

Oleg Zhivetin

Oleg Zhivetin was born on March 8, 1964 in Tashkent, Capitol of the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, to a family of Russian painters. He started to paint at a very early age under the supervision of his father's severe and demanding eye. When he was nine years old he began an art program where he learned to work with watercolors. While still young, his family resettled in Moscow, where Oleg began his studies at age fifteen at the Moscow Academy of Art. At the academy he continued to learn how to paint and draw as well as study traditional subjects such as history, of which Oleg is extremely fond. He earned his Fine Art degree with honors, in 1982. Oleg decided to apply to the Surikov Art Institute, which is known by many to be the Soviet Union's most prestigious school of art. Unfortunately, Oleg was not accepted to the school on his first try and this prompted him to go back to Uzbekistan to earn a degree in art education. He was accepted to the Surikov Art Institute after applying for a second time. Only those talented enough to gain admission to the Surikov were able to study under esteemed Soviet artists such as Yuri Karilov. Oleg eventually obtained the coveted Master of Fine Arts degree in 1990.

After graduation, Oleg grew beyond his academic focus of Dutch, Flemish, Renaissance old masters, and Soviet social-realism to develop a much more individualistic and contemporary style. Oleg decided to hire one of his neighbors to sell his art on the street in order that he could earn some money to live. The artwork began to sell after a few months, and eventually, his neighbor asked him if he wanted to go to America. Oleg was given a phone number to call to arrange for this opportunity. It turns out that the telephone number belonged to a man who was looking for exceptional artists to sponsor. Needless to say, the sponsor liked what he saw in Oleg's work. This sponsorship allowed Oleg to work in the United States under a three-month visa. He arrived in California and took some of his paintings to a Russian art dealer.

Within just a few months, he had been invited to his first one-man museum exhibition at the Mission San Juan Capistrano Museum in California, where he received positive reviews from the press and television. In 1991 Zhivetin experimentally created the first in a series of seven limited editions on canvas that he called, "Origigraphs." Since then, Zhivetin has worked on extraordinarily complex paintings with the universal theme of love in his recognizable fractured color style. Numerous layers of paint achieve the richness and vitality of colors in his artwork. The sensuous lines and intricate patterns of the paintings are enhanced with the application of gold, silver or copper leaf. Oleg has perfected his fragmented imagery technique and his work elicits remarkably positive responses from his collectors. Oleg has made his home in both California and Russia over the years.

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