

From the Israel Museum to the British Parliament

The Launching of Jerusalem - Names in Praise

Livre d'artiste by Ya'akov Boussidan

Westminster Palace, London, November 6 2007, 7.00-9.00pm

Ya'akov Boussidan has been invited to launch his book at a special event to take place at Westminster Palace, home of the British Parliament. The initial launching took place at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. *Jerusalem—Names in Praise*, a work in homage to Jerusalem and an artistic and intellectual combination of calligraphy, drawing and research, was recently presented to Pope Benedict XVI by the B'nai Brith World Organization. The book which took over eight years to compile focuses on the many different names that have been given to Jerusalem by writers over the years, each one rendered in beautiful calligraphy. In all, Boussidan has discovered almost 400 different names for Jerusalem.

Ya'akov Boussidan, is prominent in the field of artistic printing and calligraphy. The books for which he is best known include the *Passover Haggadah*, and *Song of Songs*. He has won prizes worldwide, including the Israel Museum's Jesselson Prize and the Monte-Carlo Biennale Honorary Prize for Prints. His works can be found in London's Victoria and Albert Museum, The British Library, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, as well as in many other museums and private collections.

Ya'akov Boussidan was born in Port Said, Egypt in 1939. When he was ten, he immigrated with his parents to Israel and was educated in Youth Aliyah, an immigrant youth framework at Kibbutz Givat-Chayim. His artistic talent was discovered by Prof. Reuven Feuerstein, the former chief psychologist of Youth Aliyah and winner of the Israel Prize for Education. Their close friendship continues to this day.

Boussidan's artistic training in Israel began under the guidance of Prof. Joseph Schwartzmann of the Germanic school and a distinguished student of Käthe Kollwitz. Boussidan studied sculpture and ceramics with Rudi Lehmann and Hedwig Grossman and received important exposure to the modern and abstract streams from Shlomo Vitkin. With the encouragement of Prof. Willem Sandberg (former head of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and one of the founders of the Israel Museum), the twenty-seven-year-old Boussidan won the Rothschild Foundation Scholarship. This enabled him to continue his academic studies at Goldsmith College in London, where he graduated with distinction for his abstract version of *Song of Songs*. This also won the first prize of the Biennale for Prints in Monte Carlo.

Ya'akov Boussidan has been a visiting lecturer at several colleges in England. In his studio, Boussidan also teaches aspects of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and ceramics, imparting the philosophy of Prof. Schwartzmann who believed that students, in order to be independent artists, should acquire a profession.

Boussidan works in his studios in Kiryat Ono, Israel and in London.

Jurors of the Jesselson Award on Ya'akov Boussidan

Ya'akov Boussidan has been engaged in the artistic design of Hebrew books for many years. His personal interpretations which go beyond illustration, are based on profound research into the Jewish significance of the book itself. This special approach is expressed in his two versions of the Song of Songs (Shir Ha'Shirim) and in the Haggadah, works that he calligraphed and illustrated. Boussidan devotes special attention to the Hebrew letter, which forms an organic part of his work. His original work is always executed with perfection; careful attention is given to every element including the quality of paper and printing.

Dr. Iris Fishof (Chairman), Izzika Gaon, Menahem Berman

About the artists' book *Jerusalem - Names in Praise*

Jerusalem dwells in many dimensions and is a source of inspiration to many. It has inspired the finest poets, beginning with King David, and has given visionaries the explanation they have sought for their very own existence

Starting with the seventy known names of Jerusalem from traditional sources, Boussidan has revealed no less than 391 names given to the city by Jews, including contemporary poets and other enthusiasts and believers who have found their roots in Jerusalem. Boussidan worked on the book for eight years. The silk-prints alone took one year and a half. To ensure quality printing, the paper was hand-made especially for the book according to the artist's directions. Each sheet bears a watermark of the book's emblem - a representation of the City of David, City of the Dove, Navel of the World. All the texts are in English and in Hebrew.

A special Committee, headed by Malcolm Gee and Kenneth Cooper, former Chief Executive of the British Library, was founded in England to support the Livre d'Artiste "Jerusalem – Names in Praise". Mr. Cyril Stein from London and the Wimpfheimer family from New York, joined by Prof. Reuven Feuerstein, President of the International Center for the Enhancement of Learning Potential, and Prof. Benjamin Ish-Shalom, head of Beit Morasha in Jerusalem, have encouraged and contributed towards the production of a more accessible edition of the artist's book to a wider public. The Livre d' Artiste has been printed on hand-made Serigraph. London 1996, 96 pages, 110 copies. The Offset edition has been printed in Jerusalem 2006, 180 pages. Further information: ruth.boussidan@gmail.com .

Yigal Zalmona, Chief Curator-at-Large of the Israel Museum at the launch evening

... There exists no more natural place than the Israel Museum for celebrating the launching of the Boussidan livre d'artiste, a combination of research, wisdom and beauty... Boussidan knows well the world of aesthetics and magic ...

Prof. Daniel Sperber at the Israel Museum launch evening

...The hundreds of names, executed in calligraphy of different designs, the marvelous drawings, and the use of colour are all brought together in this layout, comprising a whole that has a unique perfection to it. Jerusalem, the city called Shalem – whole and perfect. ... When we mention Jerusalem, we mention it as a metaphysical idea that has roots in the past and envisions the future - a place of longing and hope. Jerusalem - Names in Praise is a celebration of optimism.