

Sasha

By Noah M. Anacleto

His real name is Alexandre Kouznetsov, but call him Sasha, and anything but ordinary. Sasha's art, like his personality, is uniquely eccentric and inimitable. His character is kind and inviting as well as dry and sarcastic as he shows me around his apartment and tells his story. He has just woken up, and he prepares two cups of Russian tea then sits down and lights a cigarette.

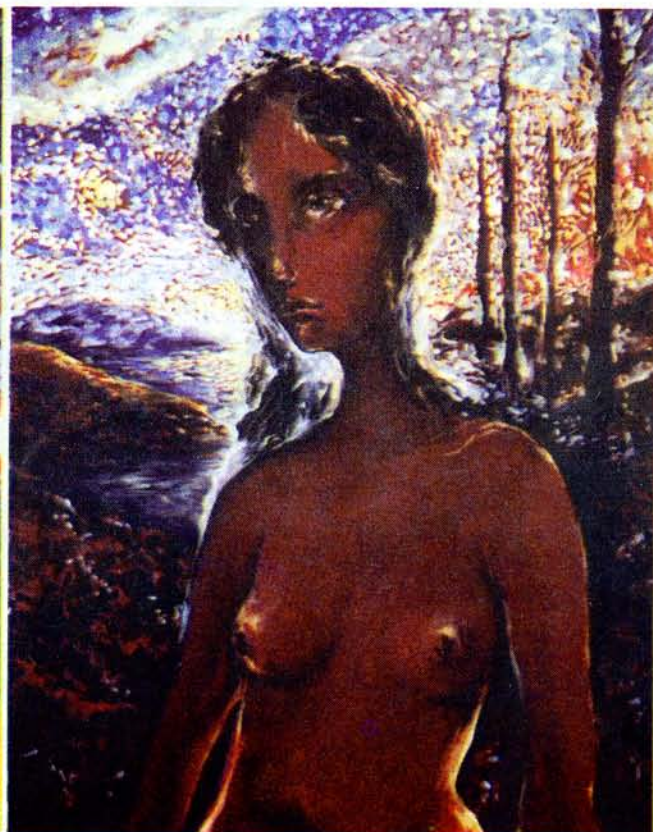
Originally from Kiev, Russia, Sasha has traveled all across the U.S., from Los Angeles to New York, "you name it, everywhere." Having lived in Newport for twelve years now, he considers the town "very convenient," in that it lies between New York City and Boston, and says he enjoys the atmosphere, the ocean, and his very good friends here. Also, "it's a big enough town for me to hide...life is very good here."

Upon first arrival to the U.S., Sasha knew only two English phrases, "How much?" and "I love you." Albeit these two statements could be very helpful in some places, Sasha knew he had to "start from the beginning." Disliking the linguistic solitude, he began to read books and watch movies in English, solely educating himself in the language. "No more professors, just artists and me," he said, and believes his moving here was "destiny and decision all together," that if he remained in Russia he "never would have developed into [his]self." Now he is pleased to simply "paint and be myself."

And as for his art: "How do you describe artwork? It's like how do you describe a soup or a salad? It is very tasty," Sasha said. "My art is very yummy, very tasty." And he's right, attempting to transform the visual appeal of his work into words is futile. Astounded by the pieces he showed me during our interview, I was anxious to tell friends about them, yet my descriptions did no justice. His portfolio is various and diversified, a conglomeration of different artistic styles and expressions, all astoundingly unexplainable. Some are blatantly political and some are soothing and emotional, some are abstract while others are portraits, including a convincing replica of the Mona Lisa.

"There are so many styles, I get bored with one and move on to another. Like composers or writers, I become obsessed with a certain style for a few months, then switch to a new one," Sasha said. "How can a guy paint the same crap for seventy years, it's very boring." The variety in his work allows Sasha to convey to his audience an array of different emotions and psychological responses, especially the pieces that are politically influenced. "As I learn about people in this world, it makes me more disappointed and sad," he said. "I am extremely political, but I hate politicians.."

Currently Sasha is writing, something he has always loved to do, and filming footage for "Painting with Sasha," a comedic TV show in the works in which he plays a disgruntled, sarcastic painter who "hates original talent and praises the mediocre." He delivers satirical painting lessons based on making money and selling the work, regardless if you can paint or not.



Meeting Sasha was like seeing his art; it can't be described, just experienced. For more information on Sasha or his art, visit www.sashasdreamworld.com.

kouznetsov