

About The Artist

Sally S. Asa was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts on June 21st, 1921. She was the daughter of Edna and David Halbstein, Russian Jews who came to this country in 1904 to escape persecution in Eastern Europe.

David and Edna married and settled initially in Lynn, where David labored at a shoe factory. They later moved to Chelsea where they opened a kosher bakery. Eventually they had six children, four girls and two boys. Little Sarah was the fourth child in line and right from the beginning showed her sense of individualism and independence.



The Halbstein family (left to right). Back Row: Bernie, Madeline, Lou; Middle Row: David, Sally, Bertha, Edna;



Sarah, who was soon called Sally, exhibited artistic promise throughout her childhood. With constant encouragement from her parents, who worked hard to see that she had formal artistic training, Sally attended The School of Practical Arts in Boston and the Boston Teachers College. When the US became involved in WWII, Sally joined the WACS, where she achieved the rank of Sergeant. Even the army took advantage of Sally's artistic prowess by assigning her to Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland, where she was one of the only female draftsmen in the armed forces.

After being honorably discharged in 1947, Sally went to work at General Electric. That same year, fate stepped in when she vacationed at a ski resort with some friends. It was there that she met Maxim Asa, a young Israeli athlete who was working as a waiter while on a winter break from school.

Maxim was a dynamic individual, who set his sights on Sally from their first glance. He finally won her over by defying the rules of the resort's kitchen and personally cooking salami and eggs for her one morning after overhearing her complain about the food. It may have cost him his job, but he won Sally's heart. For the next two years, they saw each other as often as they could until Max could finish his studies of physiology and physical medicine at Springfield College in Massachusetts. After his graduation, he and Sally married with her whole family in attendance.

Soon after, he whisked her home to Israel so he could help with the efforts to rebuild the newly established State by creating extensive rehabilitation camps.

Sally loved being in Israel. Even though the lack of modern conveniences was sometimes frustrating, the sheer beauty of the land and the majesty of its

biblical history inspired Sally to put it all on canvas. Her creations were beautiful, and it was in Israel that her twin daughters, Judi and Leora



were born. Sally loved her new extended family in Israel; with David and Edna now gone, Sally embraced Max's parents as her own.



When the twins were three, Max decided to take his family back to the States so he could pursue his Master's and Doctorate Degrees in his chosen field of physiology and rehabilitation. They settled in

Springfield, Mass., where Max began his intensive studies. Sally was happy to be back near her sisters Madeline, Ruthie and Bertha, and brothers, Bernie and Lou.

While Max was finishing his degrees and beginning his career, Sally was refining her skills as an artist. Her paintings were starting to be recognized and sought after. She entered shows and claimed many prizes. Her career as an artist was off the ground.

In 1959, Max and Sally moved to Livingston, NJ, where they had a son, David. With three children to raise, a new driver's license and Max busy with his career, Sally's still-lives were threatened by real-life. Undaunted, Sally balanced it all and was able to raise her children and still follow her muse.

Sally's life as an artist was only complimented by Max's life as a visionary. They traveled extensively, not only to Israel, but all over the world. Many times they would take the children, believing in the education of travel. With all that Sally saw and experienced, she let it all pass by her eyes and go into her hands as she put her impressions on canvas. It wasn't long before she opened her own studio and began to teach art. Her teaching abilities were inspiring. She opened the minds of many young budding artists with her tutelage.

In 1964, Max found the house of his dreams and moved the family to Deal, in Monmouth County, at the New Jersey Shore. With the girls starting junior high school, and David away at school, Sally settled into the community that she would claim as her



own. Not to be overshadowed by her husband, now the Head of Physiology and Clinical Research at Monmouth Medical Center, or her brother, Dr. Bernard Halbstain, an orthopedic surgeon and President of the Medical Board at the same hospital, Sally began to establish her own reputation as a talented artist and as an involved member of the community. She involved herself in many organizations. She created scenery for summer theatrical productions, participated in programs that promoted artistic achievement, and taught classes in painting and sculpture. During the next decade Sally's artwork gained prominence in Monmouth County and around the world; her work was sought after by many respected collectors.

In 1974, Sally's dream of having her own gallery finally came true. She opened "he Shore Fine Arts Center on Ocean Avenue in Long Branch, NJ. The gallery was not only a showcase for her original art and sculptures, but it offered a place for other area artists to exhibit their work as well. That same year, she painted a portrait of the then-President of Israel, Golda Meir. She sent the portrait to Dr. Meir, and received a personal note of thanks.

To anyone else, it would seem like Sally had reached her pinnacle but that wasn't the case. She never wanted to stop learning about her craft...how far she could take her talents and stretch her abilities. Her respect for other artists was great. She relished going on painting junkets all over the world. She took seminars and studied with Edgar Whitney, Jon Argay and Robert E. Wood. Her style took many forms over the years, encompassing all she learned. She exhibited her work in several states, and won numerous awards.

Sally's biggest honor came when she was listed in Artists of Renown 1981-1982. Her works could be seen in various foundations, libraries, colleges, community organizations and private collections around the world from Israel to Tokyo.

Sally passed away unexpectedly on September 26, 1988. It was a shock to her family, friends and long-time admirers, but most of all, a tragic loss to the world of art...for all the paintings that were still inside her head will never be shared with the world.

This small retrospective showing of her paintings is a representative sampling of the work of Sally Asa; paintings owned by her estate, her family, and on loan from private individuals. Through these various works we hope to inspire you and share with you her love of beauty... her passion for light and color... her purity of expression...

~ her love of art.~

Sally Asa, American Artist 1921-1988

