

The Exhibition of Russian Art in Paris



“REVIEW OF TROOPS IN THE REIGN OF PAUL I.”

(In the possession of M. Botkine)

BY ALEXANDER BENOIS

were of an equal standard, we could perhaps not help surmising that, as in the case of some modern French artists, there must be here, too, some routine underlying it all, some knack which may be learnt without being felt, and which, when once learnt, debars the possibility of one plate being less successful than another.

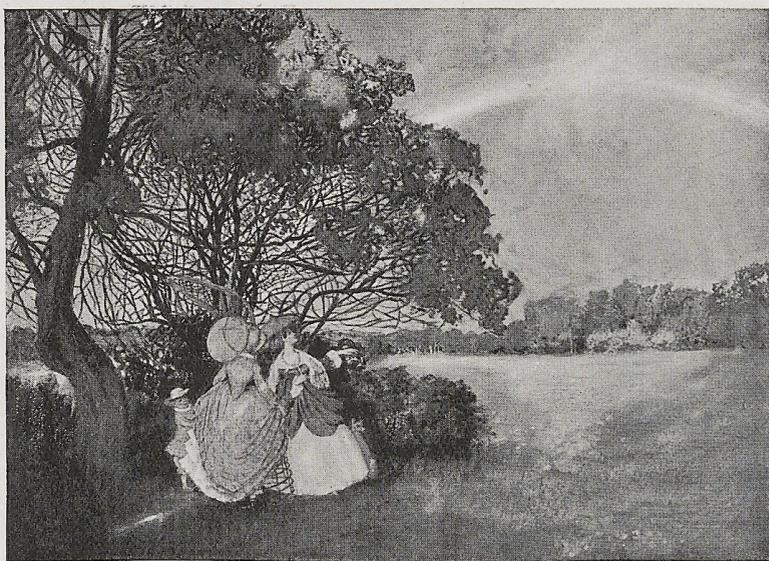
H. W. S.

THE EXHIBITION OF RUSSIAN ART IN PARIS. BY HENRI FRANTZ.

EACH year the Autumn Salon, with the broad spirit of initiative which characterises that institution, reserves for us some display of uncommon art, some new field of study, dealing now with the art of the Past, now with that of the Present. But I have no fear of being contradicted when I declare that the Russian Exhibition, organised by the Salon d'Automne last October in the Grand Palais, surpassed in interest and in novelty anything this Salon has had to show us hitherto. The conception

setting of rare beauty and worth, with walls hung with precious hangings, and with charming *bosquets* wherein the statuary was seen as in one of Boucher's or Fragonard's gardens.

First of all, one room was devoted to the antique ikons, those earliest lisplings of Russian painting, which to the close observer often reveal great beauty of technique and a depth of feeling and emotion worthy of the primitive Italian school. And although the originality of these painters was



“ IN THE PARK ”

BY CONSTANTIN SOMOFF

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"THE OLD TOWN"

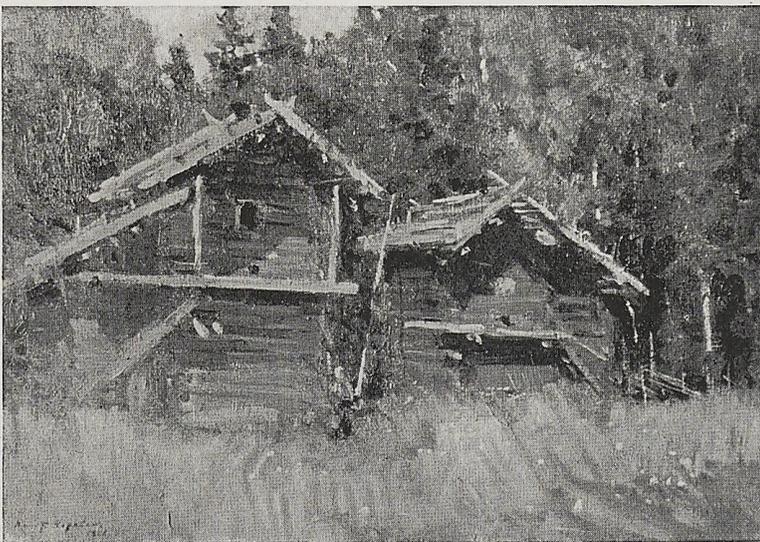
BY NICHOLAS ROHRICH

prevented from expanding beneath the immovable yoke of ecclesiastical canons, yet we frequently come across instances of delightful decorative grace side by side with extraordinary richness of colour. The Byzantine tradition in these ikons was perpetuated until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Peter the Great attracted foreign artists to his court. Under the reign of Elizabeth an academy was founded in St. Petersburg, and quite a large number of French and Italian artists came to live there. They had an influence on Russian architecture, sculpture and painting, the depth of which is seen even to-day. Tocque and Lagree, Falcoñnet,

Roslin, Moreau le Jeune, and others, came to Russia in the reign of Catherine II. (1762-1796), and it was under the influence of these admirable artists that the painters Lévitzy (1735-1822) and Borovikovski (1758-1826) developed their talent. Both were well represented at the Grand Palais, the first-named by several charming portraits of women dancing, and by a whole series of great personages of the period; and Borovikovski, the chief pupil of Lévitzy, by no fewer than twenty of his canvases, including the portraits of the great Catherine and the Emperor Alexander I. Compared with these two great artists, Miropolski, Drozhine and Rokotoff are rather

"small beer." In addition to these portraitists there were also several excellent landscapists, such as Stchédrine, Alexeieff, Belsky, and Ivanoff, who, in their charming views of St. Petersburg, were obviously inspired by Canaletto, and in their decorative park scenes by Hubert Robert and Vernet.

Temporarily misled through the "booming" of the antique by David and his school, the Slavonic imagination was somewhat deeply touched by the "romantic" shock — as witness the work of Ivanoff, Brullov and Orlovski — and thence returned, with



"THE LOG HUT"

BY KOROVINE

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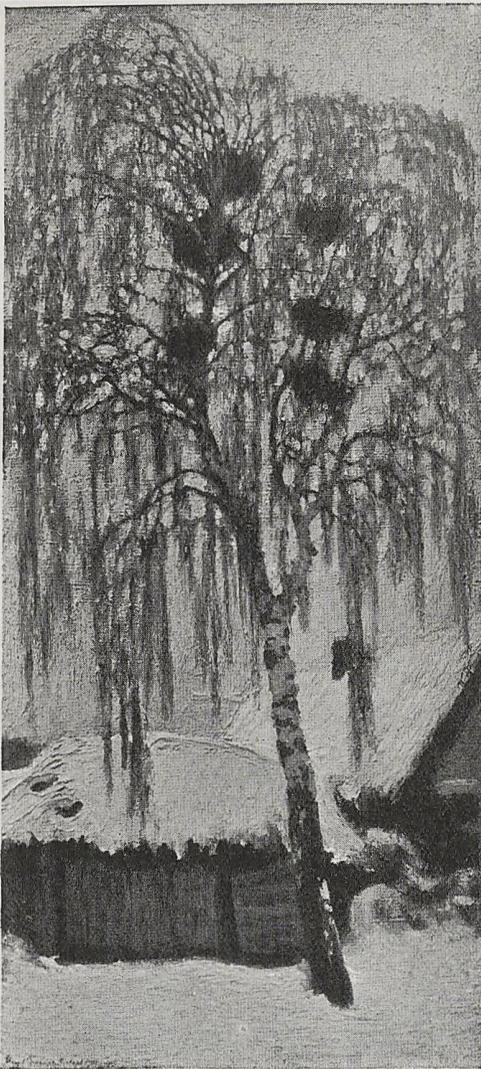
all the ardour of our own Courbet, to realistic art as illustrated by Répine and V6restc.hagin. A little later, as a re-action against the ultra-conservative tendencies of the Academy, there was formed under the title of the " Ambulants " a society of artists who played a rôle analogous to that of our dissentient Salons.

The latter part of the nineteenth century was particularly well represented



"THE DEAD CITY"

BY CONSTANTIN BOGAEVSKY



" BIRCH TREE "

BY IGOR GRABAR

by a'pleiad of living artists in full activity. Like their predecessors they have in many cases dipped deep into eastern sources. While Benois is haunted by the spirit of the eighteenth century, and in his little canvases revives its bewigged personages and its hooped marquises, gyrating about their well-trimmed hedges, we find other painters, like Léon Bakst, impressed by Aubrey Beardsley and the English decorators, yet with a vision all their own.

Nevertheless, one can set up a general classification among all these artists. Some, like the two highly-gifted painters just mentioned, are, above all, imaginative, cultured, impregnated with literature, and thoroughly versed in the work of the East. Here we had the St. Petersburg School, which can boast yet other masters apart from the two artists already referred to. Among them I noticed Somoff, represented by some two score pictures, drawings and book-covers; Lanceray, author of an excellent picture, *JUmp'etratrice Elisabeth d Tsarskoie Selo*, and sundry charming illustrations; Dobuzhinski; Koustodieff, who showed a pleasant drawing of Count Witte ; and Ostrooumov, whose wood engravings are quite remarkable.

The Moscow School is nearer to Nature and at times more barbaric. Therewith must certainly be associated Philip Malyavine, an ardent colourist, whose crayon studies constitute so many "documents " on the rustic life of Central Russia; and, though he does not live there, Moscow must have the credit attaching to that most interesting artist, Constantin Korovine, whom Paris was happy to greet anew in its midst. Korovine adorned with admirable paintings the Central Asian Pavilion at the Exhibition of 1900. Here he was represented

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MODEL

BY PRINCE PAUL TROUBETZKOY

ruined ramparts raising their heads amid deserts of stone; Petrovitcheff, who in like manner chants so feelingly the melancholy of the winter landscapes of the North; and Koustodieff, another artist who strives to express textually the spectacles which strike his eye; also Yuon, whose work is marked by great technical skill—and many others.

It has been urged against this exhibition that it was not complete, in that it neglected several contemporary Russian artists. Be that as it may, I hold that

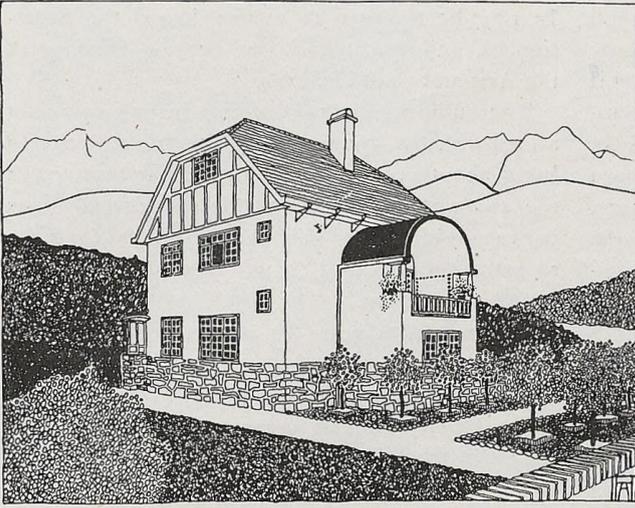
by one of his *Barques en pêche* panels, and several little canvases painted with truly extraordinary vigour and "go."

An immense panel by Vroubel suffered for lack of the space needed to see it properly, but several smaller works gave one the opportunity to appreciate the achievement of the celebrated Russian decorator. Golovine seemed to me to be well represented by his *Décors*, which well illustrate his conception of decorative painting. Prominent also were the two Milliottis, Péréplechikoff and Shroff, who is certainly a most powerful colourist. Then we had Soudéikine and Ryloff, a good landscapist; Grabar, whose harmonies resemble those of Le Sidaner; Mile. Baklund, who loves to paint great forests buried in winter's snow; Kousnetzoff; and Bogaievsky, the painter of desolate landscapes, of towns with



"PEASANT WOMEN" (The Property of Prince S. Stcherbatoff) BY P. MALJAVINE

The Imperial Arts and Crafts Schools, Vienna



DESIGN FOR A VILLA BY HOLLMANN (PROF. HOFFMANN'S CLASS)

it has given Paris a true revelation concerning many very personal, very original artists; and it only remains to congratulate the promoters of this fine scheme and the generous collectors and art lovers who enabled it to be realised.

HENRI FRANTZ.

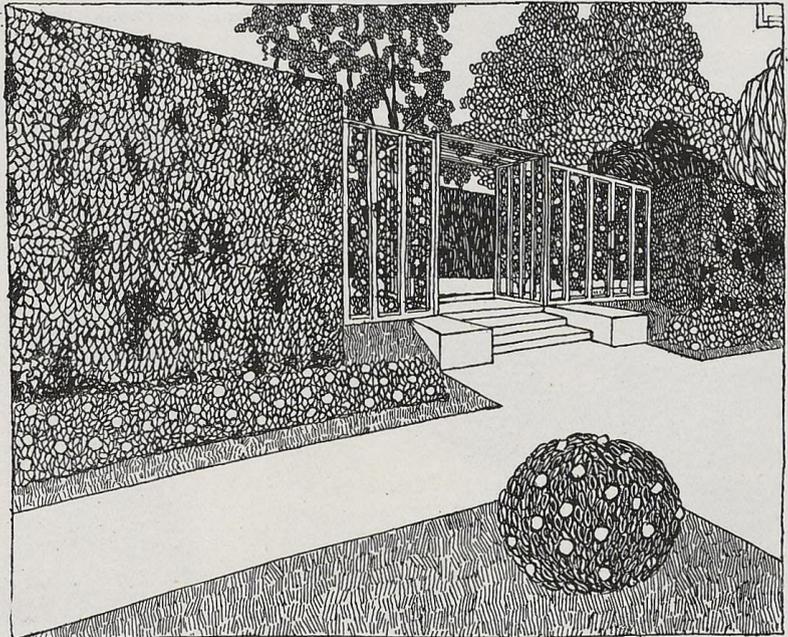
THE IMPERIAL ARTS AND CRAFTS SCHOOLS, VIENNA. BY A. S. LEVETUS.

ARTS and crafts schools, or *Kunstgewerbeschulen* as they are called, were first established in Vienna by the Imperial Government nearly forty years ago, though for many long years before that the arts and crafts had been taught in the capital, and as a result some fame had already accrued to Vienna in this direction, particularly with her bronzes. The idea of such schools, like many other things pertaining to the welfare of the nation, originated in the great Empress Maria - Theresa. For the first thirty years of the existence of the present schools the students were mere copyists of old and stereotyped forms ; there

was no attempt to train them to think and make use of eye and hand together. Everything necessary to bring life into art was systematically avoided: nothing was done to stimulate the imagination of the students; the curriculum consisted in drawing and painting from the flat or cast, or painting on vases which were bought prepared for the final touch that was to transform them into *objets d'art*.

Then came the great upheaval in art, coinciding with the founding of the Vienna Secession in 1897. At the winter exhibition at the Austrian Museum, in 1898, Hofrat von Scala showed what England was doing in arts and crafts, while at the Secession exhibitions the best work of other nations as well as England was put on view, and helped to forward the cause. Then followed the resignation of the Archduke Rainer as Protector of the Austrian Museum, and that of Hofrat von Storch as Director of the *Kunstgewerbeschulen*, a position which he had held for thirty years. He was succeeded by Baron Felician von Myrbach in May, 1899. From that time dates the reform.

A man of many parts, Baron von Myrbach had gained valuable experience in the battle of life, experience which pre-eminently fitted him for the office of organiser. Destined for the army he, at



GARDEN DESIGN BY FRANZ LEBISCH (PROF. HOFFMANN'S CLASS)