

One hundred issues – 7 articles in each - Hebrew and English = 1,400 articles on a subject that can be summed up by one good building, one bad building, and everything in between. Twenty-six years, 9,360 work days (not including Saturdays and holidays), 10 cups of coffee a day, 30 French pastries, 10 Israeli wafers. 10,000 divine eggs with Arab salad, three million phone-calls to subscribers, a similar number to advertisers, many, many compliments for our persistence, quite a few complaints - "why his and not mine"; my name is written with an "E" not "I"; and why couldn't the courier wait until the puddle dries..."

The story began twenty-six years ago in a small office in Netanya. For the first two years we managed to convince subscribers that a quarterly is every four months... and in the third year, our father died. The country was painfully shallow in architectural theory, and the most profound article on the subject was the bi-annual statistical publication telling the number of paternal-households - at that time they didn't know much about maternal ones.

Just back from London University with a master's degree, I was charged as a wild horse with theoretical energies - God knows what I'd have done without a serious magazine to free my reins. With Ruchi, who agreed to be my wife, and Udi, who agreed to be my brother, we established the Eighth Wonder - an independent magazine, that refuses to publish articles on behalf of, not ashamed to criticize our subscribers buildings, and has managed to survive despite, or maybe thanks to, for a quarter of a century, and our pen is still slanted in the right direction, at least as we see it.

My father taught me not to fear anything except malice combined with stupidity, liars and hypocrites. Even when you do things that may seem impossible, he said, it's enough that you're excited for it to eventually happen. I remember him explicitly telling us, go for it, it's worth the effort. Unfortunately, he died at the ninth issue and didn't know how much effort it takes to live on a quarterly basis - first month to invent, the second to write and photograph, and the third to layout, edit, translate, edit, modify, edit, translate... until you feel it's good enough to satisfy the spectrum of readers so laboriously collected through the years, although many of them are certain they'd do my job far better. For them (and for me) I wrote the following lines:

*I live on a quarterly basis
survive slowly but surely
sustained by the pouch of optimism
burned into my shoulder by father who said
go, son, get far,
away from the racing crowd*

*Here and there you will meet scum
pay no attention, they're only signposts,
slopes you descend
to climb back up*

*From him I learned
mountains drip nectar
when hills rejoice*

*And that's quite a lot
on a quarterly basis*

living on a quarterly basis

editorial

Mother, who lasted until issue 84, used to ask every time "Have you published the book yet?" Not that she didn't know it was only a Journal, but because it seemed to her like a parting of the sea, and every time she hoped that God would help us cross it.

Not everyone knows, because some have already died, but in order to publish the first issue, we met with all architects working in the country at the time; between five and ten offices a day, where we saw handmade presentations, drawings, designs and cardboard maquettes. It was exhausting and instructive, but the conclusion was unequivocal - there really was no such thing as an architecture of Israel, and thinking there should be one, we gave the journal this name, raising quite a few eyebrows. Today we reach all corners of the earth, and the Israeli magazine ranks among the top ten of its kind in the world.

This issue presents work by four architectural firms that reflect the state of architecture in Israel compared to other countries: David Nofar on Nachlat Yitzhak, Gidi Bar-Orian on Rothschild Boulevard, Livay-Dvoriensky in Raanana, and Hagy Belzberg in Los Angeles.

Architect Dr. Ami Ran

