



*Golden Angel*

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*City People*

# NATALYA NESTEROVA

## An Artist's Dialog with the Subconscious

By JAMIE ELLIN FORBES

Natalya Nesterova has a well-developed, finely honed Soviet/Russian style of painting, uniquely molding the multi-dimensional symbols that represent the universal into her basic renditions of life. Her constant dialogue with the subconscious reaching through to the esoteric is a transitioning current of thought by which she invites her audience to view the space she has chosen to present her very special iconoclastic language of characters. Her alphabet of art is expertly used to define the concepts offered for discussion while staying in traditional boundaries. The work is not quite as fanciful as Chagall's, for example, but neither is it as dreamscape oriented. The pieces are factual representations of the artist's idea of how this and other planes of existence interact within the order of the everyday.

Nesterova uses contrast to achieve her goal of uniting all levels of experience. For the most part, this is done in her selection of ideas and their construction, rather than by choice of colors. The muted palette is only occasionally well-lit by basic bright blues, greens, reds and some violet. Her energetic brush stroke is confined in static characters, atonally occupying their space. The sense of polarization of ideas is obtained in the play of the presentation of the universal terms in which she clothes her ideas and the rhythm in which she speaks to the viewer. This is primarily achieved by employing the circle of life for presentation. The message is conveyed subtly. Softly molded forms create average-looking people. The ascendent angel against the cityscape, fish who fly amongst standing people, waiting to act. Everything is animated yet nothing moves. Natalya's paintings are screaming calmly about the basic condition of mankind in ancient glyphs with a steady, non-threatening approach compelling her audience to not just observe, as do her characters, but to think and participate in her ancient Russian dialogue with the esoterica of the soul.

The order in which she displays her concepts as a whole are non-challenging to the fundamentals of any system. Here, the master has added the veil of the mundane in order to bridge the message of communicative acceptance. This may be what allowed a non-traditional dialogue to be had in the traditional Soviet art arenas and also offered an appeal to what has come after a very basic use of the universal and its symbols to evoke the desired thought response.

Everything is a paradox. Silent people walking in the park, not seeing the stone statues, making passionate love. All goes on with an almost monotone movement while the absurdity of life is overlooked, nothing is challenged by the participants. Badminton games, picnicking, various forms of ordinary activity are all recorded by the artist within the circle of life. Eyes never make contact. Masks are worn by many. Angels ascend and descend. Fish fly. Men are embodied by decks of cards. All levels of activity between this world and another dimension are visually accented with the use of the camouflaged unusual. Timeless observations of indifference are framed: and the discussion is had in the system of a tired and bored population of players — those viewing the paintings and those held confined within the paint on the canvas. The artist has taken the liberty of simply rearranging the order of time and space, never disturbing the facade of gray.

Nesterova's dialogue in the vocabulary of the eternal and the ground level of the soul from which she embarks is the pivotal point that graces her high level of acceptance throughout a thirty-year period in her homeland. It is the weaving of a clear mental outlook (the light behind the mind) and her search for and uncanny ability to relate the everyday view contained in her paintings that has allowed the work to bridge cultural boundaries while anchored in the images that are primary to her personal experience. It is this steady focus of presentation that allows this work to be untied to the limits of any one cultural viewpoint or time frame.

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*Hammock*

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*Dream on the Shore*