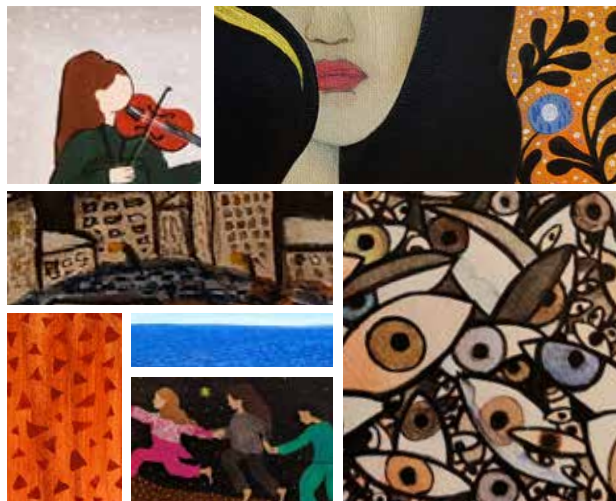


HEIDI H.
WAINTRUB
MOSAIC OF
WAR



2023—2026 VOL—01.

פסי פס
מלחמה

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Heidi H. Waintrub (b. 1981, Israel) is a multidisciplinary painter and visual storyteller whose work explores the intersection of narrative, emotion, and technique. Her practice spans traditional and digital media, with a foundation in classical methods and a distinctly contemporary voice.

Waintrub relocated to Florence at the age of twenty-five, where she immersed herself in the city’s artistic heritage while earning a B.A. in History and Archaeology from the University of Florence. During this formative period, she studied Italian Renaissance painting in specialized workshops and refined her practice in an artist’s *bottega*. Her early career included roles as Art Director in New York and Miami, where she collaborated with galleries and developed a curatorial sensitivity that continues to inform her work.

She works in acrylic, oil, gouache, watercolor, pastel, and collage, alongside digital production, drawing on expressionism and surrealism. Known for her intuitive use of color and form, Waintrub engages both personal and collective memory. Her Italian training remains visible throughout her work, and it is where that training meets the Jewish world and her Israeli heritage. Questions of continuity, transmission, and loss run through everything she makes. Her background in archaeology informs the same instinct: there as in the studio, the remnant is the point of departure, and the question is what it is still able to tell. Her works have entered private collections internationally.

Beyond her studio practice, she has cultivated a parallel career as a graphic artist, producing digital compositions for luxury boutiques in Italy. This multidisciplinary approach reflects her belief in art as a conduit for self-exploration and shared experience: a universal language bridging past and present, tradition and innovation.

פסיפס מלחמה

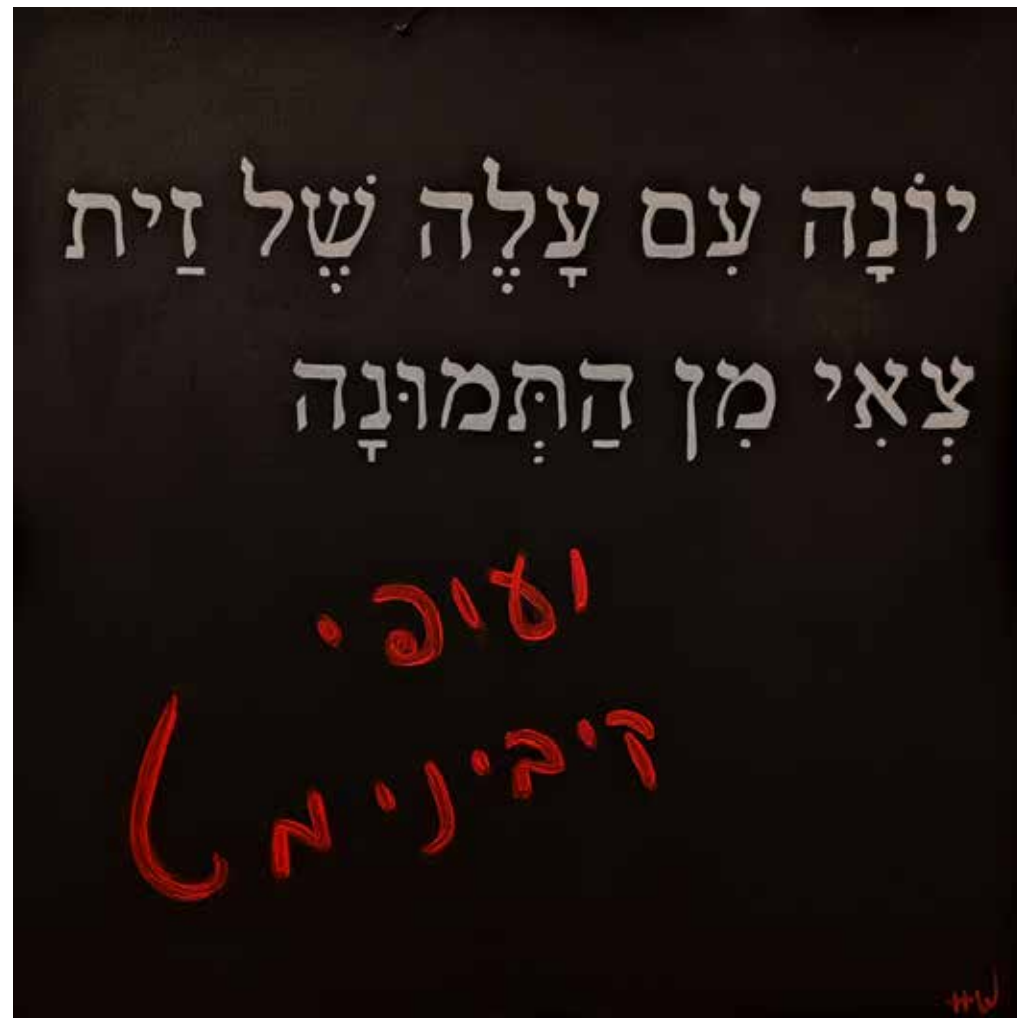
Mosaic of War is a deeply personal and emotionally charged body of work by Israeli artist Heidi H. Waintrub, made in the aftermath of the October 7 attacks and during the Gaza War. It reflects the psychological landscape of a Jewish Israeli woman living in the diaspora. Though physically distant from the front lines, the artist was profoundly affected by the war, and the work follows a raw and complex emotional arc, from fear and despair, through rage, toward a fragile glimmer of hope.

Spanning oil, watercolor, acrylic, and digital works, the series unfolds in chronological and emotional stages. Each work functions as a fragment, intimate and specific, of a larger, shattered whole. Together, they form a mosaic of personal and collective trauma, remembrance, and resilience.

The work includes tributes to victims and hostages, symbolic responses to destruction and propaganda, meditations on motherhood, and moments of reluctant faith. Iconic figures such as Shani Louk, the Bibas family, and Amit Man appear not as political symbols but as deeply human presences: loved, mourned, and reimagined through the artist’s lens.

Waintrub’s visual language bridges classical technique and contemporary urgency. In her paintings she evokes both spiritual iconography and modern-day imagery from news and social media. In the final works, including the Angel Series, color returns with unexpected softness, suggesting a resting place for grief and a tentative gesture toward an inner peace.

Mosaic of War is a personal testimony rather than a political manifesto. It offers no resolution but only the insistence that even from a place of profound fracture, expression, memory, and dignity endure.



"יונה" (Dove), oil on canvas, 40x40 cm, 2023

"יונה" (Dove) takes its name from a known Israeli song written in the 1980s, "A Dove with an Olive Branch," by Talma Alyagon-Rose. The song, still widely recognized, became an anthem of hope and yearning for peace, a sentiment that defined much of the artist's generation. The dove, with its olive branch, has long served as a universal symbol of reconciliation and nonviolence. For decades, it represented the collective desire to end conflict, to believe that peace was not only possible, but inevitable.

That belief was shattered on October 7. In this painting, the artist confronts the emotional devastation brought by the massacre and the collapse of those hopeful ideals. Set against a black-painted canvas, the opening line of the song is hand-written: "A dove with an olive branch, fly out of the picture." But the artist abruptly ruptures the nostalgic tone with a new, searing addition: "and fly to hell."

This work is not only about loss; it is about rage. The dove becomes a broken symbol, no longer able to carry the weight of peace. The piece voices the disillusionment felt in the face of horror, when language and hope alike seem to fall short. It is a visual lament, and a raw expression of a peace betrayed.

That is also why the artist chose not to paint the dove at all. Only the words remain, stripped of their symbol, suspended in a void where hope once was.



"*Madonna con Bambini*", watercolor on paper, 12.5x10 cm, 2023

This painting takes its name from the well-known Christian motif of the Madonna con Bambino, a visual tradition that has appeared for centuries in Western art, symbolizing maternal tenderness, protection, and sacred love. While not a direct depiction of this iconography, the title serves as a conceptual reference point, connecting a contemporary image of anguish to this enduring artistic language.

Here, the motif is reimagined through the tragic image of the Bibas family: a mother and her two young children kidnapped to Gaza by Hamas terrorists. Their abduction, captured on film, became a chilling emblem of the war's cruelty. The mother's face, frozen in terror as she clutches her sons, was seared into the global conscience.

Created in the early days of the war, when their fate was still unknown, the work speaks to universal grief and maternal fear. By invoking a sacred visual tradition, the artist seeks to reach beyond cultural and political boundaries, offering a moment of shared humanity that every mother, everywhere, might recognize.

"The Starry Night of Israel", watercolor on paper, 12.5x10 cm, 2023

Created in the early days of the war, *The Starry Night of Israel* captures a surreal and haunting visual experience that became part of daily life: the night sky lit by rocket trails and Iron Dome interceptors. As sirens blared and alarms filled the air, civilians across the country looked upward, watching not stars but weapons in flight. The arcs of light, both menacing and mesmerizing, carved chaotic patterns above the cities.

In this small watercolor, the artist echoes the swirling skies of Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, reinterpreting them through the lens of modern conflict. The resemblance is not just aesthetic but emotional: a night filled with movement, fear, and awe. Here, beauty and terror co-exist in a single frame.





"Inferno", watercolor on paper, 10x12.5 cm, 2023

"Inferno" reflects the destruction of Gaza following the Israeli counterattacks after October 7. Inspired by images of Khan Younis engulfed in flames, the painting captures a city ablaze, its skyline swallowed by fire under the night sky. The scene struck the artist with the force of a living hell, both for those in the city and the hostages believed to be held underground during the bombings.

Using watercolor, the work conveys chaos and sorrow without direct representation. The fire becomes both literal and symbolic: a testament to devastation and a mirror of the emotional collapse shared across enemy lines. It is a brief, searing vision of a world consumed.



"Girl With a Grey Tank", watercolor on paper, 10x12.5 cm, 2023

Painted in the early weeks of the war, **"Girl With a Grey Tank"** offers a rare moment of hope and strength amid unfolding devastation. It was inspired by the story of seven young female Israeli soldiers from the Caracal Battalion who, on October 7, defended and saved kibbutz Holit in active combat for 17 hours. Their actions marked the first known combat involving tanks crewed entirely by women.

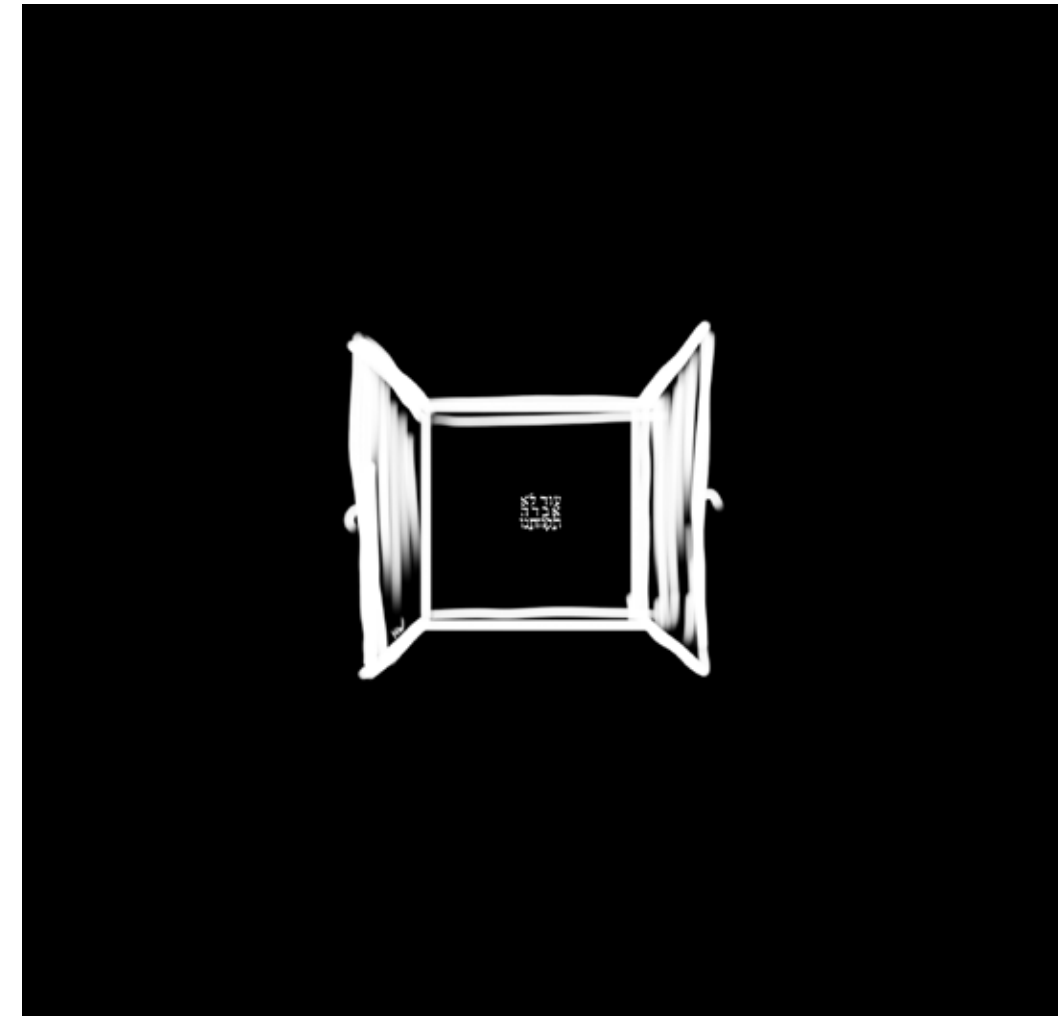
Rendered in soft washes of grey, brown and green, the painting conveys both vulnerability and resolve. The girl portrayed is not overtly militant but exudes quiet dignity and strength. The tank becomes a symbol of protection, determination, and transformation.

In this intimate composition, the artist honors female bravery and the emergence of courage in dark times. It is a reminder that even in chaos, resilience can rise.

"Od Lo"—meaning "Not Yet" in Hebrew—is a digital illustration-created nearly a year into the war, at a time when despair and exhaustion weighed heavily across Israeli society. The composition is stark: a black background dominates the canvas, interrupted only by a small white window. Inside it, barely visible, is a line from *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem: "Our hope is not yet lost."

The phrase is almost unreadable, written in minute Hebrew letters, as if whispered rather than declared. It captures the fragile state of collective emotion at that time: uncertainty about the hostages' fate, no clear end in sight, and a country suspended between mourning and waiting. The black background speaks of fear, helplessness, and the weight of the unknown. And yet, the small white window offers a faint contradiction: a reminder, almost against reason, that hope lingers.

"Od Lo" reflects the truth embedded in the national psyche: even in the darkest times, hope is never entirely extinguished.



"Od Lo", digital print, 2024



"ים של זועות בשתי עיניי" (Sea of Horrors), watercolor on paper, 22.5x18 cm, 2024

Drawing its title from the well-known 1970s Israeli ballad "Sea of Tears", "**Sea of Horrors**" reimagines the metaphor through the lens of the October 7 massacre and its aftermath. Initially shrouded in confusion, the scale of the atrocity was only slowly revealed, body by body, testimony by testimony, unfolding with unbearable weight. The watercolor medium lends a sense of fragility and diffusion, echoing both the emotional disorientation and the flood of grief that followed.

Eyes dominate the composition, multiplying across the paper like fish in a sea. Each one a symbol, a soul, a witness. In Jewish tradition, the eye within the *Hamsa* is a talisman believed to ward off evil; here, its protective power is rendered tragically impotent. The symbolism is stark: the horrors occurred despite every ancient gesture of protection.

There is further irony in the use of the eye motif. Many victims were forced to watch the torture, rape, and murder of their loved ones. In this context, the eye becomes not only a symbol of the soul but also a sign of violation: the unbearable gaze that could not be turned away. Through this piece, the artist offers a haunting visual archive of collective trauma and the painful burden of witnessing.

"Help" is a digital painting created in response to the early, uncertain months of the hostage crisis in Gaza. During the initial stages of the war, concrete information was scarce. Only fragmented reports, harrowing video footage, and brief glimpses offered any indication of the fate of the hostages, both civilians and soldiers, held underground. The work responds to the psychological torment of piecing together horrors from partial truths, speculation, and silence.

A sea of hands reaches outward from the darkness, some fully formed, others damaged, missing fingers, or twisted in pain. These disembodied gestures become symbols of silent desperation, extending through the digital void in search of recognition, rescue, or grace. The hands do not belong to any one victim, but to all of them. Each one a call from beneath the surface, from the tunnels described in reports as cages and tombs.

The composition evokes a vision of hell: not in mythological terms, but as a lived condition endured by the living. By reducing the human form to pleading limbs, the artist distills the universal cry of suffering—"help"—into a single, overwhelming visual statement. In doing so, the work transforms abstraction into testimony.



"Help", digital print, 2024

"Yellow and Black Flower", oil on canvas, 60x40 cm, 2024

In memoriam: Shani Louk

"Yellow and Black Flower" is a tribute to Shani Louk, a young woman whose life was brutally taken during the events of October 7. The title references the striking contrast in her hair, black with blonde tips, which became a visual hallmark of her widely circulated image. The artist transforms this tragic iconography into a poetic symbol, reimagining Shani not through the lens of death, but as a rare and fragile bloom.

Flowers, chosen here as the central motif, serve as a metaphor for ephemeral beauty and the brevity of life. Their delicate presence becomes a vehicle for commemorating a woman whose youth, freedom, and individuality were violently cut short. While the canvas is awash in color, evoking a dreamlike serenity, subtle cues betray a deeper truth: the faded pallor of her skin and the vacant stillness of her expression quietly suggest that the subject is no longer alive.

This work responds not only to personal grief, but to a broader cultural wound. Shani Louk's image—her lifeless body exposed on the back of a truck—became one of the most haunting emblems of gendered violence in the aftermath of the attack. Through *Yellow and Black Flower*, the artist reclaims her memory from spectacle, restoring tenderness, dignity, and humanity in place of brutality.



"Exodus" Polyptych

This twelve-painting polyptych records the hostage releases of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that began on January 19, 2025, during the Gaza War. Over the following weeks Hamas handed over hostages in stages, some alive and some dead, in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. The last handover of this first phase took place on February 27. The paintings follow that sequence and portray the people who came back, and what their return stirred in the artist.

It began as a spontaneous response, with the first three hostages released. The artist then kept painting as each new group came home, and the series grew into a record of the whole process. The figures differ. Some stand upright and composed, others carry what they went through. Hamas televised the releases and staged them for propaganda, which made them hard to watch. Relief came mixed with grief and anger.

As the series grew, the artist sensed an almost biblical rhythm in it, like an exodus unfolding in slow motion. It ended at twelve paintings.

Included in the polyptych are representations of:

Romi Gonen, Doron Steinbrecher, Emily Damari, Liri Albag, Karina Arie, Daniella Gilboa, Naama Levy, Watchara Sriaoun, Bannawat Seathao, Sathian Suwannakham, Pongsak Thaenna, Surasak Lamnao, Gadi Mozes, Arbel Yehud, Agam Berger, Keith Siegel, Yarden Bibas, Ofer Kalderon, Or Levy, Eli Sharabi, Ohad Ben Ami, Sagui Dekel-Chen, Alexander (Sasha) Troufanov, Iair Horn, Oded Lifshitz, Shiri Bibas, Ariel and Kfir Bibas, Avera Mengistu, Hisham al-Sayed, Omer Wenkert, Tal Shoham, Omer Shem Tov, Eliya Cohen, Ohad Yahalomi, Tsachi Idan, Itzik Elgarat, Shlomo Mansour.

Each name here represents a story returned from darkness, some in life, others in memory.

2023—2026.



From left to right:

"Sealed with a Kiss", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"A Shared Fate", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"The Promised Land", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025



From right to left:

"Shalom", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"No Words", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"A Decade", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025



From left to right:

"Orange Is the New Sad", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"Never Again", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"Time Is Running", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025



From right to left:

"The Three Graces", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"P.O.W., No More", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"Purgatorio", acrylic on paper, 21x30 cm, 2025

"Angels"

The Angel Series is the last chapter of the body of work, followed by one closing painting, "Tushlaba.". The series is a collection of digital paintings that offer a striking tonal shift from rage and grief to serenity and reflection. Rendered in vivid yet gentle colors, the series evokes a sense of peace and quiet reverence, dedicated to the memory of the babies and young children murdered on October 7.

The artist represents the infants as beings untouched by politics, conflict, or ideology. Their killing was, and remains, one of the most devastating dimensions of the attack. In these works, the artist imagines them not in suffering, but in light: cradled by calmness, surrounded by color, held in a space beyond violence.

Among the compositions, one exception stands apart: a tribute to Amit Man, the young paramedic who continued to care for the wounded until the very end, reportedly aware that her own death was imminent. Her selfless final acts resonated deeply with the artist, who saw in her story a form of transcendence, an embodiment of grace in the face of horror. The palette in this painting is notably softer, with light, pastel tones, and the forms are simplified, almost as if drawn by a child, echoing innocence while underscoring the tragedy.

The Angel Series is not a denial of pain, but a vision of peace offered to those who were denied it in life. It stands as a final prayer for the children, their families, and all who carry their memory forward.



"מה אברך להם" (What Shall I Bless Them With?), digital print, 2025

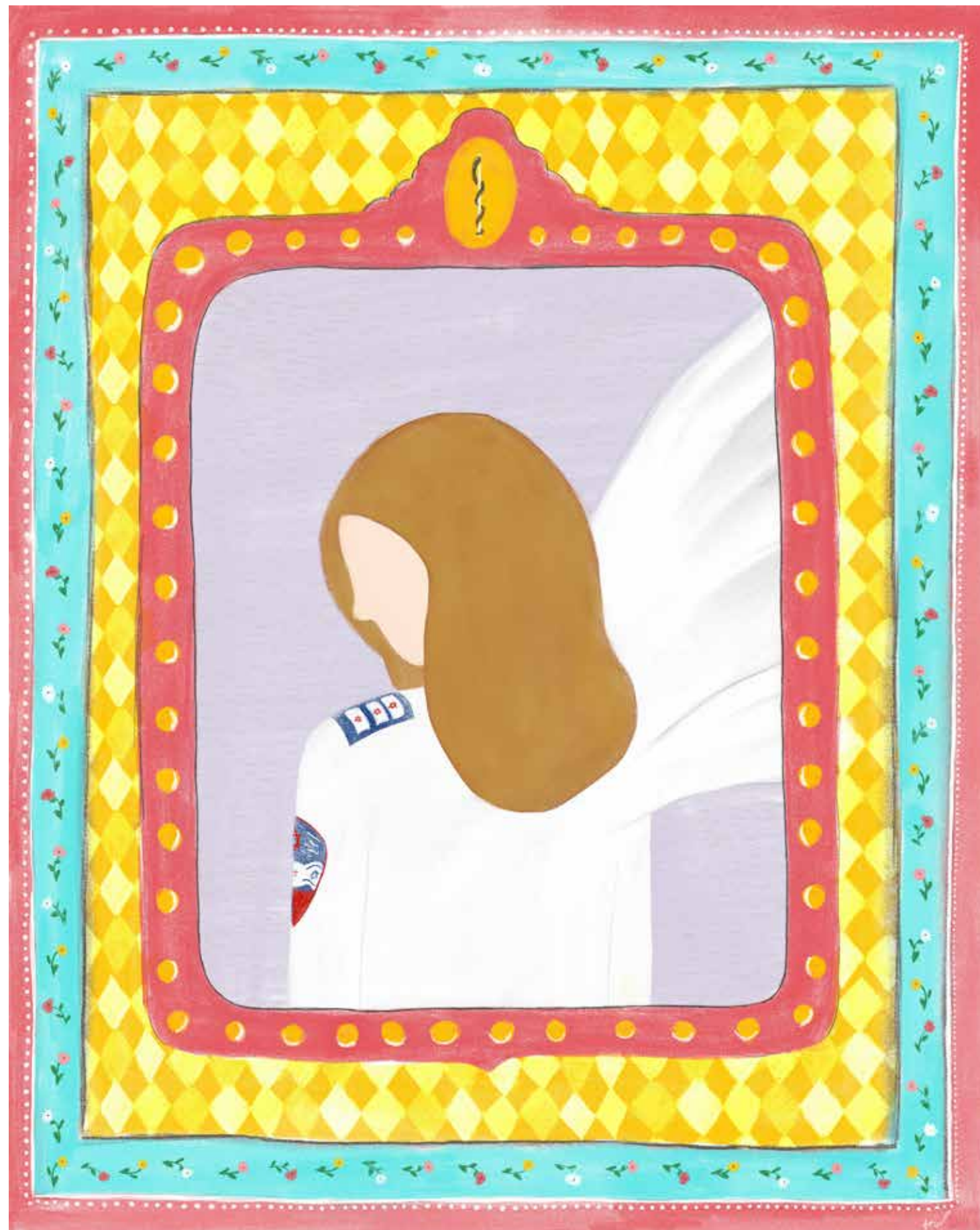
In memoriam: Shiri, Kfir and Ariel

"Happy Place", digital print, 2025
In memoriam: family Kedem-Siman Tov





"Green Fields", digital print, 2025
In memoriam: Ohad and Mila



"מגנת דויד אדום" (She Who Defends the Red Star of David), digital print, 2025

In memoriam: Amit Man

"Tushlaba", acrylic on paper, 11 x 17.5 cm, 2026

"Tushlaba" closes the series. The first work, Dove (2023), took a line from an Israeli song of the 1980s. This one takes a line from Jeremiah 31:17: "And there is hope for your future, declares the Lord, and your children shall return to their own border." The title is the Hebrew acronym tushlaba, written at the end of a book: "finished and complete, praise be to God, Creator of the world." The last hostage is back home.



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