

Author's sincere revelations arouse audience's affection

Exhibition by Brest painter Leonid Rotko at Minsk gallery confirms that creativity has nothing to do with provincial approach

By Victor Mikhailov

The city of Brest boasts more European style than is usually found in Belarusian cities, perhaps because it's situated in the west, near the border with the EU. Border areas always show the legacy of other cultures more clearly. Even the city's architecture is unique; the historical quarter's buildings are lower and its streets are calmer. However, life in Brest is actually quite busy; the city is never viewed as being quietly provincial. Artist Leonid Rotko, who has lived in Brest for many years, finds it endlessly inspiring.

Mr. Rotko was born in the Minsk Region's Kopyl District and polished his drawing abilities at the Minsk boarding school named after Akhremchik, known for its good traditions. He graduated from the Belarusian Theatre and Art Institute, specialising in 'artistic metal'. For almost twenty years, from 1976 to 1993, he worked with the Belarusian Mastatstva Art Factory, where his creativity saw application in decorating public buildings — inside and out. In his free time, he devoted himself to easel painting, which has been his passion since his school years.

Today, Mr. Rotko is sixty, yet still stirs public interest. His jubilee exhibition is unusual in its palette and theme, radiating wonderful energy. You would think his works were created by a bold



Leonid Rotko gives fresh outlook on impressionism — for himself and all those keen on his artistry

young man — an assumption blasted away on closer acquaintance with the artist.

Admiring the work of the French impressionists and those of the Parisian school from the early 20th century, Mr. Rotko tells us, "I'm not interested in reproducing images absolutely accurately. I'm rather interested in capturing the internal state of a person or nature via colour." Evidently, he tries to gain insight into the essence of

all things through his work; the spiritual side of existence prevails, with Mr. Rotko asserting that the process of creativity is itself spiritual. "Sometimes, some magic light pours in from above, opening inside me," he explains. "Although this doesn't last long, I manage to acquire clarity, freedom and confidence that I should do something very important. I don't think about anything; I just take a brush and canvas and begin to draw..."

His exhibition includes still-life paintings, portraits and landscapes. In his *Our Father...* series, he explores the brevity of human existence while his love of the female form finds fruition in his vivid portraits, which are both touching and tender. He paints each character's mood and state with bright illumination. Meanwhile, his landscapes glorify the Brest Region: *Belovezhskaya Pushcha*; *Two Pines*; *A Vegetable Gar-*

den in Autumn; *Autumn. Courtyard* and others.

On viewing the exhibition, it's easy to see that he reveres his creativity, giving his soul and heart to each work; they are like revelations rather than canvases, showing his creed and his constant search for the meaning of life. His individual creative manner and sincerity inspires a spiritual dialogue while arousing the warmest feelings from spectators.

Professionals work for less money



During TV series shooting

By Alexey Shcherbakov

According to Russian film director, it's cheaper to shoot a TV series in Belarus

Famous Russian film director Vladimir Krasnopolsky has created films such as *Shadows Disappear at Noon*, *Eternal Call*, *Two Destinies*, *The Yermolovs*, *Wolf Messing: the One Who Saw Through Time*. He's now involved in making a new TV series, called *Viktoria*, with many scenes shot in Minsk suburbs.

He believes that people communicate 'more eagerly' in Belarus. "It's cheaper to shoot in Minsk and people's attitude is different here. It's cheaper, as pavilions stand idle and there's a difference in the cur-

rency exchange rate. At the same time, the cameramen and artists are totally professional," notes Mr. Krasnopolsky. He adds that Belarusian actors demand far less payment too.

Viktoria has been commissioned by the Rossiya (Russia) TV Channel and will be the film director's fourth work to be partially shot in Belarus. As an ironic melodrama, it tells of a provincial young girl who works in sales but dreams of an exotic prince whisking her away. The city scenes were filmed in the Minsk Region's Logoisk, with local shops and boutiques used for the locations where *Viktoria* (played by Russian actress Yulia Peresild) lives and works.

The director calls his actors an 'Olympic ten'. Yevgeny Kryzhanovsky, a Belarusian humourist, actor and chief producer of Minsk's Khristofor Satire and Humour Theatre, plays one of the roles.

Shooting should be complete by January 31st, 2012, with the series running in eight parts on Russian screens in February.

Unusual art complements modern urban landscape

By Andrey Veselovsky

Avant-garde artistic installations to supplement 'granite-bronze' city architecture

Ales Kudryashov, 22, is a third year student at the Arts Academy, studying monumental painting. He loves to view intricate patterns using a kaleidoscope presented to him by a St. Petersburg colleague. The game of light and shade inspired him to create an installation entitled *Corridor of Eternity*, which mirrors the Simon Bolivar Park in Minsk. It even won the *Art City* contest (a Belarusian-German project aimed at transforming urban environments).

"Since the 1960-1970s, public art has gained increasing popularity worldwide. Instead of being focused on museums and galleries, painters create their pieces in streets. Static monuments give way to temporary installations and performances which always involve audiences," explains the co-ordinator of the project, Minsk Goethe Institute employee Vera Dedok.



Corridor of Eternity installation soon to be launched

Public art combines the outrageous and serious. For example, German sculptor George Tsai (who gave a master class in public art for 20 Belarusian artists last October) is known for his zebra statue in a prison yard — a sad parody of the 'world in stripes'.

"The contest gathered 14 people, uniting both young and already honoured artists," Ms. Dedok tells us. "We're suggesting that Minsk City Executive Committee create the winner's project in 2012."

Mr. Kudryashov shows us his drafts; an outlandish 10m construction aims to divert us from our daily routine and material values. View-

ing this unreal mirror landscape inspires thoughts of eternity. "I'm interested in synthesising arts, being fond of poetry and cinematography. Working with architecture is important for me as a monumental artist. I will need to work with mosaics, stained glass windows and frescoes," he says.

Installations usually exist for a short period of time — several days or weeks, mostly in spring or summer. We hope Minsk's architectural appearance, with its monumental bronzes and rich Empire-style decorations, will soon be supplemented by public art pieces which are truly democratic and modern.