



מכון ון ליר בירושלים

THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

معهد فان لير في القدس

THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE 2021



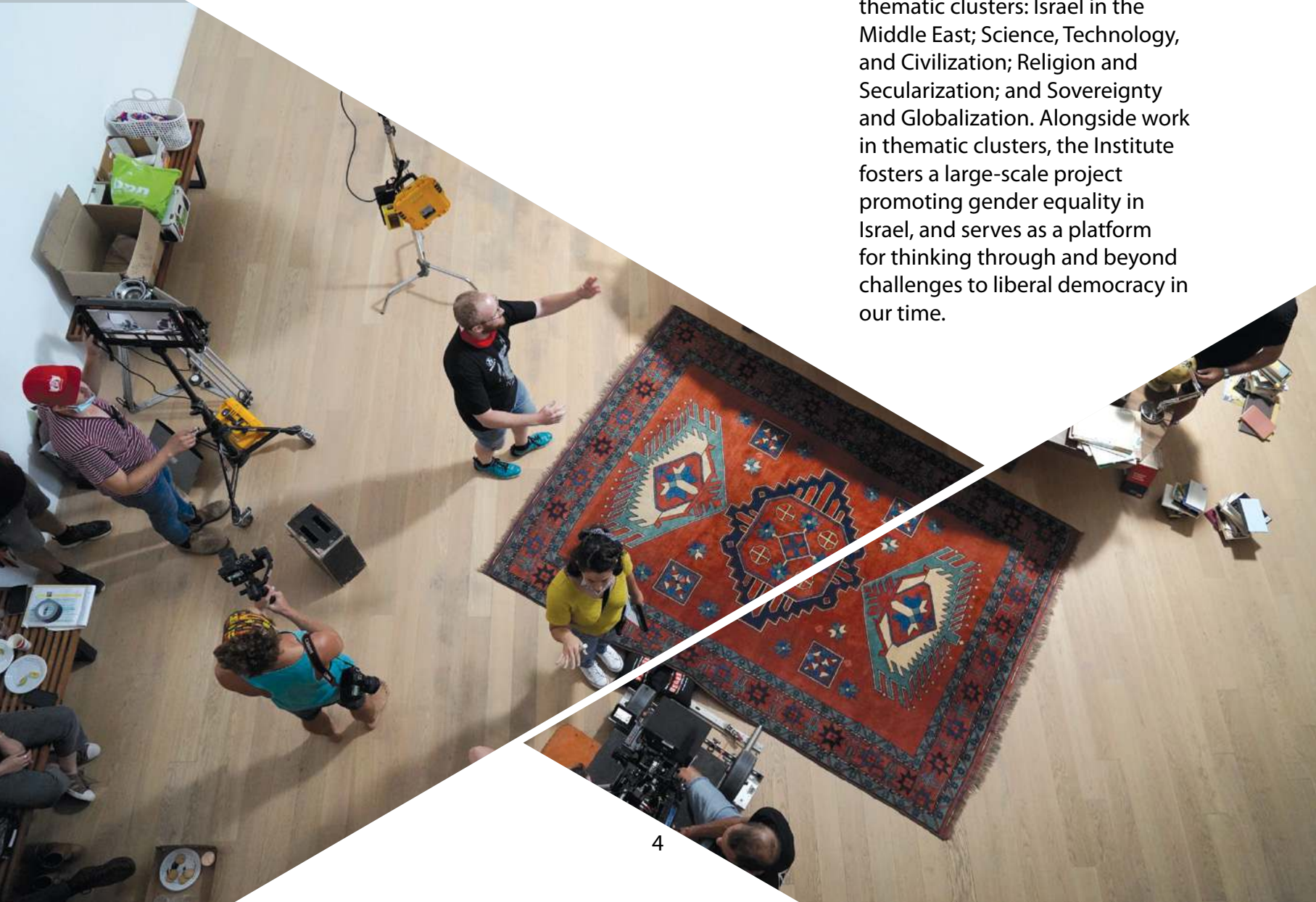


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THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (VLJI) fosters innovative interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences and develops new ways of addressing questions of global concern that have special import for Israeli society and the region. Research and public engagement at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute currently take place in four thematic clusters: Israel in the Middle East; Science, Technology, and Civilization; Religion and Secularization; and Sovereignty and Globalization. Alongside work in thematic clusters, the Institute fosters a large-scale project promoting gender equality in Israel, and serves as a platform for thinking through and beyond challenges to liberal democracy in our time.





In all areas, work at the Institute seeks to break down some of the obstacles to social change by overcoming dichotomies that have become stifling, and suggesting new terms through which to think about contemporary issues. The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute is home to the Polonsky Academy, the leading international post-doctoral program in Israel, as well as to the Van Leer Institute Press, which publishes leading academic journals in Hebrew as well as key works in cutting-edge social and political thought and Middle East culture, mostly in Hebrew for an Israeli audience. The Institute runs numerous events each week that are free of charge and open to the public.

AIMS

To be a hub for groundbreaking ideas in the humanities and social sciences

To probe, define and shape public discourse by disseminating alternative ways of thinking about current topics

To foster intellectual leadership through capacity-building programs

To promote new ways of living together in a deeply divided society and region, and to advance a just and democratic social and economic order



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This is, sadly, my last introduction to the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute annual report as Chair, as I complete my time as a Van Leer trustee in June 2021. I have so enjoyed my time with the Institute. My years as Chair have seen major changes at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. We finally focused on a few themes and developed them with rigor and perseverance. Our acknowledgement that impact was important and that we were driven by a goal of gaining serious social impact of deep ideas made us present material differently and partner with *Haaretz* and others to disseminate, in a form accessible to the general public, what we were doing. Our seminars and events presented material to a

wide audience and began to make an impact. Along with that, our Intellectual Journeys leadership program brought together young Israelis from all backgrounds and produced an inspirational and heady mix of ideas – and enduring friendships across divides.

All this would be good enough, indeed, very good. But then came COVID-19 and lockdowns, and all this work had to be transferred online, or, at best, done in accordance with social distancing rules. And still, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute managed to inspire, cross boundaries, and appear in the press and increasingly on the lips of all kinds of Israelis, who had heard, somehow, of what we were and are doing. This year has brought us to acknowledge that the sign of a vigorous and healthy organization, from its Polonsky Fellows to its catering staff, from its researchers to its program directors, and everyone involved everywhere,

is how it manages to flourish in difficult times. COVID-19 made things difficult. But the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute flourished. Thank you to everyone who made that possible and we look forward to the resumption of normal life, when we can gather people across all divides to discuss those things that matter to us and to society at large.

It is not only time to say goodbye, it is also time to say thank you. I want to pay tribute to the amazing Shai Lavi, whose inspirational leadership has transformed the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute into the extraordinary, humming hotbed of intellectual activity it is today; to Yochi Fischer, whose espousal of the values that matter has been a cornerstone of how the Board has thought; to Zippi Hecht, who helped us all until her retirement in 2020; to my Board colleagues, who have been so supportive and fun to work with; and to all the staff at the Institute, for inspiring us with learning, enabling us to understand contemporary situations differently, and helping us to look at theoretical frameworks through a different lens.

**RABBI BARONESS
JULIA NEUBERGER DBE**

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The past year, 2020, will go down in the annals of world history as the year of a global pandemic. COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of individuals, communities, and institutions. What role can a research institute committed to accelerating social impact by incubating deep ideas have during a world emergency, when people's attention seems to be focused on bare survival rather than on lofty ideas? Surprisingly, as we discovered this year, much more than one might have expected.

First, it became clear that the pandemic threw into high relief some of the core issues that we have been exploring in recent years: the fragility of our world economy and the importance of government involvement in the economic sphere; the imperative of reducing tensions in Israeli society, especially between religious and secular groups; the importance of viewing Israel as part of the Middle East, in response to a virus that knows no national boundaries and in light of the recently signed Abraham Accords; and the continuing challenge of gender inequality, which has intensified during the pandemic.

Second, we discovered that the general public was very much interested in learning more and deepening its understanding of our current predicaments. During long periods of lockdowns and social distancing, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute innovated its methods of discourse and communications. We produced high-quality online content in new and exciting formats and reached growing audiences in Israel and abroad.

Finally, this period has allowed us to internally strengthen our bonds of mutual commitment. The Van Leer Jerusalem team has been able to maintain a high level of activity as well as to express solidarity with our colleagues who could not work

from home by donating vacation days that enabled us to continue to fully employ our entire staff. At an institution that prioritises creating social change, our team proved that it is possible.

It is with my utmost appreciation and gratitude that I wish to personally thank Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger DBE, who has served as the Chair of our Board during the past few years. Julia is an internationally renowned Rabbi and a leading public figure in the UK. Her guidance and contagious enthusiasm have encouraged the Institute to pursue new and exciting directions. She will continue to be a true inspiration to us all.

Let us hope that we will soon be able to return to most of our old routines and that some of the lessons we have learned from this difficult period will not be too quickly forgotten.

PROF. SHAI LAVI



SACREDNESS, RELIGION, AND SECULARIZATION

DR. YOCHI FISCHER

WE PROPOSE THAT RELIGION AND SECULARISM ARE NOT FIXED AND CONTRADICTORY IDENTITIES, BUT ARE BEST UNDERSTOOD AS INTERRELATED AND CO-DEPENDENT PROCESSES OF SACRALIZATION AND SECULARIZATION.

The growing presence of religion in the public sphere has become a reality in many countries. Whereas intellectuals of the early 20th century prophesied the gradual decline of religion, today it is clear that religion continues to thrive, sometimes in new forms. This research cluster focuses on tensions between religion and secularism

and the role that new forms of sacredness play in post-secular societies. The topic is especially relevant for Israel, but resonates with developments across the globe.

We question the ways in which scholars and the general public view the tensions between religion and secularism. We propose that religion and secularism are not fixed and contradictory identities, but are best understood as interrelated and co-dependent processes of sacralization and secularization. The emergence of new religious forms and the growing presence of religion in the public sphere is an integral part of secular society. Understanding the interdependence of these identities and processes opens new ways of comprehending these tensions and is likely to enable progress toward resolving them.

The central, intensifying, and ever-changing place of religion in the public sphere and in public discourse has been more strongly demonstrated in 2020 Israel – a year in which religious institutions, practices, and believers have become more influential, yet have had to adjust to new and unfamiliar conditions. In turn, these conditions have given rise to new interactions

and conflicts between the religious, the sacred, and the secular spheres. With the restrictions imposed upon religious gatherings, pilgrimages, and the public sphere in general, the last year has seen both adjustments of time-old practices to the new conditions and clashes between the regulations enforced by secular and religious authorities and members of religious communities who refuse to adapt to these new regulations.

As part of our efforts to re-examine, in both the local and the global contexts, deep questions about religion and secularism and the role that new forms of sacredness play in the contemporary post-secular world, in 2020 we held an international online workshop titled “Sacred Places in a Post-secular and Globalized World” with leading scholars in the field of religious studies: Profs. Robert Orsi, Kim Knott, and José Casanova, and more than 40 participants from around the world. The workshop addressed the changing conditions of the sacred place in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the environmental crisis, and global political instability.

A discussion with the prominent Turkish-French scholar, Nilüfer Göle, addressed the fate of secularism

from another angle by examining the conflict between laïcité and public expressions of collective and personal Muslim religiosity in contemporary France and Turkey.

In the local context, we held public online discussions addressing the acute and ongoing clash between the authority of the “secular” state and parts of the Haredi society with regard to the COVID-19 restrictions. These activities have all grown out of our ongoing work on the changing concept of sacredness, on the place of Haredi thought and society within the general Israeli context, on the meaning of secularism in contemporary society, and on the constant interaction between religion and secularity.





GLOBALIZATION AND SOVEREIGNTY

DR. KFIR COHEN LUSTIG

The Globalization and Sovereignty cluster advances original research and civil society projects that respond to the political, economic and cultural challenges emerging in a global, neoliberal world. Our point of departure is that today no understanding of the Israel and indeed the world is possible without understanding the nature of globalization and global capitalism. We seek to advance state-of-the-art academic work so as to renew existing disciplinary bodies of knowledge that still think of the world as an aggregate of nation-states.

Responding to the crisis going on in many societies today, we believe that what tears people and groups

Needed urgently: a new economic order

While seeking local solutions for the coronavirus pandemic, we must also consider transitioning from a profit-based society to a society based on human needs. To establish a viable alternative, we must start talking about post-capitalism

apart are not simply political, ethnic or cultural differences, but a shared global way of life that prioritizes profits over human and communal ends. Not being satisfied with critique alone, we develop alternative ways of thinking about what we call postcapitalism that seeks to re-center human ways of life on common, inclusive goals.

For better or for worse, 2020 provided an opportunity to test our social impact activities and thinking to great effect. Our efforts to build a local and international community of scholars around global studies saw the successful launch of the Global Studies Forum, which includes over 50 junior and senior scholars. The forum has already hosted, via Zoom technology, Arjun Appadurai of New York University and Saskia Sassen of Columbia University.

Because of COVID-19 we moved up our public-facing postcapitalist activities to April 2020 and tailored them to the situation. Writing op-eds, our research team engaged with COVID-related issues surrounding banking, debt, work, and universal basic income (UBI). Our work, showcased on the front page of *Haaretz* Weekend Magazine and other national media outlets, introduced hundreds of thousands of Israelis to our ideas and helped in slowly establishing postcapitalism as a recognizable and intriguing position in the Israeli public sphere. Our five NGO partners are busy advancing postcapitalist

thinking and practices in housing, green energy, Arab-Jewish relations, and work.

Our unique writers' workshop on postcapitalist speculative fiction, "The Days of Tomorrow," imagining near-future worlds, finalized its first anthology and eight short stories await to be published. Focusing our efforts, we continue the workshop this year with four novelists who will write four speculative novellas.

WE BELIEVE THAT WHAT TEARS PEOPLE AND GROUPS APART ARE NOT SIMPLY POLITICAL, ETHNIC OR CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, BUT A SHARED GLOBAL WAY OF LIFE THAT PRIORITIZES PROFITS OVER HUMAN AND COMMUNAL ENDS.





SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CIVILIZATION

DR. HAGAI BOAS

WE EXPLORE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ERA ON HUMAN CULTURE.

Science, Technology, and Civilization is a research cluster in which we explore the implications of the current science and technology era on human culture. Geologists have termed this period the Anthropocene, and it is usually considered in terms of the human's role in climate change. Our working assumption is that the concept of

the Anthropocene captures a much more essential change in human culture and how we understand civilization.

This change is marked in many ways. It is found in the new interpretations of human feelings that have emerged from neuroscience; in the new self-understanding based on genetic discoveries; in the new perceptions of reality and constructed reality derived from the use of virtual reality; and in the new conceptions of communication stemming from the extent to which it is mediated by objects and technology. Social and political thought now include nonhuman entities – living and nonliving – and the Anthropocene brings ethical and political questions to the table associated with both climate change and the new world in which humans and nature co-produce.

In our research groups, public lectures, and original research, we critically and constructively examine the implications of nature losing its essence as an independent force on our understanding of the human body in light of advanced medical technologies and human–nonhuman relations (from interacting with smart devices to



relating to animals). Our research group “Theological Thought and the Anthropocene” examines religious responses to climate change and explores the theological underpinnings of the Anthropocene discourse. In 2020, the group convened monthly and hosted two prominent international scholars – Prof. Michael Northcott and Prof. Bronislaw Szerszynski. These activities will continue in 2021.

Among our higher-impact activities is our current collaboration with the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Our research teams are studying two major contemporary issues in Israeli society: Israel’s planned biobank and the surplus of pre-embryos in Israeli IVF clinics. The final report on the ethics of the biobank, submitted by Prof. Yael Hashiloni Dolev and Prof. Aviad Raz, is already available on our website. It includes an overview of the methods and policies of biobanks worldwide together with a report on the attitudes of Israelis on the ethical questions of

donating genetic information to a national pool. This project will conclude with a public conference. The project on surplus pre-embryos in IVF clinics will be finalized in 2021. We aim to suggest new perspectives on both issues to decision makers.

Our public engagement activity is a series of public lectures led by Prof. Oren Harman, titled “Talking about Science in the 21st Century”. Now in its fourth season, it has attracted a large audience in Israel and abroad through Zoom.

מכון ז'ור בירושלים
THE VAN LEEUWEN JERUSALEM INSTITUTE
معهد فان لير في القدس

Sunday
26.4.20
11:00 a.m.

live
Facebook >
VL Website >

A discussion with
Prof. Charles Rosenberg
Harvard University
Hosted by **Prof. Oren Harman**

Understanding Epidemics

Epidemics are biological phenomena, but it takes more than a biologist to understand them. The historian Charles Rosenberg's classic book, *The Cholera Years* (1962), was a path-breaking study showing that epidemics cannot be understood outside the social, cultural, and policy context in which they play out. Disease doesn't just happen to us: How we construct our understanding of it and reaction to it can tell us a lot about our culture and times. Using the example of cholera in the nineteenth century and the more recent AIDS epidemic we will explore the nature of disease and discuss the possible consequences of COVID-19.



ISRAEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

DR. ASSAF DAVID



Israel is not simply in the Middle East, it is *of* the Middle East. We are striving to advance a comparative perspective on Israel and other Middle Eastern countries. Our aim is to contextualize Israel in the region and explore the political, cultural, and societal strings that tie Israel and its population to the region.

Whereas Israel is perceived as a “villa in the jungle” in Israeli academic and public discourse, and whereas a fundamental distinction is drawn between “us” and “them,” this cluster seeks to stimulate a paradigmatic and methodological change and transform deeply held perceptions and understandings of Israel’s neighbors in the Middle East.

Unlike most analyses of the Israel–Arab conflict that focus on warfare and politics, we locate the source of contention and the possible amelioration of tension in culture. By humanizing the Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian “other” we hope to cultivate civil discourse and eventually a collective consciousness that will be conducive to peaceful coexistence with the other regardless of the existing and future political formulas.

This cluster is manifest in both academic endeavor and public engagement. Initial research papers of two of our research groups – “Israel in the Middle East” and “Israeli Citizenship and Jewish and Arab Nationalism” – will be published soon in *Minbar*, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute’s bilingual magazine that deals with Jewish–Arab relations in Israel. The “Critical Incubator” study group that supports early career Israeli-

Palestinian academics is working on a textbook on Palestinians in Israeli academia, and another Palestinian research group has manifested the Arabic language in public spaces in Israel through graffiti.

During 2020 we strengthened our network of academics, activists, educators, and journalists who share our vision. The *Ofek* project, which offers nuanced information and analysis to the Israeli public, is gaining traction in various professional and media circles and has entered a new phase of weekly cooperation with national media outlets such as *Ynet* and *Haaretz*. We published our extensive research report, *Arabs, Jews, Arabic: Arabic Teaching in Israel and Its Challenges* (edited by Yonatan Mendel, May Arow, Thabet Abu Rass, and Gal Kramarski), and we are embarking on a massive PR campaign to promote a new policy regarding Arabic teaching in Israel.

The Maktoob book series, a pioneering and unique endeavor, the translation of Arabic literature into Hebrew, saw the publication of four books and three booklets this year. The newly established cooperation with the Jerusalem Foundation included small projects with the Jerusalem Tolerance Coalition on the Arabic language and an analytical paper on the changing relations between eastern and western Jerusalem. This year also saw high-profile interventions of the cluster’s personnel in public discourse on current affairs: Israeli–Arab normalization (the Abraham Accords), the Palestinians, and Arabic teaching in Israel’s education system.

**WE HOPE TO CULTIVATE CIVIL DISCOURSE AND
EVENTUALLY A COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS
THAT WILL BE CONDUCTIVE TO PEACEFUL
COEXISTENCE WITH THE OTHER.**



THE CHALLENGE OF LIVING TOGETHER

PROF. NISSIM MIZRACHI

Living in the same political space with those who are deeply different from us and have profoundly different views about social justice and the “common good” is perhaps the most acute political challenge facing Israel and other contemporary democracies in our times. For social scientists, however, how to live together is not only a wrenching political question but also an urgent and weighty research question which requires us to refresh our theoretical toolkit.



The Challenge of Living Together research area at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute seeks to take on this mission, going beyond the liberal imagination. Our work, in collaboration with Shaharit–Creating Common Cause, scrutinizes the liberal grammar of critical discourse – widespread in academia in Israel and throughout

OUR WORK SCRUTINIZES THE LIBERAL GRAMMAR OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE – WIDESPREAD IN ACADEMIA IN ISRAEL AND THROUGHOUT THE WEST – WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS GRAMMAR ITSELF LIMITS OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE AN INNOVATIVE SOCIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE QUESTION OF LIVING TOGETHER.

the West – with the understanding that this grammar itself limits our ability to provide an innovative social interpretation of the question of living together. The Challenge of Living Together area seeks to contend with this dual rift, the scholarly and the political, by reframing the affinity of deep ideas to social reality.

In 2020 we dealt with several issues. First was promoting the products of the sociology group and preparing the multidisciplinary collection *Beyond the Liberal Imagination: The Post-Critical Turn in the Social Sciences and the Humanities in Israel*, which combines original works that seek to push the boundaries of critical discourse and mark new directions for interpretation and

research. In addition, we are editing a special issue for *The American Sociologist*, which will include sociological works that correspond with the situation in the world. At the beginning of the year, a session was held at the Israeli Sociological Society that focused on the sociology of meaning, in which researchers from our research group presented their products. In December 2020, the important book of Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, was published in Hebrew for the first time by the Van Leer Institute Press, as part of the work of our group “The Political Economics of Contemporary Populism.”

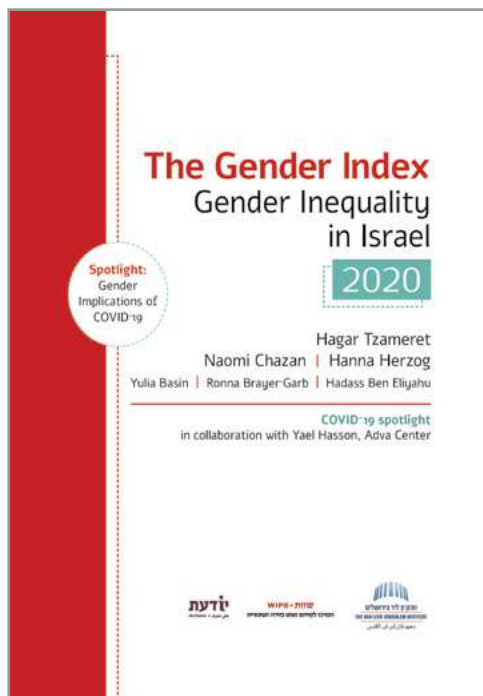




הו | מנהלת מרכז "יודעת", מכון ון ליר

אפליה מהבית

מחקר בריטי: גם בעבודה מהבית מעט



GENDER AND FEMINISM AT VAN LEER

**DR. MIRI ROZMARIN
AND RONNA BRAYER-GARB**

The Gender and Feminism projects at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute aspire to re-examine existing paradigms and theoretical conventions in feminist theory and in the academic field of Gender Studies. Our point of departure is that contemporary feminist theory, as well as feminist politics and activism, are facing fundamental challenges that are threatening our ability to evolve and respond to changes in the social and political world. Concepts and perceptions such as liberty, choice, and equality, which form the normative basis for feminism, are no longer adequate to describe the multiplicity of gendered experiences and conditions. The Gender and Feminism projects at the Institute are committed to enhancing Israeli democracy and increasing the knowledge foundation that will allow for greater gender equality and social justice.

The Conceptual Research Incubator for doctoral and post-doctoral students re-examines feminist concepts in order to encourage innovative and relevant feminist research and political action. In 2020, 30 early-career researchers from institutions across Israel met periodically to undertake this conceptual work together, and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute continued establishing itself as a forum for pathbreaking gender-

related research that changes the terms of public discourse. Among the concepts discussed by the group were consent, agency, empathy, intersectionality, and political imagination.

Continuing the same line of critique, and thinking about feminism as part of a wider political and philosophical project, in 2020 we conducted a research workshop titled "Between a Critique of Power and a Philosophy of Emancipation in the Post-liberal Era." A group of 15 researchers from different areas of critical thought convened regularly to think together and engage with each other's research on the political and theoretical questions regarding critical theory and its political implications at this time.

Alongside our research and academic work, the She Knows (Yodaat) knowledge center – which incorporates the annual Gender Index – is the most advanced and innovative information hub on

women and gender in Israel. Since the launch of its new website in September 2019, the knowledge center has become the central source of information and a means for social change agents from numerous institutes, programs, and media outlets to acquire information for advancing gender equality and to design steps to overcome gender gaps in a variety of areas. This includes addressing the gendered implications of COVID-19 as the pandemic impacted women and men differently and deepened existing gender gaps. The Knowledge Center models a way in which our conceptual work can be brought to the public, affect public discourse, and generate interest in social equality.





THE POLONSKY ACADEMY



The Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, established by Dr. Leonard Polonsky in 2014, is one of the newest international fellowship programs worldwide, aiming to promote cutting-edge research in these fields. Each year, hundreds of applicants apply to the Academy, which awards up to seven post-doctoral fellowships,

tenable for up to four years (with a possible fifth year in exceptional circumstances), to outstanding international scholars working in any field of the humanities and social sciences. In 2020–2021 there are 20 Polonsky Fellows engaged in research at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, working on such diverse topics as democracy and technology, Palestinian studies, environmental history, Ottoman history, and the philosophy of action. The research is conducted both independently and in collaboration with ongoing projects at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. Because of the pandemic, the ensuing social isolation, and

international travel restrictions, Polonsky Academy weekly seminars and other activities continued via Zoom. Fellows at the Polonsky Academy are provided with state-of-the-art services for their research, including individual offices, a library, advanced IT, a lecture hall, and multiple meeting spaces, all in an award-winning facility on the Van Leer campus, which is located in one of the most beautiful neighborhoods of Jerusalem.

HAZMAN HAZEH

MAGAZINE

ASAF SHTULL-TRAURING
EDITOR

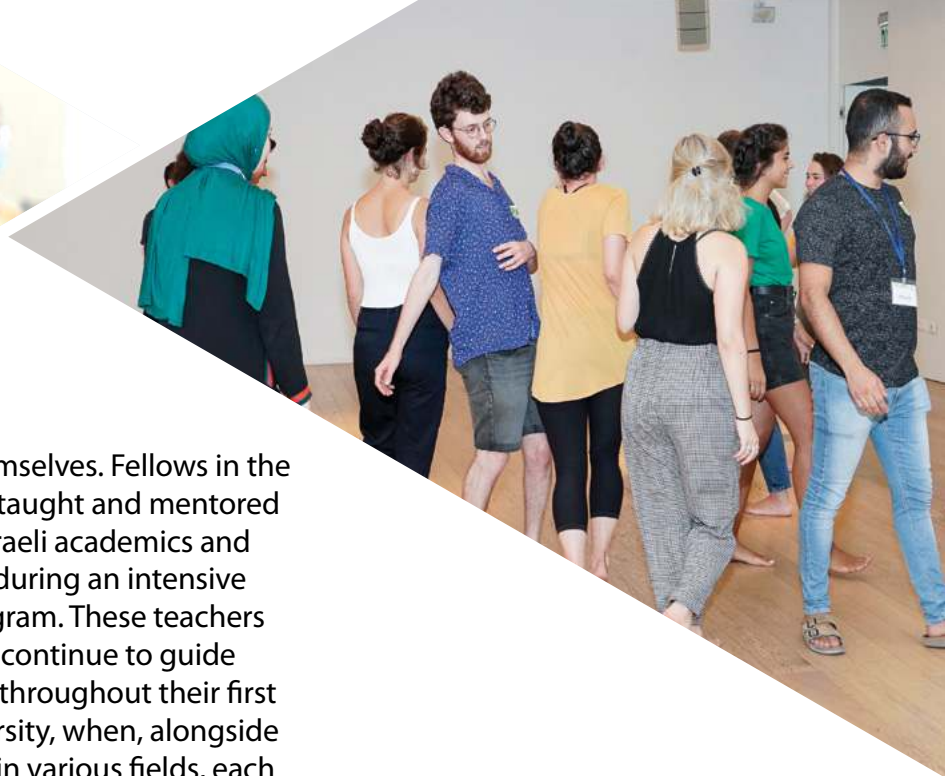
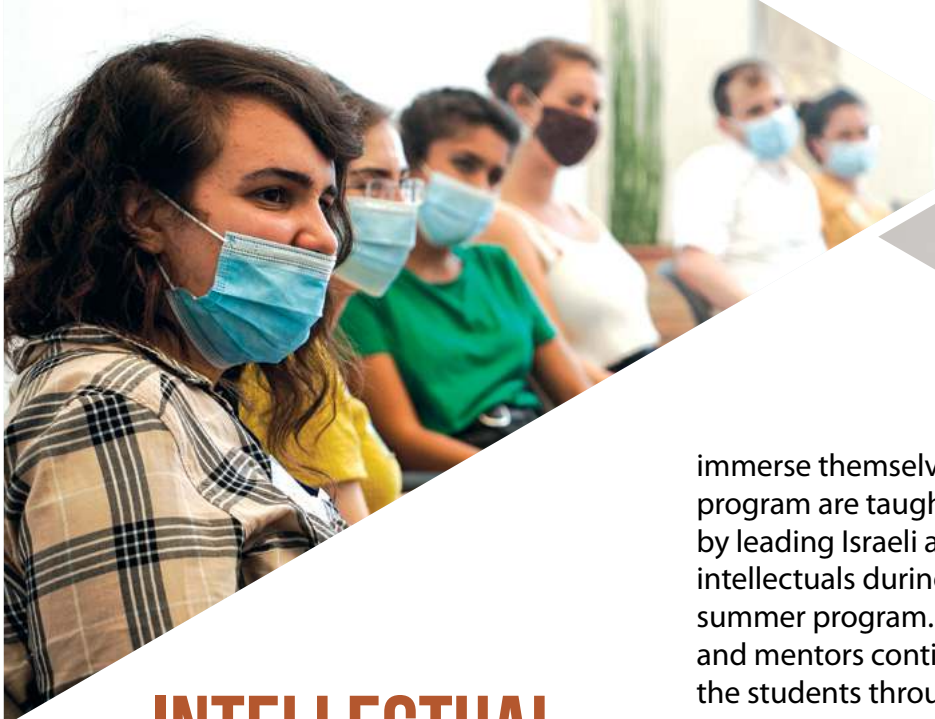
Hazman Hazeh (These Times) is a magazine of political thought, culture, and science launched in 2018 by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The magazine publishes articles and essays by leading scholars and original thinkers from Israel and abroad, aiming to offer new ideas and perspectives on key issues that are, or should be, on the public and intellectual agenda in Israel.

Print issues are distributed twice a year along with the *Haaretz* newspaper to approximately 85,000 households in Israel. Articles are published weekly on the magazine's website and are distributed to over 34,000 newsletter subscribers.

Recent articles in *Hazman Hazeh* have included among others "The Question of Resilience" by José Brunner and Galia Plotkin-Amrami, which discusses the role of the resilience discourse in the contemporary formation of the neoliberal social contract; "A Reconsideration of the New Ultra-Orthodox" by Itamar Ben-Ami, offering a new framework for understanding current trends in Haredi society in Israel; and a

translation of Kate Crawford and Trevor Paglen's piece "Excavating AI," which discusses neglected political aspects of Machine Learning.





INTELLECTUAL JOURNEYS: A PROGRAM FOR FOSTERING YOUNG INTELLECTUALS

DR. YOCHI FISCHER

“Intellectual Journeys” is a program incubated at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute to offer a model for 21st century liberal arts education in a deeply divided society. The program introduces 15 young adults, from diverse and otherwise separate communities in Israel, to a world of deep ideas in which, together, they

immerse themselves. Fellows in the program are taught and mentored by leading Israeli academics and intellectuals during an intensive summer program. These teachers and mentors continue to guide the students throughout their first year at university, when, alongside their studies in various fields, each student works on a personal project that relates the humanities to crucial social issues. In their final projects and as graduates of the program, fellows develop their own voice and engage intellectually with the wider public by writing op-eds, organizing public debates, teaching young adults, or volunteering in NGOs.

One aspect of the program that makes it unique within Israel is the extent to which ethnic, cultural and religious diversity are crucial in the composition of the group and are considered key intellectual tools for developing a multifaceted perspective.

The program is devised and monitored by an international advisory committee, and in its current and third year, the intellectual community surrounding

the program has expanded to include representatives from all of Israel’s institutions of higher education.

In 2020 special efforts were made for the summer program to take place despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The summer program was shortened and condensed, and the fellows stayed together as an isolated “capsule.” Despite the circumstances, the shortened summer program this year was extremely successful. Our alumni program is growing, and the alumni have been proactive in their communities and university programs, introducing aspects of this model on a small scale through programs and study groups they have initiated in the spirit of the program.



THE INTELLECTUAL INCUBATOR FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS

DR. YOCHI FISCHER AND
RONNA BRAYER-GARB

The Intellectual Incubator for Documentary Filmmakers at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute was formed in conjunction with the Israeli Documentary Filmmakers Forum and the Jerusalem

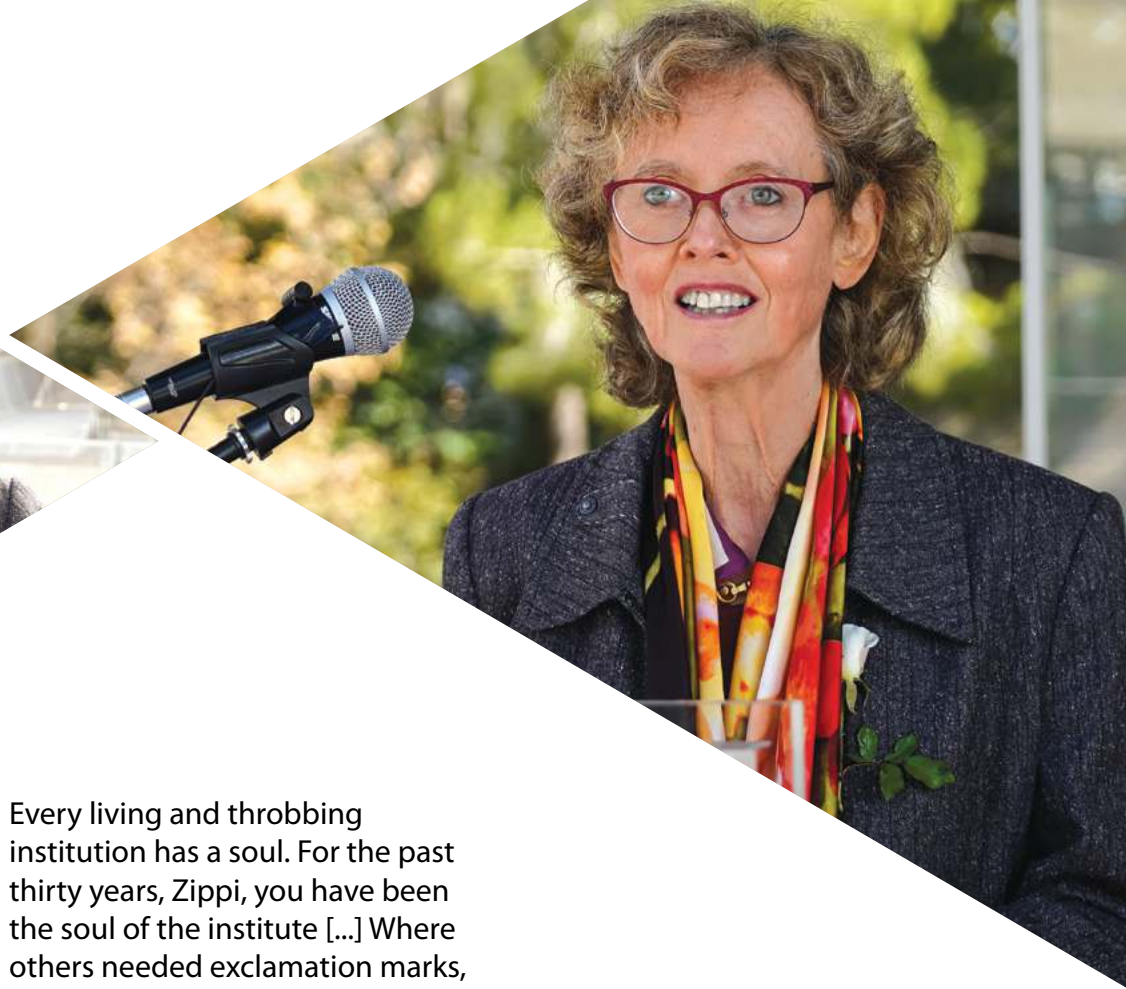
Cinematheque. It is a framework for thought and critique about the intellectual, social, and cultural contexts in which documentary films are conceived, produced, and received, and it is also a place for developing ideas and for the collaborative work of filmmakers and researchers.

The Incubator offers filmmakers an opportunity for more thorough research and for developing the thoughts that underlie their cinematic endeavors. The aims of the Incubator are to support the development of ideas and promote cooperation among filmmakers and

academic researchers, in order to advance documentary filmmaking in Israel. The filmmakers who participate in the Incubator and their films benefit from greater intellectual depth and creative momentum, thus enriching documentary filmmaking in Israel.

In 2020 the Incubator hosted some of the most prominent and successful documentary filmmakers in Israel. The topics of the 10 selected projects ranged from a film based on confessions about the Haredi wedding night, to the story of the terror attack on the Savoy Hotel in Tel Aviv in the 1970s, to a film about the rhetoric of Arab MKs throughout the history of the Knesset. Several films that started out in our program have now obtained significant support from film foundations and broadcasting bodies.





FAREWELL TO ZIPPI HECHT

At the end of 2020, we said goodbye to our dear Zippi Hecht, Assistant to the Director, who retired after thirty years of dedicated work alongside all five heads of VLJI. Zippi was the beating heart of the institute. Here are some of the words written in the farewell booklet:

Every living and throbbing institution has a soul. For the past thirty years, Zippi, you have been the soul of the institute [...] Where others needed exclamation marks, all you needed was to gently place a question mark to set us back on course.

Prof. Shai Lavi

For you, what mattered was the welfare of the Institute. Many people display responsibility in their work, but a fierce devotion to the workplace is rarer.

Prof. Gabriel Motzkin

You are the glue that holds together all the people inside and outside the VLJI. [...] Wisdom, Diplomacy and kindness are the words that fit you best.

André Betting

Always wisely. At discretion. In good spirits. A winning combination of a big, creative mind and restrained moderation.

Prof. Ruth Gavison Z"L

Her intelligence, the human charm she instills in her environment, and her ability to dispel tensions shaped the spirit of the institute and its organizational and ethical culture during the thirty years in which she served us all.

Dr. Shimshon Zelniker

DIGITAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PUBLIC EVENTS

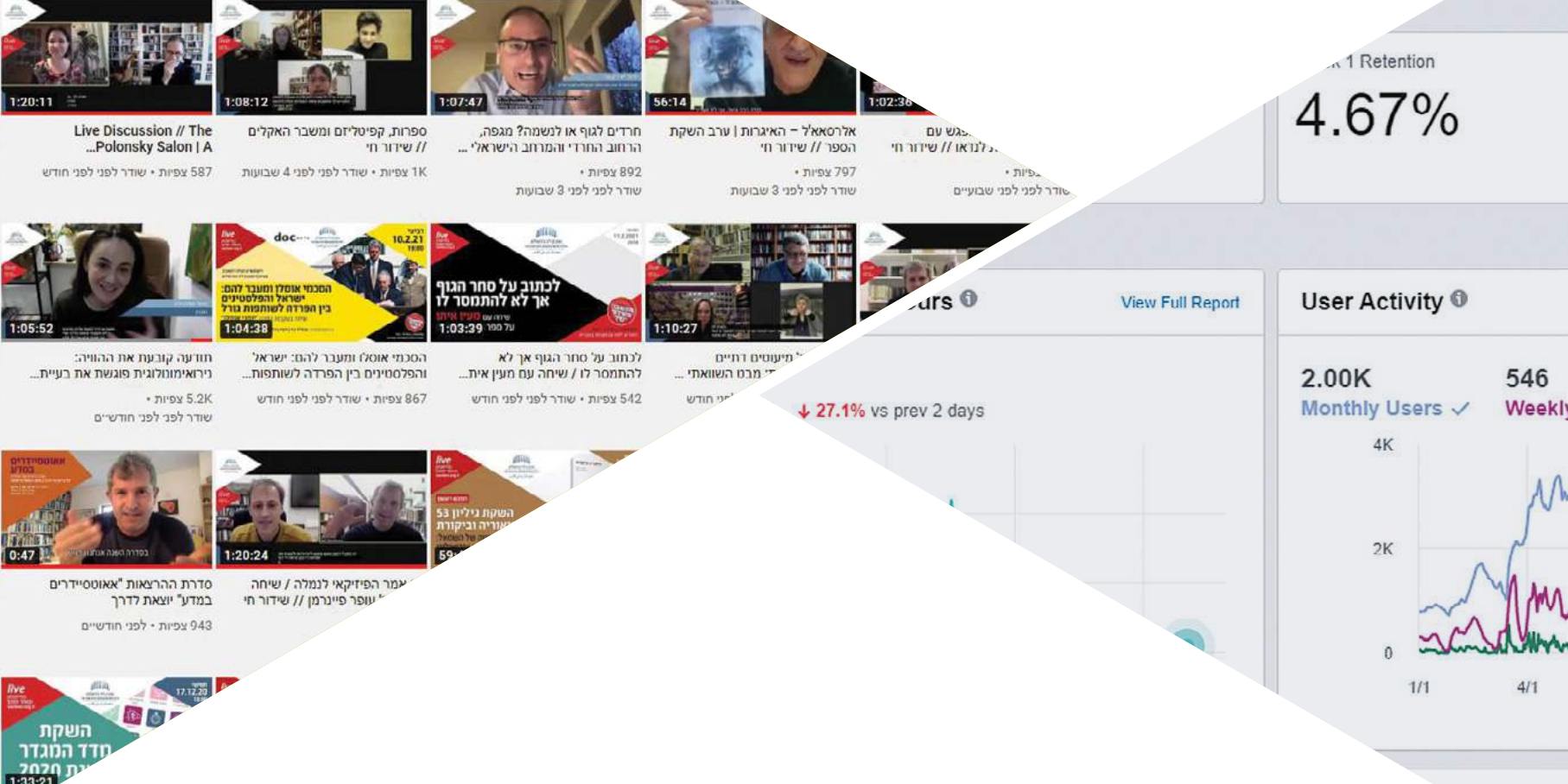
DR. ADAM KLIN-ORON AND SHULAMIT LARON

Each year, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute hosts on its premises hundreds of public events, including lecture series, film screenings, and conferences, mostly in the context of our research clusters and the public-engagement aspect of our work.

In January, just prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Israel, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute established a new digital team, headed by Dr. Adam Klin-Oron, to coordinate the Institute's content and visibility on social networks and digital platforms. Starting in March, the pandemic-related lockdowns shifted most of our

research and all our public activity to the virtual world. In September, a new website was launched, showcasing our lectures, articles, events, publications and staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not only impact the nature of our public events, but it also shaped their content by permitting us to share novel views and aspects of the pandemic. Starting with a series of *Theory and Criticism* events on the state of emergency, and a series on postcapitalistic alternatives that the new crisis brought to light, we



Mess
432

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86

Users ✓
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held 48 online events, streamed on Facebook, YouTube, and our website. For the first time, in real time, we extended the reach of our events beyond Jerusalem to audiences across the country and abroad. Each of our live broadcasts attracted over 220 participants in real-time, and an additional 1,200 viewers later on (on average). Our most popular event, a discussion of Prof. Eva Illouz's *The End of Love*, had a live audience of 560 participants and over 4,000 views overall. Operating for diversity and inclusion, all our online events were close-captioned live for hard-of-hearing viewers.

Our presence in social networks grew significantly in 2020; follower engagement more than doubled on Facebook and YouTube. With over 160,000 annual visitors to our new website, we can now also share our thinking and activities directly through the integration of videos, research, graphics, and opinion pieces in Hebrew, English, and Arabic.



VAN LEER INSTITUTE PRESS

DR. TAL KOHAVI

Van Leer Institute Press is a publisher of original scholarship. Since its founding 30 years ago, its mission has been to disseminate scholarship of the highest order that promotes critical theory and contemporary thought, as well as honest and committed public discourse on key issues in Israel and beyond. The Van Leer Institute Press

offers scholarly and nonfiction books, academic journals, and online products that are mainly the outcome of research conducted at the Institute. The Press also publishes *Theory and Criticism*, a leading peer-reviewed journal in Hebrew.

Beyond books, journals, and papers published through the Van Leer Institute Press, the Institute publishes (together with Yedioth Ahronoth Press) Maktoob, a series of Arabic language books translated into Hebrew—17 books

Maktoob

Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qasim, *Al-Rasail – The Letters*, trans. Yehouda Shenhav-Shahrabani, ed. Loayy Wattad (VLIP and Yedioth Books, 2020).

For two years the two Palestinian poets Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qasim exchanged letters that became an invaluable part of modern Arabic literature and poetry. Letters about friendship and love, poetry and resistance, the individual and the collective, that also tell the story of a generation

since 2017; *Hazman Hazeh* online magazine, in collaboration with the *Haaretz* newspaper; and *Ofek*, an online news portal facilitating access to Arabic news and opinion pieces for Hebrew readers. Our publications draw media and public attention, and the public is invited to events associated with them.



Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, trans. Shunamit Lifshitz (VLIP, Hakibbutz Hameuchad and Shaharit, 2020).

In this book Karl Polanyi reveals the roots of the catastrophe that befell humanity during his lifetime. In light of the economic, social, and environmental crises that have befallen the global capitalist world in the twenty-first century, Polanyi's thought is again arousing great interest and receiving renewed recognition.



Mahmoud Shukair, *Routine*, trans. Yehouda Shenhav-Shahrabani; ed. Loayy Wattad (VLIP and Dar Layla publishing and translation, 2020).

Rajaa Ghanem Danaf, *On Being a Refugee and Laundry Lines*, trans. and ed.: Idan Barir, Iyad Barghouti, Tami Israeli (VLIP and Dar Layla publishing and translation, 2020).

Research Papers

Hagar Tzameret, Naomi Chazan, Hanna Herzog, Yulia Basin, Ronna Brayer-Garb, and Hadass Ben Eliyahu In collaboration with Yael Hasson, *The Gender Index: Gender Inequality in Israel 2020* (VLIP, WIMPS, and Yodaat, 2020).

Amit Kaplan (et al.), *Making Women's Invisible Work Visible: Barriers to the Incorporation of Women into Israel's Labor Market (A Summary Report)* (VLIP and WIPS, 2020).

Yehouda Shenhav-Shahrabani, *Laborers and Actors in Translation: From the Individual Turn to a Bi-National Translation* (VLIP and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2020).

Yonatan Mendel, *Language Out of Place: Orientalism, Intelligence and Arabic in Israel* (VLIP and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2020).

Michal Shamir, Hanna Herzog, and Naomi Chazan, eds., *Gender Gaps in Israeli Politics* (VLIP and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2020).

Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jabarti, *The Day on Which the Laws of Nature have Changed*, trans. Immanuel Koplewitz, poetry trans. Idan Barir, eds. Eyad Barghuthy and Yoni Mendel, academic editing and epilogue: Tammi Sarfatti (VLIP and Yedioth Books, 2020).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM THE VAN LEER INSTITUTE PRESS BOOKS



FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES DATA (2020)

Financial data refers to CPA's report for 2020

MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME

TOTAL 25,778,000 ILS

71.3%

VLGF

3.9%

VLGF Special Grant

4.1%

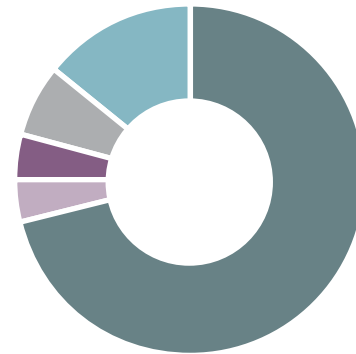
VLJI

6.7%

Cooperation and grants from Israeli sources

14.0%

Cooperation and grants from foreign sources



EXPENDITURE ACCORDING TO MAIN CATEGORIES

TOTAL 25,778,000 ILS

54.12%

Research Division

16.42%

Research Support Division

12.86%

Administration & Premises Division

29.99%

Public Engagement Division

-13.00%

Balance Sheet Deficit



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

UNIT COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESEARCH COST 7,731,000 ILS

15.6%

Outreach

17.3%

Young Intellectuals

8.7%

Creative Arts

17.2%

Public Activities

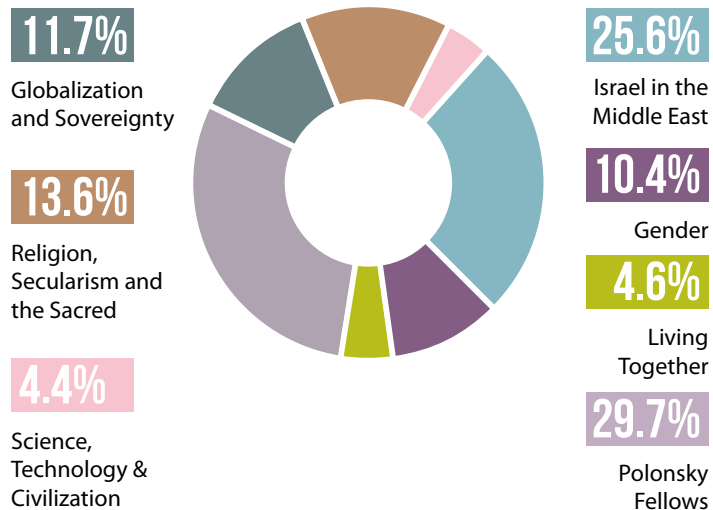
41.2%

Publications

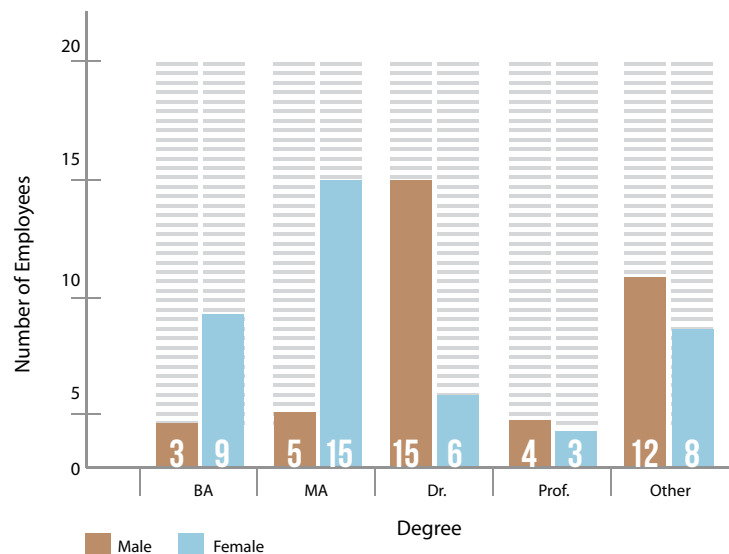


CONTENT UNIT RESEARCH

COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESEARCH
COST 13,950,000 ILS

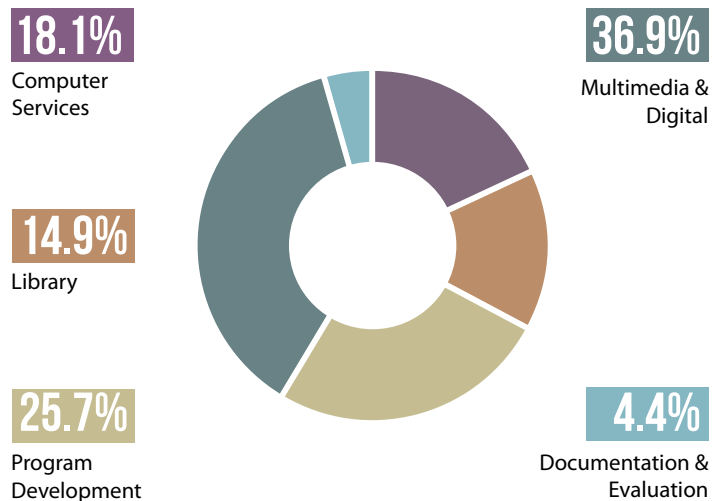


EMPLOYEES BY DEGREE AND GENDER



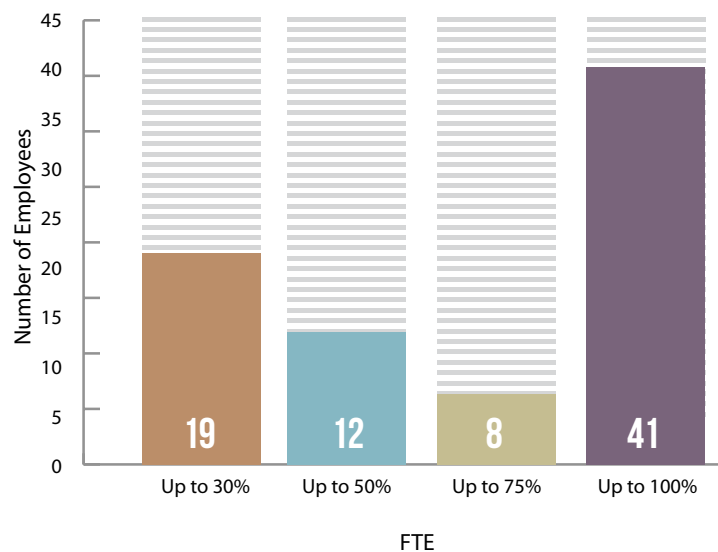
RESEARCH SUPPORT

UNITS COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESEARCH
COST 4,234,000 ILS



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY FTE

TOTAL FTE: 53.76



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The VLJI was established thanks to the vision and generosity of the Van Leer family of the Netherlands. The Institute is grateful to the Van Leer Group Foundation for its ongoing support and commitment to the legacy of the Van Leer family. The Institute also gratefully acknowledges the Polonsky Foundation and our other philanthropic partners, without whom its wide range of projects and activities would not be possible.

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OUR CAMPUS

In the heart of Jerusalem, adjacent to the President's residence, lies the campus of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The campus's distinctive architecture and physical setting is an inspiring oasis of greenery and restrained elegance. Built around the main garden court, the campus houses the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute's two buildings – its original building

designed in the 1960s by Reznik Architects and Povzner Architects, and the building of the Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences inaugurated in 2013 – as well as the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Council for Higher Education, and the Israel Science Foundation which were all included in the original campus design.

The original building of the Van Leer Institute houses offices for scholars, a press, a library, a large auditorium, and a smaller conference room, as well as extensive public areas for meetings and for interaction among scholars, cultural figures, employees, and visitors.

The Polonsky Academy building, the second building of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and the newest on Van Leer campus, was designed by Chyutin Architects, both to fit in with the campus and its environment and to preserve the skyline and adhere to the highest green standards. Its total area is 7,200 square meters, on four levels. In addition to thirty rooms for fellows, it has five seminar rooms, a cafeteria that serves the entire

campus, a 145-seat auditorium, a multi-purpose hall, administrative offices, a fitness room, and expansive foyers.

The Polonsky Academy building also houses the Polonsky Library, that together with the Van Leer Library contains over 40,000 books and journals focusing on the humanities and social sciences. In addition, the libraries hold an important collection on the history of science.

The Polonsky Academy building won Israel's 2015 Design Award

in the Public Buildings and Architectural Lighting categories. In 2015, the building was chosen by Archilovers as "Best Project" of 50,000 projects considered. In 2018, Bracha and Michael Chyutin won the prestigious Rechter Prize for planning the Polonsky Academy building.



Editor Orna Yoeli and Daniel Jonas
Photos Tamar Abadi and Nahariel Leader
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