LeHaim

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At the age of thirteen Haim Shiff left his homeland, Poland, and arrived on the shores of Palestine with his mother and three brothers aboard the ship Polonia. His father, Dov, had immigrated to Palestine seven years earlier, but was murdered soon after receiving the certificates that sanctioned the immigration of his family and was never reunited with them. As a boy of eleven, Shiff had already learned something about trade in his hometown. He first demonstrated his commercial skills in Palestine, when, at 15, he managed a thriving commercial network based in Haifa with considerable talent. To the dissatisfaction of various monopolist groups, he fought for a free market and employed marketing and sales methods considered highly innovative at the time. Moving to Tel Aviv in 1952, he began working as a building contractor, and in 1954, relocated to Jerusalem. There he began his entrepreneurial activity, building numerous hotels throughout the country and the world over.

This album was created as an act of commemoration. Seeking an unconventional way to perpetuate his father's memory, Dubi Shiff, approached fifty different artists who work in a wide range of techniques, commissioning works that would sketch Haim Shiff's portrait. Among the artists who took up the challenge were some who knew Haim closely;

others had met him several times or heard about the man and his activities, and yet others were entirely unfamiliar with him. As a point of departure, each artist was given several photographs of Shiff, of which s/he chose one or two. The younger artists, who did not know Shiff in his lifetime, relied on the photographs in their work and were also aided by his autobiography – *No Dictates* – where Shiff described the many obstacles he had to overcome as a hotelier and a businessman while setting up his financial empire and battling with treasury and other government officials to save it from the forthcoming collapse caused by the economic system. The artists who knew Shiff personally were also influenced by the memory he left in them, recollections that added a personal touch to the portraits they created.

In his commission, Dubi Shiff approached artists of various generations, among them ones whose works had been included in his father's art collections for many years. Haim Shiff was an art collector who collected in his own unique way. His collection did not focus on a given period, a specific school or style, but rather expressed his spontaneous enchantment with a certain work of art, and reflected his unique relationships with various artists, some of whom he also supported for many years. The artists whose works are found in his collections are represented in the current album by Igael Tumarkin, Liliane Klapisch, Menashe Kadishman, Ury Lifshitz, Moshe Givati, Ra'anan Levy, Avi Feiler, Motke Blum, Albert Goldman, David Gerstein, Yigal Zemer, Moshe Rosenthalis, Vadim Stepanov, Marcus Botbol, as well as Daniel Kafri, who sculpted Shiff's bust in 1994, and Ofer Lellouche, who painted

his portrait in 1999. Dubi Shiff followed his father in this field; for many years now he has been compiling an art collection of his own, including works by artists Aram Gershuni, Yael Goren-Strauss, David Nipo, Shimon Palombo, Michael Rapoport, Sergio Daniel, Ido Shemi, and Asad Azi, whose works are also included in this album. Through Haim Shiff's portrait, all the other artists who take part in the current project have joined this growing art collection.

Dubi Shiff's selection of artists was not random. Haim Shiff knew Jerusalem-based Motke Blum from the 1960s and 1970s, when he purchased works from him for his private collection and his hotels. Albert Goldman, who worked for many years as manager in Shiff's hotels, used to shut himself in his room during break time and paint; these intervals helped him cope with the daily work pressures. Haim purchased numerous paintings from him and hung them in his hotels. When Yigal Zemer returned to Israel from a long sojourn in the United States, Haim helped re-absorb him in Jerusalem and purchased paintings from him. As for Ra'anan Levy, the son of Shiff's friend, the late Raffi Levy – Haim had accompanied his development since youth, following his artistic path until his death. David Gerstein was one of a group of Jerusalem artists who kept in regular contact with Haim and used to visit the swimming pool at the Diplomat Hotel. On Schwebel's relationship with Haim one may learn from the portrait he painted, with the Diplomat Hotel, where the artist used to stay, in the background. Ury Lifshitz's personal acquaintance with Haim also developed at the Diplomat Hotel, where Ury used to stay and paint, and where he also met his wife, Dorit. The

Shiff Collection includes paintings by Lifshitz perpetuating the landscapes of the area. Haim's special relationship with Daniel Kafri developed when the artist lived in Jerusalem, a reminder of which may be found in the large collection of Kafri's sculptures at the Shiff family home. Haim Shiff's close link with Moshe Givati, which continued until Haim's passing, began in 1990, when he originally purchased a work by Givati, the first in a series of acquisitions spanning Givati's fifty years of work. The Shiff Collection also includes paintings by Kadishman, Rosenthalis, and Tumarkin, who knew Haim and reflected their personal view of the man in their portraits. Haim's portrait, which Dubi commissioned from Ofer Lellouche as a 75th birthday present to his father, was the nucleus from which the entire portrait project evolved.

Some of the younger artists who did not know Shiff in his lifetime and learned about him by reading his autobiography, related their reactions to the man and the project:

Daphna Arod: "While painting the first portrait and reading the book, I unheedingly became fond of the man. I felt the desire to paint him again and to charge the portrait with his charm, elegance, humor and dignity. I lived by its side in the studio for many days, until it was dry enough for me to part with it. His entertained gaze accompanied my entry into the studio, and I felt that he liked his figure, and therefore – liked me as well. It is strange to befriend a man whom you didn't know in person, a man who is no longer alive."

Vadim Stepanov: "Before I started the portrait, I feared that the painting would come out tasteless and devoid of inner tension. I wanted

to express Haim Shiff's dual affinity, to the Diaspora on the one hand, and the new world of Israel, in whose construction he took part, on the other. When I looked at the wide range of family, personal and formal photographs, I noticed that his face appeared identical in all of them. I realized that the mask he assumed became his very face, and that he hid behind it his entire life. Therefore I decided to paint his portrait as a mask."

Ayelet Hashahar Cohen: "After reading Haim Shiff's autobiography, I chose to work on two portraits simultaneously. One depicted Shiff as a young man, his reduced head peeking through the window of the Diplomat Hotel on a festival night. The other presented the mature Haim, whose eyes emerge from his head as if they were breaking out from hard, solid concrete. At the margins of the work appear references to the younger portrait. The two works conduct a dialogue, thus complementing my gaze on Haim Shiff through space and time, between his external and his internal worlds."

When the idea of initiating a commissioned portrait, which began almost as a curiosity, materialized into a full-blown commemoration enterprise, Dubi Shiff approached the artists. In his commission, he stressed that he was not looking for photographic resemblance to Haim Shiff, but rather wanted the portraits to convey his father's spirit and illustrate the added value of portraiture, articulating the artist's world view, ingenuity and personal signature. All these can be found in the eclectic assortment of portraits comprising this exhibition, portraits that represent Haim Shiff in different modes and myriad forms: by way of

idealization, through naturalistic mapping of his lineaments, or by looking into the depths of his soul and mirroring his personality, temperament and hidden nature. While the majority of portraits exhibit a great physical resemblance to Haim Shiff's appearance, they also manifest the artist's freedom to transform the portrait from a type of photograph substitute to a means of expressing a human condition, and a surface whereby the artist develops and elaborates his personal artistic language.

A Short Stroll through the History of Portraiture

The gallery of portraits that has adorned art history from time immemorial includes a long sequence of human acts of documentation that partake in a constant and ongoing perpetuation enterprise. From the dawn of history to this day portraits of kings and beggars, dignitaries and anonymous figures, people of flesh-and-blood and figments of the imagination, men and women, children and elders, angels and demons, the pretty and the ugly stare at us, painted, sculpted, engraved, carved in stone, scorched in clay, photographed, made from diverse materials, or perpetuated in state-of-the-art techniques. Together they create a fascinating, multi-layered mosaic that attests to the culture of each period, its prevalent customs and beliefs, the trends it spawned, the ways in which it influenced its immediate and remote surroundings and the influences it adopted and absorbed. The portraits looking at us from each chapter of human history disclose intriguing revelations about human nature — about man as an artist and as a model; at the same time, they remain

shrouded in secrecy and mystery.

Tracing the metamorphoses in the representation of portraiture through history leads one on a fascinating, highly instructive journey – beginning with the perpetuation enterprise of the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Minoan civilizations and ending with discussions about the perception of portraiture in contemporary art, which proposes to read divergent, ostensibly deviant, artistic manifestations as portraits per se.

Findings from antiquity indicate that the ritual of perpetuation was considered as transpiring between life and death, or as an act that, to some extent, cancels death in favor of eternity. The ancient Egyptians, for instance, believed that they could continue to enjoy their lives eternally if their figures were sculpted in stone, or their portraits copied onto the walls of their tombs, next to their mummified bodies. For this purpose they developed a funerary art form for "immortals," spectacular art that was, absurdly, intended to remain hidden from the public eye since its sole purpose was to serve the deceased as he traverses the paths of eternity. This concealment helped preserve the treasures of the Egyptian world, and thus we were granted the enchanting portrait of Queen Nefertiti, wife of Pharaoh Akhenaton, during whose reign the laws of representation rooted in Egyptian art were broken. This art was briefly opened to influences of the stylistic freedom of Minoan artists, distinguished by their depiction of swift movement in a flowing, free line. The portrait of Akhenaton himself, also preserved from that period, stands out in its originality, the individuality emanating from it, and the fierce expression.

In Mesopotamia, on the other hand, where the belief in life after death was not widespread, the portraits were fashioned according to an idealistic approach that included victorious descriptions of rulers on memorial plaques which over time united to form a continuous documentation of the events of the period.

Classical Greek art worshipped beauty and perfection. The way in which its artists presented the human figure directly influenced the evolution of Roman art, and later – Western art as a whole, emphasizing proportion and symmetry as the basis for determining a portrait's beauty. In opposition to the dogmatic, conservative approach that predominated in Egyptian art, the Greek portrait modeled the body's shape and motion in a manner that conveyed the subject's personality. At the height of Athenian democracy artists gained appreciation and respect, and the number of local wealthy people who commissioned bronze monuments to perpetuate themselves increased. In the time of Alexander the Great, artists such as Lysippus, his favorite court sculptor, reached great mastery in their means of expression, learning how to capture specific character traits with their brushes and to produce portraits with unique countenances. Grand and often dramatic, the Hellenistic Age had a crucial impact on Roman art. The Romans were distinctive portrait enthusiasts, and their rulers and officials adorned their homes with sculptures and portraits depicting their family members, some created in their lifetime, others – as funerary masks, by casting wax on the face of the deceased. The portrait's role in the perpetuation of the dead is comparable to the contemporary role of photography. A quintessential example is provided

by a double portrait that survived from the Pompeii frescoes, portraying a young couple of the first century CE, focusing on portrayal of their personality and precise appearance. The illusion of reality is similarly heightened in portraits excavated in burial grounds at Al Fayyúum near Cairo (from the Roman rule of Egypt), rendered on the wooden lids of sarcophagi in encaustic wax. Possessing a highly-expressive naturalistic dimension, these are possibly the most ancient realistic painted portraits to have survived, in addition to the frescoes. In this context one may mention modern cemeteries where this practice has taken on a current variation, embedding the portrait of the deceased on the gravestone by means of a special technique for printing photographs on smooth marble or granite. Manifestations of this phenomenon are also seen in Israeli cemeteries.

The spread of Christianity and the beliefs that thrived alongside its different currents changed the face of art. The first Christian artists rejected the ideals of imitation, faithfulness to nature and the veneration of corporeal beauty, in favor of an aspiration for clarity and simplicity. This tendency led to the decline of ancient fine art, which gave way to the use of simpler, cruder means by which artists delineated the model's portrait, accentuating the area around the eyes and the wrinkles and grooves on the forehead. The discussion about the purpose of art was reopened, and the definition of its role in the Christian agenda deeply influenced the entire history of Europe. In the eighth and ninth centuries a dispute emerged in the Byzantine world regarding the use of paintings or engraving depicting a realistic human figure. For a whole century the

iconoclasts demanded the restriction of religious art to depictions of non-human images, a demand that led to the migration of Byzantine artists to Western countries. At a later stage, the Eastern Church allowed its artists to present the figments of their imagination freely, as long as they abided by its consecrated patterns. The amount of artistic freedom in that period resembled the freedom implemented by the ancient Egyptians, who strictly guarded their tradition.

In the middle ages it is hard to find works of art that may be dubbed portraits in the contemporary sense of the word. The artists of that period settled for the traditional depiction mode of a male or female figure, inscribing the subject's name in the margins of the painting. This stasis of Byzantine painting was interrupted by Giotto, who infused it with a new spirit and led Gothic painting to its greatest development. Giotto's paintings display a genius for natural form, sculptural volume, true humanism, body language, facial expression, gaze, emotion, and interaction with the beholder.

Fourteenth-century artists painted from nature, stressing the portrait's resemblance of the model. This inclination was gradually refined toward the emergence of the Italian Renaissance and the beginnings of the Northern Renaissance. Theretofore portrait paintings had been intended to document events as well as for various specific purposes, but were not created for art's sake. Robert Campin was the first to observe the eyes of his subjects, endeavoring to highlight their singularity. The new painting style which evolved in the Low Countries gradually refined the ability to expose the model's personality via reference to the minutest details. This

tendency culminated with Jan van Eyck's paintings, which left an indelible mark on fifteenth-century art. Since the early sixteenth century the aspiration to obtain scientific precision and a greater degree of realism increased, reaching its peak with the magnificent balance and harmony characterizing the works of Da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian and others in Italy, and Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein the Younger and others in Northern Europe. In the most celebrated portrait of all times, the *Mona Lisa*, Da Vinci lends the depicted face an air of mystery, infusing it with vitality by means of his progressive, sensitive painterly approach and the use of the sfumato technique (blurred outlines and subtle color transitions that soften the contours, mainly at the corner of the eyes and mouth). The *Mona Lisa* became a cultural icon, and has been reproduced and referenced in every possible medium, but the secret of its mysterious appeal remains undeciphered.

The great demand for portraits enabled artists to develop different approaches to the subject and even gather people with shared interests to create group portraits, like modern-day family portraits in festive events, class photos of sorts, or other group photographs intended for keepsake.

Seventeenth-century artists rejected the intricacy of Mannerist painting, creating a new type of painting closer in style to the formal grandeur of Renaissance at its height. The sincerity of emotion, the imagination and the human drama became vital components in Baroque paintings, usually articulated via expressive, theatrical gestures that were emphasized by sharp shading effects and combinations of rich colors. Caravaggio lent his portraits a bold sensuous facet verging on the decadent, while granting

a human, earthly appearance, devoid of spirituality to the poor, aging maiden enfeebled at the time of her death, or to the young Christ lacking pretensions of sanctity. Artemisia Gentileschi who was influenced by Caravaggio, inspired expressions conveying an emotional storm on the faces of her subjects. Rubens's portraits, on the other hand, are replete with Catholic humanism, expressing optimistic, vigorous spirituality. Rubens painted kings and other dignitaries and gained fame in his lifetime. Flemish painter, Sir Anthony van Dyck, who also painted portraits for the royal court and the nobility, laid the foundations for the English portraiture tradition with his elongated, distant, self-confident figures. Velazquez, who was also influenced by Caravaggio, was court painter to the King of Spain and depicted the courtiers with free, swift brushstrokes, discernible, for example, upon close observation of his famous group portrait, *Las Meninas*, featuring the little princess, her ladies-in-waiting, her tutors, the servant-boy, the court dwarf, the distant reflection of the King and Queen, the dog, and the artist himself at his easel. Similarly, Dutch painter Frans Hals became known for his swift and skillful brushwork, whereby he would "tousle" the sitter's hair or "crumple" his sleeve. These paintings seem to offer a quick glance at a figure in motion, like a snapshot that freezes a single moment in life.

The gradually evolving art of portraiture reached a peak with Rembrandt. Bequeathing to us portraits reflecting an absolute truth which he held in higher regard than harmony and beauty, Rembrandt offered a penetrating insight into the human soul, including his own. He left a series of self-portraits behind, beginning in his youth, when he was a

successful, popular artist, and ending with his lonely old age, when his face reflects the sorrows of life, his weakness and the brave acceptance of his fate. The dozens of portraits where the artist reviews himself with utmost frankness unite to form a unique autobiography. The face looking at us is a true human face, without even an inkling of pretence. Even when he paints others, Rembrandt's works exhibit these rare qualities, reflecting his subjects' souls like x-rays. A generation later Vermeer would grant us some striking portraits in their tranquil brilliance: depictions of plain people in their everyday lives endowed with a dimension of sanctity inherent in the mundane by using a sophisticated chiaroscuro effect and a fascinating combination of softness and precision that renders them unforgettable.

Eighteenth-century British artist William Hogarth stood out in his ability to paint penetrating and highly revealing portraits. Hogarth was a trailblazer in his field as he daringly presented members of the English middle class in a format that had previously been reserved exclusively to the nobility. He abhorred Italian Rococo and French Mannerism, fashionable in London at the time, and employed satire as a vehicle for social criticism, presenting the figures in his paintings as actors in a theatrical play. In all his portraits, Thomas Gainsborough included the landscape pertinent to his subjects, habitually lending it equal weight to the depicted persona. Full-body portraiture evolved as a special tradition in eighteenth-century English and French painting; it even won the appreciation of Goya, who later imitated it in his own variation. Goya, who was endowed with a piercing, critical eye, exposed the inner truth

of anyone who came under his brush. As official painter to the Spanish court, he never spared the members of the royal family, nor did he spare himself when he decided to expose their stupidly, homeliness and vanity for eternity. None of the court painters before or after Goya dared take upon themselves such far-reaching artistic liberty and perpetuate their patrons in their grotesqueness with such grandeur.

In the nineteenth century the affinities between the artist and society expanded, and the use of portraiture acquired additional meaning beyond its basic objective as a documented commission or as a means to create an image. Gustave Courbet, who represented the uncompromising rebellion against tradition in his time, had no aspirations for beauty, but rather strove for the truth and obeyed his conscience alone. He juxtaposed his own figure with those of familiar social figures, jolting the bourgeoisie and the artistic establishment, to the extent that he was ostracized. Following the romanticism of Goya and Delacroix and the realism of Courbet, artists such as James Ensor or Édouard Manet emerged, centering their work invariably on the human figure and leaving the studio in an attempt to capture in color the poetry of the here-and-now. Edgar Degas, who was already influenced by photography and the simplicity of the Japanese print, harnessed his drawing skill to create compositions that were striking in their innovation in terms of the painted and sculpted figures. The Impressionist worldview brought about a profound change in the approach to art. The subjects of portraits were now people related to the artists themselves or anonymous figures from everyday life that sparked their imagination. Everything became fidgety and quivering, as

lithograph *The Scream*. The artists who sought new artistic criteria conducted various experiments in search of new ways that might accompany the transition from post-Impressionism to Modernism at the turn of the century.

At the 1995 Venice Biennale entitled *Identity and Alterity*, the vast and diversified spectrum of portrait and body images created between the late nineteenth and the late twentieth centuries, was conspicuous. The impact of the photographic medium on the art of that century was crucial. When Richard Wagner first encountered photographs of his face, he said that his facial expressions were too varied and he could not choose a single expression that would be suitable for a solid, reliable portrait. That "multifaceted" quality became an intriguing element and an ongoing challenge, possibly the very core of art's constant quest for new paths of expression in its confrontation with portraiture, even when the human image is entirely absent in the artist's work. Sculptors such as Rodin, Medardo Rosso, and later Alberto Giacometti, were astounded by the changeability of the human expression, whose complications were also discernible in the work of artists such as Richard Gerstl, Arnold Schoenberg, Boccioni, Ferdinand Hodler, Lovis Corinth, Oskar Kokoschka, Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, the early Baselitz, and many others. Portraiture in the past century was not limited to a study of human nature or character alone; it became an object in an experimental laboratory far-removed from mere appearance. The modes of representation gradually changed, while old patterns recurred. Picasso, who constantly tested how far he could go in representing a headless

figure unconventionally, occasionally harked back – as exemplified by a 1945 lithograph portraying a perfectly realistic head, as opposed to an earlier Cubist representation from 1928 where the depicted figure is entirely unidentifiable. Similarly, Giacometti's modern "head" from 1930 is, in fact, a stone cube turned into portrait by two recesses (and if we may shift to Israeli art, many of Raffi Lavie's "head" pieces are defined as such only because the word "head" is inscribed in the body of the work). Picasso, whose work was profoundly transformed by the impact of tribal African art, and Matisse, whose coloration and textures were influenced by North Africa, often explored portraiture.

The mask played a pivotal role in Picasso's work. Already in his *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) he draws inspiration from the mask for physiognomic distortions, using it to estrange the depicted figures. The mask was also widely used by Henri Matisse, Die Brücke (The Bridge) movement, Constantin Brancusi, and many others. Max Beckmann, for one, was inspired by the ambience of the German carnival, transforming it into a theater of evil and absurdity in his work. The gas masks used during World War I best illustrate uniformity and automatism as human traits revealed in times of trouble – an element echoed in many art works in different media from that period. In the current exhibition of Haim Shiff's portraits, the mask emerges in the work of Vadim Stepanov who addresses the "cover," the portrait's "sur-face," as it were. Stepanov lends Shiff's portrait-mask an exemplary resemblance to the original face, thus eliminating the gap between truth and fiction.

Matisse, who began his career as a Fauvist, giving color a cardinal place

in his work, painted an unusual portrait of his wife Emily in 1905, her face bisected into two differentiated areas by means of a green stripe descending from the forehead down along the nose. When asked about his portrait of Haim Shiff painted for the current project and the meaning of the green speckle with which he stained the tip of Shiff's nose, Igael Tumarkin replied that he remembered Shiff as a sulky man.

The stylistic breakthroughs of the early twentieth century granted artists the freedom to choose new modes of expression, which gradually expanded with the advance of technology, the social changes that occurred due to historical events and ideological revolutions, and the development in the study of the human psyche. The two World Wars left their imprint on the flesh, familiarizing the human eye with impossible sights. Otto Dix exposed the horror inherent in them, both in his self-portrait as a soldier and in his painted portraits of wounded and dead soldiers. In his writings, Walter Benjamin describes the masses of silent battalions returning from the battlefields of World War I, their mute faces and detached gazes attesting wordlessly to their experiences in the bloody war. His descriptions shed light on the condition of portraiture in the twentieth century, a portrait that was analyzed and deconstructed, shed one form and assumed another, was crushed to pieces and reconstructed in a thousand identities.

The extensive waves of emigration brought many artists from various places in Europe and overseas into the big art centers, and mainly into Paris. The School of Paris (l'École de Paris) that flourished between the two World Wars left an impressive range of contemporaneous portraits

perpetuating artists, writers, philosophers and their close circles. Picasso documented all his wives, Modigliani created an impressive gallery of portraits typified by a unique style, Soutine painted numerous portraits in his Expressionist style, inspired by his wild, chaotic, tormented, eruptive spirit, Chagall did it in his Jewish way, the Israeli Chana Orloff sculpted and drew many portraits of her colleagues, and Man Ray who arrived in Paris in 1921, befriended the Surrealist group and engaged in artistic experimentation – leaving behind series of photographic portraits that rank among the most beautiful and engaging in the history of photography. In a joint work created with Marcel Duchamp in 1924, the back of the latter's head is seen, with a five-pointed star shaved on it, reclining in an armchair, in a proto-punk gesture ordinarily identified with the last quarter of the twentieth century, and still encountered on occasion here (originally, this haircut was a paraphrase of the shaven head of Catholic priests).

The Expressionists and Surrealists explored the dark and mysterious facets of the human soul, abstract artists refined the gaze, taking it to its utmost minimalist end, but occasionally reconsidered this move, as did Kasimir Malevich the Suprematist who adhered to radical reduction, but at some point reverted to painting spectacular portraits, figurative in varying degrees. In the 1920s and 1930s representations of the automated man were manifest in portraits by Raoul Hausmann, Oskar Schlemmer, Heinrich Hoerle, Fernand Léger, and even in the portrait of a modern Cyclop from the 1970s by Markus Lüpertz, which appeared as sequels to De Chirico's 1917 *Troubadour*. The propaganda machine of enlisted

art distributed the portraits of healthy, happy people alongside those of the rulers of totalitarian regimes. In contrast, one may note Felix Nussbaum's uncannily magnificent self-portrait from 1943, where he appears with a yellow badge on his coat, holding an ID card with the word "Jew" printed in red. A large part of Jewish art that survived from the Holocaust consisted of portraits, some executed by commission, others in a desire and dire need to perpetuate people, in fact as a last act of documentation. In most cases the artist inscribed the figures' names and the exact date and place in which the portrait was created next to his signature, in the hope that they might survive to become historical documents.

In the series of portraits created by Jean Fautrier between 1943 and 1945, the face is unrecognizable, as if it had been deprived of its skin or washed away by lava that erupted directly from its brain. Jean Dubuffet created raw, aggressive, material and absurd portraits. The human figure in Francis Bacon's dramatic works was distorted and sickly, and served as a source of inspiration and imitation at the time. Neo-Expressionism was also discernible in the portraits of Jackson Pollock, Karel Appel, De Kooning, Leon Kossoff, and others. Giacometti, who was fascinated by the ambivalent figure of Jean Genet, painted the latter's monochromatic portrait in the mid-1950s. "Objective" photography was legitimized in the aftermath of World War II, and the medium of photography – with its diverse uses – became a crucial factor in twentieth-century art. In the 1960s Diane Arbus photographed the portraits of eccentric figures, and Georg Baselitz presented his subjects upside down. Andy Warhol

introduced his well known and extensively publicized *Marilyn Diptych* in the early 1960s, and in 1980 created the body of portraits entitled *Ten Jews of the Twentieth Century*. Since the 1980s art has been characterized by extreme pluralism, post-modernism, the disappearance of the notion of "hegemony", and convention-shattering. It is beyond the scope of this essay to present the profusion of artistic manifestations that have since emerged, especially in the field of portraiture. Man has been and remains the protagonist of art works from time immemorial, and the ongoing quest for identity still continues in full force. In this context, a large series of portraits exhibited by Christian Boltanski at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne toward the late 1980s springs to mind. It featured the faces of German children who lost their families in the war, in a line-up of sorts, extracted, as it were, from a sad ritual of the Department for the Detection of Lost Relatives. Boltanski expressed the presence of the absent in an entirely different manner when he hung identifying plaques along the walls of two apartment buildings in Berlin, thus delineating the space left by a residential building destroyed in the war. On the plaques he carved the names of Jewish family members who resided in the absent building, and next to each of the names he noted the person's occupation. The absence of plastic images in this work generates a highly expressive "group portrait," intriguing in its sensitivity and power. Gerhard Richter, in contrast, shattered a cultural-political convention when he combined the portraits of the Bader-Meinhof gang members to form his photographic/painterly repertoire, exhibiting it in a museum. Figuration in its various manifestations flourished at the time,

as exhibited, for example, by Avigdor Arikha who reverted from the abstract to paint naturalistic portraits, Helmut Newton who photographed naked models on the runway alongside their clothed portraits, Annie Leibovitz who documented famous figures, or Lucien Freud who radicalized the facial expressions and bodily postures of his fleshy figures. Chuck Close processed photographs of himself, his friends and family, enlarging them on monumental canvases to the point of pixelization. Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman used images of themselves for a feminist manifesto of reaffirmation, whereas David Hockney introduced a series of pencil drawings in the 1990s, documenting the portraits of his close circle at the time. When Robert Mapplethorpe's wonderfully aesthetic photographs finally broke the barrier of American conservatism and were allowed to be displayed, body art thrived. Bruce Nauman presented himself in videos demonstrating radical narcissism, and Gary Hill processed fragments of the human body to a state that no longer allowed for an analogy between the portrait and the persona. Various artists created portraits that undermined the familiar, reflecting feelings of chaos and an inexplicable threat. Others expressed a yearning for Neo-Classicism, which recurred in different interpretations throughout the history of art.

The use of portrait seems to express every possible form of preoccupation with identity and its representation: its definition, deconstruction, splitting, blurring, concealment, effacement, appropriation, masquerading, fictionalization, reproduction, and so on. Adam Baruch chose *Portrait of My Mother*, a borrowed, appropriated

portrait, as the cover image for his 2004 book *How are Things at Home?*. In the introduction, Baruch describes how the portrait of an anonymous young woman painted in the late nineteenth century became a family heirloom, bearing the fictive title "Portrait of My Mother."

Liliane Klapisch, who knew Haim Shiff in his lifetime, preferred not to work from his photograph, but rather to convey "a type of statement that reflects his true personality." "He had an aristocratic look," she says, "he liked art, he was a man of power and success, and he also wrote an autobiography. Quite accidentally I came across a painting by El Greco that contains all these qualities – a portrait of a man by the name of Brother Hortensio Felix Paravicino, seated on a chair, holding a book in his hand. The painting hangs in the Boston Museum of Art. It was exactly what I was looking for. I recreated it in my own way, but changed the face so as to lend it Haim's expression, in implied rather than realistic form. I wanted to declare his simultaneous presence and absence."

Ziv Peleg Ben Ze'ev never met Haim. She learned to know him through his autobiography, describing the process as follows: "In the course of acquaintance with Haim Shiff I was struck by the mindset described at the end of his book. The last chapter, the last minute, the personal gaze and the private feeling. Not the pathos, nor the heroism, but rather the personal eyes looking back at the past and describing a sense of loneliness vis-à-vis the harsh struggle on his way to success. From the child to the adult to the man who changed the geographic map of tourism in Israel, I extracted the human being. Haim Shiff for me is the building; he is the concrete and steel that made his buildings. I saw Haim

Shiff standing at the end of his life, rooted in his buildings (sculpture), looking at the city (painting) in whose construction he took part, observing, self-reflecting and soul-searching. It was there that I discovered the man."

Presented last year as part of the Art Focus 4 Biennale in Jerusalem, Bill Viola's video *Observance* features a dramatic mourning scene where each actor steps forward in turn, encounters a tragic vision that the viewers cannot see, but experience it through the facial expressions and the look in the actor's eyes. The work exposes perhaps most of all the intensity of emotion and the power and complexity of the overt and covert, the visible and the hidden.

Moshe Gershuni returned to figurative painting due to Shiff's eyes, due to the gaze reflected in them. Writing in succinct sentences he says: "Jews: Come to the Land of Israel!"; "Eyes Looking into the Distance"; "Experienced Heart." The work spawned by Shiff's gaze has, by now, evolved into a series which Gershuni calls *Requiem to the Twentieth Century*.

Haim Shiff passed away in the year 2000, at the conclusion of the twentieth century. After his passing a new millennium began.