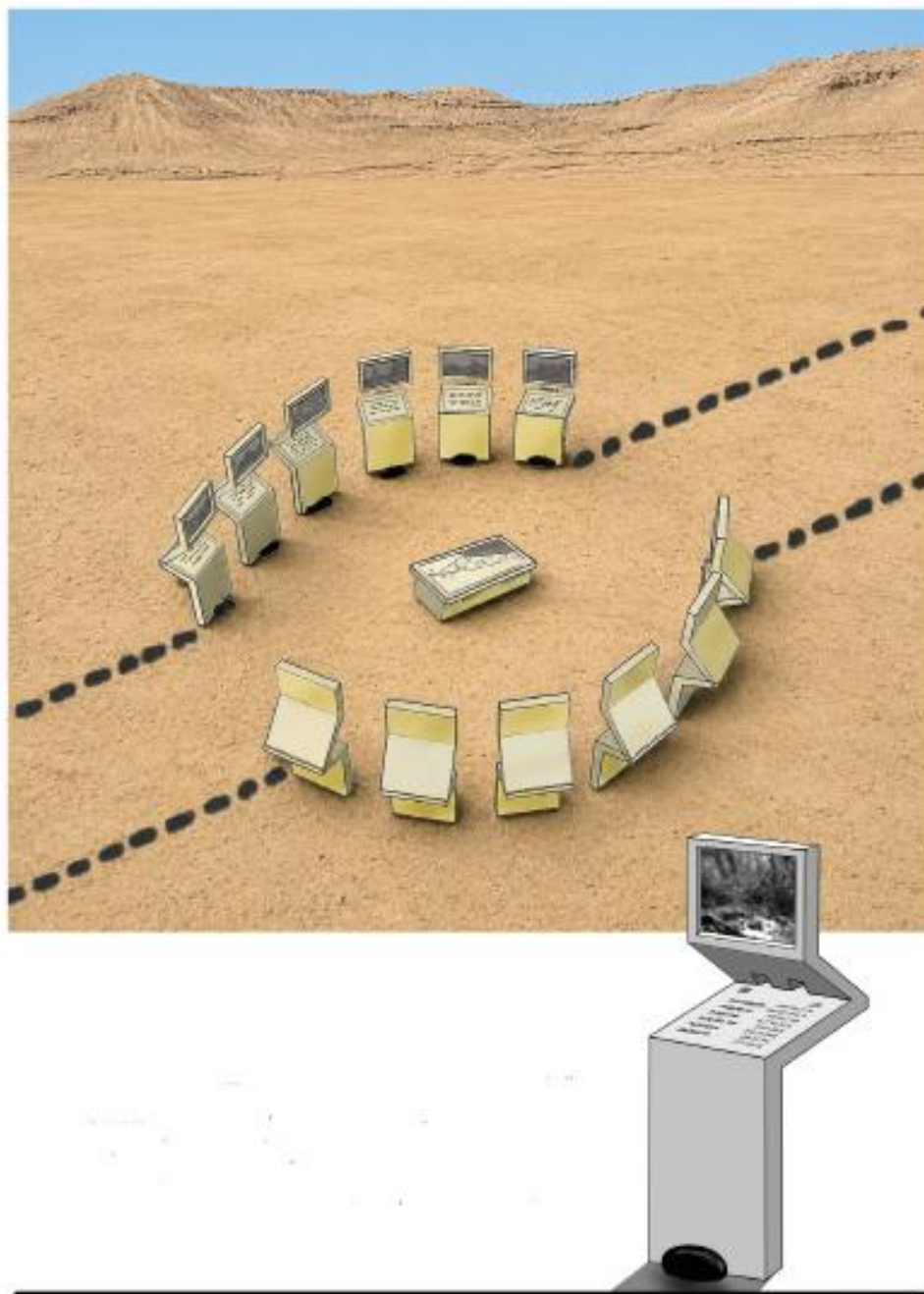




What Is the Circle of the Soundings?

In the spring of 1993 - still before the inauguration of the Israel Trail - I set out on a walking journey, the first of its kind, along the length of Israel. Eighteen days and more than 600 km, following a route entirely my own, with a map case, a backpack, a small field tent, and the long, demanding road from Tel Dan to the Gulf of Eilat.

A journey that began with picking up a small stone, a river pebble, from the spring at Dan on the northern border; continued with immersing it in the Sea of

Galilee and in the waters of the Mediterranean; and ended with placing it on the seabed of the Red Sea, our southern border.

It was also a deeply personal journey, with quite a few soundings - a series of works and actions carried out along the way, immediate and spontaneous expressions of an encounter with a particular place, with a particular landscape in this land. This series of soundings was documented in words and photographs in the book *Ish Holech Et Eretz Israel* (A Man Walks the Land of Israel, Bitan publishing house, Tel Aviv, 1994), which appeared one year after the journey. It was also the first book to describe a journey of this kind.

The idea of selecting twelve soundings from that book - ones that define the essence of that journey - and presenting them as sculptures (or three-dimensional objects) in a circle has accompanied me for years in various attempts. The idea recently took shape in this, its final form, thirty-three years after I set out on that walk.

The twelve works installed in the Circle of the Soundings, arranged according to the order in which they were created, now face one another, speak to one another, and in this way create a unique, original connection to a journey across the land. It is an unusual and distinctive installation, connecting border to border, sea to sea, and one way station to the next, along the entire route from Tel Dan to the Gulf of Eilat.

And this journey is entirely from here, entirely our own - Israeli and local in the fullest sense - with touches of Hebrew myth and legend, of the land's distant and recent past, of its ancient and modern Jewish history, and of the unique beauty of its landscapes.

Where would you place the Circle of the Soundings? I asked myself more than once. And the answer was always the same: in the Zin Valley in the Negev. At the heart of the exposed, open expanse, with nothing around it but wilderness. And the place that feels most right to me for such an installation is on the route of the Israel Trail as it passes through the valley, a path used by many hikers every day, on their way northward and southward.

Description of the Sculptural Installation

12 sounding columns are arranged in a circle according to the chronological order of the works along the journey from Tel Dan to the Gulf of Eilat, and

documented one year later, in photographs and accompanying captions, in the book "A Man Walks the Land of Israel".

Each column presents a sounding image accompanied by a text. The height of each column is no less than 1.80 m. The diameter of the Circle of the Soundings is no less than 6 m. The Map of the Soundings (laid horizontally) is positioned at the center of the circle. 52 rounded basalt stones (preferably from the old patrol road in the Golan Heights) serve as the entrance and exit path to and from the circle, and as markers at the base of the sounding columns.

First Sounding Column

Stone (05:39, Tel Dan)

Second Sounding Column

Hermon Sentinel (08:56, Nebi Huda)

Third Sounding Column

Hittin Sentinel (12:21, Horns of Hittin)

Fourth Sounding Column

The Seam Line (06:30, Beit Yanai Beach)

Fifth Sounding Column

Lachish Wall (15:10, Tel Lachish)

Sixth Sounding Column

Railway Sentinels (10:23, railway line to Beersheba)

Seventh Sounding Column

Zin Sentinel (06:10, Zin Stream)

Eighth Sounding Column

Water in the Rock (16:08, Hava and Tzinim Stream Junction)

Ninth Sounding Column

House Stones (05:30, Har Orahot)

Tenth Sounding Column

Road Sentinel (17:10, Yaelón Stream)

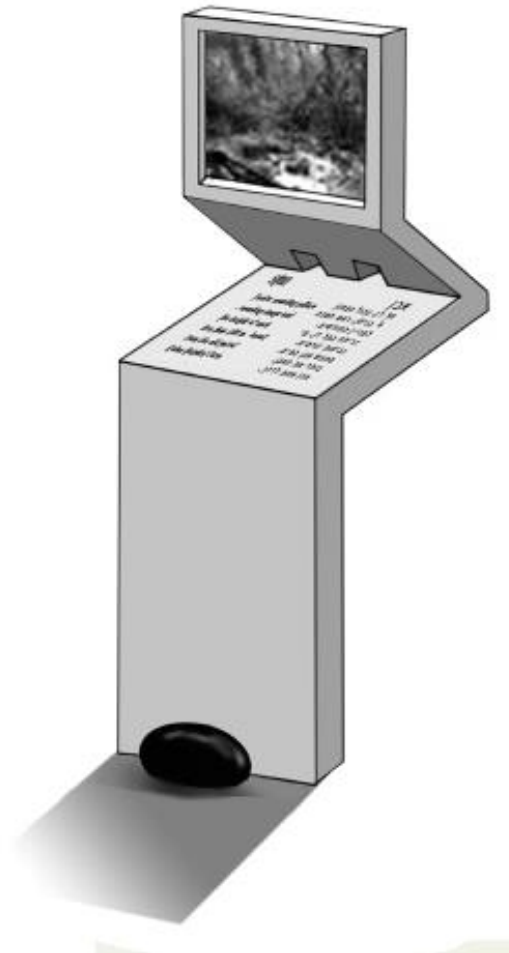
Eleventh Sounding Column

The Line of Fate (15:22, entrance to Samar)

Twelfth Sounding Column

Her Place of Rest (09:34, Gulf of Eilat)

A SOUNDING COLUMN



First Sounding Column: Image and Accompanying Caption



STONE

05:39 . Tel Dan, Northern Border

1 Nisan, the beginning of the year for the counting of the months.

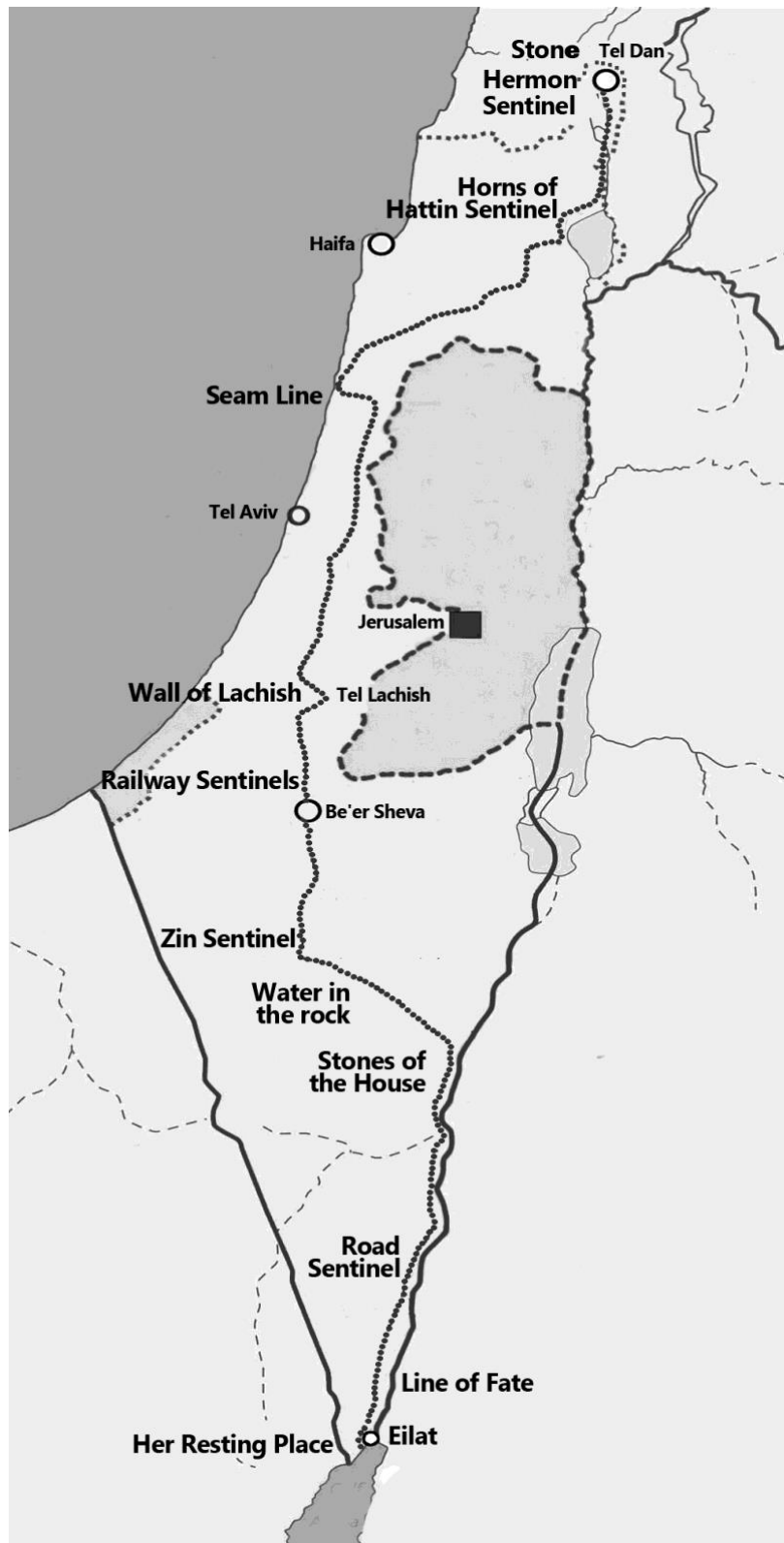
Sunrise at Tel Dan. Spring waters are flowing.

Looking for a stone in the water.

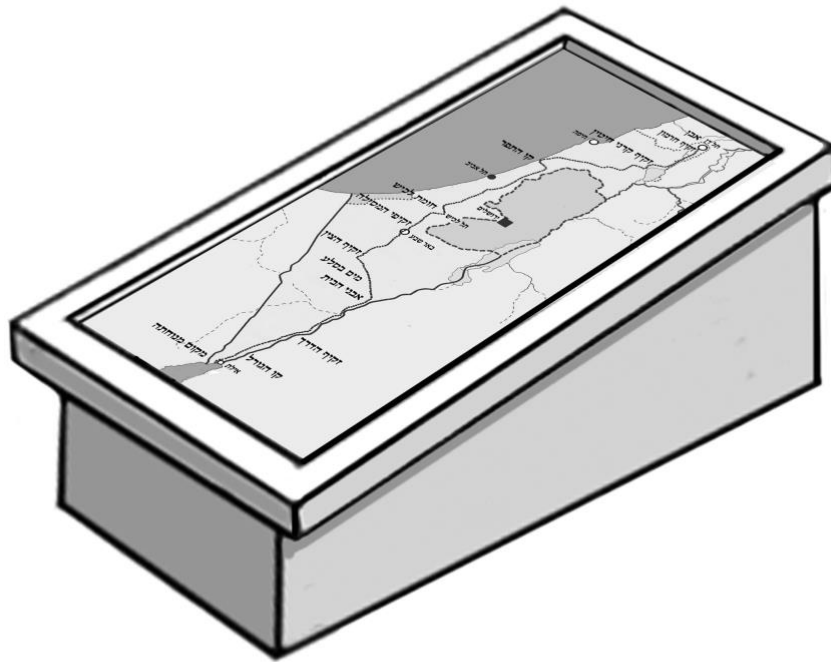
Choosing the stone.

One stone for the road, for the journey.

MAP OF THE SOUNDINGS



MAP OF THE SOUNDINGS (in the center of the Circle)



The Circle of the Soundings in the Zin Valley

The strength of the sculptural installation Circle of the Soundings in the Zin Valley, Negev, lies in the fact that the desert landscape does not function merely as a passive backdrop to the work, but becomes one of its active creators and an integral component of its being.

Unlike the traditions of Land Art and monumental sculptural projects in the desert, which sometimes impose enormous geometric forms upon the landscape, Circle of the Soundings proposes an intervention of a different nature - measured, attentive, and organic. The work is not a monolith detached from its surroundings, but rather a participatory act that incorporates within it an actual bodily experience of movement through space.

Despite its specific, site-specific location in the Zin Valley, the installation in fact draws the entire geography of Israel into itself. It transforms a single point in the desert into a kind of conceptual panorama of the country and of the continuum of human walking along its length.

At a time of profound upheaval and rupture, including in the sense of physical security, Circle of the Soundings invites hikers to pause in their journey, experience a moment of inward gathering, and reconnect with the earth and the landscape through intimacy and mental presence.

It is important to note in this context that, in addition to the artistic and cultural value of the work, Moshe Oren's proven ability to initiate and lead large-scale spatial projects of substantial historical and symbolic significance - such as The Linking Trail and The Garden of the Missing on Mount Herzl, Jerusalem - strengthens confidence in his ability to bring this complex and sensitive project to fruition.

Dr. Galia Bar Or

Art Historian and Curator

On the Circle of the Soundings

The open space in Israel is not merely a natural resource, but also a cultural space, carrying traces of journeys, memories, and stories. Moshe Oren's proposal to establish the Circle of the Soundings in the Zin Valley, Negev, fits into this tradition and gives it a unique artistic expression.

The project originated in the walking journey Oren undertook in 1993, from Tel Dan to the Gulf of Eilat. As far as is known, this was the first journey to cross the country from end to end, and the first to be documented in a complete travel book – "A Man Walks the Land of Israel". This journey occupies an important place in the development of walking culture in Israel.

The sculptural installation does not reconstruct the journey, but distills from it twelve key moments. Each sounding is a direct response to a place, a landscape, and a particular moment in time. The documentation of the works at the sites where they were created, through photography and the recording of the precise time, gives them a dual status: works of art and documents of a geographical experience.

The term sounding expresses the essence of the project. It is not a representation of a place, but the product of a one-time encounter between a person, time, and landscape. The landscape does not serve merely as a backdrop to the work, but as an active participant in its creation.

The choice of the Zin Valley is also particularly appropriate. The open and quiet character of the desert allows the installation to integrate into the space and become part of it, thereby strengthening the connection between walking, observation, and time - the three elements upon which this project rests.

In my view, the Circle of the Soundings is much more than an art installation. It is a contribution of value to Israel's cultural landscape, offering a new way to experience and interpret the space. Its placement in the Zin Valley will enable it to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the desert, with the Israel Trail, and with the people who walk it, thereby giving it the appropriate context and the full measure of its significance.

Prof. Emeritus Maoz Azaryahu

Head of the Herzl Institute for the Study of Zionism
University of Haifa

The Artist

Moshe Oren is a writer, journalist, and editor. His books for children and adults have been published by various publishers in his country.

Oren was born in the Jezreel Valley, and is a graduate of Tel Aviv University where he studied the ancient history of Greece and Rome. He worked as a journalist for Yedioth Ahronoth in London and had a weekly column on films and cinema in Al HaMishmar.

Oren is the initiator and editor of Lechiot Bechol Tnay (To Live Under Any Conditions), the first Hebrew survival guide for hikers and backpackers, and the first man to cross the country in the spring of 1993 (before the opening of the Israel Trail) on a walking journey from Dan to Eilat. His book Ish Holech Et Eretz Israel (A Man Walks the Land of Israel, Beitan publishing house, Tel Aviv, 1994) was the first book to describe a journey of this kind.

In the first decade of the millennium, Oren initiated and led several of the country's major memorial projects on Mount Herzl, Jerusalem, including The

Linking Trail between Yad Vashem and Mount Herzl, The Garden of the Missing, and the Last of Kin Monument and Memorial Project.

