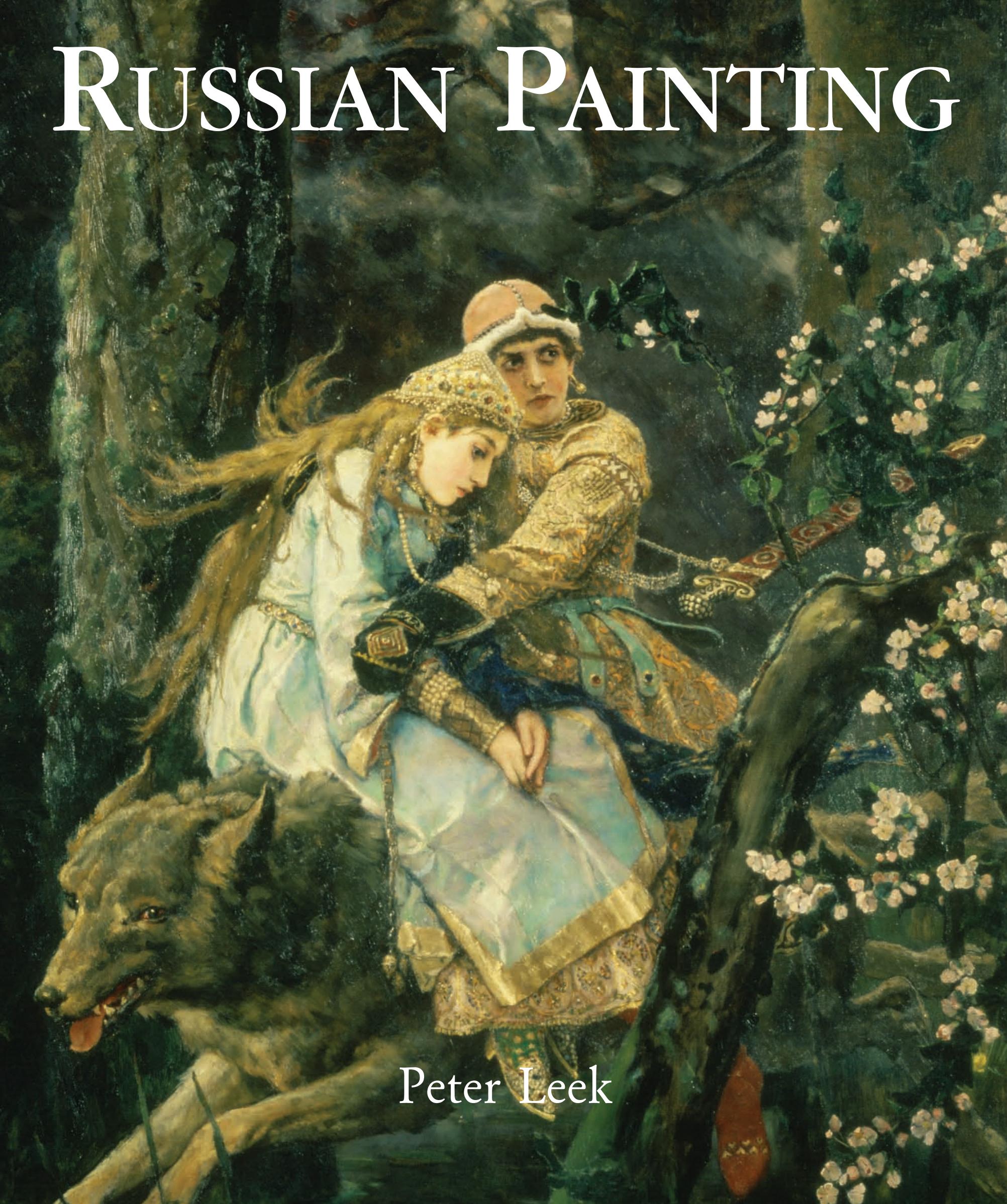


# RUSSIAN PAINTING



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# RUSSIAN PAINTING

PETER LEEK



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# INTRODUCTION

The sublime imagery of the great icon painters, the portraiture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the paintings of sea, snow and forest, the scenes of peasant life and the historical works of the Itinerants, the stylishness of the World of Art movement, the bold experimentation of the artists of the early twentieth century... To anyone unfamiliar with Russian painting, its richness and diversity may well come as a surprise or at least an exciting revelation. Indeed, the creative energy of Russian artists over the past two and a half centuries has been such that a book of this size cannot hope to offer a comprehensive overview of their output. Its aim is therefore to provide a representative selection of Russian painting from the eighteenth century to the start of the post-Revolutionary period (plus some glimpses of more recent work), but without attempting to do more than briefly allude to Russia's rich heritage of icon painting or giving in-depth coverage of Soviet era art.

## Icon painting

Although icon painting rapidly became an integral part of Russian culture, initially it was an imported art form, brought to Russia from Constantinople. The name “icon” is itself indicative of its Byzantine origin, being a transliteration of the Greek word for a “likeness” or image. In 988, after sending out envoys to report on the various religious options available, Prince Vladimir of Kiev Rus (the first Russian state) adopted Christianity both for himself and his subjects, staging a mass baptism in the River Dnieper. In order to build and embellish Christian places of worship, he invited Byzantine architects and artists to Kiev. As a result, the grand stone churches in Kiev were endowed with magnificent frescoes and mosaics. However, many of the early Kievan churches were built of wood, which made mural decoration impractical. Instead, religious images were painted on wooden panels. And these were often displayed on a screen separating the sanctuary from the body of the church — which eventually evolved into the iconostasis, an elaborate tiered partition adorned with icons.

The most famous of these early icons, *The Virgin of Vladimir*, (now in the Tretyakov Gallery, in Moscow), is thought to have been painted in Constantinople during the first quarter of the twelfth century. Between then and the time of Simon Ushakov (1626-86), arguably the last icon painter of stature, a great variety of schools and styles of icon painting developed, most notably those of Vladimir Suzdal, Yaroslavl, Pskov, Novgorod and Moscow. The earliest icon painters remain anonymous. However, it is known that they were not all monks, and before long workshops specializing in icons and other forms of church decoration were common in many parts of Russia.

1. Anonymous,

*The Virgin of Vladimir*, 11th - early 12th century.  
Tempera with eggs on lime-panel, 100 x 76 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

## INTRODUCTION



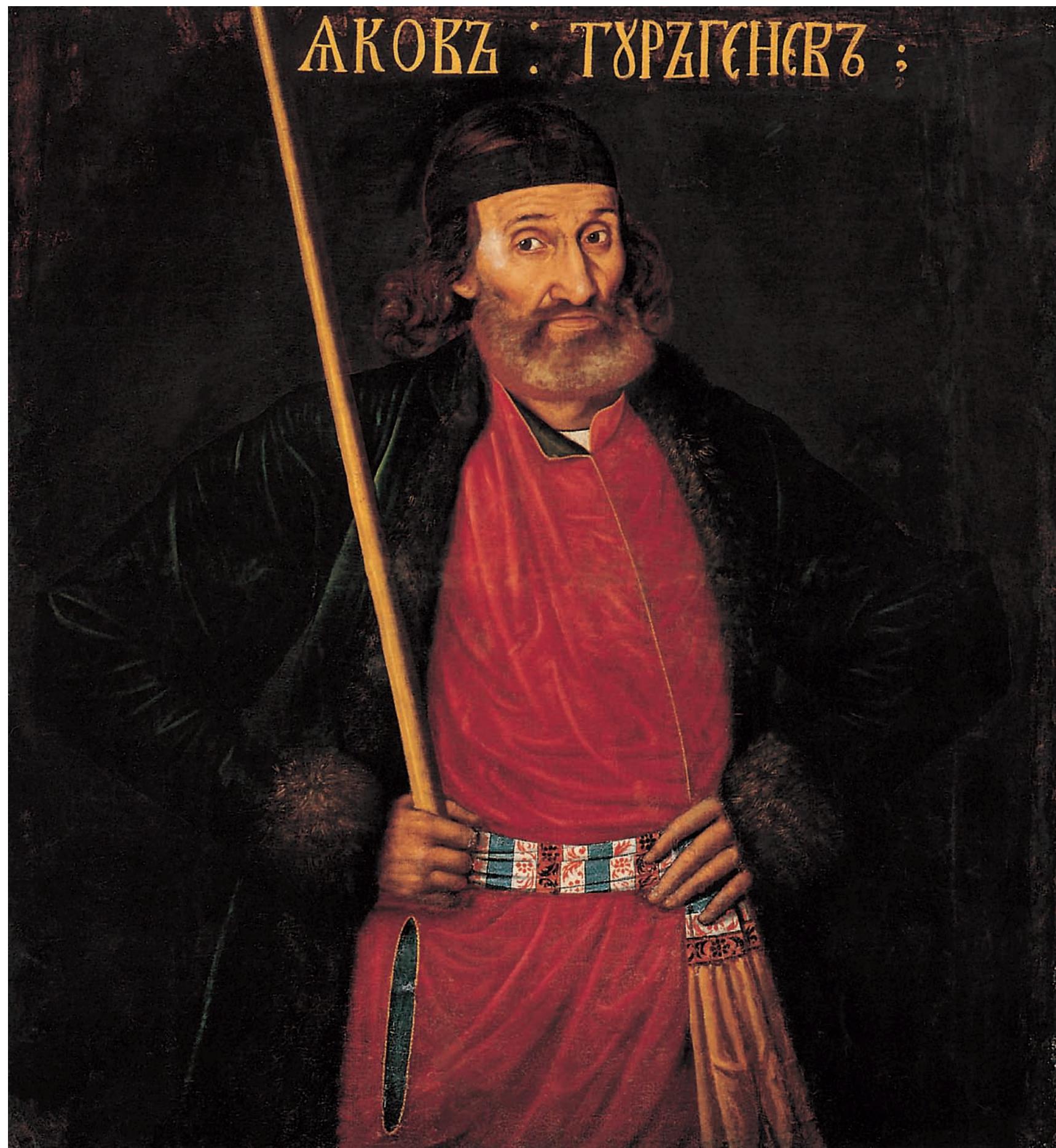
2. *The Miracle of St George and the Dragon.*  
 15th century. Egg tempera on panel. 114 x 79 cm,  
 National Art Museum, Kiev.
3. *The Passion of Christ.* 15th century.  
 Egg tempera on panel. 192 x 133 cm.
4. Andrei Rublev, *Old Testament Trinity*, 1422-1427.  
 Tempera with eggs on lime-panel, 142 x 114 cm,  
 Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Of the masters of icon painting, Theophanes the Greek (c. 1340-1405) came from Constantinople to Russia and greatly influenced both the Novgorod and Moscow schools. Other well-known masters include Andrei Rublev whose most famous work, the *Old Testament Trinity*, is in the Tretyakov Gallery; his friend and collaborator Daniel Cherniy (a monk, as was Rublev); and Dionysius (c. 1440-1508), one of the first laymen to become a leading icon painter.

At the time when Dionysius and his sons were active, ownership of icons became increasingly common. Previously nobles and merchants had begun the practice of displaying them in a place of honour in their homes, sometimes even in a special room, but now peasant families who could afford it also began to hang icons in a *krasny ugol*, or “beautiful corner”.





## Parsunas

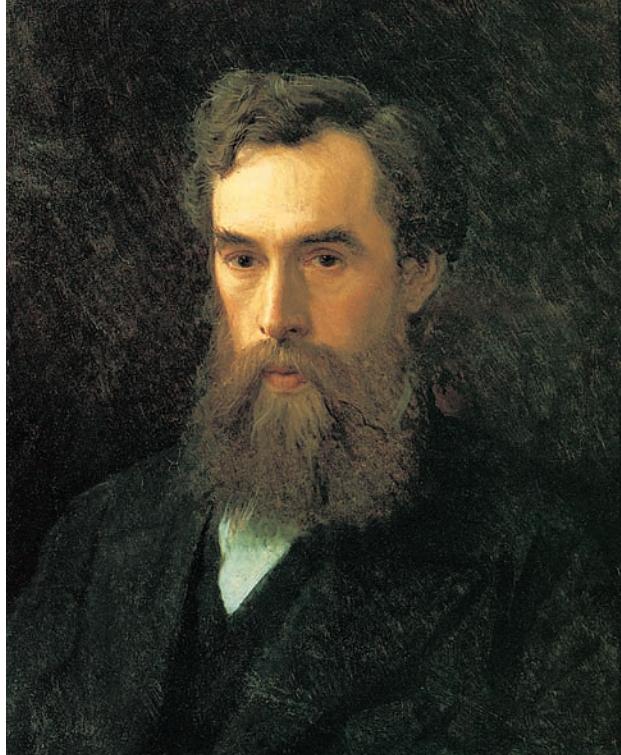
Up to the middle of the sixteenth century, in addition to Christ, the Virgin Mary and saints or angels, icon painters generally restricted their imagery to figures from the Old and New Testaments. Then, in 1551, Ivan the Terrible convened a Stoglav (ecclesiastical council) to settle a variety of issues, including the question of whether the depiction of living people in icons was sacrilegious. The council's somewhat cryptic ruling was interpreted as sanctioning the inclusion of tsars and historical or legendary figures alongside those culled from the Bible. As a result, icon painting gradually widened its ambit, both in terms of style and content until, during the schism that split the Russian Orthodox Church in the mid-seventeenth century, Nikon (the reforming patriarch) and Avvakum (the leader of the conservative Old Believers) vied with one another in their attempts to restore iconic purity. Nikon smashed, burned or poked out the eyes of icons that departed from the Byzantine tradition, especially those that included secular figures while Avvakum railed against innovations and foreign influences in language of a violence scarcely less than Nikon's.

But the ruling of Ivan's Stoglav had unwittingly paved the way for the spread of non-religious art. To escape the attentions of Nikon and Avvakum and their henchmen, painters turned to portraiture and other varieties of artistic endeavour. One result was a vogue for *parsunas* (from the Latin *persona*), pictures of living people similar in style to icons, but of a non-religious nature. These were usually painted on wooden panels, rather than on canvas. At first they were extremely stylized, and the emphasis was not so much on capturing character as on conveying the sitter's place in society. But before long the *parsuna* gave way to a more realistic type of portraiture. For example, the portrait of Peter the Great's jester Jacob Turgenev, painted by an unknown artist some time before 1696, has a psychological depth and an irony absent from most *parsunas*. The quizzical shrewdness of the jester's expression and the way his powerful figure fills the canvas may have been meant to suggest that wisdom is not exclusive to princes, nor folly to fools.

## The Academy

The Academy of Sciences was established in Saint Petersburg by a decree of the governing senate on 28 January (8 February) 1724, following an order of Emperor Peter the Great. Peter the Great's decision to build a capital that would be "a window on Europe" had considerable significance for Russian painting. First, he lured architects, craftsmen and artists to Russia from various parts of Europe, both to design and decorate the buildings of Saint Petersburg and to train their Russian contemporaries in the skills needed to realise his plans for modernizing the whole country. With similar aims in mind, he paid for Russian artists to study abroad and planned to establish an art department in the newly created Academy of Sciences.

5. Anonymous,  
*Portrait of Jacob Turgenev*, before 1696.  
 Oil on canvas, 105 x 97.5 cm,  
 Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



6. Ivan Kramskoi,  
*Portrait of Pavel Tretyakov*, 1876.  
Oil on canvas, 59 x 49 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

7. Jean-Marc Nattier,  
*Portrait of Peter the Great*, 1717.  
Oil on canvas, 142.5 x 110 cm,  
Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

After Peter's death, these plans reached fruition with the founding in 1757 of the Imperial Academy of the Arts, which opened in earnest six years later. For more than a hundred years the Academy exerted a powerful influence on Russian art. It was supplemented by a preparatory school, where budding artists were sent when they were between six and ten years old. It was rigidly hierarchical, with titles ranging from "artist without rank" to academician, professor and councillor. Students who had the stamina to do so toiled at their studies for fifteen years. And, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it was dominated by unquestioning acceptance of classical ideas. Russian artists frequently found the Academy's regulations and attitudes frustrating, but it did have the merit of making a comprehensive and rigorous artistic education available to those who showed signs of talent.

### Cross-currents in art

Initially the staff of the Academy included a preponderance of foreign — mainly French and Italian — teachers. As a result, Russian painting during the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries owed a great deal to the fashions prevalent in other parts of Europe, which tended to reach Russia with some delay. Given the distance from Saint Petersburg and Moscow to the Western European capitals, this lag is hardly surprising. But Russian painters did have considerable opportunities to familiarize themselves with Russian and non-Russian art, both thanks to the circulation of reproductions (often in the form of engravings and lithographs) and to the art-buying habits of the ruling class. As well as funding the Academy (including travel scholarships for graduates), Catherine the Great bought masterpieces of French, Italian and Dutch art for the Hermitage. During the French Revolution, her agents — and Russian visitors to Paris in general — were able to pick up some handy bargains, as the contents of chateaux were looted and sold off.

### The Itinerants

However, although the Academy boasted a diverse and fairly liberal collection of foreign masterpieces, not all of the students were content. In 1863 — the year that the first Salon des Refusés was held in Paris — fourteen high-profile art students (thirteen painters and one sculptor) resigned from the Imperial Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg in protest against its conservative attitudes and restrictive regulations. Their next move was to set up an artists' cooperative, although it soon became apparent that a more broadly based and better organized association was needed, eventually leading to the formation of the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions.



## INTRODUCTION



The Society was incorporated in November 1870, and the first of its forty-three exhibitions was held in November 1871 (the last one took place in 1923). The four artists who spearheaded the Society's founding were Ivan Kramskoï, portrait, historical and genre painter, who taught at the Society for the Encouragement of Artists school of drawing in Saint Petersburg before being given the rank of academician in 1869; Vassily Perov, portrait, historical and genre painter who taught painting at the School of Painting and Architecture in Moscow from 1871 to 1883; Grigory Miasoyedov, portrait, historical and genre painter who lived in Germany, Italy, Spain and France after completing his studies at the Academy in Saint Petersburg and was one of the board members of the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions, and finally, Nikolaï Gay, religious and historical painter, portraitist and landscape artist, sculptor and engraver who also wrote articles on art. First a student at the university of physics and mathematics in Saint Petersburg, he entered the Academy of Arts as a teacher as of 1863.

One of their primary concerns, reflected in the name of the Society, was that art should reach out to a wider audience. To further that aim — perhaps inspired by the *narodniki* (the Populists then travelling around Russia preaching social and political reform) — they undertook to organize “circulating” exhibitions, which would move from one town to another.

And like the Impressionists in France (who also held their first exhibition in 1874), the *peredvizhniki* — variously translated as Itinerants, Travellers and Wanderers — embraced a broad spectrum of artists, with differing styles and a great variety of artistic preoccupations. But, initially at least, the Society was a more tightly knit organization, and ideologically its aims were more coherent. Living at the time when the writings of Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy were awakening social consciences, most of the Itinerants were actively concerned with the conditions in which the ordinary people of Russia lived, and strove to stimulate awareness of the appalling injustices and inequalities that existed in contemporary society. The artistic movement that focused on these concerns came to be known as Critical Realism.

8. Victor Vasnetov,

*Ivan the Tsarevich Riding the Grey Wolf*, 1889.

Oil on canvas, 249 x 187 cm,

Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

## The emergence of Russian Avant-garde

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, modern Russian painters wished to confer upon art a vaster social resonance. To this end, they had to reconcile the profound attachment of Russians to tradition and the desire for renewal. The latter found expression in a wide variety of movements. Russian avant-garde offers multiple facets, drawing inspiration from foreign sources as well as those of its home country, making Russian art the spearhead of the worldwide artistic process at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A hundred years or so later, Sergeï Shchukin and the brothers Mikhaïl and Ivan Morozov purchased numerous Impressionist paintings and brought them back to Russia. In 1892 the merchant and industrialist Pavel Tretyakov gave his huge collection of paintings (including more than a thousand by Russian artists) to the city of Moscow. Six years later, the Russian Museum opened in the Mikhaïlovsky Palace in Saint Petersburg. Today it houses more than 300,000 items, including some 14,000 paintings.

Exhibitions, such as that of Tretyakov in the Russian Museum, also played an important role in the development of Russian art. At the end of the nineteenth century, the artistic status of icons had been in eclipse for approximately two hundred years, even though they were cherished as objects of religious veneration. During that time, many of them had been damaged, inappropriately repainted or obscured by grime. In 1904, Rublev's *Old Testament Trinity* was restored to its full glory, and in 1913 a splendid exhibition of restored and cleaned icons was held in Moscow to mark the millennium of the Romanov dynasty. As a result, the rediscovered colours and stylistic idiosyncrasies of icon painting were explored and exploited by a number of painters in the first decade or two of the twentieth century. Similarly, when Diaghilev mounted a huge exhibition of eighteenth-century portrait painting at the Tauride Palace in Saint Petersburg in 1905, it resulted in a noticeable revival of interest in portraiture and in Russia's artistic heritage as a whole. International exhibitions (like the ones organized by the *Golden Fleece* magazine in 1908 and 1909), together with foreign travel and visits by foreign artists to Russia, allowed Russian painters to become acquainted with movements such as Impressionism, Symbolism, Futurism and Cubism. What is particularly fascinating is to see how artists as diverse as Grabar, Vrubel, Chagall, Larionov and Goncharova adapted these influences and used them to create their own art — often incorporating Russian elements in the process.

9. Nikolai Souetine,  
*Esquisse de peinture murale*. Vitebsk. 1920.  
Chinese Ink on paper. 20.3 x 18.2 cm.



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# RELIGIOUS PAINTING

## From the Eighteenth Century to the 1860s

In 1843 Briullov and a number of other artists, including Bruni, Markov, Basin, Chebouev and Timofei were commissioned to decorate the interior of St. Isaac's Cathedral in Saint Petersburg.

A Russian artist of French origin (his family had fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685) Briullov raised Russian painting to the European level. He introduced Romantic warmth along with inspiration from pompous classicism and reproduced living, spiritual and physical human beauty. From his home in Italy, where he lived until 1853, Briullov painted diverse subjects and explored various genres. Although antique and biblical subjects soon became less important, the largest murals of the St. Isaac Cathedral were entrusted to him: the cupola, the four Evangelists, the twelve Apostles and also the four large compositions from the New Testament. His depiction of the Virgin in Majesty, surrounded by saints and angels, fills the interior of the impressive central dome (a ceiling of over 800 square metres rimmed by gold stucco and white marble). Today, we still have sketches of these compositions as well as preliminary drawings based on models. The paintings of the Evangelists and the Apostles are reminiscent of his *Siege of Pskov*. The damp, cold and stone dust in the newly built cathedral undermined his health, and in 1847 he was compelled, reluctantly, to abandon the murals, which he had hoped would be the crowning glory of his artistic career.

Two other painters who produced major historical and religious works were Anton Losenko (1737-73) and Alexander Ivanov, whose father — Andrei Ivanov (see above) — was a professor of historical painting at the Academy. Losenko was born in a small town in the Ukraine and orphaned when young. After a course of singing lessons, he was sent to Saint Petersburg because of his remarkable voice. There, at the age of sixteen, he was entrusted to the care of Argunov (by that time one of the leading portraitists), then studied at the Academy, where he eventually became professor of history painting. Losenko's artistic education was completed in Paris and Rome, and several of his religious works — such as *The Miraculous Catch* and *Abraham's Sacrifice* — show the influence of Italian Renaissance painting. Curiously, his *Cain* (1768) and *Abel* (1769) were intended as exercises in life painting and were only given their Biblical names several decades after his death.

A contemporary of Briullov, Alexander Ivanov was indisputably the most influential religious painter of his day. After making his mark with pictures such as *Apollo, Hyacinth and Zephyr* and *The Appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene* (1836), he embarked on *The*

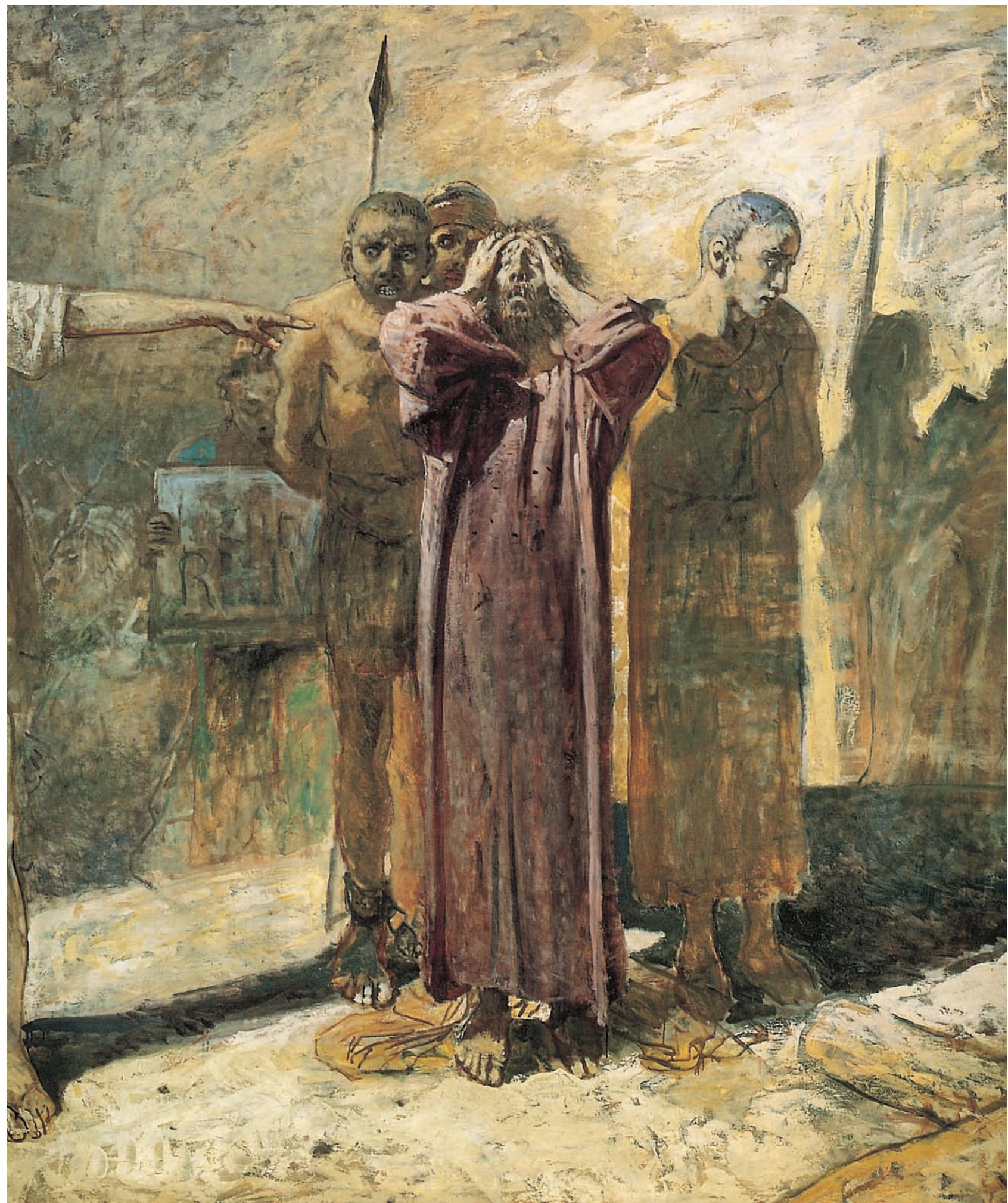
10. Nikolai Gay,  
“Quid est Veritas?”, 1890.  
Oil on canvas, 233 x 171 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

11. Nikolai Gay,  
*Calvary (Unfinished)*, 1893.  
Oil on canvas, 22.4 x 191.8 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

12. Ivan Kramskoi,  
*Christ in the Desert*, 1872.  
Oil on canvas, 180 x 120 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

RELIGIOUS PAINTING





*Appearance of Christ to the People*, a huge canvas that was to occupy much of his energy for the next twenty years, from 1837 to the year before he died. Nevertheless, despite all those years of effort, Ivanov was never happy with the painting and never regarded it as finished. Indeed, it has an undeniably laboured quality, and many of his preparatory studies — landscapes, nature studies, nudes and portraits, including a head of John the Baptist that is masterpiece in its own right — have a vitality that is absent from the painting itself.

During the last decade of his life Ivanov produced more than 250 *Biblical Sketches*, many of them remarkable for their limpid colours and spiritual intensity. His great ambition was to convert these watercolour studies into murals for a temple that would encompass every aspect of human spirituality. This project, which drew on mythology, as well as Christian ideas, loomed so large in his imagination that he made endless excuses to avoid working on the interior of St. Isaac's Cathedral, in order to concentrate on the ideal temple taking shape in his mind.

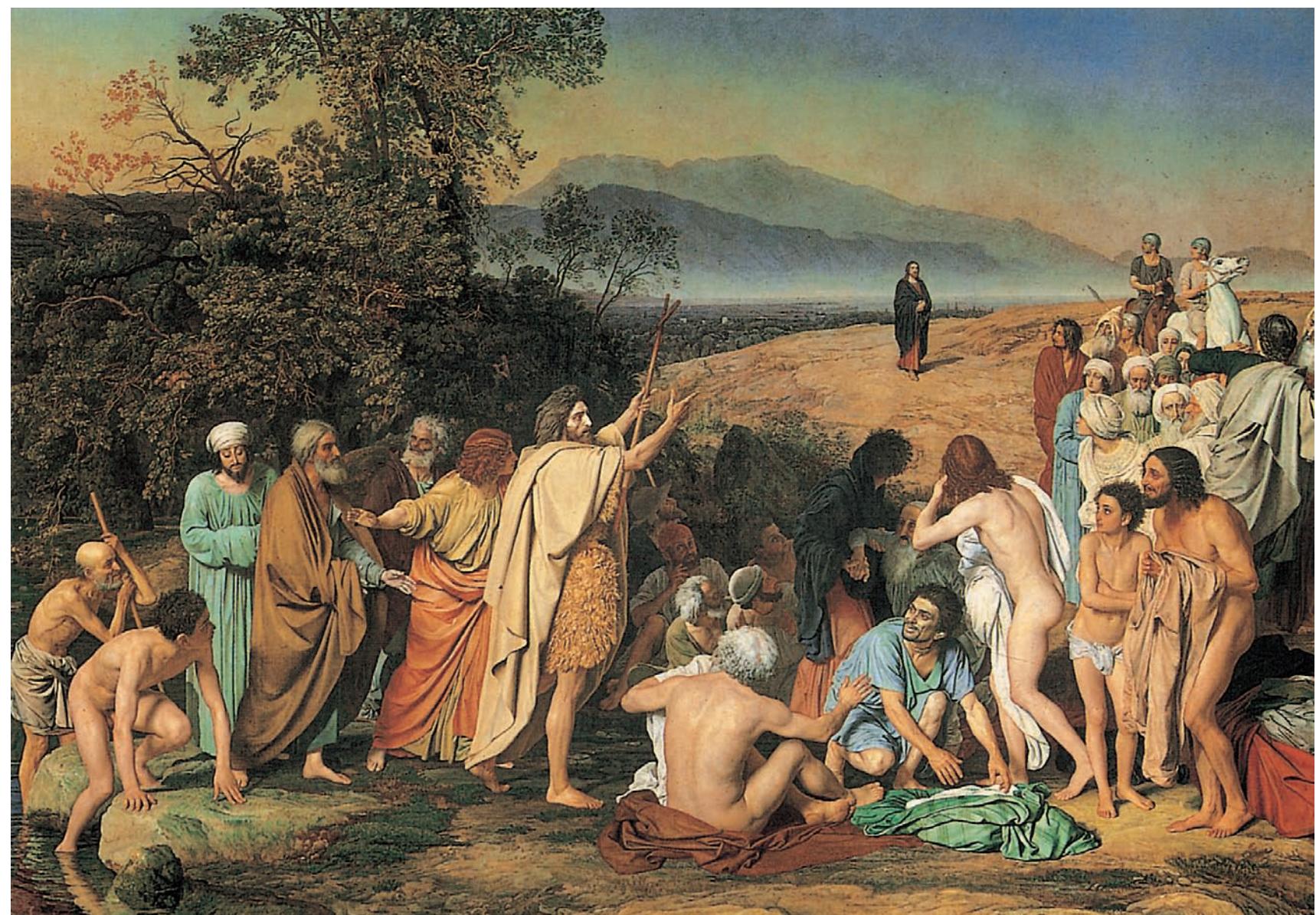
## From the 1860s to the 1890s

The religious painting of the Itinerants was marked by an imaginative and psychological intensity that had not been seen since the days of Alexander Ivanov earlier in the nineteenth century.

During 1863, the year when the fourteen artists rebelled against the conservatism of the Academy, Nikolaï Gay's powerful painting *The Last Supper* was exhibited in Saint Petersburg and roused passionate controversy. Dostoyevsky was among those who were disturbed by its realism and theatricality — the ghostly appearance of Judas, the disquieting shadows that fill the painting and, finally, the apprehension of the Apostles watching Judas leave, all contribute to the unusual atmosphere. The stakes were high, as many artists before him, including greats such as Leonardo da Vinci and Tintoretto, had tried their hand at portraying this biblical episode. But in his painting, the feelings of the characters, particularly exacerbated, deeply touched viewers. Gay set aside classical canons and yet achieved such an immense success (Emperor Alexander II himself bought the painting) that the Academy bestowed on him the title of professor. Later, he stated that it was by working on this painting that "he had at last grasped the modern meaning of the Holy Scriptures..." which was not a legend, but a real, living, eternal drama. Gay's later pictures, which he described as an attempt to create a "Gospel in paint", were no less shocking. In several of them Christ is shown in a very human state of torment, looking more like a political prisoner than the son of God — a notion so shocking that "*Quid est veritas?*" ("What is Truth?") had to be withdrawn when exhibited in 1860 because it was regarded as blasphemous. Nikolaï Gay, contrary to Kramskoï or Polenov, did not intend to idealize the representation of Christ but wanted rather for the viewer to share in his suffering. This is apparent in *The Calvary* or in *The Crucifixion*. Christ resuscitated looks very human and he said, regarding this: "I will

13. Nikolaï Gay,  
*The Last Supper*, 1863.  
Oil on canvas, 283 x 382 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





14. Alexander Ivanov,  
*The Appearance of Christ to the People*,  
1837-1857.  
Oil on canvas, 540 x 750 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



15. Ivan Kramskoi,  
*Laughter* ("Hail, the King of the Jews!"),  
1877-1882.  
Oil on canvas, 375 x 501 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



shake their brains by showing the suffering of Christ. I will force them to suffer without commiserating! After visiting the exposition, they will forget for a long time their small, banal concerns." Through techniques and pictorial means such as contrast between light and dark, or the quickness of his brushstrokes, Gay managed to provide, with virtuosity expressive works that are very realistic.

Nikolai Gay was born into a noble family of French origin: his grandfather emigrated from France at the end of the eighteenth century during the French Revolution. The painter's parents died when he was still a child. He was raised by his nurse, who taught him, as he later explained, compassion for the poor. All his life, he remained sensitive to the misery of others. He entered the Academy of the Arts in Saint Petersburg in 1850, after having studied physics and mathematics for some time at university. At the Academy, he took classes with Pierre Basin, a painter who specialized in portraits and historical subjects. But, according to Gay himself, he was far more influenced by Karl Briullov. This influence is obvious in works of Nikolai Gay's such as *Leila and Khadji-Abrek* (1852), *The Judgement of King Salomon* (1854) and *Achilles Mourning Patrocles* (1855).

All of these paintings, while very Romantic, correspond to the demands for classicism by the Academy. For his *The Witch of Endor calling the Prophet Samuel's spirit*, he received not only the gold medal but also became an academician in 1857. He then travelled for six years. During this period, he discovered Germany, Switzerland and France and, in 1860, he finally settled in Italy. His interest in historical painting and portraits grew. In 1863 he returned to Saint Petersburg with his painting *The Last Supper* (1863). The following year Nikolai Gay left the Academy where he was teaching to return to Italy, where he spent several years. He painted a portrait of his favourite Russian author, Alexander Herzen, in 1867. Upon his return to Saint Petersburg in 1870, he became one of the founders and directors of the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions. Then he turned his attention to the history of Russia. The painting *Peter the Great Interrogates his son Alexei in Peterhof* (1871), once again provoked widespread interest. Anew, the painting told the story of a historical father-son conflict. His other historical subjects had no success, either with critics or the general public. The painter took this failure very badly and lost confidence in his talent. In 1876 he bought a domain and went to live there. He stopped painting and devoted himself entirely to breeding and farming. Early in the 1880s he came back to art thanks to Tolstoy, whom he met. The two became close friends. From this time on, he devoted himself to biblical subjects and to portraits. Among the most famous portraits are those of the writer Saltykov Shchedrin, the poet N. Nekrasov and of Leon Tolstoy and members of the Tolstoy family. *Sanhedrin's Judgement: He is guilty!* (1892) was refused at the annual exhibition of the Academy of the Arts; *The Calvary or Golgotha*, (1893) remained unfinished, as for *The Crucifixion* (1894), it was banished by Alexander III. The artist died suddenly in 1894.

Kramskoi's *Christ in the Desert* also caused a sensation when exhibited, in 1872. It shows Christ in a state of agonized indecision and dejection, hands clasped together out of tension, not in prayer. Kramskoi felt both impelled and daunted by the urge to paint

16. Ilya Repin,  
*St. Nicholas of Myra Delivers The Three Innocent Men*, 1888.  
 Oil on canvas, 215 x 196 cm,  
 Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

17. Ilya Repin,  
*The Raising of Jairus's Daughter*, 1871.  
 Oil on canvas, 213 x 382 cm,  
 Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





Christ in a way that had never been attempted before, and said that he painted the picture with his own “blood and tears”. Repeatedly, the painter expressed his doubts as to what he was attempting to represent. “Is it Christ? No, it isn’t Christ, or, to be more precise, I don’t know who it is. It is more the expression of my own thoughts. (...) driven by the circumstances of life, I perceived of existence as something tragic. I very clearly saw that in the life of each man, created with variable success on the model of God, sooner or later a moment comes when he must choose which path to take: turn to the right or the left, betray God for a rouble or resist Evil.” This lends depth to the painting, which hereby represents the quest and the duty of every man rather than remaining a simple religious picture. As for the painting *Laughter* (“Hail, King of The Jews!”), he worked on it for five years before leaving it unfinished. “As long as we chatter lightly about Good and Honesty, we will remain on good terms with everyone. Try to put your ideas into practice and you will hear laughter spring up all around you,” he said. As the previous painting does, this piece goes further than simple picturing.

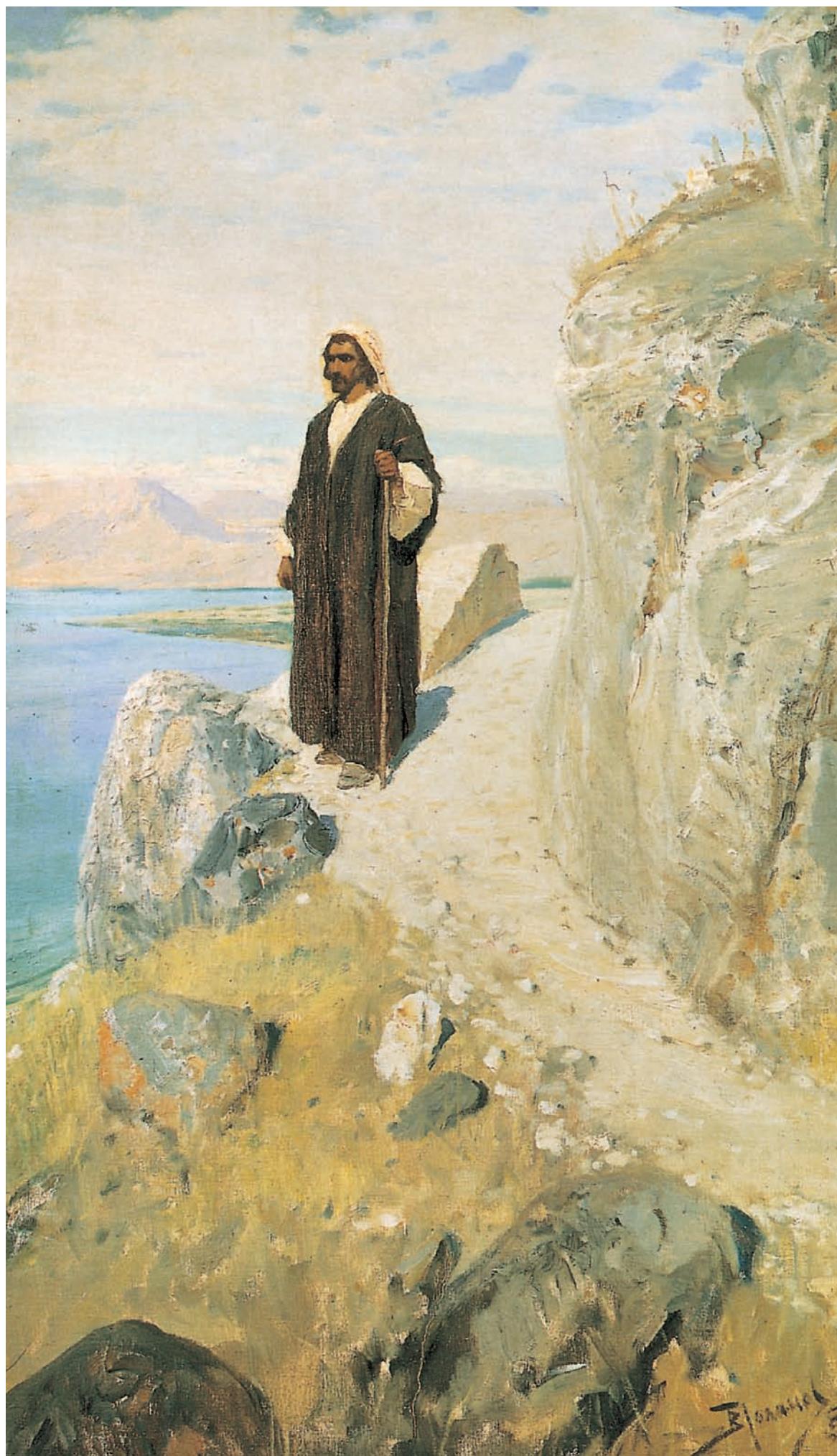
Both Repin and Vassily Polenov produced paintings of Jesus raising the daughter of Jairus. Although both admirably express Jesus’ charisma, Repin’s work is certainly richer in emotion. This is the painting that was given the gold medal of the Academy of the Arts in 1870. In it, the influence of Ivanov’s *The Appearance of Christ to the People* is gripping: sobriety in the relationships of colour, restraint and modesty in movements, this religious episode is solemn and profound.

Repin was born in a province of Kharkv (the Ukraine) in 1844. As of 12 years old, he joined Ivan Bounakov’s studio to learn the icon painter’s craft. Religious representations always remained of great importance for him. Later, he studied at the Academy of the Arts in Saint Petersburg from 1864 to 1873 under Kramskoï. The Tretyakov Gallery began to purchase his works in 1872. With his wife and children, he left for visits to Vienna, Rome and to study in Paris for two years, where he was strongly influenced by outdoor painting without, however, becoming an Impressionist, a style that he judged too distant from reality. Taken with French pictorial culture, he worked to understand its role in the evolution of contemporary art. From 1874 to 1875, he exhibited at the Paris Salon and participated in the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions in Saint Petersburg. A year later, he was named academician. Seen as one of the masters of realist painting, he devoted himself to portraying the lives of his contemporaries: the most renowned Russian writers, artists, intellectuals; peasants at work; the faithful in procession; revolutionaries on the barricades. There are also a number of portraits of his friends: Tolstoy, Gay...

18. Vassily Polenov,  
*Returning to Galilee in the Power of the Spirit*, 1887.  
Oil on canvas, 131 x 75.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

19. Vassily Polenov,  
*Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, 1887.  
Oil on canvas, 325 x 622 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

Two traits of Repin’s talent deserve special attention. He understood the pains of the people perfectly, the needs and the joys of ordinary lives. Kramskoï said on this subject, “Repin has a gift for showing the peasant as he is. I know many painters who show the *moujik*, and they do it well, but none can do so with as much talent as Repin.” In 1886, he made a good number of sketches on biblical subjects. He left to travel for a year and withdrew, in 1887, from the Society for Itinerant Exhibitions. In 1888 he worked particularly on *St. Nicholas*





THE KING IS COME IN MEAN  
REPEAL OF THE LAW IS COMING  
THE MEANING OF THE LAW  
IS HEAVY TO THEM WHICH  
CANNOT TAKEN IT UP

Blaauw 1866



*Saves three Innocents from Death* to express his opposition to the death penalty. He went to Paris for the World Fair. In 1891, he was elected to the Governmental Commission for the Elaboration of New Statutes of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts. A year later, he left the Society for Itinerant Exhibitions because he did not agree with the new statutes which limited the rights of young artists admitted to the Society. He became a member once again in 1897, the year in which he was named rector for a year of the *Ecole Supérieur des Arts*. Four years later he received the Order of the Legion of Honor. That same year, he painted several portraits of Tolstoy, whose spiritual authority he revered. He went as far as to immortalise Tolstoy as a ploughman. He was honoured in Helsinki in 1920, when he had been living in Finland for some time already. He worked on *St. Thomas' Doubt*, *The Prophet Elijah carried to Heaven*, *Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalena* and, a year later, in 1923, a personal exhibition was consecrated to him in Prague. Next it would be Moscow and, in 1925, in the Russian Museum in Leningrad. The same year, he exhibited *Golgotha* in Oslo. He died in 1930 and was buried in the park of the "Penates". Repin attained immense stature in Russia and outside of its national frontiers.

Polenov's enormous *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* is so packed with worldly detail that it seems more like a secular painting than a religious work. During the later part of his life, Polenov produced a series of paintings inspired by Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus* (1863), a book that had a huge impact on artists and writers both in Russia and elsewhere. Indeed, David Frédéric Strauss and Ernest Renan who both wrote books entitled *The Life of Jesus*, brought to light the positive side of Christ's life. This positivism had immense success throughout Russia, an even greater success than in the Occident, thanks especially to these two books. Renan's book in particular emphasized another point that influenced many Russian artists, including Tolstoy, Nikolai Gay, Kramskoi and, of course, Polenov. According to Renan, Jesus deserved to be called on by God, not because he possessed within himself something divine, but rather because he taught men to elevate themselves toward an ideal. Polenov was among those who were impacted by Renan. He therefore attempted to portray Christ as he was in reality. Thanks to trips he made to Syria, Egypt and Palestine, he was able to reproduce with an impressive number of historical details *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*. But his work cannot be limited to simple ethnographic, historic or geographical details. It raises the question of humanity. Christ is of the "best of men" and portraying him in this way was the objective of the painter and the historian. This work was displayed in the fifteenth itinerant exhibition.

Among the Itinerants, the evangelical theme played a very important role. Many paintings testify to Christian morals: giving of oneself, love of others, Christ's suffering for his people... All of these scenes encourage the viewer to rise toward the ideal that he has set for himself. In addition, the theme of salvation particularly attracted Russian artists who, here again, found a way to better man and the human condition. It was more the idea of morals that had a value in and of themselves. Occidental art, to date, had never managed to raise itself to such a level of pathos.

20. Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin,  
*The Mother of God of Tenderness Towards Evil Hearts*, 1914-1915.  
 Oil on canvas, 100 x 110 cm,  
 Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



KIB.



# PORTRAITURE

## From the Eighteenth Century to the 1860s

In Russia, the eighteenth century was the century of the portrait. Other than icon painting, the patronage of the tsars, wealthy nobles or merchants was virtually the only source of income available to Russian painters. Perfecting their skills as portraitists was therefore high on the agenda of the five painters sent to study abroad, in 1716, by Peter the Great.

One of the five was Ivan Nikitin. The son of a priest, he began his artistic career by studying drawing and arithmetic at an artillery college. Noticed by the tsar, he was dispatched to Italy, together with his brother Roman, an able though more conventional painter. In the portrait of Peter the Great that Ivan painted in 1721, the emperor is shown without attributes of power and with a degree of intimacy rarely encountered in royal portraits. Four years later, he painted an emotionally charged portrait of the tsar on his deathbed. Ivan's last years were overshadowed by tragedy. After the death of Peter the Great, he opposed the regime of Anna Ivanovna and in 1736 was deported to Siberia, together with his brother. By the time they were pardoned, Ivan was critically ill, and he died on the way back from Siberia.

Another of the artists sponsored by Peter the Great was Andrei Matveyev, who was sent to study in Holland. Obliged to paint battle scenes, ceilings and panels for the palaces of the tsars, he lacked freedom to fully develop the talent for portraiture evident in works such as *The Allegory of Painting* (1725) and the portrait that he painted of himself and his wife in 1729. Matveyev was a fine colourist, and his works are full of pleasing nuances. They also hint at his desire to break new ground, to bring a more psychological approach to portraiture.

The 1730s saw appreciable changes in Russian society. Intent on strengthening their position vis-a-vis the State, the aristocracy strove to show their standing by displaying the superiority and sophistication of their tastes and lifestyle, especially through the embellishment of the interiors of their homes. Portraits offered a means of self-aggrandisement and of conveying status. By the 1760s they were in evidence everywhere — not only at the court in Saint Petersburg, but in remote parts of Russia too.

Some of the most accomplished portraits from the mid-eighteenth century were produced by Ivan Vishnyakov (1699-1761). Continuing Matveyev's tendency towards lyricism, they possess the decorative qualities typical of the Rococo style then prevalent in Russia, without the frivolity generally associated with it. Instead, their static poses and facial expressions have an air of seriousness, focusing attention on the subject's face. Vishnyakov was at his most sensitive when portraying children; their elaborate clothes



21. Ivan Argounov,

*Portrait of an unknown Girl in Russian Dress*, 1784.

Oil on canvas, 67 x 53.6 cm,

Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

22. Ivan Nikitin,

*Portrait of a Leader*, 1720.

Oil on canvas, 76 x 60 cm,

Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





23. Fyodor Rokotov,  
*Portrait of Alexei Bobrinsky in Childhood*, c. 1763.  
Oil on canvas, 59.5 x 47 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

24. Alexei Antropov,  
*Portrait of Maria Rurnyantseva*, 1764.  
Oil on canvas, 62.5 x 48 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



25. Dmitri Levitsky, *Portrait of Maria Diakova*, 1778.

Oil on canvas, 72 x 57 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

26. Vladimir Borovikovsky,

*Portrait of Maria Lopoukhina*, 1797.  
Oil on canvas, 72 x 53.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





27. Vassily Tropinin,  
*Lacemaker*, 1823.  
Oil on canvas, 74.7 x 59.3 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

28. Vassily Tropinin,  
*Portrait of the Writer Varvara Lizogub*, 1847.  
Oil on canvas, 82.5 x 68 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

and frozen poses underline the innocence and vulnerability of these diminutive lords and ladies. Despite the formality of his portraits, relatively few of them were commissioned by the Imperial court.

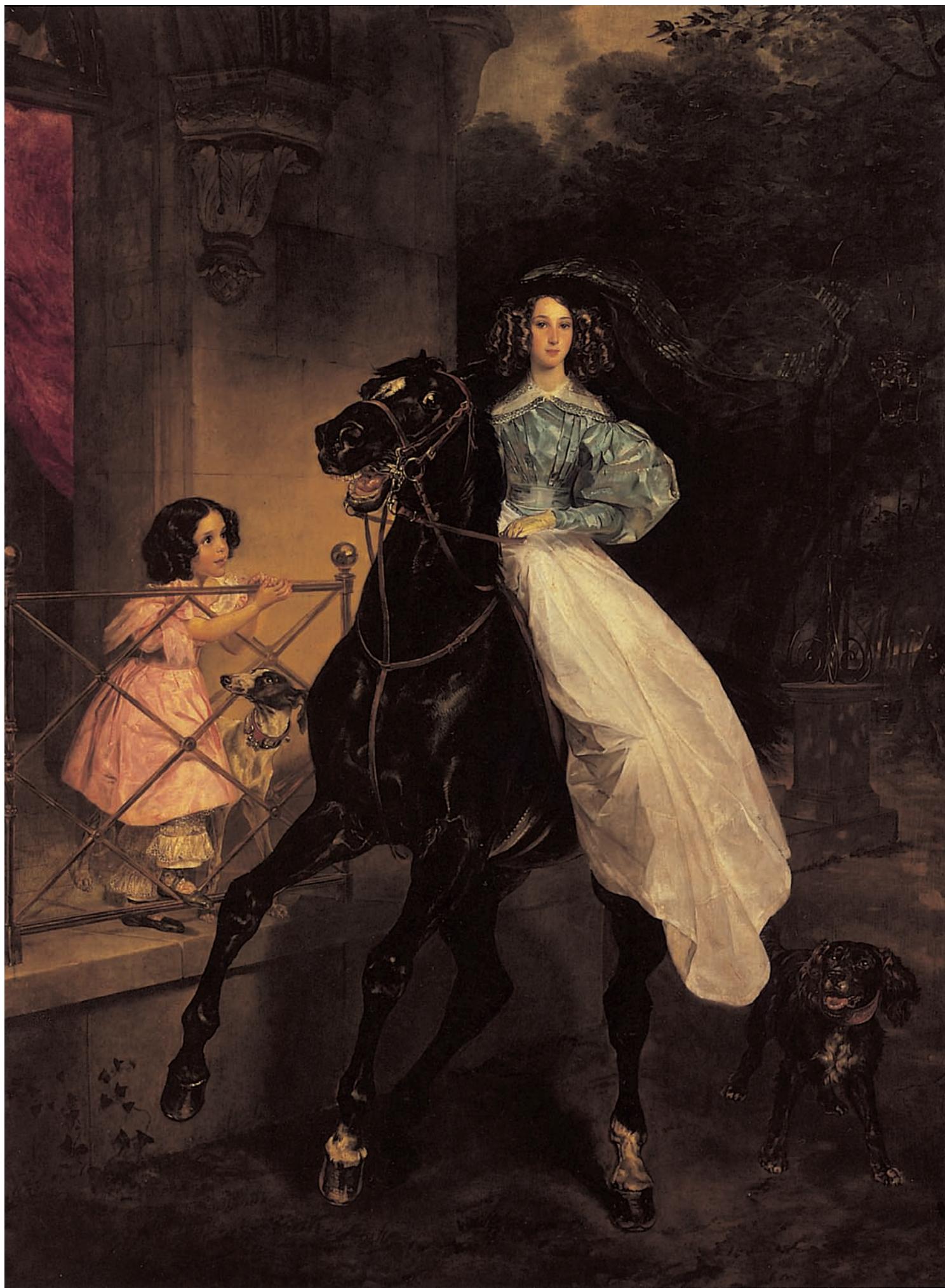
This adoration of portraiture continued during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna, when Russia enjoyed a blossoming of the arts and sciences and an expansion of education — thanks largely to the influence of Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-65), a man of immense learning and wide cultural interests who became a professor of chemistry at the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg in 1745. Russian sculpture in particular benefited from these stimuli — and so did portraiture, which developed in two ways. Although there was a greater demand for elaborate formal portraits, there was also an increased realism in the way people were portrayed.

This development in portraiture was clearly demonstrated in the work of Alexei Antropov who first studied with Matveyev and then worked for nearly twenty years under the direction of Vishnyakov, concentrating primarily on learning to paint formal portraits. Flags, columns and other decorative accessories tended to be featured in these portraits, along with luxuriant robes and drapery, all painted in lively colours. In deference to convention, they were normally full-length. Despite the inhibiting nature of official portraiture, Antropov managed to achieve a remarkable degree of veracity. The portraits, both formal and informal, that he painted during the 1750s and 1760s show him at his best.

Antropov's contemporary Ivan Argunov painted numerous portraits of artists and their families. By the middle of the eighteenth century he was already considered a leading portrait painter, and he received a great variety of commissions — probably greater than any other Russian artist of his time. His portraits range from the Empress and members of the court to the serfs and ancestors of his wealthy patron, Count Sheremetev. While Antropov's style — with its rather static quality and detached feeling — is sometimes reminiscent of the *parsunas*, Argunov's work is generally more immediate and less austere.

In addition to Argunov, among the portrait painters of the second half of the eighteenth century, three stand out for the brilliance of their work: Rokotov, Levitsky and Borovikovsky. Their styles, however, are very different. Surprisingly, although highly regarded by his contemporaries, Fyodor Rokotov was completely forgotten during the period following his death and was only rediscovered at the beginning of the twentieth century. Initially he worked as a court painter in Saint Petersburg, where he produced portraits remarkable for their individuality and vivacity, among them his *Portrait of the young Alexei Bobrinsky*. In 1767 Rokotov moved to Moscow, where he became the portraitist most sought after by Muscovite society. Once he was freed from the constraints of court painting, his portraits — especially those intended for the interiors of private houses — became more intimate. Particularly in his later works, he increasingly made use of *sfumazo* (almost imperceptible colour transitions), and a silvery tonal range to reproduce the delicate sheen of his sitters' satins, silks and velvets.







29. Karl Briullov, *Rider; Portrait of Giovannina and Amazillia Paccini*, 1832.  
Oil on canvas, 291.5 x 206 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

30. Alexei Venetsianov, *Reaper*, before 1827.  
Oil on canvas, 82.5 x 68 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

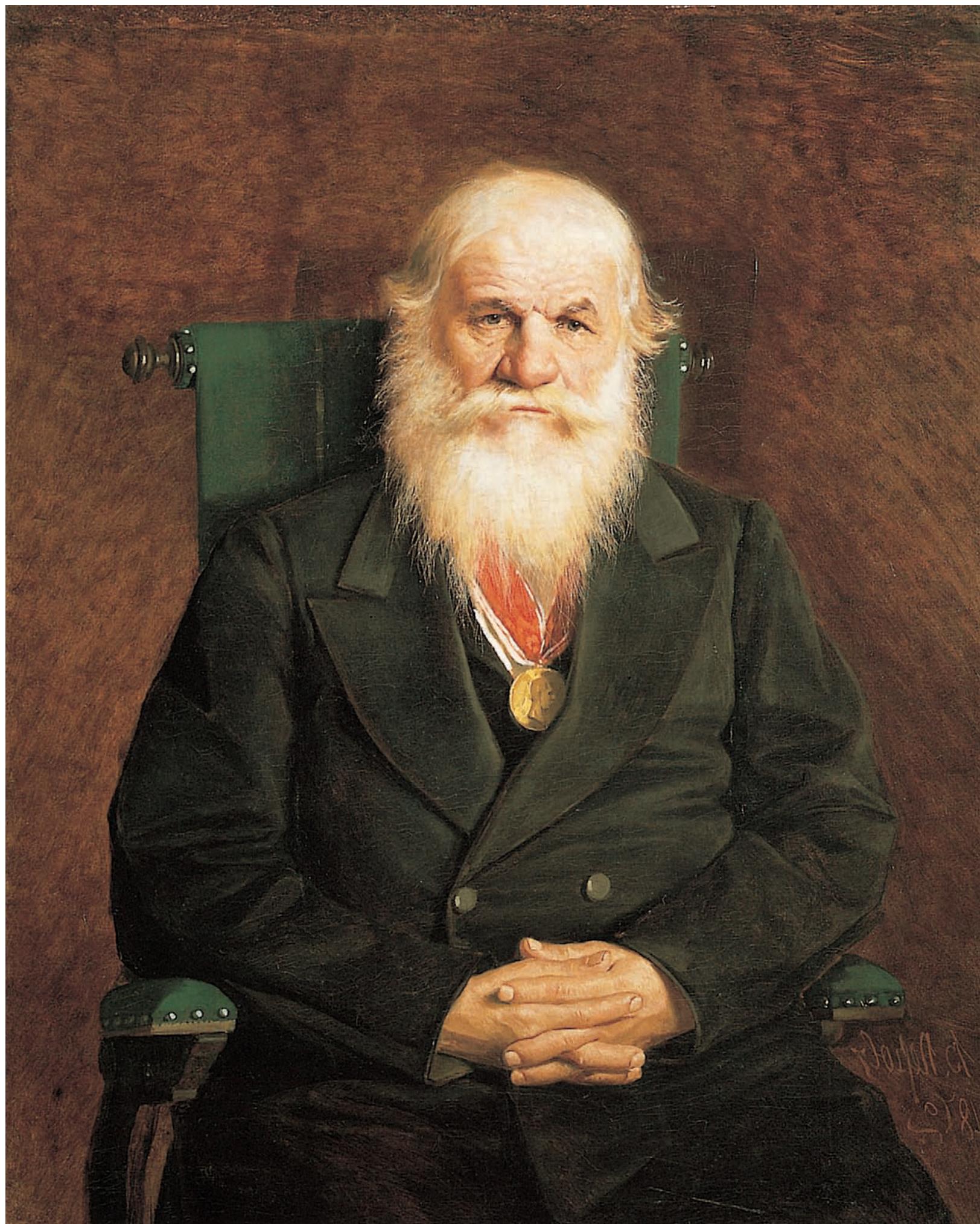
## PORTRAITURE



31. Karl Briullov,  
*Portrait of the Artist with Baroness Yekaterina Meller-Zakomelskaya and her Daughter in a Boat*,  
1833-35.  
Oil on canvas, 151.5 x 190.3 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

32. Karl Briullov,  
*Italian Midday*, 1827.  
Oil on canvas, 64 x 55 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





Dmitri Levitsky differed from Rokotov in that he possessed a marvellous ability to interpret and express personality. Every detail is painted with care, yet a feeling of spontaneity is never absent from his work. The son of a priest who was a gifted engraver, Levitsky was born in the Ukraine. After studying with Antropov, he spent a few years producing icons for churches in Moscow, then taught portrait painting at the Academy from 1771 to 1788. Levitsky excelled at female portraiture, as can be seen from his paintings of the aristocratic Ursula Mniszech and Maria Diakova, the wife of architect, painter and poet Nikolai Lvov. Between 1773 and 1776, at the request of Catherine the Great, he painted a series of portraits of her favourite pupils at Smolny Institute (the school she founded for the education of young noblewomen), showing them engaged in such activities as amateur dramatics, playing the harp or dancing the minuet. Thanks to his portraits of foreign visitors to Saint Petersburg — among them Diderot — Levitsky acquired a reputation outside Russia (his style was even compared with that of Boucher and Watteau). In 1788 illness forced him to retire from the Academy, where he had been the principal teacher of portraiture. During the last thirty years of his life he hardly painted at all.

A member of an old Cossack family, Vladimir Borovikovsky (1757-1825) was the son of an icon painter. He lived in Mirgorod until 1788, where he painted icons and portraits in the Ukrainian tradition. In 1790, after Catherine the Great expressed her delight at the allegorical decorations which he had been commissioned to paint in honour of her triumphal tour of the Crimea, Borovikovsky moved to Saint Petersburg, where he studied with Levitsky and the Austrian portrait painter Johann-Baptist Lampi. That same year he painted a portrait of Catherine the Great, looking more grandmotherly than regal, walking her favourite dog in the park at Tsarskoe Selo. Borovikovsky's portraits of women — often attired in Grecian gowns and backed by a sylvan setting — have been likened to those by Gainsborough and Angelica Kauffmann. In many of them, the sitter is portrayed with the fingers of one hand delicately curled round an apple. As late as the 1790s, Borovikovsky's work was tinged with sentimentalism. Then at the beginning of the nineteenth century he adopted a more classical style, producing works like the *Portrait of Prince Alexander Kurakin* that he completed in 1802.

This classical style adopted by Borovikovsky at the start of the nineteenth century led to Romanticism which was beginning to influence Russian portraiture. Painters began to express themselves more freely, and self-portraits became increasingly common. With its accent on individuality, Romanticism was a perfect match for the self-portrait — which was, after all, a vehicle for psychological probing and spiritual revelation. It also led to important changes of form. In order to focus attention on the face, the sitter's clothes were given less prominence. For the same reason, a neutral background tended to be used.

Romantic portraiture found its fullest expression in the art of Orest Kiprensky, who painted several self-portraits, including a very painterly one, with brushes stuck behind his ear. Kiprensky's own life bore the hallmarks of Romanticism. The illegitimate son of an



33. Vassily Perov,  
*Portrait of the Merchant Ivan Kamynin*, 1872.  
Oil on canvas, 104 x 84.3 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

34. Vassily Perov,  
*Portrait of the Writer Alexander Ostrovsky*, 1871.  
Oil on canvas, 103.5 x 80.7 cm, Tretyakov  
Gallery, Moscow.

## PORTRAITURE

35. Vladimir Borovikovsky,  
*Portrait of Prince Alexander Kourakine*, 1801-1802.  
Oil on canvas, 259 x 175 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



36. Orest Kiprensky,  
*Portrait of Life Guard Colonel Yevgraf Davydov*,  
1809. Oil on canvas, 162 x 116 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



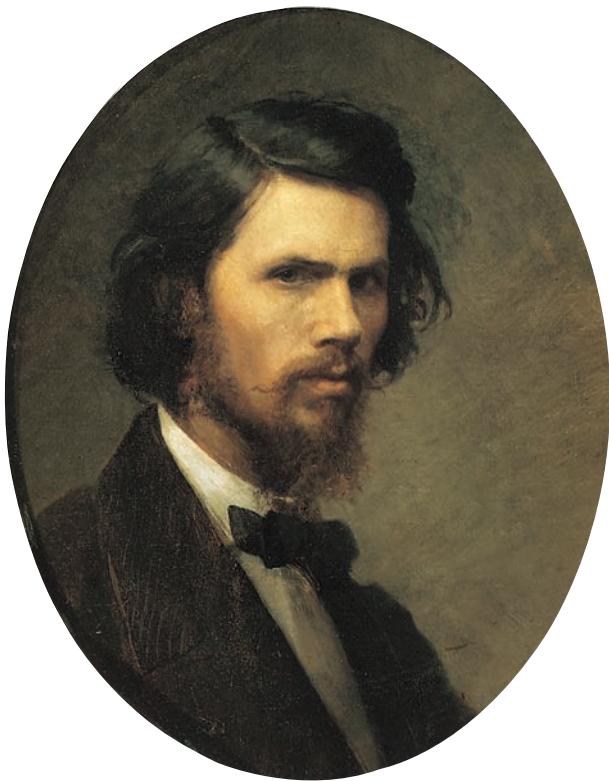
## PORTRAITURE



37. Orest Kiprensky,  
*Portrait of Alexander Pushkin*, 1827.  
Oil on canvas, 63 x 54 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

38. Vassily Perov,  
*Portrait of Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, 1872.  
Oil on canvas, 99 x 80.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





39. Ivan Kramskoi,  
*Self-portrait*, 1867.  
Oil on canvas,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

40. Karl Briullov,  
*Self-Portrait*, 1848.  
Oil on board, 64 x 54 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

aristocratic army officer, he studied painting at the Academy (where he was enrolled at the age of six) and rapidly became a successful portrait painter. Then in 1805, he was awarded a travelling scholarship, and as soon as the Napoleonic Wars ended he departed for Rome. There he led a fairly bohemian life, and found himself the subject of scandal when an Italian model and a manservant died as a result of a fire at his house. In 1828, after four years back home in Russia, he returned to Italy, married the model's daughter (whom he had entrusted to a convent school) and spent the next eight years roaming Italy with her, until his death from tuberculosis in 1836.

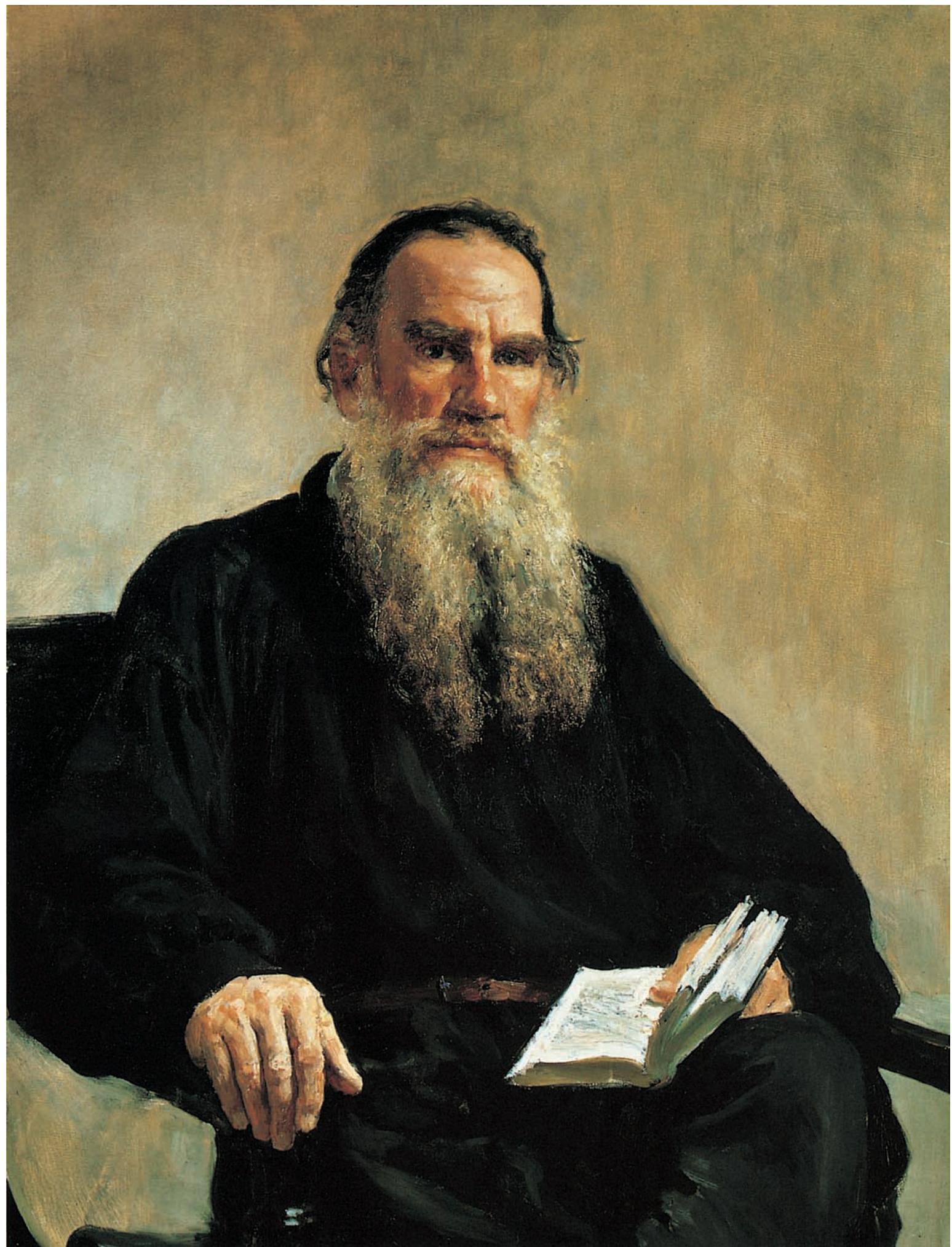
At the Academy, Kiprensky had learned to paint so flawlessly that his brush strokes are practically invisible and his pictures have an ivory-smooth finish. They also display an exceptional ability to convey character and to achieve subtle effects of colour and light. In them it is possible to see something of the spirit of the great Russian poets and novelists of the nineteenth century. Among his best-known works are the portrait of Pushkin that he painted in 1827 and the one of Colonel Yevgraf Davydov, an aristocratically nonchalant cavalry officer (and poet), who seems to have stepped straight out of the pages of *War and Peace*. When in Paris in 1822, Kiprensky was invited to exhibit at the Salon. He also had the distinction of being asked to provide the Uffizi Gallery with a self-portrait for their permanent collection.

The career of Vassily Tropinin was very different from Kiprensky's. Born a serf, he was given to Count Morkov as part of his wife's dowry and spent the first part of his life on the Count's estate in the Ukraine. When Morkov discovered that Tropinin possessed artistic ability, he used him to make copies of famous works of art and also to paint portraits of his family. In 1799 Morkov sent Tropinin to Saint Petersburg to train as a pastry-cook. Tropinin seized the opportunity to attend classes at the Academy, at first secretly and then with Morkov's approval. But in 1804, Morkov recalled him to the Ukraine to continue working on his estate, both as a servant and as an artist. Eventually, in 1823 — when he was nearly forty-eight — Morkov granted Tropinin his freedom.

The following year Tropinin received the title of academician and moved to Moscow, where he painted portraits of celebrities (including Pushkin and Karamzin) and numerous foreign visitors. In the 1820s he began painting "genre portraits" depicting women at work, with titles such as *Lacemaker*, *Spinner* and *Embroidress*, which are remarkable for their realism and directness. Masterpieces from the later part of his life include his refreshingly unaffected portrait of the writer Varvara Lizogub, and one of his most memorable works is the very natural portrait of his own son painted in 1818.

Like Tropinin, Alexei Venetsianov was in his true element when painting ordinary people. The quiet realism of his work represented an important step in the development of Russian painting and had a clearly discernible influence for several decades. Until the age of thirty-nine, Venetsianov worked as a draughtsman and land surveyor in the civil service. After taking up residence in Saint Petersburg in 1802, he studied with Borovikovsky and ran a newspaper advertisement offering his services as a portrait painter. In 1811 he received a

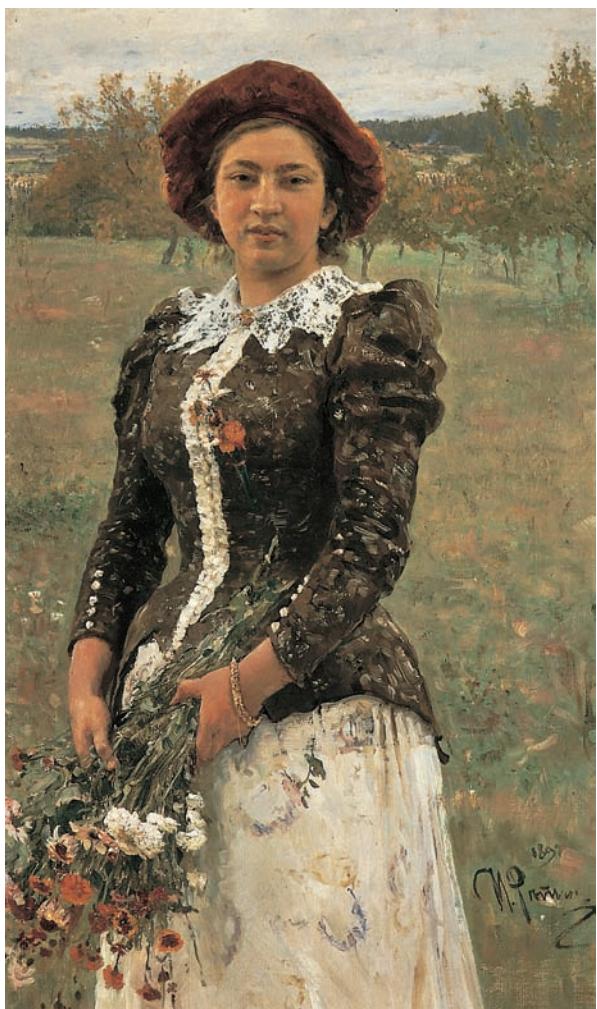






41. Ilya Repin, *Portrait of Leo Tolstoy*, 1887.  
Oil on canvas, 124 x 88 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

42. Ilya Repin, *Portrait of Modest Moussorgski*, 1881.  
Oil on canvas, 69 x 57 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



43. Ilya Repin, *Autumn Bouquet: Portrait of Vera Repina, the Artist's Daughter*, 1892.  
Oil on canvas, 111 x 65 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

44. Ivan Kramskoi, *The inconsolable Grief*, 1884.  
Oil on canvas, 228 x 141 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

distinction from the Academy for his self-portrait, which rivals Chardin's for its frankness, and it was for a portrait of Golovachevsky (one of the professors) that he was nominated as an academician. Nevertheless, in March 1823 he decided to devote his energies primarily to genre painting, and wrote "Venetsianov hereby relinquishes his portrait painting" on the back of a portrait he had just completed.

With, Venetsianov, however, the distinction between portraiture and genre painting is often blurred, as can be seen from his *Girl with a Birch-Bark Jar and Reaper*, both painted after 1823. And, he clearly did not take his "relinquishment" of portraiture very seriously, since he afterwards painted affectionate portraits of his wife, daughter and young serfs and peasants — including a series in which he portrayed various peasant girls with face and hair framed by a shawl. In 1834 he painted a portrait of Gogol, whose progressive ideas he greatly admired.

Venetsianov's declared aim was "to depict nothing in any way different from how it appears in nature... without recourse to the style of any other artist, that is, not to paint à la Rembrandt, à la Rubens and so forth, but simply, so to speak, à la Nature". In 1819 he resigned from the civil service and went to live at Safonkovo, the country estate to the east of Moscow that he had bought a few years earlier. At Safonkovo, he started teaching some of his neighbours and their serfs to paint. In the end, more than seventy pupils had absorbed his approach to art, including several who became popular teachers and transmitted his ideas to the next generation.

Among Venetsianov's contemporaries, the most popular Russian portrait painter was undoubtedly Karl Briullov, whose fashionable clients in Rome and Saint Petersburg were very different from the shepherds and dairymaids that sat for Venetsianov in Safonkovo. Briullov was taught to paint by his father, a Huguenot woodcarver, before going to the preparatory school of the Academy at the age of ten. Then in 1822 he was awarded a grant which enabled him to travel to Italy, where he stayed until 1835. Briullov's portraits from the 1820s are unmistakably Romantic in spirit, and some of his outdoor portraits from that period, such as his watercolour of Cyril and Maria Naryshkin, have an Italian setting. In 1827 he painted one of his most delightful and best known works, a picture of a girl gathering grapes (intended as part of a series of genre portraits), to which he gave the title *Italian Midday*.

Towards the end of the 1820s and during the 1830s he produced increasingly large and elaborate compositions, such as *The Portrait of the Artist with Baroness Yekaterina Meller-Zakomelskaya and her Daughter in a Boat*.

As Briullov's art developed, his style evolved beyond Romanticism. His portraits began to exhibit more psychological preoccupations, often giving the impression of being unaffected and placing a greater emphasis on the sitter's personality. The ultimate development of his style can be seen in the remarkable self-portrait that he painted in 1848.



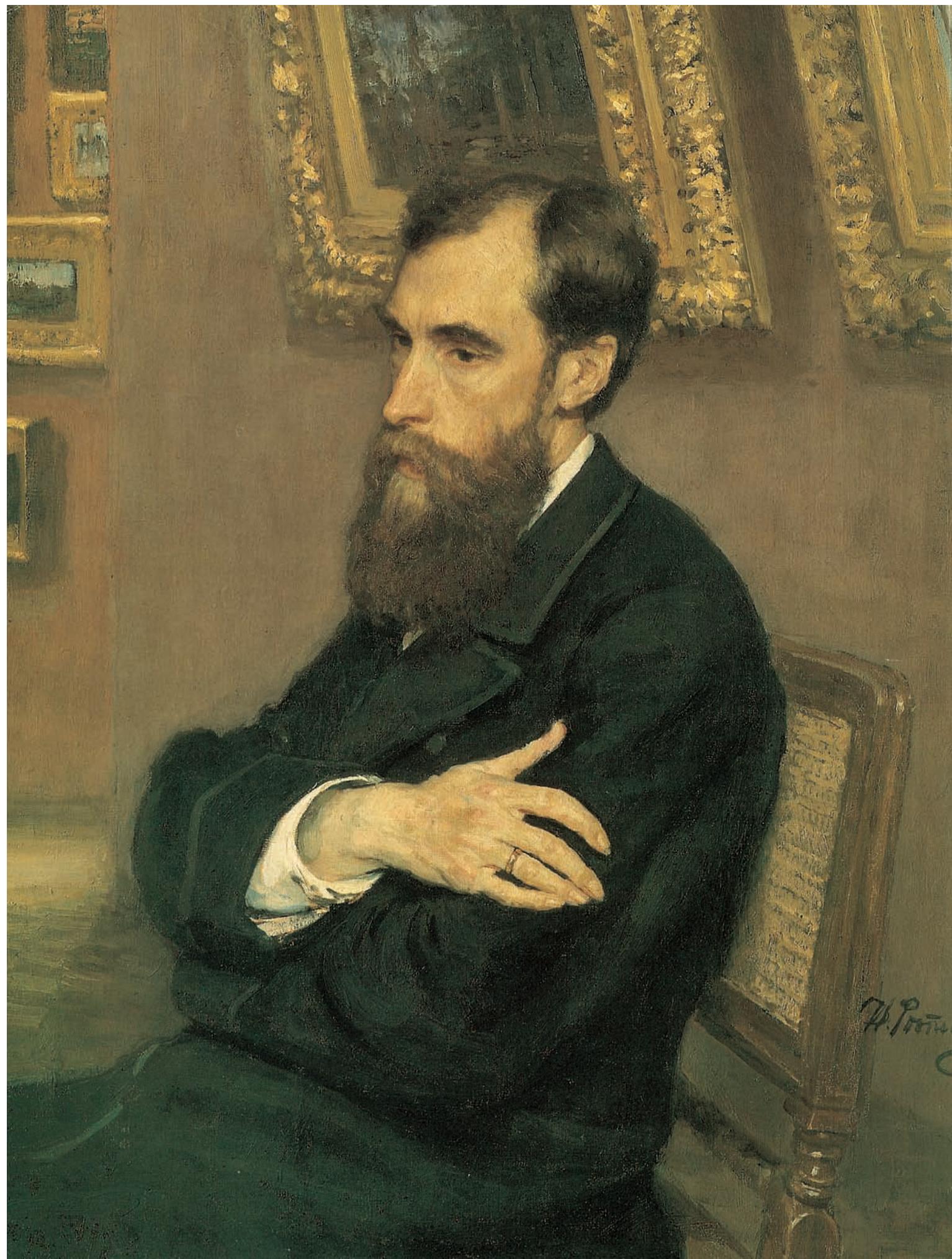


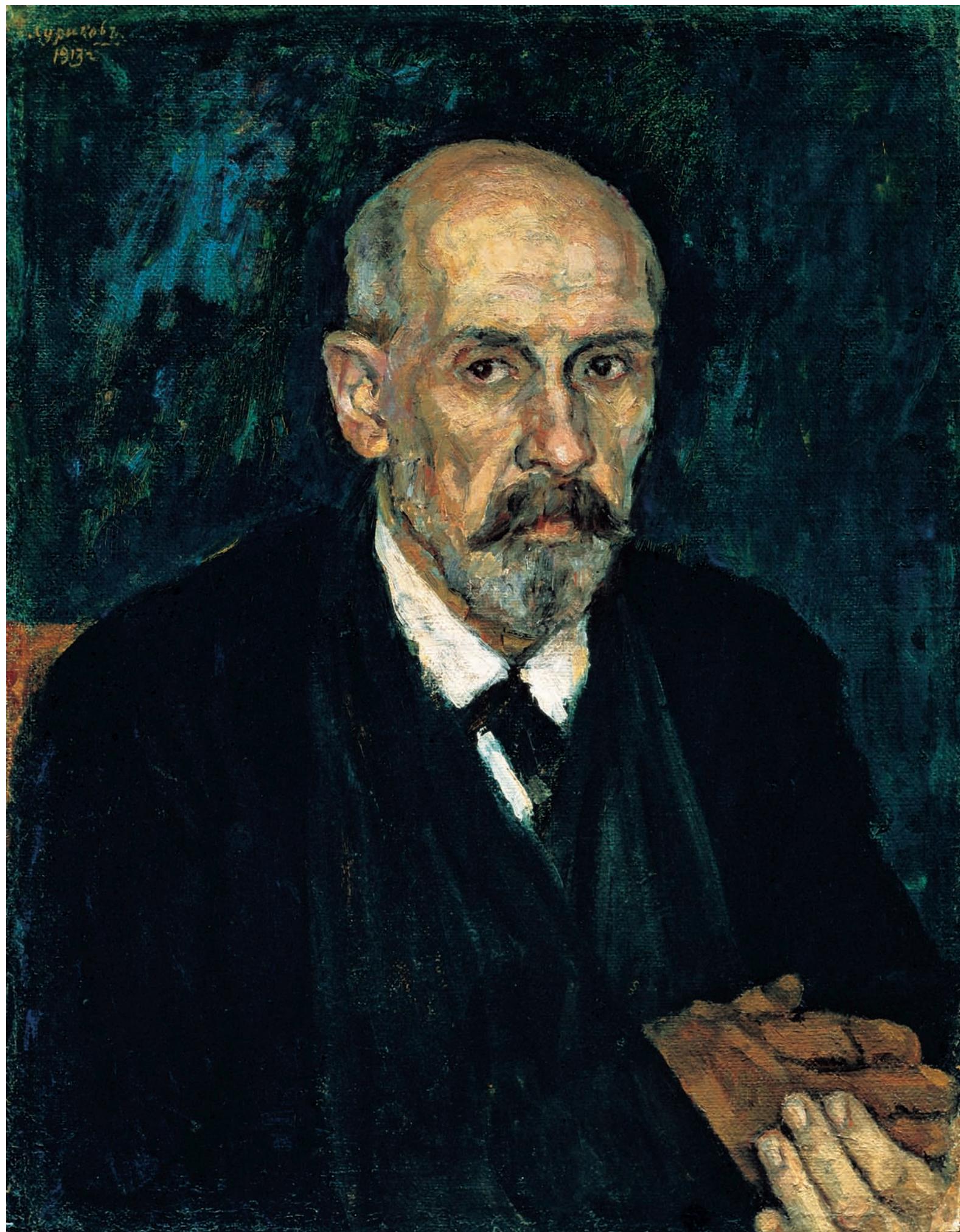
45. Ilya Repin, *Archimandrite*, 1877.

Oil on canvas, 124 x 96 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

46. Ilya Repin, *Portrait of Pavel Tretyakov*, 1883.

Oil on canvas, 98 x 75.8 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





## From the 1860s to the 1890s

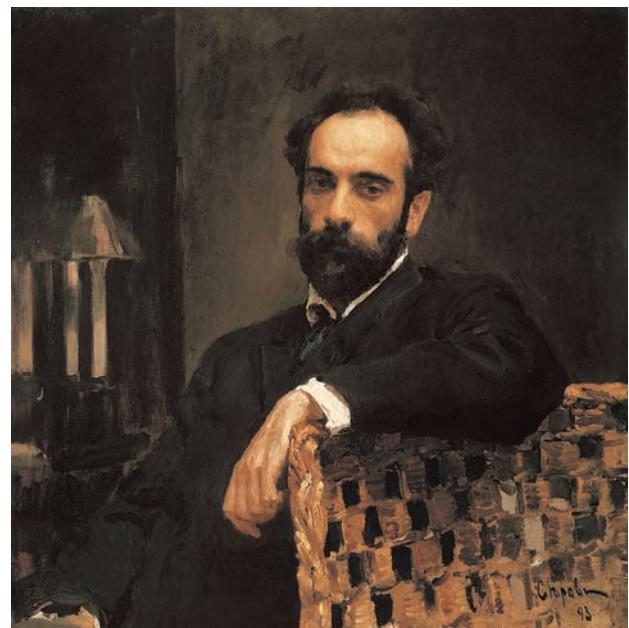
The most prominent role in setting up the artists' cooperative was played by Ivan Kramskoi, who had also been a leading member of the "Revolt of the Fourteen". Although initially drawn to historical and genre painting, he found his fullest expression as a portrait painter. Among the gallery of celebrities who appear in his paintings are fellow-Itinerant Ivan Shishkin — pictured against a backdrop of trees surveying the landscape before setting up his easel — and the singer Elizaveta Lavrovskaya (1879) on the stage of a concert hall, receiving an ovation. His portrait of the forty-four-year-old *Leo Tolstoy*, who sat for him while writing *Anna Karenina*, focuses on the thoughtful intensity of the novelist's gaze. Kramskoi's portrait of Nikolai Nekrasov, painted during the poet's harrowing final illness, shows the poet courageously attempting to finish his *Last Songs*. Even more heart-rending is his painting entitled *Inconsolable Grief* (1884), depicting a grieving woman standing beside a wreath of flowers, painted when his own wife was mourning the death of their son.

Vassily Perov, a warm-hearted man whose views commanded respect among his fellow Itinerants, almost invariably shows his models sitting in a quiet and dignified pose. With great subtlety, he conveys the haunted sensitivity of Dostoyevsky, the mental energy of the dramatist Alexander Ostrovsky, and the shrewdness of the merchant Ivan Kamynin — whose family refused to allow this portrait to be exhibited at the World Fair in Paris in 1878 because it did not present a sufficiently congenial image of him. Many of Perov's liveliest genre paintings, such as *Hunters at Rest*, *A Meal in a Monastery* and *The Angler*, rely on character observation for their lively satire or humour.

Ilya Repin (1844-1930) has a style of portraiture that remains very much his own, despite being influenced by both Manet and Velazquez. Among his most enchanting portraits are the ones of his daughters Vera and Nadezhda and the idyllic group portrait *On a Turf Bench* (1876), all painted *en plein air*.

Repin was a close friend of Leo Tolstoy. He made numerous paintings and sketches of the novelist, and it is interesting to compare the portrait reproduced here with the one painted by Kramskoi in 1872. An interval of fifteen years separates the two paintings, during which Tolstoy had become increasingly ascetic. No less revealing is Repin's *Portrait of Mussorgsky* painted in hospital (hence the dressing-gown) shortly before the composer's early death, hastened by alcoholism. One of Repin's most memorable portraits is *The Archdeacon* (1877), which splendidly conveys the patriarchal robustness of this "lion among the clergy" who, he felt, embodied "the echo of a pagan priest".

The most demanding official commission undertaken by Repin was a painting of the formal session of the State Council held on 7 May 1901. In order to complete this gigantic group portrait, he prepared dozens of studies so he could accurately capture the character of each of the 100 councillors, and he enlisted the help of two of his pupils, Boris Kustodiev and Ivan Kulikov. The painting was commissioned to celebrate the Council's



47. Vassily Surikov,  
*Man with an Injured Arm*, 1913.  
Oil on canvas, 68.5 x 53.9 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

48. Valentin Serov,  
*Portrait of the Artist Isaac Levitan*, 1893.  
Oil on canvas, 82 x 86 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

49. Alexander Golovin,  
*Portrait of Stage Director Vsevolod Meyerhold*, 1917.  
Tempera on panel, 80 x 67 cm,  
Theatre Museum, St. Petersburg.

50. Boris Kustodiev,  
*Portrait of Fyodor Chaliapin*, 1921.  
Oil on canvas, 215 x 172 cm,  
Theatre Museum, St. Petersburg.





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51. Alexander Golovin,  
*Portrait of Dmitry Smirnov as Grieux in Jules Massenet's "Manon"*, 1909.  
Tempera on canvas, 210 x 116 cm,  
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow.

52. Alexander Golovin,  
*Portrait of Fyodor Chaliapin as Boris Godunov*,  
1912. Tempera and gouache on cardboard,  
221.5 x 139.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.







53. Valentin Serov,  
*Portrait of Savva Mamontov*, 1897.  
Oil on canvas, 187 x 142.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

54. *Portrait of Sergei Diaghilev*, 1904.  
Oil on canvas, 57 x 83 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

centenary — but, whether intentionally or not, Repin succeeded in conveying its aura of implacable conservatism. One critic remarked that he had painted a vision of “Carthage on the eve of destruction”.

Many of the other Itinerants were gifted portrait painters, among them Yuri Leman, Alexeï Kharlamov, Nikolai Yaroshenko (1846-98) — dubbed “the conscience of the *peredvizhniki*”, who succeeded Kramskoi as leader of the Itinerants — and Nikolai Gay, who painted a marvellously expressive self-portrait during the two years preceding his death. The portraiture of two of the most brilliant of the Itinerants, Serov and Surikov, will be discussed in the third part of this book.

### From the 1890s to the Post-Revolutionary Period

Although the World of Art movement attracted many of the best artists, it did not have a monopoly on talent and had little appeal to the older Itinerants, many of whom were still producing interesting and innovative paintings. Surikov, for example, continued to paint until the year before his death, and during the 1880s and 1890s produced a magnificent series of “costume portraits”, often graced with a descriptive title, such as *A Siberian Beauty* or *A Cossack Girl*, in addition to the model’s name. In doing so, he aimed to portray “a special beauty, ancient, Russian”. According to Alexander Benois, Surikov was “the first... to discover the peculiar beauty of old Russian colouring”, and these costume portraits are remarkable for their rich, warm tones. But Surikov also painted portraits that were more “modern” in style and more concerned with the personality of the sitter, such as *Unknown Girl Against a Yellow Background* and *Man with an Injured Arm*.

Among the “young *peredvizhniki*” who joined the World of Art group, the most brilliant portraitist was Valentin Serov. Like many of his contemporaries, he delighted in painting out of doors, and some of his most appealing portraits — such as *Girl with Peaches*, *Girl in Sunlight* and *In Summer* — owe their naturalness to their setting or to the interplay of sunlight and shadows. Indeed, Serov regarded them as “studies” rather than portraits, giving them descriptive titles that omitted the sitter’s name. The subject of *Girl with Peaches* — painted when Serov was only twenty-two — was in fact Mamontov’s daughter Vera. The model for *In Summer* was Serov’s wife.

When only six years old, Serov began to display signs of artistic talent. Repin acted as his teacher and mentor, giving him lessons in his studio in Paris, at the age of nine, then letting Serov work with him in Moscow, almost like an apprentice. Eventually Repin sent him to study with Pavel Chistiakov — the teacher of many of the World of Art painters, including Nesterov and Vrubel, who was to become a close friend. Because Serov’s career spanned such a long period, his style and subject matter vary considerably — ranging from voluptuous society portraits (the later ones notable for their grand style and sumptuous dresses) to sensitive studies of children, like the one he painted of Mika Morozov in 1901. His portraits of Isaac Levitan and the actress Maria Yermolova demonstrate his genius for







55. Konstantin Korovin,  
*Chorus Girl*, 1883.  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

56. Vassily Surikov,  
*Unknown Girl against a Yellow Background*, 1911.  
Oil on canvas, 51 x 44 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



capturing his sitter's personality. Utterly different from any of these is the famous nude study of the dancer Ida Rubinstein, in tempera and charcoal on canvas, which he painted towards the end of his life.

Although Serov's early style has much in common with the French Impressionists, he did not become acquainted with their work until after he had painted pictures such as *Girl with Peaches*. In contrast, Konstantin Korovin was deeply influenced by the French Impressionists almost from the outset of his career, as can be seen from his *Chorus Girl*, which is regarded as one of the first Impressionist works by a Russian painter.

57. Valentin Serov,  
*Portrait of Mika Morozov*, 1901.  
Oil on canvas, 62.3 x 70.6 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

58. Valentin Serov,  
*Girl with Peaches (Portrait of Vera Mamontova)*,  
1887. Oil on canvas, 91 x 85 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

Together with Korovin, Alexander Golovin designed the crafts section of the Russian Pavilion at the 1900 Paris World Fair. He then went on to design stage sets and costumes for a number of theatres, including the Imperial Theatres in Saint Petersburg (where he became the principal decorator), the Bolshoi, the Moscow Arts Theatre and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Two of his most powerful paintings arose from his interest in the performing arts, namely his *Portrait of the theatrical director Vsevolod Meyerhold* and the one of the bass singer Fyodor Chaliapin in the role of *Boris Godunov*, which he painted in 1912.





59. Konstantin Somov,  
*Lady in Blue (Portrait of Elizaveta Martynova)*,  
1897-1900. Oil on canvas, 103 x 103 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

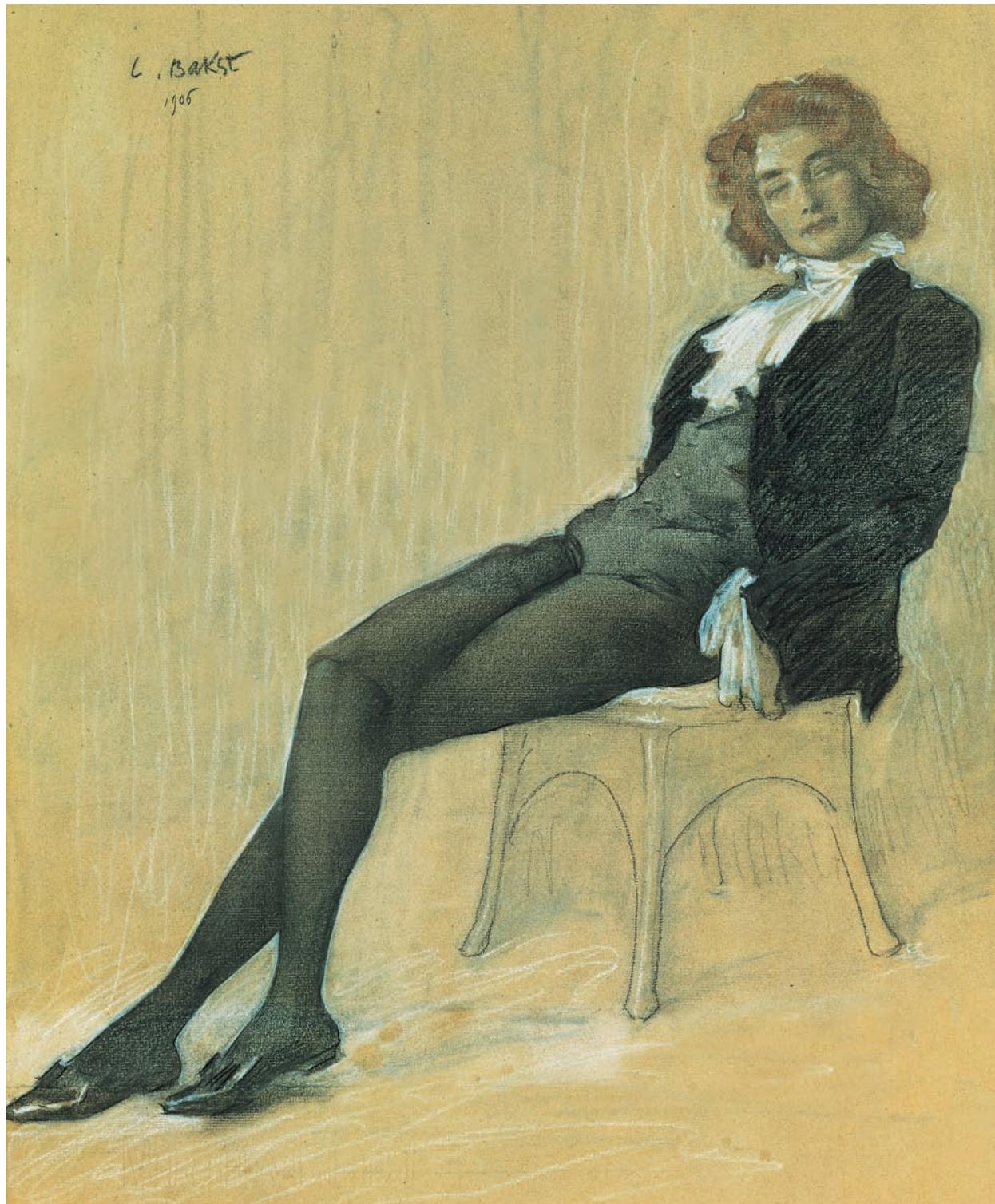
60. Konstantin Somov,  
*L'Echo du temps passé (Echo of the Past)*, 1903.  
Watercolor, gouache and graphite on paper  
mounted on cardboard, 61 x 64 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.











61. Valentin Serov, *Portrait of Ida Rubinstein*, 1910.  
Tempera and charcoal on paper, 147 x 233 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

62. Leon Bakst, *The Supper*, 1902.  
Oil on canvas, 150 x 100 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

63. Leon Bakst, *Portrait of Zinaida Hippius*, 1906.  
Pencil and red and white chalk on paper  
mounted on cardboard, 54 x 44 cm, Tretyakov  
Gallery, Moscow.



64. Valentin Serov,  
*Portrait of the Princess Olga  
Orlova*, 1911. Oil on canvas,  
327.5 x 160 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

65. Mikhail Vrubel,  
*Young Girl against a Persian  
Carpet*, 1886.  
Oil on canvas, 104 x 68 cm,  
Museum of Russian Art, Kiev.





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Chaliapin was the subject of a number of other portraits, including one (when young) by Serov and one by Boris Kustodiev, who depicted him standing like a fur-coated colossus on a snow-covered hillock, while in the background there is a fairground scene busy with tiny brightly coloured figures. Many of Kustodiev's portraits and genre paintings are richly decorative — for example, his splendid *Merchant's Wife Drinking Tea* — while the elegance and accuracy of his portrayal of the human figure reflect his early training as a sculptor.

This accuracy was also evident in *Lady in Blue*, on which Konstantin Somov worked from 1897 to 1900. He achieves its effects by an unexpected synthesis of realism and stylization. The delicate beauty of the model — the artist Elizaveta Martynova, who died soon after this portrait was painted — appears all the more lifelike because of the artificial pose and scenery, and the old-fashioned dress that Somov asked her to wear. In contrast, the sketch of the poet *Zinaida Hippius* by Leon Bakst — who produced spectacular costume designs — is uncontrived and naturalistic. Philip Maliavin painted portraits of several of the World of Art painters, such as Somov and Grabar, that convey their character and characteristics with great insight and sensitivity.

From the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, “expressive” use of colour became more prevalent in Russian portraiture and figure painting — as, for example, in Ilya Mashkov’s *Artist’s Model*. It is also exhibited in Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin’s *Portrait of the poet Anna Akhmatova*, and furthermore in Martiros Saryan’s portraits of his family and *Victoria Alabian*.

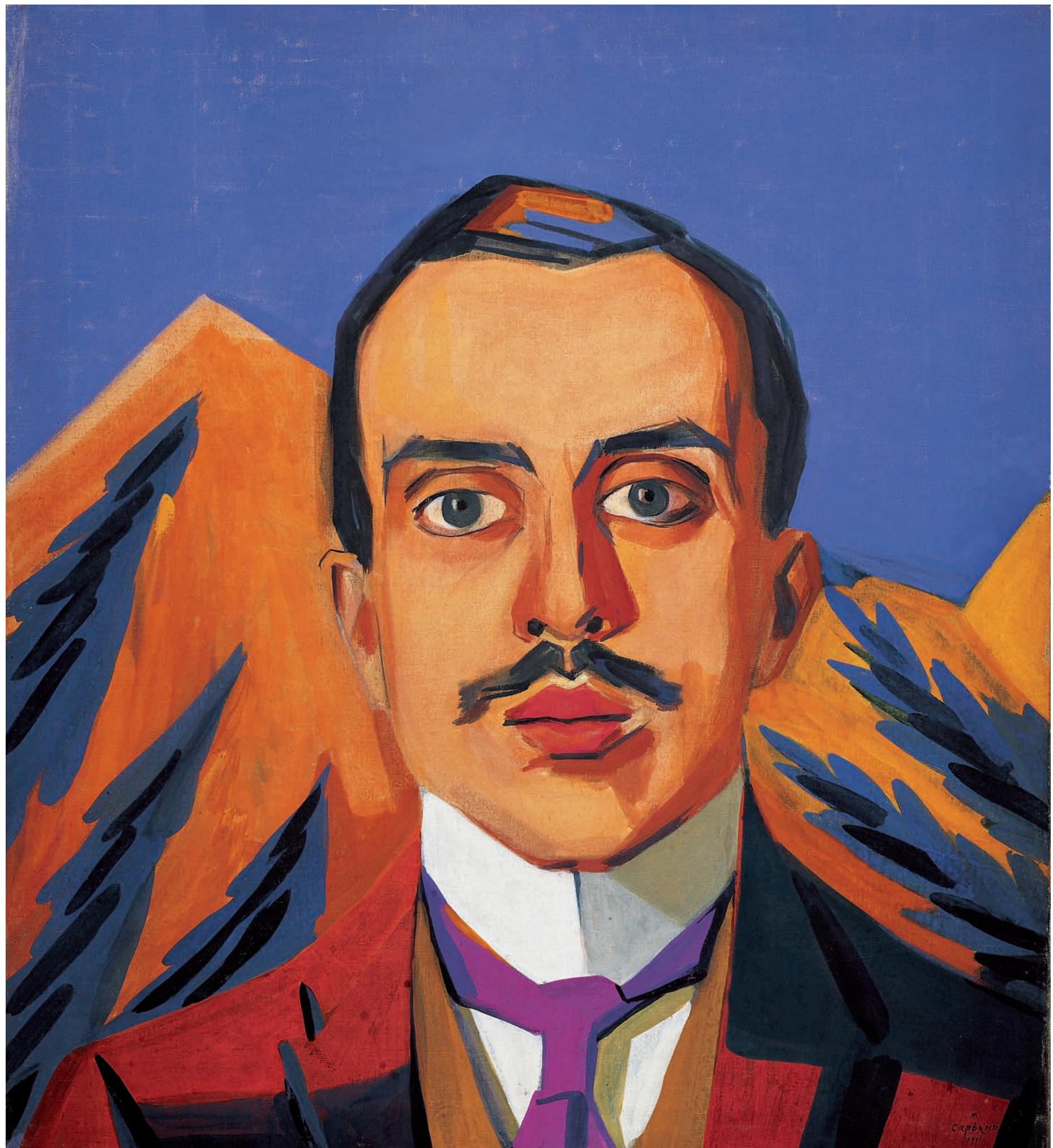
Further examples of this “expressive” use of colour are demonstrated by artists such as Saryan, Surikov, Vrubel, Petrov-Vodkin, Robert Falk and Mikhail Nesterov who all painted remarkable self-portraits. Among the canvases that Nesterov created in the 1930s was his double portrait of the painters Pavel and Alexei Korin, which, unlike most of his works from the post-Revolutionary period, echoes his earlier Symbolist style. In terms of style, Vrubel’s portraits, like Nesterov’s, vary enormously. They range from the sober and conventional — for example, the portrait of Konstantin Artsybushev that he painted in 1897 — to highly decorative works such as *Girl Against a Persian Carpet*, which is both a sensitive portrait of a child and an inspired exploration of pattern and colour.

In addition to Nesterov and the other remarkable portraitists, there was Zinaida Serebriakova, who was the daughter of a sculptor, the granddaughter and great-granddaughter of architects, the niece of Alexander Benois and the sister of Yevgeny Lanceray. She painted portraits that have a lucidity and freshness of vision. Her self-portraits and pictures of children, such as *At Dinner*, are particularly delightful. During the 1920s, the ballet and dancers featured prominently in her work, while many of her other portraits from the same period include elements of still life, contributing to their feeling of tranquillity.

66. Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin,  
*Portrait of Anna Akhmatova*, 1922.  
Oil on canvas, 54.5 x 43.5 cm.

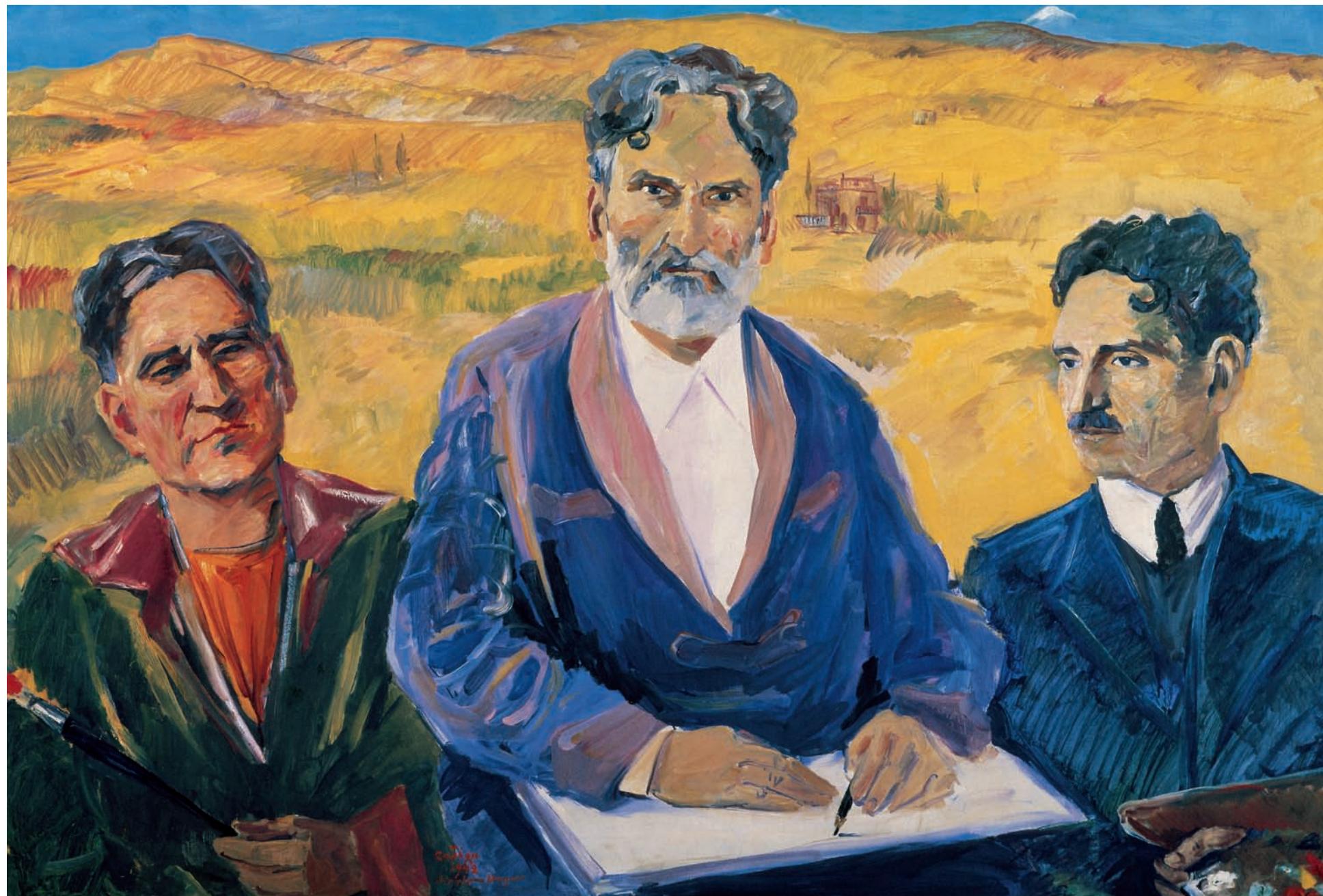
67. Martiros Saryan,  
*Portrait of Ivan Chtchoukine*, 1911.  
Tempera on canvas, 85 x 85 cm,  
Private Collection.

68. Martiros Saryan,  
*My Family*, 1929.  
Oil on canvas, 102 x 80 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Chagall  
1911





69. Martiros Saryan,  
*Self-portrait: Three Ages*, 1942.  
Oil on canvas, 97 x 146 cm,  
Martiros Saryan Museum, Yerevan.



70. Martiros Saryan,  
*Portrait of Victoria Alabian*, 1931.  
Oil on canvas, 46 x 61 cm,  
Martiros Saryan Museum, Yerevan.



# HISTORICAL PAINTING

## From the Eighteenth Century to the 1860s

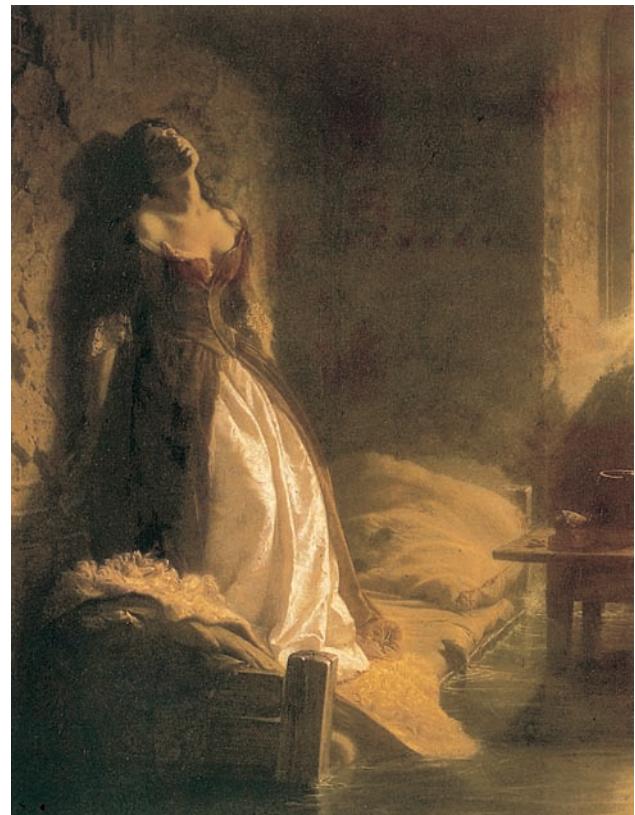
Early Russian history painting was closely linked to religious painting, and only freed itself from the canons of icon painting at the start of the eighteenth century. One of the first Russian paintings in which a realistic reconstruction of a historical event conveyed a patriotic message was Ivan Nikitin's depiction of the victory of Prince Dmitri of Moscow over the Tatars at Kulikovo in 1380 — with vivid portrayals of the individuality of the combatants, the fury of the battle, and the musculature of the men and horses.

History painting in Russia, however, did not come into its own until the founding of the Academy. As of then, was regarded as superior to other art forms such as religious art and the depiction of mythological themes, which became subcategories of history painting. One of the most celebrated pictorial works from this period was not a painting but a mosaic of Peter the Great's victory over Charles XII of Sweden at Poltava in 1709, produced by the workshop of M.V. Lomonosov between 1762 and 1764.

One constraint on the development of realistic history painting was the lack of reliable historical and archaeological sources, which deterred many artists from attempting accurate representations of places, people and events. Another inhibiting factor was the Academy's worship of classicism. Events from Russian history were depicted less frequently than subjects from antiquity or mythology — such as Bruni's *The Death of Camilla, Sister of Horatius* (1824) and Losenko's *Hector Taking Leave of Andromache*, which melodramatically exploits the pathos of the couple's inner anguish and outer stoicism.

Even when events from Russian history were chosen, Russians were often represented in classical mode — in Greek or Roman costume, or forced into heroic poses imitating those of Antiquity. Sometimes the result verged on the absurd, as in Andrei Ivanov's painting (c. 1810) of an act of bravery during the siege of Kiev in 968, where the scanty attire and statuesque posture of the heroic youth have an obvious debt to ancient Greek sculpture.

The ultimate manifestation of this infatuation with classical themes was Karl Briullov's masterpiece, *The Last Day of Pompeii*. Painted between 1830 and 1833, while he was living in Italy, it caused a stir throughout Europe. Gogol described it as "a feast for the eyes". It was also admired by George Buiwer (-Lyttton), who visited Italy in 1833 and whose almost identically entitled book was published in 1834. The painting earned Briullov all sorts of honours, including the prestigious Grand Prix at the Paris Salon, and was instrumental in establishing his reputation as the greatest Russian painter of his day.



71. Nikolai Gay,  
*Peter I Interrogating his Son Alexei at Peterhof*,  
1871. Oil on canvas, 135.7 x 173 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

72. Konstantin Flavitsky,  
*Princess Tarakanova*, 1864.  
Oil on Canvas, 245 x 187.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

73. Karl Briullov,  
*The Last Day of Pompei*, 1830-1833.  
Oil on canvas, 466 x 651 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





Briullov's most serious rival was Fyodor Bruni (1799-1875), whose masterpiece, *The Bronze Serpent*, was no less ambitious than *The Last Day of Pompeii* and more than matched it in size. Bruni laboured at it for fifteen years (from 1826 to 1841), but much to his chagrin, it failed to bring forth the same acclaim.

A small flood of caricatures, lampoons and paintings with nationalistic themes was unleashed in reaction to events such as Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 and the Decembrists' attempt to oust the as yet uncrowned Nicholas I in 1825. Later, in 1853, the downfall of their coup was recalled in a painting by Vassily Timm (1820-95), showing Nicholas receiving the news that the rebel troops had been overwhelmed by the Imperial guards, whose presence is a visible reminder of tsarist power.

### From the 1860s to the 1890s

Among the Itinerants, the undisputed master of history painting was Vassily Surikov. Born in a remote Siberian town, Krasnoyarsk, of Cossack ancestry, he felt strong personal links to the people and history of Russia. Like many other Russian artists in the 1870s and 1880s, he was particularly fascinated by the Petrine era — the reigns of both Peter the Great and Alexander II (from 1855 to 1881) were periods of national development and liberal reforms, yet both rulers behaved autocratically and dealt ruthlessly with their opponents.

The conflict between the rights of the individual and the power of the state provides the central drama of two of Surikov's greatest and most complex works, both painted in the 1880s. In *The Morning of the Execution of the Streitsy*, Peter the Great, on horseback, surrounded by his retinue, watches with vengeful fury as members of the Streitsy — Russia's first professional militia, who had tried to block his accession — are taken from tumbrels to gallows erected beside the walls of the Kremlin. The central figure of Surikov's *The Boyarina Morozova* is also a rebel — this time a noblewoman, an Old Believer, being dragged away on a sledge to face retribution for persisting in her "heretical" beliefs, while the onlookers jeer or signify their sympathy or respect. In both paintings, Surikov emphasizes the emotions of those caught up in the drama and the impact of history on their lives.

74. Vassily Surikov,  
*Menshikov at Beriozov*, 1883.  
Oil on canvas, 169 x 204 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

75. Vassily Surikov,  
*The Tsarina visiting a woman's Convent*, 1912.  
Oil on canvas, 144 x 202 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

In *Menshikov at Beriozov*, Surikov depicts Peter the Great's favourite in exile in Siberia together with his three children, after Peter's death and the statesman's fall from grace. The four figures, stripped of wealth and status but still a family, are no less eloquent than the crowds in Surikov's more dramatic works.



А. С. Григорьев





## HISTORICAL PAINTING



76. Ilya Repin,  
*The Zaporozhian Cossacks Writing a Letter to the  
Turkish Sultan*, 1880-1891.  
Oil on canvas, 203 x 358 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



77. Ilya Repin,  
*Ivan the Terrible and his Son on 16 November 1581*, 1885.  
Oil on canvas, 199.5 x 254 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

78. Vassily Surikov,  
*The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy*,  
1878-1881. Oil on canvas, 218 x 379 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





Unlike Surikov, for Repin history painting was not a prolific area of artistic endeavour. Nevertheless, he made an enormous contribution to it. Several of his paintings probe the psychological truth of historical situations and show an empathy with those whose lives are touched by history.

His painting showing Ivan the Terrible, grief-crazed, hugging the body of his son, whom he has just killed in a fit of rage, vividly depicts the obscene consequences of tyranny. Repin said that he started work on the picture shortly after the execution of the revolutionaries who assassinated Alexander II, and painted it “in fits and starts” with his emotions “overburdened by the horrors of contemporary life”.

Repin’s painting of Peter the Great’s half-sister Sophia, imprisoned in a convent for opposing him, portrays both her undiminished defiance and her anger and horror at the fate of her supporters (the silhouette of a hanged man is visible through the window of her room). In *The Zaporozhye Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, which focuses on the mirth of the letter writers, Repin invites us to admire the Cossacks’ independent spirit and to share in their enjoyment of their act of effrontery.

Like Surikov and Repin, most history painters of this period were intent on expressing libertarian ideas. In *Princess Tarakanova* (1864), which shows the beautiful princess forgotten and about to drown as flood waters invade her prison cell, Konstantin Flavitsky dramatised historical events to make a more pointed protest against the callous despotism of the tsars. Perov’s painting depicting the condemnation of Emelyan Pugachev, who led a popular uprising against Catherine the Great, showed his identification with the spirit of peasant revolution. Nevrev, Polenov and many of their contemporaries painted pictures that condemned, directly or indirectly, the plight of the serfs.

The democratic ideals of the Itinerants and their dedication to the pursuit of truth provided a stimulus for Nikolai Gay, who in the late 1860s had been experiencing a period of uncertainty that inhibited his artistic development. His picture of Peter the Great interrogating his son Alexei, suspected of treason, marked a turning point in his career. When the painting was shown at the Itinerants’ first exhibition in 1871, it was seen as a celebration of the tsar’s idealism in repressing his paternal feelings for the sake of his country.

79. Ilya Repin,  
*Tsarina Sophia in 1698, a Year after her Confinement to the Novodievitchi Convent, at the Time of the Execution and the Torture of All her Servants*, 1879.  
Oil on canvas, 201.8 x 145.3 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

80. Vassily Surikov,  
*The Boyarina Morozova*, 1887.  
Oil on canvas, 304 x 587.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.









During the same year, Vassily Vereshchagin (1842-1904) painted his grim masterpiece *The Apotheosis of War*. A seasoned soldier, he strove through his art to make the world aware of the horrors of the battlefield and the cruelties of colonialism and tsarist terror. Internationally, Vereshchagin was the most widely known of the major Russian painters of his day. He was also one of the few who did not join the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions. After spending much of his life observing war at first hand, he died aboard a battleship that exploded during the Russo-Japanese war.

For Aivazovsky and Alexei Bogoliubov (1824-96), naval warfare provided opportunities to explore the effects of light and to display their mastery of the moods of sea and sky. Both painted numerous pictures of naval engagements involving the Russian fleet.

Different from any of these is the art of Victor Vasnetsov who described himself as “a historical painter with a fantastic bent”. In paintings like the one based on the twelfth-century *by/ma* (epic poem) recounting the story of Prince Igor’s campaign against the Polovtsy, he built on Russia’s early history and folklore, creating images that have a mythical aura of their own. Many of his paintings — such as his portrayal of Ivan the Terrible, tormented but still every inch a tsar — have a decorative quality reminiscent of Art Nouveau. The monumental mural on the theme of the Stone Age that he painted for the History Museum in Moscow is a masterpiece of composition, brilliantly re-creating the infancy of mankind.

## From the 1890s to the Revolutionary Period

One of the strands in the ideology of the World of Art movement was “retrospectivism” — a fascination with the past. In the words of Vsevolod Petrov, “The World of Art introduced into history painting innovations totally unlike anything seen before. Neither style, psychological probing nor social issues played any essential part in the creative thinking of Somov, Benois and their associates. . . In their historical subjects they sought to convey the elusive flavour and charm of bygone eras, to express that disenchantment with reality, that nostalgic dream of the irretrievable past which assailed the minds and hearts of their milieu. This retrospective glance served as a romantic protest against the petty bourgeois prosaism of the age.”

81. Marc Chagall,  
*Soldiers with bread*, 1914-1915.  
 Gouache and watercolor on paper,  
 50.5 x 37.5 cm,  
 Collection Zinaida Gorbeyeva, St Petersburg.

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82. Ilya Repin,  
*Formal Session of the State Council Held to Mark  
its Centenary on 7 May 1901*, 1903.  
Oil on canvas, 400 x 877 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





B. Kustodiev  
1916 — 1922

Such “retrospectivism” is very much in evidence in the works of Alexander Benois, who started a vogue for “historical landscapes”. Many of them depicted places associated with Russian history, including royal palaces and parks, and the architectural and monumental splendours of the past. In addition, Benois was fascinated by Versailles during the time of Louis XIV, resulting in an extensive series of pictures painted at intervals between 1897 and 1922, such as *The King’s Walk* and *Versailles: By the Statue of Curtius*.

This preoccupation with “the everyday life, intimacy and aesthetic of history” can be seen in scenes such as *Empress Elizabeth Petrovna at Tsarskoe Selo* by Yevgeny Lanceray. Lanceray also produced paintings depicting historical events —such as his tension-charged painting showing Elizabeth Petrovna (younger daughter of Peter the Great) on the night she deposed the infant Ivan VI — and historical landscapes such as *Saint Petersburg in the Early Eighteenth Century*. Lanceray’s penchant for history was encouraged by Benois (his uncle), who took a lively interest in his artistic career.

Like Benois and Lanceray, Valentin Serov sought to convey the flavour of bygone eras, particularly the eighteenth century, but he was also intrigued by the character of historical personalities and the psychological nuances of historical scenes. Soon after joining the World of Art society he received a commission to provide illustrations for Nikolai Kutepov’s book *Royal Hunting in Russia* — including one of Peter II and Princess Elizabeth riding to hounds, notable for the momentum of the galloping horses and the contrast between the finery of the riders and the poverty of the peasants watching them pass.

83. Boris Kustodiev,  
*Group Portrait of the World of Art Artists*,  
1916-1920.  
Oil on canvas, 52 x 89 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

84. Victor Vasnetov,  
*Tsar Ivan the Terrible*, 1897.  
Oil on canvas, 247 x 132 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

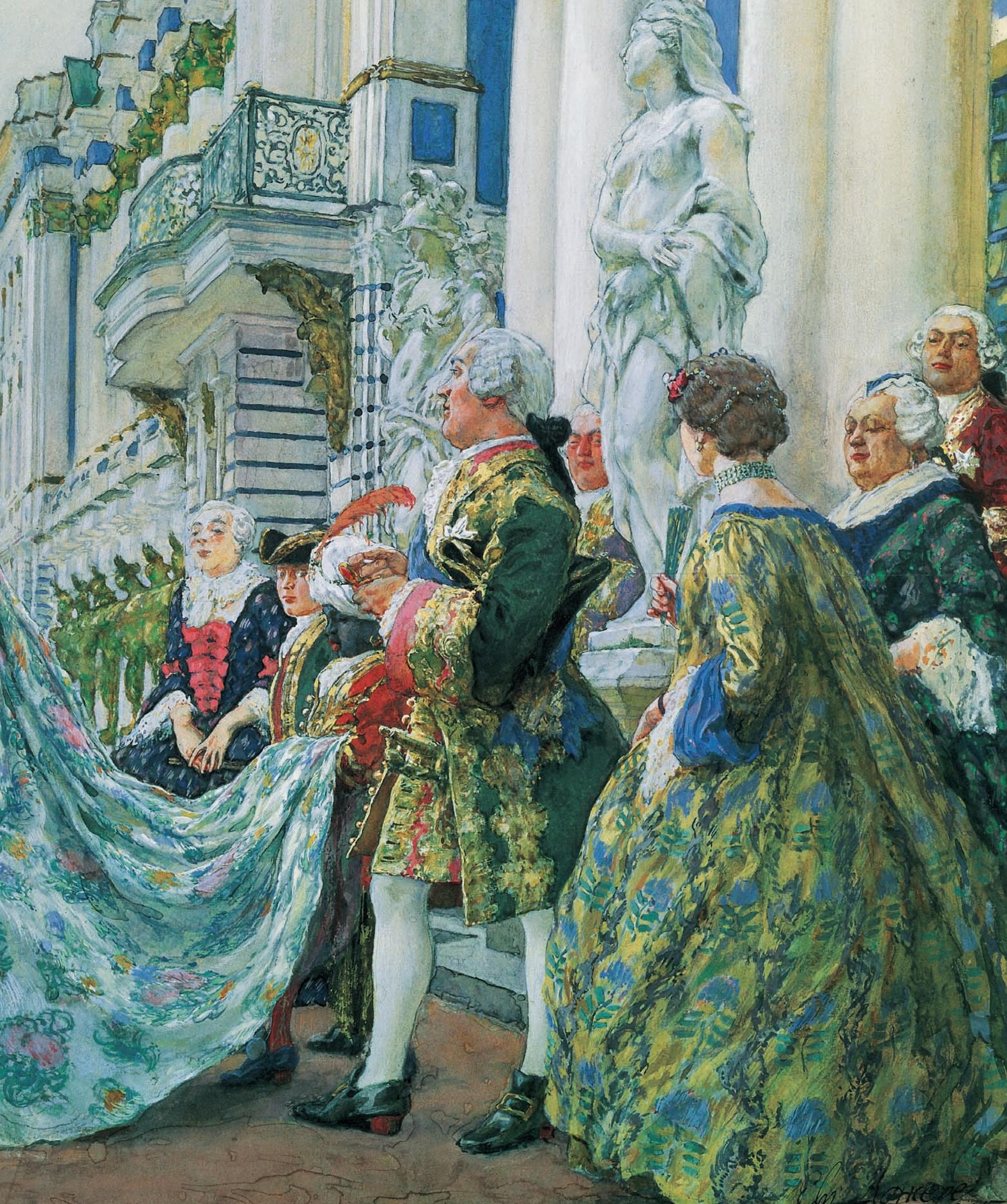
85. Yevgeny Lanceray,  
*Empress Elizabeth Petrovna at Tsurksae Selo*, 1905.  
Gouache on paper mounted on cardboard,  
43.5 x 62 cm, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

The World of Art painters tended to favour the decorative texture of tempera, pastel, watercolours and gouache rather than the richness of oils, and Serov’s most remarkable historical work is a relatively small tempera painting bearing the unadorned and unqualified title *Peter the Great*. It shows Peter purposefully striding across the shore of Vassily Island during the building of Saint Petersburg, while his retinue struggle to keep pace with the impatient tsar.

Serov used tempera and charcoal for a series of poignantly satirical pictures prompted by the savage suppression of the Revolution of 1905. On “Bloody Sunday” (9 January 1905) soldiers opened fire on a procession of workers approaching the Winter Palace. Serov’s response was “*Soldiers, heroes every one of you, where has your glory gone?*”, showing the troops, led by a mounted officer, advancing on the unarmed demonstrators.







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86. Ilya Repin,  
*Barge Haulers on the Volga*, 1870-1873.  
Oil on canvas, 131.5 x 281 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

87. Yevgeny Lanceray,  
*Elizabeth Petrovna's Ascent to the Throne*  
(*Tsarevna Elizabeth Petrovna and Soldiers of the*  
*Preobrazensky Regiment in the Guardroom of the*  
*Winter Palace during the Early Hours of 25*  
*November 1741*), 1911.  
Tempera on paper, 60 x 83 cm,  
Art Museum, Odessa.



88. Yevgeny Lanceray,  
*Boats from the Time of Peter the Great*, 1911.  
Tempera on paper, 64 x 86 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.







Two years later, in 1907, Serov visited Greece together with Leon Bakst. Their travels inspired Serov to paint *Ulysses and Nausicaä* and *The Rape of Europa*, both of which are remarkable for their aura of timelessness, as well as their adventurous composition and the modulation of their colours. Bakst's response to their visit was totally different, taking the form of a decorative panel endowed with a vertiginous perspective and a nightmarish intensity that are almost Surrealist. Entitled *Terror Antiquus*, it depicts an ancient civilization at the moment of destruction.

89. Valentin Serov,  
*Peter the Great Riding to Hounds*, 1902.  
Tempera on paper mounted on cardboard,  
29 x 50 cm, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

90. Alexander Benois,  
*Frontispiece for Pushkin's poem Bronze Horseman*,  
1905. Watercolor heightened with white on  
paper, 23.7 x 17.6 cm,  
Pushkin Museum, St. Petersburg.

Like Bakst, Nikolai Roerich was an exceptionally imaginative stage designer (it was Roerich who designed the sets for Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring*). The scale and decorative possibilities of theatrical design, coupled with an intense interest in Slavic history made him the ideal candidate when it came to commissioning wall panels for Moscow's new Kazan Railway Station, built in a resplendent amalgam of styles by the architect Alexei Shchusev between 1913 and 1926. Like Kustodiev's proposals for the main ceiling, Roerich's ideas did not go beyond the design stage, but his preparatory paintings indicate how impressive the murals would have been. During the Second World



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91. Valentin Serov,  
*Peter the Great*, 1907.  
Tempera on cardborad, 68.5 x 88 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



92. Valentin Serov,  
*Ulysses and Nausicaä*, 1910.  
89.5 x 101.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.







War Roerich used his knowledge of history and legend to patriotic effect, creating works featuring Russian epic heroes and saints.

The two World Wars and the Soviet Revolution inspired numerous documentary and commemorative paintings. Many of these, especially after the promulgation of the dogma of Socialist Realism in 1934, were official commissions. In its initial manifesto, published in 1921, the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR) stated that its aim was "to capture, through artistic and documentary means, this supreme moment in history" and to portray "the life of the Red Army, the life of the workers, the peasantry, revolutionary activists, and the heroes of labour". Dedicated to the continuation of the historical realism of the Itinerants, the association attracted an impressive array of well-known artists, including Arkhipov, Baksheyev, Kasatkin, Kustodiev, Maliutin, PetrovVodkin and Yuon. Kustodiev, who possessed an unusual

93. Yevgeny Lanceray, *St. Petersburg in the Early Eighteenth Century*, 1906. Tempera on canvas, 58.5 x 111.5 cm, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

94. Valentin Serov, *The Rape of Europe*, 1910. Tempera on canvas, 71 x 98 cm, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



talent for painting crowd scenes, produced a lively record of the mood of celebration outside the Comintern Congress held in Petrograd in 1920. Petrov-Vodkin's *Death of a Commissar*, painted in 1928, provided a pietà-like memorial to those who died during the Russian Civil War.

To satisfy demands for patriotic propaganda, many of the paintings produced during the Second World War were executed in an exaggerated heroic style reminiscent of poster art. Among them were such monumental canvases as *The Defence of Sevastopol* by Alexander Deineka. *The Defence of Petrograd*, which Deineka painted in 1964, is no less heroic — but the style is totally different, being, in effect, a return to or rather a development of his style of the 1920s. This later painting starkly presents two contrasting images. In the top half, victims of war wearily make their way across a bridge, while below, as if marching in counterpoint, their comrades rally to the city's defence.

95. Mikhail Vrubel,  
*The Six-Winged Seraph*, 1905. Watercolor, lead  
mine and black chalk on paper, 33.6 x 48.5 cm,  
Pushkin Museum, St. Petersburg.

96. Nicolaï Roerich,  
*Guest from Overseas*, 1902.  
Oil on cardboard, 79 x 100 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.







97. Ilya Repin,  
*Man and Woman at a Table, two seated Women,  
Man putting a Glove* (Study for the painting  
*Parisian café*), 1873.  
Oil on canvas stuck on paper,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



98. Boris Kustodiev,  
*A Bolshevik*, 1920.  
Oil on canvas, 101 x 141 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





99. Nicolaï Roerich,  
*The Rite of Spring* (Setting for Nijinsky's Ballet),  
1914. Tempera on canvas, 56.5 x 122 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

HISTORICAL PAINTING



100. Leon Bakst,  
*Terror Antiquus*, 1908.  
Decorative Panel, oil on canvas, 250 x 270 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



101. Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin,  
*Death of the Commissar*, 1928.  
Oil on canvas, 196 x 248 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



# INTERIORS AND GENRE PAINTING

## Interiors in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

With the establishment of the Academy, instead of being treated as a branch of “perspective painting”, the depiction of interiors came to be regarded as an artistic discipline in its own right. An outstanding example of the new genre was the watercolour “portrait” of the salon of the palace in Saint Petersburg belonging to Prince Alexander Bezborodko, Catherine the Great’s military commander. Painted in 1790 by his close friend the architect and artist Nikolai Lvov, in a gamut of greens and lilacs, it has an intimacy in keeping with their friendship, coupled with a theatricality due in some measure to the extravagant drapery. By making ingenious use of mirrors and views from the windows, Lvov managed to include glimpses of both the city and the mountains. This touch of artistic sophistry was surely appreciated by the prince, who was a connoisseur and generous patron of the arts.

Compositions of this kind became increasingly common during the first half of the nineteenth century, stimulated no doubt by the interest in interior design that seized Europe during the post-Napoleonic period. In 1828 Vorobiev was appointed professor of perspective at the Academy. At the same time Venetsianov, as part of his own curriculum, made pupils paint carefully observed interior scenes. Many of these have survived, among them views of the Hermitage and the state rooms of the Winter Palace. Other notable paintings of interiors by Venetsianov’s pupils include Soroka’s *The Study in a Country House at Ostrovski*, Alexei Tyranov’s delightful picture of the Chernetsov brothers in their studio (1828), Alexander Denisov’s *Sailors at a Cobbler’s* (1832), Yevgraf Krendovsky’s *Preparations Before the Hunt* (1836) and Lavr Plakhov’s *Coachmen’s Room at the Academy* (1834).

Venetsianov’s own treatment of interiors underwent a sudden transformation thanks to *The Choir of the Church of the Capuchin Monastery on the Piazza Barberini* by the French artist François Granet. Venetsianov saw it in the Hermitage in 1820 and was instantly struck with a desire to apply Granet’s treatment of space and light to a vernacular interior. The result was *The Threshing Floor*, which he painted some months later. In order to get the light and details right, he had one of the end walls of the threshing barn removed. It is interesting to compare this interior with *The Kitchen* by Yuri Krylov (1805-41), painted five or six years later. It is not known whether Krylov was one of Venetsianov’s pupils, but the mood, attention to detail, and the preoccupation with perspective and light must surely have been influenced by the earlier work.



102. Karl Briullov,  
*Young Girls Gathering Grapes near Naples*, 1827.  
Oil on canvas, 62 x 52.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

103. Karl Briullov, *Italian Family*, 1831.  
Watercolor on cardboard, 18.8 x 22.4 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

104. Alexei Venetsianov,  
*The Threshing Floor*, 1821-23.  
Oil on canvas, 66.5 x 80.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.







### Genre Painting from the Eighteenth Century to the 1860s

In the 1770s the Academy offered a class of “domestic exercises”. Scenes from ordinary everyday life however, which came to be known as genre painting, were scarcely considered as worthy topics for art and did not enjoy the same prestige as portraits or historical tableaux. Initially, as with landscape and interiors, Venetsianov’s interest in peasant life was partly responsible for genre painting being viewed as a separate artistic discipline.

Although, as with other artists, the distinction between Venetsianov’s genre pictures and his other types of painting is sometimes blurred, what sets them apart is the quiet focusing on the men, women and children who appear in these tableaux — on their activities, surroundings, identity and lifestyle. Many of his genre paintings — such as *Cleaning the Sugar Beet*, *Peasant Children in a Field* and *The Morning of a Landowner’s Wife* — capture a “frozen” moment of time. The same is true of the lively medley of people, animals, carts and carriages in *Square in a Provincial Town* by Yevgraf Krendovsky (1810-53), a wide-angled panorama notable for its ingenious manipulation of perspective.

105. Leondi Solomatkin,  
*Morning at a Tavern*, 1873.  
Oil on canvas, 52 x 71 cm,  
Art Museum of Irkutsk, Irkutsk.

One of the first Russian artists to specialize in this type of painting was Mikhail Shibanov. A serf of Prince Grigory Potemkin (the favourite of Catherine the Great),

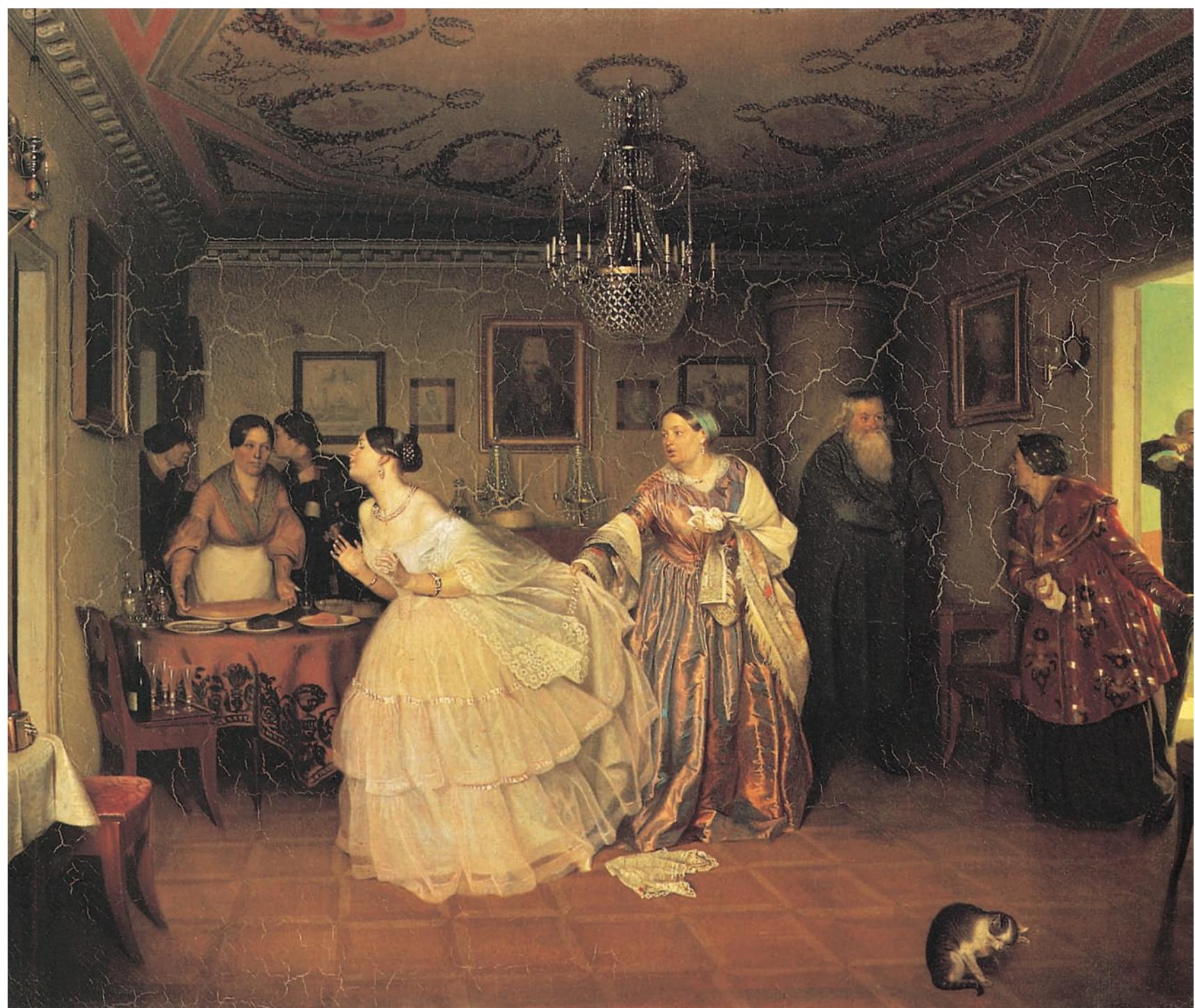


he had first-hand knowledge of peasant life. The dates of his birth and death are not known, though he died after 1789. The family that figures in his most famous painting — *Peasant Meal*, painted in 1774 — is shown gathered round a farmhouse table. It is doubtful whether the Academy had ever previously been asked to consider a work of art that featured ordinary people in a humble domestic setting engaged in a commonplace daily routine. By portraying the dignified solidarity of this peasant family, Shibanov showed that it was possible to produce a masterpiece without painting in the grand manner. The same qualities are apparent in *Solemnizing the Wedding Contract*, which he painted three years later. There is no distance between Shibanov and the people featured in these pictures. For the first time in the history of Russian art, peasants are treated not as exotic characters or curiosities, but as real people endowed with an aesthetic and moral worth.

Another artist who left a vivid record of peasant life was L. A. Ermenev. As with Shibanov, we do not know his precise dates, but he was probably born in 1746 and died some time after 1789. The son of an equerry at the court of Catherine the Great, he was orphaned at an early age. After graduating from the Academy, he went to study in Paris. There he witnessed the events of the French Revolution, which deepened his preoccupation with the condition of the lower classes. Ermenev's paintings have

106. Illarion Pryanishnikov,  
*The Mockers*, 1865.  
Trtiakov Gallery, Moscow.

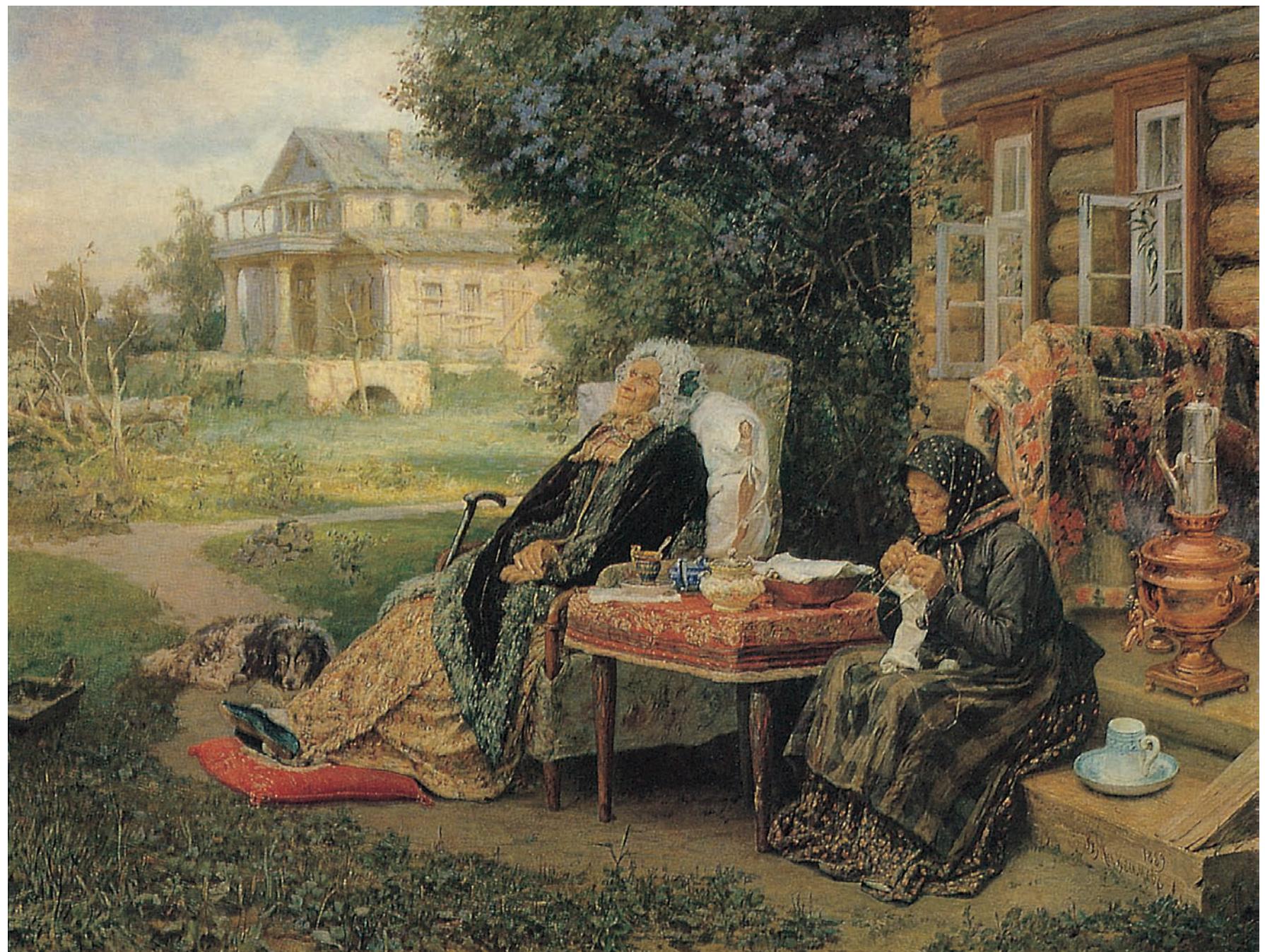
INTERIORS AND GENRE PAINTING



107. Pavel Fedotov,  
*The Major's Marriage Proposal*, 1848.  
Oil on canvas, 58.3 x 75.4 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

108. Pavel Fedotov,  
*The Newly Decorated Civil Servant*, 1846.  
Oil on canvas, 48.2 x 42.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





109. Vassily Maximov,  
*All in the Past*, 1889.  
Oil on canvas, 72 x 93.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



110. Vassily Maximov,  
*The Sick Husband*, 1881.  
Oil on canvas, 70.8 x 88.6 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

poignant titles — *Poor Woman and Her Daughter*, *Blind Singers*, *Peasants at Table*, *Poor Man and Woman*, *Old Man Seated with a Bowl*. Dressed in tatters or patched clothes, often with rheum-filled eyes and with rags on their swollen feet, the serfs and beggars that people his pictures are a far cry from the fashionably attired courtiers who sat for Rokotov, Borovikovsky or Levitsky. Ermenev died alone, unrecognized, and his work was virtually overlooked until after his death.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Russian writers and painters were also beginning to focus attention on other sectors of society that had, until then, scarcely figured in art. Landowners, civil servants, the military and the clergy all became possible subjects for artistic comment. As a reaction against the repressive and bureaucratic regime of Nicholas I, the behaviour of the ruling class was frequently depicted in a satirical light.

One of the most astute social commentators was Pavel Fedotov. Fedotov's contemporaries would have immediately recognised the social status of the dramatis personae in his best-known picture — *The Major's Marriage Proposal*, painted in 1848. Marriageable young ladies, like the one whose hand the languid major is seeking, could be seen promenading on Saint Petersburg's Nevsky Prospekt and in the city's parks. All the figures, down to the servants in the background, are portrayed with an unerring eye for detail. Fedotov's art pillories social evils (in this case the way women were treated as marketable chattels), mostly with humour though occasionally with bitterness. In 1844, at the age of twenty-nine, Fedotov abandoned a military career in favour of painting. Eight years later he died in a mental institution, his mental state unbalanced by poverty and frustration.

Fedotov's *The Newly Decorated Civil Servant* infuriated the self-important officials caricatured by him to such an extent that he was banned from selling reproductions until the medal had been removed from the civil servant's dressing gown and the title changed to *The Morning After a Party*. His sense of the absurd is keenly evident in works like *The Discriminating Bride* (1847), *A Poor Aristocrat's Breakfast* (1849) and *Encore! Encore!* (1851-52), which features an army officer desperately trying to relieve the tedium of a rural posting by teaching his dog to jump over a stick. Fedotov's last paintings have a more sombre atmosphere — such as *The Gamblers* (1852) and *The Young Widow* (1851-52), an extremely moving picture inspired by his own sister's bereavement.

## Genre Painting from the 1860s to the 1890s

111. Vassily Pukirev,  
*The Unequal Marriage*, 1862.  
 Oil on canvas, 173 x 136.5 cm,  
 Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

112. Ilya Repin,  
*On the Turf Bench*, 1876.  
 Oil on canvas, 36 x 55.5 cm,  
 Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, two currents existed side by side. Painters such as Venetsianov and Shibanov expressed aspects of everyday life in Russia in a good-natured way without the least criticism, while others, such as Fedotov and Ermenev, laid the foundations of Critical Realism, which directly or by implication commented on social and moral issues. The Itinerants and other painters active during the second half of the century built on these foundations, providing a vivid record of the reality of people's lives.







Georges Seurat  
1886



113. Vassily Perov,  
*Troika (Apprentice Workmen Carrying Water)*,  
1866. Oil on canvas, 123.5 x 167.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



114. Vassily Perov,  
*Drowned Girl*, 1867.  
Oil on canvas, 68 x 106 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



115. Ilya Repin,  
*A Ploughman, Leo Tolstoy Ploughing*, 1887.  
Oil on cardboard, 27.8 x 40.3 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



116. Vassily Perov,  
*Hunters at Rest*, 1871.  
Oil on canvas, 119 x 183 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

117. Ilya Repin,  
*Religious Procession in Kursk Province*,  
1880-1883.  
Oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.







One painter who would have appreciated Fedotov's *The Artist Who Married Without a Dowry Relying on his Talent* was Vassily Pukirev, whose dramatic painting *The Unequal Marriage* had an autobiographical basis. The parents of the girl he loved had made her marry an elderly general, since they did not regard painting as an eligible career. Pukirev himself figures in the congregation, standing unhappily, with arms crossed, behind the reluctant bride. This painting, which was to enjoy enormous popularity, made its debut in September 1863 at the same exhibition as Nikolai Gay's *The Last Supper*. Together they heralded a much freer and more innovative approach to academic art.

Like Fedotov and Pukirev, Nikolai Nevrev had a sharp eye for pretence. In *Bargaining: A Daily Scene in the Serfdom Era (From the Recent Past)* the object of derision is a landowner selling a pretty serf to cover his debts. The anachronism and obscenity of serfdom is underlined by the "civilized" surroundings in which the deal is being struck. Leonid Solomatkin was a less overt moralist, but in many of his paintings comedy has a mordant edge — as can be seen from *Morning at a Tavern* and the grotesque jollity of *The Wedding* (1872).

118. Vassily Maximov,  
*Arrival of a Sorcerer at a Peasant Wedding*, 1875.  
Oil on canvas, 116 x 188 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

*The Mockers* by Illarion Pryanishnikov, in which merchants and their affluent customers laugh at a dancing beggar, was based on a scene from a play by Alexander Ostrovsky. In *The Zemstvo is Dining* by Grigory Miasoyedov the contrast between rich and poor is more oblique in pictorial terms, though no less obvious. The peasants are obliged to eat their



frugal lunch outside, while decanters and washing-up glimpsed through the window reveal that the more affluent members of the *zemstvo* (rural district council) have been banqueting in the council chamber.

The prime concern of many artists of this period, both Itinerants and non-Itinerants, was to convey the reality of people's lives. Vassily Maximov grew up in a village and spent much of his adult life in rural Russia, different aspects of which are portrayed in paintings such as *Arrival of the Sorcerer at a Peasant Wedding*, *The Sick Husband* and *All in the Past*. In the paintings of Konstantin Savitsky, often people *en masse* — rather than individuals — are the heroes, as in *Repairing the Railway* and *Off to War!*.

Vladimir Makovsky was equally adept at portraying crowds of people, as in *Bank Crash* and *A Doss-House* (1889), even though these and most of his other canvases are half the size of Savitsky's *Off to War*. Both urban and village life figure in his paintings. The best ones, such as *In the Doctor's Waiting Room* and *On the Boulevard*, or *The Rendez-Vous* (1883) and *Declaration of Love* (1889-91), quietly capture fleeting moments from people's lives. The unevenness of Makovsky's work led Benois to describe his art as "cold" and "heartless", while Dostoyevsky enthusiastically praised his "love of humanity".

Perov's genre works range from comedy to tragedy. In *The Last Farewell* the bowed and huddled figures accompanying the coffin on the sledge poignantly convey the harshness of

119. Grigory Miasoyedov,  
*The Zemstov is Dining*, 1872.  
Oil on canvas, 74 x 125 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



120. Vladimir Makovsky,  
*In the Doctor's Waiting Room*, 1870.  
Oil on canvas, 69.4 x 85.3 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



life. In *The Drowned Girl* the stillness of the two figures, alone in the riverside dawn, is no less expressive. In contrast to these sombre sentiments are the hilarity of pictures such as *Hunters at Rest* and the whimsicality (barely masking anticlerical satire) of *Easter Procession in the Country*, in which the joy of Easter is marred by the weather and the drunkenness of the priests.

Pryanishnikov faithfully captured the atmosphere of a rather more normal religious procession, but Repin's *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* — on which he worked from 1880 to 1883 — represents a totally different level of artistic achievement. The woman holding a miraculous icon, the mounted police and stewards, the merchants, shopkeepers, peasants, clergy, beggars, cripples, children... everyone is carefully characterised, creating a multifaceted image of provincial Russia, or even of Russia as a whole. Thanks to the masterly use of perspective, the whole procession seems to be moving steadily forward and to be imbued with life.

The use of perspective and composition is no less important in *Barge Haulers on the Volga* — often called *The Volga Boatmen* — which Repin painted between 1870 and 1873, while still in his late twenties. Its power and immediacy made it one of the most widely known paintings in Russia and inspired a flood of Realist pictures with contemporary themes.

121. Victor Vasnetsov,  
*Players*, 1879.  
Oil on canvas, 84 x 136 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

122. Vassily Perov,  
*Easter Procession in the Country*, 1861.  
Oil on canvas, 71.5 x 89 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.







Repin wrote that the choice and use of colour “should express the mood of a painting, its spirit... Like a chord in music.” The bright colour scheme and harsh shadows, the facial expressions of the haulers, their strength and exertion express both the human dignity of their labour and its inhuman demands.

The variety of Repin’s genre painting and his gift for characterization can be seen from *Vechornitsy* (*Ukrainian Peasant Gathering*), *Reading for an Examination* and *Seeing Off a Recruit*. In *They Did Not Expect Him* — started in 1884 and completed in 1888 — Repin makes marvellous use of his talent for drama.

As a result of the revolutionary movement that culminated in the assassination of Alexander II, hundreds of political suspects were imprisoned or deported to Siberia. In 1883 the new tsar, Alexander III, declared an amnesty for political offenders. The drama of *They Did Not Expect Him* lies partly in the reactions of the family to the “returnee”, partly in his own anxiety about how they and others will react to his return, and partly in the intrusion of nightmarish reality into a seemingly untroubled domestic scene.

### The Post-Revolutionary Period: the life of the People

123. Arkady Plastov,  
*Haymaking*, 1945.  
Oil on canvas, 193 x 232 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

The “life of the workers, the peasantry, and the heroes of labour” was to become the great theme of Soviet art. But it had also been the dominant preoccupation of the Itinerants — especially the “young *peredvizhniki*”, such as Abraham Arkhipov, Nikolai Kasatkin and Sergei Ivanov.



The last decade or so of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of what was known as the “eventless genre” — pictures that expressed the underlying significance or nuances of a situation, without any narrative element or the implication of any causative event. Arguably, the ultimate “eventless” picture was a scene of bored bourgeois domesticity by Baksheyev entitled *The Humdrum of Life* (1893). One of the most famous was Arkhipov’s *Down the Oki* (1889) — depicting a group of peasants afloat on a river on a sunny day — which conveys an overwhelming feeling of time standing still. But the “eventless genre” could express the joys and pains of life as well as its existential quality. Arkhipov’s *Visiting* portrays the simple pleasure of spending time with friends, while the priests who demurely savour an afternoon out in Kustodiev’s *Moscow Teahouse* illustrate his satirical vein and sense of fun.

In utter contrast to these, Arkhipov’s *Laundresses* is a powerful indictment of the grinding drudgery of manual labour. Concern with the living and working conditions of peasants and industrial workers was voiced in the works of many of his contemporaries. Kasatkin, for example, lived for several months in a coal-mining region, and many of his pictures depict the rigours of the miners’ existence. Sergei Ivanov’s *On the Road: The Death of a Migrant Peasant* focused on the plight of agricultural workers in the later part of the nineteenth century. The desperate state of the economy had resulted in thousands of peasants leaving their home villages in search of work. The dead man lying in bright sunshine in the middle of nowhere, his prostrate wife and their bewildered child are powerful symbols of the cruel struggle for survival.

124. Arkady Plastov,  
*Threshing on the Collective Farm*, 1949.  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 382 cm,  
Museum of Russian Art, Kiev.



125. Ilya Repin,  
*Vechornisty (Ukrainian Peasant Gathering)*, 1881.  
Oil on canvas, 116 x 186 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



126. Konstantin Savitsky,  
*Repairing the Railway*, 1874.  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 175 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





The dignity of peasant life, its closeness to nature and its serenity and vigour have been recurring themes in Russian art since the time of Venetsianov. The peasants who feature in the paintings of Serebriakova, Goncharova and Plastov are, in a sense, the descendants of Venetsianov's sowers and reapers. In terms of imagery, among the most remarkable representations of peasant women are Philip Maliavin's dancing peasant girls, almost lost amid the frenzied swirls of colour. Maliavin's dancers, in the words of Dmitri Sarabianov, were seen by his contemporaries "as a symbol of the elemental force of the peasantry which exploded at the time of the Revolution". No less memorable are the harmonious, rhythmic colours of *Woman Sleeping in a Sheepfold* by Pavel Kuznetsov, many of whose paintings convey the freedom and fascination with the nomadic world of the steppes.

One of the liveliest tableaux of Russian life dates from the 1890s. To help Surikov recover from depression after his wife's death, his brother urged him to paint a picture of the "storming" of a snow fortress — a Cossack tradition, which was still popular in the area around his home town of Krasnoyarsk. Each year, on the last day before the beginning of Lent, a snow fortress would be built, often with considerable skill and imagination. Then a battle would ensue between attackers on horseback, who had to "capture" the fortress, and defenders armed with branches and rattles.

127. Abraham Arkhipov,  
*Laundry Workers*, late 1890s.  
Oil on canvas, 91 x 70 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

128. Abraham Arkhipov,  
*Visiting*, 1915.  
Oil on canvas, 105 x 154 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



129. Nikolai Kasatkin,  
*Poor People Collecting Coal in an Abandoned Pit*,  
1894. Oil on canvas, 80.3 x 107 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



130. Boris Yakovlev,  
*Transport Returns to Normal*, 1923.  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 140 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

131. Vassily Surikov,  
*The Taking of the Snow Fortress*, 1891.  
Oil on canvas, 156 x 282 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.







K. Godebski  
1910



132. Konstantin Somov, *Pierrot and Lady*, 1910.

Gouache on paper, 46 x 55 cm,

Museum of Oriental and Occidental Art, Odessa.

133. Boris Kustodiev, *Kiss and Congratulation for*

*Easter*, 1916. Tempera on paper mounted on

cardboard, 50 x 42 cm,

Kustodiev Picture Gallery, Astrakhan.

Such examples of Russian life are also shown by other well-known artists. With their violinists, street sweepers, soldiers, newspaper vendors, cattle dealers, rabbis and lovers, Chagall's pictures — including many painted when he lived in Paris — provide affectionate glimpses of village and small-town life in pre-Revolutionary Russia.

In the post-Revolutionary period, however, industrialization provided a new stimulus for Soviet artists. In 1923 Boris Yakovlev painted a small picture entitled *Transport Returns to Normal*. In the words of the art historian John Milner, "only the approaching engine's red star communicates the message" in this "hymn to railway transport... closely recalling Monet's *Gare St Lazare* paintings". If Yakovlev's painting is a hymn to the railways, many of Deineka's works are hymns to industry or to the dynamism of the Soviet people. Nevertheless, a note of ambiguity or paradox is often present.

In *Female Textile Workers* there is a lightness and efficiency about the workers' movements — but they are also trancelike and robotic, and a decidedly pre-industrial cowherd and pair of cows are visible through the window of the ultra-modern factory. Similarly, in *Building New Factories* the spark of communication between the two women and the athletic twist of their bodies contrast with the geometrical skeleton of lifeless steel girders.

The development of collective farms stimulated some equally memorable images. Deineka's trim 1930s farmworker pedalling through the immaculate countryside on her drop-handled bicycle provided a reassuring symbol of progress (tempered, perhaps, with a barely expressed hint of irony). In the 1930s and after the Second World War, Arkady Plastov painted farming scenes full of life and confidence, celebrating the beauty of the Russian countryside and the heroic efforts of the workers engaged in the drive for agricultural regeneration. Meant to impress, these huge canvases were intended for public buildings and they have been aptly described as "calls to action, icons of Socialism".

Some aspects of rural life, however, have altered little. In 1934 Sergeï Maliutin (1859-1937) — a multi-talented artist who designed several buildings in Moscow incorporating folk-art elements and who headed the woodwork studios at Talashkino in the 1890s — painted *The Brigade's Lunch*. But, as so often the case with Russian painting, there is a thread of continuity in this painting that links the present and the past. The peasant meal of soup and green onions, the lunchers themselves and the riverside setting might have provided subject matter for one of the Itinerants (perhaps Miasoyedov, Arkhipov or Sergeï Ivanov) — or even for Mikhaïl Shibanov, the painter who provoked something of a furore when he exhibited his *Peasant Meal* at the Academy in the eighteenth century.

134. Zinaida Serebriakova,  
*Ballet Dressing Room: Snow Flakes  
(The Nutcracker)*, 1923.  
Oil on canvas, 105 x 85 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.





# LANDSCAPE

## From the Eighteenth Century to the 1860s

It was only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and during the first part of the nineteenth century that landscape painting in Russia emerged as a separate genre. Artists such as Fyodor Alexeyev (1753-1824), Fyodor Matveyev (1758-1826), Maxim Vorobiev (1787-1855) and Sylvester Shchedrin (1791-1830) produced masterpieces of landscape painting, although their work was heavily influenced by the Latin tradition — by painters such as Claude Lorrain, Poussin and Canaletto — it is in the work of Venetsianov and his followers (for example, in his *Summer: Harvest Time* and *Spring: Ploughing*) that landscape with a truly Russian character makes its first appearance.

Two of Venetsianov's most promising pupils were Nikifor Krylov (1802-31) and Grigory Soroka (1823-64). Despite the brief span of their working lives, both of these artists were to have a considerable influence on the painters who came after them. The countryside in Krylov's best-known picture, *Winter Landscape* (1827), is unmistakably Russian, as are the people that enliven it. In order to paint the scene realistically, he had a simple wooden studio erected, looking out over the snow-covered plain to the woodlands visible in the distance. Krylov's artistic career had barely begun when, at the age of twenty-nine, he succumbed to cholera. Only a small number of his works have survived.

Soroka died in even more tragic circumstances. He was one of the serfs belonging to a landowner named Miliukov whose estate, Ostrovki, was close to Venetsianov's. Conscious of Soroka's talent, Venetsianov tried to persuade Miliukov to set the young painter free, but without success. (True to his humanitarian ideals, Venetsianov pleaded for the freedom of other talented serf artists and in some cases purchased their liberty himself.) Later, in 1864, Soroka was arrested for his part in local agitation for land reforms and sentenced to be flogged. Before the punishment could be carried out, he committed suicide. One of his most representative paintings is *Fishermen: View of Lake Moldino* (late 1840s), which is remarkable for the way it captures the silence and stillness of the lake.

For a period of thirty or forty years most of the leading Russian landscape painters were taught by Maxim Vorobiev, who became a teacher at the Academy in 1815 and continued to teach there — except for long trips abroad, including an extended stay in Italy — almost up to the time of his death. Vorobiev and Sylvester Shchedrin were chiefly responsible for introducing the spirit of Romanticism into Russian landscape painting, while remaining faithful to the principles of classical art. Especially during the last decade of his life, Shchedrin favoured dramatic settings. Vorobiev went through a phase where he was attracted by landscapes shrouded in mist or lashed by storms, and both he and Shchedrin delighted in Romantic sunsets and moonlit scenes.

135. Alexei Sarasov,  
*The Rooks have returned*, 1871.  
Oil on canvas, 62 x 48 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

136. Ivan Aivazovsky,  
*The Ninth Wave*, 1850.  
Oil on canvas, 221 x 332 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.







Among Vorobiev's most talented pupils were Mikhail Lebedev (1811-37) — whose landscapes are less overtly Romantic than either Vorobiev's or Shchedrin's — and Ivan Aivazovsky, one of the most popular scenic painters of his time and certainly the most prolific. Indeed, those who reach such fame in their lifetime are rare. Barely finished with his studies, his name was already circulating throughout Russia. His learning years were situated, in effect, at a critical time. If academic rules were still in force, Romanticism was growing and each and everyone had Briulov's fabulous *The Last Day of Pompeii* on their minds. This painting had a great effect on Aivazovki's inspiration. He was further taught by Vorobiov, whose teaching was influenced by the Romantic spirit. Aivazovki remained faithful to this movement all his life, even though he oriented his work toward the realist genre. In October 1837, he finished his studies at the Academy and received a gold medal, synonymous with a trip to foreign countries at the cost of the Academy. But Aivazovki's gifts were such that the Council made an unusual decision: he was to spend two summers in the Crimean painting views of southern towns, present them to the Academy, and leave for Italy after that. The echo of the success of his Italian exhibitions was even heard in Russia. The *Khudojestvennaiā Gazeta* wrote, "In Rome, Aivazovski's paintings presented at the art exhibition won first prize. *Neapolitan Night*, *Chaos...* made such an impression in the capital of fine arts that aristocratic salons, public gatherings and painters' studios resound with the glory of the new Russian landscape artist. Newspapers dedicate laudatory lines to him and everyone says and writes that before Aivazovski no one had shown light,

137. Fyodor Vassilyev,  
*Wet Meadow*, 1872.  
Oil on canvas,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



water and air with such realism and life. Pope Gregory XVI bought *Chaos* and hung it in the Vatican where only paintings by world-famous painters have the honour of hanging.” While in Paris, he received the gold medal of the Council of the Academy of Paris and was made Knight of the Legion of Honour in 1857!

Influenced to some extent by Turner, he created magnificent seascapes, such as *Moonlit Night in the Crimea*, *View of the Sea and Mountains at Sunset* and *The Creation of the World*. One of Aivazovsky’s most famous works, *The Ninth Wave* (1850), owes its title to the superstition among Russian sailors that in any sequence of waves, the ninth is the most violent. Like many of his paintings, it bears the imprint of Romanticism: the sea and sky convey the power and grandeur of nature, while in the foreground, the survivors of a shipwreck embody human hopes and fears. Although the sea is the dominant theme in the majority of the 6,000 paintings that Aivazovsky produced, he also painted views of the coast and countryside, both in Russia (especially in the Ukraine and Crimea) and during travels abroad.

The enthusiasm for all things French that had been so prevalent in Russia during the eighteenth century diminished following the Napoleonic Wars — which is one reason that Russian painters, in common with European artists and writers generally, began to transfer their allegiance to Italy. This trend was reinforced by the Academy’s veneration of antiquity

138. Fyodor Vassilyev,  
*The Thaw*, 1871.  
53.5 x 107 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



and the Italian Renaissance, and also by the first stirrings of the Romantic movement. Fyodor Matveyev painted little else besides Italian architecture and landscape. Both Sylvester Shchedrin (who spent the last twelve years of his life in Italy) and Mikhail Lebedev delighted in idyllic fishing scenes and tableaux of Italian peasant life. Aivazovsky painted views of Venice and Naples (many of them bathed in moonlight), and Fyodor Alexeyev actually became known as “the Russian Canaletto”.

Sylvester Shchedrin entered the Academy of the Arts in Saint Petersburg in the landscape department. He received the gold medal to crown his graduation. The Academy offered him a trip abroad. He left for Italy, but only in 1818, because of the Neapolitan invasion. The most famous work of this period is undoubtedly *New Rome, the Castle of the Holy Angel*. Indeed, this painting was a great success and Shchedrin had to fill several orders and made several replicas of the painting from different angles. He lived in Rome and then in Naples. Orders were abundant and Italy was a constant source of inspiration. He worked outdoors, drawing nature, bays, hills, villages, fishermen... Among his works, we can point out *View of Serrento* (1826) and *Terrace on a Seashore* (1828). He liked drawing hillsides of vineyards overlooking the sea. His numerous terraces were very well received as, for him, they represented the harmony between people’s lives and nature. After the 1820’s, he began drawing night landscapes filled with anxiety. As he had fallen ill, this certainly explains the change. Most of his works belong to private collectors throughout the world.

139. Ivan Shishkin,  
*Countess Mordinova's Forest, Peterhof*, 1891.  
Oil on canvas, 81 x 108 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

During the first half of the nineteenth century a steady stream of Russian painters travelled to Italy or took up residence there — among them the Chernetsov brothers (who also travelled to Egypt, Turkey and Palestine) and such influential painters as Briullov,



Kiprensky and Alexander Ivanov, whose *Appian Way at Sunset* and *Water and Stones near Pallazzuolo* have an almost Pre-Raphaelite quality. In 1846, Nestor Kukolnik — a fashionable poet and aesthete whose portrait was painted by Briullov — declared that Russian painting had virtually become a “continuation of the Italian school”.

The architecture of their own country also caught the imagination of Russian painters. Both Fyodor Alexeyev and Vorobiev (who had been one of Alexeyev's pupils) produced numerous paintings of the buildings, streets and squares of Saint Petersburg and Moscow. So did Semion Shchedrin (1745-1804), Sylvester's uncle. Professor of landscape painting at the Academy from 1776 until his death, he painted charming, sensitive views of the parks and gardens of the Imperial residences near Saint Petersburg — such as *Stone Bridge at Gatchina*, one of a series of decorative panels that he produced between 1799 and 1801.

Alexeyev's images of the city created by Peter the Great are much more than topographical records. They are executed with a harmony and appreciation of beauty that became a mark of Russian landscape painting throughout the nineteenth century. The skilful handling of complicated effects of chiaroscuro, both in terms of brushwork and perspective, coupled with the wealth of observation of city life and the detail of the buildings, give his work enduring artistic and historical value.

Andrei Martynov (1768-1826) and Stepan Galaktionov (1778-1854) were nicknamed “the poets of Saint Petersburg”. Martynov, who was a pupil of Semion Shchedrin, painted atmospheric views of the avenues of elegant houses, the gardens of Monplaisir, the quays along the Neva lined by palaces and the Smolny Convent, seen from a distance, dissolving

140. Ivan Shishkin,  
*Morning in a Pine Forest*, 1889.  
Oil on canvas, 139 x 213 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

141. Ivan Shishkin,  
*Oak Grove*, 1887.  
Oil on canvas, 125 x 193 cm,  
Museum of Russian Art, Kiev.





LANDSCAPE



142. Arkhip Kuinji,  
*After the Rain*, 1879.  
Oil on canvas, 102 x 159 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



143. Vassily Polenov,  
*Overgrown Pond*, 1879.  
Oil on canvas, 77 x 121.8 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



into the evening sky. Like Vorobiev and Aivazovsky, he managed to travel widely, and painted in Siberia, Mongolia and China. Galaktionov (another of Semion Shchedrin's pupils) was a lithographer and engraver as well as a painter, which is reflected in the careful, detailed character of his work.

### From the 1860s to the 1890s

With the Itinerants, the status of landscape painting was greatly enhanced. Even artists like Perov, who were primarily concerned with people rather than landscape, regarded the countryside as something more than a convenient background for portraits and genre paintings. Perov's *The Last Tavern at the City Gates*, painted in 1868, is enormously evocative, with its wintry light and the snow-covered road stretching into the distance. Three years later, Fyodor Vassilyev's *The Thaw* and Alexei Savrasov's *The Rooks Have Returned* were among the highlights of the Itinerants' first exhibition. These three paintings in effect mark the watershed between academic Romanticism and a more realistic representation of nature.

A mild-mannered and extraordinarily patient teacher, Savrasov exerted a far-reaching influence on Russian landscape painting. From 1857 to 1882 he was in charge of the landscape studio at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, where Levitan, Korovin and Nesterov were among his pupils. *The Rooks Have Returned* brilliantly evokes the reawakening of the Russian countryside after the winter.

144. Vassily Polenov,  
*Bethlehem*, 1882.  
Oil on canvas, 12.5 x 36 cm,  
Radishchev Art Museum, Saratov.



Ivan Shishkin was dubbed the “Tsar of the Forest” by his contemporaries. And rightly so. From his earliest years, he was fascinated by the conifers around his house. After his studies, and with the benediction of his father, who always encouraged him in this path, he left for Moscow in 1852 to study painting. An exhibition of Aivasovsky’s seascapes made a profound impression on him. At the time, realism was highly regarded and academic rules were less strict, which allowed Shishkin to freely develop his deepest inclinations. He was taught by Mokritsky, who was under the influence of Briullov and Venetsianov himself. He encouraged Shishkin in the direction that was his; namely, landscape and nature. Very soon, he asked himself why inspiration was sought in Italian nature, as by Shchedrin and Lebedev, and not in Russian nature. He then left the Academy of Moscow and went to the one in Saint Petersburg in 1856. The most influential painters there at the time were Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov, for whom painting was meant to be not only a mirror of the surrounding world but a means to transform it. Another important aspect of teaching was the emulation of western painters, especially the Swiss landscape artist Alexandre Calame, who was very popular at the time. Calame influenced many Russian painters, among whom Shishkin, who, however, retained a personal touch. At first he often used pencil. A silver medal rewarded his drawings in 1857. In 1860, he was given the gold. He was recognized for the finesse and extreme precision of his strokes. At this time, he was also trying his hand at eau-forte and lithography. His drawings alone represent a large part of his work. The title of academician was given to him in 1865 thanks to his painting *View near Dusseldorf*. His return to Russia (he had spent three years abroad) was a real joy and

145. Vassily Polenov,  
*Lake at Gennesaret*, 1889.  
Oil on canvas, 52 x 87 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



a source of inspiration for him. He also made friends with many painters, including Repin. Speaking of his friend, Repin declared, “The loudest voice was Shishkin’s, he impressed everyone with his youth and his strength, which made him resemble a young forest in his vigorous health, his wolfish appetite and his beautiful Russian. Numerous and remarkable drawings were born during these evenings. Sometimes, spectators standing behind him uttered terrified ‘Ohs!’ and ‘Ahs!’ upon seeing him, with his thick, rough, cart-driver’s hands, erase what he had just so brilliantly drawn whereas, on the contrary, the drawing became as if by miracle more and more refined.” In 1870, he was among the founders of the Society for Itinerant Exhibitions, with its realist tendency.

In 1872, his painting *Conifers* marked a new phase in the painter’s artistic evolution. Nothing disturbs the calm of this scene. All the details are present: the bear, the flying bird, the pines that are all different one from the other. This is thus once again a very realistic scene but, at the same time, a new energy emanates from this painting, expressing a harmony that Shishkin had not reached up to that point. This painting was an immense success. The painter became friends with Kramskoï, leader of the Society. With remarkable perception, he corrected Shishkin’s awkwardness. Together, they very often went off to make sketches from nature.

146. Isaac Levitan,  
*The Vladimirka Road*, 1892.  
Oil on canvas, 79 x 123 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

But it was during the 1880s that the artist attained the summit of his art. *Pine Forest* (1885) or *After the Storm* (1888) reflect great artistic liberty. Henceforth, the artist

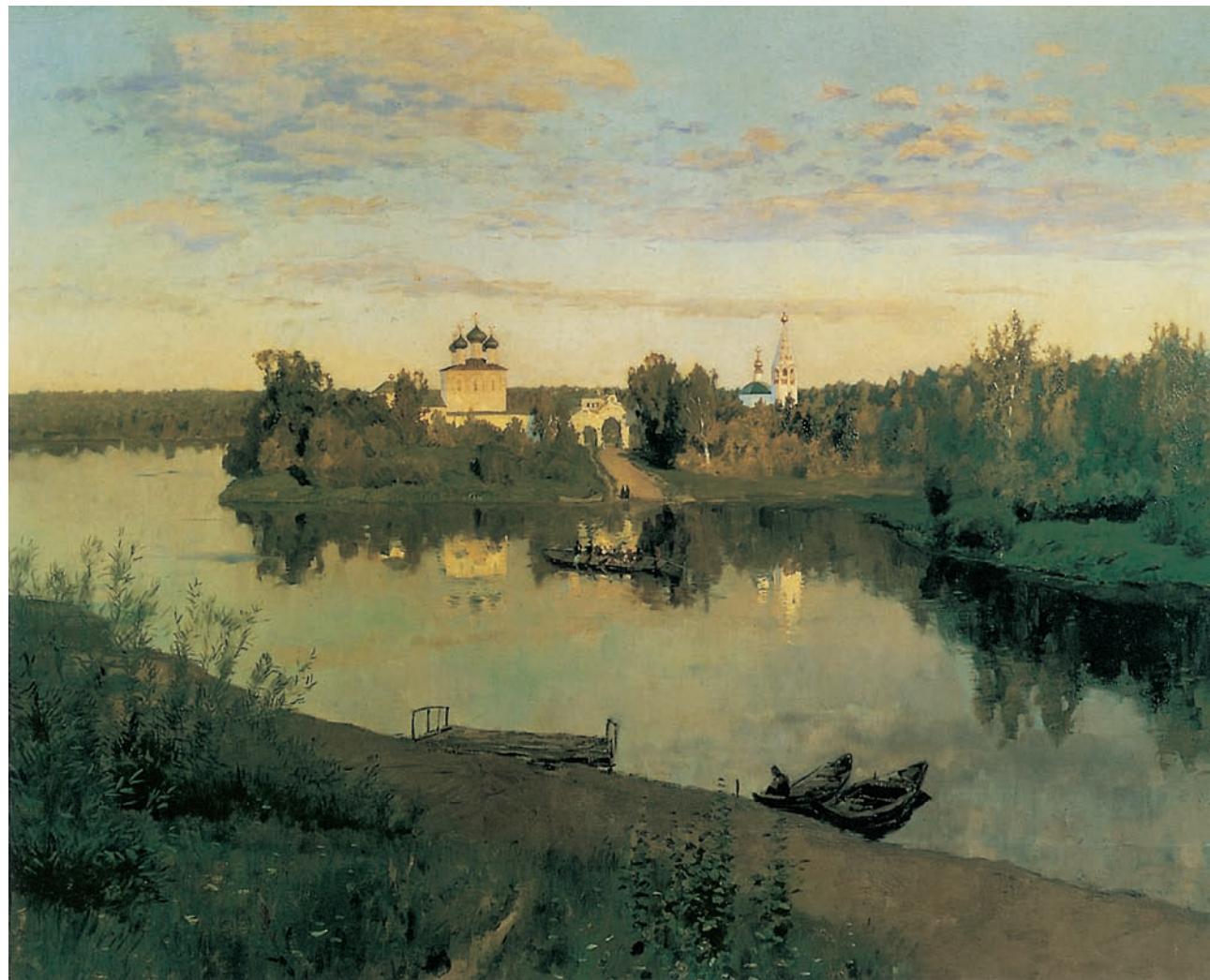


alternated light and dark rays, which allowed him to better translate space and to render the landscape more energetic and dynamic. He was increasingly preoccupied with the representation of light, which was not the case previously. His study *Sunlit Pines* (1886) reveals shadows and reflections that leave the light penetrate. During those years, his strokes became supple, dynamic, alert to reflected light while the crosshatching, for its part, was more sensitive and varied.

The technical virtuosity and poetic majesty of his painting speak for themselves. Works such as *Winter* (1890) are unrivalled in the way they convey the texture of snow, while his summer landscapes such as *Rye and Oak Grove* powerfully express the beauty and colours of the Russian countryside. *Morning in a Pine Forest*, unforgettable for its bears, and *Countess Mordvinova's Forest at Peterhof* are among the hundreds of paintings by him that capture the magic of the forest and the character of the trees. Indeed, *Morning in a Pine Forest* describes the awakening of the forest, the sun coming up, the fog slowly lifting; the foreground is in focus whereas the trees that are further away have fuzzy contours. The sliding light of the sun which chases the mist away little by little bestows great poetry on this magnificent piece of work. The lyricism of this wakening forest is like the signature of Shishkin's immense maturity with respect to nature.

Shishkin died while he was setting to work on a new painting, *The Kingdom of the Forest*, on 20 March 1898, leaving behind him an immense artistic legacy.

147. Isaac Levitan,  
*The Golden Autumn*, 1895.  
Oil on canvas, 82 x 126 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



During the 1870s the art of Arkhip Kuindzhi underwent an abrupt transformation. Many of the pictures that he painted in the early and mid-1870s — such as *The Forgotten Village* and *The Pack-Ox Road in Mariupol* — have muted tones, reflecting the harshness of life in rural Russia. Then Kuindzhi began to experiment with a completely different tonal range, resulting in the marvellously luminous quality of paintings such as *After the Rain* and the brightness of ones like *The Birch Grove*, both of which date from 1879.

Enthralled by Kuindzhi's new style, Repin declared that "the illusion of light was his God" and no other artist had "equalled the miraculous success of his paintings". However, there were artists who tried to emulate Kuindzhi's "lunar colours", and ones who made similar use of dramatic light effects, such as Nikolai Dubovskoi who painted *The Calm Before the Storm* in 1890.

Vassily Polenov was also a master of pleasing light effects, amply demonstrated by his painting *Overgrown Pond*, a tranquil Moscow backyard, more farmyard than courtyard, that helped to establish a vogue for landscape paintings with prominent genre elements and nuances of light and shade. An enthusiastic advocate of *plein-air* painting, he succeeded Savrasov as head of the landscape studio at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.

148. Isaac Levitan,  
*Evening Bells*, 1892.  
Oil on canvas, 87 x 107.6 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



One of the greatest and best-known landscape painters among the Itinerants, Isaac Levitan, had the advantage of studying under both Savrasov and Polenov. Although his art is perhaps less epic than Shishkin's, his style and subject matter are more varied — perhaps surprisingly, since he died at a comparatively early age. Levitan, like Shishkin, was a supreme master of the use of colour, composition, and light and shade. All the seasons of the year, the different times of day, and the infinite variety of nature figure in Levitan's canvases. But, unlike Shishkin, who had a preference for summer landscapes, Levitan preferred the fresh colours of spring and the muted cadences of autumn. When he painted summer scenes, such as *Secluded Monastery*, he preferred to work in the evening, when the light was softer, or even at dusk. He also joined the Society of Itinerant Exhibitions. He was a contemporary of Nesterov, Korovin, Stepanov, Bakcheev and Arkhipov. He was friends with Ostroukhov and Serov.

Summing up Levitan's mature work, Chekhov (who was a friend) said, "Nobody before him achieved such astonishing simplicity and clarity of purpose... and I don't know whether anyone after him will ever achieve the same." Levitan's paintings are in effect a hymn to nature. *Autumn Day: Solniki* and *Summer Evening: Fence* both express the vastness and emptiness of parts of Russia. *The Vladimirka Road* is a typical Russian plain that stretches out on the canvas and disappears in the distance. The sky is heavy, grey and

149. Isaac Levitan,  
*Above Eternal Peace*, 1894.  
Oil on canvas, 150 x 206 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

## LANDSCAPE



150. Isaac Levitan,  
*March*, 1895.  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 75 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

151. Isaac Levitan,  
*Springtime Flood*, 1897.  
Oil on canvas, 64.2 x 57.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

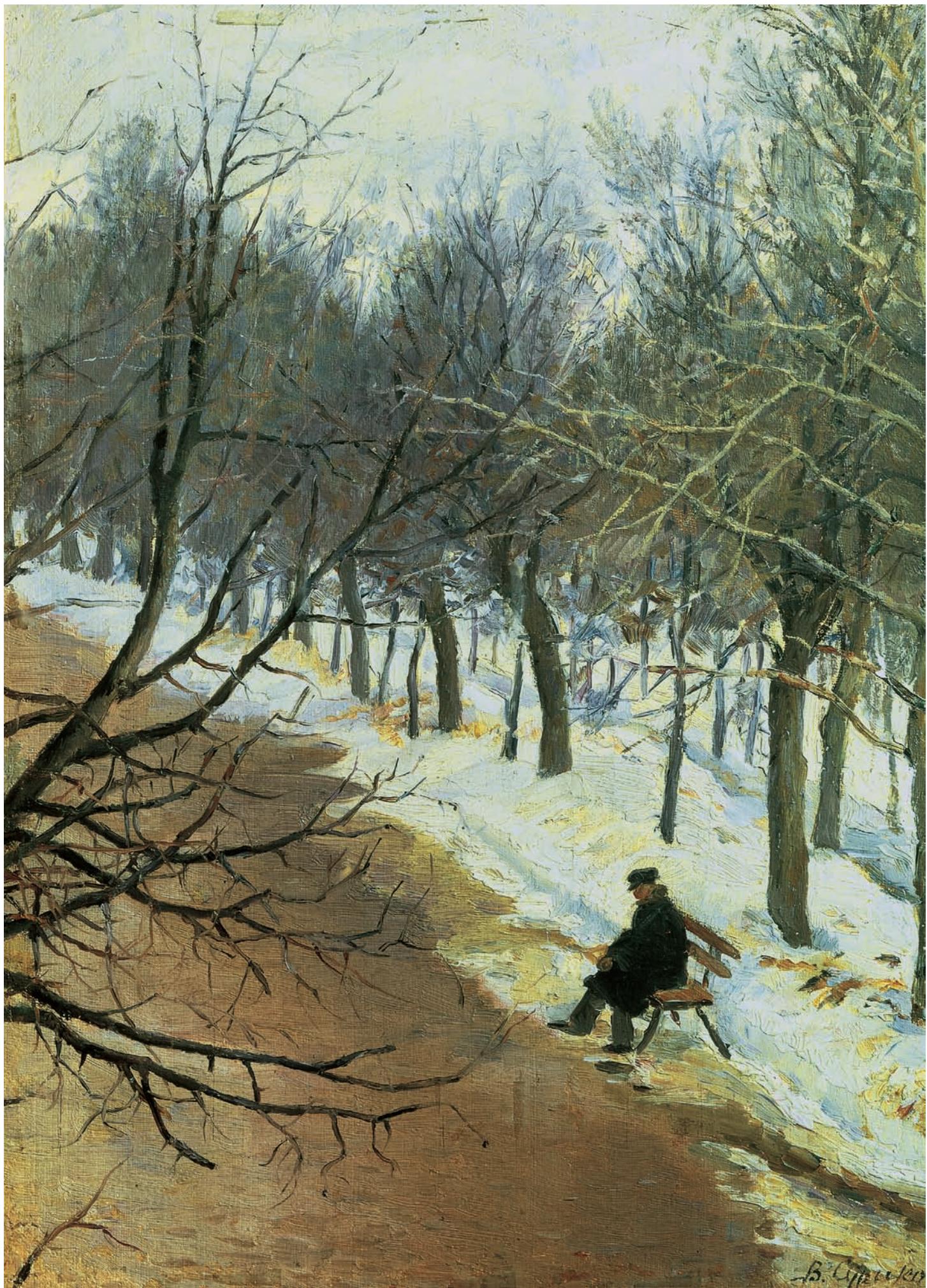


## LANDSCAPE

152. Igor Grabar,  
*February Azure*, 1904.  
Oil on canvas, 141 x 83 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

153. Vassily Surikov,  
*Zubovsky Boulevard in Winter*.  
Oil on canvas, 42 x 30 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





LANDSCAPE

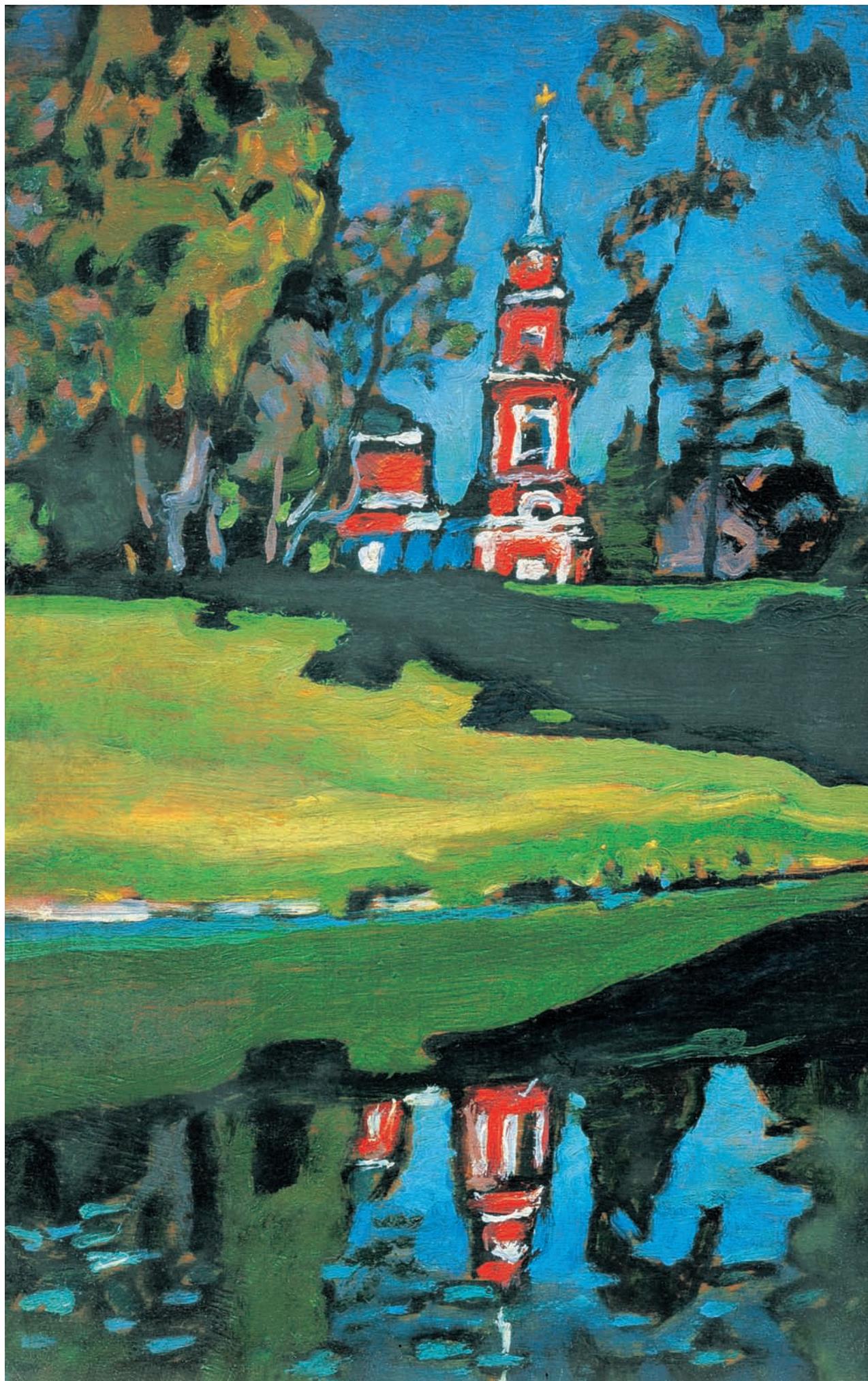


154. Konstantin Yuon,  
*March Sun*, 1915.  
Oil on canvas, 107 x 142 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



155. Nikolai Krimov,  
*Windy Day*, 1908.  
Oil on wood, 70 x 101 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

LANDSCAPE



cloudy, like a lid that weighs on the entire tract of land crossed by a road alongside of which run paths made by many feet. If the painting is marked by a certain feeling of sadness, an impression of solemnity also emanates from this empty space. The silhouette placed in the painting accentuates even further the feeling of solitude. On the subject of the road, Levitan said (remarks later recounted by the painter Kouvchinnikova), "It's the Vladimirka road, the Vladimirka along which convoys of countless unhappy souls with chained feet formerly made their way toward the prisons of Siberia." Further, *Evening Bells* is a delightful example of his handling of dappled light.

He left a permanent mark on Russian painting by bringing to it the feeling of profound typically Levitanian poetry characteristic of Russian nature. This principle came in part from Savrasov because he believed that the particular merit of this artist was to have tried to "reveal in the most simple and ordinary things, the intimate, troubling and often sad traits that characterize Russian landscapes and act so strongly on the spirit." (*Masters of Art Speak of Art*, Vol. 7, Moscow, 1970, p. 198) Indeed, what he appreciated most about this master was his "lyricism and infinite love of his native country".

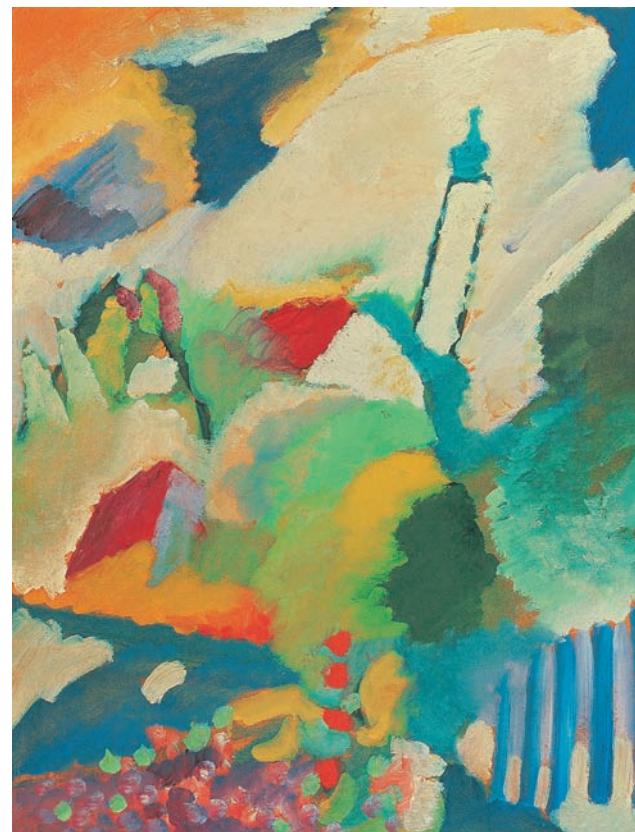
Levitans art is characterized by the breadth of feeling expressed by his palette through various landscapes. Extolling the simplicity of aestheticism before all else, which only a great master has the capacity to succeed in, his paintings were first and foremost a simplification of shape and colour, while preserving the most expressiveness and realism possible.

## From the 1890s to the Post-Revolutionary Period

With its championing of *plein air* techniques, Impressionism inevitably had a considerable impact on Russian landscape painting; one of the foremost Russian Impressionists was Grabar, whose favourite genre was landscape. In particular, he liked to paint sun and shadows on snow or the contrast between wintry skies and frosted trees, as in *February Azure*. Other snow scenes that are remarkable for their handling of light and colour include Serov's *Colts at a Watering Place*, which makes brilliant use of pastel to capture the frosty sunset, and Surikov's *Zubovsky Boulevard in Winter*, where the wintry effect is achieved through the pervasive use of blacks, blues and browns.

The style and mood of *Blue Spring* by Vassily Baksheyev, an almost exact contemporary of Grabar, are reminiscent of the spring landscapes painted by Savrasov, who was one of his teachers. Baksheyev devoted his energies almost entirely to landscape painting from the early stages of his career, and the beauty of slender birches seen against a clear spring sky was a theme that he returned to again and again.

In common with other painters who belonged to the Union of Russian Artists, Konstantin Yuon was attracted by the landscape of Old Russia, particularly by the ancient towns, with their onion-domed churches, monasteries and bustling markets. His urban landscapes, such as *A Sunny Spring Day in Seigiev Posad* — are often enlivened by human activity and



156. Vassily Kandinsky,  
*Red Church*, 1901.  
Oil on plywood, 28 x 19.2 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

157. Vassily Kandinsky,  
*Murnau with Church I*, 1910.  
Oil and watercolor on cardboard,  
64.9 x 50.2 cm,  
Municipal Gallery of the Lenbachhaus, Munich.

## LANDSCAPE



158. Martiros Saryan,

*Constantinople Street. Midday*, 1910.

Tempera on cardboard, 59.5 x 63.5 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

159. Martiros Saryan,

*The Courtyard of my House*, 1923.

Oil on canvas, 102 x 68 cm,  
Armenian Painting Gallery, Etevan.



the movement of birds or animals. After the Revolution, he produced landscapes such as his famous *Industrial Moscow Morning* (1949), which have a poetic quality expressing the dynamism of industry and the joy of work.

Another of the painters associated with the Union of Russian Artists — and also with the Blue Rose group — was Nikolai Krymov, who played an important role as a teacher of landscape painting in the post-Revolutionary period. Before the Revolution, he experimented with a variety of styles, including a Primitivist phase that resulted in landscapes such as *Windy Day*, notable for a pictorial quality and colour range inspired by Russian folk art.

Both landscape and folk art were important to Chagall and Kandinsky. The lovers and other dramatis personae that fly, loom or hover in so many of Chagall's pictures — such as *Over Vitebsk* — do so above unmistakably Russian houses and streets. *The Blue House* (1917-20) features an *isba* (a traditional wooden house) in the foreground and, beyond it, a very Russian view painted in a style derived from Russian folk art. Chagall also painted a number of delightful views from or through windows, some of them realistic, others in a more symbolic style.

Kandinsky's early landscapes, such as that of Kochel in the Bavarian Alps, divulge some hints of his future Expressionism. But it was only after he went to live in Murnau — in the mountainous area outside Munich, where he shared a house with Jawlensky — that his move towards abstraction began to emerge, with canvases such as *Boat Trip*. This was painted in 1910, the year before he launched the *Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider) group together with Franz Marc.

One of the most spectacular landscape painters of the mid twentieth century was Martiros Saryan. Despite the length of his working life, Saryan's landscapes never lost their feeling of spontaneity and delight in the scenic grandeur of Armenia and the Caucasus. Paintings such as *Constantinople Street at Midday*, *The Courtyard of my House* and *Lake Sevan* show the intensity of his colours and his instinct for dramatic composition. Saryan himself described how the central and southern Caucasus had a special enchantment for him: "There I first saw the sun and experienced intense heat. Caravans of camels with bells, nomads coming down from the mountains with tanned faces, with herds of sheep, cows, buffaloes, horses, donkeys or goats; the bazaars, the street life of the motley crowd; Muslim women slipping silently by in black and pink veils; the big, dark, almond eyes of the Armenian women — it was all that reality of which I had daydreamed back in childhood... Nature, many-faced and many-coloured, forged by a great unknown hand, is my only teacher."

160. Martiros Saryan,  
*Lake Sevan*, 1936.  
Oil on canvas, 73 x 53 cm,  
Private Collection.



С. Родионов  
1938



Georges

1879.

Seurat

# STILL LIFE

## From the Eighteenth Century to the 1860s

In Russia, still life did not emerge as a separate artistic category until the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, until that time there were relatively few Russian painters who devoted their energies primarily to still life. Its most brilliant proponent was Ivan Khrutsky (1810-85), whose decorative pictures of fruit and vegetables were influenced by the Dutch masterpieces displayed in the Hermitage. Dutch and Italian still lifes served as models for most of Khrutsky's contemporaries — though one or two of them departed from the norm by substituting indigenous vegetables, such as onions, carrots, mushrooms and parsley, in place of the hothouse fruits typically included in the Dutch and Italian compositions.

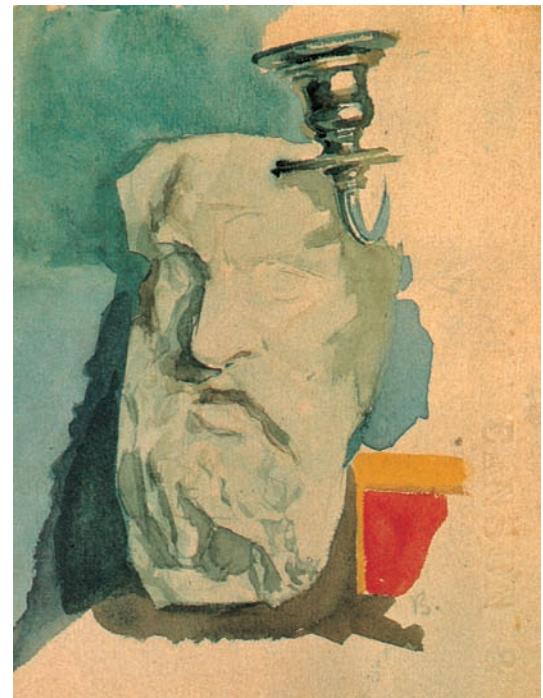
Some of Venetsianov's pupils, such as Kapiton Zelentsov (1790-1845) and Alexei Tyranov (1808-59), painted lively, minutely observed compositions of everyday objects. Still-life elements also figure frequently in portraits and pictures of interiors by these artists — for example, on the desk in the foreground of Soroka's *The Study in a Country House at Ostrovski*.

Count Fyodor Tolstoy (1783-1873), a friend and admirer of Venetsianov and relative of the famous novelist, was an exceptionally versatile artist who became known as a sculptor and medallist as well as for his silhouettes. In addition, he produced natural-history studies of birds and flowers, and interior scenes with such titles as *At the Window on a Moonlit Night*. One of the art forms at which he excelled was the creation of charmingly convincing *trompe l'oeil* miniatures, in pen-and-ink and gouache, featuring flowers and berries plus butterflies or birds.

## From the 1860s to the 1890s

Although there are some pleasing still lifes from the second half of the nineteenth century, it was not until the earlier part of the twentieth century that still-life painting in Russia came into its own. Repin's *Apples and Leaves* echoes the Dutch and Italian masterpieces of earlier centuries, which he would have had ample opportunity to study both while abroad and at the Hermitage.

More distinctively, and slightly ahead of its time, the patterned background and vase of Mikhaïl Vrubel's *Dogrose* belong to the decorative world of Art Nouveau, in contrast to the simple blocks of colour used in his *Still Life with Plaster Mask and Sconce*. Vrubel privileged, contrary to most of the landscape artists of the second half of the nineteenth century who lauded realism, a somewhat scenic and decorative beauty of the subject.



161. Ilya Repin,  
*Apples and Leaves*, 1879.  
Oil on canvas, 65 x 75.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

162. Mikhail Vrubel,  
*Still Life with Plaster Mask and Sconce*, 1885.  
Watercolor on paper, 18.5 x 11.7 cm,  
Museum of Russian Art, Kiev.

Vroubel, who worked a great deal in the area of theatrical, monumental and decorative art, is often considered as one of the masters of Russian Art Nouveau. The range of colours that the painter preferred included all the shades of blue, from light blue to violet; combined with pink or green, these colours create the impression of a shimmering and changing surface. In fact, the subject served as a pretext for his stroke and his palette of colours. Born in Omsk in 1856, he only began painting later in life, in 1880, after having obtained a law degree from the University of Saint Petersburg. At the Academy of the Arts, he was a student of the teacher and graphic artist P. P. Tchistiakov. Just four years later, he was entrusted with the restoration of ancient frescoes in Kiev, in the twelfth century Kirillov Church. Vroubel also accomplished other paintings there, including a mural. In Kiev, Vroubel made sketches as well of the unfinished painting of the cathedral of St Vladimir that was under construction. As of 1890, he lived in Moscow and was a member of the Abramtsevo circle that was composed of the Vasnetsov brothers, Ilya Repin, Vassily and Yelena Polenov, Mark Antokolsky, Ilya Ostroukhov and many others. His painting turned toward epic subjects inspired by the history of his country. Some historical portraits were painted before he launched himself into ceramic work and even invented a new method of baking. In addition, a number of decorations of properties, decors and costumes for Mamontov's opera... are owed to him. Suffering from depression as of the beginning of the century, he nevertheless continued to create, perhaps to free himself from his stagnation. From 1904 to 1905 his illness was calmer; this was the moment in particular when he gave himself over to still lifes. The impressive painting *Lilacs* (1900) proves his disposition for this genre, which remained secondary in Russia for a long time.

Like many other of his paintings, including the portrait of Savva Mamontov reproduced in the third part of this book, he left this still-life "unfinished" — whether as a conscious decision, through lack of time or because of the mental turmoil that plagued him periodically throughout his life, is not known. Whatever the case may be, Mikhaïl Vroubel undoubtedly inspired Symbolism in Russia more than anyone else did.

### **From the 1890s to the Post-Revolutionary Period**

During the first few decades of the twentieth century still-life painting in Russia was one of the most inventive art forms, in terms of technique, subject matter and imaginative treatment. One reason was that it was a natural vehicle not only for the decorative and aesthetic philosophy of the World of Art movement but also for the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist experiments with colour and the avant-garde experiments with form. Both Korovin and Igor Grabar produced delightful still lifes in the Impressionist idiom, such as *The Uncleared Table* and *The Blue Tablecloth*, while the World of Art painters tended to favour a more sensuous or decorative approach, as in Kustodiev's *Still Life with Pheasants* and Golovin's *Still Life with Flowers and China*.

163. Mikhail Vrubel,  
*Dogrose*, 1884.  
Watercolor on paper, 24.5 x 19.5 cm,  
Private Collection.



STILL LIFE



Среди цветов, растущих в Крыму, — на ветке пурпурной. 1894



Konstantin Korovin was born into a family of shopkeepers. At the early age of 14, he entered the Architecture Department of the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture of Moscow. He gave drawing lessons at age 15 to help support his family. After two years of studies, he managed to gain admission to the Department of Painting. He took classes with Alexei Savrasov, who felt that paintings of nature were important. He knew how to spark enthusiasm in his students and, as soon as the weather became better, they left the city and its suburbs to admire flowers, fields, the miraculous rebirth of life after winter. Under his influence, Korovin was attracted very early on to landscape painting — *The Village* (1878), *Early Spring* (1870) — and moved from place to place without hesitation to apply the final touch and thereby preserve the impression of nature. In order to finish his education, Korovin entered the Academy of Fine Arts of Saint Petersburg; he left after only three months, disappointed by the teaching methods. Upon his return to Moscow, he took courses with Polenov for his last year of studies. *Portrait of a Chorister* (1883) was the

164. Isaac Levitan,  
*Bouquet of Cornflowers*, 1894.  
 Pastel on brown cardboard, 62.3 x 47.7 cm,  
 Private Collection.

165. Sergei Sudeikin,  
*Still Life with a Tray*, 1914.  
 Oil on canvas, 51 x 64.5 cm,  
 Private collection.

work that revealed the young artist to the public, thanks to its depiction of nature, of the outdoors. With a brushstroke free of all constraints and its luminous colours, this portrait reminds us of Serov's style. Polenov introduced Korovin to the Abramtsevo circle. His painting was very soon appreciated within that circle. Korovin's painting and the refinement of its colours remained marked by northern landscapes, notably during his second trip with Serov.

He was also chosen to design the Russian pavilion for the World Fair held in Paris in 1900. The painter received a gold medal during the Fair for that work. Having thereby gained an international reputation, his work was exhibited worldwide.

Essentially a colourist, colour remained his principal means of expression, no matter which art form he used: decoration, painting or decors for the theatre or opera. "Colour and shape combine to reveal harmony and beauty," he wrote. "Colours can be a celebration for the eyes, and your eyes speak to your soul of the joy, the pleasure of relaxation..." His favourite themes were landscapes, cities (particularly Paris), but he was also asked for theatrical decors and he painted still lifes as well. Indeed, he did many paintings such as *Roses and Violets* (1912), executed with an extremely rich colour palette. In *Fish* (1916), objects have a very concrete presence, upholding the diversity of colour. The influence of Impressionism, of which Korovin knew many paintings due to his travels, is palpable in his use of colour. Objects are less and less defined but still remain tangible. His colours are less and less precise, gradually becoming touches of light. From 1901 on, Constantin Korovin was a teacher at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture where he had been a student. He taught his art to an enormous number of students. He died at the beginning of the Second World War.

Among the artists of the Blue Rose group, Nikolai Sapunov (1880-1912) and Sergei Sudeikin (1882-1946) are famous for their colourful theatrical decors. Both were enthusiastic admirers of Russian crafts and decorative traditions — hence the "Primitivist" (folk-inspired) colours of their paintings. They often included old objects in their still lifes such as antique figurines, hand-painted trays and old-fashioned toys.

Like Grabar, Sapunov produced flower paintings remarkable for their handling of colour, though in terms of tonal range the two artists could scarcely have been less similar.

In contrast to the flower paintings of Grabar and Sapunov, bolder experimental styles were in evidence at the Knave of Diamonds exhibitions — discernible influences ranging from Matisse and Cézanne to Primitivism, Expressionism and various types of Cubism (analytical, synthetic, etc.). Four of the most active founding members of the group were Alexander Kuprin, Pyotr Konchalovsky, Ilya Mashkov (1881-1944) and Robert Falk. All four produced still lifes that played with colour and form. This creative playfulness resulted in pictures like the ones by Kuprin and Konchalovsky reproduced here. Many of Mashkov's still lifes feature fruit or loaves — sometimes stylized and sometimes so realistic that they are almost palpable. For a time, Falk was attracted by

166. Sergei Chekhonin,  
*Still Life*, 1916.  
Oil on canvas, 55 x 68 cm,  
Museum of History, Architecture and Art, Pskow



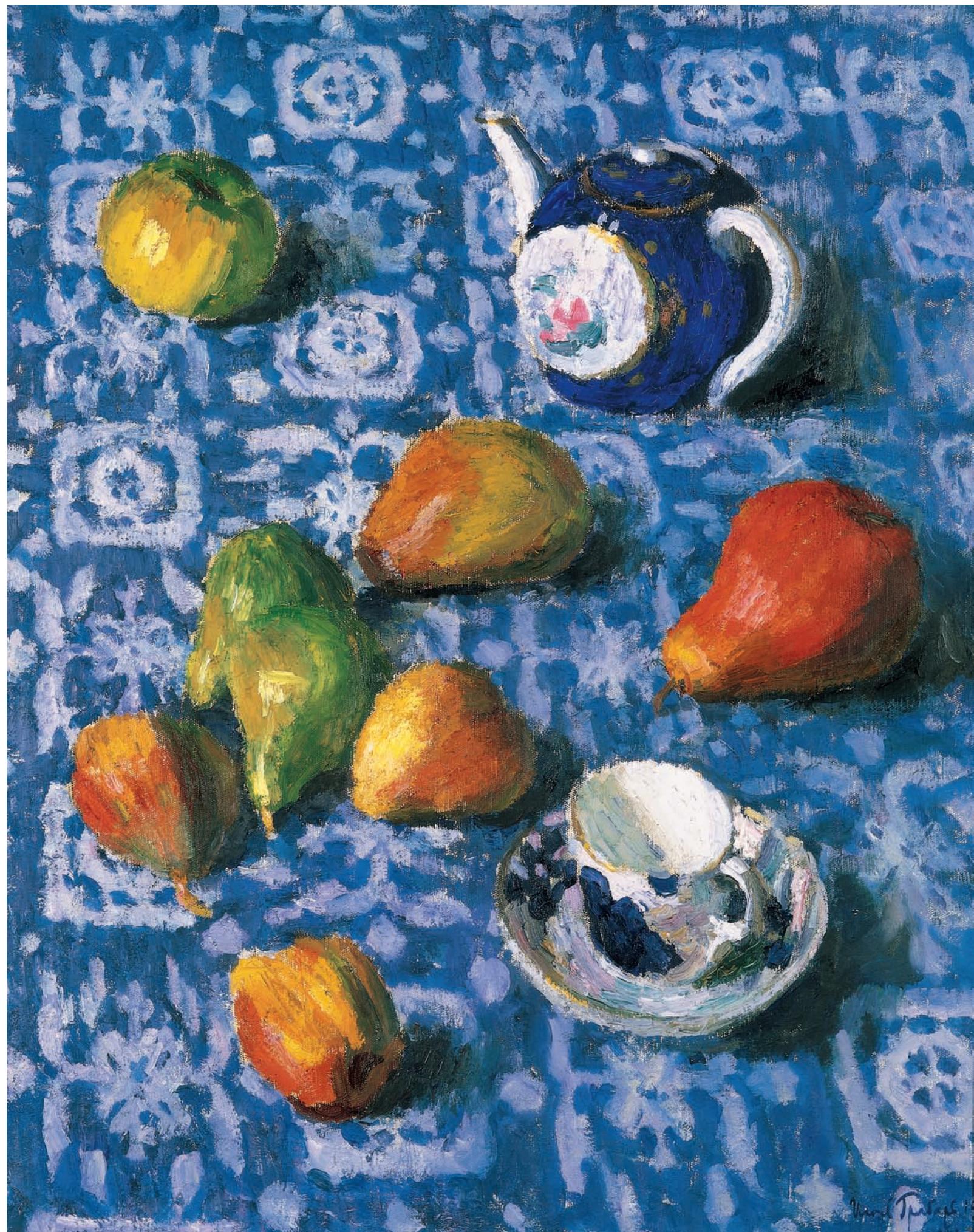




167. Alexander Golovin, *Still Life with Flowers and China*, c. 1912. Tempera on plywood, 88.5 x 70.5 cm, Brodsky Memorial Museum, St. Petersburg.

168. Boris Kustodiev, *Still Life with Pheasants*, 1914. Oil on canvas, 41 x 40 cm, Kustodiev Picture Gallery, Astrakhan.

STILL LIFE



Impressionism (especially Cezanne) but by the 1920s, when *Red Furniture* was painted, he had begun to explore what Alan Bird has called “a most private and almost secretive path” of his own.

Quite different from any of these were the still lifes of Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, who became an influential theorist and teacher. Petrov-Vodkin began working as a student of Burov. He completed his studies at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture of Moscow in 1904, where he was guided by Serov. Writing as much as he painted at that time, he hesitated greatly as to which path to follow. He made his choice after a trip to Italy and a long trip to Paris where he studied in many artists’ studios and art schools. His figurative and laconic paintings date in part from the influence of modern European and western painters. First that of Germans and Austrians, the influence then became French, in particular Neoclassic and post-Impressionist.

At the time of the formation of the Blue Rose group he was working in North Africa (which had an impact on his treatment of light and the human figure), but he was able to participate in the *Golden Fleece* exhibitions. According to Petrov-Vodkin, “the new way of looking at things is markedly an absence of vertical and horizontal lines”. Many of his later paintings are notable for their “spherical perspective”, but in *Morning Still Life* the intriguing tension of the composition derives from his use of “tilted space”.

In 1910, Petrov-Vodkin became a member of the artistic World of Art association and he remained a member until its dissolution in 1924, although he belonged to no school. He was incapable of defining his art and admitted himself that he was “a difficult painter”. His evolution proved that he attempted to synthesise the traditions of Eastern and Western painting. At the end of the 1910s, he developed and wrote a new theory on the representation of space. His “spherical perspective” differed from the traditional Italian perspective. The artist created various spaces on his canvas, connected by gravity. Dealing with space in such a way with such specific colours proved the maturity of Petrov-Vodkin’s style.

After the Bolshevik revolution in October 1917, Petrov-Vodkin painted more and more still lifes: *Morning Still life* (1918), *Still life with mirror* (1919), *Still life with Blue Ashtray* (1920). Between the end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties, as a result of his illness, he ceased painting and devoted himself to writing once again. We owe him two autobiographical compilations, *Khvalynsk* and *Eucild’s Space*, in which he expressed his points of view and theories on art. Petrov-Vodkin’s last work, *Alarm*, came out in 1919 and although it was simply a transcription of the situation at the time, it became a political symbol of the entire period and many referred to it. The work of Petrov-Vodkin did not correspond to Stalinist ideology, it was therefore quickly forgotten.

Different from Vodkin was the style of Larionov whose still lifes went through several phases. Although works such as *Fish at Sunset* and *Flowers (Two Bouquets)*, which date from 1904, have an Impressionist quality, around that time he began to experiment with more intense colours, resulting in the Fauve-like idiom of *Pears*. Between 1907 and 1913, Larionov and



169. Igor Grabar,  
*Pears on a Dark Blue Tablecloth*, 1915.  
Oil on canvas,  
The Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

170. Nikolai Sapunov,  
*Vase, Flowers and Fruits*, 1912.  
Tempera on canvas, 142.7 x 115.8 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

STILL LIFE



171. Pyotr Konchalovsky,  
*Tray and Vegetables*, 1910.  
Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



172. Alexander Kuprin,  
*Large Still Life with Artificial Flowers,  
a Red Tray and a Wooden Plate*, 1919.  
Oil on canvas, 140 x 168 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



Goncharova poured out a stream of Primitivist pictures, using elements and styles culled from folk art, especially tradesmen signboards and *lubki* (the Russian wood-cuts, similar to English chapbooks, that had become immensely popular in the seventeenth century).

Among paintings influenced by signs, *Bread* sets itself apart. A pyramid of round and oblong loaves of bread takes up the entire surface of this monumental painting. The poet Maximilien Volochine, after having visited the Knave of Diamonds exhibition in late 1910, noted, "Larionov is the most naive and most spontaneous of our 'Knaves'. His painting *Bread* is nothing more than bread: good bread, well baked, that would have been the pride of any bakery had it been on its tinplate sign." While drawing inspiration from signs, Larionov was not content to simply imitate. His approach to the subject is all the contrary: weighty and serious for the sign painter, it becomes ironic and full of humour in Larionov's work.

There followed a period of brilliantly coloured semi-abstract still lifes, such as Larionov's *Rayonist Sausage and Mackerel*, typical of the Rayonist period. In 1913, Larionov published a manifesto on Rayonism as well as an article entitled "Rayonist Painting". But a tract that he distributed during a debate organised by The Target (the group that organised exhibits) is

173. Alexander Kuprin,  
*Still Life. Cactus and Fruits*, 1918.  
Oil on canvas, 96.5 x 113 cm.



even clearer, as shown in this extract: "Teachings on Radiation. Radiation of reflected colour (coloured thrust). Reflectivity. Realistic rayonism reproducing real shapes. Negation of shapes in painting as existing independently of the eye (*a priori*). Conventional representation of the ray by the use of the line. Disappearance of frontiers under the effect of what is called the plan of the painting and nature. Seeds of rayonism in previous arts. Teachings on the creation of new shapes. Spatial shapes, shapes engendered by the intersection of rays from different objects, brought to light by the painter's will. Reproduction of the sensation of the infinite and the timeless. Pictorial construction according to the laws of painting (ie. workmanship and colour). Natural decline of all previous art which, thanks to rayonist shapes, transforms, just as life does, solely into the object of the painter's observation." (*Larionov's Rayonism in the Orient, the Nation, the Occident*, tract at the beginning of the debate held by "The Target", Moscow, 23 March 1913)

Thus, Larionov makes a distinction between real, objective rayonism and non-objective, non-figurative rayonism, where external links with the visible world no longer exist. Larionov's rayonism thereby pulled painting, little by little, out of the grip of the object, transforming it into an autonomous self-sufficient pictorial art.

174. Pyotr Konchalovsky,  
*Still Life. The Trunk (Heroic)*, 1919.  
Oil on canvas, 143.5 x 174 cm.  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

STILL LIFE





175. Martiros Saryan,  
*Large Oriental Still Life*, 1915.  
Tempera on canvas, 105 x 231 cm,  
Saryan Museum, Erevan.





Finally, after Larionov suffered a concussion in 1914, he and Gontcharova moved to Paris, where they worked as designers for Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* but also of Prokofiev, Stravinsky and numerous other artists. He participated as well in the illustration of anthologies and poems, such as *The Twelve*.

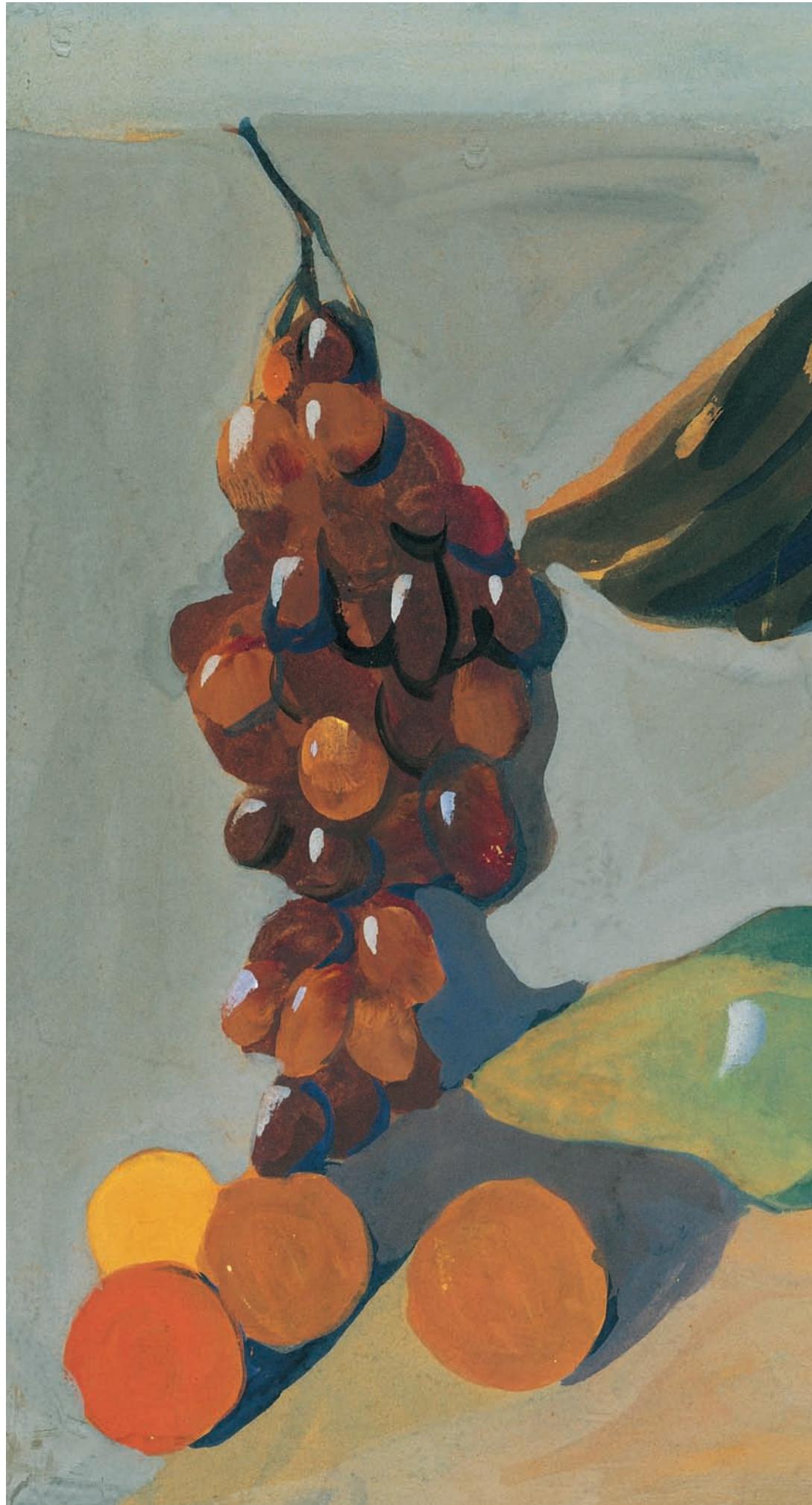
Like Larionov, the Armenian painter Martiros Saryan studied under Korovin and Serov at the Moscow College of Painting and Sculpture, where he became friendly with Sudeikin, Kuznetsov and Petrov-Vodkin — all brilliant colourists. His still lifes, like his portraits and landscapes, have a remarkable zest. Many of them feature fruit, vegetables or flowers painted in vibrant, sun-drenched colours. A few include Eastern elements, as in *Buddhist Still Life*. A warm light emanates from the juxtaposition of colours. Though a landscape artist, he painted flowers all through his life, regardless of the circumstances. Only one bouquet stands apart from the others. On 9 May 1945, people had come to congratulate him on the victory. The artist's studio was filled with flowers. According to his son, Saryan, although he was still in the army, conceived of his still life *Flowers*, which he dedicated and brought to "the Armenian soldiers that served the Great Patriotic War".

176. Mikhail Larionov,  
*Breads*, c. 1910.  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 84 cm,  
Private Collection.

177. Mikhail Larionov,  
*Fish at Sunset*, 1904.  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 95 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

STILL LIFE

178. Martiros Saryan,  
*Still Life. Grapes*, 1911.  
Tempera on cardboard, 43.5 x 64 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.





К.  
Сарбако



# TWENTIETH-CENTURY AVANT-GARDE AND REVOLUTIONARY ART

## A New World of Art

By the 1890s the Society for Itinerant Exhibitions had become so well established that three of its members (Repin, Polenov and Bogoliubov) were invited to draw up a new constitution for the Academy. Then Repin, Shishkin, Kuindzhi and Makovsky were appointed professors. But at the very moment when the Itinerants had succeeded in storming the heights of academia, the Society began to fall apart. Although it continued to hold exhibitions until the 1920s, there was internal bickering about who should be allowed to join or participate in exhibitions, and up-and-coming artists began to regard the Society as backward-looking and no longer a dynamic force. Moreover, new ideas about art were in the air. Realism and populism were out of vogue, replaced by a preoccupation with "art for art's sake". This manifested itself in numerous forms, ranging from Impressionism and Russian Art Nouveau to the abstract art of the 1920s and 1930s. As happened elsewhere (for example in France and Germany), the various movements gave rise to a plethora of groups, associations, exhibitions and magazines. Among the most influential of these affiliations was the one known as the World of Art. The World of Art (*Mir iskusstva*) was founded by a group of young artists, writers and musicians in Saint Petersburg and included Alexander Benois, Konstantin Somov, Leon Bakst, Yevgeny Lanceray, the writer Dmitri Filosov and the future impresario Sergeï Diaghilev, who was intent on "exalting Russian art in the eyes of the West".

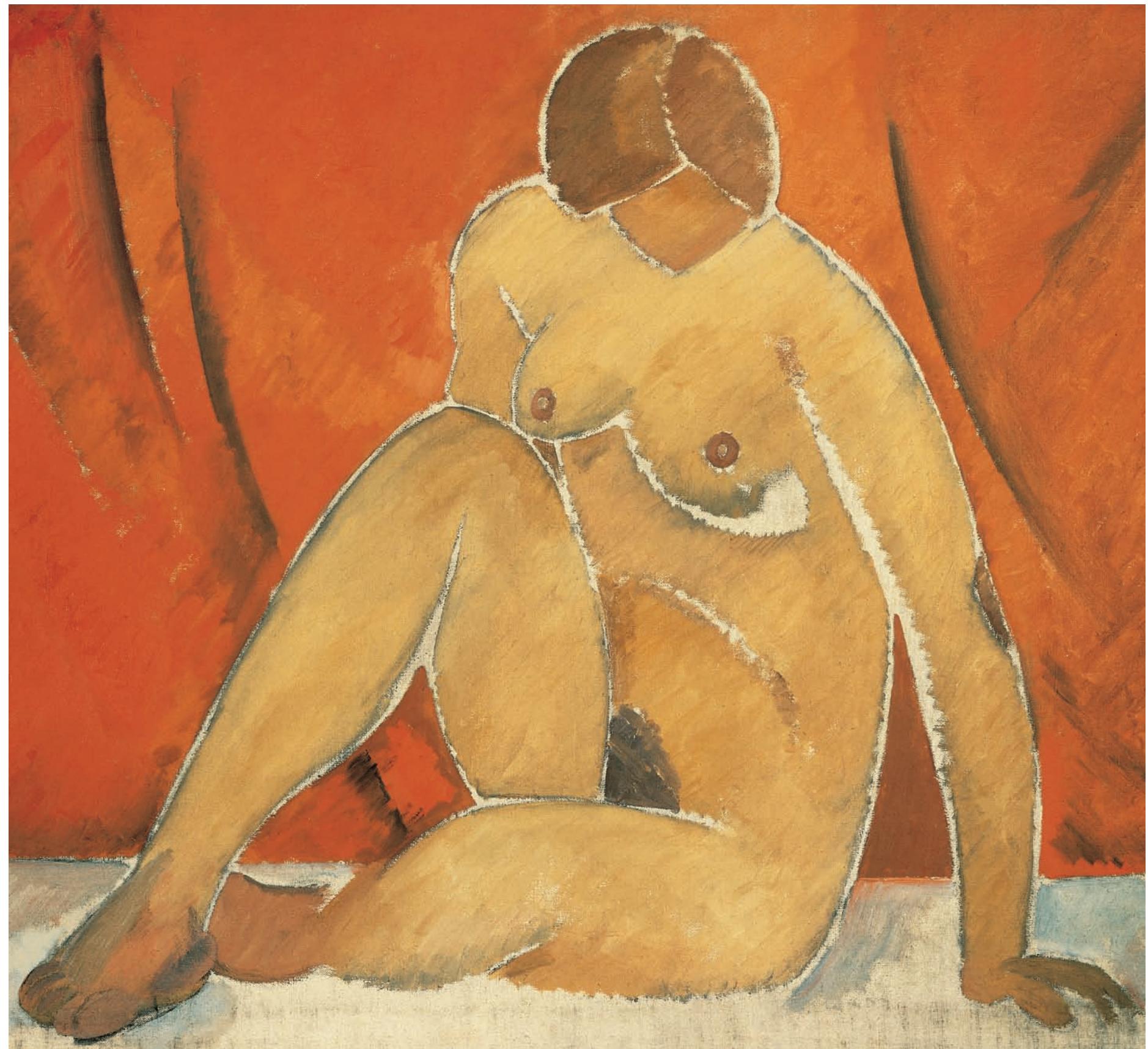
Diaghilev soon proved to be a promoter and motivator with an unusual ability to recognize artistic potential. In 1898, at the age of twenty-six, he staged an exhibition of Russian and Finnish artists, persuading a number of well-known Muscovite painters to participate — among them Korovin, Levitan, Nesterov, Riabushkin, Serov and Vrubel. The following year he launched a monthly magazine, also called *Mir iskusstva*, notable for the calibre of its principal contributors, which included Benois, Bakst and Igor Grabar. The magazine was only published for six years (until 1904), but partly because of its enthusiasm for the *style moderne* (as Art Nouveau was called in Russia), it had an immense influence not only on painting but on a variety of art forms.

When the World of Art society was reborn in 1910 (after the period of turmoil that followed the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905), it attracted a new wave of supporters, including Konchalovsky, Kuznetsov, Roerich, Sapunov, Serebriakova, Saryan and Kustodiev. The latter sketched one of their meetings as a preparatory study for a large-scale composition that was going to be "both decorative and realistic, monumental and true to life". Despite these lofty intentions, it failed to materialize. Artists as diverse as Dobuzhinsky, Maliavin, Tatlin and Chagall took part in the exhibitions that the society organized, the last of which was held in 1924. But the World of Art movement had further ramifications. Diaghilev commissioned a great many members of the group to produce stage and costume designs for



179. Kasimir Malevich,  
*Haymaking*, 1909-1910.  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

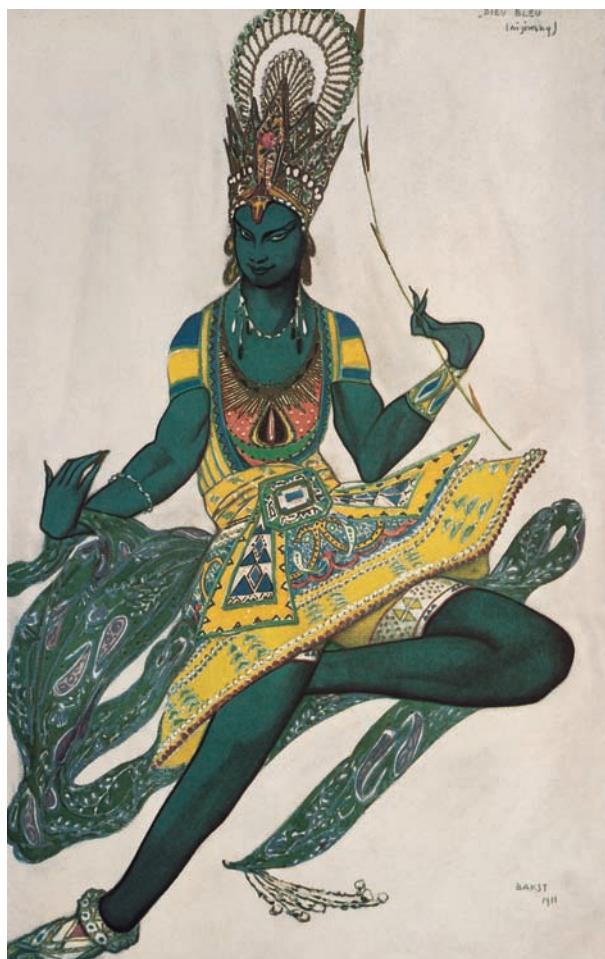
180. Mikhail Larionov,  
*Smoking Soldier*, 1910.  
Oil on canvas, 99 x 72 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



181. Vladimir Tatlin,  
*Nude*, 1910-1914.  
Oil on canvas, 104.5 x 130.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



182. Vladimir Tatlin,  
*Sailor*, 1911.  
Tempera on canvas, 71.5 x 71.5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



183. Leon Bakst,  
*The Blue God*, 1912.  
Watercolor on paper,  
National Library,  
Museum of the Opera, Paris.

184. Mikhail Larionov,  
*The Autumn (from the Cycle of Seasons)*, 1912.  
Oil on canvas, 136.5 x 115 cm,  
Musée National d'Art Moderne,  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

185. Vassily Kandinsky,  
*Composition VII*, 1913.  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

his opera and ballet productions, giving them an opportunity to work on a grand scale and to explore analogies between the rhythms of painting, dance and music. And because Diaghilev's productions toured Europe, it helped them to become known internationally.

The artists associated with the World of Art were also fortunate in having an imaginative patron, the millionaire merchant Savva Mamontov — memorably portrayed by Vrubel and Serov — who was endlessly hospitable, encouraging them to stay at Abramtsevo, his country estate near Moscow, where he provided a creative environment for them to work. As well as establishing craft workshops, he invited well-known artists to participate in building and decorating a new village church, urged them to decorate pottery and other artefacts produced in the Abramtsevo workshops, and got them to design and paint scenery for his private opera company. Another generous patron was Princess Maria Tenisheva, who set up craft studios on her estate at Talashkino, near Smolensk, and also helped to finance Diaghilev's magazine. Unfortunately a rift with the Princess, Diaghilev's high-handedness, plus internal dissensions, contributed to the magazine's demise.

When *Mir iskusstva* ceased publication, many artists who had belonged to the World of Art society transferred their allegiance to the Union of Russian Artists, which had been founded the previous year (1903) by disgruntled members from within the World of Art group. That it was based in Moscow was in itself significant. Founded in 1832, the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture had for a long time offered a more flexible and progressive alternative to Saint Petersburg's Imperial Academy of the Arts. Several of the most influential Itinerants had studied or taught in Moscow, and Moscow painters such as Korovin, Arkhipov, Maliavin, Nesterov, Riabushkin, Yuon and Grabar, all of whom were to a greater or lesser extent influenced by Impressionism, emerged as a distinct group.

The World of Art and the Union of Russian Artists were in effect the forerunners of the most innovative period of Russian art, which spawned a bewildering array of artistic groups and movements, often with bizarre names, among them the Link, the Triangle, the Wreath and the Union of Youth. One of the most seminal was the Blue Rose group, which launched a highly influential monthly magazine, *The Golden Fleece*. Reviewing their first exhibition, held in March 1907, the Symbolist poet Sergei Makovsky declared that the group was "in love with the music of colour and line" and described them as the "heralds of the new Primitivism". Prominent exhibitors included Larionov and Goncharova (his lifelong companion and collaborator), Kuznetsov, the Miliuti brothers, Sapunov, Saryan and Sudeikin. Among the painters who influenced the group were Vrubel and Victor Borisov-Musatov (1870-1905), whose Symbolist paintings made a huge impression when Diaghilev organized a retrospective exhibition of his work in 1907. The *Golden Fleece* exhibitions held in 1908 and 1909 were notable for the participation of major French artists, among them Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, Fauves and Nabis.

Although Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova had joined the Blue Rose group and been active participants in the *Golden Fleece* exhibitions, their ideas were constantly evolving. Moreover, Larionov was an organizer of immense energy, and in 1909 the two of









them, together with David Burliuk, set up the Knave of Diamonds group (sometimes translated as the Jack of Diamonds), which held its first exhibition in 1910. But before long Larionov and Goncharova felt the need to move on, and organized further exhibitions, as well as artistic debates and other events, including the Donkey's Tail (1912), Target (1913) and No. 4 — Futurists, Rayonists, Primitives (1914). Most of the Russian avant-garde painters participated in the exhibitions of one or other of these groups — among them Burliuk, Chagall, Exter, Falk, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Konchalovsky, Kuprin, Lentulov, Lissitzky, Malevich, Mashkov and Tatlin.

An offshoot of the Knave of Diamonds was a group known as the Moscow Painters (1924-26), which in turn was succeeded by the Society of Moscow Artists (1927-32). The latter, in particular, was dominated by “Cézannists” and had a noticeable preference for landscape and still life. Falk, Grabar, Krymov, Kuprin and Mashkov were members of both organizations, as was Aristarkh Lentulov (1882-1943), an idiosyncratic innovator who was also an energetic organizer and propagandist. A more eclectic association was the Union of Youth (1910-14), based in Saint Petersburg, which embraced Cézannists, Cubists, Futurists and Non-objectivists. Its literary section, called Hylaea (founded in 1913), formed an important link between writers and artists.

## Abstraction

The second decade of the twentieth century marked the start of an accelerating move towards abstraction. In 1913 Larionov published a manifesto explaining the principles of his latest artistic credo — called Rayonism, because its basis was “the crossing of reflected rays from various objects”. Rayonist works ranged from semi-abstract pictures such as Larionov’s *Cock and Hen* and Goncharova’s *The Green and Yellow Forest* (1912), to the totally abstract *Blue Rayonism*, also painted by Larionov in 1912.

Around the same time, Vassily Kandinsky evolved from the style of works such as *Boat Trip* (see below) to the more fully abstract style of his *Improvisations and Compositions*, which he painted between 1910 and 1912, in which he tried to free himself almost completely from the weight of space. Then his compositions became increasingly pure, as in *Black Spot* and *Non-Objective*. These first non-objective figurations of Kandinsky’s were not appreciated by the public until, little by little, the public finally asked itself how it had managed to live deprived of such art. Effectively, the non-objective paintings gave art a new environment in which to exist, virgin terrain that seemed worth discovering. As of that moment, abstract art became a serious alternative to figurative art.

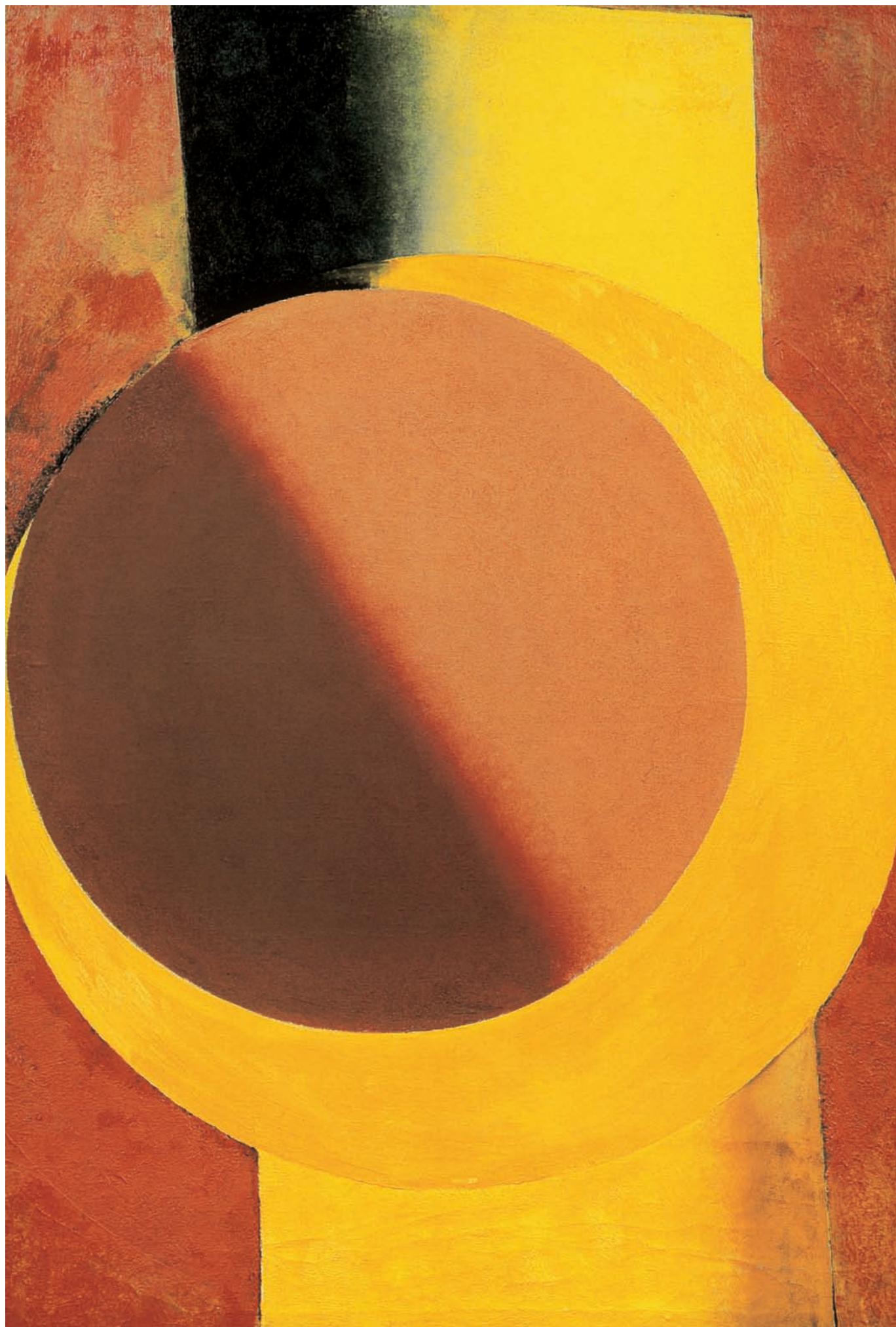
Like many other pioneers of avant-garde painting, Kandinsky evolved a system of theoretical principles, which played an important role in the development of his work. After the Revolution, he became head of the Painting Department of Inkhuks (the Institute of Artistic Culture) in Moscow, but resigned when his “Symbolist philosophy” failed to be adopted as the basis of the Institute’s teaching program. Kandinsky’s intellectual orientation was above all philosophical; he did not comment on his work but on his ideas.

186. Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin,  
*Bathing of a Red Horse*, 1912.  
Oil on canvas, 160 x 186 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

187. Alexandra Exter,  
*Still Life*, 1917.  
Oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm.

188. Alex Rodchenko,  
*Red and Yellow*, 1918.  
Oil on canvas, 90 x 62 cm.





189. Kasimir Malevich, *Aviator*, 1913-1914.

Oil on canvas, 124 x 64 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

190. Mikhail Larionov, *Cock and Hen*, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 69 x 65 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

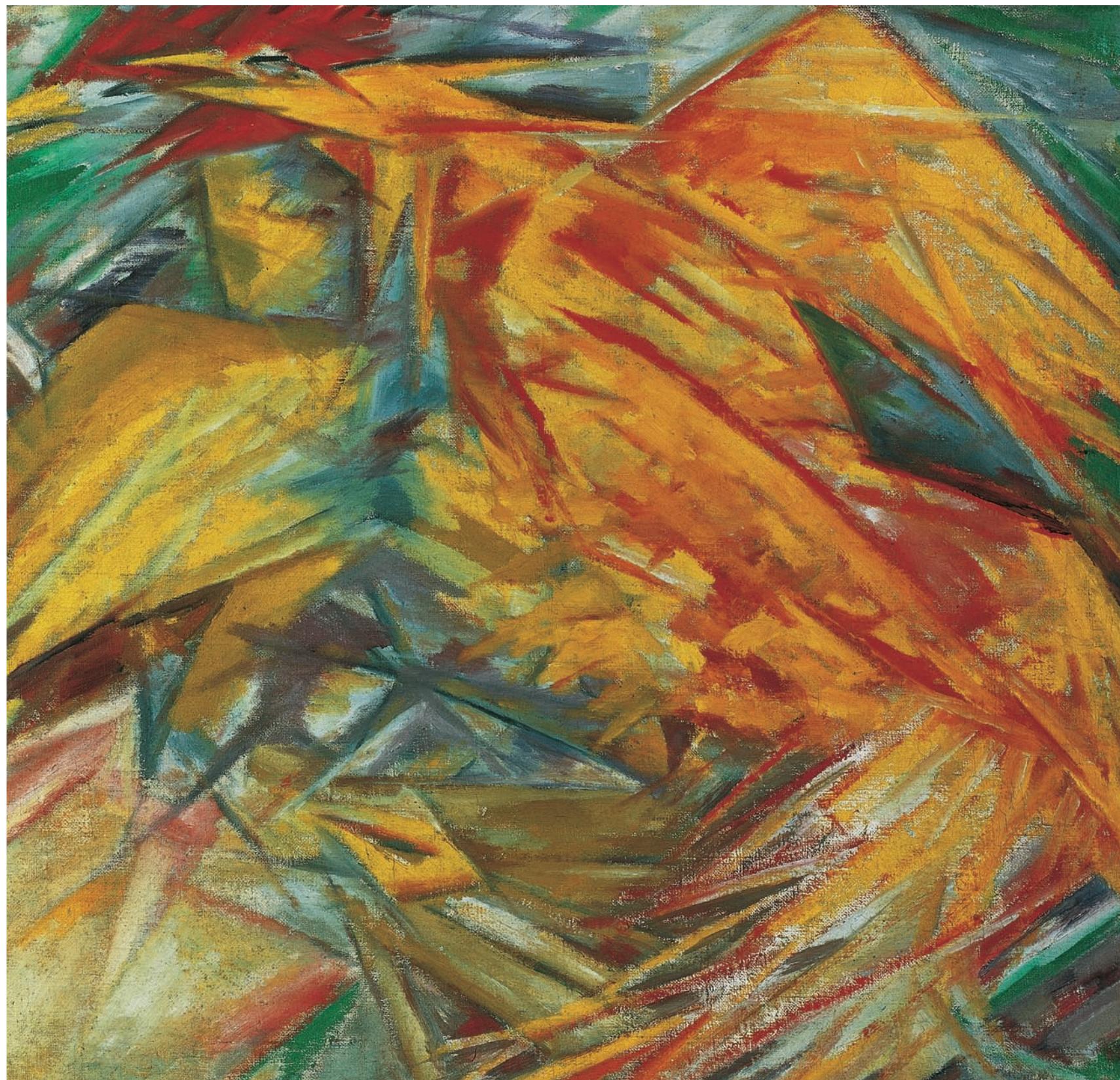
191. Ivan Pouni,  
*Draft of decoration of the Liteiny prospect*, 1918.  
Indian ink and watercolour on paper.  
38.3 X 34.4 cm.192. Kasimir Malevich,  
*Principle of Painting a Wall: Vitebsk*, 1919.  
Watercolor, gouache and India ink on paper,  
34 x 24.8 cm.

His ideas can be appreciated independently of his paintings, as he managed to build into them reasoning which is as philosophical as it is aesthetic. He then returned to Germany, where he had lived between 1896 and 1914, and was able to put his theoretical ideas into practice when he accepted a teaching post at the Bauhaus in 1922.

He began work on *Small Worlds*, where he was confronted with the grandeur of the small and the littleness of the great. He explains this paradox very well in the following declaration: "The whole can be concentrated in a single atom, in its particles, because consciousness is neither big nor small and it is only within consciousness that worlds exist." For years, Kandinsky's fame went together with that of the Bauhaus. The spirit of that school corresponded on all points to what the artist had constantly sought: uncompromising professionalism, intellectual finesse as well as Romantic rationalism. He had to leave Germany to escape from the Nazi regime and settled in France. Already at that time, his success was worldwide.

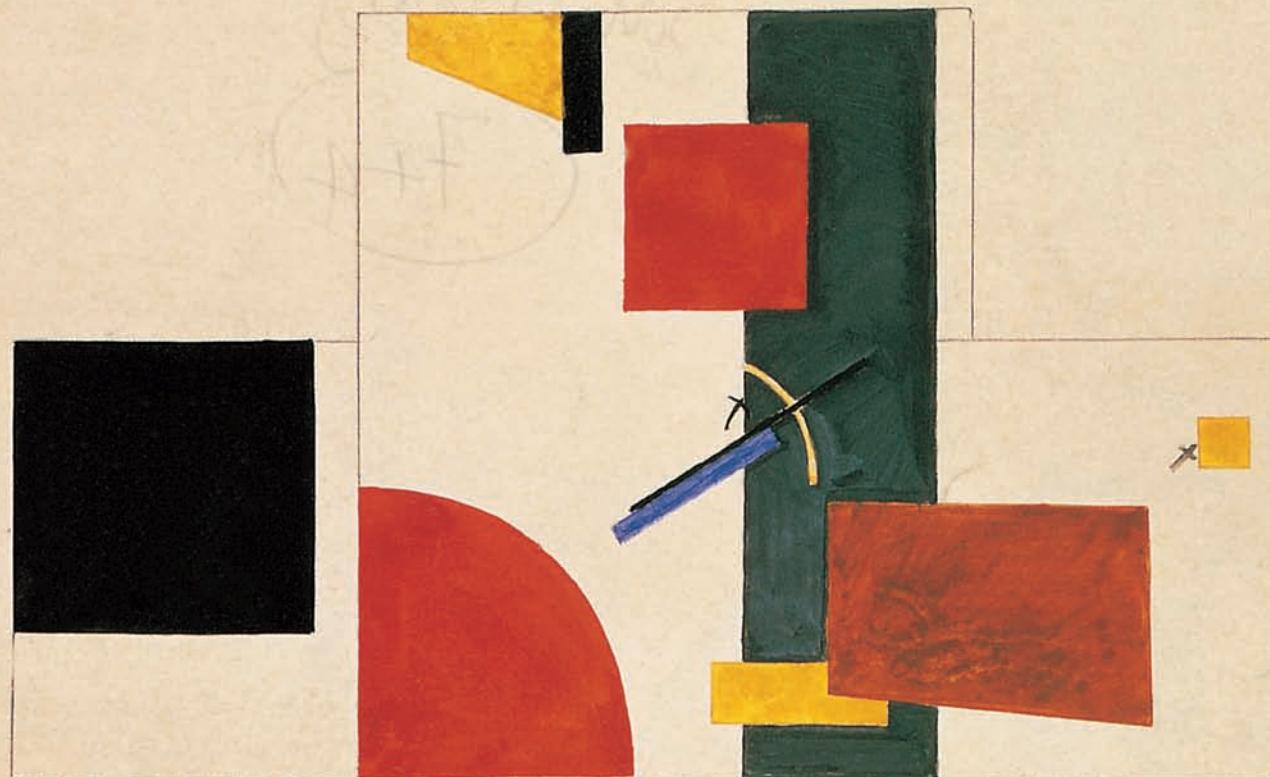
Kazimir Malevich took a different route to abstraction. For a time he worked closely with Larionov and Goncharova, producing delightful Primitivist gouaches with peasant themes. Next came his "tubular" Cubo-Futurist phase, notable for masterpieces such as *Haymaking* and *Taking in the Harvest* (1911), which progressively led him towards a less figurative and more "mechanistic" style. Eventually, probably in 1913, he arrived at a system of abstract painting, which he called Suprematism, based on geometric forms. Among the thirty-five abstract works that Malevich made public in 1915 was *Black Square*, one of the most famous of his Suprematist works. "The keys of Suprematism", he wrote, "led me to the discovery of something as yet uncomprehended... there is in man's consciousness a yearning for space and a 'desire to break away from the earthly globe'." Malevich worked on his *White on White* series — arguably the ultimate in Suprematism — from 1917 to 1918. *Principle of Painting a Wall: Vitebsk* dates from 1919.

Kandinsky's "Symbolist philosophy" and Malevich's Suprematism found a rival in Constructivism, the brainchild of Vladimir Tatlin. Indeed, the rivalry between Malevich and Tatlin was such that on several occasions they came to blows. According to Camilla Gray, Tatlin "disliked his stepmother only a little more intensely than his father". Not surprisingly perhaps, to escape the torment of their relationship, at the age of eighteen he enrolled as a sailor. While in the merchant marine, he learned to paint and produced such memorable pictures as *Fishmonger* (1911) and *Sailor* as well as some slightly Picasso-esque nudes such as *Nude*. For a time Tatlin was influenced by Larionov and Goncharova, and worked with them closely. But in 1913 their collaboration came to an end. Deeply impressed by Picasso's "constructions", he began that winter to create "painting reliefs" and "relief constructions", incorporating materials such as wood, metal, glass and plaster, until the distinction between painting and sculpture was effectively submerged. After the Revolution, he played a leading role in the organization of Soviet art, became increasingly interested in technical design, and for the last nineteen years of his life spent much of his time designing a glider, based on his observation of the organic structure of flying insects and the mechanics of insect flight.





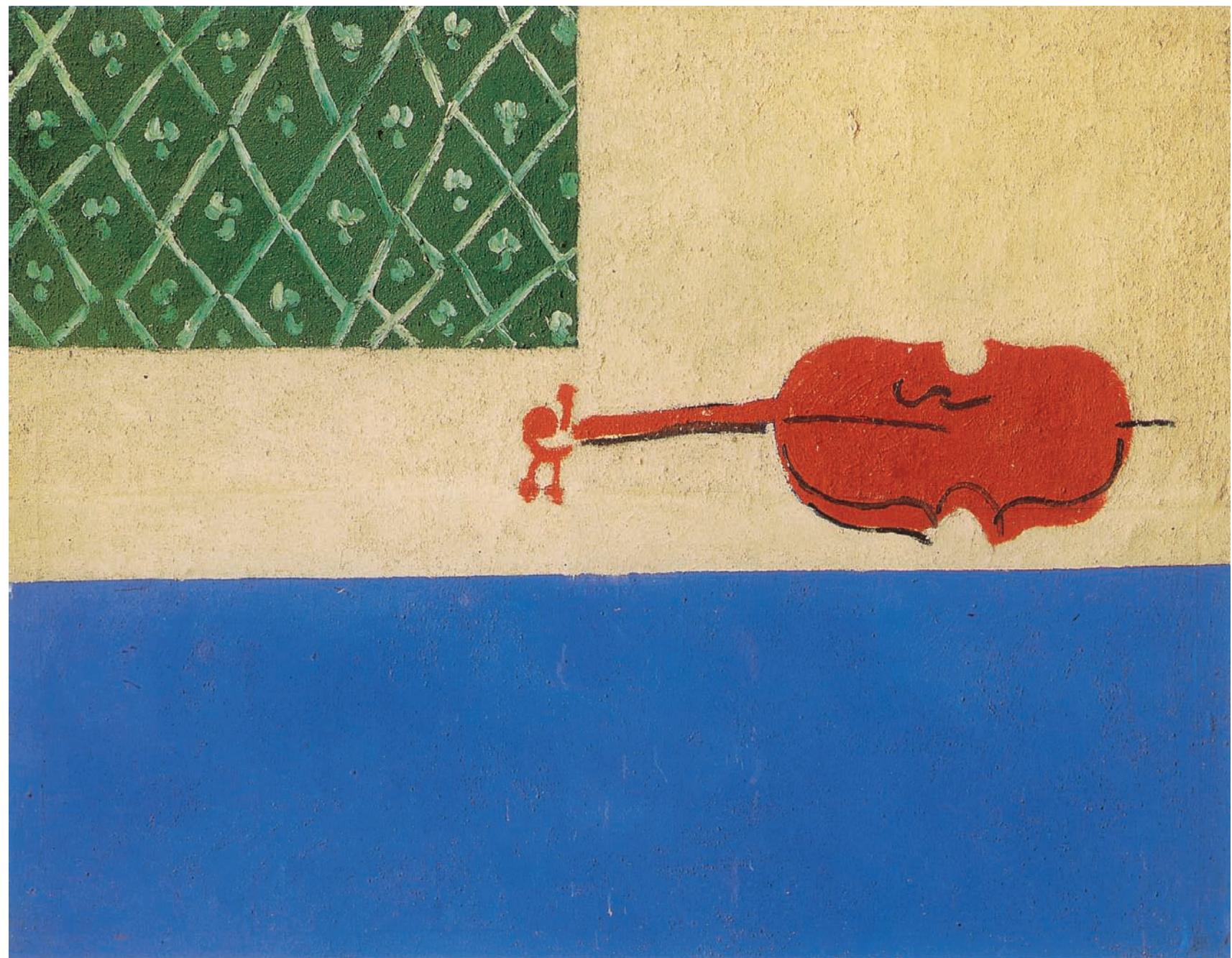
Красный цветок синевы или зелени  
Колхозы или чистой квартиры по окончании  
Супрематизма (с картой города)  
1919. Бумага.  
12 листов



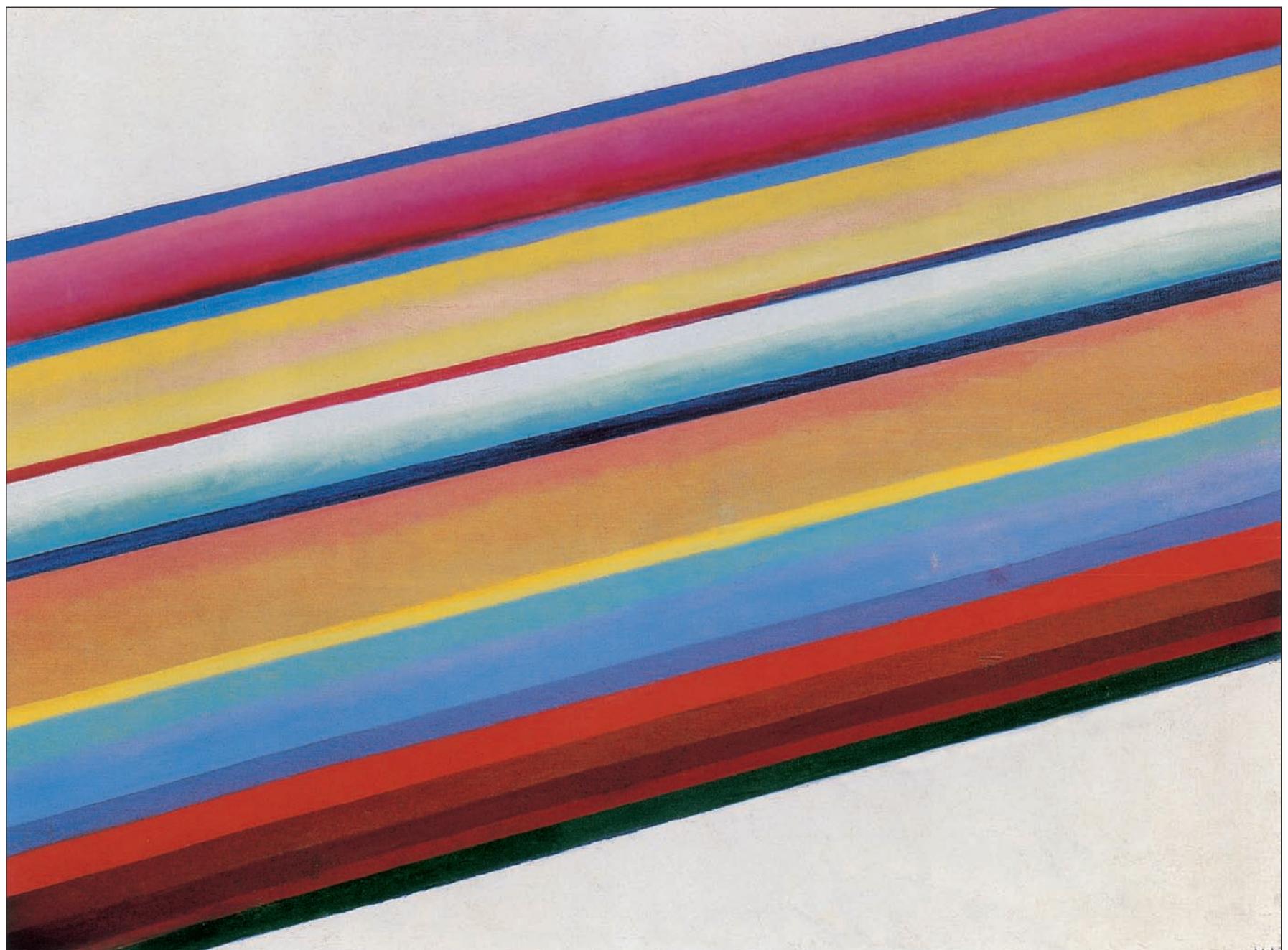
Это значит, что раскраска открывает нам антиподы  
окраин города на Супрематическом уровне, контрасты  
окраин окна роскошь и страдание на уровне, где в Примирение  
разных по происхождению оттенков в других оттенках Примирение  
и единение всех, то есть он стариков, между ними  
распространяется в рожьше уровня, чтобы рожьша могла  
стремиться к свету. Примирение уровня, это уровень единения,  
этот единение выражается в просторном уровне и не  
имеет конца, оно имеет бесконечную движительность в пространстве.

Д. Малевич

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193. Ivan Puni,  
*Still Life, Red Violin*, 1915.  
Oil on canvas, 145 x 115 cm.



194. Mikhail Matiouchine,  
*Movement in space*, 1922.  
Oil on canvas, 124 x 168 cm.



1.

ВОТ, ГРАЖДАНЕ, РАЗИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ПРИМЕР—  
НЕ ПЕРВЫЙ ЧЕСТНЫЙ ОФИЦЕР  
НЕСЕТ НАМ ЗНАНИЕ И ТРУДЫ,  
ВСТУПАЯ В КРАСНЫЕ РЯДЫ.

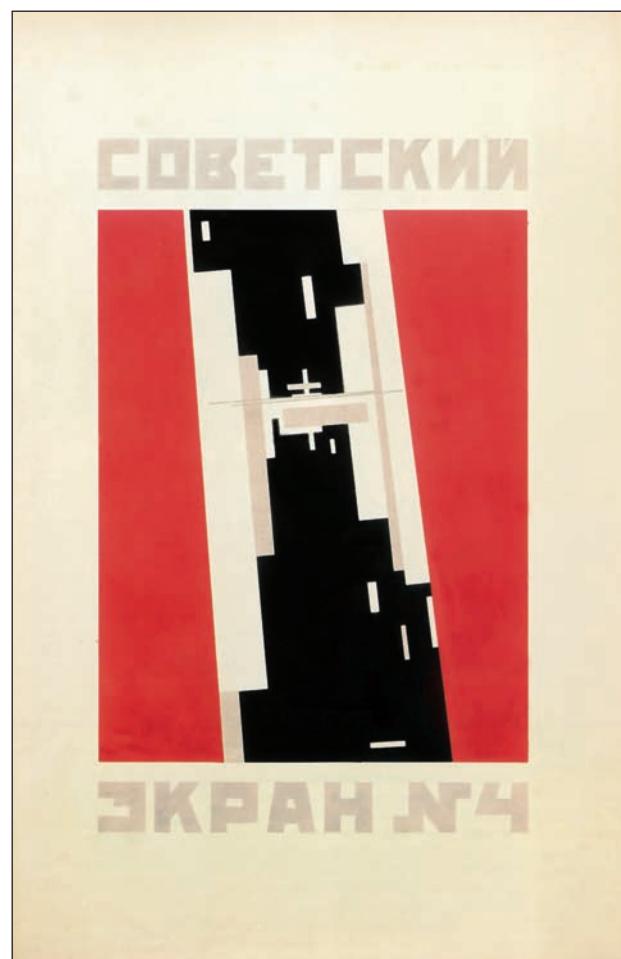
In Russia, the 1920s and 1930s were decades of infinite experiment. The array of artists who made major contributions to the development of abstract painting during that period included Nadezhda Udaltsova, Alexandra Exter, El Lissitzky (who produced abstract pictures called “prouns”), Olga Rozanova, Mikhail Menkov, Ivan Kliun and Alexander Rodchenko. Constructivism, in particular, had an impact on other art forms — especially sculpture, architecture and interior design.

## Symbolism

Symbolism — which Kandinsky regarded as the core of his artistic credo — played a prominent part in the development of Russian painting during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Originally a literary movement, it had begun to make its presence felt in the visual arts during the late 1880s. Symbolist artists sought to “resolve the conflict between the material and the spiritual world”. As the French poet Jean Moréas put it in his *Symbolist Manifesto*, published in *Le Figaro* in September 1886, their great aim was “to clothe the idea in sensuous form”.

In Russia, one of the first Symbolist painters, and one of the most intriguing, was Mikhail Vrubel. Many of his paintings have a surreal, dreamlike quality. Some of the most remarkable — such as *The Bogatyr* (1898), *Pan* (1899) and *The Swan Princess* (1900) — are of mythological figures. And many of them feature either the elaborate patterns characteristic of Art Nouveau or mosaic-like patches of colour akin to those found in the paintings of Gustav Klimt. In 1890 Vrubel was commissioned to illustrate a special edition of the works of Mikhail Lermontov, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the poet’s death.

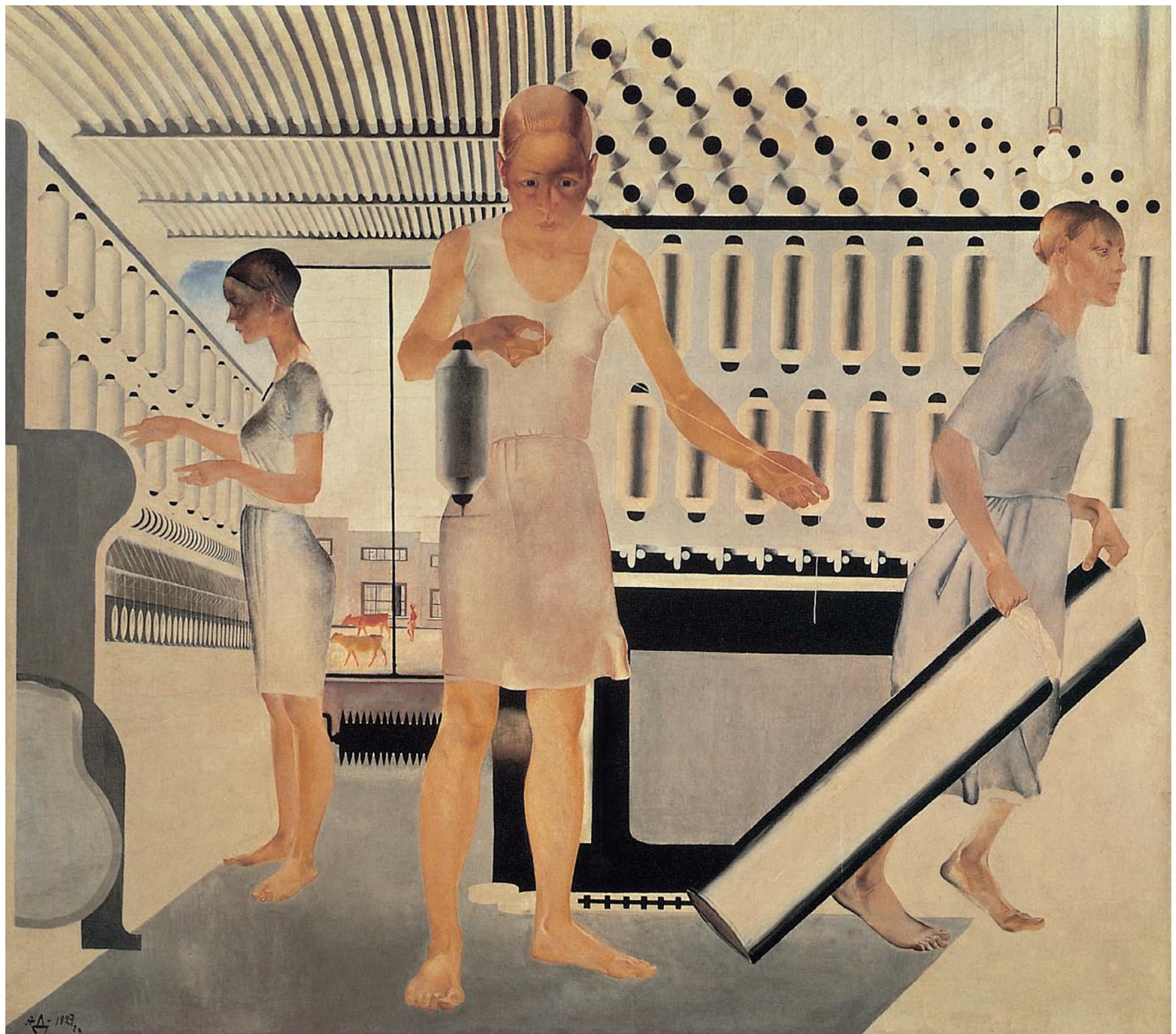
Even as a child Vrubel had been fascinated by Lermontov’s poem *The Demon*, a subject that he would return to, both in painting and sculpture, practically until the end of his life. *The Seated Demon* and *The Demon Cast Down* (1902) are two of the most powerful works of Russian Symbolism. A demon, Vrubel frequently had to explain, is not the same as a devil. In Greek mythology, a *daimon* was a spirit that guided the actions of mankind. Tormented by mental illness, Vrubel spent most of the last nine years of his life in hospital, where he continued to work until, in 1906, he lost his sight. Like many of the Russian Symbolists (among them Borisov-Musatov and Petrov-Vodkin), Mikhail Nesterov was influenced by Puvis de Chavannes, who had painted the murals of the life of Saint Genevieve in the Pantheon in Paris. During the period when he painted *Taking the Veil* and *The Youth of Saint Sergius of Radonezh*, Nesterov was “under the spell of a deep religious faith, periodically withdrawing to monasteries and making pilgrimages to remote shrines”. After the Revolution his art underwent a dramatic transformation, and he became well-known for portraits with a contemporary flavour and scenes from Soviet life. A religious nature also exists in some of the pictures painted by Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, such as his *Madonna of Compassion Who Moves Evil Hearts*. Others — such as *Mother* or *Petrograd* (1918) — have a spiritual aura, although their subject or setting is ostensibly secular. In the words of John Milner, “His excitement at the work of Matisse and Cubist artists gave way to his admiration for the traditions of icon painting... The result was iconic paintings of precision and boldness



195. Vladimir Kozlinski,  
*The Red Commander*, 1920-1921.  
Outline Voilà poster, citizens, a striking  
example, Gouache and watercolour on paper,  
109,7 x 72,3 cm.

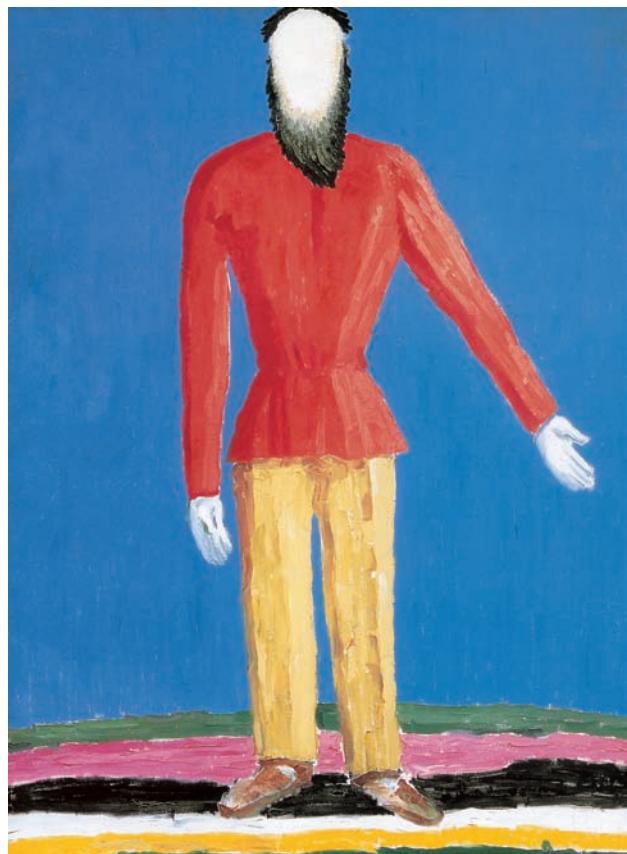
196. Ilia Tchachnik,  
*Draft of the Soviet poster screen n°4*.  
Year 1920. Black and red Indian ink on paper,  
98 x 66 cm.





197. Alexander Deineka,  
*Building New Factories*, 1926.  
Oil on canvas, 209 x 200 cm,  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

198. Alexander Deineka,  
*Female Textile Workers*, 1927.  
Oil on canvas, 171 x 195 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



199. Kazimir Malevitch,  
*The Peasant*, 1928-1932.  
Oil on fabric, 129 x 98,5 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

200. Kazimir Malevitch,  
*Peasants*, 1928-1932.  
Oil on fabric, 53,5 x 70 cm,  
Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

with a strong narrative aspect.” Petrov-Vodkin’s most overtly Symbolist works, such as *Bathing of a Red Horse* (1912) and *Girls on the Volga* (1915), have a metaphorical quality, but are devoid of religious overtones. Although often more complex in terms of content and symbolic meaning, many of the paintings by Marc Chagall — such as *I and the Village* and *The Wedding* — also have a mystical or dreamlike aura, heightened by the feeling that the figures within them hover between the material and the spiritual world.

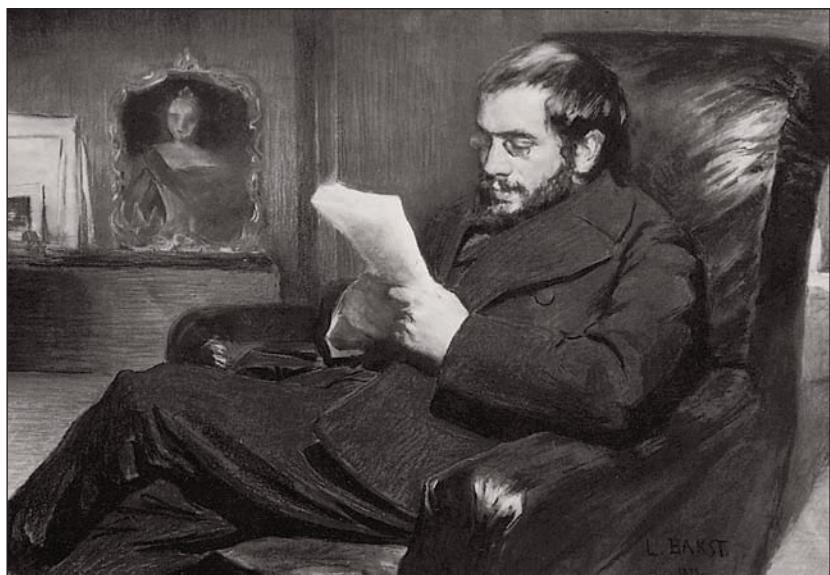
At an early age, Chagall tore himself from the cocoon of his very religious Jewish family, for whom all figurative representation was strictly forbidden, in order to follow his calling. But academic teaching was not for him. Rebellious against all teaching, his first audaciousness put distance between him and that of his teacher, of a highly classical style, Mr. Pen. The doors of the famous Zvantseva school in Saint Petersburg, where new teaching was given, were then opened to him. This teaching brought the technical means of contemporary expression to students, means that were cruelly lacking in classic teaching. Chagall elaborated his own language little by little in working with his professor Leon Baskt who had already achieved international renown at that time. Chagall made his own Baskt’s theory that was “the art of juxtaposing contrasted colours while balancing their reciprocal influences”. (Y.L. Obolenskaia, *At the Zvantseva school directed by L. Baskt and Modoujinski*, 1906-1910. Manuscript kept in the manuscripts section of the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow (in Russian)). In his *Self-Portrait* of 1909, Chagall’s artistic bias is already foreshadowed. Effectively, the character already has the appearance of flying, as if liberated from gravity, an impression that the different tones of blue certainly help to create. Melancholy, a characteristic of a good number of Chagall’s works, is present as well. Pain is often hidden behind the luminous colours.

But Paris truly revealed Chagall. There, he made friends with Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars and Max Jacob; he often went to the *Palette* and *Grande Chaumière* studios. He first exhibited at the *Salon des Indépendants*, in 1912. He acquired in the capital the “free-light” through which he became an accomplished painter. Paris it was that influenced his pictorial palette, bringing to it a quickness as well as a perfect clarity of its lines. He owes the geometrical shapes of his paintings to the Cubists and colour exacerbated to the extreme to the Fauves. However, his work remained extremely personal. *The Wedding* for example, although it expresses a dream, has an underlying evocation of religion (which is present in many works) but also of nostalgia for the homeland and the pain of exile. Vitebsk, place of his childhood, remained forever emblematic and symbolic of his native land, as shown in his paintings. Next, a confirmed Symbolist principle is given expression in a whole series of paintings, in which the system of shapes is perfectly defined. His aspirations were often openly poetic and philosophical. The artist often used metaphor. His fundamental concepts were time and space. When war was declared, he returned to his native country, where his wife Bella was waiting for him. The Revolution only served to increase the artist’s beliefs: art became for Chagall the requirement for a person’s development as well as a means to climb the social ladder. He organised in Russia structures for teaching, museums, studios... In 1919 Malevitch violently opposed Chagall’s work, that he equated to Naturalism. Chagall understood neither Malevitch’s work nor his aesthetic choice. He therefore was obliged to leave Vitebsk, cast out by the avant-garde in the



name of a concept more radical than art itself. The images that feature in the paintings of Pavel Filonov (1883-1941), who was closely associated with the Russian Futurist movement, are even more surreal and invariably pregnant with symbolic meaning. Filonov's imagery has been succinctly summarized by the Russian art historian Dmitri Sarabianov: "His fish always signify Christ, his trees are the trees of life, his boats are Noah's Ark, his men and women are the naked Adam and Eve standing before the world and all history, past and future." Filonov developed a method of painting, not unlike that of Paul Klee that emphasized the value of "organism" as opposed to "mechanism". His artistic credo, known as Analytic Art, "attracted young artists like a magnet" so that by the mid-1920s he was one of the most popular leaders of the avant-garde. Nevertheless, he refused to sell his paintings, "having decided to hand (them) over to the State to be made into a Museum of Analytical Art."

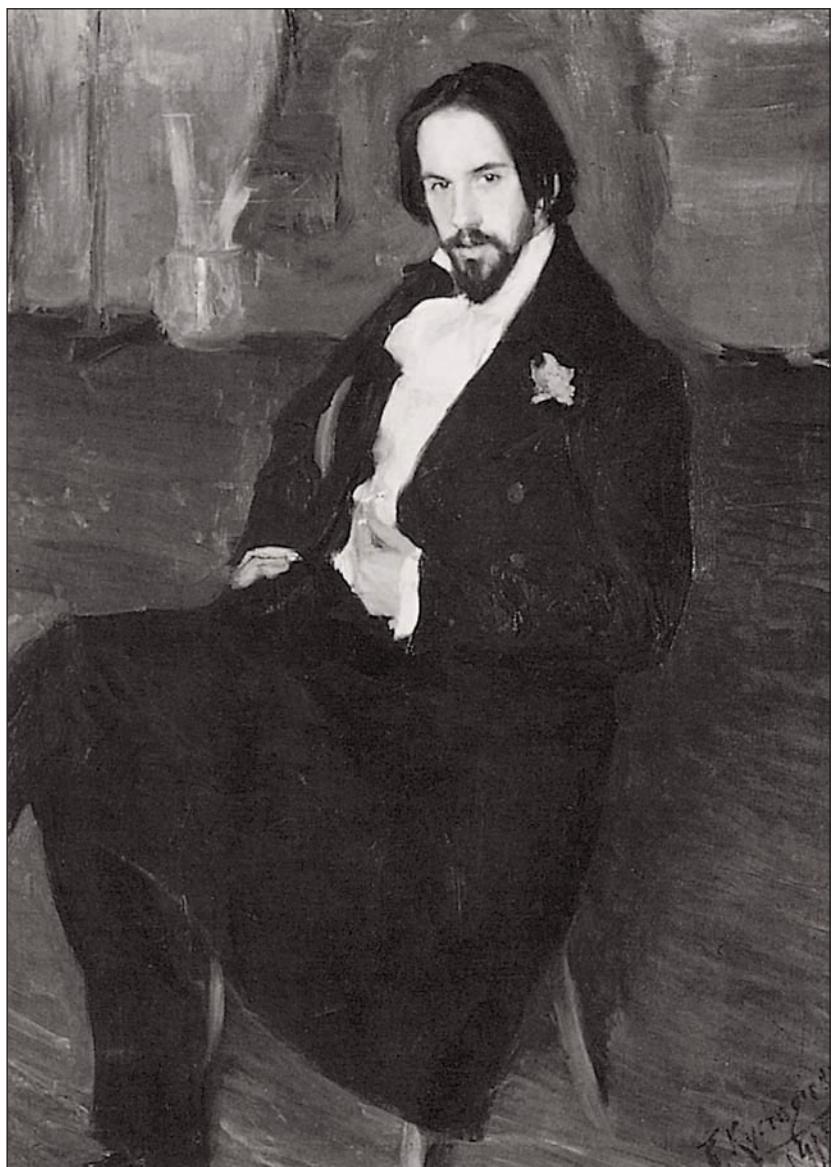
# Biographies



## ALEXANDER NIKOLAYEVICH BENOIS

Alexander Nikolayevich Benois was born on 21 April (3 May, New Style) 1870 in Saint Petersburg. He was the youngest of nine sons of Nikolai Benois, an Academician of Architecture. In 1890-94, after graduation from K. May's private school, he studied at the Law Faculty of Saint Petersburg University. In 1887 he became an unregistered student of the Academy of Arts, but, unsatisfied with the quality of education there he left four months later. He began to practice drawing and painting under the guidance of his elder brother, Albert, an academician of watercolour painting. In 1890 and 1894 he travelled to Italy, Switzerland, and Spain; in 1896-98 and from 1905 to 1907 he worked in Paris, Versailles, and Normandy; he subsequently visited France every year and also spent time in Italy, Switzerland, and Spain. He contributed to exhibitions as from 1892. From 1895 to 1899 he was the curator of Princess Tenisheva's collection. An organizer and the ideological leader of the World of Art association, the initiator behind the establishment of the art journals *Mir iskusstva* (*World of Art*) and *Khudozhestvennye sokrovishcha Rossii* (*The Art Treasures of Russia*) he was the editor of the latter from 1901 to 1903. From 1917 on, he was actively involved in the preservation of monuments of art and history and the reorganization of museum practice, particularly at the Hermitage where he headed the Picture Gallery from 1918 to 1926. He produced pictures in watercolour, gouache, pastel and, from 1905, oils forming a series entitled *The Last Walks of Louis XIV* (1897-98) and the *Versailles Series* (1905-06). The associated paintings are *The Marquise Bathing*, *The Chinese Pavillon*, *The Jealous Man* and *Italian Comedy: Indiscret Punchinello*. Compositions on themes from Russian history commissioned by Iosif Knoebel for his major publication *Russian History in Pictures* (1907-10) are *Parade in the Reign of Paul I*, *The Entrance of Catherine the Great at the Palace at Tsarskoye Selo*, *Suvorov's Camp*, *Peter the Great Walking in the Summer Gardens*. A major place in Benois' legacy is held by views of old Saint Petersburg and its suburbs - Peterhof, Oranienbaum, and Pavlovsk (1900-02). He produced a large number of landscapes during his travels around Europe to the Crimea, and the villages of Novgorod Province. Benois illustrated and designed the following

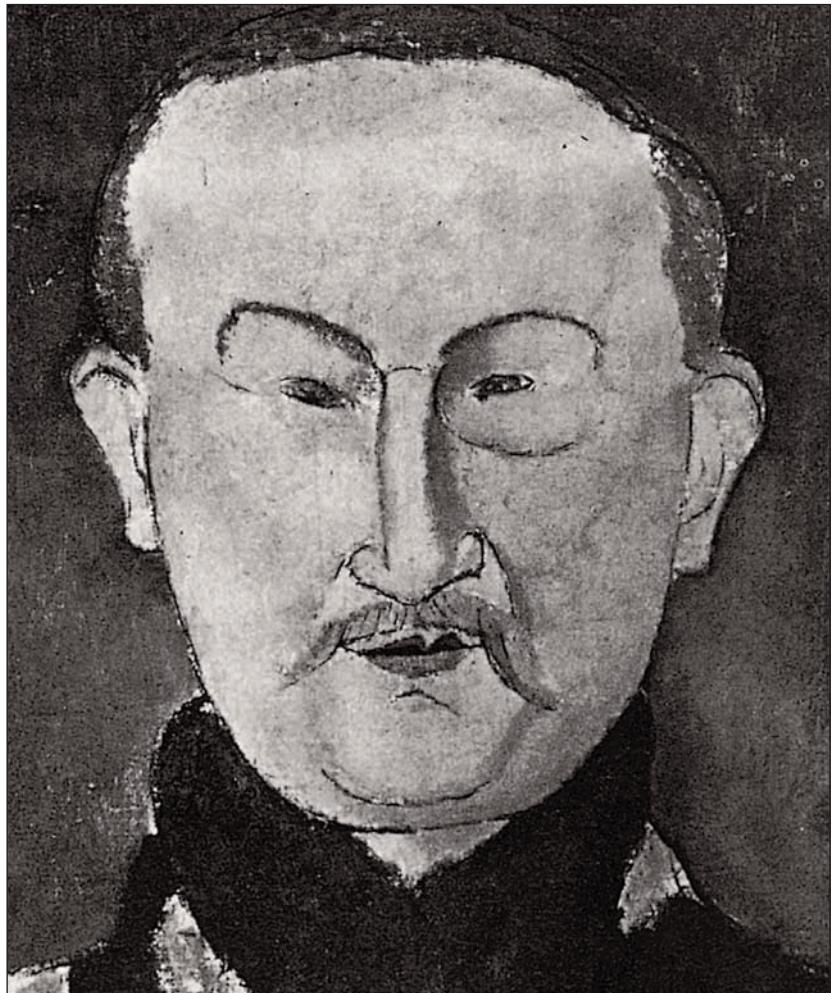
publications: Pushkin's *Queen of Spades* (1898, 1905, 1910), *Bronze Horseman* (1903, 1905, 1916-22), and *The Captain's Daughter* (1904, 1919); N. Kutepov's famous books devoted to the history of a royal hunt in Russia (1901, 1907, 1908); D. Merezhevsky's *Paul I* (1907); A. Pogorelsky's *Black Hen or The Underground Dwellers* (1922); illustrations for *A Children's Alphabet* book (1904) and others. He created drawings, head-, and tailpieces for the journals *The World of Art*, *The Art Treasures of Russia*, and *Zolotoye runo* (*The Golden Fleece*). He produced a series of drawings called *Toys* in 1904 (issued as postcards by the Publishing House of the Red Cross Society of St. Eugenia) and another, *Death*, in 1907, as well as pencil portraits of numerous artists, musicians, friends, and relatives and a series of lithographs devoted to Peterhof (1918-22). In 1900 he began to work for the theatre. He designed the productions of Wagner's opera *Götterdämmerung* and Nikolai Tcherepnin's *Le Pavillon d'Armide* (1907), he was also involved in directing the latter, at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg. In 1907 he created a curtain design for the Antique Theatre which opened in Saint Petersburg. From 1908 to 1911 he was the art director of Diaghilev's troupe in Paris; for the Russian Seasons he refurbished the decors for *Le Pavillon d'Armide* and designed other ballets: Chopin's *Les Sylphides* (1909), Adam's *Giselle* (1910), and Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* (1911) - he wrote the libretto for the last and was involved in its direction - as well as Stravinsky's opera *The Nightingale* (1914), where he was again involved as a director. In 1913-15 he headed the art production section of the Moscow Arts Theatre. In conjunction with Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, he designed and staged productions of Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire* and *Le Mariage forcé*, Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters*, and Pushkin's *Feast in a Time of Plague*, *Mozart and Salieri*, and *The Stone Guest*. From 1919 to 1923 in Petrograd, he designed and staged Merezhovsky's *Tsarevich Alexei*, Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* and *Le Médecin malgré lui* as well as Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters* at the Large Drama Theatre; Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* at the State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet (the former Mariinsky) and Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* at the State Academic Drama Theatre (the former Alexandrinsky Theatre). From 1914 to 1917 Benois headed a project to decorate the interior of the Kazan Railroad Station in Moscow with paintings. He drew up the overall plan and produced designs for several panels (*Asia*, *Europe*, *Labour and Science*, and others) but the project was never implemented. By 1899 Benois had become an important art critic and historian. He published an immense quantity of articles in numerous journals and newspapers. He wrote the influential Russian painting section for Richard Muther's *History of Painting in the Nineteenth Century* and the books *The Russian School of Painting* (1904), *Tsarskoye Selo during the Reign of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna* (Material for the *History of Art in Russia in the Eighteenth Century*) (1910) and *A History of Painting in All Times and Among All Peoples* (1912-17, unfinished) and other longer works. After 1926, Benois lived in Paris. He continued to paint and to work in the graphic arts, but focused his efforts on the theatre. From 1927 to 1935 he was the chief artist in Ida Rubinstein's troupe. He designed over sixty productions in Paris, London, Milan, New York, Vienna, and other cities around the world, more than twenty of them for La Scala, where his son Nikolai was a production manager. In later life, Benois wrote *Reminiscences of the Ballet* (1939) and *The Life of an Artist, Memoirs* (1955). Alexander Benois died on 9 February 1960 in Paris.



### IVAN YAKOVLEVICH BILIBIN

Ivan Yakovlevich Bilibin was born on 4 August (16 N.S.) 1876, in Tarkhovka near Saint Petersburg. On graduation from secondary school he studied simultaneously at the Law Faculty of Saint Petersburg University (1896-1900), the Drawing School of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts (1895-98), and Princess Tenisheva's private school under the guidance of Ilya Repin (1898-1900). In 1898 he frequented the studio of Anton Abe in Munich, later he toured Switzerland and Italy. From 1900 to 1904 he was an unregistered student of the Academy of Arts attending Ilya Repin's studio. In 1900 he became a member of the World of Art Society and contributor to its exhibitions. From 1902 to 1904, commissioned by the ethnographical department of the Russian Museum, he participated in field expeditions to Vologda, Arkhangelsk, Olonets, and Tver Provinces collecting works of folk art and taking photographs of wooden architecture. In 1904 he published the articles *Folk Art of the Russian North* and *The Relics of Art in the Russian Countryside*. From 1907 to 1917 he taught at the Drawing School of the Society for the

Encouragement of the Arts and from 1910 to 1912 at the Women's Higher Polytechnic Courses. In February 1917 he worked in the commission for the preservation of art monuments. He began to work in the field of literary and newspress graphic art in 1899. In the 1900s - early 1910s he illustrated traditional Russian fairy tales and designed books of them (*Vasilisa the Beautiful*, *The Frog Princess*, *Maria Morevna*, etc.), Pushkin's tales (*The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel*), and *bylinas* (epic poems) and created originals for postcards issued by the Publishing House of the Red Cross Society of St. Eugenia (about 30). He designed covers, title pages, and head- and tailpieces for a large number of publications (works by Fiodor Sologub, Alexei Tolstoi, Konstantin Balmont, Alexander Kuprin, Rudyard Kipling, Friedrich Nietzsche, H. G. Wells, etc.). In 1905 and 1906 he contributed to the satirical journals *Zhupel* (*Bugaboo*) and *Adskaya Pochta* (*Hell's Mail*), in the 1900s-1910s, to *The WorId of Art*, *The Golden Fleece*, *The Art Treasures of Russia*, *Narodnoye obrazovaniye* (*Popular Education*), *Solntse Rossii* (*The Sun of Russia*), etc. He designed posters, stamps, and playing cards. From the 1910s to the 1930s and later he produced landscape drawings and watercolours, including views of the Crimea, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and France. He produced his first work for the theatre - sets and costumes for Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Snow Maiden* - at the National Theatre in Prague in 1904. In 1908 he designed costumes for Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* and for Diaghilev's *Russian Seasons in Paris*. From 1907 to 1914 he worked for the Antique Theatre (Rutebœuf's *Le Miracle de Théophile*, 1907; Lope de Vega's *Fuente ovehuna*, 1911) and the People's Flouse Theatre in Saint Petersburg (Rimsky-Korsakov's *Ruslan* and *Liudmila*, 1914) and the Zimin Opera in Moscow (Rimsky-Korsakov's *Golden Cockerel*, 1909; A. Verstovsky's *Tomb of Askold*, 1914). In 1913 he produced sketches for the decoration of halls in the State Bank building in Nizhni-Novgorod and in 1915 designs for the ceiling paintings of the Kazan Railroad Station in Moscow. From 1920 to 1926 he lived in Egypt (Cairo, Alexandria) and in Paris; in 1924 he traveled to Palestine and Syria. In Egypt he produced decorative panels and sketches for iconostases and frescoes. In 1925 he designed productions of Tcherepnin's *Russian Fairy Tale* and *Romance of a Mummy* for Anna Pavlova's company. In Paris he continued to work for the theatre (Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, etc.), illustrated traditional fairy tales of various nations, and those of the brothers Grimm and Alexander Pushkin. While visiting Czechoslovakia, he produced sketches of frescoes and iconostases for a Russian church in Prague and designed opera productions in the theatres of Brno and Prague. In 1934, at the request of the Soviet embassy in Paris, he created the panel *Mikula Selianinovich*. In 1936 he returned to Leningrad. From 1936 to 1942 he was a professor at the Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, the All-Russian Academy of Arts. He produced illustrations for Alexei Tolstoi's novel *Peter the Great* (1937), Lermontov's *Song of the Merchant Kalashnikov* (1938-39), and *bylinas* (1940-41); designed the production of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* at the State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre and took part in decorative work for the planned Palace of Soviets in Moscow. He died during the siege of Leningrad on 7 February 1942.



### LEON BAKST

Leon Bakst (Lev Samoilovich Rosenberg) was born on 27 April (9 May N.S.) 1866, in Grodno. His family soon moved to Saint Petersburg. From 1883 to 1887 he was an unregistered student of the Academy of Arts under Pavel Chistiakov and Karl Wenig. In 1891 he traveled to Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, and Italy. In 1893, having been commissioned to paint *Paris Welcoming Admiral Avelan* (completed in 1900), he left for the French capital, where he stayed for six years. In Paris he visited the studio of Jean-Léon Gérôme and the Académie Julian, and studied under the Finnish painter Albert Edelfelt. He traveled to Spain and North Africa. In 1907, he made a journey around Greece together with Valentin Serov. In 1890 he joined the circle of Alexander Benois and his friends Konstantin Somov, Dmitry Filosofov, Walter Nuvel, and Sergei Diaghilev. In 1898, he played an active part in the organization of the World of Art association. He participated in exhibitions as from 1890. From 1906 to 1909 he taught at Yelizaveta Zvantseva's art school. As from 1909, he mainly lived in Paris. His early ventures in the field of literary and newspress graphic art date from 1888 to 1893: they were the designs of books for children and teenagers, journalistic drawings in the journals *Khudozhhnik* (*The Artist*) and *Peterburgskaya zhizn* (*Saint Petersburg Life*). Later, the style of his graphic works changed markedly. Between 1899 and 1909 he

contributed to the journals *World of Art*, *The Art Treasures of Russia*, *Vesy* (*The Balance*), *The Golden Fleece*, *Satiricon*, *Apollon*, and *Yezhegodnik Imperatoskikh teatrov* (*The Annual of the Imperial Theatres*), *The almanachs of Northern Flowers*, *The Dogrose*, as well as the books: V. Vereshchagin's *Russian Book Sign*, A. Benois' *Russian Museum of Emperor Alexander III*, A. Bloke's collection of poems *The Snow Mask*, etc. He produced drawings for theatrical programs and postcards issued by the Publishing House of the Red Cross Society of St. Eugenia, sketches for posters, and bookplates. In 1899 and the 1900s he worked in the medium of lithography. He created many graphic portraits including those of Isaac Levitan, Philip Maliavin, Maria Savina (all 1899), Andrei Bely, Konstantin Somov, Zinaida Gippius, Alexander Golovin and Isadora Duncan (all 1905 to 1908). His paintings belong to different genres and include many studies and portraits: *A Spaniard* (1901), *Self-Portrait* (1893), *A Young Dagomean* (1895), portraits of Walter Nuvel (1895), Alexander Benois (1898), Vassily Rozanov (1901), Liubov Gritsenko (1903), Sergei Diaghilev and his nun (1906); landscapes: *The Courtyard at the Musée Cluny in Paris* (1891), *In the Environs of Nice* (1899), *Olive Grove, A Rainy Day in the Alps*, *A Village Church*, *Autumn in Versailles* (all 1903-04); narrative pictures: *Siamese Ritual Dance* (1901), *Supper* (1902), *Vase: Self-Portrait* (1906), *Downpour* (1906); decorative panels: *Elysium* (1906), repeating the curtain for the Vera Komissarzhevskaya Theatre), *Terror Antiquus* (1908). In 1902, he produced boudoir decor designs for the Contemporary Art Store and Exhibition. Bakst turned to theatrical painting, to which he largely owes his fame, in 1902. He designed the following productions: *The Marquise's Heart, a pantomime show* (1902, the Hermitage Theatre), J. Bayer's ballet *Die Puppenfee* (*The Fairy Doll*) (1903, the Hermitage Theatre and later the Mariinsky Theatre), Euripides' *Tragedy Hippolytus* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (1902 and 1904, the Alexandrine Theatre). From 1909 to 1921 he worked for Diaghilev's Company, becoming its artistic head in 1911. He designed a number of ballet productions: *Cleopâtre* to the music of A. Arensky, S. Taneyev, M. Glinka, and others (1909), Stravinsky's *Firebird* (1910, costumes for two characters), Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhérazade* and Schumann's *Le Carnaval* (1910), Weber's *Le Spectre de la Rose* and Nikolaï Tcherepnin's *Narcisse* (1911), Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloé*, Reynaldo Hahn's *Le Dieu Bleu*, Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un Faun* (1912), Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* (1921), etc. He also worked for Ida Rubinstein's company (d'Annunzios *Le Martyre de St. Sébastiene*, 1911; and *La Pisanelia*, 1912), and Anna Pavlova's company (*Oriental Fantasy* with music by Ippolitov-Ivanov and Mussorgsky, 1913). During the last years of his life he designed productions in the *Grande Opéra*, *Théâtre du Gymnase*, *Femina*, and *Théâtre de la Renaissance* in Paris; continued to draw portraits: Léonide Massine (1914), Virginia Zucchi (1917), Vaslav Nijinsky (1910s), Anna Pavlova (1920) etc. and designed dresses. He lectured on contemporary art and costume in many cities of Europe and the USA. He created decorative panels for mansions in London, Rome and elsewhere. He is the author of the articles *The Ways of Classicism in Art* (1909), *On Contemporary Art* (1914), and of memoirs *Serov and I in Greece* (1923). He died on 27 December 1924 in Paris.



## KONSTANTIN ANDREYEVICH SOMOV

Konstantin Andreyevich Somov was born on 18 November 1869, in Saint Petersburg. He was the son of Andrei Somov, the senior curator of the Hermitage and art collector. He studied at K. May's private school, where he met Alexander Benois, Walter Nuvel and Dmitry Filosofov. During his school years, he took private drawing lessons and attended the evening drawing classes of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts. In 1888 he entered the Academy of Arts and from 1894 studied in Repin's studio there. In 1897, under the influence of Benois' circle, he left the Academy and in the autumn of that year went to Paris. He attended the Académie Colarossi and studied the collections of the Louvre, Carnavalet, and the Luxembourg Museum; in the autumn of 1898 he again spent several months in Paris. He took part in exhibitions from 1895 on. He was one of organizers and active members of the World of Art association. He painted small-scale pictures and studies in watercolour and gouache, as well as compositions and portraits in oils. The best examples of his work are distinctive narrative scenes, "retrospective visions" depicting ladies and cavaliers in eighteenth-century costumes, love scenes, *scènes galantes*, and promenades: *A Letter*, *A Lady by a Pond*, *A Promenade after Rain* (all 1896), *Rainbow*, *A Promenade in Winter* (all 1897), *In the Bosquet* (1898-99), *An Island of*

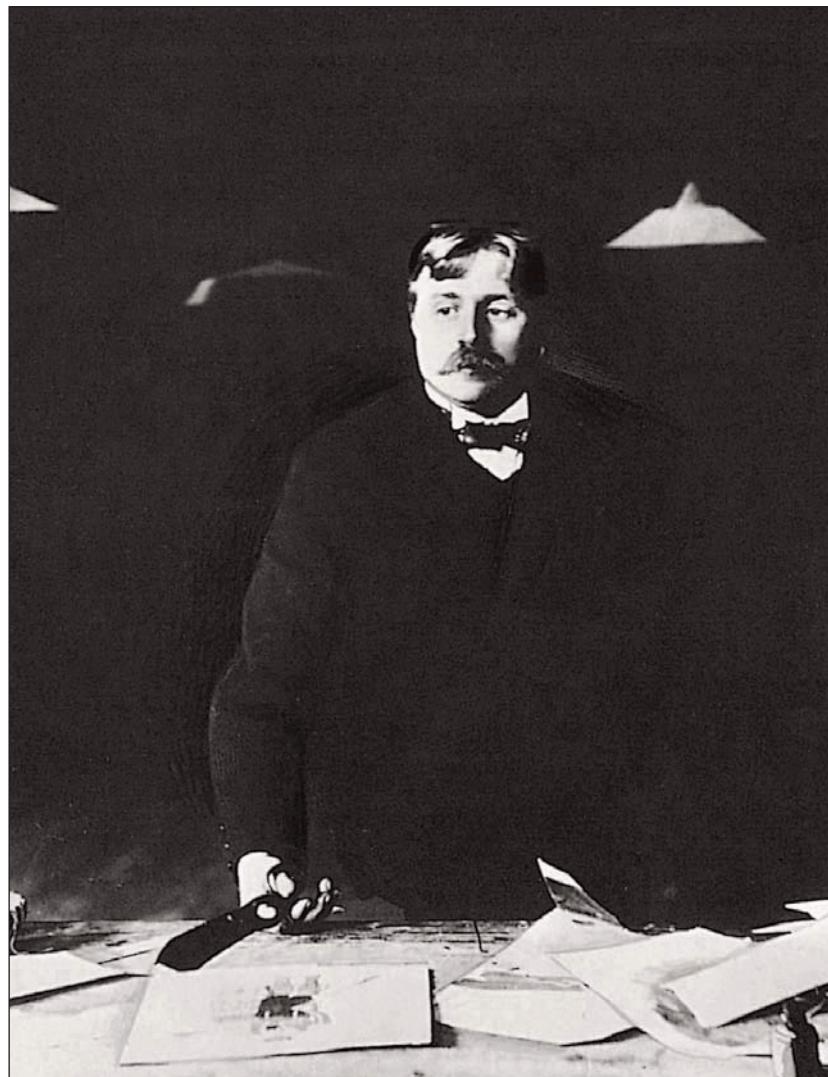
*Love* (1900), *Evening* (1902), *The Echo of Times Past* (1903), *Summer* (1904), *Winter* (1905), *The Ridiculed Kiss* (1909), *Winter*, *The Skating Rink* (1915), etc. In the early 1910s he created the series *Harlequinade (Fireworks)* which included the paintings *Pierrot and Lady*, *Harlequin and Lady*, *Italian Comedy*, and *Columbine Poking Out Her Tongue*. In 1913 he designed a curtain for the Free Theatre in Moscow. Between the late 1890s and the 1910s, he painted many landscapes from life: *Road at the Dacha*, *In Spring: Martyshkino* (1896), *White Night: Sergiyevo, Moonrise* (1897), *Autumn in the Versailles Park* (1898), *Grove on the Seashore*, *Ploughland* (both 1900), *Rainbow* (1908), *Spring Landscape* (1910), etc. He also produced several retrospective landscape compositions with figures: *In Confidence* (1897), *Bathers* (1899). In the late 1910s - early 1920s such compositions took on a different character: *Landscape with a Rainbow*, *Summer*, *Summer Morning*, *Landscape with a Rainbow and Bathers*. Throughout his artistic career, he painted portraits, notably of Natalia Ober (1896), his father (1897), himself (1898), Yelizaveta Martynova (*Lady in Blue*, 1897-1900), Anna Ostromova (1901 - 1904), Henrietta Hirschmann (1911), Yelena Oliv (1914), Nadezhda Vysotskaya (1917), and Mefody Lukyanov (1918). From 1906 to 1910 he produced, for the journals *The Golden Fleece* and *Apollon*, graphic portraits of Viacheslav Ivanov, Alexander Blok, Yevgeny Lanceray, Mikhail Kuzmin, Fiodor Sologub, and Mikhail Dobuzhinsky. Closely related to them are his self-portraits (1902, 1903, 1904, 1909) and a portrait of Walter Nuvel (1914). An important place in his work is taken by literary and newspress graphic art. He designed the *World of Art* journal, contributed to the journals *The Art Treasures of Russia* and the *Golden Fleece*, produced the cover of *The Northern Flowers Almanach* for 1901. He designed covers, title pages and frontispieces for A. Benois' book *Tsarskoye Selo during the Reign of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna* (1902), K. Balmont's *Firebird*, *The Slav's Pipe*, V. Ivanov's *Cor Ardens and The Theatre* (all 1907). He produced relatively few illustrations as such: drawings for Pushkin's *Count Nulin* (1899), Gogol's *Portrait* and *Nevsky Prospekt* (1901). He completely designed an edition of Franz Blei's *Lesebuch der Marquise* (1907), including the title page and half-title, a large number of illustrations, numerous vignettes, head- and tailpieces, frames, ornamental patterns, and initials: some elements of the ornamentation were, like the headpieces for *The Golden Fleece*, executed in a silhouette technique. He worked extensively in the field of applied graphic and decorative art: he designed many posters, theatrical programs, postcards for the Publishing House of the Red Cross Society of St. Eugenia (the *Days of the Week* series, 1904), tobacco-boxes, items of jewelry, fans, and embroidered articles. In 1905 he created models which were used at the Imperial Porcelain Factory to cast the statuettes *The Lovers*, *Lover*, and *Lady Removing Her Mask*. Late in 1923 he went to New York with a group of artists accompanying an exhibition of Russian art and remained in America; in 1925 he moved to France. During his years abroad he painted retrospective scenes to commission, produced a number of watercolours devoted to the Russian ballet in Paris, and portraits (including *Sergei Rachmaninov*, 1925, and *Self-Portrait before a Mirror*, 1934). He died on 6 May 1939 in Paris.



### VALENTIN ALEXANDROVICH SEROV

Valentin Alexandrovich Serov was born on 7 January (19 N.S.) 1865, in Saint Petersburg, the son of the composer and music critic Alexander Serov. From 1872 to 1874 he lived with his mother in Munich and took lessons from the artist Karl Köpping. Between October 1874 and the summer of 1875, while in Paris, he regularly attended Ilya Repin's studio. In 1877 he studied at Nikolai Murashko's private drawing school in Kiev. From 1878 to 1880 he studied under the guidance of Repin and lived in the artist's flat in Moscow; in 1880 he accompanied him on his travels to the Crimea, Odessa, Chernigov, and the Zaporozhye area. From 1880 to 1885 he studied at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts and in Pavel Chistiakov's private workshop. In 1886 he attended classes at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. He frequently traveled to different parts of Europe: Germany (1885, 1889, 1897, 1899, 1902), Belgium and Holland (1885), Italy (1887, 1904, 1911), France (1889, 1900, 1909, 1910), Denmark (1899), Greece (1907) and England (1911). He visited the Caucasus (1883) and the Crimea (1883, 1887, 1893). In the late 1870s and 1880s, he often lived and worked on Savva Mamontov's Abramtsevo estate near Moscow; between 1886 and 1911 he spent some time almost every year at Domotkanovo, Vladimir Derviz's estate in Tver Province and from 1901 at his own dacha at Ino in Finland. From 1897 to January 1909, he taught at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. From 1886 to the end of his life he was a member of the Board of the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. He took part in exhibitions from 1886 on and those of the World of Art starting in 1899. As from 1894 he was a member of the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions and from 1910 of the reorganized World of Art. He mainly worked in portraiture. He painted portraits of relatives, friends, and children: Olga Trubnikova, his wife (1885, 1886, 1895), Vera Mamontova (*Girl with Peaches*, 1887), Maria Simonovich (*Girl in the Sunlight*, 1888),

Sasha and Yury Serov (*Children*, 1889), Alexander Serov, the artist's father (1889), and Mika Morozov (1901). He created a large gallery of creative people: Angelo Masini (1890), Francesco Tamagno, Konstantin Korovin (both 1891), Isaac Levitan (1893), Nikolaï Leskov (1894), Nikolaï Rimsky-Korsakov, Sergeï Diaghilev (both 1904), Maria Yermolova, Glieria Fedotova, Maxim Gorky (all 1905), Ida Rubinstein (1910). He painted commissioned portraits of members of the imperial family, high society and the bourgeoisie: Grand Duke Pavel Alexandrovich (1897), Mikhail Morozov (1902), Zinaida Yusupova (1900-02), Felix Yusupov, Felix Sumarokov-Elstone (both 1903), Henrietta Hirschmann (1907), Ivan Morozov (1910), Vladimir Hirschmann, Olga Orlova (both 1911). In 1910 he was commissioned by the Italian Ministry of Public Education to produce a self-portrait for the Uffizi Gallery, but no evidence has been found of its completion. His painted landscapes and landscapes combined with elements of everyday life which reflect his interest in rural motifs: *Overgrown Pond: Domotkanovo* (1888), *Landscape with Horses (Village Landscape)*, 1890; *October: Domotkanovo* (1895), *In a Village: Woman with a Horse* (1898), *Rinsing Linen, A Hay Stack* (both 1905). During his journey to the Russian North in 1894 he produced a series of sketches (*The White Night*, *The Sea Dwellers*, *The Northern Dvina*, *At Murman*, etc.) From 1900 to 1911 he created many historical works: *Emperor Peter II and Tsesarevna Elizabeth Petrovna Riding to Hounds* (1900), *Catherine II Setting Out to Hunt with Falcons*, and *Peter the Great Riding to Hounds* (both 1902), all illustrations for N. Kutepov's book *The Royal and Imperial Hunt in Russia: Late 17th and 18th Centuries*; *Peter the Great* (1907) for Iosif Knoebel's publication *Russian History in Pictures*; as well as *Oprichnik* (1909); *The Grand Eagle Cup, Peter the Great at Monplaisir* (both 1910), and *Peter the Great at Work* (1910-11). He often turned to ancient themes. After his visit to the Crimea in 1893 he painted *Iphigenia at Tauris*, while his visit to Greece in 1907 inspired *Odysseus and Nausicaa* and *The Rape of Europe* (both 1910). In 1894 he produced sketches for the panel *After the Battle of Kulikovo Field* (for the Historical Museum in Moscow, not completed). In 1887 he created the ceiling painting *Phoebus Effulgent* for Selezniow's estate in Tula Province. He created theatrical decor for Alexander Serov's opera *Judith* (1907, the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg), various curtain designs, and the curtain itself for Rimsky-Korsakov's ballet *Schéhérazade* (1911, the *Russian Seasons* and *Le Théâtre du Châtelet* in Paris). Serov was an outstanding master of drawing. He produced many drawings as works in their own right, as well as sketches and studies. Most are portraits of prominent cultural figures: Fiodor Chaliapin, Konstantin Balmont (both 1905), Mikhail Vrubel, Wanda Landowska (1907), Eugene Isaye (1903), Ivan Moskvin, Vassily Kachalov, Konstantin Stanislavsky (all 1908), Tamara Karsavina, Michel Fokine, Anna Pavlova (two portraits) (all 1909), and Vaslav Nijinsky (1910). He also created lithographic portraits: Alfred Nurok, Alexander Glazunov, Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva (all 1899), Ilya Repin (1901), and Leonid Andreyev (1907). From 1896 to 1899 he produced a number of etchings: *A Lion Recumbent*, *October*, *Self-portrait*, *Portrait of Vassily Mathé* and *Peasant Woman with Horse*. Between 1895 and 1911 he produced a large series of illustrations for Ivan Krylov's fables. During the revolution of 1905 he was involved in organizing the satirical political journal *The Bugaboo* and produced a number of scathing satirical drawings: "Soldiers, heroes everyone...", *The Year 1905: Alter the Pacification, Prospects for the Harvest of 1906*, as well as some sketches of real events: *Baumann's Funeral*, *The Dispersal of Demonstrators by Cossacks*, *The Sumy Regiment*. He died on 22 November (4 December N.S.) 1911 in Moscow.



### ALEXANDER YAKOVLEVICH GOLOVIN

Alexander Yakovlevich Golovin was born on 17 February (1 March N.S.) 1863, in Moscow. From 1891 to 1889 he studied at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (first in the architectural department, transferring two years later to the painting department) under Illarion Prianishnikov and Vladimir Makovsky. In 1889 he took a number of lessons at the Académie Colarossi and in 1897 studied at Witti's private school under Raphael Colin and Luc Olivier Merson.

From 1895 to 1898 he traveled to Italy, Spain, and France. Almost every year before World War I he toured around Europe. He participated in exhibitions as from 1893 and was a member of the World of Art beginning in 1902.

In the late in the 1890s he worked at the ceramic workshop at Abramtsevo together with Mikhaïl Vrubel and produced majolica works — tiles, utensils, and decorative panels. At Vrubel's suggestion, he took part in the decoration of the façade of the Hotel Metropole (designs for the majolica panels *Cleopatra*, *Orpheus*, *Swans*, etc.). He produced sketches for the decor of the "Russian dining room" at Yakunchikov's home (together with Yelena Polenova) and a Russian-

style room for the art enterprise Contemporary Art. In 1900 he designed, together with Konstantin Korovin, the handicrafts section of the Russian Pavilion at the Paris World Fair.

He began to work for the theatre in 1900, designing opera productions for the Bolshoi Theatre: A. Koreshchenko's *House of Ice* (1900), Rimsky-Korsakov's *Maid of Pskov* (1901), etc.

In 1902 he was appointed chief decorator of the Imperial Theatres and moved to Saint Petersburg. From 1902 to 1908 he designed opera productions in the Mariinsky Theatre: Rubinstein's *Demon*, Glinka's *Ruslan* and *Liudmila* (together with Konstantin Korovin), Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tale of Tsar Saltan*, Bizet's *Carmen*, etc. and in 1905, 1906 and 1907, drama productions in the Alexandrine Theatre: Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea* and *Phantoms*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, and others. For Diaghilev he designed the main scenes for Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (1908), and sets and costumes for Stravinsky's ballet *Firebird* (1910).

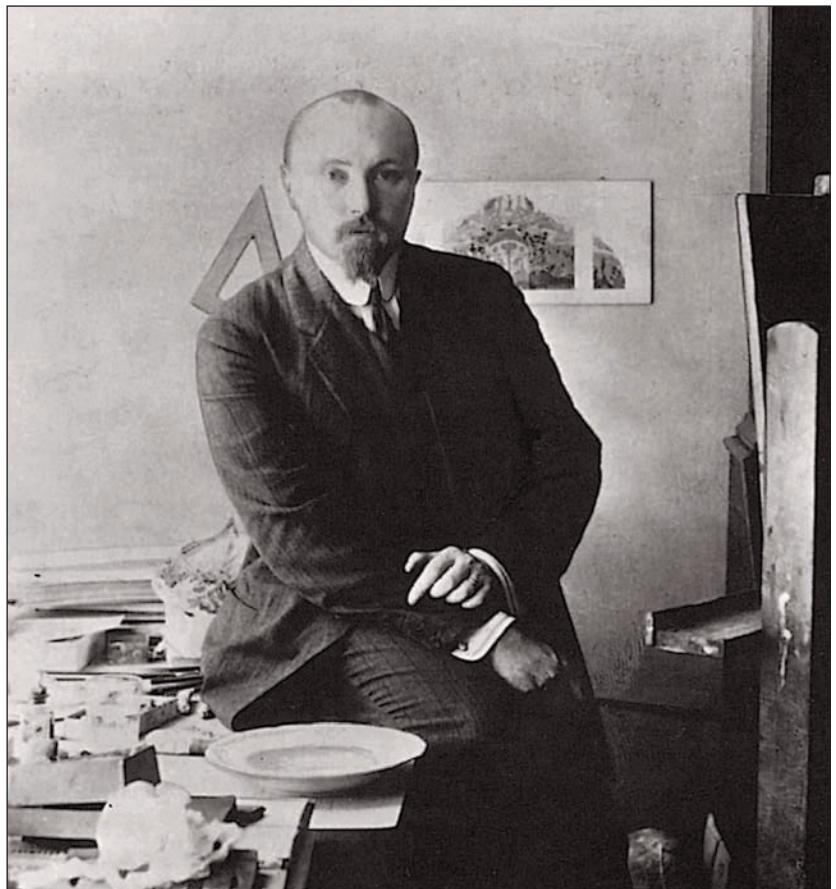
From 1908 to 1917 he collaborated closely with Meyerhold: at the Alexandrine Theatre he designed productions of Hamsun's *At the Gates of the Kingdom* (1908), Molière's *Don Juan* (1910), Ostrovsky's *Thunder* (1916), Lermontov's *Masquerade* (1917) and other works; at the Mariinsky Gluck's opera *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1911), Dargomyzhsky's opera *The Stone Guest* (1917), a ballet to Glinka's *Jota Aragonesa* (1916), and more.

In subsequent years he continued to work in the theatres of Petrograd/Leningrad and Moscow. The most significant venture of this period was a production of Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* in the Moscow Arts Theatre (1927).

He designed a curtain for the Mariinsky Theatre (1917) and two curtains for the Odessa Theatre (1925). He devoted much time to easel painting, creating portraits of major cultural figures: Nicholas Roerich (1906), Mikhaïl Kuzmin (1910), Konstantin Varlamov (1914), Vsevolod Meyerhold (1917), and others; performers in roles: Chaliapin as Mephistopheles (1905 and 1909), the Demon (1906), Farlaf (1907), Holofernes (1908), and Boris Godunov (1912), Maria Kuznetsova-Benois as Carmen (1908), Dmitry Smirnov as de Grieux (1909), etc., the Spanish Women series (1902-11); formal portraits: Marina Makovskaya, Natalia Vysotskaya, Yevfimia Nosova (all 1910s) etc., as well as landscapes: *Pond in a Grove*, *Landscape: Pavlovsk*, *Autumn Landscape*, etc.), still lifes: (*Phloxes*, *Porcelain and Flowers*, *Golden Tansies*, etc.).

He designed concert and theatrical programs, trademarks of publishing companies, bookplates, covers for books and journals; in the 1920s he produced illustrations for Leconte de Lisle's *Les Erinyes*, Hoffmann's *Doubles*, Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil*, etc.

During the last years of his life, he wrote the book *Meetings and Impressions*. He died on 17 April 1930, at Detskoye Selo (formerly Tsarskoye Selo, now Pushkin) outside Leningrad.



### NICHOLAS ROERICH

Nicholas Roerich was born on 27 September (9 October N.S.) 1874, in Saint Petersburg. From 1893 to 1897, after attending K. May's private school, he studied at the Academy of Arts under Arkhip Kuinji (from 1895) and simultaneously at the Law Faculty of the university. In 1900-01 he perfected his skills in painting at Fernand Cormon's studio in Paris. During his school years, as a student, and after graduating from the university, he took part in barrow excavations in Saint Petersburg Province; he was a member of the Russian Archaeological Society and lectured at the Archaeological Institute. In 1899 he made a journey along the ancient route from the Varangians to the Greeks — from Lake Ladoga to Novgorod — making sketches and scholarly observations, as well as recording legends. In 1903-04 he visited many old Russian cities (Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Rostov the Great, Uglich, Vladimir, Suzdal, Pskov, Izborsk, Pechory, Smolensk, etc.); in 1906 he traveled to France (then again in 1908), Italy, and Switzerland, in 1907 to Finland, in 1911 along the Rhine and around Holland. From 1901 on he was the Secretary of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, from 1906 to 1918 the Director of the Drawing School attached to that society. He contributed to exhibitions beginning in 1900, was a member of the Union of Russian Artists as from 1903 and of the World of Art from 1910; from 1910 until 1919 he was its chairman. He produced more than 7,000 paintings. Many of them form series: *The Beginning of Rus*: *The Slavs Messenger: People Have Risen Against People* (1897), *The Idols* (1901), *Guests from Overseas, Building a City* (both 1902), *The Slavs on the Dnieper* (1905), paintings devoted to the earlier stages of Russian history: *The Sea Dwellers: Evening* (1907), *The Stone Age (The Call of the Sun)* (1910), *Our First Ancestors* (1911), *the Viking cycle (The Song of the Viking)* (1907), *The Viking's Triumph (The Viking's Grave)* (1908), *The Varangian Sea* (1910). He created several series of sketches during his journeys to old Russian towns (1903-04, about ninety works); around Italy and

Switzerland (1906); Finland (1907). He produced works about religious figures revered in Russia: *The Prophet Elijah* (1907), *St. George the Victorious* (1908), *St. Procopius the Righteous Praying for Those At Sea* (1914), *St. Pantaleon the Healer* and *St. Nicholas* (both 1916) as well as a series of striking "apocalyptic visions": *The Sword of Valor*, *The Last Angel* (1912), *The Serpent's Cry* (1913), *The Messenger*, *The Doomed City*, *Human Affairs* (1914); *the Heroic series* (1917); the *Karelia* cycle (1917), etc. He produced drawings for the journals *The Balance* and *Lukomorye* (1905), vignettes for the book *Talashkino* (1905), and for a collection of his articles entitled *Roerich* (1916), a frontispiece for the journal *Apollon* (1910), the cover for the anthology *Beneath a Favourable Sky* (1911). He created a number of lithographs (*Krimherd the Giantess*, *The Cemetery*, *The Hiding Place*, all 1915) as well as many narrative drawings and watercolours. He designed interior painting and mosaics for churches in the village of Parkhomovka in Kiev Province and near Schlüsselburg (1906), in Pskov (1913) and for the Pochayevskaya Lavra (1910); his most significant work in this field was the paintings and mosaics in the Church of the Holy Spirit at Talashkino, near Smolensk (1910-14). He painted the *Heroic* frieze of seven large panels (*Volga*, *Ilya Muromets*, *Sadko*, etc.) between 1907 and 1910 for F. Bazhanov's house in Saint Petersburg and made cartoons for two paintings intended to decorate the Kazan Railroad Station in Moscow: *The Fight on the Kerzhenets* and *The Conquest of Kazan* (1913-16). He began to work for the theatre in 1907: Nikolai Yevreinov's *Three Magi* (1907) and Lope de Vega's *Fuente ovehuna* (1911) at the Antique Theatre, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snow Maiden* at the Reinecke Drama Theatre in Saint Petersburg (1912), and Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* at the Arts Theatre in Moscow (1912). For the Russian Seasons in Paris, he designed stage sets for Borodin's opera *Prince Igor* (1909, a second version for the Covent Garden Theatre, London, 1914) and for some scenes of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Maid of Pskov* (1909). He wrote the libretto and designed the production of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* (1910-12, staged in 1913). He designed stage sets for Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* (1912), Maeterlinck's *La Princesse Maleine* (1913) and A. Davydov's *Soeur Beatrice* (after Maeterlinck, 1914), which were not staged. In 1916 he moved to Serdobol (Sortavala), and after the separation of Finland from Russia in 1918 found himself abroad. In 1919 he moved to London and lived in the USA from 1920 to 1923. He initiated the creation of the Cor Ardens art union, the United Institute of Arts, and the Corona Mundi International Arts Center. In 1923 the Roerich Museum opened in New York. That same year he went to India. He organized expeditions to Sikkim and Bhutan (1924), Central Asia (1925-28), China and Mongolia (1934-35) and founded the Urusvati Research Institute for Himalayan Studies in the Kulu Valley (1928). In 1929 he published a draft of the "Pact for the Preservation of Cultural Treasures during Armed Conflicts" (the Roerich Pact) which served as a basis for the final act of the Hague convention in 1954. From the 1920s to the 1940s, he produced a huge number of works including the series *The Dreams of Wisdom, Saints, The Messiah, The Banners of the East (The Teachers of the East)*, *Maitreya*, *The Pearl of Searching*, *The Secrets of the Mountains*, as well as series of Mongol, Tibetan, and Himalayan mountain views and many other paintings. During World War II he turned again to images of Russian epic heroes and saints: *Alexander Nevsky*, *The Fight of Mstislav and Rededia*, and *Boris and Gleb*. He wrote many essays and books (from 1898) devoted to the problems of archaeology, art, and culture, including *The Flowers of Morii* (a collection of poems), *The Heart of Asia*, *The Kingdom of Light*, *The Gateway to the Future*, *The Sheets of a Diary* (about one thousand essays). In 1947 everything was made ready for his return to his native country. He died on 13 December 1947 at Nagara in the Kulu Valley in India.



## YEVGENY YEVGENYEVICH LANCERAY

Yevgeny Yevgenyevich Lanceray was born on 23 August (4 September N.S.) 1875 in Pavlovsk near Saint Petersburg. He was the grandson and great-grandson of eminent architects, Nikolai Benois and Albert Cavos respectively, the son of the sculptor Yevgeny A. Lanceray, and Alexander Benois' nephew. After the death of his father in 1886 he lived in the house of his grandfather Benois in Saint Petersburg. From 1892 to 1895 he studied at the Drawing School of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts under Jan Tsionglinsky and Ernst Liphart. In 1891 and 1893 he traveled around the Yaroslavl, Vladimir and Ufa provinces of Russia and in 1894 made his first trip abroad (Poland, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France). From 1895 to 1898 he studied at the Colarossi studio under Anne-Louis Girodet and Gustave Courtois and at the *Académie Julian* under Jean-Paul Laurent and Benjamin Constant. In 1897 he made a journey to Brittany, in 1898 to Germany and Prague between 1902 and 1905 to Pskov, Novgorod, and some other provinces; to Siberia, Manchuria, and Japan; in 1904 he traveled to the Caucasus, and in 1907 toured Italy. In 1914-15 he was on the Turkish-Caucasian Front. From 1912 to 1915 he was head of the art sections at the lapidary works at Peterhof and Yekaterinburg, as well as the porcelain and glass works in Saint Petersburg. In 1917 he moved to Daghestan and in 1920 to Tbilisi in Georgia. From 1920 to 1922 he worked as an artist at the Ethnographical Museum in Tbilisi, from 1925 at the Caucasian Archaeological Institute. He took part in many scientific expeditions in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorny Daghestan. In 1922 he made a journey around Turkey; in 1927 he was sent to Paris on official business. In 1934 he moved to Moscow. He taught at the Academy of Arts in Tbilisi (1922-34), at the Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Leningrad (1934-37), and at the Architectural Institute in Moscow

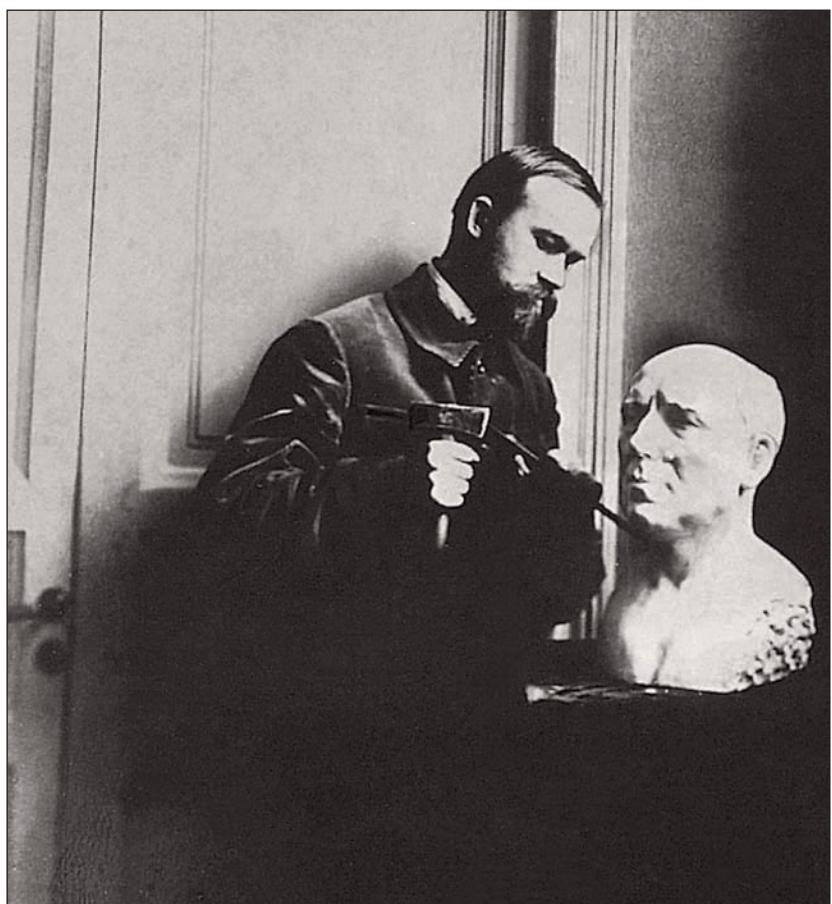
(1934-43). He was a member of the World of Art and contributor to its exhibitions as from 1898. His creative career began with illustrations and vignettes for Y. Balabanova's *Legends about the Old Castles of Brittany* executed in 1897-98. From 1899 on he was a regular contributor to *The World of Art*. He took part in the journals *The Art Treasures of Russia*, *The Golden Fleece*, *Detskiy otdykh* (*Children's Rest*), *Krasnaya niva* (*The Red Cornfield*), *Yezhegodnik Obshchestva arkhitektorov-khudozhnikov* (*The Annual of the Society of Architect-Artists*), the *Shipovnik almanachs* (*The Dogrose*) and other periodicals. During the revolution of 1905-07, he was involved with the satirical journals *Zritel* (*The Viewer*) and *The Bugaboo*; after the latter was closed, he became the editor and one of illustrators of *Hell's Mail*. He took part, with other artists, in designing N. Kutepov's *Royal and Imperial Hunt in Russia: Late 17th and Early 18th Centuries* (1902) and Alexander Benois' *Tsarskoye Selo during the Reign of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna* (1908); he designed the books S. Makovsky's *Poems* (1905), S. Kondurushkin's *Syrian Stories* (1908), *A Tribute to Wrangel* (1916) etc.; he produced the covers for many books: Muther's *History of Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (1902), *Portraits of Russian Writers* (1903), Alexander Benois' *Russian School of Painting* (1904), V. Kurbatov's *Gardens and Parks* (1915), etc. He designed and illustrated literary works dealing with the Caucasus: Leo Tolstoy's stories *Hadji-Murat* (1912-16, 1931, 1936-37, 1941) and *The Cossacks* (1917-37), Lermontov's fairy tales *Ashik-Kerib* (1914-15) and his poem *The Demon* (1914-16). He worked in the sphere of applied graphic art. He devoted most of his graphic works and paintings in the 1900s and the first half of the 1910s to Saint Petersburg: *The Old St. Nicholas Market in Saint Petersburg* (1901), *Peter the Great's Boat* (1906), *The Kazan Cathedral* (1903), *Empress Elizabeth Petrovna at Tsarskoye Selo* (1905), *Saint Petersburg in the Early Eighteenth Century* (1906), *Walking along the Breakwater* (1908), *Ships from the Age of Peter the Great* (1909, 1911; for Knoebel's edition *A Russian History in Pictures*); works from the late 1910s to the first half of the 1930s were devoted to the Caucasus: landscapes, architectural monuments, national types. Between 1929 and 1931, he created the triptych *The Red Partisans of Daghestan Descending from the Mountains to Defend Soviet Power*; in 1942 he created a series *The Trophies of the Russian Army*. He produced sketches for decorative paintings in the Large Moscow Hotel (1906), the Rossiya Insurance Company in Belgrad (1907), Ya. Zhukovsky's dacha in the Crimea (1909), G. Tarasov's mansion in Moscow (1910-12), the Memorial Hall of the Library of the Academy of Arts in Petrograd (1915) and the Palace of Railroad Workers in Kharkov (1931). Between 1935 and the early 1940s he worked in Moscow designing decorative panels for one of the metro stations, the Moscow Hotel, the Lenin Library, and the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1916-17 he was involved in the unrealized project to decorate the Kazan Railroad Station; in 1933-34 he designed decorative paintings for the restaurant at the station; in 1945-46 he worked on two panels for the vestibule — *Victory and Peace* (completed by his assistants). His first theatrical work was for the Antique Theatre in Saint Petersburg — set designs for productions of Nikolai Yevreinov's *Fair on St. Denis' Day* (1907, unfinished) and Calderon's *Purgatory of St. Patrick* (1911). In the 1920s, while living in Tbilisi, he designed sets for the Maly Theatre in Moscow (Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, 1923) and for theatres in Odessa and Kutaisi. In Moscow he created sets for Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit* (1938, the Maly Theatre), Boris Asafyev's ballet *A Peasant Lady* (1946, the Bolshoi Theatre) and Prokofyev's opera *A Betrothal in a Convent* (1946, unfinished). He wrote and illustrated a book of travel impressions about Turkey, *A Summer in Angora* (1922). He died on 13 September 1946 in Moscow.



### MSTISLAV VALERIANOVICH DOBUZHINSKY

Mstislav Valerianovich Dobuzhinsky was born on 2 August (14 N.S.) 1875 in Novgorod. He studied in Saint Petersburg at the Drawing School of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, from 1895 to 1899 at the Law Faculty of Saint Petersburg University, in 1897 at the studio of the engraver and painter Lev Dmitriev-Kavkazsky. In 1899-1901 he studied in Munich at the art schools of Anton Abe and Simon Hollósy; in 1901, on his return to Saint Petersburg, he trained in etching under Vladimir Mathé. Over the years, he traveled widely in Europe (Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, England, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, and Finland) and around Russian cities (Vilno, Chernigov, Nezhin, Voronezh, Kursk, Pskov, Novgorod, etc.). During World War I he visited the front to sketch from life. He was a member of the World of Art and contributor to its exhibitions as from 1902. From 1906 to 1910 he taught at Yelizaveta Zvantseva's school, from 1911 to 1917 at the New Art Studio (M. Gagarina's school), in 1918-19 at the State Workshops of Decorative Arts (the former Stieglitz School of Technical Drawing) and at the same time at the Vitebsk Practical Art Institute, in 1919 at the Institute of Photography and Photo-technology and in A. Gausch's private school, in 1922-23 at VKhUTEIN (the Academy of Arts). After 1917 he participated in the work to preserve Saint Petersburg's monuments, in the activities of various artistic councils and was the deputy chairman of the House of Arts. His work in the field of literary and newspress graphic art began with drawings for the journals *Strekoza* and *Shut* (1897-1902). In 1905-06 he contributed satirical drawings to the political journals *The Bugaboo* and *Hell's Mail*. From 1902 to 1915 he contributed to the journals *The World of Art*, *The Art Treasures of Russia*, *The Golden Fleece*, *Apollon*, the almanachs *Belye nochi* (White Nights), *Nevskiy Almanach* (*The*

*Neva Almanach*), and others. In the 1920s he worked for the journals *Perezuony* (Peal of Bells), *Zhar-Ptitsa* (The Firebird), etc. He designed many book covers and also designed and produced illustrations for S. Ausländer's *Prince of the Night* (1909), Pushkin's *Station Inspector*, *La Demoiselle paysane* (1919), and *The Covetous Knight* (1921), Karamzin's *Poor Liza*, Leskov's *Toupée Artist* (both 1921), Dostoyevsky's *White Nights* (1922), and several more publications. He worked in the field of applied graphic art (posters, bookplates, stamps, postcards for the Publishing House of the Red Cross Society of St. Eugenia, etc.). His easel works are mainly devoted to the urban theme: paintings embodying "Dobuzhinsky's Saint Petersburg" — *A Corner in Saint Petersburg* (1904), *A House in Saint Petersburg* (1905), *Winter* (1909), *City Outskirts: the Priazhka River* (1914), etc.; numerous views of Russian provincial towns; capitals and cities of European countries such as Vilno: *Omnibus* (1906-07), Chernigov: *A Photograph* (1912), Tambov: *Baker's Shop* (1923), *A Bridge in London* (1908), Haarlem (1910), Naples (1911), etc.; a series of fantastic compositions *Urban Dreams* (1906-1920s); a series of autolithographs of Saint Petersburg in 1921-22. Between 1907 and 1911 he created a number of paintings devoted to historical subjects: *The Provinces in the 1830s*, *Training of New Recruits* and *A Military Settlement* (for Knoebel's publication *A History of Russia in Pictures*), *Peter the Great in Holland* (panel for the Peter the Great School in Saint Petersburg, sketches, and variants). From 1910 on, he drew dozens of portraits: Konstantin Stanislavsky, Lydia Koreneva, Grigory Yakulov, Tamara Karsavina, Alexander Benois, Dmitry Mitrokhin, etc. He also practiced monumental decorative art. In 1910 he designed a number of interiors and produced designs for the painted decoration of the Kazan Railroad Station in Moscow. In 1918 he created 48 sketches for the decoration of the Admiralty during the celebration of the first anniversary of the October Revolution. During his life abroad he decorated private dwellings and social buildings in Lithuania, Paris, and Brussels. As a theatrical designer, he worked on productions of Adam de la Halle's *A Play about Robin and Marion* at the Antique Theatre and Remizov's *Devilish Act* at the Komissarzhevskaya Theatre in 1908, as well as Gabriele d'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini* (at the same theatre) and Potiomkin's *Petrouchka* at the Lukomorye Theatre. In 1909-17 he designed twelve productions at the Moscow Arts Theatre, including Ivan Turgenev's *A Month in a Village*, Nikolai Stavrogin and *The Village of Stepanchikovo*, both after Dostoyevsky's works, and Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit*. In 1914 he worked for Diaghilev's company (Schumann's *Les Papillons* and M. Steinberg's *Midas*) and for Anna Pavlova's troupe (Bayer's *Puppenfee*). In 1919-20 he designed productions of M. Levberg's *Danton*, Schiller's *Die Räuber*, and Shakespeare's *King Lear*, followed in 1921 by Anatoly Lunacharsky's drama *Oliver Cromwell* at the Maly Theatre in Moscow. From 1924 to 1939 he lived in Kaunas, Lithuania, spending long periods in France and England. He worked for the Lithuanian State Theatre, taught art, and continued to paint landscapes as well as to draw portraits and produce works of graphic art for publications. From 1926 to 1928 he worked for N. Balieff's cabaret-theatre *La Chauve-Souris* in Paris. He illustrated Yury Olesha's novel *The Three Fat Men* (1928) and Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1936). In 1939 he moved to the USA. He designed more than one hundred theatrical productions at various theatres in America and elsewhere - France, Italy, Britain, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark. He produced a number of paintings inspired by Dmitry Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony* and designed an edition of *The Lay of Igor's Host*. He wrote the books *Recollections of Italy* and *Reminiscences*. He died in New York on 20 November 1957.



### ANNA PETROVNA OSTROUMOVA-LEBEDEVA

Anna Petrovna Ostroumova-Lebedeva was born on 5 May (17 N.S.) 1871 in Saint Petersburg. From 1889 to 1902 she studied at the Stieglitz Central College of Technical Drawing under Vassily Mathé, Nikolai Koshelev, Genrich Manizer and Alexander Novoskoltsev, from 1892 to 1900, with breaks, at the Academy of Arts under Ilya Repin (from 1896) and Vassily Mathé (from 1899). In 1898-99 she practiced painting in the studio of James Whistler and studied western European and Japanese engraving.

In the late 1900s she improved her skills in watercolour in Yelizaveta Zvantseva's private school under Leon Bakst. She traveled widely in Europe: Italy (1899, 1903, 1911), Finland (1905, 1908), Paris and Austria (1906), Germany (1911), Holland and Belgium (1913), Spain (1914), Berlin and Paris (1926), as well as to the Caucasus (1916, 1929) and the Crimea (1902, 1924).

Between 1918 and 1921 she taught at the Institute of Photography and Photo-technology, from 1934 to 1936 at the Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture of the All-Russian Academy of Arts in Leningrad. She participated in exhibitions from 1898 on and became a member of the World of Art in 1899.

In 1926 she joined the Four Arts group. She worked in various media: wood engraving, watercolour, drawing, and, considerably less, in lithography, oil and tempera painting. The dominant subjects of her work in all media were townscapes, mainly the views of Saint

Petersburg. She is known mainly as a xylographer; producing both coloured and black-and-white engravings. In 1901 she created her first series of wood engravings devoted to Saint Petersburg for the *World of Art* journal, which included one of her most famous prints, *Saint Petersburg: New Holland*.

From 1901 to 1905 she created a number of coloured prints depicting the palace-and-park ensembles of Pavlovsk and Tsarskoye Selo, and between 1908 and 1910 a series of colour views of Saint Petersburg (*The Columns of the Exchange and the Fortress, A Perspective View of the Neva, The Mining Institute, The Kriukov Canal, The Admiralty Clad in Snow*, etc.).

She produced two series of black-and-white engraved illustrations for books — for V. Kurbatov's *Saint Petersburg* (1912) and for N. Antsiferov's *Soul of Saint Petersburg* (1920). Among her best works of the 1910s and 1920s featuring Saint Petersburg are *The Biron Palace and Barques* (1916), *Tackle* (1917), *The Moika by the Singers' Bridge* (1919), *Smolny* (1924), *View from the Trinity Bridge* (1926), and *The Fontanka and the Summer Gardens in Hoar-Frost* (1929).

In 1922-23 she produced a series of small-scale black-and-white engravings, *Pavlovsk*, which was published as a book with her introduction. Besides Saint Petersburg and its environs, her xylographs captured landscapes and urban views in many countries: *Finland Beneath Blue Skies* (1900), *Fiesole* (1904), *Saint-Cloud and Fireworks in Paris on July 14* (both 1908), *Venice by Night and Villa d'Este* (both 1914), *Versailles: The Pool* (1927), etc. She often used the medium of wood engraving to produce bookplates for, among others, V. Riabushinsky (1911), Sergei Lebedev (1923-24), Ivan Pavlov (*Our Library*, 1929), Dmitry Mitrokhin (1940), and herself (*My Epitaph*, 1946). Sometimes she turned to lithography: she produced a series of landscapes at Tsarskoye Selo, Pavlovsk, and Peterhof (1904); a series of twelve sheets making up her album *Saint Petersburg* (1922), and a series of postcards with views of Leningrad for letters to the front (1942). Drawings and watercolours produced throughout her creative career depicted Saint Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad, Tsarskoye Selo, and Pavlovsk (Tsarskoye Selo: *A Bench*, 1904; *Saint Petersburg: View from the Peter Park*, 1912; *Pavlovsk: The Temple of Friendship*, 1921; *Petrograd: Red Pillars*, 1922; *Leningrad: The Kirov Islands in Early Autumn*, 1937), Finland (*Rocks over a Fiord at Nodendal, At Sunset*, both 1905), Paris (*Notre-Dame de Paris, Musée Cluny*, 1906), Italy (*Venice: The Grand Canal; Villa Borghese: A Pine Grove*, both 1911), Holland and Belgium (Amsterdam: *Old Warehouses*; Bruges: *A Group of Houses*, both 1913), Spain (*Segovia: View of Alcazar, Landscape near Toledo*, both 1914), oil derricks in Baku and the town of Koktebel in the Crimea (Baku: *Bibi-Eibat, Old Oil Derricks*, 1916; Koktebel: *Sura-Kaya in the Evening*, 1924). She also practiced portraiture, her first attempts having been made in Repin's studio. She produced a number of watercolour portraits of artists, actors, writers, and scholars: Ivan Yershov (1923), Alexander Benois (1924), Andrei Bely (1924), Sergei Lebedev (1924, 1932), Yelizaveta Kruglikova (1925), Maximilian Voloshin (1927), and a tempera self-portrait (1940). She wrote *Autobiographical Notes*. She died on 5 May 1955 in Leningrad.



### ZINAIDA YEVGENYEVNA SEREBRIAKOVA

Zinaida Yevgenyevna Serebriakova was born on 28 November (10 December N.S.) 1884 on the estate of Neskuchnoye near Kharkov. She was the granddaughter and great granddaughter of architects, Nicholas Benois and Albert Cavos respectively, the daughter of the animal sculptor Yevgeny A. Lanceray, Alexander Benois' niece and the sister of the artist Yevgeny Ye. Lanceray and the architect Nikolai Lanceray.

After the death of her father in 1886, the family moved to Saint Petersburg and settled in the Benois family house, visiting Neskuchnoye, from 1898 onward, every summer.

In 1901 she studied for less than a month in Princess Tenisheva's private school (before its closure); from the autumn of 1902 to the spring of 1903 she was in Italy studying the art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; from 1903 to 1905 she studied in the Osip Brais studio in Saint Petersburg and copied works by the Old Masters in the Hermitage.

In 1905-06 she trained in drawing and watercolour at the *Académie de la Grande Chaumière* in Paris, visited museums and exhibitions. In 1911 and 1913 she traveled to the Crimea, in 1914 she toured Switzerland and Italy.

From 1918 to 1920 she lived in Kharkov, working in the Archeological Museum, and then returned to Petrograd. She contributed to exhibitions from 1910 and became a member of the World of Art in 1911.

She worked in many genres and media (oils, tempera, gouache, watercolour; from the early 1920s on she often resorted to pastel). She produced a large number of landscapes at Neskuchnoye and during her travels to Italy, Switzerland, and the Crimea: *Capri*, 1903; *Orchard in Bloom*, 1908; *Winter Crops*, 1910; *Before a Thunderstorm*, 1911; *Spring in the Crimea, Mountain Landscape* (both 1914); *Landscape, The Village of Neskuchnoye, Kursk Province*, 1916; *View of the Peter and Paul Fortress*, 1921, etc.

She produced many portraits and portrait studies: *Christia the Peasant Girl* (1903), *A Peasant Girl* (1906), a portrait of a nurse (1907), a student (1909), Olga Lanceray, Nadezhda Chulkova and Georgy Chulkov (1910), Yevgeny Lanceray (1912), Boris Serebriakov (1913), Sergei Ernst (1921), Anna Cherkesova-Benois with her son (1922), etc.

Children's portraits occupy a special place in her work: *At Dinner* (1914), *The Guard House* (1919), *Boys in Sailors' Jackets* (1919), *Girls at the Piano* (1919); she also produced many self-portraits: *At Toilette: A Self-Portrait* (1909), *Girl with a Candle: A Self-Portrait* (1911), *Self-Portrait with Daughters* (1921), *Self-Portrait with a Brush* (1924), etc.

Between 1913 and 1917 she created a number of paintings devoted to peasant life: *A Bathhouse*, *Harvest*, *Bleaching Linen*, *Sleeping Beauty*, producing many preliminary drawings, sketches, and studies, which sometimes have an artistic value of their own, such as *A Bathhouse. Study; Peasants; Peasant Woman with a Kvass Jar; Bleaching Linen. Study*.

In 1922, 1923 and 1924 the theme of ballet became prominent in her work: portraits of dancers in theatrical costumes (George Balanchivadze-Balanchine, Alexandra Danilova, Lydia Ivanova, Yekaterina Geidenrich, Valentina Ivanova, her daughter Tatyana, etc.), scenes in ballet dressing rooms during performances (*Pugni's Pharaoh's Daughter*, *Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker*, *Bayer's Puppenfee*; *Ballerina before Her Entry*, *Blue Ballerinas*, etc.). In the same years she turned to the still life which she often combined with portraits: *The Attributes of Arts. Still Life*, *Tata with Vegetables*, *Katia with a Still Life*, *In the Kitchen, Herring and Lemon*.

In 1915-16 she took part in the Kazan Railroad Station project, producing sketches for paintings in four lunettes: *Turkey*, *Japan*, *India*, and *Siam*. In the autumn of 1924, having received a commission for a decorative painting, she left for Paris and did not return.

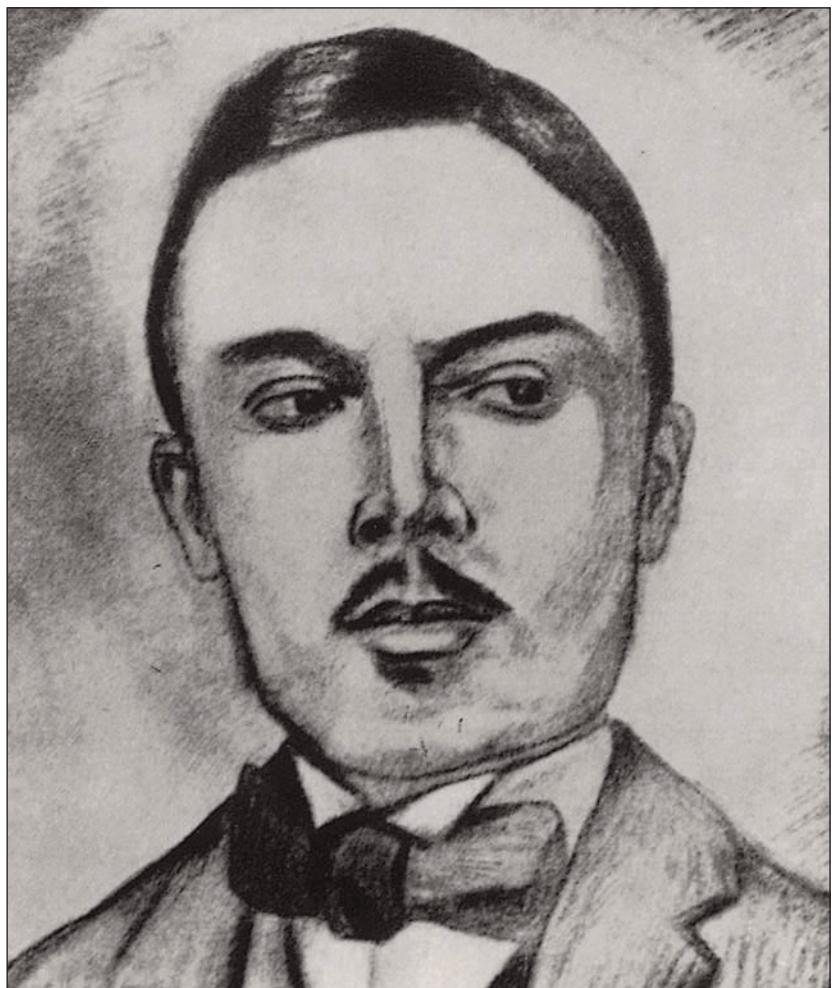
She made journeys to England, Germany, Belgium, Morocco, Italy, Switzerland, Brittany, and the south of France. She painted portraits (including those of Sergei Prokofyev, Konstantin Somov, and Sergei Lifar), landscapes, and still lifes. She died on 19 September 1967.



### IGOR EMMANUILOVICH GRABAR

Igor Emmanuilovich Grabar was born on 13 March (25 N.S.) 1871 in Budapest; in 1876 the family moved to Russia. During his studies at the Katkov Lyceum (1882-89) he attended Sunday classes of drawing at the Society of Art Lovers where he studied under V. Popov. From 1889 to 1893 he was a student at the Law Faculty of Saint Petersburg University; at the same time he covered the whole course of the Faculty of History and Philology. From 1894 to 1896 he studied at the Academy of Arts in the studios of Pavel Chestiakov and Ilya Repin. From 1896 to 1901 he lived in Munich and attended the school of Anton Abe (later he taught there); he also studied architecture at the Munich Polytechnic. From 1895 onward, he made frequent visits to Europe (Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Denmark, Britain, Greece, Spain); visited Egypt in 1914 and the USA in 1924. He lived in Saint Petersburg until 1903 and then moved to Moscow. He contributed to exhibitions as from 1898. He was a member of the World of art from 1901 on, of the Union of Russian Artists beginning in 1904, of the Moscow Painters group as from 1924, and of the Society of Moscow Artists from 1927 on. From 1913 until 1917 he was a trustee, then, until 1925, director of the Tretyakov Gallery. In 1914-15 he rearranged the display on the art-historical principle; in 1917 he published the gallery's first ever *catalogue raisonné*. In 1917-18 he headed the Museum Department of the People's Commissariat for Education. In 1918 he organized

the State Central Restoration Workshops and was their director until 1930; from 1944 to 1966 he directed scholarly research there. Between 1919 and 1930 he organized and participated in expeditions to restore and discover works of art in the central and northern areas of Russia. From 1920 to 1946 he was a professor at Moscow University (lecturing on art restoration); from 1937 to 1947 he was director and professor of the Moscow Art Institute. From 1943 to 1946 he was the director of the All-Union Academy of Arts and the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Leningrad. In 1944 he proposed establishing an Institute of the History of Art attached to the USSR Academy of Sciences and was its director to the end of his life. His artistic legacy consists mainly of easel paintings, with the exception of drawings produced at an early age, before the Academy of Arts, for the journals *Shut* (*The Jester*) and *Strekoza* (*The Dragonfly*) (1890-91) and a large number of illustrations for Gogol's stories *The Overcoat*, *The Sorochintsy Fair*, *The Night Before Christmas*, and others (1893-94). In 1892, during a journey down the Sukhona and Northern Dvina Rivers, he produced a series of watercolours depicting works of wooden architecture and used them to make originals for postcards issued in 1903 by the Publishing House of the Red Cross Society of St. Eugenia. His favourite genre in painting was landscape, in which he worked throughout his career: *Sunbeam* (1901), *September Snow* (1903), *March Snow* (1904), studies and paintings depicting hoar-frost (1903-08, 1918-19, and every winter after 1941), *Rowan Tree* (1915), *On the Lake* (1926), *A Creek* (1930), *Winter Landscape* (1954), *The First Thawed Patches of Spring* (1957), etc. He also often painted still lifes: *Flowers and Fruit on the Piano* (1904), *Chrysanthemums* (1905), *After the Meal* (1907), *Delphinium* (1908), *Pears on a Blue Tablecloth* (1915), *Roses on the Piano* (1939), etc. Portraiture, which had already attracted him in his school years, occupied a prominent place in his work in the 1930s and 1940s: he produced portraits of his brother Vladimir Grabar (1901), his mother Olga Grabar-Khrabrova (1924), Piotr Neradovsky (1931), Nikolai Zelinsky (1932), Svetlana (1933), Sergei Prokofyev (1934, 1941), Sergei Chaplygin (1935), Kornei Chukovsky (1935), Boris Grekov (1945) and others, as well as more than twenty self-portraits (1897-1956). From 1909 to 1914 he designed the Zakharyin Hospital complex near Moscow. Between 1894 and 1960 he published many critical articles in various journals and newspapers; from 1899 to 1912 he worked for the journals *The World of Art*, *The Old Years*, and *The Balance*. He wrote monographs on Isaac Levitan (together with Sergei Glagol), Valentin Serov, Ilya Repin, Theophanes the Greek, Andrei Rublev, books about old Russian art, restoration and preservation of works, articles for encyclopedias, and the book *My Life: an Autobiography*. He initiated and directed the publication of the first scholarly *History of Russian Art* (vols. 1-6, 1910-14, unfinished; he was also the editor and author of its most important sections). In the early 1950s he again undertook the publication of a multi-volume *History of Russian Art*, being one of its editors and authors (five volumes appeared during his lifetime, from 1953 to 1960; the work was completed in 1969). He died in Moscow on 16 May 1960.



### NIKOLAÏ NIKOLAYEVICH SAPUNOV

Nikolaï Nikolyevich Sapunov was born on 17 December (29 N.S.) 1880 in Moscow. From 1893 to 1901 he studied at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture under Isaac Levitan, Valentin Serov, and Konstantin Korovin; in 1904 to 1911 at the Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg under Alexander Kiselyov. In 1900 he worked in the decoration studio of the Moscow Arts Theatre under Victor Simov, producing sets after Korovin's sketches from 1901 to 1903. He made a trip to Italy in 1902.

From 1908 on he lived in Saint Petersburg. He was one of the organizers and members of the artistic council of the House of Intermissions in Saint Petersburg (an institution that existed in 1910–11). He participated in exhibitions as from the 1900s, took part in the Blue Rose exhibition in 1907 and contributed to the World of Art exhibitions from 1911 onwards.

In the early 1900s he designed sets and costumes, together with Sergei Sudeikin, for several theatrical productions at Moscow's Hermitage Theatre (Savva Mamontov's opera), Esposito's *Camorra*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* (not staged), etc. Then he designed

sets and costumes for Balmont's *Three Flowerings* at the Tragedy Theatre in Saint Petersburg (1905), Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Rossini's *Barber of Seville* at the Opera Studio in Moscow (1905) and Maeterlinck's *Death of Tentacles* at the Theatrical Studio on Povarskaya Street in Moscow (again with Sudeikin; 1905, not realized). When he worked for the Theatrical Studio the artists rejected a design for the first time and painted the sets themselves. His subsequent productions were staged in Saint Petersburg in cooperation with Vsevolod Meyerhold: Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and Blok's *Balaganchik* at Vera Komissarzhevskaya's Theatre (1906), the pantomime *Columbine's Scarf* after A. Schnitzler's story, the pastorelle *Liza the Dutch Girl* and *The Corrected Eccentric*, both by M. Kuzmin, at the House of Intermissions (1910). His last works were sets and costumes for Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1911) and C. Gozzi's *Princesse Turandot* at K. Nezlobin's Theatre in Moscow (staged by Fiodor Komissarzhevsky). His designs for operas and dramas are also known: Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Mozart's *Don Juan*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Blok's *King on a Square* (1907), Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Chekhov's *Uncle Vania* (1909), and G. B. Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1910).

He often produced easel paintings devoted to the motifs from earlier productions: *The Mystical Meeting* (1910, based on Blok's *Balaganchik*), *The Green Bull Flotel* (1910, based on *Liza the Dutch Girl*), *Pantomime* (1910, based on *Columbine's Scarf*), *Jourdain's Room*, *Turkish Ceremony*, and *Dorimène* (1911, based on *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*); his painting *The Dance of Death* (1907) based on Wedekind's play is also famed. Other easel paintings belong to different genres. There are landscapes: *Winter*, 1900; *Blooming Apple-Trees*, *Landscape with a River*, *Before a Thunderstorm*, all 1911; flowers and still lifes: *Roses*, 1906; *Blue Hydrangeas*, 1907, 1909, 1910; *Still Life with a Self-Portrait*, 1907; *Peonies*, 1907, 1908; *Still Life*, 1910; *Still Life: Vase of Flowers, Teapot and Cup*, *Still Life: Vase, Flowers and Fruit*, both 1912. There are also portraits: Nikolai Milioti, 1908; L. Guseva and A. Komissarzhevskaya, both 1911; a mulatto actress — four versions, 1911–12; the poet and composer Mikhail Kuzmin — two versions, 1912, not completed; pencil portraits of Valery Briusov, 1912 as well as depictions of festivities and masquerades: *A Minuet*, *A Ballet*, *Night Merry-Making*, *Masquerade*, 1907; *Spring: Masquerade*, 1912 or popular entertainments: *Carrousel* — two versions, 1908; *Mummers*. Finally, pictures and sketches of genre scenes of a grotesque character exist (*Tea-Drinking*, 1912) along with representations of a drawing room in a brothel, a nighttime tavern, a male choir in a tavern, etc. He produced vignettes for the journals *The Balance* and *The Golden Fleece*.

In the spring of 1912 he took part in the establishment of a theatre in Terioki (now Zelenogorsk) near Saint Petersburg and intended to paint sets for a production of Ostrovsky's drama *The Thunderstorm* at that theatre. He also intended to go to Paris, probably to hold negotiations with Diaghilev. He drowned in the Gulf of Finland near Terioki on 14 (27) June 1912.



## SERGEÏ YURYEVICH SUDEIKIN

Sergeï Yuryevich Sudeikin was born on 7 (19 N.S.) March 1882 in Saint Petersburg. From he studied (with breaks) at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and from 1909 to 1911 at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts, where from 1910 he attended the studio of Dmitry Kardovsky. In about 1901 he traveled to the Caucasus and to Italy, then in 1906 to Paris, where he took part in the Russian section of the *Salon d'Automne*. He played an important role in the organization of the exhibitions of the Scarlet Rose (1904, Saratov) and the Blue Rose (1907, Moscow); in 1907 he participated in the Wreath exhibition mounted by Mikhail Larionov and David Burliuk. He was a member of the World of Art as from 1911 and a regular contributor to its exhibitions. During the 1900s — 1910s he painted pastorals, ballet scenes and “fêtes galantes”: *A Night Holiday* (1905), *A Pastoral* (1905, 1906, 1912), *Merry-Making* (1906), *In a Park* (1907), *A Poet of the North* (1909), *Ballet* (1910), *The Carrousel* (1910). He also turned to the motifs of popular merriments, show-booth farces, and theatrical performances: *Shrovetide Festival* (1910s), *Petrovouchka* and a series of *lubok* prints called *Shrovetide Characters* (mid-1910s), *The Puppet Theatre* and *Harlequinade* (1915); produced still lifes, landscapes, and

portraits: *Still Life* (1909, 1911), *Saxon Figurine* (1911), *Flowers and Porcelain* (early 1910s), *A Park* (1915), *A Summer Landscape* (1916); Portraits of S. Tiunin (mid-1910), Yury Yurkun (1915), Vera Sudeikina (1917), and Ya. Izrailevich. He created graphic works for books and the press: illustrations of Maeterlinck's *Death of Tintagiles* (1903), M. Kuzmin's book *The Chimes of Love* (together with Nikolai Feofilaktov), *The Travel of Sir John Fairfax* (*Apollon*, 1909, No. 5), *Autumn Lakes* (1912), *Venetian Madmen* (1915); contributions to the journals *The Golden Fleece*, *The Balance*, *Apollon*, *Satiricon*, and *New Satiricon*. He mainly worked for the theatre and artistic cabarets. In the late 1890s and early 1900s he designed a number of productions for Savva Mamontov's Opera in Moscow. In 1905 he took part in the decoration of the Theatre-Studio at Povarskaya Street attached to the Moscow Arts Theatre, designing the production of Maeterlinck's *Death of Tintagiles* there and his *Soeur Beatrice* at Vera Kommissarzhevskaya's Theatre in 1906. He continued to design various productions in Saint Petersburg and Moscow in subsequent years: G.B. Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1909) and O. Dymov's *Spring Madness* (1910) at the New Drama Theatre, M. Kuzmin's comic opera *Amusements for Virgins* and three one-act ballets at the Maly Drama Theatre (1911), Jacinthe Benavente's *Seamy Side of Life* at the Russian Theatre (1912), one-act ballets for the tour by Mariinsky Theatre dancers around Russia in 1914-15, including Adam's *Giselle* and Bizet's *Andalusiana*; Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro at the Chamber Theatre* (1915), etc. In 1913 he produced sets and costumes for F. Schmidt's ballet *Tragedy of Salome* for the Russian Seasons in Paris. (Like Sapunov, he always painted sets from his designs himself.) He did a great variety of work for Saint Petersburg theatres. In 1910 he produced a curtain for the House of Intermissions and designed the production of E. Znosko-Borovsky's *Transformed Prince*. He created costumes for guests, props and patchwork panels for the artistic cabarets *The Stray Dog* and *The Comedians' Halt*. From 1911 to 1915 he painted and decorated the main rooms in *The Stray Dog* and designed theatrical soirées such as “Dogs' Carrousel” and “Dolls' Den”. Between 1915 and 1917 he designed masquerades, festivities, and play productions: A. Schnitzler's *Columbine's Scarf* and Kozma Prutkov's *Fantasia*. In 1917 he went to the Crimea, worked in the valuation commission at the nationalized Vorontsov Palace and at the end of the year he moved to Tbilisi where he painted, together with David Kakabadze and Lado Gudiashvili, the poets' tavern *Khimerion*, designed Vassily Kamensky's poetry evening (1919), painted pictures and took part in exhibitions. In 1920 he left for Paris. He did a great deal of work for N. Balieff's cabaret-theatre *La Chauve-Souris*, and designed several theatrical productions, including Beyer's *Puppenfee* and Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* for Anna Pavlova's troupe. In 1922 he moved to the USA and settled in New York. He designed a number of productions for the Metropolitan Opera and other theatres, as well as ballets produced by Balanchine, Fokine, Mordkin, and Bronislava Nijinska. He was artistic designer of the Hollywood film *Resurrection*, created a panel based on Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacré de printemps*, as well as painting pictures. He died in New York on 12 August 1946.



### DMITRY ISIDOROVICH MITROKHIN

Dmitry Isidorovich Mitrokhin was born on 15 May (27 N.S.) 1883 in Yeisk on the Sea of Azov. In 1902 he entered the College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Moscow, where he studied under Appolinary Vasnetsov and Alexei Stepanov. In 1904 he transferred to the Stroganov College where his teachers were Stanislav Noakovsky and Sergei Yaguzhinsky.

In 1904-05 he worked with the Murava group of artistic potters. In 1905-06 he lived in Paris for ten months attending evening classes at the *Académie de la Grande Chaumière* under Théophile Steinlen and Eugène Grasset and studying classical European and Japanese engravings, drawings by the Old Masters, and contemporary graphic art. He took part in exhibitions as from 1906 and began to exhibit with the World of Art in 1911, of which he became a member in 1916.

In 1908 he moved to Saint Petersburg, where from 1918 to 1923 he was a curator and head of the Department of Engraving and

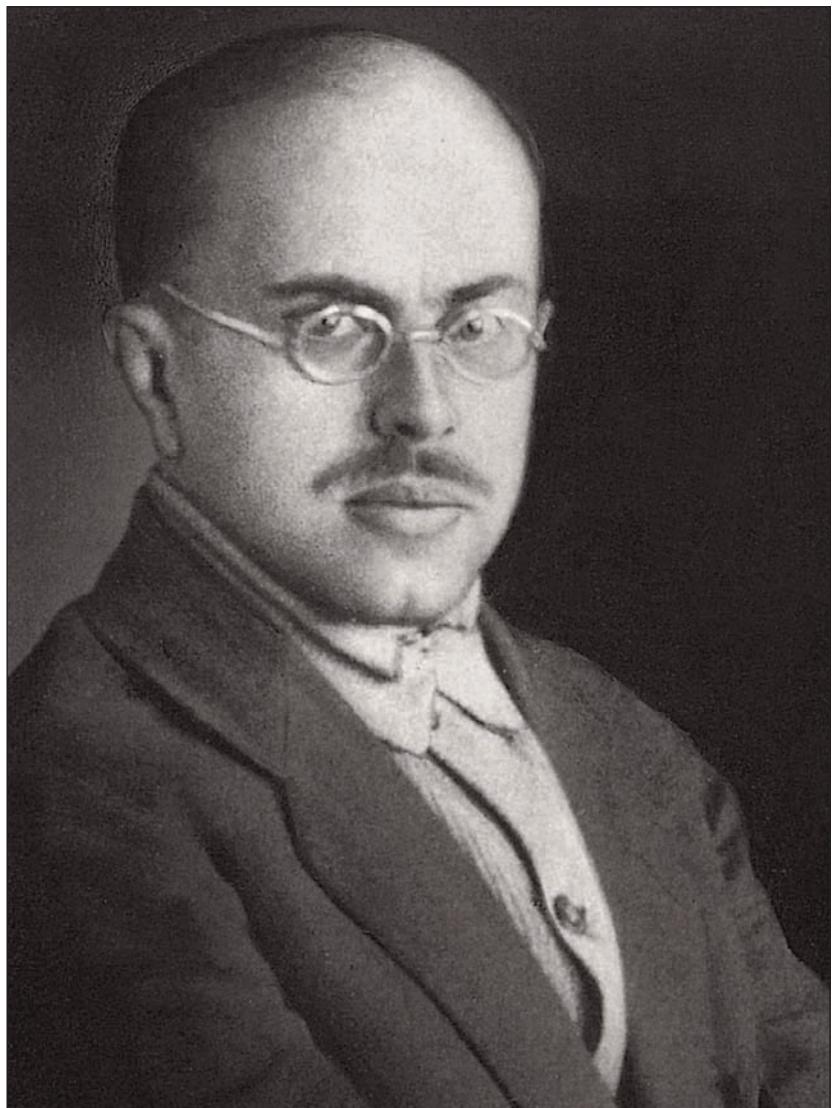
Drawings at the Russian Museum. From 1919 to 1923 he was Professor of the Art Faculty at the Higher Institute of Photography and Photo-technology, from 1924 to 1930 professor of the Polygraphic Faculty at the Higher Art-Technical Institute, lecturing on book graphic art.

At the age of 58, during World War II he joined the popular militia as a volunteer. In October 1942 he left besieged Leningrad for Alma-Ata. In 1944, after the evacuation, he moved to Moscow. He worked in all fields of graphic art, producing illustrations for books and journals, applied graphic works, engravings, lithographs, drawings, and watercolours.

In 1904 he created his first vignettes for the journals *The Balance* and *Pravda (Truth)*. Between 1905 and 1910 he drew covers, head- and tailpieces, initials and illustrations for the journals *The Viewer*, *Yunost (Youth)*, *Satiricon*, *Novy Satiricon*, *Apollon*, *Lukomorye*, *Vershiny (Summits)*, etc. In the 1920s he designed some elements for various journals (*Dom iskusstv [The House of Arts]*, *Krasnaya Panorama [The Red Panorama]*, *Vesnik profsoyuzov [The Trade Union Herald]*, and *Drezina [The Hand Car]*). As a graphic artist he designed either only covers or entire books. He created his first cover in 1907 and the last in 1962. The best examples of the whole publications designed by him are children's books in the series issued by the Knoebel Publishing Company: Hauff's *Little Muck* and *The Ghost Ship*, V. Zhukovsky's *Goblet and Orlando the Sword-Bearer* (1911-1914), Poe's *Gold Bug* (1922), Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1923), books for the Academia Publishing House (1930-34), Aristophanes' *Comedies*, Heliodorus' *Ethiopica*, K. Immermann's *Münchhausen*, Turgenev's *Prose Poems* and *French Folk Tales* (1958).

He produced about 50 bookplates, designed a decorative typescript (an alphabet on subjects from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1910; *An October Revolution Alphabet*, 1927) and drew dozens of colophons, trademarks, emblems and labels. In the field of engraving, after a short fascination with coloured lithography, he worked in the techniques of xylography, linocut, metal engraving (burin and dry-point); quite often he tinted his prints in watercolour or printed a picture from two or three blocks. His works are mainly street scenes and views of the Petrogradskaya Side in Saint Petersburg, and depictions of Yeisk fishermen. He used the medium of metal engraving to produce the *Central Park of Culture and Leisure* series, still lifes, and flowers.

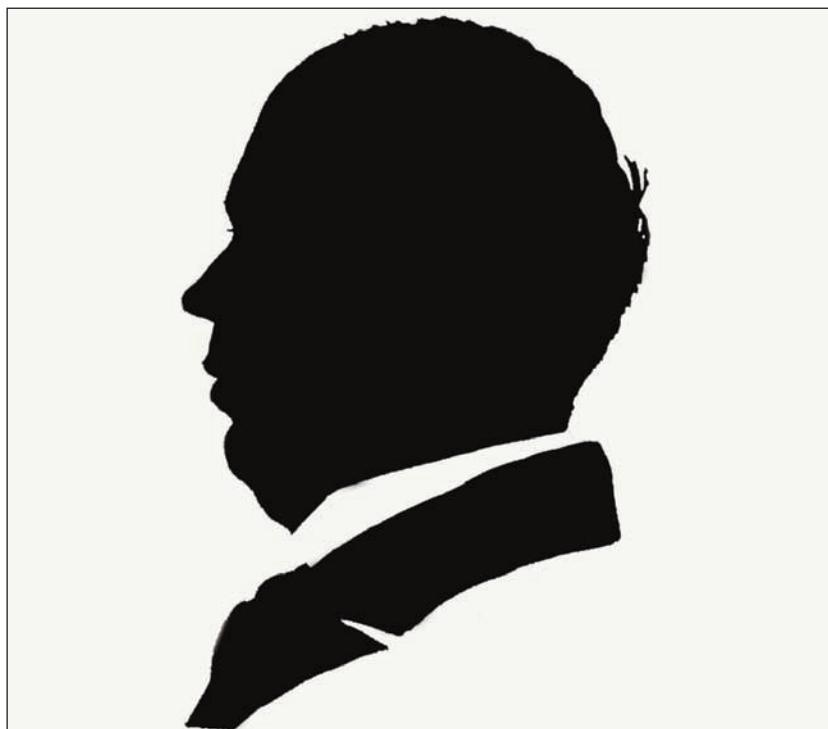
He was constantly drawing from life, making sketches in the streets and parks of Leningrad, in Alma-Ata, and during his travels to Yeisk, Abkhazia, Novgorod, Arkhangelsk, the Northern Dvina and the seashore by Riga. During the last thirty-five years of his life he mostly produced drawings as works in their own right. His output amounts to many hundred of small-scale landscapes, interiors, and still lifes depicting fruit, flowers, fish, pharmacy vessels, etc. He died on 7 November 1973 in Moscow.



### GEORGY IVANOVICH NARBUT

Georgy Ivanovich Narbut was born on 26 February (10 March N.S.) 1886 in the Ukraine (village of Narbutovka, Glukhov District, Chernigov Province, now Sumy Region). In 1906, on graduation from the school in Glukhov, he entered the Oriental Faculty of Saint Petersburg University, but immediately transferred to the Faculty of History and Philology and left the university in November 1907. He practiced drawing in the students' circle which was advised by World of Art members. A pupil of Ivan Bilibin, he lived in his apartment from 1906 to 1912. In the winter of 1907-08 he studied in Yelizaveta Zvantseva's studio under Leon Bakst and Mstislav Dobuzhinsky. In the autumn of 1909 he went to Munich where he spent about half a year, briefly attending Hollósy's studio. During World War I he was an official of the Trophy Commission; in 1915 he worked as an artist of the heraldry department, where about 60 coat-of-arms were designed under his direction. In March 1917 he was an active member of the Committee for Artistic Matters attached to the Provisional Government. Later he moved to Kiev and took part in the establishment of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts. After it opened in

September 1917, he was made Professor of Graphic Art, before becoming rector in February 1918. He was a member of the board and chairman of the Art Industry Department of the All-Ukrainian Committee for the Fine Arts, a member of the committee for the creation of a new emblem for the Ukraine, and led the commission for the organization of a museum based on the B. and V. Khanenko collection. He began to exhibit with the World of Art in 1904 and became a member of the association in 1913. He worked almost entirely in graphic art, especially in designing books and journals and producing illustrations for them. He contributed to the journals *Satiricon*, *Apollon*, *Argus*, *Lukomorye*, *Gerboved* (*The Heraldic Scholar*), *Otechestvo* (*Fatherland*), etc. In Kiev he designed and illustrated the journals *Nashe minule* (*Our Past*), *Narodnoye khoziaystvo Ukrainskogo naroda* (*The Popular Economy of the Ukraine*), *Zori* (*The Dawns*), *Solntse truda* (*The Sun of Labor*), *Mistetstvo* (*Art*). His first illustrations and elements of book designs dated from his school period (*The Song of Roland*, 1903; the tales *The Brave George*, 1904; *The Snow Maiden* and *Gorshenya*, both 1906). Later he designed and illustrated many fairy tales and fables (often using a silhouette drawing, black or white, in combination with colours): *The Crane and the Heron*, *The Bear* (1907); *The Terem*, *Mizgir* (1909); *Dance, Matthew: Don't Spare Your Shoe* (1910); *B. Dix's Toys* (1911), *The Year 1812* in Krylov's Fables (1912), *Russia Saved*, after Krylov's Fables (1913), *The Nightingale* (1912) and other Andersen's fairy tales, S. Repnin's *Tale of the Love of the Beautiful Queen and the Faithful Prince* (1916). He designed many book covers: Fiodor Sologub's *Book of Partings* (1908), Dmitry Merezhkovsky's *Gogol: Creative Work, Life and Religion*, V. and G. Lukomsky's *Vyshnevetsky Castle* (1912), A. Sacchetti's *A History of the Music of All Times and Peoples* (1913), *The Russian Red Cross: 1867-1917* (1917). He designed and illustrated the books G. Lukomsky's *Old Architecture of Galicia* (1915) and *Old Landed Estates in Kharkov Province* (1917), S. Troinitsky's *Coats of Arms of the Hetmans of Small Russia and The Coats of Arms of the Commander and Officers of the Brig Mercury* (1915), T. Shchepkina-Kupernik's *Songs of Brussels Lace-Makers* (1915), V. Narbut's *Hallelujah* (1919). He produced an illustration for I. Kotliarevsky's *Aeneid* (1919). He worked on *The Ukrainian ABC* in 1917 and 1919 (neither version was completed). He also produced bookplates, posters, designs for stamps, banknotes, textiles, wallpaper and flyleaf papers. His easel works were compositions in watercolour or gouache: the Cornet cycle of 1910 (*A Cornet, Landscape with a Cornet, Organ, etc.*); allegorical war scenes (*Allegory of the War with Turkey*, *The Battle of Heligoland*, *The Destruction of Rheims Cathedral*), etc. 1914-16); *Roses in a Goblet* (1915); architectural fantasies on the theme of old estates (*Moonlit Night*, 1916; *Architectural Motif*, 1917; *Ruins and Mills on a Moonlit Night*, 1919, etc.). He executed portraits (half-length, full-length, and group portraits) of his relatives, friends, and his family (1913-19), and created his *Self-Portrait*. He took part in the decoration of the large-scale exhibition *Lomonosov and the Age of Empress Elizabeth* (the painted decor of the Small Russia [Ukraine] Room, 1912) and executed wall paintings on S. Troinitsky's estate. He died in Kiev on 23 May 1920.



### SERGEI VASSILYEVICH CHEKHONIN

Sergei Vassilyevich Chekhonin was born in 1878 at Lykoshino Station in Novgorod Province (now Tver Region). From 1893 to 1896 he served at the Nikolayevskaya Railroad Station, often visiting Saint Petersburg and attending the Stieglitz School of Technical Drawing. From 1896 to 1897 he studied at the Drawing School of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts under Jan Tsionglinsky and trained in ceramic art under V. Schreiber. Between 1897 and 1900 he studied at Princess Tenisheva's Private School and under the guidance of Ilya Repin. From 1902 to 1907 he worked under Piotr Vaulin at Savva Mamontov's Artistic Pottery Works in Moscow, from 1907 to 1915 in the "Goldwein and Vaulin workshop" near Saint Petersburg and in the workshop on Princess Tenisheva's estate at Talashkino near Smolensk. In 1906 he traveled to Paris to organize an exhibition of Russian folk art and in 1913 to Berlin to prepare an exhibition of Russian handicrafts. In 1913 he took part in the organization of the second All-Russian Handicraft Exhibition in Saint Petersburg and after it was invited to work as an artistic adviser to the handicraft department of the Ministry of Agriculture. Between 1913 and 1917 he was in charge of the enamel painting workshops at Rostov in Yaroslavl Province and at Torzhok in Tver Province, the workshop of artistic furniture at Yefremov, Tula Province, and the gold embroidery and stitching workshop at Torzhok. In 1917 he entered a commission for handicrafts and in 1918 an art board attached to the People's Commissariat for Education. From 1918 to 1923 and 1925 to 1927 he was the chief artist at the State Porcelain Factory in Petrograd/Leningrad; from 1923 to 1925 he headed the artistic section of the Novgorod Porcelain Works (formerly the Kuznetsov Factory). He took part in the World of Art exhibitions and was a member from 1913. His first drawings appeared in the political satirical journals *The Viewer* (1905-06) and *Maski* (*Masks*, 1906) of which he was an editor, he also produced two sheets for *The Calendar of the Russian Revolution* (1906). In the 1910s and 1920s he contributed to the journals *Apollon*, *Satiricon*, *New Satiricon*, *Flame*, *October*, *Red Panorama*, *The Worker* and the

*Theatre*, etc. He designed dozens of books including K. Balmont's *Cali of Antiquity*, Sasha Chorny's *Satires* (1911-12), G. Lukomsky's *Monuments of Old Architecture in Russia* (1913), S. Makovsky and N. Radlov's *Modern Russian Graphics* (1914-17), A. Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri* (1914), A. Lunacharsky's *Faust and the City* (1919), J. Read's *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1923), *The October Revolution in Art* (1926). He also designed collections of works by Fiodor Dostoyevsky, Lope de Vega, Victor Hugo, Mikhaïl Lermontov, Nikolaï Nekrasov and children's books (K. Chukovsky's *Cockroach*, 1923; Ye. Polonskaya's *Guests*, 1924; S. Marshak's *Book about Books*, 1924, etc.). More than other World of Art members he devoted himself to the creation of fonts: he created *The Fairy Tale ABC* (1912, each letter representing some character), *The Theatrical Font* (1920s) and others; he designed printers' typefaces and in 1912 won first prize in the competition of new fonts for I. Leman's publishing house. He worked in the other spheres of graphic art too: he designed posters, slogans, colophons, as well as the first examples of Soviet emblems, seals, banknotes, trade-union emblems, postage stamps, etc. His easel paintings and graphic works include landscapes (*Landscape*, 1912; *Ostankino*, 1927; *View of the Park of the Russian Museum*, 1928); still lifes, mainly flowers (*Roses*, 1913; *Still Life*, 1916; *Poppies in a Glass*, 1925); numerous portraits (S. Andronnikova, 1916; Vladimir Kachalov, 1918; Maxim Gorky, 1921; Larisa Reisner, 1922; a series of Russian composers; several portraits of Lenin). He revived the art of the portrait miniature (depictions of Lydia Vychevzhanina, 1915; Zinaida Lukomskaya, 1916; Georgy Narbut, 1917 and others). He took part in the designing of the interiors and façade of the Hotel Metropole in Moscow (1902-07), decorated interiors in some private mansions, in the Yusupov Palace from 1912 to 1915; he produced designs of majolica panels for the church of the Life-Guards of the Moscow Regiment in Saint Petersburg (1906), the School House (1907), and the church built to mark 300 years of the House of Romanov (1914) in Moscow, and other buildings. He took part in the decoration of Petrograd for the first anniversary of the October Revolution (1918) and the first rest home for workers on Kamenny Island in Petrograd, and in planning the mass spectacle *The Siege of Russia* in honor of its inauguration (1920). He decorated articles with flowers, fruit, and figures; produced the first examples of propaganda porcelain (plates and dishes "Blessed be free labor!", *The Red Baltic Fleet*, "The reign of workers and peasants will never end", *The Hammer and Sickle*, *The RSFSR*, etc.); invented new shapes for vessels (the *Narkompros* [People's Committee for Education], *Plenipotentiary*, *Sheaves*, *Jubilee*, and other services, etc.), and statuettes (*Maternity*, *Street Vendor*, *Negro Woman*). His first venture in theatrical art was connected with the satirical theatre called *The Crooked Mirror*. He designed costumes and sets for Rostand's *La Princesse lointaine* for K. Nezlobin's theatre in Moscow (1916), sets for Andreï Bely's *Petersburg* at the Arts Theatre in Moscow and produced the sets for N. Vekstern's play *In 1825* (1925). In 1928 he went to Paris, accompanying an exhibition of modern Russian porcelain, and did not return. While abroad, he painted landscapes, still lifes, portrait miniatures, produced a number of decorative panels, engaged in porcelain decoration, jewelry, advertising and restoration; invented a new process of many-coloured printing from the same cylinder. He worked particularly in the theatre, for V. Nemchinova's *Théâtre des Champs-Elysées*, N. Balieff's cabaret-theatre *La Chauve-Souris*, and other companies. He died on 23 February 1936 in the town of Lörrach near Basel, Switzerland.

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# List of Works Classsed by Artist

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A		K	Arkady Plastov 1893-1972 Vassily Polenov 1844-1927 Vassily Pukirev 1832-1890 Illarion Pryanishnikov 1840-1894
Ivan Aivazovsky 1817-1900 Alexei Antropov 1716-1795 Abraham Arkhipov 1862-1930 Ivan Argounov 1727-1802		Vassily Kandinsky 1866-1944 Nikolaï Kasatkin 1859-1930 Orest Kiprensky 1782-1836 Pyotr Konchalovsky 1876-1956 Konstantin Korovin 1861-1939 Ivan Kramskoi 1837-1887 Nikolaï Krymov 1884-1958 Arkhip Kuindzhi 1842-1910 Alexander Kuprin 1880-1960 Boris Kustodiev 1878-1927 Pavel Kuznetsov 1878-1968	
B		R	Ilya Repin 1844-1930 Nicolai Roerich 1874-1947 Fyodor Rokotov 1735-1808 Andreï Roublev 1370-1430
Vassily Baksheyev 1862-1958 Leon Bakst 1866-1924 Alexander Benois 1870-1960 Victor Borisov-Musatov 1870-1905 Vladimir Borovikovsky 1757-1825 Karl Briullov 1799-1852		L	Nikolaï Sapunov 1880-1912 Martiros Saryan 1880-1972 Konstantin Savitsky 1844-1905 Alexei Sarasov 1830-1897 Zinaida Serebriakova 1884-1967 Valentin Serov 1865-1911 Mikhail Shibanov 1780-1821 Ivan Shishkin 1832-1898 Leondi Solomatkin 1837-1883 Konstantin Somov 1869-1939 Sergei Sudeikin 1882-1946 Vassily Surikov 1848-1916
C		M	
Marc Chagall 1889-1985 Sergei Chekhonin 1878-1936		Yevgeny Lanceray 1875-1946 Mikhail Larionov 1881-1964 Isaac Levitan 1860-1900 Dmitri Levitsky 1735-1822	Vladimir Makovsky 1846-1920 Kazimir Malevich 1878-1935 Philip Maliavin 1869-1940 Sergei Maliutin 1859-1937 Andrei Matveyev 1701-1739 Vassily Maximov 1844-1911 Grigory Miasoyedov 1834-1911 Amadeo Modigliani 1884-1920
D		N	
Alexander Deineka 1899-1969 Mstislav Dobuzhinsky 1875-1957 Nikolai Dubovskoi 1859-1918		Georgy Narbut 1886-1920 Jean-Marc Nattier 1685-1766 Mikhail Nesterov 1862-1942 Nikolai Nevrev 1830-1904 Pyotr Neradovsky 1875-1962 Ivan Nikitin 1688-1742	Vladimir Tatlin 1885-1953 Vassily Tropinin 1776-1857
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For centuries Russia had no great painters to speak of. Artists like Rublov concentrated nearly all their creative talent on the painting of icons. But with the accession to the throne of Peter the Great, the world of the European Enlightenment flooded into this large and reputedly backwards empire.

St. Petersburg emerged from the swamps as if by miracle, thanks to the genius of an Italian architect, and for more than a century it was a cultural epicenter. The all-powerful Tsars that followed, along with Catherine the Great, encouraged exchange between European and Russian artists. And from this exchange Russian painting was born, drawing strong inspiration from Italy and its colours, and combining this with the traditions of Russian art. It was not until the 19th century, however, that a true national style emerged, with the Itinerants and the Blue Rose group. The Revolution followed, and with it, the Russian avant-garde and modernism.

Throughout the book the author investigates Russian culture, which he finds to result from Eastern influences as much as Western. The illustrations reflect his analysis of these influences, and, covering all genres and styles, they add up to a stunning pictorial variety. The works of artists like Borovikovsky, Serov, Vrubel, Briullov, Fedotov, Repin, Shishkin and Levitan, among many others, here showcase the fundamental contributions these painters have made to the history of world art. Writing after the fall of communism, Peter Leek puts into perspective the history and evolution of Russian art.