

Building and sculpture in a totality of environment

BY KAY KRITZWISER

Kosso Eloul, the sculptor, has a rather engaging way of punctuating his opinions by quoting patriarchal proverbs.

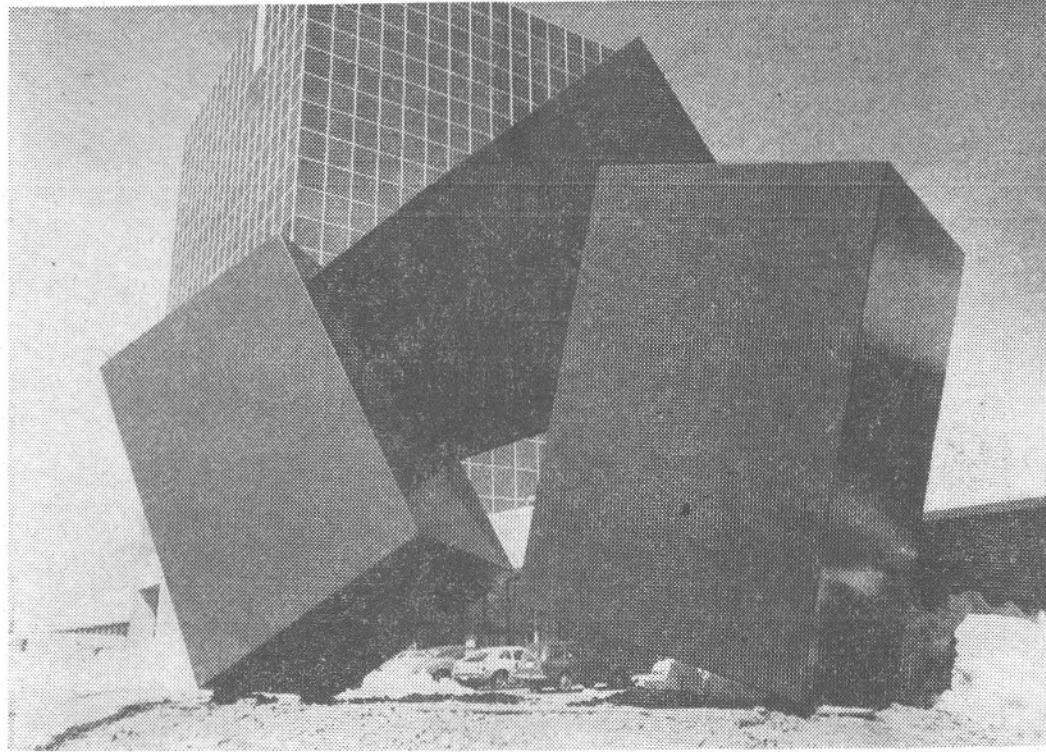
"If a lion eats a mouse," he said, "The mouse does not become a lion." In an odd way, his proverb applies to his sculpture Constella, posed against the magical blue mirror building at 1000 Finch Ave.

For Constella might easily have been dwarfed against architect Harvey Cowan's new building. Instead, its blue steel cubes, hard-surfaced as a gleaming automobile, stand up with authority to the impressive building. The building amicably takes in the sculpture's reflection as it does the moving cloud banks above. Building and sculpture exist in an unusual totality of environment.

There is nothing happenstance about the relationship. The newly opened JDS Building at the corner of Finch Avenue and Dufferin is one of those sensible alliances between owners and artists. In this case, Jack Israeli and his partner, David Smoskowitz, have made something of a habit of commissioning work from Toronto artists.

A tall bronze sculpture by Maryon Kantaroff was commissioned for their Sheridan Mall in Mississauga. In the mall at Pickering, stands another Kantaroff sculpture and a soaring mural by Rita Letendre. In the new building, 1000 Finch Ave., the commissioned art adds a third dimension of artistic importance.

There at the entrance is Kosso's perilously balanced trio of forms, each exerting a calculated pressure and testing of stress as remarkable as the geometric mirrored surfaces of the building above it.



Kosso's Constella: gleaming cubes stand up with authority to the building.

On the ground floor, a long arcade divides the building, and here, on three overhanging arches, hang the murals *Andante*, *Allegro* and *Cantata*, the work of Miss Letendre. The long vista is punctuated by the singing colors painted directly onto the surface. Miss Letendre painted her murals from a scaffold which required her to work in cramped quar-

ters to achieve such soaring shafts of color.

In an area near the entrance on the ground floor, a vast tapestry called *Sunrise*, the work of Tamara Jaworska, is a romantic interpretation of beautifully integrated dawn colors.

In a mezzanine area which leads up to Israeli's many-windowed office, a two-story frieze of sculptured styrofoam is the work of

Dubi Arie, an artist from Israel now living in Toronto. The sculpture is a modern version of ancient symbols, ranging from the Star of David to a Canadian maple leaf.

In the board room, its furniture still swathed, its broadloom still waiting to be put down, Israeli unrolled a colorful tapestry, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, by Reuvin Rubin, an Israeli tapestry-weaver.

Israeli, who came to Canada in 1958, was born in Poland in 1931, but of that background he can offer little. "I was a war baby survivor."

In Canada, young and eager, he went into the building business, beginning on a modest scale with houses, graduating to small commercial properties, and finally to the latest project, the big office building called 1000 Finch.

"Toronto has moved forward a great deal in that time, as far as art is concerned," Israeli said. "But not enough people in our business world appreciate the need for art around us. I could be criticized for this, but I don't think banks, for instance, do nearly enough to support the arts. They should be the avant garde in the field. Besides, they're in an enviable tax position to do it. I think financial institutions should be doing more. Not to show off, but because they love having art around them."

Israeli has his own small personal collection of lithographs, paintings and sculpture which he shares with his wife and three children. "I've always been interested." He even made the sheepish admission that at one time he made a serious effort with his drawings. "I even did some black and white illustrations for a book on camp life when we were detained in a camp on Cyprus."