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RUSSIAN IKON, "CREATION OF THE WORLD."
RECENTLY ACQUIRED.

RUSSIAN IKON ACQUIRED

Byzantine Art, a decorative manifestation wherein motifs become symbols of other things and subdivisions of a larger composition and unit, originated in the East, especially in Byzantium. It has the usual love of color, sparkle, and luxuriance found in the jewelry, metal, enamel, and fabrics of old Russia.

After the Christian faith had been established a few centuries, brilliant mosaics and painted panels began to appear. One big group of such paintings were the ikons or likenesses of holy Christian personages.

The modern, Nicolas Roerich, surrounded by his progressive and brilliant canvasses, in speaking of Russian painting at The Detroit Institute of Arts, told of the Russians who work as of old. One may commission such artists to paint the Head of Christ, for example, stiffly and conventionally, according to formulae that have been the "recipe" for ages. And so Russia still continues to enjoy her fine old ikons which the world may well appreciate. Such painting first came into Russia in the Tenth Century, imported by the Princess Olga, and forced upon the people by the energetic Vladimir. The difference between the various examples are slight in style, whether from one century or another, whether from North or South.

Several good examples of them belong to the collection of Prince Gagarin, the Russian Consul in Barcelona, who belongs to a fine old family descended from the Nobility of Moscow. The present Prince is important in the modern history of his country.

His panels which have recently been shown in a number of cities, in-

cluding Detroit, are most pleasing. Of these, the most interesting is that of "The Creation of the World" by the Strogonof School, recently bought by the Detroit Institute of Arts. Dating from the Sixteenth Century, it reveals several scenes of Adam, and Eve, the Labor, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, the Landing on Mt. Ararat, and the division of the world after the flood. It also shows many unusual subjects, together with the "Virgin and Child," "Trinity," "The Crucifixion," and the "Heavenly Host." Russian captions tell us the substance of the various scenes. "The Creation of the World" is in Russian, painted at the center of the upper border.

The pictures are in brilliant polychrome, and show the early Italian Renaissance influence. Authorities tend to date the panel Seventeenth Century. All who have seen it admire and love it. The flesh tones, the robes of many colors, and the almost childish, but naive freedom and naturalism of drawing of the trees, the "Noah's Ark" animals, the stone-breaker typifying the "Adam" condemned to hard labor—all fascinate. While there is such spontaneity, life and ease of representation, one realizes that there is perfect technique of color, modeling and brushwork, if not entirely of drawing. It thus is a happy combination of the Eastern decorative abstractions and the Western informal naturalism.

This, and a Byzantine panel of St. Mercurius, a XII Century panel owned by the Art Institute, make a telling introduction to the fine collection of great Masters in the James E. Scripps' bequest.

R. P.

STAINED GLASS PRESENTED BY MR. GEORGE G. BOOTH



THE TOWN OF STECKBORN



THE FAMILY SCHERER

Domestic stained glass was most extensively practised and reached its greatest technical excellence in Switzerland in the XVI Century, and continued through the XVII and into the XVIII Centuries. It consisted, for the most part, of painted glass, used in the home, or designed for town halls, guilds or similar public places. The subject matter is generally coats of arms or heraldic insignia, supported by richly costumed figures—if for a home, of the master of the house on one side faced by his good frau on the other, or if for a corporation, decorative ornament significant of the town, guild hall or other assembly for which the glass was made. It was customary for one town or guild to present another with painted glass panels, especially designed with their armorial insignia.

Six such panels have been presented to the Detroit Institute of Arts by

Mr. George G. Booth as follows:

A glass of the Swiss citizen "Stöckli," 1589, in the center of which is the donor as halberdier, his right hand grasping a Swiss dagger. On his left there is hanging a sword with a lion head. Two heavy columns are the architectural part. Above five horses are drawing a load of wine, and the coachman swings the whip. Beneath the coat of arms is the inscription, "Hans Stöckli," and above the date 1589. Height 30 cm., breadth 19 cm.

A round glass of the town of "Brugg" made by Jakob Brunner, second half of the XVI Century. The coat of arms in the center is held by two bears, with halberds. One of them wears a coat of mail and the other a red vest and a sword. The background is yellow damask. Diameter 31 cm.

A glass with the coat of arms of the family Scherer, about 1530. The coat



HANS STOECKLI

of arms is below a lovely landscape. On the left side is a halberdier and opposite is his wife very elegantly dressed, presenting him a fine cup. Two columns frame the panel on each side. Above the two figures is the famous place of pilgrimage called "Santiago de Compostela," with four pilgrims. Height 39 cm., breadth 29 cm.

A glass with three coats of arms, by Felix Lindtmayer, Junior, from "Shaffhausen," dated 1559. On very fine double blue glass; in the center is a tree, toward which a little boy is reaching. On the left is a man, the donor, with a large feather on his head. He is dressed in a black velvet vest and white trousers. In one hand he has a Swiss dagger. His wife stands on the other side, very nicely dressed with a white cap, white blouse, a red dress and a violet under-petticoat. Below each figure are inscriptions: "Hans Imen Huser von Stan, 1559 and Madlena Wilhalmine von Vostry." Between these inscriptions are the three coats of arms, of which the one in the middle belongs to the man. Two boys below are troubling a bee-hive. In the corner above are two men, a drummer and a fife-player and two warriors with spears. Height 39 cm., breadth 28.5 cm.

A very fine glass of the town of Steckborn, by Wolfgang Spengler, who worked from 1624 till 1678. Two lions are holding the double coats of arms, above which is the

proverb: "Frid ernert, Unfrid ver-zert," which means: "Peace brings fortune, discord misfortune." At the base the inscription: "The town of Cumun of Steckborn . . ." Height 40 cm., breadth 32 cm.

A large fine glass in the middle of which is the coat of arms with half a lion. On each side are mythical figures, one with a sword and balance representing Justice, the other with a serpent round her arm, and a looking glass, representing Prudence. Between wonderful red and blue colors are sailing ships. At the top the ship shows a banner with a cross. Between two small figures the latin inscription: "Fortes, Fortuna Juvat, 1620" which means that luck follows the strong. Probably the donor of this glass was a ship-owner. Height 41.5 cm., breadth 32.5 cm.

These are amazingly brilliant in color and intriguing for their skillful craftsmanship. The Swiss glass painters would flow a solid color over the glass and then, while it was still fluid, would wipe it out with such skill as to get good modeling and delicate gradations of color. Or by the needlepoint process of scratching away the color, they were able to execute the most florid patterns. And hair, fur or similar textures was represented with amazing realism. They were thoroughly thought out and then put on the glass with great spontaneity.

C. H. B.

Do you know that you can buy pictures by the best American artists at studio prices from the Ninth Annual Exhibition in the Detroit Institute of Arts?



THE PRODIGAL SON. LOANED BY RALPH H. BOOTH.

PRODIGAL SON TRIPTYCH LOANED

A most important triptych telling the story of the Prodigal Son has recently been loaned to the Detroit Institute of Arts by its new owner, Ralph H. Booth. At the left a young man is leaving his home and opportunities, in the center he is returning to the father's home to be forgiven for his past with its disgraceful life, as the right panel has pictured it. Here the son has sunk to the level of a swine herd. The subject is unusual for the period and for Northwestern Europe, its evident provenance.

It apparently came into the possession of Georg A. Reimer, a Berlin collector, from either a Rotterdam or Amsterdam public sale. It was his chef d'oeuvre until his death in 1842, remaining in the Reimer family until bought by Mr. Booth.

The panels have only minor restoration and on insignificant details. The departing son's coat is the one dull bit, alone different from the otherwise prevailing gleam of fresh,

good colors, with the lustre so characteristic of the early XVI Century.

The outer panels represent, on the left side, Christ, in gris aille, standing in a flamboyant Renaissance niche, pointing to the other, similarly decorated, panel with the latin for verse 7 of Luke 15. Below is inscribed the latin for, "The Master upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that be bowed down." This is quoted from Psalm 145, verse 14, as "Ps. 15," more or less correctly suggests. There is no artist's signature nor mark. But inside, over the open house arcade, is the following: "1526 factus sum Hant," apparently indicating that the triptych was painted in Antwerp.

After careful study of Georg Reimer's monograph on the work in which he quotes the many varied critiques as well as argues for his Holbein attribution, certain generalities may be safely asserted and a definite attribution suggested.

The weight of evidence is against

Reimer's Holbein attribution, none of the many painters accepting it and eight of the critics definitely saying Holbein can not be its master.

Four speak of it as a Netherland product, three calling it by an Antwerp painter. Two see in it a precursor of P. Breughel, five others saying that the style is that of Quentin Massys. Three others feel that it received the general scrutiny of that leader himself. It seems safe, therefore, to say that it is Netherlandish, probably within the influence of the Quentin Massys school. Dr. Friedlander first proposed such a theory.

Although five have seen Dutch characteristics in such detail as the landscape and genre parts, Dutch attributions have been doubted by practically all critics. Apparently though there may be Dutch features, they are not of sufficient importance to warrant an attribution of the panels to a painter from Holland. Thus the two names, Swart van Groningen and Bartholomaeus Bruyn, suggested by two critics, in each case have proved insufficiently authenticated.

Reimer argues that Holbein painted these panels enroute from Basel to England in 1526, at Antwerp. He says Holbein painted differently here than before or after, because he desired to fit into the Massys' manner popular there. He stayed in Antwerp long enough to do the work, Reimer says. This critic admits, however, that others have not accepted the theory because not substantiated by facts. Lack of space prevents an account of DeGroot's opinion. He shows that Holbein could not have painted this because he did not have the time to do so in Antwerp, because he never before or afterwards showed any suggestion of such painting and

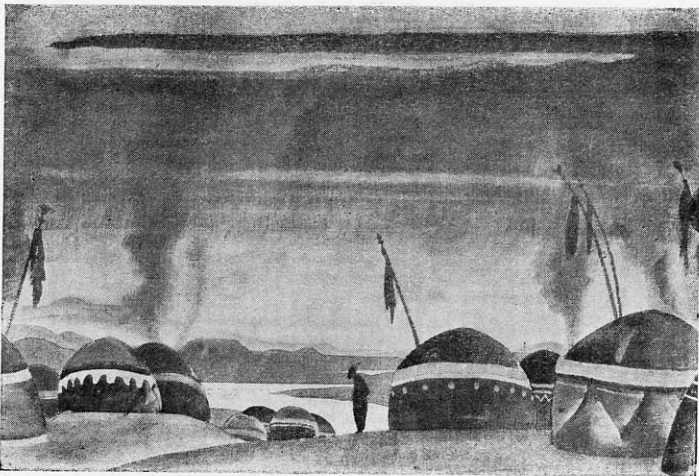
because he would not have made such a radical change for one picture.

The greatest Belgian authority, Prof. George Hulin, in Vol. 35, 1913, Prussian Art Collections, writes of Goswyn van der Weyden. This painter, born in Brussels 1465, is generally known as the grandson of the more famous Rogier van der Weyden. Free of the guild of St. Luke in Antwerp in 1503, he is known to have had many apprentices from 1504 to 1513. In 1514 and 1530 he was elder of the corporation. In 1535 he painted a triptych for the Tongerlo church. Its inscription says it was . . . "imitating the art of his grandfather Roger, called the Apelles of his age. . . ." He was in Antwerp in 1538 also.

There is something of the Roger manner in the dramatic spirit and pose of the central group. There has been and seems to be no proof against Goswyn van der Weyden as the author of the Prodigal Son. At least he is as likely to be the painter as any, as Hulin said in a criticism of this triptych, and as Dr. Walter Cohen, assistant director of the Municipal Museum in "Düsseldorf" and Gronau of Casel, less surely suggest. Dr. Cohen definitely says it is from the Quentin Massys atelier where many artists were working. Many indications corroborate the Goswyn van der Weyden theory, he adds.

At all events, the picture is a most valuable masterpiece because of its subject, technique and attractiveness in the colors of the original. As a document of its time, as a naturalistic and dramatic picture of life, and as a decorative design of infinite sky, mysterious landscape, architecture and figures, it is a real treasure.

M. B. and R. P.



STAGE DESIGN, BY NICOLAS ROERICH
RECENTLY PURCHASED.

DESIGN FOR PRINCE IGOR ACQUIRED

Russia has returned to its own Slavic love of strength and quality of color, to its almost primitive forms and mystic, passionate and luminous chromatic designs in the work of Nicolas Roerich, a painter still living and progressing. In a world of truth and fantasy, he has produced some of his most powerful and beautiful pictures for the stage. Encouraged by royalty and enlightened patronage a large group of artists contemporary with Roerich were entering this field of work headed by Vrubel. Leon Bakst and Boris Anisfeld were among this number, now so well known. In such work Roerich found a realm for the free play of his fantasy, imagination, and synthetic composition. His art is always personal, though national. His style is modern, always with unity of volumes, well harmonized and plastic.

His first work was for a XII Century Mystery Play, very successful and followed by numerous similar commissions. In 1909 he helped to produce the Petrograd and Paris

productions of Prince Igor, the scene design for which has been purchased in Detroit. The primitive power in the Polavetsky Camp scene for this production is one of his greatest.

Diaghileff produced Prince Igor in 1920. It is a group of Polovtsiennes Dances which have no great significance but are superbly barbarian and frenzied. The scene of this ballet purchased by the Detroit Institute of Arts shows the Igloo type of nomadic home, in olive drabs before the quiet waters. Against a sky of sapphire green, thin columns of smoke rise from camp fires. In the ominous sky above stretch out threatening fingers of flame-colored clouds.

The picture was first shown in London in 1920. It was the unanimous choice of the museum authorities in Detroit.

R. P.

Art Institute open Friday evenings, 7:30-9:30. Free sketch class, Recreation Commission.

MUSEUM NOTES

The Ninth Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists will be opened to the public with a reception on Wednesday, April 11, from eighty-thirty to eleven o'clock. Guests will be welcomed by a reception committee consisting of Mr. William J. Gray, representing the Arts Commission of the City of Detroit; Mr. D. M. Ferry, Jr., of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society; Mr. Frank Scott Clark, President of the Scarab Club; Miss Helen E. Keep, Secretary of the Detroit Society of Women Painters; Mr. William B. Stratton, Vice-President of the Society of Arts and Crafts; Mr. Louis C. Stanley, President of the Archaeological Society of Detroit; and Mrs. Lillian Matthews, Detroit Federation of Women's Clubs.

The public is invited to participate in the official opening of this exhibition which is national in its scope

and representative of the best work being done by contemporary American artists.

A fine collection of posters has recently been given to the Detroit Institute of Arts and a group of the most notable are now hanging in the Print Galleries.

Students of the graphic arts will view with interest the poster by Cheret, the French artist who created the art of the poster, and the work of Willette, another French artist and lithographer, who is represented by a characteristic poster, done in the silvery grey tones which he so often used.

Moucha has three fine posters, one having a timely as well as artistic interest, for it represents the great Bernhardt in her glory. The posters will hang in the Print Galleries until the middle of April.

LECTURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

April:

- 1st, 3:30 P. M.* Easter Musical Program rendered by The Detroit Chamber Music Society.
- 8th, 3:30 P. M.* Lecture, "Early Art in America," by Clyde H. Burroughs.
- 11th, 8:30 P. M.* Reception and Opening View of the Ninth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American artists.
- 15th, 3:30 P. M.* Lecture, "Contemporary Art in America" by Clyde H. Burroughs.
- 22nd, 3:30 P. M.* Lecture, "Canada Today," by Mr. Frank Yeigh.
- 29th, 3:30 P. M.* Special Musical Program rendered by the Detroit String Quartette of the Symphony Orchestra under auspices of the Detroit Chamber Music Society.

EXHIBITIONS

- April 11th to May 30* Ninth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American artists. Galleries III and IV.
- April 1 to 30* Special Exhibit in Children's Museum.
- April 1 to 15* Posters and colored woodblock prints.