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# Silken Creations

*The handpainted, pure silk creations by Rachel Gitai are an inspirational art form, requiring dedication and hours of patience*

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**R**ACHEL GITAI is a well-known international artist who gained her experience through teaching and exhibiting works in the areas of creativity, visual communications and interior design. Her recent dedication to the creative technique of hand-painted silk has given her the versatility to produce modern and eclectic works. Each piece is an original and unique work of art.

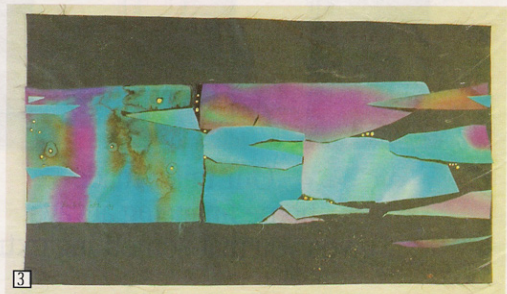
The experience that Rachel has gained over the years is impressive. She managed a photographic laboratory in the Israeli Defence Force from 1975 to 1977, and from 1978 to 1982

she taught and trained art students at the Kibbutz College. In late 1982 she practised as an interior designer and from there moved into a consultancy position for domestic applications in Israel.

Rachel arrived in South Africa in December 1984 and wrote interior design articles. She later returned to Israel where she lectured at the Israeli Arab College on the subjects of visual



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communication and creativity. During this period, she was also running interior design courses concerning domestic and commercial subjects.

Rachel returned to South Africa in 1988 and has since been producing unique pieces of silken artwork which have a charm all of their own. These modern, handpainted silk creations are based on the old technique used by master paint-

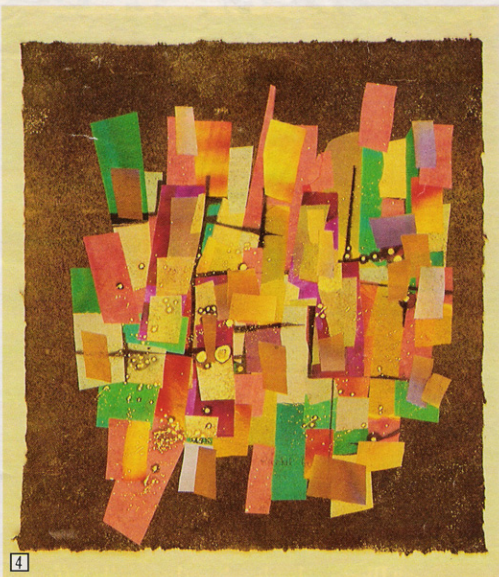
ers of the Far East. The silk has to go through a soft-water bath treatment, alternating the cloth between hot and cold water. This process stabilizes the warp and weft fibres of the cloth. While the cloth is still wet, the edges are tied to a flexible frame. The tension across the material can be adjusted in this way to create unusual effects.

The painting work is done exclusively with concen-

trated silk paints which are applied with the tiniest of fine brushes. To achieve the best effects with the colours, the application of the paint is done preferably in wet weather conditions or in the early hours of the morning. But over and above this, the essence of the high standard required is a steady hand and a great deal of patience.

When the painting is finished, the material stands for as long as two days in dry conditions and is then put through a steaming process to stabilize the paint. Now that the material is ready, the intricate stage of cutting, sewing and assembling the tiny pieces can begin. It is these tiny pieces of material strategically placed that form the final work of art.

Rachel's dedication and her perception of colour and its reflective qualities is brought to a peak in her treatment of this silken cloth. Recently, she has produced pieces for interior designers and decorators, and finds it a challenge to do works that complement and highlight the wide variety of styles and schemes. □



1. Tints and tones of the complementary colours red and green were used in this modern work that Rachel feels reflects vibrance and energy.

2. An abstract using purples and pinks. The black background gives the work a dramatic quality.

3. One of Rachel's earliest pieces that she feels is one of her finest.

4. The tiny pieces of coloured silk are mounted here on a piece of handmade paper. Rachel feels that this piece gives the viewer the impression of a jigsaw puzzle.

5. Soft browns and purples, a colour combination not often explored, was used to create this piece.

6. Soft greens, ochres and turquoise flow across this work, creating an impression that a viewer is free to interpret as he wishes.

