

OLGA SHMUYLOVICH

TEXTS

What is shaping our lives?
– Encounters...
... with people and events...
... with phenomena expected and
unexpected...
... with good and evil...
And we become who we are.

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BUTTERFLY

Golubaya Dacha

"Golubaya Dacha", Nevel, Russia – Boston, the USA

Almost half-a century ago, in the middle of Russia, a young girl was standing at the clearing of the forest, at the edge.

She could not take her eyes off three huge squares of the very green grass, with low white picket fences around them. Two – in the open, one – still in the woods.

It was known that these green squares were mass graves of Jews – many hundreds - perished, murdered here, lost in the Shoah. No signs, no memorials then; but people knew: one grave was of men, two – of women and children. And sky started falling apart over our girl's head: she could not comprehend, absorb, accept what she was seeing...

It was the first time she was allowed to accompany her parents in their annual visit to this place.

And it changed her life forever.

The girl grew up, became an artist, art teacher, worked a lot on different projects on Jewish culture, and learned about happy and bitter times and moments in life and history of Jewish people, people she belonged to.

She left for the US, and continued her work and learning there.

She learned about Terezin Concentration Camp, and Terezin children's art: she saw their pictures, read their poems – and love them dearly; and she loved the song I Never Saw Another Butterfly... created in our time, after the war, on the poem The Butterfly.

When the Gallery she was a Curator started working on this ("Another Butterfly") project, she asked little girl Sasha Slivinsky to let Gallery use her picture of butterfly as an image/symbol of the project.

Sasha kindly agreed.

And suddenly Curator realized that Sasha, turned out, - Great-Great-Granddaughter of Moshe-ben-Yude, one of the Jews lost in the Shoah. That was at his – their – grave-side our Curator, then young girl, stood under the falling sky in the middle of Russia, almost half-a-century ago.

OS

5/1/09

(Olga Shmuylovich, 2009)

GOLUBAYA DACHA
(Blue Dacha)
Addition
MS, Grandfather

And one more thing... she experienced a feeling of being ‘called’ – though the silence at Golubaya Da-cha seemed to be overwhelmingly deep. Rush of energy, from one of these sites, directly to her heart, warming her heart.

She felt drawn, almost physically, to the biggest of the three, partly hidden in the woods green grassy squares surrounded, ‘embraced’, by white picket fences.

She managed to collect herself – she understood.

Later she said, meekly, to her Mother and Father that she thought she knew which one of these grassy green squares was the men’s grave (it was unidentified then, where were men, women, children - no signs, no memorials) over there, at Golubaya Dacha. Probably, they had not even been able to hear her whisper of a statement; or did not pay much attention at the words of the shaken in her elements 14-year old girl.

She learnt, in several years, when the identity of the squares was made public, that she was right in her strange knowledge.

Of course.

Olga Shmuylovich
August, 2016

ALMA and TAMARA

Alma and Tamara have created, together – making, both of them, their unique contributions – a good number of excellent artworks. Few of them – at least three – are stunningly beautiful.

Yet they never met in person.

Even more to be said: Tamara began her art-making when Alma had already left us for a better world.

The Bridge of Art, the bridge between “Alma Universe” and “Tamara Universe” was built while following the thought:

Art Act of one creator invites – encourages – stimulates – initiates Art Act of another creator.

And it brings a phenomenon of Art-making into play. (Concept of Art Response/Art Jam, by OS)

Within the multi-dimensionality of ‘Open Art’ Studio’s time-space, Tamara was offered an opportunity to create – on the “grounds” of Alma’s painting – her own, Tamara’s, piece of art.

‘Free Art’ Studio functions on the concept of being opened to all many ideas, approaches, techniques, media, et cetera. This ideology becomes an important contribution in creating a unique uplifting experience in the realm of Art-making. Telling the story about Alma and Tamara, it has to be said: we are given a chance of such an experience: we are experiencing an astonishing beauty of the artworks brought to life by creative efforts of two of them. The creative efforts being put together at the “Free Art Studio”. Magically. While looking at one of these works we are watching how a small 3D sculpture baring Tamara’s painting on its surfaces is literally ‘arises’ from 2D “grounds” of Alma’s painting.

The flawless visual logic of this collaborative art work is striking.

We do have the benefit of MAKING (ART-MAKING, that is) here:

The two art-spaces are spanned, two creative forces – two creative lives which would not otherwise interlink – are coming into concord, “... And single brighter light goes forth”(Bashert, Baal Shem Tov).

A crack in the art-matter is welded, the flow of creative connectivity is strengthened, and this action of Art Acts, through time and space, brings to us an art object of its own value.

Alma

Alma graduated, years ago, from the Pratt Institute, New York – famous old Art School.

She practiced painting all her life, until, about, 10 years before starting her residency at The House (TH). However, even when not actively painting, Alma – as her daughters told me – loved to go to various art shows and galleries, sometimes buying there an artwork she liked.

We met with Alma in the beginning of her residency at TH.

First time I saw Alma, she was weeping and crying endlessly and loudly. She was repeatedly stating her desire to 'go home' – to go to her home.

The idea was to make an attempt of bringing Alma into art-making, into painting.

Task # 1 was to have Alma pick up a brush: to re-establish her sense of physical connection between an artist and this artist's tool - those practicing or who have practiced the trend are used to experience this sense as very authentic.

Task # 2 came to be solved by a sudden inspiration. Complimenting her painting, I got an enlightening idea to compare it to Turner's paintings: this name had to be loved and admired by these rather sophisticated circles of intelligentsia Alma had belonged to. Her eyes lit up: 'Turner', iconic symbol of Alma's time, clicked.

Since then Alma's art-making run forward crescendo.

Looking at what Alma was creating, one could see the living proof that Boston, surely, was the land – and the Birth Place, by the history of art – of Abstract Expressionism.

No more crying and weeping; always striving for the next session of painting.

She was painting away, painting away! Fast, passionate, with great fearless brushstrokes; color could be strong... delicate...always balanced – and her signature when she'd decide the work is done. Sometimes she would be humming a tune while engaging in art-making; or listening to a live piano improvisation by our young Ari. That was one of Alma's delights, to paint to his music-making.

Several of Alma's paintings were framed and displayed, for people to enjoy! Then Alma suffered a stroke.

Slowly, she began recovering.

We managed to give her an opportunity to get back to painting, to her obvious pleasure – though Alma was unable to express her pleasure verbally, as clear as she used to do it before her stroke.

Alma's new art-making worked out fine, for all of us. The followed year had ups and downs.

At some point, regretfully, it became dangerous: when putting her brush, her 'tool', in her hand – she could harm herself by using it in the wrong way. However, having a chance, she kept painting, all over herself, and even herself. We were asked to call our art-making sessions off.

Now Alma was shedding tears quietly... and all the time.

She could not speak.

But being who she was, she would gently respond to one's gentle touch.

And, one day, Alma left us for a better world.

Her paintings, her exciting paintings, in a great number, were now exposed to the "elements". I promised to myself to do what I could to prevent them from being discarded (a real possibility, regretfully), or from dissolving in nowhere. Saving them – by putting them to work.

Tamara

Here comes Tamara, now.

She was Master on what she was doing for, nearly, 50 years. Seriously talented; highly regarded.

It must be mentioned, before the story goes ahead: realizing that previously existing “river-bed” for the stream of her talent is no more – we created a new “river-bed” for the rushing river of her creative energy. Thus Tamara’s Talent obtained a new appearance, a new name. And the mighty river forced its grand waters into, and along, the new lodgment. What a spectacular newly-born was washed ashore, delivered to us by this almost primordial stream of her talent!

In the beginning... In the beginning of her life in The House, Tamara was badly depressed, deeply sad because of the fact that her life had to come to this stage, the stage of her residency at TH, due to her illness. I had to help her.

We learned that Tamara was highly regarded as a prolific specialist, in creating sound environments for movies and films: music, sounds of nature, and lots of other ‘sounding’ stuff were part of her “palette”. She worked for one of the most influential Cinema Corporations in the country. She was a workaholic. She was always fine with using music – before college, graduated from a music school of 8 years, class of piano. She always loved dancing!

She was tall, very fit, with a strait posture.

She used any chance to exercise.

She truly enjoyed a good walk around inner yards and gardens of TH; frequently would be taking pleasure in strolling along those nicely designed green pathways available within the TH territory.

One day, I found Tamara in the very far away corner at the very end of the chain of these lovely green oases. She was sitting in the middle of the small enclosure made between bushes of the garden and an outside wall, with a metal fence on the top of this outside wall. Her head was turned to this wall. Blank face, an “inward” stare of her very dark eyes. A tear, down in slow motion, was leaving a wet trace on her cheek... We already knew each other; kind of liked each other. Out of respect to this lonely tear; admiring, with a heavy heart, the absolute beauty of this picture of a profound despair – I greeted her, and left her there to continue her self-contemplation.

It took a year and a half of strategical and tactical logistics, and intricate practices – before Tamara picked-up a brush. Still with a doubt, lacking confidence: she said that she had never painted in her life, ever!

But...soon, soon!

An explosion of color-play, encouraged and directed by this writer!

Tamara happened to be a synesthetic, not knowing the name of this phenomenon, synesthesia, though having experienced it for years. “Always” – she answered to my cautious question ‘have you ever seen music in color?’ My heart sunk... for some long time I kept collecting information on synesthesia – and here we are: a real person!

Now, while art-making, we'd do it this way.

I'd cut out of paper 2D white silhouette, or shape-up 3D white object (Tamara could not impart any form from a white paper matter); I'd place it on a black background, to enhance the outlines of the white fields – and she would run for it, covering this white object with brilliantly bright or delicately tender, harmoniously shimmering paintings! As if opening a Cave of Treasures! Or we'd put together elements of compositions as if, for example, designing poster-like texts – using shapes of letters in our designs. With Tamara's exciting painting on them, we pulled compositions together even more – one of them became a Title-piece I had been using for a good number of the Art displays/projects.

Once, not being sure about the outcome... but taking a risk, I placed one of these white 2D shapes on Alma's painting on an artboard; and I asked Tamara if she would be interested in painting "the shape" laid out on the painting. She said "Yes".

I repeated the experiment using the 3D as well.

And, every time, I was watching in awe how thoroughly she would be considering, and contemplating, and touching lightly – adding one brush stroke to another onto this white object and turning it into something else; enhancing and "opening-up" the essence of both Alma's and her own 'color-play-adventures'. In the case of 3D, Tamara would move the piece she was working on around the "lake" of Alma's painting, looking for a right place for it – let's take an example of origami bird being brought to life as if being a magical Phoenix: from the dead whiteness to the shining warmth of life, by kind painting (kind is Tamara's definition). Reflecting here in this vividness on the strength of Alma's image; placing warm soft reflections onto Alma's "lake", reflections of her painting...

Indeed, making such a unique Art Story.

Bird on the Lake is on display, of course – for people to enjoy.

These two art-makers, Alma and Tamara, have been granted a perfect space for their encounter, Art Encounter. The space of their ART.

My idea of Art Encounters ("Art Jam" /Art Response project) through Art, through Art-making came to be realized by these two NATURALS, these two painters Alma and Tamara.

One Encountee, Alma, by the moment of the Art Encounter, was physically out of this world, 'dead', as we term it in our languages – and so much alive in her painting, in her Art!

Another Encountee, Tamara, by this moment of the Art Encounter, just discovered the new form of her talent-totality. And, because of that, she found her freedom – "I am free now!" – while making Art.

The creative efforts of these two Encountees – Alma and Tamara – are coming into resonance, and one mighty stream of creative energy, as of Light, rushes forth and reaches strait to heaven (after Bashert, Baal Shem Tov).

We are swept away by this mighty stream, and, being carried happily within it, we have the 'hearts of (our) souls' (after Nuhman from Bratzlav) nourished luxuriously with the Heavenly Joy.

Olga Shmuylovich, 2017-2018

To V, and to all

Люди становятся голосами в телефонной трубке.
Словами e-mail'а.
*(People become voices on the phone.
Words in the e-mail.)*
And we dwell on it, dwell on it.

When their bodily life expires,
We turn them into books –
If they are Artists or people of Letter.
Why don't we do it before they cross the river?
So they, too, enjoy their doubles?

2013

BLUE BELL

Our friends, Alexander O and his family, were leaving for Israel.

Alexander – Sasha – and I knew each other since we were kids, students at Solomon Davidovich Levin’s Art Studio; then – the same Art School; art-involvements, etc.

We respected and liked each other, too, and we always had liked to sense this feeling of *liking*, mutual and shared.

Few days before them to leave, Sasha dropped in to pick up several pages of his script, I’d been retyping for him for some time: Alexander, together with Victor G, translated Elie Wiesel’s “Souls on Fire” into Russian. There was a hope to get it to print somewhere... sometime.

Last days before departure were terribly difficult, very tiring.

Sasha was badly tired when he came.
We ate some quick meal.
Then went about the manuscript.
After we finished, I went out to see him off.
It was getting late, getting dark.

Lights were on in the street we took, to get to Sadovaya from the place near Isaakievskaya Square where I lived with my parents.

We talked.

Sasha was worrying, complaining about his age: almost 30 *already!*
I was trying to calm him down by reasoning why he did not need to be so upset.

Commonly, I was considered wise (and I was older – a year older!), and known as possessing somewhat special knowledge...

We stopped.
Looked at each other.

I was looking into his fair face, beautiful beyond ethnicity or race – warm, serious, concerned...
And caught myself thinking that it could be the last time I was seeing Sasha: in those days farewell did mean farewell forever. No traveling abroad for a visit; letters – perlustrated; ‘bugged’ phone calls – rare and

difficult. The word Internet was unknown yet term in the USSR of 1979. Edgar Poe's "Nevermore" was well read.

I recall: apparently, responding to Sasha's lamentations, I was doing my best convincing both of us in the exactly opposite – that Nevermore would be, for sure, proved wrong.

(Or "untrue". I just love this playful approach to building 'negatives' by attaching UN to 'positives').

Night light of the City brightened the Royal Blue of Sasha's parka. I stretched out my arm and took in my hand and closed my fingers on a little plastic bell-shaped stopper dangling on the end of his parka's collar-strap.

It dwells now in the palm of my hand: cool cobalt smoothness of that little blue bell feeling.

Olga Shmuylovich

PERPETUUM MOBILE

SCIENCE-FICTIONAL ESSAY

WHAT, and HOW, and, possibly, WHY

...Like we've been injected with something, and now can't stop making art...

(Alek Rapoport, artist)

Preface

Creation, procreation...

Love, Love, Love...

Love to a creation,

Love to a creator,

Love of a creator for creation, for creating...

We are all, humanity, drawn to it irresistibly:

To get high. Again. To experience total happiness of a BLISS while creating.

Like children rewarded for their good behavior – and want more!

What, and How, and possibly, Why

Apparently, there is nothing there but Power of Creation, with this Force of Creation which transpires through a Creator/Maker – any level.

SCIENCE-FICTIONAL ESSAY, the body

What

Manifestation of the Force of Creation reveals itself as CREATIVE FORCE, in the dual form:

– Creative Energy being instilled into the subject – A Maker

– Energy generated through the process of creating an object of creation by this ‘subsidized’ subject, A Maker, - we call ‘Energy of Creativity’

Results of this action of revelation are two, ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’, two rewards:

– Subjective reward is experienced by A Maker – as individual total happiness, BLISS

– Objective ‘reward’/result is this newly generated Energy as a FUEL needed for Universe to keep running. This FUEL Energy, among all many Universe’s ‘runs’, keeps the circle/cycle unbroken while sublimating (part of it) into Creative Energy to be instilled into A Maker...et cetera, see above.

How

PHENOMENON OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY

What neuronal and neurotransmitter electric charges, and what chemical processes are happening when Creative Activity occurs?

That is 'Creative Activity' as a process of creating – creation as action – of any kind:

- Philosophy, generalization and/or nuance;
- Fine Arts as of Visual Images;
- Art of Sound – Music, etc.;
- Mathematics, with applications;
- Natural Science;
- Verbal Arts, traditional and non-traditional;
- Liberal Arts;
- Applied Arts;
- Everyday-Life Arts;
- Much, much, much more...

It is impossible not to notice that people engaged with the practice of creating intend to describe their personal experiences in very similar terms. As relevant to the matter illustration to this tendency there is one popular saying which proclaims the similarity between art-making and love-making. Slightly extreme – though seemingly right – example of the equality of form and shapes obtained by Manifestation of this phenomenon known as CREATIVITY – or Creative Force – or Force of Creation – or Force of Creating.

It can be assumed that for all many creative processes, of all many kinds – there should be something in common, mutually shared by all those participating/performing/executing the action: subjectively, every party involved in an action which is to be called "Act of Creation" is experiencing the BLISS thing.

Through the 'Act of Creation', in the beginning, to obtain what is needed for a start – ENERGY, of course: to be "charged", so-to-speak – a creator connects – or comes to be growing to the point of being connected – with the SOURCE all the Universum takes the energy from. Energy to be utilized in all the processes of the Universe.

This Energy, or Energies, is/are perceived by us as Manifestation of the Power of Creative Force, Power of Creativity.

And thus we go:

"Bereshit Borah... In the Beginning..."

It plays out this way:

After the intake of the energy needed to start (to trigger) the creative process – and through the run of the creation, creative process, “creating” – this creative process results in the outburst of the energy GENERATED/PRODUCED/RELEASED by-through-owing to – creative process, process of CREATING.

– Energy is generated/produced/released by 1) neuronal-transmitteral charge (in brain), and by 2) chemical reaction (in brain) – both are “set off” by the Act of Creation; more: both electrical charge and chemical reaction as they accompany Act of Creation are seen as indicators of such Act of Creation, by brain studies.

– This outburst of Energy effects the activity, relieves the tension of electro-magnetic fields and other “networks” within the matter of the Entity of Universe which ‘being of Humanity’ is part of. Impulses of ENERGY emerge centrifugally, multidimensionally – and reach the SOURCE, thus contributing in “filling” the SOURCE with ENERGY.

– Heart of Source (see the story by Nahman from Bratzlav) is as eager for Energy as if were a motor striving for gas; and the newly generated ENERGY is taken in, almost, to be said, sucked into this Heart where a measure gets compressed into immeasurable to become nihil. Only to be giving ‘annihilated’ away, thus revealing ‘nihil’ as endless, infinite.

– Hence:

Constantly functioning PULSATION of Energy, perpetual in and out, giving ‘out’ and taking ‘in’ by Universum to which Entity we “leaving creatures” belong to as part of – this PULSATION provides the very existence of Universum.

Universum within us?

Us within Universum?

In this case, it does not make any difference.

Commonality of all this knowledge does not prevent us, Humanity, from seeing the phenomenon of the Universal Creativity as being fundamentally important – when we exercise our ability to comprehend our right place in the World structure.

Why

When asked “What is our place?” – still asked, however! – teaches of Judaica Studies are used to answer:

When World is created, human beings, to be distinguished from other beings, are given

– Free Will

– Ability to Create

And we can imagine WHY – when we are coming to terms with ourselves about WHAT and HOW.

Olga Shmuylovich, June 2015