

# Alexander Volkov

(b. 1960, St. Petersburg, Russia)

**Alexander Volkov is an American master realist of the New England “scene.”** He specializes in landscapes and still lifes imbued with light and shadow, plus a nostalgic sense of one’s home, home-town, and local landscapes that stir memory and soul. Though born at the height of the Cold War, after marrying an American in Russia, he emigrated to the U.S., where he has lived and worked for 25 years.

Volkov started painting in high school. As a fledgling artist, he made a name for himself painting the **streets, canals, and bridges of Leningrad** -- especially interested in the streetlights and how they lighted up the canals, and in the sunshine of summertime after the long, dark winters.

In 1981 he began exhibiting with a group of 200 Leningrad artists known as the **"Brotherhood of Experimental Arts"** -- a conglomeration of "underground" art groups active in Leningrad at the time. Later, he joined a splinter group called **"Ostrov"** or **"Island,"** which united 30 artists who felt that, ideologically, their work was neither Socialist Realism nor extreme avant-garde.

Of his mentors, he says, *"I have had the enormous advantage of picking my own teachers: William Turner, Vermeer, Franz Hals, Rembrandt, as well as Edward Hopper, Maxfield Parrish, and Andrew Wyeth of the 20th century. They have all taught me something -- how to see, how to hear, how to understand things and, most importantly, how to understand myself."*

Combining a lifelong fascination with architecture, landscape, and still-life, Volkov brings drama and poetic expression to the homespun ‘scapes and sights around us every day. **With intimate vision, he merges mood and atmosphere, evoking powerful emotions into harmony.** *"There is no greater mystery than the conflict of light and dark. In the way they clash and penetrate each other: there is the source of everything. Whether I paint a landscape or a still-life, within it there is always a story of light traveling through darkness.* This light creates longing. The longing for a place -- a fantasy of stability, that things could be permanent, secure -- that we will live meaningful lives and that things will remain after us." With their house in his wife’s family for over 150 years, Volkov adds, "I want my work to speak to the history of places, of individuals who built their homes, lived their lives in them, and worked the land for generations." Volkov also wants the viewer to have a one-on-one relationship in the solitude of his work. **"To remain serene, one has to have private space. That’s also what my paintings are all about."**

## EDUCATION

1967-'77      English School, Leningrad, Russia  
1986          PhD., Department of Physics, Leningrad State University

## CAREER

1980s          "Brotherhood of Experimental Arts," avant-garde exhibitions, various  
                  "*Ostrov*," ("Island") splinter group, exhibitions, various  
Late '80s-      Animator, Leningrad Studio of Science Films  
early '90s      Stage artist, Leningrad Theatre

## MONOGRAPH

*The Neverending Way Home* (2004)