

# blueprint asia

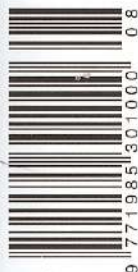
dynamic city foundation on  
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tel aviv port regeneration project

arne quinze's new monograph



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# A STAGE FOR LOCAL CULTURE

AFTER NEARLY HALF A CENTURY OF NEGLECT, THE ONCE DECREPIT TEL AVIV PORT REOPENS AS A BEAUTIFULLY REVITALIZED PUBLIC SPACE WHICH IS FAST GAINING POPULARITY WITH LOCALS AND VISITING TOURISTS ALIKE.





Urban picnics on seating terraces

**TEL AVIV RESIDENTS** reportedly couldn't wait for an official public space where communities would be able to freely gather and intermingle with one another – enthusiasts were flocking to the Tel Aviv Port to have some fun in the sun even well before the architects-in-charge – a young and burgeoning practice called Mayslits Kassif Architects – could commence their work on their widely publicized regeneration of the area's open spaces. A locale comprising an eclectic mix of houses, restaurants, bars, schools, studios, galleries and boutiques, the port's most unique feature is undeniably an expansive undulating surface



"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."



that serves as an urban platform for all manner of community initiatives, ranging from spontaneous rallies to artistic endeavors. Quirkily decked out with a series of randomly placed 'sitting stones', the wavy surface was also constructed to reference "the mythical dunes on which the port was historically built", according to its architects. Bearing in mind its present stance as a treasured public area, it is difficult to imagine that the bustling and vibrant port – situated on one of Israel's most breathtaking waterfronts – was once regarded as an unofficial junkyard which underwent a gradual process of deterioration over a painfully prolonged period as plans, blueprints and tenders for its potential rejuvenation were continually submitted and withdrawn. It wasn't until 2003 when the commission to revamp the area was finally awarded to Mayslits Kassif Architects who collaborated on the winning proposal with Galila Yavin. In a thriving metropolis located in one of the most densely populated countries in the world, any form of outdoor space is unsurprisingly regarded as a valuable commodity, making the city's decision to allocate the port for public use a much welcomed move in the eyes of its residents. Not discounting the unique circumstances surrounding the implementation of the regeneration project, the architects' main objective was to devise a structural framework which could better intertwine private and public space. The idea was to create an area wherein the dynamics of human interaction would fall in line with a non-hierarchical plan that shuns a restrictive division of space. "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." reads the original statement from the firm's 2003 winning submission.

Founded in 1994 and headed by directors Ganit Mayslits Kassif and Udi Kassif, Mayslits Kassif Architects is a Tel Aviv-based practice which specializes in urban planning, public buildings, housing, retail and landscape urbanism. For their work on the regeneration of the port, the firm deservedly nabbed the 2007 Israeli Design Award for the best Urban Architectural Project in Israel, known to be the highest honor of its kind. ▀

[www.mkkarchitects.com](http://www.mkkarchitects.com)

+ PROGRAM  
Design and strategy for the port's public space

+ CLIENT  
Marine Trust Ltd.

+ STATUS  
Completed

+ LAND AREA  
55,000 m<sup>2</sup>

+ LOCATION  
Tel-Aviv Port

+ AWARD  
1st prize with Galia Yavin Open Competition 2003

+ PROJECT ARCHITECTS  
Oren Ben Avraham and Michal Ilan

