

Beth Miriam's first art show part of 'Hineynu' outreach program



by [Alan Richman](#)
NJJN Contributing Writer

Sidebar

September 20, 2017

- [Israeli art sale](#)

For Temple Beth Miriam — the venerable Reform congregation that traces its history to the mid-19th century — it's a first.

The Elberon synagogue has put on display the creative output of 35 artists, a total of 234 works, for its "Days of Awe Art Show."

While it never before staged an art exhibit, the temple seems to have given the congregation and community members what they want; the opening reception on Sept. 10 drew more than 320 congregants and other visitors to celebrate the launch of the show, which will remain up until Nov. 5.

Cochairs Renee Freedman and David Nussbaum declared the event a "major success."

Rabbi Cy Stanway said the themed and juried art show was the first major effort in "Hineynu: It's Our Turn," a wide-ranging series of activities designed to engage the community with examples of how enriching synagogue involvement can be. "Art is just one aspect of the kinds of programs we will feature," he said. Others are creative worship services, social action programs, and social activities.

The participating artists, most from in and around Long Branch and Ocean Township, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to display their work and for the professional manner in which it is displayed. Pictures stretch from near high ceilings to just a few inches off the floor, and the sheer size of the show meant that it could not be confined to the social hall; the temple's corridors are also crowded with canvases in a wide range of styles and media. (See "A tribute to Clara Gee," p. 30.)

Exhibiting artist Karen Starrett, originally from New York City, but a resident of Ocean for 36 years, describes herself as an "intuitive" painter. With a degree in art education from Douglass College, she has a dual career as an art teacher and a certified dementia practitioner.

"I never plan ahead," she told NJJN. "I talk to the painting, and it talks to me. And when the conversation ends, the painting is finished. It's only after it's completed that I know what the painting means," said Starrett, a member of Congregation Torat El in Oakhurst.



Brynnah McFarland and Largo beside several of her character studies.

Sol Hara, 81, one of the older artists represented in the show, is also a resident of Ocean. He said he did not begin creating artwork until after his retirement in 2005. "I started out with charcoal, then watercolor. But in 2009 I discovered pastel, and that's what I've been concentrating on ever since," he said.

Neither of Hara's parents — Sephardic Jews from Turkey (father) and Syria (mother) — painted. But he does have a younger brother, Ira, now 70, who has made pictures since he was a little boy.

Ira Hara also has entries in "Days of Awe," including one called "Temple of Silence," a gouache and ink presentation. According to Ira, most of his efforts center around spiritual themes or nature.

A native of Israel, born in Ramat Gan but raised in Deal, Leora Asa now lives in Freehold and is one of a few "Days of Awe" artists who make a living as an artist, in her case, creating custom area rugs. "Night Owl," one of her numerous show entries, is an acrylic on rockboard image of a woman, which, Asa said, she intended as an homage to her favorite artist, Gustav Klimt, whose famous "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I" was the center of "Woman in Gold," a 2015 movie about restitution of artwork looted by the Nazis.

Artist Brynnah McFarland, 27, came to the opening with her service dog Largo. A graduate student at New York University and a resident of Brooklyn, McFarland heard about the show from family friends. Her entries — seven informal self-portraits — all rely on the same technique, but in different media. "Each picture is made by projecting an original photograph onto a wall, tracing the defining outlines, and then free-form redrawing or painting the image," she said.

"A photo is then taken of the handmade reproduction, and it is digitally overlapped and mixed with the original photo." For the redrawing or painting, she said, she has used, at one time or another, crayon, watercolor, gouache, oil, pastel, and ink.

Thirteen decorative mezuzah cases mounted on a board earned lots of praise for Nissan Mayk of Eatontown. But she showed more pride in her painted silk scarves and jewelry — functional art that can be worn. One of the more established artists in the exhibit, she has had a Miriam Cup on display for 10 years at New York City's Jewish Museum.

Alex Greenfield, a 25-year-old art teacher from Queens, has two paintings in the show, "Holy Temple" — of which he said, "I want people to wonder whether it depicts the past or the future" — and "Boneh Yerushalayim," each listing for \$8,500. He said that despite those hefty prices, they were not the most expensive works he'd ever done.

"When I was three, I painted a mural on the living room wall in my family's apartment," Greenfield said. "That cost us the security deposit. I haven't yet had a sale to equal that amount."

Israeli art sale

MENACHEM SAFRAI, grandson of the founder of Safrai Fine Art Gallery, which was established in Jerusalem in 1935, will bring Israeli art to East Brunswick with an exhibition and sale.

More than 1,500 works, including original oil paintings, watercolors, lithographs, and etchings by Israeli artists, will be available to view and purchase.

From the beginning of the 20th century, visual arts in Israel have been creatively inspired by the confluence of East and West as well as by the land, its development, the character of the cities, and stylistic trends from abroad. Local landscapes, Jewish and biblical themes, and Israeli history and society inform the uniqueness of Israeli art.

The four-day event takes place Nov. 2-5 at Temple B'nai Shalom, which is a sponsor of the program along with East Brunswick Jewish Center. Admission is free (with the exception of the wine and cheese event on Saturday, Nov. 4).

Hours are as follows:

Thursday, Nov. 2, 7-9 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 3, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 4, 7-10 p.m.; \$18, wine and cheese reception

Sunday, Nov. 5, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Visit bnaishalom.com or call 732-251-4300, ext. 232.

You might also like:

- [YU undergrad part of research program](#)
- [Union Y offers 'JOY' in new outreach program](#)
- [Gaelen art show winners announced](#)
- [Gaelen art show winner announced](#)

Reader Discussion

Leave a Comment

© Copyright 2017 | The New Jersey Jewish News | All Rights Reserved.
901 Route 10 | Whippany, NJ 07981-1157 | 973-739-8500 p | 973-887-4152 f
[Webmaster](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)