

# Friends of Nukus Museum



April 21, 2008

## Quarterly Newsletter No. 4

1. Spring greetings from Washington, D.C. (David Pearce and Rada Lankina), Amsterdam (Kees Kramer), The Hague (Richard Dion), and Nukus (Marinika Babanazarova and her colleagues). We hope that 2008 to date has been a peaceful and productive one for all Friends of Nukus Museum.

### A. FoNM Foundation News

2. **Governance.** *First*, as already announced, Kees Kramer relocated from Turkey to The Netherlands earlier this year and, in early March, became General Manager of the Crowne Plaza—City Centre Hotel in Amsterdam. *Second*, Richard Dion, who, as some Friends may recall, spent several years in Tashkent (with his wife, Charlotte Altenhoner of UNHCR) and is now with Shell International in The Hague, has kindly agreed to join the Board as Treasurer. *Third*, en route to Bishkek, David Pearce plans to visit Tashkent and Nukus during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May to discuss with Marinika Babanazarova and her staff the progress of various projects and plans for 2008-09—supplementing the now regular semi-monthly Board SKYPE teleconferenced meeting involving David, Kees, Richard, Rada, and Marinika.

3. Meanwhile, we are still seeking: (a) one additional Friend able and willing to volunteer as the fifth Board member provided for in the Foundation's statute; and (b) five additional Friends able and willing to act as alternates or deputies for all five Board positions. The time involved is modest—averaging perhaps 5-6 hours monthly, comprising two hour-long teleconference calls plus 3-4 hours for advice, consultation, and correspondence, mainly by email.

4. **Membership and contributions.** To date, fifty six (56) old and new Friends have responded to the invitation letters issued last year and are thus considered FoNM members (*cf.* Attachment 1). About half have contributed

US\$100, €80 or their equivalent for the membership year July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008. Thus, the balance in the FoNM's bank account is currently €1,583 or about US\$2,375, plus \$200 paid by two Friends in cash directly to the Museum. To those who have already contributed, many thanks for your support! To those who have not yet, we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

The **Friends of Nukus Museum Foundation** account—at ABN-AMRO Bank, Bezuidenhoutseweg 33, The Hague, 2594 AC Netherlands—is: **581557352**. Inter-bank routing codes for international transfers are: BIC ABNANL2A; or IBAN NL17ABNA0581557352

5. **Financials.** Meanwhile, in line with the principle that at least 90% of membership contributions should be made available directly to the Museum (in cash or in kind), we are now discussing with Marinika which small project(s) may be earmarked for specific FoNM support later this year (commencing July 1, 2008)—for example: (a) restoration of specific painting(s) from the Savitsky collection; (b) reproduction of existing publicity materials (such as greeting cards, posters, CDs and/ or videos, etc.) for sale in the Museum's shop; or (c) additional support for the on-going *Museum on Wheels* project. At this point, the total amount available—about US\$2,500—remains modest albeit, symbolically, very important. Obviously, US\$5,000, *i.e.* the amount potentially available from 56 paying Friends, would go twice as far; and, US\$10,000 from the targeted 100 paying Friends by end-2008 would be a very significant annual contribution. This latter remains the Foundation's goal in the short-term. Later, if successful in mobilizing corporate and/or other foundation resources for specific projects, we hope it will be possible to contemplate a more ambitious, higher level of direct FoNM support to the Museum in subsequent years.

6. **FoNM Activities.** We are pleased to report important progress in the following ongoing activities, including two new **FoNM-sponsored projects**:

- **FoNM Summer Internship Program.** In consultation with Marinika Babanazarova, FoNM has launched an internship program for students of art, art history, and museum management which, if successful, may become an annual activity. Twelve applications were received in response to a simple internet announcement last month, of which four were selected to spend 1-2 months in Nukus between April—September. Interns will work with Museum staff on a variety of projects of mutual interest, including strategic planning, donor outreach, grant proposal writing, and exhibition conceptualization. FoNM hopes that, besides providing practical help to the Museum and broadening their own experience, these interns—one each from France and the United Kingdom and two from the United States—will also become 'ambassadors' for the Museum, helping to spread the word about Nukus and Savitsky. Many thanks to Richard Dion for this new initiative.
- **Museum/Savitsky Collection Website.** NHA Associates, London has agreed to work with FoNM to help upgrade the Museum's website. While the existing site's overall framework will remain, several areas will be substantially expanded, using examples from the Collection to highlight its range, quality and size. It will also include a separate FoNM section. Once the enhanced website is up and running—hopefully by mid-May in time for the Central Asian early summer tourist season—the FoNM plans to contact tourist agencies specializing in travel to Central Asia with a view to their adding the Museum—as well as other archaeological and cultural sites in Karakalpakstan—to their well-established Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva itineraries. Many thanks again to Richard Dion for leading this new initiative.
- **Les Survivants des Sables Rouges.** Meanwhile, translation from French into English of the catalogue prepared for the 1998 Savitsky exhibition in Caen, France by an informal team of Friends has now been substantially completed. Initial discussions have also begun about the format and scope of its planned publication later this year, including the financial and other resources required. Many thanks to Brigitte Brefort in

Tashkent for all her help with this project. Meanwhile, translation of the catalogue into Russian is also envisaged later this year.

- **FoNM Brochure.** The FoNM publicity brochure attached to the last (3<sup>rd</sup>) Quarterly Newsletter has now been translated into Russian—thanks to Alla Chekhova in Provincetown, MA, Natasha Khan in Vancouver, BC and Rada Lankina. One hundred hard copies of both English and Russian versions have been printed and will be hand delivered to Marinika next month for use by the Museum locally. In addition, thanks to Kathy Ogawa in Washington, D.C. and her sister in Tokyo, the brochure has now also been translated into Japanese. French, German, and Spanish versions are planned for completion by mid-2008.
- **FoNM Discography.** Brigitte Brefort has now completed a wonderful CD/DVD electronic album on the Museum which, in principle, may be an important addition to, and instrument of the Museum's and FoNM's public information and outreach effort. Brigitte, Marinika and David will be discussing how best to replicate and distribute it next month in Uzbekistan.

## B. News from Nukus<sup>1</sup>.

7. From end-February through June, the Museum is holding an exhibition of paintings from the Savitsky Collection by **Kliment Red'ko** (1897-1956) and **Solomon Nikritin** (1898-1965). Red'ko, who spent several years in Paris in the 1920s, is well represented in the Collection by over 50 paintings—one of the best known being perhaps his *Motherhood* oil on canvas (1928) on display in the Museum's permanent exhibition. Nikritin, a graduate of the Kiev School of Art and one of the founders of the Jewish Cultural League in 1919, is similarly well represented in Nukus by over 170 works, with his 1935 oil on canvas *The Old and The New* (pictured above) on display in the permanent exhibition. In June, the Red'ko/Nikritin exhibition will be followed by a two-week photo



<sup>1</sup> This section is based on information provided by Marinika Babanazarova and Nukus Museum staff

exhibition “*Europe in the eyes of Uzbekistanis*” organized in collaboration with the German Embassy in Tashkent.

8. As reported previously, paintings from the Savitsky collection will feature at **two, possibly three exhibitions in Moscow during 2008-09**. **First**, a large exhibition of restored paintings from various collections in Russia and the CIS—including about 20 paintings from Nukus—will be held at the **Tretyakov Gallery** this summer to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute of Restoration. **Second**, the **Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts** plans to host an exhibition of about 100 paintings from the Savitsky collection; this event, a very significant one for the Nukus Museum if it materializes, was originally planned for the fall of 2008, but will now take place in 2009. **Third**, an exhibition of paintings from Nukus is expected to be included as part of a series of Uzbekistan-government sponsored cultural events in Russia in 2009.

9. Meanwhile, the Museum has recently received expressions of interest in possible exhibitions: **first**, in **Germany**—this following a visit to Nukus by the Mayor of Halle, Saxony-Anhalt last month; **second**, in **Japan**—a delegation from The Japan Foundation, with the official approval of the Uzbek Ministry of Culture, plans to visit Nukus in May to investigate prospects for an exhibition in Japan; and **third**, in **Tashkent**—the Russian Embassy has proposed to sponsor an exhibition at the National Bank of Uzbekistan’s (NBU) Gallery in 2009. On the other hand, meetings planned for January 2008 with the **Van Abbe Museum** in **Eindhoven, The Netherlands** to pursue its interest in hosting an exhibition in 2009 have not yet taken place; and, the future of this initiative—as well as a related documentary film about Savitsky and the collection proposed by a British company based in London last fall—is now unclear. Given the Museum’s limited human and financial resources, whether any or all of these exhibition proposals materialize will evidently depend on the availability of significant official, corporate and/or foundation support from the host countries and/or institutions concerned.

10. Visitors to the Museum during the first quarter of 2008 have included: over 100 participants of an International Conference on the Aral Sea, sponsored by President Karimov, including Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov; the new French Ambassador; UNESCO’s new Regional Representative, Ms. Anna Paolini; and a delegation of German financial institutions, including the Mayor of Halle noted above and

representatives of the German Embassy, Tashkent.

11. Finally, the Museum and the Savitsky Collection continue to achieve important international media coverage, including during the last three months: (a) a 16-page, four article illustrated feature in the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of **Steppe Magazine**—



announced in Rada’s email of February 15 to all Friends ([www.steppe.com](http://www.steppe.com))<sup>2</sup>; (b) a 4-page illustrated article entitled “*Le Louvre des steppes*” in the February 11 issue of the French magazine **Télérama**; and (c) a feature article in Uzbekistan Airways’ Inflight magazine. In addition, a **Berliner Zeitung** correspondent visited the Museum in mid-March to research an article for that newspaper; and, on March 27-28, Marinika gave an interview to Piotr Favorov, correspondent of the widely-read Moscow tourism publication **Afisha-Mir**. Finally, thanks to the French Embassy in Tashkent, the Museum recently received 1,000 copies of the French language edition of the Guidebook to the Museum (originally published in 2006 by Silk Road Media UK Ltd. with a grant from the British Council, Tashkent).

### C. Priorities for 2008

12. As part of the Foundation’s reporting obligations to the Dutch authorities earlier this year, the FoNM Board was required to submit a draft business plan and strategy for the next 2-3 years. Priorities for 2008 may be summarized as follows:

- **first**, recruitment of additional individual FoNM members—e.g. 100 by end-2008, & 200 by end-2009—implying potentially increased FoNM financial support to the Museum (US\$9,000 by end-2008 and US\$18,000 by end-2009); and creation of an FoNM Advisory Council of eminent persons;
- **second**, completion of the planned FoNM website (as part of the Museum’s upgraded website) and creation of inter-active FoNM blog (by mid-2008); and, completion of other

<sup>2</sup> A copy of Marinika Babanazarova’s evocative memoir “Remembering Savitsky”—one of the four articles—is being distributed with this Newsletter

publicity/outreach materials such as French, German and Spanish language editions of the FoNM leaflet and the Savitsky FlipAlbum CD;

- **third**, assessment of the prospects for, and mobilization of corporate and/or institutional financial support for specific FoNM/Museum projects—including for the following:
  - (a) completion and publication of the Savitsky biography by mid-2009;
  - (b) translation and publication of the Normandy exhibition catalog (*Les Survivants des Sables Rouges*) by end-2008/early2009;
  - (c) continuation in 2009 and beyond of the “*Museum on Wheels*” education outreach project in Karakalpakstan; and
  - (d) resumption of the “*Restaurauteurs sans Frontières*” painting restoration technical assistance project.
- **fourth**, planning of a possible week-long FoNM visit to Uzbekistan (Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Nukus) either in October/November 2008 or April/May 2009<sup>3</sup>.

13. We look forward to receiving Friends’ comments, questions, and general feedback on any or all of the above—at the electronic email addresses noted in the box below—and, in particular, any ideas or initiatives Friends may have to help make the new FoNM become an internationally sustainable effort and reality.

#### FoNM Board of Directors

David PEARCE, Chairman  
[pearced@verizon.net](mailto:pearced@verizon.net)

Kees KRAMER, Deputy Chairman  
[Kees.kramer@ichotelsgroup.com](mailto:Kees.kramer@ichotelsgroup.com)

Richard DION, Treasurer  
[richardrdion@yahoo.com](mailto:richardrdion@yahoo.com)

Rada LANKINA, Membership  
[friendsnukuseum@gmail.com](mailto:friendsnukuseum@gmail.com)

---

<sup>3</sup> About 12 Friends (from France and The Netherlands) have indicated interest in principle in an April/May 2009 visit