

Назва музея

Адрас

месца, дата

To Whom It May Concern

Not so long ago, while visiting the museum, I paid attention to the paintings by Nadia Khodasevich Léger, the world-known artist born in Belarus. I was extremely disappointed that the museum shields attribute her as “the French artist of Russian origin” or “born in Russia”. It is not true.

I am Belarusian and I know that the famous artist Nadia Khodasevich (Grabowski) Léger was born in the village of Asetsishchy, now the Dokshytsy district of Vitsebsk region (Belarus) in 1902. We can trace her family roots with the help of the Belarusian history of art researchers.

Nadia Khodasevich’s parents come from the former Barysau district of the Minsk province (now Barysau district, Minsk region in Belarus). Piotr Khodasevich, the artist’s father, was born in the village of Muzhanka, and her mother, Maria, in the town of Zembin. Therefore, Nadia had primary Belarusian origin and lived till the age of 14 in her Belarusian family in the Belarusian village.

In 1917, during World War I, Nadia’s family was evacuated to the town of Belev, Tula province (Russia). From this place, Nadia (she was 15) on her own will leave for Smolensk, where she entered the State Higher Art Workshop. She studied there from Władysław Strzemiński, her compatriot from Minsk, who headed the UNOVIS group in Smolensk.

In 1921, the artist left for Warsaw. She took advantage of refugees from Western Belarus who had the right to return to their homes (the place where Nadia was born turned out to be in Poland). From 1922 she studied at the Academy of Arts and researched Warsaw museum collections. In 1927, after her daughter Wanda was born, Nadia left for Paris together with her husband Stanisław Grabowski, a Polish artist. The woman entered the Academy of Modern Art, managed by Azanfan and Léger (who became her next husband officially in 1952).

In the 1930s, Nadia Khodasevich Léger founded the *L'Art Contemporain — Sztuka Współczesna* magazine, published simultaneously in two languages: French and Polish.

During World War II and the occupation of France, the artist worked underground, distributing partisan leaflets in Paris, she joined the Front Aid Society as well. In 1944, Nadia joined the Union of Soviet Patriots and the Union of Aid to Former Prisoners of War; for the benefit of the Red Cross and the Union of Soviet Patriots, she organized an exhibition-auction of artists participating in the Resistance.

In 1968, Nadia Khodasevich Léger came to the USSR for the first time. She had a chance to visit the places of her childhood in Belarus, and then returned there several times to see her relatives.

Nadia Léger donated some of the paintings by her husband and her works of art (including 72 mosaic portraits) to Soviet museums (the Belarusian ones among them). She also donated more than 2,000 high-quality reproductions of Louvre paintings to Belarusian schools. It was a real event in the early 1970s — a large traveling exhibition that was taken around Belarusian towns and villages. Mosaics, paintings, and graphics by Nadia Khodasevich Léger are being saved in the National Art Museum of Belarus and the Zembin Picture Gallery (a part of the Museum of National Glory in Zembin town, Belarus). Today we can say that exhibitions and art events held in Belarus with Nadia's participation, works of art, and reproductions she presented to the people and country have had a significant impact on Belarus' artistic life in the 1970s.

Let's look at the pages of her memoirs. The first book by Nadia was published in Moscow in 1978. According to this book and researchers' from the USSR and Poland (for instance, Karolina Zykhovich, Zachęta Gallery) testimonies, Nadia Khodasevich Léger consistently identified herself as Belarusian. She had a clear national Belarusian self-consciousness.

To be fair, the artist's contribution to Russian art history is very modest. It is limited by 2 years of her studies in Smolensk (in 1919, it was Belarusian territory, it was the first capital of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Belarus). Nadia spent more time studying in Poland, where she received professional art education at the Warsaw Academy of Arts. And from 1924 until she died in 1982, the artist lived and worked in France, where she developed her artistic style.

Thus, taking into account all written above it is logical and correct to call Nadia Khodasevich Léger a French artist of Belarusian origin. Her work and public activity influenced the formation of Belarus' artistic culture. She also, indirectly, influenced Polish art in the interwar period.

Thank you for reading this message. I hope that my letter will initiate the first (or next) step towards the fair Nadia Khodasevich Léger and other Belarus-born artists' attribution in the (назва музея) museum and everywhere in the world.

I will be glad to receive an answer to my proposal.

Sincerely yours,
імя, прозвішча