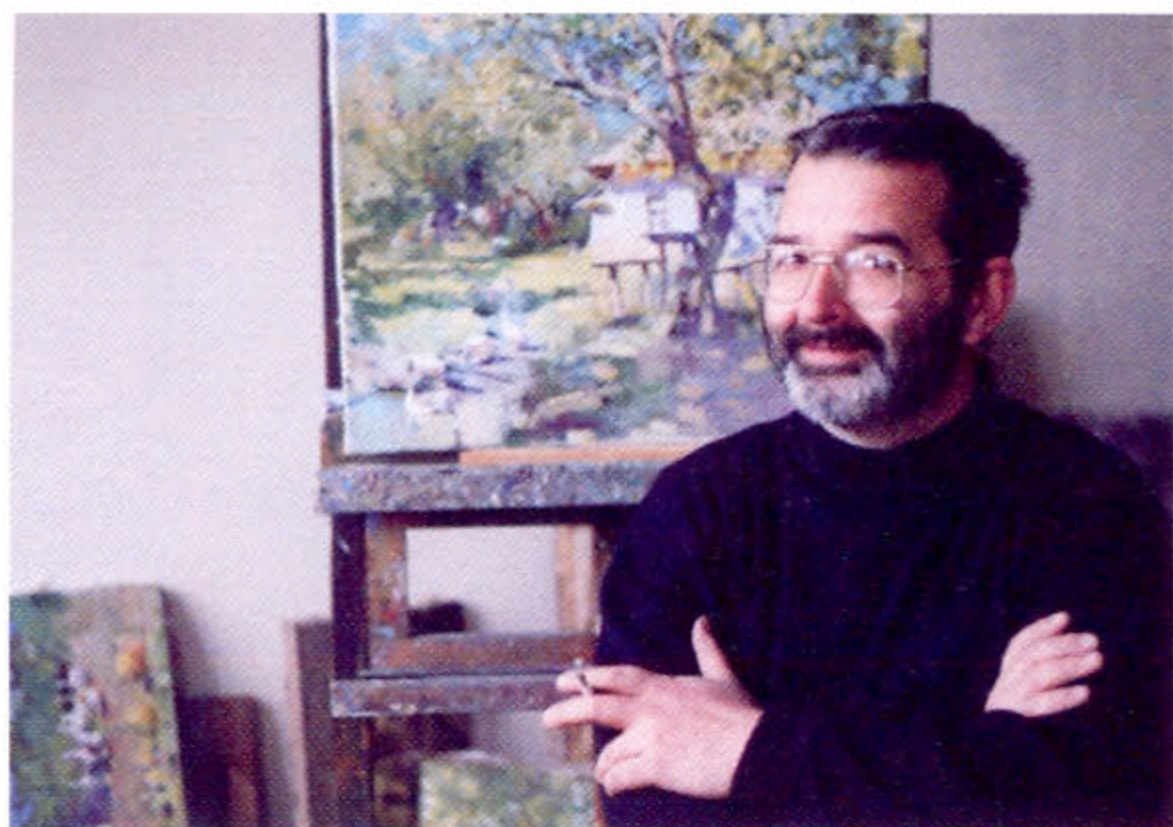


FLEETING IMPRESSIONS

Andriy Yalanskyi has been described in his native country as the 'Monet of Ukraine'. Erik Empson asks him how he came by his Impressionist style and how it is changing



How did you come by your particular style?

I was fortunate to be educated in a good classical school of art – this education gives a good basis to work in any style.

Which artists have influenced you the most?

My strongest influences and the artists I identify with most are the French Impressionists Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir.

How has art changed in Ukraine in the post-Communist era?

Social subjects have changed. There are no more paintings with slogans for freedom and equality. At the time these were very strong themes but appeared at times with an exaggerated nationalistic subject. There was never a shortage of materials in the Soviet period, nor is there now. The only issue is the matter of price.

The subjects of many of your paintings are not classically impressionistic. Is there a paradox in the use of the 'insurgent' style for quite conservative themes?

The method or technique is largely the same but the subject matters are different because artists depict their own societies, which inevitably change over time – there are nearly 100 years of differences in Western and Soviet Impressionism. What was revolutionary in past times has become established and accepted.

How, then, does the style of Impressionist art relate to its content?

The Impressionist style can be used for any subject matter. I like painting rural scenes and I like expressing

myself through these themes. During the Soviet period these subjects were not encouraged and you had to work hard to prove yourself and be accepted for it.

You often use small spots of primary colours, (beaks of geese, the red jackets of huntsman): is this a deliberate device?

The use of small spots of primary colours is to attract attention to the subject matter and get colour effect to the paintings. Adding them is simply done by intuition.

Your paintings are quite meticulous in balance, colour and subject, but appear to have been done in a single sitting. How long on average does each take to paint?

Certainly, with good education and its daily application, it might take one to two hours for small paintings and three to four hours for larger ones. It takes much longer to think about the art and to find the right subject matter.

Do you paint *en plein air*?

The landscapes are painted *en plein air* and the dynamic subjects are photographed and done in the studio. I also use broken colour – three or four short strokes helps to achieve a more delicate presentation.

What challenges are you addressing in your painting? How do you see your art developing?

My aim could be described as trying to show to people what they fail to see every day. Not everybody has the ability to spot or see the unusual or beautiful in the simple things around us. I hope to carry on in the same direction in the near future. ■



RIGHT Andriy Yalanskyi, *Ducks, village street*, oil on canvas, 40x60cm

Profile

Andriy Yalanskyi was born in 1959 in Kyiv, Ukraine, and studied at the State Art Lyceum and the Ukrainian Academy of Fine Arts. His work is held in private and state collections worldwide. His work can be seen at Old Gala House, Galashiels, 22 September to 27 October, and at the Kinblethmont Gallery, Kinblethmont Estate, Arbroath, Scotland, from 25 September to 12 October, where he will also be artist-in-residence. See www.danusha-fine-arts.co.uk or www.kinblethmont.com/artgallery.htm, or call (01241) 830756.