62. *Woman above the city*, by Josef Čapek. 1919-20. 80.5 by 44.5 cm. (Oblastní galerie, Liberec; exh. Castle Riding School, Prague).

63. *Head of Don Quixote*, by Otto Gutfreund. 1911-12. Bronze, 38 cm. high. (Národní galerie, Prague; exh. Castle Riding School, Prague).

Václav Špála (the latter rather poorly represented in this section), as also the relatively superficial character of philosophical or political motivation in the more programmatic works of Emil Filla. In addition to the exuberant use of colour, identified as the determining feature of this phase, the early period is especially notable for self-portraits, above all those of Bohumil Kubišta.

The second, and internationally most significant, manifestation of Expressionism in Czech art, is associated with the Czech response to Cubism. This section of the show, including paintings by Kubišta, Otakar Kubín and Jan Zrzavý, was dominated by the work of the sculptor Otto Gutfreund. The combination of a dozen vigorous brush drawings, five reliefs and seven sculptures from the years 1911–12 drew particular attention to the relation between the two- and the three-dimensional that Gutfreund was to discuss in his essay of 1912–13, *Plocha a prostor* (Surface and Space). A number of works, notably the *Head of Don Quixote* (Fig.63), pointed clearly to some of the sources informing Gutfreund's initially 'Expressionistic' approach to the possibilities opened by Cubism: the pathos of 'animated' form discussed in Wilhelm Worringer's influential *Formprobleme der Gotik* (1911), the contemporary fascination with El Greco, and the treatment of the figure in the work of Honoré Daumier.

The concluding section, covering wartime and the first post-war decade, proved exceptionally interesting in its stylistic diversity, the attention to lesser known figures such as Jiří Kroha or Vlastislav Hofman and the reference to a wider range of media. Appropriately, the strongest presence here was that of Josef Čapek, whose painted images invariably reflect a parallel engagement in literature, theatre and film.[2] Especially compelling in Čapek's work of the years 1918–25 is a series of steely yet vulnerable urban types (Fig. 62). These testify to a subversive emotionalism persisting within the new commitment to a forward-looking objectivity.

While the catalogue accompanying *Expresionismus a české umění* certainly ranks among the more innovative of recent accounts of the early twentieth-century Czech avant-garde, its interest and value for scholars outside the Czech Republic may prove to be limited because of its authors' reluctance to attend to the broader context of their subject. In a volume with so many essays, it is surprising that not one is devoted to relating cultural developments to those in the social and political sphere. In the cultural realm itself, the discussion of so international a movement would surely have benefited from a more vigorous exploration of contacts between Prague and Berlin and a glance at contemporary developments elsewhere in Central Europe, in particular the variants of Expressionism found in Hungarian and Polish art of the 1910s and early 1920s.

ELIZABETH CLEGG

[1] *Expresionismus a české umění 1905–1927* was at the **Castle Riding School, Prague,** from 15th December 1994 to 19th March 1995. Catalogue edited by Alena Pomajzlová, with essays by Michal Bregant, Jarmila Doubravová, Václav Erben, Růžena Grebeníčková, Iva Janáková, Vojtěch Lahoda, Pavel Liška, Zdeněk Lukeš, Alena Pomajzlová, Věra Ptáčková, Karel Srp, Rostislav Švácha, Radim Vondráček and Jindřich Vybíral. Summaries in English. 375 pp. incl. 120 col. pls. and 261 b. & w. ills. (Národní galerie v Praze, 1994), ČK 450. ISBN 80–7035–81–4. Of the 264 exhibits listed in the catalogue, around a fifth could not eventually be lent for the show. There was, however, a commendable range of lenders both within and outside Prague (of the latter, notably the public collections of Brno, Zlín, Liberec and Ostrava), and a significant proportion of loans from private collectors.

[2] Čapek's equally important career as a book illustrator was addressed in the exhibition *Josef Čapek: knižní grafika a obálky* at the **Klementinum, Prague** (23rd February to 19th March).

Moscow
The State Tretyakov Gallery

After eight years of painstaking renovation and reconstruction, the State Tretyakov Gallery, by any other name the national gallery of Russia, is once more open and set to become a major international cultural attraction. Under the leadership of its new Director, Valentin Rodinov, and financed by a combination of major state sponsorship and private donations, the radically re-hung museum now shows the full variety of the indigenous arts of Russia selected from a store of over 90,000 works in all media. The long wait appears to have been worthwhile. The immaculate nineteenth-century gallery, built in the Neo-Slavic style with façade designs by Viktor Vasnetsov, remains the collection's nucleus, but is now flanked and enlarged by two massive new galleries, sympathetically integrated with the old building and extended behind the scenes to provide a large range of storage and conservation facilities.

Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov (1832–98), who came from an old Muscovite family of textile merchants, inherited his

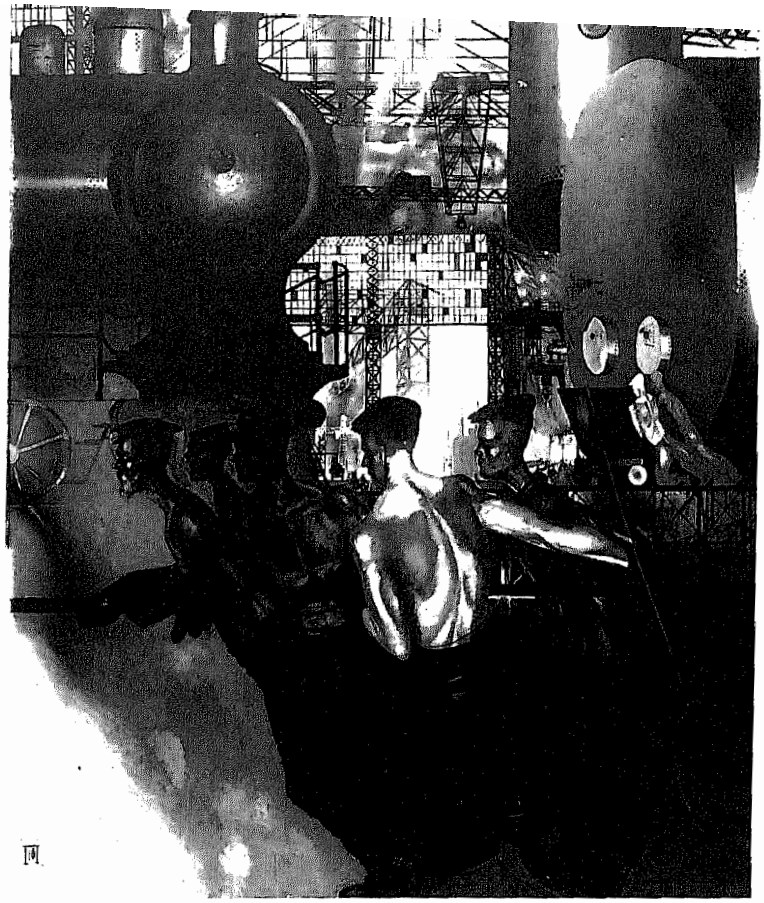
father's fortune at eighteen and initially began collecting Dutch masters, turning to contemporary Russian art during the progressive 1860s. This is reflected in the collection, the bulk of which centres on the activities of the mid-nineteenth century dissident artists, the Wanderers, with whom Tretyakov's gallery culturally came of age. A secessionist school, breaking ranks with the Imperial Academy, the Wanderers set about chronicling contemporary political and social ills in gritty images of the rural and urban peasantry and revolutionary activism, subjects stigmatised by the Tsarist regime as seditious and tendentious.

As a substantially wealthy rival to the hegemony of court patronage, Tretyakov became popular with the liberal intelligentsia for his democratic and at times seemingly radical collecting activities, yet he was a most unlikely and at times reluctant cultural revolutionary, a mixture of progressive ideals and conservative views, whose commitment was less to social and moral renewal than to nationalism. A devout orthodox believer, he attended church daily, had a strong respect for patriarchal authority, and rejected pressure from the left to convert his collection into a vehicle for progressive propaganda. In particular he distrusted excessive political content and not infrequently had to be brow-beaten by the eminent critic Vladimir Stasov into purchasing such pieces. We owe it to Stasov's arguments, that *all* social phenomena should be represented in the collection, that such masterpieces as Repin's celebrated *They did not expect him* (1884–88; Fig.66), showing the return of a dishevelled political exile to his family, were acquired despite the patron's lack of enthusiasm.

Tretyakov had firm ideas about how his collection should grow, and while he did acquire harrowing scenes of political unrest and peasant hardships, he also patronised Slavophile themes such as national history, myth and folk-tales. He particularly favoured landscape and religious painting (which in turn influenced the market), and bought works by the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century academic masters derided by the utilitarian liberal intelligentsia. An appreciation for non-naturalistic art, unusual among his contemporaries, laid the foundations for the gallery's outstanding collection of icons.

When in 1893 Tretyakov donated his collection to the city of Moscow it numbered just under two thousand items, an impressive legacy that was extended after his death by the state, especially following 1917 when it was augmented by art donated or 'liberated' from other museums, private collections, cathedrals and monasteries. Substantial numbers of avant-garde works were acquired at a time when many of the leading practitioners, such as Kandinsky, Rodchenko and Chagall, held administrative posts within the Ministry of Arts; these have since taken a long time to be rehabilitated.

In a country with a strong legacy of political and cultural prohibition, the re-hanging at the Tretyakov Gallery, while adhering to a conventional chronological survey of the Russian arts, is nevertheless innovatory. Gone are the former proscriptive and tendentious ideological manipulations, so that



64. *On with heavy industry*, by Yuri Pimenov. 1927. 260 by 212 cm. (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow).

65. *Improvisation*, by Wassily Kandinsky. 1914. 119 by 139 cm. (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow).

66. *They did not expect him*, by Ilya Repin. 1884-88. 160.5 by 167.5 cm. (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow).

former untouchables, such as spiritual and non-objective art forms, are allowed to take their rightful place in the nation's cultural history. Equally refreshing are the objective retentions: no form of positive discrimination or retrospective wisdom has been allowed to dim, for instance, the achievements of the socialist realist school.

The re-hanging procedure now finds considerably wider space for Russia's religious heritage. On the lower floors, in a suitably subdued and reverential atmosphere, are displayed the unrivalled medieval collections, including *Our Lady of Vladimir* and Rublëv's *Old Testament Trinity*, the two most venerated of Russian images (currently the subject of ownership disputes between Church and State). Additionally some two hundred icons will be displayed in the newly restored Church of St Nicholas which is attached to the gallery. Chronologically the collection then winds a familiar path up to the post-Petrine era when Russia aligned itself with western art practices. Fine academic works and impressive romantic pieces are followed by the core collection of nineteenth-century realism, latterly erupting into the decorative-aesthetic Art Nouveau and *Mir iskusstva* period epitomised by the works of Diaghilev's stable of theatrical decorators such as Bakst and Benois. A special room of enormous proportions is now devoted to the art of the symbolist painter Mikhail Vrubel (fast acquiring a significant standing in western scholarship), especially his colossal *Princess Greza* which was rescued from oblivion and decay in the vaults of the Bolshoi Theatre.

Triumphantly and copiously displayed are the works of Russia's internationally celebrated avant-garde, the 'formalism' derided and actively persecuted under the Soviets: Malevich, Larionov, Goncharova, Tatlin, Popova, El Lissitsky and Kandinsky (the gallery is particularly rich in the last named; Fig.65) are now proudly exhibited in all their resplendent and sometimes laconic audacity. The Tretyakov collection in fact ends with Malevich's suprematist *Black square* (1914–15): 'Full stop', as my curatorial guide explained (though in fact the collections of post-revolutionary art will continue in the Central House of the Artist, near Gorky Park, still under the aegis of the Tretyakov; Fig.64).

The achievement of the re-opened and reconstituted gallery consists perhaps more in the matter than the manner of the display, but this is by no means negligible. True, the art of erstwhile 'reactionary' or 'degenerate' forces has been rehabilitated by slow and isolated steps before now, but in terms of a comprehensive vision of the Russian arts the Tretyakov Gallery provides an incomparable survey. The triumph of the current administration resides in its judicious emptying of the store rooms and dismantling of the old taboos, finally allowing the visitor to this pre-eminent state collection the opportunity to assess and appreciate the full and at times bewildering diversity of the Russian arts. The lacunae are at last filled and the bowdlerisations contextualised.

DAVID JACKSON
University of Leeds

Boston and Los Angeles Nolde Prints

Perhaps because of their relative scarcity, or the vicissitudes of the artist's reputation, Emil Nolde's prints are not well known in the United States, even though he is regarded as one of the most important graphic artists of twentieth-century Germany. Thus, *Nolde: The Painter's Prints* has been eagerly anticipated, and can now be welcomed as the most important exhibition of this branch of Nolde's work ever mounted in America (the exhibition closes at the **Museum of Fine Arts** in **Boston** on 7th May and can be seen at the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art** from 8th June to 10th September). It is the most extensive presentation of this material since the exhibition at Kiel and Bern in 1975–76, which it exceeds in the depth of its analysis.[1] About one-fifth of the artist's printed *œuvre* is presented, in a subjective selection that reflects the taste and outlook of the organisers. Though it is not a reference book, its catalogue becomes the authoritative study of Nolde's prints in English.[2]

It is a connoisseur's exhibition, in the tradition of the Museum of Fine Arts' influential studies of the prints of Goya, Rembrandt, and Degas. Nolde's graphic art is interpreted not by meticulous recording of states but by presenting the artist's aesthetic motivations and technical accomplishments in a manner accessible to a wide audience. The installation includes some printing plates and woodblocks, and a section on Nolde's involvement with the illustrated book. A case of tools is also exhibited, along with explanations of the technical rudiments of printmaking. In the catalogue there is a similar glossary of printmaking processes, that is frequently referred to in the entries.

Nolde was an artist of remarkable confidence and fluency, capable of unaffected eloquence in every mark he made. His achievement as a printmaker lies in the combination of this effortless power and grace with technical virtuosity that was the product of years of experiment and invention. He produced his prints in intermittent, prolific spurts, paroxysms of energy prompted by flights of inspiration or his compulsive fascination with printmaking technique. This fitful engrossment reflects facets of a creative personality unfamiliar from Nolde's autobiography or from studies of his painting.

Between 1898 and 1937 Nolde produced more than five hundred prints. He pursued one printmaking medium at a time and of his own volition. His tuition was ordinary and at first he produced conventional prints in each medium; he quickly progressed, however, into diverse interrogative experiments. He spoke to artists and printers, and studied many other prints in his searches for new effects and subtleties of expression. The artist always remained open to accident, which he conceived as 'collaboration with nature'. As time passed, the bold design of Nolde's prints and the saturated intensity of his aberrant palette may have been caused by an uncomfortable sensitivity resulting from a visual ailment.

The exhibition reveals the broad stylistic and technical range of Nolde's woodcuts, and his elated variation of cutting, inking and printing. He purposely avoided perfect, even impressions, and no two proofs are identical. The artist experimented with different papers in his woodcuts, choosing sheets of varied content, weight, colour, and

67. *Young couple*, by Emil Nolde. 1913. Colour lithograph, 62.1 by 50.9 cm. (Museum of Modern Art, New York; exh. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).