

Tel Aviv Port / Public Space Regeneration Project

By Mayslits Kassif Architects

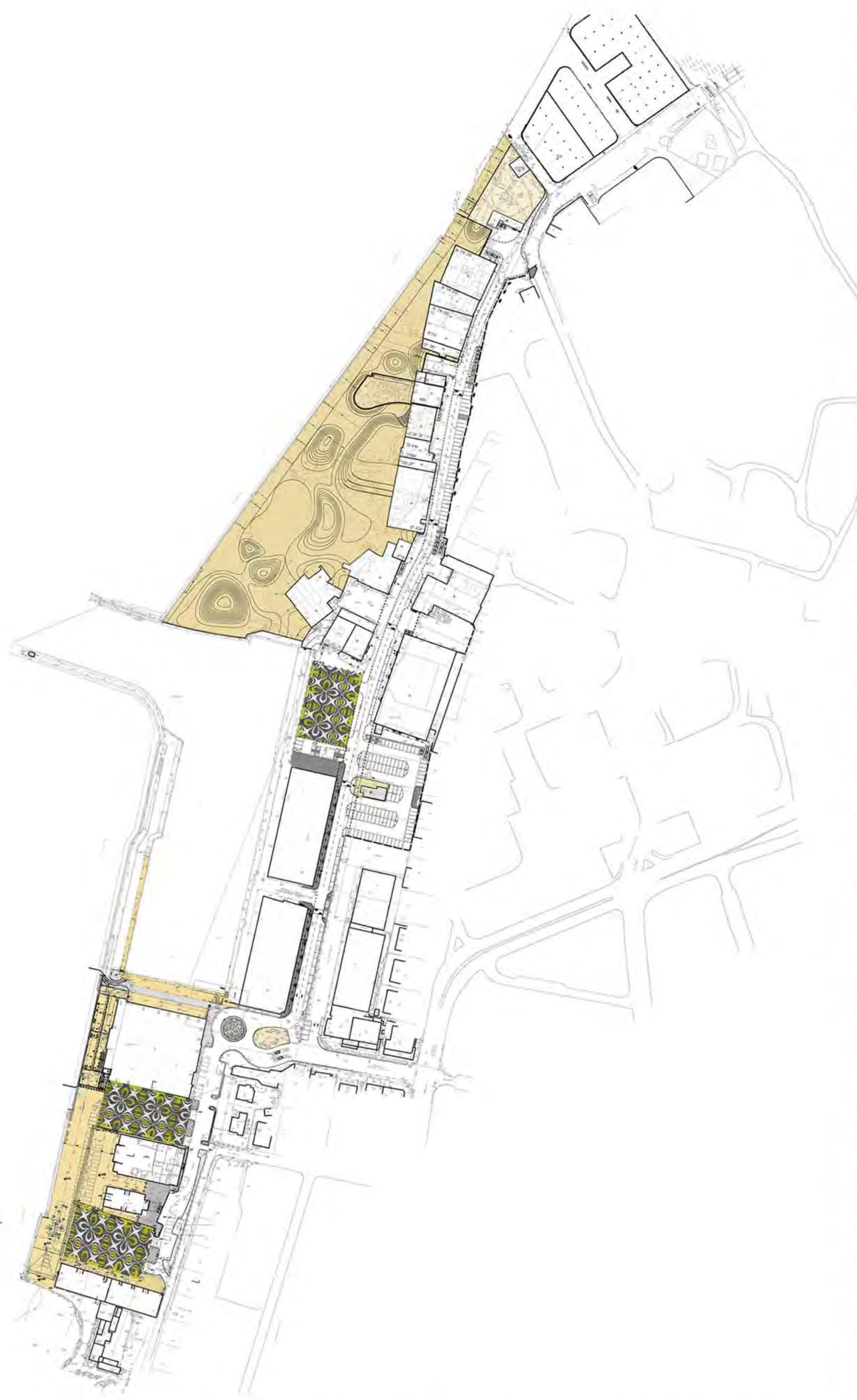


Situated on one of Israel's most breathtaking waterfronts, the Tel Aviv Port was plagued with neglect for almost 50 years; after its primary use as an operational docking port was abandoned in 1965. For nearly half a century, this exceptional piece of urban shoreline was cut off from the city; serving as an unofficial junkyard, while simultaneously being the subject of dozens of grand real estate developments plans. Blueprints, plans, tenders and architectural competitions were submitted and withdrawn, leaving Tel Aviv's residents unable to enjoy their urban gem – until recently, when a public space development project managed to restore this prominent part of the city, and turn it into an urban landmark.

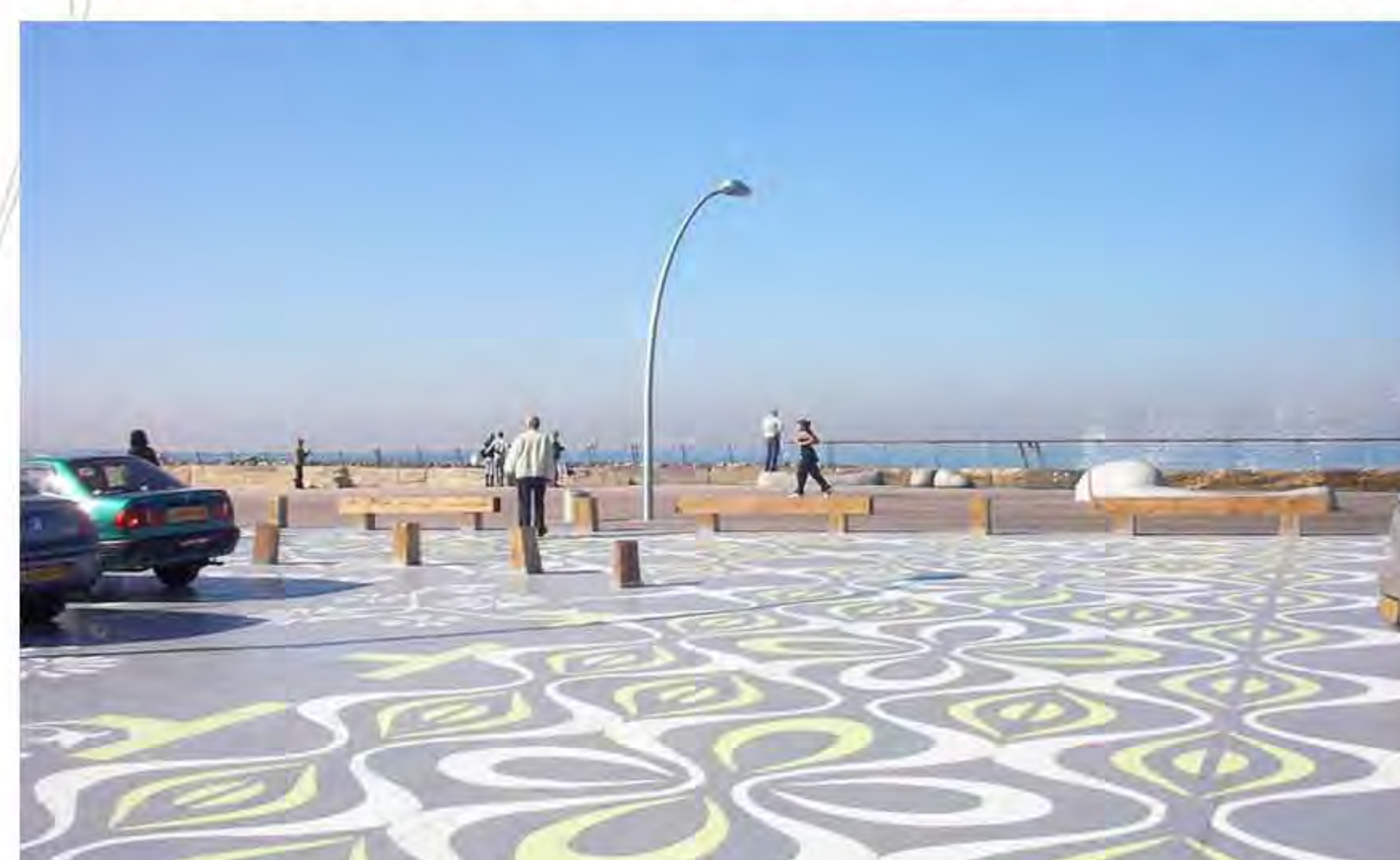
The 2003 announcement of the public architectural competition for the development of the port's public spaces, proved to be the turning point for the urban redemption of this unique part of Tel Aviv. The winning design, submitted by Mayslits Kassif Architects in collaboration with Galila Yavin, was quickly brought to life, with Tel Avivians flocking to the revamped port even before the project was completed.

Remarkably, despite city planning dominated by market forces and because of its immense popularity with the public, the project has been able to circumvent massive development schemes, opting instead to present an alternative future for the harbor area. As a result, all of the area's rezoning plans have been suspended; turning the existing project into an example of an urban development plan which is not propelled by building rights, but rather by a unique design strategy, which aims towards the cultivation of the public space.





Beach Chairs & Parasols available free of charge



The Parking Park as multipurpose surface



Urban picnics on seating terraces



View from north

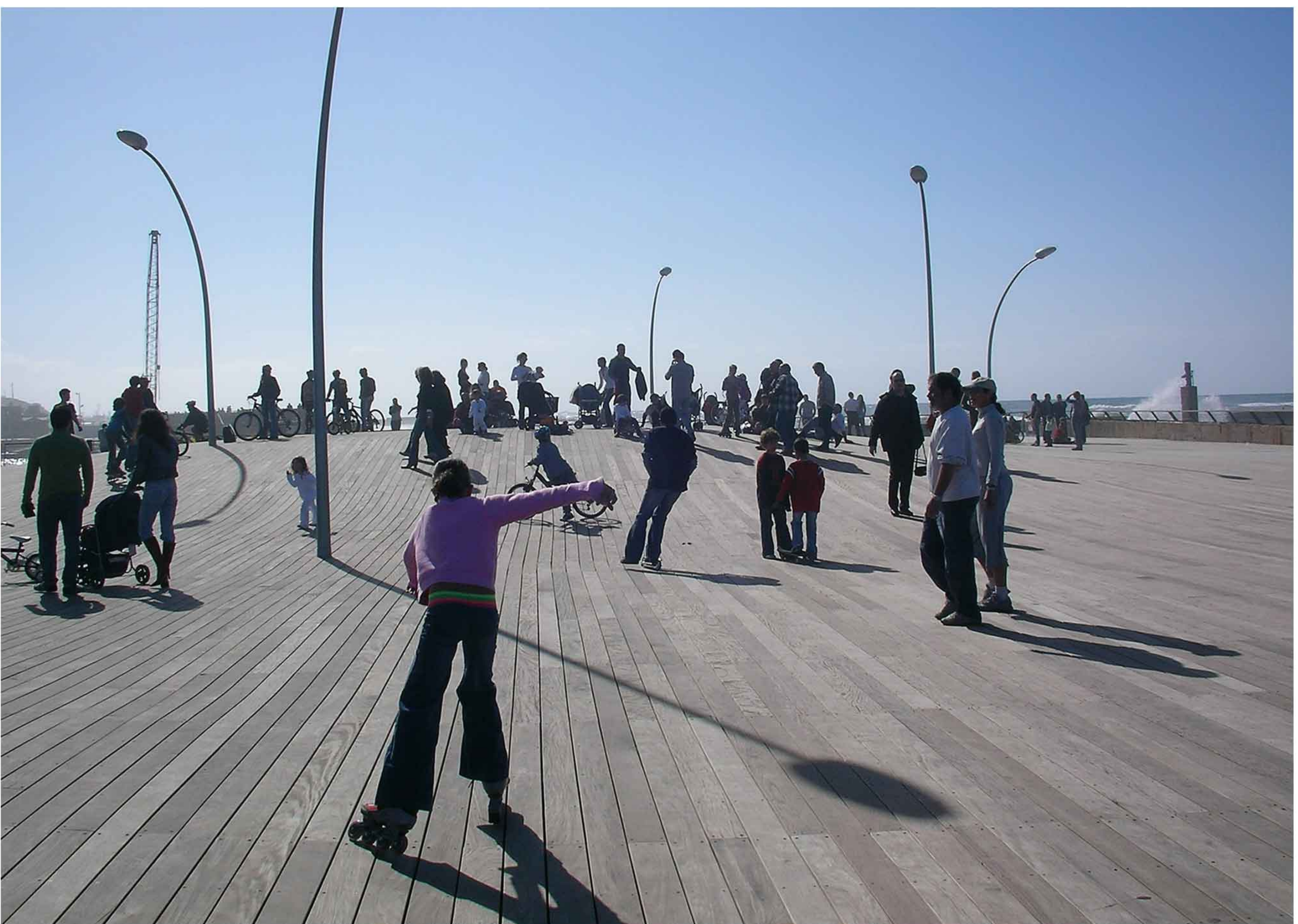
Public vs. Private – Towards a new agenda of hospitality

Being a fast growing metropolis, the contrast between Tel Aviv's luxurious, privately built areas and its dull public spaces is stark, with both public and private investors finding it hard to envision public areas as a worthwhile endeavor: The standard budget allotted per square meter of outdoor public space is about 5% of the average budget allotted per square meter of a standard building construction.

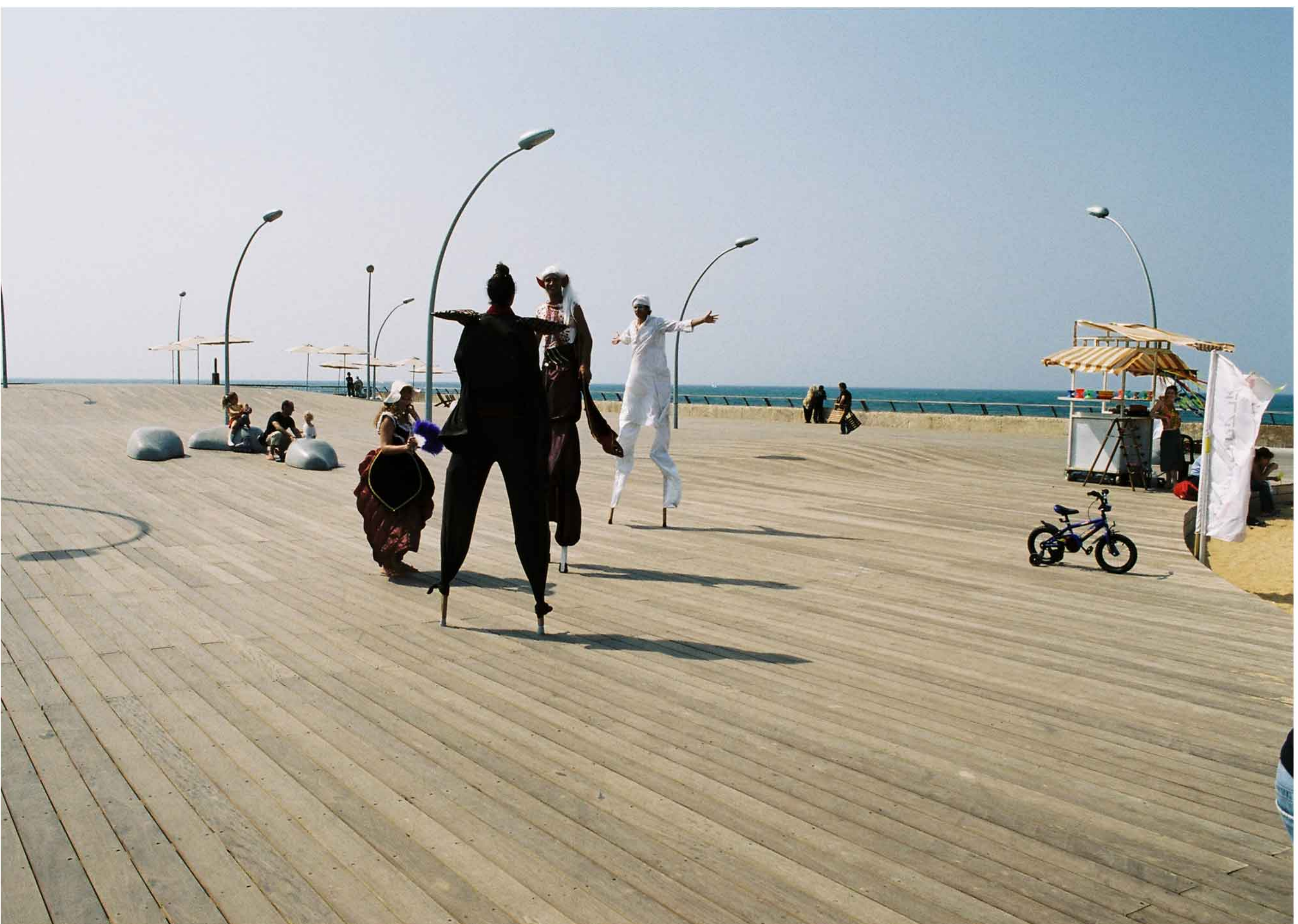
Considering the fact that Israel is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, every square foot of outdoor space becomes a highly valuable commodity. With this notion as a guiding motif, the architects saw the Tel Aviv Port project as a unique opportunity to create and construct a public space which challenges the common contrast between private and public development, and suggest a new agenda of hospitality for collective open spaces.

Strategically, the project aspired to create a rich combination, which challenges the familiar classes of public and private space in various ways, including intertwining them in ways which make features usually offered exclusively in privately leased areas, available to the public. On top of introducing a non-hierarchical plan, a policy which negates restrictive fences and various design elements that suggest open interpretations by its users, the deck is fully equipped with hundreds of plug-in points for parasols which, along with beach chairs and breathtaking views, are available – free of charge – to anyone.

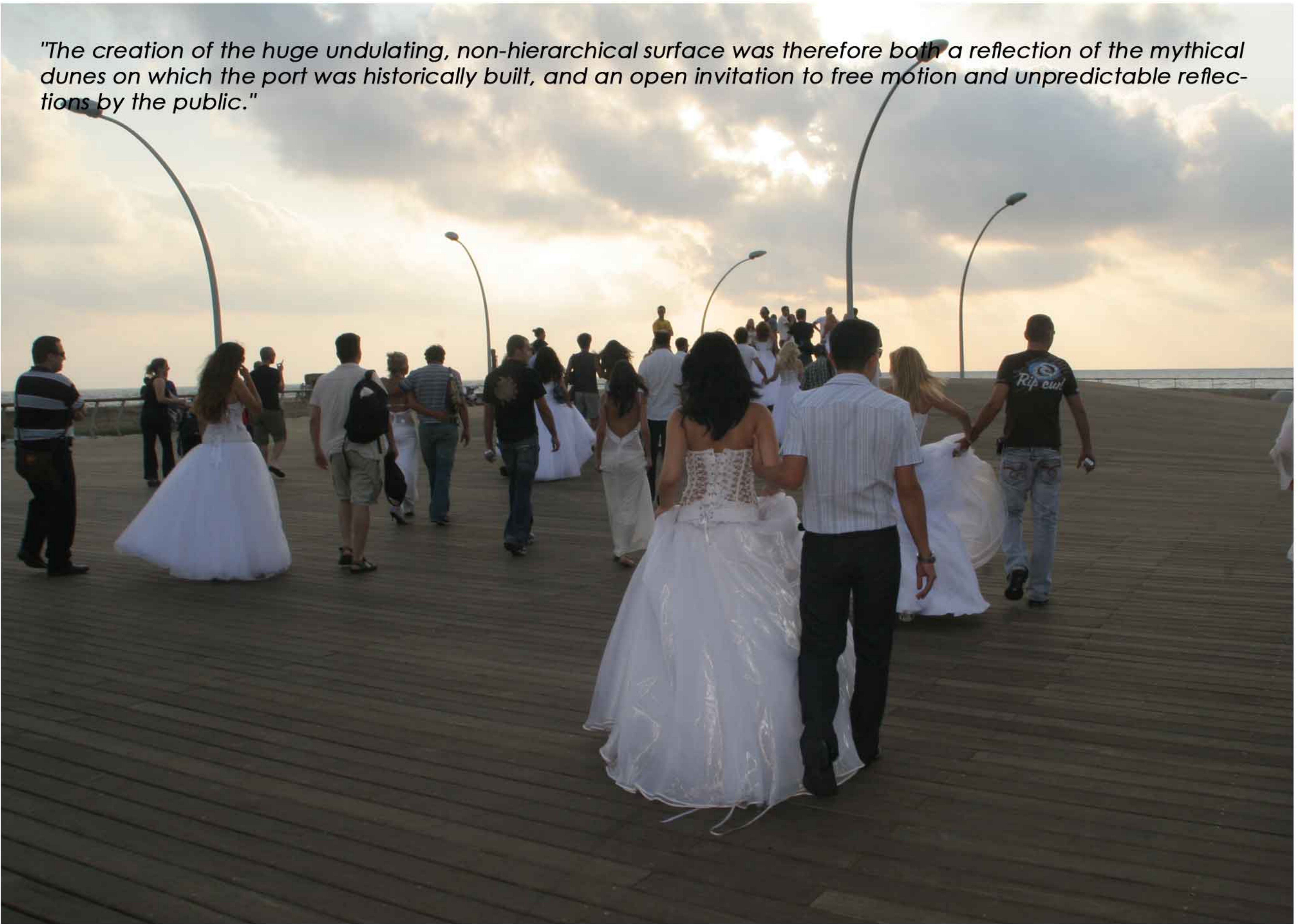
"The city of Tel Aviv needs some disorganized space, open to all sorts of interpretations. A fresh, outdoor domain unconstrained by too many intents and purposes. In our proposal we chose to do the least in order to achieve the most..." (From the competition proposal 2003).



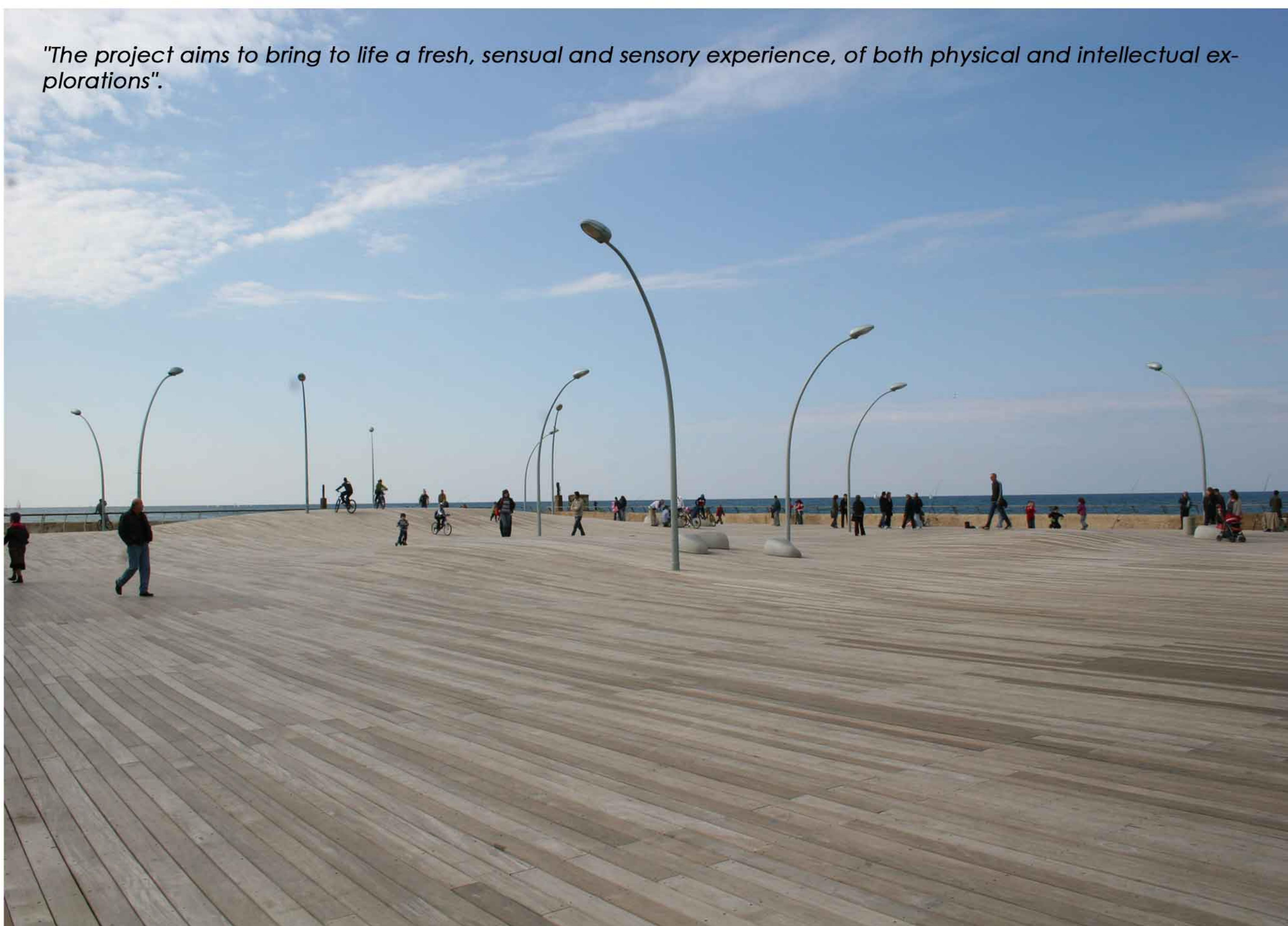
"Perceiving users as active readers and attempting to encourage vital use of space, led us to the search of an environment, which is receptive and flexible, while offering a variety of ways to experience space. We were prompted to use specificity, abstraction and joy as our tools to create an alternative to the passive, preconceived interpretation of the familiar."



"The creation of the huge undulating, non-hierarchical surface was therefore both a reflection of the mythical dunes on which the port was historically built, and an open invitation to free motion and unpredictable reflections by the public."



"The project aims to bring to life a fresh, sensual and sensory experience, of both physical and intellectual explorations".





Mayslits Kassif Architects

Mayslits Kassif Architects was founded in Tel Aviv in 1994, by Ganit Mayslits Kassif and Udi Kassif. Since its inception the practice is involved in a variety of projects in the fields of urban planning, public buildings, housing and retail, with a particular focus on the combination between landscape and urbanism.

Since 1997 Mayslits Kassif Architects has won several prestigious public competitions, such as the Remez-Arlozorov Cultural Center in Tel Aviv, the regeneration of the Ashdod City Center and the redevelopment of the Tel Aviv Port public spaces.

Mayslits Kassif Architects' Tel Aviv Port development project won the firm the prestigious 2007 Israeli Design Award for the best Urban Architectural Project in Israel. The highest honor of its kind.

For more information: www.mkarchitects.com