

# Step 1: Factual Information

The conflict between the Israeli and Arab people is the longest ongoing religious/cultural conflict in the world. Basically, both sides have historical rights to the area now referred to as Israel and the Palestinian territories. The Jews were in the area first but displaced by the Roman Empire diaspora. Then the area became Christian until about 600AD when Christians moved to Europe and the area was occupied by the Muslim people. The Arabs lived in this area until England colonized it in the late 1800s and gave the area the name Palestine (although nobody who lived there recognized it as such). After WWII, the United Nations decided to give the Jewish people a homeland because of the atrocities they suffered during the Holocaust. Surrounding Arab nations such as Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia absolutely did not want the Jewish people to take this land and warned the UN not to create this new country of Israel. The UN voted to do just that and on the first day official day of Israel's existence in 1948, the Arabs attacked. Since then, there has never been peace between the two cultures. Arabs continually attack Israel and Israeli forces continue to monitor the borders of the Arab areas of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Not only are the people living in the area affected DAILY by this conflict, their lives constantly in peril, but people who are of the same religions, Jewish and Muslim, in ANY country are affected by watching their brothers and sisters fight and die. Speaking broadly, the allies of these countries are also affected by the actions that are taken each day.

The turbulent history of the state of Israel has always interested me, especially when viewed as a battle of faiths. Both faiths preach peace yet can't seem to recognize common ground. I feel it is our duty as American citizens, as human beings, to stop the untruths told by the media, learn the real truth and offer support to people who are suffering.

## Step 2: Existing Artwork Analysis

Read off of paper.

### Step 3: Conceptual Artwork

I would like to create a fake cemetery that has rows of unnamed graves, much like the National Cemetery in Washington DC. The cemetery would be enclosed with a walkway going around the edges of the graves, much like the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial. The gravestones themselves would be topped with a sculpture that depicts an Islamic Star on one side and a Jewish Star on the other. The exhibit would be arranged so that people have to enter from one side or the other and be guided around by arrows until they made a full circle around the cemetery. When people walk in the initial direction, they would see one star and as they circled around, they would see the other star. For example, if someone entered the exhibit from the east, they would see rows of Islamic Stars topping rows of gravestones. As they walked around the exhibit, they would see the Islamic Stars morph, or change, into rows of Jewish Stars atop rows of gravestones. The message of my artwork is that both sides have suffered enough loss and both sides have sacrificed. The idea that both stars fit inside the same basic shape shows that the two religions share the same basic beliefs and hopefully both sides can find a peaceful resolution.

My artwork was inspired by Nandor Glid's International Monument at Dachau through the movement of the piece. Glid's viewer is guided down a slope and towards the sculpture until the mangled bodies of the victims at Dachau take shape from the image of a barbed wire fence. Similarly, people will witness a transformation of the stars in my artwork. Both stars emerging from the same basic shape is also inspired by the double duty of the images on Glid's sculpture.

Additionally my artwork was inspired by the traditional ceremonial stars from both faiths. The 8 pointed Islamic star is a common motif in Islamic art often seen in ancient artworks, flags and depicted on the sides of (as well as in the architectural design of) many mosques. The Star of David was adopted by the Zionists in the 1800s and has since come to be central symbol for Judaism. Both stars are instantly recognizable and are clearly similar yet uniquely different much like the two faiths; Islam and Judaism. This underscores the message that the two factions share beliefs, history, pain and loss and that is it time to stop the fighting.