

## Biography Ivan Slavinskiy

Ivan Slavinskiy was born in Leningrad in 1968. He started painting in his childhood, after that he reached professional skills at the Art School of the Academy of Arts. His talent was an inheritance from his father, the well-known Leningrad painter Dmitri Oboznenko. Slavinskiy's debut exhibition took place in a Saint Petersburg private gallery in 1991. Back then, it was an era of political division in culture between official and underground. Even not so long ago the organization of such exhibitions depended on official authorization by certain government representatives. However, Ivan Slavinskiy was lucky. He started expressing his creative ways in a period when official opinions weren't that important anymore. But it's not difficult to imagine that he was still dependent on their will. Without their consent Ivan would have never received the right not only to organize a personal exposition, but even the right for taking part in a joint exhibition. Nevertheless, his creative work just couldn't be kept within the frameworks of socialistic realism.



It was his first exhibition in Saint Petersburg that made Slavinskiy well known. After that, he was willingly invited to exhibit in galleries in Moscow. Unfortunately for Ivan however, the peculiarities of the art market in Russia are such, that both fame and even popularity frequently do not result in sufficient financial compensation. That's why during last year's Ivan mainly presents his works abroad. The peoples of France, Great Britain, USA, Germany, Italy, Netherlands have already had the chance of admiring his creative works. Actually, his first personal exhibition took place in Dublin (Ireland) in 1989.

Slavinskiy has been professionally active for fifteen years. At the beginning of his creative career he was occupied with graphics too, but now painting prevails. The profession of an artist requires a settled way of life. An artist needs to work in a workshop. But fidelity to his vocation does not make Slavinskiy a couch potato. He has visited all the countries where his pictures were presented and impressions from his travels are represented in numerous etudes and sheets, which are used as working material.

Ivan creativity is marked by rare integrity, at least for a young artist such as Ivan. The artist's development goes in the direction of themes and stylistic receptions chosen by him a long time ago. However, the variety of subjects of his works and the boldness in which he uses these receptions are surprising.

His pictures strike us with logical inexplicability. It is impossible to explain the meanings of his pictures, they can be only interpreted. It is also impossible to try to reveal the main theme of the creativity of the artist. So, they are a combination, or rather a collision, of the old and the new worlds. He resolves it sharply and in conflict. In his works the artist goes in the direction of the modern trends of literature and motion picture arts, dealing with problems of the global changes in these modern times. Such serious themes, already determined in Slavinskiy's creative mind at the beginning of his career, have demanded extraordinary decisions and boldness in searching his own unique art language from the artist. Slavinskiy's paintings, whether they are subject pictures, landscapes or a still-lives, are always full of internal dynamics stressed by a scale of disproportion of his subjects. The clear outlines of his subjects prompt lines that easily split the canvas to build composite designs, that are baroque and exalted by a character of movement. Slavinskiy successfully combines the traditional receptions of realistic creativity with the modern original techniques of painting. The usage of the panoramic vista gives an epic character to his works. The pictures influence emotionally, they are

remembered because of the bright mysteriousness. The artist composes the most complicated subjects in his pictures with a refined ingenuity. Hence their reality they cause the most unforeseen associations. The subjects have fantastic character which is emphasized by his planning of space in the pictures. The only thing that remains constant, deprived of an external action among storming passions around, is an image of a woman as the keeper of the world. She is always beautiful, and in different pictures she appears in lyrical images of motherhood ("The Coast of the Leaving Sea"), tenderness and defenselessness ("The Binary Code") and love ("The Seller of Wings").

Slavinskiy has included in the compositions of his works "The Letter from Delft" and "The Island of Pelicans" citations from pictures of masters of the past in order to aggravate the emotional and aesthetic influence of the painting on the spectator. The artist has intentionally chosen well known and easily recognized pictures as: "Lady Reading a Letter" by Jan Vermeer from Delft (1655) and "The Blind Leading the Blind" by Pieter Breughel the Elder (1568).

However, it is not at all an imitation or a direct citing. Enriching the known themes and subjects with his own improvisations, the artist refracts images and ideas of the last era. Simultaneously, his choice of the quoted works characterizes the author's personal art preferences. The artist has excellently obtained a skill that is peculiar to masters of old schools: reproducing the textures of represented subjects with the help of delicate light and color shades, especially of silk, glass and metal surfaces. His virtuosity is expressed in his techniques of painting. He uses surprising feeling for colors, his love for the so-called philosophical still-life proves to be exemplary for the continuity of the traditions of the Dutch painters of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17th century in the creativity of Slavinskiy.

A mystical perception of the world is typical for all fields of creativity of Ivan Slavinskiy. We can read his still-lives as a book or guess at it as it was a rebus. He plays with symbols. A pomegranate means abundance and fertility, a playing bone means whims of destiny, a sand-glass is transience of life... However its distinctive feature is a multi-variant approach. A combination of specific aesthetic elements, marks, portraits of civilization through direct analogies and associative comparisons expand to an opportunity for various interpretations of the same concrete-symbolical attributes used in a theme.

A prepared spectator of Ivan's pictures can read his painting easily: he recognizes myths, legends, the Bible and the Gospel, Russian literature, West-European painting. Nevertheless, a spectator of Slavinskiy's works is not obliged to be educated and widely read, he should be open.

Keeping a sensation of nature, Slavinskiy uses to the most courageous combinations for color emphasizing and refining the general picturesque system of his works. The interaction of separate tone spots is flexibly combined with warm-cold and saturated with light combinations in still-lives as "The Visiting", "Another's Window", "Plug and Play".

Slavinskiy's landscapes represent "a psychological portrait" of Saint Petersburg, his native city. He is not interested in the well-known architectural ensembles, the glorified Petersburg views. Familiar places to every citizen like "Lev Tolstoy Square" and "Five Corners" sink in multi-colored evening lights of street lanterns, traffic lights, automobile headlights and windows of houses, showing an enchanting show. An unreal space rises on canvases of the artist even when graphic details and motives are absolutely concrete. The landscapes of Slavinskiy live by themselves, mysteriously flickering and gaining heat from the inflamed flashes of the paints used.

And only staring upwards, you notice a grey twilight sky, hanging above the city. The twilight or "The Day of the Moon" is the favorite time of day of the artist. You can see it verge between day and night, past and future, reality and fantasy.

