

Design of the **times**

Gaby Wine talks to talented Israeli artists whose work is on display at the V&A



Hot feat: shoes made from chilli peppers, by Lily Poran and galvanised iron and wax linen thread basket, by Yehudit Katz



A buggy full of clay Coke cans, a pile of shoes made out of pebbles and peppers, extraordinary woven baskets suspended in the air and eye-catching, geometrically designed jewellery.

These are just some of the pieces by Israeli artists which feature in Collect, an international art fair for contemporary objects, organised by the Crafts Council, on show at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

"It's a marvellous opportunity for artists to show that Israel isn't just about war," says Yehudit Katz, who wove the baskets. The idea behind her work is "to move away from

industrial design and return to the handloom."

The fair is also a chance for artists to sell their work outside Israel. Indeed, while we are talking, someone snaps up four baskets.

Also hoping for international recognition is jeweller Yael Herman, who is sporting an unusual platinum-laminated necklace and exquisite earrings made from lines of diamonds — both her own designs.

"I like to experiment with all types of metal and to combine precious metals with non-precious metals and diamonds. It makes things very dramatic."

Her work is heavily influenced by architecture, particularly the simple, angular Bauhaus style which dominates Tel Aviv. "I like to take

simple shapes and play with them. Each time, I try to see them from a different perspective."

Yehudit and Yael are among a number of artists brought over from Israel by Aida — the Association of Israel's Decorative Arts, sponsored by Bank Leumi, which aims to introduce Israeli artists to the international arena. Marion Naggat, the driving force behind Aida in the UK, said: "All the artists' work is exceptional and promotes a whole different image of Israel."

"Collect" is at the V&A, SW7, until Monday. Tickets at £12 (£8 concessions) are available on 0870-842 2208

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