

**Arts & Entertainment**

# World traveler Sergey Melnikoff opens new gallery in Boca Raton



Dr. Sergey Melnikoff opens first gallery in Boca Raton.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS



**Skip Sheffield**

By Skip Sheffield  
STAFF WRITER

While most people were relaxing or celebrating our nation's independence on July 4, Dr. Sergey Melnikoff was hard at work putting finishing touches on the Melnikoff Gallery at 251 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton.

"Tomorrow I leave for Zimbabwe," Melnikoff explained Monday in the gallery. "I am renting a helicopter to photograph Victoria Falls. I have never been there before."

There are few places on earth Melnikoff has not visited. Since fleeing from Russia via Mongolia in 1986 and settling in America in 1990, Melnikoff has crisscrossed the globe countless times (he has collected 180 pages of visas on his passport over the past ten years), capturing nature's wonder on his Leica and Fuji wide-format cameras. Melnikoff's photos are owned by President George W. Bush, Sir Elton John, the King of Nepal, the Sultan of Brunei, billionaire Jeffrey Koo and many others.

Melnikoff has three university degrees and has written a number of books, but since coming to America he has settled on large-format art photography for his milieu. While working as a journalist in Russia, Melnikoff ran afoul of the hard-line Communist government, and he was imprisoned in 1980, to spend six years in what he describes as a concentration camp.

"When Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the USSR, he was more tolerant of critics of Communism," he recounts. If not for him I would have been in prison for another

ten years. He pardoned me in 1986, but a friend of mine who knew the Soviet general prosecutor told me I had just one day to escape before they arrested me again. I took my wife and young daughter and escaped through Mongolia. We spend three days in a UN refugee camp, and they relocated us to Thailand. In 1990 we came to Uniontown, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh. I was an FBI protected refugee."

Melnikoff will turn 50 next week in Zimbabwe. He then will travel to one of his favorite places, Kygyzia in Middle Asia ("It's very beautiful," he says), and thence to South China before returning to South Florida after a month away.

"We have looked at Lincoln Road (Miami Beach), Las Olas (Fort Lauderdale) and Fourth Street in West Palm Beach," Melnikoff reveals. "But we settled on Boca Raton for our first gallery. It's a very artistic community, and we like the proximity to Mizner Park. If this gallery goes well, we plan to open more."

For more information, call 347-6411 or (954) 579-4492.

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The Artists Guild of the Boca Raton Museum of Art has announced winners of the group's "Images July 2005" exhibition at their gallery at 414 Plaza Real in Mizner Park.

First place is "Out of Print," a sculpture by Kris Smith of Deerfield Beach. Second place went to "At Sea," a painting by George Torjussen of Boca Raton and third place went to "Cow, Cow V," an assemblage by Terry Froelich of Boca Raton. Walter Hnatysh, the juror, selected Sonia Wallace of Boca Raton and Katherine McRae of West Palm Beach for Juror's Recognition awards and Dagmar Hollmers of Coral Springs and Maxine Rosenberg of Boca Raton for honorable mention.

The Artists Guild Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and noon until 10 p.m. Sunday. Most works are for sale and admission is free. Call Jack Schaffer at 479-2439.

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Harid Conservatory graduate

Hanae Seki of Nagano, Japan was awarded the Bronze Medal at the New York International Ballet Competition on June 26. The 18-year-old dance graduated from Harid Conservatory in May after two years of study.

Seki was partnered in her ballet competition with Gleidson Vasconcelos, and recent Harid graduate. Together they performed the pas de deux from "La Fille Mal Gardee" and the "Santella Pas de Deux." Seki also performed the solo dance, "Sway," created by Montreal choreographer Mark Godden.

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Claire V. Dorst, founding president of the Palm Beach Watercolor Society and past chairman of the Art Department and professor emeritus at Florida Atlantic University, is offering a one-day Saturday Workshop July 16 at the Dorst Studio at bay no. 121 on N.W. 43rd St. off Oak Circle in Boca. Another session is scheduled for July 30. There is a \$50 fee. Call 395-4918 or 392-2003. ■