

Contemporary Ceramic Art in Russia

Julia Repina

Hello, I'm Julia Repina. I'm a pottery artist from Saint Petersburg. Saint Petersburg is one of the birthplaces of ceramic arts in Russia and a leading production center.



Dmitry Vinogradov, the father of Russian porcelain, lived and worked in Saint Petersburg. Back in the 19th century, the Emperor's porcelain factory in Saint Petersburg created fascinating Empire-style dinner sets.



After the October revolution in 1917, it began to create masterpieces in the so-called "propaganda porcelain" style based on works of Malevich, Chekhonin, Schekotihin-Potoskaya and other notable artists. Agitfarfor's modern ceramics include many best-sellers in various international fine-art auctions.



In the 1970s and 80s, when Saint Petersburg was known as Leningrad, there was a unique association of pottery artists there called "One Composition". Its members included Vasilkovsky, Nekrasova-Karateeva, Zadorin, Savinova, Kopylkov and Tsivin.



Their creations and numerous art exhibits went a long way to influence the next following generations of artists.

Saint Petersburg is home to Russia's leading pottery arts school — The Shtiglits Applied Arts Academy, ceramics and glass arts department. I, for one, am a grateful alumna of the Academy. Studying pottery is not a simple process. Some things can never be taught. An open, creative atmosphere full of excitement, passion and exploration is a must. Of course, great teachers help. I was fortunate to study under Vasilkovsky, Guschin and Oleinik, Olevskaiya among others.

Practice at various local porcelain and pottery factories was crucial. That is where students got a real feel for the material and a chance to try out advanced techniques.

To create you need inspiration, either direct or indirect. I've always been fascinated by primeval art, from Neolithic Venuses, to petroglyphs, to sophisticated cavern frescos, to the energy and vitality of African arts and powerful antique sculptures.

Another influence is Russian folk art. You may not be familiar



with it, but it could surprise you with its depth and originality. Take, for example, ancient Pskov and Novgorod churches—truly conceptual sculptures, rough yet graceful, growing naturally out of their surroundings.

What strikes me in primal art the basic tools they used to pose and answer timeless issues. This dialog between art and eternity is simple and magnificent at the same time.

I would also like to tell you about other artists from Saint Petersburg with whom I studied in the past and with whom I work together on joint exhibits and workshops. They are my good friends.

One of my best friends is Ekaterina Sukhareva, also from Saint Petersburg. Four different generations in her family have been artists of various genres. Her grandfather and grandmother were painters, while her parents were pottery artists as well as painters. Ekaterina does wonderful things with porcelain and stone and is a brilliant graphic artist.

Sergey Sukharev is a graphic arts, pottery, and ceramics professor at the Academy.....

Kirill Kopylkov is a third-generation artist. He's a sculptor, graphic artist and design artist.....

Igor Vasiliev and Marina Gronina are subtle and clever artists.....

Svetlana and Nikolai Karlakhanov are originally from Uzbekistan. They came to Saint Petersburg 10 years ago and set up an arts gallery in an old mansion located just outside of Saint Petersburg. They organize workshops and exhibits and invite sculptors, painters and potters to exhibit their creations.....

Dmitry Ilyinsky.....

Yulia Klopova.....

Every summer these and many other artists participate in a plein-air organized by the Saint Petersburg Ceramics and Glass Museum. It takes place in one of the city's most beautiful areas, the Elagin island.

After graduating from the Applied Arts Academy, I've been working in Saint Petersburg and exhibiting my works from time to time. I take part in local workshops and galleries as well as international festivals. Last year I exhibited my works in Japan.

I find it challenging to comment on my own creations. I enjoy the sculpture part of pottery the most. Simplicity and power of form is what I'm after. I work with stone and fire-clay. Unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to work with porcelain yet but I hope to do that, at some point. Recently I have been using a minimum of color - a bit of engobe and some glaze.



