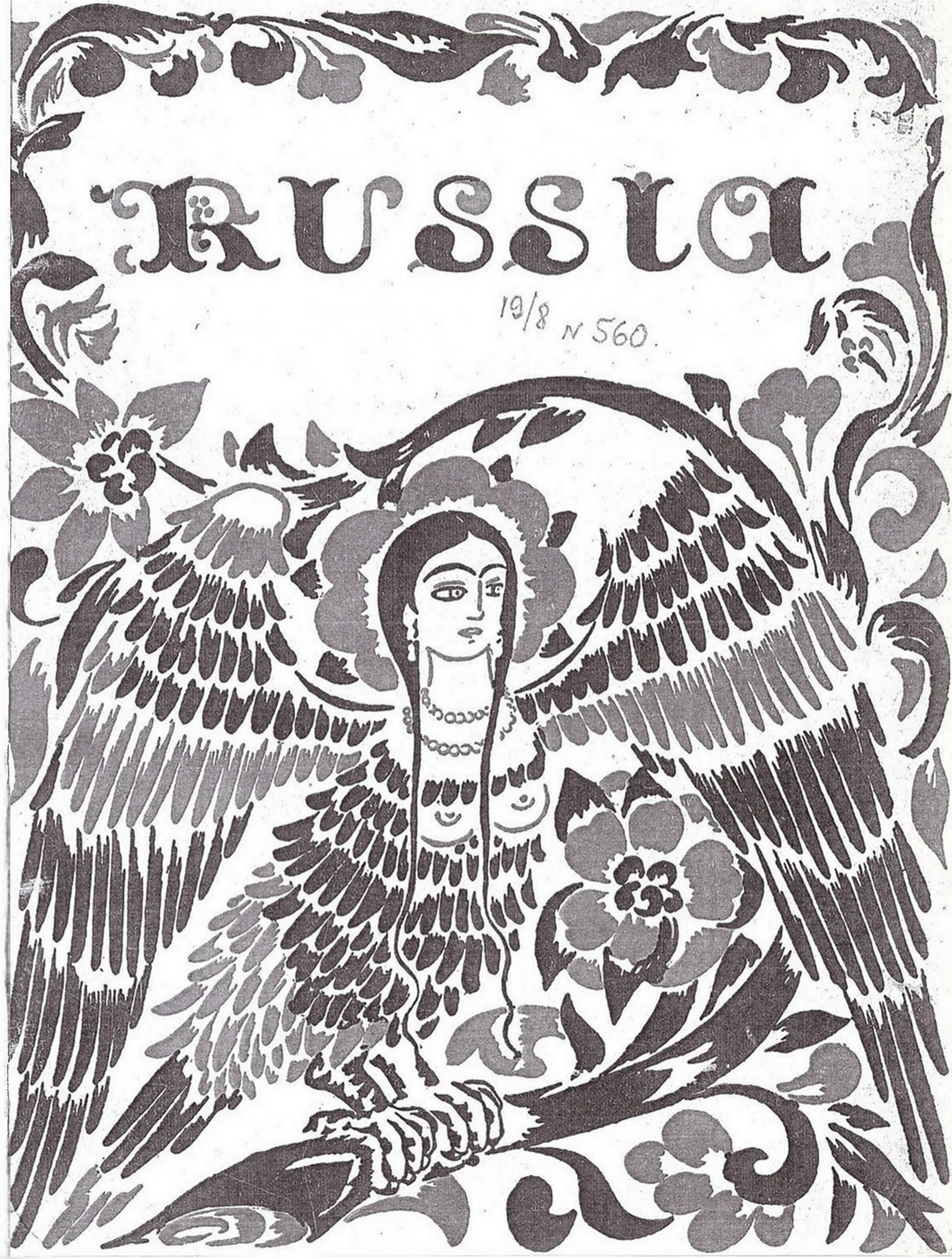


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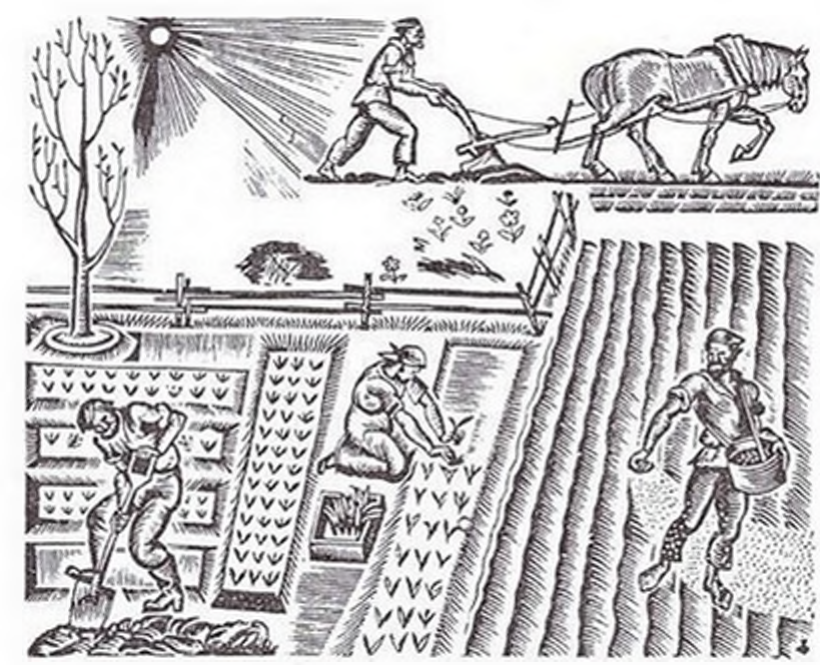
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SERGEY SUDEYKIN: *The Moscow Fiancées*
 Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton

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EXHIBITION OF
 RUSSIAN PAINTING
 AND SCULPTURE
 REALISM TO SURREALISM

INTRODUCTION AND CATALOGUE
 BY
 CHRISTIAN BRINTON



THE WILMINGTON SOCIETY OF THE FINE ARTS

1932

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FOREWORD

THE Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts takes pleasure in presenting the current exhibition of contemporary Russian art as the third offering of the season of 1931-32. It is earnestly hoped, and confidently believed, that the exhibition, which covers the period from Realism to Surrealism, will shed new and interesting light upon Russian artistic progress and achievement. It may incidentally be noted that this exhibition is the first of its kind, either in Europe or America, to illustrate definitely marked lines of development, such as are indicated in the four main divisions of Realism, Idealism, Nationalism, and Internationalism, which in effect is Surrealism. Grateful acknowledgment is due the artists themselves who have co-operated in such generous spirit by lending their works to the exhibition. Also to such public institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Worcester Art Museum, Roerich Museum, La France Art Institute, and Société Anonyme Inc. Museum of Modern Art. Likewise to numerous private collectors, including Mrs. S. Bashkiroff, Dr. Christian Brinton, Mr. and Mrs. John M. Carter, Mr. Bernard Davis, Miss Katherine S. Dreier, Mrs. W. K. du Pont, Mrs. Angelika W. Frink, Mr. Adolph Lewisohn, Mr. Ivan Narodny, Mr. Israel Perlstein, Mr. A. G. Raskin, Mr. Sidney Ross, Baron and Baroness Rodolphe M. de Schauensee, Mr. William S. Stimmel, and Mr. M. Zamustin. We wish, in addition, to thank Madame Natalia Goncharova for the delightful cover design of the catalogue showing the Russian Fire Bird, and Amtorg for the decorative woodcuts in the body of the book. The Society is happy to express its indebtedness to Dr. Christian Brinton for invaluable assistance in the organization of the exhibition, and the preparation of the catalogue.

MRS. HOLLYDAY S. MEEDS, JR.,

President, The Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts.



ABRAM ARKHIPOV: Ivan Rodin from Ryazan

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art

INTRODUCTION

BY CHRISTIAN BRINTON

Le Beau, c'est la Vie

EVERY now and again, the Fire Bird of Russian art, the fabled Jar-Ptitzza, wings her way to some fresh part of the world. Since the war she has successively alighted in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Venice, Brooklyn, and New York. And now, it is Wilmington where she has momentarily come to pause. Whether it be Europe or America—north, south, east, or west—it is the same story. In her flashing train follow the twin gifts of colour and imaginative fantasy. Yet, whilst colour and imaginative fantasy are among the outstanding characteristics of Russian art, they have not been won without due regard for fact. Thus, let us for the moment indulge in a few facts. Previous exhibitions of Russian art, alike at home or abroad, have been wanting in definite plan and purpose. In particular have they lacked sequence, the sense of sequential development. It has been the aim of the present venture to avoid this pitfall. Upon these walls you will see Russian painting displayed as a living organism, an organism subject to constant and not infrequently radical change. The art that does not reflect life, which does not convincingly and eloquently render visible the social and cultural aspirations of its particular day and generation, is unworthy the name. This, at least, Russian art achieves.

Due to the plasticity of the Slavic soul, Russian art evinces seemingly infinite variety of inspiration and motivation. This variety is the variety of life itself. But whence does it come? Beyond question it derives from the fact that the Russ has never, as have the Western nations, become over-rationalized. These Slavs are followers of Dionysus. We Westerners worship Apollo. They are emotional, mercurial. We prefer the assured equipoise of the estab-

lished order. Children as we are of Greece and of Rome, rather than Byzantium and the mystic East, let us yet face with fresh, open mind the manifest extremes of the Slavic aesthetic temperament as herewith set forth. But first, just a few more facts. The progressive evolution of contemporary Russian painting was initiated by the realists. Rebels, they were, against the ponderous pseudo-classicism and sterile academic practice of the day. Back in 1863 a band of fiery young radicals, at the head of whom stood Ivan Kramskoy, seceded from the Imperial Academy and formed themselves into a group known as the Peredvizhniki, or Wanderers. Their watchword was truth to nature. Like their contemporaries in the field of letters, Turgenev and Tolstoy, their art was based upon a solid groundwork of objective verity. The living incarnation, the very archetype of their aesthetic, was the indomitable Cossack from the Ukraine, Ilya Ryepin, who died less than two years since in Finland, a grisly, embittered expatriate.

Yet realism, with these men often provincial and prosaic, did not satisfy the Slavic creative consciousness. Before long one heard the beating of the magic wings of Fancy. The tortured, haunting Vrubel appeared upon the horizon to beckon his generation towards the kingdom of colour and imagination. The realists were demoded. Their place was usurped by the idealists, headed by Roerich, the nordic, Anisfeld, the oriental, pagan Bakst, the calm neo-classicists Yakovlev and Sorin. In a sense apollonians, their avowed aim was beauty, often formal beauty. The robust, rugged verity of the Slavophiles was repugnant to certain of these exquisites of art, whose activities were focussed in the society known as Mir Iskusstva, the World of Art, which, in effect, was their especial world. Diaghilev, creator of the sumptuous, exotic Ballet russe, was their fugelman, the ballet their chef d'oeuvre. Whilst idealism flourished mainly in the patrician atmosphere of Petrograd, the "Palmyra of the North," there spontaneously flowered in lusty, bürgerlich Moscow a genuinely national school of art. Stemming from the fecund centre

of Russia it was frankly popular and democratic rather than aristocratic. The sprightly Gogol, not the serene, olympian Turgenev, was its literary prototype. The majority of these men belonged to the Soyuz or Union. Later not a few drifted into the camp of the new primitives. Russian nationalism found congenial expression in the expansive pulchritude of Sudeykin's Moscow Fiancées, in the decorative evocations of Goncharova, which trace their origin to the bright-tinted signs of local inn or traktir—in the primal animalism of Grigoriev's peasant types.

Partially inspired by the French modernists, and in part sui generis, the latest phase of Russian painting, the international phase, was inaugurated before the war by the Bobnovy Valyet, or Knave of Diamonds group. Its protagonist was David Burluk, the same who to-day continues the battle for aesthetic freedom upon a strange, far front. We shall not minutely descant upon the puzzling ramifications of Russian modernism. Suffice to say, it is not wilfully isolated and out of touch with its time. Quite the contrary, for its literary counterpart you will meet in the tragic lyricism of Aleksandr Blok, and the volcanic vehemence of Mayakovsky. Mainly constructivist, suprematist, or surrealist, it apparently parallels the modern art movement the world over. But only apparently. In essence it remains Slavic. It is at once more colourful and less abjectly stereometric than the average gamut of modernist painting. For it, too, has been brushed by the wings of the Fire Bird.

Such, in summary profile, are the main categories of contemporary Russian painting—Realism, Idealism, Nationalism, and Internationalism—in as far as they concern the present offering. Each of these divisions, each separate wall of the gallery in fact, has its focal point. From the centre of each radiates the spirit of some one artist of recognized calibre and achievement. Flanking the seated form of Ryepin's Tolstoy, himself an ardent apostle of the muzhik, are the veracious, forthright peasants of Arkhipov, who died only last year with the coveted distinction of Peoples' Artist. Though it

is obvious that Sorin's Anna Pavlova is neo-classic in inspiration, there is something about this scrupulously wrought, calligraphic presentment that recalls the Swan Princess of Vrubel. It holds a suggestion of that suppressed romanticism Ingres himself sometimes betrays. And around Pavlova clusters the full flowering of idealist aspiration—coming from the north with Roerich, the south with Anisfeld, from mystic, hieratic Byzantium with Chernov's Autumn. It is the same with the nationalists, who find their key personalities in Sudeykin and Grigoriev, and with the internationalists, or surrealists, whose spearhead is Burliuk, militant "Father of Russian Modernism." Whatever one may elect to think of this work, each artist at all events proves himself the possessor of a free, unfettered, creative individuality. Those who have remained in the stressful, aspiring homeland have conserved more of the racy savour of Matushka Rossia—Mother Russia. Yet they who have perforce become citizens of the world still bear the unmistakable stamp of the Slav.

The first thing to strike the casual visitor to the exhibition will be the scant amount of landscape, still life composition, and purely abstract theme. There is, in fact, mercifully little of those sterile, egocentric studio exercises so esteemed in certain quarters. And here, moreover, is an exhibition without the boresome blight of Cézannism. The problem posed by the Slavic painter is not the problem of two tired apples on a tilting table. Rather is it the eternal enigma of man in relation to his background, real or imaginative. This art is in broad measure a human document. It seldom disassociates itself from nature and from life. Russian art seeks not to escape from, but to accept, and even to intensify, and magnify life. The Fire Bird assuredly quickens our sense of the beauty and mystery of life. Verily, with these Russians—le Beau, c'est la Vie.

PAINTINGS and DRAWINGS

ANISFELD, BORIS. Born Bieltsy, Bessarabia, 1879, resides Chicago.

1 The Golden God Oil
Lent by Mr. Sidney Ross, New York

2 The Exodus Water colour
Lent by the Brooklyn Museum

3 Grey Day on the Neva Oil

ANNYENKOV, YURY. Born, 1889, studied Petrograd, resides Paris.
Paris.

4 Still Life Composition Oil
Lent by Mr. Bernard Davis, Philadelphia

5 The Cathedral Oil
Lent by La France Art Institute, Philadelphia

ARCHIPENKO, ALEKSANDR. Born Kiev, 1887, resides New York.

6 Before the Mirror Sculpto-painting
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton

ARKHIPOV, ABRAM. Born Egorov, 1862, died Moscow, 1930.

7 Ivan Rodin of Ryazan Oil
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

8 Girl from Ryazan Oil
Lent by Mr. A. G. Raskin, New York

BOBRITSKY, VLADIMIR. Born Kharkov, 1899, resides New York.

9 Crucified—The Machine Age Wash drawing
Lent by Mr. Ivan Narodny, New York

- BURLIUK, DAVID. Born Kharkov, 1882, resides New York.
- 10 Winter in the Bashkir Steppe Oil
- 11 Ilya Prorok Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- 12 Ikon of the Soviet Age Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- CHAGALL, MARC. Born Vitebsk, 1887, resides Paris.
- 13 I and My Village Oil
Lent by Baron and Baroness Rodolphe M. de Schauensee, Philadelphia
- 14 Fantasy Tempera
Lent by La France Art Institute, Philadelphia
- CHARCHOUNE, SERGEY. Born Samara, 1888, resides Paris.
- 15 Window—Spring Oil
- 16 Pathway to the House Oil
- CHERNOV, VADIM. Born Ekaterinoslav, 1887, resides New York.
- 17 Autumn Oil tempera
- 18 Still Life Tempera
- CICKOVSKY, NIKOLAI. Born Pinsk, 1894, resides New York.
- 19 Russia Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- 20 Young Man from the Government of Penza Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- FECHIN, NIKOLAI. Born Kazan, 1881, resides Taos, New Mexico.
- 21 Lady in Pink Oil
Lent by Mr. William S. Stimmel, Pittsburgh
- 22 Lydia Sapojnikova Oil
Lent by Mr. William S. Stimmel, Pittsburgh

- GONCHAROVA, NATALIA. Born Tula, 1882, resides Paris.
- 23 Curtain Design for Stravinsky's "Noces" Gouache
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- GORKY, ARSHELE. Born Nizhni-Novgorod, 1903, resides New York.
- 24 Composition Oil
- 25 Portrait Oil
- GRAHAM, JOHN D. Born Kiev, 1891, resides New York.
- 26 Abstraction Oil
Lent by Dudensing Galleries, New York
- 27 Woman of the Steel Age Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- GRIGORIEV, BORIS. Born Moscow, 1886, resides Paris.
- 28 Portrait of My Son Oil
Lent by The Worcester Art Museum
- 29 Madonna of the Steppe Oil
Lent by Mr. Adolph Lewisohn, New York
- 30 The End of Harvest Oil and tempera
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- HAUSCH, ALEKSANDR. Born Petrograd, 1873, Academy Professor.
- 31 Russian Carpets and Toys Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton

- LARIONOV, MIKHAIL. Born near Odessa, 1881, resides Paris.
- 32 Décor for Ballet, "Midnight Sun" Gouache
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- LISSETZKY, ELEIZER. Born Vitebsk, 1903, resides Moscow.
- 33 Giant of the Future Drawing
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John M. Carter, Philadelphia
- 34 Traveller Through the Ages Drawing
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John M. Carter, Philadelphia
- MALYAVIN, FILIPP. Born 1869, pupil of Ryepin, resides Paris.
- 35 Peasant Woman Oil
Lent by Mr. Israel Perlstein, New York
- MALYEVICH, KAZIMIR. Born 1878, founder Suprematism, resides Leningrad.
- 36 The Scissors Grinder
Lent by Société Anonyme Inc. Museum of Modern Art
- PETROV-VODKIN, KOZIMA. Born 1878, resides Leningrad.
- 37 Peasant Girls Oil
Lent by Mr. Sidney Ross, New York
- RYEPIN, ILYA. Born Chuguyev, 1844, died Finland, 1930.
- 38 Portrait of Count Tolstoy Oil
Lent by Mr. M. Zamustin, Philadelphia
- ROERICH, NICHOLAS. Born Petrograd, 1874, resides New York.
- 39 Sunrise—Land of the Berendey Tempera
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- 40 Our Forefathers Tempera
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton

- ROERICH, SVETOSLAV. Born Petrograd, 1904, resides New York.
- 41 Tibetan Lama—Yellow Sect Tempera
Lent by the Roerich Museum, New York
- 42 Tibetan Lamas—Red Sect Tempera
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- SORIN, SAVELY. Born Polozk, 1886, resides Paris.
- 43 Portrait of Anna Pavlova Tempera and water colour
Lent by Mrs. W. K. du Pont, Wilmington
- STELLETKY, DMITRI. Resides Cannes, France.
- 44 Ivan the Terrible Oil and tempera
Lent by Mr. Sidney Ross, New York
- SUDEYKIN, SERGEY. Born Smolensk, 1884, resides New York.
- 45 The Moscow Fiancées Tempera
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- 46 Russian Toys Tempera
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- 47 Petrushka Oil
- VASILIEV, NIKOLAI. Born Moscow, 1889, resides New York.
- 48 Young Russia Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- 49 Tea for Two Oil
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton
- YAKOVLEV, ALEKSANDR. Born Petrograd, 1887, resides Paris.
- 50 Portrait of a Russian Woman Sanguine
Lent by Mrs. S. Bashkiroff, New York

ZERNOVA, EKATERINA. Born Siberia, resides Murman, Siberia.

51 The Giants' Swing Oil
Lent by Mrs. Angelika W. Frink, New York

52 Murman, Siberia Oil
Lent by Mr. Sidney Ross, New York

53 Muzhik and Tractor Constructivist poster design
From the Decorative Institute, Leningrad

54 Milkmaid Constructivist poster design
From the Decorative Institute, Leningrad

SCULPTURE

LIPCHITZ, JACQUES. Born Druskinienki, 1891, resides Paris.

1 Man with Guitar Bronze

2 Woman with Braid Bronze

ZADKIN, OSSIP. Born Smolensk, 1890, resides Paris.

3 Female Head Polished copper

4 Female Head Swedish granite

5 Musicians Bronze

6 Ball Players Bronze

**The sculpture has kindly been lent for the Exhibition by La France Art Institute, Frankford, Philadelphia, courtesy of Mr. Bernard Davis.*



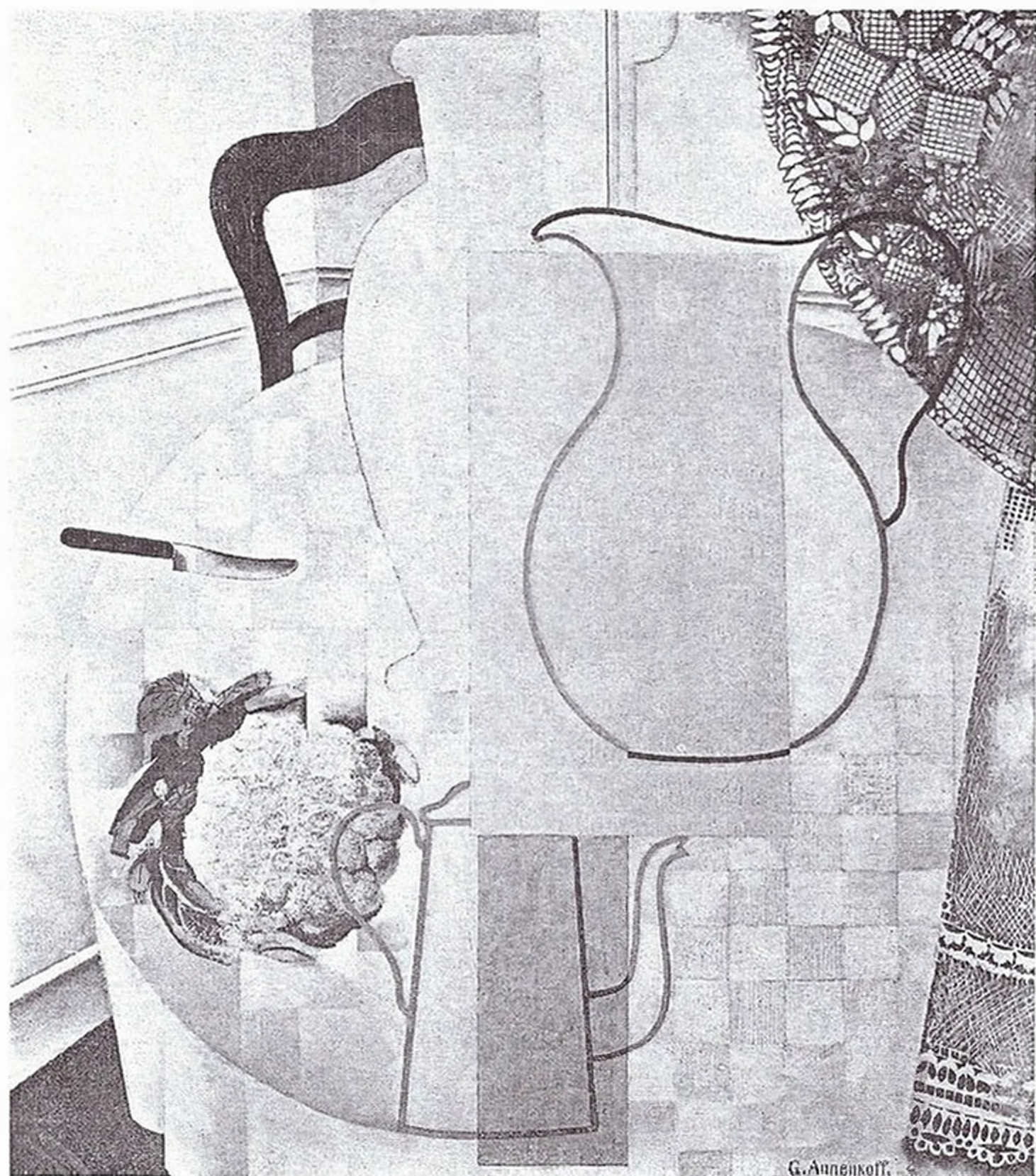
BORIS GRIGORIEV: Madonna of the Steppe
Lent by Mr. Adolph Lewisohn



EKATERINA ZERNOVA: *The Giant's Swing*
Lent by Mrs. Angelika W. Frink



NIKOLAI CICKOVSKY: *Young Man from the Government of Penza*
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton



YURY ANNYENKOV: Still Life Composition
Lent by Mr. Bernard Davis



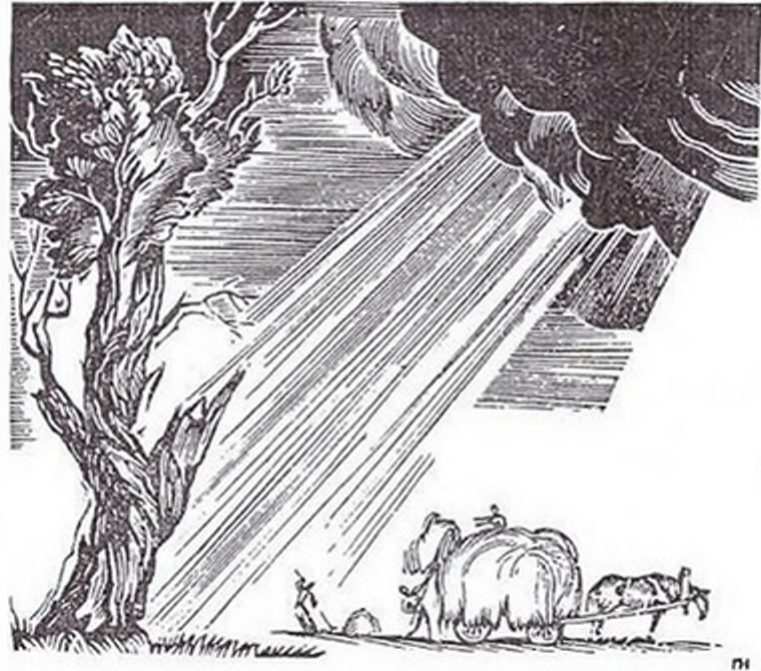
MARC CHAGALL: I and My Village
Lent by Baron and Baroness Rodolphe M. de Schauensee



JOHN D. GRAHAM: Woman of the Steel Age
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton



DAVID BURLIUK: Madonna of the Soviet Age
Lent by Dr. Christian Brinton



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