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Multitalented Vladimir Anisimov

The first time I met Vladimir Anisimov in Moscow I was flabbergasted. "Rasputin" flashed through my mind. His beard, his hair and even the facial lines reminded of the legendary monk. He smiles as I told him that when we were seated in a comfortable chair at the Borobudur Hotel here.

He is used to being called Rasputin, he says smiling. Then stroking his long beard, he smiles again telling me that in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kuwait, people see in him Osama bin Laden. Good heavens, thank God he is neither of them!

Anisimov is the director of the Russian Bureau of Creative Expedition, who joined the Russian Ministry of Culture, the Indonesian Department of Culture and Tourism, the Russian Embassy in Jakarta and the Russia-Indonesia Cooperation and Friendship Society in organizing the excellent exhibition of Russian Contemporary Artists at the National Gallery which was held in conjunction with President Megawati Soekarnoputri's state visit to the Russian Federation.

It was the second exhibition of Russian artists in Indonesia, but the first that included works detailing the development of the arts in Russia. Among these were the compelling works by Voronkov Alexander done in the style of the realist with a surrealist touch such as *Birth of Aphrodite*, oil on canvas, and the colossal works in grisaille and sanguine on cardboard *The Reign of Paul the First* (201x450 cm) and *Apocalypse* (350x800 cm).

The Russian Bureau of Creative Expedition was founded jointly by the Russian Cultural Ministry, the Russian Union of Art and private companies. Its founders usually support its activities.

Leading expeditions of Russian painters to the Inner Himalayas, India, Cuba and twice to Indonesia, where they traveled, painted and exhibited, he also organized and cooperated in numerous joint exhibitions in Russia. In 2001 Yayasan Seni Rupa Indonesia (YSRI) brought Contemporary Indonesian Artists to exhibit their work in the then newly opened Modern Art Museum in Moscow.

Carla Bianpoen

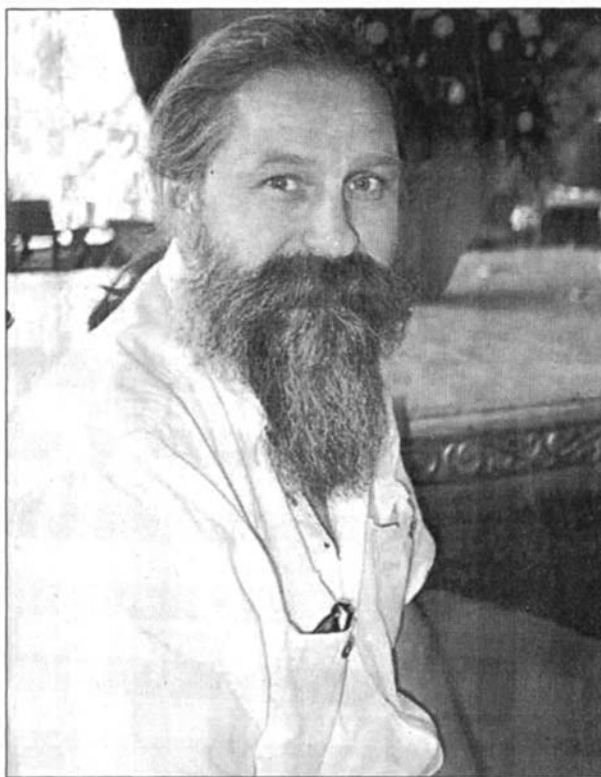
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It is no surprise that Anisimov likes to be seen as a man of the East. In addition to the expeditions he led, he also traveled privately, lived in India for seven years and, given his five visits to Afghanistan, he doesn't shy away from dangerous situations.

A valuable exponent of diplomatic relations through the arts, he also helps restore art treasures shattered by war destruction.

"When I entered the Afghanistan museum, there was only the door left, everything else was crushed to pieces," he disclosed.

But then, he picked up the catalog that lay on the floor and started putting the pieces together. Back home he gath-



JP/Carla Bianpoen

VLADIMIR ANISIMOV

ered his friends and organized follow-up assistance. Now, the museum is in the process of starting to operate again.

He is currently also director for Russian artists to work in the Rerin art museum in the Himalayas, taking care of roundtrip tickets, full accommodation and painting necessities. Would he consider going to Baghdad and do the same? Anisimov cautiously said that was very

possible, but he would first evaluate all information once back in Russia.

Anisimov is not only an art organizer, he is an active artist as evidenced from the 13 works presented in this exhibition, nine of which were produced in 2002.

Anisimov was born in 1955, 10 years after the Great War. His father, who had been a hero in that war, had apparently seen enough of violence

and harshness. He decided his son should have an art education.

"I was seven years old when I started my art studies," said Anisimov, adding he didn't do too well in secondary school due to major activities in music and painting. While he seemed to have musical talents, he eventually entered art school in Moscow and graduated after eight years. He then went on to the art faculty of the Textile Academy where he spent six years, in between stays in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

With such intensive training in the fine arts, it is no surprise his work bears witness to good skill with lyrical, scenic and atmospheric overtones as reflected in the paintings *January Sergiev Posad*, *Winter Sergiev Posad*, *Autumn*, *Bashkirova's village*, *The Crossroad*, *Bashkirova Village*, *The Christmas*, *Ships in Bengkulu*, *Fighter of Alliance*, *Afghanistan*, while *Pandagaran* (2003) and *Bali* (2000) are compelling works of hand tapestry-wool.

While visiting the Bogor Palace at the invitation President Megawati, Anisimov saw the many paintings once collected by the late president Sukarno, the current President's father.

Among these were a number of Russian paintings. The idea came up to help with conservation work for two large Russian paintings by Makovsky. For that, Anisimov says he is going to organize professional Russian conservators to come to Indonesia.

Spasiba, thanks Anisimov, and see you soon.