

### Exhibition of Russian Paintings

At a time when world is full of ugliness and the whole of mankind seems bent on destruction it is refreshing to hear of something beautiful and constructive and to know that men are not really blind to the higher and creative side of life. In England there have recently been exhibitions of Allied Art and the Government have also organized a series of art exhibitions for the benefit of all classes of war workers. Now India is to have an exhibition of Allied art under the auspices of the National War Front and in aid of the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund with a view to assisting Russia's War Effort. This will afford us an opportunity of enjoying an aesthetic treat and at the same time showing our appreciation of what Russia has done, and is still doing, for this country. It is obvious that were it not for the part which Russia is playing in the war India would now be occupied by the Germans. By supporting this exhibition of Russian Art we can contribute some little help to Russia's war effort and in this practical way express our gratitude for Russia's help to us.

It is fortunate that the forthcoming exhibition should consist of the work of two famous Russian artists who are well-known in India and whose paintings, though Russian, have absorbed considerable local colour due to their lengthy residence in this country. It is appropriate that an exhibition which is for the purpose of aiding the Russian War Effort should consist of the works of representative Russian artists with an international reputation and whose fate it has been to be closely associated with India. Few people in India, who are interested in art, will need an introduction to Professor Nicholas Roerich or his son Svetoslav.

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The work of these artists must already be familiar to the majority of art lovers, but that will only be an added reason for those, who have the opportunity to do so, to visit this exhibition where they will know they will be assured of a feast of beauty which will not be without educational value. This exhibition will be the largest that has so far been given by the Roerichs in India and will include some of their most recent paintings. Both father and son have painted some hundreds of pictures of the Himalayas that not only reflect the magnificent beauties of the hills, but also embody something of the spiritual history and legend with which they are associated. A study of any group of Nicholas Roerich's paintings will show that they are varieties of expression of central impulse of Spiritual vision and love. The essence of his art is revelation, his paintings are instantaneous synthesis of life as it presents itself to the outer and inner eye. Both the father and son work in the tempera method, though Svetoslav occasionally diverges into oils.

It is indeed fitting that an exhibition of Roerich's Art should be held in connection with Russia's War Effort, since it was Nicholas Roerich himself who, during the last years of the Empire, was Director of the Imperial School of Art at St. Petersburg, and leader of a group of Russian artists and architects, who strove to advance national art in alliance with the traditions of the past. One of the great things about him was that, by example as well as by precept, he taught his students and contemporaries, not to emulate the products of the Paris Salons, but to base their painting on Byzantine and Russian traditions. Indeed, in his own work, he went back beyond the Christian era to prehistoric, pagan Russia, to the designs of Scythian craftsmen; and, borrowing a barbaric splendour from the past, he evolved a style of decorative painting that was a completely new note in modern European art.

That it should fall to the lot of Roerich to represent Russian Art

is a matter for which those responsible may be congratulated is born out by some remarks made by the wellknown art critic of the Sunday Times - the late Frank Rutter, -who, in reference to an exhibition of Russian Art then being held in London, said: "It is simply staggering that this exhibition should contain nothing by Roerich." He said that, by international standard Roerich had considerable claims to be regarded as great.

In the history of contemporary Russian art, the individuality of Roerich in its contact with the last achievements and discoveries in this ~~xxx~~ sphere, stands out independently and originally. About a hundred of his paintings were shown in a special Russian section of the first London Salon of the Allied Artists in 1908. It is said that there is no museum or art gallery in Russia that does not own Roerich's canvas and designs for decorative art. Gollerbach, a foremost art critic of the Soviet, says: "Roerich.....this name has long since come to identify an entire cosmos called into being ~~byx~~ by the creative will of the artist, - an entire world of forms of the deepest significance, inspired by wisdom in the antique meaning of the word: sophia is "mastership", ability to create a thing; not without reason in Pindar and Aristotle is the true artist called "the wise".

Writing of Russian Art Roerich himself says: "The Russian nation has always been closely attached to art. Since the times of yore all its modes of life have been saturated with self-expression of true art. The ancient heroic epos, the folk-lore the national string and wind-instruments, laces, carved wood, ikons, ornamental details in architecture, all of these speak genuine, natural artistic aspirations.

Of Svetoslav Roerich it may be said that he is a born portrait painter. An example of his work in this field will be on view in the exhibition. It is a portrait of Professor Roerich. Visitors will have

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this opportunity of judging for themselves his capabilities in a sphere in which he undoubtedly stands in the front rank. His figure studies have a charming pictorial value. His portrayals of various types of hillmen are particularly pleasing. If he excels in portraiture his work is by no means confined to that branch of art, and his mastery of line and subtle colour sense is revealed in a variety of canvases. He displays his father's love of the mountains and makes temporary excursions to the mystic regions in which his father so frequently dwells.

The forthcoming exhibition bids fair to make a landmark in the history of art exhibitions in India and should not be missed by anybody who has the opportunity of attending it.

A.E.M.

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Roerich Exhibition For Russia's War Effort

In India we know all too little of the cultural work of our Russian allies, but those who will be in Delhi round about February 20th will have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with Russia Art when Her Excellency, The Countess of Linlithgow opens an exhibition in connection with the National War front and in aid of the Viceroy's War purposes Fund with the object of assisting Russia's War Effort.

Among the masters of Russian painting and also those of Europe, the work of the Roerichs stands out as something altogether unique. Michel Kuzmin, in his monograph of Roerich, says that: "He is a phenomenon in Russian art, something extraordinary." Although the Roerich's art is essentially Russian in character, it has elicited praise and admiration of writers and artists the whole world over. It appeals especially to those who are able to appreciate the Roerichs' understanding of the deep wisdom of the East. It is an acknowledged fact that the Roerichs -- Professor Nicholas Roerich and his son Svetoslav -- are two of Russia's greatest artists and have an international reputation. Nicholas Roerich has dedicated hundreds of paintings to the majesty of the Himalayas of which he portrays the true spirit. Many of these will be seen in the forthcoming exhibition but there will also be others on Russian themes, such as, "Tiron", "Partizans", and "Alexander Nevsky".

Although the main object of this exhibition is the aid of Russia's War Effort it can be truly said that every Roerich exhibition is an artistic treat as well as being of educative value, consequently those fortunate people who will be able to attend this exhibition will not only be helping Russia's War Effort but will also derive considerable benefit themselves. It will be the largest exhibition the Roerichs have

so far given in this country and will contain many of their most recent paintings. In the words of Russian poet Baltrushaitis: "It is essential to see the feast of colours in Roerich's paintings with one's own eyes, as it is essential to hear a musical composition with one's own ears, in order to conceive its individual nature."

In helping Russia's War Effort we are also helping ourselves, for the final objective is common to all the allies, that we are to have an opportunity of helping while at the same time deriving pleasure and profit ourselves is a matter for self-congratulation. It is certainly an opportunity not to be missed.

The work of these famous Russian artists holds a particular interest at a time when all eyes are turned on Russia. Zuloaga, the Spanish painter on seeing some of Roerich's paintings, exclaimed: "Great artist! Here is the evidence that from Russia is coming some force to the world - I cannot measure, cannot impart what it is, but it is here." There are probably no Russian artists who are better fitted to represent their country than the Roerichs. A few words concerning these artists may not be amiss.

Nicholas Roerich was born in St. Petersburg - the present Leningrad which has cost the Germans so many lives - and mastered the art of drawing and painting when he was barely fifteen. At that early age he was contributing beautiful drawings to a number of leading art magazines, later he was trained in Paris. From 1896 to 1900 he was a professor at the Russian Imperial Academy of Archaeology and Editor of the journal "Art". As the guiding spirit of the "Society for the Encouragement of Arts" and later the chief of the school of that Society, Roerich organized and co-ordinated that new and powerful impulse in music, dance, drama and painting which spread throughout the civilized world. In 1906 he was appointed Director of the Academy for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in

Russia. He executed a number of works for the theatre: for the Russian Ballet he painted the scenery in Prince Igor; for Stanislavsky the setting of Peer Gynt. He wrote the libretto and also designed the costumes of "Rite of Spring" for which Stravinsky composed the music. The artist Benois ~~wrote~~ wrote: "Some of his sceneries for 'Princess Maline' and for 'Sister Beatrice' are amazing in their true sense of the mediaeval North." After the Russian revolution of 1917 Roerich settled in America. After a long series of exhibitions in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and England in 1920-22 a series of rotary exhibitions was organized on the invitation of the Chicago Art Institute in some forty cities in the United States. At the St Louis Exhibition seventy-five sketches of Russian antiquity by Roerich, called by S. Ernst "The Pantheon of Russian Glory" were sold. During an expedition to Tibet, Chinese Turkestan and Mongolia, he completed 500 paintings. In recent years Roerich Exhibitions have been given in various parts of India from Lahore in the north to Trivandrum in the south.

Svetoslav Roerich was born in St Petersburg in 1904. After preliminary education in Russia he studied art and other subjects in England and America. In 1926 he received the medal of the Sesquicentennial Exposition of Philadelphia for an Oriental composition. He came to India in 1923 where he has been working with his father. Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the work of the father and the son is that the latter has more of the classical manner. It is, perhaps, as a portrait painter that he excels. One critic has described him as a portrait painter of very high calibre and another describes him as a born portrait painter, yet another says that as a portraitist he stands in the front rank in his capacity to express the essential characteristics of the sitter and fitly to suggest their interest. He has already painted the portraits of many celebrities.

The art of the Roerichs appeals to people of all classes the world over, and many famous people have expressed their appreciation of their

work in glowing terms .For example,Tagore said : "When I tried to find words to describe to myself what were the ideals which your pictures suggested I failed.It was because the language of words can only express a particular aspect of truth and the language of pictures finds its domain in truth where words have no access..." And Einsten wrote: "I admire these creations so much that I can say without exaggeration that never have landscapes made such a great impression on me as these."

In the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" It is stated that Nicholas Roerich established his reputation by painting pictures of Russian prehistoric life and the wanderings of the Vikings.After beginning with realistic pictures his manner evolved under the influence of Byzantine,Icon and Oriental art towards a purely decorative and monumental style.Roerich studied the technique of ancient Russian frescoes and his wall paintings for the Kazan railway station at Moscow,representing combats between Russians and Tartars were at the time considered his most important work.

Probably more has been written on the subject of Roerich's art than on that of any other living artist.He is probably more prolific than any other artist and his paintings are to be found in nearly every famous museum and picture gallery,as well as in private collections,in almost every country.It is not every day that in India one can get an opportunity of enjoying the work of great and acknowledged Masters,and when Her Excellency opens this exhibition in aid of the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund she will be admitting the public to a view of poetry in painting such as is seldom or never seen in this country.

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