

On Campus

Exhibit will benefit York U's scholarship fund

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TORONTO — A recent exhibition of pastels and oils by York University visual arts student Amir Pichhadze revealed a telling transition from the style of his at-home study with his Soviet trained artist father Jacob, to the scope fostered by his current professors.

An enthusiastic crowd at the

opening reception in the Samuel J. Zacks Gallery at Stong College heard York Visual Arts Department chair Ken Carpenter exclaim, "In the history of the Visual Arts Department we have not previously had an occasion like this where a student has shown the particular kind of ability that Amir has shown. We are very proud of Amir!"

Part of the proceeds from the sale of the artworks, which include

originals, limited edition reproductions and posters, will go to a York University scholarship fund. The majority of the works are abstracts, but there are some florals and allegorical pieces.

Although Pichhadze is studying and exploring in the university milieu, he relies very much on the "secret" pastel technique taught to him by Jacob, a master of the medium, who continues to pass down

his specific knowledge only from father to son.

Amir's abstracts have burst onto the scene in bold form, yet they are controlled by the finely honed colors which he is making his own.

He has already proven himself capable of fine representational art. Now he is reaching deep inside for the inspiration to express himself in abstractions.

Often exuberant, they demand involvement.

What do they mean? For Amir, they are personal. For the viewer, they are whatever he or she sees and feels.

This, Amir maintains, is the essence of abstract. "It's the play of color and shape. It's not supposed to represent anything. Color has a power of its own. You don't have to represent the natural world. Color and composition have enough in themselves. With representational, it's there for you but in abstract you shouldn't expect to have everything there. You have to get over relying on visual recognition; then you'll be able to extract from color and composition the power to invoke an emotion."

For this reason he uses such titles as *Abstraction #4* - reds,



Pichhadze reaches deep inside for inspiration.

oranges, yellows, zooming lines projecting motion; *Abstract #6* - warm colors, flowing shapes; *Portrait #1* - abstracted yet almost cubic form, sombre greens, turquoise.

An exception is *Old City*, which is Jerusalem simplified to abstraction.

Pichhadze touches the viewer, and as he carries on with his studies, he is determined to probe and grow. "I could not continue as an artist if I were not always learning," he insists.