



1844 – 1930

Ilia Efimovich Repin was born in 1844 in a small Ukrainian town of Tchuguev in the family of a military settler. As a boy he was trained as an icon painter.



Repin's house in Chuguev (photo)



The imperial
Academy of
Arts,
Petersburg

His arrival to the capital coincided with an important event in artistic life of the 60s, the so-called "Riot of the Fourteen" when 14 young artists left the Academy having refused to use mythological subjects for their diploma works. They stood on the point that art should be close to real life. Later Repin would be closely connected with some of them, the members of the Society of Peredvizhniki.

For his diploma work (1871) Repin was awarded The Major Gold Medal and received a scholarship for studies abroad. "Barge Haulers on the Volga" (1870-1873) was the first considerable work painted by Repin after graduation. It immediately won recognition. In 1873, Repin went abroad. For some months he had been travelling in Italy and then settled and worked in Paris up to 1876.

"Barge Haulers on the Volga"



Sketches for the painting "Barge Haulers on the Volga"



A series of paintings devoted to the revolution theme deserves special attention. The artist was no doubt interested in creating the character of a fighter for social justice. The range of social, spiritual and psychological problems, which attracted Repin, is revealed in his works: "Unexpected Return" (1884) and "Refusal from the Confession" (1879-1885).

"Unexpected Return"



"Refusal from the Confession"



Repin rarely painted historical paintings. The most popular in this genre is "Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan" (1895). The expressive, intense composition and psychological insight in rendering the characters produced an unforgettable impression on the spectators.

"Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan"



The end of life

The last quarter of the 19th century is the best period in Repins work, though his creative activity continued in the 20th century (the artist died in 1930), he did not paint any masterpieces then. After the bolsheviks' revolution in 1917 he lived and worked in his estate Penates in Finland. There is a Repin museum. The museum visitors have the opportunity of gaining a knowledge of the artists life and work.

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