

The Portuguese Azulejo. Contemporary Dialogues

Tel Aviv University - Sourasky Central Library

1.12 - 16.12

The Portuguese ceramic tile has its roots in traditions that were renovated throughout the centuries in their techniques, colors, shapes, themes, usages, and that presents itself as a fingerprint of the Portuguese culture.

In Portugal, the ceramic tile largely surpassed the mere utilitarian function or its destiny of ornamental art and reached the status of Art, while poetic intervention in the creation of architectures and cities.

The dialogue with modernity is its peculiar way of thinking contemporaneity and opening the space for reflection to a vast public by expressively marking places of anonymity, as subway stations.

In this exhibition, the public is invited to embark on a journey that starts in the 16th century, when the first ceramic tiles were produced in Portugal. Throughout the twenty one panels that compose the exhibition, you can see examples of:

- the simple and naive depictions of exotic fauna and flora under oriental influence, in the first half of the 17th century;
- the renovation of themes in the second half of the century, opening way to social criticism and caricature and to the depiction of profane scenes based on classical mythology;
- the baroque period, with its movement, drama and complexity, and the application of the rules of perspective, which lead to the creation of immaterialized spaces and illusion;
- the cycles of the great masters in the 18th century;
- the application of the Portuguese ceramic tile in Brazil;
- the transition to the neoclassic style, with its simplification of decoration and more severe lines;
- the application of ceramic tile panels to façades in the 19th century, with romantic and revivalist motifs;
- the usage of industrial ceramic tiles on walls of railway stations, markets, shops and homes, with nationalistic and folkloric motifs, during the first half of the 20th century;
- and, finally, the new aesthetic proposals of the second half of the century, with the integration of ceramic tiles in modern architecture and urbanization projects, of which the subway stations are an accomplished example.

For more information, visit **Museu Nacional do Azulejo's** website: www.museudoazulejo.pt