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Avdeyev Mixes Myths In New Enameled Art

By Eleonora Krolevetskaya

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The artist stands with his enameled creations, which contrast classical sculpture with traditional folk designs. **Vladimir Filonov**

Svetlana Sazhina's gallery opened a new enamel art works exhibition Friday in which creator Andrei Avdeyev presented nearly 20 exhibits of different sizes from his new series "Atlantises."

The art objects were constructed through highly complex processes, and the result is visually unpredictable. It combines work with metal and glass, giving almost eternal life to the pieces. The sparkling enamel gets its amazing look after being melting at over 800 degrees celsius. Andrei Avdeyev has used this ancient technique for more than 20 years and has exhibited his work throughout Europe and Asia. Nowadays, he is one of the artists whose creations are regularly displayed at Svetlana Sazhina's gallery. He dedicated a year to creating the "Atlantises," and each panel took him about a week.

Avdeyev was inspired by Sri Lanka's folk art. During his visit to the island, his attention was attracted by the antique ritual masks. Masks have historically played a role in native religions in China, Ancient Egypt, India and the Middle and Far East. Everywhere, the purpose of the masks was to contact paranormal forces. This mask motif led to the idea of mixing artistic heritages of different civilizations. "Developing within its own patterns, every culture is managed by the same fundamental rules, and they exist at the same time from a global point of view," Avdeyev said to The Moscow Times. "Each of them are of one origin."

Each work in "Atlantises" combines ancient European art pieces and Sri Lankan masks, creating an amazing visual impression through the use of bright-colored enamel. Hellenic gods, heroes, caryatids, formed in famous sculptures, are shown wearing colorful pagan masks in Avdeyev's panels. This combination allows one to describe his style as both symbolist and postmodern.

The most remarkable of the pieces on display, and one of the artist's favorite works, is "Winged Victory of Samothrace," which displays the Greek goddess Nike against a yellow background with a grinning ethnic mask on her face. The detail-minded artist pays attention to every little thing, from the folds of clothes to the mask's decorations. Both the sculptures and masks images act in concert to transport the viewer to the ancient epochs of art history. From Michelangelo's "David" covered with a tattoo of a Chinese dragon all over his body to a blue-colored "Venus de Milo," all of the exhibits are a transformation of sculpture into flat panels.

"In my mind, 'Atlantis' is a symbol of antiquity and a common noun. There are many of them, but for us every ancient culture is Atlantis," Andrei Avdeyev said.

"Atlantises" exhibition will run until Oct. 25 at Svetlana Sazhina's gallery, 17 Brusov Pereulok.

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