

Opening Raffi's Box: Neither a Sabra, Nor a Geranium

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Abstract

As an artist distinctively identified with the currents of conceptual art, Raffi Lavie (1937-2007) was one of the most influential artists on the Israeli art scene during the 1970s and 80s, and also represented Israel at the 53rd Venice Biennale. Although much has been written on his artistic work, it has remained enigmatic, given that his signifiers are deliberately vague. Lavie's case was defined by the historian of Israeli art, Gideon Ofrat, as "Raffi's Box", in equivalence to the mythological Pandora's Box, as an issue ostensibly not to be decoded. This study examines four collages created by Lavie from the beginning of the 1980s, composed of photos of Classical images. The accepted interpretations have conceived these images as declaratively meaningless and as worthless pieces of history; from the premise that all that remains from the Classical past is but a lexicon of banal and depleted images. The argument underlying the present study is that, rather, these very images are the signifiers of the abstract meaning claimed of Lavie's work, as contended by most of his commentators, and even expressed by him in a certain way. This research, which belongs to the field of Classical Reception Studies, offers a critical analysis achieved via a deconstructive methodology, according to which the Classical images are conceived as a supplementary or parasitic text within the main text, present in order to reaffirm the accuracy of the latter.

Keywords: Israeli art, Conceptual art, Classical art, Classical reception studies, Platonic thought.

Introduction

Raffi Lavie (1937-2007) was one of the most prominent artists identified with the currents of conceptual art in Israel, during the 1970s and 80s. Influenced by conceptual attitudes rooted in Modernism and Postmodernism, Lavie's artistic work is characterized by visual features such as pencil scribbles, intentionally childish drawings, collages, and graphical images.¹ An historian of Israeli art, Gideon Ofrat, has already pointed out the enigmatic and misleading nature of Lavie's work, as that of signifiers being deliberately meaningless.² Ofrat even proposed the name "Raffi's Box" for Lavie's case, recalling the mythological Pandora's Box.³ Using Ofrat's

term as a starting point, this study focuses on an analysis of four collages by Lavie that integrate photos of Classical artistic images:

1. A collage on a pink background, composed of three images set askew:⁴ a small photo of Albert Einstein; a horizontal poster announcing municipal events; and on the upper left a photo of a relief from a Roman altar, the Ara Pacis Augustae, dated to the first century BCE. The figure in this photo is that of Terra Mater, the personification of earth and fertility, accompanied by two infants.⁵

2. A collage with an image of the Archaic Peplos Kore dated to the 6th century BCE, alongside a sea at sunset photograph, both on a background of brightly hued brush strokes and a pencil drawing.⁶

3. A collage with an image of an athlete from Marathon, dated to 330 BCE, alongside a

¹ The modernistic European source that inspired Lavie was the child-like style of Paul Klee and Joan Miró. See: David Ginton, "Head Birth: Portrait of Raffi as a Young Painter," in *Raffi: The Early Paintings, 1957-1961, an Exhibition Catalog, The Tel Aviv Museum of Art* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 1993), 81. On the influence of Modernism and Postmodernism on Raffi Lavie see: Sarit Shapira, *Raffi Lavie: Works from 1950 to 2003, an Exhibition Catalog, The Israel Museum* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2003), 322-338 (the title in Hebrew is: *This isn't a Cactus, it's a Geranium*). The most striking artistic current associated with Lavie is Arte Povera.

² Gideon Ofrat, *Bikurei Omanut: Chapters on Israeli Artists* (Jerusalem: the Zionist Library, 2005), 461 (Hebrew).

³ Ofrat, *Bikurei Omanut*, 457.

⁴ No title, 1982, acrylic and collage on plywood, 125 X 125 cm, private collection, Tel Aviv. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie - Works from 1950 to 2003*, 186.

⁵ This image was generally considered as representing a Roman burial stela. See: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie - Works from 1950 to 2003*, 284.

⁶ No title, 1981, acrylic and collage on canvas, 114 X 195 cm, private collection, Jerusalem. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie - Works from 1950 to 2003*, 36.

poster announcing a literary event titled “A meeting of Tishrei” (“Pgishat Tishrei”) placed vertically, and a photo of a desert landscape.⁷

4. A collage with a background of red paint smeared with an image of a muscular athletic torso alongside a poster announcing “an open day” at Tel Aviv University, and a photo of a sea at sunset.⁸

The images in these collages have been considered as meaningless, as a lexicon of depleted items, and as readymade objects, given that Lavie “garners for his paintings images as if they were mere surface, forms used as a tool to practice the technique of painting and painting as technique”.⁹ Lavie himself expressed an unawareness of the significance of his work, declaring:

I am the last one to interpret my works, and when I’m asked: ‘what is this painting?, I choose the right to remain silent until my lawyer, the curator Sarit Shapira arrives, and explains, and then I too will know what I am painting.¹⁰

Regarding Lavie’s attitude to the Classical legacy, one can learn from an interview held in 1982:

Aristophanes for me, as it is, without re-working, is no longer art, it is archeology. There is a moment when art stops being art and becomes archeology [...] I think that I accept most of the Classical Greek art out of curiosity and thus as archeology, and not as art.¹¹

The approach to a visual culture as “archeology” rather than “art” means a denying of its aesthetic and conceptual values, merely because it is ancient (and one should also bear in mind that everything eventually becomes old). It is this approach that constitutes the core of the problematic issue under discussion. As will be shown, an aesthetic signifier cannot be

defined merely as “archaeological”, so to speak, and thereby deprived of any conceptual meanings.

This might be connected to Levi-Strauss's criticism of the inclination to discard what seems to be foreign, and to judge ancient civilizations from a contemporary point of view that adopts only what is associated with its own values and perceptions.¹² It is my contention that any signifier in art history, ancient or otherwise, is necessarily loaded with conceptual and cultural meanings, despite its enigmatic nature in the contemporary eye.

Amongst the many commentaries and discourses on Lavie’s artistic work, and specifically the collages, there have been no analytical references to the Classical images, other than a general reference, such as:

[...] If only a lexicon of images and subjects accessible to all is left of classical splendor (for even the most basic art class uses them to practice painting) – then these images and subjects become, precisely in their seemingly banal and depleted existence, abstract units fated to return as artistic instruments, this time not associated with a practice (“art”) inlayed in a given cultural setup, but because a single artist has discovered and activated them in his individual practice.¹³

Another interpretation links the appearance of the Classical images in Lavie’s collages with the dimension of time immanent in his work.¹⁴ The images used for the collages were ripped from books or newspaper cuttings and calendars that Lavie had collected, and he related his choice to draw childishly to his obsession with ‘starting at the beginning’.¹⁵ The inscription on the reverse poster “Pgishat Tishrei”, for example, has been interpreted as referring to the beginning of things.¹⁶ This extraction of images by the artist and their integration as collages has seemingly turned them into worthless pieces of paper referencing obsolete traditions.¹⁷

In the absence of any interpretation referring substantially to the Classical images

⁷ No title, 1982, acrylic and collage on plywood, 120 X 120 cm. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 28.

⁸ No title, 1983 (“Open Day”), acrylic on plywood, 122 X 250 cm, collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 47. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:B03_0063-Lavie,_Raffi,_Untit led,_1983.jpg

⁹ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 379.

¹⁰ David Ginton, “The Un-Tetragrammaton: What is an Arab – Purple Mustache?”, in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, eds. E. Biberman and D. Berest (Tzufit: Beit Berl College, 2009), 48 (Hebrew).

¹¹ Nilly Neumann, “Israeli Art Relative to its Identity: a Conversation with Raffi Lavie,” *Kav* 4-5 (1982): 17 (Hebrew).

¹² Claude Levi-Strauss, *Race and History*, trans. Amotz Giladi (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2006), 49, 64.

¹³ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 380.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 274.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 374.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 392.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 388.

integrated in Lavie's collages, and the explicit determination that his abstract images bear no particular symbolism,¹⁸ what is left is merely to treat them as "subjects accessible to all", "banal and depleted".¹⁹

Lavie's famous utterance "behind the painting there is only a white wall", has blocked directions of interpretation, cancelled the relation between sign and signified, and stressed the principle of 'suchness', according to which there is no significances behind the surface.²⁰

Consequently, the photo piece of the Marathon athlete is equivalent to the poster and to the desert landscape, etc., as all are "ready-made" images and thus "depleted".²¹ Lavie's landscape images have thus been considered as "[...] earthly, concrete, formalist, contextualized [...]";²² and his aesthetic approach as "the aesthetics of the undefined".²³

The Classical images also represented for Lavie the aesthetic criticism that relates to technical qualities and skills, which he strongly rejected, identifying with Marcel Duchamp and the conceptual currents.²⁴

The curator Sara Breitberg-Semel summed up Lavie's denial of any tradition or legacy in his work: "For the 'Tel Aviv child' there is no 'religion', no 'nation', no 'land', there is only the concrete city. There is no ideology, but true vitality".²⁵

Shapira reinforces this a-historical attitude:

[...] The Want of Matter quickly became a dominant idiom in Israeli art discourse. This thesis presented Lavie as a key figure in the crystallization of the identity of contemporary Israeli art, an art marked by poor materials and an appearance lacking

any contexts saturated with history and meaningful contents.²⁶

Shapira also notes that "Lavie is an artist of a culture detached from history";²⁷ and the artist Michal Neeman has declared that Israeli art does not belong to history and to the contemporary history of art, and that "[...] Lavie's art teaches us how to make art under conditions of amnesia [...]".²⁸

Another troublesome assessment is that: "Art for Lavie exists on the thin line between what is worth including in history and what can be discarded in the trash".²⁹

The above raises crucial questions: Who determines what is to be thrown away? What are the criteria for evaluating the worth of history? Are Classical images indeed worthless and to be discarded?

My claim is that the occurrence of the Classical images in Lavie's collages demands a far deeper analysis than seeing them merely as "depleted" objects. As a spectator, I desire to observe these Classical images in depth, refusing to blindly follow the accepted perceptions, while keeping Roland Barthes's "the Death of the Author" in mind. Indeed, one of the books dedicated to Lavie's work is called: "Please read what is painted in here",³⁰ and thus invites us to interpret freely.

My analysis here is based on a deconstructive critical methodology according to which the Classical images should be perceived as a supplementary text within the main text, intended to reaffirm it:

Yet the supplement entails a kind of crazy logic: it is neither inside nor outside, and/or both inside and outside at the same time. It forms part without being part, it belongs without belonging.³¹

However, it is the supplement that causes us to re-think what had previously been

¹⁸ Sara Brightberg-Semel, "The 'Aesthetics' of Raffi Lavie," in: *Raffi Lavie: A Selection of Paintings, an Exhibition Catalogue, Tel Aviv Museum of Art* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 1980), 41.

¹⁹ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 380.

²⁰ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 399-400, 313-314. David Ginton stressed that Lavie eventually claimed that all that was only a provocation, and that he had always believed in metaphysical interpretations, although this is the task of the interpreter, not the artist. Ginton, "Head Birth: Portrait of Raffi as a Young Painter," 50-53.

²¹ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 380; Sarit Shapira, "Neither from Here Nor from There", in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 82 (Hebrew).

²² Shapira, "Neither from Here Nor from There", 82.

²³ Sara Brightberg-Semel, "The 'Aesthetics' of Raffi Lavie", 35.

²⁴ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 392.

²⁵ Sara Breitberg-Semel, *The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art, an Exhibition Catalogue, Tel Aviv Museum of Art* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 1986), 182.

²⁶ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 398-399.

²⁷ Sarit Shapira, "A Note on a Prince and an Orphan King," *Studio* 48 (1993): 33 (Hebrew).

²⁸ Michal Neeman, "A Nut to Crack: Raffi and Josefina, or mouse and mountain relations," in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 21 (Hebrew).

²⁹ This assessment is referred to Sarit Shapira. See: Efrat Biberman and Deganit Berest, "An Introduction: The Painting Before the Wall," in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 10 (Hebrew).

³⁰ Biberman and Berest, *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here* (note 10).

³¹ Nicholas Royle, *Jacques Derrida* (London: Routledge, 2003), 49-50; Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967), 154.

considered as the main issue. Royle notes that Derrida's thought is characterized by a compulsion to explore the apparently 'minor' or what is considered as superfluous elements of a writer's work, and that the rethinking of a supplement, or the "parasite metalanguage", might lead us in a new direction, and thus invert the original meaning of the text.³² Following deconstructivism and Derrida's principle - 'There is nothing outside the text' - this study seeks to explore instead the supplementary, which in this case is that of the Classical images scattered across Lavie's plywoods, functioning ostensibly as parasitic. The basic assumption underlying this study is that the analysis of a contemporary work of art that incorporates ancient motifs requires an initial analysis of the significances of those ancient images, in that they are works of art saturated with meanings and thus should not be treated merely as "ready-made".

The analysis of those images relates to their original iconological significance in Antiquity in connection to the discipline of Classical Reception Studies, a field that researches the features and implications of Classical concepts in contemporary culture. Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray define reception thus: "By 'reception' we mean the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imagined and represented. These are complex activities in which each reception 'event' is also part of wider processes".³³ Highly relevant to the present study is Neville Morley's comment:

"However, part of the history of this reception is the history of disputes over the use and abuse of antiquity [...]"³⁴

Representing *Idea*

The image of the Terra Mater relief glued on a collage was part of the Ara Pacis Augustae altar dedicated in the 1st century BCE by the Roman senate in celebration of the peace constituted by Augustus in the Roman Empire following his

victories in Gaul and Spain.³⁵ The altar itself is monumental (over 11 m long, over 6 m high), and on exhibit today in a museum in Rome designed specifically for this monument.³⁶ The depictions on the exterior of the altar are symbolic and can be interpreted at several levels. In general, they symbolize the cosmic dominance of Emperor Augustus and the peace and prosperity policy (Pax Romana) that he sought to establish. The reliefs on the long side of the altar represent an Imperial procession with figures crowned with laurel wreaths, apparently reflecting the atmosphere of peace claimed by the emperor. The nature of this peace and the apparent economic prosperity is complicated, since hunger and war reigned in many parts of the empire.³⁷ The reliefs on the lower part present floral stylized and symmetrical images. Those on the upper part represent, in general, the twins Romulus and Remus, the mythological founders of Rome; Mars, their father; Aeneas, one of the mythological ancestors of Rome sacrificed to the *Penates*, the Roman gods of the household; Dea Roma, the personification of Rome; and the image of Terra Mater, the goddess of earth and agriculture, also called Tellus, whose Greek equivalent is Gaia. The personification is accompanied by images of prosperity and fertility: two infants, vegetation, fruits, sacrificial animals - a bull and a lamb, and two personifications: that of water, seated on a marine creature; and that of air, seated on a swan. Those female personifications feature a nude upper body with fabric draped around the lower body, like the image of Aphrodite from Melos. They hold a billowing scarf like a halo. The infants, the personifications, the vegetation, and the sacrificial animals, depicted in a naturalistic style, were intended to reflect her characteristics as a goddess of nature, fertility, prosperity, and maternity, while her features offered a conceptual image of the natural elements, of earth, air, water, and fire. Terra Mater was also identified as a personification of Italy, of Venus, and of Peace. Diana Kleiner has

³² Royle, *Jacques Derrida*, 57-58.

³³ Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray, eds., *A Companion to Classical Reception* (Malden, Ma.: Blackwell, 2008), 1. See also: Lorna Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (Oxford: Published for the Classical Association [by] Oxford University Press, 2003). Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas, *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2006).

³⁴ Neville Morley, *Antiquity and Modernity* (Chichester, U.K.; Malden, MA, 2009), 141.

³⁵ 1st century BCE, marble, in Rome. See: Diana Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), figs. 79-80. Public Domain: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arapacis.jpg>

³⁶ The museum was designed by architect Richard Meier and inaugurated in 2006.

³⁷ This has been discussed at length in the historical enquiry into Augustus's reign. See: Zvi Yavetz, *Augustus - The Victory of Moderation* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1988) (Hebrew); Karl Gallinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 120. For a description and interpretation of the Ara Pacis see: Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, 90-99; Stefan Weinstock, "Pax and the Ara Pacis", *The Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960): 44-58.

noted that this image is a generalized conceptual symbol of the overall functions outlined above, as an *idea*.³⁸ Moreover, as a whole, personifications in Antiquity were conceived as conceptual embodiments of the forces of nature.³⁹

Another female image composed in a collage by Lavie, is the image of the Archaic Greek Peplos Kore dated to the 6th century BCE from the Acropolis.⁴⁰ The *Korai* idols represented priestesses and were dedicated as offerings to Athena. They were designed in a uniform pattern, mainly frontal, with one hand clasped to the chest and holding an offering – a flower, a fruit, or a bird, while the other hand clasps the gown tightly to the body. The stylized features of the *Korai* stemmed from a conceptual attitude which sought to create an archetypal representation of female youthfulness. The archetypal feature of the *Kore* type was intended to reflect a world of order and rationality, displayed strongly in the *Kouros* type, which was the Archaic male archetype.⁴¹ This image of a youth was widespread in Archaic sculpture, frequently used on gravestones and represented the archetype of a warrior who had fallen in defense of the *polis*. The *Kouros* was characterized by abstractness and generalization (*schemata*) based upon aesthetics of symmetry, linearity, flatness, and stylization. This aesthetics signified a rational and cyclical universe, and reflected the archetype of the *ethos* of the warrior, based upon qualities such as moderation (*sophrosune*), self-control (*enkrateia*), and excellency (*arete*).⁴² Together these qualities constituted the concept of *kalokagathia*, namely “the beautiful and the

good”. The *agathos*, which is the good or the useful, was conceived as manifested in the *kalos*, which is the beautiful. This concept is Platonic and can be found in dialogues such as *Hippias Major*, in which Socrates and his interlocutor conclude that beauty is formed by the intrinsic value of things: thus, the good and the useful is the beautiful.⁴³ This concept is mainly reflected in Archaic and Classical Greek art and prominently in temple architecture. The nudity of the *kouros* type was an archetypal and absolute way by which to express *kalokagathia* and *arete*.⁴⁴

A collage from 1982, made by Lavie, incorporates a photo of the image of the Youth from Marathon.⁴⁵ The youth is nude, for nudity was the characteristic manner of representation for athletes in sculpture and, as stated earlier, was intended in the Classical period to symbolize archetypal youth, and the spiritual and physical features manifested in the idea of *kalokagathia*. The turned head and the solemn gaze directed downward is an archetypal depiction of an athlete in Classical sculpture. This stance and expression were intended to express *aidos* – modesty, as against *hubris*; and *dianoia* – the “reflexive thought” of the rational and moderate personality of the winner, fully aware of his role in the *polis*.⁴⁶

It is important to note that the visual images of the Classical athletes in Greek art do not necessarily aim to reflect the realistic appearance of the athletes but, rather, their spiritual qualities. Consequently, the discussion of Greek beauty should not focus on the physical but on the spiritual that the visual embodies.

³⁸ Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, 96.

³⁹ Thomas Bertram Lonsdale Webster, “Personifications as a Mode of Greek Thought,” *Journal of Warburg and Courtland Institute* 17 (1954): 10-17.

⁴⁰ The Peplos Kore, circa 530 BCE, Parian marble, 120 cm, Acropolis Museum. See: John Boardman, *Greek Sculpture - The Archaic Period: A Handbook* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 75, fig. 115. Public Domain:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ACMA_679_Kore_1.JPG

⁴¹ Andrew Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 123-124.

Public Domain: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kouros>

⁴² Jeffrey Hurwit, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1100-480 B.C.* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), 18-32, 167-202; Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997), 63-70; Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration*, 9-12. On the noble human features see: Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. C. C. W. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 356-357; Heather Reid, “Athletic Beauty in Classical Greece: A Philosophical View,” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 39 (2) 2012: 285; Heather Reid, *Athletics and Philosophy in the Ancient World – Contests of virtue* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 59-61.

⁴³ Plato, *Hippias Major*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 5.287-291; Ingomar Weiler, “Inverted Kalokagathia,” *Slavery & Abolition* 23 (2) 2002, Vol.23 (2): 11; Reid, “Athletic Beauty in Classical Greece,” 283-284.

⁴⁴ Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, 106.

⁴⁵ Youth from the sea off Marathon, circa 340-330 BCE, 130 cm, bronze, was found in the sea off Marathon, in the Aegean Sea in 1925, exhibited in the Archeological Museum in Athens. It is designed in the Praxitelean manner and represents a winner in an athletic competition. Martin Robertson interpreted this image as a youth pouring wine into a vessel held on his left palm. See: Martin Robertson, *A Shorter History of Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 142-143, Fig. 198; Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, 1990, 177, Figs. 497, 499. Its stance might be interpreted also as a grasp of a winning ribbon. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NAMA_X15118_Marathon_Bo_y_3.JPG

⁴⁶ Compare: the “Blond Boy” from the Akropolis, ca. 490-480 BCE; The “Critias Boy” from the Akropolis, ca. 490-480 BCE, in: Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, 14, 133-135, 145, figs. 219, 221-222; Weiler, “Inverted Kalokagathia,” 11.

The soul (*Psyché*) cannot be separated from the physical (*Soma*): movement, body language, and expression. Actually, Classical statues of victorious athletes never appear in the same manner as that of modern winners celebrating their victory with triumphant cheers and arms thrust euphorically towards the sky. Quite the contrary. The Classical figures display modesty and serenity with their gaze cast slightly downwards and to the side, and never reflecting effort or pain.⁴⁷ Reid notes that athletics and philosophy both originate from a similar time and place, and that both practices seem to be fraternal offspring of a distinctively Hellenic spirit concerned with virtue and excellence (*arete*).⁴⁸ These virtues are embodied in the image of the *Doryphoros* by Polykleitos, a sculptural archetype from the 5th century BCE made originally in bronze, and later in numerous marble copies.⁴⁹ A typical Roman copy of this image appears in a photo in a collage by Lavie from 1983.

The *Doryphoros* is the archetypical and generic image symbolizing the essence of the athlete/warrior, the defender of his homeland, and his body is considered beautiful because of its usefulness for the *polis*. The image of the athlete/warrior reflected the primary public duty: to defend the homeland. He is thus characterized by the excellence (*arete*) and bravery (*andreia*) required on the battlefield.⁵⁰ As determined by Jerome J. Pollitt, Polykleitos was in Antiquity the chief master and foremost exponent of the principle of *symmetria*, 'commensurability of parts', in art. *Symmetria* was a Pythagorean philosophical concept aimed at expressing visually the abstract spiritual qualities of the harmonious soul that constitute the essential nature of man in Pythagorean terms; or the essence of the human *idea*.⁵¹

In summary, the images from Classical culture used by Lavie in his collages constitute symbols of generalized concepts of nature,

femininity, and masculinity, as these were perceived in Antiquity.

In a constitutive study Pollitt has shown that Archaic and Classical art cannot be understood without referring to Platonic notions and the underlying concept of *idea*. Pollitt contended that Archaic and Classical Greek art undoubtedly tended to a generalized and formulaic nature through their conceptual and abstract manner of expression, and were based upon aesthetic patterns, as pure icons of Platonic ideas, which predominated over transitory materialism and phenomenal realities.⁵² Reading a Classical or Archaic vase painting or a sculpture, thus requires an acquaintance with the generalized and formulaic signifiers that were used as refined and conceptual representations, detached from realistic phenomena.⁵³ This kind of perception is, in effect, a conceptual abstraction, and thus Platonic in essence.

Refining phenomenal reality into a kind of non-materialistic Platonic utopia was the declared intention of the "Want of Matter" style. The curator Sara Brightberg-Semel suggested Lavie's spiritual elevation in analogy to the ascent of a hot-air balloon: the weight is removed in order to enable the elevation; Raffi Lavie thus empties in order to elevate;⁵⁴ and similarly: "This immaterial character of the works, almost unseen in their physical elements and concrete statements [...]"⁵⁵ This brings to mind the scale of beauty in Plato's *Symposium*, leading from the physical beauty to the "sea of beauty", which is abstract, spiritual, absolute, and eternal.⁵⁶ Lavie himself explained:

Without make-up, without beautiful coloring, without any renunciations. What interests me, apparently, is to go to the

⁴⁷ Reid, "Athletic Beauty in Classical Greece," 284, 285.

⁴⁸ Reid, *Athletics and Philosophy in the Ancient World*, 11.

⁴⁹ *Doryphoros*, by Polykleitos, Roman copy of the imperial era after a Greek original of the late Classicism, 1st century BCE, Carrara marble, 200cm, Naples National Archeological Museum. See: Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, figs. 378-382. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Doryphoros_MAN_Napoli_In_v6011-2.jpg

⁵⁰ Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in Ancient Greece*, 86-96. On excellence in the battlefield see: Doyné Dawson, *The Origins of Western Warfare* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 52-55.

⁵¹ Jerome Jordan Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 1972), 106-107; Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, 160-163.

⁵² Jerome Jordan Pollitt, "Early Classical Greek Art in a Platonic Universe," *Greek Art Archaic into Classical - A Symposium* held at the University of Cincinnati April 2-3, 1982, ed. Cedric C. Boulter (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 96-111.

⁵³ Claude Bérard and Jean-Louis Durand, "Entering the Imagery," in *A City of Images*, ed. Claude Bérard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 23-38. See also: Harvey Alan Shapiro, *Myth into Art: Poet and Painter in Classical Greece* (London: Routledge, 1994); Nigel Jonathan Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

⁵⁴ Sara Breitberg-Semel, "A Collage on Raffi", in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 43 (Hebrew).

⁵⁵ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie - Works from 1950 to 2003*, 391.

⁵⁶ Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1951), lines 210, 211.

source, to the origin, to the beginnings of art.⁵⁷

This, again, coincides with Plato's notion of the purified essence, free of human corporeality and colors.

Lavie's "beginnings" have been explained as:

[...] the mimetic image in the most unadulterated and archaic sense – an image that arises from nothingness [...] Such an image doesn't follow something in reality prior to it, for it is prior to anything simulated – but at the same time it can fool the viewer's eyes and make him believe it is showing him a piece of the world that preceded the image.⁵⁸

And also: "In Lavie's figures there is always something non-corporeal, a form that hasn't yet embodied itself in matter".⁵⁹

The above comments instantly evoke the Platonic Idea – the absolute and eternal essence detached from the physical and concrete phenomenon, which is only a dim reflection of the essence, as described by Plato:

Those latter you could touch and see and perceive with the other senses, but those that always remain the same can only be grasped by the reasoning power of the mind? They are not seen but are invisible? That is altogether true, he said.⁶⁰

Another analogy relates to the interpretation of the landscape in Lavie's collages as images of an archetypal memory of a utopian realm.⁶¹ An equivalence can be found in the discussion in Plato's *Phaedrus* dialogue of the memory of the soul and her longings for the

archetypal realm in which she had dwelt before her incarnation in materiality.⁶²

An incident regarding Yoyo, Lavie's oldest son, was for this artist a constitutive event for his childishness in his painting, as the manifestation of a painting conceived as a signifier detached from its signified, or a sublimation of the artistic object, and even its generative intention.⁶³

The Little Prince was a book that deeply inspired Lavie in the 1950s, in its kind of Platonic affinity, as the child's drawing depicted "not the external reality, which is apprehended as superficial, but a different one, conceived as deeper and truer".⁶⁴

The curator Sara Breitberg-Semel completes this analogy between the interpretation of Lavie's artistic work and the Platonic conceptualization:

[...] Lavie, on the other hand, has been very selective. Only the two-dimensional (posters, photographs, paper scraps), representations of reality, has been allowed; never something from the world of primary materials, never objects. This point is crucial to an understanding of one of the many aspects of 'the Want of Matter'. The materials are not chosen to enrich the pictures. They themselves are 'secondary vessels', photos of the primary matter, representations of material reality, rather than the material world itself. This distance is maintained by Lavie throughout his work.⁶⁵

And considering the whole of "the Want of Matter" style:

The conclusion I aim to arrive at will show that these artists use the materials in order to devalue them, to emphasize matter's abstract, representational side much more than its material side.⁶⁶

This interpretation, in effect, applies Platonic terms in order to characterize the plywood as anti-material:

⁵⁷ Originally in: Naomi Siman-Tov, "The Pressure of the Pencil Tore the Fabrics," Tel Aviv, 7.6.91 (Hebrew), cited in: Ginton, "Head Birth: Portrait of Raffi as a Young Painter," 42.

⁵⁸ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 295.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 269. On non-corporeality in Raffi Lavie's artistic work see also: Aïm Deüelle Lüski, "The Plywood's ways", in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 88-89 (Hebrew).

⁶⁰ Plato, *Phaedrus*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub., 1997), 79 a. On the Platonic Idea see also: Plato, the allegory of the cave, in: Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1946), 7. 514a-521d. Idea in Neo-Platonism, see: Plotinus, *Enneades*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 5. 9.5.

⁶¹ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 275-280.

⁶² Plato, *Phaedrus*, ed. Harvey Yunis (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 251. Plotinus, *Enneades*, 5. 9.5.

⁶³ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Idem*, 326. Lavie liked to tell how his son Yoyo returned from kindergarten one day and said: "Daddy, I painted a painting and the teacher asked me what it was, so I said it was a painting." In: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 400.

⁶⁴ Ginton, "Head Birth: Portrait of Raffi as a Young Painter," 68.

⁶⁵ Brietber-Semel, *The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art*, 182.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 184.

It is important to note that the plywood sheet, Lavie's 'material' contribution to Israeli art, is also but a reflection of matter: it is thin, easily tossed away, not fraught with meaning, wood in its least material and most meagre form.⁶⁷

Such desire to break free from materialism is Platonic, as shown, and perceiving the material as a necessary evil was a prominent issue in Neoplatonist anti-materialistic thought.⁶⁸

Raffi's Idea

Raffi Lavie, in effect, declared himself as such: "[...] I'm in the head, I'm conceptual, I'm Platonic [...]".⁶⁹ Tamar Getter, an artist and friend, has described Lavie's art as "the Idea of pure motion".⁷⁰ The use of the term *idea* in its Platonic aspects has also been employed by Aïm Deüelle Lüski;⁷¹ and the artist Itamar Levi has found in Lavie's compositions a classical order and serenity.⁷² Another of Lavie's friends, the artist Yair Garbuz, reinforces this affinity: "There is nobody like Raffi who knows how to turn the functional into the beautiful. It is not the used that is beautiful, but the useful".⁷³ These words evoke the Platonic Classical concept of *kalokagathia* mentioned earlier, while the above mentioned artists speak, whether consciously or not, in a classical manner. Furthermore, in closing her catalogue essay, Shapira turned to Greek philosophy, citing Plato's *Symposium* discussion on the nature of the androgenetic in order to interpret two profile images in works by Lavie from 1992.⁷⁴ This suggests Fredric Jameson's comment that a good parodist has to have some secret sympathy for the original.⁷⁵

What, thus, is Lavie's *idea*? The basic Platonic Ideas engaged mostly with moral and aesthetic values: justice, goodness, beauty, and

the elements, such as fire and water.⁷⁶ The Archaic, Classical, and Roman images discussed above are all manifestations of these abstract concepts.

The most essential *idea* that Lavie wished to express would seem to be that of "suchness",⁷⁷ or of banality as worthwhile. Lavie, considered as "a Tel Aviv boy", seemed to represent a particular concept of Tel Aviv, while the white plywood and the pencil scribbles being considered by some commentators as an act of solidarity with the city.⁷⁸ Perhaps the plywood symbolizes the idea of the *Sabra*, the native-born Israeli, with whom Lavie identified himself, as reflecting the Israeli-Zionist-sabra-urban features?⁷⁹ Another suggestion sought to see the geranium plant that appeared in Lavie's photographs and films many times, as another characteristic of Tel Aviv.⁸⁰

Whatever Lavie's idea might be, it cannot be considered wrong, since abstraction has always been based on refining and generalizing and, likewise, the reuse of an aesthetic language has been acceptable and common throughout art history. Likewise, there is no wrong in the desire to establish a local aesthetic identity. However, the problematic issue in Lavie's case is the making use of ideas while seemingly ignoring their precedents and abolishing their signifiers.

The principle of 'suchness' in Lavie's work is reflected in the determination: "the Painting declares that empty life, devoid of godhead, as worthy".⁸¹ "Godhead", in this case, would seem to refer to the entire cultural and historical references that Lavie denied, in being: "The ghost child behind the Tel Aviv artist unencumbered by the history of Western culture [...]".⁸² Emptying, ignoring, and repudiating the precedents as appropriated by Lavie is clearly illustrated by Breitberg-Semel:

[...] From the standpoint of the plastic arts, this means a lack of immediate references to classicism, or the lack of a long-rooted aesthetics that makes one feel at one with his environment and landscape. The history

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 175.

⁶⁸ Plotinus, *Enneads*, 1.8.3.

⁶⁹ Ginton, "Head Birth: Portrait of Raffi as a Young Painter," 55.

⁷⁰ Tamar Getter, "The Winning Number Is," in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 25.

⁷¹ Aïm Deüelle Lüski, "The Plywood's ways," 88-90.

⁷² Itamar Levi, "Jars, Heads and White Noise," in *Raffi Lavie: Please Read What is Painted Here*, 70-71.

⁷³ Yair Garbuz, "Regarding Raffi: Splotch, Crown, Ketchup, Love," in *Regarding Raffi: Views on Raffi*, ed. Naomi Siman-Tov (Tzufit: Beit-Berl College), 54 (Hebrew).

⁷⁴ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 253-255.

⁷⁵ Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (London; New York: Verso, 2009, 1998), 4.

⁷⁶ Plato, *Phaedo*, 100. R. E. Allen, trans., *Plato's Parmenides* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 130 b-e.

⁷⁷ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 313-314.

⁷⁸ Breitberg-Semel, *The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art*, 162.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 185; Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 302-309. On the plywood as an ideological platform in Lavie's work see: Aïm Deüelle Lüski, "The Plywood's ways," 85-100.

⁸⁰ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 258.

⁸¹ Sara Breitberg-Semel, "A Collage on Raffi," 42.

⁸² Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 398.

of Israeli art is pitifully short, and entirely modern, with no rich sources of visual symbols, no museums containing the world's cultural treasures: neither Christianity nor the ancient mythologies, which are the source of symbols for European art and thought. Rather, it is set against the background of a starkly anesthetic and non-material religion, outside the European frame of reference, with sparse and meagre materials as a basic fact.⁸³

Gideon Ofrat has warned, as a prophet of doom, of the impact of the Tel Avivian narcissism:

[...] Sara Breitberg-Semel's claims should be carefully checked one by one [...], because the impression they left on the Tel Aviv narcissist is huge. Because around the exhibition "The Want of Matter" in the Tel Aviv Museum, a raging orgy is taking place, in which the Tel Aviv locals embrace themselves and bear children with birth defects. Find the thalidomide [...].⁸⁴

Ofrat has already noted the appropriation evident in Lavie's work, stating: "The audacity of those who don't have anything to offer as contents, values and ideals, but they shatter with charming sarcasm the values and ideals".⁸⁵ Ofrat, who referred the sources of "the Want of Matter" to Judaism, the socialism of Berl Katznelson, and the Sabra myth, stated explicitly: "[...] I don't buy this. I want to show that the merchandise is already used [...]."⁸⁶

Sara Chinsky also spoke against the so-called "dispossessed sabra", the narcissist Tel Aviv local who adopts a sloppy appearance and shirks his responsibility for other dispossessions in the same geographical region.⁸⁷

Ofrat and Chinsky have emphasized Lavie's contradiction in having both appropriated Jewish concepts, as defined by Breitberg-Semel as a "non-material aspect of Judaism",⁸⁸ and having

an affinity to Judaism; while at the same time being prominently secular:

Although the artists I speak of are in no way religious, their works nevertheless display an affinity for what it means to be a Jew, dissociated from pagan or allegorical Christian culture sustained by myths and symbols.⁸⁹

From a comprehensive perspective on Israeli art, Shapira perceives in it, and in Lavie's work particularly, features of a "minor culture", following Felix Guattari:

[...] A manifestation of the periphery, which deliberately copies and displaces styles and forms of expressions developed in central cultures, in order to extract the core of the meaning and of normative grammar, which constituted them as "origin".⁹⁰

Shapira has referred to Marcel Duchamp and Modernism's influence on Israeli art. In light of Lavie's affinity to Platonic notions, however, while still denying their signifiers, this interpretation acquires additional meanings.

Reflecting to some extent W. J. T. Mitchell's discussion on landscape, Lavie's work too is a site of amnesia and erasure, a strategic site for burying the past and veiling history,⁹¹ as Mitchell expresses it:

One has to be struck by the selectiveness of memory and history that is brought to the holy landscape. There is no mention, for instance, that the new Israeli forests often concealed the marks of Palestinian habitation, or that the landscape they covered was not sandy desert, but cultivated olive groves and rural villages.⁹²

And also: "Whose myths? Whose memories? What was erased, rendered invisible in order that this landscape might present the face it does?"⁹³

Considering this, it seems that it is no coincidence that three of Lavie's works under discussion feature landscape postcards, in a way

⁸³ Breitberg-Semel, *The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art*, 181.

⁸⁴ Gideon Ofrat, *Touch: Israeli Art in the Late Eighties* (Jerusalem: Art of Israel, 1988), 76 – 77 (Hebrew).

⁸⁵ Ofrat, *Touch: Israeli Art in the Late Eighties*, 79.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 76.

⁸⁷ Sara Chinsky, "Silence of the Fish: The Local and the Universal in the Discourse of Israeli Art," *Theory and Criticism* 4 (1993): 118-119 (Hebrew). Criticism over the hegemony of Lavie on the art field see: Ariella Azoulay, *Training for Art: Critique of Museal Economy* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999), pp. 216-253 (Hebrew).

⁸⁸ Breitberg-Semel, *The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art*, 186.

⁸⁹ Breitberg-Semel, *The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art*, 179.

⁹⁰ Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 379. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

⁹¹ W. J. T. Mitchell, "Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 195.

⁹² Mitchell, "Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness," 195-196.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, 196.

reminiscent of Mitchell's memory of a postcard representing a Bedouin on a camel crossing sand dunes at an oasis.⁹⁴

Furthermore, Lavie's Classical images are comparable to Mitchell's comment on Palestine as an entity that had been reduced to the status of a landscape: "framed, hedged about, shaped, controlled, and surveilled from every possible perspective", a landscape which must not be cultivated, according to the key conditions for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.⁹⁵

This dominated landscape prohibited from cultivation is treated by Mitchell in a metaphorical way that coincides with the present discussion:

The original, savage, pagan dwellers must make way for the settlers; idolatry will not be tolerated, and any territorial negotiations with pagans will be regarded as idolatry.⁹⁶

Mitchell points out that the Israeli strategy of occupation is actually an appropriation of territory under the cover of a moral crusade.⁹⁷

As noted by Chinsky, appropriation in Israeli art is also reflected in the somewhat mythological concept of "The Israeli Light" that characterizes the paintings of Joseph Zaritsky and Avigdor Steimatsky. This definition perceives the dazzling light as a positive metaphor that impressed the artists who had immigrated to the Land of Israel. However, this light also dazzles other populations, which are not Jewish and which experience this light quite negatively.⁹⁸

Chinsky recognized two main factors in the Israeli artistic discourse: the local and the universal. The local is all that is anchored in the Zionist myth, while the universal is all that belongs to western culture, especially European culture. "Israeli art" is national. However, the cultural and artistic arena was never autarkic.⁹⁹ Hence "the Want of Matter", and so, Raffi Lavie, who perceived himself as belonging to the conceptual currents, cannot exist as detached from a larger and universal cultural field, and also, therefore, an historical one.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 212.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 207.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, 207.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 218.

⁹⁸ Chinsky, "Silence of the Fish," 116.

⁹⁹ Sara Chinsky, "Eyes Wide Shut: on the Acquired Albino Syndrome in the Israeli art Scene," in *Coloniality and the Postcolonial Condition: Implications for Israeli Society*, ed. Yehuda Shenhav (Jerusalem: Van-Leer Institute; Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2004), 264.

Epilogue

The analysis of the Classical images embedded in the four collages by Raffi Lavie discussed here, has sought to point out the problem that ensues from the denial and rejection of ancient traditions, when attempting instead to establish original aesthetic features intended to characterize the young nation. Such attempts belong to the broader context of the debate over the nature of the emerging State of Israel – the place of religion and secularity, and the role of the distant past and the history of the Jewish people. Disputes and conflicts over the nature of Judaism and the Israeli or Hebrew culture have been deeply rooted for decades. Lavie's case certainly reflects the deeper conflicts of self-identification imbued within the Hebrew and Israeli culture. The aspiration to break away from the Jewish tradition of the Diaspora and establish an original Hebrew nation was typical of the mood during establishment of the State.¹⁰⁰ The negation of the Diaspora and the desire to disengage from any sign that symbolized the past in Europe, alongside the cultivation of the "New Sabra" ethos, dominated the Israeli state of mind. This atmosphere resulted in the determination of Hebrew as the only language, and the demand to substitute typical Hebrew names for those from the Diaspora.¹⁰¹

Considering the mistakes caused by negations such as these, and in relation to this study, one of the main conclusions drawn here is that an analysis of a work of art should relate to every component in it, as Derrida notes: "There is nothing outside the text". An analysis should never be based on the premise that some components are inferior, functioning as

¹⁰⁰ Anita Shapira, *Jews, Zionists and in Between* (Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 2007), 152, 158-159, 169, 181-183 (Hebrew); Yaakov Malkin, *The Gardens of Epicurus: Atheism, Judaism, and the Pursuit of Happiness* (Tel Aviv: Xargol, 2013), 19, 64-66 (Hebrew); Yaakov Malkin, "The Influence of Epicurus the Greek and Jewish Epicuroi on Judaism – Epicurus, Epicuroi and Hivi the Balch," in *Secular Jewish Culture: New Thought in Israel*, ed. Yaakov Malkin (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), 148; Yaakov Malkin, *Judaism Without God: Judaism as Culture and Bible as Literature* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2003), 22-23, 76-82; Yehuda Bauer, "Development of thought and movement of Secular Humanistic Judaism," in *Secular Jewish Culture: New Thought in Israel*, ed. Yaakov Malkin (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), 35, 38-39.

¹⁰¹ Gideon Shimoni, "The Theory and Practice of Shlilat Hagalut Reconsidered," in *The Age of Zionism*, Eds. Anita Shapira, Jehuda Reinharz, Jay Harris (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2000), pp. 45-63 (Hebrew); Anita Shapira, "Where Gone "Shlilat Hagalut", *Alpayim - A Multidisciplinary Publication for Contemporary Thought and Literature* 25, 2003, 9-54; Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile Within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the "Negation of Exile" in Israeli Culture", *Theory and Criticism - An Israeli Forum*, 4, 23-55.

supplements that were aimed 'only' to "talk about", referring to the term "aboutness" coined by Arthur Danto.¹⁰² Another insight reached here refers to a common misunderstanding of aesthetic signifiers of ancient cultures as "archaeology", in a manner that negates their value as art objects signifying cultural and spiritual concepts. Indeed, the study of Classical art itself has undergone changes from that of a purely archaeological approach that conceived Archaic and Classical painting and sculpture as evolutionary,¹⁰³ into an art-history discipline that perceives the images as signs imbued with the notions and concepts of their time.¹⁰⁴ However, as noted earlier, an ancient image incorporated within a collage should not be treated as a depleted "ready-made". Such images are, after all, works of art loaded with meanings; and throughout history, sometime and somewhere, they have been meaningful to someone.

¹⁰² Arthur Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art* (Chicago, Ill.: Open Court, 2003), 65, 68.

¹⁰³ See for example: Gisela Richter, *A Handbook of Greek Art* (London: Phaidon, 1983, 1959).

¹⁰⁴ See a critique of the "archeological" approach in: Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in Ancient Greece*, 3-7.

List of Referenced Works:

1. No title, 1982, acrylic and collage on plywood, 125 X 125 cm, private collection, Tel Aviv. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 186.
2. No title, 1981, acrylic and collage on canvas, 114 X 195 cm, private collection, Jerusalem. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 36.
3. No title, 1982, acrylic and collage on plywood, 120 X 120 cm. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 28.
4. No title, 1983 (“Open Day”), acrylic on plywood, 122 X 250 cm, collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. See photo in: Shapira, *Raffi Lavie – Works from 1950 to 2003*, 47. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:B03_0063~Lavie,_Raffi,_Untitled,_1983.jpg
5. Terra Mater, marble relief from the Ara Pacis Augustae, 1st century BC, Ara Pacis Museum, Rome. See photo in: Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, figs. 79-80. Public Domain: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arapacis,jpg.jpg>
6. The Peplos Kore, circa 530 BCE, Parian marble, 120 cm, Acropolis Museum. See photo in: Boardman, *Greek Sculpture - The Archaic Period*, fig. 115. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ACMA_679_Kore_1.JPG
7. The Youth from the sea off Marathon, Bronze, circa 340-330 BCE, 130 cm, National Museum, Athens. See photo in: Robertson, *A Shorter History of Greek Art*, fig. 198; Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, figs. 497, 499. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NAMA_X15118_Marathon_Boy_3.JPG
8. Doryphoros, by Polykleitos, Roman copy of the imperial era after a Greek original of the late Classicism, 1st century BCE, Carrara marble, 200cm, Naples National Archeological Museum. See photo in: Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, 160-163, figs. 378-382. Public Domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Doryphoros_MAN_Napoli_Inv6011-2.jpg

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