



Chairman of the NGO Belarusian Union of Artists, Vladimir Savich, is impressed by 3rd Testament Painting, Graphic and Sculpture Biennale

# Creativity knows no usual bounds

Each decade brings its own fashions and trends, reflected in our creativity. The innovation and imagination of others is often taken for granted but the ability to organise your artistic thoughts into a tangible form deserves respect and attracts attention.



Realism painting exhibition as clear as photography



Against background of exhibits at Testament Biennale

By Victor Mikhailov

The process of creation was recently honoured at the Palace of Arts' Republican Gallery of the Belarusian Union of Artists. It became a huge studio during the first week, allowing artists to create their art objects for the would-be exposition in situ, in front of visitors' eyes. The creative process was thus revealed, at least in part.

What is usually hidden from ordinary people, who aren't connected with art, has actually become the major visual attraction. This was live interactive communication between painters and spectators Belarusian public. The event encouraged artists to experiment boldly and on grand scale, as well as sharing their thoughts with colleagues and the audience

Meanwhile, in the first

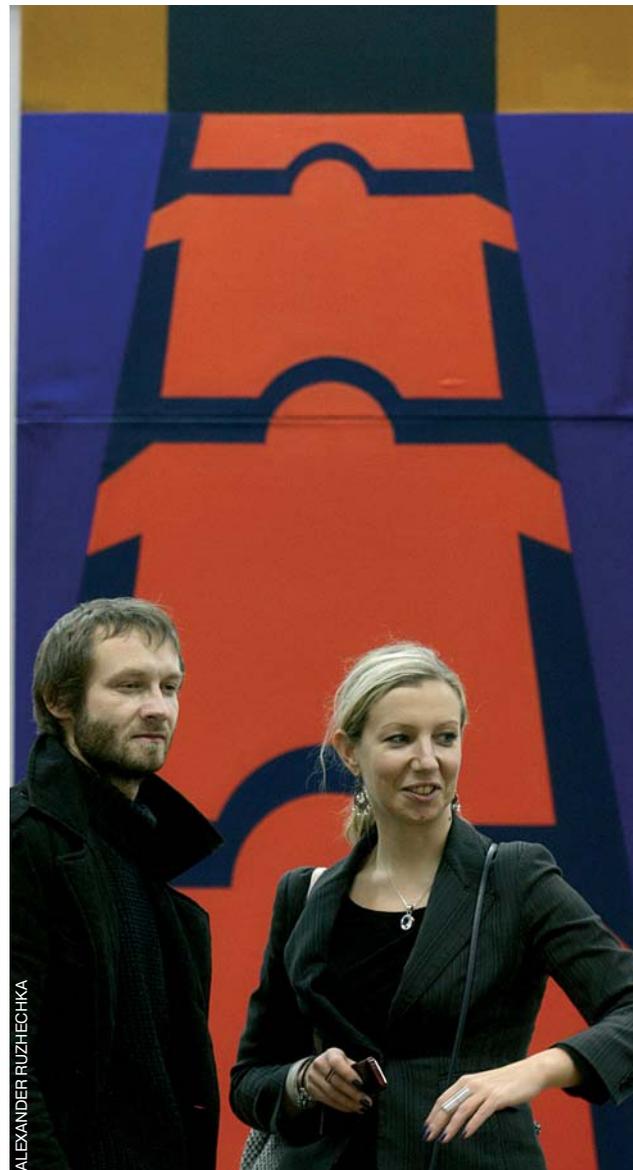
week, wishing to attract spectators to the exhibition and make some issues regarding modern arts more understandable, the cultural website kyky.org ran a parallel programme of expert lectures, a master class for children, musical performances and professional excursions — all dedicated to promoting our understanding of art in a contemporary context.

In this unusual way the major exposition of the biennale has appeared already after the first working week. Painters have been assessed by the professional jury, alongside the tally of a visitor voted for favourite works, allowing the public to give their own feedback. The exhibition's goal has been to refute the traditional idea of the world of art being closed, only accessible by an elite. According to Vladimir Savich, the Chairman of the

Belarusian Union of Artists, such form of organisation will enable us to close the gap in communication between spectators and painters while opening up a door into the laboratory of mastery. He hopes that the experiment will encourage artists to interact more with audiences in future and is hopeful that the event is more European than ever before, following the path of the Venice Biennale.

The Belarusian biennale also honoured art works from the past two years, with prizes given in the nominations of 'Sculpture', 'Painting' and 'Graphic Art'. Each winner's works will have an opportunity to organise their personal exhibition in Moscow, Warsaw, Lvov and other cities with which the Belarusian Union of Artists has liaisons.

Many may have wondered at the selection criteria, since



Meeting full of surprises

works were certainly diverse, chosen by an organising committee rather than a curator. Nor was a clear theme or concept prescribed, notes Olga Kovalenko, a cultural special-

ist and art critic. She tells us that the task was to show 'the cutting edge of contemporary Belarusian art, with its innovative core.'

All members of the Bela-

rusian Union of Artists were eligible to take part but most were of young and middle age — rather than maestros. Ruslan Vashkevich, a driving force behind the biennale, explains that the exhibition aimed to also reveal problems in contemporary Belarusian art.

The event was devoted to Sergey Timokhov, who initiated the 1st Belarusian Biennale in 2008. According to Rygor Sitnitsa, First Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Artists, Timokhov's aesthetic priorities were followed in selecting works, which had to be highly professional and spiritual. The professional jury was chosen to reflect various artistic views, bringing greater objectivity.

Certainly, the event was successful in involving the public more widely than is usual, while revealing the creative process. The event continues the world traditions of forums in Venice, Florence, Shanghai, Istanbul and elsewhere, opening doors to fans of what is called postmodernism by art experts.

Artists' interaction with the public led to the event being more chaotic than is typical for such exhibitions, with some pieces being unsigned and others standing on the floor half-unpacked. Olga Kovalenko, a member of the International Association of Critics, tells us, "Having seen the exhibits, I can say confidently that contemporary Belarusian art does boast diversity."