

FHS Oral History Project – Orit Reuben

Description:

Orit Reuben was born in Israel in 1966. She recounted her upbringing in Israel during the 1970s, from visiting her grandparents in their kibbutz to living in a low-middle-class neighborhood. She specifically recollected memories about experiencing the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Her dad served in the Israeli military and moved the entire family to the United States in 1979 as part of his role in the military. Orit recalled the joy and struggles she encountered culturally in her transition from Israel to Minneapolis. At the turn of the 1990s, Orit attended the University of Minnesota, studying computer science despite her deep artistic passions and talents. Mandatory military service as an Israeli citizen interrupted her collegiate experience, and Orit did not continue her computer science degree upon returning to Minneapolis. Instead, she pursued her artistic passion by studying commercial interior design at the University of Minnesota. Orit moved to Orlando, Florida, in 2006 to find better employment opportunities. She explained how the economic recession of 2008-2009 prompted her career move to paint as a self-employed artist full-time, as she volunteered at the Crealdé School of Art in Winter Park, Florida, after losing her job. In addition to broader observations living in Orlando, Orit discussed her painting style, how she interprets Florida through her artwork, and the overall artistic and cultural community she has discovered through her artistic career in Central Florida since 2009.

Transcription:

00;00;04 - 00;00;20

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: This is Sebastian Garcia interviewing Orit Reuben on May 13th, 2025, at Orit's home residence in Orlando, Florida, for the Florida Historical Society Oral History Project. Can you please restate your name, your date of birth, and where you were born?

00;00;20 - 00;00;29

ORIT REUBEN: My name is Orit "Ruben." In Hebrew, it is Orit Reuben, and I was born in Israel in 1966.

00;00;29 - 00;00;35

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Perfect. Can you tell me about your childhood growing up in Israel?

00;00;35 - 00;03;24

ORIT REUBEN: I grew up in a nice small town. Now it is a kind of a bigger town. It is too big right now. But when I grew up, it was a nice place. Nice neighborhood. Kind of a middle class place. In an apartment. My parents were kind of lower middle class, a little struggling. My dad was a career military Air Force person, and my mom was a housewife. And, as everyone in Israel, [I] went to a school, everyone went to public school, I think still does, that was walking distance away. And all [my] friends were living in [my] apartment building. Also, I had two aunts and cousins that lived in that town as well. I had a bigger family, actually, very big family. But two aunts and their families lived in that same town as well. We were close to my mom's family. My grandparents were living on a kibbutz, which my grandparents were founders, not on their own, but they were part of the founding group of this kibbutz in a coastal location in Israel. And so that was a very nice memory going to my grandparents' home. Not every

weekend, but almost every Saturday. And being spoiled by the grandparents and all that. And that is a very nice memory. Otherwise, Dad was in the military, sometimes away on a base. Growing up in Israel, I did live through a couple of wars. The schools were very good, and nice friends that [were] all walking distance away because over there you live an urban life and everyone walks everywhere. And as kids, we were just playing outside, running around until it was dark and time to eat. I think it was the same thing here at the time.

00;03;25 - 00;03;29

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. What is a kibbutz?

00;03;29;18 - 00;04;21;09

ORIT REUBEN: Kibbutz is like a farm. [It] was a farming community, but that was cooperatively owned by the members and residents at the time. I think now it is different. But at the time, the residents and members owned the lands and shared the profits. People were not paid by money. I think they got a stipend and sort of like [their] food was free and [they] worked [their] job on the kibbutz. It is a little bit like a commune, but more organized and professionally run.

00;04;21 - 00;04;24

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Interesting. Were you an only child?

00;04;24 - 00;04;38

ORIT REUBEN: No. I have a sister, so I am the oldest. My sister is three years younger than I am. And, yeah, both of us girls.

00;04;39 - 00;04;52

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: I have done some reading on you because you have a solid public presence. And you mentioned how your late grandfather was a painter who deeply inspired you. Can you talk to me about that?

00;04;52 - 00;06;15

ORIT REUBEN: Yes. So my late grandfather was a painter. A couple of his paintings are hanging in my house, and he was a horticulturalist. And was in charge of a lot of the kibbutz's horticultural landscaping. He was in charge of entire plantations. I think the avocado plantations, the mango plantations, pecans. I think he imported and started the avocado and mango industries in Israel. And at the time, I think he probably was the horticulturalist in Israel. But in his spare time, he painted. And then my mother was also a painter. He went to art school. He went to the University of Buenos Aires, I think in the 1920s. So he had an art education background or some. But my mom is more of a hobbyist. She still paints every day.

00;06;15 - 00;06;25

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. That is awesome. And what was it about seeing them paint as a child that inspired you?

00;06;25 - 00;06;57

ORIT REUBEN: I cannot really pinpoint it. I think it was just part of my life or part of my being. And I feel like I had a talent as a young child that was recognized by my parents and my teachers and friends. So I already recognized that in myself. And when I was asked at a young age, in school, “What would you like to be when you grow up?” I always said, “Artist.”

00;06;57 - 00;07;05

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: That is awesome. Were there any particular challenges your family faced growing up?

00;07;05 - 00;08;58

ORIT REUBEN: I always felt like we were struggling a little financially, even though we went to a very middle class, and everybody was kind of ordinary in class. At the time, it was very kind of an egalitarian culture. Everyone was kind of the same. The kids in my class happened to be—it was just a circumstance—some of the richest kids in the country, probably at the time, children of builders or children of owners of insurance companies or something like that. It was just coincidence. So I always felt they had these designer jeans, and I did not. And I was a very shy person also at the time. I came out of my shell later on. And my dad was also a very practically minded person. So at the time, I mean, later on growing up, I did not see or was not allowed to or see a financial opportunity at ever going to art school or being an artist. That was not a possibility in my family. But that was later on when I thought about what will I be when I grow up.

00;08;58 - 00;09;01

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Even though your mom and grandfather painted as hobbyist.

00;09;02 - 00;09;03

ORIT REUBEN: It was their hobbies.

00;09;03 - 00;09;04

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. Okay.

00;09;04 - 00;09;06

ORIT REUBEN: They didn't make a living at it.

00;09;06 - 00;09;23

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Got it. You mentioned how you lived through some wars when you were in Israel. One of the most notable ones, of course, is the 1973 Yom Kippur War. But you were a—

00;09;23 - 00;09;23

ORIT REUBEN: I was seven.

00;09;24 - 00;09;25

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. You were a little child.

00;09;25 - 00;09;27

ORIT REUBEN: And I remember it like it was yesterday.

00;09;27 - 00;09;28

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Then talk to me about that please.

00;09;28 - 00;11;49

ORIT REUBEN: I think now buildings are built differently. But at the time every apartment building had a bomb shelter. And that war was a surprise, so we were not prepared. The bomb shelter was not prepped for people going in there. I know my dad knew because he was a military man, and he was stationed in the Sinai desert, where a lot of the fighting was going on with Egypt. He was drafted a day before and we saw cars moving around in the streets on Yom Kippur, which you know something [was] happening because nobody drives on Yom Kippur. The roads are empty. And so we knew something was happening, but he could not say anything, or he said something to my mom, but we were kids. So at four in the morning, exactly, there was a siren, and I just jumped out of bed, and it was my birthday. And my mom had given me for my birthday an Indian moccasin kit that I put together, [these] leather moccasins, and I was very proud of them. So I put them on because they were by my bed. And in our pajamas we ran down to the bomb shelter, and I was the first one in and it was dark. I think that the light was not connected. And I remember going downstairs in this concrete room and stepping in a puddle of water, pitched dark and ruining my moccasins. I mean, as a kid, that is what you think of because you do not really understand what is going on. And then the adults brought chairs there and kind of made it into a more comfortable place. And us kids were playing around and, later, my mom told me that she and the adults [heard] the bombs, falling wherever they did. But as kids, I think we were not paying attention and were not aware.

00;11;49 - 00;12;05

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. Well, I guess my next question will be when and where did you emigrate once you left Israel?

00;12;06 - 00;16;13

ORIT REUBEN: In 1979. My dad did go to the US a couple of times as part of his role as a military officer, he had some dealings with the United States. And then at a certain point he was offered a private job as an engineer, in a contract to work with a partnership between an Israeli and American company in Minneapolis, in the Twin Cities. So our family moved to Minneapolis. And it was kind of an adventure. We landed in New York first for a few days. We had friends in New York that at the time worked in the embassy. They were best friends of my parents. And we knew the kids, and we stayed with them for a few days, and I got to see New York. And then we came to Minnesota, actually, and I was in eighth grade, I think I was either twelve or thirteen. I think I must have turned thirteen at the time and, then put in a suburban school, Richfield Public Schools. There were a bunch of Israeli families that were with us living in this apartment building and the building across the street that were part of the same group that came, so there were a bunch of Israeli kids of different ages going through the school systems. And the reason we went to this school system is because it had an English as a second language program. So I was in this English as a Second Language Program [ESL] for the first year. I did know English because that was my favorite subject in school. And everyone has to learn English in Israel. But everyone spoke really fast, so I could not understand, or I had to

have people repeat everything for me. What was really nice [was that] Minneapolis at the time was a very wholesome place to move to. Very nice people. Everyone there was mostly Scandinavian heritage and just this wholesome place and right away in middle school, they gave me a locker partner and a person to show me around the school and that person became my best friend at the time. And by that automatically I became friends with her friends. So I had American friends right away. And they spoke to me in English, corrected me and made sure I was integrated and understood what was going on, or the culture and the Minnesota, Scandinavian culture, the slang, everything. It was still hard for me and culturally hard for me because, just psychologically, how people related, especially in the Midwest, was very different, less direct than communication style than Israeli communication style. And I still struggle with that. I think I am a lot better. Just in the last few years, I think I have become better at it. I understand and know that I am a very direct person. That is just because of the culture, and I have a hard time understanding indirect communication.

00;16;14 - 00;16;23

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah, absolutely. And I know you were, you know, around thirteen when you left, but did you ever envision leaving Israel?

00;16;23 - 00;16;49

ORIT REUBEN: I did not envision it or did not really imagine it, but when it happened, I think my sister and I were kind of excited. My parents made it to be an exciting thing. And my dad, when he would come back from his American trips, he would show us slides and pictures and he was all excited about it. So it seemed like an exciting thing to happen.

00;16;49 - 00;17;09

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And you mentioned how your friends in middle school sort of facilitated your adjustment to life in the US. What other ways did you adjust at that age?

00;17;09 - 00;17;51

ORIT REUBEN: I think at that age, I was too young to have very strong opinions. I think at the time, especially in the late 70s, early 80s, what was hard was the transition, food wise, it was very hard because food in Israel was very fresh and good and flavorful, and everything here tasted like cardboard, especially then, and especially in the Midwest. But as a kid, you do not know that much better.

00;17;51 - 00;18;29

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: I am curious, do you think being Israeli sort of—I do not even know how to frame this question. I am just curious, in terms of you growing up in Minnesota, in middle school, high school, especially in high school when you are a little bit older, did your friends or people around you try to understand your culture, especially since Israel in the 1980s, I mean, to this day, it is a continuing topic?

00;18;29 - 00;19;05

ORIT REUBEN: Yes, but not really. That Minnesota culture is a very homogeneous culture. And people are very proud of their Scandinavian heritage there. I do not know how curious they were about it, maybe from a religious standpoint, but otherwise probably not that much. I do

not think they as kids, they did not really know what to imagine. And even in high school, they did not think about it too deeply.

00;19;05 - 00;19;10

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. For sure. You attended the University of Minnesota, correct?

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ORIT REUBEN: Correct.

00;19;11 - 00;19;15

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What years did you attend and what was your major?

00;19;15 - 00;20;19

ORIT REUBEN: So at first I did attend as a computer science major. I was on a student visa and that was kind of by the coaxing of my dad and math was kind of a strength of mine anyway. I did not really fit in. At the time they were not that many women in computer science. But at the same time, I [liked] it. I had good friends, and I [enjoyed] the experience. And then [during] my third year, [as] an Israeli citizen, I did have to go back to Israel to do the military service. And that was not something I could get out of. So I did go back and do my service. And that was, I believe in 1990 or '91, I think it was '90.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And that was during college?

00;20;21 - 00;21;42

ORIT REUBEN: During college. Yeah. So I basically left college. I did not finish. And when I came back, I had the chance to finish, but then just in my gut, I felt like I just could not go back. First of all, everything that I had learned—since computer science at the time was changing so much—I think if my heart was really in it, I could have gone back and made up what I have lost and finished. But my heart was not in it, and I was just really kind of aimlessly floating. I was not sure what I wanted to do until I [made] a decision. I think a friend of mine suggested it to me. A friend of mine recognized that I was artistic, and I helped her with some art homework that she was not good at. And I think we kind of together figured out what I should do was [go] to interior design school. And I applied to again to the University of Minnesota and once I got accepted to that and started, I wholeheartedly embraced it. And I really enjoyed it. And I was good at it. So that had been my career for twenty years or so, commercial interior design.

00;21;42 - 00;21;48

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And I am assuming that that was why you moved to Florida because of a career opportunity.

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ORIT REUBEN: Yes, that was why I moved to Florida.

00;21;53 - 00;21;57

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And that was as soon as you graduated from interior design school?

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ORIT REUBEN: No. I graduated in 2000, and I worked in Minnesota until 2006. And then in the summer of 2006, I moved here.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Okay. So it is about to be twenty years.

00;22;10 - 00;22;11

ORIT REUBEN: Yes.

00;22;11 - 00;22;18

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Talk to me about what you did as an interior designer?

00;22;18 - 00;23;16

ORIT REUBEN: I did basically interior architecture, from furniture to finishes, to detailing walls, detailing cabinetry, producing construction documents, everything that goes on the inside of the building, sometimes even the outside. And then the architect would sign off on it, but [I] basically [told] the builder how to build the inside, and [I dealt] with codes and space planning and then the finishes. [I] constructed it and then [I chose] the finishes and, basically telling an architect or a builder how to build a building from the inside and the cabinet maker how to build a cabinet and so on and so forth.

00;23;16 - 00;23;24

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Interesting. And was your move to Florida intentional or was that—

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ORIT REUBEN: It was intentional because I felt like, at a certain point, even though [I like] living in the Twin Cities, I felt like my world was getting a little small. It was a little bit of a kind of a gut decision of, “Let’s try something else. Let’s get out of this cold weather.” My dad was living in Minnesota, but my sister and mom already moved to California [for] nicer weather. And I thought that was where I would end up. But at the same time, I was open to looking for a job just all over the country. And I actually did not think of Florida and did not think of Orlando, and it just ended up this way that I got a job downtown Orlando. I was flown to interview for a day. And then I basically was offered a job and was told, “You have a month to move.” And I accepted it and moved almost site on scene. I found an apartment in a historic house downtown, like in Eola Heights. And walking distance from the job and kind of rebuilt my life. It took me a little bit of time to adjust because Orlando culturally is probably a step down from Minneapolis, especially at the time, art wise and theater wise. And it was a little bit of a struggle. And it was a struggle to find your people. I was friends with people at work right away. I had friends, people that I [liked] at work. And I still like them, but I think once I found art, then I found people that I really connected with, and that took a while too. One of my bosses at the time was painting on the side. And then I thought, “If he can do it, so can I. Why can’t I do that?” So then I started dabbling and taking classes.

00;25;55 - 00;25;59

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And that was around 2009, correct?

00;25;59 - 00;27;13

ORIT REUBEN: Yes. So actually I was laid off during the recession. And I did not have a job, and I got a traffic ticket on Aloma, and then I went to court, and I said, “Can I volunteer? I have a lot of time, but I do not have money. Can I just do community service instead of paying this?” I think it was like \$280, like fifteen miles over the limit. And I was going fifty at a thirty, something stupid like that, and it was almost a \$300 fine in Winter Park. So the judge said yes. I volunteered at a couple of places before I volunteered at Crealdé School of Art, answering phones. And I really liked the place. And I found out you get to take free art classes for volunteering there, and I stuck around there for a long time. I was a volunteer. Then I was a fellow and a studio artist. I participated till the end. I took advantage of it to the fullest.

00;27;13 - 00;27;14

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. Right.

00;27;14 - 00;27;21

ORIT REUBEN: Took classes from really wonderful teachers and—

00;27;21 - 00;27;27

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And can you explain your painting style, your aesthetic?

00;27;27 - 00;28;35

ORIT REUBEN: I look at my painting style as an impressionistic. I discovered pastels while at Crealdé. I painted on oil first. Well, I did charcoal, black and white, just charcoal on newsprint, which I still do. But then someone donated a box of pastels when I was answering phones at the front desk, and I asked if I can keep them, and I did. And then I started taking classes in pastels and I sort of took to it and kept studying it and developing it. And I was also back working full time, and then decided that, in order to do something well, I have to do stick to one thing. And so I stuck to pastels. And right now, I mean, I would love to paint and oil also, but it would be a learning curve. Learning again, how to use a brush, how to mix. At the time I really knew how to do those things, but now I would have to learn it all again. And I will at a certain point. But I kind of am sticking to what I am doing right now.

00;28;35 - 00;28;42

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. How do you interpret Florida through your artwork? Or have you?

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ORIT REUBEN: I love how unique Florida nature is. I love nature. I was raised to love nature. And [I] came up in that sort of family on my mom's side. And I love how unique Florida nature is. I also travel. I like being outside and so I paint outside a lot. I also paint inside, but I get a lot of inspiration, and I observe a lot being outside. I learn to paint what I paint while I am outside and bring it inside to the studio. And my new favorite place is the Orlando Wetlands Park. These islands of palms that I paint there. I don't know if you have been there.

00;29;45;25 - 00;29;46;27

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: No, I have not.

00;29;46 - 00;29;48

ORIT REUBEN: Yeah, I recommend it.

00;29;48 - 00;29;48

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Okay.

00;29;48 - 00;30;07

ORIT REUBEN: And I like birds. I like scenery. I started by painting the figure, and I want to go back to painting the figure, too, because it is very challenging, and it is gratifying to paint the figure.

00;30;07 - 00;30;08

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Absolutely.

00;30;08 - 00;30;22

ORIT REUBEN: But then, I moved to painting landscape. And again, it is hard to be all over the place and do a million things, but eventually I will go back to painting the figure as well.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: In what ways did your venture into painting full time sort of connect you with the cultural and artistic scene of Orlando? Or did it?

00;30;37 - 00;32;07

ORIT REUBEN: I feel like it did even before painting full time, how I got connected. Well, first of all, belonging to a Crealdé School of Art, being a student there, being part of the fellowship and also teaching there in the end, connected me to a lot of the arts community here. Working downtown, I was also connected to City Arts Factory in the beginning because I worked across the street from there, and also the personnel at my workplace that was Baker Barrios Architects volunteered to do marketing and things for City Arts Factory, so I connected to that aspect of the art community. And then I was recruited to be a part of a group called The Florida Painters. They are no longer active, but we painted outside every Saturday religiously, every Saturday morning, painting outside. And that was how I started painting outside. And this was a very close knit group of people that some of them are professional painters, some of them are hobbyists, and they are really interwoven in the Orlando painting community, and they know everyone in Winter Park, some of them are McRae Studios people.

00;32;07 - 00;32;20

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And given those experiences, generally, how has Orlando's cultural landscape and artistic scene changed since you have been here over the past almost twenty years?

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ORIT REUBEN: That is a good question. I feel like I see the same artists here, as when I came here. I feel like I am the newbie, and they have existed here before me. I just got to know them. That is how I look at it. From what I have learned, I think I have learned that there were more professional galleries here at the time in Winter Park, especially. But most of them have unfortunately closed. There have been a couple of gallery openings just in the last year. And I know professional art galleries are struggling in this town. I hope it will change. Since I know there is a need here, there are people that need art and consume art, but maybe go other places for it. There are home builders, interior designers, and there is a need. But I do not think I have seen a change. Maybe I have learned more about it as I have gotten more enmeshed in it, as the newcomer to it.

00;34;03 - 00;34;27

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. And from your perspective, do you think now that you have been here for almost twenty years the cultural scene of Orlando has leveled with your previous hometown in Minnesota since you mentioned how when you first got here, that was one of your struggles, that it was so stark?

00;34;27 - 00;35;36

ORIT REUBEN: Yes and no. And I think there are many really nice museums here. To be honest, because this is the South, some of the museums are conservative in a strange way that I think is inappropriate to museums. I am just being honest and blunt. But otherwise, there is a lot to see that I do not even take the time anymore to enjoy because I am so busy with my own things. But I think there is enough to do and see here as far as art exhibitions and activities, and I think that existed before too. I know the Rollins Museum is going to expand, which is really a fun thing. But maybe I am not the expert as far as how the art is growing.

00;35;36 - 00;35;45

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What challenges, from your perspective, does Orlando face today?

00;35;46 - 00;37;06

ORIT REUBEN: I think that investment in, from my perspective, from my very narrow perspective, because I know that I have a narrow perspective of a visual artist. Orlando is very invested into the performing arts because of Disney. It is a performing arts center, which is wonderful, but there is investment in it. But I feel like there is not enough investment in professional visual arts. I feel like professional visual arts, not just nonprofit visual arts, could stand some help and some investment. But that is just from my very narrow perspective. And I see a lot of people trying hard. And I appreciate that. A lot of really good people work hard. And I know Orange County is trying to come up with a plan, which is very admirable as well. So yeah, I see good people trying.

00;37;06 - 00;37;14

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: From your perspective, how will Orlando change in the next twenty years?

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ORIT REUBEN: I see a lot of people moving to Florida. And I see the place growing and developing, especially the suburbs. Just building, building, building. I feel like it is inevitable, how it develops and how it gets built. It is out of my control. I do not really know. So I hope there is a wise development. And I feel like a lot of nature is going away, so that is sad for me. I guess that is how I am thinking of it. When I paint, I think of that. I think maybe I am painting a lot of disappearing places and disappearing nature.

00;38;04 - 00;38;20

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. What is something that you learned about Florida that you had no idea of before moving here now that you have been here for twenty years?

00;38;20 - 00;39;23

ORIT REUBEN: I learned that it is a very diverse place. People from other countries [but] people from other states. And it is not a homogeneous place at all. It is the South, but it is not the South. And it has a lot of mixed influences from many different places. And a place like Minnesota where I grew up, you drive around, you see maybe an Iowa or Wisconsin license plate. Here it is normal to see license plates from everywhere. And nobody even blinks an eye. And then the snowbird phenomenon that I was not aware of being a Minnesotan, and now I see how that exists here. And people live here half the year and live somewhere else the other half.

00;39;23 - 00;39;35

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. How has your Israeli heritage influenced your perspective on life generally, but also living in the United States and Florida specifically?

00;39;35 - 00;40;39

ORIT REUBEN: I think being from somewhere else enables you to sometimes look at the big picture and see things from another side, more from a global picture, and understand that, wherever you are, you are not the center of the universe. There is always another point of view. Of course, I recognize that I am biased and have my own strong point of view, but I see that there are other ways of living in other places, some of it is good, some of it is bad. I look at it from being an Israeli also. I also am aware of safety. "Am I safe, am I not safe?" Because that is kind of an Israeli point of view.

00;40;39 - 00;40;46

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. And to that point, what do you hope to see in Israel's future?

00;40;46 - 00;41;27

ORIT REUBEN: Oh, that is such a difficult question. I feel like at this point, hope is not even a concept. As Israelis, we understand and can, I mean, that is like, pardon the pun, but it is hard to have hope right now. I think there is an acceptance of this is what it is. And we cannot really control it. It is sort of a resignation for how things are internally and externally. Internally too things that are not good either.

00;41;27 - 00;41;39

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. If someone is listening to this recording fifty or a hundred years from now, what do you want them to know about your culture and the state of Florida?

00;41;39 - 00;42;43

ORIT REUBEN: My culture as an Israeli? And the state of Florida? I feel like the state of Florida is a welcoming place. And I know that there are a lot of other Israelis here also. I like Florida, it is a welcoming place. And I personally do not seek to be enmeshed in the Israeli community because I grew up in it. So I kind of like meeting people from other places and being integrated into American culture. I feel like it is accepting and embracing, and people here really make an effort to welcome people from other places. Yeah, I can see that here.

00;42;43 - 00;42;53

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Orit, thank you so much for taking some time out of your day to talk to me, and to share your life story. I really appreciate it.

00;42;53 - 00;42;53

ORIT REUBEN: You are welcome.