

YUKHYM RUDMINSKY'S JOYFUL MESSAGE

A noted artist almost always cuts an enigmatic figure in the public eye. People wonder about his talent, special vision of the world, and an ability to not only observe, but also look into the essence and logic of existence.

Yukhym Rudminsky passed away nine years ago and his name has since marked a certain phase of this epoch.

His childhood was marked by poverty and hunger, yet he was fortunate enough to come across a person who would become his true teacher: artist Abram Balazovsky who saw in a quiet youth attending his classes an extraordinary personality. Later (the artist notes in his brief autobiography), "by the will of God and in the person of artist Mykola Hlushchenko (he happened to notice my works), I was enrolled in a school of art." Still later, he joined a department of architecture, and after graduation received a job with the Kyivmistobud Urban-planning Research Institute of Kyiv, the only job he would ever have. He would describe that period, "I remember the way I felt rather than dates".

No one knew at the time that Yukhym Rudminsky was not only a gifted architect, but also an extraordinary and prolific painter. For his colleagues it was a stunning discovery.

Now that we know him as both, art critics argue which of his talents was more significant. S.Kileso, Candidate of architecture, insists on the priority of Rudminsky's architectural attainments, saying that he constantly took part in international contests in Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and in Japan: "the remarkable thing is that he always received prestigious prizes." Here is far from exhausting list of his major architectural projects:

The resort complexes "Verkhovyna" and "Shayany" in Zakarpattia, Pivdenny in Phoros (Crimea), and the Russian Embassy in Kyiv. Kileso notes that Rudminsky was the first to look for national forms in Ukrainian architecture, not by borrowing but by creatively conceiving them. His Hogodomor and Babyn Yar memorials turned out very special. The latter reflects the artist's idea to use various shapes of rock (rock being a symbol of tragedy and eternity), gradually reduced in size, as though vanishing, thus illustrating the tragedy of the Jewish people.

Rudminsky said: "I regard the arts as a single current of culture in time (without the past, present and future), belonging to the mystery of existence". This statement is perhaps a key to understanding his concept of fine arts.

His creative heritage became known only after Rudminsky's death. His works are amazingly diversify in terms of style, trend and technique – the impression is that his inner world was tremendous and constantly changing, and that he was in a hurry to convey at least something of what he saw and knew. Series of subtle lyrical and slightly mournful landscapes, the quick-passing lower Kyiv neighborhood of Podil, the arresting Crimea, tender and scenic Carpathian Mountains, and the enigmatic sadness of the Baltic countries.

The Biblical Prophets cycle reveals emotionally gripping pictures that make visitors stop and spend a long of time exploring each, staring at faces looking back across thousands of years. There is a definite Beethovenian touch to Rudminsky's portraits: suffering and sage awareness of the cross one is destined to bear. Art critic Yuri Neiman wrote, "It is eternal sorrow – perhaps not even sorrow but a lasting, quiet and a little sad reflection on an individual being above time and space, but having to exist at a certain space, and to give everything to that space."

Klavdiya, Yukhym Rudminsky's wife, is the keeper of his legacy and organizer of his exhibits in Ukrainian cities. There is a web site most comprehensively illustrating his versatile creative attainments, and there is an excellent album.

By Natalia TIMURSHAYEVA