

Solomon Telingater (Russian, 1903–1969)

An adherent of Constructivism, Solomon Telingater was a prominent Soviet book and type designer, who created over six hundred books during his prolific career. He was born in Tiflis (now Tbilisi), Georgia, into an artistic family. His father Benedikt Telingater (1876–1964) was a theater designer. The Telingater family moved to Baku in 1910 and it was there that the future artist received his first art lessons, attending Sunday drawing courses.

In 1918, Solomon created propaganda posters for the art workshop BakKavROSTA (Khudozhestvennoe ob"edinenie Bakinskikh rabochikh kavkazskogo kraevogo otdeleniia ROSTA; Art Association of the Baku Workers of the Caucasian Regional Branch of the Russian Telegraph Agency), which he helped organize. He also published satirical drawings in local newspapers and magazines, made film posters for the first movie theater in Baku, and together with his younger brother Adolf Telingater (1905–1943) created costume and stage designs for The Workers' Club.

In 1919–20, Telingater studied at the *Khudozhestvennye masterskie* (Art Workshops) of Narkompros (People's Commissariat for Education) in Baku. In 1920, he was awarded a scholarship from the Narkompros to continue his studies at VKhUTEMAS (Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops) in Moscow, where he studied briefly in 1920 and 1921. While at VKhUTEMAS, Telingater studied under the famous Russian graphic artists Vladimir Favorsky (1886–1964) and Nikolai Piskarev (1892–1959), who instilled in him the idea of a book as an integral artistic creation. He returned to Baku in 1921 and soon began his career as an illustrator, creating drawings for Aleksander Blok's poem *Dvenadtsat'* (The Twelve).

In 1925, Telingater moved to Moscow where he was appointed technical editor of the *Novaia Moskva* (New Moscow) publishing house. In 1927, Telingater met El Lissitzky (1890–1941), whose experimental design for Vladimir Mayakovsky's 1923 book *Dlia golosa* (For the Voice) he greatly admired. That same year, he collaborated with Lissitzky on the design of the catalogue for the *Vsesoiuznaia Poligraficheskaiia vystavka* (All-Union Printing Trades Exhibition). Telingater served as a member of the editorial board of the *Poligraficheskoe proizvodstvo* (Printing Trades) journal, designing its many issues.

Upon its founding in 1928, Telingater became a member of the graphic arts section of the *Oktiabr'* (October) group—a large international organization of artists, architects, photographers, and filmmakers who supported the concept of socially conscious art. That same year, Telingater designed Alexander Bezymensky's book *Komsomolliia: Stranitsy epopei* (Communist Union of Youth: Pages of an Epic), his first major independent book design commission.

Between 1928 and 1929, Telingater served as a graphic artist for the *Pervaia Obraztsovaia tipografiia* (First Exemplary Printing Shop) and worked as an art director for the journal *Daesh'* (Let's Produce!), where he collaborated with artists Aleksandr Deineka (1899–1969) and Dmitrii Moor (1883–1946).

Telingater also designed several issues of the journal *SSSR nastroiike* (USSR in Construction) in collaboration with the photographers Boris Ignatovich (1899–1976) and Dmitrii Debabov (1899–1949). In the 1930s, Telingater designed many books and journals often employing collage and photomontage. Among his most important works to use this artistic technique are: *Slovo predostavliaetsia Kirsanovu* (Kirsanov is Called upon to Speak); *1914-i. Dokumental'nyi pamphlet* (The Year 1914: A Documentary Pamphlet); and the journal *Brigada khudozhnikov* (Artists Brigade).

In 1933, Telingater became an art director at the *Partizdat* (Publishing House of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks), where he worked until 1941. His work was included in many exhibitions, including major international ones such as *Pressa* (Cologne, 1928) and the Paris and New York World's Fairs of 1937 and 1939.

When the Second World War broke out on Russian soil in June of 1941, Telingater joined the First Moscow Rifle Division. After the division was disbanded in October of that same year, he was appointed to the 49th Army of the Western Front as an artist of the army editorial office of the newspaper *Za Rodinu* (For the Motherland), a position he maintained for the entire war. Telingater was awarded three medals for his military service during the Second World War.

After returning to Moscow at the end of the war, he worked as an art director for *Voennoe izdatel'stvo* (Military Publishing House) between 1945 and 1949, and from 1946 to 1951 he collaborated with other major Moscow publishing houses, including *Detgiz*, *Khudozhestvennaia literatura*, *Akademiia nauk*, and *Iskusstvo*.

From the end of the 1950s through the early 1960s, Telingater designed the journal *Iskusstvo kino* (Film Art). In the 1960s his works were included in thirteen Russian and foreign exhibitions, and he also served as an organizer and a jury member for numerous additional exhibitions. In 1963, Telingater was the first Soviet artist to receive the International Johannes Gutenberg Award.

Key Sources

G.P. Konechna, ed. *Solomon Telingater: Konstruktor graficheskikh ansamblei* (Solomon Telingater: Constructor of Graphic Ensembles). Moscow: Galart, 2008.

<http://telingater.togdazine.ru/>

Elektronnyi arkhiv khudozhnika Solomona Telingatera (Electronic archive of the artist Solomon Telingater). Compiled by the artist's son Vladimir Telingater. Accessed June 14, 2021.