Henri Rousseau

1844-1910

"Everyone likes it!" Henri Rousseau, the-retired-customs-agent-become-Sunday-painter, exclaimed of his picture, *The Dream*. True, many people enjoyed the naive charm of the old man's picture of the woman he desperately loved, but few saw its artistic merit.

Another example of Rousseau's composition and design is *Path in the Woods at St. Cloud.* Probably no one subject in landscape painting has been attempted quite so frequently as the converging road or avenue of trees, but there are few more difficult subjects. The eye rushes into the picture space toward the convergence of the avenue, and unless the artist has provided a means for the eye's re-emergence from the deep space, a funnel effect or a hole has been created. Rousseau provides for the eye's re-emergence in three ways: First, by the triangle created by the three figures in red; second, by placing the trees closer together on the right side as they approach the spectator. And third, as a result of the placement of the trees, the shadows grow wider apart on the path in the distance than they are in the foreground.

Although untrained, Rousseau's composition was superb. □

Mihail Chemiakin

St. Petersburg 1978

Photos Courtesy of Edvard Nakhamkin Fine Arts, Inc., New York City.

Mihail Chemiakin was born in Moscow in 1943. His father was an officer in the Army and his mother was an actress. Shortly after his birth, his family moved to Germany where his father served with the Soviet Occupational Forces. In 1957, they returned to Russia and enrolled Mihail in the Leningrad Academy of Arts. That was the beginning of Mihail's problems with the authorities. In 1959, he was expelled from the school and began working as a mailman, street sweeper or whatever he could find.

His first exhibition was in 1962 at the Club l'Etoile in St. Petersburg. This exhibition was a great success and he began immediately to plan for his next exhibition. But that was not to be until 1964. That exhibition was held at the Hermitage Museum and was far from a success. After three days, the exhibit was banned and the museum director lost his position. This pattern continued with his exhibitions being banned soon after they began. He was becoming prominent in the underground art movement in the U.S.S.R., but that was not helping him or his art any.

More and more strict controls were placed on him and others like him. After many years of hardships and active persecution, he decided to emigrate. Finally, after many more difficulties, Chemiakin and his family arrived in Paris where his work received wide recognition.

Since his arrival in 1971, Mihail Chemiakin has had numerous successful exhibitions throughout Europe and the United States. He has won particular acclaim for his illustrations for limited editions of the works of Hoffman, Dostoevsky and Gogol, and for "Ventre de Paris" published in 1977. "With Chemiakin," writes Andre Parinaud, "we are on the inside of the fantastic . . . the monsters of fear and panic, the horrors of sex, the terrors of death . . . but transfigured by the mystic eye of a painter of icons."

The two original lithographs shown here are signed and numbered by the artist in a limited edition of 225 on Arches and 75 on Papier Japon. They are the first in a series of ten lithographs entitled "Carnival." The price of each litho ranges from $240 to $300 depending on the size of the image and the paper. □