

Gail Rubin



1938-1978

An Appreciation

Gail Rubin was 39 when she was killed last March by Palestinian terrorists who landed on a beach north of Tel Aviv. Gail was probably photographing wildlife. The terrorists were off course, and Gail was the first person they found and killed before taking over a bus and killing everyone they could along the Tel Aviv highway.

Gail had been in Israel nine years—it was where she became a photographer. In a small country where just about everything has already been photographed, Gail etched out a tough, lonely turf—Israel's wildlife, especially the animals of the Bible, along with the country's flowers and the land itself.

Gail found elegance in everything she photographed—it was part of her acute appreciation of every experience. She was the total photographer, savoring the quality of Jerusalem light whenever she arrived from Tel Aviv. Attracted to the Sahara-like sand and the sea of the Gaza Strip's Bardival Lagoon, first on a nature appreciation trip then back again on her own. In Israel's nature preserves, photographing migrating storks, tiny conies in their self-absorption.

Heading south along the Mediterranean toward Tel Aviv, searching out the best junk food. And back in New York, "the best pastrami sandwich," part of the reunion with our mothers at the Madison Delicatessen. The absurdity of convincing Israeli customs officials that her close-ups of eucalyptus bark were art—an experience Gail compared with the hassles of the first Impressionists. Cutting,



Sand dunes, Bardival Lagoon—1972

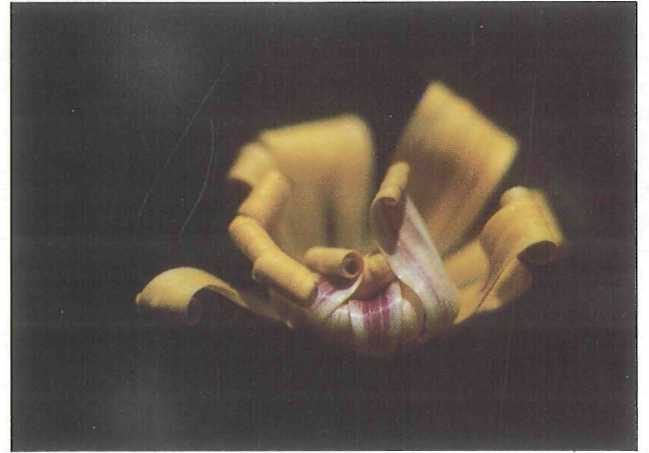
witty comments on the pillars of the Jewish establishment who put her through an unrewarded obstacle course in her search for backing for her "Birds of the Heaven, Beasts of the Field" photography show at New York's Jewish Museum last year. Witty dissections of her struggles with some of the editors of Jewish magazines. "Grotesque," a favorite word of Gail's to describe what she found painful or unacceptable—including Israelis' pity for her being a childless, single woman approaching 40.

Above all, the impossibility of leaving or staying in Israel. Getting closer and closer to coming back—but staying. Staying till New York weather was milder; staying so Soumsoum and Lucky—Gail's dogs, provided for in her will—wouldn't be limited to the sidewalks of New York; staying for just one more assignment.

Staying because in Israel she was not just one more person with a camera hustling to make a living. In Israel, Gail was a photographer.

—Amy Stone

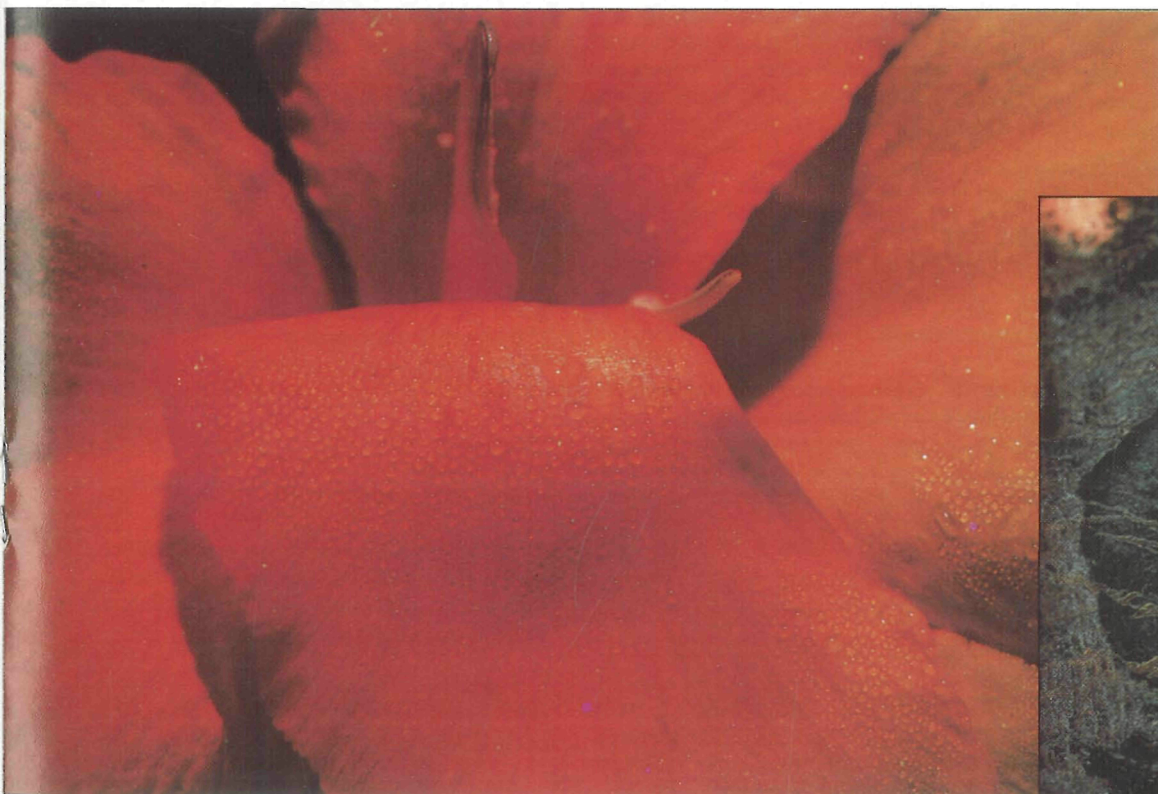
Gail Rubin Photographer



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in everything she
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from eucalyptus bark
and wild flowers to
doors in the afternoon
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Her turf was the whole land of Israel.





(Clockwise)
 Yellow flower—1976
 Beit Gubrin Caves—1976
 Eucalyptus tree bark—1975
 Lily—1973
 Walls in Jericho—1975
 Salt deposits, Dead Sea