

---

# PRESENCE=PRESENT

חוויה=הוויה

---

(a minimal sculpture)  
A collaboration between

DAVID GERSTEIN and ALANA RUBEN FREE

“P=P” is an interactive, immersive art experience to encourage reflection, communication, and intimacy within a protective minimal sculpture, including an attached bench that can seat up to 4 adults.



## DIMENSIONS:

**HEIGHT:** 250 cm **DIAMETER:** 160 cm **WEIGHT:** 500 kg  
**COLOR:** White-Cream **MATERIAL:** Aluminum 10 mm thick  
**ATTACHED SEMI-CIRCULAR BENCH:** Aluminum

(Dimensions variable. Appropriate for inside or outside use.)

## SUGGESTED USAGE

Sit down, set your timer for 2 minutes, breathe, and say aloud or silently: “I love you. I trust you. I respect you. I appreciate your presence in my life.”  
Please sign the journal on the way out.

## In HEBREW

אני אוהב/ת אותך  
יש לי אמון בך  
אני מכבד/ת אותך  
אני מעריכ/ה את נוכחותך בחיי

לאחר שתי דקות, צאו ושתפו את מי שנמצא בחדר בחוויה שלכם. אתם מוזמנים לכתוב לנו בספר האורחים בדרכם החוצה.

## SELECTED VISITORS' REACTIONS FROM JOURNAL ENTRIES AND INTERVIEWS

(some translated from Hebrew)

Alana spent over 70 hours at the exhibit meeting and speaking with various visitors, whom she observed, recorded, and photographed. She witnessed expressions of love and friendship in many varieties. For most visitors, integrating and articulating their experiences in the journal was an integral part of the process.

**“Presence=Present is one of the most important and brilliant art pieces we had...”**

-- Rami Ozeri, founder of the Jerusalem Biennale, quoted from Canadian Jewish News.

“Thank you for the chance to slow down, to focus, unburden, and for these four points of wisdom, which give so much clarity and comfort. This rounded space, protected, yet open, (secure and cozy), tells of so many deeper possibilities for bonding and closeness, being present and true for the ones that we love and listening. Thank you for these gifts, this fresh, wonderful perspective of relationship, for this unique experience.”

“I am going through treatments and I was able to have a difficult conversation with my daughter that I have been wanting to have. Thank you for creating this space for us to communicate in a deeper way than we usually do. We don't usually express our feelings verbally on a daily basis...”

“Together inside of the egg was born a conversation while I was breastfeeding... about freedom and art and motherhood. This work reminds me of the land of Israel. We are safe and protected by a veil of protection. We can look out at the world, but their view of us is obscured by the veil that covers us here.”

“...you created for me the womb. I was wrapped in mercy, and the veil protected me with grace...Again and again I am born into life...”

“A strong experience of going inside of myself while being with my partner, while there's a crowd outside. A very pleasant feeling overcomes me. The sculpture encourages intimate conversation...”

“After this whole process, the weight on my shoulders began to lift.”

“Each time I said the words, I directed them (in my mind) to those I care about the most, my daughters, and the one child with whom I have the most difficulty...”

A poem by an 11 year old girl:

I am in a red and white colored bubble/ There are curtains/  
This is fun, pleasant, and relaxing for me/ Outside it's loud, and inside here relaxing  
Outside war, inside safe/Outside is hot, inside cool, like being in an iceberg.

“Of all of the installations that I have ever seen or experienced, this is one of the, if not, the most effective.”

“Thank you for providing a space of gratitude and appreciation.”

“Thank you for reminding me what is important.”

“How wonderful to have two minutes of peace in this time of turmoil.”

“Strong but at the same time welcoming and soothing.”

“My husband held my hand and said some of the nicest things he has ever said to me.”

“A place to reconnect with myself.”

“A new symbol of intimacy. A great place to go for a date.”

“Sitting down in the egg immediately grounded me. I felt more calm as my breathing slowed down.”

“Wow! Inspiring!”

“Gave me a more optimistic outlook.”

“I gathered good energy.”

“2 minutes of peace in the City of Peace.”

“We did our (marriage) vows again.”

“We had a little cuddle, too. Lovely!”

“Speaking words of acceptance and love seemed natural in this environment.”

“The affirmations fill the egg and overflow into the surrounding space.”

“Thoughts jumped back and forth like sparks.”

“I came out of the two minutes smiling and serene, like after a serene satisfying journey.”

“What a beautiful idea executed beautifully.”

“You’ve created an island of love and acceptance that can inspire everyone to be their best self.”

## Background Information:

The curators of the exhibit “Ima lyla’a: The Art of Motherhood” approached Alana to create a unique project for their exhibit for the Jerusalem Biennale of Contemporary Jewish Art. After conceiving of the idea to create a physical space that visitors could enter to read a script that would encourage the sensation of love, she approached David Gerstein, knowing of his experience in metal sculptures. She explained to David that the sculpture should support a meditative experience and balance masculine and feminine principles, as the work should engender a sense of wholeness. David suggested an open sculpture shaped like an egg. Ideally, the participants would be within a spherical space (feminine symbol) and sit on a semi-circular bench, so participants would have to make a choice as to how close they wanted sit to one another. Istanbul architect, Burak Pekoglu, developed the plans for the construction of the work.

## BIOS:

**Alana Ruben Free**, poet/conceptual theatre artist, was born in Canada in 1969. Since 2002, she has been collaborating with other artists to create inspiring performances in a variety of venues; her process includes transforming the audience into a community of active participants in the theatrical process. “She writes a monologue, it becomes a dialogue, it’s always a poem.”—Bob Holman, Bowery Poetry Club/Publications. Her work has been produced in Europe, Australia, Canada, USA, and Israel. Her prior works have been primarily preoccupied with exploring themes of love and intimacy, as well as the mundane aspects of motherhood. “Presence=Present” is a turning point in her process and medium. Alana has lived her life between New York (1993-2013), Canada and Israel. In 2014, she moved permanently to Israel and became a citizen.

**David Gerstein**, painter and sculptor, was born in Jerusalem in 1944. From 1965-66, he studied at the Bezalel Academy, followed by Ecole Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, the Arts Students League, New York, and did post graduate studies at St. Martin's School of Art, London. From 1971-85, he was a senior lecturer at the Bezalel Academy. "Presence=Present" continues Gerstein's long-time interest in breaking down the barriers between the work of art and its audience, and making art accessible to the public at large. His art maintains a conscious dialectic between the hand-made "original, unique work of art" and the reproduced work of art, between high art and popular art. His outdoor sculpture "Momentum" is Singapore's tallest public sculpture, and he is currently represented in galleries in over 25 countries, making him one of Israel's most well-known artists.



---

**David Gerstein** | 054-440-8412 | [david@davidgerstein.com](mailto:david@davidgerstein.com)

**Alana Ruben Free** | 058-773-0170 | [alana.free@gmail.com](mailto:alana.free@gmail.com)

---