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UNIQUE ART IS BIBLICAL SYMBOLISM

By Opal Hartsell Brown

Illustration by Jerry Toppah



**“SYMBOLISM” SHE SAYS, “IS THE OLDEST
AND THE EASIEST METHOD OF TEACHING.”**

Artists have created paintings, carvings, and sculptures of almost everything, but there is an Oklahoma woman who deserves the designation *artisan* who has something that is believed to be unique. She is Juanita Summers Martin of Shawnee, whose creation is a micro-replica of “City Four Square,” supposedly heaven.

Based on the vision of John the “divine,” recorded in Chapters 21 and 22 of REVELATION, the city is a cube, 7 x 7 x 7 inches, made of antique crystal beads that Ms. Martin bought at garage sales throughout the state. She uses the city as a teaching tool.

Following the description in the BIBLE, Ms. Martin used the colors of stones mentioned in the twelve foundations, which represented the twelve apostles. When talking about her project, she uses the legendary meaning of each stone.

“Symbolism,” she says, “is the oldest and easiest method of teaching. Beginning even before writing, it appeals and applies to the moral, spiritual, and intellectual sides of man.”

“The first foundation of the city is reddish brown jasper, symbolizing the glory of God. The next is pure blue for sapphire, symbolizing brilliance and stability. Then comes chalcedony, a grayish blue, which indicates perfect obedience.

“The bright green emerald means life, as it always comes in the spring. Foundation number five is orange sardius, for purity and humility; number six is brownish red sardius, representing loyalty, while gold chrysalyte is for heavenly wisdom.

“And there is pinkish beryl,” she points out, “symbolizing



Photographs by the author.

PORCELAIN CASTER

LEGENDARY SYMBOLS

love of the Father; yellow to brown topaz, the fulfillment of duty. Applegreen chrysoprasus indicates one who endures adversity; bluish purple jacinth denotes unchanging or eternity, and the twelfth is amethyst, a symbol of royal priesthood."

Completing the structure, Mr. Martin explains the twelve gates, made of imitation pear; twelve angels, each made of six beads; the river of life with forty crystal beads, representing the forty days of flood, and last, the tree of life. It also has twelve beads, indicative of twelve fruits, each for a month of the year.

"I thought of making this," Ms. Martin said, "when I was teaching a Bible class. I mentioned it to a few people who said it couldn't be done—that beads wouldn't hold together as building blocks. I believed they would and began trying. It took me a while to find an adhesive that would stick, but I finally did. It was quick-drying apoxie. It still holds."

Ms. Martin was on that project five years, primarily because the desired beads were so difficult to find. She considers the result worth the time and perseverance.

During those years, Ms. Martin was wife and mother, an interior decorator, and a realtor. Her latest project is the casting of porcelain. She became interested in making lace-draped dolls while living in El Paso in 1957 and studied at every opportunity. Today she is an apprentice No. 2 in the Doll Artisan Guild and a teacher of the craft.

Her husband, Raymond, is one of her students. Being a rancher, however, he creates mostly cattle and buffalo. ●

OPAL HARTSELL BROWN, who lives near Davis, has been a WESTVIEW supporter all the years of its publication.

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