



Culture and education center opened at Patriarchal Metochion of the Martyrs of Chernigov



On March 24, 2017, after the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts at the church of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist-at-the-Pine-Forest, the opening of a culture and education center 'Chernigov Methochion' took place at the conference hall of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies (CMI). Presented to the public was an exhibition of canvases by Moscow-based artist Nikita Makarov, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Arts. Called 'Contemplative Life', the exhibition presents urban landscapes, mainly in Italy and France, associated with the lives of Russian emigres. Held in the year of the centenary of the 1917 Revolution, it is called to bring viewers closer to the legacy of the Russian diaspora and introduce them to the Russian perception of the European reality.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), CMI rector and the the rector of the Patriarchal Chernigov Metochion. Opening the exhibition together with Metropolitan Hilarion was Ms. N.

Sheredega, head of the Tretyakov Gallery department of Old Russian art.

The ceremony was led by Mr. Miguel Palacio, head of the CMI public relations and protocol department.

Among the attendees were Hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), CMI pro-rector for training; Archpriest Peter Kholodny, Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia; Colombia's ambassador to Russia Alfonso Lopez Caballero; Mr. O. Ozerov, former Russian ambassador to Saudi Arabia; Mr. Jose Gregorio Escalona, minister-counsellor of Venezuela embassy in Russia; Mr. Irek Suleimanov, deputy head of the culture department of Germany's embassy in Russia; Mr. N. Makarov, director of the Russian Academy of Sciences institute of archeology; Ms. F. Zakharova, director of the Linia Zhizni foundation; Mr. Ye. Mikhilchenko, deputy director of the Russian Socio-Political Center; Mr. A. Lubkov, rector of the Moscow Pedagogical State University; Ms. M. Rusetskaya, rector of the Pushkin State Institute of the Russian Language; A. Nikepelov, pro-rector of the Russian State Social University; Ms. Ye. Kibivskaya commissioner of the VI Moscow International Biennale of Young Art; and other ecclesial and secular officials, cultural dignitaries, art collectors, businessmen and journalists.

In his address to the assembly, Metropolitan Hilarion said:

'We are in a historically significant place. The church, in which the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts was celebrated today, is dedicated to John the Baptist and prayers were said here for over six centuries. To this place the relics of the Holy Prince Michael of Chernigov and his boyar Theodore, who martyred in the Golden Horde and glorified as martyrs, were brought in. In this connection, opposite one church, that of John the Baptist, another church was built, dedicated to Michael and Theodore of Chernigov. Thus this compound was named the Chernigov Metochion.

In the Soviet time, there was abomination of desolation here. The building you see now was in disrepair. There was no electric power or heat in it, and the windows were broken. In addition, the second floor was unlawfully occupied by a dubious organization. In a word, much work had to be done to put the compound in a decent order and restore the churches. In this effort, we were helped by benefactors and the Moscow Government.

Today, studying here at students of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute, a higher education institution of the Russian Orthodox Church, which offers unique programs to graduates of theological seminaries, academies and universities, both Orthodox and secular. The assembly hall, in which we are now, has been adjusted to accommodate the exhibition of canvases by Nikita Makarov, who is present here. These paintings are devoted to various places in Western Europe associated with the life of the Russian diaspora.

I would like to greet the artist and all the guests and say that the Chernigov Metochion culture and education center will do all that is possible for it to help hold exhibitions and other cultural events. We already have an experience of organizing concerts, including outdoor ones. Last summer, renowned singer Alexander Sklyar recited Vertinsky's songs here. I believe we will continue holding events of such kind'.

Nikita Makarov expressed his gratitude, saying, 'I am delighted to feel to an extent a participant in this marvelous event and I would like to thank personally His Eminence and the excellent team of the Chernigov Metochion, which has so kindly helped to organize this festivity'.

Then the floor was given to Ms. N. Sheredega who greeted the assembly on behalf of the Tretyakov Gallery director Ms. Z. Tregulova and pointed to the fruitful cooperation between the CMI and 'Tretyakovka'. She drew the attendees' attention to the unusual format of the opening day as it was preceded by the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts: 'It obliges us all to become more serious and thoughtful'. She mentioned the 'striking' choice of the paintings which make you feel the classical tradition allowing us to see the world that emigres and their descendants saw with their own eyes – a harmonious and perfect world, one for us all, a world in which 'every breath praises the Lord'. 'For our museum it is a sacred space that unites the Tretyakov Gallery, its paintings and shrines, with the place that has been commanded by God Himself to bring the spiritual principle into our culture', she concluded.

The solemn part of the ceremony was concluded with a performance by the Yuri Rozum Foundation grant winners, students of the Central Music School under the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatoire Maria Urybina (flute) and Ravil Islyanov (violin).

In continuation of the event, guests had an opportunity to see the exhibition and talk to Nikita Makarov.

CMI Press Service

DECR Communication Service