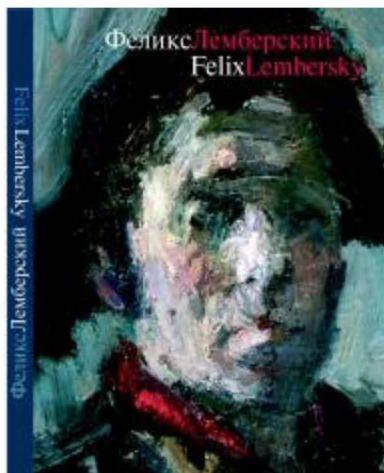


**Феликс Лемберский, 1913-1970 : живопись, графика = Felix Lembersky, 1913-1970 : paintings and drawings** / Alison Hilton and Yelena Lembersky.—Moscow: Galart, 2009.—151 p.: ill.—ISBN 9785269010809 (cl.): \$65.00.



This is the first major monograph to be published on Soviet-era painter Felix Lembersky, and other than a little-seen 1999 exhibition catalog, it is only the second English publication focusing on the artist. The text is made up of two essays each printed both in Russian and English, one by Alison Hilton, and the other by Yelena Lembersky, the artist's granddaughter. A third essay by Yelena Ilyina and Larisa Smirnikh titled "Nizhny Tagil in the Life and Art of Felix Lembersky" is printed only in Russian, as are the artist's collected notes and statements written about him by his contemporaries.

In her brief essay, "Witness and Seer: Felix Lembersky and the Revision of Soviet Art," Hilton introduces the context beautifully and concisely, outlining the issues surrounding

Russian painting prior to the revolution and Soviet painting thereafter. She provides an especially lucid consideration of Socialist Realism as it flipped roles from a subversive form of protest in the decades preceding the revolution to the officially mandated style of the state beginning in the early 1930s. Then, in "The Life and Art of Felix Lembersky," Yelena Lembersky covers her grandfather's career trajectory over forty pages, relating his style to other Soviet painters, analyzing his subjects and compositional arrangements, and even breaking down the physical construction of his canvasses. She observes, "In the foreground of *First News*, a man and a child (about the age of Lembersky during the Revolution) stand at the gate's threshold, neither joining nor turning away from the village crowd gathered around the bearers of the first news of the revolution." This quote sums up Lembersky's ability to work both within and against the strictures of state censorship, as his style evolved from impressionistic and expressionistic variations on Socialist Realism toward eventual geometric abstraction.

The back matter contains a wealth of materials, including a biographical timeline with historical notes, a bibliography, a list of documents in the Lembersky Archive, and lists of selected exhibitions and collections. Lush illustrations are the book's primary strength, with over eighty full-color reproductions and forty more in black and white. This includes ink and pencil sketches and three large photos of the artist. All back matter and image captions are printed in both Russian and English. No artist signatures are provided. As a basic primer on an artist yet unrecognized in the Western Hemisphere, this monograph would likely be of greatest value to art history undergraduates researching Russian painting, Soviet Socialist Realism, or the creative struggle under communism.

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