



מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים  
the israel museum, jerusalem  
متحف إسرائيل، أورشليم القدس

**Exhibition Showcasing Recent Contemporary Art Acquisitions  
Explores Notions of Individual and Collective Identity**

**Opening in September 2015, *we the people* Continues the Israel Museum's  
Year-Long 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations**

**Jerusalem (August 19, 2015)** – The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, continues its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations with a new exhibition addressing notions of individual and collective social identity within society. Opening on September 20, *we the people* brings together recent acquisitions in contemporary art with key loans to explore definitions of selfhood and to reflect on how individuals find solidarity with one another through shared beliefs, values, and cultural systems. Through an examination of ideals of freedom and of the power of collective action, the works on view represent a range of perspectives within a local and global context by artists including: **Pawel Althamer, Cyprien Gaillard, Melanie Gilligan, Shilpa Gupta, Susan Hefuna, Yoav Horesh, Sala-Manca, Wolfgang Tillmans, Danh Vo, Lawrence Weiner, Artur Żmijewski, and Natalia Zourabova**, among others.

"*we the people* examines the freedom of expression that art has afforded throughout centuries for the exploration of self and the search for a sense of belonging to a larger whole," said James S. Snyder, the Museum's Anne and Jerome Fisher Director. "When presented together, the works in this exhibition—among them, stunning examples of our Museum's recent acquisitions in contemporary art—mirror in thought-provoking, sensitive, and, at times, humorous ways the complexities of the world's current geo-political climate. As we enter the second half of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary exhibition year, we look forward to engaging our audiences in this conversation about contemporary creative exploration, which is also so much about life in our time."

*we the people* addresses how social order evolves from such diverse factors as politics, religion, technology, and language. From the formation of majorities and minorities to the impact of opposition within a given society, the works on view engage in a dialogue about how utopian ideals can be stimulated or constrained. Exhibition highlights include:

- **Danh Vo's *We The People* (2011)**—the inspiration for the exhibition's title—replicates the Statue of Liberty through 300 distinct parts on a one-to-one scale. Drawing on this universal symbol of freedom and democracy, Vo's fragmentation and displacement of this icon of democracy investigates the abstract nature of the concept of freedom.
- **Wolfgang Tillmans' *Memorial for the Victims of Organized Religions* (2006)** is a wall installation comprised of 48 black-and-dark-blue photographs presented in a minimalistic grid that alludes to religious notions of the "absolute."
- **Shilpa Gupta's *Stars on Flags of the World* (2012)** brings together hundreds of stainless-steel stars originating from all 194 national flags. The stars piled atop one another in a vitrine represent the entire world and highlight the relationship among individual countries that make up global society.

- **Melanie Gilligan's *The Common Sense* (2014)** is a video series revolving around a futuristic technology that enables people to experience directly the physical sensations and feelings of another person. The narrative that unfolds focuses on the influence of technology and the economy on human relationships.

### **Exhibition Organization**

*we the people* is curated by Rita Kersting, the Israel Museum's Landeau Family Curator of Contemporary Art.

### **About The Israel Museum, Jerusalem**

The Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the leading art and archaeology museums in the world. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections ranging from prehistory through contemporary art and includes the most extensive holdings of Biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world, among them the Dead Sea Scrolls. Over its first 50 years, the Museum has built a far-ranging collection of nearly 500,000 objects through an unparalleled legacy of gifts and support from its circle of patrons worldwide.

The Museum's 20-acre campus, which underwent comprehensive renewal in 2010 designed by James Carpenter Design Associates and Efrat-Kowalsky Architects, features the Billy Rose Art Garden, the Shrine of the Book, and more than 225,000 square feet of collection and temporary exhibition galleries. The Museum also organizes programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the ancient Land of Israel; and at its historic Ticho House, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.

The Museum is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout 2015, with a year-long program devoted to an exploration of Israel's aesthetic culture in the 50 years before and after its founding.

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