

19a

**SVETOSLAV
ROERICH
EXHIBITION**



From the North

PAINTINGS OF INDIA

By

SVETOSLAV ROERICH

THE PHILADELPHIA ART ALLIANCE

APRIL 24 — MAY 12

1940



Portrait of My Father

THE INDIA OF SVETOSLAV ROERICH

By CHRISTIAN BRINTON

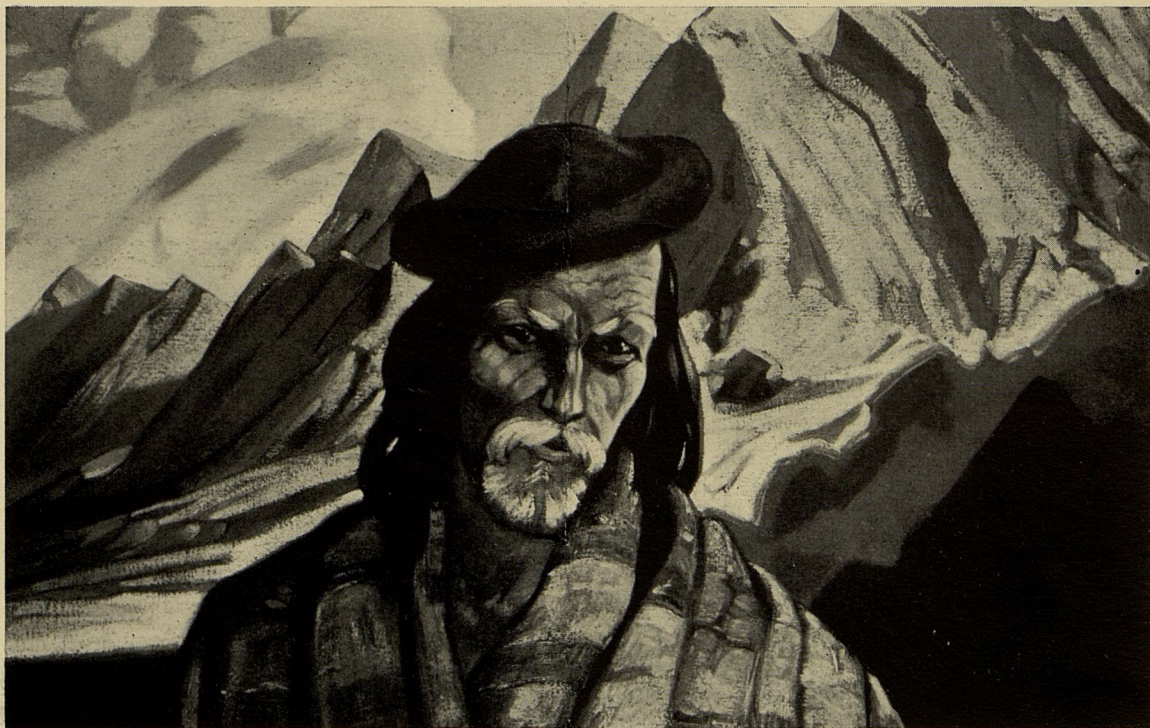
But now has come the time of the illumination of Asia

Across troubled waters, in a stressful hour arrives the pictorial offering seen upon these walls. Remote is the land from whence it appears. Far removed is its appeal from ordinary visual experience. The key to a proper appreciation of this young painter's contribution is alone disclosed in the light of his personal background and a racial patrimony as ancient as it is distinguished. In common with the Musorgsky family, the Roerichs, it may be recalled, belong to the "Rurikovichi". They are the descendants of doughty Varyag chieftain Rurik of Novgorod who, in the ninth century, founded the first Russian dynasty. Through the maternal line are traces of Mongolian ancestry. Naturally not a little of the exotic compulsion of the canvases here displayed may be attributed to this dual heritage. Predestined for a cultural career, Svetoslav Nikolayevich Roerich was born in Petrograd, the "Palmyra of the North", during the period of the Russo-Japanese conflict. In consequence he was too young, before the Great War, to have attended the Imperial Academy of Arts on the Neva, through whose imposing, sphinx-guarded portals had passed his richly endowed father. The elder Roerich became in fact one of the prime initiators of that "Russian Renaissance" which in music, painting, and the ballet was often Slavo-oriental in character. Following the outbreak of the Revolution the Roerich family scene shifts with dramatic swiftness and frequency. Within the span of the succeeding half dozen years are focussed the flight to Finland, visits to Sweden, an extended sojourn in London, arrival in New York—the initial glimpse of India. Unhampered by academic formalism Svetoslav Roerich's artistic abilities matured

with amazing rapidity. His coming of age was signaled by the winning of an official award at the Sesquicentennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1926. Whilst at the outset devoting his energies mainly to portraiture, the Indian scene is the theme of Svetoslav Roerich's current activities. However, it is not the India of his eminent father, Professor Nicholas K. Roerich, that looks from these varied panels in oil and in tempera. The deep-searching exponent of Slavic proto-history, the seer whose vision appears at moments actually to have been "engendered in infinity", has never consciously influenced his son's professional development. Both live and labour in the Kulu Valley amid gardens and flowering fruit trees. But from the immemorial mountain massives towards which they daily gaze, and which they so revealingly interpret each distills a distinctive message. In the work on view one encounters no lonely and perilous "ascents to the absolute". Less the mystic than the decorative stylist, Svetoslav Roerich moves man to the centre of his particular pictorial cosmos. Whatever their mood or subject-matter these paintings are imbued with human significance. In spirit as in aim they are basically anthropogenic. It is gratifying to record that an aesthetic expression at once so personal, though bespeaking a profound regard for tradition in the better sense of the term, should not want of public recognition. Including Paris, some dozen European cities as well as numerous leading municipal museums of India possess canvases by Svetoslav Roerich. But thirty-five years of age, the gifted limner of these luminous compositions will doubtless live to note changes in his India. Changes not mayhap so much in outer aspect as of inner content. Essentially the artist, he portrays the colour, shape, and pattern of things visible, notably of that India which has remained static, steeped in the somnolence of lagging centuries. Yet this work in its assured grasp of native type and character, its penetrant humanitarian sympathy, would seem to breathe deepening preoccupation with another India. Not alone the India of awesome natural beauty. But also that India which is a vast and mighty complex of mortal misery and aspiration—the India of its own fateful day and hour.

PAINTINGS IN OIL AND TEMPERA

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Portrait of My Father | 15 Spiti Range |
| 2 Man from Kulu | 16 Deo Tibba |
| 3 Lohar—Kulu | 17 Mira |
| 4 Men from Kham | 18 Woman from Spiti |
| 5 Saraj Woman | 19 Spring |
| 6 Attainment | 20 Ludmila |
| 7 Toiling by Night | 21 Ghepan Lahul |
| 8 Rebti—Kulu | 22 Whither goes my Brother |
| 9 Tripura Temple | 23 Over the Pass |
| 10 Trees in Sunset | 24 Naggar Village |
| 11 Autumn Foliage | 25 View towards Spiti |
| 12 Sunset | 26 From the North |
| 13 Sunrise—Bhagujuar | 27 Spring in Kulu |
| 14 As in Days of Old | 28 Chenarti |
| 29 Child from Naggar | |



Lohar—Kulu



Saraj Woman



Whither Goes My Brother

