

MAMAD



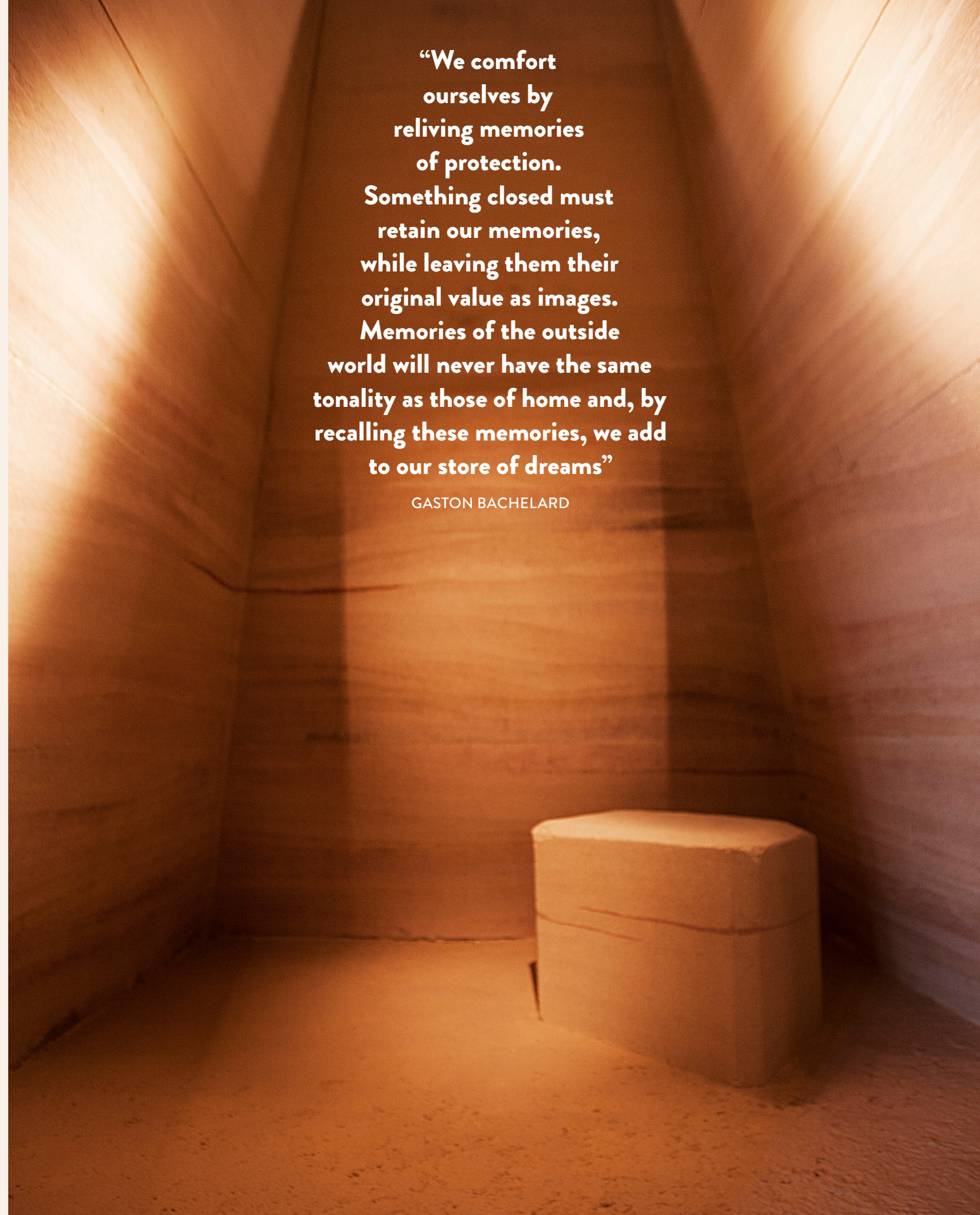
BEN GITAI

The primary subject presented in MAMAD is the metaphor of the cave as a protective space. This notion is embedded within the layout of today's Israeli housing units. The mamad is a reinforced security room meant to offer protection against high impact projectiles and chemical weapons. According to law, each apartment built in Israel after the Gulf War must have one. The idea is that the mamad is conveniently located inside your home for quick access in the event of an attack, and that simultaneously it fits into a normal domestic vocabulary. Its walls are built out of reinforced concrete. The room has two openings, usually one window and one door, though never on the same wall. The minimum net area of the room is nine cubic meters.

MAMAD exhibited at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

“We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams”

GASTON BACHELARD





The intention of the MAMAD project is to create a landscape room that translates the geopolitical changes in the region into the spatial and legal framework of the home. Landscape is always the scope with which to measure geopolitical activities. Therefore, the landscape room formalizes these changes into a new model of protected space.

The creation process of the MAMAD begins by rearticulating the conflict area: the standard prefabricated configuration of the mamad and Israeli secure room-specific regulations. Thus, the rather negative experiences associated with the room—those of oppression and confinement—are transformed in a new spatial configuration that uses the materiality of earth as a layered, protective envelope. The MAMAD (proportion 3m x 3m x 3m) allows the visitor to see a new interpretation of a mamad through a spatial contradiction—a revelation of the outdoor landscape situated indoors.

MAMAD embodies layers of a place, memories, and culture. It resides among past, present, and future, and occupies the space between the private and public state of mind. In order to create a physical experience and embody memory, the piece transforms the physical property of this specific territory into a metaphysical experience through natural materials—specifically wood and soil sourced from land near former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's cabin in the Negev. Using the rammed earth construction technique, the excavated earth (in Hebrew adama, meaning man and land) forms the walls and

roof. When entering the space, the individual connects to the clay body, awakening senses associated with interiority and security, while simultaneously having the sense of dislocation through a new atmosphere. The architectural experience is reliant on the object, and our reaction depends on the physical experience the building imposes on us. We feel safe when a building is stable and warm, when it is properly sealed, and keeps out the winter draft. The sensuality of light, sound, orientation, and stability create the embodied architectural event of space.

In today's accelerating world, architecture is an ongoing interplay between the sensual experience and its emotional, cultural, and symbolic counterpart. It is an actual space that evokes our imagination. MAMAD, as a landscape room, encapsulates a constant exchange and dialogue between inside and outside, as the interior use of earthen material creates an utterly different experience and contrasts with the collapsing territory outside. The precise distinction of inside and outside forms ignites the imagination, and provides the visitor a space to contemplate freedom and the limits of personal—and political—landscapes.

A second MAMAD, situated on the border of Israel and Jordan. Image courtesy of Nirit Bagron.

RIGHT MAMAD exhibited in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Image courtesy of Abir Sultan.

