

**Press release 28.02.2013**

**The Big Change. Revolutions in Russian Painting 1895-1917  
Unique selection and the most valuable collection of Russian art ever to come to the Netherlands**

*From 12 March to 11 August, the Bonnefantenmuseum is presenting a unique collection of almost 90 paintings from the two most important museums in Russia (the Tretyakov Museum in Moscow and the Russian State Museum in St Petersburg) and from a number of smaller collections. The exhibition illustrates the birth of modern art in Russia, from 1895 to 1917; an exceptional period of continuous innovation and creativity that had a decisive influence on the global development of visual art. The exhibition presents world-famous artists such as Kazimir Malevich and Wassily Kandinsky alongside new discoveries like Ilya Mashkov, Aristarkh Lentulov and Pavel Filonov. Most of the paintings have never been seen in the Netherlands before, and some of the works have never even been exhibited outside Russia.*

*The missing link*

Between 1895 and 1917, the Tsardom underwent a period of drastic change. The conservative Russian society was shaken up by an economic boom and growing international contacts. And painting played a vital role in this cultural explosion. In St Petersburg and Moscow, artists like Malevich and Kandinsky were part of innovative art scenes that engaged in extremely lively debate, resulting most visibly in a very wide artistic diversity. This fascinating period is not well-known in the West, which is why the Bonnefantenmuseum is presenting this missing link between tradition and innovation, and giving visitors the opportunity to experience the versatile powers of this period.

*Valuable collection*

The exhibition is being organised as part of the Netherlands-Russia Year 2013. The involvement of the Russian government has made it possible for the absolute top works from the history of Russian art, which hardly ever leave their museums, to be exhibited in Maastricht. Never before has such a valuable collection of Russian art been seen in the Netherlands. Loans of such valuable and high-quality works are practically impossible to obtain, making it highly unlikely that such an exhibition can ever be organised again in the Netherlands.

The exhibition has been curated by guest curator Dr. Sjeng Scheijen (Leiden University and artistic director of the Netherlands-Russia Year 2013). This is his fifth exhibition of Russian art (previous exhibitions include those for the Groninger Museum, National Gallery London and Drents Museum).

*Successful fund-raising*

Fund-raising for the exhibition is going well. The special project is generously supported by DSM, VSB Fund, Mondriaan Fund, SNS REAAL fund, the Province of Limburg, the City of Maastricht, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and Lukoil. The museum also started the *Metsenaty* crowd-funding campaign in November, through which 60 paintings have already been adopted. This means that a substantial part of the total exhibition budget of almost 900,000 Euros has already been financed. The success of the fund-raising campaign shows the great involvement of private individuals and businesses in the exhibition.

*Fringe programme: Dachas, Soiree Russe and more*

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive programme of educational activities and events. Throughout the exhibition period, the museum will be giving lectures, guided tours by museum staff, special audio tours (spoken by Sjeng Scheijen) and children's workshops.

The Russian artists Marta Volkova and Slava Shevelenko have designed a dacha room, in which they have realised new work and where visitors can find additional in-depth information about the exhibition.

On 21 June, the museum is organising a Soiree Russe. The Soiree brings the *Belye Nochi* (White Nights) from St Petersburg to Maastricht. The special museum evening will be filled with art, literature, dance, music and Russian gastronomy. Tickets for this special event can be ordered from the Uitburo (€ 49.50 per person).

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue edited by Sjeng Scheijen, with essays by John Bowlt, Nicoletta Misler, Evgenia Petrova, Sjeng Scheijen and Anna Winstein. The catalogue is available from the Museum Shop (184 pp. NL/EN editions € 34.95, ISBN 9789072251633).

During the exhibition an extra charge of two Euros will be added to the normal admission rate.



NOTE FOR THE PRESS: If you require more information, please go to our press page or contact the press department (Tues-Fri), Avenue Céramique 250, Postbus 1735, 6201 BS Maastricht. Tel. +31 (0)43 329 01 09, fax +31 (0)43 329 01 99 - Lieke Heijmans: [pressoffice@bonnefanten.nl](mailto:pressoffice@bonnefanten.nl)