

**THE NICOLAS ROERICH  
EXHIBITION, WITH  
INTRODUCTION AND  
CATALOGUE OF THE PAINTINGS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649020805

The Nicolas Roerich Exhibition, with Introduction and Catalogue of the Paintings by Christian Brinton

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**CHRISTIAN BRINTON**

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*From a photograph by Arnold Genthe*

NICOLAS ROERICH

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By  
CHRISTIAN BRINTON



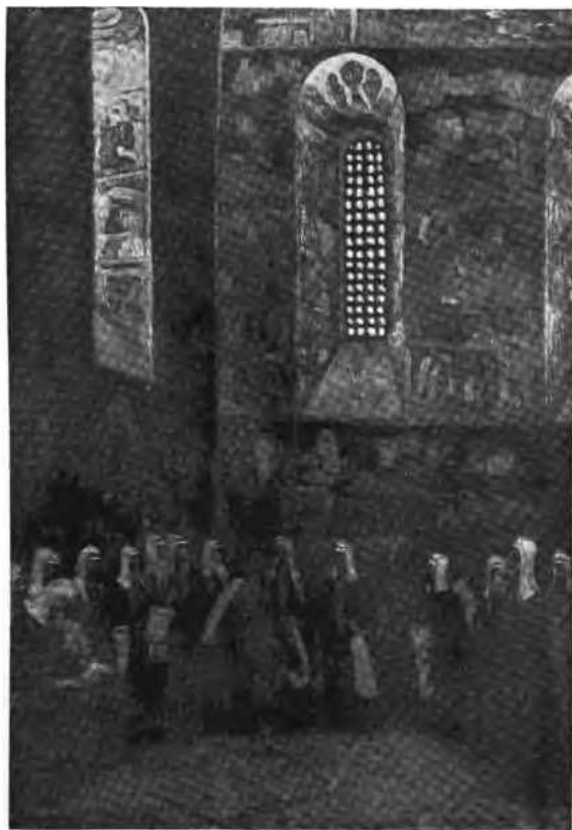
1920-1921-1922

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TOUR OF THE NICOLAS ROERICH  
EXHIBITION HAVE BEEN MADE BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
ROBERT B. HARSHE, OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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REDFIELD-KENDRICK-ODELL COMPANY, INC., NEW YORK



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## INTRODUCTION

By CHRISTIAN BRINTON

*His Blue is the Blue of the Northern Twilight;  
His Green is the Green of the sea-grass;  
His Red is the Red of Pagan watch-fires,  
And his Flame—from Byzantine arrows.*

SCREENED by protecting trees there stood, in the spacious park of Iswara, a glass-covered orangery to which, throughout certain busy weeks during the early summer, came a serious-browed young man. The slanting rays of the sun filtered through the dust-filmed panes, the door swung ajar, and in floated the song of birds, the fresh scent of the forest, and the cool breeze from the nearby lake. Day after day he stood before the easel, and often did not forsake his impromptu studio until the sun had set, and the magic of the northern twilight enveloped park and green and white family mansion in its diffused radiance. The painting that so engrossed the young man's attention, a study in green, violet, and brown, showed a stretch of water with a wooden

kreml bristling on a rugged promontory to the left, and, gliding silently forward, a rude craft in which were two figures, one standing in the stern, the other, a bearded, patriarchal giant, seated in the bow gazing tensely before him. The title which the youthful artist gave his picture was *The Messenger*, and nothing could have been more typical of his maturing taste, or more prophetic of his career, than this composition which to-day seems at once the prelude and the epitome of his entire achievement. Although he did not at the time realize it, the mysterious Messenger was bringing him treasures from a remote, eloquent past, and pointing the pathway of a luminous future.

While born in Petrograd, on the Vassili Ostrov, not far from the Imperial Academy of Arts where he was later destined to study, Nicolas Roerich's boyhood was passed at Iswara, the family country place near Gatchina. The son of a distinguished barrister, he first saw the light of day September 27, 1874, and his earliest memories go back to the great estate of some ten thousand acres with its tracts of primeval forest, its shining lakes, and mysterious mounds wherein lay buried the Viking warriors of dim, heroic days. Passionately devoted to outdoor life, the youthful Nicolas Konstantinovich spent most of his time hunting, now afoot, now gliding over the crusted snow upon skis. He gloried in the solitude of nature, his only companions on such occasions being his dogs and his guide and body-servant, a taciturn Finn named Gustav, who would tramp for hours by his side without uttering a syllable.

Yet blackcock, deer, and even bear did not claim his entire attention, for when about fourteen years of age the young hunter became deeply absorbed in the hundreds of tumuli