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The Artist, his Admirers, his Dealers and Inheritors – Ilya Repin and his Career in the Republic of Finland

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This is a revised and extended version of Timo Huusko's article 'Ilya Repin's early art exhibitions in Finland', published in Anne-Maria Pennonen (ed.), *Ilya Repin*. Ateneum Publications Vol. 147. Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum, 2021, 103–27. Transl. Don McCracken

Ilya Repin was faced with a new, unexpected situation when the October Revolution of 1917 severed the close ties between St Petersburg and Kuokkala in Finland. He had become accustomed to many changes in the course of his long life, but up until then these had been mainly due to his own decisions, especially his bold departure from Chuguev to St Petersburg to study art in 1863, then moving on to Moscow in 1877 and exhibiting with the non-academic *Peredvizhniki* (Wanderers) group. Repin returned to St Petersburg in 1882, and in 1892 he became first a teacher at the Imperial Academy of Arts, and later its Director. He also acquired a place in the countryside near Vitebsk in Zdrawneva, Belarus, in 1892, and subsequently entered into a relationship with Natalia Nordmann, with whom he purchased a house in Kuokkala on the Karelian Isthmus in 1899. In 1903, he moved permanently to Kuokkala and



Ilya Repin,
*Double Portrait of
Natalia Nordmann and
Ilya Repin, 1903,*
oil on canvas,
78.5cm x 130cm
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery /
Jenny Nurminen



**Ilya Repin, Natalia Nordmann
 Dancing, 1900–10, red chalk
 and pencil on paper,
 37cm x 26.5cm
 Finnish National Gallery /
 Ateneum Art Museum**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery /
 Hannu Aaltonen

two years later retired from the Academy. These decisions were all made as a result of more-or-less conscious judgments that influenced his quality of life and relationship networks.

Things changed in 1918, however, and Repin was no longer in control. Nordmann (1863–1914) had died of pneumonia in Switzerland four years earlier, and the border between Finland and Russia was closed in April 1918 in the wake of the October Revolution and the Finnish Civil War, leaving Repin a 73-year-old Russian emigré in the newly-independent Finland. His property in Russia was confiscated, and for nearly three years he was virtually ignorant of what was happening in Soviet Russia.¹ On top of all that, his right hand had become partially paralysed, preventing him from working properly after 1903. He lived in his studio house, Penates (Penaty) with two servants and his daughter Nadya (Nadezhda), who had learning disabilities. His son Yury lived nearby with his family and his eldest daughter Vera moved to Penates from the Soviet Union in 1922. His third daughter Tatyana lived in Zdrawneva until 1930.

By this point Repin had lost his former network of exhibitors and buyers, along with the Russian intelligentsia and circle of patrons that had given him job opportunities and also provided inspiring food for thought. In fact, Repin had cut himself off from the St Petersburg elite after moving to Kuokkala in 1903, although at that time a St Petersburg newspaper had reported he was still voted the fourth best-known Russian after Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Gorky.² The way that he distanced himself can be seen, for example, in the fact that he became interested in the

free co-operative movement and a self-sufficient economy in the spirit of Tolstoy, as well as in democratic, non-hierarchical structures and ideas about living in harmony with nature in general. Repin and Nordmann's weekly receptions at Penates on Wednesdays offered only vegetarian food and self-service at the dining table, although that did not stop prominent Russian writers and artists visiting him until the outbreak of the First World War. While Repin opposed new art trends, such as the aestheticism of the *Mir iskusstva* (World of Art) group and especially the early avant-garde, nevertheless in the mid-1910s he became acquainted with, for example, Vladimir Mayakovsky and David Burluk, whom he met at the villa of his neighbour, the author Korney Chukovsky.³

Even though Repin was stranded on the Finnish side of the border, he still had his studio house and plenty of his own works with him. He also continued to paint relentlessly. Perhaps the most interesting works from his late period are the large religious pieces and paintings that depicted Russian-Ukrainian people, such as *Golgotha* (1921–22), *Religious Procession in an Oak Forest (The Miraculously Revealed Icon)* (1877–1924), *Cossacks on the Black Sea* (1908–19) and *The Hopak (Dance of the Zaporozhian Cossacks)* (1926–30), which

1 Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier. *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, 186–87. According to Tito Colliander, Repin last visited Russia in November 1917. See Tito Colliander. *Ilja Repin, ukrainalainen taiteilija*. Helsinki: Tammi, 1944, 331.

2 'Ett och annat', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 4 July 1903.

3 Olli Valkonen. 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', in *Ilja Repin*. Exhibition catalogue. Helsinki: Taidekeskus Retretti, 1995, 38–43. After the revolution, Chukovsky remained in Soviet Russia, where he became a major children's writer. He was also a significant person in Repin's life as editor of Repin's memoirs, which the artist began to compile in Kuokkala. The memoirs were completed as early as 1916, but were not published in the Soviet Union until 1937.

Repin painted several times, making changes each time, as was his habit. He was fascinated by the Cossack theme because he was born in Chuguev, in Kharkiv province, which belonged to the Russian Empire and is now located in Ukraine, although his Russian-speaking parents came from near Moscow.⁴ In his childhood, Repin admired the Cossacks of the nearby Don region, with whom his father traded horses.⁵ The western tributary of the River Don, the Donets, flowed near Repin's home, and the mythical Ukrainian Zaporozhian Cossack region was located on the lower reaches of the Dnieper River, north and east of the Sea of Azov, a few hundred kilometres south of Chuguev. After the Great Northern War (1700–21), the area was taken over by Russia. Repin became acquainted with the descendants of the Zaporozhians in Ukraine and southern Russia when he was there in 1880 and in 1888. It is said that he became so enthusiastic about the subject that in 1880 he spoke Ukrainian to his children.⁶

Thus, in his later art, Repin repeatedly returned to his childhood and youth and his monumental late works can be viewed from a nostalgic perspective, not only because they reflected a longing for the experiences of his earlier years, but also because they served as a means of resisting the passage of time by recounting the past.⁷ In other words, one might think that despite the challenges presented by his external circumstances, Repin created a kind of mental comfort zone for himself by painting these themes, which were important to him. In this article, however, I focus mainly on how he gained a foothold with his art in Finland, and what happened to his works as they spread through his own and his family's circle of acquaintances via exhibitions and acquisitions beyond Penates. The fate of these works is also associated with adversity and outright exploitation. How exactly did Repin's works leave Russia via Finland, and end up elsewhere in Europe and the United States?

Forging contacts with the art field in Finland

Professor Olli Valkonen has thoroughly discussed Repin's years in independent Finland, writing insightfully about how the artist had to start making connections within the Finnish art world to ensure his livelihood. Of course, Repin was not completely unknown, as his work had been followed in Finland since his permanent move to Kuokkala in 1903.⁸ After the Bolshevik Revolution, he was also used by the Finnish media to a certain extent as political propaganda.⁹ This might have been partly due to the fact that, having lost his homeland, he was pessimistic about the Russian people and 'their tendency to tolerate the worst'. At that time, he did not seem willing to express any particular political thoughts, and he had no preference for one nationality over another.¹⁰

Repin became sceptical of the Bolshevik regime as more information emerged about the reality of life in Soviet Russia. In honour of his 80th birthday, major exhibitions of his works were staged in Moscow in 1924 and St Petersburg in 1925. In conjunction with the latter, he was asked to return to St Petersburg (then Leningrad) but he refused despite the promise of accommodation and a monthly allowance. In the Finnish press, Repin was said to be very

4 Pekka Häkli. 'Suuri siveltimen mestari. Ilja Rjepinin täyttäessä 85 vuotta', *Työn voima*, 8 August 1929 (); S[igríd Schauman]. 'Ilja Repin 85 år', *Svenska Pressen*, 6 August 1929.

5 See Repin's autobiography, Ilja Repin. *Mennyt aika läheinen*. Helsinki: WSOY, 1970 (original work 1937), 13–48.

6 Colliander, *Ilja Repin*, 245.

7 For the dual meaning of nostalgia (therapy and pain), see Pirjo Kukkonen. 'Nostalgian semiosis. Keveyden ja painon dialogia', in Riikka Rossi and Katja Seutu (eds.), *Nostalgia. Kirjoituksia kaipuusta, ikävästä ja muistista*. Helsinki: SKS, 2007, 15–17. Kukkonen is referring to Philippe Robert-Demontrond's idea of nostalgia.

8 E.g. 'Professor I.J. Repin', *Nya Pressen*, 7 October 1907; 'Hos Ilja Repin i Finland', *Wiborgs Nyheter*, 10 December 1908; 'Hos ultravegeterianerna på villan "Penatern"', *Björneborgs Tidning*, 9 December 1910.

9 'Repin och nöden i Finland', *Wiborgs Nyheter*, 4 July 1918; 'Ilja Repins tack', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 9 August 1918; 'Taiteilija Ilja Repin...', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 3 July 1918.

10 'Repins tankar om sig själf och Ryssland', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 18 August 1918.



Ilya Repin drawing water from the Well of Poseidon at Penates in Kuokkala, late 1920s. Photographer N.N. Simanovsky. Nikolai Shuvalov Archive. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

negative and harsh, but his letters to the Soviet People's Commissar Anatoly Lunacharsky were more diplomatic: he expressed his desire to visit the Leningrad exhibition and his confidence that Finland and Russia would enjoy good neighbourly relations in the future. However, Repin then cited his beloved Penates and its Well of Poseidon, which produces healing water, as an obstacle to his return.¹¹ From this, one could conclude that Repin did not want to rule out the possibility that the Communist government would be overthrown, leaving him able to return to Russia. Respect for Russian culture can also be seen by the fact that, according to some sources, Repin had returned to the Orthodox Church in Kuokkala as early as 1920. This was the first time he had attended church since the Russian Orthodox Synod excommunicated Leo Tolstoy in 1901. At the same time, it was also reported that Repin had been forced to stop eating vegetarian food – he had been vegetarian for more than a decade in line with the teachings of his late partner – and had started to include fish on the menu.¹²

Repin first visited Helsinki in 1905 and again in July 1912 with Korney Chukovsky, his son Yury and his former student, the painter Isaak Brodsky. They paid a visit to the Ateneum Art Museum, where Repin said that he became acquainted with the paintings of Anders Zorn (1860–1920), Albert Edelfelt (1854–1905) and Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931).¹³ Repin had already come across Edelfelt in St Petersburg in 1895. Edelfelt was at that time learning about

11 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 46; 'Ilja Repin ja bolshevikit', *Länsi-Suomi*, 14 February 1925.

12 'Ajantietoa. Ilja Repin', *Saarijärven Paavo*, 29 April 1920.

13 See Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 41.



Ilya Repin's villa, Penates, in Kuokkala, 1920s. Photographer N.N. Simanovsky. Grigori Brenev Repin Archive. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery



Ilya Repin, *Portrait of Akseli Gallen-Kallela*, 1920, oil on canvas, 100cm x 81cm
 Finnish National Gallery /
 Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery /
 Jenny Nurminen

the syllabus in the Imperial Academy of Arts, and Repin had played a key role in revising it. It was also thanks to Repin that Edelfelt was able to arrange a place for Juho Rissanen, who was not fluent in the language, to study at the Imperial Academy in 1897–98. Repin had a positive image of Finland, or of Helsinki at least: in 1905, he contrasted the 'depressed landscapes inhabited by introverted Finns' to Helsinki, which was as much part of Europe as a corner of Paris, and whose cheerful public joy made even the city's boulevards come alive with laughter.¹⁴

Another Finnish artist that Repin was drawn to was Gallen-Kallela. Repin might have met him on his 1912 visit to Helsinki, as he was invited in the spring of 1914 to become an honorary member of

the Artists' Association of Finland, which Gallen-Kallela chaired.¹⁵ Initially, however, Repin's relationship with Gallen-Kallela was anything but positive, as his new *Kalevala* paintings, which strongly emphasised contours, colour juxtapositions and two-dimensional surface impressions, aroused great indignation, especially in 1898 when the works were included in

14 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 40–41.

15 See 'Konstnärsgilletts 50-årsfest', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 4 May 1914.



Ilya Repin, *Winter Landscape*, 1903, oil on canvas, 80cm x 64cm
 Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Aaltonen

an exhibition in St Petersburg. Repin's opposition was related to the fact that, at the time, he could not accept *Mir iskusstva's* interest in Symbolism or western influences in Russian history.¹⁶ Later, however, Repin became better acquainted with Gallen-Kallela and came to appreciate him so much that in 1920 he painted a quick portrait of him, and he even compared the artist to the Zaporozhians in facial features and character.¹⁷

Additionally, according to one news report, Repin agreed to hold an art exhibition at the Strindberg Art Salon in Helsinki in the spring of 1918, but this project, which was planned as a major event, failed to materialise. Repin did, however, exhibit two works at the Strindberg in May 1920.¹⁸ It would appear that Repin had already at that stage forged a relationship with the Strindberg Art Salon Director Arvid Lydecken, who later organised several exhibitions of

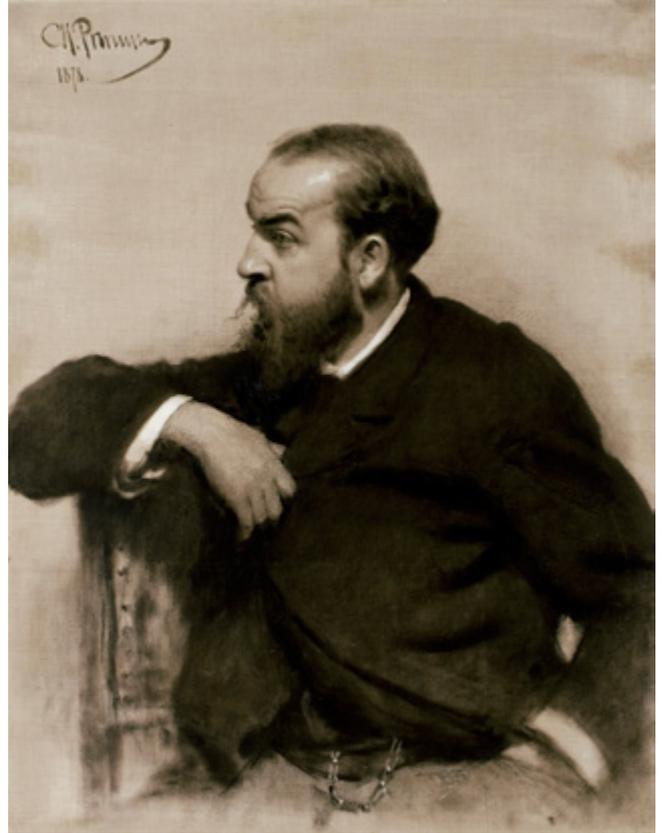
16 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 36–37.

17 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 44.

18 'Ilja Repin', *Dagens Press*, 2 Nov 1918; 'Strindbergin taidesalongin näyttely', *Uusi Suomi*, 18 May 1920.



Ilya Repin, *Portrait of the Artist's Daughter, Nadezhda (Nadya) Repina*, 1898, oil on canvas, 71cm x 57.5cm
Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum
Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Jenny Nurminen



Ilya Repin, *Portrait of the Artist Rafail S. Levitsky*, 1878, oil on canvas, 89cm x 69cm
Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum
Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Aaltonen

Repin's work in Helsinki. Vasily Levi, a Ukrainian or Polish-born lawyer, journalist and amateur artist, who became Repin's neighbour in 1916, was often involved in the arrangements.¹⁹ However, the first full-scale exhibition of Repin's works in Helsinki was held at the Hörhammer Gallery in November 1922. Fifty works were included, 17 of them relatively recent paintings. The others were sketches and drawings.²⁰

An art donation to the Ateneum Art Museum

Instead of having his own exhibition, Repin apparently decided to do something even more appealing because in October 1919 he declared that he would donate 30 works of art, some of his own works and some by other Russian artists, to the Finnish Art Society. Four of the works painted by Repin were those that Natalia Nordmann, who had a partly Finnish background, had owned and bequeathed as a donation to the Finnish Art Society. The Art Society at the Ateneum enthusiastically accepted the donation, as it had very little Russian art in its collections.²¹ The content of the donation changed slightly, and the final gift, made

¹⁹ See Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 45.

²⁰ The exhibition catalogue is in the Finnish National Gallery Library. Works by Yury Repin and Vasily Levi were also included.

²¹ 'Stora donationer till Konstföreningen', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 15 October 1919.



Ilya Repin and Vera Repina (centre, front) with their neighbours at Repin's 85th birthday celebrations in Kuokkala on 5 August 1929. Vasily Levi is third from left. Photographer unknown. Lauri Haataja Repin Collection. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery



Ilya Repin with his works at the Ateneum, early 1920s. Photographer unknown. Nikolai Shuvalov Archive. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

in March 1920, included seven paintings by Repin and 23 works by other Russian artists. The donation from Nordmann's estate included *Portrait of Natalia Nordmann* (1900), *Double Portrait of Natalia Nordmann and Ilya Repin* (1903) and *Winter Landscape* (1903). Among the works he owned himself, Repin donated slightly earlier portraits of Rafail Levitsky (1878), Elizaveta Zvantseva (1889), Nadezhda Repina (1898) and Vera Pushkareva (1899).²²

The donation received a lot of publicity, as did the dinners that were held at Helsinki's Seurahuone restaurant in September 1920. The donated works had been exhibited at the Ateneum in May, and Repin was invited to become an honorary member of the Finnish Art Society in March. During the visit in September that year, Repin said that he was painting a great work depicting a baptismal procession. He painted *Religious Procession in the Oak Forest* between 1877 and 1924, and it now hangs in the Gallery of Modern Art in Hradec Králové, in the Czech Republic. Helsinki seemed to Repin now more impoverished and sleepy than it had 15 years earlier, when he had found it happy and beautiful.²³

²² Timo Huusko, 'Ilya Repin's Works in the Ateneum Art Museum', in *Repin: a Russian master's life and work in Finland*. Tallinn: The Art Museum of Estonia – Kadriorg Art Museum, 2013, 82

²³ 'Ilja Repin käymässä Helsingissä', *Uusi Suomi*, 16 September 1920.



Ilya Repin, *Great Men of Finland*, 1920–27, oil on canvas, 152cm x 281.5cm
Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Aaltonen

At dinner, Repin was the subject of much attention. The table was set for 35 people and included many notable Finnish artists, such as Gallen-Kallela, Ville Vallgren, Pekka Halonen, Väinö Blomstedt, Tyko Sallinen, Marcus Collin, Alvar Cawén, the architect Eliel Saarinen and the composers Jean Sibelius and Robert Kajanus. The highly respected General Mannerheim also made it in time for coffee at the end of the meal. In the poet Eino Leino's celebratory poem for Repin, the line, 'Repin is as dear to us as the Volga is to Russians' has become legendary. An excited Repin painted the aforementioned portrait of Gallen-Kallela in a single session the next day and donated it to the Finnish Art Society too.²⁴

In the dinner speeches, Repin praised Finland's newly achieved independence and urged Finnish artists to immortalise historic events. On his way back to Kuokkala, he decided to set an example and make a painting that would capture the atmosphere of the dinners. Thus began the creation of *Great Men of Finland* (1920–27), for which he ordered canvas from Stockholm and colours from Düsseldorf.²⁵ In addition to those who were there, he also painted an imaginary portrait of Finland's first President K.J. Ståhlberg. He intended to have those who were present sit for him in Kuokkala, but that did not work out and he had to be content with photographs, which some people failed to send. The painting was displayed in 1922–23, when the artist's exhibition toured Tampere, Helsinki, Pori, Vaasa and Vyborg, but Repin was not happy with it and continued to work on it until 1927, when he bequeathed it to the Finnish government in return for permission to be buried in his studio garden – a request that was granted by the Ministry of Education. Previously, the work had not even been worthy of being accepted as a gift by the Finnish Art Society and the Ateneum.²⁶

24 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 44; see also Huusko, 'Ilya Repin's Works in the Ateneum Art Museum', 82. Repin also donated plaster images of Leo Tolstoy and Natalia Nordmann that he made in 1922 to the Finnish Art Society.

25 Repin often painted on linoleum at this time.

26 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 45; 'Rjepinin jälkisäädös avattu', *Uusi Suomi*, 18 October 1930.



The dining room at Penates, in Kuokkala, 1920s. From left: Yury Repin (standing), with his wife Praskovya seated at the table next to an unknown woman, Ilya Repin, his daughter Vera Repina and an unknown man. Photographer N.N. Simanovsky. Grigori Brenev Repin Archive. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

Early exhibitions in Finland

Vasily Levi organised a small travelling exhibition of Repin's works even before the Hörhammer show in Helsinki in 1922. It opened at the Seurahuone Hotel in Oulu in May, then toured Tampere City Hall in July and the Seurahuone in Hanko in the late summer. Detailed information about the content of the exhibition has been lost, but it included several paintings and watercolours, as well as sketches.²⁷ The highlight of the show which opened in the Hörhammer in November, was the painting *Christ and Mary Magdalene* (1922, private collection), which is reminiscent of Rembrandt, and *Night in the Garden of Gethsemane* (1896), which has now disappeared. The works were also included in the exhibition at the Pori Fire Brigade Hall, Näsilinna in Tampere, Vaasa City Hall and the Vyborg Union Bank building.²⁸ Portraits from various periods in Repin's career were also included, along with 30 sketches and studies, which made up the majority of works sold at the exhibitions. According to news reports, oil paintings from the Hörhammer exhibition were also sold to private collections in Helsinki, as well as in rural areas.²⁹ The Hörhammer exhibition was the only one that Repin organised himself. Dinner parties were held in Helsinki's Hotel Fennia in honour of the opening, with the sculptor Ville Vallgren presiding as master of ceremonies.³⁰

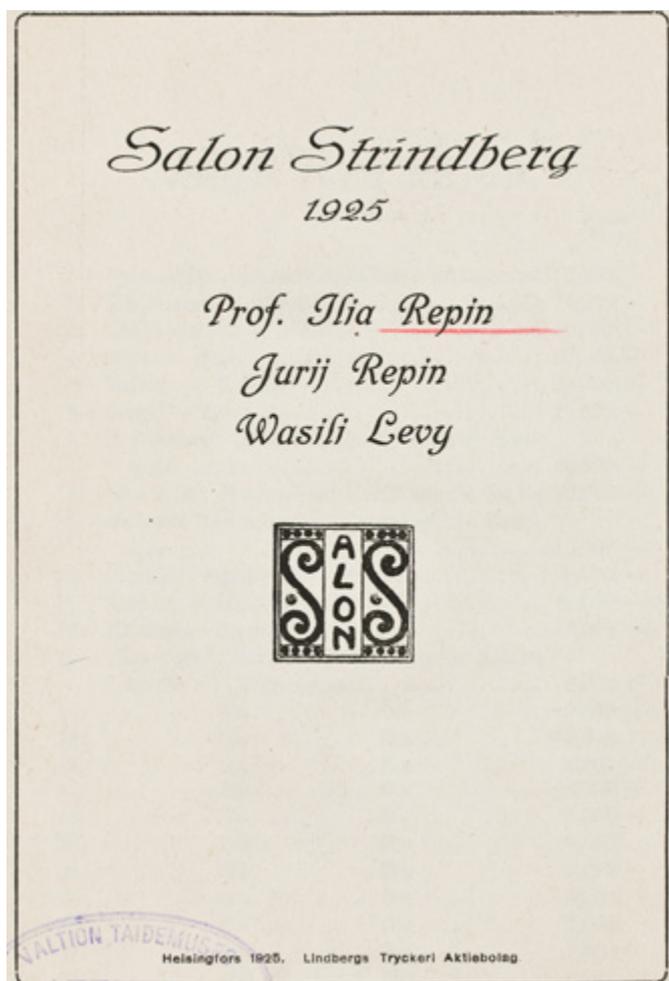
At this stage, exhibitions of Repin's work were also sent farther abroad from Finland. These were arranged by Vasily Levi and Repin's daughter Vera, who moved from Petrograd in

27 'Venäläinen taidenäyttely Seurahuoneella', *Kaiku*, 12 May 1922; 'Repin-utställningen', *Tammerfors Aftonblad*, 15 April 1922; 'Repin-utställningen', *Hangö*, 5 August 1922.

28 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 44–45; 'En stor konstnär och en god man', *Björneborgs Tidning*, 8 December 1922; 'Taidenäyttely Näsilinnassa', *Kansan lehti*, 30 December 1922; 'Ilja Repinin näyttely', *Waasa*, 13 January 1923; 'Ilja Repin m.fl.', *Wiborgs Nyheter*, 29 March 1923.

29 'Taidekirje Helsingistä', *Karjala*, 28 November 1922; 'Rjepins utställning', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 18 November 1922.

30 Valkonen, 'Ilja Repin ja Suomi', 44–45.



| | | Hinta Pris |
|-----|--|---------------|
| 1. | Naisen pää. Vesiväriharjoitelma. Studiehuvud | 12,000: -- |
| 2. | Harjoitelma — Studie | 14,000: -- |
| 3. | Ukrainalainen — Ukrainare | 20,000: -- |
| 4. | Mies — Man | 20,000: -- |
| 5. | Nainen — Kvinna | 22,000: -- |
| 6. | Pappi — Pop | 25,000: -- |
| 7. | Harjoitelma „Ristiinnaulittu“ — „Den korsfästa“ Studie | 30,000: -- |
| 8. | Naisenpää. Harjoitelma. Kvinnohuvud. Studie | 10,000: -- |
| 9. | Maisema Kuokkalasta — Landskap från Kuokkala | 12,000: -- |
| 10. | Runoilija Majakovski — Poeten | 8,000: -- |
| 11. | Nainen — Studie | 16,000: -- |
| 12. | Kalastaja. Luonnos. Fiskare | 6,000: -- |
| 13. | „Zaporogit“. Piirustus harjoitelma — Blyerts studie till „Zaporogerna“ | 8,000: -- |
| 14. | S:n D:o | 10,000: -- |
| 15. | S:n D:o | 15,000: -- |
| 16. | S:n D:o | 6,000: -- |
| 17. | S:n D:o | 8,000: -- |
| 18. | S:n D:o | 5,000: -- |
| 19. | S:n D:o | 10,000: -- |
| 20. | S:n D:o | 4,000: -- |
| 21. | S:n D:o | 5,000: -- |
| 22. | S:n D:o | 7,000: -- |
| 23. | S:n D:o | 3,500: -- |
| 24. | S:n D:o | 6,000: -- |

Repin exhibition at the Strindberg Art Salon, Helsinki, in 1925. Cover and first page of the exhibition catalogue. The exhibition featured 73 works by Ilya Repin. Finnish National Gallery Library

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Jenni Nurminen

Soviet Russia to Penates in 1922, bringing a new lease of life to the house. One of the things that Vera took on was to oversee the revival of the Wednesday receptions, during which guests would gather around a rotating self-service table to dine and discuss current issues from the world of art and science.³¹ Vera and Levi also established contacts with Russian émigré centres in Europe and managed to organise an exhibition of works by Repin, Levi and Yury Repin in Czechoslovakia at the turn of 1923–24. According to the Finnish press, almost all of Repin's works were sold.³²

31 Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 187. Valkenier has used Repin's correspondence as a source.

32 E.g. 'Prof. Ilja Repin till Amerika', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 9 February 1924; Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 188. On exhibitions in Czechoslovakia, see Julie Jantšarkova. 'Vasilij Levi i Il'ja Repin. Vystavki russkogo iskusstva 1920-1930-h godov v Tšehoslovakii', in *Arhip Kuindži i ego rol' v razvitii hudožestvennogo protsessu v XX veke. Il'ja Repin v kontekste russkogo i evropejskogo iskusstva. Vasilij Dmitrievič Polenov i russkaja hudožestvennaja kul'tura vtoroj poloviny XIX – pervyh desjatiletij XX veka: materialy nautšnyh konferentsij*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennaja Tret'jakovskaja galereja, 2020, 303–05.

The most significant Repin exhibition was held in 1925, first at the Strindberg Art Salon in Helsinki and later that year in Prague, then in Nice and possibly elsewhere.³³ According to the list of works, there were a total of 73 shown in Helsinki, including some early watercolours and early drawings that had not been previously exhibited. The exhibition was a public success, and the art critic Sigrid Schauman paid particular attention to the early watercolour of Repin's wife, his pencil drawings of Zaporozhians, and the watercolour interior that portrayed Tolstoy and his wife.³⁴ There were also studies for *Barge Haulers on the Volga*, *Unexpected Return*, and the painting of Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan.³⁵ An oil painting titled *A Ukrainian*³⁶ and *Portrait of Maria Klopushina* (1924) were sold at the Prague exhibition.³⁷ In addition to this, President Tomáš Masaryk bought four or five paintings, which are now at Národní Galerie in Prague.³⁸

At the end of 1925, a separate art exhibition by Repin, his son Yury and Vasily Levi was held at the Turku Art Museum and in Tampere City Hall. It included, for example, the newly completed *Golgotha*. There were 83 works in this exhibition, and the intention was for it to travel to Belgium via Scandinavia. Some of the works had been included in the Helsinki exhibition, and according to a Tampere newspaper, it was this version that was to be sent to Europe.³⁹ Repin's works were often shown at the Strindberg Art Salon in Helsinki from this time on, including exhibitions during his lifetime in 1927 and 1928. The Helsinki exhibition in 1927 was the first time that the large-scale *Golgotha* (1921–22) was put on display there, apparently along with a smaller initial version of *The Hopak (Dance of the Zaporozhian Cossacks)* (1926–30), which Repin worked on until his death. *Portrait of the Violinist Cecilia Hansen* (1922), which was shown in the 1928 exhibition, belonged to Vera Repina and was sold at Sotheby's in New York in 2008. *Prometheus*, which was also part of the same exhibition, was donated to the State Historical Museum in Moscow in 2009.⁴⁰ *Golgotha* was sold to Norway, it was purchased apparently in the spring of 1927, by the Norwegian physician Cato Aall, who bought it without seeing the painting. His son Christian Aall donated it to Princeton University in the United States in 1979.⁴¹

33 According to Signe Tandefelt, the exhibition was travelling from Helsinki to Prague and Paris. 'Ryska utställningen i Salon Strindberg', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 15 January 1925; Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 188. According to Valkenier, there was also an exhibition in Sweden in 1925, but I have not found any information about this.

34 'Repinutställningen i Salon Strindberg', *Svenska Pressen*, 17 January 1925. According to Schauman, the exhibition was travelling to Scandinavia and continental Europe.

35 Signe Tandefelt. 'Ryska utställningen i Salon Strindberg', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 15 January 1925.

36 See pictures of the work in the *Uusi Suomi* Sunday supplement on 18 January 1925 and on the website <https://www.pomortzeff.com/eng/features/2015/rusart/> (accessed 22 September 2020).

37 Compare the picture in the *Uusi Suomi* Sunday Supplement on 18 January 1925 and the one in I.E. Grabar and I.S. Silverstein (eds.). *Repin*. Part I. Moscow, Leningrad, 1948–49, 304.

38 See Jantšarkova, 'Vasilij Levi i Il'ja Repin...', 306: the works were a sketch for *Send-off of a Recruit*; a sketch for *After the Battle*; *In the Sun* (1923); *Portrait of a Young Woman (Portrait of Maria Klopushina?)* and a work called *Waggons* (1878).

39 'Repin-näyttely', *Aamulehti*, 21 November 1925. In the catalogue of this exhibition (Finnish National Gallery Library) *Portrait of Poet Voinof* and the sketch for *After a Battle* are listed. According to Jantšarkova, 'Vasilij Levi i Il'ja Repin...', 303–06, those works were sold in Prague. Those are not mentioned in the Strindberg Art Salon's exhibition catalogue in 1925.

40 *Ilya Repin 1844–1930. For the 175th Anniversary of the Artist's Birth*. St Petersburg: State Russian Museum, Palace Editions, 2019, 239.

41 Undated draft of a letter by Vasily Levi (1927) and art dealer Arvid Lydecken's letters to Cato Aall on 11 April 1927, 3 May 1927 and 16 May 1927. The Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon, file 52. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki (AC, FNG). Aall offered 50,000 Finnish marks for the painting, but Lydecken refused the offer. The price in the exhibition catalogue was 200,000 marks. The agreed price was 160 000 FIM. The painting was sent to Norway between 17–19 May 1927. Lydecken's letter to Levi on 1 August 1927 indicates that Aall had received the painting; see Ludmilla Turkevich. 'The Princeton "Golgotha" and its master Repin', *Russian Language Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 128, Fall 1983, 187. According to the information, Aall fell in love with Repin's works upon visiting Russia in 1924, and bought *Golgotha* without seeing it, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43669402?seq=1> (accessed 25 September 2020).



The Nikolai Shuvalov Archive was donated to the Finnish National Gallery in 2002. The archive includes a large number of glass negatives, some of which feature works of art owned by the Repins, some of which have been lost. This glass negative shows 11 works, including sketches for the paintings *The Raising of Jairus's Daughter* and *Before the Confession*. Photographer N.N. Simanovsky. Nikolai Shuvalov Archive. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

In the Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon in the Archive Collections of the Finnish National Gallery there is also an undated draft of a letter to Cato Aall, written by Vasily Levi. Levi explains that he is authorised to deal with Repin's artwork sales and assures Aall that the appropriate price for *Golgotha* can be found. He tries to convince Aall that the prices for Repin's works in Finland are lucrative, considering his world renown. Levi points out that Repin's works were sold in Prague for 275,000 Finnish marks and that the President of the Republic, Tomáš Masaryk had purchased many of them for the National Gallery of Czechoslovakia.⁴²

42 Undated draft of a letter by Vasily Levi (1927). The Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon, file 52. AC, FNG. Levi described his relation to Repin as follows: 'der Repins geschäftsangelegenheiten verwaltet'. The most well-known of the purchases made by Masaryk is *Alexander Pushkin at the Convocation at the Lyceum on 8 January* (1911), which was located in Prague castle in 1933. *Self-Portrait* from 1915 was acquired by Národní Galerie. Originally it had been sold to a collector with the surname Salus and the purchase was obviously mediated via Igor Grabar.



**Ilya Repin, *Doctor Writing*,
1919, oil on linoleum,
83cm x 70cm
Wäinö Walli Collection, Finnish
National Gallery / Ateneum
Art Museum**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery /
Hannu Aaltonen

Works acquired by Vasily Levi in 1919

Vasily Levi acquired a total of 48 artworks from Repin in 1919, for which he appears to have paid 185,000 marks.⁴³ Levi was partly an intermediary in this trade, because the buyer was an English-born businessman Frederick Behm, who had lived in St Petersburg and emigrated to Finland after the October Revolution. Behm had heard of the artworks from a Finnish ex-officer Carl Loenbom, who made the deal with Levi and was paid 322,000 Finnish marks from Behm. This deal had in fact already been made in February 1919, but Repin seems not to have had his share before May 1920.⁴⁴ Behm's idea was to organise an exhibition of Repin's works in Stockholm and later in the United States. Works were exhibited in September 1919 at the Liljevalchs Kunsthalle in Stockholm, which was then led by Sven Strindberg, who used to run the Strindberg Art Salon in Helsinki. In Stockholm nothing was sold, however.⁴⁵ For some reason the organiser of the exhibition was the 19-year-old Ms Hjördis Ridderstadh, who

43 The works in the collection are listed in the article 'Jätteprocess om annan tavelkollektion', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 December 1929.

44 'Jätteprocess om annan tavelkollektion', *Hufvudstadsbladet* 20 December 1929. In this news a paper from 8 February 1919 is mentioned, in which Loenbom states that he paid Levi 185,000 Finnish marks for the works and sold them to Behm for 322,000 marks. See also <https://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.9.html/2014/important-russian-art-l14114> (accessed 25 September 2020). Levi wrote on 20 May 1920 to Repin that he had received payment in full from the works that he had sold to Loenbom. This information comes from the researcher in I.Y. Repin's Estate Museum, Ms Ludmila Andruschenko.

45 The exhibition catalogue is at the Åbo Akademi Library in Turku.



**Ilya Repin, *Woman Sitting at a Table*, 1923–25, watercolour and pencil on paper, 26cm x 35cm
 Wäinö Walli Collection, Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Pakarinen

seemed to have been an international adventuress. Who gave the assignment to Ridderstadh is not known. Ridderstadh had already pawned some paintings in Stockholm and after being able to redeem them, she went to New York in 1920 in order to organise an exhibition there. She was arrested in New York, however, because she had sold one of Repin's works during the voyage, but never handed it over to the new owner.⁴⁶

The Repin exhibition did, however, open at the Kingore Galleries in New York, with the works coming from Finland, in 1921. The organiser of the exhibition was an art critic, Christian Brinton.⁴⁷ It is not known how the contact with Brinton was made. Nothing was sold from the exhibition and the works were returned to Stockholm, where they were confiscated due to unpaid travel expenses and other claims. The ownership of the works was still disputed at the end of the 1920s.⁴⁸ Those who had bought the works from Repin with Levi, both Loenbom and Behm, had already passed away and Behm's Danish business partner, Andreas Schou, claimed in 1929 to be the owner of these works, even though the collection had been auctioned in 1923 and bought by Nyman & Schultz company, which had granted the loan for Ridderstadh's undertaking. Later on the company had sold the collection to a Swedish doctor.⁴⁹ The price

46 E.g. 'Suomalainen seikkailijatar', *Rovaniemi*, 14 January 1922.

47 Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 188 and footnote 12 in p. 226. Artworks of the collection are listed in 'Jättestadshuset om annan tavelkollektion', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 December 1929. Some works, which are known today, such as *Leo Tolstoy's Portrait* (1916), *Aleksandr Kerensky's Portrait* (1917) and *Black Sea Freeman* (1908–19) were in the New York exhibition. See *Ilya Repin 1844–1930*, 19, 312.

48 E.g. 'Tvist om äganderätten till dyrbara Repintavlor', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 December 1929.

49 'Rjepins sekreterare svindlar bort tavelkollektion i Sverige – Jättestadshuset om annan tavelkollektion', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 December 1929. The amount that Levi paid to Repin is in present-day value c. 75,000 euros.

that the company paid at auction was 155,000 Swedish kronas⁵⁰, more than four times higher than the price that Repin was paid four years earlier. When the works had gone to New York in 1920, the estimated sale value for them had been 628,500 kronas. Repin himself did not benefit later from the deals, which may explain why, in the late 1920s, his daughter Vera was so indignant about Levi's dealings.⁵¹

It might have been that Repin was not so well aware of the exchange rate changes and the huge inflation in post-war Finland, and thus might have sold the works without understanding their current value. Or it might have been that he had to take what was offered, because there was a shortage of everything at the time. This is touchingly documented in a letter, which Repin sent to Russia in the winter of 1918/19:

How do I live, what do I feel as an artist 'in these dark days'? Dark indeed, in every respect, even this unintended synchronicity with the darkest season, the coldest day, the frost. It's no longer possible to warm the studio in order to take a breath, forget oneself, have a moment of distraction, like an old drunkard... Dreary, dismal feelings chaotically and nonsensically swarm into my head. I wish I could up and go to St Petersburg: it has been more than a year since I last saw my daughters. Locked up, in exile, you live enslaved, constrained, with fingers benumbed by frost, brains compressed. But the heart is not a stone – you walk up to the studio; it's just +4°C...⁵²

Repin's *Self-Portrait* from 1920 (Repin Estate Museum Penates) reflects this mood and it also seems to testify that Repin had not yet received his part of the payment.

It is interesting to notice that Vasily Levi's name is frequently mentioned during the later phases of the history of these artworks. Levi emigrated to Kuokkala after the October Revolution and in 1928 he lived in Helsinki, but after 1929 he did not presumably return to Finland.⁵³ He lived in Warsaw, Prague and Paris in the 1930s and moved to Sweden, in 1939, where it was safer, considering his Jewish background.⁵⁴ In Sweden Levi wrote his memoirs, describing how he met Repin. He wrote that he became acquainted with Repin in the spring of 1918 and gained Repin's confidence during the time when the artist was short of money. According to Levi, Repin had borrowed altogether 1,000 Finnish marks from him and asked if he could paint a portrait of Levi's wife as compensation. It was agreed, and in 1920 Levi had sold the painting to a Swede, Erik Minnberg, for a price that enabled Repin to live for two years on the proceeds, and for Levi to live off for even longer.⁵⁵

Levi's memoirs give naturally a favourable image of his actions. There is also an interesting interview, which Levi gave later in Sweden in 1946. There he says that he bought the earlier mentioned 48 artworks from Repin in 1919, but that due to financial difficulties he made a business agreement with a 'Finnish businessman', who paid two-thirds of the value of the paintings, while Levi remained as the owner with one-third possession of them. Levi's business partner – it is not known if he is talking of Loenbom or Behm – had since disappeared and later on, after the exhibition in the US, Levi had been asked to help to sell the collection, but he had not done so.⁵⁶ It remains unclear whether Levi still owned part of the collection after the auction in 1923, and the identity of the Swedish doctor who bought the works from the auction is still not known. In 1946 Levi donated anonymously Repin's *Narcissus*

50 'Rjepins sekreterare svindlar bort tavelkollektion i Sverige', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 December 1929. 155,000 Swedish kronas is c. 280,000 euros in present-day value.

51 E.g. 'Levi har profiterat av vänskap med sin gamle mästare?', *Svenska Pressen*, 20 December 1929.

52 <https://www.tretyakovgallerymagazine.com/articles/1-2019-62/death-and-resurrection-repin-and-eternal-themes-human-existence> (accessed 29 March 2021). The article is written by Galina Churak.

53 'Levi har profiterat av vänskap med sin gamle mästare?', *Svenska Pressen*, 20 December 1929.

54 In Sweden Levi used the name Basil Levi.

55 See <https://issuu.com/bukowskis/docs/repin/10> (accessed 25 September 2020). The portrait was displayed at the Strindberg Art Salon in 1920.

56 See <https://www.uppsalaauktion.se/fokus/ilya-repin-narcissus/> (accessed 25 September 2020).



Installation view of the Ilya Repin exhibition at the Ateneum in Helsinki, in 1980. On the left: *Great Men of Finland* (1920–27); on the right: *Portrait of Akseli Gallen-Kallela* (1920) and *The Attack with the Red Cross Nurse* (1915). Photographer unknown. Collection of Archived Photo Prints. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

painting to the Art Association of Jämtland in Sweden.⁵⁷ It is also known that in 1937 Levi owned at least 10 artworks by Repin.⁵⁸

Some of the works, which Repin sold to Levi, have lately come to light in auctions and their provenance history indicates Levi as owner. The best-known of these paintings is *Cossacks on the Black Sea* (1908–19), which is deposited at the Maritime Museum in Stockholm. The paintings *Self-Portrait* (1917)⁵⁹, *Cossack* (1910) which was a study for *Cossacks on the Black Sea*⁶⁰, *Portrait of the Writer Leo Tolstoy* (1916), *Portrait of Aleksandr Kerensky* (1918), *Portrait of Mrs. Beatrice Levi* (1918)⁶¹ and *Narcissus* (1916)⁶² have been sold at auctions since the turn of the 21st century. Of the other paintings in the collection, *Poet-futurist (Portrait of Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky)*, from 1916, was previously part of a private collection but was sold to the National Congress Palace in St Petersburg⁶³, and the large-scale *The Attack with the Red Cross Nurse* (1915) was part of a private collection in Finland, at least in the early 1980s,⁶⁴ and later on was sold at auction.

57 <https://www.uppsalaauktion.se/fokus/ilya-repin-narcissus/> (accessed 25 September 2020).

58 Vasily Levi's letter to Arvid Lydecken, Oslo 25 February 1937. The Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon, file 52. AC, FNG. The letter is undated, but Levi mentions that he was then 59 years old. He is proposing an exhibition, which would include 8–10 works by Repin. I want to thank Curator Helena Hätönen from the Finnish National Gallery for finding this and other letters from the Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon.

59 https://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot_Sep_html/2014/important-russian-art-14114 (accessed 26 September 2020).

60 <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/russian-art-evening-sale-109674/lot.217.html> (accessed 26 September 2020).

61 Two portraits of Kerensky are known to exist, one of which was donated by Repin to the Central Museum of the Revolution in Moscow in 1926.

62 <https://www.uppsalaauktion.se/fokus/ilya-repin-narcissus/> (accessed 25 September 2020).

63 *Ilya Repin 1844–1930*, 229.

64 *Ilya Repin 1844–1930*. Exhibition catalogue. Helsinki: Suomen taideakatemia / Ateneumin taidemuseon, 1980, number 38.

The exhibition tour in Europe in 1928–30

Ilya Repin himself seems to have had trust in Levi, at least until 1927 and 1928, because the exhibitions of Repin's works at the Strindberg Art Salon in Helsinki were organised by Levi and Vera Repina. Works by Repin were also exhibited abroad by Levi from 1928 on. In Prague the 49th exhibition of the Månes Society included Augustin Němejc's works together with 132 Russian artworks brought by Levi. Eight paintings by Repin were included and one of these, a sketch for a *Man's portrait*, was sold.⁶⁵ In the Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon there is a letter that Levi sent from Prague to Arvid Lydecken in September 1928. Lydecken seems to have been some kind of business associate in this venture. Levi explains that he is planning to have a touring exhibition of Repin and other Russian artists. To prepare for it he had already travelled to Berlin and Scandinavia and agreed on exhibitions in Oslo and Gothenburg. Stockholm and Copenhagen were alternatives.⁶⁶ In the same letter Levi writes that in Berlin he had been invited to take the exhibition to Sofia in Bulgaria, but he had been warned that he might easily lose his head in the enterprise. An exhibition in Oslo seems to have taken place at the beginning of 1929,⁶⁷ but there is no clarity about the end of the exhibition tour, as a piece of news appeared immediately after Repin's death in October 1930 that 'a number of the most valuable' of his works were still on tour in Europe.⁶⁸ It is known that the exhibition was in Prague in April/May of 1930 and included 25 works by Repin. Before Prague it had been in Belgrade, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Amsterdam and the Hague.⁶⁹

The information on the Belgrade exhibition seems to be true, since the Finnish sculptor Emil Wikström wrote in 1930 to Lydecken that he wanted to help the ageing artist with some purchase. He had heard from a friend who lived near Repin in Kellomäki that there would be artworks in Penates, which had recently returned from Belgrade. Wikström also wrote that Repin had provided around 30 works for Levi to be sold during this tour, but that Repin had heard nothing from Levi for over a year.⁷⁰

Later on, after Repin's death, Levi still organised exhibitions of Repin's works in Czechoslovakia, in Hradec Králová and Brno in 1931–32 and in Ostrava in 1934. The *Portrait of Natalia Nordmann Reading* was sold in Ostrava. Earlier, in 1931, it had been exhibited at the memorial exhibition of Repin at the Strindberg Art Salon in Helsinki. Later on it was nationalised and returned to the owner and sold in Prague Dorotheum in 2013. *Portrait of Alexandr Kerensky* was also exhibited in Ostrava, which strengthens the supposition that Levi was the actual owner of the painting.⁷¹

Repin's legacy and the Finnish collections

Repin's will was made in Kuokkala on 20 August 1927. The artist divided his movable and immovable property in Finland equally between his children Vera, Nadezhda, Tatyana and Yury. Vera also received drawings and an unfinished version of *The Hopak (Dance of the*

65 Jantšarkova, 'Vasilij Levi i Il'ja Repin...', 306–07

66 Vasily Levi's letter to Arvid Lydecken, Prague 12 September 1928. The Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon, file 52. AC, FNG. Levi wrote to Lydecken in German.

67 'Rjepinin taulunäyttely Norjassa', *Kannaksen lehti*, 12 January 1929.

68 'Rjepin lahjoittaa Suomelle', *Laatokka*, 4 October 1930.

69 Jantšarkova, 'Vasilij Levi i Il'ja Repin...', 308. Altogether there were 35 Russian artists in the show. A work called *Dvina* (1896) and a sketch for a portrait of Pushkin were sold. *Dvina* is now at Národní Galerie. In the recent State Russian Museum's Repin catalogue it is said that there were exhibitions of Repin in Prague, Helsinki, Gothenburg, Copenhagen and Nice in 1928–29 and at the beginning of 1930, when Repin was still alive, in Berlin, Amsterdam and Belgrade. See: *Ilya Repin 1844–1930*, 314.

70 Emil Wikström's letter is undated, but is most likely from spring 1930. The letter is in the Olli Valkonen Archive. AC, FNG.

71 Of the exhibitions, see Jantšarkova, 'Vasilij Levi i Il'ja Repin...', 308–311. Kerensky portrait was also seen at the Strindberg Art Salon in 1930.

Zaporozhian Cossacks).⁷² The Strindberg Art Salon hosted Repin's two memorial exhibitions, in November 1930 and in April 1931. The first featured studies of masterpieces, plus other unfinished material from the studio, as well as portraits and early works.⁷³ A significant portrait of Repin's father (1881) was displayed in this exhibition and purchased by the Czechoslovakian ambassador in Finland, Emilian Miller.⁷⁴ The exhibition in 1931 included paintings that the children had inherited and had put up for sale.⁷⁵ In these exhibitions there were many works that had not been seen in the earlier Repin shows and it is not known if these also included those works that had possibly returned from the European tour organised by Levi.⁷⁶

The beginning of the 1930s was a time of great depression. Writing to Lydecken from Paris, Levi said he regretted that Lydecken was unable to sell anything from the exhibition in November 1930, but at the same time revealed that Vera Repina had sold works from it for 100,000 Finnish marks without Lydecken's knowledge, thus avoiding provision payments to him. What is more, Levi blamed Vera for having tried to benefit from the inheritance at the expense of her other siblings.⁷⁷ From then on Levi was no longer active in Finland.

The artist's children Vera and Yury lived in Kuokkala until the outbreak of the Second World War. It is estimated that about 200 paintings and drawings, mostly owned by Yury, remained in Penates at the mercy of the war.⁷⁸ According to Tuuli Reijonen, who has written about cultural life in Terijoki (now Zelenogorsk), Vera sold works in Helsinki in the 1930s once a year 'to interested buyers at a ridiculous price, for instance to an art gallery that took full advantage of other people's dire straits'.⁷⁹ However, thanks to her father's will, Vera had many works that she could sell. It has even been claimed that she had more than 900 drawings and 35 sketchbooks in her safe, which was opened after her death in 1948.⁸⁰ *The Hopak (Dance of the Zaporozhian Cossacks)*, which was bequeathed to Vera, was purchased for a Finnish private collection, eventually ending up in Russia via Sweden in 2004.

In addition to the sales in Helsinki, the artist's works were also sold in Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus. Tatyana Repina apparently sold part of her legacy from her father in Vyborg as early as 1930.⁸¹ From 1901, the Shuvalov family, whose son Nikolai (1906–68) became a notable collector of Repin's works, spent their summers in Kuokkala as Repin's neighbours. Nikolai's grandfather had a confectionery factory in St Petersburg and his sons continued the business. Nikolai moved to Helsinki in 1918 to run the clothing and fabric store he founded, and he also bought and sold art there. Nikolai spent his summers in Terijoki in the 1930s and also acquired works from Vera and Yury. He probably owned about 500 works by Repin and other Russian artists when his collection was at its largest, making it the biggest collection

72 'Rjepinin testamentti avattu', *Kannaksen lehti*, 14 October 1930. The will was drawn up in both Russian and Finnish.

73 An unprinted list of the works (58) from the 1930 exhibition is in the Finnish National Gallery Library.

74 See http://www.gavu.cz/data/886-repin_web.pdf (accessed 3 October 2020). The portrait is in the exhibition catalogue either no. 3 or 5.

75 Apart from the *Hopak* painting, *Reading (Portrait of Natalia B. Nordmann)*, like the *Bolsheviks* painting seen in 1930, also belonged to Tatyana Repina. *Ilya Repin 1844–1930*, 261. The printed catalogue of the exhibition includes 30 artworks.

76 See Elena Kirillina. 'Zaporogit Suomessa', in Olli Imonen (ed.), *Ilya Repin. Penatyssä oli onnemme*. Lappeenranta: Saimaan ammattikorkeakoulu, Etelä-Karjalan taidemuseo, 2009, 108. According to the information there had been an exhibition of Repin's works in Stockholm in 1931.

77 Vasily Levi's undated letter to Arvid Lydecken, Paris (1931). The Archives of the Strindberg Art Salon, file 52. AC, FNG.

78 Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 228. His daughter Nadezhda died in 1931 and Tatyana (1880–1957) moved to France in 1931.

79 Tuuli Reijonen. *Kannaksen mosaiikkimaailma*. Helsinki: Otava, 1968, 24. The Strindberg Art Salon held exhibitions of Repin's artworks in 1936–39.

80 Veikko Pakkanen. 'Ilya Repin's Legacy of Drawings and its Inheritors', in *Repin: a Russian master's life and work in Finland*. Tallinn: The Art Museum of Estonia – Kadriorg Art Museum, 2013, 122–23. There are no references in this article.

81 Pakkanen, 'Ilya Repin's Legacy of Drawings and its Inheritors', 122.

of individual Repin works in Finland.⁸² The works were so significant that many were sold to the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, first in 1967 and then in 1971.⁸³ One of Repin's paintings that had belonged to the Shuvalovs, *Portrait of Mrs. Rivoir* (1918), is now part of the Serlachius Collection in Mänttä, Finland. Nikolai Shuvalov's archive was donated to the Finnish National Gallery in 2002. In addition to written sources, it includes a large number of photographs and glass negatives, some of which depict artworks belonging to the Repins, and some that have disappeared.⁸⁴

The works by Repin that were sold in Helsinki form the core of the collections of his work in Finland. It should be noted, of course, that many works were bought from the artist himself during his lifetime. For example, in addition to the donation of seven paintings by Repin himself, the bulk of the collection of 116 works managed by the Ateneum Art Museum consists of 72 paper-based works bought by Torsten Stjernschantz, then Director of the Collections of the Finnish Art Society at the Ateneum, from Kuokkala on 14 September 1930, shortly before the artist's death. After that, no more works by Repin were added to the Ateneum Collection until 1981, and again in 1992 during the era of the Finnish National Gallery as a state museum (now foundation-based).⁸⁵ It has recently turned out that the painting purchased in 1992 is a portrait of Repin's Ukrainian-born friend and fellow-student from St Petersburg Art Academy, the artist Nikolai Murashko (Mykola Murashko) and not a portrait of Professor Ivanov, as was earlier presumed.⁸⁶

In addition to his works in the Ateneum Art Museum, Repin's art can also be found in other Finnish public art collections, such as the collection of the Gösta Serlachius Fine Art Foundation in Mänttä, the Hiekka Art Museum in Tampere, the Kirpilä Art Collection in Helsinki, Hämeenlinna Art Museum, Kuopio Art Museum (Risto Vilhunen Collection), Lahti Museum of Visual Arts Malva, Turku Art Museum and the Ostrobothnian Museum in Vaasa. Moreover, some private collections in Finland include several works by Repin.

Keywords: Ilya Repin, Natalia Nordmann, Vasily Levi, Strindberg Art Salon, Kuokkala, Nikolai Shuvalov, collectors

82 Huusko, 'Ilya Repin's Works in the Ateneum Art Museum', 84; Helena Hätönen. 'Sources for Ilya Repin's researchers in the Finnish Central Archives', in *Repin: a Russian master's life and work in Finland*. Tallinn: The Art Museum of Estonia – Kadriorg Art Museum, 2013, 111; see also the updated version of the article, 'Sources for Ilya Repin researchers at the Archive Collections of the Finnish National Gallery', *FNG Research* 2/2021, https://research.fng.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/fngr_2021-2_hatonen_helena_article1.pdf.

83 I would like to thank Nina Markova, the Curator of the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, for sending me the list of pictures, which show that 19 of Repin's paper-based artworks were acquired in 1967 and a total of 9 in 1971; See Huusko, 'Ilya Repin's Works in the Ateneum Art Museum', 84. According to this information, the State Tretyakov Gallery would have acquired as many as 175 works in 1967 and a total of 25 in 1972, some of which were by other Russian artists.

84 Regarding the archival sources related to Repin in the Archive Collections of the Finnish National Gallery, see Hätönen, 'Sources for Ilya Repin researchers...', *FNG Research* 2/2021.

85 Regarding the acquisitions made by the Ateneum Art Museum after Repin's death, see Huusko, 'Ilya Repin's Works in the Ateneum Art Museum', 85–86.

86 The Ateneum Art Museum wants to thank senior researcher Ms Maryna Drobotiuk from the National Art Museum of Ukraine (Kiev) for identifying the portrait.