

SOVIET UKRAINIAN PAINTING c. 1955-1979:

NEW CURRENTS AND UNDERCURRENTS

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ABSTRACT

Since the early 1930s, Soviet artists had to work under strict controls imposed by the Communist Party. Yet, at the beginning of the 1960s a large scale flowering of Ukrainian culture took place in which Socialist Realism lost its tight grip on the visual arts, particularly painting. This thesis documents the revival of Soviet Ukrainian painting and traces its development in the context of the cultural and national past, using unpublished Soviet sources.

The cultural and political background of 20th century Ukraine are described briefly as are the controls and censorship of the arts by the Communist Party working through the Ministry of Culture, the Academy of Arts, and the Artists' Union. The thesis discusses the effects of Socialist Realism on the artists, and then proceeds to examine the impact of Khrushchev's policy of liberalization and Brezhnev's re-tightening of controls on the development of Ukrainian painting. It investigates the new currents and undercurrents of Soviet Ukrainian painting, particularly those beyond the narrow confines of Socialist Realism, covering approximately a period of twenty-five years. Some of the main trends of Ukrainian painting of the 1960s and 1970s are identified on the basis of an analysis of the work of a select number of innovative artists. Ukrainian and Western European influences are traced in the paintings of such official artists as R. Sel's'kyi, V. Patyk, and O. Dubovyk, and in the work of such unofficial ones as P. Zalyvakha, K. Zviryns'kyi, I. Marchuk, F. Humeniuk, V. Makarenko, and V. Sazonov. The thesis evaluates, from a Western point of view, the contribution of non-conformist art to the continuity of creative achievements of Ukrainian painting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

p. 3.	Abstract
p. 4.	Contents
p. 5.	List of plates
p. 21.	A Note on Translation and Transliteration
p. 23.	Acknowledgements
p. 26.	Preface
p. 31.	Chapter One: The Cultural and Political Background of Artistic Developments After 1900
p. 62.	Chapter Two: Socialist Realism
p. 105.	Chapter Three: New Currents: Widening the Socialist Realism Framework
p. 166.	Chapter Four: Undercurrents: Non-conformist Art
p. 216.	Chapter Five: Undercurrents and Official Artists: Sel's'kyi, Patyk, Dubovyk
p. 244.	Chapter Six: Non-conformist Artists: Zalyvakha, Zviryns'kyi, Marchuk
p. 301.	Chapter Seven: Non-conformist Artists: Humeniuk, Makarenko, Sazonov
p. 378.	Chapter Eight: Conclusion
p. 394.	Selected Bibliography
p. 410.	Appendix A
p. 420.	Appendix B

LIST OF PLATES

- Plate 1.1. Map of Ukraine.
- Plate 2.1. S. Hryhoriev, Pryiom do Komsomolu (Admission to the Young Communist League), 1949.
- Plate 2.2. S. Hryhoriev, Pryiom do Komsomolu (Admission to the Young Communist League), 1949. Museum of Ukrainian Art, Kiev with Stalin's bust painted out.
- Plate 2.3. A. Lopukhov, Do Petrohrada. V. I. Lenin (To Petrograd), 1953.
- Plate 2.4. S. Huiets'kyi, Smolnyi, 1917, 1957.
- Plate 2.5. K. Filatov, Krasna ploshcha (Red Square), 1965.
- Plate 2.6. V. Tokariev, Nova shkola (New School), 1965.
- Plate 2.7. M. Bozhii, Dvadtsiatyi vik (Twentieth Century), 1967.
- Plate 2.8. S. Yerzhykovs'kyi, Artylerysty pid Stalingradom (Artillerymen Near Stalingrad), 1945.
- Plate 2.9. V. Puzyrkov, Chornomortsi (Black Sea Sailors), 1947.
- Plate 2.10. S. Otroshchenko, Partyzany (Partisans), 1947.
- Plate 2.11. D. Shavykin, Druzhba (Friendship), 1950.
- Plate 2.12. A. Konstantynopol's'kyi, Na svitanku (At Daybreak), 1961.
- Plate 2.13. A. Safargalin, Medsestra (Nurse), 1965.
- Plate 2.14. O. Khmelnyts'kyi, V imia zhyttia (In the Name of Life), 1967.
- Plate 2.15. V. Kostets'kyi, Povernennia (Return), 1947.
- Plate 2.16. V. Chekaniuk, Pershyi Komsomol's'kyi oseredok na seli (First Komsomol Members in a Village), 1958.
- Plate 2.17. K. Trokhymenko, Kadry Dniprobudu (Builders of the Dnipre Dam), 1937.
- Plate 2.18. P. Deputatova, Molodi kadry Donbasu (Young Cadres of Donbas), 1947.
- Plate 2.19. T. Yablons'ka, Khlib (Bread), 1949.
- Plate 2.20. I. Bokshai, Bokorashi (Loggers on the River), 1947.

- Plate 2.21. A. Manastyr's'kyi, Hutsuly-kolhospnyky (Hutsul Collective Farmers), 1951.
- Plate 2.22. H. Hliuk, Lisoruby (Woodcutters), 1954.
- Plate 2.23. M. Burachek, Doroha do kolhospu (Road to the Collective Farm), 1937.
- Plate 2.24. I. Shtil'man, Kolhospna nyva (Collective Farm Field), 1950.
- Plate 2.25. V. Dobrzhans'kyi and B. Rapaport, Zavod iminem Dzerzhyn's'koho (The Dzerzhyn's'kyi Factory), 1952.
- Plate 2.26. M. Khmel'ko, Naviky z Moskvoiu - naviky z rosiis'kym narodom (Forever with Moscow - Forever with the Russian People), 1954.
- Plate 2.27. M. Derehus, Taras Bul'ba na choli viis'ka (Taras Bul'ba at the Head of His Army), 1952.
- Plate 2.28. M. Kryvenko, Yikhav kozak na viion'ku (A Cossack Rode to War), 1952.
- Plate 2.29. H. Melikhov, Molodyi Taras Shevchenko v maisterni K. Briullova (The Young T. Shevchenko in the Workshop of K. Briullov), 1947.
- Plate 3.1. A. Hors'ka, L. Semykina, and P. Zalyvakha, Taras Shevchenko Panel, 1964.
- Plate 3.2. M. Hlushchenko, Vidlyha (Thaw), 1959.
- Plate 3.3. M. Hlushchenko, Rankove sontse (Morning Sun), 1971.
- Plate 3.4. M. Hlushchenko, Blakytnyi natiurmort (Light Blue Still Life), 1971.
- Plate 3.5. R. Sel's'kyi, Stavok u Mykulycheni (Pond in Mykulychen'), 1953.
- Plate 3.6. V. Manastyr's'kyi, Rika Bila Tysa (The White Tysa River), 1954.
- Plate 3.7. R. Sel's'kyi, Karpatsk'kyi peisazh (Carpathian Landscape), 1958.
- Plate 3.8. V. Manastyr's'kyi, Sadok u Karpatakh (Orchard in the Carpathian Mountains), 1958.
- Plate 3.9. R. Sel's'kyi, Kryms'kyi budynok (Building in Crimea), 1962.

- Plate 3.10. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Pid horoiu Sokil (At the Foot of Mount Sokil), 1962.
- Plate 3.11. R. Sel's'kyi, Dzembrons'kyi natiurmort (Still Life from Dzembronia), 1965.
- Plate 3.12. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Hutsul Still Life, 1957.
- Plate 3.13. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Natiurmort v interieri (Still Life in the Interior), 1963.
- Plate 3.14. M. Sel's'ka, Still Life, 1967.
- Plate 3.15. O. Shatkivs'kyi, Calla Lillies, 1967.
- Plate 3.16. A. Erdeli, Zarucheni (The Engaged Couple), 1953.
- Plate 3.17. A. Erdeli, Molodytsia (Married Woman), c.1940.
- Plate 3.18. F. Manailo, Hutsulka (Girl from Hutsul Land), 1939.
- Plate 3.19. F. Manailo, Hutsul's'ka grazhda (Hutsul Farm), 1967.
- Plate 3.20. A. Kotska, Na hutsul'shchynyi (In Hutsul Land), 1972.
- Plate 3.21. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Legin' (Highlander), 1949.
- Plate 3.22. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Verkhovynka (Highland Lass), 1960.
- Plate 3.23. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Marichka, 1973.
- Plate 3.24. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Rik 1939. Zustrich vozz'iednanykh (The Year 1939. Meeting of the Re-United), 1954.
- Plate 3.25. V. Manastyrs'kyi, Divchynka (Girl), 1948.
- Plate 3.26. H. Smol'nyi, Narechena (Fiancée), 1957.
- Plate 3.27. T. Holombiievs'ka, Rozmova. Podruhy. (Conversation. Friends.), 1959.
- Plate 3.28. T. Holombiievs'ka, Ukrainins'ki kumantsi (Ukrainian Pottery), 1960.
- Plate 3.29. T. Yablons'ka, Vesillia (Wedding), 1963.
- Plate 3.30. T. Yablons'ka, Bride, 1966.
- Plate 3.31. P. Zalyvakha, Divchyna z Poltavshchyny (Girl from the Poltava Region), 1964.

- Plate 3.32. P. Zalyvakha, Boritiesia - Poborote (Fight and You Shall Conquer), 1964.
- Plate 3.33. P. Zalyvakha, Petro Kalnyshevs'kyi, 1964.
- Plate 3.34. F. Manailo, Novyi khlib (New Bread), 1975.
- Plate 3.35. Hors'ka, Zubchenko, Zarets'kyi, and Pryshed'ko, Boreviter (Wind Fighter), 1967.
- Plate 3.36. Hors'ka, Zubchenko, Zarets'kyi, and Pryshed'ko, Derevo Zhyttia (Tree of Life), 1967.
- Plate 3.37. K. Zviryns'kyi, Vechir (Evening), 1958.
- Plate 3.38. M. Sel's'ka, Yavoriv, 1956.
- Plate 3.39. M. Sel's'ka, Zbir vynohradu (Grape Picking), 1962.
- Plate 3.40. R. Sel's'kyi, Decorative Appliqué, 1965.
- Plate 3.41. R. Sel's'kyi, Composition with Kites, 1969.
- Plate 3.42. L. Medvid, Emigranty I (Immigrants I), 1964.
- Plate 3.43. L. Medvid, Triumf zhyttia (Triumph of Life), 1968.
- Plate 3.44. V. Patyk, Taras Shevchenko na baat'kivshchyni (Taras Shevchenko in his Homeland), 1964.
- Plate 3.45. M. Vainshtein, Vesnianyi motiv (Spring Motif), 1967.
- Plate 3.46. M. Vainshtein, Pershi (The First Ones), 1968.
- Plate 3.47. A. Summar, Terrace, 1959.
- Plate 3.48. O. Dubovyk, Portrait of Artist V. Zhuravel', 1966.
- Plate 3.49. V. Hryhorov, Majesty, 1968.
- Plate 3.50. V. Ryzhykh, Hockey, 1966.
- Plate 3.51. S. Geta, Na dystantsii (Race), 1966.
- Plate 3.52. M. Hlushchenko, Composition, 1966.
- Plate 3.53. M. Hlushchenko, Zhinka z klitkoiu (Woman with Cage), 1967.
- Plate 3.54. T. Yablons'ka, Razom z bat'kom (Together with Father), 1962.

- Plate 3.55. T. Yablons'ka, Yunist' (Youth), 1969.
- Plate 3.56. T. Yablons'ka, Odynoka (Lonely), 1970.
- Plate 3.57. L. Medvid', Pershi kolhospy na L'vivshchyni (First Collective Farms in the Lviv Region), 1972.
- Plate 3.58. V. Basanets', City Landscape, 1964.
- Plate 3.59. V. Basanets', Abstraction No. 3, 1964.
- Plate 3.60. O. Atsmanchuk, Love, 1960-67.
- Plate 3.61. Photograph of studio exhibit of A. Hors'ka's work.
- Plate 3.62. L. Pushkash, Narodzennia liudyny (Birth of a Person), 1969.
- Plate 4.1. Photograph of participating artists in the 1971 Exhibit in Odessa.
- Plate 4.2. Photograph of L. Yastreb Catalogue, Odessa, 1976.
- Plate 4.3. V. Maryniuk, House of Books Murals, Odessa.
- Plate 4.4. V. Basanets', Abstraction 3, 1964.
- Plate 4.5. V. Basanets', City Landscape, 1964.
- Plate 4.6. V. Basanets', Untitled, 1965.
- Plate 4.7. V. Basanets', Spomyny pro bile misto (Recollections about the White City), 1967.
- Plate 4.8. V. Basanets', Devushka v bumazhnoi shapke (Girl in a Paper Hat), 1961.
- Plate 4.9. V. Basanets', Son (Dream), 1974.
- Plate 4.10. V. Tsiupko, Self-Portrait, 1971.
- Plate 4.11. V. Tsiupko, Chovny (Boats), 1977.
- Plate 4.12. V. Tsiupko, Landscape, 1977.
- Plate 4.13. V. Tsiupko, Vertykal'na struktura (Vertical Structure), 1978.
- Plate 4.14. V. Strelnikov, Drawing, Untitled, 1968.
- Plate 4.15. V. Strelnikov, Family, 1972.
- Plate 4.16. V. Strelnikov, V Chovni (In a Boat), 1974.

- Plate 4.17. V. Strelnikov, *Composition*, 1975.
- Plate 4.18. V. Strelnikov, *Osinne (Autumnal)*, 1977.
- Plate 4.19. L. Yastreb, *Hurtozhytok (Group Residence)*, 1968.
- Plate 4.20. L. Yastreb, *Women*, 1976.
- Plate 4.21. L. Yastreb, *Zhinka bilia vikna (Woman by a Window)*, 1975.
- Plate 4.22. L. Yastreb, *Velyka piramida (Large Pyramid)*, 1978.
- Plate 4.23. L. Yastreb, *Velyki kupal'nytsi (Large Bathers)*, 1979.
- Plate 4.24. L. Yastreb, *Yasna kompozytsiia (Bright Composition)*, 1978.
- Plate 4.25. L. Yastreb, *Troie (Three)*, 1978-79.
- Plate 4.26. L. Yastreb, *Vecheria (Supper)*, 1979.
- Plate 4.27. Photograph of V. Maryniuk in his studio in Odessa.
- Plate 4.28. V. Maryniuk, *Mother and Child*, 1970.
- Plate 4.29. V. Maryniuk, *Divchyna v strichkakh (Girl in Ribbons)*, 1971.
- Plate 4.30. V. Maryniuk, *Portrait*, 1975.
- Plate 4.31. V. Maryniuk, *Kvadraty z postatiamy (Squares with Figures)*, 1976.
- Plate 4.32. V. Maryniuk, *Rakhmanynyn*, 1978.
- Plate 4.33. V. Maryniuk, *Landscape with Hills*, 1977.
- Plate 4.34. V. Naumets', *Portrait*, 1971-1972.
- Plate 4.35. V. Naumets', *Znak I (Sign I)*, 1976-1977.
- Plate 4.36. V. Naumets', *Obraz (Image)*, 1977.
- Plate 4.37. V. Naumets', *Icon*, 1979.
- Plate 4.38. V. Naumets', *Znak II (Sign II)*, 1977.
- Plate 4.39. V. Naumets', *Object*, 1976-1977.
- Plate 4.40. V. Naumets', *Head*, 1978.

- Plate 4.41. V. Khrushch, *Osinni obiekty* (Autumn Object), 1977.
- Plate 4.42. V. Khrushch, *Untitled*, c. 1977.
- Plate 4.43. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Composition no. 4*, c. 1965.
- Plate 4.44. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Composition*, c. 1965.
- Plate 4.45. O. Min'ko, *Derevo* (Tree), 1959-1961.
- Plate 4.46. O. Min'ko, *Composition no. III*, 1959-1961.
- Plate 4.47. O. Min'ko, *Hra v karty* (A Game of Cards), 1961.
- Plate 4.48. O. Min'ko, *Cholovik z metelykom* (A Man with a Butterfly), 1967.
- Plate 4.49. O. Min'ko, *Poema pro davnii step* (Poem about the Old Steppe), 1967.
- Plate 4.50. O. Min'ko, *Smert' koshovoho* (Death of a Cossack Leader)
- Plate 4.51. B. Soika, *Bilia dzherela vichnosti* (By the Source of Eternity), 1959.
- Plate 4.52. L. Medvid', *Perehony tush*, (Race of fat), 1963.
- Plate 4.53. L. Medvid', *Evacuation*, 1965.
- Plate 4.54. I. Zavadovs'kyi, *Do sontsia* (Toward the Sun), 1969.
- Plate 4.55. I. Zavadovs'kyi, *Kompozytsia z holovoiu osla* (Composition with a Donkey's Head), 1966.
- Plate 4.56. P. Markovych, *Flowers*, 1968.
- Plate 4.57. P. Markovych, *Avtobiografichne* (Autobiographical), 1971.
- Plate 4.58. P. Markovych, *Hutsul's'ka legenda* (Hutsul Legend), 1972.
- Plate 4.59. M. Krystopchuk, *Doiarky* (Dairy Maids), 1972.
- Plate 4.60. M. Krystopchuk, *Untitled*, c. 1970.
- Plate 4.61. M. Krystopchuk, *Old Church*, c.1970.
- Plate 4.62. H. Sevruk, *Year 1937*, 1966.
- Plate 4.63. H. Sevruk, *Zlamani kryla* (Broken Wings), 1967.

- Plate 4.64. H. Sevruk, *Bat'ko ukhodyt'* (Father Is Leaving), 1971.
- Plate 4.65. H. Sevruk, *Father*, 1972.
- Plate 4.66. H. Sevruk, *Portrait of Alla Hors'ka*, 1971.
- Plate 4.67. H. Sevruk, *Nadiika*, 1972.
- Plate 4.68. B. Plaksii, *Okovy* (Chains), 1971.
- Plate 4.69. B. Plaksii, *Portrait of the Sculptor Tatrov*, 1973.
- Plate 4.70. V. Hryhorov, *1,2,3,4 - 0*, 1972.
- Plate 4.71. O. Dubovyk, *Composition no. I*, 1970.
- Plate 4.72. M. Vainshtein, *Naperedodni* (In Expectation), 1968.
- Plate 4.73. M. Tryhub, *Pietà*, 1970.
- Plate 4.74. M. Tryhub, *Skriz' mynule* (Through the Past), 1977.
- Plate 4.75. V. Padun, *Vitriak* (Windmill), 1975.
- Plate 4.76. V. Padun, *Sobor* (Cathedral), 1979.
- Plate 4.77. V. Loboda, *Divchyna i lebidka* (Girl and Swan), 1971.
- Plate 4.78. V. Loboda, *Lake*, 1975-1976.
- Plate 4.79. V. Loboda, *Dvolyka istota* (Two-Faced Being), 1975-1976.
- Plate 4.80. L. Loboda, *Portrait of a Girl*, 1971.
- Plate 4.81. L. Loboda, *Try divchyny* (Three Girls), 1976.
- Plate 4.82. O. Zalyvakha, *Hutsul's'ka pysanka* (Hutsul Easter Egg), 1972.
- Plate 4.83. O. Zalyvakha, *Dzvonar* (Bell Ringer), 1972.
- Plate 4.84. P. Hulyn, *V maisterni* (In the Studio), 1968.
- Plate 4.85. P. Hulyn, *Choven* (Boat), 1968.
- Plate 4.86. P. Hulyn, *Krekhivs'ki vrazhinnia* (Impressions of Krekhiv), 1968.
- Plate 4.87. P. Hulyn, *Serpanok* (Crescent Moon), 1969.

- Plate 4.88. P. Hulyn, *Viter zeleni (Wind of Green)*, 1976.
- Plate 4.89. V. Makarenko and F. Humeniuk at the First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art, Moscow, 1975. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.90. N. Pavlenko against a display of Humeniuk's paintings at the First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.91. Gen. P. Hryhorenko and F. Humeniuk at the First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.92. F. Humeniuk reading the Manifesto at the First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.93. First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art: list of participating artists and their Manifesto pinned to the doorway below paintings by V. Makarenko. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.94. The First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art. Paintings by V. Makarenko. Unpublished photo.
- Plate 4.95. Second Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Artists, Moscow, 1976. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.96. Second Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Artists, Moscow, 1976. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 4.97. Second Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Artists, Moscow, 1976. Paintings by Antoniuk, V. Maryniuk, and V. Makarenko. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 5.1. R. Sel's'kyi, *Self-portrait*, 1923.
- Plate 5.2. R. Sel's'kyi, *Natiurmort z ornamentom (Still Life with an Ornament)*, 1925.
- Plate 5.3. R. Sel's'kyi, *Ploshcha v Paryzhi (A Square in Paris)*, 1927.
- Plate 5.4. R. Sel's'kyi, *Moriak (Sailor)*, 1934-36.
- Plate 5.5. R. Sel's'kyi, *Port in Hel*, 1931.
- Plate 5.6. R. Sel's'kyi, *Dveri (Door)*, 1932.
- Plate 5.7. R. Sel's'kyi, *Khata v Mykulychyni (House in Mykulychyn)*, 1952.

- Plate 5.8. R. Sel's'kyi, Hlechyk z kvitamy (Vase with Flowers), 1949.
- Plate 5.9. R. Sel's'kyi, Siti (Fishing Nets), 1966.
- Plate 5.10. F. Leger, Paysage Romantique, 1946.
- Plate 5.11. R. Sel's'kyi, Nad morem (On the Seaside), 1969.
- Plate 5.12. R. Sel's'kyi, Zyma v Kosovi (Winter in Kosiv), 1978.
- Plate 5.13. R. Sel's'kyi, Zyma za viknom (Winter Outside the Window), 1970.
- Plate 5.14. R. Sel's'kyi, Palanha, 1974.
- Plate 5.15. R. Sel's'kyi, Dekoratyvna kompozytsiia (Decorative Composition), 1975.
- Plate 5.16. V. Patyk, Selo (Village), 1963.
- Plate 5.17. V. Patyk, Palaiuchyi manuscript (Flaming Manuscript), 1964.
- Plate 5.18. V. Patyk, Vesil'nyi korovai (Wedding Bread), 1965.
- Plate 5.19. V. Patyk, Natiurmort z svichnykom (Still Life with Candlesticks), 1966.
- Plate 5.20. V. Patyk, Stil staroho hutsula (The Old Hutsul's Table), 1966.
- Plate 5.21. V. Patyk, Kompozytsiia na narodnykh motyvakh z ptytsiamy (Composition with Folk Motifs with Birds), 1967.
- Plate 5.22. V. Patyk, Kompozytsiia za motyvamy pysanok (Composition after Easter Egg Motifs), 1969.
- Plate 5.23. V. Patyk, Doshchevyi den' (Rainy Day), 1971.
- Plate 5.24. V. Patyk, Autumn in Rusiv, 1971.
- Plate 5.25. V. Patyk, Lito (Summer), 1972.
- Plate 5.26. O. Dubovyk, Vikno (Window), mid 1960s.
- Plate 5.27. O. Dubovyk, Piket (Picket), 1967.
- Plate 5.28. O. Dubovyk, Oikumena, 1969.
- Plate 5.29. O. Dubovyk, Vstanovlennia (Establishment), 1972.

- Plate 5.30. O. Dubovyk, *Buket (Bouquet)*, 1974.
- Plate 5.31. O. Dubovyk, *Zaliznyi buket (Iron Bouquet)*, 1971.
- Plate 5.32. O. Dubovyk, *Buket (Bouquet)*, 1975.
- Plate 5.33. K. Malevich, *Head of a Peasant Girl*, 1913.
- Plate 5.34. K. Malevich, *Slozhnoe predchuvstvie (Complicated Apprehension)*, 1928-32.
- Plate 5.35. O. Dubovyk, *Pivden' (South)*, 1973.
- Plate 5.36. O. Dubovyk, *Fantom (Phantom)*, 1975.
- Plate 5.37. O. Dubovyk, *Dorohovkaz (Road Sign)*, 1978.
- Plate 5.38. O. Dubovyk, *Liabirynt (Labyrinth)*, 1978.
- Plate 6.1. P. Zalyvakha, *Nichnyi natiurmort (Night Still Life)*, 1961.
- Plate 6.2. P. Zalyvakha, *Portrait of a Photographer*, 1962.
- Plate 6.3. P. Zalyvakha, *Ivan Drach*, 1964.
- Plate 6.4. P. Zalyvakha, *Ukraiinka (Ukrainian Girl)*, 1963-64.
- Plate 6.5. P. Zalyvakha, *Trudoden' (Working Day)*, 1964.
- Plate 6.6. P. Zalyvakha, *Oblychchia (Faces)*, 1964-65.
- Plate 6.7. P. Zalyvakha, *Nich (Night)*, 1964.
- Plate 6.8. P. Zalyvakha, *Self-portrait*, 1963.
- Plate 6.9. Photograph of one of P. Zalyvakha's ex libris, that was pasted over an illustration in an art book in order to be smuggled out of camp, but it was spotted and ripped out.
- Plate 6.10. Photograph of P. Zalyvakha's ex libris pasted over illustrations in an art book that was smuggled out of camp intact.
- Plate 6.11. Photograph of P. Zalyvakha's ex libris pasted over illustrations in an art book that was smuggled out of camp.
- Plate 6.12. P. Zalyvakha, *Zeleni sviata (The Day of the Pentecost)*, 1970.
- Plate 6.13. P. Zalyvakha, *Zakorinenist' (Rootedness)*, 1975.

- Plate 6.14. P. Zalyvakha, Dedicated to Alla Hors'ka, 1970s.
- Plate 6.15. P. Zalyvakha, Chervona kalyna (The Red Kalyna Tree or vibertum opulus in Latin), 1974.
- Plate 6.16. P. Zalyvakha, Blahoslovennia (Blessing), 1975.
- Plate 6.17. Virgin of Volhynia, end of 13th c. - beg. 14th c. icon from Luts'k. Coll. of the National Museum of Ukrainian Art, Kiev.
- Plate 6.18. P. Zalyvakha, Vil plache (Crying Ox), 1975.
- Plate 6.19. P. Zalyvakha, Dolia (Fate), 1976.
- Plate 6.20. P. Zalyvakha, Self-Portrait, 1972.
- Plate 6.21. P. Zalyvakha, Chumaky, 1973.
- Plate 6.22. P. Zalyvakha, Self-portrait, 1972.
- Plate 6.23. P. Zalyvakha, Pokrova (Mary the Protectress), 1978.
- Plate 6.24. P. Zalyvakha, Dzvonar (Bell Ringer), 1975.
- Plate 6.25. P. Zalyvakha, Ne spit' (Do Not Sleep), 1973.
- Plate 6.26. P. Zalyvakha, Death of a Cossack, 1976.
- Plate 6.27. P. Zalyvakha, Viazen' (Prisoner), 1979.
- Plate 6.28. K. Zviryns'kyi, Vesna (Spring), 1958.
- Plate 6.29. K. Zviryns'kyi, Staryi lis (Old Forest), 1958.
- Plate 6.30. K. Zviryns'kyi, Vechir II (Evening), 1959.
- Plate 6.31. K. Zviryns'kyi, Vechir I, 1958.
- Plate 6.32. K. Zviryns'kyi, Interior, 1960.
- Plate 6.33. K. Zviryns'kyi, Composition, 1960.
- Plate 6.34. K. Zviryns'kyi, Composition no. 4, 1960.
- Plate 6.35. K. Zviryns'kyi, Composition no. 1, 1960.
- Plate 6.36. K. Zviryns'kyi, Composition, 1965.
- Plate 6.37. K. Zviryns'kyi, Dribnytsi (Trinkets), 1965.
- Plate 6.38. K. Zviryns'kyi, Still Life, 1966.

- Plate 6.39. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Still Life with Butterfly*, 1967.
- Plate 6.40. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Trinkets no. 5*, 1970.
- Plate 6.41. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Still Life*, 1970.
- Plate 6.42. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Composition*, 1967.
- Plate 6.43. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Composition*, 1967.
- Plane 6.44. K. Zviryns'kyi, *Relief Painting*, 1967.
- Plate 6.45. I. Marchuk, *The Twelve Apostles*, 1970, relief in clay.
- Plate 6.46. I. Marchuk, *Spohad pro vesnianyi vechir (Memory of a Spring Evening)*, 1966.
- Plate 6.47. I. Marchuk, *Untitled*, 1967 or 1968.
- Plate 6.48. I. Marchuk, *Polit (Flight)*, 1968.
- Plate 6.49. I. Marchuk, *Zaliubleni (Lovers)*, 1971.
- Plate 6.50. I. Marchuk, *Verby v obiimakh misiachnoi nochii (Willows in the Embrace of a Moonlit Night)*, 1971.
- Plate 6.51. I. Marchuk, *Tini na snihu (Shadows on the Snow)*, 1973.
- Plate 6.52. I. Marchuk, *Nich na Ukraini (Night in Ukraine)*, 1978.
- Plate 6.53. A. Kuiindzhi, *Misiachna nich na Dnipri (Moonlit Night on the Dnipro River)*, 1880.
- Plate 6.54. I. Marchuk, *Last Supper*, 1973.
- Plate 6.55. I. Marchuk, *Yabluko na snihu (Apple on the Snow)*, 1979.
- Plate 6.56. I. Marchuk, *Avtoportret: Try tiul'pany (Self-Portrait: Three Tulips)*, 1975.
- Plate 6.57. I. Marchuk, *U tyshi spohady rostut' (Memories Grow in the Silence)*, 1976.
- Plate 6.58. P. Filonov, *Pir korolei (Feast of Kings)*, 1913.
- Plate 6.59. I. Marchuk, *Untitled from the series of "Lost Flowers"*, 1976.

- Plate 6.60. I. Marchuk, *Slidamy davnyny (In the Footsteps of the Past)*, 1975.
- Plate 6.61. I. Marchuk, *Empty Nest*, 1976.
- Plate 6.62. I. Marchuk, *Autumn Melodies*, 1976.
- Plate 6.63. I. Marchuk, *Mii korabel' osiv u pusteli (My Boat Has Settled in the Desert)*, 1976.
- Plate 6.64. I. Marchuk, *Requiem*, 1978.
- Plate 6.65. V. Vereshchagin, *Apotheosis of War*, 1871.
- Plate 6.66. I. Marchuk, *Chervoni maky (Red Poppies)*, 1975.
- Plate 6.67. I. Marchuk, *Bili maky (White Poppies)*, 1975.
- Plate 6.68. I. Marchuk, *Spomyyny pro tatovu khatu (Memories of my Father's House)*, 1977.
- Plate 6.69. I. Marchuk, *Composition I*, 1978.
- Plate 7.1. Photograph of part of the collection of kamianni baby (Stone grandmothers) at the Yavornyts'kyi Museum in Dnipropetrovs'ke.
- Plate 7.2. F. Humeniuk with his diploma painting *Na buriakakh (Beet Picking)*, 1965, taken at the Dnipropetrovs'ke Art School, 4 November, 1988.
- Plate 7.3. F. Humeniuk, *Osin' (Autumn)*, 1970.
- Plate 7.4. F. Humeniuk, *Kozats'ka domovyna (Cossack coffin)*, 1972.
- Plate 7.5. F. Humeniuk, *Virnist' Ukraini (Loyalty to Ukraine)*, 1972.
- Plate 7.6. F. Humeniuk, *Nashi Sviati (Our Saints)*, 1973.
- Plate 7.7. *St. Mykhail (St. Michael)*. Icon from the iconostasis in Rohatyn, Western Ukraine.
- Plate 7.8. F. Humeniuk, *Doroha za silliu (Trip for Salt)*, 1974.
- Plate 7.9. F. Humeniuk, *Ukraiins'kyi motyv (Ukrainian Motif)*, 1974.
- Plane 7.10. Photograph of F. Humeniuk at the Exhibition of Unofficial Artists in Leningrad, 1974. Unpublished photograph.
- Plate 7.11. F. Humeniuk, *Sviashchennyi krai: moia Ukraino (Blessed Land: My Ukraine)*, 1974.

- Plate 7.12. F. Humeniuk, *Sviashchennyi krai: povernennia* (Blessed Land: Return), 1974.
- Plate 7.13. Nevskii House of Culture, Leningrad. Line up of people waiting to see the Second Exhibition of Unofficial Art, October, 1975. Photo: courtesy of J. P. Himka.
- Plate 7.14. Second Exhibition of Unofficial Art, Nevskii House of Culture, Leningrad, October 10-21, 1975. Photo: courtesy of J. P. Himka.
- Plate 7.15. Photograph of Humeniuk's paintings at the First Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art, Moscow, 1973.
- Plate 7.16. Photograph of F. Humeniuk's paintings at the Second Ukrainian Exhibition of Non-conformist Art, Moscow, 1976.
- Plate 7.17. F. Humeniuk, *Het'many* (Hetmans), 1976.
- Plate 7.18. F. Humeniuk, *Staryi Het'man* (Old Hetman), 1976.
- Plate 7.19. F. Humeniuk, *Zeleni Sviata* (Whitsuntide), 1976.
- Plate 7.20. F. Humeniuk, *Chumats'ka dolia* (Chumak Fate), 1979.
- Plate 7.21. F. Humeniuk, *Moia Ukrainina* (My Ukraine), 1979.
- Plate 7.22. Icon of the Dormition, Monastery of the Tithes near Novgorod, 12-13th century.
- Plate 7.23. K. Malevich, *The Knife Grinder*, 1912-13.
- Plate 7.24. V. Makarenko, *Budivnychi* (Construction Workers), 1963.
- Plate 7.25. V. Makarenko, *Sueta*, 1965.
- Plate 7.26. V. Makarenko, *Bozha maty* (Mother of God), 1967.
- Plate 7.27. *Pokrova* (The Intercession), 12-13th cent., National Museum, Kiev.
- Plate 7.28. V. Makarenko, *Blahovishchennia* (Annunciation), 1972.
- Plate 7.29. V. Makarenko, *Still Life*, 1973.
- Plate 7.30. V. Makarenko, *Terre d'Ukraine*, 1975.

- Plate 7.31. V. Makarenko, *Blahovishchennia (Annunciation)*, 1973.
- Plate 7.32. V. Makarenko, *Souvenir de ma mère*, 1973.
- Plate 7.33. V. Makarenko, *Metaphysical Head*, 1975.
- Plate 7.34. V. Makarenko, *My Ukraine*, 1975.
- Plate 7.35. *Diagram, My Ukraine*, 1975.
- Plate 7.36. V. Makarenko, *Estonia*, 1975.
- Plate 7.37. V. Makarenko, *Apocalypse*, 1975.
- Plate 7.38. V. Makarenko, *Bez prava prozhyvannia (Without the Right of Residence)*, 1976.
- Plate 7.39. V. Makarenko, *Buste Métaphysique*, 1974.
- Plate 7.40. V. Makarenko, *Dimanche Matin en Ukraine*, 1976.
- Plate 7.41. V. Makarenko, *Bili nochi (White Nights)*, 1972.
- Plate 7.42. V. Makarenko, *Symbole Érotique (no. 42)*, 1975.
- Plate 7.43. V. Makarenko, *Makarenko and His Model*, 1974.
- Plate 7.44. V. Makarenko, *Illustration pour Apocalypse no. 1*, 1975..
- Plate 7.45. V. Makarenko, *La Trinité*, 1975.
- Plate 7.46. *Photograph of four of V. Sazonov's paintings*, 1976.
- Plate 7.47. V. Sazonov and his work, *Moscow*, 1975-76.
- Plate 7.48. V. Sazonov and V. Strelnikov, *Moscow*, 1976.
- Plate 7.49. V. Sazonov, *Untitled I*, 1977.
- Plate 7.50. V. Sazonov, *Untitled II*, 1977.
- Plate 7.51. V. Sazonov, *Untitled III*, 1979.
- Plate 7.52. *Icon, Christ Enthroned, from the Deesis Range, 15th c., Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Vanivtsi. Lviv Museum of Ukrainian Art.*
- Plate 7.53. *Sts. Cosmas and Damian, 15th c. icon from Tylych. Collection of the Lviv Museum of Ukrainian Art.*
- Plate 7.54. V. Sazonov, *Kamiana baba z yanholom (Stone Baba with Angel)*, 1979.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

Unless otherwise stipulated, all translations in the text and appendices have been rendered by the author. To avoid possible errors in identification, titles of paintings have been given in the original language followed by a translation, except in such straightforward cases as "Still Life", "Composition" or "Self-portrait".

In transcribing the Cyrillic alphabet, a modified version of the library of Congress system of transliteration is used for both Ukrainian and Russian respectively:

а	a	а	a
б	b	б	b
в	v	в	v
г	h	г	g
г	g	д	d
д	d	е	e
е	e	ж	zh
є	ye (initially, then -ie)	з	z
ж	zh	и	i
з	z	й	i
и	y	к	k
і	i	л	l
ї	yi (initially, then -ii)	м	m
й	y (initially, then -i)	н	n
к	k	о	o
л	l	п	p
м	m	р	r
н	n	с	s
о	o	т	t
п	p	у	u
р	r	ф	f
с	s	х	kh
т	t	ц	ts
у	u	ч	ch
ф	f	ш	sh
х	kh	щ	shch
ц	ts	ь	y
ч	ch	ь	'
ш	sh	э	e
щ	shch	ю	yu
ю	yu (initially, then -iu)	я	ya
я	ya (initially, then -ia)		
ь	'		

Conventional English transliterations of Ukrainian place names have been retained where the orthography preserves the correct pronunciation (e.g. Odessa, not Odesa) or where the form is more familiar to the English reader (e.g. Kiev, not Kyiiv). Where the pronunciation is different, the Ukrainian transliteration has been used (e.g. Kharkiv, not Kharkov; Lviv, not Lvov). The surnames of Ukrainian artists have been transliterated according to the above transcriptorial code and remain consistent throughout the text proper, unless the artist is well known under a different spelling of his name (e. g. Strel'nikov is known as Strelnikov). In the footnotes and in the bibliography, the spelling will vary according to the original language of the source of the material.

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PREFACE

In spite of the fact that art from the Soviet Union has been given considerable attention in the West in recent decades, very little is known about the art of Ukraine, the second largest of the Soviet republics. A large scale, unprecedented since the early twenties, flowering of Ukrainian culture took place in the late fifties and beginning of the sixties in Soviet Ukraine in which the visual arts, particularly painting, flourished. It was followed in the seventies by a period of renewed repressions and stagnation that channeled most art that did not conform to Socialist Realism underground. An examination of the new currents and undercurrents in Ukrainian art, its aspirations, and manifestations has not been undertaken in the West or in Ukraine. What events sparked the rebirth? What political and social causes fanned the flames of artistic creativity? What was the effect on the art of artists working in isolation from the mainstreams of modern art and, paradoxically as it may seem, cut-off from Ukrainian culture and traditions? What were artists trying to achieve? How did the developments in art, particularly non-conformist art, change the framework of Socialist Realism in Ukraine and give rise to the unofficial art of the seventies?

In search of answers to some of these questions, I travelled to Ukraine in 1983, 1987, and 1988. While there I met with individual artists, art historians, museum curators, and Artists' Union officials in order to study and photograph paintings that went beyond the confines of Socialist Realism. To obtain, as broad a perspective as possible, I also interviewed several Ukrainian artists and writers who had been actively involved in the events of the sixties and seventies, but who had emigrated to

the West, and are now living in Western Europe or North America.

Most of the paintings under discussion were seen and photographed by the author. The Socialist Realist works, particularly those in Chapter Two and in Chapters Three and Five were officially exhibited and often reproduced in Soviet publications. As state property, they are displayed publicly in such institutions as the Ukrainian State Museum of Fine Arts in Kiev, the Lviv Art Gallery and the Museum of Ukrainian Art in Lviv, as well as at the Kharkiv and Odessa Museums of Art. This, however, is not the case with non-conformist paintings because the majority of them have remained the property of the artists. I was fortunate to be shown and allowed to photograph the work of the following artists in the privacy of their studios or homes: V. Basanets', V. Martyniuk, O. Stovbur, V. Tsiupko, and L. Yastreb in Odessa; P. Zalyvakha in Ivano-Frankivs'ke; D. Dovbushyns'kyi, V. and L. Loboda, L. Medvid, V. Patyk, R. Sel's'kyi, I. Zavadovs'kyi, and K. Zviryns'kyi in Lviv; O. Dubovyk, V. Hryhorov, I. Marchuk, Ye. Petrenko, H. Sevruk, and M. Vainshtein in Kiev; V. Padun in Dnipropetrovs'ke; N. Haiduk, V. Khrushch, and V. Naumets' in Moscow; F. Humeniuk and N. Pavlenko in Leningrad. The whereabouts of a few of the non-conformist paintings discussed, including some of the early work of V. Makarenko, F. Humeniuk, V. Strelnikov, and V. Sazonov, are unknown because the artists did not keep records for obvious reasons. Also, I had access to paintings by F. Humeniuk and P. Zalyvakha in Canadian collections, as well as to the paintings in the collections of V. Makarenko, V. Sazonov, and V. Strelnikov in Paris and Munich respectively. All of the O. Minko paintings and several by R. Sel's'kyi and M. Sel's'ka are in the Lviv Art Gallery collection and were photographed with their permission.

As a result, this study is based on primary sources and unpublished data culled from numerous interviews and visits with living artists, and some who have since then passed away, who formed the vanguard of the sixties and seventies, as well as from archival material and sources available in Soviet and Western publications.

The political situation in the Soviet Union generally, and in Ukraine specifically, where the State had control of most facets of artistic life affected my research and methodology. Developments of official art within the framework of Socialist Realism have been extensively documented in the Soviet Union, albeit from a very limited point of view of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. However, this was not the case with non-conformist paintings that went beyond official interpretations of Socialist Realism. One of the main problems that arose was that of gathering information about art and artists that were not officially recognized. Since by their very nature non-conformist artists worked outside the normal channels of exhibitions, catalogues, and press reviews of their work, it was not possible to apply research methods and procedures taken for granted in the West.

Since the 1930s most art that was not officially sanctioned was ignored by the Soviet Ukrainian art establishment including the press, art critics, and art historians. With few exceptions this also applied to the artists that created the paintings. Exhibition records, photographs, if they existed at all, were in private collections, as were the paintings themselves. Therefore, I had to rely on oral sources and the goodwill of private individuals who had access to paintings and artists.

This also presented some difficulties because until recently Soviet citizens were not allowed to have contacts with foreigners without approval from the authorities and some of them have not lost their fear of reprisals. Wherever possible I checked the oral sources against written records, or tried to obtain oral confirmation from another source. Fortunately by 1988 the policy of "glasnost" and "perestroika" made artists more willing to share their experiences and their art without fear of reprisals. Museum directors were also less reluctant than previously to allow a foreigner access to their collections of contemporary art. The Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of the UkSSR in Kiev proved to be a cache of Artists' Union materials. Nonetheless, because of the relative secrecy in which some artists had worked, finding out about them and their art at times presented problems. Only gradually was I able to build an over-all picture of non-conformist artists and their painting, and to examine the work of some of them in detail. The full extent of unofficial art and artists deserves further research.

Until very recently it was not considered advisable for Soviet art historians to study unofficial art and artists, therefore, not surprisingly, I did not encounter any Ukrainian art specialists who had been documenting the non-conformist art and artists of the sixties and seventies. The situation was somewhat better with official artists who worked at expanding the framework of Socialist Realism, and in some cases had created non-conformist art that had not been exhibited. Nonetheless, there were no articles analyzing the formal aspects and sources of influence in the Western European art context. The few historians of contemporary art were working exclusively within the limitations of Socialist Realism methodology and dealing

primarily with official paintings.

The developments taking place between my initial visit to Ukraine in 1983, then subsequently in 1987, and my prolonged almost fourteen week research trip in 1988, were astounding in terms of documentation made available and paintings that came out of closets. Several breakthrough exhibitions took place in 1987 and 1988 in Kiev and Lviv which saw the gradual emergence of non-conformist art from obscurity. This brought to light only a very small number of artists and their work, but it was a long awaited beginning.

In this study I have concentrated on presenting and discussing the new currents and undercurrents of Ukrainian art of the sixties and seventies with an emphasis on the life and work of a select few individual artists. An interpretation of the cultural, iconographic, and formal aspects of the chosen examples of paintings follows, rather than an evaluation of their artistic worth.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1900

Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century the territory of present-day Ukraine was divided between two empires, that of tsarist Russia in the east and Austria-Hungary in the west. The collapse of the Russian Empire prompted the secession of Ukraine, and in January 1918 an independent Ukrainian state was proclaimed by the Central Rada in Kiev. With the impending defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Western Ukraine claimed its independence November 1, 1918, and by a proclamation of January 22, 1919 all regions of Ukraine were unified in a sovereign state. However, Ukraine's independence was short-lived. With the defeat of the Ukrainian Army and the resultant partitioning in 1921 at the Conference of Riga, Western Ukraine became part of Poland while Eastern Ukraine was constituted as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and in 1922 became part of the U.S.S.R. (plate 1.1). Two small sections of Ukraine, Bukovyna, and Transcarpathia, became part of Romania and Czechoslovakia respectively.

At this time most of the Ukrainian population lived in rural areas and engaged in farming. Private ownership of land was highly valued and there was great attachment to the soil. Rural society was steeped in strong agricultural traditions and folk art customs that had developed throughout the centuries. Of the urban dwellers many were

ethnic Russians, Poles, and Jews. Thus the population of the cities, in contrast to the countryside, was cosmopolitan and predominantly non-Ukrainian.¹ Needless to say artists were attracted to the cities like Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, and Lviv where art training and patronage were available, as well as contacts with other artists and art developments.

Eastern Ukraine

Preceding the First World War artists working in Eastern Ukraine or South Russia or Little Russia, as the territory was often referred to by the tsarist authorities, not only kept in touch with avant-garde art in Western Europe and Moscow, but were among its creators. In fact, the architects of the Russian avant-garde were for the most part non-Russians, as has been pointed out by R. C. Williams in his book *Artists in Revolution*, and several of them came from Ukraine.² Because of the political situation, and the

¹ According to statistics provided in *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopaedia*. Vol. 1. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 212-216, based on 1926 figures for Soviet Ukraine and 1930-31 figures for Western Ukraine, 77.1% of the rural population was Ukrainian, but Ukrainians made up only 38.8% of the urban population. Thus in 1926 in Kiev 42.1% of the population was Ukrainian, 27.2% was Jewish, 24.1% was Russian, 2.7% Polish, and 3.9% others. In Lviv only 16.2% of the population was Ukrainian, 31.9% was Jewish, 50.8% Polish, and 1.1% others. Out of a total population of 41,820,000 in 1932, there were only 31,525,000 Ukrainians which is 75.4% of the total population of the country.

² R. C. Williams, *Artists in Revolution: Portraits of the Russian Avant-Garde, 1905-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p.ix. Williams writes: "They were in general not Russians but non-Russians drawn to Europe...". Later on p. 9 he states: "The Russian avant-garde was in part the product of previously unsuccessful non-Russian artists from the provincial towns who surmounted the cultural competition of urban centers, both in Russia and in Europe, by

dominance of the Russian Empire, it is not always recognized that such artists as David Burliuk (1882-1967), Volodymyr Burliuk (1886-1917), Alexandra Ekster (1882-1949), Kazimir Malevich (1878-1935), and even Mikhail Larionov (1881-1964), who were at the forefront of Russian avant-garde art, were born in Ukraine.³ Some artists including Aleksander Archipenko (1887-1964) and Alexandra Ekster travelled to Paris and Munich and were in contact with the latest art developments, especially in Western Europe. They participated in exhibitions abroad and at home.⁴ Ekster worked in Italy and introduced Futurism to Kiev when she opened an art school there in 1918.⁵ Kazimir Malevich, who was born in a village near Kiev, studied at the Kiev Art School from 1897 to 1900, and went to Moscow in 1905 when he was twenty-seven years old.⁶ V. Tatlin,

successful innovation."

³ David Burliuk was born in Kharkiv and Volodymyr in Chernianka, Count Mordvinov's estate near Kherson, where Burliuk senior was estate manager. Malevich was born near Kiev into a Polish family, Larionov was from Tiraspol, and Exter from Bilostok near Kiev.

⁴ Myroslava Maria Mudrak Ciszkewycz, "Nova Generatsiia" (1927-1930) and the Artistic Avant-garde in the Ukraine. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. (University of Texas at Austin, 1980). For a listing of exhibitions for Burliuk and Ekster see pp.74-82. Ekster, for example, participated in exhibitions of La Section d'Or in Paris in 1912 and in the Salon des Independants.

⁵ Ekster closed her Kiev art school in 1921. She taught in Moscow in 1921-1922, and then worked on stage sets and costumes for the Martian scenes in the film *Aelita* before emigrating to Paris in 1924.

⁶ Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art: 1863-1922*. 2nd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), pp.143-144. Charlotte Douglas in *Swans of Other Worlds*. Kazimir Malevich

although born in Moscow, spent his youth in Kharkiv, and according to Camilla Gray, was a "Ukrainian by nationality".⁷ In 1908 David Burliuk organized "Zveno" ("Link"), an exhibition in Kiev of avant-garde artists. According to V. Marcadé, "Zveno" was "the first challenge issued in the Ukraine to the outmoded realism of the Wanderers, the refined aestheticism of the Symbolists, and the Style Moderne of the 'World of Art' artists."⁸ In 1911 both David and his brother, Volodymyr Burliuk, exhibited with the "Blaue Reiter" group in their first show in Munich which was organized by Vasilii Kandinsky, Franz Marc, and Gabriele Münter. Kandinsky (1866-1944), who grew up in Odessa and was a Russian, was by then working in Germany, but remained a member of the Odessa-based group called the "Tovaryshchestvo yuzhno-russkikh khudozhnikov" (Association of South Rus' Artists) or TYuRKh and exhibited with them regularly.⁹ He also took part in the International Salons organized in Odessa in 1909 and 1910 by the sculptor V. Izdebsky. The two Izdebsky exhibits included works by Ukrainian, Russian, German, Italian, and French artists.

and the Origins of Abstraction in Russia (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Press, 1976, 1980), pp. 86-87 writes that relatively little is known about Malevich's early life. She says that his father was a manager at the Tereshtchenko sugar refinery near Kiev, and that in 1926 when Malevich applied for a visa to Paris he listed his nationality as Polish.

⁷ Ibid., p. 167.

⁸ Valentine Marcadé, "Vasilii Yermilov and Certain Aspects of the Ukrainian Art of the Early Twentieth Century", *The Avant-Garde in Russia 1910-1930* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1980), p. 46.

⁹ M. M. Ciszkeycz, p. 82.

Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Symbolists, Nabis, Fauves, and Expressionists were represented.¹⁰ According to Valentine Marcadé "The Izdebsky Salons enabled the public to see for themselves that paths to the creation of new forms of plastic expression would have to be sought with renewed energy." ¹¹

George Heard Hamilton in his book *Modern Painting and Sculpture in Europe 1880-1940*, states that the exhibitions of contemporary work in the Russian Empire including such provincial cities as Odessa, Kharkiv, and Kiev "held their own beside advanced art from the other countries" and that there was only geographical remoteness from Western Europe.¹² Ciszkewycz writes that "As manifested in all of these local exhibitions, the New Art developing in the Ukraine was not far removed from the avant-garde activities in Western Europe."¹³

Other artists who helped promote the avant garde movements of Cubo-Futurism and Constructivism in Ukraine included Oleksander Bohomazov (1880-1930) and Victor Pal'mov (1888-1929) in Kiev and Vasyl' Yermylov (1894-1968) and

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 79. Some of the artists represented were: Signac, Bonnard, Vuillard, Vallotton, Maurice Denis, Redon, Braque, Gleizes, Metzinger, Laurencin, Van Dongen, Vlaminck, and Matisse.

¹¹ Marcadé, p. 46.

¹² George H. Hamilton, *European Painting and Sculpture 1880-1940* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 305.

¹³ M. M. Ciszkewycz, p. 83.

Maria Syniakova (b. 1898) in Kharkiv. The Panfuturists, grouped around Mykhailo Semenko, aimed to lift the shackles of insular thought patterns by integrating the arts to create poezo-paintings.¹⁴

However, not all artists pursued avant-garde concerns. Some, like Mykola Burachek (1871-1942) and Vasyl Krychevs'kyi (1872-1952), remained faithful to Impressionism, while others, including Yukhym Mykhailiv (1885-1935) and Mykhailo Sapozhnykov (1871-1937) were under the influence of Symbolism. The prominent Ukrainian art historian, Sviatoslav Hordyns'kyi, has stated that "Symbolism was a very characteristic feature of our art and literature around the time of the First World War".¹⁵

In spite of the turmoil of war, political and social upheaval, artistic life continued to thrive in Kiev and Kharkiv. In 1917 at the start of the brief period of Ukraine's independence the Ukrainian National Academy of Art was established in Kiev with Vasyl' Krychevs'kyi as the first rector. Initially the faculty included eight

¹⁴ Myroslava M. Mudrak, *The New Generation and Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1986), pp. 171-172. According to Mudrak "poezo-paintings" were an artistic hybrid invented by M. Semenko in which he "segmented and fractured words into their component syllabic parts and then recombined them into a 'visual' mosaic of Futurist puns".

¹⁵ Sviatoslav Hordyns'kyi, "Maliarstvo Yuliana Butsmaniuka na tli yoho doby" (The Painting of Yulian Butsmaniuk against the Background of His Period), Y. Butsmaniuk (Edmonton: The Shevchenko Scientific Society in Canada, 1982), p. 10.

professors with diverse artistic styles and pedagogical methods who ran their workshops with complete freedom.¹⁶ This meant that now Ukrainian art students could get their advanced art training at home without having to go to Russia or elsewhere. In 1922, after Ukraine became part of the USSR, the Ukrainian Art Academy was turned into an Institute of Fine Arts and in 1924 it was amalgamated with the Institute of Architecture, and became known as the Kiev Art Institute.

One of the most influential professors at the Art Academy and later at the Institute turned out to be Mykhailo Boichuk (1882-1937) who was born in Western Ukraine and studied painting at the Art Academy of Vienna (1899-1900) and the Academy of Cracow from which he graduated in 1905 before continuing his studies in Munich. While living in Paris, he took part in exhibitions from 1907 to 1910, and then travelled to Italy. Guillaume Apollinaire writing about the Salon des Indépendants in 1910 referred to the work of Mykhailo Boichuk, Mykola Kasperovych, and Sophia Segno as belonging to the "school of Byzantine revival" whose aim, he states, was "to maintain religious

¹⁶ The professors were: Fedir and Vasyl' Krychevs'kyi, Heorhii Narbut, Mykola Burachek, Mykhailo Zhuk, Mykhailo Boichuk, Abram Manevych, and Oleksander Murashko. The programme was very unstructured and varied from teacher to teacher. In fact, it appeared to parallel similar programmes established in Moscow and Leningrad after the 1917 revolution. For more information see Vadym Pavlovs'kyi, "Ukrains'ka Derzhavna Akademiia Mystetstv: do 50 littia iii stvorennia" (Ukrainian Academy of Art: On the 50th Anniversary of Its Founding), *Notatky z mystetstva* (Ukrainian Art Digest). No. 7, May 1968, p. 45-56.

traditions".¹⁷ As a professor of Monumental Art at the Ukrainian Art Academy (1917-1922) and later at the Kiev Art Institute (1924-1936) Boichuk revived fresco painting in Ukraine. He was a strong believer in collective creativity and a group approach to mural painting. Ukrainian peasants and rural life were Boichuk's favourite subjects. Although in keeping with revolutionary aims Boichuk aspired to develop an art for the masses, he considered knowledge of the past essential to the creation of a relevant contemporary art. For inspiration he turned to pre-Renaissance works, Byzantine-Ukrainian icons, and Ukrainian folk art traditions. With a group of artists, including his students and followers, he painted murals for the Lutsk Barracks in Kiev (1919), a sanatorium in Odessa (1928), and the Chervonozavodsk Theatre in Kharkiv (1933-1935).¹⁸ Boichuk also wished to create an art that was Ukrainian in spirit, therefore, he did not seek inspiration in the Russian "peredvizhniki", but turned to Ukrainian and western European sources. This contributed to his arrest and

¹⁷ Guillaume Apollinaire, *Chronique d'art, 1902-1918* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 113.

¹⁸ Among his followers and students the following artists should be mentioned: Sophia Nalepyns'ka-Boichuk (his wife), Tymofii Boichuk (his younger brother), Vasyl' Sedliar, Oksana Pavlenko, Ivan Padalka, I. Lypkivs'kyi, P. Ivanchenko, Antonina Ivanova, S. Kolos, K. Hvozdyk, E. Shekhtman, and M. Rokyts'kyi. Serhii Bilokin' in his article "Z pid nepravdy" (From Beneath Lies), *Ukraina*. No. 9, 1988, p. 11 lists the following as also having studied with M. Boichuk: Princess Maria Trubets'ka, Katria Borodina, Yakiv Zaks, Serhii Yanushivs'kyi, and Nadiia Khazyna (wife of O. Mandel'shtam).

premature death in 1937.¹⁹

On the other hand, some artists and writers such as Mykhailo Semenko²⁰ called for the creation of a totally new art and a break with the past. This was more in tune with Proletkult's message that bourgeois art had to be supplanted by its proletarian antithesis, but not in tune with the didactic and naturalistic tendencies of Socialist Realism. When Socialist Realism was imposed as the only artistic method, Semenko suffered the same fate as M. Boichuk. He was arrested and died in 1937.

With time, production art and proletarian themes came to play a more substantial role in Soviet Ukraine, but avant-garde art continued to develop under the new Communist

¹⁹ M. Boichuk was arrested in the autumn of 1936, as were most of his followers known as "boichukisty", and perished in the sweeping liquidations that followed. Soviet publications give his date of death as 1939. According to the latest available research from Soviet Ukraine by S. Bilokin' it would appear that M. Boichuk died in prison in 1937. See S. Bilokin', "Vidome - nevidome?" (Known and Unknown), *Kul'tura i zhyttia*, 5 March, 1989, p. 4. Because Boichuk was accused of being "an enemy of the people", all of his monumental work was destroyed. His work and school were criticised for "formalist tendencies" in all Soviet publications even though the work was figurative and somewhat reminiscent of the frescoes of Giotto in the treatment of space and volume. M. Boichuk was rehabilitated in the 1960s, but did not regain prominence until 1984 when the first of a series of lectures in his memory was organized by S. Bilokin' in Kiev.

²⁰ Mykhailo Semenko (1892-1937) was primarily a poet who created "poezo-paintings" and promoted Ukrainian Panfuturism, a proletarian system of art, through the journal *Nova generatsiai* (New Generation) of which he was editor. For more information see Myroslava M. Mudrak, "Mykhailo Semenko" in *The New Generation and Artistic Modernism in the Ukraine*, pp. 9-31.

regime until the beginning of the 1930s when the Communist Party tightened its controls over all arts in the Soviet Union and reversed its policy of Ukrainization.²¹ However, before this occurred, the 1920s witnessed a cultural rebirth with an unprecedented outpouring of Ukrainian literature and art.

Of the avant-garde artists, Alexandra Ekster, Olexander Bohomazov, Vasyl' Yermylov, and Anatolii Petryts'kyi (1885-1964) continued to work in Kiev and Kharkiv. They participated in the post-war movements of Suprematism, Cubo-Futurism, and Constructivism. Ukrainian artists took part in European exhibitions including the exhibition of Ukrainian graphic art at the Musée du Livre in Brussels in 1927, the Pressa-Köln Exhibit in 1928, and the Venice Biennale where in 1928 Fedir Krychevs'kyi and in 1930 A. Petryts'kyi won medals. V. Tatlin and K. Malevich came to

²¹ Beginning with the Twelfth Party Congress in 1923 the Communist Party followed a policy of "korenizatsiia" (indigenization) that became known in Ukraine as "ukrainizatsia" (Ukrainization) in an attempt to gain widespread support from the Ukrainian intelligentsia and peasants. It attempted to recruit Ukrainians into its ranks by giving them positions in the Communist Party in Ukraine. At that time Ukrainian was the administrative language in the UkSSR and Ukrainian culture was supported and encouraged. This policy came to an end in the early 1930s with the destruction of the Ukrainian Communist leadership and the great Stalinist terror that followed. For further information see Robert S. Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine 1917-1957* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 84-148, and James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine 1918-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1983).

teach at the Kiev Institute of Art.²² Between 1928 and 1930 Malevich published his lectures on "New Art" in twelve issues of the Ukrainian panfuturist journal *Nova Generatsiia* (New Generation). His "Architecture, Studio Painting, and Sculpture" was published in the *Nova Generatsiia's* Kiev journal *Avantgard almanakh proletars'kykh mysttstv Novoi Generatsii* (The Avant-garde Almanac of Proletarian Artists of the New Generation).²³

Ciszkewycz states that *Nova Generatsiia*, edited by M. Semenko, was:

an essential link between the earlier generation of the Ukrainian avant-garde, steeped in the traditions of Cubism and Futurism, and the second, post-revolution generation, which in addition to carrying out basic precepts of the previous movements, not only perpetrated them, but made them confluent with such movements as Constructivism and the International Style.²⁴

At this time several artistic groups flourished including the three major ones: *Asotsiatsiia revoliutsiinykh mysttstv Ukrainy* or ARMU (Association of Revolutionary Artists of Ukraine), established in 1925; *Asotsiatsiia khudozhnykiv chervonoii Ukrainy* or AKhChU (Association of Artists of Red Ukraine), established also in 1925; and *Obiednannia suchasnykh mysttstv Ukrainy* or OSMU (Association of Contemporary Artists of Ukraine),

²² Tatlin taught in the Cinema and Theatre Section of the Kiev Art Institute from 1925 to 1927. Malevich taught from 1927 to 1930.

²³ M. Ciszkewycz, p. 177.

²⁴ M. Ciszkewycz, p. 185.

established in 1927. There were also other groups like the Obiednannia molodykh mystttsiv Ukrainy or OMMU (Association of Young Artists of Ukraine), Zhovten' (October), a group of revolutionary artists, mostly constructivists; the Kostandi Association of Odessa, and the Odessa Association of Artists. The members of ARMU, the largest and most diverse of these associations, viewed themselves as representatives of a wide range of trends from Impressionism to Constructivism, and made a stand against naturalism in art. ARMU was dominated by the Boichukisty and had leanings towards Ukrainian national traditions. Because of this, some artists concerned with the latest developments in modern art, formed their own group, OSMU. AKhChU attracted mainly followers of realism who were ready to dedicate their services to the state. All of these groups were active in promoting exhibitions throughout the country and internationally.

The revolutionary spirit of Communism, which at the beginning had attracted many artists and had resulted in the development of avant-garde art, lost its fervour as the Communist Party became more firmly established and eventually turned its attention to art. The militant measures to transform the USSR into an industrial power announced by Stalin in his first Five-Year Plan in 1928 also applied to art and culture. More and more artists were made to serve the needs of the State in ways dictated by the Communist Party.

By 1932 all avant-garde activity in Soviet Ukraine, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, came to a standstill when a decree specifying that all independent art and literary groups must be liquidated and replaced by unions came into effect.²⁵ In Ukraine an Organizational Bureau was created to oversee the arts, but in 1933 it was replaced by the Organizing Committee of the Artists' Union whose mandate was to unite all visual artists and to prepare for the First Congress of the Union of Artists. The final blow to creative freedom came in 1934 at the First Writers' Congress held in Moscow when Socialist Realism was officially proclaimed as the one and only method of artistic creativity.

To ensure adherence to Socialist Realism, realist artists like F. Krychevs'kyi and K. Trokhymenko, as well as O. Shovkunenko and P. Volokydin from the Odessa Art Institute, were appointed to teaching positions in the Kiev Art Institute. Among the Russian realist artists from the Art Academy in Leningrad invited as guest lecturers were I. Brodskii, B. Yoganson, O. Gerasimov, G. Riazhskii, P. Kotov, and L. Shervud.²⁶ Both the Odessa and Kharkiv Art

²⁵ This was the April 23, 1932 decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. For details see *Propaganda i agitatsia v rishenniakh ta dokumentakh VKP(b)* (Propaganda and Agitation in the Decisions and Documents of All-Union Communist Party /Bolshevik/) (Kiev: Derzhpolitvydav Ukrainy, 1950), pp. 283-284.

²⁶ P. I. Hovdia, *Virnist' tradytsiiam: zhyvopys, hrafika, skul'ptura, arkhitektura* (Loyalty to Traditions: Painting, Graphic Art, Sculpture, Architecture). Album. (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1982), p. 11.

Institutes were closed and the Kharkiv Institute of Applied and Industrial Arts established. This meant that the Kiev Art Institute was the only fine arts institution of higher learning left in Ukraine, and its faculty of dedicated realist artists was well qualified to teach according to Socialist Realism specifications.

In Ukraine the imposition of Socialist Realism coincided with the suppression of national concerns and the elimination of many prominent political and cultural figures including Communist Party members, many of whom were accused of "bourgeois nationalism".²⁷ According to George Luckyj most could not conceivably fit that label, but they were liquidated because they were trying to steer Ukraine towards the culture of Western Europe, and "This ran contrary to the policy of keeping the non-Russian nationalities welded to Russia, allowing them to develop only their popular and folk culture."²⁸ By 1938 most prominent members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia - writers, artists, teachers, and religious leaders, as well as the Communist Party elite in Ukraine, were executed or were sent to labour-camps in

²⁷ O. Subtelny in his *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 419 writes that in 1933 over 15,000 people holding responsible positions were purged on charges of "nationalism". In the 1937-1938 purges, according to Subtelny, p. 420, the entire leadership of the Ukrainian Soviet government was liquidated and that an estimated 37% or about 170,000 members of the Communist Party in Ukraine were purged.

²⁸ George S. N. Luckyj, *Keeping a Record. Literary Purges in Soviet Ukraine (1930s): A Bio-Bibliography* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988).

Siberia.²⁹

It has been substantiated by several historians that from 1933 a systematic destruction of Ukrainian culture took place while at the same time all aspects of Russian culture were glorified under the disguise of fostering "friendship of Soviet peoples".³⁰ In a speech on March 8, 1963 Khrushchev confirmed that Stalin intended to destroy a considerable part of the artistic intelligentsia of Soviet Ukraine because he suspected that nationalistic tendencies and sentiments were developing among them.³¹ O. Subtelny

²⁹ This included the top seventeen ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Government. Panas Liubchenko, the Prime Minister, committed suicide. Almost the entire Central Committee of the Politburo of Ukraine perished. It has been estimated that over three hundred writers and critics were lost to Ukrainian literature. For a list of writers who were liquidated see George Luckyj, *Literary Politics in Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956) or his *Keeping a Record. Literary Purges in Soviet Ukraine (1930s): A Bio-Bibliography*. As far as I was able to determine, at the present time no list of artists who were liquidated has been published. The list provided in *Istoria ukraiins'koho mystetstva v shesty tomakh*. (The Ukrainian History of Art in Six Volumes) (Kiev: Academy of Sciences, 1967-1968). Vol. V, p. 24 is incomplete as it only gives the names of six artists: M. Boichuk, his wife S. Nalepyns'ka-Boichuk, V. Sedliar, I. Padalka, I. Shul'ha, and D. Diachenko. Obvious omissions include Mykola Kasperovych, who was arrested in 1934 and disappeared without a trace, as did Yukhym Mykhailiv, Ivan Lypkivs'kyi, and B. Pylypenko. It is known that Kyrylo Hvozdyk spent twenty years in the Gulag, but survived, as did Onufrii Biziukov.

³⁰ See Robert S. Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine 1917-1957*, pp. 226-230. Also James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine 1918-1933*, pp. 267-301, and O. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, pp. 421-422. For recent examples see John Kolasky, *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1970).

³¹ See "Khrushchev on Modern Art" in Priscilla Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts. The Politics of Soviet Culture 1962-1964* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1965), p. 160.

in his book *Ukraine: A History* writes that by destroying the Ukrainian elite in the 1930s and renewing Russification, Stalin reversed the trend of associating modernity with Ukraine. Modernity took on a Russian guise again while Ukrainian culture was identified with peasants and village life.³² Ukrainian culture was exiled from the cities to the farms from which it had emerged during the brief period of Ukrainization. These discriminatory policies in combination with Socialist Realism were to affect the development of art in Ukraine in the decades to come.

Of the older artists who survived like A. Petryts'kyi, F. Krychevs'kyi, and V. Yermylvov all had to conform to Socialist Realism, which prevailed until after the death of Stalin in 1953. They also carefully avoided painting anything that could be labelled "nationalist".

It should also be pointed out that in the name of collectivization millions of Ukrainian peasants were starved to death in the man-made famine of 1932-1933 while countless other millions were deported to Siberia where most perished in the harsh, uninhabitable environment.³³ Considering the

³² O. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, p. 424.

³³ Until recently the Soviet Union denied that the famine had taken place, and as a result exact figures of casualties were not available. Presently, estimates in the Soviet press range from five to ten million people, but no official government figures have been released. For a Soviet source see Arthur Bauer, "1933 Famine", *Ukraine. Illustrated Monthly*. No. 10, 1989, p. 24-28. For information and statistics published in the West before the Soviet Union acknowledged that the famine indeed took place see Robert Conquest, *Harvest*

number of artists that came to art from rural, peasant backgrounds, before these tragic events and after, the lost potential in Ukraine must be considerable.

When all opposition to Stalin's policies had been crushed, the Party turned its attention to the restructuring of the artistic organizations. Meetings of artists took place in Kiev, Kharkiv, and Odessa at the beginning of 1938, followed by the First Congress of the Artists' Union of Ukraine held 25-28 of October, 1938 in Kiev with 116 delegates present.³⁴ "The establishment of the Artists' Union was meant not as a conventional association of all artists who wished to work according to the new principles, but as a rearmament of artists on the basis of the new creative method of Socialist Realism."³⁵ Ivan Boichenko, a graphic artist and Communist Party member since 1927, was chosen to head the Artists' Union of Ukraine and did so until 1941 when he was replaced by O. Pashchenko (1941-1944) and V. Kasian (1944-49).³⁶ The charter proposed by the

of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine (London: Hutchinson, 1986).

³⁴ "Khronika: Ziizd radians'kykh khudozhnykiv Ukrainy", (Chronicle: Convention of Soviet Artists of Ukraine) Maliarstvo i skul'ptura (Painting and Sculpture). No. 10, October, 1939, inside back cover.

³⁵ Quoted from a typewritten short history of the Artists' Union of the UkSSR, p. 2 supplied by the secretary of the Artists' Union Executive, Mykola Kostyuchenko in Kiev in November, 1988, and now in the possession of the author.

³⁶ The other heads of the Artists' Union of Ukraine were: O. Shovkunenko (1949-51), M. Khmel'ko (1951-55), M. Derehus (1955-62), V. Kasian (1962-68), B. Borodai (1968-82), O. Skoblikov (1982-83), and O. Lopukhov (1983-). This

Artists' Union Congress was approved September 7, 1939 by the executive of the Radnarkom (Council of Ministers) of Ukraine. This paved the way for strict government controls of not only all Artists' Union activities, but also of the lives and creativity of the artists themselves.

World War II, which in the Soviet Union is known as the Velyka vitchyzniana viina (The Great Fatherland War, or the Great Patriotic War, as it is referred to in Soviet translations) interrupted the activities of the Artists' Union. Prior to the German occupation of Kiev, many of the artists were conscripted into the Red Army. The Kiev Art Institute, its staff, and students were evacuated to Samarkand in Central Asia, where together with the Kharkiv Institute of Applied and Industrial Art they became a branch of the Moscow Institute of Art.³⁷ Unfortunately the art of this period has not been documented in any publication that I am aware of. However, the political situation in Eastern Ukraine during the German occupation has been documented, and on that basis it would appear that the atmosphere was not conducive to creative endeavours. Soviet Ukraine became the "Reichskommissariat Ukraine" under the brutal Erich Koch. The German occupational forces and the Gestapo behaved much more ruthlessly in Kiev in all spheres of life, including art and literature, than they did in Lviv, which

information was obtained from Mykola Kostyuchenko, Executive Secretary of the Artists' Union of Ukraine.

³⁷ P. I. Hovdia, *Virnist' tradytsiam*, p. 12.

was part of the "General Gouvernement". Odessa was occupied by Romanian forces. As living conditions were very harsh, there was little time and energy for the making of works of art.

Artistic activities resumed after the war with the assistance of the Communist Party apparatus, but with even greater control of art and artists. In 1946 a drive for ideological conformity in cultural life, which lasted until the death of Stalin in 1953, was launched by Andrei Zhdanov. Throughout the USSR artists, scientists, and educators were required to campaign actively for building a Soviet society. In Ukraine attacks were directed at cultural workers for not opposing "bourgeois-nationalist conceptions". Artists and writers were instructed to emphasize Soviet achievements over non-Soviet ones, and to show that they were superior to nationalist goals. According to R. Sullivant works tending to set off Ukraine as distinct from the other republics were to be avoided, and so were works that depicted Ukrainian culture as developing in opposition to or separately from the cultures of Russia or Belorussia.³⁸ In painting, these restrictions meant that themes that would be characteristic of Ukraine were not to be depicted. Prominent artist Tetiana Yablons'ka recalled that during Zhdanov's tenure even Impressionism came under attack, and the use of

³⁸ Sullivant, p. 266.

Impressionist colours and effects were forbidden.³⁹

Western Ukraine

In Western Ukraine on the other hand, first under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, after 1921, under the Polish administration, a more conservative development of the arts continued with a dominant orientation towards the West, especially France and, to a lesser degree, Germany. The Polish state was based on constitutional principles and elections to the bi-cameral parliament were relatively free. The Polish authorities maintained a liberal attitude towards the arts, although generally they did not support the education and activities of Ukrainian artists. Throughout this time Lviv, the largest urban centre with a population of about 300,000, was at the heart of most cultural endeavours in Western Ukraine. Even though there were almost five million Ukrainians living under Polish administration, (most of them in Halychyna, or Galicia, as that territory was called by non-Ukrainians), they did not predominate in Lviv or the other cities of Western Ukraine.⁴⁰ As in Eastern Ukraine most of the Ukrainian population tended to be rural. However, their level of

³⁹ During an interview with T. Yablons'ka 7 October, 1988 in the artist's studio in Kiev, Yablons'ka stated that one could not even mention the word "Impressionism".

⁴⁰ In 1930-31 the Ukrainians made up only 16.2% of the population of Lviv even though they accounted for 66.1% of a total population in Western Ukraine of 7,150,000. There were 4,730,000 Ukrainians, 1,570,000 Poles, and 705,000 Jews. For further information see *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopaedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963) Vol. I, pp. 212-216.

national consciousness was quite high compared to that of their compatriots in Soviet Ukraine.

There were contacts with Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s and several joint exhibitions were held, but with the onset of Stalinist terror in the early 1930s communications with Soviet Ukraine ceased. Western Ukrainian art also benefitted from the impact made by a number of artists from Kiev and Kharkiv who sought refuge in Lviv from the Communist take over in Soviet Ukraine. Petro Kholodnyi (1876-1930), Pavlo Kovzhun (1896-1939), and Robert Lisovs'kyi (1900-1976) were just a few of the artists who settled in Lviv where they continued to pursue their artistic careers. Kovzhun in particular was instrumental in organizing Ukrainian artists, exhibitions, and publications, as well as generating an interest in the arts.

As there was no centre of higher art education in Lviv, some of the more talented artists studied at the Cracow or Warsaw Art Academies in Poland, others went to Vienna, Munich or Paris. Of the native Lviv artists Oleksa Novakivs'kyi (1872-1935) was the best known and the most influential because of the art school which he founded in 1923 and ran very successfully until his death in 1935.⁴¹

⁴¹ O. Novakivs'kyi started his art school with the support of Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi, the Primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, in 1923. Some of his better known students were R. Chornii, S. Hordyns'kyi, V. Lasovs'kyi, M. Levyts'kyi, S. Lutsyk, M. Moroz, I. Nyzhnyk-Vynnykiv, and H. Smol's'kyi.

His work, combining an Impressionist palette with an Expressionistic brushstroke, was mostly in the Post-Impressionist tradition. Novakivs'kyi's students formed an art group known as RUB and in 1933 published an almanac called Karby. They held annual exhibitions of student work and participated in other Lviv shows.

Two other well known artists were Olena Kulchytska (1877-1967) and Ivan Trush (1869-1941), both of whom worked in a modified Impressionist style. O. Kulchytska was interested in folk art and documented the regional peasant costumes in a series of watercolours. She also illustrated local folk legends and traditions in some of her paintings, prints, and drawings. Trush, who is best remembered for his landscapes and portraits of Ukrainian writers, also painted genre scenes of Hutsuls in their colourful folk dress.⁴²

The Association of Independent Ukrainian Artists (ANUM) was established in 1930 in order to bring together all Ukrainian artists working in Lviv and throughout Europe. In 1931 ANUM organized an international exhibition which included works by Lviv artists, Ukrainian artists working abroad like Archipenko, Andreenko, Khmeliuk, Hryshchenko (Gritchenko), as well as works by Picasso, Derain, Chagall,

⁴² The people living in the north-eastern part of the Carpathian Mountains were known as Hutsuls. Because of the relative isolation of the region, they retained many folk customs that had disappeared from areas more open to outside influences. They were particularly well known for their colourful garments, woodwork, leather tooling, and ceramics.

Modigliani, Zadkine, Severini, and Tozzi.⁴³ Sviatoslav Hordyns'kyi, one of the exhibit organizers, estimated that at this time there were about thirty Ukrainian artists working abroad, mostly in Prague, Munich, Berlin, and Paris, and that they helped Western Ukrainian artists to keep in touch with developments in the rest of Europe.⁴⁴ ANUM activities included ten other exhibitions, the publication of five issues of an art magazine, titled *Mystetstvo* (Art), and seven monographs dedicated to individual artists.

There were also organizations of Polish artists (New Generation and the Society of Professional Plastic Artists), as well as a group of artists of Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian origins founded in 1929 and known as "Artes". The latter aimed to promulgate avant-garde art and was credited with being the first to bring the spirit and practice of the new art to Lviv as may be seen from an article in *Mystetstvo*:

Their art surprised not only the unprepared population, but also the art critics who took a long time to realize that a new time had come and with it new people and new artistic ideas.⁴⁵

All of these organizations provided an artistic milieu for their members and carried out extensive exhibition

⁴³ S. Hordyns'kyi, "ANUM", *Sucasnist*, March, 1985, p. 40.

⁴⁴ S. Hordyns'kyi, "ANUM" (II), *Sucasnist*, April 1985, p. 62.

⁴⁵ M. Vynnyts'kyi, "Roman Sel's'kyi", *Mystetstvo*. No. 4, 1932/33, p. 86. The article indicates that one of the modern trends favoured by members of Artes was Surrealism, but the reproductions of the work of Sel's'kyi show that it was very low key and of the realist variety.

activities.

At the onset of World War II, in September, 1939, as the result of the Nazi-Soviet agreement made a few months earlier, Soviet Armies invaded Western Ukraine and occupied the territory until June, 1941 when they were forced to retreat by their former German allies. Attempts were made during the Soviet occupation to organize the Lviv artists, and an Organizing Committee was established with R.

Sels'kyi, M. Vnuk, H. Shtreng, and R. Vitsyns'ki.⁴⁶

Artists from Kiev were sent to Lviv to help organize the local artists and introduce them to Socialist Realism.

However, there was no time to impose Socialist Realism.

Some of the artists that arrived from Kiev like Mykola Azovs'kyi, Ivan Denysenko, Mykhailo Dmytrenko, and Mykola Nedilko enjoyed the atmosphere of Lviv so much, that they avoided the evacuation of Soviet citizens and remained in the city during the German occupation, and then emigrated to the West.

During the Soviet occupation several exhibitions were held in Lviv including a graphic exhibit, a group show of the work of A. Manastyrs'kyi, his son V. Manastyrs'kyi, R. Sel's'kyi, M. Sel's'ka, H. Smol's'kyi, and O. Lishchyns'kyi,

⁴⁶ M. I. Batih, "Tvorcho-orhanizatsiina dial'nist' lvivs'koi orhanizatsii spilky khudozhnykiv UkRSR 1939-1985" (Creative-Organizational Activities of the Lviv Organization of the Artists' Union of the UkSSR 1939-1985) (Lviv: Lviv Organization of the Artists' Union of the UkSSR, 1986), p. 6 and 42. A copy of this limited publication marked "for internal use only" is in the possession of the author.

as well as a solo exhibit of the work of I. Trush. Some eighty artists participated in the large group exhibit of Lviv artists and Hutsul craftsmen held in Moscow in 1940. Lviv artists also participated in the Moscow exhibition "Nasha bat'kivshchyna" (Our Fatherland) held to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine was marked by arrests and executions in which the prominent artist Roman Chornii disappeared, as did thousands of Ukrainian community leaders.⁴⁷ Many thousands of so called "enemies of the people" were shipped in cattle cars to Siberia or perished along the way, while others were massacred in prisons before the retreat of the Soviet forces.⁴⁸ This atmosphere of uncertainty and fear was not conducive to creativity.⁴⁹

In 1941 Western Ukraine was occupied by the Germans and under the name "Distrikt Galizien" became part of the "General Gouvernement" under Hans Frank. Ukrainians in Western Ukraine suffered less than in Eastern Ukraine under Erich Koch, but arrests and executions were common

⁴⁷ For a partial list of arrested leaders see Ukraine. A Concise Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, p.873.

⁴⁸ Michael Yaremenko in his book *Galicia - Halychyna: From Separation to Unity* (Toronto: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1967), p. 256 writes that 10,000 prisoners were massacred in Lviv alone.

⁴⁹ This view was expressed by the artist Myron Levyts'kyi b 1913 in Lviv and now living in Canada in a note on Lviv during the Soviet occupation, prepared at the request of the author.

occurrences. During the German occupation of Western Ukraine artistic activities continued to be centered in Lviv. The Ukrainian artists initiated a new organization called "Spilka pratsi ukraiins'kykh obrazotvorchykh mysttstv" (Society of Work of Ukrainian Visual Artists) which held five exhibits.⁵⁰ The third exhibition, was dedicated to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Ukrainian Academy of Art in Kiev. There was even an attempt to set up an Art Academy headed by V. Krychevskyi, which was officially known as the Higher Visual Arts Studio.⁵¹ The orientation of most artists teaching at the newly founded art school was toward Ukrainian and Western European

⁵⁰ This period is not well documented. According to B. Pevny in *Mykola Nedilko* (New York: Ukrainian Academy of arts and Sciences, 1983), p. 27, the new society was headed first by M. Osinchuk and later by I. Ivanets'. There were about one hundred members. Group exhibitions were held in December, 1941; June, 1942; and December, 1943. There was a retrospective exhibit of the work of three artists - Ivan Trush, Oleksa Novakivs'kyi, and Petro Kholodnyi, as well as a solo retrospective of the work of Olena Kulchyts'ka in May, 1943.

⁵¹ Not much has been written about the Higher Visual Arts Studio, also referred to as the Lviv Academy of Art, that was set up in the fall of 1943 near the Opera. With the approach of the Soviet Army in 1944 it moved briefly to the village of Labovii and then Krynycia where it was disbanded in April and the faculty were evacuated by the Central Ukrainian Committee to the West. Some of the teachers had studied abroad, others came to Lviv during the Soviet or German occupation, but all were nationally conscious individuals who would have been persecuted by the Soviets for their pro-Ukrainian activities had they stayed. Vasyl' Krychevs'kyi (1872-1952) was a prominent artist and architect, and professor of the Art Academy in Kiev from its founding in 1917 to 1922 and then professor at the Kiev Institute of Art. He relocated to Lviv in 1943 during the German occupation. After the war he lived in Paris before settling in Venezuela. Serhii Lytvynenko (1899-1964), a sculptor, studied at the Cracow Art Academy and in Paris in 1930. He worked in Lviv from 1931 to 1944 and emigrated to the United States in 1949.

sources.

Artists of Jewish origin did not fare as well as Ukrainian ones, because they were persecuted by the Nazi regime and according to art historian V. Ovsichuk the following artists lost their lives: E. Erb, Otto Hahn, M. Kits, V. Kshyzhonovs'ki, O. Remer, and Yanish.⁵² Margit Raikh Sel's'ka was saved by a Ukrainian neighbour who helped her escape from the Jewish compound in Lviv. She spent the rest of the German occupation period in hiding.⁵³

As Western Ukraine did not come under continuous Communist domination until 1944 when it became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Socialist Realism did not become as well entrenched there, as in Eastern Ukraine where it had predominated since 1934. Some of the most active artists who had lived through the first occupation of Western Ukraine by Soviet forces such as S. Hordyns'kyi, E. Kozak, V. Krychevs'kyi, V. Lasovs'kyi, M. Levyts'kyi, R. Lisovs'kyi, S. Lutsyk, I. Nyzhnyk-Vynnykiv, and M. Osinchuk emigrated to the West, but many others remained and survived the Stalin years. Among them were Hryhorii Smol's'kyi (1898-1985) who had studied with Novakivs'kyi and in Paris, Leopold Levyts'kyi (1906-1973), Oleksii Shatkivs'kyi (1908-

⁵² V. Ovsichuk, *Zakhidnoukraiins'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys 1939-1985* (Western Ukrainian Soviet Painting 1939-1985). Author's unpublished manuscript, p. 10 and 26.

⁵³ Information based on a conversation with the Lviv artist, V. Patyk, 29 December, 1989 in Toronto, Canada.

1979) and Vitold Manastyrs'kyi (1915) who had studied at the Warsaw Academy of Art, Yaroslava Muzyka (1898-1973) who had studied in Paris, Roman Sel's'kyi, (b.1903-1990), and Margit Raikh-Sel's'ka (1903-1980), both of whom had studied in Cracow and Paris.

All of these painters had close ties with Western European art particularly Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Cubism. Even though they were figurative painters, their individual styles differed and were not imitative of nature. In order to survive under Stalin and the restrictive policies implemented by A. Zhdanov in 1946, they were forced to adapt to Socialist Realism by producing work that was markedly more realistic and narrative from what they had been doing before the war. Many managed to retain some sort of individuality at least part of the time. Some of them also continued to create paintings that were not shown publicly because they were in the spirit of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, and Cubism. Others like R. Sel's'kyi and Y. Muzyka directed their energies into teaching and had a lasting influence on the younger generation of artists who trained in Lviv after World War II.

When the Soviets recaptured Lviv June 27, 1944, they lost no time in organizing the artists, and on July 31 the Artists' Union of UkSSR was established with Roman Turyn as

its first head.⁵⁴ However, imposing Socialist Realism on artists who were used to relative creative freedom and Western European art was a slow process that was not always successful. To a certain extent Lviv artists continued the European and Ukrainian traditions and their work differed from what was being produced in the rest of the country in subject matter and manner of painting as will be seen from the examination of the work of such artists as Roman Sel's'kyi, Volodymyr Patyk, and Karlo Zviryns'kyi to be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Some of the difficulties faced by the Lviv artists may be surmised from the transcript of the Regional Conference of the Artists' Union in 1955 in the discussion of the state of the visual arts in the Western Regions of Ukraine. The following criticism was made by Mykhailo Khmel'ko, head of the Artists' Union of the UkSSR:

The visual arts of Western Ukraine, Zakarpattia and Chernivtsti oblast, differ sharply from the requirements of our day, from the growing cultural and esthetic questions of our people. Soviet reality, the great historical transformation have not found pictorial expression in the paintings.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ M. I. Batih, *Tvorcho-orhanizatsiina diial'nist' l'vivs'koi orhanizatsii spilky khudozhnykiv URSS 1939-1985*. (Creative-Organizational Activities of the Lviv Organization of the Artists Union URSS 1939-1985), p. 42. The following list of heads of the Lviv branch of the Artist Union are given: L. Levyts'kyi (1948-1949), S. Tkachenko (1949-1950), R. Turyn (1950-1952), Y. Shcherbatenko (1952-1953), H. Leonov (28.4.1953-30.5.1953), V. Skolozdra (1953-1955), Y. Chaika (1955-1966), E. Mys'ko (1966-1981), and Y. Sadows'kyi (1981-).

⁵⁵ Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of the UkSSR in Kiev (CSAMLA), fond (fund) 581, opys (description) 1, spava (file) 550, "Stenohrama mizhoblasnoi

Furthermore, in the report, the Artists' Union of Lviv is blamed for not carrying out a stronger campaign in the ideological objectives of creativity.⁵⁶ Such statements are significant in showing that there was resistance to Socialist Realism, and that despite persistent pressures from the authorities the individual creative spirit survived, particularly in the regions newly added to the UkSSR.

In summing up, in a span of about forty years, Ukraine had gone from the overthrow of imperialist autocracy through a brief period of independence, with a concurrent revival of culture and the arts which continued through the 1920s in Soviet Ukraine, to be followed by the imposition of Communism and the implementation of Socialist Realism and with it the decline of all avant-garde art and Western influence. At the same time the population of Ukraine had changed from primarily an agrarian one to an urban, industrialized society, albeit a socialist one within a totalitarian state.⁵⁷ Ukrainian lands had emerged unified into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, which, despite its membership in the United Nations, was subject to

konferentisii khudozhnykiv zakhidnykh, Zakarpats'koi ta Chernivets'koi oblastei, 4 chervnia, 1955" (Stenogramme of the Inter-Regional Conference of Artists of Western Ukraine, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi Region, 4 June, 1955), p. 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 32.

⁵⁷ For more information and statistics see *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopaedia*, Vol. I, pp. 225-226.

decisions emanating from the Communist Party in Moscow.⁵⁸ The isolation of artists from their own heritage and the world outside the USSR prevailed until the death of Stalin in 1953 when cracks began to appear in the Iron Curtain that eventually allowed for the expansion of the narrow confines of Socialist Realism. The process of regeneration was nurtured by a revival of past memories and artistic achievements including those of the 1920s.

⁵⁸ Interesting examples of centralist decision-making may be found in the recent interview with Petro Shelest, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine from 1964-1970, conducted by D. Tabachnyk, "Bez kul'tury nema narodu" (Without Culture there Is No Nation) in the monthly journal Kiev. No. 10, 1989, pp. 90-110.

Origins, Theory, and Practice

The formula for Socialist Realism was devised and officially proclaimed at the First All Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. In his address to the Congress A. Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, gave a definition of Socialist Realism which was written into the Charter of the Writers Union:¹

Socialist Realism is the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism. It demands of the artist the truthful, historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction of reality must be combined with the task of ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism.²

Although this formulation, upon which the edifice of Socialist Realism was built, originated with the Communist Party and was first accepted by the writers, it was applied to all art.

¹ Zhdanov's definition as delivered in his address to the First All Union Writers' Congress differs only in wording and not in content from the definition accepted by the First All Union Congress of Soviet Writers as may be seen from the following quotation taken from "Soviet Literature - the Richest in Ideas. The Most Advanced Literature," Soviet Writers' Congress 1934. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977) p. 21:

In the first place, it means knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, not to depict it in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as 'Objective reality', but to depict reality in its revolutionary development. In addition to this, the truthful and historical concreteness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remoulding and education of the toiling people in the spirit of socialism.

² Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi sezd sovetskikh pisatelei, (The First All Union Congress of Soviet Writers) Stenographic transcript. (Moscow, 1934) p. 716.

In the visual arts it marked the culmination of a struggle that began in the 1920s among different artistic groups, ranging from realists to avant-garde artists, to impose their views as official policy. Up to this time a considerable variety of approaches and styles had been possible in Soviet art, in spite of growing restrictions that led artists like D. Burluk, M. Chagall, A. Ekster, N. Gabo, V. Kandinsky, and A. Pevsner to leave the Soviet Union. When in 1932 all art groups were disbanded, it became obvious that the leadership of the Communist Party had decided to endorse realist art, but it was not until after the Writers' Union approval in 1934 that Socialist Realism became the only officially sanctioned art. It became the one and only method allowed in art just as only one party, the Communist Party, was permitted in politics, and only one philosophy that of Marxism-Leninism was permitted in thought. All other approaches to art were strongly criticized and eventually forbidden. Any artist openly opposing Socialist Realism could be accused of committing an offence against the State.

Thus, according to Soviet theory, art was to serve a higher destiny, that of Communism which in the early stages of development is known as socialism. The artist was to fulfill the demands placed upon him by the Communist Party. This position derived from the theory of dialectical materialism and originated in the Marxist-Leninist principle of aesthetics that was based on the interpretation of art as a means to the understanding and revolutionary transformation of the world.

For a Marxist-Leninist there is only one reality, a reality that stems from the concrete world and not from internal sensations. All other realities are false. Human consciousness reflects only the objective world and cannot exist without it, at the same time as the world exists independently from human consciousness.³ These principles were entrenched in the definition of Socialist Realism in the Charter of the Artists Union which governs the work of its members and effects the life and creativity of all artists in the Soviet Union.⁴

Although Socialist Realism has been officially recognized in the Soviet Union as a method, because it does not define a particular style or genre, but aims to fulfill the demands of the Communist Party, it is, in fact, an all embracing doctrine that the State uses to set limitations on the creativity of artists and affects their day-to-day existence. Fundamental to Socialist Realism are the concepts of "narodnost'", "partiinnost'", and "klassovost'", the meaning of which is essential to the understanding of Soviet art, as they are at the core of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics.⁵ There is a fourth

³ Y. V. Belichko, "Vtilennia lenins'koho vchennia pro mystetstvo u tvorchi praktytsi ukraiinskykh radians'kykh khudozhnykiv," *Ukraiins'ke mystetstvoznavstvo*, No. 4, 1970, 5.

⁴ *Materialy pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov 28 fevralia - 7 marta 1957* (Materials of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists, 28 February - 7 March 1957), (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1958) p. 331.

⁵ The information provided is based on the Academy of Science of the USSR Institute of Philosophy and Institute of Art History book *Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki* (Foundations of the Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics) (Moscow: Government

concept, "ideinost'" which is used by some of the Soviet theoreticians and Western writers.⁶ All of these concepts are difficult to translate because they do not have equivalents in English.

"Narodnost'" (literally "peopleness" or "of the people") means that the art has appeal to the people, can be understood by them, and reflects their interests. It also reflects "the most progressive tendencies of the epoch".⁷ Because it is said to combine artistic quality, ideological content, and social functions, "narodnost'" is central to Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. Although its origins may be found in the aesthetics of Hegel in the notion that art exists for all people and not just a small circle of the elite, it was through Lenin that it became the basis for the popular character of all art and literature.

Publishers of Political Literature, 1960). A summary of the Russian text is provided by C. V. James in *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1973).

⁶ V. O. Kudin, *Ideii velykoho mystetstva. Pro partiinist', klasovist', narodnist' u mystetstvi sotsialistychnoho realizmu* (Ideas of a Great Art: about Partiinnost', Klassovost', Narodnost' in Socialist Realism) (Kiev: Radians'ka shkola, 1973). Although the title of the book lists only three of the concepts, Kudin, in fact gives all four as being the main principles of the Socialist Realism method on p. 5. "Ideinost" is also discussed in *Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki*, p. 596-598. Geoffrey Hosking in *Beyond Socialist Realism. Soviet Fiction since 'Ivan Denisovich'*, (New York: Homes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980) p. 3 lists "narodnyi", "ideinyi", and "partiinyi" as the three terms used to characterize Socialist Realism. He does not discuss "klassovyi", but defines "ideinyi" as reflecting "a mature, correct and fully formed ideology on the part of the author".

⁷ *Osnovy marksistsko-leninskoi estetiki*, p. 307.

"Klassovost'" (literally "classness") refers to the class nature of art. According to Marxist-Leninist teaching all art is class art, even in socialist societies where it reflects the moral-political unity of the people building Communism under the guidance of the Communist Party. As Soviet society is monolithic the "narodnost'" and "klassovost'" of Soviet art coincide and find expression in the "partiinnost'" of art.⁸

"Partiinost'" (literally "partyiness") alludes to the fully articulated awareness of the political function of art as determined by the Communist Party and stems from Lenin's article "Party Organization and Party Literature".⁹ It embraces the artist's identification with the Communist Party, his open allegiance to the cause of the working class, and a deliberate decision to devote his work to the furtherance of socialism. "Partiinost'" turns art into a weapon in the irreconcilable war of socialist ideology against bourgeois ideology.¹⁰

"Ideinnost'" (literally "ideanness") refers to the correct ideology of the artist as it is reflected in the content of a work of art which must possess ideological orientation. All four concepts are closely inter-related and difficult to

⁸ Ibid., p. 327.

⁹ This article was written by Lenin in 1905. A translation of it is available in C. V. James, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory*, pp. 103-106.

¹⁰ L. S. Zinger and M. A. Orlova /ed./ *Istoriia iskusstva narodov SSSR (The History of Art of the Peoples of the USSR)*, Vol. 7. (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo, 1972) p. 5.

separate. They have had a strong impact on the development of Soviet Ukrainian painting, and not only on the works of Socialist Realism, but well beyond.

In practice Socialist Realism meant that art was a tool in the hands of the Communist Party and was to be used to serve the Party; art was to be didactic and its duty was to educate and enlighten the masses in the spirit of Communism; art was no longer to be a private vision and activity of individual artists, but had responsibilities to fulfill, which were decided upon by the Communist Party; art was to represent reality not as it actually appeared to the artist and as he perceived it, but as it was defined by the Communist Party. Subject matter was more important than form, and artistic quality was to be judged on the basis of subject matter and how it expressed Communist ideology.

However, as was pointed out by A. I. Stetsky, speaking at the First Writers' Congress, "Socialist Realism is not some set of tools that were handed out to the writer to make a work of art with." ¹¹ When it came to individual works, the detailed interpretation and development of Socialist Realism were left to the artists, working under the watchful eye of institutions controlled by the Communist Party. The artists in positions of leadership in the Artists' Union, the Academy

¹¹ A. I. Stetsky, "Under the Flag of the Soviets, under the Flag of Socialism," Soviet Writers' Congress 1934, p. 264. Stetsky was manager of Culture and Leninist Propaganda Section of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. when he delivered his speech.

of Arts, and the Ministry of Culture became responsible for the application of "the method of Socialist Realism" in practice.

The artistic role models endorsed by the Communist Party were the "peredvizhniki", 19th century Russian artists whose descriptive realist art was not founded on pure aestheticism, but on social and political content, and had as its aim the enlightenment of the people. In that sense Socialist Realism was a continuation of nineteenth century Russian traditions. At the same time it was not exclusively specific to the Communist Party because similar realist approaches to art were imposed wherever a totalitarian state has made art serve its interests, as did the Nazi Party in Germany and the Fascist Party in Italy. Totalitarian ideology strives to destroy all art which does not fit in with its doctrines and endeavours to keep out rival systems.¹²

The Communist Party did just that. Modernism in art was declared incompatible with Socialist Realism. A bitter ideological and aesthetic struggle between realism and modernism was declared.¹³ As part of the overall restrictions

¹² For a discussion of totalitarianism see Leonard Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (London: Pall Mall, 1972).

¹³ Aleksei Metchenko in "The Basic Principles of Soviet Literature," *Problems of Modern Aesthetics* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 7 writes that the principles of Socialist Realism can never be reconcilable to modernism. Aleksander Dymshits in "Realism and Modernism" in *Problems of Modern Aesthetics*, p. 261 states that "There has always existed a bitter ideological and aesthetic struggle between realism and modernism. It is a struggle of diametrically opposed world outlooks,

enforced by the Communist Party, artists, along with all other citizens, were isolated from outside influences by the Iron Curtain and by controls from within. In fact, in Moscow both museums of modern art, the Moscow State Museum of New Western Art and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art, were closed in 1947 and 1949 respectively because they were dedicated to art not encompassed by Socialist Realism.¹⁴

In Ukraine, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, this meant that all avant-garde art, modern Western art, as well as all art that was not deemed appropriate was relegated to museum basements, into "spetsfondy" (special closed archives). In some cases it was destroyed, as happened in Lviv when in 1952 nearly two thousand works of art from the Ukrainian Museum were smashed or burned.¹⁵ At the same time interest in so

artistic methods, and socio-aesthetic attitudes towards life and art."

¹⁴ The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art was reopened after Stalin's death, but the Museum of New Western Art remained closed, and its collection was distributed between the Moscow State Museum of Fine Arts and the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.

¹⁵ The destruction of works of art from the Ukrainian Museum in Lviv were carried out by the assistant director of the museum, Vasyl Liubchyk. Liubchyk, an artist and Communist Party member born in 1913 in Stavropol, Russia, was appointed assistant to long-time director, I. Svientsits'kyi in December, 1949. He was responsible for the destruction of paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures deemed religious, nationalist, or formalist in content. This included works by Archipenko, artists who had emigrated to the West and those believed to be Ukrainian nationalists. The complete list of destroyed art sent by I. Hrechko to the Minister of Culture, Y. Olenenko, in 1988 was published by the unofficial Lviv journal Yevshan Zillia No. 2, 3, 4, and 5 and partially reprinted in Sucasnist No. 10 (1988): 47-58. A photocopy of the original typewritten list with museum inventory numbers, as well as correspondence related to it is in the possession of the author. A special Investigation Committee

called bourgeois art and contemporary modern art of the West was viewed almost as criminal. The history of world art was rewritten in accordance with dialectical materialist methodology of Marxist-Leninist ideology, which is based on socio-political and economic processes. Class struggles and social and political upheavals largely replaced the development of ideas, artistic styles or movements that were used to denote periods in Western art historical studies. This was also done with the history of art of Ukraine.¹⁶ In the early fifties even well documented periods, such as the Baroque were denied existence in Ukrainian publications,

appointed to study the matter reported in an article "Vandaly v muzeiu" (Vandals in the Museum) in the Lviv monthly of the Writers' Union, Zhovten' April (1989): 83-85 that of the 2,115 art works ordered for destruction 1,842 appear to have been destroyed. In 1956 when the first attempt was made to have the destruction investigated, Liubchuk was found guilty and sentenced to ten years of hard labour, but the sentence was never carried out. On the recommendation of the Investigation Committee, the matter has been referred to the Public Prosecutor's office in Lviv.

¹⁶ For example in the book *Narysy istorii arkhitektury ukraiinskoi RSR* (Survey of the History of Architecture of the Ukrainian SSR) (Kiev: State Publishers in Building and Architecture UkrSR, 1957) the development of art is given under the following chapter headings: "Architecture of Ukraine of the Period of Formation of Ukrainian Peoples (XIV-XVII)", "Architecture of Ukraine After the Unification with Russia", "Architecture in the Period of the Russian Court Empire", and "Architecture of Ukraine during the Period of Capitalism". *Y. Zatenats'kyi in Ukrainians'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys* (Soviet Ukrainian Painting) (Kiev: Academy of Sciences of UkSSR, 1958) has the following chapter headings: "Painting on the Threshold of the Great October Socialist Revolution" and "Painting in the Years of Struggle for the Victory of Socialism". As may be seen from these sample chapter headings, the periodization of art history follows the Marxist-Leninist methodology which does not account for the influence and development of such European styles in art as the Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo, Classicism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, etc. In painting the emphasis is on the development of thematic pictures and the narrative or didactic aspects of the work.

despite the visual evidence to the contrary.¹⁷ There was no mention of the avant-garde art of the 1920s, Suprematism, Constructivism, and Cubo-Futurism. Post-Impressionism, Cubism, and Futurism were ignored or at best dismissed as decadent trends and even Impressionism was attacked.¹⁸ Realist painting that was not based on approved sources was criticized, as was the case with M. Boichuk and his followers

¹⁷ In *Narysy istorii arkhitektury ukraiinskoi RSR*, p. 107 it is stated that the architecture of the second half of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century is often incorrectly called "Ukrainian baroque". It is argued that to associate Ukrainian architecture with Western European styles is artificial because in Russia and Ukraine the new trends developed from indigenous sources based on the creative transformation of ancient Rus' architecture. The same argument is repeated in *Narysy z istorii ukraiins'koho mystetstva* (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1966), p. 78. In contrast to these denials as to the existence of a Baroque style, volume III of the *Istoria ukraiins'koho mystetstva v shesty tomakh*, p. 22 states clearly that the art of the second half of the 17th century developed in the Baroque style, but that this style differed from the Western Baroque which is, indeed, the case. The visual evidence supports claims made by Western Ukrainian art scholars M. Holubets' in *Istoria ukraiins'koi kul'tury* (The History of Ukrainian Culture) (Lviv: Tyktor Publishers, 1937) p. 567 and V. Sichyns'kyi in *Istoria ukraiins'koho mystetstva* (The History of Ukrainian Art). Vol. I. (New York: T. Shevchenko Academic Society, 1956) pp. 115-116 that the architecture was an adaptation of the Baroque and was known as Ukrainian Baroque.

¹⁸ Ya. Zatenats'kyi in *Ukraiins'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys*, p. 84 writes:

One can hear among some artists and art historians that Impressionism as a method is hostile to Soviet art, but its separate technical attainments may be utilized. One cannot separate form from content, and the ideological basis of Impressionism is subjective idealism which is hostile to Socialist Realism. Technical achievements of Impressionism, as we have already seen from the work of Drachenko, Khytrova, and Yablons'ka, lead to creative failures.

Modern styles that followed Impressionism were ignored by Zatenats'kyi, but ten years later Cubo-Futurism, Suprematism, and Constructivism were mentioned as negative, foreign influences in *Istoria ukraiins'koho mystetstva v shesty tomakh*, p. 121. A constructivist work by V. Yermilov, reproduced as an example on p.139 is a clear indication of the changes made possible by liberalization policies of the 1960s.

who advocated Ukrainian and European models.¹⁹ As a result contemporary history of art was limited to the development of 19th and 20th century realist traditions which culminated with the attainments of Socialist Realism.²⁰

¹⁹ In 1958 Ya. Zatenats'kyi in *Ukrains'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys*, p. 20 writes that the murals executed by M. Boichuk and his group in the Luts'k barracks in Kiev were "a typical example of formalist trickery with lubok-iconographical stylization". On p. 30 he states that: "Great harm was done to the young Soviet Ukrainian visual art, particularly painting, in the 20s and the beginning of the 30s by Boichuk's followers." He goes on to explain that the followers of Boichuk proclaimed themselves to be "the carriers of a historic mission in Ukrainian art", and that "they attempted to tear Ukrainian art away from the development of socialist art and particularly from the art of the brotherly great Russian nation and its classical traditions". Although he writes that Boichuk's followers encouraged artists to study Byzantine art, icons, and the paintings of Giotto, he does not mention that, in fact, their art was rather realistic in rendering and socialist in content as it depicted peasants and workers. The simplification of forms and controlled depth were well suited to the large scale wall frescoes of public buildings. For information on the fate of Boichuk and his followers see Chapter One, p. 39.

²⁰ It is interesting to note that the chapter on 1920-1933 in *Narysy z istorii ukrainskoho mystetstva* published in 1957 is titled "The Struggle for the Consolidation of Soviet Realist Art". The struggles of the opposing artistic groups, of which only that of M. Boichuk is discussed, are considered to be the result of class conflict even though Boichuk came from peasant stock. (p. 179) Boichuk and his school are called "enemies of realistic traditions" particularly of the Russian *peredvizhniki* whom they are accused of considering bourgeois. (p. 179). Only realist art is discussed in the chapter and the art revolution taking place in Ukraine is dismissed with the following statement:

The bourgeois ideologues tried to resist the new Soviet life, the new Soviet culture that was being built by the people newly delivered from the captivity of capitalistic slavery. The "modernists" from AKhChU, the "boichukisty" from ARMU and the "innovators" from OSMU defending a variety of stylistic manners concurred in the struggles against realist traditions, in particular of the *peredvizhniki*, ideologically embracing "Khvyliovizm" in Ukrainian literature - a trend that propagated a secession of Ukrainian culture from the culture of the brotherly Russian people and an orientation towards the art of bourgeois Europe. (pp. 179-180.)

Control of the Arts and Censorship

The imposition of Socialist Realism required censorship of the arts and the establishment of several levels and types of control. This was made possible throughout the Soviet Union through the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, the establishment of the Artists' Union, and the Academy of Arts of the USSR.²¹ Although theoretically independent, the three organizations are closely linked together by the Central Committee of the Communist Party under which they function. Because of the highly centralized structure of the USSR, ultimate power and control rest with the Communist Party decision makers in Moscow, though parallel structures in the form of the Ministry of Culture and Artists' Union exist in each Soviet republic.

The Ministry of Culture

The Ministry of Culture of the USSR, established in 1953, replaced the Committee of the Arts that was attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR. It is the highest supervisory institution which oversees not only the visual arts, but also is responsible for the theatre and cinema, as

²¹ The Art Academy of the USSR replaced the All-Russia Academy of Arts established in 1932 with the realist sculptor, Alexander Matveyev, as first director. In the book *The USSR Academy of Art* (Leningrad: Aurora, 1982) it is significant to note that despite the title of the book (*The Art Academy of the USSR*) the text traces the development of the Art Academy, not from 1932 when the All-Russia Academy was established, nor from 1947 when the USSR Academy took shape, but from 1758 when the Academy of Arts was founded in Russia in St. Petersburg by the tsar. The tsarist Academy had been abolished in 1918 by a decree of the Council of Peoples' Commissars signed by Lenin, Lunacharsky, Stalin, and Chicherin. However, there is no mention of this fact in the text.

are its counterparts in the republics. The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture, although nominally autonomous, in fact follows policies generated in Moscow by the All-Union Ministry of Culture which has authority over art museums, and this includes approval of all exhibitions in the Soviet Union and abroad.²² Indirectly, through the State Purchasing Commission, the Ministry allocates state funds to artists and also approves new acquisitions of works of art which then become the property of the State.²³ Until recently, the State was the main and only legal purchaser of works of art which, according to Marxist-Leninist teaching, belong to the people and are not meant for private individuals. The Ministry has authority to award special prizes, such as the Stalin Prize (now the State Prize), and titles, such as People's Artist of

²² At the Second Congress of Artists of the UkSSR in Kiev in 1956 M. Khmel'ko, in his chairman's report, voiced criticism of the All-Union Ministry of Culture for "serious infractions of the nationalities policies, the degradation of the role of the republics in the creative process of developing multi-national Soviet art". Khmel'ko pointed out that the All-Union Purchasing Committee of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR has a higher payment schedule for works of art purchased from Moscow artists than the republican ones, thereby, not matching payment according to artistic and thematic worth of a work, but evaluating it on the basis of whether the artist is from Moscow or elsewhere. CSAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 526, "Materialy II. ziizdu khudozhnykiv UKRSR, Kiev, 1956" (Materials of the II. Congress of Artists of the UkSSR), pp. 45-46.

²³ The State Purchasing Committee buys works from the annual thematic exhibitions and distributes them to the museums and institutions throughout the country. According to a report to the Third Congress of Artists of Ukraine in 1962, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine spent nine million old rubles in the two-year period of 1960-1962 on purchases of art. CSAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 954, "Materialy III. ziizdu khudozhnykiv UKRSR, 1962" (Materials of the III. Congress of Artists of the UkSSR, 1962), p. 246.

the USSR, which confer special status upon the artist, as well as financial rewards.

Ministry officials are members of exhibition and purchasing committees, which they dominate together with the academicians. The All-Union Ministry publishes the newspaper *Sovetskaia kul'tura* and is the co-publisher with the Union of Soviet Artists of the USSR of the periodical *Iskusstvo* (Art). In Ukraine it publishes the newspaper *Kul'tura i zhyttia* (Culture and Life) and co-published with the Artists' Union and the Unions of Composers and Cinematographers the journal *Mystetstvo*, devoted to the visual arts, music, and film. When *Mystetstvo* ceased publication in 1969, it was replaced by the bi-monthly journal *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo*, (Visual Arts) devoted to monumental art, painting, sculpture, print-making, and crafts. The All-Union Ministry of Culture jointly with the Academy of Art has been responsible for the approval of curriculum guides prepared by special committees of the Repin and Surikov Art Institutes, usually under the guidance of an academician.²⁴

²⁴ This information is based on the curriculum guides examined at the Kiev Art Institute including the following some of which are in the author's archive. *Programma po zhyvopisi dlia khudozhestvennykh vuzov* (Programme in Painting for Artistic Institutions) (Moscow: Ministerstvo kul'tury SSSR, Ordena Lenina Akademia khudozhestv SSSR, 1964, 1976), *Programma po kompozitsii dlia 1-VI kursov fakul'teta zhyvopisi i masterskoi stankovoi zhyvopisi* (Programme in Composition for I-VI Courses in the Faculty of Painting and Workshops of Easel Painting) (Moscow: Ministerstvo kul'tury SSSR, Ordena Lenina Akademia khudozhestv SSSR, 1964, 1977), *Programma po rysunku dlia khudozhestvennykh instytutov* (Drawing Programme for Artistic Institutions) (Moscow: Ministerstvo kul'tury SSSR, Ordena Lenina Akademia khudozhestv SSSR, 1974).

The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture oversees the curricula of the republic's art schools, of which eight train visual arts specialists.²⁵ It has jurisdiction over the teaching programmes in the Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Art and the Kharkiv Institute of Applied and Industrial Art. For example in 1959 it closed the popular Monumental Painting Faculty of the Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Art, which was attracting many students because of the high calibre of teaching not solely oriented on Socialist Realist art.²⁶ The Kiev Art Institute, on the other hand, follows a curriculum set and approved jointly by the All-Union Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Arts of the USSR.²⁷ Adherence to centrally planned programmes of study, which spell out the projects to be undertaken and the number of hours to be spent

²⁵ According to information received from the Ministry the eight visual art schools are in Voroshylovhrad, Dnipropetrovs'ke, Donets'ke, Symferopil', Lviv, Odessa (where there are two), and Kharkiv.

²⁶ As a result of the closure, the prestige of the Institute declined over the years. The Faculty was re-opened in 1987 with the help of the Lviv branch of the Artists' Union.

²⁷ This information is based on the curriculum guides examined at the Kiev Institute of Art in October, 1988. Original curriculum outlines for the Faculty of Painting are in the possession of the author including one for drawing (1974), painting (1976), composition (1977), and copying of masterpieces in museums (1979). The programme of study for 1974 and 1976 was prepared by a committee from the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture and the Moscow, V.I. Surikov National Art Institute. The other two were prepared only by the Repin Institute. All texts were in Russian.

on them, ensures a certain uniformity in the training of artists.²⁸

The Academy of Arts

The Academy of Arts of the USSR, which does not have counterparts within the republics,²⁹ co-ordinates artistic and research work, and is responsible for guiding the educational and methodological work of the visual arts institutes in all the republics. In addition to the institutes of higher education such as the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in Leningrad and the Surikov National Art Institute in Moscow which are directly under its control, the Academy also encompasses the Scientific Research Institute of the Theory and History of Visual Arts and its publications, a research museum, library, workshops, and auxiliary research institutions.³⁰ As there is no Ukrainian branch of the Academy of Art, art historical research is carried out by

²⁸ See *Uchebnye programmy po spetsial'nym distsiplinam dlia fakul'teta zhyvopisi* (Moscow: Academy of Art of the USSR, 1950). These were prepared by the Repin and Surikov Art Institutes at the request of the second session of the Art Academy and approved by the President of the Academy. They include six-year programmes for the study of drawing, painting, and composition that list the subject to be executed and the number of hours allocated for each assignment.

²⁹ At the Second Congress of Artists of Ukraine in 1956, a resolution was passed to ask the Central Committee of the Communist Party to permit the formation of a Ukrainian Academy of Arts. CSAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 526, "Otchet o vtorom sezde khudozhnikov UkSSR, 3-7 aprelia, 1956" (Report of the Second Congress of Artists of the UkSSR, 3-7 April, 1956). The request must have been turned down as no Academy was established. The request was repeated at the next congress in 1962 with similar results.

³⁰ For more information see *The USSR Academy of Art*, p. 59.

scholars working at the Ryl'skyi Institute of Art, Folklore, and Ethnography in Kiev and its branch in Lviv, both of which are under the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR.

Membership of the Academy is restricted and highly selective. There are corresponding and full members, all highly paid, chosen from amongst the most prominent Artists' Union members of the different republics.³¹ Presidents are appointed for life.³² It is the academicians, laureates of the Stalin and State prizes, who define the scope of Socialist Realism through their own work and serve as role models for the other artists.

The Union of Artists

The Union of Artists of the USSR is a powerful organization with vast financial resources. All professional artists come under its direct control mostly through its counterparts in the republics.³³ The Charter of the Artists

³¹ Out of a total number of two hundred visual art members twelve were from Ukraine. This count is based on the membership list published in *The USSR Academy of Art*, pp. 393-400.

³² The first president was Alexander Gerasimov who was also chairman of the Artists' Union from 1938 to 1954. The others have been Boris Yoganon, Vladimir Serov, and Nikolai Tomsky, all laureates of several Stalin and State Prizes. Yoganon and Tomsky were awarded the most prestigious of titles, "Hero of Socialist Labour".

³³ The Union of Artists has fifteen branches in the republics, as well as local organizations in Moscow and Leningrad. It may be of interest to note that according to a decision of the Third Plenum of the Executive of the Artists' Union of the USSR dated December 1957, all Artists' Unions in the republics were asked to submit lists of artists and art historians and critics for All-Union membership. As a result membership in the Artists' Union was centralized in Moscow, and

Union of the USSR, accepted by the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists held 7 March, 1957 in Moscow, states that:

The Union of Artists of the USSR is a voluntary social organization, which unites artists and art scholars³⁴ who take an active part in the development of Soviet visual arts.

Guided by the policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government, the Union of Artists of the USSR organizes and directs the creative work of artists and art scholars towards the use of art to help the struggle of the Soviet people in the building of Communism.

The Union of Artists of the USSR by means of all of its activities assists the Communist Party and the Government in the aesthetic education of the Soviet people.

Continuing the better traditions of the Russian classical art, the art of the peoples of the USSR, and world artistic culture, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, the Union of Artists of the USSR established the method of Socialist Realism in the creative activity of all artists and art scholars in the Soviet Union.

Socialist Realism represents the higher stage in the historical development of world art. Socialist Realism guarantees the true, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development.³⁵

Thus, the charter, by acknowledging the superiority and control of the Communist Party over the art and artists and emphasizing the monopoly role of Socialist Realism, gives priority to the ideological function of the Artists' Union. Moreover, the didactic nature of art in building Communism,

any changes would have to be approved there. The exchange of local membership cards for All-Union ones was completed by 1 July, 1962. See "Obmien biletov" (Exchange of Membership Cards), *Soiuz khudozhnikov USSR 1957-1962* (Moscow: Artists' Union, 1963), p. 10.

³⁴ The Russian word "iskusstvoved" embraces both the art scholar or historian and art critic. Therefore, art critics are also eligible for membership in the Artists Union.

³⁵ Quoted from "Ustav Soiuz khudozhnikov SSSR" (Charter of the Artists' Union of the USSR) *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiusnogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 331-332.

recognized in the introductory paragraphs, is reiterated in the section "Duties of the Union of Artists of the USSR":

The unification of Soviet artists and art scholars for the purpose of creating ideological, highly artistic works of all types and genres, which would aid in the construction of Communism in our country, the struggle for peace, and friendship of all nations of the world.³⁶

The ideological nature of art is reaffirmed by the second objective: "to assist in the development of art which is socialist in content and national in form".³⁷ The third objective makes the Artists' Union responsible for the ideological direction of its members by stating that the Artists' Union is to provide:

The ideological and political education of Soviet artists and art scholars, and assistance for them in mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory. The education of the Soviet artist and art scholars in the spirit of intolerance to manifestations of bourgeois ideology, aestheto-formalist and naturalist tendencies in art.³⁸

The artistic functions of the Artists' Union are dealt with only in the fourth objective which states that the Artists' Union aims "to foster the creative growth of the artists and the perfection of their professional mastery".³⁹

The other eight objectives deal with a wide range of responsibilities of the Artists' Union of a more practical

³⁶ "Zadachi Soiuza khudozhnikov SSSR" (Objectives of the Union of Artists of the USSR) in Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov, p.332.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 332.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 332.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 332.

nature such as the organizing of competitions, discussions, travel, exhibitions, and providing accommodation, as well as exchange possibilities with artists of the other peoples' democracies and "progressive" artists in foreign countries.

In fact, the Artists Union with its triple mandate in the realms of ideology, creativity, and economics is a large bureaucratic apparatus that functions as a corporate business,⁴⁰ and has under its direct control the Art Fund, the Copyright Bureau, and the Sovietskii khudozhnik (Soviet Artist) publishing house in Moscow, with an equivalent in Ukraine called Mystetstvo Publishers in Kiev.⁴¹

Through the Art Fund, which was formed 4 February, 1940 by the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, the Artists' Union has jurisdiction over all art commissions, production, and materials.⁴² Among the

⁴⁰ In the report of the Art Fund in *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 323 it is stated that the Art Fund spent one hundred sixty million rubles for its creative and social endeavours. This included 45.3 million spent for creative assistance and trips, ten million for purchases of art, 24.1 million for exhibitions.

⁴¹ See section V, no.1 "Yuridicheskie prava Soiuz khudozhnikov SSSR" (Legal Rights of the Artists' Union of the USSR), in *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 338.

⁴² See "Legal Rights of the Artists' Union of the USSR" in *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 338 where it is stated that the Art Fund, the Copyright Bureau, and the Sovietskii khudozhnik publishing house exist as separate financial organizations under the Artists' Union. The Art Fund is defined as "a public organization existing under the Artists' Union" in "The Charter of the Art Fund of the USSR", *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 340.

prerogatives listed in the Charter of the Art Fund of the USSR is the duty of looking after the material welfare of members of the Artists' Union. Thus the Art Fund is responsible for meeting the demands of work for the artists, looking after their health and medical care, arranging artistic trips and vacations for artists and their families, as well as supplying artists' materials, etc. All art commissions are negotiated and contracted through the appropriate sections of the Art Fund.⁴³ The Art Fund has the right to open studios, production centres, factories, and shops in order to create and produce necessary works of art or supplies.⁴⁴ It can organize exhibitions, run competitions, open galleries, organize art clubs, art centres, libraries, and even old age homes for artists. It is responsible for renting and building homes for the artists and their families, as well as studios, and it has a mandate to operate vacation resorts. In other words it is the duty of the Artists' Union, through the Art Fund, to look after the welfare of members and candidates for membership of the Artists' Union. The Art Fund also has the right to offer support to artists that are not members of the Artists Union and to appoint to its governing body non-union

⁴³ The Art Fund is organized into sections or "kombinaty" of painting, sculpture, monumental painting, graphic, interior design, and applied or commercial art. The "Khydozhnia rada" (Artistic Council) of each section has to approve proposals, as well as finished works of art.

⁴⁴ The Art Fund earned eighteen million rubles in artistic commissions. CSAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 954, "Materialy III. ziizdu khudozhnykiv UkrSR, 1962", p. 246.

artist.⁴⁵ In Ukraine the Art Fund has offered jobs to non-members and made it possible for some of them to make a living as artists, but it usually reserved appointments for members only.

At the time of the First Congress of the Union of Artists of the UkSSR in 1938 there were only 165 members.⁴⁶ In 1945 membership had grown to 428 while in 1956, when the Second Congress of Artists of UkSSR was held, there were 803 full and candidate members.⁴⁷ By the time the First All-Union Congress took place in 1957, Ukrainian membership had reached 821 artists of a total number of 7,011 members in fifteen republics. The Artists Union of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was the second largest after the Russian Republic with 4,549 members.⁴⁸ By 1962 there were 9,939 members in fifteen republics of which 1,332 belonged to the

⁴⁵ Information based on the 1957 "Ustav khudozhestvennogo fonda soiuza SSSR" (Charter of the Art Fund of the USSR), *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, pp. 340- 343.

⁴⁶ "Khronika" (Chronicle) *Maliarstvo i skul'ptura* (Painting and Sculpture) No. 10, (Kiev, 1938), inside back cover.

⁴⁷ According to the report, out of a total membership of 803, there were 637 members under the age of thirty-five and 171 older members (27.2%). CSAMLA, fond, 581, op. 1, sp. 526, "Materialy II. ziizdu khudozhnykiv UkrSR", p. 40.

⁴⁸ In the Executive Committee elected in 1957 there were seven members from Ukraine out of a total of ninety-nine. They included V. Kostets'kyi, V. Lytvynenko, H. Melikhov, O. Shovkunenکو, and T. Yablons'ka from Kiev; V. Svyda from Uzhhorod; and Y. Chaika from Lviv. For a complete list see *Materialy Pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 361.

eleven branches in Ukraine.⁴⁹ By 1971 there were fifteen branches and membership in Ukraine had grown to 1,549.⁵⁰

In order to be accepted for full membership, an artist has to apply in writing, present his work for evaluation by a special committee, be recommended by three members of the Artists' Union, and have his application approved by the Artists' Union of his republic.⁵¹ An artist who was not a member of the Artist's Union and did not work in any state institution could be arrested under the law against "parasitism".⁵² In other words, membership in the Artists' Union gives the artist the freedom not to be employed. It also gives him access to artists' materials which cannot be readily purchased, opportunities to exhibit his work without approval by a jury and to sell it, as well as the privilege to

⁴⁹ These figures were obtained from *Soiuz khudozhnikov SSSR 1957-1962* (The Artists Union of the USSR 1957-1962) (Moscow, 1963), p. 8-9. The breakdown of membership by branches was obtained from CSAMLA, fond 581, op. sp. 954, "Materialy III. ziizdu khudozhnykiv Ukrainy, 1962". It was as follows: Kiev-506 members, Kharkiv-113, Lviv-102, Odessa-82, Crimea-66, Donetske-33, Dnipropetrovs'ke-28, Stanislaviv-27, Luhans'ke-25, Transcarpathia-22, Chernivtsi-18, Zaporizhzhia-10.

⁵⁰ *Ukrains'ki radians'ki khudozhnyky* (Ukrainian Soviet Artists). A Guide. (Kiev: Artists' Union of Ukraine, 1972).

⁵¹ See "Chleny i kandidaty v chleny Soiuz khudozhnikov SSSR. Ikh prava i obiazannosti" (Members and Candidates for Membership of the Artists' Union of the USSR: Their Rights and Obligations) in *Materialy Pervogo Sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, p. 333-334.

⁵² See J. N. Hazard, W. E. Butler, P. B. Maggs, *The Soviet Legal System* (Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.: Oceana Publishing, Inc., 1969) p. 324. Article 12 of the Constitution of the USSR as amended through July 1, 1976 states that "Work in the USSR is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat.'"

obtain a studio. In material terms, it offers the Soviet artist a good life with benefits that artists in Western democracies can only dream of. By making adherence to Socialist Realism a condition of membership in the Artist's Union, and membership a condition for being able to practice professionally, the state provided itself with a convenient mechanism for steering the creativity of artists into the required channels.

For young artists, newly graduated from one of the art schools or institutes, there are special Youth Sections run by the Artists' Union that help them get started. Members of the Artists' Union who serve in Youth Sections get paid for providing the young artists with ideological and practical advice. There are special exhibitions of the work of young artists that give them opportunities to show their work publicly.

Several times a year the Artists' Union initiates large thematic exhibitions to mark special events and anniversaries such as the birth or death of Lenin, Stalin (until the mid-1950s only), Pushkin, etc.; the tenth, fifteenth, twentieth anniversaries of the October Revolution, the anniversaries of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, or the Lenin Komsomol (Young Communist Youth League), or the Armed Forces, etc. There have been exhibitions dedicated to the Congresses of the Communist Party, to labour, and to the fatherland. In 1959 there were two hundred exhibitions, in

1960 there were 210, while in 1962 there was an increase to 250 exhibits.⁵³

Starting with the local branches and working through Exhibition Committees thematic exhibits are repeated at the regional, republic, and all-union levels on a regular basis.⁵⁴ According to Igor Golomshtok, Exhibition Committees place orders with chosen artists of good standing and advance money for them to produce paintings on the particular theme of the exhibition.⁵⁵ Selected works from local exhibitions are picked as entries to the republic shows held at the Artists' Union Building in Kiev, and in the case of major all-union exhibitions in Moscow, usually at the Manezh. Some of the works from any one of these exhibitions are bought by the Ministry of Culture or Art Museums for their own collections and to be distributed to local museums and government institutions.

⁵³ Derehus, chairman of the Artists' Union gave these figures in his report at the III. Congress of Artists of UkSSR in 1962. CSAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 952, p. 60.

⁵⁴ In 1960 the Artists' Union had eighteen art galleries in Ukraine.

⁵⁵ Igor Golomshtok, "The History and Organization of Artistic Life in the Soviet Union" in Marilyn Rueschemeyer, Igor Golomshtok, and Janet Kennedy, *Soviet Emigré Artists. Life and Work in the USSR and the United States* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1985), p. 41.

It has been claimed that for twenty five years there were no exhibitions of foreign art in the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ This situation began to change slowly in Moscow soon after the death of Stalin. However, there were few changes in Ukraine. In the period 1957-1962 the Artists' Union of the USSR held 201 exhibitions inside the Soviet Union and organized fifty two exhibits in foreign countries mostly of the Eastern Block, but also a few in Sweden, Great Britain, Switzerland, China, Japan, Denmark, Belgium, Cuba, Finland, Australia, France, and Mexico. Several of the exhibits were of folk art. During those five years there were fifty-one foreign exhibitions sponsored within the Soviet Union of which nineteen travelled outside of Moscow and only five were sent to Kiev or Odessa. This meant that the artists working in Ukraine were isolated from any possible influences of the foreign art that was to be seen in these shows.⁵⁷

Art Publications

It is a well known fact that the press and all publications are very strictly controlled in the Soviet Union. All art books, exhibition catalogues, albums, individual reproductions, and even greeting cards have to be approved by

⁵⁶ Igor Golomshtok, "The History and Organization of Artistic Life in the Soviet Union" in M. Rueschemeyer, I. Golomshtok and Janet Kennedy, *Soviet Emigré Artists*, p. 44.

⁵⁷ Statistics taken from *Soiuz khudozhnikov SSSR 1957-1962*, pp. 56-57. These were the Hiroshima Exhibition by Iri and Tosiko Maruki (1957) in Odessa, Romanian Folk Art Exhibit (1960) and Contemporary Mexican Graphic Show (1960-61) both in Kiev, and the Graphic Art of Cuba Exhibition (1960-62) held in Odessa and Kiev.

a censorship committee before publication.⁵⁸ Control over art publishing ensured that only Socialist Realist works received circulation. Any artist that hoped to see his work reproduced had to satisfy the censors, and as a result most artist became very good at self-censorship.

It should be noted that there were very few art publications in Soviet Ukraine from 1934 until 1955. In fact, according to Soviet sources no monographs on Ukrainian art were printed between 1934 and 1945.⁵⁹ Only eight popular albums about individual Ukrainian artists, including three about Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), two about M. Burachek and M. Samokysh, and one each about V. Sedliar and A. Strakhov were published.⁶⁰ During the same ten years there were thirty

⁵⁸ Special censorship committees exist at each publishing house appointed by "Holovlit", an acronym for Holovne upravlinnia pry Radi Ministriv UkrSR po okhoroni derzhavnykh taiemnyts' (Chief Administration of the Council of Ministers of the UkSSR for the Guarding of National Secrets). It is their duty to read and approve all material to be printed or ask for corrections, omissions, or reject it outright. Tereza Egrezzi, a Lviv artist now living in Budapest, told the author that even linocut holiday greetings created by an artist for personal use had to be approved.

⁵⁹ These statistics are based on T. Radziievs'ka's "Bibliohrafia ukrains'koho obrazotvorchoho mystetstva (radiants'ki vydannia 1917-1968)" (Bibliography of Ukrainian Visual Arts: Soviet Publications 1917-1968) in *Ukrains'ke mystetstvoznavstvo* No. 4 (1970): 128-180.

⁶⁰ According to T. Radziievs'ka, p. 131 these were: Kholostenko, Ye. Vasyl' Sedliar. Kharkiv: Rukh, 1934; Raievs'kyi, S. Plakat A. Strakhova. (A. Strakhov's Poster) Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1936; Burachek, M. Moie zhyttia (My Life). Kiev-Kharkiv: Mystetstvo, 1936; Samokysh, M. Yak ya stav khudozhnykom (How I Became an Artist). Kharkiv: Mystetstvo, 1937, 74 p.; Burachek, M. Velykyi narodnyi khudozhnyk: Taras Shevchenko (A Great Artist of the People: Taras Shevchenko). Kharkiv: Mystetstvo, 1939, 48 p.; Vladimirs'kyi, G., A. Savinov. T. H. Shevchenko - khudozhnik (T. H. Shevchenko - Artist). Leningrad - Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1939,

four exhibition catalogues published. The situation did not improve much in the decade after the war (1945-1955) when, of the six monographs or books published, five were about folk or applied art while the sixth was a book about the Kiev art school. However, there was an increase in the number of books and albums of individual artists of which there were eighteen printed, some in Russian. In 1957 for the first time books on the history of Ukrainian art and architecture made an appearance with the publication of a survey of Ukrainian architecture and a book about Ukrainian art in Russian.⁶¹ The year 1958 saw three more publications on Ukrainian visual arts.⁶² After that the situation improved somewhat, especially with the publication of the *Istoria ukrains'koho mystetstva v shesty tomakh* (The History of Ukrainian Art in Six Volumes) in the 1960s. Despite the cultural thaw of the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were serious omissions,

50 p.; Raievs'kyi, S. *Zhyttia i tvorchist' khudozhnyka Tarasa Shevchenka* (The Life and Creativity of the Artist Taras Shevchenko). Kharkiv: Mystetstvo, 1939, 120 p.; Burzhal, Y. N. *S. Samokysh. Symferopil'*: Krymosizdat, 1941.

⁶¹ The two books were: *Narysy istorii arkhitektury ukrains'koi RSR* (Survey of Architecture of the Ukrainian SSR). Kiev, 1957, 557 pages with illustrations, and Kuril'tseva, V. and N. Yavorskaya. *Iskusstvo Sovietskoi Ukrainy: Ocherki* (Art of Soviet Ukraine: A Survey). Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1957, 299 pages with illustrations.

⁶² The three publications were: P. Hovdia, *Ukrains'ke radians'ke obrazotvorche mystetstvo* (Soviet Ukrainian Visual Arts) Kiev, 1958, 48 p. with illustrations, edition of 7,000; V. Kasiian, *Ukrains'ke obrazotvorche mystetstvo za sorok rokiv radians'koi vlady* (Ukrainian Visual Arts During Forty Years of Soviet Rule). Kiev, 32 p., edition of 10,000; Ya. Zatenats'kyi, *Ukrains'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys* (Soviet Ukrainian Painting) Kiev: Academy of Science of the UkSSR, 1958, 117 p. with illustrations, edition of 5,000.

particularly regarding the development of twentieth century art.

In order to understand the controls and isolation under which the artists in Ukraine had to work, it may be of interest to look at the only art magazine published in the republic. *Mystetstvo*, the official art magazine of the Ministry of Culture of the UkSSR, the Artists' Union, and the Union of Soviet Composers commenced publication in 1953 in Kiev. During this period it was published once every two months, that is six times a year and contained articles about art, music, theatre, cinema, and dance. When it ceased publication in 1969, it was replaced by *Obrazotvorche Mystetstvo* (Visual Art), a journal devoted entirely to the visual arts of painting, sculpture, prints and drawings, applied arts such as book design and illustration, ceramics, mosaics, etc.

In the late 1950s in the joint publication *Mystetstvo* there were only three or four colour reproductions of works of art per issue, and the rest, numbering between ten and twenty, were in black and white. The illustrations reflected the Communist Party line on art. For example in 1959 four of the six issues contained reproductions or photographs of works of art celebrating Communist victories in war or episodes from the Revolution. In 1959 there were ten of these, in 1962 twelve, and forty-one in 1968. The number of reproductions of Communist leaders, particularly those of Lenin also increased

significantly. While there were only five portraits of Communist leaders in 1959 and six in 1962, there were eighteen in 1968, of which twelve were of Lenin. Workers and peasants were well represented: fifteen in 1959 and 1962, twenty-two in 1968. On the other hand there were very few reproductions of still life compositions: none in 1959 and 1962 and only one in 1968. Landscapes fared a little better with four each in 1959 and 1962 and seventeen in 1968. Few of these, however, were of pure landscape. The majority depicted factories, construction, or collective farms. There were only two reproductions of nudes in the three years surveyed. Portraits were much more numerous averaging about ten per year, but most of them were of war heroes, literary figures, or over-achievers in the five-year plans. In the three years, 1959, 1962, and 1968 there were no reproductions of art masterpieces of any kind, no works from countries outside the Communist sphere of influence, and only a limited number from other Communist countries. There were some reproductions of pre-revolution, realist Ukrainian art: eight in 1959, nine in 1962, and six in 1968.

Judging by the rather limited scope of subject matter reproduced, as well as the regional nature of the work, it appears that despite the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's speech at the XXth Party Congress, few changes were taking place within the narrow confines of Socialist Realism in Ukraine, at least in the official publication of the Artists' Union. On the other hand, the tightening controls of the arts

under Leonid Brezhnev were reflected in the growing number of Lenin images and the diminishing number of reproductions of traditional Ukrainian art.

Each issue of *Mystetstvo* included one or more editorials stating the position of the Ministry of Culture and the Artists' Union on artistic policy. Although in 1959 there were nine editorials and four articles on art theory and aesthetics, there were no articles on art of Western Europe or America. There were just two articles on art outside the Soviet Union both of them dealing with the art of Communist China. Only five articles dealt with art prior to the October Revolution, and eight considered the art of the other Soviet republics or countries like Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania most of which were, in fact, under the control of Moscow. As a result, it would appear that in the late 1950s Ukrainian artists could not rely on *Mystetstvo* to learn much about their own art traditions, European art movements, or the developments of modern art.

Not surprisingly, as *Mystetstvo* was a joint publication, there was more space devoted to theatre, film, and official pronouncements than the visual arts.⁶³ This trend continued until the end of 1969 when the journal ceased publication, and

⁶³ *Mystetstvo* for the year 1959 contained thirty-one articles about theatre and film, fifteen about music, and only thirteen about the fine arts. There were also three articles bearing greetings from the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party to the Fourth Congress of Ukrainian Writers, the Third Congress of Writers of the USSR, and the First All-Union Congress of Journalists.

was replaced by *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo*, devoted entirely to painting, sculpture, graphic art, and applied art.

Although the monthly art journal *Tvorchestvo* published in Moscow by the Artists' Union of the USSR contained many more reproductions, it was also limited in what art works were illustrated. Unlike the Ukrainian publication, *Tvorchestvo* was entirely dedicated to the visual arts and was published monthly. As in *Mystetstvo*, for the years 1959 and 1962 there were few still life compositions and even fewer masterpieces of world art.⁶⁴ However, there were also far fewer reproductions of Communist leaders in 1959 and 1962 than in the Ukrainian journal. In 1968 this number went up considerably, from four and three respectively to fifteen, reflecting the freeze in the cultural climate of the Soviet Union. The most frequently reproduced works were of the workers and peasants in heroic poses. In 1959 there were one hundred and eighteen works reproduced, in 1962 the number was ninety-one, and in 1968 it was ninety three. Landscapes were more numerous than in the Ukrainian publication, as were portraits. In 1962 and 1968 there were quite a few reproductions of contemporary works from other Communist countries, as well as art created by Communist artists living outside the USSR and its sphere of influence in 1962 and 1968. This included works by Picasso, who had been a Communist Party member in France, and Siqueiros, who had devoted his talents

⁶⁴ In fact there were eight still life compositions reproduced and only one masterpiece: Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait*, 1661.

since 1921 to furthering revolutionary ideals in Mexican art which was rooted in native traditions. Starting in 1962 some art masterpieces, particularly from the Italian and Northern Renaissance, appeared regularly, including a full page colour detail of a featured work of art.⁶⁵ By 1962 the Moscow journal was also publishing articles and reproductions of a small number of more contemporary European artists such as Van Gogh, Matisse, Barlach, Rodin, and Roualt. It also reported on some of the European art exhibitions in Venice and Paris.

In contrast to *Mystetstvo*, *Tvorchestvo* carried very few editorials expounding the Communist Party line on the arts. Articles about Socialist Realism and its interpretations were usually signed by art historians or artists. There were many reviews of art exhibitions held in conjunction with certain anniversaries such as the October Revolution. Art and artists from the different Soviet republics were regularly featured. Thus the scope of *Tvorchestvo* was much broader and more varied than its counterpart in Ukraine, and it continued to be so in the 1970s.

The Socialist Realism Paintings

The isolation of the artists and the requirement that art serve the Communist Party and the totalitarian state resulted in an official art that for the most part was narrative,

⁶⁵ Among the Italian Renaissance artists were Leonardo da Vinci, Tiepolo, Titian, Boticelli, Piero della Francesca, Massaccio, Mantegna, Uccello, Bernini, and Carravagio. Of the Northern artists there was Hans Memling, Jan Vermeer, Jan van Eyck, and Rembrandt.

didactic, optimistic, and full of hyper-inflated idealism. However, it is difficult to reconstruct even a partially complete picture of the paintings of the Stalin period, because all works with his likeness have disappeared from museums and publications, even though such paintings dominated exhibitions during his life time. In Ukraine there were no art history books published during the Stalin years and those published after the attack on the "cult of personality" (i.e. Stalin) by Khrushchev at the XX Party Congress in 1956 have been purged of all paintings of Stalin, with only a few exception. One of them is the colour reproduction of the painting *Pryiom do Komsomolu* (Admission to the Young Communist League), 1949, (pl.2.1) by S. Hryhoriev which shows a plaster bust of Stalin in the right hand, upper section of the work. This painting, reproduced with the bust of Stalin, was included in Ukrainian publications as late as 1957 and 1958.⁶⁶ All subsequent reproductions of *Pryiom do Komsomolu* appear without the bust of Stalin (pl.2.2). In fact Stalin has been painted out of this picture which is prominently displayed in the State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Arts in Kiev.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ The painting with the bust of Stalin appeared in the album *Ukraiins'ke obrazotvorche mystetstvo: zhyvopys, skul'ptura, hrafika* (Ukrainian Visual Arts: Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Art) (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo obrazotvorchoho mystetstva i muzychnoi literatury UkrSR /State Publishers of Visual Art and Musical Literature of the UkSSR/ 1956 and 1957 editions). Also in Ya. Zatenats'kyi, *Ukraiins'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys, illustration between p. 102 and 103.*

⁶⁷ *Pryiom do Komsomolu* was on display in the fall of 1988 without the bust of Stalin. The reproduction in the museum's official publication shows the painting without the bust of Stalin. See *Derzhavnyi muzei ukraiins'koho obrazotvorchoho mystetstva URSR* (State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Arts) (Kiev: *Mystetstvo*, 1972), p. 88.

Only a carefully selected group of paintings from the late 1930s through to the 1950s have been reproduced in publications. Usually they have been the same safe ones that may be seen in museums and art galleries. They constitute the visual evidence of what Socialist Realism paintings looked like in the Stalin period and provide continuity to the Socialist Realism paintings of the 1960s and 1970s. Without looking at them even briefly it is impossible to appreciate the changes that occurred in art after the death of Stalin.

An overwhelming majority of these works belong to the category known in the art of Socialist Realism as thematic pictures or paintings with a Soviet theme or subject matter. For the most part they celebrate the achievements of the Soviet Union under Communism and glorify the state. They include the idealized images of leaders of the Communist Party such as Lenin and Stalin, portrayals of the victory of the October Revolution, and the heroic exploits of war and triumphs particularly of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

Even though there have been no reproductions of any paintings of Stalin since 1955, some indication of the widespread requisite of portraying Stalin and Lenin may be observed from the number of reproductions in the art journal *Maliarstvo i skul'ptura*. For example in the first issue for 1938 there are twelve pages of reproductions of Lenin and Stalin, in which they appear together on the first page and

then one each to a page. The journal *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo* for January of 1939 featured a reproduction of a sculpture of Lenin and Stalin on the first page, followed by thirteen sculptures of Lenin, ten drawings and one full colour painting. Stalin also appeared in a group sculpture. There were only three reproductions of art without either leader in this issue. Images of Lenin continued to be prevalent in the post-war years as may be seen from the work of H. Kyiachenko, *V. I. Lenin u Razlivi (Lenin in Razlivi)*, 1950, S. Yerzhykovs'kyi's *V. I. Lenin and N. K. Krupskaya in the Tatra Mountains*, 1950-51, or V. Khytrykov's, *V. I. Lenin na III. ziizdi komsomolu (Lenin at the Third Congress of the Young Communist League)*, 1951, all of which depict Lenin among the people. A. Lopukhov in his painting *Do Petrohrada. V. I. Lenin (To Petrograd)*, 1953, (pl.2.3) portrays a heroic version of Lenin returning from Finland to Petrograd in the locomotive of the train, looking purposefully ahead.

Pictures of Lenin became particularly numerous after Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalin, and no publication or exhibition were complete without them. Among the most often reproduced are the following: S. Huyetskyi's *Smolnyi*, 1917, 1957, (pl.2.4) showing Lenin looking at two revolutionaries asleep after the battle; K. Filatov's *Krasna ploshcha, (Red Square)* 1965, (pl.2.5) depicting an energetic Lenin inspecting revolutionary troops, and V. Tokariev's, *Nova shkola*, 1965, (pl.2.6) where Lenin is seen walking with a group of school children. In all of these paintings Lenin's figure dominates

the composition, emphasizing his leadership and importance in Communist ideology. The rendering is three dimensional and ranges from academic naturalism to expressive realism in the Filatov work. In M. Bozhii's *Dvadtsiatyi vik* (Twentieth Century), 1967, (pl.2.7) Lenin is shown on top of the world, striding purposefully over the curved horizon line at his feet. Paint has been applied with expressive brushstrokes in the rising light behind the full length figure.

After 1945, the Great Patriotic War became one of the most prominent themes in painting. Heroic exploits of the Red Army were portrayed in several paintings including S. Yerzhikovs'kyi's *Artylerysty pid Stalingradom* (Artillerymen Near Stalingrad), 1945, (pl.2.8), as well as in several works painted in 1947 including *Chornomortsi* (Black Sea Sailors), (pl.2.9) by V. Puzyrkov, and S. Otroshchenko's *Partyzany* (Partisans) (pl.2.10). In *Druzhba* (Friendship), 1950, (pl.2.11) D. Shavykin depicted sailors carrying a wounded colleague. All of these paintings not only show the fortitude and heroism of individuals and groups, but also present a romanticized picture of war without the accompanying carnage, destruction, and death. The emphasis is not on sacrifice and martyrdom as it had been in the work of Sedliar and Padalka in the 1920s, but on heroism, optimism, and victory. The modelling is three dimensional with an attempt to recreate the figures and landscape as accurately as possible. Colour is used descriptively, and brushstrokes are not individualized.

There are variations in composition, but emphasis is on the collective, heroic effort of the participants.

In Ukraine, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the experiences of the war have not been allowed to fade into history, but have been maintained in the pictures produced in the late 1950s and 1960s by such artists as A. Konstantynopol's'kyi in *Na svitanku* (At Daybreak), 1961, (pl.2.12); A. Safargalin in *Medsestra* (Nurse), 1965, (pl.2.13); O. Khmelnyts'kyi in *V imia zhyttia* (In the Name of Life), 1967, (pl.2.14) which depicts a dead soldier face down, his spread-out arms embracing the red earth. The symbolic gesture and colour do not leave much to the imagination.

The experiences of war have also found their way into what could be called genre scenes, except that they do not depict ordinary events, but occasions selected for their ideological content. For example V. Kostets'kyi in *Povernennia* (Return), 1947, (pl.2.15) shows a soldier being welcomed home by his family, whereas V. Chekaniuk in *Pershyi Komsomol's'kyi oseredok na seli* (First Komsomol Members in a Village), 1958, (pl.2.16) depicts four young people walking proudly, one of whom is a wounded young man in an army coat and hat.

Some of the more prominent thematic paintings have been devoted to socialist labour and its heroes, as well as the builders of Communism, all of whom are invariably shown happy

and smiling. Optimistic pictures of beaming construction workers in a panoramic landscape were depicted by K. Trokhymenko in *Kadry Dniprobudy* (Builders of Dnipro Dam), 1937, (pl.2.17) while cheerful miners getting off work were portrayed by P. Deputatova in *Molodi kadry Donbasu* (Young Cadres of Donbas), 1947, (pl.2.18). Two years later in 1949 T. Yablons'ka painted her award-winning composition *Khlib* (Bread) (pl.2.19) which shows robust, happy young women sacking grain on a collective farm named after Lenin.⁶⁸

It is interesting to note that artists from Western Ukraine and Transcarpathia often portrayed workers in the picturesque ethnic dress of their region which in reality was mostly reserved for special occasions and not physical labour. This artificial staging of events resulted in very unconvincing, theatrical compositions as may be seen from I. Bokshai's *Bokorashi* (Loggers on the River), 1947, (pl.2.20) and A. Manastyr's'kyi's *Hutsuly-kolhospnyky* (Hutsul Collective Farmers), 1951, (pl.2.21). More in keeping with the commonplace, H. Hliuk painted his men in *Lisoruby* (Woodcutters), 1954, (pl.2.22) in civilian clothing against a sun-drenched landscape of the foothills. His painting, like the others, is a celebration of the great achievements of socialism and an idyllization of Soviet daily life, rather than the depiction of actual working and living conditions in the USSR.

⁶⁸ Yablons'ka was awarded the Stalin Prize for this painting.

As pure landscapes were not favoured during the Stalin years, the more prominent ones encompass views of collective farms or industrial complexes as in M. Burachek's *Doroha do kolhospu* (Road to the Collective Farm), 1937, (pl.2.23), I. Shtil'man's *Kolhospna nyva* (Collective Farm Field), 1950, (pl.2.24), and V. Dobrzhans'kyi's and B. Rapaport's *Zavod imenem Dzerzhyns'koho* (The Dzerzhyns'kyi Factory), 1952, (pl.2.25). Artists like M. Hlushchenko from Kiev and later R. Sel's'kyi from Lviv and I. Bokshai, F. Manailo, and A. Kashshai from the Zakarpattia Region, nonetheless, continued to paint scenes of nature in the changing seasons. In the immediate post-war period their landscapes tended to be naturalistic depictions in subdued colours, but with time they became vehicles for expressing the individual artist's feelings for the countryside. Nowhere is this more apparent than in a comparison of landscapes by M. Hlushchenko, R. Sel's'kyi or V. Manastyr's'kyi from the Stalin period, painted naturalistically in muted colours, with the later landscapes, where the space is flattened, shapes are simplified, and colours more vibrant.

Anniversaries of historical events were more suitable as subjects for the large, thematic pictures favoured by the Communist Party than were pure landscapes. However, only celebrations of officially approved milestones and figures, like the three hundredth anniversary of the "unification" of Ukraine with Russia, the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Taras Shevchenko, the fiftieth anniversary of the

USSR, and so on, were deemed appropriate as subjects for paintings. Most often pictures produced for these occasions were multi-figured compositions in the 19th century academic tradition as may be seen in M. Khmel'ko's large canvas *Naviky z Moskvoiu - naviky z rosiis'kym narodom* (Forever with Moscow - Forever with the Russian People), 1954, (pl.2.26). The artist presents the viewer with a panoramic, theatrical portrayal of cossacks cheering Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi standing with the Muscovite czar's emissary at his side upon the proclamation of the news of the Pereiaslav Agreement.⁶⁹ In the 1950s paintings of cossacks appear to have been limited to events involving Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, or the legendary Taras Bul'ba, including M. Derehus' *Taras Bul'ba na choli viis'ka* (Taras Bul'ba at the Head of His Army), 1952 (pl.2.27).⁷⁰ About this time a few paintings appeared that illustrated popular songs about cossacks, like M. Kryvenko's *Ikhav kozak na viion'ku* (A Cossack Rode to War), 1952, (pl.2.28). In this work, which has antecedents in 19th century Romantic Ukrainian paintings of Mykola Pymonenko and

⁶⁹ Bohdan Khmel'nytskyi (c.1595-1657) was hetman of Ukraine from 1648 until his death, and was responsible for negotiating and signing the Pereiaslav Agreement in 1654 with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich of Muscovy that marked a turning point in the history of Ukraine because it put Ukraine under the protection of the tsar. In 1954 the Communist Party decided to interpret the agreement as the culmination of the desire of Ukrainians and Russians to be united and that the union of the two peoples had been the prime goal of the 1648 uprising led by Khmel'nyts'kyi against the king of the Polish Commonwealth of which Ukraine was then a part. It is this official interpretation of historical facts that artists in Ukraine were asked to illustrate for the three hundredth anniversary of the Pereiaslav Agreement.

⁷⁰ Taras Bul'ba is the cossack hero of Nikolai Gogol's novel of the same name.

Serhii Vasyl'kivs'kyi, a girl in folk dress stands alone in the steppe as her beloved rides off to war.⁷¹

Of the thematic pictures dedicated to literary figures there were several depicting Taras Shevchenko such as H. Melikhov's *Molodyi Taras Shevchenko v maisterni K. P. Briullova* (The Young Taras Shevchenko in the Workshop of K. P. Briullov), 1947, (pl.2.29) which illustrates the first meeting between the two artists.

Portraiture was dominated by socialist heroes, including military and political leaders, labour over-achievers, and literary and artistic figures. The aim was to render a likeness that would also display the admirable characteristics of the person being depicted. Very few still life compositions from this period were reproduced, as it was felt they had little to contribute to the building of socialism, and there were no pictures of nudes and animals, apparently for the same reasons.

Even a brief survey of the works allowed public exposure shows that Socialist Realism confined painting to optimistic representations of idealized situations, imposed limitations on the artist's individuality and expression, and also on the

⁷¹ Mykola Pymonenko (1862-1912) and Serhii Vasyl'kivs'kyi (1854-1917) painted numerous genre scenes from the life of the Ukrainian village including some with girls saying farewell to cossack boyfriends leaving for war. See M. Pymonenko's *U pokhid* (Going off to War), 1902, and S. Vasyl'kivs'kyi's *Kozaky na storozhi* (Cossacks on Guard), c. 1890.

subject matter with which the artist had to work if he or she wished to exhibit, retain membership in the Artists' Union, and reap rewards for his creative efforts. Yet, despite all the enticements and measures of control, some artists continued to attempt to test the narrow framework of Socialist Realism, as evidenced by the following quotation:

In the post-war years formalist tendencies appeared in the work of particular painters, sculptors and graphic artists. As a result of the lowering of standards by the Artists' Union and the Committee of Art of the UkRSR, it was possible to see at exhibitions works that were incomplete and even formalist. All of this pointed to the fact that the struggle with formalism and cosmopolitanism was not over.⁷²

It is this art alluded to above that will be at the centre of the discussion that follows.

⁷² Zatenats'kyi, p. 76.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHANGING SEASONS: WIDENING THE SOCIALIST REALISM FRAMEWORK

The Cultural and Political Thaw

After the death of Stalin in 1953, changes took place in the political climate of the Soviet Union that had far reaching effects on culture in general and on art in particular. In part they were brought about by the emergence of Nikita Khrushchev as the Communist Party leader. Khrushchev deprived the Internal Security Forces (KGB) of some of their arbitrary and repressive powers, and thus effectively brought to an end "Stalin's reign of terror" that had gripped Soviet society since the thirties.¹ The hard-line ideological policy aimed at eradicating all possible Western influences in the arts, literature, sciences, and other fields came to an end and was replaced with a more open policy of liberalization which became known as the Khrushchev "thaw". The Twentieth Party Congress at which Khrushchev denounced Stalin in a secret speech that has since become famous, heralded changes not only in ideology, but also in greater autonomy for the republics and a more sympathetic attitude toward the nationalities problems.² With de-Stalinization, a new

¹ For more information about this period see Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror. Stalin's Purge of the Thirties*. Revised edition. (New York: Collier Books, 1973).

² For a discussion of the liberalization and its effects on the nationalities problems see Robert S. Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine 1917-1957* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962) pp. 280-314.

period of reform, experimentation, and liberalization in many fields, including the arts, emerged. As a result, some of what had been banned under Stalin began to reappear and this included the names and works of such purged Ukrainian writers and artists as Mykola Kulish, Olexander Dovzhenko, Ivan Padalka, Vasyl Sedliar, and Mykhailo Boichuk.

After decades of terror, tight control, and relentless indoctrination, a remarkable phenomenon occurred. A small but increasing number of educated individuals began to criticize Communist Party policies and to demand greater civil, religious, artistic, and national rights. One of the first voices to be raised against the inhibiting bureaucratic controls was that of V. Pomerantsev, a writer of Jewish descent living in Kiev, who called for sincerity in literature in an article in a Moscow magazine, *Novyi mir*, for December, 1953.³ Its impact in Ukraine may be seen from an address delivered by the head of the Artists' Union, M. Khmel'ko, at the Regional Conference held 4 June, 1955:

In the last few years in Ukrainian visual arts the "theory" of abstract sincerity propagated by Pomerantsev on the pages of *Novyi mir* became widespread. Some artists did not recognize this alien ideological theory and began saying that you could write whatever you wished as long as it was sincere. Under the mask of this call, which in fact slandered Soviet art, there was a tendency to divorce the artist from the majestic, significant themes of life. Is this not the reason why some artists who had worked on thematic pictures, switched to landscapes,

³ The article "Ob iskrennosti v literature" (On Sincerity in Literature), *Novyi mir*, XXIX, No. 12. (December, 1953), pp.218-245 caused indignation in official circles and resulted in an attack upon the writer in the Soviet press. Eventually Pomerantsev was forced to emigrate and settled in Paris.

and sketching, digressed from the important theme of life?⁴

Pomerantsev's call was followed by Oleksander Dovzhenko's article in the Moscow newspaper, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 21 June, 1955 in which the famous Ukrainian writer and filmmaker, one of the few who had survived the Stalin purges, and had been exiled to Moscow, wrote: "I am not calling artists to abstraction, nor to individual aesthetics, but I am deeply concerned that the boundaries of Socialist Realism have to be expanded".

At the Second Congress of the Artists' Union of Ukraine, held 3-7 April, 1956 in Kiev, I. Vrona, art historian and first rector of the Kiev Art Institute, criticized the tendency to naturalism in painting as a deviation from realism and called for changes in Socialist Realism. He said:

There is a need to widen the framework of Socialist Realism beyond the canonized stylistic features of a certain group of artists, that have usurped a monopoly on realism, but themselves have come close to naturalism, and attempt to declare all those that think otherwise, to be outside of realism.⁵

Most importantly the liberalization policies prompted

⁴ CNAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 550, "Stenohrama mizhoblasnoi konferentsii khudozhnykiv Zakhidnykh, Zakarpats'koi ta Chernivetskoii oblastei, 4 chervnia, 1955" (Stenogramme of the Inter-Regional Conference of Artists of Western Ukrainian, Transcarpathian, and Chernivtsi Regions, 4 June, 1955), p. 32.

⁵ CSAMLA, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 544, "Stenogramma II-go sezda khudozhnikov UkrSSR, 3-7 aprelia, 1956, g. Kiev" (Stenogramme of the Second Congress of the Artists Union of Ukraine, 3-7 April, 1956, Kiev), pp. 83 and 86.

the reappearance of intellectuals, writers, poets, critics, and artists who were not afraid to express their views and feelings publicly. Eventually this new generation of cultural activists became known in Ukraine as "shestydesiatnyky", meaning "the sixtiers" because they had reached maturity and became vocal in the sixties. The most outspoken among them were poets, writers, and critics such as Vasyl' Symonenko (d 1963), Ivan Drach, Vitalii Korotych, Lina Kostenko, Dmytro Pavlychko, Mykola Vinhranov'kyi, Ivan Svitlychnyi, Ivan Dziuba, Yevhen Sverstiuk, Mykhailo Osadchyi, Ihor Kalynets', and Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets'. They were joined by creative individuals from a variety of fields, including the theatre producer, Les' Taniuk, the film director Serhii Paradzanov, and the painters Victor Zarets'kyi, Alla Hors'ka, Liudmyla Semykina, Opanas Zalyvakha, Stefania Shabatura, and many others. The ties that brought all of these young intellectuals and artists together were their shared concerns about Communist Party meddling in literature and art, restrictions on creative freedom, and the lack of recognition of the Ukrainian language and culture. It was their concern with Ukrainian language and culture that differentiated their interests and demands from those being made in Moscow and Leningrad.

Between 1956 and 1964, the year Khrushchev was removed from power, periods of liberalization were followed by periods of tighter controls throughout the Soviet Union, but at no time did the regime revert to the Stalinist tactics of

mass arrests and executions. There were denunciations of individuals in the press and intimidation, but overall the narrow interpretation of Socialist Realism widened. The Picasso Exhibition in 1956, held in Moscow and Leningrad, was followed by exhibitions of the work of James Ensor. Then the works of Monet, Renoir, Degas, Gauguin, Cézanne, and Matisse were brought out of storage. However, the work of Russian and Ukrainian modernists such as Kandinsky, Malevich, Tatlin, and Yermilov remained hidden from view. Perhaps it was felt that young artists would find more in common with their compatriots than with artists from Western Europe. Of course none of these exhibitions travelled to "the provinces", but word about them reached artists in the republics and aroused discussions.

The fluctuations between periods of "thaw" and "freeze" were reflected in the reaffirmation of the theoretical tenets of Socialist Realism, which remained intact, and in the widening interpretations of Socialist Realism, which in practice were becoming more flexible. For example the Resolutions of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists held in 1957 in Moscow during the cultural "thaw" do not demonstrate any changes in the principles of Socialist Realism. On the contrary, they indicate how strongly established these postulates had become, as may be seen from the resolutions of the First Congress:

The Soviet artists have arrived at the First All-Union Congress with important creative achievements. Our art has gone through great and complex paths of development. In the struggle of various movements,

in arguments and distortions, the method of Socialist Realism developed and won. The important Lenin principles of "partiinost'" and "narodnost'" of the art, Lenin's teaching of two cultures and the relationship of artistic traditions of the past - these were and shall remain important, fundamental principles of Soviet art, under whose guidance Soviet artists under the leadership of the Communist Party were able to overcome all difficulties and to embark on the wide road of Socialist Realism. (p. 347)

...As a result of the Marxist-Leninist teaching on art, the First All Union Congress of Soviet Artists strongly repudiated all distortions and vulgarizations of the understanding of the method of Socialist Realism. Socialist Realism is the artistic method resulting from the Marxist-Leninist ideology. It foresees the unanimity of ideological and political points of view of artists. All the same, unity does not exclude, but makes room for a variety of genres, forms, styles, means of artistic expression, characteristic of the creative personality of individual artists. (p. 348)⁶

Yet, the last sentence suggests that an effort was made to restate Soviet principles in such a way as to admit a greater measure of flexibility and individuality. Some attention was given to the interpretations of Socialist Realism that would allow for variations of creative expression. This could be read as a widening of the framework, albeit within the limits of Socialist Realism.

That same year, in 1957 during the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students held in Moscow, Soviet artists had their first experience with contemporary works of art from fifty two countries, including American abstract expressionism. The exhibit also encompassed American and

⁶ "Rezoliutsii pervogo vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov" (Resolutions of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists), *Materialy pervogo Vsesoiuznogo sezda sovetskikh khudozhnikov*, pp. 347-348.

European Surrealist art. None of the Ukrainian artists interviewed by the author had seen the exhibit as travel was restricted and costly. However, most likely as a result of this exhibition and the great interest it aroused, the art magazine *Tvorchestvo* ran two illustrated articles in 1959 about Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism.⁷ Both articles drew negative conclusions about the art, but at the same time provided interesting information about two modern art movements which would have been invaluable to artists starved for information about Western art.⁸

The American Graphic Arts Exhibition which toured the Soviet Union in 1963-1964 for one hundred and five days and attracted 1,602,000 visitors also contributed much needed information about art in the West.⁹ Once more few

⁷ The first article "Chto takoye siurrealism" (What Is Surrealism) by V. Prokofiev appeared in *Tvorchestvo*. No. 7, 1959, p. 23-24. It was illustrated with reproductions of the work of Yves Tanguy, René Magritte, and Salvador Dali. The second article written by I. Golomshtok, "Otkrytie tashisma" (Discoveries of Tachism) appeared in *Tvorchestvo*. No. 9, 1959, p. 23-24. It was illustrated with No. 23, a 1949 work by J. Pollock and K. Davidson's *Picture*, 1955.

⁸ The article on Surrealism expressed the view that Surrealism was the result of the crisis of bourgeois culture. It had become part of the dying social order that had given rise to it, and was the ideological expression and active weapon of the most aggressive groups of imperialist reaction. In the article on tachism I. Golomshtok stated that abstract expressionism was not new to bourgeois art, but was the logical conclusion of the main achievement of an art that had abandoned life and serious contemporary problems in favour of subjective experiences of the artist.

⁹ Paul Sjeklocha and Igor Mead, *Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. xi. The exhibit schedule included Moscow and Leningrad, Yerevan in Armenia, and Alma-Ata in Kazakhstan.

Ukrainian artists saw the show because it did not travel to Ukraine. No reproductions appeared in the official Ukrainian art journal *Mystetstvo* about this exhibition which was attracting so much interest.

Generally, artists and art historians in Ukraine responded to the liberalization more slowly and more careful than those in Moscow, and this was reflected in the art publications, which not only failed to report on exhibitions of foreign abstract art, but appeared to have intensified their attacks on "formalism" and "bourgeois nationalism" in art.¹⁰ Perhaps this was their way of reacting to the threat posed by the penetration of the "Iron Curtain" by art from the West. However, inroads were being made and some changes were taking place. In the monograph on Ukrainian painting published in 1958, the author, Y. Zatenats'kyi, even though adhering carefully to the Communist Party ideology and Socialist Realism methodology, included

¹⁰ The editorial "Komunistychna partiinist'- prapor nashoho mystetstva" (Communist Partyness - the Banner of Our Art) in *Mystetstvo*, No. 1, 1957, p. 2-3 states that:

Lately, the mad attacks of the reactionary ideology that has been condemned to death have escalated upon the proletarian internationalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Imperialist forces have used everything in their power to break up socialism, the international workers' movement, to sow in it seeds of disillusion and discontent. Spasmodically it grabs at everything, resorting to lies, slander, provocations, and crimes against humanity, in order to cheat the workers, to divert their attention from the capitalistic reality, to disguise from the masses the real aim of domestic and foreign policies....We have to remember that the national form of Soviet Ukrainian art besides everything else is also a strong ideological weapon in the struggle against Ukrainian bourgeois-nationalist outcasts.

thirteen black and white reproductions of pure landscapes and two reproductions of still life compositions, albeit realistic ones, out of a total of ninety-five illustrations.¹¹ This was significant considering the absence of both genres from the magazine *Mystetstvo*. Thus pure landscapes and still life compositions gained in prominence, particularly through some of the artists who had studied in Western Europe and had strong ties with landscape traditions in Western Ukraine and Transcarpathia.

Khrushchev's policies in the arts were not always clear, and it would appear that they fluctuated depending on the political situation at home and abroad. In December, 1962, for example, Khrushchev attacked "formalist art" during his well publicized visit to the exhibition "Thirty Years of Moscow Art" which included a small selection of non-representational paintings and sculptures.¹² Khrushchev called the abstract works "a mess" and "dog shit" exclaiming that "What is hung here is simply anti-Soviet. It is immoral. Art should ennoble the individual and arouse

¹¹ Y. Zatenats'kyi, *Ukrains'kyi radians'kyi zhyvopys (Soviet Ukrainian Painting)* (Kiev: Academy of Sciences of UkSSR, 1958). There were eighty-three black and white reproductions and twelve in colour.

¹² The exhibition that signalled the beginning of a crackdown on the creative arts was held at the Manezh, a reconverted tsarist riding stable. Khrushchev was accompanied to the exhibit by four members of the Communist Party Presidium and four members of the Party Secretariat, as well as the former president of the Artists' Union, Sergei Gerasimov.

him to action."¹³ Khrushchev went on to say that the state had the right to send artists to cut trees in order to pay back what the government had spent on their education if they abused their positions by painting abstract works. He concluded by stating:

Judging by these experiments, I am entitled to think that you are pederasts, and for that you can get ten years. You're gone out of your minds, and now you want to deflect us from the proper course. No, you won't get away with it.... Gentlemen, we are declaring war on you.¹⁴

On March 8th, 1963 Khrushchev delivered a lengthy speech about the arts in which he spoke against "formalism" and "abstraction" and insisted that all artists adhere to Party policy in the arts:

I don't understand why the adherents of formalism and abstractionism call those art workers who adhere to the position of Socialist Realism conservatives, while abstractionists are considered representatives of what is progressive in art. Are there any grounds for this? I think there are no grounds, nor can there be any grounds for this, as formalist and abstractionist vagaries are alien to and not understood by the people, and anything alien to the people does not get their support and certainly cannot be progressive....

On questions of creative art the Central Committee of the Party will demand of everyone - from the most distinguished and famous worker in literature or art to the budding young artist - that he abides unswervingly by the Party line.¹⁵

Khrushchev's speech was a clear indication that the government was not relinquishing control of the arts, and that liberalization had gone too far. However, before these

¹³ Quoted from P. Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts. The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962-1964: Documents*, pp. 101-103.

¹⁴ P. Johnson, p. 105.

¹⁵ P. Johnson, p. 173 and 179.

pronouncements and the resulting setbacks, some creative individuals had begun to interact and to form small groups. This was particularly true of the young writers and poets in Kiev and Lviv, and it is through literature that this period and its events became known in the West.¹⁶ However, the resultant rebirth of national consciousness and Ukrainian culture, reminiscent of the 1920s, was much broader and more sweeping.¹⁷ It involved young intellectuals, artists, scientists, students, and workers who were concerned with reviving Ukrainian language and culture. Unfortunately, developments in all aspects of the visual arts, dance, music, theatre, and film have not been explored and adequately documented.

By 1959 the Kiev writers and artists had organized the Creative Youth Club (Klub tvorchoii molodi) which was responsible for bringing together young people of diverse interests. According to its first head, Les Taniuk, and enthusiastic member Nadia Svitlychna, it had official blessing and was under the sponsorship of the Central

¹⁶ For further information about the writers see Iwan Koszeliwec, *Panorama nainovishoi literatury v URSR. Poeziia, Proza, Krytyka* (Panorama of the New Ukrainian Literature. Poetry, Prose, Criticism) (New York: Prolog, Inc., 1963); Iwan Koszeliwec, *Suchasna literatura v URSR* (The Ukrainian Literature of Today) (New York; Prolog, Inc., 1964).

¹⁷ For a description by a Canadian eyewitness of some of these events that marked the re-awakening of national consciousness see John Kolasky, *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1970).

Committee of the Komsomol.¹⁸ Its aim was to give young creative individuals a place to meet and share interests as official organizations of writers, artists, theatrical and film artists, musicians, and architects were very conservative and polarized. Poetry readings and evenings dedicated to the newly rehabilitated playwright Mykola Kulish, the popular writer Ivan Franko, the poet Taras Shevchenko, Lesia Ukrainka, and others were held. The club sponsored talks on Ukrainian history, conducted by the historian Mykhailo Braichevs'kyi, and trips to monuments of architecture, conducted by the art historian, Hryhorii Lohvyn. Members gathered to sing, revived old Ukrainian customs, and prepared traditional costumes for performances of "vertep" which they staged as part of the New Year celebrations.¹⁹ Young people from Russified families discovered their Ukrainian heritage and became interested in learning the language.²⁰

¹⁸ Information about the activities of the Creative Youth Club is based on interviews with Nadiia Svitlychna, taped in Mississauga, Canada, 10 October, 1987, and with Les Taniuk in Kiev, 1 October, 1988. As far as I know, no documentation on the activities of the Club has been published. John Kolasky mentions the Club of Creative Youth in his book *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine*, p. 204. The date and reason he gives for the dissolution of the club differ from the one given to me by Nadia Svitlychna and Les Taniuk.

¹⁹ "Vertep" was a performance re-enacting the Christmas story that was popular in Ukraine at Christmas. It was an old custom carried on by young people dressed in costumes and masks going from house to house carolling. The custom was forbidden during the Stalin years. Later, when it was revived, it took place as part of the New Year festivities because public celebrations of religious holidays were not permitted.

²⁰ Nadia Svitlychna recalls giving Ukrainian lessons to artists Alla Hors'ka, Halyna Sevruk, and Liudmyla Semykina who were eager to improve their knowledge of Ukrainian .

The Creative Youth Club in Kiev and its parallels in other cities contributed greatly to the raising of Ukrainian national consciousness. Many of the better known young talented people in literature and art were among its members. Even though leadership of the club passed to the less controversial Viktor Zarets'kyi, that did not save the club from being banned in 1964 after a particularly patriotic and emotional evening dedicated to Taras Shevchenko where his poetry "Son"(Dream), "Kavkaz" (Caucasus), and "Mertvym i zhyvym" (To the Dead and Living) were recited.²¹

The Cultural and Political Freeze

After Khrushchev's speech denouncing "formalism" and "abstraction" the authorities began paying more attention to the activities of the Creative Youth Club and started looking for "formalists" among its members. Permission to

²¹ The poems selected for reciting were very patriotic and critical of tsarist Russian oppression, not the usual "safe" ones. The concert proceedings were interrupted with an unscheduled song in Russian that disturbed the emotional atmosphere created by the poetry, and caused about half of the people to leave in protest. Also, the programme for the evening, containing quotations from the poetry of Taras Shevchenko, that had been designed by Alla Hors'ka turned out to be an embarrassment to the authorities. When the programme was folded, it was discovered that the following often quoted lines from Shevchenko's poems appeared opposite each other: "Karaius', muchus', ale ne kaius'..." and "V simii vol'nii novii..." (I agonize and suffer, but do not repent..., In the new and free family). Whether it was obviously intended as a parody on the current situation in the USSR, or was a coincidence, is not clear. The programme, a photocopy of which is in the possession of the author, had been approved by the censor as indicated by the code "BF 29384", therefore, the artist and organizers who were questioned were not held responsible. One side of the programme was reproduced in John Kolasky, *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine*, p. 196.

hold a concert on the anniversary of the death of Lesia Ukrainka was given and then denied, but the celebrations went ahead in a park. This contributed to having the Club disbanded. After delivering a speech at an anniversary meeting dedicated to the Ukrainian playwright, Mykola Kulish, in which he pointed out similarities between the russification described in one of Kulish's plays and the current situation, Les Taniuk was threatened with expulsion from the final year of studies at the Karpenko-Karyi Institute of Dramatic Arts in Kiev.²² In 1963, a play by M. Kulish *Tak zahynuv Huska* (This Is How Huska Died), that was directed by Les Taniuk in Lviv, was banned a few days before its scheduled opening. Meetings of members of the Theatrical Workers' Union, the Artists' Union, and the Writers' Union were held in Lviv and Kiev denouncing "formalism" and "bourgeois nationalism" in art during which artists were asked to admit their mistakes and to criticize themselves and their colleagues.²³

Another example of fluctuations in policy, but

²² The Kulish play referred to was *Myna Mazailo*. It depicts a Russified Ukrainian family where members are divided in their support of the policy of Ukrainization that was in effect in the mid 1920s. This incident is described by John Kolasky in *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine*, p. 75 where he states that Taniuk was expelled from the Institute. As far as I could find out, Taniuk experienced great difficulties in staging a play for his diploma, but eventually managed to do so and graduated.

²³ Meetings at places of work held to criticize errant members of a group of artists, teachers or workers were common in the Soviet Union. Their intention was to get the person in question to recant and admit his guilt before his colleagues.

primarily an illustration of repressions in art that merit attention is the destruction of a stained glass panel dedicated to Taras Shevchenko and the censure of the artists involved.²⁴ The ill-fated panel had been commissioned by the University of Kiev to mark the 150th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko, patron of Kiev University and Ukraine's greatest poet. The contract for the window was negotiated through the appropriate section (Kombinat) of the Art Fund on behalf of the artists Alla Hors'ka, Liudmyla Semykina, and Halyna Zubchenko, and an advance for materials was obtained. The finished panel showed a stern Shevchenko holding his book of poems, *Kobzar*, in his raised left hand while embracing a woman symbolic of Ukraine with his right arm (pl.3.1).²⁵ A quotation from one of Shevchenko's poems was incorporated into the design of the upper arch of the window.²⁶

Installation had been completed during the night prior to the Shevchenko anniversary celebrations planned for next day, 9 March, 1964. When Liudmyla Semykina arrived at the

²⁴ According to information provided by Liudmyla Semykina 9 November, 1988 in Kiev and confirmed later by Panas Zalyvakha, the panel was not executed in stained glass, but in fact was a painting on glass. With back lighting the effect was of a stained glass window. To create a stained glass window would have required more time than was available before the celebration of the anniversary.

²⁵ No photograph of the finished work is available as none was taken by the artists before the window was smashed. Only a photograph of the working design is available.

²⁶ The quotation was taken from one of Shevchenko's psalm poems and read: "Vozvelychu malykh otykh rabiv nymykh, a na storozhi kolo iikh postavliu slovo" (I shall awaken those small, dumb slaves and place the word to guard them).

university vestibule next morning, she was surprised to see the window covered up with drapery. It appeared that comrade V. Boichenko, the secretary of the Kiev Regional Committee of the CPU responsible for ideology, had ordered the window covered up and later destroyed.²⁷ This act of government interference and vandalism echoed the destruction of Boichuk's murals and churches in the 1930s. It augured the destructions of works of art in the years to come.

On April 13 at a stormy meeting of the Kiev Artists' Union called to look into the demolition of the Shevchenko window, two of the artists, Liudmyla Semykina and Alla Hors'ka, who were Artists' Union members, were denounced, the window was labelled "a defective creation", while the manner of depiction was called "formalist".²⁸ Although

²⁷ The most detailed description of events is provided by John Kolasky in *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine*, p. 90-94.

²⁸ *Ukraiins'kyi visnyk* (Ukrainian Herald). Volume IV. (Paris: Smoloskyp Publishers, 1971), p. 12. A partial transcript from the meeting of the Kiev Artists' Union chaired by V Shatalin reads:

V. Shatalin: Artists A. Hors'ka, L. Semykina, and O. Zalyvakha have executed a stained glass window in the vestibule of the Kiev University to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko. This window has caused indignation and was taken down on the orders of the Party Organization of the University and the Ministry of Higher Learning. The Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party, comrade Boichenko, asked the Organizational Office of the Artists' Union to look into the stained glass window affair. The verdict of the commission of the Organization Office (Shatalin, Fridman, Panfilov) is that the window is a defective creation. Shevchenko is behind bars. The manner of depiction is basically formalist, not in keeping with the image of the "Kobzar". We must denounce sharply the involvement of members of the Artists' Union, Hors'ka and Semykina, as responsible for this work and demand an explanation.

many artists defended the window, the Executive of the Kiev Region Artists' Union decided not to prosecute the "vandals", but to punish two of the artists, Semykina and Hors'ka, by expelling them from the Union. The decision dated 13 April 1964 accused the two artists of lack of professionalism in carrying out the commission and charged them with depicting the figures "in the spirit of a medieval icon foreign to the principles of Socialist Realism".²⁹ This new accusation not only differed from the previous one, but could not be proven because the evidence had been smashed and no longer existed. Zubchenko did not lose her membership because she had not participated actively in the execution of the window.³⁰ As Zalyvakha was not a member of the Kiev branch of the Artists' Union, his membership was not revoked and he was allowed to return to his place of residence in Ivano-Frankivs'ke. However, his participation in the creation of the window was not to be forgotten when arrests began in the summer of 1965.

Upon an appeal launched by Hors'ka and Semykina, the expulsion decision was overturned by the Union of Artists'

²⁹ Private archive. The author was able to transcribe the text of the Kiev Artists' Union decision signed by V. Shatalin in which the accusations were listed, a copy of which is in the author's archive.

³⁰ In conversation with Halyna Zubchenko in Kiev, 26 October, 1988 the author was told by Zubchenko that at the meeting she did not utter a sound because she was so frightened. Both Semykina and Hors'ka defended their work.

headquarters in Moscow.³¹ Both artists were reinstated, but their membership was to be short-lived as will be seen from events that unfolded in the near future. This affair shows the heavy-handed role of the Communist Party of Ukraine in cultural and artistic endeavours. It also was a clear indication that public demonstrations of Ukrainian national consciousness were not going to be tolerated.

Soon after Khrushchev's fall from office in 1964, reprisals against Ukrainian intellectuals and writers began in earnest with the arrests in 1965 of over twenty writers, poets, critics, students, and artists with Panas Zalyvakha among them.³² Zalyvakha was accused of "falling under the influence of hostile nationalistic propaganda, of having

³¹ Private archive, Kiev. A transcript of the decision reached by the Secretariat of the Executive of the Union of Artists of the USSR dated 28 July, 1964 is in the possession of the author. In part it states that Semykina is to be reinstated fully because of her active participation in exhibitions and Hors'ka is to become a candidate member for a year, at the end of which her case is to be reviewed. This, however, was not the end of the matter because the Artists' Union of Ukraine asked to make reinstatement conditional on the artists' satisfactory participation in a forthcoming exhibition. A transcript of "The decision of the VI Plenum of the Executive of the Artists' Union of UkSSR, dated 23 September, 1964" is also in the possession of the author. In part it states that on the basis of the decision reached by the Secretariat of the Executive of the Artists' Union of the USSR on 15 July, 1964, it requests to postpone the decision to reinstate Semykina and Hor'ska until after their participation in the next republican exhibition in 1965 on the theme "On Guard for Peace".

³² Viacheslav Chornovil, a journalist covering the trials compiled documents about twenty of those arrested and brought to trial. These documents were published in the West under the Ukrainian title *Lykho z rozumu* (Evil from the Brain) (Paris: Premiere Imprimerie Ukrainienne, France, 1967), and in English as *The Chornovil Papers* (New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 1968).

read literature not examined by Soviet censorship, and of having expressed his views".³³ Instead of spreading fear, the trials, most of which were in camera, resulted in a mounting campaign of protest which included Alla Hors'ka's complaint to the Prosecutor of the UkSSR about KGB methods of questioning and intimidation.³⁴ Ivan Dziuba, a prominent literary critic, submitted to the CPU his work *Internationalism or Russification* in which he analysed the mechanics of Russification in Ukraine using Marxist-Leninist theory to make his points.³⁵ His work was condemned in the press and at meetings of the Writers' Union, but Dziuba was not arrested until 1972 when he was sentenced to five years which he did not serve because he recanted.³⁶ It was apparent that dissent in Ukraine was centered around issues involving Ukrainian culture and language.³⁷ As has been pointed out by O. Subtelny, dissent in Ukraine "was clearly

³³ V. Chornovil, *The Chornovil Papers*, p. 128.

³⁴ Alla Hor'ska was protesting her own interrogation in December, 1965 by the Kiev KGB in conjunction with the September arrest of Ya. Hevrych. In the letter of protest to the Prosecutor she stated that in the future she would not answer any KGB questions without the presence of representatives of the Prosecutor's office. For full text see *Ukraiins'kyi visnyk* (Ukrainian Herald). Vol. IV. (Paris: Smoloskyp Publishers, 1971), pp. 15-17.

³⁵ Ivan Dziuba's work was published in the West in Ukrainian, English, and Italian as *Internationalism or Russification? A Study in the Soviet Nationalities Policy*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968 and 1970).

³⁶ For more information see *The Ukrainian Herald*. Issue 6. *Dissent in Ukraine*. An Underground Journal from Soviet Ukraine. (Baltimore: Smoloskyp Publishers, 1977), p. 188.

³⁷ For eye-witness information by a Canadian Communist about the policies and practices of Russification see John Kolasky, *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine*.

the latest manifestation of the generation-old confrontation between the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the bureaucracy of a Russian dominated empire."³⁸

Persecutions, arrests, and sentences of individuals for their convictions on trumped up charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" resulted in numerous appeals to state authorities about violation of the laws of the USSR. In 1968, a letter pointing to some of these violations was sent to L. I. Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU; to A. N. Kosygin, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR; and to N. V. Podgorny, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. This letter, signed by over 130 writers, artists, scientists, researchers, students, and labourers, included the signatures of artists V. Dovhan', Alla Hors'ka, Ivan Marchuk, S. Kyrychenko, I. Lytovchenko, V. Lutsak, Borys Plaksii, Liudmyla Semykina, Halyna Sevruk, V. Zaboy, Zakharchuk, and V. Zarets'kyi.³⁹ As a result of this letter many of the signatories lost their jobs, some were forced to recant, and the artists who refused were expelled from the Artists' Union. Among them were the recently reinstated Alla Hor'ska and Liudmyla Semykina, as well as Halyna Sevruk, who was a candidate for membership at the time. Hors'ka, Semykina, and Sevruk appealed their

³⁸ O. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, p. 516.

³⁹ This list is based on the one provided in *Ferment in the Ukraine* (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 192-196. A translation of the text of the letter is given on pp. 191-192.

expulsion to the Central Committee of the CPU, but without success.⁴⁰ From a copy of the letter of appeal it would appear that the decision to expel them had come not from the members of the Plenum of the Artists' Union, who had voted in favour of a verbal rebuke, but as a result of the unconstitutional intervention of the instructor of the Central Committee of the CPU responsible for the visual arts, P. P. Orlov.⁴¹

It is worth mentioning that throughout the 1960s the Communist Party in Ukraine remained very conservative and powerful under the leadership of Petro Shelest, who had replaced Mykola Pidhornyi (Nikolai Podgornyi in Russian), as First Secretary of the Communist Party of the UkSSR. During his term of office from 1963 to 1972, Shelest promoted

⁴⁰ Semykina, who stopped painting and turned to sewing folk-dress inspired garments in order to make a living, continued to fight her expulsion and was reinstated as a full member in the fall of 1988. This was done on the basis of a recommendation of the executive of the Kiev Monumental Art Section taken 22 April, 1988 in which it was stated that she had been expelled unfairly and that she was not guilty of any wrongdoing in signing the letter of protest in 1967. In 1989, Hors'ka's was also reinstated as a member, albeit posthumously since she had died under mysterious circumstances in 1970. Sevruk stopped painting in the early 1970s and turned to ceramic sculpture and monumental art as a living. She has not been reinstated yet.

⁴¹ A copy of the letter of appeal is in the author's archive. According to the letter, the vote was as follows: for expelling Hors'ka - 21, for a rebuke - 37; for expelling Semykina - 17, for a rebuke - 43. The vote in Sevruk's case was stopped and a recess called during which the Party Group of the Executive were told to vote for the expulsion, and they did so when the meeting was resumed. This was confirmed by a member of the Plenum of the Artists' Union, who was present at the meeting, V. Patyk in conversation with the author 29 December, 1989 in Toronto.

certain aspects of Ukrainian assertiveness in economic and cultural policies, but held others in check. In fact, only those activities were allowed that were initiated by the state. Shelest defended and encouraged the use of the Ukrainian language in government and in institutions of higher learning, yet, he presided over the first wave of arrests of Ukrainian activists and later persecutions of human rights defenders.⁴² His cultural policies encouraged the revival of folklore and ethnography and resulted in the expansion of folkloric tendencies in literature and the arts, but attempts to pick up the threads of Ukrainian fine arts as part of the European development of art were not favoured. While Shelest was in office, the *History of Ukrainian Art in Six Volumes* was published, but there were serious omissions about twentieth century art and artists. There was a substantial increase in art publications, but on a selective basis.

In 1970, Shelest published a book *Ukraiino nasha radians'ka* (Our Soviet Ukraine) in which he retold the days of glory of the Ukrainian cossack state, mildly criticized the tsarist exploitation of Ukraine, and stressed the achievements that Soviet Ukraine had made with the help of

⁴² According to P. Shelest, as quoted in the recent interview with D. Tabachnyk "Bez kul'tury nema narodu" (Without Culture there Is No Nation), Kiev. No. 10, 1989, p. 95, he was accused by M. A. Suslov, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU responsible for ideology, during a Politbureau meeting in September, 1965 of encouraging the use of Ukrainian language, and of according special status to the poet Taras Shevchenko.

the "fraternal" Russian people. Although the book was withdrawn from circulation and Shelest was attacked for its content, it brought much needed attention to an important part of Ukrainian history that had been ignored in official history texts.⁴³

Deepening of the Freeze

When Shelest was removed from office in 1972, he was succeeded by V. Shcherbyts'kyi as First Secretary of the CPU. A year later Shelest was dismissed from his Politbureau post amid charges of upholding a nationalist view of Ukrainian history.⁴⁴ His fall was accompanied by personnel changes in the Party and key institutions, as well as a wave of new arrests and trials of Ukrainian intellectuals and creative intelligentsia.⁴⁵ Among those

⁴³ Ibid., p. 93. In the interview Shelest stated that copies of the book were confiscated and burned on orders of L. Brezhnev, but at the instigation of M. Suslov, who had the book translated from Ukrainian into Russian so that he could read it.

⁴⁴ For more information about Shelest, his policies, and fall see B. Lewytskyj, *Politics and Society in Soviet Ukraine 1953-1980* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1984) and *Za shcho usunuly Shelesta? (Why Was Shelest Purged)* Documents. No. 7. (New York: Sučasnist, 1973). Also see D. Tabachnyk's interview with Shelest "Bez kul'tury nemaie narodu", pp. 90-110.

⁴⁵ For more detailed information on the arrests see *The Ukrainian Herald Issue 6. Dissent in Ukraine*. Many of those arrested and given long terms were poets and writers including the talented poet, Ihor Kalynets and his wife Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets from Lviv, both sentenced to six years of strict-regime labour camps and three years of exile, literary critics Ivan Svitlychnyi and Yevhen Sverstiuk, who were sentenced to seven years strict-regime labour camps and five years of exile, and the poet Vasyl Stus who was sentenced to five years strict-regime labour camp and three years of exile. Among those re-arrested and sentenced were V. Chornovil, who

arrested in Lviv was the tapestry artist, Stefania Shabatura.⁴⁶ There was an intensification of Russification and censorship which effectively brought the Ukrainian cultural renaissance to a halt and stalled the development of the arts.⁴⁷

However, before this occurred, there was a flowering of the arts within the widening framework of Socialist Realism and beyond. It was a rebirth that in many respects paralleled the one in literature, which became much better documented because it was easier to disseminate the written word than to reproduce works of art. Also, for the most part, the writers were more vocal than the artists, and much more capable of articulating national sentiments.⁴⁸ They

received a sentence of seven years labour camp and five of exile, Ivan Gel', who was sentenced to ten years of hard labour camps, and Mykhailo Osadchyi, who received a sentence of seven years of strict-regime labour camp and three years of exile.

⁴⁶ Stefania Shabatura b 1938 was a tapestry artist who took part in official exhibitions. Arrested in Lviv in 1972, she was accused under article 62 of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". For more information see *Pohrom v Ukraini 1972-1979 (Pogrom in Ukraine)* (New York: Sucasnist, 1980), p. 279-285.

⁴⁷ For a description of the repressions see R. Kupchyns'kyi. "Introduction". *Pohrom v Ukraini 1972-1979*, pp. 7-29. Also pp. 124-147 for a list of those arrested, reprisals against others, and examples of anti-Ukrainian actions by the authorities.

⁴⁸ In Ukraine, as in other East and Central European countries, writers have traditionally played a more important political role than in the West. The Ukrainian bard, Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), was the first poet to inspire Ukrainians national consciousness. Writers were at the forefront of the independence movement and involved in the period of Ukrainization in the 1920s. Among the more prominent ones were V. Vynnychenko and M. Khvyliovyi.

were backed by influential literary critics like I. Dziuba, Y. Sverstiuk, and I. Svitlychnyi, whereas none of the art critics or art historians rose to the occasion in the visual arts.

The Thaw in Painting

The developments in painting took several paths, one of which involved a widening of themes that included folkloric subject matter, a trend that paralleled a general ethnographic revival encouraged under Shelest. Pure landscapes and still life compositions, neglected for many years, became more acceptable and eventually gained in prominence. Variations and innovations in expression, some involving experimentation with modernist styles of the West and attempts at a synthesis between Ukrainian and contemporary art appeared.

The first changes became noticeable in the expansion of themes deemed appropriate to Socialist Realism. Whereas, before, only industrial or collective farm landscapes were encouraged, it now became possible to exhibit pure landscapes and still life compositions without a socialist message. In this respect one of the more influential was the Kiev artist, Mykola Hlushchenko (1901-1977), who had studied at the Berlin Academy of Art and worked in Paris, and upon his return to the Soviet Union had to adapt his

subject matter and expressionist style to Socialist Realism.⁴⁹ In the 1950s Hlushchenko returned to painting pure landscapes in an Impressionist manner, as in *Vidlyha (Thaw)*, 1959, (pl.3.2) that later changed to expressionist depictions in vibrant hues, as in *Rankove sontse (Morning Sun)*, 1971 (pl.3.3).⁵⁰ His still life compositions underwent a similar metamorphosis that brought Hlushchenko closer to abstraction as the organization of *Blakytnyi natiurmort (Light Blue Still Life)*, 1971 (pl.3.4) into colour planes would indicate.

Prior to 1944 landscape painting had been an integral part of the tradition of Lviv artists particularly Roman Sel's'kyi, his wife Margit Sel's'ka, and Vitol'd Manastyr's'kyi, which they continued in private, until such time when pure landscapes gained official acceptance in the 1960s.⁵¹ The Transcarpathian artists, Yosyp Bokshai (1891-

⁴⁹ Hlushchenko was a student at the Berlin Academy of Art from 1919-1924, and then worked in Paris from 1925 to 1936 where he took part in numerous exhibitions. In 1936 he returned to the Soviet Union and lived in Moscow until 1944 when he received permission to settle in Kiev. By this time his vibrant, expressionistic canvases had undergone a stylistic and thematic change that brought them closer to Socialist Realism.

⁵⁰ There were ten pictures including *Vidlyha* by Hlushchenko in the exhibition "Radians'ka Ukrainina" (Soviet Ukraine) in 1960, all of them landscapes. See *Vystavka radians'ka ukrainina. Catalogue.* (Kiev: State Publishers of Visual Art and Music, 1960) p. 21.

⁵¹ In conversation with R. Sel's'lyi in Lviv, 25 November, 1988, the artist spoke about his favourite spot, Dzembronia, in the Carpathian Mountains and remembered how other artists followed in his footsteps there. Artist, Volodymyr Patyk, a former student and friend of the Sel's'kyi's recalls making numerous painting trips into the Carpathian Mountains with

1975), Zoltan Sholtes (1909), Havrylo Hliuk (1912-1983), and Anton Kashai (1921) also carried on the landscape tradition after that region became part of the Soviet Ukraine in 1945.⁵² They continued to paint local landscapes in a Post-Impressionist manner using a bright, intense palette and flattened space.

Indeed, the landscapes painted by some of the artists just mentioned mirrored the widening of the Socialist Realist framework rather well. In the 1940s and early 1950s the landscapes of R. Sel's'kyi and V. Manastyr's'kyi were rendered in a naturalistic, almost photographic manner, depicting the countryside as closely as possible in a restrained palette as in Sel's'kyi's *Stavok u Mykulycheni* (Pond in Mykulychen'), 1953, (pl.3.5) and Manastyr's'kyi's *Rika Bila Tysa* (The White Tysa River), 1954, (pl.3.6). The landscapes painted in 1958 were more Impressionistic in colour and rendering, as in *Karpats'kyi peisazh* (Carpathian Landscape) (pl.3.7) by Sel's'kyi and in *Sadok u Karpatakh* (Orchard in the Carpathian Mountains) (pl.3.8), by Manastyr's'kyi. In the 1960s their landscapes had become more abstract with condensation and flattening of forms and a pictorial structure based on colour. In Sel's'kyi's *Kryms'kyi budynok* (Building in Crimea) (pl.3.9), and in Manastyr's'kyi's *Pid horoiu Sokil* (At the Foot of Mount

them.

⁵² Transcarpathia was part of the Czechoslovak Republic from 1919 to 1939 and part of Hungary from 1939 to 1944, when it became part of the UkSSR.

Sokil) (pl.3.10) there is little depth, natural forms have been reduced to essentials and mutually adjusted into a balance at once decorative and expressive that activates the whole surface.

Similar changes may be observed in the still life compositions of the two artists. From dark, descriptive works in the 1940s they went to simplified, flattened paintings such as Sel's'kyi's Dzembrons'kyi natiurmort (Still Life from Dzembronia), 1965, (pl.3.11). Manastyr's'kyi's smooth brushstrokes became pointillistic in the manner of Pissarro in Hutsul Still Life, 1957, (pl.3.12) and then fused into flat patches of colour in Natiurmort v. interieri (Still Life in the Interior), 1963, (pl.3.13). M. Sel's'ka developed a heavily textured surface that she used in her landscapes and still life compositions together with a two-dimensional space and geometricised form, as in Still Life, 1967, (pl.3.14). Another Lviv artist, Oleksa Shatkivs'kyi, also did much to popularize still life painting. In his intimate compositions, many of them of flowers, the shifting nuances of colour and the patchy brushwork create a shallow depth held in check by the dark outlines which delineate the physical volume of objects as in Hortenzii, 1964, or Calla Lilies, 1967, (pl.3.15).

As may be seen, formal explorations based on Western European models paralleled the expansion and innovations in subject matter. That they were not met enthusiastically may

be seen from the difficulties faced by the Lviv artists at the Inter-Regional Conference of the Artists Union in 1955 on the state of the visual arts in the Western Region. At the conference Mykhailo Khmel'ko, head of the Artists Union of the UkSSR, stated that:

It is not a secret that the work of many of the artists of Lviv, Uzhhorod, and Chernivtsti does not move beyond the framework of landscapes. It is not a secret, that the basis of the major themes of today is the subject of work but it has not been prominent in the creativity of our artists.... The self-imposed isolation of the artists of Lviv has to be overcome. Artists have to go to collective farms, institutes and clubs to get inspiration for their work.⁵³

Furthermore, a complaint was made that the Lviv artists were not interested in going to the Houses of Creativity to work. The change in the work of Z. Sholtes, who spent some time in the Senezh House of Creativity in the Russian Republic, was given as an example of how these trips can help in the "re-education of the artist". It was claimed that the creative re-education of Fedir Manailo, who had a tendency towards decorativeness, was coming along painfully and that the artist had not exhibited since 1947.⁵⁴ H. A. Leonov, vice-chairman of the Lviv Region Executive, accused R. Sel'skyi, R. Turyn, O. Shatkivs'kyi, and H. Smol's'kyi of "creative passivity".⁵⁵

⁵³ CSAMLA, Kiev, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 550, "Stenogramme of the Inter-Regional Conference of Artists of Western Ukraine, Transcarpathia, and Chernivtsi Region held 4 June, 1955", p. 2 and p. 32. All three regions in question were recent additions to the USSR.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 32 and p. 39.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

Such statements indicated that there was opposition to Socialist Realism, and that, despite persistent efforts of the authorities, the individual creative spirit not only survived, particularly in Western Ukraine and Transcarpathia, but sought to expand the Socialist Realism framework. They were proof that landscape traditions of pre-Soviet art were being kept alive as were individual expression and a tendency to seek out Western European models, particularly French ones. That these efforts were not in vain may be seen from the following statement made about the Uzhhorod artists in 1973 by Y. Belichko who wrote: "This school did not flow mechanically into the artistic mainstream, but made itself felt, especially in landscapes and the brightening of the palette."⁵⁶ By that time landscapes and still life compositions had become acceptable subjects in painting.⁵⁷

A new Ukrainian folklore theme, formerly not common in Socialist Realism, appeared in the work of several artists

⁵⁶ Y. Belichko, Tema. Ideia. Obraz. Tendentsii rozvytku suchasnoho ukraiins'koho obrazotvorchoho mystetstva (1945-1972) (Theme. Idea. Image. Tendencies in the Development of Contemporary Ukrainian Visual Arts) (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1975), p. 65.

⁵⁷ One can better appreciate the inroads made in landscape and still life painting by the Lviv and Transcarpathian artists by examining some of the exhibition catalogues from the 1950s and early 1960s where the few landscapes and still life compositions listed were likely to be by artists from those two regions. This contribution to Soviet Ukrainian painting was acknowledged in the introduction to the catalogue XXV khudozhnia vystavka (Twenty-Fifth Art Exhibition) (Lviv: Artists' Union, 1964) p. 5.

in the 1950s.⁵⁸ For the older painters it was a return to pre-Soviet interests in ethnography; for the younger generation it heralded the discovery of Ukrainian folk art traditions which were formerly discouraged and suppressed.⁵⁹ Some of the first signs of folk art themes appeared in the work of artists from Uzhhorod and Lviv who painted pictures of people dressed in peasant costumes of their regions. For example Adalbert Erdeli (1891-1955), an Uzhhorod artist, portrayed a young couple in the folk dress of Transcarpathia in *Zarucheni (The Engaged Couple)*, 1953, (pl.3.16).⁶⁰ He did so using vibrant, high intensity hues typical of folk traditions, but which were characteristic of his style before Transcarpathia became part of Soviet Ukraine, as may be seen from the simplified areas of black, white, and hot pink in *Molodytsia (Married Woman)*, c.1940 (pl.3.17). In a sense, he was continuing the traditions of

⁵⁸ This theme had antecedents in the work of M. Boichuk and his followers who had represented Ukrainian peasants in folk dress, but in the 1930s their work was declared "formalist" and "nationalist". Stalin's centralist, pro-Russian policies left no room for national sentiments and this included Ukrainian folk culture. As a result Ukrainian themes were rare in Socialist Realist painting, until Western Ukrainian artists reintroduced an element of Ukrainian ethnography in the 1940s and 1950s, by depicting peasants in their folk dress working to build Communism. These were relatively safe pictures rendered in a naturalistic, photographic manner, and showed smiling, happy people.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the changes in policy that made this possible see Robert S. Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine 1917-1957*, pp.291-306.

⁶⁰ Adalbert Erdeli studied at the Art Academy of Budapest (1911-1915) where he came in contact with Impressionism. Together with Yosyp Bokshaii he ran an art school in Uzhhorod before World War II. Despite the requirements of Socialist Realism his colours remained vibrant and his forms flattened.

pre-Soviet art fostered by several of the Transcarpathian artists including Fedir Manailo (1910-1978) in his painting Hutsulka (Girl from Hutsul Land), 1939 (pl.3.18).⁶¹ This painting shows a girl in Hutsul dress in a frontal pose with an emphasis on flat, simplified areas of bright colour. Manailo also returned to painting Hutsuls in his vividly portrayed Hutsul's'ka grazhda (Hutsul Farm), 1967 (pl.3.19) with its deliberate unrepresentational use of colour. In 1972 Andrii Kotska painted Na hutsul'shchyni (In Hutsul Land) (pl.3.20) with slight modelling of forms, reduced figures and landscape in bright hues of orange and scarlet against areas of white.

That the new trend was officially sanctioned may be surmised from the fact that in his speech on painting at the First Congress of Artists of the USSR in 1957, I. A. Serebrianov criticized some artists in Leningrad for their drab, dirty-gray palette and suggested that they had a lot to learn from the rich colour harmonies of folk art.⁶² Another indication of state support of folk art was a disproportionate number of publications on the folk arts.⁶³

⁶¹ Hutsuls were people that lived in the eastern part of the Carpathian Mountains. Because of isolation, they had retained their traditions and colourful dress.

⁶² I. A. Serebrianov, "Sodoklad o zhyvopisi", *Materialy pervogo vsesoiznogo sezda khudozchnikov*, p. 80.

⁶³ Based on the "Bibliographia ukrains'koho obrazotvorchoho mystetstva (radians'ki vydannia 1917-1968) (Bibliography of Ukrainian Visual Arts: Soviet Publications 1917-1968), it appears that in the period of 1945-1953 there were only five books published, all of them on folk art. In the period of 1954-1964 eight of the thirty books published

Some of the large exhibits of professional art had sections for displaying the arts and crafts of the folk artists.⁶⁴ Folk artists, in fact, were eligible for membership of the Artists' Union. There was talk that folk art had the added advantage that it was created by the mystical "narod" or common people in rural areas and had appeal to the masses. It had "narodnost'", and, therefore, it could be argued that a depiction of folk art by professional painters drew them closer to the common people and the primary sources in art. Folk art, it was claimed, expressed the spiritual beauty of a nation.⁶⁵ V. Afanasiev, writing in 1967, declared that folk art played a fundamental role and served as a source of inspiration in the development of all art.⁶⁶ In his book *Tema. Ideia. Obraz* (Theme. Idea. Image), published in 1975, Y. Belichko stated that in the 1940s and 1950s attention to folk art was discouraged, but that this was a mistake

were on folk art or artists and seventeen of the fifty-seven albums, as well. This would indicate that the government policy under Stalin acknowledged only the worth of folk art, while under Khrushchev the fine arts received attention, but folk art remained a serious contender with 28.7% of the publications being devoted to folk art.

⁶⁴ For example the Exhibition of Art from Western Ukraine held in Moscow, Kiev, and Kharkiv in 1940-1941 included Hutsul arts and crafts. The Jubilee Exhibition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of T. Shevchenko in 1964, that was held in Kiev, also included folk and applied arts.

⁶⁵ For a discussion see Y. Belichko's article "Ideine i formal'no-obrazne zbahachennia suchasnoho ukraïns'kohoadians'koho mystetstva" (The Idealistic and Formalist-Imagist Enrichment of Contemporary Soviet Ukrainian Art), *Ukraïns'ke mystetstvoznavstvo*. No. 4. (1970): 23.

⁶⁶ V. Afanasiev, *Stanovlennia sotsialistychnoho realizmu v ukraïns'komu obrazotvorchomu mystetstvi* (The Implementation of Socialist Realism in Ukrainian Visual Arts) (Kiev: *Mystetstvo*, 1967), p. 140.

because the presence of bonds with folk art is one of the factors that determine the artist's ability to express the contemporaneity of life.⁶⁷

By encouraging folklorization in the arts, the Communist Party fostered a return to peasant traditions and an association of Ukrainian culture with a rural way of life as opposed to the urban, industrial nature of Soviet culture. At the same time the achievements of Ukrainian fine arts that began with the eleventh century art and architecture and had strong links with European traditions were ignored or labelled as incompatible with Socialist Realism. This served as a restraint to the exploration of modern, formal artistic concerns which were deemed cosmopolitan and, therefore, alien to expressions of Ukrainian culture. Most Soviet Ukrainian artists, unfortunately, responded by unquestioningly glorifying 19th century ethnographic traditions, and defending them as essential to the development of contemporary Ukrainian art. Only a few saw this as a detriment to the exploration of Ukrainian fine art sources of the past.

The folkloric revival focused attention on the Carpathian Mountain dwellers, particularly Hutsuls, with their picturesque costumes, beautifully ornamented crafts, and legends that had motivated many Lviv painters in the

⁶⁷ Y. Belichko, *Tema. Ideia. Obraz.*, pp. 76-77.

1920s and 1930s.⁶⁸ Hutsuls at work, somewhat incongruously in their Sunday best, had been depicted in large, narrative canvases in the 1940s and early 1950s by several of the Western Ukrainian and Transcarpathian artists in their efforts to adapt to the requirements of Socialist Realism. It is enough to compare the photographically rendered portrait of a Hutsul (Legin', meaning Highlander) (pl.3.21) painted by V. Manastyr's'kyi in 1949 with a portrait of a Hutsul girl, Verkhovynka, (Highland Lass) (pl.3.22) painted in 1960 or his Marichka (pl.3.23) done in 1973 to become aware of the changes brought about by liberalization. In contrast to the subdued and naturalistically correct Legin', Verkhovynka is painted in vivid cadmium yellows and oranges with only the face modelled three dimensionally while the rendering in Marichka is even flatter with slight modelling. The transformation in approach and expression are amazing and cannot be accounted for by stylistic developments because it would appear that for official occasions Manastyr's'kyi continued to paint narrative thematic canvases in a photographic manner like Rik 1939. Zustrich voz'iednanykh (The Year 1939. Meeting of the Re-United), 1954, (pl.3.24) while at the same time creating such sensitive pictures as Divchynka (Girl), 1948, (pl.3.25) in private.

⁶⁸ Due to the isolation of the region, Hutsuls and other mountain dwellers like the Boiky and Lemky managed to retain many of the old traditions and customs, intricately woven and embroidered garments, pottery, woodcrafts, songs, and mythology that had disappeared from most of the other parts of Ukraine, more exposed to outside influences.

Hutsuls painted for the sheer pleasure of their colourful garments and exotic good looks, without any reference to social themes, reappeared in Hryhorii Smol'nyi's *Narechena (Fiancee)*, 1957, (pl.3.26) pulsating with hues of high intensity yellow, orange, and red against a whitish backdrop of barely discernible figures. At the same time other Western Ukrainian artists continued to paint narrative scenes in a descriptive manner that capitalized on the emotional appeal of the subject without taking advantage of the expressive possibilities of colour and form.⁶⁹

Artists from other parts of Ukraine also sought inspiration in the dwellers of the Carpathian Mountains. Kiev art student Tetiana Holembiievs'ka won recognition for her depiction of two Hutsul girls leaning against a fence in *Rozmova. Podruhy. (Conversation. Friends)*, 1959 (pl.3.27). Unlike most Socialist Realism works with their theatrical poses and three dimensional modelling, this painting inclines toward Impressionism in colours, composition, and rendering. Spontaneity of brushstroke and sun-drenched colours and effects also characterise Holembiievs'ka's next picture of Hutsul maidens called *Ukraiins'ki kumantsi (Ukrainian Pottery)*, 1960 (pl.3.28).

Tetiana Yablons'ka, a member of the Academy of Art and

⁶⁹ For example V. Kushnir painted three Hutsul musicians playing the "trembita" (a very long mountain horn) in *Trembitari (Trembita Players)*, 1961, and V. Kokoiachuk depicted a young couple in *V hosti (Going Visiting)*, 1968, in a descriptive manner.

a prominent artist and teacher, also turned to painting Hutsuls after a visit to Kosiv in such pictures as Pysancharky (Easter Egg Decorators) and Sviatkovyi vechir (Festive Evening), 1960. However, she was more fascinated by the work of the Transcarpathian artists Erdeli, Manailo, Bokshai, and Sholtas and this motivated her to search for inspiration in folk art closer to home.⁷⁰ Ultimately she discovered folk art in the villages close to Kiev as may be seen in her painting Vesillia (Wedding), 1963, (pl.3.29) with its bright, solid colours and rhythmic movements.⁷¹ She also became fascinated with peasant cottage interiors. As a result of her interests in folklore, in the 1960s her work underwent not only a change in subject matter, but also in style. Compositions and images became simplified, deep space was reduced to overlapping areas of vivid colours unmodulated by light. Simple signs replaced facial features, as in Bride, 1966, (pl.3.30) with its reference to folk tradition in the wreath with ribbons.⁷²

As more and more artists rediscovered their Ukrainian

⁷⁰ From a taped interview with the artist, 7 October, 1988 in Kiev.

⁷¹ This painting portrayed the festivities seen by Yablons'ka in the Vasyl'kivs'kyi Region near Kiev.

⁷² Prior to World War II it was the custom in rural areas of Ukraine for girls to wear flower wreaths with coloured ribbons for festive occasions whereas married women had to have their heads covered at all times. This, of course was no longer the case in 1966, and most brides wore a white dress and veil. What is interesting is that Yablons'ka has chosen to depict a return to Ukrainian folk traditions by painting a wreath with ribbons and a girl wearing an embroidered white blouse and blue skirt.

heritage, ethnographic subject matter from other regions of Ukraine gained in popularity. Folklore and peasant clothing came to be associated with one's national roots, with the past and with tradition, as well as with feeling Ukrainian. At the same time it provided a link with the Romantic movement in Ukrainian literature and art of the 19th century and with such artists as Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), Petro Levchenko (1856-1917), and Mykola Pymonenko (1862-1912), as well as with the 20th century painters that sought inspiration in Ukrainian folk art, such as Vasyl and Fedir Krychevs'kyi, Mykhailo Boichuk and his followers, Oleksa Novakivs'kyi, Olena Kul'chyts'ka, and others.

One of the young artists who felt a need to express his newly discovered Ukrainian heritage was Panas Zalyvakha, an art student from Leningrad who spent the summer of 1957 working in Kosiv in the Carpathian Mountains, and as a result felt compelled to learn to speak and read Ukrainian. He painted several portraits of women in folk dress including *Ukraiinka*, 1964, with heavy black contours, and *Divchyna z Poltavshchyny* (Girl from the Poltava Region), 1964, (pl.3.31) that was reproduced in colour on the cover of the art journal *Mystetstvo* in October, 1965.⁷³

However, Zalyvakha was not satisfied with folkloric

⁷³ The amazing aspect of this was not the fact that his work was reproduced, but that it was allowed to appear even though by this time Zalyvakha was behind bars for alleged "nationalism".

subject matter and started probing Ukrainian history for interesting material. In 1964 he created a stylized ceramic panel with a cossack with sword kneeling in front of a woman in folk dress in the traditional pose of blessing. This work, called *Boritiesia - Poborete* (Fight and You Shall Conquer) (pl.3.32), was not accepted when submitted for an exhibition in Ivano-Frankivs'ke probably because of its title which could be read as a call to arms even though it was a quote from Taras Shevchenko. Also in 1964 he painted *Petro Kalnyshevs'kyi*, (pl.3.33) the last commander of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who was imprisoned by the Russian tsar in 1775 and sent to the Solovets'ky Islands in the White Sea, where he became a symbol of Ukrainian resistance.⁷⁴ This painting, however, was not exhibited publicly as it dealt with unsanctioned cossack history.

Folk art objects and traditional items such as festive breads, or "korovaii", appeared in still life compositions by V. Patyk like *Vesil'nyi korovai* (Wedding Bread), 1966, (pl.5.18) and F. Manailo's *Novyi khlib* (New Bread), 1975, (pl.3.34). Patyk went further than most artists by incorporating traditional Ukrainian Easter egg symbols into his abstract compositions.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Kalnyshevs'kyi (1690-1803) was pardoned by Tsar Aleksander in 1801, but insisted on living out his days in a monastery on the island.

⁷⁵ One of these paintings, *Composition on Folk Art Motifs*, 1967, (pl.5.21) was included in the exhibit of Lviv art in Kiev in 1970. See *Khudozhnyky L'vova. Exhibition Catalogue.* (Lviv: Ministry of Culture of the UkSSR, 1970) p. 10. Two paintings (*Composition on Folk Art Themes with Birds*, pl.5.22,

Alla Hors'ka attempted to find colours that would convey the "Ukrainian spirit". This may be seen from Zalyvakha's answer to her letter in which he discredited her claims by pointing out that colour harmonies and combinations were not the same in all parts of Ukraine but varied in each region and sometimes even from village to village.⁷⁶ According to the artist Halyna Zubchenko, the leader of the search for national form and colour in art, was the monumental artist Hryhorii Synytsia, who advocated exploration into the "essence of folk art" instead of the depiction of folk art subject matter.⁷⁷ This resulted in work that was highly stylized, colourful, and reminiscent of folk art ornamentation, as may be seen from the collective efforts of Hor'ska, Zubchenko, Zarets'kyi, and Pryshed'ko: *Boreviter* (Wind Fighter) (pl.3.35) and *Derevo Zhyttia* (Tree of Life) (pl.3.36) both 1967.⁷⁸

Hence, the folkloric trend not only expanded the themes and subject matter of Socialist Realism, but legitimized

and Composition on Folk Art Motifs) from the series based on Ukrainian Easter egg designs were included in the 1972 exhibit in Riga. See *Katalog vystavki rabot khudozhnikov Mariona Ilku, Leopold'a Levytskogo, Ivana Ostafiichuka, Vladimira Patyka*. (Riga: Lviv Branch of the Artists' Union of the UkRSR, 1972) p. 5 and 14.

⁷⁶ See Zalyvakha's letter to Hors'ka in *The Chornovil Papers*, p. 121.

⁷⁷ In conversation with H. Zubchenko in Kiev, 26 October, 1988. Also quoted in O. Klymchuk's article about Synytsia "Spas na kvartali-95" (Saviour in the Quarters-95) in the weekly journal, *Ukraina*. No. 5. (1990): 12.

⁷⁸ Both of these were designs for mosaic walls executed on a panel with coloured papers.

stylization, simplification of form, flattening of space, and, above all, use of bright, high intensity hues applied uniformly, without three dimensional modelling. It allowed artists, that were looking for opportunities to find a synthesis of Ukrainian and modern art, to take advantage of some of the developments in Western art and to camouflage them as folk art inspiration. However, not all artists profited from this opportunity. Some continued to paint ethnographic themes using anonymous brushstrokes, a subdued palette, and naturalistic modelling.

The Khrushchev thaw also gave artists the opportunity to experiment with modern art movements from which they had been isolated for so long without the folkloric theme. Cultural links with the West were greater than ever before, as were encounters with European and American art, albeit, mostly from reproductions. Once again, it was the Lviv artists who appeared to lead the way in investigations of a variety of twentieth century art movements including Abstraction and Surrealism. Starting with semi-abstract reduction of natural forms in 1958 in such paintings as *Vechir (Evening)* (pl.3.37), Karlo Zviryns'kyi had completely abandoned figuration by 1960, but he kept all of his abstract work in his studio and few people knew of its existence since abstract paintings could not be exhibited publicly.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ For a discussion of Zviryns'kyi's work see Chapter Four, pp. 266-275.

Generally, partial abstraction found greater acceptance and, therefore, was more popular with several Lviv artists. Its apprehensive beginnings may be observed in the work of Margit Sel's'ka in such landscape paintings as *Yavoriv*, 1956, (pl.3.38) with its simplified forms and abstract patterns of colour. It was more pronounced in *Still Life*, 1967, (pl.3.14) in the geometricized, flattened space, and in the composition built up in a series of layers, one behind the other. In *Zbir vynohradu (Grape Picking)*, 1968, (pl.3.39) Sel's'ka had broken up the picture plane into flat areas of colour which were heavily textured with a grainy surface that eliminated any illusion of depth.

Roman Sel's'kyi also pursued formal concerns more openly as may be seen from *Decorative Appliqué*, 1964, (pl.3.40) with its red, white and brown cut out patches of flat colour and disregard for aerial perspective. Sel's'kyi, who had practiced Surrealism, albeit in a modest way, before the Soviet take-over, reintroduced some Surrealist elements in *Composition with Kites*, 1969, (pl.3.41) a still life composition of an odd assortment of out-of-scale objects set on a shore which has references to Surrealist juxtapositioning of disparate articles and a Synthetic Cubism rendering of forms.

Surrealist influences may be found in the work of some of the younger Lviv artists like Bohdan Soika, Liubomyr Medvid', Petro Markovych, and Ivan Zavadovs'kyi, but most of

their paintings were not exhibited, and therefore, will be discussed later. Medvid', however, not only painted a series of Surrealist inspired pictures called "Immigrants", but managed to have two of them accepted for his two-man show with Laslo Pushkash in 1972.⁸⁰ In *Emigranty I* (Immigrants I), 1964, (pl.3.42) Medvid' depicted several elongated people seen wandering in a deep, empty space, seemingly alienated from the surroundings and from each other. The strong light from the left, the stark modelling, and distortions recall Surrealist devices. His *Triumf zhyttia* (Triumph of Life), 1968, (pl.3.43) from the "Evacuation" series, with a nude woman and man, greatly distorted, cavourting in a deep, empty space with a tiny crucifixion on the distant low horizon has antecedents in the work of Dali.

One of the artists who explored Post-Impressionism, Volodymyr Patyk, painted *Taras Shevchenko na bat'kivshchyni* (Taras Shevchenko in His Homeland), 1964, (pl.3.44) with no attempts at historic representation. The palette was limited to blue-grey-black areas of flat colour with white and red accents and dark contours.⁸¹ Despite the unusual

⁸⁰ See Liubomyr Medvid', *Laslo Pushkash* (Lviv: Artists' Union of the UkSSR, 1972). Even though the catalogue was printed and the paintings were lined up to be hung, the exhibition never took place. One of the paintings, *Emigranty* (Immigrants), 1964, was actually reproduced in the exhibition catalogue. It is interesting to note that there were no paintings from 1966 to 1967 in the exhibition probably because much of the work of that period that I was able to see in the artist's studio was Surrealist.

⁸¹ For a detailed analysis see Chapter Five, pp. 230-231.

portrayal and rendering this painting was shown at the Kiev Shevchenko Anniversary Exhibition and in the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Unification in Lviv where it was reproduced in the exhibit catalogue.⁸² Patyk also sought inspiration in other European movements including Expressionism and Abstraction, but this will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Such departures from Socialist Realism did not appear to be as common among the Kiev artists, at least not until the 1970s. During the 1960s interest in French art tended to be much weaker in Kiev than in Western Ukraine. For the most part Kiev artists were inclined to remain more figurative, although in the early 1970s Surrealist influences and pure abstraction appeared in the work of several of the younger painters, but these paintings were not shown publicly. One of the few exceptions was Mykhailo Vainshtein's *Vesnianyi motyv* (Spring Motif), 1967, (pl.3.45).⁸³ Amazingly enough it was reproduced on the back cover of *Mystetstvo*, no. 3, 1968. At first glance it resembles the abstract-expressionist all-over paintings of

⁸² See *Yubileinaia khudozhestvennaia vystavka, posviashchennaia 150-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia T. H. Shevchenko*. (Jubilee Art Exhibition Dedicated to the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of T. H. Shevchenko) Catalogue. (Kiev: *Mystetstvo*, 1964), p.47. The Shevchenko Anniversary exhibit was also held in Moscow, but Patyk's painting was not included. Also see *XXV. khudozhnia vystavka* (XXVth Art Exhibition) (Lviv: Artists' Union, 1966), p. 28.

⁸³ Moisei Vainshtein (known as Mykhailo) (1940-1981) graduated from the Kiev Institute of Art. Officially he painted thematic Socialist Realism works and parallel to them, particularly in the 1960s, he experimented with texture and all-over patterns.

Pollock in its swirling mass of lines and colours, but upon closer examination one can discern a tree shape. It is interesting to note that parallel to his explorations of abstraction Vainshtein was painting Socialist Realist pictures that glorified the armed struggles of the Young Communist League, as *Pershi (The First Ones)*, 1968, (pl.3.46) which was painted for an official exhibition and also reproduced in *Mystetstvo*, no. 5, 1968.⁸⁴

Even though non-representational work was rare in the 1960s, several of the Kiev artists created semi-abstract paintings. Among those who experimented with reduced figures and flattened space were Anatolii Summar (*Terrace*, 1959) (pl.3.47), Oleksander Dubovyk (*Portrait of Artist V. Zhuravel'*, 1966) (pl.3.48), and Victor Hryhorov (*Majesty*, 1968) (pl.3.49).⁸⁵ None of these paintings, however, were displayed publicly at the time. Some partially abstract paintings, however, were reproduced in *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo* in 1967 as for example Victor Ryzhykh's *Hockey*, 1966, (pl.3.50) and Serhii Geta's *Na dystantsii (Race)*, 1966 (pl.3.51).⁸⁶ In both pictures the human figure has been simplified and distorted to emphasize movement and an

⁸⁴ The work was reproduced as part of an article about the exhibition dedicated to the Komsomol. See M. Kompaneits', "Komsomolovi prysviacheno" (Dedicated to the Young Communist League), *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo*. No. 5, 1968, p. 10.

⁸⁵ Anatolii Summar, b 1933, graduated in architecture while Olexander Dubovyk, b 1931, and Victor Hryhorov, b 1939, both graduated from the Kiev Art Institute, and worked as monumentalists.

⁸⁶ *Mystetstvo*. No. 4, 1967, p. 14 and 16.

abstract rhythm of forms.

The slower development of abstraction in Kiev in comparison to Lviv can be attributed to several causes. One of them being that Socialist Realism had been in force in Kiev almost twice as long, and Kiev artists were more likely to look up to the official role models from Moscow than the Lviv artists who considered Paris, not Moscow, as the art capital of the world. In respect to non-representational works, Kiev also lagged behind Moscow and Leningrad, where greater artistic freedom was to be had than in the "provincial capitals" where local political control was more restrictive.⁸⁷ Another possible factor was the fact that some of the Kiev artists were much more preoccupied with searching for their Ukrainian heritage, and, therefore, less interested in total abstraction which was considered cosmopolitan. In general, the Kiev artists also appeared to be less inclined to follow French models of Post-Impressionism, Cubism, and Expressionism than those working in Western Ukraine. Unlike the Moscow artists, who were eager to absorb the latest art of the American avant-garde, at least some of them appear to have been more interested in finding a synthesis of what to them constituted Ukrainian art and modernism.

Some of the inroads into Socialist Realism in the late

⁸⁷ Paul Sjeklocha and Igor Mead also expressed this idea that controls were tighter outside Moscow and Leningrad in their book *Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union*, p. 104.

1960s and early 1970s in Kiev were made by established artists such as Mykola Hlushchenko and Tetiana Yablons'ka, who because of their status were able to show paintings that went beyond the officially sanctioned Socialist Realist themes and rendering.⁸⁸ Hlushchenko painted interiors with nudes in high intensity colours as in *Composition*, 1966, (pl.3.52) and pictures like *Zhinka z klitkoiu* (Woman with a Cage), 1967, (pl.3.53) which clearly indicated his fascination with Fauvism as practised by Vuillard. Both paintings were reproduced in full colour in a 1973 album about the artist.⁸⁹

In 1962 Yablons'ka painted *Razom z bat'kom* (Together with Father) (pl.3.54) in which she kept close to thematic requirements, but the rendering of space was shallow, forms were flattened with little modelling, and above all, colour was highly expressive. Both faces, of son and father were painted in bold brushstrokes in reddish hues with green outlines in the manner of Matisse's 1905 portrait of his wife. In 1969, after Yablons'ka folkloric period, she painted *Yunist'* (Youth) (pl.3.55), an unusual work for the time, showing a young man with a bag slung over his shoulder standing with his back to the viewer, looking over the rolling green hills before him. The young man was depicted

⁸⁸ Mykola Hlushchenko had the title of "Zasluzhenyi diach mystetstv URSS" (Merited Artist of the UkSSR) while Tetiana Yablons'ka was a member of the Art Academy of the USSR.

⁸⁹ Ihor Buhaienko, *Mykola Hlushchenko* (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1973), ill. 37 and 43.

standing at the edge of a small pond, his feet in the water, even though there is a path to his right. The rendering of the hills without aerial perspective and no details in the slightly modulated greens, the flat vertical rhythm of the undulating shapes, and the silhouette of the youth in jeans have a flattening effect on the space. The loop of the path acts as a compositional device while at the same time it could be interpreted as a deliberate attempt by the young man not to take the customary route to his destination. Such reading of the image, suggesting individual aspirations, and not the collective ones propagated by the Communist Party, was an indication of the widened framework of Socialist Realism. However, this was not the approved interpretation of the picture. The following description perhaps helps to explain why the picture gained approval despite the theme and the rendering:

...the sharp sedge seems to bristle with bayonets, because in the artists soul, as in the soul of the youth who has stopped before the old shell-hole, there still sounds the "echo of the past war".⁹⁰

Yablons'ka was one of the first to show pictures that depicted old age and loneliness. In Odynoka (Lonesome), 1970, (pl.3.56) an old woman, "dark as the earth", was portrayed bent at some household chore beside a window in her cottage blackened with age. This portrayal was a far cry from the heroic depictions of athletic looking, smiling workers, but was an actual depiction of life as observed by

⁹⁰ Vladimir Leniashin, *The Soviet Character. Paintings by Soviet Artists. 1960s-1980s* (Leningrad: Aurora, 1986) p. 25.

the artist, without embellishments.⁹¹ It was in the spirit of what was to be later called the "severe style", popular in Moscow with some artists who attempted to extend the notion of "truth to life".⁹²

Generally Ukrainian artists did not appear to favour the "severe style", but indications of its influence may be seen in the work of Medvid', particularly in his painting of *Pershi kolhospy na L'vivshchyni* (First Collective Farms in the Lviv Region), 1972 (pl.3.57). At the forefront of the bird's-eye-view composition, Medvid' portrayed a couple separated from the figures in the upper part of the canvas by a man in uniform, his head partially turned toward the couple, and a wooden fence. Of the couple, the woman has turned toward the official while her husband faces the viewer as he prepares to do some work on his property. Medvid' depicted the confrontation of Lviv farmers with Soviet authorities in enforcing collectivization in a starkly realistic and symbolic rendering. The earthy, grey-brown palette emphasized the dreary aspects of life on collective farms broken only by the illuminated head of the individual willing to stand up for his land. It was well

⁹¹ In a taped interview of 7 October, 1988, in the author's archive, Yablons'ka said that she was inspired to paint this picture when she met the old woman on a painting trip to a village.

⁹² In the late 1950s and 1960s some of the Moscow artists began painting realist pictures that reflected the painful and tragic aspects of Soviet life. Among them were Boris Birger, Vadim Sidur, Ernst Neizvestny, Vladimir Veisberg, Nikolai Andronov, and Pavel Nikonov.

known that the drive to collectivize the Lviv Region had been difficult, but no one had dared to depict this as less than a happy occasion. Medvid' not only showed the conflict and the force used by the state to coerce the rural population, but centered the composition and formal means on the only individual willing to defy the authorities even temporarily. The picture was first reproduced in the catalogue accompanying the two-man show in Kiev that closed before it opened.⁹³ In rendering and composition, however, Medvid' comes closer to Andrew Wyet, an artist he admires, than the "severe style".

The situation in Odessa was somewhat different than in either Lviv or Kiev. Here artists were not as concerned with national consciousness, but felt a need to expand their creative freedom and did so by seeking inspiration in European art movements. Artists such as Valerii Basanets' painted representational landscapes, but with a tendency to steer clear of pompous, complex compositions as in *City Landscape*, 1964, (pl.3.58) with its dark and brooding palette and reduced shapes. At the same time he experimented with complete non-objective compositions such as *Abstraction No. 3*, 1964 (pl.3.59) which were not entered in official exhibitions.⁹⁴

⁹³ See Liubomyr Medvid'. Laslo Pushkash. *Exhibition catalogue*, n. p. It is also reproduced in *L'vivs'ka kartynna galeriia* (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1987) pl. 108.

⁹⁴ In conversation with the artist in his studio 22 November, 1988.

The trend toward expanding Socialist Realism centered on small scale urban landscapes with figures not copied from nature, but analyzed in terms of light, space, and inter-relationship of forms. It was not until the early 1970s that several of the Odessa artists had moved to semi-abstract figuration and to total abstraction or assemblage. Among them were Viktor Maryniuk, Volodymyr Strelnikov, Volodymyr Tsiupko, Volodymyr Naumets, and Liudmylla Yastreb whose work will be discussed in the next chapter because they were at the centre of non-conformist art.

Of the older artists, Oleksander Atsmanchuk (b 1923-1974), a member of the Artists' Union, had one of his expressively painted pictures reproduced in *Mystetstvo* in 1967.⁹⁵ *Love*, 1960-67, (pl.3.60) showed two young people locked in a kiss against a golden background. Not only was the rendering not naturalistic, but the subject matter was one not seen in Soviet Ukrainian publications before or after.

As more and more artists produced work that went beyond Socialist Realism, many of them were frustrated in their attempts to have their paintings exhibited. In the 1960s in all three centres, Kiev, Lviv, and Odessa, artists began holding exhibitions in other places than the designated exhibit spaces controlled by the Artists' Union. Some scientific institutions, like the Institute of Cybernetics

⁹⁵ *Mystetstvo*. No. 4, 1967, p. 24.

in Kiev, offered their premises to a few of the artists whose work did not conform to Socialist Realism. Informal exhibits were also held in artists' studios and in some private homes, but these were not as popular as they were to become later in Moscow. Ivan Marchuk, for example, had an exhibit of his work in 1968 at the apartment of Academician Tolpa in Kiev.

Private showings were also held by small informal groups, usually centered around certain individuals. In Lviv older artists gathered around Roman and Margit Sel's'kyi, some younger ones met regularly with Karlo Zviryns'kyi, while others grouped around Volodymyr Urishchenko.⁹⁶ Yet another group of writers, poets, and artists included Stefania Shabatura and poets Ihor and Iryna Kalynets'. In Kiev, the studios of Alla Hors'ka and Liudmylla Semykina attracted young artists and writers after the disbanding of the Creative Youth Club. In Odessa, the home and studio of Liudmyla Yastreb and her husband Victor Maryniuk became a popular gathering place. These support groups created micro-climates that helped the artists establish a milieu for their creativity. However, they did not give the artists access to the wider public.

A solution to the problem was tried in 1967 in Odessa

⁹⁶ According to Laslo Pushkash, who was part of this group, V. Urishchenko, born 1932, was a self-taught artist who had the ability to draw others toward him. Ivan Skobalo, another Lviv artist, was also a member of this circle.

by Stanislav Sychov and Valentyn Khrushch, two artists who were not members of the Artists' Union, and, whose work was rejected by exhibition committees.⁹⁷ In order to show their work, they decided to hold an open-air exhibit in front of the Odessa State Theatre of Opera and Ballet. This was several years prior to the famous, open-air exhibit held in Moscow in 1974 where bulldozers were used to disperse the artists and public. Although the Odessa outdoor exhibit lasted only three hours before being closed by the police, it was important because it brought the artists' disenchantment with official art and exhibitions into the open. As Mudrak has pointed out, this event emphasized the strong distinction between official and unofficial art in Ukraine.⁹⁸ Surprisingly, no serious reprisals followed, but henceforth, in Odessa, outdoor exhibits were replaced by apartment shows which were tolerated by the authorities throughout the 1970s.

The situation in Odessa was unique in terms of officially sanctioned exhibitions of young artists whose work went beyond Socialist Realism. In 1971, for example, with the support of Artists' Union members, Yurii Yegorov (b 1926) and Oleksander Atsmanchuk a five-man exhibit was

⁹⁷ Members of the Artists' Union have the privilege of showing work of their own choice and not having to go through exhibition committees, but it would appear that this was not always adhered to.

⁹⁸ See M. Mudrak, "Introductory Essay" in *Contemporary Art from Ukraine* (Munich: Travelling Exhibition Committee, 1979), p. 7.

organized at the Artists' Union building in which V. Strelnikov, V. Maryniuk, S. Sychov, Lucien Diulfan, and Lopatnikov participated. Another exhibit was held in 1972 with eight artists taking part, but it was also the last because it was strongly criticized by the Artists' Union for deviations from Socialist Realism.⁹⁹

The Freeze in Painting

There were several fluctuations in the artistic climate before the "thaw" came to an end. One of the first steps taken to limit the dissemination of Western European art influences occurred in 1959 in Lviv with the closing of the Monumental Painting Faculty just as the new generation of artists educated in the Soviet school system was about to enter institutions of higher learning. This meant that the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Art would graduate its last students trained in painting in 1964. Consequently such future Lviv artists as Ivan Marchuk, Petro Markovych, Liubomyr Medvid', Oleh Min'ko, Ivan Ostafiichuk, and Laslo Pushkash had to choose to specialize in textiles, ceramics or graphic art even though most of them wanted to study painting. It also meant that such teachers as Sel's'kyi and Zviryns'kyi and others who were oriented towards Western European art had fewer opportunities to pass along their experiences and knowledge. Eventually this closing served

⁹⁹ According to Strelnikov the eight young artists besides himself were: Aleksander Anufriev, V. Khrushch, V. Maryniuk, Nud'ha, S. Sychov, V. Tsiupko, and Ushchychov. See pl.4.1.

its purpose by reducing the prominence and influence of the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts.¹⁰⁰

Despite greater creative and personal freedom and the widened framework of Socialist Realism, all the controls remained in place as did the definition of Socialist Realism. In 1967 Afanasiev wrote:

In Ukrainian visual art realism triumphed irrevocably and lastingly....The victory of the principles of Socialist Realism in Ukrainian visual arts means that it became a manifestation of the Marxist materialist viewpoint, the hopeful instrument in the arsenal of other ideological measures that the Party utilizes in the struggle for the building of a Communist society, and that all of this meets the objective tendencies of the development of national art.¹⁰¹

These claims notwithstanding, it was rather obvious from officially exhibited and reproduced paintings that interpretations of Socialist Realism varied greatly and artists were not willing to give up their newly found freedom. One of the artists who refused to be forced into submission was Alla Hors'ka. At the end of November, 1970 she was found brutally murdered and her death was not adequately explained.¹⁰² An exhibition of her paintings

¹⁰⁰ O. Ripko in her article "Petro Markovych u retrospektyvi shkoly" (Petro Markovych in the Retrospective of the School). Zhovten'. July. (1989), p. 126 voiced the opinion that the closing of the Faculty of Monumental Painting was very detrimental to the development of the Institute and resulted in a lowering of standards.

¹⁰¹ V. Afanasiev, Stanovlennia sotsialistychnoho realizmu v ukraïns'komu obrazotvorchomu mystetstvi, pp. 158-160.

¹⁰² One of her friends, Nadiia Svitlychna, who was present when Hors'ka's body was found in the basement of her father-in-law's house near Kiev, suspects that the KGB had something to do with the murder. Similar rumours have been widespread in

was held in Alla Hors'ka's studio on the day of her funeral, 7 December, 1970, (pl.3.61) the only solo exhibition ever held of her work. As she was well known not only in Kiev, but also in Lviv and other regions of Ukraine where her work had taken her, her murder must have had the effect of spreading fear among human rights activists and artists pursuing Ukrainian themes in their art.

After the arrests began in January of 1972, several of the artists were regularly questioned by the KGB. Some were asked to report on their friends, and were threatened with reprisals if they refused. It became common knowledge in Lviv that V. Patyk and the graphic artist, Ivan Ostafiichuk, were pressured to incriminate others or testify against those being held, and both refused.¹⁰³ Some artists were called up for Army duty.¹⁰⁴ Lviv tapestry artist Stefania Shabatura, arrested in January, had two hundred of her works confiscated even though the work was not political in

Ukraine based on such facts as the elimination of Hors'ka's name from the mosaic panels on which she worked.

¹⁰³ In his book *Cataract*, Mykhaylo Osadchy wrote that Ostafiichuk testified at his trial that he had not been given any literature to read by the accused, yet, the court insisted in entering that Ostafiichuk was given an underground manuscript to read. See M. Osadchy, *Cataract*. Translated and edited by M. Carynnyk. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), p. 72.

¹⁰⁴ According to Ostafiichuk, now living in Canada, there was an order issued for him to report to the Recruiting Office, but he managed to avoid induction into service by not being at home whenever the order, which has to be delivered in person, was presented.

subject matter.¹⁰⁵ At her trial she was accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and given a five-year sentence in hard labour camps and three years in exile. All of her work created in camp was impounded and presumably burned, and Shabatura was forbidden to paint or draw.¹⁰⁶

Artists who spoke out in defence of human rights and against Russification were not the only ones harassed by the authorities. Petro Markovych, who admitted to being a practicing Baptist, was censured and asked to renounce his faith at a meeting of the Artists' Union. Because he refused to do so, he was expelled from the Artists' Union, and his pictures were not accepted for any exhibitions even though there was nothing religious in the work he was creating.

In the spring of 1972 an exhibition of paintings by Lviv artists, Liubomyr Medvid' and Laslo Pushkash that was ready to open in Kiev was cancelled a few days before the

¹⁰⁵ For further information see *Ukrainian Movement for Human Rights and Justice* (Toronto: Smoloskyp, 1978), p. 197.

¹⁰⁶ It was reported by Mal'va Landa in a letter to Amnesty International that 150 drawings and seventy ex libris confiscated from Shabatura during her incarceration were burned because they were "abstract" and considered "an insult to the labour camp". As charges against Shabatura were not based on her art, this can be seen as a strictly punitive measure which had precedents in the tsarist period when T. Shevchenko was also forbidden to paint and draw while serving his ten-year sentence. For details see *Pohrom v Ukraini*, p. 279-285.

opening.¹⁰⁷ In the introductory essay to the catalogue published by the Artists' Union for the occasion, H. Ostrovs'kyi pointed out that this was to be a debut in Kiev for the two young artists. Soon after the cancellation, the newspaper L'vovskaia pravda (The Lviv Truth) published an article criticizing the two artists. Pushkash's painting Narodzhennia liudyny (The Birth of Person) (pl.3.62) was found defective in its depiction of people gathered around the table, and his still life compositions were deemed weakened by copying of Western pictures.¹⁰⁸ Medvid' was accused of depicting "a dead earth illuminated by deadly light." His "naturalistic portrayals" were found deficient because "he did not depict the richness of the young representatives of the working class in the Lviv Region." Medvid' was advised to "represent Soviet people in all their beauty of their heroic toil for the good of our planet".¹⁰⁹ Colleagues of the artists were told that they shared responsibility for the failures of the two artists because it was their duty "to guide the young artists and to teach them not only professional mastery but also to ensure their 'ideinost'', 'partiinnost'', and 'narodnost''".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Based on an interview with Laslo Pushkash 8 December, 1989 in Toronto. Pushkash, who graduated from the Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Arts in 1965, was born in 1941 in Uzhhorod. Since 1973 Pushkash has lived in Budapest.

¹⁰⁸ A. Smydovych, "Sveriaia s zhyzniiu...", L'vovskaia pravda (Lviv Truth), 23 August, 1972, p. 3. Amazingly there was no criticism of the composition which echoes Leonardo da Vinci's painting Last Supper.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.3.

In his keynote address at the Fifth Congress of the Union of Artists of the UkSSR held in 1972 Vasyl Borodai stated:

The achievements of Soviet Ukrainian art are significant. They would be inconceivable without the guiding role of the Communist Party, without constant, wise nurturing. Therefore, first of all we thank the Lenin Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, the Soviet Government, for the honoured and important position reserved for the artists in the vanguard of building Communism, for the invaluable assistance in our daily work, and the attention to our future and everyday matters.... It would be odd and artificial, without any historical basis, to claim some sort of exceptional poetics for Ukrainian arts, an exclusivity of national motifs and images in the creativity of Ukrainian artists. Ukrainian art is developing according to the shared laws of development of all multi-national art, as its integral, organic part. It is impossible to imagine the art of Soviet Ukraine detached from the practice of the prominent masters of all Soviet art.¹¹¹

In this speech the head of the Artists' Union, not only underlined the supremacy of the Communist Party in art, but also served notice that claims to create a characteristically Ukrainian art, were not be tolerated, that uniformity of Soviet art was the ultimate goal.

In 1973 V. Kudin, a Party art critic, published his book *Ideii velykoho mystetstva* (Ideas of a Great Art) reaffirming the principles of Socialist Realism.¹¹² The leadership of the Artists' Union joined in pressuring the

¹¹¹ Vasyl Borodai, "Zvitna dopovid' pravlinnia V ziizdu spilky khudozhnykiv Ukrainiis'koi RSR" (Keynote Address of the Executive of the Union of Artists of the Ukrainian SSR). *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo*. No. 2. (1973): 4.

¹¹² V. Kudin, *Ideii velykoho mystetstva* (Ideas of a Great Art) (Kiev: Radians'ka shkola, 1973).

artists to adhere to official interpretations of Socialist Realism. V. Odainyk, a member of the presidium of the Executive of the Artists' Union called artists to return to:

Such themes as Lenin, the Communist Party, the Revolution and Civil War, the exploits of the Great Patriotic War, socialist work, building Communism, the theme of the Soviet Fatherland - these are the main themes of all our Soviet art through which lies our majestic road to development.¹¹³

It was abundantly clear that possibilities for new developments in painting through official channels were becoming limited or non-existent. As soon as restrictions on themes and expression were imposed in an attempt to reign in individual creative freedom and ensure stricter interpretations of Socialist Realism, most artists complied for fear of reprisals. Yet, privately in their studios and among friends, many of them continued to pursue their artistic concerns. Some young and restless individuals eventually found themselves outside the official art organizations, and this led to a distinction between official and unofficial artists. This distinction was not always clear cut because there were many artists that fulfilled state orders and produced work for official exhibits in order to make a living while in private they created paintings for their own satisfaction that were shown only to trusted friends. Thus, the Khrushchev "thaw" that had given rise to new developments in art, set in motion the

¹¹³ CSAMLA, Kiev, fond 581, op. 1, sp. 1,781, "Stenograma ot 26 dekabria, 1973. II. plenum soiuz khudozhnikov" (Stenogramme of the Second Plenum of the Artists' Union, 26 December, 1973), p. 57.

creation of works of art that refused to fit the constricting mould of Socialist Realism, and fell outside the jurisdiction of official art. This was the non-conformist art that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Many artists were reluctant to give up the emerging artistic freedom experienced during the Khrushchev thaw. When the Communist Party leadership once more felt impelled to repress the demands for more basic changes prompted by the freer atmosphere, most of the artists in Ukraine learned to live with the resulting new restrictions. However, there were a few artists who struggled against being forced into the confines of Socialist Realism. To do so openly, particularly during the early 1970s, would have been dangerous, therefore, most artists withdrew into the relative safety and privacy of their studios to await more auspicious times. Some led a double existence executing state orders publicly and, at the same time, painting privately. Only a few artists dared to defy the authorities openly, usually for only brief periods of time before being silenced.

Several books and many articles have been written about the struggles of those artists in the Soviet Union who sought individual creative freedom and an opportunity to show their work to the public. Most of these books, however, have concentrated on the art of Moscow and Leningrad where the "unofficial" artists were most numerous and vocal.¹ Information about Ukrainian artists, as well

¹ One of the first books on the subject was Paul Sjeklocha and Igor Mead, *Unofficial Art In the Soviet Union* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967). It was followed by Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer, *Soviet Art in Exile* (New York: Random House, 1977),

as artists from other Soviet republics, has been very limited because of a lack of exposure and access to the Western media, and the complete silence of the Soviet press on this subject.² Even though the majority of authors have chosen the term "unofficial" to describe the art and artists who have not adhered to Socialist Realism, I would prefer to use the term non-conformist in order to allow for greater flexibility of interpretation, especially in those cases where such art was created by officially recognized artists.

While the distinction between official and unofficial artists, based on membership in the Artists' Union, is clear cut, this differentiation becomes more difficult to make for those artists who worked for the Art Fund or were teachers at schools of art, but were not members of the Artists' Union. In a sense, they were "official" because they were employed by the State, but on the other hand they did not have all the privileges of the Artists' Union members. The distinctions in art are even more ambiguous. In rare cases, paintings that went beyond what was acceptable at the moment as Socialist Realism, created by both official and

and Norton Dodge and Allison Hilton, *New Art From the Soviet Union* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1977).

² The first publication about Ukrainian non-conformist artists was *Contemporary Art from the Ukraine*. Exhibition catalogue. Introduction by Myroslava M. Mudrak. (Munich: Special Exhibition Committee, 1979). Stephen Feinstein wrote an article about Estonian art, "The Avant-Garde in Soviet Estonia" in Norton Dodge and Allison Hilton, *New Art from the Soviet Union*, pp. 31-34.

unofficial artists, made it into exhibitions, thus giving them "official" status. Furthermore, there were official artists, members of the Artists' Union, like R. Sel's'kyi and O. Dubovyk, who painted pictures that were not shown because they did not satisfy Socialist Realism criteria in theme and style, and, therefore, should be called non-conformist.

Thus, for the purposes of this text, non-conformist art is a very broad term that encompasses all art that went beyond Socialist Realism and did not meet official approval and recognition in the USSR. This term has meaning only in a society like the USSR where there is an officially endorsed policy and where the arts are carefully policed and controlled. In Soviet Ukraine, as in the other republics of the USSR, non-conformist art refers to work that does not follow the prescribed interpretation of the method of Socialist Realism, whatever that happens to be at the time.

Non-conformist art does not comprise a collective movement, nor is it a style. No uniformity of ideology, beliefs or technique stand behind it. Neither is it, for the most part, a dissident art which is politically motivated. Figurative pursuits stand alongside abstract and formal concerns. The only unifying link is the artists' belief and insistence on freedom to think and express themselves creatively as individuals. In many cases it is a "private" art reserved for selected viewers. To any Western

observer there is little unusual, shocking, extremist or avant-garde about the non-conformist art. Strictly speaking this art was not forbidden in private. However, if shown publicly its creators could have been subjected to harassment and repressions as was the case in Moscow, Leningrad, and Odessa.³

Pressures brought to bear on the artist creating non-conformist paintings varied greatly. First and foremost, these artists were systematically censored by being prevented from exhibiting their work publicly. Some were rebuked at their places of employment by Creative Councils of the Art Fund or the Artists' Union. Others were expelled from establishments of higher art education, from the Artists' Union or their places of employment. A few of the artists were denied permission to continue living in the cities of their choice and were banished to rural areas. In extreme cases they were harassed by the police, denounced in the press, arrested, jailed, and sentenced on trumped-up charges to hard-labour camps and internal exile in Siberia or Mordovia.

³ For information about Moscow and Leningrad see Paul Sjeklocha and Igor Mead, *Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967). For details about Moscow see Alexander Glezer "The Struggle to Exhibit" in Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer, *Soviet Art in Exile* (New York: Random House, 1977), pp. 197-120. For information about Leningrad see Constantine Kuzminsky, "Two decades of Unofficial Art in Leningrad" in Norton Dodge and Allison Hilton, *New Art from the Soviet Union* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1977), pp. 27-30.

Government controls and restrictions have not only forced the non-conformist artists to work in solitude, but have prevented their work from being reproduced in the Soviet Union, and from reaching the West. Except for a small number of works of art, mostly paintings, by a handful of artists, the work of the non-conformist artists was virtually unknown in their own homeland, as well as abroad.⁴ Only three of the Ukrainian non-conformist artists were allowed to leave the Soviet Union for the freedom of the West.⁵

The exact number of artists who found themselves outside the official artistic organizations is difficult to determine because there were no public statements about most of them.⁶ They were surrounded by a wall of official

⁴ In Ukraine the climate of glasnost' and perestroika has made it possible to show the non-conformist work in public institutions and galleries only since 1988.

⁵ The three Ukrainian artists who were allowed to emigrate were: Volodymyr Strelnikov from Odessa, Volodymyr Makarenko from Tallinn, and Vitalii Sazonov from Moscow. All three actively took part in non-conformist exhibitions and left on Israeli visas even though they were not Jewish, as this was the only possible way to emigrate to the West. A fourth artist, Anton Solomukha from Kiev, left for the West by marrying a French woman and going to Paris in 1978 to visit his in-laws. He has lived in Paris since then. A graduate of the Kiev Art Institute, Solomukha worked for the Art Fund and filled state orders while creating non-conformist work in private. However, he did not get into any difficulties with the authorities and did not participate in non-conformist exhibits.

⁶ Sjechlokha and Mead, p. 104 estimate that there were anywhere from fifty to one hundred unofficial artists working in Kiev in the 1960s. Considering that in 1962 there were only 506 Artists' Union members in Kiev, those figures seem high. If on the other hand this estimate includes all of those artists that were working for the Art Fund or as

silence in the Soviet press and received only an occasional mention in the West, usually when controversies erupted on a large scale as with the bulldozing incident in Moscow.

Who were these artists that pursued individual visions and continued to resist official art? Most of them had grown up after the war, and had studied during the Khrushchev "thaw". They represented the first generation that had received a Communist education and advanced training in Socialist Realism in an atmosphere that was free of Stalin's terror. Although their access to Western sources was limited, they had grown up at a time when it was possible to search for the artistic traditions disrupted by the imposition of Socialist Realism. Even though at times it appeared that their inspiration and interests were guided by what was forbidden, most of them emphasized their belief in complete creative freedom. As the idea of individual freedom was a product of a political understanding of individual liberty and the highest value of Western society, it was in disagreement with the principle of collective responsibility of Socialist Realism and Communist Party doctrines.

In Ukraine this included artists who had lost Artists' Union membership because they refused to follow the Communist Party line on art or had been expelled from the

illustrators, but were not Artists' Union members, then it is probably a realistic estimate.

Artists' Union for human rights activities or religious beliefs. They were joined by students, who had been forced out of art schools and institutions for not conforming to the curriculum, and by those artists who were refused Artists' Union membership because their work did not meet approved criteria. Whereas, before, artists had remained silent, in the mid-1970s, they sought alternate possibilities. They organized their own informal groups and held exhibitions in private quarters. Some young artists deliberately submitted paintings to Membership Committees that had not been especially painted for the occasion of gaining membership. These were the artists who not only dared to be different, but were ready to suffer for their beliefs. A few refused to seek membership in the Artists' Union intentionally.

In general there were three main trends pursued by artists creating non-conformist art: one that primarily centered on the formal and plastic aspects of painting, another that felt that art can articulate spiritual values, and a third that advocated a synthesis of modern art and national consciousness. As regional differences appear to have played a role in what trends artists pursued, it is interesting to examine the paintings created not only in the three major cities of Odessa, Lviv, and Kiev, but in smaller centres as well.

Non-conformist Art in Odessa

Artists in Odessa were especially successful in asserting their creative freedom in an organized manner. As an art centre and as a city Odessa is not like any other in Ukraine. Even though the original settlement was considerably older, the name dates from 1795 when the name of the former fortified naval port of Khadziubei was changed to Odessa.⁷ In 1860, by tsarist decree construction of a city and civil port according to plans in the classical revival style popular in the Russian Empire at the time was launched. Culturally the traditions of Odessa dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries were not Ukrainian, as the population was overwhelmingly Russian (38.7%) and Jewish (36.5%), with Ukrainians being in the minority (17.4%) in 1926.⁸ Even though by 1959 Ukrainians were in the majority comprising 41% of the population, a strong Russian cultural presence remained.⁹ There were also Western European influences that had developed at the turn of the century through the activities of artistic groups and exhibitions which were disrupted by the imposition of Socialist Realism.¹⁰ In general the artistic atmosphere of Odessa

⁷ *Entsyklopedia ukraiinoznavstva* (Encyclopedia of Ukraine) (Paris: Shevchenko Scientific Society, Inc., 1966) Vol. 5, p. 1,815.

⁸ *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Vol. I, p. 216.

⁹ According to census figures of 1959 41% of the population of Odessa was Ukrainian, 38% Russian, 16% Jewish, and 5% others. *Entsyklopedia ukraiinoznavstva* (Encyclopedia of Ukraine) (Paris: Shevchenko Scientific Society, Inc., 1966) Vol. 5, p. 1820.

¹⁰ K. Kostandi (1852-1921) was the mainstay of Ukrainian art in southern Ukraine in the late 19th century. He was the organizer of the Association of Southern-Rus' Artists which

appeared to be more cosmopolitan and not as conservative as in Kiev. Perhaps the international port status of the city had an effect on the artists and the bureaucracy.

Not surprisingly Odessa was not too affected by the Ukrainian cultural revival of the early sixties. However, it did benefit from the liberalization. Although a group of active, young artists sought out their Ukrainian heritage, they remained unaffected by the folkloric trends of the 1960s. Victor Maryniuk recalled that he, Liudmyla Yastreb, and Volodymyr Strelnikov were seriously concerned with national aspects in their work, but rather than resorting to obvious ethnic elements they felt that creating good art was the best way of doing so.¹¹ The Odessa artists, unlike their colleagues in Kiev and Western Ukraine who signed petitions and attended trials of their friends, seem to have pursued only artistic concerns.

Among these concerns was the rendering of the topography of the city and the continuity of the landscape

was the Ukrainian counterpart of the Russian peredvizhniki. Kostandi concentrated more on the formal aspects of painting with an emphasis on strong colour contrasts and illumination than the didacticism typical of the peredvizhniki. Kandinsky, who spent his childhood in Odessa, remained a member of the Association of Southern-Rus' Artists and exhibited with them regularly. He also took part in the international exhibitions organized by V. Izdebs'kyi in 1909 and 1910 in Odessa.

¹¹ In conversation with Maryniuk 26 October, 1988 in Odessa, the artist voiced his opinion that the folkloric trend was officially promoted, and was propagated by official artists.

traditions in a contemporary manner.¹² Following in the footsteps of 19th century Odessa landscape painters, the young artists filled their canvases with light saturated colours typical of the sub-tropical surroundings of sea, sky, and land. There was a tendency toward urban scenes with figures and a landscape-based abstraction.

Unlike most non-conformist artists, who worked in solitude or within a small circle of friends, the Odessa artists formed a cohesive group that managed to exhibit together. Volodymyr Tsiupko (b 1936) was the oldest in the group that included Volodymyr Strelnikov (b 1939), Victor Maryniuk (b 1939), Valerii Basanets' (b 1941), Oleksander Stovbur (b 1943), Liudmyla Yastreb (1945), Volodymyr Naumets' (b 1945), and Vitalii Sazonov (b 1947). Stanislav Sychov (b 1937), Valentyn Khrushch (b 1943), Aleksander Anufriev (b 1940), and Ruslan Makoiev (b 1943) were also identified with the group. Most had studied at the Odessa School of Art and all of them believed in individual creative freedom. During the 1960s some of them managed to get their paintings accepted into regional exhibits, and to find work with the Art Fund. However, this became more difficult by the mid-1970s, even though at that time artists in Moscow and Leningrad were demanding, and in some cases, receiving concessions from the State to hold exhibitions of

¹² Odessa landscape traditions were established by such 19th and 20th centuries artists as K. Kostandi (1852-1921), P. Nilus (1860-1943), and V. Synyts'ky (1896) who worked in a realistic manner painting sea, land, and sky with a light filled palette.

unofficial art.¹³

As mentioned already, at first these young Odessa artists received encouragement for their innovations and experimentation from a few members of the Artists' Union, and with their help organized an exhibition at the Artists' Union building in 1970.¹⁴ It was a milestone of sorts because the work shown went beyond the boundaries of Socialist Realism and was presented in a space controlled by the Artists' Union.¹⁵ There was another exhibit a year later in which eight young artists participated (pl.4.1) and which was enthusiastically received by the younger generation.¹⁶ However, because of the negative reaction from the Artists' Union, and the general tightening of controls, the next exhibit was held at the Komsomol's'ka iskra (The Komsomol Spark, an Odessa newspaper) premises, with the following artists contributing their work: V. Matskevych, V. Strelnikov, O. Stovbur, V. Tsiupko, and

¹³ For more information see Aleksander Glezer, "The Struggle to Exhibit", pp. 107-120.

¹⁴ Strelnikov, interviewed 17 October, 1986 in Munich, gave the date of the exhibition as 1970 and so did Basanets', interviewed 26 October, 1988 in Odessa. However, Maryniuk remembered the date of the exhibition as 1971.

¹⁵ This opinion was voiced by Odessa art historian, Tetiana Basanets', and her husband and artist, Valerii Basanets', 26 October, 1988 in Odessa.

¹⁶ According to Strelnikov the eight artists including himself were: Sychov, Khrushch, Maryniuk, Ushchyov, Tsiupko, Anufriev, and Nud'ha. See photograph pl.4.1.

Liudmyla Yastreb.¹⁷ Thereafter, it became impossible to exhibit in public places. Not until 1976 were there renewed efforts to show non-conformist art, and they were confined to private apartments.

One of the first exhibitions of non-conformist art was organized by Strelnikov after the success of the Ukrainian Non-conformist Art Exhibits in Moscow.¹⁸ It was held in the apartment of Zhenia Suslov in 1976 with about twenty artists taking part including three members of the Artists' Union.¹⁹ Several others were held at the apartment of Vladimir Asriev, an art collector of Armenian descent. Asriev even published a private catalogue featuring seventy-four works of art, where most of the Odessa artists were represented. Other exhibits were held in Zlotin's apartment and in Ruslan Makoiev's studio located in a basement not fit for human accommodation.²⁰ In 1976 Yastreb organized a solo exhibit in her studio and prepared a catalogue of the ninety-nine pieces of work on display (pl.4.2).

¹⁷ In conversation with O. Stovbur in his studio in Odessa 27 October, 1988.

¹⁸ Information provided by Strel'nikov in a taped interview 17 October, 1986 in Munich.

¹⁹ According to V. Strelnikov the three Artists' Union members were Y. Yegorov, V. Basanets', and Kovalenko. I was not able to confirm the status of Kovalenko.

²⁰ Ruslan Makoiev b 1943 was an artist. According to information received from Tsiupko 27 October, 1988 in Odessa Suslov was a photographer and sportsman while Zlotin was a television repairman, but both were willing to allow artists the use of their premises.

Photographs from several of the apartment exhibits and a survey of the paintings indicate that there was a variety of approaches and some of the work was non-representational. As a closer examination of the work will show, there was not much that could be called Ukrainian in content, and formal concerns predominated. Tsiupko feels that this, coupled with the fact that the artists made no demands for raising Ukrainian consciousness, allowed them to pursue formal concerns without reprisals.²¹ It was only after his participation in two exhibits of Ukrainian artists in Moscow and his involvement with apartment shows in Odessa that Strelnikov began to be harassed by the KGB. It would appear, therefore, that the authorities were more concerned with subduing artists who had rediscovered their Ukrainian roots and were showing leadership potential than persecuting artists for "formalist" interpretations and individual expression, so long as those artists did not voice Ukrainian concerns.

Most of the young Odessa artists found work in the Monumental Art Section of the Art Fund, creating decorations for interiors such as the murals for the House of Books which were designed by Maryniuk and Strelnikov (pl.4.3). Flattened space, stylizations, and decorative colours adapted to the wall surface were tolerated in monumental art, but were labelled "formalist" in official easel painting. As will be seen from the work of individual

²¹ Tsiupko in conversation 26 October, 1988 in Odessa.

artists, similar situations developed in Lviv and Kiev where the most innovative artists tended to be drawn to the Monumental Art Sections of the Art Fund because of fewer restrictions on their creative endeavours. Yet, most of these artists working as muralists continued to paint easel pictures which, they felt, gave them status as artists even if they experienced difficulties in having them exhibited.²²

Of the Odessa artists, V. Basanets' was one of the first to explore Abstract Expressionism and he did so in 1964 when he painted a series of gesturally unrestrained, brooding, compositions without any phenomenal associations, as in *Abstraction 3* and *Abstraction 4* (pl.4.4). Yet, at the same time, he was painting urban scenes, with houses and trees reduced to generalized planes in dark tones of ochre, grey, and brown as in *City Landscape* (pl.4.5). His palette remained restrained and almost monochromatic in *Untitled*, 1965, (pl.4.6.) with its somewhat enigmatic male figures against a blurred city skyline. In *Spomyyny pro bile misto* (Recollections about the White City), 1967, (pl.4.7) Basanets' returned to a non-objective composition based on variations of tone and size of squares. The subdued palette, the delicate tonal modifications, as well as the

²² Most of the artists working in the Monumental Art Section of the Art Fund expressed this idea. This included Strelnikov, Maryniuk, and Tsiupko from Odessa, Dubovyk and Marchuk from Kiev, and Patyk from Lviv. Humeniuk also felt that executing stained glass panels was secondary to painting in oils.

misty quality of the geometric shapes became characteristic of his later figurative paintings. By 1970 most of his paintings portrayed people with greatly simplified bodies against geometricized shapes of the city frozen in a blurred image with clear outlines and no details. The monochromatic palette, the shadows and semi-shadows, the hazy forms permeated his work with a timelessness and spacelessness as in *Devushka v bumazhnoi shapke* (Girl in a Paper Hat), 1961 (pl.4.8). In *Son (Dream)*, 1974, (pl.4.9) the cylindrical shapes of the woman's head and hair, as well as the alternating flat and cylindrical architectural forms behind her, have echoes in the 1928-1932 paintings of Malevich such as *Torso in Yellow Shirt*, but are typically Basanets' in the hazy terra-cotta palette. It is not clear how Basanets' managed to become an Artists' Union member in 1970, but in all likelihood he must have submitted work that was more in tune with Socialist Realism than the paintings he chose to show at unofficial exhibitions.

Volodymyr Tsiupko, a graduate of the Mukhina Art School in Leningrad in 1970, was not accepted for Artists' Union membership until 1980, but that did not prevent him from working for the Art Fund in Odessa. His diploma painting, titled *Ukrainian Songs and Dumas*, suggests that he was interested in Ukrainian ethnography, though there were no folkloric elements in his later paintings. A 1971 *Self-Portrait* (pl.4.10) indicated that Tsiupko was concerned with contrasts, simplified forms, and flattened space somewhat

reminiscent of Malevich's *Self-Portrait*, 1933. At the same time, he was experimenting with abstract compositions on paper and landscapes where the land, water, and sky were reduced to areas of colour.²³ In *Chovny (Boats)*, 1977, (pl.4.11) the shapes of the two row boats on shore, the sea and sky are all identifiable, but at the same time they are composed of patches of solid colours that show Tsiupko's concerns with formal investigation. Recognizable landscape elements have all but disappeared from his later works, like *Landscape*, 1977, (pl.4.12) and *Vertikal'na struktura (Vertical Structure)*, 1978, (pl.4.13), but the predominance of whites with sharp contrasts of earthly hues and bright red accents convey the sunny atmosphere of the Odessa countryside.

In the 1970s abstraction appeared to dominate the work of many of the non-conformist artists in Odessa, but it was an abstraction that was inspired by the visual stimuli of Odessa. Almost without exception the artists began with representational images before moving into semi-abstract, and eventually purely abstract picture construction, as was the case with both Liudmylla Yastreb and Volodymyr Strelnikov.

Strelnikov, who studied briefly at the Odessa Art

²³ This was evident from the work I saw in Tsiupko's studio in Odessa, 2 November, 1988. Unfortunately, as it was an overcast day none of my slides of his early work are worth reproducing.

School, was mostly self-taught. Dedicated and convinced that he wanted to be an artist, he submitted pictures to the Autumn Salon in Odessa in 1960 and two were accepted for the exhibition.²⁴ Strelnikov had his first solo exhibit in 1965 at the apartment of Shevchuk, Head of the Building Department, and sold several pictures for twenty-five rubles each. That year three of his paintings were accepted by the Selection Committee of the Artists' Union for a local exhibit. Periodically from 1962 to 1965, in order to make a living, Strelnikov and Basanets' travelled through villages near Odessa painting signs and posters. Later Strelnikov joined Maryniuk on similar working trips into the countryside. He also began working on projects for the Art Fund in the Monumental Art Section. In 1969 he was sent on an all-expenses-paid trip to one of the Artists' Union residences for artists where he met artists from across the USSR. Strelnikov applied to join the Artists' Union in 1970, but his application was rejected.²⁵

None of Strelnikov's paintings from the early period are available for viewing. A drawing from 1968 of several figures in an architectural setting was indicative of his

²⁴ All information about Strelnikov was obtained in two taped interviews with the artist 16 and 17 October, 1986 in Munich.

²⁵ It was not uncommon to be rejected on the first attempt to join the Artists' Union. What was unusual in Strelnikov's case was the fact that he was not a graduate of any art school. Graduates of art institutes who had graduated with distinction could become candidates for membership immediately and full members within two years.

interests, as well as a concern for reduced shapes and the inter-relationship of figures to architecture (pl.4.14). In the early 1970s he continued painting people in architectural settings, but in a deliberately child-like manner, as in *Family*, 1972, (pl.4.15). By 1974 Strelnikov was emphasizing shapes and colours in such multi-figured compositions as *V chovni (In a Boat)* (pl.4.16) where clear, sunny patches of colour fit into a tight, enclosed larger form set against the horizontals of sand, water, and sky. In *Composition*, 1975, (pl.4.17) there were fewer distinctions between ground and figuration in the central dominant form with only a suggestion of heads and bodies in the curvilinear patterns of shapes and colours. In later pictures the architecture and figures were reduced to simplified patterns within the larger contained form, sustaining a tension between the shapes detailed with intricate designs and the surrounding smooth areas of warm colours, as in *Osinne (Autumnal)*, 1977 (pl.4.18). Strelnikov's puzzle-like form construction and detailing have antecedents in the work of Jean Dubuffet, especially in the "L'Hourloupe" series begun in 1962.²⁶

Liudmyla Yastreb (1945-1980) was one of the few women artists who regularly participated in non-conformist exhibits in Odessa and Moscow, and, despite her early death from cancer, made a serious contribution to the development

²⁶ See Jean Dubuffet. *Paintings*. London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1966, pp. 59-63.

of Ukrainian art.²⁷ Yastreb graduated from the Odessa State Art School in 1964, and began exhibiting her paintings in official exhibitions in Odessa, Kiev, and Moscow. Employed by the Art Fund on monumental art projects, Yastreb continued easel painting in the studio she shared with her husband, Victor Maryniuk. Her early paintings, consisting of genre scenes rendered realistically, as in *Hurtozhytok* (Group Residence), 1968, (pl.4.19) and landscapes with architecture, gave way to figural compositions of women that became more and more abstract as Yastreb became disillusioned with the materialistic outlook of Socialist Realist art and sought the spiritual in art.²⁸

Her pictures of women, single or in groups, were not individualized portraits, or narratives. They were figure inspired abstractions composed of patches of colour that resembled torn paper reconstructions of the naked female form, as in *Women*, 1976 (pl.4.20). Parallel to this Yastreb

²⁷ The exhibition catalogue *Contemporary Art from Ukraine* refers to Yastreb as Yastrub, but her husband, V. Maryniuk told the author 27 October, 1988 in Odessa that the name is of Russian origin and should be written as Yastreb.

²⁸ In an unpublished statement from a private archive in Odessa entitled "Dukhovnyi stoitsizm khudozhnika v sovetskom obshchestve" (The Spiritual Stoicism of the Artist in Soviet Reality) written in 1979, but according to the author meant to describe the situation of artists in Odessa from 1959-1979, Yastreb makes several references to the artist as the transmitter of spiritual values. She writes that "Contemporary artists were the first to point to the spiritual truths needed to bring back people's souls from the emptiness that resulted from the revolution, war, famine, etc." She also claims that "Only the artist can sense the breath of spirit that was reborn after the physical suffering and losses inflicted on our people". A typewritten copy of the original manuscript is in the possession of the author.

explored figure-based abstraction where the object of inspiration was no longer readily identifiable, as in *Zhinka bilia vikna* (Woman by a Window), 1975 (pl.4.21). A similar development took place in her landscapes which progressed from the natural world to one composed of rhythmic bands of solid colour with a dominance of white. Eventually the distinct shapes gave way to more spontaneous, gestural forms and colours of such paintings as *Velyka piramida* (Large Pyramid), 1978, (pl.4.22) and *Velyki kupal'nytsi* (Large Bathers), 1979 (pl.4.23). In *Yasna kompozytsiia* (Bright Composition), 1978, (pl.4.24) all references to the objective world have been eliminated in order to create an abstract expressionist canvas full of light and movement.

A year before her death, Yastreb painted several pictures that have antecedents in religious art. The three heads with halos in *Troie* (Three), 1978-79, (pl.4.25) outlined with red recall the Holy Trinity, a subject that was not officially approved. Their rendering, however, is not in the icon painting tradition, but rather suggests that Yastreb may have been looking at the work of Picasso. The key to understanding *Veheria* (Supper), is in the title (pl.4.26). The twelve, white bust-like silhouettes and a black one set on solid blocks of bright colours against a patchwork of sombre hues with superimposed lines for arches suggests that Yastreb intended to paint a contemporary image of the Last Supper. Perhaps, Yastreb turned to forbidden, religious themes at a time when she became aware of the

terminal nature of her illness. In her diary entries and unpublished statements she saw artists as "the new messengers of the rebirth of spiritual values in our society".²⁹ She also felt that through manifestations of the avant-garde art a new and unprecedented understanding of the spirit and values of contemporary human beings could be reached that would bring forth the considerable and beautiful experiences of past ages. Yastreb credited artists with collecting the "trash" thrown out by society such as icons, churches, old books, folk art, etc. and with reviving scorned traditions including those of the 19th and 20th centuries. Her writings leave no doubt that she believed in creative freedom and individual expression, but felt that artists had a role to fulfil in society.³⁰

Although Yastreb made no great innovations in painting, her pictures were unusual in the transformation of the female figure into semi-abstract and abstract compositions. At a time when it was not safe to explore abstraction, she consistently strove to find a synthesis between figuration and abstract painting, and was not afraid to exhibit her work at exhibitions of non-conformist art including her solo exhibit in 1976. Of the non-conformist women artists she was the most consistent and dynamic.

²⁹ Yastreb, unpublished manuscript from the Maryniuk archive.

³⁰ Yastreb, unpublished manuscript.

Among the Odessa artists Victor Maryniuk remained the most figurative, but even he experimented with an abstract structure for his pictures and with geometrical abstraction, as the photograph of the artist against a selection of his paintings would suggest (pl.4.27).³¹ Maryniuk began with traditional themes and representational pictures such as *Mother and Child*, 1970, (pl.4.28) in which his interest in stripes and squares of colour are apparent in the blanket, skirt, and legs of the woman. There was a tendency to geometricize form in *Divchyna v strichkakh* (*Girl in Ribbons*), 1971 (pl.4.29). Squares, and variations on them, contributed to the disappearance of figure-ground distinctions and an ambiguous space in *Portrait*, 1975 (pl.4.30). In contrast to the solid colours of most of the canvas only the face and bands of hair received slight chiaroscuro modelling. In *Kvadraty z postatiamy* (*Squares with Figures*), 1976, (pl.4.31) Maryniuk constructed his picture using bands of multi-coloured squares with figural elements in most of them somewhat in the manner of Jean Dubuffet, but with a greater emphasis on the optical effects of the squares of colour. Out of the mosaic-like squares of *Rakhmanynyn*, 1978, (pl.4.32) two faces emerge, one en face, the other in profile. That Maryniuk's interest in abstract construction alternated with an interest in icons is apparent in his treatment of mountains and sun in *Landscape with Hills*, 1977, (pl.4.33), where the rock formations have

³¹ This slide of Maryniuk in his studio was taken in 1977 and the original is in the possession of M. Mudrak Ciszekwycz.

been adapted from Byzantine-Ukrainian icons.³²

Another Odessa artist who sought inspiration in icons was Volodymyr Naumets', one of the most innovative and interesting painters, who began by creating heads in a primitivist manner such as *Portrait*, 1971-72, (pl.4.34) with distorted features and expressive hues.³³ In *Znak I (Sign I)*, 1976-77, (pl.4.35) Naumets' borrowed figural and colour elements from a *Mother and Child* icon and rearranged them in what appears to be an abstract composition, but where such signs as a cross, silhouette of a woman, and embryo of a child are recognizable. The cross as the main element of construction of the picture and as image appeared in several paintings including *Obraz (Image)*, 1977 (pl.4.36). It was integrated into the composition of *Icon*, 1979 (pl.4.37), where the frame of reference was disrupted and the abstracted fragments of the icon elements regrouped. Somewhat akin to the precious metal, carved coverings given some 18th and 19th century icons, Naumets' incorporated a real object in part of the composition. He also created a series of paintings with silhouettes of heads without any features, but with a multitude of textured gem-like shapes

³² Rock formations with overlapping planes were part of the Byzantine-Ukrainian art traditions and may be seen in icons from the 15th to the 16th centuries as for example in the icon *Voskresinnia Lazaria (The Resurrection of Lazarus)*, beg. 16th century, Church of Pokrova in the village of Poliany, Lviv Region.

³³ Information about Naumets' is based on a study of his paintings and an interview with the artist in his studio in Moscow, 27 December, 1988.

in rich colours and a cross clearly visible, of which Znak II (Sign II), 1977, (pl.4.38) is a good example. With the tight, contained form, but without any direct references, Naumets' has managed to convey the impression of an icon.

Parallel to these paintings Naumets' created works that combined collage materials with a richly painted surface. Object, 1976-77 (pl.4.39) and Head, 1978, (pl.4.40) recalled the gestural painting of Abstract Expressionism and the re-use of "waste" materials of pop art, as well as the incorporation of Dada "ready made" objects or perhaps even the crude and direct imagery of Art Brut. This transformation of material objects into strikingly different images was not common in Ukrainian art at the time, and in that sense Naumets' was breaking new ground. In later paintings Naumets' returned to religious subject matter and became preoccupied with highly expressionist and personal images of the crucifixion.

Even though Naumets', who studied at the Moscow Higher Artistic and Production School (the former Stroganoff School of Applied Art), decided to stay in Moscow after graduation in 1970, he kept in touch with his Odessa colleagues usually through summer visits, and joined them in exhibitions in Odessa. In 1976 he took part in the Second Exhibition of Ukrainian Artists in Moscow, but has had few contacts with Ukrainian artists since then.

The work of Valentyn Khrushch, who had no formal artistic training, was the most provocative, as may be seen from *Osynnyi obiekt* (Autumn Object), 1977, (pl.4.41) where he abandoned painting and worked with found objects. Khrushch also painted abstract, monochromatic pictures such as *Untitled*, c. 1977 (pl.4.42).³⁴ In 1978 Khrushch and Naumets' worked together on *Joint Composition*, a non-objective painting with a cross as the underlying element of design.

It would appear that Odessa artists kept in touch with what was happening in art in Moscow rather than in Kiev or Lviv. Several of the Odessa artists recalled that Vladimir Yakovlev, a non-conformist artist from Moscow who lost most of his vision at eighteen,³⁵ and was being treated at the famous Ophthalmic Institute in Odessa kept them informed about the latest artistic developments in Moscow.

The non-conformist artists of Odessa continued their apartment exhibitions throughout the 1970s without suffering any serious consequences. After the forced emigration of

³⁴ In December 1988 Khrushch lived on the outskirts of Moscow where he had a studio at ul. Profsoiuznaia, 100 at the Cheremushkinskii Region Cultural Centre. I visited his studio accompanied by Naumets', but my attempts to interview him were not very successful as he was reluctant to answer any questions, perhaps due to the presence of a student from the USA.

³⁵ Sjechlokha and Mead, p. 173.

Strelnikov in 1978,³⁶ the authorities, it would appear, decided to allow the apartment exhibits to continue rather than drive the non-conformist art and artists underground. Some of these exhibits were documented in privately published catalogues, a feat unparalleled anywhere else in Ukraine, and an example of the often arbitrary nature of controls exercised in the name of Socialist Realism.³⁷

Non-conformist Art in Lviv

In Lviv non-conformist art had quite a following particularly among the younger artists in the 1960s, but no organized exhibits took place. In contrast to Odessa, where artistic expression centered mostly on formal concerns, in Lviv there were artists who explored international trends, as well as those that felt a need to find a synthesis of traditional Ukrainian and modern art.

Karlo Zviryns'kyi, a teacher at the Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Art, was concerned like the Odessa artists primarily with forms, colours, and textures without

³⁶ As a result of harassment by the KGB Strelnikov decided to apply to leave the USSR on an Israeli visa. This only increased the persecution, and he was threatened with violence. At the same time the Artists' Union promised to give him a solo exhibition if he stayed. The situation deteriorated so much that he decided to divorce his wife so that she would not carry the stigma of his immigration. Strelnikov was eventually given an exit visa and left Soviet Ukraine 3 May, 1978 by train. He settled in Munich where he continues to live and paint.

³⁷ The three privately published catalogues that I am aware of were: *Kollektsiia Vladimira Asrieva*, Odessa, 1976; *Yastreb*, Odessa, October, 1976; and *Khudozhniki Odessy*, 1980.

any reference to Ukrainian elements, as in Composition No. 4 (pl.4.43). In the 1960s he experimented with the inter-relationship of forms and colours and the resultant tensions created on a uniform background. Then he explored compositions where ground and figuration distinctions had disappeared. By mid-1960s Zviryns'kyi was working with painted relief constructions, as in Composition, (pl.4.44), but all of these works remained in his studio and few people knew of their existence.³⁸

One of Zviryns'kyi's students, Oleh Min'ko,³⁹ who was in his first year at the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Art, painted non-objective compositions on a textured ground using a limited palette, as in Derevo (Tree) (pl.4.45), Composition no. II, and Composition no. III (pl.4.46), all 1959-1961. In all three paintings there are black and white shapes floating on the variable, fabric-like ground of black with one or more accents of primary colour. His 1961 painting, Hra v karty (A Game of Cards) (pl.4.47), consisted of a greyed blue-green ground with geometricized, minimal forms suggestive of table, players, and cards. After Min'ko graduated from the Institute in 1965, his work became more figurative, but forms remained reduced to

³⁸ Arrangements to talk to Zviryns'kyi and see some of his work were made at my request through Halia Grons'ka, curator of contemporary art at the Lviv Museum of Ukrainian Art, who herself had not seen any of the abstract work before.

³⁹ Oleh Min'ko was born in 1938 in Makiivka in the Don Region. He moved to Lviv in 1959 and has lived there since then.

essences, as in *Cholovik z metelykom* (Man with Butterfly), 1967, (pl.4.48) where an elongated shape within a rectangle bears resemblance to a Brancusi-like face with a butterfly in place of a mustache.⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that Min'ko did not take part in any exhibitions between 1969 and 1971, when he painted such symbolic canvases as *Poema pro davnii step* (Poem about the Old Steppe) (pl.4.49) and *Smert' koshovoho* (Death of a Cossack Leader) (pl.4.50) with their stylized images, flattened space, and nostalgia for Ukraine's past.⁴¹ Although he participated in eight exhibits between 1972 and 1978, fewer pictures were painted and their titles indicate that he submitted work that conformed to Socialist Realism themes.⁴² When Min'ko returned to more active participation in exhibitions in 1978, his work had undergone a change in style and subject matter and was more in keeping with Socialist Realism practices.

Many younger Lviv artists became fascinated with Surrealism, mostly of the veristic variety. In a 1959 painting called *Bilia dzherela vichnosti* (By the Source of Eternity) (pl.3.51), Bohdan Soika created a metaphysical

⁴⁰ All three paintings are in the collection of the Lviv Art Gallery where I was permitted to photograph them.

⁴¹ Information based on "List of Exhibitions", *Oleh Min'ko: zhyvopys* (Oleh Min'ko: Paintings). Exhibition Catalogue. (Lviv: Lviv Art Gallery, 1988), p. 20.

⁴² These include the following titles: *Divchyna, yaka rozvishuie bilyznu* (Girl Hanging Laundry), 1973, *Soldat vyzvolytel'* (Soldier, the Liberator), 1974, *Den' peremohy* (Day of Victory), 1975.

landscape with boat and figures bathed in a cold light emanating from the left. The crisp modelling, bluish-purple palette, and odd juxtapositioning of billowing drapery, a ladder, and illuminated branch with leaves convey an atmosphere of unease, as well as harking back to the Surrealist canvases of Magritte.

In 1963, Liubomyr Medvid',⁴³ while still a student, painted *Perehony tush* (Race of Fat) (pl.4.52) where realistically modelled, headless pigs, one of them with billowing red drapery, were shown racing on bicycles with only the front wheel in place. The deep space and dismembered limbs rushing toward the viewer in *Evacuation*, 1965, (pl.4.53) indicated that Medvid' had mastered Surrealism as practiced by Salvador Dali, but at the same time hinted at a sub-text that could be read as a desert with lost souls that was symbolic of the political situation in the Soviet Union.

Ivan Zavadovs'kyi (1937-1983) was also still a student at the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts when he painted a sea of semi-abstract nude bodies in a deep space in *Do sontsia* (Toward the Sun), 1969 (pl.4.54). In *Kompozytsia z holovoiu osla* (Composition with a Donkey's Head), 1966, (pl.4.55) where amorphous and semi-abstract

⁴³ Medvid', born 1941 in Variazh, Lviv Region, graduated from the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Art in 1965, where he remained as an instructor until 1970. He became a member of the Artists' Union in 1970.

shapes floated in and out of an ambiguous, shallow space, he turned to the abstract phase of Surrealism for inspiration.

Petro Markovych (b 1937) made use of fanciful plants, flowers, and spheres to create whimsical compositions such as *Flowers*, 1968, (pl.4.56) which is somewhat reminiscent of Miro's *Fish Magic*, 1925. In 1971 he painted a double self-portrait in *Avtobiografichne* (Autobiographical) (pl.4.57), which has such Surrealist elements as fanciful creatures and out-of-scale figures in an ambiguous space. In *Hutsul's'ka legenda* (Hutsul Legend), 1972, (pl.4.58) through the oddly juxtaposed objects of pitcher, carved bird, egg, and carved Hutsul head Markovych showed an interest in combining Ukrainian and Surrealist images.

Such obvious departures from Socialist Realism, however, did not find favour with Exhibition Committees and these paintings were never seen by the public. Nonetheless, some elements of Surrealism slipped into paintings that were officially exhibited, as was the case with Medvid' and his *Immigrants I* discussed earlier (pl.3.42).

Mykola Krystopchuk (b 1934) painted Socialist Realist pictures like *Doiarky* (Dairy Maids) (pl.4.59), which he displayed in his studio for the benefit of visitors, while at the same time he created highly symbolic canvases in which he portrayed cossacks in bondage being rescued by the

Virgin Mary, as in *Untitled*, c. 1970, (pl.4.60). Although the depiction was representational, there were discrepancies in space and scale. In the 1970s Krystopchuk also painted landscapes and still life compositions using the encaustic technique, which resulted in a rich combination of hues and a fluidity of surface made possible by the spontaneous application of the medium, as in *Old Church* (pl.4.61).

Overall, the restrictions of the 1970s, as well as the return of harassment and fear, had an adverse effect on non-conformist art creation in Lviv, and artists tried to be careful in what they showed and to whom. Most of them abandoned explorations into abstraction and Surrealism, and eventually joined the Artists' Union or worked for the Art Fund.⁴⁴ Even Sel'skyi stopped painting temporarily and turned to pottery making where controls were less stringent.⁴⁵

Non-conformist Art in Kiev

In Kiev there were probably more non-conformist artists than elsewhere in Ukraine, but because they did not exhibit as a group it is difficult to determine their numbers and influence. Most of the contributions to non-conformist painting were made by individuals working without the

⁴⁴ Medvid' and Min'ko became members in 1970. Zavadiv's'kyi worked for the Art Fund.

⁴⁵ In conversation with Sel's'kyi 25 November, 1988 in his bedroom in Lviv. According to Sel's'kyi, his former student, Markovych, became his instructor in pottery.

benefit of apartment shows. Some artists were primarily concerned with self-expression and this was particularly true of the work of the 1970s. It would also appear that the art produced in Kiev was less experimental than that of Lviv or Odessa and fewer artists explored abstraction. At the same time it must be remembered that the leadership and power of the Artists' Union was concentrated in Kiev, as well as at the Kiev Institute of Art, both of which were very conservative, and without a doubt had a stifling effect on the artists.⁴⁶

One of the Kiev artists who found herself outside the Artists' Union due to her human rights activities, was Halyna Sevruk. She was one of several artists mentioned in Chapter One as having signed a letter protesting human rights violations. Had her paintings been exhibited publicly she might have had problems because of her art as well. Sevruk created some very interesting pictures that revealed her personal feelings through expressive forms and colours. Year 1937 (pl.4.62) painted in 1966 could be seen as a metaphor of the political situation in 1937, as well as

⁴⁶ This opinion was voiced by many artists in Ukraine. Several of them mentioned that it took many years to unlearn what had been taught officially in order to be able to develop an individual artistic vision. Judging by the diploma paintings at the Kiev Institute of Art, the Institute adhered to a narrow interpretation of Socialist Realism. See the history of the Kiev Art Institute titled *Virnist' tradytsiiam* (Loyalty to Traditions) (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1982).

of the period in which the painting was conceived.⁴⁷ The flat, red earth with black mounds, two of them with crosses, serves as the backdrop for a white road that ends abruptly with a red silhouette of a figure with upraised arms on the left and disappears between two of the mounds on the right. The feeling of devastation is relieved by two small tree shapes bathed in white haloes on the black horizon. Although the title of the work recalls the terror and deaths of 1937, it is possible to interpret the picture as a statement of what was happening to Ukrainian intellectuals who were being arrested in 1965 and sentenced in 1966 to long terms in Siberian hard labour camps.

A naked, emaciated figure suspended on a dark background of rectangular shapes dominates *Zlamani kryla* (Broken Wings), 1967 (pl.4.63). To the right, surrounded by darkness, a whitish tower with church dome sits forlornly removed into the distance by its small size. Utter despair permeates the picture, probably a despair felt by the artist when some of her friends were sentenced to long terms in hard-labour camps, including in particular the artist, Panas Zalyvakha.

In 1971 when Sevruk's father passed away she responded with a picture *Bat'ko ukhodyt'* (Father Is Leaving) (pl.4.64) in which we see a small white figure suspended amongst large

⁴⁷ Some of the worst Stalin purges took place in 1937, and many of the Ukrainian writers, artists, and intellectuals perished in prisons and in labour camps. See Chapter One.

rectangular blocks and in the distance a barely visible speck of light against a dark blue doorway. A stylized figure of a woman with head and arms raised in supplication appears in the lower left of the picture. The blocks are modelled three dimensionally, but the figures are flat and almost transparent, emphasizing the nightmare atmosphere of the painting. As part of the series about her beloved father Sevruk also painted *Father*, 1972, (pl.4.65) where a small forlorn figure kneels on the edge of a greyish-white globe looking down into the precipice.

Sevruk, shaken by the murder of one of her friends, the artist Alla Hors'ka, painted an unusual portrait that has antecedents in Surrealist photo-realism (pl.4.66). A photographic likeness of Alla's face looms like a mirage in a blue sky with clouds floating through her hair. On the low horizon a kneeling figure holds a trembita, but not in the playing manner.⁴⁸ This implies mourning, but without the sound and could be read as the muzzling of information about Alla Hors'ka by the authorities.⁴⁹ Two more trembita instruments, that jut into the sky from a grey cloud or mountain formation, hold the composition together, but also serve as symbols of mourning.

⁴⁸ The trembita is a long woodwind instrument played by the Hutsuls in the Carpathian mountains to announce the passing of life.

⁴⁹ Officially there was no mention of Hors'ka or her name in association with any of the monumental projects on which she had collaborated.

When in 1972, another friend was arrested and sentenced, Sevruk painted *Nadiika* (pl.4.67), showing a woman dwarfed by snow and trees, with spring flowers in her hand.⁵⁰ The rendering of the trees and snow is true to nature, but the hesitant pose of the barefoot figure disrupts the tranquility of the scene. Once more the subject matter of the work is expressive of Sevruk's personal feelings about the political situation unfolding around her. Sevruk, in fact, was one of the few artists who responded to events that concerned her in her art. Unlike others, who escaped into art that did not deal with Soviet realities, Sevruk recorded her reactions in her pictures. As there was no possibility of exhibiting any of them, she eventually stopped painting and turned all of her energies to ceramic sculpture and monumental art decorations.⁵¹

Another artist who experienced difficulties as a result of signing the 1968 letter protesting against human rights violations and then refusing to recant was Borys Plaksii (b 1937). At first his name was not included in the list of artists who had worked on the design of the Museum in Krasnodon, and then paintings he submitted to exhibitions

⁵⁰ The friend who inspired this picture was Nadiia Svitlychna, a philologist, and sister of the prominent literary critic of the sixties, Ivan Svitlychnyi. She was arrested in 1972 and sentenced to four years of strict regime camps for "anti-Soviet activity". Her two-year old son was placed temporarily in a children's home without the knowledge of family members.

⁵¹ All of the paintings mentioned and a few others were exhibited for the first time in December, 1988 in Kiev, in the Podol Museum.

were rejected.⁵² In 1971 the authorities found fault with his newly completed murals for the "Khreshchatyi yar" cafe based on the history of Kiev, and the work was destroyed. Plaksii was dismissed from his position with the Monumental Section of the Art Fund. His paintings at the time indicate that he was doing figurative work expressively painted and with a symbolic content. In *Okovy (Chains)*, 1971, (pl.4.68) Plaksii depicted a muscular man straining at the bonds that shackle him. The anatomy of the naked body has been greatly exaggerated and distorted, and its curvilinear muscle structure contrasts with the angular break-up of the surrounding space. In *Portrait of the Sculptor Tatrov*, 1973, (pl.4.69) the transition of figure and background is more integrated, but the restructuring of forms greater. The agitated faceting of forms, the massive bodies and hands, as well as the bluish-ochre-orange palette have antecedents in the early work of Filonov, and also echo the Cubo-Futurist works of such artists as Yurii Annenkov (1889-1974).

In Kiev, as in Odessa and Lviv, many of the artists who went beyond Socialist Realism to produce non-conformist art, were members of the Monumental Art Sections of the Art Fund.

⁵² For a description of events see Danylo Kulyniak, "Nema zerna pravdy" (There Are No Seeds of Truth) *Ukraina* No. 34, 1989, p. 12 and a four page colour spread between p. 12 and 13. When Plaksii was recommended by the Monumental Art Section, in which he was reinstated in 1978, for membership in the Artist' Union in 1981 he was asked to admit to his mistake of having signed the letter in 1968, but he refused, and his application was rejected.

This included Ivan Marchuk, who had studied at the Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Art, and came to Kiev in 1965. Although his work will be discussed separately later, it is worth mentioning that in the early seventies Marchuk's paintings were definitely influenced by Surrealism. Figural pictures of bizarre human beings, birds, and animals in startling settings evocative of dreams, nightmares, and the subconscious predominated, as may be seen from *Zaliubleni* (In Love), 1970, (pl.6.49).

Others who carried out commissions obtained through the Monumental Section of the Art Fund were Victor Hryhorov and Oleksander Dubovyk.⁵³ In the early 1970s non-objective compositions like *Zakladnyk* (Hostage), c 1970, and *1,2,3,4 - 0*, 1972, (pl.4.70) by Hryhorov, and *Composition no. I*, 1970, (pl.4.71) by Dubovyk remained in the artist's studio. In fact, Dubovyk, whose work will be discussed later, was to continue painting non-objective works that he stored in his studio throughout the many years when such art was not publicly exhibited, and from 1968 he did not participate in any exhibitions.⁵⁴ The consistency and dedication with which Dubovyk pursued his vision and the resultant

⁵³ Hryhorov (b 1939 graduated from the Kiev Art Institute in 1967, but did not become a member of the Artists' Union until 1978. Dubovyk (b 1931) will be discussed in Chapter Five.

⁵⁴ In conversation with the artist 27 October, 1988 in his studio, Dubovyk stated that the years 1968-1984 were very difficult for him because he refused to abandon his individual pursuits in art. For confirmation of his non-participation in exhibitions see Aleksander Dubovyk. Catalogue. (Kiev: Artists' Union of the UkSSR, 1988), p. 54.

abstraction make him unique among the artists of Kiev.

However, not all artists could bear to work in isolation, and for some, the temptations of gaining recognition for their work was too great. This meant having to make compromises in their creativity in order to exhibit their work. According to a recent article, M. Vainshtein, made alterations to his paintings as demanded by the Exhibition Selection Committees.⁵⁵ For the most part these were thematic pictures on approved subjects, but Vainshtein used a heavy impasto technique. He also painted work that he did not attempt to exhibit, like *Naperedodni* (In Expectation), 1968, (pl.4.72) showing his pregnant wife in a swirl of abstract shapes some of them suggestive of an angel with wings.

Mykola Tryhub (1943-1984), who remained unrecognized as an artist until his death by suicide, made a living working as a film set designer until 1974, and then on odd jobs so that he could devote himself entirely to painting in an expressionist manner with symbolic overtones. There are icon-type stylizations of the garments in *Piéta*, beg. 1970 (pl.4.73) and symbolic use of colour, but the composition is not traditional. Western sources may be detected in *Blakytyna divchyna* (Light Blue Girl), 1972, and *Skriz' mynule* (Through the Past), 1977 (pl.4.74). In the latter Tryhub

⁵⁵ See Maria Skliars'ka "Nezhaslyi vohon' tvorhosti", *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo*. No. 5, 1989, p. 23.

has created tension by having juxtaposed flat angular areas of yellow with elements of geometric designs outlined in yellow. Without a formal art education, and without any means to display his work, Tryhub did not live to see his paintings exhibited.⁵⁶

Non-conformist Art in Dnipropetrovs'ke

Dnipropetrovs'ke, an industrial centre on the Dnieper River, was isolated from outside influences even more than the major art centres of Kiev, Lviv, and Odessa because until recently it was closed to foreigners. Yet, surprisingly, the local Art School was the alma mater of several well known non-conformist artists like Feodosii Humeniuk and Volodymyr Makarenko, who gained prominence in other republics. It was also home to several artists who remained in Dnipropetrovs'ke's limited environment producing work that sought inspiration in Western European and Ukrainian art. From 1959 to 1962 the Art School was fortunate in having on staff Yakiv Kalashnyk (1927-1967) who had studied at the Art Academy in Riga and was familiar with modern trends in Western European art, which he introduced to his students.⁵⁷ He suffered harassment as a result of

⁵⁶ His first exhibition was organized by friends after his death in 1984 in Kiev.

⁵⁷ Kalashnyk studied at the Odessa State Art School (1946-1951) after having fought in the army during the war. He graduated from the Riga Academy of Art in 1959 and taught at the Dnipropetrovs'ke Art School from 1959 to 1962 when he was forced to leave. He continued teaching in his studio and conducted classes for interested young people at the Palace of Students.

his creative approach to teaching and his "formalist" concerns, but appears to have left a strong impression on several of his students including Humeniuk and Makarenko.⁵⁸

One of the artists who studied with Kalashnyk in his studio was Volodymyr Padun (b 1942) whose work has antecedents in folk art paintings of the near-by village of Petrykivka.⁵⁹ Padun painted village scenes, flowers, and trees using bright colours in the manner of primitive folk art painting. *Vitriak* (Windmill), 1975, (pl.4.75) is typical of his work. Inspired by Oles' Honchar's book *Sobor* (Cathedral), published in 1968, he painted the wooden church described in the novel.⁶⁰ In Padun's *Sobor*, 1979, (pl.4.76) the wooden cathedral near Dnipropetrov'ske, appeared not in its natural colours, but in red and green hues against the blue of the sky and river.

Another artist, Volodymyr Loboda, a rebel at heart, who dislikes authority of any kind, pursued a variety of

⁵⁸ In an interview with Humeniuk, 6 October 1988 in Dnipropetrov'ske, the artist stated that Kalashnyk was the first teacher to point out that there was more to art than copying nature.

⁵⁹ Petrykivka is a village near Dnipropetrov'ske famous for its folk art paintings which evolved from decorative painting on whitewashed walls. Stylized floral and plant motifs are arranged into two basic types of compositions called "kvity" (flowers) if they form bouquets, and "bihuntsi" (runners) if they form a frieze.

⁶⁰ Oles' Honchar's novel *Sobor* (Cathedral) which was attacked in the press, became very popular as a symbol of the persistence of good in man and the struggle against evil.

interests in art, folklore, and history.⁶¹ His studies were interrupted several times by his restless nature before he graduated from the Dnipropetrovs'ke Building Institute, Faculty of Architecture in 1971. He has experimented a lot in an attempt to synthesize Ukrainian artistic traditions with the achievements of world art as in *Divchyna i lebidka* (Girl and Swan), 1971, (pl.4.77) where the depiction of the swan has references to folk art motifs, but has been rendered with spontaneous brushstrokes and solid colour which mirror the greatly reduced elements of the figure. In 1975-1976 Loboda changed to a more tonal, expressive manner in such paintings as *Lake* (pl.4.78) where there are ambiguities in space and form. *Dvolyka istota* (Two-Faced Being) (pl.4.79) has the added element of the fantastic.

Loboda's explorations in painting have been reflected in the work of his wife and student, Liudmyla Loboda (nee Topolyna, 1945). In *Portrait of a Girl*, 1971, (pl.4.80) Liudmyla has combined a Ukrainian folk headdress with an elongated head that has references to Modigliani in the elongation of the features with some of the primitivizing characteristics of the Boichuk school. In the mid-seventies Liudmyla's forms lost their crispness, her brushstrokes became flame-like somewhat in the manner of El Greco with an ambiguity of space and forms, as in *Try divchyny* (Three Girls), 1976, (pl.4.81).

⁶¹ Loboda was born in 1943 in Dnipropetrovs'ke.

Both of these artists not only worked in a micro-climate of their own creation, but purposefully stayed away from the Artists' Union, creating work that was not seen outside their home. However, at times, Liudmyla accepted commissions for book illustrations and designed tapestries.

Other Non-conformist Artists

There were other artists who lived outside the major art centres and who, as a result, worked in solitude and remained unknown in their own homeland. Zalyvakha, whose work will be examined separately, was the most prominent. He worked in Ivano-Frankivs'ke after his return from labour camps, in segregation from other artists because of his incarceration and limited contact outside this Western Ukrainian city which was closed to all foreign travel. He continued to experiment and search for a synthesis of abstract art and Ukrainian subject matter, as may be seen from such paintings as Hutsul's'ka pysanka (Hutsul Pysanka) pl.4.82) and Dzvonar (Bell Ringer) (pl.4.83), both c. 1972, with their combination of Ukrainian themes and partial abstraction.

Petro Hulyn (b 1942) graduated from the Trush Art School in Lviv in 1968, and considers Lviv his spiritual home even though for a number of years he worked in the city of Ternopil.⁶² His problems began when he painted a series

⁶² In conversation with the artist in Moscow, 27 December, 1988. Ternopil' is a small provincial city east of Lviv in Western Ukraine.

of six pictures on the theme of "Vertep" (Christmas Story) and submitted this to the exhibition marking the one hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth.⁶³ His work was rejected by the Selection Committee in Kiev, and Huly'n's difficulties began with criticism and an attempt to have him admit to his "mistakes". For a time he survived on twenty kopeks a day, and eventually suffered a complete breakdown.⁶⁴ His situation improved when an exhibit of his work was held in Moscow in 1976, and he was accepted into the Artists' Union in 1977 on the basis of his book illustrations. Since 1979 he has lived and worked in the city of Uzhhorod in the Transcarpathian Region.

Huly'n's paintings in the 1960s varied from figurative to almost abstract compositions as may be seen from *V maisterni* (In the Studio) (pl.4.84) and *Choven* (Boat) (pl.4.85), both 1968. In some of his paintings he transformed religious folk art sources into semi-abstract pictures, as in *Krekhivs'ki vrazhinnia* (Impressions of Krekhiv), 1968, (pl.4.86) in which he portrayed a Crucifixion that echoes the roadside depictions popular in Western Ukraine before 1945. By 1969 elements of Surrealism

⁶³ Oleksander Zozuliak, "Blyz'kyi do sertsia" (Close to the Heart) *Nove zhyttia*. No. 29 (2163). 21 July, 1989, p. 7. "Vertep" is a traditional Ukrainian Christmas pageant presented by actors and carollers going house to house to perform it during the Christmas festivities. "Vertepy" were revived in the 1960s during the period of liberalization as part of the New Year celebrations, but were forbidden in the seventies.

⁶⁴ In conversation with the artist in Moscow, 27 December, 1988. Also see Zozuliak, p. 7.

became evident in his work, as in *Serpanok* (Crescent Moon) (pl.4.87), a painting with a smiling cow's head, amid two tree trunks and a crescent moon. In the 1970s Hulyyn painted abstract compositions using geometric shapes and signs that echoed the Surrealist pictures of Miro. An element of the fantastic has remained an important part of his artistic vocabulary. In *Viter zeleni* (Wind of Green), 1976, (pl.4.88) Hulyyn composed with a variety of small geometric and amorphous shapes on larger areas of solid colour in a shallow space controlled by advancing and receding hues and forms.

Exhibitions of Ukrainian Non-conformist Art in Moscow

Quite a number of Ukrainian artists received their art training outside their own republic, usually in Leningrad or Moscow. Some of them remained in these two centres where the artistic activities of the USSR were concentrated. They were also attracted by the more liberal atmosphere, exhibitions of foreign art, and contacts with the West. When unofficial exhibits held in institutions like the *Druzhba Club* or the *Architects' Centre* in Moscow were no longer tolerated, artists began to search for alternate possibilities. As a result an outdoor exhibition was planned by twenty-four artists from Moscow, Leningrad, Pskov, and Vladimir for the outskirts of the city on 15 September, 1974. This exhibition became well known because

bulldozers were used by the authorities to disrupt it.⁶⁵ Starting with this incident Moscow became the centre of confrontation with the authorities over demands by unofficial artists to exhibit their work. After negotiations several exhibitions of work by unofficial artists were permitted in Moscow and Leningrad in which some of the Ukrainian artists resident in the two cities participated. Among those taking part in Moscow were Vitalii Sazonov, Naumets', Strelnikov, and Nadia Haiduk.⁶⁶ Feodosii Humeniuk participated in exhibitions of non-conformist art in Leningrad (pl.4.89).

At this time many apartment exhibitions were also held, particularly in Moscow. They became quite popular among artists and art lovers and usually were held in the homes of art collectors or artists' studios. In 1975 Humeniuk came up with the idea of organizing the First Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Art in Moscow.⁶⁷ Held from November 28 to December 8, 1975 the exhibit included paintings, prints, and drawings of six artists: Feodosii

⁶⁵ For more detailed information of the Moscow and Leningrad exhibits see Aleksander Glezer, "The Struggle to Exhibit", *Soviet Art in Exile* (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 112-120.

⁶⁶ Nadiia Haiduk (b. 1948) graduated from the Odessa Theatre Art School in 1970 and began painting in oils in 1972. In 1975 she moved to Moscow where she participated in official and unofficial exhibits. Vitalii Sazonov, whose work will be discussed later, signed his paintings as Witalij Sazonow, a German transliteration of his name.

⁶⁷ According to information provided by Humeniuk 15 March, 1989 in Toronto, the exhibit was held at the flat of Slava and Aida Sychov at Rozhdestvenskii bul'var, 5/7, kv. 18.

Humeniuk and Natalia Pavlenko from Leningrad, Volodymyr Makarenko from Tallinn, Vitalii Sazonov (formerly from Odessa) from Moscow, Volodymyr Strelnikov, and Liudmyla Yastreb from Odessa.⁶⁸(pl.4.89 and 90) Some of the others were warned by the KGB not to participate and stayed at home.⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that four of the artists were working outside their homeland. The significance of this exhibit lies in the fact that for the first time Ukrainian artists from different parts of the Soviet Union joined forces and did so in the Russian capital, the only place where diplomats and correspondents had an opportunity to see the art and where such exhibits were tolerated by the authorities.

This exhibition of Ukrainian non-conformist art in Moscow was just one of many held in private apartments by different groups and individuals. In fact, an exhibition by Jewish artists had been held earlier at the same location.⁷⁰ No mention of any of these exhibits were made

⁶⁸ It is not clear whether Liudmyla Yastreb took part in the opening of the exhibition. Her name does not appear on the first manifesto of the group that was prepared for the opening. However, her name does appear on the second manifesto prepared for the second exhibit which also lists participating members of the first exhibit. Natalia Pavlenko was of the opinion that Liudmyla Yastreb did participate, but that she did not get her work to Moscow in time for the opening.

⁶⁹ Confirmation that several artists from Kiev and Odessa were intimidated may be found in a taped interview with Strel'nikov 16 October, 1986, Munich. Further proof may be found in the handwritten statement by Humeniuk in Chapter Six.

⁷⁰ Taped interview with Strelnikov, 16 October, 1986, Munich in the author's archive.

in the Soviet press, but word spread and they were well attended by Soviet citizens and foreigners.

According to J. P. Himka the First Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Art was announced the same day that it opened.⁷¹ The organizers called up the foreign correspondents and diplomats in Moscow. The news travelled fast and people came to see the exhibit including the prominent human rights activist, General Hryhorenko (pl.4.91). The comments in the visitor's book were laudatory and were written in Russian, Ukrainian, English, and Japanese.⁷²

The exhibition statement read at the opening (pl.4.92), and then displayed during the exhibit (pl.4.93 & 94) is of importance because it confirms that the participating artists stressed their Ukrainian identity. It reads:

The participants of the exhibition are united by the conscious awareness that their work forms part of the national traditions of Ukrainian painting. The broad channel of these traditions, in their opinion, can absorb and become a firm basis for a multiplicity of individual endeavours. In the diversity of fragmentation of contemporary art, the search for a national basis for creativity becomes a question of life and death, rebirth or degeneration of the spirit and meaning of art itself. The only possible guideline in this search for a Ukrainian artist or

⁷¹ John Paul Himka, who was then studying in Leningrad, now teaches history at the University of Alberta. Information provided to the author through a photocopy of the diary kept at the time by Prof. Himka and dated 9 January, 1976.

⁷² All of this information was provided by Prof. J. P. Himka of the University of Alberta from a notebook that he kept during his stay in Leningrad, and a photocopy of which he kindly made available to me.

indeed, for a Russian artist or an artist of any other nationality, who feels his kinship ties, is an unfettered inner absorption of national cultural values.

It is essential to oppose the meaningless stylization of national cultures, which have become common products of a fashion for things antique, must be opposed by spiritual striving towards what links us to the past.

The purpose of turning to tradition is not to be found in an enfeebled retrospection but in the new dimensions of the artists' feeling for life.

"A look into the past" should lead to new visions of the present and to visions of a new future. A spiritual and internally free communion with traditions, the rebirth of tradition, this is the difficult path, but the only path of an artist into self-discovery.

The future of this path should not be sought in differentiation or in the superficial originality which has become the idol of modern artistic creation, but in bringing together the various efforts of many in linking them in a spiritual brotherhood of a national school of art.

However distant this goal may be, it is the inspiration of the participants of this exhibition.⁷³

This statement was an indication that the artists were searching for inspiration in their Ukrainian heritage, which they wished to develop in their paintings even though most of them were working outside their homeland in other Soviet republics. It is this common Ukrainian heritage rather than stylistic concerns that brought all of these artists together.

⁷³ It is not clear who was the author of the final version of this manifesto. N. Pavlenko seemed to recall that the ideas were those of Humeniuk, but that it had been written in Russian by the artist Vladimir Ivanov. A photocopy of the original was provided by Pavlenko, and is to be found in Appendix C. Translation into English was provided by Prof. J. Dingley.

The exhibition was such a great success in terms of attendance and interest generated that another exhibit was organized in the same apartment from 12 to 23 of March, 1976. This time the original six artists were joined by seven others mostly from Odessa. Altogether thirteen artists were represented with about two hundred paintings, prints, and drawings.⁷⁴ Once more the unifying factor was their common Ukrainian heritage as articulated in the manifesto displayed during the exhibit (pl.4.95).⁷⁵ Stylistically the work ranged from the figurative to the abstract, as may be seen from unpublished photographs of the exhibition (pl.4.96 & 97).

These two exhibitions prompted four of the artists, Naumets', Anufriiev, Sazonov, and Strelnikov to organize a four-man show in the freshly whitewashed studio belonging to

⁷⁴ It was difficult to find out how many artists took part in the Second Ukrainian Exhibition in Moscow because neither Humeniuk, nor Strelnikov could remember who the artists were, although they were certain that all six of the original artists participated. In a letter to the author dated September 9, 1987, Humeniuk stated that he could not recall the names of the others. A note made by J. P. Himka, a Canadian student in Leningrad at the time, gives the number of participating artists as thirteen and the number of works as over two hundred. N. Pavlenko confirmed that the actual number was, indeed, thirteen and as proof provided a photocopy of the exhibition statement where the following names were listed: Natalia Pavlenko and Feodosii Humeniuk (Leningrad), Volodymyr Makarenko (Tallinn), Vitalii Sazonov (Moscow), Volodymyr Strelnikov, Liudmyla Yastreb, Alexander Anufriiev, Victor Maryniuk, Valentyn Khrushch, Volodymyr Tsiupko (Odessa), Andrii Antoniuk (Mykolaiiv), Volodymyr Naumets' and Olha Myleshko (Moscow).

⁷⁵ According to information provided by N. Pavlenko, the text of the manifesto was the same one that was used during the First Exhibition.

Naumets'.⁷⁶ According to Naumets' there were foreign diplomats among the visitors and several of the paintings were sold.⁷⁷

After the Ukrainian Non-conformist Exhibitions two of the artists, Humeniuk and Strelnikov, ran into difficulties with authorities, and this effectively brought their joint activities to a halt.⁷⁸ The move against the Ukrainian artists coincided with a wider offensive by the authorities against the creative intelligentsia in both Leningrad and Moscow, and followed the wave of arrests in Ukraine that had started earlier and had intensified in the mid-seventies. How the individual artists coped with the latest restrictions on their artistic freedom will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

⁷⁶ Reported in conversation with Naumets' 26 December, 1988 in Moscow. The artist, however, could not recall the exact date of the exhibit. However, Naumets' did remember that some of the paintings were sold.

⁷⁷ In conversation with Naumets' 26 December, 1988 in his studio in Moscow.

⁷⁸ From my conversations with the artists it would appear that Humeniuk and Strelnikov were the organizers in the group and this may have prompted the authorities to deal with them more harshly.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNDERCURRENTS AND OFFICIAL ARTISTS: SEL'S'KYI, PATYK, DUBOVYK

Most official artists seemed to have been satisfied with creating works of art that were within the framework of Socialist Realism as this allowed them to enjoy special privileges and all the material benefits provided by their membership in the Artists' Union. However, there were some artists who led a double existence. On the one hand they painted thematic canvases commissioned by the State or carried out work for the Monumental Art Section of the Art Fund, while in private they created paintings for their own satisfaction. This was particularly the case after the Khrushchev thaw and the brief taste of creative freedom. In the West the closest comparison would be to creative artists having paying jobs in commercial art or design, but this comparison is not entirely accurate because Western artists have the choice of exhibiting their work, if they wish, and doing so through private galleries. This possibility did not exist in Ukraine. To illustrate the situation, three artists, members of the Artists' Union, have been chosen whose contributions to the continuity of Western and Ukrainian art traditions were considerable.

Two of the artists, Roman Sel's'kyi and Volodymyr Patyk, produced work that was within the norms and practices of Socialist Realism, as well as paintings that went beyond its confines. Some of their innovative work was exhibited

and even reproduced, particularly in the 1960s, thereby helping to widen the Socialist Realism framework. However, what was exhibited and reproduced was only the tip of the iceberg, and presents a fragmentary view of Sel's'kyi's and Patyk's oeuvre. Many of their more risky paintings remained in their studios. The third artist, Oleksander Dubovyk, did not exhibit any of his work for twenty years.

The purpose of examining their life and creativity more closely and chronologically is to give as complete a picture as possible of conditions under which innovative official artists in Ukraine lived and worked, how they coped, and how the changing policies effected their work.

Roman Sel's'kyi

More than any other artist in Lviv, Roman Sel's'kyi was the artistic magnet that in the post-war years attracted students and artists. Beginning in 1947 he was the guiding light at the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts for twenty-seven years.¹ Sel's'kyi more than perhaps anyone else in Soviet Ukraine was responsible for carrying on the traditions of Western European art during the post-

¹ Information about Sel's'kyi is based on a conversation with the artist 24 November, 1988 in his apartment in Lviv, as well as conversations with his former students and colleagues, and on the following written sources: H. S. Ostrovs'kyi, *Roman Sel's'kyi: zhyvopys, grafika. Album.* (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1988); O. Ripko, "Vystavka tvoriv R. Sel's'koho", *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo.* No. 3, 1977, p. 29; R. Sel's'kyi, *Vystavka tvoriv (Exhibition of Work)* (Lviv: Lviv Art Gallery, 1977); and *Roman Sel's'kyi. Catalogue.* (Lviv: Department of Culture, Lviv Region Committee, 1986).

war period, in his own work and through his students.

Sel's'kyi was born 21 May, 1903 in the town of Sokal' in what is now Lviv Region, but was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father was a civil servant and wanted his son to pursue a career in law. Sel's'kyi, however, was more interested in art. When the family moved to Lviv, Sel's'kyi attended evening classes of the Free Art Academy run by L. Pidhoretski, and consulted O. Novakivskyi on a regular basis about his drawings and paintings.² From 1921 to 1922 Sel's'kyi attended decorative art classes taught by Kazimir Tsikhulski at the Lviv Business School.³ In 1922 he enrolled at the Crakow Art Academy from which he later graduated.⁴ Sel's'kyi was fortunate to spend 1925-1926 in Paris where he soaked in the atmosphere and followed the latest contemporary art movements including Surrealism. Upon graduation in 1927 he returned to Paris with his wife and fellow artist, Margit Raikh Selska, who had been studying with Fernand Léger. Before returning to Lviv in 1929 the couple spent some time in Italy.

² L. Pidhoretski, an architect, opened his Free Academy of Art in 1912. It ceased to exist in 1922. Novakivs'kyi did not open his school until 1923.

³ K. Tsikhulski was a proponent of the art of the Sezession which had been popular in Austria and Germany since the latter part of the 19th century. This was the name given to the Art Nouveau movement in both Austria and Germany, that involved a deliberate attempt to create a new style based on ornament in reaction to the academic historicism of the second half of the 19th century.

⁴ At first he studied with Prof. Y. Mehoffer, but two years later changed to Y. Pankevich, a younger teacher, working in an Impressionist manner.

From an early Self-portrait, 1923, (pl.5.1) it is apparent that Sel's'kyi was a good draftsman, in the academic tradition. His *Natiurmort z ornamentom* (Still Life with an Ornament), 1925, (pl.5.2) revealed such French influences as Post-Impressionism and Synthetic Cubism in the flattened space, the ornamental border, and the semi-abstract forms of the cup and vase. The modelling and palette in *Natiurmort z knyzhkoiu* (Still Life with Book), 1926, and *Ploshcha v Paryzhi* (A Square in Paris), 1927, (pl.5.3) are further examples of French art influences.

Upon his return to Lviv at the beginning of 1929 Sel's'kyi was elected head of the newly organized group of young artists called "Artes".⁵ The aim of the group was to propagate avant garde art through exhibitions. The group was referred to as "left" in an article in *Mystetstvo* (Art) because of their sympathies with the Communist Revolution.⁶ It would appear from two of his paintings from that period, *Chervoni prapory* (Red Flags), 1934-36 and *Moriak* (Sailor) from the series of "Battleship Potiomkin", 1934-36, (pl.5.4) that in the thirties Sel's'kyi was interested in what was happening in the Soviet Union. The depiction of events,

⁵ The group was formed on the initiative of the architect, painter, and restorer A. Krzhvoblotski and included the following artists of Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian origins: Mechyslav Vysotski, Otto Hahn, Liudvig Lillie, M. Raikh Sel's'ka, A. Rymer, L. Tyrovich, H. Shtreng, J. Yanish, and R. Sel's'kyi.

⁶ M. Vynnyts'kyi. "Roman Sel's'kyi," *Mystetstvo* (Art) No. 4, 1932/33, p. 85.

however, is somewhat in keeping with Surrealist portrayals.

Indeed, Sel's'kyi's contribution was in Surrealist art according to M. Vynnytskyi writing in a 1932 article in the Lviv art journal *Mystetstvo*.⁷ The article was accompanied by five reproductions of Sel's'kyi's work in which there were discretely used Surrealist devices. In *Port in Hel*, 1931, (pl.5.5) the realistic-looking view of a pier and sea upon closer examination reveals that the block shapes on the left resemble partially open books and that the tower-like structures at the end of the pier turn to chimneys at the top. There is an enigmatic atmosphere created by the open door and stream of yellow light in *Dveri (Door)*, 1932, (pl.5.6). Sel's'kyi treated all objects equally, and their rendering was three-dimensional, yet their combination was somewhat unusual, although not shocking as in the works of French Surrealists. Vynnytskyi wrote that "his art is a bright ray of light in the grayness of Galician workdays".⁸

In 1937 Sel's'kyi and his wife returned to Paris for the last time. Sel's'kyi's trips to Paris left a permanent mark on the artist who recalled the sights and life in Paris lovingly and in great detail.⁹ The available paintings

⁷ Vynnyts'kyi, p. 86.

⁸ Vynnyts'kyi, p. 88.

⁹ In conversation with the artist 24 November, 1988 in his apartment in Lviv. Sel's'ky who had been bedridden for six month was very eager to speak about his Paris years and remembered street names and places he had visited, but did not want to discuss his difficulties with Socialist Realism.

from this period like *Vikno z peizazhem* (Window with a Landscape), 1938, have more in common with the Impressionist tradition, particularly the work of Bonnard and appear less bold than earlier ones.

During the occupation of Lviv by the Soviets between 1939 and 1941 Sel's'kyi was a member of the Organizing Committee of the Artists' Union in Lviv and his work *Carpathian Landscape* was exhibited in 1940 in Moscow at the Group Show of Western Ukrainian artists.¹⁰ Perhaps as a result of this activity, Sel's'kyi was safe from harassment when the Soviets returned to stay in 1944. He continued teaching art at the Trush Art School until 1947 when he was appointed head of the Painting Department of the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts. A year later he was replaced as head, but allowed to continue as an instructor and later professor. At the time he was told that "His art may be good for the French and English, but not the Soviets".¹¹ Former students and colleagues of the artist stated in private conversations that Sel's'kyi had constant difficulties with authorities because of his painting and was accused of "formalism" on several occasions.¹²

¹⁰ M. I. Batih, *Tvorcho-orhanizatsiina diial'nist' lvivs'koi orhanizatsii spilky khudozhnykiv URSR 1939-1985*, p. 6 and 42.

¹¹ In conversation with the artist in his bedroom in Lviv, 24 November, 1988. According to Sel's'kyi this comment was made by the secretary of the Party Organization of Lviv.

¹² Both Zviryns'kyi and Patyk spoke of the difficulties experienced by Sel's'kyi, but the artist himself was reluctant to discuss this during our meeting 24 November, 1988 in Lviv.

In the early post-war years and well into the fifties when Socialist Realism became more entrenched in Lviv, Sel's'kyi painted a few collective farm scenes that were expected of all artists in order to show their loyalty to the new regime.¹³ For the most part he painted realistic still life compositions in sombre colours, as well as representationally correct, but uninspired landscapes such as *Khata v Mykulychyni* (House in Mykulychyn), 1952, (pl.5.7.). In comparison to his previous work these paintings were rendered in an academic manner with blended brushstrokes and descriptive colours. However, they differed from the typical Socialist Realism work in their subject matter because both still life compositions and landscapes were not encouraged at the time.

Although publicly Sel's'kyi appeared to have bowed to the narrow confines of Socialist Realism, he obviously had not forgotten what he had absorbed in Paris. In *Hlechyk z kvitamy*, (Vase with Flowers), 1949, (pl.5.8) all shapes were rendered two-dimensionally in solid bright colours of yellow, cadmium red, blue, and olive green. Bold, brown, vertical and horizontal stripes served a decorative and formal function. This painting was reproduced in the 1988

Because he was bedridden and ill, I did not press the point.

¹³ The exhibition catalogue from 1977 lists four titles of paintings of collective farm workers, but the only one reproduced was *In the kolhosp* (On a Collective Farm), 1950, showing workers stacking hay. In the 1986 catalogue and in the album published in 1988 none of these works were listed leading one to think that Sel's'kyi did not consider them worthy of exhibiting.

album only, and was not even listed in the earlier publications of Sel's'kyi's work.

In the sixties Sel's'kyi's openly returned to painting bold canvases in solid colours without any shading or depth. At the same time he almost stopped exhibiting and kept the work to himself. A 1966 painting titled Siti (Fishing Nets) (pl.5.9) depicts found objects on a beach against a backdrop of blue sand and sky with dark outlines around the clouds, flags, poles, and nets.¹⁴ In composition and rendering this work is highly reminiscent of the late Léger sea coast paintings such as Paysage romantique, 1946, (pl.5.10). Nad morem (At the Seaside), 1969, (pl.5.11) is a semi-abstract still life composition of vase, fish on a plate and partition in ochre, blue and black that reveals Sel's'kyi's knowledge of synthetic Cubist works by Picasso and Braque.

Sel's'kyi painted numerous landscapes including many of the Carpathian Mountains particularly of the Dzembronia Region, which he made famous through his work. Most of these paintings have unusual compositions, flat areas of colour, and abstract rhythms as in Dzembrons'kyi natiurmort

¹⁴ Siti was shown in the Kiev exhibit of Lviv artists in 1970, but the date given was 1965 not 1966. Sel's'kyi usually signed his work, but often did not date it. See Khudozhnyky L'vova, p. 11. The work is in the collection of the Lviv Art Gallery and was photographed there by the author 8 December, 1988. The gallery label date is 1966. In the album Roman Sel's'kyi: zhyvopys, grafika. (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1988), ill. 40 the date given is 1966, but it is listed under the title Dekoratyvna kompozytsia (Decorative Composition) although it is identical to Siti.

(Still Life from Dzembronia), 1965, (pl.3.11) and Zyma v Kosovi (Winter in Kosiv), 1978 (pl.5.12). There were views through open windows, as in Zyma za viknom (Winter Outside the Window), 1970, (pl.5.13), and open doors with views over water, as in Palanha, 1974 (pl.5.14). Dekoratyvna kompozytsiia (Decorative Composition), 1975, (pl.5.15) was inspired by the Carpathian landscape, but its construction is abstract.

During the new wave of repressions in the seventies Sel's'kyi took up ceramics because there were fewer restrictions as this was considered a craft. When he painted Selo Poronin (Po Lenins'kykh mistsiakh) (The Village of Poronin: Along Places Associated with Lenin), 1972, with its pattern of flat, blue-gray forms, he obviously wished to make this semi-abstract painting acceptable by relating it to the venerable Lenin. He continued teaching at the Art Institute until his retirement in 1974. His work was finally recognized when in 1977 Sel's'kyi had his first solo exhibit in Lviv and was awarded the Order of the Red Flag of Labour. The small, fourteen page catalogue published on this occasion contains only eight black and white reproductions, none of which are from the sixties, even though work from that period was included in the list of paintings being exhibited.

Many of the more prominent artists in Lviv studied under Sel's'kyi. Of the older generation there were Karlo

Zvirynskiy and Volodymyr Patyk. Among the younger ones there were Liubomyr Medvid', Ivan Marchuk, Ivan Ostafiichuk, Oleh Min'ko, Zenovii Flinta - all of whom have made a name for themselves as artists in their own right. Sel's'kyi's contribution to the development of art at a time when even Impressionism was not allowed in the fifties, and later in the sixties and seventies when all twentieth century movements continued to be suspect, cannot be underestimated. In the early fifties when a student could be expelled from the Institute for bringing to class a reproduction of a Cézanne painting, Sel's'kyi managed to teach his students the formal aspects of composition and to instill the continuity of artistic traditions.¹⁵ One of Sel's'kyi's students, now living in Budapest, has said that Sel's'kyi was the only teacher to discuss formal devices when examining students' work. As an example Teresa Egrezzi recalled Sel's'kyi as saying, "Whether this is a cow or a cloud, I don't know, but as a shape it is excellent".¹⁶

According to Zviryns'kyi, "Sel's'kyi was an island in the sea of Socialist Realism" and his views helped guide the creative development of numerous artists, as well as the

¹⁵ In conversation with Zviryns'kyi in his studio in Lviv 8 December, 1988.

¹⁶ In conversation with Egrezzi 14 April, 1987 in Budapest. Egrezzi (b 1931) graduated from the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Art in 1958 in fashion design and became a member of the Artists' Union soon after.

artistic life of the city.¹⁷ Despite recent publications and exhibitions, Sel's'kyi's contribution to the development of art in Ukraine has not been fully appreciated, and awaits a scholarly evaluation.

Volodymyr Patyk

Volodymyr Patyk, one of the artists who studied with Sel's'kyi, is a figurative painter whose work is characterized by expressive brush strokes and strong hues. Even though Patyk's reputation has been built on energetically painted landscapes in bright, high intensity colours, he has also created some very interesting still life compositions, portraits, and symbolic canvases. An active member of the Artists' Union in the sixties, Patyk ran into difficulties in the seventies as did a number of other talented artists.

Patyk was born October 9, 1929 in the village of Chorny Ostriv in Western Ukraine into a family of farmers. His interest in drawing began in early childhood. As paper was in short supply, Patyk remembers drawing in the margins of used newspapers.¹⁸ In the village school he was encouraged by teachers to study art and upon completion of the sixth grade he continued his education in the nearby

¹⁷ In conversation with Zviryns'kyi, 8 December, 1988 in Lviv.

¹⁸ Most information about Patyk is given on the basis of three interviews and several conversations in Lviv 24 November and 1 December, 1988, and in Toronto 7 and 12 November, as well as 28 and 29 December, 1989.

town of Khodoriv under Zenovii Ketsalo.¹⁹ During the German occupation of Western Ukraine, he attended the Lviv Applied Art School for three years, but his art studies were interrupted by the resumption of hostilities and later, work on the railway, counting cars. Even though memories of war, killing, and destruction have stayed with Patyk throughout his life they have not found expression in his painting. In 1946 he was accepted by the Lviv Art School into the third year programme which he did not complete because in 1947 he applied to the newly founded Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Art and was accepted into their monumental art programme.

Even as a student at the Institute Patyk had great difficulties suppressing his rich, vibrant palette and expressive brushstroke which the faculty of the Institute found offensive because they did not conform to the colouristic and technical norms of Socialist Realism. As a result during, the third year, in 1949 he was expelled from the Institute for "formalism".²⁰ H. A. Leonov, Rector of the Institute, advised him to seek work in a factory to gain

¹⁹ Zenovii Ketsalo b. 1919 graduated from the Lviv Industrial Art School in 1938 and for a year studied at the Cracow Academy of Art. He taught art in Khodoriv until 1941 when he was conscripted into the Soviet Army. After the war he spent ten years in the Gulag and returned when Stalin died. Since 1954 he has been living and working in Lviv mainly as a graphic artist.

²⁰ There were several students threatened with expulsion for formalism. Patyk, Karlo Zvirynskyi, and Slavko Zakharchyshyn were expelled. Sofia Karaffa-Korbut changed to the graphics faculty. I was not able to find out what happened to the fourth student, Skorodyn's'ka.

insight into the working class.

For six months Patyk was employed in a shoe factory as a sign and poster artist. In the meantime he appealed against his expulsion and eventually was reinstated, but was forced to repeat the third year and his scholarship was taken away.²¹ That meant that Patyk had to survive on the small amount of money earned doing odd jobs and the occasional supplies of potatoes and beans provided by his parents who worked on a collective farm and could not help financially. According to Patyk:

Life was difficult without financial support. Sometimes I was so weak that I had difficulties climbing the stairs to the fourth floor room I shared with a fellow student. Both of us lived in this unheated room where I finally came to the conclusion that I had to paint in a limited palette of colours as required. This meant working with grayed hues which I forced myself to do. I received the top mark of five for my diploma work, a proposed ceiling for the Palace of Pioneers.²²

Subdued and reconciled to painting in drab, uninspired tones, Patyk graduated in 1953 with a diploma in monumental art.

While at the Institute, Patyk developed a close working relationship with Sel's'kyi and through him discovered Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Cubism. At the time

²¹ According to Patyk the aunt of Karlo Zvirynsky who was highly placed in the Communist Party was instrumental in getting the expelled students re-admitted.

²² Volodymyr Ovsichuk, "Maliarskyi svit Volodymyra Patyka" (The Painterly World of Volodymyr Patyk). Zhovten. No. 1, 1988, p. 122.

Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh were considered "enemies" and one could be expelled for showing their work in school, therefore, any rare publications with reproductions of their work were reserved for a select number of trusted friends. He learned about M. Boichuk from Mykola Fediuk, a teacher at the Lviv Art School, who had studied in Munich. His diploma supervisor was Yosyp Bokshai, who had studied at the Academy of Art in Budapest and was an experienced monumental artist working in the tradition of Tiepolo.²³ Thus, Patyk was exposed to Western European art traditions not only before the imposition of Socialist Realism, but also during the period of strictest controls of the arts.

Upon graduation Patyk was assigned an administrative job with the Oblvykonkom (Regional Executive Committee) to oversee artistic productions.²⁴ While working there for the next two years, he continued painting whenever time permitted and some of his pictures were accepted for local exhibitions starting in 1954.²⁵ In 1955 Patyk decided to devote himself to painting full time, but as he was not yet a member of the Artists' Union, he joined the Art Fund even

²³ Y. Bokshai (1891-1975) graduated from the Academy of Budapest in 1914 and later worked in Uzhhorod before coming to teach in Lviv. Patyk remembers him fondly, as a teacher, person and artist.

²⁴ All Regional Committee decisions were subject to approval by the Regional Communist Party.

²⁵ Because Patyk was single, he did not qualify for housing which was in very short supply. It was only after he was able to arrange for a room of his own that he could start to paint more seriously.

though he managed to find work on his own.²⁶ One of his jobs was painting murals and icons for a church in Khodoriv that was done in relative secrecy.²⁷

Patyk did not become a member of the Artists' Union until 1958 because he had difficulties getting approval from the Regional Party Office.²⁸ His entry into the Artists' Union coincided with the cultural renaissance sweeping the country which made possible a return to Ukrainian themes and at the same time allowed Patyk to investigate new trends in Western art, and assimilate some of them into his own work.

In *Selo (Village)*, 1963, (pl.5.16) Patyk depicted Ukrainian thatched-roof cottages set in the foothills, but echoed the paintings of Gauguin in the choice of purplish colours, their application, and contrasts, as well as in the treatment of the space. In a painting already mentioned in Chapter Three, *Taras Shevchenko na bat'kivshchyni (Taras Shevchenko in his Homeland)*, 1964, (pl.3.44) Patyk synthesized several sources including Gauguin and Matisse to

²⁶ Membership in the Art Fund insured artists from being accused of not being employed and charged with parasitism. Only Artists' Union members had the privilege of not being employed.

²⁷ According to Patyk, he worked on the church with Ketsalo and Bureiko. They decorated the church in a neo-Byzantine manner.

²⁸ At the time the usual waiting period for a graduate of the Institute with an evaluation mark of four or five on the diploma was two years, but it took Patyk five years to become a member because of the expulsion from the Institute on his record.

create a composition which can be read as symbolic. A young Shevchenko with brush in hand is shown before an easel, and to the right a girl in folk dress, rests her head on her arm in sorrow. The girl may be perceived simply as a model or may be taken for a symbol of Ukraine, as in Shevchenko's poetry. There is an empty bowl with a spoon on the table, an icon of the Mother of God with Child in the corner, and on the wall a picture of cossack Mamai, the latter two reminders of Ukraine's past and not permitted in Soviet art as subjects by themselves. The depiction of this joyless scene suggests parallels between the portrayal and the fate of contemporary Ukraine. Patyk appears to be using the past to make a statement about the present.

Patyk made no attempt to paint an illusionistic, historical canvas despite the title. Depth was limited by the blue-grey-black flattened areas of colour. Strong dark lines contoured the figures and items in the room. The limited palette was accented with white and red in the tablecloth, the girl's clothing and the embroidered towel over the icon. Vertical stripes of dress and objects created patterns that further flattened the space.

Also in 1964 Patyk painted *Palaiuchy manuskrypt* (Flaming Manuscript) (pl.5.17) with brushstrokes that suggest he had been looking at Abstract Expressionist art. Stylistically this was a bold statement made even bolder by the subject that was a direct allusion to the burning of the

Library of the Academy of Sciences of the UkSSR in Kiev.²⁹

This painting was not displayed publicly.

Not surprisingly for the times, he started to experiment with folk art motifs in combination with gestural brushstrokes. This resulted in *Vesilnyi korovai* (Wedding Bread), (pl.5.18) a 1965 still life with the traditional wedding bread and Ukrainian woven ritual cloths, painted in bold reddish hues and vigorous accents of black and white. The predominating red palette, the distortions, and the two-dimensional space suggest that Patyk had seen Matisse's *Red Studio*, 1911. Like Matisse, Patyk has used colour as an independent element of the pictorial structure and has integrated surface ornament into the design of the painting. The surface of the bottle was broken into abstract shapes, the three birds and dolls were condensed and flattened, as were the flowers and foliage. There were no details and no modelling. An ancient Ukrainian folk tradition had been portrayed by modern means.

This painting was followed by *Natiurmort z svichnykom* (Still Life with Candlesticks), 1966, (pl.5.19) with its pattern of arabesques, dark outlines, and two-dimensional forms which echo Matisse, and yet retain a Ukrainian flavour in the ceramic horse and pottery. In *Stil staroho hutsula*

²⁹ In 1964 the library of the Academy of Sciences of the UkSSR in Kiev burned down destroying countless irreplaceable manuscripts and books. It was suspected that the fire was planned and that the intention was to destroy various items of Ukrainian culture.

(The Old Hutsul's Table), 1966, (pl.5.20) the title suggests an ethnographic content, but the still life objects and table reveal a Cubist composition and objects reminiscent of Picasso and Braque.

In 1967 Patyk ventured into abstract compositions using Ukrainian Easter egg symbols as floating signs on a gesturally painted background as in *Kompozytsiia na narodnykh motyvakh* (Composition with Folk Motifs) and *Kompozytsiia na narodnykh motyvakh z ptytsiamy* (Composition with Folk Motifs with Birds) (pl.5.21).³⁰ Although Patyk chose to borrow the folk art elements, he used them freely in a different context and in unusual combinations of stylized line drawings, solid forms, and gesturally painted background. The purple-pink palette and subdued tones, as well as the spontaneous brush work indicate that he was not imitating folk art traditions, but trying to transform them in order to create contemporary paintings somewhat reminiscent of the works of Miro and late Picasso.

In a 1969 painting, *Composition after Easter Egg Motifs*, (pl.5.22) the source of inspiration has become synthesized into an abstract composition of reddish-pink gestural ground with yellow, ochre, white and green triangular and circular figures. The sun, spirals, and line

³⁰ Patyk was inspired to incorporate Easter egg motifs because he wanted to create work that was modern, but at the same time retained elements traditional to Ukrainian art. He studied the egg collection at the Ethnographic Museum in Lviv and copied over two thousand Easter egg designs.

patterns of traditional Easter eggs have been successfully incorporated into a non-representational composition even though Patyk retained a clear distinction between background and figuration.

By the beginning of the seventies Patyk was painting dark and brooding village scenes with thatched roof cottages as in *Doshchevyi den'* (Rainy Day), 1971 (pl.5.23). His brush stroke had become energetically expressive, his palette sombre with unexpected contrasts of white and red. Depth was achieved through overlapping with disregard for aerial perspective. In *Autumn in Rusiv*, 1971, (pl.5.24) the panoramic view of the undulating hills conveys anguish through the turbulent patterning of the fields, and the volatile application of paint.

A different mood prevails in *Lito (Summer)*, 1972, (pl.5.25) where the palette is considerably lighter and more vibrant. The spontaneity of the paint application, the stark contrasts of yellow and green, and particularly the cadmium red tree branches echo some of the landscapes of Maurice Vlaminck.³¹

In the sixties and early seventies Patyk was active in the Lviv Branch of the Artists' Union and served on different committees. In recognition of his achievements as

³¹ The colour and shape of Patyk's branches recall the cadmium orange sweep of branches in Vlaminck's *Carrières-sur-Seine*, 1906.

an artist and his work on behalf of the Artists' Union, in 1971 he was one of the artists chosen to go on a trip to the Asian part of the USSR. A catalogue of his paintings was published in Moscow by the Sovietskii Khudozhnik publishers in 1973, but without the knowledge of the Lviv Artists' Union.³² Patyk feels that local approval would not have been forthcoming because at the time there were repressions against Ukrainian cultural activists, and he had been questioned by the KGB about his relationship to such artists as Stefania Shabatura and writers M. Osadchyi and V. Chornovil.³³ However, it was obviously possible to circumvent not only the local branch, but also the Artists' Union of Ukraine.

In 1976 ten of Patyk's paintings were reproduced in the album *Khudozhnik i mir* (The Artist and the World) published in Moscow. Patyk was one of five Soviet artists chosen for this publication which also included the work of T. Yablons'ka. In the introductory essay A. D. Sarabianov recognized Ukrainian folk art influences in the intense colours, the expressive drawing, and decorative flatness of Patyk's work and credited these to the artist's peasant

³² Patyk explained that he kept the publication of his work a secret because he was certain that Lviv authorities would have prevented the printing of his album.

³³ According to Patyk he was regularly asked to come for talks to the KGB offices in Lviv, sometimes on a weekly basis, although he was never charged with anything.

roots.³⁴ However, there were no references to Western artistic influences of any kind. In this respect it is interesting to note that H. Ostrovskiy in the introductory essay to the earlier catalogue, no doubt written before the restrictions of 1972, had stated that Patyk was not only influenced by Ukrainian folk art and folk painting, but also by Western Ukrainian icons, and that he was aware of the problems of contemporary art that occupied Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, and Léger.³⁵

At the time of the Moscow publications few of Patyk's paintings were being reproduced in catalogues printed in Ukraine and Patyk continued to be called for questioning by the KGB in Lviv.³⁶ This was indicative of the control exercised by local Communist Party authorities over artists and the publication of their work, and showed that even official artists, members of the Artists Union were not immune to harassment by the police. It also demonstrated that relatively speaking, there was more artistic and personal freedom in Moscow than in Ukraine.

³⁴ A. D. Sarabianov, *Khudozhnyk i mir. (The Artist and the World)* (Moscow: Sovietskii khudozhnik, 1976), n.p.

³⁵ H. Ostrovskiy, "Introductory essay". V. Patyk (Moscow: Sovietskii khudozhnik, 1973), no pagination.

³⁶ For example there were no reproductions of Patyk's work in the album *Lvivskiy muzei ukraiinskoho mystetstva. (Lviv Museum of Ukrainian Art)* published in Kiev in 1975. Reproductions of his work appeared only in the 1987 museum catalogue. Similarly, Patyk was not one of the artists included in the first edition of the beautiful album *Ukraiinskyi zhyvopys (Ukrainian Painting)* published in 1986. However, Patyk was represented by *Wedding Bread, 1965*, in the second edition of the album printed in 1988.

Olexander Dubovyk

Dubovyk was one of the few non-objective painters in Ukraine who throughout the seventies consistently worked with abstraction inspired by natural forms, as well as geometric configurations. As far as I was able to determine, he was also the only one of the official artists who did not have any paintings exhibited for twenty years starting with 1968.³⁷ During all these years Dubovyk continued to paint in the privacy of his studio, while at the same time he worked on minor projects for the Monumental Art Section of the Art Fund.³⁸ Dubovyk's only major monumental project throughout the 1970s was the mosaic decoration for the House of Culture in Pytkiaranta, Karelian Republic executed in 1975, a commission which he obtained on his own initiative.³⁹

Dubovyk was born in 1931 in Kiev, the son of a poet who was arrested in 1940 and disappeared into the Gulag. According to friend and writer, Pavlo Movchan "life as the son of an enemy of the people was not easy", but Dubovyk was

³⁷ Dubovyk's first solo exhibit held at the Architects' Building in Kiev in 1984, was not open to the general public and was closed after five days at the request of the Artists' Union. Dubovyk had to wait until June, 1988 to have a solo exhibit of his work at an official art gallery on Volodymyrs'ka, 51/53 in Kiev.

³⁸ See introductory essay by Z. Fogel' in the exhibition catalogue Aleksandr Dubovyk (Kiev: Artists' Union of Ukraine, 1988), p. 6.

³⁹ A list of major monumental works by Dubovyk appeared in the exhibition catalogue Aleksandr Dubovyk, pp. 54-55. Dubovyk had to wait five years before he received a second major commission, this time for a mosaic in Kiev in 1980.

a survivor.⁴⁰ His father's rehabilitation in the post-Stalin period and the posthumous publication of his poetry in 1957, helped the talented young artist to progress through the system of art education. For his diploma work at the Kiev Institute of Art in 1957 Dubovyk painted a narrative composition depicting Julius Fucek, the Czech Communist leader. He taught at the Kiev Applied Art School from 1957 until 1962, when he was accepted for advanced art studies at the Art Academy Workshops in Kiev.⁴¹ A member of the Artists' Union since 1958, Dubovyk headed a committee set up in 1965 to help young artists. According to Dubovyk, Exhibition Selection Committees at the time accepted paintings, particularly from young artists, that went beyond Socialist Realism, but all of this did not last very long.⁴²

Dubovyk's paintings from the mid-1960 indicate that he was interested in partial abstraction, as may be seen from *Portrait of Artist Zhuravel* (pl.3.50) and *Vikno (Window)* (pl.5.26). Condensed, stylized forms, and a shallow space characterize both paintings. In *Piket (Picket)*, 1967,

⁴⁰ Pavlo Movchan, "Vymahaiu spivavtorstva" (Demanding Co-Authorship) *Ukraina*. No. 32, 1988, p. 12 and four-page insert with no pagination.

⁴¹ The Art Academy Workshops were three-year graduate level studies for artists conducted by the Art Academy of the USSR in Kiev. According to Dubovyk artists accepted into this prestigious programme received accommodation, a living allowance of one hundred rubles a month, studio, and free instruction.

⁴² In conversation with Dubovyk 28 October, 1988 in Kiev.

(pl.5.27) figures and landscape have been partly abstracted and all details eliminated.⁴³ Cubo-Futurist elements may be seen in the construction of the space and break-up of forms.

However, the Khrushchev thaw had come to an end and by 1967 Dubovyk found it difficult to adapt his paintings to naturalistic depictions of didactic themes. He was moved out of his positions in the Artists' Union, and his paintings were no longer welcome in exhibitions. In 1968 he decided to pursue his individual vision and to keep his work private.⁴⁴ Dubovyk offered the following explanation for his decision:

My viewpoint changed at the time when after the thaw, artists were once more being herded into ideological canons. One day on the way back from Leningrad to Moscow I had a vision of the micron of eternal human existence. The speck of eternal life flew into my window, into my eye, into my consciousness, and settled so deeply into my soul that I felt its greatness, serenity, culmination. I realized that I would never be able to recreate what I had experienced through traditional artistic means. I understood that in order to create it was necessary to reconstruct, and even to destroy. It was necessary to ruin myself, and then the surrounding space. Gradually everything extraneous fell by the wayside. The idea of two spaces (planes) came to me: one in which we exist and the other that has been there from time immemorial. The micron of human existence, seen from the window of a train, was the stimulus to the rethinking of everything witnessed. I began to see simple things like a house, a lit window, people living there: a tired woman sitting on a red bedspread, and in the corner a pile of pillows...The yard flashed by, a stack of hay, a cow, hills in shadows, glens...One

⁴³ It is interesting to note that this painting was purchased by the Ministry of Culture in 1988.

⁴⁴ Information provided by Dubovyk mostly in conversation with the artist 9 and 28 October, 1988 in Kiev.

window was superimposed on another and the depth of existence opened up. Ordinary sensation of form and format disappeared. Everything else was supplanted later. Only the idea of space and time remained opening up the vertical...⁴⁵

After this mystic experience in which Dubovyk saw art as a means to the attainment of the spiritual, he rejected narrative subject matter and descriptive colours and began to explore geometric shapes as expressions of the metaphysical.⁴⁶ The oval and rectangle appeared in several of his paintings as symbols and elements of construction, alongside geometricized or stylized objects. In one of the earliest available paintings, *Oikumena*, 1969, (pl.5.28) Dubovyk combined a blue oval ring, enclosing a rectangular shape with another oval view of architecture in the centre. According to Dubovyk blue and yellow represent opposites, as do verticals and horizontals.⁴⁷ It is possible that like Kandinsky Dubovyk considered the circle to be the symbol of eternity, but for reasons of composition

⁴⁵ Movchan, n. p.

⁴⁶ Although Dubovyk made no references to theosophy, his views as quoted by Movchan suggest that he had some knowledge of theosophical teachings which had been made popular at the turn of the century by Mme. Elena Blavatska and had been absorbed by Kandinsky and Malevich. According to theosophical beliefs we live not only on a material plane, but also on a spiritual one, of which there are several. The most important of them being the 'ethereal' and the 'astral' of which the 'astral' survives death of our worldly body. See Robert Williams, *Artists in Revolution: Portraits of the Russian Avant-garde 1905-1925*, pp.101-107.

⁴⁷ In conversation with the artist 28 October, 1988. Wassily Kandinsky in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* in the chapter on "The Language of Form and Colour" discusses the three main antitheses of colour of which the first one is blue and yellow. See Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Translated and with an introduction by M. T. H. Sadler. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977), pp. 36-38.

preferred to use the oval. In *Vstanovlennia* (Establishment), 1972, (pl.5.29) Dubovyk floated an oval filled with cumulus clouds in a cobalt blue space above a series of post and ball shapes that could be read as people. The vertical, geometric areas along the sides and the black horizontal at the top suggest a frame or window, devices that Dubovyk would return to often.

The oval, as dummy head with a pattern of flowers dominated several paintings of the "Buket" series including *Buket* (Bouquet), 1974, (pl.5.30) a composition framed by curving shapes on three sides. In *Zaliznyi buket* (Iron Bouquet), 1971, (pl.5.31) Dubovyk juxtaposed four pod-like shapes with spikes modelled three-dimensionally against a uniform, blue background with flat cloud patterns that despite their recession in size do not create a deep space. The pictorial tensions created by the contrasts of volume and flatness are held in check by the bands of blue-black that frame the images. This painting, as well as *Buket*, 1975, (pl.5.32) recall Malevich's Cubist work, *Head of a Peasant Girl*, 1913, (pl.5.33) but they also indicate that Dubovyk had been looking at Surrealism and transforming both sources into his own images. Possible antecedents for the heads and stripes may be found in Malevich's *Slozhnoe predchuvstvie* (Complicated Apprehension), 1928-32, (pl.5.34), as well as his Cubo-Futurist paintings with their flat areas contrasted with metallic modelled forms.

Dubovyk also painted several pictures using rectangles as in *Pivden'* (South), 1973 (pl.5.35) and *Fantom* (Phantom), 1975 (pl.5.36). In *Pivden'* there is a rectangle within a rectangle and the inner one is further subdivided into two rectangles of equal size and a narrower one in the middle that suggest a picture within a picture or windows that in turn hint at multiple levels of reality. The single horizon line running through the whole painting provides unity and spacial ambiguity. The head of a horse and a dummy head that occupy the rectangles are references to Surrealist devices, but there is only slight modelling and depth is controlled by a flat application of earthy hues. In *Fantom* there are only two window-like rectangles that are unified by the continuity of the white, cloud-like shape running horizontally through both inner rectangles. The framing bands of colour vary and, therefore, recede and advance at different rates creating a visual and spacial tension which is partially resolved by the repetition of orange frames.

In the late seventies Dubovyk's vocabulary of images became more abstract until he was working with the inter-relationship of forms and colours in the manner of hard edge abstraction as may be seen from *Dorohovkaz* (Road Sign), 1978, (pl.5.37). At the same time his subdued and somewhat monochromatic palette became more varied and much brighter. However, Dubovyk retained the central motif of his earlier work, as well as a clear distinction between ground and figuration, as in *Liabirynt* (Labyrinth), 1978 (pl.5.38). He

continued to apply his colours smoothly, and to use contrasting hues, as well as very fine modulations, but without any modelling. Like the hard-edge abstractionists, Dubovyk's pictures were marked by a high degree of intellectual control and an impersonal surface, but unlike their large canvases, Dubovyk's work remained small in scale.⁴⁸ At the time Dubovyk worked mostly with tempera on paper and rarely used oil on canvas as these materials were more expensive and more difficult to get.⁴⁹

The constancy and dedication with which Dubovyk pursued his vision and the resultant metaphysical abstraction make him unique among the artists of Kiev, and for that matter in Ukraine.

⁴⁸ Most of the work discussed retained a 50x70 cm. format.

⁴⁹ Art supplies for personal use not connected with commissions are not readily available in the Soviet Union and there are shortages of materials.

CHAPTER SIX

NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS: ZALYVAKHA, ZVIRYNS'KYI, MARCHUK

Most of the non-conformist artists began their artistic careers painting Socialist Realist pictures. They had no choice, but to do so if they were in attendance at any of the art schools or institutes. Many of them ran into difficulties while still students, others somewhat later. Most often their careers as artists began normally enough with employment by the State, but usually controversies erupted because their work did not satisfy the Socialist Realist regulations and practices.

In contrast to the three official artists discussed in the last chapter, the three artists who are the subject of this chapter were not members of the Artists' Union although all three were products of a higher Soviet art education and had their first taste of freedom in the sixties. Panas Zalyvakha was a "born-again" Ukrainian who was one of the few artists arrested and sentenced, while Karlo Zviryns'kyi dedicated his life to teaching and kept most of his own paintings out of the spotlight. Ivan Marchuk made a living through the Art Fund and spent the rest of his time in the privacy of his studio painting pictures that were not exhibited until 1979 in Moscow.

Panas Zalyvakha

Panas Zalyvakha's work came to attention in the West in 1967 with the publication in Paris of documents collected by the well known Ukrainian journalist and dissident writer, Viacheslav Chornovil.¹ Zalyvakha was born in 1925 in the village of Husyntsi near Kharkiv, but grew up in the distant Eastern republics of the Soviet Union. He studied art in Russia at the Secondary Art School of the Leningrad Academy of Fine Arts and later at the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in Leningrad. While a student at the Institute, he had problems with the school authorities over work that did not adhere to Socialist Realist expectations and was expelled temporarily. Upon graduation in 1960 he was posted to Tiumen, West Siberia where he became chairman of the Art Council of the local Art Fund.²

As an art student Zalyvakha had spent the summer of 1957 in Kosiv, a very picturesque Ukrainian town in the Carpathian Mountains, where he came into contact with the

¹ Viacheslav Chornovil, *Lykho z rozumu*, pp. 51-79 and *The Chornovil Papers*, pp.117-130. Zalyvakha was one of twenty arrested and sentenced Ukrainians discussed by Chornovil. Some of my biographical information came from the Chornovil books, it was corroborated by Raiisa Moroz, Zalyvakha's friend and former wife of the dissident historian Valentyn Moroz. Additional information was obtained in two conversations with the artist: 3 December, 1988 in the artist's home in Ivano-Frankivs'ke and 16 December, 1988 in Kiev.

² It was a common practice in the Soviet Union to place all graduates of Art Institutions in jobs according to their specialty. The State, in fact, looked after job appointments for all graduates of higher learning institutions.

Ukrainian language and folk art, and became fascinated with his Ukrainian heritage. This made a strong impact on the young artist that resulted in his re-learning the language which he had forgotten, reading Ukrainian books, and investigating his Ukrainian roots. In 1959 Zalyvakha spent another summer in Ukraine, this time in the areas of the Sea of Azov and Chernykhiv where his interests in ethnography continued to grow.

Zalyvakha had his first solo show in Tiumen in the autumn of 1961, and his paintings were purchased by the Tiumen Art Gallery and the Khanta-Mansiis'kyi Museum. He also participated in regional exhibitions in Novosibirsk. His second solo exhibit was held in the city of Ivano-Frankivs'ke in Western Ukraine in 1962 where he had moved in December 1961 and had joined the local Art Fund. This exhibit was closed after a few days by the Regional Party Committee due to "decadent tendencies" in his art.³ This closure raises the question of whether Zalyvakha's art had undergone a drastic change or were different criteria being applied to artists' work in Siberia than in Ukraine. The list of works provided by Chornovil included fifty-two paintings that were exhibited in the April show in Ivano-Frankivs'ke, but of these only two, Vulytsia Respubliky v Tiumeni (Street of the Republic), 1961, and Zaliznychnyky (Railwaymen), 1961, were listed in both exhibitions. None were reproduced. As only two of the paintings from the

³ Chornovil, p. 54 and Chornovil Papers, p.118.

second exhibit, *Maky* (Poppies) and *Nichnyi natiurmort* (Night Still Life), were reproduced in Chornovil's book, it is impossible to conclude whether there were stylistic changes that made some of the work unacceptable or whether, indeed, stricter controls were applied in Western Ukraine perhaps due to the rising feelings of nationalism. One of the works in the closed show was titled *To Lenin* indicating that Zalyvakha was not opposed to painting Communist leaders.

What these "decadent tendencies" in his art were is, therefore, not easy to determine.⁴ In *Nichnyi natiurmort* (Night Still Life) (pl.6.1) painted in Tiumen in 1961, the simplified forms and flattened space emphasised the construction of the composition rather than a description of reality. According to the artist he was criticized for depicting shabbily dressed people on Lenin Street in the painting *Chaina* (Tearoom) of which there is no reproduction. It was a representational picture of an actual place in the Carpathian Mountains called Vorokhta, but the portrayal of a run-down neighbourhood, although factual, was considered inappropriate.⁵

Thereafter, Zalyvakha's work was usually rejected by

⁴ Chornovil, pp.58-68 gives an incomplete catalogue of the Zalyvakha pictures, both paintings and prints. He points out on p. 57 that Zalyvakha as a rule did not date his work and did not give titles which makes cataloguing very difficult. In cases where tentative titles were supplied by Chornovil, this is indicated by parentheses.

⁵ In conversation with the artist 16 December, 1988 in Kiev.

Exhibition Selection Committees on artistic grounds, although some of his pictures were in fact reproduced in magazines.⁶ During this time Zalyvakha illustrated several books for the "Veselka" Publishing House.⁷

Chornovil wrote that "Zalyvakha refused to take the well trodden path and to follow in the hundred-year-old footsteps of the peredvizhniki. He searched for other, more creative means of self-expression."⁸ According to Chornovil these searches led Zalyvakha to Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and twentieth century art movements which influenced his work.⁹ In *Portrait of a Photographer*, 1962, (pl.6.2) modelling had given way to a geometricized and flattened treatment of space reminiscent of Cubism. Although the features of the face were reduced to flat shapes, they remained individualized. The foreground space with parts of photographic apparatus was broken into condensed flat patterns, as was the surrounding background.

Zalyvakha's portrait of the young poet, *Ivan Drach*, 1964, (pl.6.3) showed even greater reduction of form, as well as some distortions of the figure necessitated by the

⁶ Chornovil, p.55-56 and Chornovil Papers, p. 118. The magazines were: *Mystetstvo*, *Zmina*, and *Vitchyzna*.

⁷ The last book with illustrations by Zalyvakha was *Boleslav Prus, Syrits'ka dolia (Orphan's Fate)* (Kiev: Veselka, 1965).

⁸ Chornovil, p.17.

⁹ Chornovil, p. 17.

composition of the whole picture. The shape of the shoulders was geometricized into an arch which was repeated in the background areas including the stylized sunflower over the poet's right shoulder that, perhaps, was a reference to some of the poetry written in the early sixties by Drach.¹⁰

At this time Zalyvakha did several portraits of women in regional costumes such as *Ukraiinka* (Ukrainian Girl), 1963-1964, (pl.6.4) and *Divchyna z poltavshchyny* (Girl from the Poltava Region), 1964 (pl.3.31.). These depictions conveyed his interests in Ukrainian folk culture, but also were indicative of the general trend in art and literature of the early sixties. It was perhaps for this reason that *Divchyna z poltavshchyny* was reproduced in two official magazines including the art journal of the Artists' Union *Mystetstvo*, No. 10, 1965.¹¹

Chornovil wrote that Zalyvakha identified himself with Ukraine and absorbed the treasures of Ukrainian folk art which he tried to transform in his art. As a result of this Zalyvakha's palette became brighter and more colourful, and his compositions became more unified.¹² Without access to

¹⁰ Ivan Drach was one of the young poets writing in the sixties who became known as the "shestydesiatnyky" (members of the sixties generation).

¹¹ In *Mystetstvo* it was reproduced in full colour on the back cover. This work was also reproduced in the magazine *Ranok* (Morning). No. 5, 1965.

¹² Chornovil, p. 17.

most of the work from this period it is difficult to appraise Chornovil's statement, although there certainly were some indications of Zalyvakha's interest in folk art and vibrant colours, as may be seen from *Trudoden'* (Working Day), 1964, (pl.6.5) in which women hoeing were depicted in an expressionistic, decorative manner. As pointed out in Chapter Three Zalyvakha was not satisfied with ethnic subject matter and began painting unapproved historical figures like the cossack leader Petro Kalnyshevs'kyi (pl.3.33). A fiery-eyed Kalnyshevs'kyi with flowing white beard was depicted against the prison watch tower, stylized sea, and orange-red sky. Overhead a bat reminiscent of the two-headed tsarist eagle was shown with wings spread across the picture plane in a highly symbolic, menacing gesture.

Zalyvakha's continuing interest in abstraction of natural forms was evident through much of his work as in *Oblychchia* (Faces), 1964-65 (pl.6.6) and *Nich* (Night), 1964, (pl.6.7) with its Cubo-Futurist reconstruction of space. That Zalyvakha was moving towards greater abstraction may also be seen from some of the titles given to his works by Chornovil such as *Abstract Composition*, 1962(?) or *Abstract Composition with Tinfoil*.¹³

Parallel to his explorations of abstraction, however,

¹³ Chornovil lists three paintings under the title "Abstract Composition". See Chornovil, p. 63, no. 9 and 13 and p. 65, no. 44 from the Ivano-Frankivs'ke period, 1962 to August 1965.

Zalyvakha continued painting representational pictures such as *Spring in the City*, 1962, and *Self-portrait*, 1963. In *Self-portrait* (pl.6.8) Zalyvakha chose to depict himself in a realistic manner, dressed in a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt, perhaps reflecting his growing involvement with everything Ukrainian. Some of the titles also suggest that on occasion he used themes favoured by the Party as in *Lenin z dit'my* (Lenin with Children), *Portrait of a CHEKA Man*, and *Vozziednana Ukrainina* (The Unified Ukraine), a triptych.¹⁴

In 1964 Zalyvakha together with Kiev artists Alla Hors'ka and Liudmyla Semykina worked on the design and execution of the ill-fated Taras Shevchenko lighted panel for the vestibule of Kiev University which was discussed in Chapter Three. Even though Zalyvakha was responsible for the idea and the design of the panel, it was the Artists' Union members, Alla Hors'ka and Liudmyla Semykina, who suffered immediate reprisals. Zalyvakha was allowed to return to Ivano-Frankivs'ke unscathed. It was not until August, 1965 that Zalyvakha was arrested and charged. He was sentenced in March, 1966 in a closed court session to five years in severe hard-labour camps for "anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation".¹⁵ According to Zalyvakha's written declaration to the Supreme Court of the Ukrainian

¹⁴ See Chornovil, pp. 67-68.

¹⁵ Chornovil, p.56 and 299-303; Chornovil Papers, p.18 and 127-130.

SSR and dated April 5, 1967 at Yavas, Mordovia he was accused of "Falling under the influence of hostile nationalistic propaganda, of having read literature not examined by Soviet censorship, and of having expressed his views."¹⁶ In response to this accusation Zalyvakha wrote:

But being a Ukrainian conscious of his national dignity is not a "harmful influence", but the duty of an honest man. To renounce one's own nationality is humiliating and immoral; the KGB agents who try to compel a man to renounce his identity are guilty of abusing their power, and deserve to be put in the dock.

I consider myself guilty neither before my conscience, nor before my people, nor before the law. I demand an immediate review of my case and return from Mordovia to the "sovereign" UkSSR, as well as the abolition of forced labour, in accordance with the Geneva Agreement. I demand that criminal prosecution be instituted against the real culprits - the chauvinists.¹⁷

According to Chornovil some of the paintings that were in Zalyvakha's flat during the search preceding the arrest disappeared.¹⁸ While serving his sentence in Mordovia in Camp no. 11, first as a truck loader and later as a stoker¹⁹, the artist was forbidden to paint in his free time and had his

¹⁶ Panas Zalyvakha, "Declaration", Chornovil Papers, p. 128.

¹⁷ Panas Zalyvakha, "Declaration", p. 128.

¹⁸ Chornovil, p. 57.

¹⁹ Valentyn Moroz in his book *Boomerang* (Baltimore: Smoloskyp Publishers, 1974), p. 55 makes the following comment:

Let Poltorats'kyi come to Mordovia and see how the Painter Zalyvakha, sent here to be re-educated, shovels coal into a furnace. He was given a stoker's job on purpose, so that this work would kill all his desires except one - to sleep.

paints confiscated.²⁰ Some of his art was also confiscated, and Zalyvakha was forced to destroy a portrait he had painted.²¹ This did not, however, deter Zalyvakha from artistic creativity whenever possible. It is known that when he was forbidden to paint, Zalyvakha took up print-making and managed to create numerous ex libris for some of his friends and fellow prisoners. Some of these were smuggled out of the camp in an album of book designs.²² Zalyvakha pasted his own ex libris over the book illustrations, but some were spotted by the camp authorities and ripped out (pl.6.9). Others were not, and they made it safely into the world outside the camp (pl.6.10 and 11).²³ Mykhailo Osadchyi who served his sentence at the same camp wrote about Zalyvakha in his autobiographical book *Cataract*. "Carve on

²⁰ Chornovil, p. 78. In a letter to Ivan Svitlychnyi, a literary critic in Kiev, Zalyvakha wrote: "Everything that I had painted was confiscated and I was threatened with harsher punishment in the future." There is also mention of this in M. Osadchy, *Cataract* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976) p. 140.

²¹ Valentyn Moroz, *Report from the Beria Reserve* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1974), p. 47-48. Describing camp life, Moroz wrote the following about Zalyvakha: They took away from Zalyvakha a portrait painted by him of the Latvian poet Knuts Skujenieks and forced the painter to cut up his own work. Does such a society have the right to criticize the Chinese Red Guards? These robots in uniform destroyed all of Zalyvakha's canvases that they could find and took away his paints. In reply to the artist's demand to be shown the law which permitted them to do this, he was told: "I am the law."

²² Zalyvakha pasted his ex libris over illustrations in *Iskustvo oformleniia knigi. Raboty leningrads'kikh khudozhnikov 1917-1964* (Art of Book Design. Works of Leningrad Artists 1917-1964) (Leningrad: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1966). This book is in the private archive of Serhii Bilokin' in Kiev.

²³ Photographed by the author from the private archive of Serhii Bilokin' in Kiev.

linoleum the white figure of a woman dressed in black? You can get the cooler for that, but so what?"²⁴ This statement was indicative of Zalyvakha's spirit in seemingly impossible situations.

Although no paintings appear to have survived the period of incarceration, the correspondence published in *The Chornovil Papers* gives us some indication of Zalyvakha's concerns and thoughts on art. In a letter to friend and fellow artist Alla Hors'ka, Zalyvakha argued against her assumption that colour was "the essence, the soul, the history of the people" by pointing out that Ukrainians from different regions used different colour combinations and in different proportions.²⁵ He then went on to discuss the two influences reflected in folk art - the pagan and Christian.²⁶ Zalyvakha pointed out similarities between Boichuk and the Mexican muralists and noted that both Boichuk and the Mexicans had studied in Europe. Even though Zalyvakha wrote that it was not absolutely necessary to study in Europe, he considered it important "to reveal a category of national thinking and its progress in art".²⁷ Why Zalyvakha used the

²⁴ Osadchy, *Cataract*, p. 141.

²⁵ *The Chornovil Papers*, p. 121.

²⁶ *The Chornovil Papers*, p. 121. In fact he writes:
Thus, we have something like two parallel currents: on one side, the inert art of the pre-Christian period - symbols, hieroglyphs, etc. (embroidery, ornamental art, carving, etc.) - and, on the other, secular art - the art of cult and its varieties.

It is not clear why Zalyvakha lumped together secular and religious art and did not distinguish between them.

²⁷ *Chornovil*, p. 73.

word "category" is not clear, but perhaps this is a reference to the notion that the national identity of the artist should be recognizable in his art. That he was not advocating a hermetic or regional art may be seen from his admiration for the level of development in Japan, which he credited to the Japanese understanding of Western thought and art and the penetration of new ideas. He contrasted Japanese development with "the Great Wall of China, the Curtain, etc." which shut out progress and change.²⁸ This could be interpreted as an implied criticism of the "Iron Curtain" and the existing situation in Ukraine, as well as in the rest of the Soviet Union. In the same letter Zalyvakha wrote:

I simply think that so far there is no new movement in Ukraine, although with time there may be one, and you are working toward this aim. Because of this I have great faith in you.....Motion towards achievement, towards that which is shaped by imagination -that is progress.²⁹

This suggests that Zalyvakha believed change was necessary if something new and worthwhile was to happen in Ukrainian art. It also pointed out Zalyvakha's belief that imagination was important in the creative process, in contrast to the emphasis placed by Socialist Realism in the faithful representation of reality.

The artist's letter to Alla Hors'ka is important to understanding Zalyvakha's paintings in the seventies because it reveals the significance he placed on the study and

²⁸ The Chornovil Papers, p. 122.

²⁹ The Chornovil Papers, p. 122.

knowledge of a nation's mythology and symbolism. In fact Zalyvakha lamented the fact that Ukrainians had not researched their mythology systematically and often were not aware of the meaning behind the traditional ornamentation. It is interesting to note how mythology, symbolism, and imagination became an inherent part of much of Zalyvakha's paintings of the period after his release. Also much in evidence were the continuing stimulus of Western art, and the need to express national identity in his work.

Having served his sentence, Zalyvakha returned to Ivano-Frankivs'ke and resumed his painting while working as a glove cutter.³⁰ Eventually he obtained work doing lettering and painting signs, then advanced to designing interiors. Although he continued to experiment with abstraction, his paintings for the most part remained figurative. Not surprisingly, the most pronounced change occurred in the subject matter. Pure landscapes all but disappeared, as did still life compositions. They were replaced by paintings that expressed Zalyvakha's concerns with life and death, and Ukraine's past and future. Visible reality was replaced in many of his paintings by allegories and symbolic forms, the meaning of which is not always clear and sometimes several interpretations are possible.

³⁰ This is not unusual. Most arrested individuals were not allowed to resume their former employment. Many were forced to take up manual labour, in order to avoid being re-arrested for not having a job under the laws on "Parasitism".

One of the first pictures painted upon his return from the Gulag was *Zeleni sviata* (The Day of the Pentecost), 1970, (pl.6.12), obviously in memory of the holy day when homes and churches were decorated with green branches and families gathered at the graves of their loved ones to pray. Zalyvakha's composition with its vertical striations suggests trees from which crosses, people, and embroidered towels emerge glimpsed through the stylized foliage and flame-like shapes symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Zalyvakha returned to the tree shapes with emerging figures in *Zakorinenist'* (Rootedness), 1975, (pl.6.13) with its autobiographical images and effective abstraction. In a 1970s painting dedicated to Alla Hors'ka (pl.6.14) the vertical shapes became crisper and flatter forming an abstract pattern for the emerging figure of the murdered artist.

His painting *Chervona kalyna* (The Red Kalyna Tree or *viburnum opulus* in Latin), 1974, (pl.6.15) on superficial viewing shows a young man in an embroidered shirt embracing a young woman. This highly stylized composition can be seen as an ethnographic illustration. Upon closer examination we see the young man's upturned palm holding the red berries of *kalyna*, a popular symbol of love and happiness,³¹ but

³¹ *Kalyna* is one of the most popular small trees in Ukraine. There are countless songs in which it is mentioned. Its red berries are considered symbolic of love and happiness, but are also considered a symbol of separation, longing for the homeland, faith in victory, virginity, faithfulness, and a symbol of hope. For a more complete listing see Stepan Kylymnyk, *Ukrains'kyi rik u narodnikh zvychaiakh* (Calendar

possibly also a reference to a well known patriotic song, very popular with the soldiers of the Ukrainian Army who fought for independence during the 1917-1921 period.³²

Behind the man, barely discernible, there is a line of men rowing - a reference to the cossacks setting out on one of their campaigns. This combination of allusions could be interpreted as the glorification of the Ukrainian past.

In *Blahoslovennia* (Blessing), 1975, (pl.6.16) a cossack is seen kissing a sword presented to him by a woman wrapped in dark clothing whose face echoes that of the Virgin of Volhynia (pl.6.17) - a famous Ukrainian icon of the end of the 13th century and now part of the permanent collection of the Art Museum in Kiev. Zalyvakha is depicting an old Ukrainian tradition of receiving parental blessing before going into battle. The identity of the woman, however, is not clear: her face is that of the Virgin, her garments suggest a religious figure while the red necklace points to folk dress. Perhaps this is Zalyvakha's way of portraying his beloved Ukraine. Her gaze, directed at the spectator and not the cossack, seems out of place at such a solemn moment.

There is also a contrast between the modelled heads and

Year in Ukrainian Folklore) (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Research Institute of Volyn', 1963), Vol. V, p.118.

³² The song likely alluded to is "Hei u luzi chervona kalyna pokhylylasia" which translates into "In the glen the snowball tree is bending". In this song the snowball tree is the symbol of the fate of Ukraine.

the flattened figures and horse. The architectural images surrounding the figures are frontally stacked without perspective as in old icons. A restless linear pattern moves through the work setting up tensions with the flowing rhythms of the horse and hinting at a meaning beyond the narrative and allegorical.

A solemn mood is expressed in *Vil plache* (Crying Ox), 1975, (pl.6.18) through the dark colours and opposing values, the contrasts between curved and straight forms, and the images depicted.³³ It is an unusual, frontal composition of the overlapping heads of a bull and two men that has antecedents in the icon tradition.³⁴ The head of Christ has been replaced by a bull's head with a ring through its nostrils and a flame in the halo of its horns in the second painting.³⁵ The significance of the interlacing

³³ The title *Vil plache* was provided by Mrs. Nadia Luchkiv, a Toronto collector, who owns twelve works by Zalyvakha. According to Yevhen Onats'kyi, *Ukrainians'ka mala entsyklopedia. The Small Ukrainian Encyclopedia* (Buenos Aires: Administratura UAPT v Argentini, 1957), p.168 the ox is primarily a symbol of hard work and piety.

³⁴ See *Entsyklopedia ukraiinoznavstva* (Encyclopedia of Ukraine) (Munich: Molode Zhyttia, 1949), Vol. 1, table XV., no. 3, Holy Trinity, XVIII. century (Kiev Museum).

³⁵ It was pointed out to me by Prof. B. Rubchak of the University of Illinois at the Seventh Annual Conference "From Kiev Rus' to Modern Ukraine: A Millennium of Growth" held at the Urbana campus in June 1989 that there was a tradition among the Hutsuls of Ukraine to place a lighted candle between the horns of the ox pulling the coffin when the head of a household passed away. For confirmation of this custom see Onats'kyi, p. 168. However, Onats'kyi makes no mention of a lighted candle between the horns. It is well known that candles were very important in the Christian rituals associated with birth, marriage, and death in Ukraine.

of man and beast is unusual and puzzling. The four eyes, each one different, stare hypnotically at the viewer. It is not clear whether the tear is streaming from the left eye of the ox or the right eye of the man. The men's lips have been covered with stylized circular mustaches which repeat the ring and are in turn repeated in the shapes surrounding the heads. The ox's schematized nose dominates the composition through form and colour. The rendering is flat and unrealistic like the whole apparition.

Zalyvakha's frontality and flattening of forms with the repetition of the circles and semi-circles seems an attempt to create paintings with forceful central motifs that are carried over the whole surface and into the corners. At the same time these main figurative elements are reinforced and made mysterious by the abstract forms that surround them.

Zalyvakha used the image of man and ox in several of his paintings.³⁶ The first of these, titled by the artist *Dolia* (Fate), 1976, (pl.6.19), follows the composition of *Vil plache*, but is much more abstract. The shapes are

³⁶ The ox with a ring through its nostril is the emblem of an ethnographic region of Ukraine called Bukovyna which is to be found on the border with Romania. However, I can find no supporting evidence that the artist is using the head in relation to this region. In Christian symbolism the evangelist, St. Luke, is represented by the winged ox. In antiquity the ox was considered a sacrificial animal, therefore, it is interpreted as referring to the emphasis St. Luke placed on the priesthood of Christ. If Zalyvakha's *Vil plache* is considered in the latter interpretation then perhaps the overlapping of beast and humans could be interpreted as the continuation of the cossack traditions as gospel.

faceted and geometricized. In contrast, the painting called *Avtoportret* (Self-Portrait), c. 1970s, (pl.6.20) is more realistic and without the tear or overlapping of heads. The artist is flanked by two oxen, one on each side, and the implication, emphasized by the horizontals, is that all three are yoked together. Above his own head Zalyvakha has painted a sphere with an "s" curve, a symbol of eternity. Oxen in the company of three men also appear in several variations of *Chumaky* (P6.21).³⁷ It could be a portrayal of the renowned chumak salt traders, except that bands of light surround the men's heads like haloes and three pairs of oxen eyes stare at the viewer. A circular form is clearly evident in the horns of the ox on the right whereas the other two have disks on their horns some of which are shaded to create the impression of a cross within a circle.³⁸ The placement, repetition, and number of these discs suggest that they have a special meaning for Zalyvakha. In Ukrainian folklore the sun is represented by the disc, but what is more important is the fact that the

³⁷ "Chumaky" were salt traders who plied their trade between the villages of central Ukraine and the Black Sea and did so with oxen and wagon. They became popular figures in Ukrainian folklore and a symbol of freedom.

³⁸ A circular form or disc with a cross inscribed inside it is considered to be a symbol of the pagan worship of the sun in Ukrainian mythology according to several sources. In particular see V. Shcherbakivs'kyi, *Osnovni elementy ornamentatsii ukraiins'kykh pysanok ta iikhie pokhodzhennia*. (The Basic Elements of the Ornamentation of Ukrainian Easter Eggs and Their Origins) (Praha: Ukraiins'ke Istorychno-filolohichne Tovarystvo v Prazi, 1925), p. 26, fig. 1.

sun is equated with the Christian God.³⁹ The abundance of these forms and their association with the horns of the animal are not clear. Perhaps the figures could be interpreted as a Ukrainian-type Trinity. Possibly there is a meaning derived from Ukrainian mythology that is attached to the animal form with a circle between its horns that I have not been able to trace.⁴⁰ Curvilinear shapes are repeated in the undulating rhythm of the foreground and in the abstract shapes of the background, as well as in the wheels and bowl.

Whatever the meaning, its significance cannot be ignored, as the head of an ox also appears in the Self-portrait, 1972 (pl.6.22). This is a complex composition in which the artist has obviously tried to make a statement about himself. Zalyvaka's face is centrally located and rendered three-dimensionally. It is surrounded by semi-abstract forms and direct quotations from some of his other paintings. On the left is a female figure in white dress with arms outstretched towards the sky, which is identical to the figure in a 1972 painting called Rozpuka (Despair). On the right is the now familiar head of an ox with a circle between its horns and a tear streaming down its face, but no

³⁹ Kylymnyk, vol. III, p. 89-90 points out that a Hutsul upon seeing the rising sun will take off his hat and say the following prayer: "Slava Tobi, Hospody, za lychen'ko Tvoye Hospodnie, shchos' sia pokazalo." (Glory to you, God, for your godly face that you have shown.)

⁴⁰ According to Onats'kyi, p. 168 the ox which is a symbol of hard work and piety in Ukrainian folklore can also be a symbol of thunder which in turn is associated with St. Elias.

ring through its nose. Another head, much smaller and with a ring through its nostril, is painted below the right hand. Some of the other recognizable shapes include an eye, a cross, and books that are interwoven in the surrounding space. However, the most stunning feature is the barely visible outline of a crucifixion on the forehead of the artist. This can only imply that the artist associated his own persecution and suffering with the Crucifixion of Jesus.

It would appear that Zalyvakha used Christian symbolism in his work, as well as themes from the New Testament to convey his own message rather than a religious one. There were several paintings in which he depicted a Ukrainian peasant with a book in his hand and called the work *Apostle*, just as he has shown a woman in a white dress with raised arms and called the painting an *Icon*. The flight of the Holy Family has been depicted in at least two of his paintings. Given his patriotic feelings, it is possible that he had in mind the flight of Ukrainian families, past and present, from their homeland. However, he also painted contemporary icons usually with Mary the Protectress, as in *Pokrova*, 1978, (pl.6.23).

Zalyvakha continued to be preoccupied with the theme of Taras Shevchenko, but increasingly portrayed the poet with uplifted arms in semi-abstract compositions that he titled *Dzvonar* (Bell Ringer) (pl.6.24). The use of bells in the

life of a Ukrainian village vanished along with many churches, soon after Western Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union in 1945. Thus depicting Shevchenko as a bell toller has allegorical connotations.

Themes of death and prison appeared in Zalyvakha's work in the seventies after his release. In *Ne spit'* (Do Not Sleep), 1973, (pl.6.25) the message and symbolism are obvious.⁴¹ A man in the white dress of common peasants reclines in a dark semi-circle.⁴² Beside him there is a large alarm clock set at a quarter to twelve. Outside this confined dark space a large raven sits waiting, while other ravens with open beaks fill the sky above. In *Death of a Cossack*, 1976, (pl.6.26) death appears as a beautiful young woman enveloping the dying soldier in her white robes.⁴³ There are several versions of this composition in various stages of abstraction in Zalyvakha's oeuvre. In *Viazen'* (Prisoner), 1979, (pl.6.27) death as a shadowy mirage hovers over a prisoner leaning against what appears to be the window molding and a woman in black who covers her face in despair. Spatial incongruities and the pale background with four circular shapes heighten the eerie atmosphere of this

⁴¹ Title provided by the author.

⁴² At the time the work was painted such peasant dress was not being worn. It went out of style after World War I. By using the traditional dress of peasants Zalyvakha may be trying to reinforce the idea of the suffering of common Ukrainians.

⁴³ Title provided by Mrs. N. Luchkiv, owner of the painting.

painting which echoes Zalyvakha's prison experiences.

Since his return from serving his sentence Zalyvakha has not had any opportunities to exhibit his work publicly, although his paintings are relatively well known among former dissidents and intellectuals in Western Ukraine.⁴⁴ Zynovii Krasivs'kyi, a dissident writer and art collector, who at one time was held in a psychiatric hospital for his views, has established a private art gallery in Morshyn, Western Ukraine dedicated to the work of Zalyvakha.

Despite the isolation and a lack of official recognition, Zalyvakha has remained a prolific artist and has continued to expand the thematic and pictorial vocabulary of Soviet Ukrainian art by painting directly from his experiences in prison, hard labour camps, and by voicing his concerns for his homeland. Without a doubt his living and working conditions have had a profound effect on his art. Although the message in his work appears to have become more important than the experimentation in style of previous years, Zalyvakha has continued his quest for self-expression by synthesizing a variety of past and present sources that help him to convey his devotion to Ukraine and its people.

⁴⁴ As a result of Gorbachov's policy of perestroika the first of a series of solo exhibitions of Zalyvakha's works was held at the Ethnographic Museum in Lviv in December, 1988. It was followed by a large exhibit at the National Museum of Ukrainian Art in Kiev in 1989.

Karlo Zviryns'kyi

Karlo Zviryns'kyi's interest in abstraction was an unusual phenomenon among Ukrainian artists of his generation. His non-representational paintings with an emphasis on form, colour, and composition were never exhibited and few people knew of their existence. Born August 14, 1923 in Lavriv in Western Ukraine, Zviryns'kyi began his art studies in Lviv in 1941 at the Industrial Art School under artists such as Volodymyr Balias and Mykola Butovych, both of whom were oriented towards Western European art.⁴⁵ He continued his pursuit of art at the short-lived Higher Ukrainian Art School, officially named Higher Visual Art Studio, organized by the artists of Lviv in December 1943 with Vasyl' Krychevs'kyi as rector and Serhii Lytvynenko as dean.⁴⁶ Here his teachers were Mykola Azovs'kyi and Mykhailo Dmytrenko.⁴⁷ The influence of these Western art oriented artists left an indelible mark on

⁴⁵ According to Zviryns'kyi the first director of the Industrial Art School, set up under the German regime at 47 Snopkivs'ka Street in Lviv, was Mykhailo Osin'chuk (1890-1969) who had studied at the Art Academy in Cracow. Volodymyr Balias (1906-1968) studied at the Academy of Art in Warsaw and taught in Lviv from 1939 to 1944 when he emigrated to the West and eventually settled in Canada. Mykola Butovych (1895-1961) studied in Prague and graduated from the Graphic Art Academy in Leipzig before coming to Lviv. He arrived in the U.S.A. in 1948.

⁴⁶ See Chapter One for details.

⁴⁷ Mykola Azovskiy (1903-47) studied at the Kiev Art Institute with M. Boichuk and Fedir Krychevskiy. He came to Lviv in 1939, stayed until 1944, and after the war emigrated to Buenos Aires. Mykhailo Dmytrenko b. 1908, a painter who graduated from the Kiev Art Institute in 1930, was sent to Lviv in 1939 to organize the Artists' Union of Western Ukraine. He stayed when the Germans occupied Lviv and later emigrated to Canada. He now resides in Detroit.

Zviryns'kyi's creative interests and future work which later was nourished by Roman Sel's'kyi.

When Western Ukraine was occupied by Soviet troops in 1944, Zviryns'kyi enrolled in the School of Applied Art and was placed in the fifth year programme. Here he met Sel's'kyi who later taught him at the Art Institute of Applied and Decorative Art, where Zviryns'kyi became a student in 1947. According to Zviryns'kyi "Sel's'kyi was an island in Lviv, because his outlook went against the postulates of Socialist Realism".⁴⁸ Because of this Sel's'kyi often had to face unpleasant situations with authorities.⁴⁹ Zviryns'kyi thinks that their friendship was of mutual assistance during the most trying times because it helped them survive in a micro-climate of their own making.

When Zviryns'kyi was in his third year at the Institute, the class was assigned to paint the human figure. Zviryns'kyi painted the model in the manner of Cézanne using

⁴⁸ In conversation with the artist 8 December, 1988 in Lviv.

⁴⁹ One of the accusations levelled at Sel's'kyi was that his art was full of "formalist tricks". Meetings were called at the Institute at which these accusations were discussed and at which Sel'skyi was threatened with expulsion if he did not mend his own ways in art. Despite these threats Selskyi was not dismissed and continued teaching until retirement. However, in 1959 the Monumental Painting Faculty was liquidated thus effectively eliminating the teaching of painting and with it the influences of Western art. Students now had to choose between ceramics, weaving, furniture and dress design. This lowered the appeal of the Institute considerably and eventually forced its decline.

blue-green colours and faceting of forms. Just before the painting was finished the instructor, Vasyl' Liubchyk, decided to make corrections and repainted the picture using white, black, and ochre pigments.⁵⁰ After three hours spent repainting the picture while Zviryns'kyi looked on, Liubchyk told him "to finish the work in the same spirit".⁵¹ Instead of doing so, Zviryns'kyi wiped clean everything done by Liubchyk. Next morning he was called to the Rector's office together with his friends Patyk and Zakharchyshyn to face a barrage of accusations which lasted from nine in the morning until six at night. The rector of the Institute, Hennadii Leonov, as well as the assistant of the Institute's Communist Party organization, were present. The students were accused of being "bandits" and "bourgeois nationalists" and all of their colleagues were told to testify against them. Because Zviryns'kyi and Patyk refused to admit their mistakes, and Zviryns'kyi kept insisting that "One of Cézanne's apples was worth more than all other paintings", they were expelled from the Institute. Eventually both were reinstated as a result of petitions and with the aid of Zviryns'kyi's highly placed aunt.⁵²

⁵⁰ For information on Vasyl Liubchyk see Chapter Three.

⁵¹ In conversation with the artist 8 December, 1988 in Lviv.

⁵² According to Zviryns'kyi he was advised by one of the teachers to petition the secretary of the Party Organization of the Institute, pointing out that his work had been evaluated in the highest range of marks, fours and fives, for three years. The argument was to be that this led him to believe that he was doing the right thing, therefore, it was the fault of the instructors that he was led astray of

In 1953 when Zviryns'kyi graduated from the Institute, he was interested in Post-Impressionism and Cubism even though being caught with a reproduction of either would have meant expulsion from the Institute.⁵³ He remembers feeling at the time that he did not know anything about art because he had been taught only to imitate nature closely, but not much else. Therefore, he set out to correct this on his own through the study of reproductions, which were beginning to appear in publications from such countries as Poland.

Zviryns'kyi was appointed instructor in the Trush Art School in Lviv in 1953 where he worked until 1959. Parallel to this he was also hired to teach at the Institute of Applied and Decorative Art in 1958 where he remained until 1979.⁵⁴ A number of prominent Lviv artists, among them Andrii Bokotei, Zenovii Flinta, Ivan Marchuk, Petro Markovych, Liubomyr Medvid', Oleh Myn'ko, Ivan Ostafiichuk, Roman Petruk, and Bohdan Soika studied under him.

Unlike most artists, Zviryns'kyi claims he made no attempts to join the Artists' Union because he did not like controls of any kind. He rarely submitted his paintings for

Socialist Realism.

⁵³ In conversation with the artist 8 December, 1988 in Lviv.

⁵⁴ Zviryns'kyi taught solely at the Institute from 1959. His contract was not renewed in 1979, and as a result he was dismissed just one year short of a pension. Zviryns'kyi was asked to return to teaching at the Institute in 1988 by the new rector, Emmanuil Mys'ko.

exhibitions and showed his work only to a select number of trusted students and friends.⁵⁵ He dedicated his life to the education of the young artists in the hope that they would live to see better days. Some of his students were invited to his studio and home on a regular basis for informal displays of art and discussions. These informal groups also met in other homes, particularly at Mynko's and Markovych's, as the two students were fortunate to occupy large rooms. In the early sixties the group around Zviryns'kyi took an active part in the national awakening sweeping Soviet Ukraine.

Zviryns'kyi's earliest available work is dated 1958 when the strict adherence to Socialist Realism had weakened, and news of what was happening in art in the West was slowly filtering through the Iron Curtain.⁵⁶ The most realistic of the early paintings is Vesna (Spring) (pl.6.28) where the artist has portrayed a maze of tree forms intertwined in a

⁵⁵ Zviryns'kyi's name does not appear in S. P. Kostiuk, *Khudozhnyky radians'koi l'vivshchyny. Bibliografichnyi pokazhchyk* (Lviv: Academia nauk ukraiins'koi RSR, L'vivs'ka naukova biblioteka im. V. Stefanyka, 1980) although he participated in some local exhibitions including the 1970 exhibit of Lviv artists where he exhibited four paintings. See *Khudozhnyky L'vova prospekt vystavky* (Lviv: Ministry of Culture, 1970), p. 8. It was almost as if he did not exist as an artist even though I was fortunate to see close to a hundred paintings in his studio, of which I photographed forty. I heard about him from his former students who spoke very highly of Zviryns'kyi.

⁵⁶ In conversation with the author Zviryns'kyi said that reproductions of modern art were beginning to appear in Soviet publications. He said that he also picked up information listening to radio broadcasts from Poland.

web of monochromatic blue with occasional yellow.⁵⁷ The branches are carefully modelled to convey a feeling of an impenetrable forest wall. In the other paintings the sources of the inspiration are less readily recognizable as the focus is on shapes, colours and composition. In *Staryi lis* (Old Forest) (pl.6.29) the roots, trunks and branches of dead trees have been flattened, exaggerated, and reordered without any modelling into a semi-abstract composition in earth browns, blacks, ochres, and whites. In *Vechir II* (Evening), 1959, (pl.6.30) the shapes of a woman and a boy emerge from blue-gray-green arches and tree shapes. Figures and surrounding forms are broken into flattened areas of sombre colours. A similar manner prevails in *Vechir*, 1958, (pl.6.31) where forms suggestive of plants and flowers are arranged on a dark, bluish-purple background. In both paintings the condensed, flat shapes have definite boundaries and paint has been applied thinly.

By comparison, in *Interior*, 1960, (pl.6.32) the edges of forms are less pronounced and the brush strokes are expressive and painterly. *Zviryns'kyi* has abandoned all illusion of a three dimensional space. There is an intentional ambiguity of inside and outside, far and near. The palette is sombre and dominated by blues, but paint has been applied freely. There is only a suggestion of an

⁵⁷ The date in the lower right corner reads "70", but *Zviryns'kyi* assured me that this was a 1958 painting dated when he had to submit something for exhibition in 1970. Most of his pictures were undated and without titles. Both dates and titles were provided by the artist at my request.

interior just as the human figures are only hinted at in the intuitively painted *Composition*, also 1960 (pl.6.33). The palette is warm, a combination of pink and reds, with outlines and accents of black and white vigorously applied.

By the end of 1960 Zviryns'kyi was experimenting with non-representational compositions and full abstraction using collage techniques as in a series of works titled "*Composition*". Retaining a figure-ground distinction Zviryns'kyi composed with a variety of geometric and amorphous shapes in the manner of Matisse cut-outs as in *Composition no. 4* (pl.6.34) and *Composition no.5* or used a combination of painted surfaces and painted and cut-out applications as in *Composition no. 1* (pl.6.35).⁵⁸ These works without any naturalistic references appear to have roots in the Bauhaus design tradition and are examples of pure abstraction.

Zviryns'kyi was to return to nature inspired pictures in 1965 when he painted the series of "*Forest Motifs*," semi-abstract works inspired by dead tree forms that echo the 1958 paintings, but are tighter in composition and more painterly. Retaining the silvery gray palette of the "*Forest Motif*" pictures Zviryns'kyi created *Composition*, 1965, (pl.6.36) with a myriad of small forms vertically stacked, some disintegrating into the background, others

⁵⁸ Numbers have been provided by the author to facilitate recognition of individual paintings.

clearly outlined in black. The textural effects and the signs and shapes have a sophisticated, but child-like appearance somewhat akin to the work of Paul Klee. Yet, that same year also witnessed a return to realistically depicted objects, stacked vertically on a flat background as in *Trinkets* (pl.6.37). Some of the objects like the necklaces, medallions, and framed photographs are recognizable for what they are, others like the numerous pencil shapes are not. A year later, in 1966 in *Still Life* (pl.6.38) the objects are fewer in number and are crisply three dimensional in form. Spread on a flat table top seen without linear perspective, the huge dice, small checkerboard, necklace, cigarettes, cone, and other paraphernalia recall the unrelated objects of the De Chirico's metaphysical pictures.

The trend to paint detailed, crowded super-realistic still-life compositions alongside abstract works continued throughout the sixties and seventies as may be seen in *Still Life with Butterfly*, 1967, (pl.6.39) and *Trinkets no.4* and *Trinkets no.5* (pl.6.40), both 1970. The stark modelling and conglomeration of unrelated objects suggest that Zviryns'kyi had been looking at metaphysical and Surrealist works, but chose to stay within the limitations of real objects that could possibly be found together on a table. Their organization is never haphazard as Zviryns'kyi remains constantly aware of the inter-relationship of forms and visual patterns. The three dimensional space with the

source of light from the left is limited by the back wall and the overall effect is of a higher reality. However, there are variations in the depictions which vary from the super-real to partially abstract as in *Still Life*, 1970 (pl.6.41).

Zviryns'kyi's continuing interest in non-representational pictorial structures is apparent from a number of relief paintings that are akin to the kinetic relief paintings of Western artists of the sixties. *Composition*, 1967, (pl.6.42) created with three dimensional squares and rectangles of varying sizes painted uniformly in a limited palette of blues, grays, and off-whites has constructionist elements that rely on the action of light to alter the painted three-dimensional surface. Another relief, *Composition*, also from 1967 (pl.6.43) shows a number of tarnished gold, rod-like shapes vertically positioned on a textured ground of blue-gray. Two other relief paintings (pl.6.44), one built with horizontal bands with recessed shapes, the other with a variety of concave rectangular forms, provide an intricate play of reflections and shadows that are indicative of the experimentation undertaken by Zviryns'kyi at a time when most other artists in Lviv concerned themselves with representational if not always naturalistic portrayals on a flat surface. It is indeed amazing that without direct contacts with contemporary Western art, in isolation from the artistic milieu of the USSR, with no hope of showing his paintings to the public,

Zviryns'kyi managed to produce art that in some aspects paralleled the creative explorations and developments of art in Western Europe and North America.

Ivan Marchuk

Ivan Marchuk's paintings range from tangible portrayals of Surrealistic visions to non-objective representations and include figural depictions, flowers, landscapes, and abstract compositions. Most are unusual in technique and often disturbing in imagery. Even though much of his work is representational in the sense of objects and figures being recognizable, the juxtaposing of images and the rendering are unconventional. Marchuk's figural compositions are inhabited by grotesque, skeletal individuals and sinister objects in irrational situations mostly amid desolate surroundings that combine elements of Surrealism with a hallucinogenic vision of mankind peculiar to the artist. His meticulously painted dense patches of wild flowers contrast sharply with their barren surroundings evoking forebodings of disaster and destruction. The seemingly realistic landscapes with their spidery, web-like surfaces convey an atmosphere of hidden turmoil and mystery. Although most of the pictures retain a monochromatic palette of earthly hues, there are great variations in tone and contrasts of light and dark which tend to enhance the fantastic nature of the subject matter.

Ivan Marchuk was born in 1936 in the village of

Moskalivka in Western Ukraine. Although his mother was illiterate, she knew many songs and folk tales. His father was an accomplished weaver whose work was widely admired, as were his innate mathematical skills and incredible capacity for work. Marchuk recalls with great admiration the colour combinations and craftsmanship of the "riadna" (a type of woollen blanket cover) that his father produced.

As a child he painted the flowers in the garden and in the fields using the juice from their stems instead of paints which were not available. His imagination was nurtured by nature and his earliest lessons in life came from the village.⁵⁹ When he was in grade seven, he was given a sketchbook for Christmas in which he copied portraits of famous people. Marchuk was encouraged by his father and other villagers who asked him to paint icons.⁶⁰ In 1951 he enrolled in the Trush Art School in Lviv in the department of decorative painting. Between 1956 and 1959 he served in the Soviet Army in Moldavia, and then in 1959 continued his studies at the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts. Although Marchuk was accepted into the department of ceramics, he was fortunate to be able to take

⁵⁹ From a conversation with the artist in Kiev, 10 November, 1988. Also in "Artist's Notes" printed by the Fiveway Gallery for the exhibition held in Sydney, Australia from 27 June to 16 July, 1989.

⁶⁰ In conversation on October 4, 1989 in Toronto Marchuk said that the villagers considered artists with high esteem because they were able to create pictures. He recalled that when he showed them the icons he had painted as a student, people would cross themselves and regard him in awe.

painting courses from Karlo Zviryns'kyi who was interested in abstract art and Roman Sel's'kyi who had studied in Paris. Marchuk speaks highly of both these teachers because they provided important insights into Western European and twentieth century art movements officially not allowed under Socialist Realism. They also encouraged students to experiment and develop individually as artists.⁶¹

According to Marchuk, Zviryns'kyi introduced him to the Impressionists and to abstract art, but this was done informally when a select group of students were invited to the teacher's studio.

Marchuk received his diploma in 1965 for the relief design in clay and metal, Folk Musicians, for the Cafe Under the Lion in Lviv. This work reflected the widespread interest at the time in ethnographic subject matter. After graduation, he moved to Kiev where he worked as a commercial artist for the Institute of Solid State Physics for two years. In his spare time Marchuk created humorous ceramic figures of peasants and animals including a self-portrait in a tall fur hat and folk dress. His figures and drawings were reproduced in Ukrainian publications.⁶² He also

⁶¹ In conversation with the artist in Kiev, 15 November, 1988, Marchuk spoke about both, but pointed out that Zviryns'kyi went out of his way to break him away from facile and stereotype rendering. Marchuk also spoke of his admiration for the two teachers, K. Zvirynskyi and R. Selskyi, in the article "Tysha i hrim" (Silence and Thunder), *Ukraina*. No. 28, July, 1987, p. 12.

⁶² Some of Marchuk's creations were reproduced in the monthly journal of the Writers Union, *Vitchyzna*, No. 9, 1968, pp. 18, 80, 151, 156, 164, 177, 189, 194, and 224.

created historical and religious reliefs in clay including Danylo Halyts'kyi, 1967,⁶³ Crucifixion, 1968, and The Twelve Apostles, 1970, (pl.6.45) in the style of Medieval wood carvings. At the same time Marchuk was painting and drawing for himself because he felt "the need to fantasize and think but found the clay medium too confining."⁶⁴ In 1968 he left his full-time job and applied for work on commissions obtained through the Monumental Section of the Kiev Art Fund.⁶⁵ This made it possible for him to devote more time to his own work and to work more independently.

In one of his earliest paintings still in his studio, Spohad pro vesnianyii vechir (Memory of a Spring Evening), 1966, (pl.6.46) Marchuk depicted elements of a farm scene without the usual context of landscape and without perspective. Against a dark, uniform bluish grey tempera backdrop he painted a large red disc, presumably the sun, to the right almost in the corner a small window, near the centre two silhouettes of cows, and at the very bottom a small figure with plow and horse on a horizontal stretch of

⁶³ Danylo Halytskyi (1237-1264) who was ruler of the Galician-Volynian State, was the first reigning Ukrainian monarch to receive a crown from the Pope of Rome in 1253. Thus he became King of Galicia and Volhynia, an equal among the sovereigns of the European feudal order. Although after the Mongol invasion he remained a vassal of the Mongol Golden Horde, he is regarded by Ukrainians as major historical figure and a symbol of independence.

⁶⁴ I. Marchuk. "Tysha i hrim", p. 12.

⁶⁵ In this capacity Marchuk executed wall decorations for a store carrying school supplies, a mosaic panel for a school on Shpak Street in Kiev, and wall relief panels for the Institute of Theoretical Physics in Kiev.

land. There is no modelling and the dark monochromatic colours do not detract from the flattening of space. All figures have been reduced to readable signs. The cows in profile turn their over-size eyes toward the spectator adding a humorous note to the composition. There are echoes of Miro in this work especially in the rendering of vertical space and in the simplifications of figures that float in a flattened area.

Several other works from this period indicate that Marchuk was experimenting with Surrealism and looking at Ferdinand Léger. In a pen and ink drawing *Untitled*, 1967 or 1968, (pl.6.47) Marchuk depicted a group of people with hands raised as if to hold up the stone-like cloud above them in a setting with factory chimneys and tubular elements. The simplified, heavy contouring, the partial dark modelling, as well as the composition have been strongly influenced by Léger. In *Polit (Flight)*, 1968, (pl.6.48) the modelling is still Légeresque, but the deep space, the discrepancies in scale, and the juxtapositioning of unrelated objects (flying blocks, cups, and trumpet) have been borrowed from other Surrealists such as Dali and Magritte. In keeping with Surrealist intentions Marchuk emphasized content and not the formal considerations of the Cubists and abstractionists.

In 1968 Marchuk's work was exhibited at the apartment of a physicist, Academician Tolpa, where it was seen by the

Head of the Institute for Theoretical Physics, Vitalii Shelest.⁶⁶ As a result of this unofficial exhibition Marchuk was asked by V. Shelest to create and execute wall decorations for the new Institute for Theoretical Physics in Kiev which he did.⁶⁷

By 1970 Marchuk was painting figural compositions depicting bizarre human beings, birds and animals in startling and disturbing settings evocative of dreams, nightmares, and the subconscious. *Zaliubleni (Lovers)*, 1971, (pl.6.49) shows a man holding a candle to a profile of a woman, both of them rendered unrealistically: with oversize heads and facial distortions. Above them, hands grasp at a curving shape encircled with menacing heads of men and birds, suggestive of vultures waiting to prey. The depiction of a human ear has antecedents in Hieronymus Bosch's drawing *Woods Have Ears, Fields Have Ears* as well as in Surrealist art.⁶⁸ Three crosses seen through an opening foreshadow sorrow and pain rather than the love suggested by the title. The limited palette of dark blue-grey with strong contrasts of yellowish highlights creates tensions that emphasize the feeling of unease as does the

⁶⁶ Vitalii Shelest was the son of Petro Shelest, the Party Secretary of Ukraine. This and his position as head of the Institute for Theoretical Physics would have made him a very privileged and influential person.

⁶⁷ Officially this work was commissioned through the Art Fund, Monumental Section.

⁶⁸ See Wilhelm Fraenger, *Hieronymus Bosch* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1983), p. 200.

breaking up of each shape into patterns and the distortions in size and scale.

It is apparent that Marchuk had been looking at the Surrealists and that he made use of some of their devices, but the images he created were of his own invention, as were the fantastic settings. The tendency of the early work to shock and to evoke obscure subconscious associations was also in keeping with Surrealist aims. Although Marchuk readily admits his admiration for Fernand Léger⁶⁹ and Pavel Filonov (1883-1941)⁷⁰ and his interest in Salvador Dali and Arkhyn Kuiindzhi (1842-1910),⁷¹ he denies any direct influences despite the fact that his work synthesizes these

⁶⁹ Marchuk expressed his interest in Léger and admiration for P. Filonov in conversations with the author in Kiev, November 15, 1988. He also refers to these artists, as well as S. Dali and A. Kuiinzhi in "Tysha i hrim" (Silence and Thunder), a monologue by Marchuk that appeared in the weekly magazine *Ukraina* (Ukraine) no. 28, July, 1987, p. 12-13.

⁷⁰ Pavel Filonov, a Russian artist who was born in Moscow, developed the analytical method of painting that was published in a manifesto called *Sdelanie kartyny* (Creating a Picture) in 1914. In it he advocated the detailed faceting of form and complexity of composition which were characteristic of his representational and abstract paintings and drawings. His work was not exhibited after 1932 because it did not adhere to Socialist Realism. Although he was ignored officially and died of hunger in the blockade of Leningrad, his work aroused interest after the death of Stalin and many young artists became interested in his approach to painting. The first solo exhibition of his work was held in 1967 in Novosibirsk. It was followed in 1988 by a major exhibition of his paintings and drawing held in Moscow and Leningrad.

⁷¹ Kuiindzhi was born in Mariupil' (present-day Zhdanov) in Ukraine. He taught at the Academy of Art in Leningrad and was a member of the *Peredvizhniki* from 1875. He was interested in depicting moonlit rural scenery and painted numerous landscapes of Ukraine.

disparate sources, as well as his childhood memories of life in the village and his Ukrainian heritage, all of which are reflected in his work. Not surprisingly, given his sources and interests of not depicting the physical reality surrounding him, Marchuk was denied membership in the Artists Union when he applied in 1970.⁷²

In contrast to the nightmarish scenes of his figurative pictures, by 1970 Marchuk was painting serene landscapes only partially based on observations and in a highly unusual manner. He built up his surfaces and volumes with multiple overlays of very fine lines that created an impenetrably dense web. *Verby v obiimakh misiachnoii nochi* (Willows in the Embrace of a Moonlit Night), 1971, (pl.6.50) composed of three grassy mounds with leafless trees against a grayish-blue sky, presents a meticulously painted surface with great detail. The impression it creates is that every blade of grass and every branch and twig have been carefully rendered. However, the realistic rendering is an illusion created by the built-up of fine lines. It is so dramatic that the second impression, that of a super-reality, is conveyed.

⁷² According to Marchuk he applied to join the Artists Union and was rejected first in 1970 and again in 1981. The reason given for the rejection was "the low quality of his work." In the article "Tysha i hrim" (Silence and Thunder) in the Kiev magazine *Ukraina*, no. 28, July, 1987, p. 12 Marchuk states that he underwent the "shpitsruteny" punishment twice. This is a reference to the punishment with birch switches meted out in czarist Russia to soldiers which often resulted in death. He was invited to join in the autumn of 1988 and did so. (From an interview with the artist 15 November, 1988 in Kiev.)

Some of Marchuk's landscapes come as a shock, as in *Yablunevyi sad* (Apple Orchard) where most of the canvas, despite the expectations of the title, is covered with barren, leafless trees casting shadows to the right in a desolate scene reminiscent of a desert with cacti pointing their fingers at the sky. Others, particularly of moonlit nights over water, thatched roof houses, or cottages under snow sometimes border on the romantic and nostalgic, but at their best they convey an atmosphere of drama and foreboding.

Marchuk became interested in strong light contrasts provided by snow and moon which he explored in such paintings as *Tini na snihu* (Shadows on the Snow), 1973, (pl.6.51) and *Merezhyvo zymovoho lisu* (Embroidery of the Winter Forest), 1973. He also painted several moonlit night scenes as a result of his fascination with *Kuiindzhi*.⁷³ In *Nich na Ukraini* (Night in Ukraine), 1978, (pl.6.52) has parallels with *Kuiindzhi's Misiachna nich na Dnipri* (Moonlit Night on the Dnipro River) (pl.6.53) in the depicted landscape with high moon over a sweeping river with a village on its banks. Whereas *Kuiindzhi* presented a 19th century, romantic view of an idyllic moonlit scene, Marchuk conveys a sense of impending drama through the use of stark

⁷³ Marchuk spoke of this in "Tysha i hrim", p. 12.

contrasts and a spidery texture.⁷⁴ However, an element of nostalgia for the past may be seen in the thatched roof cottages and romanticized village scenes no longer to be seen in the countryside.

By 1973 Marchuk had transferred the spidery, tangled surfaces of his landscapes to his figural paintings. They also became more crowded and more complex in composition as in *Taina vechera* (The Last Supper), *Strastnyi chetver* (Shrove Thursday), and *Ptytsi i liudy* (Birds and People). In all three a flickering surface of whitish spidery lines results in a flattened, fragmented space and an eerie atmosphere. Despite the biblical reference in the title of *Last Supper* (pl.6.54) there is no attempt to depict Christ and his disciples. The setting is of a secular scene with farm animals as it also is in *Shrove Thursday* where Marchuk depicted the old religious custom of bringing home a lighted candle after the church service.⁷⁵ Here the figures rise out of the hilly landscape with table and a miniature church as in a mirage.

In later works Marchuk abandoned the spidery web technique for most paintings, and continued using it only

⁷⁴ Marchuk creates a spidery web-like texture throughout the composition by applying the tempera pigment through a syringe in several overlapping layers.

⁷⁵ In Ukraine there was a religious tradition of bringing home a lighted candle after the evening church service on Shrove Thursday. In depicting people with candles throughout the picture plane, Marchuk was recreating a custom forbidden by communist authorities at the time.

for landscapes, as may be seen in *Yabluko na snihu* (Apple on the Snow), 1979 (pl.6.55). For the figural paintings he relied on more customary modelling of forms, based on contrasts of light and dark. However, it is not a smooth, chiaroscuro type of modelling, but an agitated, flickering of a partially dry brush with a build-up of lighter colours over darker underpainting. Surfaces often look tormented, clothing appears tattered, and features are disfigured by veiny and bony details. There are echoes of the multi-variable surfaces, the faceted dissection of form, and complicated compositions of the analytical painting manner advocated by Filonov.⁷⁶ There are also reverberations of Filonov's pessimism and a Bosch-like fantasy. Marchuk calls the series of these figural pictures "Holos moieii dushi" (Voice of My Soul) because he considers them intuitive outpourings of his subconscious.⁷⁷

Beginning in the early seventies Marchuk worked on several cycles of the "Voice of My Soul" series including "Zahubleni kvity" (Lost Flowers), "Opustile hnizdo" (Empty Nest), "Osinni melodii" (Autumn Melodies), "Spohady pro bat'kovu khatu" (Memories of My Father's House) to which he has returned from time to time. All of these works were

⁷⁶ See Filonov's *Kolkhoznik*, 1931, or *Head*, 1930 (?). Reproduced in Pavel Nikolaievich Filonov (Leningrad: Aurora, 1988), p. 97, fig. 179 and p. 100, fig. 187.

⁷⁷ In conversation with the artist 13 September, 1989 in Toronto. Marchuk's statement and even his title for these paintings, "Voice of My Soul", suggests that he was attempting to paint in a manner in tune with Surrealist manifestations of automatism.

figurative compositions where Surrealist devices and elements were prominent, but they were being used to convey a particular mood or even a message that was basically rational and timely.

In the cycle of "Lost Flowers" Marchuk depicted poignant moods of loneliness through solitary, anguished men and sad women shown from the waist up amid desolate surroundings. In *Avtoportret: Try tiul'pany* (Self-Portrait: Three Tulips), 1975, (pl.6.56) Marchuk has pictured himself against a desert vista in a gesture of fatigue and melancholy. His eyes seem unseeing, turned inward and the three flowers are anemic and frail. In another work, *U tyshi spohady rostut'*, (Memories Grow in the Silence), 1976, (pl.6.57) a lonely figure resembling the artist stands over a model of a hill with tiny church and spikes in the ground.

These melancholy figures with distorted features and prominently visible hands were reminiscent of Filonov's dejected figures in *Pir korolei* (Feast of Kings), 1913 (pl.6.58). However, they also displayed some of the characteristics of German expressionism in the distortions used to emphasize the pessimism and alienation, and in the absence of shadows.

Like the men, the women depicted in the "Lost Flowers" cycle were lonely, anguished figures shown from the waist up

with an odd assortment of objects. In one of the paintings dated 1976, (pl.6.59) the woman was shown frontally with a large, artificial-looking flower at her side, one arm resting on a book, the fingers of the other touching an egg. The woman's head was covered with what appears to be a tattered veil. The flower in her hair was very much at odds with the shabbiness of her apparel. It is difficult to tell whether the circle behind her head is a halo or part of the head decoration. A high horizon line and an empty landscape complete this distressing picture, the meaning of which is not clear suggesting an ambivalence in Marchuk's personal attitude to women.

In *Slidamy davnyny* (In the Footsteps of the Past), 1975, (pl.6.60) Marchuk depicted a man, oddly cut off, silent, and alone, amid broken egg shells and pottery in a bare expanse of field and sky. His eyes look like dark, empty recesses turned inward, while his head is oddly twisted upwards in the direction of the wind-blown sail of the land-locked boat. The meaning of the broken items before him and the boat and unbroken pottery behind him may be seen as metaphors of shattered hopes and future expectations, as well as the futility of dreams of hope conveyed by the wind-blown sail without water and upturned head with unseeing eyes.

In one of the paintings of the "Empty Nest" cycle from 1976, (pl.6.61) Marchuk portrayed an old woman in peasant

scarf holding a cracked egg shell in her palm with a crow beside her looking at a nest full of empty shells. As in other Marchuk paintings the woman appears to grow out of the ground. The nest is made of twigs arranged in a circle. Even though there are some flowers at the stakes of the fence they look artificial and are the only plants in an otherwise empty landscape stretching into a deep space. It is impossible to tell whether the nest is empty because the young have flown away or whether the eggs have been cracked open by an adversary or perhaps the eggs were not fertile and no young were born. There may be an allegorical meaning attached to these images. In her role as farmer, the woman could be expected to be examining hen's eggs, not those of a crow. By showing her examining eggs in the presence of a crow suggests that the crow is tame and on friendly terms with the woman, that perhaps these are crow's eggs. Another suggestion may be that the woman whose traditional role was that of nurturer in this scene of abandonment or destruction, represents mankind presiding over the devastation of our planet. Eggs usually are considered symbols of life, but it is clear that by using only the empty shells the artist's intention here and in other works is to show them as symbols of death. It is also interesting to note that crows appear quite often in Marchuk's paintings alongside people. As a young boy Marchuk says he destroyed many crows' nests and as an artist he has painted crows to

atone for the childhood pranks.⁷⁸ Yet, in Ukrainian folklore crows and ravens are considered to be harbingers of death and symbols of evil or at best as symbols of malicious criticism, as informers.⁷⁹ In view of Marchuk's occupation with destruction and death the crow can be read as an evil omen.

It is obvious that the subject matter and tone of Marchuk's earlier Surrealist vision had undergone a change by the mid-seventies and that Marchuk now felt a need to communicate a message through the symbolic use of certain images. Even though the meaning is often ambiguous, there can be no doubt about the prevailing anguish and pessimism. Both the single men and women appear alienated and withdrawn suggesting that Marchuk was projecting his own feelings and his personal position as an artist into these images, particularly of men. As is known from the dissident literature reaching the West, Marchuk was not the only one to feel out of place in the tightly controlled environment

⁷⁸ In conversation with the artist 11 April, 1987 in Kiev. Crows are also much in evidence in the city of Kiev where Marchuk has his studio and does much of his painting.

⁷⁹ For a complete list of folklore characteristics, all of them negative, attributed to the raven and crow see Y. Onats'kyi, *Ukrains'ka mala entsyklopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 2112-2113. However, in some Ukrainian folk tales and fables crows are represented as being wise birds. In both stories by the well known writer Ivan Franko "The Crow and the Snake" and "Crows and Owls" crows are given attributes of wisdom and respect by other birds.

of Socialist Realism.⁸⁰ Also he was not the only artist being questioned by the security services of the police on a regular basis.⁸¹ As a result of the harassment Marchuk began to dream of leaving the Soviet Union so that he could create in peace.

Alongside the images of single men and women Marchuk continued to paint group figural compositions including the series "Autumn Melodies" in which symbols, often contradictory, abound. In a 1976 painting from this series (pl.6.62) four figures are depicted from the waist up. Two of them are shown in a boat shape that sits firmly on land across the front of the composition; two others are visible behind them. A circle is drawn around all four heads, repeating the semi-circular shape of the boat. A man in profile is shown on the left cradling a large egg seen with the egg yolk inside. The woman beside him holds a pot with

⁸⁰ Intellectuals and artists, including Stefania Shabatura, the poet Ihor Kalynets, and his wife the writer Iryna Stasiv Kalynets were arrested and given long hard-labour terms of five, six and seven years respectively plus three years of exile for expressing their own opinions about art, literature, and personal freedom. For a list of some of those arrested see M. Sahaidak, /ed./ *Ukrainskyi visnyk* (Ukrainian Herald) (Paris: Smoloskyp, Issues VII-VIII, Spring 1974), p. 125-126.

⁸¹ Ivan Marchuk was "invited" for "talks" with the security people starting in 1972, sometimes as often as once a week. Later perhaps once a month until 1982 when he was questioned about a friend that was arrested. In 1983 he was warned not to meet with the author and suspected that his studio was bugged. The effect of this harassment on Marchuk was that he found it difficult to paint and answered his phone with dread of another "meeting". It is possible that Marchuk is still very much afraid of the security forces because he refuses to discuss the subject in any detail.

six lighted candles over a small table with three apples. Directly in front of them on the land we see what appears to be two miniature hay stacks. A third one inside the boat has a halo and its central pole appears to have been turned into a candle. Similar shapes are repeated to the upper right. If indeed these are hay stacks with lighted candles, then they surely will self-destruct suggesting several possible readings, including the one that mankind is destroying itself and its environment. To the left of the figures there are trees and bushes with fruit, implying that Marchuk is depicting a life cycle with an emphasis on birth and death. The frames seen around the heads of the two women suggest doorways through which life passes or perhaps also the open coffin which may be the final passage on earth. All four figures look old and tired giving rise to the interpretation that life is joyless and hard. The brownish-ochre palette and the shrivelled leathery texture reenforce this.

In another work from the "Autumn Melodies" series *Mii korabel' osiv u pusteli* (My Boat Has Settled in the Desert), 1976, (pl.6.63) Marchuk continues the image of a boat grounded in the vast and desolate landscape. In this painting the boat shape encloses three cut-off figures where the head of the man with closed eyes bears a striking resemblance to the artist himself. The boat is no longer a symbol of expectations, but one of confinement or perhaps a shelter against the surrounding desert. Who are the two

women? Saints or temptresses? The silhouette with halo and the tiny single-domed church seen in the landscape add to the enigma. Images of fruit and flowers crowd the boat while, outside, the land remains oddly deserted and infertile. The symbolism of this irrational scene is not easily apparent, but it does suggest that despite the hostile environment, the artist has found a temporary haven, but one without a future. There can be little doubt of the pervading gloom and anxiety reenforced by the monochromatic brownish-grey palette and the incongruities in space and in scale.⁸²

It is not clear whether Marchuk's desolate surroundings are the result of his interest in Surrealist art or whether they are the result of his preoccupation with the ecological devastation of the planet or perhaps his concerns with the absence of spiritual values in the materialistic ideology of Communism.

What then of his use of churches and crosses, as well as religious titles? It would appear that they signified an escape from the official restraints as did his choice of themes and technique, but at the same time they should be considered as symbols of the continuity of the past and the traditions into which Marchuk was born, but which the

⁸² In a public talk given in Toronto 1 October, 1989 at the Ukrainian Canadian Art Foundation, Marchuk stated that the picture was painted at a time when he had lost all hope of leaving the Soviet Union.

Communist Party tried to wipe out.

By the 1978 Marchuk's forms had become crisper and space and texture more pronounced. His modelling with myriad light and dark tones of a continuing monochromatic palette resulted in a more detailed, complex surface as may be observed in *Vse na svoje mistse* (Everything Has a Place), 1978, *Nimy dialoh* (Mute Dialogue), 1978, and *Requiem*, 1978 (pl.6.64). In the latter a pile of animal skulls, broken frames, and wilting poppies occupy centre stage in an empty, deep landscape marked by lit candles. Antecedents to this painting may be seen in Vasilii Vereshchagin's *Apotheosis of War*, 1871, (pl.6.65) with its pile of human skulls in a devastated landscape.⁸³ The absence of a horizon line creates the feeling of total destruction and the bare trees of the Vereshchagin work have been replaced by lighted candles receding into a distance. Lighted candles, however, were not only used at funerals where it was customary to place a candle in the hands of the dead to light their way into another world. They were also held by family members during the Mass and funeral services. In Ukrainian church traditions they are used at christenings, and in folk interpretations they represent the beginning of a celebration, as well as the light in the darkness. Marchuk has placed a lighted candle prominently on a block of wood. Thus, in this work as in previous paintings the images

⁸³ V. Vereshchagin's *Apotheosis of War* was reproduced in Soviet publications, including the Ukrainian art magazine *Mystetstvo*, no. 6, 1964, p. 11.

continue to reflect Marchuk's themes of destruction and rebirth. It would appear that in this painting, as in others that followed, Marchuk used elements of Surrealism to make a statement about a political and ecological situation over which he had no control at a time when it was not safe to criticize the government. Of course the imagery could be explained in more universal terms and eventually it was probably this possibility that allowed Marchuk's paintings to be shown publicly.

Since 1973 Marchuk has periodically turned to painting larger than life flowers in desolate surroundings, calling them "Tsvitinnia" meaning "Flowering". He has depicted patches of roses, chrysanthemum-like blooms, daisies, and thorn-like flowering bushes mostly in devastated landscapes that contrast sharply with the flowers. Often there is an element of surprise such as bowls and vases among them, usually smaller in scale, as reminders of a human presence and the continuity of life.

Symbolic meanings can be attached to Marchuk's paintings of flowers produced in the mid-seventies. In *Red Poppies*, 1975, (pl.6.66) he depicted several adjoining patches of poppies in different stages of growth, from flowering to fruition and decay amid a desolate landscape with a very high horizon line. A vase-like vessel may be seen in the central patch and to the right a square of cloth with what appears to be a white pumpkin. Both are reminders of a human presence. Higher up, several more, smaller

pumpkins are set unto the ground. Pumpkins may be considered as symbols of rejection ⁸⁴, but their out-of-scale presence here suggests an element of the unexpected. In Ukraine poppies usually grow in fields, often mingled with the grain, and in meadows with other wild flowers, or are cultivated in gardens. Marchuk's poppies inhabit land without other growth, contrasting sharply in colour and beauty with the apparent barrenness of the area. In Ukrainian folklore poppies carry several meanings including that of fertility. They are also valued for their medicinal purposes and as a source of opium. As such they could suggest hope, temporary relief from pain, and euphoria. According to the poet Dmytro Pavlychko poppies are also associated with insanity and self-destruction.⁸⁵ Pavlychko interprets these works as nostalgia for beauty that at the same time is a nostalgia for the flowering of the soul, for its spiritual burgeoning in labour.⁸⁶

In another painting from 1975 titled *Bili maky* (White Poppies) (pl.6.67) Marchuk depicted the normally red blooms as pale pink against a bluish grey background of empty stretches of land and sky. The poppies have retained their shape, but lost their traditional colour as happens to

⁸⁴ According to Ukrainian wedding traditions a pumpkin is presented by the young woman to her suitor as a sign of rejection.

⁸⁵ See Dmytro Pavlychko, "Dyvyna svitu" (The Wonder of the World), *Bilia muzhniho svitla* (Beside the Manly Light) (Kiev: Radians'kyi Pys'mennyk, 1988), p. 256-265.

⁸⁶ D. Pavlychko, "Dyvyna svitu", p. 260.

hybrids and as flowers removed from sunlight tend to do.⁸⁷ The surroundings are completely sterile with only small spikes receding into the middle distance of the horizon. A small white bowl with tiny red berries set along one side of the growth provides an unexpected contrast and raises questions of the author's intended meaning. Are the poppies to be read as a sign of the eternal source of the continuity of life and beauty amid ill-health and barrenness, as symbols of insanity, opium of the people or just dream fantasies?

Marchuk has stated that he never paints flowers from nature, and that he creates them usually in the winter, as souvenirs of the beautiful and mysterious phenomenon of life.⁸⁸ He also combines his larger-than-life flowers with nostalgic visions of the simple peasant life of the past. A bouquet of fantastic flowers dominates the composition from the series "Spomyny pro bat'kovu khatu" (Memories of My Father's House), 1977 (pl.6.68).⁸⁹ These ochre and brown inventions loom large against small thatched-roof cottages, a fence, three pumpkins, and a jug. Fence posts like memories recede into the far horizon. An irrational element

⁸⁷ A variety of white poppies is available for garden planting, but in the wild poppies are usually red. The poppies in Ukrainian folklore are traditionally red in colour.

⁸⁸ Quoted by O. Vartanova in "In the Circle of Plastic Associations". Vitchyzna. March, 1984, p.189.

⁸⁹ In a public talk in Toronto October 1, 1989 Marchuk stated that he had fond memories of his parents' house surrounded by beautiful flowers lovingly cultivated by his mother and three sisters.

is provided by the curving metallic shape wrapping around the prickly plant and separating it from the garden.

In the late seventies, along with the representational work, a new series, abstract and non-objective, appeared under the title of "Preliudii" (Preludes). These were precise and complex compositions with a clear separation of ground and figuration. Limited to a palette of earth hues of ochres, browns and blacks with accents of blue, they were composed of flowing, amorphous shapes and ribbons in constant flux. There are suggestions of tubular forms and shading, as well as hints at representational forms, but for the most part these are non-objective designs where shapes generate new ones, inter-penetrate, overlap and set up rhythmic patterns across the paper as in *Composition I*, 1978 (pl.6.69). It is interesting to note that Filonov, whom Marchuk has called "a god", also painted abstract compositions alongside his figural ones, but his are much more angular and tied to objects and figures.⁹⁰ Marchuk's abstractions, on the other hand appear to undergo a process of metamorphosis and growth and as such come close to the abstract Surrealism of such artists as André Masson. According to Marchuk they begin as intuitive pencil doodlings on paper and only with the addition of colour lose their spontaneity.⁹¹ These paintings were to remain in the

⁹⁰ I. Marchuk in "Silence and Thunder", p. 13.

⁹¹ In conversation with the artist in Toronto, 13 September, 1989.

artist's studio for a number of years, and it would be almost ten years before total abstraction would be allowed in official exhibitions in Kiev.⁹²

Marchuk's creative efforts went unrecognized until 1979 when he had his first exhibition, not in his homeland, but in Moscow at Mala Gruzynskaia Exhibition Centre, sponsored by the Moscow City Committee of the Union of Graphic Artists.⁹³ Only after this ground-breaking event it became possible for Marchuk to show his paintings in Kiev and other cities in Ukraine in exhibition spaces made available by the Writers' Union, the National Medical Library, the Composers' Building, etc., in other words outside the jurisdiction of the Artists' Union. Eventually, as a result of numerous exhibits and articles about him written and published by members of the Writers' Union, Marchuk became one of the best known of the unofficial artists.⁹⁴

⁹² In 1987 the Monumental Artists Section of the Art Fund in Kiev organised an exhibition called "Pohliad" (Glance) at the Politechnical Institute at which abstract work was officially displayed in a group show. Also in 1987 Alexander Dubovyk, an abstractionist from Kiev had a solo exhibit where his work was shown to the general public. In Moscow, where there was more artistic freedom, abstract art had been shown since the mid-seventies.

⁹³ In a move to deal with unofficial artists the Moscow City Committee of the Union of Graphic Artists established a painting section in the summer of 1976 and invited most of the unofficial artists to join. Some artists viewed this as a new way to control them; others took advantage of the possibility to exhibit their work and joined.

⁹⁴ The poet and writer Dmytro Pavlychko was the first to praise Marchuk's paintings in print in "Z hlybyny dushi" (From the Depth of the Soul), Nauka i kul'tura (Kiev: Academy of

Several reasons come to mind why Marchuk's work was first accepted for exhibition in Moscow and only subsequently in Kiev. Since the Khrushchev thaw artists had been allowed greater freedom in the capital of the Soviet Union than in any of the republics. Because the Shcherbyts'kyi-run government of Ukraine was very repressive in all fields of culture, it was felt that if one exhibited in Moscow then it would be safe to be shown in Kiev. Also Kiev, in comparison to Moscow, was, and still is considered to be provincial. Consequently if one made it in the capital then one would be deemed worthy of an exhibition at home. Also it would be safer for the sponsors. Yet, another factor should be noted namely that Surrealism had been popular among the artists of Moscow and Leningrad for a number of years, and Surrealist related works had been exhibited during the Open Air Exhibits in 1974 and 1975. In Kiev, on the other hand, as elsewhere in Ukraine, few of the artists had adopted Surrealist devices in their work and fewer still had chosen to depict their fantasies and nightmarish scenes of introspection and destruction with strong overtones of social consciousness, particularly in

Sciences of UkSSR, 1980), pp. 402-406 and in "Maister penzlia - Ivan Marchuk" (Master of the Brush - Ivan Marchuk), Dnipro (Kiev: Molod', 1982), p. 69-70. Many other articles followed including the following: O. Vartanova. "U koli plastychnykh asotsiatsii" (In the Circle of Plastic Associations), Vitchyzna (Kiev: Radians'kyi Pys'mennyk, 1984), p. 187-189; O. Vartanova, "Flowering", Ukraine, No. 7, July, 1985, pp. 14-16; O. Klymchuk, "Tysha i hrim" (Silence and Thunder), Ukraina, No. 28, July, 1987, p. 12-13; V. Kotsiuk, "Na zakhyst neba i zemli", Moloda Gvardiia, 30 January, 1987, p. 4; I. Gereta, "Holos moieii dushi" (Voice of My Soul), Vil'ne zhyttia (Free Life, a Ternopil' paper), 14 February, 1987, p. 4.

ecological matters. In those respects Marchuk stood alone in the seventies in Ukrainian art.

It should be pointed out, however, that Marchuk's work differs from most Surrealist paintings produced in the West because it often carries an underlying message. Even though it creates a world of fantasy and dreams or nightmares and embraces seemingly irrational situations, figures, and objects, a thread of rational connections runs through much of the work and the associations it evokes are of such identifiable universal experiences as alienation and devastation. Thus, one of the contributions made by Ivan Marchuk to the development of Ukrainian art, and perhaps world art, is the adaptation of Surrealism to convey contemporary moral and ecological issues. Marchuk also deserves credit for his unusual and inventive technique of paint application particularly in the landscapes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS: HUMENIUK, MAKARENKO, SAZONOV

The tightening of controls in the seventies brought dissatisfactions to the surface and an open opposition to the officially sanctioned art particularly in Moscow and Leningrad. Ukrainian non-conformist artists working outside Ukraine, especially those in Moscow and Leningrad, voiced their concerns for creative freedom by joining in the non-conformist exhibitions held locally, as well as by organizing exhibits of Ukrainian non-conformist art in Moscow.

Two of them, Volodymyr Makarenko and Feodosii Humeniuk, who had received a secondary art school education in Ukraine and pursued advanced art studies in Leningrad, continued to work there because they found the atmosphere stimulating and supportive of their artistic endeavours. Surrounded by Russian culture, they maintained their Ukrainian heritage, and Ukrainian culture and history remained an integral factor in their creativity. The third artist, Vitalii Sazonov, came to painting without any formal art education, but his abstractions had antecedents in archaeology, which he had studied, and the sacred art of his homeland.

In some respects, Humeniuk and Makarenko were typical of the generation of young Ukrainian artists who were born during the Second World War, grew up in the Soviet system, received their artistic training in the post-Stalin period,

and began to exhibit in the seventies. After a thorough grounding in Socialist Realism, they rejected what they had been taught and came to believe in creative freedom and individual artistic expression. Unlike the artists of the sixties who sought to widen the framework of Socialist Realism, they embarked on a search for new themes and styles more suitable to their personal concerns and vision. They were joined in their quest by Sazonov, who gave up a career in history, to become an artist.

Frustrated in their attempts to exhibit their work publicly they participated in exhibitions of unofficial art in Moscow and Leningrad and smuggled some of their work to the West. As a result of solo exhibitions, Makarenko and Humeniuk, became better known in the West than in the Soviet Union. Eventually all three became so disillusioned with life and working conditions in the Soviet Union that they sought legal ways to emigrate. Two of them, Makarenko and Sazonov, succeeded in leaving for Paris and Munich respectively, while Humeniuk's efforts proved futile.

Feodosii Humeniuk

Unlike some of the artists of his generation who primarily sought models in Western European art, Feodosii Humeniuk found inspiration in his Ukrainian heritage, not just in the officially sanctioned revival of folk art, but in the historic and artistic past of his nation. More consciously than others he sought to express the glory of

the Cossack State through a synthesis of Ukrainian, early twentieth century, and contemporary art.

Humeniuk was born in 1941 in the village of Rybchyntsi, Vinnytsia Province in Ukraine.¹ In search of better living conditions his parents, who were farmers, moved in 1950 to the city of Dnipropetrovs'ke where Humeniuk attended the Dnipropetrovs'ke Art School from 1959 to 1965. At the Art School Humeniuk met fellow student and artist, Volodymyr Makarenko. Both of them attended painting classes conducted by Yakiv Kalashnyk, who had graduated from the Academy of Art in Riga, Latvia, and who guided their artistic development in Dnipropetrovs'ke.² Kalashnyk was responsible for making both of them aware of the existence of Western European art, for introducing them to such

¹ Biographical information about Humeniuk is based on handwritten information from the original manuscript copy of a catalogue prepared by Humeniuk in 1978 and now in the author's archive. This is also based on several conversations and interviews with the artist: 6 and 7 November, 1988 in Dnipropetrovs'ke, 11 December, 1988 in Kiev, 22 and 23 December, 1988 in Leningrad, and 15 March, 1990 in Toronto.

² Lidia Yatsenko in "Zhyvopys Yakova Kalashnyka", in *Mystetstvo*, (Art), no.4 (91), 1969, p. 22-23 writes in a post-humus article on the artist that he graduated from Riga in 1959 and joined the faculty in Dnipropetrovs'ke the same year. He had studied with the Latvian artists O. Skulme and E. Kalnynia and was fond of Van Gogh, Cézanne, and Vrubel. According to the author Kalashnyk favoured bright colours, dark contours and attempted to combine an expressive painterly style with the draftsmanship of old masters. Reproductions of his work show that he worked in a figurative, representational manner, outlining his figures and using clearly visible brushstroke. It is also worth noting that his teachers in Latvia had experienced Western European art and were aware of twentieth century art movements as their country did not come under the domination of the USSR until 1944. Socialist Realism was not as strongly entrenched there as in areas which had been under Soviet domination prior to the Second World War.

artists as Van Gogh and Cézanne, as well as twentieth century art movements.

During their years in Dnipropetrovs'ke, Humeniuk and Makarenko were frequent visitors to the Yavornyts'kyi Museum which housed the archaeological findings from the area including artifacts from the cossack period, as well as many stone figures found in the surrounding steppes and called "kamianni baby" (stone grandmothers) (pl.7.1).³ The museum also had a good collection of folk art paintings, including those of the popular and legendary figure of "Cossack Mamai", that served as models for Humeniuk and Makarenko in some of their later paintings.⁴

In 1962 Humeniuk and Makarenko entered their paintings in the Annual Exhibition of the Dnipropetrovs'ke Museum.

³ "Kamianni baby", meaning "stone grandmothers", were male and female figures carved in stone that were to be found in the steppes of Ukraine, but have since been removed to local museums. They are thought to have originated with the Turkic tribes that moved across the southern parts of Ukraine during the 11th to 13th centuries. They were placed on top of burial mounds, but their meaning is not clear. For further information see *Istoria ukraiins'koho mystetstva: mystetstvo naidavnishykh chasiv ta epokhy kyiiivs'koi Rusi* (History of Ukrainian Art: Art of the Oldest Period to the Epoch of Kievan Rus') Vol. I, pp. 89-90.

⁴ The Cossack Mamai type of folk picture gained in popularity at the end of the eighteenth century. The composition usually included a cossack sitting crossed-legged with his bandura (a folk multi-stringed instrument), sword, horse, tobacco, and a pipe. These pictures often included written texts taken from school theatrical productions known as *vertepy* (meaning a type of Christmas Pageant). This folk art parallels similar descriptions of cossacks in songs and literature. For more information see *Narysy z istoriii ukraiins'koho mystetstva*, p. 100-101.

Their pictures were rejected by the Selection Committee, and the director of the Art School was notified that his students had submitted work with "formalist tendencies".⁵ Makarenko and Humeniuk were told to bring their offending pictures to school, but they refused. In the ensuing controversy Humeniuk gave in and cut up his own painting in order not to be expelled from art school.

Humeniuk's art studies were interrupted by compulsory army duty, which he served in Leipzig, East Germany.⁶ For his diploma in 1965 Humeniuk painted Na Buriakakh (Beet Picking) (pl.7.2) in a predominantly bluish palette, showing smiling young women working in the fields.⁷ Upon graduation he was accepted by the Repin Institute of Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting in Leningrad from which he graduated in 1971. In 1966 his oil Kapusnytsi (Cabbage Pickers) was entered in the Young Artists of Dnipropetrovs'ke Exhibition sponsored by the Komsomol.⁸ While still a student Humeniuk experimented with Cubo-Futurism and "analytical painting" as practiced by Filonov

⁵ "Formalism" is a widely used term to denote all art not acceptable to Socialist Realism. The work does not have to be abstract or non-objective to be so labelled.

⁶ Humeniuk only served for one year because he became ill and was discharged.

⁷ I photographed the painting at the Art School in Dnipropetrovs'ke 5 November, 1988.

⁸ *Tvorchyi zvit molodykh khudozhnykiv Dnipropetrovshchyny 1966* (Creative Report of the Young Artists of the Dnipropetrovs'ke Region 1966) (Dnipropetrovs'ke: Oblasnyi komitet komsomolu, 1966). A copy of the catalogue is in the author's archive.

as may be surmised from *Osin'* (Autumn), 1970 (pl.7.3). In 1971 and 1973 he took part in local exhibitions. Although it is not known which of Humeniuk's works were displayed, there are slides available of some of the paintings from this period which give us an indication of his concerns. At the time his rendering was three dimensional and colours were dark and descriptive, but there were signs of dislocations in time and space.

In *Kozats'ka domovyna* (Cossack Casket), 1972, (pl.7.4) Humeniuk painted a bouquets of eight dried poppy heads standing upright in an imaginary landscape with a white horse and red berries on a stylized bush. There are banner-like bands protruding into the sky from the edges of the canvas as in folk art pictures of Cossack Mamai. On one of these, two words, "haida" and "Maky" appear, which together read "haidamaky", the name given to rebellious Ukrainians who fought the Polish overlords in the eighteenth century and were considered by the common people to be defenders of the Orthodox faith and the Ukrainian people.⁹ As it was not against official policy to mention the haidamaky because they had fought against Poland, not Russia, it would appear that Humeniuk was playing with words, perhaps in the

⁹ According to *Ukraine, a Concise Encyclopedia*, Vol.1, p. 660 the word haidamaky is of Turkish origin and means a restless, rebellious person. Haidamaky emerged at the beginning of the eighteenth century as resisters against the power of the Polish nobility which oppressed the peasants of Ukraine. The haidamaky rebel attacks and peasant disturbances merged into revolts against Polish rule in Right-Bank Ukraine in 1734, 1750, and 1768.

tradition of Surrealist art. However, his depiction of dry poppy heads is more likely intended as a symbol of Ukrainian traditions and an expression of mythological beliefs. Dry poppy heads were thought to ward off evil, and as a result were to be found in many homes.¹⁰ They were also considered to be symbols of fertility, and it is with this in mind, perhaps, that Humeniuk shows one of the heads stripped of their dry hard shell. The horse in Ukrainian folklore was often idealized as a friend of heroes, the guardian of the land.¹¹ Unlike the Surrealists, Humeniuk juxtaposed meaningful images that were meant to convey a message about his homeland.

Humeniuk's concerns with his Ukrainian heritage was even more apparent in a painting called *Virnist' Ukraini* (Loyalty to Ukraine), 1972, (pl.7.5). The composition is dominated by a young woman wearing a multitude of necklaces and ribbons standing behind a table and holding a Kobzar. A rooster with a cross on a chain around its neck is perched on her wrist, indicating that this is not a casual depiction of a young lady with a bird, but a composition with symbolic images.¹²

¹⁰ For a detailed description of the symbolic meaning of poppy heads and seeds see Onats'kyi, *Ukrains'ka mala entsyklopedia*, p. 892-894.

¹¹ Onats'kyi, p. 644 also points out that in pre-historic times the horse was associated with the sun-god. In Christian carols there is mention of a horse that builds churches.

¹² Humeniuk later painted out the cross, so that when the work was exhibited for the first time publicly in Lviv and Kiev in 1988, there was no cross.

The rooster appears in several of Humeniuk's paintings and its incorporation is very likely intended as a sign of new life, of awakening, and perhaps as a symbol of the Christian faith.¹³ The half-cut apple beside the figure could allude to sinfulness, but more likely represents the promise of eternal life.¹⁴ The allegorical figures barely visible in the background strengthen the message of a new beginning. The rendering in this picture is realistic with three dimensional modelling with light and dark reminiscent of Old Masters.

In one of his letters Humeniuk stated that his interest in Ukrainian culture developed after the completion of his studies and entirely on his own.¹⁵ In the same letter he wrote that the discovery of the artist's heritage is his second birth, a spiritual one. It includes the conscious choice to serve your nation and to create an art that is national in content and form, but at the same time remains attached to world culture. On several occasions Humeniuk has stated that *Virnist' Ukraini* was a milestone painting

¹³ Roosters in Ukrainian mythology are symbols of new life. Prof. J. P. Himka wrote in his notes while doing research in Leningrad in 1975 that "Roosters in Humeniuk's paintings symbolize resurrection."

¹⁴ See James Smith Pierce, *From Abacus to Zeus. A Handbook of Art History* (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1977), p. 117 for an explanation of the symbolism of the apple in Christian iconography.

¹⁵ Letter to the author dated 9 September, 1987, p. 1.

that initiated his conscious endeavours to work towards the development of Ukrainian art.¹⁶

In his work Humeniuk has attempted to continue the artistic traditions expounded by Mykhailo Boichuk, who encouraged his students to search for their inspiration in Ukrainian-Byzantine icons, Ukrainian folk art, and Western art rather than in the paintings of the Russian peredvizhniki.¹⁷ Humeniuk also found inspiration in the poetry of Taras Shevchenko and Ukrainian history.¹⁸ In particular he became interested in the cossack period because it revived the traditions of Ukrainian statehood and brought forth a flowering of culture and art.¹⁹ In the 1970s Humeniuk attempted to synthesize his interest in Ukrainian history, old Ukrainian icons, Ukrainian Baroque art, and some aspects of modern art in his paintings.

¹⁶ See Feodosii Humeniuk, "My Rediscovery of Ukraine Through Visual Art", *Echoes of Glasnost in Soviet Ukraine* (Toronto: Captus University Publications, 1989), p. 219.

¹⁷ For information about Boichuk see Chapter One.

¹⁸ Shevchenko had studied at the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg and there is a room dedicated to him at the Repin Institute. When Humeniuk was a student, there were annual concerts held at the Institute commemorating the anniversaries of his birth and death, 9 and 10 of March. Humeniuk was able to study Ukrainian history on his own by reading the works of M. Hrushevs'kyi, Yavornyts'kyi, and Konys'kyi in the library of the Repin Institute. These books were not available in Ukraine because there they had been relegated to special archives.

¹⁹ This period coincided with the Baroque style in architecture which in Ukraine is often referred to as the Cossack Baroque due to the great number of churches and secular buildings constructed in the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries.

His work from the early seventies often was based on the form and composition of Ukrainian icons. In fact sometimes Humeniuk borrowed icon compositions and some aspects of the Byzantine-Ukrainian style, and transformed Christian iconography into his own contemporary visual analogues. At times he elevated historical figures to sainthood as in the oil *Nashi Sviati (Our Saints)*, 1973 (pl.7.6). Here Taras Shevchenko appears in a seven-point cartouche of blue and yellow, colours symbolic of Ukrainian independence, surrounded by a white halo which recalls the figure of Christ and two apostles from the 15th century Transfiguration icons. The thorn wreath held by angels is an obvious symbol of suffering, but the chalice below could be a symbol of sacrifice, redemption or rebirth. The two figures in Ukrainian cossack costume have the haloes of saints, but the appearance of secular historic personages. The woman wears a crown, the chief attribute of queens and the Virgin Mary.²⁰ Unlike the usual depictions of Mary with a lily, she holds a palm branch which is an attribute of martyrs, symbolizing their triumph over death and suggesting perhaps that Humeniuk is depicting Ukraine. The man holds up a two-edged sword and a shield at his side. Both items were used during the Princely Period (10-13th centuries) and not by cossacks and appear usually in icons of St. Mykhail (pl.7.7). The pose is that of St. Mykhail,

²⁰ Explanations of symbols are based on James Smith Pierce, *From Abacus to Zeus*.

the patron saint of Kiev, and a very popular figure in Ukraine, but the shaved head and mustache are those of the cossack period. The ambiguity and mixed symbolism are typical of Humeniuk's work.

Although the figures were painted realistically and were modelled three-dimensionally, there were discrepancies in scale and spatial incongruity. A small doll-like figure, perhaps the soul, heads in the direction of the full chalice.²¹ On the very low horizon, removed into great distance by its small scale, is a white horse. It is impossible to judge the spatial relationship of the scroll. It is similar to such items in old Ukrainian woodcuts where scrolls were used to identify the figure of composition, but it appears blank, as if to say that no explanations are necessary.

In 1974 Humeniuk had a two-man exhibition of his paintings and prints in Dukhtsevo, Czechoslovakia.²² One of his paintings, reproduced on the cover of the fold-out announcement of the exhibit, was *Doroha za silliu* (Trip for Salt), 1974, (pl.7.8). A large image of a roundish fish dominates a barren, hilly landscape with cloud covered sky.

²¹ According to James Smith Pierce, p. 117 in narrative representations the soul is depicted as a little doll-like figure.

²² The exhibition was held at Statni Zamek in the Duchcov Gallery. It was opened on 12 November, 1974 by Dr. Vladimir Fiala. Works by J. Daniel Smetana and Feodosii Humeniuk were displayed.

The round shape painted in the centre of the fish contains a silhouette of mother and child indicating that Humeniuk has painted a "chumak icon".²³ There are small silhouettes of two oxen on the horizon to the left and a windmill on the right. Behind the fish's tail a whitish image of an angel appears which adds to the Surrealist image of the work.

The other painting reproduced in the programme was *Ukrains'kyi motyv* (Ukrainian Motif), 1974, (pl.7.9) which shows a cossack playing the bandura, a horse, a female figure, and a rooster set in a unrealistic landscape of rocks and sky. The cossack is typical of the folk art Mamai types. The girl is enveloped in a mandorla of flowing ribbons more suitable to a religious figure than a peasant. It is possible that Humeniuk is using the girl as a symbol of Ukraine, as he continued to do in many of his later works. The rendering of the figures is simplified, with primitivizing tendencies and a flattening of space favoured by the Boichukisty. The hands are disproportionately small and there are spatial inconsistencies that make a strictly narrative interpretation of the picture difficult.

Despite these successes, the young artist must have felt a dissatisfaction with official art and exhibitions because in December 1974 he participated in the First

²³ Humeniuk claims he discovered such a "chumak icon" on a dried out fish at the Ethnographic Museum in Leningrad.

Exhibition of Unofficial Artists in Leningrad.²⁴ This exhibition, in which fifty artists participated, was open for four days only, but was attended by many people who lined up in the cold in order to see it. Humeniuk had three paintings in this show (pl.7.10), two of which can be identified as *Sviashchennyi krai: moia Ukraino* (Blessed Land: My Ukraine) and *Sviashchennyi krai: povernennia* (Blessed Land: Return). In *Sviashchennyi krai: moia Ukraino* (pl.7.11), also known as *Svite tykhyi* (Silent World)²⁵, a sleeping young woman lies across the front of the composition. In the foreground to the left, Humeniuk has painted the head and upper shoulders of a grey animal that resembles an ox or perhaps a bull.²⁶ The animal wears a wreath around its neck and has a mane of white, but no ears. Outside the platform-like space occupied by the sleeping girl, an angel is depicted seated like a stone sculpture and silhouetted against semi-circular bands of flat colour that echo the symbol of God in old icons. In the centre,

²⁴ See Alexander Glezer, "The Struggle to Exhibit", p. 116 for a more detailed description of this exhibition which opened 22 December at the Gaas Dim Kul'tury (Gaas Cultural Palace). Also see M. Shemiakin, editor, *Apollon'-77*. No publication data, p. 377 for a photograph and list of the participating artists including Humeniuk.

²⁵ "Svite tykhyi" is a quotation from a very well known poem "Rozryta mohyla" (Plundered Grave) by Taras Shevchenko. The poem begins with "Svite tykhyi, krayu mylyi, Moia Ukraino! Za shcho tebe spliundrovaly, Za shcho, mamu, hynesh?" This translates into "Silent world, my dear land, my dear Ukraine! Why have you been plundered, why are you, mother, dying?" In this poem Shevchenko criticizes Hetman Khmelnyts'kyi for having allied Ukraine with Moscow by signing the Treaty of Pereiaslav in 1654.

²⁶ In Western European art Zeus is depicted as a gentle white bull approaching Europa.

directly behind the girl, Humeniuk has positioned a dismounted cossack with a black horse - perhaps another sentinel, this time historical. Above the girl's head there is a bush bearing fruit and a large bird resembling a dove, a symbol of love and peace. A golden apple is positioned beside the sleeping figure on a blue surface.²⁷ Although Humeniuk has used some symbols from religious paintings, he has mixed them with mythological and personal images with no indications that a religious work was intended. In keeping with his other paintings, Humeniuk most likely has painted an allegorical composition in which Ukraine is asleep, guarded by heavenly and earthly figures, but will re-awaken in the near future.

This interpretation is supported by the images of the second painting *Sviashchennyi krai: povernennia* (pl.7.12) which depicts a standing woman with a horse's head and a man wearing peasant or chumak dress, with cattle to the left. A dry fish icon floats in the sky. In the left hand corner the same circular bands appear as in the preceding picture. The depiction of a leafless tree on the horizon could be read as symbolic of death and resurrection, a reminder of the cycles of man and history. "Povernennia" means return and this makes more sense if the two works are considered

²⁷ According to J. S. Pierce, p. 117 when the apple is held by Mary or the infant Jesus or appears near them, it is usually understood to allude to their roles as the Second Eve and the Second Adam who helped to take away the sin of the first man and woman and restored to mankind the promise of eternal life.

together - a return to normal life, here represented as the age long task of tending cattle. In both cases the female figure is depicted as an unmarried woman with a wreath in her hair.²⁸ Representing Ukraine as a maiden is typical of Humeniuk's work. Whether this is a reference to virginity is not certain. What is more likely is the association of Ukraine with Mary and the subsequent substitution.

In both of these paintings flat, simplified areas of colour have replaced most three dimensional modelling. Linear and aerial perspective have been eliminated in favour of overlapping and vertical stacking to indicate space. Humeniuk's palette has become highly saturated, intense, and warm. He has reshaped and distorted nature to create an interesting pattern of forms and hues. Sections of *Sviashchennyi krai: povernennia*, particularly the space surrounding the figures and part of the woman's dress, are filled with abstract patterns of colour.

With paintings depicting allegorical themes and expressive of a personal vision of Ukrainian nationhood in a partially abstract manner, it is not surprising that Humeniuk chose to exhibit his work with unofficial artists at exhibitions which were not always officially sanctioned. When the Second Exhibition of Unofficial Art was held from

²⁸ Until recently it was customary in rural Ukraine for married women to keep their heads covered at all times. Often elaborate headdresses made from scarves and decorative towels were worn.

October 10 to 21, 1975 at the Nevskii dom kul'tury (Nevskii House of Culture) in Leningrad (pl.7.13 and 14) with seventy-eight artists taking part, Humeniuk showed three paintings: *Het'man Vyhovs'kyi*, *Het'man Doroshenko*, and *Costumed Carollers*.²⁹ While *Costumed Carollers* indicate a continuation of Humeniuk's interest in folk traditions, *Vyhovs'kyi* and *Doroshenko*, 1973, heralded a new concern with Ukrainian history as seen from the point of view of a Ukrainian patriot and not the Soviet Government.

Stylistically these two oils continue the partial abstraction of the previous work, but thematically they are the first of Humeniuk's series of paintings depicting Ukrainian hetmans.³⁰ Humeniuk chose to represent leaders who fought for Ukrainian statehood and against foreign domination and suppression of the common people. His portrayals do not attempt to recreate accurately historical events in time and place, but are rather glorifications of the cossack leaders through symbolic images. Humeniuk has interwoven history with folklore, myth with his own imagination. What is of special interest in both of these

²⁹ Slides of these paintings were made available by Prof. J. P. Himka, University of Alberta.

³⁰ Hetmans were elected leaders of the Zaporozhian Cossacks who were heads of the Cossack State from the end of the sixteenth century until the mid-eighteenth century. Some of them became vassals of the tzar after the Treaty of Pereiaslav in 1654, but their actual authority in Ukraine was greatly diminished only after Hetman Mazepa's ill fated alliance with Charles XII of Sweden and their defeat at the Battle of Poltava in 1709 by Peter the Great of Russia. Catherine the Great was responsible for the ultimate liquidation of the cossacks as an organized unit.

paintings is that Humeniuk had chosen to portray leaders who fought Muscovy.³¹

Later that year, Humeniuk organized the First Ukrainian Exhibitions of Non-conformist Art in Moscow which was discussed in Chapter Four. In conjunction with this exhibition Humeniuk prepared a written statement explaining his position as an artist. This was not the manifesto which was displayed during the exhibition for the public, but a personal one that gives an insight into his concerns and views at the time. It reads:

We are not discovering new lands. We Ukrainians have our own land and culture. We only desire to retain that which has been given to us by God. God has given each of us a talent to be an artist, to express himself in a contemporary manner, and we are doing only His bidding. What we do is only from Him; we are the executors of His will. And here He sends us to do certain things in a particular way and in a special manner. Everything is from God. We, the creatures of this world, are performing only His will. Let His Name be blessed!

Our First Ukrainian Exhibition in Russia is not a protest, only a means of showing the creativity of Ukrainian artists, who have not been overcome by the Muscovite wantonness, who have retained their courage to place their minority against those who want to dominate us.

³¹ Ivan Vyhovs'kyi was hetman from 1657 to 1659. He reached an understanding with Poland in which the Ukraine re-entered the Polish commonwealth as the Grand Rus' principality, along with Poland and Lithuania. This was confirmed in the Treaty of Hadiach in 1658 and was viewed by Moscow as a declaration of war. A Muscovite army invaded Ukraine, but was defeated near Konotop on July 8, 1659 by the Ukrainian forces and their Tartar allies. Petro Doroshenko was hetman from 1666 to 1676 and was responsible for freeing Left-Bank Ukraine from Muscovite domination and the brief reunification of Ukrainian territory in 1668. Both of these hetmans are presented as villains in Soviet historiography.

Our group was not joined by artists from Kiev because of their fear of the KGB. This Committee worked before the exhibition, requesting to see many of the young Ukrainian artists and threatening them with consequences if they participated in the Exhibition of Ukrainian Artists. As a result only six artists participated in the First Exhibition of Ukrainian Artists: Feodosii Humeniuk, Natalka Pavlenko, Volodymyr Makarenko, etc. There were attacks and arrests in Ukraine, I was told. We share our culture at the level of our cultural rebirth. To start anew in this age we Ukrainians need to continue our culture. Our group is composed of young artists who have graduated from secondary art schools in Ukraine and continued our studies at higher art institutions in Russia. Volodymyr Makarenko graduated from the Mukhina Institute, F. Humeniuk from the Repin Institute, Natalka Pavlenko studied at the Physics Faculty of the University, etc. We were raised on the frescoes of St. Sophia, on the paintings of Lavra. Our year...³²

From this statement it is apparent that Humeniuk felt a great need to express his feelings as a Ukrainian artist. He wanted freedom for Ukrainian artists to create and exhibit as a separate group and felt threatened by the policies of Russification of Ukrainian culture. This statement also makes clear Humeniuk's belief in God and his own destiny as a Ukrainian artist.

Available photographs from this exhibition show two walls with Humeniuk's work (pl.4.97 and pl.7.15) which consisted of two still life compositions that showed an attempt at primitivizing, two compositions with bouquets of dried poppy heads, and three paintings which have been

³² Prof. John Paul Himka of the University of Alberta has a written first draft of this statement which was authenticated by Humeniuk, 10 February, 1989 in Toronto. A photocopy of the latter is in the author's archive.

discussed: Chumats'kyi shliakh (Chumak Road), 1973, and two larger paintings with figures based on Ukrainian themes, Virnist' Ukrainini and Sviashchennyi krai.

Photographs from the Second Ukrainian Exhibition show that the following paintings were displayed: Chumats'kyi shliakh, Chumats'ka dolia (Chumak Fate), 1975, Hetman Doroshenko, 1975, an unidentified painting with "chumak icon", Kozats'ka domovyna, and Virnist' Ukrainini on one wall (pl.7.16) and Het'many, 1976, on another (pl.7.17). These paintings indicate that Humeniuk's iconography continued to be based on Ukrainian ethnographic traditions and history.

An interesting work from this period, one that was a continuation of the hetman series, is Staryi Hetman (Old Hetman), 1976, (pl.7.18) in which Humeniuk dared to portray Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who was considered a traitor by the Soviet authorities.³³ Humeniuk depicted Mazepa in the centre of his composition in full hetman regalia. Behind him he painted such familiar symbolic images as a white horse with flying angel, and in the red semi-circle a rooster with cross, and a banner with the Mother of God and

³³ Ivan Mazepa was hetman of Ukraine from 1687 to 1709. He was an able politician and diplomat who tried to unify the Ukrainian lands. At first he supported Peter I in his war against Sweden, but in 1705 began negotiations with King Charles XII. In the decisive battle of Poltava Mazepa fought with the Swedes and lost. During his hetmanate Ukrainian art and culture flourished with his support. Soviet history texts consider him a traitor because he changed sides, while nationalist historiography treats him as a national hero because he tried to throw off the Muscovite domination of Ukraine.

Child. The angel holds out a wreath on fire. To ensure proper identification Mazepa's coat of arms is presented at his feet. Humeniuk surrounds the figure of Mazepa with images related to his life. There is Peter I brandishing a sword and holding a globe in his hand with the black double-headed eagle of Great Russia, and golden cupolas of a church behind him. Mazepa's mother holding a cross was shown to one side and the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church who were instructed by Peter the Great to excommunicate him as a traitor on the other. The composition resembles eighteenth century folk art models where the hetman is depicted in the centre surrounded by images symbolic of his office. It represents a culmination of elements characteristic of Humeniuk's work, but is more narrative than most of his other historical compositions.

In 1976 Humeniuk started another series of paintings that he was to continue in the future, a series of pictures based on the traditions of religious holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and the Pentecost, the celebrations of which were not encouraged by the atheist state. In *Zeleni Sviata*³⁴ (Green Holiday), 1976, (pl.7.19) Humeniuk portrayed a cossack and maiden with customary attributes of horse and rooster, but he surrounded them with a brightly

³⁴ "Zeleni sviata" is the equivalent in name of Whitsuntide which is the first in the series of pagan summer holidays. In Christian times the name "Zeleni sviata" was transferred to the celebration of the Pentecost. As in pre-Christian times the houses and churches were decorated with green branches. There are no green branches in Humeniuk's picture and no visible signs of a religious nature.

coloured abstract ground, the details of which echo Malevich's cubist canvases of the 1910s. There are reminiscences of Malevich in the tubular modelling of figures particularly of the cossack. There are no religious symbols and the work appears entirely ethnographic in nature. It does not, however, depict Soviet reality, but focuses on the past and lost folk customs.

Not surprisingly, shortly after the Second Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Art, Humeniuk started having problems with the authorities and his permit to continue living in Leningrad was withdrawn.³⁵ Eventually at the end of the year, he was forced to move with his wife and child to Dnipropetrovs'ke, a provincial city in Ukraine, far removed from artistic centres.³⁶ The move to get rid of Humeniuk coincided with a widespread offensive by the KGB against the creative intelligentsia in Leningrad and followed the wave of arrests in Ukraine that had started in 1972 and intensified in the mid-seventies.

At first life in Dnipropetrovs'ke appeared to proceed normally. Humeniuk applied for work in the Monumental Art

³⁵ In his article "My Rediscovery of Ukraine Through Visual Art", p. 220 Humeniuk describes how his permission to live in Leningrad was taken away.

³⁶ In Dnipropetrovs'ke Humeniuk did not find any interest in or understanding of his or Makarenko's art and what they were trying to achieve. In one of his letters he wrote: "This type of art is not understood here, even by people that I respect." From an undated letter to Makarenko (no.1) in the author's archive.

Section of the local Art Fund from which he received several commissions. His paintings were accepted for the Autumn Exhibition in Dnipropetrov'ske. However, Humeniuk soon found himself under surveillance by the local KGB and his mail was opened.³⁷ Then his proposals to the Art Fund were rejected and eventually no work came his way. In desperation Humeniuk arranged for an invitation by fictitious relatives to emigrate to Israel³⁸. He also begged his Canadian friends to invite him to come to Canada.³⁹ Permission to emigrate was denied, the harassment intensified, and friends of the Humeniuk's were questioned and advised not to associate with them. Rumours were spread that Humeniuk was "sick in the head" as a youngster and that this affliction had reappeared. He was accused of being a "nationalist", a CIA agent, and an OUN spy.⁴⁰ In the end Humeniuk was left in virtual isolation

³⁷ In one of his letters Humeniuk wrote that " This is not Leningrad, sad to say. In this accursed city there are different laws that apply only here, and there is nothing one can do about this." Author's archive, Letter no. 2.

³⁸ At the time the Soviet Union allowed immigration only to Israel regardless of the ethnic origin of the applicants or their destination. Undesirable citizens were often provided with fictitious relatives in Israel in order to get them out of the country. People desperately wanting to emigrate resorted to the same methods.

³⁹ Photocopies of letters to Prof. J. P. Himka of Edmonton and Roman Zurba of Toronto in which Humeniuk asked to be sponsored to Canada are in the author's archive.

⁴⁰ These accusations were voiced by Communist Party representatives at meetings of the Monumental Art Section of the Art Fund. Later they appeared in print in an article by Olexa Vusyk, "Koly spadaie maska" (When the Mask Falls) in Dnipropetrovs'ka zoiia. 26 November, 1982, p. 2. OUN (Orhanizatsia ukraiins'kykh natsionalistiv which means Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) was an organization of

and without any means of supporting his family. Fortunately his wife, Natalka, was able to continue earning a living.⁴¹

Despite these traumatizing experiences Humeniuk continued to paint although it is not clear how he obtained his art supplies. In fact what Humeniuk painted at this difficult time was a series of pictures with bouquets of dry poppy heads. As perhaps could be expected their palette was subdued and cold without the high intensity hues of previous work. There were several versions of *Maky*, each with a bouquet of dry poppy heads in the centre of the canvas set against a bleak landscape. In one composition a church and peasant houses appear in the distance; in another, there are city houses along with an angel, a horse with cossack sword hanging from a limb of a cut-off tree, but no cossack. In 1979 Humeniuk painted *Chumats'ka dolia* (Chumak Fate) (pl.7.20) in which he combined the dry poppy head bouquet image with that of the dry fish icon resulting in an original and personal symbolism that has no precedents and is based on his Christian faith and forgotten Ukrainian folk traditions. The composition is equally inventive. Humeniuk has set the fish icon against a bouquet of twelve dry poppy heads, perhaps intentionally symbolic of the apostles,

Ukrainian militant nationalists that was active between the wars in Ukraine and fought both the Nazis and Communists in World War II. It was suppressed by the Soviet Government by the early 1950s.

⁴¹ In 1983 the family was able to move back to Leningrad where both Humeniuk and his wife found work and Humeniuk's pictures were accepted for local exhibits.

floating strangely like a balloon in a desolate landscape. On the other hand the State considered religion to be "the opium of the people", and opium is derived from poppies. One of the poppy heads is cracked open to reveal fine vertical lines. Thus multiple readings of the depiction are possible. The fish, of course, by itself is a symbol of Christianity. The composition is symmetrical and frontal as in religious pictures, suggesting that Humeniuk has painted a contemporary icon, and at the same time has made a statement about his artistic and religious freedoms.

The element of the fantastic is enhanced by the rendering of space and the play of light over the forms. Humeniuk's modelling emphasizes the similarities in the shape of the fish and poppy heads and the details of the fish tail and poppy stems. The unrealistic use of bluish-ochre colours and the unnatural flickering light contribute to the enigmatic atmosphere and at the same time unite the composition.

However, not all of the artist's work at this difficult time was marked by brooding tones. His themes varied as well. During his enforced stay in Dnipropetrovs'ke Humeniuk continued to use religious elements as part of his historical or allegorical compositions in which he depicted past glory to make a statement about the future of

Ukraine.⁴² In these works the palette continued to be rich and intense. *Moia Ukrainina (My Ukraine)*, 1979, (pl.7.21) is a good example of this type of painting. A reclining figure of a girl in folk dress sweeps in a graceful s-curve diagonally across the foreground. She appears entwined with ribbons that also form a halo around her head. Above her at the apex of the pyramidal design Humeniuk positions a cossack, as bandura player, in the familiar pose of cossack Mamai from folk art paintings.⁴³ Traditionally cossacks were considered as symbols of Ukrainian independence and its defenders while bandura players or minstrels were the transmitters of Ukrainian oral history.⁴⁴ To the right Humeniuk painted the Baroque church in Subotiv, built by

⁴² Prof. W. Isajiw of the University of Toronto has stated in an unpublished paper "The Symbolic and the Unific in Ukrainian Culture" that the symbolic cognitive form of thought as opposed to the rational is dominant among Ukrainians and that this manifests itself in the use of the past to make a symbolic statement about the future.

⁴³ The pose of the cossack bandura player is almost a direct quotation from the folk art paintings of cossack Mamai. The position of the hands is the same as in *Cossack Banduryst (Cossack Bandura Player)*, 18th c. folk painting from the Taranushchenko Collection in Kiev, reproduced in colour in *Istoria ukraiins'koho mystetstva*. Vol. 3, on the front cover of the book jacket.

⁴⁴ Bandura players or minstrels were very popular in Ukraine, and quite a number of them were active until 1933. That year the Soviet Government called a congress of all players and had all of the participants shot. According to Shostakovitch writing in *Testimony: Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 214-215 over three hundred were thus liquidated. This virtually wiped out the oral history tradition in Ukraine and appears to have been a deliberate act by Stalin in his attempt to destroy the Ukrainians as a national entity.

Hetman Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi in 1653, in flames.⁴⁵ It is not clear whether this refers to the destruction of church architecture and other cultural masterpieces by the Soviet Government or simply to the destruction of organized religious activity, because the church itself is still standing. It could be a reference to the flames of revolution. To the left Humeniuk depicted four cossacks on white horses carrying banners with religious images of Mother of God and Christ. This suggests the sanctity of the cossack quest in their fight for independence. Behind the bandura playing cossack there is a flying angel against concentric semi-circles that echo the depiction of God the Father in old icons. The whole composition is highly reminiscent of church frescoes and icons particularly of the Dormition type (pl.7.22).⁴⁶ As a matter of fact it appears that there are direct parallels. Humeniuk has replaced Christ with a cossack playing the bandura and the Mother of God with Ukraine. Instead of a group of saints Humeniuk depicts cossacks on horses. The portrayal of the flying angel and the use of the traditional iconography of God the Father may be interpreted as sacred witnesses not only of the historic past, but also as being present in the attainments of the future.

⁴⁵ Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi was hetman of Ukraine from 1648 to 1657. He signed the ill-fated Pereiaslav Treaty with the tsar of Moscow in 1654, which began the period of gradual Russian encroachment on Ukraine.

⁴⁶ Icon of the Dormition, 12-13th cen. from the Monastery of the Tithes near Novgorod shows a similarity of composition and iconography, as do some others.

By the late seventies Humeniuk's colour and style had undergone a change which is evident in *My Ukraine*. He abandoned modelling in favour of flat, simplified areas of colour, and a rich highly saturated palette. In *My Ukraine* there is a palpitating rhythm created by the juxtaposing of complex, multi-hued surfaces against simplified flat forms. The vibrant yellows, reds, greens, and blues are those of Ukrainian folk art of the Dnipropetrovs'ke region where Humeniuk lived as a student and was forced to return in 1976. There is a new dynamic quality in the composition and less symmetry. Possibly there are echoes of the work of Malevich from his Cubo-Futurist period of 1912-13 and such paintings as *The Knife Grinder* (pl.7.23) where the whole surface has been broken into flat facets of colour and shapes that are partly modelled.⁴⁷ This is particularly true of the details in the girl's dress, but may also be seen in the drapery of the angel.

There are vestiges of three-dimensional space in the modelling of the faces, in the fullness of the skirts, and in the horses seen frontally. Faces in particular, do not appear well integrated into the crisp areas of flat, high intensity hues. There is a strange expression of detachment in the faces of both the cossack and the girl, and there is

⁴⁷ According to Makarenko, Malevich's paintings were accessible to art students in Leningrad at the State Museum of Russian Art, and Humeniuk had an opportunity to study them. Included in the collection were such pictures as *Marfa* and *Vanka* and *Portrait of Ivan Vasilievich Kliun*, 1911.

partial stylization of their features which parallels the contrast between flat and modelled spaces.

The meaning of the work is not clear. It could be the depiction of the ethnographic past, as suggested by the bright dancing shapes of colour, or it could express the feelings underlying the sad and strangely detached expression of the faces. This ambiguity of meaning parallels the more complex composition and the new abstraction and flatness evident in Humeniuk's work.

Such paintings left Humeniuk open to criticism, not only for inappropriate content, but also for rejecting "realism" in favour of "a cold, calculated stylization".⁴⁸ Claiming creative freedom to express himself as an artist, Humeniuk continued his lonely quest for an art that would best express his concerns as a contemporary Ukrainian artist.

It is this obvious historical content of much of Humeniuk's work with its patriotic message that separates Humeniuk from other Soviet painters. At least three of the artists who participated in the Moscow exhibitions have stated that Humeniuk was responsible for instilling in them a sense of Ukrainian identity and encouraging them to search

⁴⁸ In 1982 a long article appeared in the Communist Party of Dnipropetrovs'ke newspaper critical of Humeniuk. See Olexa Vusyk, "Koly spadaye maska", p. 2.

for inspiration in their national heritage.⁴⁹ He was not only instrumental in bringing the Ukrainian non-conformist artists together for exhibitions in Moscow, but did much to re-awaken in them a feeling of national consciousness.

Volodymyr Makarenko

Although Volodymyr Makarenko is not a narrative painter, some of his works are visual texts that can have multiple readings. Usually they are complex, but harmonious compositions full of surprises and meticulously textured surfaces. Like Humeniuk, Makarenko has synthesized Western and Ukrainian art sources to create his own artistic vocabulary that includes elements of fantasy and nostalgia.

Volodymyr Makarenko was born 26 July, 1943 in the village of Verkhovtsi where his father was a railway engineer, but he spent his early childhood in the nearby village of Nova Pushkarivka not far from the city of Dnipropetrovs'ke.⁵⁰ When he was five years of age, his parents separated and two years later his mother, a primary school teacher, moved to Dnipropetrovs'ke taking her only son with her.

⁴⁹ The three artists were Volodymyr Makarenko, Vitalii Sazonov, and Volodymyr Strel'nikov. These sentiments were expressed to the author in taped interviews with the three artists.

⁵⁰ All biographical information about Makarenko is based on three taped interviews conducted by the author in Paris on December 3rd and 8th, 1986 and London, on June 29, 1987.

Makarenko was accepted by the Dnipropetrovs'ke Art School into the painting programme in 1958.⁵¹ It was here that he met another fellow artist, Feodosii Humeniuk. Together they paid frequent visits to the Yavornyts'kii Museum with its rich collection of "kamianni baby" and folk art paintings of "Cossack Mamai" which Makarenko greatly admires to this day.

Of all his art teachers Makarenko remembers Yakiv Kalashnyk most warmly, and credits him with guiding his artistic development in Dnipropetrovs'ke. Kalashnyk, according to Makarenko, was the first teacher who made him and Humeniuk aware of art other than the official art taught at the school. He was responsible for opening their eyes to the existence of Western European art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Officially at the Art School students were taught from the examples of classical Russian realist artists such as Vasiliï Surikov (1848-1916), Valentin Serov (1865-1911), and Isaak Levitan (1861-1900).⁵² Socialist Realism artists to

⁵¹ Not all applicants were accepted. In order to be accepted the candidate had to pass an entrance exam which included drawing, water colour painting, and composition. This type of art school is the approximate equivalent to the specialized secondary schools in Canada where part of the curriculum includes art subjects. For details see article by Oleksii Sokal's'kyi, "Vykhovannia khudozhnyka" (The Education of an Artist), *Mystetstvo*, No. 1, 1966, p. 22.

⁵² Some of the same names are listed in an article by Andrii Trypil's'kyi "Zakony krasny" (Laws of Beauty), *Mystetstvo*, No. 6, 1964, p. 7.

be emulated included the Russian artists Aleksandr Lakhtionov (1910-1972), Nikolai Romadin (1903), and Boris Ioganson (1893-1973). Learning from old masters was not encouraged as their art was considered bourgeois.⁵³

Makarenko painted his first large oil as an individual assignment under Kalashnyk's supervision. The subject suggested by Kalashnyk was picking cabbages in the field. Also at his suggestion Makarenko used a predominantly blue palette with ochre and sienna highlights. Makarenko remembers being surprised at the suggestion of using a limited palette, but states that he was very pleased with the finished painting which he named *U holubomu krayu* (In the Pale Blue Land). As a matter of fact he was so proud of his work that he decided to submit it to the Annual Exhibition at the Dnipropetrovs'ke Museum and this got him into trouble at the art school because the Selection Committee decided that the painting had "formalist tendencies".

Threatened with expulsion if he did not destroy his painting, Makarenko managed to survive the ensuing pressure at a special meeting of students and teachers called to condemn him. During this meeting Makarenko was accused by

⁵³ A. M. Gerasimov in *Za sotsialisticheskii realizm. Sbornik statei i dokladov* (For Socialist Realism: Collection of Essays and Lectures) (Moscow: Academia Khudozhestv SSSR, 1952), p. 84 says that some old masters were acknowledged. These included Rembrandt, Velasquez, Rubens, Frans Hals, Courbet, Delacroix, Gericault, David, and Ingres.

one of the teachers of working for the White House, of which he knew nothing at the time.⁵⁴ Because some of the teachers defended him as a good student and talented artist, the matter was referred to a committee and eventually Makarenko was reinstated, but warned to paint naturalistically from real life. Throughout the ordeal he had the backing of Kalashnyk who encouraged him to stand up for his beliefs in artistic freedom.⁵⁵

For his diploma work in 1963 Makarenko painted construction workers (pl.7.24). The picture was criticized for the colourful dresses worn by the women and for the distraction from work provided by the boy with flowers, but in the end it was accepted with a grade of four.⁵⁶

Makarenko was advised by one of his teachers not to study at the Kiev Art Institute, but to go to Moscow or Leningrad where the creative atmosphere was freer.⁵⁷ He applied and

⁵⁴ This was a reference to the residence of American presidents in Washington.

⁵⁵ It is interesting that in 1967 Kalashnyk himself painted a picture called *U holubomu krayu* (meaning In the Pale Blue Land) which was hung together with Makarenko's painting at the memorial exhibition held in Dnipropetrovske after Kalashnyk's death. This painting, one of the last ones completed by Kalashnyk, was reproduced in the official art journal, *Mystetstvo*, no. 4 (91), 1969, p. 23. Unfortunately Makarenko's painting is not available and there are no photographs.

⁵⁶ In the grading system used, the highest mark is a five. It is usually reserved for compositions of heroic war efforts or revolutionary deeds.

⁵⁷ Sjeclocha and Mead, p. 104 say:
Ironically, it is in the two metropolitan centres, where official culture policy originates, that the

was accepted by the Mukhina Applied Arts Institute in Leningrad into the Monumental Art Faculty. Out of eleven first-year students, there were three others from Ukraine including Volodymyr Tsiupko from Odessa, who had left the Art Institute in Kiev after two years of study because he found the curriculum too rigid and the atmosphere very restrictive. The other two were also from Odessa.

In Makarenko's opinion the atmosphere at the Mukhina Institute was not as restrictive as at the Repin Institute of Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting (the former Academy of Art in Leningrad) because more freedom was allowed in the applied and decorative arts than in the fine arts. Because of the Mukhina Institute's orientation towards monumental art, the students there studied Leger, Corbusier, the Mexican School, and Picasso. Even some slight borrowing from Kandinsky and Malevich was permitted. Old church art was also studied, and students were given permission to make copies of ancient icons. The art history courses included the study of Western art such as Cubism and abstraction which were shown as examples of decadence in art.

At the time it was possible for art students to borrow books from the library of the Hermitage on Western art and

unofficial artists enjoy the greatest freedom. However, in the provinces, away from the watchful eye of the cultural officials where one might expect unofficial groups to flourish, local political control is so restrictive that the artist can do little more than echo the approved official sentiments emanating from Moscow.

artists. The Skira series of art books were especially valued, and students would save money in the hope of being able to purchase one of them when they were available from local art bookstores. Makarenko eventually acquired a book on Cubism and one on metaphysical painting with work by De Chirico and Carra. When a student bought an art book published in the West, all his friends would gather to look at the book and discuss the reproductions. Most of the discussions were based on visual appreciation of the work as few students could read English, French or German well enough to be able to understand the text fully. This meant that attempts by students to follow the work of Western artists were not based on theoretical understanding of their paintings, but on purely visual evidence gained from reproductions. Makarenko's favourite artists then included Piero della Francesca, Botticelli, Cézanne, and Modigliani.

Having completed his first year at the Mukhina Art Institute, Makarenko was called up for army duty, but managed to get himself discharged due to ill health by a friendly physician. Upon his return to Leningrad in the spring of 1965 he painted SUETA (pl.7.25). It shows a young man playing a sopilka, a popular folk wind instrument similar to a recorder, reclining on a rock with a woman lying across the bottom of the canvas with lighted candles sticking up from her supine body. Surrounding the couple are semi-abstract circular forms on which, on the left, the

letters "CYETA" are visible.⁵⁸ The breaking up of forms into geometric shapes, the use of a printed word, and the shallow space are indicative of Makarenko's interest in analytical Cubism and Cubo-Futurism.

In 1967 Makarenko painted *Bozha maty* (Mother of God) (pl.7.26), which shows signs of the vocabulary he was to develop further as a professional artist. A bell shape outlined in ochre in a predominately blue palette dominates the rectangular canvas, a shape that could also be seen as an outline of a head covered by a veil or with long hair. Inside this centrally placed form, similar shapes are repeated. Starting with the inside there is a bust with a suggestion of open hands and reminiscent of the Christ Child form found in such icons as *The Virgin of Pechersk* (also known as *The Virgin of Svena*), c. 1288, *The Virgin Great Panagia*, c.12th cen. now in the Tretyakov Gallery or *Pokrova* (*The Intercession*), 12-13th cen. now in the National Museum in Kiev (pl.7.27). Surrounding this figure is yet another bell shape with a yellowish halo which in turn is found within a larger similar form of ochre and dark blue that is part of the torso of what appears to be a woman with her mouth gagged by whitish boards. Outside this main form at shoulder level to the inner figure, there are upturned hands

⁵⁸ The word "SUETA", written as "CYETA" in Russian, means vanity in Ukrainian and Russian. It can also mean fuss or bustle. The ambiguity of meaning is probably intentional. Makarenko had returned to Leningrad to find that the girl he was in love with had found someone else in his absence. This painting was done while he was trying to come to terms with the loss of his girlfriend.

with radiating bands of ochre and blue moving diagonally outward. The upturned palms echo those of the St. Sophia Oranta in Kiev and other icons of the Pokrova type.⁵⁹ There is a suggestion of a cross in the background with a rectangle of sky with clouds on the left and a thorn wreath to the right.

The composition is frontal and static reflecting Makarenko's interest in religious art while at the same time it is indicative of his personal imagery not based on observations of nature, but conceptualized. Furthermore The Mother of God makes an obvious statement about the lack of freedom in Soviet society, freedom of expression - religious, political, and artistic. Makarenko, in this unofficial student painting, has transformed the ancient icon images into a contemporary symbolic statement of Soviet life.

Prototypes for Makarenko's layers of bell shapes may be seen in the multiple arches surrounding the Virgin in The Pokrova icon of the 12-13th centuries from Kiev. The silhouettes of the stone steppe babas near Dnipropetrovs'ke also resemble a bell shape. Until the Soviet government

⁵⁹ Pokrova means Protectress and is derived from the word "pokrov" or maphorion or veil of the Virgin. The Virgin is depicted in a standing frontal position facing the spectator. Her arms are raised in a gesture of prayer with a veil spread from hand to hand. This image is thought to have been derived from the image of the Virgin in mosaic in the apse of the church of the Blachernae in Constantinople where the Virgin's veil was preserved. This image of the Virgin was very popular in Ukraine.

declared war on religion, bells played an important part in keeping the population informed about the death of parishioners, fire in the community, and other emergencies. Separate belfries were part of every village church in Ukraine and may be seen even presently as part of the church complex of St. Sophia and the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. Although bells are gone now and no longer are an indispensable part of daily life, Makarenko could not avoid seeing the belfries and must have been aware of the significance of bells in Ukrainian culture. The limited palette of blues and ochres, however, recalls his earlier monochromatic work *U holubomu krayu* and not the earthly hues of browns, ochres, greens and reds of most religious art.

Another possible source for Makarenko's layered bell shape may be the popular multi-layered wooden dolls sold in shops throughout the Soviet Union and even exported to the West. As each doll is opened, it reveals a smaller doll inside. The simplified doll's silhouette resembles Makarenko's forms. Even though there is a new doll inside, all the dolls are very similar except for size. Unlike the dolls, each new layer in the artist's image has variations as if to say that there are several layers of reality, each one somewhat different.

While Makarenko was in his final year at the Institute, he saw an exhibition of watercolours by Mikhail Shemiakin,⁶⁰ and later met the much talked about, non-conformist artist who had been in conflict with the authorities.⁶¹ Makarenko was impressed by the technique and composition of Shemiakin's paintings.

At the time of their meeting Shemiakin was the leader of The Petersburg Group of Artists⁶² whose aims were "freedom from pseudo-innovations, escape from pseudo-individuality and freedom from the chains of ignorance which

⁶⁰ There is uncertainty about the date of their meeting as the exhibition mentioned by Makarenko was held in 1966 at the Rimsky-Korsakoff Conservatory and not in 1968, the final year of his studies at the Institute. For confirmation of exhibition date see Mihail Chemiakin (Paris: Galerie Altmann Carpentier, 1976), p. 96 or *L'art russe non officiel* (Musée du Vieux de Laval, 1978), p. 28.

⁶¹ Shemiakin was born in Moscow in 1943 and in 1957 entered the Repin School of Art, but was expelled after two years for "formalism". He was the organizer of The Petersburg Group of Artists which came together at the beginning of 1960 according to Shemiakin (Chemiakin) writing in the introduction of Vladimir Makarenko. Catalogue. (Paris: Galerie Hardy, 1976). *L'art russe non officiel*, p. 33 also gives the date as 1960, but some other sources such as *La peinture russe contemporaine* (Paris: Palais des Congres, 1976), p. 44, give the date as 1964. Shemiakin was detained in a psychiatric hospital for his unorthodox views on art in 1961. In 1964 he participated with five other artists in an exhibition held at the Hermitage. This exhibition was closed by the KGB and the director of the museum, Academician Artamonov, was dismissed. In 1971 Shemiakin emigrated to Paris and now lives in New York.

⁶² The choice of name is perhaps significant as it indicates the rebellion against authority and the adoption of the original name of the city of Leningrad. When it was established by Peter the Great, the city was called Sankt Petersburg, but later was renamed Petrograd, and then after Lenin's death it became Leningrad.

confine contemporary artists in irons".⁶³ Furthermore in keeping with Kandinsky, The Group wished to built spiritual bridges between the old and new, ignoring the superficial, exterior stylization in favour of studying the original sources of art and the laws of one of the greatest metaphysical arts - the Russian icon.⁶⁴ The objectives of The Group were elaborated in the Metaphysical Synthetism Programme prepared by Shemiakin and Vladimir Ivanov, a member of The Group. This programme included such statements as,

1. God is the basis of Beauty., 2. Art means the paths of Beauty leading to God...The icon is the most complete and perfect form of the revelation of Beauty in the world. All the efforts of the Metaphysical Synthetists are directed towards the creation of a new icon-painting.⁶⁵

Makarenko was already aware of the mystical quality inherent in old icons and was consciously striving to recreate the spiritual intensity of the icon in his work, as may be seen from his paintings Pokrova and Mother of God. Therefore, it is not surprising that he felt an affinity with The Group and joined it. Makarenko says that what appealed to him most was The Group's belief that one should not copy nature but should follow his own inner conceptions. Also it filled his need to counter the superficial manifestations of

⁶³ M. Chemiakin, "Introduction", Vladimir Makarenko, p. 5 and 8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 6 and 9.

⁶⁵ For a more detailed description of the manifesto see M. Scammel /ed./ Soviet Art in Exile, p. 155-157.

Socialist Realist art and introduced him to a new technique which he later adopted.⁶⁶

Makarenko now claims that he was not a regular member of The Group because he still spent most of his time with his friends from the Institute and was too busy working on his diploma project. However, the impact on his art of the early 1970s is obvious, as will be shown later. By that time Shemiakin was living in Paris and the activities of The Group had ceased.

For his diploma project Makarenko chose the depiction of the history of the theatre and received approval under the cultural category. It was to be executed as a wall decoration in fired and glazed clay. The final version was a rendering to scale on paper with gouache colours, as well as fired sections in actual size. It showed some selected aspects of the development of theatre from the Classical Greek to the present in stylized, symbolic forms. The contemporary actors were shown in long gowns which the head of the monumental art department found unrealistic. Makarenko, however, refused to shorten the dresses claiming that to follow current fashion was not his intention and that long robes were more appropriate. The Diploma Committee which included outside examiners from Moscow and

⁶⁶ This technique introduced to The Group by Shemiakin involved imprinting paper with a pattern of spatters by means of etching and then drawing outlines in ink and painting with multiple layers of watercolours or gouaches.

representatives from the Academy of Art judged the work acceptable and gave Makarenko a grade of four.

In order to obtain work as an artist Makarenko had to be accepted into one of the sections of the Art Fund. It was generally believed by young artists that to be accepted one had to create very naturalistically rendered pictures with a socialist message. Despite advice not to do so, Makarenko says that he submitted his private paintings and stylized studies for some decorative wall panels. To everyone's amazement the work was found acceptable and Makarenko was congratulated for being "a real artist" by the members of the Admissions Committee. This gave Makarenko confidence to continue working to satisfy his own creative needs. It also confirmed his suspicions that members of selection committees were able to recognize good art and to allow it as long as it did not deviate too much from Socialist Realist norms, and as long as this was in the decorative arts field.

Makarenko's first paid assignment as an artist was the creation of decorative enamel panels for the ship Yurii Gagarin. In fact, one of Makarenko's teachers, Kazamtsev, had the contract to decorate the ship and hired Makarenko to execute fifteen of the panels.

A year later, Makarenko was asked to present his work before a Review Committee of the Central Art Fund from

Moscow. Once again he chose watercolours and drawings he had done privately because he believed that he should be honest and not submit work prepared especially for the occasion. He expected to be criticized and dismissed from the Art Fund, but instead was rewarded with compliments. As a result of his experiences Makarenko feels that often self-censorship by the individual artists is stronger than that of the official committees. It is impossible to judge how different Makarenko's work was from the typical Socialist Realism pictures, as no reproductions from this period are available.

Makarenko claims that he found it difficult to accept the duality of existence common in the Soviet Union where individuals lead double lives and where a dual economic system is in existence. Most good artists, according to him, produce private and public art, just as mechanics, plumbers, or just about everyone else who works for the state, at the same time works on the side, which is not legal under the present system, but which is often tolerated. Makarenko considered himself lucky to have been able to work creatively without having to compromise his beliefs and to have found support for his work from official committees and some of his teachers.

However, he was not as fortunate with exhibition committees. Although he submitted paintings regularly to exhibitions in 1967, 1968, and 1969 they were rejected just

as regularly. Only in 1970 did he succeed in getting a work accepted in the applied arts category. The same work entered as an easel painting would be rejected because of "formalism", yet be condoned if labelled "plan for a building decoration" and submitted in the decorative and applied art section where stylization and partial abstraction were judged acceptable.

What Makarenko's private art was like at this time may be seen from two available oils, *Blahovishchennia* (Annunciation), 1972, (pl.7.28) and *Still Life*, 1973 (pl.7.29). The influence of religious art is immediately apparent in *Annunciation* even without the title, in the pose of the figure and the angel in the upper left.⁶⁷ There is a stark contrast between the finely modelled face of the Virgin, which is more reminiscent of the Italian Renaissance and Leonardo da Vinci than the icon tradition, and the flat bands of colour surrounding her. Yet, prototypes for this may be seen in some 16th and 17th century icons, where under the influence of the Renaissance the face has been realistically rendered and gently modelled in three dimensions whereas the garments and background have retained the flatness and linearity of the Ukrainian-Byzantine tradition.⁶⁸ Makarenko has gone a step further by reducing

⁶⁷ Makarenko has given this work alternating titles of *Mother of God* and *Annunciation* or used both together.

⁶⁸ Examples of this may be seen in the Lviv Museum of Ukrainian Art in the icon of *Mykyta*, mid 16th cen., from the church of *Paraskeva Piatnytsia* in the village of *Il'ky*, Lviv Region.

the background to four bands of flat colours and abstracting the halo, veil, and some of the clothing.

In this work Makarenko does not follow the traditional composition of the Annunciation where the angel is usually represented of equal size with Mary, but allows the figure of Mary to dominate. A dark, almost black shadow envelopes Mary and echoes her dark features. Also not in keeping with traditional iconography are the mask-like forms resembling an oval shield to the lower left and the sword to the right.

In Ukrainian religious art, Mary is seen as the intermediary between human beings and God the Son. She is not depicted with attributes of conquest or war. In the Deesis Range of the iconostasis she is shown in a prayerful, intercessionary pose to the right of Jesus Enthroned.⁶⁹ In Makarenko's painting her eyes are upturned and face serene while the gesture of the hands seem to indicate acceptance of God's will. Yet, these hands also point to the shield and sword. Perhaps the artist is not only thinking of Mary and the Annunciation, but making a statement about his homeland. A somewhat later work, *Terre d'Ukraine*, a 1975 watercolour, (pl.7.30) bears a striking resemblance to the Annunciation in both the composition and rendering suggesting that like his friend Humeniuk, Makarenko

⁶⁹ See *The Deesis Range*, 15th cen., the church of the Birth of Mary in the village of Vanivtsi, now in the Lviv Museum of Ukrainian Art.

interchanges the figure of the Mother of God with that of Mother Ukraine. In the latter context the shield and sword may be seen as symbols of struggle. Both these paintings reaffirm Makarenko's interest in religious art and introduce an element of Ukrainian patriotism.

The *Still Life* is a complex, semi-abstract composition in a predominantly red palette with strong contrasts of complementary and black hues. A bottle, vase with cherries and a woman's face with hand and two more cherries are recognizable. The face in profile appears as half of a mannequin head topped with an oval shape. Once more there is a strong contrast and tension between two-dimensional and modelled forms, as well as the representational and abstract objects. There are suggestions of erotic symbolism in the cut open pear, cherries, and pomegranate.

Makarenko made use of oil glazing in both these pictures to achieve variations and subtle changes in tones creating a patina usually associated with old masters. Parallels to this may be found in the artist's watercolours from this period in the use of etched paper and watercolour washes.

In 1972 Makarenko submitted some work to an Exhibition of Young Artists organized by the City Komsomol Committee, but it was rejected. Soon after, Makarenko was summoned by the City Passport Office to show his permit for living in

Leningrad. As his term of residency had expired, and he was not employed at the time, Makarenko's request to reside in the city was denied. He was advised to return to Dnipropetrovs'ke and warned not to go to Moscow or Kiev.⁷⁰

As Makarenko did not wish to return to Dnipropetrovs'ke, a city far removed from art centres and closed to foreigners, he decided to try Tallinn in Estonia because he had seen an exhibition of paintings from Estonia and was impressed by them. Also he cherished the opportunity of being able to watch Finnish television programmes not normally accessible elsewhere in the Soviet Union.⁷¹

Makarenko arrived in the capital of Estonia, Tallinn, in the autumn of 1973, and with the assistance of friends found employment as a furnace stoker which made it possible for him to receive a resident's permit. He submitted three pictures to the Autumn Exhibition of Estonian Artists and

⁷⁰ Residency permits are required of all Soviet citizens. In order to qualify for one it is necessary to have a place to live and to be employed. Authorities have been known to refuse renewal of residency permits and on occasion have withdrawn them from dissidents, writers, artists, and other "undesirable" citizens.

⁷¹ This is made possible by Tallinn's geographical proximity to Helsinki. S.C. Feinstein in "The Avant-Garde in Soviet Estonia", *New Art from the Soviet Union*, Washington: Acropolis Books, 1977, p. 31 states that the Estonian artists have benefited from the television broadcasts they are able to receive from Finland. As Finnish and Estonian are related languages the artists benefit not only from the images but can understand some of the spoken language. This allows them to keep in touch with art in the West.

all three were accepted. All three of these paintings had been rejected previously in Leningrad. An explanation for this may be found in the article by Feinstein where he writes about the special status of unofficial art in Estonia:

The movement exists in the open with strong support from local population and with the apparent consent (or lack of overt opposition) of the Estonian Communist Party. The movement itself has changed from its 'unofficial' status in the early 1960's to its current 'official' or 'semi-official' status (depending on precise conditions of the time in question), without sacrificing experimentation and creativity.⁷²

Feinstein also states that since 1964 exhibitions were held regularly which included work by all artists in the galleries of the Union of Artists and Tartu University and not in private apartments as was the case in Moscow and Leningrad. These shows included what elsewhere in the Soviet Union was being called unofficial art.⁷³

Of the work accepted for The Autumn Exhibition only a slide of Blahovishchennia (The Annunciation), 1973, (pl.7.31) is available. This is the first of Makarenko's paintings to be purchased by a gallery, the Art Museum of the Estonian SSR, housed at the Kadriorg Palace in Tallinn. The religious subject matter is not apparent, at first glance, as it was in the previous Annunciation, but the great simplification of the figural elements and the use of purely visual abstract shapes are. This is not a

⁷² Feinstein, "The Avant-garde in Soviet Estonia", p. 31.

⁷³ Ibid.

traditional Annunciation with Western or Byzantine iconography. Rather it is a very personal close-up view of two heads, one in profile, the other en face. Mary's head is roundish and frontal with extremely elongated nose, small lips, and almost slit-like eyes. Abstract circular shapes appear more as formal elements than a halo. The Angel's head is depicted in profile and facing towards the lower right. It contrasts in its pink-sienna hue with the pale off-white tones of Mary's features. The eye is frontal but all other details are reduced to a minimum. The hair flows in a rhythmic cascade of rainbow colours that intersect with the horizontal sweep of the shoulder, curving arm, and hand. Vertical wing shapes arise out of the hair to lead the eye of the viewer upwards to the semi-circle with a turquoise hand pointing towards a small white bird flying towards the two heads. Two small hands raised in supplication are visible in the lower right. The composition is unified by the delicate colours, linear patterns, and the flowing rhythms of the forms. There is hardly any depth and the feeling of space is achieved through overlapping and slight tonal variations. The religious symbolism of the hand and bird are almost lost, and without the explanatory title, the faces could be seen as those of a secular encounter.

In this watercolour, as in others, Makarenko was making use of the mixed technique introduced by Shemiakin of painting over an imprinted surface. There were also similarities in style and composition. However, Makarenko

retained a very personal vocabulary of images, signs, and symbols, and his own subject matter. Makarenko's outlines were more sensitive, more poetic than those of Shemiakin, and his colour sensitivity developed to a higher degree. Several of his works in watercolour dealt with childhood memories, personal fantasies, and dream-like visions of Ukrainian cossacks.

Souvenir de ma mère, 1973, (pl.7.32) shows a woman's head in profile on the right and a smaller self-portrait profile of the artist on the left, suggesting that this is a picture of Makarenko and his mother. Hands touching and raised in blessing, several hands, fill some of the area between them. In the upper left there are two angels floating in a grayish space occupied by concentric bands of colour arranged in the corner somewhat like the presence of God the Father and His messengers in old Ukrainian icons. A glimpse of medieval Tallinn, with two figures, may be seen in the crook of the woman's neck. Fluid bands of colour substitute for hair and act as formal compositional devices. There is an eye in the space between mother and son, an eye crying, but not belonging to any face or figure. This scene brings to mind the traditional mother's blessing so often repeated in Ukrainian literature and folk songs. Makarenko has substituted the usual icon used in the blessing with the actual picture of the open sky with God and His angels as witnesses and partners to the event. The whole composition, however, lacks the mystic atmosphere of icons which here has

been substituted with a dream-like vision and elements of the fantastic.

Makarenko's life in Estonia seems to have triggered a longing for his childhood and for his homeland even though outwardly as an artist he was quite successful. His work continued to be accepted for exhibitions, including both The Spring and Autumn Shows of Estonian artists in 1974. In the summer of 1974 Makarenko took part in the First Watercolour Exhibition in Tallinn. In 1975 he entered work in the Eleventh Biennale in Ljubliana, Yugoslavia and his watercolour *Metaphysical Head* won the purchase prize of the Ljubliana Chamber of Commerce.

Metaphysical Head (pl.7.33) was painted over an etched surface in a predominantly pinkish-green palette with delicate black ink outlines. The head referred to in the title was centrally placed. In its shape it resembled a mannequin head sectioned off into an assortment of curving forms, some identifiable as fruit, some used as structural devices. Semi-circular and round shapes filled the upper part of the head while the lower section presented a frontal and profile view simultaneously. To the right an outline of a partial figure may be glimpsed. There is an interplay of ground and figuration and the use of solid black outlines. Shallow space and the metamorphoses of one shape into another are just some of the devices common to most of Makarenko's works of the mid-seventies.

In the fall of 1975 Makarenko exhibited with the Young Painters of Estonia in Tallinn and later participated in the First Exhibition of Ukrainian Non-conformist Artists in Moscow. He does not remember which of his pictures were included in the Ukrainian Exhibition, but a photograph shows that the Annunciation, 1972, was one of the paintings on display, as was a metaphysical composition hanging on the open door (pl.4.100). There were six other paintings on the adjoining wall, one of which appears to be a self-portrait while the others are still life compositions and one with figures. It is impossible to tell whether any of these pictures had political overtones.

However, there can be no doubt that by the mid-seventies some of Makarenko's paintings carried political comments with the possibility of multiple interpretations of the images. By this time Makarenko was trying to find a way to leave the Soviet Union. He had received an invitation to emigrate from Shemiakin, but was denied permission to do so. Another invitation arrived from the Hardy Gallery in Paris in 1976 inviting Makarenko to the opening of his first one-man exhibition of watercolours.⁷⁴ It too was denied. There can be little doubt that by now Makarenko had become totally disillusioned with the Soviet Union and wanted to emigrate to the West. As all his efforts to do so were

⁷⁴ The exhibition at Galerie Hardy, 27, rue Guénégaud, Paris took place from April 29 to May 22, 1976. A catalogue and colour poster were published.

being frustrated, it is not surprising that his art started to reflect his beliefs and emotions more strongly.

At about this time there were also changes in expectations and demands for creative freedom made by artists in Moscow and Leningrad who were becoming more militant. In the summer of 1976, after several confrontations with the authorities, the Moscow City Artists Committee established a painting section and invited all the non-conformist artists to join. Similarly Makarenko was approached at about this time in Tallinn, and was invited to join the Russian Section of the Artists' Union of Estonia. However, he declined saying that he was not a Russian and there was no Ukrainian section for him to join.

My Ukraine, 1975, (pl.7.34) is representative of the work of this period. It retains the complex composition and highly schematized flat patterns of interlocking forms of the previous work. The choice of subject matter, the images, and the texts bring new meaning to Makarenko's art. Painted in watercolours on paper etched with a grayish texture, Makarenko has composed with a variety of flowing forms and subdued tones. Some shapes are identifiable as abstractions of figures, animals and buildings while others are simply compositional devices.

A cossack head is shown in profile with closed eyes and curved linear rhythms in the mustache, collar, and hair

flowing to the right. The viridian-blue and gold bands that suggest his long hair, in fact, turn out to be the long skirt of the girl above him. The billowing sleeves of the girl's skirt and her clasped hands encircle her head like a halo and repeat the flesh colour of the cossack's profile. An assortment of allegorical figures seem to rise behind the two humans separated from them by the girl's long hair streaming in a gently undulating solid black line diagonally across the picture. Four ribbons of solid colour, upon which Makarenko has written in Ukrainian "village of Pushkarivka" and "road to the city of Paris", point towards one of the beasts. The flowing rhythms of the left side are repeated in the roundness of the embryo shown between the cossack and the girl, in the semi-circular shapes to the left, and in the white of the moon or sun. A house drawn upside-down and a tree balance the composition along the horizon line on the left, as do the three steps on the right.

The rhythms on the right side of the painting are more abrupt and flame-like. Directly behind the woman the pinkish-red shape turns into an odd-looking beast standing on its haunches. Its cadmium red, fish head appears backwards with three black tongues, a tiny eye and black star. The same pink-red is repeated in what looks very much like a pig's snout and head. Three mummy figures with bandaged eyes are huddled together between the animals and the red flames and dark smoke. These figures recall the

tailor's dummies in the work of the De Chirico, as well as the stone steppe babas. Floating above them is a shape like a side of beef divided for carving and labelled as a map with "Ukraina bezplatno" (Ukraine - free of charge) printed in one of the sections. Different sorts of meat and their prices appear in the other subdivisions. Bear-like paws in different tones of red anchor the composition to the cossack's back and are in contrast to the solid cerulean blue and pale yellow band entwined around his neck.⁷⁵

The figures have been highly stylized and reduced to flat patterns of interlocking forms and hues. Barely perceptible modelling achieved through slight darkening or graying of the pigment can be detected in the faces. Most shapes have been contoured with a very delicate pen and ink line, and several small areas have been emphasized by a flat solid application of pigment which has obscured the texture seen throughout. The handwritten text, particularly the circular pattern of writing on the left enhances the textural composition, whereas most of the other writing blends into the design and is barely noticeable, as for example the word "Ukraina" on the girl's skirt (pl.7.35).

Makarenko frequently utilizes combinations of letters and numerals, sometimes stencilled words, and even entire

⁷⁵ Blue and yellow are the colours of the independent Ukrainian Republic of 1917-1920. The present flag of the Ukrainian SRS is red and blue while Ukrainians in the West have retained the original blue and yellow. The use of these colours is very likely intentional.

passages. He quotes his favourite Ukrainian poets, Taras Shevchenko and Lesia Ukraiinka, or writes down his thoughts. Reading his texts can add to our appreciation of his work, but is not essential to our understanding of the images. Antecedents for this may be found in Ukrainian icons, woodcuts of the 17th and 18th centuries, the avant-garde art of the 1920's, Surrealism and of course in pop and conceptual art. Makarenko is aware of all of these precedents and uses them for his own purposes.

It is not clear whether some forms are positive or negative, and whether they are ground or figuration. Adding to this ambiguity is Makarenko's use of the same shape to denote different figures simultaneously. Even though some images may be out-of-scale, border on the fantastic, and appear irrational, they are usually not out of Makarenko's context. There is always some underlying content that holds them together, but may not be immediately apparent.

Estonia, 1975, (pl.7.36) carries similar political messages and incorporates a related pictorial construction. This painting conveyed Makarenko's concerns for his adopted country that gave him his first opportunity to exhibit and achieve recognition as an artist. Living in Estonia, Makarenko had become sympathetic to the cause of Estonian independence and opposition to Russian domination.

Juxtapositioning of human figures and mannequin heads is a recurring image in the work of Makarenko. It creates a psychologically disturbing image, and probably is a conscious effort to expose the inhumanity of the Soviet system where individuality and self-expression, whether personal or national, is not to be tolerated and people, as well as nations, become cogs of the system.

Makarenko's concern about his own fate and preoccupation with human existence reoccurs in several of his paintings and may be recognized by his continuing use of the mannequin head and wheel of fortune or both. In *Apocalypse, 1975, (pl.7.37)* the wheel of fortune occupies the central position in the upper part of the watercolour. Its spokes appear broken by a red snake weaving through them. Black bars appear scattered throughout the composition which spreads out in widening paths, each of which contains a mannequin head or mask floating in the ochre-greenish space. The grouping of silhouettes with white linear haloes to the left is a quotation from the famous icon *The Old Testament Holy Trinity, 1411, by Andrei Rublev*. The staffs of the Trinity have become abstract lines, two of which intersect near the edge and act as compositional elements. It is interesting to note that it is this religious grouping which provides a stable and peaceful contrast to the unrest and movement aroused by the black bars and wavy background in the rest of the picture.

Perhaps this is a reference to the peace and salvation to be found in religion.

The heads, whether mannequin, human or mask, appear severed at the neck and are arranged in a semi-circle, one to each flowing section. In three of them there are echoes of the heads of Oskar Schlemmer (see *Nude*, 1925, or *Five Men in a Room*, 1928) and Carlo Carra's *The Engineer's Mistress*, 1921. The head on the right has lost all facial features and is more like the tailor's mannequin head of De Chirico. Like Carra, Makarenko relies not on the physical observations of nature, but more on the conceptualization of the image through line, shape, and colour. However, his work does not possess the dislocated reality of a dream of Carra or De Chirico. Whereas in their metaphysical paintings both Carra and De Chirico aimed to create insights into the reality behind ordinary objects by neutralizing the objects shown of all their usual associations and setting them into new and enigmatic relationships, Makarenko's images usually carry associations that are recognizable, and are not for the most part out of Makarenko's context. Unlike the deep space and low lying source of light casting mysterious shadows in the metaphysical works of both Carra and De Chirico, Makarenko's space is very shallow, there is little linear perspective, and no noticeable source of light. It would seem, therefore, that Makarenko has transformed what he has borrowed from the metaphysical art of the 1920's into a personal statement of Soviet reality.

This seeming preoccupation with mannequin heads continued throughout the seventies with variations and multiple readings possible. In the watercolour *Bez prava prozhyvannia*, (Without the Right to Residence), 1976, (pl.7.38) the head resembles a giant geometricized robot that is part of a centrally placed, highly stylized and frontal figure. Its two arms are crossed and tied with red. Except for the animal forms joined to the hands and the curving blue and purplish shapes suggestive of a tree line, the rest of the picture is constructed of various geometric, abstract forms almost symmetrically balanced. There is a gold painted border around the whole, as in old icons, and high up in the centre drawn in ink two concentric circles with a triangle, but no eye as in ancient church frescoes. Yet, directly underneath, as well as in other symmetrically located places the words "niet nadobnosti" (the Russian equivalent of the Ukrainian title "Without the Right to Residence") are printed in ink.

It is this message repeated five times that clearly states the artist's intentions. By this time Makarenko had personally experienced the anguish of being forced to live outside his chosen cities and art centres. In addition Makarenko had been denied permission to travel to the opening of his first solo exhibition in Paris, and all his efforts to emigrate were being thwarted.

The faceless head and shoulders are central to a number of compositions entitled *Buste Métaphysique*. In the 1976 Galerie Hardy catalogue there are seven paintings out of a total of forty-three where the mannequin appears as a central element of a symmetrical and frontal composition. In some of these head images horizontal bars cover the faces, bars punctured with holes or boards nailed shut. The earliest of these *Buste Métaphysique*, 1974, (pl.7.39) is clearly labelled "UKRAIINA-74" suggesting that this form has become a symbol of Ukraine and associated with the lack of freedom in his homeland. The lower edge of the bust is filled with outlines of six compartmentalized figures, five of which are labelled with the names of well known Ukrainian cultural figures: Taras Shevchenko, Skovoroda, Lesia Ukrainka, Kotliarevs'kyi, Berezovs'kyi.⁷⁶ The clipped winged bands on both sides of the head bear messages, one of which reads "The Wings of Ukraine". The circular forms above, that could be haloes or sun or both, are pierced by a hand holding a knife. An apple nearby has cracks in it and is labelled "shchastia" meaning happiness while a cut piece of the apple is labelled "NADIIA" meaning hope. The

⁷⁶ Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) is the preeminent Ukrainian poet, and also an artist who wrote poetry very critical of the tsarist regime in Ukraine. He made repeated demands for the abolition of serfdom and Ukrainian independence from Russia. Lesia Ukrainka (1871-1913) and Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi (1769-1838) were both well known writers. Ukrainka encouraged fellow Ukrainians to fight for their rights and freedom. Kotliarevs'kyi was responsible for introducing the vernacular Ukrainian into serious literature in 1798 with the publication of *Eneida*. Hryhorii Skovoroda (1722-1794) was a well known Ukrainian philosopher and scholar, while Maksym Berezovs'kyi (1745-77) was a composer who studied in Italy.

rectangular shape on the upper right contains a Mother and Child enclosed in a fish outline which probably is a reference to the forgotten tradition of chumak icons.

Some of Makarenko's work of the mid-seventies suggests that he was moving closer to the hallucinatory quality of posed, unrelated objects, the use of architecture, and a deeper articulation of the planar surface pioneered by De Chirico and Carra in their metaphysical works. However, Makarenko's space remains basically shallow, and he makes little use of linear perspective. At the same time he was absorbing many of the lessons of Surrealist art, as well as assimilating some of the stylistic ideas of the Renaissance, particularly, the chiaroscuro modelling of female features, and actually quoting some of the artists.

In the watercolour *Dimanche Matin en Ukraine*, 1976, (pl.7.40) the sandy coloured surface has the typical textural variations produced by the transparent overpainting of the etched surface of the paper. A vertical solid dark bar divides the composition into a narrow strip on the left with what resembles a handle being grasped by a cut-off hand, and two loops of a cord that disappears to the left. Adding to the enigma is a silhouette of a human figure and diagonal shadows moving to the right. Above the vertical lines of the floor that are cut off suddenly, Makarenko floats a female head, delicately contoured in ink and finely modelled in grayed tones and less transparent pigment. An

oversized, open safety-pin pierces the area on the right which could be a doorway with a small keyhole. Spider webs that fill the angle of the safety pin and the written message "ozhydanie reshenia" (meaning "waiting for a decision" in Russian) confirm the slow passage of time and the precariousness of the situation. Although the artist has created a hallucinatory atmosphere by juxtaposing seemingly unrelated objects and disregarding size and spatial distances, the underlying message has remained the same: a longing for Paris and freedom reiterated by the list on the door reading "Paris: aprel', mai, iun', iul'" (meaning April, May, June, July in Russian) and the message above the head reading "Voskresnoe utro" (Resurrected morning). The head recalls the Closed Eyes of Odilon Redon, but the face with its partially opened eyes resembles the features of one of the girls of Jethro in Botticelli's *Scenes de la vie de Moise*, 1481, reproduced in the Skira series of books.⁷⁷

Yet another dimension of Makarenko's work, which incorporates erotic imagery as part of the fantastic and dream state of some of his work, was evident as early as 1972, when Makarenko painted *Bili nochii* (White Nights) (pl.7.41), a watercolour with two partially clad women set against a semi-abstract background of arch and flat areas of colour, stylized fountain, and white sun. The central nude

⁷⁷ See Botticelli (Géneve: Editions d'art Albert Skira, 1957), p. 9.

holds an apple with an exotic bird. More apples appear in the foliage between the figures somewhat suggestive of a garden. Whether Makarenko used the apple as a symbol of temptation or sin and the garden as a metaphor of chastity is not certain and perhaps not important. What is evident is that he was borrowing from a variety of artists and periods. The two figures in the composition do not interact, but seem strangely frozen in their artificial environment.

In a series of watercolours entitled "Symbole Érotique" painted between 1974 and 1975 the erotic images become more overt and pervasive. *Symbole Érotique*, 1975, (no. 42)⁷⁸ (pl.7.42) has several versions of male genitalia including a male figure transformed into an enormous penis ejaculating into a face balanced precariously on machine-like tubing which turns into shapes suggestive of the male organ. *Symbole Érotique*, (no. 30) with its central concentric circles differs from all the other compositions. It is much more geometric and abstract and only hints at a womb and female reproductive organs. *Makarenko and His Model*, 1974, (no. 26) (pl.7.43) reveals the artist's fascination with large breasts that suggestively engulf the cossack figure. Makarenko makes use of a timeless symbol of virile sensuality, the horse or in this case only the horse's head

⁷⁸ The numbers refer to the exhibition numbers listed in the catalogue Vladimir Makarenko, 1976.

cum beast with flicking tongue, to emphasize the sexual connotations of the images.

As erotic art is officially not sanctioned in the Soviet Union and nudes are excluded from most exhibitions, it is interesting that Makarenko was not only painting erotic pictures but allowing them to reach the West to be exhibited and reproduced. Therefore, it appears that erotic images and suggestive compositions were indicative of Makarenko's fascination with the forbidden and not only an expression of his sensuality.

Alongside these erotic pictures Makarenko continued to paint works with religious images, albeit in a very personal interpretation. The cross appears as an image in such watercolours as *Composition Métaphysique*, 1975, (no. 31) while in *Illustration pour Apocalypse no. 1* (no. 9) (pl.7.44) and *Apocalypse no. 2* (no. 8) the cross determines the composition of the painting. In the latter works the corners are filled with secular images such as an apple, lemon, pear or rose. Of course, the apple could also be seen as a religious symbol of temptation or sinfulness and the rose as a symbol of Mary.⁷⁹ The rose may be seen as the flower of Venus, goddess of love.⁸⁰ The ambiguity is interesting and probably intentional. In *Illustration no. 2*

⁷⁹ According to James Smith Pierce, p.125 the rose refers to the charity of Mary when used in representations of the Virgin.

⁸⁰ See James Smith Pierce, p. 125.

there is even a suggestion of the erotic in the detailing of the core of the apple and the two human profiles, or perhaps it is Makarenko's reference to Adam and Eve. *La Trinité*, 1975, (pl.7.45) shows three silhouettes of figures around a large table recalling the icon of the same name. The staffs of the angels have become diagonal bands of flat colour and the decorative linear patterns of Byzantine-inspired art have given way to shallow textured areas, written messages, and Makarenko's personal vocabulary of abstract and figurative elements.

In all the paintings mentioned there is in evidence a technical mastery and control of the medium. Makarenko's works speak of competence, knowledge of the history of art, and an ability to synthesize several disparate sources. Yet, at the same time his pictures of the seventies betray the lack of systematic and personal encounter with contemporary Western art during the past decades, resulting in an unusual, inventive, and unique vision.

Makarenko, his wife, and daughter were allowed to leave the Soviet Union at the end of 1979. After a brief stay in Vienna, Makarenko's dream of living in Paris became a reality.

Vitalii Sazonov

Unlike Makarenko and Humeniuk whose work remained figurative, Vitalii Sazonov (1947-1986) from the beginning

worked in an abstract, non-objective manner inspired in part by the writings of Kandinsky and abstract art, as well as the texture, colour, and composition of old icons.⁸¹ Many of his paintings convey the metaphysical spirit of the icon without the canonical rendering of the figures. It is as if Sazonov stripped the icon to its essences, which he then abstracted.

Sazonov was born in Siberia near the frontier with Mongolia where his father served with the Soviet Army as a border guard.⁸² Both his parents came from peasant stock: Sazonov's mother from a village near Kiev and his father from a village in Belorussia. After the death of his maternal grandfather in 1930, his mother's family was forced to seek a new life in the city.⁸³ His father was called up

⁸¹ Vitalii Sazonov usually wrote his name in Latin script as Witalij Sazonow, which is the German transliteration of his name.

⁸² Most biographical information about Sazonov came from a tape of a public talk given 23 May, 1985 in conjunction with his solo exhibition at the Ukrainian Canadian Art Foundation in Toronto, organized by the author, as well as from conversations the artist had with the author: 14-27 November, 1982 in Toronto and 3-5 December, 1982 in Winnipeg, 7 August, 1983 in Munich, 5 June, 1984 in Paris, and while the artist was staying with the author in May and June of 1985 in Toronto.

⁸³ Sazonov related that during the great famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine his maternal grandmother who had five children to feed saved the family from starvation by sitting on the only sack of grain in the house when the authorities came to confiscate all food. The story told by Sazonov's mother had her wearing a long fur coat which concealed the sack on which she sat while saying to the searchers: "Good people search if you please. I have nothing to hide. I have nothing to feed my children with." From the taped talk 23 June, 1985 in Toronto.

for service in the Soviet Army in 1930. Upon his return to his village in 1935, his father encountered a famine and could not find any work. Because of this he went back into the Army and eventually attained the rank of captain. He served for many years in Zabaikal district where he met his future wife shortly before the war. Their only child, Vitalii, was born there in 1947. The family lived in the Far East until 1952.

Part of Sazonov's childhood was spent with his maternal grandmother in Western Ukraine in the city of Lviv when his father was stationed along the western border of the USSR with Hungary. Later the family lived briefly in Symferopil' and then in 1957 moved to Odessa.

As a secondary school student Sazonov became interested in archaeology and took part in archaeological expeditions in the steppes along the Black Sea. He studied history and the history of philosophy at the University of Odessa, but lost interest in both when he started painting. Sazonov discovered art by reading about Van Gogh and other artists, and became intrigued with learning "how artists captivated their viewers" and "what drove some of them, like Van Gogh, crazy".⁸⁴ When a friend, who had studied art, showed him how to use paints, Sazonov became so involved that he began painting full time and dropped out of university.

⁸⁴ From the taped talk 23 May, 1985 in Toronto.

In the beginning Sazonov experimented a lot by pouring any paint that he was able to get onto the surface of the board or canvas in the manner of American Abstract Expressionist artists. Through Polish and Czech magazines, which reported the new trends in Europe and the United States, he became interested in Western avant-garde art and tried to emulate it. As a result Sazonov's work became abstract.

In order to support himself he had to resort to painting some official portraits of Lenin, as well as workers on a collective farm.⁸⁵ According to Sazonov all artists were forced to do this in order to survive, and to be able to buy materials for painting their private pictures.

He visited Central Asia, Uzbekistan, and the Baltic countries. Eventually he married and settled in Tartu, Estonia in 1974 where he lived for about a year and a half. After meeting some artists from Odessa in Moscow, among them Volodymyr Strel'nikov, Victor Maryniuk, and Liuda Yastreb, he decided to move there, which was not easy without a

⁸⁵ As far as is known Sazonov was not a member of the Art Fund, therefore, any jobs he obtained were probably received through friends who were members of the Artists' Union or were members of the Art Fund, and, as such, were eligible to contract to do certain projects for which they then hired their friends.

residency permit.⁸⁶ Like most of these artists Sazonov was attracted to Moscow by the growing community of unofficial artists and the opportunities to exhibit his work. Moscow was one of the few places in the Soviet Union where unofficial art shows were tolerated by the authorities, and where the foreign press reported on the unofficial exhibitions.

In Moscow Sazonov joined the unofficial artists and took part in apartment shows, signed letters asking for official exhibition spaces, and participated in peaceful demonstrations demanding artistic freedom. As is known, eventually some of these demands were met. The authorities designated certain spaces for display purposes, although they were inadequate in meeting the needs of about two hundred unofficial artists. As a result paintings were hung vertically, one above the other. Many people lined up for hours to be able to look at the work displayed because they were eager to see something other than the officially sanctioned Socialist Realism.

In 1975 at one of the Moscow exhibits of unofficial art Sazonov met another fellow Ukrainian artist, Feodosii Humeniuk who at the time was living in Leningrad. He

⁸⁶ Residency permits were usually arranged through women who had accommodation in Moscow, and were willing to contract a marriage for money which gave their so-called husband an address. This was common practice not only among the artists. I am not certain what arrangements were made by Sazonov, but eventually he found a woman to live with.

credits Humeniuk with making him more aware of his heritage and national identity.⁸⁷ Sazonov participated in both exhibitions of Ukrainian non-conformist artists in Moscow.

It is difficult to establish what Sazonov's paintings were like at this time because I have not had access to any work from this period and there are few photographs or slides available. A black and white photograph dated 1976 (pl.7.46) shows four small paintings in which the artist's interest in abstract forms and textured areas is apparent. In one of the paintings the surface has been divided into six flat rectangular areas with three small circles and several amorphous, floating shapes. The relationships of figuration and ground are also evident in another of the paintings. A third shows three abstracted figures against a darker ground, while in the fourth painting the forms are more geometric and well defined.

Two other photographs from 1975-1976 indicate that the format of Sazonov's work was small and that the paintings were non-objective (pl.7.47 and pl.7.48). One of these shows the artist against a display of his work, and the other shows Sazonov with Strel'nikov in a basement exhibition room standing against a wall hung with their

⁸⁷ In a taped reminiscence about Humeniuk, Sazonov emphasized his debt to Humeniuk for making him conscious of his identity as a Ukrainian. Humeniuk, it would appear encouraged Sazonov to read about Ukraine and even passed along some of the Ukrainian dissident literature. From a taped interview recorded in Munich at the beginning of August, 1983 in Sazonov's apartment.

pictures. Unfortunately it is impossible to identify the compositions more closely. It would appear, however, that Sazonov was still experimenting and his abstract compositions were not as yet rooted in ancient icons. That he was searching for a means of communicating a meaning beyond the purely aesthetic one may be seen in the next available pictures.

There are two untitled paintings dated 1977.⁸⁸ Both were done in tempera on board. In the first of these Untitled I (pl.7.49) a vertical brownish stripe bisects the horizontal plane of the composition, on both sides of which are to be found semi-circular forms, one reddish the other olive green. A greenish-ochre band, varying in width on each side, frames the work as do the thin lines of red and black. There is an inter-play between the vertical and horizontal rhythms mitigated by the curved shapes. The textured surfaces appear most prominently in the lighter areas but are also present throughout. There is a symmetry and frontality which was not apparent in previous work, but is characteristic of old icons. Also apparent are an emphasis on simple geometric shapes, colour, texture, and a two-dimensional space common to twentieth

⁸⁸ Both paintings are reproduced in Witalij Sazonow. Album. (Munich, 1984), n. p. Sazonov rarely gave titles to his work as may be seen from the album where all thirty paintings which are reproduced are listed as "without title". The artist sometimes did not date his pictures and often signed the work only when it was sold. Double dates indicate that the painting was reworked at the time of the second date or that there were some alterations.

century modern art as well as to Byzantine inspired religious paintings.

The second painting, *Untitled II* (pl.7.50) is also divided into two adjoining, but assymmetrical sections held together with a single common horizontal, the repetition of arches, and varied textural surfaces. Each section could stand on its own but appears more meaningful as one. The contrast in value and flatness provided by the solid black is startling. The textures are rich in underlying colour variations which appear from underneath multiple layers of pigment. A white cross within a red square appears in the centre of the wide band of black, more a sign than a religious symbol. The large white arch contains a figure which is more reminiscent of a bird than a human, or perhaps it is intentionally a combination of the two. It does not bear any resemblance to the saintly silhouettes and iconic arches to be seen in later pictures. Although all forms are simplified and clearly delineated, they take on another dimension through the brocaded wealth of textural shapes.

Many of Sazonov's paintings are carefully balanced, serene compositions that convey the spirit of icons, but where religious figures have been replaced by a combination of geometric and symbolic forms. These rectangles, squares, arches, human silhouettes, and crosses constitute a transformation of the visual conventions of an icon into a modern, abstract idiom.

Like most old icons, *Untitled III*, 1979, (pl.7.51) is symmetrical and static. Its composition is dominated by a centrally placed madder-red form which appears like an island surrounded by golden tones of most of the canvas. Sazonov has anchored this red shape by framing it with a black band parallel to the bottom of the picture. A vertical golden ribbon cuts through the red and provides a bridge to the upper part of the composition with its two squares framed in black on the left, and an off-centre black rectangle slightly to the right. Framed against the black of the arch Sazonov has positioned an elongated figure with a circular head and semi-circle for upper torso. The shimmer of the golden, reddish tones relates it to both the ground and the dominant red shape. It is impossible to say whether the red form is in the same space as the archway in front, or behind. The solid black areas provide a contrast to the overall effect of the textured surface, and at the same time are prevented from penetrating the space deeply by the appearance of black in the underlying facture.

The whole canvas is richly textured with darkened areas, spots and remains of black pigment which have been carefully rubbed into the superimposed layers of tempera and plaster of Paris. As a result, even though the palette is limited and there is a minimum of shapes, the work is much richer and more complex than it might otherwise appear.

The black arched form recalls the doorways depicted in numerous Ukrainian icons.⁸⁹ Prototypes for the madder shape can be seen in the red throne of Christ Enthroned (pl.7.52). However, Sazonov's throne is empty as in sacred art predicting the second coming of Christ. The geometricized silhouette of the figure in the archway resembles the elongated figure of a saint or even the Virgin Orans with her upturned arms in prayer. An indication of the holiness may be detected in the nimbus with which Sazonov has replaced the head. He has also transformed bands of colour, haloes, figures, and furniture of icons into abstracted shapes. Icon compositions are often subdivided into squares or rectangles in which the lives of the saint represented are portrayed. Sometimes squares are used as bases for figures, as may be seen in such icons as the 15th century icon of St. Cosmas and St. Damian from the village of Tylych (pl.7.53). In this painting as in many others Sazonov has eliminated all direct reference to the icons and possible allegory, and has retained only an abstract language of forms.

Kamiana baba z yanholom (Stone Grandmother with Angel), 1979, (pl.7.54) is less symmetrical, but remains frontal and static, as was characteristic of Ukrainian-Byzantine sacred pictures of the 11-14th centuries. Similarly, horizontal bands provide a base for the somewhat enigmatic figures and

⁸⁹ For example see St. Paraskeva Piatnytsia with Scenes from Her Life. 15th cen., village of Zhohatyn.

shapes that have replaced the religious figures. The composition is dominated by a large bulky image that is weather-beaten and eroded by the elements. This could be the stone baba suggested by the title. A lighter, more complex, round-headed form stands on the right. It appears as a shadowy figure over which Sazonov has superimposed (or is it the other way around?) the darker elongated shape with a wing. Perhaps it is an angel as suggested by the title, or may be it is a symbol of the spiritual as the halo and elongation imply. Perhaps Sazonov has juxtaposed the material with the mystical. The ambiguousness of forms and Sazonov's interest in the spiritual suggest the possibility that the three images were intended to be the Virgin, St. Anne, and the Angel Gabriel. Possibly this is Sazonov's modern interpretation of the Annunciation, not the stereotypical one seen in religious pictures, but one that requires a viewer's participation in unveiling the meaning.

The division into horizontal bands of colour echo the temporal and spatial divisions in some of the icons where actions, past and present, are shown simultaneously without perspective in areas delimited by horizontals. Even the colours in both of these paintings are those seen in traditional icons, not as they were originally painted, but darkened with soot and candle smoke, the layers of which have only partially been cleaned to reveal the cracked gold leaf, the yellowish tones, and reds darkened by age. This is particularly true of the ochres and greens. The glimpses

of underlying hues and vanishing shapes that emerge from beneath the many layers of pigment may be the equivalent to multiple veils of meaning.

Sazonov has been quoted as saying that through the use of subdued tones and the shimmer of gold he strives to awaken an awareness of the passing of time.⁹⁰ Although his work makes a strong impression on purely visual grounds, it gains an added dimension through the reading of the iconographic programme that suggests a spiritual content. Sazonov's paintings are indeed contemporary visual analogues to the traditional Ukrainian icons and simultaneously fully modern works of art.

Writing about the artist, Gert Ruge, a German diplomat who befriended Sazonov in Moscow says:

Sazonov's work encompasses modern experiences made by Malevich, as well as the discoveries of Western European modern artists. These experiences do not appear in Sazonov's paintings as an imitation but are rediscovered and subsequently conquered.⁹¹

Indeed there are hints in some of Sazonov's work of Malevich's suprematist compositions in the use of simple geometric forms and flattened planes, just as there are in the added dimension of spiritual content. However, the dynamism inherent in the diagonals is absent, as is Malevich's flat application of solid hues. Like Malevich

⁹⁰ Gert Ruge, "Introduction", Witalij Sazonow. Album. (Munich, 1984), n. p.

⁹¹ Gert Ruge, n. p.

and Kandinsky, Sazonov believed art to be essentially a spiritual activity, and therefore, he consciously strove to convey the mysticism he felt and experienced through his paintings.⁹² Some critics have commented on the philosophical, meditative quality of his work.⁹³ Sazonov himself had said that he felt a need for an artistic and philosophical communion with the icon.⁹⁴

Sazonov was not a religious person in the sense of organized religion. In his last letter he stated that he had not been baptized and did not want a Christian burial.⁹⁵ This, perhaps, was not surprising, as he grew up in a state that considered religion to be "the opium of the people" and did not encourage it. On the contrary, there were efforts to stifle religion and to promote atheism.⁹⁶

⁹² In conversation with Sazonov in Toronto, 27 November, 1982.

⁹³ See V. Janiv, *Witalij Sazonow* (Munich: Ukrainian Free University, 1983), p. 7. Also in an article "Gespräch mit Ikonen" in *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*. Nr. 138/19.

⁹⁴ Gert Ruge, n. p.

⁹⁵ Stated by Sazonov in an undated letter, a photocopy of which is in the author's archive, found in Sazonov's studio in Munich when his death was discovered by Motriia Zaiats' 14 September, 1986. In this letter the artist left instructions about his burial and property. This was one of the reasons why at first it was suspected that Sazonov had committed suicide. The autopsy report, according to his physician and friend, Dr. Mialkovsky, indicated that he had died of a heart attack.

⁹⁶ Many examples could be given to show how the State discriminated against organized religion despite the Soviet constitution that assures religious freedom. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was liquidated in the 1930s. In 1946 the Ukrainian Catholic Church was liquidated and most of its clergy were sent to die in Siberia. Many churches were

Despite this Sazonov was drawn to the spiritual, the mystical, and philosophic. He was fascinated by religious symbolism which he transformed very successfully into his own artistic vocabulary. There cannot be any doubt that his pictures convey these spiritual experiences while at the same time remaining aesthetically satisfying contemporary works of art.

destroyed, others were turned into museums, some into museums of atheism. Soviet citizens were persecuted for their religious beliefs. For more information see Bohdan Bociurkiw and John W. Strong (ed.) *Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R and Eastern Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

CONCLUSION

For centuries Ukrainian developments in art had followed the styles of Western and Central European art and architecture, often more slowly and at a later date. Byzantine, Renaissance, and Baroque styles were adapted to already existing indigenous models. In the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth many young Ukrainian artists studied in such world art centres as Paris, Munich, and Vienna and kept pace with the latest developments in European painting. At the turn of the century several Ukrainian artists were actively involved in the creation of Russian and Ukrainian avant-garde art while a few like Archipenko were at the forefront of developments in Paris. Others sought a synthesis of contemporary art with Ukrainian artistic traditions particularly at the time of the rebirth of Ukrainian culture in the 1920s.

All of these developments came to an end in Soviet Ukraine at the beginning of the 1930s with the imposition of Socialist Realism as official art policy. For Ukraine this represented a break with the normal development of art on several counts. It cut off the life line of Ukrainian artistic traditions and it severed the ties with European art movements, especially modernism which came to be regarded as irreconcilable with Socialist Realism. Strict adherence to Socialist Realism stifled individual expression in favour of a collective art in service to the Communist

Party and its leaders.

Isolated from the outside world by sealed borders and by government controls from within, artists had little choice but to comply if they wished to survive as practicing artists. However, as soon as there was an easing of pressures and controls as a result of political policy changes, artists were quick to take advantages by forcing the expansion of the narrow confines of Socialist Realism. The period of liberalization following the death of Stalin gave artists an opportunity to experiment and to pursue their own artistic visions. Furthermore, it would appear from looking at the paintings of artists working beyond Socialist Realism that they sought models in Western European and American art, the art of the Russian and Ukrainian avant-garde, and in the Ukrainian artistic traditions, thus, re-establishing ties with what had been forbidden for twenty five years. The process of regeneration which began in 1956 was nurtured from within by a reawakening of national consciousness, by the rediscovery of Ukrainian culture, and the rehabilitation of repressed art and artists. From the outside it was fed by information about contemporary art in the West, reproductions and books, exhibitions, visitors, and an exchange of ideas.

In the early sixties older artists like Hlushchenko and Sel's'kyi tried to recapture what they had been forced to give up; while younger ones began the labourious process of

condensing and assimilating three decades of international artistic growth, usually on the basis of second-hand, published sources. In Ukraine this was coupled with the rediscovery of Ukrainian culture and history. However, it would be wrong to look at the resulting innovations in Socialist Realism and in non-conformist art as a product of superficial borrowing of Western European and American trends. In the best of the paintings these innovations were filtered through the Soviet Ukrainian experiences, and transformed into original works of art, as can be seen from the works of artists discussed in the last three chapters as for example Sel's'kyi, Zalyvakha, Dubovyk, Makarenko, Marchuk, Sazonov, and Humeniuk. That is not to say that pastiches of all the well known styles of this century, ranging from Cubism to Op-Art were not abundant particularly among the younger artists and the less creative ones. Eventually many artists acknowledged their debt to a variety of art movements and artists and worked out their own positions in painting.

With the re-tightening of controls at the beginning of the 1970s and the new repressions against Ukrainian intellectuals, writers, and artists, non-conformist art went underground, but did not disappear. It resurfaced in Ukraine whenever conditions permitted, but not as openly as in Moscow or Leningrad which became centres of unofficial art activity. By the mid-1970s some Ukrainian artists were attracted to Moscow by the possibilities of exhibiting their

work and this culminated in two group exhibitions of Ukrainian non-conformist art in the Russian capital.

The impression created by some writers about the situation of non-conformist art in Moscow and Leningrad was of clearly drawn distinctions between official and unofficial artists, and official and unofficial art.¹ This did not appear to be the case in Ukraine where most of the non-conformist artists made a living from the production of official Socialist Realist art while creating unofficial and non-conformist art in private. In Ukraine, it would appear that it was not that difficult to work through the Art Fund and to make enough money to be able to pursue individual interests and forms of expression, privately or semi-officially as artists did in Odessa and other cities.

For the first time since the thirties, however, there was an alternative to producing Socialist Realist paintings and even a limited market for such pictures, particularly in the mid-1970s, through the venues of unofficial exhibitions. The few artists who decided to pursue creative freedom openly and exclusively, including Strelnikov, Sazonov, and Humeniuk, soon found themselves in conflict with the authorities. As a result three of them were eventually given permission to emigrate to the West while others were

¹ See Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer, *Soviet Art in Exile* (New York: Random House, 1977).

isolated in out-of-the-way areas.² Nevertheless, such measures did not break the newly established ties with Western European and American art which continued to be nurtured in private, awaiting more auspicious opportunities, while at the same time chipping away at official interpretations of Socialist Realism by providing an alternative to the monopoly of official art.³

Despite the apparent lack of stylistic and thematic uniformity in the work of the non-conformist artists who have been discussed, there are certain characteristics common to many of them other than the rejection of Socialist Realism as the one and only "method" in art. Consciously or unconsciously, the non-conformist artists rejected the depiction of the physical world around them. They seem to have alienated themselves from the circumstances of their daily lives in favour of an individual inner vision which most often was figurative. They rejected Soviet values with an emphasis on materialism in favour of nostalgic subject matter, religious and historic themes, fantasy, and introspection. Norton Dodge wrote that in Soviet unofficial

² The three artists allowed to emigrate were Volodymyr Strelnikov from Odessa, Volodymyr Makarenko from Tallinn, Estonia and Vitalii Sasonov from Moscow. All were given exit visas for Israel, the only country to which immigration at the time was officially tolerated, even though none of them were of Jewish background. Humeniuk was banished to Dnipropetrovs'ke, a city in Ukraine closed to foreigners.

³ Upon his arrival in Dnipropetrovs'ke, for example, Humeniuk told the local artists about artistic events in Leningrad and Moscow and showed them his work. Eventually he was isolated from local artists by the KGB.

art "One notes a pervasive anti-materialistic outlook" and this was also true of Ukrainian non-conformist painting.⁴

This anti-materialism manifested itself in the symbol-laden canvases, the multiple readings of the images, the pictorial metaphors, and the emphasis on expressive and symbolic properties of colour and composition. It was also evident in the spatial dislocations, discrepancies in scale, juxtaposing of objects seemingly out of context and the use of dream-like imagery. Like the late 19th century Symbolists, the Ukrainian non-conformist artists valued their inner vision above observation of nature. Surrounded by dialectical materialism and collective Socialist Realism they turned to the metaphysical and the spiritual.

It is not surprising that in their search for a new expression of the spiritual some artists sought out Kandinsky and Malevich, and not the Constructivist movement whose goals were utilitarian. The inner meaning with which both Kandinsky and Malevich sought to embody their forms, made them attractive to some of the artists, like Sazonov, Makarenko, Humeniuk, and Dubovyk. Marchuk attributed the disproportion in his figures and their physical distortions to his wish to emphasize the spiritual.⁵

The search for the spiritual may be recognized in the

⁴ Norton Dodge, p. 11.

⁵ Olena Vartanova, p. 188.

admiration and transformation of the art of the icon. The icon, a particular manifestation of the spiritual, served as inspiration for many of the artists. Albeit differently, several of the artists, including Zalyvakha, Humeniuk, Naumets', and Makarenko assimilated the images and formal elements of the icon into their paintings. Others like Sazonov abstracted religious images and aspired to create their own vocabularies derived from sacred art. Still others like Marchuk used religious symbols as artistic raw materials without losing the traditional connotations entirely.

Icons and religious symbols also served another purpose. They provided a link with the forbidden past, as did cossack and historical figures. The past, religious and secular, but particularly the latter, was glorified and embellished to serve as a symbol of individual freedom and national independence, as in the paintings of Zalyvakha and Humeniuk. In this respect, somewhat ironically, it echoed the glorification of Communist leaders in Socialist Realism albeit in more modern form. However, it must be remembered that the spiritual, the historic, and cultural past were all intimidated by official policy. Thus the non-conformist artists shared concerns for threatened values.

Most authors writing about unofficial art in the Soviet Union see Surrealism as the most important trend in the work of many non-conformist artists. Janet Kennedy states that

"Surrealism comes close to being the dominant mode of unofficial art in the Soviet Union."⁶ It is certainly true that Surrealist devices and images appeared in the work of many of the artists studied, particularly Marchuk, Makarenko, and Medvid'. However, often unlike the Surrealist works created in the West that juxtaposed unrelated objects in irrational situations and aimed to shock, the images painted by the non-conformist Ukrainian artists had a rational relationship, as in the work of both Marchuk and Makarenko.

It is worth recalling that Surrealism had antecedents in Symbolism. The significance of dream-like imagery with its sources in the irrational, the multiple meanings, and the landscapes of the mind were first explored by Odilon Redon, Max Klinger, Jan Toroop, and other Symbolists. There was a strong Symbolist tradition in Russian and Ukrainian art and literature at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Russian artist Mikhail Vrubel (1856-1911), who according to Hamilton "might have been ranked with the leading Symbolist masters",⁷ came to the attention of Ukrainian artists when he restored the Church of St. Cyril in Kiev. In the 1920s Symbolism was kept alive in the ideas of artists like Malevich and Filonov in Russia, as well as Yukhym Mykhailiv in Ukraine. There was a strong symbolist

⁶ Janet Kennedy, "From the Real to the Surreal" in Norton Dodge and Alison Hilton, (ed.) p. 35.

⁷ Hamilton, p. 137.

tradition in Ukrainian poetry in the 1920s which was revived in the work of the poets of the sixties. Ukrainian non-conformist art developed at the same time as the lyrical poetry of Lina Kostenko, the symbolic imagery of Ihor Kalynets', and similar trends evident in such award winning films as S. Paradzhanov's *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1965) and Y. Illienko's *Well-Spring for the Thirsty* (1965). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that symbolism was important to the creative process of some of the Ukrainian non-conformist painters who made conscious efforts to synthesize Ukrainian artistic traditions with contemporary developments in art.

Surrealism arose in Western Europe during a period of widespread disillusionment with political and social conditions. Although the situation in Soviet Ukraine was different, there can be no doubt that many of the artists were disillusioned with the Soviet system. By emphasizing the subconscious and the irrational Surrealism contradicted the Soviet definition of reality and provided an escape. However, among Ukrainian artists particularly in the seventies, even pictures with strong Surrealist antecedents carried the Socialist Realist imprint of "ideinost'". Unlike true Surrealist paintings, works by non-conformist artists tended to contain a message which was conveyed to the viewer encoded in the artist's vocabulary of private "signs" the meaning of which sometimes could be deciphered, and at other times remained ambiguous. This is not as

surprising as it may appear considering the indoctrination in the principles of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics which the artists underwent during their training. Even though they had rejected the superficial, narrative message of Socialist Realism most of them appeared compelled to speak of their duty to communicate to the viewing public their positions as artists. Many of them felt that their art should be an expression of their social and national concerns, most of which could not be expressed openly. Perhaps these needs underlay one of the reasons Surrealism became so popular. Also non-conformist artists most probably felt that the representational aspects of Surrealism, which were more compatible to the viewer used to realist art than abstraction, coupled with the irrational, were appropriate vehicles for the expression of a different mode of meaning.

The "message between the lines" which may frequently be found in Soviet published texts, and the double meaning of many official pronouncements in the Soviet media have their parallels in the multiple readings of the images of non-conformist paintings. This is particularly evident in the paintings of artists like Makarenko and Humeniuk.

In their rejection of Socialist Realism, the non-conformist artists spurned the officially endorsed policy of "folklorization" in painting as superficial, yet many of them sought inspiration for the expression of their patriotic feeling in images of peasants (Marchuk), folk

dress (Humeniuk), and village scenes (Patyk), usually depicted with modern stylistic devices and not in a realistically accurate manner. However, most non-conformist artists searched for ideas beyond what was advocated and permitted, delving into the traditions of the past and into Ukrainian history that was not sanctioned by the Soviet State.

What came to me as a surprise, after I had undertaken this study, was the concern many of the artists expressed for Ukrainian national identity and for a need to deal with it in their work. Humeniuk, in particular, made a career of doing so using forbidden subjects and images in combination with a formal vocabulary built on a synthesis of several styles.

Only a few of the non-conformist artists rejected representational subject matter and saw art as an absolute value in its own right. Both Dubovyk and, for a time Zviryns'kyi, used form as a vehicle of meaning, but they were exceptions even among the non-conformists.

A common trait shared by many of the non-conformist artists was their meticulous craftsmanship and the control they exercised over the medium, as is apparent from their work. No doubt this came as a result of many years of academic-type art training most of artists received, where craftsmanship was highly prized. Perhaps the fact that the

artists had so little control over their own lives under the Communist system was reflected subconsciously in their work, over which they could exercise as much control as they wished. Although this trait was shared also by official artists, the non-conformists did not reject it.

In Ukraine women artists make up a sizable portion of the Artists' Union membership, but they were not well represented in non-conformist art. This perhaps could be seen as typical of the male dominated Soviet society in which they lived, and which has parallels in the West. Despite official pronouncements to the contrary, women in the Soviet Union have not achieved equality, and the status of the average woman in Soviet Ukraine is far from enviable. Burdened with continuous shortages of food and other products, the necessity of standing in long queues for the essentials of life, and an almost total lack of modern household conveniences such as washing machines and electrical appliances, Soviet women carry out the traditional duties of homemakers and nurturers in very difficult circumstances. Most of the women artists in addition had jobs with the Art Fund or elsewhere which left them with little time and energy for creative endeavours. Many of them achieved recognition in applied art or in the crafts rather than in easel painting. As a result their direct contribution to non-conformist art appears very limited. Of the women artists taking part in the Exhibitions of Ukrainian Non-conformist Art in Moscow, only

Liudmyla Yastreb, became a serious artist. Their role in the general development of Soviet Ukrainian art, however, has not received any attention and deserves further study.

It was through non-conformist painting that reached the West in the seventies that interest in Soviet Ukrainian art was aroused. Exhibitions of work of the non-conformist artists brought them to the attention of the West. Makarenko was the first to have an exhibit of his watercolours in Paris at the Galerie Hardy in 1976. Humeniuk was next with a solo show in Toronto in 1979, followed by Strelnikov's exhibition in Munich. In 1979 there was also a group exhibition of the work of twenty-one Ukrainian non-conformist artists held in Munich and London. The catalogue of this exhibit focused attention on some of the non-conformist artists who, at the time, were experiencing difficulties in the Soviet Union.⁸ The emigration of Strelnikov in 1978 and Makarenko and Sazonov in 1980 aroused further interest in the plight of non-conformist artists in Soviet Ukraine.

When I first embarked on this study in 1985, the framework and interpretations of Socialist Realism had widened considerably stylistically and thematically since the fifties, but exhibitions and publications continued to be dominated by vintage Socialist Realist paintings while

⁸ Catalogue: Contemporary art from Ukraine. Munich: Special Exhibition Committee, 1979.

the pictures of the non-conformist artists gathered dust in their studios. Changes in what was being exhibited did not appear until 1987 when, in the spirit of Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika, exhibition committees began to show work that went well beyond the framework of Socialist Realism. The following three exhibits which focused attention on innovations, religious themes, and abstraction could be considered milestones in recent developments in art. They were the "Molodist' krainy" (Youth of the Country) and "Pohliad" (Look) exhibits held in 1987 in Kiev and "Dialoh" (Dialogue) held in 1988 to mark the millenium of Christianity in Ukraine. The last two were organized by the artists working for the Monumental Art Section of the Art Fund in Kiev many of whom had not been able to exhibit for years. Among the non-conformist artists discussed, Marchuk and Dubovyk participated. These large group shows were followed by solo exhibits of the work of Dubovyk in Kiev and Humeniuk and Zalyvakha in both Lviv and Kiev in 1988 and 1989.

All of these exhibitions and numerous follow-up articles in the Soviet press indicate that non-conformist art has finally gained official and public recognition, and the non-conformist artists have become "official" by being made members of the Artists' Union.⁹ On the other hand the large thematic canvases favoured by Socialist Realism have

⁹ Humeniuk and Marchuk became members of the Artists' Union in 1988, as did other artists.

all but disappeared from exhibition walls. What better vindication of the struggles of non-conformist artists to create and exhibit paintings that had broken out of the hermetic seal of regionally oriented Socialist Realism centered in Moscow and opened the way towards a more cosmopolitan art?

In this sense non-conformist art clearly functioned as an avant garde. But avant garde art is often seen as breaking the mould of continuity and tradition, as cutting through the incumbrances of an artistic heritage. In the special circumstances of Ukrainian art in this period such was not the case. Ukrainian artists were faced with a repressive state and Russifying cultural authorities. It appears, therefore, that Socialist Realism as a monolithic artistic method continued to thrive only as long as it was being implemented by force, but could not survive on its own without the rigid controls and enticements of the Communist Party. As soon as artists realized that their lives and work were no longer threatened on a daily basis, a great many of them lost no time in rejecting Socialist Realism in favour of creative freedom and expression. The artistic heritage which had been silenced, distorted, and driven underground, but which remained potent mainly through the efforts of non-conformist art, came into the forefront. Socialist Realism, the dictated art of a totalitarian regime, as well as a vehicle of Russification, began to disintegrate with the lifting, albeit partial, of the State monopoly on art whereas non-conformist art emerged as the source of continuity, renewal, and inspiration.

In the end it becomes evident that the artificial imposition of Socialist Realism, which was hailed as "the higher stage of development in world art", failed to stifle the natural development of Ukrainian artistic traditions, even though for a time it delayed and impeded their advancement. These traditions nurtured for thirty years by non-conformist artists working under difficult conditions, not only provided continuity with Ukrainian culture and Western art, but formed the springboard for new developments in Soviet Ukrainian painting.

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Appendix A

Constitution of the Union of Artists of the USSR Ratified by the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists March 7, 1957

I

General Principles

The Union of Artists of the USSR is a voluntary social organization, which unites artists and art scholars, who take an active part in the development of Soviet visual arts.

Guided by the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Union of Artists of the USSR organizes and directs the creative work of artists and art scholars towards the use of art to help the struggle of the Soviet people in the building of communism.

The Union of Artists of the USSR by means of all its activities assists the Communist Party and the Government in the aesthetic education of the Soviet people.

Continuing the better traditions of Russian classical art, the art of the peoples of the USSR and of world artistic culture, on the basis of mastering Marxism-Leninism, the Union of Artists of the USSR establishes the method of Socialist Realism in the creative activity of all artists and art scholars of the Soviet Union.

Socialist Realism represents a higher stage in the historical development of world art. Socialist Realism guarantees a true, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development.

Based on the principles of Socialist Realism, the Union of Artists of the USSR assists the all-sided development of individuals, assists the achievement of the richness and diversity of artistic styles and methods, upholds the wide initiative and creative struggle in the fight for high idealism and craftsmanship of Soviet multinational visual arts.

II

Duties of the Union of Artists of the USSR

The duties of the Union of the USSR include:

1. The unification of Soviet artists and art scholars, for the purpose of creating ideological⁽¹⁾, highly artistic works of all types and genres, which would aid in the construction of communism in our country, the struggle for peace and the friendship of all nations of the world.

⁽¹⁾In Russian "ideinikh"

2. All-sided support of the development of visual art of the peoples of the USSR, socialist in content and national in form. The exchange of creative experience among the artists and art scholars of all Union Republics.

3. Politico-ideological education of Soviet artists and art scholars, and assistance for them in mastering Marxist-Leninist theory. The education of Soviet artists and art scholars in the spirit of hostility (intolerance) to bourgeois ideology, aestheto-formalist and naturalist tendencies in art.

All-sided development of criticism and self-criticism as the most important moving force in the development of Soviet art.

4. Fostering the creative growth of artists, perfection of their professional craftsmanship.

The development of Soviet art scholarship and art criticism, the creative expansion of the experience of Soviet artists based on the principles of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics.

Fostering the creative development of young artists and art scholars.

5. The organization of discussions of the more important creative and theoretical problems, surveyance and discussion of new artistic creations and works of artistic scholarship.

The fostering of the involvement and attraction of wide circles of Soviet citizenry in discussion of exhibitions, and reports on creativity of artists and art scholars.

6. The organization of competitions for the purpose of creating better works of visual art.

7. Communo-creative influence on institutions and organizations of visual arts (art education establishments, art galleries and museums, the visual arts media, etc.), on enterprises of art industry.

8. Assistance for artists and art scholars in studying the life, toil and traditions of the peoples of the USSR, the organization of creative and scholarly trips into industrial and agricultural regions as well as cultural centres of the country.

9. Propaganda of Soviet achievements in art, by means of exhibitions, excursions, lectures and discussions, publication of works of art scholarship, textbooks, monographs about the creativity of artists, reproductions of the finer works of Soviet visual art.

10. Organization of activity aimed at improving the cultural and material means of livelihood of members and candidates for membership of the Union, and the protection of their copyright rights.

11. Fostering in the development of visual art activity among units of the Soviet Army and Navy.

12. The development of international contacts among artists and art scholars, with the purpose of struggling for peace and the fostering of friendship among peoples, the organization of exchanges of creative experience with artists from the countries of peoples' democracies, and with progressive artists of other foreign lands.

III

Members and Candidates for Membership of the Union of Artists of the USSR. Their Rights and Duties

1. The membership of the Union of Artists of the USSR may consist of painters, sculptors, graphic-artists, theater and film artists, decorative and applied artists who created works of a high professional craftsmanship and community-artistic value, and art scholars, whose works of scholarship and criticism foster the development of creative practice and theory of Soviet visual artists.

2. A member of the Union of Artists of the USSR is obliged to take an active part in the work of the Union of Artists, to raise his/her ideological-political level and professional craftsmanship, to abide by the rules of discipline set out by the Union, and to carry out the obligations set out in the Constitution of the Union of Artists of the USSR:

a) to elect and be elected to the organs of leadership and control of the Union, to take part in all undertakings of the Union of Artists;

b) personally to take part in discussion of one's own creative work at the meeting of organs of the Union, as well as in decisions about one's own activity or behaviour;

c) to exhibit one's own works, based on one's own selection and judgement, at jury-free exhibitions organized by the Union;

d) to make use of all forms of cultural and material services, available under the jurisdiction of the Union;

3. Candidates for membership in the Union of Artists may be artists and art scholars, who are engaged in active creative work, creating individual works and art-scholarly works, but who have not demonstrated the full measure of their creative potential.

The period of Candidacy is established to be a two year term.

In cases when, after completing the period of Candidacy, a Candidate is not transferred to full Membership in the Union of Artists, the Candidate is considered automatically to have terminated being a Candidate for Membership of the Union of Artists.

4. Candidates for Membership in the Union have consultative rights at all meetings of the Union, but may not elect or be elected to the leadership or control organs of the Union. Also, they do not have the right to exhibit their works of their own choosing, at jury-free exhibitions.

In all other respects Candidates for Membership in the Union have all the rights of Members of the Union. Candidates for Membership in the Union are duty-bound to carry out the obligations stipulated by the Constitution of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

5. Entering members or Candidates for Membership for the Union of artists submit:

- a) a written application;
- b) artistic creations or art-scholarly works;
- c) recommendations of three members of the Union, who provide the creative and social which give characterization of the Candidate.

6. Acceptance into Membership or Candidacy for Membership in the Union of Artists is realized by the leadership of the Union of Artists of the Union Republics or the Cities of Moscow and Leningrad.

The leadership of the Unions considers the question of acceptance into membership, upon the recommendations of the leaderships of the branches of the Unions of Artists.

Denial of membership can be appealed to the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR, whose decision is final.

7. Those accepted for Membership or as Candidates for Membership of the Union pay dues at the rate set out by the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

8. A member of the Union of artists of the USSR is given a single membership card.

A Candidate for Membership in the Union of Artists of the USSR is given a Candidate membership card.

9. Loss of membership in the Union is realized by the same organs of the Union of Artists of the USSR, which have been given the right to accept members to the Union.

Loss of membership is instituted in cases of:

- a) the loss of voting rights by a court of law;
- b) carrying out an anti-social act;
- c) activity incompatible with the aims and duties of the Union of Artists of the USSR.
- d) Prolonged inactivity in creative and community work of the Union, without serious reasons;
- e) failure to pay dues according to schedule;
- f) personal request.

Decisions about termination of membership in the Union of Artists may be appealed to the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

IV

Organizational Structure of the Union of Artists of the USSR

1. The highest leading organ of the Union of Artists of the USSR is the all-Union Convention of Artists, which is held at least once every four years.

The norms of representation at the Convention are established by the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

2. The All-Union Convention:

a) Discusses and elaborates the question of the state and the development of Soviet visual arts, sets the tasks and organizational forms of activity of the Union of Artists of the USSR;

b) Endorses the reports of the central leadership and control organs of the Union;

c) Ratifies the Constitution of the Union of Artists of the USSR, as well as amendments to the Constitution.

d) Elects the Leadership and the Central Control Commission of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

3. The Executive Organ of the All-Union Convention of Artists is the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR, elected by a secret ballot of the Convention, which leads the Union in the period between Conventions.

The Plenum of the Leadership meets not less than three times a year.

4. The Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR:

a) organizes the ideological-artistic activity of the Union;

b) directs the work of the Union, its establishments and creative organs, and ensures the implementation of the decisions of the All-Union Convention of Artists;

c) approves the Leadership of the Art Fund of the USSR, creates commissions, auxiliary organizations of creative and community activities of the Union, and approves Regulations about such activities;

d) reports on its work at the All-Union Convention of Artists.

5. The Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR elects from among its members the Secretariat of the Leadership.

6. The Secretariat of the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR carries on current activity aimed at implementing the decisions of the All-Union Convention of Artists, and of the Plenums of the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR, and organizes the monitoring of the implementation of their decisions.

7. Republican Unions of Artists are formed in the union Republics. In the cities of Moscow and Leningrad - the Moscow and Leningrad Unions of Soviet Artists.

Branches of the Union of Artists are formed in the Autonomous Republics, and in the provinces ("oblasts") of the Union Republics, in accordance with the decisions of the Leaderships of the Republican Unions.

Republican, country ("krai"), provincial ("oblast") and city organizations of the Union of Artists, as a rule, may be formed provided that there are not fewer than 10 members of the Union there.

Groups of fewer than 10 members may join interprovincial branches of the Union of Artists, according to the principle of territorial proximity.

8. The highest governing organs of the Republican Unions of Artists are the Republican Conventions, and in the Moscow and Leningrad Unions of Soviet Artists - the General Meetings of the members of the Union. In the branches of the Unions of Artists of the provinces, countries and autonomous republics the governing organ is the general meeting of the members of the Union.

The Republican Conventions of Artists and the General Meetings elect, by secret ballot, the leadership and the control commission. The leadership elects the head of the leadership from among its members, his vice-head (or vice-heads) and the responsible secretary.

In organizations of the Union of Artists, that have more than one hundred members of the Union, the leadership elects from among itself a presidium for directing current work and controlling its implementation.

Republican Conventions and reporting-voting meetings are convened not less frequently than once every two years.

9. The Leadership of the Unions and the Leaderships of the Branches of the Union of Artists is the executive and directive organs in the period between the relevant Conventions or General Meetings of the members of the Union, and report to these Conventions or General Meetings or to the Secretariat of the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

The Leaderships of the Unions and the Leaderships of the Branches of the Union of Artists form sections, which facilitate the development of creative and community activities of the Union.

The General Meetings of the Sections (where there are no Sections - General Meetings of the members of the Union) elect appropriate artistic councils by secret ballot. The Leadership of the Unions and the Leaderships of the Branches of the Union direct the work of the artistic councils.

10. The All-Union Convention of Artists elects, by secret ballot, (but not from among the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR or its organs) the Central Control Commission, and the Republican Conventions and General Meetings of the Union of Artists and of branches of the Union of Artists elect their own Control Commissions.

The Control Commissions elect, from among themselves, the head, the vice-head (or vice-heads) and secretary.

The Control Commissions are elected for the same terms of office, as the Leaderships of the Unions and their branches, and report about their activity to the organs which elected them.

The duties of the Control Commission include:

a) supervision of the implementation of the Constitution of the Union of Artists of the USSR, the Constitution of the Art Fund of the USSR, and of the decisions made by the Conventions and General Meetings of the Unions of Artists;

b) verification of the financial and material-management activity of the relevant governing bodies, as well as of all institutions and agencies subordinated to them;

c) supervision of the proper disbursement and management of their financial resources.

11. The numerical composition of the leaderships and control commissions is determined by the organs that elect them.

The elections of the leadership organs and control commissions of the Union of Artists, as well as the delegates to the conventions are made by secret ballot in the presence of not less than 2/3 of the voters.

Those members of the Union who receive the majority of the votes, but not less than 50% of all votes that took part in the voting, are considered to have been elected.

V

Juridical (Legal) Rights of the Union of Artists of the USSR

1. The Union of Artists of the USSR, the Republican Unions, the Unions of Artists of the cities of Moscow and Leningrad, and the branches of the Unions of Artists have the rights of juridical (legal) person, with all consequences that follow from this, on the basis of existing laws. (They can enter into all kinds of agreements, consistent with their aims, to acquire and dispose of property, to sue and to appear before the courts, to receive moneys, to possess current and other accounts, etc.)

2. The Union of Artists of the USSR has the right to create such institutions and enterprises as are necessary for its work, in accordance with independent constitutions or regulations that have been created about them, including agencies, exhibitions, courses for the upgrading of qualifications, houses of artists, houses of creativity, houses of rest, sanatoriums, medical institutions, workshops, laboratories, libraries, stores, galleries, publishing houses, journals, the construction of institutions, ateliers, living quarters, etc.

3. At the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR there exist administratively independent but working under the direct direction of the Secretariat of the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR and acting on the basis of statutes and regulations:

a) the Art Fund of the USSR, the duty of which is the fostering of the creative activity of members and candidates for membership in the Union of Artists, and the improvement of their socio-economic and cultural state.

b) the Governing Council for the protection of authors' rights, which takes upon itself the protection of authors' rights (copyright) of artists and art scholars, inside as well as outside the boundaries of the USSR, and acts through the relevant Soviet organs.

c) the publishing house "Sovetskii Khudozhnik" ("Soviet Artist") which propagates Soviet visual arts by means of publication of books, albums, catalogues, reproductions etc.

4. The Director and Deputy-Directors of the Art Fund of the USSR, the director, deputy-director and chief editor of the publishing house "Soviet Artist", the director of the Governing Council for the protection of authors' rights, and the chief auditors of these institutions are appointed by the Secretariat of the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR.

5. The Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR is located in Moscow.

6. The Union of Artists of the USSR, the Republican Unions of Artists, and Unions of Artists of Moscow and Leningrad and the Branches of the Union of Artists have seals and stamps that indicate their official names.

7. The financial base of the Union of Artists is formed:
- a) from initial and membership dues;
 - b) from allocations of government organs;
 - c) from income which results from the activities of organizations and enterprises, which are subordinated to the Union of Artists of the USSR.
 - d) from income from the Art Fund of the USSR.

8. The Union of Artists of the USSR is free from government or local taxes, payments and duties.

9. The Union of Artists of the USSR may be liquidated by a resolution of a Convention of Artists or a decision of the Government.

All property, which remain after the liquidation of the Union of Artists is transferred to organs indicated in the resolution of the Convention or in the decision of the Government.

The liquidation of the Unions of Artists and Branches of the Union of Artists can occur as a result of a special decision of the Leadership of the Union of Artists of the USSR. All means and property that remain after liquidation are transferred to the next higher organ of the Union of Artists.

Translated by V. Koniuk and J. W. Darewych.

ВЫСТАВКА УКРАИНСКИХ ХУДОЖНИКОВ

28. X1. - 8. X11. 1975 года г. Москва

НАТАЛЬЯ ПАВЛЕНКО

ФЕОДОСИЯ ГУМЕНЮК

ВЛАДИМИР МАКАРЕНКО

ВИТАЛИЙ САЗОНОВ

ВЛАДИМИР СТЕЛЬНИКОВ

Участники выставки обременены сознанием причастности своего творчества национальной традиции Украинской живописи. Широкое русло этой традиции способно, по их мнению, вместить в себя и стать надежным основанием многообразия индивидуальных усилий. В пестроте и разобщенности сегодняшнего искусства поиск национальных оснований творчества становится вопросом жизни и смерти, возрождения или вырождения духа и смысла самого искусства, Ориентиром этого поиска для украинского, - как и для русского и для всякого другого художника, ощутившего свои кровные связи, - может стать лишь свободное внутреннее усвоение ценностей национальной культуры. Легковесным "стилизациям национальной" ставшим расхожим товаром антикварной моды, необходимо противопоставить духовную устремленность к "связи времен". Смысл обращения к традиции - не в расслабленной ретроспекции, а в новых масштабах жизнеощущения художника. "Взгляд в прошлое" должен вести к новому видению настоящего и к видению в нем "нового" - будущего.

Одухотворенное и внутренне свободное приобщение к традиции, ее возрождение - и есть трудный, но единственный путь художника к самому себе.

Перспективой этого пути должно быть не обособление, не поверхностная "оригинальность", ставшая идолом современного творчества а сближение разрозненных усилий, слияние их в духовном братстве национальной художественной школы.

Как не далека эта цель, она вдохновляет участников выставки.