

Academician
Maria Chegodaeva,
the author of «My Art» series,
presents:

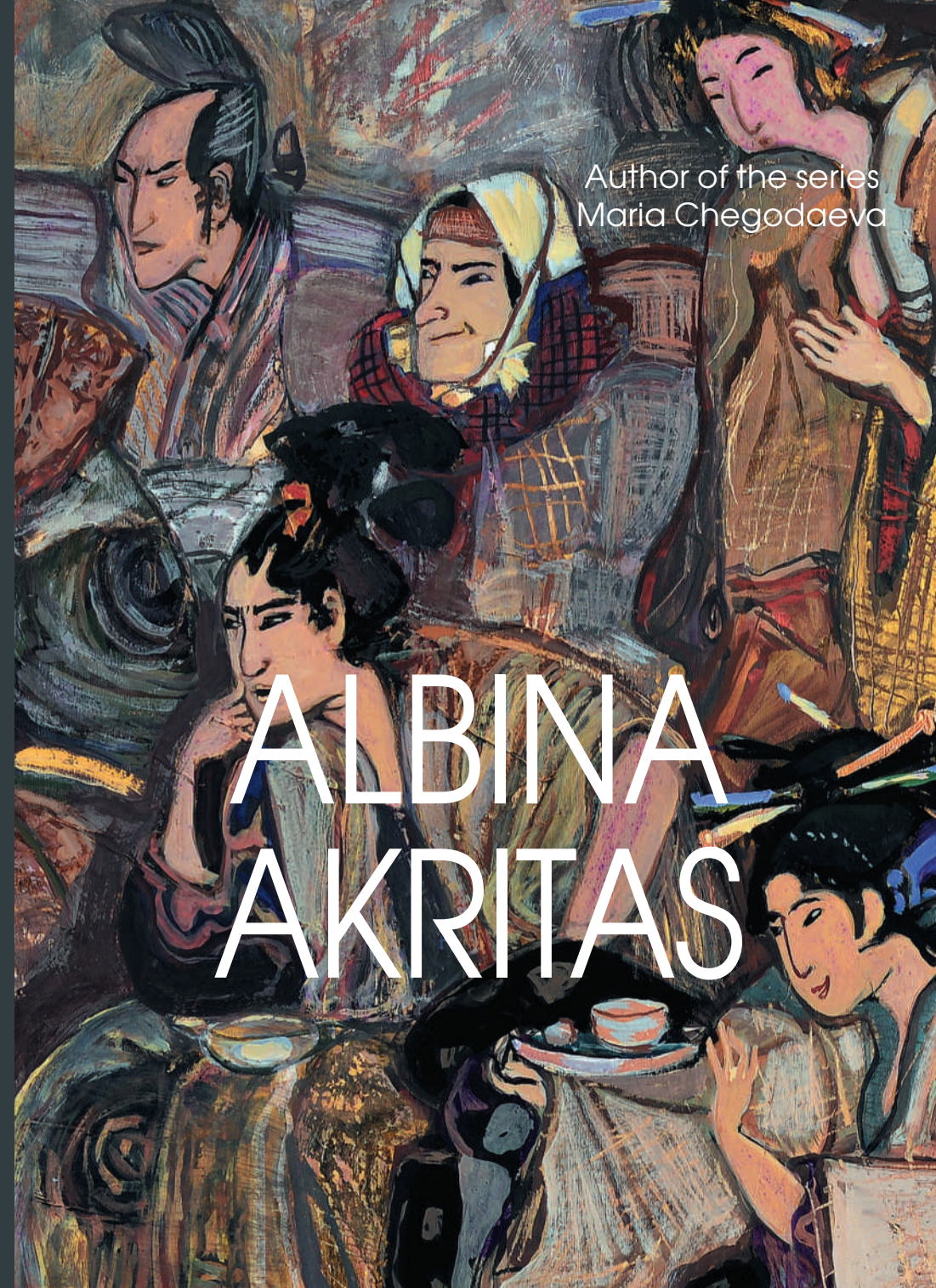
Zurab Tsereteli
Pavel Nikonov
Igor Pchelnikov
Leo Shepelev
Olga Bulgakova
Dmitry Zhilinsky
Victoria Nikonova
Ekaterina Kudryavtseva
Peter Grigoriev
Albina Akritas

My Art Series



www.albinaakritas.com

ALBINA AKRITAS



Author of the series
Maria Chegodaeva

Albina Akritas

Born July 12, 1934 in Moscow.

Graduated from the Painting Department
of the I. Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture
and Architecture of the Academy of Arts
of the USSR in Leningrad in 1961, where
her teachers were well-known artists
V. Oreshnikov, A. Mylnikov, B. Ugarov.

Since 1962, member of the USSR Union
of Artists.

Since 1981, People's Artist of the RSFR
(Russian Federation in the USSR)

Since 2004, People's Artist of Russia.

Since 1997 Full Member of the Russian
Academy of Arts.

Professor, full member of the International
Academy of Culture and Arts, member
of the Russian-Greek Artists' Creative Union.
Winner of numerous prizes, including the
prize of the Government of Moscow (2006);
awarded the Silver medal of the Russian
Academy of Arts (1988), the Gold medal
of the Russian Academy of Arts (1999),
the Gold Medal of the Union
of Artists of Russia (2014).

My Art Series

THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR THE THEORY AND HISTORY OF FINE ART



THE RUSSIAN
ACADEMY
OF ARTS

ARTIST
ALBINA AKRITAS

ALBINA

My Art

ARTIST

AKRITAS

AUTHOR OF THE SERIES
Maria Chegodaeva

Series «My Art» founded in 2013

Chegodaeva M. Albina Akritas. – M.: UP PRINT, 2014. – 112 p.
– (Series «My Art»).

An art book devoted to creativity of the famous Russian artist,
academician, People's Artist of Russia Albina Akritas.

Cover design picture
of Albina Akritas «Japanese triptych». 2010.

ARTIST ALBINA AKRITAS

Trial by Painting

Maria Chegodaeva

8

Road to Bethlehem

19

Antique Dance

51

Faith, Hope, Love

79

ISBN 978-5-91487-065-9

© Albina Akritas

© Maria Chegodaeva, 2014.

© Dmitry Chegodaev – design, 2014.

TRIAL BY PAINTING

Maria Chegodaeva

*«Painting, in itself,
for itself, is everything.
It IS art itself».*
Konstantin Korovin

The cited words that Alibina Akritas found in the book «Konstantin Korovin recalls...» – an artistic «credo» of the most beloved and intimate Akritas' artist – define her better than any art review. This is a «key» to Akritas not only as an artist, but as an individual.

Albina Akritas is a natural painter. She thinks in a language of art no matter what technique – tempera, oil, collage, drawing – or what colour specter – moderate monochrome, vividly chromatic, black-and-white – she experiments with. «It often occurs to me that the present meaning of the word «painting» is slightly different from what it used to be. It didn't refer to the technique, or stated that a picture was painted with brush, in oil

or tempera, on canvas or cardboard. No, the word actually meant «zogrophia» or «live graphics» with a stress on «live». For me this deep meaning is still valid».

This is Albina's own credo, the indispensable quintessential part and parcel of her art. Picturesqueness is her element. In the first place she manifests herself and her temperament in the impetuous combination of brush strokes and unusual, unexpected textures. The

surface of her each canvas or paper literally breathes, vibrates, plays with overtones and colours, either dense or transparent, resembling ceramics or a monumental fresco or even an oriental rug.

But the main attraction of the artist's works is that in every brush stroke, every colour match or composition solution. Albina Akritas manifests herself, her soul and her nature. Greek by nationality, temperamental, romantic, passionate, Akritas, to the greatest possible extent, embodies herself in her art: in a striking subtle harmony of pastel colours in the panel «Cupid and Psyche» exhibited in the Academy of Arts' White Hall, in a powerful almost stucco texture of «Diogenes and Aristotle», in «Judgment of Paris», in her picturesque frieze «Faith, Hope, Love» and in the subdued in colour but radiant from «inside» triptych «The Road to Bethlehem». All these decisions were

prompted by the artist's lively feeling and intuition, seen by her spiritual vision before being born in the «flesh» either on canvas, cardboard or other materials.

Akritas combines her self-forgetful creativity with an accurate premeditated experiment. She can again and again put under an endless «test» various potentials of painting and graphics: she works with oil, tempera and pastel; she applies such a rare technique as engraving on pastboard, collage, all kinds of mixed techniques. She includes bronze in her palette. Her gold appears not as the background or insertion in the composition but organically fits in the colour accord of the picture.

«Faith, Hope, Love». Collage, tempera, bronze. Three female figures: on the left stands Faith – not so young or, to be more precise, her age is rather unidentifiable, motionless as if lost in her

thoughts, wearing heavy enveloping clothes, the dim gold transparent through the heavy veils. In the middle sits Hope turning to us her beautiful young face, a baby deer at her feet, her right hand dwells on a clinging to her lion's head, her left hand strokes a cat in her lap, her cloak is shining gold. It is a direct reminiscence of the Old Testament prophecies about the «Golden Age» when the divine peace will spread on Earth and: «the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid...» (Isaiah the Prophet).

On her right young Love, a thin delicate figure shining in dazzling white light, reaches out her hands to Hope. The whole scene is in pearly tones of silver, pale-blue and subdued gold while the background looks as huge grey stones with dense and at the same time raw texture that resembles a stone cave and clay walls.

Akritas permanently turns to Biblical themes: «Christ and the Sinner», «The Return of the Prodigal Son», «Annunciation». The triptych, «The Road to Bethlehem», is one of very personal, undoubtedly dear for Akritas works. The left wing of the triptych depicts Joseph with Mary on a donkey – it might be the flight from Bethlehem to Egypt or the journey to Bethlehem: «Went and Joseph also from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, who was pregnant». (Luke, 2/4-6)

...A gentle obedient donkey, the wonderful lively face of the animal is in the foreground. Joseph, an aged man in the dark cloak, carefully embraces the light nearly childish figure of Mary clinging to him who anxiously, with great intensity gazes at

an ominous motionless crowd of white ghostly figures in the distance.

The central scene presents Mary with Child. The mother hugs the curly head of the infant of about two years old, covers him with her hand, protecting his sweet face. The crimson red clothes of the child are like dried blood enfolding him... «Behold the angel of the Lord is in sleep to Joseph, saying, arise, take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him». (*Matt., 2/13*)

The right wing depicts lonely walking Mary followed by watchful glances of the women from the crowd... The background to all three scenes is an ancient gloomy city with its dull gray walls of mud houses. Akritas' triptych seems to embrace all the Bethlehem themes and to reveal what contain all the evangelists' stories: a great

tenderness, care, love and at the same time the rejection of the mob, alienation and the fateful premonition of the tragic death.

Another constant theme of the Greek Akritas is Greece, antiquity, myths and legends of ancient Hellas. «Diogenes and Aristotle», «Judgment of Paris», «Parting of Hector and Andromache», «Penelope», «Abduction of Europa»...

Akritas dared almost to repeat the composition of the great painting «Abduction of Europa» by Valentin Serov: Zeus, the handsome mighty bull, gliding in the sea with a graceful figure of the girl on his back. But according to Akritas, the message of the myth is love. Europa tenderly leans to the bull; the bull turned his enormous head to the kidnapped girl, overshadowed her with his mighty horns. Their heads are united in the outburst of amorous passion beyond the power of the stormy gray sea, the black clouds overhead,

the violent silver waves, that crash around the two figures merged in one and seem ready to swamp them, to devour and to blur the clear contours...

The lovely Greek landscapes: «Noon at Delphi», «Evening on the Island of Syros», «Ancient Ruins», «Olive Grove». And the wild Dionysian dances: «Girl with Tambourine», «Female Dancers», «Dance», «Antique Dance»... Furious rhythms, hot sensual music literally sounding in the ears of the audience are achieved by the play of colours, not by their motley variety but the harmoniously matched shades of red and blue, of pale lilac, stains of dark blue-and-black, black-and-red and the flashes of white. In the whirlwind of the temperamental and bold painting the bright fabrics of skirts and shawls seem to jump up, to swirl, to whirl about, interwoven into one rushing tangle. Whatever the

origin of the dancers, Gipsy or Spanish (Akritas also has a «Spanish Dance»), it still will be the «Antique Greek Dance», an ancient mysteria, unrestrained passionate celebration of the God of wine Dionysus. And today's living Greece. And Sirtaki, the dancing music, resonating in her every brushstroke.

«Nude model» with its graceful female figure, jutting out of the gray background, sometimes porous sometimes smooth as stone, acquires monumentality and does not look as a «chamber» drawing but as a decorative panel capable of holding the whole wall. Suddenly the engraving begins to look like a flat relief carved from limestone. Such an effect is achieved by imprinting from cardboard, on which the engraving is cut as on linoleum or wood. And here again is the reminiscence of Hellenic antiquity, Greek statues and painted vases.

Another constant, favorite with Albina Akritas subject is Pushkin. The great poet appears in Akritas' works as a living contemporary, friend, teacher, who she, a poet herself, can show her poems to as she did once to Bulat Okudzhava.

Akritas often accompanies her works with poetry. She puts as an epigraph to her composition the following lines:

«...So gone the kiss
of our date
But I shall wait,
you owe it to me»

and she «takes over» :

«And so it happened...
And she unto whom
thou wept,
Incapable to break the kiss,
With whom
posthumously the date
Thou so ingeniously
guessed,
So there she
embraced thee...»

Audacity? And isn't it audacity to bring Pushkin at table together with his fervent admirers, Anna Akhmatova and Faina Ranevskaya in her picture «Players»? From the dark-brown darkness advances at us a brightly lit table with bottles, wineglasses, candleholders with burning candles. Pushkin is in the dimly lit back of the room. More light is on his two guests: Akhmatova clad in a fur coat with a lush fur collar on the left and Ranevskaya who lights a cigarette on the right... For Akritas the sense of eternal everlasting life of Pushkin who is privy to our feelings, our daily worries is quite natural.

Maybe particularly acute this sentiment pervades the picture «Evening in Trigoriskoye». A calm genre piece, thoroughly and meticulously, up to every detail, reproduces the interior with picturesque, beautifully painted still lives: burning candles, a mirror in a bronze

frame... Two girls in white, one playing the piano, the other standing by the instrument... Pushkin is absent in this scene, but his verses can be clearly heard:

«But in the distant
foreign land
My thought unchanged
will always wander
Around Trigoriskoye estate
And when
the clear darkens day
Alone from
the depth of grave
The yearning shadow will fly
To cast a loving glance
at the beloved».

The world of Trigoriskoye, Pushkin's world, springs to life here, it lives in the artist's eyes ... «The Date beyond the Grave».

Likewise through a string of dates Akritas illustrates Pushkin's works. Her triptych «Don Juan» consists of three key scenes from «The Stone Guest», one of his «Little Tragedies»: Don Juan at

Laura's after the duel with Don Carlos; Don Juan knelt before Donna Anna in front of the monument to Commander and the final one is the "shake of his stone hand". The left wing: Don Juan, a tall slender cavalier, leaning on his sword, looks in contempt and somehow condescendingly at a formless broken mass of a dead body lying at his feet, the corpse of Don Carlos, he has killed. Laura leaning against Don Juan's shoulder looks at the dead body thoughtful and aloof... Transparent, light, white-pink colour gamma of the whole scene; obscure dark shadows behind the figures add the solidity and volume to them. The living stand out like monumental sculptures while the sculptural statue of Commander in the second and third panels of the triptych is vaguely shaped, almost unidentifiable like the dead body.

The themes of Akritas' works are as diverse as the

painting techniques she uses. Among them such unexpected deviations: to the medieval history like in the triptych «Jeanne of Arc» or to the remote world of Japan like in «Geishas», «Tea Ceremony» or «Samurai».

But all this diversity is marked with a unique common feature – it's always she, Albina Akritas: her eyes, her hands, her stroke, her colours, her texture, it's her «LIVEPAINTING».

«Believe it or not, but for me the most real is the imaginary which I embody in my painting». Eugene Delacroix. Another aphorism of a great artist, found and stored in her memory, reflects Akritas' own feelings.

«The imaginary» as seen by her inner vision and created by her hands is as real for the artist as the tangible nature before her eyes. Albina Akritas, a skillful and distinguished master of the artistic profession, in her works

recreates life in all its similarity, which is not an easy task in itself and, what is a great deal more difficult, she glorifies it in her poetic transformation.

In our days it has become trendy to take up new forms of artistic representation like photography, computer graphics, happenings, performance. Some try to declare the «old» art dead, unnecessary, hopelessly gone into the past with its canvases and paints, metal casting as old as metal and handmade prints dating back long before the printing press. It's easier to destroy than to preserve.

Albina Akritas is one of those who took the responsibility for the fate of fine arts, ancient and immortal as the humanity.































1. Annunciation. 2014.
Oil painting on canvas.
56x68.



2. Madonna with Child. Triptych. 2003.
Boards. Mixed technique.
180x100.



6. Judgment of King Solomon. 2002.
Oil painting on canvas.
88x84.



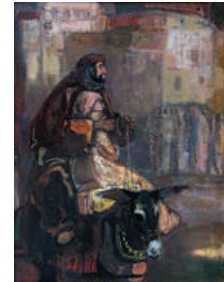
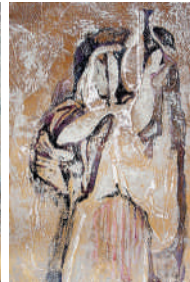
7. At the Brook. 2012.
Oil painting on canvas.
69x65.



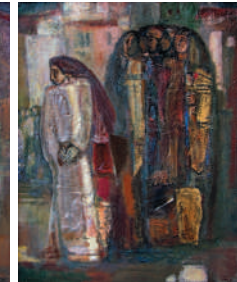
3. Old Testament Triptych II. 1998.
Engraving on cardboard.



The left part. David. 50x80.
The central part. Salome before Herod. 81x80.
The right part. Shulamith. 50x80.



8. Road to Bethlehem. Triptych. 2004.
Oil painting on hardboard.



The left panel. 68x88,5.
The central panel. 55x88,5.
The right panel. 68x88,5.



4. The Return of the Prodigal Son. 2002.
Oil painting on canvas.
110x95.



5. Mary with Child and the Bird. 2013.
Plywood. Mixed technique.
75x149.



9. Christ and the Sinner. 2004.
Oil painting on canvas.
150x180.



10. Prayer. 2003.
Paper. Pastel.
31x42.

Antique Dance























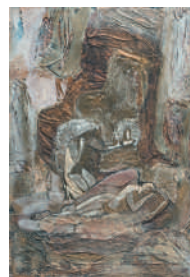




11. Antique Dance. 2003.
Oil painting on canvas.
160x110.



12. Aristotle and Diogenes. 2012.
Oil painting on canvas.
110x120.



17. Psyche and Cupid. 1999.
Cardboard. Mixed technique.
69x99.



18. Judgment of Paris. 2011.
Canvas. Mixed technique.
100x80.



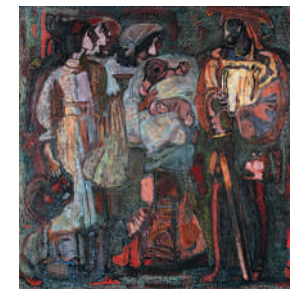
13. Kores. 1997.
Paper. Mixed technique.
54x56.



14. Penelope. 1999.
Hardboard. Collage.
47x69.



19. Three Graces. 2003.
Paper. Mixed technique.
45x52.



20. Parting of Hector with Andromache.
2001. Oil painting on canvas.
104.5x105x.



15. Abduction of Europa. 2001.
Oil painting on canvas.
160x100.



16. Fight for the Body of Hector. 1997.
Paper. Mixed technique.
61x50.



21. Judgment of Paris. Triptych. 2004.
Hardboard. Collage.

The left part. 80x154.
The central part. 100x111.
The right part. 80x154.

Faith,

Hope,

Love























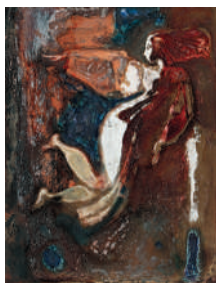








22. Faith Hope Love. 2010.
Plywood. Mixed technique.
153x105.



23. Spring. The series «Seasons». 2008.
Cardboard. Mixed technique.
55x70.



27. Players. 2008.
Oil painting on canvas.
122x130.



28. Spanish Dance. 2006.
Oil painting on canvas.
115x115.



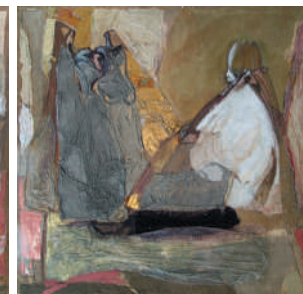
24. Summer. The series «Seasons». 2010.
Cardboard. Mixed technique.
55x70.



25. Conversation. 2007.
Tempera. Bronze.
59x83.



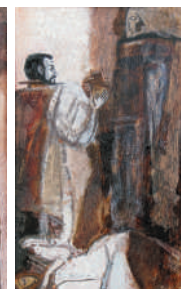
29. Jeanne of Arc. Triptych. 2011.
Boards. Mixed technique.



The left panel. King. 64x150.
The central panel. Trial. 150x150.
The right panel. Execution. 64x150.



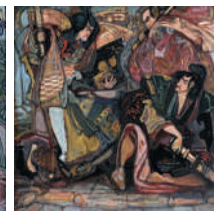
26. Don Juan. Triptych. 1998.
Boards. Mixed technique.



The left part. Don Juan and Laura. 60x95.
The central panel. The Date. 60x95.
The right part. The final. 60x95.



30. Japanese triptych. 2010.
Plywood. Mixed technique.



The left part. Geishas. 160x120.
The central part. Samurai. 120x120.
The right part. Tea ceremony. 160x120.



Maria Chegodaeva

ALBINA AKRITAS

«My Art» series

Editor

Alicija Veshnivecka

Design & layout

Dmitry Chegodaev

Translation

Roza Karataeva

Margarita Orlova

Proof of readers

Marina Belova

Printed in «Up Print»

129626, Moscow, 3rd Mytischinskaya str., 16

Tel.: 8 (495) 980-92-30, 8 (495) 979-64-38

Fax: 8 (495) 980-92-31

e-mail: up@up-print.ru

www.up-print.ru