

Black-and-white magic of fictional images showcased

Denis Nedelsky and Andrey Shchukin present alternative reality in their exhibition project, attracting visitors to see their unusual exposition at Minsk's National Art Museum

By Victor Mikhailov

First, let's start by taking a small trip through history. In the 19th century, French painter Paul Delaroche reacted to the invention of photography by saying: 'painting is dead'. Of course, he meant that paintings cannot rival photographs in their accuracy in reproducing objective reality. About fifty years later, the comparison became irrelevant, unforeseen by painters or photographers; 20th century avant-garde art embraced abstraction, denying that images must reflect reality at all. Moreover, any interrelations were denied regarding a picture and its object and, later, regarding form and content.

We can confidently say that photographs by Mr. Nedelsky and Mr. Shchukin are signs which are open to interpretation, with the audience invited to create their own understanding. Each work acquires a deeper reality the longer we ponder. Truly, the artists have inspired us to think beyond the literal, stirring a range of associations and interpretations.



Artists demonstrate original inventions which are always intriguing

The clearly defined central character of the series is a naked female figure — seen wearing a mask, in a chamber, in a mirror and fragmented, as if viewed through a kaleidoscope. The mask is a traditional 'attribute' of theatre and carnival, sym-

bolising a façade, role playing and disguise, pretence and self-protection, deceit and anonymity. Accordingly, the wearer forfeits their identity. The photographers' characters are hidden under the cover of masks...

The exhibition space is

impersonal, with no extraneous decoration, creating an artificial environment; this can be perceived as a 'chamber' and 'staged', setting a neutral background for performances. Where mirrors and kaleidoscopes are used, the chamber can

become an active element of the performance. Of course, mirrors reflect reality, while enhancing the sense of space; they can also multiply reality while producing exact copies in reverse. At a symbolic level, there is some ambiguity, since mirrors

both deceive (creating a fictional reality) and show the 'reverse' of an image. There are also associations with the underworld, inspiring irrational and unconscious human fears. In various ways, mirrors are actually detached from reality. The exhibited works primarily display links between mirrors and the soul: a 'wandering association', being transnational, moving from one time to another, vividly seen in the photomontages.

The authors figuratively interpret that a broken mirror symbolises the destruction of life and order, the breakdown of relationships, with chaos giving birth to fragmentation. Visual signs are abstract, perceived as ornamentation or as a kaleidoscope. However, the latter is no random scattering of multi-coloured glass; it shows the fragmentation of a human figure, deconstructed to its base elements.

Generalising, we see nothing but an imaginary post-modernist picture of the world: a sphere of 'intimate mythology' alongside accumulated experience of artistic speech and bright, unexpected images.

Dudarski Fest Fest revives tradition

By Yekaterina Krasovskaya

Minsk hosts 10th International Festival of Bagpipe Music

The bagpipe has always been viewed as a military instrument, with its plaintive yet majestic tone inspiring Roman warriors to battle. Over the course of time, Europeans changed the tradition; bagpipe playing is now popular in Scotland, for example. In fact, the instrument is closely connected with folk culture. Quite a few modern day fans of the bagpipe live in Belarus, with the Festival of Bagpipe Music — *Dudarski Fest* — organised in the Republic since 1990. This year, it featured several concerts, with bands from Germany, Sweden and Poland in attendance.

The event opened at Minsk's House of Veterans, with cult Belarusian band *Essa* creating a wonderful mood, as might be felt in a village



Concert held as part of Dudarski Fest

home. *Sary Olsa* band strengthened the fairy-tale by wearing medieval costumes and performing enchanting music.

In turn, Swedish *Hedningarna* performed a mix of electronic and rock music, featuring Scandinavian folk motifs. The band organically unites traditional instruments with synthesised music and sampled melodies. Belarusian *Litvintroll* closed the party, singing lyrics which fully embraced the mood and well confirmed bagpipes as a folk instrument.

The village of Borok, in the Volozhin District, hosted a conference as part of the festival, entitled *Preser-*

vation of Bagpipe Traditions in Eastern Europe. Participants delivered speeches, followed by a German-Swedish-Belarusian jam session. The museum complex of Dudutki also hosted several events. Its surroundings perfectly suit the historical and musical traditions of the Belarusian bagpipe. Several centuries ago, bagpipe playing was common at Easter, it being a Belarusian custom to visit neighbouring houses with bagpipe playing and songs.

The festival closed at Minsk's Reactor Club, where Belarusian and foreign bands met on a single stage to perform music in various styles.

Canada's golden voice praises hospitality

By Victoria Struchinskaya

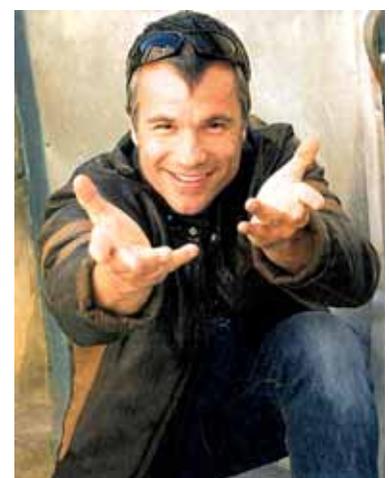
Spiritual generosity of Belarusians appeals to Bruno Pelletier more than glamorous artistic world

The world level star and owner of one of the most beautiful voices worldwide, Bruno Pelletier, has visited Belarus for the first time, giving a concert in Minsk.

The Canadian singer is known primarily for his brilliant work in the popular *Notre Dame de Paris* musical, in which he performed the role of poet Gringoire. Although Gringoire wasn't the major character, Mr. Pelletier managed to create a lasting impression; everyone understood that he was a true world star. The musical premiered in Paris in 1998 and gained a place in the Guinness Book of Records for having the most successful first year of any musical to date.

Mr. Pelletier remains unequalled, despite *Notre Dame de Paris* being staged in over 20 countries worldwide. At present, his repertoire covers rock, jazz and blues, alongside arias from musical plays. He is also very

proud of his son, who is a musician, playing the guitar and having his own band. Mr. Pelletier performs in Italian, Spanish, French and English and has been recently studying the Russian language, planning to sing a song in Russian too.



Bruno Pelletier

The singer admits that he felt comfortable in Belarus and especially notes the simplicity and hospitality of our people. He visited the Mount of Glory Memorial Complex, the National Library of Belarus and other famous sites around Minsk.