

Artistic roots, international travel inspire mosaic master's puzzle-perfect pieces

By Liz Katynski



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Komar works on a mosaic.

different ideas."

By the late 1980s, other types of art were allowed in Russia. But Komar was already gone. He immigrated to Canada in 1981 at the age of 18, with his mother and stepfather. They settled in Winnipeg, where he went on to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Manitoba.

He went on to travel to many different countries. In Spain and Morocco, he was captivated by the colourful abstract mosaics he saw. When

he returned to Canada, he set up a business called Mosaika, and completed commission work for private homes and businesses.

"There were many new homes going up," he says. "I did kitchens, saunas, bathrooms, stores, recording company logos ... I did a variety of mosaics. I also created my own picture mosaics."

Komar's classes are three hours long. He includes food, wine and ethnic music for inspiration. During the first session, his classes included themes like Middle Eastern, Greek, Italian and Ukrainian.

"I want people to learn and enjoy themselves," he says.

No experience is required, and participants only have to bring the objects they want to work on. Komar provides the tools and materials. Students in the first session worked on objects including frames, tables, counters, pictures, trays, glasses, furniture, and coffee pots.

"It's really up to the individual," says Komar. "Mosaics are difficult to make. You have to have a lot of patience. Everyone works at their own pace, and finishes at least one project. They get into it. I don't rush them. Every design is different. I love it. It's a great opportunity for me, and for them."

For further information on the program, call Komar at 475-3076.

A west end resident was so inspired by the mosaics he saw on his travels in Europe that he came home to create his own surface designs and intricate patterns with tiles and bits of tile, stone, and glass.

Now he is teaching others this fine art, too.

Dimitry Komar is wrapping up the first session of his mosaics class in his home studio at 647 Strathcona St. The next six-week session starts on May 31.

"I bought the house last year, and my studio is big enough for me to paint and teach mosaics," says Komar. "It's a dream come true."

Born in Moscow, the full-time artist who creates oil painting and mosaics also taught mosaics classes at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. He started his art training in Russia, where his father was also an artist.

"He did paintings for government," says Komar. "His commissions were for government, images of the Second World War, the Revolution. He had little room to express himself. It was dangerous to do your own thing at that time. That would threaten your membership in the artists' union, your steady job and any form of recognition. Of course, I always had