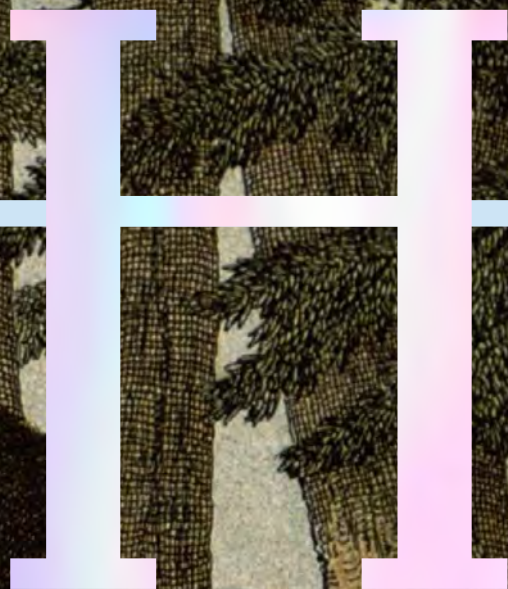


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P. 58



ISSUE #30

HERMITAGE MAGAZINE

NEAR BUT FAR ◀ THE OWLS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM ◀
THE MOTHERS OF FINNISH MODERNISM ◀ GESAMTKUNSTWERK
FOR EVERY DAY ◀ THE CHOCOLATE RATION ◀



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PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

COVER

B. HAMMEL.
Gray bear, Three foxes, Two raccoons
on a tree trunk (fragments)
 Incomplete suite of images of animals
 from the book
The world in pictures,
wild animals from all parts of the world...
 The State Hermitage Museum
 Inv. No. OF-400580, OF-400581, OF-400540

The artworks in this issue's colophon are by Antti Laitinen (Finland). These works have been exhibited at the Finnish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2013); The Liverpool Biennale, UK (2010) and other exhibitions worldwide.
 © Antti Laitinen. *Self-Portrait on the Swamp*, 2002
 © Antti Laitinen. *It's My Island VI*, 2007
 © Antti Laitinen. *Broken Landscape III*, 2017

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EDELFEIT IS BACK

MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY
DIRECTOR, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
23 MAY 2020

The first exhibit to return to us, having being stranded far from St. Petersburg because of the quarantine measures and border closures, arrived at the Hermitage a few days ago. Albert Edelfelt's painting *Good Friends* by is back from Finland, along with his painting *Children* (from the Rybinsk Museum and Reserve). You can read about the stories behind both of these artworks in this issue of the magazine. Another painting is currently on its way from Italy. International road traffic is resuming, but slowly and with a new rulebook. The van driver will have to spend two weeks in quarantine. In a departure from museum tradition, custodians are no longer able to escort their exhibits. The museum world is divided and has been scrambled up in space and time. The cooperation and exchange programmes discussed below have been transformed into a dynamic, changeable "neural network." The Hermitage's El Greco is stuck in Rome, the Assyrian reliefs from the British Museum are in the Hermitage (and we are paying insurance premiums on them), the Marc Quinn show has been delayed by a year, and we have had to postpone the Knights exhibition because *Jewels!* has been extended at the Hermitage Amsterdam Exhibition Centre, due to reopen soon.

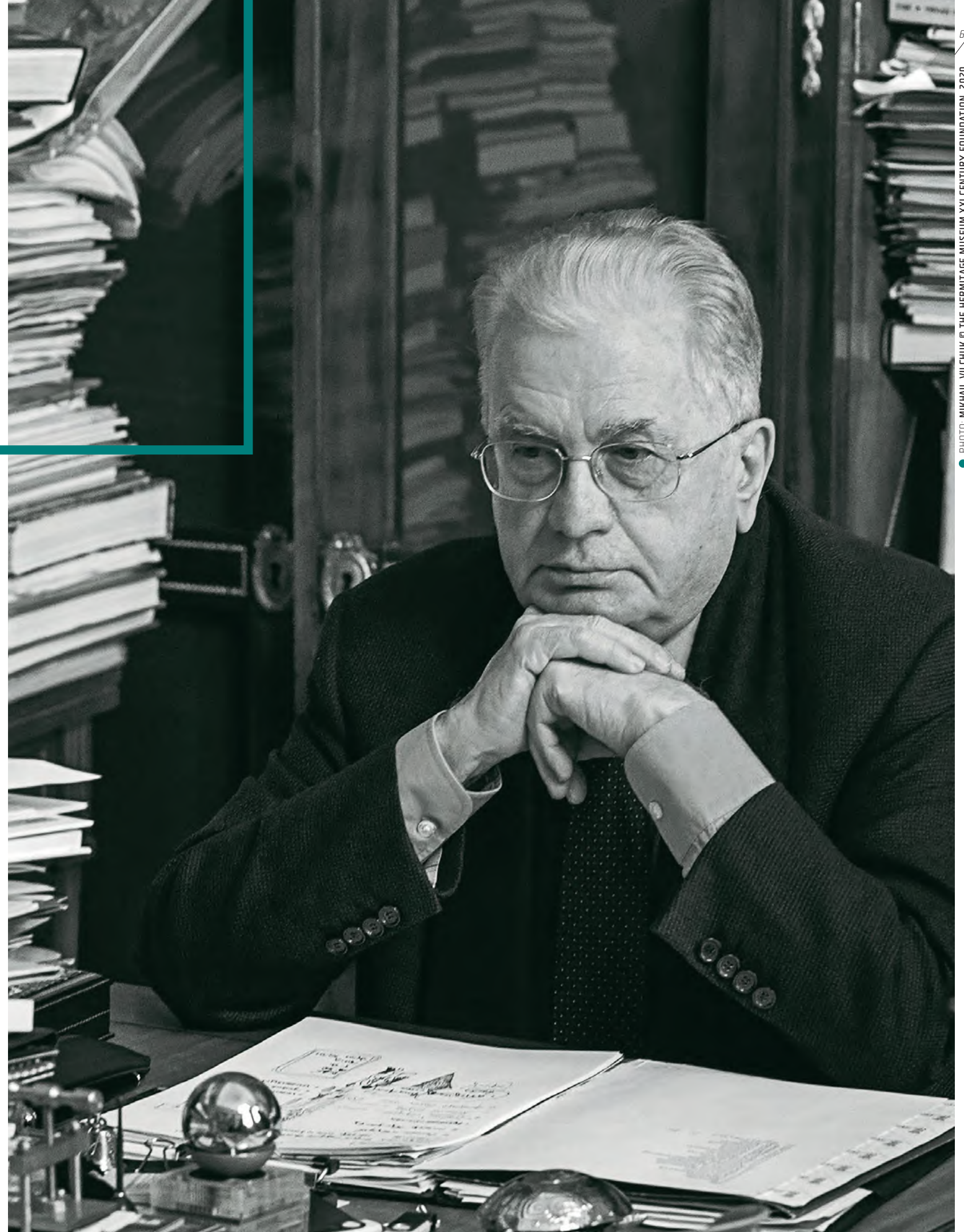
The curbing of unrestricted freedom of movement, regarded by many as a prime source of all kinds of infection, drives the world towards insulation instead of globalisation. This could be a major throwback for culture, returning it not just to a less permissive place, but to a less enlightened place in general. Museums are bridges between nations. We must maintain them, whatever it takes. We need to persevere like the heroes of this issue, the actors of the theatre company of *The Unseeing Eye*, who overcame unfathomable obstacles in their quest for vision, assisted by our long-time friends and partners the PRO ARTE Foundation.

Our first exhibit returned from Finland, but not only because of Finland's proximity. The Hermitage has long worked with other organisations to forge creative solutions for the continuity of museum partnerships – solutions that never deny the

past, but instead embrace the precarious turning points in our history and historical memory. Our partnerships have given rise to exhibitions, seminars, student internships, and Hermitage Days in Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, and Retreli. These lies were born in the Silver Age, from the tastes of the *Mir Iskusslva* artists, exhibitions of Nordic artists, and the Northern Art Nouveau dimension of St. Petersburg's architecture. We have our own repertoire of Finnish motifs at the Hermitage. To us, Gallen-Kallela is an artist who exhibited with Mir Iskusslva, Edelfelt a portraitist of the St. Petersburg nobility, and Mannerheim a Russian Guards Officer and explorer of the Orient. We have hosted Sibelius memorial festivals in our theatre, and we have staged an exhibition celebrating the global significance of Finnish modernist design and its influences in Russian art. The possession of a watercolour sketch design by Saarinen Sr. makes us part of the line that can be drawn between late pre-1917 St. Petersburg architecture and the early high-rise towers of New York.

With the establishment of the Hermitage-Vyborg Centre, the legacy of the great Finnish architect Uno Ullberg shone anew. Just like Ullberg had intended, his famous building on a cliff now houses an art school and a picture gallery. The artworks from the original gallery had found new homes in various Finnish museums, so the revitalised gallery in Vyborg periodically plays host to art masterpieces from the Hermitage collection. The Hermitage made sure the labelling inside the centre was done in three languages: Russian, English, and Finnish. There is now a Friends of the Hermitage Society in Finland.

The seeds of many different fruits are encapsulated in historical memory. The Hermitage carefully propagates the good ones. We never lose sight of the fondly appreciative characterisation of Finns offered by Alexandre Benois, a discerning art critic and former art custodian at the Hermitage. His words are highlighted in this issue. This issue of the magazine tells the story of our museum's external lies as they arose and in great detail. Today this is no longer merely a good story – it is a resonant statement of commitment to a cultural globalisation that enriches every nation.



The Hermitage Endowment Fund serves to provide the necessary autonomy, independence and stability for the museum.

Mikhail Piotrovsky
General Director
of the State Hermitage Museum

The revenue from the Fund is used to augment the Hermitage's museum collection. The last acquisition made with the Fund support was a unique collection of Western European art of the XI - XVII centuries

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THE WORLD
IN THE HERMITAGE

THE HERMITAGE IN THE WORLD

EL GRECO'S SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
FROM THE STATE HERMITAGE COLLECTION

The Hermitage's painting *Saints Peter and Paul* is one of the later works of Domenikos Theotokopoulos (1541-1614), an artist from the island of Crete whose work would come to be considered the epitome of the Spanish spirit.

El Greco, as he was nicknamed in Spain, is one of the world's most powerful and original artists; his works cannot be classified as part of any one national school. A Greek by birth, he studied painting in Italy in the studio of the great Titian, where he was strongly influenced by the Venetian colourists. It was from them that he learned the technique of oil painting. At the age of 35, El Greco moved to Toledo, the ancient

El Greco (Domenikos Theotocopoulos)
Aposlles Peter and Paul
State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
Inv. № GE-390



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Sergei Androsov, Head of the Department of Western European Art at the State Hermitage Museum, and Alda Fendi, President of the Alda Fendi Foundation, at the ceremony of the exhibition opening
December 14, 2019. Palazzo Velabro, Rome



PHOTO: © FONDAZIONE ALDA FENDI, 2019

capital of Spain, where he encountered realistic Spanish art. He was also inspired by Italian Mannerism. El Greco is known for his unique, dramatic, and expressive style. In his portraits, he placed significant emphasis on expressing the subtle psychological characteristics of his subjects.

The Hermitage canvas shows two different types of people. On the left is Peter the Apostle, who thrice renounced Christ after he had been captured. He appears sad and uncertain; his gaze and gestures communicate supplication and remorse. The imperious Paul, who is known to have started as a zealous persecutor of Christians, looks as if he is spiritually on fire in the affirmation of the gospel. The master may have actually endowed Paul with some of his own physical features. The hand gestures that form the compositional centre convey the dialogue that unites the two apostles.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul narrates the story depicted in the painting: "Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, 'If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?'"

Saints Peter and Paul, painted by El Greco in Spain between 1587 and 1592, predates a series of paintings known as the *Apostolados* — images of Christ and the twelve Apostles, each image depicting a profound psychological aspect.

THE ART OF THE BELSKYS

The Belsky brothers played a special role in the history of 18th-century Russian painting. The Belskys — Ivan (1719–1799), Alexey (1729–1796), and Efim (1730–1778) — were the best artists of the painting team of the Chancellery (later the Office) of Buildings of Her Imperial Majesty.

For over half a century, the Belskys took on the most important painting commissions by Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine II. They mastered vast ceiling paintings for palaces and small images equally well and executed both murals and easel paintings.

“It is with a great taste that Ivan Belsky and his brothers Alexey and Efim create historical paintings and ceiling paintings under Valeriani’s supervision in Tsarskoe Selo and other imperial palaces. The youngest brother is particularly gifted in painting flowers and borders in a manner inspired by Antonio Peresinotti”, noted Jacob von Stäehlin in his study on 18th-century Russian art.¹

Ivan Belsky also worked as an inspector of “mosaic art” for almost 30 years. After the death of Mikhail Lomonosov in 1765, the mosaic factory suspended its operations. The workers, as Von Shtelin notes, “were twiddling their thumbs while waiting for further orders from the Senate or Chancellery.” But as early as the following year mosaic production resumed “under the supervision of Ivan Belsky, an experienced Russian painter and student of the famous Valeriani... Under the glorious reign of Empress Catherine II or, more specifically, at... the new facility of the mosaics factory, which was now controlled by the Chancellery of Buildings... an old man’s head was copied from Rubens’ original

Mikhail Belsky
Portrait of a history and geography teacher Baudouin with two students of the Academy of Arts first and third age

BETWEEN JANUARY 24 AND MAY 17, 1773
The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg

Mikhail Belsky
Joseph with the baby Christ

LATE 1780S – EARLY 1790S
The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM,
ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



Unknown Artist, 18th-century
St John the Evangelist

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ЭРЖ – 2459

Unknown Artist, 18th-century
St Mark the Evangelist

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ЭРЖ – 2458

Unknown Artist, 18th-century
St Luke the Evangelist

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ЭРЖ – 2460



magnificent work provided by Count Stroganoff.” Under Belsky’s supervision, a student of Lomonosov’s, Matvey Vasiliev, “created such a splendid mosaic that a few paces away it was mistaken for the original.”²

It was only Ivan’s eldest son, Mikhail Belsky (1753–1794), who followed in the artistic family’s footsteps.

The exhibition marked 300 years since the birth of Ivan Belsky, 290 since Alexey and Efim’s, and the 225th anniversary of Mikhail Belsky’s death. Among the works by Ivan Belsky displayed as part of this exhibition were his paintings and icons from the Church of the Nativity of Christ in Peski. Paintings by Alexey Belsky that were selected for this exhibition included a series of works commissioned by the Smolny Institute of Noble Maidens. The exhibition featured approximately 40 paintings and graphic works from the collections of the State Russian Museum, the State Hermitage Museum, and the State Tretyakov Gallery.

¹ _____ Jacob von Stäehlin’s Notes on the Fine Arts in Russia [Записки Якоба Штелина об изящных искусствах в России]: in 2 volumes. Moscow. : Iskusslvo, 1990. V. 1. P. 66.
² _____ Ibid. C. 122–123, 127.

Alexei Belsky
Mural for the School of the Academy of Fine Arts. Never Be Idle. Ne soyes jamais oisive

Not after 29 July 1769
The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg



The exhibition *Tsars and Knights* sheds light on the early 19th-century revival of the romantic medieval world at the Russian court.

TSARS AND KNIGHTS, THE ROMANOV'S
LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE MIDDLE AGES

In the second half of 2020 the Hermitage Amsterdam will present *Tsars and Knights, the Romanovs' Love Affair with the Middle Ages*. The exhibition will tell an entrancing tale of tsars and medieval knights through more than 250 items brought to Amsterdam from the Western European medieval art collection and the arsenal collection of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. In the late 18th and early 19th-centuries, many people in Europe fell under the spell of a romantic nostalgia for a distant era: the Middle Ages. There was a genuine revival, which spread to many different spheres of culture and sparked a craze for collecting medieval *objects d'art*. The passion was shared by the Russian court. Tsar Alexander III snapped up a celebrated medieval art collection that was about to be auctioned off in Paris, to the fury of the French. Tsars Paul and Nicholas I both contributed to the vogue for the age of chivalry, the latter by beginning a collection of arms and armour. These three tsars laid the groundwork for the present-day medieval collection and the arsenal collection at the State Hermitage – an assemblage of masterpieces that has expanded over time to become world-famous. Now, for the first time, a number of the best items from the medieval art and arsenal collections are being brought to the Netherlands. They tell a tale of knights and ladies, of courtly love and tournaments, and of the Russian court's admiration for it all.



Bronzino, Angelo
(Agnolo di Cosimo di Mariano),
circa 1503-1572
*Portrait of Duke Alessandro
de' Medici (1510-1537)*
The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-5426

*Lamp with an Arabic
Inscription*
The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. No. ЕГ-494



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Column
The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. No. Ф-219

*Reliquary Casket
with the Christmas
and the Flight into Egypt*
The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. No. Ф-180



*Miniature image from a medieval manuscript
of The Romance of the Rose*
Authors of the allegorical novel in verse:
Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meun (Clopinel).
Painter of the miniatures: Boethius L'Allemagne of
Bourges
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Manuscript Inv. No. ОРр-5

Roman de la Rose, the Basilewsky collection, and the armour of Charles V

One of the themes of the exhibition will be courtly love: the chaste devotion between the sexes so widely celebrated in the literature of the Middle Ages. A high point will be a magnificently illuminated copy of the *Roman de la Rose*, one of the most famous works in all of medieval literature. The erotically charged love story dates from the 13th-century and enjoyed an enduring popularity due to its mixture of courtly details and more explicitly sexual features.



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Hugo van der Goes
Adoration of the Magi
(Triptych)
The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-403



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Central to the exhibition, however, will be the medieval art collection of Paris-based collector Alexander Basilewski. When he decided to sell it in 1884, the collection numbered around 750 items. Just as it was about to be auctioned off, Tsar Alexander III paid a record sum to purchase it. The exhibition will feature many of the best items from the collection, including: a rare gilded reliquary casket from about 1200, produced in the Limoges region of France and adorned with scenes from the Flight into Egypt; small panels from an ivory quadriptych showing New Testament scenes; and a precious reliquary bust of St. Thecla (c. 1325–50), now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

The exhibition will also showcase around twenty complete suits of armour, spectacularly displayed in an atmosphere of chivalric splendour and culminating in a tournament. Particularly noteworthy examples are the armour of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, a unique 16th-century suit of armour specially adapted for use by Tsar Nicholas I, and a German suit of tournament jousting armour dating from around 1500 and weighing around fifty kilograms.



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Reliquary bust of St Thecla
UPPER RHINE REGION, STRASBOURG, C.
1290–1300 AND/OR 1325–50
Silver, copper, enamel, glass,
precious stones, gilding



PHOTO: © RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM

Diptych with Gospel Scenes
The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. № Ф-43

TO BE EXPECTED

Tsars and Knights

THE ROMANOV'S
LOVE AFFAIR
WITH THE
MIDDLE AGES

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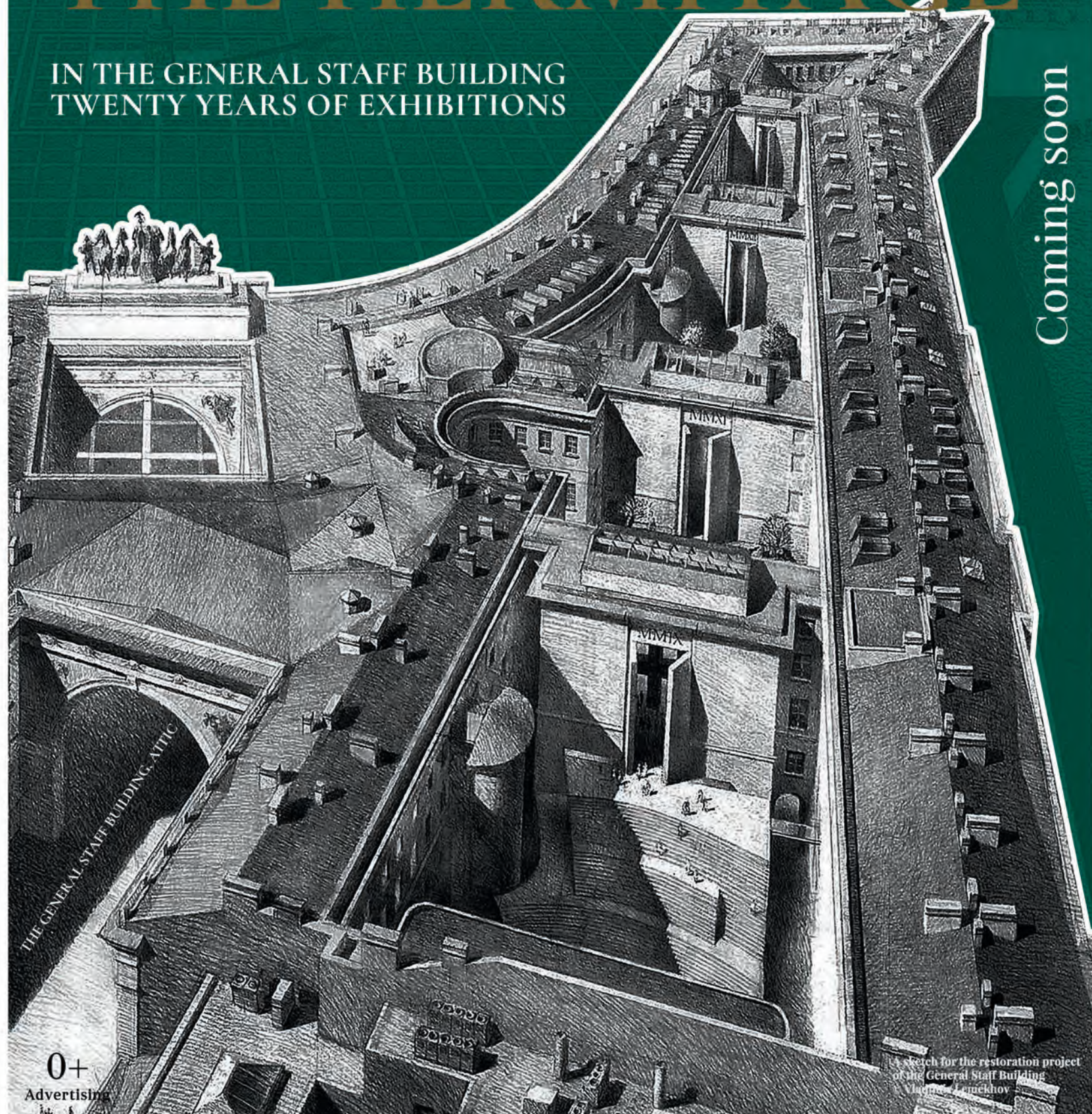
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HERMITAGE-SIBERIA CENTRE, OMSK
8 NOVEMBER 2019 – 24 MAY 2020

Turkish-Arabic Shield

The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. № B.O.-1063

Helmet

The State Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg
Inv. № B.O.-1258

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director, The State Hermitage Museum

“The formidable role of military servicemen in a state called for their social status to be appropriately emphasised. Decorated personal arms served precisely this purpose. They were tokens of wealth, respect, the ruler’s gratitude (when received as gifts), and good fortune (when they were trophies). As a status symbol, weapons inspired both craftsmen and artists. The former would make them sharp and durable, while the latter would turn commemorative inscriptions into masterpieces of calligraphy and sword hilts into matchless pieces of jewellery. They also devised intricate gem-cutting methods and invented ingenious gold and silver inlaying techniques to use on helmets. The multifaceted Hermitage opens its new satellite museum in Omsk — Hermitage-Siberia — with the ceremonial fanfare of the clangour of arms on parade.”

“SWORD IN HAND...”
WARRIOR CULTURE AND WEAPONRY TRADITIONS
OF THE MIDDLE EAST

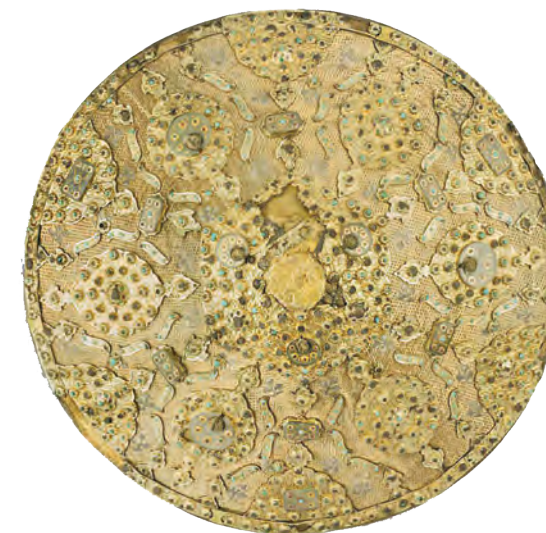


PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Numbering more than 400 exhibits, this is the largest Hermitage exhibition Omsk has ever seen. It goes beyond the theme of weapons to highlight an extensive cultural layer of the peoples of the Middle East.

The dagger from Yemen was Empress Maria Alexandrovna’s poignant gift to her husband, Alexander I of Russia. The *kilij* scimitar, gifted to young Nicholas I, began the collection at the armoury at Tsarskoye Selo, which later became the Hermitage Armoury. The belt, sabre with sheath, and horse trappings were some of the diplomatic gifts to Alexander II from the Khudayar Khan of Kokand. The horse headpiece was received by the Emperor as a gift from the Emir of Bukhara. And the velvet and brocade horsecloth with gold stitching was a gift to Nicholas II from the Khan of Khiva.

The array of Russian helmets and Turkish *zischägge* illuminates the artistic borrowing that occurred between the Russians and the Turks. The elegant Caucasus daggers are not nearly as flowery as their Persian counterparts. The personal belongings of those in Imam Shamil’s circle, as well as the Imam’s own military decorations, are echoed in an elaborate fashion in the weapons of the Emperor’s mountain guards. The Indian arms are also most impressive. The armour is known as *Chihal’ta Hazar Masha*, or the *Attire of a Thousand Nails*. The helmet bearing the images of Hindu gods is one of the treasures of the Hermitage collection. And some new additions – items from the Mahdist State in Sudan – are on public display for the first time.

MOSCOW STATE MUSEUM-RESERVE
KOLOMENSKOYE-IZMAILOVO-LYUBLINO
13 NOVEMBER 2019 — 16 FEBRUARY 2020

This exhibition was focused on the everyday life of the family of the last Russian Emperor, Nicholas II, and particularly on his children – Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia and their brother and heir to the throne Grand Duke Alexei. Chronologically, it covered a period beginning with their birth and continuing through their youth, with special emphasis on their education and upbringing. The final months of the royal family’s stay in Ekaterinburg and their tragic death were not included.

THE CHILDREN’S WORLD OF THE FAMILY
OF EMPEROR NICHOLAS II.
OLGA, TATIANA, MARIA, ANASTASIA, AND ALEXEI

The items in the exhibition were limited to objects that once belonged to members of the imperial family, and are now part of the State Hermitage Museum’s collection or the State Archives of the Russian Federation. There were also several family photographs of the last Romanovs, as Nicholas II and his family were very keen on photography. We thus have numerous pictures of them, including stills of a young Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra, as well as some of their parents – Emperor Alexander III and Empress Maria and the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse, Louis IV and Alice.



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Doll in National Costume
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭДР3-2712

Doll
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭДР3-2715



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Toy Cat
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭДТ-14796



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Visitors were able to follow the children of the last Russian monarchs through their childhood, looking at the grand duchesses’ dresses and Alexei’s suits, toys from the State Hermitage collection, themed family photographs from the State Archives.

Nicholas II and Alexandra Feodorovna’s daughters were divided into pairs: the elder sisters, Olga and Tatiana, and the younger sisters, Maria and Anastasia. Each pair shared a bedroom and a classroom, and each pair would have their lessons together. In one section of the exhibition, the curators attempted to recreate the atmosphere of the girls’ rooms, displaying portraits of them from 1904 to 1914, their hats, personal belongings, diaries, letters, greeting cards, and drawings.

The curators focused on Tsarevich Alexei individually. The long-awaited heir to the throne was deeply loved by his parents and sisters. They spent a great deal of time together, playing games and doing other activities. Despite his debilitating haemophilia, the tsarevich still tried to live the life of an ordinary boy, with lessons and games on the rare occasions when his health allowed. To recreate the heir’s daily life more precisely, the State Hermitage and the State Archives provided his children’s military uniform, toys, letters, drawings, workbooks, and lesson timetables from their collections.

This exhibition dedicated to the Romanovs recalls another recent project – the huge exhibition at the State Hermitage to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution, *The Winter Palace and the Hermitage. 1917. History Was Made Here*. Some of the objects that were on display in the Winter Palace in 2017 were also exhibited in Kolomenskoye – Princess Tatiana’s evening dress, the children’s stuffed toys, and Tsarevich Alexei’s officer uniform.

FROM NEO-CLASSICISM TO IMPRESSIONISM.
19TH-CENTURY FRENCH PAINTING AND
SCULPTURE FROM THE HERMITAGE COLLECTION

The collection of French paintings from the late 18th to the mid 19th-century is one of the most interesting in the Hermitage. Chronologically, the paintings span a period that begins with the late 18th-century, Neo-Classicism of the school of Jacques-Louis David, and concludes with the academic salon art of the second half of the 19th-century, contemporary with Impressionism.

Of the 500 paintings currently included in this collection, 38 are being exhibited in Vyborg, alongside 36 bronze, marble, and terracotta sculptures.

The earliest works featured at the exhibition are paintings dating back to the Age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution, 1789–1799. Among these are portraits of Enlightenment figures, such as famous philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (painted by “Lefort”) and naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (painted by François Henri Mulard). Both paintings were created in 1790 in the studio of the great painter Jacques-Louis David.

Unknown French artist

LATE 18TH-CENTURY

Allegory of the French Revolution

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Inv. No ГЭ-10234



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

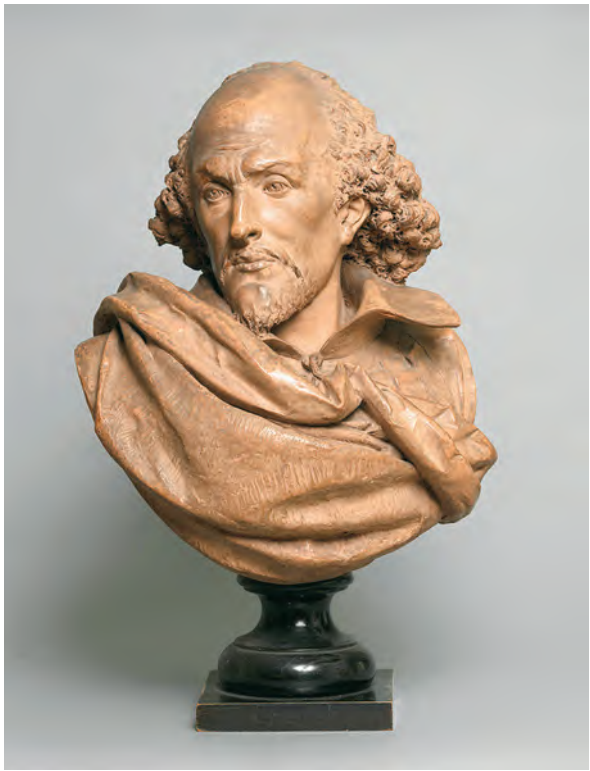


PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Pierre-Jean David d'Angers
Portrait of Émile Jean-Horace Vernet
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No H.ck-2081

Albert-Ernst Carrier-Belleuse
Portrait of William Shakespeare
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No H.ck-963

Alfred de Dreux
Pug Dog in an Armchair
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ГЭ-3865



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

It is possible that David is pictured among the figures seen in *Allegory of the French Revolution* (c. 1795). There is no doubt, however, that this painting — attributed to Nicolas-Antoine Taunay — depicts both Marat and Robespierre. Despite the allegorical nature of the painting, the artist's disapproval of the Reign of Terror installed by Marat, Robespierre, and their associates is evident.

All of the main painting genres of the 19th century are represented in the exhibition — portraiture, animal painting (canvasses by de Dreux and Bachereau-Reverchon), landscapes (a piece by Orientalist painter Prosper Marilhat), and genre painting (Auguste Toulmouche's girl reading a book). A number of works can be classified as “comical”, including the particularly interesting *Politicians in the Tuileries Gardens* by Louis-Léopold Boilly.

This exhibition shows the variety of styles that existed in French painting of the 19th-century — Neo-Classicism (in the works of Jean-Jacques Lagrenée the younger), Romanticism (Ary Scheffer and Horace Vernet), Realism (in landscapes by Rosa Bonheur and Camille Corot), and Pleinairism (in a painting by Ferdinand Heilbuth). Two canvasses by Renoir introduce visitors to the style of late Impressionism.

Finally, at the intersection of Classicism and the new Romanticism there is David d'Angers, who created numerous medallions with portraits of illustrious people of the time.

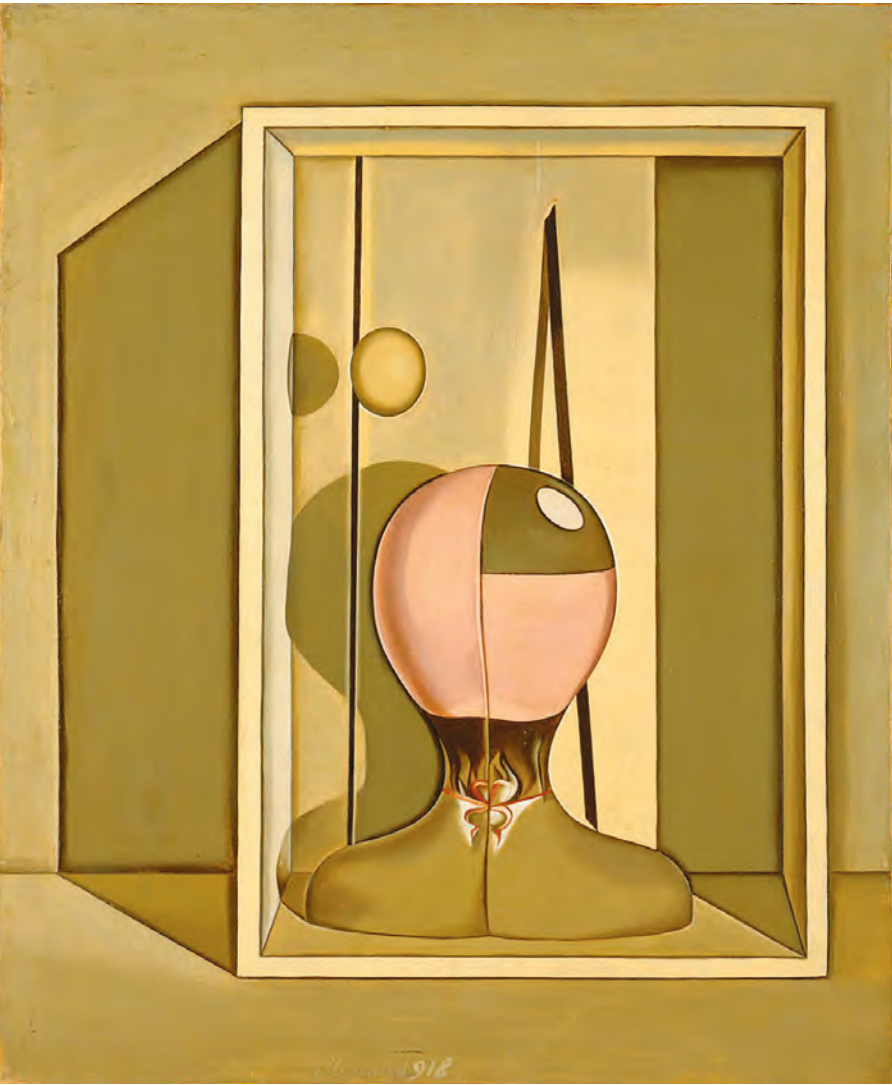
This exhibition in Kazan is the first attempt ever to gather together works from the Hermitage collection that represent European art from the interwar period.

MATISSE, PICASSO, CHAGALL...
WESTERN EUROPEAN ART OF THE 1910S-1940S
FROM THE HERMITAGE COLLECTION

The First World War turned the lives of most avant-garde artists upside down. The effect was a distinct trend towards order, clarity, and balance in their works, which remained evident in the following generation as well.

French artists Raoul Dufy and Georges Rouault, who started off their careers with a passion for Fauvism and Cubism, found their own styles and themes after the First World War. Dufy combined elegance and a truly French chic with the guileless sincerity of a child’s drawing. The expressiveness of Rouault’s brushstrokes was guided by his quest for a new figurative language to convey the main themes of the Gospel.

The Novecento group formed in Italy in 1922, its very name proclaiming the genesis of an art movement that was intended to become the embodiment of the 20th-century, but



Giorgio Morandi
Melaphysical Still Life
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ГЭ-8957

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

Raoul Dufy
Sailing-Boats In Deauville
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ГЭ-10604

also to remain within a tradition dating back to the Renaissance. Modernity also resonates through the sculptures of Francesco Messina, who combines studies from life with a firm foothold in the classics. Some of his works are on display at this exhibition, alongside others by Georg Kolbe, Antoine Bourdelle, Fritz Behn, and Herbert Garbe.

The drawings displayed at the exhibition are the work of some of the most prominent artists and sculptors of the time — Paul Signac, Georg Kolbe, and Emil Nolde.

Two paintings, a sculpture, and a number of drawings by Henri Matisse are also included in the exhibition. Most of these were donated to the Hermitage by Lydia Delectorskaya (1910–1980), the artist’s long-time assistant and muse. The drawings include still lifes and landscapes, but the majority are portraits of Delectorskaya herself. Regarding these, the artist said “When I get bored, I do a portrait of Madame Lydia.”



Natalia Dyomina, Researcher, Department of Western European Art, The State Hermitage Museum

“The works displayed at the exhibition are like shards of a huge stained glass window shattered by the Second World War and reunited in the Hermitage collection at the end of their individual journeys. Most of them are first-class works of indisputable artistic value, even outside their historical context.”

1. Bottle with Peonies

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № VI-1022

2. Plate with Lotus Flower

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № AK-361

THE WORLD IN THE HERMITAGE
THE TREASURE OF A PERSIAN PRINCESS:
A CHINESE PORCELAIN DISH FROM THE AL THANI
COLLECTION

This Chinese porcelain dish with underglaze cobalt painting dates from the beginning of the 15th-century, during the reign of the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-1424), the third Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

According to the inscription engraved on the underside of the item, the dish belonged to Princess Mahin Banu.¹ Next to the inscription is a mark indicating that the dish was later passed into the possession of the Mughal Padishah Shah Jahan (r. 1627-1658), the man who commissioned one of the most beautiful monuments in the history of world architecture — the Taj Mahal.

In 1967, this unique dish was bought by Alastair Bradley Martin (1915-2010), who purchased masterpieces of world art to form the Guennol Collection. Between 1968 and 1991 this item was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. From 1991 to 2006 it was on display at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Currently, the dish is part of Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah al-Thani's collection.

The Mahin Banu dish depicting bunches of grapes is a classic example of a porcelain piece with underglaze blue painting, produced during the heyday of this art form in China. There are as few as one dozen similar items in the world that can be dated back to the beginning of the 15th-century. The dish from the Al-Thani collection was one of the first Chinese pieces to immediately attract the attention of the highest Iranian nobility, and as a result inspired Iranian masters to create ceramics in the Chinese fashion. The Middle Kingdom's exquisitely decorated porcelain, with its strong white body and blue decoration, was considered a real treasure, admired and sought after by the elite.

To illustrate the Chinese influence on Iranian ceramics, the exhibition also features three Chinese vessels from the 16th-century and four examples of Iranian faience from the 16th and 17th-centuries from the State Hermitage's collection.

¹ Mahin Banu (1519-1562) was the daughter of Shah Ismail I (r. 1501-1524), founder of the Safavid Dynasty of Iran (1501-1736).

3. Vessel with Lotus Flowers

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № VI-763

4. Makhin Banu dish with the grape

China, Jingdezhen
Ming Dynasty, Yongle's reign
(1403-1424)
Porcelain; underglaze cobalt painting
Diameter 43.2 cm; height 8.26 cm
Al Thani Collection

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020



PHOTO: © THE AL THANI COLLECTION 2018. PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY PRUDENCE CUMING



1 3
2 4

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
DECEMBER 10, 2019 — MARCH 29, 2020

The Assyrian kingdom was the most formidable political power from the 9th to the 7th-century BCE. Every Assyrian king sought to mark his military victories by building a palace. What we know of Assyrian art is largely thanks to these royal palaces.

“I FOUNDED THEREIN MY ROYAL PALACE...”
ASSYRIAN ART FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The brick walls of the palaces were built two or three meters high and covered with stone reliefs featuring the king in battle, hunting wild animals, celebrating a victory, or worshipping the gods.

Some reliefs are narratives in pictures featuring: Assyrian soldiers besieging an enemy city, a soldier cutting the chain which inhabitants of the besieged city used to collect water, arrows flying from the city walls while Assyrian soldiers hide behind their shields to protect themselves, Assyrians chasing Arabs astride graceful long-necked camels, King Ashurbanipal accepting booty (including severed human heads) after the capture of Babylon, and magnificent hunting dogs pulling at their leashes to join the royal hunt.

The reliefs aimed to capture the king’s actions for the gods and to glorify them for subjects as well as for envoys of foreign powers. Like the mass media of today, they were meant to demonstrate to every palace visitor the power and greatness of the king, his feats and achievements, and his efforts to maintain order and peace in the world. Anonymous ancient masters managed to create touching and captivating stone canvases that are among the greatest works in the history of art.

Fragment of a wall relief: a dying lion

NORTHERN PALACE OF ASHURBANIPAL IN NINEVEH
7TH CENTURY B.C.
©The British Museum, 2019



Isaac Asimov ¹

The bas-reliefs depicting powerful Ashurnasirpal II, who drives horses and chariots with his strong hand and strikes lions with arrows, are admirable... even beautiful. The animals are all muscle, rage, and emotion. It’s not likely that another realistic depiction of animal suffering comparable to the Assyrian carved relief images of wounded lions can be found anywhere in world art. In fact, they somewhat communicate an enjoyment of animal suffering, reminding us that Ashurnasirpal II is famous, or rather notorious, for something very different from art. It is to him, more than to any other Assyrian, that this nation owes its reputation in history. His 25-year reign was filled with unthinkable cruelties, only outweighed by those of Hitler.



Fragment of a wall relief
with the head of a deity

North-Western Palace of Ashurnasirpal II
at Kalhu 9th century B.C.
©The British Museum, 2019

Wall relief depicting Assyrian soldiers
chasing the Arab army on camelback

Northern Palace of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh
7th century B.C.
©The British Museum, 2019

¹ _____ Azimov A. Middle East. The history of ten thousand years. Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2006.

Portraits by Portuguese court painter Miguel António do Amaral commissioned by Empress Catherine II for the portrait gallery of ruling European monarchs and their heirs.¹

Miguel Antonio do Amaral
Portrait of Joseph Emanuel, King of Portugal
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-4438

Miguel Antonio do Amaral
Portrait of Marianna Victoria, Queen of Portugal
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-4429



PORTRAITS OF THE PORTUGUESE ROYAL FAMILY
FOR THE CHESMA PALACE

In 1773, Russian ambassadors to European courts were given instructions to commission paintings of monarchs and members of their families and to dispatch them to St. Petersburg when completed. The idea of creating a gallery of foreign rulers came to Catherine II at the same time as the idea of building an “amusement castle”, which was initially known by the Finnish name of its location, Kekerekeksinen (“Frog Marsh”). It was renamed in 1780 to mark the tenth anniversary of the Russian naval victory in Chesme Bay, becoming the Chesminsky, or Chesme, Palace. Fifty-six portraits of royal personages hung in the Chesme Palace until 1830, when, upon orders from Nicholas I, the building was reconstructed to serve as a home for the infirm. The paintings were removed to the English Palace in Peterhof, and were transferred to the Hermitage in the 1920s.

The exhibition presented portraits of the Portuguese royal couple, King Joseph (José) I (1714–1777) and Mariana Victoria (1718–1781), as well as portraits of members of their family. Joseph I, known as the Reformer, ascended to the throne in 1750. During his reign efforts were made to reform all aspects of economic, social, and colonial policy to enable Portugal to compete more effectively with other great European powers.²

The paintings presented at the exhibition are by Miguel António do Amaral (c. 1710–1780). He created art on religious subjects, including large-scale paintings for churches and monasteries, but became best known for his portraits. Artist and art historian Cirylo Wolkmar Machado (1748–1823) mentioned the royal portraits by Amaral and noted that they included works commissioned by an agent of Russian Empress Catherine II.

1. The exhibition was organized by the State Hermitage and the National Archive of Torre do Tombo (Portugal), with assistance from the Sharing Foundation (Portugal), the Centre of Russian Art and Culture (Portugal), the Embassy of Portugal in Russia, and ARTIS – the Art History Institute at the University of Lisbon (Portugal).
2. Full-scale diplomatic relations between the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Portugal began in 1779. The exhibition was timed to mark their 240th anniversary.

THE IRON AGE
EUROPE WITHOUT
BORDERS



COMING SOON | Manege of the Small Hermitage

Plate depicting two warriors fighting
4th c. BC
Gold; repoussage
Dnepr Region, Northern Black Sea coast, Geremesov barrow

The statue of the Calvatone Victory from the Berlin State Museums has undergone restoration and was featured at an exhibition at the State Hermitage Museum.

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Statue of the Calvatone Victory
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № 3Cca-574

THE CALVATONE VICTORY: THE FATE OF A MASTERPIECE

The Calvatone Victory: The Fate of a Masterpiece exhibition is the latest stage of the longstanding and fruitful cooperation between the State Hermitage and the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation's State Museums of Berlin. Previous exhibitions that have sprung from this partnership have included two from the Europe without Borders project — *The Age of the Merovingians* and *The Bronze Age*. They have created a new format of cultural cooperation by introducing museum objects displaced from post-war Germany into the academic discourse.

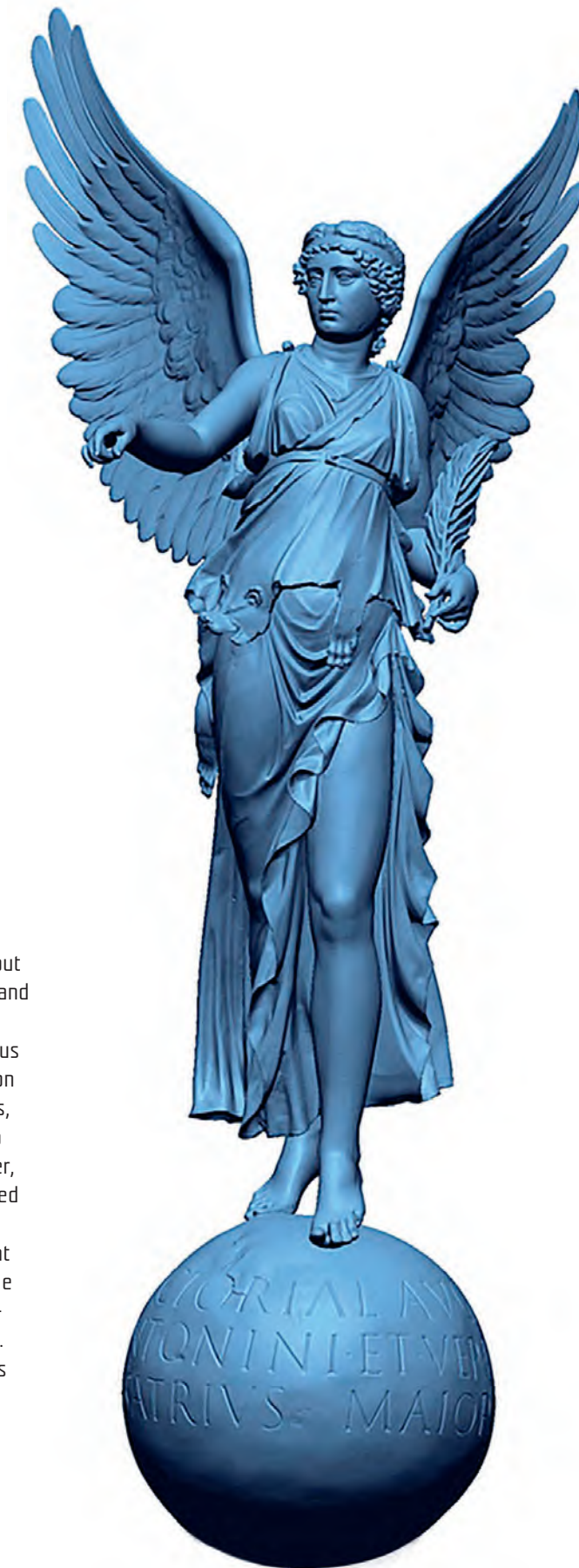
The history of the *Calvatone Victory* statue illustrates the complex history of the 20th-century. The year 2019 marked 80 years since the public last saw this famous statue dating back to the Roman Empire in the halls of a museum. In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, Berlin's museums closed their doors to the public. When the fighting ended the *Calvatone Victory* was nowhere to be found. The absence of documents and the numerous "restorative" additions from the 19th-century, which had altered the statue in accordance with the fashions and ideas of the time, prevented the statue from being recognised as an object from antiquity. Only now, many years later, are we able to look into the statue's 20th-century history.

Cooperation among specialists from the State Hermitage Museum and the Ancient Art Group of Berlin's State Museums in researching and restoring the *Calvatone Victory* produced significant results, which were reflected in the exhibition concept that they developed together.

MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY
Art Belongs to the Whole World

3D model of the statue of the *Calvatone Victory* before conservation.
Visualisation by L.K. Zolotova

Restoration of the statue was carried out after more than two years of research and study at the State Hermitage's Laboratory for Scientific Restoration of Precious Metals. The art historical and restoration research showed that certain attributes, including the wings, had been added to the statue in the 19th-century. However, these new details had essentially shaped the historical image of the artwork. A winged Victory is depicted on the coat of arms of the Italian province; the same image is seen in all the academic publications of the 19th and 20th-centuries. During the restoration, therefore, it was decided that all details that had been subsequently added in the modern era should be kept.



Prior to the restoration work, the sculpture was scanned at the Laboratory for Scientific Restoration of Precious Metals. The resulting 3D model, as well as the mould from the plaster workshops of the State Museums of Berlin, can be compared to the statue after restoration to see what the specific additions were over time. The 3D model shows not only the general shape of the sculpture, but also its texture, casting flaws, seams and patches.

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM (GENERAL STAFF BUILDING)
NOVEMBER 21, 2019 – MARCH 8, 2020

The painting style of Adrian Ghenie has its roots in the work of Francis Bacon and Gerhard Richter. It is described as hybrid, dynamic, and cinematic. ²

“I HAVE TURNED MY ONLY FACE...” ¹
PAINTINGS BY ADRIAN GHENIE

Cultural constants, childhood memories, and popular imagery are three key motifs in the works of Adrian Ghenie, one of today’s most successful young Romanian artists. His creative biography is indirectly linked to the Hermitage: as a child, he liked to look at reproductions of Dutch paintings from the Hermitage collection in a 1984 album published by the Soviet publishing house Iskusstvo. Over the years, the future artist painstakingly copied Hermitage masterpieces, eventually arriving at his own artistic style.

Ghenie says that his remote experience with the Hermitage collection was key to his creative evolution. The artist visited the Museum for the first time in 2017, after which he executed a series of works related to Hermitage paintings. *The Hunter* was inspired by *Hunter with Dogs in a Landscape* by Jan Wildens, while *The Farm* was prompted by Paulus Potter’s *The Farmyard*.



Adrian Ghenie
The Farm
2019
Oil on canvas
230 x 300 cm
© Adrian Ghenie
Gallerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Paris-London-Salzburg

Adrian Ghenie first attracted the attention of major art collectors and art critics in the early 2010s, when his works began to be exhibited in New York, Berlin, and Paris. People started comparing his style to that of Francis Bacon. The artist himself does not agree: “Despite people[’s] belief Bacon was never a direct source of inspiration for me... At this point in my career, I do what I always did — I steal from everybody.” ³

Ghenie was born in the Romanian city of Baia Mare in 1977 and graduated from the Art and Design University of Cluj-Napoca. “People in the West have this misconception that if you studied painting in a post-communist country, you would have studied Social Realism. In fact it was the opposite. My teachers were closer to abstract art. But I wanted to create works of figurative art,” Adrian Ghenie explains. ⁴

Ghenie’s creative philosophy is based on a unique understanding of abstraction: he considers his painting technique to be a resolution of the conflict between figurativeness and abstraction, a conflict that characterised the entire 20th-century. He also considers Henri Rousseau – to whom he dedicated one of his latest series, *Jungles in Paris* – as the first abstractionist. The artist often turns to traditional painting and produces reinterpretations of classic works while admittedly disregarding recognisability, seeing his main task as depicting the freshness of sensations.

Ghenie’s works are marked by blurred, rough textures interspersed with light and colour. They are at times shapeless, but elsewhere sharply outlined, with individual elements sometimes given a precise, almost photographic definition. This play of contrasts produces a collage-like impression and adds additional depth. The artist rejects brushes, preferring the palette knife and spatula. Restrained colour schemes are disrupted by chromatic explosions that scintillate like glitches in a digital image or patches of oil on water. This combination of the chaotic and the orderly affects the viewer on an almost physiological level: Ghenie’s painting aims at sensual, intuitive perception.

The exhibition at the Hermitage displayed twelve paintings that were created by the artist especially for this exhibition.



Jan Wildens
Hunter with Dogs in a Landscape
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-6239



Mikhail Piotrovsky and Dimilry Ozerkov
at the painting *The Hunter* donated
by Adrian Ghenie to the Hermitage
General Staff, the State Hermitage Museum,
30 December 2019

Adrian Ghenie
Raft II
2019
Oil on canvas
230 x 334 cm
© Adrian Ghenie
Gallerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Paris-London-Salzburg



¹ _____ The title of the exhibition is a line from a poem by celebrated Romanian poet Nichita Stănescu (1933–1983), an artistic manifesto in which the creator is represented as a horseman galloping towards the sun.

² _____ Adrian Ghenie, born 1977, is one of the most popular and successful young artists in Europe. He was born in Romania, and now lives between Berlin and Cluj-Napoca (Romania), where he has opened a contemporary art gallery. Ghenie’s works can be found in prestigious art collections around the world, including Tate Modern, the Pompidou Centre, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 2015 the artist represented Romania at the Venice Biennale. His solo exhibition, an homage to Pieter Bruegel, was held in 2019 in Palazzo Cini (Venice).

³ _____ Quote from “How Adrian Ghenie Conquered the Art Market”. URL: www.theartnewspaper.com/news/how-ghenie-conquered-the-art-market.

⁴ _____ Quote from “Romania. The stunning success of Adrian Ghenie’s paintings at Solihby’s.”.

The exhibition *Creativity and Daydream. Korean Eye 2020: Contemporary Korean Art*, inaugurated by its curators in an online stream from the General Staff Building on 24 March 2020, continues a series of projects in which group exhibitions of young artists from different countries are shown at the State Hermitage.

CREATIVITY AND DAYDREAM.
KOREAN EYE 2020: CONTEMPORARY KOREAN ART

The aesthetic expressiveness of contemporary South Korean art can be understood by any viewer, anywhere. Its artists treat complex subject-matter in a way that blends their national tradition with intuitively obvious, universal visual codes. With these fruits of zealous daydreaming by 16 artists on public display, the show invites the viewer to begin exploring the development of modern art and discover a hitherto hidden facet of contemporary South Korean culture.

What young South Korean artists seem to have in common nowadays is their adroitness at spinning credible myths, moulding them with the aid of media and techniques so unconventional that truly exceptional zeal is needed to give them perfect visual form. Some very diverse genres meet at this exhibition: installation, performance, painting, sculpture, ceramics, embroidery, video art, and photography. All the works have been created over the past few years and are being shown in Russia for the first time.



Young In Hong
A Fire That Never Dies. Rhythmic Flowers
Great Britain. 2016
Viscose rayon threads, rhinestones, mesh fabric, cotton
©Young In Hong



Sekyung Lee
Hair on the Plate (Meissen Angels)
Korea. 2020
Porcelain, painted human hairs
©Sekyung Lee



Doowon
Bird Racing Car Chasing a Bee
Korea. 2019
Mixed media
©Courtesy of artist and ARTWA

South Korean artists gravitate to a variety of themes, pondering political events of historic consequence, paradoxes of post-colonial existence, the inner conflicts of a consumerist society, and global geopolitical developments, viewing it all through the optics of their traditional culture. Some of the works featured in this exhibition display a keen interest in the meaning of true communication and suggest a contemplative world outlook, visualising a range of social dilemmas and delving deeply into personal emotion. Due to the unremitting focus on their national identity and history, the South Korean artists contrive to recognise and elaborate what pertains to their national legacy in the universal subject-matter investigated by their peers everywhere in the world.

The use of unconventional media seems to be a signature style of several of the artists on show. For example, Sekyung Lee's porcelain plates are decorated with patterns and images made from real human hairs, Doowon's *Triptych* is painted on fabrics and rugs he found during his travels, and Eunha Kim's installation is an assemblage of discarded clothing.

"The Hermitage is presenting an exhibition of some very young Korean artists," said Mikhail Piotrovsky, General Director of the State Hermitage Museum, in his video address:

"They come from a country that likes to astonish the world – with unexpected political decisions, economic achievements, excellence in art, wildly popular contemporary music, and films that leave festival juries in awe. Korea makes no particular attempt to conceal its 'soul', its national character, and yet it remains shielded from the rest of the world. Time and time again we have hosted amazing exhibitions of classical Korean art, featuring some of its finest pieces that can rightfully be said to be treasures of South Korea's national heritage. Now we are starting a new trend, introducing some of the art that South Korea has produced since the nation opened up to rest of the world. In this, another tradition of ours comes into play, one we have pursued for several years in partnership with the Saatchi Gallery, which is to host exhibitions for very young artists. We like to think that we are giving them a pass into a wider world by exhibiting their art first at the Hermitage and then in London. And that is what we are doing today. The exhibition now on display at the Hermitage will later travel to the Saatchi Gallery in London before going home to Seoul. The artists, hand-picked by our British and South Korean experts, stand to emerge famous and successful from this project. This is the second show we are opening with no gala ceremony and no viewers in attendance: the museum is now in quarantine. To make up for it, we will be streaming this show regularly on the Hermitage website and on our social media, and as a result it will end up seen by a lot more people than would have physically visited the museum. I believe this show comes just at the right time. It really is magnificent, and cannot fail to be appreciated, especially now that South Korea may be in a position to teach the world how to beat COVID-19."

Dancers perform in front of *We Share Our Chemistry with the Stars* (MQ300 and VW300L) during the opening ceremony of Marc Quinn's *Under the Skin* solo exhibition at CAFA Art Museum, Beijing



NON-DOWNLOADABLE TIME AND SPACE

MARC QUINN¹ AND DIMITRY OZERKOV
AT THE HERMITAGE BEFORE THE OPENING
OF THE EXHIBITION CHRONOS AND COSMOS

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA



Meeting with Marc Quinn at the Youth Center of the Hermitage. Discussion host Dimitry Ozerkov. An event is held as part of the educational programme for Marc Quinn's upcoming exhibition at the State Hermitage Museum
FEBRUARY 28, 2020

Dimitry Ozerkov: We are very happy to see you here, Marc! This is a visit in preparation for the show. We've been working hard to make it happen for all these weeks and months. Welcome, Marc.
Marc Quinn: Thank you, Dimitry... Yes, we talked about this for quite a long time.... I've been inside the museum all day, which is a great place to be. What's amazing is that the museum has this incredible collection of works from antiquity and other centuries, which are exactly the kind of things that inspire me to make my work. So to be able to show my work along with these works is like a dream come true for me. I'm really excited about the show.
It's interesting. Just going around today we pretty much finalised where everything is going to be, which is not an easy thing to do. It's taken us at least a year, I think, going back and forth. I'm excited for the show! I came to the Hermitage first when I was 16, on a school trip. I didn't realise then that I'd be doing a show here. So it's great to kind of come home... The trip was pretty crazy. It was in Soviet times, and me and my friends, when the teachers had put us to bed, we'd slip out of the hotel, bribe the babushka there not to say anything, and then go out to the fancy restaurants that existed then and have a fun time. We'd get back just in time for the next day. So my memories of St. Petersburg are pretty good....

- Q . Well, we've started revealing what's going to be there in the exhibition, and I'm sure by now everybody realises that it's going to be held in the Greek and Roman Section of the New Hermitage.
- Q . So it's the whole downstairs floor. 15 rooms. It's a circle. And there are some interesting juxtapositions. For instance, the busts of the refugees I think will be interesting in the Roman Courtyard...

¹ Marc Quinn, born on January 8, 1964 in London, is an artist and sculptor and a member of the Young British Artists art group (YBAs), which has dominated the art scene since 1990. Marc Quinn's exhibition *Cosmos and Chronos* will be held at the Hermitage in 2020. Dimitry Ozerkov is the curator of the exhibition.

Mikhail Piotrovsky at an Interfax news agency press conference. March 2020

Marc Quinn and I have agreed to hold a large exhibition in the halls of the Antiquities Department, a dialogue between contemporary and classic art. We are both constantly explaining to everyone that there is no such thing as contemporary art from the point of view of the Hermitage. There is just art. It has its own way of developing, and we need to look back to the past to understand what is happening today.



In the Amazon There is a Tribe, and In That Tribe They Kill Monkeys, and the Women of the Tribe Then Breastfeed the Baby Orphaned Monkeys and Bring Them Up As Their Own, Marc Quinn
2012
© Marc Quinn studio



Detail from:
All About Love
“Breathe”

2016
CAFA Beijing, 2019

PHOTO: ©AURELIEN FOUCAULT

- Q . Am I correct in saying that you are producing some completely new work for the Hermitage?

Q . Yes. There are a lot of new works which I’m... in the middle of doing now *[laughs]*. There’s a three-and-a-half metre sculpture of a zombie boy, there’s some enormous sculptures of hands... It’s the first time that I’m doing a museum show of the plastic bag paintings, *The Collective Subconscious*. There are new resin works. I’d say almost half of the works are new. The bonsai trees. There are many new pieces. You know, all art was once contemporary. Even Greek and Roman art was once contemporary art. And I think that without even trying, human beings have the same questions throughout time. When you put a contemporary work that deals with certain questions in with ancient works, it makes the ancient work more alive, in a sense. You see that it’s connected to today, and then you also see that today’s work is a continuation of something that came before. I think that contemporary art is not a sealed bubble away from all the rest of art. So I think it’s just interesting for me to mix it up. And it’s an experiment. I mean, we haven’t even put the works there, so maybe when we put them there they’ll tell us something completely different to what we think they will, which is the exciting thing.
- Q . So, what are the main – subjects – if you want to formulate it like that? You mentioned refugees versus Greek and Roman history...?

Q . In the *100 Heads* works which will be in the Roman courtyard, migration is a key theme. I mean, migration is something that’s been a topic since forever, and the limits of how – are you politically in a country or not – is very important. Also in the Roman world it was very interesting too, and in the Greek world. But I think that this idea, when you take someone, and make a bust of their head – in this case in concrete, not in marble – and you put it on a plinth, it immediately acquires a kind of gravitas, and it seems to be an emperor or a god, or a queen or a goddess. It dignifies and gives individuality to the refugees. So it’s interesting, when you meet someone, how much you project onto them from what you think you know about them. If you tell someone that this person is a king and this person is a refugee, they’ll have different views about them. But in fact they can look the same.
- Q . So it is in a way using migrants and ecological topics and so on to make some political statement?

Q . Yes. I’m interested in making work about the world we live in now, and how I think art is way of understanding that. For me, to make art is a way of understanding the world and a way of expressing it. Also, when I make an artwork, it’s for you and me and everyone here. But it’s also for people who are going to be born in 500 years. In a way it’s like a time capsule from now that goes into the future, in the same way as when we go into the Hermitage and look at a Greek sculpture from 4000 BC. We may know nothing about the artist or why they made the work. But if it’s a great work you’re communicating with it and you’re in the moment. I think that’s how you define a great work of art – if you’re in the present moment. So it doesn’t matter if it was made yesterday or 10,000 years ago. It always feels now. I think that art should be about more than just making aesthetic objects. I think that now, when politics is all over the place, everywhere, in some way art can help us think about the world in a different way, one that has nothing to do with politics, but has more to do with humanity. So by changing how people think about the world, maybe art can change the world.
- Q . Can you tell us a little bit about the title of the show, *Cosmos and Chronos*?

- Q . Well, it means time and space...
- Q . It’s about Heidegger, right?

Q . Yeah, but it’s also in relation to Greek mythology, and the way that certain ideas were incarnated. They’ve always been human ideas, and they find different form in different periods. In Greek mythology they might be in stories about imaginary people, and now we find them in artworks or in films, or in other things like that. And these archetypal ideas are part of what it is to be human.
- QUOTE FROM HEIDEGGER
- Q . There’s always a question here in Russia about what people will think of the work. In this museum with some of the contemporary art projects, there have been cases where people have protested. Maybe they wanted to frighten us, but we were not. Do you listen to what people say about your work? Are you interested in their opinions?

Q . Yeah, I’m interested in opinions, but my work is not just for the sake of shocking. It’s to communicate more directly with someone. It’s like a little missile that goes inside you and then explodes. It’s to communicate good things, things about the world, but just in a different way. I think if you don’t love or hate an artwork, it’s probably not very good. Art should polarize you. But I don’t control anything. Once I let go of the work of art it has its own life. So people can understand or misunderstand it. There’s no such thing as the right answer. As for the context of the work... each country is different, and each country has different things that they’re interested in, not interested in, more aware of, less aware of. So obviously when you move art around the world the reactions you get are completely different. And I think that’s one of the exciting things about showing in different countries. I’m sure from doing this show I will understand these works in a different way to what I think I know about them so far. So I’m excited to show here in Russia, in the Hermitage, in St. Petersburg, and see what people think about it... It’s a way of exploring the different ways that people think in different countries, exploring what the work means in different places. Sometimes the work can have different meanings in different societies.
- Q . Your experience of working in other museums – bad and good – what has it been like?

Q . In a museum you always have to remember that you are working with, in a way collaborating with, the museum. They have their own vision. Here it took us two years to get everyone on board. It’s great though. It shows that people really cared about what they had. I think it’s the same in all the museums that I’ve worked in. People who look after museums with art by dead artists sometimes find it a little bit perturbing to have a living artist there who’s got an opinion. But it’s always been a great result for me.
- Q . The exhibition we are working on now will be held in the Greek and Roman Department. But in your art there are always different quotations, references to old art. What art has influenced you more? What period, what country...?

Q . I think it just depends on the body of work. Sometimes Greek and Roman, sometimes Indian... Sometimes contemporary things. I just look at everything. There is no real rule. I just look at every kind of art.



PHOTO: © AURELIEN FOUCAULT



*Labyrinth Painlings
(Red, Black & Chromatic)
and Bread Hands and Feet*
CAFA BEIJING, 2019

BLOOD, GOLD, SHOCK

- Q . When making the “imprint” of the face of the refugees, for example, are you using a new technique?
- Q . Yes, now I’m using 3D scanning. I scan people’s heads with a rig of 50 cameras. It’s an interesting way to make a sculpture. Before, when you would make a portrait of someone, you’d take many pictures and you’d see the person many times. And, in a sense, when you’d make the sculpture out of clay, it was an amalgamation of all those moments. Almost like you’re making an abstract essence of the person. Whereas when you do a 3D scan of them, it’s the person in that particular moment. So it’s a different thing; it’s about capturing a moment, almost capturing the breath. To me they feel much more alive. It’s the purest way of doing a physical presence.
- Q . Self, your self-portrait made of blood – will it be part of our exhibition as well? Do you really make a piece like that every five years? ²
- Q . It’s not really one sculpture. I made the first one... I made a mould of my head, and then I went to the doctor for a year and took my blood out one bit at a time until I had the same amount of blood to fill my head up. It’s coincidentally the same amount of blood as is in your whole circulation system. So I took out the amount of blood that fills my body, over a year, and then I poured it into the mould, then into a freezer, and when I took the mould off, I had essentially what was a blood ice cube shaped like my head. It’s in a special freezer that keeps it frozen, but you can see it. If you unplug it, though, it turns into a pool of blood. So it’s almost like a sculpture that’s alive. It’s a sculpture that is on life support, in the way that we are, but we don’t realise it. We’re here, we have the projector, we have the lights, the heating. We’re not at -25 degrees like it is outside. We’re all dependent on infrastructure. The sculpture just makes that obvious by having it plugged in. Able to only exist in a world that’s different to ours. It can exist on the North Pole or South Pole with no electricity, but not in our world. There’s an interesting juxtaposition – I have sculpted heads made of blood and gold. For me they’re both frozen sculptures. The gold one is, in fact, called *Frozen Head*. One is kept frozen by being plugged in and having electricity keep it at – 18 degrees, and one is kept frozen by value, and by collective human belief in what’s valuable. So once the value of the art is less than the value of the metal, it will be melted down and turned into something else. So it only exists while people still value art in some way... or just my art, maybe (*laughs*).
- Q . You’ve referenced your frozen flowers works with which you began. You mentioned that the refrigerator produces gas that basically kills them.
- Q . Yes, there’s one work, it’s got a ridiculously long title. It’s called *In the Amazon There is a Tribe, and In That Tribe They Kill Monkeys, and the Women of the Tribe Then Breastfeed the Baby Orphaned Monkeys and Bring Them Up As Their Own*. It is a true story. It’s about how we create and destroy at the same time. That sculpture is a ball of ice from the North Pole that is being kept frozen by a freezer. So the thing that’s preserving the North Pole block is also killing the real North Pole. It’s a paradox about the human relationship to nature.

- Q . Can you tell us more about this new project *Our Blood* that you’re doing in New York?
- Q . *Our Blood* is a project with five thousand settled refugees and five thousand people who see themselves not as refugees. They all gave a little bit of blood, and they create these blocks which are a meter by a metre by a metre. And so in this block you have all the DNA. You have all the people, from every nationality, every religion, every skin colour. But you can’t tell the difference. It’s just one block of humanity. So it’s very interesting, because you can take that block to another planet and start the human race again. It’s really like a library, this block. It’s like taking minimalism, like a Richard Serra cube, and filling it with maximum content. I like the paradox between maximalism and minimalism as well. In this sculpture, each person who gives blood also makes a video, and those videos become a record of all the stories of the people. And they get shown in the city where the piece is. And the whole thing is for charity; it will raise money and awareness for refugee causes..
- Q . Is there a website?
- Q . Yes, there is a website: ourblood.org.
- Q . Can anybody participate?
- Q . Yeah, you just get on there and fill in the form. You can give your blood. You can be in art forever.
- Q . It sounds a bit creepy: “Give me your blood!”
- Q . HI think it’s just how you look at it. One man in the video, a Syrian refugee, said that he couldn’t look at blood, because he’d seen so much violence. We are looking at blood as a positive thing, as something that can help people. And actually, in society, giving blood is what people do when they want to help society, in a sense. Often when there is a natural disaster, people’s first idea is to go and give blood. Maybe that blood is not needed, but it’s more about the symbol of doing it....
- Q . So it’s a very serious project, not all fun and Disneyland...
- Q . No, it’s a serious thing... I think that it has an edge on it; it’s designed to be a public artwork, so that when you walk down the street you see it. So it’s very arresting. You go and see what it is and when you first see it you might be shocked, but then what happens is that that first, initial shock means that you can’t forget it. And when you can’t forget it, you can’t forget what it’s about...
- Q . One question I have is about what is good shock and what makes for a bad shock for you. Your art always comes with this description – “shocking”.
- Q . I don’t think any of it is shocking... There are more shocking things that happen in the world every day. It is using, certainly, materials that have a charged quality, or images that have a charged quality. And also, usually, using “found” things from the history of art. For example, everyone thinks they know something about marble stat-



Marc Quinn
The Collective Subconscious
2020
© Marc Quinn studio

2 _____ In 1997, Quinn’s work *Self* was shown in the exhibilion *Sensation*. The *Self* series is composed of four pieces: the first one was created in 1991, and the others in 1996, 2001, and 2006.



Marc Quinn
Frozen Head
2009
© Marc Quinn studio

ues which have broken limbs. So I was in the British Museum one day, watching someone looking at these statues and saying how beautiful they were. I thought: “It’s very interesting. If someone whose body was the same shape as the statue came into the room, probably these same people would find it difficult to talk to them, would feel a bit awkward, wouldn’t know how to relate to them.” It was interesting to see something that was accepted in art but not accepted in real life. And then I decided to make these sculptures, such as *Alison Lapper Pregnant*... I thought, “I’ll find some people whose bodies are shaped like that and make sculptures of them.” Often it’s an idea that’s between art and real life that causes me to think of something.

BOOKS, NEW MATERIALS, AND PLASTIC BAGS

Q . I saw on your Instagram a couple of days ago that you had a pile of books on a table or chair. I looked at the titles and was impressed with the variety.

Q . I mean, I like to read lots of different kinds of books, go to different kinds of shows, watch different TV programs, meet different people. It is always interesting to sort of suck the world in, and then something comes out in the form of art.

Q . You work with different materials, this must be something vital for you?

Q . Yes, always I like to find a new material for a new idea. Usually things come together when you’re making the piece. Maybe you have the idea first and then the material comes, or... I often have a list of materials I’d like to work with in my head, and then suddenly I have an idea, and I think, “This is the perfect time to use this material.” For instance, with the *Beings in Light* sculptures that we’re going to have at the bottom of the staircase, they’re transparent. They light up. I wanted to make a sculpture that was sort of halfway between a virtual object and a real object, that was something that seems to materialise or dematerialise, or be half real and half not real. I think that’s now one of the big questions for us. So much of our life is spent in the virtual world, looking at the phone, or doing whatever. We can almost forget that we’re embodied people. I think that’s one of the big questions of the 21st-century – how do you negotiate being embodied and being a virtual person at the same time.

Q . Is it important, when you choose a material, to know how long it will exist? How long the piece will be there?

Q . Yeah, and I think there’s a balance between things like stone and concrete, or plastic bags, which will probably last the longest, and something that’s frozen, which can only last as long as it lives in a world where people are giving it attention and plugging it in. .

Q . I like your story about your works with plastic bags. Can you tell us a little about it?

Q . They’re paintings, and they really are oil on canvas, because plastic bags are made from oil... They’re called *The Collective Subconscious*. In a way they’re part of the *History Painting* series that I’ve done, but they’re almost everything that we try to forget, or bury, or hide. That includes the plastic itself, of course, which we now know is

something that will take forever to go away. So when I started to think about it, I researched people who make bags, and I found people who make non-biodegradable bags. So by buying them and turning them into art I was taking them out of landfill. It’s interesting. This painting, when you press it, it’s sort of soft, and it feels like something you throw away, but it will last 10,000 years or something. It’s got an insane life to it. It’s about the paradox of materiality, as well. You have this seemingly ephemeral thing that lasts forever.

Q . What does it mean to be an artist now, in this strange society, in these strange times?

Q . I think that art is more and more important, because it’s a one-on-one experience. When you look at a picture of an artwork and then you see the real thing, it’s completely different. You can’t really see art by just looking at the artwork. And usually, what you think you like about it in a picture turns out to be the least important thing when you see it in real life. It’s a bit like if you look at a photograph of somebody and then you meet them. You get some idea of them from the photograph, but it’s never like what they’re actually like... Art is one of the few non-downloadable experiences. Everything else – music, movies – can be downloaded, but art can’t. So that gives me hope as well, that there are still experiences in the real world that are important. The more “virtual” our lives become, the more important that art is, the more important the singular kind of experience you have with a work of art is.

Q . It is a fantastic formula, “non-downloadable”

Q . I think that’s why people travel across the world to go to great museums, or to go to visit things, because subconsciously they know that coming here and looking at all the great art is completely different to looking at a book about the Hermitage. There’s no comparison. So, there are some things that are still unique experiences, and those, I think, will become more and more important.

EVERYONE HAS AN IRIS

Q . I would like to ask about these circular works that have eclipses, or eyes....

Q . Yes, I’ve been painting pictures of people’s irises. The eye is, in a way, another way of showing the commonality of people. A bit like giving blood. Everyone has an iris, and you can’t really say whether they’re a man or a woman or where they’re from. You can just say that they’re a human being. So when you look at them, also, at that scale – when they’re big – they become like a map of the universe in some sense. And that black hole in the middle is like the mystery of life, like this unknowable bit. But you can accept that, as long as it’s in the right location. So it’s about how you don’t have to have all the answers. And then the other ones... after the eclipse two years ago, I suddenly saw this eclipse, and realised that it was like the opposite of the eye. It was projecting. Like the Anthropocene, when humans project themselves onto the world. And we see the human in the cosmic, while the other one is finding the cosmic in the human. So I think these two works, in that room with the circular vase in the middle, are quite a good beginning and end of the show.

The real breakthrough came, early December, taking the booklet from the nail. A few minutes later, he sat down with it. A few minutes later again, he was still staring.

“My God.”

In previous years, on this last page of the calendar, he'd looked at the Giant, better known as Il David, or the statue of David, many mornings, many nights—but for the first time now, he saw it. He decided instantly with whom his true loyalties lay. By the time he stood again, he couldn't even be sure how long he'd been there, watching the expression on David's face—a statue in the grip of decision. Determined. Afraid.

There was also a smaller picture in the corner. The Creation of Adam, from the Sistine Chapel. The curvature of the ceiling.

Again, he said it.

“My God...”

How could someone create such things?

Markus Zusak. *Bridge of Clay*. 2018

Brogi


Topographic Photography: Florence.

View of the Uffizi and the Palazzo Vecchio.

3023.

The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

Inv. № ОГФ-4354



■ ■ ■ ...AT THEIR CORE, THE FINNS REMAIN UNIQUE AND TRUE ONLY TO THEMSELVES. AND IN THIS LIES YET ANOTHER RECUPERATIVE LESSON FOR US. THEY ARE NOT AFRAID TO LEARN FROM OTHERS, FOR THEY KNOW THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH THEY LEARN, THAT LEARNING WILL NEVER EXTINGUISH OR OBLITERATE THEIR OWN ESSENCE. FANCY-DRESS NATIONALISM IS ALIEN TO THEM, FOR THEY ARE NATIONAL BY NATURE. LIKE THE FLEMISH, WHO IN THE 17TH-CENTURY REMAINED TRUE TO THEMSELVES, CREATING GREAT FLEMISH ART THE LIKES OF RUBENS AND JORDAENS DESPITE THE DOMINANT LEVELLING EFFECT OF HUMANISTIC IDEALS AND SPANISH HEGEMONY, THE FINNS HAVE, DESPITE THEIR COSMOPOLITAN CULTURE AND ROUGHSHOD RUSSIAN PRESSURE, SUCCEEDED IN MAKING THEIR WORLDVIEW STATEMENT IN ART WITH REMARKABLE FULLNESS, WITHOUT RESORTING TO NATIONALISTIC MAKE-BELIEVE OR WINDOW-DRESSING, UNLIKE OURSELVES OVER THE LAST YEARS OF THAT OLD, LIED-OUT REGIME OF OURS.

■

Alexandre Benois. Finnish artists' exhibition in Petrograd, April-May 1917





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HISTORY OF A COLLECTION

Scandinavian and Finnish paintings of the 18th to the 20th-centuries ¹

ALTHOUGH THE HERMITAGE COLLECTION IS TO A GREAT EXTENT A RANDOM ASSEMBLAGE OF ARTWORKS, IT ALSO REFLECTS PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIAN-SCANDINAVIAN RELATIONS, IN LARGE PART CONDITIONED BY THE GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY, POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC INTERESTS AND EXIGENCIES, AND FAMILY TIES BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN ROYAL HOUSE – THE FOREMOST CUSTOMER AND PATRON OF THE ARTS IN THE 18TH AND 19TH-CENTURIES – AND THE ROYAL HOUSES OF SWEDEN AND DENMARK. SOME SCANDINAVIAN ARTISTS CAME TO WORK IN RUSSIA, AND MANY FINNISH MASTERS WERE EDUCATED IN ST. PETERSBURG, PARTICULARLY AFTER FINLAND BECAME PART OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN 1809.

ELIZAVETA RENNE ²

The catalogue contains 127 Scandinavian paintings belonging to the Hermitage. Originating from Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland and spanning the 18th, 19th, and 20th-centuries, the paintings comprise a mixed and diverse collection. The Scandinavian section in the Hermitage is dwarfed by the formidable presence of the more prominent European schools of painting. This reflects the historical fact that Scandinavia did not join the European art mainstream until the late 18th-century, when national painting cultures began to germinate, initially under a strong foreign influence. Moreover, Nordic art in general had never been a specific focus for Russian collectors; it was only individual Scandinavian masters of European renown that found favour.

Danish portraitist Vigilius Eriksen came to St. Petersburg in 1757 or 1758 and worked as a Russian court painter for about fifteen years. Eriksen’s early works include two small oil sketches of Elizabeth Petrovna of Russia in her final years. He painted the best portraits of Catherine II in the first decade of her reign, a portrait of Grand Duke Paul Petrovich at the age of ten, and two enormous portraits of the brothers Orlov on horseback at the Grand Horse Carousel of 1766. Eriksen received many commissions for paintings from the Russian court, which has left the Hermitage with the largest and most representative collection of his paintings.

Alexandre Roslin, the famous Swedish portraitist, did not spend as much time in Russia. Making his way back to Paris from

Rasmussen, Georg Anlon
Norwegian Fjord
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-7505

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020



1 — Introductory article in the collection’s catalogue (State Hermitage Museum, 2018)

2 — Elizaveta Renne is a Candidate of Art History, Senior Research Associate, and Curator of English and Scandinavian Painting at the State Hermitage Museum.

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020



Melbye, Anlon (Daniel Hermann)
Sea at Night
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-7563

Stockholm, where he had painted a portrait of King Gustav III, Roslin made a stopover in Russia at the invitation of Catherine II, and stayed for 18 months. Roslin lived most of his life in France. He was elected a member of the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, and his skills were highly valued by European monarchs and their courtiers. Russian noblemen and dignitaries who travelled extensively in Europe knew Roslin well, even before he visited the Russian capital. Some of them, like the Stroganovs, for instance, had even sat for him in Paris. Roslin's success in Russia was therefore assured, and he was flooded with requests. Beginning with the members of the royal family, he completed over a hundred portraits during his short sojourn in Russia.

In the 18th-century, most of these paintings by Eriksen and Roslin belonged to Catherine II, serving as interior decoration for her residences in St. Petersburg and its suburbs. It was not until after 1917 that they ended up at the Hermitage. Three large, life-size portraits – of Christian VII of Denmark (begun by Peder Als and finished by Gotthard Wilhelm Okkerfeldt, both Danish painters); Frederick, Prince of Denmark, by Eriksen; and Sophia Magdalena of Sweden by Lorenz Pasch – also found their way into the Hermitage post-1917. All three come from the Gallery of Monarchs at the Palace of Cesme, conceived of by Catherine II in order to display her own portrait alongside the portraits of her European peers and blood relations. Nicholas I ordered the neglected palace remodelled into a poor-house in 1830, and the paintings were moved to the English Palace at Peterhof. They were later moved to Moscow in 1919 for safety reasons, returned again to Petrograd in the early 1920s, and eventually, in 1929, added to the collection of artworks and antiques slated for international sale, together with the other paintings from the Cesme Gallery. Few of those artworks actually left Russia, but there were three valuable Scandinavian paintings that did: the portraits of King Gustav III of Sweden (Malmö Art Museum) and Dowager Queen Louisa Ulrika (National Museum, Stockholm)

by Lorenz Pasch, and the magnificent portrait of Dowager Queen Juliana Maria of Denmark by Vigilius Eriksen (National Gallery of Denmark in Copenhagen). It is interesting to note that Catherine the Great's Gallery of Monarchs left her cousin Gustav III greatly impressed during his visit to St. Petersburg and the Cesme Palace in 1777. He borrowed the idea and, upon his return to Sweden, founded a similar, if much smaller, gallery – the Gallerie Contemporaine in Gripsholm.

Benjamin Palersen, the Swedish painter of portraits, genre scenes, and cityscapes, came to St. Petersburg in 1787. He would live the rest of his life, 28 years, in Russia, but he never lost touch with his homeland. From 1790 on he would regularly send his works to Stockholm to be exhibited at the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, where he was elected a member in 1798. Palerson is best known for his numerous cityscapes of the Russian capital, many of which were displayed in the Gallery of St. Petersburg Views at the Small Hermitage in the mid-1800s. Palerson's oil paintings, watercolours, and tinted engravings of St. Petersburg provide an irreplaceable historical record of the city and its people at the turn of the 18th to the 19th-century.

Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich, the future Emperor Alexander III of Russia, married Princess Dagmar of Denmark in 1866 and developed a taste for Scandinavian art. The wedding gift to the newlyweds from the people of Jylland were portraits of the father and mother of the bride, Christian IX of Denmark and his Queen Louise, painted by Carl Bloch. At the time of the 1917 Revolution both portraits were in Alexander III's second reception room at the Anichkov Palace, which soon became the City Museum and maintained that function for a few years thereafter. When it was eventually closed in 1928, many of the exhibits were handed over to the Department of Antiques to be sold abroad. Some of the items that were never sold would return to the Hermitage or other museums, often divested of their histories and their creators' names. The portraits of Christian

IX and Queen Louise were among such exhibits. Returned to the Hermitage in 1948, they were rolled up and left in the back of the storeroom, disappearing from researchers' radars for decades. The portraits were eventually identified and their history reconstructed from a handwritten catalogue of the grand ducal collection. The catalogue, drawn up on the heir's orders in 1872, was subsequently maintained by Alexander himself until 1879. The detailed entries list every item, describing where the painting was purchased and at what price, making the owner's preferences abundantly clear. Alexander's collection numbered 495 paintings and drawings at the time of his enthronement in 1881. Most of the artworks were Russian, but when it came to Western art, Alexander particularly favoured French and Danish masters. Alexander III and Empress Maria Fedorovna were, quite possibly, the most avid collectors of Scandinavian art in Russia. They would shop for it at exhibitions in Denmark and around Europe, in the art shops of Copenhagen, and in artists' studios. On a visit to Copenhagen in 1870, Alexander, then Grand Duke, purchased from Carl Frederik Sørensen one of his most influential paintings, *Lighthouse off the Coast of Skagen in North Jylland*, and asked the artist to paint another

seascape for him. On the same trip, Alexander commissioned the painting *Italian Men and Women at Breakfast in a Tavern from Carl Bloch* and the painting *Danish Battleship at Sea* from Carl Neumann. The present-day location of both these paintings is unknown. The future Emperor Alexander III was particularly fond of Danish marine artists. His collection numbered at least twenty seascapes, including paintings by the brothers Anlon and Vilhelm Melbye and Carl Frederik Sørensen. Unfortunately, only two of those seascapes remain in the possession of the Hermitage.

Danish painter Laurits Tuxen visited Russia a number of times. His 1882 royal commission to paint a group portrait of Christian IX's extended family while they congregated at the Fredensborg Palace for the 65th birthday of Queen Louise sealed his artistic destiny forever. He successfully painted a colossal portrait of the Queen, surrounded by her many sons and daughters with their spouses and children (32 people in total), who had flocked to Denmark from the different parts of Europe they ruled. None of the dignitaries stayed in Denmark long enough to witness the completion of the painting, so the artist had to follow them around Europe, begging their majesties



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Palersen (Palerson, Palerssen, Palersson), Benjamin
View of the Neva Gate at the Peter and Paul Fortress
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ЭРЖ-1671

Alexander III and Maria Fedorovna were particularly fond of Finnish artist Albert Edelfelt. One of the first Edelfelt paintings to enter their collection was a portrait of the artist's sister Bertha Edelfelt (1869-1934), where she was depicted with her dog Kapi at Albert's country cottage in Haikko. This 1881 portrait, named *Good Friends*, is suffused with sunlight streaming in through the open window and imbued with a warm, homey feeling. The royal couple loved this painting and Alexander III soon purchased it. Both the Emperor and his brother, Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, asked Edelfelt to paint portraits of their children similar in spirit and compositionally close to this painting. The painted and graphic versions of the portraits of Alexander III's children Michael and Ksenia, also with their dog, were once kept at the Gatchina Palace. Now they are at the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki. The location of their cousins' portraits is unknown. The

Russian Emperor bought a few more of Edelfelt's paintings from 1883 to 1890, including the Hermitage's *At Sea and In the Nursery*, *Boys on the Shore* (at the Ateneum Art Museum since 1930), and *Anchorage at Copenhagen* (location unknown). The Hermitage has four paintings by another Finnish artist, Hugo Backmansson. A career military man, he joined the Izmailovsky Regiment of His Majesty's Personal Guard in 1884, serving in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and took part in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War and the First World War, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel. Concurrently with his military career, Backmansson studied painting and graphic art, attending the Imperial Academy of Art in 1884-1886 and again in 1894-1899, graduating as a qualified artist in 1899. He painted extensively on military subjects. His painting *Manoeuvres of the Russian Army at Kara-Lome, Bulgaria in 1877*, remained in one of the rooms of the Winter Palace until 1917.



Ericksen, Vigilius
*Portrait of Grand Duchess Ekaterina Alekseyevna
(the future Catherine the Great)*
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-9908

Bloch, Carl Heinrich
Portrait of Christian IX, King of Denmark
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-9413



Ericksen, Vigilius
*Portrait of Catherine the Great
in Her Coronation Robes*
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-9499



and excellencies for additional sitting sessions. This first commission of Tuxen's brought him to Russia in the spring of 1884. He spent a few months in Gatchina, the seat of the Russian court at the time. Empress Maria Fedorovna and her children all sat for their portraits – "Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, and Grand Duchesses Ksenia and Olga, the latter modelling on all fours, being too young to stand upright; Emperor Alexander III appeared only once. He arrived in full regalia and asked me about the posture I wanted him to assume for the portrait. Then he stood completely motionless the entire three quarters of an hour that he accorded to me", wrote Tuxen in his memoir, *The Story of Sixty Years in Art as Told by Me*, published in 1928. A few portraits produced by Tuxen during his stay in Russia have survived, and are currently in Denmark. There is one study of his in Pavlovsk (Inv. No. ЛХ-1382-III; oil on canvas, 75 x 107) for the 1886 painting *Christian IX of Denmark and Queen Louise with Family Gathered in the Garden Hall at Fredensborg Palace in 1883* (Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen; oil on canvas, 440 x 670). Empress Maria Fedorovna purchased it from the artist himself in 1885. Tuxen's portraits were a resounding success and more orders followed, bringing him back to Russia three more times – in 1894, 1895, and 1896. In 1894, Queen Victoria of Great Britain commissioned him to paint the wedding of her granddaughter, Princess Alix of Hesse, to the Russian Crown Prince, Grand Duke Nicholas Alexandrovich, the future Nicholas II. The actual painting is in the collection of Elizabeth II of Great Britain (oil on canvas, 169.5 x 139.5), but there is a modello

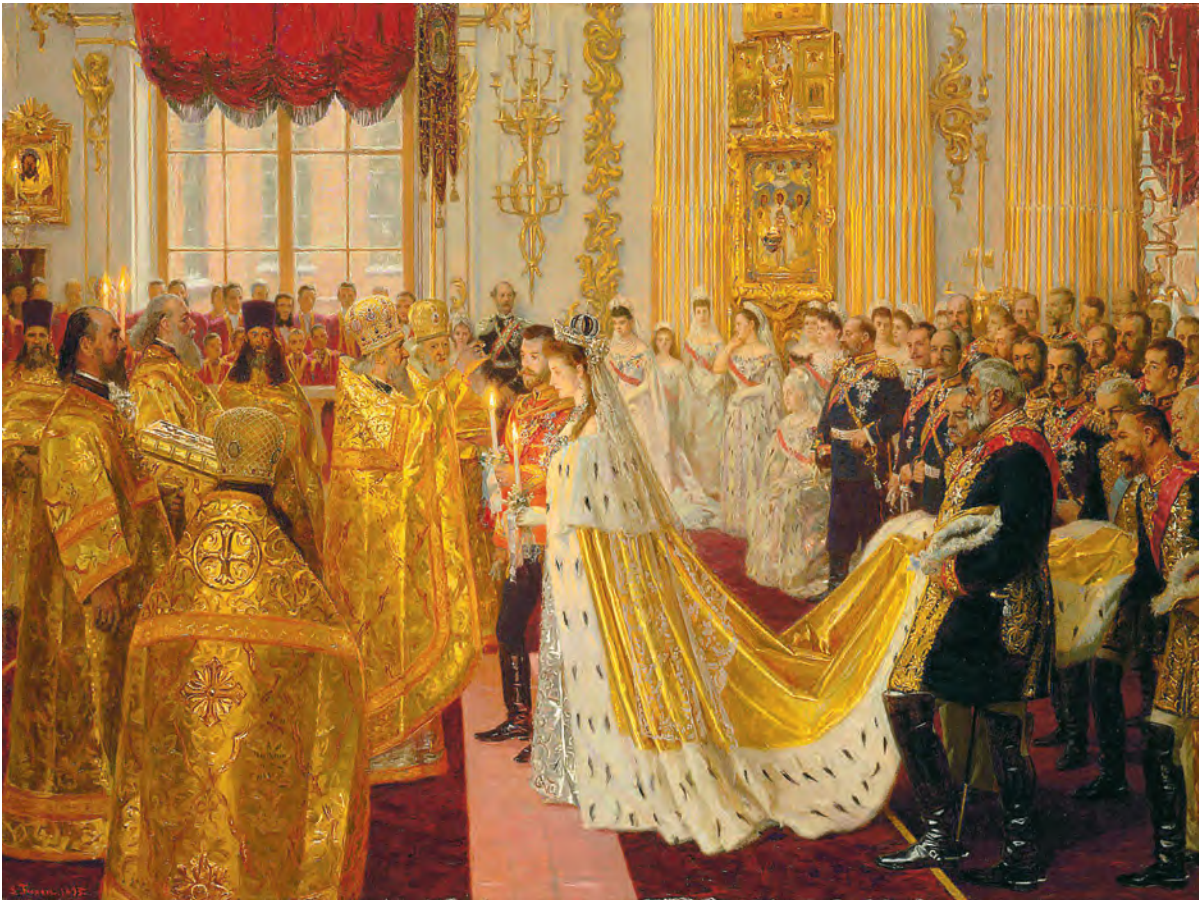


Als, Peder; Åkerfjell, Gollhard Wilhelm
*Portrait of Christian VII,
King of Denmark and Norway*
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-4471

Roslin, Alexander
*Portrait of Grand Prince Paul
Petrovich, future Emperor Paul I
Sweden*
Холст, масло
265 × 168 см
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-1356



Tuxen, Laurits Regner
*The Wedding Ceremony of Nicholas II
and Grand Princess Alexandra
Fyodorovna at the Chapel
of the Winter Palace, St Petersburg,
on 14/26 November 1894*
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ГЭ-6229



Thaulow, Frils Johann Frederik
The River
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. OP-43784



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

for it at the Hermitage, and there is another small painting, of only the bride and the groom, at Palace-Museum Darmstadt. Tuxen had painted the latter especially for Empress Alexandra Fedorovna's brother, Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse. On 14 (26) May 1896 Tuxen witnessed the coronation of Nicholas II at the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow. The Hermitage is in possession of a modello for Tuxen's grand coronation portrait, which somehow ended up in Pavlovsk (Inv. No. LX-72-LI; oil on canvas, 142 x 180).

There are three paintings of questionable provenance at the Hermitage, signed by one Roland Rasmussen. Transferred to the Hermitage from the Anichkov Palace, these works apparently used to belong to Empress Maria Fedorovna, likely cherished as mementos of her homeland. Two of them – *An Old Square in Copenhagen* and *Villa Hvidovre*, both signed and dated 1909 – are still in the Hermitage, while the third painting, *View of Amalienborg Square in Copenhagen*, which bears no autograph yet is clearly painted by the same artist, was transferred from the Hermitage to the State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow in 1930, and erroneously ascribed to Carl Rasmussen (Inv. No. 3479) during the transition. The signatures notwithstanding, the creator of the two Hermitage paintings was never identified. The name is not mentioned in any art encyclopaedia. These views of Copenhagen, so dear to the Russian Empress's heart, were perhaps painted by some amateur artist.

More Scandinavian art found its way to Russia in the second half of the 19th-century thanks to artists, art critics, and collectors from St. Petersburg and Moscow who visited Paris frequently. From the late 1870s on, few art exhibitions in Paris went without the presence of Nordic artists, whose acclaim grew ever wider. Many of them were art students in Paris, mastering the great painting traditions and simultaneously absorbing the new influences wafting in the air of the French capital in those years, while also cultivating their unique visions and personalities.

"All this young talent – Edelfelt, Zorn, Thaulow, Skredsvig, Werenskiöld, Normann, and others – came at the right time, with their diaphanous poetic freshness and genuine worship of nature," wrote Sergei Diaghilev in an 1896 article. First introduced to the Nordic masters in Paris, Diaghilev purchased a few of their works, including *Landscape with a Lake* by Erik Werenskiöld. He would subsequently assist with arranging a Scandinavian art exhibition at the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts in St. Petersburg in 1897. Diaghilev travelled to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark in connection with that exhibition, visiting local artists

in their studios to hand-pick works for the show. He also purchased some paintings for his private collection. Some of the paintings included in the exhibition would end up in private collectors' hands in Russia. One of them was *Winter Landscape* by Frits Thaulow, which ended up in the hands of the Ratkov-Rozhnov family. Russia's growing appreciation of Scandinavian painting was accompanied by a surge of interest in the music of Edvard Grieg, and the literary works of Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Knut Hamsun, and August Strindberg – an infatuation that would positively sweep Russia on the cusp of the 20th-century.



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Werenskiöld, Erik
Landscape with a Lake
(*Summer Evening at Kvileseid*)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-9825

Among the pioneers of Nordic art collecting were the great Russian patrons of the arts Sergei Shchukin and the Morozov brothers. The painting *Night* by Frits Thaulow, currently in the Hermitage, comes from the Morozov collection. Thaulow's landscapes were among Shchukin's first new acquisitions in the mid-1890s, when the collector switched focus from Russian to Western European art, leading to a truly outstanding Impressionist and Post-Impressionist collection. Later, in 1915, Shchukin contracted another Norwegian artist, Christian Krohn, then temporarily residing in Moscow, to paint his portrait. Shchukin and Krohn had previously met and become friends in Paris. Shchukin, who was a huge fan of the art of Henri Matisse, had tried to kindle Krohn's appreciation for him. Unlike the collector, it took some time for Matisse's art to grow on Krohn, but once it did, the Frenchman would become a big influence. Matisse's impact is reflected in the two portraits of Shchukin painted by Krohn – shoulder-length and life-size, in December 1915 and January 1916, respectively. Both were painted in a much simplified manner, with accented, flat geometrical shapes and bright colours. The Matissean quality of the painting was probably the reason the creators of the First Museum of New Western Art (MNZI 1) in Shchukin's mansion at Znamenka had placed the shoulder-length portrait next to Matisse's *View of Collioure*, Van Dongen's *Woman in a Black Hat*, and other Fauvist artworks, as evidenced by photos from 1922-1923.

In 1923, MNZI 1 (Shchukin's collection) and MNZI 2 (Morozov's collection) were merged to form the National Museum of New Western Art (GMNZI). In 1948, its holdings were divided between the State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and the Hermitage in Leningrad, with Leningrad receiving a substantial portion of the GMNZI artworks. In addition to

paintings traceable to the Shchukin and Morozov collections, the Hermitage obtained many other artworks acquired from different sources while the GMNZI existed. Along with the previously mentioned paintings of Thaulow and Krohn, other Scandinavian paintings now in Hermitage custody included Thaulow's landscape *The River* and Edelfelt's *View of Porvoo from Nasinmaki* (both originating from the collection of Zinaida Ralkova-Rozhnova), as well as a few paintings purchased at art exhibitions in Moscow, such as *The Walk-Out* by Erik Johanson (1924), *the sketch Children* by Carl Erickson, *The Tailor-Philosopher* by Väinö Kunnas, and *Finnish Peasant Woman* by Hugo Simberg (1935).

However, those were not the only sources of Scandinavian art for the Hermitage.

In 1931 the Hermitage received several paintings of superior artistic merit from the Academy of Arts Museum: *Rocks* and a *Waterfall in Telemark* by Carl Lehman, *Two Girls* by Juho Rissanen, and *Fiord in Norway* by Georg Rasmussen (Cat. No. 42). Although Scandinavian art is rarely found in private collections, the Hermitage contrived, from 1946 to 1986, to acquire numerous Scandinavian artworks through its purchasing commission: paintings by Danish artist Ditlev Marlsen, Swedish artists Wilhelm von Gegerfeldt, Carl Nordgren, and Bengt Nordenberg, Norwegian artists Carl Lehman and Hans Dahl, and Finnish artists Oscar Kleinh, Albert Edelfelt, Hugo Backmansson, Pekka Halonen, and Alvar Cawen. While these paintings were a substantial supplement to the holdings of Scandinavian art at the Hermitage, they failed to fill the most regrettable gaps: the Hermitage has not a single painting by either of two of the greatest Nordic masters of all time, Anders Zorn and Edvard Munch.³

³ Mikhail Morozov bought the painting *Girls on the Bridge* by Edvard Munch in Paris in 1903. Currently held by the State Museum of Fine Arts, it is Munch's only painting in Russia.

ALBERT EDELFEIT

Edelfelt, Albert (Gustav Aristid)
Landscape
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. OP-18902



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

VALENTINA BEREZINA

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE PUBLICATIONS "REPORTS OF THE ORDER OF LENIN OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM. XXVI", 1965 AND "REPORTS OF THE ORDER OF LENIN OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM. XXVIII". 1967. "THE SOVIET ARTIST" PUBLISHING HOUSE, LENINGRAD

TWO SKETCHES AND A WOMAN'S PORTRAIT

**THE HERMITAGE OWNS FIVE PICTURES
BY FINNISH ARTIST ALBERT EDELFEIT
(1854–1905), BUT DATES AND SUBJECT
MATTER HAVE ONLY BEEN DETERMINED
FOR THREE OF THEM.**

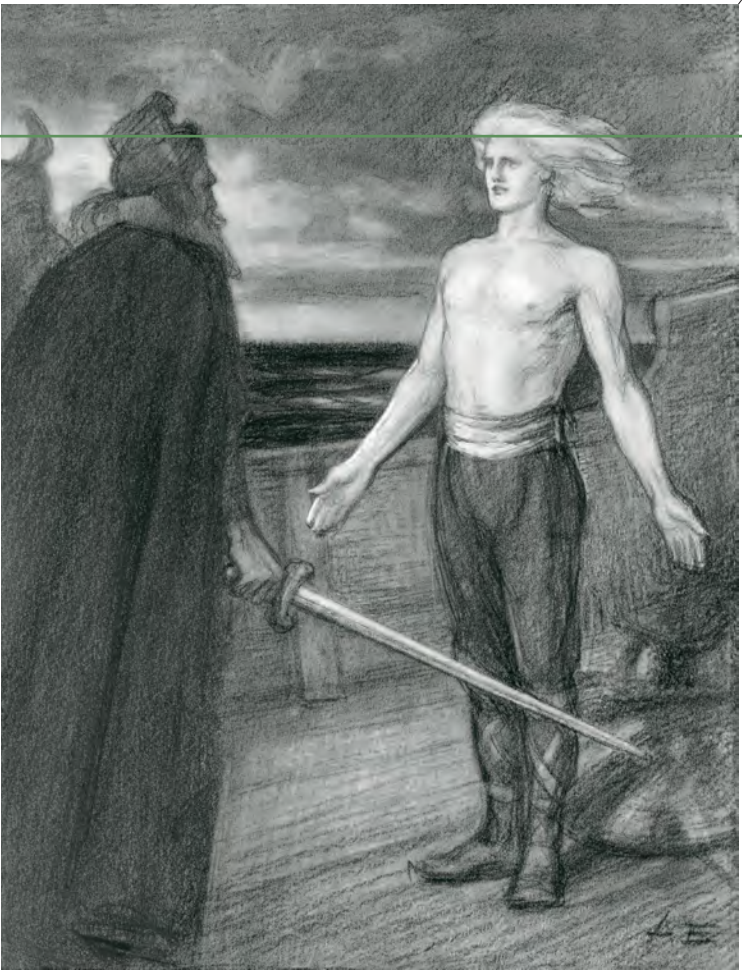


PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

Edelfelt, Albert (Gustav Aristid)
Illustration for the Poem 'Konig Fjalar'
by J.L.Runeberg
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. OP-27117

One – a landscape in watercolour – was received in 1930 from the Russian Museum and catalogued under No. 18902 as *View of a Placid River with Reflecting Banks*. If we compare this picture with one of Edelfelt's finest landscapes, *Kaukola Ridge at Sunset*, there is not a shred of doubt that the Hermitage painting depicts the same breathtaking, islet-sludded lake view, but from a different vantage point, a bit lower down, but on the same mound that fills the foreground of the more famous painting. In the watercolour we see only two of the pine tree trunks growing on the precipitous promontory, and only a hint of the land at the bottom edge.

Edelfelt's superior command of watercolour painting techniques is evident in every detail. With skilful colour grading, he achieves a water surface with a mirror-like quality; the thick masses of greenery and their reflections on the lake's surface are conveyed in a confident, sweeping manner. The immediacy and freshness radiating from the sketch suggest that it may have been the artist's first modello for the eventual painting. This assumption is indirectly vindicated by the horizontal orientation of the drawing (21 cm × 26 cm): like the painting itself, the two previously published drawings from the Aleneum Museum in Helsinki are oriented vertically (25 cm × 21.5 cm). Edelfelt painted *Kaukola Ridge at Sunset* while staying at the Saari Estate in July of 1889. He altered its foreground

1 Based on: Berezina V. *A Woman's Portrait by Albert Edelfelt* // *Papers of the State Hermitage Museum*. 1965. [No.] XXVI; Berezina V. *Two Sketches by Edelfelt* // *Papers of the State Hermitage Museum*. 1967. [No.] XXVIII.

Edelfell, Albert (Gustav Arislid)
Portrait of Marie von Heirolh, nee Dyakovskaya
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-6476



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

slightly the following autumn, or possibly in the spring of the next year, prior to exhibiting it at the National Society of Fine Arts in Paris. It would be fairly accurate to assume that the Hermitage watercolour was painted in June or July of 1889 or, in any event, before he began the final painting.

Another study, drawn in charcoal and whitewash was christened *Allegory, Youth with Naked Torso and Windblown Hair in Front of an Old Man Clad in a Long Mantle with a Sword*, upon its arrival in the Hermitage in 1926 from the State Museum Fund.² The nature of the sketch indicates with some certainty that it must be an illustration for some literary work. An investigation into Edelfell’s work in the genre of book illustration leads us to believe that this may be an illustration for the 1844 epic poem *King Fjalar* by Finnish poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg. The poem, which tells the story of the legendary King Fjalar and his son Hjalmar, seems to fit perfectly with this assumption. The Hermitage sketch is an illustration for *Song Three*, the climax of the poem.

After many a victorious battle, King Fjalar takes an oath that neither he nor his son will ever wage war again. But when Hjalmar grows up, he leads his army into a war and returns victorious. Fjalar subsequently seeks to put his son to death for breaking the oath. Fjalar climbs onto a ship’s deck, sword in hand. Hjalmar kneels before his father, resigned to his fate:

*And flashing fell the sword
Upon the skull of Hjalmar.
The helmet sounded,
But Hjalmar rose unscathed.*

*— My strength has failed me — quoth the King —
My strike is e’er so weak.
Remove your helmet, son,
I am not strong enough to cleave it.*

But when Hjalmar dutifully removes his helmet, his father’s hand falls, and the sword only brushes Hjalmar’s hair. Fjalar then pardons his son.

In Edelfell’s drawing Hjalmar stands before his father, having cast off his armour and his helmet, waiting for the punishment to be meted out. The artist amalgamates the contents of several stanzas. He strives to render the scene in an ultimately romantic vein, to match the style of the poem: the sea is dark and grim, and the chiaroscuro of the overcast skies portends disaster. Against this backdrop stands Edelfell’s “ideal” hero – a handsome, fair-haired Nordic character. But as in his historical paintings, Edelfell falls prey to exaggerated and artificial aggrandisement in this drawing.

The most comprehensive monograph on Edelfell that we have, complete with a catalogue of his works, was authored by Bertel Hintze.⁴ It mentions only three paintings under the name of *King Fjalar with the Body of His Son Hjalmar* among Edelfell’s illustrations for the poem, but the paintings themselves are not reproduced in the catalogue. This drawing from the Hermitage collection, therefore, partially fills this gap in our knowledge of Edelfell’s work. Edelfell started work on the illustrations for the epic poem *King Fjalar* in Haikko in the summer of 1894, and completed them the following year. The Hermitage drawing belongs to that period.

The painting *Portrait of a Woman* by Albert Edelfell was transferred to the Hermitage from the Russian Museum in 1930.³ The portrait is autographed and dated, but only the numbers “189” are clearly visible. With the last digit completely illegible, no accurate dating of the work was possible.

The painting was on display in the Finnish Art section of the Hermitage. A visitor once informed the museum administration that he recognised the woman in the painting, identifying her as Maria Vladimirovna Heirolh. He was, however, unable to provide any further information on her, other than saying that he thought she lived in St. Petersburg. This name remained associated with the painting from then on.

The history of the painting was researched in the archives of the Russian Museum. It so happened that the painting had been purchased in 1908 from one Vasily Male, a professor of the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, for one thousand roubles. In his declaration dated 15 November 1908, Male refers to the painting simply as a “woman’s portrait”. This depersonalised reference, coupled with the fact that no Maria Vladimirovna Heirolh was mentioned in St. Petersburg’s city directory from the 1890s through the 1900s, raised serious doubts as to whether the portrait was indeed of her.

The matter was clarified further by the catalogue appended to the monograph *Albert Edelfell* by Finnish art historian Bertel Hintze. No. 755 in the catalogue is recorded as *Portrait of Mrs. Maria von Heirolh (nee Dyakovskaya)*. Even more importantly, it is mentioned that the portrait was painted in Helsinki in January 1896, and that the artist gave it to his model as a gift. There is a pencilled sketch for the painting in the possession of the Helsinki-based society Nylands Nation. It is also reported that the painting was featured (Cat. No. 88) in an exhibition at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg as early as February-March 1896, and then appeared (Cat. No. 22) at an exhibition hosted by the Finnish Artists’ Society in Helsinki in September 1896.

Our research into Maria Heirolh yielded some interesting new information. It transpires that she was the first wife of Alexander Alexandrovich Heirolh (1882–1947), a well-known actor in the Moscow Art Theatre (MKhAT). According to his fifth and last wife, Lyubov Heirolh, Maria’s first marriage was to a man named Wentzel. In 1905 the sister of Alexander Heirolh’s father, who was friends with Maria Wentzel, persuaded her to accompany Alexander, then a young artist of promise, on his

trip to Paris. They fell in love with each other on that trip and married soon thereafter. The marriage, which produced a son, Algar, did not last long. Alexander Heirolh left his wife and son in 1910. Maria and her son moved to Finland in 1914, retaining the name Heirolh.

In her essay *Alexander Heirolh* in Brief, on file in the Central State Archive of Literature and Art of the USSR in Moscow, Lyubov Heirolh mentions that Maria was seven years older than Alexander.⁵ Thus the year of her birth would have been 1875, and she would have been 21 in the Hermitage portrait. Replying to an official request from the Hermitage, Lyubov Heirolh kindly shared what little she knew about Maria from her late husband Alexander. Apparently Maria’s father was Ukrainian and her mother was German. Born and raised in Finland, she received a good education. She spoke French, German, and Swedish fluently, and was an excellent pianist. Most of her friends were Swedish. She was also a friend of Finnish artist Ellen Thesleff. The most recent information we have regarding Maria Heirolh dates to the early 1930s.

The information Bertel Hintze provides in his book regarding the portrait of Maria Vasilevna Heirolh needs some correcting. Hintze writes that “the portrait was purchased from Mrs. Heirolh in 1898 for the Alexander III Museum in St. Petersburg.” This is incorrect. As mentioned above, the portrait was purchased for the museum a decade later, and there is no evidence that Maria Vladimirovna had anything to do with the sale. Indeed, it would have been extremely strange for her to divest herself of a portrait that was given to her by the artist almost before the paint had dried on it, so to speak. It makes more sense to assume that it was not she herself, but rather her ex-husband Wentzel who had sold the painting to Male sometime after 1905, or that Male was an intermediary in the sale. At any rate, we now understand why the name of the woman in the portrait was not mentioned when it was sold to the Russian Museum.

Another significant fact is that in the *Catalogue for the Exhibition at the Imperial Academy of Arts*, 1896 the Edelfell painting bears the title Portrait of Ms. D. This leads us to assume that Maria Vladimirovna was not yet married at the time of the painting, and was known by her maiden name of Dyakovskaya. Thus, the Hermitage portrait in question should most appropriately be entitled *Portrait of M.V. Dyakovskaya-Heirolh*.

2 _____ Inv. No. 27117. 36 cm × 28 cm.
3 _____ Inv. No. 6476. Oil on canvas. 50 cm × 41 cm.
4 _____ Hintze B. *Albert Edelfell*. Porvoo : WSOY, 1953.
5 _____ Now the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI).



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

SANI KONTULA-WEBB ¹

ALBERT EDELFEIT: A FINNISH ARTIST AT THE RUSSIAN COURT

“An examination of the history of cultural ties between Finland and Russia reveals a strong and fruitful relationship, especially at the end of the 19th-century. There was a lively exchange between the two nations in music, theatre, and the fine arts. Although, for the most part, Finnish artists looked to the West as their reference point, the seminal role that St. Petersburg and its Imperial Academy of Arts played in the birth and coming of age of the Finnish art scene should not be underestimated.

Finnish paintings appeared quite frequently at St. Petersburg’s academic art shows. Throughout the 19th century there was no lack of young artists from Finland among the academy’s students. Some Finnish masters were granted academic titles in St. Petersburg. Among the Finnish artists who worked in St. Petersburg, Albert Edelfelt is in a league of his own. He alone had won the acclaim and acceptance of the Russian imperial court and the lucrative commissions that came with it – executing portraits and other paintings

for Alexander III, Nicholas II, and Academy President Grand Duke Vladimir.

The exhibition *Albert Edelfelt and the Romanovs* explores the shared art history of Finland and Russia, shedding light on the lesser known chapters of Edelfelt’s oeuvre. Portraits of the imperial family’s children will appear together for the first time in more than over 100 years, offering visitors a rare chance to appreciate them as a series. For the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg, this exhibition provides a fortuitous opportunity to bolster and develop cultural cooperation between our countries, working in partnership with Russia and Finland’s premier art museums.

Art History never ceases to confront us with new discoveries, masterpieces thought lost a long time ago yet miraculously recovered, and long forgotten stories suddenly taking centre-stage again. I trust that readers of this catalogue and visitors to the exhibition will learn about Albert Edelfelt, his art, and his many-faceted international career.”

Edelfelt, Albert
Good Friends
(Portrait of the Artist’s Sister Bertha Edelfelt)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-9812

¹ Sani Kontula-Webb is curator of the exhibition *Albert Edelfelt and the Romanovs* (November 2019 – January 2020, Academic Research Museum of the Russian Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg) and Director of the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg.



PHOTO: © KATYA NIKITINA

Opening of the exhibition Albert Edelfell and the Romanovs at the Museum of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts 13.11.2019

Edelfell, Albert
Children. Grand princes Boris Vladimirovich and Kirill Vladimirovich
1881
Oil, canvas
Rybinsk State Historical, Architectural and Art Museum

collection. The request was granted and the expert commission at Vneshtorg sent a few artworks to Rybinsk, including this portrait by Edelfell. When the Rybinsk State Museum of History, Architecture, and Art put its collection online in 2017, I managed to identify a certain painting named *Children*, by Edelfell, as the very portrait of the Grand Duke’s children Finnish researchers had been looking for.

Edelfell described his stay in Tsarskoye Selo in numerous letters, which have reached us intact. In a letter he wrote to his mother, Alexandra Edelfell, on 19th November 1881, Albert shared an amusing account of his experience painting the portrait of the little Grand Dukes Boris and Kirill: “The tiny masters are very playful. They come and lick me, grab my paints, and so on. All children are alike, whether high-born or not. Little Boris surprised me today. Looking at his own portrait, he suddenly uttered: ‘That is His Imperial Highness Mister Boris’. Therefore he already knows he is a ‘highness’. In general, they are good children, kind and obedient. When I ask them to sit still, they do the best a child their age can possibly manage.”²

THE ARTIST ALBERT EDELFELL (1854–1905) LOOMS LARGE IN THE HISTORY OF FINNISH ART OF THE 19TH-CENTURY. HIS WORKS ARE A NATIONAL TREASURE, AND ARE AMONG THE MOST RECOGNISABLE OF ANY FINNISH ARTIST. EDELFELL WAS NOT ONLY A MASTER PAINTER. HE ALSO WAS ABLE TO INFLUENCE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DECISIONS MADE IN HIS HOMELAND, AND WORKED TO PROMOTE THE APPRECIATION OF FINNISH CULTURE AND ART INTERNATIONALLY.

Albert Edelfell spent a considerable part of his life away from Finland, mostly in Paris. Not surprisingly, his persona and his creative work are firmly welded to France as well as to his home country. Although Albert Edelfell’s works connected with Russia are not so well known, they represent a vibrant and extremely consequential chapter in the history of artistic ties between Russia and Finland.

It is with the aim of highlighting these ties that the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg presented the *Albert Edelfell and the Romanovs* exhibition at the Academic Research Museum of the Russian Academy of Arts and the Sinebrychoff Art Museum in Helsinki. More than a hundred years had elapsed since Edelfell’s last personal exhibition in Russia. And some of the works included in the Helsinki exhibition had never been seen on Finnish soil before.

Edelfell’s return to St. Petersburg and the Academy of Arts, by way of his painting, has momentous symbolic significance. It was the Imperial Academy of Arts that paved the way for his recognition by the Romanovs of Russia.

Edelfell’s paintings were first noted by certain Russian art connoisseurs at the Salon in Paris, whereupon the Finnish artist received an offer to exhibit at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg.

Albert Edelfell owed his first commission from his aristocratic Russian patrons to his painting *Good Friends* (1881), which is now in the Hermitage. This painting – a portrait of the artist’s younger sister – caught the eye of prominent art collector and patron of the arts Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, who also happened to be president of the Academy of Arts. He first met the Finnish artist in person in the autumn of 1881, shortly after Edelfell was awarded membership to the academy.

So impressed was the Grand Duke with Edelfell’s art that he gave him two commissions at once – a double portrait of his older sons, Grand Dukes Kirill and Boris, and another portrait of his youngest son Andrey.

While working on this commission, Edelfell made frequent trips to the Grand Duke’s Auxiliary Palace in Tsarskoye Selo at the end of 1881. The final portrait shows Boris, 4, and Kirill, 5, in a palatial setting. Both boys are wearing white dresses. In the 19th-century it was customary to dress small children of both sexes in identical lace dresses and leave their hair long.

In Finland, this portrait was thought to have been lost after the 1917 Revolution. A few years after the painting was removed from Grand Duke Vladimir’s palace, it resurfaced in the Rybinsk Art Museum. In 1921 the Museum in Rybinsk requested more exhibits from the government to enlarge their





Edelfell, Albert
Under the birch-trees
1882
Canvas, oil
Private collection

Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich and his wife Maria Pavlovna were very pleased with the portraits of their children. The wife of Emperor Alexander III, Maria Feodorovna, was enchanted as well. Edelfell was officially introduced to the Empress in December 1881, and she commissioned him to paint portraits of two of her children, 6-year-old Grand Duchess Xenia and 3-year-old Grand Duke Michael. Edelfell was invited to stay in Gatchina while working on the portraits. He was at the royal residence in Gatchina when the New Year of 1882 was rung in.

When you compare the grand ducal child portraits with the painting *Good Friends*, it becomes obvious that the latter served as a compositional model and style guide for the portraits. And it’s no wonder. Following his official introduction to the Empress, Edelfell packed up his works and moved them from the Academy of Art to the Gatchina Palace. *Good Friends* was among them. Maria Feodorovna, enthralled by the painting, wanted to buy it immediately. Edelfell obliged, and the painting was added to the royal art collection at Gatchina.

Upon completion, all three children’s portraits were exhibited together at the All-Russian Art and Industry Expo in Moscow in 1882. At the 2019 exhibitions in St. Petersburg and Helsinki the portraits were reunited for the first time in almost 140 years, having ended up in different collections, in Finland and Russia, after the 1917 Revolution.

Albert Edelfell had also painted a few genre scenes for Alexander III and Maria Feodorovna, including *Boys Playing on the Shore* (1884), *In the Nursery* (1885), *Under the Birches* (1882), and some Copenhagen marina views.

These paintings are currently in the possession of several Russian and Finnish museums. One of the marina views – *Anchorage in Copenhagen III* – hangs in the Finnish Presidential Palace in Helsinki. The whereabouts of another of these paintings, *Under the Birches*, was unknown until very recently. Edelfell painted it to decorate the Anichkov Palace, Alexander III’s favourite residence. The painting was subsequently transferred to a Russian royal residence in Poland.³ Then it disappeared without a trace.

In 2018 I discovered that the painting *Under the Birches* was in the hands of a private collector in Poland. Its provenance was then researched at the owner’s request.⁴

I started off with the knowledge that there once were three Russian royal residences in Poland: two palaces, in Białowieża and Skierniewice, and a hunting lodge in Spała. Of the three residences, only the Spała lodge was directly associated with the customer for the painting *Under the Birches*, Maria Feodorovna – it was her and her husband’s favourite getaway in Poland. They spent their holidays in Spała regularly between 1886 and 1894 while the modest palace was finished and decorated. The painter Ivan Shishkin (1832–1898) visited Spała by imperial invitation and stayed for two months. It was the imperial couple’s idea to decorate their favourite summer place with paintings from the best artists. It would be entirely logical to assume that Edelfell’s painting was relocated from St. Petersburg to Spała at some point during those years.

The assumption that the painting was at Spała is vindicated by a particular 1924 photograph taken inside the White Salon of the former imperial residence. The painting *Under the Birches* is clearly discernible in the background. The photograph was included in the very detailed study on Spała by Michał Słoniewski and Svelana Chesnykh, published in 2014.⁵

Spała changed hands several times, but the most valuable items had been removed from the former royal residence and preserved. When Poland gained independence the building was nationalised, and the remaining decor became state property. Spała was converted to a government residence for high-level officials.

The beginning of World War II in September 1939 meant another takeover for Spała. When the second capture of Spała by German troops appeared inevitable, the staff promptly removed all valuables from the palace. This was, quite possibly, when *Under the Birches* left Spała, never to return. It must have been removed in a hurry – the canvas was simply cut out of its frame. No interior decorations survived at Spała, as the palace burned down in 1945.

Nearly 15 years had passed since Edelfell’s portraits of the Romanov children when the Finnish artist received another Russian commission, this time from the new ruler of the Russian Empire. Edelfell joined a group of artists assigned the task of chronicling the coronation of Nicholas II in Moscow. He was also asked to execute a series of official portraits of the Emperor. It was customary to paint such portraits from existing likenesses or photographs, but Nicholas II made an exception for the Finnish artist and agreed to pose for the portrait in person. This was the highest point of Albert Edelfell’s career at the Russian Imperial Court.

² _____ Cil. ex: Albert Edelfell och Ryssland : brev från åren 1874–1905 / utgivna av R. Knapas och M. Vainio. Helsingfors : Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland ; Stockholm : Atlantis, 2004. P. 96.

³ _____ Hintze B. Albert Edelfell. Porvoo : WSOY, 1953. P. 531.

⁴ _____ Kontula-Webb S. *Albert Edelfell and the Romanovs. SPb.* : The Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg, 2019, P. 99–100.

⁵ _____ Słoniewski M., Chesnykh S. *Pałac i ludzie. Historia rezydencji myśliwskiej w Spałe 1885–1945.* Spała: Max, 2014.



K.A.Somov
Posler "Exhibition of Russian
and Finnish artists. 1898"
1897
The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg

THE PROXIMITY OF RUSSIA AND FINLAND COULD NOT HELP BUT INFLUENCE CREATIVE TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE 20TH-CENTURY. FINLAND'S EAGERNESS TO BE INDEPENDENT FROM RUSSIA, AND THEN WORLD WAR II - IN WHICH THE COUNTRIES FOUGHT AGAINST EACH OTHER - CAUSED THEIR CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP TO BECOME POLITICALLY CHARGED AND EXTREMELY TENSE.

KATARINA LOPATKINA ¹



NEAR BUT FAR



Exhibitions of Finnish art in Russia during the first half of the 20th-century

But the two countries also had “agents of rapprochement.” At the turn of the century, Finnish painter Albert Edelfell and impresario Sergei Diaghilev were two such men. Edelfell, who had become famous in Paris, had been receiving commissions from the Russian imperial family since the early 1880s. He often visited Russia not only to exhibit his own paintings, but also to make the Russian public familiar with works by his compatriots. In 1882 Edelfell helped organise a display at the All-Russia Industrial and Art Exhibition in Moscow.²

Edelfell interested both aristocratic patrons and young Russian artists – future members of the World of Art group Alexandre Benois recalled: “Never will I forget our excitement when in the spring 1891, at one of my brother Albert’s dinners, we were sitting next to Albert Edelfell, a stately and handsome man. He was as a famous painter whose pictures hung in the Paris museum. We were happy to talk in person with such a “celebrity”, discuss things with him without ceremony, and listen to his stories about what was going on in the world,

what was fashionable to love or despise: was this not greatest happiness?... He was a typical northerner who had more Swedish features than Finnish. He was exceptionally charming, and under his stern eyebrows his large eyes shone as if they were reflecting the mystery of the white nights and the smooth surfaces of the icy-cold lakes... And, to us at least, it seemed that his head was surrounded by the halo of a painter ‘acknowledged in Paris’.”³

The late 1890s witnessed a powerful performance by Finnish artists in St. Petersburg: 19 paintings by Edelfell were exhibited in the Catherine Hall of the Academy of Fine Arts during an academic exhibition in 1896. Sergei Diaghilev wrote: “Edelfell knew how, while in no way discrediting the [Finnish] national character, to combine the original features of his country with a purely French lustre and a refined technique. He belongs to that stellar group of northern artists who injected new life into painting in Western Europe in the early 1880s.”⁴

Two years later an exhibition took place that was destined

¹ Katarina Lopalkina (Helsinki) is an independent researcher and curator specialising in the history of 20th-century art.

² Reilala A. *Friendship under the Canopy of Politics. Introduction to the History of the Russo-Soviet and Finnish Artistic Relations: Presentation given at the Repin Institute in 1980.* P. 5.

³ Benois A. *My Memoirs.* Books 4-5. Volume 2. Moscow: Nauka, 1980. P. 187-188.

⁴ Diaghilev S. *The Finnish Painter Edelfell. Sergei Diaghilev and Russian Art: articles, open letters, and interviews: correspondence: contemporaries about Diaghilev: Volume 1.* Moscow: Izobrazitelnoye iskusstvo, 1982. P. 52.

to become part of history – the Exhibition of Russian and Finnish Art organised by Sergei Diaghilev. In January of 1898, works by 10 Finnish and 21 Russian artists were exhibited at the Museum of the Baron Stieglitz Central School of Technical Drawing in St. Petersburg. Diaghilev and his adherents regarded the Finnish artists as ambassadors of European culture, which at the time was lacking on the Russian art scene. The exhibition was greeted with fervour: it provoked diametrically opposed opinions, leaving no one indifferent. Ilya Repin unabashedly called Gallen-Kallela’s art “the epitome of wildness” and criticised the “dilettantism” and “decadence”. Vladimir Slasov was not enchanted with the paintings by the Finnish painters either: his article *The Miraculous Miracle* mentioned “stupid, tasteless exhibitions with wacky Finns to make it even worse”. At the same time, younger artists found the exhibition robust, fresh, and inspiring. After visiting the exhibition, Anna Os troumova-Lebedeva wrote in her diary: “I went to the exhibition of Finnish and Russian artists. No exhibition has ever made such a strong and unified impression on me. Edelfell is undoubtedly the best among the Finnish painters. His genre picture *Laundresses* is amazingly true-to-type and lifelike, and it is technically splendid.” ⁵

The exhibition was clearly an opportunity for the Russian public to get to know the art of Finland. But the main failures and successes of this exhibition were of the Russian artists. The panel painting by Mikhail Vrubel was the greatest disappointment. Alexandre Benois bitterly reported: “Vrubel is said to be an irreproachable master who paints ‘like Ingres’, but here we see hardly distinguishable, ‘roughly’ worked out, and rather banal figures of women splashing about in algae.” ⁶ On the contrary, paintings by Konstantin Somov were purchased by famous collector and President of the Academy of Fine Arts Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich, as well as by the “Helsingfors Museum”. ⁷

After the exhibition, *Mir Iskusslva* would often publish reproductions of the paintings by Edelfell, Gallen-Kallela, Enckell, and Järnefelt. However, the citizens of St. Petersburg were only able to see actual paintings by Finnish artists again in 1917. They rejected multiple previous invitations for “political reasons”. ⁸

In many respects, this made the 1917 exhibition – which was intended to be an artistic event – political and politicised. It was held by the art bureau of Nadezhda Dobychina, based in the Adamini House. It opened in 1914, and occupied a ten-room apartment, with windows facing the Moika River and the Field of Mars. Dobychina organised more than 30 exhibitions at the bureau. In contrast to Diaghilev, she was not limited to only one movement or artistic group: she exhibited artists from the World of Art and the rebellious artists from the Union of Youth.

Held immediately after the February Revolution, in the

spring of 1917, the Exhibition of Finnish Art turned out to be the bureau’s grand finale. The Finns brought almost 300 works by 27 artists to Petrograd. It was the only exhibition of foreign artists in Petrograd during the war. Gathering paintings to exhibit in the time of war proved quite difficult, and the exhibition was not as impressive as anticipated. Benois recalled: “We expected something different; we did not know whether it should have been larger or better, but certainly different. We were promised the greatest Finnish art: Gallen, Halonen, Enckell, Simberg, and Vallgren. But they did not take part in the exhibition.” ⁹ At the same time, the opening ceremony and other events – dinners, receptions – were very formal and “official”: “They tried to invite as many people as possible to the opening ceremony. ‘The whole of Petersburg’ gathered together, including new ministers and popular Duma deputies, and everybody simply entreated the Finns to send Russia to hell and live as they wished.” ¹⁰ Gorky wrote the preface for the catalogue; Mayakovsky shocked everyone with his behaviour at the dinner. Many recorded their recollections about the opening ceremony and the subsequent week of celebration, but not about the exhibition itself. Of course, newspapers published some reviews, all positive: M. Grushevsky’s article “The Triumph of Finnish Art” (*Birzhevyye Vedomosti*) and V. Denisov’s “Eläköön Suomi!” (*Den*) shared the same opinion: there was much that Finns could offer to Russians. ¹¹ However, Benois, a fervent admirer of the Finnish, preferred to express warm but very general comments on the Finns instead of making a detailed critical analysis of the exhibits:

“This is neither scarceness nor indifference. Oh no! The imagination of the Finns is not weak. Finns are not indifferent, and Finns are neither sluggish nor deprived of temper. No one else is as passionate as a Finn in anger. Their clear and bright eyes, which may seem apathetic, can suddenly sparkle with a terrible lightning or a surprisingly tender smile. In fact, Finns waste neither their anger nor their tenderness. They are thrifty by nature and in the best sense of the word. But they are absolutely trustworthy; they rate everything as its true value. Finnish art does not hide anything or disguise it with linsels; it comes as it is. You absolutely believe their art; it influences your mood just like the cliffs, pine trees, lakes, and waterfalls in Finland. They and their art generate wholeness and a health-giving sense of virtuous nakedness.” ¹²

The Bolsheviks’ takeover halted artistic relations between the two countries once again. The next exhibition of Finnish art was not until 1934, this time in Moscow. It was the first Finnish art exhibition Moscow had seen since the 1882 All-Russia Industrial and Art Exhibition. This time, of course, the organisers were of a totally different disposition. From the mid-1920s until the 1950s the key role in maintaining the Soviet Union’s international cultural contacts was played by

⁵ Masters of Art about Art. Volume 7. Moscow: Iskusslvo, 1970. P. 382.

⁶ Benois A. My Memoirs. Books 4-5. P. 190.

⁷ Ibid. P. 191. Rainbow by Konstantin Somov is now part of the collection of the National gallery of Finland.

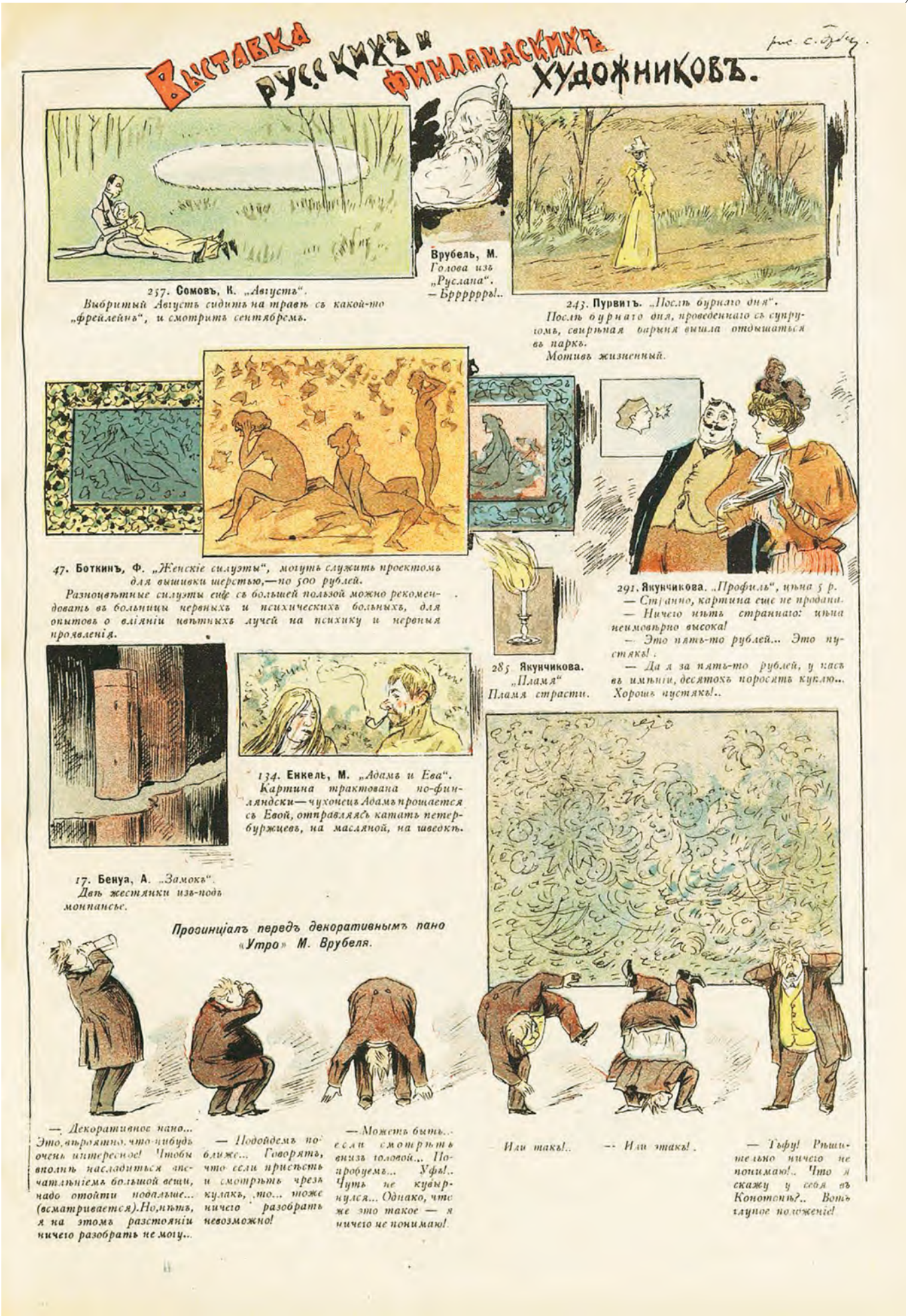
⁸ Ibid. P. 188.

⁹ Benois A. Memoirs. 1916-1918. Moscow: Zakharov, 2010. P. ??

¹⁰ Bunin I. Complete Collected Poems, Novels, and Stories in One Volume. Moscow: Alpha-Book, 2018. P. 1046.

¹¹ Hellman B. “‘So Much! So Much! So Much!’ The Finnish Exhibition in Petrograd in 1917”. Sludia Russica Helsingiensia et Tartuensia XII: The Mythology of Cultural Space: On the 80th Birthday of Sergey Isakov. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2011. P. 68.

¹² Benois A. An Exhibition of Finnish Artists. In Petrograd in April and May of 1917. URL: benua.su/art_fin_1.



VOKS, the All-Union Society of Cultural Relations Abroad, an institution established in 1925, which became the key institution for Soviet cultural diplomacy.

According to its charter, the society's work included maintaining contact with various organisations, the press, and international "friendship societies", as well as organising exhibitions and trips by important Soviet specialists abroad. VOKS had an exhibition department, which helped Soviet artists take part in international exhibitions and organised exhibitions of Soviet artists abroad. The work at the department was largely directed outwards and targeted to the West. Showcasing Soviet scientific, cultural, and artistic achievements was an important part of teaching foreigners to understand Soviet reality. VOKS regarded exhibitions of Western artists as a by-product rather than a goal. They often served as a diplomatic "down payment" to a foreign "society for friendship with the USSR" in order to facilitate subsequent exhibitions of Soviet artists abroad. This was certainly the case with the exhibitions of Dutch (1932), Polish (1933), and Finnish (1934) art. The exhibitions were often difficult to organise. A report on the Finnish exhibition mentions a discussion among the Finnish organisers: many artists did not want to send their works to the USSR. The disputes of the Finnish organising committee were so robust that it "led to a knife fight."¹³ Nevertheless, VOKS managed to open this exhibition in November 1934. It was promised in exchange for an exhibition of Soviet artists in Finland, which was held six months prior in Helsinki.¹⁴

The Soviet press did not write much about the exhibition at all, and the general reaction was rather half-hearted: the exhibition of Finnish art seemed to simply underscore the diplomatic failures of the USSR in Finland, where the German Nordic Society dominated the cultural arena. In the autumn of 1933, a discussion with Finnish envoy Aarno Yrjö-Koskinen took

place at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Soviet diplomats noted that "Finland extrapolates to the USSR the concepts and attitudes towards Tsarist Russia that had formed before the Revolution. Our neighbour Finland knows less about us than it does about more distant countries...Finland seems to be isolated from the USSR by an impenetrable wall."¹⁵

At the same time, it was an unprecedented exhibition. The works of 90 artists were displayed: from the classics that Benois was expecting to see in his time (Albert Edelfelt, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Hugo Simberg, and Ellen Thesleff), to young modernists (Sulho Sipilä and Greta Hällfors-Sipilä).¹⁶

There were almost no foreign exhibitions held in the Soviet Union from 1937 to 1947. After the war, VOKS' influence weakened. The Ministry of Culture took control of the cultural scene and began organising international exhibitions at the highest levels. The first art to be exhibited came from the USSR's political allies: Yugoslavia (1947), Romania (1949), and China (1953).

Finland's turn came in 1953. The Academy of Fine Arts in Moscow and then the Russian Museum in Leningrad exhibited a full-scale national retrospective: from the famous birds of Ferdinand von Wright to the delicate graphics of Tuulikki Pietilä. The exhibition included 98 works. The catalogue noted that "the exhibition of Finnish art in Moscow includes works of art from the mid-19th-century to the present day. Works were selected in such a way as to meet the expectations of the Soviet side – Realism. This exhibition will give the Soviet people a chance to get to know Finnish art. Finland has never exported as large and diverse exhibition as this one."¹⁷ But the practices in Soviet art press were such that only *Iskusstvo* (Art) published an article about the exhibition – in May of 1955.¹⁸

This formidable show finished off the history of large Finnish exhibitions in the first half of the 20th-century. The



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Hugo Simberg
Finnish peasant

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-8948



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Väinö Ilmari Kunnas
The Tailor-Philosopher

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-9035

development of cultural and specifically artistic ties between Finland and Russia look after the ups and downs of mainstream politics: close ties in the 1890s became more distant in the 1900s, and so forth. Unfortunately, attempts to increase cultural interaction were often regarded as solely a means of solving a specific political issue, which ultimately sidelined the art.



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Edelfelt, Albert
Laundresses

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЭ-6477

Edelfelt, Albert
Self-Portrait

1902
Finnish National Gallery / Aleneum Art Museum



PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / HANNU KARJALAINEN

¹³ Lopalkina K. *The Bastards of Cultural Relations. International Artistic Ties of the USSR in the 1920s-1950s*. Moscow: Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2019. P. 14.
¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁵ Cit. ex: Baryshnikov V. "Issues in Finnish-Soviet Cultural Relations in the 1920s-1930s." *Scandinavian Readings of 2006: Ethnographical, Cultural and Historical aspects*. St. Petersburg: Russian Academy of Sciences, 2008. P. 389.
¹⁶ See: *Exhibition of Finnish Art: catalogue*. Moscow: VOKS; Vsekokhudozhnik, 1934.
¹⁷ *The Exhibition of Finnish Fine Arts (1953, Moscow): catalogue*. Moscow, 1953. P. 7.
¹⁸ *Iskusstvo*. 1955. No. 3.

DOES THE OCTOPUS HAVE A MIND?

I am a visual artist and musician based in Helsinki, Finland. In my free time I study Japanese and play the harp. I work with moving images, sound, light, glass, chemical and microbiological processes, and artificial intelligence to explore the conditions in which humans exist with what is more than human. Often my work emerges as situations and installations that inquire into the interpenetration and interconnectedness of language, body, and matter within shifting ecosystems.

In recent years I have been interested in matters of expanded consciousness, ecology, and technology. This manifests in my work in various ways. Using transparent materials has been very integral to my practice. I often use glass and transparent video screens to alter perspectives on and the space around a work, and also to create multi-layered installations where the individual spectator becomes part of the piece. Through these material conductors, I look at how different “mediators” can alter neural and sensorial activity levels. One of my main interests is examining the environmental effects of human actions on the planet, and looking for places where the interconnectedness is evident. Human life is inseparable from the ecosystem, and it is important to highlight the complex systems of symbiosis that surround us at all times. I have been closely observing the methods of acquiring knowledge on ecological issues; it is something that continually informs my work.

Tuomas A. Lailinen
From the series A Proposal for an Octopus
 2019
 Mouth-blown glass objects
 Courtesy of the artist and Helsinki Contemporary



PHOTO: JUSSI TIAINEN

¹ Tuomas Aleksander Lailinen (born 1976) is an artist and musician. He graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2008. Lailinen’s works have been shown at the 21st Biennale of Sydney, the 7th Bucharest Biennale, Screen City Biennale 2019 (Slavanger, Norway), SADE LA (Los Angeles), Amado Art Space (Seoul), the Museum of the Moving Image (New York), A Tale of a Tub (Rotterdam), Art Sonje Center (Seoul), Helsinki Contemporary, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki), Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA; Espoo, Finland), MOCA Shanghai, and Cinemateca do MAM (Rio de Janeiro).

Tuomas A. Lailinen
Still image of a GCL animation
 LiminalClusterRemastered_TWOSCREENS_00515



THE MULTI-CORE INTELLECT

Since 2016, one vein of my research has been attempting to understand cephalopod intelligence. This project has resulted in works with different material manifestations: glass objects made for octopuses, multiple video and audio works, and a series of glyphs – made both in font form and as glass objects – derived from research on octopus arm movements. In the videos I filmed octopuses interacting with the glass objects. The entire project was a process of trying to understand the minds of non-human beings and the possibilities of interspecies communication, as well as how very different models of intelligence behave in their own environment. The octopus’ neural distribution is decentralised; some go as far as to say that they have nine minds – one central brain and eight auxiliary ones.

I am currently working on a new piece for the 2020 Helsinki Biennial, which will be a continuation of my long-term research on all of these issues.



PHOTO: © TUOMAS A. LAITINEN

Tuomas A. Lailinen
Dossier of Osmosis

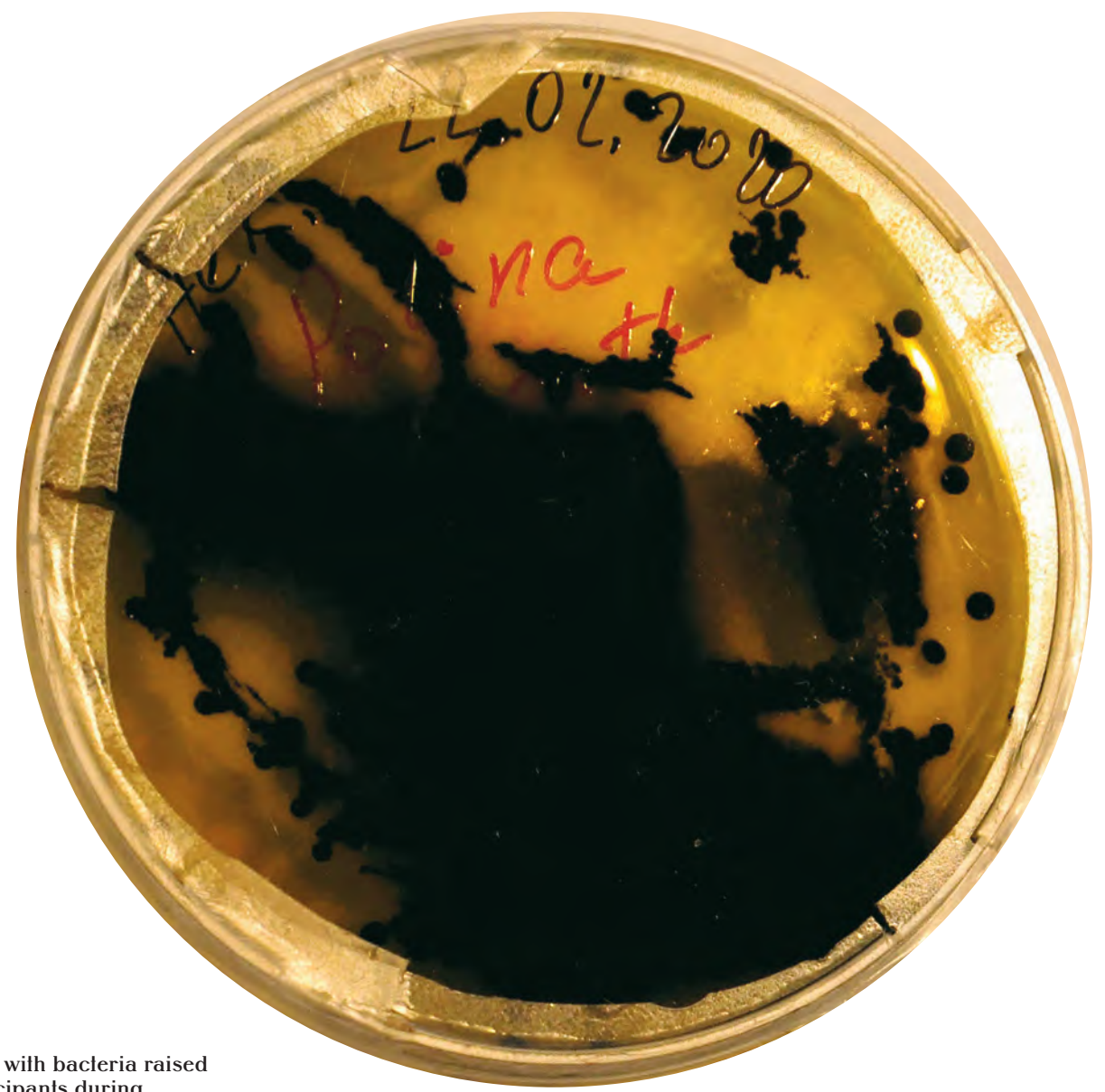
2018
 Chemical reactions, glass, vitamins, seaweed, ultrasonic audio and light
 Exhibition view: 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018)
 SUPERPOSITION: Equilibrium & Engagement
 Commissioned by the 21st Biennale of Sydney
 Courtesy of the artist and Helsinki Contemporary

THE MEASURE OF CHAOS

WHAT IS ART & SCIENCE? IS IT ENTERTAINMENT FOR GEEKS? IS IT A POPULARISATION OF SCIENCE? IS IT A MOVEMENT IN ART IN WHICH AN ARTIST WHO IS PASSIONATE ABOUT INVENTING SOMETHING NEW OR IS TORMENTED WITH HOPELESS TRADITIONAL MEDIA TRIES TO USE TECHNOLOGY?
EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS CAN BE ANSWERED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY;
EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS IS A TOPIC FOR A LONGER DISCUSSION. BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THIS TREND CAN DEVELOP THROUGH ENHANCED INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS AND THE INTERPENETRATION OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND ART.

It's become commonplace to think that the time of genius individuals has passed. Everybody more or less understands that a viable project cannot be launched by one person. Behind the project initiator is always someone else – an engineer, or behind-the-scenes staff (technicians, operators, and programmers).
 Is it true that a work of art involves science if its description includes the word *science*? To what extent is the attempt to aestheticise machinery – 100 years after the Futurist manifestoes – an innovative artistic gesture? How reasonable is it to elevate a possibly trivial technological phenomenon by moving it into the museum space or into an obscurity that justifies everything?
 Despite the relatively significant community of curators and artists that has formed over the last decade in Russia, there are not enough to solve the puzzle of this movement. How can a larger number of participants be engaged in a process that has the potential to be a technological and cultural driver in the growth of these areas and become a significant segment in the creative industries? How can we outline the key areas of the art & science agenda? How can we turn the museum into a hub of interdisciplinary intersection? How can we reintroduce a young audience to it? An analysis of the actual directions within the movement shows four key vectors. The first and main theme asks: what is Art & Science? Jean Baudrillard argued that technology could end up as the last remaining force connecting individual fragments of reality, although he did not see technology as the concentration of meanings. And that lack of formulated meaning is, in large part, the problem that faces all participants in this process: how can the movement be systematised and conceptualised if its description is largely devoted to its narrative aspect? Imagine a landscape with an explication that thoroughly describes what a tree is, how it grows, how the mist in the background emerged and what it consists of, what the names of the species depicted by the artist are, and how they live and interact... in no way will this lead to a definition of, for example, the Barbizon School.

PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV



A Petri dish with bacteria raised by the participants during the workshop

LIZA SAVINA¹

SCIENCE AS A METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

¹ Liza Savina is the curalor of the exhibition *Measure of Chaos. Science As a Method of Communication* (part of *Museum 15/24*, an international youth project).

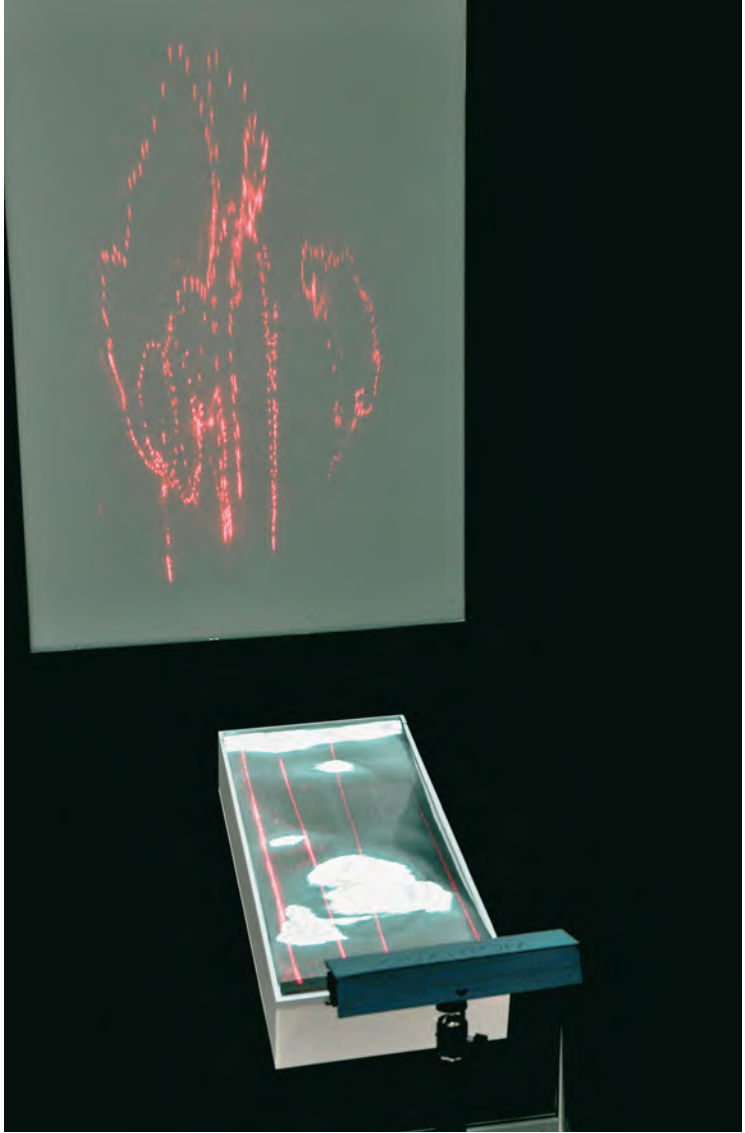


PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV

Olaf Schirm's project *Quantom*

Bio-art workshop by artist Laura Rodriguez in the laboratory of ITMO university



PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV



PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV

Projects documentation of the exhibition program Measure of chaos. Science as a way of communication at the Central Museum of Communications named after A.S. Popov, St Petersburg. Left: Documentation of Vasily Sumin's project Episode 1: How to accept the answer? Right: Documentation of the iBiom art group projects (Olga Zubova, Tala Gorian, Evgenia Zolotnikova, Anna Prilutskaya)

In Art & Science, the viewer, trudging through the thicket of definitions, often does not reach the emotion, as a rule, that normally results from an association based on lived experience. This is why discussion is of particular importance in the movement.

Another direction is life forms. This is probably the most common theme, connected with biology and anthropology. But as the anthropocentric model of the world recedes, the interaction of the artist with various species becomes especially valuable, including in terms of ethics in general and the applicability of the ethics of anthropocentrism to various biological forms in particular.

Non-life forms are connected not only generally to technologies that destroy illusions of the world, but to artificial intelligence as well (interaction with which having an emotional and ethical impact as well). This includes positive futurological concepts and concerns regarding the impossibility of controlling artificial intelligence as an "inorganic form of life". The rules for the evolution of this "life", on the one hand, are set by man; on the other hand they develop according to intrinsic laws that are difficult to predict.

Art that works with quantum technology has quite significant prospects of development. But this topic is so complex that, despite the huge interest in quantum physics, most art projects, even if they are launched under the high-budget

Arts at CERN, come down to a metaphorical "dancing around the collider". It is obvious that quantum technology is dramatically replacing digital technology, and artists must learn more about it.

The Measure of Chaos is a project that aims to answer these questions. Recognising that space is the highest manifestation of order, we would like to attempt to define who we are, where we are, and where we are going, and attempt to bring more people to this process of understanding, to connect them directly with scientific laboratories. This is not the first attempt, but it is by no means the least important. The project links two cities. One is St. Petersburg, where important exhibitions and research projects have been recently conducted in the sphere of Art & Science, and where the university Art & Science community is actively growing. The other is Novosibirsk, which has huge potential for institutionalisation based around the Novosibirsk Scientific Centre. Within this movement, the centre is forming a concept for the development of the region and amalgamating the scholarly traditions of Siberia.

In addition, repairs have begun at the abandoned *Orbita* space communication station in Novosibirsk (a monument of Soviet Modernist architecture from 1967), identified as a special aspect of the project. This means that chaos has slightly receded – by a conditional quantum.



PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV

Documentation of Paul Vanuz's project Labor

"Limacon" is an authorial musical instrument and part of the installation "ELAC L" by Boris Shershenkov



PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV

Installation by Boris Shershenkov "ELAC L". Combination with the museum model of the satellite station "Orbita"

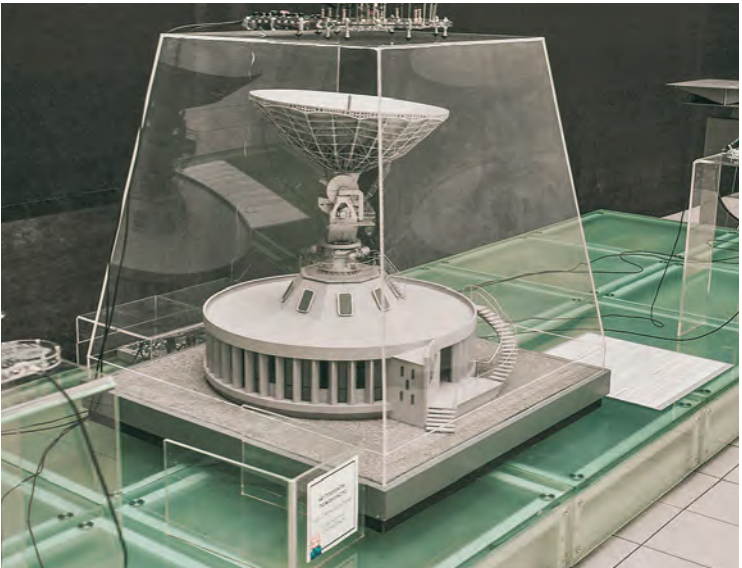


PHOTO: © ILIA KRONCHEV



Edelfelt, Albert

View of Porvoo from Nasinmaki

The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

Inv. № ГЭ-9031

“Certain acts dazzle us and light up blurred surfaces if our eyes are keen enough to see them in a flash, for the beauty of a living thing can be grasped only fleetingly. To pursue it during its changes leads us inevitably to the moment when it ceases, for it cannot last a lifetime. And to analyse it, that is, to pursue it in time with the sight and the imagination, is to view it in its decline, for after the thrilling moment in which it reveals itself it diminishes in intensity...”

Jean Genet. *Miracle of the Rose*. 1946

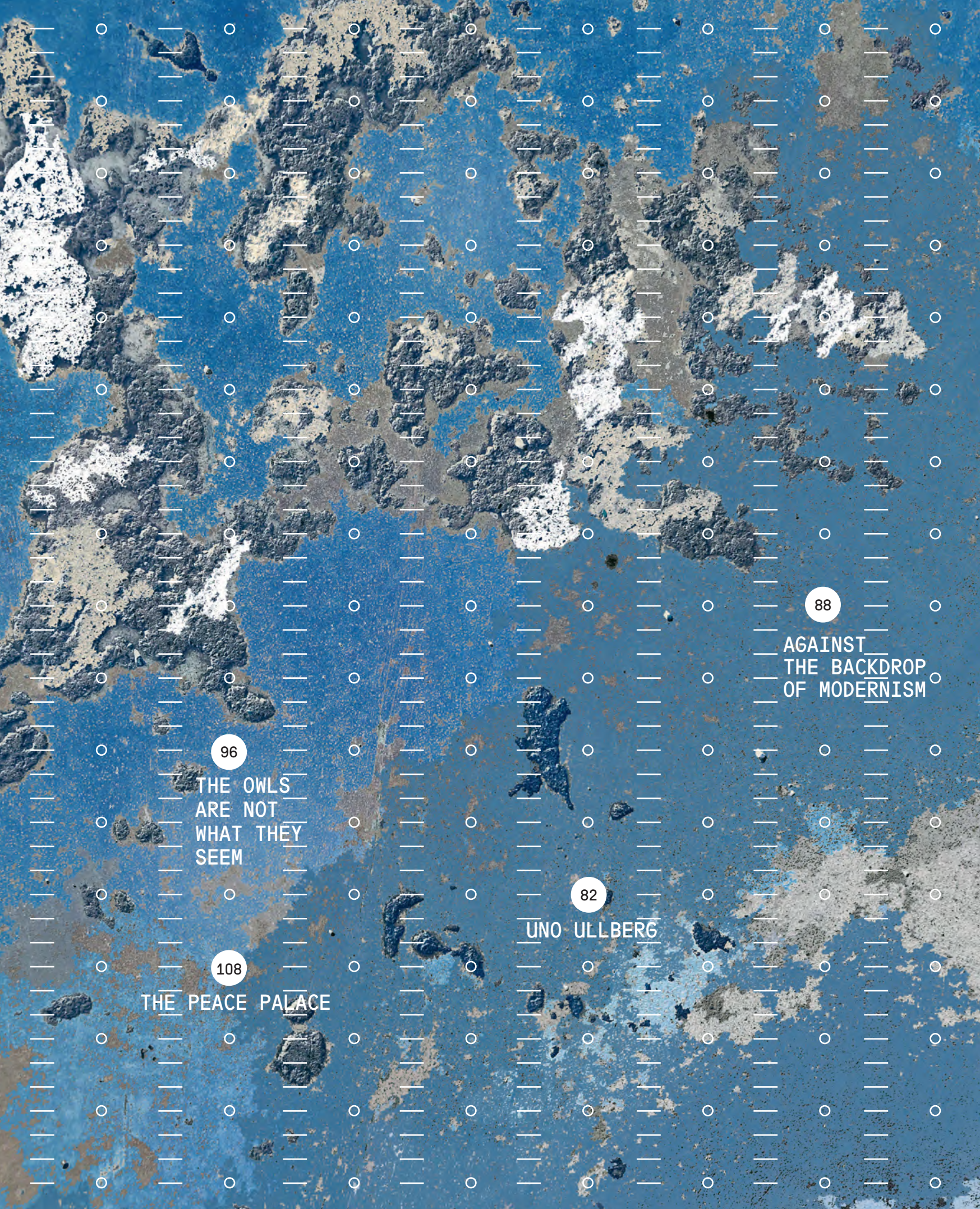
■ ■ ■ WE ALWAYS FEEL THAT BEAUTY IS ELSEWHERE – FAR, FAR AWAY. TO TERRY GILLIAM, MEL BROOKS, OR THE RUSSIAN AUTHORS ILF AND PETROV, BEAUTY RESIDES IN BRAZIL. MY OWN DISTANT THING OF BEAUTY USED TO BE PORTUGAL, THE EUROPEAN NATION FARTHEST REMOVED FROM FINLAND. IT IS ONLY TOO EASY TO FANTASIZE THAT THERE YOU WOULD FIND TRUE HAPPINESS. BUT OF COURSE WE ALL KNOW THAT THERE IS NOTHING FOR US IN THAT FAR-OFF LAND.

■

Aki Kaurismäki, Finnish screenwriter and film director







96

THE OWLS
ARE NOT
WHAT THEY
SEEM

108

THE PEACE PALACE

82

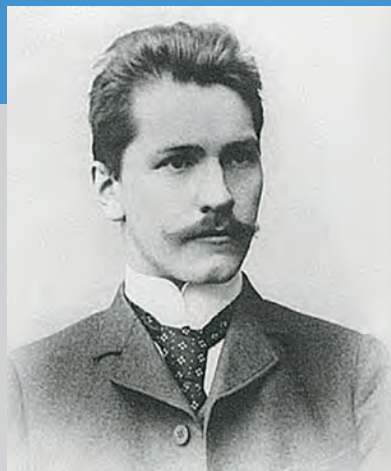
UNO ULLBERG

88

AGAINST
THE BACKDROP
OF MODERNISM

UNO

ULLBERG



KSENIA MALICH¹

THE VELVET REVOLUTION IN ARCHITECTURE

“Listen to the railway’s thunderous music
Listen to the engine’s shrilly whistling:
Here I come
— a t r a i n
with sides gleaming black
haughty and beautiful
rushing and dashing...”²

These lines from the poem *Arthur Honegger* by Arvi Kivimaa accurately convey the worldview that gripped Finnish writers, artists, and architects in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Those were the years when the thrill of motion and of expressionistic, visceral immersion into modern city life inspired the movement of Tulenkantajat (literally translated as the Fire Bringers). Automobiles, trains, and other hallmarks of technological progress were the ubiquitous accoutrements of the scenography in the 1928 novel *Grand Illusion* by Mika Toimi Waltari, as well as in the novellas and poems of Arvi Kivimaa, Olavi Paavolainen, and Kalri Vala. When describing his trip to study in Italy, architect Alvar Aalto constantly registered his fascination with the strident, modern way of life and advanced means of transport. When Aalto received the monetary award for his win in an architectural competition for an agricultural cooperative building in Turku, he bought himself a Fiat 509 (which was soon replaced by a much more stylish Buick).

Reflections on the future inspired new political and cultural creeds. Progress was in vogue when independent Finland was born in 1917, and this coincided with the nascence of Finnish avant-garde architecture, or “White Functionalism”, as it was christened in Finland.

THE HERMITAGE-VYBORG CENTRE IS PREPARING TO HOST AN EXTENDED RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO DISTINGUISHED FINNISH ARCHITECT UNO ULLBERG, WHO SERVED AS VYBORG’S CHIEF ARCHITECT BETWEEN 1932 AND 1936. HIS CREATIVE PATH EMBODIES THE UNIQUE JOURNEY TAKEN BY FINNISH ARCHITECTURE IN THE EARLY 20TH-CENTURY.



Art Museum and School in Viipuri
1929-1930

East Karelia and Viipuri (Vyborg), Finland’s second largest city and one replete with cultural and social significance, were, together with the capital Helsinki and the city of Turku, one of the main sites of a grand experiment, an endeavour from which Russia has inherited an impressive number of international architectural masterpieces created by consequential Finnish modernist architects Alvar Aalto, Uno Ullberg, and Erkki Huttunen. But steam power, electricity, and reinforced concrete structures were par for the course in Europe in the 1930s. Today we are more impressed by the contrast between early Modernism, with its utopian enthusiasm and pristine white stucco walls, and the environment of a post-Soviet Karelia, Finnish Functionalism’s aesthetic opposite. That environment, gnawing continually on the pre-war legacy, has fortunately failed to devour it completely: the creative energy of the interbellum decades proved too resilient. Vyborg’s public library and former drawing school have survived intact, testifying to the fact that the architecture of early Finnish Modernism can adapt itself perfectly to new functional uses and, indeed, looks more relevant than the more recent buildings surrounding it. What is the secret of this amazing adaptability? Is it that it is a natural, logical continuation of the local tradition?

The architecture critic Reyner Banham was right when he wrote that the “modernity” of European architecture did not

¹ Ksenia Malich, Architectural Historian.

² Arvi Kivimaa / ed. and transl. by K. Bosley. *Skaling on the Sea: Poetry from Finland*. Newcastle upon Tyne : Bloodaxe Books, 1997. P. 213..

begin with Le Corbusier or Waller Gropius. It grew organically over time, developing through all the generations of architects since the mid-19th-century, and it owed its first steps to the Arts and Crafts Movement.³ Because the process took so long, the link may not be so obvious between certain examples of radical, experimental architecture and the Victorian tradition. But on a small piece of historically Finnish land that evolution meets the eye all at once, as if compressed. Of the 28 buildings Uno Ullberg designed in Vyborg 22 have survived, along with another seven in Sorlavalta. This legacy is sufficient to give us a good sense of the history of Finnish architecture in the first half of the 20th-century.

The career of Uno Ullberg (1879–1944) began long before the Fire Bringers sang the praises of the automobile and the airplane. Ullberg was born and went to secondary school in Vyborg. He returned to his hometown in 1906, having completed his degree at Helsinki Polytechnic. He first went into business with his college mate Axel Gylden for a few years before launching a solo career in 1909. Ullberg’s architectural firm was the most influential in Vyborg’s architectural matters until 1936. Ullberg knew European architecture well. He had travelled to England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Belgium, and Spain. His first designs followed in the wake of his predecessors, inspired by the Finnish school of

National Romanticism. In 1907–1908 he designed the business and residential headquarters of Hackman & Co, a major local timber processing and trading company. The grey crushed-granite façade echoed the fragments of an earlier structure. The building was designed to appear as if it grew out of a rock. Its rough rustication and asymmetric silhouette with high pediment combined with fanciful incised ornamentation seemed to allude to the legendary time of “national awakening”. A team of craftsmen completed all interior finishing, furnishings, and fireplaces manually, to custom designs, occasionally drawing on “medieval” know-how.

A couple of years later, in the 1910s, the typical plasticity of Nordic Jugendstil began to acquire a touch of rationality. Natural stone rustication was out; symmetry and large, regular windows were in (the offices of the Karjala Company, 1911–1915). In 1926, architects from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Germany flocked to Vyborg for a convention of Nordic architects. Many of the participants were great fans of the work of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Jacobus Oud. Uno Ullberg’s colleagues thought highly of his work as well, which gave him strength to keep moving forward.

The building for the editorial offices and printing presses of the Karjala newspaper (1929) was designed with minimal décor, limited to modest brickwork ornament and a cheerful cornice

³ _____ Banham R. *Pevsner’s Progress // A Critic Writes : Essays by Reyner Banham*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1996. Pp 219–220.



1-3. Art Museum and School in Viipuri
1929-1930



more or less in the spirit of Art Deco. Some variety on the façade is provided by the shallow window recesses and the narrow semi-columns with triangular cross-sections. Built with the same bricks found on the façade, they practically blend into the surface of the wall. The monumental equipoise of the building is what comes to the fore. Ullberg’s work during this period exudes understated Functionalism. A grand new style of great potential looms behind the frugality of décor, the geometrical patterns of the building fronts, and the summary exegesis of the order.

Unlike German Bauhaus or Soviet Constructivism, Finnish Functionalism was not characterised by utopian rigor or drastic reduction in design. Finnish architects never questioned the “morality” of the decorative element, never explored some “mystical cosmos” behind visible reality with the aid of Theosophy, and never saw in abstraction a path toward attainment of divine harmony. They simply followed what their predecessors had taught them. Architect Hilding Ekelund, editor-in-chief of the journal *Arkitehti* (*Architect*), wrote: “Finnish architecture’s entirely Constructivist nature and scarcity of décor are the features that bind it to contemporary architecture, which arose thanks to the same principles of necessity and aesthetic fulfilment.”⁴

In Finnish architecture, the rock-solid bond of generations was never questioned, and no one was ashamed of their past, even when Futurism was all the rage. When Vyborg authorities

made plans in the 1920s to raze the Round Tower, one of the two surviving towers of the medieval town wall, Uno Ullberg spearheaded the campaign to save it. He formed a historical society and initiated a fundraiser. When a sufficient amount had been collected, he approached authorities with a design project to convert the tower to a café. With an official blessing, the plan was carried through to completion. Ullberg consistently advocated for the conservation of Vyborg’s historic old town in its exact, authentic form. He even believed that the use of zinc-plated iron as roofing was too traumatic a solution for some parts of the old town. Ullberg, a Modernist, categorically rejected any encroachments on the past.

Having absorbed the rationality of European Neo-Classical architecture, the “Swedish grace” of the creations of Gunnar Asplund, and the constructive modernity of early North American Art Deco, Finnish architects shied away from any perceived “aesthetic excesses”, from anything laden with someone else’s memories. That same quest for the rational is evident in their fascination with Swedish and Italian Classicism. In his first published essay, written in November 1922 for *Illalehti* (*The Evening Paper*), Finnish architect Alvar Aalto predicted that his mentor Armas Lindgren’s vision of “Finnish monumentality” would soon become reality, if only public tastes were nourished in the right way. The best models to hone this

⁴ _____ *Modern Architecture in Finland. Helsinki : Kirjayhtymä, 1987. P. 21.*

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/PHOTO: PAR NINARAS – TRAVAIL PERSONNEL (CC BY 4.0)



House of “Karelia” joint stock company, Vyborg
1911–1915

The building of the pawnshop in Vyborg
1931



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/PHOTO: LUDVIG14 (CC BY 4.0)

laste were, in his opinion, the architecture of the Gustavian era. Not surprisingly, one of the many creative periods in Uno Ullberg’s career was devoted to rethinking the Classical toolkit. The Art Museum and Drawing School complex in Viipuri (Panzerlachs Bastion, 1929–1930) exemplifies a completely novel approach with its smooth white stucco walls and its emphasis on an understated yet highly expressive arrangement of functional spaces. Respect for the Classical tradition emanates from the windows – semicircular at the top – and from the ascetic rectangular columns of the propylaea that open up toward the sea. The generous interior decorations enhance the impression that this edifice had not been fully consumed by the era of White Functionalism.

The Vyborg Pawnbroker’s Office (1931) is another story. Here we see a veritable classic of Functionalism – a simple white façade with horizontal bands of windows. Even here, though, Ullberg indulged himself by adding two niches with semi-spherical vaults, in which the doorways are concealed on either side of the façade. At certain angles, those arches are for all intents and purposes completely obscured by the ground floor. But upon closer inspection from the front, they immediately betray the distinctive genealogy of Ullberg’s mature designs. This vacillation between the Classical and the Modernist appears to be the definitive characteristic of Ullberg’s work in the 1930s (e.g., the bus station in Sortavala, the Vyborg Provincial Archives).

Today, if we look at the Cantatory Field (1932) that Ullberg designed for choir performances on Intendant’s Hill, we are hard put to say what impresses us more – the lingering power of the local pagan singing tradition, the elegant functional simplicity of the outdoor theatre, or the beauty of the archaic, antique visage of the amphitheatre.

Singer’s field
1932

The building of the hospital in Vyborg
1930



PHOTO: SOTVIRK PENNA TERVO/SA-KUVA HTTP://SA-KUVA.FI

FINNISH CINEMA LIKELY PROVIDES THE MOST VIVID EVIDENCE OF FINLAND'S PASSION FOR MODERNISM. MANY NEW BUILDINGS AND INNOVATIONS BY FINNISH ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS HAVE BECOME PERFECT BACKDROPS FOR FILMS. WE HAVE SELECTED FIVE POPULAR FINNISH FILMS FROM THE 20TH-CENTURY AND ANALYSED THE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN THAT SERVED AS THEIR SETS.

KSENIA MALICH

ARCHIECTURE AND DESIGN
IN FINNISH FEATURE FILMS

AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF MODERNISM

The Scapegoat [Syntipukki, 1935]



SF Parade [SF-paraati, 1940]



SHOPPING CENTRE

In 1935's *Syntipukki* [*Scapegoat*], clumsy and naïve Frans Esko Ylermi Adalbert Koikkalainen gets a job at Sampo, a modern shopping centre in the capital. The film was shot at the Stockmann department store, at the time the most modern store in Finland. Interestingly, architect Sigurd Frosterus designed the building back in 1916. The civil war and the tough economic conditions prevented it from being completed in the 1920s, but even in 1930

the design was still modern and relevant. People were amazed at the endless retail space, elevators, escalators, and fashion display podiums. The building that houses the Stockmann department store is a monument to the transition from streamlined Neoclassicism to modern architecture. The film depicts an era that was already living through a happy future -- the era in which architects were inventing Finnish Functionalism.

NEW CONSTRUCTIONS

SF-paraati [*SF-parade*], 1940, was released shortly before the Summer Olympics planned for 1940.² The main characters are opera singer (and part-time taxi driver) Tanu Paalu and tour guide Ansa Koskeli, whose love story unfolds against the backdrop of the most popular tourist attractions in Helsinki. The scenes show a modern city ready to welcome the Olympics. Ansa shows tourists around the architectural ensembles in the central districts, the Parliament, the rail-

way station, and, of course, the new stadium, a project by Finnish Functionalists Yrjö Lindegren and Toivo Jäntti. The building industry had not yet developed enough to allow all the new technologies to be incorporated in new housing developments. But public buildings such as hotels, cinemas, and sports facilities erected in the 1930s have since become classic landmarks of early Modernism (the period was later termed "White Functionalism").

² _____ The 1940 Olympics did not take place because of World War II. Helsinki hosted the 15th Olympic Games in 1952.

The Gold Medal Wife (Kultamitalivaimo, 1942)



STADIUM

Kultamitalivaimo (*The Gold Medal Wife*), made in 1942, is a classic Finnish comedy about the popularisation of physical culture in the 1930s and '40s. It features a group of Finnish girls who are passionate about amateur sports and spend their days at the stadium. Their husbands are jealous at first, but soon they try it out themselves as track and field athletes. This is yet another chance to admire views of the stadium and new residential areas in Helsinki.

The tough economic times in Finland prevented the implementation of the Modernist projects of new residential areas in the 1930s. Thus the Olympic Village project in Helsinki (1940) was of particular importance for architectural advancement. Hilding Ekelund, Kai Englund, Georg Jägerroos, and Martti Välikangas developed the general plan alongside Alvar Aalto. The architects wanted to use laminated panels for the frameworks of the residential buildings, which were also arranged in such a way as to maximise natural light and fresh air in the apartments. The rocky landscape forced the architects to reject the network of squares characteristic of Modernism.

The 1940 the Summer Olympic Games were originally supposed to be held in Japan, but the Japanese emperor decided against holding both the Summer and Winter Olympics that year. It was then that Helsinki was nominated to host the Summer Games. However, on 2 May 1940 the International Olympic Committee was forced to announce that the 12th Summer Olympic Games would not take place.



Postcard with the view of the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki

The Scarlet Dove (Tulipunainen kyyhkynen, 1961)



CITY CENTRE

1961's *Tulipunainen kyyhkynen* (*The Scarlet Dove*), a Finnish film noir with a happy end, is surprising and spectacular. Tormented by suspicions of his wife's infidelity, the main character decides to spy on her. He spends a long, agonizing day roaming around the centre of Helsinki. The city becomes a metaphor for their tragic relationship. But hope returns when we see the new buildings in the International Style typical of the first post-war decade. The cheerful people and the main character walk past contemporary shopping centres, big-windowed cafes, and the sun-washed quay.

But the infidelity of the protagonist's wife is nonetheless confirmed. By evening, the desperately confused man wanders among the old wooden buildings not yet touched by renovations in the working-class district of Kallio on the city's outskirts. Here, on the brink of madness, the man is almost ready to commit a foul deed. A few hours later, however, to prove his innocence, he brings a policeman to the house he had visited that night. To his horror, he finds that the entire block has been destroyed with a bulldozer. The fog clears away, and the man wakes up.

Time of Roses (Ruusujen aika, 1969)



CITY OF THE FUTURE

1969's *Ruusujen aika* (*Time of Roses*), a naïve social utopia, was the first Finnish film about the future. The story was set in 2012: society had overcome class conflicts and the people's relationships with each other appear quite peaceful. But the apparent happiness and social harmony turns out to hide a hopeless sadness. Moreover, the main character, historian Raimo Lappalainen, finds out that the newspapers and television had concealed information on a riot at a nuclear plant. The plot was inspired by the work of Herbert Marcuse and Marshall McLuhan, as well as political events in Europe in 1967 and 1968.

The film was shot in new residential areas: Pihlajamäki in Helsinki and Otaniemi in Espoo. Olli Kivinen designed the experimental Pihlajamäki neighbourhood

in 1960, when an increase in migration from villages to cities resulted in a serious housing crisis in Finland. Architects searched for a solution through developing the suburbs and standardizing construction elements.

In the film, the future looks much like the ideas of the artistic neo-avant-garde of the 1960s. Director Risto Jarva invited the best artists of his time to work on the film. The score was composed by Henrik Otto Donner, experimental jazz pioneer and founder of the first rock-and-roll record label in Finland. The dance of the future, *pyllymylly* (literally "butt mill"), was arranged by Erkki Kurenniemi, a Finnish trailblazer in electronic music. The interiors included furniture designed by Eero Aarnio, while the characters wore clothes with a Marimekko print design.

Fuluro House in Dombay, Karachay-Cherkessia, Russia

Fuluro House in Normandy, France



PHOTO: © ME7027 | DREAMSTIME.COM



PHOTO: © JEFF WOODNACK | DREAMSTIME.COM

The *Futuro* house was built in the 1960s. Finnish architect Matti Suuronen designed it as a summer house at a time when experiments and "space" design were in fashion. The house consisted of a bedroom, a bathroom, and six reclining seats. *Futuro* was designed as a mobile house for summer or winter holidays. It could be easily assembled on a mountain slope or any other surface. The house was meant to be inexpensive and light, so the main material used in its construction was the then newly invented polyester. *Futuro* was marketed to the public in 1969, beginning the same week Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon. The interest the house generated was likely due to the general euphoria surrounding everything related to space. Even today the house looks like everyone's idea of an alien spaceship. Despite all of the publicity (a version of the house was even sent down the Thames in 1968 for an exhibition), *Futuro* proved to be a commercial failure. Due to the oil crisis the use of polymers became unprofitable, people started thinking about the sustainability of such production. Fewer than 100 houses were assembled. While they did become cult objects for collectors, many were abandoned when times and fashion changed. Artist Craig Barnes, new owner of a *Futuro*, has renovated the domicile and opened it to the public.



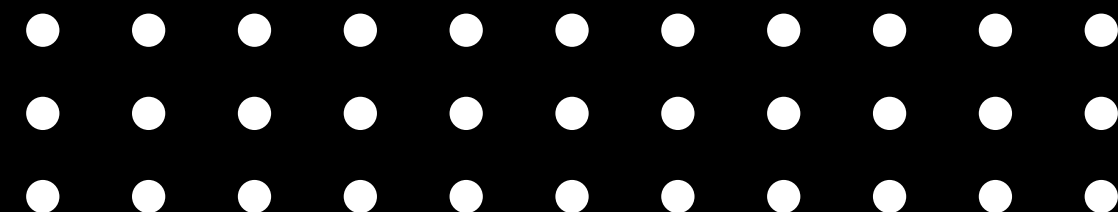
Owl on the facade of Ye. K. Barsova's
Apartment Building.
Architect: Yevgeniy Morozov.
1911–1912

IT WAS THE RISE OF FINNISH ART AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE 20TH-CENTURY THAT HELPED ST. PETERSBURG
EMBRACE THE NEW IMAGE OF A CITY ON THE BALTIC
COAST, RATHER THAN THAT OF THE FOURTH ROME,
SECOND AMSTERDAM, CITY OF ALL STYLES, OR
NORTHERN VENICE... AS VADIM BASS PUT IT, IT WAS
THEN THAT "THE COUNTRYSIDE, FINLAND, DICTATED ITS
ARCHITECTURE TO THE METROPOLITAN CAPITAL." ³

THE OWLS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM

NORTHERN ART NOUVEAU AND THE NATIONAL ROMANTIC STYLE ²

ANASTASIA DOLGOVA



¹ Anastasia Dolgova - architectural historian, NIITIAG
² "The owls are not what they seem" – a quote from the cult mystery TV series *Twin Peaks*,
directed by David Lynch and written by Mark Frost.
³ V.G. Bass. 'David and Goliath. The Finnish National Romantic Style and St. Petersburg's
Northern Art Nouveau: On the Mechanisms of Architectural Import' // *Architecture of the
Modern Era in the Countries of the Baltic Region*. SPb: Colo, 2014. P. 80

Telephone Company Building
in Helsinki. Architect Lars Sonck
1905

Apartment Building of A. F. Buby.
Architects: Nikolay Vasiliev,
Aleksey Buby
1906-1907



Indeed, cultural contacts grew strong between St. Petersburg and Finland (at the time part of the Russian Empire), which is not surprising as they were only 30 vershs (32 kilometres) apart. The excellence and originality of the Finns, who showed a unique ability to appreciate everything new and advanced in Western culture and an even greater desire to borrow it while preserving their individuality and “national physiognomy”, were highly valued by Russian architects.⁴ As a result, the Finnish National Romantic style played the main role in bringing to life a special interpretation of the “new” style in St. Petersburg – Northern Art Nouveau.

Despite the many analogies and parallels between the works of Finnish and Russian masters, as well as some straightforward borrowings, Northern Art Nouveau architecture was not just imitation or copying. In fact, the origins of these trends were the same; National Romantic was therefore easily embraced and adapted by Petersburgers; Fyodor Lidval, Nikolai Vasiliev, Aleksey Buby, Alexander Lishnevsky, Hyppolite Pretreus, and others.

Without delving into history and analysis, we will highlight the five most striking features of Northern Art Nouveau in St. Petersburg, which were also characteristic of Finnish architecture at the time.

Natural finishing materials

Stone, wood, rocks, and pines are the poetry of the North. Techniques borrowed from its neighbours, such as facing with granite and soapstone, masonry with massive rough-cut blocks, and original combinations of textures, gave the façades of St. Petersburg particular expressiveness and a romantic flavour.

Occasionally, façades were entirely faced with natural stone. The main façade of the Bazhanov House on Maral Street was clothed in a light-red granite. The grey granite of the Azov-Don Bank on Bolshaya Morskaya Street emphasised its austere and imposing character. But more often the facing was fragmented, with key compositional elements highlighted: plinths, corners, portals, window openings... A spectacular alternation of different surfaces was achieved with both artificial

decorative stucco (which will be discussed later) and processed stone of different textures and patterns. One might immediately recall the famous Pohjola Insurance Company Building in Helsinki.

Of course, wood was rarely used in the architecture of the time, but as an example there is Roman Mellzer’s own house on Kamenny Island, which might be thought of as “high-fashion” Northern Art Nouveau. The natural properties of materials were masterfully exploited in the building, becoming the main means of expression. The finishing was made of oak and pine, common trees of the Russian North. The wooden texture played an important role in both the exterior and interior decoration. In the interiors it was successfully complemented and set off by the rough texture of the fabrics used, such as thick military felt and Irland (a cotton fabric similar to Irish linen). The combination of these materials gave an impression of accentuated simplicity, even brutality, which was in full accordance with the tastes and principles of Finnish National Romantic.

On the right:

National Museum in Helsinki.
Architects: Herman Gesellius,
Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen. 1902
Bear sculpture by Emil Vikström



⁴ V.P. Apyshkov. *The Rational in Contemporary Architecture*. SPb.: Art of Imaging Press, 1905. P. 48.

Kallio Church in Helsinki.
Archilect: Lars Sonck
1912

● PHOTO: SVETLANA BULACHEVA, 2010



Helsinki Train Station.
Archilect: Eliel Saarinen
1906-1914

● PHOTO: A. VOZNESENSKY, 2011



Aparlment Building of T. N. Pulilova.
Archilect: Hyppolite Prelcreaus
1906-1907

Mellzer Apartment Building.
Archilect: Fyodor Lidval
1904-1905

Artificial materials and decorative stucco

Archilects also managed to achieve an even greater variety of textures thanks to new materials like the variety of decorative stuccos. Occasionally, they would imitate stone facing (as in Markus Ziv’s mansion on Rizhsky Prospekt by Boris Girshovich), but more often they would simply expand the architectural palette. With the alternation of materials and their textures, rough and smooth surfaces, it was possible to achieve memorable and expressive artistic patterns. The façades of the Aparlment Building of Ida Lidval, for example, were a combination of soapstone, granite, and fluted and fine-grained stucco, while the facades of the T. N. Pulilova House were a combination of soapstone, granite, and textured stucco. In some architectural landmarks these combinations were even more elaborate, with added facing of brick and tile, roof tiles, and sometimes stucco in different textures and colours (as in the K. I. Kapuslin House on the Fontanka River Embankment). The stern look of the Basseynoye Association Residential Complex went well with the grey rock-dash plaster pointed with thin ruslication and decorated with grooves in the lower floors, also in imitation of stone.

Towers, gables, and bay windows

The overwhelming majority of landmarks of both Northern Art Nouveau and the National Romantic style are likely to evoke associations with medieval architecture and old castles. This is largely due to their fondness for towers, gables, tented roofs, cupolas, bay windows, cornices, and ledges – and indeed for all architectural forms that give the building a dynamic and picturesque silhouette. Like mixed cladding, these elements usually mark the main compositional nodes in buildings. Most often, of course, they accent corners with towers, cylindrical bay windows, gables of complex shapes, and the like. The mansards are also developed. Examples are the corner cylindrical bay window and tower of the Mellzer House on Bolshaya Konyushennaya Street, the step-like arrangement of bay windows on the Pulilova House, and the design of Emanuel Nobel’s house on Lesnoy Prospekt.

Ornamentation. Flora, fauna, and epics

“Details borrowing the flora and fauna of Finland were of great interest; bears, wolves, squirrels, pine and spruce cones, and thistles were the motifs, naturally dearer to a Finn than an acanthus leaf or a scroll of Rococo ornament,” wrote architect Vladimir Apyshkov in 1905.⁵ In fact, these same motifs were just as close to Petersburgers. Various zoomorphic and vegetational details, as well as heroes of folklore and epics (the Kalevala for the Finns and Bylina for St. Petersburg), inhabited the facades and interiors of that period. Some fantastic creatures (for example, those on the Aparlment Building of A. F. Bubyр on Siremyannaya Street) are actually quite difficult to identify. The most popular motif and most recognisable attribute of the style would likely be the depiction of owls. It is not by chance that the aforementioned Pulilova House on

5 _____ Ibid. P. 50.

On the right:
Panu Building in Helsinki. Architects:
Georg Wasastjerna, Karl Werner Poló
1903



Residential Complex of the Basseynoye
Association of Apartment Owners.
Archilects: Ernest Wirrich, Aleksey Zazersky,
Nikolai Vasiliev, Aleksey Bubyr
1912-1914



Furnace tilework designed
by Bertel Jung.
Gräsviken Ceramic Factory
1900S
Keramarch Museum

Hvillräsk Manor. Fireplace
in the Main Living Room.
Architects: Herman Gesellius,
Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen
1902

Bolshoy Prospekt (Petrogradskaya Side) is widely known as the “House with the Owls.”

Importing design. Furnaces

Northern Art Nouveau and the National Romantic style are also reflected in interior design. It is noteworthy that many St. Petersburg buildings of this time were built with furnaces that were not only produced in Finland, but also designed by famous Finnish architects. Some of these were devoid of obvious stylistic references to the decorum of Jugendstil, while others were fine instances of National Romantic. An example is the building of the Russia Insurance Company (35 Bolshaya Morskaya Street), which houses well preserved furnaces designed by Vilho Penttilä and Eliel Saarinen. But when you encounter a similar Finnish furnace in St. Petersburg, do not jump to conclusions about its manufacturer. A similar appearance tells us only of the designer, not the production facility, as identical models were made at different factories, some of which were outside Finland. For example, a furnace at the Keramarch Museum that was designed by Bertel Jung and produced by the Gräsviken Ceramic Factory can also be found in the catalogue of at least one other Finnish factory, the Tampere Factory. Several popular “Finnish” furnaces, including the well-known *Pines* furnace by the architectural bureau Usko Nyström-Petreljus-Penttilä for the ABO Factory, were also intended for sale to the Deselnik Factory in Mogilev.



PHOTO: YURI MOLODKOVETS. 2019



PHOTO: KOLATON. 2012

On the right:

Pohjola Insurance Company Building
in Helsinki. Architects Herman
Gesellius, Armas Lindgren,
Eliel Saarinen
1899-1901



PHOTO: A. VOZNESENSKY. 2011

THE PEACE PALACE

A NORTHERN ART NOUVEAU CLASSIC IN THE HERMITAGE. THE HISTORY OF A DRAWING.



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG, 2020

THE STATE HERMITAGE'S COLLECTION INCLUDES A NUMBER OF ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FROM THE 20TH-CENTURY. AMONG THEM IS A PIECE BY GOTTLIEB ELIEL SAARINEN, AN OUTSTANDING FINNISH ARCHITECT AND THE FATHER OF FINNISH NATIONAL ROMANTICISM. IF IT WERE NOT FOR SAARINEN, THE HISTORY OF SKYSCRAPERS IN NEW YORK WOULD BE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT. HOW DID THIS DRAWING MAKE ITS WAY TO THE COLLECTION?

EKATERINA OREKHOVA ¹

In 1968, the State Hermitage acquired Saarinen's competition design for the Peace Palace (initially it was thought to be a design for a Scandinavian stock exchange). The sketch was received from relatives of architect Andrey Ol, who in 1905 and 1906 trained in Helsinki in the studio of Eliel Saarinen and Armas Lindgren while a student at the Institute of Civil Engineers.

The idea for a palace for the resolution of international conflicts arose as far back as the First Hague Conference in 1898, called at the initiative of Russian Emperor Nicholas II. The American diplomat Andrew Dixon White was the project's ideologue. It was meant to be an immense building – a palace of justice, a temple of peace, and a sacred place for all countries. In 1905, the Carnegie Foundation called for an open international competition for the design of the Peace Palace in The Hague. 216 architects participated, and over 3,000 drawings were submitted. Queen Wilhelmina organised an exhibition of the submissions, after which most of the drawings were returned to the participants. The winning design, in the Neo-Renaissance style, was submitted by French architect Louis Marie Cordonnier. Construction took place from 1907-1913.

Saarinen submitted a more "progressive" solution: a monumental, staggered, step-like

structure reminiscent of Northern Art Nouveau, but rationalised and purified. The drawing kept at the Hermitage is obviously not the final version; it is rather a sketch outlining the main concept, with the details not yet worked out. The main architectural accent was an octagonal tower topped with a hemispherical cupola, which rose above a cross-shaped building. A lane of sphinxes led to the palace.

The idea proposed by Saarinen was further developed in competition designs for the Finnish Parliament (1905-1908), the Town Hall in Revel (Tallinn, 1912), the Australian Parliament in Canberra (1911), and the Kalevala Tower (1921). After his immigration to the USA, Saarinen suggested to American architects combining the terraced form of a ziggurat and the ribbing of European Gothic architecture to achieve an ideal solution for high-rise structures. This becomes part of the history of the high-rise rush in Manhattan. Around that same time, upon his return from Finland, student Andrey Ol designed a summer cottage in Vammelsuu on the Karelian Isthmus for writer Leonid Andreev. Ol was Andreev's friend, as well as the future husband of his sister. Unfortunately the house has not been preserved, but the design drawing shows that Andrey Ol was undoubtedly influenced by Saarinen's idea of "rationalisation".

Gottlieb Eliel Saarinen
Competition entry for the Peace Palace
(International Court of Justice)
in The Hague

1905
The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
Inv. No. OP-46021

¹ Ekaterina Orekhova - art critic, the State Hermitage Museum



● PHOTO APPEARS COURTESY OF THE ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY OF ARCHITECTURE AND CIVIL ENGINEERING

Andrey Ol (1883–1958)

Andrey Ol was a Soviet architect, the head of Workshop No. 4 at Lenproekt, a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Architecture, and a doctor of Architecture. He designed many Neo-Classical buildings in the 1910s, conducted avant-garde experiments (the communal house on Rubinstein Street, the OGPU-NKVD building), and led many important projects in post-war residential development. He also participated in the restoration of the palace complex in Petrodvorets. As a student at the

Institute of Civil Engineers, in 1905-1906 he studied under Eliel Saarinen and Armas Lindgren, the most prominent figures of Finnish National Romanticism. During his apprenticeship he helped to build residential houses in Helsinki. Upon his return to St. Petersburg he studied under Fyodor Lidval, another proponent of Northern Art Nouveau and Neo-Classicism. Andrey Ol acknowledged this period as extraordinarily important for his creative development: "I gave my greatest gifts to northern architecture. I was attracted by its strong connection to national traditions and its bright and cheerful spirit."¹



● PHOTO: WWW.NBA.FI

Gottlieb Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950)

Architect Gottlieb Eliel Saarinen was the founder of Finnish Modernism, whose work anticipated Art Deco and Functionalism. Eliel Saarinen grew up in Russia. His father served as the pastor of a Lutheran parish near Gatchina. Saarinen's family spoke Finnish, Swedish, and Russian. In 1897 he graduated from

the Helsinki Polytechnic Institute. A year before his graduation, he started a company along with Armas Lindgren and Herman Gesellius; it would become the leading architectural firm in Finland at the turn of the century. In 1923 he immigrated to the USA and became president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

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¹_____ National Library of Russia. F. 1062. Op. 764a. No. 5. 1940.



“I don’t agree! That argument is based on the approach of traditional historians, which reduces memory to just another footnote of history. On that basis, history is objective and memory is subjective, history is collective and memory is individual; history is scientific and memory is emotional... But to me, that means everything is reduced to an ideology. The German Egyptologist Jan Assmann coined the term “mnemohistory”. He said that cultures do not only have historiography, but also communicative and cultural memories that are articulated in different ways... From that perspective, the radical opposition of history versus memory makes no sense. They will always be dependent on each other.”

Andreas Huyssen. ‘Interview for Barcelona Metròpolis.’ 2019

Alexander Nikolsky
The Ship Polar Star near the Hermitage
The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
Inv. № OP-44568

■ ■ ■ DOES OUR EMBROIDERED ORNAMENT MEAN ANY-
THING? IS IT ONLY A FLIGHT OF SOMEONE'S FANCY
OR AN ARBITRARY MAZE OF LINES? NEVER! THE OR-
NAMENT OF ANY AND ALL NEW NATIONS HARKENS
BACK TO REMOTE ANTIQUITY. BUT IN ANCIENT TIMES
NOT A SINGLE LINE WAS EVER MEANINGLESS IN
A DESIGN: EVERY LITTLE DASH MEANT SOMETHING –
A WORD OR A PHRASE, AN EXPRESSION OF FAMILIAR
NOTIONS OR CONCEPTS. ORNAMENTALISTIC ROWS
ARE LEGIBLE SPEECH, A SEQUENTIAL MELODY THAT
HAS ITS OWN ROOTS AND MEANING; THEY ARE NOT
INTENDED SOLELY FOR THE EYES, BUT FOR THE MIND
AND HEART ALSO.

■

Vladimir Slasov, music and art critic. Illustrated Album of Folk Embroideries.
Study on Folk Ornament. 1872







GESAMTKUNSTWERK
FOR EVERY DAY

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THE MOTHERS OF
FINNISH MODERNISM:
HELENE SCHJERFBECK
AND ELLEN THESLEFF

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TUULA AND THE BEAR

GESAMTKUNSTWERK

FOR EVERY DAY

PHOTO: © SIGNE BRANDER, 1912 / FINNISH HERITAGE AGENCY — MUSKETTI



Suur-Merijoki mansion in 1912

→
Eliel Saarinen.
Design of the interior
for the Suur-Merijoki estate
1902
Museum of Finnish Architecture, Finland

The Suur-Merijoki Manor

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1900, SUCCESSFUL RUSSIAN ENTREPRENEUR AND SHAREHOLDER OF THE FAMOUS RUBBER GOODS MANUFACTURER TREUGOLNIK, MAXIMILIAN OTHMAR NEUSCHELLER, PURCHASED A SCENIC LAND PLOT OF APPROXIMATELY 1500 HECTARES IN THE VICINITY OF WHAT IS NOW THE COMMUNITY OF KHARITONOVO NEAR VYBORG. HE COMMISSIONED THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER ARCHITECTS OF THE ERA - THE HELSINKI ARCHITECTURAL FIRM OF ELIEL SAARINEN, HERMAN GESELLIUS, AND ARMAS LINDGREN - TO DESIGN AND BUILD HIS MANOR HOUSE.



ELIEL SAARINEN A.D. 1902

The brilliant trio had just staked out their claim to fame at the 1900 Paris World Expo, where Saarinen, Gsellius, and Lindgren had designed the Art Nouveau Finnish pavilion that won the hearts and minds of the more discerning and demanding public. The iconic Leon Benois himself sang its praises. In the architecture journal *Zodchiy*, art critic Pavel Makarov explained how the Finnish pavilion's architecture rhymed with Russian sensibilities: "The Finnish room, despite its scarcity of décor... felt ineffably cosy and warm. It exuded something homey, rural, and simple, something that made you want to slay in that little nook whose magic had been wrought by the simplest means, with pine serving as an excellent substitute for oak, plain felt for velvet, and unbleached cloth for silk."¹ The Finnish architects' epic success set them up in the vanguard of a trend that would change the face of Nordic architecture forever – the National Romanic Style, of which the Manor of Suur Merijoki, built for the Neuscheller family, was a definitive and consistent example.

In the late 19th and early 20th-centuries, the prevailing sentiment among well-to-do families was to want the totality of their everyday environment to be a thing of beauty. It was their desire to inhabit and be surrounded by works of art of the finest quality, and for all objects to be in harmony with one another. Very few were able to afford such an all-embracing artistic environment, which came to be known as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or the "Total Work of Art". A man of substantial



Felix Nylund
Sculpture 'Wreath'
1903

PHOTO: MUSEUM CENTRE VAPRIKKI, FINLAND / SAANA SAILINDJA

wealth, Neuscheller spared no expense in his bid to ensure the comprehensive perfection of his future dream home. He ordered the same architects that were to design the manor to also furnish and decorate it, down to the minute details. The resultant "Total Work of Art" was to meticulously reflect the lifestyle and tastes of the Neuscheller family.

Maximilian Neuscheller (1859–1919/1921) – a Swiss-born Russian entrepreneur, 1st Guild merchant, connoisseur and patron of the arts – had a large family. He and his wife Cornelia van der Pals had ten children. Maximilian was a man of many interests, including engineering, astronomy, photography, and music, and he also travelled extensively. In St. Petersburg the family lived in a house designed by Victor Schroeter that belonged to Treugolnik, a Russian-American rubber manufacturing partnership. They also owned a small dacha on the Malaya Neva River. The Neuschellers had had their dacha rebuilt several times, but the small plot size and pre-existing early 19th-century structures set natural limits to expansion. A lot more room and total creative freedom was what Maximilian Neuscheller needed to create the extraordinary family nest he envisioned.

The Suur-Merijoki mansion was built quickly: the fully-furnished house was delivered in turnkey condition in 1903. Standing on a picturesque hill, surrounded by forests, the mansion rather resembled a castle or a fort. Its massive granite base, smooth stucco walls, high tiled roof, corner tower with helm-shaped dome, differently shaped windows, and scores of other architectural nuances combined to underscore that resemblance.



PHOTO: PROVIDED BY TERUOKI.SPB.RU

Family of Maximilian Neuscheller. In the first row from left to right: Cornelia (Alexandra), Johanna, Maria, Vladimir. In the second row: Henry (Andrew), Leopold, Maximilian, wife of Leopold Lucy van de Pals
1908



PHOTO: SIGNE BRANDER, 1912 / FINNISH HERITAGE AGENCY - MUSKETTI

The hall. View of the boudoir and the music room.
At the table is Cornelia Neuscheller. 1912

The interiors were a perfect stylistic match for the facade.

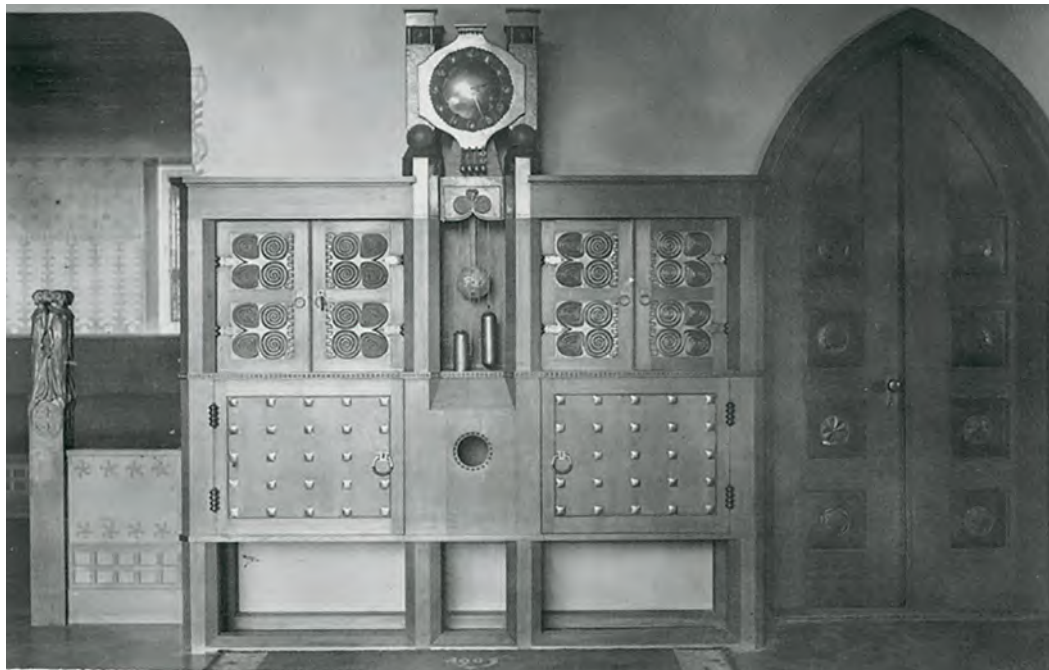
It was a huge, nearly 900-square meter house with a compact layout. The spatial core was formed by a tall mixed-use hall, from which most rooms could be accessed directly. This typical *Jugendstil* arrangement with a spatial centre of gravity, rejecting the enfilade system and the traditional hallway, exemplified an emerging trend in single-family housing design. The same layout was widely used in country collage construction in England, and the acolytes of the new style immediately grasped the merits of such an open plan. Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, a celebrated English architect of the Art Nouveau era, discussed the resurgent, pivotal role of the hall with subtle hu-

mour in his 1902 essay *A Country Collage*: "A series of compartments without unity or focus can never make a house. However large the rooms may be, however great their individual beauty and attractiveness, they never unite to form a consistent and coherent whole. The occupant of such a dwelling is indeed never aware of the house as a whole, but, shut in by the four walls of the particular room he happens to be living in, that room is, for the time being, the house."²

In the Neuscheller manor, the hall was just such a place that tied the house together. The well-lit vaulted hall was the living room and dining room combined. On those occasions when the hosts invited people over, they would entertain in the hall, finished and furnished with great

¹ Makarov, P.M. *Finnish Decorative Art // Zodchiy*. 1903. No. 14, p. 184.

² Baillie Scott M. H. *A Country Collage // The Studio*. 1902. Vol. 25. No. 108. P. 89.



Fragment of the interior.
Museums of Lappeenranta (Finland)

Loja Saarinen and student
The sculpture Four Women
Museum of Tampere



PHOTO: MUSEUM CENTRE VAPRIKKI, FINLAND / SAANA SALINDIA



Eliel Saarinen.
Design of the interior
for the Suur-Merijoki estate
1902
Museum of Finnish Architecture,
Finland

now the property of a private collector, depicting a man clad in floor-length, putatively medieval vestments and a tall cap, holding a scale model of Suur-Merijoki. This church warden character is presumably Maximilian Neuscheller himself. Adding even more mystery to the image, there is a Tertullian quotation underneath – *tempus omnia revelat* (time reveals all things) – and a bright shining star (possibly a reference to the owner’s interest in astronomy, or to Adoration of the Magi. The long vestments are appropriate in either case).

The manor house garnered much attention, particularly from artists and architects. Soon after its completion, in 1904, Suur-Merijoki welcomed a group of members of the Finnish Architects’ Club. The visit was followed by extensive coverage in trade periodicals. The manor generally received rave reviews, although some of the architectural solutions employed were described as “eccentric” or out of tune with “Finnish values”, by which the critics usually meant a modesty verging on asceticism. Some critics doubted the pleasure associated with living in a house where everything is integrated into a comprehensive work of art. (The comfort of a life of Gesamtkunstwerk was frequently questioned when the style was in vogue.



Doorhandle

Longcase clock designed
by Eliel Saarinen
1907



PHOTO: MUSEUM CENTRE VAPRIKKI, FINLAND / SAANA SALINDIA

finesse to the design of Eliel Saarinen. There were designated functional areas within the very roomy hall: a musical nook with a piano on a podium, a special section for relaxing, a dining area, and so forth. The repetitive pattern of the vaults and apertures, as well as the décor – emphatic yet balanced despite its variety – detracted somewhat from the spatial monumentality.

As befit an ideal National Romantic interior, the rooms at Suur-Merijoki were filled with hand-made bespoke furnishings, ceramics, rugs, curtains, stained glass windows, ovens, and fireplaces. Some chairs, clocks, chandeliers, and even fabrics designed by Eliel Saarinen have survived. His extant designs look like illustrations for some fabulous medieval epic tale. Numerous Finnish artists and craftsmen contributed to the interior decoration of the manor. There were sculptures by Felix Nylund, murals by Karl Gabriel Engberg and Väinö Blomstedt, and metal artworks by Eric Otto Ehrström.

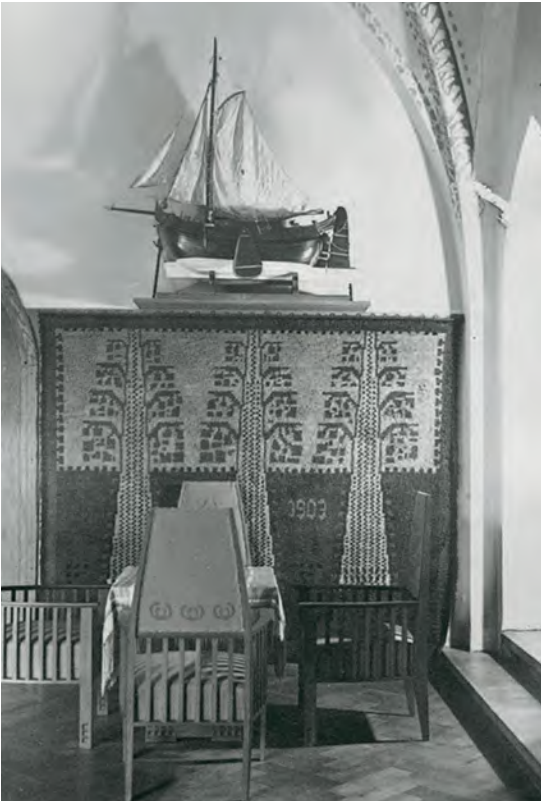
The “personal” theme was emphasised in the interior decoration. Many surviving objects from the manor bear the initials or monograms of the owners. One of the doors to the boys’ room was adorned with a copper plate incised by Ehrström,



PHOTO: MUSEUM CENTRE VAPRIKKI, FINLAND / MARIA PITKANEN

Clock for the library.
Design of Eliel Saarinen.
Private collection

Hall. Museums of Lappeenranta (Finland)



Fragment of the interior



Fragment of the hall interior



Carpel designed by Eliel Saarinen



Fragment of the interior. Museums of Lappeenranta (Finland))



Billiard room. Museums of Lappeenranta (Finland)

The memorable newspaper satire *The Poor Little Rich Man* by Adolf Loos is a prime example. It tells the bitter story of a customer who ends up as a hostage in his own house at the hands of an architect.) Suur-Merijoki was never just a country house or a holiday retreat. The vast estate incorporated a garden, tennis court, farm, flour mill, lumberyard, and even a factory that produced linseed oil and oil varnish. Crops were grown in the surrounding fields. Neuscheller was a serious cattle breeder as well. There were 50 horses and 300 cows on his estate. He commissioned John Munsterhjelm to sculpt a bronze statue of an Irish-bred bull, which was placed right in front of the house. (The statue is now in the town of Järvenpää.) When Neuscheller retired from his business in 1909, he moved permanently to Suur-Merijoki and devoted himself to his multiple avocations. He was a passionate photographer, studied astronomy (he had had an

Sconce designed by Erik Ehrslröm



Chair from the set of furniture made for the hall, designed by Eliel Saarinen. «Salakunla Air Command»



● PHOTO: SA-KUVA / FINNISH DEFENSE FORCES PHOTOGRAPH ARCHIVE



● PHOTO: FINNISH HERITAGE AGENCY - MUSKETTI

Suur-Merijoki mansion designed by the architectural firm Gesellius-Lindgren-Saarininen

An officers' club blown up during the Winter War

Loja Saarinen
Sculpture Winter Night



● PHOTO: MUSEUM CENTRE VAPRIKKI, FINLAND / SAANA SAILINDIA



● PHOTO: MUSEUM CENTRE VAPRIKKI, FINLAND / SAANA SAILINDIA

Erik Ehrström
Copper panel "Tempus Omnia Revelat" (fragment)
Private collection

astronomical observatory built on the grounds), and tended his plants and cattle.

But this idyllic life did not last. Following the 1917 revolution Neuscheller was repeatedly interrogated, then arrested, and died in 1919 (or 1921, according to certain sources). His family remained at Suur-Merijoki until 1923. The Grand Duchy of Finland had seceded from the Russian Empire, so the manor was now in Finland. The estate was nationalised in 1927, and the Finnish air force moved in. An airfield was built on Suur-Merijoki's grounds, and the manor house became an officers' club. Sadly, the amazing house has not survived. Its roof was damaged during the 1939-1940 Winter War, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise, since all the furnishings and decorations were promptly removed and thus salvaged. Used as a hospital in 1941-1944, the building was completely destroyed by the end of the war. A memorial sign was placed at Suur-Merijoki in 2006, marking the former location of the manor house.

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Реклама

THE MOTHERS OF FINNISH MODERNISM:



● PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / HANNU AALTONEN

HELENE
SCHJERFBECK

FEMALE FINNISH MODERNIST PAINTERS FULLY SHARED THE VICISSITUDES OF AN ARTISTIC CAREER WITH THEIR EUROPEAN AND RUSSIAN SISTERS EQUIPPED WITH BRUSH AND CHISEL. ALL OF THEM FOUND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO ENTER AN ART SCHOOL, HAD TO PAY MORE FOR CLASSES, RECEIVED FEWER ORDERS, AND FACED ADDITIONAL CRITICISM.

AND

Helene Schjerfbeck
Under the Linden
1911
Finnish National Gallery / Aleneum Art Museum, Kaunisto Collection

Ellen Thesleff
The Violin Player
1896
Finnish National Gallery / Aleneum Art Museum, Ahlsröm Collection



● PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY

ELLEN
THESLEFF

Since the second half of the 16th-century, the fine arts academies in major European capitals have been setting standards for quality and trends in artistic style that are quickly imitated by arts academies around the world. The first academies were established in Italy: the Florence Academy of Art was founded in 1561, and the Academy of St. Luke in 1577. The Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, better known as the Academy of Fine Arts, opened in Paris in 1648. In the 18th-century academies were opened in St. Petersburg (1757) and London (1768). For many years, academies were the only recognised educational centers in the sphere of art, as well as the only organisations through which an artist might be commissioned for work. They were monopolies forming the professional community and the art market as a whole.

Some academies allowed women to become members, but placed various restrictions on them. The original charter of the Academy in France did not prohibit the appointment of women to the position of academician, but in 1780 there were only four female artists of high rank. Restricted admission to art schools was a major obstacle for women who chose to devote their lives to art. The Royal Academy in Britain, for example, did not allow female students until 1860. The woman who would become the first female student revised this rule following a bold move. Laura Herford submitted her drawings signed only L. H., and she was enrolled. Her act was largely considered an encroachment on the traditional academic order, but despite this the Royal Academy accepted 34 more women over the next 10 years.

¹ Katarina Lopalkina (Helsinki) is an independent scholar and curator specialising in the history of 20th-century art.

The St. Petersburg Academy of Arts did not admit women on a par with men until 1891. Anna Oshtromova-Lebedeva was one of the first female students, who successfully passed the exams in 1892. Up until then, women were admitted to the Academy but were not granted diplomas.

In France, the School of Fine Arts began to enroll women in 1896, after many years of the enthusiastic Hélène Berlaux's founding of the Union of Women Painters and Sculptors (Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs). In one of her fiery speeches, she pointed out "It seems the administration of the School of Fine Arts is saying, 'We very much want to have women artists, but we want to lock them within the most humble mediocrity. They will be only allowed to practice the applied arts (making fans, fireplace screens, flower pots, and portraits of cats); the path to honor and glory will be barred for them. We would like to keep honor and glory for ourselves.'"

But in 19th-century Paris a woman had more chance of entering an art school than in any other city. Even though the School of Fine Arts did not accept women, they were permitted in the studios of renowned painters and in private schools such as the Académie Colarossi and the Académie Julian. In the 1890s, the enterprising artist Rodolphe Julian even decided to

focus a huge portion of his teaching efforts on women. By 1890 the Académie Julian had opened nine studios in Paris: five for men and four for women. The tuition fees, however, were twice as high for females.

Helene Schjerfbeck (1862–1946) was born in the family of Svanle Schjerfbeck, manager of a railway parts workshop, and his wife Olga Johanna (née Printz). Helene began her art education at the Finnish Art Society drawing school in 1873 and quickly achieved considerable success. Painting classes were physically difficult for Helene due to a severe hip injury sustained in her early childhood. Despite this, she worked hard and fruitfully. In 1877 Schjerfbeck entered a private academy run by Adolf von Becker in Helsingfors. She graduated from the academy in the autumn of 1880. After receiving a scholarship for further study from the Senate of the Russian Empire, she left for Paris. Helene studied at Mme Trélat de Vigny's studio and the Académie Colarossi for about two years (Léon Bonnat and Gustave Courlois were among her mentors); she also travelled to Meudon and Brilliant. On her second visit to France in 1884–1885, Helene took part in the Paris Spring Salon for the first time and made a second visit to Brilliant. There she met and got engaged to an English artist (whose name is unknown). In 1885

Helene Schjerfbeck
The Convalescent
1888
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum



PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / YEHIA EWEIS



PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / YEHIA EWEIS

Helene Schjerfbeck
Self-Portrait, Black Background
1915
Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art
Museum, Hallonblad Collection

Helene Schjerfbeck
Self-Portrait
1912
Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum



PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / YEHIA EWEIS

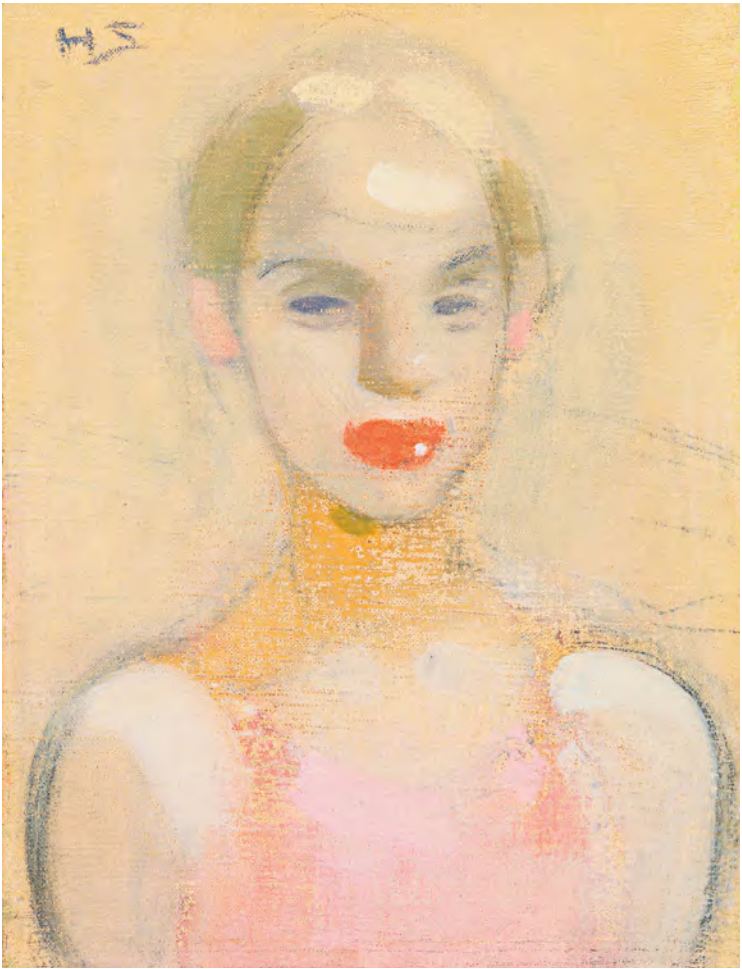


PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / YEHIA EWEIS

Helene Schjerfbeck
Circus Girl
1916
Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art
Museum, Kaunisto Collection



Helene Schjerfbeck
Silk Shoes
1938
Finnish National Gallery / Aleneum Art
Museum, Anlell Collection

her fiancé called off the engagement. His relatives believed that Helene’s hip issues had resulted from osleoarticular tuberculo- sis. Helene never married or had children and being childless was particularly difficult for her. She considered adoption, but received no support from her relatives.

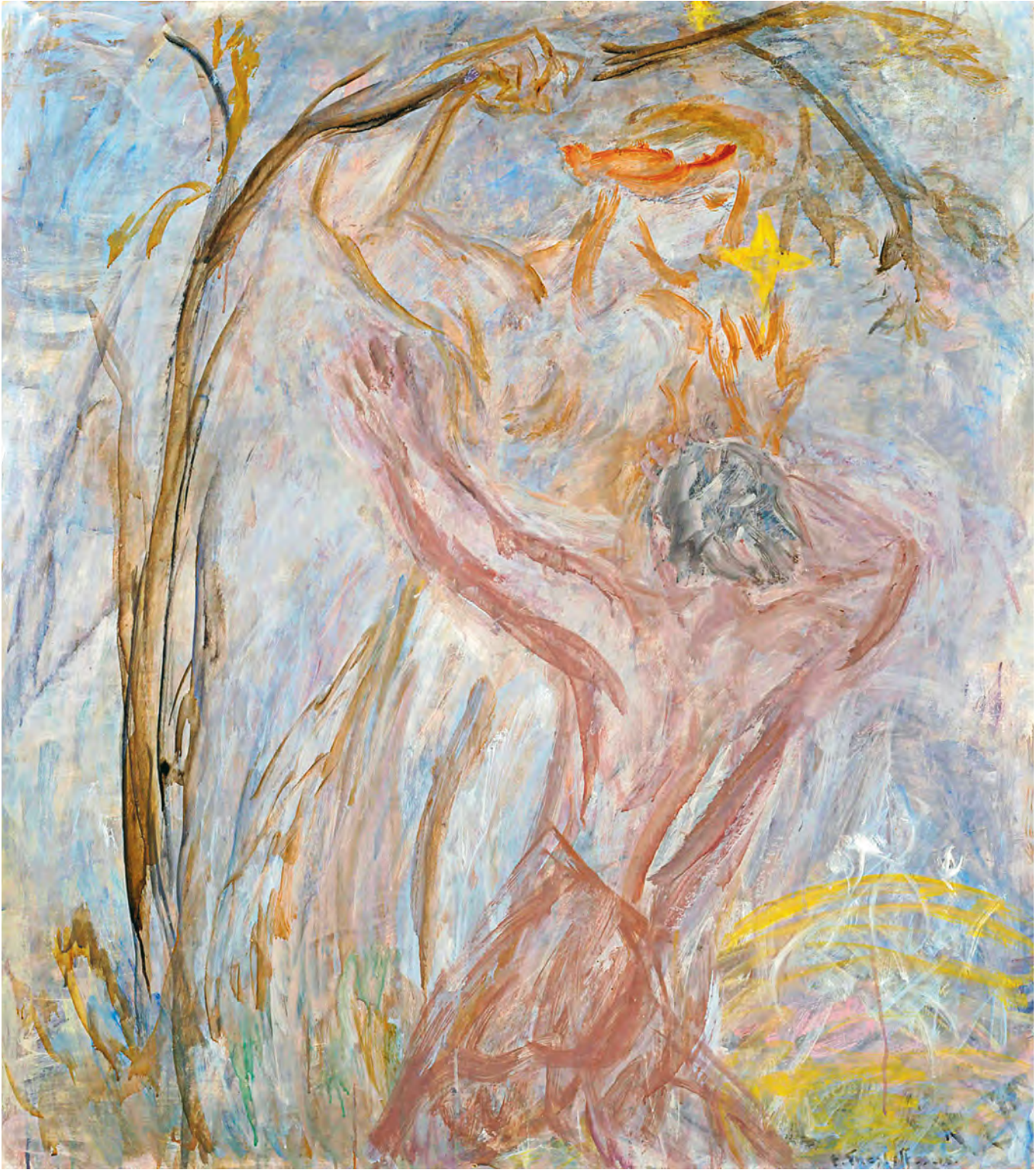
Schjerfbeck painted far less in the 1890s than in previous years due to her teaching duties at the Art Society drawing school in Helsinki and her poor health. In 1902 she resigned from her post. Doctors advised her to live in a dry climate, and in the summer of 1903, she and her mother moved to Hyvinkää. The new location and the quieter atmosphere motivated Schjerfbeck to avidly take up painting again; she did not go to back to Helsinki or travel abroad for the next fifteen years. Far away from the capital’s art community, she kept in touch only with her friends, female painters with whom she had studied in Paris – Helena Westermarck, Maria Wiik, and Ada Thilen.

Helene’s first recognition as an artist came quite late. Contemporaries were critical of her works: in early paintings she touched upon topics such as war, death, and misfortune, which were considered “inappropriate” for a woman. In addition, history painting as a genre was not common in Finland, which did not help the reception of paintings like *Wounded Soldier in the Snow* (1880), *Linköping Prison Door in 1600* (1882), and

The Death of Wilhelm von Schwerin (1886). The Finnish public was also disappointed with the artistic manner Schjerfbeck had learnt in France: the children in the painting *A Boy Feeding His Little Sister* (1881) were seen as “ugly” and “rough”. Nor did they understand the technique of broad and free brushstrokes. *Dancing Shoes* (1882) was painted at the same time, and in the 20th-century became one of her most popular pictures. It depicts the artist’s cousin Esther Lupander pulling on her dancing shoes. Schjerfbeck returned to the picture several times and even executed an autolithograph of it. Painted in the Realist style, the painting clearly shows the influence of the French Modernist painters Manet, Degas, Morisot, and Cassatt.

For quite a long time, Helene was unmistakably aware of the differences between her and the Finnish art community. In the mid-1910s, everything changed when she met Gösta Stenman, a Swedish journalist and art dealer who highly valued her work. Stenman persuaded Schjerfbeck to exhibit her paintings more often. He organised her first solo exhibition in 1917. Thanks to him, Helene renewed her contact with the world of contemporary art: she went to Helsinki to see the works of the French masters Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse, and Friesz at the Aleneum Art Museum. At the same time, she met lumberjack, writer, and artist Einar Reiler, who became her close

Ellen Thesleff
Star
1938
Finnish National Gallery /
Aleneum Art Museum



● PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / HANNU AALTONEN

friend and biographer. In 1917, under the pseudonym H. Ahlela, Reiler wrote the first biography of Helene Schjerfbeck, which was published on the occasion of her first solo exhibition in Helsinki.

Schjerfbeck worked with deliberation and repainted her pictures again and again, trying to achieve the desired effect. Being very self-critical, she never felt that she had achieved what she wanted. Her painting is known for a gradually increasing expressiveness, both in line and in the use of colour. This is especially evident in her series of self-portraits, which traces changes both in her style and in the painter herself.

Helene’s self-portraits were the height of her oeuvre. For centuries, women were objects, models, and muses for artists; the naked female body was a symbol of the authority and power of the male artist. As a result, self-portrait, portrait, and still life became “female” genres: the model was always at hand and did not require special permission to work with. In the late 19th to early 20th-century, female European painters more and more often turned to the genre of self-portraiture and created profound and innovative pieces. Among them were: Suzanne Valadon (1865-1938), Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907), Marie Laurencin (1883-1956), and Charley Toorop (1891-1955).

Almost all of Schjerfbeck’s self-portraits (she painted about 40) are concentrated on the expression of the painter’s face and eyes. They almost never show her physical condition, her environment, or references to her profession. The only exception is a self-portrait that was commissioned by the Finnish Art Society in 1914; Schjerfbeck was the only woman among the nine painters engaged.

Ellen Thesleff
In the Theatre
1903
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum



● PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / YEHIA EWEIS



● PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / HANNU PAKARINEN

Ellen Thesleff
Sister of the Artist, Gerda Thesleff
1889
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum, gift of Arvid Sourander



● PHOTO: FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / YEHIA EWEIS

Ellen Thesleff
Decorative Landscape
1910
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum

After her mother's death in 1923, Helene moved to Tamisaari to find a peaceful place to do her work. But her growing fame would not allow her to fully dissociate herself from the world. In the 1930s her works began to be exhibited all over Europe. Even in 1942, during the War, an anniversary exhibition of her work was organised at the Slenman Gallery in Stockholm. During the War Helene was evacuated to Tenhola. Soon after she moved close to Loviisa, and from early 1942 stayed at the Luonola Sanatorium in Nummela. In February 1944 Slenman helped her move to Sweden. Schjerfbeck spent her last years in Sallsjöbaden, where she died in January 1946.

Interest in her paintings did not fade after her death. Her works look part in international exhibitions in Sweden and Finland, and later in other countries. Schjerfbeck's paintings were exhibited in Stockholm, Paris, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Milan, and Rome. In 1956, Helene Schjerfbeck became the first woman painter to represent Finland at the Venice Biennale.

Helene Schjerfbeck is often compared to another prominent representative of Finnish Modernism – her contemporary Ellen Thesleff (1869-1954). Indeed, their biographies have much in common: they are both of Swedish-speaking origin, were educated in Swedish, and never married. But the most important similarity was that Thesleff, like Schjerfbeck, was focused on Modernist European art.

Ellen Thesleff was born into a wealthy family that valued education and art. Her father, Alexander August Thesleff, was her first painting and drawing teacher. A civil servant, in his youth he had dreamed of becoming an artist. In 1885 Ellen entered an academy run by Adolf von Becker in Helsinki. From 1887 to 1890 she studied at the Finnish Art Society drawing school, and then under Gunnar Berndtson.

In the early 1890s, Thesleff continued her studies at the Académie Colarossi and Gustave Courtois' studio in Paris. In 1894 she visited Florence, Rome, and Naples to study the art of the Old Masters. Italy had always inspired her, and she made several visits throughout her life. Thesleff said that only in Italy

was she able to understand the true nature of light, the way it falls on objects, and how it enlivens everything around. Most of her landscapes were painted in Tuscany and Florence. Over time, her landscapes became more and more Expressionist.

In her works, Ellen Thesleff focused on colour. At first, the colour in her paintings was quite restrained; her portraits were covered with a soft haze and resembled the lyrical canvases of Eugène Carrière. However, after she had been to Italy and become acquainted with contemporary art, her style changed significantly. From Symbolism she moved to Expressionism and Fauvism, and even approached Abstraction (the first known Finnish artist to do so). Over time, she developed a recognisable and very poetic individual style. Her colours became more saturated, and her characters more emotionally expressive. Indeed Thesleff's paintings are essentially storyless: they reflect feelings and convey mood rather than display or describe events. She was greatly influenced by Kandinsky's paintings in 1905. New, bright colours appeared in her work, and she mastered a more free and individual approach to interpreting themes.

Apart from Ellen Thesleff's artistic achievements, she also made a huge contribution to the popularization of European art in Finland. Together with her like-minded friend Magnus Enckell she became a founder of the "Seplem" group, which was instrumental in the development of avant-garde painting in Northern countries.

Ellen Thesleff lived a long life and remained active until the early 1950s. In the history of Finnish and European art, however, she remains in the shadow of Helene Schjerfbeck. Despite her voluntary isolation, Schjerfbeck became something of a media personality in the 20th-century. Conversely, Ellen Thesleff's variety of artistic styles and multiple experiments played quite the cruel joke on her: while we unmistakably recognise Schjerfbeck's style, many of Thesleff's paintings need to be closely scrutinised to recognise her poetic and spiritually driven, but infinitely varying hand.

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PHOTO: NATALIA NESMASHNAYA

ARCHAIC SEMANTICS

In 1887, the third edition of the Finnish epic *Kalevala* featured drawings of Finnish peasants from the Iron Age. This was the first ever attempt to recreate the Finnish national costume. The illustrations were based on extensive academic research. Shortly before the release, the remains of women's aprons, decorated with fragments of geometrical patterns, were found in 12th-14th-century burial sites on the Karelian Isthmus. Theodor Schwindt, the archaeologist who discovered them, is considered the father of Finnish ethnography. He proposed the notion that the ancient patterns of Finnish textiles had remained practically unchanged over many centuries. Techniques evolved, but the shape and the structure of the decoration would see only insignificant variation: archaic semantics "decay" very slowly. There are very few ancient patterned textiles extant, and thus similar specimens from the late 19th and early 20th-century are of particular interest to academics. The embroidery from the State Hermitage collection falls into this category.

The conservative nature of "archaic" embroidery patterns can be ascribed to the elements of the designs (including deliberate "mistakes") having both symbolic and ceremonial meaning. They were also believed to have magical powers. Women in peasant families would pass from one generation to the next their knowledge of the sacred rituals believed to bring prosperity to and protect the family. Certain patterns, for example, were positioned on the parts of the costume that could potentially be used by evil spirits as an entry point – the hem, the collar, and the sleeves. And the pattern could be "deciphered" or "read". The very word "text" is believed to come from the Latin word *textus*, meaning a structure, woven pattern, or connection. There are also reasons to believe that there was more to the geometrical pattern than its graphic and mythological aspect; it also had its own sound, as the designs were a type of phonoideographic writing. You can also see that the traditional patterns somewhat resemble Cyrillic *vyaz*, a type of ornate writing. (The Pomors, incidentally, used numerous intricate web-like and geometrical ligatures, a variation of this writing.)

The symbols used in Finno-Ugric embroideries often closely resemble Russian ones. One of the oldest segments in such patterns is the diamond. There is a theory that humans took this shape from the pattern present on mammoth tusks.

To recreate the zigzagging rhythmical lines seen on the tusks of this huge, mighty animal, artisans would draw a diamond-shaped pattern, symbolising power, strength, and a source of nourishment. Later on, diamonds clearly developed an additional meaning of "fertility" (with hooks in the diamond, or "frog"), which also became a charm placed at any entrance (diamond-shaped symbols were even placed on keys). Various curved swastikas had a similar protective meaning. As a symbol of the sun, the swastika was associated with the supreme deity, who gave the essential life force to humans.

Border patterns were made of variations of repeating geometrical elements. They would occasionally be combined with zoomorphic elements (ducks, swans, bears), or even less frequently, with anthropomorphic figures. The graphic formula was repeated multiple times to make the spell stronger. This resulted in a sequence of symbols and, eventually, a pattern. If you look at these geometrical patterns more closely, you will see exact symmetry on the four sides. The reason for this symmetry is found in ancient charm practices invoking protection from all four directions. Traditional patterns are usually comprised of basic elements and combinations repeated four times.

In 19th-century Karelia, as in the Old Believer areas of Northern Russia, embroidering with gold and silver threads was common among peasants. Such embroidery was called "sacred". But the techniques used to create this sacred embroidery were actually quite primitive, involving only simple peasant stitches.

Theodor Schwindt's discoveries drew a lot of attention to Finno-Ugric weaving. Artists explored the traditions of Finnish applied folk art in search of new sources of inspiration, fresh creative energy, and the life wisdom hidden in ancient designs and patterns. Applied and decorative art found in Karelian villages began to be collected. The Finnish Craftsmanship Society was established in 1879 with the intention of reviving medieval applied and decorative art practices and adapting them to the new national school. Thanks to the work of this society, the Central Arts and Crafts School, which promoted craft and folk traditions, opened in Finland. The objects created under the umbrella of the school and the society were extremely popular in the 1890s. They were exhibited at international fairs and became top-selling, fashionable items as a result.

ALLI PUUMALATAR



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020



The square shape embroidery,
double-sided on canvas, with silver
thread oblique stitch on the opening
and silk thread
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭПТ-5436



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020



Double-sided square shape embroidery,
with black silkcross-stitch
and silver thread oblique stitch
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭПТ-5440



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Double-sided embroidery, with black silk cross-stitch and silver thread hemstitch
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭПТ-5439



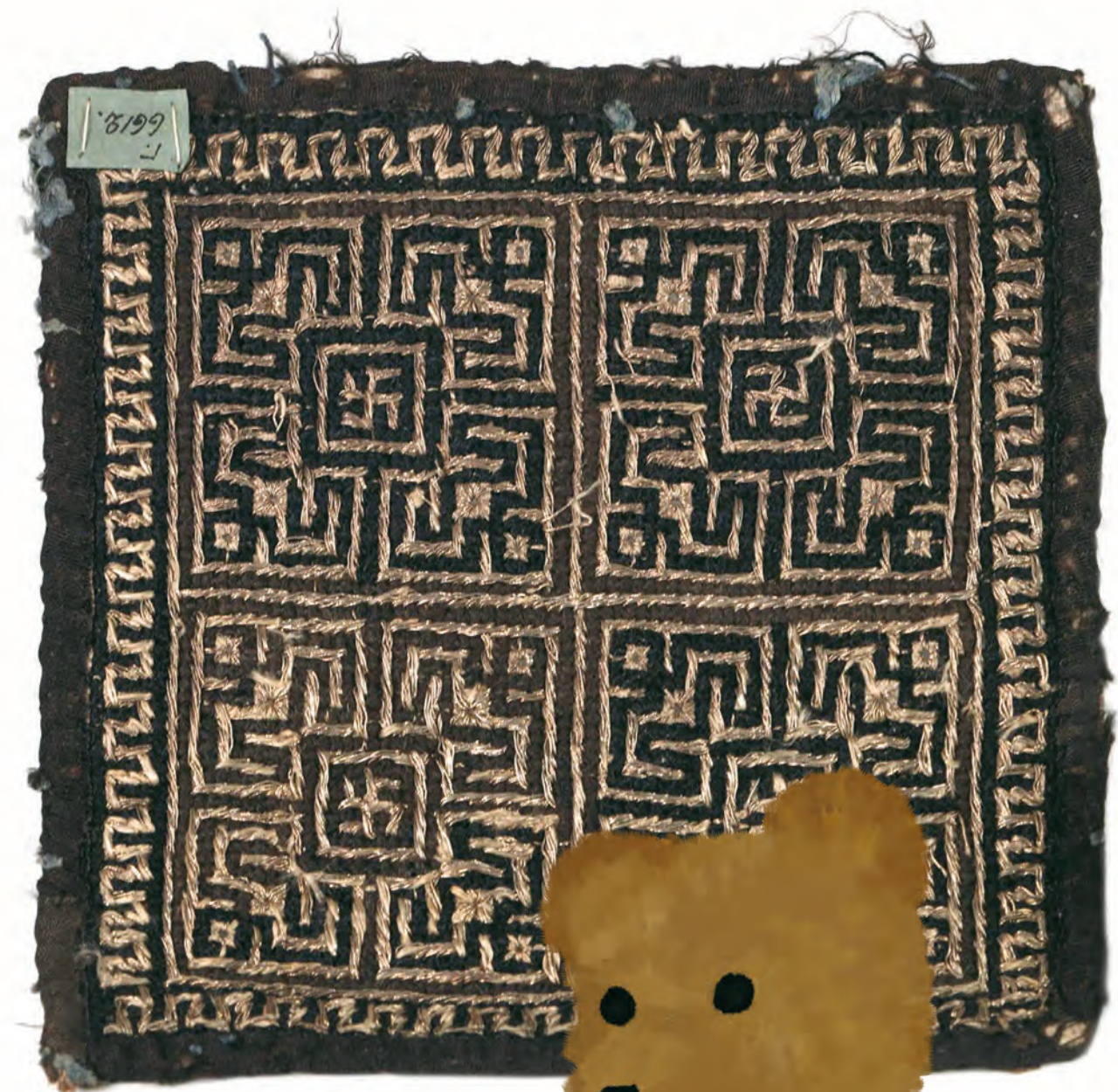
● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Double-sided embroidery, with black, red and green silk and silver thread on the canvas
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭПТ-5460



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Embroidery with red and blue paper,
yellow and black silk and silver thread
oblique stitch on the canvas
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ЭРТ-5656



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Solid double-sided embroidery,
with black silk cross-stitch and silver
thread oblique stitch on the canvas
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No ЭРТ-5446



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020



Embroidery with red and yellow silk
double-sided hemstitch on the canvas
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ЭДТ-5569



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Embroidery from two strips of canvas,
connected by a strip of orange silk;
embroidered with a red, green, yellow,
blue and black silk cross
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ЭДТ-5541



The Cheremiss [Mari] of Russia, a Finnish people, tell a story of the creation of man which recalls episodes in the Toradjan and Indian legends of the same event. They say that God moulded man's body of clay and then went up to heaven to fetch the soul, with which to animate it. In his absence he set the dog to guard the body.

James George Frazer. *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*. 1918–1919



● PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Anonymous Artist

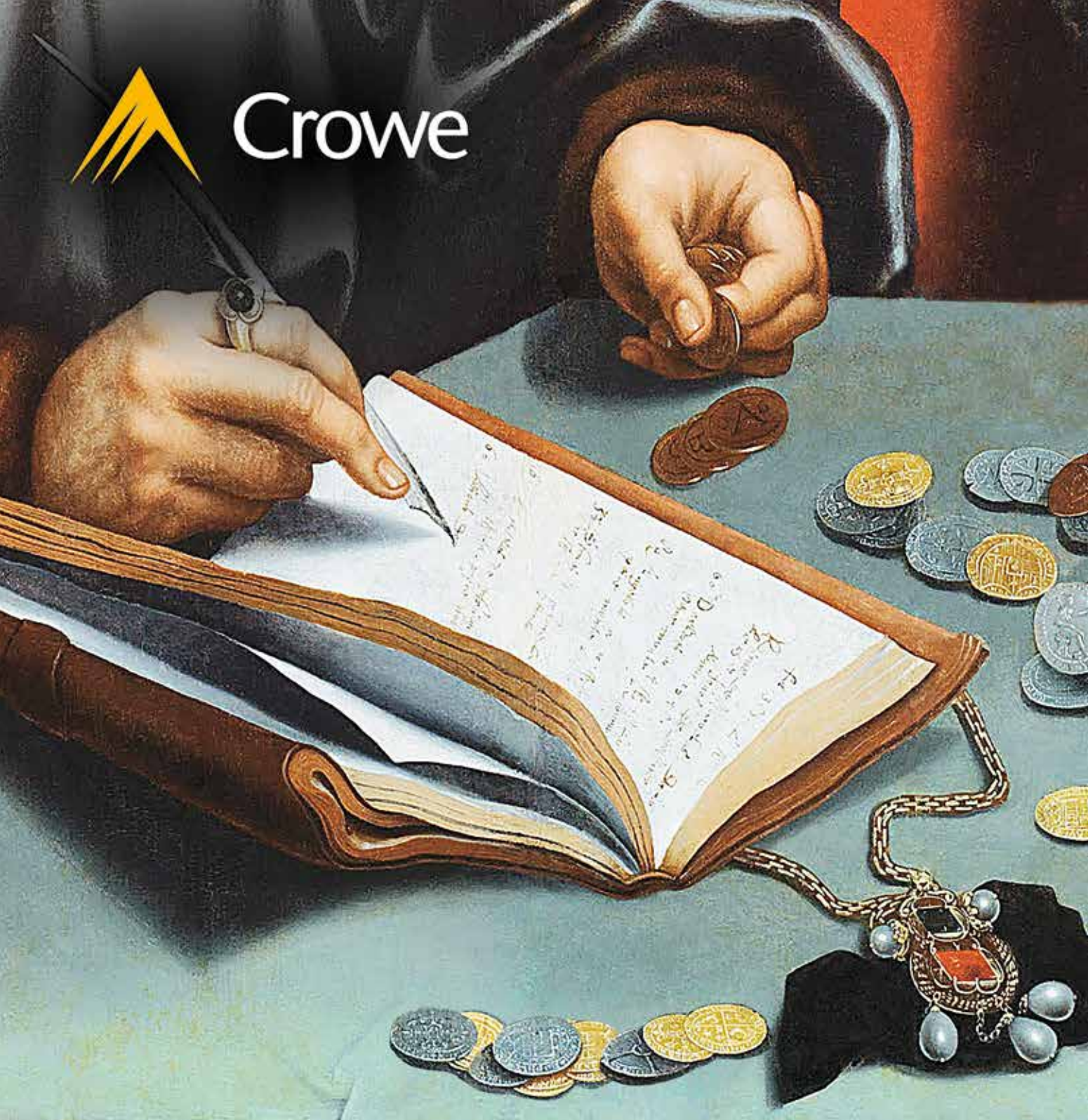
Peasant Woman Spinning. Trompe-l'oeil Figure

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

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РЕКЛАМА

FAZER: WHEN FOOD IS CULTURAL HERITAGE

KSENIA MALICH

THERE IS DELFT BLUE, THE COMMON
APPELLATION OF FINE PORCELAIN FROM
THE NETHERLANDS, AND THEN THERE
IS FAZER BLUE, THE TRADEMARK COLOUR
OF AN ICONIC FINNISH CHOCOLATE BRAND.

Karl Fazer was only 25 when he opened his first Russian-French confectionery in Helsinki. Karl's father Eduard Fazer, a Swiss-born furrier of renown, strongly disapproved of the project – he had hoped that his son would continue the family business. But Eduard's view proved shortsighted. Karl had judged the market right and hit the mother lode, ending up with a fantastically successful business destined to become a hallmark of Finnish national identity.

When Karl Fazer decided on a career in the confectionery business, he travelled to St. Petersburg for a two-year internship with the Berrin Patisserie on Malaya Morskaya Street, producers of exclusive-quality cakes, meringues, pastries, and ice-cream, and purveyors to the Russian Imperial Court. But Karl did not consider his experience gained at Berrin sufficient, so he sought further training, first in Berlin and then in Paris. While perfecting his pastry-making prowess in France, Karl

Fazer explored the resplendent French capital during the Belle Époque, full of café-chantants, cabarets, and bars. At the time Paris was home to many forward-looking artists, writers, and architects. Their passion for new trends in art was contagious. Karl Fazer would forever retain that special feeling of being on the culling edge, blazing new trails. It would serve him well later on in his career, when Karl would engage Finland's top artistic and architectural talent in the design of his product packaging, his buildings, and his image-enhancement initiatives.

Karl Fazer opened his first café in a building his father owned on Kluuvikatu, close to the Esplanadi in Helsinki, on 17 September 1891. This was a time of fast-paced change for Helsinki and the lifestyle of its residents. Speedy urbanisation brought in its wake more leniencies in social matters and relations between the sexes, as well as new opportunities for work and leisure. Take a look at the painting *The Fazer Bar* by

Henry Ericsson
The Fazer Café
1931
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum



PHOTO: © FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY / HANNU AALTONEN



Inside the Fazer Café at Kluuvikatu in Helsinki.
The interior is designed by Jari Eklund, the mural
by Hjalmar Hagelström. Fazer corporate archives

Henry Ericsson. The year is 1931. There are men and women of different ages sitting at the tables, looking laid-back, chatting, smoking, reading newspapers, or looking around. A young waitress is serving the customers. It is a picture from real life. With the university campus right around the corner, professors and students alike would frequent this place to talk shop or politics over a snifter of port. Young women would stop by for a cup of coffee, and no one expected them to be escorted by a male family member.

This is not to say that Fazer was the first establishment in Helsinki to serve coffee and pastries. We need only recall the legendary Ekberg Café and its famous "Alexander Bars" with pink icing, named after Alexander I of Russia. However, in Karl Fazer's vision, a café should be part of the emerging

new world, in which people can enjoy their new leisure time in a truly comfortable urban environment. Unlike a regular confectionary shop, Fazer's idea of a café included an ambience conducive to social networking and new opportunities, a place for people to get together to discuss matters creative or political, or simply to have a friendly conversation. And yes, Fazer did "spoil" his fellow Helsinki residents with excellent coffee and copious amounts of premium chocolate.

Gastronomic pleasure-seeking was inherent in the bourgeois culture of Europe, but Fazer "exploded" the market with his new take on the business, staking out a place of honour for himself among the *fin du siècle* pioneers that were to reshape the entire economic edifice of Scandinavia. The new Nordic bourgeoisie followed in the footsteps of their German

Akseli Gallen-Kallela.
Boxes for caramel candies
1908





Inside the Fazer Café at Kluuvikatu in Helsinki. The interior is designed by Jarl Eklund 1928–1930

and English peers. Today, names like Ahlstrom, Andersen, Kier, Solberg, Mathiesen, and Wallenberg represent industrial concerns of formidable dimensions, but back then, taking their cue from the movers and shakers of the Belle Époque, their founders were doing everything possible to bridge the economic gap between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe.

A Belle Époque without cafés or sweets would not have been very Belle! Fazer had discerned a market niche of great promise that happened to be vacant. It was customary for confectioners in Helsinki to produce their goods in small amounts, enough to sell out in a day. And prior to the mid-1890s, before a duty was legislated, most of Helsinki's confections were brought from Russia. Fazer launched his chocolate-making on industrial scale at the perfect time. In three years, 1898 to 1901, Russian candy imports had shrunk to only a very small fraction of the erstwhile volume. Fazer was now international, having won a few expo prizes; its earnings snowballed year after year. The company's spotless reputation and Protestant family busi-

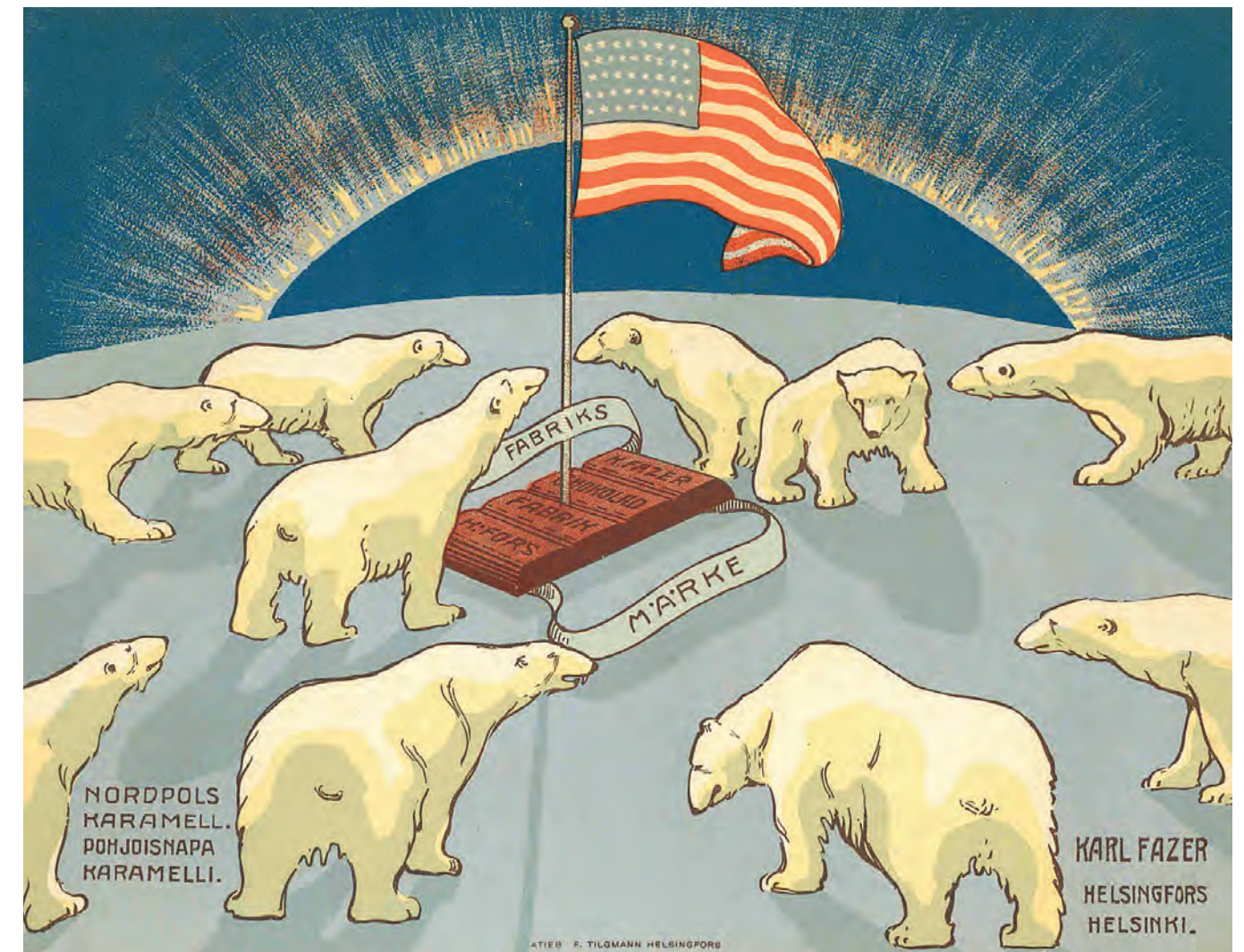
Fazer headquarters at Kluuvikatu in Helsinki. Architect: Gösta Juslen 1928–1930





Tove Jansson. Candy wrapper designs
1950s

Candy wrapper "North pole candy".
The design was invented after the polar
expedition of Albert Cook in 1908



ness ethic also helped. Between 1895 and 1915, Fazer's annual income rose from 88,000 to 4.6 million Finnish markkas.

There is a theory that candy serves as a kind of psychological support, an "upper" for the Finns during their long, dark winters – something quite easy for a Petersburgers to understand. In Finland, there is a special confectionery recipe attached to every national holiday. For instance, Runeberg Cakes, topped with raspberry jam in the middle of a ring of sugar icing, are baked all over Finland for the anniversary of the birth (February 5) of the Finnish national poet, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, who authored the lyrics to Finland's national anthem. Finns also bake star-shaped puff pastry cookies for Christmas, sweet *semula* rolls with whipped cream and almond paste (*laskiaispulla*) for Shrovetide, and *lippaleipä* (funnel cakes) for Vappu, May 1. Finnish cinnamon and coriander pastries, though not trademarked, are definitely the best in Europe.

Sweets, particularly hard candy, were traditionally associated with the enchanted, balmy East, *One Thousand and One Nights*, etc. Karl Fazer's emphasis on variety in sweet treats might as well have been inspired by the Orient. Fazer produced liquorice drops, fruit *pasilla*, and cookies, as well as chocolate, which to this day are made according to the same secret Swiss recipe. Over time, the initial basic recipes for hard candy and toffee developed extra ingredients such as nuts, berries, cream, and chocolate. Fruit jellies became a Fazer specialty



Yacht Swan 651 Fazer Finland, participant in the race Whitbread Round the World Race 1985-1986. From the Fazer Collection

in a league of their own. In 1902, Fazer sent a shipment of its green “Finland” fruit jellies by special appointment for the coronation of Edward VII of Great Britain, a known sybarite and gormandizer. The boxes were emblazoned with a royal crown – a design Fazer has kept intact ever since. But few will remember that the recipe for Fazer’s sourish jellies came from St. Petersburg, Russia.

It would be fair to say that Russian bakers and pastry chefs made a meaningful contribution towards the rise of Fazer’s stardom. An old photo from 1926 shows a group of bakers from the Fazer café on Kluuvikatu soaking up some sun outside their workplace. Five of them were of Russian background. Karl Fazer handpicked quite a few Russian recipes for his future business while interning in St. Petersburg.

Many professional Russian chefs joined the company following the 1917 revolution in Russia. The idea for Fazer’s vastly popular “fox candy” also originated in Russia – a rowanberry jellied candy with a distinctive “Nordic” taste to it. Olga Ehrström, who was commissioned to design a wrapper for it in 1908, recalled a Scandinavian adage – “‘Sour’, said the fox about the rowanberries” – and came up with a minimalistic sketch that would give the candy its name: a snow-covered hill, snow-covered clusters of rowanberries, and a red fox standing on its hind paws. Olga Ehrström was a well-known artist, but perhaps would have been even better known had it not been for her family obligations and the assistance she provided to her husband, who was also an artist. Fazer also worked with Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who designed

Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Boxes for caramel candies 1908



Bakers at café Fazer. 1926. Five out of six confectioners are Russians

Inside the Kalaslajatorppa restaurant in Munkkiniemi Helsinki. 1939



packaging for the firm in the early 1900s. But by the 1930s, it was the modernists' turn to shine. Birger Carlstedt, for one, would deliver every one of his design sketches as a finished artwork, painted with oil on canvas.

Swedish author and artist Tove Jansson completed her first work for Fazer right before the Second World War. At the time Jansson was living in Helsinki's Munkkiniemi neighbourhood, next door to a Fazer restaurant, struggling to make ends meet. She would occasionally give her paintings to the restaurant to make rent money, and once she painted their wallpaper, which still exists there today. After the war, Jansson designed the packaging for a Moomintroll-themed Fazer candy series.

Architecture was no less important to Karl Fazer. After Finland gained its independence in 1917, young Finnish architects applied themselves passionately to generating better, more up-to-date architectural ideas that would help the nation leave behind the adversity of the First World War and Civil War, and at the same time be abreast of the latest technological achievements and as relevant as urban architecture anywhere else in Europe. Medieval quotations and ornaments with fantastic creatures were hopelessly out of tune with a modernity of steam power and electricity. But before crossing the threshold into the realm of functionality, Finnish architects felt the need to test the limits of artistic and constructional rationality on neoclassical and art-deco practices. From that short-lived yet consequential

period of Finnish architecture sprang the new Fazer corporate headquarters on Kluuvikatu, designed by Gösta Juslen and erected in 1928–1930. The building's imposing façade pulses with a measured, rhythmic, interspersing pattern of narrow windows and partition walls, and its vertical accents clearly hint at a kinship with American high-rise architecture.

The ground floor is clad in grey granite, and the facade cut through at the top by semi-circular arches, underscoring the building's grandeur and solidity.

But it gets better inside. In the showroom, Jarl Eklund's exquisite interior design, with the amazing abstract mural in the spirit of Neoplasticism created by Hjalmar Hagelslam, meets the eye fully intact.

Recently built in Vanha to the design of the Finnish architectural studio K2S Architects, the Fazer Visitor Centre comes across as a paragon of modern Nordic architecture – subdued, filled with light, and open to the world outside. A portion of the lobby is finished in natural wood. There is a winter garden inside with plants that are indispensable in the making of proper chocolate: sugar cane, vanilla, cocoa, and others. Yet another statement – albeit one not quite as radical as having a modernist artist paint your candy wrapper as a full-size work of art – the Fazer Visitor Centre follows to a T all the contemporary Scandinavian architectural commandments on eco-friendliness, accountability, and versatility.



Akseli Gallen-Kallela.
Boxes for caramel candies
1908

6+

January 31–May 10

“We Treasure Our Lucid Dreams.”

The Other East and Esoteric Knowledge in Russian Art, 1905–1969



Daniil Stepanov. *Bacha*, 1923. Oil on board. Tatyana and Georgy Hartsenkov collection

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GARAGE

THE CHOCOLATE RATION*

THE CHOCOLATE ROOM

‘An important room, this!’ cried Mr Wonka, taking a bunch of keys from his pocket and slipping one into the keyhole of the door. ‘This is the nerve centre of the whole factory, the heart of the whole business! And so beautiful! I insist upon my rooms being beautiful! I can’t abide ugliness in factories! In we go, then! But do be careful, my dear children! Don’t lose your heads! Don’t get over-excited! Keep very calm!’

Mr Wonka opened the door. Five children and nine grown-ups pushed their ways in – and oh, what an amazing sight it was that now met their eyes!

They were looking down upon a lovely valley. There were green meadows on either side of the valley, and along the bottom of it there flowed a great brown river.



PHOTO: © CENTRAL STATE ARCHIVE, SOFIA

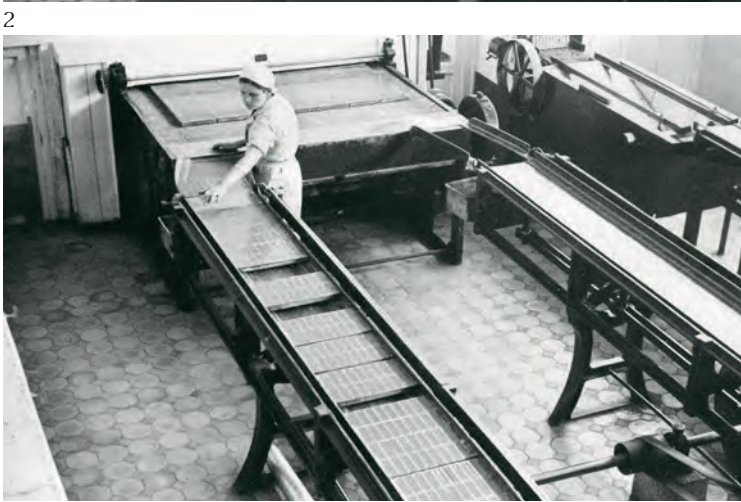


PHOTO: © CENTRAL STATE ARCHIVE, SOFIA



PHOTO: © THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, USA

What is more, there was a tremendous waterfall halfway along the river – a steep cliff over which the water curled and rolled in a solid sheet, and then went crashing down into a boiling churning whirlpool of froth and spray.

Below the waterfall (and this was the most astonishing sight of all), a whole mass of enormous glass pipes were dangling down into the river from somewhere high up in the ceiling! They really were enormous, those pipes. There must have been a dozen of them at least, and they were sucking up the brownish muddy water from the river and carrying it away to goodness knows where. And because they were made of glass, you could see the liquid flowing and bubbling along inside them, and above the noise of the waterfall, you could hear the never-ending suck-suck-sucking sound of the pipes as they did their work.



PHOTO: © THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, USA

Graceful trees and bushes were growing along the riverbanks – weeping willows and alders and tall clumps of rhododendrons with their pink and red and mauve blossoms. In the meadows there were thousands of buttercups.

‘There!’ cried Mr Wonka, dancing up and down and pointing his gold-topped cane at the great brown river. ‘It’s all chocolate! Every drop of that river is hot melted chocolate of the finest quality. The very finest quality. There’s enough chocolate in there to fill every bathtub in the entire country! And all the swimming pools as well! Isn’t it terrific? And just look at my pipes! They suck up the chocolate and carry it away to all the other rooms in the factory where it is needed! Thousands of gallons an hour, my dear children! Thousands and thousands of gallons!’

Roald Dahl. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. 1964



PHOTO: © THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, USA

1. At the chocolate factory

Between 1909 and 1920

2–3. Chocolate factories of Velizar Peev, Bulgaria

Until 1943

4–5. Chocolate Factory Elite.

The territory of modern Israel.

The 30s of the 20th-century

“Then, as though touching her waist had reminded her of something, she felt in the pocket of her overalls and produced a small slab of chocolate. She broke it in half and gave one of the pieces to Winston. Even before he had taken it he knew by the smell that it was very unusual chocolate. It was dark and shiny, and was wrapped in silver paper. Chocolate normally was dull-brown crumbly stuff that tasted, as nearly as one could describe it, like the smoke of a rubbish fire. But at some time or another he had tasted chocolate like the piece she had given him. The first whiff of its scent had stirred up some memory which he could not pin down, but which was powerful and troubling.”

George Orwell. 1984, 1948

Like Fazer, the fabulous chocolate factory from Roald Dahl’s novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* – Wonka’s Factory – is named after its founder, Willy Wonka. Fazer and Wonka’s chocolate factory from the novel are both chocolatiers par excellence, but they also make other confectionery products. In the chocolate world, factories and products quite often take the name of the recipe creators and founders of the first chocolate factories of the brand: the imaginary Wonka is right up there with the very real Cadbury Chocolate (founded by John Cadbury), Ghirardelli (founded by Domenico Ghirardelli), and Hershey’s Chocolate (the factory in Hershey, Pennsylvania, which was founded by Milton Hershey).

The names of the miraculous sweets produced by Willy Wonka’s imaginary company hint unobtrusively at the multi-use options for the products, for example: Toffee-Apple Trees for Your Garden or Lickable Wallpaper for Nurseries. Chocolatiers in real life use the same marketing strategies to inveigle and mesmerise their consumer. Was it Mr Wonka’s idea to add marshmallows to hot cocoa mixes, by any chance? Wonka’s factory was forever brimming with ideas on how to mix all sorts of things with chocolate. Maybe it sells better?



PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

**Covered Chocolate Pot
Painter: Herold, Christian Frederick**
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ГЧ-1275

In 2007, Forbes ranked the imaginary company, Wonka Industries, as the 15th largest fictional company, with sales totalling an estimated \$21 billion for that year:

15

Wonka Industries
Headquarters:
Kent, England
Industry:
Food, Drink & Tobacco
CEO: Willy Wonka
Est. 2007 sales: \$21 billion

Immature management continues to plague Wonka, maker of world’s finest chocolates, sweets. Wonka heir apparent Charlie Bucket devoting majority of time to speculative Glass Elevator space tourism project, neglecting core confectionary competence. Experts say Glass Elevator should be perfectly safe, but public remains skeptical despite celebrity endorsements from the likes of Johnny Depp. Featured in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

* Idea: Young people aged 15 to 24 – the Russian members of the international youth advisory board of the Museum 15/24 Project

THE PRO ARTE FOUNDATION IS 20 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR – A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR AN INDEPENDENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO). THROUGHOUT THIS TIME, WE HAVE ENJOYED A CLOSE AND FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HERMITAGE, WHICH CONTINUES TO THIS DAY.

THE UNSEEING EYE

ELENA KOLOVSKAYA ¹

Our partnership began at the landmark 1999 conference *20th-Century Art. Achievements, Traditions, and Innovations*. Since then, we have organised almost one hundred events – including exhibitions, lectures, workshops, concerts, and plays. We hugely value this relationship with one of the world’s largest and most highly regarded museums. The Hermitage has been a constant and ever reliable source of support, helping us negotiate the unexpected twists and turns which invariably occur in the life of an NGO. We are proud of our contribution to a number of high-profile exhibitions held at the Hermitage, including: *Bill Viola and Shirin Neshat*; *Hogarth, Hockney, and Stravinsky. The Rake’s Progress*; and *Still Standing* by Antony Gormley. Recently, PRO ARTE played an integral part in the Vladimir Potanin Foundation’s generous donation to the Hermitage of Bill Viola’s video installation *The Silent Sea*. We have also organised well-attended lectures by Daniel Libeskind and Ralph Appelbaum; Antony Gormley and Peter Noever; Dominique Perrault and Jean-Michel Wilmotte. To best describe our friendship however, we have chosen to focus on a performance by visually impaired actors – *The Unseeing Eye*. It began in

2017 in a theatrical laboratory that we titled *Special Theatre*, where we worked with young directors and both sighted and blind actors, to create a performance/reflection on ‘what it means to see.’ The play was based on real-life stories told by the *Special Theatre* actors – their recollections, observations, and personal reflections on their lives and experiences. This was complemented by literary sources including Goethe’s *Theory of Colours*, the work of Wassily Kandinsky and Le Corbusier, and Olga Sedakova’s essay *Travelling with Eyes Closed. Letters on Rembrandt*. Whilst working on the performance, the group visited the Hermitage to experience and study the work of Rembrandt for themselves. As a result, the performance was informed by the group’s reflections on how someone who had never seen a picture might perceive painting – and how to describe a picture to another person. Since 2018 we have been performing *The Unseeing Eye* on two stages – at the Hermitage Theatre where it rings most true due to the proximity of the paintings by Rembrandt discussed in the play – and at the Alexandrinsky Theatre’s new stage.



PHOTO: FROM THE ARCHIVE OF ELENA KOLOVSKAYA

At the opening of the *Ekphrasis* exhibition at the General Staff Building 2015

¹ Elena Kolovskaya, director of the PRO ARTE Charitable Foundation of Culture and Art.



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- 20 years of collaboration with leading Russian and international museums
- programmes for young journalists, artists, designers
- inclusive projects

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“The eye may be said to owe its existence to light, which calls forth, as it were, a sense that is akin to itself; the eye, in short, is formed with reference to light, to be fit for the action of light; the light it contains corresponding with the light without.

We are here reminded of a significant adage in constant use with the ancient Ionian school – “Like is only known by Like”; and again, of the words of an old mystic writer, which may be thus rendered,

Wär’ nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,
Die Sonne könnt’ es nie erblicken;
Läg’ nicht in uns des Gottes eigne Kraft,
Wie könnt’ uns Göttliches entzücken?³

“This immediate affinity between light and the eye will be denied by none; to consider them as identical in substance is less easy to comprehend. It will be more intelligible to assert that a dormant light resides in the eye, and that it may be excited by the slightest cause from within or from without. In darkness we can, by an effort of imagination, call up the brightest images; in dreams objects appear to us as in broad daylight; awake, the slightest external action of light is perceptible, and if the organ suffers an actual shock, light and colours spring forth.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
Theory of Colours

TRAVELLING WITH EYES CLOSED

I bring up my peers’ panic regarding blindness not so that I can talk about myself again, but because I think it has a direct connection to Rembrandt. The idea of blindness is intimately tied to his work.

Does he touch on this subject often? He seems to. At times he seems completely obsessed with the topic: the men in the Old Testament who went blind and were healed (Samson being blinded, more than one depiction of Jacob – who was blinded by his tears, and many images of Tobit), blind Homer on canvas and in an etching, and other anonymous old blind men... But it is not the subject matter that is important. What matters is the general theme of blindness and sightedness, visible and invisible that penetrates the master’s works. These include Rembrandt’s faces with eyes that look as if they have glazed over and see nothing external; his incredible hands that seem to know the world by touch – in a way that eyes never could (a father’s hands on his son’s back, Simeon’s hands in his last canvas, the groom’s hand on his bride’s stomach); and in the blackness that crowds around his colours. In his paintings, red is more tactile than visual (a sign of that warmth which allows us to distinguish things by touch), and the pastose colour layer makes our eyes involuntarily feel the texture (the groom’s sleeve in *The Jewish Bride*). Rembrandt’s red might also pique the interest of ophthalmologists: what if it is a symptom of failing eyesight? Dante mentioned that when his eyes were overstressed from reading at night they ached so much that everything around seemed to be a reddish colour.

But that is not all. What struck my schoolgirl imagination about the antique bust of Homer was the visible tension on his face (in Rembrandt’s painting which I have mentioned, the hand of Aristotle, who is wearing a lace collar and a gold chain over his shoulder, lies on a bust of the poet). Homer is *consumed* by scrutinising something. The people in Rembrandt’s works are focused on visually perceiving something in the same way. While a person has eyes that can see, it would seem that nothing else in their body is required for the process, and might be freed up. And this not only applies to people. In Rembrandt’s paintings, trees and objects seem to do the same... Blindness, or the idea of what is visible and who can see.

Rembrandt depicted the scene of Candlemas seventeen times during his life, the last time in 1699, thought to be his last, unfinished work. It is a wonderful finale, better than the *Return of the Prodigal Son* (a constant theme in Rembrandt’s works that culminated around that same time and is said to have been finished by someone else). To depart to this music: *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine (Now lettest thou thy servant depart)*. What finale is more final? But note: why allow the servant to depart? Because *viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum (mine eyes have seen thy salvation)*. The last epiphany of vision.

OLGA SEDAKOVA
Travelling with Eyes Closed.
*Letters on Rembrandt.*²

² Olga Sedakova (born 1949) is a poet, translator, and philologist. She has a PhD in philology and an honorary degree in theology from the European Humanities University (Minsk). Sedakova works as a senior research associate in the Department of Christian Culture of the Institute of World Culture in Moscow State University, and is also the author of many books. Her essay *Travelling with Eyes Closed. Letters on Rembrandt* was published in 2006.

³ “If the eye were not sunny, how could we perceive light? If God’s own strength lived not in us, how could we delight in Divine things?”

BORIS PAVLÓVICH,
Director

The story began with a reciprocal interest: a company of blind and visually challenged people interested in theatre and young actors and directors interested in their blind and visually impaired colleagues. Our mutual curiosity and questioning of each other "How do you see?" grew into a long-term research project. How do you see? How do I see? We spent over a year discussing, experimenting, improvising, singing, and walking around the city. We

discussed films, music, trips to the sea, and shared sounds that we recorded on our phones in various interesting places. We read Goethe's treatise on colour theory, discussed colours and pictures, and finally headed for the Hermitage. On a Monday, we spent a few hours in the silent and empty Rembrandt hall. Those who could see described the pictures to those who could not. But what does it mean to see a picture? It must be just as difficult as seeing a person. Inspired by Olga Sedakova's book *Travelling with Eyes Closed*, we took a closer look at

Rembrandt. From simple description of the object we moved on to *ekphrasis*, describing a painting with language, an old tradition with roots in ritual. With each of our meetings, the border between the visible and the invisible faded and the meaning of the word "see" broadened.

It is difficult to say what the larger theme of our play is – eyesight or language and the ability to explain things to those who do not have access to eyesight. In Velimir Khlebnikov's short story, Ka taught about "words you can see with (eyewords) and words you can do with (handwords)".

ELINA PETROVA,
Playwright

We started interviewing professional actors and visually impaired actors three years ago. When I joined the project as a playwright a lot of stories were communicated early on. Our first performance in December 2017 was based on these real-life stories. At some point, we reached a higher level of trust and stopped being afraid to ask each other questions such as: "How are you?", "What do you dream of?", "How do you orient yourself?", and "What is colour?" Then

we realised that it was our desire to know how another person sees the world, whether sighted or blind was the most important part of the project. It became clearer that blindness does not mean that you do not see the world. The real-life stories grew into a fictional text that merged with our discussions and reflections by Goethe, Sedakova, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein on the nature of sight and perception. It was important for me to connect the "points of view" of the sighted and the blind to eliminate the separation. So that I could think about what I see and how it moulds me.

Our visit to the museum was an integral part of the play. We decided to kick off with the idea that *Special Theatre* was a project of the PRO ARTE art foundation, and attempt to understand how someone who had never seen a picture perceives painting. Our visit to the Hermitage, to Rembrandt, became part of the play. How does a person visualise a picture if they have no idea what a picture is? Can a sighted actor who had seen a picture recall it in detail? How can a picture be described to another person? This brought us into the domain of memory, imagination, perception, and the vision of painting.

A VERY SPECIAL PLAY

The Performance *The Unseeing Eye*,
actors Leon Slovisky
and Elena Zubareva



ALEXANDRA NIKITINA,
Special Theatre Actress

As far as my own significant personal discoveries are concerned, the first thing that comes to mind is the class where we were asked to tell a story from our life. We worked in pairs, and when I said “starry skies” my partner Kolya asked me what starry skies look like. I tried to explain: “It’s a black canvas with white dots of light like torches.” Kolya responded that he had never seen light. At that moment I felt like I was in space, floating

and not knowing what to cling to. Suddenly you understand that everything is based on feeling. You can only explain how you feel and try to use your own emotions to communicate things that a person has never seen. But in fact everybody interacts in this way. I say something and you smile, and this is now our shared emotion, even though it started with me.

This has changed how I perceive things. In life we are all very different; when you listen to me, this does not mean you understand me in the way I would like

to be understood. We must always take this into account. Our project highlights this: everybody sees the world individually, regardless of their visual capabilities. To find a connection we need to create a common space. What we seem to be working on most of all is creating this space of mutual understanding. *Special Theatre* is a very dynamic project. While a regular theatre already has an idea what their performance will be like, we say “Oh, something will happen...” – and we, the performers are just as anxious to see what.

ROMAN STOLYAR,
Composer

The blind usually orient themselves by ear, and to some extent in certain exercises it was easier to work with them than with the sighted actors. Obviously we had to adapt some things. Conducting, for example, says nothing to the blind since they don’t see the conductor’s gestures. That is why we invented what I call “tactile conducting”, which replaces these gestures with movement and touch along the partner’s

forearms. We worked with rather complex compositional structures, different methods of sound production, the voice, and more. We used quite a wide range of tasks to prepare our blind actors. These practices worked: our actors are now able to set up many things on the stage by themselves. Of course, they follow the logic of the action, but what’s in the sound modules is mostly their initiative: they understand how to work together, how to listen to each other, and how to develop the sound material. I think the results are quite good...

ALEXANDER MOKHOV,
Theatre Designer

Creating a space for blind actors has turned out to be the most challenging and interesting task I have ever had. The “empty stage” and the vulnerability of these people in an uncertain space is already a contradiction. We therefore came up with the idea of filling the space and including haptics and audio feedback...⁴ Upon joining the project, it was clear to me that I should set myself the task of creating a space to help the actors feel comfortable on the stage and be able to orient themselves and navigate a bit and, at the same time, ensure that the person remained of primary importance in the space.

Ordinarily monotonous repetition of vertical elements contrasts with the human body very well. However, in this case, only a more complex construction will be able to connect both sighted and blind actors with an audience. We will have to see differently.

The Performance *The Unseeing Eye*, actresses Alexandra Nikitina and Tatyana Dugina

⁴ Any touching on the stage is accompanied by the sound of sticks clapping together.

PHOTO: KSEENIA SYTINA

PHOTO: KSEENIA SYTINA

The Performance *The Unseeing Eye*, the audience

TRAVELLING WITH EYES CLOSED

Olya, 30, is congenitally blind. She has been a vocalist for many years, and is now a professional. She is also studying massage. Olya got married last year. In the play, Olya has a monologue about the colour red.

- when you describe an object or a person
- to me
- I know what they look like
- theoretically speaking
- they have a head
- a body
- and all the rest
- if you give a specific description,
- then usually
- I think that I know
- what the person looks like
- I have a vision
- I watch a film and I am told
- that the character leaves his house and gets into his car
- and I
- i m a g i n e
- the car
- because I've touched a car, I've travelled
- in a car, and I've heard the sounds made
- by a car

Tanya, 32, is visually impaired. She works as a massage therapist at a nursery school. She lives on Kolokolnaya Street in St. Petersburg and travels to Vyborg to see her mother and sister at the weekends. Tanya plays the guitar and brings her instrument to all rehearsals and performances. In The Unseeing Eye, Tanya has a long monologue in the end, in which she takes us from her home to the Rembrandt hall at the Hermitage.

- I decided to catch my dream
- how I move from reality to dreamsv
- I closed my eyes
- I see the darkness
- then a feeling emerges
- as if I was being taken somewhere
- and then I suddenly find myself
- in a bright room

Kolya, 25, is deaf and blind. He studies massage at a medical college. He also plays the accordion. Kolya likes reading and avidly participates in the *City Reads* project. He likes poetry.

- I was at home in my room
- I was supposed to be going to school
- I was in the third or fourth grade
- Suddenly the window opens
- and a rocket flies into it
- I heard the rocket
- I saw the rocket
- I can't explain how I managed to see it, but I saw it
- At first, I didn't understand anything
- and then – I get it
- if there's a rocket, that means I've been invited to fly into
- space
- yes, interesting, but I have to go to school
- but Yuri Gagarin said to me:
- Nikolay, I'm Yuri Gagarin
- I know what you dream of
- I said: what?
- he said: to fly to the Moon and Mars
- am I right?
- I said: yes, Yuri Alekseevich, you're right
- You'll make it in time for school. Let's fly; let's travel.
- Then I'll take you to school.
- My mum comes into the room and sees a strange sight –
- a rocket and a strange man
- She says: what do you want, young man?
- Yuri Alekseevich says: Nikolay, get in the rocket and don't
- listen to anyone.
- I got into the rocket
- Yuri Gagarin locked the door and we blasted off
- Suddenly, I heard an explosion below
- Our house had blown up
- We were flying for a long time
- And reached the Moon
- And reached Mars
- but how do we get back home?
- there is no home
- Yuri Alekseevich said: there wasn't, but now there will be
- I woke up and couldn't understand anything
- I went to the kitchen
- I scream: Yuri Alekseevich, where are you?
- Yuri Alekseevich!
- Yuri Alekseevich was not there and nobody else was
- either.
- At school I also asked where Yuri Alekseevich Gagarin
- was.
- The most interesting part was that when we were flying
- together
- I steered the rocket, not him
- he trusted me with the rocket
- it felt like an amusement park ride
- but always flying up, up, up

Slava, 37, is visually impaired. He recently got married. Slava went blind when he was in school, in the 10th grade. His classmates always come to see the plays, where he takes part in a scene “about love”.

- I saw three types of dreams
- when I was sighted
- when I lost my sight
- and when I was again able to see a little
- when I went blind
- at first I saw my memories
- the places I'd seen
- the things I'd done
- I saw those in my dreams
- then old visual dreams went away
- I began to see new things, streets, faces
- – but everything was blurry
- you invent your dream, you compose it

Vlad, 22, is deaf and blind. He is a student at the Department of Education for the Blind at Herzen State Pedagogical University. He plays the accordion. Vlad has not missed a single rehearsal or meeting. In the play, Vlad recites a passage from *Goethe's Theory of Colours*.

- if I have been seeing someone for a long
- time
- I can recognise them even if I don't hear
- their voice
- first via touching
- second via smell
- I often imagine
- what people are like through smelling
- third – the way they walk
- I can't do this that well
- but my friends are really good at it
- someone takes a step
- and they know
- who's there
- I'm not as good at it as they are
- but I can do it too, sometimes
- I have clear parameters
- within which I see –
- touch and smell

In addition to wars, epidemics, and other “terrible things”, nature follows its own Orpheus to a black hole – a black hole tirelessly depicted, described, installed, and performed by artists, tasted and analysed by influential thinkers.

It is appropriate to nonchalantly reflect on an old painter and the properties of his palette? Or do I believe that this will be some kind of salvation? Who will save whom, and from what? “Beauty will save the world.” But I wonder what the *world* that beauty saves is like. “...But music will not save me from the *abyss*!” argued Osip Mandelstam. What exactly is this abyss that we cannot be saved from? Also, neither music nor beauty – at least in their traditional forms – aid us much in understanding what is of importance in Rembrandt's art. Many other names can be more easily connected to music and beauty. Old age has no music or beauty. More precisely, if it has anything that might be called music or beauty, we would have to revise these concepts, turn the light inside them off – yes, not only the shininess, but the light as well. Just imagine music and beauty with the light in them switched off!

Rembrandt seems to have been born an old man. Old age – even senility – peer out of the face of his supposedly youthful *Saskia as Flora*. Her fresh flowers are not young. The fair-haired boy Titus aged profoundly a long time ago. All of them – even the dog in the elching lying with its back to the viewer – had long been unaware of who would have had them on a leash or where they would be led. They had already experienced the most egregious defeat, the last defeat in life. Which means that, if we are to believe Rilke, they have finally grown up.

*Sein Wachstum ist: der Tiefbesiegle
von immer Größerem zu sein.*⁵

⁵ _____ This is how he grows: by being defeated, decisively, by ever greater beings.

No, they have not grown to their full height, as some might say; they have reached down to their roots, to common depths, to a water-bearing layer, and nothing else interests them. As for their height – they bent over and got shorter, like we all do with age. It is difficult to stand upright in Rembrandt’s space: difficult for people, trees, and earth. But this is a topic for a different conversation.

They gaze at us *from inside* us, and having met their gaze, our eyes cannot see *them*, they stop seeing altogether. But, strange as it may seem, they remain our organ of sight, like something that has caught a person’s eye right before they could close it. This might happen, say, to someone who describes their dreams in public, like young Joseph in the etching *Joseph Telling His Dream* (1638). Or to someone explaining to others a germ of truth that only he can see, like young Jesus in an etching with a similar composition, *Christ Preaching* (1652). The eyes may still be able to see something, as before, but it does not matter: they see without distinguishing; *the look* has left them – the look has been, as Dante puts it, “to such depth absorb’d, that memory cannot follow.” Upon its return, the look has nothing to say: no thoughts, no feelings, and no images. But it is a different look, and this is irreversible.

The paintings by mature Rembrandt (and I would not say this about his graphic works) become *invisible* very quickly – completely invisible, their visual surfaces revealing neither fa-

cial features, nor a bit of lace, velvet fold, or warm pearls, as if it had all been brought together and reduced to its primal form – to a small sphere, a dim ball of light. We will come back to the ball.

How visible are other masters compared to Rembrandt? They are theatre, show, performance.

Note how visible the people in paintings by his teacher Lastman are. Take a look: objects and people are placed within a rectangular space on a stage with the curtain rolled up. They are being displayed for us.

If we really see Rembrandt, we will have nothing to say about his “technique” or “composition”. We will not be able to retell his story or explain what he means unless we have first turned away from him. In Rembrandt, the *performance* and *show* of European painting both come to an end.

He himself began with this theatre, silent scenes à la Caravaggio effectively halted: a dropped dagger hangs in the air before reaching the ground (*The Blinding of Samson*). He painted renaissance-style curtains in front of gospel scenes, and even when he did not, we still understand that there is a foreground keeping us from the depths of the stage. But then something happened. Something devastatingly simple killed the theatre: there was no longer anyone to act for. The actors (including the actors in a painted drama – colours, contours, and the arrangement of the bodies) speak in their own voices rather than in theatrical ones. What’s more, they are speaking in their final voices. An old man is not interested in acting or how he looks to the external viewer. He has matured to this level. What would he say upon coming out of his pensiveness?

“Yes, it’s all true”, says he to someone, or to himself, or to no one.

“Yes, it’s true. Yes.”

This “yes” is almost the meaningless “yes” of an epilogue, a confirmation. It is a nod of assent rather than a word. It is the only word one can hear behind what Rembrandt depicts. What is this “it”, this “all”, that is confirmed with a bowed head and folded hands as if a long task has just been completed? God only knows.

We probably know too, but individually rather than all together. There are some things that we do not explain to other people, but simply say: “you understand.” You know this place where you exist on your own, can commune with yourself. Just return there. Come back from our “interaction”. Such instances of entrusted private knowledge last for only moments in the ordinary course of life. In Rembrandt, they have edged out time and taken its place. Yes, they have supplanted *moving* time.

Rather than interaction, Rembrandt offers us an inexplicably shared privacy.

OLGA SEDAKOVA

Travelling with Eyes Closed.

Letters on Rembrandt

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Hauser & Wirth
Hazlitt Holland-Hibbert
Herald St
Max Hetzler
Hollybush Gardens
Hopkins
Edwynn Houk
Xavier Hufkens

I
Invernizzi
Taka Ishii

J
Bernard Jacobson
Alison Jacques
Martin Janda

Catriona Jeffries
Annely Juda

K
Kadel Willborn
Casey Kaplan
Karma International
kaufmann repetto
Sean Kelly
Kerlin
Anton Kern
Kewenig
Peter Kilchmann
König Galerie
David Kordansky
KOW
Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler
Andrew Kreps
Krinzinger
Nicolas Krupp
Kukje / Tina Kim
kurimanzutto

L
Lahumière
Landau
Emanuel Layr
Simon Lee
Lehmann Maupin
Tanya Leighton
Gray
Lelong
Lévy Gorvy
Gisèle Linder
Lisson
Luhring Augustine
Luxembourg & Dayan

M
Jörg Maass
Kate MacGarry
Magazzino
Mai 36
Giò Marconi
Matthew Marks
Marlborough
Mayor
Fergus McCaffrey
Greta Meert
Anthony Meier
Urs Meile
Mendes Wood DM
kamel mennour
Metro Pictures
Meyer Riegger
Massimo Minini
Victoria Miro
Mitchell-Innes & Nash

Mnuchin
Modern Art
The Modern Institute
Jan Mot
mother’s tankstation
Vera Munro

N
nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie
Schwarzwälder
Nagel Draxler
Richard Nagy
Edward Tyler Nahem
Helly Nahmad
Neu
neugerriemschneider
Franco Noero
David Nolan
Nordenhake
Georg Nothelfer

O
Nathalie Obadia
OMR

P
P.P.O.W
Pace
Maureen Paley
Alice Pauli
Peres Projects
Perrotin
Petzel
Francesca Pia
Plan B
Gregor Podnar
Eva Presenhuber
ProjecteSD

R
Almine Rech
Reena Spaulings
Regen Projects
Rodeo
Thaddaeus Ropac
Lia Rumma

S
Salon 94
Esther Schipper
Rüdiger Schöttle
Thomas Schulte
Natalie Seroussi
Sfeir-Semler
Jack Shainman
ShanghART
Sies + Höke
Sikkema Jenkins

Bruce Silverstein
Skarstedt
Skopia / P.-H. Jaccaud
Société
Pietro Sparta
Sperone Westwater
Sprovieri
Sprüth Magers
Nils Stærk
Stampa
Standard (Oslo)
Starmach
Christian Stein
Stevenson
Luísa Strina

T
Take Ninagawa
Tega
Templon
Thomas
Tokyo Gallery + BTAP
Tornabuoni
Travesfa Cuatro
Tschudi
Tucci Russo

V
Georges-Philippe &
Nathalie Vallois
Van de Weghe
Annemarie Verna
Vielmetter
Vitamin

W
Nicolai Wallner
Barbara Weiss
Wentrup
Michael Werner
White Cube
Barbara Wien
Jocelyn Wolff

Z
Thomas Zander
Zeno X
ZERO...
David Zwirner

Feature
1 Mira Madrid
Ben Brown
Ellen de Bruijne
Experimenter
James Fuentes
Christophe Gaillard
Garth Greenan

Hosfelt
Jhaveri
Kasmin
Levy
David Lewis
Loevenbruck
Max Mayer
Lorcan O’Neill
Parker
Project Native Informant
Yancey Richardson
Barbara Thumm
Upstream
Vedovi
Venus Over Manhattan
waldengallery
Zlotowski

Statements
Bank
Bodega
Bureau
Commonwealth and Council
Company
Bridget Donahue
Emalin
Lars Friedrich
Grey Noise
High Art
Isla Flotante
JTT
LambdaLambdaLambda
Magician Space
Queer Thoughts
Simone Subal
Temnikova & Kasela
Union Pacific

Edition
Niels Borch Jensen
Cristea Roberts
mfc-michèle didier
Fanal
Gemini G.E.L.
Sabine Knust
Lelong Editions
Carolina Nitsch
Paragon
Polígrafa
René Schmitt
Susan Sheehan
STPI
Two Palms

50
YEARS

September 17–20, 2020





NEW YOUTH LIBRARY AT THE HERMITAGE

Opening soon!

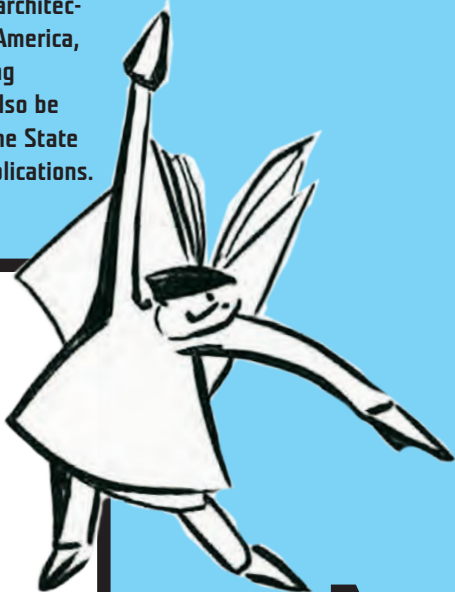
The State Hermitage Museum will soon be opening a youth public library in the General Staff Building as part of the Russian-Dutch Museum 15/24 project. The newly accessible books and periodicals will be targeted at young people aged from 15 to 24 who have an interest in contemporary art and modern museum and exhibition practices. Young visitors to the Hermitage will be offered access to books on contemporary art history and theory, catalogues of high-profile biennials and exhibitions. This will include reading material on the practice of art, architecture, design and photography in Europe, North America, and Asia, and selections of periodicals discussing 20th- and 21st-century visual arts. There will also be a separate collection of reading on offer from the State Hermitage Museum's own contemporary art publications.

Engagement with the library will be further encouraged with lectures and educational programmes run by the Department of Contemporary Art and the Hermitage Museum's Youth Centre. The new Hermitage library will include a work and lecture space where young visitors will be able to attend lectures, read books, and enjoy contemporary visual art objects in a comfortable, relaxing atmosphere. The library's selection of books on contemporary art is curated by Christina Steinbrecher-Pfandt, an art industry professional with more than a decade of experience in the field and who held the position of artistic director of viennacontemporary until 2019. Funding for the youth library at the General Staff Building comes from the Museum 15/24 project. Design for the youth library in the General Staff Building of the State Hermitage Museum. Completion scheduled for November 2020. Designers: Andrey Shelyutto, Irina Chekmaryova (Faro Studio).

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MUSEUM

24



BOOKS



Glyptics: Past and the Present. Exhibition catalogue / The State Hermitage Museum
SPb. : State Hermitage Publishing House, 2019. – 164 p.: ill.

This catalogue was prepared for an exhibition of Glyptics, the art of carving on miniature stones. Historical cameos and intaglios from the State Hermitage collection, spanning a period of several centuries, are juxtaposed with similar modern gems by Vladimir Popovich, provided for display by Tenzo Jewellery House. The catalogue also features seals, jewellery, and small stone figures with carved elements. The book is aimed at a wide range of readers.



Victoria Calvatone: The Story of a Masterpiece: Exhibition catalogue / The State Hermitage Museum
SPb. : State Hermitage Publishing House, 2019. – 184 p.: ill.

This exhibition catalogue is dedicated to the gilded bronze statue *Victoria Calvatone*, a unique work of ancient plastic arts. The sculpture was discovered in the Italian village of Calvatone in the first half of the 19th-century, broken into several pieces. Since the beginning of the 1840s, this masterpiece was kept in the Antiques Collection of the Berlin State Museums. In the aftermath of World War II it was moved to the USSR. The catalogue articles written by Russian and German researchers tell of the sculpture's story, its iconography, and its travel from museum to museum. Special attention is paid to the scientific research done by State Hermitage restorers, who used modern high-precision equipment to examine fragments of the statue's ancient armature and the restorative additions made in the 19th-century. The book is aimed at a wide range of readers.



"This is Potemkin himself!" In Honour of the 280th Anniversary of his Highness Prince Grigory Aleksandrovich Potemkin-Tavrichesky: Exhibition catalogue in 2 vols. / The State Hermitage Museum
SPb. : State Hermitage Publishing House, 2020. – 300 p.: ill.

This publication was prepared for an exhibition that featured more than a thousand items from the State Hermitage Museum, other St. Petersburg museums, Kazan (Volga Region) State University, and private collections, with most of the exhibits displayed for the first time. They convey



a vivid, multi-faceted image of Potemkin, describing his personal life and close surroundings, his main achievements in domestic and foreign policy, and his successes on the battlefield. It was the first exhibition to display works from the art collection of the most powerful nobleman of Catherine's reign on a large scale, as well as books and prints that were part of his library.

The exhibition catalogue consists of two volumes. The first volume includes materials related to Potemkin's biography and various aspects of his state activities. The second volume is dedicated to the prince's private life, his personality, his image in art, and details of his collection. The book is aimed at specialists, collectors, and a wide range of readers interested in history, culture, and art.

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The restoration of two horse figures made from tinted plaster, shown at the exhibition and made by Peter Clodt. The completion of this restoration was made possible with the financial support of the Hermitage Friends' Club members.

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Clodt von Jürgensburg, Peter
English stallion Middlelon
Sculpture after restoration (fragment)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. No 3VIT-1773



Heinz Fleischer
The blind with a sign on his chest: "Blind"

The State Hermitage Museum,
 St Petersburg
 Inv. No V-1836/13

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2020

Handwritten signature: *Handwritten*

Handwritten signature: *H. Fleischer*

"Instead of fixing a proximate object, let the eye, passive but free, prolong its line of vision to the limit of the visual field. What do we find then? The structure of our hierarchised elements disappears. The ocular field is homogeneous; we do not see one thing clearly and the rest confusedly, for all is submerged in an optical democracy. Nothing possesses a sharp profile; everything is background, confused, almost formless. On the other hand, the duality of proximate vision is succeeded by a perfect unity of the whole visual field."

Jose Orlega y Gassel. 'On Point of View in the Arts'. 1924

ULTIMA

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