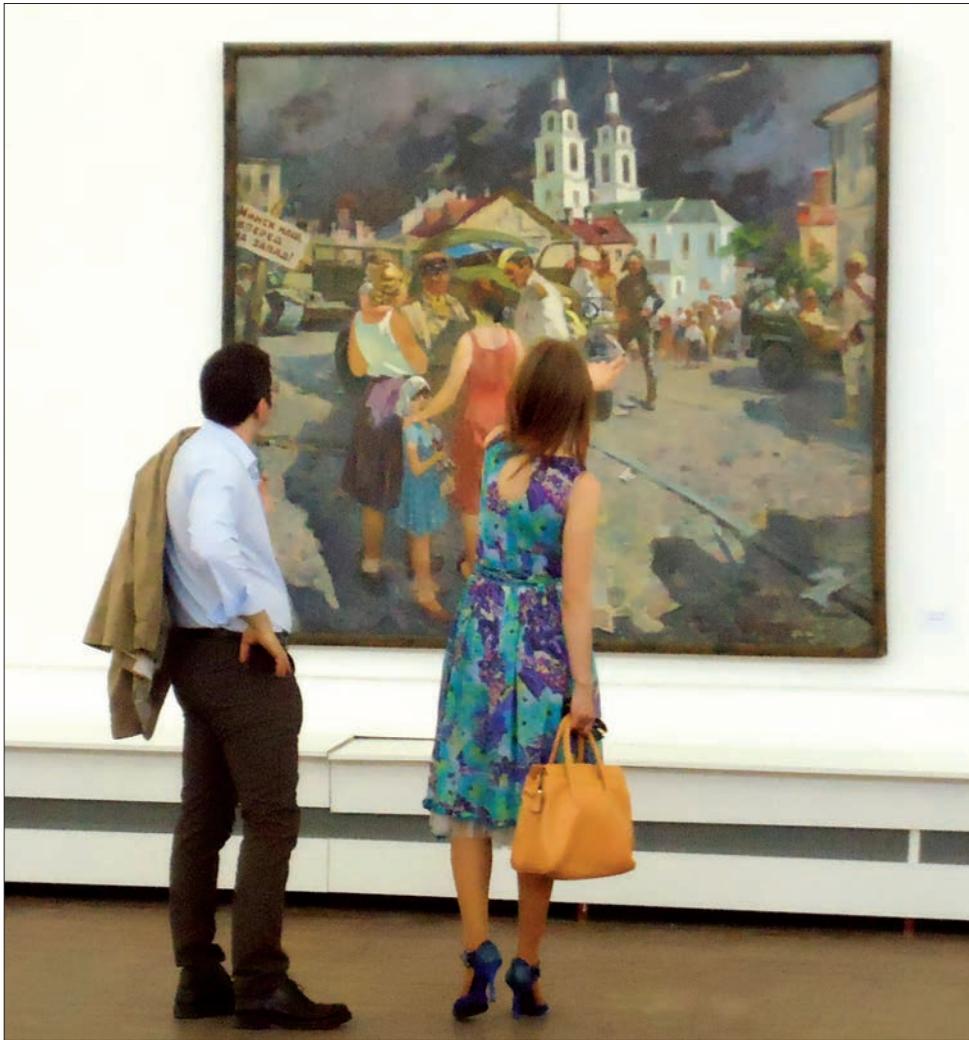


Evocative, bright symbols of heroic deeds and memory

Colours of Victorious Spring exhibition hosted by Minsk Palace of Arts



Leonid Shchemelev's *End of War*



Our Minsk by Fiodor Baranovsky

By Victor Mikhailov

The Belarusian Union of Artists' exhibition is a Victory Day tradition, reminding us of the heroism and courage of those who fought in the Great Patriotic War and of the wider self-sacrifice of those tragic war years.

Each spring, towns and villages decorate their streets in honour of the Great Victory, which began in May 1945, and various exhibitions and commemorative events are organised. This year, our capital presented *Colours of Victorious Spring*, at Minsk's Palace of the Arts, naturally dedicated to the military theme and the 68th anniversary of the Victory against Fascism.

Unquestionably, the works on show have the power to pull our emotions, showing the ordeals of those who lived through wartime. Some paintings were created by ex-soldiers, such as People's Artist of Belarus Leonid Shchemelev and People's Artist of Belarus Victor Gromyko; their sad and terrible experience of war gained depiction on canvas.

The exhibition at the Palace of Arts is dedicated to our Victory but also to the infinite value of life. Some memories never fade. Accordingly, the halls of the Palace of Arts show works by young artists as well as old, allowing new generations to give their interpretation of the emotional aspects of war.

Fiodor Baranovsky's famous battle-pieces in Soviet realism style are a cornerstone of Belarusian art. One of the first graduates of the Art Institute of Minsk, his works are rarely seen at exhibitions, despite being in state archives and private collections. He showed soldiers' characters and inner vitality: their emotions, determination and courage. We see the lives of those who endured tough times with bravery, creating a life of honour. He passed away over a decade ago.

The Great Patriotic War, which ended 68 years



ago, is long part of history yet remains an element of the destiny of almost every Belarusian family. How can it be different in a country which lost a third of its residents in the war? Every year, on May 9th, we solemnly celebrate Victory Day, with genuine respect for veterans. We understand that, no matter how many years pass from that victorious spring, for us and all generations living

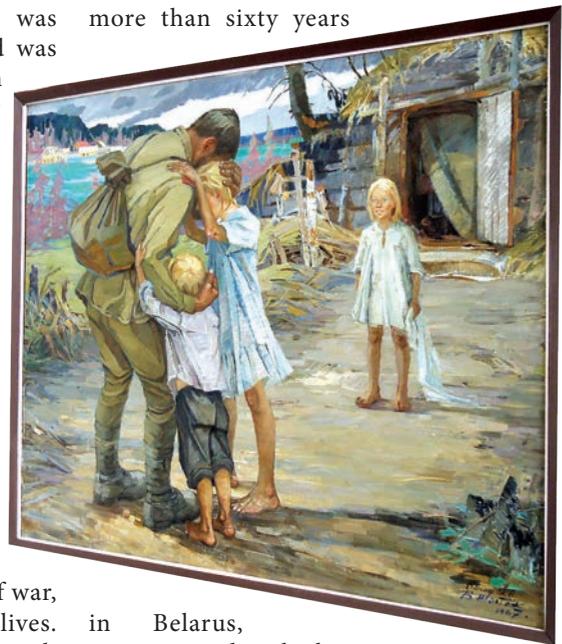
on this Earth, the day is a celebration of our freedom to live: a right won for us by those who fought in the Great Patriotic War.

Mr. Baranovsky was born on July 3rd and was celebrating his 20th birthday on the day Belarus was liberated, in 1944. Later, he would paint *Our Minsk*, depicting the joy of the soldiers' return and of Victory. The canvas forms part of the current exhibition at the Palace of Arts. Another of his famous military themed works is *The Bath*; behind the obvious domestic plot, it conceals protest against the idea of war, which ruins young lives. Its unexpected approach presents a paradoxical mix of love for life and hidden tragedy, carried off with great professional technique.

Of course, Mr. Baranovsky is a star of Belarusian art, standing along-

side such masters as Nikolay Zolozny, Ivan Dmukhailo and Iosif Belanovich, whose works are also on display at the exhibition.

portray life's rich beauty through landscape painting. It was a genre in which he fully revealed his talent. Born in Ukraine, he lived more than sixty years



in Belarus, creating works which were lyrical and candid. He was called the Belarusian Levitan, although he could also be called Ukrainian and received the titles of Honoured Artist of the Republic of Belarus and Cavalier of the Ukrainian Order of Merit. He worked until the very end of his life, admiring Ukrainian and Belarusian landscapes

his native Minsk. soldier of the Great Patriotic War, Iosif Belanovich, chose the military theme for his works — such as *Brest Fortress*, *Heroes of Immortality*, *Memory* and *Soldiers*. He reflected the humanity of those who fought, continuing to paint until his final day on Earth, creating canvases dedicated to the heroic defence of Brest Fortress, the courage of the victims of the siege of Leningrad, the fighting in Berlin and the liberation of

his native Minsk. Belarusian artists may differ in their approach to the theme of war but courageous resistance and national heroism always dominate. The works of People's Artist of Belarus Georgy Poplavsky are no exception. Also presented at the exhibition, his paintings relate Great Patriotic War narratives. As he once explained: 'It is our duty [to explore this theme] due to the unforgettable sacrifices suffered by Belarus during the war.'

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Self-portrait of People's Artist of Belarus Leonid Shchemelev

and the beauty of women. Life held so many mysteries for Ivan Dmukhailo, subtly explored in his paintings.

Another former

