

TRIBUNE

Ambala Cantt.

24 JAN. 1960

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The Roerichs, both the late Professor Nicholas Roerich and his son, Svetoslav Roerich, have such long associations with Punjab, both Lahore and Kulu Valley, that they hardly need an introduction to readers. Professor Roerich was one of those Russian intellectuals who adopted India as his home. His son, Svetoslav, also an eminent artist, is married to Devika Rani, still affectionately remembered by the Indian public in spite of her retirement from films many years ago. One of the chief art events of the year was the opening of a one-month exhibition at the A.I.F.A.C.S. Hall by the Prime Minister on Wednesday. As Mr. Nehru remarked while opening the exhibition, he first met Mr. Roerich 18 years ago when he spent a few days with his daughter at their Kulu home. He described Mr. Roerich as a retiring and restrained person who never pushed himself. He confessed he felt a strange sensation of harmony, beauty and depth when he looked at his paintings. Mr. Nehru continued : "They are obviously remarkable not only because they are beautiful but because they have a lasting effect on the minds of those who see them."

The vast exhibition, covering the walls of four galleries, is an event in the art life of Delhi, to use the Prime Minister's words. It would need many pages to review the whole exhibition adequately. All that I can say is that Roerich's draughtsmanship ought to be a lesson to the new, and somewhat slapdash, generation of "modern" artists in India. His sense of colour is deliberate and highly original. His triptych on the crucifixion theme which dominates the main hall has a

strange stained-glass effect, luminosity and power which linger in the mind long after one has seen it. It is not often that a visiting Head of ~~xx~~ State finds the time to visit an art exhibition. But Mr. Voroshilov and Dr. Rajendra Prasad both found time to pay this supreme compliment to Svetoslav Roerich.

From the pleated gunny which forms the backdrop to the paintings, to the courtesy and efficiency with which visitors are looked after, this is one of the best planned and displayed exhibitions in the Capital for years.

By AMITA MALIK

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