

## **The Activities of Students of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts In the Altai in the End of XVIII - First Half of XIX Century**

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the personalities of architects and artists who studied at the Russian Academy of Arts and worked in the Altai and Siberia in XVIII – first half of XIX centuries. The historical monuments of the administrative center of the Altai mining region of the city of Barnaul are analyzed. The biographies of the first Altai professional architects and artists are presented and their works are described. The article defined the value of the students of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts in the formation of the artistic culture of the Altai and Siberia: the industrial, religious and civil architecture, religious and secular painting and graphics. The article describes the formation of the primary art education in the Altai mining region, showing the role of the mining schools in training qualified personnel for factory production. The article states that the work and honest service of the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in the factories reflected the attempts of progressive people of the first half of the XIX century to find the solution of social problems in the purely moral, ethical sphere by establishing the ideal personality of duty and honor. The Academy of Fine Arts adhered to the principle of unity of education and training, which was understood in a broad sense as the formation of a professional and a citizen.

**Key words:** Architects • Landscape painter • Painter • Icon painting • Ensemble • Monuments • Academy

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many aspects of the role of the Academy of Fine Arts in shaping the culture of Russia have not yet been investigated. In pre-revolutionary and Soviet historiography, there are no works generalizing and determining the importance of the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in the formation of the Siberian culture. The scientific literature on the history of Siberian culture refers to the names of the architects and artists A.I. Molchanov, L.I. Ivanov, Ya.N. Popov, I.M. Zlobin, V.P. Petrov and M.I. Myagkov. Life and creative destinies of these authors are associated with the Academy of Arts; the academic school had a decisive influence on their creative views and methods.

A specific feature of the activities of the architects A.I. Molchanov, L.I. Ivanov, Ya.N. Popov and artists V.P. Petrov and M.I. Myagkov is that they proceeded under the authority of the Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty (hereinafter - HIM), as Kolyvano-Voskresenskiye plants belonged to the Russian Emperor on the basis of possessory right. The Cabinet of HIM fully decided the fate of those who received any education in this field.

The Architectural Class of the Academy of Fine Arts was founded in 1758 and the first admission consisted of 13 people. In Siberia in general and in particular in the Altai in the XVIII century, there were no professional architects. They appeared only in the end of the XVIII century. Among the first students of the Academy of Fine Arts in the Eastern Siberia were A. Losev and in the Western Siberia – A. Molchanov.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Systematic, historical and analytical methods were used in this work.

**Key Part:** The full course of the architectural class of the Academy of Fine Arts was completed by the seniors of the Cabinet A.I. Molchanov (1765-after 1819) - 1786-1791 years and L.I. Ivanov (1803 -?) - 1820-1825 years. During Molchanov's education at the Academy the architectural class was guided by A. Zakharov; L.I. Ivanov having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts, for two years improved his knowledge in practice at the construction in St. Petersburg under the supervision of K.I. Rossi

according to the Charter of the Academy of 1784. Ivanov during his studies at the Academy was awarded with I and II silver medals for his architectural compositions.

Ya.N. Popov (? - after 1852) studied at the Architectural Class of the Academy in 1820-1822; later he was engaged in practical works in St. Petersburg under the leadership of K.I. Rossi.

Construction activities of the Altai factory architects were carried out in a professional manner and had various purposes. They performed construction works not only in Barnaul, but in all factory towns and mines. These were mainly the production facilities, warehouses, shops, barracks, factory offices and churches.

Construction works, extensively developed in Barnaul in the first half of the XIX century, were the result of social and economic changes that caused the growth of the cities and led to the issuance of the Decrees on the improvement of Siberian cities in the years 1809 and 1816.

No one monument of the eighteenth century in Barnaul retains its original appearance. The facades of all the buildings of A.I. Molchanov were changed in the XIX century by his successor Ya.N. Popov. These changes were targeted to creation of a single composition of Petropavlovskaya Street (Polzunova) according to the requirements of the architecture of the Russian classicism of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The factory architects built a single architectural composition in Barnaul: Cathedral Square – Petropavlovskaya Street - Demidov square. This is one of the great monuments of Russian classicism in Siberia that includes the factory square. For modern reconstruction of Barnaul there is an urgent problem of creating the protected historical zones in the city.

In the middle of the XIX century, I.M. Zlobin carried out a lot of construction works in the Altai. He graduated from the Mining Institute in St. Petersburg and from 1830 attended the Academy of Fine Arts "preparing to become a mountain architect". I.M. Zlobin built Guryevsky and Ridder plants in 1840-ies. In 1852, he was assigned to correct the position of the architect of Kolyvano-Voskresenskiye plants.

The first professional artist, who worked in the early XIX century in Siberia, was V.P. Petrov (1770? - 1810), directed to the Siberian plants by Alexander I on the recommendation of the President of the Academy of Fine Arts Count A.S. Stroganov. The State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg houses more than a hundred drawings and watercolors that V.P. Petrov made in Siberia. For the views of Ridder mine and caves near Bukhtarminsk Fortress [1], which the artist sent to St. Petersburg in 1805,

he received the title of Academician in 1806. This is evidenced by a document stored in the Central State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg. It says: "To the benefit and glory of Russia the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, established and patronized by the Greatest Emperor Alexander I in the power given by the autocrat, for the hard work and knowledge in the landscape art... recognizes and honors Mr. Vasily Petrovich Petrov as the Academician of the Academic Assembly, with the rights and benefits, which are prescribed for this title in the resolution of the Academy."

V.P. Petrov was very attentive to nature, tactfully included landscape in the panorama of the city or town and subtly and delicately used the color. The unique is his "View of the interior of the factory and melting furnaces with costumes of the masters." In Moscow Literary Archive there is his sketch in oil on cardboard with inscription: "Furnaces and hearth painted on location in Barnaul. September 1809. Petrov."

M.I. Myagkov, Academician of Fine Arts, lived and worked in the Altai for more than 20 years. His work was multifaceted. M.I. Myagkov represents a religious painting in the Altai. His work in this area was not only in line with the pursuit of academic painting of the second third of the nineteenth century, but also was at the origins of the Russian-Byzantine style of academic painting formed by the mid-nineteenth century.

The history of religious paintings of the XIX century is still the least studied aspect of the Russian art. Mean or more detailed information on this can be found in the research of A.G. Vereshchagin, I.V. Ginsburg, V.G. Lisovskiy and V.K. Vistingauzen.

From 1840-ies, on the initiative of the Academy of Fine Arts materials on the history of Russian culture and Russian art was collected. In parallel, church collected the materials on Russian churches and church painting. Within eparchies there were architectural and archeological commissions. Interest in the history of architecture and art of the provincial cultural figures is reflected in the European publications [2].

Dying of classicism in Russia was accompanied by the formation of the Russian-Byzantine style in church architecture and religious art [3]. In 1856 in the Academy of Fine Arts, the class of orthodox iconography was established on the proposal of the official for special assignments at the president of the Academy of Fine Arts, G.G. Gagarin.

In 1859, the academy founded an Ancient Christian Museum, whose collection includes ancient icons and sketches of architectural monuments. According to a

special "command of Her Imperial Highness," in 1840, the Academy of Fine Arts as the official agency in charge of all spheres of artistic life of the country was imposed with the duty to consider the "icons and paintings newly ordered from the Government at the general meeting of professors and academicians."

Mikhail Ivanovich Myagkov was born in 1799 in the family of a serf in the Novgorod Province. In 1818 he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts; the landlord charitably gave M.I. Myagkov freedom. The Council of the Academy decided to give him a certificate of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree on completion of the class of historical painting. In 1823, "special meeting of academicians rejected a proposal to admit M.I. Myagkov to honorary free members for a painting presenting Samson passed by Philistine, due to the majority of disapprovals at voting. It was decided: not to nominate Mr. Myagkov" [4].

In 1828 Myagkov addressed to the Academy of Fine Arts with the following petition: "I learned that under the authority of the Cabinet in the city of Barnaul in the Barnaul Mining School, there is a vacancy of the teacher of drawing. Since I would like to get this job, please find attached the recommendation on my knowledge given by the professor of the Academy, the Collegiate Counselor and Holder Egorov. Herewith, I am asking the Board of the Academy of Fine Arts to address to the Cabinet about my employment. This petition is signed by the artist of the 14 class Mikhail Ivanovich Myagkov".

In the records of the "Office of the Mountain Board" in 1830, there was a note from which we learn that the artist Myagkov from the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts "was employed by the Kolyvanskiye plants on March 30, 1829... His wife - Evgenia Ivanovna ... has neither inherited nor acquired "assets". Working as a teacher of drawing in Barnaul Mining School, Myagkov continued communication with the Academy of Arts. In the letter dated August 1, 1833, he reported to the Board of the Academy: "... being nominated as a candidate to academician by the Council of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, having received their order to draw a scene from the life of the Siberian savages, I have chosen the so called Kulondin Tatars migrating near Teletskoye Lake as its subject and exactly presented the way of life and the character of these people. I have finished this order with due diligence and herewith this is my honor to present it for the consideration of the Council..." [4].

On May 21, 1835 the letter and the diploma of academician of historical and portrait painting M.I. Myagkov was sent from the St. Petersburg Academy in Barnaul to the Head of "the Altai mining plants". In 1830 Myagkov received an order to draw the icons for the

newly built church of Dmitriy Rostovskiy in the Barnaul factory almshouse from the chief of the plants P.K. Frolov. According to the artist, he worked on the icons "a year and four months" and nevertheless did not receive a cash reward. In the petition dated June 10, 1838 M.I. Myagkov wrote: "The former chief of Kolyvano-Voskresenskiye plants invited me to draw some paintings for Dmitriy Church built at a Barnaul mountain almshouse and gave me an unconditional promise to make for a monetary reward and so I have drawn these paintings ... I was doing this work permanently for one year and four months, I finished it and finally handed over. I remained confident that my work would be reimbursed by local governors, especially since having taken the job I did not agree any preconditions. But my expectations still remain unsatisfied" [4].

Contemporaries rather highly appreciated Myagkov's paintings in Dmitriy Church; it was known in other Siberian cities as well, in particularly in Omsk. The military chancellery of the Siberian Cossack line regiment appealed to the Altai Mountain Board to allow the academician of fine arts Myagkov to draw icons and make murals for the interior of the Omsk Cossack Nikolsky Cathedral, built in the forms of classicism by the architect Stasov. One of the arguments of the request was a reference to the high quality of the artist's paintings. For example, the report of the Omsk commander of the Cossack regiment Captain Rebrov dated April 27, 1836 stated: "In the city of Barnaul, ... there are two painters. One is Myagkov, graduated from the Academy and another one is his pupil non-commissioned shihtmeyster Shirokov. The best church in Barnaul is Dmitriy Church, where all iconostasis was made by Academician Myagkov... In Dmitriy Church there are many Myagkov's works that are considered elegant. Shirokov's paintings compared with the works of Academician Myagkov can be called mass produced items... "According to the contract signed on December 21, 1836 Myagkov had to draw 19 icons for Omsk for 10 thousand 600 rubles. This work continued until 1840.

There are archival documents showing that Myagkov drew icons for factory churches [5]. For example in 1830, he received an order to draw 14 icons for the church of Suzun plant; besides, he made some work for the church of Zmeinogorsk mine. Myagkov painted icons on the canvas with oil paints in the academic manner, so contemporaries and those who had a chance to see them later, referred to them as paintings. The artistic heritage of the artist is large and diverse. But his fate developed dramatically: after 1917, the iconostases of the churches were destroyed.

Activities of professional artists in the Altai region in the first half of the XIX century were sporadic. The exceptions were the academicians V.P. Petrov and M.I. Myagkov.

Arrival and stay of V.P. Petrov in Siberia in the years 1802-1810 and his role of the "traveling painter" were typical manifestations of Russian culture originated in the XVIII century.

In 1788, A.S. Stroganov planned to publish the collection of drawings, plans and maps of the regions, cities and other worthy objects in the homeland under the title "Painter travelling around Russian". In 1780-ies, similar trips were made by A. Ivanov, who made sketches of the Dnieper rapids and S. Shchedrin – the author of the wonderful views of the Caucasus and the Crimea. The artists introduced "Russians to all Russian" by means of these works. To some extent it was the implementation of the Lomonosov's idea "to direct the artists in ancient capitals and cities of the grand dukes to collect Russian iconology of former Russian governors", presented to the Academy of Arts in 1760.

Creative work of V.P. Petrov is in line with the general direction of the development of Russian landscape art. V.P. Petrov organically flows into a pleiad of his contemporaries, "portrait painters" of towns and regions of Russia. V.P. Petrov's patron was the president of the Academy of Fine Arts Count Stroganov; Petrov's works were evaluated and criticized by the Board of Academicians, who elected the artist as academician.

Arrival of M.I. Myagkov to the Altai also continues the tradition of the XVIII century. Creativity of the Academician of Painting Myagkov was in line with the academic pursuit of religious art, which led to the creation of icon painting in the tradition of Russian-Byzantine style; in the Altai and Western Siberia in general, Myagkov played the role of a professional temple painter" and a portrait painter. Academician of painting manifested himself as an author of historical and genre painting. Thus, it is reasonable to mention the significant contribution of V.P. Petrov and M.I. Myagkov in the development of art of the Altai; their creativity, thanks to the academic professionalism and talent, was an important part of the culture of Siberia and part of an all-Russian culture.

The feature of the Academy of Fine Arts was the fact that so many of its students were from the lower classes of the Russian society (F. Rokotov, Voronikhin, P. Sokolov, F. Shchedrin, V. Bazhenov, O. Kiprenskiy and others). The factory artistic intellectuals were not an exception: A.I. Molchanov and L.I. Ivanov were the sons of soldiers and M.I. Myagkov came from serfs.

In end of the XVIII century - the first quarter of the XIX century, the fine arts and architectural classes of the Academy of Fine Arts prepared many professionals for Kolyvano-Voskresenskiye plants under the order of HIH Cabinet. In accordance with the Charter of the Academy of 1784 the architects improved their knowledge at the sites of practical construction under the guidance of the great masters. In 1802, the Charter of the Academy was added with the articles prescribing "to engage in the projects of capitals and cities decoration", "to approve" all large monuments installed in Russia and to hold contests [6]. Reconstruction of the historic center of Barnaul was designed and carried out under the supervision of the Academy of Fine Arts, which approved the creation of a square for obelisk in honor of the centenary of Kolyvano-Voskresenskiye plants. Students of the Academy of Fine Arts Ya.N. Popov and I.L. Ivanov implemented this project.

The Academy of Fine Arts was not only the training and educational institution, but also a center of artistic education. The Academy regularly held exhibitions and organized proper library and museum. The Charter of 1812 legalized the leading role of the Academy in the development of the Russian arts education in all areas of artistic life. Students of the Academy introduced the academic educational tradition in Russian provinces. V.P. Petrov brought to Barnaul the collection of prints of Western European art, including Rembrandt's etchings, drawings by Rubens and Van Dyck and bequeathed them to the students of the drawing school at Kolyvan grinding factory [7]. Thus, the influence of the Academy of Arts on the activities of its students was maintained throughout their lives. Russian architecture and Russian art of XVIII – first half of XIX centuries attracted attention of foreign authors [8, 9] and foreign publishers published works of the Russian authors [10].

## CONCLUSION

The merit of the Academy of Fine Art is the development of art education in Russia; it provided support to the activities of its pupils in the province; in the Altai teaching of drawing and art was carried out in the mining schools and the Mining College by such qualified specialists as V.P. Petrov and M.I. Myagkov. The architects had students at the factory "drawing offices". The architectural graphics stored in the State Archives of the Altai region is distinguished by high level of mastery.

### **Findings:**

- The artistic heritage of the factory architects and artists, students of the Academy of Fine Arts, is a contribution to Russian culture, architecture and the fine art of Siberia. Now their works are monuments of history and culture protected at the republican and local level.
- The most valuable monuments are ensembles of the historic center of Barnaul in the forms of classicism: Cathedral Square – Petropavlovskaya Street – the factory yard - Demidov square.
- Drawings and watercolors of V.P. Petrov with the views of Siberian mining plants are not only the great works of graphic art, but also valuable historical sources of information about the architectural appearance of factories, mines and mining plants of the Altai in the early nineteenth century.
- Legacy of the academician of painting M.I. Myagkov has a significant artistic value in the field of religious painting, portraiture and genre painting.
- Students of the Russian Academy of Arts played a significant role in the artistic development of Siberia and the Altai.

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