

Wonderful world of star wanderer

Vitebsk Region's Glubokoe hosts *Wonderful World of Uncle Yazep* exhibition, devoted to 125th anniversary of artist Yazep Drozdovich's birth

By Yuri Chernyakevich

Some Belarusian painters leave more of a legacy than others. An elite radiate such skill and national character that they shine like beacons. Famous Belarusian graphic artist, sculptor, writer, folklorist, ethnographer and archaeologist Yazep Drozdovich is one such: born 125 years ago in the Glubokoe District's Punki, to a poor yet noble family.

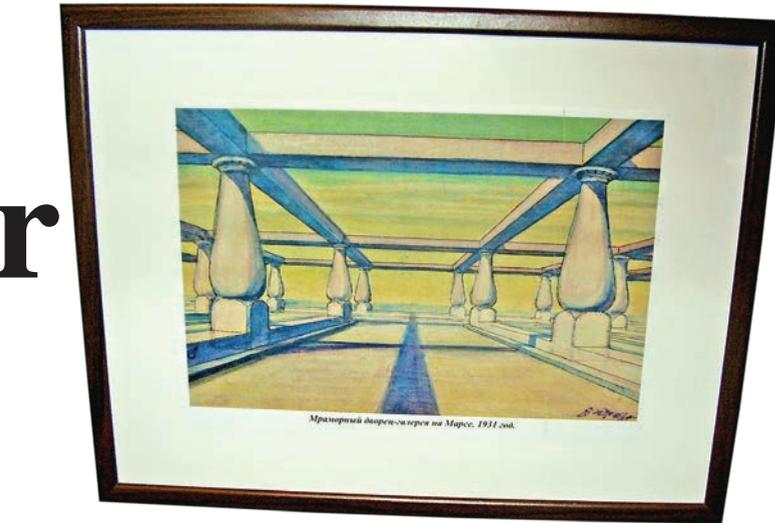
Drozdovich's range of talents and achievements was quite breathtaking: he painted wonderfully and taught others; he collected museum exhibits, participating in archaeological digs; he recorded folklore and sketched old castles; he established a school to teach in Belarusian; he set up an amateur theatre; he wrote papers on astronomy; and he was a skilled palm reader! His perfect knowledge of Belarusian enabled him to publish a book of prose and compile a diary describing the twists and turns of his life, as well as his thoughts, feelings and dreams.

Drozdovich is mainly known as an artist, having been taught painting by Professor Ivan Trutnev, at Vilno's Artistic School. After graduating, Yazep joined the army but later lectured in drawing at Minsk's Women's Gymnasium. As an illustrator, he liaised with newspapers and magazines, with works printed in the 1910 Belarusian calendar and the Belarusian Konstantsia Bulio's *Mount Flower* book of poetry, as well as in his own books.



By the late 1920s, Drozdovich had begun drawing castles, as well as Belarusian landscapes — for his *Disnenshchyna* series. Among these, his pictures devoted to medieval Belarus stand out: those showing scenes from the Polotsk Duchy and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Travelling across Belarus in Soviet times, Drozdovich visited hundreds of villages, chatting to local residents and recording their folk songs and lexicon, as well as sketching.

Drozdovich also painted works on the theme of the cosmos and, in 1931, published a popular book on astronomy in Belarusian: *Celestial Run*. His keen interest led him to develop a city plan for the Moon — including quays and parks. Drozdovich's wide reading on the subject of astronomy even led him to draw speculative images of creatures which might live on Mars and

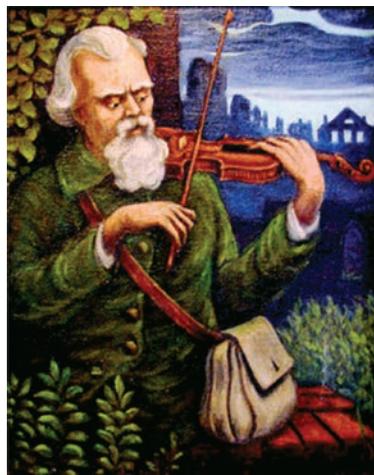


Fascinating exhibits presented in Glubokoe at exhibition devoted to well-known artist Yazep Drozdovich

Saturn. He also designed spacecraft, which resembled those later made in the 20th century (after his death).

Quite a few of Drozdovich's works were exhibited at the Historical-Ethnographical Museum in the Vitebsk Region's Glubokoe this past December. The *Wonderful World of Uncle Yazep* was devoted to the 125th anniversary of the artist's birth — organised by the Belarusian National Art Museum, the Zaslavl Historical-Cultural Museum-Reserve and the Germanovichi Culture and Life Museum (which shared Drozdovich's works from its archive).

The museum's five halls housed dozens of canvases, paintings and sculptures, including *Welcoming Spring on Saturn*, depicting outlandish alien residents, as well as his picture of the Roman Catholic church (in the village of Zadorozhye) and



his vivid portrait of Polotsk's Grand Duke Vseslav Polotsky.

Drozdovich's life and artistry were rich enough to fill several volumes but Arseny Lis — who has studied the master — summed up the great man's life succinctly in his book: 'Yazep Drozdovich was a unique artist and an interesting person. He spent all his life travelling, searching for bread and truth. We can't help but admire the breadth of his achievements in his endlessly nomadic, shifting life.'

Belarusian exhibition expands

By Galina Grishkovets

Baku Museum of Miniature Books gains Belarusian edition of Leonid Dranko-Maysyuk's poems

Regina Davidovich, the Deputy Chair of the Belarusian Women's Union, recently visited Baku as part of a Union delegation, and donated the edition. The museum holds around 7,000 editions from over 70 countries but features no other poetry collection by Dranko-Maysyuk.

The Baku museum is truly unique, with its collection based on exhibits collected by Zarifa Salakhova over three decades. Some of its miniature books were printed in pre-Revolutionary Russia and during Soviet times: rare editions by Alexander Pushkin, Korney Chukovsky, Agnia Barto, Nikolay Gogol and Fiodor Dostoevsky. There is even a 17th century Koran among its oldest books. The museum exhibits miniature books by famous Azerbaijani classical writers, such as Vagif, Khurshidban Natavan, Nizami Gyadzhevi, Nasimi, Fizuli, Samed Vurgun and Mirza Fatali Akhundov; many need a microscope to be read.

The Belarusian exhibition features books by Yanka Kupala, Yakub Kolas and Maxim Bogdanovich. A miniature book on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's visit to Azerbaijan is also on show.

In search of truth

Ancient Kolozha Church hosts exhibition of modern icons

An unusual exhibition devoted to the theme of Christian martyrs, promoting their timeless values to people today, has launched in the old church in Kolozha, in Grodno. Painters from Polish Novitsy have contributed works, as have those from Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. Two icons created by Belarusian married couple Victor and Natalia Dovnar are on show: an icon of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and an icon of Saint Nicolas. The exhibition will continue through the Christmas holidays.

Icons with folk philosophy

By Andrey Fiodorov

Holy Faces of Christ and the Mother of God exhibition opens at Rumyantsev-Paskevich Palace in Gomel

The exhibition features icons, books and copper castings from the museum at Rumyantsev-Paskevich Palace and from private collections. The icons represent various painting traditions, but are united by the common theme of Jesus Christ and the Mother of God — central to Christian art.

Since the museum's establishment, it has been collecting icons and religious items. Articles from



One of the exhibited icons

the chapel of the Paskevich family were the first in the collection, with others added over time, showing the diversity of icon-painting

traditions within the Gomel Region. Orthodox icons are seemingly simple, having folk naivety, as is representative of national philosophy, yet are executed with great skill. Old Believers' icons, created in the region, follow ancient Russian traditions from the 17th-early 20th century.

Visitors to the exhibition can learn about the restoration works being carried out, with some recently restored icons on display in a separate hall.

Verses inspire creativity

By Sergey Sokolov

National Library hosts Ukrainian Inspired exhibition, devoted to 120th anniversary of Lesya Ukrainka's first poetry collection: *On Wings of Songs*

The National Library's recent book exhibition, dedicated to the work of Lesya Ukrainka, has been complemented by artistic works by the founders and members of the Art Diplomacy society: all inspired by her verse.

The spouse of the Counsellor of the Embassy of Ukraine to Belarus, the Vice President of Minsk's International Women's Club, Natalia Sukhovet-

skaya, contributed her own unique works, under the title *Charming World of Ukrainian Nature*, featuring embroidery, batik textile painting and decoupage (collage on wood), as well as Chinese painting.

Other contributors were the Vice Treasurer of the club, Natalia Apostol, and the spouse of the Counsellor of the Embassy of Armenia to Belarus, Anush Babayan, alongside the Art Director of Art Diplomacy, Marina Eliyashevich. In addition, Professor Yevgeny Shuneiko, a Candidate of Art History,



at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts, presented his works for show, as did graphic artist Vladimir Sytchenko. Meanwhile, Ales Fomenko designed the banner for the exhibition, a poster and programme.

All the contributing artists agree that Lesya Ukrainka — the Slavic world's first poetess — reached the highest levels with her creativity. Their works are both inspired by her and devoted to her, in the hope of striking a chord with visitors to the National Library of Belarus.