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Design **Refined Truth**

By Yuval Samuelov

The jewelry artist Esther Knobel was recognized on Friday as the winner of The Andy Prize, also known as the Andrea Bronfman Prize for Decorative Arts. In its third year, the prize is awarded to an outstanding Israeli artist in ceramics, jewelry, textile and glass and it includes a substantial sum of money, an exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and the purchase of two of the artists works for the permanent collections of the Tel Aviv Museum and The Israeli Museum in Jerusalem.

Knobel is at the peak of a thirty- year career and enjoys international recognition. Her works are in the permanent collections of museums of decorative and fine arts and she has a long list of solo and group exhibitions in Israel and abroad in her resume. In the next two months, for instance, her works will be displayed along with those of other female Israeli jewelry artists at an exhibition in Huston, Texas.

The jury of The Andy Prize were impressed with the extraordinary professional maturity of Knobel's works, and noted that a solo exhibition of her works will contribute to the local discourse on jewelry art and design. The encouragement of such a discourse, through the support and promotion of excellence among craft artists, is exactly the goal of The Andy Prize. The Prize has already become established as part of the tradition in the field, and --- along with the regular support of AIDA, also supported by Jewish philanthropists from the US – fills the vacuum that existed because of lack of institutionalized support of the field.

The jury of The Andy Prize, headed by the independent curator Nirith Nelson, takes pride in its prestigious international judge. This year it was Teruo Kurosaki, the Japanese design entrepreneur and founder of Tokyo's Designer Block. Kurosaki has played an important role in the relationship between international and Japanese design. During his visit in Israel, and at the initiative of the JCVA, Kurosaki visited Shenkar and Bezalel, gave a lecture at the Tel Aviv Museum and met with Israeli industrial designers and modern graphic design artists.

In the early 80's , Kurosaki founded in Tokyo a studio for the production of limited series of Western designer items, providing a platform for Philippe Starck, Ron Arad and Mark Newson who were then anonymous young artists and later became key figures in the design world.

During his visit in Israel, Kurosaki explained that that the next stage in the evolution of design is the "design of experiences, similar to what Apple did with the iPod and iPhone, items that achieved a super status in spite of an overcrowded and competitive market, because of their innovative emphasis on the consumer experience. His solution is to create multi-disciplinary partnerships.

In order to promote these, Kurosaki founded several platforms bringing together designers, architects, manufacturers, cultural figures and media producers.. The most successful of these initiatives in the Tokyo's Designers Block (TBD), a five day design festival modeled after the London Designers Block. As opposed to the London Designers Block, the TBD is not located in one main space but scattered in hundreds of alternative spaces across the city. The event, that took place annually from 2000 to 2005, reinforced Tokyo's standing as the capital of design, demonstrating, through its lack of physical and methodological boundaries, Kurosaki's holistic concept of design.