

SERGIY HRAPOV

The world of theater and fairy tales

Peter Nesterenko

Wise Italian St. Francis of Assisi said: "He who works with his hands is a laborer.

He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman.

He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist".

Sergiy Hrapov, a well-known artist-graphics from Lviv (Ukraine), works in the field of easel painting, book graphics, and watercolor. A member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine since 2000, the Austrian Ex-libris Society (1998–2007), and American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers, he became known for his passion for exlibris, which he began to design while a student at the Ukrainian printing academy 25 years ago. His famous professor, Sergiy Ivanov, was a big fan of ex libris and instilled a love for this genre of graphics to the talented artist.

Sergiy Hrapov works with etching, which he combines with aquatint and mezzotint, a combination which gives a special charm to his graphic designs. They are filled with the rich imagination of the artist; though his images, we are transported to the world of the theater and fairy tales.

Connoisseurs of his ex libris from Europe, America, and Asia soon became his clients. He has been widely published in Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Japan, United States, and Ukraine. During



his career, Hrapov has participated in more than 200 international exhibitions. He received medals and diplomas.

As children, we love fairy tales. When we become older, we love world of fantasy, but in another way. Every good fairy tale has a subtext, an allegory, a nuance, a deep thought, backed by a real life experience. Behind a naive story, the incredible adventures of the fairy tale characters feel attracted to happiness, joy, an indescribable desire to overcome everything which prevents us from enjoying life and stands in the way of good. A fairy tale is a fantastic story. But the main thought, its deeper meaning is always real. Philosophy and the fairy tale are characteristic of Hrapov compositions.

Born under the zodiac sign of genius, like all those supervised by Aquarius, the artist has a sharp mind. As a purveyor of original ideas, he generously provides new images. It is not surprising that fantastic fish (kinship souls) fill his ex libris with glamour, giving them a special charm. We sail in a big boat, as in the paintings of Bosch. A cosmic clock floats on it, without a helm or sail; filled with energy, the immense cosmic universe pushes the craft – clockwise; we have passed in this immense world ... There is no way back, and in front of us – a mysterious journey to the unknown ...

Translation by Antonina Kostruba

Some words of the artist

I am grateful to my clients for the cooperation and creative inspiration, which I get from communicating with them. I like to get an order for the thematic ex-libris. I like to read literature, to study the theme, to do many drawings for the implementation of this task. I like to create a new creative space in which new spectacular, powerful and interesting thoughts will be born and weak ideas will die, where the creative process will move fast.

The etching is a serious technique that demands a large amount of effort, time, attention and finances. It forms everything – my thinking, my perception of the world, it requires constant reflection, improvement of my tools and technical base of knowledge... This is a huge world, which I love and feel comfortable in it. My every work is a letter to the unknown addressee, the letter that I send, throwing it into a stormy whirlwind of life. Maybe it is addressed to a person who lives on another planet called Earth, in another dimension, in another millennium ... I am sure that I have the most wonderful profession. Only an artist can make a step from the real world to the world of fantasies. I do it every day! I Love to travel fantastic labyrinths of my consciousness. Sometimes they are full of light and sunshine, but they can be dark and creepy...

I try to make good and joy, which we have so little in our lives, a fundament of my creative ideas. The creative process is a very hard and complex research of new implementations, it is a struggle between known and unknown... It helps me to gain spiritual balance... Our swift life moves us to new dimensions, decorations change, we change, roles in our life change, our friend gone for good... New people, unfamiliar, young, talented and ambitious appear... Fool wears a mask of a sage, a sage wears a mask of a fool ...Life goes on...

Translation by Antonina Kostruba



CERCHER LA FEMME

Opus 160 (2013) for Ludek Kriz, Czech Republic.
C3C5C7, 10,5x15 cm.



DEVERTISSEMENT

Opus 164 (2014) for Frank Vermeulen, Belgium.
C3C5C7, 12,7x15,6 cm.



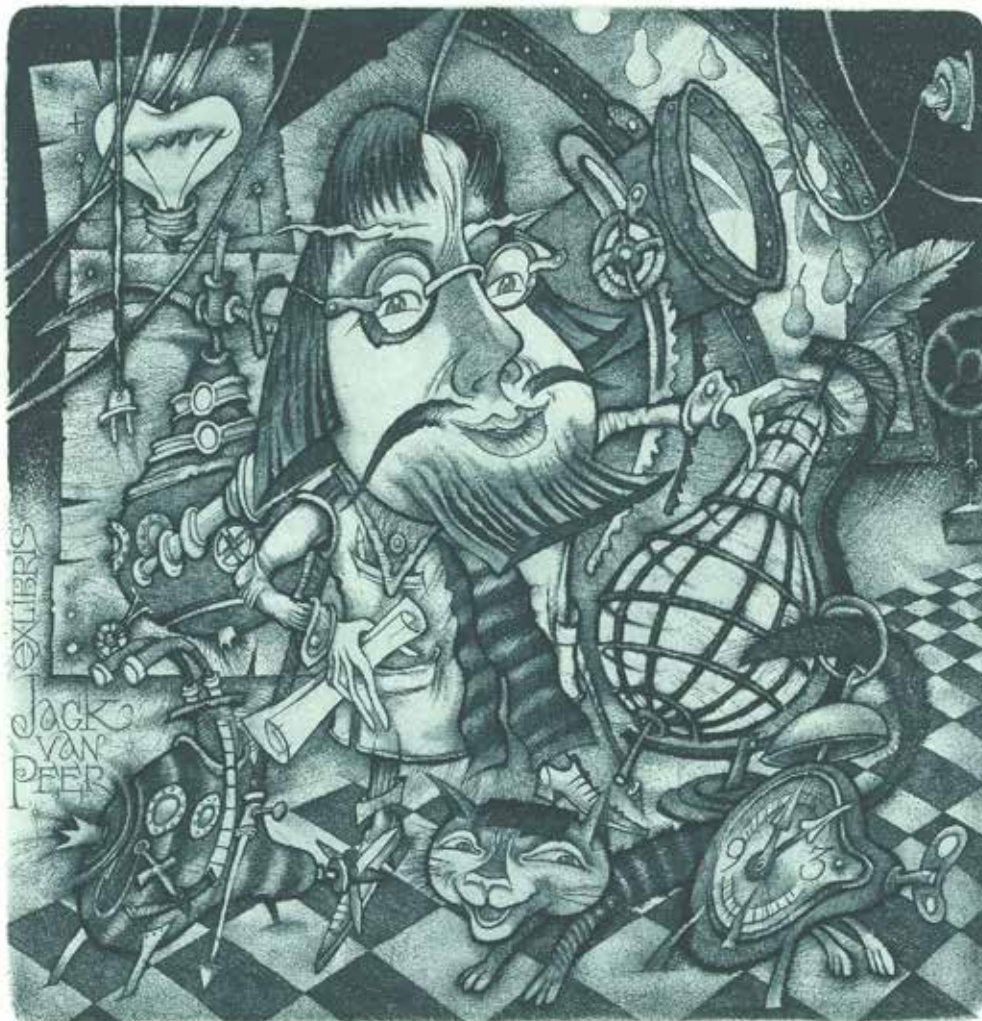
FORGOTTEN MELODY

Opus 169 (2015) for Johnny Mann, China.
C3C5C7, 11,3x17,1 cm.



VICTORIOUS

Opus 170 (2015) for Johnny Mann, China.
C3C5C7, 11,3x16,1 cm.



INVENTOR

Opus 172 (2017) for Jack Van Peer, Belgium.
C3C5C7, 13,2x13,4 cm.



TIME

Opus 166 (2015) for Liu Shuohai, China.
C3C5C7, 15,3x13,3 cm.



MAGIC SQUARES

Opus 168 (2015) for Ari Bergman
C3\C5\C7 14,7x19,7cm.



CREATION

Opus 167 (2015) for Walter Humplstotter, Austria.
C3C5C7, 12,1x14,8 cm.