

'Shelter for the Homeless'

Israeli Artist's Design Featured on UN Stamp

By Reba Karp

An oil painting by Israeli artist Raya Talmor is the featured design on the World Federation of United Nations Association's stamp issue "Shelter for the Homeless."

Tidewater and Peninsula residents may be familiar with Talmor's work which was on exhibition at the Durwood Zedd Co./Gallery of Fine Art in Virginia Beach in December, 1986.

Representing Talmor in this country is Deidre Freeman. She explains that the United Nations General Assembly has designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). She feels Talmor's work for the UN as an Israeli is especially significant, for Israel has established itself historically as a haven for the homeless. "Raya's painting is an abstract of bold, bright colors with images of the sky, earth, carved rocks, a ram's head, a hand, all symbolic of the sacrifice of those things most necessary to build a better world." Freeman explains that with the issuing of the stamp Talmor will be joining a very distinguished list of contributors, among them, Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall, Alexander Calder, Joan Miro, Chaim Gross and Victor Vasarely.

Some of Talmor's most recent works give expression to her interest in sacrifice as an on-going theme in Jewish and Israeli history. One reviewer notes: "... the effect of Talmor's use of color is complimentary. One consequence is that colors often appear to have been uncovered or revealed, as though their true nature had been previously hidden..." This, he feels, was especially true of a scene painted in her "Kibbutz Garden."

Talmor and Freeman were in New York for the first day issue of the stamp at the United Nations Headquarters on March 13. Also at the presentation were Israeli Ambassador Extraordinaire to the United Nations, Johanan Bein, Annabelle Weiner, Director of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, and heads of various philanthropic world organizations.

It was a doubly auspicious occasion for Talmor, for as the first Israeli artist to be so honored internationally, it brings her homeland as well as her home in Kibbutz Yagur into the limelight.

Freeman became interested in Talmor's work when she visited Israel two years ago while marketing Ahava, mud masks and bath

salts derived from the Dead Sea. As chance would have it she saw one of Talmor's paintings on the wall of her husband's Kibbutz office, admired it and decided then that she would work to bring Talmor's art to America. At the time the artist was emerging from a triple bypass heart operation and the two did not meet. However, Freeman persisted and following a series of long distance phone calls, Talmor's work came to the United States.

"For Raya," Freeman adds, "exhibiting in America has always been one of her lifelong dreams."

Raya Talmor, who quoted exclusively for *Renewal*, explains: "It was a wonderful, very dignified ceremony that brings great honor to both myself and to Israel. It was a most rewarding honor, recognizing me as an artist. The thrill of the exhibit in the UN and of the knowledge that the art print will go all over the world with the wonderful message it carries of the shelter for the homeless will always be part of my life."

"Johanan Bein summed it up when he said Israel has always been a place of shelter for people to live." □



Raya Talmor talks with Johanan Bein, Israeli Ambassador Extraordinaire to the UN in New York.