

EX-LIBRIS

ENCYCLOPAEDIA BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL OF
THE ART OF THE CONTEMPORARY EX-LIBRIS



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ART OF THE CONTEMPORARY EX-LIBRIS XX

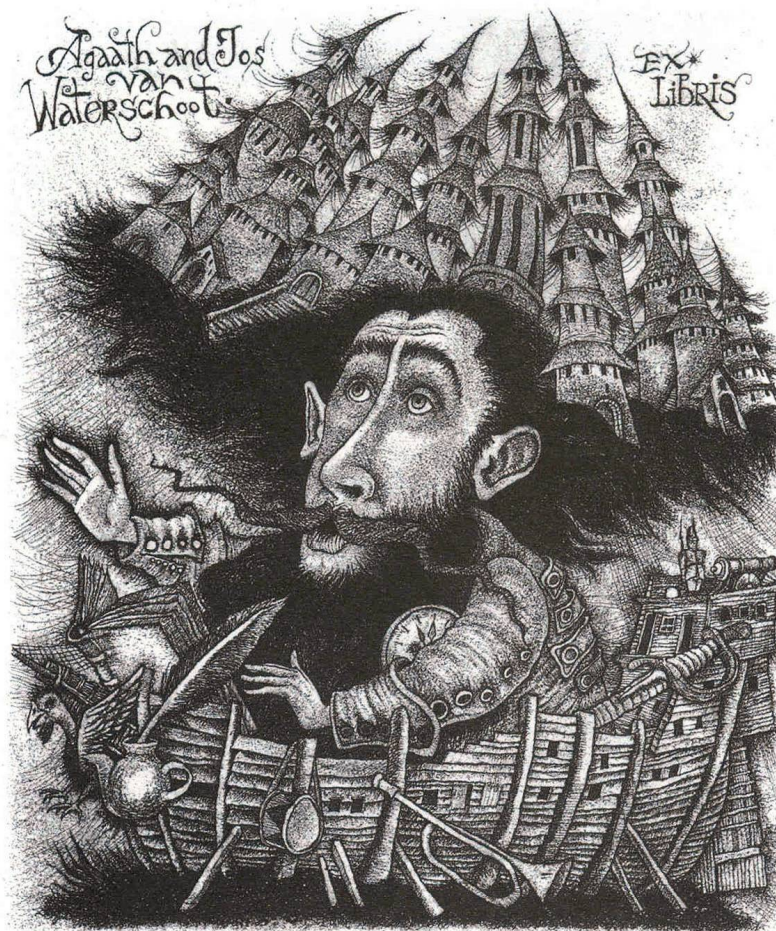
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SERGEY HRAPOV

Oksana Danyluk

*Being Armed with Sight of Narrow Wasps...
Osip Mandelshtam, Russian poet*

Sergey Hrapov the Artist

As one can easily realize, monsters may be engendered not only by the sleep of the mind. At times, the mind being awake, strained pulsation of thought and the commotion of feelings can give birth to such creatures that the well-known monsters of Goya, in comparison with them, would seem to be sweet domestic animals. And it is even

not worth mentioning our life, our notorious existence – it is inhabited by creatures and torn by conflicts that are not subject to a single pen and a single brush.

But they are not the main thing, not the principal stuff. The chief thing is inside, not outside; and indeed it is a gift of gods – to be able to incarnate somehow these monsters, to embody them – with the help of a word, sound or



A/p, "Climb" C3, C7 S. Hoapov 1997





Sergey Hrapov

shape. If one has ability and power to tear out, with flesh and blood, a part of himself and then to establish it in the outer world, making it a mediator between him and this world; if one can and has the gift, and then the courage to look into the eyes of this monster – this person is beloved by gods. In attempt to hide the unconcealable, in communication with the space through your own creation, in understanding this alienated and embodied part of your own self as a mirror with double bottom, a mirror that can reflect, capriciously and electorally, the two worlds – the world already

created and the world being created now, this moment, and between them – the creator himself, demiurge in the continuity of the creating moment, – in all these things you can find the innermost sense of a gift called the genius of form-creating.

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Alas! Lvov of the late 90s doesn't bear a strong resemblance to Athens in times of Pericles or Florence of the Renaissance epoch. Or, rather, it bears no

resemblance at all, in spite of all its artistic traditions, Bohemian past and architectural charms. Alas! People with tight-filled purses and those who make arts and estimate arts, appeared on the different sides of a barricade. They have got different possibilities, reference-points, values and targets. But «ARS LONGA», and this unquestionable truth which was proclaimed in other times, more favourable for arts, still unites present-day Lviv with Lvov — Lvov is the former name of the city; Lviv is the modern one — that already has gone, and also with other places and epochs. And it means that even now you can meet here people occupied by things being far from bizarre vanity or nationalistic convulsions.

For example, by drawing, etching, ex-libris. In spite of the necessity to survive, in this or that way...

Those people throughout the world who create, estimate and understand ex-libris, form now some kind of an exclusive caste or order. Their flame is difficult to uninitiated people, it passes their comprehension; the object of their intent attention has small dimensions, it is neither colourful nor decorative, and it does not enjoy wide popularity. Now you can hardly find a private library with personal ex-libris pasted in books... And almost all members of this order are acquainted with one another — due to exhibitions, catalogues and letters, because it is the way of communication and of establishing contacts in the world of ex-libris. This genre naturally slips out of the contemporaneity, because it (the genre) presupposes intent, concerned, not superficial attention paid to the person whose name is put down to the work; it presupposes that this person has and





reads those books which are mentioned in the name of this genre. Ex-libris are archaic now, as well as, for example, a habit of writing letters. Do many people read books in the epoch of TV? Do many people write letters in the epoch of fax and E-Mail? Sergey Hrapov does. He reads books, writes letters and makes ex-libris. And all these things he does in his own way, sometimes traditionally, sometimes – quite the contrary. And he lives his life in the same way, because the outer outline of his existence is very traditional for a common person and is quite impossible, unusual for an artist. It is the family – Sergey's wife and son, – his home and his work. And some contacts, professional and friendly. And that's all. Plus everlasting shortage of money, for this period of time is not the best for the Ukraine in general, and for the artists in particular. For nobody in the modern Ukraine will order an ex-libris

for himself. So Sergey makes ex-libris disinterestedly as a real artist has to do; he draws because it is his way of experiencing life, of understanding his own place in this world, his own means of a dialogue with it. And also it is a means of restraining and controlling his own, individual monsters emerging in this dialogue. Sergey does it through alienating these monsters; he fastens them with a pin, like insects, to the sheets of paper, and they start their own life on this paper, in the kingdom that was created specially for them. In this kingdom they are quite free to do whatever they like – they ride bicycles, they carry cities and forests on their backs like snails, they hurry somewhere with large bags, they go fishing or serve as a horse for a human beauty. Or tear to pieces a poor creature, also of human nature, fastened to an armchair. And who knows what abyss did Sergey escape

from, what nightmare he kept off when he created this work? For these insects who are so beloved by Sergey are the most pitiless, the most cruel creatures in the world, they really stay on the other side of good and evil and feel no compassion. ... But the infinite abyss is bottomless only for somebody who is falling there. The person who has already escaped it may shudder when turning round, but then he will continue his way on the safe solid ground. Maybe towards the next abyss.

On this way he can meet more friendly beings. The fresh wind blows here, and strange beings swim in the air head over heels, armed with an imponderable plumelet; also you can often meet fishes (or, may be, the Artist often directs his eyes to them?). Here you can see unicorns, a lot of unicorns, big and small, toy unicorns and quite real ones.

A young beautiful virgin with a butterfly-net hunts for a wooden toy-unicorn, small and defenceless.

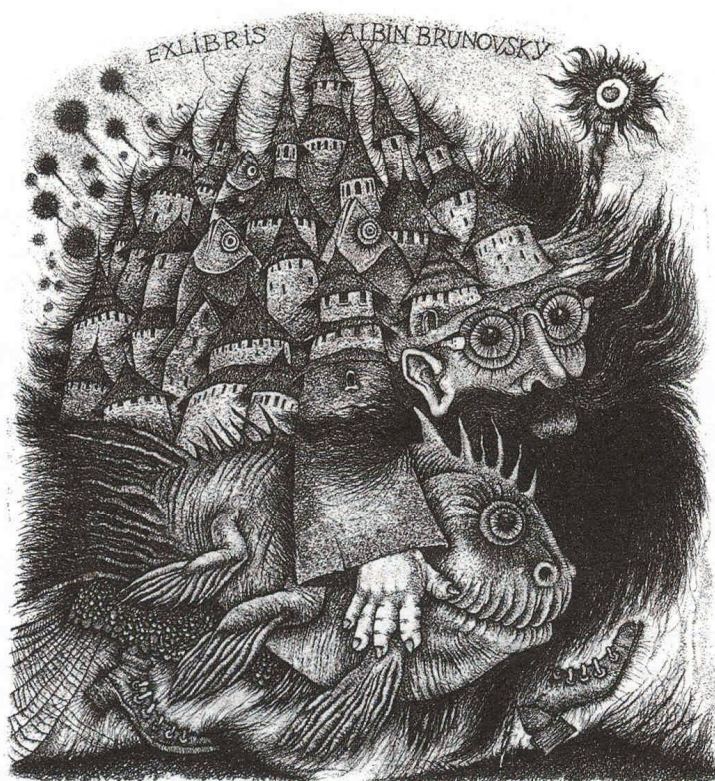
However, she also is not very real: delicate strings are fastened to her hands, feet and head and go somewhere upwards. It is interesting who is there overhead, isn't it?... And there you can meet a hybrid of an unicorn and the Trojan Horse; a wood of spears sticks out of it. It is interesting who is there inside, isn't it?...

Clowns, masks, motleys and bells, a snail-orchestra and a man-town, (of course, carrying a fish); everybody is in a hurry, everybody is business-like, everybody lives his own life. Nobody knows the way to the next abyss. «Sorry, I have no time. A lot of things to do. So long. Goodbye. Take care. Go forward, may be there...».

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EXLIBRIS * CHASSAING JEAN-FRANÇOIS



*Where am I? What nasty thing
had happened to me?...*

Osip Mandelstam

The following things have happened to Sergey on his way from the first abyss in every life – the birth – to the last one – the death.

He was born in Lvov, Ukraine, in 1956. Sergey was always drawing: ten years in the school he was drawing the innumerable leaders on the innumerable armoured-cars. He was not an exemplary pupil, and even the pictures of armoured-cars couldn't help. Being a school-boy he began to sew and made his first shirt. Sergey dreamed to enter the Institute of Applied Arts, but he hadn't enough money or connections necessary for it. That is why he spent two years in the Soviet Army after finishing school. There he continued to draw numerous portraits of numerous leaders and, besides this, he began to draw caricatures and to send them to the popular satirical magazines;

they refused to publish Sergey's works with amazing constancy. Then he overgrew these jokes and funny pictures, became too old for them. And he felt for the first time that he wanted to illustrate books for children.

Then he worked as a designer on the «Electron» plant in Lvov. In 1983 Sergey began to study drawing and painting in the studio under the guidance of Victoria Dubovik who taught him to feel the colour, the composition and the flesh of the model he is painting. In 1984 he met Oleg Kozak who trained Sergey for entering the Polygraphical Institute, the Department of book illustration.

The period of working on the «Electron» plant was very difficult for Sergey. The routine of soviet life seemed to be unbearable, and once when the feeling of despair was particularly sharp, Kozak told him: If you can't live for yourself – try to live for others. The advice worked.

In November 1993 Sergey had



defended his degree work in the Institute.

Sergey began to make ex-libris in 1991, being a student. He also worked for the Publishing Houses «Kamenyar», «Karpaty» and «Vyscha Schola», made illustrations and book-covers for technical literature. In 1991 he had made his first serious etchings, and took part in his first exhibition organized by Rolf Bergstran. Then Sergey became the correspondent of Peter Ford, Arnold Hausweiler, Ottmar Premstaller and other people loving and collecting ex-libris. He had got the first orders, and took part in many exhibitions: in Sweden, Norway, Poland, Hong Kong, Spain, Italy, UK. And a lot of private collections in Europe today possess ex-libris by Sergey Hrapov. And even one collection in Japan. And – and even several in Ukraine.

Today Sergey is preparing works for several exhibitions at a time, he cooperates with publishing houses in Lviv and Kiev, illustrates books for children, makes ex-libris on private orders. He reads books and writes letters.

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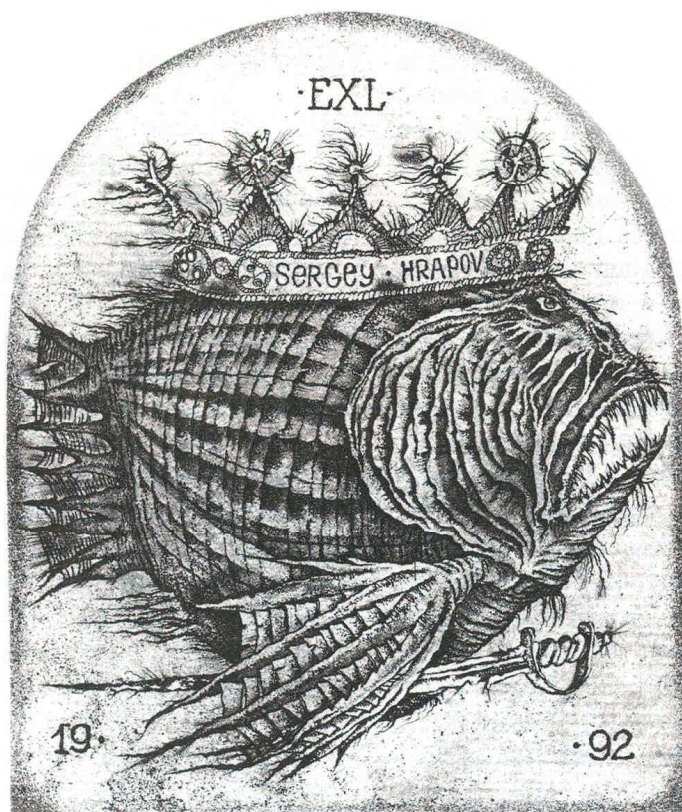
*The earthly dreams burn on the
dreadful height.*

Osip Mandelshtam

...The Art is the reaction to the fundamental gap between the human being and the world, and to the impossibility of overcoming this gap.

An Artist who is trying to fill this gap is at the same time broadening it. He wishes to create forms which could break through the bounds given to a man, which could lead to the other side of the usual flesh of the world, that is always familiar and eternally slipping away. The Space of an Artist is in the past and in the future simultaneously, it exists in the eternity, in the ideal world possessing inaccessible integrity and unity. He tries, tirelessly and persistently, to unmask the structure and bonds of the world forces, to rhyme the different realities dwelling in the different spaces which are incompatible by their nature but which gravitate towards one another in a strange and wonderful way. The chronology of ups and downs on this way constitutes the real biography of an Artist.





CHECKLIST *of* EX-LIBRIS *by* SERGEY HRAPOV

1991				1995			
1	Boris Levych <i>Gold time</i>	C3/C5	8,9 x 11,8	9	Oksana Danyluk <i>Debora</i>	C3	8,1 x 5,5
2	E. L. Z. <i>Man-made</i>	C3	6,4 x 11,1	10	Agaat & Jos van Waterschoot <i>Tired</i>	C3/C7	6 x 6,9
1992				11	Peter Ford <i>Artist</i>	C3/C5/C7	6,8 x 7,2
3	Boris Levych <i>Vessel</i>	C3/C5	9,2 x 11,2	12	Albin Brunovsky <i>Success</i>	C3	9,6 x 8,8
4	Sergey Hrapov <i>Fish</i>	C3/C5	8,2 x 9,8	13	Dr. Ottmar Premstaller <i>The hope</i>	C3	6,2 x 8
1994				14	P. F. <i>Funny</i>	C3	7,6 x 7,5
5	Sergey Hrapov <i>Cockle shell</i>	C3/C5	10 x 8,5				
6	Jean-François Chassaing <i>Body</i>	C3/C5	7,6 x 9,6				
7	Arnold Hausweiler <i>Sad</i>	C3/C7	11,4 x 7,2				
8	Arnold Hausweiler <i>Second</i>	C3/C7	9,1 x 6,4				



1996				1997			
15	Dr. Ottmar Premstaller <i>Unicorn</i>	C3	6,5 x 9,2	22	Artur Mário da Mota Miranda <i>Climb</i>	C3/C7	6,7 x 8,7
16	Oksana Danyluk <i>Hunting for unicorn</i>	C3	9,2 x 8,1	23	Boris Levykh <i>The albatross</i>	C3/C7	6 x 9,3
17	H. P. Bongers <i>Eternity</i>	C3	10,5 x 7,7	24	Elsbeth Rhonheimer <i>«Rich»</i>	C3/C7	8 x 7,5
18	Irena Hrapova <i>Phoenix</i>	C3	8,6 x 7,1				
19	Agaat & Jos van Waterschoot <i>The fairyland</i>	C3/C7	9,5 x 11,6				
20	P. F. <i>Prosperity</i>	C3/C7	5 x 5				
21	Artur Mário da Mota Miranda <i>Encyclopaedia</i>	C3/C7	10,7 x 8,1				

