

# Following in path of Black Square



Great Supremacist Kazimir Malevich's genetic roots to Belarus announced at Minsk's Pushkin Regional Library, at launch of exhibition honouring the 135th anniversary of his birth

By Alla Narovskaya

Belarusian artists' interest in Kazimir Malevich and his creativity began in Vitebsk in 1919, when he arrived to lecture at the local People's Art School. He changed the very nature of the school itself, the city's educational system and cultural life; many would say that he transformed art worldwide. On arrival, he had already formed his Suprematic ideas: in theory and concept. However, they needed a new environment for further development and the city became that venue. Those with an open mind were able to view Suprematism as an integral part of the universe.

They united under the association UNOVIS (Affirmers of New Art), pushing traditional limits.

The present exhibition — organised by the MASTER International Public Association of Painters and Art Critics and the Belarusian Union of Designers — aims to cherish the memory of Kazimir Malevich and re-consider his artistry. Suprematic style posters adorn the walls; painted by Belarusian designers, devoted to UNOVIS, Malevich and his follower, El Lissitzky. Malevich invented 'Suprematism' in the early 20th century: abstract compositions of geometric shapes — often in red, white and black. Posters by S. Sark-



Exhibition dedicated to 135th anniversary of birth of Kazimir Malevich at Minsk's Pushkin Region Library

isov, Y. Tareev and R. Naidenov are on show, alongside A. Mikhalevich's *Transformation of K. Malevich's Square into A. Mikhalevich's Stool*. The work won the 'Objects' prize at *Postulat-2012*, organised by the Belarusian Union of Designers.

Sergey and Evelina Krishtapovich's works particularly stand out, having a different style but a similar aesthetic and use of form. Sergey prefers a laconic approach, encouraging realistic reflection, while Evelina fully expresses the well-known ideas of Suprematism.

The show revolves around Evelina's portrait of Malevich and her *Music of Suprematism* diptych, as well as Sergey's *Red Square*; the pictures are placed on opposite walls.

Kazimir Malevich often said: 'music aims at silence' and 'a picture must be seen and heard'. These ideas perfectly describe Evelina's diptych, which seems to portray music via images. Sergey's aesthetic tradition has been avant-garde since the early 1970s — when he was three times excluded from art college (at the age of 16) for

his radical works. His geometric minimalism is worthy of his great teacher, Malevich. Sergey's *Cross of Fate* shows a red square against a white background, with the cross-like figure of a bird flying, symbolising Fate, the universe and man. "In our 21st century world, we need to look beyond Malevich's universe, creating a new Suprematism," he asserts.

The Minsk show launches a large project, which the MASTER Association plans to realise over the coming two years.

# Heritage reflected on canvases

Famous artist Boris Arakcheev finishes final work one hour before his death

By Victor Mikhailov

Boris Arakcheev — Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus, prominent realistic painter, a former combat veteran and a teacher — died on March 10th, aged 86. The exhibition at the Yanka Kupala Literary Museum in Minsk pays tribute to his memory, displaying his works from across the decades. Some are on show for the first time and, at the centre, is *Yanka Kupala — The Great Patriot* (alongside two early sketches for the work). The exhibition is entitled *I See the Power of Life Everywhere* and gives a clear sense of Mr. Arakcheev's love for his homeland.

His daughter, Oksana, tells us, "Nature was his first teacher. As a child, from a small Russian village on the Sit River, he gathered stones and ran along the river bank. Those stones were colourful treasures to him."

Over the years, the boy became a great artist, whose pictures occupy a worthy place in museums, galleries and collectors' homes in Belarus and abroad. Moreover, Mr. Arakcheev taught hundreds of other artists, including his three daughters.

"My father treated his students as creative personalities," continues Oksana. "He believed that a teacher's major task is to nurture a creative atmosphere for pupils. His students loved him; many became wonderful



**Boris Arakcheev.**  
*Autumn.*  
Canvas, oil,  
1977



**Boris Arakcheev.**  
*Bread.*  
Canvas, oil,  
1977

teachers themselves."

Although not Belarusian in origin, Mr. Arakcheev found a passion for Belarusian history, culture and nature. Among his works dedicated to this love are: *Berezina*, *Silence*;

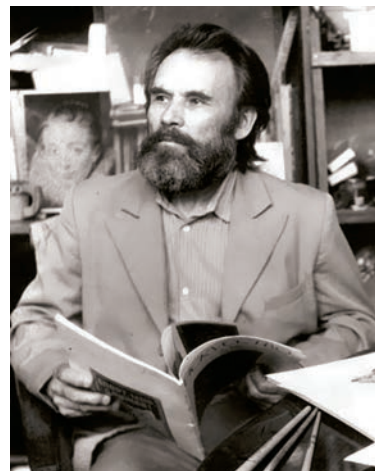
*Zhirovichi Monastery*; *Lake Svityaz*; and *Passage of the Army of Bagration through the Dnieper River near Old Bykhov*. He explored every genre, from landscapes, portraits and still-life to military and historical themes.

All are filled with deep emotion and a powerful sense of colour. Moreover, he created many drawings of Minsk, with fascinating and unforgettable candour.

"My father once drew Minsk's Svobody Square, featuring buildings which didn't exist there now. As a small girl, I would look out from the windows of his studio, seeing the life of the city while my father painted. He created a ring of impressively huge trees, which were only from his imagination. However, his painting captured the essence of something which lives on," recalls Oksana Arakcheeva.

Oksana learnt much from her father, today working as an artist and book illustrator for children's editions and junior school textbooks. Flowers and portraits are her specialty. She graduated from the Art Academy's Graphic Department and her style certainly echoes that of her father. Her love for her native land is evident, showing in her depiction of old household items, which supplement her favoured 'flower' topic. One of her works shows an ancient jug filled with camomile daisies, lit by a lantern. Beside them is a spinning wheel. You can't help but imagine the 18th century potter's wheel of some Belarusian master, in a small village, which created the jug; now, the jug has found its way to the painter's studio.

Her still-life paintings are filled



**Boris Arakcheev**

with such sunshine that her flowers seem to radiate perceptible fragrance. As well as wild flowers, she paints those from greenhouses and gardens, so 'truthfully' that they are almost alive. Each tiny detail of petal and leaf quivers with life.

Oksana is a fan of city landscapes and, like every one of us, has her own favourite corners of Minsk: the Yanka Kupala public garden with its view over the River Svisloch; the quay; Yubileinaya Square with its Cathedral Church; the Town Hall; and old corners of the city. Naturally, time changes the appearance of our capital, finding reflection in her works, which she often compares with those of her father. Her heart rejoices at finding an image which makes her soul sing and her philosophy has been inherited from her father, to whom she dedicates many of her works.