

Jerusalem's Safrai Gallery Comes to Lafayette

By Andrea A. Firth

“As the saying goes, if Muhammad doesn’t come to the mountain, we will bring the mountain to Muhammad,” explains Menachem Safrai as he describes why he is transporting over 1,500 works of art from his gallery in Jerusalem to exhibitions throughout the United States. And the first stop on the tour will be Lafayette, CA. The work of over 100 Israeli artists will be available for viewing and purchase at the upcoming exhibit entitled “Colors of Israel” to be held at Temple Isaiah (3800 Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette) on April 9th through the 13th.

“We are confident that the Lamorinda community will be thrilled by the depth, color, imagination, and talent that will be on display at the ‘Colors of Israel’ exhibit,” states Rabbi Roberto Graetz of Temple Isaiah, “and we are happy that we can share the event beyond our Temple membership.”

“What makes Israeli art unique is the fact that we are a nation of immigrants...our artists come from all over the world and bring with them their heritage and background,” explains Safrai whose great-grandfather established the family’s Jerusalem-based gallery back in 1935. “We have a mix of cultures, styles, techniques, and ideas, which creates a versatile and unique style of art, unlike any other place in the world,” he adds.

The extensive collection includes modern and traditional works created by artists both old and new to the Safrai Gallery. On display will be the art of one of Safrai’s most exciting, new discoveries—Slava Ilyayev. Truly a “starving” artist, this young man immigrated to Israel several years ago and worked as guard in a supermarket in order to make ends meet until his work was first exhibited less than a year ago. “The reaction from our clients all over the world has been phenomenal, and we are grateful for the opportunity to help build his reputation,” states Safrai.

Whether in the market to purchase or not, the exhibit will give the viewer the opportunity to enjoy art by 100 different artists in a variety of styles, techniques, and media notes Safrai. “The common thread in all the artwork painted in Israel is the effect of the strong sunlight on the artist’s eyes,” he adds. “Vibrant, exploding colors emanate from all the works.”

A preview of the exhibit “Colors of Israel” will open at Temple Isaiah on Wednesday, April 9th at 7 pm; tickets cost \$10 and include music and refreshments. The exhibit is open to the community for viewing and sales from 10 am to 5:30 pm on Thursday, April 10th and Sunday, April 13th from 10 am to 4 pm. Gallery-owner, Menachem Safari, will present a talk about the artists at 2 pm on Thursday. For more information visit Temple Isaiah’s website at www.temple-isaiah.org.



Artwork by Slava Ilyayev

Provided by Safrai Gallery, Jerusalem