

The Personal Story, the Computer and Old Testament Stories

This book presents my colorful and digital version of the Old Testament stories. However, I would like to use this introduction for telling my own story first. In this framework I want to introduce my origins, draw the specific artistic path I have taken, and clarify what it was that motivated me to take this path. This presents me with something of a challenge. It entails having to deal with four key questions, each of which demands detailing and clarification. The questions are:

First, I would like to explain who I am and to present the business ethos I have maintained during my fifty-year working career, up to 2005, and to explain why I have focused on the said occupations during these years.

Second, I feel the need to explain why, in 2005, I decided to undertake a dramatic professional transition, and why I chose to focus on the art of painting.

Third, I feel duty-bound to convey the reasons why I preferred digital painting to painting with the traditional tools - a brush, pencil, chalk or charcoal.

And fourth, I would like to focus the discourse on the question of why I chose to devote my virtual brush to the stories of the Old Testament.

Who Am I and Where Do I Come From?

I will try to clarify who I am, as my origins have influenced the essence of my art and, especially, on my choice of subjects to draw. Moreover, I feel it is important to explain the core of my activities during my 50-year active working career up to 2005, particularly in view of the professional transition to painting which I underwent that year. Further, it is important for me to explain why I did not involve myself in painting until 2005, despite my natural tendencies and the arts education I acquired in this area during my studies in Paris.

My history, like that of my family, is strongly connected to the settlement of the land of Israel. I am a granddaughter of Abba and Sarah Ne'eman (among the founders of the first Jewish city - Tel Aviv), a great-granddaughter of Zerah and Yoheved Moshli (who were among the first ten families who built homes in Neve Tzedek, the first Jewish neighborhood of Jaffa), a fifth generation descendant of Rabbi Itzhak Heshin, the "Hassalwitzer", who was one of the leaders of the immigration of the disciples of the GRA (the Gaon Rabbi Eliyahu) who settled in Tzefat in 1805, and a seventh generation descendant of Israel Bek who settled in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem in 1837 and, in so doing, symbolized the return of the Jews to the Old city of Jerusalem. He was also one of the driving forces behind the Jewish agricultural revival in Eretz Israel, at his farm in Jermak.

Through my 50-year marriage to my husband Gideon, and together with my daughters Marit and Savyon, we have also played our part in settling the country.

First, when we lived in the Negev between 1955 and 1970, where we helped to renew Jewish life in Be'er Sheva, the home of our Forefathers, which became the first Jewish city in the Negev. We subsequently continued between 1971 and 1980, when we moved to the first new home built in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem after its liberation, thereby returning to the traditional roots of my mother's family, who was born in the Jewish Quarter. Finally, in 1992 we moved to Neveh Tzedek in Tel Aviv and helped to renew the first Jewish quarter built in Jaffa, returning to the roots of my Neveh Tzedek-born father's family.

I grew up in a bourgeoisie family in Tel Aviv. My schooling was orderly. I attended the Herzliya Gymnasium, followed by mathematics and physics studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I took music lessons with Frank Peleg who suggested I become a professional pianist. I took ballet lessons with Gertrude Krausz, who suggested I become a member of the Folk Opera ballet troop. After completing my military service I went to Paris where I studied applied art, and I started working in design, illustrations and advertising.

My professional career started out with artistic work, and I worked in this field for a short period after I returned to Israel. Following my marriage I moved to Be'er Sheva, during the 1950s. At that time, the residents of Be'er Sheva, new immigrants, were busy trying to survive. Artistic design did not fit in with daily life there. As such, I had to adapt my design work to the needs that were relevant to that time and place. In this framework, I established and managed a factory, at the end of the 1950s, where Yemenite embroidery and Persian carpets were produced. Forty new immigrant women, who spoke 20 different languages, made a living from the Be'er Sheva factory, and many more workers were employed at branches I operated in Dimona and Ofakim.

The question, therefore, is how did I get from this involvement to the legal profession, which became my entire world for almost forty years? How did I get from an embroidery factory in Be'er Sheva to becoming a tenured professor at the University of Tel Aviv, specializing in labor law and its wider implications? How did I become a leading figure in the field, and an Israeli Prize recipient for legal research?

The story starts out with Gideon who served as the secretary of the Be'er Sheva Workers' Council and who, rightly, thought that he should not be dependent for his livelihood on political parties and organizations. To this end he started studying law and, after completing his studies, he opened his own law firm. Gideon tried to run his law firm alongside his political endeavors. However, he soon realized that he couldn't run a law firm by remote control. This also did not sit well with the political mission he took upon himself, and in which he believed fervently. I considered these conflicting needs of Gideon's and this brought me to the realization that I had to give up my artistic path and study law instead. This was the only way I could run the law firm Gideon established and allow him to devote his energies to following his public mission. I made this dramatic transition without hesitation or doubt. I thought that it would only be a matter of a temporary interval, as long as it lasted, and that I would

eventually someday resume my painting activities.

That is how I came to the world of law, and the rest is history. My scientific work has been recognized in Israel and abroad. In 2001, as I said, I was awarded the Israel Prize for legal research. In so doing I joined two other Israel Prize recipients in my family - my brother Prof. Yuval Ne'eman and my cousin Prof. Haim Harari - and I became the third grandchild of Abba and Sarah Ne'eman to receive the prize. I have received other prizes: I was a recipient of the Barniv Prize for labor law in 1988, of the Minkoff Prize for legal excellence in 2000, the Israel Bar Association Prize for Women in Law in 2001, and the Women's Lobby Award in 2005.

Why Painting?

So how did it happen that in 2005, at the age of 74, I closed the legal chapter of my life and turned over a new leaf in the field of painting? This change was not the result of a whim, but reflects the embracing of a new philosophy born of the demographic developments that occurred in the world at the end of the twentieth century. In starting a new career at my age I am actually applying an innovative school of thought which we, Gideon and I, developed in a book we published in 2004 called "Who's Afraid of Third Age?".¹ This new ethos ensued from the dramatic increase in life expectancy that occurred towards the end of the twentieth century. According to this school of thought the life expectancy of anyone who reaches the age of 60 is likely, first of all, to reach 100 in the coming years. Moreover, in contrast with the past, people's quality of life has improved so that there is a high likelihood that even at such an advanced age they will enjoy full vitality and soundness of mind.

Traditionally, working people developed one-dimensional careers. Based on this career concept, they identified with their place of work and spent their entire working life in the same professional organization, role or occupation until they retired. In view of the increase in life expectancy and the improved quality of life, people's active lives now incorporate their life as a salaried worker and the period of activity after they formally retire from their employment. Extending people's years of active endeavor means that those extra years should be spent doing something meaningful. This leads to the need for variety in the professional nature of the activities in which we are involved. This need for variety is reflected in a transition from a one-dimensional career which, thus far, has been the working norm, to a multi-dimensional career.

The multi-dimensional career approach is required because every worker, regardless of his or her age, has 10-15 years in which they can contribute, develop, initiate and innovate in the work they do. Thereafter their creative contribution declines. They become bored and they find the work monotonous. However, if they change their work, again regardless of their age, they will become refreshed and they will then enjoy several years in which they can contribute, develop and create. This provides further grounds for replacing a single-dimensional with a multi-dimensional

career. In this way we can find new interest and become more creative and fruitful throughout our years of activity.

As I said, I was 74 in 2005. I thought I would probably have another ten to twenty years of activity at my disposal. I felt I could not carry on for another ten to twenty years doing what I had been doing until then. I felt a strong need for renewal, to gain a fresh perspective and realize myself in a new and different way. Thus, I decided to undergo a professional transition and open up a new leaf in my life. There was, however, an obstacle that hindered and hampered the decision to strike out in a new professional direction. The difficulty was emotional. While, in my traditional field I had achieved a senior position and was a role model, it was clear that I would start from the bottom in my new area of interest. This entailed a decline in my professional standing, the need to re-establish my status in a new reference group which did not know me and, as such, was not at all aware of my abilities and skills. I weighed the advantage of renewal against the disadvantage of starting out again. The balance tipped strongly in favor of the advantage. The chance for renewal, the enjoyment of studying and being able to express myself in a new area overcame the anxiety of losing prestigious status. The only question that remained after that was on what to focus my new activities at this stage of my life?

My psychological tendencies and natural talents offered me three options, each capable of providing me with a solution for a suitable new occupation. Each offered me an area of activity where I could find interest, creativity and renewal. In fact, I could clearly see that, at the end of the process, I would realize all three careers in the 10-20 years I had left. The only question was in what order to do them. I also saw that, despite the fact that each of the careers I was considering represented some sort of continuity from my past occupation, returning to the currently considered fields demanded that I relate to them in an innovative way that would reflect the fact that I live in the 21st century. The three options I was considering were: first, to develop my painting skills and return to my beginnings, and thereby realize myself in the area in which I specialized in Paris. The second option was to develop my skills in music, and return to my beginnings and realize myself in the area in which I specialized as a student of Frank Peleg. The third possibility was to turn to writing and to chronicle the stories of my family, which mirror the annals of the Jewish settlement of Eretz Israel. These were stories that, if I did not record them, could be lost forever.

Without too much deliberation, I chose painting as my first area of activity. First of all, this was because I was naturally drawn to painting. It was for this reason that I focused my studies in Paris on decorative design. There is also an artistic tendency in my family. My grandfather, Abba Ne'eman, who came to Israel from Lithuania in 1890, at the end of the "first aliya", was an amateur painter. Together with his brother Itzhak he prepared, for instance, the scenery for the first amateur dramatics performance held in Eretz Israel, in 1894. It was a production of Goldfaden's Shulamit (in Yiddish) held in the Stein factory auditorium in Neveh

Tzedek. Towards the end of his life, after the death of his wife Sarah in 1953, driven by his longing for her Abba Ne'eman began to paint her portrait, and enjoyed several fruitful years as a painter. My father was an amateur painter who, because he had to support his family, did not develop his artistic talents. But he painted all his life and the walls of our home were covered with a tapestry of his works. My aunt, Tzila Neiman, was an acclaimed painter.

Alongside my own and my family's artistic tendencies, my professional choice was augmented by the fact that it was only due to my family circumstances that, at the outset of my working life, I swapped artistic design for the legal profession. Subconsciously, I believed that it was only a hiatus. So, for me, my prompt decision to transfer to paintings was a sort of important closure in my life.

Why Digital Painting?

So, why did I specifically choose to paint by means of my computer? What brought me to replace the traditional painting tools - the pencil, pen, brush, charcoal, chalk etc. - with a computer, using Vector Graphics (vector-based pictures, as opposed to creating pixel-based images using Bitmap Graphics)?² My answer to this query is as follows, the reasons presented in order of ascending importance:

First, I have been using a computer since 1984 and spend many hours a day in front of it. All my research work, and the teaching methods I employed, was performed with the help of my computer. Expressing myself with the help of a mouse has become second nature to me. Other than signing checks I have not had to use a pen in the past twenty years. Using a computer for the purposes of painting was a natural continuation of the habit that had taken root in me during my legal work. So it was natural that the mouse would replace the brush in this area too.

Second, working with a computer changed my way of thinking, my research and teaching work, and improved them in the long term. This is particularly evident in all aspects of conceptual sharpness and precision, and clarity of thought. It seemed to me that the potential offered by the computer, and which helped enhance my teaching and research methods, provided more than a mere hint that by working with a computer I could improve my work, even when that work was painting.

Third, working with a computer is an indication of the reciprocal relationship that exists between technological developments and the world of art. Technological development is meant to be used by man in all areas of life, including artistic work. Man has always searched for ways to enhance his power and abilities. This is also true with regard to the contribution of technology to the artist and art. Technology allows the artist to exceed his boundaries and the possibilities offered by traditionally accepted art, and acts as a sort of amplifier of its abilities. The language of art was enriched by embracing new technologies, and thanks to the willingness and will of artists to use these technologies. Today, art still lives in the shadow of photographic,

video and kinetic art technologies, while it takes only hesitant steps in the direction of using a computer as a direct creative tool. An historical examination of the reciprocal relationship between art and technology indicates that technological developments are not immediately and automatically embraced by the world of art. Artistic application will only occur when use of new technology becomes routine and accepted practice. The fact is that, in the 21st century, the computer is an integral part of our natural, domestic and practical environment. This leads to the conclusion that the conditions exist for adopting the computer as a bona fide painting tool too.

Fourth, today's generation is the computer generation. Since the end of the 20th century the generation that lives and breathes the computer has grown up. Today, young children are familiar with the language of the computer and the way it works even before they learn how to read and write. Today, people spend most of their time sitting in front of a computer screen. They use the screen for work and for leisure, for play and for study. Because of this people are now used to thinking, experiencing and understanding things in the language of the computer. They feel a sense of closeness and common experience when talking about tools which they are used to, like the computer. Thus, if you want to talk to the contemporary generation about art you have to talk to them in their language. It seems, therefore, that if you want to access the audience of the future there are grounds for trying to form your art in a language they understand. The right medium for painting today is the computer, not necessarily as the exclusive medium, but certainly as a legitimate medium.

Fifth, painting on a computer using vector software creates, as will be explained below, a unique "brush". The latter offers innovative qualities which are unparalleled among traditional painting tools used thus far for this purpose. However, recognition of the uniqueness of the "brush" the computer creates does not confer on the computer any status beyond it being solely a means of implementation. The status of the computer as a practical tool is similar to that of the traditional pencil or brush. The computer does not have discretion or consideration of its own. The artist is still the creator, even in the era of digital painting. The computer, similar to the traditional pencil or brush, continues to be used in accordance with the instructions of the artist, who dictates the details of the painting. The only thing the computer adds to the art of painting (when used with vector software) is that it offers the artist a new tool with unique qualities. It is a tool just like any other tool used in painting to date.

Most artists who have worked with a computer have generally utilized a specific advantage of the computer - its ability to create endless possibilities for incorporating standard elements in a single picture. These elements can be geometric, linear, punctual or textural. Artists for either of two reasons generally use this attribute: either because, at the time, computers were limited to these options, or because this kind of use was suitable for the needs of those artists. This approach is, for example, prominent in the work of Victor Vasareli³ who, as early as 1968, became very interested in computers and looked for ways to create art that suited the modern era. Vasareli painted objects that were limited to standard elements and the artistic effect

was achieved through using the infinite possibilities of color combinations which digital painting has turned into a realistic option. This is also true of the work of Manuel Barbadillo.⁴ As he himself testified, the search for an objective language in his paintings led him to replace the objective elements with a number of repetitive basic shapes in black and white, in interplay between positive and negative or by adjusting the angle at which they are depicted, in repetitions that generated their own rhythm. Despite the different nature of Michael Nul's works,⁵ in practice he used the same qualities offered by the computer. In Nul's works the standard shapes were changed into infinite combinations, which the computer can create, from points scattered across the screen and lines joining them. In this way Nul achieved a closed geometric composition in which the continuous line generates surfaces of different sizes and shapes. John Whitney⁶ utilizes the advantage of the computer by using different sequences of denser and less dense concentrations of dots. The cumulative effect of these variable sequences creates the illusion of movement.

Reuben Kadim⁷ who since 1995 has created his paintings on a computer also indicates the geometric elements and the mathematical order in the basis of work. He, too, has employed the non-manual tools of the computer to produce the complexities of the geometric textures that characterize his work. At the same time, in recent years the computer has also begun to be used in an additional way, by making use of a different ability, which is not necessarily based on the range of combinations it can offer. This additional use stems from the possibility of scanning photographs and utilizing the endless computerized possibilities of processing them by using pixel software.⁸ Nir Hod's works, for example, incorporate this use of the computer.

As we said, none of these artists made full use of the potential offered at the dawn of the 21st century by computers using vector software. This potential stems from the nature of vector software, which embraces a wide range of attributes. While there was awareness of the abilities of the computer in this area, as used by graphic designers, they have not been exhausted in painting to date.

The special potential of the computer, which enhances the artist's abilities, and which enables him to go beyond the limitations of traditional painting, derives from the attributes of vector software.⁹ In vector images, lines, curves and colors are defined in mathematical values. This means that each vector line, shape or composition can be enlarged, rotated, have its color or shape changed, or undergo any other processing, while calculating the values that comprise the actual shapes, all without affecting the final quality of the shape. The qualities of vector software create options that enhance the painting. In this regard one can, for example, mention the computer's ability to join (blend) two identical or different shapes by duplicating them until they fully blend, where the shapes created constitute interim stages between the two shapes chosen in terms of shape, color, position, etc.; the ability of the computer to duplicate a line or shape and to display them in an enlarged or reduced size (called "scale"); to create a library of objects (symbols) which the artist can use for any future painting; to print the painting on an endless selection of

backgrounds and materials, with an enlarged or reduced version of the painting, which could thereby produce a range of paintings of differing qualities; or the fact that the mathematical selection of a range of colors allows the artist to create an enormous number of colors via this calculation.¹⁰ My paintings, which I show here, demonstrate the use I made of some of these attributes.

מימין לטקסט ציור עץ ותחתיו ציור אות קין The first example relates to the way in which I put together a line of trees. On the right we can see a tree I created and saved as a symbol in the library. I used this tree as the basis for creating the line of trees I painted in the picture of Cain, running for his life, with the sign of Cain imprinted on his forehead. The line of trees was created in several stages, including: first I imported the tree symbol, which I painted earlier and saved for future use in the library. Copying the tree I painted and positioning the duplicated tree a certain distance from the first tree followed that. Third, I activated the blend function on the two trees. This produced further duplications of the trees at the same distance set between the first two trees, as many times as was required to fill up the space. This produced a boulevard of trees in the said painting.

Moreover, the computer's abilities to paint an element duplicate it and save it as a symbol enabled me to achieve an additional result. I wanted to embellish my painting with a frame that would signify some topic in the actual painting. In the painting of the sign of Cain, I created a symbol from the Hebrew letter "koof" (the first letter of the name Cain in Hebrew) on which I based the design of the sign of Cain. I copied and positioned the symbol I created in rotation around the painting, to create a frame. Another example of this approach can be seen in the painting of Cain Works the Land shown further on. In that painting I used a vine leaf as the basic element based on which I made the frame. The leaf represented the fruits of Cain's labors.

שלוש ציפורים I painted a series of birds that became part of the Garden of Eden population. These birds appear in the second example. Their wings demonstrate the use I made of the scale function to achieve the birds' special appearance. I also used this function on the outlines of the wings. I duplicated the line in a reduced size several times, and at distances I predetermined. I achieved the color transitions of the rings relating to the tail or body of the birds using the blend function on the computer. This function can be used not only for shapes but also for color surfaces.

מימין או משמאל מגדל קטן מגדל גדול ותמונת מגדל בבל The Tower of Babel I painted comprises the third example. This Tower of Babel demonstrates the use I made of the blend function. Using it, I took two simple linear shapes - which I painted in different shapes and with different colors - and placed them a certain distance apart. The blend function I used for these two shapes allowed me to join them by duplicating them the number of times I set until I had filled up the entire distance between them. The tower I painted, as I said, was saved for future use as a symbol in the library. The city created in my painting of the Tower of Babel, shown on this page, demonstrates the

use I made of the Tower of Babel I painted and which I saved in the library as a symbol. I retrieved the painting of the Tower of Babel I had painted from the library and copied it several times, sometimes enlarging it, widening it, making it narrower and changing the color of the copied towers positioned around the tower, in the painting. Thus I built up the city at the foot of the tower. The possibility of changing the proportions of the tower is illustrated through the small tower alongside the bigger one as shown above.

מימין מלאך מתחתיו מעגל מלאכים ומתחתו תמונת הגירוש The angel I painted and which I show on the right, is another example of the use of the scale function in my paintings. I used this function in the painting of the six angel wings. After I finished painting the angel I saved it in the library as a symbol for future use. I can retrieve the angel I stored in the library at any stage, as I said, copy it and use it to create different compositions. One example of such a composition is the circle of angels, shown on the right. I retrieved the object of the angel I had painted from the library, copied it several times and rotated it to create the circle of angels. I also saved the circle of angels as a symbol in the library so I can use it for other paintings.

My painting, which relates to the expulsion of Adam, Eve and the snake from the Garden of Eden, shown on the right, is another example of the use of the symbol function in general, and in this case of the symbol of a circle of angels which I painted and saved, as aforesaid, in the library. In this painting the circle of angels was employed to reflect the fact that the angels prevented Adam, Eve and the snake from returning to the Garden of Eden.

I think the computer's abilities I have noted convey the richness of its brush, which is unparalleled in the traditional painting tools. The uniqueness of the computer's brush supports the opinion that painting using vector software forms a new cyber-culture in the world of art. This idea is anchored in the thinking of Herbert Marshall McLuhan who coined the phrase: "The medium is the message." In this phrase he confers on the communications medium, used in the circumstances, a central role in the development of culture. According to his philosophy, every society and every era has its own communications medium (regardless of the essential content expressed through that medium). According to McLuhan the use of an innovative communications medium leads to the development of a new culture which forms new commonly used ways of thinking, followed by personality patterns, sets of values and social structures. In our context, the application of Herbert Marshall McLuhan's philosophy to digital painting using vector software leads to the conclusion that utilizing this new means in the realm of painting actually generates a new cyber-culture.

The cultural change derived by adopting technological means can also be

addressed, for example, through the famous essay written by Walter Benjamin in the first half of the 20th century, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”.¹¹ In this essay Walter Benjamin looks at the considerable impact of technological changes of the time – reflected in photography and cinema - on the essence of art. To demonstrate this change he compares the following: a work of art in which the artist is directly involved, such as a stage actor, and a work of art in which technological means are an integral part of the creative process, meaning that the artist’s involvement is indirect, such as in the case of a film star.¹² The conclusion he reaches following the said comparison is that there is a difference between these two creations.¹³ One can note, for example, two changes that take place in such differing circumstances. The first difference stems from the fact that the work of the film star undergoes a series of optical tests, courtesy of the camera operator. The second difference stems from the fact that the film star, who does not present himself to his audience, is unable to maintain a dialogue with the audience while he performs. As such, he feels that using technological means of reproduction detaches the reproduced work from tradition.

Paul Valery made a similar prophesy in the middle of the last century. He also believed that the incorporation of technological changes in the artistic creative process would lead to change in the actual concept of Art. He said that:¹⁴

The origins of the fine arts and the evolution of their various types were formed in an era that was fundamentally different from our era of rampant change, by people whose control of matters and circumstances was negligible compared to our own ability to control. However, following the amazing development of our means, both in terms of their ability to adapt and the measure of their accuracy, it is reasonable to assume that we can expect to see significant changes in the ancient industry of the beautiful... We must be ready and prepared for the possibility that these far-reaching innovations will change the entire technique of art, will affect the actual work of creativity and, may perhaps even eventually change, in the most wondrous way, the actual concept of art.

One can try to determine the characteristics that form the new cyber-culture produced by digital art, often referred to as “the new medium”. In this regard one can note five basic characteristics that delineate the boundaries of this renewing cyber-culture:

The first attribute that denotes the difference deriving from the style of the new cyber-culture in painting (produced by the use of digital art) is an outcome of the endless selection possibilities which the computer offers the artist. As a result of this potential the painting loses its incidental and empirical nature that was characteristic

of the artist's studio. In these circumstances the empirical coincidental nature of manual painting is replaced by precise project planning the editing of which becomes a realistic option due to the abilities of the computer. The limits and conditions of the painting are set after the computer offers the artist the ability to precisely consider the range of potential options relating to line, form, proportions, composition of color, etc.

The second attribute that denotes the difference deriving from the style of the new cyber-culture in painting (produced by the use of digital art) is reflected in the expectation that painting with computers will make the art of painting more amenable to the younger generation without popularizing the quality of the art. The elite mostly enjoyed manual painting. For the younger generations manual art was an alien experience. The transition to digital painting turned the art of painting into a familiar and understood experience for the members of this generation, as the computer's "brush" creates works and speaks to the younger generation in its language.

The third attribute that denotes the difference deriving from the style of the new cyber-culture in painting (produced by the use of digital art) can be seen in the enrichment of the world of art, in the addition of new qualities available to the artist and which were not accessible in relation to manual painting. The reason for this is that the computer, with the range of functions it offers, enhances the artist's abilities and allows him to go beyond the limits and possibilities of traditional manual painting.

The fourth attribute that denotes the difference deriving from the style of the new cyber-culture in painting (produced by the use of digital art) is seen in the separation created between two different factors of the process of art production. In practice, this is a two-stage process, incorporating a virtual stage accompanied by a tangible stage. In manual painting the artist is the one who conceives the virtual idea of the painting, and the one who puts that idea into practice. Using the brush the artist turns the virtual idea into a tangible work of art. The transition to digital painting created a gap between these two stages:

First, there is the stage of planning the work of art and executing it in its virtual context on the computer screen (which is a work of art). This stage is implemented by the artist, and by him alone. This stage incorporates not only the idea, composition and colors but also selecting the artistic tools which the artist will use to create the work. For digital painting this stage includes setting the level of software to be used and selecting the computer features to be used in producing the painting.

Second is the stage of completing the painting whereby the work of art turns from a virtual concept to a tangible creation (in other words, the technical act of printing the work on the printer). This stage can be performed by the artist, but need not necessarily be performed by him.

This differentiation imbues computerized painting with something of an industrial nature reminiscent, for example, of the construction industry where there is

a clear delineation between engineering planning and execution by the contractor. This differentiation is not unique to digital painting. It was found earlier in etching work, lithographs and even in areas of photography.

The fifth attribute that denotes the difference deriving from the style of the new cyber-culture in painting (produced by the use of digital art) is expressed in the revolution which occurred in the significance of the original concept of painting. In contrast to manual painting, which delivers a single original painting, the computer produces an infinite number of original paintings. One can have these paintings with a range of backdrops and in varying sizes. The limitless number of original paintings which the computer can produce is not the result of an outside factor associated with the creative process. This possibility is an integral part of the process of producing the painting on the computer.¹⁵ A similar development took place, in essence, at an earlier stage when photography was accepted as an art form. The circumstances of photography also offer endless numbers of original photographs. The manual painting, on the other hand, was a one-off work. This gave the concept of the original work a narrow significance which referred exclusively to one-off works. However, the concept of the original work is contingent on time and development. As such, the concept of the original creation and, particularly, its coverage are likely to change following technological changes. The difference in the number of original works, produced from a single work of art, creates a quantitative difference, which becomes a fundamental difference. This characteristic imbues digital painting with an industrialized nature similar to conveyor belt manufacturing which is in complete contrast to the individual one-time creation of manual painting. It seems that the transition from a single original to numerous original works necessitates a redefinition of what painting, or any other original work of art is and what is a duplication, copy or print. Moreover, re-evaluation of the concept of originality will also require reappraisal of the legal definition. This will clarify the scope of copyright in relation to digital painting, or photography. To date such issues have been resolved in practice based on practical and financial considerations. In order to boost demand for their work, photographers or artists who produce digital paintings or pictures limit in advance the number of originals they will produce.

In my opening remarks I ventured the question of “why digital art?” It may be said that my answers to this question indicate that the use of digital art, as we said, produces a new cyber-culture, as conveyed by the aforementioned five characteristics. I have no doubt that this result justifies my decision to forsake the traditional means of art and concentrate on digital art. In using computerized painting I do not, as I said, try to emulate the qualities of painting achieved with traditional tools. On the contrary! I use digital painting to utilize all the tools and special features, which the computer offers its user in order to imbue my paintings with new qualities. The unique contribution of the computer's qualities will be especially evident following my decision to paint stories of the Bible on my computer. I believe the uniqueness of the computer “brush” will enable me to express an innovative approach, even when the subject matter is paintings of biblical stories. This is despite the fact that the

stories of the Bible are a subject that has been addressed by the top painters with every painting means available. They have used wood etchings, charcoal paintings, water colors and oil paintings, paintings on ceilings, murals, stained-glass, etc. This obliges me to address the last question I raised in my introduction, and that is why I specifically chose to paint Old Testament stories?

Why Old Testament Stories?

My decision to focus my professional transition on digital painting naturally led to the following question: What should I paint? The answer I produced to this question emerged intuitively and unequivocally: I decided to paint Old Testament stories. Today, I can only try to trace the reasons that brought me to this decision. With hindsight I can think of four reasons for my decision.

The first reason stems from my roots, my origins and formative beginnings, both as an Israeli and as a citizen of the world. I had always dreamed of one day painting subjects connected to these - subjects that symbolize my connection with this nation and this country, regardless of religious allegiances. The stories of the Old Testament, including the laws and legends woven into them, seemed to me a correct choice that satisfied my heartfelt needs. In the Jewish context, the stories of the Old Testament were the last remaining link of the Jewish nation with its national independence of yesteryear. The Old Testament stories served as a magical staff for Jews in the Diaspora, and a means of dispelling the gloomy reality of their lives, and of immersing themselves in reflections on a glorious past.¹⁶ It was as if the events of early history were re-enacted for them everyday. But, for me, the importance of the stories of the Old Testament went beyond their national context. The story of the Creation and the initial development of human history described in the Old Testament are, for me, of universal importance.

The second reason, which lies at the very heart of my choice of Old Testament stories as a subject for my paintings, stems from the possibility of addressing them in the context of current affairs. I felt the Bible stories were an appropriate subject for depicting the reality of our lives, because they could be imbued with contemporary content that is central to our everyday public life. For example, the story of the Creation could be used to express the heavy anxiety over destruction of the world as a result of the development of the atom bomb, in the shadow of which we live. This concern can be expressed in various artistic forms, including using a painting brush. Haim Heffer, for example, expressed this excellently in the lyrics he wrote for "Genesis" which recounts the Creation after the world has been destroyed by the atom bomb, where God does not create man in the new world, in order to prevent additional future destruction of the world.

The third reason behind my choice of Old Testament stories as the subject for

my paintings stems from my curiosity and research tendencies. I am looking to increase my knowledge and extend my understanding of the Midrash, Jewish law and legend. This enrichment is necessary to understand the content of the stories that I want to paint. It satisfied my personal need. I had to read the Midrash and legends, which would enlighten me about the meaning of the Scriptures, and enable me to imbue my paintings with my own special interpretations. I will demonstrate this with three examples, each of which relates to a different story from the Old Testament.

ציור של חוה מהצלע יכול להזיז בימין או בשמאל The first subject refers to the process of creating Eve. The legend explains why Eve was specifically formed from the rib and not from another part of Adam's body. According to the legend, God said He would not create Eve from the head so she would not raise her head with pride; not from the eye so she would not be curious; not from the ear so she would not be obedient; not from the mouth so she would not be garrulous; not from the throat so she would not be impudent; not from the heart so she would not be jealous; not from the hand so she would not be tactile; and not from the foot so she would not be a gadabout.¹⁷ God thought that creating Eve from the rib, an unassuming place in Adam's body, would guarantee the future. I painted Eve's creation from Adam's rib. However, in contrast with every other painting of this event, I placed the forming of Eve from Adam's rib against a background of the Tree of Knowledge where, as Eve is being formed, her hand is already stretching out towards the fruit of the tree. By this, I wanted to infer that, in practice, it doesn't matter how many precautions are taken. Man cannot escape his fate.

מימין תמונה של הנחש עם רגלים The second subject relates to the snake's form when it tempted Eve. I examined hundreds of paintings from different periods that depict Eve's tempting by the snake. The snake's form was uniform in all those paintings. It crawled on its belly from the outset, even before it was punished for tempting Eve.¹⁸ However, examination of the Midrash and legend indicates that this was not so.¹⁹ The legend describes the snake before the punishment according to the ancient tradition, according to which the snake had hands and legs which were cut off by the angels when it was punished. Some even say that the snake had wings. I only found one painting in which the snake is depicted with hands and legs. This is the painting of the original sin by Hugo van der Goes from about 1470 which is exhibited in the Kunsthistorisches (History of Art) Museum in Vienna. In one of the versions I painted I also depicted the snake with hands and legs, as learned from the picture seen on the right. I did this as a means of expressing the concept of reward and punishment.

מימין תמונה של קין על רקע יבוליו The third subject relates to the image of Cain. Few painters depicted Cain as a farmer and Abel as a shepherd. Most of the paintings

of the story of Cain and Abel address the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel, or the scene of Cain attacking his brother Abel. However, a few painters such as Abel Pann and Lilian also addressed the subject of Cain as a farmer. Both painted him ploughing against a background of parched land. I believe that in this painting they infer that Cain did not really have anything to sacrifice to God, and that is why Cain put such a poor offering on the altar. If the poor quality of Cain's offering was due to his poverty that means that God unjustly insulted him and did not appreciate his offering. This interpretation does not seem right to me. I wouldn't be prepared to depict God as petty minded. That's why I preferred to take a different approach. To this end I specifically depicted Cain, as a farmer, against a background of his rich harvest. My painting infers that Cain could have offered up a rich sacrifice to God, and it was because of his character that he did not do so. My interpretation places God in the right, as my painting on the right shows.

The fourth reason, for my choosing Old Testament stories, stems from my feeling that they were an ideal subject for series of paintings. I found the uniqueness of series paintings as a challenge. I was intrigued by the possibility of trying to instill new meaning in an ancient painting tradition, painting Old Testament stories as series. This was a tradition that told the whole story in a single painting. The magic lantern put an end to this tradition. It was no longer possible to convey the entire story in a single picture. This meant that the story had to be divided up into several static pictures whereby the whole story could only be achieved by placing them in sequence. This represented a transition from the story picture to the story series. The two examples mentioned below convey the series paintings of the Creation of Adam or Eve and the story of the Garden of Eden.

The first example, relates to a water color and ink painting called "The Fall of Adam" painted in 1809 by an anonymous painter. This painting can be seen today at the *Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Center Williamsburg, Virginia*. This painting shows Adam with a place missing from his ribs due to the creation of Eve from his rib. Next to him the snake is curled around the Tree of Knowledge with Eve on the other side of the tree. To her right one can already see the angel with the flaming sword in its hand, with the painting referring to the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The paintings are augmented by written texts. The following story series painting "God creates Adam and Eve, the Fall and Expulsion" taken from the *Moutier-Grandval Bible* of early Medieval Art, demonstrates a different approach. This example offers a sort of modern day comic book approach, with the story told picture by picture.

My decision to create a series of paintings was also prompted by my plan to use such a series to embrace and adapt comics, which is a means of expression of the younger generation of the 20th century, to the artistic language of contemporary painting. In addition, I wanted to use a series of paintings to forge a link between the individual picture and animation film; to actually translate the language of the magic lantern of the early 20th century to the language of the digital painting of the 21st century. This approach is even reflected in paintings of the actual animation films. For example, an animated film painted by Jochen Kuhn in 2004, which is the fifth part of a series he calls *Neulich* (News of the Day), was painted in this style. The work incorporates main pictures, accompanied by a number of transitional items, which tell the story.

Moreover, I believe that today, in the era of digital painting there is room, due to the medium's special attributes, to make the transition to series painting. The range of possibilities offered by the computer and, in particular, by its built-in libraries enables us to use the computer to generate series of pictures that tell a story. This is relevant for stories in which the same figures and backdrops appear throughout. These can be presented (as needed at each stage of the story) using the abilities of the computer to execute infinite possibilities in terms of size and composition.

In conclusion, in this book I have sought to present my digital version of the stories of the Old Testament, designed as a series. In this book I have let my creative imagination run freely, and have expressed my interpretation of the stories of the Old Testament as I put them together based on both legend and Jewish law. I am writing these lines 15 months after making my professional transition. Today, looking back, I know that the preference I gave to painting, choosing the computer as the painting means and my decision to paint stories from the Old Testament were, for me, the right thing to do. This choice, in all its three aspects, opened up new horizons for me. It obliged me to deal with subjects that were very different from those in which I had been previously engaged, to delve into a different type of literature, to think deeply about problems of a different kind, and to participate in classes and courses of an entirely different nature. Illustration classes, sketching nude models, or attending lectures on postmodern art have filled my life with new meaning. My bookshelves are filled with literature of a different nature that has replaced my legal library. I am enchanted with the challenge presented to me in dealing with digital art, as well as the need to offer new interpretations of my own to stories from the Old Testament. I feel as if I have been reborn. Sometimes I feel as if I have discovered the yearned for elixir of youth.

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