Oleg Vassiliev

Widely known as one of the leading figures of the Soviet Non-Conformist Art Movement (the "unofficial" Russian Art Movement) originating in the late 1960s, Oleg Vassiliev is regarded as one of the most significant Russian artists of his generation. Sadly Oleg passed away earlier this year, but his legacy as a pioneering artist will not be forgotten.

Vassiliev's artistic visions were in constant opposition to the dogmatism of Soviet-era socialist realism. Indeed, Vassiliev's. paintings have been known to them to the distinctive quality of depicting the fantastic innovations of the early 20th Century Russian avant-garde with the Nationalism, frieze and realism that became the hallmark of Russian painting of the 19th Century. In essence, what Vassiliev did was to return to the image in his own visual narrative – his paintings conveyed impressions, moods and sensations through an exploration of light and space. By including, eliminating and transforming a personal, intimate collection of visual images from both past and present, Vassiliev captured something more universal, something common to all human memory.

"Memory is evoked in its choice of subjects. Often, one recalls something quite unimportant, at first glance, seems insignificant, yet memory reinvents some things and lets others go. Apparently, it is not a matter of the mind or the object. Most likely, these have been preserved in an irrational way, immersed in the stream of light that travels from the past to the present. Is the very essence of remembrance, it becomes crystallized into the image of the stream of light. And somehow, even this, beyond the boundaries of the observable, it turns into a river of golden light, is that over the river of light, a different river, the river of light.

— Oleg Vassiliev, 1980