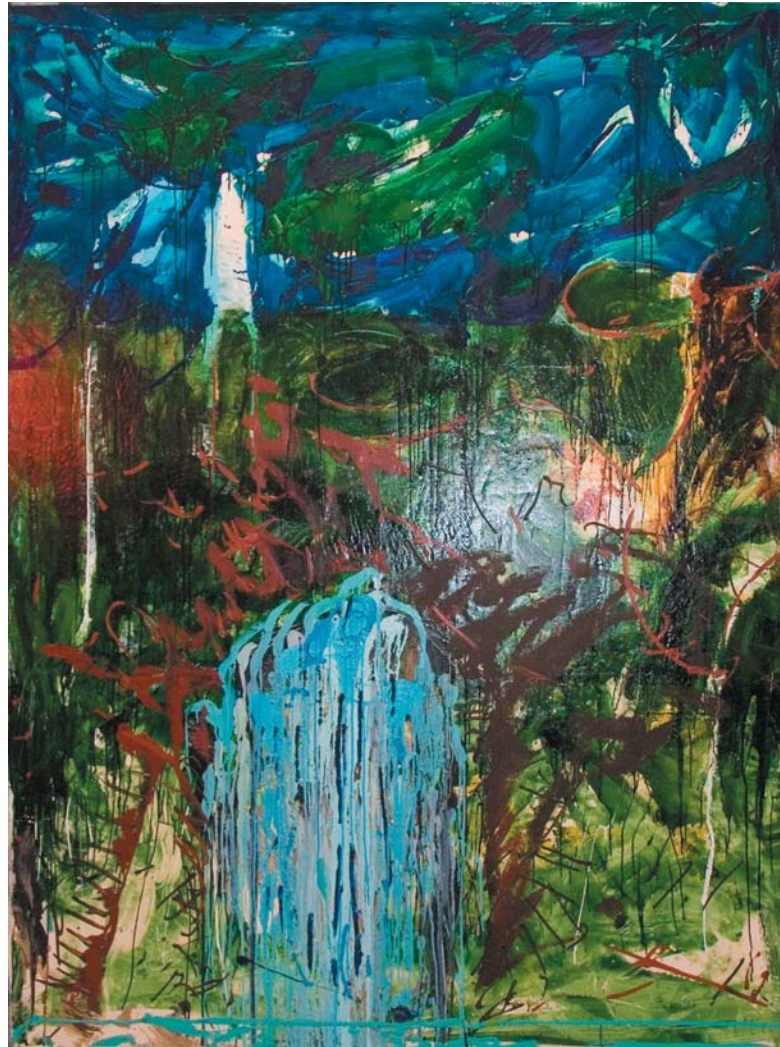
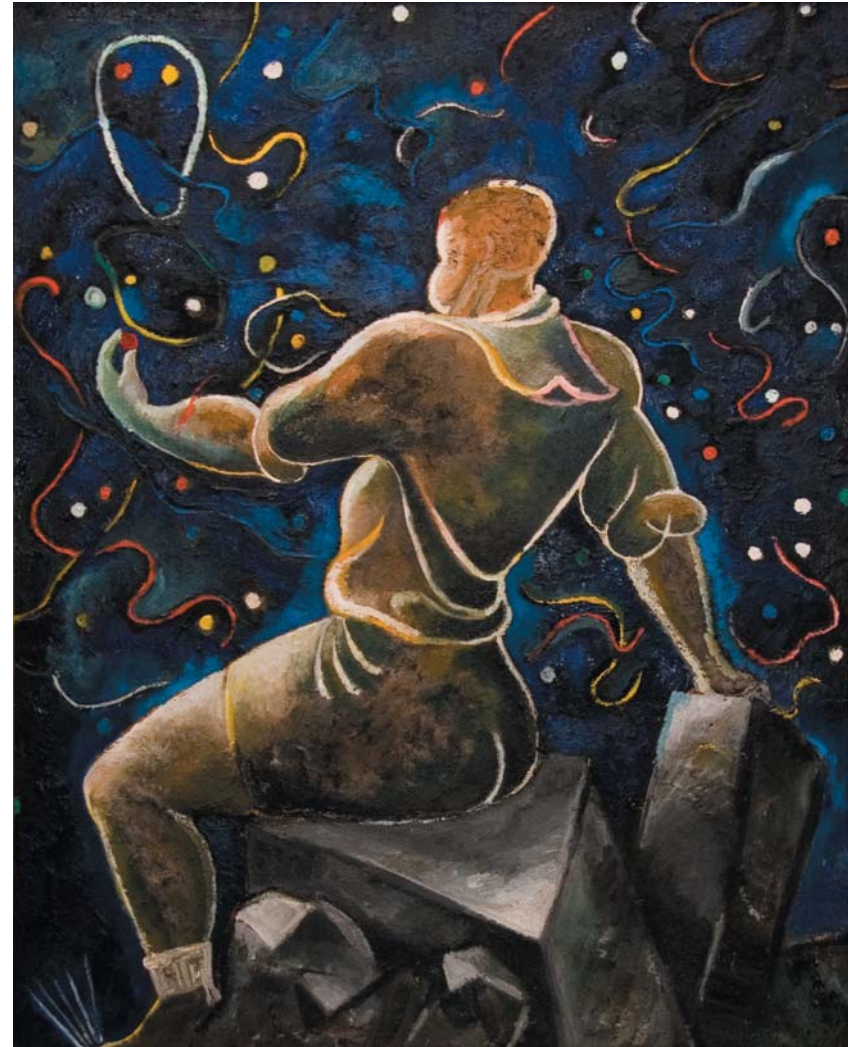
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Up left, clock wise:

Sandro Chia, *Meditazione*, 1981, Oil on Canvas.

Mario Schifano, *Cascata*, 1986, Oil on Canvas.

Enzo Cucchi, *Bestemmia*, 1996, Fresco.

Page 15:

Mario Merz, *Tiger*, 1983, Mixed Technique

Italian Mentalscapes

Tel Aviv Museum of Art : July 19 – October 6, 2007

The Italian Cultural Institute of Tel Aviv is happy to announce the opening on July 19, 2007 at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art of ITALIAN MENTALSAPES: A Journey through Italian Contemporary Art, a major art exhibition that presents the works of the most influential Italian contemporary artists. The exhibition is curate by Prof. Demetrio Paparoni and it received the patronage of the Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Massimo D'Alema, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture Francesco Rutelli and of the Ambassador of Italy in Israel Sandro De Bernardin The exhibition will remain open to the public until October 6 2007.

Thanks to the elaborate and large selection of the artists and the quality of the works, the exhibition qualifies as one of the most important displays of Italian art outside of Italy of the last decade.

Demetrio Paparoni is an acclaimed art historian, art critic, curator and writer of several theoretical works on contemporary art. In the 1980s he created the magazine *Tema Celeste*, that he directed for more than 20 years and in 1993 he was appointed commissioner for the Italian pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Paparoni also teaches History of Contemporary Art at Catania University and has recently curated *TIMER*, a major exhibition of contemporary art at the Milan Triennale.

Italian Mentalscapes analyzes the spirit of Italian contemporary art and is conceived as a path through which all the works are connected to one another, grouped according to specific themes not necessarily following a chronological order.

The curator has divided the exhibition in three sections: literary metaphysics, analytical metaphysics and tragic-ironic metaphysics. This classification allows for an original identification of the characteristics that distinguish the Italian contemporary art, celebrating its uniqueness.

Italian Mentalscapes focuses from the Seventies until today, but it will also present older works. Three major works will open each of its sections: a work of Giorgio De Chirico for the “literary metaphysics”, one of Giorgio Morandi for the “analytical metaphysics” and one of Alberto Savinio for the “tragic-ironic.” Although the exhibition begins with the *Arte Povera* (poor art), it will display the works of artists from previous decades whose teachings have had a strong impact on the development of the Italian contemporary identity (Giorgio De Chirico, Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni.)

The exhibition and the catalogue will highlight the works belonging to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art’s collection (Piero Manzoni, Mimmo Palladino, Enzo Cucchi, Sandro Chia, Claudio Parmiggiani). Many of the works were donated by Arturo Schwarz, a strong supporter of this initiative. Particular

attention will also be given to the works of Israeli private galleries and private collectors. In his introductory note in the catalogue, Arturo Schwarz, one of the most renowned contemporary art historian and a strong supporter of this initiative, writes that

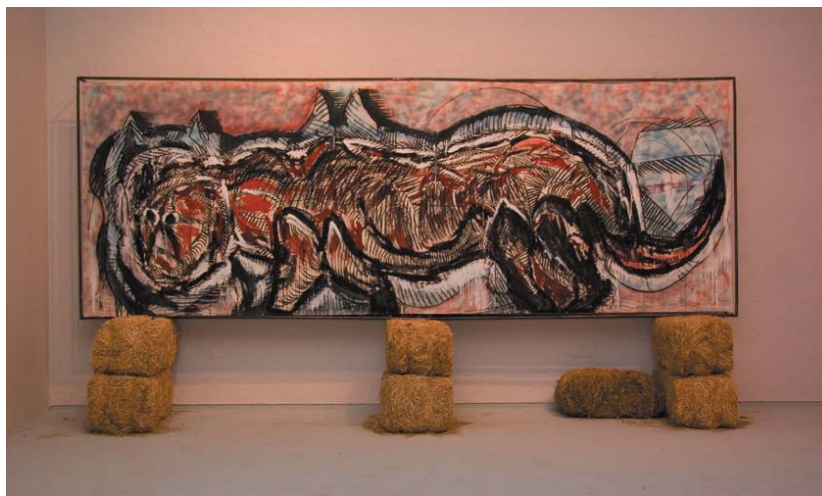
“*Mentalscapes* presents artists which are familiar to the international arena but also allows for an original critical vision of Italian art by highlighting the origins of the metaphysical thought that developed in the beginning of the 1900 with Giorgio de Chirico, Carlo Carrà, Giorgio Morandi, Alberto Savinio and more.” Schwarz also adds that “The title of the exhibition, *Italian Mentalscapes*, was born in the cafeteria of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art during a meeting between Mordechai Omer, Director of the Museum, Demetrio Paparoni, curator of the exhibition and Simonetta Della Seta, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute. It was Mordechai Omer’s intuition that led to the invention of a new word that would synthesize the spirit of the initiative. The translation into Italian in *Mentalgrafie* is by Giuseppe Conte, one of the most influential Italian poets.

One of the most important aspects at the basis of the project of *Italian Mentalscapes* is the idea that the exhibition should be a meeting point between the Italian and Israeli cultures as both countries are increasingly aware of the importance and necessity of

dialogue between people.

The exhibition opens with a self-portrait of Francesco Clemente (self-portraits, which are a theme dear to De Chirico, are the symbolic affirmations of our own identity) and ends with *10 Insects to Feed* by Masbedo, a large work created specifically for the Museum’s wall that displays a video (now part of the Museum’s collection as a donation by Arturo Schwarz.) The video deals with the theme of the West’s fear of fear and its negative effects on the defense of democracy. Another significant work is Michelangelo Pistoletto’s “Love Difference”: a large table surrounded with several chairs originating from various countries. With this work Pistoletto - who was recently awarded the Wolf Prize - offers a meeting place for exchanging ideas between people of different cultures and ethnicities, ready to sit at the same table with a mindset of “love difference.”

At the conclusion of its stay in Israel, *Italian Mentalscapes* will be displayed in Athens, Istanbul and Ankara. ●



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Nati Shaked

By Olga Tyomina

If you want to go out and feel self-confident, if you want to meet new people and not compare yourself nervously to others, if you want to wear any clothing and not ask for a bigger size, then it is time to start working out. If you are working out in a gym, you don't need to have a tennis racket in your car and you will not be hit on your face with a soccer ball. You will just come to a gym, drink some water, talk to a trainer; and that's it – high time to start. That's what I was thinking about on my way to the new fancy fitness club, "Core", in Herzliya Pituach. I have heard many great remarks about it and decided to try it out. The club is really nice, and what is important – you can get a professional fitness trainer that will plan your very own personal training program. After working out you can get a massage and relax in the sauna. While in the club I met the owner, Nati Shaked, who is a very interesting and impressive person. He is a businessman, lawyer and entrepreneur who created his own unique conception of having a healthy, sportive way of life. When talking to him, you feel that Nati Shaked is a person that doesn't swim with the stream of life; he tries himself in all interesting spheres and usually reaches good results. He believes that you should get the maximum out of your life and enjoy it.

Communicating more and more with him, I learned that in 2006 Nati represented Israel at an international competition in California: Mr. Gay International. Not surprisingly he won first place and became the ambassador and spokesperson of the Gay community in the whole world. Once he received his prize, he traveled all over Europe and the United States talking in front of thousands of people, explaining and representing the freedom of choice, tolerance and equality which does not depend on your sexual preferences and orientation. When you meet interesting people, you start asking them about everything. I asked him what he thought about the last Pride Parade in Jerusalem and the Orthodox Community's reaction. He said that Pride Parades are important to be held all over; not only in a free and secular Tel Aviv but also in religious and orthodox Jerusalem. They play an important role of human rights and freedoms support. They show that democracy should be real without any limitations and should not depend on the city. That a dialog and respect between religious and secular communities should take place in every form it can and that every family and every father should understand that his child should be able to make his own choices and not be ashamed



or afraid of telling his parents. That each representative of our society can do his or her best and reach his maximum in any chosen sphere, whether it be business, science or art and it should not depend on his gender or sexual orientation. That we all are equal and there's no difference between any of us. I asked Nati about his plans for the future. He answered that there are many things left to do, many new places to visit, different ways of doing business and many new chances and opportunities that are still waiting to be realized. ●

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