

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SOTHEBY'S RUSSIAN ART SALES

WORKS BY ACCLAIMED RUSSIAN ARTISTS

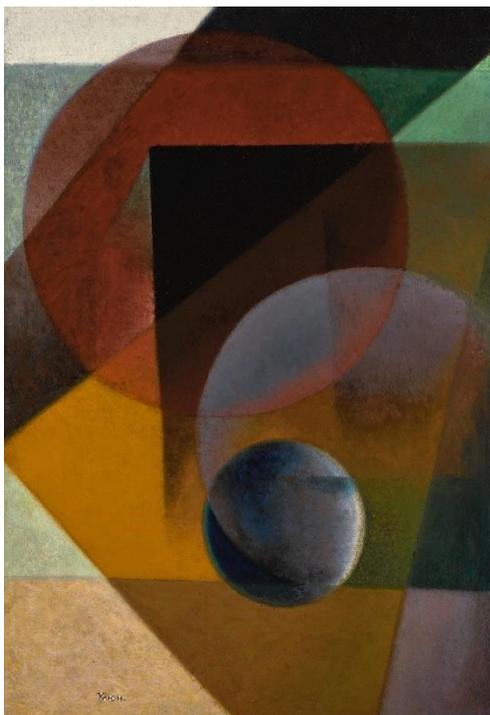
INCLUDING THE MOST IMPORTANT PAINTING TO APPEAR AT AUCTION BY
AVANT-GARDE ARTIST AND ASSOCIATE OF MALEVICH, IVAN KLIUN

London, 19 November 2019: Later this month Sotheby's is set to offer works by some of the most pre-eminent creators of Russian art in its [Russian Pictures](#) and [Works of Art, Fabergé and Icons](#) sales on 26 November in London.

Leading the Russian Paintings sale is a rare oil painting by the celebrated Russian avant-garde artist, and associate of Malevich, Ivan Kliun. One of very few works by the artist in private hands, *Spherical Suprematism* is the most important work by Kliun ever to appear at auction. Other highlights include a recently rediscovered view of Uglich by Konstantin Yuon, lost for over a century, the striking *Green Landscape* by Yuri Annenkov (est £100,000-150,000), and a number of impressive examples of portraiture by Boris Grigoriev, including *Les Enfants* (est £300,000-500,000) and *Breton Woman* (est £150,000-200,000).

The Russian Works of Art, Fabergé and Icons sale features a number of works from the collection of Caroline P. Ireland, including a rare Fabergé jewelled rock crystal 'snowflake' pendant (est. £40,000 – 60,000), created by Alma Pihl, one of only two female designers at the firm. Further highlights from the sale include brilliantly painted modelled vase, one of only two known examples of a Russian Imperial Palace Vase in the Chinese Taste, a silver-gilt cloisonné and pictorial enamel triptych icon (est £ 100,000 - 150,000), depicting the Ascension of Christ flanked by Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky and Saint Blessed Xenia, and 19 outstanding examples of painted Soviet Porcelain (est £3,000-25,000).

RUSSIAN PAINTINGS SALE (LONDON, 26 NOVEMBER)



Ivan Kliun

[Spherical Suprematism](#)

Oil on board laid on canvas, first half of the 1920s
Estimate: £2,500,000 - 3,500,000

Ivan Kliun was a leading light of the Russian avant-garde, friend of Malevich and pioneer of non-objective art. This painting is the most important work by the artist to appear at auction. Of exceptional provenance, the painting belonged to the fabled collector of the Russian avant-garde, George Costakis. It was largely through Costakis's efforts that Kliun and many other artists of this seismic period in art history were not consigned to obscurity.

Costakis acquired this work from the artist's daughter in the 1960s. When he was granted permission to leave the USSR in return for the donation of the bulk of his collection to the State Tretyakov Gallery, *Spherical Suprematism* is one of the works he elected to take with him when he emigrated, and bears a USSR export stamp on the reverse.

Please click [here](#) for full press release.

Konstantin Yuon

[The Ancient Town of Uglich](#)

Oil on canvas, 1913

Estimate: £600,000 - 800,000

Known only from a black and white photograph held in the artist's archives, which was published only once in the 1950s, the appearance at auction of *The Ancient Town of Uglich* is a major rediscovery. Painted in the last summer before the outbreak of the Great War when Yuon was at the height of his creative powers, it has remained unseen in Italian private collections for over a century.



Fedor Bronnikov

[Hymn of the Pythagoreans to the Rising Sun](#)

Oil on canvas, 1877

Estimate: £300,000 - 500,000

Depicting the religious rites of the Pythagoreans, who are believed to have worshipped the rising sun accompanied by sacred music, this

painting is one of several versions Bronnikov made of this famous composition. Besides the original 1869 version, which was commissioned by Pavel Tretyakov and is now at the State Tretyakov Gallery, the artist executed at least six others, three of which belong to museums in Russia. The painting has remained in the same esteemed collection of the Gucci family for most of the last century.

Alexei Bogoliubov

[Venice at Dusk](#)

Oil on canvas

Estimate: £400,000 - 600,000

A graduate of the St Petersburg Imperial Academy, Bogoliubov first arrived in Venice in 1854, witnessing the magnificent Festa della Salute celebration, during his stay.

This evocative cityscape from a private French collection, is most like Bogoliubov's earlier Venetian canvases; painted in the Romantic tradition of the Academy - the dark silhouettes of the cathedral and surrounding buildings, emphasised by the fires of the illuminations, stand out against the clear evening sky. The dramatic lighting contrasts between light and shade, and animated figures of the gondoliers and citizens bring a touch of drama to a conventional panoramic scene.





Boris Kustodiev

[Portrait of Admiral Oskar von Kraemer](#)

Oil on canvas, 1902

Estimate: £120,000 - 180,000

This portrait of Admiral Oskar von Kraemer belongs to a series of preparatory studies executed by Boris Kustodiev for the *Ceremonial Meeting of the State Council on May 7, 1901*. The monumental large-scale composition, now at the State Russian Museum, was commissioned by Emperor Nicholas II to commemorate the centenary of the State Council.

The execution of the painting was entrusted to Ilya Repin, however, suffering from painful arthritis in his right hand, he hired assistants to help with the commission. Boris Kustodiev, a graduate of the Imperial Academy of Arts and one of his most talented students, had a gift for portraiture and a not dissimilar style to

Repin, making him the perfect candidate. In all, Kustodiev completed 27 preparatory portraits, including this work, which remained in the collection of the von Kraemer family.

Although better known in Russia than his native Finland, Oskar von Kraemer was the most highly-decorated Finnish naval officer of the 19th century.

Nikanor Chernetsov

[View of Alexandria](#)

Oil on canvas, 1850

Estimate: £180,000 - 250,000

In 1840, the Chernetsov brothers, Nikanor, Grigory and Polikarp, left Russia for their first trip abroad. After an extended and fruitful stay in Italy, they left Europe behind with the aim of reaching the Holy Land, travelling via Egypt, and arriving in Alexandria in the autumn of 1842. By then, the city had largely recovered from the Napoleonic wars and was once again an important economic and cultural centre.



The brothers worked relentlessly, filling their sketchbooks with the exotic views they encountered. Back in St Petersburg, these would become valuable material which would influence their work for years to come. This work, painted by Nikanor in 1850, Alexandria is seen from the distance, from a slightly elevated view point, revealing the city in all its glory. On the left, the Citadel of Qaitbay, built in the 15th century on the site of the famous Pharos, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, is visible.

Boris Grigoriev

[Les Enfants](#)

Tempera on canvas, 1923

Estimate: £300,000 - 500,000

This portrait of twin-sisters, the children of the artist Florence Cane (1882-1952) and the poet and lawyer Melville Henry Cane (1879-1980), was painted by Grigoriev in October and November of 1923, during his first visit to the USA.

Capturing the intimacy and warmth of sibling affection between Mary and Katherine, Grigoriev also managed to catch a sense of their artistic sensibilities, as if divining their unconventional fates (both girls became artists, famous pedagogues and specialists in the field of art-therapy). This gift of 'vision', possessed by those of certain intrinsic qualities, was typical of Grigoriev who always sought not just a certain originality in his sitters but a complexity of their spiritual makeup, even if they were children.



Vladimir Lebedev

[Wrestlers](#)

Gouache on paper, 1933

Estimate: £30,000 - 50,000

Best known for his book illustrations and poster designs, Vladimir Lebedev was Art Editor of the state publishing house for children's literature Detgiz between 1928-1933. This work belongs to the artist's most interesting period; when free from the confines of children's literature and before a damning article appeared in Pravda in 1936 denigrating the illustrators of the Leningrad school, he felt most able to experiment.

From 1927, the Soviet Union began to invite foreign nations to participate in Classical Wrestling championships in Moscow, hosting Germany, Finland, and, in 1933, Turkey, over whom the Soviet team won a decisive victory. The highly-stylised works in this series demonstrate an ironic reappropriation of the aesthetic canon historically associated with the depiction of athleticism.

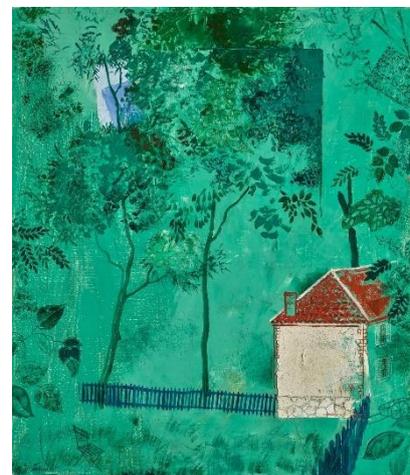
Yuri Annenkov

[Green Landscape](#)

Oil on canvas, circa 1926-1927

Estimate: £100,000 - 150,000

Annenkov managed to leave the Soviet Union through his participation at the 1924 Venice Biennale, from where he went straight on to Paris. Once in France, he threw himself into painting, opening his first solo show at the Galerie Bing in 1930. The exhibition was accompanied by a book by the Swiss-French critic Pierre Courthion with illustrations of thirty-one works, of which the present work is no.3. With its economy of line, flattened perspective and bold yet restricted palette, it most likely dates to 1926-1927.



By the time of Courthion's publication in 1930, Green Landscape was already in the collection of a Monsieur Kelly, Paris. Thomas Smith Kelly was the husband of the celebrated interior decorator Sarah Hunter Kelly (whose name is inscribed on the stretcher). Originally from Philadelphia, the Kellys moved to Paris at the end of the First World War and remained in France for nearly two decades. They soon fell in with a glamorous crowd including Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Josephine Baker, Magritte and Man Ray, and bought the 100-room 18th-century chateau Méréville outside Paris to house their growing art collection which included works by Quentin de la Tour, Thomas Hart Benton, Marcel Duchamp and this work by Annenkov.

RUSSIAN WORKS OF ART, FABERGÉ AND ICONS SALE (LONDON, 26 NOVEMBER)



A Fabergé jewelled rock crystal 'snowflake' pendant

**Workmaster Albert Holmström, after the design by Alma Pihl,
St Petersburg, circa 1913**

Estimate: £40,000 - 60,000

Related to the famous Imperial Winter Egg, each of Fabergé's intricate 'snowflake' designs was to be completely unique, like the ice crystals that inspired them. These rare designs were originally intended as souvenirs from Russia for the wealthy wives of the oil tycoon Emmanuel Nobel's international clientele and are some of the most imaginative pieces ever produced by the famous jewellery firm. Held in private hands for decades, this example was originally in the important Fabergé collection of Lansdell K. Christie and was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1962.

A silver-gilt, cloisonné and pictorial enamel casket

Feodor Rückert, Moscow, 1908-1917, width 18cm

Estimate: £100,000 - 150,000

Famed for his exceptional enamel work and long-standing collaboration with Fabergé, Feodor Rückert was a master of the Neo-Russian style. Held in a private collection for over fifty years and depicting a view of the Moscow Kremlin, this rare work relates most closely to examples in The Royal Collection and Fabergé Museum, St Petersburg.





[An important and rare porcelain vase](#)

Imperial Porcelain Factory, St Petersburg, period of Nicholas II, 1898

Estimate: £40,000 - 60,000

This brilliantly painted and boldly modelled vase is one of only two known examples of a Russian Imperial Palace Vase in the Chinese Taste, the other of which forms part of the collection at Pavlovsk Palace, St Petersburg. Featuring gilt peacocks, flower branches and a dragon in pastel shades, the vase was created during the reign of Emperor Nicholas II for the Imperial palace in Tsarskoe Selo.

[A silver-gilt cloisonné and pictorial enamel triptych icon](#)

Khlebnikov, Moscow, 1899-1908

£ 100,000 - 150,000

Designed with the highest quality pictorial enamel panels, this sophisticated silver-gilt and enamel triptych icon features a depiction of the Ascension of Christ flanked by Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky and Saint Blessed Xenia.

The iconography of this icon suggests an Imperial connection: both Saint Alexander Nevsky and Saint Xenia were depicted as patron saints of the Romanov family, the former being the patron saint of Emperor Alexander III himself.



Images are available to download [here](#).

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