

Artistic Level of Contemporary paintings

My intention of introducing paintings from my art collection on pages of my book is to enable you to grasp through these works what kind of art contemporary Russian paintings is, and needless to say, the precondition for it is that the works introduced have the characteristics and artistic levels representing the core of contemporary Russian art. I myself know from my experience in Moscow that my collection meets this requirement, and it is exactly because I had been so deeply consoled by these works that it occurred to me to make use of this collection as a means of illustrating the excellence of contemporary Russian art.

Thinking it over composedly and logically, however, a person who is completely unfamiliar with contemporary Russian paintings has possibly no basis for making a judgment, and it may not be particularly strange if someone is inclined to doubt me, thinking that I highly evaluated the paintings I collected during my time abroad merely because I decided so arbitrarily. Even if such a example is too extreme, I'm sure that the question of an artistic level representing contemporary Russian paintings is a point of great interest for readers.

Therefore, in this chapter concluding my introduction of the works, I would like to take up in particular the pieces that could be said to have embodied the standard of high artistic level representing contemporary Russian art.

Determining this standard level representing contemporary Russian painting circles is an extremely difficult task, but fortunately, I have at hand a book that will help. It is an album called "Moscow Landscape Artists" published in 1979, which I happened to find at a used bookstore when my time in Moscow was drawing to a close. The album introduced one or two pieces for each artist of a total of 193 Moscow landscape artists, including fourteen People's Artists of the USSR, thirteen People's Artists of Russia (Republic), and fifty-eight Honored Artists of Russia, in order of age. The overall high level of the works can be adequately ascertained there, and we may say that this album represents Russian painting circles of the time. Judging from the Russian art world having quite a number of artists, that an artist was not selected there is not necessarily proof that he or she is not first-grade. However, because of the excellence of the works and a large number of People's Artists and Honored Artists, we could say the opposite is true.

The publication year of this album was more than ten years before I was stationed in Moscow, and I was able to confirm that out of 193 artists about 60, a little less than 80% of whom were People's Artists or Honored Artists, had already passed away when I was living in Moscow, and as for the remaining artists there was no way for me to know how many of them exhibited their works at the galleries I frequently visited, but as a result of collecting pieces I liked, seven of the artists introduced in that album are included in my collection. In the previous chapters I have introduced the works of two of them, but here, I'd like to take up the works of these seven artists, including these two anew, from the new viewpoint to exactly show how high an artistic level representing contemporary Russian art is

It goes without saying that the pieces I introduce here are not at all inferior to the works of the same artists selected for this album. Looking at these works, you'll be able to judge to a certain extent the level of contemporary Russian paintings, and also by comparing with and referring to these, you shall understand to some degree that the works having been already introduced till now also represent the artistic level of contemporary Russian paintings.

Moreover, the artist ranking for the artistic level published by "the Artists Trade Union of Russia" is an enough standard to more objectively confirm the value of the artists. That's why I listed for your reference the ranking of the respective artists introduced in this book in the right hand column of the illustration list at the end of this book with the aim to show what category of ranking these artists have received among the artists of the Russian art history on the whole from the eighteenth century up to now.

Therefore, before getting into the main issue, I think it quite rational to briefly explain the artist ranking of "the Artists Trade Union".

The list of artist ranking is released as a part of "United Artists Rating" published by "the Artists Trade Union". The Russian word of art is broad in its concept, and the word "fine art" translated from this Russian word does not necessarily cover its concept. In the category of artist, not only oil painters, drawers, and sculptors, but also metal chasers, architects, stage designers, and film directors are included. Because of this, "United Artists Rating" (Fifth Edition) issued in 2002 is made up of an art

ranking for the collection owned by 755 art museums, an oil painter and drawer ranking (later to be referred to as artist ranking), a sculptor ranking, and guidelines for the lowest prices for the artists' ranking. In the sixth edition, the architect ranking was newly added, and the metal chaser and film director rankings are currently being prepared for to be supplemented to the "United Artists Rating".

The artistic ranking is set up by twenty-seven professional collective mainly consisting of art scholars and critics of the Ranking Center attached to "the Artists Trade Union". The characteristic of the ranking is that these professionals do not consider existing authority such as having an honorable title from the (Soviet) Russian Artists' Union, having won noted awards, or being a member of an art academy—that is to say, the artist is assessed and ranked based only on the artistic merit of the works from a purely aesthetic viewpoint without any influence from opinions of influential groups and organizations. The first edition of the "United Artists Rating" was published in 1999; as a rare book right from the publication, it could not be found anywhere but large libraries. To further promote their objective of protecting the profits of artists and creating an ordered, standardized art market within Russia, the fifth edition was released on the Internet in June 2003. The artist ranking in this book was taken from the artistic ranking, where necessary, of this web-site. The artistic ranking covers all together 12572 artists from the whole of Russian art history, including not only contemporary artists, but also the artists in the past. The rankings are broken down into fourteen levels, from the highest "1" to a "7". "1" is artists of a world-class artistic level for over a century (thus, there is no "1" assessment for contemporary artists). "1A" is similarly a world-class artist who, however, has not stood the test of time of a century. "1B" is a high-class working artist with excellent organizational skills enjoying absolute demand and popularity. Thus explanations for each ranking are given. Although it is in Russian language, I'd attach the site address here for reference; interested readers may refer to it: * <http://rating.artunion.ru>

*The indication of rankings was removed from the Internet in January 2006, but instead, as of February 1st, 2013, you may buy a download version of the artists' ranking list through the aforesaid web-site.

By the way, on the next page is shown a rating table of the 193 artists in *Moscow Landscape Artists* according to the artist ranking. Re-checking these 193 artists with the list of Soviet Artists' Union members published in 1988, we see the changes in the number of artists given the title because this member list was made up after nine years

Rating Category	People's Artist of the USSR	People's Artist of Russia (Republic)	*Honored Artist of Russia (Republic)	No title (Soviet) Russian Artists' Union Member
1				
1A	2			2
1B	5			
2A	5	2	5	7
2B	6	3	6	1
3A		4	9	6
3B		6	17	10
4A	1		9	14
4B		1	29	43
5A				
5B				
6A				
6B				
7				
Total	19	16	75	83

*Including eight Honored Art Activity Artists (2B - 1, 3B - 3, 4A - 1, 4B - 3) and five Honored Cultural Workers (4A - 1, 4B - 4)

from the release of *Moscow Landscape Artists*.

What is clear from this table is that while a definite correlation can be seen between the titles of the Artists' Union and the ranking level assessments, Artist's Union members with no titles are capable enough to maintain almost the same artistic levels as those of the artists with titles. In other words, a title suggests the fair judgment that the artist is of a considerable artistic level, but a lack of a title does not necessarily mean the opposite. All 193 members are, without exception, members of the Artists' Union and there are no artists ranked lower than "5A." In addition, many of the artists with the title of Honored Artist that is seldom given are ranked "4B," so it seems that meeting both conditions of being an Artists' Union member and being ranked "4B" or higher objectively shows a standard that the artists belong to a group of the top tier of artists

*In February, 2013 I newly checked the web-site of the Artists Trade Union and found out the several notable alterations, the important information of which first of all lies in the point that the Artists Trade Union has qualified the rating level “1-3” of Russian professional artists as the level of the world scale and publicized the rating list of the international artists in total not less than 11500, which consists not only of all the artists having the rating “1-3” throughout the history of Russian fine arts from XVIII century till now, but also of great painters in countries other than Russia just for the same fixed period, having been selected by the same criteria of the artistic level as Russian rating “1-3”. The second important alteration, which is directly related with the aforementioned change, shall be the age limitation having been introduced to the rating of the artists: the rating level “1” in any case won’t be given to the living and working artists, nor the rating level “2-4” — to any artist younger than 50 years old, and so on. Needless to say, this means that the obstacles to be cleared for acquiring the artistic level higher than “4” in particular became harder and more severe for the artists.

In this connection, I myself pay attention to the artistic level of rating “4”, not to mention the rating of the international artists, because the artists with the rating “4” are by far more in number than those of “1-3” and form an inconspicuous mainstay, so to speak, of the painting circle among the artists “1-4” which represent the artistic level of Russian paintings. That’s why they occupy so important position as to exert a decisive influence on this artistic level on the whole and the thickness of their layer. And if I say about the actual artistic level of the artists “4” based on my experience, the majority of the works of the artists “4” are on such a high artistic level that enables viewers to feel what splendid paintings they are, which make it even possible to regard the artists “4” as first class, if we call the artists of “1-3” very first rate painters on the ground that the Artists Trade Union has qualified them as the painters of world scale. Such a high artistic level of rating “4” means nothing but an abundant reserve of the artists, from where some of them earlier or later are to be promoted to rating “1-3” and it symbolizes better than anything else that the activity level of Russian artistic circle on the whole lies in a very healthy condition.

Applying this standard to the artists in this book, *nineteen of the twenty-six artists meet this standard, as shown in the right column of the Illustration List. Because the remaining *seven are not assessed in the fifth edition of the *United Artists Rating*, their rank is unclear, but the number of artists to be assessed in the seventh edition increased to 21324 and will likely increase successively in future, so I expect the time will show that most of the remaining artists eventually turn out to have

embodied the artistic level of this standard in their works.

Setting this aside, nowadays it is clear that more than *70% of the artists fulfill the two standards above. So I think we can safely say that the aim of objectively providing the ground that not only the artists I'm about to introduce here, but also the artists introduced till now are the representatives of contemporary Russian art has been achieved to some extent.

*In January 2009, namely in three and a half years after the publication of this book, I asked the Artists' Trade Union about their renewed ranking assessment for the artists in this book. Their reply is shown in the right column of the Illustration List at the end of this book: rankings with mark \rightarrow on the left are revised ones at the time of my inquiry, and also the newest rankings checked as of May, 2013 are shown with mark \Rightarrow . The rankings with no arrow mean that they remain unchanged. Some artists have dropped their rankings, but they have their talents by nature respectively. So I don't worry about it so much.

As the introductory remarks were prolonged so much, let's revert to the main subject.

Morning (Illustration 32) depicts the riverside morning scene where against the background of the wild current of a curving river full of water a horse and foal are grazing on the bank, with the deciduous trees dyed the autumn golden colors growing on it.

This piece, as we may expect from the works of an Honored Artist, is very substantial in its expression, enabling us to feel a larger scale than the actual size of the painting. The bending and coursing river is portrayed such that the river rich in water flows quite lively with power, and the reality in the expression of such energetic current draws our eyes involuntarily. This is contrasted with the gloomy monotone sky of the early morning, further enhancing the sense of wild, vigorous movements, and the differences in the positions and color tones of each of the groves of trees arranged in the background, middle distance and foreground give the impression that they have rhythms in agreement with the flow of the river, simultaneously playing a role in increasing the power of the water rapidly flowing on through the broad river basin from the distance to foreground, and right to left.



Illustration 32

Mikhail A. Suzdaltsev (1917 – 1998)

Member of the Russian Artists' Union, Honored Artist of Russia,

Winner of the USSR State Prize

Morning (1992) Oil on canvas, 50 × 70 cm

What is splendid about this piece, along with the excellence of such portrayal of the river surface, is how well the titular morning atmosphere is felt in the expression of partly shaded light and air imbued with a feel of fresh cool.

Portrait of a Girl (Illustration 33) is the only portraiture in my collection. You may wonder if I did not encounter any other excellent portraits. Of course, I did. There were two or three that I wanted to secure, but in general, I find it difficult to muster up the desire to have a portrait beside me if I have no spiritual connection with the portrayed person, just like someone close to me or any specific notable person, such as my favorite novelist or musician.

Nevertheless, I acquired *Portrait of a Girl* because I found a certain type of



Illustration 33

Vasily A. Arlashin (1923 – 1998)

Member of the Russian Artists' Union

Portrait of a Girl (1967) Oil on canvas, 100 × 90 cm

universal beauty in this healthy girl, and also because the painting itself is excellent. The girl sits on a chair without backrest, slightly turning to the left. Her back is straight, and her face turns towards us. This figure is brimming with a healthy youthfulness. Not everyone is likely to regard her as a beautiful girl at first glance, but she has her own appeal. Her long neck holding her head straight enhances her beauty.

When I first saw this piece, to be honest, she looked like a farmer's daughter, and somehow, I associated the expression of "babje leto". The bright, warm weather of

early fall is called “babje leto” in Russian; “babje” is the neutral adjective of “baba” (married farm woman) and if translate this phrase literally, it means “a farm woman’s summer.” The reason why a farm woman is referenced to in an expression for Indian summer is that the recurrence of a short summer is compared to the married farm woman whose peak of womanhood quickly faded, having no time to take care of herself, dressing up because of the hard work in the fields. In recent years farm life has improved and such old sayings are likely no longer necessarily the case, but this sort of tendency may remain in high probability.

I was reminded of this expression because I remembered the word “baba”, relating it to “babje leto” and actually in this piece, as if to back up my impression, are portrayed the girl’s simple, unadorned features, her clothes extremely subdued for a young girl together with the tanned arm showing out of the plain, green, short-sleeved blouse, and the dexterous hands accustomed to work, all of which suggest that she is a sweet, rural village girl. Most probably she must be surrounded by the life of farming village, in which the peak of womanhood fades more quickly than in the city. The artist recognizes in this girl a beauty supported by the health and youth of a rural girl before marriage, and depicted it lovingly in this portrait.

The portrayal of the lively expression of her hand on the chair, the form of her upper body with a sense of stability implying the firm support of the structure of her bones and muscles, and the sensible treatment of light in conformity with the laws of nature are indeed quite excellent, and the attentive consideration the artist gave to the depiction, including the way he partly provided the subtle shading for the wallpaper in the background, brings the artistic level of this piece even higher.

The Foundation of the Port at Kamchatka: The Ships St. Peter and St. Paul (Illustration 34) is the second-largest piece in my collection. It is also the sole historical painting I own, depicting a port scene in those days when the port at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky was founded. This port is said to be opened in 1740 when maritime explorer Vitus Bering wintered there so that he could explore Kamchatka a second time. The port opened that year in such a remote region as one of exits to the sea of Far East as a result of the Cossacks having advanced into Siberia as an advance



Illustration 34

Vitali T. Davydov (1923 – 2007)

Member of the Artists' Union, Honored Artist of Russia

The Foundation of the Port at Kamchatka: The Ships St. Peter and St. Paul (1991)

Oil on canvas, 100 × 130 cm

team since the 16th century and on.

As you will see, the painting depicts two large sailboats smoothly sailing the quiet inlet of the bay with sails unfurled. These are warships of that time flying the flag of the Russian navy, that is to say, St. Peter and St. Paul, the very ships used by Bering on his second expedition. The tall mountain, covered in snow, rising up behind the hills which form the line of the coast, is the Koryaksky volcano that is 3456 meters above sea level. The season is likely the beginning of June, just before Bering goes exploring. The mountain and sky in the background are bright with sunlight, by contrast with which the wharf in the foreground is depicted in deep shade, where it looks unpleasantly chilly, and a few soldiers are crowded around an open fire, trying

to warm themselves.

It goes without saying that the focus of this piece is the warship in the front. The artist put a great deal of energy into its portrayal and you can feel in it even a sense of weight. When you attentively see from which direction the sun shines on the sail and the stern, you'll instantly notice this light is unnatural as if it came from the projector. The reason why the artist intentionally did so is to make this warship conspicuous by showing light on it for the purpose of fixing it on the focus. In this portrayal having sacrificed the natural treatment of light are seen traces of efforts made by the artist who was well aware of the importance of its expression. Viewing this piece carefully, I can grasp something akin to the artist's sincere sentiment in the expression of the warship which is portrayed in the bright light with a feel of such weight and solidity that even a lever could not move it, in which I imagine the artist's pride and respect were embodied for Bering's great achievement which opened the port as early as 18 century as an advance base to the Pacific Ocean and for the foresight of the rulers of that time who entirely backed up his expedition, and in this very point I feel that I can see the motive of this artist for producing this piece. The presence of this warship tightens the composition of the piece, giving it a density. The position, size, and color tones of the warship are in perfect harmony with the dark brown hill in the background and the conic-shaped volcano covered with snow, shining pink in the sunlight, and do enhance the historical mood and beauty of this work, rich in nuances of light and shade.

Strawberries (Illustration 35) is a still life of fruits done from the viewpoint of looking down a little bit from above. The fruits, the containers that hold them, a towel, and a small carpet are put close to one another onto a small, black table, the scene of which is reproduced with bright colors in the light. The strawberries, apples, and currants that fill the dishes and the dishes themselves are represented with realistic colors and the texture the real things have. Above all, the titular strawberries that are the focus of the piece, although small, are portrayed carefully one by one, richly with a feel of solidity and bathed in light, this brilliant and simultaneously indescribable, soft red color tone is a feast for the eyes.

What is remarkable about this piece is that not only still life itself, but also the abundant light accompanying it are reproduced with a real feel. It goes without saying



Illustration 35

Rarisa S. Zatulovskaya (born 1924)

Member of the Russian Artists' Union

Strawberries (1991), Oil on canvas 40 × 50 cm

that it is realized by the realistic portrayal of the objects with the bright, vivid hues and the firm outlines, the expression of which easily makes it clear that this is the work of a master. Zatulovskaya has a strong force in her portrayal of colors that is quite rare for a woman artist, and this wonderful expression is only possible when there is power in the painted colors.

By the way, the artist took attentive care in several points to enhance the completeness of this piece. Something has been placed in the back part of a little bit deep, flat wooden dish containing the strawberries to tilt the dish so as to make the contents clearly visible, suitably for the focal point, and, most probably, a cream, rather than white, towel has been put beside it to harmonize it with the wooden dish and bring out a soft mood. A multi-colored woven mat, with its warm color, is put under the earthenware pot filled with strawberries. The colors and size of the mat were intentionally selected and placed from a need to give brightness to this place and

arrange the color balance of the overall painting because the earthenware pot is a dark color. It can be safely said that the artist's capable brush and such a skillful care have produced this truly complete painting with an excellent, bright color balance. Looking at this piece from close, the dish with the currants has a worn-out appearance, and the towel looks a little dirty, but from a distance, unexpectedly such impression is swept away; the ceramic texture of the dish becomes apparent, and the towel appears to have a fluffy three-dimensionality. Although this piece is rather small in size, in the vivid expression of colors the viewers can feel the balanced radiance and deep transparency common to all the excellent paintings.



Illustration 36

Peter P. Ossovsky (1925– 2015)

Member of the Russian Artists' Union, People's Artist of the USSR,

Winner of the USSR State Prize

Quiet (1993) Oil on canvas, 73 × 73 cm

I selected this piece titled *Quiet* (Illustration 36) at the studio of the artist, to whom I was introduced by my whiskered and bearded artist friend during my second stay in Moscow. Its painting style differs from the realism paintings having been introduced up to now, and besides, it was painted by one of artists occupying a central position in the contemporary Russian art world. Therefore, taking into consideration such high attention it deserves, I decided to add it to this book and treat it in this chapter, viewing that his works were in “the Moscow Landscape Artists” referred to at the beginning of this chapter.

As you can see, the painting has a quite marvelous attractiveness. The piece having a clean and concise portrayal without any excessive details is full of a soft, transparent feeling like a watercolor, wherein is expressed a strong feel of reality and a quiet tranquility as if the soul was purified. The light shining out through the break of clouds, which is one of the features indicating this artist’s romantic tendencies, is portrayed with all his energy so elaborately and so realistically that it enhances the beauty of the piece on the whole, attaching to it mysterious hue. The quiet appearance of the boats with the reflection in the calm surface of the lake is a characteristic of this artist, and the presence of the boats against a background of conspicuous natural beauty all the more draws the eyes.

I had looked at a considerable number of paintings in galleries and other places till then, but it was the first time that I came across such style of work. I opened an album of Ossovsky’s that an artist friend of mine left for me with the words “if you’re interested,” and my eyes opened wide at the fresh charm of his landscapes. Looking in detail, wondering from where this charm comes, Albert Marquet occurred to me as an artist whose works gave me in a certain way a similar impression as I received from Ossovsky’s works.

Marquet is a French artist belonging to Fauvism, and in Japan, he is not so conspicuous hidden behind Matisse, but that he is indeed a grand master is proved by several of his masterpieces which are on permanent display at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and at the State Hermitage Museum respectively. Almost all of these are landscape of town with canal or lake. On the whole, his paintings are captured roughly and simply, however, as far as the main point is concerned, the artist grasps it realistically. Such style of his painting creates an indescribable feel of reality

even in a calm atmosphere, and because of this, he has many fans in Russia.

What made me associate Marquet when I looked at Ossovsky's album is that I saw a common factor in the specific point that the works of Ossovsky on the whole are depicted with a quite concise expression, as if he made one step forward from realism, but actually all the more for it an emphasizing point portrayed by the style of realism looks more attractive and increases in a feel of reality. Certainly, it seems to me that my opinion of Ossovsky and Marquet resembling each other with regard to the effects that such painting techniques exert on the entire work is not greatly beside a point, but the styles and the thought embodied in the works are, of course, of different natures.

Quiet is a piece that clearly shows Ossovsky's characteristics. While it is an actual landscape, the sky, earth, and water are at the same time the symbols of his native land that Ossovsky loves beyond anything else, and in such style of expression that extra details are pared away to a minimum to leave only the essentials, I feel as though the artist's philosophies were embodied in it. Judging from a strong feel of existence of the boat, which is the motif that appears repeatedly in his works, I think the artist especially emphasizes the aspect that it is a human structure, which is placed against a beautiful scene illuminated by the light pouring down through the break of clouds like a revelation from god, creating an exquisite harmony and further setting off the natural beauty and stillness. I am likely not the only one who finds in way of this construction the religious view of Christianity. It can be said that this is a landscape depicted from the artist's meditation, and I believe this unique style with a strong inclination to romanticism will seriously enchant quite a lot of viewers.

As implied by the title, *Morning* (Illustration 37) is a nude giving off a fresh atmosphere of a fine morning, which depicts a scene where a naked woman hanging a towel over her right shoulder stands with her back to us at a garden gate, therefrom opens up a private path leading to the sea below. She somehow looks down at the sea before going down to swim. The rear view of the nude woman is brimming with a bright feeling of openness, and I particularly like how the piece does not make me feel the slightest bit uneasy about looking at a naked woman. I bought this piece on impulse.

I had had the opportunity to view many open-air nude pieces in galleries, majority

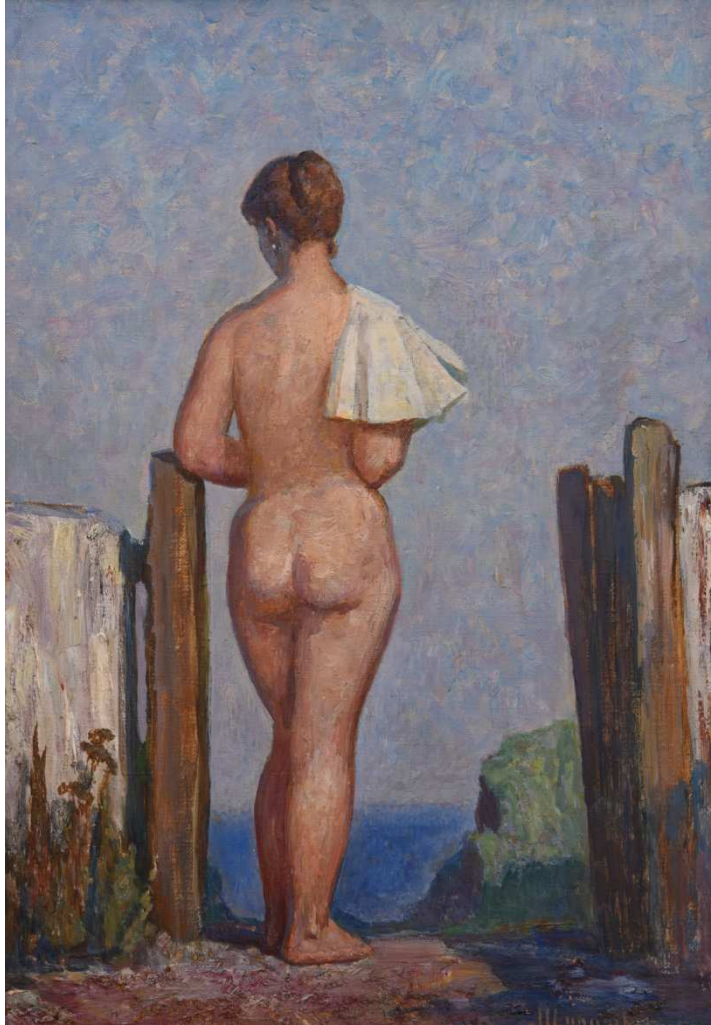


Illustration 37

Leviy S. Shshipachev (1926 – 2001)

Member of the Russian Artists' Union

Morning(1992) Oil on canvas, 82 × 58 cm

of which portrayed a nude woman standing near a river's edge, surrounded by nature, and among them there were even such works giving the impression that the women had been gratuitously added to the nature, therefore it's also difficult to understand why a nude woman was there. When depicting the artistic beauty of female figure in the midst of nature, it is undeniable that the image becomes out of focus because it is overwhelmed by the surrounding nature, and that's why it is apt to give the impression as if it were half done.

Most likely, fully aware of this, Shshipachev decisively placed the emphasis on the nude woman's beauty in this piece. The object is specially portrayed so that the woman does not lose out to the surrounding nature. This figure from the back is depicted with such style differing from realism that almost could be referred to as a kind of formalism. The outline is bordered with dark colors that reflect almost none of the nuances of the outdoor light, and in this portrayal we feel a strong sense of existence and stability. Looking at this piece, I got the impression that the nude woman was portrayed first with a stable form and color tones, and the surrounding scene was incorporated later to add an invigorating atmosphere to this nude woman's beauty. In fact, her upper part from mid-section to head looks even more attractive because of the expressive high sky in the background, and the left side of her face against the refreshing sky makes us imagine that she is beautiful. Although I am not always satisfied with the portrayal of nature eliminating details, such approach which differs from realism brings about the artist's intended result, and we can sufficiently grasp the artist's skillful ability from this work.



Illustration 38

Georgi A. Sysoliatin (1936 – 2010)

Member of the Russian Artists' Union

The Roads of Non-Black Soil: Riumnikovo Village (1991)

Oil on canvas, 45 × 120 cm

The Roads of Non-Black Soil: Riumnikovo Village (Illustration 38) is somewhat dark piece, which is, in this sense, exceptional in my collection. I had the opportunity to

view several of Sysoliatin's works while I lived in Moscow, including non-sale exhibitions. Without exception, they were depicted with rather dark tones and it seems that such tones are characteristic of his color balance. Nevertheless, his expression is substantial enough to fully make up for this darkness, which applies to this work as well. The piece, having a large composition with wide view, depicts with a masculine, powerful touch the scenery of a desolate field, in the rear of which a group of trees in autumn colors stands as if to block the view in the background. On the left side of it there's open space commanding view, therefrom the lake and the boundlessly expanding scenery over the lake are seen against the blue sky with floating white clouds.

Since the titular *Roads* of this piece in original in Russian language is indicated as plural, they likely refer to the several wheel tracks left by trucks on the field. These connect to the road seen to the right of the group of trees, and because cultivated land is seen in the slightly rising geography on the opposite shore of the lake, it's likely that this leads to Riumnikovo Village somewhere nearby. The conspicuous group of trees in a position that blocks the distant view is painted in a characteristic style, and once you are accustomed to looking at them, you can feel in this portrayal a considerable charm pleasant for the eyes. It seems to me that these trees serves as a curtain hiding the stage, stimulating me to imagine that the village might be on the opposite shore somewhere in the area blocked by the trees.

The excellence of this piece lies in the portrayal of the field. Viewing it at a distance, the field spreads out backward much more, giving the impression that the painting has become more than two times larger. Oddly enough, what comes out is only the field, and the rest appears with almost no change, in which a surprisingly vast and devastated form of the field spreads out vividly. And it made me understand that much of the artist's energy was put into the expression of this field and that he deliberately used a wide oblong canvas from the viewpoint to make the most of this expression. Perhaps the field is laid fallow because the soil is barren. In the rough depiction of the earth turned up and carved out by vehicles in the mud, and the heavily depressed, deep green of the short grasses and mosses, the desolate feeling of a field left alone without looking back is expressed. Precisely because the field is depicted as having gone to ruin, naturally it

is contrasted with a beauty of the cultivated, carefully attended land in the sunny distance, and with the clear sky and the idyllic, drifting clouds, causing a viewer to feel that if he went to the other side of the lake, there would probably be something good there. This piece can be said to be the painting where the unseen Riumnikovo Village is expressed in an atmosphere of such expectation.