

RUSSIAN ART + CULTURE



RUSSIAN ART WEEK GUIDE

LONDON ■ 25 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER 2016



Oleg Kulik

Eclipse I from the series RUSSIAN, 1999

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Cover Image: Kazimir Malevich, *Peasants*, c. 1930
Oil on canvas, 53 x 70 cm State Russian Museum, St Petersburg
Photo © 2016, State Russian Museum, St Petersburg

Above: Dmitriy, Krasnopevtsev, *Two vases (detail)*, 1972,
47 x 59 cm, oil on hardboard.
Image provided by ART4

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TAKING UP THE BATON

It may come as a surprise to regular readers of *Russian Art Week Guide* to find a new owner penning the introduction. The boots of Theodora Clarke, the dynamic founder of **Russian Art + Culture**, will be hard to fill. It is a daunting but exciting challenge. Flanked by my team of Lauren Warner, Katya Belyaeva and Simon Hewitt, I am looking forward to it.



We have had to put together this edition of the *Russian Art Week Guide* pretty swiftly, but are delighted that our strong relationship with the main auction houses, dealers and Russian art market actors continues unimpaired – and we are pleased to welcome back Sotheby’s among our advertisers. On November 29 they are offering two outstanding private collections, one devoted to avant-garde works, the other to non-conformist art. Add in vintage paintings by Volkov and Marie Vassilieff at Christie’s the day before, a rare Tropinin and early Shishkin at MacDougall’s, to say nothing of an important Roerich at Bonhams the day after, and the number of top-quality lots in the salerooms this week looks the highest for some time – offering grounds for optimism that the Russian auction revival, tentatively evident in June, can gather pace.

The Russian Art Week Guide remains a uniquely practical source of reference about the Russian auctions and cultural events taking place in London during the last week of November. Now, to widen the *Guide*’s appeal, we are introducing editorial coverage – epitomised in this issue by an in-depth curatorial discussion of the Royal Academy’s imminent blockbuster exhibition *Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932*.

Russian Art + Culture will itself mark the 2017 centenary of one of the most significant events in world history with two special issues evoking the extraordinary creativity of Russians across their vast land. Our approach will, as always, be cultured and apolitical.

Natasha Butterwick

RUSSIAN ART + CULTURE

The world’s leading platform for Russian art and cultural events.

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*The contents of this guide are believed to be correct at the time of printing. Nevertheless, the authors, publishers and directors of **Russian Art + Culture** shall not be liable for loss or harm of any kind which may arise or result from any errors, inaccuracies or omissions.*

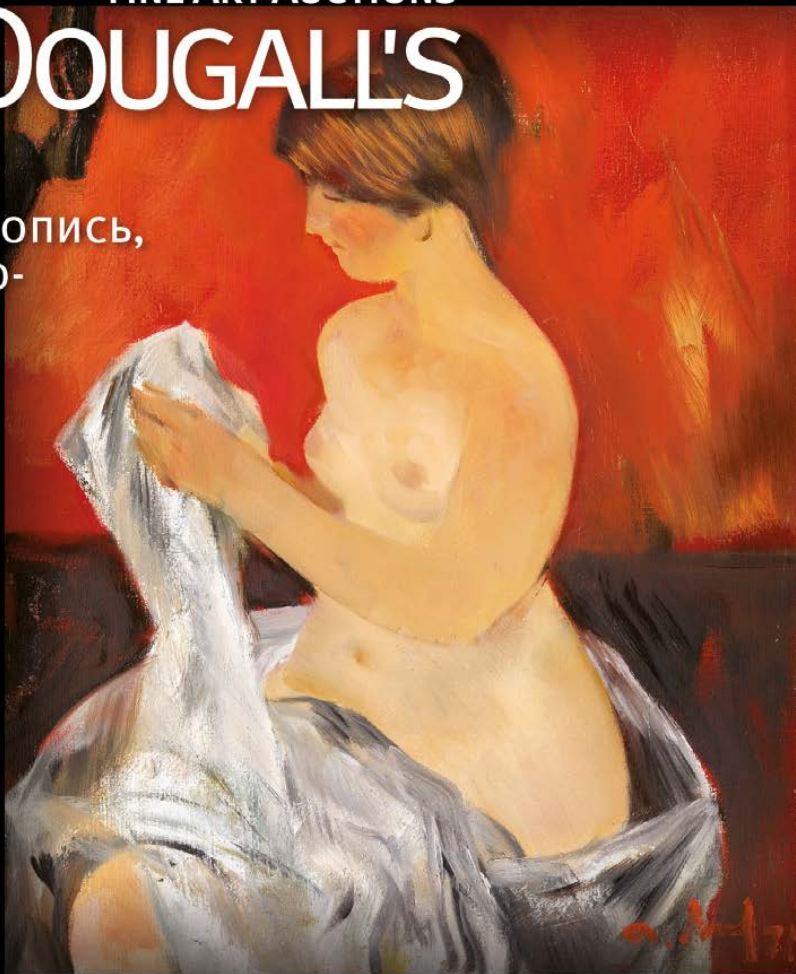
FINE ART AUCTIONS

MACDOUGALL'S

SINCE 2004

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ПРИКЛАДНОЕ
ИСКУССТВО,
ФАБЕРЖЕ
И ИКОНЫ

СРЕДА,
30 НОЯБРЯ 2016,
10:30



Андрей Мыльников, «Обнаженная», 1972

£100 000–200 000

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RUSSIAN ART WEEK NOVEMBER 2016 AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS



In November 2005 Sotheby's, Christie's, MacDougall's and Bonhams initiated their biannual Russian art sales in London. In November 2012, **Russian Art + Culture** published its first *Russian Art Week Guide*, including details of Russian auctions and other Russian-related cultural events. Since then Russian Art Week has grown from strength to strength, attracting Russian art and culture aficionados from around the world. Now, in November 2016, we are delighted to present highlights from the upcoming Russian sales in our *Guide*. Listed by order of sale, experts from each of the auction houses share their comments below.

Lauren Warner - Editor
editor@russianartandculture.com

CHRISTIE'S

8 King Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6QT

28 NOVEMBER | 10:30 & 14:00

282 lots

VIEWING:

25 November: 09:00–16.30

26-27 November: 12:00–17:00

Contact: Helen Culver Smith

Email: hcsmith@christies.com

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7389 2662

The Russian Art Sale is led by top paintings by Marie Vassilieff and Alexander Volkov. Showcasing significant works from the 17th to the 21st centuries from private collections, the sale also includes three fine works by Ivan Aivazovsky and a striking canvas by Petr Konchalovsky, inspired by the autumn harvest. Further standouts include opulent

pieces with Imperial provenance, notably an important icon presented to Tsarevich Aleksei in 1912. The afternoon session is further highlighted by a rare and important diamond-encrusted star of the Order of St Catherine, First Class, an important Scandinavian Collection of porcelain and significant works by Fabergé.

Order of St Catherine Bolin,
St Petersburg (c.1908)
H. 9.5cm
est. £70,000-90,000



Gold Imperial Snuff-Box
Friedrich Koechli
St Petersburg (c.1890)
W. 9.2cm
est. £80,000-120,000



Boris Grigoriev

Turkey Chick (1934)
pencil on paper 32 x 31cm
est. £8,000-12,000



Sotheby's EST. 1744

29 NOVEMBER | 10:30, 13:30 & 15:00

370 lots

VIEWING:

25 November: 09:00–16.30

26-27 November: 12:00–17:00

28 November: 09:00–16.30

With an estimate of £2.5-3.5m, Alexander Rodchenko's 1919 *Construction N°95* (advertised on page 21) is expected to be the most expensive lot in London this week. It hails from a 23-work Russian avant-garde collection that also features works by Chashnik, Stepanova, Popova and Suetin. Other sale highlights include Deineka's *In the Donbass* (1954) and ten works by Ivan Pokhitonov, led by *Hunting for Quail in*

Ivan Pokhitonov

Hunting for Quail (c.1902-1906)

oil on panel 23 x 35cm

est. £200,000-300,000



34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA

Contact: Reto Barmettler - *Russian Pictures*

Email: reto.barmettler@sothebys.com

Tel: +44 (0)20 7293 5673

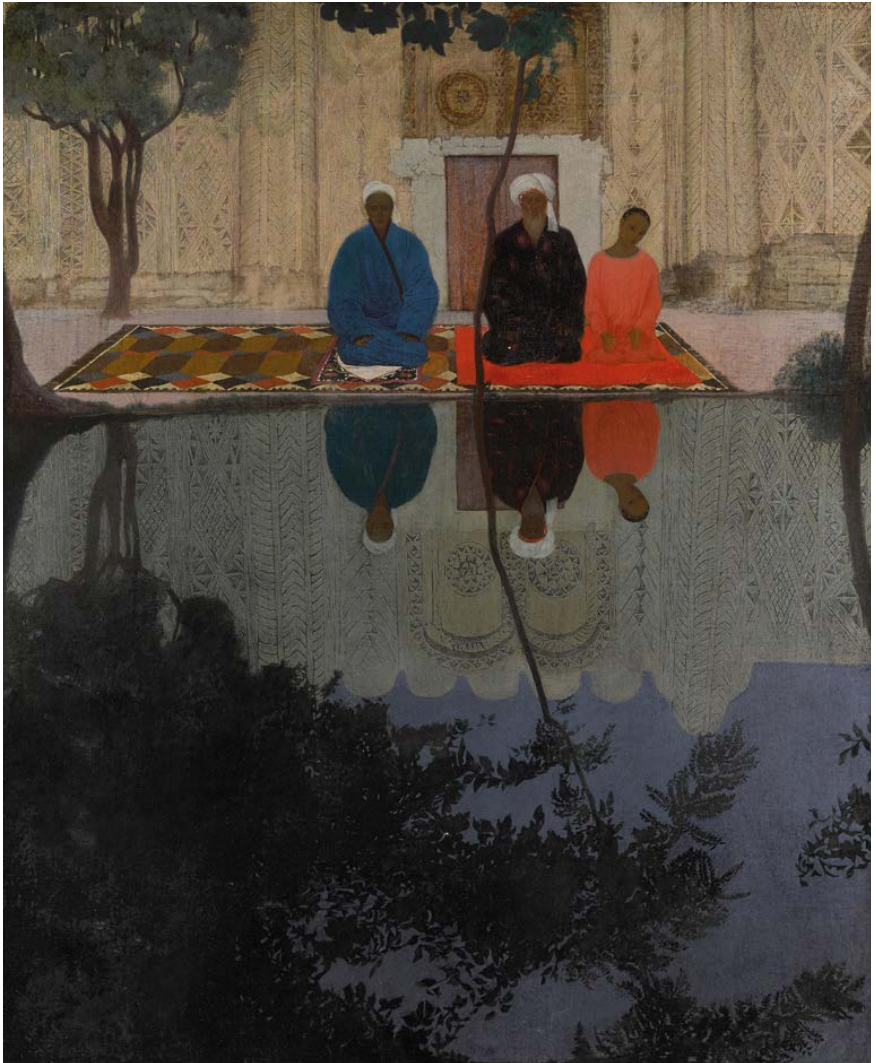
Contact: Darin Bloomquist - *Works of Art*

Email: darin.bloomquist@sothebys.com

Tel: +44 (0)20 7293 5105

Zhabovshchizna. Following the morning session, Sotheby's will bring to the market highlights from the Bar-Gera collection of Soviet Non-conformist art, including paintings by Oleg Tselkov and Vladimir Weisberg from the 1960s. Finally, a singular highlight of the Works of Art sale is a rare icon from the House of Fabergé. It is one of the earliest examples of Fabergé's experimentation with Art Nouveau design.





Left: A Fabergé gem-set silver-gilt and enamel icon of the Yaroslavskaia Mother of God, Moscow (c.1895)
est.£30,000-50,000

Daniil Stepanov, *Prayer, Samarkand*, 1925
est. £150,000-200,000



30 NOVEMBER | 10:30

228 lots

VIEWING:

18 November: 11:00–18:00

21-29 November: 11:00–18:00

30A Charles II Street, London SW1Y 4AE

Contact: William MacDougall

Email: info@macdougallauction.com

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7389 8160

MacDougall's November sale looks to build on momentum from June with rare works by 19th century masters, notably an accomplished *Portrait of a Gentleman in a Plaid Waistcoat* – doubtless a merchant or civic dignitary – by Vasily Tropinin, and Lev Lagorio's *Bathing in Crimea* from 1891 (est. £140,000-200,000). An eye-catching array of paintings from the Soviet '70s includes Andrei Mylnikov's coolly classical yet sensuous *Nude*

(advertised on page 6); Yuri Pimenov's lyrical, full-length portrait of *Kyoko the Japanese Girl*, painted in the wake of Pimenov's sell-out solo show in Tokyo in 1975; and a Severe Style still life *On a Black Background* by Geli Korzhev, the muscular messiah of Russian Realism. The June Russian art auctions showed renewed excitement in the market. We look forward to continued growth in the market in the November Russian Week.



Geli Korzhev

On a Black Background (1976)
oil on canvas 50 x 80cm
est. £120,000-180,000



Above: **Vasily Tropinin**
Portrait of a Gentleman in a Plaid Waistcoat
(1847)
oil on canvas 77 x 61cm
est. £150,000-300,000



Yuri Pimenov
Kyoko the Japanese Girl (1975)
oil on canvas 137 x 71cm
est. £280,000-400,000

Bonhams

30 NOVEMBER | 15:00

152 lots

VIEWING:

27 November: 11:00–15:00

28-29 November: 09:00–16.30

30 November: 09:00–12:00

101 New Bond Street, London W1S 1SR

Contact: Daria Chernenko

Email: daria.chernenko@bonhams.com

Tel: +44 (0)20 7468 8338

Bonhams Russian Sales include Russian Art of all categories: from paintings, icons and sculpture to Fabergé, silver, enamels and decorative orders. Our specialists in London and the US source Russian Art from private collections around the world and have achieved world record prices time and again during Russian Art Week. Particular successes in

recent years have included selling *Madonna Laboris* by Nicholas Roerich for £7.9 million as well as works by Polenov, Falk and Alexander Volkov for millions of pounds. Also notable was the sale of the hardstone model *Meshchanka* by Fabergé for £1.3 million. Our Russian Sales are held twice a year during Russian Art Week and are a firm fixture in the category.

Silver-gilt & enamel tazza
11th Artel, Moscow (1908-17)
H. 20cm
est. £10,000-20,000



Nikolai Roerich

Sadko's Chamber (1920)

tempera on canvas 50 x 77cm

est. £80,000-120,000

Fedor Zakharov

Ballerina

oil on board

160 x 110cm

est. £35,000-45,000



RUSSIAN ART AUCTIONS



CHRISTIE'S

RUSSIAN ART (SALE 11997)
28 NOVEMBER | 10:30 & 14:00

VIEWING:
25 November: 09:00 - 16:30
26 November: 12:00 - 17:00
27 November: 12:00 - 17:00

Christie's, 8 King Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6QT
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7839 9060 **Website:** www.christies.com



Sotheby's EST. 1744

**RUSSIAN PICTURES, INCLUDING THE BAR-GERA
COLLECTION OF SOVIET NON-CONFORMIST ART
(SALE L16115) 29 NOVEMBER | 10:30 & 13:30**

**RUSSIAN WORKS OF ART, FABERGÉ AND ICONS
(SALE L16116) 29 NOVEMBER | 15:00**

VIEWING:
25 November: 09:00 - 16:30
26, 27 November: 12:00 - 17:00
28 November: 09:00 - 16:30

Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7293 5000 **Website:** www.sothebys.com

RUSSIAN ART AUCTIONS



**RUSSIAN ART, WORKS OF ART,
FABERGÉ AND ICONS**

30 NOVEMBER | 10:30

VIEWING:

18 November: 11:00 - 18:00

21 - 29 November: 11:00 - 18:00

MacDougall's, 30A Charles II Street, London SW1Y 4AE

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7389 8160 **Website:** www.macdougallauction.com



Bonhams

THE RUSSIAN SALE

30 NOVEMBER | 15:00

VIEWING:

27 November: 11:00 - 15:00

28, 29 November: 09:00 - 16:30

30 November: 09:00 - 12:00

Bonhams, 101 New Bond Street, London W1S 1SR

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7447 7447 **Website:** www.bonhams.com



EXHIBITIONS



UNTIL 25 NOVEMBER

AMANITA RUSSIAN ALPHABET: SELECTED WORKS

Dadiani Fine Art, 30 Cork Street, London W1S 3NG

Times: Mon – Fri: 11:30 - 18:30

Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.dadianifineart.com



UNTIL 30 NOVEMBER

MARC CHAGALL FABLES

Alon Zakaim Fine Art, 5-7 Dover Street, Mayfair, London W1S 4LD

Time: Mon - Fri: 09.00 - 18.00

Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.alonzakaim.com



UNTIL 18 DECEMBER

2016 NEW EAST PHOTO PRIZE EXHIBITION

Calvert 22, 22 Calvert Avenue, London E2 7JP

Time: Wed - Sun: 12:00 – 18:00

Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.calvert22.org



23 NOVEMBER - 05 DECEMBER

NATASHA ARENDT. Food for Thought: Paintings and Objects

Rosotrudnichestvo, 1st Floor, 37 Kensington High Street,
London W8 5ED Time: Mon - Fri: 10.00 - 17:00

Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.gbr.rs.gov.ru

EXHIBITIONS

25 NOVEMBER - 15 JANUARY 2017

YURI SOBOLEV From Points of Level Zero,
Rediscovering the Russian Avant-Garde
Pushkin House, 5A Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2TA
Time: Mon-Sun: 14:00 - 17:00
Tickets: Free admission **Website:** www.pushkinhouse.org



29 NOVEMBER - 04 DECEMBER

RUSSIAN FILMS - British Posters
(Part of the Russian Film Week in London)
The Exhibitionist Hotel, 8-10 Queensberry Place,
South Kensington, London SW7 2EA
Tickets: Free admission **Website:** www.theexhibitionisthotel.com



01 DECEMBER - 28 FEBRUARY 2017

DESTINED TO BE HAPPY - Irina Korina Solo Exhibition
GRAD Gallery, 3-4A Little Portland Street, London W1W 7JB
Time: Tue - Fri: 11:00 - 19:00, Sat: 11:00 - 17:00
Tickets: Free admission
Website: www.grad-london.com



03 DECEMBER - 18 DECEMBER

YALTA 1945. Installation of 31 panels, 1986-87.
By **Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid**
Ben Uri Gallery, 108A Boundary Road, London NW8 0RH
Time: Mon: 13:00 - 17:30, Tues - Fri: 10:00 - 17.30,
Sat - Sun: 11:00 - 17:00 **Tickets:** Free admission
Website: www.benuri.org.uk



EXHIBITIONS



08 DECEMBER - 18 DECEMBER

MARTYRS & MATRYOSHKAS. Recent work by Russian-born, London-based artist **Karina Akopyan**

The Old Truman Brewery, 91 Brick Lane, London E1 6QL

Time: 11:00 - 19:00 **Tickets:** Free admission

Website: www.trumanbrewery.com



11 FEBRUARY - 17 APRIL 2017

REVOLUTION: RUSSIAN ART 1917-1932

The Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly,

London W1J 0BD **Times:** Mon - Thur: 10:00 - 18:00,

Fri: 10:00 - 20:00, Sat-Sun: 10:00 - 18:00

Tickets: Free admission **Website:** www.royalacademy.org.uk



15 MARCH - 3 JUNE 2017

IMAGINE MOSCOW: Architecture, Propaganda and Revolution

Design Museum, 224-238 Kensington High Street,
Kensington, London W8 6AG

Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.designmuseum.org



APRIL 2017 - SEPTEMBER 2017

LIBERTY AND REVOLUTION:

Russia 1917 Revisited

British Library, 96 Euston Road, Kings Cross, London NW1 2DB

Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.bl.uk

Sotheby's EST. 1744

Collectors gather here.



ALEXANDER RODCHENKO
Construction No. 95, 1919
Estimate £2,500,000–3,500,000

Russian Pictures

Including the Bar-Gera
Collection of Non-conformist Art

Russian Works of Art, Faberge & Icons

Auctions London
29 November 2016

Viewing 25 – 28 November

34–35 NEW BOND STREET, LONDON W1A 2AA

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EVENTS



UNTIL 27 NOVEMBER | THEATRE

CINCINNATUS - Based on Vladimir Nabokov's novel -
Invitation to a Beheading. **Barons Court Theatre**, Curtain's Up
 Pub, 28A Comeragh Road, London W14 9HR **Time:** Tue – Sat:
 19.30, Sun: 18.30 **Tickets:** £15, Concessions £10
Website: www.offwestend.com



23 NOVEMBER - 12 JANUARY 2017 | BALLET

THE NUTCRACKER, The Royal Ballet
Royal Opera House, Bow Street, Covent Garden,
 London WC2E 9DD
Time: Times vary **Tickets:** £6 - £120
Website: www.roh.org.uk



25 NOVEMBER | TALK

MARGARET FLEMING-MAKARIAN on the hidden allegory
 of Tchaikovsky's 'The Nutcracker'. **Society for Co-operation in
 Russian and Soviet Studies**, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB
Time: 19:00 **Tickets:** SCRSS members £3, Non-members £5
Website: www.scrss.org.uk



26 NOVEMBER | THEATRE

THE HUMAN VOICE, Solo Performance of Natalia Maeva
RADA Studios, 16 Chenies Street, London WC1E 7EX
Time: 17.30
Tickets: £15, Concessions £7
Website: www.rada.ac.uk

EVENTS

26 NOVEMBER | THEATRE**WARSAW MELODY** with Nonna Grishaeva and Egor BeroevLogan Hall, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way,
London WC1H 0AL **Time:** 18:00**Tickets:** £30 - 60**Website:** www.20bedfordway.com/logan-hall**27 NOVEMBER | MUSICAL DRAMA PERFORMANCE****THERE IS NO EVERYDAY LIFE IN JAZZ, IS THERE?**

with Egor Beroev and Basinia Shulman

Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5ED

Time: 18.30 **Website:** www.baleclectique.com**27 NOVEMBER | SOCIAL****CHAI À LA RusSE**

Tea Club at Pushkin House

Pushkin House, 5A Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2TA

Time: 15:00 **Tickets:** £20**Website:** www.pushkinhouse.org**28 NOVEMBER | MUSIC****TIME REGAINED: HARPISCHORD + STRINGS**

Mahan Esfahani with Russian Virtuosi of Europe

Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place,
St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR**Time:** 19:30 **Tickets:** £36 **Website:** www.easternseasons.com

EVENTS



29 NOVEMBER | TALK

LENINGRAD SAMIZDAT POETRY:

Music for a Deaf Age

Pushkin House, 5A Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2TA

Time: 19:30 Tickets: £7, Concessions £5

Website: www.pushkinhouse.org



29 - 30 NOVEMBER | MUSIC

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / Valery Gergiev

with Barry Douglas

Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS

Time: 19:30 Tickets: £10 - £42

Website: www.barbican.org.uk



29 NOVEMBER | TALK

EUGENE ONEGIN: A representation of Russian music outside Russia. Part of Opera Prelude Lecture Series 2016

Caversham Room at Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace

London SW1X 9DQ Time: 10.30 Tickets: £30

Website: www.cadoganhall.com



30 NOVEMBER | TALK / PERFORMANCE

DASH CAFÉ:

Platonov - in words, film, performance and conversation

Rich Mix London, 35 - 47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA

Time: 19:30 Tickets: Free admission

Website: www.richmix.org.uk

EVENTS

30 NOVEMBER | TALK

50 YEARS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY IN
POSTERS 1890-1940

AntikBar Gallery, 404 King's Road London SW10 0LJ

Time: 19:00 Tickets: £5

Website: www.antikbar.co.uk



30 NOVEMBER | MUSIC

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOSCOW
CONSERVATORY CONCERT: Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov

Pushkin House, 5A Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2TA

Time: 19:00 - 20:30 Tickets: £20, Concessions £16

Website: www.pushkinhouse.org



30 NOVEMBER - 04 DECEMBER | FILM SCREENING

RUSSIAN FILM WEEK IN LONDON

Regent Street Cinema, 309 Regent Street, Marylebone,
London W1B 2UW Time: Times vary

Website: russianfilmweek.org



02 DECEMBER - 14 JANUARY 2017 | THEATRE

WILD HONEY BY MICHAEL FRAYN, adapted from the play
without a name by Anton Chekhov

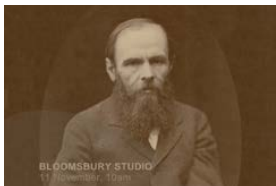
Hampstead Theatre, Eton Avenue, London NW3 3EU

Time: 19:30, time may vary Tickets: £10 - £35

Website: www.hampsteadtheatre.com



EVENTS



03 DECEMBER | FILM SCREENING

DOSTOEVSKY IN DECEMBER: Crime And Punishment,
1970 Dir. Lev Kulidzhanov

Barbican Cinema, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS **Time:** 14:00

Tickets: Standard £9.50, Members £7.60, Concessions £8.50,
Young Barbican £5 **Website:** www.barbican.org.uk



06 - 10 DECEMBER | BALLET

UP & DOWN Eifman Ballet Saint Petersburg

London Coliseum ENO, St. Martin's Lane,
London WC2N 4ES

Time: 19:30 **Tickets:** £10 – £85

Website: www.eno.org



06 - 10 DECEMBER | THEATRE

CHEKHOV TRIPLE BILL a trilogy of short comedies by Anton Chekhov: *The Proposal*, *The Evils of Tobacco*, and *The Bear*.

The Drayton Arms, 153 Old Brompton Road, London SW5 0LJ

Time: 20:00, Sat: 15:00 and 20:00 **Tickets:** £14, Concessions £10

Website: www.thedraytonarmstheatre.co.uk



11 DECEMBER | FILM SCREENING

DOSTOEVSKY IN DECEMBER: The Gambler, 1973,
Dir. Alexei Batalov

Barbican Cinema, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS **Time:** 16:00

Tickets: Standard £9.50, Members £7.60, Concessions £8.50,
Young Barbican £5 **Website:** www.barbican.org.uk

RUSSIAN ART



CONSULTANCY



Ivan Samarine + 44 207 582 5577 www.russianartconsultancy.com



THE ART NEWSPAPER RUSSIA

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER ON ART

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EVENTS



14 DECEMBER - 07 JANUARY 2017 | BALLET NUTCRACKER

London Coliseum ENO, St. Martin's Lane,
London WC2N 4ES

Time: Times vary **Tickets:** from £16.10

Website: www.eno.org



15 - 17 DECEMBER | BALLET-OPERA

LITURGIE. A Reinvented Ballet Opera

By Other Means Gallery, Unit 11, 38-40 Upper Clapton Road,
London E5 8BQ

Time: 20:00 **Tickets:** £6.43 – £8.55

Website: www.spectraensemble.co.uk



18 DECEMBER | FILM SCREENING

DOSTOEVSKY IN DECEMBER:

The Brothers Karamazov, 1969 Dir. Ivan Pyrev

Barbican Cinema, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS **Time:** 14:00

Tickets: Standard £9.50, Members £7.60, Concessions £8.50,

Young Barbican £5 **Website:** www.barbican.org.uk



21 DECEMBER - 14 MARCH 2017 | BALLET

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Royal Opera House, Bow Street, Covent Garden,
London WC2E 9DD

Time: Times vary **Tickets:** £7 - £130

Website: www.roh.org.uk

2017 EVENTS

14 JANUARY 2017 | MUSIC

PROKOFIEV'S ROMEO AND JULIET

Gift of Life charity concert

Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road,
London SE1 8XX **Time:** 19:30 **Tickets:** £16 - £85

Website: www.southbankcentre.co.uk



08 MARCH 2017 | MUSIC

VLADIMIR SPIVAKOV

and Moscow Virtuosi Orchestra in Barbican

Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS

Time: 20:00 **Tickets:** £35 - £110

Website: www.barbican.org.uk



A bold and exciting feature documentary that encapsulates a momentous period in the history of Russia and the Russian Avant-Garde. Drawing on the collections of major Russian institutions, contributions from contemporary artists, curators, and performers and personal testimony from the descendants of those involved.

March 2017 (USA)

ROYAL ACADEMY CURATORS

To mark the centenary of the 1917 Russian Revolution next year, the Royal Academy will host an blockbuster exhibition entitled *Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932* from 11 February until 17 April 2017. Our editor, Lauren Warner, speaks with all three curators – Natalia Murray, Ann Dumas and John Milner – to learn more about the exhibition.

Lauren Warner: How did the project *Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932* come about?

Natalia Murray: I first had the idea to organise an exhibition in London which would include artists from all the artistic movements developed in the fifteen years after the Revolution when I was writing the biography of Nikolay Punin, published by BRILL Academic Publishers in 2012. I was very keen to organise it at the RA in order to achieve the powerful contrast of classic interiors and Soviet art, so I approached the RA in 2008 and together with the curator Ann Dumas, and a few years later with John Milner, we started working on this exhibition which aims to include not only avant-garde but artists from different artistic movements which developed in Russia at the time.

LW: Why was the 1932 exhibition, *Artists of the RSFSR Over 15 Years*, so important?

NM: The exhibition *Fifteen Years of Artists of the RSFSR [Khudozhniki RSFSR za 15 let]*, held at the State Russian Museum in Leningrad from November 1932 till January 1933, was the most significant showcase of all the artistic movements which developed during the 15 years after the October 1917 Revolution. It was organised by the art critic Nikolay Punin in only six months. Originally it was supposed to be in Moscow but they did not have a big enough gallery to house it as it consisted of 2,640 works: 1,050 paintings, 1,500 graphic works and 90 sculptures made by 423 artists. These took up 35 rooms of the Russian Museum. It offered an unprecedented opportunity for artists, critics, and the general public to get an overview of the past and present of Soviet art. Artists who were excluded from this exhibition, like Vladimir Tatlin, felt that they had been excluded from the history of Soviet Art.



ALEXANDER DEINEKA, TEXTILE WORKERS, 1927

Oil on canvas, 161.5 x 185 cm

State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

Photo © 2016, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

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LW: What were some of the different movements that developed in Russia at that time?

NM: The most important mainstream movement which had full support from the new Bolshevik state was the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia [AKhRR] which was created in 1922. Drawing on the traditions of the Wanderers movement, members of AKhRR aimed to depict the present-day reality, which varied from cheerful demonstrations and street fairs in the paintings of Boris Kustodiev and happy peasant women on the canvasses of Abram Arkhipov, to iconic portraits of Lenin by Isaak Brodsky. This art organisation of increasing power was created specifically to oppose the avant-garde. Its effect was such that as early as 14 July 1926, Kazimir Malevich was writing to Nikolay Punin about his fight with the Association: 'We must overthrow AKhRR ... But we must be careful – so that this rot doesn't bring any damage.' Malevich felt that AKhRR was drowning the remains of art in its quagmire. At the same time as AKhRR, around 72 other groups, such as OST, Makovets, 4Arts, Being and the Society of the Young existed in Soviet Russia in the 1920s. In 1932 they were all replaced by one group, the Union of Soviet Artists.

LW: How did you choose which artists to include in the present exhibition?

NM: Originally we wanted to show only artists who were included in the 1932 exhibition. However, since we are no longer controlled by the same strict censorship as Punin had to face under Stalin, we decided to extend our selection to the artists who were active in Russia in the first years after the Revolution but left in 1921-22 and became personae non gratae in the Soviet Union, like Vasily Kandinsky and Marc Chagall.

LW: Visitors will have heard of artists such as Kandinsky and Chagall, but the exhibition also includes some less familiar names on the international stage. Can you please highlight a few who are particularly compelling to you?

NM: When I first conceived of the exhibition, my main aim was to be able to include artists who are very important for the history of Russian art, but although famous in Russia, remain unknown in the West, mainly because their paintings are absent from the public collections here. So this exhibition will give us an opportunity to show our visitors such brilliant artists as Pavel Filonov, Alexander Samokhvalov, Isaak Brodsky and Ekaterina Zernova. We are also very proud to dedicate a special room at the exhibition to the most brilliant artist Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin.

Alexander Bogomazov
1880-1930



Dacha - Boyarka, 1914
Sanguine on paper, 32 x 29 cm

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LW: Is there anything else you would like to add?

NM: At this time of political turmoil and shifting attitudes to Russia in the West, we hope that our exhibition will give people in Britain a chance to understand Russia and Russian people through its rich culture and enable all our visitors to see beyond politics instead of judging Russian people through politicians.

LW: Why was it decided to organise the exhibition at the Royal Academy?

Ann Dumas: Natasha approached me with the idea some years ago and we thought it would be a good idea to do the show partly as a sort of 'sequel' to the *From Russia* exhibition that we did at the Academy in 2008 and, more importantly, because 2017 is the centenary of the Russian Revolution.

LW: How many artists and works are included in the exhibition?

AD: There are 260 objects and about 100 artists.

LW: The exhibition will 'survey the entire artistic landscape of post-Revolutionary Russia' for the first time. Why was it important for the exhibition to feature so many different kinds of media?

AD: Not the whole of post-Revolutionary Russia. Our time frame is 1917 to 1932. This was a very creative period in all the arts, not just painting. Also it was an important aspect of Communist ideology that art should be manifest in everyday objects, not just fine art or painting, which was considered bourgeois. We have therefore included ceramics, posters, photographs, fabrics and film in addition to paintings because together they reflect the diversity and creativity of the time.

LW: What are the highlights?

AD: Alexander Deineka, *Defence of Petrograd*, 1928; Lyubov Popova, *Space-Force Construction*, 1921; Boris Kustodiev, *Bolshevik*, 1920; Kandinsky, *Blue Crest*, 1917; Malevich – a reconstruction of his entire gallery in the 1932 survey exhibition – about 20 works; and Petrov-Vodkin, 15 works.

LW: Could you please explain a bit more about the exhibition's objectives?

John Milner: Natasha Murray, with whom I have worked a great deal over the years, and I have discussed that often there is no context set out in these exhibitions. The Russian avant-garde has quite different contexts within which it develops, and in the West, Russian avant-garde art is subsumed into the history of modern art without referring to how it came about.



KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN, FANTASY, 1925

Oil on canvas, 50 x 64.5 cm

State Russian Museum, St Petersburg

Photo © 2016, State Russian Museum, St Petersburg

This led us to think it would be useful and interesting to explore how big a part of Russian revolutionary art was the avant-garde, whether the Revolution made the avant-garde revolutionary or whether the revolutionary artists found themselves particularly useful. This meant taking a broader view of the whole range of Russian artists working in the Revolutionary years and to some extent what happened to all their different biographical experiences because, after all, the context that is usually missing was absolutely difficult, problematic, and, if you like, exciting and political.

There is no doubt about the variety of Russian art in the revolutionary years, by which I mean through to the late 1920s. However, designing an exhibition in a way that is not going to cause confusion requires careful consideration. It became clear to us that these artists are, to use the phrase I have used previously, 'breathing the same air'. That is, they have things in common even if stylistically they are quite different and even if the media they use are quite different. It then became increasingly clear that they have these things in common because the government told them what to do to some degree. An obvious case of this is the emergence of slogans, such as: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat' or 'Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin is to live forever'.

When we looked into these slogans and ideas, it became evident that they provided a kind of insight each time into what these people had in common. According to Lenin, art should be collective and public. Later, Stalin slightly changed Lenin's criteria and held that art should be nationalistic and promote the Party line. But an art that was collective, political and public was a guideline that everybody had to think about even if they did not follow it and that critics and steering committees were quite clear about. All these points can serve as a critique for visitors as they make their way around the exhibition. It is a visual show, rather than a political one. It has to persuade and engage the visitor through the look of it.

LW: Please could you explain more about the exhibition's layout?

JM: The first room is Salute the Leader, a concept which was anathema to the avant-garde initially and even to Lenin. Rather self-effacing, Lenin was not especially interested in art, so far as we can tell, or the avant-garde. Bearing in mind the politics, this framework begins to open up the political themes quite readily, and we thought Salute the Leader made it evident that this was a politicised environment. An obvious point to highlight, but not one people usually consider, unless they are historians or political figures themselves, and it certainly does not feature much in other exhibitions.

The second room, *Man and Machine*, is about the relationship between human beings and machines and it takes into account the philosophical dimension of this relationship. It opens up the themes of increased power and a materialist view of the world, as well as the worker as an image. After a rather red room, which includes Lenin's funeral, we have a grey room, which depicts different aspects of being a worker. The next room is *Brave New World*, which is about the new way of life, so it includes highly politicised paintings, like Kustodiev's *Bolshevik*.

As Ann mentioned, the exhibition also features a room dedicated to Malevich's works. It is a strict reassembling of the paintings that Malevich showed in 1932, with some works by his followers, accompanied by a number of the tiny *architektons* that Malevich created, as well as a selection of porcelain pieces. We wanted to counterbalance Malevich, who is *avant-garde*, if you like, with someone whom most people in Britain do not know: Petrov-Vodkin. So we have a Petrov-Vodkin room, as Natasha said. In doing so, we can show that although Petrov-Vodkin's paintings are very beautiful, figurative, and inventive, they are not *avant-garde*. Consequently, it balances the *avant-garde* with another style and shows some of the variety I mentioned earlier.

Another room is *Fate of the Peasants*, which examines the peasants' journey from desperation through the idea that industry and agriculture are twin pillars of the Communist government, to being devastated by civil war and famine. Then there is the room *New Society, New Citizens*, which is about the late 1920s and the NEP [New Economic Policy], which includes some material that has been rarely displayed previously because the Soviets never really promoted NEP advertising themselves.

The room called *Stalin's Utopia* focuses on male and female sport, the idea of gigantism, the Palace of the Soviets and essentially shows socialist realism coming into its own; the workers need to know what the future for which they are striving looks like. It illustrates that the ideology has shifted to *narod*, the people are the nation, and to *partiinost*, commitment to the Party line.

There is also a slide projection from the Memorial Foundation in Moscow of gulag victims, with each one shown for a few seconds and briefly introduced, enabling visitors to meet them all in a rather intimate and confrontational way. In fact, this intimate, confrontational approach depicting the light and the dark aspects of everyday reality is a feature of the whole show and can be seen in each of the rooms.

LW: The exhibition also includes a full-scale recreation of an apartment designed for communal living. Please can you tell us more about this concept?

JM: It is an idea of the future. It is an enlargement of a model by El Lissitzky that was not actually implemented. It marks the high point of international modernist links as well, because the project for the Palace of the Soviets was rising at the same time in reality and that is another world. So we are building the apartment life-size, although it is not liveable. A key element of this exercise is the idea that there are two histories of Russian Art. There is the Western one and the Russian one, stemming in part from the division that separated East from West, even before the Iron Curtain. I think you could go again and again to the exhibition and, at this point, I really must thank the Russian museums and collectors for their co-operation in putting the exhibition together.

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Russian Art + Culture's core team includes Moscow-born owner Natasha Butterwick who moved to London in 2001 and has over 20 years' art world experience in the fields of research, dealing and collecting; editor Lauren Warner, who is a former lawyer with MAs in Russian art history from the Courtauld Institute of Art and in Russian from Bryn Mawr College; and Chief Operating Officer Katya Belyaeva, who holds an MA in economics from the Finance University in Moscow and an MA in art history from Christie's Education, London. Oxford-trained art historian Simon Hewitt serves as International Editor.

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