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## Young artist tackles contemporary issue

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**TORONTO** — What does a 20-year-old artist have to say on pastel board or canvas? Plenty, if he is Amir Pichhadze. And with remarkable insight.

The Israeli born Pichhadze came here eight years ago. Until now, his father Jacob, a significant painter and master of pastels, has been his principal teacher.

"I taught him technique," Jacob says. "He will take it from there."

As he hones his skills under his father's direction, young Pichhadze

discovers his own concepts.

*A Commemoration of a Jewish Tragedy*, displayed recently at a juried exhibition in the Leah Posluns Theatre, is a searing probe into the death by gunfire of Israel's late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin at the hands of a Jewish assassin — the enemy from within.

Seen in the aftermath of the murder, a grieving man crouches, head bowed, before Rabin's flag-draped coffin with a broken Magen David representing unity gone awry. A portion of the flag is wrapped around the man's legs and covers his feet. His hands are

bloodied and behind him is a blood-spattered copy of Shir Lashalom (Song of Peace), which Rabin had at the moment he was killed. An obvious bullet hole is a reminder of the method of assassination.

### A Jewish Tragedy

The man is the Jewish People, torn by political and religious strife. He mourns the death, yet the infighting marks him as it does all those who cannot or will not come to peaceful terms with their differences.

The song sheet is colored in reverse, white lettering on a black background to accent the darkness of the act and its consequences. But one corner, curled forward, pristine white against the sky, signifies a glimmer of hope. Pichhadze's youthful optimism?

In the surrealistic *Reward for*

*Virtue*, the artist depicts a balance between the good and bad that are in all of us, portraying the good struggling over a barrier, hovering between light and dark and eventually passing through a narrow opening to emerge triumphant.

*Yellow Bloom*, a single luminous rose, is a lovely feel-good pastel.

Pichhadze uses pastels or oils according to the subject, he says, but he leans toward pastels.

Just out of high school, he has enrolled in Fine Arts at York University and begins classes in September.

How will he reconcile what he has learned from his father with the experience that lies ahead?

"I'll keep an open mind," he says, ready to meet the challenges of computer graphics, which are "new to me and my father."



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