

Rave of colours in all shades creates integrated meaning

Exhibition of picturesque works by Russian painters at National Art Museum of Belarus recalls artistic views and approaches which once shared common endless space

By Victor Mikhailov

The Krasnodar Krai Art Museum has brought paintings from its collections to Minsk, all created in Kuban, in the south of Russia. On seeing them, you can feel how the artists were inspired by the wonderful and diverse landscape of steppe, Caucasian mountains and sea coast, as well as by the ordinary people who lived nearby. The stylistic range is extensive, including examples of Socialistic realism and some post-modern trends.

The history of Kuban's professional art school is closely connected with the museum and its founder: collector Fiodor Kovalenko (1866–1919). Twice a year, he organised exhibitions attracting artists from St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev. The shows were a true revelation for Yekaterinburg residents, who knew little about pictorial art (until 1920, Krasnodar was named Yekaterinburg). In 1909, Mr. Kovalenko set up an artistic club, with Ilya Repin as its Honorary President. In 1911, it was re-organised as a school of pictorial painting and, after the Revolution, became an art college. It now celebrates its 100th jubilee.

In 1938, a branch of the Union of USSR Artists opened in Krasnodar, including Mikhail Bogoyavlensky among its members. He was a senior research officer at the Art Museum, saving the collection from being stolen during WWII, when the city was occupied by the German fascists. Many painters died on the



Exhibition of works by Russian painters occupies a worthy place at Belarus' National Art Museum, arousing sincere interest

frontline, but those who survived created wonderful pieces after the war, devoted to those tragic days. We have V. Ovechkin's *Kovpak on the River Pripyat*, V. Krysin's *Between Fights* and B. Siroma's *Restless Years*.

Naturally, others wished only to forget those dreadful days, concentrating on a new, peaceful life. They painted Socialist Labour Heroes restoring farms, modest villagers and workers and native landscapes. Good examples

are G. Arakelyan's *Mid-day*, A. Kalugin's *Portrait of Socialist Labour Hero V. Golovchenko*, V. Nechitailo's *Milkmaid Nina Chub*, and P. Ruzheinikov's *Kolkhoz Brigade Go Harvesting*. They are full of sincere faith in the strength of people changing the world, filling it with kindness and joy.

In 1976, a youth association of Kuban artists was created and, in 1980, the Contact non-conformist group was established. Since then, new artistic tra-

ditions have appeared, in addition to realistic trends. Yevgeny Tsei, an artist from the Soviet underground movement, influenced the younger generation greatly. He lived in Krasnodar and created unique pictures, which stood apart from the established artistic and social-political system.

A. Parshakov was Mr. Tsei's follower but chose his own path, deciding not to leave his native village for success in the capital, preferring to draw his villag-

ers, relatives, friends and household utensils. He explored man's problems, his relation to the environment and the fundamental laws of the universe. In contrast, L. Blokhina combined abstract and figurative art, focusing on human feelings and the changing face of nature — as we see in her *Lake. Spring*.

Another landmark event for the Krasnodar painters was the establishment of the Facade artistic association in 1994, which united artists of different genres. On visit-

ing the Minsk show, we can learn more about Facade's D. Kochanovich, whose paintings played games with the senses. He drew on European history for his themes. Meanwhile, P. Martynenko used ancient myths to inspire his own amazing pictures.

Visitors to the show will clearly realise that the Krasnodar Krai was situated at the crossroads of national and cultural ideas, leaving vivid traces in Russia's history.

Smile, you've been x-rayed

By Anton Vladislavlev

Minsk's Tsentralny cinema hosts exhibition of unusual photos

Works by British designer and photographer Hugh Turvey, who uses the roentgen spectrum, comprise the bulk of the exhibition. Without exaggeration, he sees right through people... and objects. His amazing X-ray of an alarm clock is on show, alongside a packed suitcase and graceful musical instruments, a racing motor cycle and, even, a rabbit in a hat.



X-ray photos by Hugh Turvey

His unusual 'anatomical' photos have graced book and CD covers worldwide over the last two decades, as well as adverts. Despite

being in black-and-white, each work shows great imagination, with many painted by the author by hand afterwards.

Interesting and talented artists' works enjoy various styles

By Olga Bogacheva

Exhibition of book illustrations familiarises Vitebsk residents with works by famous artists

The exhibition, from the collection of St. Petersburg's Vita Nova Publishing House, includes 350 works in various styles. Curious spectators can admire watercolours, etchings, lithographies, and pieces with mixed techniques, by prominent artists such as Oleg Yakhnin, Igor Ganzenko, Eduard Kochergin and Klim

Lee (St. Petersburg), Mikhail Shemyakin (France), Loretta Abashidze-Shengelia (Tbilisi), and Yuri Vashchenko (Moscow). "Each of these painters is an extraordinary personality and boasts an amazing life story," noted Alexey Zakharenkov, Director General of the Vita Nova Publishing House, at the opening ceremony. "I may have the opportunity to meet other interesting and talented artists in Belarus."

The scale of the project requires two museum sites: the Marc Chagall Museum

and the Contemporary Art Centre. "The exhibition is a landmark event in the cultural life of Vitebsk. Pleasingly, it has opened a new creative season at our museum," explains Lyudmila Khmel'nitskaya, Director of the Marc Chagall Museum.

The Vita Nova Publishing House specialises in releasing small editions of belles-lettres and poetry, as well as biographical and philological books, where the best traditions of book printing are combined with academic preparation of texts.