

Journey: From the Land of Milk and Honey

Michal Nachmany Inaugural Art Exhibit

(Adapted from the Hebrew version of [Interview](#) by Carrie Rubenstein, published by Yediot America)

Herzl with Ice Cream

It took Michal Nachmany many years to find the artist within her. When she finally did, a very original New York art exhibit – but with Israeli roots – was born

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Michal Nachmany inaugural exhibit

September 3-18

La Boite, 724 11 Ave. in Manhattan (52 St.)

Monday – Friday, 10 am – 6 pm

Press / VIP Preview: Sep. 3, 12-2 pm

Opening Reception: Sep. 10, 6-9 pm

Connect with or set a time to meet Michal:

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When we meet before the interview, Michal Nachmany opens the door to her apartment, and opens a door for me into her world. My own worries are forgotten when I am exposed to the colorful art in every corner of the house. Michal is colorful too - her eyes sparkle, and her excitement from her new profession as a creative artist is evident and contagious.

“Just a year ago I started to focus on creating art,” she says. But as we trace back her life, just before her inaugural exhibit opens in Manhattan, I find that art has been embedded in Michal’s life since her early days.



“I was born in Jerusalem’s Arnona, in the Jerusalem of yesteryear. My father arrived from Poland in the 1930s with his parents, orthodox Jews who settled in Mea She'arim. Finding great difficulties adjusting to Palestine, his mother chose to go back to Poland together with his older brother and both perished in the Holocaust. My father grew up with only a father, and I believe that lacking a mother, toys, or possessions,

he developed a special love, almost an obsession, with finding special objects and creating collections.”

Every Saturday, Michal and her family would visit the markets of Jerusalem, searching for objects to collect. “We created many collections: fabrics, beads, ceramic, jewels.” As Michal describes her collections, I look left and right. It is clear that she continues her father’s legacy in her Upper West Side apartment, as if she extended her explorations of the markets of Jerusalem to life in Manhattan.

“My father studied economics, and in time was appointed to deputy secretary of the Israeli Government. My mother was a kindergarten teacher. My two sisters and I were very independent. From an early age, I walked all over, exploring Jerusalem by myself. My parents always loved art. We did not study to play the piano or ballet, but we did study art. I took a class in the Youth Wing of the Israel Museum when it was just being built. I remember riding two buses to get there. When I was ten years old one of my drawings was chosen to be an Israeli postage stamp.”

Despite her early love of art, Michal did not consider art as a profession she could explore. “At home, the expectation was to study a profession. I studied Education, Geography, and Urban Planning.” Following her Israeli army service, she worked for the Foreign Affairs Office.

For years Michal continued her weekly pilgrimage to the markets of Jerusalem. Seeking a change, she decided to try New York where she got a job working at the Israeli Mission to the U.N. “I arrived when Netanyahu was the head of the mission. I remember him stating that one day he would become Israel’s Prime Minister. We admired him.” From working with Bibi to figuring out daily living in the Big Apple,

Michal did not focus on her art. She started working as a Hebrew teacher and discovered that she loved teaching. A blind date, and shortly afterwards she got married. “My mother was sick and I hoped that she would be able to attend my wedding, but she died a few months before.” Marriage followed with children, earning a living, and raising a family. “My children grew up. When my youngest son left for college a year ago, my children were concerned about what would happen to me once the house is empty. ‘Do not worry,’ I answered. ‘I will reinvent myself.’”

And so she did. Surprisingly, despite living for many years in New York, with its colors and inspiration, Michal never focused on creating her own art, but now the timing was right.

“One day while touring galleries in Harlem I saw the work of two talented artists. One was born in Baku, the other on a farm in Japan. Each showed a distinct style and technique. I asked if they were willing to teach me.”

Michal started to visit the artists’ studios, to learn from them and apply what she experienced to her new creations. “With both of them, I loved the feeling of nostalgia, the colors, the openness. I learned their techniques balancing different mediums. I also started to incorporate hand-made paper-making techniques, which I am learning from the artistic director at Dieu Donne. In my next exhibit I hope to focus even more on that technique.”

Unsurprisingly, Michal found inspiration in different collections. “A friend gave me matchbooks from the 1950s and 1960s. They were collected by his parents, a Jewish couple who kept matchbooks from each place they traveled to, like an early ‘Instagram...’ I also explored using my

husband's collections of historical Israeli documents and memorabilia as materials for my art."

A few months ago Michal's father died. Her desire to exhibit art about collections and collecting – her father's legacy - intensified.

"The idea for an exhibition came about when I met an Israeli Chef and author ([Lior Lev Sercarz](#)), who has a beautiful shop on 11th Avenue and midtown which he also uses as a gallery space. He bakes cookies that are sold in tin-cans decorated by artists. Lior also specializes in spice mixes (some of which are named after streets in Tel Aviv), and among his cookbooks is one called [The Art of Blending](#). When I discussed my interest in a show, he invited me to exhibit, and I decided to take advantage of the opportunity..."

For her inaugural exhibit, Michal chose to integrate her collages and mixed-media art. "In the exhibit I can go deeper, both in interpretation and in style," she added.

Michal is excited not only about putting on her first solo show, but about the entire process, from the beginning of a piece to hanging it on the wall. "I ask myself, why have I not done it before? But now I feel I am reborn."

Michal's exhibit captures how the state of Israel has transitioned. For example, her pieces linking Theodor Herzl historical images to ice cream depicts the process 'from the Land of milk and honey to a land of ice cream and money.'

If you visit the exhibit (Sep. 3-18, opening reception Sep. 10th 6-9 pm), you will find images of pioneers with pop art designs; golden oranges with Yiddish expressions; and a door that shows enlarged images of colorful old matchbooks. Each piece of art shows an interesting story.

To an Israeli, this exhibit offers not just an artistic, but also a nostalgic and emotional experience.

Michal's art combines a nostalgia that touches the hearts of many. The many small details of Michal's collages show clippings of pre-state letters from labor unions, or financial history documents of a pioneering Israel. A sparkling orange. The state of Israel Emblem whose seven flames are images of Herzl. The exhibit gets new dimensions of depth with authentic historical references and memories.

Michal summarizes: "My message is: an artist is made of the mold of his or her upbringing, the landscape and images of formative years. At some point these early life images can re-emerge. Some people hide their past experiences. I, instead, celebrate my past."

Michal invites all to celebrate with her.

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