

Exodus

Twenty two year old Amir Pichhadze, a resident of our community and highly gifted artist, recently exhibited his work at York University to great acclaim. His parents emigrated from Georgia (a republic of the Soviet Union at that time) to Israel in 1972, and Amir was born in Tel Aviv. At the age of twelve and a half, he immigrated to Canada with his family, and he presently studies Fine Arts at York University. His father is the world renowned artist, Yaakov Pichhadze, and from the earliest age Amir was exposed to art, greatly influencing his own creative development. He would like to study law at some point in his life, as it is applied to the field of Art. His parents have been very supportive of the JRCC, and it is a pleasure to have such a talented family in our midst.

Young artist expresses himself through colour and charitable deeds

by Professor David Ben-Arieh

York University recently hosted a fund-raising art exhibition named "Students Helping Students at York University." The exhibition showcased the artwork of the university student Amir Pichhadze. Part of the proceeds from the sale of the artwork was donated towards an annual student scholarship fund at the university.

The exhibition featured original pastel and oil paintings, limited edition reproductions, and posters. The works ranged in price from \$55, to \$7,500. Twelve works were sold at the opening reception on March 1, 1988.

The reception was an experience that will be cherished by all its attendants. With more than 500 attendants, the reception offered a welcoming and entertaining environment. "This is one of the most successful student exhibitions I have attended, and I have been Dean for six years now," said Seth Felman, the Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at York University.

Among the guests of honour who opened the reception was Toronto Deputy Mayor Case Oates. "Your donation of proceeds from the sale of your artworks to an annual student scholarship fund at York University is an admirable deed, and one that should be applauded by all those who benefit from your generosity," said Oates to Pichhadze. York University President Dr. Lorna Marsden added, "We are proud to have

such a gifted artist and generous student as part of the York community...I applaud Amir for his artistry and altruism."

Pichhadze is not new to the art scene. His work has been shown in jury exhibitions in Toronto, the Artxpo exhibitions in New York, and exhibitions in Israel. Pichhadze's works are described as "bold and evocative." The works are attracting significant collector and media interest, both in North America and in his native Israel.

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Pichhadze's primary source of inspiration and knowledge is his father Jacob Pichhadze, a well-known painter and master of pastels, whose exhibitions in Israel were opened by such dignitaries as the former President of Israel Efraim Katzir, and the former Prime Ministers of Israel, Shimon Peres and Itzhak Shamir. Jacob, a former professor in art, is helping Amir and many other interested students to expand their creative potential.

"It was my father's gift of lessons in ethics as well as painting that became unforgettable elements of my training," says Amir. As he absorbed every word and each example provided by his father, Amir Pichhadze understood that painting is not merely a coloured drawing, but a highly specific world expressing the artist's poetic strivings and joy. Its role is not merely to prolong and further develop the traditions associated with painting with the help of various technical means, but to also raise them to a new level defined by contemporary thought, and create a specific collection of means for expressing the spirit of our time. For Amir Pichhadze art is not a vocation, it is a heartfelt experience and an expression of his soul.

A highlight of the paintings by Jacob and Amir Pichhadze is their use of the pastel medium. Jacob has mastered the use of the medium, and is passing on the knowledge to Amir. The visual strength of the medium is expressed through the colours of Amir's abstract compositions. The effects of these colour combinations have attracted the attention of numerous critics and art historians. "Your colours are wonderful! I particularly found your abstract compositions impres-

sive," said Dr. Daria Darewych, an art historian and professor.

Among the works displayed was a pastel painting titled "Old City." This, according to Pichhadze, was inspired by his visits to the old city of Jerusalem. This work, however, is different from other representations of Jerusalem. Here the artist goes beyond reproducing the details of a particular place. His aim is to capture the mood experienced during his visits. He abstracts the city scene to its essential geometric nature. Through a rhythm of line movement and a combination of soothing colours, he captures the spiritual essence of the scene.

Pichhadze is determined to continue in his efforts to help raise funds for charitable causes. "My father has organized numerous charitable fund raisers for the benefit of organizations such as Bnai-Brith of Israel, 'Nitzan' organization for sick children of Israel, Sick Children's Hospital of Toronto, to name a few," says Amir, "This virtuous way of life has influenced my views. I have experienced that my greatest reward is in sharing my talent and success by helping others, regardless of differences in race, nationality, or religion."

"Our Jewish culture has played an important influence on the virtuous interests of my family," says Amir. "Among many things, it teaches us to respect and care for others as we would care for ourselves." With this view in mind, Amir Pichhadze is leading the youth of today into a bright future.



From left to right:

Deputy Mayor of Toronto Case Oates, artist Amir Pichhadze, and York University President Dr. Lorna Marsden, beside the painting "A Commemoration of a Jewish Tragedy."