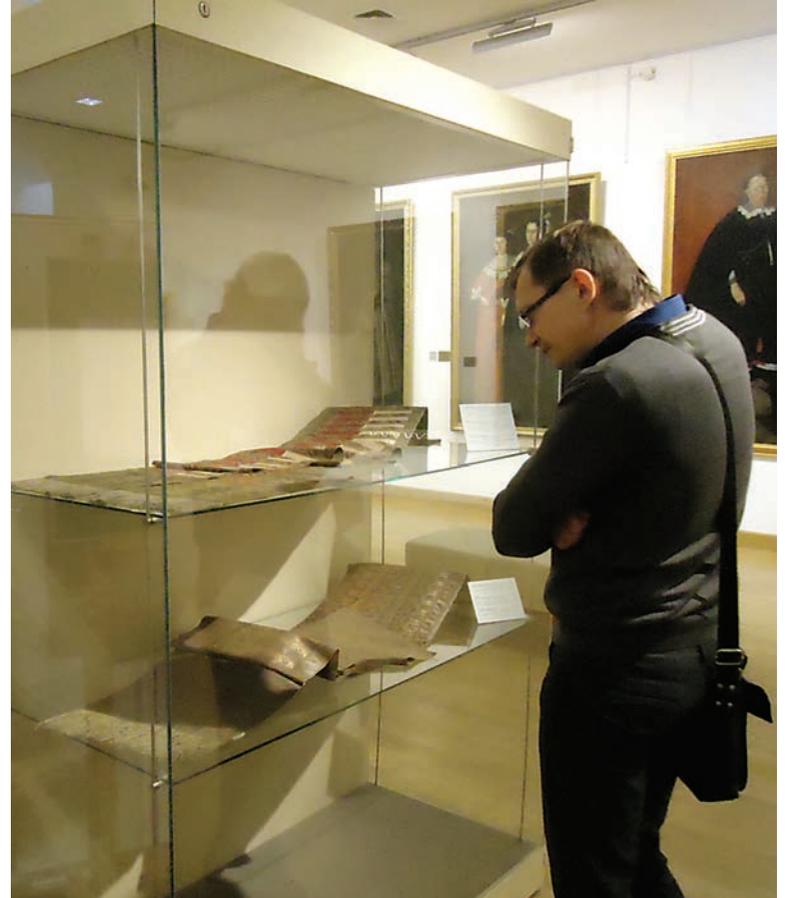




Exhibition of works by Lithuanian artist Jonas Daniliauskas



Museum hall exhibiting intricate Slutsk belts

True art remains eternally attractive

Original and diverse exhibition at National Art Museum has something to appeal to everyone

By Victor Mikhailov

Entering one of the halls in the new building of the museum, an amazing exhibition of Slutsk belts immediately catches your eye. Already open for a year, interest continues unabated. Of course, Slutsk belts are recognised worldwide as having come from Belarus; hand-woven in a unique fashion, they symbolise the self-determination of the nation. These skilfully made masterpieces were created throughout the mid-18th century and in the first half of the 19th century, by several local workshops. However, the most well-known of these was in Slutsk. The exhibition boasts four belts from various workshops, on loan from the Lvov Historical Museum's pre-war collection.

Belts were an important part of the gentry's attire, worn by men in the 18th-19th century as a symbol of power and riches. On show alongside the belts are portraits of members of the Belarusian gentry, wearing their sashes.

Count Potocki's family began a belt-making workshop in Stanisławów (now the city of Ivano-Frankovsk, Ukraine). It was the most well-known in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Radziwiłł dukes, who lived in Nesvizh, organised the production of belts inspired by oriental Persian designs and those from Istanbul.

The high level of mastery shown by Belarusian weavers in Slutsk was the main reason for Duke Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł for inviting in 1758 weaver Jan Madjarski from Stanisławów to work at Nesvizh manufacture, and then at Slutsk manufacture. The master was born in Istanbul, so brought oriental traditions to his training of local weavers.

The main body of each belt made by Jan Madjarski bore diagonal stripes and was embellished with botanical or geometrical patterns. Stylised bouquets of flowers adorned the ends of the belt and each had a fringe. The weaver's mark and name ('Ян Мажарски') or place of production 'Слутскъ', 'Въ градъ Слутскъ' ('Slutsk', 'In the town of Slutsk') was found on the border. Yan's son, Leon Madjarski, later made the belts more vivid in colour and even more decorative. Such were these belts' popularity that factories sprang up copying Slutsk designs, particularly in Kraków.

Of the exhibition's four belts on display, two were made under Leon Madjarski, bearing markings declaring they were made in the town of Slutsk — 'В граде Слутске'. Stylised

floral bouquets adorn the ends and the belts are woven with silver and golden thread. The third states that it was made under Franciszek Maslowski (1758-1830) in Kraków; it clearly copies the decorative traditions of Slutsk, with oriental influenc-



Slutsk belts worth seeing



From Winter, Winter... collection

es. The fourth belt on show skilfully copies designs popular under Leon Jan Madjarski and is executed with vivid colours and good proportions.

Walking another ten steps within the museum, a quite different display can be found: *Flowers for Those Who Love Life*, by famous Lithuanian artist Jonas Daniliauskas. Located in the crossing gallery of the National Art Museum,

it boasts about 30 canvases created over the last two decades. The maturity of the painter is evident in his energy and emotion, with attention to the smallest detail. It's easy to understand that his works reflect his life experience, ever expanding and growing, but with an enduring central style.

Daniliauskas demonstrates the main trends in modern Lithuanian art, with his own individual twist. His meticulous detail brings a new depth of expression, as seldom seen today. Symbolism and plot combine with ease, offering us his personal

prism of artistic vision. He uses composite structure and originality of thinking, positivity of energy and vital wisdom beyond pragmatic reality. In this age of modern technologies and material culture, his creativity reminds us that happiness comes from within and can be found in the most simple of things.

The art-cafe at the National Art Museum is also hosting an exhibition — from a private collection: *Winter, Winter... Paintings by Belarusian Artists*. Comprising winter landscapes from the mid 1950s until 2012, they show the development of Belarusian landscape painting over more than half a century. Winter is a long and beautiful time in Belarus, and has inspired many great works. Among the canvases on show are those by well-known classic artists, known for their realism: Mikhail Savitsky, Abram Krol, Piotr Krokhaliev, Nikolay Isaenok, Konstantin Kachan and Fiodor Doroshevich. The symbolism of the winter landscape is represented by works by Alexander Kishchenko, Ales Marochkin, Alexander Grishkevich, Vladimir Zinkevich and others.

This calendar winter has already come to an end and the winter exhibition was due to close by now. However, at the request of visitors, it has been extended. True art cannot follow the seasons.

Chinese lanterns illuminate Belarusian hearts

Belarusian State University's Lyceum hosts concert honouring Chinese national holiday

By Polina Lokhmanenko

Chinese culture is both unique and mysterious, embracing traditions which have endured through the centuries. It's hard not to fall in love with the ancient arts of the East. Unsurprisingly, an increasing number of Belarusians are studying Chinese, being eager to learn more about this wonderful country.

The annual Chinese Lantern Festival marks the end of the traditional New Year (following the lunar calendar); it proclaims the unfurling of Spring, which brings new life. Legend says that the festival originated during the Han Dynasty, initiated by the Emperor, who ordered that red lanterns be hung everywhere on that day. The annual tradition is now a state holi-



Vivid holiday of lanterns

day: a time of flying lanterns and dragon dances, with an atmosphere similar to Valentine's Day.

In Belarus, the holiday was organised by the Republican Confucius Institute, uniting efforts by Belarusian and Chinese students. A great concert was held at the BSU's Lyceum, with a programme rich in singing and dancing, following ancient Chinese tradition. There were also theatrical performances (staged in Chinese), with a new version of *Cinderella*. A Minsk schoolgirl team demonstrat-

ed traditional Wushu fighting, which combines strength and delicacy, and the holiday ended with a symbolic singing of the popular Chinese song — *A Friend* — by all the students.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Gong Jianwei, noted in his welcoming speech that Belarusian-Chinese friendship is gaining strength and joint holidays of this kind contribute to our two seemingly opposite cultures growing closer.