



Welcome, viewers, to **Landscapes of Home**

Of all the unique landscapes of the Holy Land, one of the most magnetic is the land to be found around the Kinneret or Sea of Galilee. Here we find the hills, the valleys and one of the largest freshwater lakes in the Middle East, its lapping waters reflecting the magically changing skies over northern Israel. We can agree that 'heavenly' is a descriptor that's not too far off the mark.

This is the landscape that drew the first of the Chutzim, the pioneer Zionists who came at the dawn of the 20th Century and founded the first Kibbutz, Degania, which was followed by dozens of others that continue to thrive and grow as a farms and communities, to this day.



Before that, this landscape drew the sages and mystics. Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai of the Zohar, Judaism's greatest philosopher Moses Maimonides, and the Masoretes who developed the first vocalized text of Jewish scriptures—all called this region home at some point in their lives.

So, what is it about this landscape that has called out to so many, and spoken to their hearts, telling them, this is home!

We called on a number of artists to help us envision the landscape and capture this special quality of the Sovev Kinneret region.

In this virtual gallery presentation, you will find lithographs by Amos Yaskil, still an active painter in his mid-80s, who has painted and drawn Sovev Kinneret for more than fifty years. We also have three photographers who call Tiberias, the region's largest city, home: Yuval Gasser, Oshri Vizman and Chaim Moreno. These image makers roam the streets and hills and promenades of Tiberias, day in and day out, capturing her beauty with stationary cameras and with drones that bring our eyes to an angle of view they would not ordinarily see.

Last November, Saint Paul photographer Linda Passon-McNally made a very special pilgrimage—a trip of return to the region, and specifically Kibbutz Sha'ar Ha Golan (the gates of Golan, which sits at the southern end of the Kinneret). She first visited, lived and worked here for some months in 1968 as a young volunteer. In 2019 she returned and had a joyous reunion with old friends that still call Sha'ar Ha Golan home.

We hope this virtual exhibition, Landscapes of Home, conveys some of the beauty, mystery and powerful emotions stirred by this land, and further, we hope these images inspire our viewers with the desire to go and see and experience for themselves the magic of Sovev Kinneret. Not only will you enjoy a unique land, but also, you will meet the wonderful and various people that call it home.

Landscapes of Home is a project of the St. Paul Jewish Federation's P2G (Partnership2Gether) committee, which works to develop programs and missions that bring the people of Sovev Kinneret and the people of the St. Paul Jewish Community together in a bond that strengthens one and all.

This exhibition could not have happened without the ongoing collaboration of Robyn Awend, the cultural arts director of the Twin Cities Jewish Community Centers. We are also indebted to Yael Eran, who works for the city of Tiberias, and curates the [Tiberias/Sea of Galilee Facebook](#) page. Eran connected us with the Tiberian photographers and has served as our communications link with them.

Landscapes of Home was originally planned as a physical art exhibition, to be shown at both St. Paul JCC campus and the Sabes JCC campus in Minneapolis, and we remain hopeful that we will offer that experience in Spring 2021. We also owe great thanks to Julie Swiler, communications director of St. Paul Jewish Federation, who took on the task of transforming the exhibition from 'art on the wall' to a wonderful, virtual experience.

Enjoy!
Jonathan Eisenthal,
Chairman
St. Paul P2G committee