|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **About you** | **[Salutation]** | Irena | [Middle name] | Vladimirsky |
| [Enter your biography] | | | |
| Achva Academic College | | | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Your article** |
| **Socialist Realism in Russia** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Socialist Realism was a term used to characterise the state of art and literature in the USSR during the 1930s-1950s. It was defined as a fundamental method of socialist art, literature and criticism that demanded from artists a ‘truthful and a historically real representation of socialist reality in its development’. Truthfulness and an historical reality of socialist life, as reflected in art, was intended to help educate Soviet citizens in the spirit of the revolutionary socialist-Marxist ideology. |
| Socialist Realism was a term used to characterise the state of art and literature in the USSR during the 1930s-1950s. It was defined as a fundamental method of socialist art, literature and criticism that demanded from artists a ‘truthful and a historically real representation of socialist reality in its development’. Truthfulness and an historical reality of socialist life, as reflected in art, was intended to help educate Soviet citizens in the spirit of the revolutionary socialist-Marxist ideology.  The official definition of ‘Socialist Realism’ was accepted in 1934 by the First Congress of the Soviet Writers. The first steps towards this new socialist art were undertaken during the 1920s with the establishment of the Association of Revolutionary painters and the founding of VKhUTEMAS (a state art and technical school). New Art associations required that their members show the everyday life of ordinary citizens of the new social order: workers, peasants, Red Army men, party and Soviet leaders and Bolshevik heroes of the revolution.  Since 1934, Socialist Realism was defined as the only form of artistic creation. It became the official guideline for art and literature and the sole criteria by which the validity of any literary or visual creation of art was appreciated. From then on, art and literature were regarded solely as instruments of Communist propaganda. They were intended to reflect, or to describe, the brighter sides of life under Communism. Any art considered not to conform to this agenda was rejected as an expression of bourgeois decadence.  Socialist Realism was based on three main principles: First was a national character intended to make art understandable to ordinary citizens. The second was to connect artistic images to proper ideological (and idealised) content—artists were expected to show the peaceful everyday life of Soviet citizens, and the heroic deeds of workers, peasants, and soldiers involved in the construction of a new and improved society for humanity. The third principle was the principle of actuality. Artists were required to be objective in their descriptions of everyday reality in its historical development, following the requirements of a materialistic understanding of history and presenting it as a class struggle by working people striving for a better life. According to Russian Marxists, changes of existence determined changes in consciousness and the perceptions of existing reality, and the art of the time must clearly embody this historical, objective point of view whilst representing their subjects as positive heroes, true builders of a better society: a Communist paradise on earth.  Fig.1: Alexander Deineka, *Relay Race along the Garden Ring*, 1947**.** Oil on canvas. 199 x 299 cm.  State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.  <http://www.artpoisk.info/artist/deyneka_aleksandr_aleksandrovich_1899/estafeta_po_kol_cu_b>  Distinguished artists were encouraged with commissions provided by the All Union Houses of Art Work; however, the rules and restrictions imposed upon artists were numerous and specific. Party and Soviet authorities took responsibility for the organisation of exhibitions and provided living conditions for Soviet artists. Freedom of artistic creativity was confined to technical methods and colour palette. Party and Soviet organisations, further, became the main customers of these paintings and sculptures, as works of Socialist Realism were mandatory in every public place, from party and administrative buildings to schools and hospitals. In this way artistic production was completely policed, from its conception to its final destination.  Fig.2: Isaak Brodsky, *Vladimir Lenin in Smolny,* 1930. Oil on canvas. 190 x 287 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow  <http://www.tretyakovgallery.ru/en/collection/_show/image/_id/331>  A number of artists stand out as successes of the time. Isaac Brodsky (1883-1939), a student of Ilya Repin, should be mentioned among outstanding representatives of Socialist Realism. He was known for his gallery of portrayals of Soviet and party leaders, mostly Vladimir Lenin and paintings dedicated to the events of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Russian Civil War. Alexander Samokhvalov (1894-1971) was famous for his impressive and expansive technical abilities, including painting, graphics, illustration, sculpture and teaching. Alexander Deineka (1899-1969) was a painter, graphic designer and sculptor. His paintings depict scenes of sporting events and general labour. His set of mosaics became the decoration of Maykovskaya Metro Station in Moscow, which opened in 1938. Pavel Korin (1892-1967) was born into the family of an icon-painter, was a student of Mikhail Nesterov and Konstantin Korovin, and became known for his monumental paintings (Alexander Nevsky) and restoration work. Dmitry Nalbandyan (1906-1993) was given the nickname of "the first paint brush" of the Communist leadership, mostly for his portraits of Josef Stalin and his circle.  Fig.3: Pavel Korin, *Alexander Nevsky,* 1951. Oil on canvas. 101 x 72,5 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow  <http://www.tretyakovgallery.ru/en/collection/_show/image/_id/343>  Socialist Realism became a fundamental art principle in the countries of Eastern Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland) and the Far East (China, Vietnam, North Korea). It became a substitute for actual reality; In its place, artists offered a myth of an imaginable reality, as envisioned by the Communist dream. |
| Further reading:  (Bown)  (Bown and Lanfranconi, Socialist Realism: Great Soviet Painting 1920-1970)  (Clark)  (Gorky and Radek)  (Grays and Rougle)  (James and Vaughan)  (Paperno and Grossman)  (Prokhanov)  (Terz) |