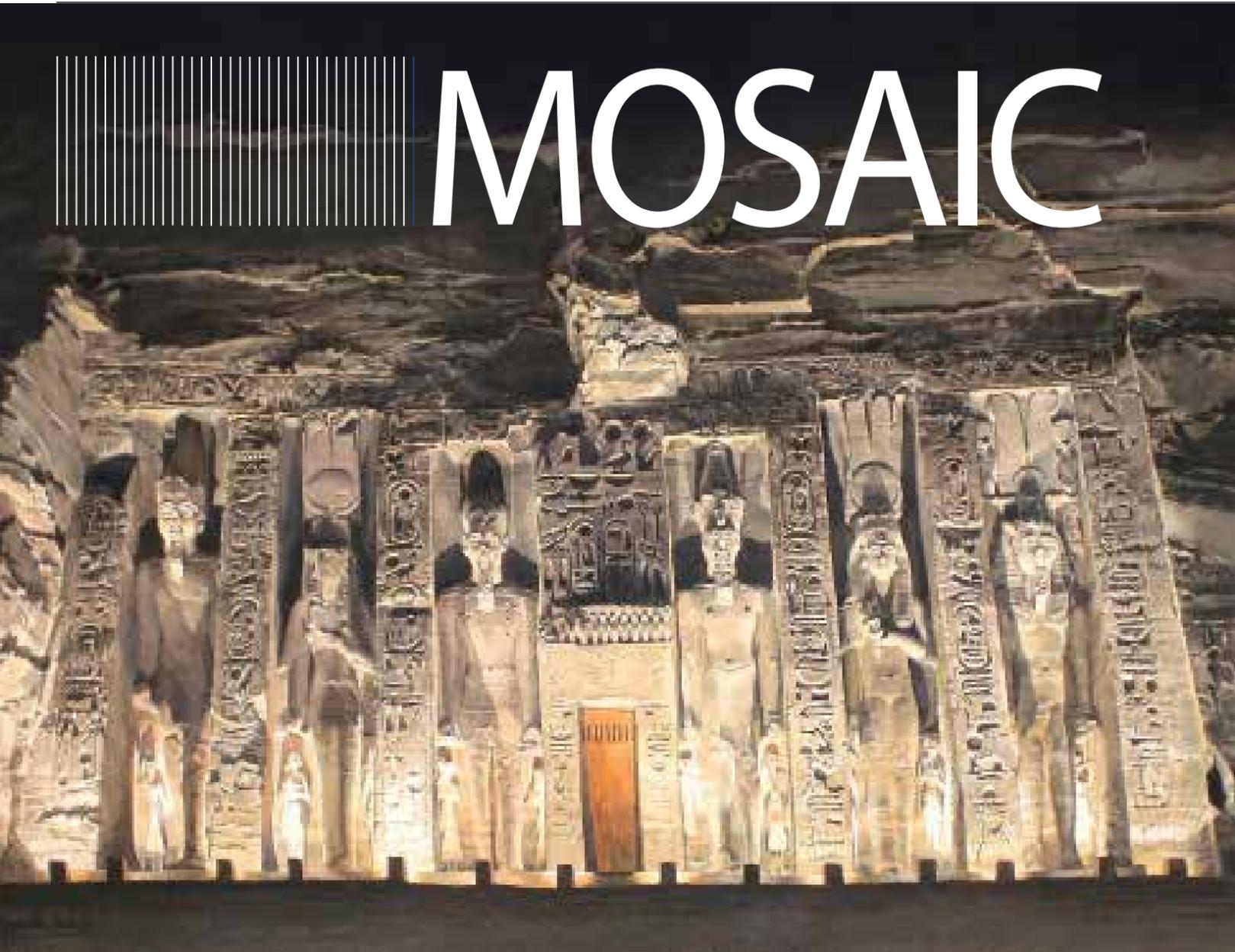


# MOSAIC



Left: AbuSimbel, Nocturne, Nefertari;  
Right: Moorish courtyard  
Below: the artist Jose Gonzalez Bueno at work

## Inspiration of the Orientalists and the Alhambra



Inspired by the work of the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century Orientalists David Roberts and Frederick Lewis, as well as the Moorish architecture of his Andalusian hometown of Malaga, Jose Gonzalez Bueno is currently among Europe's leading contemporary Orientalist painters.

He originally studied medicine and with his love of precision and attention to detail had hopes of becoming a surgeon. However, it was during his university years that he decided to switch direction and dedicate his life to a career in painting, much to the delight of art lovers across the world, including members of the royal households of Spain and Jordan, who boast original Jose Gonzalez Bueno works in their collections.

The artist's intricate watercolours testify to his love of precision and the minutiae of design, with every brush stroke making up an infinitesimally small part of the greater, richer whole. His paintings of the treasures of Petra, Cairo and the Alhambra Palace in Spain,



Left: Mosque Gate  
Right: Edfu Temple

sing with the authenticity of long gone centuries etched into ancient stone.

I became interested in the possibilities of watercolour, mainly because of the endless tonal variations possible, and it also suited my draughtsmanship abilities very well.

As a younger man Gonzalez Bueno was much influenced by the work of David Roberts and Frederick Lewis. "Their detailed oils and watercolours inspired me firstly, to emulate their techniques until gradually, through painting the courtyards and detailed buildings of the Alhambra, which is just a few miles from my home in Malaga, little by little I developed my own technique," he notes.

"In time I had a chance to travel to the Middle East, which had long been an ambition. I visited Damascus in Syria, Petra and Jerash in Jordan and also spent 10 days in Egypt, where I travelled down the Nile. "I was very eager to visit Petra, to record the colour and the light and many of my paintings of Petra and Jerash have since been sold to the Jordanian Royal Household," the artist confirms. Although all his travels have influenced his work in different ways, Gonzalez Bueno has a special affection for Jordan.

"Jordan is among my favourite countries in the region, it is modern but with a well preserved history. I tend to paint architectural subjects rather than landscapes such as the vastness of the desert but I find it all magnificent and I am longing to go back there."

The painter did not originally plan for a full time career in art. "I am a doctor. I studied medicine and had plans to become a surgeon but gradually, I realised that a career in art was what I really wanted. I began painting from home and gradually, moved on to working from my own studio, where over the course of around 18 months, I put together a selection of work for my first exhibition in Malaga. It was a sell out and my fate was sealed." Gonzalez Bueno, who has also lived in Madrid and Venezuela, has since exhibited 25 or 30 times in various parts of the world.

Although at the moment, there are no plans to visit the region in the near future, when the opportunity arises, Gonzalez Bueno will be ready to seize it. "I have no plans to visit the Middle East at the moment but I would love to go back there. I would like to revisit Syria, Jordan and Egypt but I would also love to see new places, such as Samarkand in Uzbekistan and Isfahan in Iran."

For the moment, the artist is currently working on a new line of work, which deviates somewhat from his Orientalist past. He is painting motorcycles. "I enjoy drawing intricate machines. I first began painting motorcycles and other machinery when I was a student but now, after so many years, I am painting them again. I will always return to painting the architecture of the Middle East, it inspires me, for the moment the motorcycles are really just for fun."

*The work of Jose Gonzalez Bueno is available at The Mathaf Gallery in London. Contact: [www.mathafgallery.com](http://www.mathafgallery.com)*

