

Kosso Eloul: an art giant

By GIL KEZWER
SPECIAL TO THE TOWN CRIER

Kosso Eloul, an internationally acclaimed Israeli-Canadian sculptor best known for his eternal flame at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, died here Nov. 8 of heart failure. He was 75.

Born in the Soviet Union, Eloul arrived in Israel as a child when it was still called Palestine. In 1939, he went to the Art Institute of Chicago, where he studied with architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and the Chicago School of Design, where he studied with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy.

After serving with the British Army in World War II and with the Israel Defence Force during the 1948 War of Independence, Eloul returned to his art and became a co-founder of New Horizons, an artists' movement in Israel that broke with Impressionism in the 1950s. In 1959 he represented Israel at the 29th Biennale in Venice. Later, Eloul was awarded the Israel Prize for Art the country's highest civilian distinction.

His eternal flame at Yad



Eloul

Vashem' Memorial Hall is encased in a squat brutalist granite and concrete building. The floor is inscribed with the names of Nazi concentration and death camps. It is a major focus of pilgrimage in Jerusalem. Until recently, all visiting diplomats were taken to Eloul's Holocaust shrine

as a matter of state protocol.

In 1964, Eloul returned to North America. He lived in Quebec and California before settling in Toronto in 1969 where he had a studio on Balliol St. He said he preferred the quiet and openness of Canada to the perennial tension of the young Jewish state.

Here his work became increasingly abstract, distinguished by its monumentality and use of stainless steel and aluminium. Perhaps the best known of his 44 pieces on public display in and around Toronto is Innercity Gate (1978) at the Toronto-Dominion Centre on King St. West. Other familiar landmarks include his Time Capsule at Ontario Place, on outdoor work at the University of Toronto, and Eternal Flame at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Eloul's sculptures can also be seen in Montreal, Kingston, Hamilton, Tokyo, Beijing and Mexico City.

He leaves a wife Rita Letendre, also an acclaimed artist, sons Rhon in Tucson, Jacques in Montreal, and Oren in Israel, daughter Sheffi in Los Angeles and eight grandchildren.