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Magazine

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FRESH START

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LOOKS LIKE A WINNER!

Tamar Jacobs and Oshri Yaniv of Jacobs-Yaniv Architects are the first Israelis to win first place at the World Architecture Festival – the Oscars of architecture – for designing a unique shelter for battered women **Rachel Kaplan**



Prize-winning architects Oshri Yaniv and Tamar Jacobs

Anita Garoni



Computerized illustration by Studio Toro

The Tel Aviv women's shelter designed by Jacobs-Yaniv won the distinguished prize in the category of the Health Future Projects at the World Architecture Festival, competing against projects that are being built with huge budgets in Canada, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia. Their project was designed for the 'No to Violence Against Women' association, founded by Israel Prize laureate Ruth Resnick, a feminist activist who is one of the pioneers in the struggle against violence against women in Israel.

And the Oscar goes to ...

Tamar Jacobs and Oshri Yaniv were winners along with the firm of Zaha Hadid, and an architecture firm that became famous thanks to the designing of Chanel stores – and this is the first time the prize has been won by Israeli architects.

The women's shelter that they designed constitutes a breakthrough in terms of the welfare authorities, because until now battered women and their children were placed in improvised buildings or shelters that were converted by the welfare authorities. For the first time, a building was designed specifically for welfare cases, with the stated purpose of protecting the women and children inside, and at the same time providing them with an experience of privacy and a pleas-

ant living environment.

The judges in the prestigious competition also explained the prize by the fact that despite the strict specifications and the limited budget, the architects created smart locations for various functions while providing areas of privacy for the residents.

From the classroom to a shared life

Tamar Jacobs studied architecture at AA (the Architectural Association School of Architecture) in London, and after completing her studies she worked in the firm of Zaha Hadid. Oshri is also a graduate of AA and interned in the firm of the famed David Chipperfield. The two met while in school and became a couple. Upon their return to Israel in 2004, they decided to embark on an independent path together, and launched the firm that today employs another six architects.

Working together was something they were concerned about at the beginning. However, the secret of their success at home and in the office is accepting each other's weaknesses and reinforcing the dominant traits that complement one another. Together they are involved in the planning and design of private homes, vacation apartments for foreign residents, public buildings and even commercial space. Among their first commercial projects in Israel was the highly praised Jaffa Port Market.

All's well that ends well

The construction of the shelter began after an eight-year legal battle, initiated by some of the residents of the street, who opposed the construction of the shelter in a residential neighborhood. It is scheduled to open in the coming weeks, in an undisclosed place in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, and will house 12 women and their children.

The flat building has two floors and is deliberately hidden in the heart of the neighborhood. The facades of the building are windowless, inspired by the tough and protective tortoise's shell, and covered with stone. The size of the shelter is 800 sq.m. on an area of 1600 sq.m., and includes classrooms, a kindergarten, treatment rooms, a dining room and kitchen, rooms for social workers and staff members.

Since the residents of the shelter spend an average of six to nine months there, the architects placed a lot of emphasis on designing the inner courtyard, which serves as a place for children to meet and play, and enables natural light and fresh air to penetrate the interior spaces of the shelter, like a "little village."

The shelter was designed in cooperation with Amos Goldreich, an architect living in London, whose family donated money to 'No to Violence Against Women' in order to rescue women and children from the cycle of violence.