

Russian literary fiction

The Geographer has drunk the Globe

Novel. AST. Moscow 2003. 413 pages

Publishers: China/ NeoCogito, France/ Fayard, Italy/ Voland, Lithuania/ Alma Littera, Netherlands/ Meulenhoff, Spain/ Plasson e Bartleboom

In the Russian province of the 90s a young teacher fights with the children of the new generation. He has been assigned to the most rebellious class. The „geography teacher“ and the teenagers, who are ready to break him, first sit in the walls of the classroom, but then outside the walls they together experience an adventure of comradeship and initiation. They learn geography more or less badly when they go on a kind of raid on primitive rafts into the widely ramified rivers of the Taiga.

The geographer is an educational novel, the story of a multiple love: for a woman, for a region, for true friendship, for shaky but sincere evenings, for a gentle smile, for quickly forgotten regrets with vodka and for a life which, despite daily sufferings, is the only one to be entrusted to.

Alexei Ivanov, himself a former teacher in his hometown Perm in the Urals, presents with this book a kind of educational novel, describing the social drift of the society after the collapse of the Soviet Union. An entire generation of Russian thirty-year-olds, who spent half their lives in and half after communism, recognized themselves in this novel.

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even more intellectual reader will get their money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment.

“On one page you can laugh, on the next you can cry, or at least sniff your nose out of sympathy with this ridiculous, touching and charming hero and the people around him. Like a huge source of strength for the soul, „Geographer“ pumps new blood into the channels of emotional perception through literature and lets many readers again - literally as the first time - feel very simple and familiar things: winter, love, wind, trust, loneliness, the smell of cigarette smoke, the taste of vodka, the headache of a hangover.”
GALINA YUZEFOVICH

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.



THE AUTHOR

languages

8 languages

awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award
2006 Big Book Award
2006 Strannik Prize
2004 Book of the Year
2004 Bazhov Award
2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

sample translation available

english

Aleksei Ivanov