

# Much spiritual wealth at museum

Over two decades of Belarus' sovereignty, the National Art Museum in Minsk has gained almost 5,000 artefacts

By Victor Mikhailov

The Culture Ministry has used budgetary funds, alongside those donated by sponsors, individuals, artists and organisations, to buy new items. Exhibitions of new acquisitions are held from time to time to show some of the most unique pieces — classical and modern.

This season's latest event comprises works from the past twenty years, and amply demonstrates that domestic art has received worthy attention. Since gaining independence, interest in Belarus-born artists has risen, so the museum has ensured that its collection of 19th-early 21st century pieces is impressive. Over this period, the most unique national art works have been created.

The museum's collection currently includes 16 lithographs by Napoleon Orda, 3 works by painter Piotr Sergievich and over 300 sketches by graphical artist Anatoly Kaplan. A brochure on the exhibition tells us that, several years ago, a collection of 20th century works by 'Belarusians from far beyond' was launched, including pieces by Yan Kuzmitsky, Leonid Tarasevich, Nikolay Pashkevich, Galina Dakalskaya, Boris Zaborov and Vyachka Telesh.

"The country's main museum has gained over 600 artworks by 194 modern Belarusian artists since Belarus' sovereignty; around a fifth of the previously collected Belarusian pictorial works are from the 20th century," explains the National Art Museum's Director, Vladimir Prokoptsov. "230 were donated by 72 artists."

The museum is especially proud of works by People's Artists of Belarus Leonid Shchemelev, Gavriil Vashchenko, Victor Gromyko, Vladimir Tovstik, Nikolay Seleshchuk, Victor Alshevsky and Valery Shkaruba. The present exhibition re-

minds us of their talent and artistic achievements. Moreover, it creates a 'profile' of the main trends from the last two generations of artists. 'New names' have also arrived at the museum: paintings by 76 artists whose works had never been shown by any state collection. "Presents from young artists — aged under 35 — allow us to show the artistry of different generations," notes Mr. Prokoptsov. Our heirs will certainly see Belarus' artistic life from the late 20th-early

21st century.

The 2011-2015 *Culture* programme is extremely important and timely, giving the opportunity to buy 18th-early 20th century Belarusian classical pieces. One rare museum piece is the straw 'Basilikos', by Alena Los, which reproduces the Basilikos from the Brest Region, from the first half of the 19th century.

The Belarusian sculpture fund has been enriched by 130 works over the past two decades. 15 were created by People's Artists of Belarus Zair Azhur, Anatoly Anikeichik,



Works occupy worthy place at museum

us. The museum is especially thankful to these people, as sculptures tend to be very expensive to purchase.

Around a thousand Belarusian original graphic arts have been donated, by almost 100 artists; 150 are by People's Artists of Belarus Georgy Poplavsky, Vasily Sharangovich

bodies has intensified. As a result, our collection of Old Belarusian art has been enriched with Russian icons," says Mr. Prokoptsov. "Recently, a collection of Russian icons has been formed and we've also gained a valuable collection of Old Believer copper castings."

Thanks to museum staff, two other collections have been acquired free of charge: a 20th century collection of Belarusian glass from Neman Glassworks (Berezovka, Grodno Region) and a splendid porcelain collection. Two years ago, the National Art Museum has received 1,632 items from the former museum of Minsk's Porcelain Factory. Over the past twenty years, the museum's funds have been enriched by almost 400 works by contemporary artists specialising in decorative and applied arts.

The collection of Russian art continues to grow, including works by famous Russian artists and academics from the Russian Academy of Arts; among them are Zurab Tseretely, Valentin Sidorov and Piotr Ossovsky.

The British American Tobacco Company is a longstanding general partner of the museum, making considerable contributions to its collections. It has bought several expensive works — such as an 18th century English clock, a bust of the first museum's director — Nikolay Mikhopol (by Svetlana Gorbunova), and a sculpture by Vladimir Slobodchikov, called *Artist's Morning* (installed in the courtyard of the museum's Vankovich House branch).

The National Art Museum is a treasure trove of national art culture. During our years of independence, so many works have arrived that a new museum could be created. The latest exhibition, displaying about 100 works from various collections (supplemented by another hundred works at an info-kiosk) is unable to cover all the new arrivals. However, it well indicates the mission of the museum.

and Arlen Kashkurevich. This collection includes many gifts from middle generation artists and from young graphic artists.

Dmitry Molotkov, a famous printer with the Belarusian Artists' Union, has made a major contribution, presenting his private collection of 887 prints by contemporary Belarusian, Russian and European graphical artists.

"Over the past decade, the museum's co-operation with customs

Ivan Misko and Lev Gumilevsky. The same number of works has been bought from young sculptors born in the late 1960s-early 1970s. Eight works have been presented by sculptors of the middle generation and 25 have been presented by families of masters no longer with

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## Physical disability no obstacle to art

**House of Government showcases exhibition by Anatoly Golushko — an amateur artist from the Brest Region's Ivatsevichi District and a member of an international organisation of physically challenged artists who don't use their hands to draw**

Especially for the show, the artist painted 27 works — all devoted to Belarus' unique landscapes. As the Chairman of the Belarusian National Assembly's House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko, notes, the show is unique in featuring pictures

drawn by an artist with mobility difficulties. "Anatoly Golushko remains eager to experience life and do good, regardless of the hand fate has dealt him. His canvases are inspired by these feelings, being full of warmth, light and love for his homeland," stresses Mr. Andreichenko, adding that some of the pictures have been bought by House of Representatives' deputies and members of the Council of the Republic and the Government. He adds that Mr. Golushko's attitude to life is admired by the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko.



At exhibition by Anatoly Golushko

The First Deputy Head of the Administration of Belarus' President, Alexander Radkov, greeted Mr. Golushko's relatives — who attended the show's opening

— on behalf of the President. He noted that Mr. Lukashenko sincerely admires the bravery demonstrated by Mr. Golushko. "Different situations occur in life but it's im-

portant to remain positive — working and purposeful. If you believe in your ability to make a difference, and don't lose heart or hope, you'll be successful," Mr. Radkov

is convinced. On behalf of the President, he gave a gift to the artist's sister, Svetlana Tavtyn.

In his youth, Mr. Golushko dreamt of becoming a sailor and even entered the Kaliningrad Marine College. Sadly, an accident destroyed all his dreams at the age of 17, when he hurt his spine, losing movement from the neck down. Despite life's hardships, he has spent two decades living life as fully as he can. He holds his paintbrush in his teeth, creating pictures full of love for his homeland; many are accompanied by his own poetry.