

Best books of Belarus

An exhibition of publications awarded this year by the National *Book Art* Contest is held at the National Library of Belarus



Denis Romaniuk

By Svetlana Savelieva

Every year, from 1960, the works of Belarusian publishers are traditionally summed up by the National *Book Art* Contest. Founded by the Ministry of Information, the purpose of the competition is to develop the art of the Belarusian book, to enhance its competitiveness, as well as celebrate our artistic and printing culture. It is a sort of creative report by publishers, artists and typographers, who have created the best examples of printed materials over the past year.

The contest featured 35 publishers with 180 publications. Less than half reached the short list, from which the competent jury selected the winners across sixteen categories: main, thematic, special and personal.

The highest award of the competition was presented in the 'Triumph' nomination to publisher Denis Romaniuk for his *Belarus. Temple and Scape*. This photo album includes 152 photographs, which depict many temples and landscapes, both iconic — recognisable at first sight — and little-known. Those who see the album for the first time are unlikely to hide their admiration; they would say: 'How beautiful is Belarus!' Denis Romaniuk himself, the author of all the pictures, tells us about the idea of creating the album, "I discovered Belarus for myself a very long time ago: in the 1970s. My father, Mikhail Romaniuk, took me — then a pre-schooler — to ethnographic expeditions with him. After-



wards, I travelled alone: first, as an artist, with a sketchbook and paints, later, as a photographer, with a tripod and cam-

eras. My safari (as I call my travels) passed through an endless number of villages, cemeteries, the Chernobyl



zone, but more and more through the hills, forests, riverbanks, lakes and heavenly expanses... and over the time, the beauty of the Belarusian landscape captured me. ...I noticed that with the image of the shrine, the landscape becomes special, and the temple building never interferes with the environment — they are always harmoniously combined and complement each other. Art photography helped me put, like notes, the duet on the pages of the album."

The winner's diploma in the 'For Contribution to the Preservation of Spiritual Heritage' nomination was bestowed upon the National Library of Belarus for the facsimile publication *Brest Bible. 1563*.

Vladimir Dovgalyo was recognised as the best illustrator for illustrations to the book *Miraculous Ring*, the best designer — Vladimir Lukashik for Vasily Gigevich's *Island*, Ales Badak's *Farewell with Eternity* and a series of books *The Written Will Remain*. The jury named Andrei Shchukin as the best photographer for the author's photography of the book, entitled *The Taste of the Belarusian Cuisine*.

The National Library invites everyone to get to know Belarus' 2019 best editions until April 18th.