

Style conquers with contemporary trends

Belarusian Fashion Centre's flax collection praised by German fashionistas

By Viktor Korbut

Belarusian Fashion Centre designers have presented their collections at a fair of female clothes — *Femme 1* — in Bonn. The arrival of Eastern Europeans was a true revelation for local audiences. Designer Elvira Zhvikova headed the Belarusian pavilion and was much impressed by the huge interest in Belarusian clothes from German women. "Belarusian women love to add a bead, flower or feather to their clothes; high heels and diamantes are 'sacred,'" she smiles. "In Germany, the situation is different, since women don't feel the need to fight so fiercely for men's attention. This may be why German ladies prefer a more restrained style."

"I was impressed by the freshness, buoyancy and modern character of Belarusian models," notes Kathrin Wallat, an organiser of the Bonn fair. "For most Germans, Eastern European fashion is associated with heavy fur coats and ultra-



Elvira Zhvikova promotes authors' design

short skirts. However, these are not clothes for daily life. Rather, these are status symbols demonstrating a woman's wealth... while showing off her beautiful legs. This time, I've seen wonderful colours, lightness and novel patterns."

Ms. Zhvikova hopes that the new ideas of the Belarusian designers can find a place on the German market, saying, "We need to make conceptual proposals, while promoting authors' designs." Speaking of how Belarusian Fashion Centre designers manage to meet

audiences' expectations, developing fashionable clothes, Elvira admits, "I draw ideas from everywhere. Working on commercial lines is most interesting for me; fashion trends are a source of inspiration."

Elvira was born in Vitebsk, where her grandfather inspired her love for art and drawing and she learnt sewing skills from her grandmother. She later built on these foundations by studying at the Vitebsk Fine Arts Studio and, after graduation, set off to Moscow to learn applied arts at the Textile Insti-

tute. Her studies in the Russian capital gave her a good basis. She was even taught how to create an even seam. Elvira's style is the result of a harmony of traditions and countries, so it's no surprise that, under her guidance, the Belarusian Fashion Centre creates designs which have defined Eastern European trends since the last century.

The Belarusian Fashion Centre has been selling clothes at its own boutique in Minsk for a long time, with a loyal customer base which adores its designs.

It was noted in Germany that Belarus lacks a brand producing a full fashion line, so experts have advised Belarusian manufacturers to co-operate, while employing a PR team and making significant investments. Belarusians can sew, with many interesting designers working countrywide. German ladies are primarily interested in clothes made from traditional and natural Belarusian flax linen, so this is a good starting point for exports.



Belarusian models conquering European market

Artistic wonders appear from... the attic

Rumyantsev-Paskevich Palace in Gomel hosts unique exhibition by painter Tatiana Shubina

As part of the *Gomel — Cultural Capital of the CIS and Belarus-2011* project, the International Craft Guild of Masters from St. Petersburg has presented a unique exhibition entitled *Metal Scrap Art — the Art of Waste Metal*. Ms. Shubina works with one of the most intriguing materials in contemporary art: rubbish. Although scrap art (or trash) is a modern trend, it also embraces the traditions of classical sculpture, using everyday items to create small wonders: old tools and components from household

appliances, wheels, speedometers, springs, headlights, water taps, and all manner of rusty teapots, spoons, brushes and other kitchen utensils. Outlandish fish, birds and insects are borne from her imagination, while some are equipped with mechanical devices allowing them to move: birds and insects flutter and turn their heads while fish move their tails and fins. "Image is always a priority in my works, so each detail should fit the form and contribute to the whole," notes Tatiana. "I select some details intuitively or use an experimental approach. I try to ensure variety in size and texture without destroying the integrity of my vision."

Dark blue sea inspires

Minsk master Natalia Yevmenenko takes photos in Berlin blue

Around 30 works are on show at the *Ultramarine* exhibition at the Modern Fine Arts Museum in Minsk.

"I'm an economist by education," notes the photographer. "However, after graduating from the Belarusian State Economic University, I worked only three months within my speciality. Unexpectedly, I became keen on photography and independently mastered my new profession. Now, I can't imagine my life without photography. My favourite place is a small town near Odessa; the *Ultramarine*

series was created there. It's a surprisingly poetic corner and I wanted to make it even more beautiful. This is how the blueprint appeared. English astronomer John Herschel invented this method of photographic printing back in 1842, allowing shots to be given a blue tone. Beforehand, a similar technology was used to dye fabrics. Now, this ancient and rather simple method is in fashion again. It creates photos in shades of blue to indigo, tinged with sepia."

Natalia is most keen on Berlin blue: a colour which suits her mountain landscapes. Moreover, to capture mountains, she has climbed many herself.

Where Visla and Dvina merge

Ancient Vitebsk solemnly celebrates its 1037th birthday



By Yelena Bogolyubova

Princess Olga is approaching the city centre on a snow white boat, along the Zapadnaya Dvina's silver sparkling waters. According to legend, she founded this wonderful city on the banks of two rivers many years ago. For centuries, Vitebsk has been praised in song and verse. It is an endless source of inspiration for artists, sculptors, architects and composers.

The city's high green banks were covered with many coloured stands, while thousands of Vitebsk residents and guests gathered to demonstrate gratitude to

City Day celebrations in Vitebsk

their locality, congratulating it on its birthday. For the first time in the past few decades, the major celebrations took place in the revamped Pobedy Square, near the river and upon it, as last occurred at the end of the last century. The decision to revive the water cultural and sports holiday on the bank of the Zapadnaya Dvina was wise. The surrounding wonderful landscapes created a unique artistic stage for the major event, which gathered so many guests.

A theatrical show featured ancient knights, hussars, Great Patriotic War soldiers, fire-fighters and modern characters. Bright

performances by sportsmen, water skiers, parachute jumpers, dancers and singers were organised. The history of this ancient city seemed to come alive. Dynamic scenes followed one upon another, causing true admiration among the audience, which included Russians, Bulgarians, Israelis, Lithuanians, Latvians and Germans.

The wonderful event on the river banks ended with a daytime firework display and many other festivities are yet to come. Artistic workshops are operational in every city square, featuring amateur shows and contests, while the parade of brides caused a great stir. Lovers of rare, classic cars have an auto show to look forward to while art connoisseurs can enjoy viewing local artists' works. Historical re-enactments are planned, devoted to the first settlement of Vitebsk, as well as cavalry and foot battles. Ancient cuisine is also on offer, while a contest to find the tallest man is being organised. Among other amusements is a classical music concert and the book launch of *Ancient Vitebsk's Youth*.

Business is also promoted via the festivities, with city enterprises enjoying increased revenue. Meanwhile, an investment forum — held at Vitebsk's concert hall — has brought several new projects to the fore.