

## Art In Israel Today

By Murray S. Greenfield

An ancient art now being reborn in Israel under completely different circumstances is that of the art of mosaics.

From the 1st to the 3rd century the art of stone mosaics in Israel was used extensively in the design of public buildings and in the design of synagogues. The decorative symbols were used on ceilings, floors, and walls and the motifs most often repeated were those of the Menorah, Lions, the Lulav and the Esrog, and the symbols of the four seasons; in the synagogue the Shofar and the symbol of Moses' two spies returning with the bounty of the Promised Land.

But lo and behold from the 3rd to the 5th century desecration set in and some of the symbols started to look like people and in the 5th century the Rabbis spoke out against the use of this "Christian" idea.

Now, in the 20th Century with the impact of archeological digs of ancient cities and sites throughout the country, mosaic art is taking hold again.

It is being used in Israel outside of public buildings and slowly but surely inside for decorative purposes.

The colors available in Israel are all of muted warm colors. The range is wide and the beauty depends mostly upon the artist's ability.

One of the most successful mosaic artists in the country is Mordechai Yoeli, a member of a kibbutz, who had studied art in Europe prior to his immigration to Israel. Mordechai stopped painting as the movement of abstract became strong.

He still refuses to sell his own paintings but the development of mosaic works is a labor of love and is an important employer of members of the kibbutz.

Mordechai, who loved touring the country, noticed the very special red and green natural stone which was present in the Negev and down around Eilat -- in fact, these stones were the basis of Solomon's Copper Mines, and now for the Israeli Copper Mines -- the blacks that are present at Arad and the reds and browns of Jerusalem and the Galilee.

Mordechai, whose biblical training stems from the Cheder in Poland, put his artistic ability to work on the design and practical making of mosaic walls. The use of natural colored stone only instead of proving limiting proved challenging. In conjunction with the plastic manufacturers a new type of glue was developed that withstands both heat and cold and special light-weight materials have to be used in order to be competitive in the export field for the designing of walls for synagogues and public buildings.

His assistant and co-worker is Kalman and interestingly enough he is a person who I had the privilege of transporting when I was bringing over "illegals" from Europe to Palestine.

Mordechai does the designing and supervision and Kalman gathers the stones and deals with the cutting and eleven other kibbutz members are involved in various facets of the creation of an original Israeli stone mosaic.

These mosaics are now to be seen on the walls of the Supersol Supermarket in Tel Aviv and the Memorial Wall of the orthodox kibbutz at Nir Etzion. Smaller plaques for home wall decoration are being made available through retail channels in the U.S.A.



ROBERT

ROBERT KRAVITZ, WHO RECEIVED STRAIGHT "A's" IN HIS 2ND YEAR OF PRE-MED AT U. OF DENVER, SHIRLEY AND LABLE ARE THE PROUD PARENTS.

JERUSALEM (WNS) Premier Levi Eshkol expressed grave concern over recent military and arms commitments made by Washington, London and Paris to Arab countries, including Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Eshkol has sent notes of protest to the three Western governments following recent talks between Foreign Minister Golds Meir and America, British and French diplomats. In Washington, Israeli Ambassador Avraham Harman met for 40 minutes with U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Ambassador Harman drew Secretary Rusk's attention to the recent Arab arms build up.

Jordan has been receiving Patton tanks from the United States under a military assistance program and Saudi Arabia is to receive \$400,000,000 worth of modern arms from Britain and the United States.

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LONDON (WNS) The Soviet Union recently supplied Egypt with a squadron of 20 Soviet MG-21D jet fighter planes, military experts reported. The planes are the most versatile of all Soviet supersonic aircraft and are said to be the first provided by Moscow to any country outside the Soviet bloc.

Other reports received here indicate that the Kremlin has promised Nasser to supply his country with considerable amounts of up-to-date armaments and supplies. Included are an improved radar warning system, construction of assembly plants in Egypt to manufacture jet engines, military aircraft and missiles. Nasser has also reportedly been promised higher credits on very low terms.

JERUSALEM (WNS) Mrs. Golds Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister since 1956, announced officially that she will retire from her post. Her retirement, believed to be due to poor health, has been rumored repeatedly recently.

It is expected that she will be succeeded as Foreign Minister by Abba Eban

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