

# ПРОБЛЕМИ НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

ТРИМЕСЕЧНО СПИСАНИЕ ЗА ТЕОРИЯ, ИСТОРИЯ И КРИТИКА НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

ART STUDIES QUARTERLY

4

ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИЗСЛЕДВАНЕ НА ИЗКУСТВОТА  
ПРИ БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ – СОФИЯ

ISSN 0032-9371

ГОДИНА 47-ма 2014



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I корица

Vera Ivanova. Деца, м.б.платно, 75/65. Частно притежание. Трета изложба на жените художнички, 1931

First cover

Vera Ivanova. Children, oil on canvas, 75/65. Privately owned. Third Exhibition of Women Artists, 1931

IV корица

Стоян Райнов, Ваза, 1934, СГХГ

Back cover

Stoyan Raynov, Vase, 1934, Sofia Art Gallery

# SUMMARIES

## **EARLY NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITIONS IN BULGARIA ORGANISATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY IN THE 1960s**

*Katerina Gadjeva*

The article focuses on a very romantic and productive period in the development of Bulgarian photography, that of the 1960s. New subjects covering the life of people rather than that of the builders of Socialism were the news in the authors' repertoires. Emotionality, joy and beauty of everyday life started pushing aside the ascetic, edifying and impassionate images, typical of the previous decade. A photographic movement developed branching out in photo clubs and groups that mushroomed across the country. Many photographers were conferred the title of artists which required participation in national, local and international competitions and exhibitions. There was a growing demand on holding national photographic reviews, competitions and expositions and forming a national photographic collection. The paper retraces the mounting and holding of the First (1953), Second (1963) and Third (1966) National Photography Exhibitions as well as the development of the International show in Plovdiv, which became a significant photographic event in this country.

## **THE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S DOMAIN IN ART IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

*Milena Balcheva*

The issue of women entering Bulgaria's artistic arena in the period between the two great wars was in close relation to the social and economic changes in this country in the wake of the First World War, which had a direct effect on women's status. Bulgarian women started making a difference in various professional fields. Unlike their predecessors, women artists of the decades immediately following the Liberation, those of the 1920s and mostly of the 1930s, made careers in the arts. They

mounted annual exhibitions of the Section of Women Artists, Society of University-educated Women (1928–1941). This article treats the issue of the early group exhibitions of artworks by Bulgarian women focusing on the idea and setting up of the Section; the first ever show; women participants; international events and results of the Section's activities; inclusion of the women artists in the rest artistic groups and societies as well as mounting solo exhibitions, a clear sign of admitting their ambitions into the public domain. The study also broaches the discussion on women's creative capacities led by the official critics of that period.

## **A SERIES OF WARTIME POSTCARDS OF THE WWI (1914–1918) BY NIKOLAI RAINOV**

*Stanislava Nikolova*

In 2014, the 125th anniversary of Nikolai Rainov and the 100th anniversary of the First World War were marked. The article deals with the wartime postcards designed by him in the period between 1915 and 1918 that have not been thoroughly researched for the time being. Printed in Berlin, the postcards were very popular in Bulgaria and very soon were out of print. These were just a few of all graphic printing products of this type devised and designed as intended.

Technological innovations prompted the creation of the postcards and their spread into Bulgaria's cultural life was to some degree due to the Europeanisation of this country. The postcards were deemed to be images of the memory. Holidays, cityscapes and landscapes, historical events and anniversaries were among the subjects covered by them. Depending on artistic concepts, the artworks could be divided in three types. Those of the first type are hand-painted and are rarities, believed to be unique pieces of art. Those of the second type feature photos or artworks. The third type includes drawings, sketches and designs by artists developed especially for this kind of printing product.

The wartime postcards dealt with and were occasioned by particular histori-

cal events such as the Balkan (1912), Inter-Allied (1913) and the First World Wars. The postcards analysed in the article are indicative of Nikolai Rainov personal aesthetic and choices in the war period. Thematically, they are grouped in several types: representing moments of soldiers' everyday life; associated with historic battles and memorable places and extolling war heroes.

## **THE NATIVE–NEW OPPOSITION IN THE CONTEXT OF FIGURAL COMPOSITIONS IN THE WORKS OF THE SOCIETY OF NEW ARTISTS**

*Tania Staneva*

The ideas of the National Art Association wielded influence on Bulgarian fine arts of the 1920s. The overall concept developed in the manifesto of the Association sought to boost the nation's morale in the wake of a long period of wars that incurred heavy losses, both material and emotional. Another concept of art was formulated in the 1930s by the Society of New Artists, a group of enthusiastic young artists making their first steps in the harsh world of art, who stood in the way of the already established trend of the 'native' through their clearly articulated position and devised in advance an aesthetical concept of the new shape of things in Bulgarian fine arts. This was this confrontation between vantage points and opinions and, at the same time, views of different generations that provoked a conflict in the art life between the already established National Art Association and the Society of New Artists, who were about to make a name for themselves. The article considers the arguments of the two disputing parties, outlining the changes undergone by the artistic model in this country over that period in terms of wading through the domestic styles prevailing in the artworks of the 1920s. The study accentuates the creative efforts of the New Artists, which helped Bulgarian art shake off the leisurely feeling of serenity and of time standing still, capsulated in the restrictive 'native', hitting upon new ideas expressed in

subject matters and plots adequate and universal both to the time within the country and abroad.

### **BORIS ELISEEV'S ABSTRACT ART**

*Galina Dekova*

Boris Eliseev (1901–1978), a Bulgarian artist born in Kyustendil, who graduated from the Academy of Art, Sofia in 1925 in the classes of Prof. Nikola Marinov and Prof. Nikola Ganushev, moved to the US in 1937, where he lived until his death. Initially, he started working as a draughtsman for different industries and then, in the 1960s started up together with his wife a packaging design studio, Elysee, for leading cosmetics companies. Over the decade of work at the studio, he never stopped painting. He made a number of pencil portraits, landscape watercolours, still lifes and monotypes; in 1950 his interest in creative experiments increased and he started making abstract art. In 1977, the Union of Bulgarian Artists held his solo exhibition in Sofia featuring his abstract artworks alongside his popular portraits, still lifes and landscapes of the 1930s. Motifs of Bulgarian popular tradition were more often than not a starting point in his quests, the colour was borrowed from that of nature, of the traditional costumes and fabrics of his native region of Kyustendil. Using action painting, through complicated and gradual work on the canvas, while retaining his fine flair for colour and composition, Boris Eliseev made Mother's Rugs using acrylic on paper, searching for rhythm, texture, harmony. An individual position in-between cosmopolitanism and the periphery of art in the second half of the twentieth century is evidenced by his career in the US, raising question about the fine and applied dimensions to art and allowing for some access to the complicated existence of an alienated personality.

### **MARIA DOSPEVSKA: THE SAMARITAN PAINTER**

*Angela Daneva*

The text is an attempt to retrace and recount the personal and creative path of the painter Maria Dospevska, until recently virtually unknown to art historians. We have identified over 50

restored oil and watercolour paintings and several academic sketches. The painter is a graduate of the renowned Women's School of Art of the Munich Academy that she attended between 1908 and 1911. Similar to her contemporaries who graduated from the art academies of Europe in the early 20th century, Maria Dospevska took up a teaching position upon her return to Bulgaria. Later in life she realigned her priorities, stepped away from her artistic path and devoted herself to the teachings of the White Brotherhood and to the noble mission of assisting the poor.

### **STOYAN RAINOV: FROM THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS TO THE ACADEMY OF ART**

*Theodor Iliev*

Stoyan Rainov is an outstanding figure in the Bulgarian artistic life of the 20th century. At first glance the sources for his life and work are numerous and detailed but we know about the period, in which the idea was born for his occupation in ceramic art mainly from stories. After graduating from high school, Stoyan Rainov joined the Artistic-Industrial School, where his professors were Prof. Anton Mitov, Prof. Zheko Spiridonov and Prof. Stefan Ivanov. He graduated the Department of Decorative Art in 1918 and organized his own exhibition, which enjoyed success. According to Stoyan Rainov's personal account, the idea for his turn towards ceramic art was also born at that time with the help of his friend Asen Zlatarov. Zlatarov is an intellectual, a scholar and a poet, one of the participants in the later appearing literary circle „Streletz", the goal of which was the rise of Bulgarian culture to European level but on a native base. Stoyan Rainov started his training in ceramics at the Artistic-Industrial School, going abroad soon. He spent more than a year in Bechyně, the Czech Republic studying ceramic art in the school, located in that town. He continued his training later in Dresden, Höhr-Grenzhausen and Paris. The artist – ceramicist chose carefully the locations, where to improve his skills with the ultimate goal of laying the foundation of the new ceramic art in Bulgaria. When Rainov returned to Bulgaria he got acquainted with traditional ceramics in the coun-

try, visiting the old ceramics centers in Busintsi, Troyan, Vratsa and the region of Sofia. In 1932 he won a competition for a professor at the National Academy of Art. Stoyan Rainov made use of what he had learned in the major European centers, considering at the same time the folk tradition to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

### **THE IDEA OF CHRISTIAN ARCHETYPE IN SIRAK SKITNIK'S PUBLICATIONS IN ZLATOROG JOURNAL (1922–1926)**

*Kristina Dineva*

The ideas of archetypes, collective unconscious and primordial images were haunting Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Notions of leading representatives of Western-European philosophical thought of the age—Spengler, Nietzsche, Spencer, Bergson, Wundt—spread in Bulgaria through publications in periodicals mainly. Their concepts of culture and the arts shaped to a large extent the philosophical and aesthetical views of eminent Bulgarian intellectuals such as Dr. Krastio Krastev, Pencho Slaveikov, Yanko Yanev, Geo Milev, Constantine Galabov, etc. The Zlatorog journal was the pivot of these ideas in Bulgaria.

In the relatively short history of Bulgarian modernism, Sirak Skitnik was in a class of his own. He played a key role in the development of criticism and theory and history of art in Bulgaria in the first half of the twentieth century. He somehow stood on the sidelines of all the 'nine-days' wonders'—post-war resignation, bitter debates held in society, controversies between Bulgarian intellectuals—doing his best to unravel that hidden pith and core of an artist's heart able to turn 'street art' into 'art as temple'.

Some of Sirak Skitnik's most significant articles in Zlatorog were Artist and Appearance (1922); The Primitive's Secret (1923) and Of Religious Painting (1926). These not only marked stages in his development of an art critic and theoretician, but also presented the idea of the Christian archetype and its interdependence with the creative process. Sirak Skitnik did not just focus on this idea, but developed and lent it further creative open-mindedness and philosophical profundity.