In memory of
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Compiled and introduced by Mikhail Guerman

OCTOBER REVOLUTION

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The remarkable and fascinating editorial material for this book was prepared under the supervision of Aurora Art Publishers, Leningrad. The text, written by a leading Soviet art historian, represents the latest research and expresses current feeling in the USSR about a subject which has recently aroused strong interest elsewhere in the world. We are pleased to offer this authentic view of an important period in twentieth century art for the English-language reader.


Frontispiece:
Lenin making a speech in Red Square, 1 May 1919. Photograph

Layout of the plate section:
ALEXANDER KOKOVKIN

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"With all your body, all your heart and all your mind, listen to the Revolution," wrote Alexander Blok in 1918.

In order to "hear the Revolution" and not lose one's bearings as a centuries-old monarchy fell, talent alone was not enough. The artist had to possess a courageous and wise talent. To overcome not only hunger and cold, but also his own doubts, to see the important rather than the inessential, the artist had to be fearless. Only then could his art make other people see, could show them how to "listen to the Revolution," a revolution that had no equal in history.

The October Revolution of 1917 changed the destiny of Russia abruptly and decisively. The Bolshevik party, headed by Lenin, led the people to their long-awaited victory. The Soviets of Workers’, Peasants’, and Soldiers’ Deputies gained power. The land was given to the peasants, and the factories became the property of the workers. Nothing like it had ever been seen.

The new Soviet Russia immediately had to defend the freedom it had won in battle. Counterrevolutionary insurrections, the advance of White armies, foreign intervention—all this meant long months, even years, of struggle. Fields were burned, and cities and factories were destroyed. Soviet power not only had to be defended, but also the country’s economy had to be reestablished.

True artists had long expected the Revolution. Some had awaited it with fear, others—indeed, most artists—looked forward to it with hope. The Revolution, when it came, lent a new meaning to their work. There were, of course, no more rich customers, no more well-born patrons. It might seem that, in cities torn by battle, rocked with gunfire, and shaken by fateful and drastic changes, art was a matter of little or no concern. But that was not the case. Art continued to have an audience: people who sought answers in art, who used art as a means of understanding what was going on around them.

True artists had been brimming over with anger, anxiety, and expectation long before 1917. They were learning how to look reality straight in the face, to see the conflicts of the time and the tragedy in the world around them. The ruthless laconism of Sergei Ivanov’s The Massacre (plate 2 of plate section following text) shows how clearly he understood the nature of tsarist Russia. It also testifies to his search for a lucid style capable of reflecting such a significant theme. Valentin Serov, in contrast, painted the chillingly grotesque “Soldiers, soldiers, heroes every one . . .” (plate 1) in which, with his characteristic merciless sarcasm, he depicted Cossacks breaking up a demonstration.

“Eternal battle. Of peace we only dream . . .” wrote Blok. The pleasant dreams of a fading tranquility and idyllic images of the past still beckoned to many artists and writers before 1917. But the future was even more enticing. In 1912, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin displayed his painting Bathing the Red Horse (plate 8). This work retains much of the old Russian style of painting, but it is by no means obsessed with the past. Here the artist turned to the roots of national art, as if to brush away the hustle and bustle of daily life and look more boldly into the future. As early as 1915, this picture was described as the “flame of a banner held high.” It became a subtle and stern symbol of the events to come.

At the turn of the century, realist art branched out, as never before, into many different currents. Everything was questioned. The best Russian artists, even those who died before the Revolution—Valentin Serov, Mikhail Vrubel, Victor Borisov-Musatov, and many others—were seeking a new language, a new way of looking at reality. Russian art had long known how to feel the pulse of the times, how to engage in an ardent search for the
truth. The changes that were imminent generated particular tension, and the complex issues of the day reverberated in many pictures, statues, and drawings. The passionate search for truth and justice in these stormy years became the basis for subsequent developments in the postrevolutionary period. The art of Soviet Russia valued these traditions highly and built upon them.

Certainly, the profound and uncompromising search for the truth was sometimes overlooked among the noisy declarations that promised so much. The public was both shocked and fascinated by the wild declamations of the Futurists.

The unusual artistic methods were alluring; they seemed to be part of the new world of machines, a world marked by spiritual tension and presentiments of war. Russian art looked watchfully to the West. The searchings of the French Cubists and the Italian Futurists evoked serious interest. More frequently, however, the reaction to trends in the West was deeply national. Although the Jack of Diamonds group frankly revealed a debt to Cézanne, imitations of Cézanne could not hold their attention for long. They retained what was essential in Cézanne's work—a knowledge of how to express form by color and, above all, a passion for "bringing one's sensations to life." Among the Jack of Diamonds members, these sensations were entirely Russian. Vladimir Tatlin greatly admired Picasso but plunged into experiments that were even more startling than Picasso's. Kasimir Malevich, who only briefly yielded to the temptation to imitate the Cubists, began, even before the war, to experiment with nonrepresentational painting. As a result, he later became famous as one of the founders of abstract art. Even earlier, Vasily Kandinsky had displayed nonrepresentational works; his compositions differed from the strict geometry of Malevich's paintings in their skillful improvisation with luminescent blurred shapes, associated, according to Kandinsky, with music. The "rayonnism" of Mikhail Larionov also had affinities with nonobjective art. (Larionov's individuality, however, is more clearly revealed in his primitivist works, which cleverly and artistically modernized the traditions of peasant woodcuts.) This abundance of new (and pseudo-new) forms is even today surprising. It reveals prerevolutionary Russia as the birthplace of many avant-garde trends.

It is easy in this respect, however, to fall prey to commonplaces and deceptive appearances. The Cubo-Futurists, the nonrepresentationalists, the Rayonnists, the Jack of Diamonds group, the Constructivists, and the adherents of the other trends and groups that sprang up so rapidly were simply more noticeable than the others. At first glance, many appear to fit easily into the general flow of the European avant-garde. They tried to do away with tradition. They captured the imagination. They irritated the Philistines. They bewildered the experts. They dazzled the young.

Their novelty seemed revolutionary, but it was often only in appearance; in rejecting the past, they rejected everything indiscriminately, including both arid academicism and genuine classics of art. Moreover, they claimed it was necessary to destroy "the old." After the Revolution, Blok wrote: "Even while destroying, we are still the slaves of our former world: the violation of tradition itself is part of that same tradition . . ." The avant-garde thus in fact threatened to become a kind of negative academicism, an antisystem, so to speak.

A common compassion for their oppressed, overtaxed, and poorly run country united artists of all generations and all styles. Both before and after the October Revolution, the works of the most talented artists revealed a trait peculiar only to Russia, a trait which ran through Russian culture from Pushkin to Mayakovsky. Namely: responsibility, belief in the noble mission of art and its ability to be the nation's conscience and guide.

In this kaleidoscope of stunning novelty, real talent was developing. An art was maturing by taking the best and rejecting the worst. This was the art that was destined to become the true basis of revolutionary art, the art of new Russia.
LENIN AND SVERDLOV AT THE UNVEILING
OF THE MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO FELL FIGHTING
FOR THE CAUSE OF PEACE AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF NATIONS
IN RED SQUARE IN MOSCOW, 7 NOVEMBER 1918
After the Revolution, a general enthusiasm and a desire to work for others, for all, for Russia, to some extent brought artists of disparate creative trends together. The names are surprisingly varied: Boris Kustodiev, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, Isaac Brodsky, Vladimir Lebedev, Mitrofan Grekov, Sergei Konionkov, Matvei Manizer, Vera Mukhina, as well as Marc Chagall, Tatlin, and Malevich. Yet it remained to be seen what the Revolution, the working people, would accept. Which artists would the Soviet Republic need? For artists, the situation of putting one’s convictions, one’s vision, to the test by a socialist revolution was unprecedented.

Of course, not every artist found fulfillment in the Revolution. Some were carried away by seeing “the world in its critical moments” (F. Tiutchev); however, for them, the fate of their country served only as the backdrop for their artistic experiments. Others could not bear the burdens of everyday life. Still others preferred to go abroad, simply because life was easier there; in the West, art did not have to keep pace with the rapid pulse of the Revolution. Some of those who lived in the West did not return; a number of them even turned hostile toward their country.

In the words of Mayakovsky, the “colors of humdrum life were painted over once and for all.” The October Revolution brought with it joy and hope inseparably mixed with anxiety, deprivation, and a feverish tempo of life. Ever since the French Revolution, the art of the people had taken to the streets once victory was achieved. Louis David had designed huge propaganda processions for revolutionary holidays. After the October Revolution, people in Russia also began to contemplate mass street performances and celebrations.
LENIN MAKING A SPEECH AT THE UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS IN MOSCOW, 7 NOVEMBER 1918
Воскресенье, 2 марта, 1919 г., № 13.

Открытие памятника А. И. Герцену.

В воскресенье, 23-го февраля, на Арсенальной набережной Литейного моста состоялось торжественное открытие памятника великому писателю — революционеру А. И. Герцену.

Памятник, по поручению Отдела Изобразительных Искусств, выполнен скульптором Л. В. Шервудом.

Открытие памятника Гарибальди.

Торжественное открытие памятника великому итальянскому революционеру Гарибальди, состоявшееся 9-го марта у Московских ворот на Международном пр., приняло характер грандиозной демонстрации, в которой участвовали, кроме петроградских рабочих, и члены III Интернационала, приехавшие в Петроград накануне торжества.

На торжестве присутствовали представители Отдела Изобразительных Искусств П. К. Вауплин, Н. Н. Пу- 

ин и Н. И. Альтман.
FROM THE NEWSPAPER ART OF THE COMMUNE
2 MARCH 1919

5 FROM THE NEWSPAPER ART OF THE COMMUNE
16 MARCH 1919

6 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO KARL MARX IN FRONT OF SMOLNY
PETOGRAD 1918
SCULPTOR A. MATVEEV

7 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO ALEXANDER HERZEN PETROGRAD 1919
SCULPTOR L. SHERWOOD

8 MEMORIAL TO ALEXANDER RADISHCHEV PETROGRAD 1918
SCULPTOR L. SHERWOOD

9 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO LOUIS BLANQUI PETROGRAD 1919
SCULPTOR T. ZALKALNS

10 MEMORIAL TO FERDINAND LASSALLE PETROGRAD 1919
SCULPTOR V. SINAISKY

11 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI PETROGRAD 1919
SCULPTOR K. ZALE
Lenin, furthermore, proposed something entirely new: monumental propaganda. Although these two words together form a paradox, they are intimately linked to the concept of revolution: propaganda, by its very nature, is dynamic and contemporary; monumentality, on the other hand, tends toward the timeless. What Lenin had in mind was to connect the past, present, and future. Memorials to the most eminent figures in history, and especially to freedom-fighters, were to stand on city streets and squares. In the spring of 1918, Lenin talked with Anatoly Lunacharsky, the People’s Commissar for Education, about “erecting monuments to the great revolutionaries”; Lenin also approved a list of those to whom it was proposed “to raise monuments in Moscow and the other cities of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic].” Along with the names of Marx and Engels and the great Russian revolutionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Radishchev, Pestel, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Khalturin, and Sophia Perovskaya were the names of Danton, Marat, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Garibaldi, Blanqui, and Jaurès. Writers, scholars, and composers were also included. Altogether it was planned to set up sixty-seven pieces of sculpture.

Lenin paid special attention to the way in which his program of monumental propaganda was carried out. He constantly reminded people of its importance and insisted that the artists involved be given all possible help. Lunacharsky also did a great deal to promote the plan. There were many shortages to be dealt with – of workshops, firewood, lighting, clay. Nor was there much time. Work went on hurriedly, to the point of exhaustion; at the same time, the artists, weak and underfed because of bread shortages, could not work at full strength. There was no bronze, no marble, no granite. The artists had to make do with concrete and plaster-of-Paris castings. Although they held the conviction that the statues of this “new world” had to be different from the sculptures of the past, the artists had no clear conception of what they ought to look like. Almost none of the resulting work has survived to the present day. The materials used were not durable, and sometimes the artists’ conceptions themselves were not lasting. Some statues expressed their creators’ ardent emotions instead of carrying out the task at hand – the enshrining of the memory of great men and women.

The first statue to be unveiled was Leonid Sherwood’s monument to Alexander Radishchev (plate 286) in Petrograd (a replica was erected in Moscow). By October 1918, the first anniversary of the Revolution, several more had been finished. Sergei Konionkov’s memorial polychromatic relief on the Kremlin wall, To Those Who Fell Fighting for the Cause of Peace and the Brotherhood of Nations (plate 282), combined a sad grandeur with echoes of Art Nouveau. The contemporary press highly acclaimed the work, commenting that its “colors, the rising sun, and the movement of the figure” gave excellent expression to the artist’s conception. A quite different approach characterizes Boris Koroliov’s monument to the nineteenth-century revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin (plate 278), in which Bakunin’s face and body are barely distinguishable in the frantic conglomeration of angular forms and shapes. The artist had evidently tried to apply the principles of Cubism in order to express new ideas. The sculpture was by no means a success, even though Koroliov’s sincerity and talent are unquestionable. If this particular work had survived to the present day, it would be regarded not just as a monument to Mikhail Bakunin, but rather as a monument to the audacious searchings of the Revolution’s first sculptors.

Many artists nonetheless still clung to a more classic laconism: Victor Sinaisky’s sculpture of Lassalle (plate 291) is both a fine portrait and a plastic symbol. The abrupt juxtaposition of the facets and the extreme generalization reveal a leaning toward the art of antiquity, a desire to invest the sculpture with a seething intellect and a spiritual dynamism. There were also large sculptural groups: for example, Konionkov’s Stepan Razin and His Men (plate 283), which was erected in Red Square, near the Moscow
Kremlin. Where once tsarist ukases (edicts) were proclaimed now stood an unusual, chaotic, formidable, and brave crowd of rough wooden figures. However, there was no genuine monumentality in these figures, and the group was out of place alongside the old Russian architecture of the Kremlin.

The people’s judgments during these years were sharp and uncompromising. Those works whose complexity of form or deliberate primitivism gave rise to protests were taken away, as were formalist works. Art began to depend on popular opinion. For the first time, the common people entered into a dialogue, even into argument, with art. This, too, was propaganda, and it was at times no less effective than the brittle concrete statues themselves. The inexorable force of public opinion had in fact a great deal to do with the feverish inspiration on the part of the sculptors. They felt they had to work quickly and that they had to create works that were new, unprecedented, great; but the muse of sculpture, according to Diderot, is “silent and elusive.” Despite everything, though, many of these hastily done sculptures have a place in history. They have a certain naive and proud splendor. They are at once straightforward and metaphorical.

And so, its failures and impermanence notwithstanding, monumental sculpture achieved its purpose. The monuments were unveiled solemnly, before large crowds of people. As Lenin said, “Let every such unveiling be an act of propaganda and a modest holiday; thereafter, on the anniversaries, one can further remind the people of a great historical figure, each time, of course, linking him closely with our Revolution and its tasks.” Lenin himself, as well as other members of the government, often appeared at such ceremonies. The people understood that these were their celebrations, that the artists were working for them in attempting to perpetuate the memory of those whom the Soviet Republic held dear.

There were also undisputed successes among the monuments of this period. The obelisk The Soviet Constitution by Nikolai Andreyev and D. Osipov (plate 280), with Andreyev’s Statue of Freedom (plate 281), deserved a longer life. Its grandeur, restrained by the terseness of the ascetic form, and the obelisk’s frank traditionality, which underscores the buoyant tension of the figure of Freedom, combined to create a classic work of art looking toward the future, thus linking the past and the future.

Other artists looked toward the future, and only toward the future, as if wishing to forget the past and lose themselves among the towering heights of bold and utopian concepts. One of the most striking creations of postrevolutionary art in Soviet Russia was Tatlin’s Tower-Monument to the 3rd International (plate 295). Tatlin made only a model of wood and wire, but the monument itself was conceived as a gigantic building, set at an angle from the perpendicular, a tower of glass and metal that would dwarf the highest skyscrapers. Inside a sparkling spiral shape, a cube and, above it, a pyramid and a cylinder, were to rotate, each with varying speeds. The unprecedented, slanting, shining colossus would slowly change its silhouette, as if living its own solemn and momentous life, like the grandiose creation of a science-fiction writer. But there was no science fiction then. Tatlin’s work was a three-dimensional prototype. Ilya Ehrenburg, who had seen the model in the Trade-Union Hall, recalled: “It seemed to me as if I had looked through a chink and seen the twenty-first century.” Today, we realize that Tatlin’s bold experiment has a great deal in common with modern architectural ideas, as well as with mobiles.

The various buildings and structures of the future were very much on the minds of artists and others at that time, but it was still not possible to “build for posterity.” One of the few structures that have survived until now has indeed turned out to be worthy of its great aims and its long life. This is the memorial To Those Who Fell Fighting for the Revolution (plate 290), designed by the architect Lev Rudnev and erected on the Field of Mars in Petrograd. The quiet, solemn rhythm of the low granite walls echoes
Торжественное открытие памятника Софье Перовской.

Отдел Изобразительных Искусств возобновил после краткого перерыва, вызванного отъездом народного комиссара по просвещению А. В. Луначарского в Москву, открытие временных агитационных памятников политическим и общественным деятелям, писателям и художникам.

Первым после перерыва был открыт агитационный памятник великому вождю партии „Народной Воли“ Софье Перовской.

Памятник, исполненный скульптором О. Гризелли, поставлен на площади Восстания (б. Знаменская площадь), недалеко от входа в Николаевский вокзал.

Торжественное открытие памятника, состоявшееся в воскресенье, 29-го декабря, в 12 час. дня, собрало многочисленную публику. Среди присутствовавших были А. В. Луначарский, З. И. Лилина, писсельбурженец Н. А. Морозов, заведующий Отделом Изобразительных Искусств Д. П. Штернберг, Н. Н. Панин и др.

На торжество прибыли со своими знаменами две депутации от железнодорожников Николаевской жел. дороги.

12 FROM THE NEWSPAPER ART OF THE COMMUNE 8 JANUARY 1919
13 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO HEINRICH HEINE PETROGRAD 1918 SCULPTOR V. SINAISKY
14 MEMORIAL THE RED METALWORKER IN FRONT OF THE PALACE OF LABOR PETROGRAD 1918 SCULPTOR M. BLOCH
15 EXHIBITION OF DESIGNS FOR A MEMORIAL TO KARL LIEBKNECHT AND ROSA LUXEMBURG. PETROGRAD. 1920

16 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO SOPHIA PEROVSKAYA. PETROGRAD. 1918.
SCULPTOR O. GRIZELLI

17 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO V. VOLODARSKY. PETROGRAD. 1919.
SCULPTOR M. BLOCH

18 UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO THE UKRAINIAN POET TARAS SHEVCHENKO.
PETROGRAD. 1918.
SCULPTOR J. TILBERG
Lunacharsky’s words inscribed on the stone: “He who fell for a great cause is immortal. He who laid down his life for the people, he who fought and died for the common good, will live forever among the people.” Lunacharsky’s words on the granite blocks of the walls were in complete accord with Lenin’s idea of “revolutionary inscriptions” with which the city was to be adorned and which were to appeal to the hearts of the people.

The young Soviet Republic still lacked the means to realize all its conceptions in durable materials. Projects designed for the distant future in the end remained only projects. The artists of the period, sparing neither time nor effort, busied themselves with their customary everyday activity, often not only with art but with organizational matters as well. The artistic boards of Moscow and Petrograd included the architects Zholtovsky, Shchuko, and Rudnev; the painters Mashkov, Kuznetsov, Chekhonin, Tatlin, and Falk; the sculptors Matveyev and Konionkov; and many other well-known and as yet unknown names. Art led a feverish existence. In April 1919, artists of many different schools and trends – from the Wanderers (members of the Society for Circulating Art Exhibitions) to the World of Art group – staged an enormous exhibition in the Winter Palace. More than three thousand works were displayed. As early as the autumn of 1917, an Appeal of the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies stated: “Citizens, our former masters have gone away, leaving a huge legacy behind them. It now belongs to all the people. Citizens, take good care of this legacy, all these pictures, statues, and buildings. They embody your and your forefathers’ spiritual strength.”

The state nationalized and took under its protection picture galleries, art collections, and architectural monuments. Lenin himself signed the decrees that nationalized the Tretyakov Gallery, the collections of Sergei Shchukin, Ivan Morozov, and others; even in its most difficult moments, the Soviet government did not forget art. Large numbers of workers and soldiers visited the former estates of the tsar and the nobility. As Lenin stated, “Proletarian culture must consist of the logical development of the knowledge that mankind gained under the yoke of capitalist society, under the yoke of the landlords and bureaucrats.”

In addition to the gigantic exhibition in the Winter Palace, individual and group exhibitions were held. The state somehow found the means to purchase the artists’ works and provide the artists with studios. The artists worked with a rare enthusiasm. Even posters and holiday decorations, which by their very nature are destined to a short life, were attended to with more than just passion. They were produced with great care and scrupulous professionalism. Every artist, each in his own way, felt himself to be involved with history as it was being made.

A very strange thing had happened: a country that Europe had considered backward had in fact turned out to be advanced; its ideas and art drew the attention of the entire world. But life in the Soviet Republic was not easy. For its artists to write, to sculpt, to draw, month after month, in a constant state of undernourishment – this required the courage of talent too. In his still life *Herring* (1918; plate 170), Petrov-Vodkin has transformed ordinary objects of everyday life (food rations of the period) into a valuable and meaningful artistic image. The picture is thus in many ways a symbol of the times, for it conveys the message that life’s scarcities can be overcome by one’s richness of vision, that any small bit of reality reflects the boundless radiant world of which it is a part.

Herring rations and the like were attractive to artists not because they provided a means of depicting the misery of those hungry years but because they were ordinary objects lying on a table. By making use of such objects, the artists could express their own perceptions and reconstruct space, as did Cézanne in his still lifes with the apples of Provence. David Sterenberg employed almost the same motif as Petrov-Vodkin, but his *Lamp and Herring* is quite different in its rigorous harmony of ascetically simple forms and in the flattened, compressed, seemingly imaginary space.
Many still lifes were done in this period. The artist, his thoughts disturbed by the onrushing and elusive flow of events and opinions, often sought relief in the simple things of life. He peered into the mirror of ordinary impressions in order to apprehend the movement of his own vision more exactly. But the times made violent incursions even into the narrow world of the still life. They laid bare and illuminated something more than the artist’s subject matter — namely, his attitude to the world around him. The artist’s work became an echo of his reflections, of the transvaluation of values, where the usual appears new and unusual and is transformed into the aeolian harp of the artist’s thoughts.

The still life was an intimate creative laboratory where the artist shaped his ability to link the great and small and to perceive simple objects as parts of a broader, more agitated world. Art, which had rushed into the streets after October, now faced a stern test in the studios and workshops. What might seem to be fervent improvisation was often based on a dedicated professionalism and a ruthless fastidiousness. Of course, not all artists painted still lifes, but still lifes, at times, could be quite stunning in their manner of execution, technique, and subject matter.

The art of this period is strikingly lavish, even to the point of excess, and it reveals a constant striving for a mass audience. The artists who, in their unheated studios, sought the inner secrets of plastic harmony, never wavered; they set out to do something that had never been done before in Russia — to make decorations for revolutionary holidays and mass street spectacles. All this is closely linked to the brilliantly diverse theatre of the period: the gloomy sumptuousness of Golovin’s Masquerade, the sophisticated yet simple staging of Princess Turandot in Vakhtangov’s theatre, and Stravinsky’s Petrouchka, which is one of Alexander Benois’s most interesting pieces of theatrical scenery (plate 320).

The theatre sought, in addition to new plays, new principles of direction and stage design. In this respect, alongside such famous theatre names as Tairov and Meyerhold, the name of Mayakovsky is especially prominent. His Mystery-Bouffe is not only a new play in every way; it is new theatre. Its first performance, on November 7, 1918, combined the fantastical, the grotesque, the sarcastic, and the unfailingly optimistic. The direction of Meyerhold and Mayakovsky himself (who, incidentally, played several roles) and the odd rhythmics of Malevich’s stage design, which, in his conception, was to harmonize with the lighting and the actors’ movements, gave rise both to delight and to debate among the public. As it turned out, the play was both contemporary and long lasting. Later, while working on a new version of the play, Mayakovsky himself did the design sketches (in a poster style; plates 304–7). Mystery-Bouffe has changed with and adapted itself to the changing times. It is no accident that it was presented in German in a circus arena — once again in a new setting — for the delegates to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern in 1921. The new Soviet theatre thus made its first successful steps on the international stage.

Serious artistic quests were sometimes reflected in the interiors of cafés designed and decorated by well-known artists. A contemporary recalls that the interior of one café was “strikingly dynamic. There were different kinds of figures made of cardboard, plywood, and cloth, figures such as lyres, wedges, circles, funnels, and spiral-like designs. In some cases lamps were placed inside the figures. Everything was bathed in light, everything whirled, vibrated, and it seemed as if the entire decor were in motion.” Is this one of the first instances of kinetic art? Of course, it was a flagrant, albeit talented, attempt to shock and surprise rather than a real artistic discovery.

What was completely new was the staging of revolutionary holidays. To decorate Rossi’s or Zakharov’s architectural ensembles, which are masterpieces in themselves, and to create a holiday spectacle that both harmonized with the old city and transformed it — these were tasks that had no parallels.
21 COLUMN OF DEMONSTRATORS IN A FESTIVAL, PETROGRAD 1920

22 PREPARING A COLUMN OF DEMONSTRATORS FOR A FESTIVAL

23 CIRCUS ARTISTS IN A COLUMN OF FESTIVAL DEMONSTRATORS, MOSCOW 1919

24 MASS PERFORMANCE IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE THEATRE OF MUSICAL COMEDY, PETROGRAD 1921
25 COLUMN OF RED FLEET MEN IN A FESTIVAL. PETROGRAD. 1919

26 CELEBRATING THE RED ARMY’S FIRST ANNIVERSARY. PETROGRAD. 1919
The celebration of the Revolution’s first anniversary was particularly impressive, especially in Petrograd. The festive city became an open-air display of visual debates among artists of various schools and disparate talents. Nathan Altman’s powerful chords of bright angular surfaces burst apart the clear-cut austerity of Palace Square (plate 263), thereby replacing the customary unity of the architecture with the emotional unity of violent colors. The Alexander Column was piled high with jagged, flame-colored panels. Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, on the other hand, made the Admiralty “even more of an Admiralty”: he accentuated its design and made it yet more reminiscent of the old Petersburg by covering the revenue houses between the Admiralty’s two wings with a forest of masts and ship’s banners (plates 151, 153). Both approaches were symbolic; the city had its lost past restored and its future opened up to it. Kustodiev decorated one city square with festive and witty panels (plates 187–93). The workers, artisans, and peasants depicted on them recalled the jolly characters seen on shop signs or in popular prints.

The bridges, transformed into long triumphal arches, were especially impressive on holidays. Bright flags and painted placards flapped in the autumn wind, and the rich and painstakingly decorated garlands, obelisks, and standards turned the bridges over the Neva and its many branches into enchanting sights. Not a single bridge was like another.

Petrov-Vodkin, Sterenberg, Sergei Chekhonin, Lebedev, Shchuko, and many others worked on the decoration of Petrograd. Likewise, Alexander Vesnin, Victor Vesnin, Alexander Kuprin, and Sergei Gerasimov helped decorate Moscow. Aristarkh Lentulov and Pavel Kuznetsov staged the holiday performances there. The decoration of Moscow did not contain such marked contrasts as that of Petrograd; it had fewer artists concerned with the avant-garde or with the deliberate use of traditional elements.

For all their excellence, the surviving designs and drafts are not numerous enough to give a full picture of the reality of life more than fifty years ago. This is so not only because they are merely designs and not the actual decorations. One also has to take into account the fact that in 1918, Moscow (which was now the new capital) and Petrograd were the two largest cities in a country three-quarters occupied by counterrevolutionary and foreign troops. Hunger was chronic. There was not enough fuel. In the evenings, only a few street lamps burned. Cold rooms were lit by dim and flickering wick and kerosene lamps. Residents stood guard at the entrances to their homes to protect themselves from bands of looters roaming the cities. Shooting often broke out. Queues formed before dawn at the shops. But despite all the hardships of everyday life, the strong pulse of the Soviet Republic could still be felt. The working people were of one mind, confident that everything the Revolution’s enemies had destroyed could be restored, that all Russia would gain its freedom. Factory workers, conscious of their mission, put in long hours; the enemy was near, the fledgling Red Army had no equipment, and the country’s industry had to be rebuilt. The All-Union Central Executive Committee declared the country an armed camp, and the people gave all they had to the cause of victory. Life was hard, by no means a holiday. “The city was empty,” wrote Victor Shklovsky about Petrograd during the Civil War, “the streets had grown so wide that it seemed as if a river of cobblestones were lapping at the banks of the houses.” But then he added: “The city lived, it burned with the red flame of Revolution.” These last words are of course a metaphor. But revolutionary holidays brought the metaphor to life. The wonderful panels by the country’s best artists, the strings of lights, the festive columns, the blue beams of searchlights – it all seemed as if the future had suddenly arrived, as if all that lived, despite everything, in the souls of the people had suddenly materialized.

Similar celebrations were held even in small towns and villages. Obviously time has not spared many of the decorative panels and holiday placards; few have survived. One can only regret how short-lived these wonderful spectacles were and how many names will remain forever unknown.
"Neither science nor literature could then serve as the stepping-stones to a career," wrote Shklovsky of this glorious period. "We were born into bourgeois times but were set free by the unselfishness of the Revolution, which raised us high and made us think again."

Indeed, many of the events of the period were unprecedented, and a number of them came within the sphere of art. "Agit-prop (agitation-propaganda) trains" and "agit-prop ships" left for the distant corners of the country and for the front lines of the Civil War. Sometimes they showed up in places where people had never seen art or where heavy battles had recently been fought. The train walls and ship decks displayed pictures and "monumental posters." These trains and ships were designed to serve many functions: to stage a holiday, to provide information, and to give the first lessons in how to appreciate art. People who walked alongside the trains reacted with delight; they laughed and talked animatedly. Naturally, both narrative and allegorical forms of expression were employed. But no matter how detailed or lifelike the pictures - as, for example, on the walls of the "Red Cossack" train - the general effect was never lost. Such agit-prop trains and ships were used as festive overtures to meetings with government officials and lecturers. The trains were called "All-Union Central Executive Committees on wheels."

How can one measure the terrible burden on the poster artists, who often had to paint a poster, one that would touch the heart, in a single day or even overnight? The most celebrated posters were the innumerable ROSTA windows (cycles of posters issued by the Russian Telegraph Agency). Mikhail Cheremnykh proposed that posters be hung in empty shop windows to provide a kind of illustrated quick news service. The very first poster received an enthusiastic response from onlookers. Mayakovsky alone did several hundred of these posters, not only drawing them, but also composing verses to accompany the drawings. "The ROSTA windows," he said, "are telegraphic news transformed in a flash into a poster; they are decrees in the form of folk verses." There were few newspapers then, and many people could barely sound out the syllables of the words as they tried to read. But the simple and witty colored drawings, which were changed almost every day, caught the people's eyes. The ROSTA windows were at once a visual treat and an avidly absorbed news source. Little by little, they instructed the people; they even taught good taste - most of the ROSTA windows were done by artists of uncommon talent. In Moscow, Victor Deni and Cheremnykh worked along with Mayakovsky. In Petrograd, Lebedev and Vladimir Kozlinsky did many ROSTA windows. These political posters combined the traditional Russian popular print and the vivid expressiveness of the latest artistic discoveries. Their succinctness and utter simplicity appealed to the public's tastes and at the same time met a vital need. They included other elements as well: a narrative, the exactness of a moral message, the directness of a slogan, and complete comprehensibility.

Of course, not all the ROSTA windows and posters were masterpieces. But some were not only of artistic merit, they have also become part of the history of art. For example, consider Lebedev's poster The Red Army and Fleet in Defense of the Frontiers of Russia (plate 15), a bold combination of angular blocks of color. The syncopated rhythm of the black lines and surfaces breaks up space. The style is characterized by a blend, rare in art, of dramatic tension and the grotesque. The figures of the soldier and sailor are rigid hieroglyphs of unbending determination. In their silhouettes, the essential swinging movement in the military uniforms of the period has been captured. It is uncommon to see an image of the artist's own time so depicted.

An irreproachable example of graphic art, Dmitry Moor's Help! (plate 46), with its tragic grotesque, is notable not only for the novelty of its style. Neither the connoisseur nor the casual observer could walk by without stopping. As one looks at the frail and shrunken old man, whom a deadly dry wind seems to carry away into the dark depths, it is difficult
Вторник 2 июля 1918 г.

**КОНЦЕРТЫ-МИТИНГИ**

бывш. Александровское военное училище,
цирк Никитных,
цирк Салонского

БЕСПЛАТНО И ИЗЪЯТИЕ СВОБОДОРОЖНЫХ ПО МОБИЛИЗАЦИИ.

Начало в 8 ч. веч.
Наши достижения, 1918-1919

Воскресенье, 13-го апреля, в 2 часа дня
В ДВОРЕЦ ИСКУССТВ (Б. ЗИМНИЙ ДВОРЕЦ)
ТОРЖЕСТВЕННОЕ ОТКРЫТИЕ
ПЕРВОЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ СВОБОДНОЙ
ВЫСТАВКИ
ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЙ ХУДОЖНИКОВ ВСЕХ НАПРАВЛЕНИЙ.
В 3½ часа дня на выставке состоится
МИТИНГ-КОНЦЕРТ
ВХОД НА ВЫСТАВКУ БЕСПЛАТНЫЙ.
Выставка открыта ежедневно от 10 часов утра до 8 часов вечера.

29 NOTICE OF A CONCERT MEETING FOR MEN CALLED UP INTO THE RED ARMY 1918
30 THE NEWSPAPER ART OF THE COMMUNE, 9 FEBRUARY 1919
31 ACTORS FROM THE DRAMATIC STUDIO OF THE RED ARMY PERFORMING BEFORE THE PEOPLE
32 PARTICIPANTS IN A MASS THEATRICAL PROCESSION IN PETROGRAD. 1919
33 NOTICE OF THE FIRST STATE EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY ALL TRENDS OF ARTISTS IN THE PALACE OF ARTS 1919
34 35 BALLET-PANTOMIME FUENTE OVEJUNA BEING PERFORMED ON THE SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE WINTER PALACE. PETROGRAD. 1921
to think only of art and remain unshaken by the sheer force of human suffering depicted here. This impression is undoubtedly created by the artist’s painstaking effort: the superfluous is cast aside, and the significant is accentuated. The bony hands are almost illusory, and the deathly face resembles a skull.

The posters of this period can give an impression of the ideas and notions of the time: the generosity and talent of the artists have made these posters not only historical documents, but also poetic recollections of an era. Kozlinsky’s linocut posters sometimes depict human figures (Sailor; plate 107) and sometimes mass scenes (Meeting; plate 14). Many posters are notable in yet another respect: they are associated with an event itself, with a day, with an hour. Alexander Apsit’s poster Defend Petrograd with All Your Strength! (plate 26) can by no means hold its own with Moor’s or Deni’s best posters. However, it bears witness to the dramatic moments when the White armies were not far from the city. Soldiers passed by this poster on their way to the front, many on their way to die.

Other posters, although they did not become famous, modestly served the everyday needs of the Revolution. They stirred men’s thoughts, they explained, they taught a love for books, they taught how to subscribe to journals and how to give inoculations. But there were also posters that dealt with very important issues. “Have you volunteered?” asks the Red Army man (plate 24) in Moor’s poster: during the war against Nazi Germany a version of this poster once again summoned people to defend their country.

It is difficult to distinguish the utilitarian posters of this period from genuine works of graphic art. Kozlinsky’s linocuts, for example, stand on their own merit, and Lebedev’s posters have achieved a second life, so to speak, as museum pieces, while Alexander Rodchenko’s graphic compositions, even his book covers, are in their own way akin to posters. Indeed, art was quite cohesive and consistent in this period.

In graphic art – that form of art closest to reporting – there was a persistent pull toward monumentality and finished design. This was only natural: a statue made in several months almost always has an unfinished look about it, while a drawing or engraving can acquire, in the same time, an air of completeness.

It is little wonder, then, that one of the best and truly monumental depictions of Lenin is in fact a drawing. To be sure, Nikolai Andreyev’s statue and bust of Lenin (plate 276) have become the pride of Soviet portrait sculpture. But Andreyev’s remarkable drawing, which gives a three-quarter length view, has clearly grasped and defined the essential Lenin. It is a strikingly rare combination of strict and uncompromising accuracy and ascetic lyricism. It is at once a drawing and a memorial, a profound synthesis of what the artist saw and thought.

This portrait is in many ways similar to John Reed’s description of Lenin in Ten Days That Shook the World: “Little eyes, a snubbish nose, a wide, generous mouth . . .” Then follows an overall impression, deeper and fuller: “Unimpressive . . . loved and revered as perhaps few leaders in history have been. A strange popular leader – a leader purely by virtue of intellect . . . uncompromising and detached, without picturesque idiosyncrasies – but with the power of explaining profound ideas in simple terms, of analysing a concrete situation. And combined with shrewdness, the greatest intellectual audacity."

Very few drawings for which Lenin posed have survived. They include the portraits by Altman, Brodsky, Philip Maliavin, and Chekhonin, all very dissimilar artists. But Lenin’s spiritual energy, concentration, and natural manner, as it were, took hold of the artists and brought them together. Although the drawings differ in style, and each artist saw some new facet in Lenin’s face, we sense in all of them the same emotional makeup, the same inner clarity, as if the intensity of Lenin’s mental life has resulted in a corresponding intensity in the lines and shapes on the paper. These few portraits done from life are thus especially valuable.
Although by virtue of their work they lived in an intimate black-and-white world, the engravers, draftsmen, and illustrators had the same passions and thoughts as the artists of the period who worked in monumental dimensions. To be sure, tradition made itself felt more often in the graphic arts. Nonetheless, here too the better artists were able to combine their refined professional culture with a keen sense of the times. Long before the Revolution, Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva’s xylographic landscapes of Petersburg were famous. At first glance, her postrevolutionary engravings (plates 111–13) seem to have changed little; on closer examination, however, they do breathe with a new spirit. Spacious skies above the city’s outskirts, sweeping vistas, and factory smoke reveal a
new face of the city, one that goes far beyond what was considered the traditional beauty of Petersburg. It is understandable that not all artists conceived of reality optimistically. Dobuzhinsky’s *St. Isaac’s in a Snow Storm* (plate 110) gives evidence of difficult days of hunger and ruin. Yet this troubled scene is viewed poetically – the artist had not lost his ability to admire even sombre beauty. For Dobuzhinsky, Dostoyevsky’s *White Nights* provided an elegiac return to the past; the novel’s touching sadness inspired one of the best illustrated cycles (plates 123–24) in Russian graphic art of the 1920s. Alexander Benois continued to improve his long-famous illustrations for “The Bronze Horseman”; after the Revolution, a new edition of the poem, for which he did the illustrations, was published (plate 121).

The new Soviet literature pushed artists ever more toward new forms. Yury Annenkov did the drawings for Blok’s poem, “The Twelve” (plates 129–33). It would be out of the question, one would think, to illustrate such an unconventional poem so riddled with metaphors. But Annenkov was able to find a style that almost matched that of the poem. Blok later wrote the artist that many of Annenkov’s concepts and discoveries “were unbearably near and dear” to him. The brittle figures crowding the imagination, the sharply drawn details, the rushing, arhythmical strokes – these indeed followed Blok’s poem closely. It was as if two forms of art were groping for each other’s pulse.

As tradition survived into this new period, it frequently assumed a new facet: for example, a popular, poster-like rhythm that bursts into Chekhonin’s characteristic book cover for Reed’s *Ten Days* (plate 16). Other tendencies broke decisively with the past. One of the founders of the new Constructivist book design, Lazar (El) Lissitzky, was nevertheless much more serious about the legacy of the past than its many detractors. As he asserted in an article he wrote jointly with Ehrenburg, “the classic models need not frighten off modern artists. Pushkin and Poussin can teach us much, not about the revival of dead forms, but about the immutable laws of clarity, economy, and uniformity.” Lissitzky, Rodchenko, and other related artists put together a book out of its own essential components – the arrangement of the typeset text and the contrasts or harmonies between the various kinds of type, assembled in many unexpected ways. Photomontages were frequently included in such projects. The works of Rodchenko and Lissitzky were the “polygraphic flesh” of Mayakovsky’s books. In 1921, Lissitzky said: “It is time to transform our intellectuals’ meetings from idea bazaars into action factories.” In contrast to the many artists who were fond of high-flown declarations, the artists in Lissitzky’s circle proved their convictions in deeds. Their works often represented the new Soviet graphic art abroad, each time with unfailing success.

Even artists who were not at all inclined toward innovation were caught up in the spirit of the times. Those who designed luxury editions set to work on mass publications and began looking for new graphic techniques that could be used in cheap-paper books printed in large quantities. Dobuzhinsky, Benois, Vladimir Konashevich, Dmitry Mitrokhin, Lebedev, all experienced book designers, as well as painters who rarely dealt with books, tried to make inexpensive books beautiful and lively, books that spoke in “the language of books.” It was only after the Revolution that a type of book satisfying two previously incompatible goals was realized: a mass-circulation book that was inexpensive and yet in impeccable taste.

All that appeared in the most varied spheres of art and at opposite poles of artistic debate gradually merged into a new visual style, giving the epoch its own distinctive image. The headlines of newspapers and journals, labels, announcements, document covers, money, postage stamps, advertisements, posters – although diverse in the extreme, they all bore the mark of an ascetic elegance, a special harsh and angular clarity. The *realia* of these years can be confused with no others. These creations were like a plastic handwriting that the times used in order to write their artistic chronicle.
The dashing and colorful insignia sewn on the front of Red Army greatcoats, the “diamonds” on the sleeves of the first Red Army commanders, the early decorations and medals, as well as the country’s new heraldry – a state emblem, flags, and a whole new set of symbols – were all fresh and exciting.

Since art could find expression neither in massive buildings nor in magnificent homes and monuments, it built up a powerful potential energy. The urge to create something great, something sublime increased, but it did not always find an outlet. An architectural conception all too often remained only a model, a monumental painting remained only a sketch on paper. This drive to invest any artistic representation with a significance and with a rigorous and momentous form is especially noticeable in porcelain. It is no accident that artists other than porcelain painters decorated dishes and designed tableware. They thought that with time all these cups and dishes would become the everyday stuff of the new life and take up quarters once and for all in ordinary homes.

Several porcelain works were conceived as unique decorative objects, as, for example, the plates with Lenin’s portrait (after Altman’s drawing) or those displaying the portraits of the Decembrists. But most were conceived as items of general use. Consequently, many of them contained the day’s most topical slogans and emblems. The inscriptions were at times naive and at times moralizing. But nearly all these objects were marvelously original. Earlier traditions in porcelain decoration were either completely rejected or else used to provide a particularly rich contrast with the new tendencies. For example, the pretty flowers that shimmer in the glazing of Chekhonin’s plate (plate 358) emphasize the delicately rigid silhouette of the hammer and sickle. At the State Porcelain Works in Petrograd, a new decorative school appeared, with its own distinct style. The decorative elements in its designs took on an audacious, cleverly improvised form. The design and color are not deployed on the porcelain simply and gracefully, but as if taking part in a tense yet harmonious debate that finally comes to a well-formed synthesis literally before the viewer’s eyes. Even the machine parts dovetail with this organic decorative pattern in an unexpectedly natural way. The flowering of early Soviet porcelain was rapid and splendid. It can only be regretted that the works in this period could not have been produced in still larger quantities, even though the artists, in their very first experiments, worried lest their works become “collector’s pieces” or objets d’art.

The only art form that by its very nature remained to a certain extent confined to the studio was easel painting. It could not “take to the streets,” as had posters, holiday decorations, and sculptures (albeit short-lived ones). Nor could it be circulated in inexpensive editions accessible to everyone. Nevertheless, it was painting – whether the painters realized it or not – that was central to the art of the period. It was to become the definitive point of departure in judging culture from the vantage of history. In museums and galleries it has forever remained the most profound, crystallized, and significant branch of art. All its traditional genres have flourished: the portrait, the landscape, scenes of everyday life, and battle scenes. It would be hardly necessary to add that a “field of tension” arose not among the genres but among the various modes of perception and representation.

It is easiest, of course, to recognize polar opposites, for instance, “figurative” and “nonfigurative” art. In this period, however, there was no place for “middle-of-the-road” art. Indifferent art was therefore alienated art. Who would deny that the influence of Kandinsky was enormous? For the adepts of “nonfigurative art,” he will always be the messiah. But in the culture of revolutionary Russia his art and work were like an echo, like the art of a brief visitor. The point is not only that Vasily Kandinsky left his homeland forever in 1921; even from the beginning, his art and philosophy were introspective. He had little to do with surrounding reality not simply because he was a “nonrepresentational” artist, but also because, more than anything else, he followed his
own fancies. In 1918, he wrote that the artist's eye "should be turned inward, his ear toward the voice of inner necessity." To be sure, Kandinsky was not the only one to make such a pronouncement. But Malevich, the creator of *White on White*, a man who became deeply absorbed in the search for abstract harmonies, placed little value on his fame abroad as an abstract artist. He tried to make his art useful to Russia in drafting such projects as homes of the future, porcelain molds, the stage design for *Mystery-Bouffe*.

There were many admirers of Suprematism, including Rodchenko, Liubov Popova, and Ivan Puni. "Younger artists readily succumbed to the lure of Suprematism. They had an insatiable hunger for innovation, and it was of course easier and more "modern" to draw
geometric figures and give them fancy names than it was to comprehend the subtleties of drawing or classical perspective. The works of such artists displayed naive enthusiasm as well as blatant imitation. It was easier to shock the public than to make some sense of the world; the mania for form often sprang from moral blindness. In searching for abstract harmonies, one too easily lost interest in the living, breathing human being, in the spiritual drama, sufferings, and bright hopes of mankind. That which Émile Verhaeren had called "Grande heure où les aspects du monde changent" had no place in the aloof experiments of the Suprematists. On the other hand, they brought the spirit of passionate searching into art. Much arose under their influence, and much came out of the polemics they aroused. Suprematism fits easily into the general picture of European art at the beginning of the century. It is tempting to measure the art of the Revolution's first few years against Suprematism, but this approach is naive at best. The truth lies not in superficial judgments; as the French justly say, "Le doute est le commencement de la sagesse." There is a Russian saying, too - "You can't take a word from a song" - and, in Russian painting at that time, there were not only many words, but also many nuances.

It may seem that "leftist" (avant-garde) art would have quarreled first of all with strictly traditional painting, or in any case with painting that tried to reproduce the material world in detail. Of course, against the general background of early twentieth-century European art, the paintings of Brodsky, Alexander Moravov, Vladimirov, and Grekov look unusually realistic and, viewed superficially, old-fashioned. However, there is a reality that is in itself so meaningful that even its minor details are of value to art. Traditional realism hardly needs defending; history has long ago separated the good from the bad. Moravov's Meeting of a Committee of Poor Peasants (plate 155) is important precisely because of its uncompromising realism and its character as a poetic document.

Slowly and gradually, that which has always been the very essence of art began to emerge: a new vision of a new man. It is not just a question of bringing out a man's character, striking as it may be, but of revealing a character that typifies and personifies an epoch. Sergei Maliutin accomplished precisely this in his portrait of Dmitry Furmanov (plate 156). Furmanov was a commissar in Chapayev's division as well as a talented literary figure. In the portrait he is young, barely thirty, and he looks out at us, in a soft and penetrating way, with eyes that are still young and bright. But you also see in them the premature wisdom of a man who has experienced a great deal in his life. The composition and colors are purposely kept simple, so that artistic devices seem to fade into the background. It is thus the man that dominates the canvas, a man who knows the price of all the military hardships borne and who believes in the sense and worth of the new life that Furmanov and his comrades-in-arms were defending. At the same time, a slight, almost ironic smile softens the character's epic significance.

Russian painting in the postrevolutionary period requires a close and unbiased look if one is to understand where and how the times expressed themselves most fully, where and how the new ideas born of the socialist Revolution took shape. There is no "golden mean" in art; a computer cannot calculate its fate.

The artists of the period sought ways to match the scale of events. They perceived the Revolution as a cosmic event, and this in turn led them into allegories, such as Konstantin Yuon's A New Planet (plate 162). Kustodiev painted The Bolshevik (plate 9), a powerful giant holding a flag and striding over houses and crowds, a giant incommensurable with an older, smaller world. The artist's talent gives this unusual scene the vividness found in a joyful fairy tale. The poetic reality of a provincial town links the painting to an older world of art, into which the metaphoric image of the Revolution strides imperiously.

Sensitive artists saw the Revolution not as a series of specific events but as something that fundamentally changed their conception of the world. The usual became the unusual, and one's earlier perceptions vanished forever. Nature itself – as in a moment
of spiritual illumination – became a reflection of the artist’s emotions. Arkady Rylov’s *The Blue Expanse* (plate 159) is, in terms of subject and artistic techniques, quite like a traditional Russian landscape. But it also has something that catches at the spirit, an intoxicating joy. The waves, the deep blue sky, and the assured and proud flight of the swans make up not merely an epic and buoyant landscape. This is nature itself seen by a man who seeks something that resonates with his inner world. This is how reality looks in moments of joyous revelation.
Even in landscapes that lack this powerful epic impact a sense of the times is still present. In the paintings of various artists, young and old, the traditional (in the highest sense of the word) landscape continued to thrive. The age-old love of one's native land and a keen concern for it were gradually suffused with a new feeling: the lasting bond between the best of progressive Russian culture and the new culture of Soviet Russia. Nature was perceived as being open to any man able to see its boundless beauty. It is enough to recall Polenov's *Flood on the Oka* and Brodsky's winter landscapes.

In contrast is Boris Yakovlev's *Transport Returns to Normal* (plate 183), an unusual painting for its time. It depicts no nature and almost no people. Instead, there are rails, steam smoke, the rigid outlines of railway wagons, a locomotive, and telegraph poles moving away into the distance. The painting concentrates, seemingly, on the distinct and quiet rhythm of the good days to come. Simple things become symbols, but they do not lose their precise objectivity.

A clear note of optimism is also evident in the various art genres of the period. *Still Life with Samovar (Copperware)* by Ilya Mashkov (plate 206) is a holiday parade of things whose prosaic nature is transcended by the radiance of the painting, which is as impressive and festive as a solemn military march. Art's traditional genres – still life, landscape, portrait – absorb the joyful and troubled melodies of the epoch. During these years, many artists suddenly found fulfillment; the import of all that had happened brought them to an early maturity. Robert Falk had never depicted events, but he discovered anew for himself the world of people. His *Working Woman* (plate 254) – a woman of the 1920s – combines a felicitous spiritual tension and an austere tenderness. Falk's sensitive hand became more and more assured during this period, and an exultant restlessness suddenly appeared in his canvases. His *Red Furniture* (plate 253) and *Trunk and Earthenware (Heroic Still Life)* by Piotr Konchalovsky (plate 203), as well as the works of Kuznetsov, Rylov, Lentulov, and Kuprin, give clear evidence of the renewal and free search (where tradition became reconciled with the discoveries in the plastic arts during the stormy years of the Revolution) that made a triumphal entry even into ordinary motifs.

Not enough time had passed for a generalized and epic depiction of the Revolution to be achieved. This was to come later. But the ardent spirit and general outlook of the revolutionary years transformed and inspired painting. Artists naturally sought expression in more lasting forms, forms that were neither hackneyed nor fashionably avant-garde. In a word, they sought the forms of a new classic style.

The paintings of these years have preserved the many aspects of an extraordinarily complex reality. These are, for example, Rudolf Frenz’s feverish pictures of nighttime Petrograd. Or Osmiorkin’s paintings, which seem to hum with the fervor of restrained colors. Or the tormented, tireless quest of Pavel Filonov, who sought to encompass the contemporary world with his artistic yet difficult and nervous style. Confusion, searching, discovery – all this created a meaningful art that was no mere copying of reality and no mere dabbling with empty forms. Thus, there were many artists whose art, in one way or another, was both topical and timeless. Many not only “heard the Revolution with their heart” but left their heart and soul on canvas.

One exemplary painting in this respect is Petrov-Vodkin’s *After the Battle* (plate 164), a true picture of the twentieth century. The wooden table and tin pot are strikingly tangible. They seem to form a bridge from the ordinary world of “things” to the silence of men whose thoughts still dwell on the hell of a recent battle, men whose faces are serene and forever sad. Behind them, as a haunting reminder, we see a slain comrade falling headlong on a huge planet Earth. This very fate may overtake them on the morrow. It is a reminder closely linked with reality – from the past, to the present and to the future. The time sequence represented here extends far beyond the picture’s immediate realm. The art of old Russia reveals itself in the picture’s quiet and courageous sadness and its
balance between the real and the imaginary. The future, or what is almost the future, appears in the subject itself; in the nervous fragility of the seemingly crystalline forms; and in the juxtaposition of everyday objects with nobility of thought and the unity of events that have occurred at different times.

One can also sense here the excitement of the art of the period: the rigorous accuracy of Grekov's battle scenes, the searching for refined artistic harmonies at the turn of the century, the Suprematists' experiments, and much else. Petrov-Vodkin is of course not the arithmetic mean for the art of the period. It is only that in his work, more acutely than in the work of any other artist, the formation of the early Soviet classicism is discerned. It is an art with deep roots and with visions that rush headlong into the future.

*After the Battle* was painted in 1923. For five years Soviet Russia had been in existence, and for five years art had "listened to the Revolution with its heart."

The previous year, 1922, had been a year of great change. The invalidity of the avant-garde position had by then been clearly revealed. The "left" had finally come to see, to understand that the people had not accepted their art, and many "leftists" themselves admitted that their position was untenable.

The need to organize realist artists, those who had won wide recognition among the new Soviet citizenry, became more and more pressing. As a result, the AARR – the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia – was formed. A new period in Soviet art had begun, a period of decisive evolution toward socialist realism. There is no single sculpture, painting or artist that can fully represent this epoch in history. Its most promising beginnings have had and will continue to have a future. The well-known Russian actress and remarkable social activist Maria Andreyeva said in 1918, on the first anniversary of October: “The October Revolution is the greatest event in the history of the world. It is the victory and holiday of the proletariat, it is joy and a firm bright belief in its final triumph. But the battle is not yet finished. Our blood and that of others still flows, and a holiday, it seems to us, should therefore be serious and austere. After all, there is still a proletariat, and there is still capital...”

These words are very appropriate for the art of the period from 1917 to 1922 and its meaning for the future. It was a “festive” art, but nevertheless "serious and austere."

This complex period in Soviet art needs neither praise, imitators, nor hasty judgments. For the first time in the world’s history, this art accepted responsibility for the first steps taken by the culture of the first Soviet country. As it fades away into history, it still remains contemporary. This is of course the mark of classic art. In this case, however, it is a special kind of classic art – revolutionary classic art.
NOTES  The information in the captions to the plates and the index of names is given according to available data. Dimensions are given only for paintings, prints, sculpture, and surviving designs for the festive decoration of cities. The imperfect technical quality of some of the reproductions is due to the state of the original works used. The size of the stamps (48-53, 360-371) and commemorative medals (378-384) reproduced in the album is substantially larger than that of the originals.
In beginnings and in ends,
artists, let your faith be strong.
Know where hell and heaven await us.
It is your gift to measure all you see
with dispassionate eyes.
Let your gaze be firm and clear.
Rub out the incidental details
and you'll see the splendor of the world.
Find out where the light shines
and you'll know where lies the dark.
Let all that's sacred in the world,
and all that's wicked, pass in unhurried flow
through the fire of your heart and the cool of
your mind.

ALEXANDER BLOK. FROM THE POEM "RETRIBUTION"
VALENTIN SEROV

1 “Soldiers, soldiers, heroes every one...” 1905.
Tempera and charcoal on cardboard, 47.5 x 71.5 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
2 The Massacre. 1905. Oil on canvas, 70 x 80 cm.
The USSR Museum of the Revolution, Moscow
YEVGENY LANGERAY
3 Feast after a Massacre. Drawing for the satirical journal Adskaya Pochta (Hell's Post), 1906, No 2

MSTISLAV DOBUZHINSKY
4 “October Idyll.” Drawing for the satirical journal Zhupel (The Bugaboo), 1905, No 1

IVAN BILIBIN
5 Donkey in Glory. Drawing for the satirical journal Zhupel (The Bugaboo), 1906, No 3

VALENTIN SEROV
6 “Harvest.” 1905. India ink on paper 25 x 36.5 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
7 The Year 1905. After Quelling a Riot. 1905. Black lead and crayons on paper, 29.8 x 25 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN

8 Bathing the Red Horse. 1912. Oil on canvas, 160 x 186 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
We Russians are living through an epoch which has few equals in epic scale . . .
An artist's job, an artist's obligation is to see what is conceived, to hear that music with which "the air torn up by the wind" resounds . . .
What then is conceived?
To redo everything. To arrange things so that everything becomes new; so that the false, dirty, dull, ugly life which is ours becomes a just life, pure, gay, beautiful . . .
"Peace and the brotherhood of nations" — that is the banner beneath which the Russian revolution is taking place. For this its torrent thunders on. This is the music which they who have ears to hear must hear . . .
With all your body, all your heart and all your mind, listen to the Revolution.

ALEXANDER BLOK. FROM THE ARTICLE
"THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE REVOLUTION." 1918
BORIS KUSTODIEV

9 The Bolshevik. 1920. Oil on canvas. 101 x 141 cm
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
IGNATY NIVINSKY
10 Design for the poster Red Lightning. 1919. The Central Archives of Literature and Art, Moscow

NIKOLAI KUPREYANOV
11 The Cruiser “Aurora.” 1922. Xylograph. 11.7 x 22.2 cm
Revolution is the roar of the streets, the tramp of the crowd read aloud. Only in Revolution can one bare one’s breast to bullets, blowing them off like fluff.

NIKOLAI ASEYEV "THIS IS THE REVOLUTION"
The Dead of the Paris Commune
Have Risen under the Red Banner
of the Soviets.

The Dead of the Paris Commune
Have Risen under the Red Banner
of the Soviets.

Vladimir Kozinsky

13 The Dead of the Paris Commune
Have Risen under the Red Banner
of the Soviets.
ROSTA window. 1921
VLADIMIR KOZLINSKY

14 Meeting. 1919.
Linocut. 32.5 x 22 cm.
Rally the ranks into a march!  
Now's no time to quibble or browse there,  
Silence, you orators!  
You  
have the floor  
Comrade Mauser.  
Enough of living by laws  
that Adam and Eve have left.  
Hustle old history's horse.  
Left!  
Left!  
Left!

Ahoy, blue jackets!  
Cleave skywards!  
Beyond the oceans!  
Unless  
your battleships on the roads  
blunted their keels' fighting keenness!  
Baring the teeth of his crown,  
let the lion of Britain whine, gale-heft.  
The Commune can never go down.  
Left!  
Left!  
Left!

There –  
beyond sorrow's seas  
sunlit lands uncharted.  
Beyond hunger,  
beyond plague's dark peaks,  
tramps the marching of millions!  
Let armies of hirelings ambush us,  
streaming cold steel through every rift.  
L'Entente can't conquer the Russians.  
Left!  
Left!  
Left!

Does the eye of the eagle fade?  
Shall we stare back to the old?  
Proletarian fingers  
grip tighter  
the throat of the world:  
Chests out! Shoulders straight!  
Stick to the sky red flags adrift!  
Who is marching there with the right?  
Left!  
Left!  
Left!
... So, with the crash of artillery, in the dark, with hatred, and fear, and reckless daring, new Russia was being born...

Like a black river, filling all the street, without song or cheer, we poured through the Red Arch... In the open we began to run, stooping low and bunching together, and jammed up suddenly behind the pedestal of the Alexander Column...

After a few minutes huddling there, some hundreds of men, the army seemed reassured and, without any orders, suddenly began again to flow forward. By this time, in the light that streamed out of all the Winter Palace windows, I could see that the first two or three hundred men were Red Guards...

A soldier and a Red Guard appeared in the door, waving the crowd aside, and other guards with fixed bayonets. After them followed single file half a dozen men in civilian dress - the members of the Provisional Government...

We came out into the cold, nervous night, murmurous with obscure armies on the move, electric with patrols... Underfoot the sidewalk was littered with broken stucco, from the cornice of the Palace where two shells from the battleship Aurora had struck; that was the only damage done by the bombardment.

It was now after three in the morning. On the Nevsky all the street-lights were again shining, the cannon gone, and the only signs of war were Red Guards and soldiers squatting around fires.

Up the Nevsky, in the empty after-midnight gloom, an interminable column of soldiers shuffled in silence - to battle with Kerensky...

In Smolny Institute the Military Revolutionary Committee flashed baleful fire, pounding like an over-loaded dynamo...

JOHN REED. FROM HIS BOOK
TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD. 1919

With the greatest interest and with never slackening attention I read John Reed's book, Ten Days That Shook the World. Unreservedly do I recommend it to the workers of the world. Here is a book which I should like to see published in millions of copies and translated into all languages. It gives a truthful and most vivid exposition of the events so significant to the comprehension of what really is the Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

LENIN. FROM THE INTRODUCTION
TO THE AMERICAN EDITION OF JOHN REED'S BOOK
TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD. 1919
Сергей Чехонин
16 Обложка к книге Джона Рида
"10 дней, которые потрясли мир"
1923
A. NIKOLAYEV  
17 Long Live the World Communist Revolution! Poster. 1918. Voronezh  

DMITRY MOOR  
18 Death to World Imperialism. Poster. 1919  

VICTOR DENI  
19 Capitalism. Poster. 1919  

20 The Entente Hiding behind the Mask of Peace. Poster. 1920  

21 The League of Nations. Poster. 1920  

22 Either We Destroy Capitalism or it Walks All over Us. Poster. 1919
Украинская Социалистическая Советская Республика.
ПРОБЕЖАЛ ВСЕ СТРАНЫ, СОЕДИНИТЕСЬ!
АНТАНАТА
МИР
ПОД МАСКОЙ МИРА

ЛИГА НАРОДОВ
КАПИТАЛИСТЫ
ВСЕХ СТРАН
СОЕДИНИТЕСЬ!

ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ РАБОЧЕ-КРЕСТЬЯНСКАЯ,
СОВЕТСКАЯ ВЛАСТЬ!
ВСЯ ВЛАСТЬ КАПИТАЛИСТАМ!
СМЕРТЬ РАБОЧИМ И КРЕСТЬЯНАМ!
СМЕРТЬ КАПИТАЛУ,
ИЛИ СМЕРТЬ ПОД ПЯТОЙ КАПИТАЛА
К ОРУЖИЮ, РАБОЧИЕ И КРЕСТЬЯНЕ!

ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ
Рабоче-Крестьянская Красная Армия!
ВСЕ В РЯДЫ КРАСНОЙ АРМИИ!

КРАСНЫЙ ПЕТРОГРАД
В ОПАСНОСТИ!

Белогвардейцы — русские, финские, эстонские, подкупленные и поддерживаемые англо-французскими буржуями, собрали все свои силы для решительного натиска на столицу мировой революции.

ОБЯЗАТЕЛЬНОЕ ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ
О МОБИЛИЗАЦИИ
КО ВСЕМУ РАБОЧИМ ПЕТРОГРАДА И ГУБЕРНИИ

23 Appeals of 1918–20 to struggle against
the Intervention:
WORKERS AND PEASANTS, TO ARMS!
LONG LIVE THE RED ARMY OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS!
RED PETERGRAD IS IN DANGER!
BINDING DEGREE REQUIRING THE MOBILIZATION OF
ALL WORKERS OF PETERGRAD CITY AND PROVINCE
Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge!

Poster. 1920
ГРУДЬЮ НА ЗАШИТУ ПЕТРОГРАДА!
Вперед, на защиту Урала!
VICTOR DENI
28 Every Blow of the Hammer Is a Blow at the Enemy! Poster. 1920
29 Start Mowing in Time! Poster. 1920

UNKNOWN ARTIST
30 Strike the Pole with All Your Strength
and Wrangel Too We’ll Beat at Length!!! Poster
Wrangel, general of the tsarist army, was one of the leaders of the counterrevolution
during the Civil War of 1918-20.
1) Мы дали Панам урок

2) Этот урок не пошел в прок

3) Подымайтесь дружно

4) Дать второй урок нужно

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

ROSTA window No 336. 1920

1. THE LESSON WE TAUGHT THE POLISH GENTS
2. IT DIDN'T TEACH THEM ANY SENSE
3. SO UP ON YOUR FEET ALL YOU MEN
4. WE'LL HAVE TO GO TEACH THEM AGAIN
14) Товарищи! Бойтесь попасть в такую пасть чтобы с нами никогда не случилось это.
Сплотимся.
Власть укрепим советов!
ГЛАВПОЛИТПРОСВЕТ № 146.
The first ROSTA windows came out singly, were done in one copy only; the later ones were stenciled and appeared in dozens or hundreds of copies. These windows give a picture-book history of the Soviet Union’s three most tense years of struggle. They are the forerunners of all Soviet satirical magazines.

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY. FROM THE ARTICLE
“ROSTA SATIRICAL WINDOWS.” 1930

33 Remember Red Army Barracks Day.
ROSTA window No 729. 1920
1. WE’VE FINISHED OFF RUSSIA’S WHITE GUARDS. THAT’S NOT ENOUGH;
2. THE OGRE OF WORLD CAPITALISM IS STILL ALIVE,
3. THAT MEANS WE STILL NEED THE RED ARMY,
4. AND THAT MEANS WE’VE GOT TO HELP IT OUT – THE TASK IS CLEAR.

34 ROSTA window No 5. 1919
WORKERS:
FORGET NEUTRALITY – A FOOLISH THOUGHT!
IF YOU WANT TO LIVE AT ODDS WITH ONE ANOTHER, DENIKIN WILL CATCH YOU ALL DISTRAUGHT,
THE GENERAL WILL Gobble YOU ALL UP,
BUT IF MILLIONS RESPOND TO THE CALL FOR A PARTY WEEK,
FROM FACTORY AND FIELD,
THE WORKER WILL BE GIVING REAL, LIVING PROOF
THAT COMMUNISTS ARE AFRAID OF NO ONE.

Denikin, general of the tsarist army, was one of the leaders of the counterrevolution during the Civil War of 1918-20.
As soon as telegrams came in (for newspapers waiting to go to press), poets and journalists would immediately give out “themes” – a biting piece of satire, a line of verse. Throughout the night artists would mess about on the floor over huge sheets of paper, and in the morning, often before the newspapers appeared, posters – satirical windows – would be hung up in the places where people most often gathered: agit-centers, stations, markets, etc. The posters were enormous, 3 meters square, many-colored, and always attracted even someone running past. The first “poster department,” with Cheremnykh as its head, opened branches in Petersburg, Kharkov, Rostov-on-Don, Baku, right down to the smallest towns . . .

Vladimir Mayakovsky from the Article “The Revolutionary Poster” 1923

Mikhail Cheremnykh
35 ROSTA window No 580. 1920
1. THE ENTENTE IS ENRAGED BY WRANGEL’S DEFEAT;
2. HE DIDN’T HOLD ON!
3. NOW WHO IS THERE TO HIRE?
4. PETLUIRA IS FEEBLE;
5. THE SRs ARE FEEBLE;
6. POOR ENTENTE! HASN’T GOT THE BRAINS TO THINK UP SOMEONE TO SMASH THE RED ARMY.
Simon Petliura was one of the ring leaders of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie-nationalist movement in the years 1918–20.

SRs (Social-Revolutionaries): a petit-bourgeois party which after 1917 came out openly against Soviet power.

Vladimir Mayakovsky
36 ROSTA window No 867. 1921
IF YOU WANT SOMETHING – JOIN UP
1. WANT TO CONQUER COLD?
2. WANT TO CONQUER HUNGER?
3. WANT TO EAT?
4. WANT TO DRINK?
HURRY UP AND JOIN THE SHOCK BRIGADE OF THE MODEL WORKERS.
Uchredilka is a contemptuous name for the Constituent Assembly, which during the 1917 October Revolution showed its hostility to the program of the Bolshevik Party and to the true interests of the people.

Boris Savinkov, a counterrevolutionary, several times headed conspiracies against Soviet Russia.
VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

38 ROSTA window No 132. 1920
1. THE ENTENTE’S WEAPON IS MONEY
2. THE WHITE GUARDS’ WEAPON IS LYING
3. THE MENSHEVIKS’ WEAPON - THE KNIFE IN THE BACK
4. PRAVO (TRUTH)
5. OPEN EYES
6. AND RIFLES – THOSE ARE THE COMMUNISTS’ WEAPONS.

Mensheviks, menshevism: a petit-bourgeois opportunist movement in the Russian Social Democratic Party which was hostile to Marxism-Leninism.

39 Glavpolitprosvet window No 141. 1921. Detail
40 ROSTA window No 337. 1920. Detail
A STORY OF BUBLIKS* FOR SALE TO THE PUBLIC AND OF A WOMAN WHO DENIED THE REPUBLIC

1. THIS STORY TOOK PLACE ONE DAY IN SOME REPUBLIC OR OTHER. A WOMAN WENT DOWN TO THE MARKET, CARRYING BUBLIKS WITH HER.

2. SHE HEARS THE TRAMP OF FEET NEARBY— MUSIC WHISTLES DOWN THE WIND— SOLDIERS OF THE RED ARMY ARE SPEEDING TO SMASH THE POLES AT THE FRONT.

3. ONE OF THE SOLDIERS FELT LIKE EATING, SO HE SAYS TO HER: "MA, GIVE A HUNGRY MAN A BUBLIK! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO THE FRONT.

4. IF MY JAWS DON'T GET TO WORK, I'LL BE AS FEEBLE AS DEAD MAN'S BONES.

5. THE POLES WILL DEVOUR THE REPUBLIC, IF WE'RE UNDERFEED."

6. THE WOMAN SAID, "NOT ON YOUR LIFE! I'M NOT GIVING UP MY BUBLIKS! BE OFF WITH YOU, SOLDIER. LEAVE ME ALONE! I DON'T GIVE A TINKER'S FOR THE REPUBLIC!"

7. SO OFF WENT OUR REGIMENT, SKINNY AND THIN, BUT THE POLES ARE ALL GIGANTIC; THE POLES' MIGHT DOES US IN AT THE FIRST ENCOUNTER.

8. THE POLE RACES BY, FEROIOUS, FURIOUS, BRINGING DEATH TO THE WORKING MAN. ON THE WAY HE COMES UPON THE STUPID WOMAN AT THE MARKET.

9. THE POLE SEES THE FAT, WHITE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. IN A FLASH SHE'S EATEN UP. SHE AND HER BUBLIKS.

10. TAKE A LOOK, COME OUT ON THE SQUARE! NO PEASANTS, NO SITNIKS** THERE. YOU'VE GOT TO FEED IN GOOD TIME THE MAN OF THE RED ARMY!

11. SO FEED THE RED MEN THEN! BRING YOUR BREAD AND DON'T COMPLAIN, OTHERWISE YOU'LL LOSE YOUR BREAD AND YOUR HEAD TOGETHER!

*Bubliks: Bread-rings
**Sitniki: White bread made of sifted flour.
ЕСЛИ ТЫ НЕ ХОЧЕШЬ КОРМИТЬ ПОМЕЩИКА
НАКОРМИ ФРОНТ, ЗАЩИЩАЮЩИЙ ТВОЮ ЗЕМЛЮ И ТВОЮ СВОБОДУ.

VLADIMIR LEBEDEV
44 ROSTA window. 1920
PEASANTS.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO FEED THE LANDLORDS, FEED THE MEN AT THE FRONT INSTEAD, WHO ARE DEFENDING YOUR LAND AND YOUR FREEDOM.
Semion Budionny (1883–1973), a hero of the Civil War of 1918-20
was a commander of the First Cavalry Army which operated
against enemies of the Soviet Republic in the Ukraine,
northern Caucasus, and the Crimea. He subsequently became
Marshal of the Soviet Union.
Хлеба!
Защитникам земли, взятой крестьянами у помещиков.

Для успешной борьбы с национально-
гиантским рабством и буржуазной кабалой
необходимо весь юг России НЕМЕДЛЕННО
обеспечить хлебом!

Ко всему крестьянству хлебородных областей и губерний
БРАТЬЯ КРЕСТЬЯНЕ!

Дорогие братья! Как только мы, боевые революционеры, обращаемся к Вам с этим призывом.
Напомним, что, погибают наши товарищи, которые ведут борьбу за свободу и равенство.
Они сражаются за наше будущее, за наше счастье.

СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЕ ОТЕЧЕСТВО В ОПАСНОСТИ!

Слышиите хлеб в пустующие элеваторы, в амбары и сыпучие пункты близ станций железных
дорог и пристаней судоходных рек!

Наша железная дорога разрушена благодаря происходящим на ней неуважительным и скандальным преступлениям. Трусы, мародеры
и спекулянты, натянутые на жертву солдатская шинель, чинят наглый на станциях железных дорог и останавливаяло враждебное
действие поезда.

Сознательные и верные революционные солдаты, крестьяне, и рабочие! Мы призываем вас, оказывать поддержку всем тем, кто
окружает наш железный дороги и препятствует хулиганам вмешиваться во внутренние порядки их. Разрушенная железная
дорога вб этих отбросов помогает нашему захламленному врагу — немецкой буржуазии и поэтому они — вне закона.

ИЗВЕЩЕНИЕ ОТ СОВЕТА НАРОДНЫХ КОМИССАРОВ.

По техническим условиям хлебный паек может быть
увеличен до полфунта только с 21-го января. 19 и 20
января будет выдано по старому, т. е. по четверть фунта.

Председатель Сов. Нар. Комиссаров В. УЛЬЯНОВ (Ленин).
Народный Комиссар по Продовольствию ШЛИХТЕР.
Управляющий д'елами Сов. Нар. Ком. ВЛАД. БОЧ-БРУЕВЧ.
Секретарь Н. ГОРБУНОВ.
Петроградская Центральная Продовольственная Управа.

18 января 1918 г.
Stamps issued in aid of the famine-stricken population. 1921–22

48 In aid of the famine-stricken population of the Volga Region

49, 50, 52 Steamer, Train, Aeroplane

51 The Ukraine’s aid to the starving

53 South-East’s aid to the starving

SERGEI CHEKHONIN

54 The Union of Art Workers Aids the Starving. Poster, 1921

In 1921 the Volga Region was hit by a terrible famine – the result of an unprecedented drought. Posters, slogans, and newspaper articles called on people to help the starving and to share their last crust of bread with them. People did everything they could and more.
СОЮЗ РАБОТНИКОВ ИСКУССТВ В ПОЛЬЗУ ГОЛОДАЮЩИХ 1921
MIKHAIL CHEREMNYKH

55 ROSTA window. 1920
1. YOU’LL BE BOLD.
2. THE WHITES COLD.

56 ROSTA window. 1920
1. THE ENTENTE’S A GLUTTON.
2. THE ENTENTE WILL BURST ITS BUTTONS.

57 ROSTA window. 1921
1. WORKERS! YOU’RE BEARING THE BANNER OF THE COMMUNE; REMEMBER THOSE WHO BORE IT BEFORE US.
2. BEAR IT AS IT WAS BORNE IN PARIS FORTY DAYS AMID SMOKE AND FIRE.
   BUT THERE WERE TOO FEW OF THEM:
   THE BANNER CAME DOWN IN A WHIRLWIND OF FLAME.
3. NOW WITH US, FIFTY YEARS ON,
   THE SCARLET COLOR OF THE COMMUNE HAS BLAZED OUT AGAIN
4. TIME AFTER TIME, ONE ARMY AFTER ANOTHER HAS TRIED
   TO TEAR DOWN THE RED BANNER OF THE COMMUNE.
5. BUT THERE ARE MILLIONS OF US, AND ONE AFTER ANOTHER
   OUR ENEMIES HAVE FALLEN APART IN SMOKE AND DUST.
6. STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNE NOW, AT THE WORKBENCH,
   TO LAST NOT JUST FOR FORTY DAYS, BUT FORTY CENTURIES!
MIKHAIL CHEREMNYKH

58 ROSTA window No 780. 1920

1. THIS IS WHAT THE TSAR GAVE MEDALS FOR:
2. YEARS OF SERVICE
3. DISTINCTION IN BATTLE
4. ZEAL
5. SPECIAL MERIT IN PUSHING IN FACES
6. THE REPUBLIC OF LABOR GIVES MEDALS TO HEROES OF WORK.

59 ROSTA window No 744. 1920

WE’VE TAUGHT A NUMBER OF MIGHTY POWERS NOT TO MAKE WAR ON US, BUT WE’VE STILL GOT TO BE PREPARED
1. WE SUCCEEDED IN TEACHING A LOT OF THEM
2. BUT THERE ARE STILL A LOT SHARPENING THEIR KNIVES
3. WHILE ENTERING UPON YEARS OF WORK,
4. BE READY FOR THIS TOO, COMRADE!
А что ты сделала для фронта?
Отдай последнее тем, кто умирает, защищая тебя.

СМОЛРОСТА
DMITRY MOOR

60 Wrangel Is Still Alive, Smash Him without Mercy! Poster. 1920

61 A Red Gift for the White Pole. Poster. 1920

UNKNOWN ARTIST

62 ROSTA window. 1920, Smolensk
What have you done to help the front?
Give all you have to those who give their lives for you.

NIKOLAI KOCHERGIN

63 The Home Guard Is the Army of Labor! Poster. 1920

NIKOLAI KOGOUT

64 By Force of Arms We Have Smashed the Enemy,
with Our Hands We Will Get Bread.
Comrades, Get Down to Work! Poster. 1921

DMITRY MOOR

65 Soviet Russia Is a Camp under Siege. Defend It! Poster. 1919
ALEXEI KRAVCHENKO

66 Red Army Men Reconstruct a Blown-up Bridge. 1923.
Xylograph, 18.1 x 14.6 cm.
VADIM FALILEYEV
67 The Troops of the Revolution. 1919. Linocut. 6 x 18 cm.
ALEXEI KRAVCHENKO
68 The Moscow Kremlin. 1923. Xylograph. 16.4 x 13.2 cm.
МОСКВА
—
ТРЕТЬЕМУ
КОНГРЕССУ
КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКОГО
ИНТЕР.
НАЦИО
НАЛА

ИЗДАНИЕ
МОСКОВСКОГО СОВЕТА МСМХХI
ПРОЛЕТАРИИ ВСЕХ СТРАН
СОЕДИНИТЕСЬ!

КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКИЙ
ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛ

№ 1
МОСКВА-
КРЕМЛЬ.

ПЕТРОГРАД-
СМОЛЬНЫЙ.

10 МАЯ
1949 г.
71 Cover of the journal The Communist International, 1919, No 1

GEORGY NARBUT

72 Cover of the journal Mistetstvo (Art), 1920, Kiev

BORIS GRIGORYEV

73 Cover of the journal Plamia (The Flame), 1918, No 33

ISAAC BRODSKY

74 Cover of the journal Plamia (The Flame), 1918, No 27
March 8 – Women’s Emancipation Day. Poster. 1920
It may well be said that in the first years after the Revolution the poster was the main or at least the most necessary art form. It was journalism in pictures, the *bon mot* brought to life.

The poster stimulated thought, expressed indignation, bubbled over with enthusiasm, provoked laughter, responded to events on the instant, and communicated news without delay. Posters were drawn at night, to be pasted up on the streets in the morning. Although the sheets were devised with the knowledge that their life was but a day, in the history of art they have lasted down the years. They have lasted not merely as witnesses of great events, but also because of their great and rigorous perfection.

Maximum information with the least means: this was impossible without penetrating insight and true craftsmanship, without a profound belief in the cause of the Revolution.
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THE WORKERS' PRESS IS A TORCH WHICH LIGHTS THE WAY TO A NEW LIFE.

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WORKER! IF YOU ARE LITERATE, BRING TOGETHER A GROUP OF ILLITERATES AND READ THEM A NEWSPAPER — IT IS YOUR DUTY.

77–80 Slogans of the Northern Office of the VTsIK Central Press Agency (VTsIK: All-Russian Central Executive Committee)
ALEXEI RADAKOV

81 He Who Is Illiterate
Is Like a Blind Man.
Failure
and Misfortune
Lie in Wait for Him
on All Sides.
Poster. 1920

НЕГРАМОТНЫЙ тот-же слепой
всюду его ждут неудачи и несчастья.
ЖЕНЩИНА!
УЧИСЬ ГРАМОТЕ!

ЭХ, МАМАНЯ! БЫЛА БЫ ТЫ ГРАМОТНОЙ, ПОМОГЛА БЫ МНЕ!

YELIZAVETA KRUGLIKHOVA
82 Women! Learn Your Letters!
Poster. 1923
ALEXANDER RODCHENKO

83 The Press Is Our Weapon. Poster

ALEXANDER APSIT (PETROV)

84 Fit Out Reading Rooms! Poster. 1919

VERA MUKHINA

85 The Masses Are Powerless If They Are Not United, and Unity Is Useless without Knowledge. Poster. 1919

S. IVANOV

86 Books Are Nothing But Men Talking to Everyone. Poster. 1920
Творчество
ЖУРНАЛ
ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ, ИСКУССТВА, НАУКИ И ЖИЗНИ
№ 5-6 1920
ИЗДАНИЕ МОСК. СОВ. РН К. А.
Cover of the journal *Russkoye Iskusstvo* (Russian Art), 1923, No 1
VLADIMIR FAVORSKY

89 Cover of the journal Pechat i revolutsiya (The Press and the Revolution), 1923, No 4

90 Still Life with Books. 1919. Xylograph, 14.1 × 18.2 cm.

91 View of Moscow from the Vorobyov Hills. From the series Views of Moscow. 1918. Xylograph, 11.2 × 12.2 cm.

92 Cover of the magazine Makovets, 1923, No 3. Xylograph, 18.1 × 17.5 cm.
VLADIMIR FAVORSKY

93 The Sverdlov Hall. 1921. Xylograph. 21 x 17.2 cm.
Sheets from the album October 1917–1918. Heroes and Victims of October. 1918.

Drawings by Xenia Boguslavskaya, Vladimir Kozlnsky, Sergei Makletsov, and Ivan Puni;
text by Vladimir Mayakovsky

94–99 Heroes: soldier, sailor, laundress, railwayman, seamstress, mechanic
VLADIMIR KOZLINSKY
Sheets from the unpublished album *Petersburg Today*. 1919

100 *All Power to the Soviets!* Linocut, 22.5 x 14.7 cm.

101 *Street.* Linocut, 31.6 x 21.6 cm.
ТОВ. ЛЕНИН ОЧИЩАЕТ
ЗЕМЛЮ ОТ НЕЧИСТИ.
103-6 Victims: banker, general, lady, factory-owner.
VLADIMIR KOZLINSKY

107 Sailor. 1919. Linocut, 33.1 × 22.1 cm.

MSTISLAV DOBUZHINSKY

108 The Sts. Peter and Paul Fortress. From the album Petersburg in 1921. 1921. Lithograph
VLADIMIR KONASHEVICH

109 In the Old Sylvia. From the album
The Pavlovsk Park, 1922. Colored lithograph
MSTISLAV ROBUZHINSKY
110 St. Isaac's in a Snow Storm, From the album Petersburg in 1921. 1921 Lithograph
ANNA OSTROUMOVA-LEBEDEVA


112 The Moika near the Pevchesky Bridge. 1919. Xylograph, 13.1 × 20.6 cm.

113 Rigged for Fishing. 1917. Colored xylograph, 27.1 × 38.8 cm.
From the album Petersburg. Ruins and Rebirth. 1923

114 Barge. Xylograph

115 The Rostral Column near the Exchange. Xylograph
ANDREI GONCHAROV

Head of an Old Woman. 1922. Woodcut, 17 x 14.6 cm.
... We must have a swan’s mighty wings to take flight on them, hang long in the air, and descend to earth unscorched, unharmed by that worldover conflagration of which we are all witnesses and contemporaries, which is flaming out and will go on flaming out, long, irresistible, shifting its centers from east to west and west to east until all the world bursts into flame and is consumed to ashes.

ALEXANDER BLOK. FROM THE ARTICLE “CATILINE.” 1918
NIKOLAI KUPREYANOY
117 Street Scene. 1923. Lithograph. 40 × 29.7 cm.

DMITRY KARDOVSKY
118 Bourgeois of the NEP (New Economic Policy). 1920s. Watercolor, 34.5 × 20 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad
ALEXANDER BENNOIS
120 Cover of Pushkin's novel The Captain's Daughter. 
People's Library. 1919
121 Headpiece for Pushkin's poem "The Bronze Horseman." 1921

VLADIMIR KONASHEVICH
122 Illustration for Fet's Anthology of Verse. 1921

MSTISLAV DOBUZHINSKY
123 Headpiece for Dostoyevsky's story White Nights. 1922
124 Illustration for Dostoyevsky's story White Nights. 1922

VENIAMIN BELKIN
125 Cover of Lermontov's story Princess Mary. People's Library. 1920

DMITRY MITROKHIN
126 Cover of Afanasyev's Anthology of Russian Folk Tales. 
People's Library. 1919
SERGEI CHEKHONIN

127 Illustration for Lunacharsky's play Faust and the City. 1919.
Watercolor (?), India ink, and pen on paper, 20.5 x 16.2 cm.
YURY ANNENKOV

128 Portrait of Maxim Gorky. 1920
Watercolor, India ink, and pen on paper. 21 x 16.9 cm.
Black evening.
White snow.
The wind! The wind!
No one can keep upon his feet.
The wind! The wind!
Through all God's earth!

The wind ruffles
The white snow.
Under the snow is ice.
It is slippery, beastly . . .
Every walker
Slips. Ah, poor things!

The wind is like a whip,
Just as fierce as the frost,
And the bourgeois at the crossroads
Buries his nose in his collar.

But who's this? with long hair
And speaking low:
"Traitors!
Russia is ruined!"
A writer, no doubt,
A phrase-maker . . .

And there's a man in a long coat,
Passing by over there, beyond the snow-drift . . .
Why aren't you gay nowadays,
Comrade priest?
Do you remember the old days:
How you strutted belly foremost,
And how your belly with the cross upon it
Shone upon the people? . . .

The tempest roves; the snow flies.
Twelve men march along.
Their rifle-slings are black . . .
All round are fires, fires, fires . . .

YURY ANNENKOV
129-133 Illustrations for Blok's poem "The Twelve." 1918
YURY ANNENKOV
134 The Storming of the Winter Palace.
Decor design for a mass performance on Palace Square in Petrograd. 1920. Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

VLADIMIR LEBEDEV
135 Two Sailors with Rifles.
From the series Sidewalks of the Revolution. 1922.
India ink and lead pencil on paper, 31.5 × 22 cm.
Private collection, Leningrad
VLADIMIR LEBEDEV

Drawings from the series Sidewalks of the Revolution. 1922.
Private collection, Leningrad

136 Girl and Dandy.
India ink, gouache, and lead pencil on paper, 30.5 x 23.7 cm.

137 Market Woman.
India ink, gouache, and lead pencil on paper, 27.8 x 20 cm.

138 Sailor and Girl.
India ink, gouache, and lead pencil on paper, 29 x 22 cm.

139 Sailor and Girl.
India ink, gouache, and lead pencil on paper, 32.5 x 21.2 cm.

140 Shoebblack.
India ink, gouache, and lead pencil on paper, 32.2 x 24.2 cm.

VLADIMIR LEBEDEV

141 Still Life with Palette. 1919.
Oil on canvas, 89 x 65 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad

142 Still Life with Coffee Pot. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 75 x 44 cm. Private collection, Leningrad
VLADIMIR LEBEDEV

143 Apotheosis of a Worker. Poster. 1920

144 Setting to Work, Keep Your Rifle at Hand. ROSTA window. 1921
   Petrograd

145 Iron-cutter. Poster. 1920–21

146 Demonstration. Poster

147 Design for the decoration of the Police Bridge. 1918. Petrograd.
   Mixed mediums on paper. 22.7 x 25.7 cm
   The Russian Museum. Leningrad

   The Russian Museum. Leningrad
LEV RUDNEV

149 Procession of Mourners. Design for the decoration of the Field of Mars. 1918. Petrograd. India ink and pen on paper.

150 Design for the festive decoration of the Field of Mars at night. 1918. Petrograd. Watercolor and India ink on paper mounted on cardboard, 31 x 45 cm. Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Leningrad
MSTISLAV DOBUZHINSKY

Designs for the festive decoration of the Admiralty Building. 1918. Petrograd

151 Flag. Watercolor and black lead on paper, 31.2 x 17 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

152 Socialism is the Goal of All Working Movements.
Panel. Watercolor, India ink, and black lead on paper, 17.2 x 16.8 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

153 Frontage. Watercolor, India ink, black lead, and crayons on paper mounted on cardboard, 54.5 x 63 cm.
Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Leningrad
YEFIM CHEPTSOV

154 Meeting of a Village Party Cell. 1924.
Oil on canvas, 59 × 77 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

ALEXANDER MORAVOV

155 Meeting of a Committee of Poor Peasants. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 103 × 125 cm.
The USSR Museum of the Revolution, Moscow
SERGEI MALIUTIN
156 Portrait of the Writer Dmitry Furmanov. 1922.
Oil on canvas, 82 x 71 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Dmitry Furmanov (1891-1926), commissar of the celebrated Chapayev division during the Civil War of 1918-20, wrote the novel Chapayev.

MITROFAN GREKOV
157 Off to Join Budionny's Army. 1923.
Oil on canvas, 37 x 52 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
KASIMIR MALEVICH

158 The Red Cavalry, 1918.
Oil on canvas, 90 x 140 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
ARKADY RYLOV

159 The Blue Expanse. 1918.
Oil on canvas, 109 x 152 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

160 Sunset. 1917.
Oil on canvas, 100 x 129 cm.
Museum of Fine and Applied Arts, Smolensk
KONSTANTIN YUON

161 Symphony of Action. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 80 × 93 cm.
Private collection, Moscow

162 A New Planet. 1921.
Tempera on cardboard, 71 × 101 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
163 The Year 1918 in Petrograd. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

164 After the Battle. 1923.
Oil on canvas, 154 x 121.5 cm.
Museum of the USSR Armed Forces, Moscow
KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN

165 *Pink Still Life. Twig of an Apple Tree.* 1918.
Oil on canvas, 58 × 71 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN

166 Morning. 1917.
Oil on canvas, 160 × 129 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

167 Portrait of Anna Akhmatova. 1922.
Oil on canvas, 54.5 × 43.5 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

168 Violin. 1918.
Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN

Self-Portrait. 1918. Oil on canvas. 73 x 53 cm
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
Painting requires of the artist exceptional powers of concentration: a picture takes months to paint, sometimes even years.

At the time of the Revolution the world was changing before the artists’ eyes, and they found it difficult to express in painting the headlong changes of the day. The exact representation of events, the philosophical still life, the bold allegory, the portrait of a man of the new world: underlying all this was the untiring quest for that new language of painting which could convey the throbbing pulse of the Revolution, the decisive step forward of the revolutionary age.

With these creative quests for something new were intertwined traditions: the inspiration of artists working at that time derived from the best in Russian democratic painting. It is to be marveled at that so many splendid canvases were produced in a period when there was so little time for quiet work in a studio, and when life was so difficult. This proves once again that art – if it is indeed art – cannot remain indifferent to the current affairs of the real world.
KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN

171 Design for a festive poster. 1918.
Watercolor on paper, 24.8 x 17.7 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

Panel designs for the festive decoration of
Theatre Square. 1918. Petrograd

172 Stepan Razin.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 36.8 x 63.5 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

173 The Firebird.
Watercolor on paper, 31.5 x 63 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

174 Mikula Selianinovich (Russian epic hero).
Watercolor on paper, 37 x 64 cm.
History and Architecture Museum, Pskov
In the difficult days of the Civil War, the young Soviet Republic staged revolutionary celebrations as prototypes of the future. Art took to the streets: cities were decked out with picturesque panels, vivid montages of banners and flags, garlands of colored lamps. There were no expensive materials, there was little time. Only the striking facility of the artists and their wonderful grasp of fantasy ensured that plywood and cloth would be enough to create magnificent and joyful spectacles.

Even the celebrated architectural complexes of Moscow and Petrograd were seen in a new light when decked in festive array. Artists seemed to be revealing anew the beautiful buildings to their onlookers, sometimes even arguing with the past. In this way the dialogue between past and present became part of the celebration.
175 The Revolution.
Panel design for the festive decoration of Bolshoi Prospekt on Vasilyevsky Island. 1918. Petrograd.
Watercolor and lead white on paper, 44.5 x 64.3 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

ARNOLD LAKHOVSKY and YAKOV BUVESTIN
176 The Triumph of Labor.
Arch design for the festive decoration of Liteiny Prospekt. 1918. Petrograd.
Watercolor, India ink, and pen on paper, 29 x 39.2 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

VASILY SHUKHAYEV
177 Design for the festive decoration of the Lieutenant Schmidt Bridge. 1918. Petrograd.
Watercolor and gouache on paper mounted on cardboard, 66.5 x 89.5 cm.
Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Leningrad

S. IVANO
178 Design for the festive decoration of the former Duma Building. 1918. Petrograd.
Watercolor, India ink, and lead white on paper mounted on cardboard, 68 x 51.5 cm.
Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Leningrad
Panel designs for the decoration of streets to celebrate the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1918. Petrograd. Watercolor and India ink on paper, 50.8 x 24 cm; 49.7 x 24 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

Revolutionary Procession. Panel design. Watercolor and India ink on paper, 37 x 59.5 cm. Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Leningrad

Panel designs for the decoration of streets to celebrate the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1918. Petrograd. Watercolor and India ink on paper, 50.8 x 24 cm; 49.7 x 24 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad
The revolutionary whirlwind has torn out of men's souls the ugly roots of slavery. The soul of the people awaits a mighty seed-time.

Perhaps artists will turn the gray dust of our cities into rainbows of a hundred colors; perhaps a thunderous music, volcanoes turned into pipes, will resound without ceasing from the mountaintops; perhaps we will compel the waves of the ocean to play upon the strings of the networks stretching out from Europe to America.

Of one thing we are certain — we have turned over the first page in the modern history of the arts.

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY. “OPEN LETTER TO THE WORKERS.” 1918
BORIS YAKOVLEV

183 Transport Returns to Normal. 1923.
Oil on canvas. 100 × 140 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
BORIS KUSTODIEV

184 Night Celebration on the Neva. 1923.
Oil on canvas, 107 x 216 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

KONSTANTIN YUON

185 Parade in Red Square. 1923.
Oil on canvas, 89.5 x 111.5 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
BORIS KUSTODIEV

186 Festivities Marking the Opening of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern in Uritsky (Palace) Square in Petrograd. 1921. Oil on canvas, 133 x 268 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad.
BORIS KUSTODIEV

Panel designs for the festive decoration of Ruzheinaya Square. 1918. Petrograd

187 Carpenter.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 32.2 x 23.1 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

188 Shoemaker.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 32.2 x 23.5 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

189 Baker.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 28.1 x 20.1 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

190 Reaper.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 32.1 x 23.5 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

191 Tailor.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 31.2 x 23.5 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

192 Abundance.
Watercolor and black lead on cardboard,
78.5 x 55.5 cm.
Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution,
Leningrad

193 Labor.
Watercolor and black lead on cardboard,
55.5 x 39.5 cm.
Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution,
Leningrad
SERGEI Gerasimov
194 Master of the Land. Panel design for the festive decoration of the former Duma Building. 1918. Moscow. Watercolor, gouache, and bronzing on cardboard, 83 × 64.3 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

195 Old Woman with Mortar. 1922. Oil on canvas. Present whereabouts unknown.

196 At the Table. 1921. Oil on canvas. Present whereabouts unknown.

197 Family of a Red Army Soldier. 1922. Lithograph. 19.5 × 15.5 cm. Private collection, Moscow.
ABRAM ARKHIPOV

198 Woman in Red. 1919.
Oil on canvas, 115.5 x 85.5 cm.
Art Museum, Gorky

ALEXANDER KUPRIN

199 Spring Landscape. Apple Trees in Spring. 1922.
Oil on canvas, 98 x 89.3 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

NIKOLAI KRYMOV

200 Autumn. 1918.
Oil on canvas, 62 x 76 cm.
History and Architecture Museum, Pskov
ALEXANDER KUPRIN
201 Moscow, Landscape with Church 1918
Oil on canvas, 99 × 124 cm
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

ISAAC BRODSKY
202 Winter Landscape 1919-20
Oil on canvas 80.5 × 136 cm
Brodsky Memorial Museum, Leningrad
PIOTR KONCHALOVSKY

203 Trunk and Earthenware (Heroic Still Life). 1919.
Oil on canvas, 143 x 174 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
PIOTR KONCHALOVSKY

204 Portrait of the Violinist G. Romashkov. 1918.
Oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

ILYA MASHKOV

205 Still Life with Fan. 1922.
Oil on canvas, 145 x 127.5 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

206 Still Life with Samovar (Copperware). c. 1919.
Oil on canvas, 142 x 180 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
PAVEL KUZNETSOV

207 Still Life with Glassware, 1919. Oil on canvas, 98 x 71 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
PAVEL KUZNETSOV

208 Decor design for Kamesky's play
Stepan Razin. 1918
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow
Stepan Razin was the leader of
the peasant uprising of the 1660s

PAVEL KUZNETSOV

From the album Turkestan. 1923. Lithographs
209 Melon sellers
210 Town
211 Gathering Pears
RUDOLF FRENZ

212 Nevsky at Night. 1923. Oil on canvas. 65 x 82 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

213 The Kriukov Canal. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 70 x 105 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
ALEXANDER OSMIORKIN

214 Still Life with White Piela. 1921. Oil on canvas, 84 x 68 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad

ALEXANDER OSMIORKIN

215 Houses and City. 1917. Oil on canvas, 89 x 52 cm. Art Museum of the Uzbek SSR, Tashkent
MARTIROS SARYAN
216 Mountains. 1923.
Oil on canvas, 68 x 68 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

ALEXANDER SHEVCHENKO
217 Landscape with Washerwomen. 1920.
Oil on cardboard, 58 x 59 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

218 Still Life with Bottles. 1922.
Oil on canvas, 84 x 85.5 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
ARISTARKH LENTULOV

219 Townscape. 1920. Oil on canvas. 104 × 140 cm
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
ALEXANDER KUPRIN

220 Flowers. Panel design. 1918.
Watercolor, India ink, black lead, and lead white on cardboard, 50 x 30.7 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

221 Design for the poster Everyone Out to the First Great May 1 Subbotnik (voluntary working Saturday). 1920.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 30 x 23 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

NATALYA AGAPYEVA

222 Flowers and Ears. Panel design. 1918.
Watercolor, India ink, crayons, and lead white on paper, 29.1 x 47.1 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
ALEXANDER KUPRIN

223 Art. Panel design. 1918. Watercolor, gouache, and black lead on paper, 60 × 71 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
KASIMIR MALEVICH and LAZAR (EL) LISSITZKY

224 Design for the festive decoration of the State Free Artistic Workshops in Vitebsk. 1918.
Watercolor, gouache, and black lead on paper, 21 x 20 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

225 Suprematism.
Curtain design. 1918. Vitebsk.
Watercolor, India ink, gouache, and black lead on paper, 45 x 62.5 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

LAZAR (EL) LISSITZKY

226 Cover design for the catalogue of the First Russian Art Exhibition in Berlin. 1922.
Watercolor on paper.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

227 Cover of the magazine Veshch (Object). 1922, No 3

228 Cover of the book The Committee for Fighting Unemployment. 1919.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

KASIMIR MALEVICH

229 Suprematist variations and proportions of colored forms for decoration of houses, clubs, books, posters, and rostrums. 1919.
Watercolor and India ink on paper, 16.8 x 28.5 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
Разворачивайтесь в марше!
Словесной не место кликуше.
Тише, ораторы!
Graphic art, especially book design and illustration, was destined to become a truly mass art. Editions, accessible to the public, required a simple and attractive design. Both classical and contemporary literature were awaiting a presentation befitting them. The traditions of Russian graphic art were to dovetail with the search for a new style, thus preserving sensitivity to the spirit of the hour.

Daring photographic montages, bold typeface arrangements and, alongside them, the consummate, superb books and prints of the masters of the older generation. In all these the common feeling of the age and the distinctly palpable "graphic style" of the time found their expression.

LAZAR (EL) LISSITZKY
230 Cover for Mayakovsky's book of poems For Reading Out Loud. 1923
231 Illustrations for "The Left March" in Mayakovsky's book For Reading Out Loud. 1923
232 From the series Victory over the Sun. 1923. Lithograph, 53 x 45.4 cm.

ALEXANDER RODCHENKO
233 Cover of the magazine LEF, 1923, No 1
234 Cover of the book Mayakovskiy Smiles, Mayakovskiy Laughs, Mayakovskiy Jeers. 1923
235 Illustration for Mayakovsky's poem "Pro Esto." 1923
Give me the sun at night

The best nipple the world has yet to see, you'll suck on it till you're well past ninety

Nowhere but at the Mosselprom

ALEXANDER RODCHENKO and VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

Advertisements. 1923

236 "Give me the sun at night"

237 "The best nipple the world has yet to see, you'll suck on it till you're well past ninety"

238 "Nowhere but at the Mosselprom"
Advertisements. 1923

239  “The Rubber Trust is our protector in rain and slush
Without galoshes Europe sits and cries”

240  “The only survivors of days gone by are ‘IRA’ cigarettes’
VASILY KANDINSKY

241 White Background. 1920. Oil on canvas, 95 x 138 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad

ALEXANDER RODCHENKO

242 Nonobjective Composition. 1918. Oil on panel, 53 x 21 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad

KLIMENT REDKO

243 Factory. 1922. Oil on canvas, 69.5 x 101 cm. Shevchenko Art Gallery, Alma-Ata
PAVEL FILONOV

244 Petrograd Proletariat Formula. 1920–21.
Oil on canvas, 154 x 118 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
MARC CHAGALL

245 Peace for the Huts, War on the Palaces...
Panel design for the festive decoration of Vitebsk. 1918–19.
Watercolor and black lead on paper, 33.7 x 23.2 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

246 Wedding. 1918. Oil on canvas, 100 x 119 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

247 Drawing from the series My Life. 1922
DAVID STERENBERG

DAVID STERENBERG


250 Worker with Hammer. Panel design. 1918. Petrograd. Watercolor and India ink on paper, 38.3 x 29.8 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad
DAVID STERENBERG

251 Still Life with Cherries. 1919.
Oil on canvas, 68 x 67 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

252 Sour Milk. 1919.
Oil on canvas, 89 x 71.8 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

ROBERT FALK

253 Red Furniture. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 105.6 x 122.8 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

254 Working Woman. 1920.
Oil on canvas, 100 x 94 cm.
The Art Gallery of Armenia, Yerevan
NATHAN ALTMAN
Designs for the festive decoration of Palace Square. 1918. Petrograd

255 Land for the Workers. Panel design. Gouache on paper, 92 × 83 cm.
Private collection, Leningrad

256 Factories for the Workers. Panel design. Gouache on paper, 92 × 83 cm.
Private collection, Leningrad

257 Design for the decoration of the façades of
the General Staff Building. Watercolor on paper, 27 × 97 cm.
Museum of the History of Leningrad
NATHAN ALTMAN

258 The Alexander Column Lit Up at Night.
Crayons and chalk on paper, 15.5 × 18.1 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

259 Design for the decoration of the façades of the Winter Palace.
Watercolor on paper, 27 × 97 cm.
Museum of the History of Leningrad
Mikhail Adamovich

Plate with portrait of Lenin (after Altman's drawing). 1922

Nathan Altman

Color Volumes and Planes. 1918.
Oil and gypsum on canvas, 51 x 41 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

Early Soviet stamp designs. 1918.
Watercolor and India ink on paper, 20.5 x 19.4 cm.
Private collection, Leningrad

Plates with portrait of Lenin (after Altman's drawing). 1922

Cover design for the pamphlet Conference of Woman Workers and Peasants from the North. 1919.
Colored lithograph, 47.5 x 31.8 cm.
Private collection, Leningrad

Emblem design.
India ink and appliqué on paper, 39.3 x 19.9 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad

Design for the festive decoration of Palace Square. 1918 Petrograd.
Watercolor on paper, 27 x 111 cm.
Museum of the History of Leningrad
Drawings from life. 1920. The Central Lenin Museum, Moscow

NATHAN ALTMAN

267 Lenin: Pencil drawing, 22.5 x 17.8 cm.

268 Lenin. Pencil drawing, 21 x 18 cm.

269 Lenin on the Phone. Pencil drawing, 21 x 17 cm.

270 Lenin Talking with Representatives of the British Trade Unions. Pencil drawing, 17.5 x 21.5 cm.

271 Cover of the album Lenin. 1920
Drawings from life (272–75). The Central Lenin Museum, Moscow

PHILIP MALIAVIN

272 Lenin. 1920. Pencil drawing, 17 × 14 cm.

ISAAC BRODSKY

273 Lenin Speaking at the Opening of the 3rd Congress of the Comintern. 1921
Pencil drawing, 14 × 10.2 cm.

274 Lenin. 1920. Pencil drawing, 49 × 35.2 cm. Autographed by Lenin

SERGEI CHEKHONIN

275 Lenin at the Formal Opening of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern. 1920.
Pencil drawing, 13.5 × 9.5 cm.

NIKOLAI ANDREYEV

276 Lenin. 1920. Bronze, 30 × 39 × 38 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
ALEXANDER MATVEYEV

277 Memorial to Karl Marx. 1918. Gypsum. Photograph
Erected on November 4, 1918, in front of Smolny in Petrograd. Not extant

BORIS KOROLIOV

278 Model of the Memorial to Mikhail Bakunin. 1918.
Gypsum, 90 x 38 x 29 cm. Private collection, Moscow
Erected near the Miasnit'ye Gates in Moscow. Not extant
These memorials are the homage paid by a victorious nation to those whose thoughts and deeds were at the roots of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

Lenin believed that monumental propaganda, by presenting the great revolutionaries of different countries, taught the workers to understand the past. The memorials produced during the monumental propaganda campaign are essentially the sculptors' first addresses to the working people. This is the prologue to the history of Soviet plastic art.

VERA MUKHINA

279 The Torch of the Revolution.
Design for a memorial to Yakov Sverdlov. 1922–23
Bronze, 104 x 60 x 60 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Yakov Sverdlov (1885–1919) was a revolutionary, Bolshevik, and first Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK)
NIKOLAI ANDREYEV and D. OSIPOV (architect)

280 The Soviet Constitution. Obelisk. 1918–19. Concrete
Photograph
Erected in Soviet Square in Moscow. Not extant

NIKOLAI ANDREYEV

281 Head of the Statue of Freedom
(The Soviet Constitution). 1919. Concrete, $97 \times 57 \times 50$ cm
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
SERGEI KONIONKOV

282 To Those Who Fell Fighting for the Cause of Peace and the Brotherhood of Nations.
Memorial plaque. 1918.
Bas-relief.
Tinted cement, 510 × 340 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
Set up in 1918 on the wall of the Senate Tower of the Moscow Kremlin.
Sleep, dear brothers, sleep!
Once more your native land
sends to the Kremlin walls
fresh hosts of steadfast troops.

New ways are afoot in the world,
the red lightning is aglow . . .
Sleep, dear brothers, sleep,
in the light from immortal graves.

The sun like a golden seal
stands guard at the gates.
Sleep, dear brothers, sleep,
past you march the people's hosts
towards the universal dawn.

SERGEI ESENIN. FROM THE CANTATA
PERFORMED IN 1918 AT THE INAUGURATION
OF THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE
TO THOSE WHO FELL FIGHTING
FOR THE CAUSE OF PEACE
AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF NATIONS

SERGEI KONIONKOV
283 Stepan Razin. 1918-19. Wood, 252 x 57 x 63 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
Part of the sculptural group Stepan Razin and His Men,
which was erected on May 1, 1919, in Red Square in Moscow.
NIKOLAI ANDREYEV

284 Memorial to Danton. 1918. Gypsum. Photograph
Erected in Revolution Square in Moscow. Not extant

SARRA LEBEDEVA

The Russian Museum, Leningrad
First memorial erected in implementation of Lenin's plan for monumental propaganda. Unveiled in Petrograd on September 22, 1918; a replica, in Moscow on October 6, 1918.

Alexander Radishchev (1749–1802) was a Russian writer. In his book Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow, he strongly condemned serfdom and the autocracy.
NIKOLAI ANDREYEV

Granite chips on cement, 88 x 57 x 10 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) was a Russian revolutionary democrat, philosopher, and writer. While in exile from Russia he published the first Russian revolutionary newspaper, The Bell. Lenin thought highly of this activity of Herzen's.

IVAN SHADR

288 Portrait of Karl Marx. 1921. High relief. Bronze, 83 x 71 x 27 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

289 Portrait of Karl Liebknecht. 1921. High relief. Bronze, 60 x 55 x 18 cm.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Karl Liebknecht (1817-1919) was a prominent figure in the German and international working movements.
From depths of oppression,
Need and darkness,
You, proletarian,
Have arisen
To win in struggle
Your freedom, your fortune.
You will bring happiness
To all mankind
And break their bonds
Of slavery.

We know not all
The heroes’ names
Who gave their blood for freedom.
But grateful man,
The human race,
Never will forget them.
This monument is raised for ever
In memory and honor of them all.

LEV RUDNEV
290 To Those Who Fell Fighting for the Revolution.
Memorial on the Field of Mars in Petrograd. 1921.
Photograph

VICTOR SINAISKY
291 Ferdinand Lassalle. 1921. Granite, 156 x 120 x 90 cm.
The Russian Museum, Leningrad
The first version of this monument was made in gypsum
in 1918 and erected on Nevsky Prospekt in Petrograd.
Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) was an active member
of the German working movement.
LAZAR (EL) LISSITZKY

292 Lenin Tribune. 1920.
  India ink, gouache, and black lead on paper, 63.8 x 47.9 cm.
  The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

293 Design for a rostrum. 1920.
  India ink, gouache, and black lead on paper, 15.9 x 14.4 cm.
  The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

NIKOLAI KOLLI

  Black lead and crayons on paper, 30.5 x 22.8 cm.
  The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

VLADIMIR TATLIN

VICTOR and ALEXANDER VESNIN
Designs for the festive decoration of the Moscow Kremlin to celebrate the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1918.
Shchusev Museum of Architecture and Architectural Research, Moscow

296 Pedestal with flags. Watercolor, crayons, and black lead on paper, 33.9 x 49.9 cm.

297 Oruzheinaya Tower. Watercolor, crayons, and black lead on paper, 26 x 22 cm.

298 Tainitskaya Tower. Watercolor, crayons, and black lead on paper, 23.2 x 25.7 cm.
VICTOR and ALEXANDER VESNIN

Designs for the festive decoration of the Moscow Kremlin to celebrate the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1918. Shchusev Museum of Architecture and Architectural Research, Moscow

299 Trinity and Kutafya Towers.
Watercolor, black lead, and crayons on paper, 31.6 x 35 cm.
To glorify Freedom, let us decorate all the empty fences, roofs, frontages, and pavements, just as the world's cathedrals were born under the inspired hammer blows of the great miracle of art which is youth.

Poets, painters, musicians, throw caution to the winds and ring out with all the bells of spring.

Poets – take up your brushes and poster-size sheets of verse, your ladder and paste, and proclaim the truth of life on the streets. Be suitors before her, before the Great Herald, the Revolution.

Painters – great Burliuks [David Burliuk: Russian Futurist poet and painter] – nail your pictures to the houses, as if for a carnival. Drag bales of posters about with you, and with your genius paint walls, squares, signboards, and shop windows.
We are the architects of earths,
the planets’ decorators;
We are the wonder makers.
The sunbeams we shall tie
in radiant brooms, and sweep
the clouds from the sky
with electricity.
We shall make honey-sweet the rivers of the world.
The streets of earth we’ll pave with radiant stars...
Today these are but doors of theatre properties,
tomorrow their poor stuff
will be replaced by firm realities.
We know that well,
we trust in it
and now we tell
the news to you.
Come to us from the hall!
Come hither one and all.
Come hither, Actor, Poet, Director.
7.8 НОЯБРЯ %.
МЫ ПОЭТЫ, ХУДОЖНИКИ, РЕЖИССЕРЫ И АКТЕРЫ
ПРАЗДНУЕМ ДЕНЬ ГОДОВЩИНЫ
ОКТЯБРЬСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ
Революционным спектаклем.
нами будет дана:

I КАРТ.
БЕЛЫЕ И
ЧЕРНЫЕ БЕ-
ГУТ ОТ КРАС-
НОГО ПОТОПА.

II КАРТ. КОВЧЕГ.
ЧИСТЫЕ ПОДСО-
ВОЯТ НЕЧИС-
СТЫМ ЦАРЯ И РЕС-
ПУБЛИКУ. САМИ
УВИДИТЕ ЧТО
ИЗ ЭТОГО ПОЛУ-
ЧАЕТСЯ.

III КАРТ. АД
В КОТОРОМ
РАБОЧИЕ СА-
МОГО ВЕЛЬЗЕ-
ВУЛКА К ЧЕРТЯМ
ПОСЛАЛИ

"МИСТЕРИЯ БУФФ!"

ГЕРОИЧЕСКОЕ, ЭПИЧЕСКОЕ И САТИРИЧЕСКОЕ
ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЕ НАШЕЙ ЭПОХИ, СДЕЛАННОЕ
В. МАЯКОВСКИМ.

Билеты на 7-е и 8-е ноября в распоряжении ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОГО БЮРО.

9-Го НОЯБРЯ "МИСТЕРИЯ-БУФФ" ОТКРЫТЫЙ СПЕКТАКЛЬ.
НАЧАЛО В 6½ ЧАС. ВЕЧЕРА.
VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

From the setting for Mystery-Bouffe. 1919.
Mayakovskiy Memorial Museum, Moscow

306 Advertisement
for the first production

307 "The Clean." Costume designs.
Watercolor and appliqué on paper,
75 x 166 cm.

NINA EISENBERG

308, 309 She, Spichkin. Costume designs for the Blue Blouse Theatre. 1923.
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow
ALEXANDER GOLOVIN

310, 311 Costume designs
for Lermontov’s drama Masquerade. 1917.
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

312 Decor design
for Lermontov’s drama Masquerade. 1917.
Tempera on cardboard.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

KONSTANTIN YUON

313 Decor design
for Gorky's play Old Man. 1919.
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

FIODOR FIODOROVSKY

314 Decor design
for Bizet's opera Carmen. 1922.
Gouache, lead white, and varnish.
Museum of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow
все волода МЕЙЕРХОЛЬД
ПОКАЗЫВАЕТ СВОЮ НОВУЮ ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННУЮ РАБОТУ:
-СМЕРТЬ-
ТАРЕЛКИНА.
-Нач. в 8-
БИЛЕТЫ В КАССЕ С 12.

Комедия-шутка в 3х действиях. соч. Сухово-Кобылина.

Эскизы афиши
исследовали
Вс. Мейерхольду.

Билеты в 2-й ряд. действительны до 24-го.
Г. а. администратор А. ЛЮБИМОВ.
GEORGY
and VLADIMIR STENBERG

318 Advertisement for the guest performances of the Moscow Kamerny Theatre abroad. 1923
GEORGY YAKULOV

319 Decor design for Hoffmann's play *Princess Brambilla*. 1920.
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

ALEXANDER Benois

320 Decor design for Stravinsky's ballet *Petrouchka*. 1920.
Watercolor on paper.
Museum of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow

IGNATY NIVINSKY

321 Decor design for Gozzi's play *Princess Turandot*. 1922.
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

322, 323 Costume designs for Gozzi's play *Princess Turandot*. 1922.
Watercolor on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow
Plays were presented in the great old theatres and in theatres newly born, in large halls and in little clubs, on the steps of palaces and on the streets.

What stage designs made their appearance then! Old-style decorated pavilions as well as extraordinary constructions presaging the buildings of the future or simply embodying the artist's power of fantastic conception.

In discussion what was old was rejected pitilessly, but on the stage it was carefully preserved. Meyerhold, Stanislavsky, Vakhtangov, Tairov, Mayakovsky – hand in hand with these names, with the new theatre productions, a new theatre artist was being born too. Figurative art in this context became a live spectacle, an integral part of theatre for the people.
ALEXANDER VESNIN

326, 327 Costume designs for Claudel's play
L'Annonce faite à Marie. 1920.
Watercolor, gouache,
and bronzing on paper.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow

ALEXANDRA EXTER

328, 329 Costume designs for Shakespeare's tragedy
Romeo and Juliet. 1921
Gouache and lead white on cardboard.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow
To the deepest recesses of Russia, where there were neither museums nor galleries, to the revolutionary fighting lines of the Civil War sped rolling stock never seen before – the agit-prop trains.

On the still smoldering field of battle, in an out-of-the-way siding, in remote provincial towns, a train of this sort would become the rostrum, the focal point for passionate, feverish political discussions.
The audacious and brilliant decoration of the cars, uniting the directness and clarity of the poster with the gaiety of the painted panel, helped people to appreciate art, through art to love their country, to understand the Revolution, through art to hate their enemies.

The winds blowing across those distant tracks and the passage of time did not spare the cars' fragile decoration, "monumental propaganda on wheels" has come down to us only in a few sketches and photographs. But even what one still can see on the pages of old books is a happy memory: the evidence of the heroic fate of the agit-prop trains.
B. SHAKH and GRIGORY LIUBARSKY

334 Design for the decoration of trains leaving for the front. 1918. Watercolor, India ink, and pen on paper, 24 x 41.1 cm. The Russian Museum, Leningrad

336 Car of an agit-prop train. 1918–19. Photograph

337 Banner of the agit-prop train "The Red Cossack." 1920. Photograph
Design for the decoration of trains leaving for the front. 1918.
Gouache, India ink, and pen on cardboard, 26.5 x 75 cm.
Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Leningrad
338 Car of the agit-prop train
“The October Revolution.” 1919. Photograph

339 Car of the agit-prop train
“The Red Cossack.” 1920. Photograph

340 Poster design for an agit-prop train.
The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
341 Car of an agit-prop train. 1918. Photograph

IVAN MALIUTIN

342 Model of an agit-prop train car. 1919.
Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Moscow
GEORGY VYCHEGZHANIN
343 Plate with the monogram "RSFSR." 1921

NATALYA DANKO
344 Figure of a Working Woman Embroidering a Banner. 1919
345 Sailor. 1919
346 The Speech. 1919

ALEXANDRA SHCHEKATIKHINA-POTOTSKAYA
347 "Bell Ringer." Dish. 1921
348 "May Day Celebration in Petrograd in 1921." Dish. 1921

SERGEI CHEKHONIN
349 Plate with the inscription
"From the high peaks of science one can
see the dawn of a new day coming sooner." 1919

VENIAMIN BELKIN
350 "Sower." Plate. 1920
MARIA LEBEDEVA

351 Dish with the text of the "Internationale." 1920
The Revolution rejected luxury. The decoration of china stopped being mere embellishment and, while remaining an art, became an art quite different from that of former times – a symbolic art closely related to that of the poster.

Porcelain was painted elegantly and concisely. The themes of the new world were introduced vigorously and unerringly into the gentle conventions that had formed over the centuries. Sumptuousness and profusion of forms passed away. Porcelain began to speak in the language of ornament, of allegory, with the expressiveness of a spare drawing, with the sonorous chords of restrained color. Artists would include in their designs the texts of slogans; not for nothing was the porcelain of that time called propaganda porcelain.

SERGEI CHEKHONIN
352 Plate with the inscription
"The reign of workers and peasants will never end." 1920
353 "The Red Baltic Fleet." Dish. 1920

MIKHAIL ADAMOVICH
354 "Five Years of the Red Army." Plate. 1923
355 Plate with the inscription
"Be daring now and forever." 1921
SERGEI CHEKHONIN
356 Plate with the emblem of the RSFSR. 1921
357 "Coral Ribbon." Plate. 1919
358 Plate with the Hammer and Sickle set in flowers and fruit. 1919

BAZILKA RADONIĆ
359 "The New Government." Plate. 1921
Stamps of the RSFSR

360 The Liberated Proletarian. 1921

361 Hand with sword severing the chain. 1918
Stamp from Soviet Russia's first stamp issue

362 The Fifth Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1922

Stamps of the USSR

363–65 The First Agricultural and Domestic Industry Exhibition of the USSR. 1923
Stamps with drawings after sculpture by I. Shadr. 1923
366 Peasant
367 Worker
368 Soldier

Stamps of the RSFSR
369 Hammer in the hand of a worker against the background of an industrial landscape. Text: "Workers of the World, Unite!" 1922
370 Symbols of the Arts and Sciences. 1921
371 Symbols of Labor. 1921
Sculpture, which was not intended for the streets and squares, was, like painting, slowly and intently looking upon its environment – that is to say, at man.

A sculptor has no other subject. Among the busts that appeared were those that suggested the spirit of the age: the spirit of men of a revolutionary epoch. Sculptors searched unremittingly for a plastic language, spare but passionate, a language both consonant with the times and capable of outliving them. In years of great change art has the gift of standing above the hurly-burly and achieving an ascetic clarity.

IVAN SHADR

372 Sower. 1922. Bronze, 110 x 150 x 65 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

373 Soldier. 1922. Bronze, 92 x 60 x 62 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

374 Worker. 1922. Bronze, 75 x 68 x 59 cm. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Gypsum coated with bronze, 63.2 x 46 cm.
The USSR Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

Gypsum coated with bronze, 61 x 46 cm.
Lenin's study in the Moscow Kremlin, Moscow

Stepan Khalturin (1856-1882) was a worker, revolutionary, and organizer of the Northern Union of Russian Workers.
MATVEI MANIZER

377 Worker. 1920. Bronze
UNKNOWN ARTIST

378 Commemorative medal marking Karl Marx's Centenary and the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1918

379 Commemorative medal marking the First Anniversary of the October Revolution. 1918

ANTON VASIUTINSKY

380, 381 Commemorative medal marking the Third Anniversary of the October Revolution (obverse and reverse). 1920

382 "Lenin's Last Hide-out near Sestroretsk Station. July 17, 1917." Plaquette. 1925
DANIL STEPANOV

383, 384. Commemorative medal marking the Second Anniversary of the October Revolution (obverse and reverse) 1919
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