

Close analysis of artistic treasures

Two exhibitions, hosted by National Art Museum and Modern Fine Arts Museum, present creativity of European artists



Exhibition of Gaspare Manos' portraits



Hungarian Rhapsody exhibition at National Art Museum

By Victor Mikhailov

The *Hungarian Rhapsody. Artists of Szolnok* exhibition, from the collection of the State Museum in honour of János Damjanich, has arrived at the National Art Museum, showing over 30 works by 24 Hungarian artists, created between 1900 and 1970. The State Museum, located in the small and picturesque

city of Szolnok, holds a wealth of works, as Szolnok has long been a centre for Hungarian art, gathering artists from near and far.

The exhibition explores Szolnok's most interesting periods of development, since its establishment over a century ago as the heart of the Hungarian school of landscape and genre painting. "This has long been a special place: a creative workshop for

artists from around the world, including from Belarus," noted Vladimir Prokoptsov, the Director of the National Art Museum of Belarus, speaking at the solemn opening of the exhibition in Minsk.

Among the most valuable of the exhibits are works by such Hungarian fine arts masters as László Mednyánszky, Ferenc Olgyay, Peter Syle, Vilmos Aba-

Novák and István Zador. All are to go on tour to other Belarusian cities after Minsk audiences have had the chance to enjoy the exhibition.

Meanwhile, the Museum of Modern Fine Arts is hosting *Gaspare Manos: Portraits in Close Up*. Italian Gaspare Manos is a graphic artist and sculptor who combines abstract and figurative art. Taught by Cy Twombly and Anselm Kiefer, his themes centre around people, time, space and place, interpreting our urbanised world — from Asia through Europe to Africa. The Minsk exhibition, for the first time, gathers 50 portraits of well-known 20th century personalities; each tells an intensely personal story, including details which would otherwise remain hidden.

Mr. Manos explains, "They possess particular interest and energy." He believes that such portraits paint a surprising picture of their subjects, revealing aspects of their life and creativity perhaps

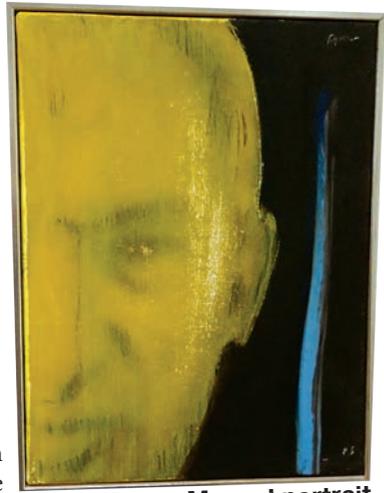
never before understood. Most of his protagonists are recognised geniuses of the last century. The canvases are from private collections and his own personal archive, created over the last 25 years: from 1987 to 2012. Some were painted in London and Venice, while others hail from Paris — his home today.

Among the subjects of the portraits are worldwide celebrities of art, music, cinema and the business sphere: artists Lucian

Freud, Fernando Botero, Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons, and film industry giants Quentin Tarantino, Woody Allen and Leonardo DiCaprio.

The two exhibitions differ greatly, each fascinating in their way and giving us a compelling reason to visit the museums. The creativ-

ity of modern European artists is in no doubt, with an ability to change our modern conceptions. The opportunity to view such works face to face should not be missed.



Gaspare Manos' portrait

Kiss of life granted to puppets

By Yelena Semenova

Grodno Regional Puppet Theatre opening unique museum

The museum's opening exhibition is to feature about forty puppets made in the 1980s by painter Leonid

Bykov: well-known as a chief set and puppet designer for the Belarusian State Puppet Theatre and the Mogilev Theatre, as well as for the Grodno Regional Puppet Theatre, in the 1980s. His hand-painted puppets were crafted for more than

a hundred performances: many classics in their genre. The Grodno Puppet Theatre is to revive some of the old puppets for a performance, before launching the exhibition, which will run for some months before being updated with new treasures.

Interesting collection made by famous Italian brands

By Anna Ilyinskaya

National Library of Belarus hosts 100th Anniversary of Italian Fashion Industry: Footwear and Handbags exhibition

The exhibition features collections of such famous brands as Prada, Dolce&Gabbana, Armani, Versace, Gucci and Fendi. Moreover, the visitors are able to enjoy some exclusive items such as Elton John's rucksack, Julia Roberts' handbag-pumpkin, Barbra Streisand's handbag with feathers, and Madonna's high boots. The

display also showcases handbags which used to belong to Grace Kelly, Nancy Reagan, and Jacqueline Kennedy.

The rarities were brought to Minsk by Giorgio Forni, an Italian collector and Director of the Sartirana Art Foundation. He began collecting footwear and bags which were gifted to him by his wife's friends. Soon he began buying items at various auctions. The exhibition has already been successfully held in a number of countries. "The exposition is unique because each exhibit has its own history which can be seen by visitors," noted Giorgio Forni.

In his turn, the Italian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Italy to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Arnaldo Abeti, noted, "This is the biggest collection of historical accessories produced by the most famous Italian fashion brands. The exhibits are true icons of sewing and time has no power over them. The exhibition features famous names and products created by the school of private masters which made the label 'Made in Italy' famous and respected. This exhibition gives a rare opportunity to get an insight into the 100-year history of Italian fashion."

Mir anticipating guests

Mir Castle again invites tourists for Christmas balls in January

Christmas balls were first organised at Mir Castle this January, notes the Director of Mir Castle Museum, Olga Popko. She adds, "We're planning to hold costume balls on the evenings of the 3rd, 4th and 5th of January, with Mir Castle hosting a jazz-styled retro-salon on 4th January and a ball for children on the 5th January. Of course, attendance is limited, since the halls can only hold a certain number."

Ms. Popko emphasises that Mir Castle is preparing to receive guests during the 2014 IIHF World Championship, saying, "We

expect many foreign tourists to visit Mir Castle during the championship, so have set up 150 audio tour devices — already offered in Belarusian, Russian and

English. Recordings are now being made in German, French, Polish and Lithuanian."

As Ms. Popko proudly admits, the number of visitors to Mir Castle is rising annually, with 248,000 welcomed this year so far, against 213,000 in 2011 and 275,000 throughout 2012. Of course, some times of year are busier than others.

Mir Castle reopened after renovations in December 2010, featuring the family vault, an Italian Renaissance garden, an English park and a pond. Its unique architecture features elements of European Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque design and the estate became part of UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List in 2000. Musical concerts and knightly festivals, as well as arts and crafts events are hosted at the magnificent venue, which is a true national treasure.



Mir invites tourists