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ORWAR Hands Up To Nir Hod

Making the **Desert Bloom**

A new museum on Meyer Lansky and mob influence in Las Vegas.

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An iconic wartime photograph is reimagined



» NEWSPAPER«

Settlement Probe by U.N. Body Ignites Another Israel Rift

By Nathan Guttman Washington

A United Nations group's decision to probe settlement activity on the West Bank has raised the specter of a new feud between Israel and the world body - and created a fresh headache for the White House.

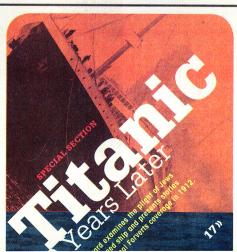
Israel quickly denounced the Human Rights Council's resolution, which calls for a fact-finding commission to investigate the "implications" of the settlements for Palestinians. The Jewish state also severed all ties with the council

Jewish groups blasted the March 19 vote - in which the United States cast the only "no" vote - as anti-Israel grandstanding. They believe it will likely lead to a seriously flawed report along the lines of the much criticized U.N. report on the Israeli offensive in Gaza. which was written by Judge Richard Goldstone.

"The report is already written," said Daniel Mariaschin, B'nai B'rith International's executive vice

The Anti-Defamation League took a tougher stance, calling on the United States to guit the Human Rights Council altogether.

Even harsh critics of Israel's settlements took a dim



The Jewish Vote 2012

Poll of Jewish **Voters Finds That** 'Social Values' Top Other Concerns

By Nathan Guttman Washington

With the battle over the Jewish vote in full swing, a new poll suggests that Democrats have little reason for concern: Jews are firmly in President Obama's corner.

And the reason, the poll suggests, has nothing to do with Obama's views on Israel or Iran. It is all about the economy and social justice.

The reason for Democrats' strong showing in the poll, which was released April 3, lies in deeply rooted views of American Jews on social issues, including traditional liberal stances on improving the economy and reducing the gap between rich and poor.

"Whoever wants to appeal to Jewish voters has to go through social values," said Robert Jones, CEO of the

Arts&Culture







art

Nir Hod Shifts Focus

A 'Mother' Revealed, 10 Times

erched above the velvet

By Lisa Amand

ropes, club kids and chain stores of Gansevoort Street, in Manhattan's meatpacking district, Nir Hod's studio, filled with books and light, feels more like a think tank than an artist's lair. Loquacious and handsome, with wavy,

40, is consumed with "Mother," his current exhibit at the Paul Kasmin Gallery in Chelsea.

In this series of 10 paintings, he amplifies literally and creatively one woman from Franz Konrad's famous 1943 photograph, "The Boy From Warsaw Ghetto," His goal, he told the Forward, was "to bring her to the front, to give her all due respect and to see her in her true colors."



KAREN LEON (MAIN IMAGE), GETTY IMAGES (ABOVE)

From Warsaw to Chelsea: Nir Hod focused on the woman in the Hod's hyper-focus on this figure began iconic photograph from the Warsaw Ghetto (above) and painted her dark hair framing chiseled features, Hod, in 2009. He was researching the iconic large, alone and repeatedly (main image).

Nazi photo online, when on CNN's homepage he saw an image from Life magazine of Hillary Rodham Clinton giving a lecture. He was struck by the photo's beautv. how Clinton's hands held up that way made her look like she was "begging for her life." That stance, of someone scared or surrounded, gripped him then, and now it grabs those viewing his work.

Each of the nine smaller canvases (59 inches by 43 inches), exhibited side by side in the gallery, uses muted shades from "a dreamy, melancholic palette" that Hod describes as colors from old magazines blended with those from the Old Masters. The differences between the paintings are definite but subtle, with the exception of featured colors that vary for each.

The singular, larger painting is twice the size of the others, and the woman's features appear elongated, more exaggerated. "You can really feel her body. There's something so strong about the hands and the expression. Here you can really feel her pain," Hod said, pointing out that her hair piled high "is almost like a skull, like a death mask It's almost like a child seeing his mother in this situation."

Hod cites Andy Warhol's Shadows paintings as a major source of inspiration. And it's clear that the subject of "Mother" is also in the shadows, having ceded the stage, in Konrad's photograph, to the child.

Hod's work has been displayed worldwide since his first solo show, at age 23, at Jerusalem's Israel Museum. But the 2011 "Genius" exhibition, at the other Paul Kasmin Gallery (half a block away), "was the big break in my career." The sold-out exhibit included controversial paintings of pouty children - some smoldering with cigarettes - and three bronze sculptures. selling for as much as \$45,000. After that success, the nine "Mother" paintings were priced at \$75,000; according to the gallery, they have already sold.

While the identity of the boy in the photograph remains a subject of speculation, little is debated and even less is known about the woman who is the focus of "Mother." That's fine with Hod: "Most of the time. the facts are not important for me. Facts destroy the experience."

Words enhance it. "Titles are really, really important for me," he said. "Once you call it 'Mother,' I think it takes it to a different level." He speaks lovingly of his own mother, who came from Israel for the show's

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