

EXHIBITION

From Helsinki to Mosco

An Encounter of Ceramics



By Åsa Hellman

Entrance of Stroganov Academy with poster for the Finnish-Russian ceramics exhibition Finite Resource

Finland has a long common border with Russia. The ceramics of Russia are however not as well known here as Central European ceramics, even though the contacts in arts and crafts were once lively with our eastern neighbour, especially at the turn of the century 1900. Many Finnish craftsmen had then settled in St Petersburg and Finnish companies like AB Iris exported unique ceramic artwork to Russia. These contacts diminished after the First World War and the cultural life in our two countries developed in different directions. Today we can note new cooperation

developing in the field of ceramic art.

The International Academy of Ceramics IAC is not only a forum for discussion. It promotes international cooperation in a concrete fashion. Natalia Khlebtsevich, teacher in the department of ceramics at the Stroganov Academy in Moscow participated in IAC's congress in Barcelona and met there the Finnish artist and ceramist Johanna Rytkölä. The correspondence between these two artists resulted in an invitation to four Finnish artists and some Russian colleagues to build a joint exhibition in the gallery of the Stroganov Academy.

This academy is called in English Stroganov Moscow State Academy of Arts and Industry. Lord Sergei Grigoriyevich Stroganov, patron of the fine arts, founded it in 1825. One of his ancestors is known for the famous dish called Beef Stroganoff. Today 60-70 students study in the department of ceramics, which has four electric kilns and one gas kiln. The Head of the Ceramics Department, Elena Yudina, has an international background and grew up

in Paris, where she also studied. The basic course in the department of ceramics lasts four years, followed by two years for the Masters Degree. Postgraduate studies require three more years.

The students begin with red clay just like we usually do in Finland. Then they move on to stoneware. The clay for high firing stoneware is imported from Crimea. Students in the third year work extensively with china and they have an opportunity to practice at a factory. The factories can sometimes take into the production objects designed by students

Nathalia Khlebtsevich, teacher of the ceramics department of the Stroganov Academy



The gas kiln at the Stroganov Academy fired about 20 times a year

