

ANDERSEN TALES THROUGH THE EYES OF RUSSIAN ARTISTS

LOLA ZVONAREVA¹, LIDIA KUDRIAVTSEVA²

ACADEMICIAN IN RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES
DSC IN HISTORY, CHAIRMAN OF THE UNION OF MOSCOW WRITERS¹

MEMBER OF THE MOSCOW UNION OF ARTISTS
CHIEF EDITOR OF "ARTIST AND WRITER IN THE CHILDREN'S BOOK" JOURNAL²

RUSSIA

LZVONAREVA@MAIL.RU¹
PEGRIGORIEV@LIST.RU, REDAKZIA@MAIL.RU²

ABSTRACT: GENERATIONS OF RUSSIAN CHILDREN IN THE XX-TH CENTURY WERE GROWN UP ON GREAT ANDERSEN TALES AND CHILDREN OF OUR TIME ARE STILL UNDER HIS MIGHTY INFLUENCE. HE IS AS CLOSE TO US AS OUR GREAT RUSSIAN POET ALEXANDER PUSHKIN. THE BOOKS OF ANDERSEN ARE CONSTANTLY IN DEMAND, ILLUSTRATED BY THE WELL-KNOWN ARTISTS OF THE PAST AND THE NEW ONES – EVERYONE IS HAPPY TO BE HIS ILLUSTRATOR. MANY ARTISTS MADE OUTSTANDING WORKS OF GRAPHIC ART, WHICH GAINED INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS. WE ANALYZED THESE WORKS, PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE INDIVIDUAL UNDERSTANDING OF ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES AND ITS INTERPRETATION.

KEY WORDS: THE BOOKS OF ANDERSEN, ILLUSTRATORS, RUSSIAN ILLUSTRATORS, BEST ILLUSTRATORS, SYMBOLISM, TALES INTERPRETATION, CREATIVE PERSONALITY, DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, GRAPHIC WORK, COLORED ILLUSTRATIONS

WE are happy to visit the motherland of the great Andersen. We can confirm - and this is certainly not a secret at all for many of you - that there is no family, no kid nor any human being in Russia who would not know or would not love Andersen's fairy tales. Generations of Russian children in the XX-th century were grown up on his tales and children of our time are still under his mighty influence. He is as close to us as our great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. The books of Andersen are constantly in demand, illustrated by the well-known artists of the past and the new ones – everyone is happy to be his illustrator. To the Russian artists of kid's books who are mostly romantics and story-tellers themselves the spirit of Andersen is very close. They were enchanted with the unique mixture of the fantastic and common - as well as expiating christian goodness and original philosophy and symbolism in the immortal texts of the great Dane. We have already mentioned that in our first book "Hans Christian Andersen and his Russian illustrators" (2005).

MANY artists made outstanding works of graphic art, which gained international success. We analyzed these works, paying special attention to the individual understanding of Andersen's fairy tales and its interpretation.

WE also studied kid's book illustration as an independent phenomenon of our culture.

OUR task was also to bring back to life and into the history of the Russian book art the unjustly forgotten names of artists and their original cycles of graphic works. The books of Andersen gave us all possibilities for these goals.

ANDERSEN is being illustrated by the best Russian artists for almost a century and a half. We began our work almost 13 years ago.

MR. Boris Diodorov, Russian graphic artist, you may know him, has proposed us to compose an album-encyclopedia of Russian illustrators of Andersen tales.

AND here it is, our book "Hans Christian Andersen and his Russian illustrators", supervised by Boris Diodorov. It is beautiful, it has many illustrations, of more than 300 artists, and also contains rich reference information. You must have it in your Center.

WORKING on it, we studied the biography of the Danish genius, based on his own memoirs and the books of G. Brandes, B. Groenbeck and Russian scholars, we analyzed two volumes of his fairy-tales, translated into Russian by two brilliant persons in XIX century - Peter Hansen (1846-1930) and his young Russian wife Anna (1869-1942).

ENCHANTED by Andersen's fairy tales and translations, we continued our work some years later. And it resulted in a new book - "Hans Christian Andersen and his Russian illustrators for 150 years" (2012), issued by the publishing house "Moscow textbooks", here it is.

HERE we extended the notes on artists, added detailed articles on the translators Hansens and on the first publishers of Andersen's fairy tales in Russia. These first Russian books of Andersen were illustrated by a Russian artist, baron Michael von Klodt, academician (1835-1914).

IT is a very interesting story, worth a special attention, but I will only say that the first issue of "The New Tales" of Andersen translated from German appeared in StPetersburg in 1868. This year is the starting point in the history of illustrated Andersen tales in Russia.

THIS book has been sent to Andersen by the editors - two Russian feminists Nadezhda Stasova (1822-1895) and Maria Trubnikova (1835-1897) along with a letter expressing their admiration for his talent. And Andersen has responded soon enough, he was fond both of the book and the illustrations. This correspondence is kept now in Copenhagen.

WHAT Andersen did not like, was his portrait made by a Russian engraver after the photo from the German edition. Andersen sent them his new photo of 1868, very nice, with his autograph, - here it is - for further publication. Unfortunately it has never occurred. This portrait opens our book dedicated to Andersen. Here is the preface, signed by the author of the idea Boris Diodorov and the authors of the project Lydia Kudriavtseva and Lola Zvonareva. "We dedicate this book to the great Andersen, whose work is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for illustrators» - this is our text on the book's title.

WE got our readers acquainted with the works of the first Danish illustrators of Andersen - Pedersen and Froelich - and, of course, made homage to the brilliant works of Tegner. They were published in Russia for the first time in 1899 - in a luxurious book, as if marking the final point in the long suite of Andersen's editions of the XIX century. Further on we showed also the works of the Western artists to Andersen fairy tales (Dore, Robinson, Dulaque, Birminghamen), published in Russia. Big Russian publishing houses continue to

publish Andersen's tales with the illustrations of the remarkable Danish artists Pedersen, Froelich and Tegner.

WE are thankful to Mr. Johan de Mulius who at the end of the XX-th century published in a gorgeous edition of "Guldendahl" the illustrations of Oscar Clever which has long been kept in the collection of the Russian illustrators of Andersen in Odense. His article on the works of Clever had made us admire his deep analysis of the illustrations and we cited him many times in our two books.

WE have to mention another book of ours - «Andersen and four Russian illustrators», issued in 2010 – it was granted by the Russian state scientific foundation after winning a contest.

IT is dedicated to the artists whose works are not very well known by the Russian readers. We gave large articles on them and included almost all their illustrations. In the first place it is Michael Klodt, whom I mentioned already - the first Russian illustrator of Andersen, whose works Andersen saw himself in 1868, but later he was completely forgotten. Next to him are Ivan Bilibine (1876-1942), Alexander Alexeev (1901-1982), both immigrated, and Oscar Clever (1887-1975), whose works were published only in Denmark. We added to these long gone artists another one - our contemporary Ghennady Spirin (born in 1948), now living in the USA. He made very interesting illustrations to five Andersen's fairy tales in the beginning of this century for an Italian publishing house, we will show you these works.

THE illustrations of the outstanding Russian artists Klodt, Bilibine, Alexeev, Clever in two our books were a real discovery for Russian readers. We would certainly like to show to the Danish people how these Russian artists interpreted the tales of Andersen. They found new meanings in the great texts of the Danish classic, which are in tune with their reflexions on the momentary and the eternal. Their works are of very high art quality.

IF you do not mind, we would like to show you the works of our best illustrators, commenting them on the go.

MICHAEL Klodt had something common with Andersen by certain sides of his creative personality - he, too, was very impressive, inclined to a sentimental grief, he was devoted to the poor people. Klodt illustrated 47 fairy tales included by the publishers into "The New Tales Of Andersen". They were small things mainly, chapter heads and end marks, and not to all the tales. The era of the High Art in book illustration had not yet begun by that time. Only six big pictures were in the text. Artist of "the genre" raised on democratic principles, he was fond of the lives of the poor people, of their characters. There are all kinds of them, urban and countrymen, young and old, drawn with due amount of psychologism for a fairy tale. Klodt could easily be carried away with a tempest on the sea or with all kind of insects or other living creatures that one can meet in a fairy tale.

ANDERSEN'S tale "The Mother" was published in Denmark in 1875 to mark his 70th anniversary – in original and in 13 translations into different European languages. Peter Hansen used this edition as a base adding eight more translations. On the cover of the Russian edition of 1894 (Saint-Petersburg) there is a portrait of Andersen made by Vassily Mate, well-known engraver, academician (1856-1917), where Andersen is poetically encircled by a spring green foliage. The author of this floristic decorative composition is Mechislav Dalkevich (1861-1941).

GEORGHY Narbut (1886-1920) could feel something familiar in the elegant ironic style of the tale "The Nightingale" (1912, Moscow). Working on the illustrations, Narbut decorated the cover, the headings, the frontispiece, two page-size illustrations, end marks with fine black silhouettes on the yellowish background of the page, they rhyme with the dense black font of the text. The artist made fantastic image of China.

MSTISLAV Dobuzhinsky (1875-1957), well-known artist, choose "The Swineherd" of all Andersen's fairy tales to work on in the fatal 1917. The book was published only in 1922 in Berlin in Russian language. All his drawings follow the original idea: to made the book whole, graceful, cute. «The Swineherd» manifested the masterly quick drawing of the artist. He embodied the charming, full of sparkling humor plot of the story in sly, witty, refined scenes. He placed the heroes into an imaginary, rich of sumptuous decorative details world of baroque, laced with artistic humor, incorporated in the very soul of the graphic work.

IN the thirties the fairy tales in Russia were not recommended for publishing - due to the ideologic considerations – the attempts were made even to forbid and replace them with the instructive stories for children about men of labour with realistic illustrations. But by the end of the fifties the climate mellowed, and the fairy tales were published widely.

IN Soviet era the most demanded illustrator of Andersen was Vladimir Konashevich (1888-1963). The future famous artist of children's books began to work on Andersen's tales when he was young. In 1909, his first year at artistic school, Konashevich copied by hand the fairy tale of Andersen "The Mother" and illustrated it. The artist possessed an impeccable sense of magic style and for many years created in his drawings a very attractive for kids, tender and ingenious world of poetic game.

THE great Russian artist Ivan Bilibine illustrated "The Little Mermaid" in Paris, before his return to the Soviet Russia. This book, a real masterpiece of book art - was published by Flammarion in 1937 and was never republished since. The illustrations of Bilibine are impressive by their finest work and the beauty of details. «The Mermaid" was part of a series of illustrated books "The Albums of Father Castor". The series was conceived by a professional French pedagogue and publisher Paul Faucher, aka "Pere Castor". The refined figure of the mermaid, finest lace of lines contouring the details - trees, streams of water, - pure emotions appear in the Bilibine's works for the first time with such vigor and tenderness. «The Little Mermaid» is maybe the sole really romantic work of Bilibine, who became famous as illustrator of Russian folk tales. The chastity of the heroine is expressed by her foreshortening. When she is naked, we can see her only from her back.

THE theme of the great love, for which one must give his own life, as the mermaid did, has echoed dramatically in the fate of the artist. Back at home after long years of emigration, Bilibine dies of hunger during the siege of Leningrad. «The Mermaid» has become his testament. All illustrations to "The Mermaid" were kindly given us by famous collector of works of Russian artists in emigration Rene Guerra. We reproduced them all in our two books.

ALEXANDER Alexeev lived in the USA when in 1942, «Maximilien Vox» in Paris us sued the French translation of Andersen's "Images Of The Moon». There are 33 miniatures («Thirty two nights»). 28 illustrations and a portrait of Andersen (etching and aqua-tint). The book was published in 1080 copies.

THE main thing in these pictures is the moonlight. The artist could feel its influence in his studio with the glass roof. The variety of the moonlight's transfigurations in his wonderful etchings is never ending. Alexeev is close to psychedelic shock under the impact of the moonlight witchery. It leads him to the sufferings and the reflections on the shortness of the earthly living. He was bewitched by Andersen's texts, empathized him, he wrote about it. This unique edition now is available only as a collectors' item. We borrowed all the illustrations to the "Images of the Moon" from the collection of Mark Bashmakov in Saint-Petersburg.

VLADIMIR Domogatsky (1909-1986) well-known woodcutter, chose the technics of the colored edged engravings to illustrate Andersen's tales.

HE began working on it in 1936, made one engraving and a flyleaf for «The Steadfast Tin Soldier». His engravings were included into the Danish book "One Hundred Best Foreign Illustrators of Andersen»

THE very technic of wooden engravings, deep black color, together with a grey-brown gamma reflects the character of the "Old House", even its aroma. And "The Nightingale" has the sense of eternity. These pictures are in the museum of Odense now.

ONE of the first books of the talented artists from Saint-Petersburg - brothers Alexander (born 1931) and Valery (1935–2011) Traugot was their best beloved tale "The Emperor's New Dress" (1963). They illustrated it together with their father Gheorghy Traugot. Since that time they keep in their signature three initials - it became their trade mark "G.A.V".

LATER they illustrated this tale many times and in many different technics – each time giving it a new interpretation. The Traugots illustrated almost all Andersen's tales in a two-volume edition for grown up readers (1969) - 157 tales. The pictures are fine ink-pen drawings, full of philosophic sense. These two volumes have been re-edited throughout all Russia, in more than two million copies. The same 1969 saw their two-volumed edition for kids with colored illustrations, very much appreciated by the collectors.

THE books are full of pictures, made by pen and water-colors of the finest shades. They are filled with joy of living and fine humor. The richness of Andersen's world has literally magnetized the Traugots.

THE latest editions of Andersen's tales with their illustrations is the tribute of love to the author, to whom they dedicated a big part of their vast legacy. They met the 200 hundred anniversary of Andersen with a new present - the whole tale "The Princess And The Pea" in hand-writing in white gouache on the black pages using a school steel pen of their childhood. All pictures are made the same way - they translate in an incredibly picturesque manner almost each phrase of the tale-teller. The pictures on the cover, flyleaves, and front page complete this extravaganza.

NEEDLESS to say that many of Traugot's pictures to Andersen's fairy tales are here in Odense.

THESE days Alexander Traugot was honored with the State Prize for his precious contribution into the kid's book culture.

THE sixties saw a new blossoming in the book culture. Young artists audaciously brought their ideas into the kid's book art. One of them is Victor Pivovarov (born 1937). His illustrations to "The Ole Lukoje» (1969) and to the collection of Andersen's fairy tales (1979) have immediately attracted everybody's attention. The artist has turned the book into a real artistic organism – he made its structure follow his original conceit: to make real the fantastic, magic world discovered by the writer. Pivovarov found a game in these tales, game with metaphors and allegories and has embodied it in the original, complex compositions.

THE same years another renowned graphic artist, academician Anatoly Kokorin (1908 – 1987) visited Danmark in order to see with his own eyes the places where the writer and his heroes lived and to study the Danish types. He made drawings all the way in a diary of his voyage through the land of the great storyteller, with different portraits of Andersen, as if made from nature. You can easily believe that he saw Andersen personally. Kokorin made his colored drawings for the smallest readers. He added many charming details, some of which he saw in Danmark, - the fish sellers, for example. His originality together with kind humor made Kokorin's pictures very popular, they are being reproduced up till now.

NATALIA Basmanova (1906–2000) from SaintPetersburg has illustrated only one Andersen fairy tale - «The Thumbellina». But we consider this work one of the best in Russian Andersiana.

BASMANOVA gave the tale a poetic translation. The effect is that her world is made of the finest lines of luminous color. This world is luminous. There is a divine breathing of life in it. The illustrations are sometimes in complex rose gamma, sometimes - in finest shades of blue. The watercolors are fascination without compunction, love without sentimentality. The little girl is like the soul of the world. These illustrations, constructed in accordance with the laws of high artistry radiate joyful feelings.

ANASTASIA Arkhipova (born 1955) loved to illustrate Andersen's tales when she was very young. She was not even twenty when she illustrated the "Foolish Hans" and "The princess and the pea" for the leading Moscow editions house «Detskaya Literatura». Later she made a beautifully edited collection of fairy tales. Her illustrations attract the modern reader with their thorough, accurate drawing, psychologism, attention to the details, costumes, - i.e. a penetration into the European culture. Thanks to its qualities, the illustrations of Arkhipova impressed many European and even Brasil editors. Books of Andersen with her pictures were published in 18 countries of the world.

WE have already mentioned Ghennady Spirin, who also works with a great success in the United States and Europe. His books are being readily reprinted by the new Russian publishers. He is a real virtuoso. He spends a lot of time for every picture. Being a real connoisseur of the history of culture, old European art, he gained a genuine admiration among the readers by his refined stylization, even citations of the old European artists. Boris Diodorov called his art breath-taking. All this you can see in his illustrations to «The Little Mermaid», «The Thumbellina», «The Ugly Duckling», «The Nightingale», «The Princess And The Pea», «The Tin Soldier». These illustrations unfortunately is not possible to publish in Russia.

AND here we go to another artist - of another generation, another character and credo. Yulia Gukova (born 1961). She also has her admirers and followers of her style. She is often very close to the manner of the modern Western artists. She illustrated only one Andersen

tale, "The Thumbellina" in 1990, rather originally, introducing into the drawings her own imaginary seeing of the situations, often absent in the Andersen's tales. The world where the personages are acting, is demonstratively artificial, as if they live in a surreal space. When "The Thumbellina» of Gukova was issued in Toronto, it was called the best book of the year. Oscar Clever has been discovered by Mr. de Mullius, but, helas, only for the collectors and the readers of our two books in Russia. We were happy to show in big size the illustrations of this surprising, unpredictable artist. His illustrations to 28 tales are full of expression and the hidden sufferings. There are so much pain in them! And also many creative discoveries. As, for instance, in the tragic illustration to the "Red Shoes" where in the scene in the churchyard the burnt trees look like the tubes of the cathedral organ reminding us the eternity.

THE completely new translation of Andersen is unconditionally linked with the fate of Clever. Mr. De Mullius writes that he spent almost two years in German concentration camp during the Second World War. (We went further on, making researches on the life of the young Clever in the following after-war years in Leningrad). The artist admitted that his life was saved in the camp by Andersen, on whose tales he worked, illustrating them in memory. Clever wrote: «I gave Andersen half of my life, but thanks to him I became spiritually richer, feeding myself with his wisdom and his soul's warmth».

WE think that everybody here knows Boris Diodorov (born 1934). He illustrated three fairy tales: «The Snow Queen», «The Little Mermaid» and «The Thumbellina», composing a whole Suite on love, devotion, on the victory of the Good over the Evil.

DIODOROV is the great master of etchings. Using this difficult technics he created a poetic world of Andersen, filled with the beauty, love and some kind of romantic mystery. Diodorov admits that he has found a religious writer in Andersen who became very close to him. We would like to say that the artist is in constant dialogue with the small readers surprising them not only with his artistic imagery but also with a lot of charming details, that children always love to contemplate.

NIKA Holz (1925–2012) well-known artist worked on Andersen side by side to Diodorov in Moscow. As many, she was fond of Andersen's fairy tales when she was a child. And was incredibly happy when the state publishing house "Detskaya literatura" asked her, young debutant, to illustrate "The Steadfast Tin Soldier». It was a modest book with black and white illustrations. She made some more similar books later. In nineties, very hard years for our artists, Holz became demanded again. And in the beginning of the new century the Andersen's tales with her colored pictures began to appear constantly. Her master drawings attract the reader by a slight irony, fine humor and kindness.

AND here are four artists who became working in the kid's books in the new century already.

THE new generation of illustrators, rather ambitious, seeking to affirm their individual seeing of the work on a book.

KIRILL Chelushkin (born 1968). He illustrated «The Snow Queen» in 2005 for the South Korea and the short Andersen's biography for kids (Taiwan, 2002). In this biography Andersen appears as an enigmatic personage. His "Snow Queen» is also paradoxical. The artist admires this heroine, as an incarnation of the beauty and dignity, and almost disdains Gerda. He invented his own technics - working with oil on a specially prepared photographic paper, and also pen and China ink. He created an irreal space on the big sheets of paper.

Diodorov wrote: «The carnival of fantasy and beauty. In the whole and in details. Chelushkin reads "The Snow Queen" in his own manner. As fallen in love, he said. He even argues with Andersen sometimes».

EKATERINA Silina (born 1960) loves fantasy in images and in plasticity. She made "The Snow Queen" for the South Korea (2004), «The Emperor's New Clothes» (2005), «The Steadfast Tin Soldier » (2006). The artist plays with the space, plays with personages, sometimes transforming them into something unrecognizable. Silina understands the tender irony of Andersen as a sharp grotesque. In the language of graphic art she tells us about mechanical tread of civilization, who is pressing and mangling the world of genuine culture. This is an extreme appropriation of the Andersen texts again, a cultivated subjectivity. The word of Andersen is no more dominant in illustration.

VICTORIA Fomina (born 1963) illustrated «The Thumbellina» for South Korean publishing house in B 2004. The artist tries to join the internal warmth of the images and the vanguard approach to the composition and the space. There is a sense of the world's cosmogony in the dynamics of her drawings. She likes to introduce the signs of the today life into the drawings. Her Thumbellina is a modern teenager, studying the world - aqualungs and so on... But the romance of a pretty fairy tale prevails all tricks.

IGOR Oleinikov (born 1953). Today he is the most demanded artist in the publishing houses of Moscow and Saint Petersburg. He was nominated for the Golden medal of Andersen. In 2004 he illustrated Andersen's "Nightingale" for the Taiwan readers brilliantly. Very well done illustrations. They are immersed into some unreal fluctuation, symbolizing the mystery of the happening. The artist never stops wondering the exotic gardens, bridges, pagodas and the figures in Chinese habits. All is refined, stylized... On this rich background the nightingale, flying in a clear blue sky, is almost lost...

AND to conclude this parade of illustrators we must remind you the works of one of the old masters, follower of the Russian classic school of illustrations and drawings.

NIKOLAY Ustinov (born 1937) is famous by his illustrations to the Russian poetry and classics. He is the master of lyric landscape. A collection of Andersen fairy tales with his illustrations appeared in 2010. His pictures are imbued with the Russian spirit. Here the Russian tsarine rules the Russian troika. Here is the Russian sky, the Russian field. This is Russian Andersen, our love.

IN the end of the book we gave an interview with Mr. Diodorov who introduced his disciples, told us how he instruct them when they begin their work on Andersen. This is the future of our children's book. And we believe, that this book will not disappear.