

Elisabeth Anisimow Is Living Art

The teen spent her summer painting a chapel and planning a ball.

By [Galina Stolyarova](#)

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This summer the 13-year-old Elisabeth Anisimow spent her summer vacation at the dacha — painting an image of the Transfiguration of Christ on a village chapel.

Born to Russian parents in Los Angeles, Elisabeth (Lisa) Anisimow showed an interest in art at an early age. When she was still a toddler, her mother would take her and her older brother to the magnificent St. Petersburg museums, where Liza would spend a long time gazing at the art. It was about that time that she first tried drawing, and it was immediately obvious that she had talent. Although she has never had any formal training, the first auction of her works took place only five years later during a fundraising event in Los Angeles. Now, aged 13, she is a hard-working, globe-trotting and internationally recognized art prodigy, with a stunningly diverse artistic experience under her belt and a website of her works.

French traditions, modern execution

Around the age of nine, Elisabeth got inspired by the French tradition of tableaux vivants and works of Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Claude Monet. Elisabeth's signature style today is to integrate painting on live models into a painted environment that she created.

Her most significant work of this kind was created in 2019, when Elisabeth was invited to make a large living art installation, titled Christmas Muse Garden, for the K11 Musea in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong. The work took more than eight months to prepare, and Lisa spent six weeks in Hong Kong before the opening. After the launch of the project in Hong Kong the artist also held a series of live painting sessions in K11 Musea space.

Elisabeth gave an unorthodox rendition of the Christmas winter atmosphere, with the sun shining over fancy unicorns and no sign of traditional reindeer. "It was a very colorful Christmas festival," she recalls. "Snowballs were falling from a blue summer sky. It was fun! It was a different kind of magic!" she told The Moscow Times.

The artist particularly likes to paint her face and says it is as thrilling as a theatrical performance. "It is a bit like trying on a new identity, or showing the inner me, which I do not normally expose. And a new face kind of lets me do whatever I like without being recognized!" she said.

A village chapel

Lisa typically spends her summer holidays in St. Petersburg, where her mother Yekaterina grew up. This year in the Pristan village not far from St. Petersburg, Elisabeth received a request that was very different from what she had done before. She was asked to paint the subject of Transfiguration on the front panel of chapel in the nearby Klyukoshitsy village. In the Pristan village they have a long tradition of celebrating the Apple Feast of the Savior, which commemorates the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, and the panel was especially meaningful to them. The St. Frol & St Laurence church is the closest to Pristan village, and the icon on the front of the church had almost vanished due to aging.

"I was a bit frightened at first, such serious work is a great responsibility, so I said no," Lisa said. But the genuine encouragement of the village residents along with a blessing of the priest soon made the artist reconsider and accept the offer.

"We talked everything through, and everyone supported me," she recalled. "The priest was really supportive and very specific about the artwork. He showed me many specific religious pieces to give me an idea of what they needed, and he also made sure I didn't add too much of my imagination to it."

In the end, although she did not stray from the canons, Elisabeth did bring her optimistic color palette into the piece. The priest and the village residents are very pleased with the result.

A St. Petersburg ball

Lisa's next project is a ball for 50 "painted" people in St. Petersburg. "I want to do an art

performance with 50 costumes which I would create for 50 characters, and I want to be among them myself,” she said. “I am thinking about a kind of ball with intricate costumes, designs, perhaps, paper wigs...but I won’t tell you all about it! I hope to do it in St. Petersburg, and hopefully before November. The architecture is beautiful here. I already have a picture of it in my mind.”

As a self-taught artist, Elisabeth never received a classical arts training. She would like to study in a contemporary arts school in Japan or Berlin when she grows up. “I love painting because I can express myself easily,” she said.

“There are so many different colors, ways to show what I am feeling, to bring to a piece of paper the things that I see in my mind.”

The essence of her art is, she says, “Escape from reality”: whimsical, bright, imaginative, a feast of color and emotion. “My art may seem childish in a way, because it is very playful, but on the other hand it is a great way for adults to travel back to their childhood, to its happiest moments.”

For more about Elisabeth Anisimow and her works, see her [site](#).

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