Tal Kobo
Curator of the Permanent Exhibition

What do the authentic artifacts add to the exhibition about the story of Jerusalem?

Within the site of this magnificent citadel, and I will add you would be hard pressed to find a site more authentic than this one, a display of artifacts validates the historical story and increases the sense of authenticity to the viewer.

What were your guidelines?

The basic guidelines for the curation process were:

1. A historical exhibit alone is not sufficient to showcase a city and all its complexities. Therefore, the interdisciplinary method was used to convey a complex experience, with different, diverse levels of experience: history, geography, archeology, literature and theology, film and photography, culture studies, music, plastic arts, practical arts and more. All were used as tools to create a complex experience that represents the story of the city.
2. Another guiding principle was to present the city over twelve different historical periods – from the Canaanite Period until today. Jerusalem has its own unique historical sequence. Ever since it was first populated the city has never been abandoned. These levels of history are still evident today and define the landscape and culture of the city.
3. The galleries are arranged in a thematic-chronological order. While they do create a story together, each one can also stand on its own.
4. An additional principle is that the museum is situated inside its main exhibit – the citadel. This foundation is especially evident in the design of the museum which doesn't interrupt the citadel itself from being the main experience of the museum.

What were the most surprising elements or the renewal?

Over years of research and curation I was surprised almost every day. There were new discoveries unfolding before us that had never been presented to the world. Our new research presented an opportunity to reference them in the new exhibits and renew how Jerusalem is perceived through them. One example of such a discovery is the Early Muslim coin that depicts the menorah from the Temple as a symbol of Jerusalem. That was a complete surprise for me.

Who did you consult?

Our advisors were as numerous as the many disciplines we used to tell the story of the city: historians, geographers, professors and experts on art, writers, poets, various religious experts, archeologists, collectors, film and photography experts and so many more.

What was the biggest challenge?

Jerusalem is the most complicated city in the world, with a history almost 4000 years old. The responsibility involved in creating a museum for such an important city was incredibly demanding.

What inspired you?

I was born in Jerusalem. Life in the city and my immediate connection to it though childhood memories greatly influenced me. As children those life experiences are extremely influential. I

absolutely loved exploring the city and soaking in all its sites. My life is intertwined with this city, and I have first-hand knowledge of the challenges of life here.