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The lack of connection between the works in the exhibition “Backgammon” in the Petach Tikva Museum weakens its’ power.

The proximity of times between the opening of the “Backgammon” exhibition in the Petach Tikva Museum, to the “Fresh Paint” Art fair, taking place last week in Tel-Aviv, is incidental even though the connection is the artists (“contemporary artists” in both cases). This similar point emphasizes the justification of a museum show. The difference in both artistic frames is clear: the artist hothouse in “Fresh Paint” (the section dedicated to individual artists under the “contemporary artists” definition) is not an exhibition and lacks the pretensions to be one. The artworks are hung in a way that supposed to point out their advantage to the wide audience that may buy them.

“Backgammon” on the other end is a museum show in one of the leading spaces for contemporary art. Its’ intention is different and far more ambitious. 15 artists exhibit works in various mediums in its’ goal, so it’s written, “is to investigate the leading characteristics of the contemporary artistic making, especially its’ challenging use of materials, fields of actions and common ideas, and the diversion of their meanings.”

One of the most beautiful and intelligent works in the exhibition is “Star Demo 2010”, a 3:11 minutes long video loop projected in the lobby of the museum.

The creator is Tom Pnini, a prominent artist for a couple of years. The work deals with the possibility of redemption as it is reflected in models of popular culture.

Pnini filmed the skyline of Manhattan from Brooklyn. In the skyline twinkles from time to time a giant star. The star is actually a helium balloon sawed by the artist, and held by a 700 Yard string by a friend. From Brooklyn Pnini directed a giant follow spot to the star. Touched by the follow spot makes the star twinkle.

The star covers a range of association from the twinkled stars of the Disney castles in amusement parks to the star of Beit Lehem, the star that led the three kings to show their respect to baby Jesus after he was born. The star in the Christmas story symbolizes the cosmological weight of the birth of Jesus and the kings symbolize the recognition of all mankind. The star acts as a sweet promise in the open wound left by the lack of the world trade center buildings in the skyline of Manhattan. Between myth and legend, with a hint to a close historical memory, Pnini creates an art piece that is left with the audience.

