

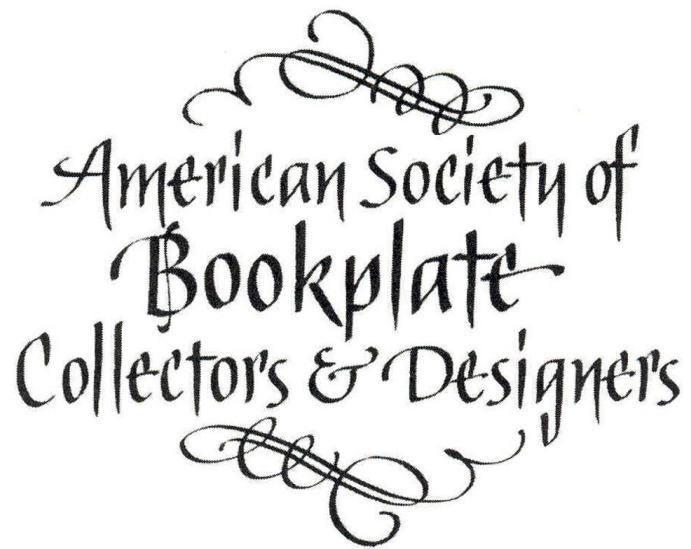
*American Society of
Bookplate
Collectors & Designers*

YEAR BOOK

2001 - 2002



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YEAR BOOK
2001 - 2002

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No 59

FULL OF SPACE AND TIME
THE WORLDS OF SERGEY HRAPOV

BY

ALEXANDRA VOLOSHIN

"But, the god sees, there is music above us ..."
O. Mandelshtam

Ten years is a small milestone anniversary, probably the first date worth mentioning in one's career. Here we introduce just so we are familiar with Sergey Hrapov both as an artist and as an individual. His works hang on the walls of my Jerusalem apartment, mostly ex libris made at different times for various people. There is also one hand drawn poster - a watercolor depicting a fat hedgehog dressed in striped watermelon trousers, shirt and suspenders properly fitting. Accentuated with glasses and equipped with umbrella and a solid paunch, this is a very serious and ridiculous hedgehog. How many times has he encouraged me in these four years, which have passed from the moment of my departure!

Looking at these works, it becomes possible to understand the path that his artistic progress took. Or, on the contrary, is it the path that each day selects him, pushes and urges him on in the necessary direction? Does not allow him to alter this, to turn off the road, to slow his rhythm and rate, to deny the depth of his self-knowledge and the purity of his self-response?

...A lot of things can happen to an artist in ten years, even if he lives in more placid times and in a more successful country. He can lose faith in himself, in his talents and his calling; he can sink to gloomy fatalism and yield to feelings of doom and hopelessness. In the end, he can stop searching for a solution to the riddle and reap the benefits of his former successes, and accomplishments. He can achieve popularity and prosperity, and at the same time lose something imperceptible, but solely alive and true, - and then again it is possible not to think of it, not to think.

Fortunately, this did not happen to Sergey. He still enjoys the discovery of new breeds of fish and lizards he conducts an intricate narrative about knightly scandals, and is occupied with the construction of snail cities and mechanisms for flights to the Moon. Also he is busy with a collection of riddles, in which there will never be a final page with the correct answers.



Voyage. Frans van der Veen

I will take a chance and assume that I know how he accomplishes this. Theoretically the way is very simple: try not to submit yourself to a direct and slavish dependence on life's realities, for the reality created by art, is definitely more powerful and convincing. The images generated by feelings, thoughts and impressions thus become cluttered with flesh, begin to play with their new found muscles, find mimic expressiveness, woolen roughness, cold marble smoothness, or rubber elasticity. Indefinitely being reflected in themselves and in each other, imperceptibly wandering from one etching to another, they grow up and create their biography living now and then several parallel lives. This reality becomes more and more condensed, stratum-by-stratum being wound on an intention, and germinating with detail.

And these worlds are populated by lonely heroes carried by the wind in search of themselves, who in primitive ships once departed once to discover distant lands and bright cities, becoming stronger, finding partners and now searching together - on a saddled unicorn, they've grown their own wings. Attention! One, two, three - go! Run, take off; now wave arms, then flap wings; everything that is necessary for travel is with them: a cuckoo clock, a small house for two, an anchor for grounding, a boat in case of an unexpected landing... Upon the arrival to a place, to the star city above the clouds, they become a wise and genuine royal couple encircled by favorable heavenly bodies... Enemies are conquered; their unpleasant faces distorted in a mute powerless shout are washed off by the stream of time.

However, somebody was not so lucky. Don Quixote formerly vigorous, accurate and astute was ready for victorious battle against the universal evil and injustice, but in the process he lost almost everything: his horse, his courage, his resolution. And the wings of the windmill, cheerfully turning behind his back, like an airplane, now are heavy, excessive, they bend down to the ground, converting a triumphant path into a cross way. And Dulcinea from a small guiding figure on the edge of the lifted lance has turned into a heavy slovenly woman, indifferently hanging out her linen somewhere in the backyard following him with her eyes. But maybe he has simply grown old and became tired, you know it can happen to anybody even to a knight.

But as a whole the works of Sergey through time became more light-colored and transparent although they are still deep, now we are directed upwards and outwards, to aerial and solar spaces. The artist has glanced into the eyes of monsters - and stood his ground daring to turn his back to them. Monsters that have been domesticated are not terrible any more - neither for the artist, nor for us, the spectators. Harmless and smooth velvet, they have left alone their victims and roll under your legs, play with us... grow fond of us... But be careful! Fangs and claws, horns and thorns are still in their places and still sharp with their sleepy eyes there is the same old thirst for somebody's life.



The Fairyland. Agaath & Jos van Waterschoot

Sergey Hrapov was born and raised in Ukraine, in the city of Lvov. He graduated from the Lvov Polygraph Institute, Book Illustration Department.

He became enthusiastic about etching in 1991, before that he was occupied with book illustrating, working on various publications, mostly technical. His serious passion for ex libris brought him to the world of the connoisseurs and experts of this exclusive genre. The bookplate is not suitable for easy perception, and even those who have heard this word do not always understand its meaning. It is neither fashionable nor popular, for it has no attributes necessary for popularity, brightness, simplicity, or intelligibility. Ex libris tend to be small, generally printed in black-and-white and saturated with details. They are often full of allusions, references and allegories, and usually the observer has to do some work in order to understand the story behind it. The real connoisseur and judge of an ex libris is to a high degree the co-author of an artist, because the process involved in understanding is the type of subtle and precise work that requires considerable emotional, tasteful and literary schooling. Otherwise it would be impossible to take a small square of paper and grow it into a universal tree - half blooming and full of life, half dry and dead, to settle in its neighborhood the winged lizards and fiery spotty salamanders, that inspire and disturb your imagination. The soul feels compelled to work and only in this way does it manage to survive.

Sergey's creative biography is very similar - it consists of work, every hour of the day. Up to the present the list of exhibitions, in which he has participated and received awards is so long that it would take all the space of this article, many of his works have been presented in: Holland, Norway, Belgium, United States, Spain, Korea, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Italy, Egypt, and Finland. Creations of Sergey's imagination, perpetually moving forward, mysterious and beautiful, have traveled all over the world. His etchings continuously receive awards: in 1997 and 2000; Poland, 1998; Ukraine, 2001 and in the US. Many famous names are entered in his ex libris, many private collections in different countries have been replenished with his works. Ten years - quite a long span of time.

What else is there to tell about Sergey Hrapov? He is absolutely not a bohemian individual, not subject to vices, he loves to stay at home and loves his wife and bringing up his son. Sergey finds subjects for his works in daily life, among the people - in a shop, on the market, walking around the city, at a bus stop. He claims, that this source is inexhaustible, - it is only necessary to keep eyes and heart open, as a window on a sunny April day.

Recently, Sergey has been working on illustration - children's books always have been his weakness, his old passion. Drawings for children form a separate special corner in an already very much alive and dynamic universe, they are bright and transparent, and



Welcome 2000. Erika & Andreas Selle

their characters are brave and self-confident. Unknown "Birds" sing on thresholds of unlocked cages; fearless "Mice" play flutes; Cheshire Cats look almost human. Affable faces of amusing beings smile, happy and benevolent because the tragic duality of life has not yet ruined their vivacious qualities. These figures are full of tenderness and love, as a mother's kiss or a lullaby that was composed and sung in other, happier times.

An artist is not obligated to use words - everything that he would like to tell the world, already exists in his work. But sometimes it may be important to ask him a question and hear his answer, pronounced rather than drawn. Let's listen to what Sergey says about himself: "Life is ambiguous there are different ways to perceive it. I try to pay less attention to the dark side of life, although it is sometimes difficult. But if you are to see in life only good, and nothing but good, in the end it is possible to become an old fool, which only understands how to be happy - "the rain is falling, the sun is shining, the tomato is red" - and that's all. Therefore I try to accept life as it is in all its unadorned manifestations. I called my Austrian exhibition "Equilibrium" and this word describes my aspirations very precisely".

Equilibrium can be a classically noble guideline, the most appropriate for a mature artist at this point of his life. The brave tightrope walker, with a balancing pole in his hands searching for a path over a double abyss. Sergey Hrapov, human being and artist, does not separate life and art.

...An expert of transformations and crossings, he opens a fan of images free of superficial logical ties or the handcuffs to common sense, but connected by internal relationships through the creating individual. We peer and then plunge into this lawless world, and it blossoms with colors, becomes filled with sounds, and the triumphant voice from Wonderland becomes louder and louder: "The further - the more interesting ..."

Jerusalem 2002



Glory. Frans van der Veen

EX LIBRIS THEATER

BY

PETR NESTERENKO

"Well, it is show time, folks..."

The question is: are Sergei Hrapov's graphic prints' essence and content to a large extent determined by the fact that his art "thinks" in images, that it portrays a vivid knowledge of reality, and that his art is a true reflection of life? Not at all.

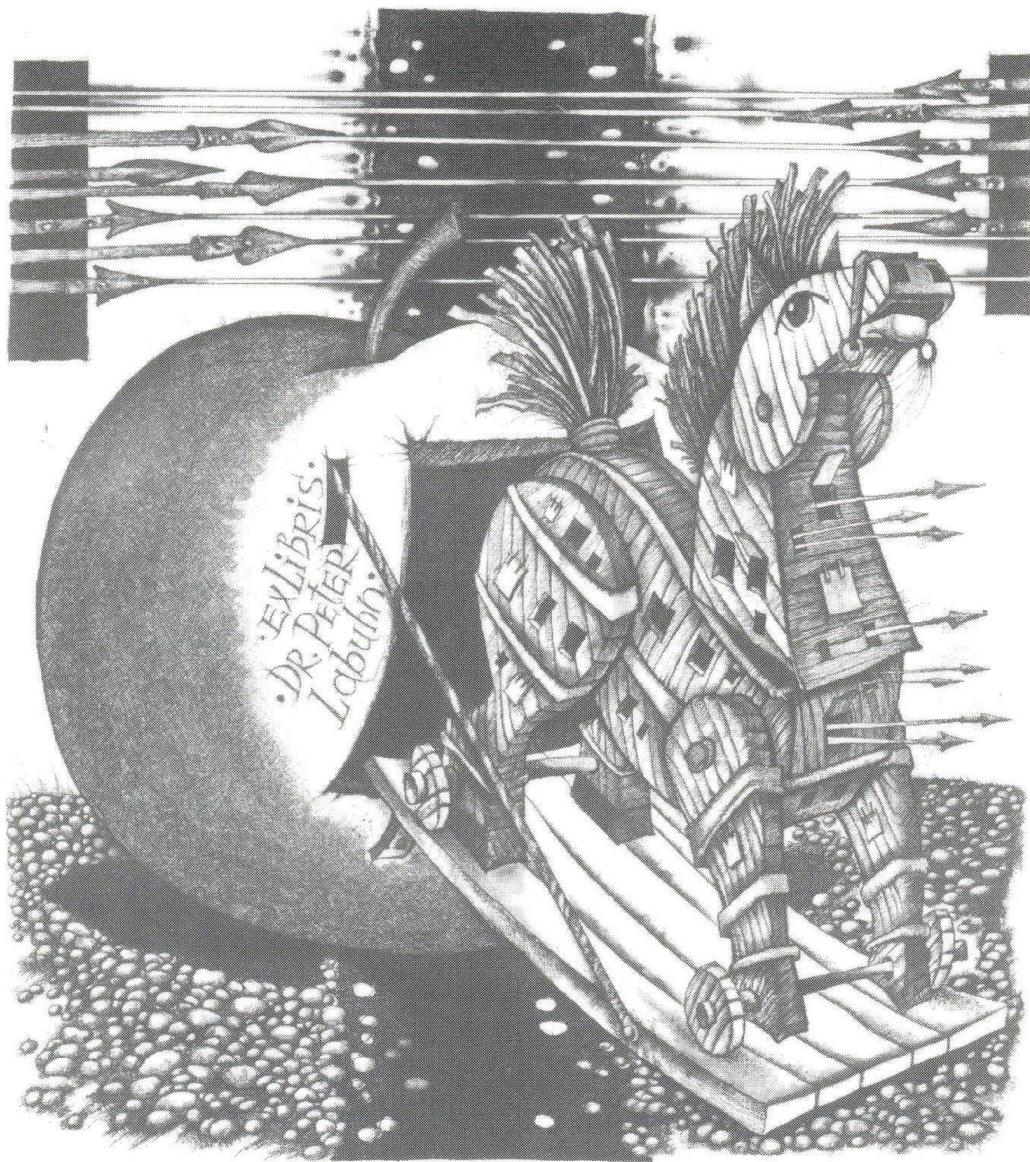
A considerable portion of disparity between the truth of art and truth of life goes under the name of "conditionality." Hrapov's art is not free from conditionality either and this is not a weakness or a shortcoming at all. The heroes of his works are not attached to religions of today, and live their own peculiar lives so it seems as though we are in a theater watching a realistic play.

A distinctive illustration of this theatrical universe is the bookplate devoted to the family of Erika and Anders Selle from Germany. Hrapov placed his protagonists in a sort of fairy tale hut. Their profiled depictions facing each other fill the whole room. One flight down we find that another character is sound asleep, his cheek resting on a book. Protractions serve as balconies of the house and in these balconies appear a day-dreamer, a fiddle-strumming musician, a romantic cat next to a bird, and even a tree. A fish that could not find enough space in the house hangs in the air next to a half-open entrance while a winged clock hangs suspended, as if ready to fly. Beside the house there is a table set with a tea kettle, two cups, and an opened book, apparently just left there by the hosts. In the sky above the roof looms towards the sun – a symbol of all-seeing God - and a crescent, suggesting the cyclic rhythm of time. These elements are bonded by familial ties and further represent male and female beginnings. The moon phases stand for immortality, joy, and eternal renewal. Under the engraving there is a line that reads "Happiness".

Similar images representing the subject of Happiness spring from other artists' works represented by winged voyagers such as: Ha and Huib Bongers, Hildegard Pungs, Frans Van Der Veen, Wimmer Tobias, at whom the sun smiles condescendingly.

In general, artistic images tend to reflect not only an objective reality, but also the subjective world of the artist this being another separate reality. These images can comprise the truth contained in life, human thought about life or a dream. Therefore it is not surprising that both Hrapov's creations and his admirers experience delight and enjoyment in the face of the miracle of artistic work.

We enjoy fairy tales since our childhood and continue to do so in a different way as adults, but to no lesser extent. Every fairy tale represents an alternative narrative of life,



Old Invention. Dr. Peter Labuhn

and its fiction contains a higher truth of human consciousness and human dreams. In this type of narration we may find incredible adventures and heroic deeds that appear so real. There are also the familiar search for good, happiness, yearning for joy, and overall the drive to overcome what prevents us from finding joy or is an obstacle to good. In spite of the fact that fairy tales have a fantastic subject its subject matter has a much deeper meaning lending them a sense of reality in every sense of the word.

In the case of Hrapov's work, both philosophy and fairy tales are simultaneously characteristic of some of his compositions such as "Nest", "Philosophy", "Old Melody", "Him and Her", "Prose", "Balance", "Spring" (a bookplate commissioned by Deurinek Lodewijk). Sergey was born under the sign of geniuses, and as all Aquarius, he possesses a sharp mind. (Faces of Destiny. Horoscope. Fortune-Telling. Dream Interpretations. - Kiev, 1993, p.8) And as a carrier of original ideas his compositions are richly filled with a great deal of wonderful images. Therefore, it is not surprising that fishes of all kinds fill his bookplates, adding special charm and we can find examples of

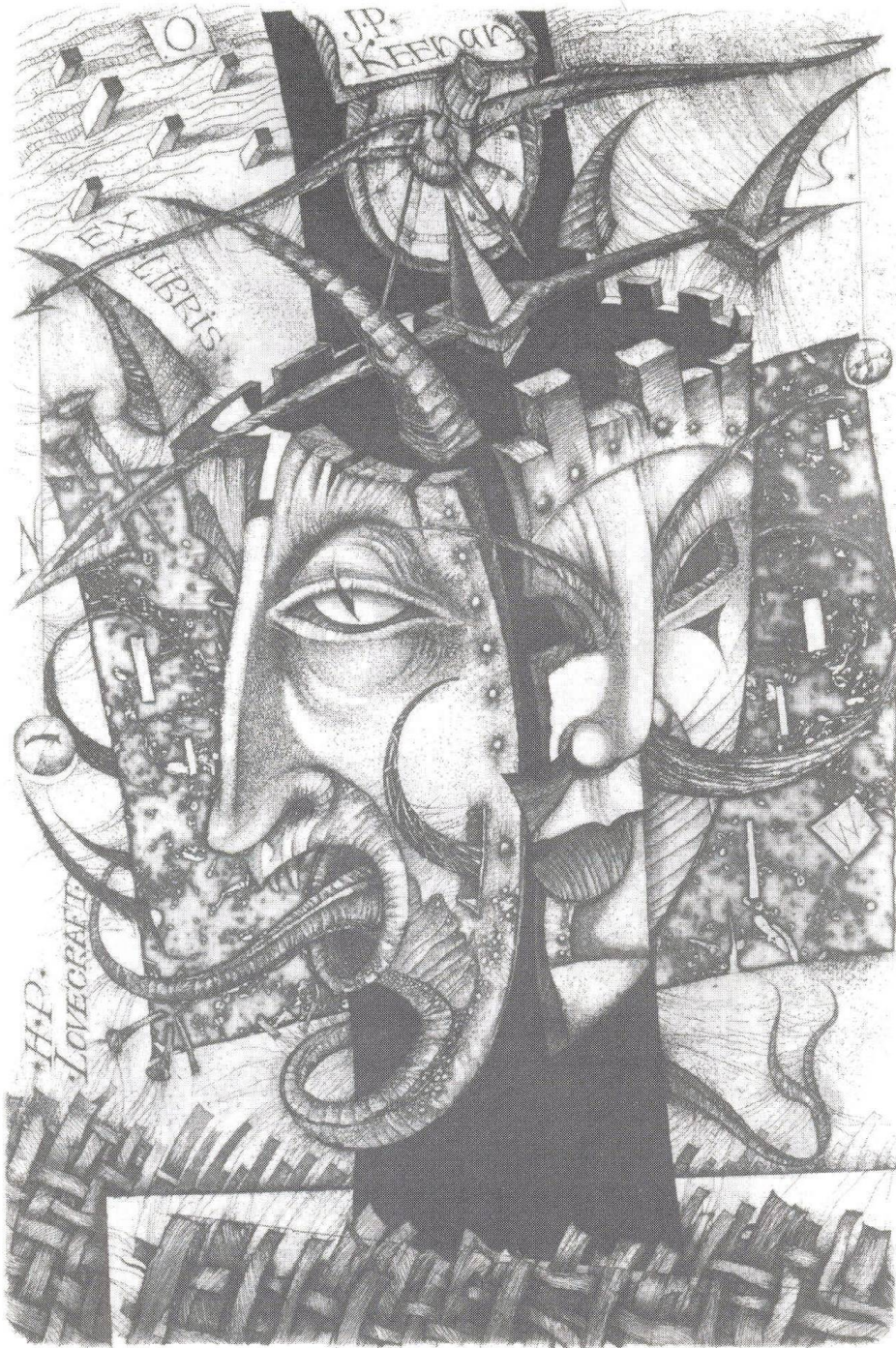
these in ex libris made for: Ottmar Premstaller, Artut Mario Da Mota Miranda, Jenten Pejinenburg, Albin Brunovsky, and H.P. Bongers.

Literary themes are not alien to the Lvov artist either. He demonstrates this in original visions of famous literary works such as "Don Quixote" by M. Cervantes, "Till Ulenspiegel" by Charles de Coster, and "Crime and Punishment" by F. Dostoyevsky.

Especially expressive are the subjects of "Old Time" and "Millennium". The premonition of changes in connection with the advancing new millennium is reflected in the emotional drive and outburst of the author's emotions. While the engraving titled "Old Time" hypnotizes by the contrast of rigid, frozen sharpness of its forms. The lack of coherence represented increases by creating a deformation in the proportions of its figures. "Millennium" does not offer anything comforting either since its representation of time depends on winged chimeras placed in the foundation of the so-called clock face with hands. However, the mysterious personalities standing above controlling the process offer some hope.

The artist, Sergei Hrapov is at the peak of his artistic bloom. He has 80 international exhibits on his record, has been awarded medals and diplomas, and his bookplates are exhibited in the International Bookplate Encyclopedia in Portugal. This talented artist unifies people with his bright talent and we wish him success!

Petr Nesterenko,
President of the Ukrainian Bookplate Club



Depth. James P. Keenan

EX LIBRIS CHECKLIST

SERGEY HRAPOV

1991

1 Boris Levych	"Gold time"	C3\C5	8.9 x 11.8
2 E.L.Z	"Man made"	C3	6.4 x 11.1

1992

3 Boris Levych	"Vessel"	C3\C5	9.2 x 11.2
4 Sergey Hrapov	"Fish"	C3\C5	8.2 x 9.8

1994

5 Sergey Hrapov	"Cockle shell"	C3\C5	10 x 8.5
6 Jean-Francois Chassaing	"Body"	C3\C5	7.6 x 9.6
7 Arnold Hausweiler	"Sad"	C3\C7	11.4 x 7.2
8 Arnold Hausweiler	"Second"	C3\C7	9.1 x 6.4

1995

9 OksanaDanyluk	"Debora"	C3	8.1 x 5.5
10 Agaath & Jos van Waterschoot	"Tired"	C3\C7	6 x 6.9
11 Peter Ford	"Artist"	C3\C5\C7	6.8 x 7.2
12 Albin Brunovsky	"Success"	C3	9.6 x 8.8
13 Dr. Ottmar Premstaller	"The Hope"	C3	6.2 x 8
14 P.F.	"Funny"	C3	7.6 x 7.5

1996

15 Dr. Ottmar Premstaller	"Unicorn"	C3	6.5 x 9.2
16 Oksana Danyluk	"Hunting for unicorn"	C3	9.2 x 8.1
17 H.P.Bongers	"Eternity"	C3	10.5 x 7.7
18 Irena Hrapova	"Phoenix"	C3	8.6 x 7.1
19 Agaath & Jos van Waterschoot	"The Fairyland"	C3\C7	9.5 x 11.6
20 P.F.	"Prosperity"	C3\C7	5 x 5
21 Artur Mario da Mota Miranda	"Encyclopaedia"	C3\C7	10.7 x 8.1

1997

22 Artur Mario da Mota Miranda	"Climb"	C3\C7	6.7 x 8.7
23 Boris Levych (in memoriam)	"The Albatross"	C3\C7	6. x 9.3
24 Elsbeth Rhonheimer	"Rich"	C3\C7	8 x 7.5
25 Elsbeth Rhonheimer	"The Season"	C3\C7	9.5 x 8.5
26 Rolf Bergstrand (Gordie Howe)	"Victory"	C3\C5\C7	7.6 x 6.9
27 Dr.George Sekine	"Pure"	C3\C5\C7	11.2 x 8.4
28 Dr. I.M. Szymanski	"Excellent"	C3\C7	7.9 x 6.4
29 Luc Van Den Briele	"Till Ulenspiegel"	C3\C5\C7	10.1 x 8.1

30 Jentien Peijnenburg	"The Dream"	C3\C5\C7	12.2 x 10.5
31 Spartaco Cadioli	"Nest"	C3\C5\C7	14.6 x 10.1
32 Albin Brunovsky (in memoriam)	"Ache"	C3\C5\C7	14.8 x 13.2
33 P.F.	"Sun and moon"	C3\C7	3.9 x 4.6

1998

34 Elsbeth Rhonheimer	"Zurich"	C3\C5\C7	9.2 x 7x5
35 Deurinck Lodewyk	"The Spring"	C3\C5\C7	12.2 x 8.2
36 Rolf Bergstrand	"Play"	C3\C5\C7	7.1 x 4.7
37 Ottmar Premstaller	"Aquarius"	C3\C5\C7	7.5 x 6.9
38 Luigi Bergomi	"Old Time"	C3\C5\C7	14.1 x 11
39 Marvin Bolotsky	"Alice"	C3\C5\C7	14.4 x 9.6
40 Leo Bednarik	"He and She"	C3\C5\C7	11.8 x 7.8
41 Luc Van Den Briele	"Dostojewski"	C3\C5\C7	12.8 x 8.8
42 Piet Van Den Akker (MC. Escher)	"Dostojewski"	C3\C5\C7	7.9 x 7.8
43 P.F.	"Ars longa. vita brevis"	C3\C5\C7	10 x 6.8

1999

44 Rolf Bergstrand (Sergiej Bubka)	"Up"	C3\C5\C7	8.9 x 6.8
45 Rolf Bergstrand (Wayne Gretzky)	"Power"	C3\C5\C7	8.9 x 6.8
46 Erika and Adreas Selle	"Happiness"	C3\C5\C7	14.3 x 9.8
47 H.P.Bongers	"Be fond"	C3\C5\C7	13.3 x 10.6
48 Norbert Hillerbrandt	"Millenium"	C3\C5\C7	14.8 x 9.9
49 Deurinck Lodewyk	"Heavens"	C3\C5\C7	14.3 x 10.7
50 P.F. (Klaus Rodel)	Frederikshavn Kunstmuseum	C3\C5\C7	14.9 x 8
51 Erika and Adreas Selle	"Welcome 2000"	C3\C5\C7	16.5 x 11
52 G. Dumon	"Wine"	C3\C5\C7	12.9 x 9.2
53 P. F. 2000		C3\C5\C7	12.2 x 7.9

2000

54 Dr. George Sekine	"Wisdom"	C3\C5\C7	9.2 x 7.4
55 Elsbeth Rhonheimer	"Music"	C3\C5\C7	12.9 x 9.1
56 Remo Palmirani	"Nemesida"	C3\C5\C7	18.2 x 11.8
57 Reglinde Lattermann	"My Garden"	C3\C5\C7	14.2 x 9.7
58 Norbert Hillerbrandt	"Old Man and Sea"	C3\C5\C7	16.2 x 11.7
59 G. Dumon	"Classical Music"	C3\C5\C7	15.3 x 9.1
60 Dorun Pestalozzi	"New Day"	C3\C5\C7	12.5 x 9.3
61 Gilbert Vandermoere	"Sacred"	C3\C5\C7	13.2 x 8.9
62 Dorun Pestalozzi	"Shower"	C3\C5\C7	10.4 x 8.6
63 Aloys Vertongen	"Dialogue"	C3\C5\C7	13.5 x 9.3
64 P. F. 2001		C3\C5\C7	17 x 8.1

2001

65 Peter Nesterenko	"Letter"	C3\C5\C7	9.8 x 5.6
66 Dr. Ottmar Premstaller	"St. Aquarius"	C3\C5\C7	5.1 x 5.1
67 Tobias Wimmer	"Agile"	C3\C5\C7	8.2 x 7.1

68 Doris Thiel	"Visitor"	C3\C5\C7	8.5 x 7.6
69 Susanne Kolar	"Good Mood"	C3\C5\C7	9.7 x 6.9
70 Frans van der Veen	"Voyage"	C3\C5\C7	14.9 x 11.9
71 Dr. Peter Labuhn	"Old Invention"	C3\C5\C7	12.9 x 11.4
72 Peter Nesterenko	"Book"	C3\C5\C7	9.8 x 6.9
73 P. F. 2002		C3\C5\C7	9.4 x 7.3

2002

74 Peter Labuhn	"Heavy Apple"	C3\C5\C7	13.9 x 9.8
75 Hildegard Pungs	"Star light"	C3\C5\C7	10.4 x 9
76 Reglinde Lattermann	"Two roads"	C3\C5\C7	14.2 x 10.5
77 Erika and Adreas Selle	"Mystery"	C3\C5\C7	19.8 x 11.3
78 James P. Keenan	"Books"	C3\C5\C7	9 x 6.9
79 Marvin Bolotsky (A. Brunovsky)	"Ache"	C3\C5\C7	14.8 x 13.2
80 Loek Aarsen	"Antagonism"	C3\C5\C7	15.2 x 11.2
81 J.P. Keenan (H.P. Lovecraft)	"Depth"	C3\C5\C7	11 x 13
82 Frans van der Veen	"Glory"	C3\C5\C7	10.3 x 15.5



Sergiej Bubka