

SCULPTOR NINA SLOBODINSKAYA (1898-1984).
LIFE AND SEARCH OF CREATIVE BOUNDARIES
IN THE SOVIET EPOCH

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TESI DOCTORAL

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Life and Search of Creative Boundaries in the Soviet Epoch**

**Anastasia Gnezdilova
2015**

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Resum

Aquesta tesi doctoral estudia l'obra de Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya (1898-1984), escultora a l'època soviètica. La seva obra creativa abraça més de 50 anys i inclou totes les tendències artístiques, temes actuals i tota classe de gèneres culturals en el període més contradictori i *sanguinari* de l'art rus del segle XX.

Nina Slobodinskaya és una artista del seu temps, que va reaccionar als reptes del moment i que va saber reflectir-ho en les seves obres. No obstant, encara que es trobés immersa en plena era soviètica, va crear de manera independent, escollint temes humanistes i atemporals. Com que va seguir les seves pròpies inclinacions artístiques, va contradir les estrictes normes soviètiques, es va oposar a seguir els dictàmens artístics de l'Estat, i això va fer que se la menystingués i se la ignorés, i va caure a l'oblit.

D'origen noble i pertanyent al cercle d'artistes, filòsofs, escultors i escriptors de l'elit cultural russa, va saber captar i transmetre els seus valors i la seva visió del món a les seves escultures; les va enriquir amb un profund contingut simbòlic i espiritual. D'aquesta manera descobrim una escultora amb una visió artística pròpia i un estil individual que ens porta a entreveure creences espirituals i filosòfiques, inherents a la tradició russa, que pel seu sistema de valors encara pertanyia a la Rússia imperial i que, per tant, va estar condemnada a l'extermini per les polítiques de Lenin i Stalin.

Resumen

Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya - escultora de la época soviética. Su creación artística cubre más de 50 años y refleja todas las tendencias artísticas, temas actuales del momento, y los géneros culturales del período más contradictorio y *sanguinario* del siglo XX.

Sin duda, es una artista de su tiempo, que reacciona sensiblemente a los retos de su tiempo y lo refleja en sus obras. No obstante, logró ser una artista independiente, escogiendo temas profundamente humanos e intemporales. Siguió sus propias inclinaciones artísticas, contradiciendo las normas estrictas de la realidad soviética.

De este modo se opuso a las demandas del Estado, que condenó a sus obras al olvido y al desdén social.

De origen noble, parte de la *intelligentsia rusa*, logró adaptar y transmitir su visión del mundo en sus esculturas, dotándolas de un profundo contenido simbólico y espiritual.

De este modo descubrimos a una escultora con su propia visión artística que desarrolló un estilo individual que reflejó las creencias filosóficas y espirituales de la *intelligentsia rusa* pero que, según su sistema de valores, aún pertenecía a la Rusia imperial y que debido a ello fue condenada al exterminio por las políticas de Stalin y Lenin.

Summary

Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya - sculptor of Soviet epoch and space. Her creative work embraces more than 50 years and mirrors all artistic tendencies, actual subjects, main sculptural genres of the most contradictory, bloody period of XX century.

Undoubtedly, the artist belongs to her time, sensitively facing and reacting at issues and challenges posed by the epoch, reflecting them in her artworks. However, the sculptor was able to become an independent master, choosing *deeply human* and supertemporal subjects in her creative work. Finally, following her proper artistic inclinations she contradicted the strict artistic rules of Soviet reality. Hence, Nina Slobodinskaya opposed herself to the State's demands, dooming her creative work to social disregard and ignorance, and therefore was consigned to the oblivion.

Noble by origin, being a part of Russian cultural *intelligentsia*, she was capable to adapt and transmit her world vision's beliefs into sculptures, enriching them with symbolical multi-level content. Accordingly, discovering a sculptor with a proper artistic vision and a developed individual style we also bring to light philosophical and spiritual beliefs of Russian cultural elite, which by their system of values still belonged to the former Imperial Russia and, therefore, was condemned to the extermination by Stalin's and Lenin's policy.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this research is to recreate life and creative work of Russian sculptor Nina Slobodinskaya – artist who was undeservedly forgotten due to the historical collisions of The Soviet Epoch. The chosen study aims to expand the research developed during my master's degree program on the XX century Soviet Art's certain artistic issues together with the artistic path and biography of the mentioned sculptor.

The analysed historical period is one of the most contradictory, tragic and dramatic in all history of Russia. Since during the short time cell of 70 years Russia faced numerous catastrophic events: revolutions, wars, starvation, its best people's extermination, caused by a proper government. Every *third* family experienced grief of losing their beloved, literally suffered of starvation and many lived in the atmosphere of constant fear to be denounced and imprisoned by the KGB. This was a period when the hugest human experiment took place – the experiment of *building happy and bright future* of communism. This experiment was hold with a kind, naive, politically passive (due to its territorial disconnectedness and incoherence) faithful nation, which in its majority sincerely respected and believed in its governors and resignedly accepted changes of political realities. No other nation was executed by their proper leaders in such a scale. As a result more than sixty millions of people died in the Soviet concentration camps and passed away during the two wars and revolutions of the ½ of XX century. The most significant personalities lost their lives in a *useless* manner, bearing the cliché of a *national enemy*. Just *few* of them survived passing through the politicized human *mincing machine* of the totalitarian State. Human life had no value, serving only for the Communist leaders' ambitions. Many historical facts are still not unveiled, and numerous names are forgotten or simply disappeared from the pages of history.

Curiously, but the political disorder and social chaos produced the outstanding artistic activities in the country and gave birth to the constellation of worldly renown movements and prominent artists: the Russian avant-garde, the constructivism, the socialist realism, the nonconformist art - are just some examples of artistic movements and styles which had their echo all around the world. Thus, in respect of the early XX century art, this period may deservedly be defined as one of the most diversified, manifold and *brilliant* in the world.

It may appear quite a challenge to define what are the interior mechanisms which *bring* into the world so many genius and talented artists in period of social cataclysms, - and still it remains quite a mystery.

Nina Slobodinskaya was a bright individuality, a talented independent artist, however her fate and her life was directly linked to the cultural and artistic Russian intelligentsia, her spiritual, creative and artistic searches were consonant with them, her artistic heritage even reflects a range of the worldview common ideas. The sculptor makes an integral whole with the fate of this social group. Thus, through exploring life and creative path of Nina Slobodinskaya and Leningrad intelligentsia we discover the whole *stratum* of cultural and spiritual life of Leningrad's intelligentsia – the society's group, condemned to extermination by the Communist government as they were guardians of the morals and spiritual values of the *Old* world, had independent minds and could critically analyse and oppose the imperfect political reality. For the Bolsheviks' power intelligentsia was a threat of the new regime's stability, and, therefore, had to be eliminated.

Nina Slobodinskaya did not leave any diary, letters, or wide autobiographical notes – documents which would help to recreate sculptor's individuality, however she remains vivid in recollections of her son – Andrey Gnezdilov, her close friends – sculptors, artists, writers, scientists among others; who with a good grace shared with me their memories. In addition, the close approach and an attentive glance at her close friends' circle (artists, writers, publicists etc.), the analysis of their creative and artistic activities, - helps to detect the common worldview, to better understand the peculiarity of her mind, her philosophical, artistic and creative vision and beliefs, mirrored in her sculptural works. Thus the analysis and display of Slobodinskaya's social and friends – fellows' circle is a method in my research. For a reason K.S. Stanislavsky claimed that “we cannot regard creativity separately from artist's life”¹.

Another issue which I aimed to explore on the example of N. Slobodinskaya's fate and other representatives of Russian intelligentsia (the artist's close social circle) was a problem of *creativity* in conditions of the totalitarian State, since artists were deprived of *liberty* – the main condition of *true creativity*. Were their art pieces, literary works *sincere* and thus *truthful* or do we face in its majority blinded *slave obedience* to the new regime doctrines? May we rely on art as on sincere

¹ Станиславский, К.С. *Статьи. Речи. Отклики. Заметки. Воспоминания (1917–1938)*. Собрание сочинений в 8 томах. Том 6, М.: Искусство, 1959, С.142-143.

confession of artists or do we deal with art as *myth's fabric*? Are *creativity* and *totalitarian power* compatible one with each other if the main condition of *creativity* is *liberty*? Russian emblematic poet S. Esenin wrote just few years before his suicide in 1920: "It is very sad to live in the historical moment of *personality's mortification* as of *live essence* it-self; now is taking place the socialism – different from what I thought"². This issue seems vital as challenges a significant number of artistic, literary heritage of the Soviet epoch as well as questions *artist's fate* and *place* in conditions of the dictatorship. The persecution, extermination of the most prominent independently-thinking writers in the Soviet epoch – it's already a historical fact: Nikolay Goumiliov, Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetaeva, Anna Achmatova, Michail Boulgakov, Osip Mandelstam, Alexander Sogenitsin among many others who without mercy to themselves refused to make compromise with proper conscience and opposed the Bolsheviks' government. However what about their creative fellows? Less notable, but equally significant society's group - artistic and cultural Russian intelligentsia(in M. Lotman's thought intelligentsia can be defined as a special circle, in paradox way combining principal democracy of its convictions with elitism of psychological beliefs)? Whether creative individuality was capable to oppose to the violence, to survive creatively and express itself under a cruel official control from out-side, to preserve artistic liberty? Whether artists were able to combine in their work proper subjects, interests, style, creative searches with an official social demand and commission of the Soviet State? Thus the issue of artistic liberty in conditions of totalitarian regime (its limitations and creative solutions, a possible compromise or an artistic escape) outstands amidst other subjects in this research.

We will follow fates of Russian cultural and artistic intelligentsia who were witnesses of two different worlds, two different epochs: the Imperial Russia and the Soviet country, – being contemporaries of N. Slobodinskaya, they were able to compare, give their judgement of the actuality, as they clearly could see all advantages and defects of the new Bolshevik State; the majority expressed themselves creatively, thus we may trace their artistic response to the social dramatic circumstances and follow their creative interaction with the totalitarian State. The issue of *freedom of self-expression* – in terms of Russian historical development is certainly rooted much deeper than in the Soviet epoch (although ever it achieved such a scale of social

² Загладин, Минаков, Козленко, Петров. *История Отечества XX век*. М.: Торгово-издательский дом Русское слово, 2003, С.133-143.

tension and had such dramatic, tragic development which led to numerous human victims); this problem still exists and is actual also in our times.

In this context logically appears a problem of *depiction's truthfulness* and arise following questions: how did artists resolve a problem of reconciling a proper creative model's vision and a social demand, which dictated its strict standard norms of human portrayal? Could artist preserve his personality and *pure morals* in his creative work or did everything *finish* in a simple adherence to the communist party's instructions and compromise with proper principles? Did artist remain faithful to himself or did he oppose his conscience? This question will be also explored on example of Nina Slobodinskaya's creative life.

The subject of forgotten artists in the Soviet Russia is not an exception, but unfortunately a frequent phenomenon. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to state that the Soviet art history is complete while so many artists remain just forgotten or ignored. Hence, the chosen issue is actual and significant either for the Soviet Art History or for the World's Art heritage.

Mostly after the *Perestroika* (since 1991) researchers started exploring and *rediscovering* an issue of forgotten Soviet artists. From now and on the interest both of the researchers and of the society in regard of *new names* of the passed epoch is just increasing.

By means of scientific and artistic analysis of Nina Slobodinskaya's works I would like to reveal the sculptor's creative personality, her ways, methods, style in art, and finally to define her own contribution and relevance in sculptural achievements of the XX century. The rich artistic heritage left by Nina Slobodinskaya mirrors the contemporary movements and styles related to the epoch. The analysis of historical and artistic context of the epoch together with sculptor's biography, social artistic circle and cultural background permits to deeply comprehend and gain a profound insight into artistic issues, creative problems of Soviet artists and identify the ways they were resolved.

Undoubtedly, all the Soviet art history is mirrored in the sculptor's fate, together with the proper country's history: its revolutions, wars, grief, Leningrad's siege, the nation's genocide performed by its governors, the inhuman and unmerciful attitude towards individuality, not to mention a creative and artistic liberty completely neglected and suppressed in conditions of new totalitarian ideology.

Regarding a scientific knowledge's level of Slobodinskaya's creative work - it is almost nullified. The creative work of Nina Slobodinskaya awoke interest of her contemporaries when by subject and style it corresponded to the official requests. Occasionally, her sculptural works were mentioned and distinguished in periodicals, especially in the post-war period³; however the artist's most original and interesting sculptures were ignored and ever publicly exposed due to their thematic discrepancy into the Soviet narrow artistic scheme.

The records and allusions of her sculptures appear in various periodic catalogues of the regular exhibitions hold in Moscow from 1930-1935 and further in Leningrad. The information on her creative work also can be found in the archives of The LOSH⁴ Artistic Union, The National Library in Leningrad, РГАЛИ (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow) and the archive of The MOSH⁵ among others sources. Nina Slobodinskaya from 1932 was a member of The MOSH and from 1933 respectively and till the end of her life of The LOSSH, being an active participant of regular unions' shows. The artist's sculptures were highly estimated by her close friends and the most recognized contemporary sculptors of Leningrad and Moscow, such as Mikhail Anikuchin (the significant Russian sculptor of the epoch and the head of the Leningrad Artist's Union), Alexander Ignatiev and Liubov Cholina, Ariadna Arendt and Smirnov-Rusetsky, whose creative work will be further contemplated. These artists claimed that Nina Slobodinskaya had her proper individual style of depiction together with sensible artistic vision⁶. Art-critics sometimes indirectly or collaterally mentioned the sculptor, yet those notices and observations are also important in creation of a complete historical base of this research⁷.

One of the important aspects of the research may be considered a chosen approach to the sculptor's heritage: I regard the artist's legacy as one, - belonging to the Soviet artist's but, simultaneously, as of a victim of the Soviet State's persecution: Nina Slobodinskaya's family was persecuted and some of close

³ Particularly after the II World War was over Nina Slobodinskaya worked a lot on sculptural portraits of militars, scientifics, and active social workers, for whiches she was often awarded and officially approved.

⁴ The LOSH – is a former Leningrad official union of artists, founded in 1932 which was transformed into St.Petersburg Union of Artists, where N. Slobodinskaya belonged till 1984.

⁵ The MOSH –is an official Moscow Union of artists, which exists from 1932 till our days and can be defined as the biggest union of Russian artists.

⁶ The sculptor's son Andrey Gnezdilov actively participated in her creative life and thanks to his personal recallings it became possible to recreate Nina Slobodinskaya's biography and artistic achievements.

⁷ In the Chapter *Traces in Sculpture* I will regard the artcritics' notices on the matter of sculptor's works.

relatives were repressed and condemned to death. When Slobodinskaya found her vocation in sculpture, at first a future artist was neglected to study in University due to her noble origin, and she even faced difficulties in finding a proper job. Eventually, pretending to belong to the working class she finally achieved to enter The VHUTEIN (The VHUTEMAS)⁸. In addition, during the post-war period the sculptor was under a surveillance of The KGB due to her loyalty to the repressed friends' circle; besides, the sculptor was often criticized for absence of ideological evidence and *patriotic* message in sculpture. Moreover, Nina's Slobodinskaya's best sculptural works (which belong to the Asian period and the late Christian imagery) were ignored and not recognized officially with the unique explanation and reason - its subject did not contain any ideological or Soviet propaganda message. Therefore, it would be appropriate to title the sculptor a victim of the Totalitarian State's regime. Presumably, In other historical circumstances the talent of a fearless and sincere female artist could flourish and obtain a better creative fate.

Accordingly, there was no specialized profound artistic research made before on Nina Slobodinskaya's creative work which would reflect her artistic response to the epoch's historical collisions, artistic tendencies and movements of XX century.

In attempt to make the research as complete as possible I relied on the personal sculptor's documentary archive and based the artistic analysis on her sculptural heritage, orientating as well as on art sources of Russian and international sculpture of the late XIX – XX century's period – the epoch when the creative work of Nina Slobodinskaya took place and developed.

Thus, the main subject of my inquiry is the artistic and cultural heritage of N.K. Slobodinskaya. Subject of the investigation – creative path of the sculptor conditioned by the Soviet reality which laid in context of XX century art development. The doctoral thesis's purpose and goal - to discover a particularity, distinctive features and peculiarity of the sculptor's artistic language as well as to reveal artist's creative individuality, accordingly, defining her artistic contribution to the XX century world of art.

The purpose conditioned the following tasks:

⁸ The Vkhutemas (Вхутемас, Higher Art and Technical Studios) was the Russian state art and technical school founded in 1920 in Moscow, replacing the MoscowSvomas, with the intentions, in the words of the Soviet government, "to prepare master artists of the highest qualifications for industry, and builders and managers for professional-technical education". The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. Собрание узаконений и распоряжений Рабочего и Крестьянского Правительства, 1920, 19 декабря, № 98, С. 540.

- The research of the sculptor's biography and creative work
- The composition and preparation of the sculptor's catalogue of all available and identified works, created in different sculptural genres, materials and techniques
- The analysis and comprehension of the art development from the contemporary point of view, first of all in sculpture, particularly in Leningrad and generally in Russia in the 1900 – 1970s
- The research of the Soviet socio-political and social-cultural atmosphere and its influence on the artist's creative path
- Analysis of realistic and socialist realist style in Slobodinskaya's sculpture

The methodological approach of my research – historical and chronological concept and base, in this respect, artistic analysis also becomes a method of the research, what permits to reveal the artistic peculiarity and creative individuality of N. Slobodinskaya, whose creative path embraces more than 50 years. The research source's base is diversified and consists of variety of materials: first of all it includes a family's archive of Nina Slobodinskaya, preserved by her son at her former studio in St. Petersburg (which includes documents, photos, notices, catalogues of exhibitions in which she participated, reports on sculptor's works of their artistic value etc.). Amongst the most important materials which are published for the first time in actual research remain following documents: sculptor's proper autobiographical notes, models' drawings, colleagues' letters and postcards with dedication, sculptures' photos (which helped to reconstruct the sculptor's early period's works, but which were supposedly destroyed in her first studio by the bombardment of Leningrad during the II World War). Among other materials appear: the personalized dedications of sculptors Anikuchin, Ignatiev, Cholina, and Arendt; in addition the family photo together with Lunocharsky's son may be distinguished.

Verbal recollections at the interview with Andrey Gnezdilov – sculptor's unique son, who accompanied Nina Slobodinskaya during her life and was a testimony of the brightest periods of her creative work, crucially helped to recreate a chronological sequence of her works, to define the sculptural images and to find a hidden motive and basis for subject choice in sculpture as well as to reconstruct and to reveal her individual personal portrait.

Undoubtedly the main research's source became the proper artist's sculptural works which are preserved in the sculptor's old studio in St. Petersburg as well as in the following museums' collections: The Nekrasov's Museum in St. Petersburg, The State Art Museum Of Komsomolsk-na Amur, The Museum of Medicine-Military Academy in St. Petersburg, The Theatre Museum in St. Petersburg, the former Kalinin's museum in Moscow, The State Omsk Museum, the LOSH's collection in St. Petersburg and in The Roerich's family Museum of St. Petersburg. Along with the research were studied archives and libraries of the historically important The MOSCH and The LOSH institutions.

The scientific newness and contribution of the research into the art history knowledge consists of following:

- For the first time the comprehensive and complete research of the sculptor's creative work has been realized
- The wide range of historiographical material on the matter has been studied
- The reasons of ambiguous evaluations of the sculptor's works have been defined
- For the first time the significant archives' material dedicated and linked to the artist's life and creative work is introduced into the scientific turnover
- Exemplified by Nina Slobodinskaya's creative work and her artistic and social circle were identified the artistic and creative relations existed midst the Soviet sculptors and Russian intelligentsia in Leningrad of the mentioned epoch (Arendt, Ignatiev, Cholina among others)
- Another studied issue - Russian artists evacuated to Uzbekistan where they made all efforts to *survive creatively* in *uncivilized* difficult life conditions during The Second World War
- The analysis of crucial stylistic and thematic changes which took place in the late creative work's period (1960 -1980ss) of Slobodinskaya
- The catalogue of Nina Slobodinskaya works has been completed as fully as it was possible
- The scientific description and artistic analysis of the most characteristic artistic methods, forms and materials of the artistic expressivity has been realized

The following statements are presented for the thesis defence:

1. Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya has made a significant creative contribution into the field of fine arts of Russia in XX century.
2. The sculptor elaborated her individual characteristic artistic vision and the plastic language of sculptural expression.
3. In the epoch of Soviet Totalitarianism the sculptor survived not only physically but spiritually and creatively, achieving to preserve her creative individual face in narrow frames of social and artistic requests; in some cases through compromise and in the latest creative period in opposition to the Soviet artistic demands.
4. The artist created the series of unique sculptural works, based on her personal deep model's understanding and a profound symbolic vision.

On the assumption of these statements I would like to define *the practical significance of the thesis*:

- For the first time a comprehensive in-depth artistic research of the artist's creative work (forgotten for many decades) has been realized
- A significant number of Slobodinskaya's artworks were reliably identified
- The scientific description of Slobodinskaya's sculptural works was elaborated
- A catalogue of all the identified artworks of N. Slobodinskaya was prepared
- The materials of the research may be used in educational aims, in collectors' necessities and for expositional purposes
- Finally, the thesis's appearance contributes to a spiritual and cultural society's memory's recovery both in Europe, in Russia and in the rest of the world
- In addition, it signifies the return of the lost knowledge and heritage into the World of Art

The structure of the thesis:

The structure of the research consists of the following: Introduction, Research Chapters, Conclusion, Bibliography and Catalogue.

*The lonely sail is showing white
Among the haze of the blue sea!..
What does it search in foreign part?
What left it in the native land?..*

*The waves are playing, wind is whistling,
And bending mast is creaking loud,
Alas, – it does not hunt for pleasure
And nor from pleasure does it run!*

*Below – a bright stream of azure,
Above – a golden beam of sun,
But it, rebellious, asks for tempests
As if the tempests give a rest!*

*Mikhail Lermontov, *The Sail*, 1832.*

2. NAMES, PLOTS, SYMBOLS, SIGNS

Art does not flourish in peace. Art is the eternal battle.

Antoine Bourdelle⁹.

2.1 Artists in the post-revolutionary reality: a found freedom or unexpected slavery?

*Enough of half penny truths!
Old trash from your hearts erase!
Streets for paint-brushes we'll use,
our palettes - squares with their wide open space.
Revolution's days have yet to be sung by the thousand year book of time.
Into the streets, the crowds among,
futurists,
drummers,
masters of rhyme!*

Vladimir Mayakovsky, *An Order to the Art Army*, fragment, March, 1918.

In attempt to reconstruct the artistic and historical background of the Soviet epoch, which personally, artistically influenced and formed sculptor Nina Slobodinskaya, I would like to focus on the cultural atmosphere and analyse the social mood in Russia at the early XX century. Despite the existing vision of Russia as of the Euro-Asian periphery, the artistic society was well informed on actual European art movements. Russian merchants and Maecenas gathered quite important collections of modern art, including works of such significant artists as Cezanne, Matisse and Picasso; besides frequent shows of European avant-garde works were organized in Russian megalopolises.

Consequently, young Russian artists were often better acknowledged with recent artistic developments than their European colleagues. Grace to this knowledge genuinely appeared Russian art, which no longer relied upon Impressionism or post-Impressionism, but instead searched and created their proper artistic innovations. For instance, Marc Chagall worked a lot in France and Germany, but he took his

⁹ Kemer, S. *Visage de Bourdelle*. Paris: Chamais, 1931, p.28.

subjects and inspiration from Russian life and folklore, yet his highly personal artistic language differed from current Russian styles¹⁰.

Regarding the period of 1910 –1918ss, it was obviously marked by the tendency (seen at the exhibitions) for entirely abstract, nonrepresentational art. As to Vasiliy Kandinsky, he left Russia in 1896 and was on his way to become the first completely abstract artist, despite the fact that Russian folk art and culture played a crucial role in his development. Casimir Malevich who's *Black Square* of 1914 appeared to be the ultimate expression of his suprematism's school, was truly committed to abstract painting, emphasizing the spiritual values of abstract art but basing his stylistic searches on the ancient Russian art¹¹. Tatlin, Naum Gabo, Pevsner, Rodchenko, Lizzitsky, Natalya Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, and the sculptor Archipenko used to shape an abstract sculpture and installations from modern, sometimes industrial materials, having caused a profound effect on the development of European sculpture; therefore - no wonder that mostly constructivism inspired the artists. From 1914 to 1922 Kandinsky returned again to Russia, attempting to help and reform Russian art schools and museums.

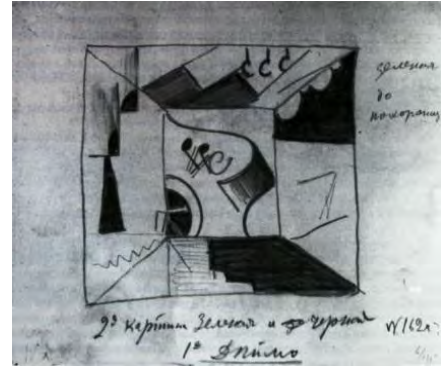
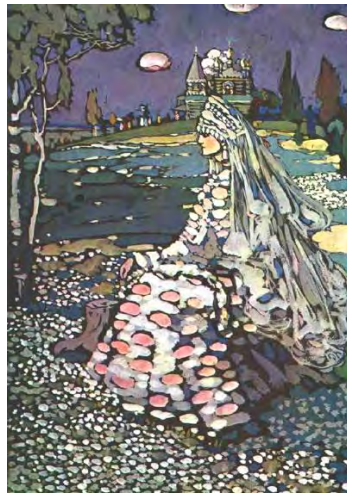
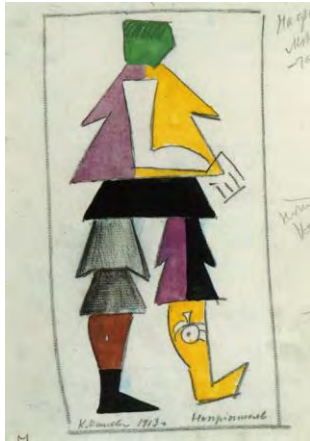
Concerning an artistic panorama after the October Revolution, for a brief period the mentioned previously artists felt free to develop and organize art schools, establishing principles and methods which significantly influenced the Bauhaus. These ideas were brought from Russia with Lissitzky and Gabo. Unfortunately In a short while the official social atmosphere drastically changed and became tense; the Communist Party decreed a socialist realism in art as the only one approved established style. Consequently there were artists who rejected painting entirely; for example Tatlin fully concentrated his work at industrial design and architecture, whilst others, like Lissitzky, created graphics and posters¹².

As we know Russian revolutionary artists were more than active, participating in all kinds of cultural and artistic events. The idea which followed new *rebirth* consisted of taking art into streets and to motivate people to become its active participants. No wonder that three years later stage director Vsevolod Meyerhold staged a performance which recreated the storming of the Winter Palace at the actual site and attracted 6.000 participants.

¹⁰ Prutkovsky, E. *The Soviet World of art*. Moscow: Iskusstvo,1997, p.17.

¹¹ Yakovlev, V. "Kakoi nam nujen peizazh? Zаметki hudojnika". Iskusstvo, num.5,1949, p.28.

¹² Prutkovsky, E. *The Soviet World of art*. Moscow: Iskusstvo,1997, p.14.



Malevich, *Victory Over the Sun* (scenery's sketch), 1913, pencil, paper, 660 × 476.

Kandinsky, *Russian woman in a Landscape*, 1905, oil on canvas, 400 × 568.

Malevich, *Victory Over the Sun* (scenery's sketch), 1913, pencil, paper, 800 × 642.

The artists took part in the performance by creating scenery, costumes for the spectacles, reflected in huge abstract sets of canvas and wood. *The Magnanimous Cuckold* and *Tarelin's Death* (both of 1922) symbolically became a culmination in these series of sets. Malevich him-self took an active role in theatre's life, creating the most abstract works which for the first time were used as scenery for Kruchenikh's *Victory Over the Sun* (1913)¹³. The so called *Agitprop* train made a tour in the country, full of artists and actors who created plays and a broadcasting propaganda. Unfortunately in a short while the theatre's activities in their *revolutionary* approach were officially forbidden. The only space where original vitality and experiment still continued appearing was work of the directors Vsevolod Pudovkin and also Serge Eisenstein.

In the end even the avant-garde art was suppressed by the State as Stalin's government saw the socialist realism as the unique reliable style which served to social propaganda aims. The creation of groups of artists who were seeking for a new style, marks the period of 1922–27ss and is visually reflected in the Association of Russian Revolutionary Artists (ARRA); its members depicted topics such as the revolution. S. Karpov and painter Katzman were founders and leaders of the ARRA. D. Kardovski contributed significantly, creating the whole series of illustrations, portraying history of the revolution. In general terms stark realism prevailed in works

¹³ Yakovlev, V. "Kakoi nam nujen peizazh? Zаметki hudojnika". *Iskusstvo*, num.5, 1949, p.29.

of Soviet artists during the II World War period. Dormidontov's *Flames over Leningrad*, Gaponenko's *Slaveholders* appear as illustrative examples. In regard of the association's activists such was the artist Lansere who exposed his paintings (illustrating the work of Soviet construction) at the Moscow railway stations¹⁴.

In regard of Soviet sculpture, which treated the same officially requested subjects and issues, it tended towards the monumental forms. In the sculptural range stand out two famous works: the statue of *Karl Marx* (elaborated in 1918 by A. Matveyev in St Petersburg (former Leningrad)) and the colossal *Lenin's* memorial near town Tiflis created by Schadr. Simultaneously the increasing influence of Western art movements was casted away by the state in the early 1930s. The painting duo Komar and Melamid in the West gained enormous popularity in the society using an academic style to satirize Soviet art and politics in the 1930s¹⁵.

Meanwhile Russian goldsmiths' and silversmiths' work of this period is remarkable for splendour, richness of colour through polychrome enamelling, and most known for original use of jewels. In the XVIII century its work was traditionally *Muscovite*, but the XIX and XX centuries marked a tendency to French influences. Peter Faberge certainly stands out in a range of Russian goldsmiths. It would not be complete without mentioning *the Imperial Easter Eggs* which he elaborated for the Russian court and which are considered among the most exquisite of all goldsmiths' work ever created¹⁶.



Matveev, *Carl Marx's monument*, 1918, bronze.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.28.

¹⁵ Arvatov, B. "Iskusstvo v sisteme proletarskoi kul'tury". Na putiakh iskusstva, num.47, 1926, p.12.

¹⁶ Prutkovsky, E. *The Soviet World of art*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1997, p.19.



Matveev, *Carl Marx's monument*, 1918, bronze.

Chadr, *V. Lenin*, 1934, marble.

The Russian enamelling is presumably the most characteristic of all the decorative arts of Russia, as well as one of the most ancient. The Greco-Scythian work found in the tumuli of southern Russia gave evidence that Russian artificers were not exceptionally influenced by Byzantine models; however there always were many renowned Byzantine specimens in Caucasia. The historical collisions conditioned Mongolian strong influences on Russian art of enamelling, as well as on all other types of art, though at this time Western influences were also making themselves felt. Hence the best of Russian enamels are the result of Asian and European influences together with proper folk traditional art. The *barbarian feeling* was predominant in much of Russian art; especially it may be seen in the imperial orb, from the Old Russian regalia of the XVII century¹⁷. Regarding Russian folk traditions, they were represented, for instance, in toys, domestic and farm utensils, carvings, door and window-frame decorations, remained not influenced by Byzantine and Western traditions.

¹⁷ Arvatov, B. "Iskusstvo v sisteme proletarskoi kul'tury". Na putiakh iskusstva, num.47,1926, p.13.



Photo of a traditional peasant's wooden house, XVIII c., Tomsk, unknown author.



Photo of a typical peasant's house, 1950s, Russia, unknown author.

After the Revolution and especially after Stalin's political victory by 1930, fields of culture and art in Russia were controlled, determined and dictated exceptionally by the governmental policy. Accordingly all artistic aesthetics and style was on service of the Soviet regime¹⁸. Generally speaking we may define three basic lines of the post-revolutionary XX century Russian art. Two of them were a vivid reminiscent of a foreign creative influence and the third followed the governmental statements of accusations of Western artistic styles. The first represented the trend, developed in

¹⁸ Juviler, N. "Forbidden Fruit". Problems of Communism, XI, Number 3, May/June, 1962, p.42.

XIX century. The Byzantine iconography was chosen to glorify the new Soviet regime's culture among the masses. It stylistically reproduced (the firmly existing in conscience of the patriarchal society with strong religious beliefs) archetypes using icon painting style and form in order to introduce new politic ideas. The main purpose was to replace the traditional religious values: figures of saints, Jesus Christ and God had to be substituted with new idols - *Soviet Leaders*, in order to achieve their adoration, what consequently would lead to new regime's acceptance and a faithful obedience. In pursuance of achieving this goal, the state used traditional devotion of Russian population to icons as a tool to conquer nation's mind and thus created mass-produced iconographic representations. The idolization of Lenin and Stalin had to replace the religious feeling which was defined as a superstition, neglected and condemned for oblivion. Thus, images of new soviet leaders had to be collocated in the place for centuries defined for icons' veneration and praying – *Red corner*¹⁹.

In respect of the second phase of early XX century Russian art, it may be defined as the phase of experimentation and can be displayed by the creative work of such artists as Malevich, Goncharova, Larionov, Popova, who created their proper innovative artistic forms and styles having experienced an overwhelming Russian and European artistic education, which, consequently influenced the western artists. Those artists without any doubt were on the top of the most experimental revolutionary and radical artistic wave of the new Soviet society²⁰.

The third phase of Russian art in the early XX century is traditionally defined as a *socialist realist art* in approximately 1930. The State by the moment had clear and determined statements corresponded to art, which was considered as the main and effective tool to impose new ideas of the new Communist Regime and to be assimilated by nation's minds in the shortest terms.

Some of the main traits of the established official art were following:

- Idealization of the surrounding life
- Visualization of Soviet leader's adoration, to be more precise - an implantation of top Soviet figures in people's conscience and subconsciousness as if they were *religious figures*, further historically defined as *personality's cult*

¹⁹ Simmons, E. *Negotiating on Cultural Exchanges*. Boston: The World Peace Foundation, 1951, p.268.

²⁰ Fox, C. *The Exchange of Easel and Plastic Arts: Soviet-American Cultural Relations, 1945-76* (PhD Thesis). USA: Tufts University, 1977, p.12-19.

- New type of hero had to be introduced and be widely displayed in art – a simple worker, a peasant, always linked to the theme of labour

At one hand the Soviet government exalted and praised a working class, which now was officially recognized as the central *figure* in the Communist state, but at the other hand the soviet government made obvious its requests towards the mentioned class, proclaiming that a Soviet citizen will be honoured only if he will be an *active constructor of the lighter future*, serving and obeying his government's policy completely and with all his fervent loyalty. Images of Soviet workers in art had to give a direct promoting message to all potential spectators – the depicted figures had to manifest their optimism, happiness, trust and confidence in a forthcoming happy future, which grace to the every day's population's efforts was quickly approximating. Any neutral artistic subjects (often appeared in the Russian avant-garde art) were not approved as did not carry in them any use, not serving for political aims, and thus were not *desirable*²¹.

The Soviet government's expectations were clearly determined in Zhdanov's speech, at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934: "Artists must know life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, to depict it not in a dead, scholarly way, not simply as objective reality, but to depict reality in its revolutionary development. In addition to this, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remoulding and education of working people in the spirit of socialism"²².

Many historians criticize the soviet leadership for the declarations made in the congress. Y. Pismenny observes: "There is no other sector of Soviet life in which Party policy has been as inconsistent as in the arts"²³. The whole theory of a communist state functioning and the main approach was adapted from Karl Marx theoretical works. Presumably, the young communists faced troubles in determining the exact place of Arts, its main functions and limitations, as in Karl Marx's works a subject of Art's role was not widely discussed or defined: "The development in all aspects of social reality is determined, in the final analysis, by the self-development of material

²¹ Gray, Camilla whose *The Russian Experiment in Art* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1970.) is a significant research on Russian avant-garde art, dates the end of the Russian avant-garde official active appearance at about 1922. While Costakis, George - the preeminent collector of Russian avant-garde art, dated the end of the avant-garde period as 1926 or 1927 in a personal interview with already mentioned Camilla Gray on November 16, 1973.

²² Zhdanov, A. "Official Speech of Greeting from the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government to the First Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow on August 17, 1934". *Essays on Literature, Philosophy, and Music*. New York: International Publishers, 1950, pp.15-31.

²³ Pismenny, Y. "Lenin and the Arts.Germany: Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R.". April 28, 1970, p.2 .

production. Art, like law or the state, for example, has no independent history, i.e., outside the brains of ideologists. In reality, literature and art are conditioned by the entire historical development of society"²⁴.

Karl Marx only hinted at the possible fruitful *collaboration* which may appear if art will be at the State's service. The communist leaders had to develop the methodology and strict aesthetic borders by their own means.

In order to understand the origin and the roots of the planned state's *Art program* we should address to Lenin's statements: "Our opinion on art is not the important thing. Nor it is much of consequence what art means to a few hundreds or even thousands out of a population counted by millions. Art belongs to people. Its roots should be deeply implanted in the very thick of the labouring masses. It should be understood and loved by these masses. It must unite and elevate their feelings, thoughts and will. It must stir to activity and develop the art instincts within them. Should we serve exquisite sweet cake to a small minority while the workers and peasants masses are in need of black bread"²⁵ ?

Lenin's opinion is clear and leaves no doubt: art is not precious by itself. It becomes only a tool to serve to the party's needs, - mainly to attract masses. The very nature of Art which signifies personal artistic liberty, and first of all, a freedom of choice, of a subject matter, style, motive, genre of depiction, - everything is neglected. So far the very condition of Art – a free creativity is disapproved by Lenin. To be more precise, he denies its true essence, its independent value and character. With a full conscience, he gives a verdict to the further role and fate of all art's development in the communist's epoch. Lenin turns art into a slave, an obedient tool, a *machine* - to reflect, to affirm, to promote and to impose a *mythological state of happiness*, utopian dream, which the Soviet State finally uses as promised *sweet cake* to justify an enormous work's efforts requested from people by the government²⁶. Certainly

²⁴ Lifshitz, M. *The Philosophy of Karl Marx*. New York: Critics Group, 1938, p.60.

²⁵ Zetkin, Clara. *My Recollections of Lenin*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956, pp.19-20.

²⁶ In order to get a coherent picture of the approach bases in the official art we should address to the main art propaganda sources and glorifying descriptions of the *true* Soviet art achievements. There we may follow the general line of artists' approvals whose works are judged under the unique criteria - loyalty to the new political regime. To see more on this issue: Сарабянова, Д.В. Под ред. *История русского и советского искусства*. М.: Высшая школа, 1979; *История советской архитектуры*. 1917-1958. М.: Искусство, 1962; Виноградова, Е. К. *Современная советская графика*. М.: Внешторгиздат, 1978; Измайлова, Т.А., Айвазян, М.А. *Искусство Армении*. М.: Азбука, 1962; Кириллов, В.В. *Путь поиска и эксперимента*. М.: 1 Наука, 1967; Кудрявцева, З.Н. *Искусство Советской Прибалтики*. М.: Внешторгиздат, 1971; Лебедев, П.И. *Советское искусство в период иностранной интервенции и гражданской войны*. М.-Л.: Искусство, 1949; Суздаев, П.К. *История советской живописи*. М.:

Lenin is right when he affirms that in previous epoch the art was a privilege of the social elite, but its obedience to a principal task as to teach the masses following the party's instructions brought an unexpected result to the communists. What Lenin would not consider it is an existence of such a notion in art as *truthfulness* of depiction, which was able to convince masses only if an artist was sincere in illustration of his ideas on canvas, otherwise it brought a feeling of false and a fraud. If artist under the social order's pressure creates a work of art, he is not able to transmit the idea more than formally, and masses will not perceive it as a sincere message and unconditional postulate.

This category reflects spiritual and energetic issues of art, but its visual evidence and a negative consequence caused by Lenin's definition of art as a slave of the state is an *ofitsioznoe iskussto* - a post-soviet determination given by art historians to evaluate artists and the idealized soviet art, created formally. To be more exact it is a definition given to the artists which accepted their role of the State's servants (sincerely not believing in communism) in exchange of social privileges, actively producing multiples images of communist leaders, Lenin and Stalin, – always positively, idealistically, depicted them as sacred figures as well as creating utopic images of a *light communism's future*. The idealized happy soviet reality was among their favourite subjects, but already in the late 1950s these kinds of artists were highly disapproved and secretly criticized by the proper Soviet society; it's fake and false imagery's nature was too obvious, especially for the population which stayed in constant fear for their lives.

Lenin's role in art's development did not stop there. He broadened his thoughts and shared the more precise vision:" In a society which is based on private property an artist produces for market, needs of customers. Our revolution frees artists from the yoke of these extremely prosaic conditions. It turned the state into their defender and client providing them with orders. Every artist, and everyone who considers himself such, has the right to create freely, to follow his ideal, regardless of everything. But then, we are communists and ought not to stand idly by and give

Сов.художник, 1978; Тугенхольд, Я. *Искусство Октябрьской эпохи*. М.: Гос.Издат., 1935. Хазанова, В. *Советская архитектура первых лет Октября*. М.: Искусство. 1973; Федоров-Давыдов, А.А. *Советский пейзаж*. М.: Сов.художник, 1964.

chaos free rein to develop. We should steer this process according to a worked-out plan and must shape its results²⁷”.

Lenin contradicts him-self promising freedom to the artists, but simultaneously taking it away, imposing instead an exact plan to be executed together with the ideals to follow. Saying that, Lenin hints at fact that the new Soviet state will work and collaborate only with artists who share and *confess* the affirmed ideology. The future art context in Russia will just confirm and visualize this Lenin's promise, and his firm statements.

From the first Lenin's declarations artists are condemned to the dramatic conflict, which soon is reflected in the field of Art. This conflict became a personal drama of an every sincere and independent artist who chose this profession to be able and freely express their feelings and beliefs; meanwhile the party *took charge* of their activities and turned them into a kind of proper slaves. The most important category and condition of *free expression* in Art – a spiritual category was prohibited and neglected. Effectively on this basis art lost its spiritual aspect and even its essential sense. The final redefinition and kind of the replacement of a notion of art as a synonym of *true, sincere* self-expression happened in the late 1930. The bright passion to abstract art prevailed in Russia during the years of The Civil War, while the government was *too busy* with the main task of a proper survival and so far *closed eyes* on the independence of art development. Actually this short historical period may be defined as the most free and independent for artists and as history shows– the most creatively productive and brilliant. Artists were full of hopes and illusions, sincerely believing that the October Revolution would put an end to the social injustices, bringing a better future. The communist party's attitude towards the actual art development was clearly defined in the article: “A waiting policy with respect to the art of painting, as bourgeois influence was still strong in this field and didn't serve the revolution directly”²⁸. Never again the soviet reality could be so proud of its *democratic* approach as in 1919. The recognized figures of abstract art such as Alexander Rodchenko and Malevich were invited as lectures and professors to give classes in the Moscow State Art School. Such legendary figures as Vladimir Tatlin, Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner were also among the teachers.

²⁷ Zetkin, Clara. *My recollections of Lenin*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956, pp.19-20.

²⁸ Uitz, Bela. "Fifteen Years of Art in the U.S.S.R.". *International Literature*, n.4, 1933, p.143.

Young artists, interested in abstract forms had chance to attend classes of The Institute of Art Culture, created in 1920 by V. Kandinsky.

In a short while the controversy disputes overwhelmed the artistic audiences; in 1920 professors and apprentices were divided into the discussion of the main role of Art in revolution. They naively believed that the party would let them participate in the vital artistic debates and in decision taking. The future showed that the party was just waiting in order to strengthen its position and power, before revealing its true purpose defined for art (and the role which it was going to impose to the free thinking artists). The artists who changed the School for the service to the Revolution developed and expanded the art of posters which would become a one of the principle tools of the propaganda and mass attraction for the nearest decades.

The poster during the first communist's years of governing discovered itself as a unique tool with broad artistic means which was able to expressively and brightly visualize the revolutionary slogans. From now and on poster becomes the most significant ideological weapon which effectively manipulates and leads the wide population's mass. The Bolsheviks quickly realized its aesthetic effectiveness and accessibility – and by 1930 this art form definitely strengthened its position.

The year of 1922 was indicative for the clear definition of the new government's tendency: the Communist Government celebrated 5 years of its Anniversary. It was a significant date and therefore a number of official acts took place. The artistic field performed a fabulous exhibition, which united the old Wanderers School of nineteenth-century, realists together with the contemporary artists which mainly welcomed the Revolution and sincerely expressed their hopes, fascination, and enthusiasm in the variety of artistic imagery. It was the unique period in Russian art development, as the state still did not show its cruelty and suppression to the artistic field; that was the main reason why still *free* artists sincerely demonstrated their admiration and joyful satisfaction of the political events. This exhibition marks the most exciting point the artists ever achieved under the Soviet regime. No wonder that the mentioned exhibition received the official approval of the party and public's acknowledgement²⁹.

It is not surprising at all that the *Wonders* got such a high evaluation of the Soviet regime: travelling through the lands of Empire and displaying social disorders, misery and poverty, which indicated at the Governmental equivocations and revealed

²⁹ Uitz, Bela. "Fifteen Years of Art in the U.S.S.R.". *International Literature*, n.4, 1933, p.40.

another face of the Russian reality, they reaffirmed and justified the significance and necessity of the October Revolution. Especially Ilya Repin was outlined as an artist. Curiously but the artist himself neglected the *social significance* of his painting. Apparently Ilya Repin disapproved the new social changes of XX century Russia – it explains his exile (on proper initiative) to Finland where he remained till his death³⁰.



V. Perov, *Children - orphans at the cemetery*, 1874, oil on canvas.



I. Repin, *Burlaks on Volga*, 1974, oil on canvas.

The new regime's unacceptance of such a prominent figure in art as Ilya Repin³¹ is quite significant and reveals the part of the society – representatives of the *old Russia*, especially Russian group of intelligentsia; before the Revolution they used to criticize the Imperial regime through a variety of artistic and literary forms and means, but its criticism bore the form of inquiries, made to the Royal government; they aimed to awake awareness of the severe reality in order to achieve a social and active governmental reaction, which would consequently awake a national consciousness and give a response to the nation's needs. That criticism was constructive and positive in its appeal, but it did not aim to destruct all the existed political and social order.

³⁰ Грабарь, И. *Илья Репин*. Монография в 2-х томах, М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1963, 1964, С.252-281.

³¹ The subject of *the Wanderers* and their crucial significance for the realist art of the late XIX and the early XX century is widely revealed in the epoch's archived documents and letters : *Товарищество передвижных художественных выставок. Письма и документы*. Москва: Искусство, Т. 1, 2, 1987. As well as in the lectures of Троицкий, Н. *Россия в XIX веке. Курс лекций*. М.: Искусство, 1997. The artistic approach of the painters and their enthusiastic devotion to the activities of the artists' group is obvious in the work of Нестеров, М. *Давние дни*. М.: Искусство, 1959, С.34-51.

Therefore the same intelligentsia class showed its disagreement with the change of the regime and the imposed new values which contradicted and neglected the very essence of the national character, based in deep religious feeling. The conceptual and abstract art faced dramatic changes in the social mood during the next few years, but its crucial point was achieved in 1924, when the famous *Discussion Exhibition* took place in Moscow³². The artistic opposition was organized consciously. Like in the battle's field the *enemies* dislocated their *troops* - just ones in front of others. Artworks of avant-garde and the ones of realist artists were exhibited separately³³, silently proposing the audience to make a comparison and as the public will further understand – to make a choice. Though, choice was quite an illusion, as we already know in the historical perspective, the party already would have taken the decision, choosing the visually direct and appealing realism.

However the party still was hiding its authoritarian nature and did not aim to openly impose its will, instead it smartly *staged the plot of the event* (organizing the inauguration of the exhibition, where the artists of the avant-garde were officially blamed and neglected) achieving the desirable point – to give its crucial verdict to the *left* art movements. The further events' development was predictable. The suprematism, cubo-futurism, constructivism, and rayonnism, among others were blamed and condemned as socially undesirable. The party's performance was so well organized that the artists felt totally *devastated*. The official verdict was given by Nikolai Bukharin which clearly defined the preference of the social mood which was given to the realistic art³⁴.

The beginning of a new artistic era was marked by the dramatic expelling of a non-presentational art. The new artistic direction was clearly defined by the Communist leaders. That was a significant historical point for the Fine arts. Finally artists realized - the so called artistic freedom will not last anymore and the strengthened State finally showed its true aggressive and possessive nature.

Moreover, it was a point when the creators and followers of a non-presentational art had to make a conscientious and a difficult choice: whether they should continue being faithful to their artistic preferences and in this case they turned to be a subject of social criticism and unacceptance in the fatherland or whether they should apt

³² Революция, быт и труд. Каталог VI выставки картин, М.: АХРР, 1924, pp.11-19.

³³ Иванов, С. Хронология. Неизвестный соцреализм. Ленинградская школа. СПб.: НП-Принт, 2007, С.380.

³⁴ Ibid, pp.357-380.

for compromise with a proper conscience and in that case, they would be able to survive in the new state. The challenge was dramatic. Independently of the made choice, all artists faced crucial changes and experienced misfortunes in their lives. The ones who had possibilities and left the country, staying in the exile for the decades, strongly felt *rootlessness* and despair, missing their fatherland, and losing their inspirational source in face of native land. Meanwhile others who stayed and tried to struggle for their independent artistic freedom, soon were oppressed by the government by means of social official pressure or even condemned to death and oblivion in the camps of concentration, bearing a cliché of a *nation's enemy*³⁵.

Would it be justified to suggest that ones or others had a *better* fate? The response would differ in every case. The artists that did not believe in the new system but openly manifested their full *obedience* and acceptance to the social order, fully devoting their creative work to depict the series of pleasing to the Government imagery – gained the state's awards, financial rewards and official recognition, but lost the battle with a proper conscience. Obviously there were artists who sincerely believed in a new state and its methods, enthusiastically venerating its ideals in their art. There were also artists who remaining under the political and artistic pressure still were able to *survive* creatively and personally, sometimes with the artistic means, in some cases finding neutral subjects and genres in art, which did not contradict their beliefs and convictions. The multifaceted reality gives us the variety of responses, mirrored in the individual fates of prominent artists. Definitely the only figure which certainly achieved its goals through the means of art in this historical period was an impersonal State's machine, which in shortest terms achieved a sincere admiration in hearts of naive people, and the fear of others.

Exactly in Stalin's epoch artists were completely *instructed* on the subjects and artistic methods they were now obligated to follow and introduce. The severe norms were proclaimed. From now and on among the main subjects in art were depiction of soviet communist leaders and revolution's fighters - Lenin and Stalin. Even the manner of their portrayal was detailed: the communist leaders had to be shown realistically and always glorified. The curious thing which apparently was never officially mentioned during the Soviet epoch but became an *unpronounced official law* – both legendary leaders were visualized significantly higher than they really

³⁵ Солженицын, А.И. *Архипелаг ГУЛАГ: Опыт художественного исследования, 1918–1956*. в 3 т., Paris: YMCA-Press, 1973—1975, pp.112-138.

were. Stalin did not request realistic justice and truthfulness of the depiction in his proper case³⁶.

Other subject approved by Stalin was labour and its glorification: workers in a factory, or a peasant, occupied by work. The party went further – it defined even a number of strict norms of a depiction method. Realism became the uniquely approved style. As to peasants and working-class depictions, every art piece had to manifest optimism and joy, however only a hint of a smile on the portrayed faces was allowed. The message had to be clear and appealing, not containing any other coded message. The picture's composition had to be laconic and understandable for masses. The idea of communist's heads consisted of creation of *Communist's mythological space* – place full of joy and happiness - kind of a fairy-land of a forthcoming future, which would lead to a permanent state of happiness and well-being. The multiplicity of artistic visualizations aimed to provoke associations and in their turn make the people believe in achieve of the *pictorial fairy land* – which in reality turned to be a utopic dream. The Communists did not create anything new, but just used and substituted the existing antique archetype which was always present in the nation's conscience – a legendary *Kitej-Grad*³⁷.

In order to limit a thematic variety the party declared that the use of other subjects in art, - pointed at the bourgeois influences of the West, which were unacceptable by the Soviet State. In 1928 the new governmental structure in definite terms settled its requirements towards the artists under the first five year plan.

2.2 Soviet artists: new role, new goal

The First Five years plan. 1928 – 1932.

*The First Five Years Plan*³⁸ (which was initiated in 1928) foreshadowed the more strict policy toward art, which become a main visual tool of the new regime's consolidation during the Stalinist's period.

³⁶ М. Десягин. "Сотвори кумира". *Завтра*, №40 (672), 2006, С.18.

³⁷ *Kitej-grad* – a sacred space of spiritual Russian dream existed for centuries in Russian folk and legendary tradition, later in XIX century was widely displayed in art and theological Russian thought. Existing as a directly appealing artistic archetype became a reference for new communistic ideology and on its base was created a new utopic dream-land of Communist's prosperity ; it was well illustrated by Криничная, Н. А. *Легенды о невидимом граде Китеже: мифологема взыскания сокровенного града в фольклорной и литературной прозе*. Евангельский текст в русской литературе XVIII—XX веков. Петрозаводск: Вып. 4, 2005, С.53-66.

³⁸ "The first five-year plan of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was a list of economic goals, created by General Secretary Joseph Stalin and based on his policy of Socialism in One Country. It was implemented between 1928 and 1932. In 1929, Stalin edited the plan to include the creation of "kolkhoz

Logically appears a problem of *Artist's fate* in the totalitarian State. It is a crucial and vital issue for Soviet artists, which was most brightly reflected in literature by famous Russian writer Mikhail Boulgakov in his novel *Master and Margarita*. The writer describes Moscow in its 1930s, which appears as kind of hell, where flourish all the most unworthy passions, while in the creative fields survive only hacks, people with lack of talent, time-servers. Writers of the official creative union – the MASSOLIT do not write, instead, actively solving their proper social problems – flats, second residences etc., concerned only by their social success. Thus cynic, pragmatic characters form the creative atmosphere of Moscow in 1930s. In M. Boulgakov's novel the conflict of a *free-thinking artist* who opposes by his sincere and fearless *Pontius Pilate* novel to the *kingdom of mediocrity and ordinariness* ended in an expected way: Master enters the psychiatric hospital in a state of nervous shock as in his proper words he does not stand violence, bad poetry and social commission. This hero was deprived of the most crucial for Artist – *freedom of Creativity*. In Boulgakov's main idea the fate of a *true artist* used to end tragically in conditions of totalitarian State, where talent and *interior freedom* were not valued, but substituted, instead, by *agreeableness* and mediocrity.

The Plan stated that its major cultural aims consisted of increase of the proletarian consumption of art but it also supposed an entire reorganization of art under the party's instructions. Accordingly, the following year sculptors, painters, graphic and decorative artists, architects were united under a single artists' group - *The Vsekokhudozhnik*, headed by Y.M. Slavinsky. "There was a hope that it would bring unity and creative uniformity capable of placing the Soviet art behind the industrialization's collectivization drive"³⁹ in the Soviet economy.

In the opinion of Alexandre Karnensky in his work *Art in the Twilight of the totalitarianism*, the years of the Second World War have a special place in Soviet art. At this time period, aesthetic debates were suspended to give way to the use of art as propaganda⁴⁰. The works of 1941-1945ss are mainly of documental interest of their time. As to 1946 -1954ss, the party made everything to take an entire control of art.

collective farming systems that stretched over thousands of acres of land and had hundreds of peasants working on them. The creation of collective farms essentially destroyed the kulaks as a class, and also brought about the slaughter of millions of farm animals that these peasants would rather kill than give up to the gigantic farms". Ратьковский, И.С., Ходяков, М.В. *История советской России*. СПб.: Искусство, 2001, Гл. 3.

³⁹ Karnensky, A. *Art in the Twighlight of the totalitarism*. Spb.: Kukshino, 2007, p.25.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.29.

Certainly we can name a few exceptions (for instance some historical compositions, portraits, landscapes of masters such as Petr Konchalovski, Pavel Korini, Sara Lebedeva, Vera Mukhina, Robert Falk and Vladimir Favorsk). It would be fair to define these artists as being *engaged on a spiritual quest*, which was totally distinct from the program asserted by Communist politicians. Their work was the sincere manifestation of reality which preserved the true historical moment in decades.

The Soviet population was filled with hope when the War was almost over. The society aspired that Russian people would find a new moral strength from the victory over Germans and that this consequently would lead to the restoration of some of artistic and personal freedoms suppressed during the 1930s. At first this hope seemed justified. Returning to 1944, when the Soviet troops advanced on Berlin, new works by Russian composers Shostakovich and Prokofiev were widely introduced; poets such as Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova could officially and openly read previously unpublished works; meanwhile at exhibitions appear some of the forgotten Russian artistic heritage, from icon painting to masterpieces of the Silver Age (1890-1910ss). The majority of Russian society believed that a turning-point in spiritual and cultural life had become a reality.

Unfortunately, this hope turned out to be an illusion. The totalitarian system which had been established over more than thirty years had just *taken a pause* during the war; after the victory over the Germans the Communist party showed its true dictator's face once more. It almost uncomprehensible that in a country overwhelmed with poverty, destruction and starvation, so much attention was paid to cultural and artistic questions, but Soviet government's alertness was a fact. Between 1946 and 1948 the Party issued one unforgettable decree after another concerning music, theatre cinema and literature⁴¹. In 1949 it initiated the struggle against cosmopolitanism, smacking of anti-Semitism. These decrees, and the speeches and press commentaries which accompanied them, had an especially reactive nature and were phrased in crude military terms. This aggressive anti-intellectual campaign is often defined as the *zhdanovshchina*, after Andrei Zhdanov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Party and Stalin's closest confidant on ideological questions, who was in charge of the issue⁴². This period shone with falsity. Soviet artists were required to produce *optimistic* works, rich in

⁴¹ Блюм, А.В. "Блокадная тема в цензурной блокаде". Нева журнал, СПб., № 1, 2004, С. 238-245.

⁴² Сталин и космополитизм. Постановление политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) о цензуре информации из СССР, М.: Фонд Александра Яковлева, 1946, С.2-4.

enthusiasm and heroics thinking, full of the praises of blossoming socialist construction⁴³. Such bragging connected directly with everyday reality in a state on the threshold of starvation and despair, but none the less it was expected from artists. If in the post-revolutionary period when many artists and the society sincerely believed in a *brighter future*, - enthusiasm was often a sincere belief, now after facing the difficulties of the post war situation viewers perceived such images as mockery, insult and fake.

Everything linked to *bourgeois society* was subjected to official attack, as well as anything concerning human values or novel views on beauty or the origins of spirituality, whether in a foreign or domestic context. Any criticism of Soviet society, even the most harmless, was a subject to a direct criticism and censorship. In Zhdanov's decree *On the Magazines Zvezda and Leningrad* he spoke about traditions of the early twentieth century in Russian literature, especially he mentioned the work of Akhmatova, and anathematized the brilliant anti-philistine satire of Mikhail Zoschenko as *rotten and corrupting*⁴⁴.

Fine art escaped disorders but the declarations made about it were dear enough. At the congress of Soviet musicians in January 1948, Zhdanov said: "Not so long ago the Academy of Arts was set up. As you know, stone tint there were strong bourgeois influences in painting which appeared everywhere under a leftist banner and tagged themselves with names such as Futurism, Cubism and Modernism: they overthrew rotten academicism and voted for novelty. This novelty manifested: If infinites depictions of girls with one head and forty legs. How did it all end? With the complete collapse of this new movement. The Party reflected the significance of the classical heritage of Bruni, Bryullov, Vereshchagin, Vasnetsov and Surikov".⁴⁵

Accordingly, the idea was clearly stated. Any kind of novelty in art was unequivocally rejected and classicism was imposed as a staple doctrine. Imitation, both of renowned Russian artists of the nineteenth century and of pseudo-academic movements and styles were encouraged⁴⁶.

⁴³ Блюм, А.В. *Советская цензура в эпоху тотального террора. 1929—1953*. СПб.: Академический проект, 2000, С. 283.

⁴⁴ Жданов, А. *Постановление ЦК ВКП, доклад а с осуждением Ахматовой и Зощенко*. О журналах: Звезда и Ленинград, Август, 1946, С.4-9.

⁴⁵ Келдыш, Ю.В. *Музыкальная энциклопедия*. М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1974.С.23.

⁴⁶ Горяева, Т.М. *История советской политической цензуры. Документы и комментарии*. М.: Российская политическая энциклопедия (РОССПЭН), 1997, С.15-21.

However it would be wrong to consider that artists in the 1940s and 1950s worked only on imitation and society's entertainment. The reality suggested more options: Soviet post-war art created a world of myth according to an elaborated plan. The approved works of art of this period gave a picture of life which was invented by the Party and had nothing in common with reality. Artists were required to depict Soviet reality in a glorifying context, worshiping greatness of its time⁴⁷. The required and imposed world-view was, to say the least, one-sided, but it was accepted by nearly the majority of artists⁴⁸. Certainly the works of this time had their own special aesthetic value and should not be all strictly attributed to the *socially commissioned*; however the existing exceptions just outlined the rule.

The Thaw. First steps to liberty. The Nonconformist Art.

There were a significant number of artistic groups and movements which actively positioned them-selves in the Soviet Union after the period of *the Thaw*⁴⁹. It appears to be challenging to classify this category of artists since they often were rather defined by their geographical proximity than due to their stylistic objectives. Furthermore, participation in these groups was fluid as the community of nonconformist artists⁵⁰ in Moscow and Leningrad was relatively small and even-keeled.

Lianozovskaya School in Moscow represents a group of Russian poets and artists which was formed in the end of 1950s. Its spiritual leader especially at its starting point was an artist and a poet Evgenii Kropivnitsky. The artistic group consisted of following personalities: Valentina Kropivnitskaia, Evgenii Kropivnitsky, Olga Potapova,

⁴⁷ Zhdanov, A. *Sovetskaya Literatura samaya ideinaia*. Moscow: Academic project, 1953, p.65.

⁴⁸ This tendency can be followed at the All-Union and whatever exhibitions in the period between 1948-52ss: *A Toast to the Hem of Socialist Labor, Congratulations to the Heroine, 7e Cotton-Growers 'Award Ceremony*. Was taken the official Decree on Awards, *Awarding the Lenin Prize to the Kirov Factory*. At the Industrial space, such as Triumphant reamer was obvious the abundance of the cult ideas introduced. Precisely in these works artists create images of a *dream-land*, kind of social sovietic paradise which will become true if soviet citizens will be *faithful sons* of their native land. See Graham, Loren R., Stites, Richard. *Red Star: The First Bolshevik Utopia*. L.: Bloomington, 1984.

⁴⁹ The period of Nikita Khrushiov's governing between 1953 and 1964 is officially defined as the period of *Thaw*, due to the fact that a significant number of political prisoners were liberated from Russian prisons and concentrated camps, in addition the censorship politics was significantly softened. Despite of all took place the aggressive anitreligious campaign, which resulted into a demolition of thousands of churches and monasteries, regardless of their architectural value: Хрущёв, С.Н. *Пенсионер союзного значения*. М.: Новости, 1991, С.416.

⁵⁰ By a notion of *Nonconformist artists* Russian critics usually refer to all *underground* and *alternative* movements, societies, individuals of Soviet artists who in the period of 1950 -1980ss were officially unaccepted and neglected by the State's censorship and were prohibited to take part in official social exhibitions and events. See Михнов-Войтенко, Евгений. М.: Новый музей, 2010; Андреева, Е.Ю. *Угол несоответствия. Школы нонконформизма. Москва-Ленинград 1946-1991*. М.: Искусство XXI век, 2012, С.21-25.

Oskar Rabin, Valery Klever from St. Petersburg, Lev Kropivnitsky, Lydia Masterkova, Vladimir Nemukhin, Nikolai Vechtomov, together with the following poets: Genrikh Sapgir, Vladimir Nekrasov and Igor Kholin. The artists mostly lived and worked in the small village at the outskirts of Moscow; traditionally on Sundays they used to organize exhibitions where everybody could exhibit their art pieces. At those shows public discussed art, used to read poetry. Poets, literature critics, cinema producers took part in the discussions. Those meetings faced an aggressive criticism in the official periodicals. In 1963 E. Kropivnitsky was fired from the Moscow Artist's Union being condemned for *formalism* in his works, but the true reason was an organization of *Liantsevo group*. It happened after the official Khrushiov's visit of the Moscow artistic show in Maneg⁵¹.



E. Kropivnitsky, *Expulsion from paradise*, 1956, oil on canvas, 80 x 67.



I. Kabakov, *Rank*, 1969, oil on canvas, 56 x 76.

A shared search for a new sociocultural identity united artists and poets of *Lianozovskaya school*, however it was not linked to aesthetic concerns, but rather to general worldview, which was far from being politicized. Curiously, the Lyantsovo's group members were not attracted by social problems. As to poets – they were interested in issues concerning only poetics. In 1959 appeared an independent magazine *Syntaxis*, its authors had previously agreed not to treat political problems and issues. Meanwhile the censorship regarded their activities as a political action, since its members aimed to escape the state's control. Analysing their works, a public will not find any hint on social criticism. Their main subject of interest was

⁵¹ Талочкин, Л.П., Алпатова, И.Г. Другое искусство: Москва 1956—1976. Московская коллекция, Сост. Т.1, М.: Художественная галерея 1991, С.28-32.

aesthetics and anti-aesthetics. As to the chosen issues of their creative work – they did not correspond to the official culture. In poet's Cholin book *Barrack's residents* we find the whole epos of a marginal life⁵².

Generally artists of the *Lianozovskaya School* worked in abstract style. Grace to a slight liberalization in *Thaw* period of 1960s new Soviet artists rediscovered historical Russian and international avant-garde traditions. Officially artists belonged to the Moscow Union of Artists, working in the applied and graphic arts. None of public open exhibitions could be hold if it was not organized by the State's Artist's Union. No wonder that *unofficial* exhibitions and so called *literary salons* were hold in private apartments. Every time it gathered more and more participants and visitors. Meanwhile Soviet officials made everything possible to harass the artists and poets. In response to the brave artistic gesture of the *Lyantsovskaya school* members, who organized an open air exhibition in 1974, offering participation to all nonconformist artists despite of the law's contradiction; - State's administration demolished the show by bulldozers and water cannons. This historical event remained known as the *Bulldozer Exhibition*⁵³.



E. Bulatov, *Krasikov Street*, 1977, oil on canvas, 150 x 200.



M. Shemiakin, *Peter the I*, 1970s, bronze.

⁵² Холин, Игорь. *Жители барака*. М.: Прометей, 1989, С.38-72.

⁵³ Лианозовская группа. *Истоки и судьбы*. М.: Сборник материалов и каталог выставки в Государственной Третьяковской галерее, 1998, С.7-19.

In the end of 1960s a number of Moscovian artists that had studios in the district of Sretensky Boulevard decided to create a like-minded artistic group which they called the *Sretensky Boulevard*. Following artists took part in this association: Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Viktor Pivovarov, Ülo Sooster, Eduard Shteinberg, Oleg Vassiliev, Vladimir Yankilevsky, and Ernst Neizvestny. As it became traditional in the Soviet reality nonconformist artists used their studios as unofficial venues of exhibitions and artistic discussions. The Union of Moscow Graphic Artists was an official representative institution to which belonged Sretensky Boulevard's artists and which provided them with studios and work commissions in a field of book illustration and graphic design. Besides a range of the commissioned works, the artists had enough of free time to create works based on their personal creative searches⁵⁴. The Sretensky Boulevard group had in common the same geographical proximity rather than similar artistic principles or styles. The main trait which united them besides the studio's proximity was an opposition to the official art and a hard work on a conceptual and abstract art, hold in secret from the official institutions⁵⁵.

The majority of artistic groups, associations of the nonconformist art were closely interwoven one with each other. So, no wonder that many of the artists of the *Sretensky Boulevard* also belonged to the *Moscow Conceptualist School*. The opposition to the government was the principle idea of this movement's appearance in the 1970s. Russian artists urged to express their proper creative identity which differed from the officially imposed.

Contemporary Russian artists suffered to be able and create works on subjects which were especially interesting to them such as the quotidian, an everyday life. Accordingly, in our days the late Soviet reality is sincerely and most fully mirrored in artworks of conceptualists, elaborated in a proper aesthetic language. Viewer discovers different moods in their works which without purpose criticize a surrounding reality: nostalgic, sad, disinterested, quietness.

The Moscow Conceptualist School and group consisted mostly of Ilya Kabakov, Komar, Erik Bulatov, Oleg Vassiliev and Melamid, Andrei Monastyrsky; however it also

⁵⁴ Salomon, Andrew. *The Irony Tower. Советские художники во времена гласности*. М.: Art marginum press, 2013, pp.35-57.

counted with other artists and *the Collective Actions group*, which influenced a creation of Russian conceptualist art⁵⁶. This artistic group actively worked in the 1960s and became quite influential. Already in the 1970s the notion of *Moscow Conceptualism* is occasionally associated with the post-modernism.



V. Ovchinnikov, *By the T.V.*, 1970s, oil on canvas, 450 × 357.

M. Shemiakin, *Sphinxes* – monument to the victims of political repressions, 1970s, bronze, St. Petersburg.

In particular the nonconformist art of Leningrad, (now St. Petersburg) developed the idea of art as of treasure by it-self, introducing it in different aspects of life and affirming its significant creative activity which acts by proper independent laws. In these terms are exemplary Mikhail Chemiakin's Non-conformist Group's activities. The artist organized an exhibition in 1964 at the Hermitage Museum, where he worked as gallery assistant. The show was called *Exhibition of the artists-workers of economic part of the Hermitage: Towards the 200th anniversary of Hermitage* and it represented works of V. Ovchinnikov, M. Chemiakin, V. Kravchenko, V. Uflyand, and O. Liagatchev⁵⁷. In two following to the inauguration date days (March 30–31), it was closed by the authorities on April, 1. As a consequence The Hermitage director, Mikhail Artamonov, was fired.

Already in 1967 E. Yesaulenko, Chemiakin, O. Liagatchev, and V. Ivanov prepared *Petersburg Group Manifesto*. Ivanov and Chemiakin had introduced the notion of *Metaphysical Synthesis*. It aimed to create a new form of icon painting through the study of religious art across all its history. Further in 1971, Chemiakin emigrated to France, then to the United States. The series of exhibitions of non-conformist artists in

⁵⁶ Salomon, Andrew. *The Irony Tower. Советские художники во времена гласности*. М.: Art marginum press, 2013, p.56.

⁵⁷ Сидоров, Л. *Живопись, Графика, Архитектура*. Россия: Издательство Петрополь, 2007, С.96.

Leningrad were held: at the Gaza Cultural Centre (1974) and the Nevsky Cultural Centre (1975). In 1979 the group despaired, abandoning the idea of holding joint exhibitions⁵⁸.

The famous figure and kind of an artistic leader of Leningrad in the 1980s became Timur Novikov. He is defined as one of the main founders of Russian conceptual art. In 1982, thanks to his theory of *Zero Object*, which is also known as the *neo-academism*. The art group *Battle Elephants* in 1984 was formed by artists Igor Polyakov and Alexander Rappaport and also represented the unofficial art.

Regarding the Russian new media art it was developed in particular by Olga Kisseleva. Afrika (Sergei Bugaev) artist was famous for his eccentric original art pieces in the 1980s⁵⁹.



L. Cholina, A. Ignatiev, P. Ignatiev, *Dostoevsky*, 1980s, bronze, St. Petersburg.

Troyanovsky, *Poet Anna Akhmatova*, 1980s, granite, St. Petersburg.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.68.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.84.

2.3 Specificity of Russian sculpture at the turn of the centuries. Traditions and new paths

In order to be able and understand all historical, cultural and artistic collisions, the sculptural context of the Soviet epoch we should analyse its background. According to E.V. Prutkovsky's work the *Soviet World of art* towards the end of the XIX century the *World of Art* movement, which sought to combine XIX century aestheticism with a return to the Russian folk traditions, produced richly coloured, highly detailed artworks which had a profound effect on book illustration and stage design. In 1899 Benois and Sergey Diaghilev founded the magazine *Mir Iskoustva*, and from it stemmed the brilliant phase of Russian ballet design, in which the names of Benois, Leon Bakst, Nicolas Roerich, and others are eminent.

The late XIX century was full of aspirations of new sculptural forms appearance: "The approximation of which indicates an applied-decorative plastic, created in result of *Abramtsovo* activities and personal efforts of S.I. Mamontov, who encouraged artists, helping them to achieve a complete synthesis of plastic arts. The first colourful majolica of M. Vrubel was objectively defined as an opposition to a blind anaemic and lifeless surface in academic sculpture of so called *plaster cast style*, prevailing in the last two decades of XIX century"⁶⁰.



M. Vrubel, *Meeting of Volga Sviatoslavovich with Mikula Selianovich*, about 1900, majolica, 1800 × 1521.

A. Benois, *Chinese Pavilion, Jealous man*, 1906, oil on canvas, 912 × 880.

⁶⁰ Брук, Я.В. Государственная Третьяковская галерея: Кат. собрания. Скульптура XVIII-XIX веков. М.: Красная площадь, 2000, С.11-12.

The academic sculptors in the beginning of XX century blindly maintained their loyalty to the officially approved style. The acknowledgement with the sculpture of P. Trubetskoi provoked a highly negative reaction in the academic environment. Meanwhile Trubetskoi introduced to Russian artistic scene a form of a sculptural impressionism: "Creative and teaching activities of P.Trubetskoy while he worked in the Moscow Academy of Sculpture and Painting (1898-1906) crucially influenced the formation of the whole range of Russian sculptors, especially of Moscovians. The Trubetskoy's works caused such a deep impression on the young sculptors that the impressionists' tendencies began to widespread very quickly among Russian artists. Though it would not be appropriate to affirm that the peculiar manifestations of impressionism were introduced in Russian sculpture only from abroad. The main fact of special influence which Trubetskoy achieved among Moscow sculptors can be explained by already pre-existent impressionism's inclinations appeared in the 1890s and reflected in the art of certain painters, in particular in art of S.I. Ivanov and his follower S.M. Volnuchin"⁶¹.

There also was another significant testimony of his influence on the Russian artistic scene: "The artistic and pedagogic activities of Sergey Ivanovich contributed to the accumulation of a big potential; so far the apprentices of Moscow sculptural class were not just ready to the perception of impressionistic forms but already had the primary base for the further development. Having adapted the precepts of S.I. Ivanov, inspired by a free creativity of P. Trubetskoy, the Moscow sculpture was naturally ready to valuate genial achievements of Rodin, to take a great interest in Antoine Bourdelle's and Aristide Maillol's, Charles Despiau's work, as well as to be acknowledged with Hildebrand ideas together with all brilliant artistic ideas of the early XX century"⁶².

The impressionism became the first movement the artists of early XX century faced. Among prominent artists of the early XX century were N.A. Andreev and A.S. Golubkina. "Golubkina – is one of the most prominent representatives of the Russian artists' galaxy whose creative work became a crucial point in the history of Russian

⁶¹ Веймарн, Б.В., Шантыко, Н.И. *История искусства народов СССР*. В 9 т., Т. 6, *Искусство второй половины XIX- начала XX века*. М.: Изобразит, искусство, 1981, С.154.

⁶² Брук, Я.В. Ред. *Государственная Третьяковская галерея: Кат. собрания. Скульптура XVIII-XIX веков*. М.: Красная площадь, 2000, С.18.

sculpture and symbolized by itself a real renaissance of the plastic arts, indicated wide perspectives in development of Russian sculpture"⁶³.

With the appearance in Russia of such artists as A. Golubkina and other contemporary sculptors the foreign art critics of the 1/3 XX century discussed a so called *Slav's breakthrough* in the European and American culture: "The breakthrough of Slavs in Europe and its penetration in America remains one of the main phenomena of the contemporary world. There is no anything more surprising in the post-war map of Europe than a fact of the Slav's increment of territorial assimilation in comparison with their possessions before 1914. The census in The United States of America indicates that the population still cannot be defined as a united, but besides, it indicates the enormous popularity of Slavs who speak in proper language and publish their newspapers. Already 2000 years Slavs move through The Europe further to the West. In terms of territory the half of Europe belongs to Slavs. At the contemporary map Slavs possess of the territories from Adriatic to the Baltic Sea. Creativity – is one of the powerful traits of the Slav's nature. The Art unites the Slavs. The Slav is stubborn in his aspiration for Culture. The inclination towards Art, Literature and Music is felt equally strong by Doctor or a peasant"⁶⁴.

The creative work of sculptor S. Konenkov was bright, life-asserting, polyhedral and many-sided: "His admiration of the Russian epos and fairy-tales matched in time with the rediscovery of antique icon-painting, antique Russian sculpture and architecture. It's grace to Konenkov's achievements that the wooden sculpture was revived. Unlike Anna Golubkina, Konenkov's sculpture does not express drama and spiritual break down. Instead its images are full of national optimism"⁶⁵.

Proper Golubkina would observe: "Konenkov became so closely linked with wood that you get impression he does not work but just frees the thing that is concluded in the wood"⁶⁶.

⁶³ Трифонова, Л.П. А.С. Голубкина. Л.: Художник РСФСР, 1978, С.3-5.

⁶⁴ Лавров, Г.Д. "Мои встречи с Анной Павловой: (Занисала С. Дроздова)". Моск. Новости, 1984, 15 янв.

⁶⁵ Ильина, Т.В. *История искусств. Русское и советское искусство. Учебное пособие*. М.: Высш. шк., 1989, С.276.

⁶⁶ Воейкова, И.Н. *Монументалисты Советской России. Альбом. Вып.1-2*, Л.: Художник РСФСР, 1980, С.49.



S. Konenkov, *Portrait of violinist A. Mikuli*, 1912, wood.

S. Konenkov, *Jesus Christ*, 1933, marble.

Trubetskoy, Golubkina, Konenkov can be definitely regarded as the central figures in the history of Russian sculpture in the early XX century. They developed their creative searches independently, sensitively reacting at the aesthetic demands of their time. Their influence caused on the development of national sculpture was enormous and many-sided; however, they did not found schools and did not have any *direct* apprentices. Only few years passed from the moment when at the XIX and the XX century's boundary the impressionism was widely spread. "The enthusiasm of sculptors, the success and the interest of the public, all factors did not make suspect that this artistic movement will exist in the short run. Gradually the impression's transmission directly and quickly fixed by a sharp gaze of an artist gives a way to a philosophical, creative vision and approach, executed by analytic method and synthesis of plastic forms and images. The tendency to *pictorial* in sculpture is coming to the end, while appears a conscious urge towards revealing the pronounced constructive and architectonic bases of sculptural images and compositions"⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ Шмидт, И.М. Скульптура / Русская художественная культура конца XIX -начала XX века (1908-1917). Изобразительное искусство. Архитектура. Декоративно-прикладное искусство. Кн. 4, М.: Паука, 1980, С.255.



P. Trubetsky, *Tolstoy*, 1899, bronze.



S. Konenkov, *Paganini*, 1908, marble.

Those tendencies with absolute evidence are perfectly traced in the activities of A. Matveev (1878-1960). It is characteristic for his work to look towards an intense search of a new, as well as the wide use of the entire world's artistic heritage. The evolution of his work appears to be a bright example of logical succession and artistic purposefulness. The art of Matveev gives an example of creative discipline and a wise self-restraint. He elaborated a minimum of plastic subjects in a *nu* figures⁶⁸. "The artist creates images of a Wonderland, the golden age of humanity; more dreaminess and idealism bear poetical illusions of Matveev – more visual determination, steadiness and completeness the master wanted to transmit to his sculpture. The pictorial amorphism of the depiction is changed by a firm severe tectonics; an exterior incompleteness of the execution cedes to the extreme form's clarity; the nervous impulsive narrative and outburst is changed by a tendency to a calm steadiness and a tendency to ideal and harmony"⁶⁹.

The First World War took place in 1914 and inevitably brought changes. "The battles which were not so bloody but still aggressive were the reality in a new European art which embraced the achievements of realism and postimpressionism of XIX century and was searching for new horizons. Culture reacted differently to the chaos of these years, sometimes giving a total freedom to radical directions, which used all

⁶⁸ Алленов, М.М., Евангулова, О.С., Лифшиц, Л.И. *Русское искусство X -начала XX века*. М.: Искусство, 1989, С.471.

⁶⁹ Каменский, А.А. *Русская скульптура на рубеже двух эпох*. М.: Паука, 1969, С.211.

means that were in their disposal, first of all manifests and theoretic works in order to express a firm opposition to the existing system"⁷⁰.

So far even the War was not able to stop the development of sculpture, on the contrary, the sculptors of a new XX century created a favourable base to the art development of next decades. Russian masters did not play the last role in this process. "It is known that such artists as Archipenko, Osip Tsadkin, Naum Gabo, Hana Orlova and others studied in Russia. However the majority of mentioned masters would share the same fate as the range of contemporary artists, from Picasso and to Modigliani, which for certain reasons and circumstances mostly worked away from their native land, mainly in Paris"⁷¹.

A young Russian sculptor Osip Tsadkin from Smolensk belonged to the most radical sculptors of the XX century. "Not achieving 30 years he definitely broke with accepted in sculpture, representative influences of Rodin, Bourdelle and Maillol, neglecting their contemporary realism, neoclassicism and mediumistic. It resulted difficult to find a proper way, his artistic principle developed slowly as in majority of cases when a young artist attempts to find his proper fresh method, but simultaneously his fear of faults impedes him"⁷². Osip Tsadkin became famous by works which reflect in sculptural form typical motives and methods of cubism (such as for example *Woman with a fan*, 1920, bronze, The National Museum of Modern Art in Paris). In the most characteristic works the sculptor combined a destructive, analytic-cubistic approach to a model with organic rhythm and symbolic generalization based on subject of Life and Death, Art in the spirit of Modern. Therefore he joined the tendencies of Modern style and avant-garde. The artist had strong correlations with Russia and sent as a gift some of his artworks (in particular *Musicians*, 1924), to The State Pushkin Museum in Moscow.

Hanna Orlova was originally from Kharkov region. Her art was highly appreciated in the west: "Certainly Hana Orlova belongs to the European group of artists who gave a new life to sculpture, while the main art movements, generated by neo-classicism and other artistic methods, brought in by Rodin were crucially affected"⁷³.

⁷⁰ Кандинский, М. *Русская художественная культура конца XIX - начала XX века (1895-1907)*. М.: Издат-во. Астрель, 2002, С. 56.

⁷¹ Шмидт, И.М. *Скульптура. Русская художественная культура конца XI -начала XX века (1908-1917)* *Изобразительное искусство. Архитектура. Декоративно-прикладное искусство*. Кн. 4, М.: Паука, 1980, С. 293.

⁷² Parkes, Kineton. *The art of carved sculpture*. London: Chapman and Hllа, 1931, p.146.

⁷³ Северюхин, Д.Я., Лейкинд, О.Л. *Художники русской эмиграции (1917-1941)*. Биографический словарь, СПб.: Издат-во.Чернышева, 1994, С.347.

Alexander Archipenko arrived to Paris in 1908, he experimented with cubistic method which he applied in sculpture, starting the series *The Circus Medrano* – figures, combined from different materials (glass, wood, metal and others). The sculptor never exhibited in Russia, but, indeed, it was him who deeply influenced Russian sculptors who arrived to Paris as apprentices. “He had his proper school where taught *cubistic movements of forms*. Sculptor Boris Korolev, a future participant of the *Monumental plan of propaganda* who shaped the cubistic and futuristic monument of Bakunin, took his classes”⁷⁴.

Koroliov was the most prominent representation of Russian cubism in sculpture: “The sculptors as artists were searching for a method to reveal a very essence of maximum generalized forms of human body’s depiction, as it could be divided into simple stereometric figures. The great attention was paid to the dynamics of sculptural forms, which could be achieved by specific displacements of sculptural volumes. Tatlin even more conditionally constructed the voluminous-spatial compositions. His famous hollow relieves synthetize in them elements of sculpture and painting plus the constructive architecture”⁷⁵.



B. Koroliov, *P. Chaikovsky*, 1940, metal.

O. Tsadkin, *The violin player*, 1935, bronze.

P. Trubetsky, *Seating lady*, 1897, bronze.

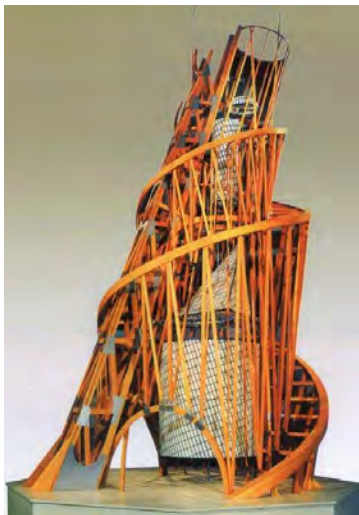
Chaim Jacob Lipchitz studied in Paris. He began with exploring realistic style but soon changed his preferences in favour of cubism. Trotsky wrote about his artworks:

⁷⁴ Деготь, Е.Ю. *История русского искусства. Книга 3. Русское искусство XX века*. М.: Трилистник, 2002, С.224.

⁷⁵ Шмидт, И.М. *Скульптура. Русская художественная культура конца XIX -начала XX века (1908-1917)*. Изобразительное искусство. Архитектура. Декоративно-прикладное искусство. Кн. 4, М.: Паука, 1980, С. 293.

"I suppose that Lipchitz's sculpture seems to remind a brilliant speech of Kruchionih – a perfect technic example of mastery"⁷⁶. Lipchitz as a sculptor was recognized as one of fundamental sculptors of XX century. Naum Gabo (Pevsner Nemea Abramovich) was sculptor's brother. Painter Antoin Natan also belonged to the same circle. Naum Gabo started his studying in the Kiev Art school, afterwards continued in St. Petersburg and Paris, from 1918 both brothers were teaching in the VHUTEMAS and in 1920 Pevsner, Gabo and Klutis organized the exhibition at Tverskoy Boulevard and published *The Realistic Manifest*, which appeared to be a first manifest of constructivism, where artists defined the bases of new decorative sculpture's aesthetic: "Some statements of the manifest, let call them founders of constructivism, as were Rodchenko and Tatlin"⁷⁷.

Contrary to the painting, the avant-garde in sculpture did not widely spread with the departure from Russia of Archipenko in 1908, Livshits in 1911, and Gabo in 1922. In Russia no other sculptor was evidently attracted by this art movement.



V. Tatlin, *Monument's model of International III*, 1920, metal, steel, wood.

A. Archipenko, *A standing female figure*, 1910s, plaster-cast.

O. Tsadkin, *3 beauties*, 1950, bronze.

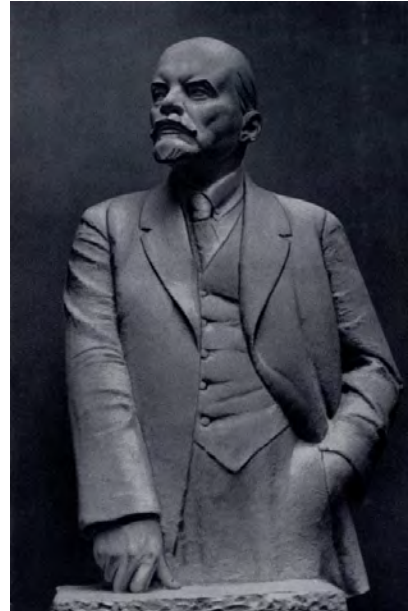
"It would not be correct to consider that cubistic lessons especially of constructivism were ignored by Russian sculpture. In opposite, these movements with its close

⁷⁶ Северюхин, Д.Я., Лейкинд, О.Л. *Художники русской эмиграции (1917-1941)*. Биографический словарь, СПб.: Издат-во Чернышева, 1994, С.290.

⁷⁷ Ibid. С.143.

attention to interrelation in volume, space, its search of clarity and sharpness in form significantly enriched the expressive possibilities of sculpture"⁷⁸.

2.4 Soviet sculpture: new perspectives and development despite the limitations



N. Andreev, *Obelisk in honour of the first Soviet Constitution*, 1918-1919, beton, architect D. Osipov, Moscow(is destructed).

N. Andreev, *Lenin – leader*, 1931- 1932, marble.

After the October Revolution the new Soviet Government accepts a range of decrees: on the 17 of June of 1918 on issue of *Libraries' preservation*, on the 5 of October in 1918 – *The registration, acceptance and conservation of antiquities and works of art both of the private sector and of the official institutions*, on the 26 of November in 1918 - *The decree, concerning scientific, literary, musical and artistic pieces*, which were defined as a national heritage. In 1918 Lenin signed the decree on nationalization of the Tretyakovskaya Gallery. In the same way The Hermitage and The Russian Museum in St. Petersburg were nationalized; many properties of nobles, private art collections, the cathedrals of Kremlin were turned into national museums as well as tsar's residences near Petrograd and Moscow. Already in 1917 at the base of the Narkompros was created a Collegial, devoted to the Museums

⁷⁸ Брук, Я.В. Ред. *Государственная Третьяковская галерея. Кат. собрания. Скульптура второй половины XX века*. М.: Красная площадь, 1998, С.19-24.

and conservation of art monuments and antiquities. The State's foundation systematized the museums' treasures and distributed them among the museums in Russia. In 1918 the decree on *The Monuments of the Republic* was published, following which, Lenin's *plan of The Monumental propaganda* started to be realized"⁷⁹.

According *the plan of The Monumental propaganda* was decided to create and install 67 monuments in Moscow and 40 in Petrograd. For this aim all available sculptors were involved in the project. The sculptors who participated in the creation of the monuments were of different ages and belonged to the variety of art movements: N. Andreev, A. Matveev, V. Sinayskiy, took part even the apprentices of Art institutions. "The given task we completed with enthusiasm as well as we could"⁸⁰ reminded sculptor L. Chervud. On 7 of November in 1918 Lenin attended the inauguration of the relief, executed by sculptor Konenkov and mounted into the Kremlin wall. The relief was made of concrete and it was coloured.

The sculptural image depicted a Genius, which in one hand was holding a green branch of a palm and in another a red flag; the sculptural relief had an inscription: *To the died in the battle for peace and nation's fraternity*. On the same day in front of Moscow Soviet was installed an obelisk, devoted to the appearance of the Soviet Constitution. In one year near the obelisk was installed a monumental statue executed by N. Andreev, called *Freedom*. It portrayed a majestic and sable female figure, which personified a beauty of the new world. This sculpture was considered as a first major achievement of soviet monumental sculpture, kind of Soviet sculpture's symbolic *fire baptism*.

⁷⁹ Ильина, Т.В. *История искусств. Русское и советское искусство. Учебное пособие*. М.: Высш. шк., 1989, С.250-270.

⁸⁰ Шервуд. *Искусство*., М.: X 1, 1939, С. 52.



I. Konenkov, *To those who died in the battle for peace and nation's fraternity*, 1918, coloured cement.



V. Sinaiskiy, *Lassal's monument's inauguration*, 1918, photo, unknown author.

The majority of elaborated sculptures of the first Soviet epoch were not preserved till our days. The quality of material used for monuments was low and not lasting: concrete and plastic cast did not last in the streets of Moscow and Petrograd. Regardless their short-lasting life, those sculptures completed their main task – they embodied a first visualization of *The Monumental propaganda plan* in the post-revolutionary epoch⁸¹, convincing population's minds that the Revolution is not a dream anymore but a fact which will change the country's fate forever.

“After the October Revolution was over and the peace with Germany was accorded the new regime put all its efforts to the reorganization of the industries. Grace to such avant-garde movements as constructivism and suprematism (appeared just before the Revolution) art supported the ideals of mechanization, geometric abstraction and the language of masses”⁸².

“Besides cubism, other source of influence of the early Soviet sculpture was expressive neoclassic language of Bourdelle. These both traditions were assimilated by sculptor Josef Chaikov – activist of Jewish renaissance, which tried to create a national style based on international modernism. Chaikov was famous in the sculpture of 1920s by his statues of mechanic people in cubistic style in which he reflected his close approach to constructivism and ideals of social engineering. The

⁸¹ Воронова, О.П. *Скульптурная живопись*. М.: Знание, 1981, С.18.

⁸² Рапелли, П. *Кандинский*. М.: АСТ. Астрель, 2002, С. 56-59.

main symbolic successor of Bourdelle in Russia was Vera Muchina, who took classes at his studio in 1912-1914. Meanwhile in the USSR Muchina attempted to unite its neorchaism with fashionable cubistic forms (project of a monument to Jacob Sverdlov, *The flame of Revolution*, 1922-1923), though neoclassic won, achieving its culmination in *The Worker and kolhoznitsa* in 1937.



V. Muchina, *The flame of Revolution*, Sverdlov's monument, 1922-1923, sketch, bronze.

Evseev, *Lenin's monument*, 1926, bronze, St. Petersburg.

Kozlov, *Lenin's Monument*, 1927, bronze, St. Petersburg.

The Plan of Monumental propaganda determined the development of Soviet sculptor for many years ahead. However, the ways which sculptors of 1920 -1930ss followed, differed. A lot depended on a level of professional preparation and a choice of sculptural tradition, on which every artist based and certainly a specific of his talent. "Precisely during this period were discovered bright creative individualities, expressing themselves in different sculptural genres. In addition a differentiation of genres and types of art, together with monumental forms of sculpture characterized the epoch. As to the easel sculpture, individual portrait coexists with a generalized image and a subject's composition; the depiction's truthfulness is combined with a tendency to a symbol. Different types of relief were elaborated, despite the fact that it was quite forgotten before the revolution and was restored to life in the first Soviet years. Sculpture feels more and more confident with time. At exhibitions it starts to occupy the same place as painting and graphics, sometimes even holding

the main position (for instance at the exhibition of *10 years of The October's Revolution*). Ever before sculpture was represented by such a number of working masters, emphatically and firmly searching for solutions in their difficult creative tasks"⁸³.

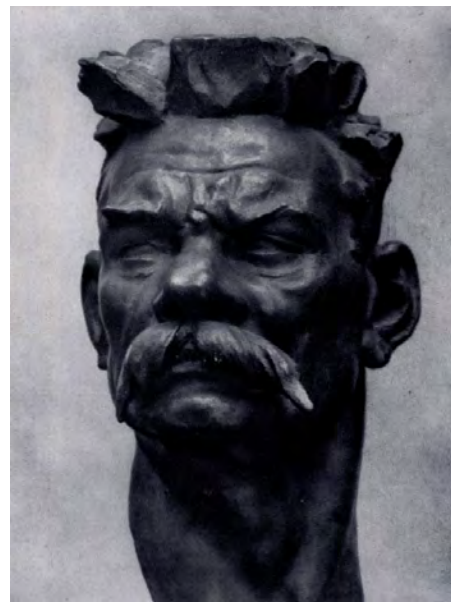
In 1926 the Society of Russian Sculptors (ORS) was created and became the first creative union of Russian sculptors. It consisted of variety of masters belonging to the diverse creative directions. The sculptural works of the AHRR⁸⁴ (sculptural section whose strength grew significantly) were close to the reality. The central place at the exhibitions of the AHRR took the portraits of prominent revolutionaries and the State's activists. In the sculptural works of the AHRR sculptors, the following subjects were reflected: the revolutionary feats, labour and private life of soviet people as well as life of the Red Army. Among other sculptors worked M. Manizer, S. Merkurov, V. Kozlov, I. Mendelevich, G. Motovilov and G. Lavrov.

Along with a wide exhibition activities were hold a series of concourses of monumental sculpture. After Lenin's death in 1924 there was a big polemic on the issue of Lenin's memory perpetuation with monumental means. The discussion was also hold around a subject of how Lenin should be depicted: whether sculptors should maintain the similarity of his appearance or whether artists may display an image - symbol. The concourse of the monument by Finlandsky railway station in Leningrad featured many artistic solutions: for example there was an idea to depict Lenin standing on the planet. The sculptor S. Evseev together with architects Shuko and Gelfreih won the concourse; in their project they kept a portrayal similarity of the leader and depicted him in the same way as he was remembered by people who listened to his speech, made in April 1917; at the end the elaborated Lenin's monument was installed in 1926. Another Lenin's monument was installed in 1927 in front of Smolny's architectural complex in Leningrad. Sculptor V. Kozlov as well created this sculptural image of the Revolution's leader. In the same 1927 the

⁸³ Зингера, Л.С., Орловой, М.А. Под ред. *История искусства народов СССР. Искусство народов СССР от Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции до 1941 года*. М.: Изобразит, искусство, 1972, С.435.

⁸⁴"The Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia which existed in 1922-1928, later known as Association of Artists of the Revolution 1928-1932 was a group of artists in the Soviet Union in 1928-1933. Diverse members of the group gained favor as the legitimate bearers of the Communist ideal into the world of art, formulating framework for the Socialist Realism style". Knyazeva, Valentina. *AKhRR Leningrad*. М.: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1967, p.38.

composition of Merkurov *The death of the leader* was mounted in the park of the countryside estate *Lenin's Gorki*. It was also Merkurov who made and elaborated a *death mask of Lenin*. Later sculptor Merkurov created some more Lenin's monuments for various cities of Russia.



P. Shadr, *Cobblestone – Bolshevik's weapon*, 1927, bronze. P. Shadr, *M. Gorkiy, fragment*, 1939, bronze.

From this period and further it would be difficult to find a town where Lenin's monument would not be installed and rarely a Soviet artist in some or other way would not treat a subject of Lenin, of the Revolution or the Civil War.

Having analysed the artistic atmosphere of the late XIX and the ¼ of XX century under the traditions and influences of which a young sculptor Nina Slobodinskaya started her professional artistic formation we should forward to the next historical moment. Obviously almost all the art tendencies of the 1910 -1930ss, in some way impacted or influenced the artistic education of Nina Slobodinskaya. The sculptor's early creative work freely joins the general flow. "This period of Russian sculpture's history can be characterized by artistic pluralism, as the thematic censure was already formed, while the aesthetics was still not touched: the state could control the subject matter but not the form; however clear criteria still were not elaborated. Therefore different groups actuated at the artistic scene: diverse institutions could be

defined as such" ⁸⁵. The period of 1930s is the most contradictory and at the same time tragic in the history of the Soviet government and accordingly in its culture and art.



M. Manizer, *Worker*, 1920-1921, cement, relief, Moscow.

S. Merkurov, *S. Shaumian*, 1929, granite, Moscow.



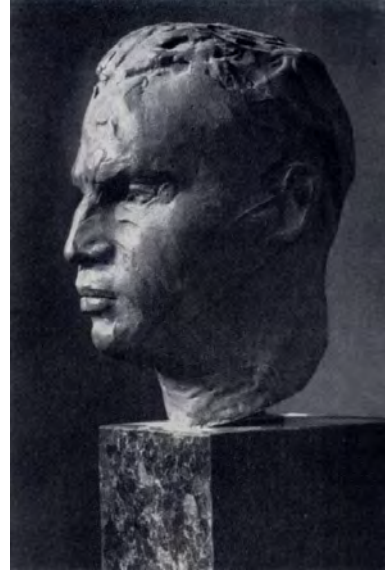
S. Merkurov, *Leader's death*, 1927, granite, Gorki.

⁸⁵ Деготь, Е.Ю. *История русского искусства. Книга 3. Русское искусство XX века.* М.: Трилистник, 2002, С.224.

On the 23 of April in 1930 was accepted the resolution of the ЦК ВКП⁸⁶ on *The reconstruction of the literary-artistic organizations*. It signified that all the existing groups were disbanded. Accordingly all writers and artists who supported the Soviet



G. Motovilov, *Agriculture*, 1939, limestone, relief for the main entrance of the USSR agricultural exhibition in Moscow.



S. Lebedeva, *V. Chkalov's portrait*, 1937, gypsum.



V. Vatagin, *Leopard*, 1945, terracotta.

⁸⁶ "The Orgburo (known as the Organisational Bureau) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union existed from 1919–52, until it was abolished at the 19th Congress of the Communist Party and its functions were transferred to the enlarged Secretariat". Горячев, Ю.В. *Центральный комитет КПСС, Историко-биографический справочник*. М.: Издательский дом Парад, 2005, С.32.

Government were proposed to create unified unions. The aesthetic program of new creative unions was defined as *socialist realism*. Its main principles were formulated already in 1934 at the first conference of Moscow writers in the speeches of Zhdanov, Gorky and Bukharin. They were following: party membership, typicalness, historic concreteness, realism, mass education as the task of the revolutionary romanticism. The *socialist realism* soon was imposed to the fields of all arts. As it was discovered further creative unions and socialist realism style were created as total and did not leave any chance for alternative. Finally, the very notion of *socialist realism* and *Soviet art* appeared to be synonyms. It became almost impossible for artists to survive in their professions from the early 1930 in the USSR, not sharing or accepting its stylistic and thematic ideas. In case of non-acceptance an artist would completely lose his membership in the system of official Artist's Unions, losing chance to exhibit his works at state's shows, to get commissions for artworks (let's not forget that the state became the unique commissioner for artists) and finally, would become a complete social outsider⁸⁷.

French writer Andre Gide who travelled around the USSR in 1936 paid attention at this situation: "No matter how genial could be an artist, but if he does not follow a general line he will not get any attention, the luck turns away from him. The only request is made to artists and writers – to be obedient"⁸⁸. Meanwhile, a Soviet press "diligently promotes high dimensional creative achievements: the metro, VSHV, the mural painting of the Moscow hotels and south sanatoriums, new monuments dedicated to Lenin and Stalin"⁸⁹. Naturally, in this context S. Merкуроv and M. Manizer - the State's main official sculptors are praised. The cult of the leader becomes the main subject in Soviet totalitarian sculpture. During these years was formed the so called *Staliniana*⁹⁰. "In the connection with the regime's toughening changed the interpretation of the leader's image: from *near* in kind of romantically open greatcoat way to the *static*, with a firmly closed coat of Generalissimos. All these sculptural images we can admire in the art of Manizer, Tomsky and Merкуроv"⁹¹.

⁸⁷ Деготь, Е.Ю. *История русского искусства. Книга 3. Русское искусство XX века*. М.: Трилистник, 2002, С.139.

⁸⁸ Жид, А. *Возвращение из СССР. Два взгляда из-за рубежа*. М.: Политиздат, 1990, С.94.

⁸⁹ Морозов, А.И. *Конец утопии. Из истории искусства в СССР 1930-х годов*. М.: Галарт, 1995, С.130.

⁹⁰ By *Staliniana* is meant a number of art pieces, musical compositions, cinematography, dedicated to the cult of Stalin's personality.

⁹¹ Славова, Л.А. *Советская скульптура тоталитарной эпохи 1930-х - 1950-х годов. Проблемы художественных традиций. Тезисы конференции, посвященной итогам научно-*

"The art of 1930s is very rich, very difficult and contradictory. We can clearly see the contradiction of artistic tendencies in Soviet art of 1930s on the example of the canal named after Moscow. This ensemble is executed with amplitude and poetic rise. The pathos of nature's conquest creates the emotional base and serves as a background to the chain of architectonic and sculptural images from Himkinsky sea station till the missives of Ivankovskaya plotina; two figures dominate this sculptural landscape. Certainly the artistic idea contained of creating a poetic and romantic image and to convey a humanistic thought. Possibly the main idea of the artists was to display the technic and industrial construction as something free, poetic and deeply human. The industrial forms were meant to bear and represent some humanistic sense. Sometimes this tendency shows the character deliberately romantic. Today this method of Art's humanization as program's antithesis and its formalistic dehumanization with its romantic intonation would be perceived as a bit naive but still artistically completed. This tendency captured all Arts. We can find this poetic humanism reflected in mosaics of Deneika at the Mayakovskaya metro station and in the *Pedagogic poem* of Makarenko and in the writings of Gaydar. This *humanization of art*⁹² was a direct reaction simultaneously to formalistic renunciation of human image and human values and, besides, it also was a response to the naturalistic incapacity to rise above prosaicism and talk on people as a song *singing*. That's why in the mentioned epoch supposedly nobody perceived enormous statues at the Volga canal as expression of something above personal. Quite a contrary, the sculptures were seen as apotheosis of humanity. Nevertheless, the sculptures of Merkurov were full of a heavy fore of cold pomposity"⁹³.

исследовательской работы за 1993 год и выставке Агитация за счастье. СПб.: Гос. Русский музей, 1994, С.26-28.

⁹² The issue of *art humanization* in the indicated Soviet period is not so widely interpreted in actuality, as the scientific tendency emphasizes the preliminary significance of sculptures of official heroes-revolutionaries, not regarding other existed aspects and genres of sculpture. However, in the contemporary to the historical moment literature we find a detailed description of this appearance in sculpture. See following works: Алпатов, М.В. *Этюды по истории русского искусства*. В 2 т. Т. II., М.: Искусство, 1967; *Архитектура Страны Советов. 1917–1977*. М.: Сов.художник, 1978; Бычков, Ю. Коненков. М.: Внешторгиздат, 1982; Воронов, Н.В. *Советская монументальная скульптура 1960–1980*. М.: Искусство, 1984; Замошкин, А.И. М.К. Аникушин. Л.: Азбука, 1979; Воронова, О. И.Д. *Шдр*. М.: Искусство, 1969; Зименко, В.М. *Традиции, новаторство, современность*. М.: Сов.художник, 1965; Дубовицкая, Н.Н. Н. Андреев. М.: Сов.художник, 1970; Воронова, О. В.И. Мухина. М.: Гос.Издат, 1976.

⁹³ Недошивин, Г.А. *Теоретические проблемы современного изобразительного искусства*. М.: Сов. художник, 1972, С.155-161.



Merkurov, *Stalin*, 1947, stone, Moscow.



Tomsky, *Stalin*, 1940s, bronze, Obuhovskaya st.



Deneika, mosaics, 1938, Mayakovskaya metro station, Moscow.



Fih-Har, *A boy with a dove*, 1935-1937, faience, sculptural model for fountain.

By different means the art of 1930 was commemorated by pathos assertion of a new socialistic regime and a formation of official governmental style. A totally new aesthetics appeared and clearly reflected the hierarchy of values of its time. The nature of new aesthetics is equally mythological as the nature of socialism. The socialistic aesthetics legitimated the world vision through the prism of social relations as uniquely possible, along with a unified form of artistic reflection of the reality. The

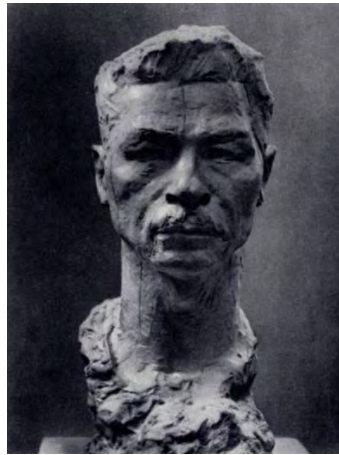
contempt of art, the creative method and even the process of heritage of ones or other artistic traditions was strictly regulated, according to the common arrangement on *idea's alteration* of a man. In this connection the traditional aesthetic criteria in sculpture of this period should not be applied.

The very *problem* of traditions in conditions of totalitarian ideological pressure bears the same mythological character as possibilities of choice and creative search are limited. On account of this limitation the main stylistic feature of totalitarian sculpture appears to be eclecticism. Regarding the content of socialistic culture, - the democratic traditions of XIX century art are quite similar in its developed social thematic, traditions of epoch of *Enlightening* within the subject of state organization. "The problem of *form* in social culture obeyed to the request of *accessibility* to mass perception. Due to the ignorance of specific sculptural problems in image's solution, the traditions of academism and naturalism were developed. Academism as a normative method of artistic vision stayed in organic accordance with ideology of the totalitarian state, which neglects the role of personality and a creative manifestation"⁹⁴.

The new artistic manifestations we may find in all art forms in the 2/2 of the 1930s. The most interesting visualization of the new approach can be traced in the genre of portrait. Creative searches of sculptors, thereby, are defined between depictions of individual and typical. *The personality in all its uniqueness and psychological complexity of a man becomes the main subject matter and attention's point of a Soviet sculptor.* For instance G. Kepinov creates interesting psychologically sensitive portraits. The person is depicted in a risen poetic and romantic lyric way (*The Georgian Komsomoltes, Female Portrait*). Sara Lebedeva worked a lot in portrait genre. Lebedeva starts working in this genre already a decade behind and creates the expressive portraits of *Krasin, Dzerjinskiy*. "In the 1930 s her sculptural images change and are fulfilled with a special pathos, heroics and romanticism. The sketch-portrait of *Tchkalov* is documentary but simultaneously it is a typical image of this epoch's man. The will and energy transmits his face. His face is a face of a man who is got used to withstand any strength, any difficulties. The very model helped the artist as was an example of expressive character, and the author brightly transmits it

⁹⁴ Славова, Л.А. Советская скульптура тоталитарной эпохи 1930-х - 1950-х годов. Проблемы художественных традиций. Тезисы конференции, посвященной итогам научно-исследовательской работы за 1993 год и выставке Агитация за счастье. СПб.: Гос. Русский музей, 1994, С.26.

in a monolith composition"⁹⁵. The sculptural portraits series can be considered as her best works. Artist's interest towards a child's portrait is also quite significant. Lebedeva creates the whole series as *Girl's head*, the portrait of *Vania Bruni*. Every time she finds a form, uniquely corresponding to a certain model, focusing at all its psychological richness and depth, creating a complete and bright image.



G. Kepinov, *Portrait of airplane constructor Polikarpov*, 1940s, coloured plaster cast.

S. Lebedeva, *Portrait of Postishev*, 1935, plaster cast.

S. Churakov, *An old woman from the village*, 1942, wood.

Besides Lebedeva some other sculptors treated this genre: I. Slonim (*Lena, Zina*); A. Zelensky (*Daughter's portrait*), the intimal format of this sculptural depiction gives a special emotional colour to these art pieces⁹⁶.

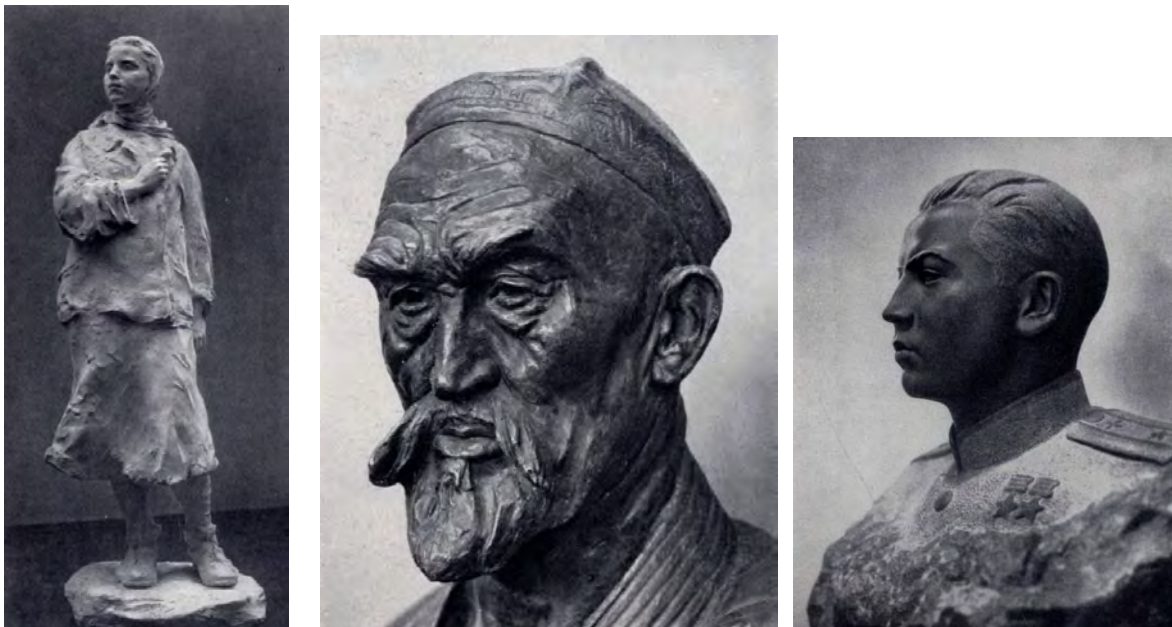
The animalistic genre takes an interesting development in sculpture of 1930s. The animalistic sculptures of S. Churakov seem fantastic, truthful and realistic (*Capricorn, Camel*). The images are full of spontaneity and vision's generalization, typical to the masters of the national toy. P. Balandin in his creative work also based on a national folkloric tradition, especially inspired by the *bogorodskaya* type of toy. The sculptor likes depicting scenes of passionate animal's fighting (*a Combat*). P. Kojin and A. Sotnikov may be defined as true masters-ceramists who worked especially a lot in

⁹⁵ Зингера, Л.С., Орловой, М.А. Под ред. *История искусства народов СССР. Искусство народов СССР от Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции до 1941 года*. М.: Изобразит. искусство, 1972, С.141.

⁹⁶ Веймарна, Б.В., Сопочинского, О.И. Под ред. *Советское изобразительное искусство. Живопись. Скульптура. Графика. Театрально-декорационное искусство. 1917 — 1914*. М.: Искусство, 1977. С. 118.

the animalistic genre; they used all the delicate nuances of sculptural richness and colourful palette of faience and porcelain. Dulevsky porcelain factory was famous grace to the efforts of these sculptors. A porcelain figure of shepherdess appears as one of the most developed and popular type of Soviet genre sculpture. Danko, being an official master of Lomonosovsky Porcelain factory, was a real innovator. In the early 1920s he created a range of porcelain figures elaborated in a new style and with completely changed subject matter: from a neutral to typical Soviet. Among others we see the *Working woman*, the *Red Army soldier*, the *Rabfakovtsi*. These works completely change their compositional direction. The cold ceramics starts to attract other sculptural artists as well. In 1930 it embodies a range of monumental panel, such as *Children* by I. Slonim, *At the water station* by Zelenovsky, which originally were regarded as an architectural ensemble.

“The years of the Second World War showed how deeply Soviet artists connected their creative fates with the nation's life. It relates to sculptors who were at the battle field of front fighting side by side with other soldiers, and to those who were at the back areas of front, creating heroic images of warriors, inspired by pathos of the national struggle. The sculptural works created during the War actually cannot be characterized by other subject”⁹⁷.



E. Belashova – Alekseeva, *Unconquered*, 1943, gypsum.

E. Vutetich, *Portrait of a twice a hero of socialistic labour Nazarali Niazov, fragment*, 1948, bronze.

N. Tomsky, *Portrait of a twice a hero of the USSR major M. Gareev*, 1947, black basalt.

⁹⁷ Валериус, С.С. Советская скульптура 1917-1967. М.: Знание, 1967, С.14.

Sculptors as actively as painters and all other artists started to put on show their works at the very first exhibitions of the War. The first exhibitions during the War were multiples and highly-attended (such as *National War* in 1941, *Heroic front and back* in 1944).

During the Second World War the genre of portrait (realized usually in form of sketch in a generalized monumental-heroic depiction) dominated in sculpture. Artists had to work hard in order to catch instances in order to portray soldiers who were leaving for the battle without knowing if they will ever return home. "Working on the portrayal of one, I with anxiety was waiting for other who at the same instance was fighting for life and death" ⁹⁸. That's how sculptor Shvarts described his work in the years of the war. New form of portraits was born – the one which was fulfilled with a deeper heroic content in the process of the intense creative work. In this difficult period the prominent sculptors shared their vision of this epoch with people. Among others Vera Muchina wrote a brilliant article on the subject of *Heroic Portrait*: "Our great and severe epoch obligates us to pay a special attention at the heroic portrait: by immortalizing a man, it also serves as an educational factor. One of the human's characteristic is his tendency to worship in front of Great, but also there is an attempt to surpass it. The thirst for bigger and better is a real engine of humanity, which leads him to the progress and light" ⁹⁹.

To the best sculptural images of this period may be related *the portrait of I. Hijniak* of 1942, *the Portrait of B. Iusupov* of 1942, made by Muchina, *The portrait of an air pilot V. Tallachin* by Kepinov in 1941; as well as the portraits of *pilots and sailors* by L. Kerbel. Prshudchev created many portrayals of the war participants. As a war artist he worked at the number of fronts and among his best works are art pieces created in the last days of the war, when together with other Russian soldiers he entered Berlin and at the very battle field with admiration was watching people who was making the last heroic efforts, below whom was hiding a joy of so long awaited peace. At the stairs of Reichstag he shaped a *Major Sokolovsky* in 1945. A special light encircles the face of a brave, tired and injured commander. Viewer may feel that the composition of the sculpture was elaborated spontaneously: a sharp head's turn, a steadfast gaze – the face expression hints that the warrior is still in the main

⁹⁸ Нейман, М.Д. Шварц. М.: Искусство, 1955, С.26.

⁹⁹ Мухина, В.И. Художественное и литературно-критическое наследие. М.: Искусство, 1960, С. 54.

centre of the battle field. The heroic is born here from an unusual state, grace to the high rise of spirit" ¹⁰⁰.

In The War period there was no time to create monuments. The exception is the sculpture of the *General Ponfilov* in the town Frunze (sculptors A. Manuilov and O. Manuilova, 1942). But precisely in the days of the War sculptors were inspired and were inspired by best ideas. Already in 1943 was planned a monument dedicated to *the major general M. Efremov*, who was killed here in the first year of the war; his monument was accomplished and installed in 1946 in the town of Viazma. The same sculptor Vuchetin in the post war period (1945-1949) elaborated a famous 13 meters high bronze figure of a soldier, holding a child in one hand and a sword in other. In Berlin in the Treptov park was mounted his enormous monument-memorial devoted to the *Soviet soldier – winner* (with architects Belopolsky and others)¹⁰¹.

The monumental art in time of the war had few possibilities. Nevertheless it continues developing its forms: in Leningrad under the siege artists from the Academy of Arts were preparing mosaics by Deineka's drawings for the metropolitan. The conditions of work were enormously difficult due to material's scarcity and expensiveness.

"Our War gave a birth to such a big quantity of heroes, gave example of such a bright and unusual heroism, that the creation of heroic portrait absolutely attracts artists. Russian legendary warriors of our epos again revitalize in a Soviet man and the epic images live with us and among us" ¹⁰². Meanwhile, the face of the *Pilot Hijniak*, 1942 by Muchina does not bear an expression of heroism, which rescued ammunition under the gunnery. The composition of her portraits is simple and clear and her sculptural images are laconic, the face's traits are accentuated with a light and shadow nuances. The shadows thicken in the lower part of *Hijniak's* face – at the cheeks and cheekbones. Thus it strengthens concentration, severity and wholeness of the image. The priority of a portrait genre is clear even more in sculpture than in painting during the military years. The objective of artists is to *capture an image of a hero*, to depict him truthfully without any exterior or formal effect. There are no unnecessary details. As to her work on *Bourdenko* of 1943, it is

¹⁰⁰ Веймарна, Б.В., Сопочинского, О.И. Под ред. Советское изобразительное искусство. Живопись. Скульптура. Графика. Театрально-декорационное искусство. 1941 – 1960. М.: Искусство, 1981, С.100-112.

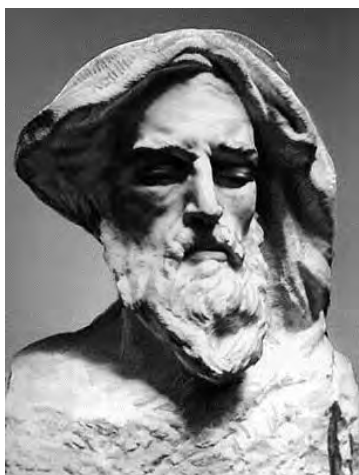
¹⁰¹ Ильина, Т.В. История искусств. Русское и советское искусство. Учебное пособие. М.: Высш. шк., 1989, С.340.

¹⁰² Мухина, В.И. Художественное и литературно-критическое наследие: В 3т. Т.2., М.: Искусство, 1960. С. 55.

created on the contrast of inner emotionality and a strong will, which coexists in the character.

These Muchina's works are distinguished by its simplicity and sincerity in the wide range of future pseudo-heroic pompous portraits elaborated in big quantities. Among Muchina's works there some which create a synthesized and generalized image of many patriots, as, for example, *The Partisan woman* of 1942, which is full of sweet idealization. To artistic contributions of Muchina at that epoch may be attached a combination and mixture of various materials, surfaces and colours in one work; as we may trace it in the *Jackson's portrait* of 1945. The artist rediscovered the appealing effectiveness of colours. Her experiences with a glass in sculpture were also notables.

Meanwhile, S. Lebedeva in the war years worked in other artistic direction. Her attentiveness and analytic mind helps her to transmit the tension of the inner model's life, high intellect, and the nuances of soul's state, as for instance in the sculptural bust of A. *Tvardovsky* of 1943. With a bit inclined head, contrasted with a sharp shoulder's turn the author accentuates the strength of his character, which helped him to defend his position of a poet till the last days of his life. As to the sculpture of a small format – the statuettes increase their popularity after the War is over. Lebedeva creates a range of statuettes – poetic images created in sharp forms, such as *Seating Tatlin*, 1943-1944.



Nikoladze, *Georgian poet Chahruhatze*, 1948, marble.

Bembel, *Gastello*, 1943, bronze, granite.

Kandelaki, *Portrait of actor Harava*, 1935, plaster cast.

Sculptors of all Soviet Republics and national schools worked on hero-image's creation: A. Sarkisian in Armenia, Nikoladze and Kandelaki – in Georgia for example. Belarusian sculptor A. Bembel creates an interesting image of *N. Gastello* in 1943; a half of his figure with a stretched hand is depicted in the form of triangle. This sculpture recreates a tragic and significant moment during the battle when a soldier turns his machine under the fire towards an echelon of enemies. In Leningrad during the siege worked hard Matveev's apprentices: sculptors V. Lichev and V. Isaeva. As a time passes the prevalence of individual and concrete in sculptural portrait is changed by pathetically heroic and even obviously idealized images. To this line can be attached sculptors N. Tomsy and E. Vutetich. Their sculptural monument of *General Cherniahovsky* reflects this characteristic artistic approach. As it was previously said authors were not able to realize their monumental ideas, but it was a fruitful moment for the ideas' recollection which then, in the post war period could be visualized and displayed. To Muchina belonged a creative idea of the music composer *P. Chaikovsky* monumental depiction; the project was successfully realized, so already in 1954 the elaborated monument was installed near the Moscow Conservatory.



Chadr, A. *Pushkin*, sketch of the monument for Leningrad, 1940, bronze.

N. Tomsy, *Portrait of the twice a hero Of the USSR general I. Cherniahovskii*, 1947, marble.

In the sculpture of the post war period the main place occupy memorials and busts of the war heroes. "The Soviet government despite of all difficulties faced during the reconstruction and restoration of destructed fabrics, factories, actively participated in the cultural development, providing a material and financial aid to the creation of monuments to all twice heroes of the Soviet union, which could be completed and installed in their native land. About fifty sculptors were in charge of this task, devoting to this project all their mastery, experience and enthusiasm"¹⁰³.

Sculptor I. Tomsky elaborates a monument, dedicated to the general I. Cherniahovsky in Vilnius in 1950 at the burial place; the monument in Kaliningrad in honour of *Guards division*, which liberated the Konigsberg tower, was elaborated by the Lithuanian sculptor Mikenas together with other sculptors. This was a first monument made in the close nearness the battle field. V. Tsigel and L. Kerbel create two monuments (one in Berlin, other in Brest, 1945-1946) dedicated to Soviet soldiers in the post war period.

In attempt to generalize and give a characteristic of style which prevailed in the sculptural depictions of the War's heroes we may find the predominance of a representative solemn and triumphal style in its artistic multiplicity. "The epoch of 1930-1950ss was rich in sense of the jubilee's organization and a multiplicity of hold monument's concourses. Kind of a proof of the totalitarian culture's mythology may appear the state's politics of active *optimization* of Arts. Consequently, even the images of *pessimist* Gogol and A. Pushkin and V. Mayakovsky were shaped and represented from the point of view of their historical significance to socialism (concourse of *Pushkin* monument in 1937, 1949, 1953; *Gogol's* monument concourse in 1951; *Mayakovsky* – 1953)"¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰³ Валериус, С.С. Советская скульптура 1917-1967. М.: Знание, 1967, С.40.

¹⁰⁴ Славова, Л.А. Советская скульптура тоталитарной эпохи 1930-х - 1950-х годов. Проблемы художественных традиций. Тезисы конференции, посвященной итогам научно-исследовательской работы за 1993 год и выставке Агитация за счастье. СПб.: Гос. Русский музей, 1994, С.27-43.



Kibalnikov, V. *Mayakovsky's monument*, 1958, bronze, granite, Moscow.



Kibalnikov, N. *Chernishevsky's monument*, 1949, bronze, Saratov.



G. Iokubonis, *Monument dedicated to the victims of fascism in Pirchupis*, 1960, granite.



V. Cigal, *Soviet hero General-lieutenant D. Karbishev*, 1963, marble, Mauchausen.

Fortunately, there were exceptions in the whole mentioned range of sculptural monuments. In 1957 at the Arts square in Leningrad in front of The State Russian Museum was installed the monument devoted to *Alexandre Pushkin*, created by M. Anikushin. Anikushin worked hard and a really long period of time he was trying to find the best artistic solution to the main creative idea of his life. Already in his years

of apprenticeship he dreamed to create Pushkin's sculpture. A multitude of sketches and options of artistic images were elaborated. Such a detailed laborious spadework could be compared with Rodin's work (for example *Balzac*) and with Bourdelle's *Beethoven*.

Anikushin executed *Pushkin's monument* in the best traditions of classical monument: we see the greatest Russian writer and poet reflected in simple, laconic forms, although his image is full of inner solemnity, grandeur and majesty. A sincere admiration which the sculptor applied and exposed through his work predominates in this sculptural image and accentuates its significance, inner nobility and clearly indicates at the main writer's role in the cultural development of the whole nation. The monument's pedestal elaborated by V. Petrov is adjusted to the main figure's proportions. The Pushkin's statue perfectly matches the whole architectural ensemble of the Arts square, being its central artistic reference. "The traditional portrayal monument has a long lasting tradition in art of the past; hence *Pushkin* of Anikuchin remains its best example"¹⁰⁵ (in the further research chapters sculptor Matveev will be regarded more detail).

The traditions of naturalism in this epoch were more neutral in ideological terms; they also more corresponded to the formation of socialist realism and its demand of *historical concreteness*. In spite of all the Soviet boundaries in case of the mentioned monument, conquered the common sense, which chose the sculptural image that was mostly revealing the national significance and symbolism of the writer. Regardless the horrors of the War, precisely in this period artist could wake up from the heavy dream of *life-less narrow* socialist realism's frames, sincerely and creatively strongly react to the historical collisions.

The War inspired artists to create sculptures full of a sincere enthusiastic patriotism without any trait of a false soviet art's pathos. The main human values were interpreted with a new artistic vision. The truthful human feeling of patriotism opposed him to the soviet conventional pathos and a dead triumphal coldness of the leaders' depiction. The canons of the socialist realism forms were not able to stop a passionate creative response to the historical instance. The true spiritual values, the common to all humanity beliefs, were transmitted in all art forms of the Soviet State. It was just an instance – a deep free creative breath, before the Soviet

¹⁰⁵ Ильина, Т.В. *История искусств. Русское и советское искусство. Учебное пособие*. М.: Высш. шк., 1989, С.353.

State once again chained the artistic free spirit. The artistic achievements of this period were mirrored at the whole art scene of the State: in the sculptural portrait (perfectly reflected in works of V. Muchina and S. Lebedeva), in a small format sculpture, including animalistic genre, which revealed the traits of art-deco.

The historical period of 1950-1960ss was defined as *The Ottepel (The Thaw)*, was outlined by public denunciation of the Stalinsky's Totalitarian Crimes, however quite superficially. Fresh breath of *illusive freedom* gave an instant flash, a very potent strong impulse to the Art's development of all next decades. It would be appropriate to mention that the end of the Stalinism's era inspired the Soviet society with a hope for the great changes in the country's life and it was reflected in fields of art and culture – in poetry, literature, music, cinematography, fine arts. It seemed that the epoch of an aggressive, violent closeness and inaccessibility of worldwide culture was finally over. The rediscovery of the ancient Russian art and heritage, acknowledgement with western artistic tradition and practice, reflected in international concourses and festivals, - all provoked enthusiasm and animation in the Soviet society.

3. LIFE AND CREATIVE WORK OF NINA SLOBODINSKAYA

3.1 Biography and worldview of Slobodinskaya reflected through her social circle



Photo of Sofia Alexandrovna Usova (Slobodinskaya), mother of Nina Slobodinskaya, 1920s, unknown author.



Photo of Sofia Usova with her children, (N. Slobodinskaya is in the center) 1890s, unknown author.

Nobles by origin, family Slobodinskiy in the early XX century belonged to the circle of Russian *intelligentsia* (cultural and intellectual elite of the society).

Originally, in the pre-revolutionary epoch the family was socially well-positioned and remained wealthy as Nina Konradovna's father - Konrad Vladimirovich Slobodinsky worked as a chief director of the Kievo-Warsavien Rail Way for the period of 35 years. Once he was even honoured to meet *Velikii Kniaz* - The Great Prince of the Russian Royal Family on his way to Turkey with a special Mission. Konrad Slobodinsky was awarded with an honourable medal, titled the *Shining Lion*. There was a photo made together with The Royal Prince as the dear recalling. During many years Konrad Slobodinskiy kept this photo as a treasure at his home.



Photo with N. Slobosinskaya on the right and her cousin Nina Grinevskaya, 1910s, unknown author. Photo of Alexander Usov (first on the left), Lunocharsky's son Anatolii (second from the right side) with his girlfriend Irina Goffe, Vladimir Gnezdilov, 1930s, unknown author.



Photo of Nina Slobodinskaya, 1920s, unknown author.

After the October Revolution big social changes took place in 1917 together with his wife Konrad Slobodinskiy moved to The Middle Asia where continued working near the town Ashkhabad. In 1927 Sofia Slobodinskaya died. By somebody's report against him his house was inspected by the KGB and that mentioned photo made together with the member of Royal Family was found. The testimony of his connection with *the old regime* became a sufficient reason to be arrested. In a short while (in 1932) he was killed and his family for a long period did not get any news on him. Finally Slobodinskaya's family had received the report, informing on his death.

Slobodinskiy's children asked the KGB a permission to bury him in a traditional way. Finally at the official burial ceremony where inspectors of the KGB observed the process, the body in the thumb was left in the ground. Previously the family was strictly requested not to open the thumb (although *the open thumb* is the part of Russian traditional burial ceremony in order to say a last goodbye to beloved). Afterwards returning to the cemetery without any testimonies, his family ventured to open the thumb and discovered his cadaver quartered, the family was terrified, just thinking on what tortures suffered their father, who was almost seventy at that time.

Nina Slobodinskaya's mother - Sofia Alexandrina Usova (Slobodinskaya after the marriage) was born in Kiev and all lifelong often changed places of residence (she stayed in different parts of Russia and in Poland near Lublin). Her family Usov was a famous one, its roots were from Lithuania (Stanislav and Lavrentii Us) and some of her familiars served in the Yard of Tsar Ivan Grozny (Ivan the Terrible). The mentioning of Usov's family can be found in *The Blue Book* of The Russian nobles. Alexander Slobodinsky - Sofia Slobodinskaya's father, for instance, was famous by his wide charity work. He was a chief of The Nobles in Russian town of Trubchevsk. The citizens even installed a monument in his honour in 1850 -1870^{ss}, commemorating his charity deeds and his kind heart. All his financial possessions Alexander Slobodinskiy spent for the needs and health necessities of Trubchevsk citizens. His charity's work was carried out to such an extent that his own children were obliged to ask the state authorities' financial support in order to get an education, corresponded to their social circle.

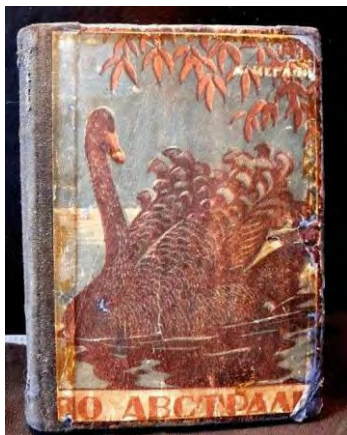


Photos of Alexander Usov, unknown author.



A. Usov, *Zebra*, 1915, illustrated stories, printed copy.





Alexander Usov, *In Australia*, illustrated book.



Alexander Usov, *Belle Tavrída*, illustrated book.



Alexander Usov, *Animals of Central and South Africa*, illustrated book.

Alexander Usov - Sofia's brother (uncle of Nina Slobodinskaya) was a famous animalist writer, naturalist and traveller. Usov Alexander Alexandrovich (his writer's pseudonym was *Cheglok*) was born in town Trubchevsk, in administration of Orlov's region. He studied Technical applied Science in The Academy of Eltse town and till 1894 lived in Odessa. There he studied violin in the Musical Academy, in summer used to work at The Railway station in order to earn money. Finally Usov had to leave The Musical Academy as he had suffered from a serious ear illness and changed the profile of his studies to the specialist of The Railway Academy, from where successfully graduated and taught students. Later he taught In the Samara Railway Academy, and further directed The Craftsmen School in St. Petersburg.

From 1892 Usov started to publish books, among which four were on natural science subject. Due to his serious health problems he had to leave for the town Host. There he actively participated in the organization of the revolutionary movement. In 1905 he even headed the local military revolt of the workers and peasants. He was appointed as the first *People's judge* by the revolutionists. When the strike was suppressed he fearlessly escaped in the last moment with the document's archive, risking being caught. In autumn of 1906 Usov immigrated to Italy, living on Capri, where met Lenin, Gorky, Plehanov, Semashko¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁶ The figure of Alexander Usov awoke interest among writers, scientists and historians in the actuality. Thus, his biography, literary and scientific activities are widely analysed and described. However, his relationship with Revolutionary leaders and activists . V. Lenin, A. Lounocharsky are kept as narrative memories, which his family transpasses throughout generations and has ever been officially

A special attention deserves the fact that Alexander Usov was a friend and fellow of Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunocharsky. The relationship of friendship existed between Lunocharsky's family and the whole family of Slobodinskiy: in the post-revolutionary epoch Lunocharsky's family often visited Usov and Slobodinskiy in Lazarevskaya (small town at the Black sea, south of Russia), where the family had second residence and used to pass there the whole summers. Their friendship and collaboration longed all their mature years, their life path constantly crossed and were interlinked; the researcher of Usov's biography even affirmed that Lunocharsky was influenced by Usov in his spiritual beliefs and searches. The fact that Lunocharsky's son Anatoly from 1926-1929 often visited Usov's family in Lazarevskaya (see a photo p. 69.) testifies a close friendly relationship existed between Usov's and Lunocharsky's families. In Nina Slobodinskaya's family archive there is a photo of Lunocharsky's son, Vladimir Gnezdilov (Nina Slobodinskaya's husband) and Alexander Usov together. Moreover, Lunocharsky always supported Usov in the post-revolutionary epoch, giving a social public way to his outstanding original ideas and defending him from The KGB attacks (A. Usov was arrested by The KGB only after Lunocharsky's death)¹⁰⁷.

Lunocharsky - the future Commissar of Culture in the post-revolutionary Russia, appointed as such by Lenin's first Soviet government. He was jailed by Kerensky in July 1917. He mysteriously died in 1933, just before taking the position of Ambassador in Spain. Anatoly Lunocharsky was originally from Poltava (Ukraine), which at that epoch was a part of the Russian Empire. Already in the gymnasium of Kiev, Lunocharsky first felt curiosity for Marxism's theory. Later Lunocharsky continued his studying in the University of Zurich, where he chooses philosophy and natural science as his specialization. The lecturer Richard Avenarius introduced a young student his idealistic ideas of Empiriocriticism, therefore Lunocharsky started to deeply study works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, a part of other materialists. It was grace to its theoretical thoughts, that Lunocharsky found the reference point to the further development of his vision and philosophical ideas – a viewpoint which affirmed that only direct experience could be used as a basis for knowledge¹⁰⁸.

published. More on the subject of A. Usov's activities we may find in the following works: Рубакин, Н.А. *Над рекою времени*. М.: Искусство, 1966; and in the work of Зорин, В.Н. *Челок: Повесть о рус. писателе, революционере, путешественнике, изобретателе*. Кубань: Вышш. шк., 1971.

¹⁰⁷ Витман, А.М., Оськина, Л.Г. *Советские детские писатели. (1917—1957)*. М.: Библиогр. слов, 1961, С.187.

¹⁰⁸ Бугаенко, П.А. *Луначарский, А. В. Советская литературная критика*. М.:Саратов, 1972, С.27.

Being already the Zurich University's student, Anatoly Lunacharsky subscribed to the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). As to the revolutionary activities, Lunocharsky started them after returning to Russia in 1898, already one year later he was accused, was arrested and deported from Russia. In 1903 the RSDLP was divided into Mensheviks (which signified *minority*), headed by Julius Martov and Bolsheviks (which meant *majority*), directed by Vladimir Lenin. Lunacharsky followed Bolsheviks. Gradually in 6 years of collaboration over the next six years the philosophical discrepancy and political disagreement consolidated between Lenin and Lunocharsky. Due to Anatoly Lunacharsky developed ideas, socialism was considered as a way of achieving *the promised land* on earth and was a part of *God-building* process; the Marxism meanwhile regarded the day when humankind would be freed from dependence on nature and the supernatural as a culminate point¹⁰⁹.

Vladimir Lenin was in opposition to Lunacharsky's ideas and Lunacharsky didn't approve Lenin's extremism and believed in parliamentary means of achieving power. In 1909 Anatoly Lunacharsky with Maxim Gorky and Aleksandr Bogdanov created the left-wing party *Vperyod* (Forward), which stood against Lenin. Gorky, Bogdanov and Lunacharsky formed an educational centre for Russian socialist workers on the island of Capri. Finally in 1910 Lunocharsky with his fellows relocated the school to Bologna and taught there up until 1911¹¹⁰.

Anatoly Lunacharsky chose an internationalist anti-war position after the outbreak of the World War I in 1914. In a year time Lunacharsky, together with Pavel Lebedev-Polyansky, started editing and publishing *Vperyod* - the social democratic newspaper, focused on proletarian culture. Lunocharsky never accepted the Menshevik's strategy and tactics in the revolutionary battle. Returning to the historical turning point, Lunocharsky was shocked with the news on the Revolution in 1917, which finished with the downfall of the Russian Empire and republic's declaration. Anatoly Lunacharsky moved from Switzerland to Russia. He took part of the Bolsheviks' group and in October 1917 was appointed as a Commissar of Education's Enlightenment (The Narkompros), which, indeed, signified to be the Education's and the Art's Minister. Lunacharsky kept this position until 1929. Lunacharsky was actively involved in his work. As the main task he considered to

¹⁰⁹ Боров, Ю.Б. *Луначарский. Жизнь замечательных людей*. М.: Молодая гвардия, С.211-253.

¹¹⁰ Ёлкин, А.С. *Луначарский. Жизнь замечательных людей*. М.: Издательство ЦК ВЛКСМ Молодая гвардия, 1967, С.38-42.

preserve the historical and cultural monuments and heritage; therefore he was terrified when Bolsheviks started bombing old historical and artistic monuments of Old Russian Empire. He even was going to resign, in protest to this event, when the Kremlin was under the attack during the October Revolution. It seems strange but some facts reveal his participation in other monuments ruining of historical meaning, regardless to their replacement with new, ideologically-oriented works. Eventually Anatoly Lunacharsky served as intermediary between Old Russian intelligentsia and a new Soviet government, trying to persuade them to collaborate. Besides he made all possible to protect scientists from persecution in the post-revolutionary epoch, however approving the mass deportation of some significant scientists and expelling a number of university teachers for political reasons¹¹¹. Anyway these controversial facts should be deeper researched and better illustrated.

The role of Lunacharsky in formation of a new socialist culture and educational system in the post-revolutionary space is primary. He developed such fields as cinema, literature, art and theatre. Lunacharsky believed that the Proletariat must control and possess the cultural and artistic heritage of the country. Particularly to him belonged the idea to approach working class to Arts and widely educate the average population. Moreover, being a literary critic and historian, Anatoly Lunacharsky edited works of the most significant Russian and foreign writers, having as the reference point, the development of proletarian literature. The main purpose of literature in Lunacharsky's opinion was analysis and criticism of the class system. Thereby, he personally took part in preparation of groups of writers, thinking that soon there would become great authors with an approach of the working people. Anatoly Lunacharsky is an author of various writings and plays, besides he made a translation of the poem *Faust* by Nicolaus Lenau¹¹². Lunacharsky was not in the direct opposition with west and generally foreign culture, instead, he attempted to find points of collaboration. He stayed in touch with such prominent writers as Stefan Zweig, Romaine Rolland, Bernard Shaw, Herbert Wells and Berthold Brecht. Another idea of Lunacharsky was to convert the Russian language into the international Latin alphabet (instead of the traditional Cyrillic)¹¹³ which was not realized.

¹¹¹ Ёлкин, А.С. Луначарский. Жизнь замечательных людей. М.: Издательство ЦК ВЛКСМ Молодая гвардия, 1967, С.38.

¹¹² Ibid, p. 59.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.67.

As in 1929 Josef Stalin took power, Lunacharsky, was fired from the post of the Commissar of Education and Enlightenment. Instead he was designated as the head of the Learned Council of the USSR Central Executive Committee. There he remained as an editor of the Literature's Encyclopaedia, which was edited from 1929 till 1939. From 1930 to 1932 Lunacharsky was a representative of the Soviet Union at the League of Nations and participated in a conference on disarmament. In 1933 he had to leave as Soviet Ambassador to Spain, but suddenly died during his travel. Lunacharsky was buried in the Kremlin Wall's Necropolis, which was considered as a great privilege at the time.¹¹⁴ Soon after his death the figure of Lunacharsky was left in the oblivion and only grace to his daughter's (Irina's) efforts, the former popularity returned to him; from that point he was newly reconsidered as a prominent figure and a symbol of the Bolshevik's Revolution. A number of streets and institutions were named in his honour, as well as the asteroid 2446, in 1971.

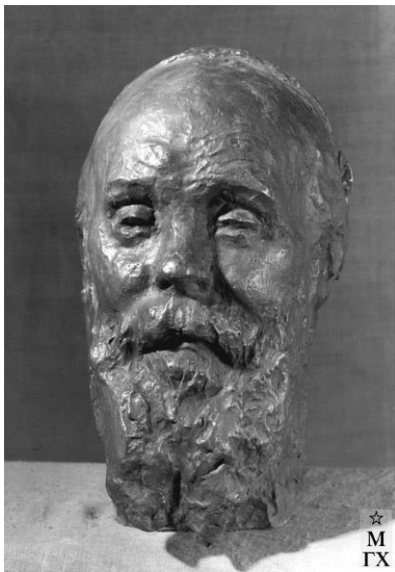
Returning to Alexander Usov, who from 1908 till 1914 travelled around the world, visiting Egypt, Sahara, Congo, and India's jungles. In addition he travelled to the South Asia, Australia, New Zealand, North America and left for Europe. As a result he wrote several interesting books, using the literary pseudonym *Cheglök* (which means a small falcon with *moustache* - black spots under its eyes). The literature critics would describe him as: "Cheglök – the unique author in children's zoological literature who so vividly and brightly describes the animal's life"¹¹⁵.

Alexander's close friend - Vasilii Vatagin (the best Russian animalist artist of XX century, a Russian academician of painting, sculptor - animalist, famous as illustrator of Kipling's fairy tales *Maugli*), accompanied him in his travels. Both personalities shared beliefs in theosophical ideas. Vatagin illustrated some Usov's books: *Our nature*, *Animalistic world of Africa*. Being in love with the Black sea and the town Lazarevskaya, in 1936 Vasilii Vatagin bought a house, where he stayed during The II World War and returned to Moscow only in 1944. N. Slobodinskaya and her son Andrey Gnezdilov remember visiting his studio, they always felt overwhelmed by the scale and the variety of his ideas always centered on the animalistic genre. The grandiosity of his ideas was based on enormous feeling of animals' world admiration. The long-term friendship, Vatagin's stories on his exotic trips, his careful, attentive

¹¹⁴ Ёлкин, А.С. *Луначарский. Жизнь замечательных людей*. М.: Издательство ЦК ВЛКСМ Молодая гвардия, 1967, С.95.

¹¹⁵ Зорин, В.Н. *Чеглок: Повесть о рус. писателе, революционере, путешественнике, изобретателе*. Кубань: Искусство, 1971, С.32-38.

attitude towards nature and model certainly made an important impact at young sculptor Slobodinskaya's artistic formation. In 1917 Usov returned to Russia, where in Moscow he worked as a publisher under A.V. Lunocharsky's direction. Then he left for the Caucasus where lived in the village of Djubga, there he directed schools of the first and the second level and also the department of National Education. In 1922 Usov left for Lazarevskaya (small town in the south of Russia at the Black sea). There together with his wife Nadejda Artemieva and his son Alexander planted the garden which got an award at the National Agriculture's exhibition. Curiously, he even wrote some notices on agronomy matter¹¹⁶.



Grigoriev, V.A. *Vatagin*, 1970s, bronze, life-size. V. Vatagin with his sculpture of rhinoceros, photo, unknown author.



V. Vatagin, *Tiger*, 1925-1926, bronze.



V. Vatagin, *Panthers*, 1922, lithography.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, C.57.

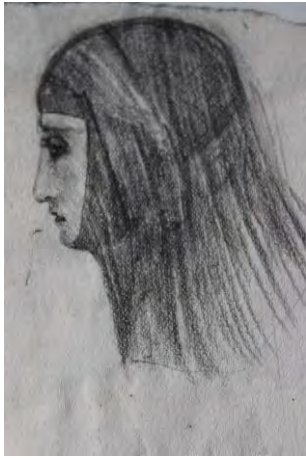
Besides, he invented a stringed musical instrument, with which 6 times performed in Moscow, invented a new method of meal boiling which was officially approved. After all he presented engineer's projects of new airplane engine and a high-speed ship. In the village of Guarek together with his fellows Alexander Usov created a small theosophical ashram - place of meditation and thinking. He also built a kind of a sun chapel in form of a star, where through the system of mirrors the sun light remained all the day long. In evenings local and travelling theosophists – fellows and close friends, used to gather near the sea-side at the bonfire, reading poems, meditating, discussing philosophical issues. Amongst the participants was a famous Russian poet Maximilian Voloshin¹¹⁷. As it was observed previously the whole family Usov-Slobodinskiy were deeply interested in theosophy and were fervent in search and developing of their spiritual knowledge; at this point would be difficult to say whose influence on Slobodinskaya was preliminary. However, Nina Slobodinskaya often mentioned to her son how important for her those multiples family's gatherings were: common talks, bright discussions of spiritual Indian texts, philosophical issues with Alexander Usov, which certainly significantly influenced Nina Slobodinskaya's worldview formation.

Active participants of this circle were Sofia Usova – Alexander's sister and her son Leonid (Nina's brother) who was an agronomic, member of the spiritual society *Star's Order in the East*. The Indian Theosophical society of Adyar founded The Order of the Star in the East (OSE), which existed from 1911 to 1927. Its spiritual task consisted of World's spiritual preparation to sudden Maitreya Teacher's appearance. Jiddu Krishnamurti (in thought of theosophy's leaders) was expected to show his belongingness to spiritual leadership. Thereby The OSE was meant to support Krishnamurti's activities. Due to the internal discordance of the Theosophical society The OSE was dissolved¹¹⁸.

Leonid Slobodinsky was also a talented person who liked to transmit his spiritual visions through art, but was too modest to call himself an artist, despite of having created multiples series of original paintings. Below we may see few of them.

¹¹⁷ Personal recallings of Alsona Usova (Beklimisheva) – the granddaughter of the writer, interviewed by the author in summer of 2012.

¹¹⁸ Alycone, i.e. Krishnamurti, J. *At the Feet of the Master*. Adyar: TPH, 1910, pp.12-54.



Leonid Slobodinsky or K.P. Timofeevskaya, *Untitled*, 1920-1940, sketch, paper, pencil.
Leonid Slobodinsky or K.P. Timofeevskaya, *Untitled*, 1920-1940s, sketch of Caucasus, paper, watercolour.



Leonid Slobodinsky, *Untitled*, 1920-1940s, paper, watercolour.
Leonid Slobodinsky, *Untitled*, 1920-1940s, paper, watercolour.



Leonid Slobodinsky or K.P. Timofeevskaya, *Untitled*, 1920-1940s, paper, watercolour.

Leonid Slobodinsky or K.P. Timofeevskaya, *Untitled*, 1920-1940s, paper, watercolour.

Nina Slobodinskaya was spiritually close with her brother, both shared interest in Asian Indian cultures and philosophy, their friendship and mutual support lasted for the whole life, both were talented bright individualities who experimented in art.

Another active participants and further close family friends were a married couple Obnorsky. Alexey Nikolaevich Obnorsky belonged to a respected antique noble family, was a highly educated person, freely spoke six languages and was deeply interested in philosophy, sharing theosophical ideas with the circle. Olga Borisovna Obnorskaya was highly spiritually developed and sensitive; she wrote poems, painted, wrote a theosophical spiritual work *the teacher's garden*¹¹⁹.

Obnorsky's couple were close friends of sculptor Nina Slobodinskaya and Andrey Gnezdilov; their friendship lasted for decades, happily they were almost neighbours in Leningrad after The II World War was over and throughout years supported each other in all. For instance when Alexey Obnorsky was imprisoned by the KGB, Nina Slobodinskaya constantly brought food and other necessary things in order to help him to survive in unhuman conditions of famous Leningrad prison Kresti (Crosses). Following Alexander Usov's fate, it was curiously linked to A. Lunocharsky. In the

¹¹⁹ Обнорская, О.Б. САД УЧИТЕЛЯ. М.: Издательство Сиринь, 1995, С.25-49.

1930s after Lunacarsky's death, Usov lost his friend's protection, was arrested and incriminated to be an anarchist - mystic. He was deported to Murmansk region. In 1942 he left the settlement *to die in freedom* and he ever returned¹²⁰.



A. Arendt, M. Voloshin, 1931, bronze, 22 x 18 x 20.



A. Arendt, M. Voloshin, mid.1950s, stone, 45 x 43 x 18.

As it was mentioned previously, the interesting member of the cultural circle and society of Usov's family was Maximilian Voloshin: Maximilian Voloshin (1877 – 1932), a poet, a painter, a thinker, a follower of the *Cimmerian* school in poetry and fine arts. He was a unique poet, accordingly, his poems are well known in Russia. Here is an extract from his poetry, from the *When Time Stops* of 1904:

“During nights when in the fog light
 Stars in sky are weaving time,
 I am catching threads of minutes
 In eternal shawl of mine.
 I am catching these tight moments,
 While material is swirled
 From all things in forms and colours
 From all those in sounds of words”¹²¹.

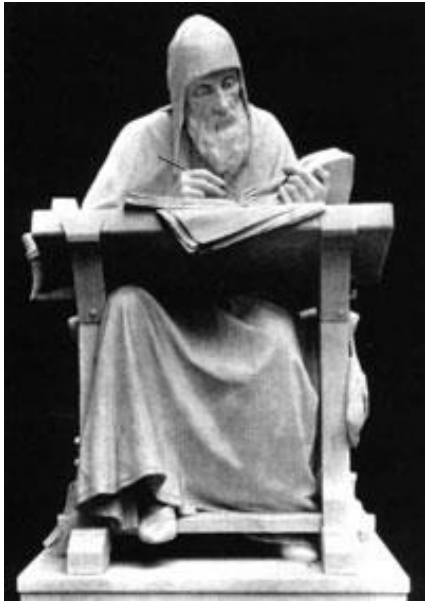
¹²⁰ Зорин, В.Н. *Челок: Повесть о рус. писателе, революционере, путешественнике, изобретателе.* М.: Кубань.1971, С.3.

¹²¹ Voloshin, M. *Kogda vremia ostanavlivaetsia*, М.: Literatura, 1904, С.25.

Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya was born in Kiev in 1897. She was the first child in the family, where later were born one more daughter and one son. As an individual she was very active, vivid and had a good sense of humour. Already as a child she showed herself as a leader in all kind of life situations. Her father called her *Ninotchka Kozii Nojki (Nanny-goat's legs)* for her vivid and active character. She had a very beautiful deep voice, practising a lot (It was a tradition in Russian nobles' families to study singing and piano playing). Thereby she got a typical for her class education. As a young lady, Nina was enchanting and charming; despite of being less beautiful than her younger sister Vera, she was more popular among young men of her environment. The future artist was a highly educated person with a variety of developed interests, and her aspirations did not end with a wish of getting married and creating a proper family. The future sculptor had a strong temperament but simultaneously she was self-consistent; when something inspired her she dedicated herself fully and passionately to a new hobby. Once having chosen sculpture as her creative vocation, she was faithful to it all her life long.



Life and sowing insurance, the USSR GOSSTRAH (state insurance agency), posters, 1920s, unknown authors.



M. Antokolsky, *Nestor –chronicler*, 1889, marble.



M. Antokolsky, *Ermak*, 1891, bronze.

Till 1917 Nina Slobodinskaya studied: first at school, then during 2 years at the historical - philological faculty of the university. After the October Revolution in 1919 she worked as an engine-driver first in Moscow in the Aerophotopark and afterwards (from 1920 till 1923) at the rail station in Kiev. In 1924 she left for Moscow, where worked in the *Gosstrah* (The Unified United Republic State Insurance Agency 1921-1990) and in parallel took classes at the workshop of drawing and sculpture, headed by Grigoriev and sculptor Babinsky.

Passion to sculpture was awaked unexpectedly – after seeing Antakolsky's sculpture. According to her son's recalling, immediately Nina Slobodinskaya realized - her vocation was found. When the decision to become sculptor was taken, as life showed, future artist dedicated all life time to develop her skills and mastery in creative work, overcoming any life obstacles. In future the artist never had problems to find a model for sculpting. Being sociable she easily could convince anybody to pose her, hence sculptor depicted many persons of her environment. During her youth she was keen of theosophy and dedicated a lot of time exploring the spiritual texts, influenced by spiritual searches of her family. In later years, on the demands of friends Obnorsky Slobodinskaya made a sculptural portrait of Buddha. When Nina was 17-19 years old her father Konrad Vladimirovich introduced her to a British attaché, who fell in love with her and they were even engaged. But the revolution put an end to this possible marriage. After the Revolution Nina had to work as a secretary to be able to survive and on various occasions she tried to enter the best

Moscow's Art educational centre of the epoch – The VHUTEMAS (Vishee Hudojestvenoe Moskovskoe Uchilishe)¹²² to study sculpture. In 1930 Slobodinskaya graduated from the VHUTEIN (earlier the VHUTEMAS) with the diploma number 630. Slobodinskaya, being a student of the VHUTEMAS and afterwards very responsibly and conscientiously regarded her professional education and so far during months studied sculptural models of The Pushkin's Museum in Moscow, The Hermitage, The State Russian Museum in Leningrad. In 1933 Nina married Vladimir Georgievich Gnezdilov – Doctor, professor of microbiology of the Military Medicine Academy in Leningrad. She used to describe her husband as a very honest person, and as he was a beautiful man with classical Greek face traits, she often used him as a model for sculpting. Due to Vladimir Gnezdilov's work, in 1933 the family Gnezdilov-Slobodinskaya moved to Leningrad. Unexpectedly, in 1940 in the age of forty two Nina Slobodinskaya gave birth to her unique son Andrey Vladimirovich Gnezdilov. According to her friends' recalling, the sculptor did not suspect being pregnant and, therefore, she addressed to the therapist, being afraid of having a tumour. As a result, on 29 of February was born her only one child, who became her stand-by, support, and kindred-spirit for the rest of her life. In future years she often sculpted him, using him as a model.



Photo of V. Gnezdilov, 1940s, unknown author.

¹²² "Vkhutemas (Вхутемас) was the Russian state art and technical school founded in 1920 in Moscow, replacing the MoscowSvomas. The workshops were established by a decree from Vladimir Lenin^[1] with the intentions, in the words of the Soviet government, "to prepare master artists of the highest qualifications for industry, and builders and managers for professional-technical education". Шведковский, Д. *Пространство ВХУТЕМАСа*. М.: Современный Дом, 2002, С.12.



Photo of Nina Slobodinskaya, her husband Vladimir Gnezdilov, son Andrey, 1943-1945, Samarkand, unknown author.

In regard of her social and artistic circle, Nina Slobodinskaya was well acknowledged with all sculptors of her epoch and had a really huge social circle of friends. Meanwhile, in the epoch of 1930s, in Leningrad there was a big amount of small intellectual and spiritually seeking societies. Nina participated in many of them: *The Boianovo Bratstvo* - fellowship of cultural pilgrims, which collected folkloric songs and poetry of Russia¹²³. *The Fellowship of a Light town* ¹²⁴ believed in a legend:

¹²³ Mentioned in the work of N.Roerich, the author says that *Boianovo bratstvo* – it is a north fellowship which concentrates its work on magic of art. Рерих, Николай. *ГРАД СВЕТЛЫЙ, ТВЕРДЫНЯ ПЛАМЕННАЯ*. Париж: Изд-во. Всемирная лига культуры, 1932, С.20-32.

¹²⁴ Mentioned in the spiritual work of Антарова, К.Е. "Две жизни". Дельфис, № 4 (60), 2009, автор статьи Н.А. Тоотс: "Светлое Братство стоит стражем-хранителем каждому существу, перешедшему рубикон четвертого луча. Задачи, даваемые Жизнью людям, передаются сонмами Учителей и учеников. Их ставит Светлое Братство водителями и поручителями людей Земли, помощниками их труду и, нередко, защитниками их быта. Имя великого Учителя гармонии — египетское, ибо здесь он прошел свой путь знаний. Его зовут сейчас Серапис. До этой минуты ты видел труд людей Земли и неба слитым в монолитных огнях башен. Земля и небо, путь труда в мире физическом и духовном, действовали через один провод — Огонь планеты. Теперь ты подходишь к одному из лучей величайшего труженика, заведующего пятым лучом в человеческой эволюции. Учитель пятого луча проносит свой труд Земле по двум проводам планетного Огня. И башня его — двойная, вернее сказать, раздваивающаяся на некоторой высоте как бы на две самостоятельные башни, слитые воедино только верхушками. Собери еще глубже все свое внимание, сам поймешь, что этому Учителю ты уже многим обязан и в дальнейшем будешь связан с ним в веках, ибо все, имеющие ту или иную степень ясновидения, хотя бы самую слабую, тесно связаны с лучами этой исключительной по работоспособности башни".

existence of the ideal town of love and justice. *The Pifogoreiskoe Fellowship* deeply studied philosophy.

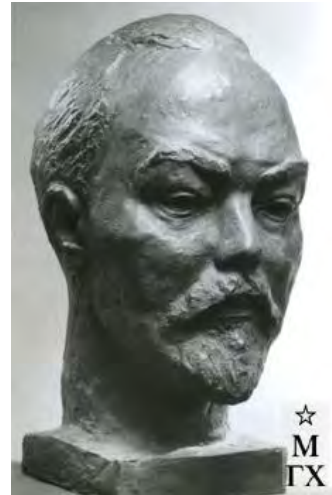
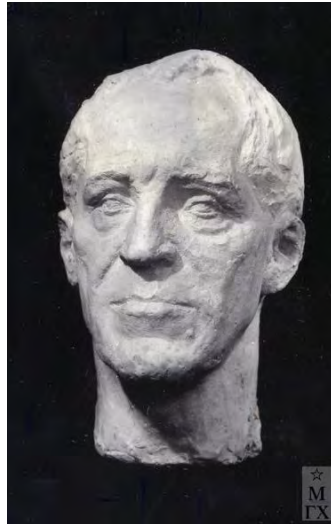
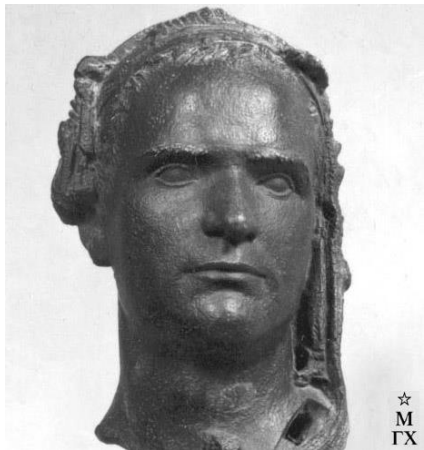
A lot of spiritual and cultural societies in summer used to gather in The Crimea. Among others participated such important personalities as Maximilian Voloshin from Koktebel (a famous Russian poet), Jukovsky, a renowned sculptor A. Arendt.



15. IV 78. Дорогой Нишке Слободинске и Андрей
От друзей ее друзей Санн Арендт и Андрей Григорьев
Спасибо

Андрей Григорьев
и друзья
- Арендт (сестра Ани)

Photo of A. Arendt with her husband sculptor A. Grigoriev, at their exhibition's inauguration in 1978 In front of M. Voloshin's sculpture. At the back side of the photo there is a dedication: "For dear Nina Slobodinskaya and Andrey from loving friends –A. Arendt and A. Grigoriev. Dated: 15 of April in 1978, unknown author.



Aizenshtant, Sculptor A. Arendt, 1940s, bronze.

A. Arendt, Composer and artist Victor Chernovalenko, 1930s, plaster-cast.

A. Arendt, Iurii Roerich, 1926, bronze.



Photo of A. Arendt, early 1920s, (when she was a student of the VHUTEMAS), unknown author.

A. Arendt, Decorative head of Iurii Roerich, 1960, stone, 48 x 38 x 20.

Ariadna Arendt – a person, who by her life's position embodied *free spirit* and braveness, belonged to the renowned female sculptors of the XX century. Sculptor Ariadna Arendt was not only a colleague in profession and a close friend of N. Slobodinskaya, but first of all her spiritual confederate.

Ariadna Aleksandrovna Arendt (1906 -1997) – a talented Russian sculptor, who during her creative work elaborated 70 sculptural portraits, dozens of compositions, genre, decorative and graphic, landscape and ceramic works. The variety of subjects characterizes her works: sculptural portraits of distinguished personalities,

fairy-tales, fables, animalistic themes. Actually Arendt's sculptors remain in the permanent collections of The State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, The Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, The Art Gallery of I. Aivazovsky in Feodosia, and many other museums.

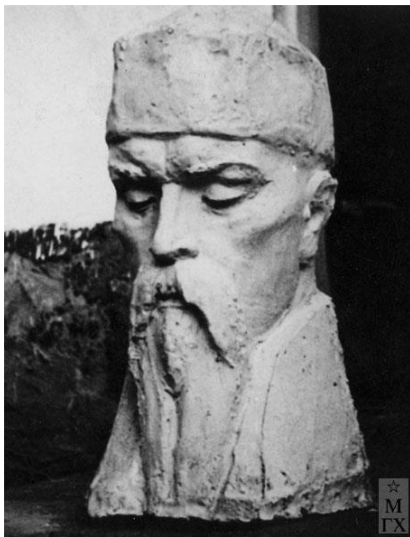
Born in a family of recognized doctors in Simferopol, from her childhood she was surrounded by creative personalities: as a girl she often visited her aunt - Ariadna Nikolaevna and her husband – Mikhail Pelopidovich Latri who was a grandchild of famous Russian painter I.K. Aivazovsky in their country seat Boran-Eli, where famous Russian poet M. Voloshin often stayed as their guest. From now and on M. Voloshin paid a special attention to the drawings of Ariadna Arendt and crucially influenced her personality's formation, which was reflected further in a thematic choice of her works. The very figure of M. Voloshin was often sculptured by A. Arendt and her husband - talented sculptor A. Grigoriev. In 1921 M. Voloshin even helped the sculptor to free her mother Sofia Nikolaevna Arendt from the prison in Simferopol, where she was held due to her noble origin.

A. Arendt studied in Simferopol's gymnasium, in 1923 - 1926 in the Simferopol Fine Arts Academy with N. Samokish and I. Itkindt as main professors. While studying, she often visited M. Voloshin. In 1928 Arendt entered The VHUTEIN in Moscow where she met Nina Slobodinskaya, and from now and on they became close friends for the rest of their lives. Arendt's main teachers in the VHUTEIN were V. Muchina, I.M. Chaikov, S.F. Bulakovsky, I.S. Efimov, and V.A. Favorsky. In the early 1920s the young sculptor suffers a tragic accident – losing her both legs under a tram. Although during her creative work and everyday life she had to bear leg prosthesis, what significantly complicated movements, despite the misfortune, Arendt still did not lose her optimism, strong spirit and a never ending energy.

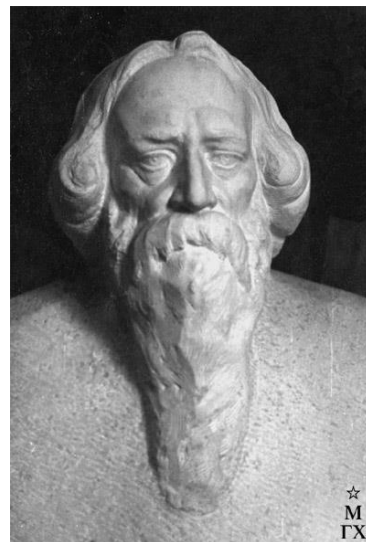
From 1930 to 1932 (as the VHUTEIN was dissolved) Arendt continued her studying in The Leningrad Proletarian Fine Arts Institute (ИНПИИ), which she successfully graduated in 1932. From 1934 she became an active member of The Soviet Artists Union. In 1948 her husband sculptor A. Grigoriev was imprisoned, being accused of participation in anti-Soviet theosophical activities. Consequently A. Arendt was expelled from the common studio and fortunately avoided to be prisoned as well, charged together with her old mother with a matter of noble's origin. In 1954 after being imprisoned for 7 years in a number of Soviet concentration-camps, A. Grigoriev was freed. In 1955 – 1956 family Arendt – Grigoriev built a house in

Koktebel, where till the end of their lives stayed, sharing their life time between Crimea and Moscow.

As it was mentioned previously A. Arendt was an intimate accomplice of Nina Slobodinskaya. They shared a similar cultural family background, common creative and spiritual searches.



A. Grigoriev, N. Roerich, 1970s, plaster cast, 1,5 higher than life size.



A. Grigoriev, Rabindranath Tagore, 1960, marble, 1,5 higher than life.

As much as Slobodinskaya, A. Arendt was highly attracted by Eastern philosophy. Both, in their youth belonged to the theosophy's worshippers. Let's not forget that already N. Slobodinskaya's mother - Sofia Alexandrovna Usova headed the theosophical circle in Kiev and N. Slobodinskaya's family studied and translated antique eastern theosophical texts. Meanwhile Ariadna Arendt was one of active founders of Moscow theosophical circle. Her sincere belief was reflected in her attitude to life. A family's friend - Alexey Kozlov recalled that Ariadna Arendt faithfully believed in reincarnation: awakened in the hospital and having realized that she lost both legs, she felt an enormous spiritual relief, even happiness, as she was convinced that in that way she paid off her karmic debt, a sin inherited from her former life. So far, it was not surprising that Arendt reflected her spiritual beliefs in her creative work, which we may follow in sculptures as the *Eastern face* of 1961, various images of Roerich's family; meanwhile her friend Slobodinskaya created sculptural images of Buddha. In context of her interest to Eastern philosophy and veneration of its numerous ideas, became natural her huge interest, respect and admiration of

Roerich's family, to whom together with A. Grigoriev and Nina Slobodinskaya they felt a strong spiritual unity, sharing common spiritual beliefs and world vision. Therefore in the range of Arendt's sculptures we find a significant number of works dedicated to Roerich's family.



Photo of A. Grigoriev, sculpting M. Voloshin, 1970s, unknown author.

A. Arendt, *Eastern face*, 1961, andesite, 50 x 46 x 50.

Strong, independent and fearless character and personality defines both female sculptors who were not frightened or submitted by the Soviet system, instead, they were opposing to it, creating independently of Soviet pressure. When Arendt's husband was arrested she never stopped attempting to release him, while Slobodinskaya bravely brought food, things of basic necessities to her arrested friends Obnorsky (also Arendt's friends), risking to be arrested. Ariadna Arendt was brave enough to write an official application in defence of her husband addressed personally to Stalin, achieving to get Vera Muchina's and sculptor's Merkurov supportive positive characteristics of A. Grigoriev. Her struggle against injustice brought its fruits – A. Grigoriev's *struggle for life* became easier, what probably helped him to survive during 7 years of his imprisonment.

A. Grigoriev – an erudite, honest and interesting person, successive sculptor, who shared common beliefs and world vision philosophy with his wife A. Arendt and their friend N. Slobodinskaya, what was mirrored in his chosen sculpture's subjects. We

find outstanding personalities of Russian culture, writers, musicians, and even prisoners of concentration camps; in sculptural range appear personalities as Rabindranath Tagore, N. Roerich, animalist V. Vatagin, M. Voloshin, A. Pushkin and others.



Photo of A. Grigoriev sculpting a pilot N. Arsenin, 1942, Moscow front, unknown author.

However, historical collisions dramatically changed a relatively peaceful existence of cultural Russian intelligentsia: in 1938 - 39 there was another wave of Stalin's terror and repressions, thereby many previously mentioned cultural and spiritual societies' members were arrested, murdered, and only few of them could immigrate and survive. Despite the social persecutions of the epoch, in regard of spiritual, cultural growth and development – the mentioned intellectual and cultural fellowships crucially influenced the formation of Nina's Slobodinskaya personality and broadened her creative vision.

In times of The Second World War after a few years of siege Slobodinskaya together with her husband Vladimir Georgievich Gnezdilov's Military-Medicine Academy was temporally evacuated to The Middle Asia, to be more precise - to Samarkand (Uzbekistan), where she experienced a bright period of a creative inspiration. As a result, the sculptor elaborated the whole series of Tadjik, Uzbek and Kirgizian sculptures together with nationally patriotic images.

Curiously and unexpectedly the post War period brought one artistic and philosophical phenomenon – a tendency to *Cosmogony*, which could be interpreted in any manner: an attentive viewer may guess a trait that unites works of

different Russian sculptors – mostly immigrants, such as Konenkov, Erzia and others. Supposedly, it had something to do with the background of their ideas. The war woke up hope and belief when there was really nothing to wait for and to lose. The psychiatrists explain this phenomena in terms of psychology: when a creative person finds him-self in a state of danger, permanent fear, psychological threat – unexpectedly he finds an escape from this state of mind - he frees him-self from fear by discovering a straight connection and kind of union with a *space of Cosmos and Universe*, and unconsciously starts to create artworks, which provide him with *psychologically comfortable space*, where he feels safe, *escaping* from a cruel and sad reality, and, where, moreover, he finds forth to hope and to live. In these terms, (which still remains a non-scientific evidence), it may be appropriate to suggest an idea of cosmogony and space reflected in sculpture - the world of beauty, wonder, fantasies and fairy-tales, which some artist's conscience admits and uses as a source of inspiration and hope. In this research we do not analyse this subject, but the idea of cosmogony may be found reflected in some of Slobodinskaya's sculptural images of the War period.

Before the Second World War Nina Slobodinskaya had her studio at the last floor of the building called *The fairy tales home* at the Dekabrists street – it was a real masterpiece of a North Modern style. The building was decorated by sketches of Bilibin.



Photo of *Fairy-tales* building, architect A. Bernardotsi, Bilibin's sketches, 1915.



Irina Vladimirovna Golovkina (granddaughter of the famous Russian composer Rimskaya-Korsakova) with her grandson Nikolay, 1980s, unknown author.

In 1945 returning to Leningrad, artist found this building destroyed and could see just a cradle of her son, swinging in the wind at the debris of the building. Her close friend sculptor A. Arendt faced similar circumstances.

Going back to Leningrad Nina Slobodinskaya did not find a univocal approval to the elaborated *Asian* sculptures; instead she was ruthlessly criticized for the *absence* of life-asserting, optimistic and ideological artworks. Meanwhile, her *Asian* sculptures are full of *humanity*, disclosing psychological portraits of models and unveiling their hidden feelings, state of mind and individual traits: tenderness, natural vitality, sadness, dreaminess and muse. Following her own creative searches, the sculptor, undoubtedly, did not fulfill her works with any ideological content.

Feeling vividly a disappointment, the sculptor had to face the fact that her *Asian* works contradicted the official state's ideas of socialist realism and, consequently, were not approved by the officials of the LOSH (The Leningrad Artist's Union) institution. According to Andrey Gnezdilov, accusing arguments of official critics would affirm, that the soviet citizens can never be sad, they always should be

optimistic about their present, future, as they *construct* a happy ideal communistic future ¹²⁵.

Regardless the LOSH's disapproval, in terms of professional growth and creative development this experience of Asian life and work became one of the most significant and precious in her carrier, since it helped the artist to refine a proper manner of seeing and creating: truthfully, thoughtfully and revealing the essence of human soul with love and deep respect towards a human being.

Unfortunately, the time dictated its severe rules: every sculptor had to follow the determined programs and ideas if he wanted to be exhibited and earn anything for his works. It was a hard time as every artist had to make a deal with his conscience and combine proper artistic preferences together with official demands. Not to obey to the state's official orders meant to any artist, intellectual or a creative worker, - to end up being totally out of social life and, besides, it meant to be persecuted by the State.

Once, in the post-war period, Nina Slobodinskaya was sent for by the KGB¹²⁶ office. This type of official letter-request meant two things: first of all, there was a big probability she could ever return home. In this case her family would not even receive any kind of justification or explanation, except a notification, which would accuse her of being the nation's enemy. Hence Slobodinskaya's husband and son would bear this stamp and cliché during all their life, which would mean to be not accepted in any university, prestigious work, and, as a result, to be out of a social and professional life. As other option, the artist might be proposed to become a spy, obliged to denounce members of her social circle. If the sculptor would not accept this *honourable* task she would be immediately sentenced to a long-term (20-50 years) imprisonment¹²⁷. Any family, after receiving this kind of notification, was saying goodbye one to each other, before leaving their homes in order to visit that obscure sombre building of the KGB. Closer to the building, a lower hanged head and

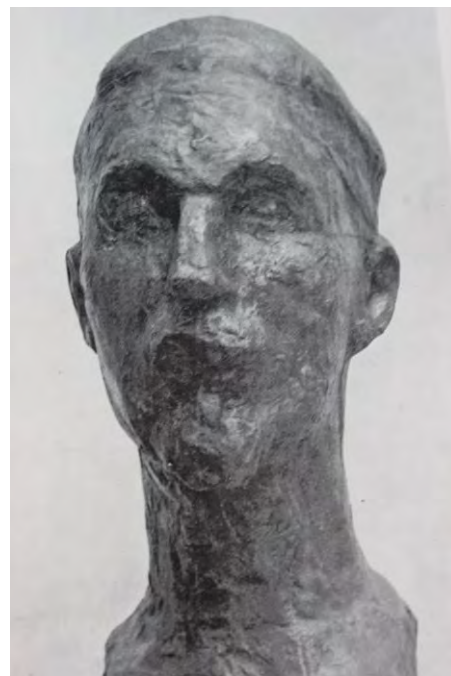
¹²⁵ Andrey Gnezdilov's recalls in the personal interview on 09.10.2014.

¹²⁶ The KGB – the Committee for State Security, was the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its collapse in 1991. Formed in 1954 as a direct successor of such preceding agencies as the Cheka, NKGB, and MGB, the committee was attached to the Council of Ministers. It was the chief government agency of "union-republican jurisdiction", acting as internal security, intelligence, and secret police. Similar agencies were instated in each of the republics of the Soviet Union aside from Russia and consisted of many ministries, state committees, and state commissions". Коровин, В.В. *История отечественных органов безопасности*. М.: Новый мир, 1998, С.36.

¹²⁶ Солженицын, А.И. *Архипелаг ГУЛАГ: 1918 - 1956*. Опыт художественного исследования. Т. 1 – 3, Москва: Центр "Новый мир", 1990, С.39-85.

shoulders of any man; Leningrad's legends reassured, that downstairs there was enormous quantity of rooms and investigators, waiting to torture, humiliate and "break" innocent people's life. As to Nina Slobodinskaya, - she had a real luck. Her family saw her again. As mentioned before, she was a truly strong person with enormous inner force to resist and not to surrender in any kind of life circumstances. According to her family and friend's recallings, the artist always amazed people with this character's trait which combined with a wonderful sense of humour. Finally, it saved her that day too. The KGB's investigator accused her of sculpting insufficient quantity of works of soviet leaders or communistic activists. He also hinted that Nina had all chances to be arrested. Surprisingly for the investigator, the artist did not render in front of the threat, instead, she responded following: "What luck! I finally will have enough time for sculpting!".¹²⁸It was pronounced so sincerely and naturally that the investigator laughed at her and let her return home. Without any doubt few Russians so happily left the KGB.

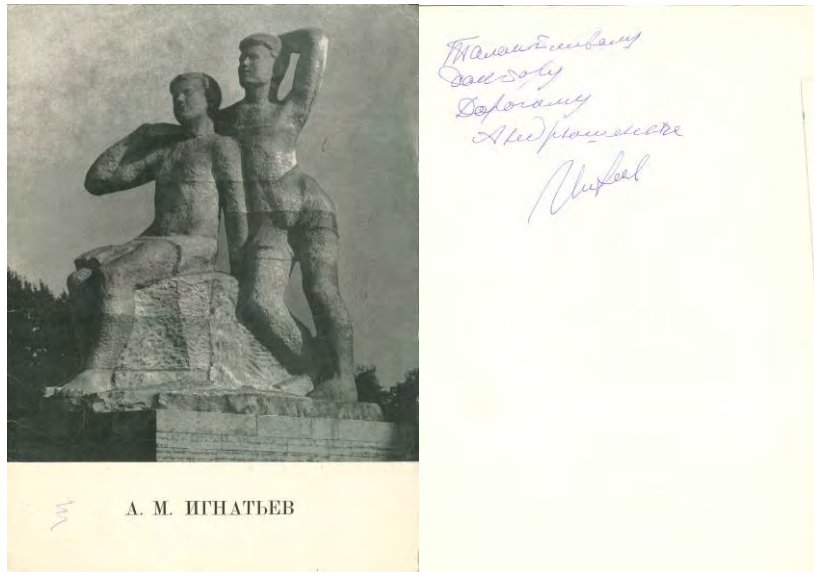
3.2 Alexander Ignatiev and Liubov Cholina – faithful friends and colleagues



A. Ignatiev, *Girl's head*, 1974, marble, 42 x 26 x 28.

A. Ignatiev, *Oncologist N. Petrov's portrait*, 1971, bronze, 60 x 30 x 26.

¹²⁸ Personal recallings of Andrey Gnezdilov, interviewed on 01.08.2014.



Ignatiev's dedication on the 2d page of the sculptor's catalogue to N. Slobodinsky's son Andrey Gnezdilov: "To dear talented doctor Andriusha".

Alexander Ignatiev together with Liubov Cholina – a married couple of widely recognized sculptors were close friends, colleagues and confidants of Nina Slobodinskaya during her life in Leningrad from 1930. Being constantly in touch, working in parallel and sometimes working on the common projects, they naturally mutually influenced each other in creative terms, concurrently preserving their proper artistic individualities. Thereby it would be justified to compare their artistic methods and searches.

A. Ignatiev was an artist of high figurative culture, coherent in his creative concept with integral, analytical intellection. In terms of artistic vision A. Ignatiev was drawn towards generalization independently of subject, genre or content of his work, while Slobodinskaya tended to concreteness aiming by its means to reveal model's particularity and individuality. Generalization thereby may be seen as an artistic feature of this sculptor. Life force of Ignatiev's images is persuading. Nina Slobodinskaya finds inspiration in real everyday life motives (especially in Samarkand period) and develops her work, expressing her vision based on direct impression and contact with reality, enchanted by its organic beauty. As to Ignatiev, a found in everyday life motive he transforms into a generalized idea, image or thought, aiming to express their significance.

Both artists perfect themselves in art gradually, purposely searching a proper artistic language and manner of expression. Two sculptors from the very beginning had a

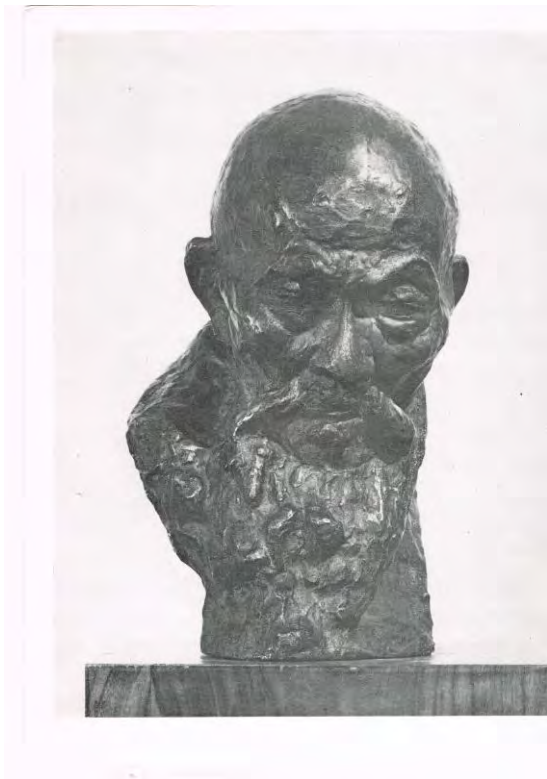
very conscious attitude to their sculptural tasks. A profound feeling of model, trust to their artistic intuition, reverential and self-demanding attitude towards work characterizes both sculptors. In regard of artistic method, Ignatiev starts his work elaborating a sketch, through which he tries to develop an architectonic vision of a concept, a model and laconic form, actively experimenting with a space. Sculpture's construction appears as a base of figurative form, which provides his works with an authentic monumentality, which may be followed in any sculpture. This creative method helps the sculptor to adapt his works in any space and lightening. Sculptor A. Strekavin observed that Ignatiev's sculpture impresses by its figural range. He has works in which can be heard a lyric melody and simultaneously another sculpture may recall a powerful affirming organ's sound.

The images created by Ignatiev seem to be full of depth and significance grace to the extreme concentration of plastic forms. Especially strong it can be observed in Ignatiev's sculptural portraits: *Girl's head*, *Petrov's portrait*, *Miner's portrait*. Sculptor achieves to show a core of a personality, to display a hidden essence of individual what turns portrait into discovery. Art historian E. F. Koftun noticed that Ignatiev's portraits are full of a calm poetry, a profoundness of feelings' expression; that's where from comes an incredible quietness of his sculpture, which almost does not have any external movement but simultaneously provokes a feeling of a huge *fighting*.

While P.P. Efimov observed that form in his sculptures is moderate and not expressive by its external traits and contours. Nevertheless, it leaves a feeling of an interior expressiveness and wholeness. Different points on the surface of his voluminous sculpture do not exist separately instead they exist in interconnection, what permits the author to achieve a variety of nuances and shades of plastic expressiveness.

According to P. P. Efimov, one of the main traits in art of Ignatiev appears to be his attitude to a space - *three-dimensionality* of his sculpture. His sculpture is not only voluminous but also a round and can be perceived in multi aspects. A volume in any aspect show different nuances together with silhouettes. This rhythmic organization of sculpture, almost unseen changes of form, bring a strong dynamism to a visual perception. Analysing sculptor's creative method would be worth mentioning an importance of Russian national tradition in sculpture. In T. Manturova's opinion Ignatiev adapted all the best of his predecessors: a sensitive attitude towards nature, poetry and a grandiose simplicity of images, architectonics

of sculpture, a profound feeling of material. After sculptor Matveev's school he created his proper harmony in sculpture, adding his interest to another plane and architectonics, tending to archaic. In E.F. Koftun's opinion it defines a professional place of Ignatiev not behind master Matveev but nearby. Humanism, interest in main eternal life's challenges and appearances, integrity characterizes Ignatiev's art. E.F. Koftun insists that Ignatiev's sculpture speaks about spiritual world, showing deep planes of a man's spiritual life, and in this sense Ignatiev works are created in the best traditions of Russian national school, searching and affirming spirituality. Exactly a search for spirituality and its affirmation in creative work unites mostly Ignatiev and Nina Slobodinskaya, a final goal and a sphere of searches.



A. Ignatiev, *Djambul Dgabaev*, 1938, bronze, 40 x 25 x 28.



A. Ignatiev, *Miner's head*, 1973, bronze, 40 x 22 x 28.

An interest in Asian culture and its personalities also unites Nina Slobodinskaya with Ignatiev. He also spends few years of the Second World War in Samarkand, studying in Matveev's class of sculpture. In Ignatiev's range of sculptural portraits stands out an image of *Djambul*, as it reflects the whole epoch of studying and experimenting. A known poet of Kazakhstan, Djambul Djambaev, who suffered misery and poverty

from his childhood, left a strongest impression on Ignatiev during their personal meeting. No surprise, that sculptor returned to Kazakhstan few times in order to study the poet in his everyday life behaviour. He spent a summer of 1938 living in Kazakhstan and had chance to see the poet in many life circumstances; the strongest impression left on sculptor - was Djambul riding in steppe, significantly, a theme of a horse as man's loyal fellow often is present in his poetry. Besides Djambul him-self used to say, that while riding he finds a rhythm of his poetry. Ignatiev liked Djambul's poetry by its sincerity and profound feeling of nature. Ignatiev commented on his sculptural sketch of Djambul's portrait: "Grace to the fact that I had chance to observe a poet for a long time, I studied him well, it also helped me in elaborating this sketch, which I could complete in 5 sessions. Normally when a model comes you have to spend some time studying it, but on that occasion, I already knew Djambul well"¹²⁹. Sculptural portrait of Djambul impresses by its detail shaping, especially comparing with his other series of sculptural works as for instance the *Girl's head*. Detail pronunciation of every face trait helps to reveal a character in a profound state of mental process, showing his deep thought and its spiritual significance.

3.3 M. Anikushin – fellow sculptor

M. Anikushin (1917 -1997) was another prominent Russian sculptor whose creative and personal path constantly crossed with Nina Slobodinskaya. His work embraced monumental, memorial and easel sculpture. He was an active member of Art's Academy, a nominated artist of the USSR, practised teaching as a professor in the Fine Arts Academy named after I. Repin. As it was previously mentioned, he is especially famous for his A. Pushkin's sculptural images, famous representatives of Russian culture and defenders of Leningrad.

His sculptural images are full of vital power and fidelity to life. In 1937 he became an apprentice of A. Matveev, who woke up in him "an authentic comprehension of model, helped to reveal that a model is a source of inspiration, but it requires a creative approach and transformation"¹³⁰. In a portrait genre sculptor attempted to show a psychological state of a person, reflecting his inner life, character's

¹²⁹ Мантурова, Т.Б. Заслуженный художник РСФСР Александр Михайлович Игнатъев. Каталог, М.: Советский художник, 1928, С.28.

¹³⁰ Zamoshkin, A.M. *Michail Konstantinovich Anikushin*. L.: Isk-vo, 1979, С.6-9.

individualization, as we for instance see in A. Chehov's portrait of 1961 or in the sculptural image of G. Ulanova of 1981. L. Doronona in her work *Sculpture of XX century* observed that: "an interior energy of a potential movement which is hidden in external statics, deep psychologism and philosophical generalization compensates a detailing absence"¹³¹. In creative work of Anikushin in 1970 -1980ss prevails movement itself, passionate burst and impulse. As his main creative method was defined an expression of characteristic traits of the epoch through revealing individualities of concrete personages. Humanistic pathos of his work may be especially noticed in his Leningrad defenders' sculptural series¹³².



M. Anikushin, A.Chehov's portrait, 1961, bronze.



M. Anikushin, Ulanova's portrait, 1981, bronze.

Beside a multiplicity of other works, the best part of his creative life Anikushin dedicated to the elaboration and perfection of A. Pushkin's image.

In 1937 the first concourse of Pushkin's sculpture was announced, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of his death. Famous sculptors of the epoch took place in it: N. Shadr, G. Mootovilov, V. Lishev, and V. Sinaiskiy. Curiously, this concourse had no

¹³¹ Доронина, Л.Н. *Мастера русской скульптуры 18 -20 веков. Том 2. Скульптура 20 века.* М.: Белый город, 2010, С.39-48.

¹³² Алянский, Ю.Л. *В мастерской на Петроградской стороне (М. К. Аникушин).* М.: Советский художник, 1985, С.95.

winner. The war postponed the work on project's development and only in 1948 the concourse continued. Renowned sculptors N. Tomsy, M. Manizer, Lishev, S. Orlov participated in the first tour, at the second part of the concourse appeared an unknown sculptor M. Anikushin with his own version of the monument. As a result his work together with Tomsy's was defined as the most successful. In 1950 the jury finally decided to choose Anikushin's model of Pushkin, after some details were corrected. It was established to install the monument at the Square of Arts - a central square of Saint Petersburg. Finally in 1957 Pushkin's monument in bronze and granite was inaugurated. Pushkin is depicted standing at the long granite pedestal, showed in the state of inspiration, his face is full of creative joy and expressiveness, his right hand is stretched out widely and freely in a poetic gesture, he seems to be declaring his poetry. Thoughtfully elaborated figure's proportions and its dimensions (8 meters long) together with prolonged granite pedestal, perfectly fit into the whole ensemble of the Arts Square. From now and on Anikushin's monument of A. Pushkin became one of the favourite sculptural images- a symbol and a visualized emblem of the greatest Russian poet and writer¹³³.



M. Anikushin, *Pushkin's monument* at the Arts Square, 1957, bronze, granite, Arch. Petrov, St. Petersburg.

¹³³ Доронина, Л.Н. *Мастера русской скульптуры 18 -20 веков. Том 2. Скульптура 20 века.* М.: Белый город, 2010, С.170-190.



M. Anikushin, *Pushkin's monument*, 1957, bronze, granite, architect V. Petrov, The Arts Square St. Petersburg.

In 1950s Anikushin continued developing Pushkin's image, - having created a model of the writer for Gurzuf, which was finally finished in 1972. In 1970-1974 in parallel with other artistic projects, Anikushin created Pushkin's monument for Tashkent. Therefore we may suggest that Pushkin's personality was his main source of inspiration, - his sculptural hero, through which he revealed his best mastery's skills and talent.

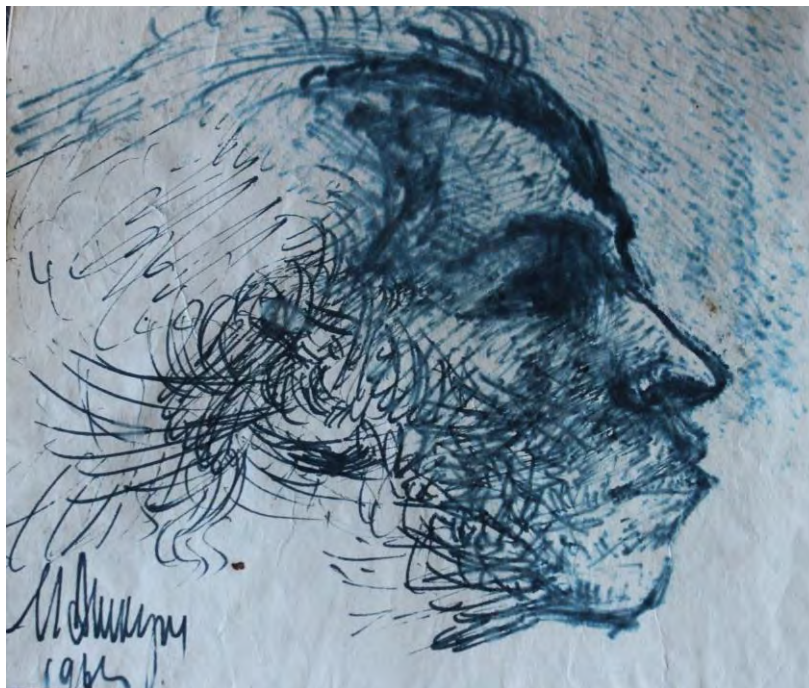
Besides a reach creative work, active pedagogic activities Anikushin was appointed as a head of Leningrad Union of Artists (1962 -1972), - precisely where was *crossed his road* with Nina Slobodinskaya. One of his duties as the Leningrad's Artists Union's representative was to communicate with artists, particularly approving or disapproving their works for exhibitions and etc. Nina Slobodinskaya being a member of the Leningrad Artists Union stayed in touch and creative communication with Anikushin. As its proof we find multiples certificates signed by Anikushin as a head of Leningrad Union concerning N. Slobodinskaya sculpture's approval. Creative socialization with artists – fellows brought creative interchange. As a testimony of this creative communication established between Anikushin and N. Slobodinskaya appears to be remarkable a document discovered in the archive of Slobodinskaya – a sketch drawing of A. Pushkin made by Anikushin in 1963. It is an

interesting sample elaborated in the period when the Pushkin's monument was already installed at the Arts Square of Leningrad and the artist continued further developing this subject. It reveals the author's further vision of Russian great writer whom he constantly continues interpreting in search of perfection.

Pushkin's face traits are elaborated cautiously, in every detail. Firmly closed lips, a gaze directed straight ahead, a clearly outlined profile, a chaotic mass of his hair and beard, - gives dynamism, indicates at an inner energy and movement of the image, an almost unseen head's tendency upwards reveals a passionate rush and impulse, a creative richness and determination of the poet.



M. Anikushin, *Pushkin's portrait*, 1960, gypsum.



M. Anikushin, *A. Pushkin*, drawing, 1963, pen, paper.



M. Anikushin, *Soldiers*, sculptural composition dedicated to the defenders of Leningrad during the II World War, 1975, bronze, granite, Victory Square, St. Petersburg, architects V. Kamensky, B. Speransky.

3.4 Irina Vladimirovna Golovkina (Rimaskaya-Korsakova) – like-minded friend, talented writer

One of the Slobodinskaya-Gnezdilov's family friend – Irina Vladimirovna Golovkina (Rimaskaya-Korsakova) – the famous Russian composer's granddaughter described in her book *Swan's song or The defeated*, in detail all the gimmicks of The KGB's attempts to bring to naught the whole society's class of nobles and so called *intelligentsia*¹³⁴.

By her noble origin, the received education and family's circle Nina Slobodinskaya belonged to the circle of Old Russian *intelligentsia* – the social cultural group that was foredoomed by The Soviet Government to the complete destruction. The fate of the *intelligentsia* class became one of the saddest pages in this severe historical period. The Soviet leaders showed them-selves especially cruel in attitude to this social class, condemning them to the total disappearance.

¹³⁴ Головкина, Ирина (Римская-Корсакова). *ПОБЕЖДЁННЫЕ*. Роман, М.: Белый город, 1998, С.40-64.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya in 1950s, unknown author.

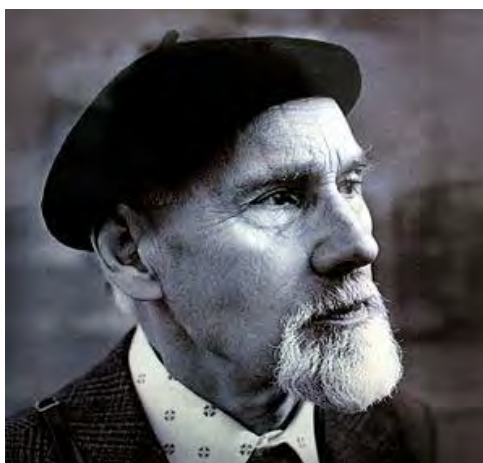
N. Slobodinskaya with sculptor Tatiana Sergeevna Kirpichnikova, 1960s, unknown author.



Photo of Nina Slobodinskaya's family (first to the right her father Konrad Vladimirovich, her mother Sofia Alexandrovna is standing), Slobodinskaya's aunt and cousins Grinevskiye, early XX c, unknown author.

3.5 Boris Smirnov-Rusetsky – spiritual fellow in cosmism

Luckily, many friends and colleagues survived and returned to Leningrad after suffering at the war, facing repressions, experiencing imprisonment in Soviet concentration camps. One of interesting personalities – a family friend and like-minded fellow in cosmism was a painter, scientist, writer, - Boris Smirnov-Rusetsky (1905 -1993), he considered himself a follower of Nikolai Roerich and his philosophical ideas, who by that time was out of Russia. In addition Smirnov-Rusetsky was an active member of the artistic group of cosmists The *Amaravella*¹³⁵ which gathered painters - intuitivists who followed the ideas of Nicolai Roerich and his interest towards India's culture and philosophy. This common with the sculptor admiration of the Asian and Indian art, culture and philosophy was personified in Eastern subject of works of the artist. The painter did not escape the *mincing machine* of the Soviet repressions and was imprisoned in the Soviet concentration camp for 14 years. Despite of tragic life circumstances, having returned to Moscow, he continued working hard, developing Roerich's philosophy and artistic activity.



Smirnov-Rusetsky's photo, 1980ss, unknown author

¹³⁵ *Amaravella* means a sprout of eternity in sanscrit – it represented a group of artists, who based a lot on their intuition (1923-1974), another group's title was *Cosmists*. The group consisted of painters A.Sardan, P.Fateev, S.Shigoliov, V.Chernovolenko, and V. Pshetskaya. By their ideas and principles they corresponded to the *Russian Cosmism* and were highly influenced by E.Blavatskaya, N. Roerich, M. Chiurlenis, V.Boris-Musatov and antique cultural traditions of East. Линник, Ю. *Амаравелла. Хрусталь Водолея (книга о художнике Б.А.Смирнове-Русецком)*. - Петрозаводск: Изд-во "Святой остров", 1995, С.57-125.



B. Smirnov-Rusetsky, *North*, 1980, pastel.



B. Smirnov-Rusetsky, *North*, 1981, pastel.

B. Smirnov-Rusetsky, *Dandelions*, 1981, pastel.

B. Smirnov-Rusetsky *Rime*, 1988, pastel.

Regarding Nina Slobodinskaya's activities after returning to Leningrad, in the post-war period, we may observe, that the sculptor gradually starts a new series of sculptures – war-heroes, some of them were commissioned and some were elaborated by her proper initiative. All of them are completed with truthfulness, realism and with a deep psychological model's analysis. The sculptor worked a lot on her husband's portraits. Vladimir Georgievich Gnezdilov (Dr, Professor of the Military Medicine Academy, specialized in parasitology) appeared to be an ideal model for her. He had expressive male face traits. Unfortunately, still quite young, in 1958 he passed away, leaving a 19 years old son and wife.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya at the cemetery, near her husband's tomb, last sculptural memorial image of V. Gnezdilov created by the artist, 1958, unknown author.

N. Slobodinskaya, V. Gnezdilov, 1958, bas-relief, coloured plaster cast.



N. Slobodinskaya, V. Gnezdilov, 1958, bas - relief, coloured plaster cast.

Approximately in the 1960s, approaching to a mature age, Nina Slobodinskaya felt more than ever attached to the Orthodox Church, despite the fact that she always was a believer. Her profound faith marked and gradually defined the field of her creative interests and searches - Christian images became the central subject of her artistic work, discovering in it a whole new world of rich spiritual content. Furthermore, it meant that despite of the official state's prohibition – to create any religious pieces, Nina fearlessly started to sculpt images of *Madonna, Jesus Christ, The Trinity and The Crucifixion*. Even if all these works of the Christian subject were small dimension's works they seemed to be monumental by their meaning's significance.

Nina Slobodinskaya died in 1984, eighty seven years old, continuing working till the last days of her life. The last work of Nina Slobodinskaya symbolically was *The Crucifixion* which she dreamed to see in a church.

In attempt to reveal the artist's personality we should address to the memories of those who knew her well and were in constant touch with her. The most *proximate* person, her *congenial soul*, was definitely her son Andrey Gnezdilov, who spent the whole life nearby and took care of Nina Slobodinskaya in the last years of her life.

Recreating his childhood, Andrey does not remember his mother often cooking, or cleaning the house, there was always somebody else who took care of everyday life necessities. For example, his father returning from work, always used to buy food, and used to cook on his own or asked Andrew's nanny to prepare a meal. Meanwhile, Andrew's mother worked hard and passionately at her studio.

She spent hours and hours, tirelessly, fully committed and purposefully shaping her sculptures. Nobody would dare to interrupt her work process – neither family nor friends.

Her studio was a *sacred space*, not *accessible* without a special permission of the artist. Andrew recalls that before starting her work, Nina Slobodinskaya used to pray in front of the icon and afterwards concentrated at her creative task. While sculpting the artist often listened to the classical music, especially she loved Chopin. The sculptor obviously dedicated more hours to her work than to her family, sculpture was her main life's passion, in other words - it became her creative necessity; so it is not surprising that she always was thinking on new ideas, images,

drawing or making short notes, even being with family or friends. Andrew reminds going often together with his mother to The State Russian Museum in Leningrad, where Nina Slobodinskaya used to work on sculptural sketches, while her small son was exploring enormous halls of the museum.

Regarding cultural and spiritual formation of the sculptor, it was undoubtedly quite rich: from a young age she was inspired by spiritual searches of her family and friends, who were keen on theosophical world view¹³⁶. Theosophical philosophy broadened her mind and world vision, she used to see the world in its complex wholeness, not dividing it to the *ours* and *their*, believing that the world's fate is common for all nationalities, cultures and religions and its origin has the same source in God. I suggest it was one of the principle ideas which she adapted from theosophy. Therefore, it was not surprising that when her friends Obnorskie asked her to sculpt *Buddha's* image, she did not mind and shaped his figure, which became a visualization of her ideas' universality.

Nevertheless, it did not stop the artist to fully dedicate her sculptural mastery to Christian imagery in the final years of her life. Her broad spiritual world vision did not contradict her deep belief in God, full expression of which the artist finally found in frames of the Orthodox Church. In addition, her faith was strengthened by her deeds. For instance, every month the artist sent some amount of money to the Sukhumi monastery, as well supporting the monks which were persecuted by the Soviet State.

During the last 20 years of Nina Slobodinskaya's life, her place (which by life circumstances also was her studio) became a socially active venue, where gathered artists, poets, musicians, dancers, singers, psychiatrists and even their patients (her son is a psychiatrist). From now and on creative personalities got used to share their achievements, finding a graceful public: poets - reading their poetry, singers – singing, dancers – making visual performances.

¹³⁶ Theosophy may be defined as a kind of esoteric philosophy which signifies investigation or seeking of spiritual knowledge, the nature of divinity. Theosophy is often regarded as directly linked to esotericism, promising to approach to hidden knowledge or wisdom and to achieve the individual enlightenment and salvation. Theosophists urge to understand the mysteries of the universe, its correlation with the universe, humanity, and the divine. Theosophists affirm to possess a secret knowledge of the origin of divinity and humanity, which may be shared with *chosen ones*. Blavatsky, Helena. *The Key to Theosophy*. London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, 1889, pp.34-51.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya at home, 1970s, unknown author.



Nikolai Nasedkin, *N. Slobodinskaya*, 1982. oil on canvas, 125 x 125.

These evenings also became kind of discussion clubs, where the last cultural events, philosophical and spiritual issues used to be treated. Mainly it happened due to the creative and social activities of her son – Andrey Gnezdilov. Nina Slobodinskaya did not mind participating in an active social life till one day, when the sculptor was so exhausted by *the crowds* of people, constantly appearing at her place and interfering at her work, that she required her son to put a limit to it, thus it was agreed to establish one day per week when people could gather at their place. T

hus *Friday evening* gatherings near fireplace, at the *old* hospitable mansard of the north modern style building, has become a tradition which lasts already for more than fifty years and attracts creative and interesting people: Scientists, medics, artists, musicians, writers and all curious personalities of Saint-Petersburg and from abroad.

Returning to the sculptor's personality, Nina Slobodinskaya was so deeply faithful and fervently religious that actively preached Christianity and tried to convince atheists to turn to the Orthodox Church; actually she highly succeeded in it converting dozens of family friends, colleagues, and her son's patients into faithful Christian believers. Curiously, she had special long written lists with the names of persons who died and for whose souls she often used to pray. Andrew Gnezdilov recalls how once his mother said on his birthday: "Andriuha, today I invited all my deceased to your birthday party"¹³⁷.

Being a highly educated, acknowledged and interesting person, who never hides her thoughts and opinions, the artist attracted many people; she was also stood out for an honest, simple and a well-wishing manner of socializing. All family friends remember her with warm words and a kind smile. Being an outstanding individuality, Slobodinskaya without any efforts made others feel an enormous respect towards her and simultaneously a joy of being in her company.

¹³⁷ Personal records of Andrey Gnezdilov, in the interview of 08.08.2014. Above all, Nina Slobodinskaya together with her son actually helped and supported many creative people of the epoch. For example due to the political realities a young talented artist who did not wish to obey strict norms of the official exams could not enter the Art academy and was even persecuted. A. Gnezdilov saved him and after he completed the oil painting of Nina slobodinskaya he was finally accepted to study in the Moscow art institute. Now he is a prominent Russian artist, whose exhibitions often are hold in the State Russian museums and in the most known contemporary Art galleries and centres.



V. Volinskaya, N. Slobodinskaya, 1970s, oil on canvas.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya, 1970s, unknown author.

Sculptor's granddaughter was only three and a half years old when Nina Slobodinskaya died, but she keeps in her memory an enormous admiration and respect which she felt towards her grandmother and a joy when she was permitted to bring a cup of tea to her studio's space. Even only by her presence the sculptor achieved to fulfil the atmosphere with energy, possessing and transmitting to others an inner *strength*, will and a *strong spirit*.

As to her work manner, the artist was highly demanding and severe to herself. In the final years, even being ill, feeling a constant physic pain, she restlessly and daily continued working till the last day. Nina Slobodinskaya passed away on 1984, at the age of eighty seven, being asleep.

Trying to sum up, we may see that Nina Slobodinskaya lived a complex life, full of cruel historical collisions, which were also dramatically reflected in her personal life; she early lost her parents, her husband Vladimir Gnezdilov passed away in 1958, leaving her alone with a young son. She had to struggle for being able to study what she mostly urged for – sculpture (her noble's origin was an obstacle), what she finally achieved, posing to be a Soviet factory worker.

The artist was a testimony of her friends' and family's sufferings and death in the period of *Stalin's terror* (the wide range of political persecutions and repressions hold in the Stalin's epoch). Nevertheless, all these difficult life circumstances did not *break* her personally and creatively. Regardless all severe life trials, Nina Slobodinskaya preserved her individual freedom, mind's and creativity's independence, which were reflected in the variety of her artistic heritage: not only in multiplicity of sculptural genres, forms, but also in the subject's choice.

Nina Slobodinskaya passed her life way with a self-dignity and self-respect, being always faithful to herself, leaving behind a significant sculptural heritage of an authentic Master and Artist.



Unknown author (probably Chulaki – mother of famous writer M. Chulaki), *Nina Slobodinskaya*, 1970s, pencil.

3.6. Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich – Urge for Spirit and Universe

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of her creative, spiritual path and fate we should address to the most significant personalities of Slobodinskaya's close social circle. As it was mentioned earlier, Sofia Alexandrovna Slobodinskaya (her mother, Usova, who was a head of theosophical circle in Kiev before the revolution) and Alexander Usov (Nina Slobodinskaya's uncle) were interested in theosophy, alluring with vast acknowledgements, high spiritual searches, and wide broaden minds. N. Slobodinskaya shared theosophical world vision's philosophy of her mother and uncle.

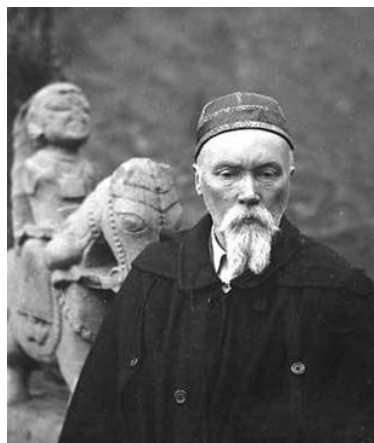
Already in her youth sculptor was keen on the Indian philosophy and world vision. Friendship which lasted throughout life in Leningrad with N. Roerich's niece – Liudmila Stepanovna Mitusova who was a keeper of a significant artistic, intellectual and spiritual heritage of Roerich's family and stayed in touch constantly with the family, - it even more strengthened and potentiated this spiritual and cultural interconnection. When Svyatoslav Roerich visited St. Petersburg N. Slobodinskaya together with her son Andrey Gnezdilov attended those secret meetings (the KGB prohibited and prosecuted those gatherings). N. Slobodinskaya used to see all exhibitions of Roerich's family and his followers as Smirnov-Russetsky for instance. Would be important to mention that in Slobodinskaya's place there were often

meetings of Leningrad theosophists and just of individuals, interested in Indian philosophy and culture. It was the same social circle of people who admired Roerich's family and shared their spiritual searches and worldview vision.

Firstly, their connection was a common spiritual worldview and philosophy. In their minds the Orthodox Church's tradition organically coexisted with a belief that ethic basis in all religions is the same: a search of eternal soul. They shared cosmological world vision, which is well introduced in Agni-yoga. They believed that God speaks with every nation in its proper language and manner. Both believed in evolution and a constant world's and man's tendency to self-perfection. Two artists shared a common belief that spiritual and cultural values prevail upon the material ones. Tendency to spirituality may be followed in the images of two masters.

As well as N. Roerich N. Slobodinskaya felt high interest in Russian icons tradition, in ancient art, folk and legends what was reflected in his early creative period. Both during different periods of their lives shared deep religious attitude to Art, rooted in Art tradition of Russian Orthodoxy together with respect and interest to Asian, Eastern philosophy, culture and Art. A common sensibility for native country's spiritual integrity and beauty may be followed in their works. Two artists had a vast outlook throughout Europe and Asia and had ability to synthesize these cultures in their worldview and art.

After all mentioned it is not surprising that Nina Slobodinskaya, and afterwards her son were in close relationship with Nicholai Roerich's family, a part of being attracted by their highly talented, noble and creative personalities, they shared similar philosophical and spiritual world vision, which we may discover focusing on Roerich family's lives and creative paths.



N. Roerich photo, 1935, unknown author.



N. Roerich, *Madonna laboris*, 1935, tempera, 1800 x 1226.

Nicholai Konstantinovich Roerich was born in St. Petersburg in 1874. Roerich's family roots were in Scandinavian country; his antecedents came to Russia at the beginning of the XVIII century. Nicolai Roerich was born in the well-being family as his father was owner of the notary's office and became a famous lawyer, highly educated and culturally developed. N.K. Roerich studied in school, which was known for its humanitarian traditions – Gymnasium of K.I. May, Precisely there Roerich first felt interest in painting and archaeology¹³⁸.

In 1893 he entered as a student of both education centres: the Academy of Arts and faculty of law in St. Petersburg State University. He listened to lectures at the historical-philological faculty, participated at the Emperor's Russian Archaeological Community's activity (since 1896), made the research of ancient annals, deeds and paintings. The theme of his graduate thesis was *Legal status of an artist in Ancient Russia*. In the high art school of the Academy of Arts he studied in A.I. Kuindgi's studio and when the teacher was undeservedly fired, he and other students opposed the directorship and stopped studying in the Academy in 1894. At this period he had already executed a row of paintings *The beginning of Russia*, *The Slavs*. This subject was his main during the following years. In 1901 N.K. Roerich married Elena Ivanovna Shaposhnikova, who was a daughter of a renowned

¹³⁸ Беликов, П., Князева, В. Рерих (Жизнь замечательных людей). М.: Молодая гвардия, 1973, С. 224.

architect, a grandniece of Commander M.I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov. Elena Ivanovna was a highly talented and a strong woman. Nicolai Roerich and his wife participated in some archaeological expeditions, travelled to Ancient Russian cities and towns, making a research of Russian folklore and architecture. Creatively this period was fruitful and in 1903 – 1904 Roerich elaborated more than 90 paintings, devoted to Russian history¹³⁹. In 1906 N.K. Roerich headed the Painting School of the Emperor's Association for Art Encouragement – the most significant art-industrial educational institute in Russia at that time. Roerich's main subjects and artistic motives of paintings in this period became - History of Ancient Russia and epos. Various aspects are reflected in those paintings: archaeologist-scientist's knowledge together with artist's delicate intuition. These motives are featured in the theatre-decorative painting: Roerich elaborated sketches for decorations and costumes for N.K. Rimsky-Korsakov's operas: *The Sadko*, *The Snow Maiden*, *The Legend of the invisible city of Kitezh* and the maiden *Fevronia*, *The Pskovityanka*, for I. Stravinsky ballet *The Sacred spring* etc. In 1909 N.K. Roerich participated in S.P. Diaghilev's enterprise – famous *The Russian Ballet Seasons* in Paris¹⁴⁰. The *fairy tales'* subject was one of the beloved in his series of paintings. He was deeply attracted by Slav's folklore. "We are surrounded by miracles, but we are blind and can't see them. We are full of opportunities but we are dark and can't see them"¹⁴¹, wrote the artist, appealing to discover the world of fairy tales and legends, where one can find a deep spiritual experience and wisdom of Russian nation, carefully preserved and transmitted through centuries and generations.



N. Roerich, *Guests from Overseas*, 1901, tempera. N. Roerich, *The rite of Spring (ballet decoration)*, 1913, tempera.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.222.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p.224.

¹⁴¹ Рерих, Н.К. Держатели. Дневники. Том 1, М.: МЦР, 1995, С.250-254.

Nikolai Roerich's attachment to the life of Ancient Slavs did not contradict with his interest to the East – a cradle of human civilization. "Something pulled me to Asia for a long time ago, could say from early years"¹⁴², remembered Roerich in his *Diary pages*. The oriental subject and Indian mythology was a permanent inspiration source for the artist and in this context he elaborated a lot of pictorial and literary works. Nikolai Roerich regarded India as the original mother of European culture and the original *fatherland* of our mankind. Finally he created a hypothesis which stated that Indian and Russian cultures have the same roots.

Nikolai Roerich headed in 1910 an Art society the *World of art*, which represented K.A. Somov, A.N. Benois, M.V. Dobuzhinsky, B.A. Kustodiev, V.E. Borisov-Musatov, Z.E. Serebryakova, E.E. Lansere, among others. During this period Nikolai Roerich was actively involved into the artistic scene of St. Petersburg, participating in the organization of following art communities and educational institutions: the Women's Artistic and Industrial Workshops the Museum of Old Petersburg, Community named after A.I. Kuindgi, the Committee of Architectures-artists and the commission responsible for the museum's creation on everyday life, embracing the epoch before Peter the Great, the Russian Art and Ancient Life Monuments Preservation Society, the Painting School of Emperor's Association for Art Encouragement, the Artistic Russia's Recreation Society, the Women's Higher Architectural Knowledge Courses, the Workshops for Physically Disabled Former Warriors. His mastery and recognition as an artist grows. In addition Nikolai Roerich found time to develop his interests in painting, creating his individual language in art. Among his marvellous prophetic paintings may be remarked (just before the World War I) - *Mankind's acts*, *Snake's scream*, *Doomed town*, etc. After creating these art works he was called a "great intuitivist"¹⁴³.

In 1916 he suffered from pneumonia and was advised to change St. Petersburg for a drier climate. Nikolai Roerich decided to move to Serdobol (Sortavala) situated on the north part of the Ladoga Lake. This period at the North became especially fruitful for his artistic development (among other achievements he executed the *Karelian pictorial cycle*, the autobiographical story *Flame*, poetical cycle the *Moria's Flowers*, a miracle-play the *Mercy*, where the artist expounded his views on the revolution's catastrophe in Russia and outlined the role of the truly knowledge in

¹⁴² Ibid. p.200.

¹⁴³ Дубаев, М.Л. *Рерих. Серия Жизнь замечательных людей*, М.: Молодая гвардия, 2003, С. 8-17.

mankind's life. Moreover, particularly during this period the artist becomes mature in his spirit and mastery. In addition, in Sartavala took shape and form his further way in art and philosophy. When Finland obtained sovereignty, the Roerich's family was separated from Russia. Roerich's family did not accept the Bolsheviks' policy, especially in the cultural sphere. Meanwhile the artist's paintings were often on show in Finland, Sweden, Norway, so far he lived in these countries. Diaghilev organizing *the Russian Ballet Seasons* in London, invited Nikolai Roerich to collaborate in this project and the artist moved to England, where were elaborated decorations and costumes for Russian operas *the Snow Maiden, the Prince Igor, the Legend about Tsar Saltan*¹⁴⁴.

In 1920 Roerich agreed to prepare an exhibition, commissioned by the Chicago University. Thus Nikolai Roerich lived for three years in America where he had opportunity to contribute into the cultural-enlightening sphere and to organize expedition to the Central Asia. Among his other achievements was foundation of the Institute for United Arts, the International Art Centre *Corona mundi*, which purpose consisted of motivating different nations to cooperate in culture. In addition was created a Museum named after N.K. Roerich in New York.

The artistic development of the artist was actively continuing: In 1922 he created a row of paintings *the Sancta*. His remarks on the Teacher's admonition, which was known since E. Blavatskaya's times as *Mahatma Moria*, prepared a separate book - *The leaves from Moria's Garden. Summons* – it was the first volume of highly known *Theory of Living Ethics, or Agni-Yoga*. Roerich travelled to Arizona and New-Mexico in order to research and to reflect on his canvas the signs of ancient American civilizations. But still Roerich's main dream was to explore the East¹⁴⁵.

In 1923 the Roerich's family travelled through India and Central Asia, to Tibet, North-West China, to Altai and to Mongolia. As an artistic result of these years were created about 500 paintings organized by cycles: *The His Country, The Oriental Banners, The Relic and The Stronghold* etc. The cycles explored ancient manuscripts, art memorials, rituals and legends, religious cults and collected a lot of collections. Roerich created images of great Teachers of mankind, thinkers and enlighteners – Christ, Buddha, Krishna, Mahomet, Confucius, Lao-Tzu, Padma Sambkhava, Milarepa, Nagardguni, and Conkapi. Especially in these years he showed himself as a formed

¹⁴⁴ Беликов, П., Князева, В. *Рерих. Жизнь замечательных людей*. М.: Молодая гвардия, 1973, С.58-64.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en> Retrieved on 25.09.14.

mature artist with an established philosophical beliefs and life vision. In 1926 the Roerich turned to Moscow. The artist brought a message Mahatma of spiritual teachers of the East to the Soviet Government. He talked with G.V. Chicherin and A.V. Lunacharsky, brought as a gift a paintings' cycle to Russia – the *Maitreya*, afterwards he continued his travel through Asia. As a result of the great central-Asian expedition Roerich published a travel dairy *Altai-the Himalayas* and wrote a book *The Heart of Asia*, where he described his way over 35 mountain passes, achieved to decrypt the meaning of ancient prophecy and legends, from the antiquity of unrecorded times, touched the mysteries of Shambala.



N. Roerich, *World's Mother*, Banners of the East Series, 1924, tempera on canvas. 103.3 x 72.3.

N. Roerich, *Remember!* 1924, tempera on canvas, 127 x 91.4.

"The Shambala Doctrine is highly vital", wrote Roerich. "This doctrine from the Himalayan does not offer dreams but it offers very practical advices"¹⁴⁶. The main mistake is the simplified understanding of Shambala, search for a particular place on a geographic map. The way to Shambala is a way of consciousness¹⁴⁷.

In 1928 Nicholas Konstantinovich Roerich and Helena Ivanovna Roerich organized the Institute of the Himalayan Studies *Urusvati*, their son George Roerich leded it. The scientific activities of the Institute that attracted attention of a number of significant scientists like A. Einstein, N.I. Vavilov, D. Boshet, G. Tucci were impressive by its significance and variety; unfortunately it was closed soon, due to the World

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁴⁷ Рерих, Н.К. Держатели.Дневники.Том1, М.: МЦР, 1995, С.254-259.

War II. The valley of Kulu was chosen by Roerich's family as the permanent residence. At the beginning of 1930s Roerich travelled to the USA and Europe, realized a great work in political and cultural circles of various countries, aiming to prepare an international agreement on protection of mental and cultural property of mankind; the urgency and necessity was caused by the increased threat of a new world war. He created a program triptych *Madonna Oriflamme*. Oriflamme (in Latin Aurum – gold, flamma - flame). As in the Middle Age France existed a gonfalon of the king, which was thrown out on the spear at the crucial moment of the battle. In Roerich's work *Lady Chervonoplammennaya* framed with great Christian Ascetics Francisco Assisiensis and Sergey Radonezhsky has in her hands a Banner of Peace, in the middle of which are depicted three circles in a circumference – one of the oldest world's symbols, interpreted by different cultures.

Grace to the efforts of Nicolai Roerich, on 15th of April in 1935 in Washington, in The White House was signed *the Roerich's Pact* - an International Agreement on Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions as well as of Historical Monuments during war and peace.

The hugest achievement of this inter-American treaty was the official recognition of the fact that cultural objects, artistic and historical monuments, scientific institutions must be protected and are of the bigger importance than military defence¹⁴⁸.



N. Roerich, *Great spirit of the Himalayas*, 1933, tempera on canvas, 74.5 x 118.

¹⁴⁸ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.



N. Roerich, *Star of the Hero*, 1932, tempera on canvas, 180 x 135.

In 1934 -1935 Roerich travelled to China and Mongolia (The Manchuria expedition). By the assignment of the US Ministry of Agriculture he was working on the research of drought-resistant plants. In addition, he continued a vast social educational program among Russian immigrants in Harbin. In collaboration with his son George and brother V.K. Roerich, he was organizing the cooperative movement on irrigation of the desert lands and creation of new settlements and University centre, was executed and orientated on help from Mongolia government. Was elaborated the program article *Let the Deserts Flourish* which illustrated these ideas. From 1935 Roerich permanently lived and worked in Kulu, concentrating on painting, publishing, correspondence and great public work, being in touch with prominent Indian figures (J. Neru and I. Gandhi among others). One of main subjects of his interest was the fate of Russia; he illustrated his thoughts in his notebook: "All, around me, I can see two topics combined together - Russia and the Himalayas"¹⁴⁹.

Thus, it is not surprising to find in his latest period of creative work such paintings as: *Nastasia Mikulichna*, *Heroes Waking Up*, *Sviatogor*, dedicated to the glory deeds of Russian nation in the Great Patriotic War and legends; those motives appeared along with the great Himalayas suite. One of the numerous talents of Nikolai Roerich

¹⁴⁹ Рерих, Н.К. Держатели.Дневники.Том1, М.: МЦР, 1995, С.254-256.

was his enormous capacity for work. The total amount of his paintings, according to the valuations of fine arts specialists, varies from five to seven thousand¹⁵⁰. The literature heritage of N. Roerich was no less significant: ten volumes were published in his lifetime, but still it was not the full collection of notes, essays, articles, letters and speeches. Indian professor Gengoli found the best definition to the Roerich's writings - "spiritual appeals"¹⁵¹.

N. Roerich died on December 13, 1947 in India. A monument was mounted on the same place where his body was cremated. The monument is decorated by the following inscription: "The body of the Great Saint (Maharishi) Nicholas Roerich, a great friend of India was burnt at this place on Maghar 30, 2004 of the Vikram era, which coincides with December 15, 1947. Om Ram"¹⁵².

3.7 George Nikolaevich Roerich – art and science hand in hand



Photos of G.N. Roerich.1958, 1929, unknown author.

Photo of G. Roerich with his brother, Svetoslav.1960, unknown author.

G. Roerich is a famous Russian orientalist, philologist, historian, art historian, ethnographer, traveller, who widely developed the world's acknowledgement of Tibetology, Indology and Mongolian sciences. From the very young age he was already keen on knowledge, history, riding and footing; George was talented in learning new languages, was artistically gifted, as a person he was very sociable and loved people. George Nikolaevich was the first son in the family of Roerich. He

¹⁵⁰ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.web.

¹⁵² Ibid, p.web.

was born in 1902 in Novgorod province, near the village of Okulovka of Kuneva estate. George Roerich spent his childhood and adolescence in St. Petersburg and in the Valdai; there he grew in the atmosphere of interest in spiritual culture of the East. Such issues as secrets of ancient burial mounds and cemeteries of the Great Eurasian Steppe of the Great Migration, the mysteries of birth and death of nomadic empires, - all these issues deeply impressed and interested the future orientalist. The ancient cultures of Egypt and Babylonia fulfilled the imagination of a young Roerich since his scholarship. Grace to the lessons with a famous Russian Egyptologist, B.A. Turaev, he felt a big curiosity for the East culture. During Roerich's family travelling his interests widely expanded, especially when they were taking their way from the Middle East to the different parts of Asia. Thus George learned the Mongolian language and literature with a help of a recognized Mongolist A.D. Rudnev, and since then the Central Asia became the important issue of his interests and researches¹⁵³.

In 1919, George entered the Indo-Iranian branch of the School of Oriental Languages at the University of London, where he studied Persian language and Sanskrit with a professor Denison Ross. At that moment he already dominated Greek, Latin, and a part of being fluent in many European languages. Georgie did not leave the studies of languages in America, in the Harvard University, where he developed his knowledge of Sanskrit with Professor Ch.L. Lanman. Simultaneously George Konstantinovich studied Paly and Chinese. He graduated from Harvard University in 1922, from the department of Indian philology with a bachelor's degree. A young Roerich deepened his education in 1923 in the School of Oriental Languages at the Sorbonne (the hugest European centre of the Oriental Studies). Finally George Nikolaevich was fluent in Sanskrit, Paly, Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian, Iranian, and number of different actual languages in India¹⁵⁴.

When the Central Asian expedition took place in 1923-1928 a young man actively participated in the research. Travelling through the ways which were absolutely unknown for science, the expedition had successfully blazed new way and ended the epic large research routes to the Central Asia that were started in the XIX century by N.M. Przhevalsky and G.N. Kozlov, and further developed by V.I.

¹⁵³ Kravchenko, N., Zaitsev ,V. *Professor George de Roerich and His Outstanding Contribution to Indo-Asian Studies*. Retrived on 12.08.2014. at the <http://www.ignca.nic.in/nl002501.htm>.

¹⁵⁴ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en> Retrived on 25.09.14.

Roborovsky, P.K. Kozlov, Y. Rokhil and Sven Hedin. George Konstantinovich revealed him-self as a scientist during this expedition. Based in Darjeeling, expedition of N.K. Roerich was holding its research work in Sikkim (India) from the end of 1923 until the spring of 1925. A part from research was made a significant collection of Tibetan Buddhist thangkas, written on silk, it was analysed in detail by G.N. Roerich in his *Tibetan painting*. George Nikolaevich practised his knowledge of the Tibetan language, talking with Lamas, for the first time during his work in Sikkim. In the late autumn of 1925 the expedition took its way from Ladakh through the Karakorum Range to the Sintszyan - one of the highest caravan ways of the world. The description of the expedition was made by George Nikolaevich in his book *On the Paths of Middle Asia*. The expedition was long, full of difficulties; so far George Nikolaevich was a significant assistant for his father. Moreover, he was responsible for the scientific work, many organizational functions and even the armed guard of the expedition; the journey was over in May 1928. The expedition helped George Roerich to become proficient in the Tibetan language and dialects, see the life, customs and lifestyle of the nomads, their culture, to develop the research work, to elaborate the richest materials¹⁵⁵.

At the end of the expedition Roerich chose the Indian valley, Kullu as their permanent residence. George Nikolaevich directed the Institute of Himalayan Studies *Urusvati*, which was found by his father. The main purpose of the Institute's work was a comprehensive study of the East (history, archaeology, botany, zoology, mineralogy, anthropology, etc.). During twelve years, from 1930 to 1942 Georgie Roerich was a head of the Institute and its soul. He organized and led several expeditions to the northern India, Kashmir, Sikkim, Ladakh, developed an extremely intensive research work. Georgie Nikolaevich proposed in 1931 a periodization of archaeological sites, and indicated at new facilities for research in his article *Problems of Tibetan Archaeology*¹⁵⁶.

In 1932, G. Roerich wrote and published his research *The study of the Kalachakra*. In 1933 he wrote the article *The Tibetan dialect of Lahul* devoted to the language of a small principality in the western Himalayas. The scientist joined in 1934 - 1935 an expedition of his father which included such destinations as North Manchuria, Barga and the Gobi Desert in the foothills of the Khingan. Working in the Western

¹⁵⁵ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, web.p.

Himalayas, George Nikolaevich achieved to make the active scientific contacts with the most prominent orientalists of the world. He edited the *Journal of Urusvati*, elaborated the great research on the history of Central Asia, created a series of monographs on Tibetan philology, and prepared the Tibetan language dictionary. The *Blue Annals (The Blue Chronicle)* may be marked as one of his great scientific achievements. It consists of translation and commentary of one of the most important research works hold on the history of Tibet, elaborated in 1476-1478 by the Tibetan historian, Go-Lo-Tsawa Shon-nu-Pal. George Nikolaevich regarded Tibet not as an isolated mountain's chain in the centre of Asia, but as a special place on the planet, where could be found the keys to the historical fate of many nations. George Nikolaevich considered the epic of Geser Khan as extremely important source. In 1942 he created *The Legend of King Gesser out of the country Ling*, which united all known facts on Gesser. The variety of the scientist's interests included Indology, Tibetology, Mongolian, and Turkic Iranian studies in various aspects. Regarding the field of Tibetan studies, he deepened the direction of archaeology, history, ethnography, linguistics, literature, historiography, history, art, philosophy and religion¹⁵⁷.

After his father death in 1948 George Nikolaevich and his mother Helena Ivanovna left the Kulu Valley for Kalimpong which was situated on the border with Sikkim. George worked at the local University, heading the research seminar for graduate students, wrote a number of his new researches (*Amdossk dialect* and others), and accomplished the translation of the historical and geographical monument - *Life of Dharmasvama* - the story about Tibetan pilgrim who travelled to India in the XV century. He was nominated as a fellow of the American Archaeological and Ethnographic Society, the Royal Asiatic Society in London, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Paris Geographical Society, and others. George Roerich's way in Science could never be defined as of a *cabinet* scientist. He always preferred to get knowledge by his own *hands* and efforts – that was his method to obtain a wealth of research material. Grace to a very wide personal contacts of his father, and by his own scientific and personal achievements, George Nikolaevich had a chance to talk on diverse issues of Buddhology, Buddhism and Indian philosophy in general, with such great minds of India, as Jawaharlal Nehru, S. Radhakrishnan and others.

¹⁵⁷ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

Thanks to the conversations with famous lamas, pundits, yogis without any language barriers G.N. Roerich was able to elaborate a deep and close approach to the contemporary life of the ancient cultural traditions of the East. Regardless his permanent life out of his native land, through all his life Roerich felt a deepest love for Russia. He profoundly suffered the fate of the native land in the summer of 1941, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union; George Nikolaevich sent a telegram to London to I.M. Maisky, the Soviet ambassador in England, asking him to accept him as a volunteer to the Red Army. During the Second World War, G.N. Roerich actively participated in support actions and insisted on the treaty on Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments initiated by N.K. Roerich¹⁵⁸.

Georgie Roerich and his mother intended to return to Russia in the late 1940s, believing that they could contribute to the knowledge's development; however, they were not permitted to return to the country. George Nikolaevich finally got to Moscow only in the end of 1957, already after his mother's death, being invited by N.S. Khrushchev. The State gave him an apartment, granted the diploma of doctor of philology. He had lived in the Soviet Union for just two and a half years, when a sudden death came. Even staying only a short period of life time in Russia, he had achieved a lot. Leading the branch of History of Religion and Philosophy of India of the Institute of Asia of the Academy Of Science in the USSR, Roerich carried out the work on study, translation and publication of ancient philosophical monuments of the East; he further developed his scientific research. Moreover he achieved to publish several papers which became a great contribution to the development of national Orientalism science. The scientific presence and work of George Roerich in Russia made an enormous impact on the further development of Russian school of *classical* Indology (Buddology, cultural history and philosophy of India), which had such a significant loss with the death of S.F. Oldenburg, E.E. Obermiller, F.I. Shcherbatskaya, as well as remarkable young Indologists and Tibetologists V.S. Vorobiev-Desyatovsky and A.I. Vostrikov. The new approach of the Soviet Indology, appeared in the beginning of 1930s (living Indian languages, civil history and economics of India), were hardly associated with the study of cultural traditions. In the shortest period, George Nikolaevich largely recreated the industry of classical Indian Studies, reaffirmed an interest in it of a wide range of scientists in the related

¹⁵⁸ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

disciplines. G. Roerich initiated the teaching of the Tibetan language and studying of the Tibetan sources. He advised on all the tibetologic works in Moscow, Leningrad and in the periphery (particularly in the Buryat ASSR). He actually headed the study of the Mongolian sources and the medieval history of Mongolia. G.N. Roerich made an important contribution into the Mongolian historical literature in the Mongolian language, which enriched the range of the history of Mongolia sources. G.N. Roerich worked on elaboration of a Tibetan-Sanskrit-Russian-English dictionary for a quarter of century and prepared it for the publication. The volume of the dictionary achieved 98 sheets of copyright and it signified an outstanding event in the world of Tibetology. The monograph of Georgie Roerich *The Tibetan language* was published already after his death in 1961 in Moscow. Besides having returned to Russia, G.N. Roerich published and wrote a large number of articles, mainly relating to the history of political and cultural ties between the peoples of Asia. In collaboration with N.P. Shastina G.N. Roerich wrote the *Letter of Peter I to Lubsan-tayiji and its originator*. The article proclaimed that letter of Peter I, written in Mongolian by the Tibetan letters, was compiled by an expert in *Tangut, writing* Pavel Ivanovich Kulvinsky. This article discovered the history of Russia's ties with Asia. G. Roerich was interested in subject of the relations between Tibet and Mongolia. He wrote the article *Mongolian-Tibetan relations in the XIII and XIV centuries* and *Mongol-Tibetan relations in the XVI and early XVII century* as this issue was widely explored in the Tibetan sources¹⁵⁹.

The research works of G.N. Roerich hold by G.N. Roerich on Mongolia requires the special mention. He published an article on some of the notions of the *Secret History*. In addition, G.N. Roerich actively participated in the organization and work of the First International Congress of the Mongolian-philologists, where he made a paper on the Mongolian loan-words in Tibetan. In 1958 G.N. Roerich published a work *The main problems of Tibetan linguistics*, in which he embraced his twenty-five years work in the sphere of Tibetan linguistics. It was significant that G.N. Roerich defined the main issues for the work of the tibetologists-linguists in this essay; firstly it consisted of the study of the modern dialects and linguistic preparation of maps, and secondly, it touched the subject of the elucidation of the phonetic system of the written language of ancient Tibet, and the development of the Tibetan written language as well as its relation to the spoken language, and finally, - the description of the history of written language and its relationship to the spoken element.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, web.p.

Moreover, this work revealed the development of the Tangut problem, and the issue of the comparative study of the Tibetan dialects and other Tibeto-Burman languages. G.N. Roerich had revived all the translation work of ancient philosophy and literature sources, besides Georgie Roerich began teaching the Vedic language. Grace to his efforts the series *Bibliotheca Buddhica* was illuminated, the first edition of the *Dhammapada* – collection of the Buddha's aphorisms brought to life in translation of V.N. Toporov edited by G.N. Roerich. In addition G.N. Roerich had developed a paper on *The Legend of Rama in Tibet* for the XXV International Congress of Orientalists. This work had already been challenged at the Congress in the absence of the author¹⁶⁰.

George Nikolaevich Roerich gave much importance to the work with youth. He revealed his vast knowledge with anyone who was interested in the Oriental studies. G.N. Roerich became not only a prominent specialist, but he was able to transmit his passion for science. Simultaneously he was very modest and natural in his behaviour, calm and optimistic. All who worked with Georgie Roerich remember this period as a brightest one. Having lived in Russia for a very short period of time, Roerich was able to attract a big number of young scholars of Indology and Tibetology, which learned a lot of Roerich's approach to science and further he had indicated in his fields. His apprentices and colleagues at the Institute of Oriental Studies of Roerich – A.M. Piatigorsky, E.S. Semeka, N.P. Shastina, V.A. Bogoslovsky mentioned in 1967 in the preface to their anthology *G.N. Roerich. Selected Works*, prepared by them:" His role in the work of Indological is expressed not only in the fact that he taught three Indian and Tibetan languages and continued his studies. For young researchers, he was a wonderful mentor in the Indian culture sphere. Indeed, such the concepts as *Veda, Buddhism, Vedanta, Karma* and etc., have been just abstractions or exotic images before were shown as a phenomenon in his conversation, well-translated into the language of Russian culture"¹⁶¹.

With time it became obvious that the contribution made by George Nikolaevich after his return to Russia was much more significant than just a scientific sphere, his main purpose was to give impetus to the new consciousness of his countrymen, to transmit them new ideas and spread their world view together with their

¹⁶⁰ Антощенко, В.И. "Исследования русского востоковеда В.В. Голубева (1878–1945) во Вьетнаме . Международная конференция Вьетнам в XX веке". М.: Ломоносов, 3, РОО: Мир Науки и Культуры, 2000, С.29-36.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p.50.

consciousness. One of the Roerich followers, Andrey Zelinsky, determined Roerich's role: "There's one important thing when we talk about the contribution to science, which was made by a man. If a scientist has left huge dictionaries, translations, works on philology, it is a matter of respect, admiration, but it still does not define the essential: firstly, for what he did it, and, secondly, what these dictionaries and translations can give us now. For us it is important to know whether the person has carried out the idea for which he did it. Has he left traces of his internal plans, his understanding of the historical reality of past and present. If he had left them, so he paved us some cuttings. So, George Nikolaevich paved the cuttings for sure" ¹⁶².

The return of the Roerich's heritage to the native land was no less significant than the revival of the school of Indology and Tibetology in Russia. George Roerich brought with him hundreds of Nicolai Roerich's paintings, an extensive library of hundreds of manuscripts in oriental languages, an archive of the Central-Asian expedition, part of the family collections (Buddhist paintings, ancient bronzes), and personal belongings of the eldest Roerich. George Nikolaevich achieved to break through a wall of silence that defined the names and work of Roerich in the Soviet Union, and thus to rediscover its national treasure to the homeland. On April, 12, 1958 a big show of the N.K. Roerich's paintings was held at the Kuznetsky bridge in Moscow. "The exhibition continues. A huge success. It is five thousand visitors every day," ¹⁶³- wrote George Roerich to his brother Svetoslav to India. "When we thought that the exhibition would be closed on May, 4, the crowd did not leave until 11 p.m. and did not let the directorate leave. Comments book is in 6 volumes!" ¹⁶⁴ - he reported later happily. Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Riga, Tbilisi – it was a huge success everywhere. Two editions of the N.K. Roerich exhibition catalogue were published in Moscow. An article in the central magazines was written, the film was shot. George Nikolaevich stayed in touch with the biographer of N.K. Roerich – P.F. Belikov, who often travelled from Tallinn to him, with R.Y. Rudzitis (Riga), who also wrote on Nicolai Roerich. The first monograph on the work of N.K. Roerich, released in 1963, was written by V.P. Knyazeva with the participation of George Nikolaevich. By the proposal of the writer Panferov, George Nikolaevich decided to release the first publication of *Pages of a Diary* of N.K. Roerich in the *October* magazine. (He had

¹⁶² Мельников, В.Л. "Николай Рерих и Императорское Русское Археологическое Общество". Санкт-Петербургский университет, СПб.: Изд-во СПб. гос. ун-та, 1997, № 3 (3437).

¹⁶³ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p.79.

two typewritten copies of *Pages of a Diary* back from India). G.N. Roerich often gave speeches and conferences at the museums and galleries, and was on radio and television. He often travelled to Leningrad, where he collaborated with Leningrad scientists V.S. Lublin, L.N. Gumilev, I.V. Sakharov. But one of the main purposes of G.N. Roerich was to found a Museum of N.K. Roerich in his native town; he discussed a possible foundation of the museum with the high-ranking officials of the Soviet government. The works of art, objects and documents from a huge collection, brought in the Soviet Union by G.N. Roerich had to fulfil the museum, as well as documents, memorial items, clothes and furniture from their former apartment in Moika, 83, saved in Leningrad by Mitusovs. Another part of the works of art was planned to pass to the museums in Moscow and Siberia. That was the desire of N.K. and H.I. Roerich. Besides, George Nikolaevich negotiated with the director of the Russian Museum, V.A. Pushkarev, who affirmed him to assign an independent exhibition hall for the permanent show of paintings of Nicholai Roerich¹⁶⁵.



Photos of G.N. Roerich. 1959-1960. G.N. Roerich (at the centre) at the opening of exhibition of paintings by S.N. Roerich at the State Museum of Fine Arts named after A.S. Pushkin. Moscow. May 11, 1960. From the right – L.S. Mitusova and I.M. Bogdanov. Unknown author.

"It will be on our way" – said George Nikolaevich to L.S. Mitusova in 1960 in respect to the Roerich's museum creation in Leningrad, having already got the consent for its foundation from the USSR Ministry for Culture. The Russian Geographical Society and other institutions participated in organizational work of foundation of the museum, the Leningrad authority had already was not opposed to this idea. Unfortunately the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.80.

sudden death of G.N. Roerich temporally stopped the realization of this idea. On May 11, 1960 was inaugurated the exhibition of famous painter Svetoslav Roerich – George's brother with the assistance of G.N. Roerich in the State Museum of Fine Arts named after A.S. Pushkin. It brought an enormous success and gathered multiples visitors. Ten days later on May 21, in 1960, G.N. Roerich passed away. George Nikolaevich Roerich was at the top of creative forces and capabilities¹⁶⁶.

3.8 Svetoslav Nikolaevich Roerich – under the banner of culture and art



Photo of S.N. Roerich. 1950s, unknown author.



Photo of S.N. Roerich and G.N. Roerich, 1950s, unknown author.



Photo of S.N. Roerich, 1982, unknown author.

Svetoslav Roerich was born in 1904 in St. Petersburg. Thanks to the family's high cultural level and the variety of artistic and intellectual interests the boy from his early childhood felt attraction to the arts. Usually in summer his parents and elder brother George used to travel to Pskov, the region of Tver and Novgorod provinces

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p.95.

and various other destinations, basing on the archaeological excavations and creative ideas of his father, but always in direction of north-western edge. Traditionally, during their journeys they fulfilled their collections, making sketches from the surroundings.

The drawings of five years old Svetoslav revealed a special curiosity and delicateness of eye of the future artist. The general education course he received in the gymnasium of K.I. May in St. Petersburg, where his father also passed the years of the scholarship, there he got first artistic drawing bases. Due to the health problems of Nicolai Roerich the family at the end of 1916 moved to the north-west coast of Ladoga Lake and in 1918 they left for Finland, which obtained independence. Precisely then, Svetoslav began taking systematic studies of painting under the guidance of his father, having a privilege to be taught by the great master, and a famous teacher. But Nicolai Roerich tried not to impose his style in art to a young son, instead attempted to wake a proper artistic vision in his son's works. Thus Sviatoslav's diverse interests and inclinations always received approval¹⁶⁷.

In 1919 Roerich's family went from Finland to London with the intention to travel to India. However, the way to this country was temporally not available for them, thus Nicholas Roerich confirmed the invitation to visit America with an exhibition tourne. Being In London and further at the Columbia University in New York, Svetoslav Nikolaevich chose architecture as main direction of his studies and after the course he was a graduate student at The Harvard University. Simultaneously, he created a lot of paintings, elaborated book illustrations and graphics. His graphic works were exhibited at the shows and were highly evaluated. The young artist was a theatre admirer: in collaboration with D. Hella he combined the ballet with the music of A. Steiner¹⁶⁸. But Svetoslav Roerich's real passion and main interest was still painting. His attachment to art marked the main line in his creative work and life; the pictures of the young painter deserved the first prize at the exhibition in Philadelphia.

In 1923 Roerich travelled from America to Bombay, where started a new period of creative and scientific activity for the family, now it was linked with India. Svetoslav took part in the research expeditions of his father, travelling to Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, studied and collected the works of art of the East populations, showed the great

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p.40.

¹⁶⁸ Дубаев, М.А. *Рерих. М.: Молодая гвардия, 2003.С. 8-17.*

interest in study of the local traditional medicine and the pharmacopoeia. In 1924, N.K. Roerich, his wife and eldest son left for a long expedition to the Central Asia, while Svetoslav decided to return to America in order to continue his artistic education and to develop the significant work that his parents started. Young Roerich worked as a director of the International Centre *Mundi's Crown* and was a vice-president of the Museum of N.K. Roerich in New York. With Svetoslav as a head various international exhibitions and competitions took place, in addition were prepared the links in exchange and attribution of works of art between museums of America, Europe and Asia. Due to the artistic activities, the young artist travelled a lot, exploring the cultural heritage of the nations of the East and the West. The first works of Svetoslav Roerich revealed a study of various schools and ancient traditions. A free old-Indian drawing, Indian miniature and the canons of Tibetan iconography, old-Russian paintings, Islamic ornaments, the elements of Greek, Persian art - all these were worked by Roerich, and was closely interconnected with the European tradition in his works¹⁶⁹.

His main artistic purpose was a search for harmony of individuality and the world, penetrating into the depths of the human spirit. Presumably it intersects with Nina Slobodinskaya's artistic goal, as she aimed to reveal an inner spirit of an every portrayed model, only achieving this goal, the sculptor considered that her work was completed. The subject of people and the *human world* in which they existed and which was changed in their hands - mostly inspired Svetoslav Roerich. He was not in a hurry to find and to determine his place in art, for as long as he was carrying on the responsibility of Roerich's cultural line development. In 1940, he prepared a personal exhibition *Paintings of India* in the USA. Besides, he almost always exhibited his paintings together with his father at the art performances. Svetoslav Roerich was quickly recognized as a significant artist, the Indian critic R. Tandan wrote about him: "Let's not forget that the great success is achieved by the artist in a very young age. He now has a sharp-sighted penetration into the true reality of things and phenomena. And we will not deceive the expectations, if we say that the coming years will be even more fruitful for Svetoslav Roerich, and his work will undoubtedly pave the way to life-synthesis, which is enclosed in the modern sense of the universality of culture"¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁹ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁷⁰ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

In 1939, the artist chose as a subject of his work - socially relevant works and created the whole cycle. The cycle started with a triptych, which plot was inspired by the events of the Second World War. The paintings represented the following big panels: *Where the humanity goes to, The Crucifixion of humanity and The Liberation*. The artist sensitively reacted to the tragic events that led to a global catastrophe; the artist challenged a conscience of each viewer with such questions: what every one of you made in response to the madness, injustice and useless sufferings? The artist demanded in his works conscious social responsibility and a civil position for everything that happened in the human world. Svetoslav Roerich did not express his active social position only in his paintings, but also in his life's deeds. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, he and his brother addressed a letter with the expression of willingness to be volunteers in the Red Army and expressed their full duty to the Soviet Embassy in London. During the Second World War, Nicolai Konstantinovich and Svetoslav Nikolaevich organized a common exhibition of paintings in India in favour of the Soviet Red Cross and the Red Army. With the same purpose Roerich's family prepared the fund raising, gave a talk on the radio, published books. As all Roerich, Svetoslav Nikolaevich passionately supported the independence of India and approved the leaders of the Indian freedom movement. In 1942, Sviatoslav met Jawaharlal Nehru, who more than once visited Roerichs in Kullu and always welcomed their participation in the cultural life of India. A warm approach of Roerich's family, love and respect towards India, brought in response the sincere recognition and fame to Roerichs in this country.

In 1945 Svetoslav Nikolaevich married one of the most famous Indian actress, who was actively promoting culture and education - Devika Rani. The couple chose as their residence the suburbs of Bangalore. Many Russians, who travelled to India, were in their hospitable home. Roerichs used to stay in spring in the Himalayan slopes, at his father's house, where Svetoslav Nikolaevich organized an art gallery. After the death of N.K. Roerich in 1947 and his older brother in 1960, Svetoslav developed the traditional family activities, trying to expand and transmit them in the Indo-Soviet scientific and cultural community. Already in 1960, the first time after a long absence, Sviatoslav Roerich returned to Russia bringing a large art exhibition. As a result, there was an endless stream of visitors at the exhibitions in Moscow and Leningrad which left many thank-entries to the visitor's book, a number of interviews and numerous publications in the press, showed that Svetoslav Roerich was

recognized as an artist and his works found a sincere admiration of Russian citizens. "A trip to the Soviet Union was a turning point in our lives,"¹⁷¹ - said the artist later.

In 1974-1975 Svetoslav Roerich prepared the second exposition in the Soviet Union, which coincided with the seventieth anniversary of the father master. Making a speech at his exhibition's inauguration in Moscow, he said: "I am happy that my exhibition will be held at the Tretyakoff Gallery. This special place is surrounded by a halo, sanctified by the great traditions of Russian art. I exhibit the pictures of different periods here. There are pictures of an early period, just a few, there are the latest ones. I work in the portrait and landscape, and genre, and in an allegorical manner, chose the topics that are close to me, the ideas that I would like to share. I am not linked with the customers, but work freely, and you will see what exactly I wanted to say at the exhibition"¹⁷².

The exhibition was hold in five towns of the Soviet Union; it was attended by over eight hundred thousands of visitors. Its success was obvious and showed urge of Russians towards new in art and cultural values.



S. Roerich, *Pandit Moru Ram*, 1973, oil on canvas, 124 x 91.

¹⁷¹ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en> . Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁷²ibid, web p. Retrived on 25.09.14.



S. Roerich. *Portrait of Devika Rani Roerich*, 1946, oil on canvas, 38 x 37,5.



S. Roerich. *Portrait of H.I. Roerich*, oil on canvas, 1000 x 1173.



Photo of S. Roerich and D.Rani Roerich, 1960, unknown author.

A genre of portrait occupied a special place in the artist's creative work. Sviatoslav Roerich created many portraits of Nicholas Roerich – he elaborated over 30 drawings of his father, the first one was painted in 1916 in Finland, and the two last portraits were created in 1947 before his death. Among others, stand out the portraits of his mother - *Helena*, and wife - *Devika Rani Roerich*, as well as of many prominent personalities of India: its artists, scientists, writers and ordinary workers. The portrait of *Jawaharlal Nehru* by Svetoslav Roerich can be found in the meeting room of the Indian Parliament; *President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's* portrait is seen in the presidential palace. The artist attempted to obtain not only the exactitude of a psychological characteristic, but also to identify the human, moral ideals in models.

In this regard are meaningful Rabindranath Tagore's words: "Personal begins where infinite becomes finite, not losing its infinity"¹⁷³. Obviously the same approach we find in Slobodinskaya's creative vision, who tried to find and portray a human essence of a model through its deep psychological characteristic.

Tagore's definition may be attached as an epigraph to the portraits of Svetoslav Roerich. His works can be found in the collections of the museums in France, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the USA, India and other countries. Svyatoslav Roerich's works are in the collection of the Tretyakoff Gallery, the State Hermitage Museum, the Museum of Oriental Art, and the Art Gallery of Novosibirsk. The artist's paintings are featured by a true mastery, the talent to create complex harmonic composition and organize the space, a wonderful purity of colours, the expressiveness of the figure, coloristic richness. Moreover, not only a true perfection in technique, but also a deep understanding of public purpose of art, a truly humanistic fulfilment of his painting characterized his work. A lot of Svetoslav Roerich's works, such as *Look, Mankind, I move among these shadows, We build the prisons by ourselves, You should not see this flame, Closer to you, Mother Earth*, show the intransigence with the dark side of life.

Talking with journalists, Sviatoslav Roerich said: " I always try to attach to India, where I lived for many years all that I received from Russia and in Russia, and, on the other hand, everything I do in India, belongs to my country"¹⁷⁴.

Multilateral activities of S.N. Roerich were highly approved and recognized in Russia and other countries. Besides all, the artist was a honorary member of the Academy of Arts, awarded by the International Prize of Jawaharlal Nehru, a honorary member of the Bulgarian Academy of Arts. India acknowledged him with its highest award - the *Padsha-Bhushan*. Svetoslav Nikolaevich made an important contribution into the education's field and headed the School of Art of Sri Aurobindo in Bangalore. He achieved to be a true spiritual heir of Nicolai Roerich and successfully developed his ideas and work. He died on January 30 in 1993¹⁷⁵.

¹⁷³ The Roerich's Museum –Institute in St.Petersburg: <http://www.roerich.spb.ru/en>. Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, web page. Retrived on 25.09.14.

¹⁷⁵ We should not underestimate the cultural, artistic, philosophical and historical heritage of Roerich's family. The impact of their vast cultural, political and artistic activities is echoed all around the world. If in the Soviet epoch N. Roerich's figure was regarded as cultural spiritual free-minded leader of the whole generations of Russian *truth-searching* intelligentsia, his family became an unofficial epicenter of cultural and artistic achievements and symbolized a *freedom of spirit* – a notion and mind's state, which Soviet totalitarian governors so fervently tried to suppress. Probably due to the fearless search, an open-minded attitude to life, wisdom, incredible artistic talent, love and respect towards ancient



N. Slobodinskaya, *Buddha*, 1940s, plaster cast.

Russian heritage and legacy, vast scientific achievements, Roerich, apparently, embodied all the best qualities of Russian intelligentsia. Still scientific world discovers Roerich family's achievements and artistic, scientific knowledge left behind; undoubtedly the subject deserves a special approach and a separate study. For more sources on this questions see: Шапошникова, Л.В. *Сотрудница космических сил .Письма Елены Рерих*. Т.1:1929–1938. , Минск: ПРАМЕБ,1992; Кайдаш, С. "Молодые годы Елены Рерих". *Утренняя звезда: альманах.*, М.: МЦР, 1993, №3. С.138–156; Книжник, Т.О. "Земная ипостась космического Иерарха: Письма Е.И.Рерих к Н.К., Ю.Н., С.Н. Рерихам". *Новая эпоха*.1999, №3 (22), С.20–23. Рерих, Н.К. *Великий облик . Листы дневника. Николай Рерих*. М.: МЦР, 1999; Фосдик, Д. "Воспоминания. Мир Огненный (Новая Эпоха)". №1 (20), 1999, С.15–16; Рерих, Н.К. *Сорок лет. Листы дневника. Николай Рерих*. М.: МЦР, 2000; Рерих. *Всемирный биографический энциклопедический словарь*. М.: Большая Российская энциклопедия, 1998.

3.9 Russian Intelligentsia's fate in the Post-Imperial space

*The murmurs ebb; onto the stage I enter.
I am trying, standing in the door,
To discover in the distant echoes
What the coming years may hold in store.*

*The nocturnal darkness with a thousand
Binoculars is focused onto me.
Take away this cup, O Abba Father,
Everything is possible to Thee.*

*I am fond of this Thy stubborn project,
And to play my part I am content.
But another drama is in progress,
And, this once, O let me be exempt.*

*But the plan of action is determined,
And the end irrevocably sealed.
I am alone; all round me drowns in falsehood:
Life is not a walk across a field.*

Boris Pasternak, *Hamlet*, 1946.

Nina Slobodinskaya belonged to the social circle of so called *intelligentsia* (cultural and intellectual group of society, often nobles by origin, which existed already in the pre-revolutionary epoch) and her life, accordingly, may be regarded as a kind of reflection of its fate, as she deeply suffered from consequences of her social affiliation. This subject deserves a special attention, especially as it directly concerned and defined life of Nina Slobodinskaya and her creative path, thereby we will illuminate some problems of its historical fate. A side of social belonging, intelligentsia's circle defined the sculptor's philosophical vision and world view as well as directly influenced the formation of her artistic way, a spiritual goal and the content of her creative searches.

The whole class of intelligentsia was under a not spelled official *verdict* of the new Proletarian Government. The intelligentsia's class lost its freedom of behaviour, a free discussion on philosophical and political issues could lead directly wholes families to the imprisonment, a severe control and their espionage were established by the new government. Ironically, according to Lotman, the main painful subject for Russian intelligentsia always was a matter of *Freedom*. Mostly all discussions hold

were concentrated around this theme. We even may define *Freedom* as the most significant issue for intelligentsia: personal, spiritual, physic, mental etc¹⁷⁶.

Originally intelligentsia considered themselves as a free, independent thinking social group, only further appears a self-critic thesis based on a suggestion that inner slavery, or inner absence of freedom of this social class is projected to the “outside society”¹⁷⁷. A so called *intelligent* (an accepted notion of a person who belongs to the intelligentsia class in Russia already in the late XIX century, which we also will use further) can be considered as a subject or individual of a specific discourse of intelligentsia. The definition of *intelligentsia* should be made in frames of this discourse space. The conceptual complex of Russian intelligentsia is an important issue which always was contradicted. *The intelligentsia and freedom* – it challenges a sense and place of *Freedom* in worldview of Russian intelligentsia, but it also touches its dreams, which are full of freedom, not forgetting its practical fight for civil liberty and rights. From other hand, there is a challenge of a subordination of the intelligentsia's group to the government's power, its social-political system. But, curiously, the main intelligentsia's submission was caused by its proper ideas and prejudices¹⁷⁸.

Regarding its subject, the discourse on intelligentsia appears to be capacious and multidimensional: geographical and cultural space, history and eschatology, morality and politics, fate and mission – those are not just issues and challenges, which concerned many generations of Russian intelligentsia, but first of all they represent categories, beyond which the development of the intelligentsia's discourse is impossible¹⁷⁹. In the most *nature* of Russian intelligentsia we see duality. At one hand it appears to be a result of an attempt to create an educated society's group, following the European example – kind of intellectual elite. And the notion

¹⁷⁶The issue of Russian intelligentsia was traditionally contradictory, their role, aspects and space of their activities, in spiritual, cultural and historical development of Russia has been challenging and hence deserves a deep glance and attentive approach. Especially deeply this issue was revealed by Russian philosopher N. Berdiaev, who showed the spiritual role of intelligentsia in the country's fate. He also developed the idea of creative freedom preserved amidst this group during the state's persecution in the post-revolutionary epoch. F. Vipper has made a differentiation of this elite group. To see more on this subject: Berdiaev, N. *Духовный кризис интеллигенции: Статьи по общественной и политической психологии. (1907-1909)*. СПб.: Алгоритм, 1910; Булгаков, С.Н. *Два града: Исследования о природе общественных идеалов*. М.: Книжник, 1911; Булгаков, С.Н. *Интеллигенция и религия. Русская мысль*. М.: Книжник, 1908.

¹⁷⁷ Успенский, Б.А., Лотман, Ю.М. *Роль дуальных моделей в динамике русской культуры (до конца XVIII века)*. Труды по русской и славянской филологии», XXVIII, М.:Тарту, 1997, С.23.

¹⁷⁸ Лотман, М. Ю. *Интеллигенция и свобода (к анализу интеллигентского дискурса)*. Таллинн: Искусство, 1990, С.12.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p.2.

svoe-chujoe – my-not mine. The orientation to the West in psychological terms always signified the orientation to the freedom. But from another point of view the very orientation at some not national specific model, could mean the contrary - limitation of a free search; the attempt to squeeze the life's diversity into the narrow frames of ready solutions. In theory of *slavianofills* – Slav's history orientated and based, freedom cannot be a result of *slavish imitation*; moreover, the Orthodox East with its ideal of organic collegiality, conciliarism and assembly is perceived as a more freeway in comparison with mechanic West and its rational and formal freedom¹⁸⁰. Intelligentsia can be defined as special circle, in paradox way combining principal democracy of its convictions with elitism of psychological beliefs. Having defined Russian intelligentsia, we return to the subject of Russian Intelligentsia's role in the October Revolution and its future fate.

After the October Revolution the Bolsheviks were interested in gaining the collaboration and support of intelligentsia, not feeling strong enough their new position in the country. Since already in the late XVIII century there were attempts from the intelligentsia circle to oppose the State's conduct and injustice. By origin those first figures were from nobles' families, who usually got a significant education and had developed free-mind thinking. In the late XIX and the early XX Intelligentsia becomes a diverse and significant group, represented by members of the nobility, middle-class. The intelligentsia featured by a constant oppose, criticism and a will to change life circumstances of the majority of poor population in The Russian Empire for better. Intelligentsia did not accept fundamental inequities and social equilibrations of tsarist Russia. Among intelligentsia could be found the representatives of any professions, such as: lawyers, scientists, writers, painters, professional craftsmen, and teachers. Russian classic writers vividly illustrate all their types and variety as well as different levels and subjects of their criticism.

Criticism differed in its forms: it could have relatively subtle forms, reflected in mercy and understanding of the life difficulties and sufferings of the lower social class of workers or peasants. But the oppose and criticism could convert into aggressive and active forms and could even finish with political violence, assassination, especially of government's officials, starting with policemen and ending with the tsar. Therefore the activists belonged to so called *militant intellectuals*. They represented the

¹⁸⁰ Лотман, М.Ю. *Интеллигенция и свобода (к анализу интеллигентского дискурса)*. Таллинн: Искусство, 1990, С.12-19.

minority of *intelligentsia* and were even criticized for their eccentric and *inhuman* behaviour by the rest of the group. The majority of *intelligentsia* represented a well-being and successful social group. Many professionals were university graduates, who dedicated their lives to the carrier's development often being at service of the State. The industry and commerce representatives were actively working without considering any social changes: their criticism ended in a close friend's circle. The significant part of *intelligentsia* consisted of creative intellectuals who were totally indifferent to the spirit of political criticism; instead they were more concerned about literary, artistic issues. No doubt the *intelligentsia* regarded themselves as a special minority – a kind of an elite society, known by its devotion to the higher moral challenges and having a significant spiritual purpose of serving the people. The most *upper-minded* considered its members responsible of social injustices, low-class people's sufferings and life difficulties. Many of the most honoured and sincere sacrificed their comfort, well-being and even their lives to the moral imperative of helping the deprived¹⁸¹. There was a significant social movement of *intelligentsia*, which left for the villages, aiming to devote their professional skills as agronomists, teachers, and doctors, engineers in order to improve and focus on facilitating of peasants' life. The main idea was to give a *rebirth* to peasants and villages. Others concentrated on organization of political groupings in a wide range of the ideological directions. The political parties from liberal conservatism to anarchism appeared in the early XX century, so the majority of active *intelligentsia* attempted to enter them, in order to achieve positive life's changes. It is almost impossible to define precisely all types of its group. As it could be regarded as more *state of mind* than a social position; it becomes a truly complicate task to characterize all the group's members. There is no a clear division of *intelligentsia* and *non-intelligentsia*. Political differences were not clearly defined and political forces were not in as strong opposition. Such notions as *self-consciousness*, *nation's fate* and *its spiritual task* were the main topics of *intelligentsia*'s conversations, which are widely depicted in literature. Big part of *intelligentsia* in theory approved the ideas of the Revolution and shared the spirit of enthusiasm of the political *intelligentsia* but they did not consider that it was a realistic way of Russian nation's fate¹⁸². The Russian

¹⁸¹ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp.158-159.

¹⁸² Кривопалова, Н.Ю. *Российская провинциальная интеллигенция в 1907—1914 гг.: социальная структура и деятельность (на материалах Самарской губернии.)*. Самара: ООО «Офорт», 2009, С. 230.

intelligentsia was always very sensitive to European artistic, philosophic and politic developments and news. The most recent European ideas were widely introduced into Russian artistic life, but soon Russia not just adopted the foreign ideas but could simply astonish the European minds with proper achievements in Arts, music, literature and philosophy, bringing a serious contribution to western world in a variety of forms (Diaghilev's Ballet Ruse, artists Kandinsky, Chagall, Malevich, Tatlin and others, not to forget the new approach to orchestral music created by Stravinsky).

The majority of intelligentsia before 1917 did not see the revolution as connected with the intelligentsia's aim of serving the people, but after the October Revolution, it was already a fact, a significant part accepted that the Russian revolution was a logic continuation of the idealized and expected social changes. Finally, many groups started to believe that the revolution provided the material base for spiritual stimulation so needed for the active social changes in a further developing Empire. Feeling a moral's duty to bring the life's improvement to the society, a significant part of intelligentsia did let a hope and aspirations to conquer the uncertainty and fear of the future. Thus, by 1917, the intelligentsia, was separated in its political views but still joined by its idealism, its sense of duty arising and its hopes for a transformed future for Russia¹⁸³. With a downfall of The Russian Royal Empire in 1917 many interior groups of intelligentsia, political and artistic, changed their approach to the political circumstances and began looking for new duties, new roles and new opportunities in the society. Curiously, precisely the most conservative members of the intelligentsia accepted with a main enthusiasm the political changes and even took part in the creation of a new base for the society's awakening from a revolutionary drama. They even were named the *reluctant revolutionaries*. Their reluctance appeared from the suspect that once major political changes were set in motion they might finish in blood and chaos. This concern was totally justified due to the further historical collisions. The radicals of the Petrograd Soviet took initiative from the hands of the centre-right, and at the period of its creation in the February revolution, the institution organized by the radical intelligentsia was pre-eminently, characterized by the variety of ideological views. Intelligentsia in that period without any doubt guarded the leading positions, regardless the fact that representatives of soldiers, workers and peasants were also active and radical. Revolutionary politics in

¹⁸³ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.230.

1917 can be regarded as competition's battles between intelligentsia and revolutionary mass activities. This group could most successfully triumph in the social revolution, finding the best manner of social reconstruction¹⁸⁴.

Meanwhile, only one section of the intelligentsia was at the top, but the Bolsheviks, over the others, on their top also had intelligentsia's representatives, attempting to control the mass's movement. The role of revolutionary intellectuals in the labour movement was increasingly significant. All history of the radical intelligentsia since the 1860s was defined by its fundamental quandary. We can just imagine how difficult it was for the minority group of intellectuals – different from other by their western type of education and social origin to become a strong political power and to take under control the increasing social chaos and disorder. Without any strictly elaborated structure or a plan, they claimed to achieve a social order. Certainly the physic strength of the revolution was represented by the peasantry and later by the working class¹⁸⁵.

The radical movements of the late XIX century clearly demonstrated the intelligentsia's attempts to take a political initiative in their hands. Apparently, they were seen as the potential source of revolution and were used for the revolution's needs by the revolutionary leaders. In *proximate future* (after having served for the revolution's needs) they became an unnecessary, dangerous element of the society, - subject for destruction and disappearance, as in the new government's mind could represent a hidden opposition and resistance to the communist's State. Some political groups tried to reach the population through education and propoganda; others definitely affirmed that violence would be more effective. Generally, the masses were indifferent to the blandishments of the intelligentsia and in this sense the revolution of 1917 was a real proof, that intelligentsia is able to manifest and state its active position, representing a whole important group, which seemed to be successfully working together on the same goal.

The established collaboration and alliance, however, soon began collapsing as the historical deeds of 1917 altered. The state of affairs with the creative and political intelligentsia was a complicated issue for the Bolsheviks. The difficulty Bolsheviks

¹⁸⁴ Вехи. Из глубины. М.: Изд-во Правда, 1991, С.49.

¹⁸⁵ Гаспаров, М. *Интеллектуалы, интеллигенты, интеллигентность*. В сб. Российская интеллигенция: история и судьба. М.: Наука, 1999, С.38.

faced in intelligentsia group was subjected to the impediment in their definition. Its very diversity and variety had proved very difficult to work on an approach, basing on the Marxist principles, mostly accepted by the Bolsheviks. Accordingly, the Soviet government first found considerable practical and theoretical challenges and questions, when it finally paid a special attention towards the intelligentsia. Keeping in mind the defined difficulties we could expect a more correct, attentive attitude and an intention to collaborate with the radical sections of the educated class, determined as the intelligentsia. The real historical circumstances showed a contrary on intelligentsia's treatment¹⁸⁶. Bolsheviks first intended to use this strength, but after the need in their enthusiastic revolutionary discourses was over together with the Revolution, Bolsheviks aimed to get rid of this society's group, not willing to share their power. The intelligentsia, mainly belonging to the field of the arts, too, the least radical, eventually discovered themselves as falling out of favour, even where they had been not substantial in trying to condemn what they thought of as bourgeois and counterrevolutionary art. The so called victory over the aesthetic values of the nineteenth-century bourgeois art, reflected by the Bolshoi ballet and opera, the recreation of the symphonic orchestra, the direct naturalistic nature of socialist realist painting and the mythological and optimistic characteristics of the Soviet novel (even though the content of these traditional forms was fulfilled with a social order commissions) represents one of the most curious and surprising consequences of the revolution¹⁸⁷.

With the end of the Civil War and the Revolution a new battle for the mind of the new Soviet man had to be organized. Firstly, various groupings within the party attempted to declare and assert their primary position in the governmental structure, naming itself as the official spokesman of the party. Furthermore, there was a diminishing band of non-communist intellectuals pretending to represent and preserve the values they had confessed before the revolution and developed along the paths of artistic creativity, which appeared in the early years of the century. Accordingly, there are three stages which may be observed in this battle, stating for the logical development of the revolution. First can be determined as the period of the Civil War (1917-1921), next period can be defined as the New Economic Policy (NEP 1921 to about 1928 - 1929) and the last reflects the emergence of Stalinism

¹⁸⁶ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.154.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p.164.

(1928/9-1936)¹⁸⁸. As the most important phase certainly should be considered the second one - NEP, as especially in this period the conflict of ideas and groups, which always existed was changed for the domination of a single faction, - the Stalinists. This period can also be characterized as a period of incredible intellectual and artistic development, especially in the fields of literature, painting, sculpture, architecture and cinema. The artistic movement of the avant-garde gained an international interest and admiration: major exhibitions took place in London, Paris and Los Angeles. Though behind this brilliant facade, however, cruel and bloody political and artistic struggles were being waged¹⁸⁹.

As mentioned before, the first period of the Soviet regime, the period of The Civil War and war on communism, the battle for survival was basically the main task, so that the intelligentsia's issue was put aside. Undoubtedly, the intelligentsia together with other population lived in misery and suffered especially in the big cities, from the general scourges of cold and starvation in 1919. The working class and party's representative's state officials did not face the same problems, having nourished themselves often with the humanitarian help, but, to be more clear, by the financial aid, received by Bolsheviks from some European political forces, interested in disappearance and social destruction of the economically powerful country with its increasing industrial strength¹⁹⁰. In addition, the mentioned intelligentsia as a group on account of their class's background often accused of sympathy for the counterrevolutionaries and thereby, being under a vigilance of the increasing secret police force. Strange but a fact, a significant number of intelligentsia took part in the counterrevolutionary groups. Regardless the political contradictions, artistic and intellectual freedom was enormous and the artists were totally uncontrolled. The anarchy reigned in arts. Many artists, philosophers, writers even came from abroad and took an important role in a further society's development. Universities functioned according to the old style and manner, facing the practical difficulties but without systematic ideological supervision. Free theatre and cinema shows and performances attracted the unprecedented numbers of the population. There were an enormous quantity of amateur groups of trade-unions and factory, entertaining

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.172.

¹⁸⁹ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.154.

¹⁹⁰ Гаспаров, М. *Интеллектуалы, интеллигенты, интеллигентность*. В сб. *Российская интеллигенция: история и судьба*, М.: Наука, 1999, С.26.

themselves with dance, choral music, theatricals, painting and writing. Even some religious and philosophical institutions were really active, for example Nikolay Berdyaev's famous *Spiritual Academy* at the Moscow University. Maxim Gorky became one of the first Russian writers to take part in the actual new government and to make a direct question to the flower of Russia's scientific, artistic and literary intelligentsia, *whether they accept the new politic and social changes or whether they stay in the old world?* The Proletkul't (The Proletarian Cultural-Educational Association) represented the major cultural institution which emerged, was dominated by Bolsheviks and which quite often contradicted Lenin on a number of serious issues, although one of their primary tasks was an organization of extensive chain of institutions, turning the Proletkult into one of the largest civilian organizations in the country besides the party¹⁹¹. The main purpose of the Proletkult was to create, in shortest terms, a working-class intelligentsia and a working-class culture.

A hard work was successfully executed: in attempt of educating the working-class and also in research and discoveries of the worker-poets, worker-painters; that *talented* minority had to replace the old elite of intelligentsia and to introduce the new values of the supposedly emerging proletarian culture, based on such topics as *nobility of work, collectivism and cooperation*. Grace to Lenin and his fellows, the Proletcult did not exist for long period; the motives of its leadership were under suspicion of Lenin, who understood it as collective strength which aimed to divide the party and bring down his own leadership¹⁹². Certainly, the strong internal divisions also affected, not permitting the development of the one-sided approach towards cultural heritage, direction in arts and especially to define the attitude and the relations with a class of Russian intelligentsia. The Proletcult's approach to the intelligentsia was quite controversial and did not dissemble its defiance of the *holders of old regime's values* and, simultaneously, could not dismiss the fact of impossibility to move ahead culture and arts without the *old* intelligentsia. The main concern and a challenge remained the same: whether the new proletarian culture should assimilate and give a continuation to bourgeois culture or should it destroy

¹⁹¹ Кривопалова, Н.Ю. *Российская провинциальная интеллигенция в 1907—1914 гг.: социальная структура и деятельность (на материалах Самарской губернии)*. Самара: ООО Офорт, 2009, С. 230.

¹⁹² Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp.155-163.

and criticize it and create a totally new approach, starting with a new history? The party and the Proletcult could not find the agreement on this vital problem¹⁹³.

The government after The Civil War was free to discuss this subject and finally to elaborate the definitive approach. The initial mood of optimism on the ease with which this natural transition might develop had disappeared and the future road was not seen clearly. The basic suggestions for the new strategy were proposed at the *Tenth Party Congress* in 1921, when Lenin determined to the party the New Economic Policy¹⁹⁴. The main issues discussed defined the State's role in the sector of the economy, which apparently was reduced. In the industry, commerce, agriculture, preserving in its hands only what Lenin defined as the *commanding heights* of the economy, so called large-scale industry, taxation, banking and transport. Market relations were considered as a major force in the Soviet economy. However, the vital issue of Russian intelligentsia's fate was also touched. Lenin defined intelligentsia as a *class enemy* and urged to keep vigilance of the intellectual influence of intelligentsia, who attempted to take advantage of new opportunities¹⁹⁵. Accordingly, NEP¹⁹⁶ had an ambiguous significance for intelligentsia. Such professionals as scientists and engineers in theory faced new career possibilities, Bolsheviks were obliged to attract specialists from pre-revolutionary times having no other choice since the early 1918. This party's declarations even attracted the Russian emigration in such a scale, that a number of the Civil War refugees returned back to the Soviet Russia. Main part of these specialists believed that NEP was the first necessary step on return to *normal* capitalist social and economic relations¹⁹⁷. This period was characterized by a brilliant enrichment of the Russian literary thought and poetry which was reflected in the work of writers such as Babel,

¹⁹³ Гаспаров, М. *Интеллектуалы, интеллигенты, интеллигентность*. В сб. *Российская интеллигенция: история и судьба*, М.: Наука, 1999, С.58.

¹⁹⁴ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.154.

¹⁹⁵ Гаспаров, М. *Интеллектуалы, интеллигенты, интеллигентность*. В сб. *Российская интеллигенция: история и судьба*, М.: Наука, 1999, С.68.

¹⁹⁶ "The New Economic Policy (NEP) was an economic policy of Soviet Russia proposed by Vladimir Lenin, who called it "state capitalism". The NEP represented a more capitalism-oriented economic policy, deemed necessary after the Russian Civil War of 1917 to 1922, to foster the economy of the country, which was almost ruined. The complete nationalization of industry, established during the period of War Communism, was partially revoked and a system of mixed economy was introduced, which allowed private individuals to own small enterprises, while the state continued to control banks, foreign trade, and large industries". Kenez, Peter. *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp.47–48.

¹⁹⁷ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp.158-167.

Esenin, Pilniak, Bulgakov, Alexei Tolstoy and Evgenii Zamyatin. Cinema and the visual arts as well mark the significant achievements of Russian Culture in the period of 1920s. Eisenstein, Vertov and the other Soviet film directors are regarded as pioneers first in Soviet but also in the world cinema. Eisenstein's method in editing, distribution of juxtaposing images (in order to achieve tense emotional effects) was wordily widespread. Silent films also deserved attention of the critics. The first step of tolerance was exceptional and therefore temporal. The Bolsheviks could not permit the formation of free-minded independent group of future Russian intelligentsia¹⁹⁸. When Stalin came to power the so called *liberal attitude* was suppressed. Stalin had conducted the unified straight autocratic political line which had to be depicted and supported in all artistic directions. The Old Russian intelligentsia did not serve for this purpose and in Stalin's mind was a superfluous element, which the new leader and its repressive machine of Communists had defined to annihilate. The idea of Stalin was to substitute the old intellectual and cultural elite, by faithful to the party and its ideals, new *Proletariat's intelligentsia*¹⁹⁹. Thereby, Stalin's verdict to the old intelligentsia was definitive and was not a subject of discussions anymore. Old intelligentsia had to disappear as a social group. That's how the dramatic decision was taken, and looking further, we may affirm, that with the KGB as his main practical tool, Stalin achieved his goal – the main part of old Russian intelligentsia perished in concentration camps, in prisons, during the Second World War, and especially in Stalin's governmental era. Only a small group of the Russian intelligentsia survived.

Today we may find documents, novels, written testimonies of how, step by step, lives of Russian intelligentsia were dramatically ruined, the proof of the nation's genocide, which was organized by the Soviet regime; the eradication which, finally, contributed to the disappearance of the *timeless moral values* (which were essential spiritual roots of the *Old Russia*) and the bearers of *Old culture* and *Nation's conscience*.

¹⁹⁸ Гаспаров, М. *Интеллектуалы, интеллигенты, интеллигентность*. В сб. *Российская интеллигенция: история и судьба*, М.: Наука, 1999, С.90.

¹⁹⁹ Read, C. *War and Revolution in Russia, 1914-22: The Collapse of Tsarism and the Establishment of Soviet Power (European History in Perspective)*. N.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.159.

3.10 Sculptural school. Teachers. Influences.

Craft in art is important as coal for fire.

Antoine Bourdelle²⁰⁰

3.11 The Vkhutemas

The Higher Art and Technical Studios (Вхутемас, Высшие художественно-технические мастерские)²⁰¹ were the Russian State Art and Technical workshops founded in 1920 in Moscow.



Photo of the Vhutemas students, 1920s, unknown author.

The Vhutemas played a role of top importance in formation of new post-revolutionary artistic system, culture, avant-garde development, applied arts, architecture and design. New Soviet educational centre united artists, architects of different artistic tendencies, becoming the crucial creative space in new Soviet reality. Significantly the most creative and innovative concepts of design and architecture in the whole country appeared in the Vhutemas, defining its general

²⁰⁰ Стародубова, В.В. Бурдель. М.: Искусство, 1970, С.7.

²⁰¹ Жадова, Л. ВХУТЕМАС — ВХУТЕИН. Страницы истории, М.: Декоративное искусство СССР, 1970, С.9-12.

development in Russia in 1920s -1930s. Under the professorship of Vladimir Tatlin, Alexandre Rodchenko, El Lisitsky the first range of designers started to work actively on industrial development. Traditions of industrial art in Russia are rooted in XIX century, as already in 1825 was inaugurated The School of Painting for Crafts on initiative of count Stroganoff. By the end of XIX century similar schools existed in the whole country.

After the October Revolution the whole system of artistic education faced dramatic changes and finally it was completely reorganized: the academic educational system was changed by the one, which reminded by established interrelation of professors and apprentices, a Renaissance's system. In a variety of cities were created free artistic workshops (SGHM). It was a sign of a totally new approach, neglecting an academic stereotype of the educational structure. From now and on every student could freely choose his main professor and follow classes of his workshop. In Moscow on the base of the Stroganoff Industrial Academy were created two workshops. Already the result of the first educational year showed defects of a new system – especially it showed *subjectivity* of such education: students studied a method of one teacher, but discovered a lack of general vast artistic knowledge. Neither students nor professors were satisfied with *subjective* method, all required an *objective* one²⁰². Consequently new government realized the necessity of a pedagogic system's creation, which would be elaborated in every detail. Thus in 1920 the second reform of artistic education took place. The aim of new educational institutions was: "to prepare artists-masters of the highest qualification for industry and preparation of instructors and directors for professional-technique education", what is defined in the Lenin's decree on 18 December of 1920.

The goals of the Vhutemas's creation were following: to organize an *objective* educational process of artistic disciplines; to approximate different arts and to elaborate a general system of education; finally to approximate an artistic material culture with industrial mass production. The Vhutemas reflected in it-self all difficulties and contradictions of creative processes taking place in Soviet Russia. As a result, the creative atmosphere of the Vhutemas and lately of the Vhutein provoked an appearance of new creative unions and groups such as *Obmohu*, *Achova*, *Oct*,

²⁰² Хан-Магомедов, С.О. ВХУТЕМАС. М.: Ладыя, 2000, С.32-34.

Oca, Aru, Rost and others. These unions consisted of students, professors, graduated apprentices of the Vhutemas. The creative life of the Vhutemas was truly passionate as numerous creative concepts, styles; tendencies appeared, self-defenced and developed, often contradicting one another. A friendly atmosphere characterized the Vhutemas, students felt as freely as professors and it provoked an active creative social life of the institution. A high independence of students strengthened a creative potential of the Vhutemas and generated a multiplicity of creative methods, styles and artistic ways. As a result it became a centre of avant-garde, constructivism and rationalism in architecture and suprematism²⁰³.



Photo of Malevich teaching, 1919-1920, unknown author.



A. Exter, *Romeo and Juliette*, 1920s, paper, gouache, costume's sketch.

As it was previously said, the educational goal of the Vhutemas was the preparation of highly qualified artists and masters, who would develop industries of a new Soviet State and educate an appearing new generation of working class. The Vhutemas counted with 8 specialized faculties: architecture, sculpture, fine arts, metalworking, woodworking, polygraph, textile, and ceramics. Every faculty accepted 100 students and finally it counted with 2.500 students. The educational concept of the Vhutemas supposed that students had to get first a general obligatory artistic course

²⁰³ Хан-Магомедов, С.О. ВХУТЕМАС. М.: Ладья, 2000, С.118-124.

and only then be specialized in their areas; it consisted of studying of plastic forms, chromatics; a special attention was given to drawing which was defined crucial and basic for any future specialization. Apprentices experimented with interrelation of colour and form, analysing as well spatial composition. Such classes as *Colour's influence* by Lyubov Popova (where were taught such subjects as colour's definition and analysis, colour's concretization, analysis of colours' elements, spatiality, forms), *Form through colour* by A. Osmiorkin, *Colour in space* by Alexandra Exter, *Colour on the plane* by Ivan Kliun, *Volume in space* by Nadezhda Udaltsova, *Construction* by A. Rodchenko, *Simultaneity of form and colour* by A. Drevin, *History of the Western Arts* by A. Nurenber, *Tutelage* by Wladimir Baranoff-Rossine; *Graphics*, and *Space* were obligatory for all students. Vesnin and Popova based their pedagogic method on analysis of objective world's real elements, aiming to discover an essence of things, to find its basis. They followed to this goal, using their proper way of form's analysis. For example, in order to define a colour and a form, to show air (in painting) and space, a depicted object was intersected by planes. It was considered that those additional (not existing in reality, but helpful) crossing over planes outline space. For the main object used substantial colours, while intersecting planes were semi-transparent. Students practised to elaborate still-lives with clearly defined planes, volumes and colours, spatial characteristics of simple laconic objects such as plates, material, cartoon, and jug. Students had to create their proper compositions, analysing and discomposing objects. For instance, creating a plate's composition apprentices used to cross over it by planes in order to show air, space and to uncover its colour and form²⁰⁴.

From 1923 the class *Colour* was regarded as additional to the general fine arts faculties. Theoretically and practically students studied there a colour's nature and laws of colour's combinations based on optics.

Colour's theory was taught by professors S. Kravkov (till 1926) and N. Fedorov (1924-1930) while A. Labas and G. Klucis headed practical classes. G.Klucis in Chan – Magomedov's opinion made greatest achievements in developing practical knowledge of this subject, giving classes at the number of faculties, claiming in 1926 that: "There, a colour was studied as a real industrial material and not as an aesthetic appendage"²⁰⁵.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p.143.

²⁰⁵ Хан-Магомедов, С.О. ВХУТЕМАС. М.: Ладья, 2000, С.119-24.



V. Kolpakova, *Colourful decision of facades of architectural volumes*, 1928, paper, gouache, class of colour's sample, headed by G. Klucis, The Vhutein.

G. Klucis, *Swallows*, 1928, paper, gouache, post-card's sketch to the All Union's Spartakiada.

Students were taught to find a difference between combining paints and combining colours, to find an additional colour to an elaborated grade; they also got knowledge on brightness, colour's intenseness, colour's heaviness and interrelation between colour and plane as well as on interrelation of colour and space. Professors used to give such tasks to students, as to construct volume with colour's aid, to find a spatial depth by a range of colourful planes, construction of intersecting planes etc.

The class *Volume* was created and directed by three sculptors: A. Babinsky (who was N. Slobodinskaya's professor in the previous to the Vhutemas Moscow's sculptural studio in 1924), B. Koroliov and A. Lavinsky, who introduced new method based on cubism's achievements at the first year of educational course of the sculptural faculty. As observes S. Chan-Magomedov in his work *The VHUTEMAS* from the very beginning professors aimed to develop an analytic approach to simple geometric figures, volumes and forms and its interrelations. A. Lavinsky already in early 1920s required students to depict a still-life in ceramics with geometric figures, not just to copy its elements but rather to express their artistic vision of this

composition's plastic forms. Sculptors elaborated a method, where a student, depending on his specialization, had to resolve tasks on voluminous composition from different elements (for example such as cylinder, cube, and circle). From 1923 the *Volume* classes were taught by I. Chaikov, Niss-Goldman, Muromtseva, Iodko and Teneta. Gradually, the *Volume* class became obligatory for all students of the Vhutemas, independently of their specialization, and as its main aim had a development of *plastic forms'* feeling and a capacity to *think in volume*.

Thus, was created a unique basis of artistic mediums of form creations for masters of all industries' areas. The attitude of future artists towards material was considered important; for instance architects considered that their main artistic material is space. Young designers saw construction as their main medium of artistic expressiveness and by its means expressed artistic idea of a project. A model-method of designing was introduced by professor N. Ladovsky, who considered that an architect should learn thinking in a voluminous-spatial composition, to make sketches not on paper but rather in volume and only in the end draw it on a sheet of paper. This method helped to liberate fantasy and potentiate means of expressiveness²⁰⁶.

In regard of the metalwork faculty, the priority was given to a practical knowledge, but still, in the beginning, students had traditional courses (such as proportions of technic forms, development of compositional and figurative skills etc.). Then students used to specialize at the departments of construction (form elaboration and general object's construction) and composition (colourful composition and exterior metal decoration). Besides general classes those students attained specialized theoretical classes, such as *Metal technology*, *Art of metal elaboration*, *History of art*, *Chemistry*, *History*, *Production's organization* and others. Practical knowledge which was got in workshops was considered of the primary importance.

Only grace to the appointment of A. Rodchenko in 1922 those disciplines were introduced and structured. It was A. Rodchenko who achieved to successfully combine art and technology, preparing first level specialists for different areas.

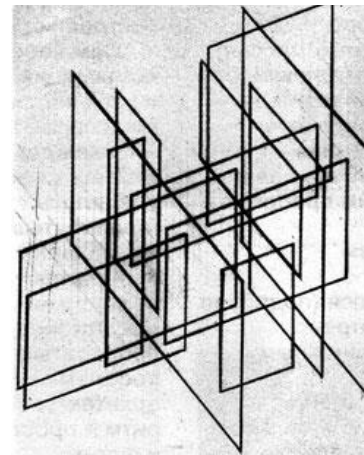
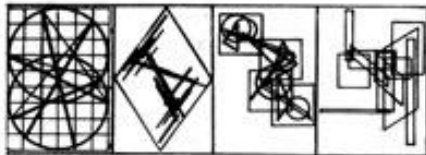
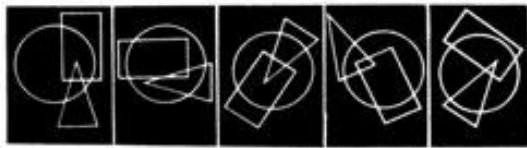
²⁰⁶ Жадова, Л. ВХУТЕМАС — ВХУТЕИИ. Страницы истории. М.: Декоративное искусство СССР., 1970, С.58.



A. Родченко. Мобили

A. Rodchenko, *Beer's publicity*, poster with Maikovsky's poetry, 1920s.

A. Rodchenko, *Mobile construction*, 1920s, spatial metallic construction.



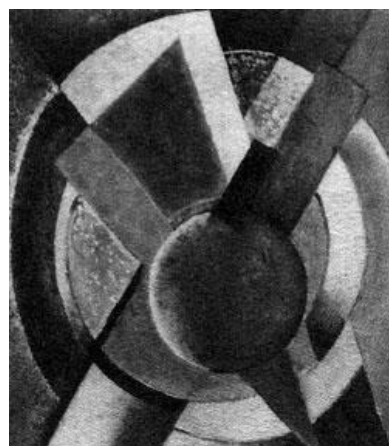
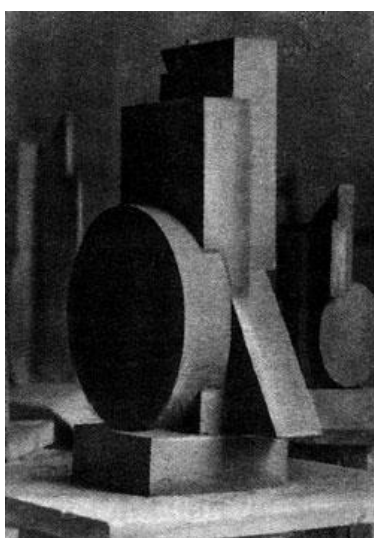
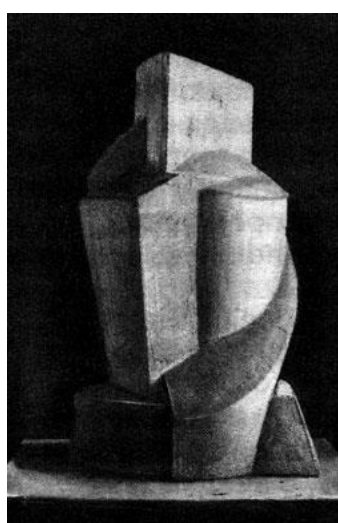
A. Ahtirko, *Different spatial compositions*, 1920s, paper, elaborated at the A. Rodchenko classes of *Graphics* in the Vhutemas.

As to the woodworking, the Vhutemas had to respond to a new social demand – mass production of cheap, accessible furniture; thus all the system engineering – technologic part of education had to be organized accordingly. The qualified engineers were invited to give classes; new technic classes had to be introduced. Thus the 1922-1923 year turned the faculty into a Designer's school. V. Kiselev reorganized faculty into 4 departments:

1. Scientifically-technologic - materials technology, technique of industry etc.
2. Productive – bases of contemporary mass production, wood and furniture.

3. Economical – production's economy, factory managing, direction and labour's organization.
4. Historical – art history, history of social everyday life, critics of form's fetishism, history of styles and style's composition.

In 1922-23ss V. Kiselev taught furniture's composition. Then A. Lavitsky changed him, in 1925 E. Lissitsky came to teach at the faculty. He orientated students to elaborate furniture according real types of flats of mass construction and of experimental spaces. In 1926 the Woodworking and the Metalworking faculties were united into one²⁰⁷.



Unknown students' work in the class of Volume of A. Lavitsky, The Vhutemas, early 1920s, carton.

Students' work sample in the class of Volume of A. Babichev, The Vhutemas, 1920s, carton.

Student N. Poluetova, Colour's variations, class of Colour, The Vhutemas, early 1920s, oil on canvas.

The constructivist designer Varvara Stepanova headed the Textile department, approving her students who experimented not only on utilitarian lines but also with fashion in order to introduce aesthetics in everyday life, but simultaneously to create cloth - easy to elaborate in contemporary factories. Liubov Popova was actively present at the Textile faculty, working on designs for the first State Textile Print Factory. Thus Liubov Popova was among first female designers in the Soviet country. The artist created thematic design and the one with asymmetrical architectonic geometries. She even elaborated original fabrics with grids of printed hammers and sickles.

²⁰⁷ Жадова, Л. ВХУТЕМАС — ВХУТЕИИ. Страницы истории. М.: Декоративное искусство СССР. 1970, С.58.



.Popova, *Cloth of actor number 5*, 1923-1924, sketch. L. Popova, *Dress sketches*, 1923-1924, paper.
L. Popova, *Tissue's decoration*, 1923-24, sketch.



Photo of A. Vesnin (right in the centre) and L. Popova (in the hat with a white spot) together with students of their workshop), 1922-1923, unknown author.

As to the Art Faculty, the constructivism and the suprematism were of the main influence. Kazimir Malevich from 1925 taught in the Vhutemas, but already in the previous years he exhibited his works there. The institution introduced a lot of polymath artists, who experimented and gained success in various disciplines. For instance, painters and sculptors experimented with architecture, creating projects as Rodchenko's *Spatial Constructions*, Tatlin's *Tower* or *Architectons* of Malevich²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁸ Хан-Магомедов, С.О. ВХУТЕМАС. М.: Ладыя, 2000, С.118-24.

Another significant personality who taught in the Vhutemas was V. Kandinsky; already in 1916 he returned to Moscow and in the post-revolutionary epoch belonged to the circle of cultural-politic development, collaborating with the IZO Narkompros in 1918 – 1921 and being in charge of museums' reforms and artistic pedagogy. Kandinsky was appointed as a head of the Purchasing Commission at the Museum's Bureau of the Narkompross, actively participating in the organization of 22 museums in the provinces. Especially a significant impact he left as a professor of the SVOMAS (free Moscow workshops) and later of the Vhutemas. In order to understand his pedagogic method we should address to his artistic language in that period – it varied from abstraction to romantic fantasies and impressionist landscapes. In his abstract paintings may be noticed a tendency to elements' geometrics.

V. Kandinsky created his proper pedagogical plan, based on the analysis of form and colour. This plan was a logical continuation of the ideas developed in his book *on the spiritual issues in art* (the same Kandinsky's ideas were announced by Kulbin at the Russian Artists' conference in 1911). The teaching plan was based at the same theory as for the Inhuk (Institute of Artistic Culture) where he actively participated as organizer. The teaching plan of Kandinsky was opposed by Stepanova, Rodchenko, Popova who considered that basic in teaching should be constructive presentation, materials' organization and their exact analysis. Any irrationality in creative art process was not accepted. Meanwhile Kandinsky was opposed to the constructivism: "If artist uses an abstract method of expression it doesn't mean that he is a painter – abstractionist; it even does not mean that he is a painter. There are not less *dead triangles* (no matter if they are white or green) than *dead chickens, dead horses or dead guitars*. To become a *realistic academician* is equally easy as to become an *academician – abstractionist*. Form without content is not a hand but an empty glove fulfilled with air"²⁰⁹. Many colleagues – artists and professors as Punin for instance, were even openly criticising Kandinsky and his method, calling Kandinsky's paintings *mutilated spiritism*. In December of 1921 Kandinsky decided to quit and to leave Russia; after 1922, when socialist ideology strengthened its pressure on art, Kandinsky's paintings were even disclosed from the museum collections in the Soviet Union for decades.

²⁰⁹ Сарабьянов, Д., Автономова, Н. Василий Кандинский. М.: Галарт, 1994, С.163.



Photo of V. Kandinsky at the background of his painting, 1920s, unknown author.



V. Kandinsky, *Red circle*, 1920, oil on canvas, 71,5 x 71,5.

In 1926 due to constant political problems, the Vkhutemas was turned into the Vhutein, as a result a number of structural changes occurred: specializations of professionals were determined more precisely and were defined shorter terms of educational program (three and four years as a maximum), excluding many general education's classes. The directorship was also changed and students felt from now on more political and ideological pressure and control.

In 1929-1930 a new reform was taken, which aiming to approximate artists to the real needs of national industries, decreed to unite various educational structures; finally, it led to the dissolution of the institution.



Photo of The Vkhutemas students, 1923, unknown author.

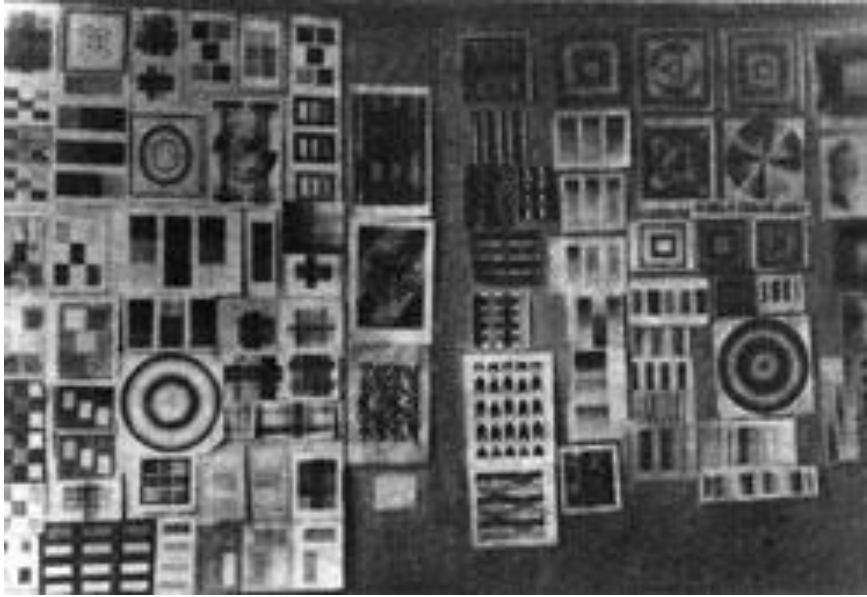


Photo of students' exhibition of the *Colour class*, 1920s, unknown author.

3.12 Vera Muchina – inspirer and teacher



M. Nesterov, *Vera Muchina*, 1940, oil on canvas, 75 x 77.

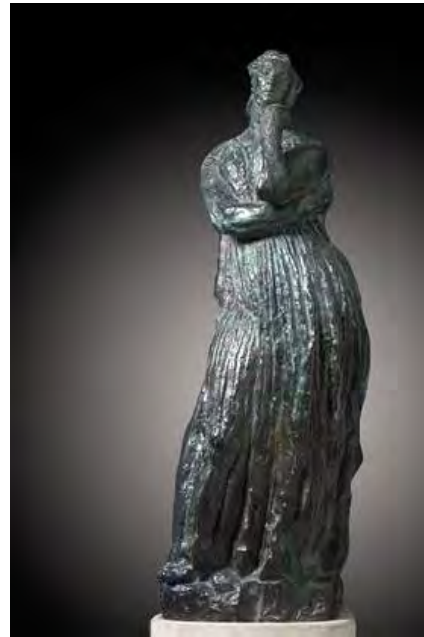


Photo of V. Muchina, 1920s, unknown author.

As previously mentioned, Vera Muchina was the main professor who taught Nina Slobodinskaya sculpture in the VHUTEMAS, and, besides, became one of the most influential artistic figures in the artist's professional life. In order to enquire to which extent was spread her artistic influence on Nina Slobodinskaya, we should analyse the basis of Muchina's creative method and style, to find out what and how she

taught her students, getting to know the origin of her professional technique, style, constructive methods in sculpture.

Regarding sculptor's formation, the most enriching studies she received in her French period, thereby we will trace the bases of her education in Paris. In 1912 arriving to Paris Muchina had to make a difficult choice: who would become her teacher in sculpture. Despiau, Maillol or Bourdelle?



A. Bourdelle, *Heracles, shooting with a bow*, 1909, bronze. A. Bourdelle, *Penelope*, 1912, bronze.

Muchina considered Despiau as a wonderful portraitist, who feels and is sensible to all nuances and shades of human face and character, but she was also afraid that it would be the only thing she would learn from this master. Vera Muchina felt a huge respect towards Maillol, appreciating his careful attitude towards an object, calmness, evenness, richness of his figures. She was admired by his knowledge: "He knows how to synthesize, perfectly dominates a body"²¹⁰, but she also would add "he is zero as a portraitist. The heads at his trunks are incredibly schematic and impersonal. *Pomona* – is his best sculpture, but does it creature thoughts"²¹¹?

Besides, Muchina did not want to leave Paris while Maillol was constantly travelling around France and was not keen on travelling with his students.

²¹⁰ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С. 97.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, p.143.

Antoine Bourdelle with his ideal of a human being as a creator and a hero was the most liked-minded to Mukhina. "Maillol – is sea breathing with calmness, while Bourdelle is pathos of fire" ²¹². With time Mukhina continues describing her teacher: "He is like a volcano, being able to make anything he wants with an earth – to deform it or to build. An object for him is just an excuse for his creative work. There is always a tension in his works. He makes them suffer, he puts them into frames he wants to obtain, and movements of his figures are carried to an extreme limit, but are never broken" ²¹³. Vera Muchina admires his sculpture of *Heracles* , which is full of energy and tension, *Penelope* – her long and brave patience, her touching and incredibly strong figure.



V. Muchina, *Bread*, 1939, bronze.

Mukhina appreciates Bourdelle's tendency to solve significant sculptural problems, to create spiritually rich images. Bourdelle's antic heroes become very close to the XX century. *Heracles* is full of passion, *Penelope* seems a peasant. These figures also recall Bretagne's woman which wait their husbands – fishermen to return from sea.

The Academie de la grande Chaumiere - the studio, where Bourdelle used to consult and to teach young sculptors every Friday, once per week. His students used

²¹² Ibid, p.143.

²¹³ Ibid, p.193.

to call those Fridays as *last judgement days*. Students from all around the globe, close to their works, were waiting for master's critical judgement. Mukhina in her turn called him *Small Nibelung*. Some of students' works he used to examine for a long while, others he just ignored. Once he stopped in front of Muchins's etude. She was waiting for his approval, as she worked really hard on it, but instead she received his criticism: "Mademoiselle, where from this leg grows? The pelvis is not wide enough. You should see a skeleton of a thing in its real aspect, in its architectural expression"²¹⁴. Bourdelle was first to pay Muchina's attention to ponderability and plenitude of form, to a correlation between analysis and synthesis. "Everything consists of details. And every detail exists only as a piece of a single whole, of a unit. It's necessary to obtain symmetry of pieces; parts would correspond to the harmony of the world. You should see a sculpture from inside: to create a work you should start from a skeleton of an object and just then give an external form to a skeleton; a statue represents an object arranged, approved by mind"²¹⁵. Students saw Bourdelle also as a *Poet of Sculpture*. He used to teach them saying: "Forget all shadows and a shy light of stark forms, rouse and stir up darkness and moving contours. Give a real freedom to lines, make their flight vivid, extend and expand your ideas, involve curative force of your soul to assist you and let a heroes and gods ardour lighten your sculptures"²¹⁶.



Photo of V. Muchina and I. Burmeister in Paris' studio, 1914, unknown author.

²¹⁴ Воронов, Н.В. *Вера Мухина*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1989, С.169.

²¹⁵ Суздаев, П.К. *Вера Мухина*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1971, С.157.

²¹⁶ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.80.

After some pause he continued giving practical advices, simple and wise, such as following: "When a chief wants to cook a roast meat with a rabbit, what does he makes first? He starts with a main ingredient – with a rabbit. In sculpture works the same method. To recreate a nature or an object, first we should catch it and firmly hold it, not letting it to run away"²¹⁷. Bourdelle constantly asked his students learn not only in studios but first of all and mainly in the streets. "There are plenty of masterpieces in streets"²¹⁸.

Bourdelle not only criticized Muchina's sculpture that time but also mentioned that Russians sculpt rather "in illusionary way than constructively"; "You, Slavs, are richly gifted by nature, but you've got an unbalanced temper"²¹⁹. Having heard that, Muchina destroyed her study and forced herself start from the beginning. Finally Bourdelle gave a new estimation to her work: "It is constructed, it is built"²²⁰.

Bourdelle was really demanding, requiring his students to possess the bases of sculpture's laws and to see their model as a whole. Composition in Bourdelle's opinion elevated art in comparison with not thoughtful nature. The master also taught young artists to be careful with public's opinion: "Mediocrity usually gets all honours and laurels of a crowd, as its art pleases a stupidity of a whole nation, instead of teaching it"²²¹.

Working at Bourdelle's studio, Muchina tried to develop and reach pureness and flow of lines, to make every line and form – one continuation of another, one entering another. One of her models of that period seems to be moving; his head is turned towards us. The figure is not higher than 1 meter but at the photo it seems really high. The volumes are worked carefully, the proportions are strictly solved. Other model, this time in a natural scale, where Muchina follows straight a shape of the model, tries to understand the skeleton, model's constitution; it has a carefully sculpted thorax and accentuated muscles of a neck and hands. Shoulders are carefully studied. Those years in Paris Muchina considered the most intensive, interesting rich and difficult at the same time. She was sure that became proficient in a craft, which in her professor's words "is necessary for art as coal to a fire"²²².

²¹⁷ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.125.

²¹⁸ Ibid, pp.140-150.

²¹⁹ Ibid, pp.140-150.

²²⁰ Ibid, pp.140-160.

²²¹ Ibid, pp.140-160.

²²² Ibid, p.170.



V. Muchina, *The boy taking out a splinter*, 1912, bronze.



Photo of Bourdelle's students of the Academie de la grande Chaumiere in Paris, end of 1912 – 1913. Mukhina is first in the upper row. Then follow A. Vertepov, B. Ternovets, I. Burmeister. Second to the right in the lower row is A.

Bourdelle, unknown author.

The sculpture created in 1912 shows the level of Muchina as of a prepared independent master, who possesses the knowledge of human body's structure. Proportional, elegantly and carefully worked. It reveals the variety of Muchina's professional skills. Another thing that Bourdelle taught young artists was a shame which they had to feel if they would repeat something that already exists. "It's so

easy to imitate. Monkeys are good examples, but who wants to make this carrier?
“²²³. Muchina finally was so afraid to create something similar to anybody else's work that would prefer on many occasions to destroy an already elaborated sculpture.

The way to a free conscience, to the interior truth, to fulfil sculptural forms with proper individual feelings and thoughts – was the most difficult thing to achieve. Bourdelle was severe, strict in his demands, he considered that a *Sculptor* is born only in a moment, when one starts suffering from a self-determination and that a principle task for him as a teacher - to help and give a birth to a *soul of apprentice*, to awake in a pupil ability *to listen and to hear him-self*.

Hours and hours spend Muchina in the museums such as The Louvre, The Trocadero, The Clouni etc. She admired French medieval art, Chinese art, which she considered severe *ant thin*, she is attracted by fluidity of forms in Indian art, she's amazed by laconic monumental stinginess of lines. “More monumental is art – more laconic it is. You should be stingy in attitude to a form. The Renaissance is more complicated, and there you find the eternal simplicity” ²²⁴.

The years in Paris were the most fruitful and intense in the artist's life. In the mornings – she carved in Bourdelle's studio; in the evenings she studied in drawing classes of Colarossi. She also went to the Academie de Beaux Arts, listened the course of anatomy of professor Riche. The professor showed a real model to his apprentices, drawing a skeleton, muscles, and biceps.

Vera Muchina did not avoid the interest to cubism. Cubists considered as their main task to open flatness, platitude of a canvas to a spectator, to achieve that a viewer would see at the same time the depicted objects inside and outside. “We should depict not only objects as we see them, but also all we know about them” ²²⁵ - Jean Metzinger would declaim. The cubists proposed not to depict the world as artist sees it, but through the analysis of form (dividing seen into elements, reveal its essence).

“To see a model – it's not enough. One should think about it. Figures, landscapes, still-lives can be determined as they are seen in artist's conscience (remembering faces, landscape I don't see them stark. I realize them in totality of moments), according to memory or a wish of an artist. Cubists attracted by the tendency to new mathematically strict way of thought. But a scheme that they elaborated as a

²²³ Ibid, pp.140-160.

²²⁴ Ibid, pp.140-160.

²²⁵ Воронов, Н.В. *Вера Мухина*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1989, С.239-278.

basis of their art – to look for first elements of an object and not to depict object in their appearance, created too many restrictions and limitations. Paintings lost a profound space, light and air. To understand the meaning of any work was always too subjective" ²²⁶.

Vera Muchina together with her friends Liubov Popova and Nadejda Udaltsova used to study in La Palette. But Vera Muchina was the first to leave the Academy, not even staying there for 2 months. "Cubists uncover and expose a form as a skeleton. I suffered, understood something and left. And I left consciously" ²²⁷.

After studying two years in Paris, Muchina changes her attitude to works of art. She not just admires any piece as it happened before but she demands a craftsmanship: "If you're a bad craftsman – you are nothing" ²²⁸.



V. Muchina, *Requesting peace*, 1950s, bronze.



V. Muchina, *Wind*, 1927, bronze.

Not only French academies, giving knowledge, but Paris itself, was a wonderful art school. Apprentices found there, so necessary for beginners, an atmosphere of work. "Staying in this environment, united by a gifted sensible way of seeing, appreciating

²²⁶ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.149.

²²⁷ Ibid, pp.160-170.

²²⁸ Ibid, pp.140-160.

all the diversity of a surrounding art world, an artist starts to see – it's the basis of any creative work" ²²⁹.

Muchina started seeing an art object as a whole: constructiveness of its solution and all the details. Emotional and notional supply of image, *its interior structure* becomes the most important for the artist. "Too many attributes don't reveal any emotions, it acts not by its external expression but by its interior tension" ²³⁰. In some while Muchina would formulate her attitude to the cubism and the reason of cubism's birth. In her opinion painting passed through the epoch of impressionism, where enriched its palette, but absolutely lost its feeling of space, so it turned to a feeling of space instead. Perspective space of construction seemed too *intellectual* and mathematical, therefore, was created a new spatial method, which she dared to call *side scenes* feeling of space. Honestly trying to study it, she felt, meanwhile, an overwhelming opposition and unacceptance, growing inside her towards cubism.

Vera Muchina was a follower of humanistic ideas in the literature: Shakespeare's tragedies, Homer's epos, – where you could always find passion, love, suffering, and huge social and personal problems. While cubists everything turned just into a form. "An artist from now and on could just paint a vase with fruits, a violin but in elaborated manner; an image – soul of an object did not interest it" ²³¹. Vera Muchina did not accept such limitations in art. In Muchina's vision a subject and object stopped to interest an artist-cubist, and what is worth interest was considered as a bad form.

Muchina looked for her proper creative position and she founds it in the end of her two years apprenticeship in Paris: "I've revealed that for me an image in art – its soul and its sense" ²³².

Another event that completed Muchina's education as a master was her travel to Italy which she made together with her friends Liubov Popova and Ida Burgmeister. That's when Muchina defined her ideal sculptor - Michelangelo²³³.

²²⁹ Ibid, pp.140-160.

²³⁰ Ibid, pp.180-190.

²³¹ Воронов, Н.В. *Вера Мухина*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1989, С. 274.

²³² Ibid, p.270.

²³³ It would be difficult to determine the exact role of Muchina's sculptural method if it would not strictly correspond to the necessities and official demands of the Soviet government. Her few years of professorship had left a significant impact on her apprentices but, mostly, as of a true follower of realism and socialist realism in sculpture. In opinion of Voronova, the sculptor would not get so much popularity if she would not perceive so sensitively the requests and aspirations of the post-revolutionary epoch. While in Polevoy's thought no other figure could embody all the grandeur and monumentality of time's spirit as V. Muchina. As we see on the example of Nina Slobodinskaya, her master's role was crucial in

The artist describes *David* of Michelangelo: "Incredibly strong expression of an inner psychological state. Marvellous image of vengeance and contempt toward an enemy. Determination, an angry, wrathful gaze, a concise mouth, calm full of fearlessness, pose of all the body – it's a real image of a hero"²³⁴.

This notion of a hero Muchina would carry during all her life, and that's how she would visualize a concept of a new hero – (a principal subject of Soviet monumental propaganda) to her apprentices in the VHUTEMAS, including Nina Slobodinskaya.

Michelangelo works not nourishing, but with an image of event (and image may be considered as a sum of emotions that a spectator feels in an art work). The ideal of a human being, of a man, that Michelangelo tried to establish was very close to Muchina. Muchina wanted to see a man spiritually and creatively strong.

"I seek for something enormous! Michelangelo's personages are heroic and titanic; and if I would dare to say he creates almost gods"²³⁵. Impression of Michelangelo's sculptures became certainly the most precious educational experience, which Muchina brought from Italy. Sculptures which taught her to distinguish between external pathos and a real heroism. Works, where from real elements were born ideas of enormous human significance. "Michelangelo creates as god-father"²³⁶ said Muchina. This description of a hero, its vision and application we will find in a future hero's sculptures of Vera Muchina, and also in the studios of her apprentices in the VHUTEMAS.

Future years of creative work were full of a hard work, new knowledge, and new achievements. But in order to understand the mature sculptor, to see a result of spiritual and creative efforts and a level of the mastery knowledge, which she shared with her apprentices, we should follow the epoch of 1920s. In 1920s Muchina was already a highly recognized master, who would dare to create an image of an ideal Soviet woman – *Peasant* in 1927 for the exhibition, which celebrated 10 years of The October Revolution. The subject of peasant was chosen on her proper initiative. The artist said that from her childhood she had "a special contact, an interior feeling of peasants"²³⁷.

her approach to composition, idea's clarity and realism. However, Muchina was not sculptor's spiritual orienteer in art.

²³⁴ Ibid, pp.180-190.

²³⁵ Ibid, pp.180-190.

²³⁶ Ibid, pp.180-190.

²³⁷ Воронова О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.194.

First she sculpted it in clay and then commissioned a bronze model. The method and approach that Muchina used in her artwork is really indicative. She shaped a sculpture without a model, imagining it in details. Only sculpting hands, Muchina used her husband Alexey Andreevich as a model, and legs were depicted from one woman, but as she said: "I exaggerated its dimensions in order to get firmness and monumentality. The face I sculpted from my imagination" ²³⁸. Starting sculpting, Muchina already kept a final vision of a ready work in her mind. We can follow it in her drawings. It helped her to create a ½ metres sketch and an almost 2 metres figure. The author defined her sculptural creature as a *Goddess of Fertility, Russian Pomona*, a kind of Russian pagan image of a Fertility Goddess.

Spectator, watching *the Peasant*, may see her image a bit pagan, massive, firm, and very earthy: kind of a woman from a Russian fairy tale, which can stop a running horse, which will enter into a house under a fire. The legs seem to grow from the earth as columns. "Such woman will give a birth, standing, and without a cry" ²³⁹ - Mashkov would comment. *The Peasant* has huge shoulders and a suddenly small too elegant head for such a massive figure.



V. Muchina, *Peasant*, 1927, bronze.



Photo of V. Muchina, 1930s, unknown author.



From up to down the monumental image, all the figure's forms gradually increase. Every muscle of the figure seems heavy and it appears that no strength is able to

²³⁸ Ibid, p.195.

²³⁹ Ibid, p.196.

move this monumental *Peasant*. A special meaning here gets a *visual weight of volumes* – one of the basic qualities in sculpture, a strong sound of mass in space.

Meanwhile, other prominent Russian artists of the same epoch also touched the subject of *peasantry* in their creative work. Especially Natalya Goncharova's paintings reflect a similar to Muchina vision of a woman – peasant as a strong and active *life-constructor*. Goncharova's peasants appear to be in an active motion – working. Their huge massive foots indicate at their everyday labour, gigantic hands impress by their strength. As much as Muchina's *Peasant* Goncharova's female personages feel *confidently* in this world.



N. Goncharova, *Women – peasants*, 1910s, oil on canvas.



N. Goncharova, *Linen's whitening*, 1908, oil on canvas.

As to Malevich, he was deeply keen on peasants' subject too, believing that peasants are an *embodiment* of all humanity, and numerous times returned to this theme. In 1920s his vision of peasants is radically more abstract; his peasants literally and symbolically appear impersonal and faceless. A peasant woman, staying statically and immobile, reminding icon's figure's position, loses any trait of individuality; her face simultaneously reminds a mask or a circle without any hint on human face. In opposite to Muchina's *Peasant* this one seems to be a *biomorphic creature* – insecure, aimless and lost; this image may symbolically hint on state of despair and horror in which stayed the majority of Russian peasantry, in the end of 1920s after the *collectivization*, having lost their properties and house hold - base of their material existence and a symbol of their connection with the world. As

Malevich said at one of the conferences: “Man's future – a riddle without solution”²⁴⁰.



K. Malevich, *Woman with a rake*, 1928-32, oil on canvas, 72, 8 x 52, 8.

Art critics of those years would recall Bourdelle analysing this work of art. Apparently they were right, as especially in that period Muchina actively talked to her apprentices and fervently described the powerful sculptural method and way of Bourdelle, relating also to a French sculpture in general. It had such a deep impact on her apprentices, that everyone, including Nina Slobodinskaya (according to the sculptor's recollections), would fulfil their home libraries with books on Bourdelle, as if he would be the most important sculptor of the epoch. Later, Muchina mentions Bourdelle and Maillol as “two principle violins in the contemporary artistic orchestra”²⁴¹. She seems to adapt in her work the same admiration of a human body – as an expression of a harmony, so typical to Maillol, and to assimilate severe discretion and thoughtfulness of Bourdelle. But those are just *external* qualities of mastery, which did not prevent Muchina to elaborate a proper artistic method and to enrich her work with a meaningful content. In her *Peasant* we see different creative criteria and categories of mind, though some of them remind us Bourdelle.

One year later, after the exhibition Muchina returned to Paris and asked Bourdelle a permission to take a key and visit all his studios and see his latest works. Doubinovsky – one of Bourdelle's students recalled an interesting fact. Bourdelle used to give a

²⁴⁰ Малевич, К. Чёрный квадрат. СПб.: Азбука, Азбука-Аттикус, 2012, С.154.

²⁴¹ Воронова, О.И. Вера Игнатьевна Мухина. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.194.

permission to visit his studio only to his favourite apprentices or to the ones who were *not imitators* in his opinion, but who elaborated their proper plastic language. Thereby, we may conclude that Bourdelle considered the majority of his pupils in Paris to be imitators, and in that case they did not deserve to see his sculptures. Accordingly, the fact that Muchina would get one, let us suggest, that Vera Muchina was recognized as an artist by the one of the most significant sculptors of the epoch. Undoubtedly, it was an important achievement for Muchina as for sculptor and a person.

Trying to compare Bourdelle's sculpture and Muchina's *Peasant* we may observe the following: The *Peasant* is much more concrete in indication of its time than a majority of Bourdelle's works. Bourdelle, in his turn, tries to reveal in his heroes universality of human feelings, awaking eternal traits. Muchina's *Peasant* does not pretend to express something out of its time, to be more precise - eternal generalization, instead, she expresses only her time, but this epoch is exposed in all possible aspects and with a maximum force of expressiveness: socially, psychologically, aesthetically. By all its aspects of appearance, head's and figure's structure – the female image belongs to her country. By its bearing, by its confidence or by its manner of holding hands, - she would express a woman of the end of 1920s, a peasant of the Soviet Union, a *master* of her proper life, and as Muchina used to say: "a self-conscious person, not a slave"²⁴².

Critics would accept this vision and recognized the *Peasant* as the best sculptural work of the exhibition. Created in a wide monumental manner, it gives an image of a huge emotional strength. A bit rough, she still has her proper dignity and a calm strength. *The Peasant* expresses an artistic synthesis of a Soviet ideal woman, a conscious *constructor of a light future*. The *Peasant* reflects a long artistic search of Muchina and finally shows a discovered solution to her creative doubts. Muchina even affirmed that in this sculptural image she finally found a notion of a *generalized image* as a basis of all her art. Even knowing that a final creative search of an artist ends only with his death, we may admit the importance of her artistic victory at that epoch. From now and on her main approach and artistic method will consist of *generalization of life observations*, expressed in capacious, laconic and

²⁴² Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С. 205.

monumental forms. A. Lunacharsky gave a characteristic of that form: "economic, expressively generalized, realistic monumentality"²⁴³.



Photo of the Sculpture's Class in the Vhutemas, 1927, unknown author.

This creative sculptural method Muchina will actively introduce to her apprentices in Moscow. *The Peasant* obtained the first premium in the concourse of the mentioned exhibition. The bronze model of the *Peasant* was exposed in the Tretyakoff Gallery, and in 1934 was exposed at the XIX International Exposition in Venice and sold to the Trieste Museum. In 1946 the first bronze model became a property of the Vatican Museum in Rome.



V. Muchina, *Son's portrait*, 1934, bronze.



V. Muchina, *A seated figure*, 1947, glass.

²⁴³ Ibid, pp.205 - 210.

In regard of Muchina's professorship, her apprentices and colleagues remember Muchina being pedantic, with manners of a strict teacher, quite reserved. They never could understand what she really felt. Her face expression was very discreet: if she felt joy - she had a not pronounced smile, if she was angry, she had a very serious gaze. However, Muchina was honest and direct in her evaluations. Giving classes of sculpture in the VHUTEIN she did not want to teach sculptors of the last courses. She used to say: "what can I teach them if I don't have an academic education" ²⁴⁴? Rarely she did it. Happily, Nina Slobodinskaya had Vera Muchina as the main professor of sculpture during all her years of scholarship in the VHUTEIN.

The issue of how to *approximate art to masses* in the most effective way was always crucial for Muchina. She studied the approach of museum workers (tours of museum guides especially) and tried to adapt their experience in attracting workers to art's understanding (by means of travelling exhibitions to factories, working-class guided tours to the museums). Muchina also urged to pay attention of her apprentices to the importance of *accessibility* of art to all classes of nation, which could be achieved by monumental forms' simplicity, laconism of lines etc.

Another sculptural genre on which Muchina worked a lot, widely and in detail introducing it to her apprentices in the VHUTEIN was a portrait. A portrait genre attracted all artists, including members of the AHRR (Association of artists of Revolutionary Russia) - the biggest artistic society of 1920ss in Russia.

In general terms, Soviet society preferred *documental portraits*, having used to see significant personalities of Russian history. The principle artistic tendency in such a portrait was a maximum personal similarity to a real model. The artists of the association believed that in time psychological portrait was a matter of the past. The present and future required representative portraits: generalized, realistically expressive and symbolical. In portrait you should show *the best of any man*, would declare Soviet artists; it was defined as the main task of artist. *With respect to a model, but without any attempt to imitate it* – that was a slogan of the Artists Society.

A comprehensive explanation of that method was given by Domogatsky: "Physical image of a man not always corresponds to his psychological image. A physical

²⁴⁴ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.194.

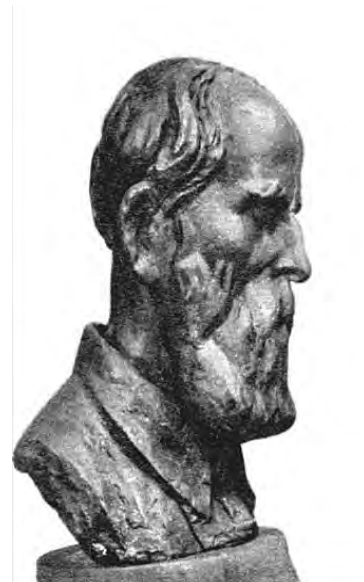
image of a person normally transforms in our conscience after we are aware of his spiritual essence or the content with which we want to fulfil this image. We exaggerate those lineaments, which in our comprehension seem characteristic. When you start treating a person you've ever seen or known before you base his image and characteristic on first impression. These first impressions are fresh and strong but are not sufficient, because an artist does not possess a more profound knowledge of a personality. As a result, an achieved similarity will be only external. And this similarity is accepted only by strangers. In a while an impression usually strongly changes and if the work of portrayal has been already started, will definitely request big changes, according to a new developed characteristic" ²⁴⁵.

In the AHRR almost all artists worked on portraits: Domogatsky, Kepinov, Zlatovrasky, Frih-Har, brothers Andreev, Sandomirskaya, Rahmanov, and Koroliov. As to Muchina, she considered sculptor Shadr to be a founder of a new type of Soviet portrait.

In 1922 Shadr created sculptural portraits of his compatriots – peasants and workers, in which he achieved to give his vision of a new Russian hero - heroes of the earth, who work not as slaves but as free voluntary men with a self-dignity and self-respect. This idealized image of a new type of peasant and worker matched political requests of the epoch, although contradicted the historical reality.



I. Chadr, *Seeder*, 1922, bronze.



V. Muchina, *Portrait of a grandfather (Andrey Cirillovich Zamkov)*, 1928, bronze.

²⁴⁵ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.237.



V. Muchina, *Farm woman Matryona Levina*, 1928, marble.



I. Chadr, *Worker*, 1922, bronze.

Returning to the sculptor's creative method, Vera Muchina used to work on portraits having a model in front. This way of working on portraits – in direct contact with a model - she also taught her pupils. The master often creates portraits of people she personally knows well: for instance her husband, his friends, and relatives – people from her close environment. Muchina's apprentice Nina Slobodinskaya follows her artistic advice, always working on portrait in direct contact with a model. All her portraits normally are well worked on; the majority of artworks are completed in bronze. In those years sculptor considered bronze to be the best material for portraits, while her apprentice Nina Slobodinskaya preferred marble and coloured clay.

We may observe in all portraits a close resemblance, an individual characteristic, but this exactitude seems a bit external. Occasionally Muchina failed to expose an essence of a psychological character of her personages. For instance, depicting *Andrey Cirillovich*, she almost showed him as a saint in Russian canonical frescos, however, the truth was, that in everyday life he was an angry person with a difficult character, who, according to his relatives, psychologically blackmailed them and his family suffered a lot. So *the truthfulness* of character's depiction is being under a question. A viewer is certainly not acknowledged with these character's traits, instead, we observe a beauty of a head's form and expression of self-concentration, what makes possible thinking that Muchina aimed to expose not a concrete personality but a *typical* head of a peasant or even an image of *philosopher* with

an interior strength and energy. This sculpture shows the similar to the AHRR group master's attitude to the portrait. Without any originality still it shows an attempt of a master to achieve a thoughtful philosophical analysis of a personality and to rich a typicalness of the image.

A characteristic trait of Muchina's portraits became a tendency to monumentalization, severity of forms, delicate but generalized psychological characteristic. Muchina always preferred a constructive thought and approach. Many followers and apprentices assimilated this tendency in portrait. In Nina's Slobodinskaya's case was adapted severity and firmness of forms, image's laconism, but Slobodinskaya had her own personal way of seeing intimate part of human personality; a young sculptor was interested to capture a model's thoughts, his feelings, to reveal his deep psychological characteristic and spiritual essence but, simultaneously, she also caught typical traits.

In 1926-1927 Muchina teaches sculpture in the Kustarno-Artistic Technicum, in 1927-1930 she gives sculptural classes in the VHUTEIN. Precisely in those years Nina Slobodinskaya was studying sculpture there and had luck to be in class of Muchina.



V. Muchina, *Revolution*, 1919, bronze, sketch of the monument for Klin.

Muchina's colleague and friend I. Chaikov invites her to give classes of sculpting. He would describe her attitude to this proposal: "I used to talk to her about her sculptures and I noticed that she is rational in a good sense, she was not counting on stormy feeling, and sudden emotions, but every form, volume and line were carefully planned and logically organized. That's why I had no doubt she will become a great teacher"²⁴⁶.

Vera Ignatievna never lectured theories; she preferred to give explanation, having a model in front. Muchina was well prepared for every lesson, she could spend hours searching for best model's position, always tried to convince young artists to shape without tension, without an interior contradiction, attempting to make her explanations and demands comprehensive to every apprentice. "When you are staring at model you have to sculpt, to what do you pay attention mostly? To a bridge of nose or to a chin? How deep are eyes? The ears, are they far from the face? One has a wide skeleton, another thin. Only having found this basic portrait's volume, you can shape nose, eyes, ears and everything else and all those elements have to be artistically expressive"²⁴⁷.

Muchina remembered and passed to her pupils the same work principles which Bourdelle taught her: "Always start with big volumes (no matter what you make), and only having found and detected them, you should pass to the smaller ones and then to the smallest. If you will use this method you'll finally approach to a surface. Never try to make a surface smooth, this smooth surface you'll get anyway when you little by little step from the depth of big forms, shaping the smallest forms"²⁴⁸. The most difficult in her teaching Muchina considered an understanding of apprentice's creative individuality: "A really hard work. Everything I tried to make maximum I could"²⁴⁹. Apprentices used to admit that Muchina was a really good teacher. They said she paid a lot of attention to composition's study. She used to give such tasks where a pupil could not just experiment and show their new knowledge but also to reveal their proper taste and understanding of harmony – everything Vera Muchina considered as creative individuality. For example, Muchina used to give a task a sculptural decoration and an arrangement of building's front or a front staircase.

²⁴⁶ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С.240.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p.230.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p.230.

²⁴⁹ Воронов, Н.В. *Вера Мухина*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1989, С.314.

She often smiled saying: "these exercises taught me as well at my time"²⁵⁰. In 1930 Muchina stopped teaching.

The next time she was publicly talking on sculpture, happened only in 1948 at the conference of the Academy of Arts in the USSR, where Muchina dedicated her speech to the artistic education. At the conference sculptor affirmed that students have to get a very specific knowledge, which would permit them to achieve and possess a technique and crafting; another important subject would be a profound acknowledgement with art history, which had to be exposed without concealing or hiding any facts or figures. Muchina also admitted that any master must preserve his individuality, let an apprentice freely develop himself, not to suppress or overwhelm him and helping him to find his proper creative path²⁵¹. Those observations may be considered as a program which Muchina followed during years of teaching and a method she applied to her apprentices.

«We, contemporary sculptors, don't have enough knowledge. We must master a form, anatomy; we should know it from inside. You can instruct pupils with all marvellous techniques and methods of sculpting but if a pupil is not able to see and to watch – it' absolutely useless. To be able to see and to watch – it's a lot! If everybody would possess a technique of sculpting but would not see anything – all sculpture in that case would be identic"²⁵².

Sculptor, according to Muchina, was as pianist or musician. "Imagine a pianist who passingly feels music but during performance constantly makes errors, - will it be a good concert or not? Imagine a virtuous performance but executed without any emotion or strong feelings"²⁵³? So far Muchina based her teaching on two principles: technique's possession and encouraging apprentices to discover a proper artistic individuality. In practice Muchina tried her best, preparing for classes, working hard to find a model, which would suit mostly. The sculptor starts to teach from the beginning: straight, clear drawing, mastery of voluminous form, an exact preparative work. Vera Muchina also explains which subject artists can use in relief and which in life size sculpture, cautions students against smallest detailing and to avoid too much of description²⁵⁴.

²⁵⁰ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976. С. 242.

²⁵¹ Ibid, p.245.

²⁵² Ibid, p.245.

²⁵³ Ibid, p.245.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p.248.



Photo of V. Muchina among students of the sculptural faculty in the VHUTEIN, 1927, unknown author.

What expected Muchina from pedagogy? Something that only a *Big Artist* is able to respond. "If an apprentice has capacity to feel strongly, we should cultivate it, if a flame of feelings is really bright, we should help and keep it bright, if it's thin, we have to support it, in order to get such an eternally young and full of passion soul as Michelangelo had, and such a wise severe and sways seeking soul as Leonardo had. The most important it is not to let your spirit to feel a calm satisfaction of wellbeing and tranquillity"²⁵⁵.

Muchina stressed: "If you will not awake an apprentice's soul from asleep, your proper soul will fall asleep. Here's a responsibility and significance of master's role"²⁵⁶". Sculptor N.G. Zelenskaya which studied in the VHUTEIN told that Muchina's classes were incredibly attractive for apprentices even if they were quite difficult to follow and requested real efforts of young artists: Vera Muchina never helped to shape or to carve, never touched pupil's models, never tried to make it easy a diploma's obtaining. Teaching a technique of crafting (she used to install special models for hands and legs) attempted to concentrate her pupils attention at the main, the importance of seeing individuality of author reflected in his sculpture.

²⁵⁵ Воронова, О.И. *Вера Игнатьевна Мухина*. М.: Искусство, 1976, С. 254.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, p.256.

The VHUTEIN existed till 1930, after its official dissolution students were redirected to another academies and art institutions. Sculptors and young artists, for instance, were sent to Leningrad to continue their studying. Vera Muchina did not accept these changes and decided to continue living and working in Moscow.

3.13 ALEXANDER MATVEEV – a talented tutor and a genial sculptor

Any art is based on the generalization, synthesis. If you possess it, then you become a master of your tools.

A. Matveev, interview on 4 maig, 1959, The State Russian Museum.

One of the sculptors - contemporaries of Nina Slobodinskaya who by her proper words left a significant creative impact on her artistic formation and creative approach was Alexander Matveev (1878-1960), undoubtedly belonging to the leading Russian sculptors of his generation. N. Slobodinskaya freely studied in his sculptural classes, afterwards she liked to observe that grace to him, had learned to *shape in masses*. He worked in a simple, vigorous, modern classical style, similar to Aristide Maillol in France. Matveev also taught for many years and St. Petersburg is proud of a number of significant sculptors – his apprentices or followers of his creative method. As an artist of international reputation, he was unofficially accepted as a leader of the Soviet sculptor's union until the 1950s, when the younger followers of socialist realism finally replaced him.

Alexander Matveev passed his childhood and adult years in Saratov, there he studied in the Bogoliubov Drawing Academy and simultaneously took classes in the painting school of the Fine Art's Amateurs Society. Particularly in this period he became friends with such prominent Russian artists as K. Petrov-Vodkin, P. Utkin, and V. Boris-Musatov. Graduating from the academy, A. Matveev left for Moscow where continued his education in the studio of sculptor impressionist P. Trubetskoy. Sculptor's full education and mastery was over after a two years travel to Paris and diverse cities of Italy. Having seen the best sculptural monuments of Italian, French artists of the Antiquity, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, in 1907 the artist returned to Russia, where started his own professional creative way. His participation in the

artistic life first in Moscow and then in Leningrad had marked the direction in the development of Russian sculpture. The sculptor worked on the sculptural portraits of scientists, Maecenas, created a number of sculptural compositions and *nu* depictions with symbolical title as *Dream*, *Morning*, *Sleeping boys*, *Tranquillity*. Matveev's sculptures constantly took part at the most important exhibitions of the *World of Art*, *The Russian Artists Union*, *The Blue rose* and others. From the very beginning A. Matveev showed a wide diapason and the perfection of technique in sculptural modelling of forms; his imagery vision was full of poetry – all together marked him as a significant and promising sculptor²⁵⁷ .



A. Matveev, *Monument of Boris Musatov in Tarus*, 1909, plaster cast of the original granite moulding.

A. Matveev, *Boys*, 1908-1911, marble, landscape ensemble of Kuchuk-Koi.

Among diverse sculptural compositions, portraits elaborated in bronze, marble, ceramic and wood, in 1910 Matveev created the most heartfelt and *moving* monument in Russian sculpture at the thumb of his close friend and famous artist - symbolist Boris-Musatov in Tarus. The pain of un expected loss, early and unjustified death of a young talented artist, a close friendship A. Matveev expressed by unprecedented earlier means for Russian memorial art.

Maximum of laconism in the artistic means, intimacy of a strong close friendship – are the main traits of this sculptural image. At the low base lays a boy as if depicted in the eternal dream. It is an image of a young boy whose body is still not formed; seems that an adolescent with a last effort, an impulsive movement unsuccessfully tries to defend him-self from an approaching trouble. A curved back, gripped knees,

²⁵⁷ Евсева, Е., Мальцев, Н., Мантурова, Т., Славова, А. А. *Матвеев и его школа*. С.: Палас ЭДИШН, 2005, С.5.

a weal-willed inclined head. There is no any conscious motion in the sculptured figure, there is no force which could awake him from a deep heavy sleep and make him rise to his feet. Nothing can rescue him or awake to life. Defencelessness, fragility and delicacy of the boy are outlined by the figure's shape. With light and impressionist shades the artist models the relief, expresses plastic forms of the body. There is no hint at the graphic lines' expressiveness, the rigid and firm structure of granite which traditionally in memorial sculpture is shown with diverse shades of cold shining of the polished surface, here instead did not appear. In Matveev's works all the volumes are smoothed over. Dashed imperceptible lines anxiously outline the figure. It reminds a granite stone which is not marked by artist's work, instead, it seems that the very nature shaped the massive by time²⁵⁸.

More than 50 years of his creative life Matveev faithfully worked with a subject of *nu*. At the exhibitions in Russia and elsewhere a variety of simple by motive and expressive in its plasticity *nu* figures appeared: bronze, terracotta, marble, wooden, porcelain figures of the bathers, caryatides, young women with towels, seated and sleeping boys. Particularly this type of creative work brought a wide popularity to the sculptor. Matveev's compositional and plastic art was on numerous occasions awarded by national and international prizes at the shows in Paris, Vienne, Berlin, New –York, Venice²⁵⁹.

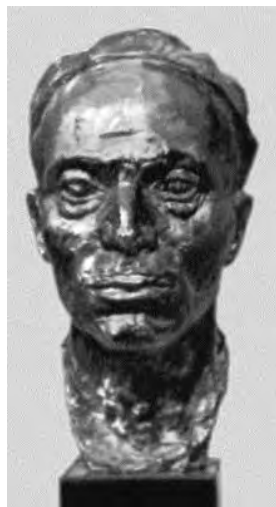
It is significant that such compact in sculptural forms and elegiac by its mood figures of seated, standing and sleeping *nu* boys and young women were used in creation of one of the most grandiose garden and landscape ensemble of the early XX century in the place of Kuchuk-Koi named behind I. Jukovsky in Crimea. Created in 1908 - 1912 from marble and increment stone, in increased scale they did not lose their plastic wholeness and plasticity on the one hand, and became a dominant of the landscape park on another hand. During the Second World War the unique sculptural complex was destroyed by the fascists. However Matveev's apprentices recreated their professor's sculptures and they were installed at their original place in the park. The preserved original sculptures were brought to Leningrad and exposed in The State Russian Museum²⁶⁰.

²⁵⁸ Евсеева, Е., Мальцев, Н., Мантурова, Т., Славова, Л. А. *Матвеев и его школа*. С.: Палас ЭДИШН, 2005, С.8.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p.8.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p.12.

Matveev's personality and his creative heritage take a special place in the history of Russian art. His brilliant talent of creator and teacher, sympathy and sincerity, cleverness and a high level mastery turned A. Matveev into not only an outstanding sculptor of XX century but also into an indisputable authority in the field of fine arts – a true guardian and follower of the national tradition of classical culture. In the ½ of XX century in the most dramatic moment of the State's fate, Matveev became the author of one of the most romantically expressive sculptural compositions – *The October Revolution* in 1927²⁶¹.



A. Matveev, Self portrait, 1939, bronze.



A. Matveev, *The October Revolution*, 1927, plaster cast origin, casted in bronze in 1958.

A. Matveev, *Sleeping boys*, 1907, haut-relief, plaster cast.

²⁶¹ Евсеева, Е., Мальцев, Н., Мантурова, Т., Славова, Л. А. *Матвеев и его школа*. С.: Палас ЭДИШН, 2005, С.14.

3.14 Anna Golubkina – spiritual preceptor in sculpture

If one watches with a wish to comprehend, than he will always find something interesting in model, and often something surprising and indicative. Somebody may say that a capacity to see is congenital and does not depend on us. However, by my proper experience, I know that a capacity to see may be developed till a deeper penetration.

Anna Golubkina, *Some words on sculptor's craft.*



Photo of A. Golubkina, 1890s, unknown author.



A. Golubkina, *Fog*, 1899, marble, decorative vase.

Addressing to other artistic personalities, which significantly influenced artistic method of Nina Slobodinskaya, we will regard Anna Golubkina; the sculptor used to repeat that the ideal example of a sculptor and a person for her was Anna Golubkina (a student of Trubetskoy and Rodin (1864 – 1927)) as she was a very kind, honest person and a talented artist.

Nina Slobodinskaya's son remembers the fascination and a real admiration which his mother felt towards Anna Golubkina in creative and personal sense. In her archives till today remain a lot of illustrations of Golubkina's works. If we analyse, we may discover a number of creative traces which Golubkina left on sculptor Slobodinskaya. First of all - thematically. As Golubkina, Nina Slobodinskaya often gave preference to the portraits of woman and old man. As to male characters, only prominent or outstanding figures are *honoured* in order to be displayed in her work. Depicting sculptural portraits Slobodinskaya also was interested in revealing

the work of thought, in addition to character's *spiritual* essence. The dynamism in sculpture – it's another common trait, which unites two female Russian sculptors of approximately the same epoch. The relief as a sculptural form in sculptural subject matter also attracted Nina Slobodinskaya. It was Golubkina who contributed in other way of its treatment and relief's innovative implementation. Thanks to Golubkina's relief's elaboration modern sculptors dared to treat reliefs widely and without a restraint. The classical canons of relief sculpture do not weigh anymore the sculptors of the beginning of XX century. The sculptors are liberated of academic clichés.



A. Golubkina, *K. Marx*, 1905, bronze. A. Golubkina, *Lermontov's portrait*, 1900, plaster cast.

Anna Semyonovna Golubkina was a prominent Russian sculptor with a difficult fate. To understand better her vision and way in sculpture we should turn to her life story. Originally, Anna was from Zaraysk, Ryazan gubernia, not far away from Moscow region. Her parents were deeply religious (belonging to Old Believers) peasants. Golubkina lost her father in the age of two. Policarp Sidorovich Golubkin deeply influenced her personal beliefs as was taking care of her during all childhood. Her grandfather relied to vegetable farmers. Due to the family's views, Anna did not get any scholar education till 25 years. Regardless this circumstance, all family was talented and developed. Anna's older sister Alexandra Golubkina got a nurse (feldsher's) education. Some teacher revealed in Anna Golubkina her remarkable talent in painting and sculpture, advising her family to let her to follow this creative

direction and to continue her studying in Moscow. As a result, in 1889 Anna Golubkina took exams and entered the Otto Gunst's Classes for Elegant Arts, - an architecture's school. At first, Anna Golubkina failed some exams due to the lack in formal knowledge. Sergey Volnukhin – one of the examiners persuaded the school's commission to accept her despite of the exam results, affirming that never saw anything as appealing and impressive as was her sculptural work *Praying old woman*. Finally Anna was admitted and her professor became her tutor²⁶².

Anna studied just one year in this school and after its bankruptcy entered the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture where she remained from 1890 till 1894 under Professor's Sergey Ivanov's tutorial. There she knew Sergey Konenkov – a future legendary sculptor. Further she was accepted as a student at the Imperial Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg in the studio of famous sculptor Vladimir Beklemishev. Some researchers affirmed that Anna Golubkina was secretly in love with her professor, but he knew nothing about it. In 1895 she left for Paris where took classes at the Academy Colarossi for two years. In that epoch it was quite traditional for Russian artists to study for a while in foreign countries; some *brilliant* students got even a grant which permitted them to dispose of living expenses. Though the future sculptor almost did not have financial possibilities she determinately continued her courses, even sometimes literally starving²⁶³. Nevertheless it did not stop her of creating original sculptures such as *The Iron One*²⁶⁴.

Anna Golubkina was honoured to become in 1897 an assistant to Auguste Rodin for three years period, replacing Camille Claudel. Rodin asked her to shape hands and legs of his sculptures. Exactly at this period the sculptor created *The Old Age*, *The Fire*, *The Mist* and other unique sculptures²⁶⁵.

²⁶² Kamensky, A. A. *Golubkina. The Person, Her Time, and Sculpture*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990, p.172.

²⁶³ Kamensky, A. A. *Golubkina. The Person, Her Time, and Sculpture*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990, p.179.

²⁶⁴ Golubkina, A.S. *A Few Words on the Sculptor's Craft. Letters. Recollections by Contemporaries*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1983, p.128.

²⁶⁵ Already in the years of scholarship in France Golubkina with all seriousness took classes and made everything to develop her sculptural craft and a capacity to see, to which in her proper words she paid a maximal attention: "Already an old professor Sergey Ivanovich Ivanov advised to *feel every place*. The best artists in France know and appreciate this feeling. Great artist Rodin requested to *feel a material*. Roman and Greek statues are full of this feeling. You will not find any good statue without a feeling of a vivid spiritualized material. Less this kind of a feeling has an art piece – worth is its final result. It is so obvious, whether you *build* theories, or try to prove a different opinion, - you cannot escape this truth. One should treat really carefully his work; otherwise he will not save this treasure of *models' feeling*. Apprentices use to come to this understanding quite late, and ones ever achieve it. Of course you may work with everything you wish, only do not mechanize your work. You should thoughtfully and carefully *awake life* in plaster cast: if you will discover it in plaster cast than you will achieve it in any other material". Golubkina, Anna. *Some words on sculptor's craft*. M.: Iskusstvo, 1965. I may suggest that Golubkina's appeal to work thoughtfully, to provoke, first of all, a material's feeling, to start primarily



A. Golubkina, *Sleeping*, 1910s, marble.



A. Golubkina, *Maria*, 1906, marble.

Regarding *The Old Age*, she seemed to vague a direct allusion with the work of Rodin. Curiously she worked on the same model, and even was shaping from the same position as Rodin²⁶⁶.

Returning to Russia, she continued working hard, as a result, Anna Golubkina's bas relief *The Wave*, mounted on the facade of The Moscow Art Theatre was regarded as an excellent result of the mature artist, which received the best possible education at home and abroad. In the end, she was named a symbol of Russian Modernism. Being a honest and sincere person, she had an active civil position - Golubkina even took part in the Russian Revolution of 1905, was arrested for one year, accused of distribution of revolutionary propaganda, but was released due to her illness. Her sculptural achievements included a number of sculptural portraits of such prominent characters as Andrei Bely, Alexei Remizov, Leo Tolstoy, and Karl Marx²⁶⁷.

The 1917 October Revolution, Golubkina accepted with joy but eventually rejected to collaborate with the Soviet Government in the Lenin's plan of Monumental propaganda after the cruel massacre execution of the former members of the State

working in plaster-cast, - was adapted and applied as an artistic method by Slobodinskaya: the majority of her works were always made in plaster cast and only once they were completed – sculptor transmitted them into other material. On the surface of Slobodinskaya's plaster cast sketches, preserved in the former studio we may observe an energetic and delicate fingers' touch, which demonstrate artist's active interaction and deep comprehension both of the material and of the model.

²⁶⁶ Kamensky, A. A. *Golubkina. The Person, Her Time, and Sculpture*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990, p.184.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.189.

Duma. Finally she agreed to teach for a short period in the VKHUTEMAS. The last work of the artist was a sculpture of *Alexander Blok*. Anna Golubkina died in 1927²⁶⁸.

Anna Golubkina may be regarded as the Silver Age's sculptor, as her main source of inspiration in sculpture were the impressionists. The texture of materials in her sculpture is the main visual proof of such a profound interest. The special treatment of the texture permitted Golubkina to create figures full of dynamism and lyrics. Besides, the sculptor liked to experiment with different materials such as wood and stone amidst other ones. The images of women, thinkers and old people always attracted her. The sculptor created the image of a woman which never feels prostrated or conquered. Golubkina's interest in thinkers can be explained by tradition of impressionism to explore the concept of thought and its movement. Such sculptures as *Old age*, *Portrait of L. Tolstoy*, *Walking man*, *Nina* and *Thoughtfulness* belong to the best of her art works. The dynamics and light-shadow play in stone are characteristic for Golubkina's sculptures²⁶⁹.

Golubkina lived and worked practically at the juncture of centuries, in historical terms her creative achievements marked the epoch's changes: her monumental reliefs therefore, can be regarded as the last traits of the XIX century. In the new time's period appear different complex subject matters. No surprise, that new means of artistic expression and techniques were discovered. A new relationship between sculptural and pictorial attributes appeared. Another Golubkina's contribution into art of relief was her achievement of a deep interaction between relief and surrounding it light and air, it also resulted into a stronger emotional connection between an artwork and viewer²⁷⁰.

The Swimmer - a legendary relief, created by Golubkina In 1903, Sava Morozov was the artwork's commissioner. The large-scale high relief had to decorate the facade of the Moscow Arts Theatre. Never before in Russia had a monumental relief revealed with such a magnitude and expressiveness the mood of the time. The theatre's innovative concept was perfectly depicted, and the artist's new creative credo was fully revealed. Aleksander Kamensky, the first writer who describes Golubkina's achievements wrote about *The Swimmer*: "This high relief represents a sculptural landscape that is unique in the history of sculpture"²⁷¹.

²⁶⁸ Golubkina, A.S. *A Few Words on the Sculptor's Craft*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1983, p.128.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p.128.

²⁷⁰ Kamensky, A. A. *Golubkina. The Person, Her Time, and Sculpture*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990, p.120.

²⁷¹ Ibid, p.120.



A. Golubkina, *Swimmer*, 1903, plaster cast, relief, The National Theatre, Moscow.



A. Golubkina, *Swimmer, fragment*, 1903, plaster cast, relief, The National Theatre, Moscow.

Originally the sculptor had the three options of the title (*The Sea of Human Life, The Wave, and The Swimmer*). The author's creative ideas in relation of *The Swimmer's* creation consisted of three hypostases of the image. The first one was related to landscape, the second turned it into the expressive form of the wave, which divides the relief panel into two parts: one in which sculptural forms dominate, the other with an elaborated perspective composition, the third one accentuates the swimmer

and his battle. The first innovative step of Golubkina was a choice of high relief instead of traditional bas-relief image. As a real master Golubkina first studied the building's function, rhythms and even the crowd's direction in Kamergersky Pereulok, not forgetting about psycho-type of theatre-lovers. *The swimmer* embodied the expressive sculptural forms at the forefront of the relief, together with gradual perspectives of the background²⁷².

Golubkina's style is quite a reminiscent to Donatello, who escaped from tradition and chose a pioneering artistic solution. Donatello's non-finite style appealed to Golubkina much more than the meticulously executed and refined reliefs of the famous Baptistery doors. During his creative work Donatello developed multi-plane low reliefs in perspective. Golubkina decided to continue this artistic solution. We cannot affirm that Golubkina used or preferred only multi-plane or single-plane perspective; apparently she saw visual effectiveness in both types of relief. Supposedly, an ability of interaction with surrounding atmosphere together with an attempt to impact viewer's senses mainly interested the author, not forgetting a shape-generating power of plastic forms. Golubkina, in her attempt to create innovative and touching artistic expression through her reliefs, was not enough appreciated by her contemporaries²⁷³.

Golubkina left a significant heritage not only artistically but also as an Art theoretician. *A Few Words on the Sculptor's Craft* – was her main theoretic work, among other essays appears the one related to the subject of creating perspective low reliefs. There Golubkina underlined the importance to protect and support a sculptural relief in all its kinds and forms. The sculptor's main artistic thought and conviction was that a creative idea should be expressed through those artistic means that reflect its purpose in the most exact and artistic manner. Golubkina wrote: "A relief is somewhat like a drawing: it is as if you were painting with clay, and your most important task when creating a relief is to maintain the same scale of reduction and perspective"²⁷⁴. She certainly did not consider the use of pictorial means literally but she accentuated the issue which was common to both, painter and sculptor, a subject regarding perspective and plane gradation.

²⁷² Kamensky, A. A. *Golubkina. The Person, Her Time, and Sculpture*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990, pp.126-141.

²⁷³ Ibid, p.142.

²⁷⁴ Golubkina, A.S. *A Few Words on Sculptor's Craft*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1983, p.20.

In creative work Golubkina was not afraid of difficulties and always looked for individual artistic way. Traditional method of artistic solution was not enough for the sculptor. She never stopped on one type of sculptural form's creating; it also was the case of low relief. The multiples types and kinds of her reliefs have not been categorized till today, but the innovative lines in its artistic depiction are absolutely clear in all her sculptural images. The landscape motives are often present in her reliefs. By their means Golubkina could achieve depth, vastness and width of a background composition in order to give a deeper sound to her work. The best examples of those ideas we find in Golubkina's works as *The Sea of Human Life* and *The Marsh*. The landscape there creates a new space, gives a new dimension to the image. In her reliefs author tends to escape from narrative depiction in order to achieve more symbolical meaning and simplicity. This tendency is reflected in the marble high relief *Music and Lights in the Distance*, as well as in the relief *The Spectacle*, and the marble *Distance*. The landscape there more indicates the mood, not playing a more important role.

The author gives a total freedom to her imagination, creating imagery of the envisioned space. The diverse reality accentuates the sculptural volumes. Creating this *imaginative space* the sculptor seems to give an initiative to a viewer in a way that he could continue developing this visual effectiveness in his mind.



A. Golubkina, *Music and Lights in the Distance*, 1910, marble, 64 × 60 × 30, high relief.

A. Golubkina, *Distance*, 1912, marble, 24 × 70 × 2,5, relief.



A. Golubkina, *Spectacle*, 1913, tinted limestone, 32 × 94 × 6, relief.

That's how the illusion of *rupture* into space prevails in the composition, despite of its heaviness. The title of the sculptural image even more prolongs her creative thought. Regarding Golubkina's limestone low reliefs we find a different tendency: in total there are eight reliefs, created in 1912-1913. One of Golubkina's preferences in material was given to limestone; it expressed with most affinity the *chronology* of world of art. The sculptor also adored marble and called it "a king next to plaster"²⁷⁵. The pliable clay astonished her with its tremulous texture.



A. Golubkina, *M. Sredina*, 1903, bronze.



A. Golubkina, *A girl. Mariika*, 1899, marble.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, p.57.

Golubkina highly appreciated Assyrian and Egyptian art, travelling to Paris, London and Berlin; she thoughtfully and seriously acquainted with the best museums' antiquities collections. Back in Russia her interest to antiquities was so big, that she even attended the classes of the Russian Egyptologist Boris Turaev, which in future became a curator of the Museum of Fine Arts. The structural tenets of ancient reliefs, bold composition of forms and their architectonics fascinated her. Nevertheless, in her proper works she found a new approach and artistic vision. It is certain, that those years of active studying, together with a deep artistic knowledge helped the sculptor to understand the origin of sacred aura of the ancient material. In her works she practiced practically all the technical and artistic means achieved and executed by the Egyptians and Assyrians. Nevertheless, in her sculptural images Golubkina elaborated a totally new artistic space within her reliefs.

The texture of material was of the biggest importance to her, as in it she saw different expressive means and a possibility to embody composition with intensity. *The Lady* would be a perfect example to illustrate her vision. In this relief we see a silent discourse of the still, almost naked body, and the inner movement. The experimenting with an intensity of background was her way to achieve a maximum expressiveness through mixed, smooth, trembling, recessed texture. Besides, Golubkina searched for a quality of contour: fluid, irregular, carved, hatched, rounded, sharp or other. The toning and number of planes played a significant role in her artistic method. *The Spectacle* shows the meticulously elaborated image which is composed against a wavy background, widely carved with a toothed chisel. The image is emotionally filled and unrestrained. T

he viewer's gaze concentrates on the hilly landscape and the characters' backs, finally ending with a deep thought that follows their collective gaze. Seldom had the sculptor thought of toning in marble reliefs, but with some time colour started to play a significant role in her limestone works. Possibly Golubkina painted at first her limestone reliefs with contrasting colours and outlines. Some of her works somehow remind traditional techniques of the ancient graffiti. Especially it can be observed in *The Spectacle* and *Sandra Moissi*.



A. Golubkina, *Motherhood*, 1925, marble, 58 x 32 x 3, relief.

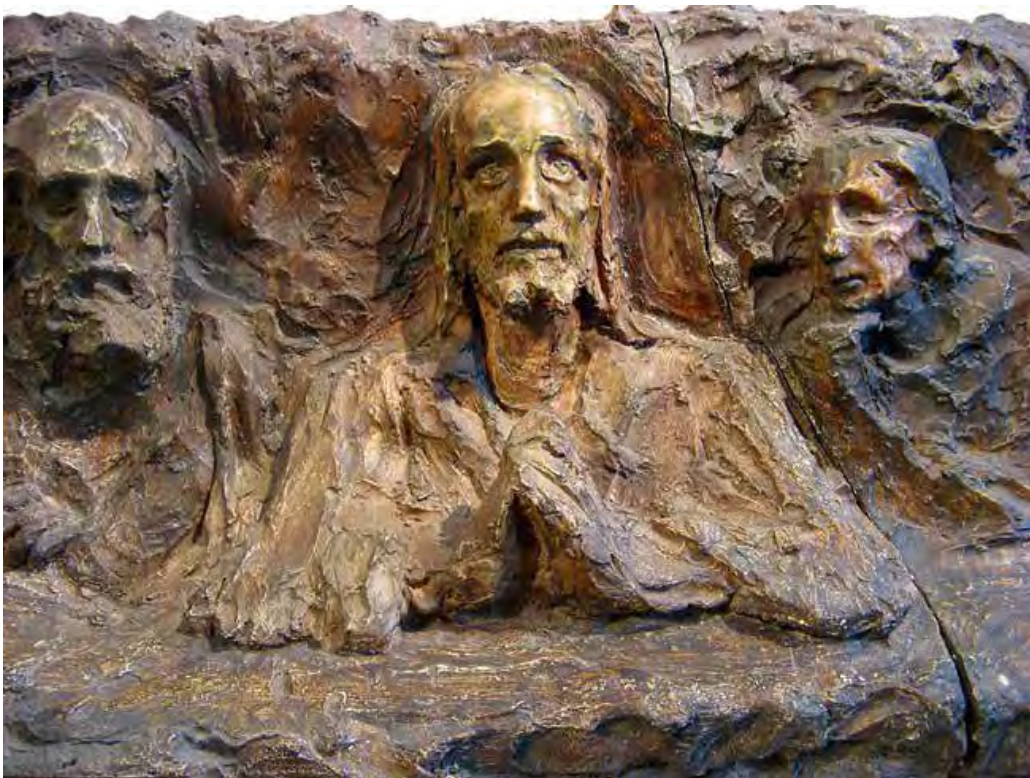


A. Golubkina, *Sandra Moissi (in role of king Edip of Sofokol tragedy King Edip)*, 1926, tinted limestone, 43 × 46 × 10, relief.

We don't dispose of any information left by Golubkina on her proper artworks. The sculptor was really modest and did not like talking or discussing her own works, although she was keen on analysing and describing other artists' achievements. Golubkina's sculptural imagery is so rich that cannot be defined only as a momentous testimony of a century left behind. Besides the sculptor's works keep

some enigma inside – they are kind of multi-faceted, rich and coded images, and cannot be just simply translated into a contemporary terminology. Her world view was complex, synthetic, and rich also grace to her national and folkloric background. *The Last Supper* represents a true revelation of the significance, inner strength, appealing not only to the past generations, but also to the present one. Golubkina's life time was anything but simple, while her imagery is full of mystery till our days. We can see a reflection of the sculptor's own contemplations and Leonardo's ideas, while ancient Russian tradition also highly influences the compositional solution of the sculptural image.

Golubkina does not use a narrative way in depiction; instead, she clearly displays the very essence of the event. The most significant traits of this image are in actual depiction the subject's *timelessness* and *non-spatiality* of the *Last Supper*. The sculptor links two distinct events here, the Agony in the Garden and the Last Supper. The icon-painting accepts such display, but almost never we see such a combination in sculpture.



A. Golubkina, *Last Supper*, fragment, 1911, tinted gypsum, relief.



A. Golubkina, *Jesus Christ*, 1912, relief, marble.

Motherhood – was the last relief work of the author elaborated in 1925. This image is also full of mystery and symbolism. The main figure of a mother more reminds a non-material image, a holy woman or even a spirit. The snow-white colour of a marble relief helps to achieve this effect of transparency and high emotional fulfilment. It can be important in analysing Golubkina's way in sculpture to know that the last word in this art form of relief was said in the most deep and significant theme as motherhood. Golubkina's attitude towards *Motherhood* was extremely careful and passionate. Zoya Klobukova described it in such words: "She worked on it with long pauses, starting with the first light touches; she would leave it, sigh, step back and admire it. The relief was completely finished, but she kept going back to it. She really loved it. Even a year later she would go back to it, scrape something away, step back, and admire it again"²⁷⁶.

To sum up, we should acknowledge that Golubkina found her proper way in sculpture, created art in forms and unexpected materials which previously were not used. Her sensitivity, attentive historical approach, kind of visualization of *timeless* sculptural forms and subjects makes her a prominent figure in Russian art of XX century.

²⁷⁶ Kamensky, A. A. *Golubkina. The Person, Her Time, and Sculpture*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990, p.126.

4. TRACES IN SCULPTURE (1930-1942)

4.1 First steps in sculpture. The early creative period

Chronologically the creative work of N. Slobodinskaya embraces more than 50 years. The first mature independent sculptural work of the artist was elaborated in the end of 1930, the last in the beginning of 1980s, thus the sculptor's creative work reflects a variety of clashes in the XX century Russian sculptural development.

The early period of Nina Slobodinskaya's creative work starts in 1930 when she successfully graduates as a young sculptor from the VHUITEIN (the Russian state art and technical school) in Moscow.



Photo of students and professors of the VHUITEIN: 1line from the left to the right 2 line – A. Grigoriev , 3d- row- **N. Slobodinskaya**, S. Bulakovsky, professor I. Chaikov, M. Belashov; 4-row: A. Aizenshtadt, E. Gercentstein, L. Pisarevsky. 1927-1930, unknown author.

As to the artistic heritage of this period, unfortunately, we don't dispose almost of nothing. Her studio was located at the mansard of the building, situated in the main centre of Leningrad. During Leningrad's bombardment in The Second World War this building was completely destroyed. Respectively all her elaborated sculptural works which were preserved there simply disappeared. With deep distress we have to

admit, that this period may be defined as the most uncertain and unknown in terms of the artistic heritage. The only testimony and proof of her creative achievements resulted to be photos, documents and a few notices, discovered in the family archive without any information on works' assignment or destination. The studio's and sculptures photos often just ascertain the fact of its creation without any more information added. Accordingly, it occurs to be extremely difficult to make a period's characteristic and works' classification; in addition, it is impossible to affirm that all further represented sculptural images give a full idea of her early creative life. This period defines the beginning of creative formation and professional development of the artist. The analysis of her works asserts us that Nina Slobodinskaya already possesses the bases of sculptural mastery. It is not surprising – as we know she got the best possible education in her field – and moreover, having Vera Muchina as the main sculpture's professor.

Above all, Nina Slobodinskaya is a mature person at her 32, with an elaborated artistic taste and a significant cultural knowledge and background; the young artist has a clear determination to find her path in sculpture despite of all social difficulties. Even if the apprentice's years were hard, and being a woman – she already knew what difficulties waited her in this mainly masculine profession - she did not change her mind. Besides, the new Soviet regime, which politics she did not accept somehow helped her: a new role of a woman as of an active participant of social life, the emancipation, made it easier to become consolidated at her profession. In addition, the social circumstances, the determination of the new government to promote it-self and cultivate its new leaders with the means of monumental art signified a risen necessity in sculptors – a certainly favourable fact for a sculptor - beginner.

In 1929 the Soviet Government decreed to start a series of massive propaganda actions in order to conquest nation's mind and conscience. And as arts were considered as a main tool to achieve this purpose, logically, increased the necessity in new specialists in all fields of arts. Hence, as soon as Nina Slobodinskaya graduated from the VHUTEIN, she was immediately assigned to work as an official sculptor in The CPKO (ЦПКиО – The Central Park of Culture and Leisure in Moscow named after Gorky). Moreover Nina Slobodinskaya was accepted as an artist – member to The MOSSH (МОССХ - Moscow Union of Soviet Artists). If not to severe

politics of terror and repressions, Stalin's dictatorship we would affirm that young artists in Russia never had such favourable conditions starting their carrier.

Being a member of the MOSSH (summer of 1932) supposed participation and the official representation at all the periodic exhibitions. The acceptance to the MOSSH from the very beginning signified to get in to the actual art-environment, to meet and to be in touch with the best and already acknowledged Russian artists such as: K. Iuon, G. Riajskii, A. Deneika, A. Lentulov, and I. Mashkov between others.

4.2 Slobodinskaya in the Moscow CPKO

“From a point of view of totalitarian aesthetics, art does not just passively reflect life, but also actively influences conscience, being a significant weapon of shaping new people, which was the main goal; thus, in order to achieve it, - all totalitarian countries spent enormous material and spiritual resources. Propaganda spoke while art demonstrated in exact images, that a new man with new qualities was already born”²⁷⁷.



The photo of a fragment of politicized Street carnival's figures, elaborated from papier-mache. 1929, Moscow, unknown author.

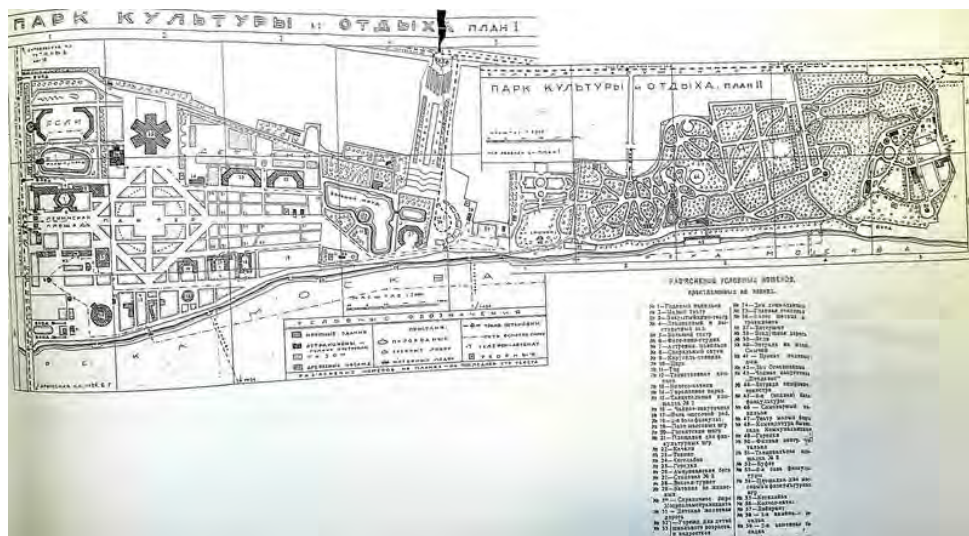
In 1930 Nina Slobodinskaya was assigned to work as an official sculptor of the CPKio (The Central Park of Culture and Leisure named after Gorky in Moscow). She participated in sculptural decoration of the Park's complex, organizing space, park, without any concrete known strictly sculptural task²⁷⁸. In order to understand what

²⁷⁷ Golomshtok, Igor. *Totalitarnoe iskusstvo*. Moskva: Galart, 1994, p.198.

²⁷⁸ Moreover, in 1929 -30s young sculptors - apprentices often participated in the decorative preparation of street-celebrations, creating multiples compositions of papier-mâché. Slobodinskaya

kind of tasks and work she had to complete it's important to analyse the works hold during those years in the Park and to find out the artistic goals of that epoch.

Therefore we address to the Park in its 1929-30 ss. By 1930 the Park was widened and reorganized. The architects created the Leninskaya Place, the kindergarden, small and big theatres. The Military town (in Summer House); a bandstand, the Corner of Silence with an alley of leisure, varios cafes *Poplavok* and *Samovarchik*. Was joined a special territory for dance, for gymnastics, for cinema watching, reading hall and attractions²⁷⁹.



The CPKO Park's plan, 1929 - 1930ss, Moscow, unknown author.

The park had to play an important role for the State's aims, representing a Moscow centre of Leisure and Culture. In terms of Communistic politics Park was regarded as a cultural factory. Leisure had to be also collective, socially significant, active and

wrote in her autobiographical notes that she took part in various projects of the Moscow street celebrations, which played the role of political carnivals. The approach to carnivals' organization was following: first, a script had to be elaborated, which would reflect International and national state of affairs. In accordance with this scenario the VHUTEIN students created decoration of *agitavtomobilei* – kind of *propaganda* – cars. For example, for the inauguration of the CPKiO's summer season in 1929 students prepared some voluminous –decorative carnival compositions, united under the unique idea. As the result, in the politicized carnival participated 54 heavy cars with 20 carts, which moved through Moscow streets towards the CPKiO Park (see the photo p.207). In the columns followed clowns - figures of the world politicians and their parodies. Thousands of people, huge crowds followed the procession. As we may observe, even the street celebrations served to the political aims; thus the Vhutemas students were orientated from the very beginning, of what kind of political fulfilment was expected from them by the State. To see more on the matter: Беньямин, В. *Произведение искусства в эпоху его технической воспроизводимости. Избранные эссе*. М.: Труды, 1996; Кагарлицкий, Б.Ю. *Рынок, государство и кризис «клас-сической культуры»*. Десять докладов, написанных к Международной конференции по философии, полити-ке и эстетической теории Создавая мыслящие миры. М.: Русская книга, 2007, С.130.

²⁷⁹ Коржев, М.П. *Из истории планировки первого советского парка, Парк и отдых*. М: Труды, 1977, С. 284.

had to introduce and impose social Soviet slogans through the variety of propaganda art, including sculpture. The park tended to develop a multiplicity of work forms, having as a goal *education* and *enlightenment* of Soviet citizens through such visually effective tools as cinema on open air or serious scientific conference, by means of balalaika concert or a symphonic orchestra performance. As it was mentioned, the park served as a perfect tool to impose new Soviet ideology and to influence masses. Territorially enormous park perfectly served for this goal. According to Soviet ideology, contemporary Russian culture had to differ from old bourgeois capitalistic one. The Soviet art and culture had to elaborate its proper language through all genres and aspects of art and culture. The Soviets had to have access to masterpieces of art and to be active participants of massive cultural activities²⁸⁰.

We should not forget that new Soviet leaders felt that their war for establishing a new regime was not over with the October Revolution, they had to convince a 300.000.000 Russian population to accept and to obey to this newly organized State. The battle was continuing without any compromise. Active social position of a mass of labour's class, their efforts to complete a 5 years plan's deadline in earlier terms, an interest towards international and interior political situation, and necessity in socialization – everything favoured and contributed to this goal.

Workers indeed considered the Park as a Cultural Factory in Nature's surroundings. In 1930 was made the sociological research. The result was following: 73% of visitors were attracted by attractions and performances, 70% used to come to enjoy walking, massive political work attracted 62 %, culture and education attracted - 34% and sport attractions gathered 40% of public. The first park workers informed that during its first 5 years of existence park gathered 37.000.000 of people: 120.000 visitors daily, and 250.000-300.000 persons per weekend²⁸¹.

Seeing such high level of popularity, which the ЦПКО gained in the shortest terms,- It becomes quite understandable why Soviet government invested big sums in the Park's functioning and decoration, aiming to attract and to win mass's minds. Artists, sculptors just having finished their studies were directed to the places of mass

²⁸⁰ Рублев, Анатолий Дмитриевич. *Парк Горького (Партер)*. М.: Искусство, 2003, С.12.

²⁸¹ Тарасова, Н.А. *Пропаганда искусства. Центральному парку - 50 лет*. М.: Министерство культуры РСФСР, Методический отдел парковой работы при Ордена Ленина ЦПКИО им. М. Горького, 1978, С.5.

attractions in order to *bring art to masses*, to embody principles of communism, developed in artistic forms.



Photo of the general view of the CPKO, 1928-1934, Moscow, unknown author.

Many contemporary famous Russian and foreign personalities visited the Gorky Park and were really amazed by its scale, variety of cultural, sport and leisure activities. Between others were: Herbert George Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Romaine Rolland, Martin Andersen Nex, and Louis Aragon. Maxim Gorky personally visited Park named behind him three times. Herbert Wells left a memorial phrase written in the *Visitor's Book* of the Park on 25 of June in 1934: "When I will die for capitalism and will resuscitate again for Soviet system, I would like to wake up exactly here, in this park of culture and leisure"²⁸². Sculpture was an active element and was widely used in Totalitarian Park, as it was considered a *Word in image* and the most powerful and influential of visual arts. That's how Russian sculpture entered in grandiose educational program of utopia – base of totalitarianism.

The Park represented a place – kind of *utopian socialization*. Stalin intended to change and to lead mind of new Soviet man into a new totalitarian – mythological system and park together with sculpture were one of the most important tools in this approach. A new visual language was actively introduced, neglecting the old one. We should not forget that the new government was obsessed with displacing and substituting Christian mythology and images of *Christ* and *Cross*, such notions as *sin*,

²⁸² Рублев, Анатолий Дмитриевич. *Парк Горького (Партер)*. М.: Искусство, 2003, С.27.

survival and expiation (which still remained as vivid archetypes in Russian man's conscience) from people conscience replacing Christian sculpture with simulacrum of antique's sculpture²⁸³.



Photo of I. Chadr working on sculptural model *Girl with an oar (first version)*, 1935, Al. Grinberg.

I. Chadr, *Girl with an oar*, 1936, plaster-cast, Harrison Forman.

Photo of the CPKO park's general panorama, 1950, unknown author.

In 1934 sculptor I. Chadre gets an official commission to create a series of sculptures for the Park. His first sculptural work of the 1935 was discarded by officials. Consequently, the park was fulfilled by 1937 with a plenty of female *nu* sculpture and so far was at its moment of artistic glory. Some critics see the sculptural organization of the Park at the epoch as a medium used by the Soviet government to generate sexual energy which later had to be inverted in socially useful forms – a labour. From that point of view sculpture's task was to generate excitement in its visitors.

Meanwhile sculptures of communist leaders as Lenin, Stalin and others were mediums for impose of socialistic mythology, emblems and signs-indicators of a *new world*. According to ideologists of propaganda in the NKVD, sculpture played the main role as a method of infusion and social hypnosis that's why it maintained position of leadership in art²⁸⁴.

²⁸³ Гегель. *О христианской скульптуре*. М.: Искусство, 1968. С.179 -182.

²⁸⁴ Золотоносцев, М. *Исследование немого дискурса*. Аннотированный каталог

According to M. Zolotonosov, another hidden message represented a massive scale of sculptures which were figures in movement – often sportsmen, throwing something in the air: javelin throwing, volleyball or basketball players (resembling the renowned sculpture the *Diskoball*). Those ones had a hidden goal to psychologically orientate, prepare and agitate a nation to the ideas of space expansion, war, expressing it by language of spatial art²⁸⁵. So far sculpture in 1930s has become one of the most dominant codes of ideological message²⁸⁶.



Photo of The CPKO's inauguration, Sport's town, 1928, unknown author.

Photo of Pushkinskaya embankment, 1930, unknown author.

Regarding N. Slobodinskaya 1 year's work in the Moscow's CPKO, unfortunately there is no scientific evidence in the found materials to affirm her authorship of the sculptural park's decoration in the indicated period. In the sculptor's autobiographical notice, she acknowledges working in the park, but does not specify a kind or a type of sculptural work she executed. The documentary information on the architecture and the ensemble's sculpture decoration work held in the Park at that period permits to assume that N. Slobodinskaya pertained to the department which was responsible for planning different projects of sculptural organization in the park's zone²⁸⁷.

садово-паркового искусства сталинского времени. СПб.: ООО ИНАПРЕСС, 1999, С.3-19.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, p.3 -19.

²⁸⁶ Кухер, К. *Парк Горького: Культура досуга в сталинскую эпоху.1928—1941*. М.: Российская политическая энциклопедия (РОССПЭН), 2012, С.352.

²⁸⁷ Мельников, Константин Степанович. *Архитектура моей жизни. Творческая концепция. Творческая практика*. М.: Искусство, 1985, С.311.

Паспорт

К портрету - Верензе - Золотого деятеля науки, лауреата государственных премий, профессора Э. Воронцова Василия Ивановича

Автор: скульптор Свободина Нина - Сведения об авторе (Член РОСХ) - конрадозна

Родилась в г. Киеве - 1892. Училась в Москве.

В 1930 г. закончила Высший Госуд. курс. (Уч. Институт) Это был последний выпуск в Москве, т.к. Институт слился с Академией художеств - в Ленинграде.

Училась в основном у И.И. Мухоморова, которая была классом скульптуры на старших курсах нашего института.

После окончания Института была направлена на работу в Ц.П.К. по оформлению Парка скульптурой. Параллельно работала над скульптурой - майки фронт. Вела общественные работы (по оформлению к праздничным датам, плакатами - фигурами из фанеры и папье-маше) и др.

Участвовала, как член РОСХ, в выставках того времени - в Москве.

Н. на обороте

N. Slobodinskaya, Autobiographical note, created on 16.09.1970. Sculptor's personal archive.

В 1933 г. переехала в Ленинград, где работала по скульптуре и по смежным видам.

Из монументальных работ:

В г. Днепре, в Ц.П.К. - установка на гранитном постаменте бронз. бюст (2 бюста) 2ххх герцога Шварца

В г. Борисоглебске: гранитный бюст академика Павлова 811.

В Ленинграде: бюст Соколова: Ц.П.К. бюст Мухоморова

В Сталинабаде: бронзовый бюст Н.И. Гаврилы герцога Соколовца, бюст Павлова

Л-град: бюст - маршал - группа "Кр. Армия"

В музеях: портретные работы:

Л-град: Некрасовский музей, В.Торжков музей, Медик музей, 3.И.И. Мейн: Калининский музей, Ветеран

На выставке 1970 г. посвященной 10-летию со дня рождения Ленина - экранирование портретов и бюстов: народного артиста СССР артиста Гаврилы Соколовца Р.И.

Портреты проф. Воронцова В.И. экранированы на выставке 1967 г. (Российский музей) посвященной 50-летию Советского государства. И экранированы в 1966-67 году к выставке.

Прилагаю:

1. Заключение экспертной комиссии портрета, подписанное председателем Правления РОСХ Родером Яничинским и т.д.
2. Справку об участии (портретом проф. Воронцова) в выставке 1967 г. 30 ноября зам. Председателя Шварца

16/9-1970. Скульптор Свободина Нина

N. Slobodinskaya, Autobiographical note, created on 16.09.1970. Sculptor's personal archive.

In the short autobiography the artist mentioned that concurrently she worked on an easel sculpture, and participated in preparation of official date's streets'

celebrations, elaborating figures of papier-mache and plywood. In 1929 a new wave of the massive propaganda overwhelmed the Soviet society together with the beginning of the *Piatiletka* – a 5 years' plan of work: aiming to provide a quick technical progress, gathering a harvest, or producing tractors - increasing an industrial power and the State's economic capacity²⁸⁸. Social poster became the most important visual tool in this goal. Consequently multiples organizations edited thousands of propaganda posters in order to promote the collectivization.

4.3 The IZOGIZ

One of the most important editorials at the time was the State's publishing house of fine arts – the IZOGIZ²⁸⁹. Already in the first 3 months of 1930 the IZOGIZ edited and published 21 posters and 600000 copies in total²⁹⁰. In the first quarter of 1931 approximately 125 models of posters promoting collectivization were published.

Politic art did n' have any official directive representative centre till 1931. On the 11 of March The CK of the Communist's Party accepted a resolution on significance of posters' role in terms of social propaganda. They recognized posters as a crucial medium to influence conscience and hearts of millions at the vast Russian territory. Besides, the party formulated an ambitious goal for Soviet political art – to change a structure of people's conscience at its irrational level. From now on it was decided to concentrate all publishing of social propaganda posters in hands of the IZOGIZ. This decree was taken precisely when Nina Slobodinskaya started working in the IZOGIZ (1931) as the specialist of the highest category²⁹¹. In this context becomes clear what kind of work Slobodinskaya could execute in the IZOGIZ. The IZOGIZ becomes the unique publishing house working directly with the CK²⁹². One centralized directive office of publishing signified a uniformity of images and ideas.

²⁸⁸ McCauley, Mary. *Soviet Politics 1917—1991*. L.: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp.28-39.

²⁸⁹ Сикорский, Н.М. Ред. *Книговедение. Энциклопедический словарь*. М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1981, С.205.

²⁹⁰ Иваницкий, С.Г., Шульц, А. *Советская скульптура*. М.: Советский художник, 1981, С.192-203.

²⁹¹ N. Slobodinskaya writes in her official autobiography's certificate (see image p. 213) that she was accepted in the mentioned status; unfortunately she did not specify a kind of work she executed.

²⁹² The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the main department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) between Party Congresses. According to the Party's rules, the Central Committee headed all Party's and government's activities between each Party Congress. Members of the committee were assigned at the Party Congresses. Месяц, С.А. *ИСТОРИЯ ВЫСШИХ ОРГАНОВ КПСС*. Москва: ИОО., 2001, С.35.

In 1932 Slobodinskaya worked for the VSEKOHUDOGNIK (Russian Union of Cooperative Societies of Artists 1928 -1953).



V. Muchina, *Rabochii i kolhoznitsa*, 1935 -1937, steel, 25 m. high, VDNH, Moscow.

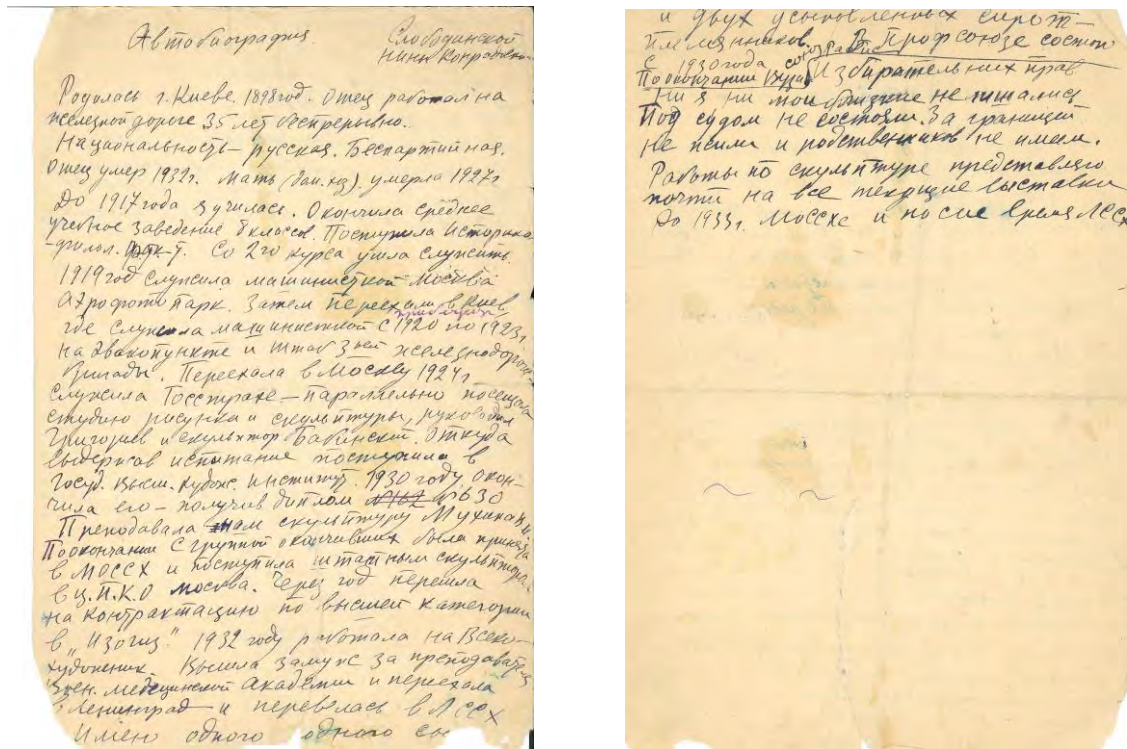
In the *Rabochii i kolhoznitsa* by Muchina of 1937 we see a female figure athletically built, strong, fertile, which visually combines in her image traits of worker and peasant. She holds a sickle in her hands, which embodies an element of the new Soviet State Emblem.

In 1933 due to the changes occurred in sculptor's private life (N. Slobodinskaya married Vladimir Georgievich Gnezdilov) she left Moscow and moved to Leningrad. There the artist was accepted as a member into the Leningrad Union of Soviet Artists (The LOSH)²⁹³ and till her death the sculptor took part in this union, mainly living and working in the former Russian Empire's capital. The young sculptor was fortunate; as she was given a studio in the famous building of Leningrad - *the fairy tales home* at the Dekabrist's Street, which was a real masterpiece of a North Modern style (see photo p.91). The building was decorated by sketches of I. Bilibin²⁹⁴ and unfortunately was bombarded during the Second World War, what caused the total destruction of

²⁹³ The Union of Artists of Saint Petersburg was created on August 2, 1932, as a creative association of Leningrad artists and arts critics. Prior to 1959, it was defined as The Leningrad Union of Soviet Artists. From 1959 (when it took part of the Union of Artists of the RSFSR), it was named as Leningrad branch of The Union of Artists of Russian Federation. After the city changed its name in 1991, it was renamed as the Saint Petersburg Union of Artists. See: *Художники народов СССР. Библиографический словарь*. Т.1. М: Искусство, 1970, С.97.

²⁹⁴ Ivan Yakovlevich Bilibin (1876 –1942) was a famous Russian artist, illustrator and stage designer who pertained to the *Mir iskusstva* movement and participated in the project *the Ballets Russes*. Russian folklore was one of his main sources of inspiration. See: Голынец, Г.В. *И.Я. Билибин*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1972, С.5.

the early period artist's sculpture. The approximate idea of the created works as mentioned before, we can get only from archival sculptor's photos left without any dating.



N. Slobodinskaya's personal autobiography, document, unknown date, Sculptor's personal archive.

4.4 Peasant and the mirrored philosophy of Cosmism

The first work I would like to analyse – it's the monumental sculptural image of approximately more than life size (2 meters high x 1m width) female figure - *The Peasant*, which has all attributes of a woman who lives and works in the contemporary village. There are just 2 photos of this work with different focuses and perspective remained in a personal sculptor's archive what permits to characterize the sculpture. Luckily the author was photographed nearby her finished plaster cast model what permits to define a monumental scale and to determine the real dimensions of the sculpture.



N. Slobodinskaya, *The Peasant*, 1934-1940, plaster cast, 2 x 1,5 m. approximately.



Muchina, *The Peasant*, bronze, 1927, 521 x 1000.



N. Slobodinskaya, *The Peasant*, 1934-1940, plaster cast, 2 x 1,5 m. approximately.

We see a larger-than-life format (2 x 1,5 m approximately), a heavy-laden woman, who carries some lading on her right shoulder. The female figure is widely striding. The peasant moves straight toward a viewer. It's easy to imagine that we meet a young Soviet woman as a stranger, following the road in the rural part of countryside. She reminds a peasant on her way home after a hard work at field. All her figure is full of dynamism and energy. She's got heavy foots, strong hands. Her manner of carrying the load indicates that she is used to work hard. The dress folds follow the diagonal line of a woman's body. It even more emphasizes the full of energy and inner strength step of the woman. The figure's head is highly accentuated; her eyes seem to be half shut. We see an image of a tired woman, who seems being asleep or inwardly *concentrated* on her own thoughts. The sculpture's face and its figure are in a kind of discordance or contradiction with each other as it seems that every figure's part has its proper life and mood. If at one hand we observe her figure's movement full of aspiration, rush, motion, purposefulness, strength, tension, than at another we notice insularity, calmness, concentration on her inner world. The curious thing is that, depending on a perspective viewer sees a different expression not just of her face but also of the

figure's posture and accordingly changes the whole message which the figure transmits.

At the photo where the model is showed together with the sculptor we see the female figure almost in front and just a little from the left side. Here, the sculptural lady seems to be in an active movement, so accurate and efficient that literally embodies clockwork, while her face expression looks more *impenetrable* than an Egyptian pharaoh's mask. The sculpted figure seems to be totally asleep or unconscious. At the other photo, where the sculpture appears on its own we see the model from the left side and spectator's impression changes completely. Her figure is still in a movement and her straight back continues her vertical line and step, but her pose in general seems to express a totally different message: tiredness, heaviness, and her stride seems to be not full of energy as previously, but instead full of inertness or necessity. The almost closed eyes, the low breast, the vertical lines of the figure's dress folds, all together seem to pull her down, and to haul the figure to the earth. A square pedestal even more accentuates this gravitation. The female figure continues a rhythmic movement, but its sound changes to more automatic, passive and inert.

Naturally arises a comparison with the artist's professor's - Vera's Muchina's sculptural work – as they coincide in subject-matter. *The Peasant* – Muchina's emblematic art work which marks an appearance of new ideal of a Soviet woman – a peasant. Both figures are heavily-laden. Their appearance has similar physic features: both seem to be *born* in the earth - the two figures have exaggerated physical traits: huge heavy legs, all figures seem heavy and strong. Both belong to their epoch by the type of dressing, their appearance is clear – they are typical peasant women and both are originated in the Russian rural world. The Muchina's *Peasant* seems by all its physic traits – an emblem of strength, power, and if we observe the female figure's mood - it is full of energy and, mentally, she is concentrated here, on the present moment, at her deed, - at labour.

She seems to be physically rooted in the earth. The figure resembles a 100 years oak deeply penetrating the earth. The earth's power breathes throughout her. Her face ensures us with a determination, will-power and confidence; the sculptural figure seems to embody statics itself. The world around belongs to her and she appears to be a queen, enjoying full rights here in her kingdom. Her image encapsulates simultaneously strength, power, will, practicality and pragmatism.

In terms of allegory if Muchina's peasant represents *statics it-self*, another peasant (of Slobodinskaya) rather encapsulates a *movement* and full of energy *urge* towards some unknown purpose. In her figure's movement and face there is an inner concentration. Muchina's personage – is present now and here by all her essence - physically and mentally, while another character is all an embodiment of yearning, aspiration, striving for some other unknown aim. She looks for something *more* than the reality around her. There are different layers, sheets and stratum in Slobodinskaya's sculptural figure. By its appearance female personage embodies the canons and attributes of her time, but she *carries a deeper meaning* than an actual epoch.

In Slobodinskaya's sculpture there is a *movement* and *will* in the figure, but the woman's face expresses *detachment* and aloofness of this world, of the reality around her. By her mind she is far from here, she is quite a stranger in the surrounding reality. She belongs to the peasant's world but simultaneously it's not *sufficient* for her, she aspires for and moves upwards, *higher*. She seeks for *other reality, other spatial dimension*. With a resolute step the *Peasant* exits a plane and edge of her *time* and looks for some other *invisible reality* which exceeds the *temporal*, - a *supertemporal reality*.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya at her studio with her son's nanny, 1940ss, unknown author.

In my opinion the female peasant figure of Nina Slobodinskaya may also be regarded as a kind of a replica, a hidden philosophic respond of the apprentice to her teacher expressed in sculpture. Muchina's female peasant is all an emblem of her epoch and actuality, being a personification and an assertion of strength, energy and life rooted into the earth, but it does not symbolize anything more than a present moment, she represents the *Temporality* while Slobodinskaya's figure *exits the frames of time* and seeks for *more*, takes a *higher purpose* – making a movement, symbolizing an *urge towards a higher sense of existence - Spirituality* and may I suggest – *Atemporality* or *Eternity* in philosophical terms.

Slobodinskaya's philosophical message suggests: life is not *in statics*, statics symbolically represents death; life is not an earth-rooted social existence – it's something *more* than that – especially through the Movement, an *inner movement*, a search and an urge to find a *highest sense* of life you may discover the way to spirituality and to *eternity*.

If Muchina's *Peasant* affirms earth *temporal values*, another *Peasant* is in active search of *eternal ones*. Slobodinskaya's *Peasant* reveals a world vision of Nina Slobodinskaya and corresponds to her global *individual search of space, and dimension of spirituality together with eternity in life and consequently in sculptor's creative work*. The philosophical message of Nina Slobodinskaya belongs to the cosmism – a very common Russian philosophical worldview, which the social environment of Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya's and she followed²⁹⁵. However, the artistic circle of sculptor regarded the cosmism in *wider frames* than it is traditionally defined. Leningrad's intelligentsia considered that the essence of Russian soul is never satisfied with calm day-to day existence, but it is always in search of some *upper sense* of life, – a spiritual and creative one. This is another point in which N. Roerich's artistic and spiritual approach intersected with Slobodinskaya's vision:

²⁹⁵ The Russian cosmism - a philosophical, religious, cultural, artistic and poetic vision, appeared in Russia in the XIX century and widely spreaded in the beginning of XX century. It confessed a theory of natural philosophy, included elements of religion and ethics embraced a history and philosophy of the origin, evolution and future existence of the cosmos and humankind. The Russian Orthodox Church's theological approach was applied, especially in aspect of its world's unity's, wholeness's and globality's vision. In case of Nina Slobodinskaya I refer to a religious –philosophical movement of cosmism, whose direct prophets were Vladimir Soloviev, Nikolai Berdiaev, Sergey Bulgakov, Pavel Florentsky, Nikolai Roerich among others. Nina Slobodinskaya also applied cosmism's vision in its artistic –aesthetic and poetic aspect, as well as Vladimir Odoevsky, Vladimir Hlebnikov, Alexander Blok, Michail Vrubel and even Alexander Skriabin in its musical aspect.
See: Владимирский, Б.М., Кисловский, Л.Д. Путиами русского космизма. М.: Либроком, 2011, С.27.

“Cosmic life’s decree calls for a lightful feat. Life’s wheel is nourished by Cosmos’s glory”²⁹⁶.

To be more precise, traditionally it represents a philosophical and cultural movement and embraces a broad theory of natural philosophy. A history and philosophy of the origin, evolution and future existence of the cosmos and humankind unite elements of religion and ethics, It reconciled elements from both Eastern and Western philosophic traditions as well as from the Russian Orthodox Church²⁹⁷. Even The Proletkult was under the influence of Cosmism and after the October Revolution, this definition came to be applied to some poets and writers: such as Mikhail Gerasimov and Vladimir Kirillov for instance²⁹⁸. The new Bolsheviks in cultural field were attracted by the emotional paeans to physical labour, machines, and they could apply it to the collective of industrial workers, structured around the image of the universal *Proletarian*, “who strides strength from the earth to conquer planets and stars”²⁹⁹. Significant Russian writers Andrei Platonov and Nicolai Fedorov were deeply impressed by the cosmism’s philosophy and incarnated it in their novels. The same ideas of the Russian cosmists were later reflected by the transhumanist movement³⁰⁰. Already in antique religious and mythological visions a man intuitively recognized an interrelation between his and Universe’s existence and expressed this vision into basically visual forms. Cosmic symbols and images of folk art, poetry illustrated the idea of Universe’s wholeness, man’s organic involvement into Cosmos’s life. This idea is also widely reflected in the world’s culture. However particularly in Russia appears a unique cosmic movement of the scientific, philosophical and religious thought in the late XIX century, which widely spreads in the XX century. An interesting reflection cosmism found in the Orthodox theological thought, which was explained by famous philosopher N. Berdiaev as *cosmocentric*, which saw Divine energies in the natural world, aimed to transform the world and also as *anthropocentric*, related to a man’s activity in nature and society. In N. Bulgakov’s opinion, particularly here, actively appears an issue of interrelation of cosmos and man; creative eschatology is developed on the basic idea: “that this world’s end and the history’s end also

²⁹⁶ Рерих, Н.К. *Шамбала*. М: Наука, 1994, С.40.

²⁹⁷ Исакова, Н.В. *Феномен глобальности в философии русского космизма*. Автореферат Дис. канд. филос. Наук, Краснодар: Изобразительное искусство, 2004, С.74.

²⁹⁸ Лобач, ВВ. *Космизм. Новейший философский словарь*. М.:Изобразительное искусство, 1998, С.49.

²⁹⁹ Seifrid, Thomes. *A Companion to Andrei Platonov*. *The Foundation Pit*. L.: Academic Studies Press, 2009, pp.69-70.

³⁰⁰ Гиренок, И. *Космизм. Новая философская энциклопедия*. М.: Наука, 2003, С.170.

depend on man's creative act"³⁰¹. Principal difference of Russian cosmism and its characteristic was in new quality of the approach towards the world. It is the idea of active evolution, - necessity of new conscious stage of the world's development, when humankind directs it by *Reason* and *Moral's Sense*. This approach is active and creative, which aims to transform not only an external world but also a proper nature. In A. Savinkov's opinion Cosmists purpose to awake man's conscious spiritual creative forces in order to lead a spirit of material and to achieve man's and the world's spiritualization. Cosmists were able to combine a care of the big whole – The World, biosphere, cosmos with deepest challenges of the highest value – a concrete man.

4.5 Motives of pilgrimage and wandering - Russian soul's search of spirituality

*I come out to the path, alone,
Night and wildness are referred to God,
Through the mist, the road gleams with stone,
Stars are speaking in the shining lot.*

Mikhail Lermontov, *I come out to the Path*, fragment, 1841.

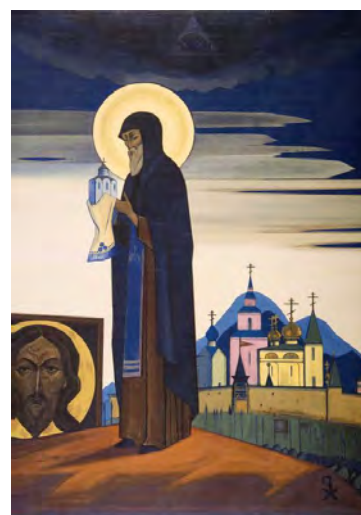
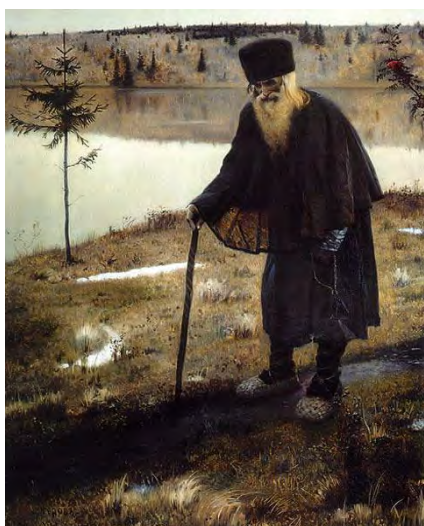
The *hidden* conceptual message of Nina Slobodinskaya's sculptural figure the *Peasant* also corresponds to another motive – motive of pilgrimage and of the road³⁰², which is so common in Russian literature, poetry, philosophy and religion, was especially demonstrated in Leskov's novel *The enchanted pilgrim*. The principal hero encapsulates the historical and spiritual experience of all Russians. Throughout their travelling pilgrims search a sense of life, its spiritual fullness, God. In Russian folklore and fairy-tales the motive of pilgrimage is personified by such a character belonging to peasant's world as Ivan –Durak – *Ivan The Full*. Usually he is a young man who is not satisfied in day to day existence in his village and seeks for some

³⁰¹ Бердяев, Н.А. *Русская идея. О России и русской философской культуре*. М.: Наука, 1990, С.43-169.

³⁰² Бердяев, Н.А. *Судьба России*. М.: ООО «Издательство АСТ», 2004, С.27. Самым тягостным испытанием для Ильи Муромца, его богатырского духа, стала его многолетняя неподвижность, лишившая прирожденного странника чиста поля. Философ говорит о том, что тип странника характерен для русской литературы, он есть и у Пушкина, и у Лермонтова, и у Гоголя, и у Толстого. Один из центральных мотивов русской литературы – мотив странничества. Земное существование человека – лишь временное, оно пройдет как с белых яблонь дым. У С.А. Есенина читаем: Есенин, С. *Собрание сочинений в 6 т.* М.: Академкнига, 1978.

different, *higher* sense of existence. He justifies the motive of a road he takes in such words: *Idu tuda – ne znayu kuda. Ishu to- ne znaiu chto*, which means I go there, where I don't know, I search something that I do not know. Russian philosopher N. Berdiaev wrote that this type of stranger is characteristic for Russia and its folklore. "Stranger – is the freest person in the world. He walks at the ground but his life belongs to the *air*, he is not *rooted* in the earth, he is not stocky. Stranger is freed of *the world* and all the earth's heaviness and earth's life is limited by a small swag at his back. The grandeur of Russian nation is concentrated at the type of stranger. A Russian type of stranger is expressed not only in life of Russian peasantry but also in its whole cultural life, in life of a best part of intelligentsia. And here, we know strangers with a free spirit, never attached to anything, eternal wayfarers, searching for an *unseen city*" ³⁰³. The philosopher affirms that stranger's type is also characteristic for Russian literature: it can be found in the works of Tolstoy, Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol. In Esenin's poetry this motive also exists:

"Whom should we pity? If everyone in the world is a stranger-
 He will pass, he will enter and will leave his home again.
 I will not return to the father's home.
 Eternally wandering wayfarer.
 All we are homeless, do we need much.
 Almost for everybody I am a gloomy pilgrim.
 God knows from which faraway land..."³⁰⁴.



M. Nesterov, *Pustinnik*, 1888-1889, oil on canvas, 1200 x 1415. M. Nesterov, *Stranger*, 1963, oil on canvas, Illustration for the novel *In the woods. City Kitaj*, by P. Melnikov-Pechiorskiy.
 N. Roerich, *St. Sergey Radonegskii*, 1932, tempera, 40 x 30.

³⁰³ Бердяев, Н.А. Судьба России. М.: ООО «Издательство АСТ», 2004, С.27.

³⁰⁴ Есенин, С. Собрание сочинений в 6 т. М.: Академкнига, 1978, С.80.



N. Roerich, *Stranger of a Light town*, 1933, tempera, 50 x 40.



N. Roerich, *We are not afraid*, 1922, tempera, 70,3 x 100.

Russian philosophers affirm that symbolic meaning of the road motive and pilgrimage – it's a human soul's spiritual search of a *higher* life sense - search of God. In painting the best imagery representation of pilgrim's motive and deep search of spirituality belongs to M. Nesterov and N. Roerich³⁰⁵.

³⁰⁵ Culture and tradition of *wandering* appeared in the period of Moscow's reign in the XV century and existed till the XX century, what differs East slavenian tradition from Roman-germans, as it lasts without any temporal interruptions. Russian wandering could be a sign of a heroic behavior, as much as could be a massive phenomenon and could unite in it self religious activitie together with profan actions. A special attention to this subject was given in the books of Dmitrij Tschizevskij, Skovoroda. Dichter, Denker, Mystiker, Munchen 1974, 206-211; Holt Meyer, Romantische Orientierung (Slavistische Beitrage, Bd. 333), Munchen 1995, 75 ff; Bogucharskiy, V. Slavistic Printings, The Hague, Paris 1970. Moral and philosophical aspects of wandering are deeply analyzed and developed in the following works:

Meanwhile James M. Nelson generalizes a worldwide notion of pilgrimage: “Pilgrimage is an ancient and complex practice found in all major religious traditions. It involves a journey from a familiar place and routine to someplace unfamiliar, typically a location that is special or sacred and difficult to reach.

The journey may be done as an act of devotion. It can also be a part of search of something or pursuit of an ideal, perhaps a cleansing or renewal that will allow us to connect with another worldly power and solve some current and seemingly intractable problems”³⁰⁶. Russian tradition of wandering in some way continues a European one which is rooted in the medieval epoch but in the opinion of Anton M. Pazos differs in its meaning depending on the historical period: “It should be clear from the preceding that one important difference between new and traditional pilgrimages hinges on the significance of the act. Pre-modern pilgrimages were ostensibly framed by religion, and the individual pilgrim’s stated goals were whatever spiritual reward his religion offered and had prepared him to encounter. Traditional pilgrimage enhanced worthiness. In traditional pilgrimage the accrual of merit gave significance to the act. New pilgrimages do not displace these traditional modes; they add new ones, focusing them not on the contract between a human soul and the divine, but on the ego, the individual pilgrim’s temporal wants and desires”³⁰⁷.

4.6 Kiting – grad – the Sacred Russia and a dreamland

In continuation in Russian culture appear an image and a philosophical notion of *Kiting-grad* which symbolically represents a holy land, a heaven paradise, which Russian souls yearn and long for; *Kitiaj-grad* becomes a final dream-destination of a stranger who searches a spiritual paradise at the earth.

The Kitiag legend represents a cycle of fairy stories about the city which submerged in the lake Svetloiar and thus escaped devastation of Tatars.

Смирнов, И.П. *Генезис. Философские очерки по социокультурной начинательности*. СПб.: Алетейя, 2006. Бердяев, Н.А. *Душа России*. Л.: Сказ, 1990, С.31., Лосский, Н.О. *Условия абсолютного добра: Основы этики: Характер русского народа*. М.: Политиздат, 1991, С.320-340.
³⁰⁶ Nelson, James M. *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*. Valparaiso: Springer science+ Business media, 2009, p.417.

³⁰⁷ Pazos, Antón M. *Redefining Pilgrimage: New Perspectives on Historical and Contemporary Pilgrimages*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014, p.44.



K. Gorbatov, *Drowned city*, 1933, oil on canvas.



N. Roerich, *Hymn to the Wilderness, the Battle of Kerzhenets*, 1912, tempera on canvas, 52 x 70,5, sketch of a drop-curtain for N. Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Legend of the invisible grad-Kitiag and lady Fevronia* for Diagelev seasons in Paris.

The name Kitiag originates from town Kideksh (a village 4 km. away from town Souzdal) which was destroyed by Tatars in 1237. By legend in a calm weather one may hear a bell's ringing and in the depth of the lake see the buildings of the drowned city. Basing on the city's legend and on the antique Russian narrative *Peter and Fevronia*, Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov created opera the *Legend of the invisible grad-Kitiag and lady Fevronia* in 1907³⁰⁸.

³⁰⁸ Комарович, В.Л. Китежская легенда. (Опыт изучения местных легенд). М.: Наука, 1936, С.34-50.

The significance and meaning of the concept *Grad-Kitiag* faced changes during centuries in Russian philosophy, literature and art but never has it acquired so much importance as in XX century, due to its historical and cultural changes. Writer S. Durilin who dedicated a book to the idea of Kitiag –grad - *Church of the invisible city* in 1914 proclaimed it “the highest symbol of Russian national religious and philosophical conscience”³⁰⁹.



B. Smirnov-Rusetsky, *Not sinking Grad (Kitiag)*, 1977, tempera on canvas.

Russian philosopher N. Berdiaev perfectly defined the spiritual meaning and aspect of the *Kitiag-grad* for Russian people: “Russian soul is never quite, it is not a philistine, bourgeois soul, not a *local* soul. In Russia, in Russian people there is a kind of never-ending search – a search of invisible town Kitiag, an *unseen home*. Russian soul discovers an endless expanse and there is no delineated horizon in front of its spiritual gaze. Russian soul burns in a fervent search of truth, absolute, divine truth and salvation of the whole world and the overall resurrection towards a new life. It always sorrows for the grief and sufferings of people and of the whole world, and its harassment does not have any mitigation. This soul is overwhelmed with a search of final damned questions on life sense. There is a stillness, insubordination and dissatisfaction of nothing temporal, conditional and relational in Russian soul. It has

³⁰⁹ Дурьлин, С.Н. *Русь прикровенная*. М.: Паломник, 2000, С.21.

to get forward and forward to the end, to the limit, to the exit of this world, of this land, of all local, bourgeois or affixed"³¹⁰.

In the poem of a famous poet and one of the active Nina Slobodinskaya's social circle's members M. Voloshin *Kitiag* in 1919 the image of underwater city appears as an eternal dream of Russian people, while a real Russian history during all its existence represents evil. The sacred Russia's spirit is disembodied, disincarnated and does not have any contact points and contiguity with earth's existence:

"The sacred Russia is covered with a sinful Russia,
And there is no way to that city,
Where calls invocatory and mysterious
Underwater ringing of church bells"³¹¹.

In the final tragic poem of Kliuev *The song on a Great Mother* of 1930-31 *Kitiag-grad* is shown as a *mysterious centre* of Russia³¹².

Russian philosopher Ilyin of XX century sees Russian history as a history of a fruitful creation and the urge of Russians of *Kitag-grad* is regarded as people's soul's tendency of *deepening and sanctifying* its everyday life, to accept and interpret life in religious terms. While Ilyin sees *Kitag* as a symbol of spiritual tradition, which inspires for the creation: "In dense soul's thicket we found a mysterious spiritual lake. Grace to it we find our wisdom; from it we started gathering of our strength and our struggle. And only occasionally Russian nation lost its way to *Kitiag*, entangled in nets of fervours, betraying its service"³¹³. But the philosopher believes in a forthcoming resurrection of Russia: "For with us is God of our *Kitiag*"³¹⁴. The poet-symbol of XX century Anna Ahmatova grace to the autobiographical allusions approximates the epoch of mysterious city *Kitiag* to the life epoch of the writer, and *Kitag* itself becomes close and is compared to the demolished by the Revolution and by repressions Russia, as the poet feels herself an heiress of that *Old Russia*. *Kitag* appears there as a Christian synonym of paradise (heaven's world to which belong saved souls; in Achmatova's poem context souls of those who died as martyrs). It is described in Achmatova's poem *I laid my curly son* of 1940. The lyric heroine hears a bell ring under the water of the native *Kitiag* churches; they reprove her in severe

³¹⁰ Бердяев, Н.А. *Судьба России*. М.: ООО «Издательство АСТ», 2004, С.27.

³¹¹ Волошин, М.А. *Средоточье всех путей. Стихотворения и поэмы. Проза. Критика. Дневники*. М: Моск. рабочий, 1989, С.91.

³¹² Ключев, Н.А. *Сердце Единорога. Стихотворения и поэмы*. СПб: РХГИ, 1999, С.168.

³¹³ Ильин, И.А. *Собр. соч.* В 10 т., Т.6, Кн. II, М: Русская книга, 1996, С. 23, 25, 26.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.27.

voice as she escaped a *bitter doom* of other Kitiag citizens and they feel pity for her, waiting for her at God's throne"³¹⁵.

Meanwhile Orthodox archbishop and theologian Ioan of Saint Francisco saw Kitiag as a hidden archetype of A. Solgenitsin's creative work: "In our days it's Alexander Solgenitsin who has a privilege to touch the mystery of Svetloiar. He sees the place where the highest truth is vanished, which remains hidden of a loud and vain word"³¹⁶.

The very name *Kitiag* Solgenitssin seems to use just once in his late work *Bell tower (Kolokolnia)* in description of violently submerged ancient town Kaliazin.

I see the same *motive of pilgrimage and a road* in the *Peasant's* sculptural figure of Nina Slobodinskaya and I may suggest that our sculptural heroine turned to a *search of the invisible and lost Kitiag-grad*. It's certainly a *hidden* message which is not so obvious from the first glance. In context of a total social control the author could not permit herself to give a direct visual reference of her beliefs and philosophical views. However, we know for sure that Nina Slobodinskaya belonged to the cultural intelligentsia cycle which shared beliefs of the high spiritual meaning of Kitiag-grad, so it would be logic to suggest that the author expressed her vision in sculptural forms, as she used to do during all creative life. Knowingly Berdiaev's description (previously mentioned) of the best of Russian intelligentsia may be applied to the sculptor's social cycle:" The grandeur of Russian nation is concentrated at the type of stranger. A Russian type of stranger is expressed not only in life of Russian peasantry but also in its cultural life, in life of the best part of intelligentsia. And here, we know strangers with a free spirit, never attached to anything, eternal wayfarers, searching for an *unseen city*"³¹⁷.

This sculpture has various layers, sheets or levels of content's meaning which we dare to develop and explain on the base of author's spiritual vision. Formally sculptor follows and obeys strict artistic rules of her time. The chosen theme is actual – a female peasant – new heroine of Soviet epoch. Her peasant's appearance is shown very clearly: by the type of figure and the dressing. The peasant carries a hard weight, which indicates her implication in to the labour – the basic attribute and

³¹⁵ Ахматова, А.А. *Стихотворения. Поэмы. Проза*. Томск: Томское кн. изд-во, 1989, С.369.

³¹⁶ Архиепископ Сан-Францисский, Иоанн. *Дно Светлояра*. Петрозаводск: "Святой остров", 1992, С.28-75.

³¹⁷ Бердяев, Н.А. *Судьба России*. М.: ООО «Издательство АСТ», 2004, С.27.

social request of depiction for any peasant's image. The woman *steps out* – what permits to suggest that she is on her way to work – to the field (to gather a harvest)- even more emphasizes the theme of labour. And the only thing may *prick up* attentive viewer's eyes – *the face expression* of a peasant. Precisely her face make us first questioning and then gives us a hint and a possible response of what exactly *lies beneath* of the obvious message, what may be a hidden sense introduced by the artist. And the knowledge of her life views, religious convictions and philosophical beliefs permits us to give a deeper interpretation and to reveal a spiritual richness and multifaceted content of senses in this sculptural image. By means of sculpture's face expression, this main detail, the master permits herself to express a deeper meaning and to fulfil the entire statue with a rich symbolic context. In artistic terms the plaster cast model is shaped schematically, with a rough energetic surface, but the volumes, the skeleton and the muscles are clearly determined and carefully underlined. The face lineaments are well worked on. It becomes obvious that the author possesses the sculptor's craftsmanship, however Slobodinskaya does not stop there – she enriches the sculpture with the *spirit of movement* and idea. This tendency to depict sculptural images in a dynamic movement is probably Bourdelle's influence, after all the French sculptor was her *guru*. Certainly it may seem subjective, but I dare to insist on this point of view basing on the knowledge of Slobodinskaya's spiritual world vision.

Generally speaking, a young sculptor - beginner who makes the very first independent steps in his carrier with a monumental sculpture, may be seen as a *brave* artist. Even if in future Slobodinskays gives preference to sculpture of a small format and other genre, her early experience with monumental sculpture proves that she already possesses a necessary technique of a mature artist and, what is even more important, she is capable to transmit a symbolical depth and fullness of her images – qualities which reveals the artist as a deeply feeling, wise and complex personality. Together with the new State's regime and the officially defined direction towards art *at service to politic aims*, a new imagery system gradually appeared. Regarding a female image in art, the principle one becomes an image of a peasant, a worker, a female character which belongs to the working class. There was no art form or genre which would not touch this subject – new ideal of a Soviet woman. Nina Slobodinskaya responded to the social requests of her time, especially following the example of her main teacher in sculpture – Vera Ignatievna Muchina.

In order to understand a significance of a new female role in a social construction of the *Soviet paradise* it's important to analyse its transformation. In 1920s a female image of a peasant is a synonym of a *pack-horse* – physically strong, naive, and obedient, completely resigned to her social duty. The image of a peasant woman with sickle in her hand, *heavily-built* figure – sign of fertility is not so common in the new Bolshevik's art. More often we encounter a woman –worker – as an ideal of Soviet epoch. Such an image of a woman - peasant existed till the collectivization. Then a visual propaganda faced important changes. A new type of woman which represents a Russian village appears, – a kind of an ideal villager – *Kolhoznitsa*. A modernized peasant looks differently and disposes of new attributes: a wheeled tractor instead of sickle. Her figure also faces changes: she is more often depicted on her own, not in a middle of a crowd. It signified that in Soviet politic iconography an important change took place: the State had *to achieve and conquer* a good will and affection of its female peasantry population as precisely those women opposed the process of social reconstruction.

4.7 Soviet Lelia and the archetype of prosperity's goddess

Another monumental sculptural work that apparently belongs to the same period of Slobodinskaya's creative work is a life-size female figure which fairly may be called *The Soviet Lelia* – mythological, the Slave pagan goddess of prosperity. Its approximate dating is between 1934-1940ss according to Slobodinskaya's son Andrey Gnezdilov. It continues the artist's series of female imagery.



Slav's goddess Lelia, VI-VIII c. A.C, traditional ancient wooden scullpture.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Soviet Lelia*, 1930s, plasticine.

Unfortunately, once again we are able to analyse this sculptural image basing only on the preserved photo as its main proof of existence. A viewer sees a woman carrying on her right shoulder a molly – a basket full of ripe fruits. Her figure seems heavy but proportional. Her legs resemble tree-trunks as they look so incredibly huge. The muscles of her hands are very well pronounced. The hands are enormous in comparison with her thin head and more remind hands of a strong man than of any woman. Her straight back and silhouette of her dress underlines the proportionality of her figure. Even having monumental forms her image is full of refinement, dignity, confidence and calmness. The female figure seems to step out of an earth-paradise – the Eden full of harvest and ripe fruits. Her kerchief elongates

her head, and the basket on her shoulders equalizes the balance with her enormous feet and the round pedestal.

In terms of Soviet iconography the sculptural image signifies prosperity and richness that brings labour in frames of communist's regime. In a wider meaning's perspective it may be regarded as an archetype image of a pagan goddess responsible for fertility and prosperity – the image that Slavs used to depict in wooden sculpture, installing them in midst of wild woods. Besides it's a one of the most portrayed characters in the worldwide mythology and visual iconography. As we see the artist's interpretation of the image should not be just limited to Soviet attributes and communist's propaganda message. It is obvious that any Soviet artist had frames of his artistic liberty. However, more often those frames were conventional. A *sincere* artist tried to overcome the *conventionality* of those demands. To find out whether they succeeded in it or not we may achieve by the means of individual analysis of every particular case and art piece.

Regarding the *Soviet Lelia* and *the Peasant* of Slobodinskaya, the *external conventional* attributes may be seen in the manner of figure's dressing, in the realistic style of portrayal and also in a subject matter. The typical hypercritical Soviet journalist or any art critic formally cannot accuse the artist of sculpture's appearance's discordance with the official artistic requests. However they neither can blame the author for imbuing the sculptural figure with other sense or other meaning's dimension, in particular with the meaning which is deeper or richer than the Soviet demands obliged.

Hence, what I dare to suggest is that any artist who had their creative individuality, who *listened* to himself and was able to find his proper plastic and imagery language “would not repeat the existing forms but discover his artistic personality”³¹⁸ - the most important quality which according to Bourdelle characterized a true master, was able to overcome the limitations (which the Soviet government imposed to all creative workers) and creatively express himself.

Creatively rich personality, the mature artist with a fully formed world vision always found ways to express her-self. When a subject was an object of limitation than Slobodinskaya fulfilled an image with a deeper meaning and sense by means of her artistic skills and as we see in our case - the simple peasant woman turns into a

³¹⁸ Деготь, Е.Ю. *История русского искусства. Русское искусство XX в.* М.: Трилистник, 2002, С.224.

spiritual pilgrim which is correlated to Russian philosophical searches and turns in to an archetype personage which constantly appears in Russian fairy-tale folklore.

Looking ahead, when the sculptor had to portray only Soviet heroes or significant personalities of a new communist era – nobody stopped the artist of creating deeply psychological intimate images, which aimed to explore a person's soul and discovered his spiritual essence, - thus the artist was able to bridge over the conventionality of the imposed art frames. We may suggest that artists in all fields of fine arts faced similar conditions, options and possibilities. It could be our response to a crucial challenge and the polemic question which many contemporary philosophers, artists and researchers make: how artists of the Soviet epoch used to deal with an issue of a personal artistic freedom of expression, - whether artists were able to overcome the imposed limitations, and in case if they succeeded, in what way did they overpass the restrictions which the Soviet iconography intended to impose.

4.8 *Woman with a gun* - a woman – hero



N. Slobodinskaya, *Woman with a gun*, 1935-1940, plaster cast.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Woman with a gun*, 1935-1940, plaster cast.

Another monumental work of the artist which characterizes the early period is the *Woman with a gun*.

It's a white plaster cast model of a supposedly life-size figure. The exact date of its creation is unknown but it varies between 1935-1940s. The sculpture was destroyed during the Second World War. We see the portrayal of a woman with large massive forms and disproportionately huge feet which reminds the volumes of Vera's Muchina's *Peasant's* legs. The female personage certainly belongs to a peasant or a working class. A typical dress, a head and hair with a kerchief on – she has all the attributes of a Soviet woman - hero. All her pose expresses obstinacy, aggressiveness, physical strength and spirit's firmness. She holds a gun in her hands with an absolute confidence. The patrons surround her breast and recall the viewer

that she is not a simple weak woman, instead, she is a warrior first of all. We can be sure – meeting an enemy this woman will not doubt before shutting him. The incline of her right knee emphasizes this stubborn strength which she embodies.

No doubt, the Soviet enemy would be threatened by finding such a personage at the open air battle. Her straight gaze, protruding chin, all indicates a strong will and even a possessiveness to complete her debt to the native land no matter where: at a field, gathering harvest, at factory – holding tools, or at a field of a battle. Accordingly the coded message appears to be following: no matter what the native land asks you to do – you have to obey and even be ready to sacrifice your interest, your life if it would be necessary. The Soviet State wanted a Russian nation to assimilate this idea. Consequently these propaganda message artists had to visualize monumentally. An image of a woman – hero – is widely displayed in all the fine arts fields especially in 1930s. In terms of the Soviet political thought Russian population had to be ready to meet enemies and to defend *their happy light future* – the utopian dream imposed to the population. Moreover, in context of Soviet ideology enemies could appear not only from foreign countries but they could be uncovered at the proper Russian territory. A Soviet citizen always had to be attentive and suspicious –that's what proclaim thousands of Soviet posters and that's the manner and a trick in which Communist totalitarian government introduces and imposes the *idea of spying* to the nation. Such are the visually effective means which communist leaders adapt in order to justify the idea of spying: your environment – neighbours, colleagues, even your proper family are under suspicion.



Be careful, an enemy is not asleep!, Don't chat! Enemy is treacherous – be on alarm! 1930s, Samples of Soviet Posters.

4.9 New communist religion and values' substitution

Step by step the government introduced and substituted the Christian values with adoration and cultivation of communist's leaders –claiming them *gods* and *fathers*; thus in context of politicized tasks, monumental sculpture was regarded as one of the most effective tools. Presumably, a specificity of Russian mentality was a *religious attitude* towards government and power; accordingly it became a factor which defined Russian history during centuries. Already in the pre-Revolutionary epoch the population was educated in respect, fear and recognition of an absolute right and power of a governing structure. Trying to shatter the Orthodox Church as a social institution the Revolution was not capable to destroy the old established stereotype of relationship between the State and a person, where obedience was the main trait. Old religious traditions were deformed in euphoric mood of the revolution. The revolutionists manifested a creation of a new world and were concentrated on mass's popularization of their ideology based on anticlericalism and atheism³¹⁹.

Once Russian philosopher N. Berdiaev mentioned: "The Communist party by its structure, by its spirit's organization reminds a kind of atheistic sect – religious atheistic sect, who sized the power"³²⁰. Meanwhile already in XIX century French historian and philosopher E. Renan wrote: "Any victory on religion is useless unless it won't be substituted by another belief, which in the same scale satisfies the necessity of heart"³²¹. The writer was convinced that any man needed a moral pedagogy, which could not be satisfied either by family or by state.

Would it be justified to suggest the appearance of a new *communist's religion*? The worship of a new *population's State* was cultivated and the whole new mythological system was created which narratively explained the historical background in which grew and developed the first State of working-class in the world. L. Andreeva affirmed that the communistic despotism had its proper ideology – total and whole *futuristic* communism: "The antipathy of communistic regime towards the orthodox institution can be explained by the fact that communists saw in it it's idea's twin by the legalization of a total power, but in a totalitarian society

³¹⁹ Кашеваров, А.Н. *Церковь и власть. Русская Православная Церковь в первые годы Советской власти*. СПб.: Репринт, 1999, С.266.

³²⁰ *История гражданской войны в СССР*. Т.1, М.: Наука, 1935, С.328.

³²¹ Ярославский, Е. *Материалы к XII главе курса истории ВКП (б)*. М.: Молодая гвардия., 1946, С.56.

can exist only one totalitarian ideology"³²². The Orthodox Church which completed the role of not political but a moral power was substituted by communist's ideology which brought the destruction of the *old world*. N. Berdiaev observed that Russian communism had not Christian bases but was linked with Russian anti-humanism, united with Russian state's absolutism, which regarded a man as a medium. Berdiaev also mentioned that evil for Marxism is a way to good. "A new society, a new man born by an increase of evil and darkness, a soul of a new man is formed by negative effects, by hate, vengeance, violence. This is a demonic element in Marxism, which is considered as dialectic"³²³.

Evil gives a birth to good – it's a principle position and statement of Marxism, which indicates what is good and what is evil. In one of his speeches V. Lenin affirmed that morality has to be in obedience of interests of proletariat's class – struggle, defining morality basing on class-necessities. He outlined that Bolsheviks "we don't believe in an eternal morality"³²⁴. It permits to draw a conclusion that good – is everything what corresponds to the needs of the proletariat, evil – all that disturbs the party's activities. Those convictions were widely publicized in the 1920s. The writers unconsciously created the ideology of a free of moral obligations new State. With the appearance of a leader which embodied the State, - the functions of new ideology creator naturally were transmitted to him, thus he started a realization of people's *moral pedagogy*. For example A. Zalkind in his book *The Revolution and the youth* tried to prove a senselessness of religious principles: do not steal, don't kill, respect your father – everything was reinterpreted. Zalkind affirmed that Bible – is an *exploitator's* book, that "for the proletariat there is no a self-sufficient treasure of a human life. Interests of the Revolutionist's class are more important than ones of a father"³²⁵. In these terms Soviet communism may be interpreted as a religious phenomenon. A prominent Russian poet Alexander Block already in 1918 predicted the construction's principle of a *light future* which was based at the certain destruction of all old:

"Fellow, hold a rifle, don't be scared!
Let's take a shot at Saint Russia –
Old –fashioned,
Full of izba,

³²² Ibid, p.69.

³²³ *История гражданской войны в СССР*. Т.2, М.: Наука, 1947, С.592.

³²⁴ Ярославский, Е. *Материалы к XII главе курса истории ВКП (б)*. М.: Молодая гвардия, 1946, С.25.

³²⁵ Коновалова, Ж.Ф. *Церковь и власть*. М.: Наука, 1995, С.65.

Barge-ass!

Ah, ah, without cross³²⁶'.

The construction's principle was religious: former halidoms were sacrificed to new idols; new cult as its first statement defined an obligatory denial of all *the old* (I mean the negation of the *old world* – religion, values, culture, and history). The old became a synonym of evil, imperfection, erroneous. Within the years this denial and dualism became absurd: proletariat's kingdom was considered as a *light kingdom*, while the kingdom of capitalism – a kingdom of darkness. N. Berdiaev wrote in this context: "Monism of Marxist's system – is its main defect. Totalitarian's State monism is not combined with Christianity; it turns a State into a church"³²⁷.

Accordingly, the substitution took place: the State which proclaimed itself atheistic misappropriated a function of a religious institution: it was in charge of the issues not only concerning the socialistic construction but also the metaphysic matter: defining what is evil and what is good. The history teaches that the higher is a level of religious inspiration – the more active must be a *witch-hunt*. The very process of *hunting* is important and necessary: whether *witches* are really culpable or not – is not a matter of principle. Firm criteria are necessary in a struggle with a help of which *our* and not *our* shall be defined and *interior* hidden enemies could be found. With time those criteria were created and were determined. A struggle with an evil becomes a life –normative. From this point of view Stalin's thesis on an increase of a class struggle as far as socialism is under construction – perfectly reflects pseudo religious processes which took place in the Soviet State. Gradually from the first years of the revolution was formed the cult of its leader – V. Lenin which becomes an *overman* and a synonym of a godhood with typical traits of the cyclisity: messianic purpose – a struggle for people, - a victory, which creates a new unity³²⁸. L. Andreeva affirmed that was created a pseudo religious cult of Lenin as a God-Father, his successor Stalin, likewise Egyptian pharaohs, by an appointment inherited a *divine nature* of Lenin according the formula "Stalin – is Lenin today"³²⁹.

Was established the religious attitude towards a leader, whose essays and writings were officially announced as *classical* ones. Any serious scientific publication had to

³²⁶ Блок, А. Указ. соч. М.: Общественные науки, 2005, С.518.

³²⁷ Бердяев, Н.А. Истоки и смысл русского коммунизма. М.: Наука, 1990, С.149.

³²⁸ Фирсов, С. Перевернутая религия: советская мифология и коммунистический культ. К вопросу о новом революционном сознании и освобожденном человеке. М.: Лекции, 1994, С.25.

³²⁹ Андреева, Л.А. Религия и власть в России. Религиозные и квазирелигиозные доктрины как способ легализации политической власти в России. М.: Наука, 2001, С.244.

contain a reference to the writings of communist leaders. It would be appropriate to call Lenin a communistic man *without sins* as God's Son – Jesus Christ. Meanwhile Lenin's fellows were precious as they were his followers- *Leninists*. A dignity of any person was defined depending on Lenin's words or attitude to him. Often Lenin contradicted himself in his evaluations so, consequently, a lot depended on the interpreter's version. Thus gradually was formed a *communist canon*. Along with *canonical* literature existed an *apocryphic* one: the narratives on Lenin, which passed the official censorship. Academician U. Sokolov observed in his monograph *Russian folklore*³³⁰ that in Soviet folklore in parallel with exact characteristic of a real personality existed Lenin's depiction as a great warrior and a giant. "Moreover Lenin's image in folk poetry sometimes takes a cosmic character"³³¹. Sokolov wrote that the leader was compared with a sun. Naturally the leader was endowed with traits of the earth's god. So far the old religious *form* absorbed a new atheistic *content*.

Lenin's death stopped the socialistic construction of a new world vision. The opposition *life-death* found its resolution in a realization of the idea of Lenin's immortality, whose cult gradually overwhelmed the people's conscience³³². The Mausoleum's construction contributed to Lenin's cult. "Thus the most significant Soviet myth got its ritual confirmation"³³³. Till the end of Gorbuchiov's epoch the mausoleum functioned as the main sanctuary and a symbol of the soviet regime. Consequently, the Mausoleum became a Mecca of *the communist religion*. The idea of its architects had to reflect: "the grandeur, simplicity and power of Lenin's ideas and had to state the firmness of Lenin's deeds"³³⁴.

The main fact of the mausoleum's construction was an outstanding event in the communist Russia; presumably a few years before the leader's death in 1918 -1920ss throughout all country was hold a company of saints' relic's confiscation. On 25 of august in 1920 the Narkomiust of RFSSR took a special directive on *Saint's relics*, in which was stated that the legal proceedings await the ones who would break a law as a charlatan³³⁵. In these terms the government considered Church representatives as charlatans. Needless to say that the communists judged the main idea of relics'

³³⁰ Соколов, Ю.М. *Русский фольклор*. М.: Обществнные науки, 1941, С.312.

³³¹ Ibid, p.524.

³³² Коновалова, Ж.Ф. *Миф в советской истории и культуре*. СПб.: Ладья, 1998, С.63.

³³³ Ibid, p.64.

³³⁴ Абрамов А. *У кремлевской стены*. М.:Наука, 1988, С.11-12.

³³⁵ Ibid, p.11-12.

existence and people's worship. The Bolsheviks were active supporters of the idea of cadaver's cremation. Lenin personally signed a decree on admissibility and even a preference of cadaver's cremation. Trotsky in this context was opposing the decision to construct Lenin's Mausoleum at the Red square: "The attitude to Lenin as to a revolutionary leader was substituted by the attitude as to a head of Church hierarchy"³³⁶. Thus the Red square became kind of a cemetery – communist cult centre on open air, which symbolized the eternal life of the new regime constructors. The appearance of *the best apprentice* naturally continued Lenin's cult, which proved his superiority in struggle with the former Lenin's fellows. The creation of a mythic Stalin started with an ideal Lenin's figure creation.

We could simply imagine another cultivated leader on Stalin's place in a range of the leaders, as its reason - a creation of a predetermined scheme which supposed an idealization of heroes. In a violent struggle with a church, destroying and humiliating on its sacred objects, the communists counterpoised them proper saints and relics. The traditional conscience would not adapt new system of values if they won't bear the old *form-package*. In our case form completely substituted the content. Stalin possibly won as in the country where a personality was not appreciated he became a flare of a *collective's in conscience*. Always declaring his loyalty to Leninism, still he indicated that Marxism is not a dogma. Stalin normally used to take into account a mass's level of readiness to the comprehension of his ideas. The phrase: *you should speak in a manner in which words feel narrowly and thoughts – spaciouly* – are attributed to Stalin.

We should remember that the majority of mass public which listened to Stalin's speeches was a group of non-educated people, which were able to understand only declarations-slogans, catchwords. In judgment of Russian philosopher E. Batalov Stalin's cult was conditioned by existence of an appropriate social conscience, which *sanctioned* by its quality determination of everything that takes place in the country, being a spiritual basis of reproduction and cult and the whole system³³⁷.

E. Batalov affirms a thesis proposed in the early XX century by the anarcho-syndicalists (first of all by Saurel) which states that revolution's myth is the most effective tool in revolutionary mobilization of masses. "Saurel was sure that not with the revolution's theory, consciously and rationally adapted by minds, but precisely

³³⁶ Панченко, А.А. *Осьмое чудо света. Канун*. М.: Вып.2. СПб., 1996, С.169.

³³⁷ Баталов, Э. "Перестройка сознания - императив истории". М.: Общественные науки, 1988, № 5, С.69.

with a help of an irrational myth we intuitively get the whole idea of socialism, which we would not get in case of using only rational declarations"³³⁸. People had to believe in the official declarations, hoping to face in the nearest future a wealthy life. Even if belief supposes a *miracle*, then communistic miracles cannot be criticized.

In the post-revolutionary epoch a special attitude towards enemies was formed. We can trace it on example of the former Stalin's political concurrent L. Trotsky, which together with his followers was persecuted and in public opinion was transformed from one of the loyal revolutionary leaders to the *fascist's servant* and betrayer. Trotsky was blamed and became a worldwide antihero. The hate towards ex fellows is not surprising as holiness does not coexist with meanness and evil with good. The revolutionary Marxism unexpectedly for persecuted by Stalin Bolsheviks showed itself from a different side, having in account, that Revolution is not a norm, but pathology of social development. Soon after Lenin's death Stalin recalled that his fellow observed, that after a revolution is over a normal order must be established, Stalin answered: "It's really bad if people who want to be revolutionists forget that the most normal order in history is a revolutionary order"³³⁹.

Stalin was right – the revolutionary order destroyed the revolutionist, pathology was regarded as a norm. So far in Soviet world vision terms the *communist religious system* became a dogma in the period of Stalin's governing.

Thus, all worlds appeared to obey the dialectic laws of Marxism, bolsheviks-leninists better than anyone are acknowledged with these laws, the best of them – Stalin; accordingly he is the central figure of the whole circle of the *dialectic cosmos*. In some years Stalin is regarded in the social conscience not only as a leader but also as a symbol of happiness, a kind of a country's talisman which in case of its loss can produce a *universal catastrophe*. This social orientation was widely mirrored in all graphics, but especially in posters³⁴⁰. The posters visualized a personification of people's happiness and prosperity in Stalin's figure as if he was its main condition. Genial leader of all the progressive humanity was a visual manifestation of an

³³⁸ Баталов, Э. "Перестройка сознания - императив истории". М.: Общественные науки, 1988, № 5, С.73.

³³⁹ Сталин, И. О Ленине. М.: Общественные науки, 1937, С.24.

³⁴⁰ Фирсов, С. *Перевернутая религия: советская мифология и коммунистический культ. К вопросу о новом революционном сознании и освобожденном человеке*. Сапись университетск. М.: Лекции, 1994, С.3.

absolute good and wealth; consequently, his power signified happiness for everybody and could not be temporal.



V. Govorkov, *Thanks to Stalin for our happy childhood!*, 1936, poster.



V. Koretsky, *Beloved Stalin - People's happiness*, 1950s, poster.

In The USSR the State was divinized and a governmental structure was perceived as a sacral institution. Theocratic traits of the Soviet State were so obvious that Stalin's contemporary A. Toinby permitted himself to give a verdict: "In such a totalitarian State of the Byzantine style a church can be either Christian or Marxist's as long as it serves to the interests of secular state's governing"³⁴¹.

In the Soviet mythological pseudo religious culture the images of demiurge and the people's father were united, and his constant feats (victory of enemies at the battle field and elsewhere) manifested a sacral strength of the great leader³⁴². Respectably, in all the official places portraits of Stalin and his fellows became a necessary attribute, which testimonies people's loyalty.

Thus, the burial of Stalin in 1953 in the Kremlin's Mausoleum was a logical consequence of his divinization. The pseudo religious activity was crucial function of the State – leitmotiv of its existence, so in these terms the demolishing of the *personality's cult* had faced a range of dangerous consequences for the firmness of the system which existed already for decades. It happened on 30 of June in 1956 by the decree of the CKPSS on the *Demolishing of personality's cult and its consequences*; thus a big range of the monuments were dismantled, his portraits were destroyed, many Stalin's decisions were subjects for change and critics. Finally,

³⁴¹ Тойнби, А. *Византийское наследие России. Цивилизация перед судом истории*. Сборник, М.: Наука, 1995, С.114.

³⁴² Коновалова, Ж.Ф. *Указ. соч.* М.: Лекции, 1994, С.78.

Stalin was completely decried and condemned by the decision of 1961 taken at the XXII Meeting of the KPSS. As a crucial moment of his desacralization was a withdrawal of his cadaver from the mausoleum and his burial in the range of other revolutionary activists near the Kremlin's wall.

Disclosure and denouncement of the cult and the refusal of the firm dualistic world vision, led to the epoch of the social renaissance - a *thaw*, which consequently increased the sceptical attitude towards the communist myths. The society already did not completely believe in the promise of the XXII party congress – *to construct communism by the 1980s*. The future transformation of this promise - a creation of the theory of the *developed socialism* served as another proof of the official state's crisis. Though the form remained the same (the political leader was regarded as the main authority of the communist *religion* and a guardian of the Marxist - Lenin's canons) the cultivated places, dedicated to Lenin, continued playing the role of relics, which was also a fact for Lenin's cadaver in the Kremlin's Mausoleum – the crisis of the *official religion* was obvious. The official political dates of celebrations turned into carnivals and entertainments. The following of the preform lost its symbolic significance. The appearance in the middle of 1980s of an alternative none and anti-communist literature signified the desacralisation of the Soviet power, separation of democracy from the dictatorship.

Our departure point of view was the idea that Soviet communism became a pseudo religion and in these terms in E. From's opinion could be accepted: he wrote that a disarrangement and distortion of freedom principle was the main trouble of all the great religions: "As soon as they become mass's institutions, managed by the religious bureaucracy"³⁴³. Indeed, the principles of a total freedom are not characteristic for religion: it requests to follow a range of concrete rules. But really significant religions in spite of religious bureaucracy, first of all, help to awake a human personality in God, so its final purpose is to achieve a personal freedom as a main perspective, while a pseudo religion aims to turn a man into a slave of another human being, proclaimed an earth's god.

The Soviet inverse religion, which used old cult's forms and proclaimed a profane as a sacral, led to the further absorption of a person by a collective, strengthening the *collective unconscious*, consequently harming the idea of an individual personal growth. It can be outlined as the main problem which the past left to the former

³⁴³ Фромм, Э. *Психоанализ и религия*. М.: Наука, 1994, С.54.

Soviet society³⁴⁴. Returning to *The Soviet Lelia*, first impression of the female sculpture is that the artist shapes the figure roughly even schematically. But if viewer looks more attentively, he observes that every detail is carefully worked on: the muscles of her emphasized feet and hands, every finger, her neck seems to underline veins. The author searches the contemporary language of expression in sculpture. She combines sharp straight lines of the figure together with naturally portrayed face, shaped in realistic manner, but the wavy lines of her dress add richness to the texture and the figure becomes more expressive and it also outlines an emotional fullness of the image. The contrasts of light and shadow even more emphasize the dramatic tension of the figure's mood. By the means of severe and laconic traits and lines the author tries to reveal the main idea of the sculpture – a young woman's *spirit's firmness and determination*; this figure embodies the image of an ideal Soviet patriot – the example to follow for the whole nation. In addition it incarnates and demonstrates the Russian female character's traits – fearlessness and an inner strength and even readiness to sacrifice proper lives protecting their beloved. And by beloved the State meant a native land first of all. The sculptor successfully achieved to depict the main creative thought and idea he aimed to express.

4.10 Partisan with a gun - an obedient woman-warrior

The same subject of a woman with a gun is used in creation of small format sculpture. It is interesting that Nina Slobodinskaya consciously turns to a small format sculpture, discovering its aesthetic value and revealing the enormous expressive potential in it; - the sculptor mentioned it in her talks with her son. Small format sculpture lately becomes one of the most favourite genres of the artist. *The partisan with the gun* – a small-format work in plaster cast, dated 1938. We see a statuette of a determined young Uzbek woman standing on her knees and firmly holding a gun in her hands. Elaborated in realistic manner, the sculpture's forms are laconic; the figure is minimally decorated, making an accent at the main feature – a stretched like a spring, female figure. The drapery of a national traditional Uzbek cloth emphasizes the main straight line of the figure.

³⁴⁴ Yet Andre Gid wrote on a possibility of this phenomena's appearance. See: Жид, А. *Возвращение из СССР*. М.: Два взгляда, С.99.



N. Slobodinskaya, *The partisan with a gun*, 1938, plaster cast.



N. Slobodinskaya *The partisan with a gun*, 1938, bronze.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya's work *The Partisan with a gun*, in the *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 1938, N24.

The face expresses strength, will, determination, braveness and fearlessness. She seems a panther which is gathering all her strength before a final jump in attempt to catch its victim. The masculine face with a pronounced chess hides any feminine trait. It's not surprising that this sculpture was featured by the Soviet press and its photo was published. The sculptural image incarnates all the qualities the Soviet State required the nation to develop: a subordinated and obedient passionate service to the Patria.

As we can observe in all art genres of the epoch the image of femininity just disappears in any type of portraits. The main reason - is there was no social official commission on it. The State was not interested to evoke and accentuate mass public's attention on the eternal values of humanity, such as maternity, love, mercy as it distracted people from service to the State. It needed an obedient impersonal man or woman-warrior, which in case of necessity could replace him. Especially it concerned women. The previous wars took away many men's lives. Logically the female population was dominant and that supposed that *the hope* and the *trust* of the State were given to them. It also explains that a very significant part of official

Soviet monumental propaganda was dedicated to Russian women. It seems incredible how openly through different art forms (posters and sculpture especially in 1930s) the official state's commission visualizes the type of citizen which they intended to create and consolidate in the population's mind as the only *right* one: an impersonal warrior who is on service of his state's order with an aggressive readiness to destroy any enemy. Finally, an important number of Soviet populations accepted and assimilated this ideal, trying to correspond to it. And even the dualism and ambiguity of the Soviet Government in its attitude and behaviour towards the nation did not weaken the trust of many. This fact once more confirms the naive and trustful character of the nation.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Morning of homeland*, 1930s, plaster cast.

4.11 *Morning of homeland - a hope for peace and prosperity*

Another plaster cast sketch I would like to describe as the *Morning of homeland* – a small-scale model of public monument project Nina Slobodinskaya worked on. Neither the dating can be exact, nor the final purpose of its creation. Luckily, the preserved photo permits us to study the model almost in every detail.

The pedestal is shaped in a form of the stairs. The central figure represents an ascending and stepping further woman. Following traditional Asian manner the woman carries on her head some lading. The straight back emphasizes the impression of dignity and self-confidence. Her figure is full of majesty and loftiness. The female figure sublimely continues her way upstairs.

The composition is clear, laconic, built up horizontally, not complicated by unnecessary details. It recalls Vera Muchina's attitude towards a model, she always insisted on that details' congestion can destroy the main idea and the whole impression of monument³⁴⁵. Nina Slobodinskaya followed those advices during all years of her creative work: you never find Slobodinskaya's sculptural image with details' exuberance. From the first sight the drapery of the central figure's cloth seems to be shaped schematically but if we look closer - they underline and give continuity to the vertical axis of the composition. At the same time the drapery reminds a falling down stream of a waterfall and creates the impression of lightness, transparency, and refinement which accentuates the lightness of heroine's step. The figure at the lower stair creates a balance and brings wholeness to the composition. Where the female figure is directing? In terms of Soviet iconography and a *direct naturalistic* and ideological explanation the response would be – ahead to the light future! The female figure symbolizes a motherland which takes care of all her beloved inhabitants and leads to the prosperity, well-being and peace. There is a warrior on his knees, which is certainly on guard, serving and guaranteeing peace and tranquillity to his motherland and its inhabitants.

If we look further and try to perceive its image, revealing other strata of meaning, we see the female sculpture which embodies a goddess of prosperity – an image often used in Slobodinskaya's imagery system. By her majestic pose and full of dignity and lightness step, she seems to climb the Olympus, reminding a goddess of

³⁴⁵ Personal recallings of the sculptor kept and recalled by her son Andrey Gnezdilov at the interview on 07.08.2014.

antiquity. In any interpretation the monument incarnates the message of hope, peace, and prosperity – which responds to the needs of exhausted by the multiples changes and psychologically tired Soviet population.

As we know any Soviet artist could escape such subjects as heroes, war, revolution, labour and work if he wanted to be accepted into the obligatory artistic unions, in order to get commissions, to be able to present their works at exhibitions and to earn for living expenses. In accordance to these social circumstances, it is not surprising that in the artist's early creative period these subjects are explored and displayed in a variety of sculptural forms.

4.12 *Miner* – fearless State's worker



N. Slobodinskaya, *The soldier*, 1930s, bronze.

In 1930s one of the principle places in the hierarchy of heroes occupied militants and labour representatives. So, no wonder, that in sculptural range of Nina Slobodinskaya we see *the Miner*- a masculine figure represented in haut-relief in bronze. Unfortunately neither location, nor exact date of its creation is known. Supposedly, it was created as a memorial desk for a thumb decoration. During 1920-1930ss due to the tragic historical collisions a lot of new cemeteries were founded and numerous burials took place (especially a huge quantity of unknown war, revolution and work heroes of the new regime were buried on expense of The State). Consequently it entailed multiples commissions of memorial desks as the government used to commemorate their deeds in order to give an example of patriotism to the rest of population. Many of those heroes were unknown – the fact which required the stylized and generalized images sculpted in realistic manner. The subject of commemorative sculpture³⁴⁶ in Soviet epoch deserves a special interest as the richness and variety of the imagery created by numerous artists is truly significant.

Formally Slobodinskaya's haut-relief responses to the basic characteristic of this memorial genre – a man seems to represent a warlike character, a determination to achieve his goal. Holding a working tool in his arms he tries to make it work. As in previous artists' military based images the expression of his face, emphasized by light and shadow rich contrasts depicts readiness, determination, strength and will. The inclined pose of the man emphasizes even more the braveness and energy of the sculptural figure's character. The bronze clearly outlines the gloomy stubbornness of the man. It seems that nothing will stop this Soviet miner-worker, his decisiveness to complete his task and his duty – only death.

³⁴⁶ Subject of Russian memorial sculpture deserves a special approach and research. For a deeper understanding and study one may address to the following research sources: Полякова, Н.И. *Скульптура и пространство*. М.: Советский художник, 1982, С.199., Азизян, И.А. "Мемориал: функция, концепция, композиция". *Декоративное Искусство СССР*, 1972, №3, С.10-15.; Компанец, С.Е. *Надгробные памятники XVI первой половины XIX вв. Практическое пособие по выявлению и научному описанию*. Научно-исследовательский институт культуры. М.: ПО «Мосгорпечать», 1998, С.68.; Пирютко, Ю.М., Тимофеев, В.Н., Ефремова, Н.Н. *Монументально-декоративная скульптура Санкт-Петербурга*. Справочник, СПб.: Арт-Бюро, 2002, С.318; Пирютко, Ю.М. *Царскосельский некрополь*. Петербургские чтения 96, Ассоциация исследователей Санкт-Петербурга, СПб.: БЛИЦ, 1996, С.278-280.; Маркина, Н.Л., Рогулина, Н.В., Савинская, Л.П., Шмелева, О.А. *Новодевичье кладбище*. СПб.: Белое и черное, 2003, С.558.; Левинсон, Е.А., Васильева, А.В., Бартенева, И.А, Рогачевский, В.М. *Пискаревское Мемориальное кладбище-музей*. Л.: Художник РСФСР, 1962, С.64.; Полякова, Н.И. *Скульптура и пространство*. М.: Советский художник, 1982, С.199.; Соколова, Л. *Когда горит свеча. Никольское кладбище Апександрo-Невской лавры*. СПб.: Ч.П. Базунов, 2002, С.223.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Labour*, 1930s, plaster cast.

4.13 *Labour* – a high mission and duty of Soviets

Another curious work of the early period which is worth mentioning - a sculptural sketch of a small-format monument, called *Labour*. The whole composition is depicted schematically, Slobodinskaya proposed an original visual solution to the subject of labour. It appears to be a truly direct visual message which proclaims an idea that *labour ennobles a mankind* – a direct appeal to every Soviet man and woman, manifests an example to be followed and a *high* mission and duty to complete. It seems to be a promotion's action reflected in sculpture. Two a bit prolonged but proportional figures are actively involved in work process -gathering of harvest. Both are passionately implicated. A man seems to stare with admiration at the working woman; a female figure is concentrated at her work. The whole composition is laconic, elaborated basing on a profound knowledge of the architectonic laws. Moreover there is a rhythmic movement expressed in the whole group, resembling a wave's movement.

Curiously, in the sculptural works of Slobodinskaya there is always a hidden inner rhythm which gives a special richness to every depicted image and reminds a musical composition³⁴⁷. As to the genre of small format sculpture, would be important to recall that it opens many artistic means of expressiveness as mentioned previously. Among other advantages it permits to make a detailed examination of a subject, presents a model's situation, and offers an artist a scope for affirmation. Small-size sculptures can represent quick sketches, consummate, highly intricate sculptures or statuettes that usually underscore a character of the work. As to viewer this format opens multiples viewpoints. Nina Slobodinskays worked in different genres. Unfortunately we can't affirm that all her creative work was embraced in our research but we can definitely be sure that this period is characterized by the variety of genres she worked on. The sculptural portrait was not an exception.



N. Slobodinskaya, V.G. Gnezdilov, 1940, bronze.

³⁴⁷ It may be significant, that precisely Anna Golubkina in her writings occasionally observed how important is a feeling – as the basic starting point for work process is. Sculptor affirmed that feeling is always right and one should not underestimate it or destroy it, giving too much importance to one or another form. N. Slobodinskaya as a rule worked on models of personalities, who would provoke her respect, admiration or would cause on her a deep impression. We might not find a model, which would be worked out in indifferent manner. Possibly due to a strong emotional link existed between sculptor and her husband, but the realistical portrait of Vladimir Gnezdilov turned into a full of humanism, of warm feeling, an authentic deep intime personality's characteristic.



N. Slobodinskaya, V.G. Gnezdilov, 1940, bronze.

N. Slobodinskaya, V. Gnezdilov's head, 1930s, plasticine, sketch.



N. Slobodinskaya, V. Gnezdilov's head, fragment of sculptural portrait, 1930s, bronze.

Photo of V. Gnezdilov, 1930s, unknown author.

4.14 Vladimir Gnezdilov – a beginning of sculptural portraits series

In 1940 Nina Slobodinskaya portrayed her husband *Vladimir Gnezdilov* – scientist, Doctor and professor of biology of the Military-Medical Academy in Leningrad. According to Andrey Gnezdilov's recalling sculptor Slobodinskaya often joked that the principle reason she married him was the fact that he was a perfect model for her sculptures: tall, athletically shaped, with beautiful face traits³⁴⁸.

The artist's husband portrait is presumably first work, which opens a series of sculptural portraits – a favourite genre, widely developed by the sculptor in the latest creative period. Vladimir Georgievich's bust is depicted realistically. His face is carefully shaped with all possible details depicted. A prolonged front with knitted brows emphasizes a profound state of concentration and indicates a deep state of thought and reasoning. Viewer may feel a deep understanding of the model which the sculptor opens to us. Despite of being a kind of representative official portrait, it suddenly reveals us the psychological richness and an interesting deep personality of Dr Gnezdilov, being simultaneously intimate and full of spirituality.

The portrayed is a complex personality. The sculptor shares with a spectator her close knowledge and her special attitude to him. We may guess grace to the realistic method of depiction, in detail worked on face, - the wholeness of his character, and his responsible thoughtful attitude to life, his spiritual nobleness, his honest personality and we see a deep thought in his mind and high spirituality of this individual, reflected in the sculptural portrait.

In my opinion this portrait was originally meant to be official, but instead, became a deeply psychological and in time, the fact which neglects the imposed manner of Soviet iconography, which reclaimed generalized images of personalities who *stand out* in the new Soviet times. The intimate portrait of Vladimir Gnezdilov contrasts with the general line of official demands; though, as to Slobodinskaya's artistic achievements, the sculptural portrait of Vladimir Gnezdilov may be considered as one of her best sculptural images in the whole portrait genre series.

Lately, especially in the post-war period Slobodinskaya worked a lot in a sculptural portrait genre, depicting interesting and significant personalities; however in any of previous work her sculptural image is so widely and psychologically deeply analysed

³⁴⁸ Personal verbal recollings of Andrey Gnezdilov- the sculptor's son at the interview on 09.08.2014.

and carefully revealed in its spiritual essence as in this case. The portrait has some official military attributes (the type of shirt for instance), but they are shaped schematically and viewer understands that it has a *secondary* significance for the artist.

Trying to sum up, we may suggest that in her early creative period Slobodinskaya worked in a variety of sculptural genres and forms: monumental sculpture of higher-than life-size dimension, small-format sculptural images, statuettes, haut-relief and portraits. The artist manifests her-self as a mature sculptor who perfectly possesses a sculptor's craft and a necessary technique. She adapts a realistic style of portrayal's depiction. Despite of giving preference to the realistic style Nina Slobodinskaya is capable to overcome conventionality of its forms and a strictness of the imposed Soviet artistic norms, fulfilling her models with a multiplicity of senses, profound meaning and symbolism. The sculptures presented in this early creative period are wide-ranging and cannot be subsumed under a single, unidirectional train of development. Nevertheless, a human figure remains always a main subject and its *contemporary* interpretation extends between figurative and abstract art. The turn to small format sculpture in Slobodinskaya's case is not a sign of artistic weakness, but rather a search of an optimal expressive artistic form.

Sculptor Slobodinskaya is not afraid of experimenting with different materials but she mostly demonstrates her skill and knowledge of a model in a plaster cast and bronze materials. The author shows confidence working on huge volume and schematic configuration of figure's pronunciation, but gradually she gives her preference rather to refined small-format sharp-cut sculptural images. One of the artist's individual traits in her early and late periods is a search and tendency to reveal an inner movement and rhythm in composition, line and figure, to give a psychological depth to a sculptural model's interpretation.

The Second World War brings unexpected changes together with new thematic and stylistic demands and possibilities. The sculptor apparently enjoyed studying and discovering *individual richness* of every depicted image, to search for essence of individuality; therefore a genre she is able to express her craft and artistic skill mostly – is obviously a sculptural portrait. Another important trait which characterizes the work of this genre is a truthfulness of model's depiction.

5. THE HORRORS OF THE II WORLD WAR

*It happened like this when only the dead
Were smiling, glad of their release,
That Leningrad hung around its prisons
Like a worthless emblem, flapping its piece.
Shrill and sharp, the steam-whistles sang
Short songs of farewell
To the ranks of convicted, demented by suffering,
As they, in regiments, walked along -
Stars of death stood over us
As innocent Russia squirmed
Under the blood-spattered boots and tyres
Of the black marias.*

Anna Achmatova, *Requiem*, introduction, 1935-1940.

5.1 Leningrad artists under the siege

Nina Slobodinskaya together with her one year son became a *prisoner* of the Leningrad's blockage for almost two years period. During this period all civilians hold their proper battle in this war, a battle with hunger and Germans' constant bombardment. To survive – was a biggest challenge. Nevertheless, Nina Slobodinskaya actively participated in art preservation's activities hold by the civilians. A special attention requires a subject of artistic life in conditions of 900 days of Leningrad siege during the II World War³⁴⁹. The exact number of victims during the siege varies depending on the source, but according to M. Walzer's research it is not less than 1.000.000 deaths: "More civilians died in the siege of Leningrad than in the modernist infernos of Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, taken together"³⁵⁰. Those dramatic circumstances in which Leningrad citizens struggled in their attempts to survive and heroic efforts made to preserve the artistic heritage of the museums, sculptural masterpieces, architectural monuments together with attempts of Leningrad's artists to *memorize* significant historical moments,

³⁴⁹ The Siege of Leningrad, may be also defined as the Leningrad Blockade was an almost 3 years long military blockage hold by the German Army Group North against Leningrad—historically and currently known as Saint Petersburg in the Eastern Front theatre of World War II. The encircling of the city began on 8 September 1941, when the last road to the city was taken under German army's control. Although Russians managed to open a narrow land corridor to the city on 18 January 1943, the blockage was ended on 27 January 1944, 872 days after it began. It was one of the cruelest and most destructive in history, which carried away more than one million of lives of civils. See: Фролов, М.И. *Салют и реквием: Героизм и трагедия ленинградцев 1941-1944 гг.* СПб.: ЛГУ, 2004, С.235.

³⁵⁰ Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars*. L.: Basic books, 1977, pp.160-174.

personalities, acts of heroism, horrors of war, people's sufferings, show us the enormous significance which art and culture had for Leningrad citizens and Russians in general.

5.2 To survive fighting. The unified cultural and political front and force

From the very beginning was created the antifascist movement which united all the artistic styles and forms under a common aim – an opposition to Hitler's military aggression. The common purposes of fighting created a unified cultural and political front and force. The publicist graphics of B. Efimov, Kukrisnikov together with other types and art genres showed their support to the Soviet army. The War gave a strong impulse to the development of realistic and political painting, sculpture and graphics. About 100 artists (members of the LOSH as Nina Slobodinskaya) immediately left Leningrad and joined the front as soldiers. Many of them fought in the national opposition, defending the city; the artists built defence-constructions, worked on the wood treatment and extraction. The necessity of art, its contribution into an antifascist propaganda and population's spirit strengthening cannot be minimized. When Leningrad was circled by fascists, the enemy's artillery and its air forces daily methodically fusilladed and bombarded - the town's artists actively participated in Leningrad's salvation. Accordingly, one of the main tasks became the preservation of architectural ensembles and sculptural monuments. The Inspection of Monuments' conservation (founded on 22 June 1941) immediately elaborated the plan of the buildings' defence and sculptural monuments' concealment. A special battalion was created in order to operatively liquidate the architectural destructions. By September 1942 - 200 architectural monuments from the list of 300 were damaged. The members of the city's architecture planning department together with members of the Architecture and Artist's Union took part in the operations of buildings' reconstruction. Such preventive actions were taken: the base of the Petropavlovsky Cathedral's iconostasis was covered with sand sacks; the defensive break wall was constructed around the unique mosaics *Poltava's battle* by M. Lomonosov in the Academy of Science at the Universitetskaya Embankment of Leningrad³⁵¹.

³⁵¹ Ефимовский, Е. *Спасенный Петербург*. Санкт-Петербург: Издательств «Левша», 2010, С.14.

The former Hermitage director I. Orbelli remembered those days: “Already on 22 of June 1941 all the work group of the Hermitage participated in the package of the pieces of art, stopping for the rest and a meal only 1 hour per day. And we could stop them for the rest only by the official order”³⁵². More than 60 members of the Artists and Architecture Union participated in the package of the precious pieces of the applied – decorative art in the city’s museums. The part of the art pieces was evacuated, another part – carefully preserved in the basements and cellars of the buildings. The artistic heritage from the former imperial summer-residence palaces was preserved in the Isaac’s Cathedral. The architect A. Gegello was responsible for the camouflage and disguising of the architectural complexes such as the Smolny complex, which was covered by the chains with material’s applications in green, brown and yellow spots, imitating leaves³⁵³. The regional architect Davidov proposed to attract the alpinists in order to cover the building’s spires. The military commandment was of the real support. The golden tops of the Isaac’s and the Petropavlovsky cathedral were painted in grey colours in order to hide its aesthetic impact. “Many Leningrad citizens remember those days when the town lost *golden shining* of its major architectural monuments: The Ingenerny castle, spires of the Admiraltistvo, The Petropavlovsky, The Nikolsky cathedrals, The Krestovozdvijnichesky and other churches”³⁵⁴.



E. Falcone, *Peter the Great's* monument, 1782, bronze.

³⁵² Кедринский, А.А., Колотов, М.Г., Ометов, Б.Н., Раскин, А.Г. *Восстановление памятников архитектуры Ленинграда*. Ленинград: Стройиздат, Ленинградское отделение, 1983, С.54.

³⁵³ Ефимовский, Е. *Спасенный Петербург*. Санкт-Петербург : Издательств «Левша.», 2010, С.17.

³⁵⁴ Кедринский, А.А., Колотов, М.Г., Ометов, Б.Н., Раскин, А.Г. *Восстановление памятников архитектуры Ленинграда*. Ленинград: Стройиздат, Ленинградское отделение, 1983, С.38.

5.3. *Peter's the Great* monument – town's guardian

On a deserted, wave-swept shore,
He stood – in his mind great thoughts grow –
And gazed afar. The northern river
Sped on its wide course him before;
One humble skiff cut the waves' silver.
On banks of mosses and wet grass
Black huts were dotted there by chance –
The miserable Finn's abode;
The wood unknown to the rays
Of the dull sun, by clouds stowed,
Hummed all around. And he thought so:
'The Swede from here will be frightened;
Here a great city will be wrought
To spite our neighborhood conceited.
From here by Nature we're destined
To cut a door to Europe wide,
To step with a strong foot by waters.
Here, by the new for them sea-paths,
Ships of all flags will come to us –
And on all seas our great feast opens.'

A. Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman*, 1833.

There was also an intention to dismount a monument of *Peter's The Great* by Falcone and to hide it in the Neva's river. Surprisingly, an old employee came to the Inspection and revealed an interesting document of 1812 where was stated the fact that in 1812 during the war with Napoleon the government also intended to dismount *the Peter the Great* monument and to hide it. Curiously, emperor Alexandre the I received a letter of one of Saint Petersburg old citizens who claimed to have had a vision while sleeping, in which the former Emperor Peter The Great ordered to inform the actual Emperor not to dismount his monuments saying following: "While I stand in the city any enemy will step into this land"³⁵⁵.

Tsar Alexander the I laid to heart the old man's vision, and in his turn I. Krestovsky accepted the proposal of the old archivarius. It was decided not to dismount the old monument but only to cover it with a double quantity of sand. Not all the monuments were dismounted or covered with protective materials; some of them were left as they served to the propaganda purpose of Russian historical victories.

³⁵⁵ Ефимовский, Е. *Спасенный Петербург*. Санкт-Петербург : Издательств «Левша.», 2010, С.38.

The allegoric monument of *General Suvorov* near the Troitsky Bridge and two sculptural figures of *General Kutuzov* and *Barclay de Tolle* near the Kazansky Cathedral were not touched. The soldiers leaving for the battles could admire and be inspired by patriotic sculptural testimonies of previous national victories.

The Kazansky cathedral was of the especial value for the soldiers and Leningrad citizens. There was a constant pilgrimage to the memorial thumbs of General M. Kutuzov who symbolized a former national victory - fearless and braveness of a Russian resistance³⁵⁶.

In difficult conditions of the war and the siege in 1942 was organized the patriotic exhibition *The National war of 1812* which aimed to inspire soldiers and all the activists-defenders of Leningrad to continue its fearless resistance. "Leningrad resisted because even in the most difficult days of the siege the town kept being a guardian of culture and historical tradition. Saving the culturally and artistically significant objects of Leningrad people remembered that they participate in the whole country's defence, as Leningrad is not only a strategically important part of the territory but it is first of all a cultural centre of Russia, it's shrine and a symbol of its power and majesty"³⁵⁷.

5.4. Pencil - a weapon to conquer the enemy

The preservation of artistic heritage was only a partial task of the local artists. Another not less important purpose was to create works of art which could give a moral support and inspire the citizens for fighting. V. Serov – the member of the Leningrad Union of Artists remembers the words of the cities govern addressed to the artists: "Your weapon – is art, pencil. Nobody has right to put this arm aside, without a soldier. This weapon has to remain in hands of artists because it also effectively conquers the enemy and brings an enormous use to our common deed"³⁵⁸. Grace to the altruistic activities of Leningrad artists the artistic life was actively developed and preserved.

³⁵⁶ Кедринский, А.А., Колотов, М.Г., Ометов, Б.Н., Раскин, А.Г. *Восстановление памятников архитектуры Ленинграда*. Ленинград: Стройиздат, Ленинградское отделение, 1983, С.59.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, p.47.

³⁵⁸ Никифорова, И.В. *Художники осажденного города*. М.: «Искусство», 1985, С.37.



Photo of artist V. Pakulin, 1941, unknown author.



E. Timkov, *Leningrad*, 1943, oil on canvas.



S. Mochalov, *Bombardment of the Labour's Place*, 1942, oil on canvas.

The landscape painter V. Pakulin not paying attention to the bombarding and freeze daily painted sketches of the city's in war working at the streets of Leningrad. In his landscapes the war destructions are not always present but still the paintings are full of special tension and lyrics. Among Leningrad landscape painters stands out E. Timkov, who created intimate truthful, human landscapes already in 1941 (the streets, small yards, parks were depicted). The mood of the city is effectively visualized in his small dimension sketches. The artists as Mochalov and Zinkovich

accentuated in their paintings an atmosphere of the city under the war, not depicting in detail human figures but, instead, catching a full of intense anxiety mood of Leningrad. Their created imagery panorama of the town under the siege is an enormously significant historical heritage³⁵⁹.

The feeling of historical importance prevails in the multiples paintings dedicated to the war events. Even if the genre is primary in their paintings, the dramatic content is also actively present. A frozen, covered with snow space is a typical at that epoch background of the *empty* landscapes. The landscape's impression of *frozenness* was aimed to effectively visualize the inhuman difficulties and sufferings faced by Leningrad citizens as well as their spirit's firmness and braveness. The portrait genre in the War period plays a special role in Soviet art. The interest towards the defenders, soldiers and heroes increased dramatically, but in case of Leningrad's artists a model and artist were united by a common fate and a will to resist and to win an enemy. An artist and his model (soldier, sailor or a simple citizen) were linked by a common tragedy of the siege, which lasted for almost 900 days. The portraits of the war days were elaborated in a rather quick manner and without any preparative sketches, often only in one artistic session with model. Generally these images may be characterized by truthfulness, sincerity, and profound psychological characteristic of model. To the best works of the War period can be related the *Self-portrait* by Nikolaev, portrait of *Boloznev* by Serebrianov.



Nikolaev, *The queue for bread*, 1942, oil on canvas.

Nepriyev, *The siege*, 1943, oil on canvas.

³⁵⁹ Ефимовский, Е. *Спасенный Петербург*. Санкт-Петербург : Издательств «Левша.», 2010, С.129.

The especially cold and severe winter of 1942-1943 was the biggest trial for Leningrad population: thousands died of starvation, there were no bread, no light no water. All citizens had to work hard, taking away cadavers in order to protect the town from diseases. The depiction of war horrors we find in the works of Neprincev *The Siege* and Boim *The Winter of 1941*. From the first days of the war the artistic group of posters elaboration *The fighting pencil* (which was a part of The Leningrad Union of Artists) gathered its efforts to provide Leningrad with daily appearing posters. Such artists as N. Tirska, N. Astapov, N. Muratov, V. Serov, and V. Kurdov among others worked hard in this group³⁶⁰.



I. Seriebrennii, *Russian nation will never kneel*, 1944, poster.

V. Ivanov, *Every border is crucial*, 1942, poster.

A. Kazantsev, *Freed me!*, 1943, poster.

³⁶⁰ The general tendency followed in scientific analysis of creative and artistic achievements during the Leningrad's blockage period may be marked as the feat, as artistic activities took place in unhuman conditions of starvation, freeze and bombardment. Thus, any active position of artists who under the threat of being killed, still remained in the streets in order to depict fragments of battle and enemy's aggressions is traditionally regarded as an act of braveness. This subject in national historical tradition has an enormous interest and is widely analysed in the following sources: Бардин, С.М. *И штатские надели шинели*. М.: Советская Россия, 1974; Берггольц, О.Ф. *Встреча. Дневные звёзды*. Ч.1. *Путь к Победе. Победа!*, М.: Русская книга, 2000; Буров, А.В. *Блокада день за днём: 22 июня 1941 года - 27 января 1944 года*. Л.: Лениздат, 1979. Внуков, Н.А. *Огненное кольцо: Фотокнижка*. Л.: Дет.лит., 1981; Глазунов, И.С. "Россия распятая". *НАШ СОВРЕМЕННОК*.-М.-1996.-№1.Продолжение в №2-5; 7-11; Фирсов, В.Ф. *Героическая битва за Ленинград*. М.: Воениздат, 1983; Гоппе, Г.Б. *Взвод моего детства: Поэма о мальчишках блокадного Ленинграда*. М.: Дет.лит., 1973; *Девятьсот дней: Лит.-худож. и докум. сб., посвящённый героич. обороне Ленинграда в годы Великой Отеч. Войны*. Сост. Михайловский, Н.Г., Ил. Юдовин, С.Б., Л.: Лениздат, 1957; Жуков, В.И. "Дорога жизни: лед и обстрелы: 65 лет назад 900 героических блокадных дней стали историей. Вести: общественно-политическая газета".-СПб., 2009.-24 января (№12).С.5.; Дмитриев, Л.А. *Блокадный дневник*. М.: ЗВЕЗДА, 1997; Дудин, М.А., Соловьев, В. *Ради твоей жизни*.Л.: Лениздат, 1967; Караев, Г.Н. *Героическая оборона Ленинграда: Военно-исторический очерк*. Л.: Детгиз, 1960; Лихачёв, Д.С. *Воспоминания*. СПб.: Logos, 1999.

In addition, artists edited and publicised miscellanies of satiric drawings and lithographic military and politic posters. As a result a strong creative group of posters' artists appeared in Leningrad. Already in the first months of the War about 50 artists dedicated their full time to the posters elaboration. Curiously the most appealing and artistically effective posters were created by the masters who before the war worked in other genres: painting, illustrating, sculpting. The main artistic group consisted of V. Serov, I. Seriebrennii, A. Kazantsev, N. Kochergin, T. Ksenofontov, L. Samoilov, A. Kokosh, M. Gordon, V. Vlasov, V. Pinchuk, and A. Sittaro.

Painter Serebrianiii worked on posters from the first days of the war and became a real master of the agitation art. His poster *Russian nation never will kneel* was published various times and became a model and the example of the best visualized antifascist propaganda message. Certainly every poster's painter had his proper artistic method and depiction language, but the common traits were following: subject's actuality, concreteness, image's realistic clarity, strong patriotism and emotional drama.

A massive visually appealing agitation was one of the main tasks of the siege artists. They created agitation brochures for the enemy's army, hundreds of drawings for the newspapers, elaborated artistic post-cards which were widely published. The subjects of these post-cards were variable: the glory of the past,- battle episode of Russian nation, feats and acts of braveness of Leningrad front and partisans, famous paintings of Russian Soviet artists and even the main emotionally appealing posters. Among others were especially appreciated the lithographic post-cards of A. Ostroumova- Lebedeva who glorified the beauty of Leningrad³⁶¹.

Such painters as N. Pavlov, E. Beluha, S. Mochalov, G. Fitingof, B. Miliutina, B. Ermolaev, U. Petrov mirrored a full of complexity and variety life of Leningrad under the siege in their paintings; they depict those who clean the city's streets from dirtiness and cadavers, the ones who make the defence constructions, those who heroically saved the weakest citizens, the crowds waiting for bread, the battalions of soldiers who leave for the front.

The specific necessities for sculptors conditioned artists work. Many sculptures elaborated from plaster cast and plasticine did not survive during the war.

³⁶¹ Никифорова, И.В. *Художники осажденного города*. М.: Искусство, 1985, С.48.

V. Pinchuk in 1941 created a dynamic and expressive sculptural figure *Baltiets*, Bogoliubov created the sculptural project dedicated to the war. Sculptors A. Petoshina, V. Drachinskaya, V. Gushina A. Gunnius, T. Linde, and T. Kirpichnikova worked among others. The artists organized exhibitions and its discussions, special creative evenings, actively participated in publishing.

Finally the siege was broken through. Ostroumova-Lebedeva described this significant day in her diary: "Today at the radio was informed of the order given to Leningrad soldiers. What happened then! Everybody was embracing, kissing, crying, exclaiming. Then a fire work took place in honour of Leningrad soldiers. What a magnificent performance we went through! 24 volleys of the 324 cannons were discharged. The cannons sounded from the military ships in different parts of Leningrad: near the Smolny, at the Marsovo field, at the Dvortsovaya square and in all the other places. It was 20.00 o'clock. The night was dark. Fire fountains of red, green, blue and white rackets were high in the sky. Around were heard the screams and exclamations *URA* of people - crazy of their happiness"³⁶².

As to nutrition during the siege, tickets for bread were distributed among citizens, which daily permitted to get a ratio of 100 grams. It was the only meal. Meanwhile, the fact was that the *intelligentsia* group including artists got a less quantity than fabric workers. It did not mean though that Leningrad artists worked less. Even in these circumstances creative people lived and worked.

D. Lichachiov described their lives: "Human brain died the last. People wrote diaries, philosophical essays, scientific researches, sincerely with all their hearts meditated and showed incredible firmness, not permitting the wind to blow them away, and not letting vanity and rush to conquer them. Artist L. Chupiatov and his wife died of starvation. Dying he painted works. When he did not have enough paper he used plywood and even the bread tickets"³⁶³.

³⁶² Ibid, p.59.

³⁶³ Санкт-Петербург. Портрет города и горожан.СПб: Palace Editions, 2003, С.12 -19.



A. Ostroumova-Lebedeva, *Firework*, 1944, oil on canvas.



T. Kirpichnikova, *Children-partisans' aides*, 1942, bronze.

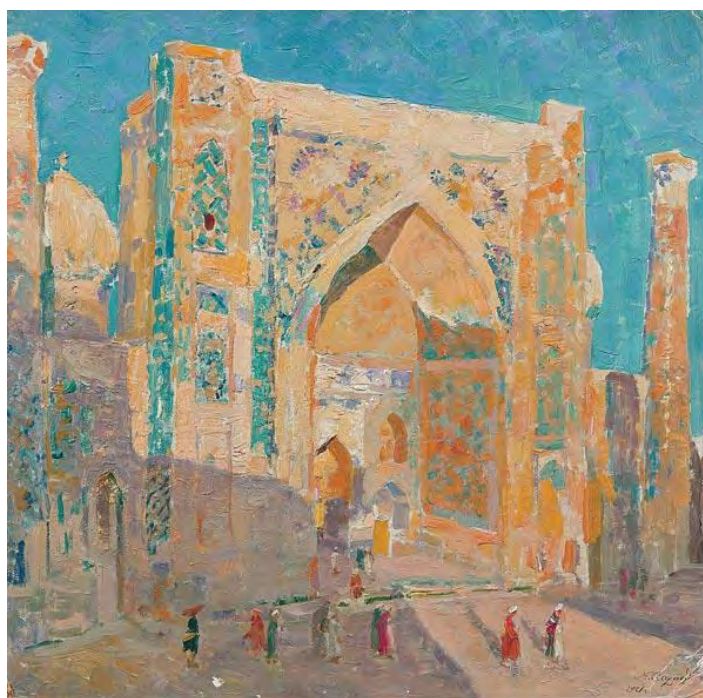


Pinchuk, *The promise of vengeance*, 1942, bronze.

6. THE WAR-PERIOD. ORIENTAL MOTIVES

*Awake! For Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight;
And Lo! The Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light*³⁶⁴.

Omar Khayyam, *The Rubaiyat*.



A. Isupov *Samarkand*, 1921, oil on canvas.

The II World War carried away countless lives, together with the years of Stalin's repressions, embodied into multiples arrests, murders, appearances of concentration camps and, properly saying, turned into the genocide of the whole population, executed by the Soviet government. Life of a human being had no value at all. Undoubtedly it was one of the most tragic periods in Russian history. Nevertheless, the Second World War period became one of the most fruitful, significant and inspiring in Nina Slobodinskaya's creative work. For about two years period Nina Slobodinskaya with her little son stayed in Leningrad under the siege. Her main task was to survive and to preserve her 2 years' child of starvation and death. She never

³⁶⁴ Khayyam, Omar. *The Rubaiyat*. Translated into English in 1859 by Edward Fitz Gerald: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-rubaiyat-of-omar-khayyam>. Retrieved on 14.07.14.

liked to recall this dreadful life period. Owing to the fact that her husband Vladimir Gnezdilov worked in The Military–Medicine Academy, their family on the third year of the siege had chance to be evacuated (by the group of three airplanes, two of which were destroyed by the air bombardment) to the Middle Asia, namely to the north east part of Uzbekistan - Samarkand.

6.1 Samarkand – artistic treasure and Asian culture’s cradle



M. Gerasimov, *Tamerlane*, 1980, bronze, the image reconstructed by Tamerlane's skull.

Samarkand is one of the most antique cities in the World. It was known already in 742 B.C. The city's perfect situation among India, Persia and China conditioned its key place in the Central Asia trade road called the Great Silk Route. Its history is long and dramatic: the city was completely destroyed by Chingischan, but then Tamerlane reconstructed the town, converting it into the capital of his new Empire. During the reign of Tamerlane's grandson Ulugbek, numerous *medrese* were constructed what turned Samarkand into one of the East's centres of culture and science. The city is rounded by thirteen magnificent parks and gardens and the *Registan* - a majestic architectural complex, which features the city being its main historic and artistic treasure. As a crossroad of ancient cultures it also illustrates all artistic achievements of the East and possesses true masterpieces of Islamic Art. Samarkand is located in

the valley of the Zerafshan's river and it is surrounded by snow melted mountains, what provided the city with abundant natural water resources and turned the town into a flourishing garden plenty of fruits and flowers. Thus it is not surprising that the travellers described the city in such words: *"If it is said that paradise is to be seen in this world, then the paradise of this world is Samarkand"*- It was declared by Ata-Malik Jovani³⁶⁵.

6.2 Russian artists in Samarkand during the war years



Afrasiab, *Soldier's head*, VII c., mural painting, Samarkand.

During the Second World War period nine Academies and forty-eight educational institutions were evacuated to the capital of Uzbekistan. In Samarkand they faced a multiplicity of Asian characters as the local population did not consist only of Uzbeks: Kurds, Balkans, Tatars from Crimea, and Turks among others were by circumstances gathered in Samarkand, which turned to be a multicultural city in the epoch of the Second World War. Leningrad artists from various institutions were also evacuated to Samarkand in 1942 by the decision of the SNK USSR. As many as 391 artists (professors, students, artists) from the Academy Of Arts arrived to Samarkand on 23 of March. Among others were brought to Samarkand following artists: V. Pavlovsky, V. Oreshnikov, S. Abugov, I. Brodsky, P. Belousov, V. Gorb, M. Taranov, and N. Baklanov, sculptor A. Matveev, M. Roslavlev, R. Frents, V. Sianaisky, L. Ovsianikov, N.

³⁶⁵ Кибрик, Е., Умаров, А. *Портретная живопись Узбекистана. Работы и мысли художника*. М.: Ташкент, 1984, С.49.

Punin, and S. Isakov. Professors and students quickly organized their everyday life and started working – the fact, which permitted to be officially graduated to a number of students in one year period. Artists' life in Samarkand turned into a creatively bright period mirrored in multiples art pieces. In studio of A. Zaitsev were created some landscapes of Samarkand, such as *Spring at the outskirts of the town*, *The Flourishing Valley* and others. The artist depicts high mountains, studies a constantly changing sky of the South, light shadows of the clouds. Victor Oreshnikov created a range of masterpieces in Samarkand, such as *Samarkand's Spring*, *Uzbek's yard*, *Dkar-Arik*. Twilight blue delicate tones and reflexes fulfil the lands of Uzbekistan in his works³⁶⁶.

Young generations of Leningrad artists were represented by P. Belousov, who was assigned as an official artist of the *Smena* newspaper from the first days of the war. Belousov was evacuated together with the Academy of Arts and created various landscapes and genre paintings, such as *Yard medrese*, for instance.

A talented apprentice of I. Brodsky – A. Laktionov was appointed as a Professor of Drawing and Painting. In Samarkand he created such works as *Silence*, *Children*, *In kichlak*. His portraits are characterized by vividness, firm and exact drawing and images full of poetic lyrics. The art academies from Leningrad were not the only ones to be brought away from the war's terror. The Moscow's and Ukraine's art institutions were also evacuated to Samarkand³⁶⁷. Culturally and artistically rich atmosphere of ancient Samarkand together with a presence of various artistic schools, art movements and styles provided artists with an art environment which was fruitful for professional development and enriching for all its artists³⁶⁸.

The Leningrad artistic school was founded on academic base. The primary elements were technique and drawing. Those principles were a continuation of P. Chistiakov's

³⁶⁶ Веймаш, Б.В., Черкасова, Н.В. *Искусство Советского Узбекистана*. Л.: Искусство, 1960, С.17.

³⁶⁷ In Samarkand took place the interpenetration of Russian and Uzbekistan's artistic schools and methods, which adapted and developed a peculiarity of local folk artistic traditions – the fact which contradicted the general line of Stalin's politics (which neglected all kind of accentuation of national characteristics in art, instead, affirming the unique style of socialist-realism). In conditions of material scarcity, everyday life difficulties artists from different parts of the USSR achieved to preserve a high artistic activity's level and to widen the frames of national conscience, enriching their art with different ethnic peculiarities and local folk traditions. Uzbek artists, in their turn, after the II world war was over in significant numbers went to study to Leningrad and Moscow, as they had chance to appreciate la level of capitals' craft mastery. Thus Uzbek art in its 1950-1960ss gave a number of bright artists who enriched the national local panorama. A more detailed picture may be found in following works: Умаров, А. *Портретная живопись Узбекистана*. Т.1, У.: Искусство, 1968; Такташ, Р. *Изобразительное искусство Узбекистана*. Т.2, М.: Искусство, 1972; М., Ремпеля, Л.И, общ. ред. *Искусство советского Узбекистана 1917-1972 гг.* М.: Искусство, 1976.

³⁶⁸ Коллектив авторов, *Искусство советского Узбекистана, 1917-1972 гг.* М.: Советский художник, 1976, С.29-58.

and I. Repin's traditions. The Moscow school in their turn was based on art method of V. Serov and K. Korovin, B. Kopchalovsky and A. Osimiorkin. Thematic painting and philosophical subject prevailed in their approach.

The Ukrainian school developed the national decorativism in bright and expressive manner, influenced by F. Krichevsky. Composition in painting (in Krichevsky's artistic method) was often created by colour and only than by drawing³⁶⁹.

As to the historical roots of Uzbek sculpture and frescos, they were related to the I century B.C. – I century A.C. This period was characterized by its deep interest to individuality. Especially this tendency may be followed in the Khalchayan sculpture.



Bactrian warrior, I B.C- A.C., coloured ceramics.

Geraya family Man's head, I B.C- A.C., coloured ceramics, Halachyan.

Kushansky's governor, I B.C- A.C., coloured ceramics, Halachyan.

The Arab's conquest in VII-VIII centuries hampered the development of sculpture in Uzbekistan, as the severe Islamist ideological tradition disapproved independent sculptural depiction which prevailed in Uzbekistan till the first half of XIX century, when Turkmenistan was joined to the Russian Empire. Only in the second half of XIX century local artists started to reconstruct to life a *new form of art*. The October Revolution served as a further stimulation for sculptural development of Uzbekistan. As to sculpture of Uzbekistan in 1930s the local school was quite weak and not multiple. The sculptural works of O. Koreiskaya, O. Rusakov, N. Kudriavtseva, I. Kuchisz, and N. Ceretolli are the testimonies of its low artistic level. It happened due to the Uzbekistan's historic circumstances³⁷⁰.

³⁶⁹ Чепелов, Б. *Искусство Советского Узбекистана*. Л.: ЛОССХ, 1935, С.39-74.

³⁷⁰ Коллектив авторов. *История искусств Узбекистана с древнейших времен до XIX в. Скульптура Халчаяна*. М.: Искусство, 1971, С.170-198.

The Khalchayan (also *Khaltchaiän*) is an archaeological site, thought to be a small palace or a reception hall located near the modern town of Denov in Surxondaryo Province of southern Uzbekistan. It is located in the valley of the Surkhan Darya, a northern tributary of the Oxus (modern Amu Darya)³⁷¹. The site is usually attributed to the early Kushans, or their ancestors the Yuezhi. It was excavated by Galina Pugachenkova between 1959 and 1963. The interior walls are decorated with clay sculptures and paintings dated by the mid. I century B.C. Various panels depict scenes of Kushan life: battles, feasts, portraits of rulers.

6.3 Artistic panorama of Uzbekistan in the epoch of 1940s



Samarkand, photo, Paul Nadar

Regardless the inopportunity for sculpture, the local Uzbekistan's artistic school of painting based on the national folklore traditions was a strong and independent group, which certainly influenced Russian artists temporally working in Samarkand. As to Slobodinskaya, we may trace the influence of a local portrait school of painting in her sculptural works together with ancient sculptural tradition of

³⁷¹ Ibid, pp.170-198.

Halachyan sculpture (especially in its attention to individuality through in detail shaped heads).

The portrait genre in Uzbek painting combined diverse tendencies: national folkloric and ethnic traditions, realism, impressionism, avant-garde. Besides, the portrait genre served as a base for future imagery and stylistic principles in all art forms of Uzbekistan. Attention to individuality became the main characteristic of the local portrait genre. Experiences of diverse national artistic schools show their preference given to realism as to the main artistic style. Individual approach, which reflects an objective reality, thematic structure and artist's attitude towards the contemporary world, can be featured generally in paintings and particularly in portrait genre. The portrait works of A. Volkov, M. Kurzin, and V. Ufimtsev formed the diverse concepts of man's depiction and defined the future evolution of portrait genre in Uzbekistan³⁷².



P. Benkov, *Tadjik's portrait*, 1963, oil on canvas.



Volkov, *Kolhoznik*, 1940s, oil on canvas.

³⁷² Чепелов, Б. *Искусство Советского Узбекистана*. Л.: ЛОССХ, 1935, С.34-62.



A. Volkov, *They are listening music*, 1920, oil on canvas.



P. Benkov, *Chaihana*, 1932, oil on canvas.

The portraits of 1920 -1930ss can be characterized not by individuality's search, but instead by display of typical and archetypical traits, kind of stereotype's depictions. Generally, prevailed a vision of person defined by his social type; to be more precise – *image's typology* determined the development of the national school at that period. P. Benkov appeared as a follower of impressionists' tradition, encapsulating pictorial motives of the Middle Asia and its unique nature. In the *Tadjik's portrait* by P. Benkov there is a sunny atmosphere; artist's capacity to express an *effectiveness of nature* becomes the main accent of the work. Benkov is fully attracted by depiction of everyday life and ethnic traits of Asian population.

As to Nina Slobodinskaya, she in her turn also accentuates and features the Asian ethnic specificity and individuality of Asian nations in her creative work. Independently of artists' conceptual orientation, their works were focused on comprehension and interpretation of the epoch and man's role in it. The individually treated avant-garde tradition is shown in creative work of A. Volkov. The interest of artist is not limited by traditional and ethnographic traits. Individual analysis of form defines his latest artistic searches influenced by symbolical images and structural plasticity of M. Vrubel. Principles of the national art he combined with geometric forms and bright colours of local environment³⁷³.

³⁷³ Коллектив авторов. *Искусство советского Узбекистана, 1917-1972 гг.* М.: Советский художник, 1976, С.58.

6.4 Samarkand – Slobodinskaya's inspiring and artistically enriching shelter

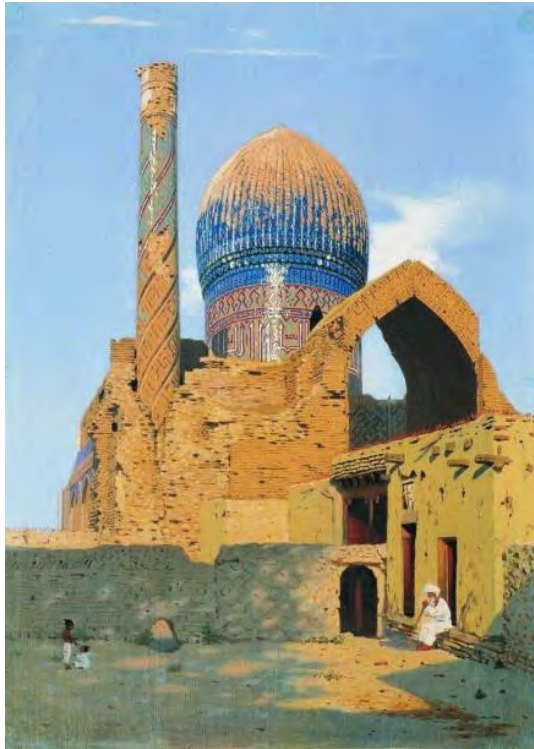
If sculptor tends to make his works more perfect, more versatile, if he wants to construct them from inside, basing on the whole truth of the Universe and on all the best of his soul, he must join to the soul of the world. Let Love's filaments from your spirit and heart to reach out other people's hearts and spirits, than under your hands any material, even solid granite and firm bronze will be marked by a stamp of eternity.

Antoine Bourdelle³⁷⁴

Samarkand – the capital of Uzbekistan became a temporal refuge for Nina Slobodinskaya and her family for 2 years. The ancient town gifted to the sculptor, physically and mentally exhausted by the Leningrad siege's horrors, a sudden quiescent and became an unlimited source of inspiration; in her proper words, Slobodinskaya felt to be suddenly waken up in Eastern fairy tales (which she loved from her childhood), meeting in streets personages of *The 1001 nights*. Probably due to the technical difficulties and problems with finding material for sculpting Nina Slobodinskaya turns basically to the small-format sculpture, statuettes or small-scale figures. As a result appear approximately 60 - 70 works, elaborated during 2 years period (not all of them survived the artist's return to Leningrad). As to material, the artist mainly uses plaster cast and plasticine, due to its availability.

Regarding Slobodinskaya's work method, - the artist always sculpts from a real model, mainly in direct contact with it. Back in Moscow or Leningrad it always was a real problem to find a model and apart it was costly (expenses which not many artists could financially permit themselves on constant base). Uzbekistan in terms of models' choice and their availability, turned out to be a paradise for all artists: local people had a different manner of life: slow and calm. Time seemed to be stiffening there. Russian painter V. Vereshagin already in 1869, 70 years before observed and captured in his paintings a *motionless sluggishness, bliss and contentment* in the atmosphere of old Samarkand.

³⁷⁴ Kemer, S. *Visage de Bourdelle*. Paris: Chamais, 1931, p.53.



V. Vereshagin, *Mausoleum Gour-Emir*, 1869-1870, oil on panel, Samarkand.

Photo of Medrese Tilia-Kari, late XIX c, Bogaevsky.

There were a plenty of Uzbeks in the streets, which were truly *pictorial*, so when the brave sculptor directly asked them to pose for her sculptural work, - Uzbeks were astonished and pleased. There were many Uzbeks who instead of being stressed by work or being in a hurry (a typical characteristic of Russian megalopolises' citizens) were totally free and disposed of all time in the world to be portrayed. The artist was more than happy discovering Asians of all generations and ages, simply sitting in the streets and meditating, observing the crowd, or just deeply absorbed by reading, playing musical instruments, or talking.

In those years Samarkand appeared to be a trade's crossroad and a multicultural Asian centre. You could find there Uzbeks but also Turks, Tadjik and other eastern Asian nationalities, daily walking in the streets. Exactly these simple people from a crowd, passers-by in their everyday life become the main characters and inspiring heroes of Slobodinskaya's sculpture. Who are they? Where they are from?



V. Vereshagin *Celebrating*, 1872, oil on canvas, Samarkand.

An old Tadjik shepherd in a huge traditional hat, a young Uzbek girl reading, a small boy having his cup of tea, a mother breast-feeding her baby, a beautiful young woman going to work, a girl holding a bunch of grape. The multiplicity of Asian characters becomes the sculptor's source of inspiration and finally they are personified in sculptural images. The main subject becomes Asian characters portrayed in their everyday life, at their usual daily occupation. Moreover, it appears that the artist tries to *catch* and show a significance and beauty of every instance in human life. All personages despite their occupation seem to be in state of deep meditation or thoughtfulness, concentrated on their inner world. The central motive of Slobodinskaya's Asian works appears to be a *spiritual interrelation* and *interaction* of man and the world. Despite time's fleeting run a man thinks on *untimeliness*. Significance of every instance for human soul is expressed by philosophical deep contemplation of life of the artist's sculptural personages. *Untimeliness* in frames of *time* – that's one of the Asian characters' leitmotivs.

As to artistic method, Nina Slobodinskaya always worked in front and in direct contact with a real model. Regarding the characteristic traits of those sculptural figures we may distinguish following features: a natural relaxed pose, a detailed depiction of their figures, thoughtfully, attentively and naturalistically portrayed faces. The author never searches for a generalized image of depiction, or a

typicalness, instead she is looking for depiction of individuality, portraying and intending to reveal a profound essence of every person.

At first sight every depicted character seems to be occupied by his every day task, but from a second sight an attentive viewer may see not just a typical image of a shepherd or of a young Uzbek's girl, but also through the expression of their faces, he guesses and feels a model's deep psychological individuality, even their *soul's movement*. I would dare to affirm that the master succeeded in revealing and showing in sculptural forms a human spiritual essence of the portrayed. In these terms the realistic style was only a formal method, a technique, aimed to display rich complex Asian personalities. Having a clear final idea of how a sculptural image should be visualized, the artist worked in realistic style, in detail, naturally, portraying every model's face and body's features without idealization.

The sculptor worked hard, sculpting all her free time. Her family was used to see Nina Slobodinskaya just for short instances; she had luck, disposing of help with home cleaning and cooking. We are able to trace her artistic development, analysing the concrete examples of sculptor's work.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Turkmen girl with cotton*, 1942-43, plasticine.

V. Muchina, *Uzbek's girl with a jug*, 1933, bronze, sketch for a not finished project of the *Nationalities'* fountain.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Turkmenian girl with cotton*, 1942-43, plasticine.

6.5 Turkmen girl with cotton - Turkmen Nefertiti

The *Turkmen girl with cotton* represents a sculptural small-sized plasticized sketch, which approximately dates 1942 – 43ss. It displays a full of lyricism and inner poetry image of a young beautiful woman in traditional Turkmen dress, bearing a head gear. The young woman holds cotton in her skirts. One of the applied artistic means of expressiveness - the figure's posture: the female figure is not shown in static pose, but rather in a natural and free movement. She is depicted stepping at the stairs, while gazing upwards. Although she's got a buggy voluminous dress, an outlined breast and declivous shoulders, all indicate at her true beauty, a refinement and slenderness of her young proportional figure. Wide traditional shoes underline her thin ankles. The sculpture's fine head proportions and the head gear permits to name her a *Turkmen Nefertiti* (mainly due to the beautifully shaped and outlined head's skeleton form together with a full of dignity and self-respect gaze). This

comparison appears naturally, the sculpted statuette definitely recalls the legendary image. The figure's pose is full of calmness, self-discipline and preciseness. The artist aimed to depict her in the natural environment of work: gathering cotton in the fields. The stone like element behind the young woman indicates at the nature's entourage. A motive of cotton gathering is not the unique in a range of sculptor's Asian sculptures. Cotton gathering – was one of the main type of work in the country as during the Soviet epoch Uzbekistan was one of the major cotton providers of all the USSR. The figure's gaze is full of deep thoughtfulness, an inner self concentration, sadness and dreaminess, hope and tenderness. As if the author would aim to show us all her rich feelings spectrum, the emotional fullness of her heart and soul. Her deep emotional world which we may guess in her gaze, her *stormy* emotional state is emphasized by her appearance: a rich dress's lines texture and its curves. A viewer can guess in the portrayed a sensible, emotionally full, thin young woman. By external attributes (cotton in the skirts, nature's element) the female figure may be symbolically associated with an image of prosperity – a goddess so beloved and often displayed by the master in different styles and manners. The girl's appearance clearly indicates at her national traits and Asian origin, although the author accentuates and mainly depicts her individuality. The whole rich sculptural composition with base permits to assume that this sculptural sketch was probably conceived as a model for a monument. Unfortunately there is no documentary evidence to prove it. The architectonical proportions of the composition are adhered exactly. There is no information left if the sculptor exhibited or turned this plasticine sketch into a more solid material or which precise dimensions it had. It's interesting to compare two different visions of the female Asian characters of Russian sculptors. One belongs to the Professor Vera Muchina and other to her apprentice – Nina Slobodinskaya. Muchina's Uzbek girl is full of dynamism, purposeful determination, her figure seems light, but her step is heavy. Uzbek girl's face is shaped schematically, its face expression is not personified; Muchina's sculptural image by itself seems to embody a symbol – sign of will, a perpetual motion, confidence. Meanwhile Slobodinskaya's Turkmen female image is full of inner lyrics, individualized poetry of female sensitivity, tenderness and sadness. While Uzbek girl determinately but unthoughtfully continues her way, Turkmen girl stops in the state of dreaminess and pensiveness, concentrated on her inner world, in a silent dialogue with the world.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Turkmen shepherd*, 1942-43, plasticine.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Turkmen shepherd*, 1942-43, plaster cast, 31 x 20 x 55.



Photo of the Market place, early XX, Rigistan, Samarkand, Bogaevsky.

6.6 Turkmen shepherd or a dialogue with eternity

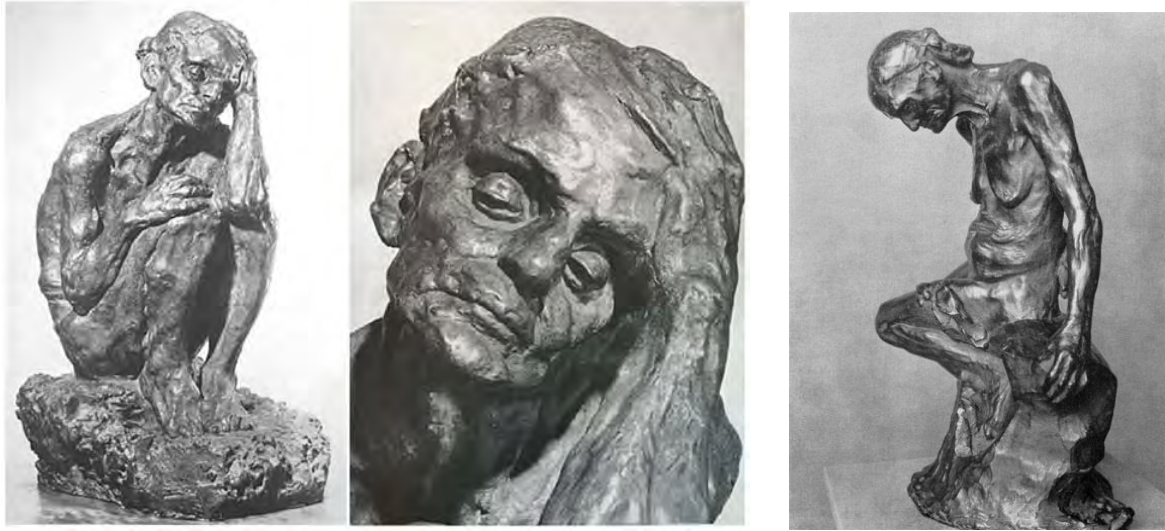
The *Turkmen shepherd* can be regarded as a brilliant example of Asian portrayals. Seating in a natural pose, an old man is playing some national musical instrument. He is haggard, peaked and gazes directly at viewer. His figure is shaped in detail, without any hint at schematic manner of depiction.

Apparently, in approach to work Nina Slobodinskaya follows the basic advises of her teacher Vera Muchina – to seek a truthfulness of depiction, and consequently uses realistic method, portraying without *mercy*, naturalistically all the age signs of the Turkmen man. Nevertheless, the main idea of the author was not to show the ugliness of oldness, but instead a tense, complex and rich inner life of this personage, on which age has no influence. Through the sounds of his musical instrument the old man seems to have a silent, mute dialogue with him-self, his soul, possibly recalling important, happy moments of past, or may be preparing to his meeting with Future.

Quite often during this creative period and further Nina Slobodinskaya portrays old people. Those images are always very expressive, full of inner meaning and personalization. Without neglecting the pure sculptural qualities of the work, we may

suggest that the key message the sculptor attempts to transmit – spiritual fulfilment of an inner model's world.

Anna Golubkina, who was a *guru* in sculpture for Nina Slobodinskaya, discovered images' richness and beauty in subject of oldness, and I suppose it was due to her creative influence that such a theme was so often developed and displayed by our sculptor.



A. Golubkina, *Oldness*, 1898, bronze.

O. Rodin, *Old courtesan*, 1884-85, bronze.

Being a philosopher *in stone*, looking for a deep psychological characteristic of her models, Golubkina in her sculptural work the *Oldness* revealed an inner world's human beauty, which in this case is shining even through the physical traits of wasting away. Anna Golubkina achieved to depict *oldness* as a *natural step into eternity*. She depicted an old lady seating in the same pose as a child in his mother's belly, trying to feature that oldness appears as a temporal state before a new birth, and that life itself turns as an *infinite circle*, Golubkina's sculptural figure creates a circle by its composition. This sculptural image was a kind of response of apprentice Golubkina to her teacher Rodin, who depicted an old courtesan, accentuating the physiological ugliness of oldness.

Nina Slobodinskaya also appears to be a real philosopher and psychologist in sculpture. The key subjects that inspire her and evoke her professional interest are human characters, complex personalities, which she attempts to explore and to reveal their characters' inner life's essence.

The sculptor's analysis is not over with a detailed portrayal of model's physical traits; Slobodinskaya is looking for *more* – a deep characteristic of individuality's complexity, richness and multi-dimensional aspects of his personality. In the Asian creative period Nina Slobodinskaya evinces as already a mature formed artist, who has developed and determined her own plastic language of expression and consciously and independently selected the key subject in her creative work. Thus sculptor's main source of inspiration and the leitmotiv of her work becomes a human being. The artist will be faithful to this theme the rest of her life through the variety of sculptural images and forms.

Being away from Leningrad and the strict official demands, the firm control of the Artists' Union, Slobodinskaya finally feels free to search for subjects interesting for her. She did not feel pressure any more to depict just socialistically orientated optimistic images with a main purpose of propaganda; instead she displays people in their everyday life in natural environment of Samarkand, concentrating her creative search on displaying their deep human psychological and spiritual essence. I think it is significant, that the artist chooses to work on deep full of humanism, intimal psychological sculptural portrayals in the epoch, when all personal had to be on service of the *Social*, following the State's aims; at the period when an interest to intimal interior world of a person was officially neglected, violently and artificially supressed and substituted with a new ideal - man's life and interest to him was justified, only conditioned by his successful service to the society, - to the State.

6.7 Girl with a grape or the Asian's bliss

Another coloured plaster cast statuette which Nina Slobodinskaya created was *The Girl with a grape* – a lyric image of an apparently 10 year's old girl who is shaped in a natural pose holding a grape in her hands. Her posture is relaxed and calm. The moment when the author saw her and was inspired was probably an instant when the girl was gathering grape in her parents' garden. The figure's head is inclined. The girl is thinking or dreaming, she is not looking at the viewer but she is in silent dialogue with herself.



N. Slobodinskaya, *A girl with grape*, 1942-43, coloured plaster cast, 30 x10 x 41.



N. Slobodinskaya, *A girl with grape*, 1942-43, coloured plaster cast, 30 x10 x 41.



At the market, 1930s, photo, Paul Nadar.

Detachment, concentration on inner thoughts, inner spiritual world of a portrayed model, philosophical meditation – it's a common trait of the sculptor's sphere of artistic search. The girl's figure's pose creates an expressive visual curve. Precisely in this period the author starts colouring her plaster cast figures. Apparently south colours inspire the artist to express vividness, contrast and brightness of Uzbekistan. Contrast colours give a new expressiveness to her sculptural figurines.

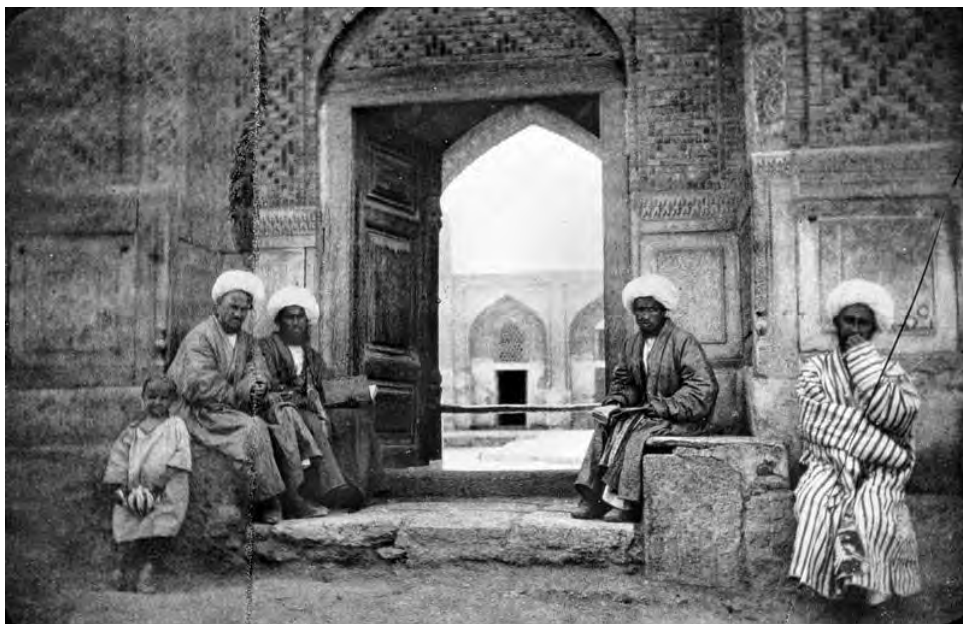
A rich, lush dark brown-orange colour of the girl's body creates a visually expressive contrast with her blue traditional Uzbek trousers, accentuates her wide cheek-bones, eyelashes, and a straight line of her black hair. The colouring gives a new sound, new image's expressiveness to the statuette, which reminds terracotta figurines.

The blue accentuated voluminous trousers emphasize the impression of lightness and refinement of the young lady. The master seems to will and depict not just a figure's movement but through it - also a movement of her thoughts, her heart and her soul. Later the sculptor follows and further develops this artistic tendency in the Asian and the post-war period in order to concentrate viewer's attention not on external movement and physical traits, but on the character's *inner movement*;

Slobodinskaya creates a number of static figures which seem to come to a standstill and stand motionless. To one of such examples may be related *The Turk with a pipe*.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Turk with a pipe*, 1942-1943, plasticine,



Near the mosque, 1930s, photo, Paul Nadar.

6.8 Turk with a pipe and the state of recollections

His motionless figure cannot be more expressive. Every muscle, every body's detail are so properly shaped and his face is so incredibly vivid, that the first impression a viewer gets – that he sees a photo of a real man, not of an elaborated plasticine figure. His neck, shoulders are perfectly outlined, his face with an accentuated wrinkles is attentively pronounced which indicates how deeply and he remains in his thoughts, being profoundly concentrated on reading. He firmly holds his pipe and the fingers of his feet are effectively thrown out. So realistically and vividly the author creates this man, which a passer-by in the twilight's time would take for real. This work is another testimony that the sculptor achieved a high level of the refined technique, in addition the sculptor tends to depict not just a figure's physical reproduction but something which is more difficult to show – the model's state of mind, to give a profound psychological characteristic and to display his intimal personal portrayal. Unfortunately only the photo is left as the proof of this unique sculptural image.

6.9 Old Uzbek – guardian of the past

Another work of Slobodinskaya which corresponds to the subject of oldness created during her refuge in Samarkand was *The Old Uzbek*.

Without posing the depicted old man simply and naturally seats in his usual manner. We may imagine this man in the calm streets of Samarkand, passing another usual day, meditating on his life. The manner of depiction seems to be truthful and realistic. A small-scale coloured plaster cast statuette appears to embody all the south characteristic of Asian traits such as calmness, sluggishness, a lazy slowness, which also mirrors an atmosphere of tranquillity and laziness prevailing in the environment of Samarkand in the middle of XX century.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Old Uzbek*, 1943-1944, colored plaster cast, 38 x 18 x 112.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Old Uzbek*, 1943-1944, colored plaster cast, 38 x 18 x 112.



At the market, Samarkand, 1930s, photo, Paul Nadar.

The accentuated wrinkles and a tensioned front indicate at a big life experience and a heavy memory's *luggage*, which counts a minimum three generations. The old man personifies a vivid memory and the history of Samarkand. In his eyes viewer may guess tiredness, sadness and yearning, probably of the majestic past of Tamerlane's lands or his aspirations to see a lighter future of his native land.

The same immobility and motionless of human figures were captured by the official photographer of the former Russian Empire - S. M. Prokudin-Gorsky who in the early XX century was sent by the order of Imperator Nicolay II to Uzbekistan with purpose to portray local life and people. These images served also as a visual illustration of life realities which further were recreated for the official report to the State's Geographical Society.

The ease and naturalness of his pose, a vivid expressiveness of his face, a detailed portrayal of his body, the colourful contrasts of the silhouette and the figure's proportions perfection – all indicates at the sculptor's high technique level, at the developed skills and the practical knowledge and a respectful mature philosophical

attitude to model. The sculptor enjoys contemplating the portrayed characters, trying to demonstrate their spiritual essence.

6.10 *Talking man and thought's movement*

Nina Slobodinskaya liked experimenting with different sculptural genres, so she decides to use a relief's form to portray an image of the *Talking man*.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Talking man*, 1943-44, tinted plaster cast, 40 x 50 x 54, relief.

The artist originally coloured the image, which with the time almost lost its colours' intensity. A vivid face expression gives impression of an inner thoughtfulness, mental movement, demonstrates the beauty of an actively thinking and dialoguing man; these traits are accentuated by the *active fingers'* depiction, an open mouth and a tensioned front. The sculptor had found her central subject in sculpture and now faithfully continued working on portrayals of interesting *and curious characters* as

she liked to say to her friends and family³⁷⁵. The author did not avoid life-size sculptural portraits format. As was mentioned before a material's scarcity was one of the reasons she sculpted mainly small scale works during this period. But there are two bright examples which demonstrate the master's inclination towards sculptural portraits genre.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Zulfia*, 1943-1944, bronze, 32 x 21 x 58. N. Slobodinskaya, *Zulfia*, 1943-1944, plaster cast, 32 x 21 x 58.



N. Slobodinskaya's *Zulfia*'s sculpture in the *Leningrad* magazine, 1945, N3.

³⁷⁵ Andrey Gnezdilov's verbal recalls, interviewed on 09.08.14.



The mentioning of N. Slobodinskaya's *Zulfia*'s sculptural portrait in The newspaper *Leningradskaya Pravda*, n.49, 1945.

6.11 *Zulfia* – youth and stubbornness

Zulfia – a sculptural portrait of a young Uzbek girl who significantly lifts up her head, showing dignity, self-confidence and youth's stubbornness. The girl – is a characteristic example of Uzbek's beauty: oval face, pug nose, outlined eyebrows accentuate the beautiful oval of her face, her gaze is full of both: dignity, firmness and independence - a strong character's manifestation. But simultaneously the portrayed image is full of lyrics, tenderness and a refined beauty. The sculptor as usual tends to catch and portray the individual psychological essence of the young complex and contradictory character.

The sculptural image was exhibited at Leningrad official periodic show and impressed the critics. it deserved a special mentioning in various published editions sources, such as a popular the *Leningrad* magazine, being illustrated on the last page, where they used to publicize works of art of the top interest; further this sculptural image appears in the *Leningradskaya Pravda* newspaper, where the critic, Dr, and journalist Lobrokovsky gives a special attention to the *Zulfia*'s work in 1945.

6.12 *Oriental Madonna* - dialogue with a soul

The *strongest* and the most significant sculptural work of Nina Slobodinskaya, which may be considered crucial and resulting in all her creative Asian period in Samarkand is *The Oriental Madonna*.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Oriental Madonna*, 1940-47, marble, 49 x 30 x 21.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Oriental Madonna*, 1940-47, marble, 49 x 30 x 21.



Michelangelo, *Medici Madonna (fragment)*, 1521 -1634, marble, the Basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence.



P. Kuznetsov, *Step*, 1910s, oil on canvas.

There is a curious background history of the sculptural image's creation. Once, in Samarkand Nina Slobodinskaya went to the market to buy some food for her family. In a short while a hungry husband and her son suddenly saw her returning without anything but a Tadjik's young woman hand in hand. Nina Slobodinskaya was so excited and did not stop exclaiming: "Don't you see? She has got Madonna's face"³⁷⁶! The family neither got lunch nor a proper supper that day, but the sculptor passionately started working on the new project with all her enthusiasm and determination.

As to the sculptor's work's manner, there were strict rules: while sculpting the sculptor did not tolerate any interference. Any meddling in her work process was not only undesirable but even unacceptable. The author's studio was a sacred territory for her family and friends. Her beloved preserved this respect towards the sculptor's work till the last days of her life.

Being a complex personality herself, Nina Slobodinskaya was able to discover rich individualities around her and tended to portray them revealing and exposing their true deep essential psychological and spiritual characters. Gradually carving, she achieves to uncover and expose a complexity of a portrayed personality. As an artist and good psychologist she used first to explore and get to know a person she

³⁷⁶ Verbal recollections of Andrey Gnezdilov, interviewed on 07.08.14.

willed to sculpt, so the majority of her best works are shaped in direct work and contact with a model.

As a result of the hard work - we see the sculptural portrait of a young Asian woman. Its prolonged beautiful form of head reminds a famous *Nefertiti's* image. The model's hair, gathered by a kerchief is a reminiscent of Renaissance's type of hair gear *sell*. Her head is a beat inclined, a thin prolonged cranium and the oval of her face accentuates finesse and a refined feminine image of the model: the underlined cheek-bones, a prolonged nose, a pronounced mouth, slightly swivel-eyed, her thin neck delicately holds a perfect form's head. The young woman seems to be full of thoughtfulness, hidden tenderness and simultaneously of the fatigue. The portrayed lady is not dialoguing with a viewer, instead she's fully concentrated on her inner world, and a hard work seems to take place in this complex and contradictory mind. The sculptor seems to uncover young woman's profound psychological character, brings out her complex inner world, denuding her spiritual essence. Viewer may also guess in a young lady's portrait – sadness, obedience, a quiet tenderness, a deep thoughtfulness. Her thoughts seem to be far from *life's vanity*. By state of philosophical contemplation, calmness, tenderness and a light trait of sadness the *Asian Madonna* recalls the *Medici Madonna* of Michelangelo. The inclined head, the glance directed inside – all hints at inner self-concentration, an inner silence of both female sculptural images.

Another aspect which the artist successfully achieves to *catch* and display would be the essence of a female Asian national character: restraint, obedience, resignation, tenderness but simultaneously an inner will and strength, appearing in the necessary life moments.

Furthermore, in addition to inner strength which the female image transmits, it also leaves some enigmatic feeling of *vagueness*, kind of *innuendo* and mystery. That's probably why viewer's gaze repeatedly returns to this female Asian's sculpture, as if trying to find an answer to a *riddle*, and yet *The Eastern Madonna* remains a thing-*in-itself*.

Human images and atmosphere of Kuznetsov's Asian painting is incredibly close by its spirit and emotional appeal to the sculptural depiction of N. Slobodinskaya.

Calmness, sadness, obedience to the same life's rhythm and time's current, kind of personages' interior self-concentration and insularity characterize both – personages of *the Step* and the Asian sculptural image.

As to creative approach, sculptor Slobodinskaya used classical technique, applying realistic style of sculpting based on Vera's Mukhina method. Finally the sculptural portrait of the *Oriental Madonna* was purchased by the State Museum in Komsomolsk-na Amure and actually belongs to its permanent collection.

Man's *inner dialogue with himself*, dialogue of soul with heart, a tensed *inner psychological work and life*, a search for spirituality in person - define the field of highest artistic purposes and creative interests of Nina Slobodinskaya. These creative searches directly correspond to spiritual beliefs, philosophical interests, and life searches of Nina's Slobodinskaya and her close environment.

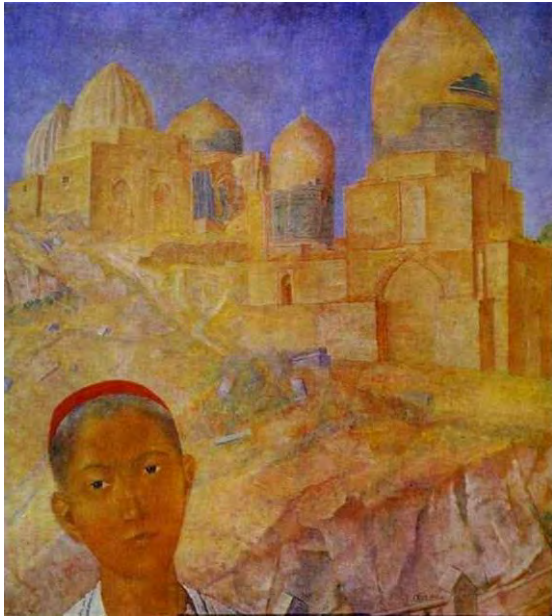


K. Petrov-Vodkin, *Portrait of an Uzbek boy*, 1921, oil on canvas. I. Getmanskaya, *Uzbek's boy*, 1961, oil on canvas.

6.13 Uzbek's portrayal - a tendency in Russian artists' works

A number of 1/2 of XX century Russian artists were amazed by Samarkand bright colours and light's atmosphere and effects. Petrov-Vodkin visited the Middle Asia in 1920s with a scientific expedition and describes his impressions in his *Samarkandia Diaries*: "Here is Shahi-Zinda, - as soon as I saw its domes – I loved them". The artist observed colourful richness of Uzbekistan: "I could see the sky at any hour. This intersection of ultramarine, sapphire, cobalt put on fire the soil, rocks, turning the green plants into nothing, creating an effect of silver; accordingly such seems a geographical colour of the country – in these two antipodes of sky and soil. It provides in Samarkandia a feeling of swelter, heat and fire under the cup of sky. A man feels uncomfortable under these colourful poles, and the eastern creativity

allowed an accord, having created a colour of turquoise. It is additional towards to the fire of soil; it outlines the basic blue, giving it an exit by the mixture of green nuances. The Aralskoye Sea hinted artists at this turquoise. My first exclamation to my friends was: "But it is water! It is a turquoise incantation of desert's fieriness! In guessing of this colour in mosaics and majolica consists a coloristic genius of the East"³⁷⁷.



K. Petrov-Vodkin, *Shahi-Zinda*, 1920s, oil on canvas. I. Mashkov, *Still-life*, 1940s, oil on canvas.



N. Karahan, *Road to Kishlak*, 1930-1940s, oil on canvas. R. Falk, *Samarkand*, 1943, watercolour.

³⁷⁷ Петров-Водкин, К. Хлыновск. Пространство Эвклида. Самаркандия. М.: Искусство, 1970, С.52-79.

Speaking in general terms, an interest of Russian artists of XX century towards the East was probably even higher than to the West. D. Sarabianov suggested that Russian artists were able to perceive the essence of Eastern beauty, but a viewer can admire this Asian life from outside as distant viewers – they are not able to *enter inside* – this life's side is not available for him. The East remains as a dream, kind of a utopic image, which may be admired at a distance being to the romantic dream. Russian avant-garde artists were interested in East by its image's system and artistic language. Velimor Hlebnikov also developed interest towards East. In the early 1910s N. Goncharova officially neglected the West and turned to the East, identifying Russia with East³⁷⁸. One of the theoreticians of Larionov's group A. Chevchenko developed this idea in one of his books³⁷⁹. In his manifests Larionov also indicated at the sameness of Russia and East. Iakulov being close to Larionov in 1914 published a manifest *We and the West* where together with L. Lurie and B. Livshits where was defined the *Eastern* essence of Russian art as a trait of Russian mentality was observed tendency to subconscious and irrational. Therefore theoretically the interest towards East existed among Russian avant-garde artists especially in the early period of their development. N. Goncharova in her figurative compositions often was oriented at Skiff women (postures, schematic movements). Skiff culture she relates to the Eastern culture and suggests it as an alternative to the European³⁸⁰. Decorativism of her Peacock of 1912 in antique Egyptian style, Persian elements, eastern ornaments of wall paper decoration which Goncharova painted together with Larionov as a background of her still-lives. All indicates at her interest towards East. Larionov often uses Turk motives in lithographic books as Gypsy woman (1908), Eastern personages in and objects in mythic cycle *Travel to Turkey* etc. Perfect image of East as a fairy-tale land or dream-land of harmony and beauty unites avant-garde artists with other Russian artists, where a man, nature and culture create a harmonic wholeness and union. In general terms: "Eastern world embodies an image of the Earth's paradise. It is a blessed ground, oasis of joy and happiness. Almost all art works fit into a notion of East's image and preserves traits of utopianism"³⁸¹. An interest to a deep psychological analysis in Uzbek's portrayal

³⁷⁸ Гончарова, Наталия. *Предисловие к каталогу выставки. Мастера искусства об искусстве*. М.: Том седьмой, 1970, С.487.

³⁷⁹ Шевченко, А. *Неопримитивизм. Его теория. Его возможности. Его достижения*. М.: Сов. художник, 1913, С.25-47.

³⁸⁰ Сарабянов, Д.В. *Русская живопись. Пробуждение памяти*. М.: Искусствознание, 1998, С.432.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.432.

which showed Russian artists - is not a singular case but rather a tendency which can be followed in other art forms and genres. Regarding painting, the best reflection of the common artistic purpose we can find in K. Petrov-Vodkin's work *Portrait of an Uzbek boy* of 1921: thoughtful and careful artist's gaze reveals a complex and rich inner psychological life of the model. Open and direct gaze of the portrayed boy charms a viewer, disclosing its inner purity, soul's beauty, and fineness. The neutral plane background accentuates brightness and vividness of Uzbek boy's gaze and the wholeness of his image, resembling the tradition of icon painting.

Getmanskaya in her *Uzbek's portrait* work also gives a profound characteristic of the boy's individuality by means of multiples contrasts of light and shadows which emphasize and deepen the controversy and complexity of Uzbek's personality.

As to Nina Slobodinskaya's fellows-sculptors contemporaries - Leningrad artist and her close friend and colleague A. Ignatiev during few years worked on sculptural image of the famous Asian poet – *Djambul*³⁸². Ignatiev in realistic method interpreted the rich complexity of the prominent poet. The bronze material outlines the sharpness of face traits and reveals a deep mental work of the portrayed, convincing a viewer of his deep wisdom and high spirituality (see cap.3).



Petrov Vodkin, *Boys, Samarkandia*, 1926, oil on canvas.

³⁸² It becomes obvious that East motives traditionally inspired the whole Galaxy of artists in the late XIX – first half of XX century. However, there were artists in whose creative work East motives take the central role not just in artistic aspect, but also in its philosophical world view aspects. In order to learn more on this subject one may address to the following materials: Беликов, П.Ф., Князева, В.П. *Свет Шамаблы. Духовная культура Востока в жизни и творчестве Рерихов*. Самара: ГМВ, 1996; Кузнецов П.В. *От Саратова до Бухары*. М.: Горная Бухара, 1923; Якимович, А.К. *Двадцатый век: Искусство; Культура; Картина мира: От импрессионизма до классического авангарда*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 2003; Тасалов, В.И. *Светоэнергетика искусства: Очерки теоретического искусствознания*. СПб.: Искусство, 2004. О Сарьяне. *Страницы художественной критики: Отзывы современников*. Ереван: Лениздат, 1980; Кузнецов, Павел Варфоломеевич. *Альбом*. М.: Искусство, 1968; Сарьян, М.С. *Из моей жизни*. М.: Изобразительное искусство, 1985.

7. ARTISTIC MATURITY. THE POST-WAR PERIOD (1945-1970)

In 1945 after the Second World War is finally over, Nina Slobodinskaya together with her husband and son returns to Leningrad. The horrors of the war were left in the past; the joy of the war's end overpasses a sadness of losses and encouraged the sculptor to look at the future with optimism and aspirations for the *better* life. As to Slobodinskaya's professional level, she undoubtedly achieved a lot during her life and work in Samarkand: having become a mature artist with an elaborated technique, a proper plastic language together with the defined thematic preferences.

Unfortunately, a return home was not completely unclouded as it also signified a loss of creative freedom: a return to the obligatory social artistic structure of the LOSH³⁸³ consequently meant an obligation to expose regularly at its shows and signified a necessity to detach her work in narrow frames of socialist realism, its main subjects and style. Obviously, the official requests and commissions limited the artist thematically. The main subjects in sculpture imposed by the Soviet state continued being the clear propaganda messages but now they also reflected new commemorative forms, glorifying war-heroes and the state-winner. Consequently Russian artists had to follow a new thematic line.

Almost a two years period of a complete artistic liberty left in sculptor a taste for freedom of artistic self-expression. Therefore it's not surprising that Nina Slobodinskaya was not ready to easily let the Communist regime to push her around. However, the sculptor finds a logic development of her creative interest to human being's depiction, working on genre of portrait. The work in portrait genre permitted the artist to remain faithful to her key interest subject and to concurrently correspond to the society's demands. In case of Slobodinskaya it was not a compromise of an artist with life circumstances but rather a *coincidence* of interests which allowed the sculptor to peacefully coexist with the State's requests. Regarding a model's choice, the artist usually found prominent, complex and bright personalities who by

³⁸³ The LOSH - Union of Artists of Saint Petersburg was founded on August 2, 1932 as an artistic union of the Leningrad artists and arts critics. Prior to 1959, it was defined as the *Leningrad Union of Soviet Artists*. From 1959 (when it joined the Union of Artists of the RSFSR), it was determined as Leningrad branch of Union of Artists of Russian Federation. In 1991, it became known as the Saint Petersburg Union of Artists. See: *Связь времён. 1932—1997. Художники — члены Санкт-Петербургского Союза художников России*. Каталог выставки, СПб.: Наука, 1997, С.4-17.

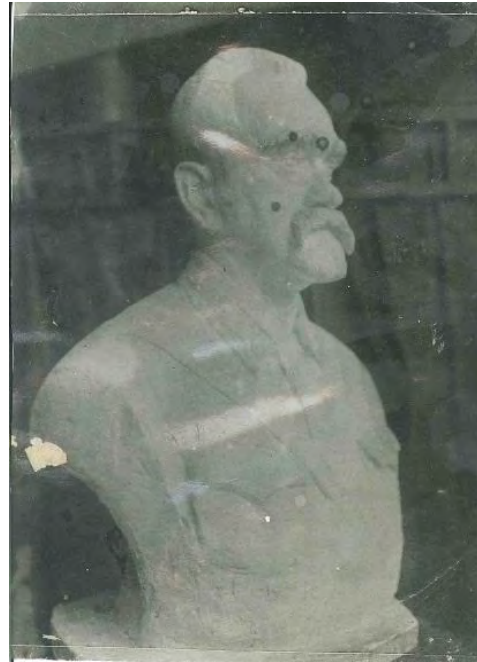
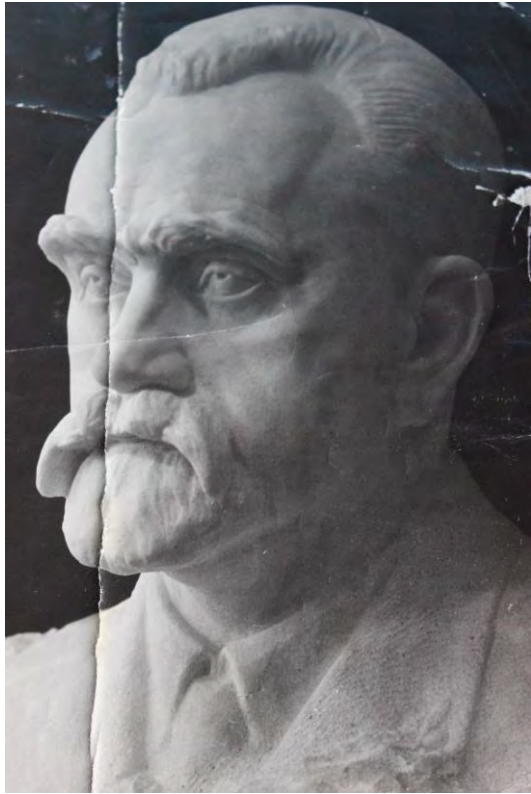
their social achievements were highly recognized by the State – the first fact satisfied the sculptor creatively and professionally and the second responded to the established LOSH's demands (social significance of the portrayed almost guaranteed sculpture's acceptance to official shows and could lead to its purchase).



N. Slobodinskaya, *Academician E.N. Pavlovsky*, 1947, bronze, 1 ½ life size.



Photos of Academician E.N. Pavlovsky, 1943-45, unknown authors.



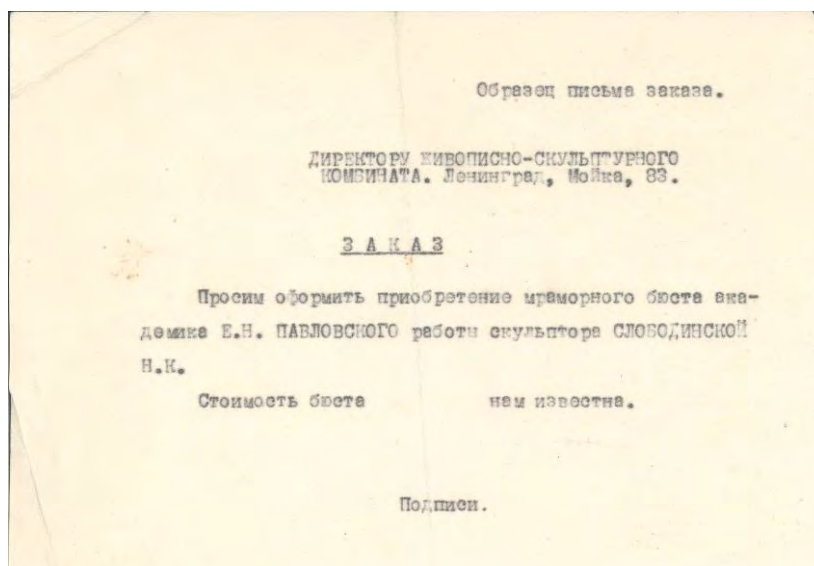
N. Slobodinskaya, Academician E.N. Pavlovsky, 1947, marble bust, 1 ½ life size, installed in school named after Pavlovsky in Duchambe (Tadjhiikistan).

N. Slobodinskaya, Academician E.N. Pavlovsky, 1947, marble bust, 1 ½ life size, plaster-clay.

Борисоглебск Коромысской
Народная 37 Музей директору
Макрохиному
Отсутствие точного адреса задерживает
отправку бюста Павловского Телеграфом
адрес отправки бюста Ленинград
Комбинат ДПИ Мойка 83
директор Смирнов

Ленинград Мойка 83 Комбинат ДПИ
директор Смирнов

Documental evidence of Pavlovsky's bust readiness, which had to be sent to the Pavlovsky's museum in Borisoglebsk, signed by the Combine DPI director Smirnov, 1940s.



Certificate which proves the official order of E. Pavlovsky's sculptural portrait's commission in marble to be elaborated in the Leningrad Sculptural Combine, 1940s.

7.1 Academician Pavlovsky – Scientist and altruist

Nina Slobodinskaya starts working on the portrait's series. In 1947 on proper initiative she decided to sculpt *Academician Pavlovsky* – a famous scientist and her husband's colleague in The Academy. Evgeny Nikanorovich Pavlovsky(1884, Voronezh Oblast – 1965, Leningrad) became a Soviet zoologist, entomologist, academician of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, honorary member of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, and a lieutenant-general of the Red Army Medical Service in World War II. In 1908, Yevgeny Pavlovsky graduated from the Military Medical Academy in Petersburg (he became a professor at his alma mater). In 1933-1944, he worked at the All-union Institute of Experimental Medicine in Leningrad and simultaneously at the Tajik branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences³⁸⁴. Yevgeny Pavlovsky held the post of director of the Zoology Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In 1946, he was appointed as a head of the Department of Parasitology and Medical Zoology at the Institute of Epidemiology/Microbiology of the Soviet Academy of Medical Sciences. Yevgeny Pavlovsky was declared the president of the Soviet Geographical Society in 1952-

³⁸⁴ Иванов, П. Павловский, Евгений Никанорович. (АН СССР. Материалы к биобиблиографии трудов ученых СССР. Серия биолог. наук. Паразитология, вып. 1), 2 изд., М.: Либроком, 1956, С.54-69.

1964. Under Pavlovsky's direction, they committed various expeditions to the Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Crimea, Russian Far East and other regions of the Soviet Union to analyse endemic parasitic and transmissible diseases (tick-borne relapsing fever, tick-borne encephalitis, Pappataci fever, leishmaniasis etc.). Yevgeny Pavlovsky introduced and developed the concept of natural nidity of human diseases, defined by the idea that micro scale disease foci are determined by the entire ecosystem. This concept laid the foundation for the elaboration of a number of preventive measures and caused the development of the environmental trend in parasitology (together with the works of parasitology's specialist Valentin Dogel). Yevgeny Pavlovsky researched host organism as a habitat for parasites (parasitocenosis), numerous matters of regional and landscape parasitology, life cycles of a number of parasites, pathogenesis of helminthic infection. Pavlovsky and his fellow scientists analysed the fauna of flying blood-sucking insects (gnat) and methods of controlling them and venomous animals and characteristics of their venom³⁸⁵.

Evgeny Pavlovsky's principal works are dedicated to the matters of parasitology. He authored several textbooks and manuals on parasitology. Pavlovsky was a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th convocations. He was a recipient of the Stalin State Prize, the Lenin Prize, the Mechnikov Gold Medal of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1949), and of the gold medal of the Soviet Geographical Society (1954). Evgeny Pavlovsky was awarded five Orders of Lenin, four other orders, and numerous medals³⁸⁶.

Regarding the sculptor's work manner - N. Slobodinskaya shaped portrait directly from a model in front. She continued using a realistic and naturalistic style in the portraying. A viewer sees a face shaped in detail with pronounced cheek-bones, a firm chin which permit us suggest that this man possessed a strong will and character. In a direct gaze of the portrayed a spectator can guess honesty, seriousness and strength. The wavy and curvy surface of the base, which seems by its texture a natural unworked granite stone, contrasts with carefully and pedantically elaborated realistic model's portrait, repeating lines of the man's hair. The chest of the portrayed is shaped schematically and a curvy rough surface of the

³⁸⁵ "К 70-летию со дня рождения Е.Н. Павловского". Медицинская паразитология и паразитарные болезни, 1954, № 2, С.7-10.

³⁸⁶ Иванов, П. Павловский, Евгений Никанорович. (АН СССР. Материалы к биобиблиографии трудов ученых СССР. Серия биолог. наук. Паразитология, вып. 1, 2 изд., М.: Либроком, 1956, С.40-70.

bust increases an impression of monolith and solemnity. It also strengthens a feeling of additional inner tension of granite and adds a shred of romanticism to the general image of the portrayed. The sculptural portrait of the academician was exhibited in 1947 at the LOSH regular show and was purchased by The Military-Medical Museum of Leningrad³⁸⁷. The sculptural portrait in marble (1 ½ life size) of Pavlovsky was also purchased by Pavlovsky's Museum in town Borisoglebsk and by Pavlovsky's school in Stalinabad (now Duchambe, Tadjikistan). The artist achieved to give a deep psychological interpretation to the sculpted image of the academician, what probably may be explained by their close friendly relations: Pavlovsky was also a colleague and friend of Nina Slobodinskaya's husband Vladimir. Model's individuality's knowledge permitted the master to depict not just a famous scientist who worked hard and responsibly for his country, but also to transmit his personal qualities, such as kindness, directness, honesty and a strong will.

7.2 Alexandre Osip Shabalin – a fearless admiral

The next significant work of Nina Slobodinskaya is the monument of an outstanding contra-admiral, twice a hero of the Soviet Union - *Alexandre Osip Shabalin* (1914-1982). It's a granite bust (2 natures); a pedestal elaborated in collaboration with architect I.I. Fomin in 1951. The new Soviet hero was a commander of torpedo boat. The future admiral was born in the village Yudmozero Onega, Arkhangelsk Oblast region in peasant's family. Russian by nationality, he was a member of the CPSU since 1943. In 1936, Alexander Osipovich Shabalin was directed to the Soviet Army. During the Second World War, he commanded a torpedo boat, and then a detachment of torpedo boats in the Northern and Baltic fleets. He worshiped and transported the enemy with military supplies and troops. He was awarded with many orders and medals. The reward of the Hero of the Soviet Union with the award of the Order of Lenin and medal *Gold Star* captain-Osipovich Shabalinu awarded on Feb. 22, 1944 for the exemplary performance of command assignments, for courage and bravery. He was awarded with such a high privilege medals grace to his high level of military achievements³⁸⁸.

³⁸⁷ Выставка произведений ленинградских художников. 1947 год. Живопись. Скульптура. Графика. Театрально-декорационная живопись. Каталог, Л.: ЛССХ, 1948, С.39-46.

³⁸⁸ Khametov, M.I. *Light gold stars*. Arkhangelsk: North-Zap.kn.izd, 1989, pp.31-53.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Alexandre Osip Shabalin (fragment)*, 1951, granite.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Alexandre Osip Shabalin*, 1951, plaster cast, monument's project.



Photos of Alexandre Osip Shabalin, 1940s, unknown author.



Article on Slobodinskaya's monument Alexandre Osip Shabalin, the Vechernii Leningrad, 1949, N77.

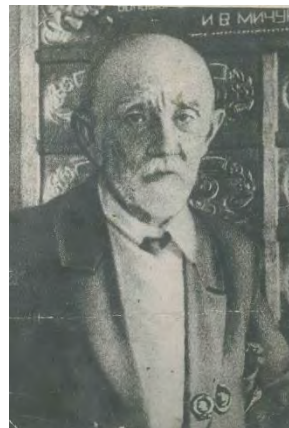
The larger-than-life monument commemorating the Hero of Soviet Union Shabalin - the Captain of *torperonosets* was installed in the central park of town Onega where remains till the actual moment. The curious thing about the captain is that when he saw his own bust elaborated, he was so impressed by its significance and solemnity that he told the sculptor that now he felt obligated to become better. Therefore, he promised to stop drinking alcohol³⁸⁹.

³⁸⁹ The recollections of Andrey Gnezdilov, interviewed on 09.08.14.

The sculptural image has all attributes of the official representative realistic portrait: majestically and widely-shaped breast is fully decorated by medals and signs of honour. The head's position is straight and highly cocked with dignity. A head-gear is wavy and gives some vividness and fervour to the general image together with a shade of romanticism. Admiral's face is exposed realistically but it's unexpectedly for the representative portrait full of *humanity*. Shabalin gazes directly at viewer but simultaneously he seems to stay deep in his thoughts.

Once elaborated this monument was successfully approved by the LOSH. No doubt - it corresponded to its basic requests: a new outstanding Soviet war hero of a peasant background (*iz naroda*) represented in socialist realism style³⁹⁰.

As to the sculptor's general artistic line of the post war period - Nina Slobodinskaya developed a personal style, impervious to fashions and fads, which she maintained throughout her career. She created portraits meticulously, often at sittings that lasted for hours. A particular attention artist paid to her model's eyes and line of gaze which gave rise to sensitive finely composed character's studies.



Photos of I. Michurin, cut by Slobodinskaya from newspapers, 1920s, unknown authors. Sculptor's achieve

³⁹⁰ It would be important to mention that the general socio-cultural climate in the post-war period facilitated sculptural portrait development, supporting a creation of monuments-busts of twice a hero of the USSR and twice heroes of Socialistic Labor, which once being completed had to be installed at these personages' native place. Thus, the Soviet Government decree on heroes' busts' elaboration promoted the increase of monumental tendencies. Hence, sculptural monument together with sculptural portrait-bust as genre became highly-sought. In sculptural monuments Soviet sculptors tend to combine appearance's similarity with a generalized image's shaping, also by an attempt to obtain harmony between sculpture and architectural pedestal, finally, attempting to create an image in all its clarity and expressivity. As to labor heroes, the main characteristic traits appear: representativeness and an effective composition, which had to embody a spirit of victim and a never-ending energy. Besides, the subject in sculpture was definitely soldiers' heroism and the war victims. In this context a huge importance was given to memorial, monument-complex; as sculptural-architectural type of monument better than others expressed a theme of victory above death.

To see more on the subject: Сарабьянова, Д.В. Ред. *История русского и советского искусства*. М.: Высшая школа, 1979; Ильина, Т.В. *ИСТОРИЯ ИСКУССТВ: Отечественное искусство*. Учебник. 3-е изд., М.: Искусство, 2000.



N. Slobodinskaya, *I. Michurin*, 1951, plaster-cast, 2 life size, bust, Sosnovo's Park.



N. Slobodinskaya *I. Michurin*, 1951, bronze, statuette.



N. Slobodinskaya, *I. Michurin*, 1951, plaster-cast, 21 x 14 x 33, figurine.



N. Slobodinskaya, *I. Michurin*, 1951, plaster-cast, 21 x 14 x 33, figurine.



N. Slobodinskaya, *I. Michurin*, 1951, plaster-cast, figurine.



M. Obolensky, *I. Michurin*, 1949, oil on canvas.



A. Gerasimov *I. Michurin*, 1949, oil on canvas, 620 x 344.

7.3 Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin – a genial agronomist

Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin (1855 –1935) was considered as a Russian practitioner of selection, was both an academician of the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agriculture and an honourable member of the Soviet Academy of Science. In 1875, Michurin purchases a strip of land of about 500 square metres not far from Tambov, began collecting plants, and started his research in pomology and selection. In 1899, he acquired a much bigger part of land of about 130,000 square meters and replanted all of his plants there.

In 1920, right after the end of the Russian Civil War, Vladimir Lenin asked People's Commissar of Agriculture Semion Sereda to organize an analytic research on Michurin's works and practical achievements. On September 11, 1922, Mikhail Kalinin visited Michurin at Lenin's personal request. On November 20, 1923, the Council of People's Commissars recognized Michurin's *fruit garden* as an institution of state importance. In 1928, the Soviets established a selectionist genetic station on the basis of Michurin's garden, which would be re-organized into the Michurin Central Genetic Laboratory in 1934.

Michurin's contribution into development of genetics, especially in the field of pomology is highly significant. In his cytogenetic laboratory, he analysed cell structure and experimented with artificial polyploidy. Michurin studied the aspects of heredity in connection with the natural course of ontogenesis and external influence, elaborating a whole new concept of predominance. He proved that predominance depends on heredity, ontogenesis, and phylogenesis of the initial cell structure and also on individual features of hybrids and conditions of cultivation. In his works, Michurin considered a possibility of changing genotype under external influence³⁹¹. Michurin was one of the founding fathers of scientific agricultural selection. He worked on hybridization of plants of similar and different origins, cultivating methods in connection with the natural course of ontogenesis, directing the process of predominance, evaluation and selection of seedlings, acceleration of process of selection with the help of physical and chemical factors. Michurin's method of crossing of geographically distant plants would be widely used by other

³⁹¹ "100th Anniversary of birth of Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin". *Mikrobiologija*, num.24, M.:(5)521, 1955, p.3.

selectionists. He worked out theoretical basis and some practical means for hybridization of geographically distant plants. Michurin also proposed means for overcoming the genetic barrier of incompatibility during the process of hybridization, such as pollination of the young hybrids during their first floescence, preliminary vegetative crossing, use of a *mediator*, pollination with the mix of different kinds of pollen etc. The Soviets began to cultivate Michurin's hybrids of apple, pear, cherry, rowan and others. Michurin was the one to start cultivation of his hybrids of grape, apricot, sweet cherry and other southern plants in the northern climates. Throughout all his life Michurin worked to create new sorts of fruit plants. He introduced over 300 new varieties. He was awarded the Order of Lenin and Order of the Red Banner of Labour for his achievements. The town of Michurinsk is named in his honour. During the Lysenkoism campaign, Michurin (after his death) was promoted as a Soviet leader in the theory of evolution, Soviet propaganda contrasting the productive *Soviet Michurinist Biology* with the *fruitless capitalist* Weismanist-Morganist-Mendelist genetics. In fact, Michurin's theory of influence of the environment on the heredity was a variant of Lamarckism. He maintained the position that the task of a selectioner is to assist and enhance the natural selection. The following phrase of Michurin's was widely popularized in the Soviet Union: "We cannot wait for favours from Nature. To take them from it – that is our task"³⁹². For this reason, in the Soviet Union he was portrayed as the only true follower of Darwinism³⁹³.

Nina Slobodinskaya carefully studied the personality of Michurin, reading about him, collecting the information on him in order to have his detailed physic and psychological characteristic. In the sculptor's family archive we find about 30 depictions, cuts, sketches, photographs of Michurin which proves how responsibly the master regarded a task of portraying a Russian prominent scientist.

As a result, Slobodinskaya creates a sculptural portrait in realistic style, aiming to reveal Michurin's deep psychological and personal characteristic. The artist seems to *catch* and to show us the essential in his psychological and personal portrait – a deep thought's movement, a profound mental work, (as we see - his gaze is full of meaning) what defines him as one of the outstanding scientists of the epoch. His portrait permits to guess such qualities as intelligence, concentration, seriousness, deep thought and spirituality – his human essence. As usual the sculptor searches

³⁹² "Teaching of I.V. Michurin in Soviet morphology". M.: Arkhiv anatomii, gistologii i émbriologii, 32, 1955, pp.1-18.

³⁹³ Malek, I. "Michurinism and microbiology". Cas. Lek. Cesk. M.: 89 (41): 1131–9, 1950, pp.14-28.

and depicts an inner intimate world of the model by means of realistic style and naturalism, achieved by a detailed and careful shaping.

The sculptor treated Michurin's image in various sculptural forms: bust, figurine and statuette.

7.4 Kalinin – human face of famous Bolshevik

The range of famous Soviet personalities includes a statuette – a seated figure of *Kalinin*. As to his origins and social significance in the Soviet state, Mikhail Kalinin was the real and nominal head of the State from 1919 till 1946 in the USSR. Not possessing any political power, he was the symbol of the people's strength, coming from a peasant background, and was called *the All-Union Headman* by the press. Mikhail Kalinin was born in a peasant's family in Tver region near Moscow in 1875. After getting an elementary education, Kalinin was sent to work as a page boy for the owner of the neighbouring estate. The mistress of the estate moved to Saint Petersburg in 1889, and brought young Kalinin with her to work as her servant. As the boy was literate, he used to the abundant library of his mistress, which deepened his education during this period. Afterwards however, he left the estate and went to work at a factory, where he got involved in various workers' protest groups and underground circles. These relations with workers' vocation and illegal protest circles were essential elements of any future Bolshevik's biography. Kalinin was no exception – for the next 20 years this became the basic formula of his life³⁹⁴.

Due to his active role in organizing protests and strikes, he was frequently arrested and exiled, - only to gain more and more respect in eyes of his peers upon his return. Thus, in 1898 he joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, and became a candidate for governing the Central Committee shortly after the Bourgeois Revolution of 1905. A year later he was sent as a representative to the 4th Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in Sweden. Perhaps, Kalinin would have remained merely an active Bolshevik all his life, had it not been for a key acquaintance he made while being in one of his many exiles in the Tsarist Russia. Kalinin was exiled to the Caucasus' town of Tiflis (actually Georgia, Tbilisi), where he met Stalin's future father-in-law, and, eventually, became involved in the same

³⁹⁴ Torchinov, V.A., Leontiuk, A.M. *Vokrug Stalina: Istoriko-biograficheskii spravochnik*, St. Petersburg: Philology Department of St. Petersburg State University, 2000, pp.240-241.

opposition circle as Stalin. This factor changed the course of Kalinin's future both politically and personally. After the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Kalinin was briefly the head of the city of Saint Petersburg, which by then had been renamed Petrograd. Two years later, he was elected as President of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The election was preceded by an elaborated recommendation from Vladimir Lenin: "This comrade, who has twenty years of party's work behind him is a peasant from Tver, and has close links with peasant farming; however, even the Petrograd workers have been convinced that he has the ability to approach wide layers of labouring masses"³⁹⁵ Peasant by birth and a factory worker by trade Kalinin was the living symbol of the union between peasants and workers³⁹⁶.

Unfortunately it's unknown why the sculptor decided to sculpt Kalinin. Perhaps his sculpture was commissioned. It was an eminent person and was widely exposed throughout all Soviet epoch. Barely in the same epoch Kalinin's monuments were shaped by such prominent figures in sculpture as S. Merkurov and A. Matveev. The Soviet artists most frequently depicted significant State and party leaders, such as Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Lenin, Mikhail Kalinin, Dzerzhinskiy. Communist symbol was of a great importance. Often monuments and figures of leaders were depicted in motion, figuratively *striding forward into the new Soviet age*, promising a future happiness and prosperity. The depiction of Soviet leaders was obligatory in portfolio of any artist, otherwise the membership in artist's unions throughout The Soviet State was declined and an artist risked becoming an *outsider*, doomed to the poverty and falling into the social oblivion.

It would be important to remind that the attitude of Nina Slobodinskaya towards the revolution and Soviet leadership was clear – a total disapproval and neglect. All her family suffered, and as it was already mentioned - her proper father was tortured and murdered by Bolsheviks. Accepting new life circumstances in order to survive, she had her proper strong beliefs and principles, which she was not afraid to reveal in close circle of family and friends, transmitting her values to her only son. Nevertheless, Slobodinskaya always remained objective and impartial and was able to appreciate and respect concrete personalities (which strongly believed and

³⁹⁵ Torchinov, V.A., Leontiuk, A.M. *Vokrug Stalina: Istoriko-biograficheskii spravochnik*, St. Petersburg: Philology Department of St. Petersburg State University, 2000, pp.200 -234.

³⁹⁶ Khrushchev, S. *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Statesman: 1953-1964*. Pennsylvania: State University Press, 2007, pp.430-460.

followed their proper ideas), even having opposite views. Supposedly it was a case of M. Kalinin.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Seated figure of M. Kalinin*, 1950s, plasticine, 35 x 20 x 55.



N. Slobodinskaya, *M. Kalinin's head (fragment)*, 1950s, plasticine, 35 x 20 x 55.

Photo of M. Kalinin, 1940s, unknown author.

Preparing to sculpt M. Kalinin Slobodinskaya studied dozens of his photos. In the sculptor's family archive were preserved about twenty different photos of the communist leader. The artist attentively studied her future model and depicting him, carefully followed all physical characteristics of the portrayed. Unfortunately there is no scientific evidence yet found, but A. Gnezdilov – sculptor's son affirmed that the artist sculpted as well Kalinin's bust for the Central Park of Leningrad (ЦПКО Ленинград)³⁹⁷. As to *Kalinin's* statuette - it is a small size sculpture – he is portrayed seated at a bank and gazing upwards. A round-shouldered pose together with a fixed gaze, a tensioned front indicate a thoughtful state of mind, kind of philosophical meditation. The peasant's traditional shirt together with typical working class jacket reminds to a viewer his background and belonging to the both most respected Soviet classes: workers and peasants. His face is portrayed realistically and shaped in detail.

The difference in depiction of Nina Slobodinskaya's statuette and other sculptors is in a manner of the leader's portrayal. The majorities of existing Kalinin's monuments are official and representative, aiming to give a direct appealing message of personality's top significance, majesty and strength, while our sculptor shows him as a *simple human being*, exposing him quite naturally, in a relaxed pose and in meditative state of mind. That was possible also thanks to the small format size of the sculpture. In monumental format the author, presumably, would not be permitted to depict a legendary revolutionist as a simple human being, showing his *weakness*; the whole composition is laconic and not overwhelmed with details. Kalinin's statuette was not the unique artist's sculpture of the famous leader. The sculptor finds another manner of treating his figure.

7.5 Sculptural group *Kalinin and Michurin* – a silent dialogue of two personalities

In 1954 the sculptor portrays a *sculptural group of Kalinin and Michurin*, elaborating it also in small format which was highly recognized and purchased by both official institutions: The Kalinin's Museum in Moscow and The Minsky State Museum. Besides

³⁹⁷ The ЦПКО (ЦПКиО) park located at Elagin island in St.Petersburg, It was founded on 5 August of 1932, named behind Kirov, after his murder: http://walkspb.ru/sad/elagin_ostrov.html. Retrieved on 15.07.14.

the sculptural group was so successful that was replicated in porcelain and widely sold, even in 1990s it could be found in the antiques' shops.



N. Slobodinskaya Kalinin and Michurin sculptural group, 1950s, porcelain.

The sculptural group represents an officially celebrated historical meeting of two significant Soviet personages, which took place twice: first in 1922 and then in 1930 in Michurin's *fruit's garden*, therefore it commemorates an important decision that was taken as a result – to name this *experimental territory* an institution of State importance first, and secondly in 1934 to reorganize it into the Michurin Central Genetic Laboratory, creating a selectionist genetic station. The Michurin's museum keeps a metal board commemorating Kalinin's visit³⁹⁸.

The significant meeting was depicted both in painting and in sculpture³⁹⁹. Being an extraordinary personality of his time – an honourable Communist hero and having an expressive appearance – Michurin was without any doubt an attractive character for portraying.

³⁹⁸ Космин, И.В. *Портрет И.В. Мичурина*. Т.2., Липецк: Липец. Энцикл., 2000, С.170.

³⁹⁹ Кострикин, А. *Памятник истории и культуры. Мичур. р-н. М.: Наше слово, 2005, С.9.*

Returning to Slobodinskaya's sculptural group would be important to underscore the seriousness of artist's preparation for sculpting (according to A. Gnezdilov she spent days long attentively studying physic traits and biography of models). Returning to Kalinin and Michurin sculptural group, - both characters were deeply studied. As a proof we find a huge preparative photo and a huge documental material's quantity in the sculptor's personal archive. Regarding the created sculptural image - we may recognize a traditional artistic approach of Slobodinskaya: as usual the author neglects formal naturalistic similarity of the portrayed seeking instead their psychological human essence, showing it in realistic manner.

The sculptural group is depicted seated at the bank; both portrayed seem to be naturally talking. Kalinin's figure is almost repeated from his previous one: the pose, the cloth, the head's position. Presumably the figure is a bit more inclined towards an interlocutor and the face expression changes from abstractedly meditative to an attentively concentrated. Kalinin's front is wrinkled and indicates the active mind's work and vivid participation in the dialogue. It's curious how well the author studied the model and captured the essential character's traits: often in photos Kalinin looks meditative with an outlined front's wrinkles.

Michurin's figure also quite repeats the previously elaborated statuette (depicted on his own). The manner of cloth's portraying, the figure, and the pose is almost completely similar. The model is more inclined towards Kalinin than in previous elaboration, but still holds the same fruit – the attribute which indicates a spectator his professional activity. The bank which is full of fruits emphasizes the effectiveness of the scientist's research and discoveries, hinting that the central theme of their dialogue was the state's approval and a promised support to Michurin's work. The message is clear and easily understandable; so far it corresponded to the actual political requests. The realistic depiction and expressiveness of the idealized scene perfectly reflect the artistic demands of 1960s. As to artistic method – after a vast experience the author already perfectly dominates small format sculpture, carefully and virtuously shaping every detail. The whole composition is laconic and clear. Presumably, the success of the sculptural group was achieved grace to the natural manner of depiction: two prominent Soviet characters are displayed as two simple human beings having a serious talk. The author does not accentuate the official representativeness of the historical scene but rather underlines a human essence of the characters, showing their personal sincere interest in achieving a *better future* for

their compatriots. I would like to repeat that this *natural* way of official characters' depiction was the privilege mainly of small-format sculptural works in the Soviet epoch.

7.6 Nikolai Nekrasov – a poet, sufferer and philosopher

In range of sculptural portraits of the artist in the post-war period we find not only scientists or politicians. Nina Slobodinskaya was highly attached by famous Russian poet, writer, critic and publisher *Nikolai Nekrasov* (1821–1878), who wrote passionate poems about peasant Russia, received Fyodor Dostoyevsky's admiration and used to be the hero of liberal and radical circles of Russian intelligentsia. Being an editor of several literary journals, such as the *Sovremennik*, Nekrasov gained success. He is well known for introducing into Russian poetry ternary meters and the technique of dramatic monologue (*V doroge*, 1845).

N. Nekrasov was born in the town of Nemyriv. His father, Alexei Nekrasov, was a descendant from Russian landed Gentry; his mother belonged to a Polish noble class. Young Nekrasov grew up in Greshnevo, Yaroslavl province, near the Volga River. There, he observed the hard labour of the Volga boatmen, Russian barge haulers. Multiples facts of social injustice together with the immoral behaviour of Nekrasov's father deeply affected a future writer. His father's early retirement from the army, and his public job as a provincial inspector, provoked drunken rages against both his peasants and his wife. These recollections deeply traumatized the young poet and determined the subject matter of Nekrasov's poems—a verse portrayal of the Russian peasants and women's plight⁴⁰⁰.

Nekrasov loved and highly respected his mother and later expressed his empathy to the women in his writings. Nekrasov studied in the classic Gymnasium in Yaroslavl for five years, but showed little interest in the studies. In 1838 his father sent the 16-year-old Nekrasov to the military academy in St. Petersburg. There Nekrasov also studied as a part-time student at St. Petersburg University. Nekrasov lived in extreme conditions after quitting the army, choosing university's courses instead. Briefly thereafter, Nekrasov authored his first collection of poetry *Dreams and Sounds*, published under the name *N. N.* His patron poet Vasily Zhukovsky approved the

⁴⁰⁰ Некрасов, Николай Алексеевич. *Энциклопедический словарь*. Т.2, М.: Большая советская энциклопедия, 1954, С.481.

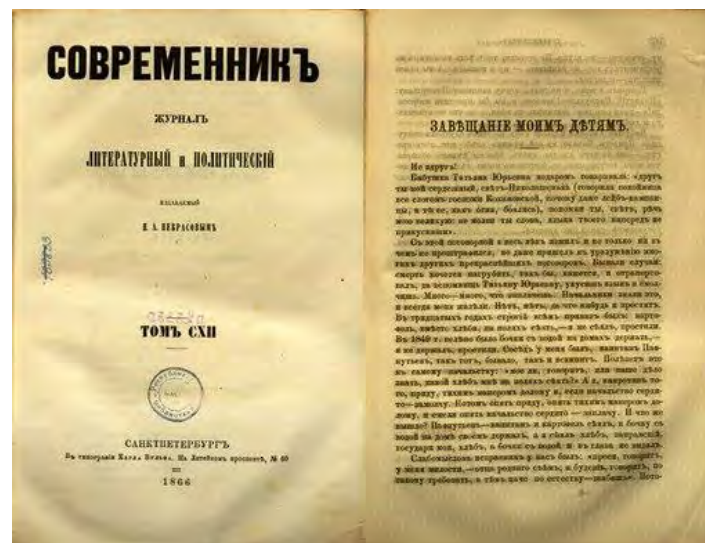
beginner's work; it was promptly dismissed as the romantic doggerel by Vissarion Belinsky, the renowned Russian literary critic of the first half of XIX century. Nekrasov personally removed all the copies of his first collection from the shops. Afterwards Nekrasov started working in team of the *Notes of the Fatherland* under his critic Belinsky, and finally became close friend with the critic. Soon Belinsky recognized Nekrasov's talent, and promoted him to position him-self as a junior editor. Nekrasov elaborated few anthologies for the magazine, one of which, *Petersburg Collection*, introduced Dostoyevsky's first novel *Poor Folk*.

At the end of 1846, Nekrasov purchased a popular magazine *The Contemporary* (also known as *Sovremennik*). The main staff including Belinsky followed the old colleague. Before his death in 1848, Belinsky recognized Nekrasov's rights to publish some material planned for an almanac. Nekrasov edited and published two huge novels: *Three Countries of the World* and the *Dead Lake* in companionship with Avdotya Panaeva, who wrote under the pseudonym of V. Stanitsky. As to Nekrasov's first works - they describe challenges of Russian life: intellectuals and their contradictions with reality (*Poem Sacha*). *Korobeiniki*, *Peasant children*, *Grandfather Frost-the Red Nose* - folk poems and poems for children, are among his best created works. *A Knight for an Hour*, *Vlas*, *When from the darkness of the delusions, I called her soul*- represent Nekrasov's deep, philosophical personality and his manner of writing as if it would be a confession. Some of his deeper and philosophical poems are written in style of self-confession. The *Russian women* (a real life story of two princesses, Ekaterina Trubetskaya and Maria Volkonskaya who took decision to exile to Siberia, following their husbands – revolutionaries in 1825) had a strong emotional appeal⁴⁰¹.

In 1875 doctors discovered that Nekrasov had an intestinal cancer. His friends invited from Vienna Dr Billoth, and covered expenses for the surgery performed by the leading professional of that epoch. Unfortunately, the surgery only prolonged his life for 2 years more, not really saving the patient; so far Nekrasov suffered for another two years. Meanwhile, he created his the *Last Songs* – a work, full of wisdom and sadness of a dying poet. Nekrasov's funeral at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Saint Petersburg was an important event for the whole population. Fyodor Dostoyevsky

⁴⁰¹ Некрасов, Николай Алексеевич. *Энциклопедический словарь*. Т.2, М.: Большая советская энциклопедия, 1954, С.483.

gave the speech, affirming that Nekrasov was the greatest Russian poet since Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov.



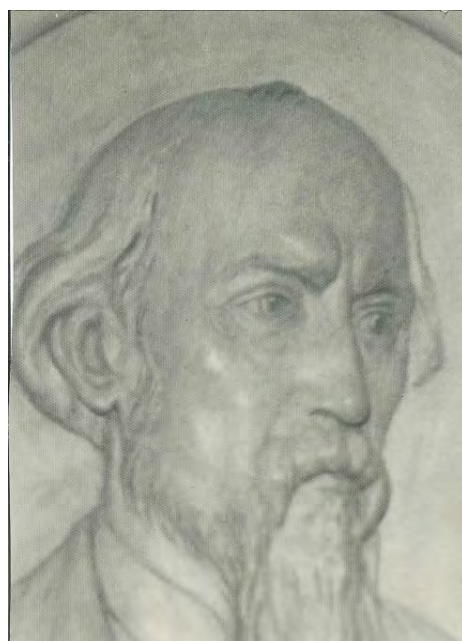
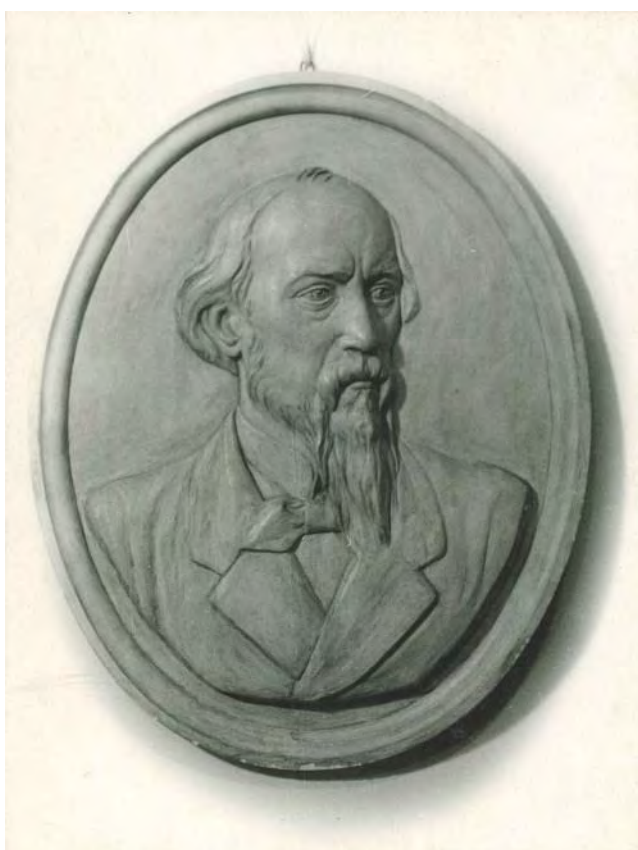
The first page of magazine *Sovremennik*, 1866.

At his epoch Nekrasov was best remembered as Fyodor Dostoyevsky's first editor, in 1845, and the publisher of *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) (from 1846 until July 1866, developing it to the leading Russian literary magazine of his time⁴⁰²). The *Sovremennik* was originally founded by Pushkin, and Nekrasov continued this tradition. This magazine was introduced into a literary salon and became a cultural forum for all Russian writers in its 20 years of active work. The *Sovremennik* offered to public the works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Ivan Turgenev, and Lev Tolstoy, including Nekrasov's own poetry and prose. In the 1850s and 1860s, The *Sovremennik* was the most recognized of all Russian literary magazines, it was also known among Russian expatriate communities in Europe. Grace to Nekrasov's talent as a publisher, the circle of talented writers in Russia and abroad *Sovremennik* achieved success. *Sovremennik* was one of the very few Russian magazines to introduce literary works of the main European writers, such as Flaubert and Balzac, in Russian. Unfortunately, due to the arrest of its radical editor, revolutionary Nikolai Chernyshevsky together with financial difficulties, the magazine was closed by the tsar's government in 1866. Nekrasov's estate in Karabikha, his St. Petersburg home, as well as the office of the

⁴⁰² Некрасова, Зинаида Николаевна. Некрасов. М.: Молодая гвардия, 1994, С.340-370.

Sovremennik magazine on Liteyny Prospect, - are now national cultural landmarks and public museums of Russian literature⁴⁰³.

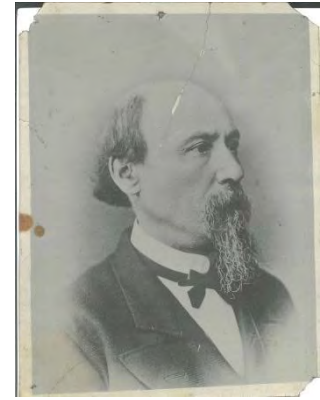
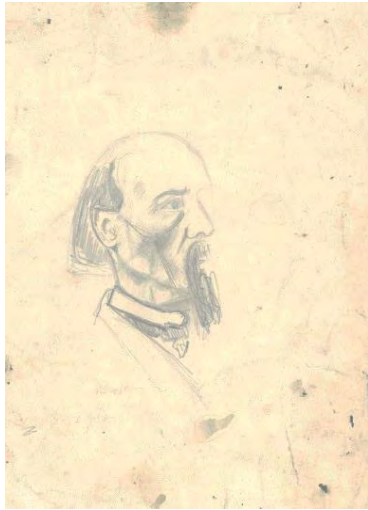
Nina Slobodinskaya decided to sculpt Nekrasov on her proper initiative. In the artist's archive were discovered dozens of photos, drawings and other images of the writer as a testimony of her deep, attentive and careful model study before starting the work. This serious and responsible attitude towards her work Slobodinskaya preserved during all her carrier, and it consequently led as a result to the carefully, well elaborated truthful and realistic models' depictions. That's also the case of Nekrasov's portrayal.



N. Slobodinskaya, *N. Nekrasov*, 1950s, plaster cast, 70 x 55 x112.

N. Slobodinskaya, *N. Nekrasov (fragment)*, 1950s, plaster cast, 70 x 55 x112.

⁴⁰³ Некрасов, Николай Алексеевич. *Энциклопедический словарь*. Т.2, М.: Большая советская энциклопедия, 1954, С.485.



N. Slobodinskaya, N. Nekrasov, 1950s, pencil drawing.

Photos of N. Nekrasov of N. Slobodinskaya's archive, unknown author.

I suppose that the idea and the decision to depict Nekrasov in a round bas-relief sculptural form were taken due to the strong impression left by the writer's photo in a round frame. More than others it shows the writer in a meditative philosophical state of mind - being submerged deeply in his thoughts. The sculptor remaining faithful to her work approach attempts to show an inner psychological and spiritual portrait of the chosen model. In the end the author creates a coloured plaster cast bas-relief 70 x 80 – kind of a bust in bas-relief sculptural form. Nekrasov is depicted in an accurate jacket and shirt, which formally serve only as a frame to his head. The detailed treatment of writer's face gives a realistic trait to the portrayed. The strained model's front hints at the character's intensive mental work. However, the main accent the author makes at Nekrasov's gaze: filled with sadness and consciousness, inner-meditation, seriousness – it seems to be an inner look just into his own soul, - kind of a dialogue which poet leads with his proper conscience, perhaps mirrors a philosophical immersion into his native land's fate.

In realist style the author achieved to show a deep psychological personality's knowledge, to transmit the individuality's richness, significance and the soul's depth of one of the greatest Russian writers, whose heart suffered for his native land's misfortunes. The form of circle does not distract, but rather deepens and concentrates viewer's attention at the central part of the image - the writer's face.

Slobodinskaya's art piece got the official recognition - Nekrasov's sculptural bas-relief was appreciated and purchased by The State Nekrasov Museum in St. Petersburg where remains till our days.

8. SCULPTURAL PORTRAITS (1960-1970ss)

*Portrait is always a double image, - artist's image and model's image.
True portraitist (who deserves this name) puts his whole personality into portrait and
above it, eternity.*

Antoine Bourdelle⁴⁰⁴

In the late 1960 – 1970ss Nina Slobodinskaya continues developing and working on the genre of portrait, remaining loyal to her main subject – a deep study and psychological analysis of man, seeking for his individuality's essence and revealing it in sculpture. The artist's social circle was truly vast and quickly expanded due to the active social life which led her son (creating at their home a place for gathering and creative meetings of artists, singers, dancers, poets, scientists, writers). Thus, it's not surprising that the sculptor had a rich variety of model's choice. Therefore the majority of the portrayed belonged to the social group of so called *cultural intelligentsia* of Leningrad.

8.1. Feodor Lopukhov – a grand choreographer

In range of interesting personalities which were sculpted appears a legendary Feodor Lopukhov. Feodor Vasilievich Lopukhov was a Russian ballet dancer, teacher and choreographer. He was born in 1886, in St. Petersburg and died in 1973 in Leningrad. He was awarded with a title of People's Artist of the RSFSR (1956) in Leningrad. Lopukhov graduated from the St. Petersburg Theatrical Academy and worked at the Mariinsky Theatre from 1905 to 1909 and in 1911; at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre in 1909-10. Feodor Lopukhov directed the ballet company of the Leningrad Theatre of Opera and Ballet from 1922 to 1930. Regarding his approach Lopukhov was never satisfied with existing standard normative of the classic ballet, instead he created a number of experimental dance works, introducing into a dance a symphony *The Majesty of the Universe* to Beethoven's Fourth Symphony (1923); *The Night on the Bald Mountain* to music by Mussorgsky (1924); the ballet *The*

⁴⁰⁴ Kemer, S. *Visage de Bourdelle*. Paris: Chamais, 1931, p.28.

Red Storm by Deshevov (1924) on the revolution; and Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (1926) and *The Fox* (1927), the ballet *Ice Maiden* to Grieg's music (1927)⁴⁰⁵. Revealing new means of expression, Lopukhov further developed the principles of XIX century academic ballet, reorganizing the classical dance and introducing acrobatic elements into it; in addition he made character dances more closely resembling the ethnic dances. Further he staged the ballet *The Bolt* by Shostakovich. He led the ballet troupe of the Leningrad Maliy Theatre of Opera from 1933 to 1936. In 1920's he staged and enlivened in different theatres many ballets of the classical era, thereby helping to preserve and brighten up Russian ballet traditions. The Soviet Union in the 1920s accepted choreographic experiments of Fyodor Lopukhov and others. Despite the official imposition of socialist realism as the criterion of artistic acceptability in 1932, grace to Lopukhov's efforts ballet gained enormous popularity with the Soviet people. Lopukhov directed courses for choreographers at the Leningrad Choreographic School, where he worked from 1937 until 1941. Lately in 1962 he was an artistic director of the choreographic section of the stage being a head of Leningrad Conservatory department⁴⁰⁶.

Among other works was staged *the Velichie mirozdaniia* in Petrograd in 1922.

One of the most impressive Lopukhov 's ballets was the *Limpid Stream* or the *Bright Stream* which represents a ballet score, Op. 39, in 3 acts, 4 scenes, composed by Dmitri Shostakovich on the libretto by Adrian Piotrovsky and Feodor Lopukhov, choreography prepared by Feodor Lopukhov, premiered in Leningrad (The Mikhaylovsky Theatre) in 1935. The central line story of the plot tells about a group of ballet dancers who have been sent to organize a sophisticated entertainment to a new Soviet collective farm. Suddenly it turns out that the honest country-bumpkins, controversially, have more to teach the city-folk. *The Golden Age* in 1930 and *The Bolt* in 1931 - two more ballets which were written by Shostakovich and were banned in a short while after their premieres; this fact heavily damaged Shostakovich's reputation, so much that he was reluctant ever to write for the lyric stage again. Leningrad and Moscow from June 1935 through February 1936 accepted with

⁴⁰⁵ Слонимский, Ю. Пути балетмейстера Лопухова. Шестьдесят лет в балете. М.: Искусство, 1966, С.37-65.

⁴⁰⁶ Lopuchov, *Shest'desiat let v balete: Vospominaniia izapiski baletmeistera in Moscow*, The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, М.: Nauka, 1979, pp.30-40.

success *The Bright Stream*. Nevertheless, an editorial in *Pravda* in early 1936 criticized the ballet and its musical suite; as a result both works were taken out of stage⁴⁰⁷.

As to the sculptor's experience - Nina Slobodinskaya recalled that in 1970 during the obligatory sessions for modelling at her studio, Feodr Lopukhov revealed him-self as a person full of humour and optimism. The choreographer did not stop making the sculptor laughing. One of the Lopuchov's anecdotes she shared with her son Andrey Gnezdilov: at one of his ballets premiere there had to be a real cow at the stage and a farm-woman had to milk a cow; unexpectedly, it was impossible to find a cow and the only option left was to bring a real bull. So the artistic decision was found and the bull was decorated with an artificial udder. But during the spectacle the ballet dancer, so called farm-woman, unexpectedly pulled away the udder and, being terrified cried. Meanwhile the bull became furious and started to attack other ballet dancers from the same troupe. The show had to be stopped. The premier was a real scandal as a result, but their choreographer was ever so much laughing in his life as that day.



N. Slobodinskaya, *F. Lopuchov*, 1970, bronze, 42 x 23 x 46.

⁴⁰⁷ Соколов-Каминский, А. Ф.В. *Лопухов и его Симфония танца*. Сборник Музыка и хореография современного балета, М.: Искусство, 1974, С.174-190.

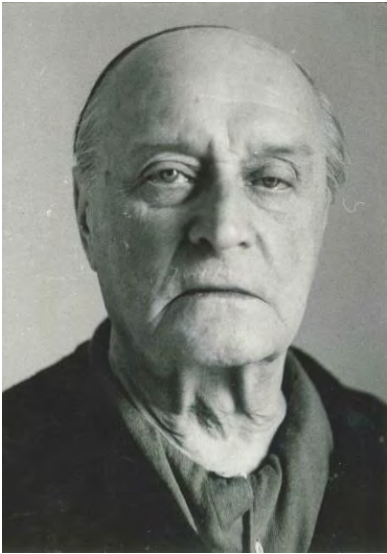


Photo of F. Lopuchov, 1970, unknown author.



Photo of F. Lopuchov, 1950s, unknown author.



Photo of sculptor's family's friend with Lopuchov's sculptural portrait, 1970s, unknown author.

The bronze portrait of the famous choreographer, elaborated 3 years before his death shows a realistically elaborated, detailed work. Face's wrinkles are emphasized and outline the pronounced traits of his face, branching out a straight nose; a character seems to transmit a dignity and inner will. Despite his oldness the portrayed expresses inner *nobleness*; apparently, the whole image is *lightened up* by a strong spirit full of honesty and self-respect. Lopuchov looks straight and his gaze reflects a memory of two last centuries: the Imperial Russian State and the Communist's new *red* era. Sharp, prominent face traits emphasize an impression of

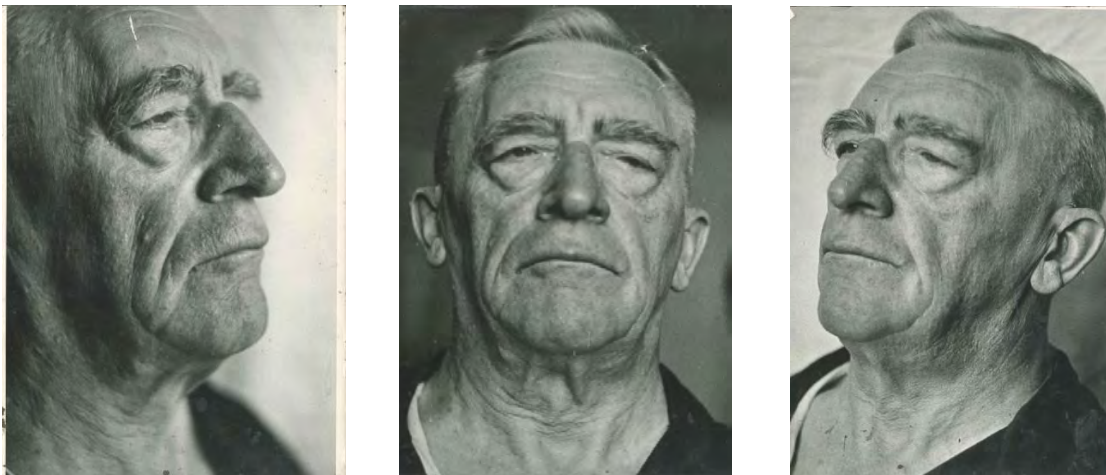
his *inner firmness* and indicate at a strong life's core which an old man still preserves. The sculptor achieves to display a strong complex character and a rich personality of the portrayed. After the sculptural portrait was over - many Lopuhov's apprentices came to visit sculptor's studio in order to see the final result of her work. Finally the Lopuhov's sculptural image was purchased by The State Theatre Museum in Leningrad where actually belongs.

8.2. Doctor Grigoriy Smirnov – a severe scientist

Among other sculptural portraits of this epoch we find an image of *Dr Grigoriy Smirnov* – a professor of the Military-Medical Academy, a colleague of Vladimir Gnezdilov. A sculptural portrait in bronze was elaborated in a direct contact with a model. Grace to the friendship of the sculptor's husband and his colleague N. Slobodinskaya had an interesting and expressive model for shaping. Aside from working directly with the model the author used photos of Dr Smirnov in different focuses in order to achieve a maximum exactitude in its depiction.



N. Slobodinskaya G. *Smirnov*, 1970s, plasticine, 47 x 28 x 70.



Photos of G. Smirnov, 1970s, unknown author.

The sculptural portrait is shaped in detail. Every trait, every wrinkle is pronounced and outlined quite naturalistically. The author uses the realistic method of depiction. In addition to the natural and close similarity of the model's image the master tends to *catch* the character's essence. The sculptor definitely achieves to uncover the personality: we may see a perfectly displayed severe serious gaze emphasized by widely and stubbornly brought together eyebrows, firmly closed mouth. In the apparently *withdrawn* appearance we may guess a strong and complex character. Generally speaking, there was a variety of sculptural portraits elaborated in this epoch, and as common traits could be determined the following: study of model's deep psychological characteristic and its display in realistic style, search of inner human essence of a portrayed and the task to transmit visually a complexity and a richness of model's inner life.

The same approach may be traced in other sculptural portraits of the epoch, such as the *Lenconcert's Artist's image*, or the *mathematician Fadeev's portrait*.

8.3 Mathematician Fadeev's portrait – a goal-seeking genius

Fadeev has been a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences since 1976, and is a member of a number of foreign academies, including the U. S. National Academy of Sciences, the French Academy of Sciences, and the Royal Society. He received numerous awards, including the USSR State Prize (1971), Dannie Heineman Prize (1975), Dirac Prize (1990), Max Planck Medal (1996), Demidov Prize (2002 - for

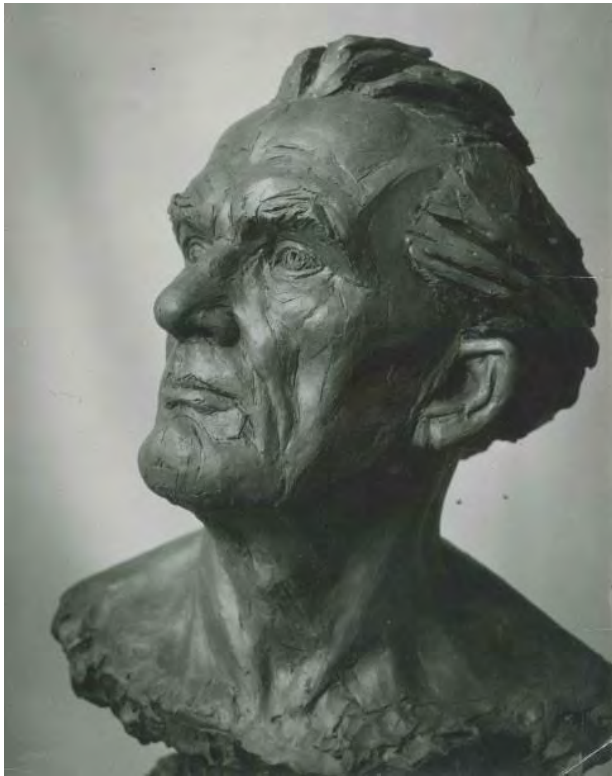
outstanding contribution to the development of mathematics, quantum mechanics, string theory and solutions) and the State Prize of the Russian Federation (1995, 2004). He is a former president of the International Mathematical Union (1986–1990). The Doctor was awarded with the Henri Poincaré Prize in 2006 and the Shaw Prize in mathematical sciences in 2008. Also the Karpinsky International Prize and the Max Planck Medal (German Physical Society). He also received the Lomonosov Gold Medal for 2013⁴⁰⁸. Fadeev has also received state awards: the Order of Merit for the Fatherland; 3rd class (25 October 2004) - for outstanding contribution to the development of fundamental and applied domestic science and many years of fruitful activity; 4th class (4 June 1999) - for outstanding contribution to the development of national science and training of highly qualified personnel in connection with the 275th anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Faddev also got the Order of Friendship of Peoples (6 June 1994) - for his great personal contribution to the development of mathematical physics and training of highly qualified scientific personnel; the Order of the Red Banner of Labour; the Order of Lenin. Honorary citizen of St. Petersburg (2010); Russian Federation State Prizes in Science and Technology 2004 (6 June 2005) - for outstanding achievement in the development of mathematical physics and in 1995 for science and technology (20 June 1995) - for the monograph *Introduction to quantum gauge field theory*; USSR State Prize (1971)⁴⁰⁹. Fadeev's sculptural portrait despite of the realistic depiction is full of expressiveness: a massive chest, wavy hair, a direct gaze – all reveals a romantic Russian legendary hero-scientific. His image is full of dynamism and vividness: physic, mental and personal. If we look at a range of the scientist's photos we may notice an active energy in his gaze: whether explaining a mathematic task to his apprentices, or just looking straight at viewer, you may feel

⁴⁰⁸ In general terms, the sculptural portrait genre in this epoch played an important role. The main artistic task was considered to be freed from standards and a stereotypic pompous representative images which invaded the periodic exhibitions of the post-war period. Life in its dramatic collisions – became one of the principle subjects. Artists tended to search for new expressive language in sculpture and found it through developing of voluminous- spatial sculptural forms. Slobodinskaya as many other sculptors- contemporaries works in a variety of materials. Image's romanization characterizes this period. An admiration of pure severe heroism, intimate interior world's dramatic expressiveness of personage may be marked as a common trait for sculptors. Nina Slobodinskaya together with other artists tends to mirror in sculpture aesthetic and spiritual values, which reflect a richness of interior spiritual life of sculptural models. To see more on the subject: Сарабьянова, Д.В. Ред. *История русского и советского искусства*. М.: Высшая школа, 1979; Ильина, Т.В. *ИСТОРИЯ ИСКУССТВ: Отечественное искусство*. Учебник. 3-е изд., М.: Искусство, 2000.

⁴⁰⁹ Тахтаджян, Л.А., Фаддеев, Л.Д. *Гамильтонов подход в теории солитонов*. М.: Наука, 1986, С.39-45.

his constant mental work's process. In my opinion precisely this deep psychological characteristic of the mathematician the sculptor successfully achieves to transmit.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Mathematician Fadeev*, 1970s, plasticine, 38 x 70 x 84.

N. Slobodinskaya, *Mathematician Fadeev*, 1970s, plaster clay, 38 x 70 x 84.



Photo of Fadeev, 1970s, unknown author.

8.4 Andrey Gnezdilov –unique son's portrait

Among realistic sculptural images of Slobodinskaya stands out a *portrait of her son Andrey Gnezdilov*.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Andrey Gnezdilov*, 1960-1970, granite.



Photo of Andrey Gnezdilov, 1950s, unknown author.



Photo of Andrey Gnezdilov, 1970s, unknown author.



Photo of Andrey Gnezdilov with his family, 1986, unknown artist.

In his case a character's physical characteristics are depicted quite symbolically and schematically. The form of the head and basic facial features are *caught* and had been shaped, but by means of face features' generalization, avoiding the detailing, master seems to accentuate viewer's attention at the psychological characteristic of the personality, revealing an inner life of the model through the full of calmness and an inner quietness boy's gaze. As in previous works the portrayed remains deep in his thoughts, as if the master would try to commit the personality's state of inner meditation and soul's contemplation – soul's dialogue with it-self. It lets the viewer to guess a secret, intimate and a very personal characteristic of the model – his inner life – his individuality's inner essence and the young man's rich spiritual life.

The artist shows himself not only as a mature master in technique – achieving exactitude and similarity in external appearance depiction of the portrayed, but what is even more important, - as deep and rich personality, who seeks to transmit not an exterior expressiveness and similarity but an inner personal life of the model in its whole complexity and richness. This difficult *highest* creative task which the sculptor defines to her-self and, moreover, the capacity which artist shows to achieve this goal, - all proves that Nina Slobodinskaya pertains by right to the *highest*

range of sculptors. It is an artistic category which not many artists are able to achieve. In my regard an artist may be called a real artist, first, if he is a truly independent personality, with a proper manner of artistic vision, secondly, if he is sincere and honest, loyal to him-self in his work, following his own visions and life ideas independently of the social pressure, bravely and fearlessly expressing it in his work.

Returning to Nina Slobodinskaya, I would dare to assert that the sculptor has got her proper artistic vision and achieves to transmit it in her sculptures, remaining faithful to her-self. In addition I would like to mention one moral personality's characteristic which may be traced in Slobodinskaya's sculpture and which unites all her depicted models – person's inner dignity and honesty. Perhaps, the sculptor intuitively guessed this moral trait in people and apart of other qualities, it attracted her. It permits to suppose that morality and ethic were not just her personal beliefs but also were attributes of her creative work.



Andrey Gnezdilov, *N. Slobodinskaya's portrait*, 1984-1985, plasticine.

9. THE GLORY OF COMMUNIST FUTURE IN LENINGRAD'S UNDERGROUND.

THE NARVSKAYA METRO STATION

9.1 The Soviet metro's appearance and a new life quality in the USSR



There's a metro, 1935, propaganda poster.



We construct the best metropolitan in the world, 1930s, poster.



Photo of the Komsomolskaya metro station, 2000s, unknown author, Moscow.

The Metropolitan in Moscow as the first line of the Soviet Union started working in 1935, the Leningrad Metro celebrated the opening of its first underground transport system in November 1955⁴¹⁰. The stylistic similarity of two metropolitans was obvious.

⁴¹⁰ Мотовилов, С. "Ленинградский метрополитэн имени В.И. Ленина вступил в строй". Ленинградская правда, 1, 16 ноября, 1955, С.7.

The Leningrad stations were so elegantly decorated with an elaborated art that often were compared to palaces⁴¹¹.

The first task of artistic decoration was to provide *lessons in socialism* in aesthetically pleasing environments for its passengers, the values and priorities of the Soviet Communism were introduced in the walls of the underground⁴¹². The USSR had changed considerably between the interwar period and the post-war era, and the messages so far differed accordingly. Such themes as military triumphs, domestic progress, and the Russian-Soviet history were highly celebrated by its art. The Leningrad Metro stations displayed especially domestic issues. The *mythologizing* of the USSR's own history was an important purpose for the local artists and the architects. The Moscow Metropolitan system portrayed the interwar message of the Soviet Communism's *bright future*, the first line of the Leningrad Metro focused on the story of the politics' development. It questions the traditional periodization of the Soviet history that tends to see Nikita Khrushchev's *Thaw* as a liberal departure from

⁴¹¹ Кузнецов, К.А. *Метростроевцы идут вперед. Ленинградский Метрополитэн им.Ленина*. Ленинград: Лениздат,1956, С.22.

⁴¹² The history of Russian and especially Moscow' metropolitan construction may be conditionally divided into 4 periods. The first – from 1935 -1938 represents a period of search of image of a new transport type, it is also a period of new style's formation in architecture, which in historical retrospective was called *Stalin's empire*; in the synthesis of arts forms of classical heritage were widely used. The second period from 1943 -1954 – the flourishing of this style, which is visualized in the decorative pomposity of metro stations. The third period 1950 – 1970ss is based on the decree taken by The CK KPSS on the destruction of excesses in the projection and construction. Therefore, decorative art almost disappeared from the traditional decoration of new metro lines. However, sculptural decoration was preserved, even in the minimalized forms. In order to learn more on the subject:

Аникина, Н.И. *Иллюзии и реальность: творчество московских монументалистов 70- 90-х годов глазами заинтересованного наблюдателя*. М. Екатеринбург: Моск. комбинат монумент.-декоратив. Искусства, 2005. Афанасьев, К.Н. "Новые станции Московского метро и их скульптурное убранство". *Искусство*, №5, сентябрь октябрь,1950, М.: Стройиздат,1978. Гинзбург, В.П. *Керамика в архитектуре*. М.: Стройиздат,1983; Баранова, С.И. *Москва изразцовая*. М.: ОАО Московские учебники, 2006; Бассехес, А. *Содружество искусств. Архитектура СССР.*, № 6,1939; Беннет, Д. *Метро. История подземных железных дорог*. Перевод с англ. М.: Магма, 2005; Беркман, А.С. и др. *Декорирование фарфора и фаянса*. М.: Росгизместпром, 1949; Веснин, А. "О социалистическом реализме в архитектуре". *Советская архитектура*, № 8, 1957; Аркин, Д. "О ложной «классике», новаторстве и традиции. *Архитектура СССР*". № 4. 1939; Голубев, Г.Е. "Архитектура метрополитена и задачи художника". *Декоративноеискусство СССР.*, №11, 1974; Голубев Г.Е. *Вестибюли метрополитенов (Основные типы и планировочные решения)*. Дис. канд. арх., М.: МГУ, 1958; Давыдова, Н., Левинсон, А. "Спор о метро: диалог искусствоведа и социолога. *Декоративное искусство СССР*". № 7, 1987; Егорьева, Е. "Синтез искусств в Московском метро". (Конференция Академии художеств СССР). *Декоративное искусство СССР.*, № 11, 1974; Ермакова, Т. "Первая очередь Московского метрополитена. Техническая эстетика". № 11, 1967; Зиновьева, Т.А. "Метро и синтез искусств". *Декоративное искусство СССР.*, № 4 (353), 1987; Катцен, И.Е. *Метро Москвы*. М.: Московский рабочий, 1947; Климов, М.В. *Идейно-художественные проблемы архитектуры Московского метрополитена (3-я и 4-я очереди)*. Дис. канд. арх., М.: Московские учебники, 1952.

the Late Stalinism⁴¹³. The thematic variety of the underground decoration permits to suppose that a liberalization process started already during the Late Stalinism. We may observe a kind of slight political relaxation on workers' treatment which is sculpturally displayed in various metro vestibules. So far some of the characteristics associated with the *Thaw* were awoken in the Late Stalin period⁴¹⁴.



Photo of the Park Kulturi metro station, 2000s, unknown author, Moscow.

Another important factor of the metropolitan's appearance – the improvement of life quality: people increased their mobility throughout Leningrad. From now and on all citizens had direct communication and access to the city centre and an easy and quick transport to get to work. Architects and city-planners encouraged the metro's passengers to consider the stations' historical messages, which contained themes of fixation on the future industrialization, warfare, militarization, reflecting the early Soviet epoch's dramatic events and challenges. The metro construction's development occurred just before Stalin's death, but architects and artists had time to display the post-war demands for a better life. In the end artists filled metro stations with images of Vladimir Lenin and dedications to the October Revolution, sometimes with images of Stalin; finally it turned to be a representation of the post-war Leningrad, and became an important part of public discourse. But there were another ceremonial messages that some of the metro stations brought to the main line: for instance, *The Ploshchad Vosstania* and *The Avtovo* are dedicated to the memory and various cultural victories of the Soviet Communism.

⁴¹³ Nealy, James Allen. *The metro (metroes): shaping soviet post-war subjectivities in the Leningrad underground*. Miami: University p.h.d, 2014, pp.9-17.

⁴¹⁴ Соколов, А.М. *Станции Ленинградского метро*. Л.: Государственное издательство литературы по строительству и архитектуре, 1987, С.16-20.

They become a true homage to the Russian-Soviet cultural heroes and history; its main key subject – a representation of Bolshevik lands, and a monument to the two wars that made possible the Soviet future⁴¹⁵.



Photo of the Soviet Metro station, 2000s, unknown author, Moscow.

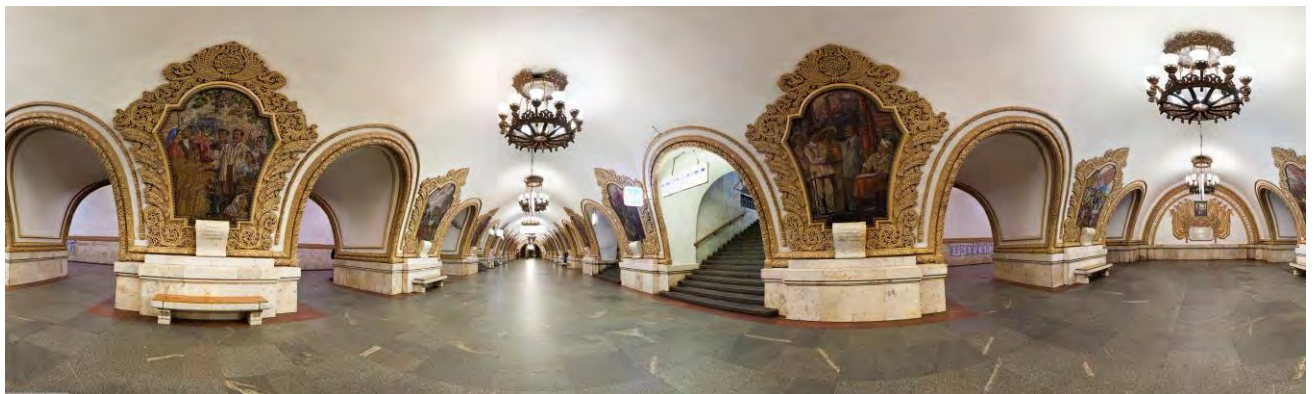


Photo of the Kievskaya metro station, 2000s, unknown author, Moscow.

9.2 The Narvskaya metro station in Leningrad - its construction and decoration

The station *Narvskaya* belongs to the Kirovsko-Viborgskaya line, which was inaugurated in 1955; it is located in the district of a significant historical meaning – The Narvskaya Zastava. The main metro's building is located at the Strikes Square, at the corner of Staro-Peterhofskiy prospect and Ivan Chernyh street.

⁴¹⁵ Nealy, James Allen. *The metro (metroes): shaping soviet post-war subjectivities in the Leningrad underground*. Miami: University p.h., 2014, pp.9-17.



Photo of the *Narvskaya* metro station, 2000s, unknown author, St. Petersburg.

The entrance hall of the *Narvskaya* was created by architects I.V. Vasilyev, D.S. Goldgor, S.B. Speransky and engineer O.V. Ivanova⁴¹⁶.

The irregularly-shaped building with a dome on the top is constructed in the neoclassical style. The whole decoration system of the *Narvskaya* is dedicated to the glory of Stalin's personality. Even the main entrance hall had to bear the following engraving of J. Stalin's words: "It is not at all impossible that Russia will be the country to lead the way to socialism. One must discard the interpretation that only Europe can guide us on our way"⁴¹⁷.

The metro station *Narvskaya* is named in honour of the Narva Triumphal Gate, located opposite to the entrance of the station; it was called so to remind citizens of the road to Narva events. During the metro station's construction it had another name – the *Ploshchad Stachek*. The name was changed another time for the *Stalinskaya*. But shortly after Joseph Stalin's death the political structure had faced changes; so, in the end, it still holds the same name *Narvskaya*. The station is decorated by the white marble, with many inserts of yellow metal under bronze. The walls of the vestibule are painted in white; the escalator's balustrades are shaped by plastic under red colour. In the underground hall on top of the walls there are sculptural groups.

⁴¹⁶ Петров, А. *Петербургский метрополитен: от идеи до воплощения*. Альбом-каталог, СПб.: ГМИСПб, 2005, С.8-12.

⁴¹⁷ <http://spb-gazeta.narod.ru/line1.htm>. Retrived on 12.07.14.



Photoset of the Narvskaya metro station, downstairs hall panoramas, 2000s, unknown author, St. Petersburg.

The *Narvskaya* metro station is located in front of the Narva Triumphal Arch, which represents a war monument constructed to celebrate Russia's victory over Napoleon. In short terms the area had become a factory's suburb. True to the architects' mandate to avoid compromising the city's aesthetic characteristics, the fixtures above the ground lobby's doors match the deep green of the arch itself. It is to the workers of this suburb, and the proletariat in general, that the station is dedicated. The station is filled with a conflicting story about de-Stalinization⁴¹⁸. Originally called the *Stalinskaya*, the name was changed one week before the first line's inauguration in November 1955 before Khrushchev's *Secret Speech* in 1956⁴¹⁹. However, a mosaic of Stalin, titled *Stalin on the Platform (Stalin na Tribune)*, survived until after the XXII Congress in 1961⁴²⁰. The *Stalin na Tribune* featured the leader behind a podium, with an outstretched hand that suggested pragmatism and a welcoming, but stern, disposition, and originally had to be accompanied with the following inscription: "Do not rule out the possibility that Russia will be the country to lay the road to socialism. We must discard the antiquated idea that only Europe can show us the way"⁴²¹. Today, in place of Stalin's there are two doors and an air conditioning unit. Upon the descent into the underground, passer-by can admire a high-relief titled *The Glory of Labour*, which shows Lenin, standing out in the midst of his speech to dozens of workers who hold flags and listen attentively. The high relief over the escalator run was elaborated by sculptors G.V. Kosov, A.G. Ovsyannikov,

⁴¹⁸ Nealy, James Allen. *The metro (metroes): shaping soviet post-war subjectivities in the Leningrad underground*. Miami: University p.h.d, 2014, pp.9-17.

⁴¹⁹ Зубкова, Е. *Россия после войны: надежды, иллюзии и разочарования, 1945-1957*. Армонк: Шарп, Инк, 1998, С.17-23.

⁴²⁰ Гарюгин, В.А., Денисов, А.Т., Туфт, В.И., Щукин, С.П. Ред. *Метрополитен Северной столицы, 1955-1995*. М.: Лики России, Цпб., 1995, С.54-58.

⁴²¹ Сталин, И.В. *Сочинения*. том 3, Москва: Гос.Издат.Политех.литературы, 1946, С.186-187.

V.G. Stamov, and A.P. Timchenko. The image depicts a group of workers who look at the centre of the composition, where supposedly an engraving of Stalin had to be displayed. Jenks has noted that change in the Soviet demography, primarily from older revolutionaries to younger *New Soviet* people, was depicted in the increased number, from four to eight, of people's categories portrayed in sculptures between Moscow's premier 1935 line and its first extension.



Gerasimov, *Stalin on the tribune*, 1955, mosaics, *The Narvskaya*, Leningrad.

G. Kosov, A. Ovsyannikov, V. Stamov, and A. Timchenko *The Glory to work*, 1955, marble, high relief, *The Narvskaya*, Leningrad.



Photo of *the Narvskaya*, 1955, unknown author, Leningrad. 1

Photo of *the Narvskaya*, 1955, unknown author, newspaper *The Soviet Star*, n.23, Leningrad.

The last decades the station faced large volumes of passengers' traffic; therefore three escalators did not correspond to the necessities of passengers during the morning and afternoon rush hours. Eventually, the station had to be renovated and

a bit reconstructed. Accordingly, in 2012, the station stopped working for a 14-month period, which supposed the destruction of the original escalators and the establishing of four new escalators. The total depth of the station counts 52 meters. Regarding the escalator's balustrades, which are covered by plastic in three colours, the premise is elaborated artistically - the columns were covered with a metal crown. The majority of decorative metal parts are executed from yellow metal and apparently are made of bronze (being a part of ventilating lattices, lattices of loudspeaker). The emblems of *strength*, such as protections of the escalators' machines are executed from a steel and aluminium⁴²².

There is a small down escalator hall; it is separated from underground station by a closing mechanism. The metro hall is decorated by various chandeliers in the neoclassical style on the walls by groups of the three pieces.

In addition a range of sculptural installations had to complete the ensemble of the down-hall vestibule. In total - forty eight repeating high reliefs, consisting of twelve plots, decorated the pylons of the hall⁴²³. In the vestibule of the underground, the station's pillars are decorated by sculptures, dedicated to twelve different professions, created in quadruplicates and mounted throughout the station for a total of forty-eight works of art. The twelve groups represented at *the Narvskaya*, however, do not appear to be really youthful; instead, they seem to be adults at the best moments of their professional lives, what could be a metaphor for the appearance of *mature socialism* in the late Stalinist period⁴²⁴.

The elaborated sculptural works were following: *People of art* by Maria Litovchenko, *Collective farmers* by Mikhail Anikushin, *Naval architects* by Mikhail Gabe, *Scholars* by Elena Chelpanova, *Plant selection breeders* by Valentina Rybalko, *Tube builders* by Alexander Ignatiev, *Textilemen* by Lubov Holina, *Founders* by P. Kulikov, *The Seamen* by V. Sichev, *Red Army* by Nina Slobodinskaya, *Builders* by Alexander Chernitsky.

⁴²² Петров, А. *Петербургский метрополитен: от идеи до воплощения*. Альбом-каталог, СПб.: ГМИСПБ, 2005, С.8-12.

⁴²³ Nealy, James Allen. *The metro (metros): shaping soviet post-war subjectivities in the Leningrad underground*. Miami: University p.h.d, 2014, pp.9-19.

⁴²⁴ Fürst, Julianne. "Introduction. Late Stalinist Society: History, Policies, and People". *European Review*, 86, no. 2, 2008, pp.2-7.



M. Anikushin, *Collective farmers*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*. L. Holina, *Textilemen*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



A. Ignatiev, *Tube builders*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*. M. Gabe, *Naval architects*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



M. Litovchenko, *People of art*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*. E. Chelpanova, *Scholars*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.

The down hall metro vestibule was constructed under the project of architects Alexander Vasilev, David Goldgor, Sergey Speransky and engineer O.V. Ivanova. Regarding the main idea of sculptural decoration of the station – it certainly glorifies labour of the Soviet people. As to the architectural appearance of the hall - many elements of the station display Soviet symbols - a hammer and sickles, red stars, images of red banners. In front of the platforms there are decorative panno and inscriptions like 1955, reminding of the inauguration year. The illumination of the

central hall is represented by the fluorescent lamps at the consecutive arches of a ceiling. This type of illumination provides a permanent bright hall's lightening.



Sichev, *The Seamen*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



V. Rybalko, *Plant selection breeders*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



A. Chernitsky, *Builders*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



V. Pirogov, *Founders*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



P. Kulikov, *Doctors*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Red Army*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.

As mentioned before, in the end of the vestibule at its central wall *the Stalin on a tribune* by Alexander Gerasimov's (who was simultaneously the president of the Soviet Union Academy of Arts) massive mosaic panel had to be the main accent in decoration. Another idea consisted of installing Stalin's bust at the central wall's background. However, in 1961 after the XXII congress of CPSU⁴²⁵, the mosaic was closed by a marble false-wall. Curiously but the panel image has been already placed in a book devoted to the Leningrad metro stations' inauguration⁴²⁶.

The free space created by the false marble wall was firstly used as the storage area. Further the premise turned into the linear point of machinists of depot Avtovo. In the end *Stalin's* mosaic was removed from the wall, which permitted to expanse *the storage space* by a pair of columns. Eventually, when the underground museum was organized the public expected the appearance of the mosaics at its permanent exhibition – the expectation was not justified. Accordingly it's unknown whether the mosaics was preserved or whether it was completely destroyed⁴²⁷.

There is one curious fact regarding the first stage of Saint Petersburg Metro: it was constructed on an actual branch of a tram. In order to get use the population to the metro, the tram line was brought to smaller streets, while at the metro station *Narvskaya* the tram ring was not touched⁴²⁸.

9.3 The Red Army – always on guard

In 1954 Nina Slobodinskaya together with her friends and colleagues L. Cholina, A. Ignatiev, among other prominent Leningrad sculptors, was commissioned to create a sculptural group for the new metro station in Leningrad, named the *Narvskaya*, which aimed to symbolically glorify The Red Army and a new Soviet population. It

⁴²⁵ "The 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held from 17 to 31 October 1961. In fourteen days of sessions (22 October was a day off), 4,413 delegates, in addition to delegates from 83 foreign Communist parties, listened to Nikita Khrushchev and others review policy issues. It was the congress which officially cemented the Sino-Soviet split, and so the last to be attended by the Chinese Communist Party. The congress elected the 22nd Central Committee". See: Сергеевко, П. *XXII съезд Коммунистической партии Советского Союза. 17-31 октября 1961 года*. Стенографический отчет, М.: Госполитиздат, 1962, С.1-3.

⁴²⁶ Петров, А. *Петербургский метрополитен: от идеи до воплощения*. Альбом-каталог, СПб.: ГМИСПб, 2005, С.8-12.

⁴²⁷ Петров, А. *Петербургский метрополитен: от идеи до воплощения*. Альбом-каталог, СПб.: ГМИСПб, 2005, С.8-12.

⁴²⁸ "Transport officials have forgotten that at *The Narvskaya* there are tram ring". www.fontanka.ru. Retrieved on 2009-09-10.

was a prestigious commission and meant a professional official recognition as Leningrad sculptors participated in the outstanding technical progress's event of the top-level State's significance. Moreover, artists' sculptural images would be admired by thousands of spectators daily. All sculptors highly welcomed the possibility to take part in this project. Stylistically and technically the task was not easy as sculptural composition in marble had to be an organic part of the whole ensemble with other sculptural groups in the metro's vestibule and in artistic terms to correspond to the official socialist realistic and officially representative style of depiction.

Grace to the photo samples left in the sculptor's studio, we know that Nina Slobodinskaya experimented and elaborated various options of the soldiers' sculptural image compositions.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Red Army*, 1954, bronze, one of the first versions for the Narvskaya vestibule.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Red Army*, 1954, bronze.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Red Army's compositions (one of the versions)*, 1954, plasticine.

One of the first *Red Army* compositions of Slobodinskaya was a bronze sculptural group which more reminded a sketch of an independent monument project than a sculptural group in chain of others. We see a dynamic group of 2 soldiers which certainly aim to represent the scene of battle. Holding the field glasses in one hand and a gun in another, the highest and the central figure embodies in it-self braveness, strength, and fearlessness. As a spiral the dynamic composition descends and continues into the figure of another soldier who prepares a battering-ram for another attack. His movement is full of energy and inner strength. The sculptural model reminds a spiral's movement from any point of view and is a successful example of realistic and dynamic sculptural image. Most likely Slobodinskaya created her original version of *the Red Army* composition which did not correspond to the general stylistic and compositional demands of the whole vestibule decoration. Anyway the composition is interesting and deserved to be appreciated as a particular art piece.

The composition which was finally approved strictly corresponds to the general sculptural image line of the metro vestibule of *the Narvskaya* station.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Red Army*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Red Army*, 1955, marble, *The Narvskaya*.

Officially chosen the *Red Army* composition consists of 3 monumental figures of Soviet soldiers and a young girl, giving one soldier a bunch of flowers together with a kind smile. Let's not forget that the central idea of the portrayed scene was to reaffirm the victory of The USSR in the Second World War and to represent a vivid memorial of The State's military strength and power. Respectively, this direct message had to appeal to all Soviet citizens and reaffirm their trust and fidelity to the State.

According to Andrey Gnezdilov, the motive of the composition was invented by Nina Slobodinskaya and was a reminiscence of one event. When the Second World War was finally over and the entire Soviet population was celebrating this event, Andrey – the sculptor's son in the age of 5 saw the procession of soldiers returning from battles, the child spontaneously picked flowers from a lawn and gave the bunch to a soldier. The soldier was so pleased that rewarded the boy with some

coins. Being under the impression of that event Slobodinskaya decided to depict the group the Russian Red Army using this motive. The curious thing is that the face of the girl with flowers resembles a face of her son in this age.

The first soldier's figure looks quite officially and representative: his athletic figure is full of dignity, calmness, and a direct gaze is filled with strength and conscience. Let's remember what proclaimed Soviet politicized slogans: *Russian citizens always have to be on guard* – we see the soldier easily holding his arm; all said may be related as well to the soldier's figure on the right which gazes straight at the main hall of the vestibule⁴²⁹.

Holding a huge gun in his right hand the soldier's figure reminds a sculptural image of ancient Greek heroes. He is athletically built; male figure is filled with calmness, dignity, but also we see an inner strength and kind of a tension, which shows his readiness in case of necessity to start the battle. He embodies a perfect Soviet soldier – beautiful in its dignity, full of calm heroism, however *frightful* for any enemy who would dare to break peace in The USSR. But nothing human is alien to a Soviet soldier, and as a proof we see a scene in the central part of the composition – a tenderly smiling soldier accepts from the hands of a girl a branch of flowers – stroking her head. A girl, apparently, symbolizes the whole new generation of growing Soviet children, who feel an enormous gratitude to the native land –defenders for bringing peace to the country. The sculptural composition in marble is life-asserting and full of inner energy: figure's motion together with moving cloth's creases gives the whole composition an active dynamism and vividness.

The author used realistic style in sculpting. Standing in natural but active dynamic pose, the figures seem to blend with a crowd which almost every 3 minutes (the time between arrivals of every train) invades the main vestibule of the metro station. These shaped figures perfectly fit into the whole chain of sculptural images at the metro vestibule representing an idealized but a real part of the Soviet society – (meanwhile in 1950s the quantity of militaries in the population was enormous). Various publications of informative character on sculptural decoration of the

⁴²⁹ Slobodinskaya's *Red Army's Soldiers* are depicted quite naturally and human, while only a decade behind such narrative depiction would not be approved in context of the Soviet artistic standard. Pathos, an artificially exaggerated patriotism, representative generalizations are left in the past. Sculptural images embody, instead, ideals of humanism, active civil position, peace and a feeling of security in everyday life. Similar message transmit the rest of 11 sculptural compositions of the metro's vestibule.

Narvskaya metro station in Leningrad diaries took place. N. Slobodinskaya is mentioned as the author of Soviet Soldiers sculptural composition. Below we may see some examples of diaries' articles.

только обрам борются за удержание и совершенствование аппарата управления, поддерживает остальное настроение.

На заводах делаются попытки упростить административно-управленческий аппарат. В него делятся (начальники цехов, завод), например, сумели так организовать труд коллектива, что малые расходы «шли» минимально. На подобные мероприятия, к сожалению, прилагаются не часто. А ведь сколько есть еще на заводе неиспользованных резервов удешевления и совершенствования управленческого аппарата! На предприятии имеются различные цеха, которые с успехом могут быть перераспределены в участки основных цехов.

Нужно не ограничиваться полумерами, а до конца последовательно проводить в жизнь, строжайшей режим экономии во всех сферах и не забывать, что одно из важнейших условий достижения успеха заключается в безусловном сокращении производственных расходов.

А. НЕПОМНЯЩИЙ

мечется сделать в срок. Но вот волокита бумажная часто сбивает с ног. Возьмем к примеру: на вал станка нужна нам муфта кожаная. Постановить — проще простого, Получить ее — дело сложное. Строчь документацию и ждать — Требование материальное. Исходный, пожалуй, дизайн это По поводу «чрезвычайному». Стучись к механику, пишет дать. Но это «дать» не фактически, Поскольку надо еще узнать, Подпишет ли в технологическом. Идешь, объясняешь: так и так. И слушают нам улыбаются. А сам неохотно в кипе бумаг Чья полтора кончается. Ты, дружище — скоро ли бросит копать. И вот кешечек не мешай дать — Завяочки нет на кожную. Не можем — какой в этом резон. — Поймите мое положение. — Досуг понимать! — возмущается он. — Ступайте в отдел снабжения.

Экая штука обидная! Заходишь — склеит, опаришь о стол, Дамочка милашнейшая. Под нее кожа стула обит, Румянцем все расцветена. И важный, почти недоступный вид, И даже в зубах «каблучочны», А ты в объяснениях входишь в раж, Ты требуешь кожанку эту. Тогда она бойко берет карандаш И бац резолюция: нету! И там отвечаю: начальства нет, Забыта черта подальше. Но вдруг летела ниточка как раз: Идешь в кладовую к Кате. — Катенька, кожанки нет ли у вас? Она подает вам — нате. И в чех астишь, но жалая ног, От радости разбрызгиваешь. И слова в работе занык станок С маленькой муфтой кожаной.

Пусть не думает: Азия важнее, Что я на них клевету стручу. Я эту волокиту бумажную Выкорчевать хочу.

Павел СОКОЛОВ,
рабочий завода «Электросила» имени
С. М. Кирова

Скульптуры для ленинградского метро

Многие ленинградские скульпторы трудятся над художественным оформлением станций строящегося метро.

Уже выполнены модели скульптурных барельефов для станций «Нарвская» и «Технологическая», вставлены на станцию «Нарвская», художественное оформление которой отличается простотой, ясностью и правдивой народностью, предполагается разместить 48 мраморных микрорельефов рельефов. Они будут располагаться сверху пилонов.

Один из рельефов «Сельское хозяйство» (автор — скульптор М. Анжушан) изображает двух дарок и козла, вешущего люльку. Простая и типичная сцена изображена с большим профессиональным мастерством. Интересна работа скульптора Л. Хозинной «Текстильщица», также отличающаяся хорошей лепкой и удачной композицией; удачна и работа скульпторов А. Негитова — «Метростроитель», В. Парожковой — «Врачи», М. Литвиченко — «Детища искусства», В. Парожковой и И. Соловьевой — «Сельские воины» и другие.

Все модели рельефов уже отформованы в гипсе. Теперь они переводятся в цемент, после чего будут установлены на места.



В. И. Ленина и И. В. Сталина, а на столбах между арками из мрамора, составляющих два параллельных ряда вдоль центрального пассажирского зала, — барельефы мезантин с изображениями выдающихся деятелей отечественной науки. Эти девятнадцать композиций рельефов отливаются в бронзе.

Сейчас в бронзолитейной мастерской Академии художеств СССР заканчивается отделка портретных рельефов. Вскоре начнется их установка на станцию.

Ленинградские скульпторы приступили к работе над моделями ступей и рельефов для других станций метрополитена. Составлены творческие бригады под руководством скульпторов В. И. Игнатьева и В. А. Овсянникова. Скульптору М. К. Анжушану поручено изготовить из мрамора портретную фигуру А. С. Пушкина для станции «Пушкинская».

□

На снимке: механики бронзолитейной мастерской Академии художеств СССР П. Ф. Обрядков за отделкой барельефных портретов М. В. Ломоносова и К. Э. Циолковского.

Фото К. Всеволодова

Photo of the sample of sculptures for Leningrad metro, accompanied with the article where was mentioned Slobodinskaya's sculptural composition the Red Army, 1956, article, the Vechernii Leningrad, n.19.

Besides the sculptural decoration of the Narvskaya station The State commissioned sculptural portraits of some metro station constructors. So far N. Slobodinskaya worked on sculptural portraits of the Stahanovets Worker S. Murashko and elaborated the sculptural statuette of the female worker M. Volkova (see illustrated in the diary below). Both works were elaborated in realistic style. S. Murashko and Volkova, hold their working tools in hands – a direct evidence of their active labour and social recognition. A viewer may guess an inner movement and energy expressed in their dynamic figures. Active, self-sacrificing social labour and its glorification – the main motives of these works.



Photo of N. Slobodinskaya's sculptures the Stakhanovtsy of metro, with mentioning of her authorship and work, 1956, (sculptural portraits of the great metro workers), article, the Vechernii Leningrad, n.32.



N. Slobodinskaya, Stakhanovets Murashko (metro worker of Technologichesky metro station in Leningrad), 1949, bronze.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Stahanovets M. Volkova (Female metro builder of the Technologichesky station, Leningrad)*, 1949, plasticine, statuette.

The sculptural portraits of the workers and builders (illustrated below) by style (realistic, dynamic, and expressive) and by subject (labor and construction) may be attributed to the same epoch - late 1950s). I may suggest that they were elaborated from Leningrad metro builders as models for further Soviet Union's exhibitions, as *metro construction* subject was of the highest actuality and belonged to the State top priority projects, - in order to further develop industrialization. Unfortunately, at the present moment there is no scientific evidence on sculpture's further fate, yet these sculptural portraits show high technical level of the sculptor, perfect possession of the realistic style, working in narrow frames of socialist realism style, still achieved to reveal deep psychological characteristic of individualities.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Miner*, 1950s, colored plaster cast.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Worker*, 1950s, bronze.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Worker*, 1950, statuette, bronze.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Worker*, 1950s, plaster cast.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Worker*⁴³⁰, 1950s, plaster cast.

⁴³⁰ An image of a worker in sculptural forms usually tended to idealization. Was elaborated a kind of stereotypic depiction of a worker-man: a personage with severe, often brutal face-traits, sometimes reminding a primitivism's manner of depiction. His face expression had to embody braveness, energy, and to affirm a subject of labor as an effort for the sake of a brighter future. An image of a worker-idol

10. CHRISTIAN MOTIVES IN THE LATEST PERIOD

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me*⁴³¹.

10.1 Slobodinskaya's spiritual beliefs through philosophical and theological vision of the Orthodox Christianity

In the beginning of 1970s Nina Slobodinskaya actively turns to the depiction of Christian images. Despite the social disapproval, unspoken taboo and the incapacity to get any financial reward for elaborating religious sculptural images the artist fully devotes her sculptural skills to depict them. It was obviously connected with the sculptor's turn to active religious life and her deep fervent spiritual searches which ended in devotion to the Orthodox Church.

It would be impossible to interpret sculptor's religious creativity without knowing the philosophical and spiritual bases of her beliefs. Furthermore, it would not be appropriate to use the same criteria in analysing religious works of art as of secular ones as the very notion of creativity changes in Russian theological thought.

Moreover, the approach to Christian art should be also different because its main reference point and its final purpose are distinct to secular art. In order to better understand it we should address to the main philosophical and theological background of the Orthodox Christian Church. P. Florensky – one of the most prominent personalities in the Russian Orthodox theology of XX century perfectly reflects this thought: "Images in art are essence of life understanding formula"⁴³².

One of the leading Russian religious philosophers of XX century N. Berdiaev gives a characteristic to the vision of religious creativity basing on the Orthodox theology:

affirmed the idea of elevating labor, which supported the utopic idea of a common communist paradise and was visualized as a contemporary hero, that's why requested a generalized depiction. See: Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994; Деготь, Е., Левашов, В. "Разрешенное искусство". *Искусство*, н.1, 1990, С.58-61.
⁴³¹ *The Revelation*, 3:20.

⁴³² Флоренский, П.А. *Столп и утверждение Истины: Опыт православной теодицеи в двенадцати письмах*. М.: Академический проект, Гаудеамус, 2012, С.735.

“The religious creativity passes through a sacrifice. It sacrifices its proper perfection and a perfection of culture in purpose and honour to continue God’s deeds of Creation. It is very important to reveal a triennial antagonism: antagonism of divine administration of cultural values and divine administration of personal space, antagonism of creativity and personal perfection. Only creative religious epoch overcomes all three antagonisms. Creativity exits from a slavery of a personal perfection and perfection of cultural values. Creativity turns to a cosmic perfection in which transcends to the wholeness – perfection of a man and perfection of his creations”⁴³³. There is another notion which has an enormous importance for creativity’s definition in frames of Russian Orthodox tradition – mysticism⁴³⁴, which goes hand in hand with all Eastern theological tradition.

10.2 Analysis criteria in religious works of art. Notion of creativity in Russian theological thought

As we see Russian philosophical thought states that only religious creativity approximates a man to the main purpose of creativity – to achieve a transcendent and universal cosmic space through his art works.

⁴³³ Бердяев, Н. *Смысл творчества (Опыт оправдания человека)*. М.: Изд-во Г.А. Лемана и С.И. Сахарова, 1916, С.48.

⁴³⁴ In thought of Russian Orthodox tradition mysticism and theology are two interconnected notions, which constantly interact; therefore, images of God and Saints are accepted canonically only represented in symbolical manner. Accordingly, schematics and image’s conventionality – are common traits for Orthodox Christian depictions. Losev brightly illustrates this idea: “The eastern tradition has never made a sharp distinction between mysticism and theology; between personal experience of the divine mysteries and the dogma affirmed by the Church. The following words spoken a century ago by a great Orthodox theologian, the Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, express this attitude perfectly: ‘none of the mysteries of the most secret wisdom of God ought to appear alien or altogether transcendent to us, but in all humility we must apply our spirit to the contemplation of divine things’.[1] To put it in another way, we must live the dogma expressing a revealed truth, which appears to us as an unfathomable mystery, in such a fashion that instead of assimilating the mystery to our mode of understanding, we should, on the contrary, look for a profound change, an inner transformation of spirit, enabling us to experience it mystically. Far from being mutually opposed, theology and mysticism support and complete each other. One is impossible without the other. If the mystical experience is a personal working out of the content of the common faith, theology is an expression, for the profit of all, of that which can be experienced by everyone. Outside the truth kept by the whole Church personal experience would be deprived of all certainty, of all objectivity. It would be a mingling of truth and of falsehood, of reality and of illusion: ‘mysticism’ in the bad sense of the word. On the other hand, the teaching of the Church would have no hold on souls if it did not in some degree express an inner experience of truth, granted in different measure to each one of the faithful. There is, therefore, no Christian mysticism without theology; but, above all, there is no theology without mysticism.” Abstract from: Lossky, Vladimir. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. London: James Clarke & Co., LTD, 1957, pp. 7-22.



M. Nesterov, *Philosophers S. Bulgakov and P. Florentsky*, 1917, oil on canvas.

Accordingly, the only way for an artist who urges to approximate to *the Universal* lies through the conscious choice of the religious creativity. Obviously it may become possible only if an artist turns to religious creativity with a spirit of a sincere strong religious feeling, otherwise, it will not bring any results (the use of religious subject without a religious *fervour* is a superficial approach which will bring the same result as a secular work of art). Berdiaev develops his idea further, declaring that Russian soul's approach to the spirituality and creativity differs from other cultures and searches for special directions: "The tragedy of creativity and crisis of culture especially strongly is perceived by Russian artistic mind. In the sound of Russian soul there is a resistance to the creativity of bourgeois – middle culture, it has thirst for creativity which builds a new life and other world. Every creative impulse Russian soul is used to subordinate to some lively- essential – to religious, moral or social truth"⁴³⁵.

In this context artist's yearning and urge towards the *universal values* is perceived as something natural and essential; it even pretends to be a logical development of any *true-seeking* creative person (the absence of artist's inclination towards universal themes - on the contrary is seen by Bulgakov as *unnatural* national trait). Finally Bulgakov defines art and free creativity: "Art is freedom and not a necessity. But the ideal of academic classical art – middle, impedimental ideal, which puts an obstacle to a revealing of the final depth in art. Because the final depth of any authentic art is religious. Art is religious in depth of a proper artistic creative act.

⁴³⁵ Бердяев, Н. *Смысл творчества (Опыт оправдания человека)*. М.: Изд-во Г.А. Лемана и С.И. Сахарова, 1916, С.49.

Artist's creativity within its bounds is a *theurgist's action*. Theurgy is a free creativity, liberated from obtrusive ideas of this world. In depth of theurgic action reveals a *religious-ontological sense* – the religious sense of the whole essence. Theurgy cannot be an imposed norm or a law for art. Theurgy is a final point of an inner urge of an artist, of his activities in the world. The one who mixes the theurgy with religious tendencies in art – is wrong. Theurgy is the last freedom of art, an interiorly achieved – artist's final point of creativity. Theurgy is an act more significant than a magic, as it is an act made in common with God: a continuation of creation *hand in hand* with God. Theurgist, linked to God, creates cosmos, beauty as essence. Theurgy is the very *call* for religious creativity. In theurgy the Christian transcendence turns into immanency and through theurgy can be achieved a perfection. Not only art leads to a theurgy but art is the one of the most important ways to it⁴³⁶.

Accordingly the artist can create truthfully only if he discovered the religious sense of the essence. The artist achieves a last freedom in art throughout a theurgy. To achieve this maximum point of creativity an artist can only through his sincere turn to God, in other words only by means of a strong faith. Thus the final criteria and pledge of the creative *successfulness* for artist is defined by his faith in God.

In relation to Nina Slobodinskaya we find the reflection and confirmation of this idea – her sincere turn to God approximates the sculptor to the creation of universal religious images which became the main source of her creative inspiration. Bulgakov comments wider on this subject: "The artist – theurgist neglects the organized art of this world as he chooses a free creative act. In the end of art – the same self-neglect as in the end of science, state, family and all the cultures. The theurgic art cannot be differential or individualistic. Theurgic art – synthetic and all overwhelming, its mystery is still unrevealed"⁴³⁷. According to Berdiaev any *authentic* artist who seeks for the *upper horizons in art* consciously has to be ready to sacrifice him-self, and this social well-being supposes that an artist has to choose the way of asceticism, almost a life of a monk, in sense of opposing to the structured world. A choice which an artist has to make demands an inner feat.

Regarding Nina Slobodinskaya's artistic way, we can state that having chosen religious subject as the main in her creative work, she opposed her-self to the society's requests, sentencing her-self to the artistic disapproval and turning into a

⁴³⁶ Ibid, p.50.

⁴³⁷ Бердяев, Н. *Смысл творчества (Опыт оправдания человека)*. М.: Изд-во Г.А. Лемана и С.И. Сахарова, 1916, С.51.

social outcast due to the Soviet historical collisions. Further Bulgakov reveals the main notion of an *inner life* of an Orthodox Christian: "The spirit means freedom, and not a nature. Spirit is not a part of a human nature but is a treasure of a highest quality. Spiritual quality and spiritual treasure of a man is defined not by any nature but by a combination of freedom and grace"⁴³⁸.

In this context of Orthodox philosophy to become an artist in the *upper sense* of this word means to achieve freedom through the Spirit. So in order to transmit spirituality to a created image an artist has to be as a *transparent vessel* for Spirit. In the end Bulgakov determines its significance in Christian's existence: "Spirituality is a task given to a human being in relation to his life. The Christian spirituality differs from a non-Christian, by its affirmation of person, freedom and love"⁴³⁹.

In terms of the upper sense of artistic understanding it appears that Nina Slobodinskaya achieved to reach this personal final point of creativity having got a fervent and sincere faith; although Berdyaev does not point at religious subject in art as a necessary condition of reaching a theurgy, her chosen religious subject matter is based on her strong belief; in other words her faith in God – became the most important priority in her life and it was natural in these circumstances that she would wish to express her faith and to share it with others by means of her creative work. As it was previously mentioned Nina Slobodinskaya turns away from the demands of the social life. The sculptor neglects the established artistic standards in the society; she chose to be faithful to her inner spiritual voice and to create freely and passionately. The issue of whether the artist successfully achieved to transmit her strong religious feeling in her works or not and what are the criteria of successfulness in respect of Christian art is another one, and we will return to it further.

Berdiaev also reveals a significance and peculiarity of Christian art: "Romantic infinity, imperfection of form is characteristic for Christian art. Christian art already does not believe in achievement of beauty in this world. Christian art believes that a perfect eternal beauty is possible only in other world. Here in this world only an urge and a yearning to the beauty of another world are possible. Beauty of its art is something that talks about other world – a symbol. Christian transcended feeling of existence creates a romantic tradition in art, which is in opposition to the classical tradition. Romantic Christian art sees a not earthy beauty in *the very infinity*, in the

⁴³⁸ Ibid, pp.52 -70.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, pp.52 -70.

main urge and in a *breakthrough of the limits* of this world. Christian art does not leave in this world of the ended beauty but leads to another world, to the beauty *beneath the boards*"⁴⁴⁰.

According to the Orthodox vision of beauty the main task of Christian art is not to create a work of art, which deserves an aesthetic contemplation by itself, but to create a symbol, which aims to hint, to indicate and to reveal an unknown world of spiritual beauty, a place of which hearts of believers are yearning in their praying, in other words to approximate to the invisible world of eternity and to create a space of religious consciousness. Thus, the analysis criteria in case of Christian imagery should be applied in accordance with artist's tasks; standard approach of the secular art in this case is inappropriate. The main issue, question a viewer may pose to himself seeing a Christian image would be following: whether this image is emotionally appealing or not? Does it make me feel involved in a close and direct interaction with the image? Is this image seems truthful and vivid? Aesthetic concerns should be applied as the last criteria or not applied at all.

Russian writer and philosopher Lev Tolstoy paid a special attention to the religious consciousness, affirming that it directs people's feelings and he widely describes the specificity of Christian conscience and the content of Christian imagery: "The essence of Christian conscience consists of every man's acceptance that he is God's son and consequently the existence of a union with God, with people, as it is said in the Gospel (John, XVII, 21); therefore the content of Christian art are such feelings which help to unite people with God and with them-selves. A good Christian art of our times cannot be understood by people because of its form's deficiency or as a consequence of people's inattentiveness, but Christian art has to be like this for people could perceive feelings which it transmits"⁴⁴¹.

So far Tolstoy also develops the idea that the main criteria of religious art is not its aesthetic value or artistic appearance but rather its emotional impact and appeal made on an audience. The similar criteria of evaluation and definition of Christian imagery (in particular to display of sacred figures on icons), gives Dionisii Areopogit, affirming that they represent "visual depictions of secret and supernatural visions"⁴⁴². Famous Russian philosopher and priest Pavel Florensky defines the main purpose of

⁴⁴⁰ Бердяев, Н. *Смысл творчества (Опыт оправдания человека)*. М.: Изд-во Г.А. Лемана и С.И. Сахарова, 1916, С.54.

⁴⁴¹ Толстой, Л.Н. *Собрание сочинений в 22 томах*. Москва: Художественная литература, 1987, С.9.

⁴⁴² Ареопagit, Дионисий. *Святого Дионисия Ареопagита о небесной иерархии*. М.: Синодальная типография, 1899, С.63.

icon: "An icon aims to direct conscience into the spiritual world, to show its *mysterious visions*. If this purpose is not achieved by viewer's evaluation, if a viewer does not have even a slight feeling of reality of *other world*, as if we could notice sea's proximity by the smell of its sea algae, than we can affirm that icon has not entered into a circle of cultural works, and in that case, - its value is only material or in the best case – archaeological" ⁴⁴³. This description may be also applied to all Christian images in painting and in sculpture, as a reference point, as *the meaning* with which artists seek to fulfil an image is exactly the same.

The most essential in Christian religious image is its *spiritual fulfilment* – if an artist achieves to provoke this feeling, – and a person in front feels that reality in front of him is an *objective one*, - than the main task is completed. But to transmit this spiritual message may be possible only if an artist has a sincere *religious fervour*. Artist's faith is a necessary base and condition to discover through the image's depiction a *window* to the upper spiritual reality. "In front of spiritually developed icons prayers feel that images appeared to be not only a window through which you could see depicted faces but also a door through which these figures enter our world. When saints *appeared* in front of prayers they *came* precisely from icons"⁴⁴⁴.

Therefore the main criteria which the Orthodox Christian thought offers to apply in religious image's analysis – it's a *spiritual appeal and impact* (a conventional feeling of *reality of the spiritual divine world*).

Returning to Nina Slobodinskaya's epoch and to artists, her contemporaries - we should admit that interest towards Russian tradition of religious art in XX century was especially deep among most *radical* artists of the new artistic wave. Icon's subject and icon's influence in XX century may be especially followed in the creative work of Russian avant-garde artists as it was observed by numerous researchers. "In the end of 1912 Malevich exposed a series of works where traditions of the ancient Russian art and folk primitive are intersected with *metallic* forms, rooted in cubism"⁴⁴⁵ wrote N. Hadgiev. While U. Groman wrote on icon's influence in V. Kandinsky's creative work, especially in the period of 1909-1914, when he attentively studied the ancient Russian painting during his numerous trips to Moscow: "During this period we see a reflection of icons' motives, forms in his works: it concerns not only the ancient

⁴⁴³ Флоренский, П.А. *Столп и утверждение Истины: Опыт православной теодицеи в двенадцати письмах*. М.: Академический проект, Гаудеамус, 2012, С.730-753.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, pp.730-753.

⁴⁴⁵ Харджиев, Н. *К истории русского авангарда*. Стокгольм: Художественная литература, 1976, С.118.

Novgorod painting school but also a later period of icon's paintings"⁴⁴⁶. M. Josep Balsach i Peig in her work *SVIG Nihilisme i utopia en l'art de l'avantguarda russa*, (TLL, Cinema, Art i pensament)⁴⁴⁷ and *La Victoria Sobre el sol (Hacia un mundo sin objetos)* develops the idea of Icons' significance in art of Russian avant-garde, suggesting its artistic roots as defining for artists' development⁴⁴⁸.

C. C. Gray in her turn, considered that besides other elements of national tradition (woodcut, popular print, embroidery, toys) icon painting significantly influenced N. Goncharova's neoprimitivism; and even the use of icon's painting methods and national ornament elements became the most important independent contribution of Goncharova in Russian avant-garde. Moreover, in her opinion icon-painting later influenced Malevich's and Tatlin's ideas development⁴⁴⁹.



V. Kandinsky, *White sound*, 1908, oil on canvas, 70 x 70.

V. Kandinsky, *Improvisation number 6*, 1909, oil on canvas, 107 x 99, 5.

In the latest publications on Russian avant-garde we find every time more observations on its influence. D. Sarabianov in his article on Malevich wrote: "Suprematism paintings of Malevich tended to icon painting. These paintings

⁴⁴⁶ Grohman, W. *Wassily Kandinsky, Life and work*. New York: W.Press, 1979, pp.83–84.

⁴⁴⁷ Balsach, M-J., «SVIG. Nihilisme i utopia en l'art de l'avantguarda russa», en Fanés, F. et al., *Cinema, art i pensament*, Girona : Universitat de Girona, 1999, pp.89-100.

⁴⁴⁸ Balsach, M-J., «La victoria sobre el sol (hacia un mundo sin objetos)», en Llorens, T. et al., *Vanguardias rusas*, Madrid: Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, 2006, pp.45-52.

⁴⁴⁹ Gray, C. *The Russian experiment in art. 1863–1922*. London: Artin, 1962, pp.97-100.

tended to be a thinking of existence, thought in form and colour. But in artist's mind they had to differ from icons. Suprematism painting depicts nobody and nothing, while an icon always plays a role of God's representative in our visual world"⁴⁵⁰.

Thereby Russian icon's influence on avant – garde is obvious. Meanwhile Tarasov tried to reveal another aspect – an existence of a *sign's system* in icon and an adaptation of this system by the Russian avant-garde, finding a proof of a very special role of icon in Russian national culture and in this connection a development of Russian *mythological conscience* based on the icon painting *sign's system* in the beginning of the Soviet new era. Tarasov develops his idea, saying that *Icon's system* in Russian avant-garde may be rooted in its poetics, and affirming that in art of avant-garde manifestations of archetype's signs are especially significant and numerous, and even may be referred to typological (permitting to regard carefully a type of culture in general terms), but it represents by itself an especially unique cultural layer where *signs'* discovery may be increased. In his opinion there are two aspects which permit to unite avant - garde poetics with *archetypical* layers to which sometimes may be referred a folk art or *the third culture* – primitive (popular print, craft-made icon). First of all culture of primitive as much as avant-garde art appears at *official culture's periphery* - in the place where an active process of signs system's intersection takes place. Both primitive and avant-garde are in opposition to the *official culture*, which does not accept or does not recognize them; thereby they are obliged to find their proper way.

If we look at culture as a vertical, a primitive appears at the *lower level* than a *high official culture*, while avant-garde is positioned *above* culture. Avant-garde had appeared in the historical turning-point, neglecting all previous European art achievements and styles, in a search of a new plastic and artistic language and way. Despite of renouncing any authorities in art, avant-garde artists search for most significant signs of different cultural traditions in order to use them in new culture's creation. Tarasov supposes that artists looked for support to be able and move further in the created *chaos* of ruined canons, in these terms avant-garde is *archaeological*⁴⁵¹. By proper declarations of avant-garde artists they move into a future but simultaneously they may move backwards, in the depth, to the headwaters of culture.

⁴⁵⁰ Сарабьянов, Д.В. К.С. Малевич и искусство первой трети XX века. Каталог выставки Казимир Малевич. 1878–1935. Ленинград: Амстердам, 1989, С.12-17.

⁴⁵¹ Тарасов, О. "Икона в русском авангарде 1910 – 1920-х годов". Искусство, N 1, 1992, С.9.

As observed Marina Tsvetaeva on N. Goncharova: "avant-garde knows an archaeological feeling of distance, tradition itself - not its restoration. Searching at the depth of cultural memory avant-garde achieved to find its essential signs – archetypes"⁴⁵². Therefore in Tarasov's opinion avant-garde artists were interested in cultural epochs which gave an increased importance to signs, such as medieval art, primitive and folk art for instance. Russian modernism and symbolism in the late XIX and early XX century also often appealed to the ancient Russian artistic heritage, we find multiples references to icon's painting, frescos and applied art. In Tarasov's vision if modernism looked for stylization of icon, aiming to enrich their works with *romanticism*, attempting to create a *symbolic atmosphere* in order to *reconstruct* reality, - avant-garde aimed to *create a new reality and new art*. In avant-garde poetics icon was seen and used as a *sign* – a formal artistic system.

In fact avant-garde artists ones of the first analysed a culture of primitivism in its form and style, having discovered a special significance of *sign's system* in icon of Russian folk art and craft and then used this knowledge as their artistic means. Malevich wrote in his autobiography: "Despite naturalistic education of my feelings towards nature, icons caused a strong impression on me. I felt something wonderful and dear. I saw in them all Russian people with all their emotional creativity. In that moment I remembered my childhood with its toy-horses, flowers, cooks, wood painting and wood carving. I felt in them some connection of peasant's art with icon's painting: icon's painting – forms of the highest culture of peasant's art"⁴⁵³. On various occasions Malevich finds this parallel and develops the same idea saying that: "clearly saw all the line from the big icon painting art fill horses and cocks of mural decoration, costumes and spinning-wheel as the line of peasant art"⁴⁵⁴, affirming that he followed exactly this type of art, having started creating paintings in primitive manner.

M. Joseph Balsach discovers and proves Byzantine icons' influence (Theotokos of Blachernae) on M. Chagall's painting *Mujer encinta* of 1913⁴⁵⁵. Goncharova and Larionov also clearly saw this artistic influence and connection, while A. Shevchenko thought that: "Folk print art was a direct continuation of Russian *spiritually moral*

⁴⁵² Цветаева, М. *Наталья Гончарова: Жизнь и творчество*. М.: Дом-музей Марины Цветаевой, 2006, С.5-6.

⁴⁵³ Вакар, И.А., Михиенко, Т.Н. *Малевич о себе. Современники о Малевиче*. М.: РА, 2004, С.36-74.

⁴⁵⁴ Харджиев, Н. *К истории русского авангарда*. Стокгольм: Искусство, 1976, С.117-118.

⁴⁵⁵ Balsach, M-J. «Marc Chagall: Memorias de Vitebsk». en Ibarz, M. et al., *Estudios de Historia del Arte en honor de Tomàs Llorens*, Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, 2006, pp.121-150.

painting, that is to say icons"⁴⁵⁶. Thereby icon was perceived as a *formal-stylistic sign* in primitive's culture by many Russian avant-garde painters. In Russian folk artistic tradition icon was kind of the *highest* form of artistic expression and reference. We may follow icon painting's influence in the mural painting, where icons' stylistics faced changes, but a *space* and *time* vision, an inverted perspective, figure's symmetry, statics, colour, - was adopted from icon⁴⁵⁷. Russian artists of avant-garde tended to separate their creative successes from their European colleagues, often opposing to them and conscientiously turning to the East trying to define proper stylistic and poetic issues. In that sense icon was perceived as a symbol of national cultural memory and as a concrete *formal-stylistic system* through which in Tarasov's vision they reflected the last contemporary achievements of European avant-garde. The exposition *Target* of 1913 may well illustrate the idea: among the works of the main artists of the Moscovian neoprimitivism (Malevich, Larionov, Le-Dantiu, V. Bart, A. Shevchenko, Goncharova, M. Chagall among others) appear icons, Russian and Eastern popular prints, children's and unknown authors' drawings. The main place at the icons' and popular prints' section was given to the pieces of Larionov's proper collection. Curiously a *stamped* ornament of popular icons we may follow in many of Goncharova's paintings⁴⁵⁸.

⁴⁵⁶ Шевченко, А. *Неопримитивизм. Его теория. Его возможности. Его достижения*. М.: Указ, 1913, С.17–18.

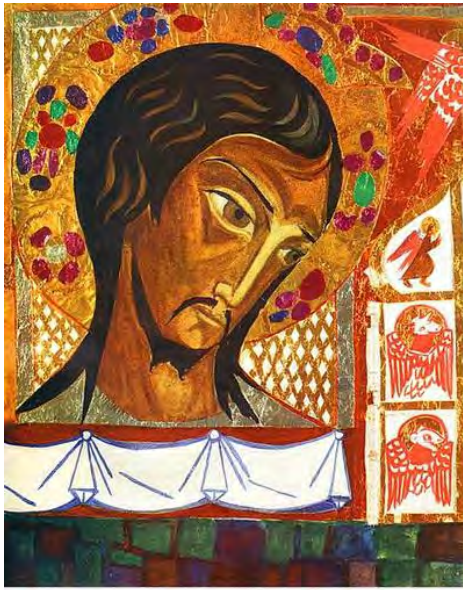
⁴⁵⁷ Тарасов, О. "Икона в русском авангарде 1910 – 1920-х годов". *Искусство*, N 1, 1992, С.9.

⁴⁵⁸ Non-objective art, especially painting of the first half of the twentieth century, in Russia often is based on the ancient Russian iconography. Its main motives correspond thematically to the ancient imagery of the traditional Orthodox iconography. The initial connection between icons and non-objective paintings is determined by their reference to the main concepts of Christian iconography. Ancient Russian artistic tradition may be followed not only in the figurative range of paintings but also is contemplated by its morals and spiritual concept's proximity to the artists of the early XX century. If for Malevich icon became as the crucial stylistic tool in his suprematism's paintings, for Larionov, Goncharova – Russian icon was a starting point, a kind of fundament of artistic, creative, conceptual searches. Stylistic, artistic, colorful richness of ancient iconic tradition helped Russian avant-garde artists to identify them-selves with their past and inspired to find a new artistic direction for the forthcoming century. The interrelation of ancient iconic tradition with Russian avant-garde may be analysed in the following sources:

Бобринская, Е.А. *Русский авангард: истоки и метаморфозы. Новейшие исследования русской культуры*. М.: Пятая страна, 2003; Вакар, И.А. *В поисках утраченного смысла. Кризис предметного искусства и выход к «абстрактному содержанию»*. Беспредметность и абстракция. М.: Наука, 2011; Гирин, Ю.Н. *Системообразующие концепты авангарда*.

Авангард в культуре XX века (1930 гг.): теория, история, поэтика. М.: ИМЛИРАН, 2010; Кандинский, В.В. *Точка и линия на плоскости*. СПб.: Азбука, Азбука,2011; Малевич, К.С. *Черный квадрат*. М.: Азбука, 2001;Сарабянов, Д.В. *Русская живопись. Пробуждение памяти*. Режим доступа. <http://www.independentacademy.net/science/library/sarabjanov/index.html>;

Сидорина, Е. *Конструктивизм без берегов. Исследования и этюды о русском авангарде*. М.: Прогресс Традиция, 2012;Тарасов, О.Ю. "Икона в русском авангарде 1920". http://www.lib.vkarp.com/2010/04/29/o_tarasov-ikona-v-russkom-avangarde-1910/.



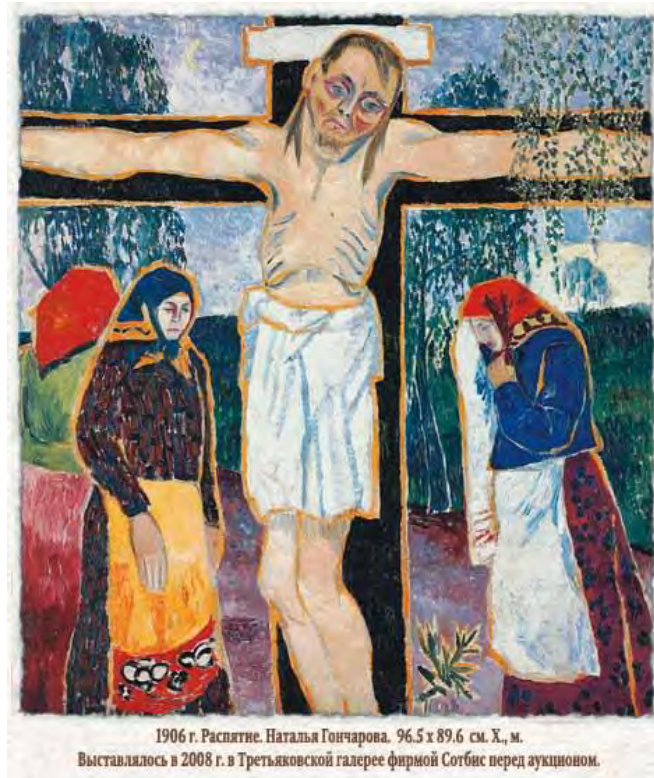
N. Goncharova, *Icon*, 1920s, oil on canvas.



N. Goncharova, *Liturgy, Seraphim of 6 wings*, 1914, oil on canvas.



N. Goncharova, *Virgin Mary with Jesus Christ (with ornament)*, 1911, oil on canvas.



N. Goncharova, *Calvary*, 1906, oil on canvas, 96,5 x 89,6.

Regarding N. Goncharova, icon in her creative work played a more important role than just of the formal stylistic interest or artistic method, as she tried to reveal and to transmit its symbolic meaning and spiritual significance through the *contemporary artistic language* and vision. In her proper words she accepted icon's significance in her creative process: "I may remember a person, while an icon – I should not? To forget – it's not an appropriate word; you can't forget a thing which is already inside you, which already lives not in the past but in the present.

As if you could forget yourself"⁴⁵⁹. Marina Tsvetaeva wrote in her recollections of N. Goncharova's primitivism period: "*Harvest. Ploughing. Sowing. Apple - gathering. Cleaver. Mowers. Women with rake. Potato's planting. Chapmen. Gardener* – all about peasants. And intersected with them icons' images (Where is God? Where is an old man? Which is a plowman and which is a prophet?): Geogiy, Varvara Velikomuchenitsa, John the Baptist (fire like, with wings, in the animal's fur); Aleksey – God's man in the white shirt, very kind with a long beard – around a flourishing

⁴⁵⁹ Харджиев, Н. К истории русского авангарда. Стокгольм: Искусство, 1976, С.117–118.

desert, his life. From her peasants' works: *Grape-gathering*, *Harvest* – all back from Apocalypses. Oil paintings which occupy the entire studio's wall"⁴⁶⁰.

We may well follow form and stylistic icon motives in the paintings of Malevich such as the *Reaper* or the *Rye-gathering*, the *Peasants in the church* among others; Tatlin's work such as the *Naked* well demonstrate it as much as Goncharova's *primitive* paintings and icons. Icon's influence in avant-garde works was reflected in: "schematics of depiction and its deformation (concrete methods of semantic icon syntax's and its space and temporal characteristics), pose's dynamics, rhythmic of movement, outlined foreshortening, reversed perspective, synthetic combination of different sides of object in one image, form's circularity as a result of visual position's summarizing and finally a synthesis of figurative and verbal range"⁴⁶¹. While Malevich affirmed: "all the Wanders' vision of nature and naturalism were combatted by the fact that icon painters, who achieved more mastery in technique reflected content in anti-anatomic truth, out of lineal and ethereal perspective.

Colour and form were created by them on the basis of emotional thematic perception"⁴⁶². Russian avant-garde artists clearly understood that icon painting art was based on nuances of colour and form. Shevchenko defined one of the principles of colour solution in icon painting: "This is the first time we find *leaking and flowing colouring* as picturesque aspect in our icons, where it expressed in cloth's patches of light in colours leaking into a background"⁴⁶³.

Similar vision existed in *new artistic perspective*, which permitted to introduce not one but many points of line intersections, aiming to show an object from various points of view. Simultaneously Shevchenko accepted the fact that: "neoprimitivism was formed grace to the fusion of Eastern traditions with Western forms"⁴⁶⁴.

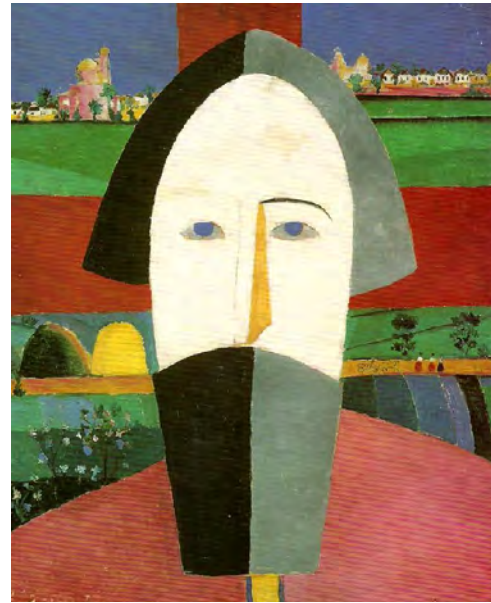
⁴⁶⁰ Цветаева, М. *Наталья Гончарова: Жизнь и творчество*. М.: Дом-музей Марины Цветаевой, 2006, С.5-6.

⁴⁶¹ Тарасов, О. "Икона в русском авангарде 1910–1920-х годов". *Искусство*, N 1, 1992, С.11.

⁴⁶² Харджиев, Н. *К истории русского авангарда*. Стокгольм: Искусство, 1976, С.117–120.

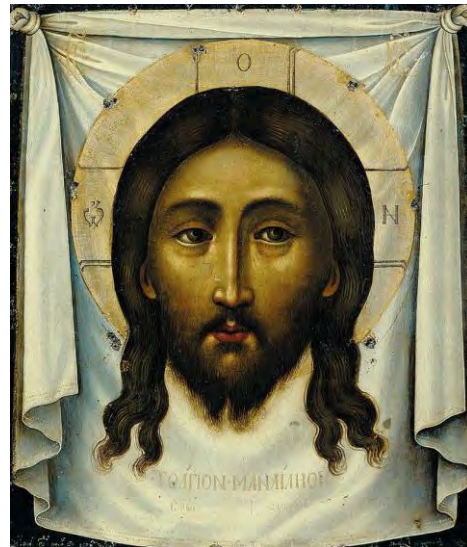
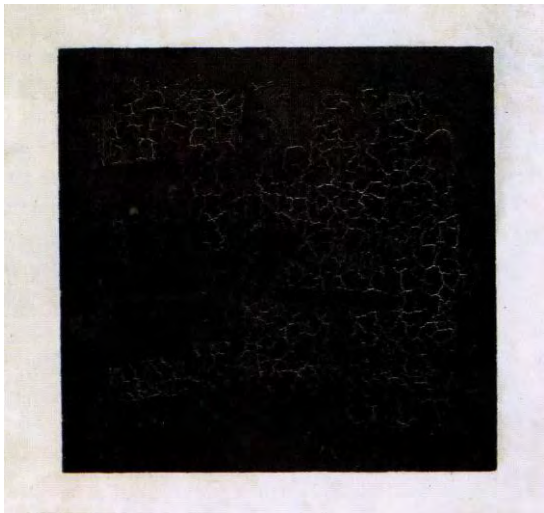
⁴⁶³ Шевченко, А. *Неопримитивизм. Его теория. Его возможности. Его достижения*. М.: Указ, 1913, С.17–18.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.14.



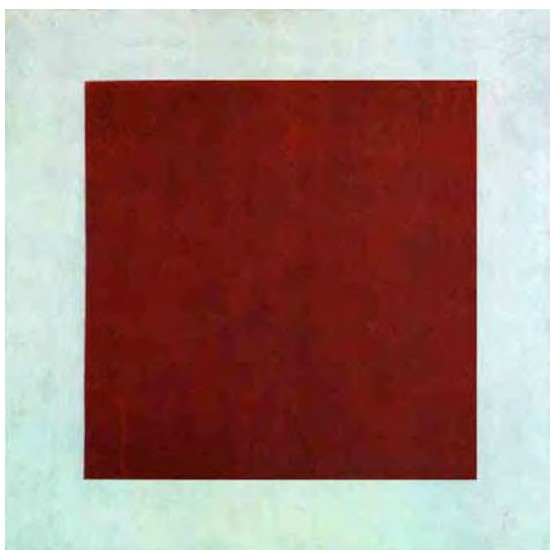
K. Malevich, *Head of a peasant*, 1930, oil on canvas, 85,8 x 65,6.

K. Malevich, *Head of the peasant*, 1930, oil on canvas, 69 x 55.



K. Malevich, *Black square*, 1915, oil on linen, 79,5 x 79,5.

Semion Ushakov, *Spas na Urbuse (Saint Mandilion)*, 1658, levkas, tempera, 53 x 42.



K. Malevich, *Red square*, 1925, oil on canvas, 53 x 53.



Rublev, *Spas v silah*, 1408, tempera, 189x136.

Regarding a meaning's similarity of icons and avant-garde painting may be found various symbolic parallels. Avant-garde artists tended to maximalism, *orientation to the possible exit, above the real world - to the upper sphere, from the sphere of images into a space of invisible, mystic*. A *super object* of an avant-garde work is often not a symbol or a sign which is *transcendental* as in icon but instead, it defines itself as *self-sufficient*. Besides it's already a fact that avant-garde is connected with *new myth* and *social-aesthetic utopia*, created and imposed by the Soviet government. Russian avant-garde leaders proposed a variety of visions of its interrelation with icons. Malevich in his speeches declared that an appearing official Soviet culture was giving to the icon an inverse sign's semantics. He directly wrote in the brochure *On the issues of fine art*: "there is a tendency to give new revolutionary movement's sense to the ancient art. If icon was thrown from homes – now they show it in a *cloth of a new sense*. Icon cannot bear the same sense, aim and means as before; its place now in the museums, where it can be saved under a new sense of non-religious definition, but as an art object; but gradually as we will deepen in our new creative sense it will loose and this meaning as well, turning into a soulless mannequin of the past spiritual and utilitarian life"⁴⁶⁵. The main idea of such an inverse vision of icon was clear in Tarasov's thought – to introduce and to strengthen

⁴⁶⁵ Малевич, К.С. К вопросу изобразительного искусства. Витебск: Искусство, 1921, С.6–7.

new *pseudo-religious values* which affirmed a new myth of social well-being⁴⁶⁶. In this researcher's opinion Malevich discovered and used only an *external side* of icon, and his suprematism's theory he builds on icons *overcoming, closing and completing* his myth on a discovery of a *real primary element* – a canon of all possible historic canons – on the *Black square*. In his book *Art, church, factory* Malevich attempts to substantiate his social–aesthetic utopia by neglecting old and new icons – two ways of cognition and achievement of absolute perfection – God in other words. The most important here is that Malevich declares a search of God as the main active forth of history, while he himself searches God without God. He makes no difference which God shall be *found*. The way of church and the way of factory or one of the technical progress to the communist paradise at the earth do not differ between each other, as lead in his opinion to the same aim – not achievable perfection: "As much as in external and deepened sense, ritualism and saint attitude, veneration, faith, hope for future - are all the same. As much as church has its leaders, as much factory's academy has its proper ones, both venerate their leaders. The wall of both institutions bear the images of portraits and images of heroes or martyrs, their names are written in the books. Therefore there is no difference between them"⁴⁶⁷. In Tarasov's opinion these two ways has no sense in historical perspective. For Malevich history does not have sense "does not exist in its base" and a real world is an illusion, so a new icon is defined as not a *sense* but *nonsense*, which we should see as *aimlessness*. History in his vision is *aimlessness* without any *truth*. That's why Malevich takes God and a Man out of the history. Only *nothingness* is left. *Nothingness* is not possible to research or study as it is a *nothingness*, but a man appears from it, but as it appeared from *nothingness* you cannot cognate it, so far God and a Man exist as *aimlessness*⁴⁶⁸. Thereby new icon of Malevich – is a *sign* which *ends* at itself, a *sign* – behind which *nothing is left*– only metaphysic emptiness and *death*. Here symbolically ends a travel of icon as a *sign* in different cultural layers of Russian culture. Its historical tendency to symbolism and sacralisation ends in the absurd manner. It could symbolically reflect collisions of Russian spiritual culture in XX century; Malevich's works of 1920s – human figures

⁴⁶⁶ Тарасов, О.Ю. "Русские иконы XVIII — начала XX вв. на Балканах". «Советское славяноведение», 1990, № 3, С.8.

⁴⁶⁷ Малевич, К.С. *Бог не скинут. Искусство, церковь, фабрика*. Витебск: Искусство, 1922, С.18-24.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, p.20.

without faces could symbolize a new official icon – icon of socialism without a human face in 1930s⁴⁶⁹.

Another way of reality's perception in Russian avant-garde was given by Kandinsky, who leaded his search with God and for whom as for an Orthodox believer icon represented more than a *form's sign* and stylistic system but rather – God's image and a *tool of grace*, and a history – not a senseless range of events but rather - God's will. That's why in the best Kandinsky's works we find an icon, bearing its refined spiritual energetics which embodies a *high religious* emotion. Therefore Kandinsky regarded an act of creativity as a religious act. Sometimes it seems that he discovered his proper vision of an *upper reality* – of God in other words. If in Malevich's works Russian icon turned into a *formal sign* and in the official Soviet culture of 1920-1930ss it was seen as *inversed in the mirror*, turned into its contrary – a kind of *anti-icon*, which canonized a man and a *new social myth*, a space without God which was substituted with communism's leaders divinization, - in creative work of V. Kandinsky and N. Goncharova icon, on the contrary reveals its inner high spiritual sense and significance⁴⁷⁰. These artists continue tradition of icon, transmitting its symbolic and spiritual fulfilment (seeing an icon as a symbol, which opens *the infinite world of spiritual beauty* even if they use new artistic means, affirming thereby a hope of all believers for a *brighter future*, hence affirming life itself).



V. Kandinsky, *Improvisation Number 3*, 1909, oil on canvas, 44,7 x 64,7.

Saint George icon, XIV c, tempera, wood, 58,5 x 42.

⁴⁶⁹ Тарасов, О. "Икона в русском авангарде 1910 – 1920-х годов". Искусство, N 1, 1992, С.11.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, p.12.

If we regard new Soviet artists in this context Nina Slobodinskaya certainly was close by her Christian images' spiritual vision to Kandinsky and Goncharova, basing her attitude on a sincere faith in God, seeing in icons first of all their appealing symbolic meaning and spiritual fulfilment and only than their aesthetic value (impact of form and method). Sculptor did not welcome revolution, she faced all its destructive power in her family's fate, studying in the Vhutemas she was introduced to all contemporary movements and styles, but felt no deep interest in them, instead being faithful to her chosen authorities in sculpture – Bourdelle, Golubkina, Muchina, searching a deep knowledge of nature, model, and personality by means of realistic method.

10.3 Christian images – creative and spiritual life's result

Approximately the last 10 years of her life Slobodinskaya worked on religious imagery and consequently created a wide range of sculptural pieces. The sculptor worked till the last days of her life despite a serious illness and a constant physic pain. Being a master of a detailed realistic method, instead, she gave preference to a generalized schematic and more symbolic style of depiction, trying to reveal its main trait – *proximity* of a displayed character, provoking such emotions as: tenderness or sorrow, sadness or spiritual richness.

It would be important first to understand the meaning, significance and role of icon in Russian Orthodox world. According to Losev and Uspensky the *Grace* is the reason of *holiness* of the depicted face and of icon. Icon symbolically participates in His holiness and through icon we kind of join to this *holiness* in our praying⁴⁷¹.

The icon shows us the glorified state of saint, his metamorphosed, *eternal image*; so far by its figurative language it appeals to us, recalling that a search of Holy Spirit's grace is a task of every Church's member. Its demiurgic role is not only in Christian belief study but also in a whole man's formation. Thus icon's content appears as a true spiritual guidance on the way of Christian life, particularly in pray. In this context icon is a way itself and a *tool*. Its purpose is to direct all our feelings, our conscience and all our human nature to its true goal – on the way of *transfiguration*. Hence the

⁴⁷¹ Послание против Аполлинария первое к Клидолию. Творения. т.4, М: Знание, 1844, С. 200.

function of icon is not to be a beautiful object but to depict beauty – God's similarity⁴⁷².

10.4 The Trinity

I would like to start the description and the analysis with the sculptural image of *Trinity*. Ichnographically can be defined two different types of Holy Trinity icons: the Old Testament Trinity and the New Testament Trinity. The Holy Trinity is a very significant subject of the Orthodox theology and iconography in the Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and stylistically differs from depictions in the Western Churches, basing on the Byzantine artistic tradition⁴⁷³.

Andrey Rublev's icon of *The Trinity* appears to be a kind of ideal and dogmatic interpretation of The *Old Testament Trinity* motive (created sometime between 1408 and 1425) and stylistically approved by The Church, as correspond to its strict demands. Sometimes this type of icon is called the *Hospitality of Abraham* (see Genesis 18:1-15). The meeting of the three angels with Abraham at the Oak of Mamre may be considered as a type of the Holy Trinity, but not an appearance of the Holy Trinity itself. This image's interpretation belongs to the Early Christian art and has become the most traditional Orthodox depiction of the Trinity⁴⁷⁴.

Regarding The New Testament Trinity, which interprets the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in a different manner, and being closer to Western models, however has Greek roots. Christ may be depicted as an adult (in this case he is shown to the right of his Father), or as a child appearing on his Father's knees, the tradition back in the early Greek images. This manner of depiction is also named the *Paternity* icon, and is rooted at the XI century, however its highest popularity in Orthodox art was achieved after the Fall of Constantinople, only then a depiction of an adult Christ became the norm⁴⁷⁵.

⁴⁷² Успенский, Л.А. *Богословие иконы Православной Церкви*. М.: Изд-во братства во имя святого князя Александра Невского, 1997, С.11.

⁴⁷³ In the Russian Orthodox tradition a realistic depiction of Trinity is impossible, as it would contradict a concept of eternal, mysterious, incomprehensible Triennial God. Thus, are acceptable only the symbolic images of Trinity, particularly the depictions of The Old Testament. See: Ульянов, О. Г. Филоксения Авраама: библейская святыня и догматический образ .Т.35. М.: Богословские труды, 1999; Успенский, Л.А. *Богословие иконы*. гл. XV, М.: Большой Московский Собор, 2003.

⁴⁷⁴ Bigham, Steven. *Image of God the Father in Orthodox Theology and Iconography*. Studies in Orthodox iconography, М.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995, pp.19-26.

⁴⁷⁵ Болотов, В.В. *Учение Оригена о Св. Троице*. М.: Сергиев Посад, 1879, С.43.

The Ancient of Days – a traditional representation of the Father, white-bearded with a peculiar type of nimbus. A white dove with a halo of the same type as Father represents The Holy Spirit. The dove may be shown between the Father and the Son or the dove may be placed in a beam of light from the mouth of the Father, symbolizing the Holy Spirit⁴⁷⁶.

Despite the fact that depictions of God the Father in Russian Orthodoxy are prohibited in medieval Novgorod, a new type of iconography appeared: *Spas Vethiy Denmi - The Saviour Old with Days* or *Christ as the Ancient of Days*. According to this manner of depiction, Jesus Christ is shown as an old white-haired man. The main point in this iconography appears to be consubstantiality – a new type of doctrine that affirms that Jesus and the Father are one. This image's interpretation of God the Father is traditional in The New Testament Trinity icons until the 1667. Curiously but in the Western churches the *Ancient of Days* continues being the basis for image creation of God the Father, this position was stated in a speech made by Pope Benedict XIV in 1745⁴⁷⁷.

Regarding the Second Council of Nicea in 787 it was affirmed there that the image creation of Christ was approved as he became a man; however the question of depicting the Father was more challenging. The common Orthodox depiction of the Trinity was based on the *Old Testament Trinity* - of the three angels visiting Abraham (Genesis: 18.1-15). Although the post-Byzantine image interpretations resemble the West ones, those ones also could be found in the Greek world. At the end the Russian Orthodox Church at the Great Synod of Moscow in 1667 prohibited depictions of the Father in human form, however other Orthodox churches occasionally do not respect this norm⁴⁷⁸.

Nina Slobodinskaya uses the most traditional Orthodox depiction of The Trinity, which belongs to the iconography of The Old Testament. The bas-relief image in a coloured plaster cast is both laconic and expressive. It strictly follows the iconographic rules of the Trinity's image. The *Trinity* shows three angels who visit

⁴⁷⁶ Спасский, А.А. *История догматических движений в эпоху Вселенских соборов (в связи с философскими учениями того времени). Тринитарный вопрос (История учения о св. Троице)*. М.: Сергиев Посад, 1914, С.28-45.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, pp.34-45.

⁴⁷⁸ Спасский, А.А. *История догматических движений в эпоху Вселенских соборов (в связи с философскими учениями того времени). Тринитарный вопрос (История учения о св. Троице)*. М.: Сергиев Посад, 1914, С.28-45.

Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 18,1-15), but the image is full of symbolism and often is seen as an icon of the Holy Trinity⁴⁷⁹.



Trinity, 1/2 VI c., mosaics, San Vitale church, Ravenna, Italy.



Feofan Greek, *Trinity*, XIVc., mural, Spas Preobragenia church, Velikiy Novgorod.

⁴⁷⁹ Болотов, В.В. Учение Оригена о Св. Троице. М.: Сергиев Посад, 1879, С.43.



Feofan Greek, *Trinity (fragment)*, 1378, mural, Spas Preobragenia church, Velikiy Novgorod.



Andrey Rublev, *Trinity*, 1408-25, levkas and tempera on wood, 142 x 114.



Dionisii, *Trinity*, 1502, mural, Feropontov monastery.



M. Nesterov, *Old testament Trinity*, 1890, 61 x 88, mural for Vladimirsky cathedral in Kiev.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Trinity*, 1975-1978, coloured plaster cast, 33 x 40 x 68, bas-relief.

Regarding the background for this iconographic image – it lays back in the mysterious appearance of the Holy Trinity in form of three travellers to Abraham and Sarah under the oak of Mamre: the angels are displayed with the same dignity, transmitting a feeling of wholeness of the trinity and equality. This manner of depiction outlines the equality of the three figures and consequently completely follows the dogma of the Holy Trinity, that's why The Church chose this image interpretation⁴⁸⁰.

A strict order is followed in the angel's depiction, in which the Holy Trinity is confessed in the Credo. God the Father – is the first person of the Trinity; God the Son – is the second, a middle angel; God the Holy Spirit – is the third angel. The three angels hold staffs in their hands as a symbol of their divine power. The sacrifice of the calf signifies the Saviour's death on the cross, while its preparation as food symbolizes the

⁴⁸⁰ Спасский, А.А. *История догматических движений в эпоху Вселенских соборов (в связи с философскими учениями того времени). Тринитарный вопрос (История учения о св. Троице)*. М.: Сергиев Посад, 1914, С.28-45.

sacrament of the Eucharist. All three figures are blessing the chalice, where is sacrificed calf, remaining for eating.

The first angel's cloth, shown at left, counts with a blue undergarment which symbolizes his divine celestial nature, and a light purple outer garment which determinates the unfathomable nature and the high dignity of this angel.

The second's figure's placement in the middle of the icon is connected by the position held by the second Person within the Trinity Itself. The cloth of the second angel symbolically recalls those in which the Saviour is usually depicted. The undergarment is a dark crimson colour which symbolizes the incarnation; the blue outer robe embodies the divinity and the celestial nature of this angel. The second angel seems to be as in a deep meditative state.

The figure on the right side is the third angel of the Trinity, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. His light blue undergarment and smoky-green outer garment hint at heaven and earth, and show the life-giving strength of the Holy Spirit: "By the Holy Spirit every soul lives and is elevated in purity"⁴⁸¹ - sings the Church.

The background instead of city's contours (as in Rubliov's *Trinity* icon) is absolutely plane, and only a round arch creates a framing to the image. The upper arch repeats another round line which represents the table with gifts, and the composition of circle is emphasized by round form of angels' wings and figure's nimbus, these wings symbolically unify the three figures of Angels and recall icon painter's Feofan Greek's *Trinity's* painting manner, - as his central angel's wings also embrace both angelic figures on his side (see Feofan Greek's *Trinity* image). The outlined form of circle which dominates the composition creates an inner motion and dynamism in the image and symbolically proposes the vision of the image as of the mysterious universe, where the trinity is the very essence and a centre. This round composition which frames the *Trinity* image corresponds to the Byzantine tradition of mosaics decoration in churches (see *Trinity's* image in mosaics in San Vitale church in Ravenna, Italy of early VI c.), Russian mural painting tradition in churches (see images of Feofan Greek *Trinity* of 1378 in Spas Preobragenskiy Velikiy Novgorod Church and Dionisiy's mural painting of 1502 in Ferapontov monastery); this tradition of circle composition which embraces a *Trinity* image further is continued in XIX

⁴⁸¹ Верещацкий, П.И. *Плотин и блаженный Августин в их отношении к тринитарной проблеме*. М: Искусство, 1911, С.132-178.

century mural painting⁴⁸². In the later epoch Russian artists who created in modern style were also fascinated by religious painting and in the late XIX century quite often were invited to work on mural decoration in churches. If we regard M. Nesterov's *Trinity* image elaborated in 1890 for Vladimirsky cathedral in Kiev we may also observe a direct continuation of Byzantium painting tradition, reflected in figures' composition. During centuries Russian artists preserved their artistic legacy to Byzantine iconographic traditions and Nesterov's murals show how strong is the connection of Russia with original Byzantine icon painting. Nesterov writes on the subject of ancient art: "I admire what is purely kept from Byzantium – I am fascinated by an inner vitality forth which lays in it. I believe in its future as much as I believe in future of serious and creative strength of Russians, in whose fate we may follow the same motives as in the Byzantium"⁴⁸³. Nina Slobodinskaya's sculptural image of *The Trinity* was gifted to the catholic church of St. Petersburg.

10.5. Saint Barsanuphius

Once, while dreaming Nina Slobodinskaya clearly saw a face of a man, who stepping out of the monastery, pronounced: "Depict me"⁴⁸⁴. In the morning she was so astonished that directly went to the Spaso-Preobragensky church where at one of the icons recognized the saint's face, who resulted to be *Saint Barsanuphius*. The Saint of Palestine, who died in 540 AD, was known as a hermit. Having got a good education, speaking many languages, - he had vast possibilities to build his carrier, however, he preferred to lead an ascetic life in the monastery of Egypt, where stayed for 50 years, further he left and finally lived near the Saint Seridon Monastery of Gaza in Palestine. There are a lot of correspondence left as a testimony of his wisdom and high spirituality. The most actively he wrote to John the Prophet, teacher of Dorotheus of Gaza and abbot of the monastery of Merosala⁴⁸⁵.

⁴⁸² Bibliography of sources, dedicated to the study and analysis of ancient Russian tradition in Christian sculptural art is certainly vast and counts about hundreds of sources, but if we center on the main fundamental authors, they will be following: А. В. Арциховский, Н. Н. Воронин, Б. Д. Греков, Ф.Д. Гуревич, В.П. Довженко, Д.А. Казачкова, В.Л. Комарович, Н.Ф. Лавров, Д.С. Лихачев, В.В. Мавродин, Н.В. Малицкий, Б.А. Рыбаков, В.В. Седов among others.

⁴⁸³ Нестеров, М.В. *Давние дни: Воспоминания. Очерки. Письма*. Уфа: Башкирское кн. изд-во, 1986, С.275 -284.

⁴⁸⁴ Andrey Gnezdilov recalls this event in the personal interview on 09.08.14.

⁴⁸⁵ Дионисий, (Шлёнов). *Варсонофий Великий. Православная энциклопедия*. М.:Сергиев Посад, 2003, С.684-696.



N. Slobodinskaya St. Barsanuphius, 1975/1981, plasticine, 17 x 11 x 25, relief.

St. Barsanuphius and St. John the Prophet, XIX c., graphic.

St. Barsanuphius was able to persuade the emperor to renovate the concordant relationship with the Church of Jerusalem. San Francesco da Paola by Bishop Theodosius church now is a home to his relics, where they were brought in 850 AD by a Palestinian monk. The relics were lost in the time of a Moorish siege but later found and placed in the city's basilica.



St. Vukol, bishop of Smirna, St. Barsanuphios, XV c., icon, Georgian manuscript.

M. Nesterov, St. Sergei Radonegskiy, 1899, oil on canvas.

St. Barsanuphios at Oria is famous for saving the city from destruction of foreign invaders. A legend tells that he stopped a Spanish invasion by appearing before the Spanish commander armed with a sword. While at the Second World War, people believed him to spread his blue cape across the sky, therefore causing a rainstorm, and preventing an air bombing by Allied Forces⁴⁸⁶.

St. Barsanuphios's image is formally similar to the iconographic depictions of XIX century, where he is shown together with his apprentice and close friend - John the Prophet. Whereas the whole image is depicted in schematic generalized forms the sculptor makes the main accent by volume and the detailed shape of the face and Saint's hand's holding a cross depiction. The face of the Saint reminds the face of Russian saints in Nesterov's paintings. Viewer may guess that the Saint persists in a state of deep meditation and pray, deep spiritual experience and faith may be observed in his gaze.

⁴⁸⁶ Дионисий, (Шлёнов). Варсонофий Великий. Православная энциклопедия. М.: Сергиев Посад, 2003, С.684-696.

10.6 Madonna - The Eleusa

Madonna - the bas-relief of the variety *The Eleusa* (or *Eleousa*) – is one of the most laconic and symbolic images of Nina Slobodinskaya. The artist intends to show the Virgin Mary as an embodiment of tenderness and mercy. Most often this type of the Virgin Mary in icons is pictured with the infant Jesus Christ nestled against her cheek. In the Western church this iconographic type is often known as *the Virgin of Tenderness*. But the image of The Virgin Mary crossing her hands – is also related to this iconographic type⁴⁸⁷.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Madonna*, 1975 -1981, gypsum, 26 x 16 x 34.

N. Slobodinskaya, *Madonna*, 1975 -1981, plasticine, 26 x 16 x 34.

⁴⁸⁷ Лосский, Владимир, Успенский, Леонид. *Смысл икон*. М.: Православный Свято-Тихоновский гуманитарный университет, 1997, С.25-41.



The Diveyevo Mary Virgin, post XVIIc., icon.

The Virgin Mary of Vladimir, approx. XIIc., unknown author, 75 x 55.



Mater Dolorosa, XIX c., Mexican retablo.

Dionisii, The Virgin Mary with child, XV c., mural painting, Feropontov monastery.

Such icons have been elaborated in the Eastern Church in all the epochs. Similar image depictions may also be found among Madonna paintings in the Western Church and are defined as the *Madonna Eleusa*, or *Virgin of Tenderness*. Lady of refuge images or Retablos in Mexican art are good examples of the 19th century. The *Pangaea Eleousa* as an iconographic notion is often used in the East Orthodox tradition. *The Theotokos of Vladimir* and *Theotokos of Pochayiv* are well-known

examples of this type of icon. *The Eleusa* is also a common epithet used to define the praising Theotokos (The Virgin Mary) in the Eastern Orthodox Church. *Eleusa*-style reliefs and sculptures and icons are widespread in the Western Church, but not so appreciated by the Eastern Church⁴⁸⁸. The sculptor stylistically follows the iconographic order of the figure and accentuates the main trait – the concentrated and meditative expression of tenderness and a quiet sadness at the *Virgin Mary's* face. The whole image is elaborated quite schematically, all the forms, apparently are minimized: Slobodinskaya does not work on the background of the image, seems that the main importance the author gives to the very emotion which the God's Mother figure transmits to a viewer. Nina Slobodinskaya attempts to reveal a symbolical and spiritual mystery of the *Virgin Mary's* image through the simplicity and laconicism of sculptural forms, which tend to mural painting, so popular in the Ancient Russia (see the image of *The Virgin Mary* - fresco of Dionisii in Ferapontov monastery).

The common trait which characterizes this late creative period is a complete change of key subject first of all – Christian depictions prevail in sculptor's creative work. Above all, Nina Slobodinskaya's plastic language takes a totally new direction. The former realistic forms, detailed images yield to a generalization of forms, schematic and symbolical depiction, which by its style and form may be more attributed to icon painting than to a three-dimensional art. Although, iconographically the sculptor follows canonical rules, - her sculptural images unexpectedly become completely *ascetic*, deprived of any decorative detail at all, reminding first Christian images in I-II centuries AC. Being an excellent master of realistic style and detailed portrayal, instead, the artist chooses symbolic and schematic manner of depiction. Supposedly those modifications occurred due to her world vision changes. Apparently, in the latest period the master is deeply centred on her faith and it occupied the main place both in her inner private life and in her professional way. Among the *Virgin Mary's* sculptural depictions stands out *The Intercession of the Theotokos* – symbolizing the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, it is called in the Eastern Orthodox Church as *Pokrov*⁴⁸⁹. The celebration which takes place on 14 of October (the new style) in Russia becomes a real festivity. Traditionally peasants celebrated on this date a

⁴⁸⁸ Лосский, Владимир, Успенский, Леонид. *Смысл икон*. М.: Православный Свято-Тихоновский гуманитарный университет, 1997, С.25-41.

⁴⁸⁹ Шалина, И.А. *Реликвии в восточнохристианской иконографии*. М.: Искусство, 2005, С.322-347.

gathering of harvest. The Slavic word *Pokrov*, like the Greek *Skepê* has a complex meaning. First of all, it refers to a cloak or shroud, but it also means protection. Accordingly, the name of the feast is variously translated as the *Veil of Our Lady*, the *Protecting Veil of the Theotokos*, or the *Intercession of the Theotokos*. It is often described as the *Feast of the Intercession*⁴⁹⁰. The *Pokrov* icon may well be attached to the Western *Virgin of Mercy* image, in which the Virgin Mary spreads her cloak to cover and protect a group of kneeling believers.

10.7 *Jesus Christ, knocking the door of a heart*

Jesus Christ, knocking the door of a heart is an allegorical sculptural image representing the figure of Jesus knocking on unopened door. This motive visually illustrates The Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me".



N. Slobodinskaya, *Jesus Christ, knocking the door of a heart*, 1975-78, plasticine, 17 x 12 x 28.

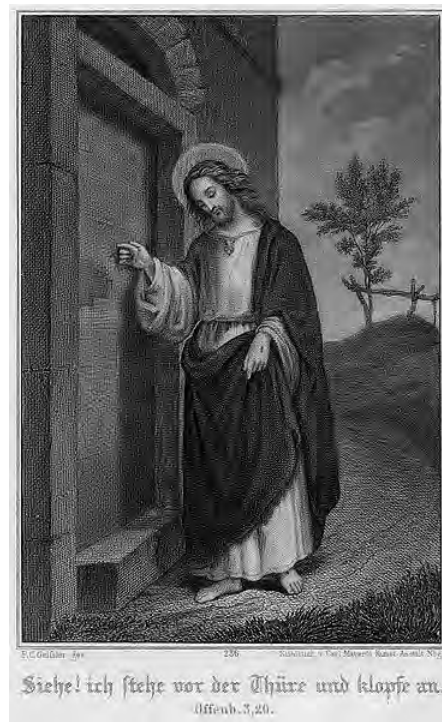
⁴⁹⁰ Протоиерей Дьяченко, Г. *Полный церковно-славянский словарь*. М.: Сергиев Посад, 1900, С. 447.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Jesus Christ, knocking the door of a heart*, 1975-78, plaster cast, 17 x 12 x 28.



William Holman Hunt, *The Light of the World*, 1853-54, oil on canvas.



Peter Carl Geißler, *Jesus Christ*, XIX c., steel engraving.

The door in the sculptural image has no handle, and may therefore be opened only from the inside. The sculptural image symbolizes *the obstinately shut mind*, but also a never ending hope of The Jesus Christ, believing that the door of people's heart will be open one day⁴⁹¹.

The small format plaster cast bas-relief is shaped schematically. Only the main motive is pronounced and accentuated: the figure of Jesus Christ humbly knocking the door. The background is plane. The author seems to pay viewer's attention at the very *action* of this biblical allegory where the key message is – the desperate attempt of God's Son to *awake people's hearts*. As believer, the sculptor tries to transmit her personal spiritual feeling of this allegorical *call* of Jesus Christ and to embody it in the sculptural form. By its quite simplified delineated and symbolic style it reminds early-Christian icons or the ancient Russian mural painting manner of figures' depiction. However, a three-dimensional form seems to transmit more depth, realism and vividness to this symbolical scene.

The unique neutral colour of the bas relief gives wholeness, organic harmony and accentuates the compositional simplicity and clarity. Slobodinskaya achieves to transmit a message of a silent appeal, emotional fullness and tension in simple, laconic sculptural forms.

10.6 The Virgin Mary

One of the most traditional depictions of a figure in a posture of prayer in Christian art is the *orant*, which usually is standing upright with raised arms. This type of posture reminds a typical manner of praying used by the first Christians. Thus the orant image type is often found in Early Christian art (II–VI c.), particularly in the frescoes and graffiti of Roman catacombs from the II century on. The faithful personages who seek a divine Salvation in the Old Testament scenes are often depicted in the orant posture.

Among N. Slobodinskaya's sculptural images of The Virgin Mary there two belonging to *Oranta* type.

⁴⁹¹ Лосский, Владимир, Успенский, Леонид. *Смысл икон*. М.: Православный Свято-Тихоновский гуманитарный университет, 1997, С.25-41.



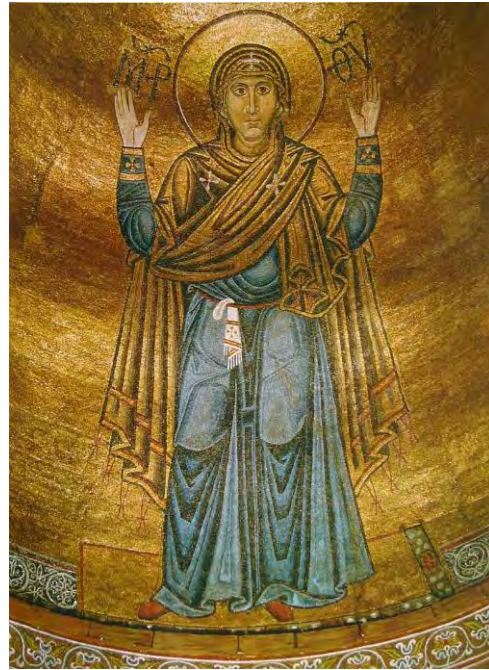
N. Slobodinskaya, *The Virgin Mary*, 1975-1978, coloured plaster cast.



N. Slobodinskaya, *The Virgin Mary*, 1975-1978, coloured plaster cast.



The Orans of Yaroslavl (Great Panagia), c. 1220, tempera, icon.



The Virgin, XI c., mosaics, Santa Sofia, Kiev.



The Virgin Orans, XV c., icon, Russia.



The Orant, late III c., fresco, in the crypt of La Velata, the Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome.



Raphael, *Heads of the Virgin and Child*, 1508-1510, drawing.

The Virgin, XII c., church decoration, stone.

One is more schematic and simply formed while another - more elaborated and is shown with a Jesus Christ nested at her knees. *The Virgin Orans, Oranta* – originally belongs to the Byzantine iconography. Her main characteristic is her posture in pray with extended, stretched and open arms. *The Great Panagias* is widely interpreted and followed in Christian imagery, especially in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. This depiction of the Virgin Mary varies: sometimes she is accompanied with a figure of Jesus Christ and occasionally she is pictured alone. The Virgin's solemn and static posture, the characteristic folds of her garments and her full of meditation and thought face expression prove that the design was strongly influenced by the Byzantine art⁴⁹². In Eastern tradition her image aimed to defend the population of country and historically believers affirmed that The Virgin Mary helped to survive and to save many cities from destruction. Consequently the image became a sacred symbol of the highest importance in the Eastern Europe⁴⁹³.

The first *Oranta* sculptural image is schematic. The composition is strict, simple and laconic. The central figure is The Virgin Mary with extended in praying gesture arms. The figure is in static position. The lines of her cloth together with the upper round arch underline the nimbus of the Virgin Mary's head, hinting at the sacred meaning

⁴⁹² Кондаков, Н.П. *Иконография Богоматери*. Т.1, СПб.: Elibron Classics, 2003, С.37-58.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, pp.37-58.

of the image. Her face expression is meditative. The handkerchief on her belt traditionally was meant to serve for wiping away the tears of those who search the mercy.

The sculptural form transmits the same message as other Orthodox icons of this type – the defence and care which a believer can find, addressing in his praying to The Virgin Mary. The Russian Orthodox Church never completely welcomed the depiction of Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary figures in sculpture. The church institution in Russia never definitely neglected the very idea of their depiction in sculptural forms but it clearly showed their disapproval⁴⁹⁴. That's the reason why I regard the sculptor's decision and determination to work on Christian imagery (regardless the possible opposition or unacceptance) as a brave and fearless gesture. Moreover, let's not forget that the State and its official artistic representation institution LOSH did not approve the religious subject in fine arts.

As a consequence Nina Slobodinskaya condemned herself immediately to be an artist – outsider: to be deprived of the official LOSH exhibitions participation, plus to get no financial reward for her works. It shows Nina Slobodinskaya as a strong, determined character, which is faithful to her inner inclinations and does not enter into compromise with her conscience. Nina Slobodinskaya was already in her 70s, when she worked on religious art, following her proper spiritual vision; these factors add even more respect towards the artist.

The second image of *God's Mother with a Jesus Christ* pretended to symbolize the defence and care of the whole nation, - was created as a symbol of protection of Leningrad. *Zachitnitsa goroda* – that is how the sculptor called the created image⁴⁹⁵. Iconographical image follows the strict rules of the figure's posture, but if viewer attentively looks at the faces, it becomes obvious that while The Virgin Mary's face is meditative and calm, Jesus Christ's face is full of emotional appeal, spirituality, inner tension and outburst. The bas-relief image is truly expressive and the plane background emphasizes even more the message of *closeness* and *accessibility* of a sacred world, Virgin Mary's and Jesus Christ involving and participation into the world's sufferings, pain and misery.

Through this sculptural religious series Nina Slobodinskaya shows her-self capable even more to transmit this icons' main message of transcendence, implication and

⁴⁹⁴ Лосский, Владимир, Успенский, Леонид. *Смысл икон*. М.: Православный Свято-Тихоновский гуманитарный университет, 1997, С.39-85.

⁴⁹⁵ Personal recallings of Andrey Gnezdilov, interviewed on 09.09.14.

interconnection of the *Sacred World* with our human's one. Hence, the subject of Christian images, which cults sacred figures' transcendence become the main in creative searches of the artist. The sculptor attempts to obtain maximally possible expressiveness in sculptural form (in order to make these sacred figures more emotionally appealing for believers).

As the main creative purpose Nina Slobodinskaya sees now a symbolical *approximation* of sacred figures of Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary to a viewer, in order to obtain a maximally strong spiritual interconnection, to achieve a true artistic expressiveness, visualizing her own strong religious belief. Presumably it was her main creative, artistic idea and task during the last life period.

Sculptor's fervent faith was reflected not only in sculpture, but also in her life: there are multiples people (mainly her son's friends and patients) who after meeting her on few occasions sincerely turned into the religion. It shows how strong her conviction, will and faith were.

10.9 Spas Nerukotvornii – Image of Edessa

Spas Nerukotvornii (Image of Edessa) - a one of the most traditional depictions of Christ's portrayal in The Orthodox Church, believed to be of divine origin⁴⁹⁶.

Formally the iconographic tradition of depiction is strictly followed: classical face's proportions, symmetry, ideal traits. But all mentioned would not be enough to express the enormous emotionally appealing impression of truthfulness, vividness and actual feeling of *presence* and *reality* of the Jesus Christ's face.

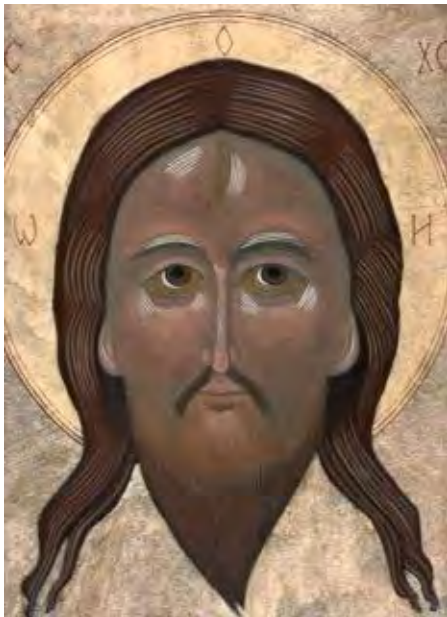
The plastering sketch still remains in the artist's studio; and by Gnezdilov's words, often occurs, that when a person for the first time enters the room and just passes by, for just an instant viewer has a full impression of seeing a real *vivid* face. Only in the second instance a person realizes that he sees a sculptural portrait. It's really difficult to understand with what means of artistic plastic language the artist achieves to reveal such a strong truthfulness of image's depiction, or rather a direct implication, full transcendence and a strong emotional appeal of the Jesus Christ's Sacred Figure's physical presence; perhaps it could be explained in terms of Orthodox images' interpretation.

⁴⁹⁶ Деяния Вселенских Соборов. Т.75, М.: Собор Никейский 2-й, Вселенский Седьмой Деяние, 1994, С.201.



The Mandylion Edessa, 1100, icon, Novgorod.

The Mandylion Edessa, XII –XIV c., icon, Russia.



The Mandylion, XVc., icon, from the Northern Russian town of Novgorod.

A. Rubliov, Christ The Redeemer, ca.1410, icon, wood.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Spas Nerukotvornii*, 1977-80, plasticine, 50 x 47 x 50.



N. Roerich, *And we see*, 1922, tempera.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Spas Nerukotvornii*, 1977-80, plasticine, 50 x 47 x 50.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Spas Nerukotvornii*, 1977-80, plaster cast, 50 x 47 x 50.

The only explanation that comes to my mind consists of the icon painter's approach, expressed in tradition to stay in pray and in fast before and during Christian image's creation. Apparently, strong religious belief together with a spiritual effort permitted to achieve the maximum expressiveness and a feeling of image depiction's *reality* (to which many generations during centuries addressed in pray and in hope). By strength of conviction, by symbolic spiritual content of the depiction, by detailed characteristic and classical interpretation of Jesus Christ's face N. Slobodinskaya's image is also accordant to N. Roerich. Let's not forget that N. Roerich was a kind of unspoken leader of contemporary to Slobodinskaya Russian intelligentsia's spiritual searches. His emblematic figure embodied the highest searches of human spirit, who in search of *Truth* and *true beauty*, aimed to unite all cultures of the world.

10.10 Crucifixion – last sculptural image

The last resultive sculptural image of Nina Slobodinskaya which also became the final not only in the series of religious images but also concluding in her proper life is the *Crucifixion*. Symbolically she aimed to elaborate a sculptural image for her proper grave. The first sculptor's idea consisted of creating a traditional sculptural image of the *Crucifixion* with its base in form of cross, but which would remind a traditional wooden icon, which may be closed by wooden doors, which would remind shutters. However, according to her son's memories, at that moment she did not have any necessary wooden base's material, so, instead, sculptor took decision to use a half of a wine's pipe as a base to The *Jesus Christ's* figure.

The created composition permits to give a multiplicity of allegoric interpretations and to suggest a variety of symbolic messages. First of all the wooden base reminds a symbolical *divine lightening* - the sun shine which appears, *growing* from *Jesus Christ's* figure, while the pedestal in form of stairs seems to symbolically express an accessibility, a direct connection between Christ's figure and viewers, to show a kind of spiritual link, which exists between His Sacred figure and the world.

The schematic Cross looks more as a hint than a real object. Further, a round frame resembles a form of circle and reveals an archetype of the World and Universe.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Crucifixion*, 1981, tinted plaster cast.

In this approach Jesus Christ seems to embrace the entire world and the very subject of His Crucifixion symbolizes the enormous significance of this event for the whole Universe. The scale of the dramatic event is defined as crucial for the whole Universe and logically for the whole mankind⁴⁹⁷.

⁴⁹⁷ The iconographical tradition of The Crucifixion of the Eastern Orthodox Church differs from the Western Catholic Church. The Catholic tradition is clearly historic and naturalistic. The crucified Christ is shown hanging on His hands; The Crucifixion transmits martyrish sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. From XV century a popular interpretation is based on revelations of Brigitte the Swedish (1302-1373), brightly visualized in the Crucifixion of Grunwald (Matiss Nithardt). The ancient Russian images of the Crucifixion are severe and even ascetic. Jesus Christ is depicted not just vivid, resuscitated, but also as reigning Savior, the Almighty, the Pantocrator and calls in his embrace the whole Universe. That's why Jesus Christ in the Orthodox version is definitely shown with open palms. The motives of the western depiction, appeared in the early XVII century were strictly judged. Another difference in characteristic of catholic Crucifixion – crossed and perforated with one nail both foos of the Savior. In the Orthodox tradition every foot is perforated separately, by one nail each foot.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Crucifixion*, 1981, tinted plaster cast.

See more on the subject of the Orthodox Crucifixion's interpretation: Филатов, В.В. *Словарь изографа. Библиотека клирика*. М.: Православное издательство Лествица, 2000; Басов, Д. *Иконы в храме и в вашем доме*. СПб.: Изд-во А.В.К.-Тимошка, 2001; Райгородский, Л.Д. *Беседы о русских иконах*. СПб.: Глаголь, 1996; Топоров, В.Н. *Крест. Мифы народов мира*. Т.2, М.: Современный Дом, 1992; *Настольная книга священнослужителя*. Т.4, М.: Прометей, 1983; Покровский, Н.В. *Евангелие в памятниках иконографии*. М.: Ладья, 2000; Ориген. *Толкование Евангелия по Матфею*. XIII, М.: Белфакс, 1997; Тертуллиан. *Против Маркиана. Богословский сборник*. М.: Азбука, 2005; Василий Великий, святитель. *Толкование на пророка Исаию. Творения иже во святых отца нашего Василия Великого, архиепископа Кесарии Каппадокийския*. М.: Наука, 1845; Покровский, Н.В. *Евангелие в памятниках иконографии*. М.: Искусство, 2000; Дамаскин Иоанн, преподобный. *Точное изложение православной веры*. СПб.: Репринт, 1984; Майкапар, Александр. *Новозаветные сюжеты в живописи: Распятие Христа*. Приложение к газете Первое сентября, № 42 (210), Ноябрь, 2000.

In the sculptural composition viewer may find a multiplicity of symbolical meanings but the central part of composition - *The Jesus Christ's figure* – is the most appealing. The schematic frame just accentuates the realistically shaped Christ's human figure on the Cross. The most expressive appears to be his face, which seems to transmit all the sorrow, grief, pain, solitude and emotional heaviness of the dying God's Son. Presumably, the artist aimed to show the most painful moment of Jesus Christ's life – a moment of human death, approximating to Jesus Christ and the pain of God's Son who feels so lonely and left by His Father. A moment when God's Son proclaims: "Боже Мой, Боже Мой! для чего Ты Меня оставил?" ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Math 27:46Mk 15:34).

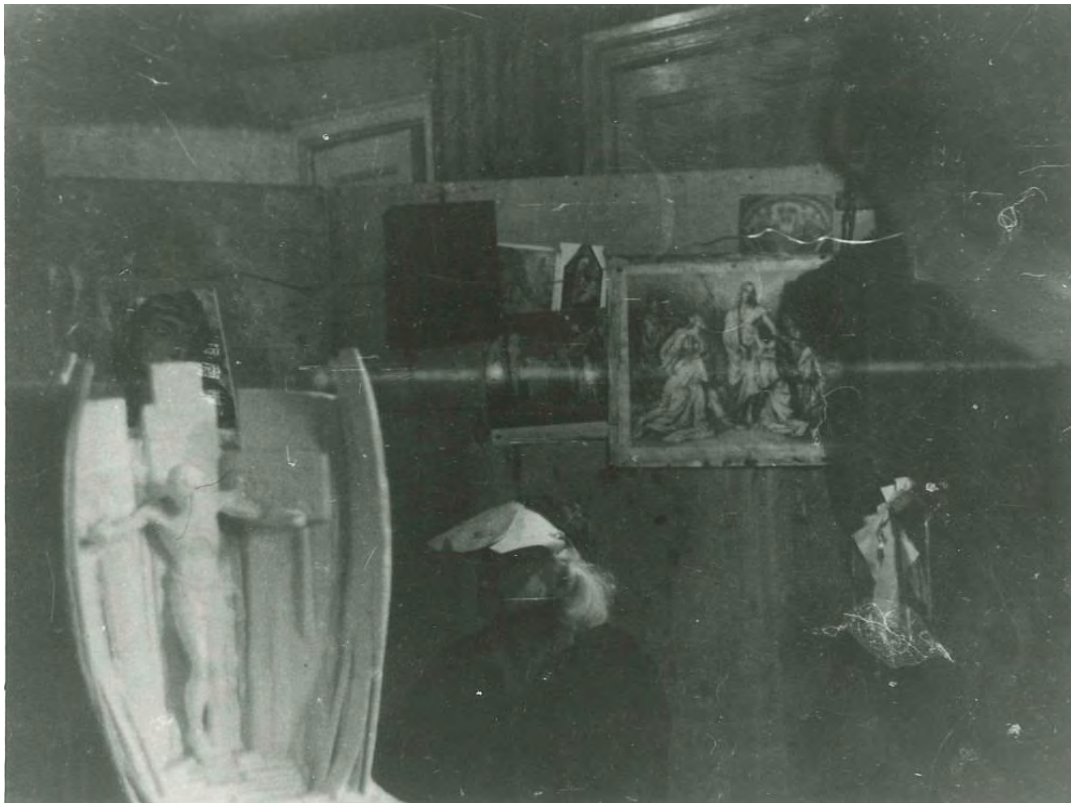


Photo of N. Slobodinskaya working on the *Crucifixion*, 1981, unknown author, this one is almost the last photo of the sculptor before her death.



N. Slobodinskaya, *Crucifixion*, 1981, coloured plaster cast.

Despite the fact that Jesus Christ's eyes are fully closed, his body seems to visualize his soul's scream filled with an inner and physical pain. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ's hand's gesture seems to be *calling* and *invocatory*. The cross which appears here only as a hint, symbolically transmits the idea that Jesus Christ is represented here more *Calling to humanity, Appealing to all mankind in His will to embrace the whole world with His Love, and to lead a man to Salvation*. The circle frame around Jesus Christ's figure in this context symbolizes God in His Glory, the grandeur Of His act of Love for the whole humanity and the Universe. By this appealing message Slobodinskaya's interpretation is close to S. Konenkov's *Jesus Christ walking above waves*, 1935, although his Jesus Christ is not crucified; while by expressive drama, concentrated inner spiritual tension of the Saviour's face, by a realistically and delicately shaped face, by a chosen material and the light yellow-brown colour of the sculptural image, - N. Slobodinskaya's Jesus Christ's image is consonant with A. Golubkina's *Christ* (see p.199 of this research).

There is no other thematic image which would be so much explored by art as The Crucifixion. It deserves a separate approach and research which is not our aim in this study. The medieval art, Michelangelo's drawings, Russian wooden sculpture of XVIII and XIX centuries, contemporary Russian sculptors as Konenkov (who reveals a personality of Jesus Christ in its grandeur, spiritual strength and expressive dramatism)

and French sculptor Germaine Richier (who represents the Calvary in a truly schematic way) – all they most brightly contribute to this theme suggesting universal, vivid and always actual Christ's vision. The conscience of Jesus Christ's suffering to death and his sacrifice full of Love for all humanity – the grandeur, moment's significance and all dramatic tension of Christ's state - is the main masters' creative idea which she successfully transmitted - the past and always the present central moment in The Gospel. The image appears to be a *direct appeal to human's heart* - to reveal their souls and to help them to discover their way towards Jesus Christ.

Such was the last sculptural message left by the sculptor. *The Crucifixion* framed in an original artistic form – complex and full of enormous emotional significance and spiritual symbolism. In my opinion – a truly honourable life result creatively and personally.



M. Antokolskiy, *Jesus Christ in front of people's judgment*, 1874, marble.



Ugolino-Lorenzetti, *Calvary*, XIV c.



Calvary, XVIII c., wood, Perm.



Calvary, XVIII c., wood, Perm.



Michelangelo, *Crucifixion*, 1541, drawing.



Христос. Сергей Коненков. Мрамор.
Смоленский музей.



1935 г. Христос, идущий по водам.
Сергей Коненков. Местонахождение неизвестно.

S. Kononov, *Jesus Christ*, 1930s, marble.

S. Kononov, *Jesus Christ walking above waves*, 1935, bronze.



Germaine Richiere, *Christ d'Assy*, 1950, bronze, 48 x 32 x 11.

11. CONCLUSION

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy.*

Rabindranath Tagore, *Pratima Bowes Songs and Poems*, 1920s.

In summary of the research I would like to designate a significant difficulty faced in pursuit of my dissertation which was the data absence of sculptor's personal and creative biography, the obtained information in official sources was minimal, reduced to few dating.

In the course of my work, particularly grace to the sculptor's private archive among other sources, it was possible to considerably recreate Nina Slobodinskaya's artistic biography, to identify more or less exactly the time period and the location of the main sculptural works, and in addition bring to light and scientifically describe the wide range of almost forgotten sculptures, which ever have been publicly exhibited or published; finally, grace to sculptor's personal archive it became possible to introduce artist's sculptural works into scientific use, preparing the first complete catalogue of all attributed to Nina Slobodinskaya's sculptural works.

In the research was made an attempt to disclose the master's means of artistic expressiveness and to reconstruct the sculptor's creative method. The scientific and artistic analysis permits to affirm that the artist first started working in realism and naturalism, occasionally using hypertrophic forms in order to better visualize sculpture's main idea in the early period; while in the post-war period the sculptor worked completely in realism, which was characteristic for the national art of the second part of XX century. Regardless of strict thematic and stylistic requests established during the Soviet epoch, in the last decade of her creative work Nina Slobodinskaya completely turned to a symbolic language and schematic method of depiction, refusing to obey to the official artistic requests, choosing instead the religious subject as the main.

The artistic and scientific analysis of the sculptor's works permits to state that Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya made a significant contribution into the XX century Art heritage.

Contemporary Fine Art tends to include into the international scientific knowledge more issues, concerning individual vision, worldview in research of artist's creative heritage and artistic individuality, - in these terms artist's personality has been significantly revealed, Slobodinskaya's philosophical, spiritual worldview, finally her personal character traits which directly impacted on her artistic vision and defined the field of her creative interests.

Being young, Nina Konradovna Slobodinskaya shared spiritual beliefs and interests in theosophy and was deeply keen on the cosmism (seeing the direct spiritual interconnection and unity of man and the Universe), which also echoed in spiritual ideals of her family and friends 'circle. Precisely this world's vision defined her creative search and interests in sculpture: to disclose person's complex individuality and to uncover human spiritual essence in every portrayed model – was Slobodinskaya's main creative purpose, and this artistic goal directly corresponded to the Russian cultural intelligentsia's search of spirituality in the surrounding world and people.

Further (in 1960s) Nina Slobodinskaya fervently turns to The Orthodox Christian faith (although she ever neglected it before), which deeply influenced her personally, - as a result, her deep religious feeling was reflected in a wide range of sculptural Christian images.

As to aesthetic ideals, Nina Slobodinskaya's sculptural *guru* were Bourdelle and Rodin in the European Fine Art's field, while on the national level she worshiped Anna Golubkina and Trubetskoi. Besides we should not underestimate the influence of her professors in sculpture who were emblematic sculptors of the Soviet epoch - Vera Muchina and Alexander Matveev.

Moreover, all historical changes together with new ideals, new heroes, and significant personalities that marked the whole Soviet epoch were reflected in the artist's creative work, what permits to affirm that Nina Slobodinskaya was a *faithful daughter* of her time, being sensitive, attentive and responsive to all challenges of The Soviet Epoch.

Among Slobodinskaya's artistic heritage appears the whole portrait gallery of significant personalities: the new Soviet war heroes such as more than life size

monument of the *Admiral Chabalin*, installed in The Central Park of Onega city; more than life size the sculptural bas-relief group of *The Red Army* soldiers, decorating the main hall of the *Narvskaya* metro-station in St. Petersburg; the range of the portrayed scientists, distinguished by the sculptural marble bust of *Academician Pavlovsky* which is permanently installed in The Medicine-Military Museum; the sculptural portrait of a legendary *Mathematician Fadeev*, a sculptural portrait of a famous Doctor *Geology Iavorsky* (this sculptural work has a documentary approval of its artistic value, signed by M. Anikushin - one of the most prominent sculptors of the Soviet epoch); the sculptural bust in bronze of *Vladimir Gnezdilov* – Doctor of Biology and the head of Biology department in the Medicine-Military Academy, especially in this work the search of inner spirituality, tension of the inner world's model's life, and a deep psychological characteristic is visualized most expressively; the monumental bust of the outstanding agronomist in XX century Russia - *Michurin*, whose monument was installed in Sosnovo (St. Petersburg's region); the small-format sculptural group of legendary Revolution's leader *Kalinin and Michurin* which was widely replicated in marble and pertains to the permanent collection of the former Kalinin's Museum in Moscow and its copy to the Minsk's Fine Arts Museum; further deserves mentioning the sculptural bust of *Alexander Pasternak* - a dramatic actor of the Lenconcert theatre in St. Petersburg; the prominent and remarkable Russian writer's *Nekrasov's* bas-relief, remaining in the collection of the *Nekrasov's* Museum in St. Petersburg – should also be displayed; and not to forget a sculptural portrait in bronze of a legendary Russian choreographer *Feodor Lopukhov*, who marked the whole Soviet Era by his new ballet performances, his sculptural portrait belongs to The St. Petersburg Theatre Museum's permanent collection; the marble portrait of the *Eastern Madonna*, which pertains to The Fine Art's Museum of Komsomolsk- na Amure, may be undoubtedly defined as the most significant female portrait of the Asian period; along a new female ideal, promoted and imposed by The Soviet government was also treated in several sculptural images, such as *The Peasant* and *Soviet Lelia*; finally as the crucial and the most appealing images appear the bas-relief of *Jesus Christ* and *The Crucifixion* – the last and the most emotionally appealing sculptural work of Nina Slobodinskaya in which the sculptor showed all her professional skills, combining symbolical and realistic method as artistic means in order to achieve a maximal expressiveness and to obtain a convincing strength of the image.

Being a strong personality, and remaining faithful to her proper beliefs, Nina Slobodinskaya did not accept the ideological changes and the imposed narrow artistic frames, and despite of all life misfortunes and trials the artist survived creatively and achieved to preserve her human dignity and self-respect, confidently and fearlessly developing her mastery and her individual path in sculpture.

Nina Slobodinskaya never lost strength and will to continue working, as its proof stands out the fact that she sculpted almost till the last day of her life, when finally the painful disease took her away. The peculiarity and originality of her artistic language, the rich artistic heritage left by the sculptor, fervent and vocational attitude to work, - underlines the significance of Nina's Slobodinskaya personality and permits to deservedly place her at the same range with the most prominent sculptors of the Soviet epoch. Moreover, it confirms a necessity to bring into public light the sculptor's artistic heritage, what hopefully will be realized in the nearest future.

Saying that, I would like to resume more profoundly the sculptor's creative achievements and to define the key artistic searches in all her life periods. Her professional interest and artistic means of expressiveness concentrated around the main purpose - a search of spirituality in man, defined artist's personal urge for *eternal values*, which were reflected in sculpture. The sculptor's works are filled with a spiritual symbolism. Aside, her sculptural images appear to be a mirror of philosophical beliefs in the cosmism; the hidden motive of *spiritual pilgrimage*, so characteristic in Russian literature, poetry, philosophy and religion, may be often traced in her imagery of the early creative period, since we know that throughout their traveling pilgrims search a sense of life, its spiritual fullness, God.

Already in the early creative period the artist widely possesses the sculptor's mastery, however Slobodinskaya does not *stop* there – she enriches sculpture with inner dynamism, a spirit of *movement*, kind of *inner musical rhythm* and spiritual *idea*. This tendency to depict sculptural images *in movement* may be probably rooted in Bourdelle's and Golubkina's method's influence.

Artist's early experience with monumental sculpture (1930s) proves that she already possesses a necessary technique of mature artist, while the symbolical depth and wholeness of her images discover an artist as a deeply feeling, sensible and complex personality, who urges to find a category of spirituality in any of her portrayed models.

We cannot overlook the fact that any Soviet artist during the epoch of the Totalitarianism had frames of his artistic liberty. In case of Slobodinskaya and her artists-fellows circle - more often those frames appear to be conventional. The artists attempted to overcome the conventionality of those demands. To find out whether they successfully achieved it or not we certainly should trace every individual case. The analysis of Slobodinskaya's and her friends' sculptural path shows that creatively rich personality, a mature artist always found ways to express him-self. For instance if a subject was a limitation than an artist achieved to fulfil an image with a deeper meaning, and as in our case happens: the simple female *Peasant* turns into a spiritual pilgrim who is correlated to Russian philosophical and spiritual searches, brightly visualized in a personage often appearing in Russian fairy-tale folklore – *Ivan Durak*.

Even if sculptor had to portray mainly Soviet war or labour heroes or significant personalities of the new communist era – nobody could stop artist from creating a deeply psychological intimate portrayal, revealing a *deeply-human* in man, aiming to discover his spiritual essence, in this way bridging over the imposed thematic frames. The example of Slobodinskaya and her contemporary fellows–friends in sculpture show that personal artistic searches could be combined with official State's requests. Probably it happened because the main theme in sculpture always remains a human being in all its complexity - immense and horizontless subject, which permits to give multilevel interpretations and fulfil an image with emotionally appealing, deeply psychological and spiritually rich, diverse content.

Nina Slobodinskaya searches a contemporary language of expression in sculpture. Generally, the most distinguishing artistic and creative traits of the sculptor were following: poetical imaginative and visual thinking, metaphoricalness, search of harmony and untimeliness, interest to a state of trance and inner concentration (especially brightly expressed in the sculptural images of the Asian period), a tension of concentrated inner life of models, a life and strength of human spirit, perfection of sculptural forms' modelling, a clear composition, laconic forms, absence of unnecessary details, a search of ideal forms' symmetry; an inner dynamism of sculptural images. Her figurative language was expressed in search of optimal proportions for volume and masses, almost architectural construction of sculptural spatial form. Probably due to Matveev's influence the artist shows her-self capable to uncover a monolithic character of form; she develops till perfection composition's

clarity and equilibrium, which is rooted in the classical tradition. However Slobodinskaya the main part of her creative path belonged to artists-realists, except her latest artistic period.

The innovation of Slobodinskaya consists of following: through realistic individual portrait, through search of spiritual essence, human spirit, through inner dialogue which a sculptural personage carries on with him-self, - the artist expresses a symbolic subject – a dialogue of man with the Universe, interrelation of man with the world, interconnection of man and the Universe, an urge of man towards a spiritual world and their organic unity; finally she reveals a theme of *untimeliness* of human soul, a category of *eternity* which prevails the *temporality* of human existence.

Nina Slobodinskaya had luck of being a permanent apprentice of prominent Soviet sculptor Vera Muchina, as only a very short period in her career the famous master dedicated to teaching. The young sculptor adapted well the Vera Muchina's lessons and advices, who stated that a multiplicity of details can destroy the main idea and the whole impression of monument. It's already a known fact, that no one Soviet artist could escape such subjects in art as new heroes, war, revolution, labour, pertaining to the obligatory Soviet artists' unions in order to get commissions, to expose artworks at exhibitions and to earn for living expenses. Thus, appears logical, that in her early creative period Slobodinskaya explores the mentioned subjects in a variety of sculptural forms.

In sculptural works of Slobodinskaya there is always a presence a *hidden inner rhythm* which gives a special *sound's richness* to every depicted image and reminds a musical composition. Without neglecting the pure sculptural qualities of the works we may suggest that the key message the artist attempts to transmit – spiritual content of individuality. However, the sculptor never just *blindly copies* the model, instead she tends to intuitively feel it, *live it through*, what presumably gives a feeling of image's harmony and natural wholeness.

Concerning the sculptural portraits of the socialist realism style (Soviet iconography reclaimed generalized images of personalities who would achieve something in the new Soviet Era), which had to be representative, but in Nina Slobodinskaya's case, instead, turned out to be deeply psychological, intimate and individual; thus sculptor did not strictly adhere to the official artistic rules, standing up for proper artistic interests.

Trying to sum up: in the early creative period Slobodinskaya worked in a variety of sculptural genres and forms: monumental sculpture of higher-than life-size, small-format sculptural images, statuettes, haut-relief, and portraits. The sculptor shows her-self as a mature artist which perfectly dominates a craft of sculptor and a necessary technique. She adapts a realistic style as the main in her artworks. However, using realistic style she shows capable to overcome the conventionality of forms and strictness of the imposed Soviet iconography, enriching her works with a content embracing a multiplicity of senses, profound meanings and symbols.

Nina Slobodinskaya showed no fear in experimenting with a variety of materials (granite, marble, terracotta, bronze, gypsum and limestone), although she mostly demonstrates her skills and professional knowledge in plaster cast and bronze. From the beginning the sculptor tended to shape in huge volume and used a schematic manner of figures' pronunciation, hypertrophic forms, but gradually artist gives preference to refined small-format sharp-cut sculptural images. One of the artist's individual traits is a tendency to find and disclose an inner movement and rhythm in composition, line and figure and to give inner dynamism to the image. Portrait genre appears to respond mostly to her artistic search of individuality's essence, her artistic sensibility permits to give a profound psychological interpretation to a model. The Second World War brings unexpected social changes together with new thematic and stylistic demands. Living for two years period in Leningrad under the siege (1941-1943) – her main task was a fight for survival. Finally, brought by life circumstances to the ancient legendary Asian town – Samarkand, sculptor discovered a bright world of the East through the range of peculiar Asian personalities. There, free from official artistic demands, flourished her interest towards a human being - individualities, simple people from streets' crowd, in whom she discovers their *inner world's* beauty, and through which explores an interrelation of man and the world in its spiritual aspect.

The sculptor's Samarkand's creative work period may be defined as one of the most artistically fruitful. The sculptor's work method consisted of the direct modelling with a portrayed in front. In general terms the characteristic traits of the Asian sculptural figures were following: a realistic manner of depiction, models shaping in natural relaxed pose, a detailed pronunciation of human bodies, thoughtfully, attentively and naturalistically portrayed images with the main emphasis on face expression. The artist never uses a generalized manner of portrayal, a typicalness or

idealization; instead she looked for image's individuality's depiction, aiming to reveal a profound human essence of every model. The sculptor succeeds in her creative attempt and the realistic style is used only as a formal method in purpose to expose rich complex Asian personalities. During this creative epoch sculptor showed interest towards a subject of *oldness* and further Nina Slobodinskaya often develops it, depicting a variety of old people, whose sculptural images are expressive, full of inner symbolical meaning, deep personalization; a theme of oldness does not appear as an expression of physic ugliness or hopelessness, instead it is shown as a natural state of human body's changes which can not affect or hide a beauty of one's soul, thus Nina Slobodinskaya affirmed a *primacy* of category of *eternity* in frames of *temporality* of human existence.

Nina Slobodinskaya turns to be a real philosopher and psychologist in sculpture. From now and on the main subject in sculpture which inspires her become human characters, complex personalities, which the artist attempts to reveal through the multiplicity of forms and materials. Sculptor Slobodinskaya after 14 years of intense creative work ripens into a mature formed artist, having found her style, and the theme of sculptural searches. The detachment, a concentration on inner thoughts, on inner spiritual world in all complexity of portrayed model – it's a common trait of the sculptor's works. Besides the artist perfectly gives the exact characteristic of national Asian traits such as calmness, sluggishness, a lazy slowness, which mirror a state of tranquillity and laziness, prevailing in the atmosphere of Samarkand in the middle of XX century.

In the post-war period the sculptor preserves the same attitude to work, portraying war-heroes, famous scientists, talented personalities, in whom she attempted to uncover a tension of concentrated interior world, giving a profound psychological characteristic of models. The artist in her approach usually neglects a formal naturalistic similarity of a portrayed trying instead to display their psychological and spiritual human essence.

Sculptural decoration of the main hall of *the Narvskaya* metro station in Leningrad among a range of the best Russian sculptors of the epoch – became a unique experience which also signified the official recognition of her mastery. Involvement into the outstanding up to-day technical innovative project of the top-level State's significance was highly prestigious and provided sculptor Slobodinskaya with a thousands of public daily. Sculptural composition the *Red Army* in marble turned out

to be expressive dynamic and laconic. The artist used realistic style in sculpting. These soldier's figures together with girl's image perfectly fit into the whole chain of sculptural images at the metro vestibule, representing idealized but real members of the Soviet society.

The last period of the artist's creative work in the beginning of 1970s may be characterized by the active and crucial turn to Christian imagery. Despite a social disapproval, unspoken taboo and incapacity to get any financial reward for elaborating religious sculptural images, the artist fully devotes her sculptural skills to the religious imagery's developing, what was obviously connected with the sculptor's turn to an active religious life and its rich spiritual searches experiences. Hence, a recurrent leitmotif in her work appears to be her strong faith in God.

Christian imagery required a special approach, as its final artistic purposes and the very notion of creativity differ from secular art. Religious creativity implied a conscious choice, appealing to a *transcendent* and *universal space* through art works. Being a master of a detailed realistic portrait, now, instead, sculptor Slobodinskaya applied a generalized schematic and more symbolic artistic language, trying to transmit an inner spiritual power and emotional strength of depicted characters: tenderness or sorrow, sadness or spiritual force.

In *The Trinity* image Slobodinskaya outlined a form of circle which dominates the composition, creating an inner motion and dynamism in the image and symbolically proposes a vision of the *Three Angels* as of mysterious universe, where *the Trinity* is the very essence and centre, representing wholeness. The sculptural bas-relief of *The Trinity* was gifted to the catholic church of St. Petersburg.

In the last sculptural religious series Nina Slobodinskaya showed her-self capable to give a *higher dimension* and a sense of *figures' transcendence* to her works; to fulfil images with sense of human and spiritual world's interconnection and a to transmit a feeling of their organic unity and wholeness; to give frontal symmetry to a composition, to obtain wholeness and clarity of architectonical solution. Sculptor's works gradually acquire an increasing drama together with high emotional appeal; show a search of deep psychologism. So far the subject of *transcendence* of Christian sacred images and the effort to obtain a maximal expressiveness in sculptural forms (in attempt to approximate these sacred figures closer to the viewer, to create a space of *direct emotional contact* between them) become the main in creative searches of the artist.

The Spas Nerukotvornii - Image of Edessa expresses the enormous feeling of *truthfulness, vividness and, actually, reality* of Jesus Christ's portrayal. According to Russian Theological thought a truly appealing message the artist was able to transmit only by confessing a strong religious belief.

The final sculptural image of Nina Slobodinskaya is the *Crucifixion*. The visualization of Jesus Christ's sufferings to death and His sacrifice full of Love for all humanity – is the main artist's idea; the sculptor aimed to show full of the emotional appeal the central moment of The Gospel. Our sculptor with a sincere empathy and deep compassion attempted to transmit a moment – full of drama, inner tension, the most painful instances of Jesus Christ's sufferings, who seems to be so close to death; - it is the most difficult moment of Jesus Christ's sufferings and sacrifice – hanging on the cross, above a physic pain, overwhelmed with a feeling of complete loneliness, a feeling of being left by God-Father. Seems that this howl full of inner despair was exclaimed precisely in this moment: *Father! Why have you forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46).

His gashed, worn out body – personification of a vivid ache, His face – embodiment of restrained torment, humility and resignation, however a gesture of His hands seem to express a *silent call* – an appeal to all the humanity – to see His act full of self-scarifying Love, to glorify God and to *come along* to Him.

The Crucifixion – a complex work full of enormous emotional significance and spiritual symbolism became a worthwhile end of Nina Slobodinskaya's artistic path.

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