

**Title:** The Artist Magda Nachman in the Years 1918–1921  
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In his book *Around the "Silver Age,"* Nikolai Bogomolov remarks that "the provincial literary life during the Civil War has hardly been studied." Letters sent from the provinces during that time give a picture of a rich and complex provincial life that strove to incorporate artistic and creative endeavors amidst the more prosaic demands of everyday existence. This paper, which is a part of a larger project devoted to the biography of the neglected artist Magda Nachman Acharya, offers a glimpse at the animated cultural life in a village in Vitebsk gubernia during the war. It looks at Nachman's work and cultural milieu during the Russian Civil War, from 1919 to 1921, the years she lived in the village of Ust-Dolyssy and worked as a set designer for the local theater. This paper is based on archival materials, on the correspondence of Magda Nachman with her friend and colleague Yulia Obolenskaya, and on an interview with a ninety-six-year-old participant in the Ust-Dolyssy Theater during the Civil War, Nina Galaktionova.

The artist Magda Nachman is almost unknown, even to specialists in Russian Modernism, other than for her 1913 portraits of Marina Tsvetaeva and Sergey Efron and a later (1933) portrait of Vladimir Nabokov as well as for a few sentences on the death of Irina Efron (penned in 1920) that have been quoted in biographies of Tsvetaeva. The letter from which these lines come is among many other letters in which Nachman reports to Obolenskaya on the theater that was organized by her and Elizaveta (Lilya) Yakovlevna Efron. Although the theater, according to the local newspaper, was one of the best in the area, it is clear that Magda and Lilya were not champions of people's theater who dreamed of mass street performances or of theater as agitprop. They had used the occasion of a village theater as a safe haven in the sea of war, famine, and lawlessness.