

Artists to Collect

Vladimir Ribatchok





previous spread, *Sunset in Red*, oil on canvas, 44" x 56"  
right, *Symphony of Autumn*, oil on canvas, 44" x 60"



right, *Symphony of Autumn*, oil on canvas, 44" x 60"  
following spread, *Tender Evening*, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"

# Painting the World with Beauty and Passion

written by Debra Usher

The famous Russian writer Lev (Leo) Tolstoy once said, "The foundation of human happiness is the freedom to be with nature, to see it and speak with it."

Artist Vladimir Ribatchok is living proof of that sentiment. As a child growing up in a small town in the Ukraine, Vladimir eagerly took every chance to escape the routine life of the orphanage where he lived, to reconnect with his natural rural surroundings. Roaming for days on end in the vast expanses of fields and forests, he loved the absolute freedom of being immersed in nature, as if he were one with it. After a few days of going missing on one of these adventures, it wasn't uncommon for Vladimir to be found by the police and returned back to his home.

## The Beginning of Life as an Artist

Vladimir would often sit in class and let his creative imagination take precedence over the lesson, filling the pages of his math notebook with elaborate drawings. Noticing this, his teachers brought it to the attention of the school's Principal who took matters into his own hands. Calling Vladimir to his office, the Principal surprised him when, instead of the usual punishment, he gave Vladimir pencils, brushes, paints and a sketch book. He then picked up the phone to make arrangements for art lessons at the School of Creative Youth.

Vladimir recalls, "It was one of the greatest turning points in life for me, that made art everything." The next day after school, he was overjoyed as he walked through the doors of the art studio. It was here, at the age of 14, where

Vladimir met his first serious teacher, Mikhail Telbizov, to whom today he is still grateful.

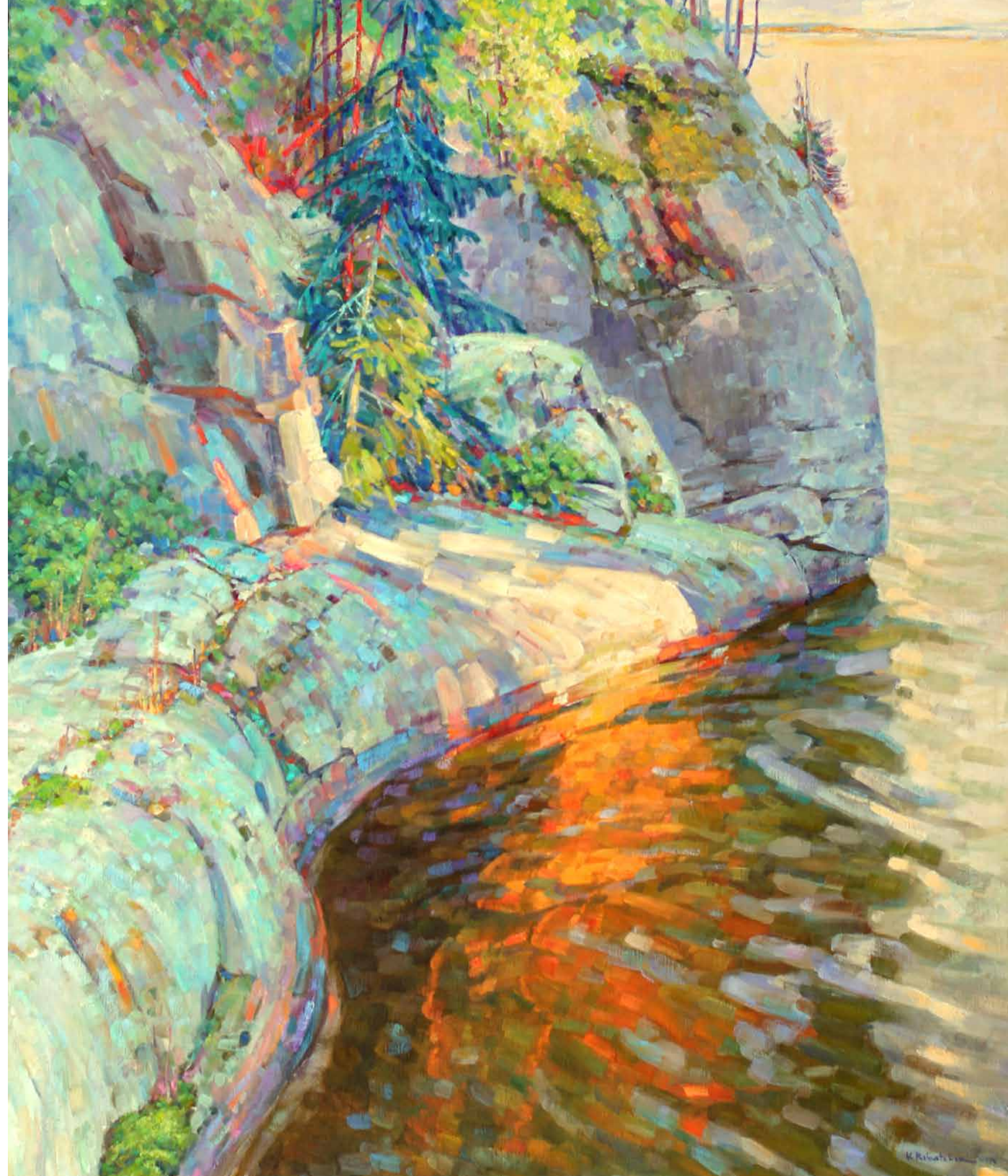
Telbizov saw in the young aspiring art student the insistent impulse to paint, helping him set the foundation of his artistic beginnings. Telbizov went as far as making arrangements with the school's security to grant Vladimir exclusive studio access after hours. He spent countless hours in the studio, learning the techniques of watercolours, oils, tempera paints and pastels.

"That studio was my home," Vladimir notes. "During the week, when I wasn't in class, I could be found painting in the studio. On weekends, I would spend the nights there. The security had no problem with me; they knew I was there to paint."

## Going to Leningrad

When Vladimir graduated from the School for







previous spread left, *Where is the Waving Woods*, oil on canvas, 60" x 40"  
previous spread right, *Light and Shadow*, oil on canvas, 60" x 50"

above, *Overlooking Lake*, oil on canvas, 40" x 48"  
right, *Overlooking Hills*, oil on canvas, 40" x 30"



Creative Youth, he worked in both railway and construction jobs while continuing to study at the art college. He expresses gratitude for the education he received while a student there, stating, "I can confidently say that I owe my knowledge to my teachers whom I met along the way." But despite all previous influences, Vladimir met his greatest guide and guru – honoured artist of the Russian Federation, Professor Yuri Skorikov – at the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Academy of Fine Art.

Vladimir recalls, "After graduation from art college, my decision to relocate to Leningrad was affected by the honoured artist of Russia, Yuri Skorikov. He told me, "Sell your paints and buy train tickets to Leningrad, and only there can I help you become a real artist." In Leningrad, I even drew theatre decoration. and slept at the train terminal, filling tons of sketchbooks with drawings of life on the streets and countryside of Leningrad."

Systematic work with a life model, composition classes, plein air painting during the summer in the mountains of Kaukaz, and touring the great museums of Leningrad, all made Ribatchok the

artist he is today.

The process of multi-layered painting, working from life and the principles of composition, gave Vladimir what he calls "my roots. Now, when I have my paintings in a number of museums in Europe, including The State Russian Museum of Art in St. Petersburg, I am thankful to the destiny for all great teachers."

#### **Moving to Canada**

Everything was very new for Vladimir when he moved to Canada, and one of the first things that really astonished him was all the colours. In a country so beautifully decorated with vibrancy, his art couldn't be anything less. Taking to the change in landscape, Vladimir did just what he had always done – started to study it. He grabbed his paint box and went to paint en plein air. "Why drink water from the pitcher when you can drink from the spring?" he asked rhetorically, just before yet another trip to the source of his inspiration. Nature.

"When I'm out plein air painting, I study the creations of nature; I am its student, it is



Peter the Second and Princess Elizabeth are Hunting, oil on canvas, 22" x 44"



left, *Gazing at the Stars*, oil on canvas, 36" x 30"  
above, *Guardian Spirits of the Mountains*, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"

bottom left, *Blizzard*, oil on canvas, 30" x 36"  
bottom right, *After His Turn Riding Night Watch*, oil on canvas, 30" x 36"





above, *Winter Games of the Young Braves*, oil on canvas, 36" x 30"  
 right, *Sioux Trails*, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"

my teacher. But when I am back to my studio, imagination takes over reality and I feel the supreme power of the landscape."

Leonard da Vinci espoused, "Painting is mute poetry." In Vladimir's eyes, painting also means 'poetic' rendering of his subject. His brush strokes are a source of vitality, and implement dramatic lyricism. There is a special relationship between the lines and masses which make it a work of art, and are the creative expression of an emotion.

Vladimir has always gleaned inspiration from the perfection and harmony of the classical masterpieces in antiquity and renaissance, from Pierro Della Francesca to Velázquez. "But," he's quick to explain, "I don't need to look around very far to find harmony and perfection in my life, nature's greatest creation is always right by my side. She is my wife." The potently heartwarming sentiment, Vladimir reinforces with a pause to reflect...

"The history of art knows many examples of the wife being the harmonizing beginning, and conclusion, to the artistic process of creating an

artwork. With a mere suggestion. With criticism. With love. For all my achievements, I am always thankful for my lovely wife's support, patience and inspiration. She is my partner in crime, and all my art is dedicated to her."

#### **The Beauty of the Canadian Landscape**

"The main stream in my art," says Vladimir, "is romanticism and the beauty of nature. First of all, it is the beauty of the country where I live, Canada. Through my paintings I want the audience to feel the eternity, to hear sounds of nature, such as the call of the loons, the sound of the wind in the forest, and the crash of the waves at the shore.

"The work of an artist never ends; it becomes a way of life. Whatever I do and wherever I am, I continue to observe my surroundings and see which elements I can use for future paintings."

Vladimir Ribatchok is represented by:

#### **Westmount Gallery**

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