



IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY

In English, people with red hair are called redheads, but Israelis adopted the British word “ginger,” and call anyone with red hair a “gingi” (JIN-ji, for a male) or “gingit” (JIN-jit, for a female). Redheads run in the Orpaz family. Saba Simcha is a gingi, as are the girls’ parents Yahel and Ofri, so there was little doubt that at least one of their offspring would inherit the redhead gene. That all four emerged from their mother’s womb with their parents’ signature red hair, freckles, and fair skin was a delightful surprise. It is enchanting to observe the myriad ways in which each Orpaz sister is her own unique combination of her parents’ genes. Spending time in their company, one marvels at nature’s complexity and beauty.



O-MA-NOOT

O-MA-NOOT (Hebrew for “art”) Gallery at Beth Jacob Synagogue is a spiritual and creative art sanctuary for Jewish values, themes and artists. We promote community collaboration, cooperation and diversity within a peaceful framework.

Wendy Schneider THEY CALL ME GINGI ג'נְגִי

Exhibition date

MAY 8 - JUNE 17, 2017

Curated by Hana (Chani) P. Rotchild

BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE ART SANCTUARY
375 Aberdeen Avenue, Hamilton ON L8P 2R7

THE STORY BEHIND THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The four little girls who are the subject of this exhibition are the granddaughters of someone I first met in the winter of 1972. Eighteen years old, attending Tel Aviv University's program for overseas students, and eager to improve my Hebrew, I was spending the semester break volunteering at Dafna, a kibbutz in the Upper Galilee region. My dining-hall duties at Dafna brought me into daily contact with Simcha Orpaz, a big-hearted, endlessly curious, and fun-loving kibbutznik with whom I whiled away countless hours in conversation. Over the next four decades, whenever I had occasion to be in Israel, I'd make a point of reconnecting with Simcha. No matter how much time had passed, it was always as if we'd spoken just days earlier—the conversation never missed a beat.

On visits to Israel over the last fourteen years, my husband, my daughters, and I have spent many memorable days with Simcha, his wife Dahlia, and their extended family. In their authenticity, loyalty, and devotion to family, community, and country, they represent everything we love about Israel.

The photographs in this series were taken at Kibbutz Snir, a five-minute drive from Dafna. Snir is home to two of Simcha and

Dahlia's children and their families. Their daughter Hila lives there with her family, as does their youngest son, Yahel, with his wife Ofri and their four daughters. Mika, Guy, Elan, and Dani are the third generation of the Orpaz family to grow up in this part of the Upper Galilee, an area of exceptional natural beauty. From their home, the children can see the Naftali mountain range to the west and the majestic Mount Hermon to the east. They can hike the trails of the nearby Baniyas nature reserve and kayak the pristine waters of the Dan River. Yet undoubtedly, the greatest blessing of their young lives is the large, loving family into which they were born.

One more biographical detail will shed further light on the significance this particular family holds for me. I too come from a family of four girls, and I am mother to my own four girls, who, to borrow a line from

Maurice Chevalier, have grown up "in the most delightful way." Photographing the Orpaz sisters, it now occurs to me, was a way to recapture precious memories of my own childhood and that of my children. My hope is that it does the same for you, and let's all say, "Thank heaven for little girls."



July 2007: three of the Schneider sisters and Simcha sharing a moment at the Kinneret.

2017 NOW WE ARE FOUR MIKA, GUY, ILAN, AND DANI



Top left: Mother and Child ~ Mika, age 3, and Ofri on a summer afternoon

Top right: Barefoot Days ~ Mika, on her front steps

2011

MIKA



Facing page, left: Three Gingis ~ Ilan, 3, Guy, 7, Mika, 8

Facing page, right: Wise Beyond her Years ~ Dani, 9 months

Back page top left: I Feel Pretty ~ Guy on her way to a party

Back page, bottom left: Freckle Face ~ Ilan

Back page, bottom right: In the Bedroom ~ Mika, Guy, and Ilan at play in the bedroom they share.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The names that Ofri and Yahel gave their daughters are a reflection of their love for, and deep connection to, the landscape that surrounds Kibbutz Dafna and Kibbutz Snir.

MIKA from "mica," a mineral named for its ability to reflect light

GUY meaning "valley," after the landscape that surrounds Kibbutz Snir

ILAN meaning "tree," for the forests that dot the Naftali mountain ridge overlooking the Galilee Panhandle

DANI meaning "my Dan," the Dan being the river that flows next to the kibbutz