

True art speaks for itself, with gracefulness

Art of Belarus album presented at National Art Museum of Belarus

By Victor Mikhailov

Art in general, and fine arts in particular, must retain originality while having a clear theme, in order to have meaning. Moreover, art should be accessible, attractive and professional. The idea has been clearly realised by the Belarusian Union of Artists, which has decided it's high time to release an album.

Of course, to invent is easier than to implement. This wonderful idea could have remained unrealised, if funds had been lacking. Pleasingly, the International Confederation of Artistic Unions (headquartered in Moscow) offered financing for the project.

It would have been unwise to miss this chance, since the period for the album's release was limited. The Belarusian Union of Artists took up the offer gladly, although much

work was required. Disregarding the deadline, the album was sent to print after the third design was approved. Designer Andrey Savich, Artists' Union secretaries Rygor Sitnitsa and Sergey Timokhov, and Chairman Vladimir Savich only relaxed once the edition was in circulation in Minsk.

book is the result of determination and persistence. At the solemn launch ceremony, nobody concealed their pleasure. Symbolically, the ceremony took place at the main museum of the country, invited by National Art Museum Director Vladimir Prokoptsov. "This event is worthy of renown among the artistic elite of the country," he said. "For the first time

at a high artistic level, with wonderful illustrations. Its content demonstrates that modern Belarusian art is full of talent."

Many of those present at the ceremony admitted that the album is a success. People's Artist of Belarus Georgy Poplavsky, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday, is delighted with the album, which he plans to give as a gift when travelling abroad or accepting guests.

He stresses, "We can be proud that we've created such a high quality album. We know the high level of our artistic endeavours but the rest of the world should also discover our talents. It's important for people worldwide to learn about our country. Our artists create European-level pictures and sculptures. We are the



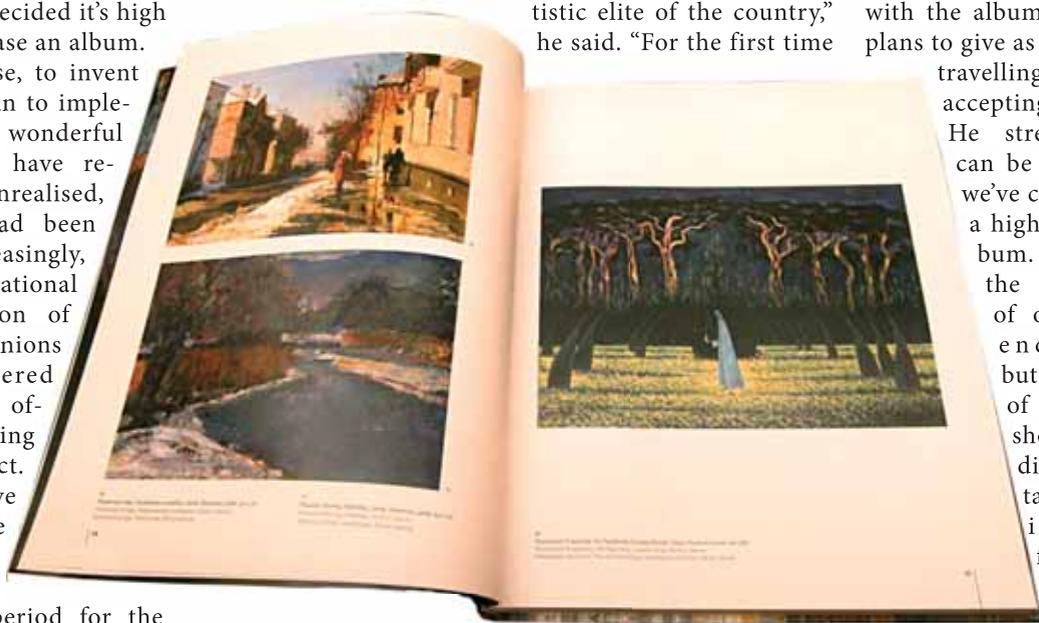
Album presented by Director Vladimir Prokoptsov

equal of anyone and even have much to teach others."

The album aims to promote modern Belarusian art, which draws on rich traditions, including those of Europe. It shall enlighten youngsters, inspiring their respect for our national artists. Already, most of the editions have been distributed to libraries and educational establishments, while ministries and other organisations

are to receive copies in the near future.

Importantly, the album should open a door to the wider world, aiding discoveries. More foreigners will learn about Belarusian painters, strengthening our ties. No doubt, culture enriches not only the artistic elite but ordinary people who wish to understand it. The more such meetings occur, the more sincere they will become. *Art of Belarus* serves this aim.



Art of Belarus – an open book

The amount of work that has been put into the project is impressive. All obstacles are in the past; the

in the history of our independent Belarus, we have a unique edition, published

country. Our artists create European-level pictures and sculptures. We are the

Acquaintance promises to be interesting

By Sergey Kochetov

Vitebsk's Regional Museum displays military technique from private collection

The exhibition is the result of co-operation between museum employees and modelling enthusiast Dmitry Kirillov, who is eagerly presenting exhibits from his own collection. The display includes military maps from 1941-1944. The event aims to show the technical equipment used by German and Soviet troops during WWII, with a model of a legendary KV-2 heavy artillery tank among the most impressive. According to Mr. Kirillov, the tank was to be used during the defence of Vitebsk. Photos of a prototype were found in the archive, from which he constructed the model.

The exhibition opens a range of events in the regional centre dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War. During the year, Vitebsk's museum plans to organise a series of exhibitions and a scientific conference, in addition to a range of public and cultural campaigns connected with this tragic date in our history.

Vitebsk's Regional Museum was named in honour of Minai Shmyrev, a partisan brigade commander and Hero of the Soviet Union.

Fashionable trends may change but exclusive style always remains

National History Museum gathers Belarusian fashion piece by piece, while adding collections by young masters for forthcoming spring-summer season

By Viktor Korbut

Clothes by Leor Gofman, Kristina Seryakova, Anastasia Sabina, Antonina Yasnitskaya and other young designers are on show, loaned by their owners for the exhibition. These unique dresses and jackets allow their owners to express their individuality, wearing extraordinary and flamboyant garments owned by only a handful of others. Of course, our designers love to create such pieces but, to be a commercial success, garments must be 'wearable'. In the past, collections presented at Minsk's *Fashion Mill* Festival have often remained almost unknown, owned by a select few. These days, the clothes enjoy wider popularity — both domestically and abroad.

Leor Gofman is just 20 but his works are already selling well abroad — especially in Russia. He is yet to conquer Paris or Milan, but is evidently taking his first confident steps in the fashion industry. Leor is keen to pass an internship in the West, to enrich his practical and theoretical knowledge, but is ready

to set up his own enterprise in Belarus, if he fails to travel abroad. He has a simple explanation for his passion: he cannot remain indifferent to what we wear. "Sadly, Belarusians are yet to understand how to wear different clothes for different occasions; they confuse formal wear with party wear. Clothes give a first impression. I want to help those wishing to look stylish and eye-catching with my clothes," he says.

Leor is demonstrating his third collection at the National History Museum, having designed clothes for men and women previously. His present collection is women's wear, with Eastern-style dresses on show, although he was inspired by the West. "I visited Sweden with a *Fashion Mill* delegation and saw Turkmen national costumes at a local museum. I wanted to use some of the Asian motifs in my own collection, alongside Indian motifs." He admits that most of them will probably only appear on the red carpet at celebrity events, so many are likely to remain in his wardrobe



Flamboyant garments stress bright individuality of their owners

for a while, or will be sold abroad.

Kristina Seryakova has no dresses awaiting buyers at home. She works at Alesya JSC, designing knitwear which is bought and worn by thousands of people. She also works with small private companies who are eager to use her designs. Kristina's *Wax* and *Amber* collections are on show at the museum. Her jackets are decorated with amber, making them difficult to create, but they are exclusive pieces, creating looks which are unrivalled.

It's not so easy to find clothes by Gofman or Seryakova at local shops. Last year, famous Belarusian designer Sasha Varlamov promised to open a boutique of designer

clothes in the centre of Minsk but its launch has been postponed until spring. Designers and customers who prefer exclusive clothes await its opening with impatience.

Clothes made from Chinese silk were presented at the Belarusian Fashion Centre in late January, showing that Eastern trends will reign this spring. Gofman is already experimenting with Eastern patterns while Antonina Yasnitskaya and Anastasia Sabina are turning to southern motifs. They've used felt, with leather patterns and African tribal style decorations, harking back to trends seen in previous seasons. As we know, fashion may change but style remains.