

Alexander Grishkevich's painting: *The Earth*

Landscape is true to scale

Creative exhibition of artist Alexander Grishkevich devoted to single picture: *The Earth*

By Vladimir Stepanenko

The Earth trio of landscape canvases is so large that it occupies a whole wall of Alexander Grishkevich's studio

I'm chatting to Mr. Grishkevich, late at night, at his studio, where he sits near his picture. Although tall, he is overshadowed by his huge, stern landscape.

Alexander, it's unfashionable to create realistic art these days — whether in pictures, novels or poems. We seem to live in an age of short but capacious information messages, ruled by computer technologies. However, your picture was painted in the last century.

I've always tried to find innovative solutions but worked with landscapes on a small scale. Many believe that larger canvases are needed to fully appreciate landscape paintings but I never agreed. David Siqueiros's paintings seem huge but are only small in reality.



However, I began to gradually enlarge the size of my canvases, wishing to give spectators a sense of space.

Do you mean that you'd like to draw landscapes almost to scale?

Why not? Each feature would then look real, with paints placed like soil...

Then a plough should be used instead of a brush.

This would be true realism!

[laughing]

The genre of landscapes cannot embrace wider ideas, can it?

I don't agree. Think of Levitan, whose small sketches were transformed into huge pictures — like his famous *March*. Another example is Vasily Savrasov's well-known *Return of the Rooks*, which is just 50cm x 60cm; it's very realistic, as everyone knows. It fulfils its mis-

sion utterly.

Do you know what kind of monument has been erected to Belarusian artist Dobuzhinsky in Vilnius?

It's an interesting project, which is directly connected with our conversation. A frame is placed on a bronze tripod and, on looking through, you can see a view of the city landscape — as chosen by the artist. The landscape is alive — whether

Alexander Grishkevich promises to give personal exhibition in his home town of Molodechno, then in his childhood home of Vileika

with snow or rain or different light. However, it is also contained within the frame.

Is there a bronze figurine of the artist himself?

No. Each passer by becomes Dobuzhinsky on looking at the view of the street and city.

It seems that you began work on this landscape — now being premiered — long ago. I well remember the field covered in snow and ice.

Everything began with other landscapes. I used to draw a road parallel to the lower edge of each canvas, as well as the sky, horizon and forests. However, I always had the desire to paint a freer, more open landscape — not just a certain view. Saints on icons are shown directly in front, looking at Believers, and I wanted to draw a similar landscape. I wished to paint nature as if it were standing in front of us, looking at us. Everything needed to be open and clear.

Doesn't the title — *The Earth* — seem a bit pomp-

ous? Director Dovzhenko has a film of the same name...

Can it be otherwise? I was trying to draw a serious picture.

Alexander, will the remaining three walls of the gallery remain empty?

I've given this a lot of thought. Besides the picture, I'll showcase several dozen small sketches, which took many years to draw. I never parted with the best of them. I want to express my gratitude to the Director of the Gallery of Arts, Yelena Lagovskaya, for her support of artists, helping them to organise exhibitions. In our modern times, everything costs money: rent, light, delivery and preparation for a show.

He opens a drawer, taking out small landscapes framed in beautiful gold, with glass. He assures me that he won't sell them, as he has promised to organise a personal exhibition in his home city of Molodechno, and in the city of Vileika, where he spent his childhood.

Luck smiles on young singer Yegor Zheshko

Yegor tried his hand at the *Song for Eurovision* national children's contest last year but luck only winked at him. This year, following a public vote via Belarus 1 TV Channel, Yegor will be representing Belarus in Amsterdam on December 1st, competing for the title of best young European pop singer.

By Viktor Afanasiev

Junior Eurovision is the most successful for Belarus among international music competition, with two victories to date: in 2005 for Ksenia Sitnik and in 2007 for Alexey Zhigalkovich. Every year, our young talents do well at the event and there is little doubt that Zheshko will also prove popular. During the national selection re-

hearsal, his stage presence and charisma were evident.

Yegor's voice coach, Valery Shmat, is the Artistic Director of *Belarusy*, which runs the Golden Voices Studio for children. Zheshko has long been singing with Mr. Shmat, whose expectations are high. He tells us, "Yegor sings confidently and, even if he is nervous before a performance, can focus well on stage, smiling

and enchanting the audience."

Yelena Budritsova, Head of Belteleradiocompany Department of TV Programmes for children and young people, is reluctant to raise our hopes, saying, "All the participants are at approximately the same level, singing beautiful songs, although few are catchy. Our finalist will have to work hard to stand out but he certainly has potential."



Yegor Zheshko to perform *A More-More...* at Junior Eurovision

The MT's reference:

Yegor Zheshko was born in 1999 in Minsk and has been singing since childhood. According to his parents, Ivan and Irina, he constantly 'sang arias' but, two years ago, took up music more seriously. Yegor plays the piano and guitar and is a fan of Nikolai Baskov, Ricky Martin and Vitas. He has participated in several international contests, including the children's 'New Wave' this year. In Amsterdam, he'll face rivals from 11 countries.