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View of the world from mountain top



When President Kennedy spoke to Germans divided into two states by a concrete wall in West Berlin on June 26, 1963, he said what is perhaps his most famous phrase: All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner!"

Strange as it may seem, ever since Shusha was occupied, apparently a subconscious sense of solidarity drives me to say everywhere that I am from Karabakh. This is how I maintain the image of our land, our paradise. By affirming my attachment to the land of Karabakh, I mentally keep it in my memory and in the



"Baku on holidays", 1952

field of our culture. In this, I have been greatly aided in recent years by the works of Nadir Abdurahmanov, an outstanding Azerbaijani painter.

High mountains lift the spirit, tune it like a tuning fork to the purity of heaven and eternal aspiration to the ideal. People born in the mountains probably have

a genetic memory of their birthplace, of thin, clean, free air, sobering rather than intoxicating.

Nadir Abdurahmanov was lucky with the "height" of his birth - he was born in Karabakh, in the mountain heights of Lachin, and forever preserved in his soul and in his art that pure and ringing Karabakh tone, the flavor

"Favorite patterns", 1967



of his dear homeland, the real music of the heavens, the all-encompassing high-mountain view of the world.

His paintings are just like that: pure, attractive, melodic and elegantly calm. They are calm with inner joy, the restraint and nobility of the palette, the light streaming from above, from behind the mountain heights. The marvelous, magical landscapes of Karabakh, its mountains, villages, the image of its noble and graceful women – how fresh and refined it all is. It attracts with a wide plan, oxygen-pure atmosphere, the view of a mountain-

eer – from above, from a bird's-eye view!

Nadir Abdurahmanov's paintings are colorfully subtle, sensual, sincere and, at the same time, intellectual and elegant – like himself.

Nadir Abdurahmanov was born in 1923 in Lachin, where his family had just moved from Shusha, the birthplace of his mother Masuma khanum. The artist's father, Gambar-agma, was the head of the health department in Lachin. Later they moved to Aghdam and only in 1933 to Baku, however, often visiting Karabakh on

Nadir Abdurahmanov

business, his father took Nadir along. The artist always remembered these places – Lachin, Shusha, Minkand, Turshsu – with great fondness. He always worked well here, because the air of Karabakh is so clean and ringing!

When he was around eight, he began to study drawing at the Republican Children's Art Studio. Here his works were noticed by the teachers of Moscow Secondary Art School at the Academy of Arts of the USSR, also called the school for gifted children, who came from Moscow. They invited him to study at their school, and in 1939 Nadir was admitted to that school. He spent two years in the famous school on Kalyaevskaya Street. He will remember this time forever! However, World War II brings him back to Baku, where in 1947 he was admitted to the second year of the art school. Although he only studied there for one year, it would be a special year because his teachers were outstanding personalities who later played a huge role in the development of the Azerbaijani school of easel painting - Mikail Abdullayev and Boyukaga Mirza-zadeh, graduates of Moscow Art Institute named after Surikov and students of wonderful artists and teachers I. Grabar and A. Osmirkin. They brought to the school the traditions of the Moscow school with its high pictorial culture, as well as their own talent, and managed to become worthy mentors for young Nadir. The one-year studies were intense and interesting, opened new horizons in the art of color and the construction of form.

However, his father, an enthusiast of the development of medicine in the republic, dreamed of seeing his son following in his footsteps in this profession, and Nadir, as an exemplary son, fulfilled his father's wish and enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine of Baku Medical Institute. But the passion for painting eventually prevailed, and Nadir Abdurahmanov returned to the art school, graduating from it in 1944. In the medical institute, he switched to the evening department, which he also graduated with honors in 1947. Later he will be respectfully called "doctor" among artists.

By this time he had already made up his mind on his profession - he went to Leningrad and entered the Academy of Arts, where he was admitted to the class of A. Milnikov and V. Oreshnikov. Outstanding teachers, the artistic environment of Leningrad, the rich collections of its numerous museums sharpened the innate taste of the young painter, creating a perfect springboard for the subsequent mastering of the profession, the formation of his individual style, worldview and un-



derstanding of life. After graduating from the Academy of Arts in 1953, Nadir Abdurahmanov returned to Baku, full of enthusiasm and creative plans. He tried his hand in all genres of painting at once, including industrial paintings, thematic compositions on various historical and modern themes, portraits, and, of course, all kinds of landscapes, very different in subject and made at home, in Karabakh, Baku, on trips to Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yugoslavia, France, Italy. Over the years, Nadir Abdurahmanov's paintings reveal a certain intellectual and aesthetic view of nature that is unique, a little detached, but all the more delighted by its divine beauty.

His delight with Nature, with Creation can be heard in the words written in his diary during visits to Karabakh: "The mountains with their snow caps here complement well the landscapes of green plains... The charming beauty itself involuntarily evokes romantic feelings. It seems that nature itself magically brush painted these unique pictures on the mountain slopes." The artist subtly and

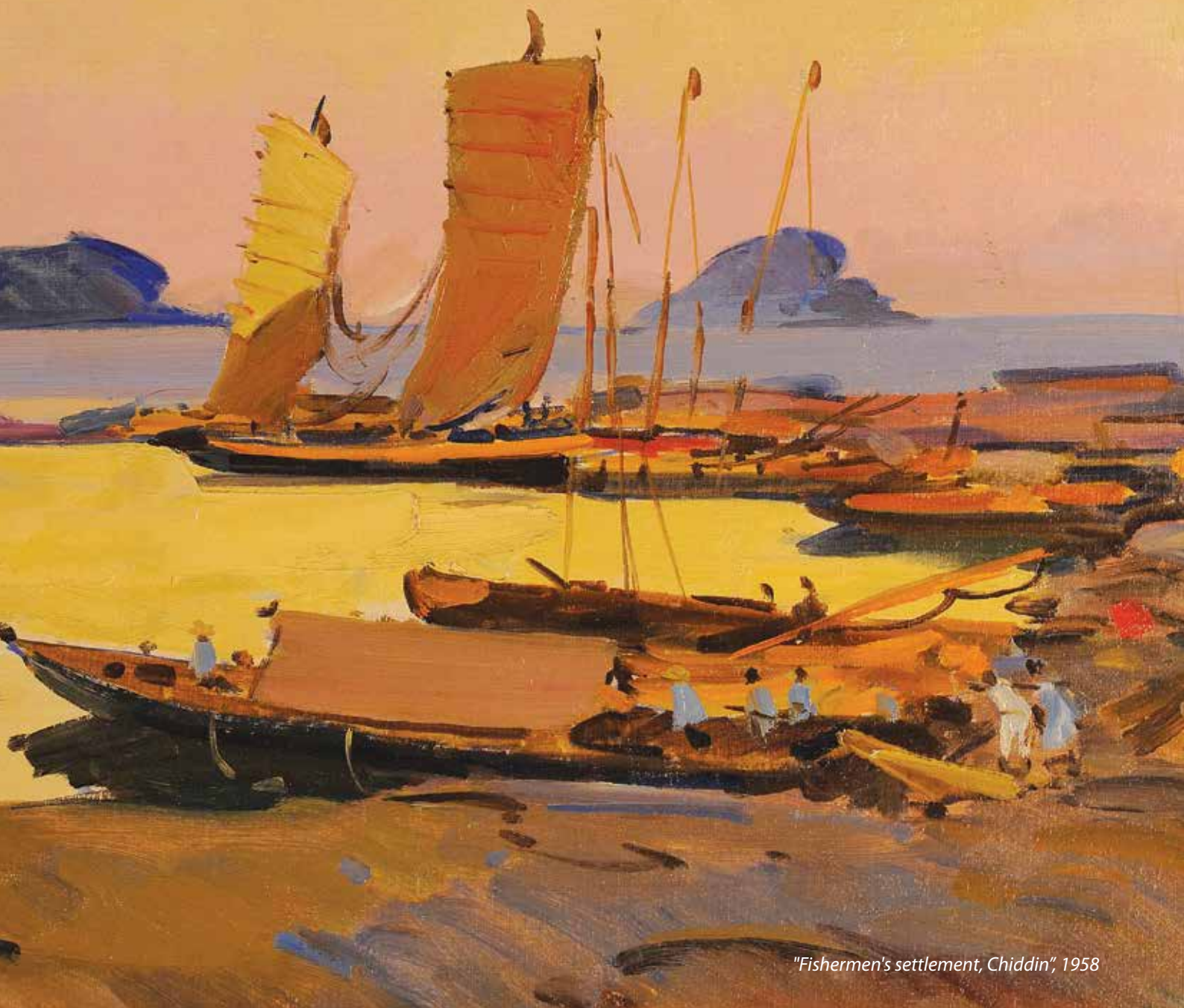


clearly shows us a special sensual and aesthetic expressiveness of such important components of the painting as its composition and construction of space, moving from the viewer to the depths of the canvas, where the terrain and the air environment form a single rhythmic whole, expressing the emotional image of the area.

Nadir Abdurahmanov's unconventional approach to creating images of mountain landscapes is very typical of him, his landscapes of Karabakh are very different: either a constructive solution comes to the forefront or the air environment, as the movement of clouds and fog becomes the fundamental approach. Often the

main idea is the picturesque multicolor, subordinating everything else. But all landscapes are strikingly lyrical, and his personal attitude to his land is clearly visible in them. And as a true native of Karabakh, Abdurahmanov is extremely musical in his pictorial speech, the structure of his landscapes is obvious! "It is the tunefulness that determines the peculiar poetics of his paintings," says researcher of his work Lidiya Akimova, who fell in love with Karabakh during a study trip to the artist's homeland.

The creative quest of the master was always directed towards comprehending the culture of painting itself,

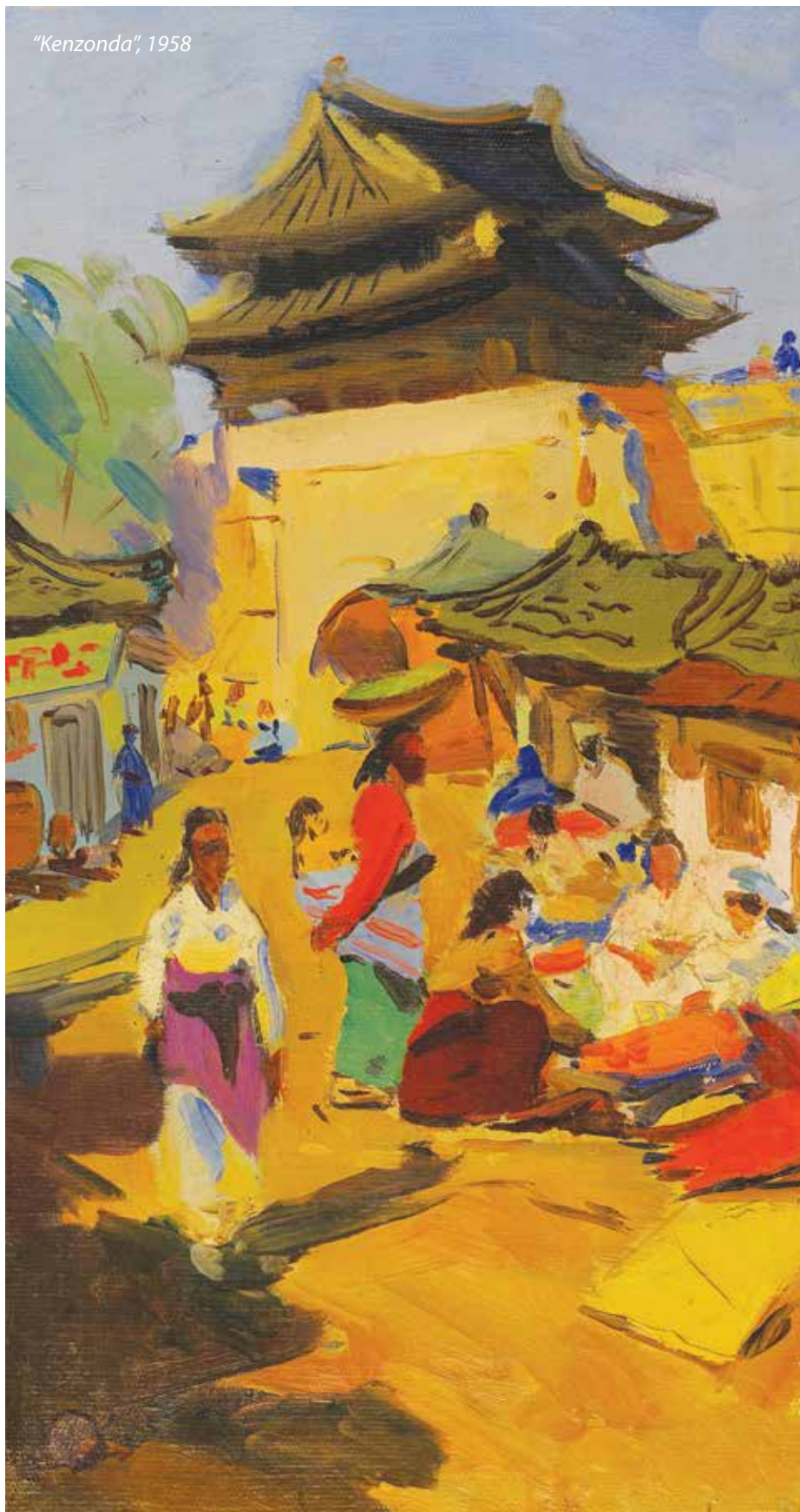


"Fishermen's settlement, Chiddin", 1958

mastering the professional secrets of lightness and flexibility of the pictorial language. The very color texture was highly aesthetic and elegant, and the special energy of all pictorial means became invaluable – it is impossible to confuse or not recognize Abdurahmanov's canvas! He brought to our painting a deeply individual view of nature, enriching Azerbaijani realism with artistic achievements of post-impressionism, fauvism, expressionism, synthesizing them with a truly national vision of life and attitude to color and visual form in general. In the landscapes of Lachin, Minkand, Shusha, the post-impressionist method applied by the artist is extremely

fruitful for reproducing the ethno-landscape uniqueness of the area. The painter plastically models the depicted landscape in the spirit of Cézanne, but does it delicately, without clear delineation of geometric forms. He introduces elements of a perceptive perspective into the landscape. Rural buildings are shown as if from above, from a bird's-eye view, the sky and mountains occupy four-fifths of the canvas plane, while houses occupy only a fifth. Nadir Abdurahmanov's color and interpretation of the pictorial surface of the canvas are invariably elegant, stylish, noble and recognizable. His works are characterized by many of the typical features

"Kenzonda", 1958

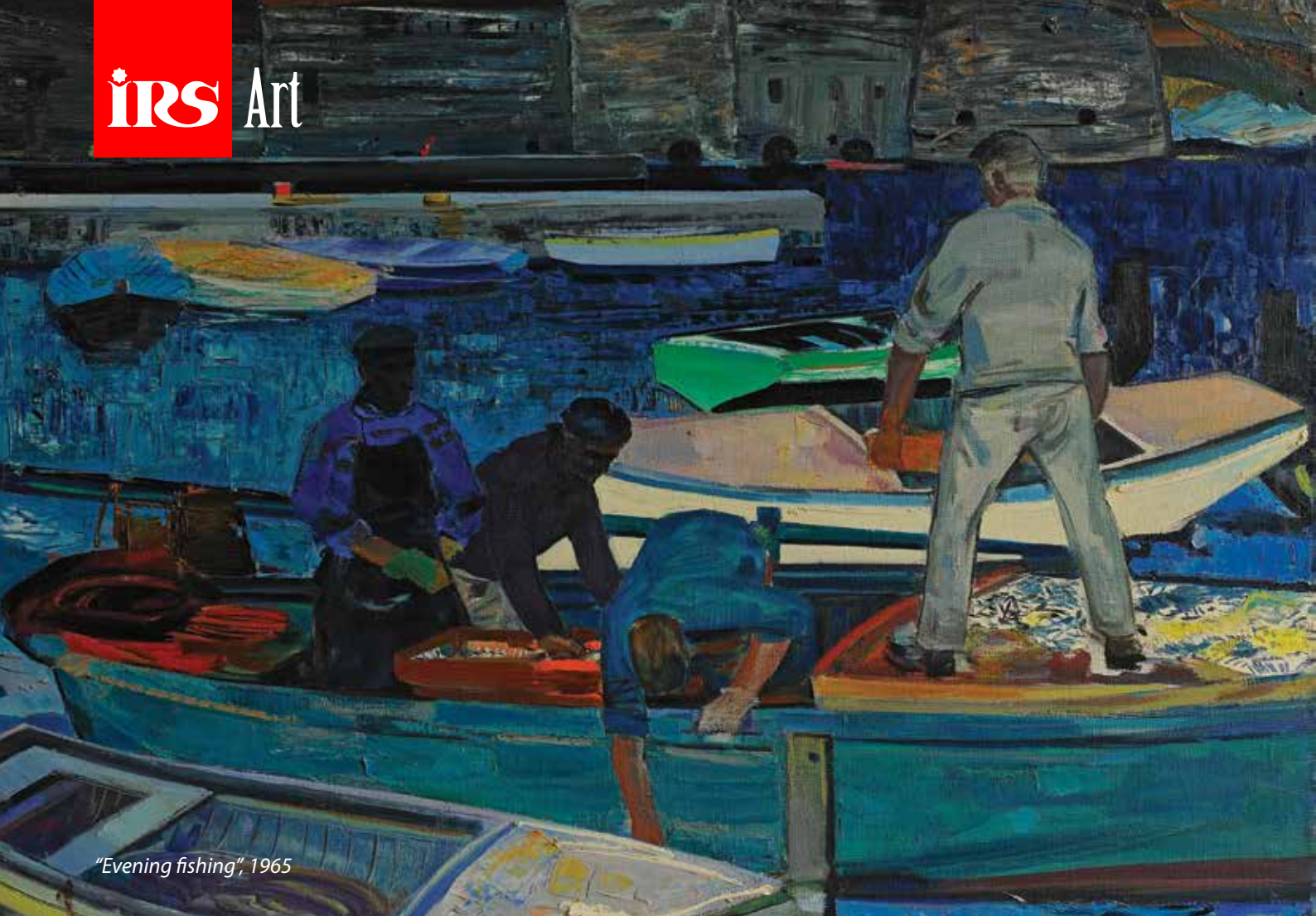


of 20th century art, an art that broke with naturalism, copying the external features of things and literary narrative. "Naturally, I sought not to reportage, but to stylistically generalized recreation of life material," - the painter wrote in his diary.

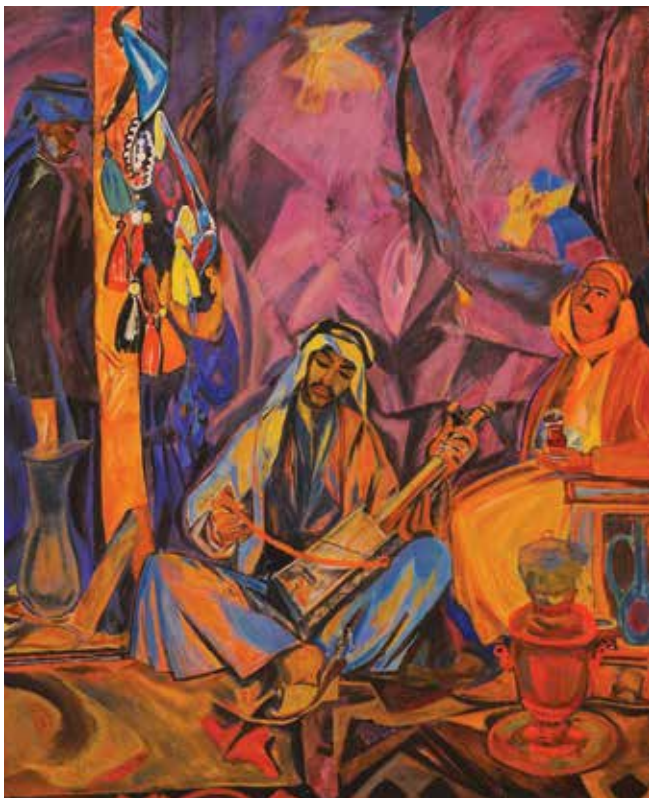
They say that a work of art is a mirror of its author's soul. The creativity of Nadir Abdurahmanov is a vivid confirmation of this. Nadir Gambarovich was an impeccable man, a true gentleman, with a very clear code of honor, which he followed all his life. His principles were simple and noble, he treated others with unfailing benevolence and cordiality. He was distinguished by a certain unique charm, he had a rare (especially in Soviet times) quality - he knew how to wear things, he was always the embodiment of elegance, his French beret always looked natural, emphasizing his belonging to the free bohemia, all the attributes of his clothing played absolutely clearly on the ensemble, there was nothing superfluous, everything according to the latest fashion and harmonious. Nadir Abdurahmanov's wife Sveta was an art historian, and their sons Arif and Mikayil also became artists, having received their education at Moscow Surikov Institute and St. Petersburg Academy of Arts respectively. Both keep the traditions of the family and work at the Academy of Arts of Azerbaijan, where their father was head of the painting workshop for many years, bringing up many young artists.

In communication, Nadir Abdurahmanov was a simple, delicate and kind-hearted man.





"Evening fishing", 1965



"Folk musicians", 1975

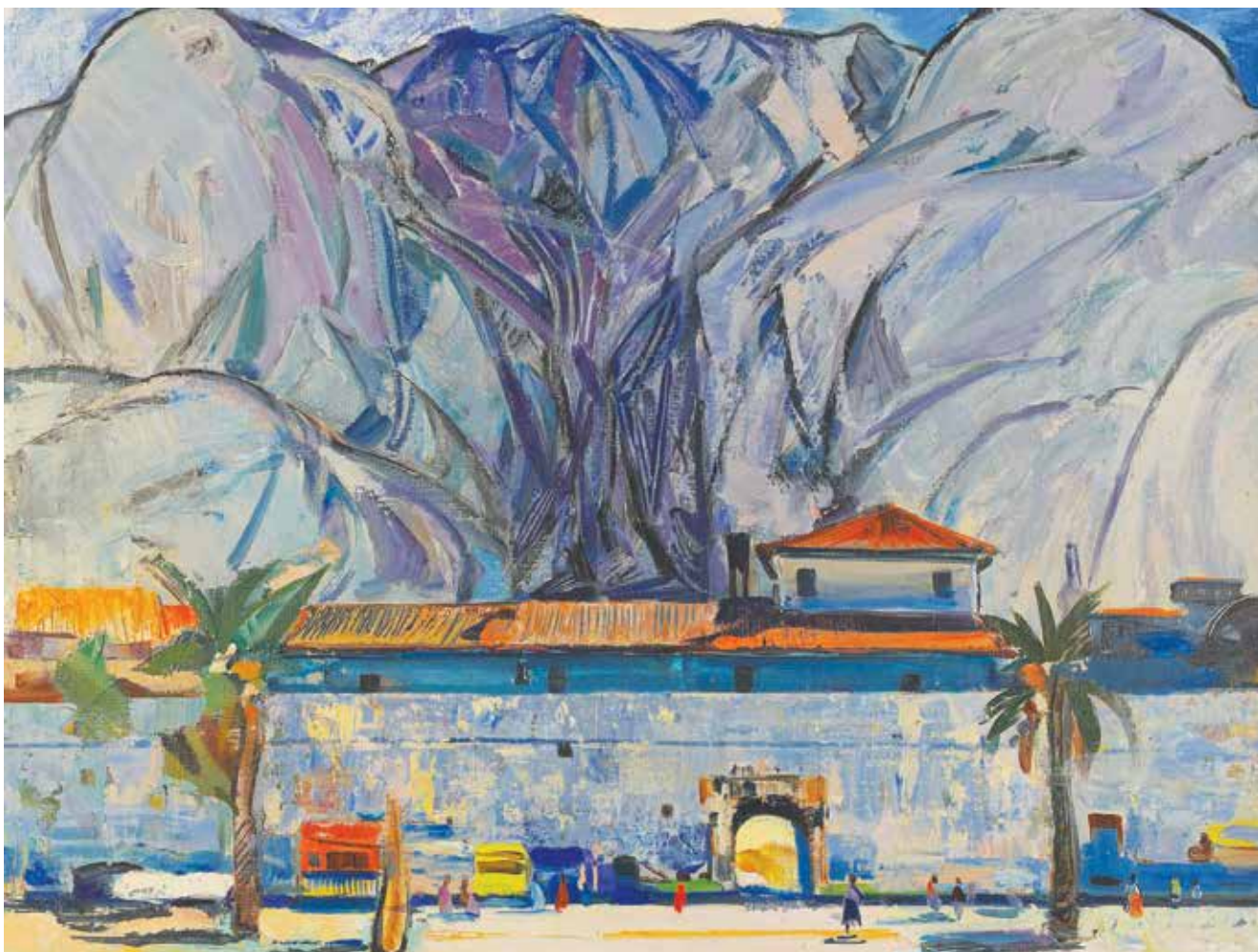


"Korean dancer", 1958

"People and mountains", 1975



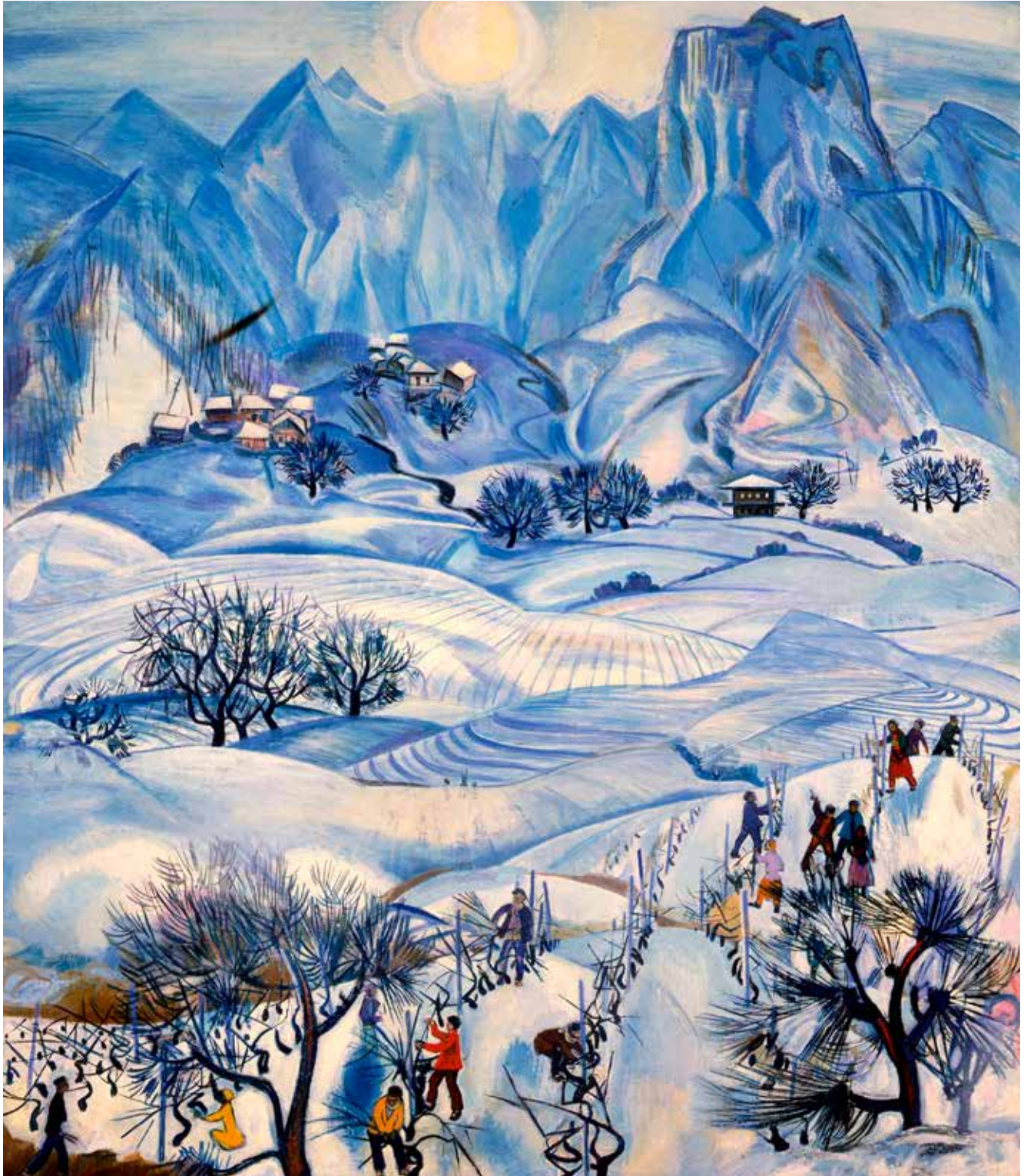
"A hot day", 1975



"Mountains. Kotor. Yugoslavia", 1966

His eyes expressed genuine interest in the interlocutor, he was always courteous, chivalrously generous and participative in conversation. Maybe it was the noble breadth of his soul mindful of the call of the heights that

gifted people can hear. Above all, he was interested in Art, he was an admirer of Beauty, valued decency, good manners and was himself the embodiment of Style and Kindness. ❖



"Vineyards of Zangilan", 1983

"Dubrovnik", 1964



"A windy day", 1961