

Photography With Joy - Intergenerational Portrait

Rationale

Each one of us has stories. Stories that evolve over time, place and age. Stories that accompany us through life, stories we gather along the way, stories that stay in our head and stories reflected back to us by those around us – as they look at us, and as we are seen by them.

Yet what happens when you bring together two stories, from different times and places, with an age gap that encompasses worlds with the distance of a lifetime between them? How does each reflect the other? Where do they overlap? What does the chasm between them look like? What does an intergenerational portrait look like?

In the Intergenerational Portrait photography workshop the participants step into a rare and unique experience of visual study and a journey between ages. The workshop brings together **Holocaust survivors** in their 70's and 80's who arrived in Israel as WWII refugees, with native **Israeli youth** in their teens. Over twelve encounters the participants are given an opportunity to peek at each other through the camera lens, to expose and be exposed to ageless content, find common ground, clarify differences, touch, get closer, watch, frame, reflect, blur and sharpen, observe from unique points of view, and build a suitable composition for photographing. To create a portrait together that embraces two diverse worlds, reflecting an intergenerational discourse that is important on the personal, social and public levels.



JDC-Eshel's Experience

The Intergeneration Portrait program has evolved from the successful and highly impactful Photography With Joy program for Holocaust survivors, which Jdc-Eshel launched in 2012.

Photography with Joy has proven to be a life-changing experience for Holocaust survivor participants. Survivors meet weekly for meetings and photography trips and through a therapeutic process, they learn both the art and science of photography. At the same time, they create a portfolio of photographs that helps them share and process their experiences of the Holocaust and its continued impact on their own and their families' lives. Often, exhibitions of their work are displayed as part of the program. Survivors continually remark that the



opportunity to exhibit their work and share their stories is both cathartic and empowering. To date, over twenty Photography With Joy courses and exhibition have taken place in Israel, impacting 300 Holocaust survivors, and viewed publicly in Israel and overseas by tens of thousands of people. Click [here](#) to view a short clip of the program in action in Moshav Nir Galim in Southern Israel.

Goals of the Intergenerational Portrait Program

- Group discourse and therapy for both the Holocaust survivors and the youth. The meeting and coming together of two populations based on personal acquaintance and a dialogue across ages.

- Processing the painful history of Holocaust survivors and transmitting the stories to the youth via a unique experience.
- Personal empowerment that stems from seeing the intergenerational and personal portrait as a mirror of a period, reflecting aesthetic and cultural values, as a person's photographed story.
- Developing social abilities and interpersonal communication through the camera and the intergenerational connection.
- Treating traumatic situations by exposure to the language of visual art and the connection with the intergenerational group.
- Exposing the exhibit to the public as a reflection of an important intergenerational dialogue in order to trigger discourse on fascinating universal values: connection, hope, Holocaust, revival, coping mechanisms, Past-Present-Future etc.



Process

- Locating the target population – Holocaust survivors and high school youth.
- Separate preparatory meetings for each population and ascertaining that all participants can and want to contribute to and receive from the group process.
- Setting dynamic and creative weekly meetings for joint work of both groups. A process of visual study will take place in these meetings, at the center of which will be the intergenerational portrait. The two groups will set out to explore various portrait expressions through the camera:
 - Portraits as a person's photographed story;
 - Portraits from different periods as a reflection of each period;
 - Portraits as a reflection of aesthetic and cultural values;
 - Portraits that portray a story, emotion, movement, statement;
 - Self-portraits.

During the process of searching for the joint portrait, the photographers will utilize the camera's special properties to frame, reflect, get closer or more distant, change viewpoints, compositions and perspectives, and look inwards and outwards to make the most of the experience.

- For bonding and the enrichment of both groups, there will be guided outdoor photography workshops for 3 hours:
 - Creative portraits – discovering the unique creative potential of each person. Photographing from a different viewpoint enables one to see things differently. Creative photography techniques, searching for different and original viewpoints, and learning advanced photography techniques using filters, lighting, exposure and touches of Photoshop. Guided excursion for street photography.



- Social portraits – lecture on documentary and social photography. Examining the uniqueness and impact of social photography. Examining society through portrait photographs throughout history versus contemporary portrait photographs, a photography tour of Tel Aviv's Central Bus Station and a personal view of the metropolis.
- The experiential process will be accompanied by counseling for each group. The youth will be exposed to the complex childhood stories of the survivors, and the survivors in turn will be exposed to the challenges of today's youth. The stories will be jointly processed through the camera and a connection will be formed based on closeness, sharing and direct intergenerational contact.
- The products of the sessions – the joint portraits embracing two worlds – will be presented in an exhibit reflecting an intergenerational discourse that is important on the personal, social and public level. The exhibit will be mobile and therefore exhibited throughout Israel and abroad. The Museum of the Jewish People (Beit Hatfutsot) in Tel Aviv has expressed an interest in hosting the initial Intergenerational Portrait exhibition.

