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Intermarrieds: Turning a Lens on 'Mixed' Couples

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By Voices of NY | Via MANHATTAN TIMES, THE JEWISH DAILY FORWARD

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An American-born Israeli photographer, now living in New York, was troubled by an official Israeli campaign in 2009 which featured “lost people” who had married outside of Judaism. Herself married to a French non-Jew, she wondered about other “intermarried” couples – people who have crossed divides of race, religion and ethnicity, to love and live with others. So Yael Ben-Zion advertised on a local parenting board to meet such couples in her neighborhood in northern Manhattan, and soon a new project was born: The Intermarrieds.



“Baptism” (Photo by Yael Ben-Zion via **Manhattan Times** video)

Both Manhattan Times and The Jewish Daily Forward have featured articles about the project and interviews with Ben-Zion. Her photographs take a close look at couples, their children, and their environment. The photos are accompanied by observations made by some of her photographic subjects.



(Photo by Yael Ben-Zion via The Jewish Daily Forward)

In one photo a woman, Ilana, is embracing her husband while her daughter stands off to the side. Ilana is quoted: “When Jeff told them he wanted to marry me, they did not support it and expressed concern that they would have Jewish grandchildren. Unlike my mother and sister, they did attend our wedding.”

Writes Anna Goldenberg in **The Forward**:

The photographs of 20 couples, their homes and their families provide an intimate look into the daily lives of people who have married outside their faith or race. They consist of a combination of still lives with details, such as a bible in the bathroom, and photos of the families in everyday life situations, like hugging, dressing children or breastfeeding.

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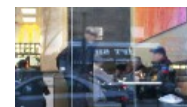


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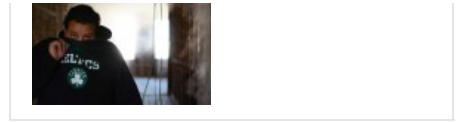
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Five of the couples including Ben-Zion's had one Jewish partner. Among the others are Baha'i, Buddhist and interracial partners. "I wasn't interested in creating a statistical survey," she said. "I was more interested to deal with the challenges."



In **Manhattan Times**, Sherri Mazzocchi writes:

In the piece *Baptism*, a couple re-enacts a baptism as the wife pours water over husband's head as he bathes. His back, covered with an elaborate tattoo of wings, faces the viewer. In *Murphy Bed*, parents and child are locked in a casual embrace.



"Murphy Bed" (Photo by Yael Ben-Zion, via *The Jewish Daily Forward*)

Gabriel de Guzmán, the show's curator, said the level of intimacy that Ben-Zion captures is surprising. "She was able to make her subjects feel comfortable and let their guard down, and let her in their world."

Ben-Zion's photographs can be seen at La Galería at Boricua College until February 3. There will be a closing reception and artist talk on February 3 at 6 p.m.

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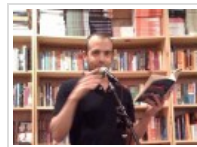
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