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The Russian Vision: The Art of Ilya Repin

By David Jackson



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Ilya Repin (1844-1930) is a key figure of Russian nineteenth-century realism; his career spanned a period of huge cultural, social and political change, bearing witness to the challenge to the Russian autocracy, the coming of the October Revolution and the dawn of the Soviet Union. From humble peasant beginnings Repin rose to a place of artistic pre-eminence and international acclaim and was the most important influence in shaping a distinctly Russian school of art. Through a series of successful but controversial works he addressed such issues as the hard lives of the peasants, the fate of revolutionary activists and Russian history, as well as painting some of the nation's greatest cultural figures, many of whom - such as Tolstoy, Mussorgsky and Gorky - he counted as personal friends.

The Russian Vision: The Art of Ilya Repin presents the life and work of the most celebrated Russian painted of his generation. A comprehensive survey of Repin's oeuvre, featuring a wealth of little-seen paintings; dramatic, distinctive images that evoke the hardships, pleasures and everyday routines of Russian society in the twilight years of Tsarist rule. Having declined in the twentieth century, Repin's reputation is growing again.

Combining close readings of all his major canvases, as well as many of his lesser-known works, within the broader context of Russian art, society and culture, written in an accessible style, David Jackson's book, featuring more than 100 colour plates of Repin's work, and telling the story of his life, will do much to help restore his stature.

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The Russian Vision: The Art of Ilya Repin By David Jackson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #655219 in Books
- Brand: ACC Art Books
- Published on: 2015-10-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 12.14" h x .95" w x 9.60" l, 3.55 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 216 pages

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