

Beauty and suffering inspire artist Dalia

By Elizabeth Levi-Senigaglia

LIVING IN Tiberias for seven years I have learned that the city is greater than the sum of its parts. Tiberias is more than water and stones; the shimmering Kinneret and the sunrise of gold over the Golan.

It is more than basalt buildings still standing after the great flood of 1934 that nearly destroyed the city; more than the 45° Celsius days from July through September. It is even more than one of the four holy cities of Israel where many of our greatest sages are buried. Tiberias is a town of hidden treasures which reveal themselves when you meet the people; some say the warmest and kindest in all of Israel.

One of our treasures is Israeli artist, Dalia Rosenfeld. Dalia has been an artist for many years. Born in Tiberias to parents who had emigrated from Poland in 1927, Dalia grew up in nearby Yavniel, then a village of three streets, during the difficult years of Mandate Palestine and the birth of Israel. Her life cycle has brought her home to Tiberias, the place of her birth.

As a young girl Dalia shared in the hardships and struggles of the Yishuv, but was compensated by the love and protection of her parents whose own immediate families had perished in the Holocaust.

While Dalia remembers the hardships, she also recalls the beauty of Yavniel; sitting in the evenings' cool breezes while watching farmers drive home in their wagons, filled with clover, food for the cows.

The juxtaposition of beauty in nature and suffering of human beings impacted Dalia strongly. These emotions and feelings would contribute significantly to her later creative expression.



Choose Life Blue
by Dalia Rosenfeld



Artist Dalia Rosenfeld working at home

Dalia attended high school on Kibbutz Beit Hashita, fell in love, married, and by age 24 was a widow with three children; her husband was killed in a motorcycle accident. Despite her grief, Dalia was filled with love of life. She remarried and moved with her family and new American husband to the United States in 1965.

The cultural shock Dalia experienced on arrival in the United States, a place that seemed dismal, noisy and materialistic, where few appeared happy, deepened Dalia's search for an understanding of the significance of life. She was homesick; she missed the vivid colors and physical and spiritual warmth of Israel where all shared in a common goal.

Dalia was determined to make a success of her



Flower Tree

choice to move to the United States. As she raised her family, which had grown to five children, she worked as a kindergarten teacher.

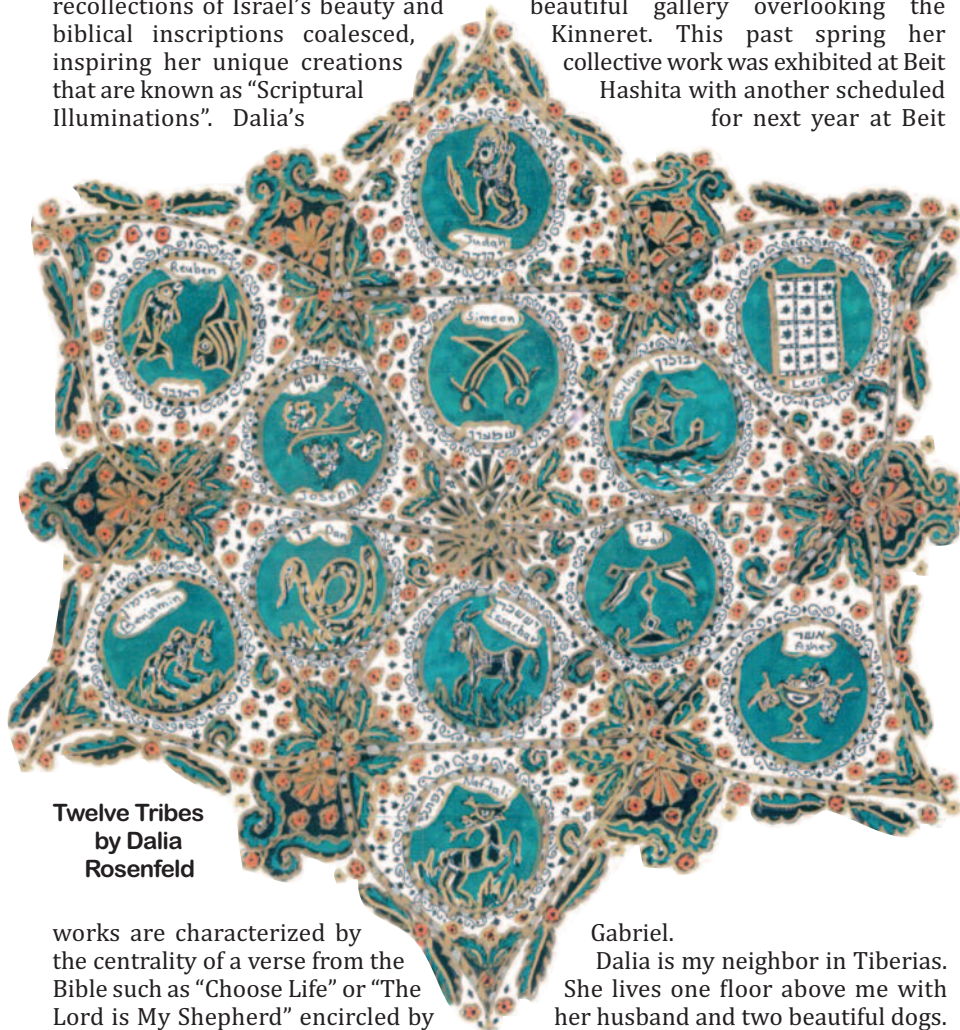
Spontaneously she decorated her classroom walls with doodles, drawings of storybook characters, sketches and fanciful scribbles, using whatever materials were available- children's crayons, magic markers, pens and pencils. These, along with the much more recent addition of nail polish as a medium, are the signature tools of

her work.

1983 was a watershed year in Dalia's development as an artist. She has a natural talent and never studied formally. After 20 years in the United States her nostalgia was intense. Her recollections of Israel's beauty and biblical inscriptions coalesced, inspiring her unique creations that are known as "Scriptural Illuminations". Dalia's

lines, frequently in black and white, sometimes color, reminding us that where there are trees there is life.

Oren was the inspiration for "The Tree Cycle", which has been exhibited in Israel at Beit Gabriel in Tzemach, a beautiful gallery overlooking the Kinneret. This past spring her collective work was exhibited at Beit Hashita with another scheduled for next year at Beit



**Twelve Tribes
by Dalia
Rosenfeld**

works are characterized by the centrality of a verse from the Bible such as "Choose Life" or "The Lord is My Shepherd" encircled by figures, people and symbols illustrating the verse and giving it life.

Always evident is her unique use of vivid colors and forms. Dalia's prolific output stemmed from this period which resulted in hundreds of works that have been exhibited in the United States and later in Israel when she returned in 1991.

When Dalia's oldest child, Oren, became a victim of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) – a deadly illness – she visited him often in Brooklyn, New York, sitting by his side and drawing pictures of trees.

Oren, who died in August 2008, was himself a photographer and talented artist. After his death, to help overcome her grief, Dalia continued with her drawings of beautiful trees, in what has evolved as her original style of dots and

Gabriel.

Dalia is my neighbor in Tiberias. She lives one floor above me with her husband and two beautiful dogs.

I first met Dalia when I glanced up and saw a garden balcony of pomegranate and olive trees, cypress bushes and birds of paradise surrounded by vines. Dalia's love of nature and beauty are reflected in her art; it is a quality that has sustained her through periods of sorrow and loss. Her wish is to bring happiness to others through her art – most importantly to "choose life", as she has done.

If you are passing through Tiberias, you will find in Dalia a warm and welcoming person. If you ask to see her work, as I timidly did, she will probably invite you to visit her home which doubles as her studio/gallery. You will have entered a world of radiance.

Dalia is truly a "Treasure of Tiberias".
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