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Textile masterpieces in the Miho Museum, Japan



## Exhibitions

### CONTEMPORARY CONVERSATION

*Dialogue at The Lobby*  
46 Frishman Street  
Tel Aviv, Israel  
26 February–31 May 2015  
Reviewed by Alberto Levi

Antique kilims have a lyrical quality that sounds best in large, tall and open spaces. That is why I was mesmerised on entering the lobby of the recently inaugurated residential highrise that dominates the pulsating heart of Tel Aviv. It was the perfect stage for an ensemble of six very different flatweaves, each positioned to achieve an ideal harmony. The seventeen metre-tall ceilings allowed their elements to breathe, and the eye to be captured by the details of their labyrinths and secret codes. I felt in complete empathy, as if I were getting closer to their soul.

I also enjoyed their juxtaposition with contemporary art, though I couldn't truly listen to that dialogue until I returned, this time in the company of the curator, Israeli art historian Miri Ben-Moshe. It all started with her discovery of kilims: after familiarising herself with the collection (belonging to Mark Berkovich and Rafi Gidron), she carefully selected each artwork as it related to each kilim.

Upon entering one is greeted by an early and dramatic central

Anatolian kilim (3), with horizontal stripes of different widths filled with colours at its fullest degree. Its association with Guy Avital's 2009 piece *Up Hill* is understandable, as they both give the visual impression of vertical motion. However I could not at first see the connection between Vered Nachmani's *Persimmon Orchard* and a pair of Mazandarani flatweaves. Then the curator pointed out that both works are related by the perpendicular interaction of warp and weft; the painting's background is clearly the result of a grid, with the persimmons acting as 'extra-weft' motifs.

Tzivi Geva's *Thorn* introduces the concept of undomesticated writing and symbolism, climbing over the canvas and on to the ceiling – just like the enigmatic green bars that embellish what would normally be an red open-field Yüncü kilim. The decidedly totemic character of a Hotamiş kilim (1) is echoed in Yigal Tumarkin's sculpture. Sigalit Landau's tall structures are titled *Zbib El Ard 2013* (from the name of a desert plant used for medicinal purposes by Bedouins); they complement the earth tones and the mysterious character of the central Anatolian panel. Altogether this installation contributes to appreciation of textile art, taking us outside our boundaries to beneficial effect and presenting it in conversation with pieces already accepted by the wide public as art.



1  
1–3 Three views of the exhibition of Anatolian kilims and contemporary art in The Lobby of 46 Frishman Street in Tel Aviv