



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

MASS. CULTURAL COUNCIL

MAY 23 2002

RECEIVED

FIELDNOTES

Accession Numbers:

KN-02-2-FN

KN-02-2-M

Fieldnotes

Audio recordings

Photographic documentation

Additional materials

Date(s): 4/1/02

Related Accession Numbers: KN-02-1-FN/C/CS and KN-02-4-FN/M and KN-02-5-FN

Individual/Group/Event: "A View From the Bridge," Russian-American art exhibit

Fieldworker(s): Kathy Neustadt

Location of Interview: Cambridge Multi-Cultural Arts Center

Street Address: 41 2nd Street

City: Cambridge

Zip: 02141

Co:

Contact person (if different from above): Kelly Mashu

Title: Production Director

Sponsoring organization (for event or group):

Address (if different from above):

Phone: Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail: www.cmacusa.org

Website:

Special Needs (including translation):

Traditions documented on visit (traditional art/skills, occupational experience, ethnic or religious community):

Russian-American arts (neither folk nor craft)

Traditions noted for follow-up:

Other Possible Contacts:

Summary Description: I initially went to this exhibit because the Belozerskys (KN-02-1) told me about it. The work represented included sculpture (Konstantin Simun), ceramics (Katya Apekina), painting (Alexander Gassel), and drawings (Anatol Zuckerman)--fine arts, all. (See the materials from the exhibit, KN-02-2-M, for more details, including titles and prices of exhibited pieces. Included, also, are the fieldworker's notes, which include artists' biographical information and observational responses).

The exhibition statement read as follows:

"Artists who emigrated from the former Soviet Union to the United States at different times have had the inevitable culture shock of transplantation. In terms of their art, they have traveled from the ideological censorship of the former SU to the financial constraints of the US. In addition to the initial shock of transplantation, they have had to adapt to a very different cultural, social political, and natural environment. Such adaptation has been achieved differently by each of the artists, as is readily reflected within each of their respective works. Yet all of them have one thing in common--a fresh, uninhibited view from the cultural bridge connecting the US and the Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation). The inherent paradox is expressed in different styles and techniques--some jovial, some melancholic, and some sarcastic, yet each of these works exhibited here is part of a cultural bridge that needs to be reinforced with attention and understanding."

Except for Zuckerman, who was trained as an architect, the others have degrees in their specialization from Russian (and often also American) academic programs. They seem to be heavily influenced by early 20th century, European-based Post-Impressionist works and artists such as Picasso, Brancusi, and Chagall (Zuckerman's drawings and Simun's sculpture are less so). Post-Impressionism is now an "historical" style in the West, which leaves these works, for the most part, looking strangely dated, even "old fashioned" in a modernistic way.

Needless to say, I found nothing approximating "folk" or "traditional" arts.