



Olga Glebova-Sudeykina
(1885–1945)

DANCER

State Porcelain Factory,
Petrograd, USSR

1922

Overglaze painting, gilding on porcelain

About the project

<https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/special/p/lyudi-i-fondy-eng/>





SELECTED BY

Darya Kaverina,

*Curator of the Collection
of Glass and Porcelain Objects in 1993–2003*



In 1993, I got a job at the Tsaritsyno Museum-Reserve, in the Department of Decorative and Applied Arts. My mentor at the new place was the Head of the Department Lidiya Andreeva, a brilliant art historian and an accomplished museum worker. She tried to involve me in working on exhibitions at every opportunity, taught me how to understand things, how to find common ground with collectors, artists, and object's owners. One day she said, 'We are going to see Gunst's widow, Elena Petrovna'.

By that time I considered myself an experienced curator, but, honestly, I did not quite realize how lucky I was. After all, Evgeniy Gunst was not just a translator from French, who worked for the publishing houses like 'Khudozhestvennaya Literatura' and 'Iskusstvo', but also a famous collector of Russian paintings, whose pieces of art were exhibited in the country's largest art museums.

And then came the day when we stepped over the threshold of this memorable flat. The windows were covered with bars: the owner told us about several robbery attempts. And the flat did hold many truly priceless objects: the walls were covered with several rows of paintings by Rokotov, Venetsianov, Surikov, Kustodiev, Serov, Vrubel, Somov...

But Lidiya's and my attention was drawn to the glass cabinet with porcelain in the corner. Elena began to take out and put on the table and sofa porcelain sculptures by Nataliya Danko. Lidiya Andreeva asked how the owner would estimate the collection. And received a disarming answer, 'It's not real painting, take it for free'.

And the miracles did not end there. At some point, she took out of the cupboard a statue 'Dancer' by Olga Glebova-Sudeykina.

'Are you giving this away too?' Lidiya Andreeva asked.

'Yes, yes, take everything'.

It was only when I took the items to the storage facility that I truly realized how unique this gift was. Nataliya Danko headed

the Sculpture Department of the Leningrad Porcelain Factory for many years and created more than 300 sculptures that comprised an epoch in the art of the 20th century. Olga Glebova-Sudeykina — dancer, actress, painter, translator — made only a few models for the porcelain factory before leaving Russia in 1924, among which we know three: ‘Psisha’ (the role she played in the namesake play by Y. Belyaev), ‘Columbine’ and ‘Dancer’. All of them were done in limited copies and are highly valued by art connoisseurs. And so, quite unexpectedly, the Tsaritsyno Museum-Reserve became the owner of one of these models.

I worked at Tsaritsyno until 2003 before being invited to work at the State Literary Museum. There I saw the familiar statue again. This time it was in the interior of the room in the photograph of Olga Glebova-Sudeykina and Anna Akhmatova, who dedicated the following lines to her friend in ‘Poem Without a Hero’:

From nowhere you came to Russia,
O my blond-haired wonder,
Our second decade's columbine:
Why do you gaze so sharply and sadly,
Petersburg doll and actress,
You, my double, my twin.

(Translated by D.M. Thomas)