

## Mayslits Kassif

# Waterfront Regeneration

### Tel Aviv (Israel)



#### Client

Marine Trust; Eliakim Architects (port architect)

#### Architects

Mayslits Kassif Architects / Ganit  
Mayslits Kassif & Udi Kassif

#### Collaborators

A. Horowitz (project management);  
O. Ben Avraham, G. Yavin, M. Ilan, M.  
Roytman (team); H. Ben Navat (graphic  
design)

#### Contractor

Green Sky

#### Photos

Daniela Orvin, Iwan Baan (p. 272  
bottom) Albi Serfaty (p. 274 top),  
Galia Kronfeld (p. 274 bottom), Itamar  
Grinberg (p. 275 bottom)

An old dock of the port of Tel Aviv, abandoned since 1965, has been refurbished by means of an urban planning strategy that is founded upon social interaction and aimed at connecting the city to its seafloor.

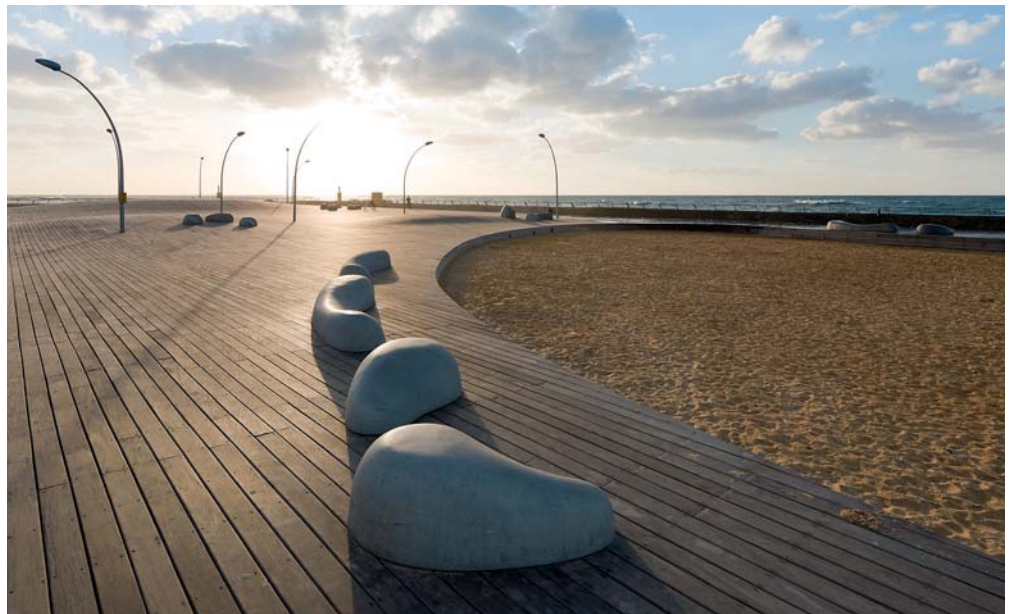
SITUATED ON what is one of Israel's most beautiful waterfronts, the Tel Aviv port was until recently an abandoned concrete pile, plagued with neglect since 1965, when it ceased to be operational as a docking harbor. The large-scale urban planning and landscaping program that was undertaken to recover this area of the seaside city and regenerate it as a functioning, alluring, frequented public recreational space was seen as an opportunity to challenge the habitual contrast made between public and private development, suggesting an altogether new agenda of hospitality for collective open spaces.

Despite city planning being dominated by market forces, and because of its immediate and immense popularity, with locals and tourists alike flocking to the revamped port even before completion, the project was able to circumvent other major schemes intended for the port's five hectares. The suspension of all re-zoning plans for the place set a precedent for urban transformation of the kind that is not propelled by building rights, but rather by unique design strategy.

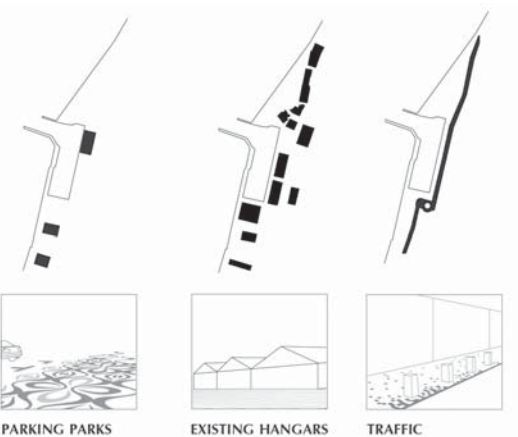
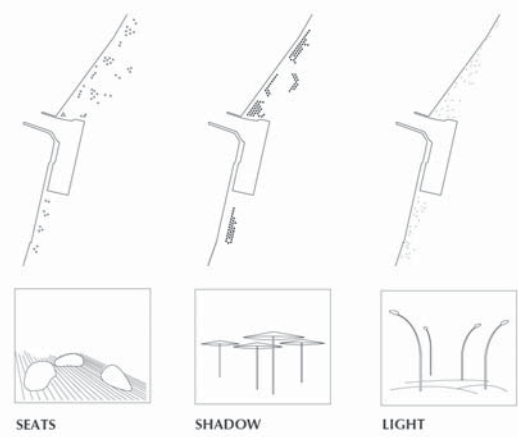
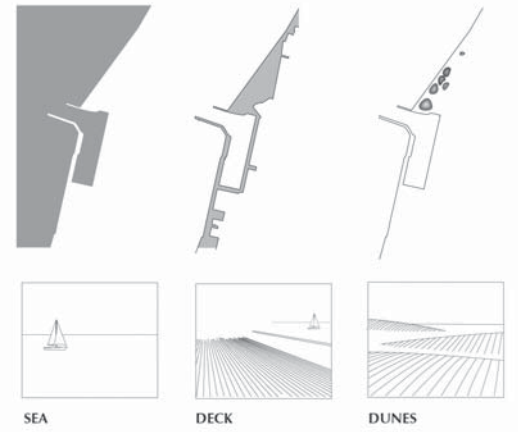
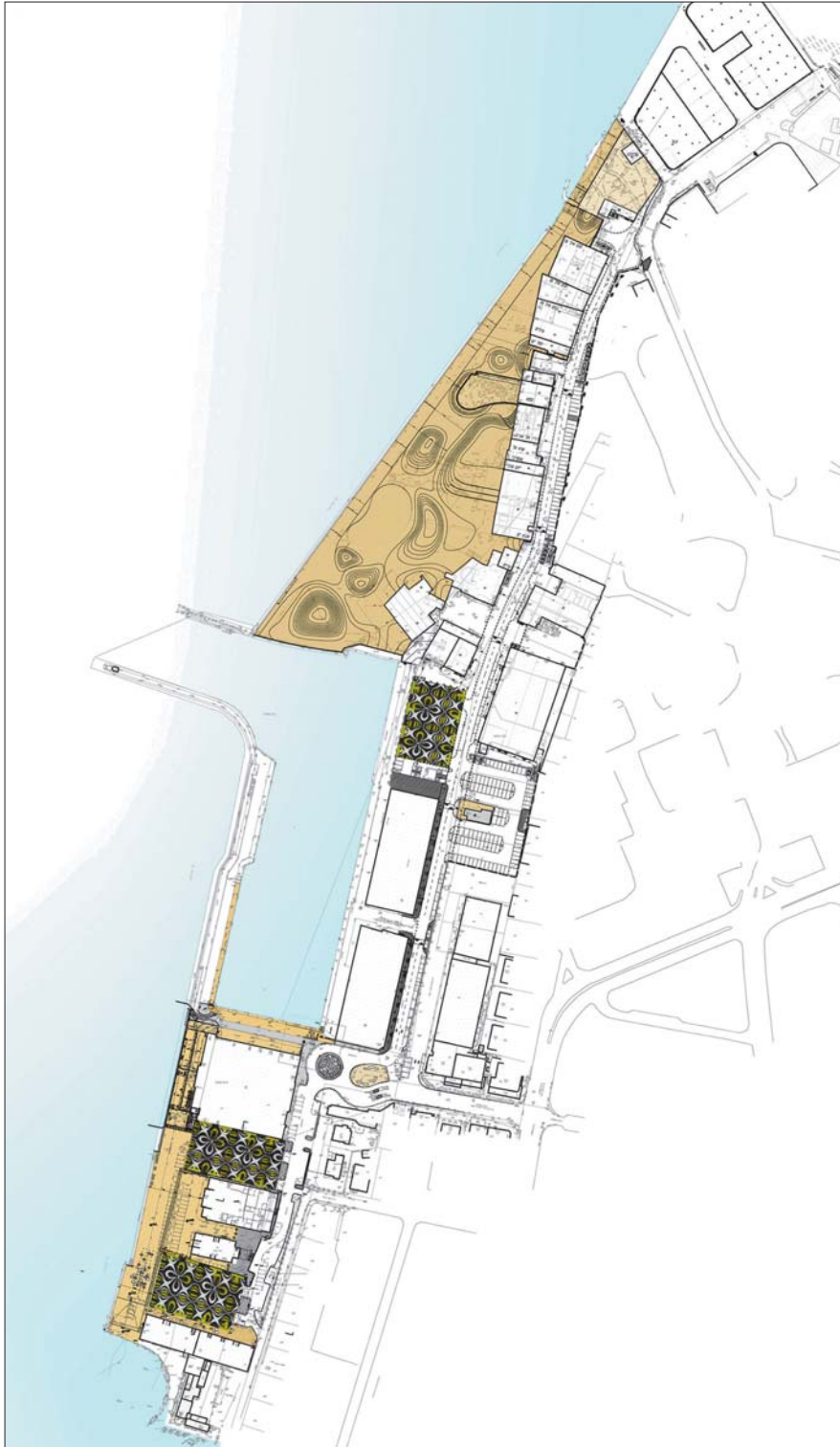
The design introduces an extensive,

non-hierarchical, undulating wood decking that is supposed to be a reflection of the mythological dunes on which the port was built. This gently rolling wooden flooring is dotted here and there with slender curving lamps and white boulder-like objects that can serve as benches, and interspersed with sand areas and concrete surfaces decorated with floral geometric patterns, all this together constituting an open invitation to free interpretations and a wide range of unstructured activities for all ages, from cycling or rollerblading to sunbathing, music bands or farmers' markets. Income is generated through shops and outdoor cafés and restaurants. A variety of public and social initiatives – from artistic statements to spontaneous rallies and mass acts of solidarity – are now drawn to this unique urban platform, indicating the project's success in reinventing the port as a vibrant sphere of civic leisure.

As a new landmark on the Mediterranean coast, the project has triggered a whole series of public space operations along Tel Aviv's shoreline, altogether revolutionizing the city's connection to its seafloor.



The project comprises two distinct parts: a zone to the south with a parking area that is also used to hold open-air markets, and one to the north, more extensive than the first, that is inspired by the mythical dunes on which the harbor was originally constructed. The northern zone is formed by a huge tapestry of wood that evokes the roofs of ships and gives the intervention a sense of unity. Different urban furniture pieces have been placed on it.

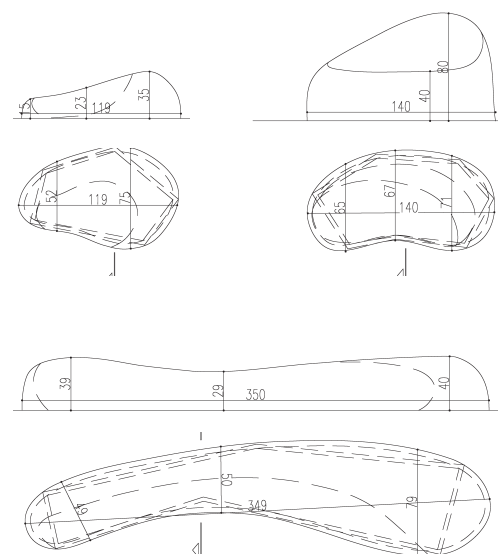






Defined by an expanse of wooden flooring whose topography recalls preexisting sand dunes, the northern part of the intervention is conceived as a space that is fluid and open to the sea, colonized only by a

reduced and selective catalog of urban furniture elements. These include slender and slightly curving lamp posts, as well as concrete benches with organic forms that rise from the ground like boulders.







The southern zone of the project, surrounded by a perimeter that is rectangular in geometry, is reserved for parking. It is characterized by a continuous dark gray pavement that is decorated with a mesh of

florally inspired patterns. This is superposed on the rigorous geometry of a parking lot and helps in the organization of the stalls and stands that are set up on days when the place is used for an outdoor market.

