



About the Artist

Born in Tiberias, Israel in 1976, **Dikla Laor** is an M.A. student at the University of Haifa, in the Department of Biblical Studies. She also holds a B.A. in Humanities and Communications, cum laude, from Bar Ilan University, and a degree in Visual and Interactive Communications Engineering from Kinneret College. Dikla is a mother to Ma'ayan, Gefen and Nevo, and is married to her beloved husband, Modi. Dikla Laor is also the founder of Webtopus, a web design and development company.



Eve, 2018

The Rissman Kol Ami Collection is a unique collection of Jewish art, artifacts and ritual objects. In addition to preserving significant objects for posterity, the museum seeks to develop programs and exhibitions that are designed to educate the congregation and promote an appreciation for works of Judaica.

To learn more about Dikla Laor and *Women of the Bible*, visit her website at diklalaor.photography. Copies of her book are for sale at diklalaor.photography/buy-book/. The photographs on display are also for sale. Contact Rachel Kamin at rkamin@nssbethel.org for information.



North Suburban Synagogue
Beth El
בית כנסת בית אל
Rissman Kol Ami Collection

1175 Sheridan Road, Highland Park 60035

Women of the Bible: Photography by Artist Dikla Laor



Hagar & Ishmael, 2015

August 27 – October 31, 2021

The Rissman Kol Ami Collection at
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El

The Story Behind *Women of the Bible*

Photography is a significant part of my daily life, filling me with the desire to continue creating. Every time I take a picture, it feels like the first time. The camera enables me to see life at one frame at a time – to commemorate the moment, capture it, and discover an entire world within. A speck of dust, a flash of light, a movement of fabric – each of these reveals endless beauty with a single glimpse.

I photograph women, Biblical women, to be precise. For me, a woman is the essence of existence, possessing the beauty of procreation, maternity and femininity. In my book, *Women of the Bible*, I shed new light on religious photography, capturing powerful Biblical women in the very places they once lived. The staged scenes are inspired by art of the Renaissance, timeless myths, and classical literature.



Serach, Asher's Daughter, 2017

I started working on the *Women of the Bible* book series in 2013, and soon realized that because of the endless array of powerful Biblical women in these stories, the project could last for many years to come. As it is well known, there are no “unnecessary” words in the Bible – meaning every single name bears strong significance. Working on *Women of the Bible* allowed me to dedicate much time to my own study and knowledge of the Bible.

The work begins with focusing on one single character, followed by comprehensive research and collecting of materials. I begin by reading the source, and then explore literary works and even poetry surrounding the characters and situations. The materials I use to study lead me to creating motifs, which lead to further depth and development. Most of the photographs involve me combining recreated scenes, with added touches and flourishes from my own imagination.

The dresses are created directly on the models, using fine fabrics stitched together. The most complex of the photographs usually involve animals, due to the unpredictable nature of their behavior. And by the end of a typical day capturing these scenes, we usually all have scratches and bruises – but it's all worth it, the sense of satisfaction of a productive day's work is incomparable.

The landscape of the Golan Heights, where I've made my home for the past 17 years, is the setting for most of the photos. The mountains majestically change based on the time of day, as well as the season. During the summertime, the scenery is dry, wild and primeval. During the winter, the mountains are covered with an intense greenery that injects life into the surroundings. Sometimes I have to be patient and wait several months for the right moment, to capture the perfect frame to express my vision.

I'm eternally thankful for the opportunity to be able to capture powerful women of the Bible, through this unforgettable journey of religious photography, devotion and expression.



Noah's Sons' Wives, 2020