

Matanel- Photography @ A Golden Light- Participants Testimonies

Ayelet Hashahar Cohen

"Since the older women in my life—my mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law—were never really present in my life, my relationship with Hagit fills that absence. And for her, I am a whole new world.

She doesn't know women like me, as she says. I bring into her life a different perspective, art, stories.

Hagit is losing her eyesight and hearing. That's how the idea for a visual diary was born—one that testifies to the passage of time and allows me to tell, in words, more than what photographic documentation alone can convey.

My relationship with Hagit is very open, a special bond was created, she is a good listener and likes to share. We do things together (digital, vegetation, cooking, poetry reading, interior design... and especially storytelling.

...The work process is fairly structured: after each meeting, I look over the photographs and write a dated journal entry, and then I transfer the images to a numbered folder. I've begun recording myself transcribing/narrating what I wrote, and considering the diary as part of an installation that includes both photography and sound.

The camera is a key tool in our relationship. At the moment, it is mostly a bystander, documenting in a very limited way.

Hagit isn't very interested in being photographed, which is why an additional medium—writing—has entered the process, as well as the option of photographing objects and the environment...

I hope that, as we continue, the camera will become both a healing tool and a creative tool for the two of us."

Shay Knaani

"My work is with Uri Bernir.. Uri, his wife Rachel, my partner, and I have been friends for 20 years...

When I suggested to Uri to be the subject of the project, he gladly agreed.

Uri exposed me to different elements of his personality that I had not been aware of, and on the other hand, I highlighted for him some aspects of his personality which he had been blind to...

I recorded several hours of conversation with Uri, photographed him in his current living environment and in the place where we first met.

From various sources I gathered materials about Uri and his activities during different periods of his life.

We decided that the main subject to address would be his military service, both as a soldier and in the reserves, as well as a focus on his life in the present.

I gain from working with Uri in several dimensions, including the photographic one — in the ability to construct a visual story by connecting elements drawn from different worlds.”

Yudit Liberman

“I am researching my parents and Batya in parallel, collecting short video clips and staged or natural portrait photographs, gathering a story of body and soul in an attempt to re-see my connection with my parents, my relationship with my father.

And at the same time, I’m trying to find in Batya a different perspective on old age — beyond what we already know.”

Batya lives in the Golan Heights, and we share a close and different kind of relationship. She owns a sheep farm and lives a life of inquiry and exploration.

My parents live in Beit El and lead a religious lifestyle.

I am interested in photographing everyday old age — the ripples of aging as they are expressed through the way the body is held, through habits, and through daily routines.”

“Batya lives in the Golan, and we share a close and different kind of relationship. She owns a sheep farm and lives a life of inquiry and exploration.”

Rama Shefi

“After years of working as a phototherapist with elderly people who were strangers to me. The current project opened up a different opportunity — to photograph my mother, who truly is a special woman.

To show the joy that radiates from her despite her aging body.”

From one meeting to the next, I discover that my mother is no less eager than I am to learn the world of photography and to make use of the camera she owns, as a way to come closer — to me and to my life.

Together we discover a shared space in which to create, to talk, and to meet one another anew.

Dafna’s guidance (Dafna is heading the program) in the project also reminded me that I am not only a facilitator or a phototherapist — but that there is also an opportunity here to reawaken the photographer within me.”

Noga Glick Shalit

"I am working on creating video art centered on my relationship with my father, David, 77, a former actor, writer, and film scholar.

My father is a partner in this work, and not just its subject. His age, voice, and awareness of the camera are very present in the work. He moves between aversion and attraction. Between play and authenticity. Our encounters move between intimate documentation and creative action, accompanied by humor and questions about time, memory, parenting, and separation."

"The work is built from conversations, reading texts, walks, poetry. From these, a movement between past and present is created. It is a process of mutual discovery, in which I explore my place as an artist and as a daughter, and our possibility of creating something together that transcends the biographical."

Rebecca Kowalsky

"I'm photographing a woman I've known for many years. This brings with it challenges- The beginning went very smoothly, and, as it turned out, my friend Janie cooperated in good spirit. But when I try to go deeper and perhaps reach more sensitive issues in dialogue with her, it becomes more challenging for the both of us. But that's the essence of the project, isn't it?"