

ROERICH.

Among the masters of Russian painting and those of Europe, the work of Nicholas Roerich stands out as something altogether unique.

Michel Kuzmine, in his monograph of Roerich, says that: "He is a phenomenon in Russian Art, something extraordinary."

Gorki tells us that Roerich is 'one of the greatest intuitive minds of the age.'

India's great poet Rabindranath Tagore was so struck by the originality of Roerich's work that he wrote: "Your pictures profoundly moved me. They made me realize one thing which is obvious and yet which one needs to discover for oneself, over and over again; it is that truth is infinite. - Your pictures are distinct- and yet are not definable by words. Your art is jealous of its independence because it is great."

The opinion of the Spanish master Ignacio Zuloaga should be of particular interest to Russians for, after seeing a collection of Roerich paintings he exclaimed: "A great artist. Here is the proof that some new force is coming into the world from Russia. I cannot gauge or define exactly what it is, but it is here."

Although Roerich's work is essentially Russian in character, nevertheless elicited the praise and admiration of writers from all over the world and artists.

Among these we might mention - Maeterlinck, Mestrovitch, Alexander Benois, Lionide Andreiv, Asit Kumar Haidar, Robert Harshe, Vittoris Pica, Frank Rutter, Gordon Bottomley, Milos Martin, Christian Brinton, Baltrushaistis, Serge Makovsky, Denis Roche....

It is a remarkable fact that whereas all these writers point to the universal character of Roerich's work, at the same time they all lay stress on the Russian side of his genius.

The peculiar quality of his style has attracted the attention of most writers and has often been defined as 'synthetic realism'.

If Roerich is always on the crest of the wave, and in the advance guard of art, at the same time he has a profound knowledge of the ancient Arts of Russia and Asia.

Roerich's complete work which comprises some five thousand canvases requires a special study, if it is to be appreciated at its real worth, and it is only in a series of volumes that we can do full justice to the immense production of this great master of Russian painting.

In the preface which Claude Bragdon wrote for Roerich's Altai-Himalaya, there is a passage which gives a very good idea of the extensive character of Roerich's Art.

"In the history of fine arts certain individuals have appeared from time to time, whose work has a unique, profound quality, which differentiates them from their contemporaries, making it impossible to classify them in any known category or to ally them with any school because they resemble themselves only, and one another, like some spaceless and timeless order of Initiates. Such were Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Duvrer, Blake, and in other fields, Beethoven and Balzac. Roerich, in his life, in his character, and in his art, reveals himself as a member of this fraternity. For thirty five years he has been going up and down the world - Europe, America, Asia, - absorbing auras of diverse peoples, making pilgrimages to remote places, and always and everywhere scattering wisdom, planting seeds of beauty, some of which have sprung up, flowered and scattered seeds

of their own."

In one of his essays Roerich appeals for a world wide co-operation.

"We are not dreamers, but workers whose mission it is to tell the people: 'Keep the image of Beauty constantly before you and never let it be driven from the fields of your daily activities. Let everyone share in the festival of Joy; let all be summoned to take part in the infinite and peaceful work of creation.'"

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