Ivan Olasiuk (1961, Saint Petersburg, Russia)

Ivan is a man of unusual fate who had considered himself as an artist from a very

early age. He is from the generation which is called “generation of janitors and

watchmen” in Russia, or “Leningradsky underground”.

An eldest son in a family with many childrens (7)  that lived in a small Ukrainian

village, Ivan started drawing at the age of 4. Employees of the administrative

centre learned about him when he was 14 and offered his parents to send their son

to boarding school so that he could study at school of arts. His father hadn’t agreed

at once to let go his eldest boy, seeing him as a farmworker.

After school of arts Ivan leaves for Odessa to become a graphic artist. Two years

later Ivan realizes that he finds self-development in socialist realism boring and

unpleasant so he breaks off his relations with the official Soviet art. In 1981 he

moves to Leningrad where he works as a janitor, joins the artistic group “Free

Culture” and becomes an active member of the art commune, which is nowadays

Art-centre Pushkinskaya 10, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

In his artistic search Ivan connects the rational and sensual nature. Sometimes he

tries to combine the impossible: sense and intuition, universe and human being.

His paintings are always ambivalent, they are conceptual and spontaneous at the

same time. Ivan calls himself a philosophic artist and sees his works as a visual

utterance. A painting should go through a great number of metamorphoses if an

artist wants to express himself fully. If one observes the process of creation of a

painting, it will be possible to see photographs of different paintings: they differ in

colours, in lines, even in technique of applying the paint.

“Multiple layers. Work and search, creation of multiple layers just to gradually

destroy them. You reach the completeness when you are able to see the mechanism

of the whole structure”.

Ivan uses the traditional stuff: canvas and oil. Sometimes he adds some organics

like ground coffee, egg-shell and water. He uses elements of a collage from time to

time, pasting one canvas or a photograph in another.