

A. RUUSMAA

MINERS-ARTISTS

On St. George's Day (April 23) this year the art club working at the Oil Shale Museum celebrated his 20th jubilee. This club unites people of different age and speciality. Every year one or two bigger exhibitions have been organized, one being the traditional annual exposition in the white hall of the museum, besides 5—6 smaller ones at schools and other places. In this paper we should like to introduce the work of the people working at oil shale industry and making up the majority of amateur artists. One of the most productive artists has been Nikolai Pakki, a former miner of the mine "Estonia", now a pensioner.

The museum owns thirteen pieces of his works of art, mostly paintings. His paintings depict the life of the mine "Estonia": "The mine 'Estonia', winter I—III", "The mine 'Estonia', summer I—II" — a nice series of pictures representing the buildings of this mine during different seasons. The painting "Oil shale" is historical in its way — it is an art document from the period when the mine "Estonia" stood on the threshold of its 6 million tonne yearly output. However, this aim remained unattainable due to some bureaucratic obstacles, the painting was not donated to the mine, and so it found a presentable place in the museum funds. It is a singular work of art simultaneously depicting the work both on the surface and underground. A three-piece series painted in the copper mine of Outokumpu (Finland) recalls the trip to the twin town of Kohtla-Järve. Some paintings represent the local nature and industrial motifs.

Paul Aav, a former miner of the mine "Estonia" (now living in his birthplace in Saaremaa for several years already) was an original artist, too. His ten pieces of art, mainly pencil drawings and water colours belong to the museum collection, including four historical pieces depicting the building of Idla quarter of Kohtla-Järve as well as very vivid and fine still lifes concerning miners' everyday life — "Still life with a telephone" and "Still life with a cage" made in 1983 are lively and rich in colour. He has depicted historical objects as well (Oru castle in Toila, the former manour house in Järve).

The former miner of the mine Käva-2 Vladimir Balahonenkov has painted a lifelike portrait "Org — a smith of the mine Käva-2" (Fig. 1). The former artist-designer of the "Estonian Oil Shale" Georg Trelin (a pensioner now) has painted the picture "Jõhvi church" (one of the first depictions of this church), but he is more renowned



Fig. 1. Vladimir Balahonenkov. "Org - a smith of the mine Käva-2" (oil painting)



Fig. 2. Lea Livšits. "Kiviõli ash hill in spring" (water colour)

for his woodworks which have always flavoured annual exhibitions of the art club. Visitors of the "Estonian Oil Shale" remember his souvenirs representing oil shale mining. The former artist-designer of the Oil Shale Research Institute Lea Livšits (a pensioner now) has given the museum seven water colours representing mainly oil shale industry in Kiviõli and Kohtla-Järve (at present "Kiviter"). Soft and picturesque, they help us to see the beauty arising from the shadows of so-called appalling industrial objects (Fig. 2). One of her paintings, "Flowers grow in Virumaa, too" is a work of art demonstrating the existence and endurance of life in Virumaa, in the miners' land, symbolic during the time when our parts were practically abandoned and struck off.

The former engineer Saima Kaljuvee has painted a water colour "Mine" (Fig. 3) — a lifelike little picture depicting a pause of rest, a lonely trolley waiting for a worker to take it away.

Thus much about the authors and their works presented at an international symposium in Jõhvi cultural centre under the title "Drawing miners". They possess the advantage of being made by experts in mining who have managed to perceive the smallest nuances of the situations and use them in depicting their object. The authors have had the theme at heart — that is why the results are so enjoyable.



Fig. 3. Saima Kaljuvee. "Mine" (water colour)

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