

# Introducing the Bulgarian Realists

- how to get to know the Bulgarians  
through their paintings

*Ronald G Young*



Nenko Balkanski (1907-1977)



Nikola Tanev (1890-1962)



# CONTENTS

page

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	2
<b>1. Personal introduction.</b>	3
<b>2. Purpose of the booklet.</b>	4
<b>3. What's in a name – classifying paintings.</b>	5
<b>4. What do we need to know about a painter?</b>	5
<b>5. Getting to see the richness of Bulgarian art.</b>	7
<b>6. Getting paintings home.</b>	8
<b>7. Further References.</b>	9
<b>8. 140 of the best!</b>	10
An annotated list.	

## Annex

<b>Annex 1;</b> Some notes on the municipal Galleries.	45
<b>Annex 2;</b> Private galleries in Sofia which concentrate on “realistic” Bulgarian painters of the mid-20 <sup>th</sup> Century.	53
<b>Annex 3;</b> Contemporary Galleries – two of the best!	55
<b>About the author</b>	56

## Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to produce this booklet without the support and encouragement of **Yassen Gollev** of Konus Gallery – also painter and lecturer. It was he who suggested the initial names of painters I should know something about and who would produce, from time to time, works for me to consider. Latterly, he supplied me with the details of some of the painters of whom I was despairing of getting any more information than their date of birth!

**Evelina Handjieva**, the Director of the Dobrich city gallery, was also very helpful in the provision of information.

To **Yovo Yovchev** is due particular thanks for being the person who really introduced me to Bulgarian painting in 2008; who sold me my first Bulgarian painting; and subsequently helped me in my searches.

Last but certainly not least I have to thank **Vihra Pesheva** – for her introductions to the canvasses of the younger generation and for her immensely helpful assistance in the final stages of the production of this booklet.

The website and auction catalogues of **Victoria Gallery and auction house** have played an important role in my education about Bulgarian realists. The website contains a great archive of photographs as well as brief information about some of the painters.

The photographs in this book and on the CD Rom have four basic sources – the Victoria Gallery; municipal galleries; my own shots of paintings; and the internet (eg ArtPriceBG). Details of these websites are given in relevant sections of the booklet and I gratefully acknowledge their use.

The publications of some of the municipal galleries have also been useful in filling out the information on painters given in the table. I found particularly useful Sofia City Gallery's 700 page **Catalogue of Painting** (2003); **Die Bulgarischen Kuenstler und Muenchen** (2008); and its **Association of New Artists 1931-1944** (2011). The Stara Zagora City Gallery's **Artists of Stara Zagora** (2007) was also helpful in that respect.

Inevitably, some errors will have occurred in the dates given for key events in painters' lives – for which I have to assume complete responsibility. In some cases, dates are disputed and, in these cases, I have made a personal judgement.

# 1. Personal Introduction

"Very recently a prominent Bulgarian assured me that water colors by the leading Bulgarian artists are second to none in Europe and when I showed some reluctance in accepting so sweeping a judgment, my interlocutor "guaranteed" me that his statement was perfectly accurate and offered to prove it by comparing the best Bulgarian paintings one by one with the best of the contemporary European masters. Being unacquainted with the European masters I accepted the guarantee on faith, though even yet I am a bit doubtful.

Nevertheless, I was very much impressed by the fact that a lawyer, who had given much of his life to politics and was at that moment engaged in trying to improve Bulgarian agriculture, should be so much interested in art".

**RH Markham (Meet Bulgaria 1931)**

Plus ça change... It was only in 2007/08 when I was living and working in Bulgaria for the first time that I stumbled on the landscapes and seascapes painted by the Bulgarian painters who were working in the early and middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I had the same reaction as Markham all of 80 years earlier (although it is only recently that I came across his comments). I thought the paintings beautiful – and affordable – and have found myself an art collector! Of not only 100 works of the older school in my collection but of various young contemporaries I also admire.

And it wasn't just a question of quality. It was also the sheer number of painters - dead and alive.

I had the sense that, pro rata, Bulgarians had more painters, cartoonists and sculptors than other countries.

And yet Bulgarian painters generally (let alone of this particular period) are not well known abroad. Hardly surprising when no book exists (or seems ever to have been published) about Bulgarian painting in the English language<sup>1</sup>.

I hope this booklet will help change that. Its aim is to introduce "modern realist"<sup>2</sup> Bulgarian painting to visitors and to encourage them to spend time (and perhaps some money) browsing the galleries here. You will be received in a very friendly way – all the more so if you show that you know something about the Bulgarian painters. It is written by a complete amateur – someone with absolutely no art training or skills but who, for the past few decades, has always put a visit to the municipal art gallery at the top of his list when visiting the various cities of Europe (and central Asia) – for example.

- Berlin in the early 1960s (to discover the pre-war works of Grosz and Kollwitz and 19<sup>th</sup> century realists such as Adolf Menzel)
- Brussels in the mid 1980s (to be moved by the 16<sup>th</sup> century Flemish art –and late 19<sup>th</sup> century realists)
- Istanbul in the late 1980s (and the delight of their miniaturists and calligraphists)
- The stunning Hermitage in Leningrad in January 1991 (the Russian Itinerants); and
- Tashkent in the early 2000s (for the Asian side of Soviet art)

---

<sup>1</sup>a book on "contemporary bulgarian painting" was apparently published in English in 1996 but is out of print. The incredible Posada art bookshop in Brussels has Europe's largest collection of art books and, in 2010, I could find (and buy) there only a 1947 edition of *Art Moderne Bulgare* (French) published by the (then) new Ministry of Culture.

<sup>2</sup>I would define this as those painting from the 1920s to the present which portray landscapes and people in realist form.

Only as I write this do I realise that most of these paintings are figurative whereas what I initially fell in love with here in Bulgaria are the paintings of their land - and sea- scape artists. Perhaps that it nostalgia for my home country, Scotland, which I left 20 years ago – and the glorious landscapes painted in Victorian times by people like John Knox and William MacTaggart and, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Glasgow Boys and Colourists.

I have lived in Sofia off and on since summer 2007; have a mountain house in the Romanian Carpathians; and blog regularly<sup>3</sup> – not least about Bulgarian paintings.

I do therefore have some terms of comparison – which strengthen my conviction that Bulgaria has something very special to offer the visitor.

## 2. Purpose of the booklet

This does not pretend to be a comprehensive guide to the painters who have been active in Bulgaria in the past 100 years. There are so many painters that that would be a difficult task even for a Bulgarian! My apologies, therefore, for any omissions. The purpose of the booklet is rather.

- To give a sense of what “realist” (as distinct from abstract) Bulgarian painters of this period offer
- To encourage visitors to Bulgaria to visit both the private and municipal art galleries – where, as a foreigner, you are generally received as a VIP
- To inspire you to make your own discoveries and purchases

The list of painters therefore goes far beyond that of the well known painters – Zlatyu Boiadjiev; Vadimir Dmitrova (Maistora); Nikola Petrov; Benko Obreshekov; Nikola Tanev; and Mario Zhekov, for example, whose names you should certainly have memorised if you wish to impress the dealers. You will not be able to afford their prices - but mentioning them will certainly establish your credibility! My selection criteria are beauty and “affordability” – and the list includes therefore artists who would not necessarily be rated by art critics.

Bulgarian art, as Markham recognised in 1931, is a comparatively new creation — almost as new as the state itself (1878). *“To be sure, there were ikon paintings of a rather high order a hundred years ago. Likewise, a number of first rate artists appeared even before the liberation, at the same time that the awakening nation was beginning to print books and papers, to give theatrical performances and to insist on having mass sung in their own language. Yet practically all the art productions worth mentioning have been created since the nation won its freedom”*. Perhaps this is one of the things which accounts for the freshness of its paintings in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

---

<sup>3</sup> In a blog called *Balkan and Carpathian Musings* – [www.nomadron.blogspot.com](http://www.nomadron.blogspot.com)

### 3. What's in a name?

I realise it is difficult to classify painters – many are versatile; or change their style over time; and I don't want to use terms which baffle (eg post-impressionist). This is a book about the painting style I like – and the word for that seems to be “realism” – the style which tries to portray a likeness rather than an abstraction (and that includes caricaturists and impressionists). It includes -

- Urban and rural landscape
- Seascape
- Figurative (includes portraits)
- Graphic
- Still life

And the allocations are mine – often on the basis of a small number of viewings! And one of the pleasant surprises for me here in Bulgaria is that quite a number of young contemporaries are still painting in this style – when so many in the West have moved on to hideous modernist doodling! I have, accordingly, included a few contemporaries in the list – again solely on the basis of my limited knowledge! The spelling of artists' names has, I must confess, been a problem – since I am converting from the Cyrillic alphabet and, again, there is no agreement on the equivalent English spelling. You will, therefore, find different spelling of the same name even within this book.

### 4. Surely paintings speak for themselves?

Paintings speak in different ways to each of us – although that doesn't stop art critics and historians from imposing a lot of words and noise on us.

I don't know about you – but, whenever I see a painting which I like, I always want to know something about the painter. Where did (s)he grow up? Where were they trained? What were the defining inspirations and influences?

And Bulgaria is particularly interesting for the art lover since it was under Communist rule for 45 years – and the artist played an important (but difficult) role in communist regimes. Bulgaria had a fair number of leftist political caricaturists in the first half of the century – who might have been expected to welcome the advent of a more progressive regime. Some flourished – others suffered. One, Rayko Aleksiev, was imprisoned and quickly died under suspicious circumstances in the immediate aftermath of the communist takeover. Painters who did not toe the official line had simple choices – migration (geographical or professional); banishment or compromise. Many painters chose to go into theatre design or cinema. Some, like Nikolai Boiadjiev, Boris Denev, Ivan Nenov and Kiril Tsonev found themselves banned from painting – let alone exhibiting. Those who have not experienced totalitarian regimes should be very careful about passing judgements on how individuals in the past have coped with such existential choices.

Maria Vassileva – Chief Curator of the wonderful Sofia City Gallery – gives an excellent introduction to Bulgarian painting on the Gallery's website<sup>4</sup>. This, in my view, is best read after you have seen a few of the paintings - but these excerpts will give you a sense of her contribution.

*The earliest post-Liberation artists (Ivan Murkvichka, Anton Mitov, Jaroslav Vešin, and Ivan Anghelov) bear testimony to the changes in Bulgarian painting that were setting in during this period. The individual human being was no longer at the centre of the artist's quests. These were directed towards the depiction of the real world with all its variety and tangible concreteness. The people's way of life was considered a sign of fidelity to the national cause suited to keep up the spirits of the people... The landscape plays nearly as important a part as the human figures. These canvases belong to the earliest attempts at plein air painting. The artist is fascinated by the effects of sunlight, the transparency of the air, the play of shadows cast by the trees. While the figures are depicted with meticulous accuracy, the landscape setting is distinguished by a certain ethereal quality, sketchiness of treatment and luminosity. The same is true of Ivan Murkvichka's Going to Market, one of his classical genre paintings, in which the artist's attention is focused on the subject-matter and the costume of the central character, but no less on the winter landscape, which envelops the scene and occupies the greater part of the canvas...*

*Besides genre painting, portraiture continued to evolve as a favoured art form. Both Murkvichka and Mitov have painted portraits; Mitov's Self-portrait is a widely known work...*

*The earliest serious attempts to break away from the old academic line in painting date from the early twentieth century. The founding of the Savremenko Izkoustvo (Contemporary Art) Society in 1903-4 was an expression precisely of these trends characterized by the interest not only in subject-matter but also in plastic values and by the desire to apply certain of the lessons of West-European painting. Nikola Mihailov, Tseno Todorov, Stefan Ivanov, Nikola Petrov, Elena Karamihailova rank among the notable artists of this period.*

*Most of the younger Bulgarian landscape painters were pupils of Jaroslav Vešin and developed further his achievements. The most significant development during this period was the definite breaking away from academism and the increasingly strong and fruitful influence of Impressionism, which affected most Bulgarian artists to a higher or lesser degree - Nikola Petrov, Yordan Kyuvliev, Nikola Tanev, Assen Belkovski, Konstantin Shturkelov, Alexander Moutafov, Atanas Mihov, Christo Berberov, Marin Georgiev-Oustagenov, Vladimir Dimitrov-Chiraka, Peter Morozov.*

*Elissaveta Konsoulouva-Vazova and Elena Karamihailova have created a gallery of intimate and psychologically penetrating portraits. Having both received their academic training abroad, these two women artists had not only a rich artistic career, but also exerted a considerable impact on the development of painting during the first half of the century. Their works evidence the mixed influences of German Romanticism and German Impressionism.*

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://sghg.bg/newsite/index.php?module=pages&lg=en&page=collection>



In the list of about 140 painters who have come to my notice I have created I try to say something about –

- Date and place of birth – and year of death
- Where they trained – sometimes under which artists
- Genre
- Main places of work – and influences (such as close artist friends and/or membership of Associations of artists)
- Price range

This information I have obtained from various places – eg from the English sections of the books mentioned on the acknowledgements page; or from the first set of interesting information thrown up on internet pages (usually translated with an automatic translator). Inevitably, therefore, some entries are rather fuller than others. I have tried to restrict the information to facts and do not intend making judgements but, occasionally, I could not contain my personal enthusiasms about a particular artist.

## **5. Getting to see the richness of Bulgarian art**

### **5.1 Sofia**

The National Gallery is worth a visit – although its exhibited collection is not very large and it never seems to circulate the paintings. As I write, it has been closed for some months (for refurbishment) and it will be interesting to see whether new stuff is displayed from its archives. The 10 leva it charges seems to me excessive. The City Art Gallery, on the other hand, is very imaginatively run – and is free!

One of the many delights of Sofia is the profusion of its small, friendly galleries in the centre – the majority displaying modern art but a handful concentrating on the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century artists who are the focus of this booklet. If you are serious in your search for particular artists, most of the owners will be able, in a day or so, to let you have a look at some which are on the market. The Annexes gives all the detail...

### **5.2 The regional municipal galleries**

Bulgaria has an excellent network of municipal art galleries, details of which are given in the Annex. All operate under tight budget conditions – which means that few can even afford heating in the winter. But, as a foreigner, you will receive a very warm reception in the regional galleries – each of which has its own local painting heroes.

### **5.3 Sofia City Gallery – a case study**

The special exhibitions of Sofia City Art Gallery play an important role in Bulgaria in bringing together the paintings of people like Dobri Dobrev, Nikolai Boiadjev (to mention 2 recent events) from the various municipal and private museums in the country. But the Sofia gallery has a large collection of Bulgarian art (3,500 pieces)

and how therefore to ensure that they see the light of day?

In 2010, the Gallery curator Dr. Maria Vassileva started a series ("The other Eye") to overcome the problem – which consists of inviting outsiders to comb the dungeons of the gallery where the collections are stored, strip off the protective covering and select some paintings.

I just missed the first two exhibitions of such works – selected by an artist Luchezar Boyadjiev and a philosopher Boyan Manchev. The small booklet which accompanied the second exhibition tells of Boyadjiev expecting to find a large section of the gallery collection covering major events – whether historical or personal. Instead *"the representation of various aspects of people's private world obviously prevails, there being, conditionally speaking, an "idyllic" thread running through the works, which unifies all those aspects through the representation of elements of everyday living, which are not directly related to either big moments in history and monumental events, or to essential existential and metaphysical issues such as life, death, birth, violence, suffering, etc."*

The third exhibition was of artefacts selected by 43 prominent Bulgarian art and cultural historians belonging to different generations and fields of work (lecturers, researchers, museum curators, directors of art galleries, museums and nongovernmental organizations, art critics, curators and freelance researchers.

## 6. Getting paintings Home

Most visitors to Bulgaria come (and leave) by plane. And this would seem to create some problems for visitors buying paintings. A large, framed painting is not exactly the easiest thing to squeeze into an already fairly full suitcase. And how will those handling the screening devices at the airport treat such an object? Will they assume you are making off with a local treasure? And what exactly are the rules of national patrimony?

Let's deal with the last issue first. It's fairly straightforward – someone (often the dealer) simply takes the object to an office in the centre of Sofia where, in a few minutes, they note its nature and size and issue a certificate which authorises the object's export. Of course they won't do that if it is considered part of national patrimony – but only very old objects (eg icons) are covered by that rule. Certainly not paintings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Just be aware that the certificates are issued (for 3 levs) only on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

As far as the physical size is concerned, there are two options. First the dealer can arrange for your purchase to be mailed to you. Or it is a simple matter to strip the canvass from its frame and pack (or roll) the canvass only. You can frame it again back home. And there are some places in Sofia where you can find interesting paintings which are not yet framed. Often the painter is unknown (or the painting unsigned) and for these reasons, you can get it for a good price. About twenty paintings in my collection fall into this category – and their purchase and study gives me particular satisfaction.

## 7. Further References

This section is for those whose appetite has been whetted by this booklet – and tries to summarise the material which is available if you look hard enough!

### *Printed Format*

In 2008 I found (in a Gallery) a nice little booklet which listed all antique dealers and gallerists in the whole of Bulgaria (containing about 30 coloured reproductions of paintings of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century) but later editions are no longer available.

My inquiries at the large second-hand bookshop in the underground passage in front of Sofia University threw up only a large 1982 book purporting to be about modern Bulgarian painting – which, however, had no Mario Zhekovs and only 2 Nikola Tanevs. A revealing historical insight into socialist selectivity! But not, for me, worth the 100 euros they were asking. In the city's various antique shops, it is generally possible to find catalogues of individual painters – thus I acquired one on one of Bulgaria's classic artists – Nikolai Boiadjiev.

Neither the bookshop next door nor the cubicle on the left as you enter the Union of Bulgarian Artists could offer me a general book on the period. The Union Arts shop had nice booklets on specific artists I didn't then know about – such as Marko Monev, Slavka Deneva and Kiril Tsonev.

The *Sofia City Gallery* has a few residual copies of a marvellous large book which is a black and white catalogue of all the Bulgarian paintings in their possession. The City Galleries of Dobrich and Kyustendil also have such a Catalogue. The Sofia gallery also occasionally prints booklets on their temporary exhibitions – a recent wonderful example being a large book about the painters who were active in the Association of New Artists in the 1930s.

The Stara Zagora gallery has a beautiful book with reproductions from the famous painters who came from that city.

One dealer was able to give me copies of three excellent booklets which were produced (in 1985!) by *Samokov Gallery* (alas no more) on Vasil Sachariev, Georg Velstoiniev and Xristo Kriskaretz. The only place I know where you might be able to pick up the odd copy of these sorts of catalogues is Alexander Aleksiev's tiny antique shop at 38 Tsar Assen St.

### *Internet*

Two auction websites have excellent archives of paintings. These are ArtPrice. BG<sup>5</sup> and the Victoria gallery<sup>6</sup> in Sofia. But be aware that the Bulgarian habit is to list by first name – not family name! And, although they give useful information on price, there is little information about the artists themselves.

The website of **Sofia City Art Gallery**<sup>7</sup> has an excellent overview of Bulgarian painting – which I have already mentioned. It also stores information on each special exhibition it has held since 2001 – and this proved an excellent source of detailed information on a few artists. The marvellous (private) Phillipopolis Gallery in old.

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.artprice.bg/autors\\_list.php](http://www.artprice.bg/autors_list.php)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gallery-victoria.com/catalog.asp>

<sup>7</sup> <http://sghg.bg/newsite/index.php?module=exhibitions&lg=en&show=past>

Plovdiv also has a website with a small archive of painting<sup>8</sup>. Those interested in contemporary painters can find websites<sup>9</sup>. There is also a curious website with a lot of entries I have never heard of<sup>10</sup>. Apart from the intro on the Sofia City art gallery, I have been able so far to find only a couple of articles in English about Bulgarian painting – a rather academic piece about developments at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup><sup>11</sup>. The other piece is a charming chapter of Markham's 1931 book which can be found on the internet<sup>12</sup>.

### *CD Roms*

An obvious format for those with restricted budgets. But they are often old - and some galleries cannot afford even that.

## **140 of the best – gaining the dealers' attention!**

It has taken me a year to accumulate this list of the painters whom I find interesting – and to acquire some basic information about them. And every week I discover new artists of this period. For example, the last day before I sent this for final design, I stumbled on 2 new painters! Getting some useful background on painters is not an easy task for a non-Bulgarian speaker. In some cases therefore the data in the table is little more than their date of birth and death.

The CD which is attached contains images of almost 1,000 paintings – and the booklet itself contains about 50 examples of various artists. I may not be able to vouch for their precise authenticity but they all seem to me to be good examples of the particular artist's style. I am told that I should be careful – since there are some forgeries around. My response is that that clearly matters when you are spending several thousand euros – but if your limit is (like mine) about 800 euros per painting and if a painting speak to my soul, then the possibility that it may be by an old master is a bonus!

Where possible, I have given an indication of the price one might be expected to pay. Prices are as at spring 2012 and based on an average canvass size (25x35).

Note on terminology; In 1896 the "State Drawing School" was opened in Sofia. In 1908 it is renamed "The State Industrial School of the Fine Arts" which changed, in 1921, to "The State Academy of Fine Arts". In 1954 it changed again to – "The Higher Institute of Fine Arts „Ikolay Pavlovitch“. In 1996 it was declared by government decree as "The National Academy of Fine Arts". Following the Scottish tradition I have often shortened the name to Sofia School of Art.

---

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.philippopolis.com/painting\\_en.html](http://www.philippopolis.com/painting_en.html)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.modernbulgarianartists.com>

<sup>10</sup> <http://art.domino.bg/artists.php?lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> [http://eprints.nbu.bg/376/1/Irina\\_Genova - Images of Modernity.pdf](http://eprints.nbu.bg/376/1/Irina_Genova_-_Images_of_Modernity.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.kroraia.com/knigi/en/rm/index.html>



Abadjiev Petko



Alekov Napoleon



Alexandrov Zhdravko



Balkanski Nenko



Barakov Vasil



Beshkov Ilyia



Boiadjiev Petar



Boiadjiev Zlatyu



Bozhinov Alexander



Chokanov Denjo



Christov Ivan



Denev Boris





Detchev Danail



Dimitrov Vladimir-Maistora



Dobrev Dobri



Dobrinov Alexander



Genev Slavi



Geshev Jordan



Lavrenov Tsanko



Mateev Kiril



Mechkuevska Alexandra



Mihov Atanas



Mikrenski Konstantin



Milev Ivan





Murkvichka Ivan



Mutafov Alexander



Nenov Ivan



Penkov Ivan



Peretz David



Petrov Ilia



Radoikov Dmitir



Rilski Vladimir



Rubev Georgi



Shishkova Olga



Shturkelov Konstantin



Staikov Anastas



Staikov Vesselin



Stamatov Stanyio



Stefchev Boris



Tabakov Ivan



Tanev Nikola



Titrinov Strahil





Trichkov Ivan



Tringov Konstantin



Tsonev Kiril



Vulev Vassil



Vassilev Stoian



Zhekov Mario

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
<u>Abadjiev, Petko</u>	1913 - 2004	Landscapes	Born in Karlovo. Colleague of Nikola Taney'and not surprisingly therefore a great colourist. He paints scenes fom Karlovo, Plovdiv and Black Sea. A nice painting of his went unsold at a recent Victoria auction – reserve price 325 euros.
Alsheh, Eliezer	1908 - 1983	Landscape, portrait	Born Vidin. Graduated 1933 from the Sofia School of Art. His first exhibition in Sofia in 1934 caused some outrage for its “pictorial boldness” – but he was supported by other artists such as Kiril Tsonev. Worked for some time as a house-painter in Palestine but came back to a second, much more successful exhibition in Sofia – the proceeds of which allowed him to spend 3 months in Paris. Spent only 10 years in BG – some in concentration camp. The new communist regime was hostile to his work and he emigrated in 1951 to Argentina.
Alekov, Napoleon	1912 - 2002	Seascapes	Born Tulca, Romania. from 400 euros
Alexandrov, Zdravko	1911 - 1999	Landscape	Born Montana. Master of rural and industrial landscapes.  recent large painting 50x70 went unsold at reduced price of 1,300 euros
Angeloushev, Boris	1902 - 1966	Graphic	Born and grew up in Plovdiv; trained in Berlin Art Academy in the early 1920s and was clearly influenced by the revolutionary events taking place then and by the powerful graphics of Kathe Kollwitz. Returned to Bulgaria in 1935.  possible to get sketch for 200 euros
<u>Balkanski, Nenko</u>	1907 - 1977	Figurative	Born Kazanluk. graduated from Sofia Art School in 1930. He then went to study in Germany, France and later Italy. He seems to have been a modest man and his portrayals of family life were well regarded by the authorities who used his work on stamps. A large still life of his is priced at 3,000 euros in a recent auction.
Balkanski, Pencho	1908 - 1985	Photographer and landscape painter	Born Lovets, Troyan area. In 1923 comes to Sofia School of Art and the works in photographic studio of his brother. In 1930 opened his first photo exhibition of portraits of Tzvetana Tabakova. In 1936 he had photographic exhibitions in Vienna. His friends included David Perez, George Papazov, Vasil Ivanov, Nayden Petkov, Georgi Velchev, Daniel Dechev. In 1958, his work was declared unacceptable and he left for Vienna and Paris. In 1978, seventy-year old anniversary makes a retrospective exhibition featuring works from the last three decades.

expect to pay almost 1,000 euros

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Barakov, Vasil	1902 - 1991	Landscape	<p>Born Kazanluk – and graduated after an apparently turbulent time from the State Academy of Arts in 1937. One of first to paint industrial landscapes. Part of a group consisting of David Peretz, himself and N Boaidjiev known as BARATZI. Exhibited widely in Athens, Belgrade, Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest, Vienna and Moscow. An uncompromising artist, he suffered poverty – but did enjoy some honours in 1963 and 1976. His paintings are generally sombre. 70x60 sold for 2,000 euros in 2011</p>
Behar, Marko	1914 - 1973	Graphic, satire	<p>Born in village in Yambol, schooled Burgas where his family moved in 1927. No early art education, he worked initially in the retail trade in Sofia in 1935 and had a first exhibition in 1940 by which time he was active in the communist movement. He spent 1941/42 and 1943/44 in a Jewish Labour camp. 46-49 he worked for the (Starshel) Hornet magazine. It was the 1950s before he was able to start an art education (in Leningrad) and returned to Bulgaria in 1957 to become Deputy-Editor of Starshel 1958-63 he was an instructor in the problems of art at the Central Committee of the Communist Party.</p>
Beshkov, Ilia	1901 - 1958	Graphics, cartoons	<p>Born in a small town near Pleven. In 1918–1920, he studied at the Faculty of Law of Sofia University and briefly returned home as a teacher. In 1921, he enrolled in painting at the Sofia School of Art and graduated in 1926. As a student, Beshkov published caricatures in the Maskarad, Div Dyado, Balgaran, Starshel and Vik magazines and illustrated the issues of the T. F. Chipev and Hemus printing houses. From 1925 on, he co-operated with the Pladne magazine among others. He was twice arrested due to his leftist political views: once after participating in the June uprising following the Bulgarian coup d'état of 1932 <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgarian_coup_d%27%C3%A0tat_of_1923">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgarian_coup_d%27%C3%A0tat_of_1923</a> and then during 1925 in the wake of the St Nedelya Church assault <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Nedelya_Church_assault">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Nedelya_Church_assault</a> In 1930, Beshkov became a member of the Narodno Izkustvo movement. He was from the founders of the famous newspaper Sturshel (Hornet) in 1940, and published in it without signature or pseudonym. One of his best known comic characters was 'Spekulanta Maks'. In 1945, he became a lecturer of drawing, illustration and print design at the National Academy of Fine Art; he was elected a tenured professor in 1953 and led the Department of Graphics until his death in 1958 in Sofia. Beshkov's political caricatures were noted for their sarcasm and deep connotations. His works were humanist, democratic, revolutionary and national in nature. The Pleven art gallery is named in his honour and most of his works are exhibited there. Sketches not difficult to find for 200 euros.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Belkovsky, Assen	1879 - 1957	Landscape, portraits	Born Assenovgrad, he studied at the state drawing school from 1896-99 after which he spent 4 years at Kazan art academy (Russia) – followed by a year at St Petersburg art academy. Then some teaching at Munich and a visit to Paris. He returned to Bulgaria in 1907 – and engaged in restoration work and art criticism.
Boyadjiev, Nikolay	1904 - 1963	Figurative, landscape	<p>Born in Svishtov where he quickly developed an aptitude for drawing. Graduated from the State High School in Commerce there and was sent by the family to continue his economic studies in Sofia. He decided, however, at short notice to try for enrolment at Sofia Art School and emerged in 1925 in the top few of those qualifying - despite his lack of preparation. He studied in Boris Mitov's studio and graduated in 1930.</p> <p>From 1932, he was an art teacher in Shumen High School and attracted increasing fame. In 1942 an article compared his colouring with that of Rubens and spoke of his “great style, acute sense of tone, clarity of technique and pronounced individuality” In 1951 he became a teacher at the Sofia Art School. Expelled in 1958 from Union of Bulgarian artists for his refusal to work on prescribed themes, he increasingly focussed on drawing.</p> <p>Superb charcoal and pencil portrait work – an underrated artist, his work s are not easy to find.</p>
Boaidjiev, Petar	1907 - 1963	Sea and landscape	A superb and underrated artist.
Boiadjiev, Tsenko	1902 - 1972	Portraits, landscapes	Born Totleben village, Pleven.
Boyadjiev, Zlatyu	1903 - 1976	Folk art	<p>Born Brezovo, Plovdiv Region. Known sometimes as the Bulgarian Breughel. In 1951 serious illness forced him to change from right to left hand.</p> <p>65x50 fetched 15,000 euros in March 2011</p>
Bozhinov, Alexander	1878 - 1968	Cartoonist	<p>Born Svishtov, educated Russe, he laid the basis for Bulgaria's strong tradition of caricaturists. He studied drawing at the newly opened state school from 1896-1899 and went in 1901 to Munich where he stayed frequently during the next 20 years, being influenced by the Simplicissimus magazine there. He edited from 1904-09 Sofia's satirical magazine "Bulgaren".</p> <p>Paintings not easy to find – although one sold recently for 750 euros.</p>
Bunardjiev, Petar	1921 - 1995	Landscape	<p>Great colourist.</p> <p>500 euros</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
<u>Chokanov, Denjo</u>	1901 - 1982	Landscapes	Born Veliko Tarnovo. Graduated 1926 from Sofia Art School – from class of Prof Gyundiev. Nephew of Boris Denev. A great colourist. 700 euros 40x50
Christov, Ivan	1900 - 1987	Landscapes	Graduated in painting from the Art Academy in Sofia in 1925. In 1926 he studied painting at the Munich Art Academy. He was member of the Rodno Izkoustvo Society (Native Art). The painter created panoramic landscapes from Tarnovo, Plovdiv, Melnik and Sozopol. He was Gold medal winner at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. His works were presented at solo exhibitions in Bulgaria, Europe and India. 600 euros
<u>Dankov, Boris</u>	1906 - 1997	Portraits, landscapes, still life	Born Kazachevo village, Lovech 1920 - his family moved in Lovech. In 1931 he entered the Art Academy in Sofia . Graduated Painting with Prof. Nikola Marinov, 1933 - 1946 he was an art teacher in Lovech, 1946 - 1949 - a teacher of drawing in Sofia; 1949 -1950 - Chief Inspector of drawing in the Ministry of Education, 1951 - 1970 - professor, associate professor, professor of “painting” at the Art Academy in Sofia. 1960 - 1964 and 1966 - 1970 - Vice Rector of the Academy of Arts. Good landscapes for reasonable prices.
Dechev, Danail	1891 - 1962	Landscape	Born Razgrad. Self-taught painter. Graduated from the industrial textile school of Sliven. Perhaps because of this he managed to extend the concept of “Landscape” in Bulgarian art. From 1919 to 1939 lived in Plovdiv, and after 1939, in Sofia going around the country, painting. Opens his first individual exhibition in Sofia in 1933. January 1, 1962. struck down by paralysis.
Denev, Boris	1889 - 1969	Landscape	Born Veliko Tarnovo; In 1903-1908 he was teacher in drawing in Tarnovo. His first solo exhibition as amateur artist held in Sofia in 1909. From 1909 to 1913 he studied in Munich. As official war artist he created battle oil paintings, many sketches and drawings depicting soldiers' everyday life. His preferences were in the fields of landscape and portrait. He was inspired by the beauty of Melnik, Samokov, Plovdiv and Sofia region. Stripped of his membership of the Union of Bulgarian Artists for a decade until being readmitted in 1956. During this period, he was forbidden from painting in the open air- and had to resort to painting the back of his house!  1,000 euros



Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Deneva, Slavka	1929 - 1984	Figurative, still life etc.	Daughter of Boris Denev, a highly original artist who "never favoured splendid nature but consciously sought the banal". Her paintings vibrate with colour and life. They rarely come on the market.
Dimitrov, Vladimir (The Master)	1882 - 1960	Romantic folk	Born Frolosh (Kyustendil) and started his career as a clerk. In 1903 he enrolled in the School of Drawing in Sofia where he had been called <b>the Master</b> ( <i>Maistora</i> ) for the first time. He is considered one of the most talented 20 <sup>th</sup> century Bulgarian painters and probably the most remarkable stylist in Bulgarian painting in the post-Russo-Turkish War era <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Turkish_War,_1877%E2%80%931878">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Turkish_War,_1877%E2%80%931878</a> His portraits and compositions have expressive colour, idealistic quality of the image and high symbolic strength. Many consider his artwork a fauvist type rather than an expressionism set. In 1922 he met the American John Crane in Rome and sold him much of his work for the next few years. More than 700 oil paintings by him are in the Vladimir Dimitrov Art Gallery of Kyustendil. <a href="http://artgallery-themaster.com/gb/index.htm">http://artgallery-themaster.com/gb/index.htm</a>
Djambazov, Ivan		Landscape	Interesting – and reasonably priced
Dobrev, Dobri Sr	1898 - 1973	Landscape	Born Sliven graduated 1925 from Prague Fine Arts Academy. 1926-1938 he lived and worked in Republic of Czech. Afterwards he came back to Bulgaria and to 1954 he lived in Sliven and afterwards in Sofia. From 1954-1965 he taught at Sofia Art School. He created paintings revealing the life in villages. He painted landscapes, daily scenes, figurative compositions. His preferred topic are the markets in his native town of Sliven. His paintings don't often appear on the market. They will cost a minimum of 600 euros
Dobrinov, Alexander	1898 - 1958	Great cartoonist	Born Veliko Tarnovo. In the period 1915 - 1919 he studied at the Arts school (Sofia). Specializing in Vienna, the famous "School of Applied Arts" (1921-1924). From 1921 worked in the field of caricature and portrait images. Prints cartoons in newspapers, magazines, collections "Temida", "Hornet" in programs for theatrical performances and some humorous magazines abroad. Works in Vienna (1921-1921), Prague (1927 - 1932), Rome (1932 - 1933), Warsaw (1937), creating cartoon portraits of prominent public and cultural figures. In the 50s cooperated with the newspaper "Literary Front," "National Culture", "Worker's Act", "Evening News" and others. Not easy to find his work on the market.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Dobrujdanski, Todor	1904 - 1990	Landscapes	Born in Karlovo. Colleague of Nikola Taney's and not surprisingly therefore a great colourist. He paints scenes from Karlovo, Plovdiv and Black Sea.
Doganov, Liuben	1884 - 1975	Landscapes	Student of Atanas Mihov.
Donev, Bocho	1904 - 1969	Figurative	500 euros (for 45x64)
Draganov, Dimitar	1908 - 1996	Graphics	Born Izvorovo village, Targovishte. He taught at the Sofia School of art from which he graduated in 1932 after which he returned to teach at his village school. Concentrated in his graphic work on miners.  There is apparently a gallery in his village with his works.
<u>Frantzaliiski, Pavel</u>	1884 - 1956	Aquarelle	Taught at Samokov
<u>Ganchev, Rusi</u>	1895 - 1965	Landscape	1926 graduated from Sofia Art Academy. 400 euros
Gasharov, Ruhmen	1936 -	Naïve, pop art	“His major topic is man and his daily routine. Pieces of embroidery and lace, fluttering angels and showy shooting galleries, leaflets and newspaper pieces all combine to give rise to the Bulgarian type of pop-art. The markedly naive manner the artist employs has developed into a subtle artistic style. The lyricism his personages invoke, contrary to the expectations, stem from the banal, the kitsch and all that is very close to the manner of the daily routine”.  <a href="http://www.gashar.dir.bg/">http://www.gashar.dir.bg/</a>
Genev, Slavi	1893 - 1977	Landscape	Studied at Sofia School of Art until 1923 – with a spell 1917/18 at Munich Art Academy. And 1926/27 at a Paris art school. Worked as an art teacher. Made Samokov his base in 1930; taught art there from 1931-1948; and became the Director of the Historical museum from 1949-1958  works cost about 400 euros
Georgiev, Boris	1888 - 1962	Graphic artist	Born Varna after which his parents moved to Odessa where he had his schooling. Studied art in St Petersburg 1905-09. He continued his art studies in Munich from 1910. 1911-1913 he travelled by foot throughout Europe – from Norway to Spain – studying drawing in Florence for a few months. Two years he lived in an alpine house he built himself near Trentino. Italy was his base – although he also travelled to India making friends with Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. He does not seem to have returned to BG before his death in Rome.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Georgiev, Gospodin	1909 - 1978	Landscape, portrait	Born Stara Zagora. Graduated Sofia 1931 and 1932 studied at Academy of Art Rome. Teacher in Stara Zagora. Awarded Cyril and Methodius medal 1971.
Georgiev, Pencho	1900 - 1940	Secessionist – theatre design with strong interest in graphics, woodcuts etc.	Born Vratsa. Set designer Sofia. 26-29 worked in Russe's municipal theatre. 1929-34 Paris where he specializes in applied arts in the workshop of Paul Laurent. Social issues dominate his work. He tends to turn ordinary rural people in monumental characters. Used chalky colours. Exhibited 11 international exhibitions.
Geshev, Jordan	1907 - 1973	Aquarelle landscapes	Born in Chichil in the Vidin region. In 1930. graduated from the Sofia Art School - receiving a special decoration by prof. Haralampi Tachev. Member of the "Modern Art" association. Organized 22 solo exhibitions. Participated in joint and collective exhibitions. A significant part of his works occupies landscapes of Rila, Pirin, Stara Planina. Exceptional aquarelle master.
Getson, Ivan	1910 - 1991	Independence wars	
Gyurova, Bronka	1910 - 1995	Landscape	Born Shumen; in Belgium 1937/38 for a special course in illustration. First solo exhibition 1943. Married artist Eliezer Alesheh in 1947. Emigrated with him to South America in 1952.
<u>Hadjimladenov, Naum</u>	1894 - 1985	Figurative	<p>In 1921 he graduated the National Art Academy, Sofia subject of painting, by Prof. Ivan Murkvichka. The same year, organized his first solo exhibition in Samokov. He began to work as a teacher in his hometown.</p> <p>From 1934 to 1946 he works and lives in Sofia - accepted as a member of the Unit of Bulgarian Artists, works at various newspapers, illustrates literary series "Ancient Bulgaria".</p> <p>During this period Hadjimladenov participates in a number of General Art Exhibitions in the capital and other cities, in the presentations of Bulgarian art abroad - 'Roerich Museum' (New York, 1935), Athens (1938). Participates in the International Biennial of Humour and Satire in Gabovo city.</p> <p>In 1937 Hadjimladenov was awarded a gold medal at the Paris presentation for his work 'Market in Samokov'. " In 1938 an exhibition of Bulgarian painting in Athens was awarded the medal "St. Alexander ". In 1954 and 1964 he was awarded the medal "Cyril and Methodius" - first degree. In 1975 he was named honorary citizen of Samokov.</p> <p>1,500 euros for 30x30</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
<u>Ivanov, Boris</u>	1904 - 1993	Portraits	Born Sofia and graduated from Sofia Art School in 1927, Exhibited internationally; taught graphics and painting at Sofia Art School 1946-51. In the 1960s he wrote numerous articles about Bulgarian art.
Ivanov, Ivan	1879 - 1966	Landscape, portrait	
Ivanov, Lyubo	1891 - 1974	Urban landscape	
Ivanov, Sava	1896 - 1976	Landscape	
Ivanov, Sergei	1881 - 1967		Studied at Sofia's Drawing School 1898-1905; then 2 years at Munich's Art Academy. Most of his works were destroyed during the 2nd WW Sofia bombings. 700 euros for 50x33
Ivanov, Stefan	1875 - 1951	Portraits landscapes	Graduated Sofia Art School 1903 – following Miroslav Murkvichka's class. Teacher at the School from 1907 – full Professor from 1914.
<u>Karamihailova, Elena</u>	1875 - 1961	Portrait	Born in Shoumen, she graduated from Robert College Constantinople in 1895. Then a graduate of the Art Academy in Munich, Germany. She is the first Bulgarian lady-artist. The portraits of women she painted are strong psychological studies.
Kabakchiev, Hristo	1879 - 1970	Aquarelle and architectural landscape. Depictions of ancient Tarnovo.	He originated from a family of strong Bulgarian national revival and revolutionary traditions. In 1899 he was one of the first graduates of the School of Arts. He was then a teacher in Veliko Tarnovo, Koprivshitz. Painter of the museum of ethnography in Sofia. A great part of his works were destroyed during the bombings in 1944.
Kantemirov, Petar	1885 - 1967	Town landscapes	1907-09 Munich Art Academy with visits to St Petersburg. In 1912 he was one of the team painting the new Alexander Nevski Cathedral. 1932-1950 Russian and drawing teacher at Karlovo.
Karakashev, Georgi	1899 - 1970	Theatre; landscape	Born Russe. studied art at the Bucharest Academy of Art between 1919 and 1920. In 1931 graduated from the Art academy, majoring in painting in the class of professor Tzeno Todorov. Creative career began in the 20s in the area of picturesque-decorative direction and in 1930-they dealt mainly with applied art (layout, advertisements, labels, posters). In 1931-32 he taught drawing in male high school in Sofia and, from 1934 and 1945, taught internal architecture and style in Rousse. Worked as art director in Rousse dramatic theatre (1945-48), Youth Theatre in Sofia (1948-52) and the National Theatre "Ivan Vazov" (from 1952 year).

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Kavarnaliev, Hristo	1892 - 1951	Seascapes	Graduated Sofia Art School 1915. He studied under Prof. Ivan Murkvichka, Anton Mitov, Ivan Angelov and Jaroslav Vesin Travelled across Russia, Italy, France, etc.  900 euros 70x100
Kazakov, Dmitar (Neron)	1933 - 1992	Folk	Born in Village in VT. Graduated in graphic arts from the Art Academy in Sofia under Prof. Evtim Tomov in 1965. He created paintings, prints and wood carvings. The artist depicted uniquely folk motives in his works. Since 1966 he participated in art exhibitions in Bulgaria and abroad. He presented his works in solo exhibitions at Sofia, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Athens, Vienna and New York. The National Collection of Contemporary Art of the Louvre, Paris, the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Emperor Collection in Tokyo own his paintings. During his lifetime Kazakov made big donations to the towns of Lovech and Tryavna, which have permanent exhibitions of his works. Works don't often appear – and will cost upwards of 5,000 euros.
Kirkov, Ivan	1932 - 2010	Modern decorative	Born Assenovograd. Studied under Tsonev and Ilyia Petrov.
Kiureliev Jordan	1877 - 1910	Landscape	Born Sliven superb painter whose life was cut tragically short when he drowned in the Black Sea.
Kodjamanov, Tihomir	1892 - 1975	Landscapes, portraits	1913 graduated from Art and Industrial School, Sofia. Also studied Vienna 1923-25.
Kolev, Boris	1906 - 1986	Landscapes	Born Kyustendil. Graduated 1932 from Sofia Art Academy. Also art historian and critic.
Kolev, Kolyo	1905 - 1950	Landscape	400 euros
Konsulova-Vazova Elizabeth	1881 - 1965	Portraits	Born in Plovdiv. In 1902 graduated the second alumni of the Arts school, in the class of Jaroslav Vesin. Between 1909 and 1910, she specialized in portraiture in Munich Academy. Her first exhibition in 1919 in Sofia is the first solo exhibition of female artist in Bulgaria. Exhibitions then followed in Prague (1931), Plzen and Bratislava (1932) and again in Sofia in 1934 and 1956. She leaves many paintings of flowers and is also the first Bulgarian female artist painting the nude body. Konsulova Vazova is one of the founders of the association "Native Art". Develops social activities as an editor of "Lecture" magazine (1934-40) and the "Home and World" magazine (1940-43); cooperates with the magazines "Artist" and "Art" with art critical articles on Bulgarian and western fine arts. In 1961 she was awarded the medal "Cyril and Methodius" – I degree.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Kostadinov, Milcho	young contemporary	Urban landscapes; seascapes; nudes	A very talented artist who captures the soul of the old buildings of Plovdiv and Sofia in sad greys and yellows; and has branched out recently to magnificent seascapes and ethereal nudes. His work sells for about 500 euros.
Kozucharov, Nikola	1892 - 1971	Portrait landscape still-life	Born Kazanlak but raised in Stara Zagora where his father was a teacher and founder of the Regional Museum. Studied under Tseno Todorov in Sofia and in Paris 1914/15. Was war artist. In 1920s and 1930s specialised in national historical scenes. From 1929-63 he was Professor at Academy of Arts. 1963/67 he was head of Dept at Higher Institute of Education VT.
Kriskarets-Yonchev, Xristo	1879 - 1950	Aquarelles Mountains	Born and lived Samokov. Graduated in 1912 from Sofia Art School where his teachers were Prof. Ivan Angelov and Professor Ivan Murkvichka. Working mainly in the landscape field he uses watercolour, tempera and oil and organizes many exhibitions in Sofia and Samokov. His famous works are the series "Landscapes from Rila" (1936). In 1931 took part in the founding of the Historical Museum in Samokov city and subsequently worked as a museum curator. 500 euros
Kudyamanov, Tihomir	1892 - 1975	Landscape	Graduated 1913 from Sofia Art School – from Prof J Murkvichka's class. 1923-25 Vienna Art Academy.
Kutzkarov, Dimitar	1835 - 1963	Aquarelle	Born Stara Zagora and graduated 1908 from State Academy where he studied under Murkvichka. Then teacher in SZ; 1918-1927 teacher in Yambol, Pleven, Svishtosh and SZ. In 1927 appointed to Berkovitz where he settled permanently and where more than 1000 of his works are housed at the Art Gallery.
<u>Lavrenov, Tsanko</u>	1896 - 1978	Vivid and mystical portrayal of monasteries and cities	Born Plovdiv. 1907 to 1916, studied at the French College "St. Augustine" in Plovdiv, printing cartoons in "Balan" under the pseudonym "Laura". Graduated 1917 from the School for Reserve Officers in Knyazhevo. 1920-1922, worked in a draper's in Plovdiv. 1923, first exhibition of the Association of South Bulgarian artists in Sofia with eight paintings. 1925, travelled through Italy, From 1935 to 1936, traveling around Mount Athos, Greece. 1937, participation in the Paris World Exhibition 1939, settled in Sofia. from 1941 to 1942, painted in Ohrid, Bitola, Skopje, 1951, worked at the City Museum SGNS (now SAG) 1958, a joint exhibition with Dimitrov-Maistora at Liege Belgium. Following exhibitions in Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Berlin, Moscow 1976 Jubilee Exhibition in Plovdiv for the 80 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the artist.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Lazarov, Ivan	1890 - 1952	Sculptor	Born Karlovo. Studied Sofia Art School 1907-1912 and Munich Art Academy 1917-19. One of the most sensitive sculptors – of peasants, soldiers etc.
Lazarov, Miladin	1894 - 1985	Portraits, landscapes	Graduated 1916 from Sofia Art School.
Lukova, Vera	1907 - 1974	Portraits	Born Sofia. Graduated 1930 from the Art School there.
<u>Makedonski, Dimitr</u>	1914 - 1993	Figures, landscapes	1944 graduated from Sofia Art School 1945-65 Curator of Sofia City gallery
Manski, Vladimir	1905 - 1969	Urban landscapes	Born Vidin. He graduated from the Academy of Arts in Sofia in 1938, from the class of Dechko Uzunov. He worked in various formats and employed all techniques: oil paints, water-colour, Indian ink. He painted a lot of compositions devoted to daily life and building. Manski is one of the masters of colouring in the Bulgarian landscape. From 1941 he participated in general art exhibitions, the exhibitions of the Bulgarian artists, exhibitions abroad, and organized 4 individual exhibitions in Sofia /1946, 1953, 1964, 1965. His works from Vidin, Sofia, Sozopol, are well-known for their exclusive qualities.
Marinov, Vasil	1897 - 1943	Landscape, genre	Born Stara Zagora, Graduated Sofia's Drawing School in 1907 where he studies under Vesin and Mrkvichka. War artist.
Mateyev, Kyril	1920 - 2006	Alpine	Graduated 1945 in mural painting from Uzonov's class. His work is easy to find. 500 euros
Mechkuevska, Alexandra	1907 - 1993	Seascape	Born Burgas. Graduated in 1933 in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia under prof. Nicola Kozhuharov and prof. Haralambi Tachev and additional graphics under prof. Vasil Zahariev. She was a member of Union of Bulgarian Artists from 1945. From 1934 participated in group exhibitions and exhibitions of women artists, in Paris /1937/, Belgrad/1938/, Cairo/1938/, Alenandria/1939/; individual exhibitions in Burgas /1934, 1936, 1948/, Sofia/1935, 1937, 1945, 1947/, Plovdiv/1936/, Kazanlak/1937/. She was awarded a medal at the Paris Exhibition /1937. 800 euros
Mihov, Atanas	1879 - 1974	Landscapes	Born Stara Zagora. Graduated 1904 from Drawing School. Sofia under Veshin where he studied under Vesin and Murkvichka. One of initiators of Bulgarian realistic painting. 1906-09 teacher in Silistra; 1910-12 Razgrad; 1918-23 Russe. War artist during Balkan War and First WW. Settled in Sofia 1923 where he worked in Knyazhevo until 1932. 1,000 euros 50x40

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Mikrenski, Konstantin	1921 - 1999	Landscape	Aquarelles.
Milenkov, Alexander	1882 - 1971	Decorative, nouveau art	Born in Samokov 1906 painted murals and stage work in Munich. First professional stage artist.
Milev, Ivan	1897 - 1927		Born in Kazanluk. Regarded as the founder of the Bulgarian Secession and a representative of Bulgarian modernism, combining symbolism, Art Nouveau and expressionism in his work. In 1917-1918, he fought as a soldier in WW1. In 1920, he was admitted to Sofia Art School. He also contributed to the communist comic magazine Red Laughter as an illustrator and cartoonist In the summer of 1923, he visited Turkey, Greece and Italy with a group of fellow students. In 1926, he graduated in set decoration from the National Academy and worked as a stage designer. Afterwards he became an independent freelance painter and illustrator and he also painted frescoes. Generally living in poverty, Milev had a brief 18-month marriage to opera singer Katya Naumova; their daughter Mariya Mileva eventually became an architect. Regarded as one of the great masters of distemper and watercolour painting in Bulgarian art, Milev often created socially-loaded works. His characteristic decorative style was much influenced by the European Secession, but it was also related to Bulgarian folk art and icon painting. <a href="http://www.ivan-milev.com/bulgarian-modernism.htm">http://www.ivan-milev.com/bulgarian-modernism.htm</a>
Minkov, Laliu	1911 - 1985	Urban landscape	600 euros 75x63
Mitov, Anton	1862 - 1930	Genre, war, portrait, landscape	Born in Stara Zagora. Graduated Florence 1885. Worked as teacher in Stara Zagora, Varna, Plovdiv and Sofia. 1896-1927 Prof of History of art and Perspectives, Art Academy Sofia (its Director 1912-18 and 1924-27). Author of first book on history of art written in Bulgarian. Co-founder of Society in Support of Bulgarian Art in 1893.
Monev, Marko	1939 - 2004	Landscapes; buildings	Born in village in Pleven and moved in 1959 to Russe.
Morozov, Peter	1880 - 1951	Romantic landscape	Born in Russe. 1905-1915 specialised in graphic art in Paris Graduated in painting under professors Ivan Murkvichka, Yaroslav Veshin and Ivan Angelov from the Art Academy in Sofia in 1905. The artist participated in the Balkan War and the World War I. He began his artistic career as painter but gradually devoted himself to printing and he contributed significantly to its development in Bulgaria and to colour aquatint in particular. He created hundreds of works depicting ancient Bulgarian monasteries, churches, houses and bridges.



Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Moutafov, Alexander	1879 - 1957	Seascape	Born in Shumen and educated in Varna, he studied art in Turin between 1899 and 1902; then Munich 1902/03. It was the Munich experience which aroused his interest in Jugendstil. From 1920-32, he was professor of Painting in Sofia's Art Academy. First Bulgarian seascape painter, he laid the basis for this specialism for subsequent Bulgarian painters.
Murkvichka, Ivan	1856 - 1938	Classical realist landscape portrait	Born Czechia and studied art in Prague. Came to Plovdiv in 1881 and moved to Sofia in 1889. 1896 co-founder of Academy of art. Prof of Painting there until 1921. Became member of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1918 and edited book in 1929 on Bulgarian painting but returned to Prague about 1937.
<u>Naumov, Vladimir</u>	1897 -	Rural scenes	
Nenov, Ivan	1902 - 1997	Portraits, landscape	Born Sofia but family moved in 1914 to Kyustendil where he met Vladimir Dimitrov-Maistora. On returning to Sofia in late teens he was influenced and helped by Ivan Lazarov and was accepted in 1919 as an extra-curricular student in sculpting at the Art School – becoming a full-time student in painting in 1920. He studied sculpture at the academy under Professor Zheko Spiridonov and painting under Professor Nicholas Ganushev. He graduated in painting under Prof. Nikola Marinov in 1925 was a member of the Society of New Artists in 1930. He travelled to Italy in 1932, 1936 and 1938. Ivan Nenov is known for his portraits of women and acts - the beach or in the interior. His work includes paintings, prints, ceramics, mosaics and small sculpture. He painted landscapes, still lifes, figural compositions, nude, portraits. His preferred techniques are tempera and oil paints. In 1930 he participated in exhibitions of modern art in Italy and Germany. With his sculptures participated in exhibitions in Bulgaria and abroad (Hungary, India, Germany, Italy, Russia and France). He was declared a formalist in the 1950s and, for almost a decade, could not exhibit his works. During this period, he focussed on ceramics. He managed, somehow, to hold his first solo exhibition in Sofia in 1975 ( previous attempts had been thwarted). Rehabilitated in the late 1950s, he was elected in 1994 an academician in the Academy of Sciences.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
<u>Obreshkov, Bencho</u>	1899 - 1970	Fig, still life, landscapes	Born Karnovat. Studied under Oskar Kokoshka in Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden in 1926 and sculpture under Antoine Bourdelle, Paris in 1925 - 1927. He was a member of the "Native Arts" Union (1925), a member of the Union of the New Artists (1931).
<u>Pascin, Jules</u>	1885 - 1930	Graphic artist	Born Vidin to a rich family (grain trader, family moved to Russe when he was young and he completed his (secondary) education in Brasov (Romania). His early talent drew the attention of the famous caricaturist Alexander Bozhinov but he never attended art school. Some of his drawings appeared in the renowned German satirical journal Simplicissimus when he was only 21. After unsuccessful attempts to involve him in the family business, he moved to Paris in 1905 where - with various forays to the USA and Caribbean - he remained until his suicide.
Penkov, Ivan	1897 - 1957	Close to Milev	Born Kazanluk – moved to Burgas in 1915. Studied at art school in Sofia 1919-1922. After a joint exhibition with Uzunov (with Milev a childhood friend), both travelled to Munich where he stayed a year and was influenced by Jugendstil and by German architecture. On his return to Bulgaria in 1923, he worked with theatre decorations. From 1939-1955 he was Professor of Theatre decoration at Sofia Art Academy.
Peretz, David	1906 - 1982	Portrait, still-life, landscape	Born Plovdiv. From 1936 travelled in Europe. Spent a year during the war in a concentration camp.
Pessov, Hristo	1923 - 2000	Sculptor	Born Kazanluk.
Petrov, Boyan	1902 - 1971	Portraits and figure composition	Born Sofia. Graduated from Sofia Art School 1928. Early 1930s worked in France and Italy. 1934-1948 worked in various schools in Bulgaria and became teacher at Sofia Art School from 1948.
Petrov, Kosta		Old village scenes	Lived in Razgrad area.
Petrov, Ilia	1903 - 1975	Graphics Populated landscapes	Born in Razgrad; Sofia Art Academy 1921-26. Studied 1927/28 Munich Art Academy and gave an exhibition there in 1928. On his way back to BG did an extended tour of German cities, France, Austria and Italy to become acquainted with European traditions. 1941-1967 he was Professor at Sofia Art Academy. 1961 visited India.
Petrov, Ivan	1909 - 1991	Fig and landscape	Born in village Razpopovci. He graduated from the Academy of Arts in Sofia in 1931 and became Professor at the Academy of Arts in Sofia.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Petrov, Nikola	1881 - 1916		Born Vidin. A defining figure in the country's painting tradition – despite his short life. Only 22 when he helped found the Modern Art Association in 1903 aiming to change the course of Bulgarian art. Can be considered founder of urban landscape in the country.
Popov, George	1906 - 1960	Figurative	In Paris 1930 – 1935 and 1937 –1939 which acquainted him with French art and the representatives of surrealism, futurism and cubism. Between 1947 – 1948 the artist lived and worked in Sweden where he created mainly illustrations. That period is also noted for his water-colours which stand out for their extraordinary intensity. He found the constraints of the new regime oppressive and, from the late 40s worked entirely in pastel and in cinema. He explored the topic of “Fishermen” in a cycle of preparatory sketches and pictures. At that time he was attracted by the still-life genre.
Popova-Balarewa, Vaska	1902 - 1979	Figurative	Born in the city of Ruse on April 7, 1902. She was raised in the family of a general and a mother who was an artist and a musician. Her love of art took her to the National Academy of Arts, Sofia, where she took up studies in Prof. Tseno Todorov's painting class. Under the mentorship of Prof. Nikola Marinov, she mastered the language of colours, graduating in 1927. Two years later she was admitted to the Academy of Arts in Rome for further specialization. There she got acquainted in detail with leather crafting techniques. After her return to Bulgaria, she established herself as a pioneer in this field. In 1933 she married General Hristo Balarev, with whom she had a son. The artist's home was frequented by intellectuals.
<u>Radoikov, DMITAR</u>	1878 - 1940	Landscape, portrait, military	Graduated 1901 from Sofia Art School – from Professor Murkvichka's class.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Rilski, Vladimir	1905 - 1969	Portraits, landscapes	<p>Born in Peshtera in a family of renowned intellectual George Rilski.</p> <p>He joined the Art Academy in Sofia in 1925, where his teachers were Prof. Dimitar Gyudjenov, Prof. Nikola Marinov and Stefan Ivanov.</p> <p>In 1929 he moved to Vienna for specialization. After his return to Bulgaria, Vladimir Rilski began working as a high school art teacher in Plovdiv. Associate to the circle of “Baratsi” – the artists Vasil Barakov, Zlatyu Boyadjiev Tsanko Lavrenov whose motto is deeply in the spirit of the national art. His first solo exhibition was in Plovdiv city in 1938. He also organized a joint exhibition with Zlatyu Boyadjiev. From 1945, taught at the Art Academy in Sofia. During this period he participated in many General Art Exhibitions. In 1949 money pressures forced him to do fairly menial work in Smolyan – doing posters, wall paintings and painting the interiors of public buildings.</p> <p>His painting brings the romantic iconography of the church and the realism of the Bulgarian folklore. While he was alive, the artist was considered as one of the most prominent representatives of the movement of native art in the 30s and 40s of XX century. Of the same, period (30s of XX century) is his emblematic cycle “Houses of Koprivshtitsa town”. Picturesque views of the Rhodope Mountain Rilski shows at his self-exhibition in Sofia in 1964. He died in 1969 in a tragic accident in “Shiroka luka” village.</p>
Rubev, George Hristo	1894 - 1975	Landscape	<p>Trained in Prague after 1919.</p> <p>600 euros</p>
Russev, Svetlin	1933 -	Modernist and art critic	<p>Although Russev does not technically belong to the Realists, he has, over the past 5 decades been an influential figure in Bulgarian painting – for his own creative contribution; for the collections he has bestowed at Pleven and Sofia Galleries; and for his work as an art critic. He was Chairman of the Union of Bulgarian Artists from 1973-85.</p>
<u>Sachariev, Vasil</u>	1885 - 1971		<p>Painted Samokov area.</p>
Savova-Nenova Ekaterinaa	1901 - 1980	Portrait, still-life	<p>Born in Sofia.</p> <p>Graduated 1925 from Prof Marinov’s class.</p> <p>One of founders of group of women artists in 1928.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Shahanova-Shishkova, Olga	1895 - 1978	Landscape, interiors, still life	<p>Born in Plovdiv. Graduated from the Art Academy in Sofia in the class in painting under Professor Ivan Murkvichka in 1920. Until 1925 assistant teacher in painting at the School in Sofia. From 1930 she lived and painted in Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Germany where she had exhibitions. Wife of the famous industrialist and producer of wines Shishkov. In 1946. returned to Bulgaria. Shahanova Olga was a member of the Association of South Bulgarian artists and the company of women artists and president. In the 60s Shahanova Olga went to Athens. For some time she lived and painted there.</p> <p>Most famous are the interiors. These people are recreated in a particularly intimate, ordinary atmosphere. Filled with vibrant color.</p> <p>900 euros 44x49</p>
Shturkelov, Konstantin	1889 - 1961	Landscape aquarelle	<p>Born Sofia.</p> <p>He studied at the Art Academy in Sofia from 1906. In 1909 departed for Moscow. His first solo exhibition held in 1911. He was war artist in 1912–1913 and 1917. He was the most famous and outstanding Bulgarian watercolour painter who preferred to draw landscapes from Rila and Pirin Mountains, Sofia and Tarnovo regions. His works were presented at national and solo exhibitions in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Venice, Germany and Hungary.</p>
Shtiliavona, Z	1903 -	Still life and portraits	<p>Born Kazanlak – studied Paris, Prague and Vienna 1929-33.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Skitnik, Sirak	1883-1943	Modernist, symbolist	<p>Born Sliven.</p> <p>Draughtsman, stage designer, writer, critic, editor and publisher.</p> <p>He studied (1908–12) under Léon Bakst at the Academy of Arts (Akademiya Khudozhestv) in St Petersburg and became a follower of the aesthetic concept of WORLD OF ART, dominated by the innovative decorative designs of Vera Komissarzhevskaya and Tairov.</p> <p>After he returned to Bulgaria, Skitnik was engaged in a variety of projects, writing poetry, critical reviews of exhibitions and plays and monographs on other artists such as Bencho Obreshkov.</p> <p>He also designed sets for the National Theatre (Naroden Teatâr) in Sofia. He painted mainly landscape and still-lives in oils (e.g. Interior with Flowers, 1920), tempera (e.g. Russian Monastery, 1912), gouache (e.g. the Kiss of Judas, 1920;) and watercolour; he also drew in coloured pencil.</p> <p>During the 1920s and 1930s he became known in Bulgaria as an innovator who experimented with new mixes of colour and form. Both his poetry and his original and highly emotional painting show his allegiance to the Symbolist movement. From 1920 to 1940 he was editor and publisher of the intellectual magazine Zlatorog (Golden Horn).</p> <p>He also belonged to the National Art Society of Bulgaria and was one of the founders (1932) of the Union of the Societies of Artists of Bulgaria.</p>
Sotirov, Stoyan	1903 - 1984	Portrait, landscape	<p>Born in Gradevo village, Blagoevgrad region. Graduated in painting under Prof. D. Gudzhenov and Prof. St. Ivanov from the Academy of Fine Arts - Sofia in 1928.</p>
Sotirova, Juliana	Young contemporary	Landscape, portrait	<p>One of the most versatile, talented and active of the contemporary realists, she paints from her visits to Bulgarian villages and North Africa.</p> <p>Prices from 500 euros</p>
Staikov, Anastas	1905 - 1988	Interiors, landscapes	<p>Born Smolyan first solo exhibition there at age 20 graduated 1929 from National Art Academy 1928-31 Paris</p> <p>1932-48 painting teacher in various Plovdiv schools celebration of traditional Rhodopes living – frequent use of tempera. Bright colours.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Staikov, Vesselin	1906 - 1970	Graphics	Born Peshtera, a small town nestled in the picturesque northern slopes of the Rhodope Mountains. On his mother's side he is descended from a prominent family of fighters for church and political independence. These militant traditions tended to develop certain tendencies in the artist's work. He worked on a whole cycle of engravings based on the national liberation struggle of the Bulgarian people from the epoch of National Renaissance down to our times.

Vesselin Staikov spent his childhood at the house of his grandfather, one of the enlightened and educated men of his times. Here, at an early age, he had an opportunity of browsing in the old family library, acquainting himself with books and illustrations not easily accessible in that epoch. These opened up a new world to him. He would sit for hours studying the pictures of the world-famous masters of Renaissance and of eminent Russian Painters.

The illustrations of the Russian Niva magazine and Gustave Dore's fine engravings in the Bulgarian translation of Dante's Inferno had a particularly strong and lasting impact on the impressionable child. The second major influence in the youth's life was the Bulgarian painter and pedagogue Vitko Babakov, who used to spend summer vacations in Peshtera. Young Staikov would go out together with him and paint the attractive environs of the town and the scenic beauties of the Rhodope Mountains. During these excursions the two would engage in long discussions on the problems of art.

In 1925 Vesselin Staikov left for Sofia. As soon as he saw Staikov's exceptional gifts, the eminent Bulgarian Painter, Professor Stefan Ivanov, permitted the youth to join his last-year class before he was even admitted to the Academy of Art. Once he took one of Staikov's etudes and showed it to his class, citing it as an example of rare talent in a schoolboy.

In 1926 Staikov enrolled at the Academy of Art in Prof. Nikola Marinov's class as a non-matriculant, for he had not yet completed his secondary education. Later he took all the necessary examinations, became a regular student and in 1932 graduated from the academy, where he had attended Prof. Tseno Todorov's course in painting.

In the summer of 1932 Vesselin Staikov left for Arbanassi, a Bulgarian village famous for its original old architecture.. 1933 Staikov joined the State Printing House in Sofia as engraver. Here he lived amid engravers and technicians and acquainted himself with printing technique. Staikov remained about a year at the State Printing House. He increasingly establishing himself as a creative artist with a social consciousness, as a bold master of composition, as a portrayer of Bulgarian architecture and of Bulgarian land.

Parallel with his successful participation in the Bulgarian National Art Exhibitions, Vesselin Staikov achieved considerable renown abroad. At the 1937 World Fair in Paris Staikov scored his greatest success, winning a gold medal. In 1938 the artist left for Munich, where he organized an individual exhibition. The same year he participated in a Bulgarian exhibition shown in New York. In 1940, after a competitive examination, Staikov went to Italy for further specialization. In Florence he studied painting with Prof. Felice Carena, and in the course of his tour of Italy he painted landscapes with architectural subjects from Florence and Venice.

In 1945, Staikov was appointed assistant professor in graphic arts at the Sofia Academy of Art. He also turned his attention to postage stamps.

In 1951 Staikov left his chair at the Academy of Art to devote himself completely to creative work. In addition to engravings with themes from nature, old towns and mountain villages, Staikov produced a cycle of engravings on the modern city: Sofia with its modern architecture, the clearing of rubble after the air-raids and the construction of new houses and buildings. He shows a particular liking for the architectural landscape with its contrasting plasticity.

The artist is also fond of doing ancient, strangely shaped trees.



Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Stamatov, Stanio	1886 - 1963	Figure composition	<p>Born Kazanluk. Graduated in painting under Prof. Ivan Murkovichka in 1911, Academy of Fine Arts - Sofia. He specialized in painting in Germany 1925 - 1927 and in France in 1926. He taught painting at Kazanlak.</p> <p>Participated in the Balkan and First World War as a war artist.</p> <p>Stamatov organized over 40 exhibitions in Bulgaria. He worked mainly in the figure compositions and landscapes. Has left many domestic scenes from his familiar rural life, large-format chamber and scenic landscapes from different corner of Bulgaria.</p> <p>Died in Munich.</p> <p>1,400 euros 44x64</p>
Stefchev, Boris	1894 - 1983	Seascapes	<p>Graduated in painting in 1916, Art-Industrial School in class of Prof. Tseno Todorov, and then a student of decorative art with Professor Stephan Badgov.</p> <p>In 1918 Ministry of Education granted him a scholarship for his studies in Munich. But, due to the outbreak of the First World War, he specialized in the Royal Academy of Art in Vienna 1918-22. In the first year he studied under Professor Pohvalski and the next two continued his studies in the class of Prof. Jungvirt.</p> <p>His first solo exhibition is in Sofia in 1921. Stefchev began working as a teacher of drawing in Sofia.</p> <p>His early compositions are defined as part of the symbolism of Bulgarian art in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Since 1927 he devotes most of his work of the sea view.</p>
Stoilov, Vasil	1904 - 1990	All genres of art of painting – portraits, daily scenes, landscapes	<p>Born 1904 in the village of Podene (at present a Sofia quarter) in a large family. In 1922 he began his studies at the Academy of Arts, in the art of painting class of Prof. Tzeno Todorov. From 1929 to 1932 he studied and worked in Paris as he earned his living, selling his pictures. From 1958 he was professor of drawing. At Faculty of Arch He produced a gallery of deep emotional images of rural villagers.</p> <p>He preferred the technique of water colours and themes of daily life.</p>
<u>Tabakov, Ivan</u>	1901 - 1977	Versatile	<p>In 1925 he graduated in painting under professor Nicola Ganushev at the Art Academy - Sofia.</p> <p>1926-32 he was at the Art Academy Paris with professor A. Bernard and prof. M. Bashe.</p> <p>Participated with portraits in the Salon of French artists and "Independent Artists". Worked on portrait, landscape and figure compositions.</p> <p>The first two decades of his work creates an intimate, mostly psychological portraits and a series of images of eminent figures of culture.</p> <p>He painted a series of landscapes of Ohrid, Kavala and others.</p> <p>80x70 3,400 euros</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Tanev, Nikola	1892 - 1962	Landscape	One of Bulgaria's greats! Born Svishtov; at age 13 sent to Paris with brother to study print techniques but began to reveal his artistic talents. Studied under Paul Renoir and, in 1910, under Claude Monet. Returned to Bulgaria – with first one-man show in Sofia in 1912. War artist from 1916-18. 1920-22 Austria and Germany. 1927 started to paint in Karlovo village – site of his most famous paintings. Travelled extensively in Europe 1928-39.
Titirinov, Strahil	1905 -	Aquarelles	Colourist.
Toma, Evtim	1919 - 1997	Aquarelle, landscape	
Tomov, Veselin	1909 - 1993	Fig, urban landscape	41-43 Art Academy Munich.
Tsankov, Maxim	1877 - 1965	Landscape portrait	Born Razgrad.
Tsonev, Kiril	1896 - 1961	Portrait landscape	Born Kyustendil. Studied Vienna Art Academy 1920/21 – then Munich Art Academy 1921-25 and stayed there until 1929. One of the innovators of his time, Influenced by German New Objectivity. Travelled 1930-32 in south america (Mexico and Cuba) and returned to Bulgaria in 1933 after the nazis came to power in Germany. 1942-50 he was Professor at Sofia Art Academy – and an art critic and historian.
Trichkov, Ivan	1892 - 1959	Landscape	Graduated painting under prof. Petko Klisurov from Art-Industrial School in Sofia. His work is characterized by diversity of colours, play of shadows and penumbras, inspiration, precise lines. His themes are old farmhouses, shepherds' huts and mountain cabins presented with a rare realism. Favorite topic of Ivan Trichkov remains Vratsa Balkan,, Zgorigrad, Veslets, Vratsa vineyards.
Tringov, Konstantin	1907 - 1981	Landscape	Born Kazanlak. Densely worked paintings.
<u>Ustagenov, Marin</u>	1872 - 1937	Spectacular all-rounder	born in Russe; studies art in Sofia and specialised in restoration skills in Munich. Founder of Lada school. Was a war artist 1912-18 and struggled to exist – with various unsuccessful business ventures. An under-rated painter in my view.

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Uzenov, Dechko	1899 - 1986	Portrait	<p>Born Kazanluk, Bulgaria's Picasso 1922/23 Munich. Teacher Art Academy Sofia 1924-1932; 1937 Professor and from 1945 its rector.</p> <p>The Dechko Uzunov gallery possesses 13,000 oil paintings, water colors, drawings, designs and sketches by Uzunov. The works were donated to the Sofia municipality by his heirs: artists Hristo Neikov, Atanas Neikov, Elena Vulchanova and Penyo Vulchanov.</p> <p>The gallery is housed in Uzunov's workshop on Dragan Tsankov Boulevard, a two-story building in the compound of the artist's house.</p>
Vasilev, Stoian	1904 - 1977	Landscape	<p>Born Pazardzhik.</p> <p>In 1927 he graduated from the National Academy of Arts in Sofia, arts of painting with Prof. Tzeno Todorov. He preferred themes from the Veliko Tarnovo region.</p> <p>A really prolific creator. He worked in various formats. Professor of arts of painting at St. St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo for many years.</p>
Velchev, Georgi	1891 - 1955	Landscape, portrait	<p>He studied painting under Prof. Stefan Ivanov and Prof. Murkvichka at Sofia Art School. He dropped out during the war (1915-1918), was captured and taken to France. Graduated Arts school after returning from the front. He studied painting in Paris with Professor Amanda Jean and Bonar. Gave exhibitions in Wiesbaden and Karlsruhe, and in Stanford, USA. Toured Australia, Hawaii and after seven years he returned to Bulgaria in 1931 where he lived mostly in Varna.</p> <p>His house in Varna is now the "George Velchev" museum. Refurbished in 1996, when most of the artist's paintings were restored and are displayed.</p>
Venev, Stoian	1904 - 1989	All genres	<p>Born Skriniano village, Kyestendil where he spent his school years. Met Vladimir Dmitrov there and was strongly influenced by him.</p> <p>Graduated from Sofia art school in 1931. Created images of everyday life and Bulgarian villages – with a strong satirical tone.</p> <p>Apparently influenced by G Grosz.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Vesin, Jaroslav	1860 - 1915	Classical realist	<p>A Czech painter who Graduated from Sofia y worked in Bulgaria and who was noted as a master of genre painting. The realistic depiction of battle scenes from the First Balkan War (1912) are the subject of a substantial part of his work.</p> <p>Věšin studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, but moved to the Academy of Fine Arts Munich in 1881 and graduated in 1883.</p> <p>Afterwards he worked in Munich and in Slovakia, with his paintings of the period mainly related to Slovak village life.</p> <p>Věšin arrived in Bulgaria in 1897 and remained there for the remainder of his life. Until 1904, he was a professor at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia and mainly worked in the area of genre painting, with notable paintings such as Threshing near Radomir (1897), Ploughman (or Land, 1899), Horse market in Sofia (1899), Smugglers (1899), In front of a market (1899), Threshing (1900), etc. The main topic of his interest was the life and labour of the Bulgarian villager.</p> <p>After 1904, Věšin became the head painter with the Ministry of War and, although he did not abandon his old interests became famous with his masterpieces of battle painting. Many of his works are displayed in the National Museum of Fine Arts in Sofia. Among Věšin's students were Nikola Petrov, Atanas Mihov and other major Bulgarian painters.</p>
Vulchev, Nikola	1897 - 1984	Landscape, figurative	<p>Born in the village of Mokresh, region of Vidin. In 1924 he graduated from the Academy of Arts - Sofia, art of painting the class of Prof. Stefan Ivanov. For long years he was a teacher in Lom and Sofia. For the period 1931-1952 he lectures in painting at the Institute of Secondary School Masters in Sofia.</p>
Vulchev, Vasil	1931-2002	Painting and graphics	<p>Graduated 1955 under Ilya Petrov.</p>
Vulev, Vassil	1934 -	Village life, small groups, portrait	<p>Born Sigmen, Burgas</p> <p>gouache, aquarelle favourite techniques.</p>
<u>Watson, William</u>	1894 -	Portraits, landscapes compositions from the urban and rural lifestyle, thematic still-life and painting	<p>Born in Paisley, Scotland. During World War I he was an officer. He remained in the Allied mission in Bulgaria and then he settled in Bulgaria. William Watson was trained as a textile engineer. In 1931, he became stockowner and a representative of Bulgaria OOD, Kazanluk for production and trade with threads and textiles.</p> <p>In 1924, he married Theodora Popova – daughter of the regional governor of Varna, Vassil Popov. After 1930 the Watson family settled in Sofia in the house of Professor Al. Balan, N 4 Kliment Ohridski Street. In that period until 1939.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
<u>Zagarov, Spas</u>	1908 - 1991	Graphics; aquarelle landscapes	Born village outside Kazanluk; Director Plovdiv municipal art gallery.
Zankov, Doncho	1893 - 1960	High mountain landscapes, frequently winter ones	Born in Sevlievo. In 1921 he graduated from the Industrial School of Arts in Sofia. He worked as teacher in the village of Tzarkva, region of Pernik. He was also a teacher in Sofia. He was an artist with First Bulgarian Army during the First World War (1914 - 1918). Initially he used to draw water-colour drawings, afterwards he employed oils.
Zhakaiev, Vasil	1895 - 1971	Graphics	
Zhekov, Atanas	1926 - 2006	Landscapes	Director of Sofia City gallery.
Zhekov, Mario	1898 - 1955	Coasts and sea	<p>Born Stara Zagora.</p> <p>In 1917 became a student at the Bulgarian Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia. Two years later he enrolled in the Painting Drawing School of Paris.</p> <p>In 1921 he moved to Constantinople Turkey-where he made the First Constantinople`s cycle. In this cycle he recreates the Bosphorus. The castle, the port and near the city.</p> <p>In 1927 returned to Bulgaria and went to the Black Sea where he painted Sozopol, Nessebar.</p> <p>In 1930 he moved to the southern Mediterranean Italy, France.</p> <p>Two years later he returned to his homeland. Here he finished his second Black Sea cycle-scales of Sozopol and Nessebar, Varna, Balchik, Ropotamo Kamchia and also landscapes.</p> <p>In 1937 he moved to Dalmatia. In Dubrovnik he created some of the most important and remarkable of his painting.</p> <p>Many of this works he presented in many galleries in Croatia, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest.</p> <p>He became more popular in Europe , than in Bulgaria.</p> <p>In 1938. made exhibitions in Stara Zagora and in Sofia. In 1941, went to Greece, Aegean, Aegean Sea, there he painted in the islands of Thassos, Chios, Samothrace and Ohridkoto lake.</p> <p>In 1943 Mario Zhekov returned to Sofia. With the help of artist Pencho Balkanski organized most representative exhibition. Part of it he shows in Bucharest and in 1946 - in Stara Zagora.</p> <p>His paintings now normally sell for a minimum of 1,500 euros – and usually much more.</p>

Artist	Dates	Focus	Location of birth, training; genre; some recent prices
Zhelezarov, Georgi	1897 - 1982	Landscapes, subject paintings, urban sceneries	<p>One of the classics of Bulgarian landscape and genre painting.</p> <p>After success in 1941, disappear from the artistic scene The circle of friends, with which Georgi Zhelezarov shares his work, is limited to a few, among who his best man Boris Denev, and Preslav Karshovski. His studio though, has no limits. It is Pirin, Rila, Vitosha mountains, the Sofia field, the City Park, Constantinopole, Marocco, Florence, Tunise, Algiers (1926-1928).</p> <p>His landscapes are covered with light, always populated with people.</p> <p>His landscapes carry particular elements of romanticism. With his attitude to the subject of art, and the creative act, he naturally joins the number of Bulgarian painters after World War One, who try to revive the academic realism through naturalistic painting.</p> <p>600 euros 32x42</p>
Zhelyazkov, Gospodin	1873 - 1937		<p>Born Demircha village, Romania.</p> <p>Graduated in painting under Prof. I. Mrkviska and Prof. B. Mitov from the Academy of Fine Arts - Sofia in 1899. Graduated from the Studio of Ilya Repin. Secretary of the Union of the South Bulgarian Artists "Lada" and one of the initiators for the founding of the Union of the Artists - icon-painters and wood engravers /1925.</p>
Zhendov, Alexander	1901 - 1953	Cartoons, graphics	<p>Born Sofia.</p> <p>As early as 1917 he was contributing cartoons to various magazines. From 1923-25, he was extra-curricular student in painting at Sofia Art School (under Marinov).</p> <p>Police repression then forced him to seek refuge first in Vienna then Germany (1926-30).</p> <p>Grosz, Kollwitz and Masserel had a great influence on him.</p> <p>Returned to Bulgaria 1930.</p>





## Annex 1; Notes on the municipal galleries

Bulgaria is a great country to tour around. Amazing scenery, great wines and food! Its many municipal galleries are an additional bonus.

Here I simply reproduce the blogs I posted after my visits – and, regrettably, I have not been able to visit them all. In particular Pleven and Burgas remain to be conquered.

**Please note that this information is correct at the time of printing but should be verified.**

### **Balchik Art Gallery**

4 Otets Paisiy St

Tel.: +359 579 41 30, +359 579 41 30, 43 09

### **Burgas – Petko Zadgorski Gallery**

“Metropolit Simeon” Str. 24

Tel: +359 56 842 169

### **Dobrich Art Gallery**

9300 Dobrich, 14 Bulgaria, Bulgaria St

Tel.: +359 58 28 215, +359 58 28 215, 29 091

Exposition: paintings, prints, sculpture

Highlights: works by Vladimir Dimitrov- the Master, Bencho Obreshkov, Alexander Petrov, Ivan Markovichka, Zlatyu Boyadzhiev, Dechko Ouzounov, Naiden Petkov and others, a collection of foreign prints.

Open: 9 - 12 a.m., 1 - 5 p.m.

Closed: summer: Sundays and Mondays; winter: Saturdays and Sundays

The Director very graciously gave us a personal tour of her domain. It started with a group of schoolkids who were receiving some interactive training in the process of paper-making – the gallery, uniquely, has a collection of paperworks produced by the participants of a recent international event held here.

Separate sections are devoted to the gallery’s collection of sculptures and prints – and to local artists as well as old masters such as a rare work of Ivan Murkovichka (1856-1938), one of two Czechs (the other is Jaroslav Vesin) who are credited with setting Bulgarian painting on its modern path.

The breadth of the collection is one of the widest I have seen (with a nice mix of older and contemporary). The exhibition space is so extensive that the tour took more than an hour.

I was very taken with some contemporary work by Plaven Valchev (born 1951).

I have been nicely received in all the municipal galleries I have visited in the Bulgaria regions – but in one I was able to have a proper conversation about the problems of running galleries here at this time. Over a cup of tea, Evelina (like all the Directors I’ve met here) an artist herself explained that it is the Ministry of Culture who set a formula which dictates the number of staff to which regional galleries are entitled. So much for local government autonomy!! And, in Dobrich’s case, with such a huge palace, the staff of 12 (including 2 cleaners and 3 attendants) is simply insufficient. There is no surveillance system - so security is labour-intensive.

As was evident from the number of brochures, the Director is highly proactive in

seeking out opportunities for marketing and funding (A Swiss Foundation was mentioned) and the Gallery's CD lists the various international exhibitions (eg China and Slovakia) which have been mounted with the support of Embassies here. But it is an uphill struggle – a good venture of bussing tourists from the beaches nearby during the summer fizzled out.

It is not easy to produce a winning formula for such a problem. But one thing is clear for me – it requires local solutions and this means removing the dead hand of central control – and encouraging networking between galleries (national and international), hotels, businesses (eg the new owners of the rich agricultural land and the golf courses!!) and educational establishments.

Don't get me wrong - national financial support needs to be maintained (otherwise the galleries could be at more risk) but on the basis of more imagination...

## **Kardjali – Stanka Dmitrova art gallery**

Kardjali has all the bustle and townscape of a Turkish town. I was able, with some difficulty, to locate the art gallery – rather small but some great paintings - including the great Atanas Mihov and the delightful Stefan Ivanov.

## **Kavarna - The Art Gallery**

9650 Kavarna, Bulgaria, 1 Aheloi St

Tel.: +359 57 084 236, +359 57 084 236

## **Kazanlak Art Gallery**

Permanent exhibition

Address: SS Cyril and Methodius “No 9

Contacts: Tel: +359 43 163 762

E-mail: [artgallery.kz@gmail.com](mailto:artgallery.kz@gmail.com)

In addition to the magic of the rose and the oil wealth of the Thracian art, Kazanlak is also famous as a city of artists. Here, many artists are born, some of which have marked some of the highest peaks in Bulgarian art, such as: Ivan Milev, Ivan Penkov, Dechko Uzunov, Nenko Balkanski, Vasil Barakov and others. It is therefore not accidental that Kazanlak owns one of the oldest and richest art galleries in the country. I was warmly received by the staff who introduced me to their collection which includes several pieces by one of my favourite Bulgarian painters - Stanio Stamatov – one of many local painters. Indeed the small town was so prolific with artists that it used to be called „the town of a hundred painters”. The collection is therefore a rich one - of both paintings and sculptures - and, amongst those whose acquaintance I made were Vasil Barakov (1902-1991); a sculptor Hristo Peshev (1923-2000); and Spas Zawgrov (1908-1991) born in a nearby village whose landscapes and portrait sketches were in a temporary exhibition funded by his family. Hristo Genev, the Director, welcomed me into his den and presented me with a couple of discs (one of his own material). He sculpts the most fascinating pieces from wood. This is a gallery worth a detour to see – and many revisits!

## **Kyustendil – Vladimir Dmitrov (Maistora) Gallery**

“Patriarh Evtimii” St. No 20

Tel.: +359 78 550 029: Curator

Tel.: +359 78 523 172: Director

### Opening Hours

Summer time : 09:00 - 12:00 14:00 - 18:00

Winter time: 09:00 - 12:00 13:00 - 17:00

Housed in the ugliest concrete bunker I have ever seen, Dmitrov (The Master) is one of Bulgaria's most famous painters. I'm not actually a fan of a lot of his stuff particularly not one of his trademarks – a face in front of a lot of crudely painted and brightly coloured flowers – but it was good to visit this collection and see a wider range of his paintings. I was taken with some of his earlier, smaller paintings – sunrises and sunsets; his mother; his father – and some multiple face silhouettes. His Peasant with a hoe which is in the Sofia City Gallery is very graceful.

### **Pleven – Ilyia Beshkov Gallery**

Director - Tel./fax: + 359 64 802 091

Working hours:

9.00 - 12.00 a.m., 1.00 - 5.00 p.m.

Closed: Sunday and Monday

The first floor presents the works of Nikolay Pavlovich, Anton Mitov, Ivan Murkvichka, Tseno Todorov, Stefan Ivanov, David Perez and many others. The sculptures of Ivan Lazarov, Angel Spasov, Ivan Funev, Marko Markov and other sculptors who had worked in the period to 1940 are included in the exposition. By the accompanied annotations for each artist and work the visitor unnoticeably passes from the art of the 1940s to 1970s.

### **Plovdiv**

The old town of Plovdiv is well worth a visit – with its cobbled streets, stunning National Revival houses, Roman amphitheatre and several galleries.

### **City Art Gallery**

“Saborna” St. N<sup>o</sup> 14<sup>a</sup>

Tel.: +359 32 635 322: Director

[www.galleryplovdiv.com](http://www.galleryplovdiv.com)

working hours (summer);

Open every day (Thursday free)

10.00-12.30

13.00-18.00

### **Art Gallery-Museum Philippopolis**

29 Saborna str., Plovdiv 4000, Bulgaria

E-mail: [gallery@philippopolis.com](mailto:gallery@philippopolis.com)

Tel.: +359 32 622 742

Tel.: +359 32 624 851

This is actually a private gallery housed in a magnificent old Bulgarian house in the old heart of the town which was rescued and brought back to its glory by the new owners. Now you can view their collection; contemplate possible purchases; eat in a wonderful restaurant in the basement; or have a quiet coffee on the terrace which overlooks the town. Its website has a virtual gallery<sup>13</sup> which allows you to see for yourself. It was a

---

<sup>13</sup>[http://www.philippopolis.com/painting\\_en.html](http://www.philippopolis.com/painting_en.html)

visit to the Phillipopolis Gallery in Plovdiv in May 2008 which really activated my painting passion. The atmosphere and reception was so great that, without at that stage knowing anything at that stage about Bulgarian painting, I bought a small Zhekov and a large Mechkuevska and two contemporaries. So, be warned!

### **Atanas Krastev House**

The Atanas Krastev house<sup>14</sup> should be visited - where local painter and conservationist Atanas Krastev lived until his death in 2003. His constant striving to keep the old buildings (at a time in the 1960s when tradition was viewed with some hostility) and to have them as active centres of cultural activity earned him the title of Mayor of Old Plovdiv – and he deserves wider recognition. The cosy, well-furnished house is strewn with personal mementoes, and the terrace offers superb views. His self-portraits and personal collection of (mostly) abstract 20<sup>th</sup>-century Bulgarian paintings are displayed. The garden also houses exhibits.

### **Razgrad - The Art Gallery**

The modern green building beside the central Mosque

Tel.: +359 84 27 067, +359.84 27 067, 29 618, [www.rzgallery.com](http://www.rzgallery.com)

Exposition: a standing exhibition and temporary thematic exhibitions of paintings, prints and sculptures.

Open: 9 - 12 a.m., 3- 7 p.m.

Closed: Saturdays and Sundays

Housed in a superb, modernised and specially-designed building (with EC funding) in the heart of the town right next to the well-kept mosque, it has an enthusiastic Director, Todor Todorov, who personally showed us round the collection on display. This included about 6 Danail Dechevs, a Tanev, a Boris Denev, several Vladimir Dimitrovs and two painters until then unknown to me - Maxim Tsankov (1877-1965) and Kosta Petrov (1894-1973).

Razgrad's permanent exhibition also includes an excellent graphics collection.

The gallery's catalogue is the best I have seen – with coloured reproductions and English as well as Bulgarian notes on the paintings and painters. It also has a website – although still, clearly, in the process of construction.

The Razgrad Gallery is the only one I have seen which has used Regional Funds to make such a major refurbishment - which shows both official initiative and political support. Razgrad's gallery must go to the top of my unofficial list of best housed, managed and documented regional galleries in Bulgaria - with Stara Zagora a close second. Russe is the worst. Of course, these are not necessarily the best criteria - for example the poorly-housed Targovishte Gallery was abuzz with a group of school-kids - and the unheated Skitnik gallery in Sliven sponsors an annual Plein Air summer school. Such local access and use should clearly be the core of the mission of any art gallery. I find these differences an interesting example of the effects and importance of local government - although the proper maintenance of older paintings which are part of a country's national patrimony has national significance. The lack of heating which threatens so many paintings in Bulgaria's regional art galleries is a disgrace - but perhaps it is too easy to put this down to lack of municipal funding. I found it curious that one of the galleries I visited had 7 staff. Of course I never like to recommend job-shedding but, in this case, perhaps lack of heating simply shows a poor sense of budgetary priorities!

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.360cities.net/image/atanas-krastev-house-museum-11#441.45.89.47.70.0>

## **Russe Art Gallery** [www.ruseartgallery.org](http://www.ruseartgallery.org)

The gallery is in a scandalous state for such a large city – with no heating and the paintings in one of the three rooms lying propped on the floor with no means of identification. Some superb works from Vladimir Dmitrov-Maistera, Atanas Mihov, Benchko Obreshkov and Nenko Balkanski – all, however, at risk from the disgraceful conditions. What was even more galling was that an expensive book was on offer – at 25 euros – celebrating 75 years of the gallery. It must have cost 5,000 euros to produce – money which would have been much better spent to keep the paintings in a safer condition.

I can understand the galleries of smaller municipalities being in poor conditions – but there is absolutely no excuse for this neglect for a city such as Russe. Places like Razgrad and Kazanlak – with one fifth of the population – clearly do so much better! Pity the poor young warden who sat wrapped up and freezing in his cubicle as I happily snapped the choicer exhibits. He smiled sadly when I asked if there was a feedback book available for me to make my comments! At the very least, the city authorities should relocate the paintings to a smaller place which is easier to heat! And it doesn't take much money to produce a CD of the gallery collection.

## **Shoumen - The Elena Karamihailova Art Gallery**

81 Tsar Ivan Alexander St

Tel.: +359 54 42 126, +359 54 42 126

Exposition: paintings, prints and sculptures

Highlights: works by Elena Karamihailova, Alexander Moutafov, Hristo Kazandzhiev, Ilia Petrov, Vasil Stoilov, Dechko Ouzounov, Nikola Mihailov.

Open: 9 - 12 a.m., 2- 6 p.m.

Closed: Saturdays and Sundays

The town of Shumen (80 kms from Varna and the Black Sea) is a bit unprepossessing as you drive in – with decaying 1950s residential blocks. But its centre is a pleasant surprise, with one the largest pedestrian areas I have ever seen – with trees, a theatre, statues and a mountain range behind. Its upper side is graced with a series of old, large official buildings – of which a mock Italian palace (the police station) is perhaps the most interesting.

Younger people we asked about the location of The Elena Karamihaylova Gallery clearly had never visited the place - but two elderly ladies pointed us in the right direction. The gallery was initially a disappointment – since the second floor containing the permanent collection was closed for reconstruction. But conversations with the staff must have conveyed our love of Bulgarian painting and the Director graciously presented us with an attractive pack containing 20 postcards of the paintings, a CD and a small booklet giving the history of the collection and short notes on the artists.

When, however, I mentioned the name Alexander Moutafov (who was apparently born in Shumen), it was literally the key to open an Aladdin's Cave.

Valentina Velikova, the paintings expert, took us to the archives where the collection (of 1,300 items) is stored and filed. And she was kind enough to find and pull out for our inspection various portraits by Elena Karamihaylova and paintings by Nikola Tanev, Alexander Moutafov and Stanio Stamatov. Marvellous to have a chance to

handle such work. And great that a small gallery should have developed such a nice pack. They are rare amongst Regional galleries in having a CD. It is so simple, cheap to create - and so necessary given the large numbers of paintings which are doomed to spend their life in basement archives!

## **Silistra Art Gallery**

Svoboda Sq

Tel.: +359 86 26 838, +359 86 26 838, 22 395

Exposition: paintings, prints, sculptures

Highlights: works by Zlatyu Boyadzhiev, Danail Dechev, Stoyan Venev, Tsanko Lavrenov, Vasil Stoilov, Bencho Obreshkov, Nenko Balkanski.

Open: 8 - 12 a.m., 2- 6 p.m.

Closed: Saturdays and Sundays

## **Sliven**

The city's „Dimitar Dobrevich” gallery has three permanent exhibitions:

Contemporary Bulgarian art – **gallery hall “Sirak Skitnik”**,

2 “Tzar Simeon” Blvd., Tel.: +359 44 25 342

The Old Sliven – paintings of Dobri Dobrev in the “**Mirkovich” house**,

io “Mirkovich” Str., Tel. +359 44 22 796

Christian Art – **Christian Art**,

13 “Tzar Osoboditel” Blvd., Tel. +359 44 22 083

Art Gallery “Dimitar Dobrevich” works everyday from Monday to Friday, from 09.00-12.00 and 13.30-17.00.

Non working days: Saturday and Sunday.

The home of Dobri Dobrev. And the town has done Dobrev proud – with some 50 of his paintings on permanent display in a superb National Revival house – Mirkovitch House. I was taken to the Gallery by one of the curators of the nearby Sirak Stitnik Gallery which is the town's main gallery who had been kind enough to show me round it. It has a great collection - not only the country's greats such as Tanev, Abadjiev and Boris Denev but a special exhibition of the graphics of a new painter for me - **Kozucharov, Nikola** (1892-1971). He's famous apparently for his mythological and historical paintings but was also a war artist - covering the Balkan War and First World Wars - and some of these sketches were on display.

Unfortunately, there was no heating in the place - like the Russe and Targovishte galleries.

## **Smolyan**

Dicho Petrov 7

Tel: +359 301 62 328

Open; 09:00-12:00 & 13:30-17:00 Tue-Sun

A great collection – well worth the trip. And in a Rhodope town in a superb location. Amongst other local artists, I was introduced to the work of Anastas Staikov by a

Slovak woman who guided us around and introduced us to the Director. What struck me was what they were achieving against the odds – they had insufficient money for proper maintenance – let alone advertise the gallery and its great paintings.

## **Sofia – the City Art Gallery**

1, Gen. Gurko Str

<http://sghg.bg>

### **working hours:**

Tuesday-Saturday: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Sunday: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Monday: day off

### **admission: free**

The City Gallery has no permanent exhibition but plays a crucial role in putting on special exhibitions which not only bring out paintings from its own large collection but exhibit paintings from the other municipal and private collections. Exhibitions in recent years have focussed on people such as Dobri Dobrev and Nikolay Boiadjev. In 2010, the Gallery curator Dr. Maria Vassileva started a fascinating series ("The other Eye") which consists of inviting outsiders to comb the dungeons of the gallery where the collections are stored, strip off the protective covering and select some paintings. So far, three such exhibitions have been held – each with a very useful booklet.

## **Stara Zagora**

Address: Stara Zagora, 27 Ruski Blvd.

Working time: Tue-Sat 10:00–18:00

Tel.: +359 42 62 28 43

Tel.: +359 42 62 23 80

The town has a superb location with the Balkan mountains as a majestic backcloth. It was completely destroyed by the Turks in 1877 for welcoming the Russian army of General Gurko and was subsequently rebuilt on a strict grid-plan with leafy Boulevards.

I therefore had no problems finding the Art gallery which is a most impressive one – well maintained and offering, for 1 euro, 3 separate exhibitions.

The permanent exhibition displays some of the works of the many painters who have been born and worked there – eg Anton Mitov, Mario Zhekov and Atanas Mihov. Paintings by Nikola Tanev, Ivan Penkov and Moutafov were also on display. The Gallery also offered a collection of women's portraits and, finally, a display of woodcuts and graphics in a temperature controlled room.

The exhibits were so enthralling I spent almost two hours in total there – with a return visit after the lunchbreak. Many new names – eg Vasil Marinov and a great portraitist Elizabeth Konsulova-Vazova (1881-1965).



## **Targovishte - The Nikola Marinov Art Gallery**

Park "Borovo Oko"

Tel.: +359 601 27 760, +359 601 27 760

Exposition: paintings, prints, sculpture

Highlights: a collection of water colours by Nikola Marinov

Open: 8 - 12 a.m., 2- 6 p.m.

Closed: Saturdays and Sundays

The gallery has a rather remote location (at least for present wintry conditions) in a park on the town's periphery next to a lake which must be glorious in summer (and also to the football stadium). From the outside its cavernous size held some promise – but this was quickly dashed by the iciness of the air as we stepped inside. There was no heating (and loud leaks from the roofs) for the Gallery's 2 huge rooms – which held little of interest. One Neron and one Svetlin Russe which must be fast deteriorating in such conditions. No sign of the Marinov water colours which I learned about later!

## **Varna - Georgi Velchev Art Museum**

8 R. Dimitriev St

Tel.: +359 52 238 011, +359 52 238 011

Exposition: paintings and drawings by one of the best masters of sea scapes in Bulgaria. Landscapes from France, Germany and Bulgaria, portraits and self-portraits by Georgi Velchev (1891-1955).

Open: summer 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.;

winter 13 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Closed: summer- Mondays,  
winter- Saturdays and Sundays

## **Varna – Boris Georgiev Gallery**

1 L. Karavelov St

Tel.: +359 52 243 123, +359 52 243 123, 243 141

Tel./fax: +359 52 243 088

Open: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Closed: Mondays

## **Veliko Tarnovo – Boris Denev Gallery**

"Park Asenevtsi"

Tel.: +359 62 638 961: Director

Tel.: +359 62 638 951: Curator

Tel.: +359 62 638 941: Ticket window

Opening hours

10.00- 18.00

Closed: Mondays

Note also that several villages eg **Berkovitsa** in Vidin Region and **Izvorovo** village in Targovishte Region apparently have galleries – the first focussing on the work of Dragonov, the second on Kutzkarov

## **Annex 2; Private galleries in Sofia which concentrate on “realistic” Bulgarian painters of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **Antique Shop and Gallery**

next door to Alexander Aleksiev's wonderful tiny antique shop at 38 Tsar Assen St, this gallery has three rooms with an interesting selection of older paintings – some from outside Bulgaria.

### **Antique Shop and Gallery**

34 Solunska St

- looks a bit kitch from outside with a dummy in soldier uniform but they have some worthwhile stuff inside. The son speaks English.

### **Barnev and Doychev Art**

15 San Stefano St

- charming small gallery in the University area – on the doctors' square. More than meets the eye since they have a lot of paintings in piles against the wall. They speak English.

### **Bulgari**

69 Bvd Dondukov

[www.gallery.bulgary.bg](http://www.gallery.bulgary.bg)

- part of a larger complex which includes a lovely restaurant (on the top floor you can dine in real privacy amongst some of the paintings). The painting selection they have makes this gallery a must visit.

### **Classica**

32, Liuben Karavelov St

Tel.: +359 896 854 210

- a charming old converted flat near the crossroads of Ignatiev and Vessil Levski.

A fairly small selection on display – although you can view on their computer other paintings they can bring for you. But they do quote rather high prices.

### **Impression Art**

Valeri Filipov

11 Vasil Levsky Bvd

Tel.: +359 898 566 667

- Valerie has recently moved to this more up-market (and contemporary art) gallery but still has a stock of the older works he displayed in his previous gallery (Valmar). He has great sources – and is worth cultivating. He speaks English.

### **Inter Nos**

58<sup>b</sup> Vassil Levski Boulevard

[www.internos-galleryantiques.com](http://www.internos-galleryantiques.com)

- atmospheric gallery with a good selection of older work - actually on the side street

### **Kristal Gallery**

100, Rakovski St

Tel.: +359 896 621 113

- well established gallery with a small but select collection. The lady speaks English.

### **Kristar Gallery**

11, Kan Khrum St

Tel.: +359 887 989 977

- some interesting stuff but a bit too eager to do a sale for my liking.

### **Loran Gallery**

Plaven Petrov

16 Oborishte St

[www.galleryloran.com](http://www.galleryloran.com)

- recently moved to this location, they have a smallish display downstairs with more expensive stuff upstairs. They occasionally produce special books on artists.

The young ladies have excellent English.

### **Neron**

Tsar Samuel 12

- at corner with Rilski St. Good selection. Language a problem.

### **Stari Maisteri (Old Masters) Gallery**

13, Parehevich St

- very small antique shop with a few paintings.

### **Tzennosti(Values) Gallery**

Buzludja St

<http://www.values-gallery.com/>

- a well-established (and prestigious) gallery focussing on Bulgaria's old masters - hidden away in a charming and old part of Sofia between Prague Bvd and Bvds Makedonia/Totleben. It has the richest collection (in more senses than one) of all the galleries I have visited here.

There were so many painters of whom I hadn't heard. Some of the paintings seem to have been there for several years (eg some Vladimir Dmitrov's at 20,000 euros in the 2009 Antiques Price Guide) – which makes one wonder about their business model. Clearly they cater for bigger spenders than me! Probably an institutional market ie the banks!

### **Victoria Gallery**

Yuri Gagarin 22a

Tel.: +359 888 572 172 (Pavlina)

<http://www.gallery-victoria.com/catalog.asp>

- THE place to go for this sort of painting! Pavlina is very knowledgeable! Their website is the most comprehensive for this older, more classic sort of Bulgarian painting. And, for each of their (quarterly) auctions, they produce a great little Catalogue – free of charge.

The auctions – generally at the Sheraton Hotel – are a great experience.

## **Annex 3; Contemporary Galleries – two of the Best!**

Although my main interest is the realist painting from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, I do have more than 20 paintings by contemporary artists – Milcho Kostadinov, Yuliana Sotirova and Angela Minkova are three of my favourites. And I have learned so much (and spent many happy hours) in two galleries in central Sofia which focus on contemporary art, ceramics and sculpture – namely.

### **Konus Gallery**

32, Khan Asparuh St

proprietor - Yassen Gollev

Tel.: +359 898 537 673

[www.konusgallery.net](http://www.konusgallery.net)

### **Astry Gallery**

34, Tsar Samuil St

proprietor - Vihra Pesheva

Tel.: +3592 986 37 80

Tel.: +359 885 230 717

[www.strygallery.com](http://www.strygallery.com)

Every two months or so, Vihra organises a special exhibition of a contemporary artist – duly opened with a delightful Vernissaj.

## About the author

Ronald Young lived the first 46 years of his life in the West of Scotland – 22 of them as an aspiring academic and innovative politician in local, then Regional, Government.

The last 20 years have been spent as a consultant in central Europe and central Asia – generally leading small teams in institutional development or training projects.

He first came to live in Bulgaria in the summer of 2007 – and has since then divided his time between a flat in Sofia and a house in the Carpathian mountains.

In 2008 he started a website <http://www.freewebs.com/publicadminreform/> which contains the major papers he has written over the years about my attempts to reform various public organisations in the various roles he has had - politician; academic/trainer; consultant.

*“Most of the writing in my field is done by academics - and gives little help to individuals who are struggling to survive in or change public bureaucracies. Or else it is propaganda drafted by consultants and officials trying to talk up their reforms. And most of it covers work at a national level - whereas most of the worthwhile effort is at a more local level.*

*The restless search for the new dishonours the work we have done in the past. As Zeldin once said - **“To have a new vision of the future it is first necessary to have new vision of the past”**.*

In 2009 he started a blog [www.nomadron.blogspot.com](http://www.nomadron.blogspot.com) to try to make sense of the organisational endeavours he has been involved in - to see if there are any lessons which can be passed on and to restore a bit of institutional memory and social history - particularly in the endeavour of what used to be known as “social justice”.



# Introducing the Bulgarian Realists

- how to get to know the Bulgarians  
through their paintings

*Ronald G. Young*



Dobri Dobrev (1898 - 1973) - Old Sliven market



Boris Denev (1889 - 1969) - View of Plovdiv