

Russian Visual Art Criticism, 1800-1913  
Primary text in Translation

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V.V. Stasov

Academic Exhibition of 1863<sup>1</sup>

Certain readers may perhaps be displeased by the appearance of yet another article about this exhibition. Some may say, 'It's too late now, the exhibition has already closed. There's nothing more to be said about it!' 'There have already been enough articles about the exhibition!', others will say. Both, nevertheless, are easy to answer. In the first place, it is never too late to do anything. In the second, even if there were sufficient articles about the exhibition, is it my fault if they did not say what should have been said?

How did the public get on with the exhibition? As always, it came, had a look around, and then immediately forgot the entire exhibition without having given it proper thought or having settled on any one firm opinion. What do they care about this sort of matter? To be sure, some may have come across something or other to their taste here, but, after all, they came to the Academy for the sake of statistics, and moreover, in order to rehearse their autumnal complaint about the poverty and paucity of the exhibition! And when all that was done, well, then the public had paid its due with the Academy and the exhibition. However, what amusing complaints they made! As though previous exhibitions had been God knows how precious to the public's heart—those, that is, that had not been poor or meagre! As though there had in fact been a particular sense in them! As though it were really possible to wish for a repetition of them! Or else perhaps it is the case that superlative creations simply rain down upon us in their dozens and hundreds in every field other than paintings and statues, and that for the whole year long there is no getting away from amazingly talented novels and novellas, from delightful poems, from marvellous comedies and dramas, from profound scholarly studies and important scientific discoveries?

Those amongst us who write about the arts also dealt with the exhibition in their customary way: it was with pleasure that they seized upon it as an ordinary and

most convenient opportunity to express, with greater or lesser intelligibility, their poetic or other feelings, their profundity and playfulness, their raptures, dissatisfactions, reproofs, advice, and hopes. Bewildered by the choice of subjects from antiquity, some exclaimed: ‘What do we know about this era? Could a few words by a chronicler really convey to an artist the forms, colours, and flesh that are essential for a painting? This is why the artist has had to invent, to dream things up in a vacuum.’ Others remarked wittily that today’s Russian genre painting has been contaminated by anecdotalism. In one place you read that landscape has now become the strongest genre of the Russian school; in another you will find profound advice to the artist to ‘acquaint himself well with the laws of beauty’; in a third one encounters regrets about the fact that a sleeping Desdemona is wearing bracelets on her arms and beads about her neck; in addition, a few rhetorical phrases, a few remarks about the picture’s contrived planning, the harshness of its colours, or the satisfactoriness of the drawing, and after that the matter is closed.

Is our exhibition, and our artists, really worth nothing more than this? Is there really nothing more to think about it, nothing more to say?

I think otherwise.

It gives me little comfort whether or not the Academy has discharged ‘its duty’ (as one critic put it) by recognising a particular professor or academician, or whether the public finds the exhibition meagre or rich in quantity; it is all the same to me if one writer, carried away by his own eloquent descriptions, announces that he is in raptures and promises the public the same sensation, while another admits in confidence that he feels dreadful when he looks at a certain painting, and even begins to wonder whether art has remained within its parameters here, while a third, on the contrary, leaves the Academy with a ‘heavy impression’ and ‘carries away something non-aesthetic from the temple of the arts’. I am indifferent to all this wordplay, to all these wasted efforts by our native critics, but I ask myself whether it would not be better, in leaving aside all these eloquent turns of speech and the entire, tempting profundity of their advice, to attend to the real essence of things and to grasp wherein the matter really lies.

This would not appear to be impossible.

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<sup>1</sup> V.V. Stasov, ‘Akademicheskaiia vystavka 1863 goda’, *Izbrannye sochineniia v trekh tomakh* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 113-21.

The current exhibition should be described as predominantly a *professorial* exhibition: in it the main role is played by former and newly-appointed professors alone. If, given an almost total absence of any higher artistic hierarchy created amongst us, the exhibitions of previous years have made us regret the impossibility of judging what our professors were doing—whether they were going forwards or backwards, whether they were doing much (or much of significance), or whether they were resting on their glorious laurels—then the present exhibition gives us rich grounds for such an investigation. This time the lower strata of our artistic world have hardly excelled at anything, as if lying low out of respect for others who have suddenly yielded the fruits of their maturity and sage experience. What a comforting spectacle! The sky has come crashing down on the heads of those who until now have objected that it is only young students who do any work, and that in them alone lies all our strength and hope; at the same time these youths have received solid, edifying confirmation of the fact that one can be neither a student nor a ‘pensioner’, and can still get on with business and produce works which will earn the praise of one’s peers and of posterity, and will delight the senior priests of beauty. As for the latter, this exhibition also placed them in a brilliant light: true, they did not send any of their own work to the exhibition and did not exhibit anything of their own, but they demonstrated their activity in the fact that they were not indifferent to the efforts of the rising generations, and found much of what they created important or good. Of course, all this is passive, but it is still better than nothing. So from all this it would seem fairly clearly that the 1863 exhibition is important and interesting for both artists and the public, and in different respects.

Yet while rejoicing in the strong development of professorial activity overall, let us examine what in particular has been done for the general masses that is new, excellent, and precious.

What is professorship? In the first place, is it the highest artistic rank with which talent, skill, knowledge, and the heights and depths of the artistic soul are rewarded; in the second, it is to raise by decree a person to such a pedestal from which he must teach artistic sense and reason to his younger companions in art, and must show them suitable paths in the dark forest of artistic preparation and creative activity. By this we mean, of course, not the professor’s activity in the classroom alone, but predominantly his influence on novice, emergent artists, as well as on the whole mood of a school. This last aspect of professorship seems very significant to me, particularly

for us, where there is constantly a deficit in our own initiative, and where, it follows, it is so important to make an appropriate selection of leaders of any sort—whether among military men, journalists, or choirmasters. When regarding professorship from this point of view it is impossible not to admit the beneficial nature of the new appointments to the Academy over the present year, and to rejoice in them.

[...]<sup>2</sup>

In the portrait section no one has been made a professor. I think that this has arisen because it is still impossible to forget the way in which a certain portraitist didn't draw a single face in his entire life, and always dawdled behind beaver furs, epaulettes, and muslin, so that not only did he teach nothing but he himself almost unlearned everything.<sup>3</sup> But even apart from that there is really no basis for making a professor in this section: after photography there is no point. Who nowadays will ask for their portrait to be done in oils? A merchant, a general, a sensitive lady? But it would not be hard to dispense with these: for the first, just show a medal clearly visible beneath his beard; for the second—paint a sultan with as florid an embroidered collar as possible, and posed in as youthful and sprightly a pose as possible; and for the last, simply offer up an angel of pensiveness and grace—and if nothing else make sure that her shadowy figure fits into the shape of a triangle, like one of the portraits of the current exhibition where the head is the apex, and the crinoline, the base. If all that is done then everyone will be happy, and no professors are necessary. True, we should perhaps turn our mind to Winterhalter: but he is a foreigner and has evidently made his career already without us, and, most importantly of all, he is just too much of a ladies' cavalier for us.<sup>4</sup> Is there really a great difference between him and those favourites who make women's hearts melt at balls, or between him and those tenors for whom people faint at the theatre, or between him and those scribblers whose candied romances make countesses and their admirers smoulder? Imagine a painter

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<sup>2</sup> A paragraph on architecture is omitted here. Nevertheless it is worth citing one section in which Stasov gives voice to the 'possible' objections of 'certain people' to a museum. In a double-voiced section that is remarkable for its scathing tone, yet typical of other moments of Stasov's writing, he 'cites' their description of a museum as follows: "From the outside it's not a museum at all, but a sort of a row of wardrobes stuck together, with a fat-bellied cake in the middle, and instead of windows there are varnished round holes, the original pattern for which can be found in dog's kennels; inside, again, what sort of architecture is this? Here there is nothing more than the dull-witted, but, all the same, curlicue fantasies of a furniture maker". Of course, we must pay no attention to such injurious remarks' (p. 115).

<sup>3</sup> Zarianko [Stasov's own note]. Sergei Konstantinovich Zarianko (1818-1870/71). Russian portrait painter.

whose whole heart and soul has gone on bows, skirts, ribbons, and lace, whose thoughts have been snagged on a jar of pomade, a phial of perfume and a pot of rouge: however you like it, however strong your sympathy, such an artist cannot easily and in good conscience be made a professor.

Neither have they appointed a single professor in the field of landscape. This, perhaps, is also an understandable matter. A great deal of attention used to be paid to landscapists when it was thought that landscape painting was making strong progress in Russia. But what sense came of this? Not a great deal, it seems to me. Our new artists have suddenly produced such paintings that all one can do is clear one's throat and clench one's teeth. What a treat they've given us, I must say! What sort of Italy is this, what sort of Little Russia and Caucasus have they depicted? These look more like fly agaric than Italian pines; here is not a crop from Little Russia, but patches of saffron; and here are green and grey illusions, not the valleys and mountains of the Caucasus drawn from nature. Some will object that Aivazovskii's<sup>5</sup> painting, too, has reached such a level of conservatism with his perpetually identical light blue seas, lilac mountains, rosy and red sunsets, his eternally trembling moonlight and other such out-of-date, congealed falsehoods and exaggeration. I would agree, but in spite of this there is a vein of real poetry in Aivazovskii, there are upsurges towards genuine beauty and truth. Moreover, he has done his own thing, and has moved others along a new path—and what has been achieved by these others, his successors? As soon as they try for a second to depart from imitating their recent foreign tutors, they are lost, perished, worthless! So, what sort of authority can we expect from them? Of course, the Academy has seen all this, and it is most likely for this reason that it has not made a single new professor of landscape this time. Despite itself it has become so cautious that it is only in passing that it has taken account of Mr Klodt Senior's superlative studies of our grey, northern wilderness.<sup>6</sup>

For all this (an unexpected miracle!) they have made Mr Pukirev<sup>7</sup> a professor for his painting *The Unequal Wedding*. The half-mocking, half-contemptuous appellation *genre* has still to be lifted from the sort of painting to which this picture

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<sup>4</sup> Winterhalter, Franz Xavier (1805-1873). German Academic painter, noted for his many portraits of Queen Victoria and her family.

<sup>5</sup> Aivazovskii, Ivan Konstantinovich (1817-1900). Russian landscape and—especially—seascape painter.

<sup>6</sup> Klodt, Mikhail Konstantinovich (1832-1902). Russian landscape painter.

<sup>7</sup> Pukirev, Vasilii Vladimirovich (1832-90). Russian genre painter. The painting discussed here is *Neravnyi brak*.

belongs. Clearly, however, the matter is itself more powerful and more important than its name; clearly, we must now consider this sort of painting no longer as we would an indulgently tolerated slave, but as we would an equal who increasingly commands universal understanding. Our age has seen many such transformations in its time, and the Academy has understood what it must no longer lag behind, and to what it must concede. If only others too understood their true role so well! Blessed is the example of the fine arts! However, the matter only concerns Mr Pukirev so far, and for my part I would in all truth be prepared to reiterate the words of one eloquent writer, that Mr Pukirev's painting 'is the adornment of the exhibition', if only I were capable of adopting the frame of mind in which exhibitions happen on this earth in order that they be adorned. But this is how I value both Mr Pukirev's picture, and the direction he has taken! This is how I delight in the position which the Academy has assumed with regard to this artist! All this seems very important to me. Until now, people have dared to show pictures of only the smallest of sizes, of everyday, real life in Russia; their subjects were not considered to be worth of the grand scale that is the true property of important, serious pictures with subjects from political history. It is very likely that these insignificant proportions led everyone to think that the content was insignificant, while the common understanding of the significance of such content forced the artist to hunch over meekly and to squeeze everything respectfully into a narrow frame. Times have changed and views have been altered: this happened firstly amongst the public, then amongst artists, and lastly it reached the Academies themselves. The former categories of 'high', 'low' and 'insignificant' exist no longer, and we cannot fail to admit that a particularly definitive transformation has taken place in our Academy if it makes a professor of someone who has painted a substantial picture—but substantial in what way? This is a picture in which there is no conflagration, no battle, no recent history, no Greeks, and no Pechenegs, but in which everything is limited to a parish church, with a priest obligingly marrying a pompous, living corpse of a general, and a tearstained young woman who is dressed up like a sacrificial victim, and who has sold her youth and her scrofulous little face for rank and money. And for such a painting the Academy nowadays awards a professorship? This is a decisive step, an important *profession de foi*, laden with consequences. What seems significant to me in this particular case is not so much the fact that Mr Pukirev has a great talent, or that his picture is full of nature, of subtle, accurate observation, and of dazzling mastery in its execution, but rather, that the former dams have been

broken through, that there is a full acceptance of the legitimacy (on a par with other artistic phenomena) of those of his works in which his full talent and vocation are to be found, and yet which until now have had to steal along timidly, to sidle past apologetically, just like an illegal contraband of sorts. Mr Pukirev is our first professor who is a professor not of historical but of everyday life. I am curious to know what will come of this and what the new professors of this new genus will show us: either, perhaps, that people are always and everywhere one and the same, and that all energy, all development, and all progression forwards comes to an end when the sacred line of any given rank is passed; or that there is truly so much life, and contemporaneity in this newly-acknowledged sort of painting, and so many tasks encroach upon it from all sides, that the artist has no opportunity to fold his arms and fall asleep—even in his maturity, which is usually such a critical turning-point for all of us.

It remains to speak of *historical* painting. In this area we have lately been provided for in the most fundamental way: we have so many leaders to hand that the matter lies not in exemplars and instruction, and this genre will never fade away with us. And this could not be otherwise, given all those unhappy, miserable, educative attempts at sacred and historical subjects which have already for several years pulled the public up short in front of them at every exhibition. After the endlessly-remembered Charons, Olympic Games, and the Moseses,<sup>8</sup> all that was left for us was to look forward to the speedy return of our reserve troops from overseas, in Italy: our pensioners—that unswerving hope of the fatherland, art's rock.<sup>9</sup> Since our native crop was so unsuccessful then we had to turn to our foreign ones (because, as is well-known, after a stay of five or six years abroad every Russian artist is already prepared and finished in the most successful way, and not a drop of anything Russian remains in him). This was not a bad measure to take, and after a brief period reliable guides for Russian art then appeared here, in various forms. Whoever wants to work in an old-Briullovian mode (which still has not departed the scene) has only to go and study Mr Flavitskii's fiery, bold painting *Christian Martyrs in the Coliseum*.<sup>10</sup> Mr Flavitskii

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<sup>8</sup> These were compulsory subjects for paintings set by the Academy.

<sup>9</sup> Russian artists who had been awarded stipends or 'pensions' by the Academy of Arts to allow them to spend several years in Italy.

<sup>10</sup> Flavitskii, Konstantin Dmitrievich (1830-66). Russian painter especially noted for biblical and historical works. The painting discussed here is *Khristianskie mucheniki v Kolizее*.

has with some success reiterated Briullov's<sup>11</sup> habitual iridescence, his theatrical expressions, his melodramatic clamour, as well as his absence of any genuine emotion. Whoever wishes to tread firmly in the footsteps of Messrs. Basin<sup>12</sup> and Markov<sup>13</sup>, but who is deprived of their works through lack of time, should go and stand before Mr Venig's poetic, captivating painting *Angels Proclaiming the Destruction of Sodom*, and feed his soul with the vapid, guileless beauties of this section of our native school.<sup>14</sup> He who is entranced by the restraint of a deliberate and sensible artist who does not wish to squander pathos and other spiritual movements with too generous a hand—in a word, he whose soul is governed by Ingres<sup>15</sup> and those Roman subjects which stirred the hearts of our grandmothers during the reign of Napoleon I—should go and be inspired by Mr Bronnikov's painting *A Quaestor Announces the Death Penalty Passed on Senator Thrasea Paetus*<sup>16</sup>, and learn how meaning, artistic ability, and innate aesthetic feeling can be crushed by a coldness of expression and the total absence of interest in a subject for which our era has no need. I would even have thought that to this number of leaders of the younger generation Mr Belloli himself<sup>17</sup> may have been added in the antiquities section, but again, like Mr Winterhalter, he is unfortunately a foreigner. What is more, however good his *Cornelia with her Children, the Gracchi*, it must nevertheless concede first place to his inimitable pastel portraits of pomaded cherubim, perfumed maidens, and ladies drawn with bare elbows and necks. This means that on this occasion Mr Belloli must be excluded from our considerations. But, finally, he who does not wish to follow any

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<sup>11</sup> Briullov, Karl Pavlovich (1799-1852). Russian Neoclassical painter. After graduating from the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, he spent much time in Rome, where he produced his most famous painting, *The Last Day of Pompeii* (1830-33), which depicts the dramatic scene of the destruction of the city of Pompeii during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Briullov later taught at the Academy of Arts. He was undoubtedly the most celebrated Russian painter of his generation, greatly admired by Gogol', Pushkin, and many others.

<sup>12</sup> Basin, Petr Vasil'evich (1793-1877). Russian painter specialising in historical and biblical subjects.

<sup>13</sup> Markov, Aleksei Tarasovich (1802-78). Russian historical painter.

<sup>14</sup> Venig, Karl Bogdanovich (1830-1908). Russian painter specialising in mythological and biblical subjects. The painting discussed here is *Angely vozveshchaiut gibel' Sodomu*.

<sup>15</sup> Ingres, Jean Auguste Dominique (1780-1867). French Neoclassical painter.

<sup>16</sup> Bronnikov, Fedor Andreevich (1827-1902). Russian historical painter. The work referred to here is *Kvestor chitaet smertnyi prigovor senatoru Trazee Petu*. The incident depicted in the painting occurred in 66 A.D., when the Roman Senator and Stoic philosopher Thrasea Paetus was condemned to death by Emperor Nero and elected to commit suicide.

<sup>17</sup> Belloli, Andrei Frantsevich (died 1881). Italian portrait and historical painter who worked in Russia from the late 1850s until his suicide in 1881. He became a member of the St Petersburg Academy of Arts in 1861. The painting discussed here is *Korneliia so svoimi det'mi Grakkhami*, a depiction of Cornelia and her sons Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.



of the paths we have listed, but who wishes, nevertheless, to attain the summit of present European art, has only to join our new luminary, Mr Ge.<sup>18</sup>

It is my firm conviction that in this artist a very important gain has been made by the Academy, its pupils, and generally speaking, even our art as a whole. I say this not because I agree with our bickering, glib-talking journalists who have decided that no other Russian artist has returned from abroad so independent or having so spurned all artistic traditions, but because for me the role which Mr Ge may play amongst us is all too clear. I do not perceive a higher creative gift in him; I do not see in him that profound and true imagination which creates unexpected, great things from elements which are scattered everywhere in reality; I do not see in him a capacity for an accurate characterisation of selected individuals—in a word, I do not perceive in Mr Ge all those most important aspects of talent which serve as the basis for great masters, and which compel them to create works at which tens of thousands of people will rejoice. There is none of this in Mr Ge's talent. He has a weak and incorrect understanding of the main motifs of the selected task. His Christ contains not one of those higher qualities under the influence of which a unprecedented, unheard-of revolution took place in the world: before us we see only a weak, characterless man, who is confused, all but lost in some sort of contrived debate, taken from God knows where—what could have caused him who appeared to us in order to overturn the world so lose spirit and be so downcast? What meaning could any heckler, however stubborn and obdurate, have to him? To represent Christ in this way means not to understand either his character or his significance at all, and if the artist was incapable of creating anything else with his imagination other to show the teacher and guide to a new life and truth as a creature who is incapable of demonstrating his enormous moral force, then it would have been better not to choose the subject of the Last Supper at all. It would have even been better to interpret him in the old, formal ways, which, although not profound, were without any crude violation of the very essence, without damage to the task in hand. As far as the apostles are concerned, they play a most miserable role in the new painting: Peter and John have just been taken by surprise by what has taken place before their eyes. What sort of people are these, what sort of characters do they have? Were they not seized by any other more strong, urgent and profound human emotion? The remaining apostles do not even express this: they

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<sup>18</sup> Ge, Nikolai Nikolaevich (1831-94). Russian portraitist and painter of biblical and historical scenes. The work discussed here is *The Last Supper* (*Tainaia vecheria*).

serve simply to fill up the background and are in the picture more than anything because they have to be. If we thus examine Mr Ge's painting from the point of view of its tasks and its content, it is nothing particularly remarkable, and is more likely to leave present and future viewers dissatisfied. At the same time it cannot serve the future artist as a guiding thread to new paths of art: surely it can only serve as a caution against a shallow and frivolous consideration of the essence of that which the painting represents. But everything changes if one looks at Mr Ge's work from another point of view, from the point of view of its execution. Here, Mr Ge's achievements are significant, and place him high in the ranks of our artists. After all Briullov's gaudiness, after all Ivanov's<sup>19</sup> lack of effect, Mr Ge is the first to display once more the robust, talented colour palette of the old masters from the great era of Italian art. He is, therefore, the first to show our artists that there are other ways of interpreting subjects from sacred history than the arid and dull way which has been accepted until now in Russia, and that it is still possible to extract so much that is new, painterly, fresh and untouched from subjects which artists have already chosen countless numbers of times, and that seems to everyone as if this is the very first time that the subject has appeared in a painting. These are all achievements which the history of our art will not forget, and which will of course bring vast benefit to our artists and our art. It is time for us to cast aside, like the rest of Europe, old, long-tiresome, and stagnant forms of composition in tasks of religious history. Here Mr Ge has attempted what artists of Germany and France have long been trying, and it would seem that he will doubtless have many followers, and the matter will make progress—after all, we have never been short of followers and epigones. Usually our deficit lies in initiative, but here it has been achieved: what, it follows, is still lacking?

I have enumerated everything that is the most recent, the most remarkable in the realm of art in recent times, and I have pointed out where our main hopes and expectations lie. But, after all, not all Russian art is contained herein, and neither have all its strengths and efforts have been expressed: no one would dream of thinking that there is no one else in the arts other than those who teach and learn, other than those who set the tone and accept the tone, and that all our interest is concentrated upon such mutual improvement alone, upon the helping hand that instructors offer working

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<sup>19</sup> Ivanov, Aleksandr Andrevich (1806-58). Russian historical painter. The son of a professor at the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, he studied there before travelling on an Academy grant or 'pension'

students, who will, in due course, turn into the same kinds of instructors. But where, then, is art itself, where are the works that our emotions and our soul need, and that we need to take pleasure in and imbibe like essential nutrients, rather than passing a cold sentence and judgement on them as if on a horse trial that takes place before our eyes? Do they not exist, or do we not see them? No, they exist, they exist amongst us and will not stay unnoticed: no, we have works which are not conceived in vain in the mind of an artist, and which, having then been transferred to the canvas, are not shown in vain at exhibitions. We have works to which crowds come not to criticise, not to split hairs, not to argue, not to prove anything, not to recollect half-forgotten texts read from twenty years ago, but as if to a friend, a relative, as if to something of one's own, extending a warm hand and hastening towards it with beating heart. Here, the matter does not lie with the artist and his art, nor with whether he is a master or not, nor with whether he fulfils some elevated tasks or other (which must be considered thoroughly beforehand) well or poorly; here, no one asks about anything or anyone, and everyone approaches the canvas as something of which he himself is the true owner and arbiter, and in which he is confronted by his own world, his own, genuine life, where he sees before him that which he himself knows, thinks, and feels. Here alone is there real art in which the people feel that they are at home and are the *dramatis personae*; here alone is there art which responds to real feelings and thoughts, and which is not like a sweet dessert which one can equally do without. Yes, we do have such a genuine, real, solid and non-superfluous art: it has arrived at last, after long years of drought, sham, and apery, and although there are few representatives of it at the present exhibition, these few exemplars bear witness to its growth, its incipient force, and its deep and real development. Also part of this, as well as Mr Pukirev's paintings, is Mr Volkov's *The Wine Cellar*<sup>20</sup>, with its profoundly accurate, artistic representation of the idle *flaneur* who has fallen asleep at the table, which holds out the promise for our painting of an imminent era of the realists and the past, the Dutch artists who were truly national painters; then Mr Trutovskii's *The Tryst*<sup>21</sup>, which, in the opinion of some, is this artist's best work, and in which all the concerns and anxieties of a young girl hurrying to meet her beloved are expressed

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to Italy. His most famous work is *The Appearance of Christ to the People*, on which he worked for twenty years, completing it in 1857.

<sup>20</sup> Volkov, Adrian Markovich (1827-73). Russian genre painter. The work referred to here is *Pogrebok*.

with great truth and grace on her young, elegant, little face as she hesitantly crosses the last fence; then, Mr Kosolap's *Mad Musician*<sup>22</sup>, a small painting by an artist who is still a novice and who is still full of technical deficiencies, but who already commands the elements of pathos, truth and poetry with remarkable strength: for two whole months the eye and emotion of every person in the ceaseless crowd that filled the halls of the Academy was caught by his poor madman, surrounded by the horrors of poverty and deprivation, playing his insane music in a rotten attic next to the body of his old mother, who is barely illuminated by the dying flame of a lamp: no one left without carrying away a deep impression from Mr Kosolap's painting. This array of truly *Russian* painting also includes several paintings from previous exhibitions (exhibited now because they were drawn by lots), which, together with the others, crown the audience's comprehension of the significance of this Russian art which has finally begun. *A Civil Servant Courting a Tailor's Daughter* is full of humour, comedy and subtle motifs, accurately touched upon.<sup>23</sup> *The First of the Month*, in which the poor, tearful, youthful wife who sits by the cradle over her drunken husband's empty wallet purse, has also come out well for the artist;<sup>24</sup> and finally, there are yet more compositions. All this is the work of generation which has been affected, and advanced by, Fedotov<sup>25</sup> and Gogol'.<sup>26</sup> And with such influence and inclination, will not this artistic generation go far?<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Trutovskii, Konstantin Aleksandrovich (1826-93). Russian genre painter. The work referred to here is *Svidanie*.

<sup>22</sup> The painting that Stasov calls *Sumasshedshii muzykant* (*The Mad Musician*) is in the collection of the Russian Museum, St Petersburg. It is now entitled *Bezumniy skripach u tela umershei materi* (*A Mad Violinist by the Body of his Dead Mother*). It was painted by Petr Sysoevich Kosolap (1834-c.1910), a Kuban Cossack who studied at the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg.

<sup>23</sup> Petrov. [Stasov's own note] The painting referred to is *Svatovstvo chinovnika k docheri portnogo*. We have been unable to identify the artist further.

<sup>24</sup> Koshelev [Stasov's own note]. The artist identified by Stasov as 'Koshelev' is Nikolai Andreevich Koshelev (b. 1840). Russian historical, portrait and genre painter. The painting referred to here is *Pervoe chislo mesiatsa*.

<sup>25</sup> Fedotov, Pavel Andreevich (1815-52). Russian genre painter.

<sup>26</sup> Gogol', Nikolai Vasil'evich (1809-52). Russian prose writer and dramatist.

<sup>27</sup> Two short paragraphs follow; the first on sculpture and the second on engraving.