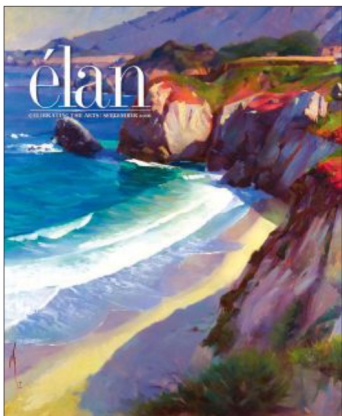


September 2016

AMAN | DEMOVIDOVA | EMRICH | JANUSKIEWICZ



On the cover: "Rocky Point Echo," oil on canvas, 24" x 24", by Nicholaus Fahim Aman; see page 28

"Tiger Lily," ink/watercolor on paper, 16" x 22", by Anna Demovidova; see page 40

Calendar	22	Pas de Deux	40
On View, On Stage, On Tap, On Deck compiled by Alice Nodine		Printmaker and Painter Anna Demovidova by Donna Cedar-Southworth	
Drawing and Belonging	28	Creating Scenic Overlooks	44
Artist Nicholaus Fahim Aman by Kathryn McKay		Interior/Exterior Design: Bringing the Outdoors In by Troy Blewett	
Seeking Quiet Moments	32	Life in a Ziploc Baggy	48
Abstract Painter Barbara Januskiewicz by Donna Cedar-Southworth		Slice of Life by Mary Eloise H. Leake	
Paper Moods	36		
Artist Hanna Emrich by Donna Cedar-Southworth			





PRINTMAKER AND PAINTER ANNA DEMOVIDOVA

Pas de Deux

WHO IS STARING AT WHOM? | BY DONNA CEDAR-SOUTHWORTH



Anna Demovidova

When viewing award-winning printmaker and painter Anna Demovidova's body of work, one comes to realize that there are two subjects interacting: one is the subject on paper, and the other is the human being viewing the work. Who is staring at whom? And who exactly is the subject? Her work is a "pas de deux," a dance for two, intimately involving both the art and the viewer and whatever transpires between them. It is engaging, provocative, sometimes amusing but never dull, her characters becoming like sentient beings.

"I believe in the human relevance of art, as opposed to the cold abstract. It should engage the viewer on

a human level," says the Vienna resident. It's clear that there is much happening between subject and viewer, and one cannot put one's finger on exactly who dominates the interplay. It is an enigma.

Her most recent body of work, *Poetry of Space*, uses mixed media on paper. "My inspiration was creating a space where a figure...becomes one with space. It belongs within the space, but at the same time, a lot of [the images] have eye contact...therefore the figure always stands out no matter how much you blend it within the space, Anna says. "Creating this kind of work is interesting, too, because first you have a blank white page and then something stares back at you. So it's



"I now understand it takes you a lifetime to truly figure [your art] out because things change and as you learn new things, try new things, your art develops with you."

—Anna Demovidova

very interesting, because when you're working on it, you don't really know where you're going to arrive. You've got an idea, maybe even visual images, but when you put it all together the surprise element is still there. It stares back at you!"

Anna loves painting women and food and, recently, women and plants. "But I still go back to food all the time. I think food is a really interesting element because I love the shapes, the huge variety of shapes, and I love the colors and the contrast.... Plants also can become part of the figure." Anna says she loves all the symbolism it may represent to the viewer. "But essentially, it starts with the visual shapes and colors and composition: how things go together, what angles they form, what movement there is and how they fill the page. I leave it to the viewer to read more into the symbolism. I think all of us can read something into the work like this, but for me the driving force is visual—it is the shapes."

Anna grew up in the Soviet Union near Moscow. She studied art as a child and attended art school there for four years. After completing ninth grade,

she was accepted into the five-year art program at the Kalinin Art Academy in Moscow, where she studied from 1989-1993.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, she came to the United States in 1994 to study art at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, where she earned a Bachelor's of Fine Arts. In her classical training in Moscow, every painting had been an "assignment"; at Stevens Point, Anna was given the freedom to paint what she wanted to paint.

"This was the biggest shock...it took me a long time to figure it out, and I now understand it takes you a lifetime to truly figure it out because things change and as you learn new things, try new things, your art develops with you," Anna says.

Women and self-portraits, though, have always been what Anna instinctively is drawn to. "People are the focus of my work; especially their expressive features, the eyes, faces and hands. These people come from all around me, or any printed images that may catch my attention." And while she has painted many male portraits, women remain her focus.



Page 42: "Moth," ink and watercolor on paper, 22" x 16"

Page 43: "Coffee and Wine," watercolor and watercolor pencils on paper, 11" x 14"

Opposite: "With Fish, Tulip, and Lotus Root," ink and watercolor on paper, 16" x 22"

Above: "Magnolia Grandiflora," mixed media on paper, 22" x 30"; and "With Fish, Lemons, and Limes," ink and watercolor on paper, 30" x 22"



Anna craves challenge, and after painting for a number of years, she has turned her attention to drawing with mixed media. "I had been primarily a painter, but I started working on paper because it seemed more interesting, more challenging," Anna says. "It was less predictable in a way because it reacts differently than the canvas. And while you can redo things on canvas, you cannot change things on paper. ...I like the immediacy and fragility of paper and the line that can be faint or have a strong presence. Education starts with drawing in the first place. Right now, I just love 'line.' With lines to make that much of an impact you have to have line after line after line and create a lot more contrast and light with those lines. I love showing dynamic movement in my work."

She likens her work to a movie still. "You're peeking in—you're getting a glimpse of a world or a life. You can come up with a story, but I don't give you a beginning and end. It's up to you to think the rest of the story." é

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