

Fine Art

IGOR SMIRNOV

*Bringing peace, harmony
and relaxation to the
multiple layers of
human experience.*

By JAMIE ELLIN FORBES

Igor Smirnov evokes harmony in his non-traditional paintings by employing color, line and composition. His works become a window to gaze upon, creating a relaxing view as a resting place for the soul. “The mission of the works,” Igor states, “is to bring peace, relaxation, and harmony to the multiple layers of human experience.”

As the son of noted Russian landscape artist Vasily Smirnov, Igor developed his personal innovative style of “Symbolic Realism” to express his artistic perception and interpretation combining his art, psychological and engineering background.

Smirnov earned a degree in Fine Art and MA. in engineering in addition to his degree in Clinical Psychology from St. Petersburg University, Russia. After studying Jung and Freud, he became aware of the healing energy of color and form through his experience with standard clinical testing on patients such as the Rorschach inkblot test and the Luscher color test.

Before becoming involved in the Russian underground movement in the



Cup of Tea, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 30"



Igor Smirnov

late 1970's, Igor spent two years restoring Icons and paintings for the Russian Museum and Museum of Urban Sculptures in St. Petersburg.

Early in his career (in the 1980s), Igor became an unofficial leader in the underground movement known as Ostrov, translated meaning *Island*. As a founding member, Igor became one of "The Five" — comprised of Leningrad artists Boris Mitavsky, Vyacheslav Suhov, Vladimir Churkin, and Victor Kozlov — who promoted spiritual harmony, positive emotions and eternal humanitarian values. As non-conforming Russian artists their mission statement and goal was to create harmony promoting spiritual evolution to individual viewers participating in the visual experience. Their collective intent was to reach a pathway through the human psyche towards philosophical enlightenment by touching upon fantasy and cosmic spheres.

A group show reuniting the original members, titled "OSTROV," will celebrate their twentieth anniversary this summer from July 3d - 19th, 2008, at the Exposition Center of St. Petersburg Union of Artists, Russia. The Golden Ratio Principle of Ancient Egyptians is the basic concept, the source for the founding aesthetics of this group which was formed to force a new perspective and to produce a positive effect of harmony and decorative effect in painting through aesthetics. Technically, equilibrium of colors concepts was engaged as a primary principle for the artistic works. The developed relationship between geometry and math in their art will be seen as a retrospective of their accomplishments independently and united. The world has changed but the principles

this collective employed are timeless.

Revolutionary in concept, this positive pioneering thematic has gained Igor artistic recognition and acclaim. After immigrating to the USA, he became established as an international artist. His works have been shown at Art Brilliant, Japan; Sunjin Galleries, Singapore; Timmons Galleries, Gail Roof Galleries and Gallery George in California; Artexpo in New York City and Gallery Michelangelo, Las Vegas. Currently Igor resides in Southern California.

Igor uses his advanced scientific and engineering knowledge of fractal geometry in his paintings. Klaus Ottmann, a museum curator who in 1989 organized

an exhibition entitled "Strange Attractors: The Spectacle of Chaos," thinks there is a fractal revolution taking place in art. "We might speak of a fractalist activity as we once spoke of a surrealist or structuralist activity," he said. Concludes John Briggs in his *Fractals: The Patterns of Chaos*, "Fractalist artists are both a mirror of the psychological and social state of society, and an interface."

I recently asked Igor if he still uses his understanding of Metaphysics in his artwork.

"I utilize new scientific concepts to develop a new type of a physical view of the environment, through geometry and



Dancing, mixed media on paper, 30 x 22

color. This new vision helped me to develop new technology, which is based on the new discoveries in nano technology and the theory of fractal geometry. These concepts continue to advance my ideas further.”

“Still the main point to fractal geometry is based on geometry,” Igor states. “A seed can reproduce the same geometry. I seed an idea and built around this seed are the structures of the painting. Sacred Geometry is from the center of the seed. I learned metaphysics, Yantras, which is the effect of color on the human psyche and matter. I create harmonizing paintings.”

The artist offers alternative mental or astral possibilities into which his viewers may delve. Figurative forms are the subjects of the artistic construction of Smirnov’s work. The art is enhanced by his extensive knowledge of esoteric metaphysics. By instilling a Kabbalic and Yogic tantric understanding of geometric structure, he subtly directs the eye of the viewer deeper into their own consciousness through these works. When coupled with his engineering skills, the intended blend of artistic, creative forms becomes the music of light dispersing harmonics through the chakras to the viewer. This increases a greater aura or current of electric energy as free-floating energetic thought forms. The ideas are the direct unfolding of space, as intended by the artist. Painter and audience share in the experience.

What introduced you to this thinking I asked?

“In St. Petersburg University, I received my degree in clinical psychology. To aid people in their wellness, I discovered fundamental techniques. These techniques, clinically tested on people, discovered through color and shapes the origin of a problem manifesting in the human body from a surrounding personal aura. Based on the selection of specific geometric shapes or color, you can find the psychology of the patient and elevate the stress causing the manifestation of the problem. I understood color and shape have dramatic impact on human’s psychology and are powerful instruments to affect the health.

“Great care is taken to select the media a concept depending what the artist wants or is requested to deliver to the viewer. This was one of the therapies as a window for the soul to see another plane.”

“In Russia, I often painted commis-



Night's Reflections, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 30"

sions wherein the buyer requested a specific healing. It is possible to affect the specific area of the brain using certain color and construction as a stimulant.”

Do you use any techniques to achieve creative awareness?

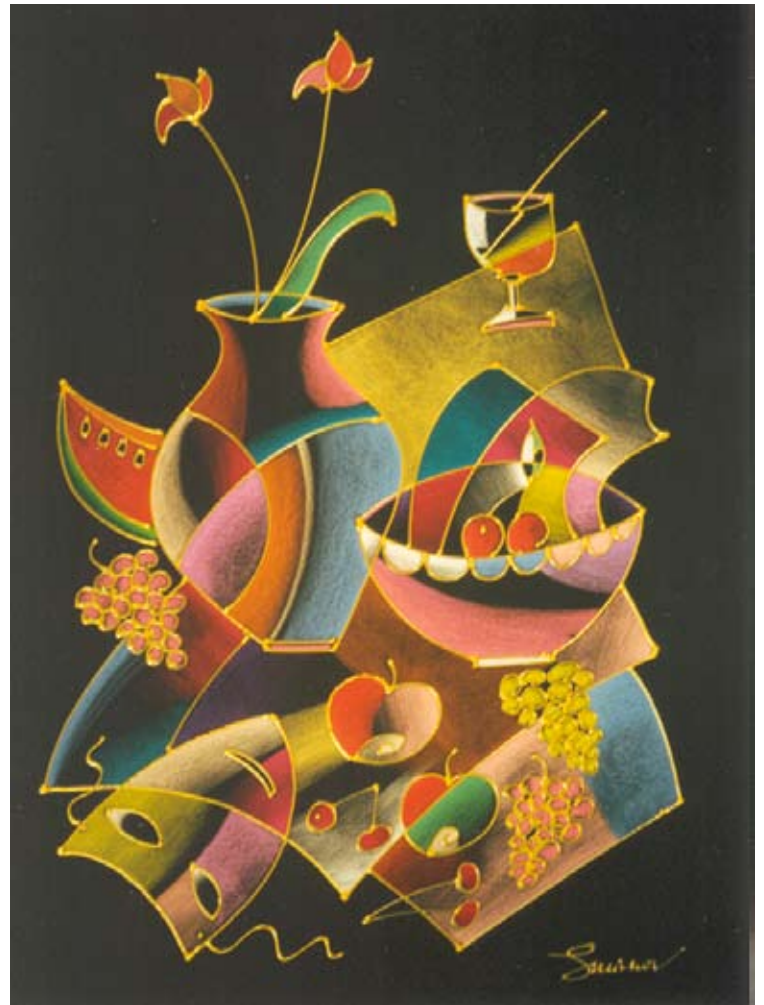
“Meditation opens the pineal gland. Our ‘seed’ is in this area of the brain. This is not the cortex or logic. The awareness through the Third Eye, the pineal gland, promotes and opens space for experience. Through meditation, an intuitive greater understanding replaces logic. I use the fractal as seed, the point of development for the paintings. I apply the ancient Greek knowledge of putting the viewer at ease to reach a place of harmony combining color, the Golden Ratio and the balancing effect of the harmony of the eternal values and cosmic ideas. Russian and Greek Icons developed in earlier painting,

unrecognized textures and combination of these principles, to promote comfort in the physical world of figurative symbols. Texture, geometry and color can produce healing harmonizing effects. Meditation heightens my creative awareness for my paintings.”

Recent works reflect Smirnov’s continued artistic commitment to harmony and beauty developed in his Symbolic Realism. His Ecological Niche continues to unfold as a seed in *Cup of Tea*. This image moves through the development of color field background introducing the abstract of a specific harmonic of rainbow-like effect, thus creating an inviting place for the lady in this image to have tea. The bird resting in the chair is a subtle surrealist comment in an otherwise well defined geometric composition. The contrasts of forms are brought together with



Still Life with a Knife, mixed media on paper, 30" x 22"



Still Life with Mask, pastel on paper, 30" x 22"

Cubist extrapolations of impression, and geometry and fractals are tools Smirnov has expertly honed to represent his individual style of Symbolic Realism.

line inferred or drawn toward the center, in the golden ratio of the image. The image splashes on the canvas and is contained in synchronicity of dark, light and color composition. A mosaic akin to Cubism makes each form independent, as they fit seamlessly together. The work is at once an extrapolation of forms and representational.

Dancing, is a work of subtlety in the display of feminine beauty. Once again, a rainbow of color is employed. The swirls create forms, which relate and contrast one another using darker or lighter hues. The Bird is seen again, this time in flight. The movement is musical the gradation of the colors suggesting the forms. Line is used to demark smaller paintings within the painting. The focus of light appears to be emerging form an inner radiance. Hearts, fish and flowers co-exist in a sea of harmonic play. Her figure is the property or landscape, essence, generating the delight seen in this work.

Nights Reflection is starkly different in mood. The woman emerges as neon out of the nightlife within the club landscape. She is seated at a bar. To illustrate her radiance fixed in darkness, red lines create an outline of her form. Due to her intensity, she appears to be floating, or separate in her thoughts. Heightened contrasts are accented by swatches of bold paint — blue, red, white and lighter shades equally delivering the structure of forms. The mood is focused through her one opened eye, fixed in an aware gaze. The faint shape of a heart is in her throat. Perhaps she is seeking, or has found, love in this setting. The lines of her

hair create the look of water. Crimson highlights and dark blue purple undertones sharpened by defining lines like waves of electric current. She is seductive and secure; two apples form hearts close to two drinks. She is solitary as a figure.

In *Still Life with Mask*, the festivities of a party are spread on a table with fruit. The construction of the abstracted vase, bowl and wine glass upon the table set with grapes, watermelon and cherries is inviting. The masquerade indicates the night's possibilities. Maybe all will not be revealed, obscured by the mask. Will fun be had? The anticipation is seen by the wine glass half full, waiting for the guest to arrive. How long is the wait? The mask lays resting on the corner of the table, a mirthful smile carved in the face.

Smirnov's works involve the viewer's interest. His intended interaction with his work is achieved as the viewer is invited into the settings designed to spread the seed of his idea of life's moments portrayed in the works. The goal of creating unique, independent worlds is achieved as his images forge visual gateways to the conscious and subconscious mind uniting "so above, so below." The seeds of his conceptual ideas live in each painting, turning the wheel of life, creating rhythm and color balanced in harmony in his art. Expert line and forms, Cubist extrapolations of impression, and geometry and fractals are tools Smirnov expertly has honed to represent his individual style of Symbolic Realism.