

# Theory of relativity

An Israeli photographer sets out to demonstrate that heredity is destiny



Left: Rishek and Zosha on their wedding day, 1947. Right: Their granddaughter Naama and partner Amir, 2012.



Orly Zailer is an Israeli photographer who has been based in London for the past four years. She studied at the Neri Bloomfield School of Design and Education in Haifa, graduating in 2008. She followed that with a master's in photography and urban cultures at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

"The Time Elapsed Between Two Frames" is a project Zailer presented last year in the context of a group exhibition at London's Photofusion Gallery. As Zailer

explained to Haaretz, the 13 diptychs that constitute "The Time Elapsed" represent an "ongoing project in which I have reproduced old photographs from various family albums with descendants of the people photographed in the original ones."

She went on: "I started the project with a self-portrait with my partner, reproducing a photo of my parents taken 40 years earlier, as I have been fascinated with the extreme resemblance of people to their parents in general and mine in particular.

I wanted to deal with questions of identity in the shadow of our antecedents, as well as physical resemblance passed on and the extent to which it affects our personality."

Zailer noted that "all people, when observed by others, especially through the lens, put on an act in order to create an ideal representation of the self to society and to future generations. I wanted each person that took part in this project to perform the performance his ancestors did so long ago..."

Zailer has also produced a short video loop, which she has posted on YouTube, in which her contemporary subjects are seen portraying "the assumed moments that could have taken place before and after the exact moment in which the original photographs were taken. This is merely a proposal of the reality that could have taken place."

For more information, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSWmNHvC69w> [www.ory-zailer.com](http://www.ory-zailer.com)

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Left: Itzik, 1982. Right: Itzik's son Idan, 2012.



Left: Hana, 1985. Right: Hana's daughter Lea, 2013.



Left: Sharon with her in-laws, Haray and Menashe, 1986. Right: Sharon's daughter Ella with grandparents Haray and Menashe, 2012.



Left: My parents, Samy and Mariana, 1972. Right: My partner Nadav and I, 2012.



Left: Katriel and his granddaughter Alvit, 1968. Right: Katriel's son Amos with granddaughter Tom, 2013.

## Shahaf Orkan, 36, chiropractor; flying to Cologne

Hello, can I ask why you're wearing three coats?

And that's without my bag of herbs ... Why so?

Because of the weight. The herbs weigh about 1.5 kilos and the coats, God knows. I'll probably have to pay overweight anyway.

Where are you going?

It's a one-way ticket to Germany. I have a job offer from a clinic in Cologne, and we are leaving, the whole family. But you never know. We'll keep paying national insurance. I also did that when I lived for seven years in South Africa.

What did you do in South Africa?

I went in 2003 to study chiropractic - there's no place to learn it in Israel. My mother lived there already. I got married and we had a child, and in 2010 we left. We were afraid to raise a child there. When I lived alone it didn't bother me. But as a family, the risk wasn't worth it. There is a lot of crime in South Africa - robberies and car hijackings.

Did you encounter violence?

To be honest, my sister and my mother's husband were kidnapped. I was already there, and my sisters had come for our mother's wedding. One of my sisters and my mother's husband went for a 10-minute drive. They'd probably been followed for a few days ... and when they parked, their car was blocked by another car. They were taken by four armed men about 100 kilometers [62 miles] away, and held as hostages for five hours, until their whole car was disassembled.

Scary. What happened?

They were "enlightened" thieves, who wore suits, not rapists and murderers. They said: "Don't resist and everything will be fine. After all, you have insurance." I was having dinner when my mother called, utterly frantic. We were really worried, but they apparently realized it would be all right.

Did you call the police?

You can, but it doesn't do any good. That was the closest case to me and also the least violent one I know. The family lawyer was murdered because he'd been involved in God-knows-what; he was set afire. Another relative was shot and died. But when you live there, it's like the terrorism in Israel: It doesn't stop you from leaving the house. You see people enjoying themselves, in the mall. Other than that, life is good there.

## Departures | Arrivals

Economically?

Yes. There's a lot of leisure time. It's a different pace.

Is that why you're leaving Israel?

I earned good money but had no satisfaction. I want to finish the day fresh, not wiped out. There's also the costs. My living expenses run to 20,000 shekels [\$5,765] a month. I live like a dog but that's considered the norm, but I've seen life abroad. We'll be able to save there. I will earn three times as much, the cost of living is a third as much, I work fewer hours. They've found me an apartment and are doing the paperwork. All they want is for me to show up. When we got back to Israel we spent a large portion of our savings. In Germany, I'm starting off better: a child allowance of 1,500 shekels [\$430], free preschool and health care ...

Why Germany, of all places?

Europe was the most realistic choice, because we have European passports. It became clear to me when sending out CVs that Germany is very friendly in terms of my profession - there is a demand; second, I have distant relatives in Cologne who received me with open arms, even though we'd never met before. Like Israelis.

So at bottom you have a yearning for Israeliness.

This morning, in a traffic jam on the Ayalon [Freeway], my wife cried. We're tired, with the move and all, and the nerves. But still: the vulgarity, the honking, the way people cut you off - it's not pleasant. It's a love-hate relationship. To communicate and connect, I still need Israelis. Israelis abroad give you the warm buddy-buddy feeling, which is always lacking there ... It's just what's going on here; it doesn't lift one's spirit.

What are Israelis like as patients?

I'm familiar with the type of patients you get in Germany, because they flew me in to work after I accepted the offer. I saw about 40 people a day in the clinic. Mechanically, physically, the people there are in better condition. They sleep a lot, do sports, jog and walk, they are wild for saunas, but above all there is no stress. The bodily condition of people here is a lot more rigid. In Israel, 90 percent of the people I treat suffer from chronic pain; they are run-down and have disc herniations. They sometimes come in with a completely worn-out body, and then it's very hard to help. The body fights back.



## Liat Elkayam, Photos by Tomer Appelbaum

### Avner Shalgi, 30, from Kibbutz Nahshon, Amit Shalgi, 27, and Lior Bap, 31, both from Tel Aviv; all three arriving from Geneva

Hello, can I ask what's in that bag?

Lior: It's George, it was hard to part from him.

Avner: We buried the other George in the snow.

Amit: We were on a ski trip. It's a snowboard. Too bad you missed the rest of the group.

How many of you were there?

Avner: We were 10. My sister Amit and her partner Lior here, and his friends.

Lior: The trip was in honor of my birthday.

Amit: Lior and his friends have been skiing for years.

Avner: And also my older brother, Netta, and his partner.

Amit: Netta told Grandma that we were going, and she said it was out of the question for two of the siblings to go and one not.

Avner: And then, as a surprise, our dad also came.

Amit: He decided the day before to join us, and it was also a trip to mark his 60th birthday.

Avner: And my brother Netta and I just finished a big three-month project. We worked hard, so the trip came at a good time.

What was the project?

Avner: We developed a product and were able to raise funds to manufacture it through a campaign on Kickstarter. It's a large wooden horse. A toy for all ages.

Do people assemble it by themselves?

Avner: There is a model for self-assembly and also ready-made painted versions. Amit: It costs between \$50 and \$120. Our site is mywoodenhorse.com.

Avner: Amit was our marketing woman.

How did the project get started?

Avner: Netta is an industrial designer ... He had made a horse and a lot of people wanted one. He co-opted me because he wanted it to be a siblings' project.

Amit: Avner went to Bezalel [Academy of Arts and Design].

Avner: Now we're thinking of more ideas.



Sounds like one big happy family.

Lior: On the trip there was a fight between the brothers, who wanted snowboarding, and the friends, who wanted to ski.

Amit: It was my first time snowboarding.

What was it like to learn?

I took lessons every day for five days. At first I had a bad instructor, but afterward a great one; there was improvement every day. Snowboarding is very fast and you fall a lot. In the end I was sure of myself.

Where were you?

Lior: At a ski resort in France called Val Thorens. It's the highest site in Europe. Big, with plenty of slopes.

Was there powder?

Lior: No, unfortunately. Snow hadn't fallen for two weeks. There was a week of sunshine and great views.

Avner: I feel as though we've come from summer to winter. It was perfect - the only thing lacking was another week there.

Lior: The site is connected to two more sites. A lot of young people come there, and there were plenty of parties.

Did you go?

There was a club on the hill next to the village, a kind of huge wooden balcony that overlooks the snow. At the end of every day you go there with your ski stuff, and you dance and get drunk, and then go back down to the town. It's dangerous and there are a lot of accidents.

But you came out in one piece.

Amit: On the second day we were in a place that you reach by a cable car. We didn't know how to get down. It was a serious slope and we knew we'd fall, so we slid down sitting on the boards.

Avner: Fear saved her.

Lior: It's just you against nature and gravity.

And your name is Shalgi [from the Hebrew word for snow]!

Avner: My father founded the alpine unit [of the Israeli army] years ago, and he taught us how to ski.

Amit: Dad was the biggest hero on the trip.

Lior: Amazing that we all came out of it safe and sound.

Amit: The main thing is that I succeeded to ski.

Avner: Well...

What?

Lior: We wanted to take a group picture on the last day. I wanted to stand on my head in the helmet, but I fell and my neck seized up.

Avner: And I ran into a tree every day. And I also saw a bear.

Really?

Avner: A bear on skis.