

A Peek into Finnish Culture and History: Finnish National Costumes

Internet Gallery

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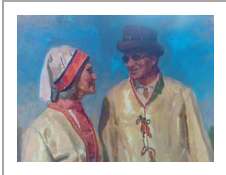
Lappeenranta University of Technology 27.8.-11.9.2015

1 A Picnic Meeting



70x100, oil, 2014, national costumes

2 The Family Couple



100x70, oil, 2014, Maritta and Sakari Haverila in the national costumes of Koivisto

3 Happy Chatting



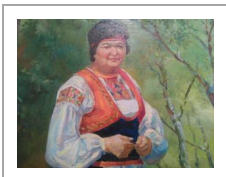
80x100, oil, 2013, Seija Nikkanen in the national costume of Antrea, Aili Jansson in the national costume of Rautjärvi and a woman in the national costume of Southern Bothnia

4 Women



80x60, oil, 2014, women in the national costumes of Kurkijoki and Tuuteri

5 By the Karelian Birch Tree



70x50, oil, 2013, Marja Kuronen in the national costume of Tuuteri, Ingermanland (South of Gatchina, Russia)

6 The Portrait of Aili Kuronen



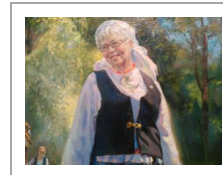
80x40, oil, 2013, Aili Kuronen in the national costume of Rautjärvi

7 On a Picnic by the State Hotel



80x100, oil, 2015

8 Karelka



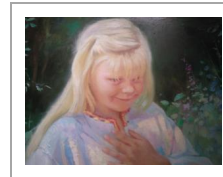
80x40, oil, 2013, Kaija Linnahalme in the national costume of Jääski

9 The Portrait of Helena Roiha



80x50, oil, 2013, the national costume and crest of Juva

10 An Angel



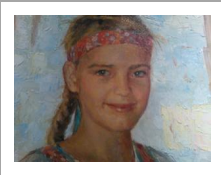
oil, 2015, the portrait of Elsa Tanninen

11 Women like Wild Strawberries



90x60, oil, 2014, Seija and Maija Tanninen in the national costumes of Kirvu, Munsala and Rautjärvi

12 The Portrait of Sonja Lähteenmäki



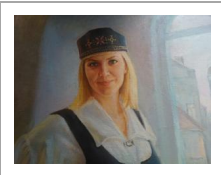
oil, 2013

13 The Portrait of Ulrikka Roiha



oil, 2013

14 The Portrait of Virpi Kaisto



oil, 2015, the national costume of Viipuri

15 Roosa and Aino



70x50, oil, 2014, national costumes of Kymenlaakso

16 The Sounds of Kantele



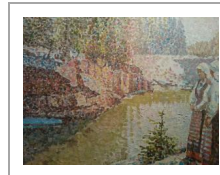
60x70, oil, 2014, Iida Kiri, a combination of a national costume and jeans

17 The Women of Jääski



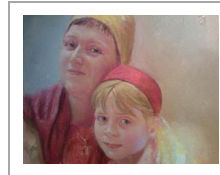
oil, 2012

18 From All Who Passed Away



oil, 2013

19 The Keys



40x40, oil, 2013, the portrait of Soja Murto Hartikainen and her daughter

20 The Keeper of Traditions



oil, 2013

V. A. Bogdanov

Painter Valery Aleksandrovich Bogdanov was born on the 13th of April 1959 in Svetogorsk, Leningrad oblast (Russia) next to the Finnish-Russian border. His love to art was raised by his father, who himself could draw well.

In 1983 Valery graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Graphics in the Herzen University, where he studied painting in the guidance of such distinguished artists of the Soviet Union as L. V. Kabachek, L. I. Krivitskiy, P. P. Litvinskiy and V. P. Sakovich.

Valery has been working with many different forms of painting, but he prefers drawing portraits.

Teaching and Other Activities

In the 1980s V. Bogdanov taught in the School of Arts in Svetogorsk, headed the Artists' Association in Svetogorsk, organized art exhibitions and took part in local and regional art exhibitions. He also studied cultural and historical traditions of the former Finnish parish Jääski and the Vuoksi river valley, together with Museum Curator Jussi Pulkkinen from the City of Imatra (Finland). As a result of these meetings, art and photograph exhibitions were organized.

Border Crossings

In 1990 Valery was elected as deputy in the City Council of the City of Svetogorsk. He worked as chairman of the ecological commission, and at the same time established cultural connections with Finland. In 1993, he

headed the International Department of Svetogorsk City Administration, was the author of the Cooperation and Twinning Agreement between the cities of Imatra (Finland) and Svetogorsk (Russia), and contributed to the opening of the international border crossing point of "Svetogorsk".

Latest Exhibitions

2013 (July) "Imatra", the International Semiotics Conference in Imatra

2013 (August) "Places of Memory in the Twin City", in the City Hall of Imatra

2015 (March) "Ladies of Imatra in National Costumes", the Vyborg Castle

National Costumes

In the last three years, V. Bogdanov has been working on the theme of national costumes of the Karelian Isthmus and Finland. He painted the largest part of the collection in Moscow. For these works, it is typical that all the motives come from the life of real people. The artist was inspired by the careful attitude of the inhabitants of the neighboring city of Imatra (Finland) towards their traditions and culture. The works of the artist are held in private collections of Russian and Finnish collectors.

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History of National Costumes

The history of Finnish national costumes dates back to the 19th century, when the first collections of national costumes were compiled. This was the period of national awakening, and folk handicrafts were admired and studied in Finland as in other parts of Europe. The first collections consisted of festive folk costumes, which were used in the 18th and 19th century in different parts of Finland before being replaced by general fashion.

Year 2015 is the 130th Anniversary of the Finnish National Costume

Year 1885 is known as the debut appearance of Finnish national costumes. On the 5th of August, Emperor Alexander III of Russia and his wife Maria Feodorovna arrived in Lappeenranta on an official visit. After inspecting the garrison, they made a walk along Lake Saimaa and visited the Imatra Rapid. Local maidens dressed in national costumes from different Finnish regions met the imperial couple and made a strong impression on Maria Feodorovna.

What do National Costumes Tell about the History ?

Today there are over 400 models of national costumes. The costumes represent different Finnish regions, and their historical and traditional characteristics. Women's costumes are worn layer on layer, and consist typically of a skirt, cotton blouse, vest or bodice, apron, scarf, headdress and shoes.

Costume pieces come with details and symbolic meanings. The apron, for example, was considered an important and valued piece of clothing. It was a sign of an honorable woman and believed to protect women from the evil. According to a legend, the red stripe in the hem of the Jääski Costume appeared, because the women had to walk and search for their family members in the bloody battlefields for such long times.

Jääski is one of the historical place names that appear in the names of the national costumes. In fact, by studying the names, it is possible to learn things about the Finnish history. Jääski, Antrea and Viipuri, among others, are parishes that Finland ceded the Soviet Union after the Second World War. The costumes of these parishes are so called Karelian costumes, which differ from the costumes of Western Finland, because of the Eastern cultural influences during the 18th and 19th century.

Finnish History in a Nutshell

1300 – 1809 part of the Swedish Kingdom

1809 – 1917 an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire

1917 -> Republic of Finland

*Lift away the gaudy cover,
Thou will find six golden girdles,
Seven rainbow-tinted dresses,
Woven by the Moon's fair daughters,
Fashioned by the Sun's sweet virgins.
In my young years once I wandered,
As a maiden on the mountains,
In the happy days of childhood,
Hunting berries in the coppice;
There by chance I heard the daughters
Of the Moon as they were weaving;
There I also heard the daughters
Of the Sun as they were spinning*

*On the red rims of the cloudlets,
O'er the blue edge of the forest,
On the border of the pine-wood,
On a high and distant mountain.
I approached them, drawing nearer,
Stole myself within their hearing,
Then began I to entreat them,
Thus besought them, gently pleading:
'Give thy silver, Moon's fair daughters,
To a poor, but worthy maiden;
Give thy gold, O Sun's sweet virgins,
To this maiden, young and needy.
- Kalevala*
