

## TAMPA ARTS TRAIL

# She Paints Beauty Of Deterioration

By ESTHER HAMMER  
Tribune correspondent

**PORT TAMPA** — Some people look at crumbling houses with chipped paint, sagging porches and boarded windows as something to demolish.

Tatyana Igumnova Hankinson sees them as art.

"When I drive around South Tampa and I see all these old houses, they just impress me so much. They're very artistic looking and they're all different," she said. "Also, because they're old, they have all these old trees around them and things on the porches."

Since moving to Tampa five years ago from her native Uzbekistan, the 38-year-old Hankinson has sought out the old structures tucked away among overgrown trees and bushes and memorialized them in paintings.

About 40 of her works will be exhibited Tuesday through Jan. 31 at the Kotler Art Gallery at the John F. Germany Public Library in downtown. The exhibit includes several paintings of South Tampa houses, as well as still lifes, landscapes and abstract works. Many are of places Hankinson has visited, including Colorado, Scotland, Venice and Greece.

"Her repertoire is extensive," gallery curator Lynda Jennings said. "She can do anything from an abstract pencil drawing to an oil portrait. And she'll work in almost any medium, too."

Hankinson's favorites are oils, acrylics and pastels, but she doesn't want to be pinned down to picking a favorite.

"It depends on my mood and my feeling."

The exhibited paintings are a far cry from the "propaganda posters" she created in her native country in the former Soviet Union. The posters bore messages such as "Smash the Enemy" and "Hard Work, Good Harvest."

"Uzbekistan is a huge country for growing cotton," she said. "My father worked at one of the tractor factories and they needed artists for propaganda posters."

The posters served various purposes.

"Sometimes it was for a holiday; sometimes it was to tell something to factory members like, 'You shouldn't go here or there.'"

Hankinson said she graduated from the Kubyshev Art School in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. But art was just a hobby, something she did for herself



Tribune photo by JAY NOLAN

**Tatyana Hankinson moved to Tampa five years ago from Uzbekistan. About 40 of her works will be exhibited, including several paintings of houses, still lifes, landscapes and abstract pieces.**



Tatyana Hankinson

**Hankinson loves to paint the forgotten old houses she finds in South Tampa, like this one called "Port Tampa Derelict."**

and friends. Her income came from a business she owned for about six years called Snow White, where she rented and sold wedding gowns.

"It's very different from America. Not everybody can afford to buy, so many people rent gowns," she said.

Being a full-time artist was always in the back of her mind.

"I was hoping and dreaming about that. But unfortunately my financial situation did not allow that."

That was before Kris Hankinson, who works at MacDill Air Force Base, came into her life while he was on a business trip to Uzbekistan.

"We met on an Internet dating site," she said. "He found my phone number and

## IF YOU GO

**WHAT:** Free opening reception for exhibit of paintings by Tatyana Hankinson

**WHEN:** 5:30 to 7 p.m. Jan. 11

**WHERE:** Louise and Arnold Kotler Art Gallery at the John F. Germany Public Library, 900 N. Ashley Drive

we met and dated about one month and then he said 'Marry me.'"

After moving to Tampa, Hankinson hit the art scene running. She joined Tampa Realistic Artists and soon became its vice president, a position she still holds.

She took first place in the professional oil and acrylics division at the 2006 Strawberry Festival in Plant City, and teaches classes at three centers in South Tampa.

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