

Malevich promenades Vitebsk

Russian director, Alexander Mitta, finishes work on his film about two great and outstanding Belarusian artists: Marc Chagall and Kazimir Malevich

By Tatiana Khoroshilova

What is the film's title?

It's called 'Chagall — Malevich'. I've focused on a short period of these two great personalities' life — the year of 1919. It was then when Chagall established his arts school in after-Revolution Vitebsk and later invited Malevich to join (whom he helped to beat poverty and disease). Malevich then headed the school but, in 1935, sadly died at a young age. Chagall, in turn, lived much longer — almost 100 years.

...and died in a lift while travelling to the second floor.

In 1973, Chagall visited Russia, but failed to visit Vitebsk — saying that he could not bear meeting his native city. The artist visited Moscow and Leningrad where his two sisters lived.

Did you have to agree the script with relatives?

Yes. The script was approved by them.

Why is this story close to your heart?



Chagall and Malevich: two artists in one film

I wished to shoot a film about two prominent artists. Chagall is a fantasist and a dreamer, while Malevich is a reformer and founder of the abstract art theory. I've been interested in Chagall for a

long time; I shot my first film about him over four decades ago.

Is he the key character of your film?

Yes, he is in the beginning, but then Malevich takes

the lead.

Where did you find actors?

Leonid Bichevin (Chagall) is a rising star of Vakhtangov's Theatre and Anatoly Bely (Malevich) is a brilliant actor

from the Moscow Art Theatre. Around 80 percent of all the actors are making their debut in the film.

Are Belarusian actors participating?

Of course.

Where did shooting take place?

The process was quick. We shot indoor scenes in St. Petersburg and outdoor in Vitebsk. The city helped us by allocating two main streets. Cafes and restaurants were closed for several days there, but we were freed from paying money. We changed the city drastically during two months of our work. Some citizens even failed to 'recognise' their own streets. However, we were asked to leave our decorations. Vitebsk residents plan to show them to tourists.

What was the initial title of the film?

Originally, it was 'Chagall's Miracle' but we later changed it to 'Chagall — Malevich', as the film discloses the collision of these two strong characters.

The film was recently screened at Moscow's Art Mainstream Festival. Do you plan to screen it in Vitebsk?

Definitely. However, no 'true' premiere has yet been organised.

Highest mastery

Arena Circus Studio from Mozyr plans to conquer audiences in USA, Turkey, the Baltic States and the CIS

By Vladimir Samsonov

The Circus Art Studio was recently awarded the Special Prize of the President of Belarus, bestowed upon figures of culture and arts for significant contributions to the development and popularisation of amateur circus art.

The Mozyr-based group unites around a hundred children, and is gaining popularity far beyond Belarusian borders. In over seven years of activity, it has taken part in the most prestigious international contests and festivals, at the highest level. The complex shows performed by the youngsters have conquered juries of children and adults, at competitions in circus art. In particular, the group won bronze at the 10th Chinese International Circus Festival, in Wuhan, against adult circus troupes from 16 countries — an important achievement. "Over our years of activity, our



Tricks from Arena

studio has won 12 international circus art contests. Our artistes have made a name for themselves due to victories in Italy, as well as across the CIS and Baltic States. They've also become popular on the Russian *Minute of Fame* TV programme. Many graduates of our Arena Studio are now working in Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and elsewhere. In 2014, we plan to take our group to the USA for a summer tour. Soon, we'll participate in the *Ukraine Has Talent* show," notes the head of the Arena Studio, Boris Kuznetsov.

Master's complex fate

Minsk's National Art Museum is first to host works by talented Gomel artist, Valery Lyashkevich

By Andrey Fiodorov

This homeless, blue-eyed old man, who draws his pictures in Gomel's streets, is a local sight for city residents and a true phenomenon for art critics. Really, this artist is worthy of careful attention.

Valery Lyashkevich studied at the art colleges of Yaroslavl and Bryansk and also attended courses at St. Petersburg's, Ilya Repin State Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Since then, his life of a wandering artist between St. Petersburg (which provided him with valuable experience) and his native Gomel (whose streets are his true home now) began. Railway passages or benches in the city's quiet yards have been Valery's shelter for two decades. Stairways or baggage rooms at the local railway station or even the concrete street pavement are his artistic workshops.

The artist has presented twenty five works to Minsk's public — all united by the philosophical theme of the 'conflict of opposites'. Actually, the problem of choice is key in Valery's artistry. Painted with different materials (such as graphite, acrylic or a ball-point pen), all the pictures reflect the artist's passing images and meetings.



Many guests attend Valery Lyashkevich's exhibition

The exhibition is supplemented with a premiere of Anastasia Miroshnichenko's *Crossroads*. The film focuses on the artist's complex life. "The reason for such a special interest in this artist is his belonging to the subculture of outcast painters. Every Gomel resident knows him," explains the Deputy General Director of the National Art Museum, Nadezhda Usova.

Valery's works are kept at the National Art Museum, Gomel's Palace-and-Park Estate, Zaslavl's Historical-Cultural Museum-Reserve and in private collections in Belarus Russia, Europe and the USA.

The show will be open to the public until late January. Reproductions of his pictures are on sale, with the generated money aimed at helping the artist.