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Nonconformist Art Pioneer Dies in St. Petersburg

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Vladimir Ovchinnikov, a founder of the Leningrad Nonconformist art movement, has died in St. Petersburg after a lengthy illness, the Interfax news agency reported Monday. He was 73.

"An amazing artist and a noble man. ... He has long been part of St. Petersburg art history, not a single exhibition could be held without his work," Alexander Borovsky, head of the contemporary art department at the State Russian Museum, wrote on Facebook.

Ovchinnikov was born in the Perm region but moved to St. Petersburg as a child. He is credited with creating a style that combined magic realism landscapes with icon painting traditions. His contribution to the 1964 Hermitage exhibition of Nonconformist artists cemented his reputation as an underground painter, and his work was regularly shown all over Europe, the United States and China.

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