



Calm and stormy seas on display at exhibition of seascape painters: primarily, works by Ivan Aivazovsky

Feeling salty taste of sea waves

To feel the force of the waves or a soothing sea breeze on a sunny day, simply visit the National Art Museum, which is currently exhibiting works by world famous Russian seascape painter Ivan Aivazovsky

By Victor Mikhailov

One floor of the amphitheatre is devoted to over sixty pictures by Aivazovsky and his contemporaries. He began work in the early 19th century but his major period of artistry was in the late 1800s. Other masters popular at the time were Alexey Bogolyubov and Ruffin Sudkovsky, who were seen as presenting a more authentic depiction of the sea's power, the seashore and ships, being less romantic. Lev Lagorio — Aivazovsky's pupil — departed from his romantic traditions, being attracted by simplicity of composition and a restrained palette (*On the Seashore*).

"The sea is my element," Aivazovsky once said. His numerous paintings form a 'sea encyclopaedia'. "I've always felt the poetry of nature and try to show it with my brush: I'm equally inspired by the charm of a southern night sky or sunset, or the horror of a storm," he admitted. The power of the sea to soothe or destroy is shown fully in his works: pacifying and calm in *Misty Morning*, *Marina* and *Morning at Sea* yet dazzling and mysterious in *Moonlit Night in Amalfi*, and *Night on the Island of Rhodes*, and severe and raging in *Storm*. Each is depicted skilfully and poetically.

"The plot of each painting forms in my head like that of a poem. Having made a sketch on a piece of paper, I settle down to work and don't leave the canvas until I've expressed myself with the brush," he explained. Undoubtedly, he always rouses the strongest of emotions. His seascapes are stirring to the soul, truly recreating the feel of waves beating upon rocks, rosy sunsets over the ocean and sea mists.

In fact, late 19th-early 20th century art was diverse, following numerous trends and combining various approaches. Colour played a significant role for Nikolay Dubovskoy, whose works are also on show, full of ease and airiness (*Seashore. Steamer. Sketch* and *Sea Landscape*) or extreme intensity (*Sea*). He created a wealth of effects using colour.

Among those who sought to present nature realistically was Vasily Surikov — another master of colour. His use of proportion and harmony in his watercolour *Seashore. Crimea* is stunning. Meanwhile, the *Sea* by Arkhip Kuindzhi springs to life off the canvas, via the clever use of colour and light. *Amsterdam* (1885) by Valentin Serov is sharply

perceived, while rejecting stereotypes. Finally, Konstantin Korovin's wonderful freshness and expression are surely the result of the time he spent painting outside.

In the 20th century, artists were drawn by the unobtrusive landscapes of the North, some portraying the Arctic. Each had their own unique style. Albert Benois' *White*

depths while Leonard Turzhansky's works plunge us into a grey and brown impenetrable wall (*Northern Night. Murmansk Shore*). We feel an ethereal pearl-blue expanse in Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya's poetic *Barents Sea*, which shows the shore sinking in the far mist. Herbert Silinsh's *To Fishing Place Region* also gives a striking interpretation. Each

sunshine, also inspired great works: Aristarkh Lentulov's *Morning in Batumi Harbour*, Grigory Nissky's *Sevastopol. Embankment*, Mikhail Kupriyanov's *Genichesk. Arabat-skaya Strelka*, *Genichesk. Fishermen's Boats*, and Nadir Kasumov's *Rocks. Sozopol*.

No doubt, the sea's power is diverse, variable and infinitely attractive to artists. Aivazovsky's works give a romantic, emotional view of nature while realists and 20th century impressionists give us something different again. The present show at the National Art Museum is truly outstanding in featuring Aivazovsky's works. His contemporaries recollected that he could draw a picture in just 90 minutes — in 'a single breath'. Meanwhile, those seeking to reproduce his works can take six months or more. Fakes are detected by how long it has taken the paint to dry (since originals were created within a single day).

The present exhibition showcases only originals — from the National Art Museum. These treasures are worthy of envy. Guests are sure to enjoy Ivan Aivazovsky's masterpieces, plunging into his sea depths, while being warmed by the charming sun and marvelling at wonderful southern nights.



It's truly beautiful

Sea makes us feel the eternal nature of the

work discloses the harsh and fascinating beauty of the North.

The southern seas, with their particular atmosphere and bright

Sincere illustration of glorious military's fate

Gomel showcasing collection of photos from WWI for first time

Gomel's Palace and Park Estate has unveiled its *Under a First World War Sky* exhibition, featuring 164 photos. Most were taken by war veteran Kazimir Poznyak, who was born in Gomel and served with the Karsk Aeronautic Detachment in the Caucasus.

The major mission of WWI pilots was to take photos (as proven by archives). Kazimir's photos depict the first aviation machinery and military actions, captured Turkish soldiers, the daily routines of the

Russian military, picturesque corners of the Caucasus and local architectural sites and people.

Some photos were sent inside Mr. Poznyak's letters to his family: to his parents (who lived in Gomel), his wife (in the Chernigov District) and brother (who served as a machine gunner with the 117th infantry detachment of Yaroslavl).

The collection survived two world wars in the attic of an old Gomel house — providing historical proof of their time and a true chronicle of the tragedy of war, while illustrating the life of a man who survived that conflict.

Prizes scattered in May

Belarusfilm screens at Cannes Film Festival for first time, jointly funded with European partners

By Tatiana Pastukhovskaya

In the Fog — shot jointly by Belarusfilm National Film Studio and European film companies — is to vie for the Palme d'Or of Cannes Film Festival this year. Based on a work by outstanding Belarusian writer Vasil Bykov, the international cinema project attracted funding from MA.JA.DE Fiction (Germany), Russia's GP Group, Rija Films (Latvia), Lemming Film (the Netherlands), ZDF/ARTE (Germany) and the EURIMAGES

Fund. Meanwhile, Match Factory owns the rights to global sales.

The historical drama was shot in just 28 days, featuring actors from Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic (nine languages in total). Directed by Sergey Loznitsa, the plot tells of a man who must make a choice in the face of unconscionable circumstances, in 1942 Nazi-occupied Belarus. Village railway worker Sushchenya is wrongly accused of being a collaborator, leading to two partisans

arriving from the forest seeking revenge. He must then prove his innocence...

In the Fog is Mr. Loznitsa's second feature film, having debuted at the Cannes Film Festival with *My Happiness*, in May 2010. The film was awarded for best directorship and received a prize from the Guild of Film Experts at the *Kinotavr* Festival. It was also awarded a Grand Prix and a FIPRESCI prize at Kiev's *Youth Forum*, in addition to a Grand Prix at Minsk International *Listapad* Film Festival.