

Two Israeli Artists, Two Worlds of Art

(Part 4 in a Series)

The Israeli Artists Group of Greater Toronto brings together Israeli artists in different disciplines of visual arts, to work, socialize and enhance the Israeli and Jewish culture in Toronto. In this series of articles, we will open a window to some of our artists who live and work in our midst.

Artist Miriam Sion, who is also known to her friends and family as Miki, a name she also uses to sign her paintings, is a native Israeli, who 40 years ago arrived in Canada with her family "for four years only", and like many of us, those four years stretched to many more. An accountant by profession, Miki started painting back in Israel, and never stopped. She attended courses in many art schools and with some of the best artists in Toronto.

When Miki moved to Canada, she was astounded by the extreme seasonal changes, especially during the autumn, with its vibrant array of red, orange and yellow hues of the foliage. These colours and the effect of the sun on them have influenced Miki's work throughout the years. This can be seen in the way she treats her subject matter, mostly images from her travels around the world. Orange and yellow dominate her Venice paintings series, reflecting the warm dusk sun on the elegant walls, canal water and gondolas. Her Prague roof tops, rendered in clean pop-art lines and shapes, and a busy cubist design, emphasize a broad range of warm oranges, reflecting the warm sun, with blue highlights to cool down the shadows.

Miki is active in many artist groups in the GTA, amongst them Richmond Hill Group of Artists, with whom she has participated in its yearly juried shows since 1995, Bayview Watercolour Society, in which she showed and was awarded prizes for her artwork, and of course, the Israeli Artists Group of Greater Toronto, of which she served as president in 2007-2008.

Being a member since 1998, I asked Miki how it influences her:

"Most of my friends are Israelis and the general feeling is that we are Israelis living in Toronto, feeling and breathing Israeli culture in our daily lives. Belonging to the group was a natural reaction to this connection, and to staying in touch with Israel."

Rikki Blitt, another one of our community artists, has been in Canada for almost 50 years. Born in the former soviet union post World War II, Rikki moved to Israel in 1950, and then to Canada in her teens. Now in her retirement, Rikki immerses herself in a new found love – designing and creating three dimensional decorative and practical objects from beads and wire. She remembers herself always doing some type of creative work: knitting, embroidery, macramé and weaving. In recent years, her collection focuses on Jewelry and Judaica objects such as Mezuzot and beaded wire Kippot.

Rikki is fascinated by the process of creation: "What inspires me is using diverse materials, colours and techniques to create objects which didn't exist before - a necklace emerges out of a mess of beads and thread, a bracelet comes out of a package of rings."

In addition to her involvement with the Israeli Artists Group, Rikki is very active in the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, Toronto (<http://pomegranateguild.ca>), where she is currently the President of the Guild. The Guild unites artisans who are interested in textile art and needlework based on Judaic themes. Together they created several projects which were donated to the community, mostly to Baycrest. Over the years Rikki learned a great deal from its members and guest presenters. She was also involved in the mounting of an exhibition of the Guild members' work in 2007 (in the Koffler gallery), in coordinating the Mezuzot Exhibit (in Baycrest) in 2009, and is currently working on a future exhibit of Tzedakah boxes (also in Baycrest). The beautiful Mezuzot exhibit can be seen on the



Clockwise from top: Miki Sion, Roofs of Prague, 22"x28", Acrylic on canvas
Rikki Blitt, Mezuzot, beads and Swarovski crystals; Rikki Blitt, Chain mail bracelet, sterling silver.

Guild's website (under Members' Work).

Miki's paintings can be viewed and purchased in her studio by appointment. Please contact Miki by email at msion@rogers.com.

Rikki's jewelry can be purchased at Made You Look, a jewelry store on Queen St. W (<http://madeyoulook.ca>). She will participate in

the group show "Tzedakah – The Beauty Outside the Box, in Memory of Beverley Colman Lokash" at Baycrest, starting September 1st, 2010. Rikki also takes commissions for jewelry, mezuzot and beaded wire kippot. To contact her please email rikki_blitt@yahoo.ca.

Both Miki and Rikki will be participating in the Israeli Art-

ists Group show in May 15-18 at the MacDonald House, 121 Centre Street, Thornhill.

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Moshe Mikanovsky is a member of the Israeli Artists Group of Greater Toronto (moshe@mikanovsky.com, www.mikanovsky.com)

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