

Lifestyle

Lynn gets a touch of Israel

Jewish artist's paintings to be displayed at Kleinman Gallery

By PHYLLIS KARAS
For The Item

Raya Talmor is an artist who feels as at home in Lynn and New York City as she does in her native Israel.

For the last three months, Talmor has been a resident of the Big Apple, painting, visiting galleries, teaching young artists and absorbing all the creative and artistic juices the city offers. On a six-month sabbatical from Haifa University (where she teaches art and Kibbutz Yagur and has been a member since 1961), Talmor will exhibit her paintings in Lynn's Kleinman Gallery on May 14 and 15.

More than anything else, she's looking forward to renewing friendships with many North Shore families who have spent time at Kibbutz Yagur.

Due to such cultural exchanges, the Israeli artist has become quite familiar with America. In fact, the comfortable feeling which developed encouraged annual visits to Manhattan for the last four years.

On one of her most memorable excursions, in March 1987, Talmor was a featured artist at the United Nations. Her oil on canvas, "Return From Mount Moriah," was showcased on the World Federation of the United Nations' first-daycover for the exhibition "Shelter for the Homeless."

Five hundred lithographs of that painting were printed, and Talmor spent an entire day autographing those artworks in the UN's lobby.

"It was a very special day," she says. "So many people came and bought the lithographs and first-day covers. The ambassador from Israel was also there, and we had dinner with UN officials. It was a day I will never forget."

For her exhibition in Lynn next month, Talmor will include 20 watercolors and oils on paper which spotlight Israeli land-



Among the works of Israeli artist Raya Talmor, left, are her self-portrait, above.

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scapes. Fifteen portraits that are part of her series on Israeli women will be displayed as well.

"These oils on paper are filled with symbols of women. These symbols include the ram, masks and the dove and they represent what Israeli women are involved in."

Talmor's paintings have been enthusiastically received in Paris, London, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

"I dream about returning to Italy, and spending time in the place where so much of the art world began," she says.

But the spot Talmor traditionally returns to is Kibbutz Yagur, located at the foot of Carmel Mountain. She lives there with her husband and three children.

However, those in-between trips are what ultimately show up on many of the artist's canvasses. For example, her first visit to New York resulted in a series of more than 20 paintings about Manhattan.

Scenes of Talmor's native country are also evident in many of her important works.

Growing up, Talmor spent her childhood on Kibbutz Ein Hahores, where nature and the varied landscapes of Israel — typified by open plains, fruit groves and eucalyptus woods — became a permanent part of her creative spirit. Dark green hilly scenes, inspired by her current home's surroundings, are also prominent in her art.

"I am most certainly an Israeli artist," she says. "Through my paintings, I represent what I feel and think about Israel. When I am at my exhibits, I expect to be asked questions, not just about my work, but about my country. That is what I hope will happen in Lynn, at the Kleinman Gallery."

The Kleinman Gallery is located at 90 Lewis St., Lynn. Gallery hours are Saturday, May 14, 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, May 15, 2-5 p.m.