

alexander manichenko

poet, poetry projects curator, poetry festivals organiser

about myself:

First and foremost, I am a poet. I read and write poetry. And I always crave more. I'm always stirring things up around me. Poetry readings, performances, collaborative projects and festivals. Even parties with friends don't go without poetry. It's the main way to talk about the world and myself and to interact with reality.

I was born in 1988 in the Chelyabinsk region of Russia, spent two years studying to be a radio and TV journalist at the university, then moved to Moscow to attend the Literary Institute. I became involved in the literary process and community, participated in many festivals, events, and projects. And gradually started organizing them myself. After the institute, I returned to Chelyabinsk and began organizing the literary community. It's something I'm good at and that benefits many people. Since 2023, I've been doing the same thing in Yerevan (Republic of Armenia).

Now, I need to tell you what I write about. It's always difficult. About the world - in my view, one of poetry's tasks is to capture reality at a specific moment. About culture and memory. About history and memory. About family and personal memory and experience. And, of course, about love and tenderness in their various forms.

I started writing at the age of 6, at 17 I began participating in regional and international poetry contests and festivals. I've been publishing in journals and anthologies since 2006. In 2009, I received the prestigious Russian youth award "LiteraturRRentgen." In 2019, my first book of poetry, "and here's about tenderness," was published by the Armchair Scientist publishing house in Yekaterinburg, Russia. That same year, in 2019, I launched my publishing project "one-eyed bandit" for poetic books with special artistic design. In this project, two of my books were published, "bestiarium" and "herbarium."

In 2016, my colleagues and I launched the "Poems About..." project in Chelyabinsk. These are regular (approximately monthly) meetings and poetry readings on a given topic. Anyone who wishes can participate, we read any poems from any time by any authors in any languages. The project quickly attracted not only poets but also many poetry enthusiasts (librarians, university professors, school teachers, artists, gallery owners and brewers). Meetings take place in various venues - pubs, museums, libraries, at various regional festivals, including the South Ural Book Fair. In 2024, we launched "Poems About..." in Yerevan.

Also in 2016, in Chelyabinsk, we began to curate the InVersia poetry program as part of the Debarcader contemporary art festival and did amazing things until it closed in 2020. We were interested in the various forms and ways of existence, creation, and dissemination of contemporary poetry. We did collective projects, anthologies, slams, synthetic projects with musicians, artists, font designers, photographers. We collaborated not only with cultural and educational institutions but also with charities. In 2020, our best project over the 5 years was the video anthology "The Walking Man. Stories of People with Cancer, Told by Poets."

I always want more poetry (mine and others'), more pleasant communication, collaboration, projects, festivals, human connections. That's why the world needs us.

poetry

books:

- 2019: bestiarium ("one-eyed bandit" self-publishing project, Chelyabinsk, Russia) - <https://bookstorepoetry.ru/product/aleksandr-manichenko-bestiarij/>
- 2019: herbarium ("one-eyed bandit" self-publishing project, Chelyabinsk, Russia) - <https://bookstorepoetry.ru/product/aleksandr-manichenko-gerbarij/>
- 2020: and here's about tenderness (Armchair Scientist publishing house, Yekaterinburg, Russia) - <https://armchair-scientist.ru/inversia/>

anthologies:

- 2006: City of Poets, Chelyabinsk, Russia
- 2010: Open Windows Day 3, Moscow, Russia
- 2012: The Anthology of Literaturrentgen Prize. Compiled by Elena Suntsova, foreword by Dmitry Kuzmin. Ailuros Publishing, New York, USA. <https://www.amazon.com/Anthology-Literaturrentgen-Prize-Russian/dp/193878104X/>
- 2013: On Reasonable Grounds. Chelyabinsk's Young Poets. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.mv74.ru/kniga/na-dostatochnyh-osnovanijah.html>
- 2017: Parovoz, Moscow, Russia. <https://www.mv74.ru/kniga/wp-content/uploads/parovoz.pdf>
- 2017: Proyavitel (Photo Film Developer), Poems and Photos. Chelyabinsk, Russia.
- 2018: Anthology of Contemporary Ural Poetry, Volume 4. Compiled by Vitaly Kalpidi. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.mv74.ru/kniga/antologija-sovremennoj-uralskoj-pojezii.html>
- 2018: Dogs and Baobabs. A 2019 calendar illustrated by Olga Antipina with poems by twelve poets. Chelyabinsk, Russia.
- 2019: Travel Culture in the Silver Age: Research and Reception. Yekaterinburg, Russia. <https://armchair-scientist.ru/travel-culture-silver-age>
- 2020: Plain Girl. Cover Versions. Yekaterinburg, Russia. <https://armchair-scientist.ru/ugly-girl-cover-versions/>

journals and magazines (paper):

- 2006: Tranzit Ural, Chelyabinsk, Russia.
- 2008: Volga XXI Century. Saratov, Russia. <https://magazines.gorky.media/volga21/2008/3/154429.html>
- 2008: Vozdukh (Air). Moscow, Russia. <http://www.litkarta.ru/projects/vozdukh/issues/2008-1/cheliabinsk/>
- 2010: Ural. Yekaterinburg, Russia. <https://magazines.gorky.media/ural/2010/4/stihi-1661.html>
- 2011: Vozdukh (Air). Moscow, Russia. <http://www.litkarta.ru/projects/vozdukh/issues/2011-4/manichenko/>
- 2015: Ural. Yekaterinburg, Russia. <https://magazines.gorky.media/ural/2015/9/pesni-dlya-odnogo.html>

online publications:

- 2007: 45th Parallel. https://45parallel.net/aleksandr_manichenko/ikar_matisa_letit_k_obemnomu_dzhazu/
- 2008: Noviye Oblaka (New Clouds). Estonia. <https://www.tvz.org.ee/index.php?page=299&lang=5>

- 2009: Polutona. <https://polutona.ru/?show=0320141903>
- 2010: Polutona. <https://polutona.ru/?show=0616182955>
- 2011: Students Meridian. <http://www.stm.ru/archive/1520/>
- 2015: Polutona. <https://polutona.ru/?show=0812110916>
- 2015: Queer Culture in Russia. <https://queerculture.ru/poetry/manichenko/golosa>
- 2021: LiTERRatura. <https://litteratura.org/poetry/4647-aleksandr-manichenko-plodovo-yagodnye-rebusy.html>
- 2022: Dvoetochie. Russian-Hebrew Journal of Literature Etc. Issue 40 on 26.12.2022. Israel. <https://dvoetochie.org/2022/12/26/alexandr-manichenko/>

videos:

- 2023: A Yerevan Balcony. YouTube channel, events and poetry readings in Yerevan, Armenia. Project by Alexei Kruchkovsky and Sofia Amirova. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuL09GNIHEc&t=44s>

poetry festivals:

- 2006: Il Toloknov Festival. Kyshtym, Russia
- 2007: Glubina (Depth). Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://glubina.litnews.ru/press2007.php> ,
- 2007: Noviy Tranzit (New Transit). Kyshtym, Russia
- 2007: LiteraturRRentgen. Yekaterinburg, Russia.
- 2009: LiteraturRRentgen. Yekaterinburg, Russia.
- 2008: Strelka. Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
- 2009: Strelka. Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
- 2008: Golos-A (Voice-s). Cheboksary, Russia
- 2009: Golos-A (Voice-s). Kazan, Russia
- 2012: Golos-A (Voice-s). Cheboksary, Russia
- 2009: Moscow Festival of University Poetry. Moscow, Russia
- 2010: Moscow Festival of University Poetry. Moscow, Russia. <http://www.stm.ru/archive/1520/>
- 2010: Black Hen. Kaliningrad, Russia
- 2010: VIII International Poetry Festival SloWWWo. Kaliningrad, Russia. <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/afisha/news/1115249-.html>
- 2011: Moscow Biennale of Poets. [https://poetograd.ru/archive/poetograd_2011_6\(12\).pdf](https://poetograd.ru/archive/poetograd_2011_6(12).pdf)
- 2016: Il Turenkov Readings. Yekaterinburg, Russia.
- 2017: Poetry Interventions Festival. Magnitogorsk – Chelyabinsk - Yekaterinburg, Russia.
- 2017: MyFest Annual Festival of Contemporary Poetry. Moscow – St Petersburg – Chelyabinsk, Russia
- 2017: Vorobey-Fest. Kamensk Uralsky, Russia
- 2018: Superfest of One Anthology. Yekaterinburg, Russia.

co-organiser:

- 2012: “See Above” Poetry and Small Prose Festival. Yaroslavl, Russia. <https://www.yarcenter.ru/news/anonsy-i-retsenzii/festival-aktualnoy-poezii-i-maloy-prozy-sm-vyshe-52666/>

- 2016-2020: InVersia poetry program, within Debarcader contemporary art festival. Chelyabinsk. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWN8_zxg6SE

curator:

- 2016-2022: “Poems About...” monthly poetry readings. Chelyabinsk, Russia.
- 2017: Golosa (Voices) Poetry Performance in OkNo Modern Art Gallery, Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.oknogallery.ru/ru/news/2017.html>
- 2020: “Poems About Meetings” within the Night of the Museums in OkNo Modern Art Gallery, Chelyabinsk, Russia. 14 May 2020. <https://www.oknogallery.ru/ru/news/20200514.html>
- 2020-2021: “In Your Words”. A series of meetings with modern poets. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7E-ykCUa4-c>
- 2024: “Poems About...” monthly poetry readings. Yerevan, Armenia.

co-curator of a poetry anthology:

- 2020: Plain Girl. Cover Versions. Yekaterinburg, Russia. <https://armchair-scientist.ru/ugly-girl-cover-versions/>

co-curator of poetry video anthologies:

- 2020: 20minus20. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDYBuSDSX9g&t=1s>
- 2020: The Walking Man. Stories of People with Cancer, Told by Poets. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHj11EauLho>

publisher, one-eyed bandit:

- 2019: Alexander Manichenko. bestiarij. Art & design by Valentina Shash and Artyom Kudryakov. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://bookstorepoetry.ru/product/aleksandr-manichenko-bestiarij/>
- 2019: Alexander Manichenko. herbarij. Art & design by Valentina Shash and Artyom Kudryakov. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://bookstorepoetry.ru/product/aleksandr-manichenko-gerbarij/>
- 2019: Natalia Sannikova. I Have Neither A Voice Nor A Tongue. Art & design by Galina Kolganova. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://bookstorepoetry.ru/product/nataliya-sannikova-net-u-menya-ni-golosa-ni-yazyka/>

media appearances:

- 2012: Vslukh (Aloud). Poetry Today. “Cruel fate. Legacy of Rock Poetry”. Culture TV Channel. Moscow, Russia. <https://smotrim.ru/video/155494>
- 2019: Inside All These People and Events. Issue 7. Yulia Podlubnova’s interview with Alexander Manichenko. Articulation. - <http://articulationproject.net/3431>

- 2021: Na-Ty-Na-Vy Project at Chelyabinsk Regional Universal Scientific Library. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 5YkFcg1KDI>
- 2022: Documentary Poetry: a Survey. POETICA literary online journal. <https://licenzapoetica.name/points-of-view/survey/dokumentalnaja-pojezija-opros>

awards:

- 2009: LiteraturRRentgen Prize in the main nomination. Yekaterinburg, Russia. <http://www.litkarta.ru/russia/chelyabinsk/news/litrentgen-2009/>
- 2007: Long List of the LiteraturRRentgen Prize. Yekaterinburg, Russia.
- 2009: Long List of the Debut Prize. Moscow, Russia

education:

- 2007-2012. Maxim Gorky Literature Institute. Higher education diploma "Literature Worker (Creative Art)", E. Sidorov's workshop.
- 2004-2007. South Ural State University. Radio and TV Journalism.

personal pages on literary portals:

- Litkarta: <http://www.litkarta.ru/russia/chelyabinsk/persons/manichenko-a/>
- Polutona: <https://polutona.ru/?show=manichenko>
- Queer Culture: <https://queerculture.ru/who/manichenko>
- Promegalit: https://www.promegalit.ru/personals/1963_manichenko_aleksandr.html
- OkNo Modern Art Gallery, Chelyabinsk, Russia: <https://vmeste.oknogallery.ru/faces/>

others about me:

Wikipedia (Russian), Robert Frost's Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening:

Critics also note the free adaptation by the Ural poet Alexander Manichenko, who translated Frost "not so much into the Russian language, but into the language of post-conceptualism."

https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9E%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B2%D1%88%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%8C_%D1%83_%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B0_%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%B5%D0%B6%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%BC_%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC

2019: Smyshlyaev E. A. The System of Spatial Motifs and Images in Contemporary Chelyabinsk's Poetry. In *New Philological Bulletin*, peer-reviewed journal published by Institute for Philology and History, Russian State University for Humanities (RSUH), №2(49) 2019. Moscow, Russia

«As noted by the chief editor of the poetry journal "Arion," poet A. Alekhin, "the special 'chronological cosmopolitanism' of contemporary poetry is caused by the awareness of the brevity and fragility of human civilization; poets increasingly feel themselves living in all times" [Alekhin]. This model of the lyrical "self" is most vividly expressed in the poetry of A. Manichenko, characterized by movement within the intertextual space of culture, combining a multitude of local cultural texts. The Chelyabinsk locus becomes just one of many places where the lyrical hero resides. Belonging to this locus is marked by local place names, landmarks, and the names of close people who represent a certain value for the lyrical hero.» http://slovorggu.ru/2019_2/49.pdf (P. 110)

2020: Davydov D. Afterword to A. Manichenko's book, *and here's about tenderness*. Yekaterinburg, Russia:

The latest trends in understanding poetry as engaged art, the displacement of aesthetics not only by politics but by ethics, and the work aimed at bringing the lyrical subject as close as possible to the recipient - while acknowledging the inevitable boundary between them - all that constitutes the nerve of a significant part of innovative contemporary poetry was predicted in due time by the poetics of Alexander Manichenko, one of the most original and simultaneously unread poets of his generation.

Perhaps the point here is that the "direct statement" in Manichenko's work is always estranged not so much by metapositional reflection as by (counter)ironic internal dialogue between the lyrical subject and the intertextual author. In Manichenko's poetry, neo-modernist rigidity and tenderness form almost post-punk structures in mood, seemingly open in their avant-garde gesture, yet in reality airproof. The impossibility of unequivocal "slogan-like" conclusions - including in the experience of trauma, which is so important for contemporary poetry and is again very sophisticatedly estranged in Manichenko's work - makes these poems "uncomfortable" for those who seek purely extrapoetic justifications in poetry.

2020: Denis Larionov, Nina Alexandrova, Alexander Malkov, Yulia Podlubnova. Reviews of A. Manichenko's book, *and here's about tenderness*. In *Vozdukh (Air)* online literary journal. <http://www.litkarta.ru/projects/vozdukh/issues/2020-40/hronika/>

Despite Alexander Manichenko debuting more than a decade ago, this is his first poetry collection, gathering many of the writing techniques he has employed throughout the 2010s. Essentially, the primary task of a Ural poet is to stop being a Ural poet at any cost, and Manichenko copes with this task excellently, drawing on a queer reading of poetry by Elena Shvarts and even Olga Sedakova, initiated in the 1990s by Dmitry Vodennikov and Alexander Anashevich. Like some older authors, Manichenko is not afraid to mix different modes of speech, except the boring one, making the affect that defines the life of the lyrical subject the object of engaged observation. In his poetic texts and cycles, Manichenko creates a mythological world where the "non-working community" jumps and frolics, involving poets, lovers, friends, enemies, and so on. Despite the emotional nature of Manichenko's conceptual poetry characters (sometimes even excessively so), he does not strive for exaltation and always keeps his finger on the pulse: Manichenko's book is a survival guide for those who perceive the world only sensually, bypassing intellect and common sense. (Denis Larionov)

This is the first book of the author, who, while fully engaged in the contemporary literary process, seems to constantly and diligently evade it, as if the poems, according to the beliefs of Zen monk poets,

should be written with a staff on sand and washed away by rain, scattered by the wind, not subject to fixation and preservation. At first glance, these are poems about tenderness and the pain that lies beneath it. The entire book is a monologue, in which "besides tenderness, there is nothing else," but there is not enough strength and words to convey it, "the most accurate answer is always missed / desire remains in the pocket between 'I want' and 'I would'." Manichenko's poetry constantly balances between sincerity and play, turning sincerity into a game. In this sense, while superficially similar, the poems are maximally distant from the currently popular poetry of trauma and from the "new sincerity." (Nina Alexandrova)

Manichenko's poems are the poems of a historian, but the one who is telling the story not in the usual way: not how a joint action or shared experience became possible, but how the action remains lonely, while the experience is yet to be created and realized. The variations on folk songs, pre-Soviet and Soviet, "Black Raven" and "Oh, the Kalina is Blooming," are amazing in the collection. The dizzying melodrama of these plots changes to articulated experiences of loneliness. "My maple, my little maple, spring has come" sounds almost like "Stop, traveller." The tender attention to the moment before death, "every button, every mole, every line," recalls the great tradition of Russian poetry from Kuzmin to Dashevsky, but the intonation here is different—not the feeling of oneself at the centre of tragedy, but the strictness of the memorial ritual, the performance of all necessary actions, the fidelity to the honour of a pre-established catalogue. It's not a tragic lament, but rather a rehearsal of explanation at the Last Judgment: if Khodasevich were completely devoid of misanthropy, he would be Manichenko. Some poems look like a continuation of Khodasevich's theme "Oblivion - consciousness - oblivion," the work of the heart as the work of memory, already resurrecting all other feelings, but if for Khodasevich everything ends with an allegory of a parsimonious knight, then here, it is rather a dispersing movement, a call to join joy and sorrow directly, bypassing any allegories. (Alexander Markov)

The long-awaited debut collection of the Chelyabinsk poet, a graduate of the Literary Institute, and laureate of the LiteraturRRentgen Prize (2009), includes texts of instrumental diversity—verlibres and heteromorphic verses, lyrical diaries and quasi-role songs, unified by the author's metaposition, now already referred to as "newest sincerity" or "newest innovative poetry," as predicted, according to Danila Davydov's afterword, by the poetic practices of Alexander Manichenko. "Maximum approximation of the lyrical subject to the recipient," the fundamental anthropologization of the Other, is combined with strategies for documenting personal experience: it is not by chance that the collection opens with a large prose-poetic text listing the names of friends (sometimes accompanied by authorial comments), some of whom are quite recognizable in the contexts of the poetic community's life: "or for example about memory—what to talk about when there is Ksenia, who remembers all our conversations with accuracy down to the replica...". Manichenko creates a space of universal participation, interconnectedness, boundless—in every sense—empathy, where special importance is given to tenderness, pain, awkwardness, memory—this very list testifies to the rehabilitation of sentimentality and sensitivity as cultural mechanisms, and to a kind of transgressive post-romantic attempts to break through to authenticity. Manichenko here appears closer not so much to the practices of Andrei Cherkasov, Ksenia Charyeva (Moscow circle of friends), or even Natalia Sannikova and Ekaterina Simonova (Ural circle), but rather to the poetics of the F-letter platform (from Nastya Denisova to Oksana Vasyakina), minus the feminist component, which, however, is compensated by a certain affiliation of the Ural author's experiences with queer poetry. (Yulia Podlubnova)

2020: Alexander Zhitenyov. *Jump into an Air River*. Review of A. Manichenko's book, *and here's about tenderness*. In *Circus Olympus* magazine. <https://www.cirkolimp-tv.ru/articles/948/prigok-v-reku>

2021: Nina Alexandrova's commentary to A. Manichenko's poetry cycle *Fruit and Berry Rebuses*. In LiTERRatura online journal. <https://litteratura.org/poetry/4647-aleksandr-manichenko-plodovo-yagodnye-rebusy.html>:

Alexander Manichenko's cycle constantly plays with the reader in those very rebuses. Will he be able to hear, behind the pastoral memories of childhood, the words, that sound between the lines, about violence, death, and life, passing by so quickly?

In the Middle Ages in Europe, there were bestiaries. Beautifully illustrated books that told about animals (partially fictional), plants, and minerals. Each page contained a moral, presented through what seemed like a naturalistic story. After all, it was believed that nature was created by God to convey moral lessons to people.

The same scheme works in "Fruit and Berry Rebuses": a memory of a plant triggers a personal story, at the end of which a conclusion is implied. The reader must feel it independently and experience it together with the lyrical subject-child, to discover, as if for the first time, still non-verbally.

The text branches out and unfolds graphically, since the blooming garden around is "everything that exists and is possible / about everything".

2021: Vasily Chepelev. Poet of Awkwardness. *textonly* online journal, Issue 52, January 2021. <http://textonly.ru/case/?issue=52&article=39351>

2021: Anna Orlova. and here's about sasha's tenderness. <https://ruins.site/2021/03/31/nu-vot-o-sashinoj-nezhnosti/>

others about my projects:

2016: Gennady Kanevsky. InVersia: how it was in Chelyabinsk. Litkarta.ru. http://www.litkarta.ru/russia/chelyabinsk/news/inversion/?fbclid=IwAR3OW6RrleFshMEKbR4mObc3OS-pmkNVy9JLvsDTjvF-GrQz6nYux_WSgOs

2019: Daria Sukhovey about InVersia Festival. *Articulation Literary Almanac*, Issue 4. <https://articulationproject.net/1860>:

The most creative event in Russia in recent years has been the Chelyabinsk "Debarkader" (curated by Alexander Manichenko, Natalia Sannikova, Konstantin Rubinsky). It operates on different principles—the "Debarkader" festival is not only text-centric, it's broader, but text is present everywhere... In 2018, for the first time I attended a festival, which I can't surpass under any circumstances.

2021: On collaboration with OkNo Modern Art Gallery. Chelyabinsk, Russia. <https://vmeste.oknogallery.ru/faces/>:

For example, together with Irina Danilova as part of her exhibition, we created the project "O". Irina gave us a task—to write poetic texts consisting of 59 words, starting with the letter "O" in English, and in the Russian translation, not starting with "O"—and Chelyabinsk poets wrote and recited these texts at

the exhibition. This cannot be considered a one-time event—we are thinking about continuing, expanding, and further developing this project in different forms.

Or the performance "Voices," conceived by Moscow poet and activist Oksana Vasyakina, which she allowed me to conduct in Chelyabinsk. The essence of the performance is the voices of participating spectators, reciting poetic texts or their fragments at the moment when the texts are sent to their phones. By the will of the host, like a conductor of an orchestra, thoughtful pauses, long solo parts, mergers of several voices into one, or polyphony of different voices simultaneously reciting different texts are created. The resulting shared space of sound and listening makes a very strong impression.

Thirdly, I wanted to mention our project "Poems About ...". These are monthly meetings where anyone interested can read poetry (of any kind! their own, others', classics, contemporary, or ancient, in any language) on a given theme. When quarantine and self-isolation happened to us, the OkNo gallery kindly provided its online platform for "Poems About Meetings" in the format of video conferencing.

2021: Olga Balla-German. Fire, shimmering in the vessel. Review of the book "Plain Girl", compiled by A. Manichenko, N. Sannikova, Y. Podlubnova (2020). [Litteratura.org. https://litteratura.org/issue_criticism/4450-olga-balla-gertman-ogon-mercayuschiy-v-sosude.html](https://litteratura.org/issue_criticism/4450-olga-balla-gertman-ogon-mercayuschiy-v-sosude.html)

2023: Barkovskaya N. (Ph.D., Professor, Ural State Pedagogical University). InVersia Poetry Festival: Creativity of Communication and Collective Authorship Experience. In Quaestio Rossica (peer-reviewed scientific journal on Russia's history, philology and culture), vol.11, No. 1, 2023. <https://qr.urfu.ru/ojs/index.php/qr/>. https://elar.urfu.ru/bitstream/10995/121670/1/qr_1_2023_11.pdf