

Community Resources and Cultural Events

The OUI holds dozens of events every year through the Department of the Spokesperson and Public Relations. These include symposia, conferences, cultural evening programs, and lectures in science, art, and music. All are open to the public, and participants enjoy talks by scholars in a range of disciplines. The OUI also offers entertainment, including lectures combined with film screenings, exhibition openings, and concert series. It also hosts the annual Scientists Night in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space (co-sponsored by the European Union) – an evening of science and research combined with lectures, artistic performances, and interactive programs for the entire family.

All OUI events, both academic and non-academic, now take place online, either aired live from the studios, prerecorded, and sometimes a combination of the two. During the second half of the year, approximately thirty online events were produced. These included introductory conferences for various populations, such as potential academia in high school students; orientation for potential undergraduate students; conferences for Arabic-speaking students; publicity events for programs such as the master's program in public policy; online conferences of academic departments; events organized for employees; and graduation ceremonies.

Selected Conferences and Symposia

- From China to Sweden: Does a democratic country have an advantage in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic?
- From the personal to the collective: Reminiscences of the 1967 war among Palestinian women of the West Bank
- Centennial of the Einstein and Eddington eclipse
- Chernobyl as an example: Inflicting a nuclear disaster in a post-truth era
- Correct Hebrew – does it exist? Differing approaches to determining language standards
- Old, new, and renovated in Middle Eastern musical traditions
- "Open to innovation" – Innovation in the cannabis sector
- Theoretical linguistics conference
- Who is afraid of the Middle Ages? – Art in an era of faith

Lamda – The OUI Bookstore

The Open University has two publishing houses: Lamda Scholarship (see page 29), the OUI scholarly press, and Lamda Books which publishes OUI textbooks and is managed by the Academic Development and Publishing Department. The books are sold to the general public via the Lamda website, at the Ra'anana campus bookstore, in commercial bookstores countrywide, and online.

In the past year, 15,857 OUI books were sold, of which 10,153 were sold to individual customers, 2,677 to bookstores and distributors, and 3,027 to institutions and universities.

Online Academe

Online Academe, Ltd., a subsidiary of the OUI, was established in 2015 to provide production services for Israeli higher education and for online learning resources that support and enhance learning by leveraging the knowledge, experience and infrastructure of the OUI.

The growing interest in learning technologies in Israeli academia, and global interest in the capabilities of digital technologies with respect to improving teaching in institutions for higher education, set the stage for establishing Online Academe. Growing recognition for the complexity of innovation in learning technologies continues, and the company, together with Shoham, analyzes the challenges of developing academic courses and characterizes the learning technologies needed.

This year, Online Academe produced courses for various organizations, including the Israeli Identity course, which was financed by the Yad Hanadiv Foundation, and courses and other online learning resources for other institutions of higher education. Online Academe is currently producing the Algorithms course, after winning production rights together with the consortium

of universities for the development of hi-tech and data science courses via the national program of the CHE and the Digital Israel national initiative.

The extensive experience Online Academe has accumulated in developing online academic courses, as well as its active engagement with the national digital initiative, place the OUI at the forefront of online teaching in Israel.

Selected Cultural Events

- The exhibition *Place/Non-place* exhibited the works on paper of Micha Ullman, along with digital works, video-art, and virtual reality installations on sand by Ronen Sharabani. Also displayed was the site-specific installation *Plummets*, which Sharabani created for the OUI gallery space. *Plummets* is a "smart installation"

based on artificial intelligence devised specifically for this purpose. It is made of ten construction plummets, ten computerized mini-motors that communicate with each other, and twenty sound bands playing a single phrase voiced by Micha Ullman: "Let sensations speak." The exhibition garnered much attention in the Israeli art sphere. It was the focus of numerous curators, collectors, and art lovers.

- Afternoon concert series
- Jazz concert series
- Tzlimim: a concert series with commentary by Anat Sharon
- Cultural events, performances, and tours for alumni and the general public offered by the OUI Alumni Association, including the series "Cinema Academia" – films with lectures by OUI faculty members.



Photo: Ronen Sharabani



Installations from the exhibition *Place/Non-place*, January-March 2020