

Yuri Larin's Space

Yuri Larin, the celebrated Russian artist, died on 14 September 2014, aged 78 years. His watercolours and other works are held in high regard around the world, and especially in Russia. Larin was the son of the Russian revolutionary, Nikolai Bukharin, and Anna Larina. Together with Ken Coates, the Russell Foundation, and many others, Yuri and Anna campaigned for many years for the official rehabilitation of Bukharin, whom Stalin had executed in 1938. Eventually, this was achieved in 1988. Thereafter, Yuri maintained intermittent contact with 'foggy Albion' via his second wife, Olga Maksakova. When Yuri died, Olga kindly arranged for his son, Nikolai (in honour of his grandfather), to deliver by hand to the Russell Foundation in Nottingham a copy of Yuri's Selected Works, published in Moscow in 2013 (ISBN 9785892950251). These pictures are taken from this beautiful volume. We also publish Anna Larina's moving account of her reunion with her son after a forced separation of 20 years. A small exhibition of Yuri's work opened in Moscow on 28 January 2015, entitled 'Yuri Larin's Space'.

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In 2008, Vera Medvedeva conducted a lengthy interview with Yuri Larin, which was published in the journal of the Russkiy Mir Foundation. It included these exchanges:

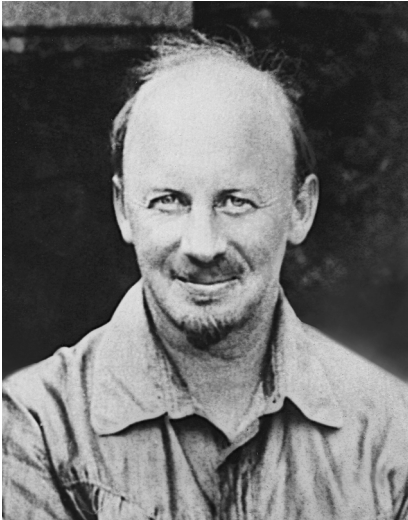
When did you start painting yourself?

I can't say for sure when exactly it happened, or whether it can even be called painting. Perhaps it was when I designed

wall newspapers at the orphanage. After I left there, I studied at the Novocherkassk Engineering and Land Reclamation Institute, and I only arrived in Moscow in the early 1960s. The first museum I ever visited was the Pushkin Museum. The first painter that I fell in love with was Albert Marquet. Everything in his works amazed me. For example, he painted a bridge over the Seine, with some people walking across. I looked at it and thought: ‘How interesting – you cannot take the image of a single person out of this painting without ruining the wholeness of its composition.’ I did not understand a single thing about art at the time, but I already sensed talent when I saw it ...

Do you ever feel bitter about your fate?

No, I don’t. Many had as hard a time as my family did at the time. I am grateful to my relatives, who took me, a one-year-old, out of the orphanage. Boris Gusman was a tremendous construction engineer, and once even participated in the construction of Lenin’s Mausoleum. After the evacuation, his family moved to Stalingrad, but he was arrested almost immediately after the war. I wound up in a Stalingrad children’s home that I only have fond memories of. We had wonderful teachers. People say lots of bad things about children’s homes, but no one ever bullied me. And by the way, to this day, I am still friends with the son of our director.



Nikolai Bukharin



Anna Larina