

From Russia with Color

Former Soviet artists draw interest in U.S.

By AUDREY PARENTE
Staff Writer
audrey.parente@news-jrnl.com

ORMOND BEACH — An opportunity to have a Russian experience, through “soul, spirit and intellect,” is the basis of an art show at The Casements Cultural Center Gallery that begins with an opening reception Friday.

The show, which continues through June 9, exhibits paintings from two Russian women artists, Marina Marza and Natasha Zarovnaya, who were successful in the Soviet Union, without applying to their government for approval, before its breakup more than 10 years ago.

After the breakup, their work also became desired by galleries in the United States, Europe and Japan.

The two are exhibiting here because Marza, a Moscow native, also is a part-time Ormond-by-the-Sea resident and the wife of John King, an American doing business in Russia.

King was a resident of New Smyrna Beach at the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union and ventured into business in Russia. He developed Saint Springs, a natural spring water bottling business. Later he purchased a condominium in Ormond-by-the-Sea and spends time in Russia and Italy.

Marza, who continues to use her pen name, said she and Zarovnaya, also of Moscow, demonstrate “two totally different approaches” to painting in styles that are considered nontraditional in Russia.

“I drew as a child and at 15 decided to study art. I went to a studio and then to Art Institute in Moscow,” Marza said. “But when I finished the institute, I felt like I had gone through a machine that tried to change me, so for one year I tried to paint and draw just what came into my mind.”

She described her works as “simple compositions,” some of animals and people, “but not just animals — not just a dog and an old man, but with a soul and a spirit — surreal, and that is where it began.”

Her earlier period used dark colors and later the colors became stronger and lighter, she said.

“I paint, paint, paint, and had no plan. There are two treks (for Russian artists). One artist works for the government. They give you orders and themes for what to paint and they would pay,” she said. “I didn’t do that. I had exhibits in flats and apartments of friends who would invite people.

“In the beginning, I didn’t sell, but after I



Neighbors photos/Audrey Par

Marina Marza shows off one of her paintings that’s scheduled to be displayed at The Casements Cultural Center Gallery in Ormond Beach beginning Friday. The show, which continues through June 9, exhibits paintings from Marza and Natasha Zarovnaya.

outsiders, many gallery representatives from other places came to her informal exhibits at friends’ flats.

“Many galleries from other countries came to Moscow and invited me to show,” she said. She was personally invited to go along with her exhibit to Hamburg and Nuremberg, Germany, and in this country, in Seattle. Her work also went to Japan and England.

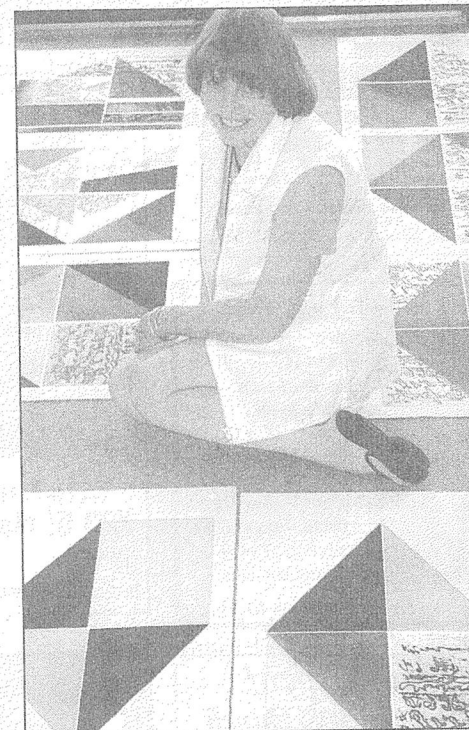
She sold many paintings, and at that point the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg and the Art Museum at Poltava in the Ukraine also bought her work.

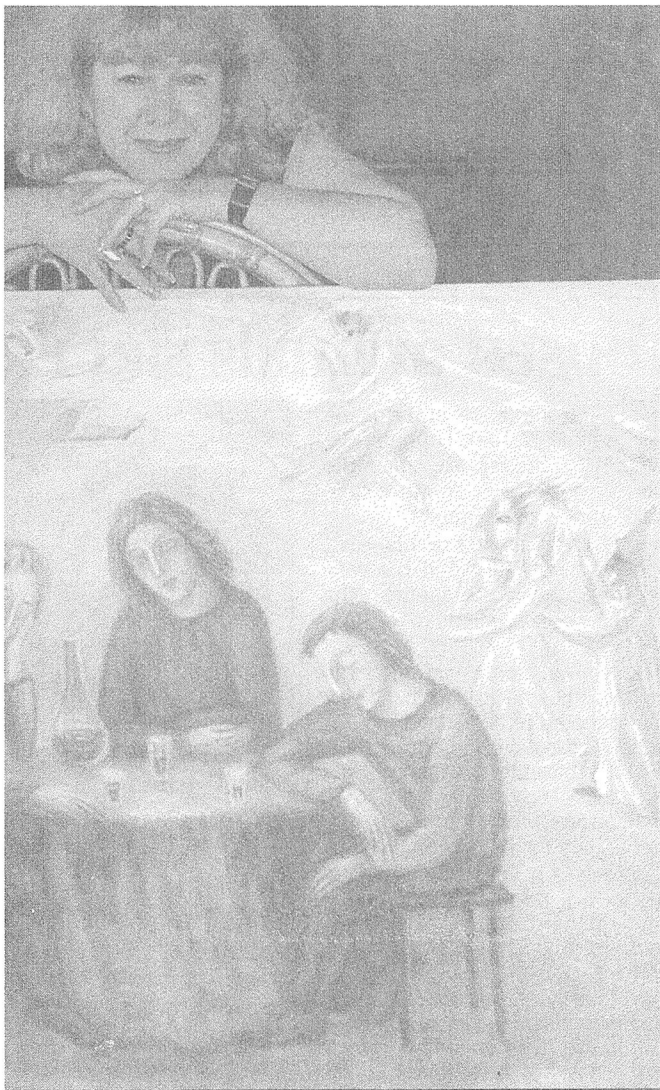
King said he noticed her work has been influenced by her travel.

“I find, in watching her, that as we travel it takes maybe a year or more to find a way into her paintings. Two years after we went to Venice, I saw influences in her work,” King said.

Marza said that while traditional Russian artists paint “churches and the Kremlin” her work is “surreal” and “has much symbolism.”

Russian art critic Vitaly Patsiukov wrote about Marza’s work. Here is a portion of a translation of his review: “The art of Marina Marza is fully at home in the wonder world of carnival and fairy-tale, revealing to us a mysterious, delightful realm that appears as a living organism. . . . In short, an unruly,





Neighbors photos/Audrey Parente

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Natasha Zarovnyaya sits among some of her works recently.

Ormond Memorial Art Museum & Gardens
presents

MOSCOW ON THE HALIFAX

May 18 - June 9, 2001

works by

MARINA MARZA
painting

NATASHA ZAROVNAYA
graphics

exhibiting at

The Casements Cultural Center Gallery

You are cordially invited to an opening reception for the artists, museum members and their guests

Friday, May 18, 6 - 8 p.m.

at The Casements, 25 Riverside Drive



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6N — NEIGHBORS Thursday, May 17, 2001

□ Russia

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Marza said that when she decided to do a show of her work here, she felt bringing Zarovnyaya would present similar themes in a complete opposite style.

Zarovnyaya's compositions are graphics, etchings, lithographs, monotypes and collages.

The Siberian-born artist arrived here recently. In an interview, with Marza translating, Zarovnyaya said she followed a similar trek as Marza, studying art at a government-run Art Institute, with one difference. Since Zarovnyaya's institute was near China, she had one teacher "from the Far East who had no pressure for the official style and was very freestyle."

Zarovnyaya, with her late husband who also was an artist, lived in "the desert near the Caspian Sea" and started an artists' colony near Mos-

cow in 1986. Even before the Soviet breakup, Zarovnyaya's work made its way into Germany, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Finland, Poland, Norway and Italy. After the breakup, she reached the United Kingdom and the United States.

She was invited to Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, as an exchange artist. Her paintings became permanent in the Rutgers collection as well as in collections at the Museum of Modern Art in Bruski, Brazil, Galleri Wosps in Glasgow, Scotland, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, the Museum of Modern Art in Kaliningrad and many others.

Both Marza and Zarovnyaya will be at the opening reception, which is free, at The Casements, 25 Riverside Drive, from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday. The exhibit continues there through June 9.

The exhibit will then move to the DeBary Country Club from June 10 to 25.