

Belu-Simion Fainaru- Bio

An artist, curator, and cultural entrepreneur born in Romania, Belu-Simion Făinaru established his artistic practice within the contemporary art landscape before settling in Haifa, Israel. His career includes participation in major international platforms, including Documenta IX, and representing Romania at the Venice Biennale in 2019—an important milestone that strengthened his reputation as a conceptually driven artist.

Făinaru's work has been shown in museums and leading international exhibitions worldwide. His artistic practice consistently explores complex ideas drawn from philosophical and mystical traditions, translating abstract concepts into immersive sculptural and installation-based experiences.

A key highlight in his career is the receipt of the state-issued Israel Prize, a testament to his substantial contributions to the arts. This prestigious national honor underscores his standing as a prominent figure in Israeli contemporary art, further cementing his influence and recognition within the international art world.

Făinaru works at the intersection of art, philosophy, and social engagement. His practice addresses themes of identity, memory, history, and territory, fostering dialogue between the private and collective, and the local and global. Drawing on Kabbalistic thought, he examines questions of existence, belonging, alienation, and the boundaries shaping contemporary life.

Făinaru is the founder of the Mediterranean Biennale, a platform that promotes dialogue between communities in conflict, alongside educational initiatives that bring together young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Since 2008, he has served as the founder, director, and chief curator of the Mediterranean Biennale of Contemporary Art in Israel. **Within the framework of the Mediterranean Biennale, he leads together with Avital Bar-Shay the “Encounters” program, an educational initiative that uses art as a tool for fostering dialogue between communities. The program is based on meetings between Jewish and Arab (Muslim, Christian, Druze, and Bedouin) youth, teachers, and educators, held in communities representing a wide range of religions and cultures.**

In 2015, he founded AMOCA – the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sakhnin, an institution dedicated to fostering coexistence between Arab and Jewish communities through inclusive, collaborative, and socially engaged artistic practices.

His work introduces a new approach, using artistic activity as a means to create a foundation for human dialogue and coexistence among communities living in conflict. It promotes peace education, tolerance, and non-violence. Through art education, these initiatives aim to transcend regional politics and disputes by emphasizing artistic creation and universal human values, grounded in vision and mutual respect, with the hope of achieving peaceful coexistence and a better future for all.

Academic Activity

Belu-Simion Fainaru is a professor at the University of Haifa, where half of the students are Arab and half are Jewish, he actively implements and teaches the SPACE FOR CHANGE program within an academic setting. In collaboration with the Rector of the university Prof. Mouna Maroun, he also extends the program beyond campus to engage Jewish and Arab youth, creating shared spaces for dialogue, creativity, and meaningful intercultural exchange.

SPACE FOR CHANGE is a unique intercultural educational art initiative that brings together Jewish and Arab students through art as a shared language of communication. The program provides a safe and open environment free from prejudice and fear, fostering mutual understanding, cooperation, and respect. Through art workshops, learning sessions, and collaborative activities, students deepen their awareness of cultural diversity and heritage within a multicultural society. The program emphasizes the role of art as a powerful means of expressing identity, promoting human rights, combating racism, and strengthening democratic values, ultimately contributing to a sustainable foundation for coexistence based on equality, tolerance, and shared humanity.