

ERNST NEIZVESTNY



SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

Education and War

In the USSR

After Exile

1995 – 2000

1926 Born April 9, 1926, in Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg) in the Ural Mountains.

1939-42 Wins national competition and attends special school for artistically gifted children, first in Leningrad, then in Samarkand during WWII.

1942-45 Volunteers for service in the Soviet Arm Forces. Commissioned as airborne commando officer and sees action on Second Ukrainian front. Severely wounded in Austria on April 22, 1945, declared dead, and "posthumously" awarded the Order of the Red Star for heroism.

1945 Teaches drawing at Suvorov Institute in Sverdlovsk.

1946 Starts to study art at the Academy for Fine Arts in Riga, Latvia.

1947-54 Studies art at Surikov Institute of Art in Moscow. At the same time studies philosophy at Moscow University.

1955 Becomes a member of Sculpture Section of the Union of Soviet Artists, Moscow Branch.

In the USSR...

1954-62 Participates in youth, republic, and all-union exhibitions in Moscow.

1956 Begins work on Tree of Life project.

1957 Wins two medals at the Fourth International Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow.

- 1958 Begins work on his "Gigantomachia" series. "Heart of Humanity" evolves into the "Tree of Life" architectural monument to human creativity in art, science, and technology.
- 1959 Wins national competition for Victory war monument commemorating Soviet victory over Nazi Germany.
- 1962 Takes part in Manege exhibition in Moscow to mark the 30th anniversary of MOSKH (Moscow Section of the Artist's Union). Discusses art with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev.
- 1965 Wins first place in the International Dante Competition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Also takes part in a symposium: "Sculpture in Free Space", and erects two sculptures - "Centaur" and "Stone Tears" - in Yugoslavia. Joint exhibition with Marc Chagall at Grosvenor Gallery, London.
- 1966 Executes 150-meter decorative relief, "Monument for All the Worlds Children" for Artek Pioneer Camp in the Crimea.
- 1968 Illustrates Dante's Short Works (Moscow: Nauka, 1968). Wins international competition with design for "Lotus Blossom" monument, the largest sculpture in the world, for the Aswan Dam in Egypt.
- 1969 English art critic John Berger publishes: Art and Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the USSR.
- 1970 Exhibitions at Museum of Modern Art in Paris, and Museum of Fine Arts in Locarno, Italy.
- 1972 Executes the 15m stainless steel sculpture "Prometheus" for *Electro-72* exhibition, and exhibits in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tel-Aviv, Israel.
- 1974 Creates tombstone for Nikita Khrushchev at Novodevichiy Monastery in Moscow, the 970-meter decorative relief for Institute of Electronics and Technology in Moscow, and a sculptural monument "Wings" for Institute of Light Alloys in Moscow. Takes part in "Progressive Currents" exhibition at Bochum Museum in West Germany. *Great Crucifixion* acquired by Vatican Museum permanent collection.
- 1975 Designs monumental architectural facade for headquarters of Central Committee in Ashkhabad, Turkmenia. Exhibitions in Vienna, Berlin, and the Lincoln Center, New York.

After exile...

- 1976 Emigrates to the West and settles in Zurich, Switzerland. Completes bronze head of Dmitri Shostakovich for Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.
- 1977 Moves to New York City.
- 1982 Essay "On Synthesis in Art" published in Continent Monthly, Paris, France.
- 1983 Presents "Heart of Christ" sculpture to Pope John Paul II. Begins to lecture on art and philosophy at universities in the United States.
- 1984 Erik Egeland's Ernst Neizvestny, Life and Work published in Norway, Canada and the United States. First collection of essays in Russian, Govorit Neizvestnyi (Neizvestny Speaks) published.

- 1987 Neizvestny's "Tree of Life" Museum opens in Uttersberg, Sweden. Essays "Body: Man as Visual Sign" and "Art and Society" published.
- 1988 Designs "New Statue of Liberty" honoring the New Republic of China and the Third World. Meets with Pope John Paul II and presents him with model of Statue of Liberty.
- 1989 Completes illustrations to Samuel Beckett's works. Lectures on culture at Moscow State University. Commissioned to design Holocaust monument in Riga, Latvia, and memorial to victims of Stalinism in Vorkuta, USSR. Elected to full membership in European Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities, Paris, France.
- 1990 Publishes first collection of essays in English; Space, Time, and Synthesis in Art: Essays on Art Literature, and Philosophy, in England, United States, and Canada. Commissioned to design memorials to the Victims of Stalinism in Magadan and Sverdlovsk, USSR
- 1992 Book of "Man's Fate" etchings, Artist Fate, is published. Exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Washington DC. Exhibition at the Le Monde De L'Art, Paris, France. Reception given in Neizvestny's honor by Ambassador of Russian Federation at Embassy in Washington DC. Completes work on the "Ecclesiastes" Series; exhibits them for the first time at the Embassy. Commissioned to create five meter monument, "The Golden Child" for Odessa's 200th anniversary Jubilee.
- 1993 Russian version of Space, Time and Synthesis published, entitled Centaur. Exhibit held honoring the *Tree of Life Peace Monument* at the Russian Federation Mission to the United Nations, New York.
- 1994 Commissioned to create three Monuments; to the Victims of the 1964 Earthquake in Turkmanistan, to poetess Anna Akhmatova in St. Petersburg, and a monument for the Republic of Kalmikia. Exhibition of works at the new Embassy of the Russian Federation in Washington DC.

1995-2000

- 1995 "The Golden Child," installed with opening ceremony in Odessa, May 19th. Starts work on the monument for Kalmikia. Commissioned to create a bust of President Boris Yeltsin. United Nations in New York presented with the "Tree of Life II" sculpture, given by the Government of the Russian Federation and President Yeltsin during the 50th Anniversary Assembly.
- 1996 Attends opening ceremony for the first monument in the Triangle of Suffering to be finished; the "Mask of Mourning", Magadan's Memorial to the Victims of Stalinism. Awarded the highest award for merit before the Motherland for his 70th birthday. Presented with a Government award for the Achievement in Arts by President Yeltsin during a ceremony in the Kremlin Palace. Gallery Dom Naschokina holds first one-man exhibition in Russia. Exhibition of "Ecclesiastes" Series at the Pushkin Museum of fine Arts, Moscow. Unveiling of his monument for Kalmykia "Exodus and Return" in Elista. Accepts invitation to become Cultural Advisor to President Yeltsin.
- 1997 Asked to create two bas reliefs; "Creation" and "Revelations" for the Cathedral of Christ The Savior in Moscow. Is the Keynote speaker at the Caux Conference for Moral ReArmament, Caux, Switzerland. The Mayor's office in Moscow is negotiating to erect the 7 meter "Tree of Life Peace Monument" in Moscow. United Nations office in Geneva accepts the gift of the *Great Centaur* sculpture to be permanently exhibited on the grounds of the Palace of Nations; exhibition of works to celebrate the unveiling.
- 1998 Completes 7m "Tree of Life Peace Monument". Exhibitions in Moscow and Paris. Two Carrara Marble totems (3.5m and 3.7m) are exhibited in New York City, USA. Publishes his illustrations in Ecclesiastes, with *The Black Sun of Koheleth* by Yakov Kumok. Appeared in History Channel's MODERN MARVELS, episode; MONUMENTAL STATUES.

- 1999 Exhibition of "Book of Job Illustrations" at the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Publication of the Illustrations in **Job** with text by Yakov Kumok, to be a companion to the **Ecclesiastes** book. Starts work on a new series of sculpture, *Animal Power*. Was interviewed for and appeared in CNN's COLD WAR POSTSCRIPT.
- 2000 Opening of the Monument "Rebirth" in central Moscow, Russia.
State Tretyakov Gallery buys "War is, ...Stride" for new Modern Russian Art wing.
President-elect Putin decorates Neizvestny with Medal of Honor for Artistic Achievements. Solo exhibition at The Third Festival Of Russian Art at the Festivals' Palace in Cannes, France.

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

Wins national competition to attend special school for artistically gifted children, 1939

Awarded the Order of the Red Star for heroism on the Second Ukrainian front, 1945

Becomes a member of Union of Soviet Artists, 1955

Wins two medals at International Festival of Youth in Moscow, 1957

Wins national competition for "Victory" WWII monument commemorating victory over Nazi Germany, 1959

Wins an international competition for the decoration of the Aswan Dam, Egypt 1969

Elected honorary member of European Academy of Arts, Sciences and Humanities, Paris 1976

Elected to full membership in European Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities, 1989

Elected active member to the New York Academy of Sciences, February 1986

Elected a foreign member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm, Sweden, May 1986

Member, International Society for Human Rights, Inc.

Guest Professor in art and sciences: New York University, New York, Harvard University, Cambridge, Yale University, New Haven, University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, New York, American Association for the advancement of Slavic Studies & Humanist in residence, University of Oregon, Eugene

Honorary Doctorate of Moscow State University for Humanic Studies, 1996

Government award for Achievement in Arts, Moscow, Russia 1996

Award for highest merits before the Mother Land, 1996

Cultural Advisor for the Russian Federation 1996

Lifetime Achievement Award, National Children's Leukemia Foundation 1997

Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, Riga, Latvia 1997

QUOTES

"His series of two hundred etchings entitled Man's Fate is, by any critical standard, one of the great graphic works of our time, comparable to Rouault's Misere or Picasso's Guernica etchings." Wrote eminent British art critic **John Berger** in his book Art and Revolution; Ernst Neizvestny and the Role Of The Artist In The USSR.

from **New York City Tribune**, March 29, 1988:

"All my life I create the work of children, and you create the work of man." Alexander Calder about Ernst Neizvestny.

Neizvestny has been called "one of nature's monumentalists" by **John Russell**, art critic for the New York Times.

Noted author **Harrison Salisbury** writes, "I regard Ernst Neizvestny as one of the great artistic talents of the twentieth century." From the blending of his two worlds, the oppression of the USSR and the freedom of the west "...Neizvestny has emerged as a true voice of our contradictory times."

Arthur Miller has described Neizvestny as an "artist of the East: who is regarded by Russians as an "expression of the country, of its soul, language, and spirit" and as a "prophet of the future" who represents the "philosophical conscience of his country." In Miller's view, Neizvestny's art--with its themes of suffering and violence, and its quest for the meaning of life--is a "prophetic assertion of human solidarity" and is profoundly religious, because it "seeks the transfiguration of flesh into spirit, of society into the city of God."

from **HENRY MOORE: The Human Dimension:**

"In the twentieth Century tradition of sculpture this constructive, creative role of negative volume or 'empty space' is perhaps most fully expressed in Moore's work...and in this Neizvestny is his successor."

by Sergi Kuskov, in his essay entitled "The influence of Henry Moore's work on the emergence of the soviet *Unofficial Art* of the 1960's and 1970's,"

from **The New Yorker**, July 13, 1987;

Neizvestny is compared to Michelangelo: "In the art schools of Russia, there's an intense fundamentalism...They have a quality of intense creationism. They can do exactly what they want...Like Dali."

from the **New York City Tribune**, March 29, 1988;

"In just a matter of years, [Neizvestny] has established himself as an internationally-renowned modern American master."

"In 1965, an international jury awarded him first prize in an art competition sponsored by UNESCO in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, to honor the 700th anniversary of Dante. Among the participants...were such notables as Robert Rauschenburg and Salvador Dali."

by Wayne Yakes, special to NYCT

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- Illustrations of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (Moscow: Nauka, 1970)

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"Man's Fate" etchings, Artist Fate, published 1992

Russian version of Space, Time and Synthesis, entitled Centaur, published 1993

Cover art, Their Fathers' Voice by Cynthia Simmons, Peter Lang, New York, 1993

Illustrations Treatise About Angels by Vera Zubareva, published Odessa, Ukraine, 1995

Illustrations of Ecclesiastes, and The Black Sun of Koheleth by Yakov Kumok, Priscels, Moscow 1996

"Remove Not the Ancient Landmark": Public Monuments and Moral Values, Edited by Donald Martin Reynolds, ***Monument to Russian Martyrs Under Stalinism*** by Ernst Neizvestny pp139-140 Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1996

Cover art, De Sista Hundra Dagarna (The Last One Hundred Days) by Boris Pankin, Wiken Publishers, Switzerland, 1996

International Affairs ***The Tree of Life*** by Ernst Neizvestny pp 180-186 Volume 44, Number 1, 1998

Illustrations The Book of Job, with "Grandeur out of Dust and Ashes" by Yakov Kumok, Koheleth, Moscow, 1999

1990-2009

Fame Artist Inc.

Ernst Neizvestny is one of the most important artists of our time. Certainly one of the finest monumental sculptors of our time. He has rightfully earned his place in history. It has been an honor to working with him and publishing the Heart OF Christ

original stone lithograph & selling his sculptures and paintings. Ernst is truly an artist of the people of the world.



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Ernst Neizvestny & Pope John Paul



Ernst Neizvestny & Boris Yeltsin



Ernst Neizvestny decorated by Vladimir Putin