

The Museum of Modern Art

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ART ISRAEL: 26 PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS by William C. Seitz; 88 pages, 84 illustrations; hardbound \$5.95, paperbound \$2.95. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, hardbound edition distributed by Doubleday and Co., Inc.

ART ISRAEL: 26 PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS by William C. Seitz, published by The Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of the first major exhibition of contemporary Israeli art held in the United States, presents a cross-section of work being done in Israel and by Israeli artists living in Europe today.

Dr. Seitz, Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, who organized the exhibition, traveled extensively through Israel and Europe to make his selections. After talking to Israeli artists in New York, Paris and London, as well as in studios, galleries, exhibitions and kibbutzim throughout Israel, Dr. Seitz concludes that Israeli art is dominated by what he calls "tragic" and "lyrical" themes which transcend individual style. He relates these themes to the recent trials of the Jewish people and to a pervasive celebration of the Israeli landscape.

In this book Dr. Seitz writes, "The intensity of human compassion, pride, intellect and creativity that gave form to the State of Israel itself is still the prime source of energy that activates Israeli art and gives it a distinctive aura, whatever the style."

Among the artists represented are Israel's two most influential teachers: Mordecai Ardon, a leading master of figurative symbolism, and Yosef Zaritsky, who paints in a totally abstract manner. Others include Yaacov Agam, a hard-edge painter who does most of his work in Paris; Itzhak Danziger, an important member of the New Horizons Group of militant abstractionists and leader of young artists; and the young sculptor Ezra Orion, who drives a tractor at Kibbutz Beit Alpha.

Michael Gross, a figurative artist who paints both landscape and human beings, has been represented in a number of international exhibitions including the XXX Biennale in Venice, the 1961 Carnegie International and "Peintres Israéliens" at the

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Galerie Charpentier in Paris in 1963. The sculptor, Yehiel Shemi, who works at Kibbutz Cabri, uses old metal plates, rails, sheets and bars which are transformed into compositions that according to Dr. Seitz, "can rise with the freedom of flame or water, or with the delicacy of flowers." Yeheskiel Streichman is one of the leading abstract artists of Israel; like many of his fellow artists he fought and was wounded in the War of Independence, unlike many of his colleagues he considers himself a Zionist painter.

Dr. Seitz notes, "Although several of the artists in the exhibition profoundly embody Jewish culture and experience in their works, they are more citizens of one nation than they are a homogeneous cultural and religious group, and are presented as Israeli rather than Jewish artists."

Accompanying the illustrations of each artist's work are statements by the artists themselves. The book also contains complete biographical information which supplements Dr. Seitz' comments on the twenty-six painters and sculptors.

Dr. Seitz has directed a number of major exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art and has written on many aspects of the arts, including The Art of Assemblage, and monographs on Claude Monet, Mark Tobey, Arshile Gorky and Hans Hofmann.

The exhibition opened last spring in the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem and was brought to this country under the joint auspices of the America-Israel Foundation and the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art. Its 1965 tour of the United States and Canada was inaugurated at the Jewish Museum in New York on December 9, 1964.

Review copies and additional information available from Lynn Traiger, Assistant Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.