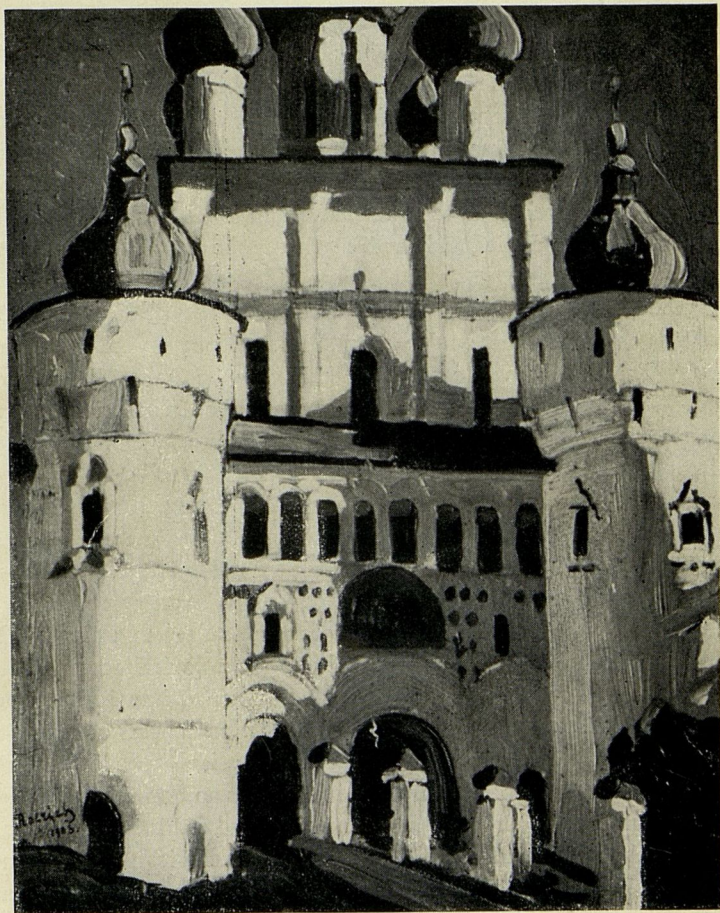


1

# NICHOLAS ROERICH



ENTRANCE INTO KREMLIN — ROSTOV THE GREAT

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NICHOLAS ROERICH  
AND  
MONUMENTS OF OLD RUSSIA

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THE CHURCH OF ST. VLASSY YAROSLAVL (17th CENTURY)

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In these early paintings Roerich already reveals his full stature, which prompted a contemporary of Roerich, the renowned artist, Aleksandr Benois, to say:

"Through the realism of these sketches shines a great poet-symbolist and a spiritual thinker."

V. Zavalishin

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## N I C H O L A S      R O E R I C H

A N D

## M O N U M E N T S   O F   O L D   R U S S I A

The unusual versatility and extraordinary vision of Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich have been known for a long time to his biographers and to art historians. In Roerich are happily blended artist, architect, archeologist and authority on the arts. Roerich was also a tireless explorer, and his extensive travels gave breadth to his creativeness.

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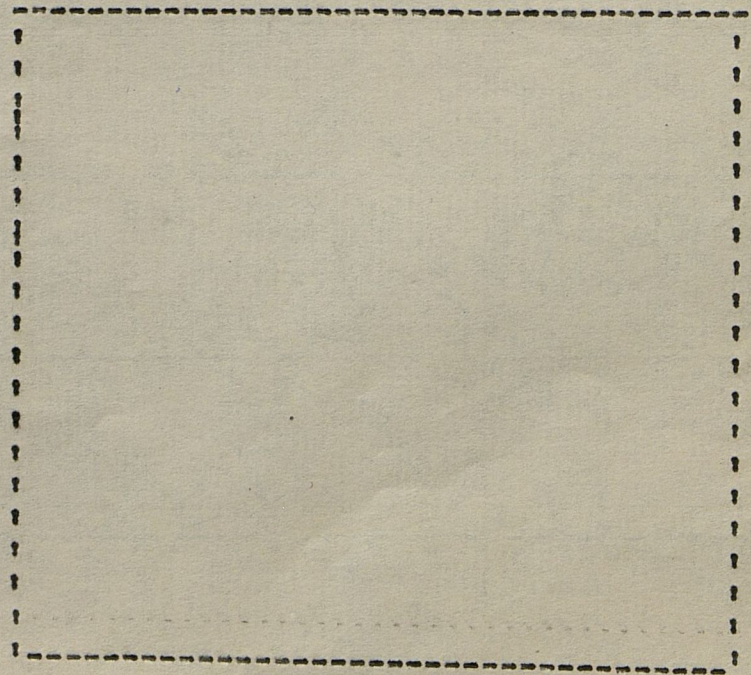
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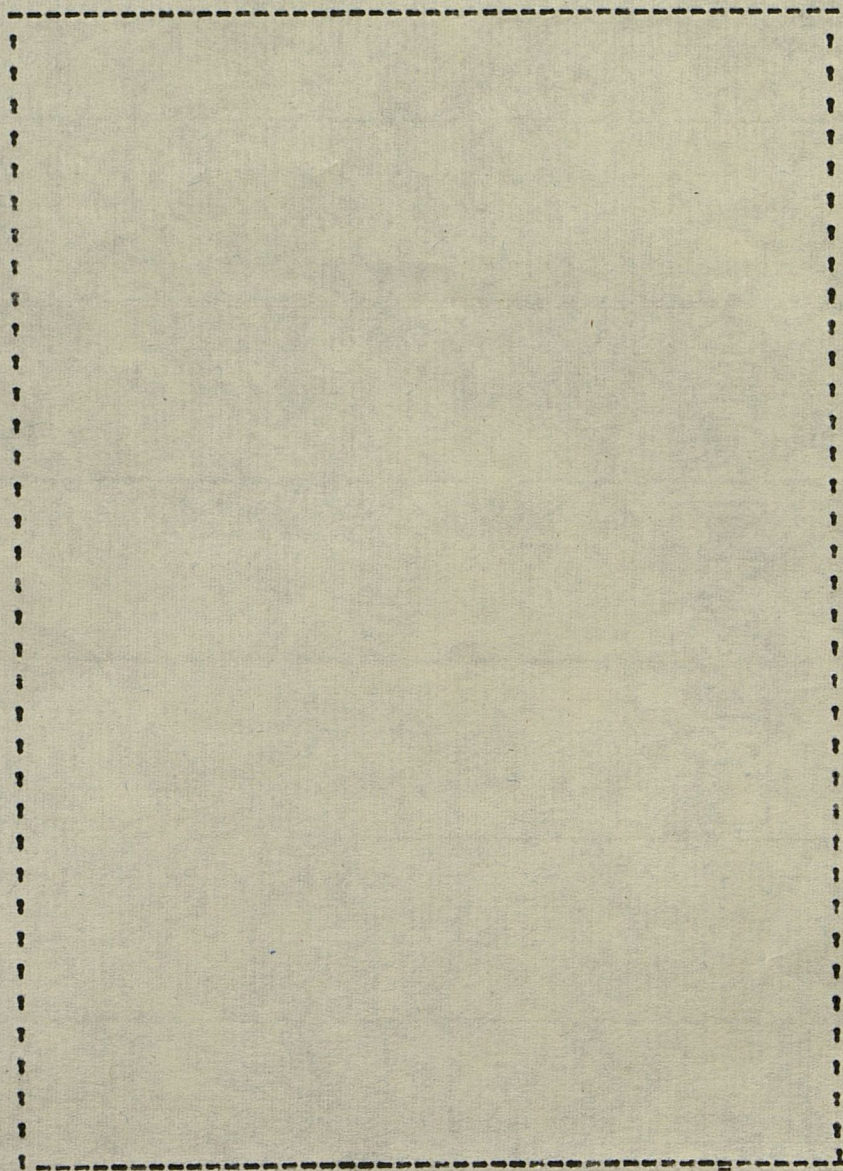
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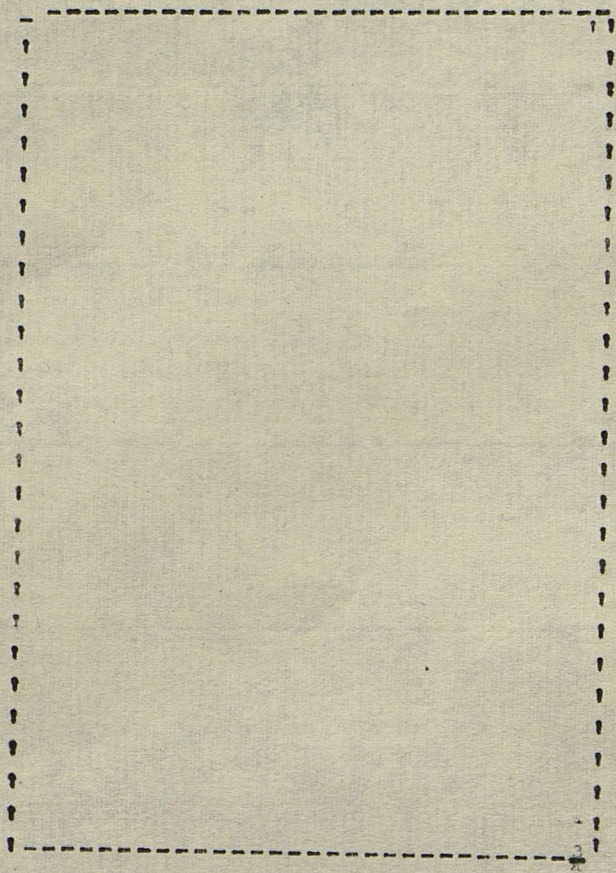
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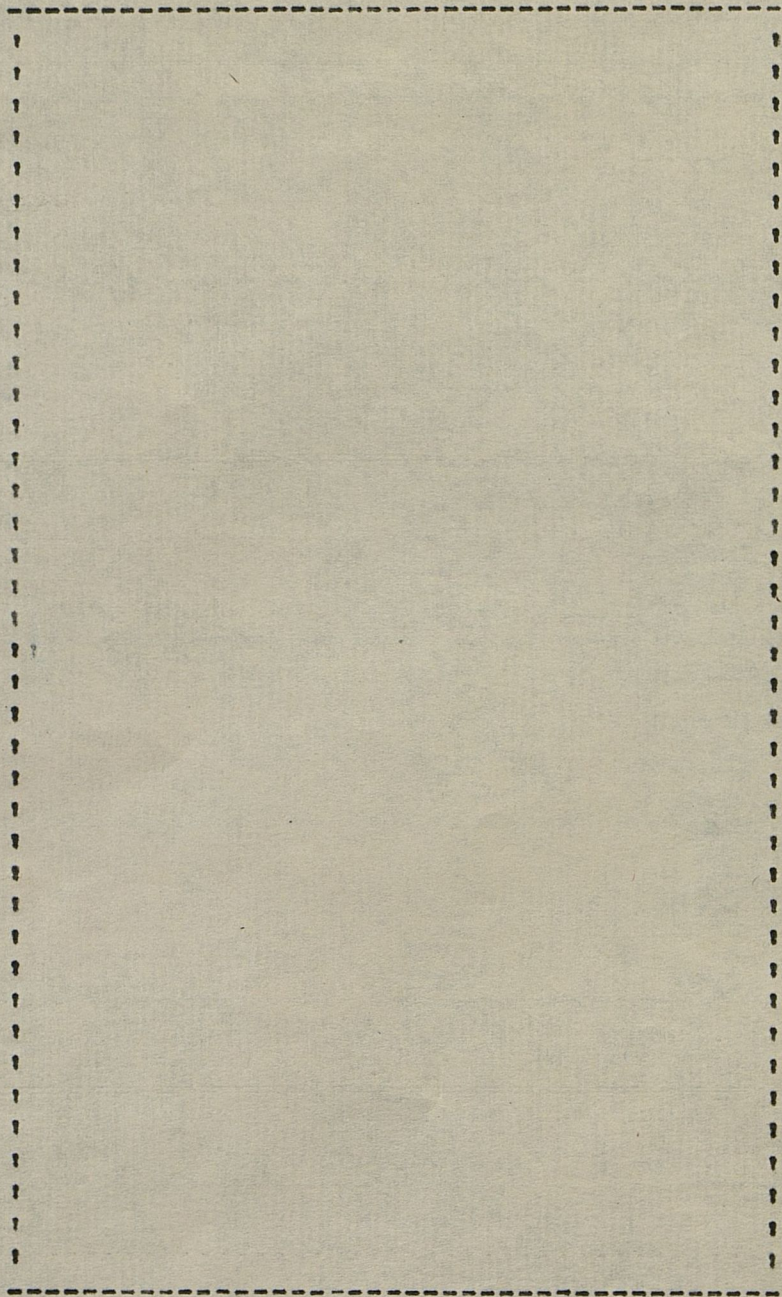
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N I C H O L A S   R O E R I C H



ENTRANCE INTO KREMLIN - ROSTOV THE GREAT

"NOVOYE RUSSKOYE SLOVO"  
November 29, 1966.

"EARLY PERIODS IN ROERICH'S ART" (Exhibition at the  
Nicholas Roerich Museum)

N.K. Roerich, as it is widely known, was unusually versatile. It has been somehow forgotten at present that he, together with Alexsey Remizov, was the father of Russian ornamental prose. We quote here a fragment from his "ornamental sketch, The "Unspilled Chalice," since it has a direct bearing on the current Exhibit.

"Beyond the boundaries of a window there is much of unperceivable beauty. The present leads to the future; penetrating is the deep blue of the aerial distances; the rivers and lakes are overflowing everywhere; hillocks and mounts are steep, sloping, covered with moss and stones; boulders are piled up like herds; running water rushes through fields and overflows the lakes. And Russia stands like an Unspilled Chalice.

An Unspilled Chalice. A full healing spring. In the center of an ordinary circle a fairy tale is hidden. And in another "ornamental" sketch Roerich writes that he sets out "to search for sacred signs."

In this present Exhibition are shown forty-two early sketches by Roerich. These are the "unforgettable beauties" of the church architecture of the cities of Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, Rostov the Great and other ancient cities of Russia's land. Roerich is equally successful in his exteriors and interiors. And in each of these sketches there is a sacred sign of interdicted Holy Russia, caught by the artist.

Baltrushaitis wrote that Roerich, as it were, removes the great image of life from its "transitory veil" while penetrating into the mystical primary sources of that which he creates. Aleksandr Benois also remarks that "through the realism of Roerich's sketches dedicated to church architecture (particularly among them are those shown in the current exhibition), shines a great poet-symbolist and a spiritual thinker."

And this Exhibition once again stresses this truth. Before our eyes are sketches in which are depicted the monuments of antiquity as they could have been seen when the artist painted them. Observing them more closely one may notice that he did not merely study (even though carefully and earnestly) the architectural landscapes of ancient icons and the original attitude of ancient Russian and Byzantine icon painters. That which was sacred in the architectural landscape of an old icon, that primeval symbolism which distinguished the approach of ancient Russian icon painters to nature, Roerich translated into the language of contemporary painting, using the ways and means of the most modern art.

This is actually the transformation of the motives of the ancient Russian art of icon painting. And when we examine such paintings of Roerich as "The View of the Kremlin from Zamoskvorechye," "Cemetery Cross," "View of the Kremlin Walls in Smolensk" (these transient forms proceeding from sketches to originally conceived compositions) one feels that the Russia of Roerich is related to the Russia of Blok and Bely.<sup>@</sup>

The Exhibition was organized by S.G. Fosdick and Edgar Lansbury. The Introduction to the English Catalog of the Exhibition was written by V.K. Zavalishin.

N. N.

@ Two great Russian poets.