



1. Spring greetings from Washington, D.C. (David and Rada), Amsterdam (Kees), The Hague (Richard) and, in particular, from Nukus (Marinika and colleagues). We trust that 2009 so far has been a productive one for all Friends of Nukus Museum—despite the challenging global economic outlook—and, in this special 25th anniversary year, we look forward to celebrating both Igor Savitsky's remarkable life and Marinika's equally remarkable leadership of the Museum since 1984.

A. FoNM Foundation News

2. **Membership and contributions.** As of end-March 2009, the number of committed Friends, *i.e.* those who have paid annual dues for the 2009-09 membership year, totals **61** located in 19 countries—an increase of 13 compared to end-2008. Forty-two (**42**) Friends, or 69%, live in **six countries**—United States (15), Uzbekistan (10), Netherlands (5), United Kingdom (5), France (4) and Germany (3). Although the Board's short-term goal of 100 paying Friends by end-2008 proved beyond reach, the upward trajectory since end-2007, the growing informal network of Museum visitors and other contacts, and this year's 25th anniversary activities will hopefully guarantee its achievement in 2009. Meanwhile, on behalf of the Museum, we very much appreciate all Friends' continuing interest and support.

3. **FoNM Outreach Activities.** The main highlights of FoNM outreach and related activities undertaken or planned during the first half of 2009 include the following:

- **2009 Internship Program.** Following the success of this initiative last year, an announcement soliciting applications for the 2009 program was posted on the Central-Eurasia Studies List in mid-February. Six applications were received and, following a short-listing and telephone interview process at end-March, two candidates were selected and confirmed earlier this month: (a) **Ms. Anne-Laure Py**, a French citizen, resident in New York, with qualifications and experience in economics, languages, marketing and public relations and, in 2007, a year-long field-based research project involving small-scale silk manufacturing enterprises in Uzbekistan; and (b) **Ms. Olivia Tani**, an Italian graduate student in international studies at Leeds University (England), with research interests in Central Asia, especially

Tajikistan, and arts exhibition experience in Pisa, Italy. Olivia plans to spend the month of May in Nukus, and Anne-Laure the month of June. In addition, there may also be interest among graduate students of London's **Courtauld Institute of Art** (conservation and technology department) in spending time in Nukus.

- **“The Desert of Forbidden Art”—documentary film update.** In keeping with the world class quality of the Savitsky Collection, film makers **Amanda Pope**, an associate professor at the University of California's School of Film-Television (and FoNM member), and **Tchavdar Georgiev** have been able to attract three world class (including two Oscar-winning) actors to narrate this film: Sir **Ben Kingsley** voices Savitsky telling his life story; and, **Sally Field** and **Ed Asner** voice other Savitsky Collection artists who stayed true to their vision despite persecution. The film's working title is “The Desert of Forbidden Art” and its 80-minute length will make it eligible for major international film festivals. Following its planned late-May completion, the film makers, the Museum, and the FoNM will meet to strategize where and when film presentations may be planned in selected European and US cities during the next few months—also as fund-raisers for proposed future exhibitions in Europe and the US. Meanwhile, to help them mobilize support on behalf of the Museum—specifically to obtain entry to film festivals, to secure television broadcasts, and to arrange other screening and outreach activities, **Amanda** and **Tchavdar** would appreciate receiving Friends' suggestions and names of possible contacts at: apope@cinema.usc.edu. In this connection, the Kunsthal Museum in Rotterdam, Netherlands recently confirmed its interest in hosting an exhibition from the Savitsky Collection in 2010-11. Thanks to **Richard** for this initiative.
- **Karakalpaks of the Aral Delta.** As some Friends may already know, two independent British scholars, **David and Sue Richardson**, have been researching the culture, ethnography and history of Karakalpakstan full-time since their first visit there in 1996. In the process, they have assembled at their home in Nottingham (England) the largest collection of costumes, carpets and yurt decorations outside the former Soviet Union, as well as a very substantial library. They have now developed sufficient material to write a high quality illustrated book—tentatively entitled *Karakalpaks of the Aral Delta*—and are

currently seeking a publisher and and/or sponsor(s). Friends interested in learning more about Karakalpakstan as well as the results of the Richardsons' research to date, may do so by visiting their fascinating website: www.karakalpak.com.

- **FoNM Leaflet.** Thanks to **Martin Raiser**, the FoNM information leaflet is now available in a sixth language—**German**, in addition to **English, French, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish**. Thanks to **Rada**, 50 hard copies of this recently printed German version will be delivered to the Museum later this month, in time for the upcoming 'tourist' season. **Olivia**, one of this year's two summer interns, is expected to help prepare an **Italian** version next month. Meanwhile, Friends interested in obtaining copies of these leaflets (PDF format) for dissemination within their communities or networks may download them from the website: www.savitskycollection.org. Friends able and willing to help with **Dutch** and **Uzbek** translations planned for completion by mid-2009 are requested to email **Rada** at: friendsnukumuseum@gmail.com.

- **FoNM Visit to Uzbekistan and Karakalpakia 101.** Responding to the announcement in the last Newsletter, some Friends have expressed interest in the planned week-long visit to Uzbekistan, **October 24-31, 2009** and others in the 5-day Karakalpakia 101 program, **September 21-25, 2009**. To clarify, the main difference between the two programs and their estimated cost is that the former—aimed mainly at members living outside Uzbekistan—includes three days of activities and accommodation in Tashkent (two upon arrival and one immediately before departure), whereas the latter—mainly for members and guests living in Uzbekistan—is based entirely in Nukus. Otherwise, the respective five-day itineraries and programs within Karakalpakstan are essentially the same, *i.e.* at least one full day in and around the Museum plus 3-4 days visiting archaeological sites (including those in which Savitsky participated)—*e.g.* Toprak-Kala, Ayaz-Kala, Chilpik, Djanpik-Kala—as well as the Badai-Tugai Nature Preserve, Mizdakhan, and Muynak. Depending on the final number of participants (maximum 15), the estimated all-in, in-country cost (including three nights' hotel in Tashkent, up to five nights' B & B in Nukus, plus lunch and dinner daily, local transport, and guides/interpreters) is expected to be about **US\$800**—plus the cost of transport to and from Uzbekistan (Tashkent and Nukus). The estimated cost of Karakalpakia 101 (including four nights' B & B in Nukus, lunch and dinner daily, local transport, and guides/interpreters) is expected to be about **US\$350**—plus the cost of transport to and from Nukus. In order to proceed with firm planning during

the summer (including reserving accommodation in Nukus and Tashkent), Friends and guests wishing to participate in either of these events are requested to confirm their interest by email to David, copied to Marinika, as soon as possible—and by **June 1** at the latest at: friendsnukumuseum@gmail.com.

B. News from Nukus¹.

4. As previously reported, the Museum's "**Museum on Wheels**" project was selected to participate in UNESCO's so-called Solidarity Program—a two month-long public fund-raising campaign in Switzerland last November-December. In the event, about \$8,000 equivalent was raised, sufficient to permit continuation through 2009 of this important community outreach project, originally funded by the British Council and later by Swiss (SECO) official development assistance.

5. After accepting the Uzbekistan Ministry of Culture's 2008 award for "Most Dynamic Museum



Director in Uzbekistan" on January 12 in Tashkent, Marinika returned to Nukus to receive a **German delegation** led by

Marinika at the award ceremony the Ambassador. During their visit, the delegation presented the Museum's restoration department with a **€2,000 grant** in-kind—*e.g.* optical visors, scalpels, spatulas, adhesives and specialized paper. The Ambassador also indicated that an art restoration expert will be made available to help upgrade the Museum's expertise in this crucial area.

6. While the number of foreign visitors during the 1st (winter) quarter of 2009 was obviously small, an 8-person group from Tashkent led by Brigitte Brefort spent the (pre-Naurys) weekend of March 14-15 visiting all departments of the Museum as well as several Khorezm archaeological sites—*i.e.* 'piloting' a shorter, weekend version of Karakalpakia 101. An interesting time was had by all. Thanks to **Brigitte** for her leadership of this initiative—and to **Marinika** for hosting the group.

7. Meanwhile, the Savitsky story and the Museum were the subject of a feature article—*Der Schatz in der Wüste* (Treasure in the Desert)—by Jutta Sommerbauer in the **March 28** issue of the Austrian newspaper **Die Presse** (Life & Travel Section). For those Friends who may be interested and who read German, the link to this

¹ This section is based on information provided by Marinika Babanazarova and Nukus Museum staff.

article, including 18 accompanying pictures of Nukus and environs is: <http://diepresse.com/home/leben/reise>. More recently, Cheryl Collins, an American freelance journalist, has written a short piece about the Museum and the FoNM that will appear—as part of a larger feature on cultural pilgrimages—in the **May 17 New York Times (Travel Magazine)**. Thanks to **Amanda Pope, Peter Jones, Don Nicholson,** and **Richard** for their help in facilitating publication of these articles.

7. In addition to her many other official duties and responsibilities, **Marinika** has now almost completed the manuscript of her updated **biography of Igor Savitsky**. At the same time, **Rada** has recently started its translation into English. With FoNM support, the Museum plans to publish the biography, which will include reproductions of selected documents, photographs and paintings, later this year to mark the 25th anniversary of Savitsky's death and Marinika's leadership of the Museum.

8. Partly to celebrate this anniversary and partly to scale up its community outreach in 2009 and future years, the Museum, with support from **Richard** and **Peter Jones** (NHA Associates), has prepared a calendar of events in the form of a **Savitsky commemorative poster**. These events are designed to illustrate various aspects of the Collection, to narrate the Museum's history and development, and to disseminate information about Karakalpakstan more broadly. Colour copies of the poster have been sent to the Museum, to other distribution outlets in Central Asia, and, thanks to **Lucy Kelaart**, to *Steppe* magazine as an insert in its next issue (www.steppe.com). Electronic copies were distributed to all Friends last month and can also be downloaded from the Museum's website: www.savitskycollection.org.



Commemorative Poster

Hopefully, foreign travellers to Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Nukus, as well as residents of Uzbekistan, will be able to participate in some of these activities during the upcoming spring and fall visiting seasons.

9. In this latter connection, Friends and their friends resident in, or visiting the region during the next 3-4 months may wish to note the following Museum events in their calendars:

- **May 16** Restoration Sneak-Preview
- **June 6-7** Women Artists
- **June 20-21** Civilization at Khorezm
- **July 11-12** Karakalpak Folk Art
- **July 27** In Memoriam: Igor Savitsky

Finally, owing to its continued popularity, the exhibition underway since last fall of works by **Arkady Stavrovsky**—25 paintings and 38 drawings—has been extended further.

C. Three Women Artists—Three Profiles

10. The Savitsky Collection comprises *inter alia* paintings and graphics by over 120 artists of the Russian/Soviet *avant garde* and the Uzbek school. Over 20 of the former are women, the best known including Ludmila Bakulina, Nadejda Borovaya, Vera Pestel, Lubov Popova, Antonina Sofronova, and Irina Shtange. Three of the latter are also women—**Elena Korovay, Nadejda Kashina,** and **Valentina Markova**—who, among others, will feature in the Museum's planned 2-day course on **Women Artists in the Savitsky Collection, June 6-7**. The brief profiles below have been prepared by **Rada**, based on material from a variety of published sources.

Elena Korovay (1901-74)

11. Elena Korovay was born in Voronezh (south of Moscow) but spent her childhood in Harbin (China), where her father—a biologist and member of the Royal Geographical Society—had moved to pursue his research. She was a gifted child, interested in poetry, music, and drawing—so much so that her parents, recognizing her exceptional talents, moved to St. Petersburg in 1913 so that she could obtain a professional education. There, she studied at the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts' Drawing School, then directed by Nikolai Roerich.



12. In 1917, the family moved to Barnaul, the capital of Altai Krai in southern Siberia, where she joined a group of left-leaning artists in their pursuit of new art forms—among them Vadim Gulyaev, Valentina Markova and Mikhail Kurzin. From 1920-23, Korovay lived in Moscow and studied at the VKHUTEMAS (Higher Art Technical Studios). During this period, she also traveled extensively with Kurzin (to whom she was later married briefly)—to Siberia, the Caucasus, Crimea and Central Asia. Their travels ended in Uzbekistan, where Korovay settled for over 20 years—initially in Tashkent, then in Samarkand where she worked as a theater artist, at its Fine Arts College, as well as illustrating and writing

children's books. She also helped establish the Samarkand branch of the Union of Artists. Later, in 1946, after experiencing a number of serious personal and professional setbacks, she moved back to Moscow, arranged by the prominent artist Vladimir Favorsky, where she worked initially in a toy factory. For several years thereafter, especially during the Soviet authorities' campaign against 'formalism', she was unable to obtain commissions and, until her collaboration with Favorsky on a mosaic panel for the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw (1955), she was obliged to live from hand to mouth.

13. In 1966, she met Igor Savitsky, who purchased several of her paintings entitled *"In the former ghetto, Bukhara"* and in 1968, he arranged for their exhibition in Moscow. These works, including the famous *"Dyers"* painting, form part of a series she dedicated to the Jews of old Bukhara. In 1969, she joined the Moscow branch of the Union of Artists. Thereafter, thanks to renewed public interest in her work as well as Savitsky's material and moral support, Korovay resumed an extensive and productive artistic life until her death in December, 1974.

14. Koravay is represented in numerous galleries, including Moscow's Tretyakov. Her most important works—21 paintings and 459 graphics—are in the Savitsky Collection.

Valentina Markova (1907-1941)

15. Valentina Markova was born in a small gold-mining settlement in Altay, where her father was a railroad engineer. The family subsequently moved to



Self-Portrait in Winter Hat

Barnaul where, from 1918-20, she attended the private art school of the artist Nadolskaya. There she met Mikhail Kurzin and Elena Korovay, who were impressed by her confidence and originality. Commencing 1923, although only 16 years old, she started exhibiting with her teachers. In 1927, like many other artists, she moved to Central Asia, following Kurzin to Tashkent where they later married, although the relationship did not last. She remained in Uzbekistan for ten years, matured as an artist and joined the exclusive Tashkent-based "Masters of the New Orient" group, experimenting with national styles and a universal artistic language. This group included such artists as Vadim Gulyaev, Mikhail Kurzin, Alexander Volkov, and Usto Mumin, who all became fascinated by the refraction of oriental art and by the ornamental art of different ethnic groups. Although one of its youngest members, Markova earned the group's respect due to

her skill and constant experimentation. Her portraits and other genre works also demonstrated her interest in human psychology. In 1937, Markova moved to Leningrad, where she died in 1941—only 35 years old—one of the many victims of the war-time siege of the city. One day, she simply left her home and never returned.

16. Markova's works often recall those of the old masters of the Italian Renaissance, and of French, German and English romanticism. Unfortunately, many from the Barnaul period did not survive. Those that did include portraits, still-lives, and decorative works of art.

17. Markova is represented in many collections, including St. Petersburg's State Russian Museum. The Savitsky Collection has 33 paintings and 249 graphics.

Nadezhda Kashina (1896-1977)



18. Nadezhda Kashina was born in Perm to a family, on her father's side, of mural and icon artists. She studied at the Perm Public Art School (1920), then from 1921-27 at the VKHUTEMAS (Higher Art and Technical Studios) and VKHUTEIN (Higher Art and Technical Institute) in Moscow under Robert Falk and Sergei Gerasimov. A founding member of the "ROST" arts society (1928-29) and a member of the "Group-13" (1929), she began exhibiting in 1928. After visiting Uzbekistan three times between 1928-30, she decided to stay there, living first in Samarkand then, from 1932, in Tashkent, where she remained until her death in 1977. Kashina's works convey her passion for expressionism and are characterized by the bright light and colors of Uzbekistan. She also authored several articles and monographs, undertook thematic paintings, and designed several murals.

19. Kashina's works are represented in Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery, in St. Petersburg, and in several private collections. The Savitsky Collection includes 207 paintings and 333 graphics. It also holds 6 paintings and 61 graphics by her sister, Nina Kashina (1903-89).

FoNM Board of Directors:

David PEARCE, Chairman
pearced@verizon.net
 Kees KRAMER, Deputy Chairman
Kees.kramer@ichotelsgroup.com
 Richard DION, Treasurer
richardrdion@yahoo.com
 Rada LANKINA, Membership
friendsnukusmuseum@gmail.com