

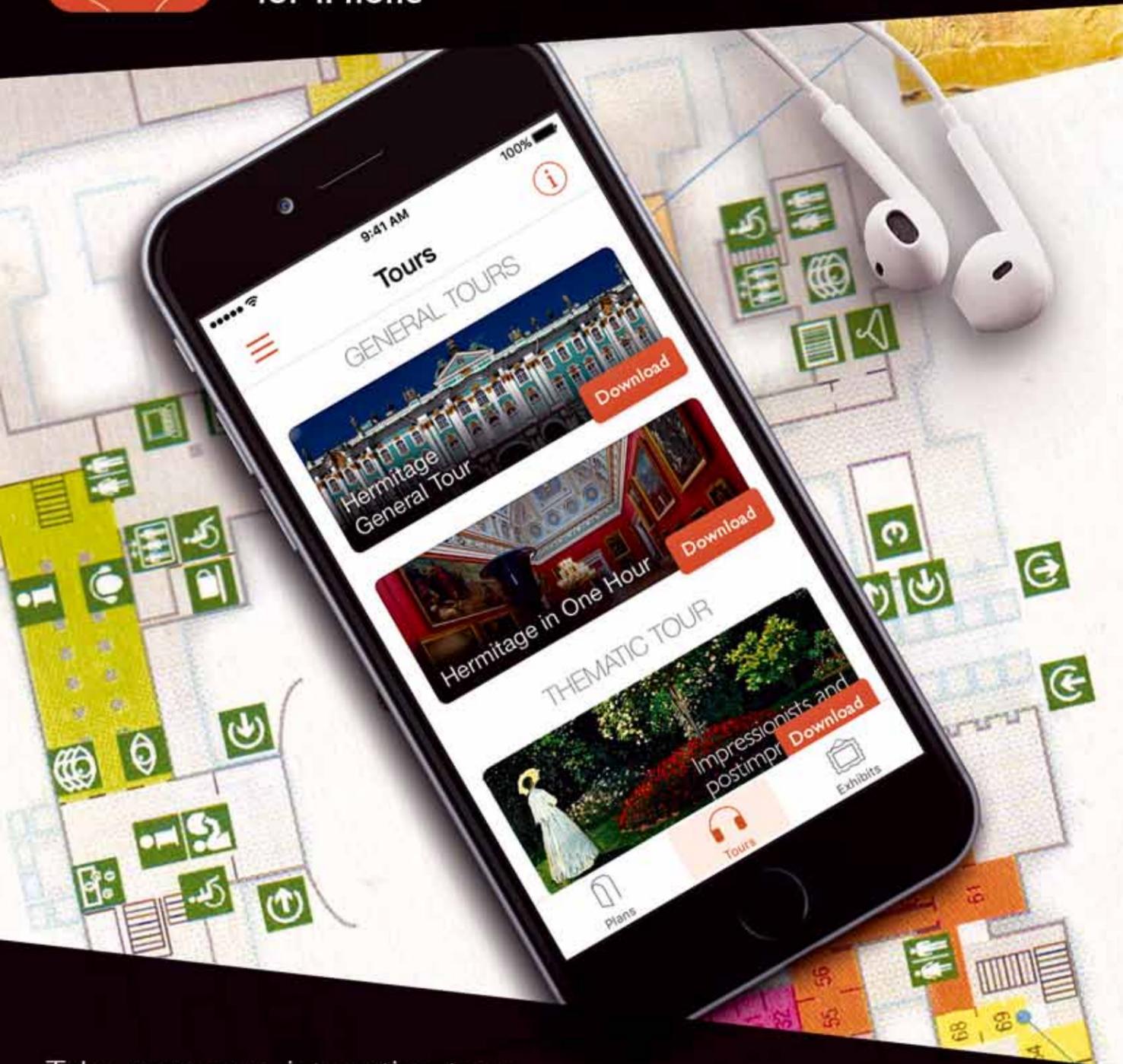
II

HERMITAGE
MAGAZINE





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IAN FABRE ◀ SHCHUKIN'S COLLECTION ◀ GARDENS
TONY CRAIG ◀ SCULPTURE IN THE PALACE
REALISMS ◀ ERTE ◀ OLYMPIA ◀



ISSN 2218-8789

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PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

WHY DO IT AT ALL?

Dozens of exhibitions, including many of modern art, play an essential role in the life of the Hermitage, consuming, at the same time, public and benefactors' money as well as the energy of the staff.

More than three and a half million visitors come to the Hermitage annually. They are primarily attracted by the permanent expositions, the museum's interiors and its reputation. The years of functioning of the new Museum annex, the General Staff building, have shown that the names of Peter and Catherine attract our guests more than Picasso and Matisse. The main charm of the Hermitage, as a matter of fact, is a profound, centuries long dialogue between objects, interior decoration, buildings, history and legends.

The Hermitage could merely perform its regular services and still have a constant flood of visitors. For that reason, we often hear from insiders as well as outsiders, "What do we need so many exhibitions for? There are already hundreds of museum exposition halls, whereas exhibitions take up a lot of the staff's time and effort!" Or, "Why should the Hermitage meddle with present-day art and risk its "standing"? Let its classic beauty be a feast for our eyes!" No doubt this is "empty rhetoric" and talking nonsense. Museums do mount exhibitions and will continue to do so, this actively being a key sign of their vitality. Museums have been expanding their repertoire in line with modern times as well as towards music and theatre, and people of extraordinary abilities.

This issue is particularly abundant with articles on modern art and the diversity of exhibitions. In fact, exhibitions serve as a main link between the museum and its regular visitors, who can duly appreciate new initiatives against the background of the permanent exposition. The key objective of the Hermitage's presentational activity is a dialogue with the Hermitage collection and traditions. To properly understand this dialogue, it is necessary to be a good judge of art in general and the Hermitage in particular. Without this knowledge of art, new exhibitions leave one indifferent or, as is often the case nowadays, hostile. The language of the museum has become complex and intricate, but this cannot be a cause for the simplification of artistic phraseology. It is the crowd of visitors flooding our permanent display that gives the Hermitage the rare privilege of ignoring common tastes and creating exhibitions for the chosen few: experts, art gourmets, connoisseurs,

who may help cultivate good taste in those who have not yet become gourmets but who would like to.

A serious social problem underlying this dispute concerns the question: who is to define the notion of the comprehensibility of art? Is it those who educate people to perceive and comprehend, or those who consider the level of their education and knowledge a reference standard and demand a reduction of the museum's vocabulary to colloquialism and slang?

Such questions arise in the context of modern art exhibitions. The state of affairs, as a matter of fact, is much more complicated. The articles on modern art in this publication are combined with the stories of people who create museum life, of the twentieth century and museum events. These stories tell the history of the earliest post-revolutionary new art exhibitions held in the Hermitage. They tell of the way Impressionist and Post-Impressionist collections were saved and returned to people (sometimes it is called the "split" of collections). Moreover, at a more profound level, it was art itself that was saved from destruction or sell out. Of similar nature are the unexpected accusations levelled at the Hermitage in the early 1990s, also discussed in this volume. Such attacks were numerous; they are plenty even now.

The viewers' aggression of today is quietly opposed by the diverse exhibition activity of the Hermitage, by displaying a variety of schools, names and methods - the fascinating world of international art in the selling of our museum. This diversity is meant to make people think and understand that what seems very simple is not, in fact, quite so simple at all. In the same way, clear and comprehensible things are not quite clear and may have a "false bottom" of connotations. Being a dynamic part of the museum exposition, exhibitions gradually make the viewer realize the main message of an encyclopedic museum, namely, that diversity is wonderful! This is a seemingly trivial idea, yet the aesthetic deafness and aesthetic aggression which go side by side in our world are evidence to the fact that the idea has not yet been accepted by the general public. If we succeed in implanting this idea in the minds and subconscious minds of people we will reduce not only aesthetic, but also social deafness and aggression. This, among other things, is a sacred duty of art and culture *per se*.

Mikhail Piotrovsky

HERMITAGE MAGAZINE

Founder: The State Hermitage Museum

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The Hermitage Museum XXI Century Foundation would like to thank **Semyon Mikhailovsky** (Commissioner of the Russian pavilion at the Venice Biennale), **Elena Borisenko** (First Vice-President of JSC "Gazprombank"), **Nikolay Kropachev** (Rector of St. Petersburg State University), **Lusy Lead** (The Wedgwood Museum, UK), **Anna Myskova, Nikolay Palazhchenko** (Art Basel) for ideas, attention, and a friendly support of the magazine.

Special thanks to:

Svetlana Adaxina, Marina Antipova, Elena Getmanskaya, Larisa Korabelnikova, Ekaterina Sirakonyan, Vyacheslav Fedorov, Maria Khaltunen, Marina Tsyguleva (The State Hermitage Museum)

ISSN 2218-0338

Founding Company: **The State Hermitage Museum**

Publisher: **The Hermitage Museum XXI Century Foundation**

The State Hermitage Magazine is registered as a media publication, registration number PI FS77-38126 issued 24 November 2009 by the Federal service for supervision of communications, information technology and mass communication (Roscomnadzor).

Circulation 3 500 copies.

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Size: 231 × 285 mm

For subscription information in Saint-Petersburg please contact:

SZA Pressinform, tel: **+7 (812) 335-97-51**; subscription reference 41093 (Russian edition), 41094 (English edition)

Printing house **PNB Print (Riga)**

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The Hermitage Museum XXI Century Foundation

An independent private Russian foundation supporting projects and programs of The State Hermitage Museum in accordance with appropriate general agreements. Publisher of The State Hermitage Magazine
 19 Bolshaya Morskaya Street, St. Petersburg, 191186. Telephone/fax: **+7 (812) 312-02-30**



COVER:

Brooch in the form of a stag beetle

Russia, Saint-Petersburg, 1908–1917. Unknown workshop
 Gold, pearls, diamonds, opals, sapphires, rubies. Art. 6,7 cm

Hallmarks: "BB"? (Nipped incomplete) — masters of The St. Petersburg District Assay Administration 1908–1917 with a sample of gold №56 on foot: identification marks of The St. Petersburg District Assay Administration 1908–1917
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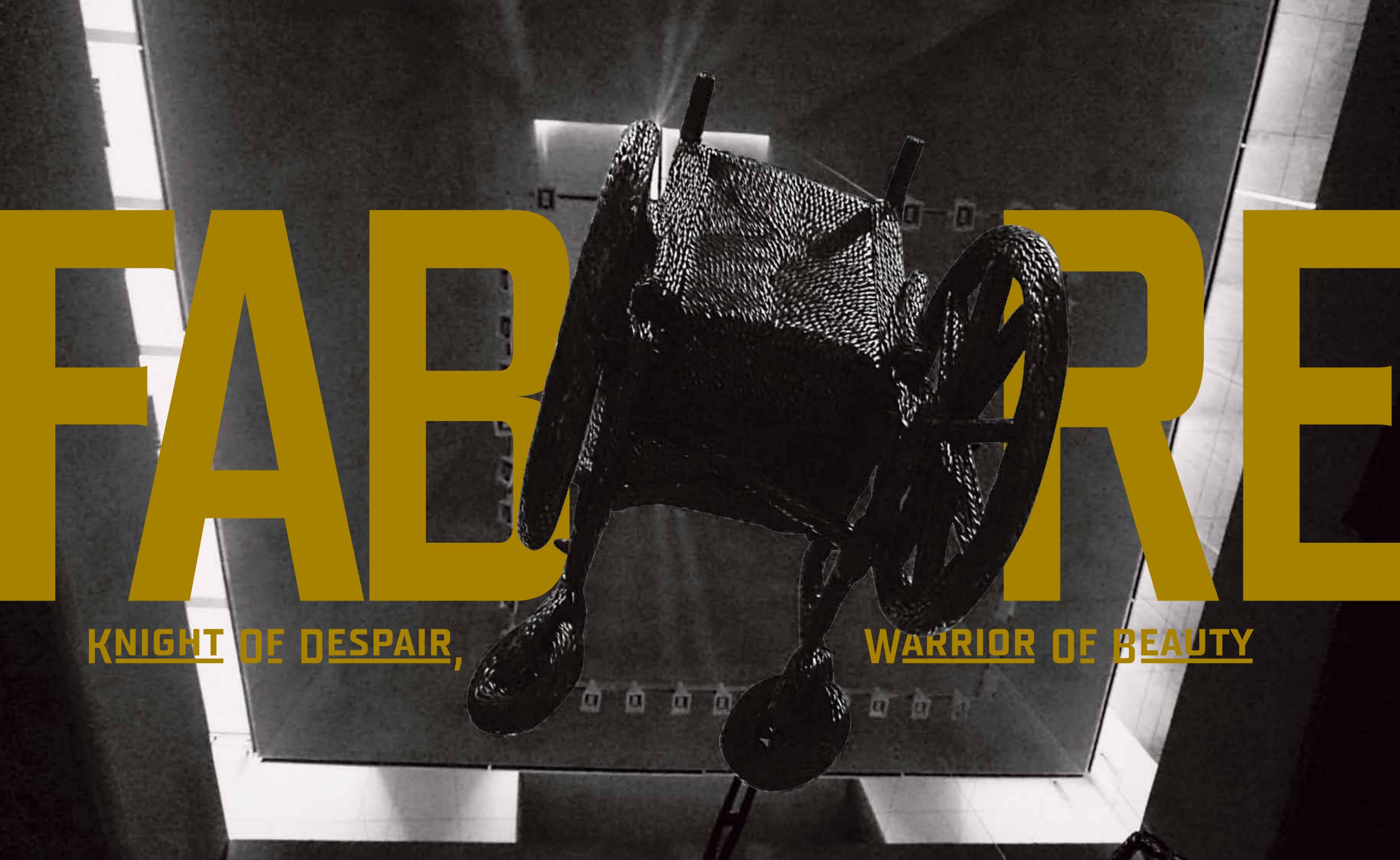


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FABRICE



KNIGHT OF DESPAIR,

WARRIOR OF BEAUTY



OCTOBER 2016 – APRIL 2017

THE IDEA OF THE EXHIBITION APPEARED AFTER JAN FABRE HAD CREATED A TEMPORARY EXHIBITION AT THE FLANDERS AND THE NETHERLANDS ROOMS AT THE LOUVRE. IN THE HERMITAGE HALLS, THIS "SKETCH" DEVELOPS INTO A MAJOR ART EVENT THAT SPARKS GREAT INTEREST AND A LOT OF DEBATE. THE LARGE EXHIBITION OF THE MOST FAMOUS CONTEMPORARY BELGIAN ARTIST CONSISTS OF OVER 200 ARTWORKS, FOR WHICH A PART HAS BEEN SPECIALLY CREATED BY FABRE.

JAN FABRE (BORN 1958, ANTWERP) IS AN ARTIST AND DIRECTOR WHO USES HIS ARTWORKS TO SPECULATE IN A LOUD AND TANGIBLE MANNER ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH, PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS, AND ABOUT THE CRUELTY CHARACTERISTIC OF BOTH ANIMAL AND HUMAN WORLDS. GRANDSON OF A FAMOUS ENTOMOLOGIST, JAN FABRE WIDELY USES AESTHETICS FROM THE ANIMAL WORLD.



PHOTO: SVETLANA DATSENKO

SEPTEMBER 2015: FIRST DISCUSSION OF THE EXHIBITION PLAN IN THE HALLS OF THE HERMITAGE

HE USES BEETLE SHELLS, ANIMAL SKELETONS AND HORNS, AS WELL AS STUFFED ANIMALS AND IMAGES OF ANIMALS IN VARIOUS MATERIALS. THE LIST OF UNUSUAL MATERIALS GOES BEYOND THAT AND COVERS BLOOD AND BLUE BIC INK.

AS EMPHASIZED BY THE ARTIST AND ACKNOWLEDGED BY CRITICS AND RESEARCHERS, HIS ART GOES BACK TO THE TRADITIONS OF CLASSIC FLEMISH ART, WHICH HE ADMIRES. PETER PAUL RUBENS AND JACOB JORDAENS ARE HIS MAJOR INSPIRATIONS, AND DISCERNING VISITORS WILL BE ABLE TO SEE THIS FOR THEMSELVES. DURING THE EXHIBITION PERIOD, FABRE'S WORKS HAVE BECOME PART OF THE MUSEUM'S PERMANENT EXPOSITION AND ENTER INTO DIALOGUE WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGED MASTERPIECES OF WORLD ART.

PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

I'M A DWARF IN THE LAND OF GIANTS

**ZINAIDA PRONCHENKO SPOKE WITH JAN FABRE
BEFORE THE OPENING OF HIS EXHIBITION AT THE HERMITAGE**

Tell us, what are you preparing for your "Knight of Despair, Warrior of Beauty" exhibition at the Hermitage? Will it overlap in any way with your project in the Louvre in 2008?

No, the idea of this exhibition is completely different. Dmily Ozerkov and I chose the Hermitage's Flemish halls for my exhibition, seeing as the Hermitage is famous for its collection of Rubens and his pupils, the little Dutch masters. My exhibit has very clear dramaturgy: we begin with the Prolo-Renaissance and lapestries, and finish with Jordaens and Snyders. It's a kind of dialogue between the classics and modernity. I also have several installations in the General Staff building. But I'm not going to tell you everything. Come see it for yourself.

Are you going to hold this dialogue on equal terms? Do you consider yourself part of the Flemish school, or are you, maybe, part of a different tradition?

No, of course not. I'm a dwarf in the land of giants. But, naturally, sixteenth and seventeenth century Flemish painting has had a strong influence on me. Probably Hieronymus Bosch most of all. I think the connection to his work can easily be traced in my art. This year, the curators of the museum in his home town of Herlogenbosch invited me to take part in an anniversary exhibition, as a kind of counterpoint to Bosch. He's my teacher. I've stolen many ideas and images from him; you know, his painting is like the subversive activity of a revolutionary working on his own. He was married to a very rich woman, and that gave him a certain independence from the powers that be, and allowed him to criticize the church and nobility. So yes, in this sense, I suit the tradition.

You've worked a lot in the genre of performance, and at a certain moment you shifted to theater; what is the difference between these two types of art for you?

You know, what I do is "uniting" different types of art, genres, etc. Theater is different from performance in one small detail. A performance, ideally, is done only once. I started in the 1980s, and in many ways, I managed, hopefully, to reform the genre. I applied the concept of real time / real action. And I never repeated my performances. In addition, performance is ontologically at the opposite pole from theater. It's not about acting, or pretending.

Who do you imagine your audience to be? Is it made up of theatergoers or adepts of contemporary art?

If a person loves art, then that person is interested in everything in art that is interesting. But jokes aside, I design each exhibition as a theatrical performance. My exhibitions are organized like a story board, so both theatergoers and contemporary art lovers will find something for them at the Hermitage. I don't like to explain it; there will always be a karmic connection between the viewer and the piece of art in my opinion, some kind of magic field independent from the artist.

Your performance in the Louvre was called "Art kept me out of jail/the museum". Should we understand that to mean that you consider museums to be a kind of obsolete institution, and that art belongs to the people, that is, to the streets?

Not at all (*laughs*). That performance of mine also coincided with my exhibition entitled "The Angel of Melamorphosis". Why? Because it brings us back to my old work from the 1980s, dedicated to Jacques Mesrine. At that time, Mesrine was still French Public Enemy Number One, and I couldn't mention his name. You know who Mesrine was. He was the greatest



PHOTO: ANGELOS BYBA

JAN FABRE
Searching for Utopia
Piazza della Signoria, Florence



robber ever, with a pronounced tendency for travesty. Often, after robbing a bank or a jewelry store, he stuck on a mustache, put on a wig, imitated a provincial accent, and joined the crowd of onlookers, even asking the police: "What's going on, what happened here?" He was an absolute genius, and my exhibition served as a sort of homage to his talent and his transformations. There is an additional meaning here too. The Louvre is actually the most important and best-equipped French jail. Just try to get inside, with all of those mechanisms, like in bank vaults... So there you go.

So here's a different question: what interests you in current events? Politics? Sports? Did you watch the 2016 European Cup?

No, all that doesn't interest me much. There's no politics in my art. I'm not interested in that at all. And sports even less so. There are plenty of artists who choose politics as their theme, and they do their work well. Good art, in my opinion, should be above politics and any kind of political bias. Good art is absolutely abstract. If anything has influenced me, it's science. I was quite interested in entomology in my youth; you know, of course, that Jean-Henri Fabre was my relative. I worked with Edward O. Wilson, and made a film with Giacomo Rizzolatti. Basically, science has been my Eros from the very beginning.

You once worked on joint projects with Marina Abramovich. Which of your colleagues would you like to work with today? Which modern Russian artists do you know?

I'll be patriotic. I am very pleased with the current generation of Belgian artists. I'm a big fan of Luc Tuymans, and Michaël Borremans. In theater and dance there's the phenomenal Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. So we're living in an interesting epoch. Among Russian artists, I love Kabakov. I've worked with him. We made two films together. Actually, they're going to be shown at the Hermitage exhibition.

Do you think art will ever return from Benjamin's "mechanical reproduction" to a more hands-on process, relatively speaking?

I don't know, but I continue to do everything myself, with my own hands. Unlike my dear colleagues Jeff Koons or Damien Hirst, who hire an army of assistants, I have only three assistants myself. And to this day I work at night, sculpting, drawing. That's the point of art, and the main pleasure in it too. I have to clarify one thing here: there's a hostile view that contemporary art is too conceptual, logocentric and, therefore, theoretical, in other words that there is no place for craftsmanship in it. As for me, I believe that this quality does not define contemporary art as a whole, but only one particular artist or another. Rubens was also logocentric, conceptual, and theoretical. You would need a special education to understand all the coded information in Rubens' work, all the different meanings and symbols, but this does not detract from his rich visuality. Here, take a look at my neck. I've got a pendant with an owl on it. What does that mean?

A symbol of wisdom.

No, it's a messenger of death. My mom gave it to me many years ago, when I was just a boy, and went to New York to become an artist. She said to me: "Don't overestimate your strength. You're only a human, a mortal shell, a bag of bones. Remember that."

Well, alright. To finish up, what happened in Greece?

In Greece... what about it? I was asked by the Greek Prime Minister to be the Creative Director of the Alhens and Epidaurus Festival. I agreed. I started choosing young artists, and, let's just say, I didn't want to invite art functionaries. Then I got a call again from the ministry, and they said you can't do that, that those are honored, respectable people. And I answered that being honored does not mean being a good artist. Politicians live in the space of compromise, but I am an artist, and for me compromise equals death. We had to stop our cooperation. That's it.

Jan Fabre's exhibition "Knight of Despair, Warrior of Beauty" is running in The State Hermitage Museum from October 2016 to April 2017. The exhibition curators are the artist himself and Dimitri Ozerkov, Director of the Department of Contemporary Art at The State Hermitage Museum.



● PHOTO: PAT VERBRUGGEN / ANGELUS BVBA



JAN FABRE
Merciful Dream (Pieta V)
2011
White Carrara marble
Statue size: 190 × 195 × 110 cm
Base size: 270 × 40 × 180 cm

FROM THAT DAY ONWARDS HE NEVER LIFTED THE METAL VISOR FROM HIS FACE *

DIMITRI OZERKOV
● PHOTO: ALEXANDER LAVRENTIEV



THE EXHIBITION OF JAN FABRE DISPLAYS EIGHT VIDEOS, INCLUDING A PERFORMANCE FILMED IN THE WINTER PALACE IN JUNE 2016 FEATURING THE ARTIST HIMSELF. DIMITRI OZERKOV, CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION, COMMENTS ON THE FILMING OF SOME SCENES TO CLARIFY THEIR MEANING.



1 ON SCREEN: The Knight of Despair and Warrior of Beauty is marching across the Great Courtyard from the main gate towards the main entrance. His visor is lowered. The hinges on both sides of the helmet make him look like a steel beetle. His footsteps echo hollowly off the courtyard walls, conjuring up the image of the Commander's statue from the Don Juan legend. A contemporary art performance in the Baroque setting suddenly acquires medieval overtones.

OFF SCREEN: A host of photographers, sound engineers, assistants and stylists are bustling around the artist as the performance is being filmed. None of this, however, will be seen in the film to be presented at the exhibition.

2 ON SCREEN: The Knight stops on the Jordan Staircase of the Winter Palace. Here, in the shrine of Beauty, he no longer has to hide his face, for he is a Warrior of Beauty. Fabre takes his helmet off slowly: he lifts the visor, undoes the fastenings, carefully pulls the helmet off and places it on the floor at his feet.

OFF SCREEN: The helmet is a crucial element of the performance which symbolizes the beginning and the end of the journey. Taking off the helmet is a moment of sincerity; it is a sign of revelation which brings the Knight closer to his ideal — Beauty.

3 ON SCREEN: The Knight's journey takes him through the stately rooms of the palace. He steps over the rope barrier in the Small Throne Room and reverentially approaches the portrait of Peter the Great, where the Russian emperor is represented standing next to goddess Minerva. The Knight lingers in front of the portrait gazing at it in admiration, then moves on.

OFF SCREEN: We are all worried that he will trip over the rope barrier with his armour.



* _____ A Poor and Simple Knight by Alexander Pushkin (translation by James E. Falen)



In the Armorial Hall the Knight kisses the gilded objects as if they were sacred. When he gently presses his lips against the gold, the pompous Neo-Classical décor undergoes a sudden transformation: the gold regains its original symbolic meaning as a noble and sacred metal which serves as a setting for Beauty and guards it with its magic power.

4

ON SCREEN:

The performance was staged in the authentic museum environment, with all the rope barriers, benches and chairs remaining in their usual places. Any obstacles the Knight encounters during his journey have to be stepped over or moved aside. However, after stopping in front of objects of beauty for meditation or a reverential kiss, he immediately returns the velvet ropes and furniture to where they belong.

OFF SCREEN:

The Hermitage curators and security staff accompanied the artist throughout the performance and closely followed all his movements. The route, however, had been planned in advance: the Knight paved the way that the visitors of the exhibition would take. They will have to follow his example and, just like him, worship the great beauty.



ON SCREEN:

Fabre enters the Rubens Room, where he finds several female painters copying Rubens's precious works. Having bowed down to Rubens, the Knight proceeds to pay tribute to the Flemish artist's devotees and gently kisses each copyist on the cheek. The beauty of the women is evidence of the presence of beauty in the world.

OFF SCREEN:

Traditionally art students copy the classical works in the Hermitage rooms every Monday. We specifically asked them not to leave and to carry on with their work during the filming. Kissing was a completely improvised move.



ON SCREEN:

The performance ends in the Knights' Hall with its stunning Cavalcade composition. The tired Knight solemnly takes his place in the centre of the room, regains his helmet (brought there by some mysterious force), puts it on, lowers the visor and freezes still in front of the equestrian group as if he were the commander. The museum now has a new sentry; the Warrior of Beauty is on patrol.



“THE ROOM OF CONTEMPORARY ART” IN THE STATE HERMITAGE FROM 1932–1937

EKATERINA LOPATKINA

CHANGES IN THE CULTURAL POLICIES OF THE SOVIET UNION AT THE END OF THE 1920s TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 1930s LED TO SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS IN THE WORK OF MUSEUMS. STARTING FROM THE END OF THE 1920s, MUSEUMS STARTED TO BE VIEWED MORE AND MORE OFTEN AS POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. HAVING AN IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCE ON MUSEUM-GOERS, AND THEIR POLITICAL EDUCATION BECAME THE MAIN GOAL OF MUSEUMS.

The First All-Soviet Union Excursion Workers Conference was held in November 1928 in Moscow, at which the current political requirements for museums' work were announced. One of the most important requirements was “to arrange temporary and permanent exhibitions on contemporary and particularly topical themes which would answer questions of interest and concern to the working class, and provide the opportunity to conduct propaganda work on the basis of the exhibition materials.”¹ The First All-Russian Museum Congress, which took place two years later, in December 1930, consolidated the earlier restructuring of the entire museum work field. The reorganization began even before the official opening date of the congress: the theses of keynote speakers' presentations were sent out in advance, having already been printed in November. One of the presentations that defined new approaches in museum work was the address by Yu.K. Milonov, Director of the Moscow Historical Museum, entitled “Targeted installations of museums of various types,” dedicated to the aims and objectives of museum work. “Absolutely all museums, without exception,” underlined Milonov, “whatever the object of their work, must disclose the universal laws of dialectics to the museum visitor through their museum materials: to showcase specific items in their genesis, development, and destruc-



Ekaterina Lopalkina in room #318
of The State Hermitage Museum

tion, showing the object of their work in all its interrelationships, in all its linkages, in all its mediations.”² The main purpose for historical museums was declared to be “showing not so much the history of culture, but rather the dialectics of development of social forms, the genesis, development, and destruction of social formations and their replacements, taking this development without fail up to the modern age.”³

The theme of the “modern age” was very important to the Hermitage in the 1930s. The exchange of exhibits between the Hermitage, the State Museum of New Western Art, and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts culminated in March 1931, following several years of cooperation. The Hermitage received 43 art works from the State Museum of New Western Art in February 1930, with these works being the first part of the collection of French painting from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The new arrivals, being works of Monet, Renoir, Degas, Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, and Picasso,⁴ were placed in the Hermitage's permanent exhibition, in room #57 (today — room #262). Negotiations continued over the course of a year, and by March 1931 the Hermitage received two more batches of exhibit items⁵. All of these items were displayed in the Hermitage (in the form of temporary exhibitions) as “paintings by new French artists” from March 7 to March 31, 1931, in the same room #57.⁶ That said, this “gateway to modernity” did not cover the hot issues of the day, since the newly acquired art works related to the period of 1900–1910s, and did not meet the ideological requirements put forward in the 1930s for the content of contemporary art. To fulfill the idea of “directly affecting the consciousness and the will of the working masses, in particular with monuments of modern art, while activating people in the struggle for building socialism”⁷ was simply impossible using such materials. Instead, the Hermitage organized the “Room of Contemporary Art” to fill these ideological gaps.

The “Room of Contemporary Art” was located on the third floor of the Winter Palace, in room #415 (room #318 today). According to a 1932 guidebook⁸, this room was meant for “temporary exhibitions”, and was the final room — thematically and chronologically — that visitors to the exhibition “French Art of the Era of Industrial Capitalism” visited. Directly in front of the “Room of Contemporary Art,” in room 414, there were works of “imperialist art” and “art of the radical petty bourgeoisie, close to the proletariat.” The first category included works by Matisse, Picasso, Derain, van Dongen, de Vlaminck, Marquet, Vallotton, and Maillol, while the second included the prints and drawings of Steinlen and Masereel.

The curator of this exhibition was Valentin Friedrichovich Miller (1896–1938), an “active member of the department of industrial capitalism”. He joined the Hermitage's Painting Gallery staff in 1929 and worked at the museum until 1937⁹. His research interests included the history of Western European art of the nineteenth century. Miller published several scientific papers in the second half of the 1930s, including on Gustave Courbet, Adolph Menzel, and Nicolas Poussin, as well as a catalogue of the Hermitage part of the collection “Exhibitions of Belgian Art of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.”

The exhibition “French Art of the Era of Industrial Capitalism” was seen by Miller from the very beginning as a continuing exhibition. As justification for the exhibition being located on the third floor of the Winter Palace, one of the arguments given by Miller in the “Short explanatory memorandum on the plan for the new placement of the Western Art Department collection”¹⁰ was “having the capability of accommodating further growth in the contemporary art collection.” Miller also noted in June 1931 at a meeting of the Department of Western European Art: “The exposition of the era of industrial capitalism holds a special and highly responsible position — it is directly connected to the modernity. Entering the modern world must be done not only in the last room of contemporary art, but throughout the whole exhibition.”¹¹

According to the State Hermitage's production plan, by the end of 1932 the “Room of Contemporary Art” was supposed to feature works of contemporary Western European masters as part of its permanent collection, received in exchange for paintings and sculptures of Soviet artists. In this connection, the Department of Western European Art planned scientific research on the theme “The Art of Contemporary Europe”. The employees T.L. Lilovaya, V.F. Miller, and Zh.A. Malsulevich were to gather material by August 1, and to make a floor plan of the exhibition by October 1.¹²

The idea was clear: the works of Soviet artists that were meant to be exchanged for Western art works could be bought for rubles, or received as gifts, which made it possible not to spend valuable state foreign currency funds for the Western works. This was not a new scheme: it had already been used successfully at the end of the 1920s by the State Museum of New Western Art. At that time, in exchange for works by T.A. Alexandrova, K.F. Bogayevsky, G.C. Vereysky, V.V. Voinov, V. Bubnov, L.F. Zhegin, B.A. Zenkevich, N.V. Kaluzhin, P.P. Konchalovsky, A.V. Kuprin, S.I. Lobanov, Yu.L. Obolensky, V.E. Pestel,

PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

M.C. Rodionov, A.G. Tyschler, and D.P. Shlerenberg, the museum received its Italian drawing collection featuring works by A. Tozi, A. Salielli, F. Casorati, F. Carena, G. de Chirico, A. Funi, and others.¹³

The acquisition of paintings by contemporary Soviet artists for the Hermitage exchange was entrusted to the Deputy Director for Enlightenment, P.Y. Irbitov, while the further exchange was managed by I.A. Kisil'syn, the Scientific Secretary of the museum. The intermediary of the exchange was supposed to be VOKS — the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.¹⁴ But for unknown reasons, it didn't work out to conduct the purchase,¹⁵ and at the beginning of 1932 it became clear that organizing a permanent exhibition in the "Room of Contemporary Art" was in jeopardy.

A forced decision was taken at this point to organize a series of exhibitions dedicated to modern Western European art instead of a permanent exhibition "giving priority attention to proletarian art and to other styles close to it."¹⁶ This decision was reflected in the Hermitage guidebook in 1932, in the wording of "temporary exhibitions." The State Hermitage archives contain a document that makes it possible to accurately date this initiative: a memorandum from T.L. Lilovaya, the Head of the Department of Western European Art, to B.V. Legran, Museum Director, dated May 23, 1932:

"To the Director of the State Hermitage

Considering the absence of contemporary art works in the State Hermitage, the Department of Western Art considers it expedient to use "The Room of Contemporary Art" for temporary exhibitions of modern art, predominantly of proletarian art, and to use part of the funds allocated to "The Room of Contemporary Art" for these exhibitions. Currently the State Hermitage can count on receiving the following three exhibitions from Moscow:

- an exhibition of proletarian Dutch artists
- an exhibition of photo montage works by John Heartfield
- an exhibition of the John Reed Club

The costs for holding each one of these exhibitions is about 300 rubles, based on the following budget:

- 1 — business trip of a State Hermitage employee to Moscow — 140 rubles
 - 2 — transportation of art works both ways — 60 rubles
 - 3 — packaging — 50 rubles
 - 4 — unbudgeted expenses — 50 rubles
- Total — 300 rubles.

Department Head, T. Lilovaya
May 23, 1932."¹⁷

The Director accepted the idea: two more documents are dated May 24 — a request to VOKS, in which the Hermitage asks not to deny the exchange of the exhibits held in the State Museum of New Western Art, and an authorization document for N.V. Kuranov, Head of the Restoration Department at the Hermitage, to receive the exhibits."¹⁸

The Hermitage also sent a request in June 1932 for an exhibition of works by the German artist Käthe Kollwitz, however, the exhibition organizers — the Vsekokhudozhnik artists cooperative — already had an agreement with VOKS to hold the exhibition in Leningrad, at Lenizoo, where Kollwitz's works, according to historical documents, had already been kept since the beginning of June 1932.¹⁹ Instead, VOKS offered the Hermitage to hold an exhibition on German architecture, which was supposed to take place in Moscow from September 15 to October 6, and afterwards could be sent to Leningrad. However, in order to hold the exhibition, no less than 400 sq. m. of "usable exhibition space" was needed, which "The Room of Contemporary Art" didn't have. As a result of these negotiations, the very first exhibition organized in "The Room of Contemporary Art" was entitled the "Exhibition of Revolutionary Dutch Artists" (October 1932 — May 1933)²⁰. The Heartfield exhibition never did take place in Leningrad, while the John Reed Club exhibition took place in the Hermitage in 1933.

Holding the Dutch exhibition was seen by the managers of the Department of Western European Art as the beginning of an important phase in their work, but at the same time, as a half-measure: "The task of including contemporary art, and in particular modern proletarian art, in the Hermitage collection, is one of the most pressing problems facing the department in the coming years. Serious attention must be paid to this task. Holding certain exhibitions that display contemporary material in a fragmented way, in a random sequence, is only a partial solution to the problem of creating a permanent exhibition, the



**THE ROOM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
IN THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM.
EXHIBITION OF "REVOLUTIONARY
DUTCH ARTISTS".
OCTOBER 1932**

presence of which would make similar exhibitions much more interesting at the same time. Considering that the exchange of art works is the only way for creating this department in the Hermitage, it is necessary to draw the attention of broad social circles to this issue, and, above all, the attention of arts organizations.”²¹

In the end, no permanent exhibition of contemporary art suiting the requirements originally intended for the exhibition — with works by proletarian artists — was compiled at the Hermitage. Temporary exhibitions of contemporary art were also few: after the “revolutionary Dutch artists,” the museum also displayed works by the American John Reed Club in 1934, and then held exhibitions of Belgian and Czechoslovak art in 1937. All of these exhibitions were organized from outside the museum, and with active cooperation of VOKS. The Hermitage did not have its own exhibition policy. We know of only one attempt by T.L. Lilovaya, who at the time was the Deputy Director of the Hermitage, to independently organize an exhibition, being one of the contemporary artist Mela Muler (Melania Mulermilch, 1876–1967) in 1935. Lilovaya met Muler when Lilovaya was on a business trip to Paris. In her address to the People’s Commissar A. Bubnov, she, with her characteristic frankness, asked him “to instruct our embassy in Paris to organize the delivery of Mela Muler and her paintings in our ship to Leningrad” and to “give the Hermitage 1000 rubles in gold for purchasing the art works.” Bubnov gave this request to the Hermitage Director, I.A. Orbeli, since he, as the Director, “should take care of such things.”²² We don’t know how the discussion ended, but we do know that no exhibition of Mela Muler works took place either in 1935, or later. The exhibitions of 1937 were — factually — the end of “The Room of Contemporary Art” project. At a later time, starting from the 1950s, the Hermitage held many exhibitions of contemporary artists. That said, up until the 2000s the Hermitage did not have a special direction of work on contemporary art. Only 80 years after the “Room” closed, in 2007, did the Hermitage hold the exhibition “America Today,” the first project of the “Hermitage 20/21” series, meant to show and collect the works of 20th and 21st century artists.

1. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1 op. 17 d. 1005 l. 1.
2. First All-Russian Museum Congress: presentation theses. Moscow–Leningrad, 1930. p. 9.
3. Ibid, p. 6.
4. The State Hermitage — A Museum of the History of Culture and Art. Quick Reference Guide with Map. Moscow, Leningrad: Lenizogiz, 1932. p. 25.
5. Malveev V.Yu. The “solitary” Hermitage, or an exhibition mosaic. Materials on the history of the museum’s exhibition activities: exhibitions in the Hermitage and in the centers of The State Hermitage. Research and reference book. V. 1. St. Petersburg, 2014. p. 283.
6. First All-Russian Museum Congress, p. 50.
7. The State Hermitage, p. 45.
8. Miller was arrested for being an “Estonian spy” in December 1937, sentenced to death, and shot on January 18, 1938.
9. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 5. d. 1071 l. 9.
10. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 5. d. 1186. l. 61.
11. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 17. d. 220 l. 4.
12. Catalogue of the State Museum of New Western Art. Illustrated publication. Moscow: State Museum of New Western Art, 1928. p. 8.
13. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 17. d. 220. l. 4.
14. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 5. d. 1371a. l. 24–25.
15. Ibid.
16. **Taliana L’vovna Lilovaya (1899–1980)** graduated in Fine Arts Academy in 1925 with a degree of the “artist-sculptor.” In the late 1920s she worked in the Museum of the Revolution. She came to The Hermitage in 1930 and worked there for 6 years, from 1930 to 1934th — as the Head of the Section of Western European art, and from 1934 to 1936th — as the deputy director for scientific work. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 13. d. 481.
17. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1. op. 17. d. 223. l. 151.
18. Ibid. p. 149.
19. State Hermitage Archive, f. 1 op. 17. d. 223. l. 22, 90, 133.
20. Malveev V.Yu. The “solitary” Hermitage, p. 285; State Hermitage Archive f. 1. op.5. d. 1371a. l. 24.
21. Ibid. p. 24–25.
22. Central State Archive of Literature and Art, St. Petersburg f. 5 op. 1 d. 5a l. 16–17.

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The State Hermitage Museum

Jan Fabre

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СОСАКА

V.D.N.H. AN URBAN PHENOMENON

ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEW AND ANCIENT RUINS, CULTURAL RIGHTS, FASHIONABLE TOTALITARIANISM, INSULTING OF FEELINGS, AND MUCH MORE — IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY AND SEMYON MIKHAILOVSKY, DEDICATED TO THE RUSSIAN PAVILION EXHIBITION AT THE XV ARCHITECTURAL BIENNALE IN VENICE.

VENICE
MAY-NOVEMBER 2016

Mikhail Borisovich, how well do you know the V.D.N.H. ? How important is it to preserve complexes like this?

For me this is, above all, a space. A park, a city, if you like, which has its own streets, squares, side-streets, and which it is pleasant to walk through. I'm very fond of walking. So for me the V.N.D.H. has not changed very much over the decades; the main thing is that its original structure has been preserved — the precise contents of the pavilions are not all that important, as far as I'm concerned. Even when its content has changed, the V.D.N.H. has remained an attractive place — a park, a labyrinth with what might be called ruins, among which it is pleasant to wander. The question of whether complexes like this should be preserved does not even arise: a monument is a monument precisely in order that it should be carefully preserved for subsequent generations. Even if there are people who think that it's not worth it. Many thought Moscow's high-rises an example of absolute lack of taste. Now, on the contrary, no one would call them that. It's the same with all Neoclassical architecture — whether Stalinist or Washingtonian. Monuments should be preserved because they are monuments. There is an academic discipline known as 'Preservation of monuments'. And there are the 'rights of culture' proclaimed by Dmitry Likhachev. Our business is to keep things safe. And to exhibit them when public interest awakes — when, if you'll allow me to say so, they become fashionable.

Do you think totalitarianism is currently in fashion?

There is undoubtedly a fashion today for totalitarian art. And not just in our country, but all over the world.

What is the reason for this? Does it lie in an affectation of optimism?

You know, I wouldn't say the mood is optimistic. These are buildings which are very oppressive. Slabs cannot be optimistic. The columns of Palmyra, even when they are ruined — yes; but the columns of the Capitol — no, they are too oppressive. But all that has indeed suddenly begun to seem perfectly worthy compared with what came afterwards. The past needs to be treated with care, with respect. Because all debunkings and denunciations invariably come back to you like a boomerang. Sooner or later, there always comes a generation which needs precisely the majesty of the past epoch. This is true of monuments too. Never complain about a monument — whether it's to Alexander II or Lenin. And never destroy



VIEWS OF V.D.N.H.

a monument — whether it's a Muslim sacred site or a Christian one. Don't touch anything. Everything is anyway destroyed by time. It's our human duty to care for things.

All the same, it seems to me that humans rarely follow advice. Just think of all those ancient temples that were reconstructed in medieval times.

There are people who protect heritage. And there are people who destroy heritage. You have to keep in mind that if you are cultured, you should be on the side of protecting heritage, even if you're creating a Christian basilica in an ancient temple. Changes like this are also part of the life of the monument. Think of the Byzantine Museum in Athens, where there has been wonderful restoration of a piece of the Byzantine Parthenon, or the mosque in Damascus, which is based on the Temple of Zeus. We don't ask ourselves which is best — the Parthenon or the basilica, the Temple of Zeus or the mosque.

I should say it again: History uses us as an instrument. And an instrument should not start giving itself airs, as if it's a creator. We need a certain humility in our attitude to monuments: the very fact that they have been preserved means that there is sense in their preservation. The V.D.N.H. survived the havoc of the 1990s — so that must be what History wants, and we are obliged to treat this fact with appropriate respect. The ZIL factory, for instance, has not survived and today there's an entirely new city block going up in its place. The V.D.N.H., on the other hand, is alive; our task is to try to understand the secret of its endurance. We can think about how to use this experience. Or we can simply gaze in wonder at what has survived. This is already an archaeological monument to a certain extent.

What we are practicing now is Soviet archaeology. When do you think we shall be able to approach the V.D.N.H. without emotion? When shall we be able to see it not as a totalitarian monument, but as a monument of architecture?

Ideological considerations, of course, get in the way of seeing things objectively. But at a certain moment these considerations fall away, to be replaced by archaeology — and archaeology is completely indifferent to whether it has to deal with Christian monuments, Muslim monuments, Soviet monuments, or non-Soviet monuments... As far as I can see, for this to happen more than one generation will have to pass. If, of course, our perception does not become more acute. Because now, for instance, there is a lot of fuss being whipped up about offending people's feelings: there is this idea that a work of art can offend the general public. This is a very delicate question. Is it only modern art which offends, or does old art offend as well? In the latter case we can expect a generation which will be offended by a nude by Rubens... That's why I talk about the need to treat monuments with humility: to judge them is wrong and inappropriate. Judging is the work of the newspaper commentator, not the historian.

Or I can give another example from the present time. The Hermitage is currently showing the Kore statue from the Acropolis Museum. The exhibition includes a screen showing the statues as they were when they were painted different colours. To a modern person this is something frightful — a desecration of good taste! For European art ancient art is art without any colours, without any tricks, without superfluous eroticism. But that was never how things were.

You want to say that we ourselves create myths — about monuments, and about art in general?

Yes, we create images, we create myths. And this is what museums are all about. For instance, I've just been in Yekaterinburg explaining at length that we should create a myth about the Hermitage in Sverdlovsk during the war.

You think the V.D.N.H. needs to do the same thing — to create a myth?

Yes, I think a myth is the most effective way of preserving a monument.

What's more, myths come in a great variety of guises. Remember, for instance, how new art used to be presented at the Hermitage: Poussin is good, Cezanne is terrible, but we have no choice but to show the latter's work. And this humiliating myth helped preserve and exhibit that for which the general public was not ready.

Let journalists and ministers create myths. The main thing is that this should help preserve monuments. Look at Palmyra. The main thing now is evidently to describe and record. Our task is to study how each monument lies in ruins. Whether we restore it or not is a question which remains open. But before we tackle that, we need to record how the monuments lay after the war, because this is where History has brought us.

How do we distinguish the new ruins from the old ones? What can be restored and what is beyond restoration? Where does this dividing line run?

There are no ready answers here; this is always a matter for serious professional discussion. Often, the ruins are beautiful in themselves. Think of the Temple of Garni in Yerevan, which suffered during the earthquake: its ruins made a grand impression and then the temple was restored. And what of it? Well, it's a stone temple of no great size...

You mean ruins are more majestic by definition?

Not all ruins, but it's true that in many cases they're more majestic. They have this aesthetic. And then all ruins are different. Take, for instance, the Near East: Palmyra has ruins of one kind; Apamea has a different kind; Gerasa has a third kind. Palmyra has the most beautiful ruins. These are standard Roman cities. But their ruins are all different. In one, one thing has been preserved, in another — another. Undoubtedly, ruins have their own aesthetic. Hubert Robert drew the ruins of the Louvre in order to understand the Louvre's essence.

John Soane showed future buildings in ruins.

That's a very good example. A ruin is a clone, a myth.

Let's go back to the V.D.N.H. It's also in some sense a ruin... Here you find pavilions of republics which have long since become independent states.

History is reflected best of all in architecture. There are numerous factors in its realization — and these include politics and economics. The V.D.N.H., of course, is a mirror of its age on a grand scale. A mirror which for many decades will be able to give an account of the history of the country — an account which is more vivid and more interesting than any museum.

Are you irritated by the fact that the V.D.N.H. is designed in such a strange style? With an abundance of décor.

But isn't the Winter Palace in the same style? So that's just further proof that it's not for us to judge heritage.

And when did you visit the V.D.N.H. for the first time?

When I was a small child. I remember the fountains. The Tobacco Pavilion, which was very beautiful. The Space Pavilion, which was in an altogether different aesthetic. It's very interesting to watch the site developing. The architecture of the pavilions differed, and it is this which makes the V.D.N.H. unique. I remember the Armenian Pavilion very well: it was so elegant and indeed conveyed the spirit of Armenia...

You talk about this with delight, but without nostalgia. And it seems to me that this is something which is important in archaeology.

The more academically we approach studying monuments, the more chance we have of preserving them. Nostalgia impedes this process.

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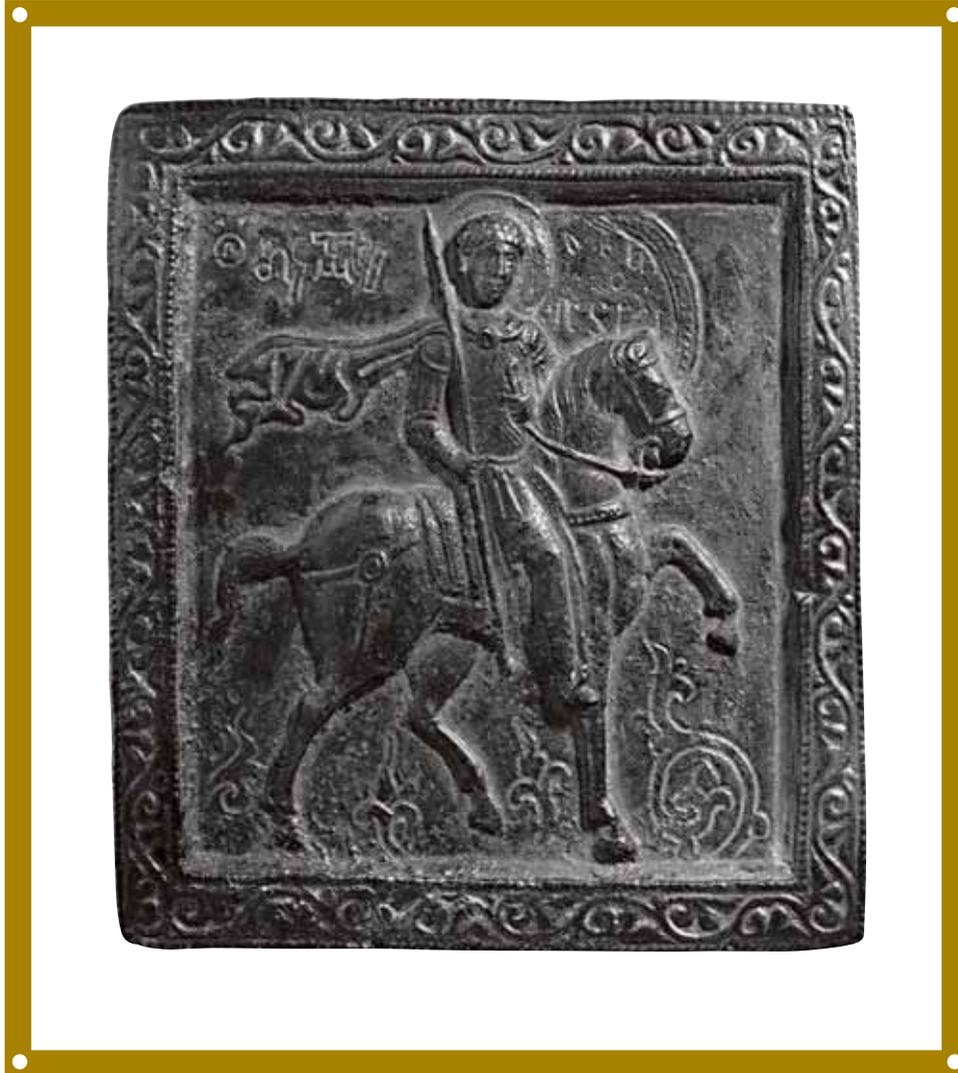
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ICON OF SAINT DEMETRIOS OF THESSALONIKI
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V.N. Zalesskaya. "Pilgrims", 20th International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Paris, 2001. The State Hermitage Museum Publishing House

"Pilgrimage is considered as spiritual purification, which came as a result of an encounter with passion relics, i.e. is comparable to the antique idea of catharsis."

"These are the sights you think you must visit,
wavering between sea and land alternately.
Turn now your eyes on the stupendous work of the artificer, Nature:
nowhere shall you see sight so marvelous in the crowded world of men."
Lucilius. Aetna



2

PARIS

"SERGEI SHCHUKIN'S COLLECTION,
THE STATE HERMITAGE, ST.PETERSBURG –
THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, MOSCOW"
LOUIS VUITTON FOUNDATION (FONDATION LOUIS VUITTON), PARIS
OCTOBER 2016

IN PARIS TOGETHER

MIKHAIL DEINKIN

THE THEME OF THE EXHIBITION WAS SELF-EVIDENT. ONE CAN HARDLY NAME ART COLLECTORS, APART, PERHAPS, FROM THE STEINS, WHOSE TASTE, CHOICE AND INSIGHT AFFECTED PRESENT DAY ART AS STRONGLY AS THE MOSCOW BUSINESSMAN SERGEI IVANOVICH SHCHUKIN.

Fate was benevolent to him and cruel at the same time; both qualities exceeded human measure. Personal and family tragedies in his Old-Believers' family, that was unable to cope with the collision of the on-coming twentieth century, intertwined with Shchukin's remarkable artistic sensibility, which had developed in his later life. When he was in his fifties he came to appreciate the Impressionists and later Cézanne and Gauguin; in his sixties to understand Matisse and Picasso, which was totally against the received tastes of his contemporaries and against public opinion, his only judge being his soul.

At the same time, everything about him looked middle-class and respectable, without any extravagance. Rich but modest, *comme il faut* and unpretentious. Picasso's friend Fernande Olivier described Shchukin as "a small inconspicuous-looking man, pale, with a big head and a face resembling a piggy mask. His severe slammer caused him suffering, he could hardly converse, which made him feel uneasy". His photos do not show the charming and open face of a clever and magnanimous person like Ivan Morozov portrayed by Valentin Serov. Rather he was Chekhov's "Man in a Suitcase", whose inner life remained a mystery. What drove him to seek out art works of fringe painters in Paris? No diaries or personal letters remained after him; nothing but dry business correspondence.

In the same way as in business, Shchukin's approach to art collecting is unhurried, thorough and systematic. He came from an art-loving family: four out of six brothers were art collectors, two of them, Piotr and Ivan – outstanding collectors. Long before Sergei, they found their way to Paul Durand-Ruel's picture gallery in Paris to buy Impressionists. Sergei Shchukin took a slow approach, cautiously examining the field. Who can now

**THE BUILDING
OF THE LOUIS VUITTON
FOUNDATION, PARIS**



PHOTO: MIKHAIL DEINKIN



PHOTO: MIKHAIL DEONKIN



SERGEI SHCHUKIN
c. 1900
Photograph. 14,2 × 10,3 cm
The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts,
Moscow

remember the names of his early purchases: Alfred Guillou, Maglen and Robert More? But to the eyes of an experienced viewer of the time they seemed so unlike the participants of the Salon that their strangeness put them somewhere close to Claude Monet. So it took quite some time for the Moscow businessman to appraise the artistic scene, to understand new trends and to identify true quality. With the understanding came the approach: Shchukin did not choose a school — Impressionism, or Fauvism, or Cubism — he chose the leader. This explains why he mainly decided on Monet, Matisse and Picasso.

The aesthetic feeling that led Shchukin, keenly reacted to the evolution of modern art at the turn of the century, when each year brought new revolutionary discoveries. An intuitive perception of the movement, of the sounds of the new times is given to few, to the chosen people who are able to trust their feeling, even though it may be in conflict with common sense and life experience. This is the lot of poets and philosophers. Shchukin was neither — he merely sold textiles. Or did he?

On the eve of the First World War Sergei Shchukin's house in Moscow was the only place on earth which concentrated everything that was vital, which was the essence of modern developments in French pictorial art. This house, where Matisse himself helped to arrange the exposition, became a major landmark in the history of Russian Futurism. It housed the "Shchukin Academy", which fostered the bloom of the Russian genius of the time.

His activity was not in direct competition with another art collection in Moscow — Ivan Morozov. Whenever Russian taste for French painting is mentioned, one cannot help thinking of works from Morozov's art collection. The situation with Shchukin was not that straightforward. In art collection as well as in life he could be one of a kind and unique in his ways, following tracks unseen to other people.

In 1913 he publishes the catalogue of his collection as if summing it up, which was illogical for an actively growing collection, changing its image after Shchukin's every visit to Paris. Yet Shchukin draws a final line, though his purchases continue. The last still-lives by Picasso were acquired from the art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler in June 1914 and delivered a few days before the war broke out. That was the end; the curtain fell. As for Russian art, Shchukin never collected it even in the isolation of the military years.

The walls of his Moscow mansion shone with brilliant works of Monet, Paul Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. The staircase was decorated by Matisse's "Music" and "The Dance", his works were also in most of the rooms: "Red Room (Harmony in Red)", "The Conversation", "Arabian Coffee-House" and a lot of other pictures that created the character of the collection. What impressed Shchukin's contemporaries was that all works by Picasso were assembled in one room; they were numerous and hang close to each other: modern art touched to the quick both artists and philosophers.

After the Socialist Revolution, when both collections were assembled in the State Museum of Modern Western Art, Shchukin and Morozov were seen by the general public almost as twin brothers, who collected everything new and beautiful. Previous exhibitions over the previous ten to twenty years, also inseparably linked these two very different people. The exhibition in Paris may give a chance to fully appreciate Shchukin's "divine view" on art for the first time.

The recent catalogue contains all the information about Shchukin known hitherto. Included also is very recent information about the time and place of his purchases, as well as the price of the masterpieces. This can hardly lift the veil of mystery off this enigmatic person, who was the first to discover the true art of the twentieth century.



**MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY,
VLADIMIR SPIVAKOV,
SATI SPIVAKOVA AT THE OPENING
OF THE EXHIBITION
IN LOUIS VUITTON FOUNDATION,
PARIS. OCTOBER 2016**

PHOTO: BORIS PIOTROVSKY

FAMOUS COLLECTORS ARE KNOWN BY THEIR NAMES RATHER THAN BY THEIR PORTRAITS. THE MASTERPIECES FROM THEIR COLLECTIONS TELL US MORE ABOUT THEIR OWNERS THAN THEIR LIKENESSES. SERGEI IVANOVICH SHCHUKIN, WHOSE ART GALLERY WAS CALLED "THE MOSCOW ACADEMY OF NEW TASTE", WAS VERY LITTLE CONCERNED ABOUT HIS ICONOGRAPHY — THERE ARE BUT A FEW PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS OF HIM.

SHCHUKIN'S PORTRAITS

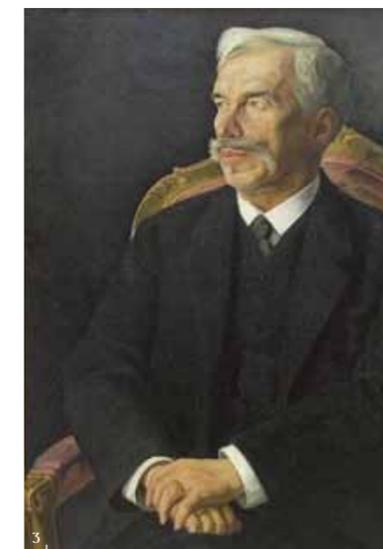
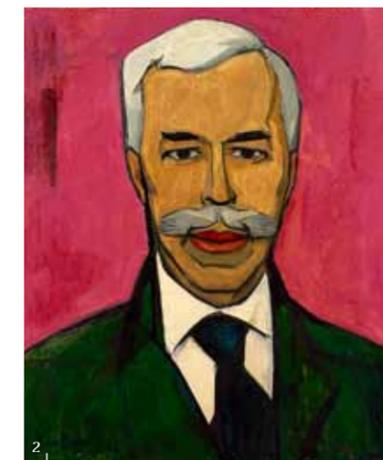
The first artist for whom Sergei Shchukin agreed to sit was his favourite painter Henry Malisse. In the summer of 1912, during a regular visit of the collector to Paris, Malisse made a big chalk drawing/sketch which was a slightly exaggerated portrait of Shchukin with his mouth from ear to ear, bulging lips and "Chinese slots of the eyes" inherited by Shchukin from the Bolkins, on his mother's line. Margerille, Malisse's daughter states that her father stopped working on the portrait when Shchukin got a telegram from Moscow, on the 12th of October, informing him about his brother's (collector Piotr Shchukin's) sudden demise. Malisse kept the preliminary drawing, which was subsequently presented by his son, Pier Malisse, to the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

When WWI began Russia was cut off from Europe and Shchukin, whose primary interest was French art and who for fifteen years purchased only foreign works, stopped replenishing his collection. No wonder that the rumour that Christian Krohn, ¹ a little known artist, was painting the collector's portrait, was a real bombshell for the artistic circles of Moscow. "By the way, here is the latest news of Moscow artistic life. Shchukin has pulled a trick — wrote the painter Heinrich Blumenfeldt to his wife, the painter Antonina Sofronova in May 1915. — "Wishing to have his portrait painted and unable to go abroad and, at the same time, faithful to his principles regard-

ing Russian artists, the collector went to the art studio of the Norwegian Krohn, one morning, and asked him to paint his portrait "as simply as possible". Krohn completed the portrait within two hours. Witnesses say it was a flat primitive face, resembling Shchukin's, that Krohn tucked into the collar and the top of his frock coat and seasoned everything with colours in the French-style". ²

Krohn started working on the collector's portraits in May and the chest-height portrait was finished by December 1915 as is evident from the signature and the date of the picture. ³

In parallel, the full length portrait was being painted to be completed by January 1916 (signed and dated) The portrait in full length shows a possible influence of Pablo Picasso and *Le Douanier* (customs officer) of Rousseau. By their generalized manner of drawing and their color scheme the portraits have a certain stylistic affinity to Malisse's works, which Krohn must have seen in Shchukin's collection. He may even have attended Malisse's "academies", because in 1907, when Malisse opened his art class, Krohn was still in Paris. The portrait in full length shows a possible influence of Pablo Picasso and *Le Douanier* (Customs Officer) by Rousseau. The background of red and white diamonds is reminiscent of the parquet floor in the study of the Znamenka mansion; in 1915 it almost completely belonged to Picasso.



SERGEI SHCHUKIN'S PORTRAITS ARE THE BEST KNOWN WORKS OF KROHN IN RUSSIA

¹ **CHRISTIAN CORNELIUS KROHN**
SERGEI SHCHUKIN'S PORTRAIT (FULL LENGTH)
1916. Oil on canvas 190 × 86,3 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

² **CHRISTIAN CORNELIUS KROHN**
SERGEI SHCHUKIN'S PORTRAIT (CHEST-HIGH)
1915. Oil on canvas 97,5 × 84 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

³ **DMITRY MELNIKOV**
SERGEI SHCHUKIN'S PORTRAIT
1914. Oil on canvas 91 × 64 cm
The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

¹ Christian Cornelius (Xan) Krohn (1882–1959) a Norwegian portrait and landscape painter. He was born in Norway, studied in Finland, was for some time an audit student at St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts, attended the art studio of Simon Hollósy in Munich, Academy Villi and Academy La Palette in Paris, where he joined the circle of Russian artists with the assistance of his wife, with whom he left for Kiev in 1908. Krohn was noticed for his portraits and landscapes at the exhibition of the group *Mir Iskusstva* ("World of Art") and the Salon of V.A. Izdebsky in Odessa and the exhibition of the group *Bubnovy Valei* ("Jack of Diamonds") in Moscow, where he moved in 1915. In 1918 Krohn left Russia and returned to Norway, continuing his artistic work.

² Sofronova A. Notes of the independent: Diaries. Letters. Memories. Moscow, 2001 p. 60 [in Russian].
Heinrich (Andrei) Malveevich Blumenfeldt (1893–1920) — artist, husband of the painter Antonina Sofronova (1892–1966).

³ See "Strana zhivitelnoy prokhlyady..." The Art of Northern Europe of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries from Russian Art Museums. Moscow, 2001 p. 232 [in Russian]; "Russia–Norway: Through Centuries and Borders: Catalogue". Moscow, 2004, pp. 377, 418–19. [in Russian]

THE WELL-KNOWN SERGEI SHCHUKIN COLLECTION OF FRENCH PAINTING OF THE LATE NINETEENTH TO EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES IS STILL ATTRACTIVE AND MUCH ADMIRER BY ALL LOVERS OF IMPRESSIONISM. YET, FEW PEOPLE KNOW THAT THE SHCHUKIN FAMILY DID NOT ONLY COLLECT EUROPEAN ART BUT WERE ALSO INTERESTED IN ORIENTAL ART, INCLUDING PAINTINGS AND APPLIED ART FROM CHINA AND JAPAN.

CHINESE PORTRAIT FROM THE SERGEI SHCHUKIN COLLECTION

MARIA MENSHIKOVA

Wonderful oriental scrolls and screens were to be found in the house of Sergei Shchukin already in the late nineteenth century and in 1912 they are recorded in art rooms together with pictures by Cézanne, Gauguin and Matisse. Several art pieces hang on the walls of the room of Ivan Sergeevich, Shchukin's son.

These art pieces were bought in Paris, in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, yet the circumstances of the purchase require additional investigation.

Piotr Shchukin's ¹ collection of applied art and jewelry was bequeathed to the Historical Museum ² long before the Revolution. Together with Russian objects, samples of Japanese and Chinese production found their way to the collection and were transferred to the newly formed State Museum of Oriental Art ³ in 1919.

In the 1920s the Museum of New Western Art was founded in Shchukin's former house and, being "outside the profile" of the exposition, Oriental art from Shchukin's collection was moved to the Museum of Oriental Art. N. Bakhtina thoroughly studied all the acts of transfer and other documents, which enabled her to gain clarity on the admission of works of Oriental art to the State Museum of Oriental Art, "Chinese porcelain from P. Shchukin's Moscow collection was received in 1929". ⁴ And further, "1926 and 1928 is the time of intensive transfer from the Museum of New Western Art (S. Shchukin's collection). Among the items received are Chinese and Japanese art pieces of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries and twentieth century, bronze works of plastic art, arms, Cantonese enamel of the eighteenth century, theatre masks of the Japanese Butaku theatre <...> It must be mentioned that the museum also received a screen — a unique sample of Japanese screen painting".⁵

As a result of these transfers from Shchukin's various collections, the Museum of Oriental Art assembled an impressive collection of Oriental painting and applied art. The museum also happened to possess two Korean portraits of the nineteenth century, there being no other items of Korean art in any of the Russian museums. Well preserved is the Japanese two — fold screen by Kano Toshun (died in 1723), "Gibbons grasping for the reflection of the moon in the water" (now in the exhibi-

tion), that was framed and hang in the room of Ivan Shchukin in the annexe. On the same wall, there used to be four Chinese scrolls, of which only two are now in the Museum of Oriental Art: "Geese in Reeds" (Bian Weiqi 1730s) and "Peonies and Pheasants" (unknown Chinese artist, 17th–18th centuries). Alongside the works recorded on the discovered photographs, one may recall many other things, among them "Yang Guifei (Kuei-fei) after Bathing", which is supposed to be an early replica from the scroll by Zhou Fang.⁶

No doubt it was Ivan Shchukin's father, Sergei Shchukin, who kindled his son's love for the Orient. "Henri Matisse recollected that each time being in Paris his patron visited the Egyptian department in the Louvre. The guest from Moscow was drawn to Egypt, he traversed the Sinai desert in a caravan of camels, he also travelled to Turkey, Greece and even to faraway India. The collector's elder son would become interested in the Orient, get a degree in history from the Sorbonne and become a leading world expert in Persian miniature. Ivan Shchukin, would undoubtedly collect Indian sculptures, Russian icons, oriental miniature. He was assisted with his earliest purchases by his father, whose love for *avant garde* painting was decisively not shared by the elder son. In Ivan's flat in the annexe of the Trubetskoy Palace there was no place for modernist art. He only allowed old masters inherited from his uncle, also Ivan — Italian, Spanish as well as Japanese and Chinese pictures on silk, framed and glazed in the European manner. His father also bought six Chinese scrolls. He placed a meter high "Patriarch's Portrait" (Ming dynasty, unknown artist) next to Cezanne's "Pierrot and



PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, MOSCOW

Harlequin ((Mardi Gras) "Shrovetide)" and "The Smoker". The other scrolls also became an integral part of the collection".⁷

The Paris exhibition «Icônes de l'Art Moderne. Shchukin's collection» ⁸ will display only one Chinese scroll that had belonged to the collectors of the early twentieth century. This is the portrait of a Buddhist monk Chang Mei lǎo zǐ. The first published mention of Chinese scrolls in Shchukin's collection is to be found in the "Apollon" Journal of 1914, № 5, "The portrait of a priest is dated as the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries but it is a mere guess. Yet it can be stated that this image carries the best traits of Chinese tradition of painting".⁹

After the scroll and other oriental pieces were transferred to the Museum of Oriental Art, the source of these acquisitions passed into oblivion. Chinese art was regained when a hand-written catalogue was compiled by D. Glukhareva and Wang Hong (now kept in the archives of the State Museum of Oriental Art). Finally, the year 2014 saw the publication of D. Sychov's book on the Chinese collection of the State Museum of Oriental Art. Unfortunately, the provenance information in the catalogue description contains an error: the collection of Oriental art was assembled by Sergei Shchukin instead of Piotr Shchukin, as is wrongly stated; at the same time, the introduction to the catalogue presents correct information. The portrait is also published by Sychov on the basis of the dating proposed by D. Glukhareva, Wang Hong, and S. Sokolova-Remesova, who used to work in the museum, under the name "Portrait of Chang Mei lǎo zǐ (unidentified artist, seventeenth century). The portrait has been part of the museum exposition for a long time.

This scroll is an example of traditional Chinese silk painting done in water soluble tints and Indian ink. The Buddhist monk is depicted seated, *en face*. He is wearing a cloak trimmed with a border of lotus flowers; his head is covered with a Buddhist cap; the left shoulder is decorated with a *pi* shaped jade disc and a pendulum-plate with a Tibetan inscription. In his hands he is telling his 108 Buddhist beads (in China they may be worn as a necklace). The monk is sitting in a massive Chinese arm-chair made of dark precious wood in-laid with mother-of-pearl with panels of white-and-black Yunnan landscape marble. His jack-booted feet rest on a small stool. Behind the arm-chair there is a table; on it there is a book in a slip-case, a bronze tripod incense-burner, a small round light-coloured box with a lid (for incense?) and a white porcelain vase with a peony flower. This table arrangement is ritualistic and full of symbolic meaning: it points at the honour, wisdom and high rank of the Buddhist monk. The upper right corner carries a hieroglyphic three-line vertical inscription, "Epoch-bearing eldest ancestor Chang Mei Long Brow — took his leave of the world. His travel to the abode of Yan Fu saints <lasted> 85 <years>. The soul is moving West, to the patriarchs of Buddhism" ¹⁰ Judging by the picture composition, by the pose and frontal depiction of the monk we are dealing with an altar, posthumous portrait of the Buddhist priest-mentor, which is supported by the inscription on the scroll. The portrait should be referred to the period of Ming dynasty (1368–1644), possibly to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; a more exact dating requires a thorough and detailed inspection. Even now it may be said that a portrait of a Buddhist monk of such a high rank is a unique example of Chinese traditional portrait to be found in the Russian collections of the early twentieth century, evidence of the refined artistic taste of Sergei Shchukin.

¹ **Piotr Ivanovich Shchukin (1853–1912)** — Russian collector, organizer of the Shchukin museum, brother of Dmitry, Nikolai, Ivan and Sergei Shchukin.

² From May 1881 the museum is filled Imperial Russian Historical Museum; after May 1894 — Emperor Alexander III Imperial Russian Historical Museum, from November 1917 — the State Russian Historical Museum and from February 1921 to date — the State Historical Museum.

³ **Ars Asialica (1918–1925)**, State Museum of Oriental Cultures (1925–1962), the State Museum of the Art of the Peoples of the Orient (1962–1992), the State Oriental Museum (from 1992).

⁴ *Bakhtina N.Ju.* The history of forming the funds of the Far Eastern arts in the State Oriental Museum. (1918–1940) [in Russian]// Nauchnye soobscheniya GMV. 1992. XXI, pp. 5, 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 12.

⁶ See Sychev V.L. "Classical painting of China in the collection of the State Oriental Museum". Moscow, 2014, № 1, 107, 331 [in Russian].

⁷ *Semenova N.* Chlchoukine. Le patron de l'art moderne. (unpublished).

⁸ **The exhibition is organized by Louis Vuitton Foundation** (Fondation Louis Vuitton), October 2016 — February 2017.

⁹ *Dmitriev V.* Chinese Reality// Apollon. 1914. № 5. p. 20 [in Russian].

¹⁰ Cited from Sychev V.L. "Classical painting of China in the collection of the State Oriental Museum" № 186, p. 110. [in Russian]

¹ **A HALL OF THE FIRST MUSEUM OF NEW WESTERN PAINTING** 1919. Photo by A.N. Tikhomirov

² **CEZANNE HALL** On the wall to the left of the doorway hangs the portrait of a Buddhist monk 1913

OUR COMMON PLANS

LATELY, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HERMITAGE HAS BEEN DEVELOPING APACE. WE ACTIVELY COOPERATE IN MANY SPHERES, FULLY REALIZING THE IMPORTANCE AND INTEGRITY OF OUR CLOSE LINKS. I AM HAPPY TO SEE OUR TWO MUSEUMS COMING TOGETHER AND BEING OPEN TO NEW ADVANCES.

MARINA LOSHAK
DIRECTOR OF THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, MOSCOW



● PHOTO: THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, MOSCOW

**A VISITOR
TO THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS, MOSCOW**

Systematic exchange of pieces of art has become our regular practice. The Hermitage readily responds to most of our requests, while we, on our part, willingly come forward to answer the demands of our St. Petersburg colleagues.

Our exhibition *“The Art of Living. Dutch Burgher House Interiors in the Age of Prosperity”*¹ displayed paintings by Dutch masters Jacobus Vrel, Frans van Mieris the Elder, Pieter Janssens Elinga, The Hermitage will send Giorgio Morandi’s still life and the Portrait of Pope Paul III by Titian’s workshop for our exposition dedicated to André Malraux, a French novelist, art theorist and the first French Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Joint exhibitions have become a good tradition between the two museums. A good example may be the first exhibition in this country dedicated to the Cranach dynasty², which was a great success in Moscow and subsequently in St. Petersburg. At present we are working together on an ambitious project for 2018: a Jacob Jordaens retrospective and masterpieces from Syria.

In January 2016 we opened an exhibition of real significance for our museum – *“Two Amenemhats, Portraits of One King in the Period of the Middle Kingdom”*³. It was devoted to the 160th anniversary of the prominent Russian scholar Vladimir Golenishchev, whose priceless collection was at the foundation of the Egyptian department of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts. It was for the first time that the two statues of the king Amenemhat III – one from the Hermitage

and the other from the Pushkin Museum – were on display together. Presented next to the fragment of the statue of *Amenemhat III Seated* from our collection was *The King Enthroned* from the Hermitage. The statue from our collection had at one time attracted the attention of Vladimir Golenishchev as one of the few signed works from the period of the Middle Kingdom. In 1893 he wrote a paper about it, where he compared the Hermitage statue of Amenemhat III with the face of the King from his own collection and with the faces of the sphynxes from Tanis in Lower Egypt and proved that all the three images belong to the same pharaoh. This article was, in fact, the beginning of a new stage in the study of a ruler’s portrait in the period of the Middle Kingdom. I consider this a perfect example of the inseparable links between the museums, of close cooperation and mutual influence. This is an illustration of the fact that the collection of one museum can affect the evolution of art history rather than merely have an impact upon the collection of another museum.

On 21st of October 2016, Paris saw the opening of the exhibition *“Sergei Shchukin’s Collection. The State Hermitage, St. Petersburg – The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow”*⁴, which is very dear for us and which has been two years in preparation together with the French colleagues from the Louis Vuitton Foundation.⁵ Our nearest plan is mounting an equally monumental exhibition to celebrate another fabulous collector, Ivan Morozov.



● PHOTO: OLGA MELEKSEVA

**MARINA LOSHAK,
DIRECTOR OF THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS, MOSCOW**

1. **From September 2016 to January 2017** in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.
2. **The exhibition “The Cranachs: Between the Renaissance and Mannerism”** (joint project of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, The State Hermitage and the u Friedenslein Palace Foundation in Gotha, (Thuringia)) took place in the Pushkin Museum between March and May 2016; from June to September 2016 it was displayed in the Hermitage with a slightly different inventory.
3. **In the Pushkin Museum the exhibition ran from February to May 2016**; in the Hermitage it was called “Two Amenemhats. For the 160th anniversary of Vladimir Golenishchev” and was open from May to September 2016.
4. **October 2016 – February 2017** under the auspices of the Year of the cultural tourism.
5. **Louis Vuitton Foundation** (Fondation Louis Vuitton), Paris (www.fondationlouisvuitton.fr).

FOR THE 160TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST RUSSIAN EGYPTOLOGIST, THE FIRST CURATOR OF THE EGYPTIAN COLLECTION OF THE HERMITAGE, VLADIMIR SEMYONOVICH GOLÉNISCHEFF ¹

TWO AMENEMHATS

IN THE EGYPTIAN COLLECTION OF THE HERMITAGE AS WELL AS IN GOLÉNISCHEFF'S COLLECTION ², THE MAIN HIGHLIGHTS ARE THE PORTRAIT STATUES OF AMENEMHAT III, A MAJOR RULER OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM. WHEN WE HAD THE IDEA OF COMMEMORATING THE 160TH ANNIVERSARY OF VLADIMIR GOLÉNISCHEFF WITH AN EXHIBITION, WE DID NOT HAVE ANY DOUBTS: IT HAD TO SHOW FOR THE FIRST TIME SIDE BY SIDE THE TWO STATUES, WHICH GOLÉNISCHEFF NEVER SAW TOGETHER.



VLADIMIR GOLENISHCHEV IN EGYPT

On the front part of the chair of the Hermitage statue there is the same column of text on each side: "Younger god, Younger god ³, lord of rituals ⁴ Nimaatra ⁵, son of Ra from his flesh ⁶ Amenemhat"



Reign of Amenemhat III (SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY BC). BEGINNING OF THE REIGN (?). Black granite. Height 87 cm, width of the base 25 cm, depth of the base 35 cm. A crack has split the statue into two parts, at the waist and below, which has resulted in losses near the split line: part of the right arm, from the elbow to the wrist, and the left back corner of the chair; part of the left hand, left foot and the front part of the base are also lost; the nose, the lips and the inscription near the left foot are damaged. Origin unknown © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016. Inv. № ДБ 729

The most plausible version is that the statue was created in one of the workshops in Lower Egypt and brought to El Kab or Qift for a large scale construction project. In Golénishev's time it was one of the rare statues of Amenemhat III that was reliably attributed thanks to the inscriptions.

A king is not a god nor a man, he is a combination of the two. In other times this duality was explained in different ways; what is important for us now is the conception which came about very early, at the time of the emergence of the Egyptian state at the close of the fourth millenia BC. According to this idea, on the Egyptian throne is the celestial falcon god Horus, who changes appearance with time; there are basically no kings, there are different terrestrial incarnations of Horus.

In sculpture this idea is manifested in the depiction of the king's face and body. A human is depicted either with a relatively ideal face and body, or with a face and body individualized roughly to the same degree. When it comes to kings' sculptures, the rule is different: the face is always individualized (we can disregard here the different stylizations characteristic of the different epochs), the body is always idealized. It is hard not to see an attempt at depicting the king's dual nature: a god's body, a man's face.

V.S. GOLÉNISCHEFF AT THE HERMITAGE

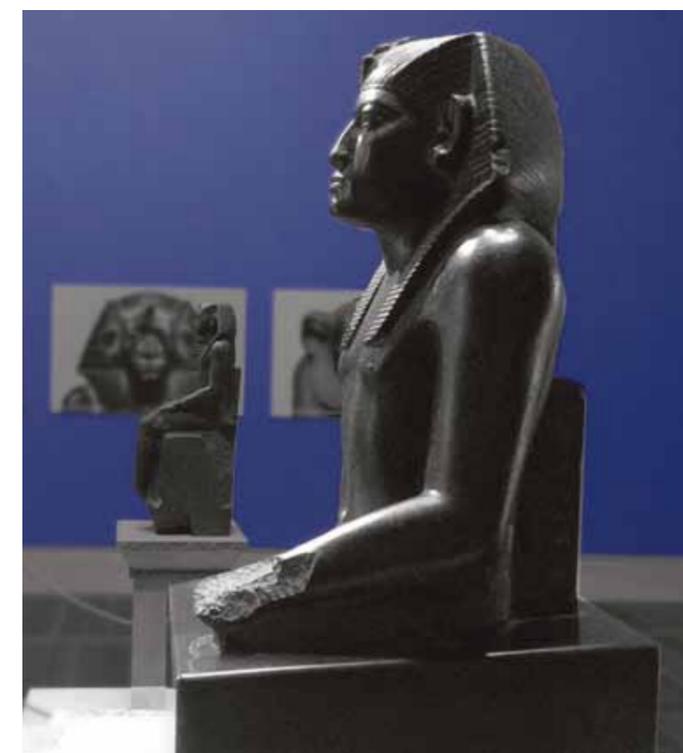
- 1880 — He started working at the Hermitage as a contract curator.
- 1881 — He finished transferring the Egyptian collection from the Kunst-kamera to the Hermitage (it had started in 1861), starts creating a full catalogue of the collection (published in 1891). He discovers in the Hermitage collection a masterpiece of Egyptian literature — the "Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor".
- 1893 — He writes an article about the Tanis sphinxes.
- 1899 — He settles down in Nice and files a dismissal request, expressing his willingness to keep his contact with the Hermitage. The Hermitage director S.N. Trubetskoy obtains Golénishev's transfer to the Ministry of the court, without allowance, and his assignment for studies at the Hermitage (in 1915 Golénishev leaves Russia for ever).
- 1908 — Golénishev sells his unique collection of Egyptian antiques to the state. It is decided to send it not to the Hermitage, but to the Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow).
- 1909 — During the interior decoration works of the Egyptian hall at the Museum of Fine Arts the collection is kept at the Hermitage.
- 1911 — Golénishev's collection is sent from the Hermitage to Moscow, to the Museum of Fine Arts.

Vladimir Semyonovich Golénishev (1856-1947) is an extraordinary person. The first Russian Egyptologist, he was an autodidact in his specialty, but managed to become one of the best researchers of Ancient Egypt in the world. Being very rich, he devoted his fortune to science in a very specific form of professional collection of Egyptian antiques. A philologist, he had an amazing taste for objects and this, along with his financial independence, allowed him to faultlessly choose and acquire interesting and important artifacts, regardless of the price. And besides that, he was very lucky — masterpieces seemed to dream of getting into his hands. Thus he discovered more literary texts than anyone else in the history of Egyptology, and this record will never be beaten.

Starting from his student years, during 40 years Golénishev's life was connected to the Hermitage: he was the first curator of Egyptian artifacts, then, after he retired, he remained "assigned to the Imperial Hermitage". Several important discoveries were made here - they were the reason of his worldwide fame, but his own collection was transferred to the Moscow Museum of Fine Arts. Thus he becomes a point of contact between the two museums, a figure respected and honored both in Saint-Petersburg and in Moscow.

In the Egyptian collection of the Hermitage as well as in Golénishev's collection, the main highlights are the portrait statues of Amenemhat III, a major ruler of the Middle Kingdom.

1. Materials from the catalogue of the State Hermitage exhibition (May-September 2016) were used in this article.
2. V.S. Golénishev's collection was acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts (now the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow) in 1911.
3. Designation of the king describing him as the Younger Sun, in contrast to the older god — the Sun itself.
4. Designation of the king describing his most important function — performing sacrifices to gods.
5. The reign name of Amenemhat III.
6. Designation of the king describing his birth from the Sun god — the idea of the divinity of the ruler which came about later than the idea of Horus as king which dates back to the 4th dynasty.



REIGN OF AMENEMHAT III (SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY BC). MIDDLE OF THE REIGN (?). Basalt. Height 29 cm, width 16 cm, depth 20 cm. The statue is intact from the waist up, the right arm is broken from the elbow upwards, the left arm is a little more preserved, the split is under the elbow. A fragment of a pleated apron is preserved, which means that the sculpture depicted the king sitting on the throne with his hands resting on his knees. In the lower part of the statue there are some platter additions, coloured in black. From V.S. Golénishev's collection The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts. Inv. № 1.1a 4757 (HF 4151)

The most famous masterpiece from Golénishev's collection. The owner of the statue was the first to introduce it into scientific discourse: in 1893 he wrote an article where he compared the statues from the Hermitage collection and from his own collection — with the faces of the sphinxes from the city of Tanis in Lower Egypt.

THE CRANACH FAMILY BETWEEN RENAISSANCE AND MANNERISM

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2016

The exhibition showing more than eighty paintings and graphic art works of the Cranach family, their workshop and related works was assembled from contributions of the State Hermitage collection and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, as well as of Nizhny Novgorod, Berlin, Madrid Prague and private collections.

Lucas Cranach the Elder is one of the major artists of the German Renaissance, a master who created an enormous amount of works, who treated all the diversity of themes and subjects of his time. Famous in his lifetime, he remains brilliant in his talent, attracting constant attention. He was born in 1472 in the town of Kronach in Upper Franconia, in the family of the artist Hans Maler. The first paintings and engravings that have reached us through the centuries were produced in Vienna, when Cranach was already 30 years old.

In his Viennese period Lukas Cranach reveals a typological affinity to his German predecessors Jan Polack, Michael Wolgemut and Veit Stoss. His inspired landscapes imbued with a pantheistic spirit laid the foundation of the Danube school of arts. His best portraits belong to this period, including companion portraits of Johannes Cuspinian and his wife Anna Putsch (1502/1503, Oskar Reinhart Museum, Winterthur). The echo of the pantheistic worldview of the Danube school is distinctly felt in "Calvary with Bystanders" (1515, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow), "St. Jerome in a Landscape" (mid-1510s; Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).

In 1505 Cranach entered the service of the Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony in Wittenberg. For the next half century he remained a court artist to the rulers of Saxony. The year 1509 is considered the most productive in Cranach's artistic career because of the big-size painting "Venus and Amor" (the State Hermitage), where he depicted the pagan goddess full length and naked — an unprecedented feat for a painter, done under the influence of the masters of the Italian Renaissance.

In 1526 Cranach created the portrait of the Princess Sibylle of Cleves, who was to become his favourite model: her features can be recognized in the depiction of Judith, Venus and nymphs. Her image is easily seen in the facial type of the Female Portrait (1526) and the Virgin and Child under the Apple-Tree (circa 1530; both in the State Hermitage).

In the beginning of Cranach's Wittenberg period, male portraits still carry expressiveness typical of his Viennese works. Cranach created iconography of one of the best known people of his time, Martin Luther — professor of Wittenberg University



PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN



whom Cranach did not merely know, but was a close personal friend of. The exhibition features two companion pictures "The Portrait Martin Luther" and "The Portrait of Philipp Melanchton" (both from the State Hermitage).

Lutherans as well as Catholics commissioned works from Cranach, despite his Protestant convictions. The artist painted Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg (1490-1545) several times. The Hermitage portrait of 1526 is one of the four surviving half-length depictions that repeat the same position of the head and facial expression.

Graphic art played an important role in German Renaissance. All prominent masters of Albrecht Dürer's time, apart from Matthias Grünewald, were active in book prints. Lucas Cranach the Elder was no exception. The exhibition featured "The Second Tournament" (1509) — one of the three woodcut engravings dedicated to a tournament held in Wittenberg the year before. Cranach also used the woodcut technique when he turned to the theme of Christ's Passions and completed the series of Passions in 1509 — the most fruitful and productive year of his graphic work. The Hermitage is in possession of the almost complete set of "Passions of Christ" series with the exception of "Lamentation". Of special interest are sheets tinted with watercolour and gouache. "The Passion" series was continued by the "Martyrdoms of the Apostles cycle" (1510-11) that was presented in its entirety in the exhibition. Two drawings from the Hermitage collection — "The Crucifixion" (circa 1509-12) and "The Mystic Betrothal of St. Catherine" (circa 1520) — were exhibited for the first time. Both works got their attribution as belonging to Lucas Cranach the Elder during the exhibition preparatory period. Before that they were considered anonymous.

After 1537, Cranach the Elder gradually began to withdraw from direct involvement in the work of his workshop, entrusting it to his second son, the 22-year-old Lucas. At first Lucas Cranach the Younger repeated his father's works in various genres. An example is Christ and the "Woman Taken in Adultery" (1530s, the State Hermitage) at the exhibition. Gradually he moved away from making replicas and found his own artistic contents, such as epitaph paintings, with Resurrection as the subject. "The Resurrection with the Donor's Family" (Epitaph for Michael Teuber) from the collection of Konstantin Mauergauz in Moscow is one of the most impressive works by Lucas Cranach the Younger. The rendering of the figure of Christ distinctly shows the influence of the art of the Netherlands. Also, the exhibition presented "The Virgin and Child with a Bunch of Grapes" (circa 1537, Konstantin Mauergauz' collection) and "Melanchthon on his Deathbed" (State Hermitage) of the workshop — works that are interesting to compare with those by Lucas Cranach the Elder.

The Cranachs' school was active for about a century, with four generations of artists working in its frame. After the death of Lucas Cranach the Younger the workshop was headed by his son Augustin Cranach, whose successor was Lucas Cranach III.

"The Hermitage is most fortunate with Lucas Cranach, Albrecht Dürer's contemporary, whom he had outlived by many years and who was the favourite court painter of the Dukes of Saxony and one of the earliest adepts of Martin Luther. Our collection includes pictures of this versatile and extraordinary master, who combined all perfections and imperfections of his country's art; touching poetry, great sincerity and, at the same time, certain barbarity, bias to caricature and often sloppiness and amateurism. Cranach painted a lot and also ran a pharmaceutical business, discharged his court duties and twice (1531 and 1540) occupied the office of mayor of Wittenberg. Such diversified and intensive activity far from major cultural centres of Germany (he was in Nuremberg only a few years and spent most of his life in Saxony) affected his artistic work unfavourably. Thankfully, all Cranachs at the Hermitage belong to his prime period."

Alexander Benois.
"A Guide to the Picture Gallery
of the Imperial Hermitage".
St. Petersburg, [1911].

- 1 | **LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER**
VENUS AND AMOR. 1509.
Oil on canvas transferred from wood.
213 × 102 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016
- 2 | **MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY**
AT THE OPENING
OF THE CRANACHS' EXHIBITION,
THE HERMITAGE.
- 3 | **VISITORS PERUSING**
WORKS BY THE CRANACHS.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS
JANUARY–APRIL 2016

Using the works of Claude Monet as a starting point, this landmark exhibition examines Modernist gardens in all their shape and glory and the role they played in the evolution of art from the early 1860s through to the 1920s against a background of great social change and innovation in the arts. The exhibition is co-organized by the Royal Academy of Arts and the Cleveland Museum of Art. Marta Zdroba

PAINTING THE MODERN GARDEN: MONET TO MATISSE

To trace the rise of modern garden painting in Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Avant-Garde of the early twentieth century, to explore the motifs, decorative methods and utopian ideas of Pissarro, Matisse, Monet, Van Gogh, Sargent, Bonnard, Sorolla, Renoir, Kandinsky, Klimt and Klee, to appreciate the freedom of breaking new ground in arts that the garden gave them – is never-ending bliss.

The highlights include the most important works by Monet, in particular the *Agapanthus (Waterlilies) Triptych*, (reunited for the first time in Europe for the exhibition) and “*Lady in the Garden*” from the Hermitage Museum, Renoir’s “*Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil*” and Kandinsky’s “*Murnau. The Garden II*”...

The garden fascinated the greatest artists. “I’m not good at anything but art and horticulture”, said Monet.

“Monet was not only a very big artist but also a phenomenal gardener. I think people do not really realize how seriously he was engrossed in plants. His art and his garden are in unique interconnection, in symbiosis, actually. His garden at Giverny, surrounded with a moat, was the center of his world, his hideout in the horrors of World War I and industrial urbanization. There were military operations not far from Giverny and Monet could hear cannon fire in his garden”, says the Exhibition curator Ann Dumas.



PHOTO: VLADIMIR TEREBENIN



PHOTO: DAVID PARRY

Seed catalogues of the nineteenth century, the design plans of gardens and greenhouse domes, blooming plants, Monet’s detailed advice to his six gardeners, teak garden benches for people who have come to see the film about painting against the Giverny pond, Joaquín Sorolla’s aspidistra, Munch’s apple trees, Renoir’s red dahlias, Caillebotte’s nasturtium, hypnotizing chrysanthemums and petunias by Klimt, white gardens, white lilies and hydrangeas; dahlias that look like poppies, poppies like peonies, peonies like roses drifting in the sea of green, lilac, light blue, pale golden – all are perceived freshly and in a new light.

But nothing can compare with Monet’s gardens.

1 | AT THE EXHIBITION IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

2 | **CLAUDE MONET**
LADY IN THE GARDEN AT SAINTE-ADRESSE
1867. Oil on canvas 82 × 101 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016

1 | Commune in France, (the Eure department in Upper Normandy) where the house, garden and grave of Claude Monet are located (1840–1926).

THE GIORGIO CONTI FOUNDATION (PALAZZO KUKKYARI), CARRARA
JUNE-OCTOBER 2015

The exhibition “Inspired by Rome. On the 400th anniversary of Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet,” was conceived by the IN ARTIBUS foundation to celebrate the double anniversary of these two great artists. About 40 paintings and drawings from the Hermitage and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, an incredibly rare edition of Rosa’s satires that were banned by the papal censors and are now held in the Book Museum of the Russian State Library, and several works from my own collection (three paintings, drawings, and an etching by Rosa, and five paintings by Dughet) all were shown for the first time in Moscow, in the Foundation’s rooms.

That said, we wanted not just to put the two artists together, thereby reconnecting the two masters centuries after they worked side by side, often competing with each other in life, but also to wonder about the role of the “genius loci” of the Eternal City in the international European landscape of the 17th century. As a result, IN ARTIBUS cooperated with the State Institute for Art Studies to organize a joint academic conference as part of the exhibition, and invited Caterina Volpi, the author of the catalogue raisonné of Rosa, and leading Dughet specialists Ann Sutherland, Natalia Serebryanaya, and Sarah Cantor to Moscow. Finally, Evgeny Ass, the architect who designed the exhibition interior, created an allusion to the atmosphere of Roman antiquity, the ruins and rubble that surrounded and inspired artists, within the Foundation’s space on Prechistenskaya Naberezhnaya in Moscow. Inna Bazhenova, art collector, founder of the IN ARTIBUS Foundation

Inna Bazhenova
at the opening of the exhibition
in the IN ARTIBUS foundation

BETWEEN AN IDYLL AND NATURE



PHOTO: IN ARTIBUS

Both Rosa, the rebel and pleasure-seeker who grew up in a small town in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius, and Dughet, the modest son of a French chef and brother-in-law and student of the great Poussin, were respected and worshipped during their day. The two were often compared while still alive, being found to be similar in their desire to completely renounce hateful modernity, losing themselves in the lost ideal of ancient idylls, as well as for their incredibly fast-paced painting (both Rosa and Dughet could begin and end a large, multi-figure landscape in just one day). They were also often contrasted, with Rosa seen as the heir of Baroque pathos and grandeur, as well as of Baroque “quirkiness,” as the creator of the “stormy landscape” and wild, “untamed” images like melodramatic cliffs covered with sweeping clouds of the heavens, and broken tree trunks and crowns. Dughet, quite on the contrary, was valued for the harmony of his landscapes of Roman Campagna and his ability to fuse together the Italian sense of form with a northern sense of nature.

The one thing the two artists invariably had in common though was their interest in the great heritage of ancient culture, in its philosophy and poetry, which for Rosa and Dughet became an image of cultural paradise, the memories of which are always painted in their love for the beautiful landscapes of Old Latium.

The first surge of posthumous popularity for both artists came in the Age of the Enlightenment, when European youth took off to finish their “home-schooling” by going



PHOTO: IN ARTIBUS

on grand tours, while British “adepts” and “dilettantes” searched for designs and motifs in these paintings brought from Italy that could serve as inspiration for their “romantic” parks. Of course, young fans of gothic novels valued Rosa’s dramatic landscapes first of all, while the “philosophers” from the Cabinet of Ministers favored Dughet. Not surprisingly, both of the Dughet landscapes brought to the Hermitage exhibition — “Landscape with an Angler” and “A Wooded Landscape” — come from the collection of Robert Walpole, the powerful Prime Minister of George I and George II.

Later on, history separated Rosa and Dughet completely. The former was given a grand romantic halo, steeped in legends, as being the one who determined the birth of romanticism long before the actual appearance of the style. The latter was assigned the fate of a talented continuer of the tradition of the ideal classical landscape, whose reputation has always been sufficiently strong, but who never again prompted the same mass admiration that he received in the nineteenth century.

The situation seems different today, and so at the exhibition we mainly wanted to bring our heroes out from behind the shadow of the great Poussin and Lorrain, and to show their own, in no way secondary, importance to Roman artistic life and the development of European landscape painting as a whole. I think that we completely accomplished what we intended to do. When you look at the seventeenth century from the twenty first century, it becomes obvious that the figures of Rosa and Dughet are no less gigantic than the figures of their famous predecessors; not by chance, Pierre Rosenberg, the director of the Louvre, calls them the two most prominent Roman landscape painters of their generation. In the eyes of his future generations, Salvator Rosa’s ecstatic sensuality was as much a part of the artistic landscape of Rome as the classical rigor of Nicolas Poussin and his younger relative Gaspard. In their “storms” and melancholic-dreamy images, a new landscape genre was born, which British theoreticians christened with the word “sublime,” in contrast to the word “beautiful” in Claude Lorrain’s work. Somewhere between the two lies the diversity of the exhibition themes, spanning the range from the idyllic to nature.

**GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION
IN THE IN ARTIBUS FOUNDATION**

**LITURGY IN THE TEMPLE OF NATURE.
THE WORLD EXPERIENCED
AS A MYSTICAL REVELATION**

The exhibition "Inspired by Rome" in the IN ARTIBUS Foundation is timed to coincide with the 400th anniversary from birth of Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet. The exhibition genre was defined by the organizers as a "crown to the two jubilees." That is, there was no special concept, just a desire to show rare works of these two luminaries of romantic landscape painting to the audience.
Zinaida Pronchenko

Art historians call the seventeenth century in European painting the "century of the world theater." It became fashionable at the time to liken the world to a stage. Both the fine arts and life itself became "theatrical" in the Baroque epoch. The tendency towards theater can be explained by the idea of synthesis, central to the aesthetic doctrines of the time. Each one of the arts, be it painting, sculpture or architecture, pursued expansion into neighboring areas, thereby performing a phenomenal exchange of values. Giambattista Marino, who stood at the origins of Baroque poetry in Italy, wrote about the relationship of art and poetry: "Poetry is said to be spoken painting, and painting silent poetry. One is silent about one thing, the other reasons about something else. But they say that poetry draws, and that art describes."

The genre of landscape painting, reduced by the Hellenistic tradition to the miserable role of a decorative backdrop in historical multi-figure compositions, had gained independence for the first time. Now mythological characters acted as staffage, and Arcadian hills became a semantic subject.

The younger contemporaries of the titans of Seicento landscape painting, Poussin and Lorrain — Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet — spent most of their life side by side in Rome, participating in the grand art projects of Pope Urban VIII. The two, being peers and neighbors in the quarter of Trinita dei Monti, were, of course, also competitors. They weren't very alike, and human memory, whose main feature is selectivity, took to the two equal talents differently, sending Salvator Rosa into eternity, and Gaspard Dughet into oblivion.

Just like Caravaggio a century before, Salvator Rosa controlled the sword no worse than he controlled brushes and paints (even to the point that, when exiled from Rome after a dispute with the court architect Bernini, he joined the rebel detachment of the Neapolitan fisherman Masaniello); the artist's stormy biography earned him a reputation as a romantic hero, an image which the 19th century was so fond of, with its revolt against the generally accepted canons.

Ernst Hoffmann wrote a novel about Rosa's life entitled "Signor Formica," Franz Liszt included the "Canzonetta of Salvator Rosa" in the cycle "Years of Pilgrimage," and

Carlos Gomez wrote the popular opera "Salvator Rosa." And even in the twentieth century, Hollywood directors willingly filmed adventure movies about the artist-rebel.

Gaspard Dughet, a Frenchman by birth, who never left Italy however, remained an artist of the few, and his fame was limited to just one country — England: Dughet's quiet "vedutas" were relished by the "Lake Poets", who popularized the painter's works in England.

Rome was and remains for an artist of any aesthetic views the same thing as Mecca is for a true believer. Winckelmann once said of Poussin that he was born in Rome at the age of 30. Indeed, without Rome, with its majestic ruins of ancient times, its collections of antique sculptures of the Vatican, and its Baroque cathedrals by Borromini, the artist's true development is unimaginable.

Rome and views of Campagna are the main themes of Rosa and Dughet's creative work. However, the pastoral idyll of the end of the sixteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century is replaced by drama in both artists' paintings. Now we have the calm before the

● PHOTO: IN ARTIBUS



1 | SALVATOR ROSA
Rocky Mountain Landscape with St. Anthony of Padua Preaching before Fish
Oil on canvas. 75,6 × 100,9 cm
Inna Bazhenova's collection



2 | GASPARD DUGHET
Forest Landscape
Oil on canvas. 97,5 × 136,5 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

3 | GASPARD DUGHET
Forest Landscape (detail)
Oil on canvas. 97,5 × 136,5 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016



storm, a stormy landscape, populated not with shepherdesses and nymphs, but with bandits and the early Christian saints. Preferring peace and unity with nature, albeit dangerous and unpredictable, but soothing to the soul — the vice of civilization, they and their small figures lost in the background of the mysterious green forest dissolve in harmony with nature.

The plastic canvas of the picture takes on a hieratic, solemn, almost religious form. It's as if the artists are conducting a liturgy in the church of nature, giving each tree, each bend of the river, the hills and the valleys their unique character and soul. The world understood as a mystical revelation is a motive appearing in the painting of Rosa and Dughet under the influence of neo-Platonism, which proliferated in those years. Not coincidentally, the German "Sturm und Drang" romantic writers highly valued both artists. The tragic perception of nature, the eternity which only emphasizes the transience of human life and confirms the irreversibility of death, was consonant with the fatalism of the nineteenth century.

The exhibition “A Voyage to Crimea” opened in the State Museum of the History of St. Petersburg in the Rumyantsev Palace in November 2016.

The exhibit features Turkish filigree silver incense burners and scent bottles of the eighteenth century from the State Hermitage collection. These items could have become part of the imperial collection in the form of diplomatic gifts or as gifts from the Crimean Khanate. Maria Menshikova

**“A VOYAGE TO CRIMEA”
TURKISH INCENSE BURNERS AND SCENT BOTTLES
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CATHERINE
THE GREAT AND PRINCE GRIGORY POTEMKIN**

Russia started searching for routes to India and the Black Sea as early as the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. As a result, armed conflicts erupted with the Crimean Khanate and Turkey for the right to control the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and the route through the Strait of Dardanelles and the Bosphorus Strait into the Mediterranean Sea. The Treaty of Bakhchisarai was signed in 1681, and the border between Russia and Turkey was established along the lower Dnepr River. Russian traded with Iran and Turkey, but Russia’s attempts to find an access point to the Black Sea were largely unsuccessful up until the second half of the eighteenth century.

The Crimean Peninsula became a part of Russia during the reign of Catherine the Great thanks to Russian victories in wars with Turkey in 1768–1774, and, especially, in 1787–1791. The culture of the Muslim population of the Crimean Khanate was under the strong influence of the Ottoman Empire, which had an effect on their lifestyle, religion, architecture, rituals, and everyday life.

During the diplomatic negotiation process, and especially when establishing peaceful relations, the two sides would exchange missionaries in the majority of cases. These missionaries exchanged gifts that were quite valuable items, including wares made of precious materials, characteristic traditional art forms, or works by well-known craftsmen and masters.

There is little information available about the Turkish tributes paid to the Russian side. The lists of gifts presented to Russia have not been preserved or have not yet been found in the majority of cases ¹. Furthermore, missions from Turkey mainly came to Moscow, thus the majority of Near-Eastern gifts of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries are kept in the Kremlin Armoury. That said, some valuables given to Russia by sultans

are held in the Hermitage collection. For example, a mirror in a gold frame with diamonds, sent to Empress Elizaveta Petrovna by Sultan Osman III (1754–1757), was exhibited in a special storeroom.

Empress Catherine the Great inherited the palace collections of valuables. Catherine, following the trend of the time, under the influence of French culture, created interiors “in the Eastern fashion” in the recently built Winter Palace. She used “Eastern” designs, particularly in her private apartments on the mezzanine floor by the Commandant Entrance. Catherine wrote to F.M. Grimm about her collection in the 1780s: “This museum makes a corner; people go there through China, to China through Turkey, to Turkey through Persia...,” and also noted that “here everything breathed with the ambrosia of Asia.”² Judging by the name of one of the rooms mentioned in the Empress’ letter, there were Turkish items there, and the Empress knew that they belonged to the culture of the Ottoman Empire. In 1789, once the Hermitage was finished, the Empress ordered many of the valuables to be moved from the mezzanine floor to the new galleries ³, where there were items from old collections, as well as many items that became part of the collection in the second half of the eighteenth century. The collections expanded, as Turkish missions came to Catherine the Great’s court multiple times during her reign. This is demonstrated, for example, by the etching by A.I. Kazachinsky “Catherine the Great Receiving the Turkish Embassy in the Winter Palace on October 14, 1764” (inv. #ERG-16654). Ambassadors usually brought gifts, but lists of these gifts are not always possible to find today. There are, however, some indirect pieces of evidence. An issue of *Kamer-Kuryerskiy Magazine* of 1793 reports that the Embassy of Turkey, which

¹ See: *Ivanov A.A. Gifts to the Emperors from Countries of the East // Gifts from the East and West to the Imperial Court over 300 years: exhibition catalogue.* St. Petersburg, 2014. pp. 61–67.

² Letters from the Empress Catherine the Great to Grimm (1774–1796) // Collected volume IRIO. 1878. V. 23. pp. 68, 329.

³ See: Inventory, erected in the Armilage of Her Imperial Majesty, a treasury of different things, marked with different letters and numbers. 1789 // AGE F. 1. Op. VI. T. 3. № 10.

⁴ See: *Feldman D.Z. The Role of G.A. Potemkin-Tavrichesky in the History of Jews in Russia // Russia in the 18th Century.* Moscow, 2002. Issue 1. pp. 109–130.

had arrived in St. Petersburg after the conclusion of peace in Iasi in January of 1792 (new style), came to a diplomatic reception at the Winter Palace. At that time, a Turkish tent was given as a gift (and is held in the Hermitage collection today).

Moreover, some of the items probably entered the collection after the unprecedented and long journey undertaken by the Empress to the Black Sea in 1787. There is no doubt that the Empress received many valuable items in the “Turkish” style as gifts during her thirteen day stay in Crimea in May. Life on the peninsula, the oath of Khan Giray, the founding of Simferopol and the parade of ships in Sevastopol, and stopping in various places and travel palaces, especially in Bakhchisarai, in the Khan Palace, had to have been marked by souvenir gifts. Prince Grigory Potemkin played a great role in arousing interest in the culture of the peoples who inhabited Crimea and the south. During his stay in Crimea, he supplemented his collection with manuscripts ⁴, interesting local goods, and valuable, often times Turkish, products, used in palaces in the Crimean Khanate. Many ornaments of life “in the Khan or Turkish style” were located in Potemkin’s travel homes in the south, for example, in Bender, Moldova. As noted by his contemporaries, the Prince’s household life was furnished with special oriental luxury. Countess V.N. Golovin describes, in particular, how “a filigree incense burner stood on the magnificent table, diffusing Arabian fragrances.” Later, these items were probably delivered to St. Petersburg, to the Tauride Palace. Several such silver items entered the imperial collection in the 1780s–90s, having been in the Prince’s collection before that. Some scent bottles and incense burners could have been transferred to the Hermitage after the Prince’s death in 1791, along with other valuables.

Monuments of Turkish jewelry in the Hermitage collection include about 15 incense burners and scent bottles held in the collection of the museum’s Oriental Department. Censers for burning incense (*Turk.* “buhurdan”) often resemble architectural structures, such as towers or mosques; usually they are fixed on legs and plates. Other items, such as scent bottles (*Turk.* “gulabdan”), were made in the form of flasks with a pear-shaped bottom and a long narrow neck. These bottles were used for disseminating rose water through holes in the neck during meetings and feasts. The shape of these perfume bottles is known to have existed since at least the 14th century in the Middle East. This form became especially popular in the 18th century.

Catherine the Great’s collection on the mezzanine level in the Winter Palace included many items made from fine silver wire. Even then these items were characterized as examples of “tedious work,” and were compared to lace. Attribution of silver filigree items was very difficult for a long time, with these items being described as oriental, Chinese, Persian, and so on, as a result of which these goods ended up in various collections and inventories in the twentieth century. The specificity of Turkish products is that they were decorated with colored enamel, which was very expensive. They were also identifiable by drops of white enamel painted over with pink, green or blue enamel paint. Floral rosettes, tulips and other floral designs are made from the drops and almond-shaped parts. More expensive incense burners and bottles were additionally decorated and gilded, and encrusted with precious stones and glass. Often bottles for sprinkling rosewater and incense burners came as a set, in which case their décor elements are similar in style.

Precious silver items in filigree are rare examples of Turkish jewelry work from the middle of the eighteenth century. These items belonged to Catherine the Great and are part of the historical collection of the Winter Palace and the Hermitage.



CENSER

Turkey. FIRST HALF — THE MIDDLE OF THE XVIII CENTURY. Silver, enamel; filigree, engraving, soldering, knockout, granulation, gilding. Height 29,5 cm

© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

A SAFE PLACE

"THE LIVING PICTURES (TABLEAUX VIVANTS)", A PLAY;
THEATRE OF NATIONS, MOSCOW
FIRST NIGHT PERFORMANCE IN FEBRUARY 2016.
AUTHOR — POLINA BARSKOVA; DIRECTOR — VIKTOR ALFYOROV

Polina Barskova *

When was it that I first thought of writing a play about love during the Siege of Leningrad? Perhaps when I found myself at the performance of Arbutov's play "My Poor Marat" in New York several years ago and was frustrated both by the play and the performance, which made me think about the appropriateness and correctness of the task itself, of the stated objective. The whole issue seems monstrously paradoxical to me: the incompatibility of the siege, which destroys everything human, and love, which enhances and engenders everything human.

The awareness of this contradiction must have stayed with me, must have kindled something in me because when, many years later, I got a proposal from Viktor Alfiorov, a director then unknown to me on Facebook, "Could you write a play about the siege" I thought simultaneously "No" and "Why not?"

Thus a process of, so to speak, crystallization started. I began thinking about the texts of love during the siege that were known to me, mainly of love between children and parents, between daughter and mother. The most impressive and powerful writings in this sphere were Lidiya Ginzburg's "A Tale of Mercy and Cruelty" and the siege diary of Sofia Ostrovskaya. In both texts we witness the decay of human relationships — strong and passionate, but unable to withstand the torture by starvation, cold and fear. These are really heartrending writings that show the most horrifying place, the end of what the human frame can bear. Thinking about them I knew that if I were to write about it, I should fight the demon of sentimentality and be totally frank, without downplaying the subject matter.

And as I thought it, I caught myself feeling something akin to being in love — if I may put it like this — with a certain lady, truly beautiful and in many ways ruthless; tales of Leningrad in the thirties, forties and fifties cannot go without mentioning her. Her name was Antonina Izergina. I heard her name mentioned in the homes of my older friends and it was always done with a very special smile: for all those who knew her she was not only the embodiment of beauty, wit, daring and self-confidence — most of all she had a rarest gift of freedom. An art-critic, a mountain climber, an intellect and a wit.

When you keep thinking about someone, as it happens when you are in love, the universe of this person joins your own universe. Perhaps, because of this strange law I happened to come across a book published in Israel by a man whose name did not tell me much at the time — Ari Vakser. It was a book about Moisey Vakser, a young artist who died in Leningrad during the siege. Later I was to learn that that Ari is Moisey's elder brother. I opened the book and everything clicked into place as in a jig-saw puzzle; Moisey was the lover and pride of Izergina; all through the winter of 1941/42 they were together in the basement of the Hermitage. And as I read the book I realized that I was going to write about lovers, who all but perished in the Hermitage, about a duel, the fight of humanity and beauty against the war.

Why was it so important for me to make the Hermitage the scene of the action?

Leningrad is my native city and I spent long hours in the Hermitage, for that reason Sokurov's idea of the Hermitage as Noah's Ark, as the place which can save and protect against the evil of the world is very close and dear to me. The wonderful book of memoirs of her friends about Izergina disclosed far from simple relations between the "stars" of the Hermitage (after the siege Izergina married her main opponent, academician Orbeli). When you read it you are amazed by the fact that, whatever passions and intrigues raged

"THE LIVING PICTURES (TABLEAUX VIVANTS)", SCENES FROM THE PLAY

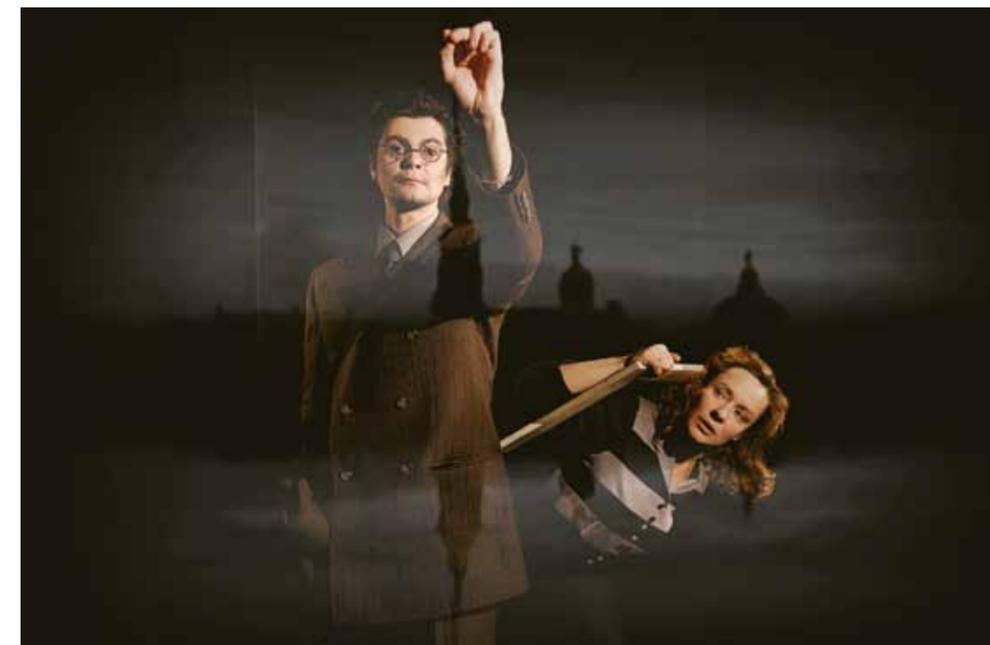


PHOTO: YEVGENY GABSKOY



PHOTO: SERGEI PETROV

there, when it came to serious things like saving the Hermitage collection in the summer of 1941 and in the days of the siege, the people were ready to perform everything possible and impossible, inconceivable even, they preserved and treasured at a time when it seemed impossible to treasure anything. As a result, a third character appeared in the play — an elderly woman, the museum treasurer. If I were asked now, "What is your play about?", I would say, "About the need to treasure, to preserve; the impossibility of treasuring, and the necessity of treasuring." The texture of the play is based on this: it incorporates Moisey's diaries, Antonina Izergina's catchphrases and pet-words as remembered by her friends. Also verses by the poets of the siege, Zaltsman and Pumpyansky. I wanted living voices to sound on the stage — through my abhorrence of the siege and against oblivion — and to live forever.

* Polina Barskova is a poet and researcher living in the USA. For her first book of prose "Living Pictures (Tableaux Vivants)" she got the 2015 Andrei Bely award. She has been studying the Leningrad Siege for ten years. She teaches this topic in lectures and seminars in Hampshire College (Amherst, Massachusetts).



STIEGLITZ — HERMITAGE

IN JUNE, THE SAINT-PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY TRANSFERRED PAINTINGS BY GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN 19TH CENTURY ARTISTS FROM BARON STIEGLITZ'S MANSION TO THE HERMITAGE FOR TEMPORARY STORAGE. AMONG THEM — THE LARGE-SCALE PAINTING BY HANS MAKART "MIDDAY REST AT MARIA MEDICI'S COURT" (550 × 358 cm), THE ONLY PAINTING IN RUSSIA BY THIS EMINENT AUSTRIAN MASTER OF HISTORICAL PAINTING.

The paintings by Hans Makart, Moritz von Schwind, Alexander von Wagner, Alexander von Liezen-Mayer and others were purchased by the famous banker and art patron Alexander von Stieglitz for his mansion on the English Embankment.

PHOTO: YURI MOLODKOVETS

"There is no doubt that Stieglitz was ready and hoped to deal with the most popular and hence expensive masters, but he was disappointed: most of the paintings he purchased were created by artists who interest only the domain specialists. The reason is not the lack of finances (the palace cost 3,5 million Russian roubles at the time), but rather the strict parameters determined by the architect that the paintings had to meet. ...One of the enormous decorative compositions was painted by Alexander von Wagner and Alexander (Sándor) von Liezen-Mayer, another one — by Hans Makart.

Stieglitz was amazingly lucky. The painting by Makart that he bought happened to be the first painting that clearly showed the elegant and fascinating virtuosity of the brushstroke of the future fashion and taste setter, beloved by the public, who in 1870-1880s became the most famous European painter in Russia. Even the fanatic lover of 'progressive' art, expressing the people's aspirations, Vladimir Stasov, while rejecting the pompous prettiness of Makart, admired the 'amazing play of colours, which brought fame to the Austrian, the Paolo Veronese of our time'. After some time the 'passions' around Makart inevitably calmed down, and in modern museums he has quite an honourable place.

In the same way, when ordering to Hans von Marées (1837-1887), who was not known at all at the time, the plafond 'Cupid leads Psyche to Olympus' (444 × 613) for the Blue living-room and the painting 'Courtyard with a Grotto in the Munich Royal Residence' (now at the Hermitage), Stieglitz could not know that he would be practically the only owner of large-scale paintings of the most eminent nineteenth century German painter outside of Germany. Although in these early works there are no shades of the complex artistic research characteristic of the mature Marées, they are important because everything is important in the heritage of a great master."

Asvarishch B. Stieglitz — Lukoil or Stieglitz — Hermitage? // Novy Mir Iskusstva [New Art World], 2003, #3.

After the revolution the building hosted an orphanage, design institutes, secure institutes and restoration workshops. The building survived a fire and lost all its utility systems.

In the 2000s there were some emergency repairs done to the building, and the restorer N.V. Malinovsky recovered the badly damaged paintings. Since 2011 the mansion, which was in a state of abandonment, without heating and proper maintenance, was transferred to the control of St. Petersburg State University. In order to preserve the paintings they were all put together into one room, where the University employees maintained proper temperature, but access to the paintings was complicated, even for the specialists. These unique paintings in the very centre of Saint-Petersburg, like submerged Atlantis, became almost a legend.

It was decided to transfer all the paintings from the Stieglitz mansion to the Hermitage for temporary storage. The evacuation of the paintings required much effort, mainly because of their size (two paintings are more than five metres wide) and their state. Hermitage restorers, with the help of the University employees, secured the paintings and prepared them for transporting. The largest paintings were rolled on a special shaft. The meticulously packed paintings were then taken out of the building with special equipment and transported to the General Staff building and to the "Staraya Derevnya" Restoration and Storage Centre. After preparatory works the most valuable of the works of art will be presented to the public in 2016.



1 | **LUIGI (LUDWIG OSIPOVICH) PREMAZZI**
Mansion of baron Alexander von Stieglitz.
Dining room
Italy-Russia. 1870
Paper, watercolor, white mineral pigment
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

2 | **LUIGI (LUDWIG OSIPOVICH) PREMAZZI**
House of Baron Alexander Stieglitz.
Dining room for lunches
Italy-Russia. 1869
Paper, watercolor, white mineral pigment
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

3-6 | **TRANSPORTATION OF PAINTINGS FROM THE MANSION OF BARON VON STIEGLITZ TO THE HERMITAGE**





● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA



St. Petersburg University



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ANNA LVOVNA SEMIN: "WHOSE IS THIS APPLE?"

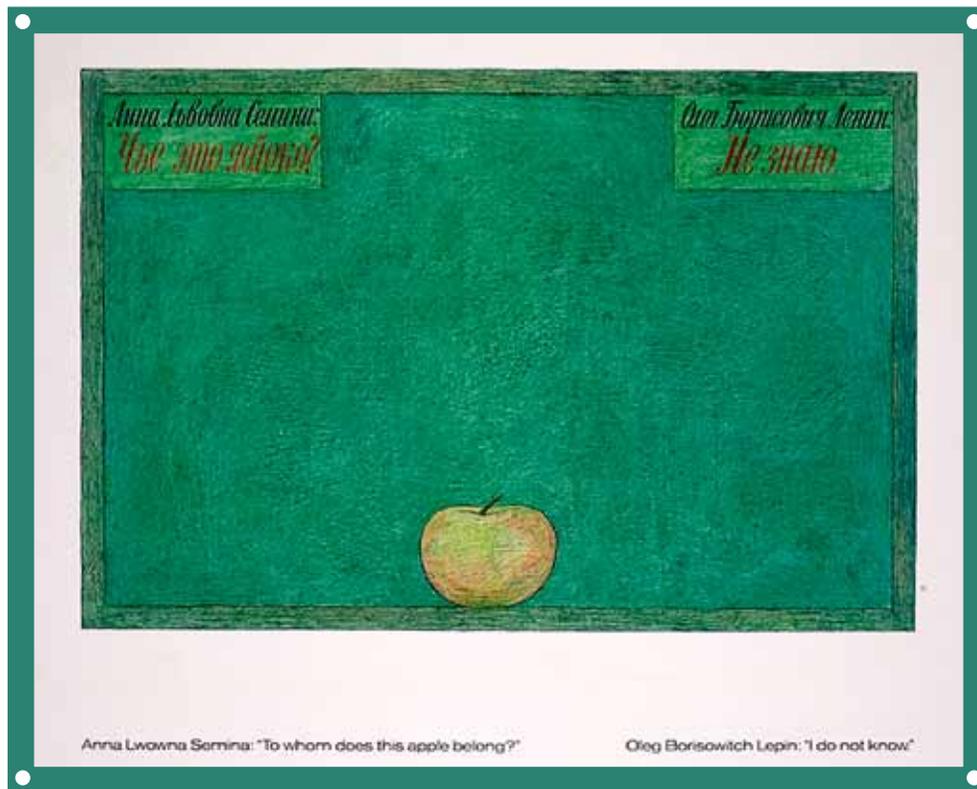
USA, 1990

Silkscreen, 70 × 100 cm

Handover date: 2010 Gift of Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, 2010

Stock number IAC-27

© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016



Waller Benjamin. "Moscow Diary" (1927, first published in 1980)

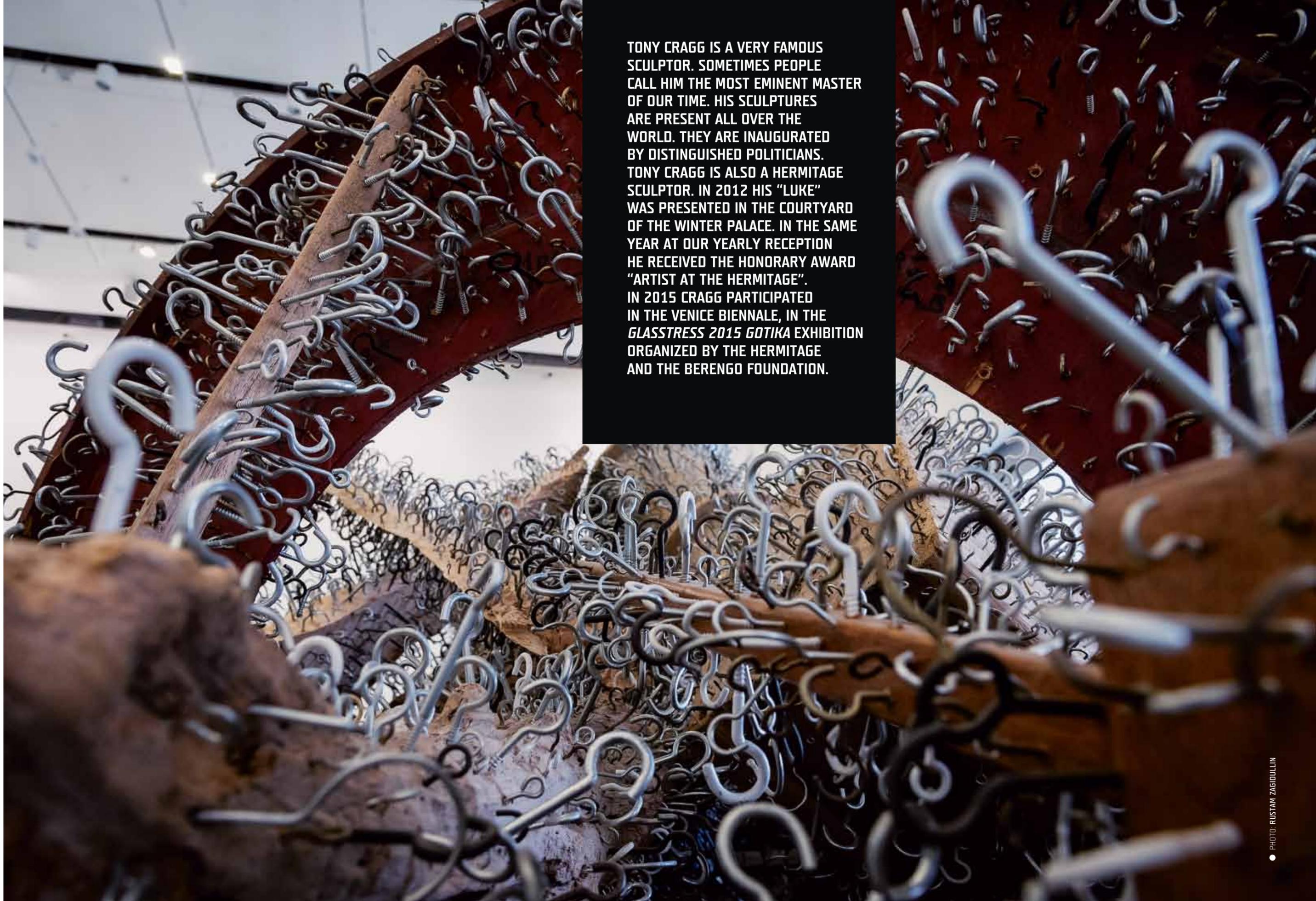
"One item in the collection that particularly struck me was a carriage that Prince Razumovsky had given as a present to one of Peter the Great's daughters. <...> All these treasures were acquired in a manner that has no future. Not only their style but also the very way in which they were acquired are now defunct. They must have been a burden to their final owners, and one can imagine that the awareness that these things were at their disposition could almost have made them lose their minds. But now a picture of Lenin hangs at the entrance to these collections, as if converted heathens had planted a cross where sacrifices previously used to be made to the gods."



3

TONY CRAGG. SCULPTURES AND DRAWINGS EXHIBITION
MARCH-MAY 2016
THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, THE GENERAL STAFF BUILDING

STABLE AND FRAGILE



TONY CRAGG IS A VERY FAMOUS SCULPTOR. SOMETIMES PEOPLE CALL HIM THE MOST EMINENT MASTER OF OUR TIME. HIS SCULPTURES ARE PRESENT ALL OVER THE WORLD. THEY ARE INAUGURATED BY DISTINGUISHED POLITICIANS. TONY CRAGG IS ALSO A HERMITAGE SCULPTOR. IN 2012 HIS "LUKE" WAS PRESENTED IN THE COURTYARD OF THE WINTER PALACE. IN THE SAME YEAR AT OUR YEARLY RECEPTION HE RECEIVED THE HONORARY AWARD "ARTIST AT THE HERMITAGE". IN 2015 CRAGG PARTICIPATED IN THE VENICE BIENNALE, IN THE *GLASSTRESS 2015 GOTIKA* EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY THE HERMITAGE AND THE BERENGO FOUNDATION.

MIKHAIL PIDTROVSKY

We are presenting a big exhibition of Tony Cragg ¹ and we think that it will be in tune with the Hermitage spirit and traditions. The Hermitage context is diverse.

Any new sculptor here joins in a dialogue with Quarenghi, Thorvaldsen, Bourdelle, Manzù, Greco, Crocetti, and now also Jacques Lipchitz and Louise Bourgeois. The series of the Hermitage exhibitions creates yet another context. Here we have presented the “painted dolls” by Markus Lüpertz, Cragg’s predecessor as the director of the Dusseldorf Academy ². Next to the antique statues here were exhibited the curved “mummies” by another great British artist, Anthony Gormley ³. Now this series is continued with Cragg’s “swirls”.

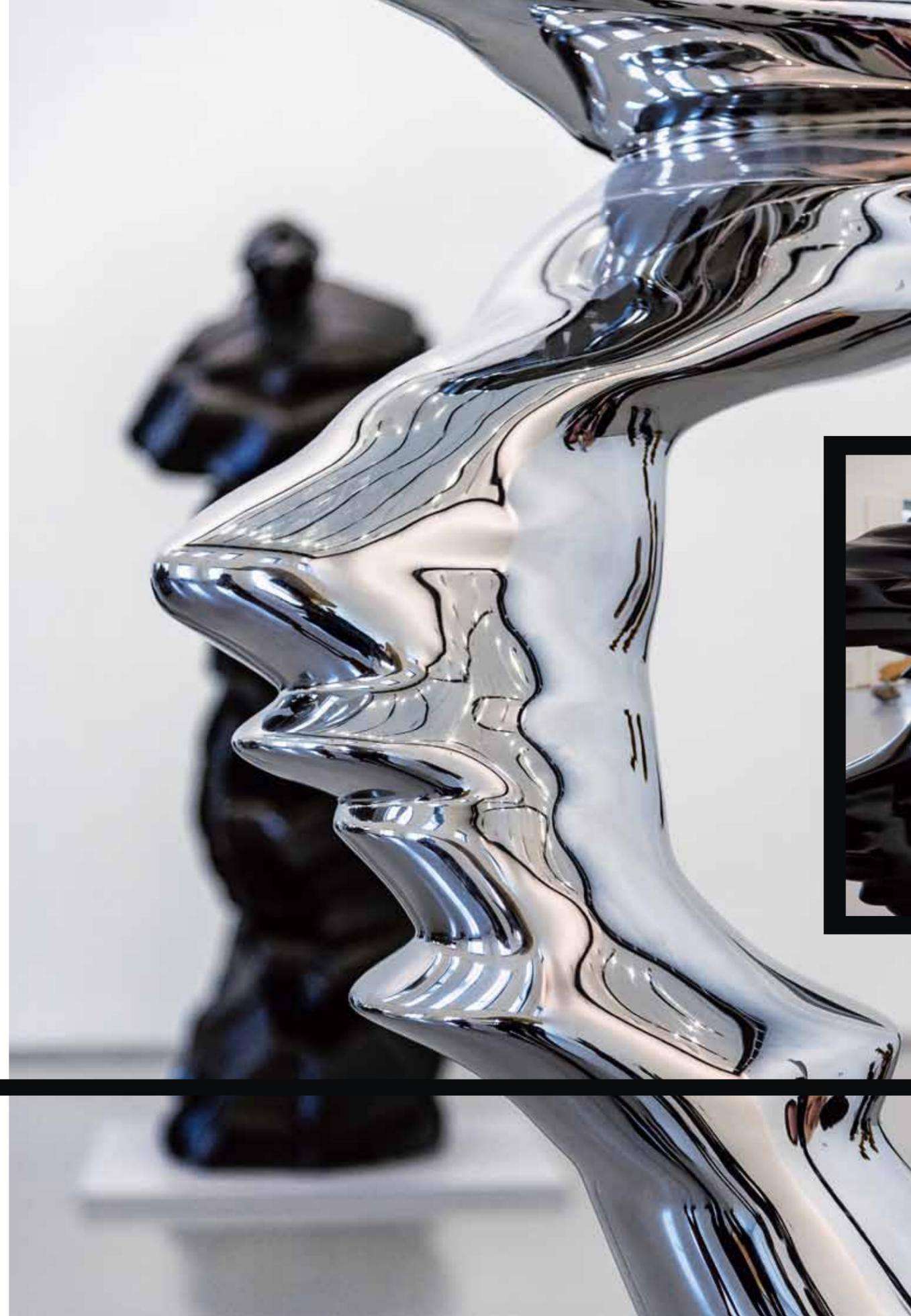
A sculptor is always transforming the world and creating a new one. Before, the material he could use to create was quite limited and was not really worth mentioning, now that is no longer the case. The set of material sources is important and interesting. Cragg takes rectangular pieces of urban garbage, dice, plastic and metal debris and transforms them into fluid surfaces and dynamic spaces. The garbage becomes like ancient symbols full of dark mysteries. Cragg makes his and our world fluid. Everything univling becomes liquid, and this liquid solidifies. But not quite. It can still pour on us or over our feet. It streams in waves, curls in swirls, gleams with ponds and puddles. We walk among all of this, and it feels nice and interesting.

1. **Tony Cragg (1949)** is an Englishman from Liverpool, living in Wuppertal, Germany, for a long time now, a city which was almost destroyed during World War II by the allies’ “fire storm”. He works and teaches there. He was the director of the Dusseldorf Academy of Fine Arts for 5 years. His exhibition in Moscow, at the Central House of Artists in 2005 was called “Gravity and Tenderness”.

2. The exhibition “Markus Lüpertz: Symbols and Metamorphoses” (organized jointly with the Michael Werner Gallery) was held at the Hermitage in 2014.

3. The exhibition “Anthony Gormley. Still Standing: A Contemporary Intervention in the Classical Collection” was held at the Hermitage in 2011–2012.

TONY CRAGG
Elliptical column
 Germany, 2012
 Stainless steel. 330 × 95 × 85 cm
 © Tony Cragg Studio, Fondazione Berengo



Tony Cragg.
 Interview in Glasgow,
 June 24, 1992

**“What if sculpture
 is only being born now?”**



THE PLASTICITY OF TONY CRAGG'S DRAWING

DIMITRI DZERKOV
PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

SPEAKING ABOUT THE VERY NATURE OF TONY CRAGG'S WORKS WE CONSTANTLY HAVE TO MAKE REMARKS, SAYING "IT SEEMS", "RATHER", BECAUSE THE THINGS WE DISCUSS EXIST NOT SOMEWHERE IN THE OUTSIDE, IN THE ART WORLD IN GENERAL, BUT ON THE VERY EDGE OF ARTISTIC ANALYSIS, SO THEY CAN EASILY SLIP AWAY AND EVEN TURN INTO THEIR COMPLETE OPPOSITE WHEN QUESTIONED DIRECTLY. CRAGG'S SCULPTURE DOES NOT CONFRONT THE LANGUAGE OF DESCRIPTION, IT EXISTS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF IT. "WHEN I DREAM, I DO NOT DREAM IN A PARTICULAR LANGUAGE, CRAGG WRITES. I DREAM IN IMAGES, IN COLOUR, IN EVENTS, AND FOR THIS WE HAVE A FANTASTIC LANGUAGE."



2 | **TONY CRAGG**
Untitled
Italy, 2015
Glass, 46 × 20 × 30 cm
Manufactured by: Berengo Studio, Murano

3 | **TONY CRAGG**
Untitled
Italy, 2015
Glass, 35 × 36 × 38 cm, 42 × 37 × 20 cm
Manufactured by: Berengo Studio, Murano

Tony Cragg, a contemporary British sculptor, is working on a very complex study of the existence of sculpture — outside the design world, outside the museums and gallery world's vicissitudes, outside the art market. He is interested in sculpture beyond the framework of its applicability, relevance, utility and practicality. He focuses on the very essence of the existence of works of form creation — rather in Heidegger's meaning of the word "existence". This makes us look at Tony Cragg's works with particular attention, taking into account our viewpoint when looking at them and the slightest effects of our visual perception.

Sometimes the sculptor seems to follow his audience's lead. He assembles strange structures from familiar objects with hooks in them ("Congregation", 1999), he makes figures from small objects ("African Culture Myth", 1984). One of the most striking impressions from Tony Cragg's works is the sense of fragility of the limits between the abstract and the realistic in his pseudo-portraits. Their fragility allows the viewer to remember his works immediately and recognize them among hundreds of others. I am referring to the most famous series of sculptures, the one with human faces. They remind us of ancient stone totems.

In the Hermitage context they remind us of the marble statues of the state rooms and also the Minusinsk basin steles as well as the later Polovets steppe women. The surface on all of them combines natural force and the resistance of the material with traces of artistic refinement. But unlike the early sculptural forms, Cragg's totems have an all-around visibility. At some angles they are completely abstract, at others they suddenly show realistic human profiles on their faces: faces of men and women, simple and characteristic, appear as if by accident, and move out of sight when the viewer takes another step around the stele. The apparition of the faces puzzles him: was there really a face here just a moment ago? The interpretation is completely up to him. Who are they: gods, heroes, philosophers, random characters? In his latest works he seems to crush and grind the shape into even smaller elements, hiding these profiles, complicating the perception and amplifying the effect of happenstance of their apparition. Thus he more masterfully sharpens the limit between the abstract and the realistic, keeping the tension of the main vector of this series. This is a major limit in human perception. It separates the animate and the lifeless, life and death, existence and non-existence.

But working with the limit of the flat projection of the sculpture which shows a face contour, is only the facade of posing these important questions — Cragg's concession to the two-dimensionality of modern mass culture with its love of simple recognition. In the same way in his other works he kindly shows how the sculptor's eye can see a zigzag in a pile of pickle jars ("Ladder", 1999) or fantastic gothic shapes in rotors and a gearwheel put on top of each other ("Minster", 1988). More complicated for perception are his other compound abstractions in the form of entangling fluid drop-like shapes, shown to the viewer in a multiplicity of their surfaces: polished, rugged, carved, chopped, covered with holes, glassy and transparent, covered with hooks, marble, bronze, steel, wooden, plastic, Kevlar, polystyrene, porcelain, plaster, shiny, matted, whole, compound. Their diversity reminds us of the works by early European modernists who tried to combine non-combinable materials, to glue newspaper on a painting and throw sand on it. But Cragg might be closer to the laconic works of Russian avant-garde artists: "material assortments" by Allman and Tallin. This term seems natural for Cragg's art when he combines materials of different nature as skillfully and counter-intuitively as they do.

What really interests Cragg most of all though is not the material itself, but the extravagance of shape, its possible life in this material. Stable and fragile — these might be the only indisputable attributes applicable to his sculptures. All the other properties are analyzed and tested by the artist. A motive, once found, is studied from different angles, in different scales, so as to address comprehensively the plasticity issue that interests the artist — another aspect of the space conditioning of the physical world. The infinity of the logical variability of

1 | **TONY CRAGG**
Congregation
Germany, 1999
Wood, metal hooks
280 × 290 × 420 cm

shapes is probably one of the major subjects that interest him. The artist never fails to be amazed by man's ability to be aware of his own earthly existence, to reflect upon it. Sculpture is, in his understanding, a sort of an answer to such reflection, a materialization of the thinking process. Cragg's shape-forming creativity is his answering to the question of existence in and outside of time. With mathematical precision he calculates in sculpture everything that can be calculated, in order to come closer to the sphere of unknowable. A shape, once started, has to end; the shaped material resists dispersion in space and time; resists disintegration with its unity; the shape demands stability and inevitably finds it. All of these ideas are elementary and simple. They can be part of the definition of the notion of "sculpture". But in the case of Cragg's works it is the basic principles that become the objects of experimental study.

The sculptor's father was an electro mechanics engineer in aviation and spent his life designing airplane parts. Cragg Junior's first job was a technician at a laboratory at the National rubber manufacturing studies association. At the age of 20 Cragg enters his first art college to become a sculptor.

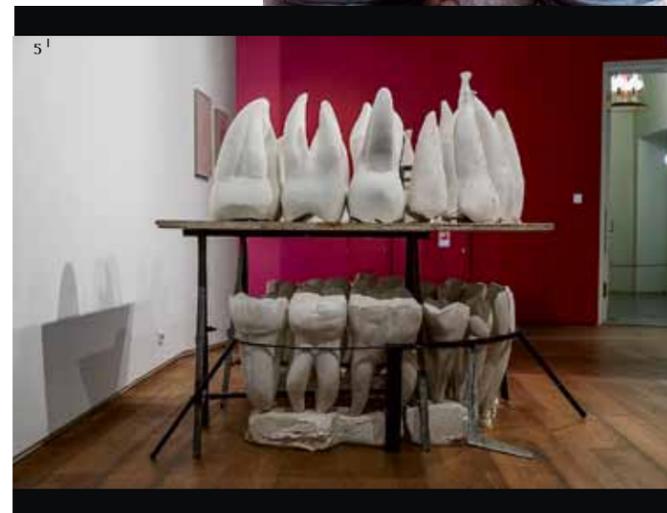
At 30 he has his first personal exhibition.

But his father's profession and his first job have undoubtedly influenced his thinking and the imagery of his plastic language.

Is biography important when talking about the art of a sculptor working on the edge of abstraction and realism? It can be insightful, but it is not obligatory, as Cragg does not make his life part of his artistic project. What matters in his case are the artist's words, his opinion on the issues he wanted to talk about. In this sense the heritage of the former professor and co-director of the Dusseldorf Academy of Fine Arts is rich with theoretic material. His work deals not only with the studying of the particularities of a material shape, but mainly with the issue of justification of its emergence, of its existence in the world. What are the numerous newly created sculpture forms? Why do sculptors make them for so many years — and why do they persistently come back to the same plastic issues again?

Sculpture is static, unlike life, but it is sculpture that affirms life. It is not as evanescent and unstable as human

existence. With its verticality, its stability, its durability, sculpture manifests the pure idea of human life, the formula of creative existence of individual human thought. A sculptor just lets it out into the world, making it a part of the existence of forms. Like any mortal being, he cannot cross the border between life and death (the same one) — he cannot animate his sculpture, breathe into it the energy of being which would make it enter the world of humans. This, as we know from the story of Pygmalion and Galatea, can only be done by a deity. Or by a cabalist mystic, as in the story of Golem. But Golem is motionless, and Cragg's Galatea does not step down from her pedestal. She is abstract and does not resemble a goddess in the Greek understanding of women's beauty: there is no real, bodily beauty in Cragg's works at all. There is formal and material perfection — balance and focused control of balance. And in this balance the sculptures are self-sufficient. They do not need any impulse from the outside: they are ready to face human perception in their primitive, prehistoric form, in the proto-existence of their forms. And this is their strength. The created forms begin existing in the world, affirming their existence by their presence — like the sculpture image of god created by the winner of the Greek games. As Heidegger wrote in "The Origin of the Work of Art", for the Greeks, "the work is not a portrait intended to make it easier to recognize what the god looks like. It is, rather, a work which allows the god himself to show his presence and is, therefore, the god himself." The created sculpture starts existing, being present in the world, interacting with animate and inanimate nature. The auxiliary status rather belongs to Cragg's drawings: they prepare the birth of a sculpture, search for its base, define the existential justification on the formal level. The drawings are inseparable from the sculptures and, strangely, live according to their laws of plasticity. The abstract forms drawn here are bearers of real and hence materialized objects. The latter search for a base in the abstract space coordinates, which can only be grasped within the limits of a sheet of paper. The drawings are plastic and multidimensional. They describe an extra-surface reality. They call for metaphors and definitions from the musical and poetic worlds, their fine language could help to determine the nature of sculptural drawing.



4 | **TONY CRAGG**
Minster
Germany. 1988
Steel. 300 × 400 × 400 cm (changeable)

5 | **TONY CRAGG**
Complete Omnivore
Germany. 1993
Plaster, wood, steel. 160 × 200 × 200 cm

6 | **TONY CRAGG**
False Idols
Germany. 2011
Bronze. 233 × 105 × 105 cm

7 | **TONY CRAGG**
Over the Earth
Germany. 2015
Fiberglass. 320 × 145 × 523 cm

8 | **VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION
AT THE GENERAL
STAFF BUILDING**

**FRANCESCO MESSINA AND 20TH CENTURY
ITALIAN SCULPTURE AT THE HERMITAGE**



GIACOMO MANZU
Falling Tebe. 1983
Bronze
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016
Gift from the artist, 1987



GIACOMO MANZU
Portrait of Tebe. 1985
Bronze
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016
Gift from the artist, 1986



BRUNO LIBERATORE
Arch and wall. 1999
Terra colla, bronze, iron
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016
Gift from the artist, 2012



VENANZO CROCETTI
Accademia. 1983
Bronze
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016
Gift from the artist, 1992



AUGUSTO MURER
Faun with a Flute. 1980
Bronze
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016
Gift from the artist, 1982

PLASTICS

IN NOVEMBER 2015 ONE OF THE LARGE HALLS OF THE GENERAL STAFF BUILDING, AS A RESULT OF THE COVERING OF THE COURTYARD, WAS TRANSFORMED. IT NOW HOSTS THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF TWENTIETH CENTURY ITALIAN SCULPTURE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IT IS ONLY A PART OF THE RICH COLLECTION WHICH IS THE MOST COMPLETE IN THE NEW ART COLLECTION OF THE HERMITAGE AND IT IS BEING CONSTANTLY REPLENISHED. IT INCLUDES WORKS BY MANY EMINENT SCULPTORS FROM ITALY, A COUNTRY WHICH HAS CONSERVED TO THIS DAY ITS HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL CULTURE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS IN THIS ART.

● SERGEY ANDROSOV
● PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

T

here are documents, but also memories which allow us to retrace the history of this interesting collection. It seems like it all started with the interest that Moscow art historians showed in the sculpture "Eva", that Francesco Messina (1900–1995) exhibited at the Venice Biennale. This is when the negotiations were started in order to acquire this statue for the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. The purchase did not take place, but Messina was interested in showing his works in large museums all over the world. As we know, he gave some of his works to the National Museum of Bargello in Florence and also founded a museum of his own in Milan. It seemed quite natural when he proposed to give 40 drawings and 40 sculptures to two Russian museums, so that after the common exhibition they would be shared by the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and the Hermitage. Messina was of course a representative of realistic art, and the Ministry of Culture accepted his donation. The right of the first choice belonged to the Moscow museum, and they acquired "Eva". But after Messina's personal exhibition in 1978 on the second floor of the Winter palace the Hermitage received a number of interesting works, among them the portrait bust of the poet Salvatore Quasimodo (1936), the elegant statuette "David" (1944–1964) and the gracious figure of a nude girl, "Beatrice" (1959). The sculptor was present at the opening of the exhibition and later wrote about the great enthusiasm of the visitors who demanded his autographs even on the palms of their own hands. According to the donation conditions, Messina's works had to be on permanent display in a special hall on the second floor (next to the Wooden staircase).

Two years later, after long negotiations, an agreement was obtained to organize an exhibition of Emilio Greco (1913–1995) at the Hermitage. The fine disposition in the Rastrelli Gallery, where the piers allowed for elegant separation of one group of works from the others, contributed to the success of the exhibition, which gratified the sculptor arriving at the last moment before its opening. During his visit to the Hermitage, Greco saw the Messina hall and expressed his desire to have a personal hall of his own in the museum.

For this room, smaller than Messina's one, he chose 10 works, including two statues ("Large Sitting Figure" and "Large Squalling Figure", both dated 1973), busts and a medallion. N.K. Kosareva and I hoped to have the "Large Bather No1", the most famous sculpture by Greco, but he turned down our request. At the end of the year the Greco exhibition was shown at the Pushkin Museum, but the sculptor, suffering from allergy, did not come to frosty Moscow. I think that if he had seen his exhibition, miserably displayed on a stair landing, he would not have given "Bather No1" to the Moscow museum.

In the beginning of 1892 I participated in the organization of the personal exhibition of Augusto Murer (1922–1985) held in Rastrelli Gallery as well. This brilliant master worked in the province of Belluno, at the foot of the Alps, and he was mostly known in the North of Italy. He is the author of numerous very expressive memorial ensembles dedicated to World War II. The most famous one is the monument to the Partisan Woman in Venice (1964): the work shows a corpse of a woman, as if washed up by the waves to the shore. This monument was of course only exhibited in a photograph and in a small-scale model. The sculptor himself, who participated in the Resistance movement, came with a group of supporters only to the exhibition opening. He was very happy with it and without imposing any conditions suggested we choose some works. N.K. Kosareva and I chose the wooden "Arlecchino" (1979) and two bronze statues, quite simple in their poses, but very interesting in their plastic ("Fawn" and "Boy with Fish", both dated 1980), as well as three small bronzes. As a result, Messina's works had to be moved a little bit closer together to make room for them.

The most famous Italian sculptor was Giacomo Manzù (1908–1991). He came to Leningrad several times and showed his works at exhibitions at the Academy of Fine Arts Museum and at the Hermitage. It seems like he wanted to follow the example of Messina and Greco and decided to give some works to our museum. The works were "Sitting Tebe", "Falling Tebe" (both dated 1983) and "Dressed Tebe" (1985). It was planned

AUGUSTO MURER
Boy with a Fish. 1980
Bronze
© The State Hermitage
Museum, St. Petersburg,
2016
Gift from the artist, 1982



that Manzù would also have a room for his works at the Hermitage. The exhibition was prepared and the author was expected to come for the opening, but he could not make it to the Hermitage, saying he was ill. Because of the lack of exhibition space the works of the four sculptors had to be gathered together in two halls later on.

It has to be noted that Boris Piotrovsky played an important role in all the negotiations with the sculptors, with the possible exception of Murer. He was eager to establish a contact with the artists, was happy to show them the museum and largely contributed to their willingness to give their works to the Hermitage.

Piotrovsky's role was especially important in establishing a friendship with Venanzo Crocchi (1913–2003), the author of the large bronze statue of a young man on a horse (about 3 meters high). It seems that they had met as early as 1989 in Italy, when the sculptor and his friend Antonio Tancredi (1934–2014), deputy of the Italian parliament, decided to organize an exhibition of his "Young Peace Rider" in different countries (in Hiroshima and New York in 1989, and later in Leningrad, Moscow, Strasbourg and Budapest). The Hermitage director was enthusiastic about this idea, despite the lack of exhibition space. As a result, the "Young Peace Rider" was exhibited in April 1990 in the Field Marshals' hall of the Winter Palace. And at the same time, largely because of his deep sympathy to Piotrovsky, Crocchi decided to give his works to the Hermitage. Unfortunately this happened only after the director's death, in 1992. Among the nine works, the Hermitage acquired the bronze study for the gate of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (Crocchi won the competition and created the second bronze gate of the main Catholic cathedral) and the monumental ensemble "Accademia" (1983), showing the master himself drawing a sitting model.

In the years since, the modern Italian sculpture collection has continued to grow. In 1992 the Hermitage, for the first time in its history, exhibited a non-figurative sculptor's works. It was Pietro Consagra (1920–2005) who gave to the museum his "Bi-frontal Onyx" (1988).

Another non-figurative sculptor, Bruno Liberatore (born 1947) had a large personal exhibition in the General Staff building in 2007, and several monumental works were displayed in the Winter Palace Courtyard. Later on, the artist's works traveled around the country and were exhibited in Kazan, Moscow and Vladivostok. As a result, in 2011 the Hermitage collection acquired six compositions by Liberatore, dating from different periods of his work.

Quinto Marlini (1908–1990), professor of the Florence Academy of Fine Arts, could not be exhibited at the Hermitage during his lifetime. But with the support of the Hermitage Friends' Club in Italy and the Carmignano town municipality (near Florence) in 2013 his works were exhibited at the Hermitage. Five works, casted especially for this exhibition, were given to the museum by a sculptor's family member, Teresa Bigazzi Marlini.

It is clear that such number of great plastic art works could not be exhibited in the Winter Palace halls, and besides that the same rooms were used for other temporary exhibitions. The opening of the General Staff building, with its unparalleled opportunities for the enlargement of the exhibitions, allows us to solve this problem. In the General Staff building there is now a permanent exhibition which includes large-scale works. Monumental sculptures by all the masters are on display here: from Francesco Messina to Bruno Liberatore. There is still one task left to accomplish: exhibiting Italian sculpture of the second half of the nineteenth century, which is now hidden in the repositories. This exhibition has to be completed with the small-scaled works by the twentieth century sculptors. The rich collection of nineteenth and twentieth century Italian sculpture has to become accessible to everyone.

We can also hope that the twentieth century Italian plastic arts collection will continue to grow in the future. One of the most eminent modern sculptors, Giuliano Vangi, whose personal exhibition was held at the Hermitage in 2002, has expressed his willingness to give his monumental bronze statue "St. John the Baptist" to the museum.



FAMOUS PAINTER

FOR THOSE WHO KNOW

EXCLUSIVE APARTMENTS
IN THE CENTER OF SAINT-PETERSBURG



IN MAY 2016 THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM HOSTED AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION ON THE SPECIAL SPACE OCCUPIED BY MUSEUMS, CULTURE, AND ART AND THE MAIN ISSUES PERTAINING TO THEIR PROTECTION. THIS IS A COLLECTION OF EXCERPTS FROM SPEECHES MADE AT THE "MUSEUM AS A SACRED SPACE" ROUND TABLE AT THE ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FORUM*.

**MARINA TSYGULEVA, HEAD OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM;
 MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY, DIRECTOR OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM;
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 NATALIA SHATIKHINA, MANAGING PARTNER, CLC LAW FIRM**

**BIG
 QUESTIONS**

* You can see the video from the round table (in Russian) on www.spblegalforum.ru

MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY

The Roerich Pact and Likhachev's Declaration on the Rights of Culture are key documents on which the future of mankind depends; yet they have not been legally adopted. Lawyers tell me that culture, like nature, has no rights; rights are for people alone. But culture should have rights, and they may not align with those of individuals, or with society's right to develop, to build, and so on. This is a complex issue underpinned by the principle that a museum is not a vendor's stall; it is something very special. There are smaller issues related to the "sacredness" of a museum, such as whether or not entrance should be free of charge. Then there are larger issues: for example, what should or should not be exhibited. This is the most important point: what is art? This question is often asked with regard to contemporary art in particular. The response is always the same: art is what is exhibited at a museum. This question was largely resolved in the twentieth century, although not everyone agrees with the answer: what an artist has touched becomes art. Defining who is and who is not an artist is another matter.

When we speak about the special dimension of culture, we are referring to the autonomy of cultural institutions and to their right to make independent decisions in the face of dictatorship and censorship. For many years, when we spoke of dictatorship and censorship in our country, we meant certain malicious

officials and the authorities in general. Now, they have been pushed aside by mob rule, the dictatorship of the masses, of the audience, of activists who do not represent the authorities, but rather exploit them; and who do not represent the church, but use its words. These attacks on culture are vicious and come from various sources, including from those acting in the name of restitution. However, if we were to commit to pulling everything back where it came from, then we would need to return every icon to the village or monastery where it was painted. Other attacks on culture take the form of intellectual property rights and copyright issues, when they restrict the actions and freedom of cultural institutions.

Although major cultural tragedies are taking place in our time, new ways of resolving them have emerged as well. Culture is now under physical attack, as is demonstrated most vividly by the ISIS fanatics who are deliberately destroying cultural monuments in order to destroy memory — in particular, the memory of a time preceding what they consider to be the only true ideas. This is what iconoclasts did in the Byzantine Empire, and what Protestants did in Britain and Holland. This is what we Russians did when we toppled monuments to

Alexander II and, later, those to Lenin. The intentional and symbolic destruction of cultural monuments in Syria, Iraq, Mali, Afghanistan and other countries is a stark demonstration that culture is more than a mere plaything or a vignette. Those who understand this know that culture must be destroyed before anything else.

Something else began to happen in parallel: the armed protection of cultural monuments. We tend to forget that Leningrad was defended not only for strategic and political reasons, but also because it would otherwise have been doomed to share the fate of Palmyra. Within the Nazi cultural frame of reference, the city was unnecessary and was thus to be destroyed. Palmyra reminded us of that story — in both cases, cultural monuments were protected through force.

This symbolic destruction of culture took place in response to protests. We need less talk and more action: we must protect culture through force and clamp down on trade in the "spoils" of such destruction.

There may come a time when the Declaration on the Rights of Culture will be ratified and enforced along with all other rights. One excellent example of the conflict between human rights and the rights of culture runs as follows: suppose a war is raging and a hill must be taken on which stands a church dating back to the sixteenth century. Inside the church's bell tower sits an enemy machine gunner. What should the commander in charge of the offensive do? Throughout history, Russian, German, and British officers, among others, have had to address this question. Their decisions were not always the same: some would advance and storm the hill at the expense of human lives; others would blast the hill with artillery fire, demolishing the church but saving lives. It is a very real question, and church ruins in Pskov and Novgorod testify to the different answers possible.

It is memory that makes territories sacred. If a territory holds no memories, then its sacredness is artificial. Chersonesus is sacred because it represents the centuries of history that have created its very atmosphere. No one knows the exact location where Prince Vladimir was baptised, but this place would be significantly more suitable for baptism than many others; it is sacred to our history.

CULTURE HAS ITS OWN TERRITORY WITH ITS OWN SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS, AND IT NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED. FAILURE TO DO SO ENTAILS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. THE NOTION OF THE SANCTITY OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS IS ALREADY SLIPPING AWAY — NOT ONLY IN RUSSIA OR IN ISIS-CONTROLLED AREAS, BUT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AS WELL.

MUSEUMS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO AUTHORISE THE USE OF DEPICTIONS OF THEIR EXHIBITS, AND THEY SHOULD PRIMARILY BE GUIDED BY THE CULTURAL CONTEXT. WE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION AND TO A MEANS OF EARNING MONEY IN ORDER TO PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE.

MARINA TSYGULEVA

Only museums can provide lawyers with the opportunity to become culture and art rights activists. Today, we are attempting to regulate the use of images of our collections for purposes other than personal enjoyment. We currently have over 32,000 digital images on the museum website. Anyone can open a "branch" of the Hermitage at home.

Does a museum have the right to prohibit the use of anything from its collection? I think it does. I am disturbed by the idea of using the image of Rembrandt's Danaë in an advertisement for a memory foam mattress. It is the role of museums to develop society's artistic tastes and to help shape its general culture.

TODAY WE ARE LIVING IN A NEW ERA WITH A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE SPACE IN WHICH MUSEUMS EXIST: MUSEUMS ARE BECOMING HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT AND TRULY SACRED PLACES BECAUSE THEY PRESERVE A VERY IMPORTANT SENSE OF MEMORY, NOT ONLY OF THE IDENTITY OF A PLACE, BUT ALSO OF LOCAL CULTURAL SYSTEMS AND THE GLOBAL CULTURAL STRUCTURE.

MIKHAIL SHVYDKOY

The life of a museum has many facets in the modern world. I think that today, at a time when European and other civilisations are undergoing not only a profound crisis of meaning but a systemic crisis as well, we are witnessing a transformation of the logocentric civilisation that emerged in the seventh century or perhaps even earlier, at a time in Antiquity when logos — words and language — was not only the focus of attention but also the very core of civilisation.

HUMBOLDT STATES THAT EDUCATION AND CULTURE ARE DESTINED FOR THOSE WHO BECOME CITIZENS. IN HIS VIEW, THOSE WHO HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED THE WORLD OF CULTURE ARE NOT WORTHY OF THE JOYS OF CITIZENSHIP. IN OTHER WORDS, EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS A ZONE OF NATURAL SACREDNESS. FOR SOME, THIS ZONE IS INHABITED BY SPIRITUAL VALUES; FOR OTHERS — BY THE MUNDANE.

NATALIA SHATIKHINA

What shapes the object of our protection? The creation of the sacred is a peculiar process. I teach a course called "Fundamentals of Criminal Policy". The rules of this subject are as strict as those of physics. Sacredness is largely shaped within this plane. A rule only becomes a law when it reinforces a genuine legal norm that has emerged objectively. I think here we have a key to understanding the sacred dimension of museums. In Humboldt's "The Limits of State Action", he discusses the extent to which the state can intervene in society: "The state ceases altogether to have any beneficial action if the individual is sacrificed to the citizen". This has nothing to do with philanthropy — the author states that there are areas which require as little interference from the state as possible (provided that they pose no threat to the state's existence): education, art, culture, religion, and any issues related to luxury and what we understand the term to mean.

Carl Gustav Jung wrote about the causes of human development and degradation, as well as the origin of nations and societies. According to his biographer,

Marie-Louise von Franz, he staunchly defended human rights and called for firm guarantees for these rights and for personal freedoms, which are ensured not only through the rule of law but, even more importantly, through maturity, wisdom and a responsible attitude towards the lives of all members of society. Jung says that one is born an animal. During the process of socialisation, one encounters natural taboos as well as the boundary between good and evil. The individual accumulates energy through dependence on society; this energy is the basis of personal development, required to fulfil one's spiritual needs. Such taboos are like keystones that enable an individual to evolve as a personality. These new characteristics may not develop in the absence of such an external frame of reference.

How is art created? It has always been something that drives humanity forward. This development may be difficult and painful, but it is always a step forward. A perturbation is only justifiable when it contributes to our development and is not merely an expression of internal tension in certain individuals.

A non-conformist and a Nobel Prize winner who attended lectures at the faculty of philology at St. Petersburg State University once wrote the following: "All are naked before God. Pitiful, naked and shabby. In all music there is Bach. In all of us is God."

NOTHING CAN COMPARE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A MUSEUM OR A LIBRARY, NOT EVEN A VOLCANIC ERUPTION. NO TSUNAMI IS MORE DEVASTATING THAN THE DESTRUCTION OF A VALUABLE COLLECTION, EVEN A SMALL ONE. THIS IS OUR ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY. ARE WE GOING TO ACT OR SIMPLY RUMINATE?



TATIANA CHERNIGOVSKAYA

My thoughts echo what has already been said. After all, we are speaking of the confrontation between human nature and the nature of beasts, or between cosmos and chaos, in the antique sense. Or: who are we? Is this the end or just a temporary crisis?

It is said that art should be a step forward. Firstly, I am not entirely convinced of the truth of that statement; and secondly, I am not sure that "forward", that is, where we are now heading, is where we want to be.

This debate has been going on for eternity: nature or culture? What distinguishes us from our neighbours on this planet? Our neighbours live in herds or in swarms, where there are no individuals — only a single organism divided into parts. Nature does not progress through individuals, but through entire populations. Any number of wolves can be sacrificed in order to preserve the wolf as a species.

I recently read the following in a book written by Nikita Moiseyev, a mathematician and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences: "In a herd, most spend their time chewing". The protection of individual members is no concern of the herd. Kierkegaard states that language is a way to fight death. Admittedly, he meant verbal language. However, humanity has many other languages: music, performing arts, mathematics, painting... Where are they leading us? This is not about "forward" or "backward". Mankind creates what nature has not created; we create our own objects, which follow their own rules. Lotman compared culture to an explosion, adding that culture is a system of taboos, and that art involves overcoming these taboos.

Mr. Piotrovsky's introduction was brilliant. I was amazed: I had never before heard the phrase "armed protection of culture". We now live in a time when such protection is necessary. Mob rule, too, must be taken seriously, as it characterises our epoch. Are we to live as a herd, each chewing his cud? Who are we?

The idea that museums are tools of entertainment and education — I am being deliberately cynical — does not appeal to me. These are certainly some of the functions of museums. But museums have a much more significant role — anthropological preservation. Museums preserve our history not only in the chronological sense, but as a whole.

Art preserves the worlds that no longer exist and the history of consciousness. It is not what is depicted but the context that is essential. These contexts are the essence of humanity; they do not and cannot exist in nature. Kierkegaard writes that "Truth exists only as the individual himself produces it in action". This is worth contemplating.

I consider myself an alarmist, and apocalyptic thoughts often cross my mind. I can see the signs of the end; they are already visible. The lines between good and evil are blurred. Everything exists in inverted commas. Good and evil, boundaries and morals: all of these human concepts are fading away. In one of his works, Nietzsche speaks of the Last Men, who will ask, "What is a star?" and blink. This is what I would like to congratulate you all on.

THE NEW PASTELS HALL

MIKHAIL DEDINKIN
PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

AT THE END OF DECEMBER 2015 IN THE GENERAL STAFF BUILDING, NEAR THE SERGEY SHCHUKIN AND THE MOROZOV BROTHERS MEMORIAL GALLERY THE NEW PASTELS HALL WAS OPENED. THE EXHIBITION INCLUDES SEVEN PIECES BY DEGAS, PASTELS BY RENOIR, MANET, TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, ART WORKS BY ROUAULT AND PICASSO. ALL OF THEM ARE MASTERPIECES OF THE NEW FRENCH ART AND ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR COLLECTION.

The Hermitage has displayed these pastels before at special and temporary exhibitions, but now for the first time this unique material is exhibited in such an impressive and elegant manner. It became a sort of an introduction to the paintings collection, gathering pieces by the most significant masters of the time in the same room.

It is difficult to exhibit pastels. There are strict conditions concerning light, which are brilliantly met by the brand-new lighting system which does not create the feeling of a dark cellar, but at the same time is delicate enough for the fragile pieces of art.

The vogue of pastels (dry colours with a high concentration of pigment, but almost no binder) in Europe has come and gone since the sixteenth century. One of the brightest periods of pastel drawings was in the middle of the nineteenth century, when impressionists used this technique quite a lot. A particular phenomenon is the work of Degas, who used pastel more and more often when he started losing his sight in old age. There are many unique things in the Hermitage collection. The ageing master, growing blind, disregarded technology and combined different, seemingly non-compatible, techniques in the same work: charcoal, tempera, gouache, pastel. And he obtained fantastic results.

Of course, this example shows that the term "pastel" is quite relative. In some works there is actually just a small amount of pastel, like in Toulouse-Lautrec's or Rouault's works, but it is the special luminescence of the material that unites all the exhibited works with the harmony that brings them into successful competition with the paintings exhibited next to them.

EDGAR DEGAS

Two Dancers

(fragment)

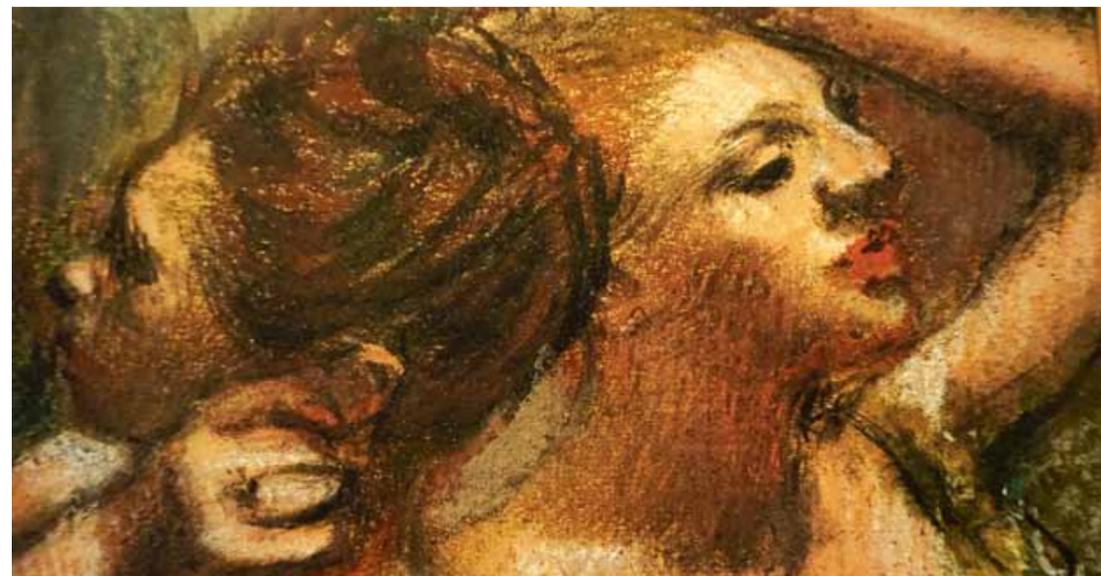
France. Circa 1897–1898

Paper, charcoal, pastel

© The State Hermitage

Museum, St. Petersburg,

2016



PASTEL HALL
AT THE GENERAL
STAFF BUILDING

"...Degas began in a 'smooth' technique, in the spirit of the old masters; his oil painting showed the grainy surface of the canvas, his pastels are covered with even and fragile powder. This transparent, light and smooth technique corresponded to the coloristic character of Degas' ballet impressions: the transparency of the gauze, the smoothness of the parquet, the delicacy of the maillot, the abundance of light coming through the huge windows of the foyer etc. Starting from the nineties this original monotonous manner gives place to a different one, more temperamental, rich and complex. Degas was one of the first 'impressionists' to grasp the meaning of the 'manner' in painting, the role of thickness and density of the stroke and of its direction on the surface of a painting.

In the 'blue' and 'pink' ballerinas the previous smooth powder gives way to a whole cloud of thick strokes, touches and points, thrown onto one another in a passionate impulse. In the language of the critics of the time this new manner was qualified as 'chaotic' and 'disorderly'. But this is actually not the case: it had new formal and psychological value. The new manner corresponded to Degas' new approach to the ballet spectacle: what he paints now is not the cold monotony of the dance class, but the fantasy of the *performance*. And this new abundance of colours which Degas came to in his second period of work has the same combination of truth and lies, of realism and romanticism which is so characteristic of him.

The realism is in the very system of strokes and touches which are not thrown on in disorder, but laid vertically or crossways, as if they were wound around an organic shape, giving a new outline and volume to it."

Tugenhold Y.

Edgar Degas and his Art. Moscow, 1922

AFRICAN ART OF THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES.
S.A. GIRDIN'S GIFTS TO THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, 2015–2016
OCTOBER 2016



TROPICAL AFRICA IN THE HERMITAGE FIRST ACQUISITIONS

IN AUTUMN 2015, HONORARY CONSUL OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA IN ST. PETERSBURG AND LENINGRAD REGION, SERGEY GIRDIN, PUT FORWARD THE PROPOSAL TO START A COLLECTION OF AFRICAN ART AT THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM. THE PROPOSAL GENERATED MUCH INTEREST AS AFRICAN ART IS ALMOST ENTIRELY ABSENT FROM THE HERMITAGE. THE EXHIBITION COMPRISES ABOUT 30 OBJECTS OF AFRICAN ART FROM THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, INCLUDING HELMET MASKS, FERTILITY DOLLS, FIGURES OF WOMEN, CEREMONIAL STAFFS, WEAPONS, PENDANTS AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTS.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC HELMET-MASK
(South-West of the modern Cameroon)
LATE 19TH — EARLY 20TH CENTURY
Wood, pigment; carving
Height 45,5 cm
From the Linden Museum collection (Stuttgart);
purchased in the field at the beginning
of the 20th century by Adolf Dill

ANDREI BOLSHAKOV

Created to satisfy the classical artistic tastes of the Russian royal family, the Hermitage has long remained indifferent to traditional African cultures. Moreover, since Africa remained outside the geopolitical reach of the Russian Empire, African art never found its way to Russian museums either through diplomatic contacts or military interventions. The 1917 revolution had little impact on the visibility of African art in the Hermitage. Indeed, most of the Museum's acquisitions during that period came from nationalized private collections which were sadly lacking in objects of African heritage; the few available works by African artists were effectively displayed by the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera).

The status-quo began to change in the 1980s. In 1987 Mr. Gemu Ble Gwimbanro (Republic of Guinea) presented the Hermitage with a traditional festival costume (an ornamented shirt made of wool) from Forested Guinea. The event marked the beginning of the Hermitage's African collection although the very prospect seemed impossible at the time. The following year, the Museum received a ritual vessel as a gift from the staff of the Pasteur Institute, who bought the art object during their work mission in Nigeria. The subsequent donation by the outstanding ethnographer Vladimir Arsenyev¹ (including a fertility doll and a two-faced mask from Mali) prompted Hermitage Director Boris Piotrovsky to acquire part of Arsenyev's collection and had a decisive impact on the Hermitage's acquisition policy.

In 2009 Vladimir Arsenyev presented the Hermitage with his textile collection, composed of artisan fabrics with stunning designs that echoed Ancient Egyptian motifs, as well as some mass-produced textiles; in 2010, Arsenyev contributed to the Museum several other objects of traditional art which supplemented the works purchased from him earlier.

¹ **Vladimir Arsenyev (1948–2010)** was a prominent researcher at the Kunstkamera (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg), who specialized in African Studies with a focus on Bambara culture. Arsenyev spent many years of his life in Mali and was even adopted as a member to one of the Bambara clans under the kin name Nchi Coulibaly. Most of Arsenyev's collection is under care of the Kunstkamera; the objects he selected for the Hermitage had both ethnographical and artistic value.

Mikhail Piotrovsky

“There is a particular context for these things in The Hermitage — the works of French artists, inspired by the art of the Dark Continent. Their place is near Picasso and Derain paintings. It is a luck, that a small bone sculpture that has been delivered to the Hermitage, was owned by Derain. This is a wonderful completion of the Hermitage collection — a generous and clever gift.”



Kirpichev's believe that all children are geniuses and for over forty years proving this. Achieving results which are hard to believe without being there to see the process in person.

Children starting from the age of two, learn to work in the studio with the basic fundamentals of architecture - form, space, rhythm, texture, colour, that precedes the architecture and what is its essential content.

Architect Steven Holl, who has been observing the development of EDAS for at least past twenty years, calls the children's works extraordinary. «It's a rare and beautiful things», he says, comparing EDAS with the legendary Black Mountain College.

Greg Lynn, architect and theorist from Los Angeles, calls this school amazing. «They get kids thinking about transportation, energy, landscape and urban living, all through drawings, paintings and room-scale models, and then they have international architects and urbanists come in and talk to them about it. It is as inspiring for the architects as it is for the kids»

Reference: EDAS-Kirpichev School-studio founded in Moscow in 1977.
Vladislav Kirpichev - architect, winner of the UNESCO Prize, laureate of the State Prize of Russia in the field of literature and art, professor. Over the years, he held a teaching position at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, UCL (Bartlett School of Architecture), Greenwich University School of Architecture (London, UK), Staedelschule Frankfurt, ZKM Karlsruhe (Germany), Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), di'angewandte Wien (Austria).

FIGURE OF A WOMAN BREASTFEEDING A BABY
Cote d'Ivoire. EARLY 20TH CENTURY
Wood, palina; carving
Height 61,5 cm
Sold from an auction in Angers in 1965, until 1972 – in the Robert Sloller gallery collection (Munich); purchased in the field before 1914.



Like most academics, Arsenyev amassed his collection with vast knowledge and limited funding. The oldest items date from the mid-twentieth century as most of Africa's earlier sculptural heritage has long been displaced from its original source to European and American museums and major private collections. In 2015 a milestone event took place which, hopefully, will open a new stage in the expansion of the Hermitage's African collection by means of antiques. At the initiative of the Hermitage's Deputy Director Georgiy Vilinbakhov, a plan of coordinated activities aimed at enhancing the Hermitage's collection of African art was developed by the Museum administration jointly with Sergey Girdin, a prominent St. Petersburg entrepreneur and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Guinea and Leningrad Region. According to the plan, the collection was to be augmented by purchasing art objects at antiques auctions, provided these objects had been known from the late nineteenth century and had a good history. In 2016 the first twenty-nine artefacts acquired as part of this project were added to the Hermitage's African collection, which now comprises over 250 items.

The keen interest in African sculpture throughout the early twentieth century helped to make it universally recognizable and stimulated intuitive understanding of African art. Cubist artists, being passionate about the "Dark Continent", provoked a commercial boom for African art and caused collectors to reassess the cultural value of African sculpture. Objects previously regarded as exotic colonial trophies were finally recognized as artworks, which made it necessary to redefine their status in museums, galleries and private collections. After a period of formal and arbitrary approach to African aesthetics, we have come to understand that African masterpieces are a window on the artists' mentality, way of life, visual language and ideas of beauty.



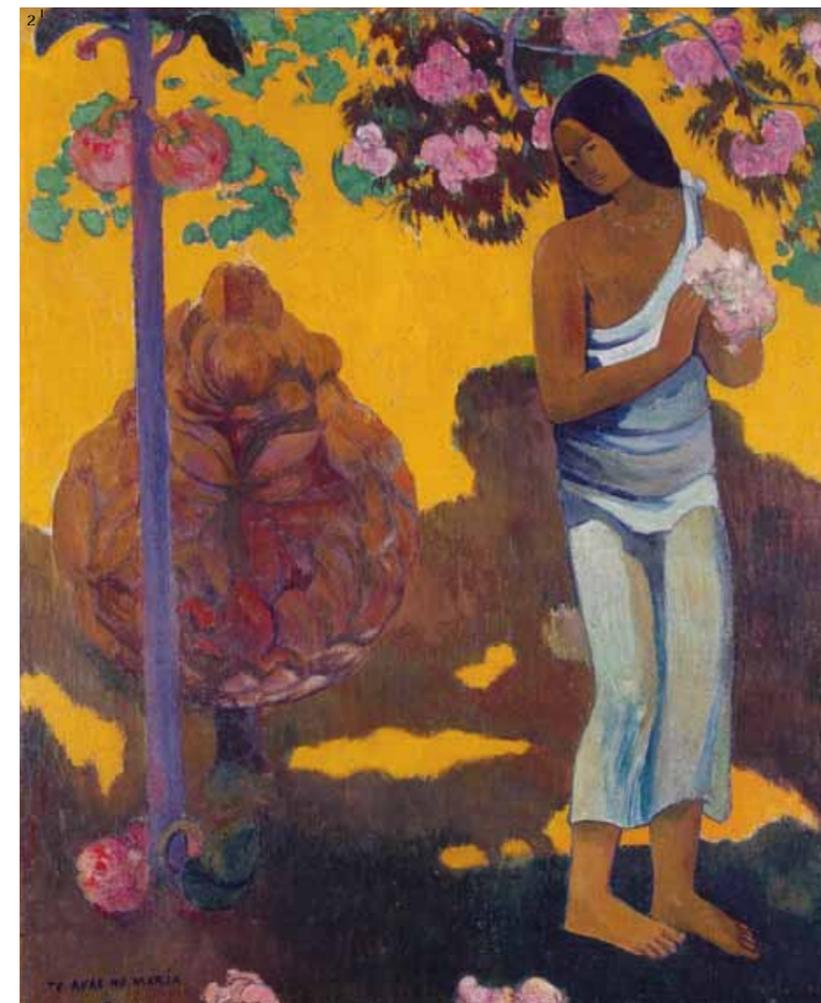
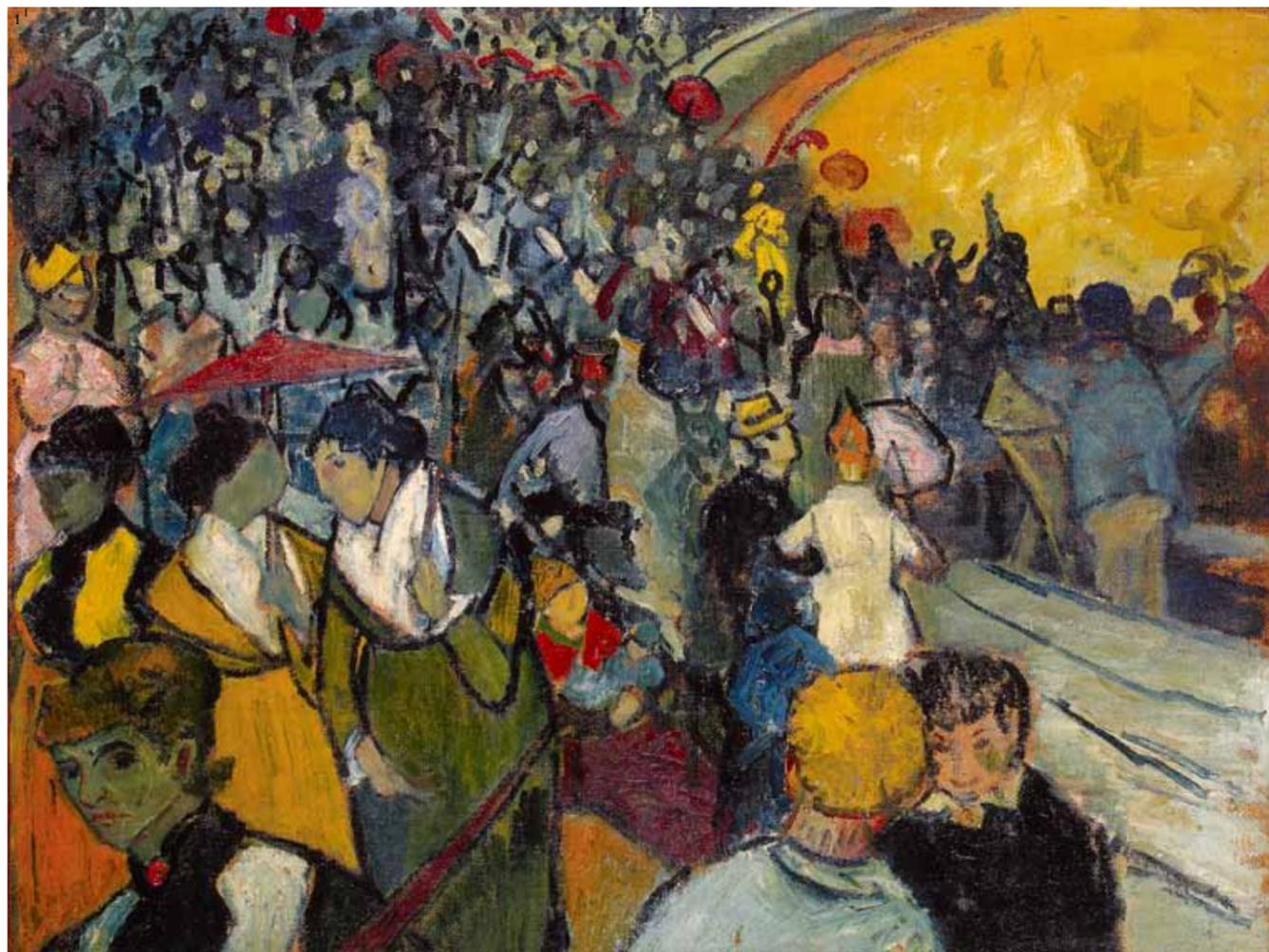
Maya Sibiryakova, 6 / Anya Sibiryakova, 5 2013 photo: Vlad Kirpichev ©EDAS, 2013

In the fall of 2016 EDAS opened a studio in St. Petersburg, the work which is carried out on its methodology and author programs. In collaboration with the State Hermitage Museum was conducted the first space-analytical workshop with the participation of EDAS and EDAS_SPb and students of the School Center of the State Hermitage Museum. It was also the lecture, where Vladislav Kirpichev spoke about the history of creation and activity of EDAS.

BY WAY OF EXCHANGE

A COLLECTION OF MODERN FRENCH ART DIVIDED BETWEEN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD. 1928-1932

THE IDEA TO MOVE A PART OF THE COLLECTION TO THE HERMITAGE WAS FIRST VOICED IN 1924, AND WAS PROPOSED AS PART OF AN "EXCHANGE PROGRAMME" WITH MOSCOW MUSEUMS. HOWEVER, WHILE EXHIBITS FROM THE HERMITAGE WERE SENT OVER TO MOSCOW FOR THREE YEARS, THE REQUEST FROM THE ST. PETERSBURG FOR SOME PAINTINGS FROM THE STATE MUSEUM OF MODERN WESTERN ART WAS NEVER FULFILLED: NEITHER IN 1924, NOR IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS.



EKATERINA LOPATKINA

The modern French art collection was acquired by the Soviet Museum Fund after private collections belonging to Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov¹ had been nationalised. In the late 1910s — early 1920s these paintings were of interest to several state museum collections that were then in the making. Between 1919 and 1922 two museums of fine art, one in Petrograd, one in Moscow, laid claim to a part of these works².

In 1923 Kazimir Malevich³ said that it was necessary to give a part of the State Museum of Modern Western Art collection to Petrograd, for the newly established section of modern art at the Russian Museum.

The idea to move a part of the collection to the Hermitage was first voiced in 1924, and was proposed as part of an "exchange programme" with Moscow museums. The talks about a transfer of a part of the Hermitage collection of "old" Western European paintings to Moscow museums started in December 1922. From the very beginning all transfers from one institution to the

other were presented as part of an exchange programme between the two museums. Within this programme each museum had the right to expand its own collection. For the Hermitage, such a development would have entailed an expansion of the chronological framework of its collection: in July 1924 Alexander Benois wrote the following to G.S. Yalmanov, who was then in charge of all Leningrad museums: "It would be particularly important for the Hermitage to acquire some works by French Impressionist and Neo-Impressionist painters, by Picasso and other representatives of contemporary Western art, which are abundant in Moscow museums, while we have not got a single painting from this category". However, while exhibits from the Hermitage were sent over to Moscow for three years, the request from the St. Petersburg for some paintings from the State Museum of Modern Western Art was never granted: not in 1924, nor in the following years. The Hermitage officials did not insist on it though; it was much more important that in November 1927, after over 500 paintings and sculptures

by Old European masters had been sent to Moscow, two representatives of the Museum of Fine Arts, N.I. Romanov and A.M. Efros, confirmed in writing that the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow had no further claims to paintings and sculptures in the Hermitage collection⁴.

In less than a year after the mentioned document was signed, on 25 October 1928, the Hermitage received an instruction from the office in charge of arts and sciences ordering it "to receive a part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Western Art necessary for the development of the Hermitage collection in exchange for a part of its collection of Old Western Art required by the Museum of Fine Arts"⁵.

In March 1929 the Hermitage received two lists: a "request" from the Museum of Fine Arts and a list of paintings from the Museum of Modern Western Art offered to the Hermitage in exchange. The Hermitage was capable of fulfilling the request and thus started the correspondence regarding the pros and cons, or the "motivations" as they put it back then, which lasted for several

1 | **VINCENT VAN GOGH**
ARENA AT ARLES
France. 1888
Oil, canvas. 73 × 92 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016. Inv. № ГЭ-6529

2 | **PAUL GAUGUIN**
TE AVAE NO MARIA. MONTH OF MARY
France. 1899
Oil, canvas. 96 × 74,5 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016. Inv. № ГЭ-6515

years. As for the list from the Museum of Modern Western Art, a second opinion of an independent expert was required, since there were no in-house experts in the latest art movements. The Hermitage sought assistance from the fine arts specialists of the Art Workers Union⁶ and painter V.V. Surkov (1885–1942) was delegated to the official “commission for the selection of paintings”. He was later joined by painters V.V. Lebedev (1891–1967), K.S. Malevich (1879–1935) and N.A. Tyrsa (1887–1942)⁷. Following their work and negotiations with the Museum of Modern Western Art, which took almost a year, on 23 February 1930 43 paintings were delivered to the Hermitage⁸.

It was decided to make the new acquisitions part of the permanent exposition on the first floor of the Small Hermitage, in the eastern part of one of the galleries, in room 57 (now room 262); in April 1930 this part of the collection was already open to the public.

Soon after the acquisition, however, (February 1930) the Hermitage initiated new negotiations regarding another, additional transfer from the collection of the Museum of Modern Western Art. After the opening of the gallery of contemporary art the director of the Hermitage, L.L. Obolensky and the interim head of the Gallery of Paintings V.F. Miller sent a letter to the Museum of Modern Western Art, in which they evaluated the Leningrad collection of French art, saying, “The exhibition of the latest works of French art held by the Hermitage, despite including not just the recently acquired works from the Museum of Modern Western Art, but also all the materials related to this field that we were able to find in Leningrad, has demonstrated that with the resources available the Hermitage can only give a very vague and sometimes distorted idea of the latest trends in French art. Many of the most significant stages of its development can only be presented through very few low-quality works. Such a collection is equally difficult to use for political and educational purposes and to satisfy the artistic audiences of Leningrad”⁹.

Based on these opinions the Hermitage once again “made an application for an additional transfer of paintings from the Museum of Modern Western Art to the Hermitage”¹⁰. A few important topics were covered in this application: the impression of the public and the personnel of the Hermitage from the exchange with Moscow museums (the exchange was seen as one-sided, “unfair”), potential transfers of exhibits from the Hermitage to the Museum of Modern Western Art (“The Hermitage is willing to provide two paintings by Léon Frédéric, one painting by Valotton and if absolutely necessary one sculpture by Rodin”), a change in the way paintings were selected by the Hermitage (“The Hermitage

is adding less significant works to the list; exhibiting these works is necessary to organise the exposition sociologically”).

The change in the approach to building the collection and, later, to creating the permanent exposition of French art of the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century was caused by a change of management at the Hermitage. In 1930 Taliana L. Lilovaya¹¹ was appointed head of the Western Art Section, and the “PromCap”¹² department¹³ also got a new curator, Valentin F. Miller¹⁴. Miller believed that “the exposition was to be built according to certain cultural periods but in such a way as to make each cultural period comprehensible from the point of view of its social necessity, as a certain cultural formation”¹⁴. He presented his view of the selection process for exhibits in more detail during his speech at a meeting on 3 June 1931: “So far all our expositions and our schools of history of fine arts in general, including the Marxist approach, applied the same selection criteria as in the west, that is to say, from the point of view of modern art movements. This means only the main lines were identified which were acceptable for the contemporary progressive bourgeois art and important for understanding how it developed. Salon art and petit-bourgeois art are not included and have not been presented at museums. Using this material makes it possible to put together a complete picture”¹⁵. The stylistic approach proposed by Surkov, Tyrsa and Lebedev was given up in favour of Miller’s “historic and sociological” approach, and the change of the key selection principle necessitated a change in what works were requested from the Museum of Modern Western Art. All those works that had once been considered “marginal” by the artists became important for demonstrating the “era of industrial capitalism”.

New requests from the Hermitage were met with indignation at the Museum of Modern Western Art. A response was written from the director of the museum, B.N. Ternovets, and sent to the office in charge of sciences with a copy to the Hermitage. It was a furious rebuke, full of vitriolic remarks about the Leningrad museum and its personnel¹⁶. With obvious outrage the letter stated (the words were capitalised in the original) the following: “The State Museum of Modern Western Art considers characterisation of the ACQUIRED WORKS OF MODERN FRENCH ART given by the Hermitage (“low-quality works”, “vague and sometimes distorted idea of the latest trends in French art”) as ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE, AS IT MISCONSTRUES THE FACTS AND IS ENTIRELY WRONG. The State Museum of Modern Western Art affirms that having acquired this collection the Hermitage now disposes of the best collection of contemporary French art in Europe

(after Paris). In terms of its fullness, diversity and value this collection is by far superior to those of Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Dresden, Rome, Venice and other major galleries of contemporary art, which UNLIKE THE HERMITAGE DO NOT KEEP THEIR COLLECTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ART SECRET AND LOCKED AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC BUT TAKE PRIDE IN THEM”. The personnel of the State Museum of Modern Western Art also expressed their opinion of the very idea of presenting “the latest trends in Western art” at the Hermitage: “The State Museum of Modern Western Art believes that EXHIBITING THE ACQUIRED COLLECTION AT THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM IS WRONG; the art of the era of industrial capitalism has very particular and conceptually new features, which makes exhibiting it together with the classical art of preceding eras methodologically wrong; this art requires a very different perceptual mindset from the viewer; this is why everywhere in Europe contemporary art (starting from Impressionism) is exhibited separately, in different museum buildings (e.g. in Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, Munich, Rome etc.); one famous exception is the Louvre which has lately started exhibiting Impressionist paintings but not such contemporary artists as Derain, Picasso and others. The Museum of Modern Western Art believes that this question should be seriously considered and debated; we should set a reasonable limit to the ambitions of the Hermitage to expand its collection over all eras and all countries, and the possibility

of exhibiting contemporary French art in Leningrad but not in the Hermitage building should be seriously considered”¹⁷. It was also pointed out that the Hermitage had based its previous requests on “stylistic and aesthetic” and not sociological criteria.

Nevertheless, based on the idea of building a “sociological exposition”, the Museum of Modern Western Art agreed to provide “a few of the requested works” and even to provide additional works which “would make it possible to expand the sociological exposition and make a more complete idea of certain artists”. As a result, on 5 December 1930, 36 works were sent to Leningrad on condition that “the official statement of the Hermitage that there would be no further applications for new transfers from the State Museum of Modern Western Art to the Hermitage would be taken into account”¹⁸. The paintings were delivered in two stages: 30 were received on 10 January, and 6 more on 4 March. The shipment was delayed because the State Museum of Modern Western Art had to make copies of the paintings. Upon arrival of the second shipment, a temporary exhibition (7–31 March 1931) of “contemporary French paintings” was held at the Hermitage, in room 57 where the previously received works were already on display. In 1932 the collection was moved: on 1 May the exposition of “French Art of the era of industrial capitalism” was opened on the second floor of the Winter Palace.

1. From 1918 – I (Shchukin) and II (Morozov) sections of the State Museum of Modern Western Art.

2. See: *I.N. Karasik Muzej khudozheslvennoy kullury. Evolyutsia idei // Russkiy Avangard. Problemy reprezentatsii i interpretatsii*. St. Petersburg: Palacedition, pp. 13–23.

3. See: *K. Malevich Russkiy Muzej. K obmenu khudozheslvennykh proizvedeniy mezhdu Moskvoy i Petrogradom // Zhizn' Iskusstva*, Pg., 1923, # 16 (891), 24 April, pp. 13–14.

4. See: State Hermitage Archive. F. 1. Op. 5. D. 865. L. 1 ob.

5. Ibid. L. 5.

6. **Sorabis (The Art Workers Union)** existed from 1918 until 1932.

7. See: Ib. D. 866. L. 35.

8. See: Ib. D. 1930.

9. Manuscript Department of the State Museum of Fine Arts. F. 13. Op. 1. Ed. Hr. 262. L. 10.

10. Ibid. L. 11.

11. **Taliana L. Lilovaya (1899–1980)** graduated from the Academy of Art in 1925 having specialised in sculpture. In the late 1920s she worked for the Museum of Revolution. She was employed by the Hermitage in 1930 and worked there for 6 years: between 1930 and 1934 as the head of the Western European Section and between 1934 and 1936 as deputy director for research. See: State Hermitage Archive. F. 1. Op. 13. D. 481.

12. Industrial Capitalism.

13. **Valentin F. Miller (1896–1938)** was employed at the Gallery of Paintings of the Hermitage in 1929 and worked for the Hermitage until 1937. His research focused on the history of French and German art of the Modern Age. In the second half of the 1930s Miller published several papers: about Gustave Courbet, Adolphe von Menzel, Nicolas Poussin as well as the catalogue of the Hermitage part of the “Belgian art of the 19th–20th centuries” exhibition. In December 1937 Miller was arrested as an “Estonian spy” and was sentenced to death. His execution took place on 18 January 1938. See: Hermitage. Istoria i sovremennost. 1764–1988. Moscow, 1990. P. 102.

14. State Hermitage Archive. F. 1. Op. 5. D. 113. L. 15.

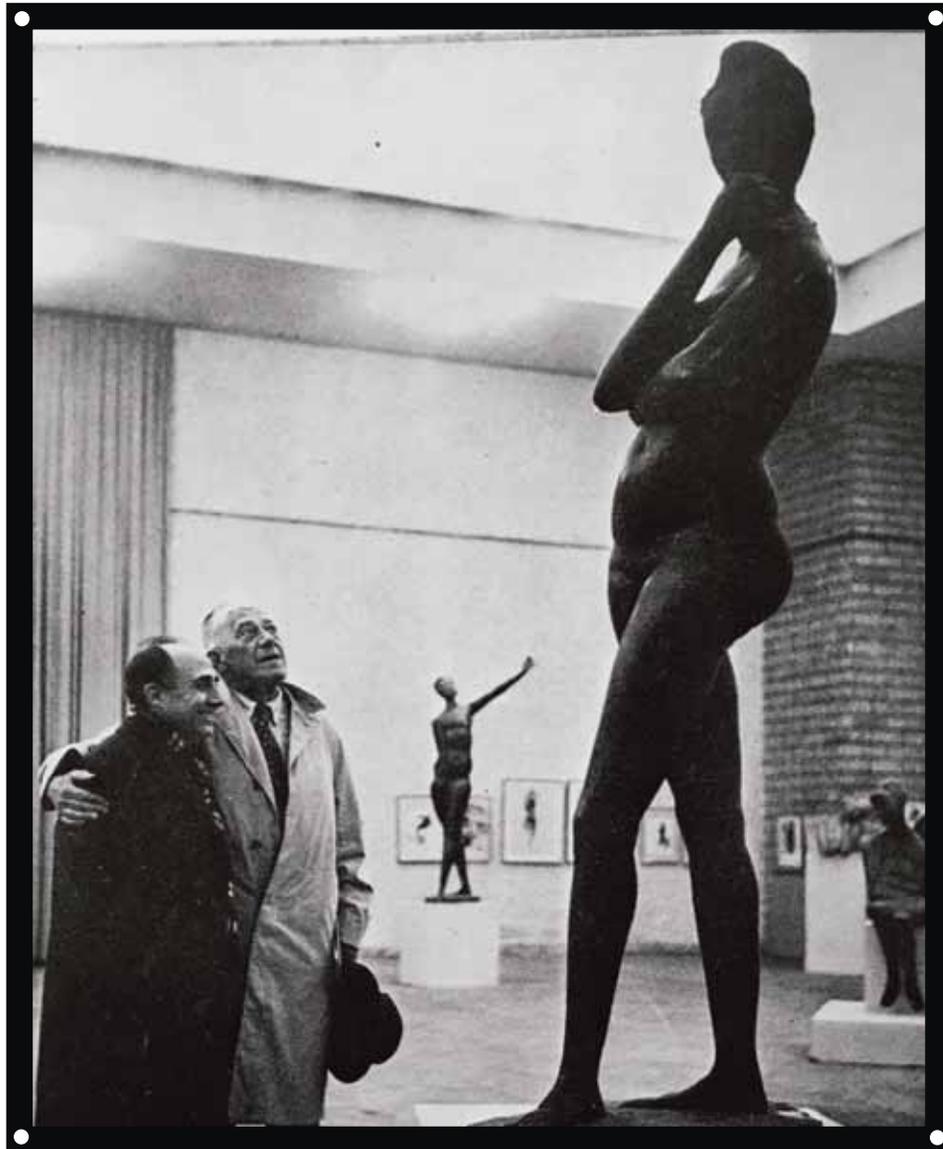
15. Ibid. D. 1185. L. 42.

16. See: Manuscript Department of the State Museum of Fine Arts. F. 13. Op. 1. Ed. Hr. 262. L. 20.

17. Ibid. The draft of the document also had the following paragraph: “The inability to utilise this material for political and educational purposes says more about the state of educational work at the Hermitage than about the paintings themselves. What is more, the Hermitage does not seem to have the necessary experts who could provide guidance in the new unfamiliar material. Our worries about Leningrad being ‘unprepared’ to approach and assimilate the acquired material is aggravated by the fact that the personnel of the Hermitage reject and try to get rid of the most characteristic and conceptually consistent works by the ‘left’ artist (‘The Conversation’ by Matisse)” (Ib. L. 28 ob.).

18. State Hermitage Archive F. 1. Op. 5. D. 1030. L. 110.

OSKAR KOKOSCHKA
AT THE GRECO EXHIBITION
AT THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA
SPRING 1960



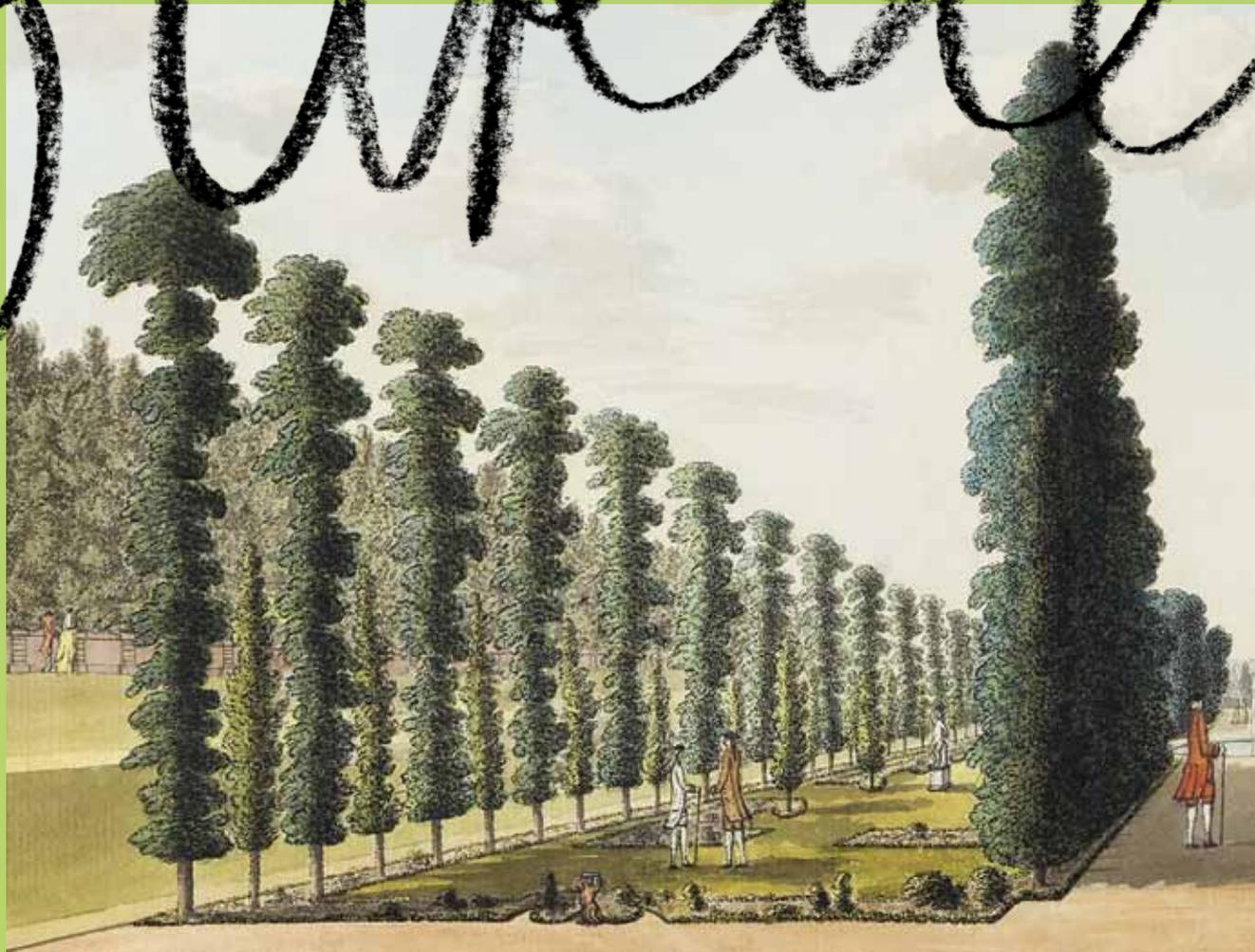
Carlo L. Raghianti ("Critica d'arte" magazine, "Vallecchi"
Publishing House, Florence, 1973), quote from the catalogue
"Emilio Greco", The State Hermitage Museum, 1979

"Latin language, hermeneutic and precise, could for centuries be an incomparable means of communication and introducing new content, and in the same way in the history of European culture there was a sort of attraction that allowed many artists to feel themselves part of the ancient Mediterranean and Greco-Roman civilization which continued to exist and deeply influence different epochs in time. It is not a highly-educated or a special artistic language, but something immanent, which does not have a 'before' and an 'after', which is not a supposition or a conclusion, but a part of a dialogue or a drama which ignores the random positions of the characters."

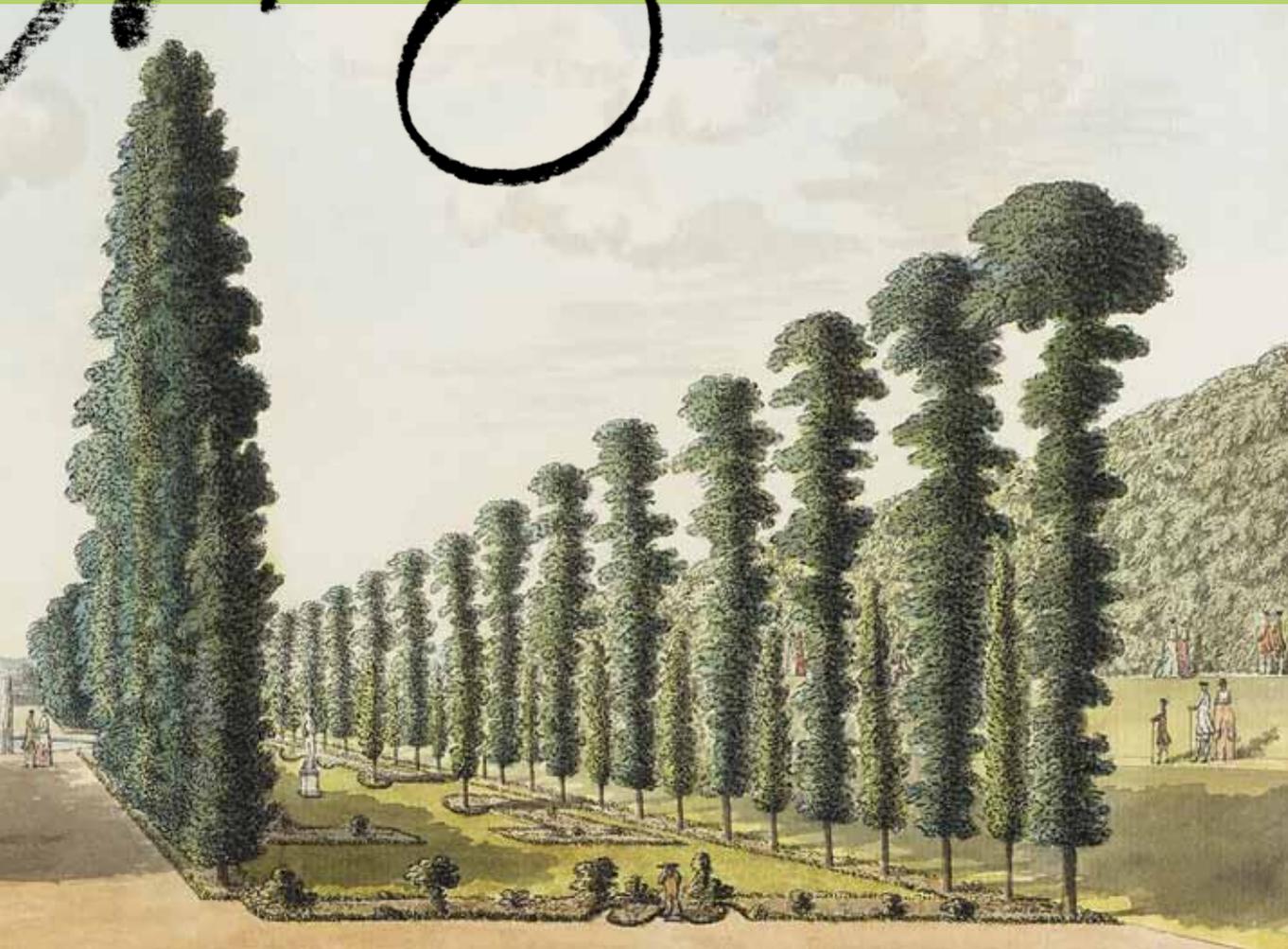


4

Parade



JOHN SPYERS
The Privy Garden
c. 1778
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016



“I cannot feel anything... just sadness...
 What do these trees bloom for?
 The beauty of pure, absolute physiology...
 Everything is arithmetic, stunningly evolutionary.
 This is silence. The man left for lunch, maybe he is sleeping —
 and he left the land alone, at least for a while...
 It is not warm, it is not cold... But where are the birds?
 Is this a land with no birds in spring?
 That is a pity...”

A. SOKUROV
Comments
on Italian
photographs.
 “In the middle
 of the ocean”,
 St. Petersburg,
 “Amphora”, 2014.

Mikhail Dedinkin

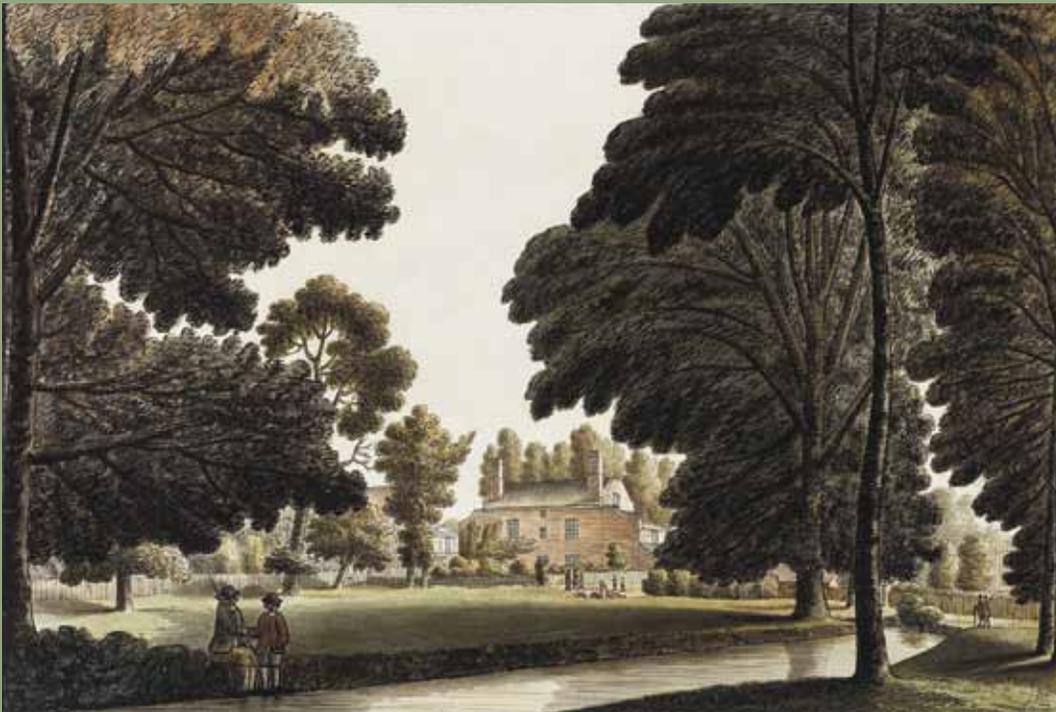
THE EMPRESS AND THE GARDENER

EXHIBITION
AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE
(GREAT BRITAIN)
APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2016

**A VIEW IN BUSHY PARK NEAR
THE ENTRANCE OF HAMPTON COURT GARDEN**

Brush and ink, watercolour over pencil sketch; 350×500 mm; OP-7611

© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016



THE EXHIBITION IS DESIGNED TO COMMEMORATE THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF LANCELOT 'CAPABILITY' BROWN'S BIRTH. 'CAPABILITY' BROWN, (1716-1783) WAS BRITAIN'S MOST FAMOUS LANDSCAPE DESIGNER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. IN HIS LONG LIFE-TIME HE CREATED MORE THAN 200 PARKS ALL OVER BRITAIN. HIS CLIENTS, WHOM HE ASTONDED BY HIS UNIQUE TALENT OF GIVING A NATURAL LOOK TO ANY LANDSCAPE, INCLUDED TWO KINGS, EIGHT PRIME MINISTERS AND THE MOST PART OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

**THE WEST FRONT OF THE ROYAL PALACE
AT HAMPTON COURT**

Pen and ink, watercolour over pencil sketch; 548×753 mm;
OP-7683, The State Hermitage Museum, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

**THE SOUTH AND EAST FRONTS OF THE ROYAL PALACE
AT HAMPTON COURT**

Pen and ink, watercolour over pencil sketch; 550×430 mm;
OP-7684, © The State Hermitage Museum, Saint-Petersburg, 2016



It was Brown's particular style that the Empress Catherine the Great of Russia meant in her letter to Voltaire, "I now love to distraction gardens in the English style, the curving lines, the gentle slopes, the ponds in the forms of lakes, the archipelagos on dry land, and I scorn straight lines and twin allées. I hate fountains, which torture water in order to make it follow a course contrary to its nature; statues are relegated to galleries, halls etc. In a word, angomania rules my plantmania."

Hard as he tried, the Russian Ambassador in London Musin-Pushkin failed to make the notable British gardener accept an invitation to Russia. Brown was already much advanced in age and served as Chief Gardener to the King at Hampton Court Palace — an enviable position. On his recommendation James Meader, the gardener to Duke of Northumberland from Sion House (near London), was invited to St. Petersburg in 1779. Catherine the Great entrusted him with the English Park, which Meader laid out together with Giacomo Quarenghi in the 1780s. It was the first grand landscape design project to be developed in Russia.

With the help of Meader the Empress came into possession of an album of views of Hampton Court Palace and garden landscape drawn by John Spyers, who had for 20 years been assistant to Brown and a draftsman in his workshop. Showing the celebrated regular gardens of the royal residence, the drawings also depict the landscape Bushy-park, which had grown on



deer-hunting grounds. John Spyers was very careful in rendering specific aesthetic views of his teacher about the transfiguration of nature in a new English park.

The second album sent by Spyers to Russia contained 50 various sketches demonstrating ideas of 'a natural landscape', architectural projects of garden pavilions, bridges, passageways, illustrating the variety of tasks set before the team of the great gardener. For the present-day researcher this collection of graphic works is a unique chance to explore in detail and appreciate the grand scale of 'Capability' Brown's achievement.

Catherine the Great's interest in the oldest English royal residence must have been kindled by the fact that the famous 'Green Frog' dinner service, a triumph of British design created for the Empress by Wedgwood, featuring images of almost one thousand of the celebrated landscapes and historical places, lacked any view of Hampton Court, the famous Palace of Henry VIII.

Though Spyers had never been offered service in Russia, his work was handsomely compensated and his artistic creations were included in the Hermitage collection. Their appearance in Russia at the turn of the 1780s was linked with a significant evolution of the Empress's views on landscape design. It was the time when earlier gardens with their numerous eclectic sculptural

**SOUTH VIEW
OF THE VASES
BY THE ROYAL PALACE
AT HAMPTON COURT**

Pen and ink, watercolour over
pencil sketch; 365 × 452 mm;

OP-7672

© The State Hermitage Museum,
Saint-Petersburg, 2016



**A VIEW IN BUSHY PARK
OF DIANA'S POND
AND THE AVENUE
TOWARDS TEDDINGTON**

Brush and ink, watercolour
over pencil sketch;

320 × 425 mm;

OP-7616

© The State Hermitage Museum,
Saint-Petersburg, 2016



monuments and architectural pavilions were superseded by gardens with minimal architectural interference in the picturesque landscape setting. No doubt, a great role in this transformation was played by *in absentia* dialogues of Catherine the Great with “Capability” Brown over the pages of the English albums.

Already in the late eighteenth century the provenance of these drawings happened to be forgotten and they were thought to be anonymous. It was only in the twenty first century that their history and the circumstances of their acquisition were discovered and the British exhibition has become the final stage of the longstanding research of this subject. Though only a bit more than 60 pages of Spyers works have been chosen for the display, the whole Hermitage collection of his drawings is featured in the catalogue.

HE WAS AN ARTIST WHO OPERATED ON A LARGE SCALE AND DID NOT JUST DESIGN GARDENS BUT WHOLE LANDSCAPES. HAVING SEEN THE ESTATE WHERE HE WAS ABOUT TO START WORKING, HE WOULD TELL HIS CLIENTS THAT IT HAD GREAT "CAPABILITY" FOR LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT, HENCE HIS NICKNAME. TRADITIONALLY BROWN IS PORTRAYED AS AN ORDINARY CRAFTSMAN WHO ACCIDENTALLY REFORMED HIS FIELD, DOING NOTHING EXCEPT FOR PLANTING TREES IN PRETTY GROUPS. THE TRUTH IS THAT HE OVERTURNED MORE LAND AND WORKED ON A LARGER SCALE THAN ANYONE ELSE BEFORE. THE CREATION OF THE GRECIAN VALLEY AT STOWE INVOLVED HIS WORKERS MANUALLY MOVING 23,500 CUBIC YARDS OF EARTH AND STONES IN TROLLEYS.

CAPABILITY BROWN¹



**HANNAH NORTHAM
WORKING
ON THE SCULPTURE
OF THE GARDENER
CAPABILITY BROWN**

Photo: Grahame J. Wickings

Brown's father was a tenant farmer at the Kirkharle estate, Northumberland. This is where the 14-year-old Brown became a gardener's apprentice and worked for as long as seven years. He then left Northumberland and moved to the south, perhaps, seeking a better climate for his asthma. We do not know what he did the following few years but he must have done something impressive because soon after Charles Bridgeman died, Lord Cobham appointed him Head Gardener at the Stowe estate. At the time Brown was only 24.

Brown found himself managing 40 other people; his responsibilities did not end there, he was also a treasurer. He gradually moved to managing the whole estate as well as garden works and construction projects. This is without doubt how he got additional training because he soon became a rather competent and even skilful architect. In 1749 Lord Cobham passed away and Brown decided to start his own business. He moved to Hammersmith, which was then just a village to the west of London, and started working freelance. At the age of 35 he was already known as Capability Brown.

At Heveningham Hall in Suffolk Brown raised a large lawn by 20 feet. He did not hesitate to move mature trees as well as whole villages. To make the job easier, Lancelot Brown invented a machine that was capable of lifting a tree to a height of 36 feet without damaging it in the process, which was a true miracle!

He planted dozens of thousands of trees — there were 91 thousand at Longleat alone. He designed lakes which would take hundreds of acres of fertile farmland (which must have left his clients puzzled).

¹ Based on Bill Bryson's *At Home: A Short Story of Private Life*.
² Lancelot Brown (1716–1783), an English landscape architect.

**HANNAH NORTHAM
WORKING
ON THE SCULPTURE
OF THE GARDENER
CAPABILITY BROWN**

Photo: Grahame
J. Wickings



At Blenheim Palace there was a beautiful bridge over a tiny trickle of a stream; Brown created lakes on both sides of the bridge, and the landscape transformed completely.

He tried to imagine what his landscapes would look like in a 100 years. Long before it became standard, he started only using local trees. Such things made Brown's gardens look absolutely natural, although they were actually planned in great detail, down to every cow pat.

He was more of an engineer and a landscape architect than a gardener and he had a particular gift for optical illusions: he would create two lakes on different levels, for example, which would look like one big one. Brown's landscapes were 'more English', so to speak, than the English countryside where he worked itself; he designed his gardens on such a large scale that it is hard to imagine now how ground-breaking his work was for his time.

Brown described himself as a 'place-maker'. Many landscapes of English countryside may look like they have always been this way, but the truth is that they were actually mostly created in the eighteenth century, and Lancelot Brown can take a lot of credit for that. If he has to be called a Craftsman, it has to be with a capital C.

Brown worked on a turn-key basis and covered the whole spectrum of works: from the garden planning to the planting and the following maintenance. He worked hard and efficiently and managed to do a few jobs at the same time. It was said that a brief hour-long tour of the estate was sufficient for him to think of a comprehensive project of improvements. Brown's methods were particularly appealing for their low cost and foresight. Mowed lawns with flowerbeds, trimmed trees and miles upon miles of low hedges required regular maintenance. Brown's landscape gardens required barely any looking after.

Furthermore, he was extremely utilitarian. While other architects built temples, pagodas and crypts, Brown's edifices *looked* like exquisite pavilions but were actually dairy farms, dog houses or workers' cabins. Having spent his childhood at a farm, he understood the agricultural needs and often suggested improvements that would make the estate more efficient.

Brown may not have been a truly great architect but his designs are very sophisticated in terms of engineering. Especially when it came to drainage, which he handled better than any of the other contemporary architects thanks to his experience in landscape architecture. He was an expert in soil science long before it was established as a discipline. There were complex



drainage systems behind his impeccable landscapes, which converted a bog into a meadow and stopped it from turning boggy again for the next 250 years.

Brown was once offered a thousand pounds for designing an estate in Ireland but he turned it down saying that he had not yet finished in England. Over the 30 years he spent working as an independent architect he performed 170 projects, transforming many British estates. Brown also made a fortune in the business. During ten years in the job he was earning 15,000 a year and joined the top of the emerging middle class.

Not everyone was impressed by his work. Richard Owen Cambridge, the English poet, once declared to Brown:

- I sincerely hope I will die before you, Mr. Brown.
- Why is that? asked the architect in surprise.
- Because I want to see heaven before it is ‘improved’, retorted Cambridge.

The landscape artist John Constable could not stand Brown’s works either. He would say that they were ugly because they were artificial.

But his arch critic was the architect William Chambers, who believed that Brown’s grounds had no artistic value because they ‘differed very little from common fields’. Chambers himself believed that the best way to improve a landscape was to embellish it with as many eye-catching buildings as possible. He was the one who designed the Pagoda, the Alhambra and other striking buildings at the Kew Gardens.

Chambers saw Brown as an uneducated peasant because his speech and manners were lacking elegance but Brown was liked by his clients. One of them, Lord Exeter, even put Brown’s portrait on the wall in his house so that he could see him every day.

It also seems that Brown was a good, sweet-natured man. In one of the few letters to his wife that have survived he says that separated by work from her, he spent a whole day in an imaginary conversation with her. “..and none of this would have mattered but it is such a shame that you were not with me. Your presence always fills me with genuine delight, my dear Biddy. Your loving husband”. Quite impressive for an uneducated peasant!

Brown died in 1783 at the age of 66 and was mourned by many.

GARDEN “A L’ANGLAIS”

AS EARLY AS PETER THE GREAT’S TIMES IT HAD BECOME FASHIONABLE TO BUILD PARKS AND GARDENS WITH GREEN LAWNS AND BOSQUETS EMBELLISHED WITH ARABESQUES OF FLOWERING PATTERNS AND STONE LINES COULOIRS. FOR THIS, VARIOUS KINDS OF TREES, BUSHES, AS WELL AS BULBS AND SEEDS OF HERBS AND FLOWERS WERE IMPORTED. BUT THE CLIMATE OF ST. PETERSBURG MADE IT NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT SOME CHANGES: ENGLISH YEW GAVE WAY TO FIR-TREES; COMMON BOXWOOD IN HERBACEOUS BORDERS WAS, ON THE TSAR’S ADVICE, SUPPLANTED WITH RED BILBERRY AND WILD STRAWBERRY. THE ORIGIN OF THIS GARDENING FASHION WAS THE “ANGLO-DUTCH” PARK STYLE.

King William III¹ of England and Queen Mary II² came to Hampton Court Palace in 1689. In the seventeenth century the palace was surrounded with a park used as deer-hunting grounds – with wild trees, greens and straight sandy paths. The castle became the favourite summer residence of the Royal couple.

Both rulers adored gardens and flower parterres. Their passion went back to the Netherlands, to Hel Loo³, where in 1684 they started planting a garden and growing a flower parterre. When they moved to England they were followed by the King’s friend and confidant Hans Willem van Benlinck and landscape designer Daniel Marol. They were assisted by English gardeners and, no doubt, by Sir Christopher Wren⁴ himself. Together with the royal couple they created a new style and a new type of garden; in Britain the “French-Dutch” garden was transformed into the garden “a l’Anglaise”, characterized mainly by its specific lay-out. In the view from the palace window the garden was to be seen through, and the growth should not screen the water.

1__William III of Orange (1650–1702) Stadtholder of the Netherlands since 1672; King of England (William III) and of Scotland (William II) from 1689.

2__Mary II (1662–1694) from the House of Stuart – Queen of England and Scotland since 1689 (co-ruler of her husband and cousin William III of Orange)

3__Hel Loo is the summer palace with a regular garden in Apeldoorn (the Netherlands) which belonged to the Dutch royal family. Built by William III in the 1680s.

4__Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723) – celebrated English architect, author of the reconstruction of London after the Great Fire of 1666.

5__John Evelyn. (1620–1706) – English writer, gardener and collector, member of the group that founded the Royal Society.



After 1689, the Dutch affection for flowers brought to Hampton Court Palace Chinese vases with opulent bouquets of flowers and also small decorative flower-beds in the open air. The big park was mostly covered with square plats of grass parterre bordered with low boxwood; here appeared yew-tree and fir pyramids, alleys of chestnut and thousands of linden-trees.

Originally, the garden was designed without flowers, but Queen Mary started pondering about a small flower-garden with a mosaic of bright flowers at the edge of grass clearings, of picturesque lines of bosquets with bright-coloured gravel paths. A new parterre, the Privy Garden, was designed requiring a special selection of plants and bushes. The site of the Privy Garden was restored in the 1990s with the greatest attention to historical accuracy allowing to reconstruct the nature and structure of garden planting in the 1690s. Flowers were planted in long border lines and convolutions of grass verges. Flowers in the flower-beds were changed by the season, twice a year: in spring the beds were decorated with bulbs — tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, irises and primulas. In summer gardeners planted annuals of about 300 breeds of calendula, marigold, nasturtium, lobelia, verbena, petunia as well as herbs. Flowers were planted pell-mell, in a disorderly pattern, to create the effect of multi-coloured enamel compositions, accentuated by tall perennials on supports, like honey-suckle, aster and chrysanthemums. Plants in tubs were brought out of green-houses, including orange-trees, of course. The garden was decorated with vases, sculptures and sparkling fountains.

In 1689 Peter the Great spent a lot of time in London staying in the house of John Evelyn⁵, who was writing a book on gardens at the time. The tsar visited Hampton Court Palace several times and was invited by William III of Orange, whom he came to admire. The English and Dutch gardens impressed Peter the Great profoundly; he gave much thought to their design and layout. The trellis parterres and parks of Peterhof, the Apothecaries Garden, the Menshikov Palace garden and other St. Petersburg landscapes are for the most part elaborations of the English-Dutch gardening styles created in the late seventeenth century.

Taliana Chernigovskaya

“WON’T YOU COME INTO THE GARDEN? I WOULD LIKE MY ROSES TO SEE YOU.”¹

Are garden aesthetics linked with the intellectual life of their time? This is a good question to ask cultural historians, to be discussed in the same drawing room with experts on intellect and mediaevalists.

Everything that we look at, listen to, read, eat, drink or wear, who we speak to — everything models our inner world. Formal gardens exert a certain influence on the minds of those who look at them, provided they acknowledge exactly what they are seeing (if they merely go out for a walk in the greenery, then it does not matter to them).

When you are looking at a tree 200–300 years old you shiver with awe. What a lot of things this tree has seen, literally speaking. Without any metaphors: it has no eyes but how many people have passed it, sat under it, what poetry did they write? From the fact that old trees do not speak follows only the fact that they are silent. Those who carelessly take up an axe or an electric saw should stop and think. In their place I would stand in awe in the same way as before shooting a flying duck. Unless we deal with para-science, we simply know very little. No global conclusion follows the fact that trees have no arms, legs, eyes and ears. As a scientist I might be expected to say, “Well, why speak about it?! Such things are not contemplated, are not studied!” The truth is, they are not studied because we do not know how to study them.

Can we speak about trees having reason? This is a serious question. It is impossible to look for something that we cannot define (we can only make a guess, either joining the company of housewives or the best of philosophers). One of my favourite books about gardens was written by Dmitry Likhachev; in it you will not find words like, “a path to the left, a path to the right”. The book is about a culture just as vital as painting or sculpture. Different as it is, it is a language.

Landscape talks to you. When you find yourself in Versailles or Peterhof you perceive one story, when you are in the field — another story, a novel or a verse. Landscape is cognitive.



Lewis Carroll “Through the Looking Glass”

**“O Tiger-Lily,” said Alice, addressing herself to one that was waving gracefully about in the wind, “I wish you could talk!”
“We can talk,” — said the Tiger-Lily, “when there’s anybody worth talking to.”**

ODILON REDON
*Woman Sleeping
under a Tree*

1900–1901
Tempera on canvas
35 × 26 cm
© The State Hermitage
Museum



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REALIZE THAT IN DESCRIBING OR PERCEIVING ANYTHING THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO THE PROCESS; IN MARINA TSVETAYEVA'S WORDS, "THE READER IS A CO-AUTHOR". A BOOK DOES NOT EXIST ON ITS OWN, ITS STARTS EXISTING ONLY AT THE MOMENT OF ITS BEING READ. ITS CONTENT DOES NOT ONLY DEPEND UPON HOW THE BOOK IS WRITTEN, TO THE SAME DEGREE IT DEPENDS UPON WHO READS THE BOOK AND WHEN THEY DO IT. IN OTHER WORDS, "IS IT STILL THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY OR THE TWENTY FIRST ALREADY?"







THE RECONCILING TULIP

Maria Elkina

DISH

Turkey

The second half
of the XVI century

Faience,

polychrome painting

Diameter: 30.5 cm

© The State Hermitage
Museum, St. Petersburg,
2016

IMAGES FROM

THE BOOK:

Catalog of Tulips
by P. Kos (1637)

Looking at tulip souvenirs in Amsterdam airport one can hardly think that the bulbs of these flowers came to the Netherlands from Constantinople. Court gardens caught the imagination of the Europeans no less than did the military power of the Ottoman Empire. In 1554 Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, an ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire in Istanbul, sent tulips, hyacinths, anemones bulbs and some of the Emperor's hazel grouses to his friend, Karl Clusius, a famous botanist in Vienna, while constantly writing warning letters home about the Turkish menace. After a while Karl Clusius removed to Leiden and brought the exotic plants with him. As early as in 1562 the first big cargo of tulips was shipped to Amsterdam. The enterprising Dutch people turned tulip cultivation into a profitable business. By the middle of the seventeenth century they had grown so excited that they started selling the rare bulbs at triple the price. This short but significant historical period is called "tulip mania" and is often considered to be one of the first examples of stock market manipulation with a subsequent collapse (at some point in time it became obvious that the prices were excessively high).

Meanwhile, The Ottoman Empire was losing its importance as a power and during the reign of Ahmed III (1703–1730) tulips began their return voyage, demonstrating their fragility but thereby providing only more solid evidence of how short-lived any superiority was. However, it isn't just about growing and selling: one must know how to admire and enjoy the flowers. In this regard it is still very hard to surpass the Turks. One can hardly find a city where flowerbeds play the same important and unique role in the urban landscape as they do in Istanbul.

A traditional Islamic garden is a formal one and includes a certain set of elements because Paradise described in the sacred texts is considered to be its prototype. Eden, where faithful Muslims go after death, is not only a very beautiful place but an extremely pleasant one to live in: they will find there rivers of water, milk and wine, fruit trees, shade from the sun and ever young wives. It follows that flowers giving much more ephemeral pleasure than the above mentioned benefits would find themselves in the heart of the Paradise. However the Ottoman Turks took the liberty of considering flowers to be an essential element of the Paradise garden. No one knows why it happened that way: whether by accident or because of the close trade relations with the Far East, where different types of flowers came from or whether because of an insouciant attitude to life. We can see how popular flowers were, from the travelers' notes, book illustrations, and ornaments of the Sultan palaces' interiors and mainly from those gardens lavishly decorated with flowers. We see flowers in the illustrations of Adam and Eva from Falnama's book. The Sultans' garments and wall tiles in the Topkapi palace were decorated with floral ornaments. Incidentally, there was no contradiction between militancy and admiration for beauty: swords could be decorated with tulip ornaments too.

Gardens are delicate creations. Compared with buildings they have far less chance of outlasting centuries without undergoing dramatic changes. We have ideas of old Istanbul gardens from miniatures, descriptions and documents. The most

1__Officially, Istanbul was known as Constantinople until 1922.

Jug

Turkey

The first half
of the XVII century

Faience

Height: 39.8 cm

© The State Hermitage
Museum, St. Petersburg,
2016



ANTHONY VAN DYCK

*Portrait of Jane
Uenmen Lady Goodwin*

Flanders

Canvas, oil

Холст, масло

132.5 × 106 cm

© The State Hermitage
Museum, St. Petersburg,
2016



luxurious gardens were set up at the Sullans' palaces and located in the palace courtyards. They must have had a kiosk, a reservoir (a fountain or a pond), cypresses and flowers. From the financial documents we know that Suleiman I (1520–1566) bought tulips for the Topkapi palace: one still can find them in one of the palace courtyards. Although none of the Sullans' gardens has remained unchanged until now, the love for flowers has outlasted both periods of Europeanization in the nineteenth century and the end of the Empire and moreover has spread far beyond the Imperial apartments, becoming a spectacle for millions of passers-by.

In present-day Istanbul one can find flowers not only in the courtyard garden of the Topkapi palace, but also in the recently restored garden of park Gulhane and nearby mosques, and in the little garden in front of the Karie Byzantine church and on the broad sides of the strait. A good European taste implies that you must follow some design rules for using flowers correctly: they must be arranged in beds in a certain way to avoid a very eclectic and garish color palette. Brightness and a riot of colors in the Istanbul flowerbeds are not considered bad taste. Here it would be appropriate to establish a parallel with the miniature art where local open colors are not considered to be kitsch, on the contrary they refer to special refinement, absence of fear of strong emotions and at the same time skill in dealing with them carefully and delicately. The direct influence of the beauty of Istanbul tulips, roses, narcissuses, hyacinths gives a sense of eternal holiday and provided a form of common ground for people, who otherwise speak different languages, sometimes literally, sometimes metaphorically. The promise of heaven, enclosed in the blossoming buds is convincing regardless of what religion you adhere to.

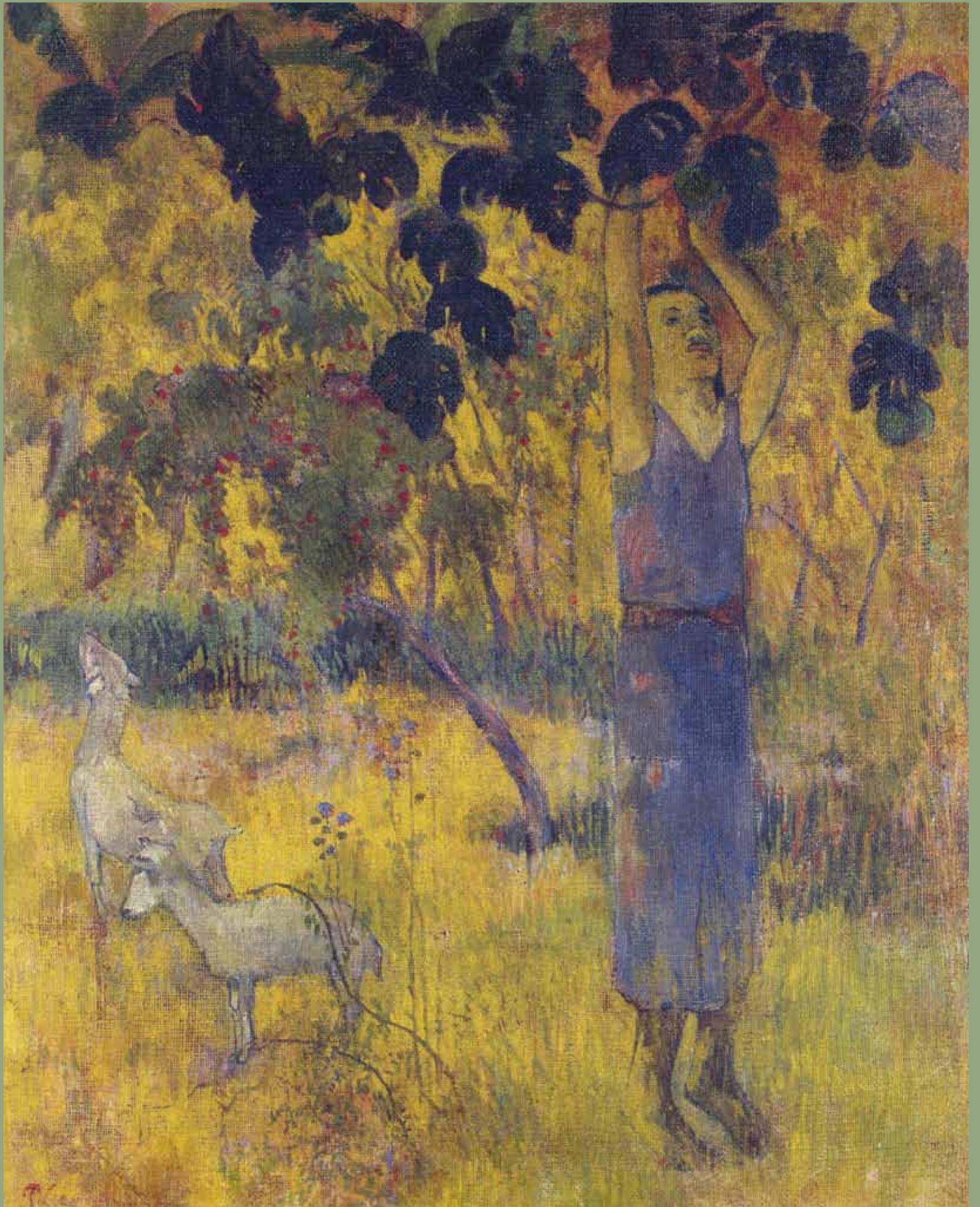
From a distance Istanbul is conceived laconically as a place where East meets West and a tourist from Europe comes here, as to former Constantinople, to see the Hagia Sophia, once the main Christian Church that later was transformed first into a mosque (after the Turkish conquest), and then, into a Museum during the reign of Atatürk.

The city now has its own dramas, each of which can be seen on the streets with the naked eye. The confrontation between the conventional religious traditionalists and the conventional supporters of the Republic (conventional — because in political games convictions often change implications imperceptibly) is one of these dramas: not even different views but different lifestyles face off here. In Istanbul the young people at the outdoor cafe tables feel no less frivolous than in Paris, but in the religious neighborhoods on the other side of the strait a woman without a headscarf is rarely seen (this, however, does not mean that the people are less friendly there).

Social inequality is evident here: in the very center you will find a typical cinematic slum where clothes are hung up to dry on the ropes stretched over the narrow streets between crumbling houses, dirty roads, and children playing ball against a wall. Most importantly, Istanbul is a rapidly growing city (the population was one and a half million in the 1960s, today it is a little more than fourteen million), turning from the former Imperial capital into a new faceless metropolis. Ordinary concrete boxes have replaced old wooden houses, so that the last ones have almost disappeared. The area where the Greeks once lived, though crowded with passers-by in the afternoon, is slowly becoming a ruin. In all this fine spun landscape full of contradictions and uncertainties, flower beds, because of their ability to be loved equally by Muslims, Christians and atheists, local and tourists, rich and poor, professors and laborer, play the role of the great mediator. All are equal to the tulip's charm.

NAMES OF THE GARDEN

"GARDEN OF HAPPINESS",
 "EDEN", "PARK", "WILDERNESS",
 "LANDSCAPE" ... ALL OF THESE NAMES
 HAVE BEEN USED TO DENOTE THE SAME OBJECT —
 THE GARDEN. IT IS A PROVEN FACT THAT
 THE FIRST GARDENS KNOWN TO HUMANS
 WERE FOUND, NOT CREATED;
 THEY WERE NATURE'S GIFT,
 A GODSEND. GARDEN ARCHITECTURE
 AND DÉCOR HAVE BEEN INTERTWINED
 WITH NATURAL BEAUTY FOR MANY CENTURIES.



PAUL GAUGIN
*Man Picking Fruit
from a Tree*
France
1897
© The State Hermitage Museum

"BY THE WINDOW, NEXT TO THE WINDOW SILL, HE POSTED A MAP OF YOUR GARDEN. OR RATHER, THE "PLAN". HE LOOKS AND FEELS HAPPY THAT THE GARDEN IN THE PICTURE IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS A REAL ONE. THE GARDENER IS WALKING THERE, BACK AND FORTH, UP AND DOWN. <...> THE FIRST FIGURE: LE PANTALON. THEN L'ÉTÉ. THE THIRD FIGURE: LA POULÉ. FOLLOWING LA PASTOURELLE. AND FINALLY, THE FIFTH FIGURE: LE FINAL (THE AUTHOR NAMES THE FIGURES OF THE CONTREDANSE). MAGNUS FLORIN. [THE GARDEN] 2005

The earliest historical evidence of gardens comes from Ancient Egypt. Thus, the British Museum is home to a picture dating from around 1400 BC representing a lovely garden in Thebes, with several waterbodies and fruit trees around the central pond. Ancient Greeks and Romans planted their gardens according to specific patterns, with trees along the perimeter edge serving as the border. The central part of the garden was taken up by fruit trees and a temple with an altar, commonly dedicated to Dionysus (Bacchus). The gardens have not survived to the present day, however excavations conducted at many archaeological sites such as Pompeii provide much visual material on the decorative elements, porticos and pavilions used in gardens during antiquity.

With the rapid development of mechanics during the Renaissance, artificial waterfalls known as cascades (precursors of fountains) appeared in most large gardens of that period. Hydraulic equipment was also widespread in Moorish gardens still common in Granada, Spain, which would usually include a patio with a central pond and fountain. Florence and Rome set the trend for country villas with gardens creating an ambience of understated luxury. The gardens were commonly surrounded by walls carrying colourful bas-reliefs, had numerous ponds and were arranged in several terraces located one above the other and divided by balustrades with sculptures. The Italian Renaissance saw the emergence of dozens of beautiful gardens, such as the landscape park of the Villa Medici or the opulent garden in the Villa d'Este in Tivoli with its hillside of fountains, basins and water jets.

The Gardens of Versailles established during the reign of Louis XIV left an indelible stamp on the evolution of garden architecture and décor in Western Europe. The French landscaping style based on symmetry and the principle of imposing order on nature became fashionable in Holland during the last quarter of the 17th century and shaped the original design for the gardens of the Het Loo Palace in Apeldoorn².

Dutch floriculture is unthinkable without tulips. Soon after this elegant flower was first imported to Holland from Turkey, it came to signify the high social standing of its owners. Doctor Adrian Pauw, Member of the State Council of Holland and one of the directors of the East India Company, had hundreds of flowers planted around a mirrored gazebo in his private garden in Harlem. The mirrors multiplied hundreds of tulips into thousands as if to show that Pauw's wealth knew no limits.

Along with expensive flowers, the very design of the garden began to function as a status symbol. The widespread popularity of garden sculptures in the late seventeenth century meant that cheap and easy-to-process materials had to be found to meet the growing demand. Sandstone and marble copies were expensive since each of them had to be carved individually. The use of lead proved much more convenient as sculptures could now be cast in molds; lead was also less susceptible to atmospheric impact and less costly compared to bronze. Emperor Peter the Great is known to have commissioned several garden sculptures for his palace to Dutch masters.

Nineteenth century garden designers began to explore the decorative possibilities of cast iron which, apart from garden furniture such as benches, chairs or tables, was frequently used for sculptures and even fountains.

The marked shift in the understanding of human nature which occurred in the eighteenth century was largely achieved owing to gardens. The English landscape garden embodied the dream of perfection and a nostalgia for the lost Arcadia, hence the prevalence of decorative elements inspired by ancient Rome, such as ruins, bridges, seashells and caves, often present in dreamy paintings by Claude Lorraine.

Owing to a renewed interest in classical antiquity during Louis XVI's reign, statues of Greek and Roman gods became a compulsory element of Neo-Classical concepts in garden design. Members of the Dutch elite used to keep private gardens known as overtuinen with tea houses, sculpture and then-fashionable sundials carved from sandstone or marble. Some of the finest specimens of overtuinen³ can be found along the river Vecht.

Stately homes around Amsterdam frequently have a classical back garden with a symmetrical layout, evenly trimmed hedges and flowerbeds with roses and other summer flowers. There are back gardens with exotic plants, even Japanese gardens with trees and shrubs endemic to Asia, like the famous Japanese Garden in the Clingendael Estate in Wassenaar near The Hague. New large-scale sculpture gardens are rare and very prestigious as economic concerns have made projects of this type a thing of the past. Yet gardens, well-groomed or wild, still remain a place of retreat from the ills and pressures of daily life. Indeed, is there anything more soothing than green leaves and grass?

1__Ruud van der Neul was born in 1949 in Heemstede, Netherlands. An antiquarian, antiques dealer and publicist, van der Neul collaborates with a number of European museums, styling compositions with real objects for temporary exhibitions. He is published in European art journals. Author of "Curaçao: Architecture and Style", "Antiek à la Carte" and "Salire en Vermaak". In 2009 he worked with Herman van Heusden on a series of photographs for the catalogue of the State Hermitage Museum exhibition "At the Russian Court!" mounted at the Hermitage – Amsterdam Exhibition Centre. Ruud van der Neul lives and works in Harlem, Netherlands.

2__The palace and part of the garden were designed to the plan created by architect Daniel Marot (1661–1752).

3__Overtuin (literally, "overgarden") – a garden separated from the country house by a river or road, normally as an extension to an estate.



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Matthew Drutt¹

SCULPTURE IN THE EXPANSIVE FIELDS: STORM KING ART CENTER

MARK DI SUVERO

Jeanne

2014–2015

Courtesy of the artist

and Spacetime C.C., New York

Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

THERE ARE MANY KEY DESTINATIONS AROUND THE WORLD FOR LOOKING AT ART, SUCH AS THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, BUT FEW OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE ART OUTSIDE, UNRESTRICTED BY AN ARCHITECTURAL CONTAINER OR THE PURITY OF "THE WHITE BOX," AND EVEN FEWER HAVE AS THE CORE OF THEIR MISSION THE MANDATE TO SHOW ART IN HARMONY WITH NATURE, IN MANY INSTANCES EXHIBITING WORKS WHICH COULD ONLY BE SEEN OUTSIDE DUE TO THEIR SHEER SCALE OR ARE STRATEGICALLY INTEGRATED INTO THE EARTH. AMONG THESE FEW INSTITUTIONS, NONE IS RIVALED BY STORM KING ART CENTER, LOCATED IN THE HUDSON VALLEY, ROUGHLY ONE-HOUR NORTH FROM NEW YORK CITY.²

From its inception in 1958, Storm King (so-called for the eponymous mountain adjacent to it) was an ambitious, visionary undertaking. At a time when New York State was selling off real estate to manufacturers and building highways that bisected its undeveloped land, businessman Ralph "Ted" Ogden and his co-founder, business partner, and (then) son-in-law, H. Peter Stern, decided to purchase a 180-acre estate in Mountainville, NY owned by Vernon Halch, who had built a Normandy-style chateau perched on a hill overlooking the grounds. At the time, the idea was to convert the building into a museum devoted to the Hudson River School of American painters, such as Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Sanford Gifford, Martin Johnson Heade, and others whose works had celebrated the majesty of the very landscape that was being slowly and insensitively spoiled by government development. It was a noble idea, especially as farmers and others who depended on the area's natural offerings for income largely populated the slowly changing area. Moreover, it is unlikely that few made the hour-long journey to New York City (in the 1950s it was surely longer) to look at art, so it was a public service of sorts.

Ogden's vision extended far beyond building an art museum for the community; over the course of his life, he donated substantial funds for the construction of Mountainville's library, baseball field, postal office, and other civic initiatives. But his, and Stern's, true legacy became the Art Center. It would not only become a collecting institution, but would hold exhibitions in the converted house, a program that continues to this day. While the founders shifted their interest to showing modern and contemporary art, for reasons that differ slightly according to whom you consult, when Storm King opened its doors in 1960, their early exhibitions were largely prints and works on paper by artists such as Winslow Homer, who had also worked in the



area. Also at that time, a trip to Europe sparked Ogden's interest in sculpture, and he purchased fewer than a dozen modestly scaled works, which were then installed formally around the chateau on the hill.

But several fortuitous epiphanies its founders had shortly thereafter would change the course of Storm King's path forward and allow it to evolve into the serene setting that one encounters today. The first was that the view of the landscape from the house on the hill was a torn-up gravel pit resulting from the construction of the adjacent highway in the 1950s. As David Collens, Storm King's long-time director and chief curator noted, "The property was in poor condition..." The quarrying "had left a cliff with pools of water below." They hired landscape architect William Rutherford and his wife Joyce with a mandate to transform the property into a more bucolic state. But they did much more than that. They created over time what became a nature preserve ingeniously alternating long meadows and fields of tall indigenous grasses with rolling hills and ponds. Instead of completely concealing the view of the adjacent highway, it was screened by a tree line. Thus, Storm King's beauty is as much a result of its alternatingly rough-hewn wooded areas and sensitively carved lands, offering artists different settings in which to situate their work.

Just as critical to Storm King's transformation was the decision to focus on sculpture displayed outside. It came about following a visit in 1967 that Ogden made to American sculptor David Smith's studio in Bolton Landing two years after the artist's death where he encountered the sculptures sited in and around the landscape rather than formally placed inside or outside. He was so inspired that he acquired thirteen works — a record purchase at the time — one that created among the

most important holdings of Smith's to this day. Sculpture like *Study in Arcs* (1957) or *Portrait of a Lady Painter* (1954/1956–57) exemplify Smith's early approach to sinewy forms inspired by nature and the human body, whereas *XI Books III Apples* (1959) typify his brushed unpainted steel objects that refract and reflect natural light, ever changing the viewer's perception of form. This was born a key turning point in the institution's approach to showing art and an important relationship with Smith's work that yielded an additional acquisition and subsequent exhibitions.

The third epiphany — and surely there have been many others—, but this one formative to Storm King's unique character, was the decision not to over-install the grounds, allowing the art and landscape to cohabitate in harmony rather than in conflict. The importance of this decision cannot be over-emphasized, for it is the other feature of Storm King that distinguishes it from other sculpture parks and gardens around the world. One feels a sense of serenity and intimacy in the expanse of art and land, that over time, has grown to 500 acres, thanks to a gift of additional 300 acres of adjoining lands made by Star Expansion Company, Ogden and Stern's former business, and more than 100 objects and extended loans made through Ogden's Foundation, Stern's own donations, and the charity of artists, board members, and patrons who have come to appreciate its uniqueness.

Perhaps Ogden's most significant act before his death in 1974 was the acquisition of Alexander Liberman's *Adonai* (1970–71) (refabricated 2000), for it introduced monumental sculpture into the lexicon of Storm King, no small undertaking. Cost aside, it transformed what had formerly been a category of sculpture normally found in urban plaza's around the world. This art was seen in relationship to architecture or as a memorial in a civic gathering space, rather than as pure form to be considered for the experience itself. I suspect that Stern embraced this idea with an almost messianic passion, for he soon embarked on



MARK DI SUVERO

Figolu, 2005–11

Steel. 47'1" × 55' × 23'

Lent by the artist and Spacetime C.C., New York.

Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

DAVID SMITH

Vollon XX, 1963

Steel. 62½' × 34' × 29'

Gift of the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation

Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

ALEXANDER LIBERMAN

Iliad, 1974–76

Painted steel. 36' × 54'7" × 19'7"

Gift of the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation.

Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

DAVID SMITH

Portrait of a Lady Painter, 1954/1956–57

Bronze. 5'4" × 4'11¾" × 12½"

Gift of the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation

Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

ALEXANDER LIBERMAN

Adam, 1970

Painted steel. 28'6" × 24' × 29'6"

Gift of the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation.

Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

a program of more such acquisitions. Liberman's complex *Iliad* (1974-6) was acquired the following year and later he purchased *Adam* (1970), a work that had reportedly angered President Richard Nixon when it was exhibited at the former Corcoran Gallery of Art³ in Washington, D. C.

But Stern took Storm King even further, turning it into a haven and opportunity for artists and audiences from around the world. Under his tenure (he is now Chairman Emeritus), Storm King became an international institution, not only in composition but in reputation as well. Another of his historic initiatives was the forging of a strategic relationship with American sculptor Mark di Suvero. Notoriously political and anti-establishment (he was famously against the Vietnam War and once walked out of a dinner in his honor when the hosting institution required that he wear a tie), di Suvero makes works that are not overtly political but belong to the category of difficult to acquire privately and challenging to exhibit inside or outside. In the abstraction and design, they are suggestive of everything from mythology to social ideals. In 1975, following an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art that helped make his reputation, rather than returning the works to storage, Stern offered him the opportunity to show a selection at Storm King. Thus began a relationship that grew over the years into no fewer than four major exhibitions, presenting more than ninety sculptures, five major acquisitions, numerous extended loans, and most recently, a highly successful exhibition of large scale works on Governor's Island New York in 2011–12 organized by Stern's son and Storm King's current president, John Stern, and director David Collens. Such is the importance of this relationship that, at the institution's 50th anniversary in 2010, di Suvero declared (and I am paraphrasing here): "If it hadn't been for Storm King, I never would have had a career."

Not all acquisitions have been in depth, but they are no less significant, especially as they have been commissioned, such as Isamu Noguchi's *Momo Taro* (1977–78). Made in Japan for the site where he now resides, Noguchi had Rutherford make a hill that provides extra visibility both of the object and the expanse of Storm King when visitors sit on the artist's adjacent bench. It is also one of the few works in the collection that visitors are invited to climb on. At the other side of the spectrum is Richard Serra's *Schunnemunk Fork* (1990–91), located on ten-acres at the southern edge of the Art Center's property. Its title refers to the broadside of a mountain in the background that Star Expansion Co. gifted in 1985 and is now a state park. It provides a further buffer to the sanctity of Storm King's autonomy from surrounding development. There are many notable things about Serra's installation, composed of four blades of Corten steel. Unlike most of his works, which can feel dehumanizing in scale or dangerous in comportment, there is a tranquility that one feels approaching these horizontal monoliths, that simultaneously slice into and emerge from the land. One of the most popular and whimsical works is Andy Goldsworthy's *Storm King Wall* (1997–98). Lesser known in this country at the time, this is the British artist's first permanent museum commission in the United States. Made with local rocks by him and a team of stoneworkers whose heritages go back generations, the work continues into the pond and re-emerges, ending at the museum's boundary where the highway begins. For Storm King's 50th Anniversary, Goldsworthy and his team were brought back to create *Five Men, Seventeen Days, Fifteen Boulders, One Wall* (2010), comprising 250 stones from the property that ends up looking like a 309-foot Celtic ruin. One of the most inspiring and challenging commissions is Maya Lin's *Storm King Wavefield* (2007–08); inspiring because it emulates the undulations of both Rutherford's landscape and waves in an ocean and challenging because it changes constantly depending on where one stands — above, within, and from afar.



ALEXANDER LIBERMAN
Adonai
 1970–71 (refabricated 2000)
 Steel
 29'6" × 63' × 52'8"
 Gift of the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation.
 Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

BARNETT NEWMAN
Broken Obelisk
 1963/1967
 (exhibition copy 2005)
 Weathering steel
 25'5" × 10'6" × 10'6"
 The Barnett Newman Foundation
 Photo by Jerry L. Thompson

The museum continues to thrive under the leadership of Stern's son John, who became its president in 2009 and has since diversified its board and public programs. Acquisitions continue to flow at a prudent pace as well. Among the more recent are Ursula von Rydingsvard's *Luba* (2009–10), an artist with a longstanding relationship with Storm King, whose work looks like a carved tree trunk but is actually made from slacked planks of wood that are then shaped with a chainsaw. Alyson Scholtz's *Mirror Fence* 2003 (refabricated 2014) is a gift that beautifully references the morphology of the white picket fences that surround the numerous private properties in the region, only here reflecting in its mirror the majesty of Storm King. Another gift, this one from Sony Corporation, is Joel Shapiro's exemplary *Untilled* (1994), which formally lies nicely back to David Smith's *Becca* (1964), where it all began. And Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* (1963/1967), courtesy of the Barnett Newman Foundation, has never looked more regal than in its site at Storm King.

It is difficult to imagine that Storm King is only in its second generation of leadership, and while continuity is at the top of John Stern's agenda, so is growth. As he noted in a recent interview: "We are working diligently to become even more green and sustainable. We now have electric carts for use on the grounds, and this season we will be adding a new electric-and-solar-powered tram. Longer-term goals include increasing our visibility and capacity to meet the needs of a growing number of visitors and to bring more resources to the table to enhance our programs. For example, we want to make the collection more accessible to scholars and to increase our capacity for conservation. We also want to continue to support and develop the careers of talented, emerging artists." For more go to www.stormking.org



- 1__ Matthew Drull (born December 8, 1962) is an American editor, writer, and independent curator who specializes in modern and contemporary art. From 1993 to 2001, he was a curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 2006, the French Government awarded him the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.
- 2__ Storm King Art Center is an open-air museum located in Mountainville, New York. The site spans approximately 500 acres, and there are more than 100 sculptures of second half of the 20th – early 21st century.
- 3__ The Corcoran Gallery of Art was an art museum in Washington, D.C. Prior to its closing, it was one of the oldest privately supported cultural institutions in the United States capital. The museum's main focus was American art. In 2014, after decades of financial problems, the Corcoran entered into an agreement with the National Gallery of Art (NGA) and the George Washington University whereby almost all of the gallery's 17,000 work collection was placed under the care of the NGA, while the school and historic 17th street gallery building continued operations as a part of the George Washington University's new Corcoran School of the Arts and Design.



**TORKOM DEMIRJIAN,
CHAIRMAN
OF THE HERMITAGE
MUSEUM FOUNDATION (USA)**

FOUNDER OF ARIADNE GALLERIES, TORKOM DEMIRJIAN, NAMED NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM FOUNDATION (USA)

The Hermitage Museum Foundation (USA) announced that Torkom Demirjian, one of the world's leading authorities on ancient art and antiquities and founder of the Ariadne Galleries in New York and London, has assumed the role of Chairman of the Board of the Hermitage Museum Foundation (HMF) in the United States. Mr. Demirjian succeeds former Chairman Paul Rodzianko, who stepped down in March after seven years of service heading the Foundation.

Torkom Demirjian is founder and chairman of the family run Ariadne Galleries in New York and London specializing in the art of the ancient civilizations of Egypt, the Near East, Greece, Rome, Asia, as well as early medieval Europe. He is a graduate of the Pratt Art Institute in New York. His childhood passion for history and art led to his love of antiquities. A self-taught specialist and art dealer since 1972, he is highly regarded by colleagues around the world for his expertise, sense of history, astute aesthetic judgment, and business acumen. Mr. Demirjian believes strongly in the vital role museums play in the preservation of cultural heritage.

Mr. Demirjian has contributed to leading museum, university and legal panels, conferences and publications on ancient art and antiquities, globally. He has been widely interviewed in the media and on television, including on CBS' *60 Minutes*. He has always sought to increase interest in and knowledge of ancient cultures among collectors and the public and has encouraged contributions to museums by his own example. During the last four decades, he has donated both important collections and individual works of art to major museums around the world including the Hermitage Museum, the Israel Museum, among others. In 2010, Mr. Demirjian donated a unique collection of Urartu artifacts to the Hermitage Museum in honor of the late Dr. Boris Piotrovsky and his legacy, for which he received The Hermitage Museum Foundation Award.



Torkom Demirjian

"I assume the chairman's role with optimism and a strong belief that helping such a great institution in Russia can only have a beneficial effect on the relationship between our countries. The Hermitage Museum, often under very difficult circumstances and in a heroic fashion, has maintained a vital role in global cultural preservation in addition to its mandate of educating and enlightening the public," new HMF Chairman Torkom Demirjian commented. He added, **"The American philanthropic community has generously supported Russian cultural institutions in the past. I have great faith that the American tradition of voluntarism will benefit the Hermitage Museum as it has so many museums and cultural institutions throughout the world."**

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Installation view; In Search of 0,10: The Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting, Fondation Beyeler, Riehn/Basel, Switzerland, October 4 , 2015 – January 10, 2016

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THE “CANE OF TITAN”

MARCH-OCTOBER 2016

THE “CANE OF TITAN” INSTALLATION, 2014, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS WORKS OF LEE UFAN IS PART OF THE HERMITAGE “SCULPTURE IN THE COURTYARD” PROJECT. THE INSTALLATION BELONGS TO THE “RELATUM” SERIES (FROM LATIN RELATIO – RELATION), WHICH INCLUDES SCULPTURE PIECES MADE OF TWO CONTRASTING MATERIALS, MOSTLY STONE AND STEEL. THOUGH IMPRESSIVE IN SIZE (IT WEIGHS TEN TONS), THE “CANE OF TITAN” HAS THE APPEARANCE OF A CHAMBER OBJECT. THE ARTIST HIMSELF PREFERENCES TO PLACE HIS WORKS IN THE NATURAL CONTEXT. THUS, IN 2011 THE LEE UFAN ART MUSEUM WAS OPENED ON THE ISLAND OF NAOSHIMA, WHERE MOST OF THE SCULPTURES ARE DISPLAYED IN THE OPEN AIR. THE AUTHOR OF THE MUSEUM PROJECT WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST JAPANESE ARCHITECTS TADAO ANDO, WINNER OF THE PRITZKER ARCHITECTURE PRIZE (1995). THE EXHIBITION WAS ORGANIZED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE HERMITAGE 20/21 PROJECT AIMED AT COLLECTING, DISPLAYING AND STUDYING THE ART OF THE 20TH-21ST CENTURIES.



LEE UFAN

Relatum – The Cane of Tilana

2014. Steel and stone. 200×520×145 cm. The State Hermitage Big Courtyard, 2016

View of the installation in the Big Courtyard by R.Zagidullin

FROM LEE UFAN'S PUBLIC LECTURE IN THE STATE HERMITAGE, MARCH 2016.

“The work that was displayed in the gardens of Versailles last year is now in the Hermitage. It is only a big rock and a heavy iron cane. I called it “Rest” or in another version, “The Cane of Reason”. Imagine a titan, a giant who leans against a rock to have a minute of rest.

The rock is natural force, the iron cane — industrial production. At present, nature, culture and industry are opposed, while the evolution of civilization requires peaceful cooperation of nature, industry and man. It should be remembered that nature possesses a force that a man cannot appraise or, even less so, subordinate.

I am far from creating anything definite, I am only trying to establish a relationship between the industrial world (“the cane”) and nature (“the rock”). I aspire to present human spirit in its encounter with the environment. At the same time, my idea is to construct or create as little as possible. Mankind has been doing it for centuries and the planet has become oversaturated with the products of human activity that cause ecological problems as well as diseases.

What we need is time to pause, rest and meditate — about nature or history, about ourselves and our surroundings. Works of art are to help us in that.

Once Einstein asked Freud a question, “What must be done to stop wars so that people should live in peace?” Freud replied that to live in peace people need time to reflect on their existence. For that they need culture. The artist’s task is to enable people to think of their origin.

The artist has the power to show the way for people to reveal all the exalted and the best in them. The artist should not be required to give answers, one must share his energy directed to meditation and doubt. Thus it is hard for me to understand people who implicitly trust one religion. It is art that helps people doubt a dogma, to think and care. The artist cannot always be simply “a good guy” but he can create a road to understanding many sides of Nature, perhaps even the Nature of the Divine.”

FRAME FROM THE FILM
"THE IDIOT
(NASTASYA FILIPPOVNA)"
plot and production
by Ivan Pyriev, 1958.
© "Mosfilm"



Fedor Dostoyevsky. "The Idiot"

"Do you know that I came here to see those trees?" pointing to the trees in the park. "It is not ridiculous, is it? Say that it is not ridiculous!" he demanded urgently of Lizabelha Prokofievna. Then he seemed to be plunged in thought. <...> "Ah, yes — you were going away just now, and I thought to myself: 'I shall never see these people again-never again! This is the last time I shall see the trees, too. I shall see nothing after this but the red brick wall of Meyer's house opposite my window. Tell them about it — try to tell them,' <...> You are not laughing?" He looked anxiously around. "But you know I get so many queer ideas, lying there in bed. I have grown convinced that nature is full of mockery..."



5

SCULPTURE
IN THE PALACE 130

OLYMPIA 146
KANDINSKY 154

Sculpture
in the decoration
of St. Petersburg
palaces of the
19th century

February–May 2016
Photo: Mikhail Rozanov

**“CREATED
BY A HAND
WITH BUT
A CHISEL ARMED...”**



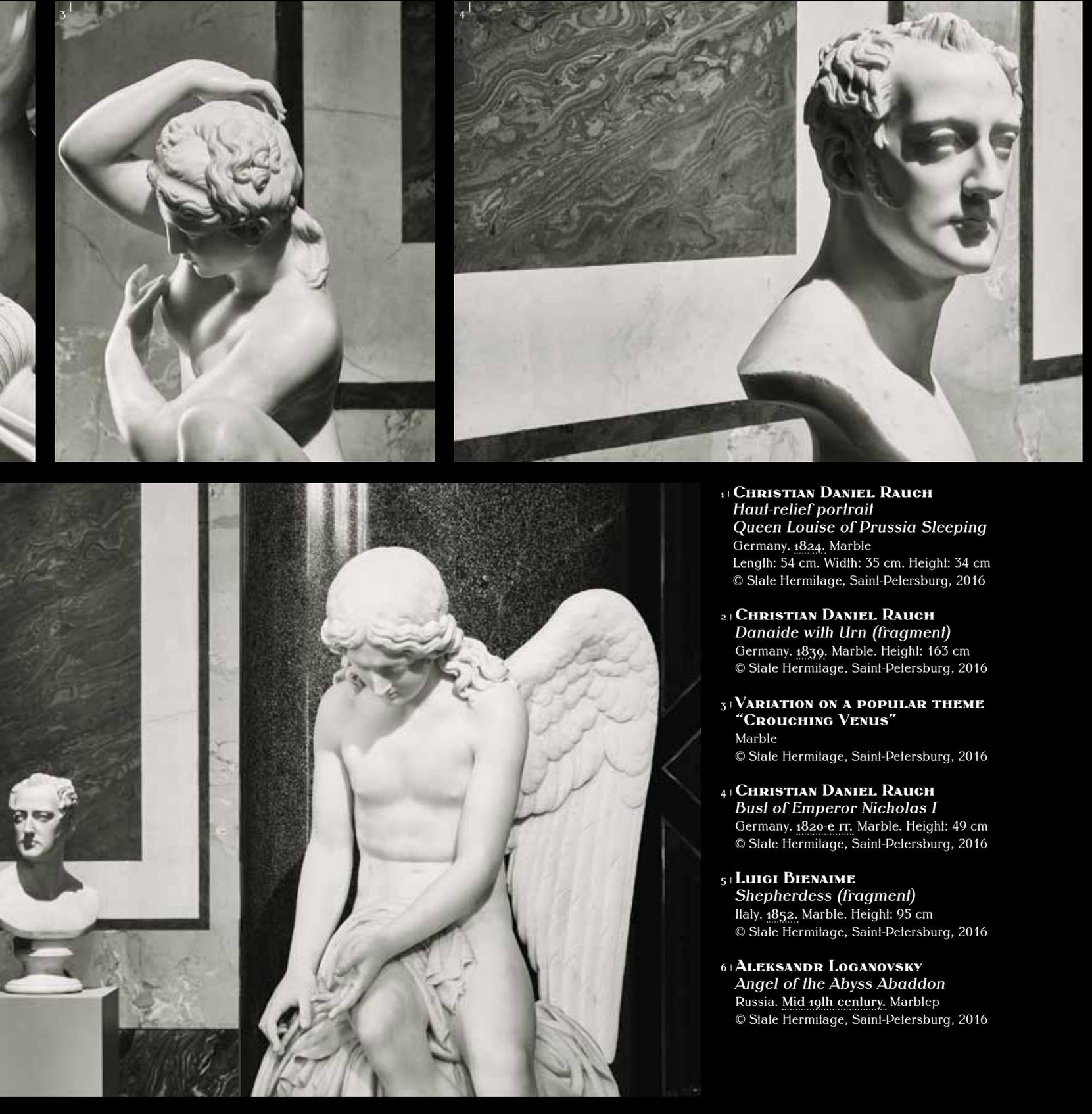
THE EXHIBITION PRESENTED MORE THAN 70 WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE STATE HERMITAGE (MORE THAN 30 SCULPTURES, AND 40 WATERCOLORS) — MAGNIFICENT WORKS OF SCULPTURE THAT DECORATED THE CHAMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL AND GRAND DUCAL PALACES, PRIVATE ROOMS OF ST. PETERSBURG IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, WATERCOLORS OF THE PALACE INTERIORS FEATURING THIS SCULPTURE CREATED BY ARTISTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,



LUIGI BIENAIME
Shepherdess (fragment)
Italy, 1852. Marble. Height: 95 cm
© State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016



Works of sculpture were increasingly used to embellish the private apartments of the Imperial and Grand Ducal palaces and private homes since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Portrait busts and statues, group sculptures based on mythological and allegorical stories produced in a variety of materials, small bronze statues adorned living rooms, cabinets, libraries and winter gardens. Sculpture gradually became an integral part of a refined St Petersburg interior. The artistic level of the most part of these marble statues and group sculptures was not far below than the level of the artifacts exhibited in the Imperial Hermitage at that time but was known only to a narrow circle of the citizens of the Russian capital.



1 | **CHRISTIAN DANIEL RAUCH**
Haul-relief portrail
Queen Louise of Prussia Sleeping
 Germany, 1824, Marble
 Length: 54 cm. Width: 35 cm. Height: 34 cm
 © State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

2 | **CHRISTIAN DANIEL RAUCH**
Danaide with Urn (fragment)
 Germany, 1839, Marble. Height: 163 cm
 © State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

3 | **VARIATION ON A POPULAR THEME**
"CROUCHING VENUS"
 Marble
 © State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

4 | **CHRISTIAN DANIEL RAUCH**
Bust of Emperor Nicholas I
 Germany, 1820-e rr. Marble. Height: 49 cm
 © State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

5 | **LUIGI BIENAIME**
Shepherdess (fragment)
 Italy, 1852, Marble. Height: 95 cm
 © State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

6 | **ALEKSANDR LOGANOVSKY**
Angel of the Abyss Abaddon
 Russia, Mid 19th century, Marble
 © State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, 2016

For example, in 1802, the statue of "Cupid" and group sculpture "Cupid and Psyche" by Antonio Canova were delivered to the Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yusupov at his palace on the Fontanka river, while in 1815, the Emperor Alexander I purchased four works by the same Italian master for the Hermitage collection. In addition to the works of the most famous sculptors of the era of neo-classicism — Antonio Canova (1757–1822) and Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), works of their talented students and followers: Tenerani Pietro (1789–1869) and Luigi Bienaime (1795–1878), Rinaldo Rinaldi (1793–1873) and John Gibson (1790–1866), Christian Daniel Rauch (1777–1857) and Emil Wolff (1802–1879), Boris Orlovsky (1797–1837), Alexander Loganovsky



EMIL WOLFF
Cupid with Attributes of Hercules

Germany. After 1836
Marble. Height: 144 cm
© State Hermitage,
Saint-Petersburg, 2016

ANTONIO CANOVA
Hebe (fragment)

Italy. Between 1800 and 1805
Marble. Height: 161 cm
© State Hermitage,
Saint-Petersburg, 2016

(1812–1855) and works of many other celebrated European and Russian masters of the XIX century were stored in the palaces of St. Petersburg.

The statues and group sculptures that belonged to members of the Imperial family and St. Petersburg's nobility, were most often acquired in Italy and Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was in those countries the Emperor Nicholas I purchased the "latest" sculpture, both for the New Hermitage, and as gifts. Among the mentioned works there was a "Danaida" created by a sculptor Rauh in 1839, and donated to the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, by Nicholas I in 1840.

The exhibition includes works of sculpture specially ordered and purchased for the collection of the heir to the Russian throne, Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich (future Emperor Alexander II) in Italy in 1838–1839, and also a sculpture "Cupid with the attributes of Hercules" by Emil Wolff purchased already for his son, Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovich in 1859

The statue of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, created to a special commission from the Emperor Nicholas I has an interesting story. The sculpture by Karl Friedrich Wichmann (1775–1836) was lost in the great Winter Palace fire of 1837 and recreated by the Russian sculptor Dmitry Savelyevich Savelyev in 1840.

The Mariinsky Palace, which belonged to the family of the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, the eldest daughter of Nicholas I, was decorated with marble works by Canova, Rauch, Wolf and other sculptors of the nineteenth century.



ANTONIO CANOVA
Hebe

Italy. Between 1800 and 1805
Marble. Height: 161 cm
© State Hermitage,
Saint-Petersburg, 2016



One could see the works of famous artists: Thorvaldsen, Wolf and Beneme in the mansion of A. L. Slieglitz on the English embankment. The exhibit included a marble group "Thetis" (sculptor: Emil Wolff), that belonged to the Baron Slieglitz in 1870s and decorated the living room of his mansion on the English Embankment.

A bust, "Fau", also in the display, was brought to St. Petersburg in the early 1830s, when it was considered to be the work of Michelangelo (now it is attributed to his contemporary Baccio Bandinelli). After passing through several hands in St. Petersburg, in the 1860s the faun came into the home of count P.S. Stroganov, and was acquired by the Hermitage in 1912 in accordance with his will.



THE NEW HERMITAGE. REPLACEMENT



THE ORIGINAL SPELTER SCULPTURES ARE EXHIBITED IN OPEN STORAGE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND RESTORATION OF ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS AT THE "STARAYA DEREVNYA" RESTORATION AND STORAGE CENTRE. PHOTO: MIKHAIL ROZANOV



THE NEW HERMITAGE IS THE FIRST BUILDING IN RUSSIA CONSTRUCTED WITH THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF HOSTING MUSEUM ART COLLECTIONS. FOR THE PROJECT OF THE IMPERIAL HERMITAGE NICOLAS I INVITED THE GERMAN ARCHITECT LEO VON KLENZE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO SHAPING MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE WITH HIS WORKS (HE IS THE AUTHOR OF THE GLYPTOTHEK AND THE PINAKOTHEK IN MUNICH). THE BUILDING IS DECORATED WITH STATUES AND BAS-RELIEFS WITH PORTRAITS OF FAMOUS PAINTERS, ARCHITECTS, SCULPTORS OF THE PAST EPOCHS: 28 PIECES, AMONG THEM — POLYKLEITOS AND PHIDIAS, MICHELANGELO AND BENVENUTO CELLINI, RAPHAEL AND REMBRANDT, TITIAN AND DÜRER. *PHOTO: MIKHAIL ROZANOV*

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE 16 SPELTER¹ SCULPTURES BY BRONZE COPIES BEGAN IN AUGUST 2013. THE DECISION TO REPLACE THE ORIGINAL STATUES OF THE NEW HERMITAGE IS DETERMINED BY THE PROGRESSIVE BREAKDOWN IN THE CONDITION OF THE METAL WHICH DOES NOT ALLOW FOR FURTHER EXPOSURE OF THE SCULPTURES IN THE OPEN AIR.



The original sculptures were taken down and transported to the workshops for restoration. During the restoration works the external and internal surfaces of the zinc were cleaned of friable deposits of oxide and persistent paint stains; constructive risks were eliminated, such as large cracks and open joints between fragments; friable metal parts were treated with conserving and antifrust compounds; missing elements of sculptures were made up.

To keep the maximum of the original author's conception, it was decided to make the copies using the traditional author's technique and technology, replacing the historical speller alloy molding by bronze. The choice of the material is determined by the characteristics of bronze, which is more solid and weather-resistant, as well as by the possibility of molding with thinner walls, which will considerably reduce the weight of the sculptures (from 700–900 to 200–250 kg).

The precise copying method made it possible to give the new bronze sculptures all the intricacies of the originals that the St Petersburg-based sculptors Piotr Svintsov, Nikolai Ustinov, Nikolai Tokarev, Alexander Loganovsky, Vasily Demuth-Malinovsky, Alexander Terebenev, David Jensen, Konstanlin Klein and Johann Reymers produced from the drawings of Leo von Klenze and small models created by the German sculptor Johann Halbig. To make up for major losses the restorers had to consult pictorial sources and the drawings by von Klenze himself.

1. Speller is the generic name of different base metals alloys.





TITANIA

**THE FACADE
OF THE NEW HERMITAGE**





БДТ

РОССИЙСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ
АКАДЕМИЧЕСКИЙ БОЛЬШОЙ
ДРАМАТИЧЕСКИЙ ТЕАТР
ИМЕНИ Г. А. ТОВСТОНОГОВА



**ОСНОВНАЯ И МАЛАЯ СЦЕНЫ
БДТ ИМЕНИ Г. А. ТОВСТОНОГОВА
НАБЕРЕЖНАЯ РЕКИ ФОНТАНКИ, 65
ЗДАНИЕ ПОСТРОЕНО В 1877 ГОДУ
АРХИТЕКТОР – ЛЮДВИГ ФОНТАНА
РЕКОНСТРУИРОВАНО В ПЕРИОД
С 2011-ГО ПО 2014 ГОД.
ПАМЯТНИК АРХИТЕКТУРЫ,
ОБЪЕКТ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОГО
И КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ
ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОГО ЗНАЧЕНИЯ**

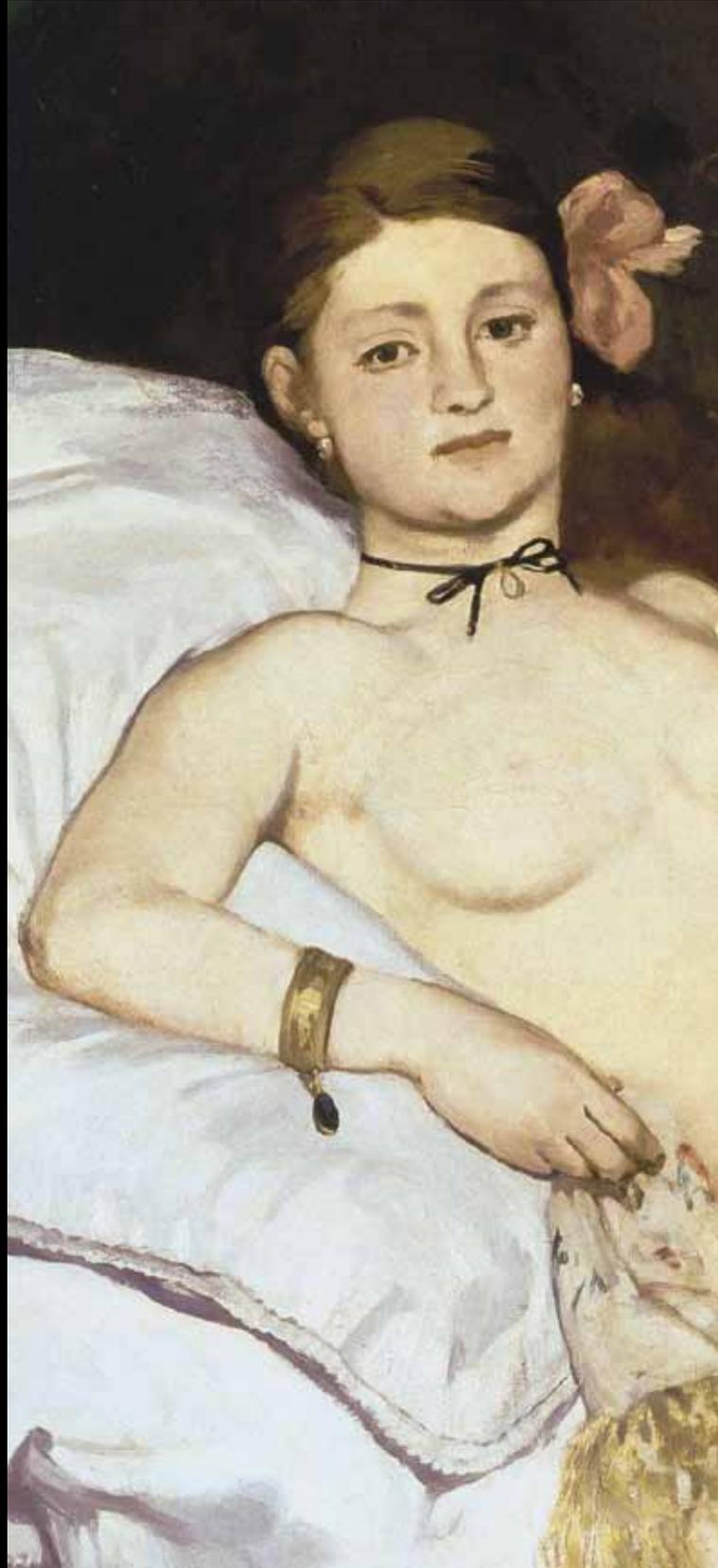
**ВТОРАЯ СЦЕНА БДТ ИМЕНИ
Г. А. ТОВСТОНОГОВА (КАМЕННООСТРОВСКИЙ
ТЕАТР). ПЛОЩАДЬ СТАРОГО ТЕАТРА, 13
ЗДАНИЕ ПОСТРОЕНО В 1827 ГОДУ
АРХИТЕКТОР – СМАРАГД ШУСТОВ
РЕКОНСТРУИРОВАНО В ПЕРИОД
С 2005-ГО ПО 2012 ГОД.
ПАМЯТНИК РУССКОГО ДЕРЕВЯННОГО
ЗОДЧЕСТВА ПЕРИОДА КЛАССИЦИЗМА.
ЕДИНСТВЕННЫЙ ФУНКЦИОНИРУЮЩИЙ
ДЕРЕВЯННЫЙ ТЕАТР В РОССИИ**



THE PEARL OF THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY

Exhibition
"Edouard Manet.
"Olympia".
Theme
and Variations"

July–October 2016



"OLYMPIA" IS EDOUARD MANET'S MOST GLORIOUS CREATION. IT BELONGS TO THE NATIONAL ARTISTIC TREASURES OF FRANCE AND THEREFORE VERY RARELY LEAVES ITS PERMANENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE, THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY IN PARIS. ITS ARRIVAL AT THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM IS, IN ITSELF, SIGNIFICANT. IN ADDITION, IT MADE IT POSSIBLE TO ORGANIZE A UNIQUE EXHIBITION OF A RARE MASTERPIECE, SHOWING THE MOST IMPORTANT FACETS OF THE WORLDWIDE EUROPEAN AESTHETIC.

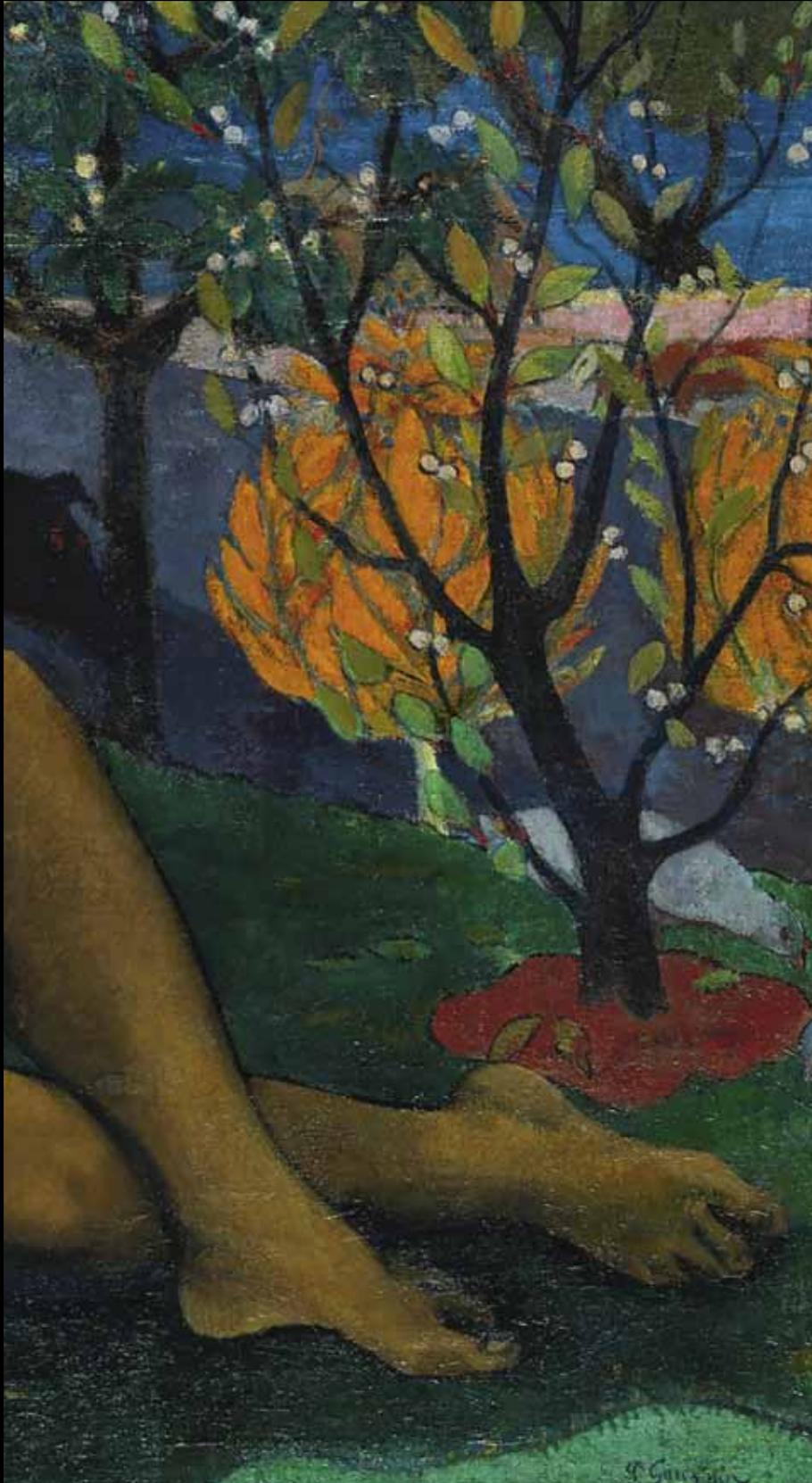




Photo: Svellana Ragina, State Hermitage



TITIAN
Danae
 Circa 1554
 Oil on canvas
 120 × 187 cm
 © The State Hermitage, 2016

The main theme of the exhibition is the perfectly beautiful nude, from the time it was formulated by the great Venetian Renaissance masters, Titian and Giorgione. Great artists from Poussin and Boucher to Ingres and Delacroix produced engravings and drawings with their own variations on this theme." The subheading of the exhibition, "Theme and Variations," speaks to the theme of the beautiful nude which connects the two paintings separated by three centuries: "Danae" by Titian and "Olympia" by Manet. New variations on this theme marked the spirit of the changing times.

In the mid nineteenth century, Paris, a recognized world capital of art, began to stagnate in the grip of salons and their academic clichés. Salon leaders such as Cabanel and Lefebvre, turned the Renaissance image of purity and spirituality into the commercial production of sugary fantasy, dedicated to the goddess of beauty. Manet and his fellow Impressionists had to break the mold.

In the Salon of Paris in 1865 the picture caused an unprecedented scandal: the administration had to assign two guards to protect it from an angry mob.

Manet was later called the father of modernism, but it was not modernism in today's sense of the word, which implies an exaggeratedly extravagant style. Rather, it was modernism in the sense of the art movement, which insisted on an accurate reflection of modernity (*modernité*), whatever it was thought to be.

ALBERT KOSTENEVICH IN THE BOOK "EDOUARD MANET. 'OLYMPIA'. THEME AND VARIATIONS" (2016):

The exhibition of "Olympia" by Edouard Manet in the Hermitage is a special kind of event. The painting which was so stood out amongst the art of its time with its ambiguous nature has an inexplicable magic about it.

Now, "Olympia" can be called "celebrated", but a half century ago, it was perceived differently, its descriptors were "cynical, notorious" or something even ruder. In the Salon of 1865, it was perceived by the public and critics as an outright violation of decency, and exhibition of the painting was considered to be a bold farce.

But the painting turned out to be a significant milestone of French painting and, at the same time, a venerated icon in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. The museum is very reluctant to part with it even for a short time. A display of "Olympia" abroad such as the one currently in Russia, requires special authorization from the president. Who could imagine such a fate when it appeared? The scandal which broke out in the Salon at that time was unprecedented.

The French have used the expression *succès de scandale* liberally and for a long time, but this oxymoronic idiom wasn't so obvious before "Olympia". Previous clashes at exhibitions, including the "romantic battle"¹ of the 1820s, are perceived more as private troubles when compared with the storm caused by "Olympia." However, the story of "Olympia" had visual parallels in the literary world, where works that later became the glory of France were prosecuted in the name of morality.



PAUL GAUGUIN
The King's Wife

1896

Oil on canvas

97 × 130 cm

State Museum of Fine Arts
named after A. S. Pushkin, Москва



JEFF KOONS
Mirror Ball
("Olympia" Manet)

2014-2015

Oil on canvas, glass, aluminum

140,3 × 206 × 37,5 cm

© Jeff Koons

In January of 1857, Gustave Flaubert was brought to trial for "moral violation" in *Madame Bovary*, which later became a key early work of realism. The trial only helped to further circulate the novel. In the same year Charles Baudelaire published "The Flowers of Evil", and the first publication provoked a lawsuit, which was marked by a fine for violation of public morals. But after a period of time, these poems influenced the Symbolists — Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé — luminaries of French poetry. "Olympia" had lapped into a seam, hidden in a secret area of social consciousness. With Baudelaire and Manet a real breakthrough began. Writers, painters, filmmakers began to encroach on routine everyday dogmas with extraordinary presence of mind, knowing that an ensuing scandal would be a reliable way to ensure the ultimate success. "Olympia" is a picture full of important historical meaning. In recent years, when it leaves its usual place, it tends to perform a function that goes beyond painting itself. Last year, the picture was the culmination of a grand exhibition at the Museum of Orsay "The Splendors and Miseries..."²

Two years prior to that it traveled to Venice. There, in the Doge's Palace, it was exhibited together with its predecessor, the "Venus of Urbino" by Titian, at an exhibition called "Manet. Return to Venice"³. At that time a double authorization from the presidents of France and Italy was required for such an exhibition. Such an attitude towards national treasures is worthy of emulation.

In Russia "Olympia" was taken by two museums: the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and the Hermitage. For a more complete understanding of its historical context, "Olympia" was shown alongside a number of corresponding works from the Hermitage, allowing the viewer to get a sense of the development of the old theme in variations throughout the Renaissance, Baroque, and modern times, beginning with the "Danae" by Titian and continuing with a group of rare engravings from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Thus the iconographic origins and development of this motif become clearer and, more importantly, the infinite potential of such an eternal concept — the image of a naked woman — becomes evident.

The original plan of the exposition assumed a structure in the shape of a triad with Manet's painting in the centre, "Danae" by Titian at the beginning and "King's Wife" by Gauguin (from the State Museum of Fine Arts named after A. S. Pushkin) at the end. Thus two other notable participants of this unusual presentation would be not only honorable escorts for a guest from France, but would be parts of a single chain, allowing one to recognize the "offspring" of Manet's painting along with its "genealogy". The triad of paintings by Titian, Manet and Gauguin would be a fascinating exhibition game. This game would allow you to hear the roll call of times, reaching early milestones of modern art regardless of all historically conditioned differences. But the plan failed: doubts which had existed before were confirmed upon the last examination of "The King's Wife". The fragility of this painting does not allow it to be moved outside of the Museum.

Gauguin's Tahitian masterpiece is not the only inevitable omission. "The Birth of Venus" by Botticelli and "Venus of



**AT THE EXHIBITION OPENING,
JULY 2016**

Photo: Svellana Ragina, State Hermitage

Urbino” from the Uffizi and “Sleeping Venus” by Giorgione from the Dresden Gallery could hang beside “Olympia” — alas, almost all of them never leave their home. It is these works of the High Renaissance that gave rise to the image of the beautiful nude, one of the most important in European art, whose gradual transformation through three and a half centuries led to the emergence of “Olympia”.

Because of the impossibility of involving the celebrated original paintings in creating a view of the evolution of the d’Orsay pearl’s image replications of their old engravings were used. Thus, the theme is marked not only with outstanding works by Titian from the Hermitage collection, but also with prints of the works of the great Venetians, and variations of the artists of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries were also marked with prints and drawings. These latest variations on the theme by romantics or masters of fine art allow us to appraise with greater accuracy Manet’s courage in overcoming the routine of the academic salons and the incredible breakthrough to the truth of the new painting.

In the case of “Olympia” Manet directly faced the problem posed by Velazquez’s “Meninas”, namely that of who is looking. Manet, tells us in all sincerity that there is no illusion, no sleeping Venus, taken by surprise, no fun in the waves at all. It is “I” who is looking at you, examining you,” Olympia says. The audience cannot hide behind the gaze of the painter. The boldness that lies in this revelation to the viewer of the essence of the problem, may explain the scandal caused by the picture.

Camellia was a detail that Dumas took from life and used in literature. Marie Duplessis* appreciated only these flowers that practically have no scent. Because of her tuberculosis, hyacinths and roses had a destructive effect on her, and later oddly the word “Camellia” began to mean women of loose morals. The name of a lesser heroine in Dumas play, Olympia, became no less patented. This was affected partly by the fact that girls from expensive brothels adored names like Artemisa, Octavia and Olympia.

Guy Cogeval, President of the Musée d’Orsay and the Orangerie (président de l’Établissement public du musée d’Orsay et du musée de l’Orangerie), gave an interview at the opening of the exhibition in St. Petersburg in which he talked about the rivalry of “Olympia” by Manet with “The Venus of Urbino” by Titian and the real audacity of the author of the painting.

How did “Olympia” fare during the journey from Moscow to St. Petersburg?

My assistants transported it. All I know is that “Olympia” travelled by truck for 14 hours and all went well. I think many great paintings have made the journey between the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and the Hermitage.

Now “Olympia” is in St. Petersburg, is it possible that it will engage in a dialogue with “Danae” by Rembrandt?

There is so much generosity in the painting by Edouard Manet, it attracts spectators like a magnet. Manet never saw Rembrandt’s “Danae”. But he saw Titian’s “The Venus of Urbino”, and here the connection is undeniable. He was engrossed by this work, traveled to Florence and drew sketches of it. A few years ago we put on an exhibition in Venice, where the “Olympia” and “The Venus of Urbino” were located next to each other.

What is the fundamental difference between these two works? If Venus, looking at us from the canvas, invites the viewer over, then Olympia, on the contrary, rejects us and pushes us out of the painting's space. During the exhibition in Venice, Italian journalists were arguing which one of the heroines was more beautiful and agreed that, of course, Venus. Manet put the viewer in the uncomfortable position of voyeur, so many could not accept "Olympia" at that moment.

Have you ever seen any strange, unexpected reactions of visitors to this painting in the Orsay Museum?

I don't think so. However, during the exhibition "Splendors and Miseries of Courtesans. Images of Prostitution in France, 1850-1910" in the Orsay Museum one of the visitors undressed in front of "Olympia", it was some kind of performance. But earlier she had done the same in front of the painting "The Origin of the World" by Courbet.

Have you seen the new exhibition of French Impressionism in the General Staff building?

I have known this collection very well since the time it was exhibited in the Winter Palace. Of course, it was impressive: French art from the seventeenth century to Matisse. But there is more space in the General Staff, the triptych "The Mediterranean" by Bonnard is very well presented.

What plans does the Orsay Museum and the Hermitage have for the nearest future? What projects that have been carried out are most important for you?

I have collaborated with the Hermitage Museum even since I was the Director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal. Even then, we had a lot of interesting projects, including the exhibition of Shchukin and Morozov collections and a large exhibition dedicated to Catherine the Great. We made an exhibition dedicated to Bonnard a year ago in the Musée d'Orsay. Mr. Piotrovsky seemed to like it. Bonnard's triptych "The Mediterranean" (from the Hermitage collection), which I have spoken about was on display there.

I came here with my curators and a young associate. I was going to show them the Hermitage and maybe think about other plans. We have talked with Mr. Piotrovsky, we'll be sure to organize joint projects. In the near future an exhibition of Gauguin, Picasso and Cezanne is to be planned in the Musée d'Orsay, perhaps works from the Hermitage collection will be exhibited there.

CAMELLIA WAS A DETAIL THAT DUMAS TOOK FROM LIFE AND USED IN LITERATURE. MARIE DUPLESSIS * APPRECIATED ONLY THESE FLOWERS THAT PRACTICALLY HAVE NO SCENT. BECAUSE OF HER TUBERCULOSIS, HYACINTHS AND ROSES HAD A DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT ON HER, AND LATER ODDLY THE WORD "CAMELLIA" BEGAN TO MEAN WOMEN OF LOOSE MORALS. THE NAME OF A LESSER HEROINE IN DUMAS PLAY, OLYMPIA, BECAME NO LESS PATENTED. THIS WAS AFFECTED PARTLY BY THE FACT THAT GIRLS FROM EXPENSIVE BROTHELS ADORED NAMES LIKE ARTEMISA, OCTAVIA AND OLYMPIA.

KOSTENEVICH, A. G. EDOUARD MANET. "OLYMPIA". THEME AND VARIATIONS. ST P., 2016

* THE MAIN CHARACTER OF A. DUMAS "THE LADY OF THE CAMELLIAS".

HENRI PERRYUSHO IN THE BOOK "EDOUARD MANET":

I chose Edouard Manet as the hero of the fourth biography in the series "Art and Fate" after Van Gogh, Cezanne and Toulouse-Lautrec. He was the artist who created "Olympia" and who became a focus of the art period, which I had decided to tell a story about. He is its core, its driving force. "Before Manet" and "after Manet" — such expressions are full of profound meaning. The whole period ended and another one began with his name. Manet was indeed the "father" of modern painting, the one who provided the impetus which set everything else in train. There are not so many similar revolutions in the history of art. It was a fundamental revolution that led to a number of important consequences.

...Before he started work on "Breakfast", Manet decided to rethink "The Venus of Urbino" once copied by him in the Uffizi Gallery in his own style. In a sense this work by Titian is thematically classic: a woman is resting in a bed, a dog is curled up and dozing at her feet. Manet interpreted this nude in his own style (the title of the painting came later but let's clarify that we are talking about "Olympia").

Weeks passed, and the number of drawings, sketches and preparatory work multiplied. Little by little, and not without difficulties, Manet put the painting together. The structure of "The Venus of Urbino" (he also didn't forget about the "Naked Maja" by Goya) remained unchanged, Manet put the thin, tan body of Viktorina Möran against a background of snow-white sheets and pillows, shot with blueness.

The light tones stand out against a dark background, which is marked off, like Titian's one with a vertical. Manet put a background figure in the right part of the painting to enliven the composition and give it sufficient relief. It was a servant, bringing a bouquet of flowers to Venus. The bouquet allowed the making of a few multi-colored strokes. In terms of plastics it would not be, of course, desirable if this figure focused on herself too much light: in this case it would disrupt the balance of the painting and would distract attention. On the contrary, attention must be fixed on the naked body. Manet also decided — as though Baudelaire had given him such an idea — to portray a black servant. Bold? No, it is not! Although relations with the African world could not be called too close in those years, one can recall a few examples: in 1842 Jalabert depicted a colored maid in his "Odalisque" Painting. As for the little dog from "The Venus of Urbino", Manet in search of a similar plastic motive decided upon a black cat after much deliberation. The black cat is a favorite animal of Baudelaire too.



**AT THE EXHIBITION OPENING,
JULY 2016**

Photo: Svellana Ragina, State Hermitage

Manet was nodding his head. The more he looked at the canvas, the more convinced that there was nothing to correct. But when the excitement that had arisen during the creative process was gone, a fear settled in his heart. Vague at first, it became stronger. He again heard the cries of the public in the "Salon of the Refused". What if this canvas provoked a similar scandal to that created by "Breakfast"?

He tried to calm himself. Baffled, hesitant, he carefully scrutinized the creation born from his own brush. Victorina had surely the nervous body, the thin lips, the neck adorned with a black velvet ribbon, the hand with a bracelet and feet shod in house slippers. He had practiced no deception, he had been truthful. However, anxiety tormented him. "I created what I saw," Manet told himself. True, but he seemed to free Victorina from all that was ephemeral or accidental. His "Venus" was not related to any particular time or to a particular place. It was more than a reality, it was the truth — truth and poetry. A still priestess of an unknown cult, she reclined on a bed in front of Manet and — goddess or courtesan? — she contemplated him with a perverse naïveté and alluring dispassion.

Eyes that knew neither
bitterness or tenderness
like two icy jewels,
of gold and steel fused.

Manet was scared. A strange silence emanated from his painting, as from a haunting dream. He felt the gaze of this creature which was far away from the world. It was so surreal and so mystically tangible at the same time; painting had never expressed the essence of a woman through such nakedness ("An image of a naked body had never been so naked since the time of the Cranach Venuses" — Robert Rey wrote insightfully. He perfectly conveyed in words the extremely embarrassing and seemingly disastrous effect that "Olympia" had on the public for a long time). Manet was scared. As if he had already heard the crowd laughing and cursing. He was afraid of that perfect canvas. He was afraid of himself, afraid of his art, which was above him. The decision came unexpectedly. In spite of Baudelaire's advice, he did not send "Venus" to the Salon. He took the canvas from the easel and put it away in a corner of the studio, where the mysterious stranger, spreading the light of new art, was kept in the darkness for months. Manet didn't want any scandals. He did not want the fate reserved for him. <...> Enough! Manet was being ridiculous; let him take Baudelaire's advice finally, let him show his "Olympia"!

In the end Manet allowed himself to be persuaded. Zacherie Astruc had already dreamt a title for this "Venus": it would be called "Olympia" from that moment. Great importance — what a title! The literary context of Manet's painting didn't matter at all. Astruc readily composed a poem — they said, that he even thought in Alexandrines — and soon he would write a long poem "Daughter of the Island" in honor of "Olympia", whose first verse (and there were ten verses in all) would be placed under the title of the painting:

When tired of dreaming, Olympia awakens
Spring enters on the arms of the mild black messenger
She is the slave who, like the amorous night

"ALL THESE IMBECILE BOURGEOIS WHO CEASELESSLY UTTER THE WORDS: IMMORAL, IMMORALITY, MORALITY IN ART, AND OTHER IDIOTIC PHRASES, MAKE ME THINK OF LOUISE VILLEDIEU, THE FIVE-FRANC WHORE, WHO, HAVING ACCOMPANIED ME ONE DAY TO THE LOUVRE, WHERE SHE HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE, BEGAN BLUSHING AND COVERING HER FACE WITH HER HANDS. AND AS WE STOOD BEFORE THE IMMORTAL STATUES AND PICTURES SHE KEPT PLUCKING ME BY THE SLEEVE AND ASKING HOW THEY COULD EXHIBIT SUCH INDECENCIES IN PUBLIC."

BAUDELAIRE CH. MY HEART LAID BARE, 1907

Comes to adorn with flowers the day beautiful to hold
The august young woman is whom ardor is ever wakeful

When the members of the jury saw Manet's paintings and especially the "Olympia", they declared it to be "vile peacockery". At first they didn't accept two works, and then they changed their minds. Because some holheads had accused the jury of excessive strictness they decided to allow to the light (it was a perfect example for them) what would have remained in obscurity in older, better times. Let the public itself make a judgement and decide if it was right or wrong to establish an academic tribunal to reject such obscenity.

On May 1st during the official opening of the Salon, Manet almost believed — but for a very short period of time — that he had won the game. They congratulated him on the exhibited works. What magnificent marinas! How right he had been to paint the mouth of the Seine! Marina? Manet shuddered. They could not take the "Olympia" for a landscape by Honfleur! He entered the room under the letter "M", where he was shown two paintings, signed with the name of an unknown debutant, Claude Monet. The Author of "Olympia" choked with rage. What was the mystification? "Where had this monster come from? He stole my name and my applause, while they threw rotten apples at me" — all of which was still an understatement. "Breakfast" had provoked merely slight displeasure in comparison to the incredible explosion that "Olympia" provoked. Olympia! Where had the artist got hold of that Olympia? Prejudice against Manet was so strong that an unusual name, not even resembling Olympia, immediately gave rise to suspicious whispering and set the public off again. What other trick had the buffoon Manet in store for the public? When Manet agreed to the name and vague Alexandrine verses composed by Zacharie Astruc, he did not think that all this self-conscious writing had anything to do with his painting (and "Venus" — is painting in the full sense of the word) However, anything that came from Manet, came as no surprise to anyone: the audience was ready to imagine God knows what. What if the author had the audacity to put in his painting (whose realism just shamelessly mocked the ideal images of the academic painters) a "shameless courtesan", the eponymous character of "La Dame aux Camelias" by Alexandre Dumas, fils? "What a majestic virgin!" What is there to say? There's majesty for you!

However, that's to be expected: by rushing into pornography the scandalous paintbrush-wielder was not afraid to outrage public opinion. He had profaned the sacred mythology, desecrated the highest form of art, which the image of the female nude had been. He portrayed a prostitute, a girl who had barely reached puberty, "betwixt and between". He had created a sensual image, which is worthy of "The Flowers of Evil" by his satanic friend (contrary to the exact wording made by Zola later ("What this all means, neither you, nor I even the more so, know") the tendency towards a literary understanding continued for a long time. In 1903, Andre Fontaine posed the question "Could it be that Manet wanted to convey a sense of the bitterness in his painting that he felt contemplating this somewhat voluptuous, mercantile, hidden life". Even Paul Valery wrote in the preface of the catalog of Manet's exhibition at the Museum of the Orangerie in 1932: "Olympia causes a holy terror, it is a scandal, an idol, it is a powerful and public disclosure of the pitiful secrets of society ... the purity of beautiful traits holds first of all the indecency that implies the peaceful and good-natured ignorance of shame of any kind. An animal vestal-virgin, condemned to absolute nakedness, she suggests the primitive barbarity and bestiality which characterizes prostitution in big cities." Valery's rhetoric was as artificial as it was meaningless).

Paris of the Second Empire gave the world a whirl of pleasure. Expensive amorous relations with famous "socialites", among which there were La Paiva; Cora Pearl, endowed with a breath-taking bust; Hortense Schneider, whose seductive and, to some, indecent motion of hips garnered ticket sales for the Variety theater and for operettas by Offenbach; Marguerite Bellanger, nicknamed "Margo-fun time girl" by her lovers - they all lent the nefarious gleam of Babylon to the Paris of the Second Empire. The whole of Europe and both Americas came here as though to a den of iniquity.

Five thousand girls were registered in the Paris Police Prefecture, and the remaining 30 thousand unofficially doing their courtesan business." In this dirty capital, where a carnival of skirts had become an everyday sight, where coarse songs were chanted at every step, it turned out that Manet was the real 'swine'. How many disquieting symptoms they saw in his "Olympia"! What perverted demonism it was — that he should put at the feet of this unsightly heaera a cat, a black cat!

And finally, the last mockery: he blasphemously hung a caricature of Christ next to this immoral painting. How they protested! How they were driven to anger and hysteria! They laughed and waved their fists in turns. A scoffing and angry crowd gathered in front of Manet's paintings. The administration had to assign two burly guards to protect them from the angry mob.

1__Book called "Romance Battle" by E.F. Kozhina of French painting of the 1820s was published in Leningrad in 1969.

2__In the name of the exhibition the title of a novel by Honore de Balzac "Brilliance and poverty courtesans" was quoted.

3__Manet. Ritorno à Venezia: catalogo. Venezia, 2013

4__Luxembourg artist Deborah de Robertis (Deborah de Robertis).

5__The exhibition "Pierre Bonnard, Painter of Arcadia" was held at the Musee d'Orsay in 2015.



THE EXHIBITION "THE ATTRACTION OF NON-OBJECTIVITY",
DEVOTED TO THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF THE OUTSTANDING RUSSIAN AVANT-GARDE
ARTIST WASSILY KANDINSKY, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS
OF ABSTRACTIONISM. STATE HERMITAGE,
JUNE—AUGUST 2016

Dimitri Ozerkov

COMPOSITION VI

ACCORDING TO THE HANDWRITTEN CATALOGUE, KANDINSKY FINISHED WORKING AT "COMPOSITION VI" ON MARCH 5, 1913. IN HIS ARTICLE WHICH WAS PUBLISHED TWO MONTHS LATER IN THE "STURM" MAGAZINE AND WHICH HE CALLED "COMPOSITION VI" AS WELL, HE WROTE: "I WAS BROODING OVER THIS PAINTING FOR A YEAR AND A HALF AND I OFTEN HAD TO THINK I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO REALIZE IT."

PHOTO: R ZAGIDULLINA

WASSILY KANDINSKY
Composition VI
1913, Germany
Oil, canvas
Slate Hermitage



**THE EXPOSITION,
JUNE 2016**

The artist writes that his source of reflection was another of his paintings, "Deluge", which he tried to reinterpret and reinvent. But he was too disturbed by the impression of the finished painting which he could not forget. Only after sending it away to an exhibition and getting it back a year and a half later could he take a new look at it and experience again the original inner sensation of a deluge, different from the imperfect finished depiction. The distinction between external and internal will become essential for Kandinsky. He will speak about "inner sounding" and "inner necessity" as vitally important preconditions for creation itself.

Researchers distinguish in Kandinsky's 1913 works the figurative and the abstract languages which can complete each other in a particular work of art. The figurative expressions allow for recognition of real objects, and the abstract ones do not: they are purely expressive. What is depicted in "Composition VI"? The figurative images exist here at the edge of dissolution of the colour patches, in their last formal manifestation. It is hard to recognize anything: the contours are blurred, the shapes are detached from the surface of the canvas. In the article the artist writes that the colours here rather "float in the air, and look as though they are enfolded with steam. You can observe such an absence of plane and uncertainty of distances, for example, in the Russian steam bath. A person standing in the midst of steam is not close and not far away, he is somewhere. The inner perception of the whole painting is defined by the main center situated "somewhere". The abstract expression is dominant.

In the bottom part of "Composition VI", however, one can see a boat and restless waves. In the centre right section there is a range of hills, on which in other Kandinsky's works there is often a fairytale-like city. There are sunbeams coming through from the sky. There is a motive of a horseman and a theme of a Russian trio of horses somewhere, which will become clear in the "Painting with White Border" (1913, New York, Guggenheim Museum). All of these elements are present in the numerous sketches to the Hermitage painting, more or less explicitly. But in the final "Composition VI" they are rather felt and guessed than seen clearly. The main achievement of this painting — and its major, exceptional novelty is in the sudden detachment



of the subject from the literal events of the pictured landscape. The narration floats above the figurative reality and rises to the sensory perception of the viewer. It is unexpectedly continued in the collision of the complex colour patches, and it is in between them that the main events and interactions occur now. The narration is thus imperceptibly transferred from the realm of our mind analyzing the objects, to the realm of our emotions living by sensations.

The further cosmic spectacle of “Composition VI” is objective and independent. It is created by the change of impressions, sentiments, conditions, “vibrations of the soul”. It is similar to a music experience: “I let the whole fugue of pink spots of different shades play to the full. They induce both great tumult and great peace, and give objectivity to the whole event. On the other hand, this solemn calm mood is violated by various blue spots giving an inner impression of warmth. The warm effect of the color that is cold by nature strengthens the dramatic element but again it is done objectively and exaltedly. Deep brown forms (especially on the top left) introduce an impacted note being expressed abstractedly that resembles an element of hopelessness. Green and yellow colors enliven this state of mind giving it the missing dynamism.”

A comparison of the two main “abstract” 1913 Compositions – the “VI” and the “VII” – shows the evolution of the artist’s language towards a purely abstract one. At the first glance the paintings are very similar, but there is a major difference between them. On the Hermitage painting you can still recognize traces of objects. Moreover, their relation in space is what holds the composition framework, inspired by the original “Deluge”. In the 1913 article Kandinsky writes that the two compositional centres of “Composition VI”, theoretically, allow for the creation of “two paintings with independent inner lives, but having grown together”. The painting from the Tretyakov State Gallery, on the other hand, is held entirely by the abstraction of colours, their balance, saturation, temperature. Colours broke away from the objective shapes, lifted off of the surface of the earth, evaporated from the painting and rushed to the air-free outer space where the action of all the other works of the artist will take place, and these works will be called only abstract now. The artistic harmony is shaped only in the viewer’s soul here. For the Christian mindset the image of the Biblical catastrophe has definitely become a great song of praise to the creator, a hymn of the new creation.

The word “abstraction”, borrowed by the art critics from the artists, mainly from Kandinsky himself, is just a science-like attempt at defining the state of artistic delight when, as Aleksey Kruchenykh put it, “thought and speech cannot keep up with the experience of the inspired”. But this development of sense is not sufficient for the creation of a painting; one needs technical skills, the ability to capture and express all the complexity of the experienced feeling. Kandinsky manages to do this thanks to the incredibly powerful artistic culture, based on the syncretism of perception and using knowledge from all sorts of domains. He compares his findings to the contemporary musical theory (Mussorgsky, Scriabin, Schönberg) and to the revelations of the rich spiritual life of the time (Blavatsky, Steiner, Besant and Leadbeater, Florensky). He enriches his poetic experiences with allusions from painting and music: his 1912 book “Sounds” is full of *Rotzacken* (“red peaks”) and *Gelbhacken* (“yellow heels”).

In order to define somehow the inspired unity that is searched for, Kandinsky introduces the notion of “pictorial counterpoint”; this counterpoint, he believes, will be acquired in the near future, “in the Epoch of the Great Spiritual”, when art will only repose on the “Principle of Inner Necessity”. Kandinsky’s predictions were not to come true. The new century brought about world wars



leading to an existential catastrophe which drove the idealistic pursuits of the artists several decades back and gave way to the ruthless manifests of modernism defining the artistic trend of the time. This is why today the Kandinsky of the "Composition VI" period seems to be a consistent traditionalist and an incurable romanticist. During those happy years he had the time to feel into the emotion and to abstract away from it, to repeat and rethink. To choose the form of the ordered canvas and to complete the ceremony of its "great overcoming". He spent hours on the "laborious task of balancing the separate parts", creation was a mystery, an enigma, a revelation for him. In his major theoretical text, "On the Spiritual in Art" (1912), Kandinsky wrote: "In each picture is a whole lifetime imprisoned, a whole lifetime of fears, doubts, hopes, and joys."

Pictorial counterpoint is possible only after determining and studying the elementary parts of an artistic expression (shape and colour in painting) and exploring the possibility to use it for artistic purposes. Kandinsky will further develop his reflections and constructions in the Bauhaus auditoriums where he taught from 1922 to 1932. The combinations he had found during his experiments allowed his students to learn to achieve the emotional effect they wanted in a painting, in a building, in a design object. Their teacher believed that "only an impact on the feeling, on the soul is the purpose of art. The feelings that have to arise through the action cannot be defined by words: they consist of a very fine substance and cannot be materialized in a word. The designation of "feeling" itself is too material for the vibrations of the soul, too precise and hence limiting". It is during his work at "Composition VI", that became a pivotal moment in his whole career, that Kandinsky managed to achieve this level of indefiniteness and to learn to use it to create an emotional state in the viewer.

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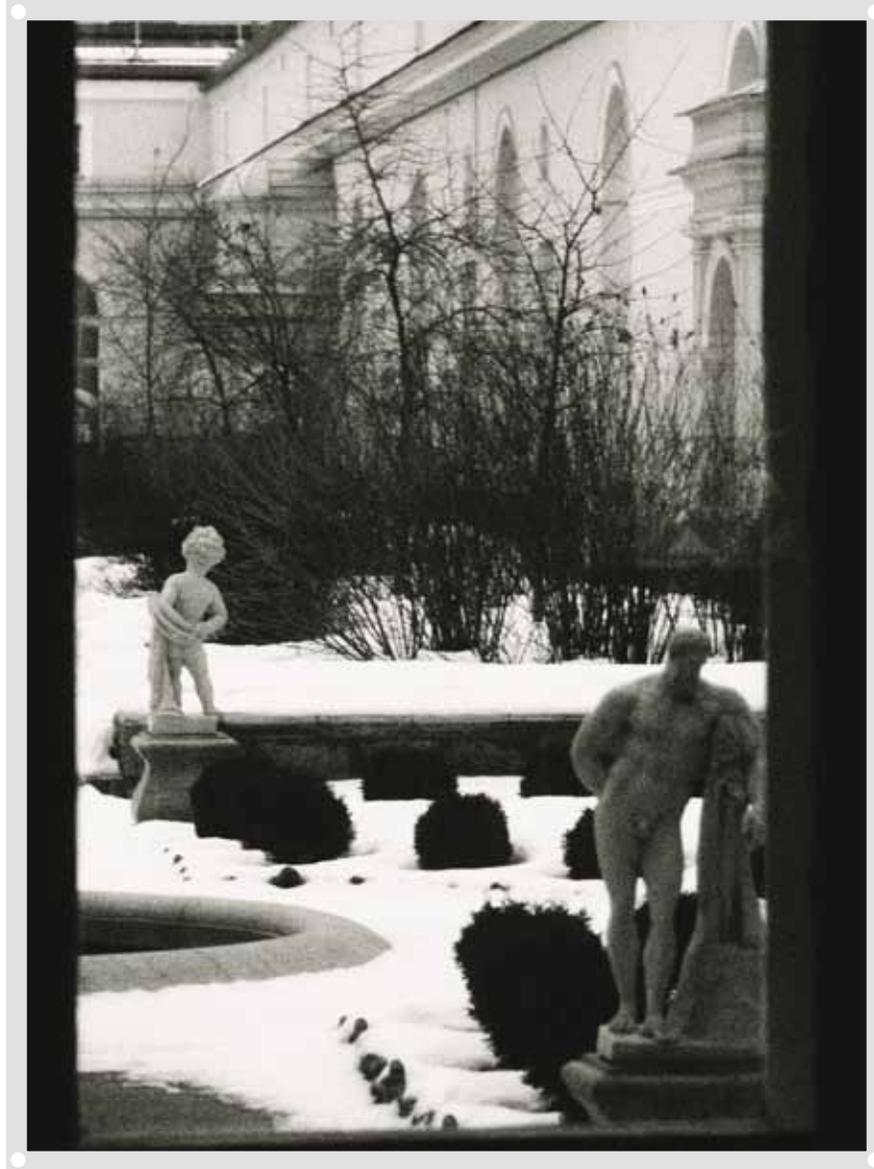
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**THE STATE HERMITAGE
HANGING GARDEN**
Photo: Nalalia Chasovilina



Oswald Spengler. "The Decline of the West"

"The means whereby to identify dead forms is Mathematical Law. The means whereby to understand living forms is Analogy. By these means we are enabled to distinguish polarity and periodicity in the world."



6

THE EXHIBITION WAS ORGANIZED BY THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
AND THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
AS PART OF THE 2016 GREECE-RUSSIA CROSS-CULTURAL YEAR.
JUNE-OCTOBER 2016



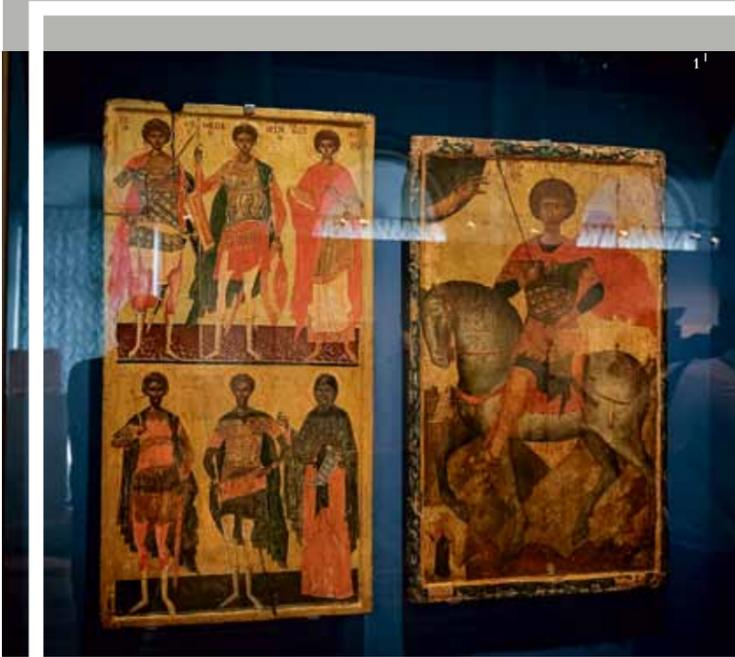
BYZANTIUM THROUGH THE CENTURIES



A VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION
IN THE WINTER PALACE

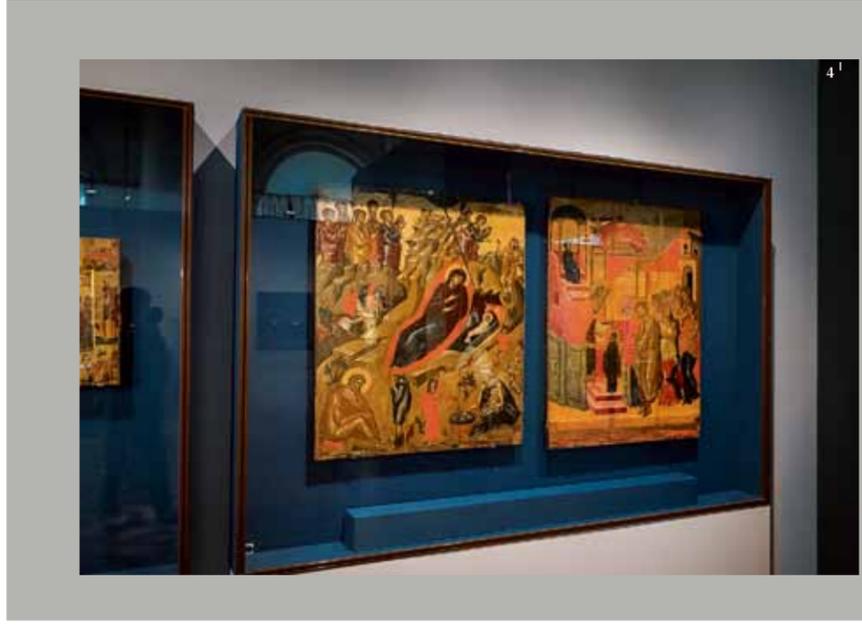
THE EXHIBITS SPAN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF BYZANTINE CULTURE, FROM THE FIRST CENTURIES AD TO THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE TO THE TURKS IN 1453. "BYZANTIUM THROUGH THE CENTURIES" CELEBRATES THE UNIQUE AESTHETIC, STYLE, BEAUTY AND HARMONY OF BYZANTINE ART AND SEEKS TO HIGHLIGHT ITS HELLENISTIC ORIGINS THROUGH SCULPTURE, MONUMENTAL PAINTING AND JEWELLERY.

PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN



Byzantine icons were executed in a broad variety of techniques and media: painted icons; stamped icons made of gold, silver and copper, often with gilding; icons carved from marble, ivory, steatite or wood; cloisonné enamels on a gold, silver or occasionally copper base. Icons could also be inlaid with minute semi-precious stones or gilded silver plates.

The evolution of the icon in Orthodox culture was a long and difficult story of explorations and heresies, theological and iconographic canons. The icon-painting canon restricted artists in the rendition of the subject, focusing their creative energies on the means of expression. Despite the many constraints on the visual language, there are no identical icons or "copies of copies": each image is unique and filled with beauty; each icon seeks to lead the soul to perfection, goodness and faith.



4 | **BYZANTINE ICONS**

The State Hermitage Museum has one of the best collections of seventh to fifteenth century Byzantine icons in the world. One of its rarest and most prized exhibits is the twelfth century Transfiguration icon painted on a red background and forming part of a transom. The icon is essentially a fragment of a single Feasts tier which was painted on a long chestnut-wood panel, later sawn into individual scenes. Other surviving parts of the same transom include two icons held by the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos and one icon ("The Raising of Lazarus") in care of the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens. The exhibition provided a unique opportunity to see the Athenian and St. Petersburg icons reunited.

1 | **BYZANTINE ICONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM AND THE MUSEUM OF BYZANTINE CULTURE (THESSALONIKI)**

2 | **BRACELET**
Byzantium, Thessaloniki or Constantinople.
9TH-10TH CENTURY
Gold, glass, cloisonné enamel
Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki



3 | **ALTAR DEDICATED TO THE GREAT MOTHER GODDESS CYBELE AND ATTIS**
Roman Empire,
Allic workshop. 387
Penelic marble
National Archaeological Museum, Athens

The Hermitage hosted art objects loaned by museums, libraries and monasteries from Athens, Thessaloniki, Kastoria, Veria, Corinth, Chios, Sparta, Rhodes, Argos, Chalcis, Boeotia, Serres, Lesbos and the Cyclades. The unprecedented exhibition brought together the most representative collection of Byzantine art that has ever left Greece for Russia: sculptures, fragments of mosaic floors and walls; mural fragments; bronze liturgy vessels; gold jewellery; cloisonné enamels; a unique two-metre Shroud of Christ with embroidery in silk (Thessaloniki, 13th century); illuminated manuscripts (some of them world-famous) spanning the period from the tenth to the fifteenth century; painted icons from the twelfth to the mid fifteenth centuries and the unique mosaic icon of the Virgin Episkepsis.

Ancient masterpieces made a profound impact of the development of the refined style that characterised Constantinople's art. Great artworks travelled to the shores of the Bosphorus from across the whole of the empire, including Rome. The new capital abounded with fine specimens of ancient visual art such as marble and bronze sculptures, busts, columns and obelisks. The Byzantines quickly accepted the pagan origin of the ancient sculptures and even grew accustomed to nude images. In more provincial areas, however, marble statues of gods were frequently modified to deprive them of magic powers. This is what happened to the head of Aphrodite, which was "sanctified" by chiselling a cross into the forehead.

Pagan sculptures and altars were sometimes transferred from temples to "inappropriate" locations in order to neutralise their magic force. As a result, the statues of Greek and Roman gods displayed in public spaces in Constantinople and other cities across the Eastern Roman Empire were perceived as decorative elements rather than idols. Yet, the belief in the power and magic of pagan gods lingered in collective mentality for centuries, rising and ebbing depending on the circumstances. Unfortunately, few antique sculptures in the Byzantine capital survived until today.



5 | **HEAD OF APHRODITE WITH A CROSS CARVED ON THE FOREHEAD**
Roman Empire, Allic workshop. 1ST CENTURY
(a copy after the work of Praxiteles, first half of the 4th century BC)
Parian marble
National Archaeological Museum, Athens



Objects of applied art could also be Christianised. Some prime examples include the bronze figure of Hippocrates from the Hermitage collection (a fragment of a candelabrum or an incense burner) and particularly miniature cameos, which were altered by jewellers in a more Christian spirit: thus, an image of emperor Caracalla could be modified to represent St. Peter, and a portrait of a Roman matron would morph into young Christ Emmanuel. However, such alterations were only possible in Constantinople or other large urban centres.

5 | **GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY AT THE EXHIBITION "BYZANTIUM THROUGH THE CENTURIES"**

6 | **A VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION IN THE WINTER PALACE**



Colourful mosaics were a popular decorative feature in aristocratic villas across Byzantium, including the islands or other remote areas. Floor mosaics dating from the early Byzantine period usually represented the four seasons or twelve months of the year, celestial bodies, circus or hunting scenes, Orpheus, Apollo and the Muses or famous poets. Floors with plant and geometrical motifs, images of birds or animals and even whole scenes could be found in Christian churches. A sixth century Byzantine floor mosaic excavated in Chersonese (a Byzantine polis in Crimea) was delivered to St. Petersburg in 1853 and installed in the Athena Hall of the Imperial Hermitage (now Room #112).

The exhibition contained several fragments of mosaic floors of this type. One large fragment depicts Autumn, symbolized by a dancing full-size female figure holding a stole filled with fruit; the mosaic comes from Argos and dates back to the fourth century.



El Greco's late sixteenth century painting "Apostle Peter" appears anachronistic among the Byzantine icons, mosaics and frescoes — yet deliberately so. Indeed, El Greco is often referred to as the last Byzantine artist and humanist, whose work is the symbol of the unfading genius of the humanist Byzantine legacy.

7 | **DOMÉNIKOS THEOTOKÓPOULOS (EL GRECO)**

Peter The Apostle

ABOUT 1600–1607

Oil on canvas

National Art Gallery —

Alexandros Souzlos Museum, Athens

8 | *Earrings with a Kufic inscription "Allah bless Zainab"*

Byzantium, Cretan workshop

FIRST HALF OF THE 10TH CENTURY

Gold, pearls, cloisonné enamel

From the Relhymno Treasure (Crete).

Sialthalos Collection

National Archaeological Museum,

Athens



Christianity as the official religion of the Eastern Roman Empire had virtually no effect on Byzantine women's love of jewellery, even though Christian authors generally regarded decorations as attributes of evil and vice. Early Christian jewellery (first to the fifth century) remained fairly conservative in form and décor over several centuries, yet with astonishing diversity in details. Jewellery could be made from gold, with or without inserts from precious stones or pearls; the gems, however, had to be close to their natural shape. The techniques ranged from casting, stamping, embossing and raising to wirework, granulation, false granulation, filigree and cold inlay; the ninth and tenth centuries also saw the rising popularity of cloisonné enamel.



● PHOTO: MARCUS KOPPEN

ERNST W. VEEN (1946, THE NETHERLANDS), FATHER-FOUNDER AND FIRST DIRECTOR OF THE BRANCH OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM IN THE NETHERLANDS — EXHIBITION CENTRE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM, AND SVETLANA DATSENKO (RUSSIA), REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CENTER IN SAINT PETERSBURG, SPOKE ABOUT “THE CRAZY BUT FANTASTIC IDEA” OF THE CENTRE, QUEEN BEATRIX AND CHRISTMAS CHANTS IN THE ROYAL PALACE, HISTORY OF REMBRANDT HALLS RESTORATION AND THE FIRST “DUTCH” EXHIBITIONS IN THE HERMITAGE.

ERNST W. VEEN. A HAPPY MAN

ERNST W. VEEN (1946, THE NETHERLANDS), FOUNDER AND FIRST DIRECTOR OF THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE, A BRANCH OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM IN THE NETHERLANDS

SVETLANA DATSENKO (RUSSIA), REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM CENTRE IN ST. PETERSBURG

SVETLANA DATSENKO: Let’s start from the very beginning — your family and childhood years.

ERNST W. VEEN: I was born into a large family; my father is a third generation priest. I had five sisters and two brothers. We lived in the country, in a priest’s house near the church; the house stood in the middle of a beautiful garden. This was where I spent my childhood and my first school years.

Later, my father received an appointment from a large church in Naarden, famous for its annual performances of “St. Matthew’s Passion” by Johann Sebastian Bach, which gather thousands of listeners.

Of course, we did attend our father’s sermons in church, but not because we were forced to. Inside the church, I often caught myself admiring its architecture instead of listening to my father. Later I realized that my interest in architecture stemmed from my childhood.

So you owe your cultural upbringing to your family?

Absolutely. My family was responsible for much of my musical education. My mother played the piano. I used to attend a music school, but quickly understood I lacked the gift and patience to become proficient. Nevertheless, the lessons I took from my mother and then at school made me passionate about music. I often attend concerts in the Philharmonic and am on the management boards of several ensembles performing classical music.

When did you grow fond of museums?

Our family comes from Utrecht. We often visited our relatives, who also lived there. The first museum I remember visiting was the Railway Museum in Utrecht, where my grandfather often took me when I was eight. I don’t remember if I visited any museums in Amsterdam with my parents — probably not.

My mother comes from an aristocratic family which has owned several castles and estates around Utrecht (notably, the Gunterstein castle ¹ and the Slot Zuylen estate ²) since time immemorial. I was exposed to

● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA



so much beauty there: splendid furniture, tapestries, porcelain, marble fireplaces... At present I am working in funds established to ensure the adequate maintenance of Gunterstein and Slot Zuylen; this is my contribution to my family legacy.

Such a beautiful, meaningful childhood! But then you grew up, finished school and...

...and was completely at a loss about what to do next. I took a course of economics in Amsterdam and continued my studies in London, but eventually dropped out because the subject did not appeal to me at all. However, I did become passionate about politics: at about 25, I headed the election campaign team of the progressive new left-wing party PPR (Politieke Partij Radikalen). In the 1974 election PPR won seven seats in the parliament, which was a major success ³. The success inspired me to explore social sciences; I entered, and graduated from, the academy [laughs]; then continued my activities in various political associations and clubs.

You could have become a bright star in the Netherlands political firmament, if it hadn’t been for your love of newspapers ...

I’d say it was rather my love of history and architecture [smiles]. But let me leave my personal story aside for a while and provide you with some historical background.

There is a fifteenth century church named the Nieuwe Kerk in central Amsterdam ⁴. Built as a Roman Catholic cathedral, in 1566 ⁵ the Nieuwe Kerk was transferred to the Amsterdam Protestant community and functioned as a place of worship. In 1814, following the restoration of monarchy in the Netherlands and the investiture of King Willem I, a provision was included in the Netherlands constitutional law that all monarchs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands had to take their oath in the Nieuwe Kerk. Since that time, the rule has remained unchanged: the most recent inauguration ceremony, that of King Willem-Alexander, took place on 30 April 2013.

In 1960 Queen Juliana of the Netherlands visited the Nieuwe Kerk; the next day, a brick fell off the ceiling right onto the spot where the queen had stood the day before. The church was immediately closed down for restoration, which took 20 years. The funding for the restoration works (65 million guilders) was provided by the state.

In 1980, the Nieuwe Kerk hosted the investiture ceremony of Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix, mother of the present King of The Netherlands. Soon after the ceremony, the leadership of the Amsterdam Reformed Church announced it could no longer afford to maintain this unique architectural monument.

At that point (and this brings me back to my humble life story), a group of influential Dutch citizens decided to establish a foundation to upkeep the Nieuwe Kerk. First of all, some alternative function had to be found for the historical building, which would not interfere with its key role in the investiture ceremony.

Finally, the Nieuwe Kerk was redefined as a venue for major temporary exhibitions intended to educate the people of the Netherlands about other cultures, world religions and leaders that changed the course of history. The principal function of the Nieuwe Kerk Foundation has remained the same since that time. The Foundation’s Management Board included 20 members; the work was really hard and soon required some dedicated administrative staff.

One day I came across a newspaper advertisement for the position of the executive secretary in the Nieuwe Kerk Foundation... Within one year of joining the Nieuwe Kerk team I was appointed the director of the Foundation and held this office until my retirement in 2011.

How did you conceive of the idea of collaborating with the Hermitage?

Would you believe me if I tell you it had been my life-long dream? Just imagine: the director of a new Dutch foundation, which has a very unusual (albeit uniquely beautiful) exhibition space, approaches the Metropolitan Museum with a request to organize a temporary exhibition in Amsterdam. Given that the Nieuwe Kerk is not a museum; it has no collection of its own — nothing but ambitions and a historical building.

The same goes for the Hermitage. I had always dreamt of visiting Russia, especially Northern Russia, Leningrad and the Hermitage [laughs]. Then in 1989 the Wall fell! In the same year, we wrote a letter to the Hermitage.

I still regret not meeting Academician Boris Piotrovsky. The first person to receive me in the museum in 1991 was Vladimir Matveev⁶. I asked him to contribute exhibits for a Scythian gold exhibition — no more, no less!

Where did you get the funding for such a large-scale, costly exhibition?

Most of the funding came from our partners and ticket sales. The Nieuwe Kerk Foundation worked hard for many years to build itself a reputation so that our partners would feel encouraged to sign long-term five-year contracts and fund high-profile exhibition projects.

And thus the first exhibition from the Hermitage arrived in Amsterdam.

As I said, it was an exhibition of Scythian gold. In 12 years (from 1992 to 2004) the Nieuwe Kerk hosted four Hermitage exhibitions: after the Scythians, our Centre hosted “Catherine the Great. The Empress and Arts”, “The Stroganovs” and “Love”.

On my first visit to Russia, I was simply overwhelmed by the Hermitage — I knew at once that it was a real treasure trove for our exhibition project. The museum was in a dismal state at that time, but we were

full of enthusiasm after our first exhibition. At that point I dared to offer our aid to the Hermitage and establish the Hermitage Friends in the Netherlands. Incidentally, King Willem-Alexander was present when we announced the opening of the foundation. Quite naturally, our Dutch foundation started its Hermitage aid project with the restoration of the Rembrandt Rooms. The project required 2.5 million guilders. The funding was raised: thus, one guilder from each ticket sold to the Catherine the Great exhibition in winter 1996–1997 was donated to the Hermitage Friends in the Netherlands.

During the opening of the exhibition in the presence of Queen Beatrix I was pulled aside and told there had been an anonymous phone call warning of a bomb in the Nieuwe Kerk. I returned to my place, told the Queen what had happened in a whisper, and made an announcement that the guests had to leave the church immediately⁷. Before the Queen was escorted out of the building via a secret passage, she asked me where the guests were being evacuated. I said that everyone had to assemble on Dam Square in front of the Royal Palace. Quite unexpectedly, she invited everyone to the palace. I can still remember that the key to the front door took some time to find. The 800 guests spent the next hour and a half in the Royal Palace singing Christmas songs (it happened in December 1996). Later I was told I had carried myself well, apart from being deadly pale [laughs].

In 1998 Queen Beatrix was planning to make a state visit to Russia, with St. Petersburg being an important part of her itinerary. However, three days before the trip Boris Yeltsin cancelled the visit as he had fallen ill and was therefore unable to receive our Queen. It was really unfortunate as we had made all the arrangements for Her Majesty to participate in the ceremonial opening of the Hermitage’s Rembrandt Rooms after restoration. I phoned the Royal Palace and suggested changing the status of the event from official royal to private visit; the Queen promised to think about it. Half an hour later I received a call from the palace informing me that the opening ceremony would be attended by Prince Willem-Alexander, who would travel to St. Petersburg with a working visit. During the ceremony in St. Petersburg, the Hermitage Friends Foundation announced its second project, which involved the design of a new lighting system for the Tent-Roofed Room in the New Hermitage⁸. Queen Beatrix opened the Tent-Roofed Room after the restoration when she was making her official visit to Russia in 2001.

As one of the organizers of Her Majesty’s visit to St. Petersburg, I know that Queen Beatrix in the Tent-Roofed Room witnessed another ceremony ...

Yes. Mikhail Piotrovsky and I signed a memorandum in Her Majesty’s presence to establish the Hermitage on the Amstel Exhibition Centre, a branch of The State Hermitage Museum in Amsterdam.

What was the story behind the Centre?

In 1997 I got a phone call from the then owner of Amstelhof⁹, head of the Amsterdam Reformed Church community, who asked me for advice on what to do with this huge property in the city centre. I should perhaps mention that Amstelhof was built in 1683 as a nursing home and functioned in this capacity until spring 2007, when its residents were relocated to new purpose-built houses outside of central Amsterdam.

I came to see the building and instantly knew it was just what we needed. I phoned Michail¹⁰ and asked him to visit me. He did, and we



THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION “CATHERINE. THE EMPRESS AND THE ARTS” IN THE NIEUWE KERK (NEW CHURCH) EXHIBITION SPACE IN AMSTERDAM. HER MAJESTY QUEEN BEATRIX OF THE NETHERLANDS, DIRECTOR OF THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY AND ERNST VEEN
DECEMBER 1996



THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT TO OPEN A BRANCH OF THE HERMITAGE IN AMSTERDAM, HELD IN THE PRESENCE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN BEATRIX OF THE NETHERLANDS DURING HER STATE VISIT TO RUSSIA. DIRECTOR OF THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY AND ERNST VEEN
JUNE 2001

went to Amstelhof together. As we were standing in the courtyard, I asked him: “Michail, how about using this building for the *Hermitage Amsterdam Centre*?”

“Crazy but brilliant!” the Hermitage’s Director replied. And this was how it all started.

Paradoxically, despite your religious background, you have already converted two religious monuments into cultural centres.

This is true — such is life. A feasibility study carried out by experts confirmed that the project could be implemented with 80 million guilders¹¹. I established the Hermitage Friends on the Amstel Foundation. Together with some of my friends and associates, we devised a plan to find four partners who could contribute 20 million each. But who would venture first?

I envisioned that our partners would include the national government, the regional authorities¹², the Amsterdam Town Hall and a private investor. The first contribution was made by BankGiro Loterij, the national cultural lottery of the Netherlands¹³. We also got support from the national, regional and local governments.

In 2009, five years after the first phase of the *Hermitage Amsterdam Centre* was opened in the Neerlandia Building (part of the Amstelhof nursing home), the large *Hermitage Amsterdam Centre* was finally inaugurated, having built a strong relationship with the Hermitage through the organization of exhibitions.

And you yourself were awarded the Order of Friendship by Russia and retired from the position of the director of the Nieuwe Kerk Foundation and the *Hermitage Amsterdam Centre*.

I received the Russian order in 2010, was made Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau in 2011 and devolved my powers to younger colleagues.

I am a happy man. I think the main thing in life is to pass down your experience to younger generations. As for the current relations between our countries which have been shaping for such a long time since the fall of the Wall, I am firmly convinced that despite the turbulent times, we must carry on with our cultural dialogue. I am confident that art and culture will prevent our nations from sliding back to the cold war. And this is the main mission of the *Hermitage Amsterdam Centre*.



PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION DMITRY MEDVEDEV, HER MAJESTY QUEEN BEATRIX OF THE NETHERLANDS, CROWN PRINCE WILLEM-ALEXANDER, PRINCESS MAXIMA AND ERNST VEEN. THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE STATE HERMITAGE’S HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE. 19 JUNE 2009

1. _____ Founded in 1300.
 2. _____ A medieval castle, which was converted into a country mansion in the 18th century and acquired museum status 60 years ago.
 3. _____ In the early 1990s PPR joined the Green Party (GroenLinks).
 4. _____ The New Church.
 5. _____ The iconoclastic anti-Catholic rebellion which took place in the Netherlands in 1566 led to most of the country accepting John Calvin’s teaching.
 6. _____ Vladimir Malveev (1948–2015) was the Deputy Director of The State Hermitage Museum in 1990–2015.
 7. _____ The Nieuwe Kerk is located near the Royal Palace.
 8. _____ The Tent-Roofed Room houses the Hermitage’s collection of the so-called “Lesser Dutch Masters”.
 9. _____ The building now houses the *Hermitage Amsterdam* exhibition centre.
 10. _____ Mikhail Piotrovsky.
 11. _____ The final budget for the project was drawn up in euros.
 12. _____ North Holland province, where Amsterdam is located.
 13. _____ According to the Netherlands’ laws, the company may not spend its revenue on dividends but is entitled to invest some of its earnings in different projects.



A short while ago, the “realism — formalism” binary adequately described ideological conflicts in Russian and world art. Over time, however, as life and art became more diverse and fragmented, critics and artists have invented many new terms and notions — so many, in fact, that art lovers began to yearn for simpler language. In the end, straightforward concepts did begin to appear in the names of art exhibitions; however, the original simplicity of the notions is lost forever, which becomes particularly obvious when one considers the phenomenon of realism.

After a period marked by the dissolution of form, when pictures seemed to have been ousted by installations, depicting the real world is now becoming a greater temptation than ever before. In the eyes and minds of the viewers, the artist is equated to the Creator. Good brushwork is seen as a challenge to the practice of passing off pre-existent objects for creations, for art. To differ from installation, art (often with the help of illusion) distorts the world beyond recognition. The real shapes begin to look bizarre, provocative and ironical. The world morphs into a genuine farce.

This is one of many possible perspectives on modern realist art, responses to which may range from compassion to physical repulsion. The atmosphere of controversy around art is completely normal; indeed, it revitalizes art and, most importantly, leads to discussion, no matter how scathing or discourteous. The project “Realisms” initiated by the Hermitage aims to stimulate an exchange of opinion and turn it into part of the art show. For this purpose, the Hermitage has created a system of “resonances” involving works by Lucas Cranach the Elder and Younger, “Two Floras”, “Two Amenemhats”, two Compositions by Kandinsky as well as the newly restored and attributed “The Resurrection” by Peter Paul Rubens. We are hoping to re-ignite those wonderful public debates that nearly all exhibitions staged by the Hermitage used to spark in the past.

Mikhail Piotrovsky.
“Hermitage As a Place for Discussions. Realisms”
(SH, 2016)

REALISMS

MORE THAN AN EXHIBITION *

TONY MATELLI
Fucked (Pair)
2005–2007
Silicone, polyester, polyurethane,
wood, steel, oil paint, hair
2,13 × 4 × 4 m
Version 1 of 2, author's copy

In the background:
JIM SHAW
Mural
Capitol Viscera Appliances
2011. Acrylic on muslin. 5 × 10,16 m
The Hermitage,
General Staff Building
June 2016



DIMITRI OZERKOV
● PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

REALISM IS THE MOST COMMON AND POPULAR, YET STRANGEST AND MOST ILL-DEFINED ART PHENOMENON. THE TERM "REALIST" IS APPLIED TO WORKS THAT REPRESENT THE VISIBLE APPEARANCE OF THINGS TRUTHFULLY AND COMPREHENSIBLY. SIMPLE LIKENESS IS NOT ENOUGH: A REALIST ARTIST MUST BE ABLE TO ACCURATELY CONVEY THE DEEPER MEANING, THE ESSENCE OF WHAT THEY PORTRAY. TODAY, MODERN ARTISTS THAT RESORT TO REALIST TECHNIQUES USE THEM FOR A DIFFERENT PURPOSE. WHILE PRESERVING THE "LIKENESS", ARTISTS WORK BY SUBVERTING THE "ESSENCE".

* Fragments of Dimilri Ozerkov's article published in the catalogue of the "Realisms" exhibition. The State Hermitage Museum (2016).

What is it that Michaël Borremans's monks, Neo Rauch's burghers, Jenny Saville's fat ladies George Condo's monsters or Enrique Martinez Celaya's ghosts are preoccupied with? Each of these artists accurately portrays their "typical" subjects on canvas without explaining which world they pertain to. Like many other modern artists, the painters listed above work with real images of things and avoid providing keys to the underlying ideology, which, as proved by modern philosophy, is fragmented before it even emerges.

Realism is especially important in the Russian context since many Russian viewers are apt to reject any art that does not fit into the "realist" category. Russian art has traditionally been ideology-driven: every picture must send a clear message. Take a landscape by Konstantin Yuon from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, or Ilya Repin's seminal work "Barge Haulers on the Volga" (1870–1873) (ill. 1), or the athletes painted by Aleksandr Deyneka in the 1930s. The sun is shining brightly, the grass is green, and one can almost hear the waves of the Volga crashing against the sand. There are no riddles to solve — nothing but a positive atmosphere or sweet sadness. As unsophisticated viewers think (and budding art critics write), "these paintings make you want to pause and contemplate them in silence" — a phrase which is still frequently heard in 2016, 110 years after the death of Vladimir Stasov (a critic that inspired the Itinerants group of Russian realist artists).

Russian classical art lives by the principles of realism. According to the classical definition, realism is an accurate, true-to-life depiction of typical characters in typical circumstances. This description satisfactorily explains the appeal of Ivan Aivazovsky's and Ivan Shishkin's legacy for Russians, typically attracted to the lucid and the understandable. At the same time, this definition, which once seemed so clear and precise, implies that its authors know what "the truth of life" is and can perspicuously render it in a painting or identify such renditions created by other

artists. Today, it is obvious that this realism is based on ideology. In this context, the Russian Itinerants with their caricatures of the nineteenth century Russian province and their search for the ideal seem no more realist today than American photo-realists of the 1970s, largely motivated by Cold War policies.

Realism is an art method; a realist work is an artificial construct made up of an accurate and recognizable depiction of reality and some external content, message, essence or agenda. Without this message, the artwork, no matter how "true-to-life", will remain naturalistic and tasteless as it will lack the ideological basis that characterizes a realist painting. Sometimes the ideology becomes preponderant over any other concerns, as it happens in Socialist Realism which largely ignores individuality. For Soviet artists, the exhausted barge haulers in Repin's painting mean nothing but a condemnation of inhumane oppression; likewise, Deyneka's runners symbolize the power and freedom of sport as well as the spiritual health of the triumphant nation pursuing world revolution.

What is an accurate depiction anyway? Is it the same as photographic accuracy? No. Even when you are about to take a snapshot, you carefully choose the composition, angle and lighting. Does "accurate" mean "competent and recognizable"? However, now that learning to paint in the academic sense is no longer a necessity, modern artists love playing with the idea of competence, the contrast between real skill and imitated negligence. Or does this "accuracy" involve conveying zeitgeist? Indeed, a realist historical painting may make the viewer remember the so-called "glorious pages of the nation's past"; thus, Vasily Surikov's realist works "Boyarynya Morozova" (1887) or "Suvorov Crossing the Alps in 1799" (1899) refer to important events in Russian history. But what does an average viewer know about Boyarynya Morozova apart from the iconic picture created by Surikov? The expertly constructed realist image has overshadowed the real evidence-based knowledge about the historical figure ¹.

The ambivalence of the visual rhetoric may result in the incorrect interpretation of the content. A modern viewer looking at Nicolas Poussin's "Tancred and Erminia" (late 1620s — early 1630s, State Hermitage Museum) may misidentify its subject with stories of heroines of the Bible. One may mistakenly believe that Erminia, like Judith or Jael, intends to kill the lying warrior. In fact, however, she heals Tancred by cutting off her hair to bind his wounds. Some misinterpretations can be downright comical. Thus, during the Soviet era, Hermitage visitors sometimes identified Etienne Moris Falconet's "Cupid" (1750s) as a portrait of Vladimir Lenin in his infancy although they did wonder why the sculptor gave him a pair of wings ².

Realism in its modern form is believed to have originated in France in the nineteenth century as a response to the subtlety of Romanticism and the then-obsolete heroic pathos of academic painting. In fact, realism is not



MITCH GRIFFITHS
Weight of Panic. 2005
Temple of Skin and Bone. 2006
The Soul Purpose. 2006
 UK. Oil on canvas

Mitch Griffiths (UK) creates iconographically complex works of large and medium size, with meticulous brushwork, carefully selected composition, complex plots and meaningful attributes. Griffiths finds his subjects in modernity and his compositions in art history, which imparts special seriousness and epic power to essentially trivial images and scenes. Griffith's characters play at real art history — and try to look the part. Like Courbet's "The Meeting", canvases by Griffiths elevate daily routines to the rank of the ideal while deliberately overinflating their significance.

The theatricality of Griffiths's works is achieved with intentionally artificial composition free from visible special effects. Like the subjects of Caravaggio, Velázquez or modern fashion photographers, the figures in Griffiths's pictures seem to be placed on an invisible catwalk installed in the artist's studio or some other ideal working space. The backgrounds resemble theatre backdrops selected to ideally match the story.

Griffiths's art is intriguing in its earnestness: all of his pictures are delicately painted on canvas with meticulous brushwork. By capturing the mundane, which makes pretence to historic relevance, the artist creates a new ideological rhetoric defying ready explanation.



DIMITRI OZERKOV, MITCH GRIFFITHS, OLGA YUDINA AT THE OPENING OF THE "REALISMS" EXHIBITION IN THE GENERAL STAFF BUILDING. JUNE 2016

The best-known works by Tony Matelli, USA, are his hyper-realist sculptures. Unlike the classical sculptures by Duane Hanson created from the 1960s onwards, Matelli employs twenty first century technologies, achieving a perfect illusion of the physical presence of bodies. The exhibit, despite appearing prosaically gruesome, clearly refers to the story of Adam and Eve, a powerful narrative underlying European cultural history. However, the biblical plot just determines the basic interpretation of the sculpture in the museum context, whereas parallel "stories" associated with the name of the work as well as its countless ghastly details make us think about the reality of special effects in Hollywood movies once these effects are transferred to static sculptural objects.



TONY MATELLI
Fucked (Pair). 2005–2007
 Silicone, polyester, polyurethane, wood, steel, oil paint, hair
 2,13 × 4 × 4 m. Version 1 of 2, author's copy

a style — it is a method by means of which an abstract idea is expressed through images of visible objects. The famous painting “The Meeting” (1854) by Courbet represents an everyday occurrence — the artist being greeted by his friends on a country road — as a historic event. Renaissance portraits, antique sculptures and even cave paintings may, too, be conceptualized in terms of realism. Indeed, all of them provide a genuine picture of reality, are life-like. What is different, however, is the ideology that engenders the images and is key to their interpretation. The realist artist Karl Brullov paints a horse to capture the beauty of the animal; a prehistoric hunter, however, saw an image of a horse as an image of god, a sign of strength or a symbol of good fortune offering protection against danger. All these contexts become visible in a great encyclopaedic museum like the Hermitage, where the dialogue, the storytelling that occurs in front of the painting acquires particular importance. Fredric Jameson defines such storytelling built on a founding ideology as a “narrative which lies outside” and is inevitably present in realism³.

2015 saw several exhibitions in St. Petersburg and Moscow focusing on realism in art, most notably “Hyper-realism” staged at the State Tretyakov Gallery; “Russia. Realism. 21st Century” at the State Russian Museum; “Picture After Painting” at the Academy of Fine Arts, and “Romantic Realism. Soviet Painting, 1925–1945” at the Moscow Manege⁴. “What makes realism so relevant today?” is the question that the Hermitage Museum’s project “Realisms” seeks to address. “Realisms” is more

than just an exhibition; it is a complex conversation on the issues of form and ideology in realism — a conversation that involves the whole of the nineteenth and twenty-first century art on permanent exhibition in the Hermitage’s General Staff building. Art historians and artists, philosophers and psychologists will make their contributions to this dialogue by responding to the artworks from their professional perspectives and analysing their own ideological approaches. The discussion will address realism; classical philosophy; Jean Baudrillard’s social hyper-realism; the horror of reality in psychology and realism in the theory of democracy; the tangibility of cyber-reality; realism in religion, erotic, photography; romantic realism in painting; surrealism and the problem of image after the advent of photography as well as issues of theatre and cinematography.

The temporary exhibition presents works by three modern artists representing different approaches to realism: Mitch Griffiths, Tony Matelli and Jim Shaw. All of them demonstrate different approaches to the realist method and utilize different techniques in working with visible reality. They construct their images as a solemn story, a mysterious theatrical rite or a shocking presence. When juxtaposed with the permanent exhibition in the General Staff building and, more broadly, with the whole of the Hermitage collection, their artworks invite new comparisons and generate new meanings which enable viewers to carry on with their meditation on the form and content of realist art.

Jim Shaw (USA) directly appeals to the theme of the theatre as his exhibits are old stage backdrops with new compositions painted over them. Ever aware of the original subject, the artist plays with, mocks at or, possibly, mourns over, his original idea, which results in an infinitely complex message. The superimposed image enters an impossible conversation with the initial work, creating new and wonderful interpretations. The fascinating realness of the backdrops makes the overpaintings appear artificial, as if they pertained to a different, unreal world. At the same time, this very realness is just the texture of theatrical illusion.

JIM SHAW
Capitol Viscera Appliances mural
2011. Acrylic on muslin. 5 × 10,16 m



1. Cf. Anisimov E. Pismo lurelskomu sullanu. Obrazy Rossii glazami islorika. St. Petersburg, 2013.

2. See Razumovskaia T. Shedevry Melrazha (www.nelslova.ru/razumovskaya/melrazh.html); Sindalovskii N. Istoria Peterburga v gorodskom anekdote. St. Petersburg, 2012.

3. See Jameson F. The Antinomies of Realism. London, 2013.

4. See Giperrealism. Kodga realnost slanovilsia illuziei. M., 2015; Rossia. Realizm. XXI vek. St. Petersburg, 2015; Karlina posle zhivopisi. K vyslavke v Nauchno-issledovalelskom muzee Rossiiskoi akademii kudozheslv. St. Petersburg, 2015; Romanicheskie realism. Sovetskaia zhivopis 1925–1945. Moscow, 2015.

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AMBIGUOUS REALISM (MITCH GRIFFITHS)

ON THE EVE OF THE OPENING OF THE “REALISM” EXHIBITION IN THE HERMITAGE, MARIA ELKINA TALKED WITH MITCH GRIFFITHS ABOUT THE FLAG OF GREAT BRITAIN, CARAVAGGIO AND A YOUNG MAN FROM THE SUPERMARKET.

● PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIULLIN



MITCH GRIFFITHS

M.E.: We say “realistic” in relation to art as if it is something obvious. Yet for me the question remains whether it is about an attention to detail or about an uncompromising view of the world?

M.G.: They are both true. From a technical point of view it means that we are creating a representational object. I refer to my work as “hyperrealism” signifying, primarily, the sphere of questions that I’m raising.

M.E.: At school in Russia we were taught that realism is, first and foremost, something from the nineteenth century and that it points out some unpleasant sides of this world. It was seen as a means of social criticism: all these poor people, cruel people and unhappy people. Does hyperrealism today still aim to show something that is not seen and not talked about?

M.G.: I think it just brings out issues which can be around us every day but that we ignore. What painting can do is make someone stop. We live in a world where everything is so fast. The painting invites you to pause and see that the world around is good enough, it’s engaging and you can connect with it.

M.E.: What was the last thing that inspired you to make a painting? Where do your impressions usually come from?

M.G.: It can be absolutely anything at all. I never get inspired by something at a glance. It’s not like I wake up in the morning and wait for something to come to me — I’m quite stable. You get your ideas from news, from various forms of media, even from the signs that you see.

M.E.: But isn’t it also a way of criticizing? Isn’t it the biggest flaw of our times that we just skip things around us, that our life is too fast?

M.G.: Definitely. All of us are editors of our lives and we would also want to be editors of each other’s lives as well. We have so many opportunities and we cannot fulfil them all. Furthermore, we always want to confirm ourselves as having a particular social status and it dilutes everything that we do. That’s why I think that realistic oil painting is such a pure form. It takes you back to a slower rhythm of life in a way. You can spend more time to digest, so to speak.

M.E.: If we talk about the old masters, who would you mention as the most important realists for you?

M.G.: The first big influence was Caravaggio because of his use of light. Rubens for his compositions and Velasquez for his brush work.

M.E.: Do you think that contemporary media have shifted the social role of good old oil painting?

M.G.: Well, that’s right, when there was no photography, seeing a painting was also very much like going to the cinema and now it’s not anymore. Yet for me there’s no particular audience, no demographics, my painting is for anyone who wants to see it, it’s my way of communicating with people.

Emotions are the most important thing in art. They are of course personal, there are my emotions on the canvas. There’s no particular person I’m trying to connect with, there’re just other human beings seeing the things that we see every day. How do they feel about them? Devices have challenged our ability to get emotionally close. We can connect to anyone in any corner of the world with our computers but when is the last time you talked to your neighbour?

M.E.: I do talk to my neighbours from time to time.

M.G.: That’s good and so do I, but I’m sure there’re so many people who don’t. If I make an emotional connection with someone looking at my painting, then I think I have achieved a kind of unity.

M.E.: You make normal people a part of traditional iconography, a little like Caravaggio...

M.G.: You’re exactly right. That’s what I’m doing, making contemporary timeless by adding some classical element to it. Caravaggio’s would literally pick out someone in the tavern and paint him three hours later.

M.E.: That was actually my question. If Caravaggio’s hero is the guy from the tavern, then who are the heroes of your paintings?

M.G.: I’d say there’s a very thin line between the model and the character, there always has to be a crossover element. Sometimes I already have

a concept for a painting and I look for a particular person. Most people from my paintings I know and normally the best work of art you can make is with someone with whom you’ve done a few paintings. You need to have a visual and emotional dialogue with your model.

M.E.: Caravaggio was very passionate in making these accidental models a part of religious iconography. What’s your point in making usual people look like Jesus Christ?

M.G.: I put them in scenes where they look like Jesus Christ because today’s celebrities are worshipped. They’re worshipped in a very religious way. When I see a huge advert on a billboard to me it’s like a wall painting in a church.

M.E.: So, there’s some irony included as well?

M.G.: Yes, as irony and humour are parts of our life.

M.E.: At the same time there’s also a hidden tragedy, isn’t there? The guy with Tesco bags on your painting — isn’t he suffering?

M.G.: I think it’s pretty evident that he is suffering.

M.E.: Do you expect any interpretation of your art?

M.G.: I just expect a reaction. The worst reaction is no reaction, when someone just says “It’s ok”. People can interpret my work and it’s not that I agree or disagree, it just fascinates me to listen and hear what they say.

M.E.: Do you ever have something like a crisis?

M.G.: You mean artist’s block? Well, I think that the worst thing to do when you have a block is to stop. Usually when I’m working on one painting I already have ideas about the others. Of course they adapt over time, but the process is ever ongoing. Planning is very important. Sometimes I feel the image is not strong enough, for instance I don’t like the composition.

M.E.: What about the flag of Great Britain on one of your paintings? Is it seriously patriotic?

M.G.: I’d put it differently. I’m rather interested in patriotism and in what other people think about it. What I’m depicting is not necessarily a reflection of my opinion, there is always ambiguity in my treatment of subject matter.

M.E.: You have a very personal artwork “Be my wife”. Do you feel ok with exposing your personal life to public?

M.G.: I made it in secret and proposed to her in front of it at the exhibition. Well, painting is a big passion of mine and my wife is too, so I combined the two.

M.E.: If you had to change profession and you could choose any what would it be?

M.G.: A sculptor. Or I think I could be a gymnast.

VIKTOR MAZIN ¹

REALISM IS BACK?

My first answer is, I have no idea. My second answer is, there is no single realism — so which specific realism are we talking about? I do not want to catalogue the numerous attributes which are added to the term “realism” (e.g. “surrealism”, “hyper-realism”, “photo-realism”) since “realism” falls apart when supplemented with a qualifier.

If realism exists, it must have a starting point. Much to my delight, however, I have not been able to find it. I am wary of words like “beginning” and “end”. If realism has a beginning and I can identify it, I find this suspicious. And yet, I seem to have located at least three or four starting points — realism, if it ever began, has multiple beginnings.

Which visual artist would I confidently classify as realist? For me, the only justified choice is Gustav Courbet, famous in part for his work “L’Origine du monde (The Origin of the World)” ². This painting, created in 1866, is usually interpreted as the end of realism. I was

The second destabilization factor is capitalism — a system we have been living in for quite some time. Capitalist reality derealizes everyday objects, interpersonal relations, institutions and life itself. The “fast pace of life” means we experience a constant acceleration of time, in keeping with the logic of turbocapitalism.

The digital and capitalist factors mutually reinforce one another. As Jean-François Lyotard said in the 1980s, realism in a capitalist society “can no longer evoke reality except as nostalgia or mockery”. Realism is a pastiche of reality we cannot capture. For Lyotard, the only reality under capitalism is the reality of the market, money and commodities.

The return of realism today is crucial for making sense of the “reality” we live in. The return of realism is a symptom to be analysed; and this critical analysis is targeted at the very question that realism struggles to escape. According to Lyotard, realism “intends

I THINK ART EXISTS AS LONG AS IT IS TALKED ABOUT. IF WE STOP TALKING ABOUT IT, IT ALMOST VANISHES. THE QUESTION I AM FACING NOW IS AS FOLLOWS: WHAT IS REALISM?



astonished to find out that realism began with Courbet’s works dating from 1855. My idea is this: if realism in the strict sense had ever existed, it was only for 11 years. The idea is fairly radical, yet stimulates further reflection.

My second point of reference is Filippo Brunelleschi and Quattrocento — an idea that is particularly valuable to me. Indeed, along with Descartes, Brunelleschi contributed to the emergence of the idea of a centred human subject in Western culture. In this framework, the perspective of the centred subject is inextricably linked with realism.

We often use the term “realism” for something we can identify ourselves with. If we can recognize ourselves in a landscape, or identify a still-life, or discover ourselves in someone else’s portrait, the very act of recognition, identification or discovery enables us to talk about reality, and realism.

I was thinking about a painting which reaches beyond the human subject and, most definitely, cannot be classified as realistic: “The Black Square”. In this case, however, we will need to reconsider our position, as transcendence, an attempt to refer to something we are unable to see makes us consider the black square as a screen, with a non-existent subject on the other side. The situation is getting increasingly more interesting: what if Courbet discovered realism and exhausted its potential in just eleven years, without ever suspecting it? What if Brunelleschi discovered the centred subject, which makes it possible to talk of realism in the first place? What if Malevich disposed of this subject or deflated it as a narcissistic illusion?

My most complex point of reference with regard to realism is called “modernity”. At some point, the seventeenth century starts shifting towards modernity, modernization of life. Simultaneously, there emerges what we call a reality deficit: reality is unsettled and loses permanence. The Black Square “illustrates” it. In this context, the core function of realism is to create a stable reference to reality.

Further, I will argue that the sole foundation for realism is belief in reality. This idea is crucial as it is only through reality that realism can be conceptualised.

Is realism making a comeback today? What makes it possible to even consider reviving realism after it was castigated and removed from the representation domain together with totalitarianism? The question prompts the answer: because it has always returned.

Can the comeback of realism mean that reality is destabilized yet again? Yes, and the destabilization is associated with a factor we all appreciate, but have yet to comprehend, interpret and theorize — digital, virtual, cybernetic, augmented and mixed reality. Instead of a single reality, we now have several; instead of a single sociality, we are dealing with multiple socialities in the form of social media. To comprehend the revolution happening today, one must distance oneself from modernity and grow post-modern.

The world is digitized, and so is art. It is now possible to speak of digital realism, or post-photographic realism, or digitized realism. For me, the very emergence of virtual, or digital reality must make us question what we consider (or used to consider) rigid, stable and permanent reality, the existence of which we never used to doubt. The emergence of virtual reality emphasizes the virtual nature of any reality. This is the first factor that unsettles reality and accounts for the need to revive realism.

to avoid the question of reality implicated in that of art”. Now we can conclude that realism means having a stable referent, which enables us to avoid questioning reality at all. This viewpoint is highly important as it brings art and critique dangerously close to the question of the dominant ideology.

Reality is always a product of ideology. To comprehend this, I will refer you to Kant’s idea that we should not confuse our perception of reality with reality as it is. In psychoanalysis, reality is a symbolic construct which refers to the real, to something that fails to conform to usual human beliefs, something that art, I suppose, aims to represent. When faced with something that falls outside of the matrix, we experience awe and catharsis; the horrors of reality, on the contrary, are the domain of mass media.

Reality is always discursive — it is constructed through our social connections grounded in language. We do not exist outside of discourse; we share a specific outlook on the world and are unable to observe this reality with innocent, untarnished vision which has never existed. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had an idea of a “virgin perspective”; psychoanalysis knows this perspective to be impossible. Let us remember that any theory constructs the world rather than reflects it; to claim that theories will not help us is an elementary form of conservative ideology.

Reality is discursive and therefore ideological. On the one hand, we may view realism as an attempt to conceal the ideological perspective of any subject; on the other, we may claim that realism reveals the symptom and realist art, when duly reflected on, facilitates understanding of modern human condition.

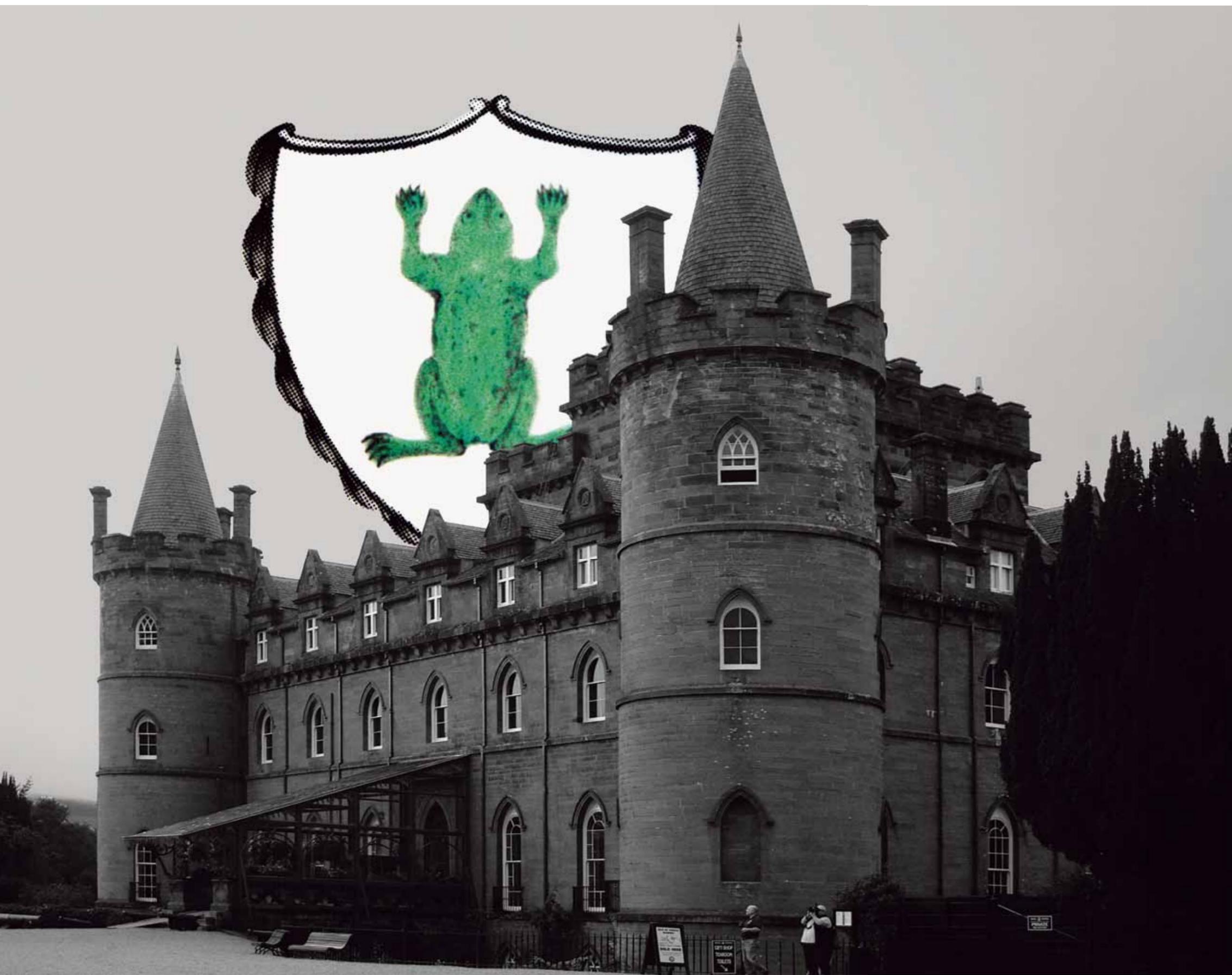
Being discursive, reality is trans-subjective, yet it appears objective without being so. This is the most complex part of our discussion. Reality is neither objective, nor subjective — it is trans-subjective.

The most provocative and, hopefully, the most comprehensible idea is that trans-subjective reality is structured as a phantasm. When we describe a certain artwork as realistic, we are referring to a particular phantasmatic version of art.

Realism is no less phantasmatic than surrealism or expressionism. Compared to science and religion, art is a relatively unrestricted domain of knowledge, which aims to subvert the illusion of reality, to reach out beyond the ideological construct. Today, the real target of art is not reality, but something that Lacan called *reality*. A juxtaposition of Lacan’s concept of the Real with *das Unheimliche* suggested by Freud and *das Erhabene* described by Kant will provide us with an aesthetic dimension of the real. The real is what falls outside of reality, something that cannot be depicted — just implicated. Reality may be pointed in a way chosen by, say, Hans Holbein the Younger in “The Ambassadors” — a painting one must learn to observe and to find that specific point from which one can notice the painting look at us. Allow me to remind you that our marathon started with Mikhail Piotrovsky quoting the Quran, which directly prohibits certain images; this representation of reality is at least partly free from narcissistic realism.

¹ Victor Mazin is a psychoanalyst, philosopher, Editor-in-Chief of the Cabinet magazine, founder of the Freud’s Dream Museum and author of multiple publications in psychoanalysis, deconstruction, cinema and modern art.

² “The Origin of the World” is housed in Musée d’Orsay.



THE HERMITAGE COLLECTIONS INCLUDE QUITE A NUMBER OF UNIQUE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SERVICES CREATED AT FAMOUS PORCELAIN MANUFACTURES IN EUROPE. THE FROG SERVICE IS ONE OF THE BEST WORKS BY THE FAMOUS ENGLISH POTTER JOSIAH WEDGWOOD (1730-1795).

THE FROG SERVICE

Wedgwood received this commission in 1770 from Catherine the Great through the Russian Consul-General in London, Baxler. The service had to be made of "cream-coloured faience", the kind of fine faience improved by Wedgwood and very popular at the time in England and starting to be known on the continent. It was stated in the commission that every piece of the service had to have different English landscapes and a green frog, as it was destined for the Chermensky Palace which was being built at the time in the environs of Saint-Petersburg in a place called Kekerekeksinen (Finnish: "frog swamp"). This explains the original name given to the service in Russia. <...> But the service is valuable not only for its artistic qualities. It has gained more historical value through the years, because the landscapes depicted on it count as many as "1224 genuine views of England", which is written on one of the pieces. It is an incredibly rich panorama of England of the 1770s, and many views were specially painted from nature for the service and their depictions cannot be found anywhere else. And taking into account that many of the buildings and landscapes depicted here no longer exist or have changed in aspect beyond recognition, the unique value of the service becomes even more evident¹.

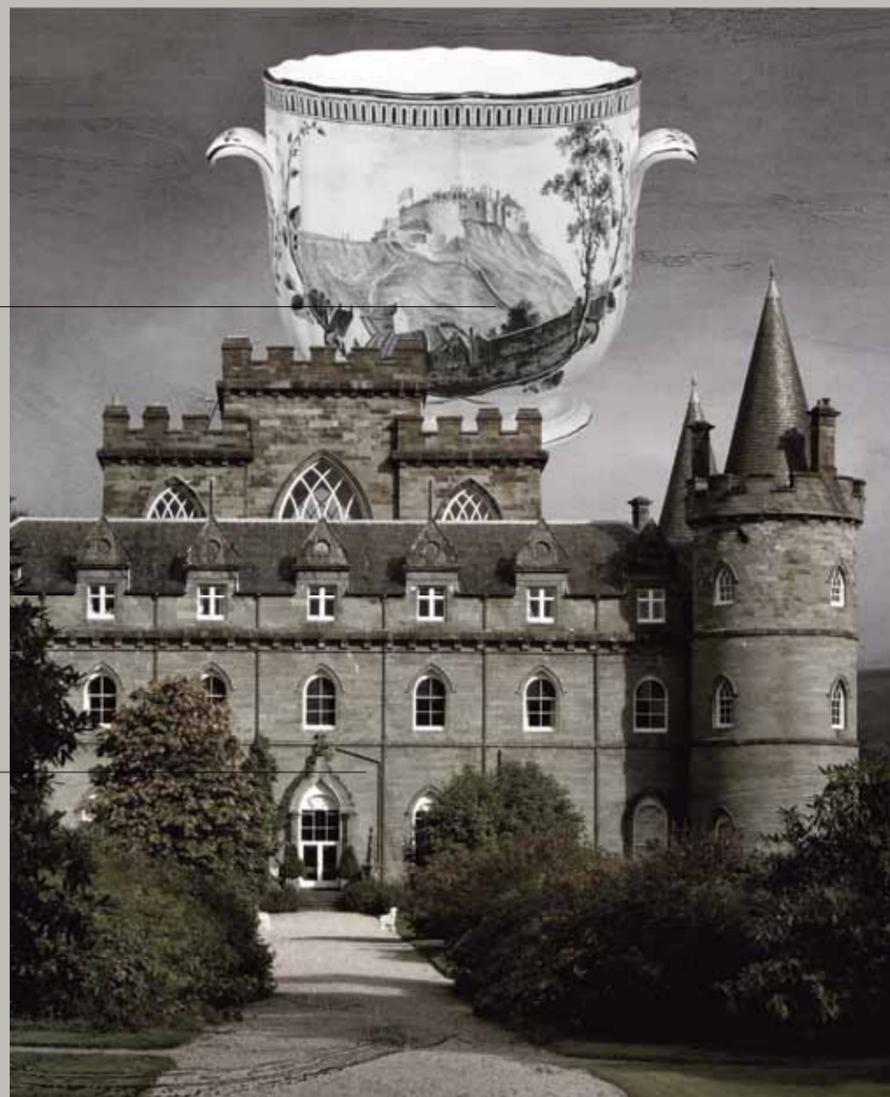
¹ Here and from this point on the text is quoted from the book: L.N. Voronikhin, "The Frog Service", The State Hermitage Publishing House, Leningrad, 1962.

Photo: Kenneth Mallard

THE FROG SERVICE
Wedgwood firm,
Great Britain
1773-1774
Faience
Overglaze painting

1 | ICE PAIL DECORATED WITH VIEWS OF OLD INVERARAY CASTLE IN STRATHCLYDE AND EDINBURGH CASTLE IN LOTHIAN
Diameter 16.5 cm, height 16.5 cm
3Ф-20836
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

2 | INVERARAY CASTLE. VIEW FROM A HILL TO THE SOUTH-WEST OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE. THE GARDENS BETWEEN THE CASTLE AND THE RIVER WERE REPLACED BY VAST FLAT LAWNS AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY.
Photo: Kenneth Mallard



WEDGWOOD'S WORK WAS WELL-KNOWN IN RUSSIA, SO THE COMMISSION FOR THE FROG SERVICE WAS NOT MERE CHANCE.

1 | SUPPORT FOR CREAM BOWL DECORATED WITH A VIEW OF LUDLOW CASTLE IN STAFFORDSHIRE
Diameter 22 cm
ГЧ-8692
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

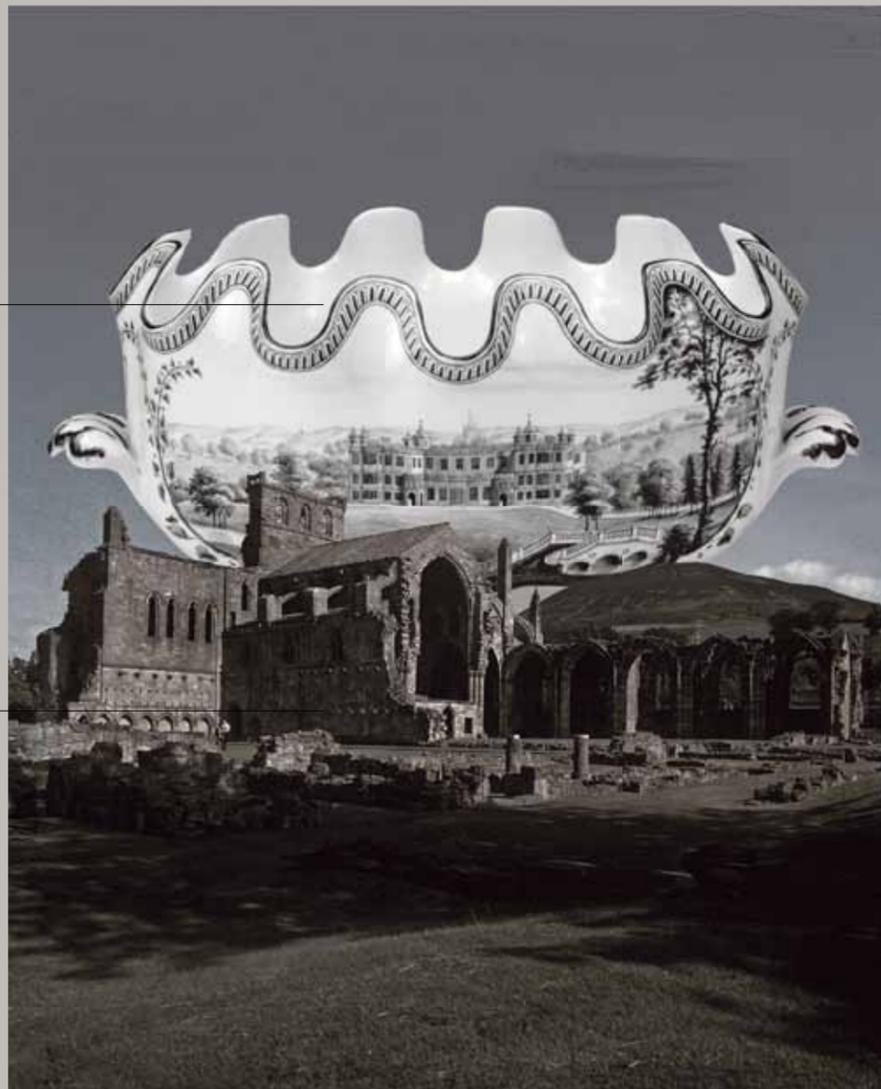
2 | LUDLOW CASTLE ABOVE A SEA OF MIST, OVER A BEND OF THE RIVER TEME, SOON AFTER SUNRISE.
Photo: Ian Capper



BESIDES LANDSCAPES SHOWING THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE FROM THE ROCKY SHIRES OF NORTHERN SCOTLAND TO THE SWAMPY PLAINS OF CORNWALL, THE SERVICE PIECES ARE DECORATED WITH DEPICTIONS OF DIFFERENT ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS "OF ALL CENTURIES AND STYLES... FROM CABINS ON THE HEBRIDES TO THE MASTERPIECES OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE".

1 | **MONTEITH DECORATED WITH VIEWS OF MELROSE ABBEY ON THE BORDER BETWEEN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND AND AUDLEY END, ESSEX**
14.4×32.8×21.8 cm
3Ф-20832
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

2 | **MELROSE ABBEY**
THE MAIN SURVIVING SECTION OF THE BUILDING, DATING FROM THE EARLY 15TH CENTURY.
© VisilBritain.com



MOST PIECES DEPICT ANCIENT CASTLES, THEN COME OLD ABBEYS AND MONASTERY RUINS.

1 | **SQUARE COMPOTIER DECORATED WITH A VIEW OF CHISWICK HOUSE, GREATER LONDON**
Acquired in 1921
3Ф-20850
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

2 | **CHISWICK HOUSE**
THIS VILLA IN THE SUBURB OF LONDON WAS BUILT IN THE 1720S TO HOST THE ANTIQUE COLLECTION OF COUNT BURLINGTON.
© VisilBritain.com



VIEWS OF LONDON ARE ESPECIALLY WELL REPRESENTED. THE ARTISTS FOUND MANY PICTURESQUE PLACES IN THE CITY SUBURBS OF THE TIME: HAMPSTEAD, HIGHGATE, PUTNEY; RICHMOND AND OTHERS.

1 | **TRIANGULAR DISH WITH A VIEW OF ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT IN CORNWALL**
Side length 28.5 cm
ГЧ-8502
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

2 | **ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT VIEW OF THE ISLAND FROM THE MAINLAND AND THE PLACE OF THE FORMER MONASTERY IN CORNWALL. THE ISLAND IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE DURING LOW TIDE, BY A SPECIAL PAVED PATH AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GULF.**
© VisilBritain.com



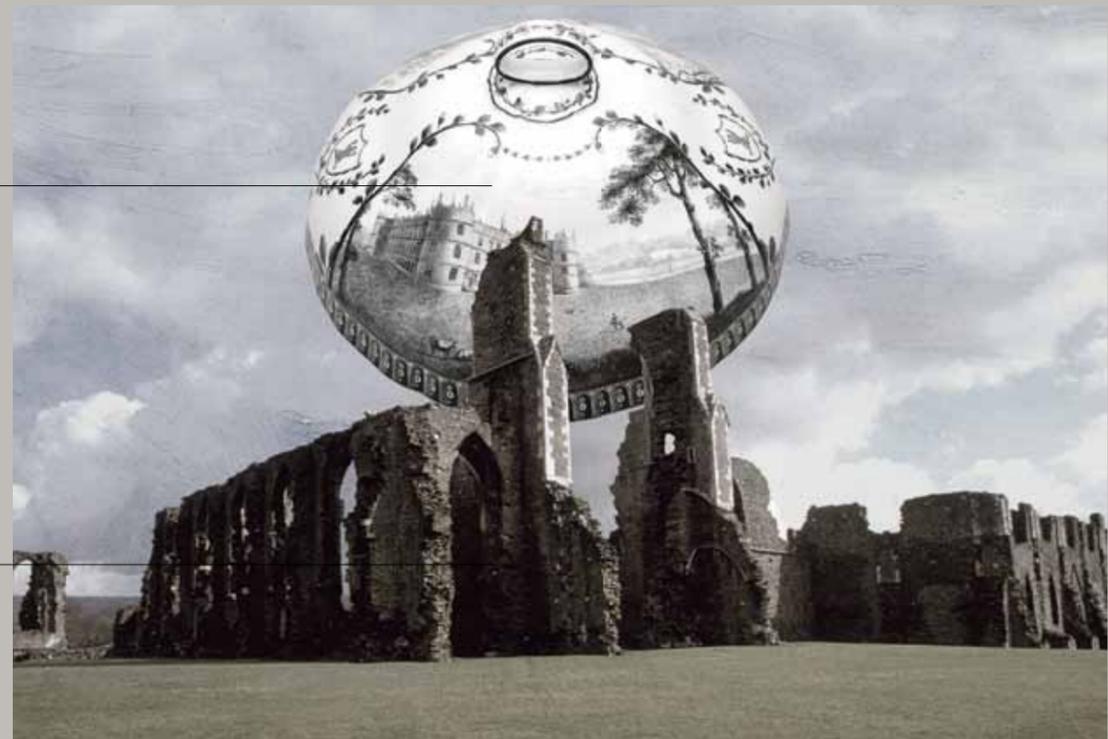
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EVERY LANDSCAPE FOUND ITS PLACE DEPENDING NOT ON THE NOTORIETY OF THE OWNER OF THE ESTATE, BUT ON HOW THE VIEW CORRESPONDED TO THE SHAPE AND THE SIZE OF THE PIECE, WHICH WERE IN MANY CASES SUGGESTED BY WEDGWOOD HIMSELF.

1 | **ROUND DISH COVER WITH VIEWS OF NEATH ABBEY IN WEST GLAMORGAN AND LONGFORD CASTLE IN WILTSHIRE**
Diameter 32 cm
ГЧ-8459
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

2 | **NEATH ABBEY RUINS OF THE LARGEST CISTERCIAN MONASTERY IN WALES, FOUNDED IN 1129, VIEW FROM THE NORTH.**
© VisilBritain.com

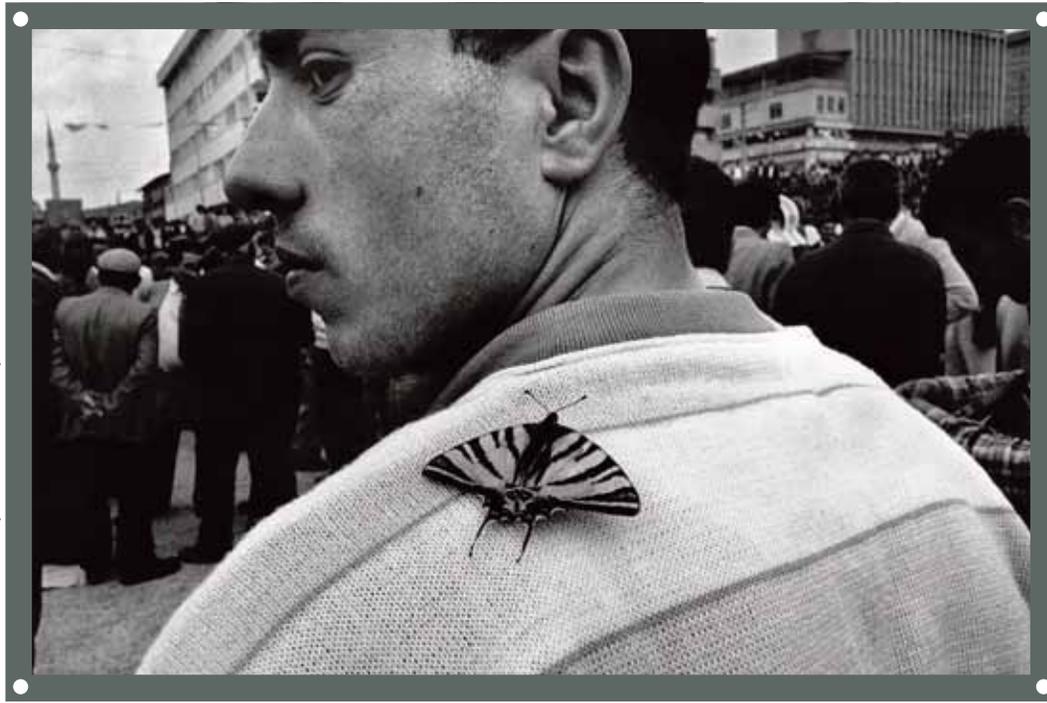


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2

IN 1912 THE SERVICE WAS PRESENTED AT THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS AT AN EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO WEDGWOOD. THEN IT WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE HERMITAGE AND FROM THAT TIME IT HAS BEEN ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS.

● PHOTO: EAST NEWS / MAGNUM PHOTOS / NIKOS ECONOMOPOULOS

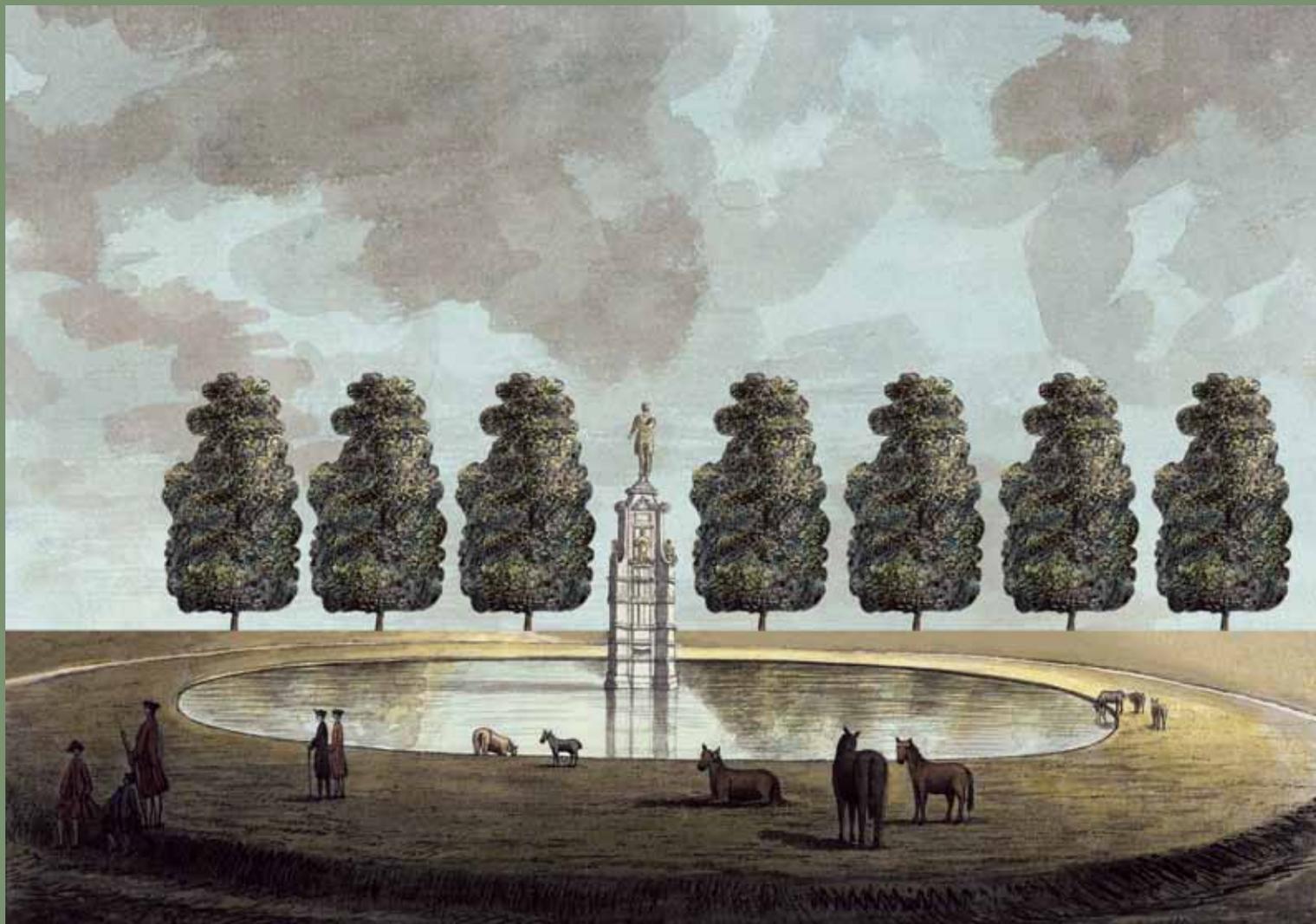


**TURKEY. YOZGAT.
POLITICAL MEETING.
1990**



Joseph Brodsky. "Fight from Byzantium". Istanbul–Athens, 1985

"Who these days really examines maps, studies contours, reckons distance? Nobody, except perhaps vacationers or drivers. Since the invention of the pushbutton, even the military don't do it anymore. Who writes letters listing the sights he has seen and analyzing the feelings he had while doing so? And who reads such letters? After us, nothing will remain that is worthy of the name of correspondence. Even young people, seemingly with plenty of time, make do with postcards. People of my age usually resort to those either in a moment of despair in some alien spot or just to kill time. Yet there are places examination of which on a map makes you feel for a brief moment akin to Providence. There are places where history is inescapable, like a highway accident — places where geography provokes history. Such is Istanbul, alias Constantinople, alias Byzantium."



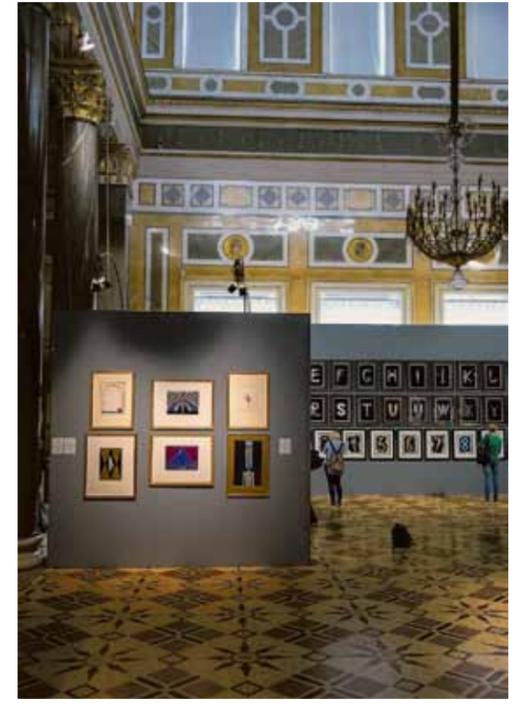
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ERTÉ 194
ORLANDINE 202

FABERGÉ 206
LEONARDESCHI 210

RESTORATION 214

AN EXHIBITION OF ERTÉ'S DRAWINGS
ORGANIZED BY THE STATE HERMITAGE IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE GROSVENOR GALLERY, LONDON AND WITH THE SUPPORT
OF THE MARTIN LAWRENCE GALLERY, NEW YORK.
JUNE-SEPTEMBER, 2016



**THE HERMITAGE HAS BROUGHT BACK
TO RUSSIA ONE OF THE MOST
SUCCESSFUL ARTISTS OF THE TWENTIETH
CENTURY, ROMAN PETROVICH TYRTOV,
KNOWN BY THE PSEUDONYM ERTÉ.**

ERTÉ:

AN ART DECO GENIUS.
RETURN TO ST. PETERSBURG

SPRING. 1990
Bronze. 46 × 48 × 23 cm

The sculpture is based on Erté's sketch
for the show *Legendary Kings*,
at the Folies Bergère Cabaret in Paris, early 30s

PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

MIKHAIL DEDINKIN
● PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIULLIN

his talented and ambitious self-taught artist left St. Petersburg in January 1912, just after graduating from school. He settled in Paris and soon started a meteoric career to become one of the most sought-after masters of his time. His only artistic training was the 18 months spent before the breakout of the First World War in the workshops for the prominent couturier Paul Poiret, who hired the Russian young man as a drawer. Very soon he was designing clothes, theatre costumes and sets himself. This is how he found himself in the world of fashion and theatre, which became his home for many years. In the late 1910s he was already conquering the US, having become the leading artist and writer for "Harper's Bazaar" magazine for the following 20 years. This explains why to this day Erle is considerably more popular in the US than he is in Europe. He lived until nearly a hundred and continued designing the sets for various shows for the best stages of both the Old and the New World. It is difficult to overestimate his contribution to shaping the Hollywood style of the 1920-1930s and the Art Deco movement which barely manifested itself in Soviet Russia but was extremely important for the European artistic world during the decades between the two world wars.

The Hermitage had a unique opportunity to select items from the most complete collection of Michael Estorick whose parents were the master's last art dealers. The retrospective exhibition covers 80 years of Erle's work: from his early almost childish drawings which he used to send to the "Damsky Journal" published in St. Petersburg to the last Broadway productions. This selection includes sketches for fashion houses, magazines, revues and shows, opera and ballet theatres, fabric designs, interior design and decorations and posters. The range of Erle's work is vast.

The exhibition at the Hermitage, the first one since the artist's death in 1990, has demonstrated one aspect of his art which is very important to us and, perhaps, particularly evident in St. Petersburg. It is amazing how precisely Erle grasped the graphic culture of the Russian capital of the early twentieth century, how close he was aesthetically to the artists of the "Mir iskusstva" movement. His artistic life essentially became a continuation of the ideas he gathered in his youth from the books and magazines of the time and from Diaghilev's theatre company productions. Hence the refined graphic culture which was not always necessary for such strictly applicable areas of art, as the theatre for example. It is often enough to produce a sketch which will serve as the basis to make a set, a backdrop and costumes. But Erle did not have any sketches, at least no one has ever seen them. Any work with his elegant signature is an impeccable finished work of graphic art, which gives away nothing to suggest that there is long, intense and meticulous work behind it. It is a fairly safe bet to say that Erle, who left Russia quite early and had barely any contact with Russian immigrant circles abroad, became the last representative of the "Mir Iskusstva" movement, thus expanding the timeframe of this specifically local phenomenon from St. Petersburg all the way to the end of the twentieth century.



**A SKETCH FOR THE EPISODE
"CUNNING WIDOW"
"ZIZI, JE T'AIME"
(ZIZI, I LOVE YOU)**
Casino de Paris Cabaret,
Paris
Gouache on paper. 20 × 32 cm

**THE EXHIBITION
AT THE WINTER PALACE**



Roman Tyrtoov was born in St. Petersburg and from early childhood he showed an interest in theatre, painting, graphics and costume design. In 1912 he left Russia for good and settled in Paris. In 1913–1914 he started working as a designer for Paul Poiret, who was the trend-setter in Parisian fashion of the early twentieth century. Soon Tyrtoov was already designing outfits and gowns which were sold under the firm’s brand. This is when his pseudonym was developed, from the French pronunciation of his initials. The young man also assisted Poiret in his work on theatrical productions; this work was influenced by Bakst’s sets and costumes for Diaghilev’s productions. His contemporaries were very complimentary of the sets and costumes for Poiret’s first production, Jean Richepin’s comedy “Le Minaret”. One of the actresses hired for this play was an exotic dancer known by the stage name Mata Hari; her costumes were designed by Erté.

In 1915 Erté signed a contract with the American magazine “Harper’s Bazaar” and illustrated the cover for the January issue. Over the following 20 years every monthly issue featured Erté’s illustration on the cover. He also wrote articles on fashion, the society column in the magazine and provided illustrations of outfits, accessories, hats, shoes, jewellery and interior design. Apart from that, Erté worked for Vogue, Cosmopolitan, Ladie’s Home Journal, The Sketch and other illustrated periodicals of the USA, Britain and France.

Following the contracts with the magazines, Erté was approached by the leading department stores in New York — Henri Bendel and B. Altman and C^o — with offers to create his own fashion collections. Over the following three years he designed two collections per year, drifting further and further away from Poiret’s style: Erté created the asymmetrical neckline; his sporty-looking men’s and women’s outfits had the quality which was later called unisex; in men’s suits he was the first to use fabrics which were traditionally typical of women’s clothes, such as velvet.

During the First World War theatre life was thriving on the French Riviera and Erté’s talent was very much in demand. In Monte Carlo he met Diaghilev, and they later worked together on “Divertissement” and a few ballet miniatures for Anna Pavlova. In 1923 Erté worked on a few productions for Parisian cabarets — the “Folies Bergere”, the “Bataclan”, the “Alhambra”, “Bal Tabarin”, “Lido” — and theatres — “Renaissance”, “Ambassadors”, the “Théâtre du Châtelet”, the “Marigny theatre”, the “Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens”, “Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt”, the “Opera Comique” and finally the “Palais Garnier”. Erté’s projects were a series of shows which competed in inventiveness, incredible fantasy and scale.

In February 1925 Erté set off to Hollywood to design costumes and sets for two Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer films. His contract was prolonged and Erté worked as the costume designer for the leading stars of the studios, the best

actresses of the silent cinema. He designed sets for some of the most famous films of the period: Fred Niblo’s “Ben Hur”, King Vidor’s “La Bohème”, Robert Z. Leonard’s “Dance Madnes”s and Tod Browning’s “The Mystic”. In 1925 Erté held his first exhibition in New York, at the Madison Hotel. The following year, in Paris this time, the Galérie Charpentier hosted an exhibition of his works created in the US. Some of his works were then first bought for state collections straight from the exhibition.

After the Second World War, Erté was no longer invited to work for magazines or commissioned to design *haute couture*. The revue as a genre had gone out of fashion and become conservative. American commissions also dried up for a long time. Everything changed in the mid-1960s with a revival of interest in Art Deco. In 1966 the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris held an exhibition titled “Les Années ‘25” which was dedicated to the famous 1925 exhibition, and “Harper’s Bazaar” celebrated its 100th anniversary in New York. In 1967 before the launch of the artist’s exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in New York, all the 170 works displayed were bought by the Metropolitan Museum. This is how Erté came to be recognised as an iconic figure in twentieth century art, as the *genius of Art Deco*.

From the late 1960s to the end of his days, the master exhibited his works all around the world. In 1970 the first monograph about his art was published. Erté’s eightieth birthday in 1972 was celebrated in Paris, New York, London and Geneva. “Vogue” dedicated a special edition to him; the BBC made a TV programme about him based on an interview with the artist. In 1979 the Smithsonian Institute put together an exhibition that toured the USA, Canada and Mexico for three years.

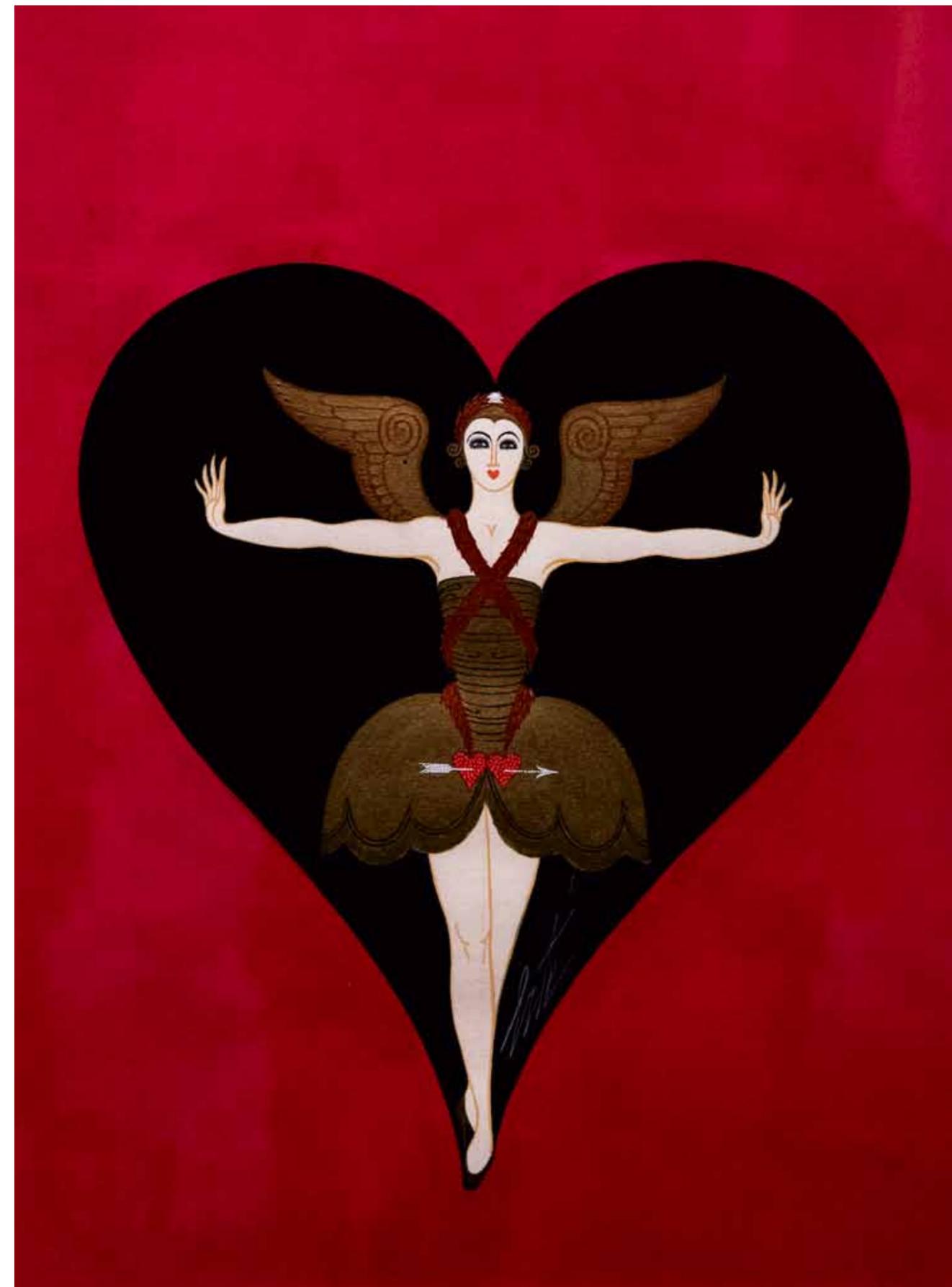
In 1967 Erté designed a show for Expo 67, the World’s Fair in Montreal. In 1970 he began a collaboration with the star of the Parisian stage Zizi Jeanmaire and the choreographer Roland Petit, with whom he created several productions.

The public eagerly bought Erté’s prints, lithographs and silk screen prints. Alongside new works, the artist reproduced his old creations. Work on separate series was a constant feature of his art in later years. Printed in 1977, the “Alphabet”, would become the artist’s most famous cycle.

At the turn of the 1980s Erté developed an interest in metal sculpture and striking methods of finishing surfaces — polishing, gilding, patination and the use of coloured varnishes. His last exhibition was titled “Theatre in Bronze”.

In 1983 he was awarded the Legion of Honour by France for his achievements in art. Most projects in the last decade of Erté’s life were related to the United States. In 1989 he worked on two productions in New York. He did not live to see the opening of his last production, an Easter show for Radio City in New York.

COSTUME DESIGN FOR “MANHATTAN MARY”
New York. 1927
Gouache on paper.
34 × 25 cm



ZEISS MICROSCOPES IN THE LABORATORY FOR SCIENTIFIC RESTORATION OF PRECIOUS METALS OF THE STATE HERMITAGE



THE HERMITAGE IS NOT ONLY ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST FAMOUS MUSEUMS IN THE WORLD, BUT ALSO AN UNPRECEDENTED RESTORATION CENTER, STORAGE FACILITY, AND SCIENTIFIC CENTER. OPTEC AND CARL ZEISS WERE HONORED TO PARTICIPATE IN PROVIDING THE HERMITAGE LABORATORIES WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT. THUS, THE LABORATORY FOR SCIENTIFIC RESTORATION OF PRECIOUS METALS USED ZEISS FLAGSHIP MICROSCOPES FOR MATERIALS RESEARCH TO WORK ON A UNIQUE COLLECTION OF GOLD HAIRPINS OWNED BY CATHERINE THE GREAT.

The Laboratory for Scientific Restoration of Precious Metals was established in 2004. The laboratory uses the accumulated knowledge of experienced masters and new high-tech equipment, allowing the restoration of unique exhibits. Previously, it has been impossible to perform many works; the equipment did not meet the level of the tasks at hand, but now the Laboratory for Scientific Restoration of Precious Metals is one of the best-equipped centers in Europe. Several thousands of exhibits have been restored here since 2004.

Today, the laboratory is paying ever more attention to analytical studies. Restorers must not go in blind—they need to see the work piece and what they are doing with it. ZEISS light microscopes make it possible to view the smallest elements of objects and provide photo and video fixation. Some exhibits handled in the laboratory are several microns in size, so it is critically important to have the equipment that will help work with miniature, microscopic objects.

The Hermitage contains a large collection of exhibits made of precious metals. Laboratory specialists are continuously working with such items, including preparation for exhibitions and monitoring of preservation.

The laboratory is quite often contacted by other museums, not only from Russia, but also from other countries, because the accumulated experience and knowledge and state-of-the-art equipment allow performing unique operations. At the same time, laboratory employees regularly visit training centers all over the world and familiarize themselves with new techniques.

A unique collection of hairpins owned by Catherine the Great, found nowhere else in the world, is made up of 250 items manufactured by Chinese masters. The hairpin elements are very fragile; the wire they are made of is only 30 microns thick. They must be handled with extreme care: when taken in the hands, a hairpin may break even under gravity. Under the microscope, one can see what cannot normally be seen with the naked eye; one can explore elements in great detail and take photos or shoot a video before, during or after the work.

Each step of the restoration is recorded by photo and video cameras. Various optics, light, and electron microscopes and other equipment are used for this purpose. Based on the results of the work performed, all materials are submitted for review by a restoration commission.

So, today the laboratory conducts a wide range of activities, and there is almost nothing that its specialists cannot do.

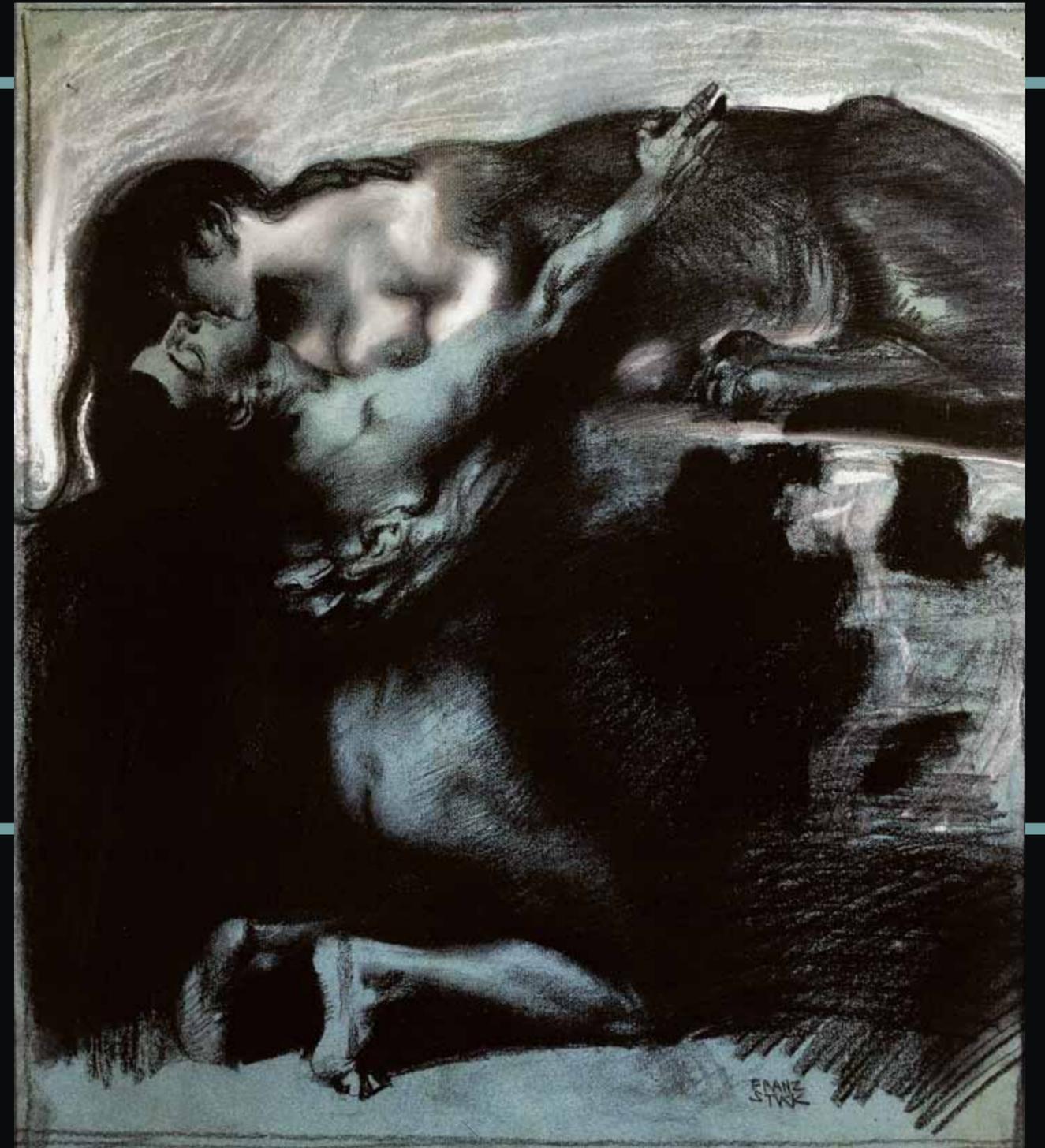
In Russia and CIS countries, Carl Zeiss Microscopy is represented by OPTEC. www.optecgroup.com

Prepared based on interviews with Igor Malkiel, Head of the Laboratory for Scientific Restoration of Precious Metals of the State Hermitage.

Beauty tainted with pain, corruption and death ¹

THE WOMAN-VAMP, FEMME FATALE IS ONE OF THOSE IMAGES THAT HAVE OUTLIVED NOT ONLY THEIR CREATORS BUT ALSO THE EPOCH WHEN THEY APPEARED. THE SEDUCTIVE EYES OF MEDUSAS AND SALOMES, WITH THEIR MACABRE GLAZE HAVE WITNESSED THE RENAISSANCE, ROMANTICISM AND DECADENCE, THE BIRTH OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE CINEMA. THE IMAGE OF THE FEMME FATALE HAS GONE THROUGH ALMOST FOUR CENTURIES OF TRANSFORMATION, TRANSMUTATION AND INTERPRETATION.

ORLANDINE



FRANZ VON STUCK
The Kiss of the Sphinx
Germany. BETWEEN 1890 AND 1914
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on grey paper, 52 × 46 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

Investigating the iconography of women I know how strong the predominance in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century of the female image as the symbol of evil, sin and death (in the Manichaeistic³ style) over the female image as the symbol of good, light and purity was. Is not Baudeleriana,⁴ an unclean woman, often in league with the daemon, the daughter of the devil, the same woman Charles Baudelaire speaks about in his “Fleurs du Mal” (“The Flowers of Evil”)?

The literature and, most of all, the painting of the late nineteenth century is insistent in the repeated treatment of these images: is there a reason for this? What were the changes and new events — social and cultural — in Europe, what new sensuality was born there that brought about such a radical alteration of traditional beliefs unchanged for centuries? We can look through a lot of drawings featuring popular biblical subjects, well-known female characters, Judith or Salome and we will see that there is something that breaks down the traditional symbolism in Christian art and the essence of religious piety, *reinventará*⁵ to something that makes the depicted women tainted by evil. At this particular time a new popular character makes an appearance in the arts — Lilith.

LILITH AND THE DEMONS

According to early Judaist texts, Lilith appears as Adam’s first wife, and, strange as it may seem, she can be treated as the first sample of an independent woman created by Yahweh⁶. An extracanonical version of the Old Testament reads that in contrast with Eve, who was created from one of Adam’s ribs, Lilith was created at the same time and from the same dirt as Adam. For this reason, Lilith always considered herself equal to Adam, always struggling for her rights, yet she remained unheard. Humbled, she revolted against her husband and left him. Yahweh, the supreme Divinity, ordered her to return and be subservient to Adam, but she refused, escaped from the Garden of Eden, coupled with the demon and became the genetrix of the diabolical tribe.⁷

This favourite of Beelzebub, aside from being beautiful and possessing splendid hair, had another trait — she hated newborns. To protect infants from suffocation by Lilith, women in labour put small terracotta amulets on their wall to protect babies from her dark forces. This prejudice was alive in several Jewish communities of Central Europe until the nineteenth century.

The character of Adam’s first wife can evidently be traced back to the times of the Jewish diaspora throughout the world. During the Exodus, Judaism was influenced by various cultures with their mythology, including Mesopotamian mythology, whose evil and demonic Lillake served as a protagonist for Lilith. On a Sumerian tablet of 2000 BC, Lillake, the goddess was pictured as a beautiful naked woman with supple breasts, accompanied by a couple of owls, a two-headed dragon and a knot of vipers — symbols of evil.

Though rabbis interpreting the Cabbala call Adam’s first wife “false”, “perverse and promiscuous”, it is worth mentioning that she was the first woman to liberate herself of male patronage. A much later Ibsen’s literary character of Nora, who strove to escape from her “doll’s house”⁸, is a close analogy to the Lilith theme, isn’t it?⁹

EXAGGERATED AESTHETICISM

The myth about *femme fatale*, who, in alliance with the devil, leads a man to his death, is not new to either literature or arts. Already in “The Monk”¹⁰, a novel of early Romanticism, Matilda is instrumental to the devil in destroying her brother Ambrosio, a paragon of virtue, by luring him to the search of sinful pleasures and bringing him to rape and murder. Several years later the “The Manuscript Found in Saragossa” (“Manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse”) appeared¹¹. In it, Thibaud de la Jacquièrè lost a blasphemous challenge, “By the bloody death of the great devil himself I promise to give him my soul and body if the great she-devil, his daughter, were to pass by and I had my way with her”. In response to the challenge the devil appears before him in the shape of the young, charming, and naive Orlandine, seduces and destroys him.

It is not unlikely that Pollock used borrowed symbols in his novel; for example, the mirror — an image of magic and of the devil — is often to be found in legends, fairy tales and folklore. In the case of Orlandine, the devilish, wicked fury of the succubus is displayed in the story about a pastime she enjoyed: comparing her perfect naked body with the old, bogey flesh of a governess, both reflected in the mirror.

THE REPROBATION OF THE WOMAN

The myth of the wicked woman has been created by the male community, especially by male misogynists. They have created this image in literature and in arts, above all in France, Belgium and England. The French term *femme fatale* is even entered in the Unabridged Oxford English Dictionary (1884) and registered in Bernard Shaw’s correspondence.

The above mentioned social and political circumstances which engendered this set of characters are of various origin. The first and the greatest factor is, no doubt, the public concern about the feminists’ movement that started in the 1850s in England, though major campaigns for female emancipation will be launched twenty years later, at the time of the so-called Long Depression. Resolute and strong-minded Suffragists demanded the right to vote, right for work and education; they started the earliest campaigns for birth-control¹², which caused violent public outcry.

The atmosphere of male fear of the “new woman” (a fighter for the place of women in public and professional life), the fright of the fall of the traditional bourgeois order, where social roles were once and forever fixed on the gender basis, and the alarm about professional competition proved to be the major reason why Great Britain became a cradle of the vamp myth, of the *femme fatale*¹³.

It was this feeling of reprobation and male fear of the woman that was expressed in works of numerous representatives of Aestheticism and Symbolism and most of all of Decadence. This atmosphere is the answer to the question why so many works of art are created where the woman is represented as the devil’s accomplice, as in works by Félicien Rops¹⁴, his “Temptation of Saint Anthony” for example. Also, female perversity is strongly emphasized, so that the woman is depicted with transformed parts of her body, as lady-bat, vulture-woman, owl-woman, especially as lady-vamp or Chimera. Of the same nature are depictions of the woman in pact and even in sexual intercourse with a snake. Shocking in their obscenity are the pictures by Gabriel Ferrier¹⁵ of the 1889s (“Salammbô”), by John Collier¹⁶ (beautiful Lilith, in lascivious embrace with a big reptile as a symbol of evil and alliance with the devil).¹⁷

All these representations form an unexpectedly ample collection, mostly unknown to the general public because it lies within the framework of classical painting, which was practically discarded and despised by all art critics of the late nineteenth century, who almost unanimously indulged in the study of Modernism.¹⁸

1. See: Kreimeier K. From Vampire to Vamp. On the Background of a Cinematic Myth // Artificial Humans. Berlin, 2000.

2. Erika Borney — an art historian and author, professor of Barcelona University.

3. Manichaeism — a syncretic religious movement that was founded in the 3rd c. in the Sasanian Empire (now the territory of Iraq and Iran)

4. Baudeleriana — a poem created by Gonzalo Rojas Pizarro (1917–2011), a Chilean poet; in 2003 he was awarded the Cervantes Prize (an equivalent of the Nobel prize for Hispanic literature).

5. Reinventará (Portuguese) — reinvented.

6. Yahweh — the main Hebrew name of the God.

7. See: Encyclopaedia Judaica. 2nd ed. Farmington Hills; Jerusalem, 2007. Vol. 13. pp. 17–20

8. “A Doll’s House” — a play by Henrik Johan Ibsen, 1879.

9. See: Bornay E. Las hijas de Lilith. Madrid, 1990 (7th ed.: 2010).

10. “The Monk” by Matthew Gregory Lewis (1794) — one of the most famous books in the genre of “mystery and horror”.

11. A novel by Jan Polocki (1804).

12. An example is Annie Besant’s campaign of 1877.

13. The tradition of elitist or “poetical” horror closely linked with most of the graphic images of *femme fatale* later became the basis, in a rather whimsical way, of aesthetics of horror films.

14. Félicien Rops (1833–1898) Belgian artist, engraver and painter, author of graphic illuminations to Charles Pierre Baudelaire’s “Les Fleurs du mal” (“Flowers of Evil”).

15. Gabriel Ferrier (1847–1914) — French artist.

16. John Collier (1850–1934) — an English portrait painter, a representative of the Pre-Raphaelite style.

17. See: The Earthly Chimera and the Femme Fatale: Fear of Women in Nineteenth-Century Art. Chicago, 1981.

18. A special mention should be made about a classical work in this field, the book by M. Praz. “La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letteratura romanica”. Firenze, 1948.

FABERGÉ — THE COURT JEWELER

A NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITION —
“HALLS IN MEMORY OF CARL FABERGÉ”
WAS OPENED IN THE GENERAL STAFF BUILDING
AT THE END OF 2015.

Carl Fabergé — was a jeweller of the Russian Imperial Court, with which he was connected almost all of his creative life. He came to work in the Imperial Hermitage as a restorer when he was a young jeweller starting his own business. At the same time he started to cooperate with the Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty, as a jewelry supplier, and a few years later he became an expert and appraiser at the Cabinet. In 1885, the head of the Cabinet reported to the Minister of the Imperial Court, Count I.I. Vorontsov-Dashkov: “In the 19-year period since 1866, pieces of jewelry to the amount of 47,249 rubles were acquired by the Cabinet from the jeweller Fabergé. The artistic level of the precious things manufactured by the jeweller Fabergé, on his drawings¹ for the Cabinet and very reasonable prices have been always very noticeable, and recently a brooch in the Russian style executed by him has received your highest approval. Because of the above-mentioned and taking into account the considerations that, in addition, in September 1884 the jeweller Fabergé was invited to take part in the work of the Commission as the assistant appraiser, (the commission that was formed for receiving the imperial crown jewels under the supervision of the Cabinet of the imperial crown jewels) and worked in the Commission for nearly five months without charge, I have the honor to apply for the promotion



● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

¹ **FABERGÉ.**
CRAFTSMEN: ALBERT HOLMSTRÖM,
JULIUS ALEXANDER RAPPOPORT
Miniatures of the Russian
Imperial Regalia
Gold, silver, platinum, diamonds, spinel,
pearls, sapphires, velvet, quartz. 1900
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016

¹ The information about Fabergé's drawings can be found in the article “An invaluable album” in the 19th issue of The Hermitage magazine.

● PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN





FABERGÉ.
CRAFTSMAN:
MIKHAIL PERKHIN.
CLOCKWORK MASTER:
NIKOLAI ROEDE
 Gold, metal alloy, diamonds,
 uncut diamonds, pearls, enamel.
 1902.
 © The State Hermitage Museum,
 St. Petersburg, 2016
 Gift of the President
 of the Russian Federation
 Vladimir Putin, 2014



OTHER EXHIBITS

of the jeweller Fabergé conferring him the dignity of the supplier of the highest court, with the assignment of the right to have a design of the State Emblem on the sign of the shop."

The director of the Imperial Hermitage A.A. Vasilchikov wrote about Fabergé's work with archaeological antiquities: "The hermitage owes him a great deal." The company was awarded a gold medal at an art exhibition in Nuremberg for a collection of copies of ancient artifacts found in Kerch. And in the same year Fabergé created by the order of Emperor Alexander III, the first Easter egg with a surprise inside. The egg was executed in the form of a golden hen, and was presented to the Empress. In 1885–1916 years the company produced fifty Easter eggs for two empresses: Maria Fedorovna and Alexandra (1895).

The world exhibition in Paris of 1900 was a triumph for Fabergé. He began preparing for it a year before the opening. Fabergé decided to make a special exhibit — a copy of the imperial regalia specially for the competition. In June 1899 he asked for "the permission of his Imperial Majesty" for the implementation of this idea: "With the intention of making exact smaller copies of the imperial crown and regalia for

the upcoming World's Fair in Paris, and not allowing yourself to dare to do it without knowledge and permission of the Cameral department of the Cabinet of H.I.M., I inform about this intention and ask to obtain by petition a permission to make the proposed copy." The resolution on the petition was brief: "Permission of His Imperial Majesty granted, but not for sale." It was an expression of trust of the emperor, who allowed the copying of one of the main symbols of the House of Romanov. In addition, Fabergé was allowed to exhibit a number of things, created for the imperial couple, including a number of Easter eggs.

The company's works were deemed at the fair to be perfect. The jury described Fabergé's works in these terms: "Shown by him as a member of the jury out of the competition, these things are at the limit of perfection, where jewelry is transformed into a work of art. Perfect execution and masterly composition are distinctive features of all the works of Fabergé, whether it's a tiny crown with 4000 stones or enamel flowers made with such care that they look alive..." Fabergé was awarded the Gold Medal and the Order of the Legion of Honor. His sons and masters were also awarded.



LEONARDESCHI ¹ TWO "FLORAS"

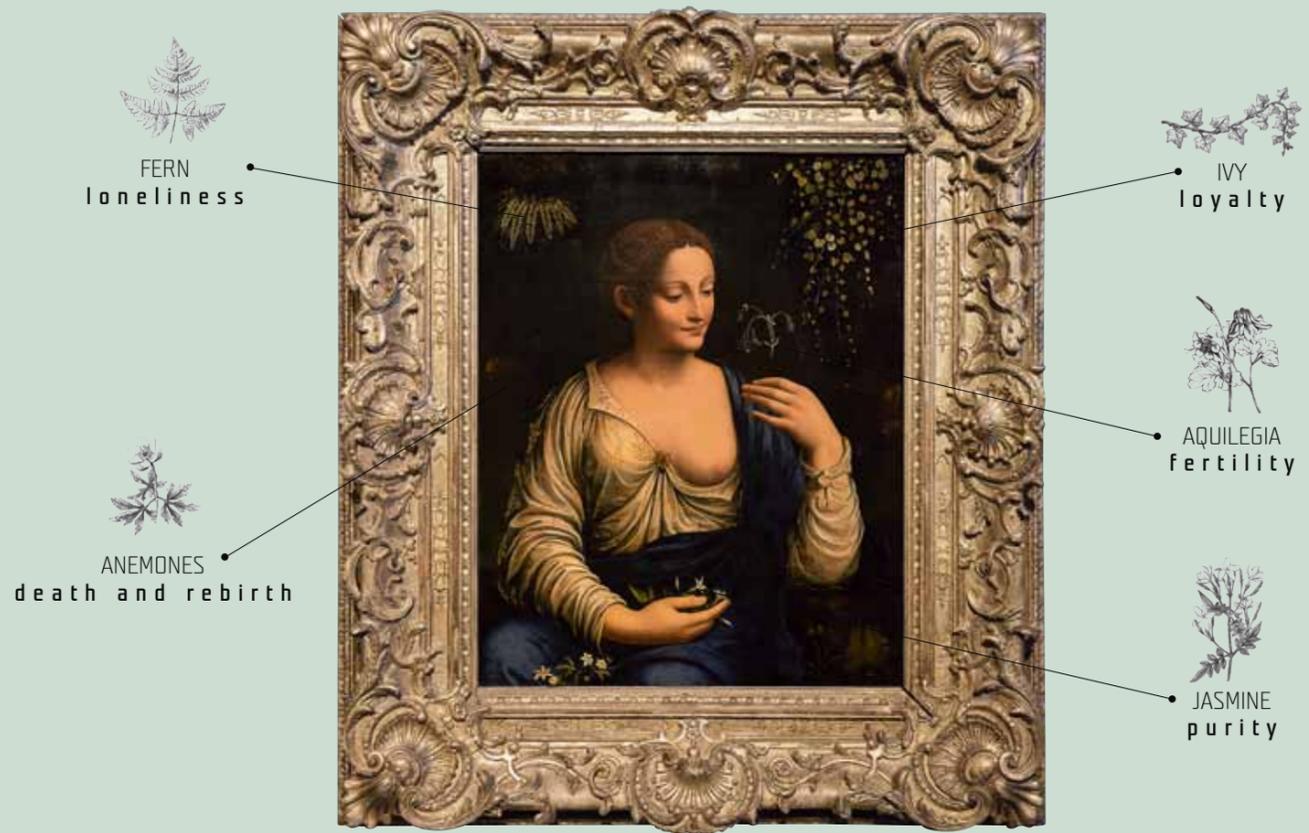
"IT'S A SMALL EXHIBITION, BUT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN A NUMBER OF KEY SPHERES OF MUSEUM LIFE, WHERE THE HERMITAGE IS A PIONEER. EVERYONE KNOWS THE WONDERFUL 'FLORA' ² BY FRANCESCO MELZI, A TREASURE OF THE HERMITAGE COLLECTION. TODAY, WE EXHIBIT IT TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER VERSION FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION. THE SITUATION IN THE ART WORLD AND GREAT NEW TECHNICAL CAPACITIES HAVE ALLOWED CAREFUL STUDY OF A LOT OF WORKS WHICH HAVE PREVIOUSLY REMAINED IN THE BACKGROUND BECAUSE THEIR PROVENANCE WAS NOT VERY CLEAR. IN PARTICULAR, THE SECOND 'FLORA' FOUND ITS ATTRIBUTION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA WITH A LOT OF VERY INTERESTING RESEARCH. A WHOLE RANGE OF WORKS HAVE COME INTO USE BY THE MUSEUM, AND WE ARE THE FIRST TO SHOW THOSE NEWLY ATTRIBUTED SUBJECTS WITH FAMOUS AND WELL-KNOWN ONES."



MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY AT THE OPENING OF THE "TWO 'FLORAS'" EXHIBITION, IN MAY 2016

1. _____ **Leonardeschi (um leonardeschi.)** — Lombard artists of the Renaissance, whose style was strongly influenced by the manner of Leonardo da Vinci of the Milan period. They were among his disciples or simply adopted his style.
2. _____ A goddess personifying the spring awakening of nature and its bloom. According to the myth, Zephyr, god of the wind, was in love with the nymph Chloe and made her his wife, transforming her into the goddess Flora, the mistress of plants.

FLOWER SYMBOLISM OF "FLORA" BY FRANCESCO MELZI



"Flora" by Francesco Melzi (1491-1568 / 1570),
 by "the most educated and sophisticated" pupil of Leonardo da Vinci, entered the Hermitage in 1850 from the collection of the Dutch King Willem II and had been considered a work by Leonardo up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The painting had been called "Columbine" (the English "columbine" is another name for Aquilegia) and "Allegory of Vanity".

"Flora" by Melzi emerged in the sphere of influence of Leonardo's art: almost everything in the painting has its origins in his art — the type of woman's face with regular features and the glance, sweeping from under drooping eyelids, the elusive smile, the hairstyle, plants, depicted with the accuracy of a botanical atlas and a grotto as the place of action. Aristocratic elegance distinguishes the composition as a whole, as well as separate details. It is not only about the appearance of the goddess, but also the rhythm of the folds of clothing and the way a knot is tied on the sleeve cuffs. It was assumed that the artist portrayed one of the ladies of the court of Francis I. Melzi depicted Flora, the goddess of spring

FRANCESCO MELZI
Flora
 Italy, ca. 1520
 Oil on canvas
 transferred from wood
 76 × 63 cm
 © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

Efros A.M. // Artist Leonardo/Leonardo da Vinci.
 Selected works in two volumes. Volume 2. Moscow, 2010. pp. 50.

Da Vinci was "even ready to work together with his pupils, to put his brilliant brush on their canvases to make their art loftier and more refined than they were able to, those people of his school, Botticelli, de Predis, d'Odzhone and da Seslo etc. who were second-rate artists. He provided them with stencils of his compositions and sketches of his inventions. This was where a number of 'leonardeschi' came from."

A STUDY OF "FLORA" FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

- Characteristics of Pigments
- The study of artistic techniques, chronology and provenance
- Ultraviolet photography
- Infrared reflectography
- X-ray
- Timber examination
- Radiocarbon dating
- Stratigraphic analysis of paint layers with different microscopes



- Wooden base including three panels of different sizes
- The right panel differs from the other
- Wood: fir
- Several layers of lacquer, traces of repainting and restoration works
- The outlines of details are clear, there is no trace of pouncing
- Frequent use of white for face tones and shadows

The second "Flora",
 presented at the exhibition, was acquired by a private individual as "a magnificent copy of the Melzi painting" from the Hermitage. According to the catalog of the Christie's auction house, it is "Columbine or the portrait of a woman in the guise of Flora... a work by a follower of Leonardo who lived in the sixteenth century, ...it was described as Columbine in the eighteenth century."

bloom and patroness of plants, an image of classical antiquity, from which the art of the Renaissance eagerly borrowed. Numerous versions and copies of the "Flora", especially in France, proves the popularity the Melzi composition enjoyed. It is probable that Melzi, who created "Flora" in Italy, could have taken it with him to France (when he accompanied Leonardo in 1517), and where the painting was made by a local craftsman.

ANONYMOUS
Flora
 France
 EARLY 16TH CENTURY
 Oil on wood
 68 × 50,8 cm
 Private Collection

Research and restoration of the "Flora" painting from a private collection were carried out by researchers from the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Bologna (Ravenna campus, diagnostic laboratory of cultural heritage). The study of the artistic techniques allowed the determination of the chronological and geographical origin of the work. The painting from a private collection has an advantage over the Hermitage work, in that it was not transferred to canvas, but on the contrary, retained its base on wood. As a result of technical research, scientists have concluded that the panel was made of fir, which was the preferred material of the masters of Northern Europe. While clay without plaster was used as a primer, which was also typical for Transmontane artists, not for Italian ones. "Flora" from a private collection is a testament to the Leonardo da Vinci heritage. It is a very important work not only because of its artistic technique, but also because of its hidden symbolism.

THE PATRON OF THE ARTISTS

100 YEARS WITHOUT RESTORATION

IN MAY 2016, AN EXHIBITION FROM THE "RENEWED MASTERPIECES" SERIES WAS OPENED IN THE APOLLO HALL OF THE WINTER PALACE. THE EXHIBIT IS ENTITLED "ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN. ¹ 'ST. LUKE PAINTING THE MADONNA.' ON COMPLETION OF THE RESTORATION."



The painting came to the Hermitage in an unusual way. It was divided into two parts. The right-hand half, with the image of St. Luke, was purchased in 1850 from the collection of Willem II, King of the Netherlands, who was married to the daughter of Paul I, Anna Pavlovna. The left half, with the image of the Madonna and Child, was purchased in 1884 from the collection of the Parisian antique dealer Antoine Baer; it originated from the collection of Isabella II, Queen of Spain who lived in exile in France.

After connecting the two halves, the painting "St. Luke painting the Madonna" almost reacquired its original appearance. Almost — because it turned out to be deprived of the upper part of the composition, as well as having two restored sections: at the top of the half with St. Luke and at the bottom of the half with Madonna. Nowadays one can imagine the missing part of the top of the painting by comparing it with other three versions.

Currently, there are four versions of the painting "St. Luke painting the Madonna." One of them is stored in the State Hermitage, the other three are stored in the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston) in Alte Pinakothek (Munich), in the Groeninge Museum (Bruges). The "American" version is considered the first in the series, since the author's changes were identified on it with the use of infrared.

A composition of the painting by Rogier van der Weyden dates back to the missing work by Robert Campin "St. Luke painting the Madonna." At the same time one can parallel it with a work of an older contemporary of Rogier — Jan van Eyck — "The Madonna of Chancellor Rolin" (1435), stored in the Louvre.

In early 2013, after examining the artwork with infrared and ultraviolet rays, X-ray, studying the composition of the painting materials, both by the authors and the restorers, work on the restoration of the painting began. At the end of 2015 the restoration was over. A new reconstruction had been carried out, corresponding to the author's original composition, on the restorational work of the nineteenth century.

¹ Rogier van der Weyden (circa 1400–1464) — one of the outstanding artists of the 15th century — the golden age of Dutch painting, a pupil of the famous master of the Northern Renaissance Robert Campin, worked in Brussels. He contributed to Dutch painting by offering a new subject — human experience, and had a significant impact on his contemporaries and followers.

BEFORE RESTORATION



ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN
St. Luke Drawing the Virgin
 Netherlands, 15TH CENTURY. Oil on canvas. 102,5 × 108,5 cm
 © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

**THE PAINTING HAS GONE THROUGH SEVERAL RESTORATIONS
 DURING ITS STAY IN THE HERMITAGE**

In **1854** a cradle was attached to the part including St. Luke (the base of the painting was reinforced from the back to prevent it from warping) by Fedor Tabuntsov.

In **1867** this half was transferred from panel to canvas by the Hermitage restorer Alexander Sidorov.

In **1884**, after acquisition of the second half of the painting he transferred it from panel to canvas and pieced them together.

AFTER RESTORATION



BEFORE RESTORATION

"All these layers were getting darker and grayer, the lacquer was decomposing, it was all getting of dull indeterminate color, and, of course, it was felt that the painting lacked intensity, as if it was observed through dirty glass" (Valery Brovkin, restorer of easel painting of The State Hermitage).

IN THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION

a multi-layer, time darkened varnish was removed, old restorational repainting and mastic on the author's painting were also removed, losses of the author's painting were toned.

AFTER RESTORATION

We see the completely unveiled paint layer of the 15th century author.



- 1 | The throne of Our Lady decorated with a rich carpet, which was supposed to hang over her as a canopy, is depicted in the upper part of the missing painting.
- 2 | The Madonna is feeding the infant Christ, sitting in beautiful, richly decorated robes on the steps of his throne opposite St. Luke. Van der Weyden was able to simultaneously portray the face of the Madonna very naturally and perfectly. She looks with a mother's loving eyes at the babe as she tenderly holds him. When the restoration process was over, a little drop of milk on her chest, previously hidden with a dark decomposed varnish came into view. This is another nuance of the interpretation of an iconographic type "Milk-giver". A century later, in the middle of the sixteenth century, such images were prohibited, and they gradually disappeared in the Western European tradition.
- 3 | A scene of the temptation of Adam and Eve by the serpent who offered them an apple is depicted on the elbow of the throne of the Madonna.
- 4 | A woman with buckets of water goes up the stairs. A citizen stands at the entrance to the shop. There is speculation that this is an artist materials shop. Drying linen flaps above it by the windows of the first floor.
- 5 | If we complete the painting with the missing upper part, we see two figures standing at the stone wall of the bridge strictly in the center, at the intersection of the diagonals in the background of the composition. They are considered to be the figures of holy Joachim and Anne, parents of the Madonna. The restoration once again gave us the opportunity to see the left hand of St. Joachim, pointing to something happening far away. It was considered lost under later repaintings.

THE THEME OF THE EVANGELIST LUKE, PAINTING THE MADONNA, IT CAME TO WESTERN EUROPEAN PAINTING AROUND THE TWELFTH A PORTRAIT OF THE MADONNA FOR A LONG TIME, BUT COULD APPEARED TO HIM, AND THE EVANGELIST MANAGED TO PORTRAY IN EUROPE, AND HIS IMAGES ADORNED THE PREMISES OF MASTERS OF FLEMISH PAINTING AS ROBERT CAMPIN, ROGIER ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE THEME OF THE

COMES FROM THE BYZANTINE ART OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY. ACCORDING TO LEGEND, ST. LUKE TRIED TO PAINT NOT REMEMBER HER FEATURES. THEN THE VIRGIN MARY HER IMAGE. ST. LUKE WAS CONSIDERED THE PATRON OF ARTISTS PAINTERS GUILDS IN DIFFERENT CITIES. SUCH PROMINENT VAN DER WEYDEN, HUGO VAN DER GOES, AND MANY OTHERS EVANGELIST LUKE, PAINTING THE MADONNA.

- 6 | Horsemen ride in the distance, on the right bank. The lightness with which these small figures are depicted, the non-mechanistic character of their movements give us a feeling of a great artist's hand.
- 7 | Artists often identified themselves with Saint Luke, so many see a possible portrait resemblance to the painter himself in the image of the evangelist depicted by Rogier van der Weyden
- 8 | St. Luke holds a silver pencil in his hands — a typical tool of the artist at that time. He holds a pencil almost at right angles to the sheet, having carried away the brush to prevent the drawing from being smudged by his hands. This is a wonderful example of the art of drawing, which, we must conclude, Rogier van der Weyden knew perfectly.
- 9 | St. Luke is depicted in a pink and red coat with fur cuffs on the sleeves and collar and a brown cap on his head. An inkwell is hanging from his belt. There is a suggestion that it is the costume of the doctor that was used in the fourteenth century. However, it would be more correct to see here a robe and cap associated with the Catholic tradition; perhaps these are items of Abbey or cardinal clothing.
- 10 | There is an open book behind the Saint. It is a Gospel that Luke has just stopped writing. Now, after cleaning the repainting, an open inkwell next to the book has come into view.
- 11 | A head of a bull is depicted below — it is a symbol of St. Luke.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

JULY-OCTOBER 2016

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 80 YEARS, THE PUBLIC WILL SEE THE RESTORED PAINTING BY THE GREAT FLEMISH PAINTER OF THE XVII CENTURY FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM. UNTIL 1934 THE PAINTING WAS KEPT IN THE TRINITY CATHEDRAL OF THE ALEXANDER NEVSKY LAVRA AND WAS KNOWN OF ONLY FROM A FEW DESCRIPTIONS.

The painting by Rubens, created in 1610–1611, was acquired by Catherine II. The painting is listed in the first printed catalog of the Hermitage (1774), which is a list of the painting works collected by that time by the Russian Empress, and stored in the galleries and cabinets of the Imperial Palace in St. Petersburg.

In 1794 Catherine II donated it, among other works by foreign artists, to the Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, built shortly before. “The Resurrection of Christ,” adorned the altar of the temple for more than one hundred years, kept out of the view of experts and consequently did not enter into scientific circulation. When the cathedral was closed in 1934, the painting, placed on a roller, was given to the Hermitage, and remained inaccessible for research for nearly eighty years. Only in 2012, after the opening of the Restoration and Storage Centre of the Hermitage “Old Village” it became possible to move this painting of huge dimensions (482 × 278 cm) from the roller and begin its restoration.

The restoration was carried out in the Laboratory for Scientific Restoration of Easel Painting of the State Hermitage and lasted about three years. Eight art restorers led by Viktor Korobov, head of the Laboratory were put to work. The large size of the canvas, strongly warped due to a long period on the roller, a significant number of darkened repainting of different times which covered losses of the original painting, as well as the presence of layers of darkened varnish determined the complexity of the restoration process.

Cleaning the painting of repainting helped to identify the author’s painting, whose style is in line with the manner of Rubens’ first years after his return from Italy to Antwerp in December 1608. The sharp angles of figures, athletic bodies with enormously well-developed muscles,



PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

PIETER PAUL RUBENS
The Resurrection of Christ
Flanders. 1610–1611
Oil on canvas. 4,82 × 2,78 m
© The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg, 2016

"... It is easier to understand what is perceived by senses; such things influence us more strongly, and allow more careful consideration, because they give us more food for our curiosity than those that relate only to the field of imagination and appear for us in the twilight of mysterious words; three times, but in vain we try to get an insight into them (as Orpheus tried to get an insight into the words of Eurydice); they always escape and deceive our hopes."

Peter Paul Rubens. Letters to Frans Junius, Antwerp, August 1, 1637
[Masters of Art about Art: Selected excerpts from letters, diaries, speeches and treatises: in 4 volumes, vol. 1. M., L., 1937. 483 pp.]

extremely complex movements — all that distinguishes the works of Rubens, created during the period of his recognition as the greatest master of Antwerp.

During the restoration process, it became clear that Rubens had not finished the painting, he left only an underpainting and details of bodies at the bottom of the canvas. A torso of Christ and figures of two guards at the bottom of the foreground on the left turned out to be the most elaborated. The head of Christ remained in the underpainting. Below, in the foreground of the composition, a noticeable difference in the elaboration of the right hand and the left fist of the guard, which remained in the under painting, is also conspicuous.

As became apparent in the early stages of the restoration process, "The Resurrection of Christ" hadn't been preserved in its original form. The painting had been cut on the right side and had three extensions (made later, but in the seventeenth century): two narrow ones — horizontal and vertical — and a wide round one. The original painting format was rectangular. A figure of Christ was put at the left edge, at the top, and a figure of the guard crouching on the ground and shielding his face against the bright light with his hand was put at the bottom. A figure of the guard running in armor closed the composition on the right. This figure was originally displayed in full. A preparatory drawing (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam) provides proof of this. The drawing includes a depiction of the guard's legs and his arms bent at the elbow, holding a sword hilt. Until now, researchers haven't been able to associate this sketch with any painting. The guard is in collision with Christ. Perhaps, the guard figure was subsequently partially removed in order to neutralize an aggressive motive, and the original painting format was changed. As a result, the figure of Christ was shifted from the edge to the central axis of the painting, and thus took a leading position not only in meaning, but also in the geometry of the composition.

According to some indirect facts we can assume that the large formal painting was commissioned to Rubens for the old main altar of the Dominican church in Antwerp (now St. Paul's Church) by the prior of the monastery Michael Ofovius. But in the process of Rubens's painting "Resurrection of Christ" the customer was sent to serve in another city. John Bokelius who took his place likely had his own idea about the design of the church and commissioned the artist to make paintings of a smaller format and on other subjects. Perhaps that is why "The Resurrection of Christ" was not completed.

Sotheby's EST. 1744

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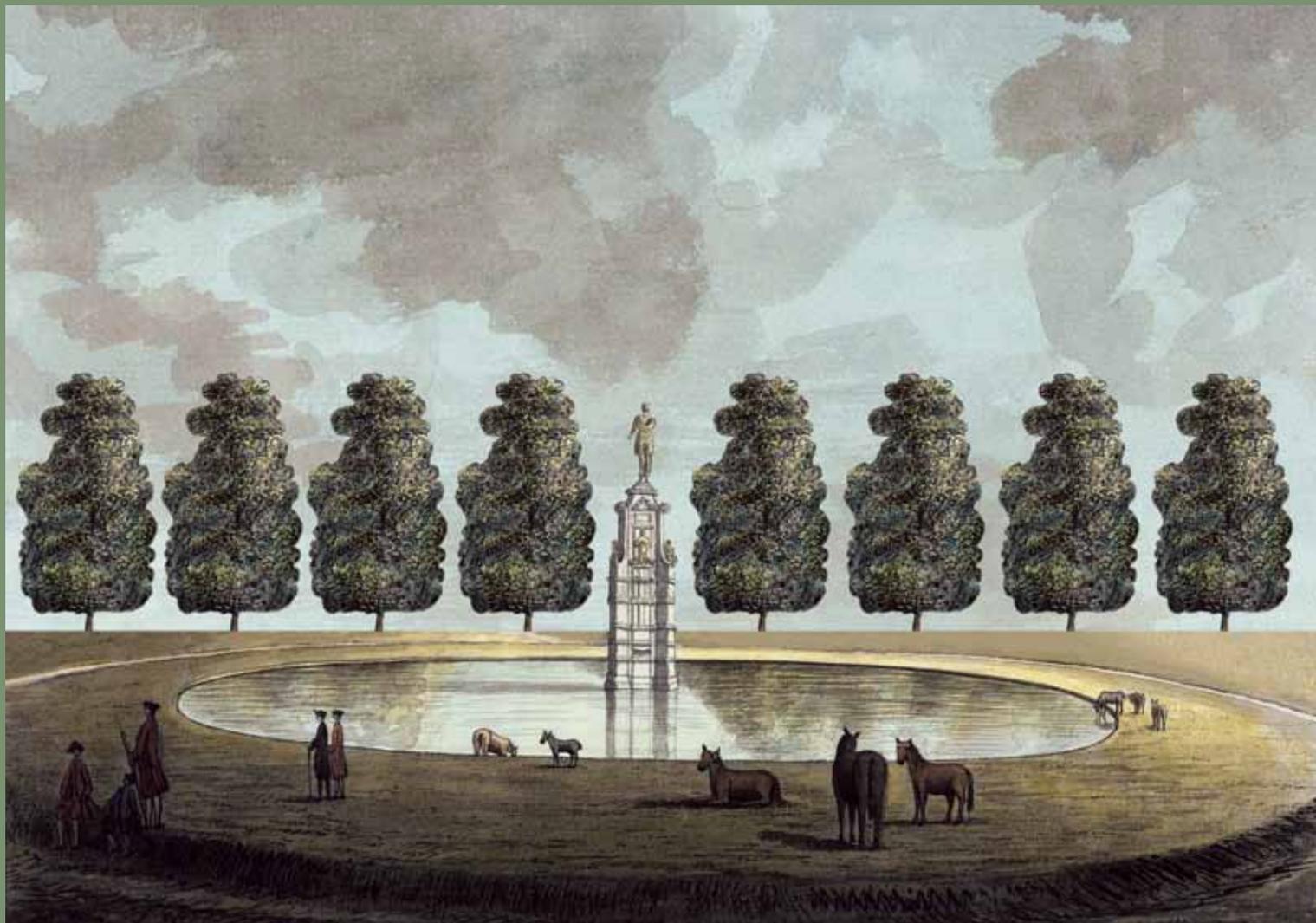
**IDA RUBINSTEIN
IN THE BALLET "CLEOPATRA" (1909),
COSTUME BY LEON BAKST**



Cocteau J. Cléopâtre // The Decorative Art of Leon Bakst /
Tr. H. Melvill. N.Y., 1972. p. 29–30.

“[She was standing] in front of us, slightly leaning forward, slightly inclining her head, as if she had ibis wings folded behind her back. On her head she had a small wig with short golden plaits on both sides of her face, and she stood in front of the enchanted public, her eyes empty and her lips half-open, mesmerizingly beautiful, like a poignant scent of some oriental perfume. <...> Madam Rubinstein engraved [Rimsky-Korsakov’s music] in her heart in the same way as the a night butterfly wings flutter fades away when it is pierced with a long blue-headed pin.”

This edition is a reprint of a catalogue of Bakst’s sketches for ballets with comments by Cocteau, first published by the Fine Arts Society in London in 1913.



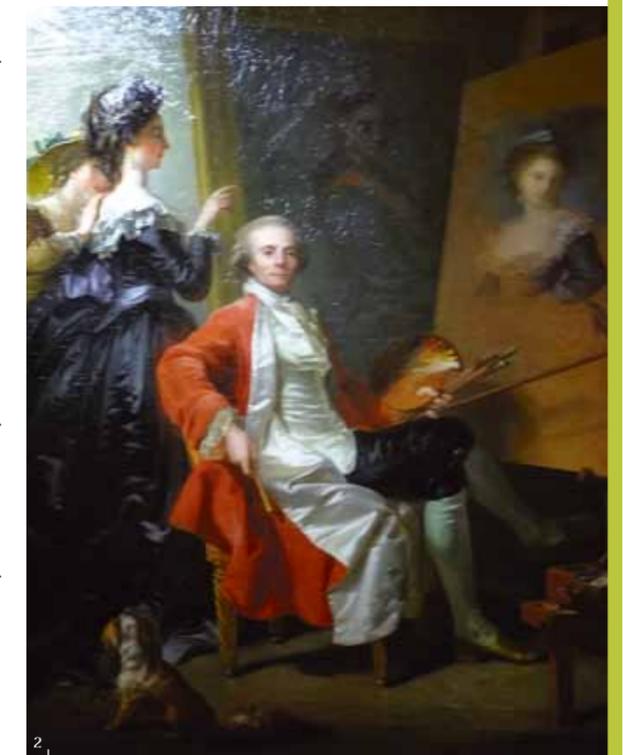
8

MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY
● PHOTO: FRANCESCA PAPASERGI



After Peter the Great the love of French art became a distinctive characteristic of Russian culture. This is why the Hermitage has a large and very diverse collection of French art, a collection which at the same time reflects the history of artistic taste in Russia. Catherine the Great was a tireless collector of great works of art and great masters, and the court followed her example. The names of Stroganov, Yusupov and others were well known on the art market in France. Catherine's taste was to a large extent determined by the ideas of the Enlightenment and love of classicism. As a result, there are large collections in Russia of such diverse painters as Poussin, Greuze and Le Nain brothers.

Catherine's epoch itself was very well expressed in the works by Walleau and Lancret. Hubert Robert was greatly appreciated in Russia – there are more than a hundred of his works in Russia. Russian aristocrats liked to commission portraits to Vigée Le Brun, who lived in Saint-Petersburg for a long time and became a member of Saint-Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts. French romantic painting was appreciated in Saint-Petersburg as well, and at the end of the nineteenth century Kushelev-Bezborodko had a great collection of Barbizon painters. In Moscow more radical art was preferred, and the cotton lords Shchukin and Morozov became famous for their stunning collections of impressionists and post-impressionists.



TURIN
"FROM CLASSICISM TO IMPRESSIONISM.
THREE CENTURIES OF FRENCH PAINTING IN THE HERMITAGE"
MARCH-JULY 2016

RUSSIAN FRANCE IN ITALY

THE EXHIBITION WAS PREPARED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PALAZZO MADAMA, TURIN, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FONDAZIONE TORINO MUSEI AND THE FONDAZIONE ERMITAGE ITALIA THROUGH THE AGENCY OF VILLAGGIO GLOBALE INT. AND IS TAKING PLACE UNDER THE AGREEMENT ON CULTURAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE STATE HERMITAGE AND THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY OF TURIN.

The Russian image of France represented by the Russian collections is quite unique and allows us to understand something about the particularities of the Russian soul. Among these particularities is also the great love of Italy which, as we can infer, was reflected even in the fact that many paintings shown at the exhibition were actually painted in Italy. Among them works by Poussin, Lorrain, Vernet and the famous masterpiece by Ingres, "Portrait of Count Nikolay Guryev".

For the exhibition in Turin the Hermitage restored several paintings, which have not been exhibited for a long time because of their state. They include the large painting "Saint Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, Pulling a Cross on Saint Genevieve" by Laurent de La Hyre, "Self-portrait with Daughters" by Jean-Laurent Mosnier, "Allegory of War" by François Perrier. Thus we are also demonstrating the work of our restorers and how thanks to restoration the paintings have re-acquired the names of their authors and the admiration of the public.

The remarkable painting by Carle Van Loo, "The Rest of Diana", was created as a sketch for a ceiling painting at Stupinigi, the residence of the Royal House of Savoy that is one of the chief tourist attractions in the environs of Turin.

Thus the Russian-French-Italian story beautifully comes full circle.

1 | **INSTALLATION OF THE EXHIBITION "FROM CLASSICISM TO IMPRESSIONISM. THREE CENTURIES OF FRENCH PAINTING" IN THE PALAZZO MADAMA**

2 | **Jean-Laurent Mosnier**
SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER IN HIS STUDIO WITH HIS WIFE AND SISTER-IN-LAW
France. 1786
Oil on canvas. 235 × 183 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

EXHIBITION AT THE BYZANTINE AND CHRISTIAN MUSEUM IN ATHENS
"THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM: GATEWAY TO HISTORY"
NOVEMBER 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017

GATEWAY TO HISTORY

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM, BOTH SAINT-PETERSBURG AND ATHENS ARE RELATIVELY YOUNG CITIES. WHEN THE BAVARIAN COURT ARCHITECT LEO VON KLENZE CAME TO THE FUTURE GREEK CAPITAL IN 1832 TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS PERSPECTIVE PLANNING THERE WERE JUST TWO DOZEN SMALL HOUSES NESTED BELOW THE ACROPOLIS. ONLY RUINS REMAINED OF THEIR FORMER GREATNESS. THE CITY HAD TO BE BUILT AGAIN, AND THIS IS WHY IT HAS KEPT THE CHARM OF THAT ROMANTIC EPOCH UNTIL TODAY.



It takes the shape of twisted wires... with figures of Scythian riders

MIKHAIL DEDINKIN

This explains the charm of the nineteenth century-built center of Athens, so familiar to inhabitants of Saint-Petersburg, the wide avenues surrounding the old king's palace, the vast square in front of it, which was once intended for military exercise, and has now become the location of civil uprisings.

The museum collections are very different though. In Athens they are mostly devoted to local antiquities. For a long time there was no large collection of foreign European art. The Benaki Museum, opened relatively recently, has not really made up for this shortfall. The Hermitage can demonstrate here the deepness and universality of its collections.

The aim of our exhibition is to familiarize the Greek audience with the Hermitage as a unique cultural phenomenon. It is a universal and viable format which unites under the same roof the maximum of European civilizations possible: from the earliest times of humanity to modern times, — and this format was already defined in the first years of existence of Catherine the Great's collection. She was, in reality, the first director of the museum, a person who thoroughly scrutinized not only the "architecture" of its collections, but all the details of its everyday existence. At the time, thanks to her energy and intelligence, in just 30 years a museum was created, one which not only met the aspirations of the age of Enlightenment, but which also put Russian art of the period after Peter the Great into the context of world and European artistic culture. The further development of the museum in the nineteenth century was a gradual emancipation of the court collection from the Winter Palace and its inhabitants. The contents of the museum was refined, the natural history collections were removed, different departments were replenished, such as "Antiquity", "Archeological Monuments", "Spanish Painting" and many others. In parallel to the active collections replenishment it was opened to the public on a regular basis: there was a possibility to move in the historical space from the Ancient Egypt to modern European and Russian painting and sculpture. In the twentieth century the museum collections and structure were greatly enriched, new independent departments were created for archeological research, Oriental art, contemporary and modern European art.

For this exhibition, which is limited in space due to the modest possibilities of the Byzantine Museum, works of art from the main Hermitage collections were selected. There are masterpieces of Scythian and antique gold, jewelry and decorative items from Russia, Europe and China. Most of the exhibition is devoted to the Picture Gallery, which is represented with masters from the Renaissance era (Bassano, Lollo, El Greco) to the twentieth century (Bonnard, Souline, Vogeler, Buffet); there is also an interesting selection of sculpture (Bandinelli, Canova, Bourdelle). It is of course only a very small-scale model of the Hermitage, but it shows its diversity and historical and artistic richness.

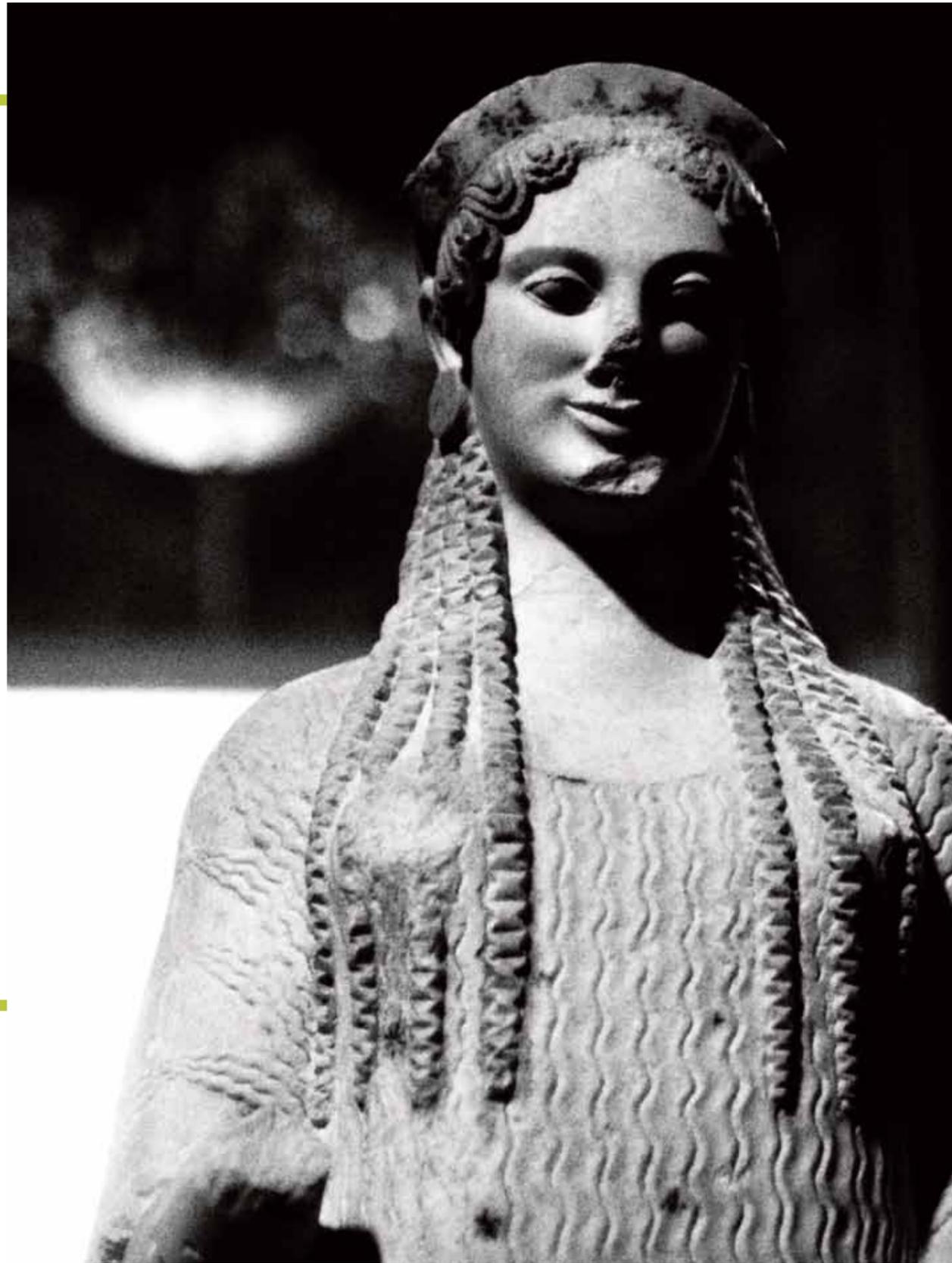


- 1 | **GOLD TORC WITH TERMINALS IN THE FORM OF HORSEMEN**
Greek workmanship
Gold, enamel. 4TH CENTURY BC
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016
- 2 | **VESSEL WITH A DEPICTION OF SCYTHIANS**
Greek workmanship
Gold. 4TH CENTURY BC
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016
- 3 | **PHIAL**
Greek workmanship
Gold. 4TH CENTURY BC
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016



PHOTO: ACROPOLIS MUSEUM ARCHIVES

THE EXHIBITION OF THE ANCIENT GREEK SCULPTURE OF A KORE
FROM THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM (ATHENS) CONTINUES THE CULTURAL EVENTS
OF THE BILATERAL YEAR OF GREECE AND RUSSIA 2016.



● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

THE EXHIBITION OF ONE MASTERPIECE FROM THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM
APRIL-OCTOBER 2016

ARCHAIC STATUE OF A KORE

A marble statue of a Kore carved by an Attic sculptor in 520–510 BC is displayed in the Roman Yard within the permanent exposition of the Department of Classical Antiquities. This Kore was found in 1886 on the Acropolis near the Erechtheum ¹.

The earliest known Korai statues date back to the seventh century BC, but the genuine rise of archaic sculpture in Athens takes place from the late sixth to the early fifth century BC. The Korai statues discovered on the Acropolis had a votive function, being dedicated to the Temple of Athena and erected as offerings to the goddess. Today they are known as “the daughters of the Acropolis”. In total about 200 sculptures depicting maidens have been found on the Acropolis. The Korai differ in size, features and details of hairstyle and clothing, but all the sculptures belong to the same type of statuary, with the figure presented in a frontal manner. The pose and composition of the statues continue the ancient Egyptian tradition, which is, however, completely rethought by the Greek sculptors of the archaic period, who breathed life into the static forms of ancient oriental sculpture.

Frequently the Korai are holding out some offering to the goddess — a pomegranate, wreath or bird, while the edge of their clothing is in their other hand. The maidens are dressed in an Ionian chiton, with its thin fabric following the forms of a woman's body. The statue of a Kore presented in the exhibition stands out for the distinctive manner of clothing depiction: the Ionian chiton is gathered with a belt in its upper part, forming an overlap at the waist, while a broad decorative edging descends along the line of the legs. The head is decorated with a diadem that retains depictions of lotus flowers and rosettes; earrings are shown on her earlobes and a bracelet on her arm. The chiton is covered with a depiction of little stars. A red meander pattern decorates its edging. Traces of painting remain on the face and hair ². The young maiden's narrow almond eyes radiate joy; corners of her lips are slightly lifted in an “Archaic smile”. This facial expression, characteristic of sculpture from the period, is considered to convey gratitude to the goddess.

THE STATUE OF A KORE 670 OF THE ACROPOLIS IN ATHENS. 520–510 BC
Attic workmanship. Parian marble, traces of paint on the face,
hair, clothes and jewellery. 1,15 m height.
Found 1886 on the Acropolis near Erechtheum. © Acropolis Museum



PHOTO: ALEXEY STUZHIN / TASS

ERECHTHEUM
421–406 BC
Acropolis, Athens

THE EXHIBITION "1917. ROMANOV AND THE REVOLUTION. THE END OF MONARCHY"
THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE
FEBRUARY-SEPTEMBER 2017

100 YEARS LATER

TAKING THE PLACE OF THE EXHIBITION ENTITLED "CATHERINE THE GREAT", A NEW EXHIBITION IS COMING TO THE NETHERLANDS. THE DECISION TO HOLD THIS EXHIBITION WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE AMSTERDAM SUBSIDIARY OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM WASN'T AN EASY ONE FOR EITHER PARTY. HOW IS ONE TO TELL THE DUTCH AUDIENCE ABOUT THE REVOLUTION OF THE YEAR 1917? CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIAN AND DUTCH COLLEAGUES LASTED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND LED TO THE FINAL DECISION: THE EXHIBITION WOULD TAKE PLACE.

SVETLANA DATSENKO

"Today, if we take a look at the statues of archaic Korai³, we will see a certain degree of coquetry, represented in the gesture of their left hand pulling the edge of a chiton. This gesture finds its interpretation in the verse of Sappho blaming a maiden for 'being unable a gown to enlase round her ankle' (Fragment 32, Veresaev). So here it is rather a matter of a symbolic gesture of a bride. It is possible that, similar to Cora (Persephone), the Korai with their bridal gesture symbolize a betrothal with Hades. But the gesture of the half-opened foot has also an obscene meaning. On a modiolus (a drinking cup) from Olbia⁴, in a grotesque depiction of the Judgement of Paris, with this gesture Hera offends Athena giving her a start. Probably, Iambe of Eleusis cheered Demeter with her indecent joke complementing it with this gesture. The smile of Demeter provided the blossoming of nature. <...> This whole ring of images closes around a mythical theme of a blossoming, fruit-bearing laughter⁵.

<...> This smile of archaic statues is a reflection of the radiant laughter of Gods. It originates from the encounter with gods, from an awareness of the divine. Archaic statues are the ever smiling representatives of gods. Their smile takes the place of other, more archaic gestures expressing the statue's presentation to the deity."

Malak D. Rilke on the "Archaic smile" //
Malak D. Antiquity and Truth: Articles on Ancient Art. Moscow, 2016.

The archaic statue of a Kore has never before been presented in the Hermitage. It is the first time that the sculpture has left the walls of the Acropolis Museum.

The Antiquities collections of the Hermitage Museum are renowned first of all for their Roman sculpture, while the pieces of early Greek plastic arts are almost not presented. The exposition of Greek sculpture of the archaic era is a big event for the guests of The State Hermitage Museum, admirers of Antiquity and art lovers.

¹ **The Erechtheion** (temple of Erechtheus) is one of the central temples in Classical Athens standing on the Acropolis north of Parthenon.

² Pediments of temples, friezes and marble statues in ancient Greece were painted in bright colours (Medieval cathedrals were painted in colours as well). In our time, the ideal of all-white Greek sculpture and the myth of White Greece arose after the writings of Ernest Renan, the French historian (1823–1892), who was to climb to the Parthenon in the mid 19th century to confront the white Parthenon with a colourful oriental culture. Yet already nineteenth century scientists argued that for ancient Greeks while meant incompleteness and disorder.

³ Refer to: *Richter G.M.A.* Korai: Maidens. London; New York, 1968.

⁴ Refer to: *Sidorova N.A., Tugusheva O.V., Zabelina V.S.* Ancient painted ceramics from the collection of The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts Moscow, 1985. No. 78; *Schwartz A.N.* On the subject of the vase with relief images found in Parulino // *Antiquities*. 1894. No. 11.

⁵ Refer to: *Propp V.Ya.* Russian Agrarian Feasts (The Experience of Historical Ethnographic Research). Leningrad, 1963.

The dramatic title of the exhibition determines the thematic narrative: 100 years after the events, to tell the European audience about the fall of monarchy in Russia, one of the most prosperous countries of the early 20th century. This is where the story begins. The viewer arrives in the luxurious world of beautiful Saint-Petersburg. In the Grand hall of the exhibition centre the guests will find themselves on Nevsky Prospekt. They will walk among the shining shop-windows of clothing stores in the Art Nouveau style; by the store of the Supplier of His Imperial Majesty Court Carl Fabergé; they will stop against the show-window filled with wonderful pieces of porcelain and glass made by imperial porcelain and glass factories from the Hermitage Applied and Decorative Arts collection of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.

Opposite the showcased clothes and jewellery the metalware looks especially modest, except that it is marked with the Fabergé brand. From the beginning of World War I the craftsmen of Fabergé had been working for the needs of the front, providing hospitals with sterilizers and syringes. Being a client of Fabergé, Nicholas II in Tsarskoye Selo used telegraph apparatus marked with the famous brand.

The next item is the "agitation window" with print examples of Russian propaganda in Japan during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. This war became one of the mistakes of a young



WINE BARRELS IN THE YARD OF THE HERMITAGE
1917



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN
TROOPS CALLED FROM THE FRONT BY THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT ON PALACE SQUARE
JULY 1917
Gelatin print
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

Photographer unknown

**MEETING OF PARTICIPANTS
OF THE 2ND COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
AT URITSKY SQUARE (PALACE SQUARE).**

Petrograd. 1920. Photomontage, gelatine print
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016



This photograph is one of the earliest examples of Soviet "photoshop". On 19 July, 1920 Victor Bulla took a photograph called "Lenin giving a speech in Petrograd on Palace Square". In February 1924 after Lenin's death, Red Niva magazine decided to use this photograph in an issue dedicated to the memory of Lenin. In order to emphasise the greatness of the leader, they came up with the idea of showing a sea of people in front of Lenin. Crowds were taken from another picture, multiplied many times and assembled with a photograph taken by Victor Bulla. Taking a closer look at this picture, one can see that different parts of it disagree in perspective.

Russian emperor and led to the tragic events of 1917–1918. A little further, one sees a collection of porcelain figures called "Nationalities of Russia", manufactured for the 300th anniversary of the House of Romanov.

The special focus of the curators is on the family of the last Russian emperor and the events that led to their death on the night of 17 July, 1918 in the basement of Ipaliev House in Ekaterinburg.

A unique document is on display. "The Book of the Population Census of the Russian Land" in a scarlet velvet binding has only a single lined page; on the page in a column of profession under the 1st number is written in the neat handwriting of Nicholas: "The Lord of the Russian Land".

Tsarskoye Selo; the private life of Nicholas and Alexandra Feodorovna; the birth of daughters; the expectation of the birth of an heir followed by desperation around his illness; finally, the year 1913 with the outbreak of World War I which held Europe in its grip. Telegram exchanges between Nicholas II and "cousin Willy", the influence of Grigori Raspulin, the photographs of the holy man with the empress, his hand-written letters to the front addressed to the emperor, touching letters of the crown prince to his father, such are the dramatic facts presented in documents and photographs.

The Manifesto on abdication, printed on a typewriter and signed by the emperor in the bottom corner of a page with an ordinary pencil, this is how the era of House of Romanov in Russia

came to an end. The era of changes promised by Vladimir Lenin from the roof of the armoured carriage "Enemy of the Capital"; many remember this image on a cover of the Soviet history textbooks of the 1980s. Today this armoured car is only a regular exhibit in St. Petersburg Military Historical Museum of Artillery but possibly it will also be brought to the exhibition in Amsterdam.

Numerous printed materials are in the exhibition: the satirical magazines and caricatures carefully kept by the Archive and Library of the State Hermitage. Many photographs of Winter Palace interiors after the October 1917 events in Petrograd are presented. Private rooms of the Imperial family were especially harmed during the riots, but Nicholas II's library has been preserved practically in its original state. It was the last pre-revolution interior created by F. Melzer and served as the private office of the Head of Provisional Government Alexander Kerensky in the summer of 1917.

The deportation of the Imperial family to Tobolsk and then to Ekaterinburg is presented in a laconic and tragic exposition: food coupons, photos from personal archive of the Family, a bayonet knife and Alexandra Feodorovna's diary opened on the last, empty page on July 17, 1917.

The unique documents, personal belongings, diaries and drawings of the Imperial family members are only a small part of all the exhibition materials kindly provided by the State Archive of the Russian Federation to the Hermitage during the preparation for this exhibition.

¹ The Hermitage Amsterdam exhibition centre is a subsidiary of The State Hermitage Museum in Netherlands, established in February 2004. Every year the centre houses two temporary exhibitions from collections of The State Hermitage Museum.

1917 Romanov & REVOLUTION

4 February | 17 September 2017

Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarevich Alexey, c.1910
© GARF, The State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow
Design: UNA designers

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HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM

FIVE SYMBOLS OF HAPPINESS

WELL-WISHING IN CHINESE ART

THE EXHIBITION "FIVE SYMBOLS OF HAPPINESS. WELL-WISHING IN CHINESE ART" SHOWED EXHIBITS KEPT IN THE ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM. THROUGH THE ARTWARE OF THE SEVENTEENTH TO TWENTIETH CENTURIES (ARTICLES MADE OF PORCELAIN, NEPHRITE, BRONZE, PAINTED ENAMEL AND CLOISSONNE, WOOD, LACQUER, BONE) THE EXHIBITION REFLECTS THE MAIN CHINESE SYMBOLS THAT MAY BE INTERPRETED AS GOOD WISHES.

THE HERMITAGE-VYBORG EXHIBITION CENTRE
APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2016



POPULAR PRINT
Liu Har Playing with Golden Toad
LATE 19TH CENTURY — EARLY 20TH CENTURY
Xylograph on paper, aniline paints. 34 × 58 cm
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

The collection of applied arts and crafts of China was formed in the Hermitage Museum during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. The second largest part of the exhibition showed popular pictures on paper of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries from the collection of V.M. Alekseev, that were given to the museum in 1960s. This collection complements the picture of popular perceptions of the Chinese and is especially interesting as an illustration of tales and beliefs. It may be considered rather unique, since the Hermitage collection of popular pictures is the largest in the world.

The exhibition attempts to expound the meaning concealed in pictures, forms, ornaments and hieroglyphs, — images surrounding the Chinese in everyday life, during celebrations and important events. Articles and popular pictures on display made it possible to understand various well wishing symbols that may seem obscure outside the Celestial Empire.

In Chinese tradition there has also been a symbolism of numbers, colours, elements and many other things. "Five" is an odd number which means it is masculine; it was used with many different concepts in the traditional culture of China. There are five basic elements, five cardinal directions, five tones in music etc. Sometimes this concept represents multitude. One can say man lives a happy life if he is given: wealth, dignity, health, long life, peace and serene old age. The exhibition showed and explained the brightest examples of these symbols, often met in different pieces and works of Chinese art.



Fu, Lu, Shou: The Three Deities of the Three Stars
EARLY 20TH CENTURY
Hanging scroll, silk, atlas,
satin stitch embroidery with coloured silk. 292 cm height.
© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2016

From his very birth, a man in China is followed by various traditional symbols, related to happiness and well-being during his life. These symbols reflect wishes for a man to have many male children, for his sons — to grow healthy and lucky, to obtain a good education, to pass exams and become civil servants, to get a good position and promotion, so that they become successful and wealthy. Then in their turn they are to marry, have many children, and what is especially important, to provide future generations with sons. The children must be attentive and respectful. They are wished a long life in abundance, to reach great age in peace and to die a natural death. The children have to fulfil obligations to seniors and to worship the spirits of the ancestors. All these views are combined in main good wishes: happiness, career path and longevity. Objects and images surrounding the Chinese form rebuses, formulas and allegories, intended for visual perception of these good wishes.

These views date back to ancient times, when a cult of ancestors spread in China. Souls of the dead must be worshipped, they must be glorified by deeds and receive sacrifices, in order not to turn into evil and hungry spirits. Only a male descendant can perform these rites, which is why the birth of a son is desired and even necessary.

In one form or another, these beliefs have survived until the present day, thus reflecting the continuity of the historical, religious and cultural traditions of the Chinese. Different objects and their decoration bear symbolic meaning and become jewellery, amulets, protections, invocation formulas, written in hieroglyphs and composed of images and ornamentation.

THE HERMITAGE-KAZAN EXHIBITION CENTRE
FEBRUARY-SEPTEMBER 2016

● PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN



IBN FADLAN'S JOURNEY: VOLGA RIVER ROUTE FROM BAGHDAD TO BULGAR

THE EXHIBITION INCLUDES OVER TWO THOUSAND ARTICLES, AMONG THEM PIECES OF APPLIED AND JEWELLERY ARTS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS, ARTWORKS OF CERAMISTS AND GLASS-BLOWERS OF THE NEAR EAST AND MIDDLE EAST; MANY OF WHICH ARE EXHIBITED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Ahmad Ibn Fadlan was the second emissary directed by Abbasid caliph in 921–922 to the king of the Volga Bulgars. He played a role of mediator between the world of Arabic civilization and the peoples of Eastern Europe in the era of the development of medieval states. His account (“journal” or “book”) became an invaluable source for ethnographic and historical information on the contemporary peoples living from Central Asia to Middle Volga, the lands where his mission travelled. Over the course of many decades the text of Ibn Fadlan has remained the subject of study and fierce debate of scientists in Russia and abroad. The present project is a new chapter and a new approach to this process. It combines the presentation of authentic items representing the culture and art of the ethnic groups described by Ibn Fadlan and a catalogue that includes a modern translation of his “journal”.

**THE VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION
IN THE HERMITAGE-KAZAN
EXHIBITION CENTRE**

The “journal” of Ibn Fadlan is a source of extraordinary importance for the history of Eastern Europe in the tenth century. Being a member of the embassy of Abbasid caliph (908–932), the author visited Volga Bulgaria. The voyage was undertaken upon the initiative of the ruler of Volga Bulgaria, who asked the caliph for protection and promised to accept Islam, seeking to get rid of the pressure from the Khazars. The embassy went forth from Baghdad in 921 and arrived in Volga Bulgaria in May 922. We know nothing about the outcome of this mission, but Ibn Fadlan (probably the second senior person of the embassy) sent back a detailed report on his journey, containing numerous unique records of ethnographic significance about Ghuzz Turks, Bashkirs,



EXHIBIT MATERIALS OF "IBN FADLAN'S JOURNEY" AT THE HERMITAGE-KAZAN EXHIBITION CENTRE



PLATE
Talinka. Clay, pottery wheel, engobe, painting, glaze
Khorasan or Transoxiana. 10TH CENTURY
Mardjani Foundation

Bulgars and Khazars. In addition, in Bulgar Ibn Fadlan had seen Rus' and left a detailed description of a funeral ceremony.

The report of Ibn Fadlan was broadly known in the Arab-Persian world. According to the thirteenth century geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi, who worked in the city of Merv, in his days this writing was widely known and many had it in Eastern Iran. Yaqut included some fragments from Ibn Fadlan's writing in his "Dictionary of Countries" which survived in several folios.

The only known folio of Ibn Fadlan's book was discovered by Orientalist A.Z.V. Togan (A.Z. Validov) in 1920s in the library at the tomb of Imam Ali Ibn Reza in Mashhad (Iran). Unfortunately, the ending of the manuscript is absent, and the number of pages lacking is not known. In 1937 a photocopy of the Mashhad manuscript was donated to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR from the government of Iran. On the basis of this copy A.P. Kovalevsky prepared and published a Russian version ¹. In 1956 he prepared another thoroughly revised and updated edition of the text.

Not only were Iranian ceramics, tenth century glassware, jewellery, weaponry and ethnic clothes, everyday utensils from the North Caucasus, Middle East, Central Asia, the Volga region, the Kama region and the Cis-Ural region: the epoch of Ibn Fadlan, cultures of the nationalities of the era, described by him, but others, those related to Khazar Khaganate, Volga Bulgaria and Ancient Rus'; the development of states, trade, cultural interactions of the pre-Mongol period, culture of the steppe peoples and population of the forest area and the influence of early medieval states... The exhibition is limited neither to the countries visited by Ibn Fadlan nor to the times of his journey.

There are many masterpieces among the objects presented. A dish decorated with "Hungarian horseman", Bulgar finger rings, Permian pendants and bells made by the Alans. One of the key exhibits is a Bulgar dirham that carries the same formula for referring to the Bulgar ruler as Ibn Fadlan cites — a rare example of the material confirmation of an ancient text. Along with examples of decorative and applied art, personal adornments, elements of a horse harness and weaponry, the display includes typical details of clothing and everyday utensils typical of one ethnic group or another, making it possible to compare by sight the degree of technological development and level of economic life in different areas.

This exhibition has been organized by the State Hermitage Museum in conjunction with Kazan Kremlin State Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve, the State Historical Museum, the State Museum of Oriental Art, the Mardjani Foundation for Support and Development of Research and Cultural Programmes, the Volgograd Regional Local History Museum, the Samara V. Alabin Museum for Historical and Regional Studies and the Astrakhan Historical and Architectural Museum Reserve.

¹ The Journey of Ibn Fadlan to Volga / translation and commentary by [A.P. Kovalevsky], edited by I.Yu. Krachkovsky. Moscow; Leningrad, 1939.



M.B. Piotrovsky at the opening of the exhibition:

"We often talk about museums' common space in Russia and today we show it to all at work. The core of this exhibition is authentic objects, representing the culture and art of nations, in some or other way described by Ibn Fadlan, The symbol of this world are the silver dirhams. They were symbols of wealth, prosperity and the spread of Islam. The present exhibition is even more pioneering than the exhibition which opened the Hermitage-Kazan ten years ago and was dedicated to the Golden Horde. This exhibition would be impossible without the participation of seven important Russian museums, and a project of equal scale will hardly be possible in the near future."

THE SPHINX OF DELFT

THE EXHIBITION "JOHANNES VERMEER. THE GEOGRAPHER" FROM THE SERIES "MASTERPIECES OF THE WORLD MUSEUMS IN THE HERMITAGE" WAS ARRANGED BY THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM AND STÄDEL MUSEUM (FRANKFURT AM MAIN). AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2016



JOHANNES VERMEER
The Geographer, 1669
Oil on canvas, 51,6 × 45,4 cm
Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main

PHOTO: RUSTAM ZAGIDULLIN

VERMEER ¹ IN HERMITAGE:

2001 — "Woman in Blue Reading a Letter" (1662-1664).

2011 — "The Love Letter" (1669-1670),
from the collection of Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

"The Geographer" was created in 1669. This is a work of rather small, so called cabinet size, signed by the artist twice ². Starting from 1713 and up to the end of the eighteenth century in all the collections "The Geographer" was accompanied by another similar, perhaps paired painting called "The Astronomer" (1668) (Louvre).

Creating "The Geographer" and "The Astronomer," Vermeer not only aimed to picture a scholar occupied with science, but also intended a wider, philosophical meaning. The globe, a symbol of the universum and the idea of the finiteness of human life, was one of the favourite motifs of seventeenth century paintings. Terrestrial and zodiacal globes are often found on commissioned portraits, genre scenes and Dutch still lifes. They play an important role in the paintings of Rembrandt and his school. One of the mysteries of "The Geographer" is the question of who the person depicted by Vermeer is. Some believe that the commissioner and the model of "The Geographer" and "The Astronomer" was the celebrated contemporary of Vermeer, Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) ³, appointed as a legal guardian of the painter's heirs in 1676.



JOHANNES VERMEER
The Geographer
(Fragment)

Jodocus Hondius' globe from 1600, which represents the universe and the idea of the finiteness of human life, was one of the favourite motifs of 17th century paintings. A globe together with an armillary sphere are also often seen on Dutch vanitas style still lifes.

- 1 — The exact date of birth unknown (baptised October 1632 in Delft, Netherlands), died 1675.
- 2 — With the use of extracts from scientific publication "Johannes Vermeer, The Geographer" (SPb.: The State Hermitage Publishing, 2016; text by I.A. Sokolova), and the books: *Wheelock A.K. Vermeer* (sic!). SPb., 1994; *Blum A. Vermeer et Thoré-Bürger*. Geneva, 1945.
- 3 — American researcher of Vermeer, Arthur Wheelock noted that the "methodically depicted maps and globes" appear on canvases of Vermeer after 1655, when Antoni van Leeuwenhoek started his study of lenses, astronomy and navigation.

"RUSSIAN" EPISODES IN THE HISTORY OF VERMEER PAINTINGS

A record of the "Russian history" of "The Geographer" was preserved by the oval stamp on the back of the canvas, reading "GALERIE DE SAN DONATO," and the faded red wax seal on the underframe. The reverse side of the canvas bears a sheet with a detailed list of all the collections to which the painting belonged from 1713 to 1872. Around 1877 in Paris "The Geographer" was purchased by Russian entrepreneur and patron of arts, Pavel Pavlovich Demidov (1839-1885). In early 1870s, having inherited the famous Villa San Donato in Florence, he settled in Italy. Here the patron of arts enriched the art collections, gathered by several generations of Demidovs, with the new acquisitions. But soon in 1880 Pavel Pavlovich decided to sell the Villa with its treasures and to move to a new estate, Villa di Pratolino. A great auction in San Donato started on 15 March 1880 and lasted for several days. According to auction sale catalogue, Vermeer's painting was numbered as "lot 1124".

"The Allegory of Faith" (currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) that was part of the collection of Dmitri Ivanovich Shchukin (1855-1932) in Moscow was mistakenly attributed to Eglogon van der Neer (1635-1703). Doubting the veracity of the attribution, the owner sent the painting abroad for examination, then gave it away.

"Mistress and Maid" (now in the Frick Collection, New York) until 1905 was owned by senator Alexander Alexandrovich Polovtsev (1832-1909), Saint-Petersburg. The painting left Russia before the Russian Revolution of 1917.

At the present time there are no works of Johannes Vermeer of Delft in the museums and collections of Russia.



THE INTERNATIONAL HERMITAGE FRIENDS' CLUB

THE INTERNATIONAL HERMITAGE FRIENDS' CLUB is a special program of The State Hermitage Museum that for the first time in Russia has united Friends around the museum. Over the years of its successful activity, the Hermitage Friends' Club has already implemented and is carrying out numerous museum development projects with the support of its many Friends all around the world.

In 2016, the International Hermitage Friends' Club celebrates its 20th anniversary.

The number of new Friends continues to grow, and the geography of Hermitage branches and Friends' organizations is steadily expanding. In 2015, a new organization — the Hermitage Friends' Club of Finland — was officially registered, becoming the seventh Hermitage Friends' society outside Russia.

For the Hermitage, every contribution is important. We are happy to introduce new programs and development projects for our Friends and look forward to enjoying their continued support. The new exhibition spaces in the General Staff Building and elsewhere open new and exciting opportunities for future collaborations.

Hermitage Friends' Club

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THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM INVITES ALL THOSE WHO CARE
ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS GREAT MUSEUM TO BECOME ITS FRIENDS.

YOUR PARTICIPATION WILL HELP US PRESERVE
THE HERMITAGE AND ITS TREASURES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS!

THE EXHIBITION "VYACHESLAV ZAITSEV IN THE HERMITAGE"
JULY-SEPTEMBER 2016

THE FIRST

HE WAS THE FIRST SOVIET AND RUSSIAN FASHION DESIGNER TO OPEN HIS OWN FASHION HOUSE, THE FIRST TO PRODUCE HIS OWN PERFUME, ONE OF THE FIRST TO BEGIN MARKING HIS COSTUMES WITH AN INDIVIDUAL BRAND, PROTESTING AGAINST COLLECTIVE AUTHORSHIP IN FASHION DESIGN ("SUCH-AND-SUCH A FASHION HOUSE..."). THE FIRST IN THE COUNTRY TO LAUNCH SPECTACULAR FASHION MODELS SHOWS, CREATING A GENUINE THEATRE OF FASHION WHERE THE SHOWS TURNED INTO PERFORMANCES WITH DRAMATURGY, STAGE DIRECTION AND MUSIC. HIS UNPARALLELED TALENT, VIGOROUS ENERGY AND INCREDIBLE WORKING CAPACITY HAVE CREATED THE PERSONAL PHENOMENON OF ZAITSEV, EVOKING INTENSE EMOTIONS FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS: FROM FANATICAL ADMIRATION TO COMPLETE REJECTION AND LACK OF UNDERSTANDING.



● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

The large-scale monographic exhibition of the distinguished Russian fashion designer includes more than 100 ensembles created by the Slava Zaitsev Moscow Fashion House over the past thirty years, as well as early drawings of clothing designs and photographs of the maestro.

"Russian fashion designers have historically been overshadowed by their western colleagues. Not in respect of their talent, ambition or artistic value of their designs, but only in regard to their fame which is conveyed by mass media. Now it is time to transform the situation. The State Hermitage Museum is the most recognized museum of Russia respected by art lovers of the entire world. Today it gives the world the opportunity to discover another lesser known part of Russian culture, and the treasures accumulated by this branch of art.

More than half a century ago I was to become a symbol of the Russian fashion for the West; for me it was not only a personal success, but also a great responsibility which I have borne all these years. I've made my purpose to learn the secrets of Beauty, Harmony and Love.

I have mined deep into myself, into my own and others thoughts and experiences, like a gold digger seeking out times, lives and feelings, dreaming of finding a nugget of the pure meaning of existence.

I aspired to it at all times and everywhere:
in fashion, in painting, in poetry.

The present exhibition in the Hermitage brings together thirteen collections created during three decades. It only seems that many years have gone, but the stories of the emergence of every collection are alive in my memory, as well as faces of the people I've worked with and thoughts and emotions that filled me then. Every image taken for the exhibition from my personal museum of fashion was selected after long deliberation.

Through the most successful examples of my work I attempted to show the characteristic features of my style: a combination of respectability and elegance, the beauty of national motifs and possibility of a modern understanding of historical heritage; the emphasis on the ensemble solution of a costume and the preservation of tailor's craft traditions.

The exhibition in the Hermitage is not only an exposition of costume; it is also the story of my life and my endeavour to establish and preserve Russia's first Fashion House".

**Professor Vyacheslav Zaitsev,
Laureate of the State Prize and People's Artist
of the Russian Federation,
a Full Member of the Russian Academy of Arts**

"The exhibition 'Vyacheslav Zaitsev in the Hermitage' was a real revelation not only for a wide audience, but for a specific professional society as well. For the first time, the central museum of the country and one of the greatest museums of the world, the State Hermitage Museum is housing clothing designs from more than thirty authorial collections created during thirty years of artist's activity.

In these decades the modern world has gone through great changes. Russia went through a loss of self-identity after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s back to the search of national idea in the mid 2010s. Together with his country, artist Slava Zaitsev has made the journey from tragic breakdown to a return to the roots of national existence. His personality was formed during the era of propaganda of Soviet ideals among the devastation of real Soviet life, and Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Zaitsev felt the urgent necessity to cultivate in

his contemporaries the understanding of fashion as a part of the aesthetic environment. Fashion, in his view, doesn't have to belong only to certain elite classes, it has to be a matter of course, be a part of general harmony, an indispensable reality of human life.

Encouraging good taste and bringing fashion to the people, Vyacheslav Zaitsev published articles in newspapers and magazines, giving lectures, arranging clothing design shows followed by authors' commentaries. Subsequently these fashion shows transformed the legendary Theatre of Fashion, and have toured the world in the 1990s, always to the huge delight of the audience".

**Nina Tarasova,
keeper of the costume collection, head of the Applied Art Sector
in the Department of Russian Culture of the State Hermitage**

The exhibition "Vyacheslav Zaitsev in the Hermitage" was organized by the State Hermitage together with the Slava Zaitsev Moscow Fashion House.

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN HOSPITAL. PETROGRAD, 1915-1917

INLAID INTO THE WALL OF THE BELOSELSKY BELOZERSKY PALACE ¹ ON NEVSKY PROSPEKT IS A SMALL OVAL BRASS PLAQUE, IT CONTAINS THE ARMS OF THE BRITISH AND RUSSIAN MONARCHIES EITHER SIDE OF A SIMPLE CROSS AND THE DATE "1915". IT COMMEMORATES THE ESTABLISHMENT ON THE SITE OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN HOSPITAL, A PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVE CONCEIVED IN LONDON BY A HIGH-POWERED COLLECTION OF INFLUENTIAL FIGURES AS "A GESTURE OF GOODWILL" TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE WHO WERE, AT THE TIME, SUFFERING EXCEPTIONALLY GRIEVOUS CASUALTIES DURING THE SECOND YEAR OF THE WAR.

CHARLES VIVIAN
● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVINA



CHARLES VIVIAN AT THE EXHIBITION ON THE CENTENARY OF THE OPENING OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN HOSPITAL IN BELOSELSKY-BELOZERSKY PALACE 2015

I was the brainchild of Lady Muriel Pagel ², a remarkable woman whom Harold Nicolson ³, when he came across her in Paris after the War, during the Treaty of Versailles negotiations, described as "...terrifying. She sends Prime Ministers scuffling on her behests..." An Appeal was launched in London and a Committee established; Queen Alexandra, the Queen Mother, whose sister was the mother of Tsar Nicholas II, became the Patron. The British Red Cross gave it their blessing, and the Russian Red Cross warmly welcomed the proposal; the British Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, writing in The Times, noted that it "authorizes me to say that it is not so much money, but a Hospital, equipped and staffed, that it needs at the present moment".

Funding was not, however, straightforward; it was assessed that to equip and operate a unit of 200 beds for one year would cost about £30,000. The Royal Family contributed £250, Canada provided £10,000, and there were several donations of over a thousand pounds. The Royal Scots Greys Regiment ⁴, of which the Tsar was Colonel-in-Chief, "endowed" five beds, country towns and districts followed suit, and the Royal Automobile Association donated four ambulances. Firms gave equipment, both medical and more general — even champagne which infringed the Defence of the Realm Act ⁵ under which no patient in hospital may be given alcohol without a medical prescription.

The building had not been easy to find as Petrograd was already bursting at the seams with casualties from the Front and with refugees. Mr Polovtsev, one of the heads of the Russian Red Cross, made it very clear to Lady Sybil Grey ⁶, who was leading the Advance Party in the absence of Lady Muriel who was ill, that "with the best will in the world considerable difficulty would be found in housing the Hospital adequately, owing to all the best buildings have been already taken." However, after the Stroganov Palace, the Winter Palace Hospital, even the German Embassy had been rejected — although it was noted that "most of the theatre sisters who work here are society ladies and wear big pearl ear-rings and quality rings" — the Dmitri Palace ⁷ was made available; and after extensive alterations, the first floor rooms became the 200-bed hospital.

However it could not be ready until the New Year; and for the first few months after their arrival the medical and nursing staff had to sit, freezing, at the Berlitz Language School ⁸ learning Russian, or in the Winter Palace making bandages ⁹. A Russian Colonel admired their pluck but commented that they seemed always to be crying — in vain: "Where is my hot water tap? Where is my Crosse and Blackwell jam?" Finally it was ready and on 1st February 1916, the Hospital was officially opened by the Dowager Empress in company with the Tsarina, five Grand Duchesses and two Grand Dukes.

It was designed for the care and convalescence only of "other ranks" — no officers — and only of the seriously wounded. Lady Muriel's original plan had been to establish

a Field Hospital at the Front; but the advice from the Russian Red Cross was that a base hospital would, at the time, be more useful and that mobile units could be formed later if needed. In the event two such units were established with staff from the Hospital later in the year; they were deployed on the Volhynia/Galicia Fronts and became the main focus of the Hospital's activities.

But the Dmitri Palace remained the medical and administrative hub of the whole enterprise — and at the end of December 1916 had a walk-on part in another: the assassination of Rasputin. The Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich, "a nice, attractive-looking boy, but very dissipated" according to Lady Sybil Grey, was Prince Yusupov's principal accessory in the murder; and it was to the rooms which he had retained on the ground-floor of the Palace that General Maximovich came to arrest them both in the evening of 1st January 1917. The Hospital continued its medical activities largely isolated from the revolutionary mayhem which subsequently affected the city throughout the year; although it had a ringside seat, it remained unaffected but did provide medical support to the wounded, both civilian and military. In January 1918 both the Hospital and its Field units finally suspended their operations and their staff returned home via the Far East.

It had been a remarkable and noble enterprise. Dr Andrew Fleming, the Commandant and first Medical Director of the Hospital, summed up their achievements towards the end of 1916: "We had established a base hospital in the capital second to none; we had organized in the field two most useful units, and had a large fleet of motor ambulances running, which was of immense value at the Russian front with its great distances and absence of railway facilities. We had, moreover, established good relations with our Russian allies, and had been to them a model of British appreciation and sympathy."

The memorial plaque is inside the Palace on the right-hand side of the entrance door; it was unveiled there in a ceremony in June 1996. It was not so grand an occasion as that of the official opening of the Hospital which it commemorates; but in place of the Dowager Empress, Vladimir Yaklovlev, the Chairman of the St. Petersburg Cultural Affairs Committee, gave a charming speech. He said that the plaque was special because it was a memorial to kindness.



A DISPLAY FROM THE EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO THE CENTENARY OF THE OPENING OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN HOSPITAL IN BELOSELSKY-BELOZERSKY PALACE 2015

1. Beloselsky-Belozersky Palace, St. Sergius Palace (rebuilt in 1847-1848 by the architect Al Shtakensneider) is situated at the crossing of Nevsky Prospekt and Fontanka river.
2. Lady Muriel Evelyn Vernon Pagel (1876-1938) — eldest daughter of Murray Finch-Hallton, who was the 12th Earl of Winchelsea, Lincolnshire; married Richard Arthur Surtees Pagel in 1897.
3. Harold Nicholson (1886-1968) — British diplomat, politician, historian.
4. Royal Regiment of Scots Dragoons (from 1681, United Kingdom) — Royal Regiment of Scots Dragoon Guards (gray). In 1971 the regiment was merged with the Guards Carabiniers regiment of Prince of Wales and is now called Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys).
5. Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) was adopted in the United Kingdom the 8th of August, 1914, four days after its entry to the First World War, and gave to the government broad powers during the hostilities.
6. Lady Sybil Gray (1882-1966) — the second daughter of Albert Henry, the fourth Earl Grey, who has been a Governor-General of Canada for a long time. Lady Sybil organized a hospital in the Hawick Hall estate in Northumberland in the beginning of the First World War. She arrived in Russia in October 1915.
7. The Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich, who owned the Beloselsky-Belozersky Palace in 1914.
8. Berlitz Language School was founded in the UK in 1877; in 1900 a network of educational centers was started worldwide, including Russia.
9. Hospital for the lower ranks in the Winter Palace under the patronage of Crown Prince Alexei worked from the 10th of October, 1915 to the 28th of October, 1917.

127 MISTAKES

CHEGODAEV AND OTHERS. MEMORIES OF AN ARGUMENT



● **SERGEY ANDROSOV**
● PHOTO: NATALIA CHASOVITINA

RECALLING A RECENT DISCUSSION ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW WESTERN ART, IT IS INTERESTING TO REFRESH THE EVENTS OF THE LONG PASSED 1987. THE DISCUSSION ABOUT THE FATE AND FORTUNES OF ART HISTORY WAS STARTED BY ANDREY DMITRIEVICH CHEGODAEV (1905-1994), DOCTOR OF ART HISTORY AND THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS PUBLICATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF ARTS.

Today, if you look up his name on the internet, you will find out that he was a prince, a descendant of Genghis Khan and a son-in-law of Mikhail Gershenzon. At the height of his professional life, the respected art historian held the position of head of the Classic Art Department in the All-Soviet Union Institute for Study of Art in Moscow for many years (from 1967 to 1991). At that time he never showed off his noble origins.

On 31 January 1987 Soviet Culture, the paper of the USSR Communist Party's Central Committee, published his article "The Science of Art: A Sign of Anxiety". There the author gave quite a critical assessment of the state of art studies in our country. Having listed names of leading art historians of the past, he complained about the present generation. The responsibility was imposed on universities in Moscow and Leningrad: "Renowned, recognized scientists are present here in a small number". There, according to the author's knowledge Moscow State University, "things work in such a way, that random people enter the university", which means people are taken by protection. As an example, the decline of Ancient Egypt studies: "...academician Boris Piotrovsky was to close down the department of Egyptology in Leningrad University when teaching Egyptologists have died and there were no successors..."

Chegodaev strongly criticized his alma mater Institute for Art Study as well. Passed over from the direction of Academy of Sciences to the Ministry for Culture, "the Institute has filled with fellows who have little to do with the science of art history and produced various 'research', 'programmes', 'recommendations', 'memorandums' etc. for the ministry..."

Chegodaev commented with exceptional rigour on the activity of the "compelling organization" — the USSR Institute of Theory and History of Pictorial Arts of the USSR Academy of Arts. The multi-volume "Art History of Peoples of the USSR" published by this Institute was described by him in the following manner: "The text on Russian art before the Revolution is a careless and brief compilation of someone else's long-obsolete

books, filled with crude errors. The text on Soviet Russian art is either a boring descriptive listing of artists (where they all look the same) or a deliberate rewriting of history".

The situation in museums, according to Chegodaev, wasn't any better: "I remember bright and talented young scientists who were starting to work in the Hermitage... But, probably due to the museums' scientific environment, they do not usually operate on the cutting edge of science; they faded and turned into scientifically inactive 'museum dames' of either sex or they quit the Hermitage". Special critical attention was given to a small-scale exposition of Manet in Hermitage: "...on eight pages of a short exhibition catalogue on the Louvre's eight paintings by Édouard Manet, I have encountered one hundred and twenty seven mistakes!"

Unfortunately, many points of Chegodaev's article are valid. But the rough and inconsiderate tone of the article created a feeling of rejection and a desire to object to the author who held the guiding role in the science of art studies for many years. Only when he retired in very advanced age, did he launch this critical address to his colleagues which was rather reminiscent of a report to the authorities.

Meanwhile feedback on the article of Chegodaev started to appear. Some doubtful characters admired the uncompromising directness of the author; such letters could have been composed by the newspaper editorial staff itself.

In the Hermitage this article was also under discussion. Somebody even demanded after the article that an estimate of the disgraceful things

**SERGEY OLEGOVICH ANDROSOV
IN HIS OFFICE.
HERMITAGE, SEPTEMBER 2016**



taking place be given (so that a reckoning could be made!). It was clear that it would be impossible to maintain silence. When I asked Boris Piotrovsky his opinion on this matter, maybe to avoid the uncomfortable subject, he suggested that I write a response to Chegodaev and promised to sign it if he liked it.

It was clear that the discussion regarding art studies was to be made more moderate and objective. At the same time I was to stand up to Chegodaev's defamation of the Hermitage. Boris Piotrovsky was sick at that moment, but given the importance of the matter, I visited him at his apartment on the Moika and he read my draft of the article. He added a few words about the Egyptology department which was soon to open, and signed the article. The text was immediately retyped and sent to Moscow.

Then quite a long period of waiting followed. Finally, on 9 April, 1987 "Soviet Culture" printed the article by Boris Piotrovsky with a new title given by the editors: "In the darkest colours". In general, the text was quite restrained and

presented a reflection on the science and museums in particular. Its principal issues seem to be relevant up to this. The article suggested that with the development of focused specialization, the broad vision, characteristic of previous generations, to some extent had been lost. Modern art studies tend to be more exact, not to say limited, often concentrated on a single subject. On the other hand, museums have to develop research of the individual pieces of art making their collections. Therefore, apart from exhibition catalogues, it is required to produce collections' catalogues with publication and the scientific processing of artworks. This part of art studies progresses successfully in the Hermitage, as evidenced by first catalogues of painting collections, published at that time in conjunction with the Italian publishing house Giunti.

We had to respond to the notorious "127 mistakes" as well. The thing was that the exhibition of Édouard Manet from the Musée d'Orsay (not the Louvre) was prepared by A.G. Barskaya (1909–1984) who dedicated her life to the study of this great painter. However, when the agreement on carrying out the exhibition was finally reached, Barskaya had already died. The introductory note was entrusted to B.A. Zernov, who created a vivid image of Manet the painter, perhaps, having made a number of inaccuracies in details. In any case, there was nothing close to 127 mistakes. In order to reject this accusation of Chegodaev, we had to use the notion made, as far as I remember, by A.G. Kostenevich: in his book¹ Chegodaev spelled the last name Manet with "э" ("Манэ"), while Zernov used the more traditional in Russia "Мане".

The debate raised by the article of Chegodaev lasted to the end of May. The editorial staff of "Soviet Culture" persisted in not publishing the responses of both institutes studying art history. At last, their articles were printed too: the one by Institute of Academy of Arts on 30 April and the one by the Institute for the Study of Art on 2 May. The latter was followed by editorial commentary emphasizing Chegodaev's fidelity to principle as

opposed to the narrowly departmental positions of both institutes who was merely defending their reputation. The closing passage made a declaratory diagnosis: "The science of art studies requires a major overhaul in the spirit of our time". It was obvious, that the "spirit of our time" meant Perestroika.

But the discussion went beyond the printed articles. Chegodaev decided to reply to Boris Piotrovsky in a private letter which was seemingly sent out to other participants of the argument too. Piotrovsky himself gave me this nine-page letter dated 10 April, 1987.

Chegodaev was beginning with the assurances of his deepest respect to our Director, "a true great scientist", but felt the need to respond with a letter "quite sharply, without any omissions or watering down", and didn't mind making this letter available to the public.

In Chegodaev's opinion, our answer was not composed by Boris Piotrovsky personally: "As you finished reading the final text, I guess, you have removed the most striking barbarities and absurdities. But not all of them..."

The most irritating thing for Chegodaev was our explanation of the origin of 127 mistakes. "You want to make me a total moron in this striking passage" regarding the 127 mistakes. According to him, the problem was obviously not the difference in the spelling of the painter's name, but "very real, ignorant and silly" mistakes. "In the nearest future I will send to you, Boris Borisovich, from 20 to 30 examples of the most striking mistakes, and when I publish the full list of one hundred twenty seven points, I will submit it as well".

On the offensive, Chegodaev tried to accuse Piotrovsky of not knowing the real situation in the Hermitage. This was followed by unfounded accusations of people badgered in the museum and accusations of plagiarism that we take the liberty not to discuss here due to their complete absurdity.

We believe, the evidence provided here is quite enough to see the rude and aggressive nature of this letter from Chegodaev. Nevertheless,

on the penultimate page of his writing, the author made a still more expressive revelation: "My article is one of those commissioned by the very high instances, those written and printed in order to break the bureaucratic barrier, to highlight all the malignant tumours, neglecting any corporate interests. Perhaps, you didn't notice the place and time of my article's publication. Why would you take a step that is obviously wrong, to defend things that were done and still are being done behind your back? In many respects the Hermitage has long since turned into something dubious, quite in the spirit of the Brezhnev-Chernenko era".

Apparently, Boris Piotrovsky decided not to reply to such a letter. Nonetheless, the professor of Moscow State University V.N. Grashchenkov also having received a copy of this missive and indignant with Chegodaev's attempt to make him an ally, gave it a well-deserved estimate in his letter to Piotrovsky dated 23 April 1987: "I have no words to describe my resentment over the boorish and aggressive letter addressed to you by Chegodaev. This inferior letter stems from his pathological vanity and foolish insinuations, always a characteristic of Chegodaev. It defames in a rude manner the professional team of the Hermitage and blemishes the Art Studies Department of Moscow State University. But you stood up for their honour in your article, published in "Soviet Culture" on 9 April this year. At last, your article has given a rebuff to A.D. Chegodaev's crude and unfounded accusations against the Hermitage and his arrogant ignorance about the achievements of Soviet contemporary science in the field of art history. All who really value our professions and care for them have read your article with a deep appreciation".

In my memoirs I tried to be objective, avoiding detailed commentaries. But the quotes above speak for themselves. Today we can see that the heated discussion and arguments of 1987 were only a preparation for other, far more painful controversies that embraced the country in the following decades.

¹ Chegodaev A.D. Édouard Manet. Moscow, 1985.

HERMITAGE BOOKS



THE CRANACH FAMILY.

Between Renaissance and Mannerism

Exhibition "The Cranachs. Between Renaissance and Mannerism", organized by the State Hermitage together with donations from the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, continues the series of exhibitions dedicated to the 500 year anniversary of Lucas Cranach the younger, son of one of the most famous artists of Germany, Lucas Cranach the elder. More than 80 exhibits from Russian and foreign museums as well as private collections, illustrate German art of the end of the fifteenth century and the adherents of the creative work of the Cranach dynasty.



NETSUKE.

Miniature sculptures from Japan from private collections: the exhibition catalogue

The exhibition catalogue includes 185 pieces of Japanese engravers. Netsuke is a small trinket, used in the 17th–19th centuries in Japan to strengthen the belt to carry necessary accessories: tobacco pouches or boxes for medicines. The figurines were carved out of wood or ivory in the shape of animals, mythical creatures, comical characters from urban fairs or talismanic gods. In the 18th century they turned from utilitarian items into real works of art, which were used to decorate the outfits of Samurai and wealthy townspeople.



Rogier van der Weyden.

SAINT LUKE DRAWING THE MADONNA.

Towards the completion of restoration

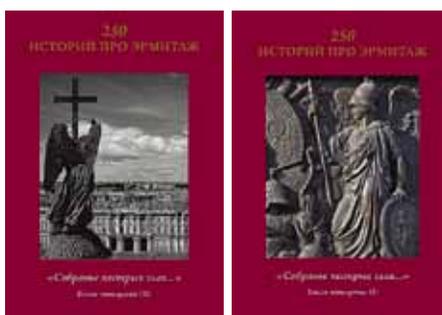
This edition introduces the reader to the history and progress of the restoration of the painting by Rogier van der Weyden "Saint Luke drawing the Madonna". The restoration helped to view the picture in a new light, to see her freed from many of the later retouches and the yellowing varnish, which distorted the perception of its colour. The book contains extensive illustrative material, which allows a consideration of the nuances which were not visible to the naked eye.



THE ART OF CLOCKMAKING.

Clocks of the 16th–17th centuries from the Hermitage collection: exhibition catalogue.

The catalogue acquaints the reader with unique examples of European clockmaking — the first indoor clocks and pocket mechanical watches of the 16th to 17th centuries, as well as with their precursors: solar, lunar and astronomical time measuring devices. In the early period clocks were made of rare, expensive materials and intended primarily for high state officials, influential people and the nobility. In Russia the clock came into use in the 16th century, and shortly became the object of collections.



250 STORIES ABOUT THE HERMITAGE: In 5 books. Book Four

The fourth book (in two parts) of the five volume edition of "250 stories about Hermitage" devoted to the fate of the museum during the two great wars of the 20th century. The first part contains the stories of people, events and things related to the first world war; on the preparations for the evacuation of the Hermitage treasures which began long before the announcement of the attack of Hitler's Germany on the Soviet Union; on the removal of children of employees of the State Hermitage from Leningrad and the trial they endured during transit; about the sending of masterpieces by train to the Urals and the life of the Hermitage staff in the Sverdlovsk branch of the Museum.



Guseva, N.Y.

RUSSIAN FINE FURNITURE OF THE 18TH CENTURY IN THE HERMITAGE COLLECTION

The publication is devoted to Russian furniture of the 18th century in the collection of the State Hermitage. This collection is the largest in Russia in terms of the number of its monuments, and in the diversity of constructive and decorative solutions. The earliest designs date back to the rule of Peter the Great, when Russian furniture art, oriented to the West, began to develop in line with popular European trends.

Founded in 2009 to support research and publishing initiatives, and projects in modern and contemporary art of the State Hermitage Museum

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