

# Librarian crystal in French artist's collection

Young artist and sculptor Raphael Zarka — known among French elite — screens his film about Belarus' National Library building in Minsk

By Zhanna Kotlyarova

The library's unusual form inspired Raphael, who has been fascinated by geometric forms for the past eight years, ever searching for different manifestations of rhombocubooctahedrons — with the largest discovered in the Belarusian capital. His twelve minute film — *Rhombus Sectus* — is a true work of art, with the artist using a film as his tool. Shooting took place last July

and Raphael was pleased with the results, although his idea transformed several times as he worked. The project is mostly dedicated to describing life around the library, rather than the rhombocubooctahedron itself. Being a specialist in geometric forms, Raphael expresses his

opinion on the library's design and its place within the city. "I was impressed and surprised with the diversity of land-

scapes surrounding the library," admitted the artist.

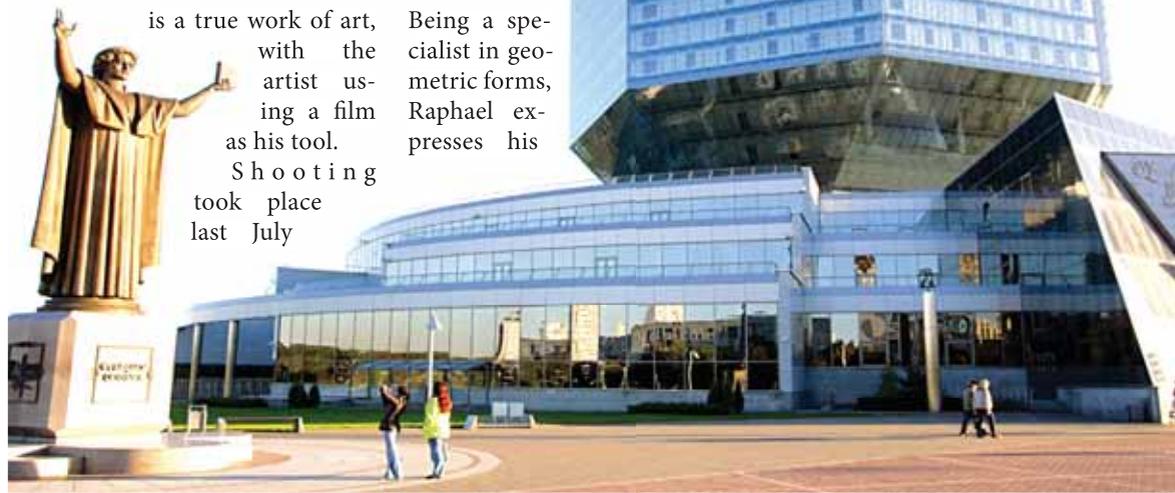
Raphael Zarka first screened his film at France's Gennevilliers' Édouard Manet Gallery. "In France, my film was well received because the building's architecture and environment were fresh to the audience," he notes. According to Mr. Zarka, he didn't focus on the library's status but looked at its form against the surrounding landscape. "I'm interested in post-minimalistic sculpture, so the library was a logical addition to my global project. I study sculptural forms and even 'collect' such 'diamonds,'" explains Raphael, showing a poster with depictions of this geometric form.

During his first visit to Minsk, his artistic team failed to thoroughly see the city, due to a tough schedule. However, they loved what they saw and Raphael was glad to return to the Belarusian capital to show his work. He reverently awaited people's reactions



to his film. Mr. Zarka was accompanied by director, actor and producer Vladimir Léon, who helped shoot the film. Mr. Léon is now preparing his own film about the sculptor's work as a director.

Works by Raphael Zarka are on show at Paris' Michel Rene Gallery. He is also a laureate of the Ricard Foundation — the most important award annually granted to young French art figures.



National Library's unusual form inspires artist to make film

## Water-colour recollections of Mainz

Belarusian artists Ksenia Belyaeva and Vyacheslav Pavlovs showcase their pictures in German Mainz

The Mainz-Minsk Friendship Club, which has closely liaised with the Belarusian Society of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries since 1995, has informed that the exhibition was entitled *Recollections of Mainz*. All works were dedicated to Belarusian Ksenia and Vyacheslav's travels along the Rhine. From 2008-2009, they took part in the *Art in the City* contest, held in Mainz, winning the people's choice award. On returning to Minsk, they drew their recollections and, last autumn, their pictures went on display in Minsk, as part of German Week.

Mainz's Mayor, Jens Beutel, attended the opening of the show, noting the high mastery of the artists, whom he called 'ambassadors of the city of Mainz and of Rhine life'. Mr. Beutel thanked the Mainz-Minsk Friendship Club and its Chairman, Franz Blum, for the promotion of mutual understanding and cultural exchange between Mainz and the Belarusian capital. "Belarus is a European country. This is why the city actively supports all initiatives which contribute to the strengthening of these relations," he said.

In creating their pictures, the artists used the same watercolour technique and, at the exposition, their pictures were placed opposite each other. However the works might be displayed, they could never be confused. Ksenia's works are bright and expressive while Vyacheslav uses a monochrome palette.

# Intellectual games show truly professional approach to their creation

*Kinovarka* Festival, organised for the second time this year, confirms common truth that cinema is becoming more democratic and accessible, with fewer star actors and expensive budgets

By Victoria Popova

These days, anyone able to use a camera can become a film maker, recording the minutiae of their own lives. *Kinovarka* is guided by this model. Some might be sceptical but they should remember that the Italian neo-realism of the 1950s also originated from an ordinary 'street' mood. Dutch *Dogma* also took this path. *Kinovarka*'s 'omnivorous' appetite could inspire a new aesthetic for our national cinema, perhaps bringing recognition at European film festivals.

Recently, the Minsk cinema hosted an open screening of films by *Kinovarka* participants. Students showed great interest in the event, with 250 people coming to watch an experimental video, instead of the planned 50. No doubt, all were full of original ideas, ready to shoot their own films suitable for an alternative video festival (unique for our country).

Last year, film makers focused on existential problems, penetrating their own fears by exploring psychological themes; however, the results were often less than fascinating. This year, production films prevailed, with entrants clearly trying to compete with the large film studios. Despite their technical simplicity, these newcomer-directors did extremely well, fulfilling the goals of the event.

*Kinovarka* aims to help young people probe their own talents, experimenting with film making regardless of a modest budget. Karambol TV Studio kindly offered technical assistance, including help with shooting, editing and looping. This year, the studio has invited four of the debut-directors to produce full length



films. At the initial stage of script writing, the entrants so intrigued the studio that the professionals offered them a real chance at making a feature film.

Director Vladimir Maximkov — who initiated the festival — has announced that *Kinovarka* is launching a parallel project: *Minsk, I Love You*. "This envisages shooting a full length film, to consist of several short stories," he said. The idea is familiar to film lovers: citizens of New York, Moscow and Tokyo have already voiced their love of their cities. However, famous direc-



*Kinovarka* Festival unites several talented, imaginative directors

tors participated in making these ambitious films. "Our project should attract good film makers," stressed Vladimir. "Owing to *Kinovarka*, I've realised that we have many bold and artistically ambitious directors. They just need help in feeling confident about their own ability. We've begun building a bridge between the alternative film festival and serious film making. Anyone wishing to take part can now send their applications for participation in *Minsk, I Love You*."

The dizzy speed of film making is impressive. *Kinovarka*'s

Grand Prix winner receives the unique chance to shoot their short film about Minsk, for inclusion in the final work. They'll be probably invited to the Cannes Film Festival (as the organisers promise). Our modern age is one of high speed, so our directors plan to implement their idea as soon as possible, to seize the moment.

From October 5th, all the films participating in the contest are available on the festival's website — [www.kinovarka.tut.by](http://www.kinovarka.tut.by). The audience's vote will decide the winner.