



EVGENY CHUBAROV
THE Artist THE Medium



E. Chubarov's studio.
Berlin, circa 1996

ART AND SPIRIT

The creative appropriation of the world through images begins long before the birth of Christ. About 60,000 BC, human evolution provides us with hints of paintings that are not coincidental in the way they deal with experienced visual realities. Cave paintings that command our reverence even today – as, for instance, the cave at Chauvet, France – were based on observation. But equally important was how what had been seen was processed to better understand the reality outside of the cave, that is in the context of nature, which is not always harmonious.

It is interesting to note that the visual culture which humans developed through cave painting emerged long before the written culture, which dated back to about the 4th century BC. The small sculpture of the Venus of Willendorf, found in Wachau, Lower Austria, was dominated by mythology,

just like the cave paintings of Lascaux, France. Myths are the body of narratives a society utilizes to make sense of the world. Metaphysical interpretations of the world that include an entire spectrum of deities can also be found in works from Ancient Egypt (the time of the Pharaoh Akhenaten in the 14th century BC), the polytheistic societies of Ancient Greece or Ancient Rome, Hindu societies and even the Germanic tribes, who favored wooden sculptures, probably to worship their gods.

Radically different, by contrast, is the Hebrew image ban of the **Tanakh**: “Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, ..., of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” We know today that this prohibition was not strictly adhered to and that a small number of images were in fact produced in Israel. The image ban was understood as a theological achievement.

A Christian visual culture did not emerge immediately with the beginnings of Christianity. During the first two centuries, images were taboo, even though the Evangelist Luke was identified as the portraitist of the Madonna. The Veil of Veronica, the Vera Icon as it is known in art history, is similarly a legend. There was a strong segment within Christianity that was critical of images. But the appearance of Christian symbols, such as fish, bread, wine and lamb, could not be halted. The visual cosmos that has been emerging approximately since the 4th century also extended to travel icons. Its most outstanding late examples are still on view at Saint Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai.

The Byzantine Iconoclasm of the 8th and 9th centuries ultimately ended with a win of the iconodules, the supporters of the veneration of religious icons, over the iconoclasts, those who rejected such a veneration. Based on the teachings of the noted Church Father John of Damascus (650-754 AD), it was said that because God became flesh in Jesus and thus assumed a concrete physical human form, a physical depiction was permissible. The saints each embody the Holy Spirit in their own way. For this reason, Christ and the saints could be visually depicted. Idealized representations exalting the religious idea were to become the seed of the Christian visual cosmos.

At the beginning of the Renaissance, several centuries later, there was yet another paradigm shift. During the Renaissance, the human scale and scientific perspective took over the formerly divine visual space, as signaled

* The Holy Scriptures, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1955

by a golden background in icons and Christian paintings. The centuries that followed brought us the Baroque and Mannerist age. The period of time after the French Revolution saw a visual world solely focused on the human image that merged into modernism, when figurative legacies were initially abolished. The radical change from traditional imagery that had been shaped over centuries was brought about by the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich who rang in a new visual era with his famous painting, **Black Square**, which was, however, quickly outmoded. This diversity of the pictorial world continues to exist even today.

II

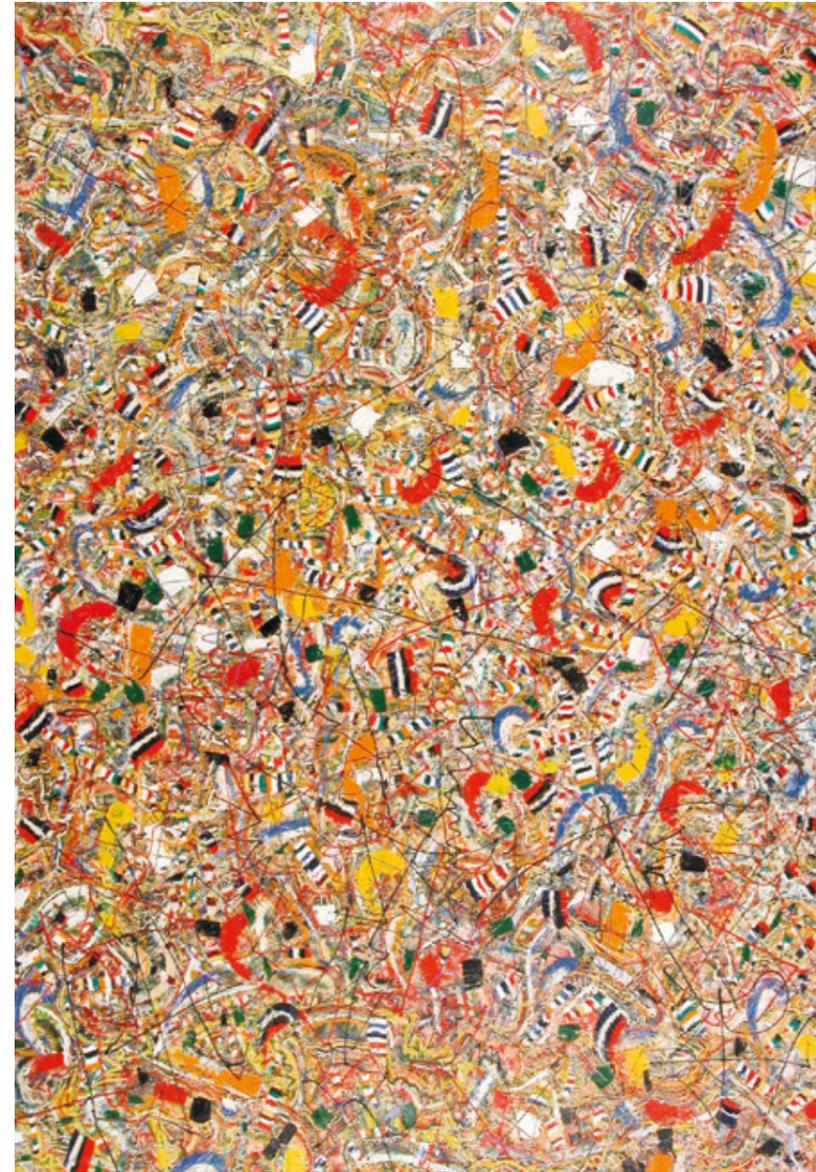
RUSSIA

In 2018/2019, the Vatican Museums featured the exhibition **Pilgrimage of Russian Art: From Dionysius to Malevich**, a cooperation with the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. On display were works from the 15th century to the 19th century avant-garde artists, such as Alexander Ivanov’s (1806-1858) **The Appearance of Christ Before the People, Inconsolable Grief** and **Christ in the Desert** by Ivan Kramskoy (1837-1887), as well as Nikolai Yaroshenko’s (1848-1898) painting **Life Is Everywhere**. A painting by Wassily Kandinsky (1886-1944) was also included: **Moscow, Red Square**.

This exhibition demonstrated to any interested observer that Russian art had changed dramatically and in stages after its initial boost during the reign of Peter the Great (1672-1725). The 19th century artists above belong to the Golden Age of Russian art that was characterized especially by its criticism. The **Peredvizhniki**, the itinerant painters, and their social criticism were equal to the realistic painters in France around Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) at approximately the same time. Still, by contrast, the Russian realists distinguished themselves by their profound spirituality that the French realists were lacking. Stated in general terms, the exhibition focused on the “Russian soul” which is steeped in deep spirituality. The spiritual aspect in Russian art manifests itself in its icons but also in references to nature, almost without exception even today. This holds true even if these references to the spiritual are not always immediately perceptible. As a rule, Russia’s rich tradition permeates its art and culture throughout.



The Miracle of St. George and The Dragon. Last quarter – end 15th century. Middle Rus' (Rostov) 84,7 x 68,7 cm



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1991-1993
Oil on canvas
198 x 292 cm

III THE ART OF EVGENY CHUBAROV

Chubarov's paintings, especially those of the late period in the 1990s created in Berlin, are characterized by their great looseness in composition. They seem initially indecipherable, as they follow the so-called All-Over principle. This method eliminates any emphasis on the center, and afforded the artist the opportunity to move freely across the large canvasses. The accentuation on the lines is striking in this art.

"The Artist Inbreathed The Line With A Meaning"

His works contain numerous layers of linear ornaments, wherein micro and macro structures come to permeate each other during the process of painting. The work is completed in sections, not in one major "paint attack" on the canvas. Chubarov seems to have been gifted with an intuitive inner command that guided his ideas while he was producing his works.



Evgeny Chubarov
 Untitled, 1996
 Oil on canvas, 300 x 200 cm

At times, there are round lines that extend from one side to the other. Then again, there are more powerful and larger interplays of lines that frame the first layer. Added to this are small rectangular, square and triangular black color juxtapositions that are strung together, as seen in the detail views in this catalog. Often, we also find squeegee marks that are composed of several colors and were applied at the very end so as to finish the previous worlds of lines.



Resurrection – The Descent
 To Hell. 1470–1480s,
 Novgorod. 47,7 x 38 cm

The results are these large-scale and magnificent paintings that create a totality of imagery that invites us to partake in the notion of the sublime. Traditionally, we associate the sublime with something that is imposing and awe-inspiring. It was Edmund Burke, who, in 1757, introduced the sublime – that had already been used in the Aristotelean theories of tragedy – in his philosophical treatise^{*} on the philosophical aesthetic of the modern era.

^{*} Edmund Burke: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. John C. Nimmo, London, 1757.



Toros Roslin Gospels
1262



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1996
Oil on canvas
Diptych, 300 x 400 cm

The sublime transcends the merely aesthetic and is associated with a sensation of the unattainable. The unfathomable that we cannot comprehend at all or that is only marginally accessible to us is one of the essential attributes of the sublime.

Chubarov was greatly inspired by Christian medieval art, Islamic architecture, Arabic calligraphy and Armenian illuminated manuscripts, which inevitably influenced his vision and art. The artist was always surrounded with illustrations and some of originals of those masterpieces while working in his Berlin studio.



Khachkar,
13th century, Armenia
110 x 170 cm

In addition, an ancient art was the subject of Chubarov's interest during his time in Moscow, especially Armenian art of that period.

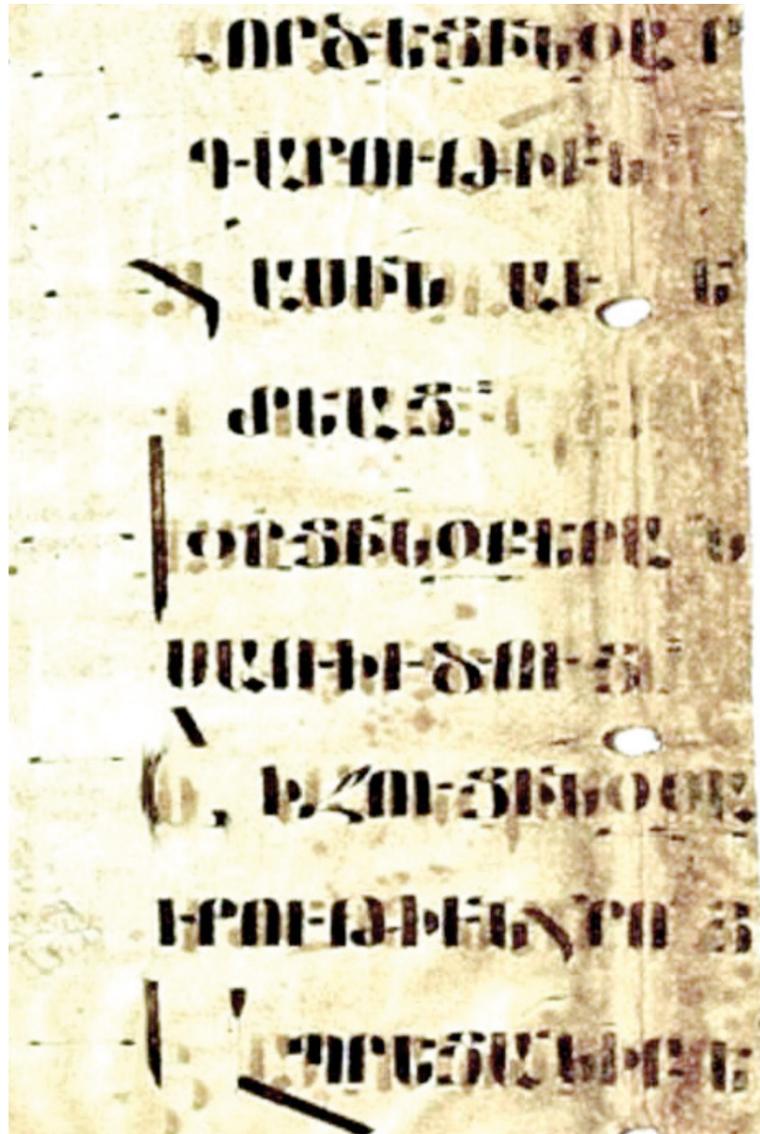
Khachkars - elaborately cut memorial stones with a relief cross in the center that is surrounded by geometric and plant motifs belong to the tradition of the Armenian Church. The rectangular, upright stone tablets are up to three meters in height. The front sides are decorated with bas-reliefs. They represent one of the central symbols of the Armenian culture.

Chubarov developed his own idiosyncratic visual language. Especially toward the end of his life, he abandoned figurative images and retreated to his



inner freedom which was tied in with his spirituality. Wassily Kandinsky's famous adage of the "inner necessity" certainly also applies to Evgeny Chubarov.

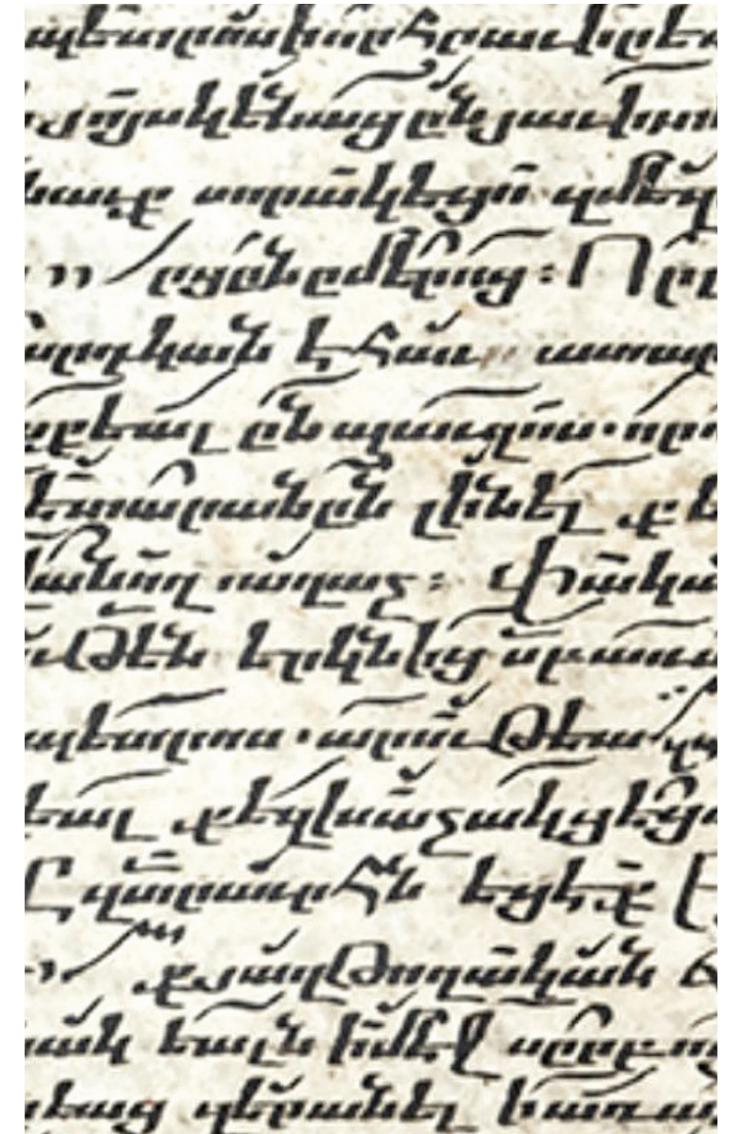
According to Kandinsky, art should not describe the outer realities but express and transport the deeper states of the soul. Kandinsky declares "inner necessity" as a criterion for evaluating art: an image is successful if it adequately expresses certain emotions and moods. If a painting achieves this, it does not matter whether it faithfully depicts the outer reality or not. A painting may be figurative or abstract – what's important is that it only employs shapes and colors that are necessary for the visual expression and efficient transformation of specific emotions.



Armenian manuscript,
5th–6th century



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1996
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm



Armenian manuscript,
15th century

IV EVGENY CHUBAROV'S ART IN THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Evgeny Chubarov, who died in 2012 at the age of 78, was a painter and graphic artist, an artist who entrusted his emotions, moods and intellectual insights to a visual language that represented a medium adequate for him. Chubarov was aware that the spiritual art tradition of his home country of Russia was subcutaneously expressed in his work. Still, he also created a visual iconography that thoroughly exemplified the contemporary world. Starting from the vantage point of the enormous freedom of form as practiced

by the 20th century avant-garde that was dominant until World War I, Chubarov later adopted formal references from the second avant-garde after 1945 that guided him to his increasingly dense imagery. Similar to the ornaments of the **khachkar**, Armenia's spiritual memorial stones, Chubarov perfected his shimmering and glimmering paintings, which - like cosmic events - suggest his innermost emotions. Apart from the large works in black and white, his polychrome paintings take us on a tour through inner worlds that are unthinkable without a deeply experienced spirituality.



Evgeny Chubarov
Dptych, 1994
Oil on canvas
300 x 400 cm

< previous page
Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1996
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm

Icons are an obvious choice for Russian artists to depict hundreds of years of this religious tradition. They are complemented by the commemoration of the Armenian tradition that draws a direct line to the All-Over paintings by Evgeny Chubarov. These memorial stones that were displayed both at the entrances of traditional Armenian churches but also fashioned as free-standing steles are the matrix for this visual art. This is why a direct confrontation with this art within the framework of an exhibition

naturally makes sense. The symbolism in Chubarov's work is hidden and needs to be decoded. It is hinted at in the line shapes that thicken in some works into concentrations of form. In others works, the lines float freely in the pictorial space.

Dr. Tayfun Belgin,
Director Osthaus Museum Hagen



Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1996
Oil on canvas, 200 x 150 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works'
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016

LIST OF WORKS FOR THE EXHIBITION



Fresco from Santa Maria foris portas in Castelseprio, Italy, 7th century

› Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1992-1993
Oil on canvas, 207 x 148 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov - The Berlin Works',
Osthause Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 - October 2, 2016

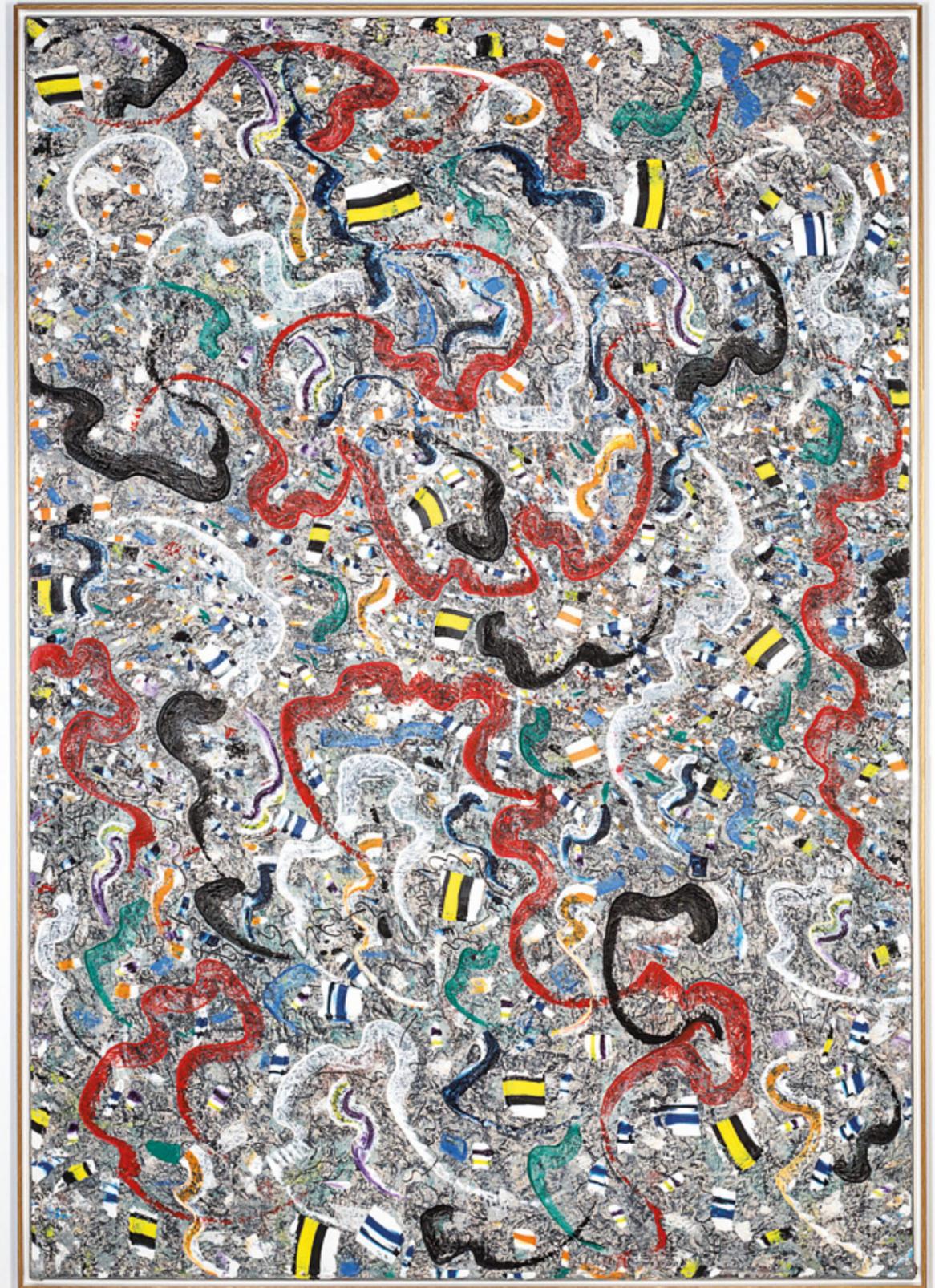






Resurrection – The Descent To Hell
Second quarter 16th century
(1520–1530s). Novgorod
84 x 60,5 cm

› Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas, 290 x 200 cm
Installation Shot from
Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works,
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016







The Miracle of St. George and
The Dragon. Last quarter – end
15th century. Middle Rus' (Rostov)
84,7 x 68,7 cm

Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1991-1993
Oil on canvas
198 x 292 cm



Epiphany, from The Feasts Tier
of The Iconostasis.
Second quarter 16th century.
Arkhangelsk lands
75 x 62 cm



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1993-1994
Oil on canvas
300 x 200 cm





Royal Doors of The Annunciation and
The Evangelists.
1410–20s. Andrey Rublev (?) or his closest
associates. Moscow School.
158,2 x 38,2 x 2,8 cm (left panel),
158,3 x 38,3 cm (right panel)



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas
300 x 200 cm



John The Baptist, Angel of The
Desert, with 14 Scenes From His
Life. Last quarter 15th century,
Middle Rus'.
90,5 x 74,5 cm



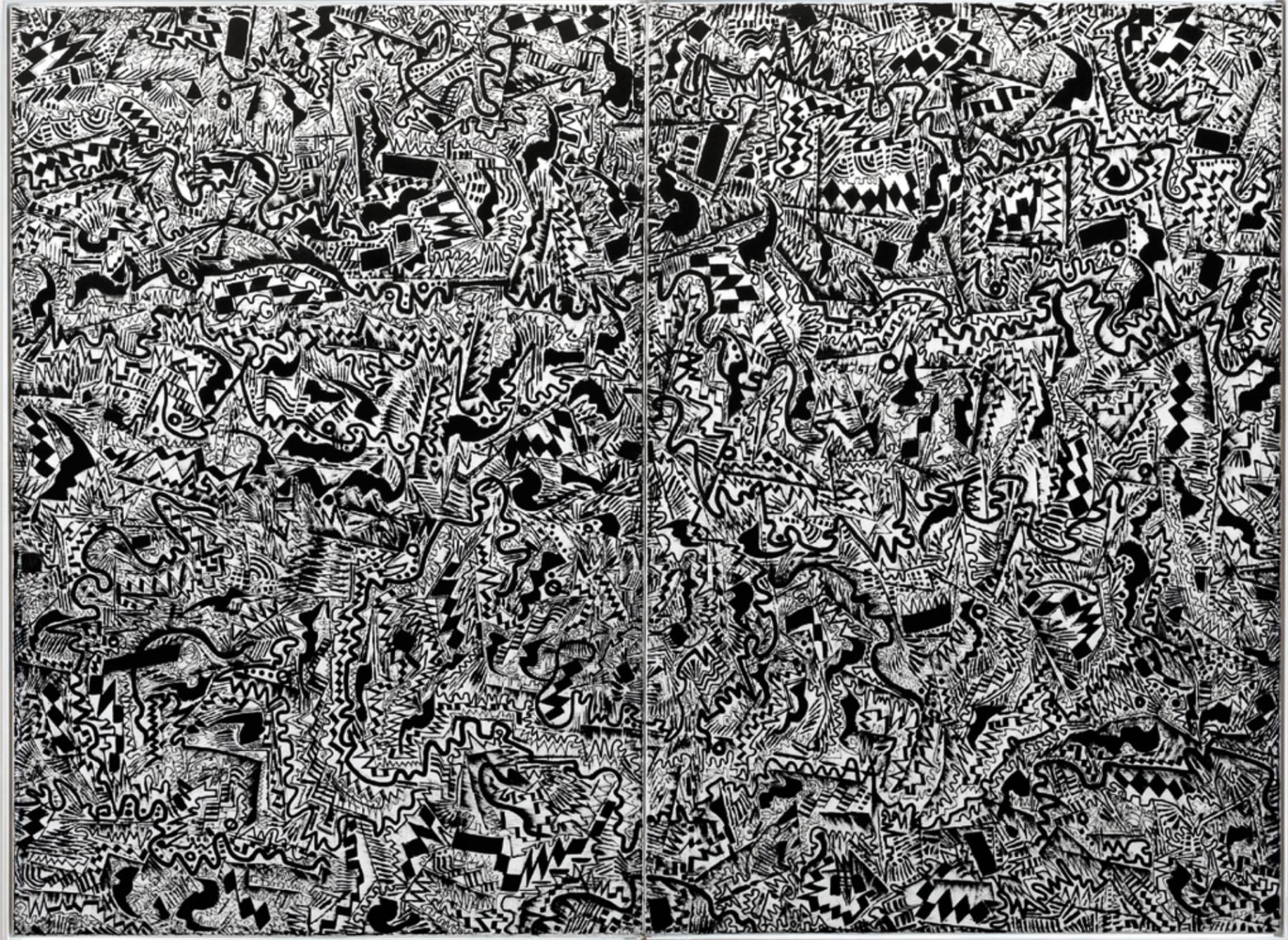


Nativity of Mother of God,
from The Feasts Tier Of The Iconostasis
1520s. Vologda
78 x 56,5 cm



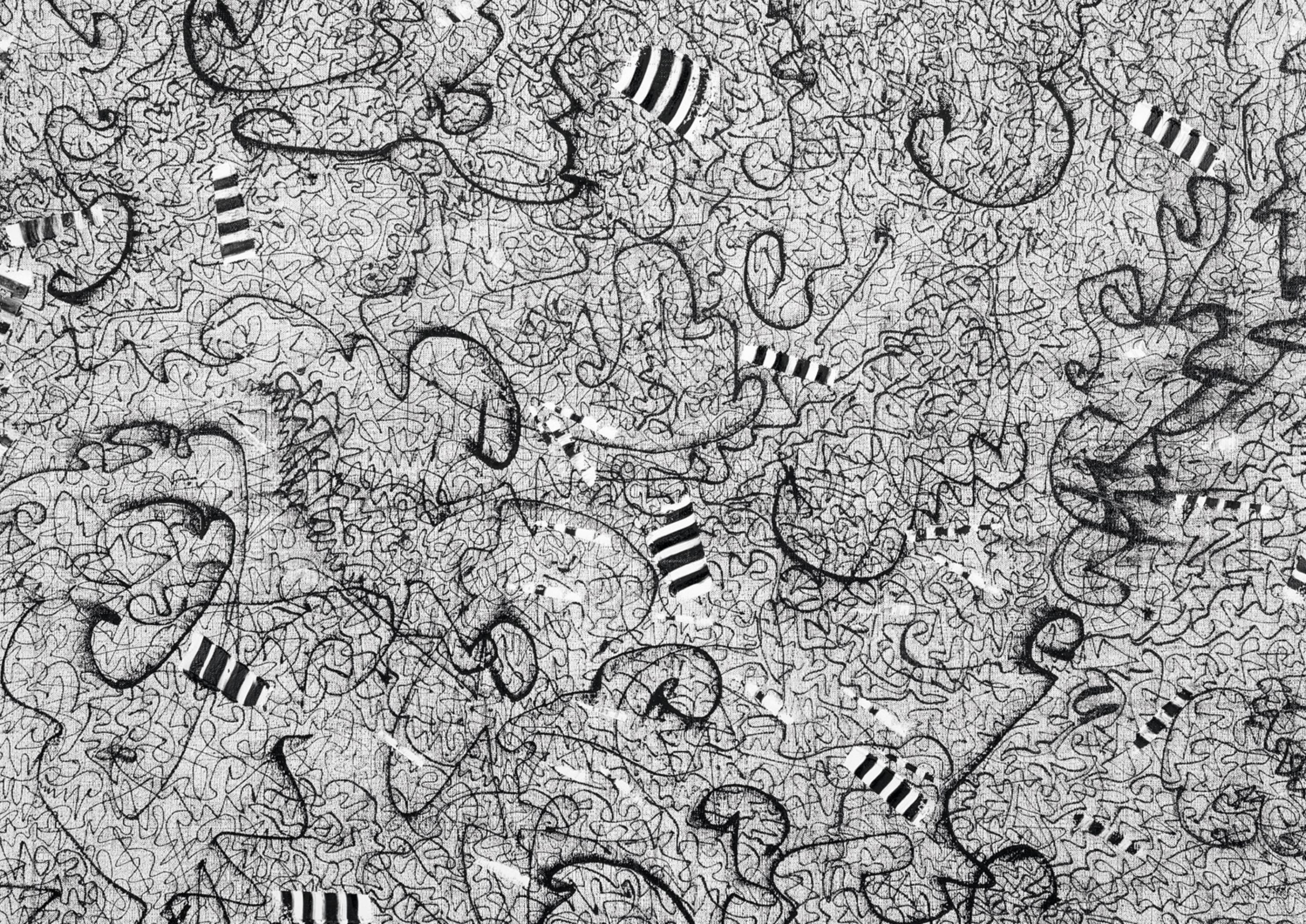
Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1992-1993
Oil on canvas
206 x 189 cm

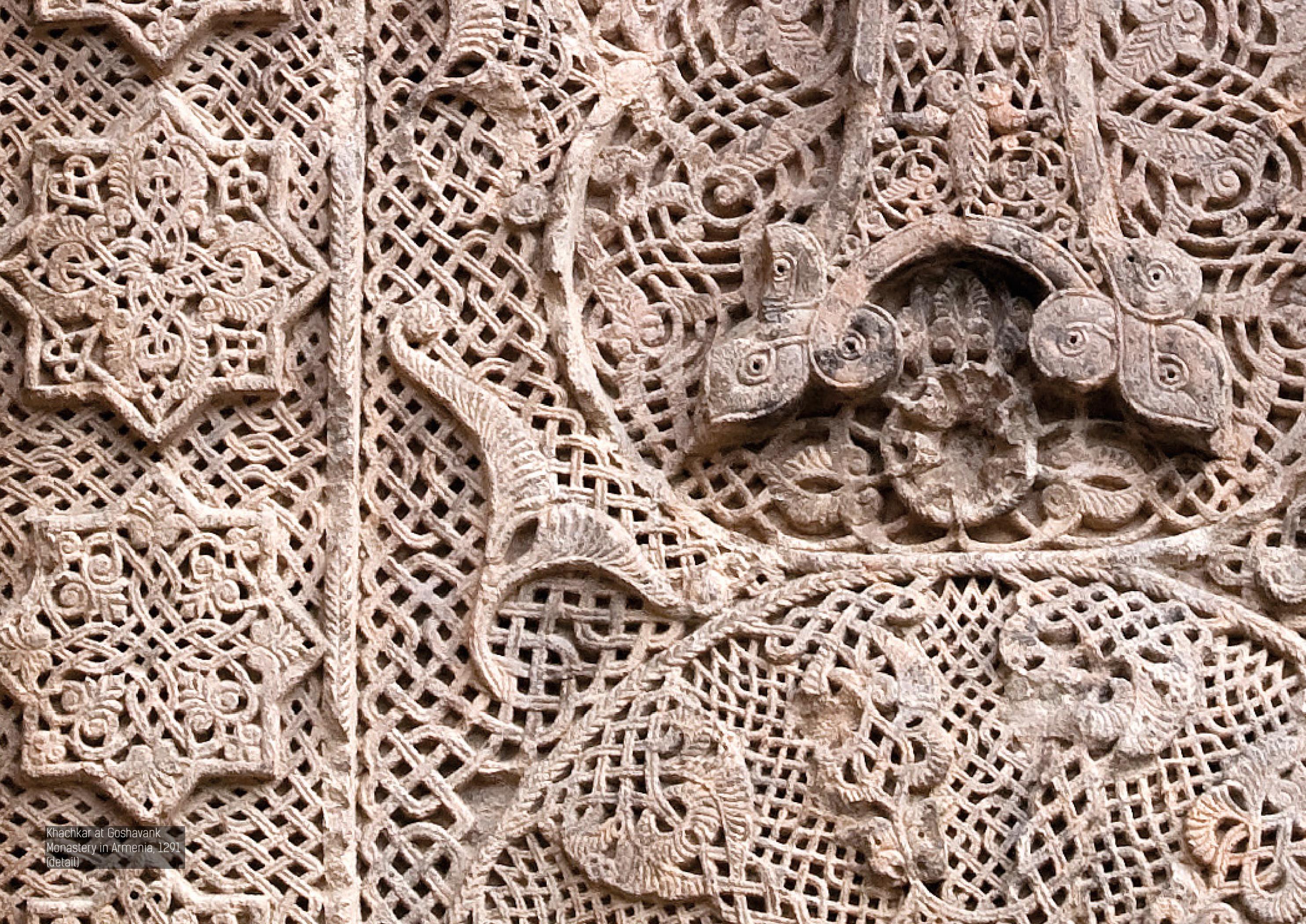




› Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas, 200 x 150 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works',
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016







Khachkar at Goshavank
Monastery in Armenia, 1291
(detail)



Armenian manuscript
 illuminated on vellum
 Constantinople ? : 1675.
 110 x 90 mm



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1991 - 1993
Oil on canvas
300 x 400 cm





Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works'
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany
July 31 – October 2, 2016



The Four Gospels, in Armenian
Armenia (Havuts Tar Monastery)
Dated 1471
Manuscript on paper
4to (185 x 140mm.)



› Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas. 300 x 200 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works',
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016



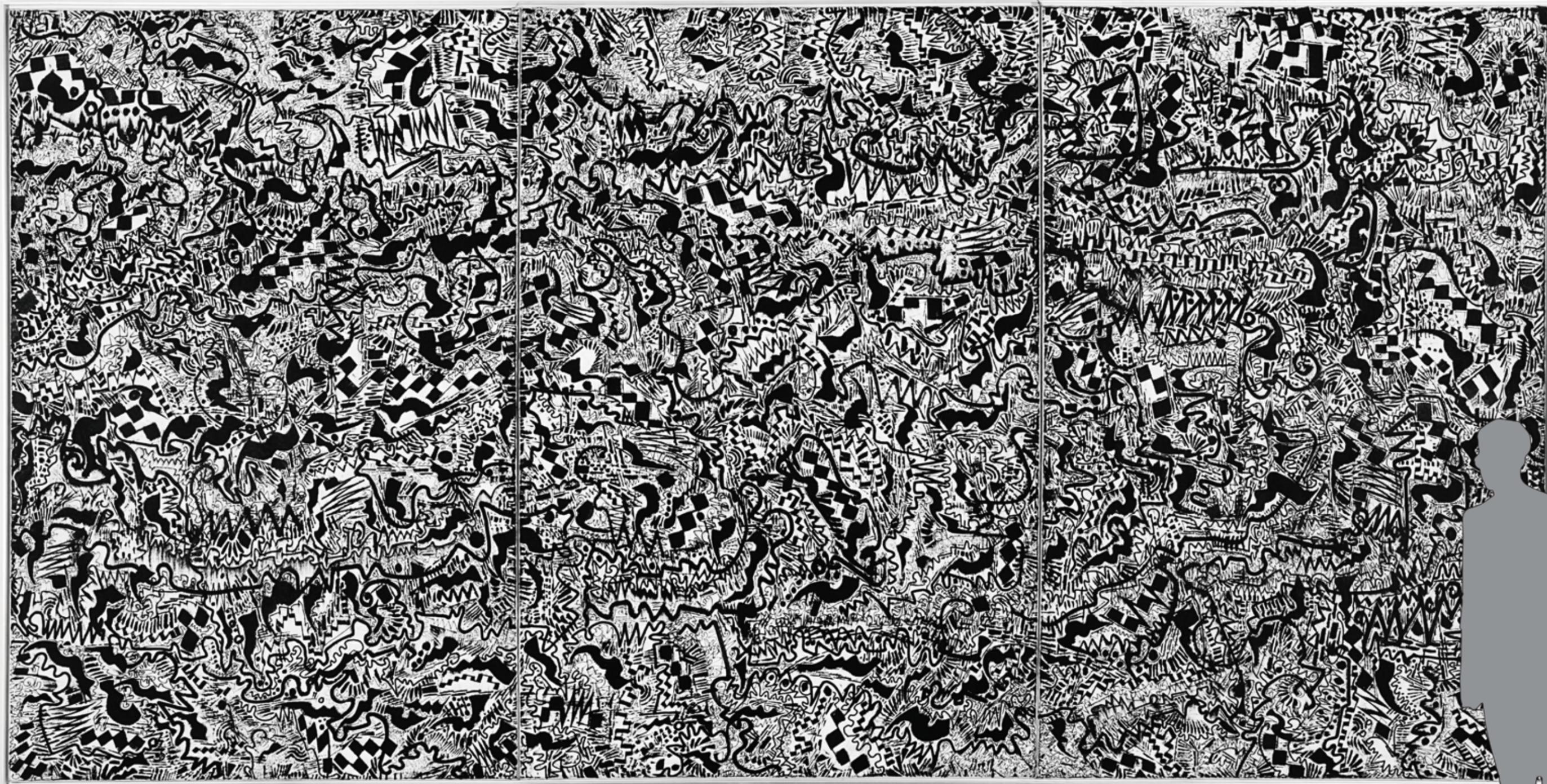


The Four Gospels, in Armenian
Armenia (Havuts Tar Monastery)
Dated 1471
Manuscript on paper
4to (185 x 140mm.)



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas
300 x 200 cm





Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1996
Oil on canvas, 300x600 cm
Installation Shot from 'Evgeny Chubarov –
The Berlin Works', Osthaus Museum
Hagen, Germany. July 31 – October 2, 2016



Sharaknots (for Books of Hymns
from the Armenian Church)
Painted by Arak'el of Geghama
Armenia, Erzerum. Late 16th century
120 x 71 mm; ink, tempera and gold
on parchment; 364 folios

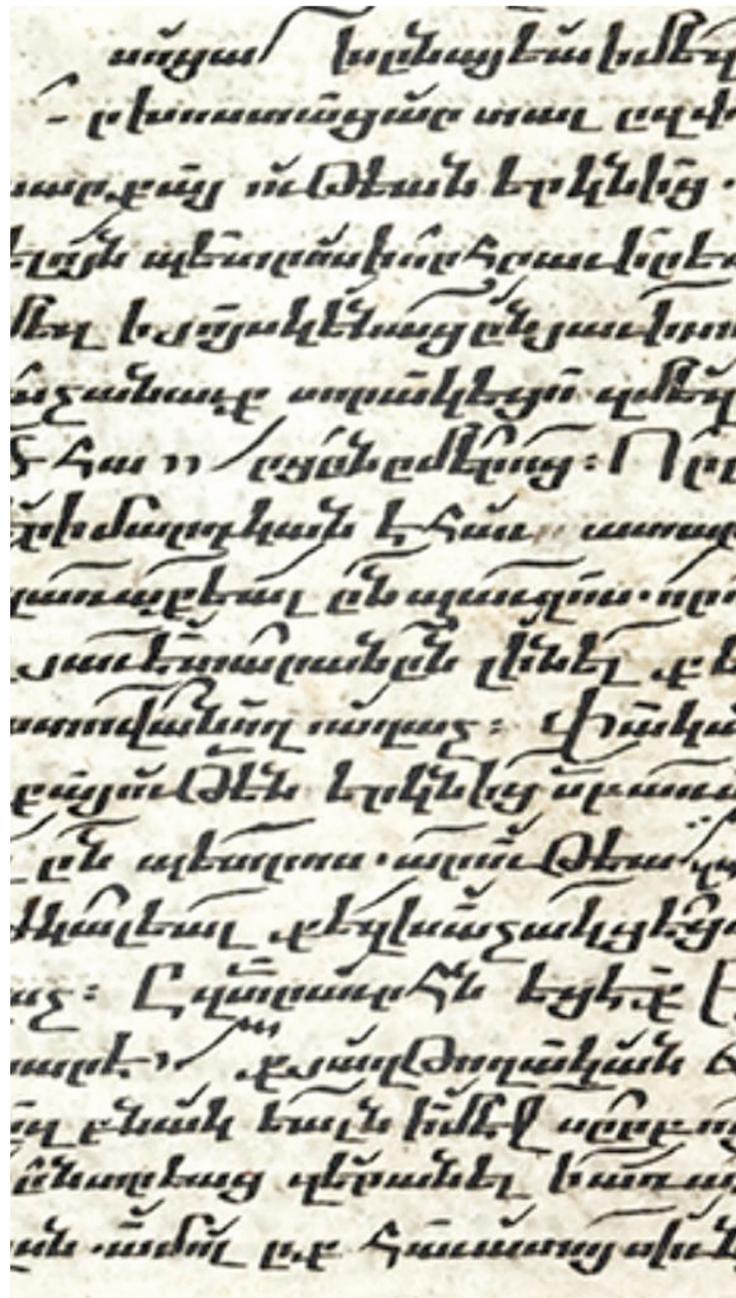
> Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas, 300 x 200 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works',
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016





Sharaknots (or Books of Hymns from the Armenian Church)
Painted by Arak'el of Geghama
Armenia, Erzerum. Late 16th century
120 x 71 mm; ink, tempera and gold
on parchment; 364 folios





Armenian manuscript,
15th century



> Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1994-1995
Oil on canvas, 200 x 150 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works',
Osthause Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016





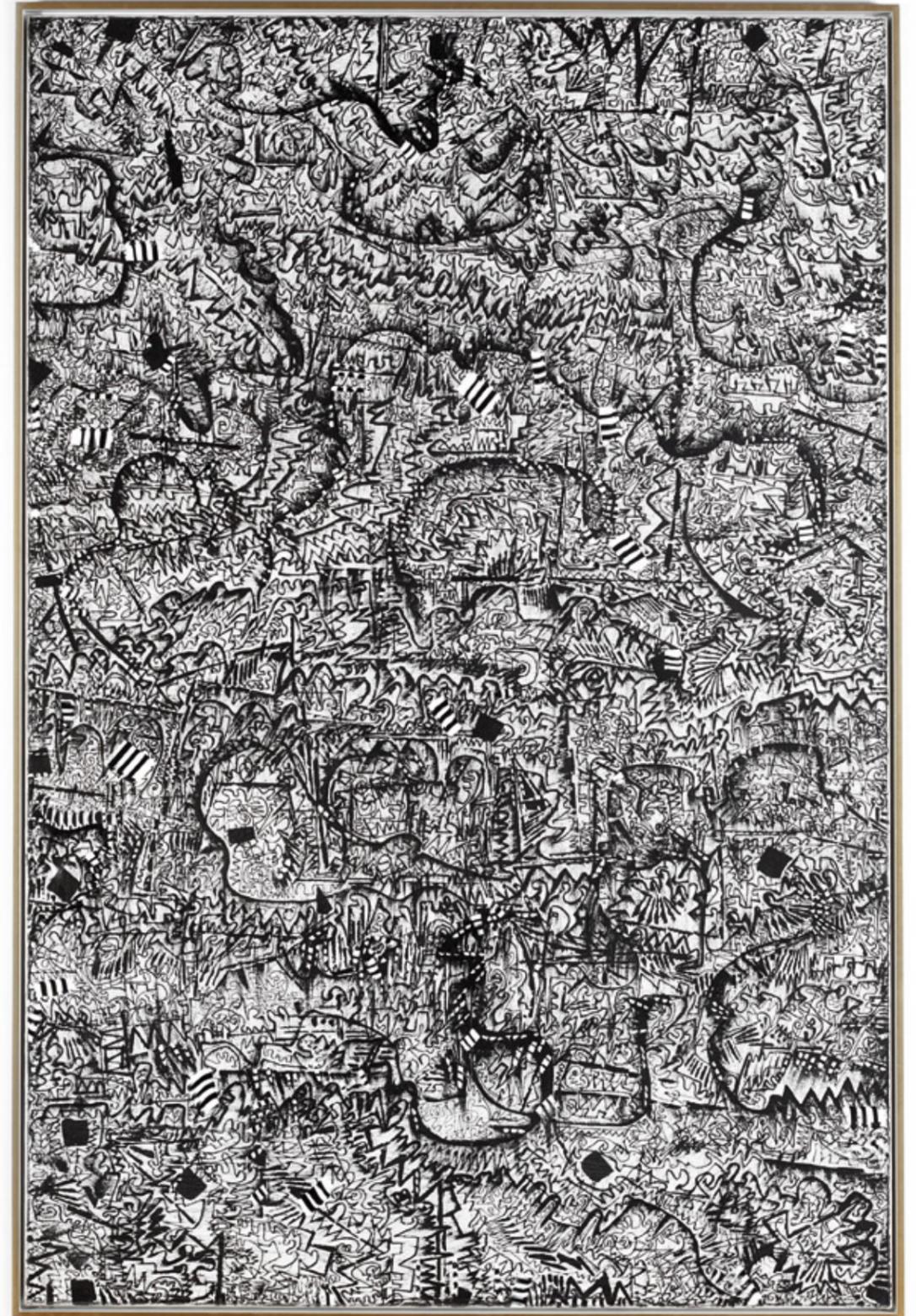
Hymnaire
En arménien, manuscrit
enluminé sur parchemin
Turquie, Khisan (Vaspourakan),
14th century



Evgeny Chubarov
Untitled, 1994
Oil on canvas
300 x 200 cm



Sharaknots (for Books of Hymns from the Armenian Church). Painted by Arak'el of Geghama Armenia, Erzerum. Late 16th century 120 x 71 mm; ink, tempera and gold on parchment; 364 folios



> Evgeny Chubarov. Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas, 300 x 200 cm
Installation Shot from
'Evgeny Chubarov – The Berlin Works',
Osthaus Museum Hagen, Germany.
July 31 – October 2, 2016





Evgeny Chubarov.
Stone heads, 1970-80s
Composition in Moscow
Muzeon art park.

LIST OF RUSSIAN ICONS AND
MANUSCRIPTS
AVAILABLE FOR EXHIBITION



SAINT NICHOLAS OF MYRA, WITH SAINTS ON THE MARGINS

Second quarter (?) – middle 14th century. Novgorod

48,5 (47,5) x 38 x 4,0 cm

Wood, solid board, gesso, linen, egg tempera, ark,
two high dowels on wooden pins.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Private collection, Leningrad (Saint-Petersburg) for approx. 40 years; according to the first owner, brought from Pskov.

In collection since 2011.

CONSERVATION BY

T. Chijov, State Hermitage Museum in 2000

The discovery of this new icon from the G. Tatintian collection, created around the second quarter or the middle of the XIV century, is a truly extraordinary event for the history of ancient Russian painting. It is all the more significant, that the piece can most certainly be attributed to Novgorod iconography, of which only a select few icons have survived. It is exceptionally important that the original layer of paint on the clothing and faces has been preserved, after the overpaint was carefully removed during restoration by one of the leading Russian experts. The icon was created by a Novgorod iconographer who followed the traditions of Palaiologos painting. Byzantine traditions manifest themselves primarily in the way the faces were painted, as evidenced by the cold green dark underpaint, the textured multi-layered modelling of form, the long active bleached highlights and the cinnabar rouge with wide dark red lines, all of which come together to create a complex and magical chiaroscuro of colourful brush strokes. The outstanding artistic value of this icon is evident in its main focus: the attentive, self-absorbed, spiritual eyes of Saint Nicholas. The technique used in the painting of the face on this icon barely has any analogues among surviving Russian icons, as entire strata of XIV century painting have been lost. The drapery technique is reminiscent, first and foremost, of the famous Nativity of Mary from the Ryabushinsky collection (State Tretyakov Gallery), painted around the middle to third quarter of the same century. In both works the wooden panels are fastened with wooden dowels and wooden nails that are normally found only in the earliest pieces. The icon's design clearly reveals some Balkan features, which might have been borrowed from iconographers that visited Novgorod. The painting of the faces resembles Serbian art, as does the powerful figure of the Saint with his hand raised in a blessing gesture and as if it were attached to the torso. The large Gospel on a heavy descending blue scarf unquestionably resembles the altarpiece of St Nicholas Basilica in Bari, donated by Serbian King Uros III in 1321–1331. Legend has it that the Zaraysk icon was transferred from Korsun to Zaraysk in 1225, and that it depicts the image of Nicholas the Bishop in the orant pose. The medieval society saw the icon as a defender from the foreign invaders. The solemnity with which the Bishop addresses the flock help form this perception, a Russian medieval society saw reliable protection and patronage in its hierarchs. Though the Zaraysk icon became legendary later (the first half of the XVI century), along with the town of Zaraysk itself, which modern research has shown dates back to the same period, it should be noted that this version of iconography spread in the XIII–XV centuries.

The icon's margins show on the left: the Martyr Esip and the Martyrs Juliana and Oxinia, and on the right: the warriors George and Stephen (of the 1318 martyrs). These two bottom images were repainted in the eighteenth century. The unusual choice of the saints was determined by the ktetorial character of this unique work. The palaeography of the author's inscriptions, the freedom in the way their names were written evokes the classical Novgorod iconography of the late XIII century to the first half of the XIV century.



RESURRECTION – THE DESCENT TO HELL

1470–1480s, Novgorod

47,7 x 38 cm

Wood (linden), solid board (in two parts), two cut-in one side dowels (fir), late; ark, gesso, linen, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Acquired in Russia by Richard Zeiner-Henriksen (Oslo) circa 1930.

1940 – Collection of Richard Zeiner-Henriksen
(1882–1962).

In collection since November 2017, through Sotheby's.

Presumably, the image was part of the Feasts tier of a small iconostasis. The scene's composition replicates one of the iconographic types of the Descent of Christ to Hell, which emerged in Russian art by the beginning of the XV century and was known both in Moscow and Novgorod. The earliest example is a church icon from Tikhvin (State Tretyakov Gallery). Throughout the XV century this type can be found in the Feasts tiers of Novgorod churches, for example, in the ensemble of the Volotov Church of the third quarter of the XV century (Novgorod Museum). The iconographer meticulously follows this reference, and repeats such characteristic features as a multi-layered circular Glory, even the colouring of its concentric circles; a huge cross in the Saviour's hands (a detail absent from the XVI century painting); the outlines of rocky mountains; and Adam and Eve's silhouettes. More ancient features of the Tikhvin icon go back to the motive of Christ's descent from the mandorla down to the mountain stones, rather than crushing the gates of hell, like in Volotov's version. This confirms that this icon follows the Novgorod tradition, although the angels flying in the centrepiece, apparently holding the Arma Christi (now lost), evoke some of the Rostov versions of this scene. Despite the characteristic features of the Novgorod style, this icon is unique in its unusual colour scheme. The delicate hues of green, blue, red, and pink stand out especially against the hills, which are contrasted with cinnabar clothes to create a dramatic dissonance. The icon design also shows some archaism: for example, the small figures of angels evoke associations with XIV century works of in the painting of the faces and hands in dense pink ochre and thin short white highlights that draw out the illuminated parts of the relief. These features prove that the work could have been created not in Novgorod itself, but in another one of the major centres of the vast region. Since the 1930s, the work belonged to one of the most famous foreign icon collections. It was acquired by a Norwegian commercial attaché Richard Zeiner-Henriksen (1878–1965), who worked in Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s at the Nobel Brothers oil company and at the Consulate General of Norway. While living in the Saltykov Palace, he began to collect art and antiques, including Russian icons. Subsequently, he transferred the entire collection to Oslo, and the icons (75 in total) were repeatedly shown at major Western exhibitions and were described in a catalogue published in 1954 in Munich, compiled by V.P. Ryabushinsky, founder of the Icon Society in Paris (1927).



ROYAL DOORS OF THE ANNUNCIATION AND THE EVANGELISTS

1410–20s. Andrey Rublev (?) or his closest associates. Moscow School.

158,2 x 38,2 x 2,8 cm (left panel),
158,3 x 38,3 cm (right panel)

Wood (linden), solid board, two cut-in dowels (late, lost), linen, gesso, tempera. Six compositions (the two parts of the Annunciation and the Four Evangelists) are each placed in their ark.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Judging by the fact that the sashes were renewed more than once and fastened together and by the small icons of Deesis embedded in the centre, in place of the roller, the icon must have spent a long time in a prayer house of Priestless Old Believers.

In collection since 1988. Germany.

EXHIBITIONS

Masterpieces of Russian Icon painting of XIV-XVI centuries, from private collections. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. February 18–April 19, 2009.

Monument of the Andrey Rublev Era. Royal Doors from the Tatintsian Collection. The Central Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Culture and Art, Moscow. October 31 – December 17, 2019

PUBLICATIONS

Masterpieces of Russian Icon painting of XIV-XVI centuries, from private collections. Exhibition catalogue The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts. Author I. Shalina. Moscow, 2009. February 18–April 19, 2009.

/ Compiled and edited by I. A. Shalina. Moscow, 2009. pp. 166-169. Cat. 27.; Collection of ancient Russian painting and ceremonial relics. [B. M., B. G.]. pp. 8, 9, 24-31. [in Russian] [L. I. Lifshitz, author of the introductory article].

Monument of the Andrey Rublev Era. Royal Doors from the Tatintsian Collection. The Central Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Culture and Art, Moscow. 2019. Catalogue

CONSERVATION BY

K. Sheikman (The Grabar Art Conservation Center), 1990.

EXPERTISE

G. Popov – Art historian, doctor of art history, professor, deputy director on scientific work of Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Art. Expert opinion dated October 30, 2019

L. Lipschitz – Head of the Department of Ancient Russian Art, State Institute of Art Studies of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

P. Khoroshilov – Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation – expert opinion dated July 10, 2011.

A. Ovchinnikov – artist-restorer of the highest qualification, Honoured Art Worker of the Russian Federation, The Grabar Art Conservation Center – expert opinion, letter of August 08, 1998.

G. Vzdornov – Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Art History, State Research Institute for Restoration – expert opinion.



THE VIRGIN HODEGETRIA (OF GEORGIA)

End 15th – early 16th century (circa 1500). Novgorod

77,2 x 61,5 x 3,8 cm

Wood (linden) in two parts, two cut-in one-side dowels, ark, linen, gesso, tempera, gilding, cutout. At the ends there are traces of nails that secured a metal cover.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Private collection S. Ratnikov, Moscow.

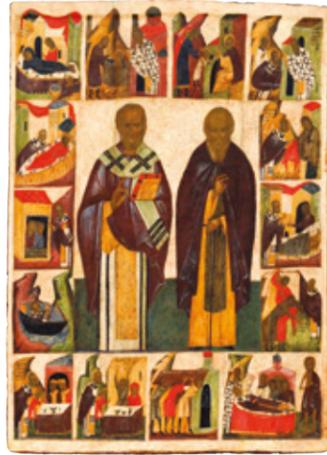
In collection since 2017.

CONSERVATION BY

N. Timofeev (The Grabar Art Conservation Center), 2018.

This icon belongs to the type of The Virgin Hodegetria, later called Gruzinskaya (of Georgia), which was widespread in the Novgorod region. This style is found in several dozen works in public museums and private collections. Most of them, regardless of their origin (from urban churches or remote areas) boast great artistry, which gives reason to think that they could be painted in the eparchial workshop of St Sophia Cathedral. However, many surviving icons originate from the time of Archbishops Macarius and Theodosius, the second quarter – the middle of the XVI century, and the best icons of this period are now in the Russian Museum collection. They are large church icons, designed to be placed in the tier of a local iconostasis, to the left of the Royal Doors. The works are distinguished by the unusual stability of their composition: Mary holds the Infant, half-turned toward her, sitting in her left arm; Jesus has his legs crossed with his right foot raised, exposing it from under the folds of his cloak. The most important feature of this icon type is the way the folds of the Virgin's robes are depicted, lying on top of the blue cap and dramatically coming down from Her head so that the triangle of the blue chiton is left open on the chest and the wide coloured lapels are symmetrically bent back so their undersides are visible. All icons of this type reproduce the compositional scheme almost unchanged, which indicates a single reference piece, most likely a glorified and revered sacred icon, which became the source of numerous replicas and copies. Most likely, they go back to the icon of St. Sophia Cathedral, Our Lady of Korsun, mentioned in the 1438 chronicle story about the Acolyte Aaron's wonderful vision of 'long dead' Novgorod bishops, who prayed for a long time before this miraculous icon.

This work from G. Tatintsian's collection occupies a very special place among these numerous artefacts, being one of the most outstanding and earliest examples of this tradition, which confirms the ancient origin of the iconography. The style allows one to date it to around 1500 (or the very beginning of the XVI century), which explains the elongation of the Virgin's figure, Her elegant proportions, and the unique ethereal feeling of space, all features characteristic of the Dionisius era. The refined colour combination of emerald green and cherry, along with the graphics of the colourful, decorative robes, exemplary of the Novgorod style, endow this work with the great artistry that allows us to confidently deem it a great example of ancient Russian icon painting.



ICON OF ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDER- WORKER AND SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS WITH THE SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ST. NICHOLAS AND THE IMAGE OF MARY OF EGYPT

1360–1380s (1362 ?), Moscow

88,7 x 63,3 x 2,7 (3,3) cm

Wood (linden), board in three parts, double ark, gesso, linen, tempera, gilding, two non-through (late) dowers. Traces of ancient non-through dowers on wooden pins.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Private collection, Russia.

In collection since 2014–2015.

EXHIBITIONS

The Central Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Culture and Art. Exposition 2014–15.

EXPERTISE

L. Lipschitz – Head of the Department of Ancient Russian Art, State Institute of Art Studies of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation – expert opinion.

3 pages. 28.07.2014

G. Popov – expert opinion, 2 pages. 03.04.2014

CONSERVATION BY

S. Ratnikov, The Central Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Culture and Art.

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PANEL ICONS ORDER

1. The birth of Nicholas;
2. The baptism of Nicholas;
3. Nicholas brought for education;
4. The consecration of Nicholas as deacon and bishop;
5. The appearance of Nicholas in dream to Constantine;
6. Nicholas returns the carpet to a wife;
7. Appearance to tree men in prison;
8. Healing the possessed man;
9. Deliverance of the ship from the flood;
10. Nicholas rescues three men condemned to execution;
- 11–12. The miracle of Vasily, the son of Agric;
13. The translation of the relics of St. Nicholas;
14. The death of St. Nicholas.

The icon is an outstanding example of ancient Russian iconography, distinct in its unique iconographic and artistic design. The centre is a double 'portrait' of St Nicholas the Wonderworker and St John Climacus, which may testify to the fact that the icon originated in the temple dedicated to those same Saints. Such combinations were typical for the Moscow churches that were erected in the XIV century in honour of the patron Great Prince Ivan Kalita. The image of Mary of Egypt, which unexpectedly completes the margin cycle, may also be related to the Moscow princely family. She was, for example, the patron saint of the holy wife of the Grand Prince's son, Andrei Ivanovich. She died in 1390, having built a church in Moscow to honour this hermitess. The famous Sretensky Monastery was later founded on that very spot. St Nicholas' life story also stands out. It suggests that the icon hung in a chapel or a church of his name. A number of scenes feature close parallels with the side compositions of the Ugresha Monastery icon, 1380–90 (State Tretyakov Gallery), which indicates that the icon followed Moscow iconography traditions. The combination of the images of St Nicholas of Myra and John Climacus, the Abbot of the Sinai Monastery and the author of the book *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, a guide to monastic life, confirms that the icon was created in the era of Sergius of Radonezh, when the Russian monastic culture was flourishing. In this respect, the work is also of **exceptional interest**.

The highly individual compositional techniques with massive slightly angular laconic figures brought to the fore and endowed with direct, sometimes expressive poses and gestures, wide planes of architecture and the dynamic construction of multi-coloured hills, allow us to date the icon to 1370–1380. The Moscow icon-painting of these decades shows loose brushwork on the faces with open multi-coloured paint strokes and the use of a transparent coloured glaze which makes the colours movable and lightweight. Analysis of the inscriptions confirms the dating established by the painting style analysis. Some inscriptions survived, and they are of particular interest to Russian palaeographers. Despite the complex preservation of the painting, which underwent antique restoration many times, the work plays a very important role in the history of ancient Russian art, filling a gap in what we know about the iconography of the third quarter of the XIV century. It was antecedent to the most important icons of the following decades, i.e. the church icon from the Pokrovsky Monastery in Suzdal and the hagiographical icon of St Nicholas from the Ugresha Monastery (both in the State Tretyakov Gallery).



THE MIRACLE OF ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

Last quarter – end 15th century. Middle Rus' (Rostov)

84,7 x 68,7 cm

Wood (fir), two boards, two narrow cut-in dowels, sloping ark, whole linen, gesso, tempera.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Until 1930 – collection of State Tretyakov Gallery (Label N 452 and painted inventory number – 14735 on verso).

From 1930 – collection of George R. Hann, USA.

1980 – Christie's, The George R. Hann collection sale.

In collection since 2005 (Germany).

EXHIBITIONS

The century Club, 1940–1941. No 12.

Carnegie Institute, 1944. No 20.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1945.

The St. Louis Art Museum, 1945.

Russian Icon masterpieces XIV–XVI, from private collections. Moscow. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, 18 February–19 April 2009.

PUBLICATIONS

Skrobucha, 1961. p. 36 (Pl.).

The George R. Hann Collection, 1980. N. 81. P. 170. Pl., p. 171.

The century Club, 1940–1941. No 12.

Carnegie Institute, 1944. No 20.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1945.

The St. Louis Art Museum, 1945.

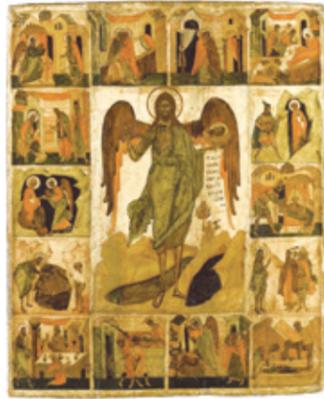
Russian Icon masterpieces XIV–XVI, from private collections. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. 18 February–19 April 2009. Exhibition Catalogue. Author I. Shalina. Moscow, 2009. № 36. pp. 202–205.

CONSERVATION BY

S. Vorobyev, 2007.

Until the 1930s this icon belonged to the Tretyakov Gallery collection, and then it was purchased for the collection of George Hann (USA), and went through a few American auctions after his death. It was purchased by the owner of this collection in 2005 at a Christie's auction. There is no information about the first time it was restored, although perhaps it was in the 1920s in the Soviet Central State Restoration Workshops. The latest restoration was performed by S. Vorobyev in 2006. On the back

of the panel there are the two inventory numbers written in oil paint at the bottom: П 5683/40 ГТГ (in white) and 14735 (in red); at the top there is a sticker with the number c / 18907. Though the story of the Miracle of St. George and the Dragon was extremely popular in ancient Russia, this icon can be appropriately be called unique because it features a special combination of artistic features. **First of all, it is one of the largest early icons, which clearly belonged to one of St. George's churches, which explains the choice of its simple yet meaningful manner, and its special design. In terms of painting technique, this work is a vivid example of Russian iconography with its extremely clear composition, laconic and refined form and open colour palette, which harmoniously blend in with the flexibility of the lines and the image's spirituality. This piece can serve as one of the best examples of Russian iconography as a genre.** The object's history is complex: once part of the Tretyakov Gallery collection, in the 1930s it was purchased for the famous collection of George Hann (USA), **and after a number of sales it finally made its way into one of the most prominent XXI century icon collections.** The object's complicated history is testimony to significance. Such succinct iconography is found in a number of icons of the second half and the end of the XV century. They clearly originate from the same reference, since not only the overall layout is replicated, but also the details. The closest analogy is a more recent icon from the collection of A.V. Morozov, which seems to date to the first third of the XVI century (State Tretyakov Gallery). Its composition includes several unique features: a rare positioning of the dragon with its body wrapped around the horse's leg and one of the horse's hooves stepping on it, the horse's tail is tied in a complex knot with three strands, and a peculiarly shaped cinnabar saddle with symmetrically raised bows. It is clearly a more complex version of its earlier predecessors. Special attention should be given to the rare detail of St. George's armour and the richly decorated harness on the snow-white horse. The high cinnabar saddle is also painted in detail with bows symmetrically raised in the front and the back, spiral cushions, a sweat flap and a yellow saddle cloth with pearl decorations, a long cinnabar belts with star and disk-like pendants and girths which tightly cover the horse's rump and chest. **It is obvious that the author was creating an original composition and did not use a ready-made sample.** A light and agile, almost flying, graphic foundation image adds a touch of sketch-like quality to the traditional rigid composition. This is the icon's most prominent artistic feature. The painting seems to recede into the background, giving way to a confident preliminary drawing applied with wide brush strokes, translucent under a thin layer of paint. The silhouette of George is gently outlined. A single line runs along his wide sloping shoulders to his long arms and small delicate hands. **Judging by the remaining fragment, the stone Saint George sculpture from the Spasskaya tower of the Moscow Kremlin (1464) from V. Ermolin's workshop (State Tretyakov Gallery) also shared the same linearity in the arms.** The agile and fast drawing of the horse stands out, as it does not have any analogies in any ancient Russian painting: an elongated body with a small, expressively bowed head, sharp protruding ears and detailed mane, contours of long and gracious legs with thin hoofs majestically stepping on the monster's body, and especially beautiful, lovingly arranged strands of tail hair tied into an elaborate, complex knot. The author does not use a golden background. He follows the Rostov technique, emphasizing the beauty of the converging yellowish-brown and ochre-pink combinations, muted cinnabar shades and special role of grey-blue colours, which played an exceptionally greater role in the author's design than can be seen today. Deliberately decorative, graphic-based painting, with lightly applied delicate shades and semi-transparent paints of sonorous blue or green can be found in a very wide range of icons of the late fifteenth century, from both Moscow and Central Russian traditions. But for all the analogies, even the closest ones, the artistic properties of this icon from G. Tatintian's collection are so unique and individual that this work cannot be confined to any particular tradition of iconography.



JOHN THE BAPTIST, ANGEL OF THE DESERT, WITH 14 SCENES FROM HIS LIFE

Last quarter 15th century, Middle Rus'

90,5 x 74,5 cm

Wood, boards, dowels, double ark, gesso, linen,
tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Sold from the collection of State Tretyakov Gallery in 1934 through 'Art Antiques' (USSR Central Collection Warehouse). On verso: «Mosgostorg» label and «Art Antiques». Invoice N d-408.

From 1930 – collection of George R. Hann, USA.

1980 – Christie's. The George R. Hann Collection sale.
Lot № 77).

In collection since 2005.

EXHIBITIONS

Russian Icons: New York. The Century Club, 1940–1941. Collection of George R. Hann: Pittsburgh. Carnegie Institute, 1944, N 14. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1945.

PUBLICATIONS

H. Gaul. A Memorable Icon Exhibition Hangs at Carnegie Institute // The Musical Forecast. February, 1944. P. 5.

The George R. Hann Collection. Pt 1: Russian Icons, Ecclesiastical and secular Works of Art, Embroidery, Silver, Porcelain and Malachite. Christie, New York, 1980. Lot № 77. P. 164–165.

Sold treasures. The history of the sale of national art treasures, confiscated from royal families, the church, private owners, and withdrawn from museum collections of the USSR from 1918–1937. M., 2000. pp. 64–65, 68–69 (dated the first half of 16th century).

CONSERVATION BY

N. Timofeev (The Grabar Art Conservation Center), 2009.

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PANEL ICONS ORDER

1. The appearance of the Archangel Gabriel in the Jerusalem temple to the priest Zechariah with the news of the birth of his son, the future prophet John;
2. The meeting of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Conception of John the Baptist);
3. The meeting of Mary and Elizabeth;
4. The Nativity of John the Baptist;
5. Stunned by the dumb Zechariah writes the name of his son on the tablet;
6. Elizabeth with baby John is hiding in the rock;
7. The appearance of an angel in Elizabeth in the desert;
8. The death of Zechariah;
9. Baptism of the Judean People (Cathedral of St John the Baptist);
10. Sermon of John the Baptist;
11. The feast of Herod, the exposure of King Herod by John the Baptist;
12. Beheading of John the Baptist. Salome's offering of the head of John the Baptist;
13. The punishment of King Herod's family by the Archangel;
14. The burial of the body of St John the Baptist, the worship of the angels of his remains. The first finding of the head of John the Baptist.

This unique hagiographic image of John the Baptist is the most ancient Russian icon on this subject. The famous icon of the turn of XIV–XV centuries from the Church of John the Baptist Conception (Gorodishche village near Kolomna, now in the State Tretyakov Gallery) has a similar central image of the Prophet, but the original side scenes did not survive and were repainted in the XVIII century. The earliest remaining similar works date to the second quarter – the middle of the XVI century. **In this respect, this icon holds a very special place in the history of Russian art, as it is the first example of the Prophet's hagiographic cycle in easel painting.** The iconography of St. John the Baptist, the Angel of the Desert, emerged in Byzantine art and appeared in ancient Russian iconography for the first time in the aforementioned Kolomna icon. However, this image is the first to feature the Prophet's head on a platter, which St. John is holding together with the traditional unfolded scroll, the text of his penitent prayer. The hagiographic cycle shows rare originality and includes unique scenes, absent even from later examples. The subdued colours in brown, green and pale red halftones; the elongated figures of elegant proportions; the rich architectural background with complex spatial design; as well as dense painting on the faces with a light brown carnation and flashes of white all testify that the artist was referencing the techniques of late Palaiologos paintings. The picturesque softness and refined character of the image clearly testify that it was painted as a church icon for one of the St. John the Baptist cathedrals. The painting style indicates that the author was of Central Russian or Moscow origin, but the work's artistic style is very unique and does not have any direct analogies among any surviving icons. Its special status is further supported by the complicated history of the object, which was part of the Tretyakov Gallery collection until the 1930s. As a result of the Soviet sale of cultural heritage, it found its way into the largest foreign collection of George Hann and was repeatedly exhibited in the USA. The work can be seen among the icons that had just been sold in the famous photograph from the New Michael Palace in St. Petersburg, where the Antiques exhibition hall was located at that time.



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, ICON FROM THE FEASTS TIER OF ICONOSTASIS

End 15th century. Middle Rus'

61,5 x 47 cm

Wood (pine?), dowels, two boards, ark, linen, gesso, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Sotheby's 1990s. Temple Gallery, London. Collection of Andreas Ritzos and Paul Lisitsin (England).

In collection since 2014.

EXHIBITIONS

Masterpieces of Early Christian Art and Icons,
The Temple Gallery, London, 2005.

PUBLICATIONS

Catalogue - Masterpieces of Early Christian Art and Icons, The Temple Gallery, London, 2005. ill. No. 12 (pp. 62-63).

This icon shows one version of the Passions that was widespread in fifteenth-century art. Examples of this iconography can be found both from Moscow (the iconostasis of the Trinity Cathedral in the Trinity-Sergius Monastery, 1425), and Novgorod (a panel from the St Sophia Menologium, an icon from B. Rockefeller's collection in the Museum of Banca Intesa). This version was used in some feast icons of the turn of the XV century – the first third of the XVI century, originating from the Vologda churches (from the collection of I. S. Ostroukhov, State Tretyakov Gallery). This composition significantly differs from other, rarer iconography of the scene, also found in works of the same time period (icons from the Feasts tiers of the iconostasis, the Assumption Cathedral of the Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery, 1497; the Vedenskaya Church of the Kornilievo-Komelsky monastery of the 1520s; the Vologda Museum, an icon from a private collection in Oslo). Its unique features include the stooping young John, highlighted in the foreground supporting the legs of Christ, helping Nicodemus remove the nails from the Saviour's feet. Numerous wives surround the scene, while Joseph of Arimathea reverently removes Jesus' heavily deformed body from the cross. The Virgin is seen on a raised platform bowing over her dead Son, which likens the scene to the next episode, the Lamentation of Christ. This impression is reinforced by the tragic gesture of the Mother as she kneels for a last kiss. It is possible that, although it was created by Central Russian artists, this icon belonged to the iconostasis of the cathedral of one of the most famous Northern monasteries, as they had become local centres at the time and gathered the best artwork. **Even among all the famous works on this subject, this icon stands out in its rare artistic qualities.** The superbly picturesque, complex composition consists of several figures in a single group, unified by a moving, flexible line that forms a common silhouette. Deep shining colours resemble faceted jewels on a rich gold background. The shimmering effect of each form is emphasized by the restless rhythm of glowing white highlights and it endows the icon with poignant expressivity and the sublime emotional state of the ongoing drama. The outstanding painting of the faces with the hair-thin lines of the features and contours reveals the author's original touch. This technique was used during the era of Dionisius.



THE PROPHET ILYA IN THE DESERT, IN VITA IN 14 SCENES

First third 16th century. Great Ustyug

95 x 71 x 3,5 cm

Wood, two boards, two sunk dowels, ark, linen, gesso, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

1980 – Private collection, Italy.

In collection since 2007.

PANEL ICONS ORDER

1. Ilya's Nativity; The angels show a fire-worn child, predicting the miraculous birth of a prophet;
2. The father of the child, Sawah, tells the Jerusalem priest about his vision;
3. The prophet Ilya convicts King Ahab of the corruption of Israel;
4. The prophet Ilya fasted in the desert for 40 days;
5. Ilya meets Sarepta widow;
6. Resurrection of the widow's son;
7. The prophet Ilya predicts the drought to King Ahab;
8. The exposure of King Ahab;
9. The sacrifice of priests on Mount Carmel;
10. The sacrifice of the prophet Ilya on Mount Carmel;
11. Ilya stabs the prophets of Baal at the stream of Kisson river;
12. Ilya hears the voice of God in desert;
13. The anointing of the prophet Elisha by Ilya;
14. The fiery ascension of the prophet Ilya.

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This church icon, painted for one of St. Ilya Churches, is one of the earliest and rarest hagiographic images of the Old Testament prophet. Extant images of St Ilya with scenes of his life are rare and, with the exception of three or four works, they are all from the middle or second half of the XVI century. Works of this period are rare, which gives even greater importance to this newly found icon. All the fourteen scenes are unique. They date back to some earlier and unknown sources. A number of them are devoted to the confrontation between the Prophet Ilya and King Ahab, which is rare, even for the most detailed cycles. Images of the prophet's stay in the desert and the dialogue-dispute are dominant. Images of the Saint's actions and miracles are minimized, which points to some ideology, perhaps associated with the monastic environment. Just as remarkable is the work's painting technique that ties it to Ustug in the beginning of the XVI century. Other signs of this time period include the laconic scenes; the predominance of pink and brown colours; dynamic blue spots of ultramarine contrasted with burning red; and the bright white ornamentation on the clothes, found in a number of icons from the collection of the Veliky Ustug Museum Reserve. The author's individuality is evident in the soft faces, modelled almost in two layers of different shades of brown; the manner accentuated scenic beauty; and the use of a confident, precise drawing technique. **There are but few surviving early Veliky Ustug works and thus we do not fully understand the local art. In this regard, this icon is an important link for the further study of this centre's iconography.**



RESURRECTION – THE DESCENT TO HELL

Early 16th century (1520s). Moscow (?)

29,5 x 23,2 cm

Wood, solid board, dowels, ark, linen, gesso, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Sotheby's, 1992, lot N° 95.

Collection of Morsink Icon Gallery, Amsterdam
(Jan Morsink Ikonen).

In collection since 2015.

PUBLICATIONS

Sotheby's catalogue 1992, p. 60, N° 95.

This icon belongs to a rare sixteenth-century iconographic series which features the frontal figure of Christ with Adam and Eve symmetrically positioned at His sides. At that time the Moscow version was much more popular with the Saviour leaning to the left, extending His hand to the Forefather. The composition follows the pattern used by Dionisius in the church image for the Cathedral of the Ferapontov Monastery (c. 1490). In both pieces, Christ is dressed in golden clothes and He raises the Adam and Eva from their graves, holding their hands. The mandorla is blue, but of a different almond-like shape, the eyes of Jesus are looking in another direction, and instead of elaborate scenes of hell only a bound Satan remains. As this analogion icon is laconic, the number of Old Testament Saints is reduced, their positions are different and their gestures are simpler. The position of the Saviour and a similar composition are found on the Rostov icon of Chernokulovo village (Vladimir-Suzdal Museum-Reserve) painted in the last quarter of the XV century. In general, the composition is very similar to the Novgorod icon of the 1558 iconostasis from the Church of Peter and Paul in Kozhevniky (Novgorod State Museum), which indicates a fairly wide reach of this rare series. However, there are a number of unique features in this palm-sized icon which clearly served for private prayer. Some of the unique details are the book in Moses' hands with the text on the cover, which is reminiscent of the Tables of the Law, and the open scroll with the words of Solomon's prophecy held by the young king.

Though the painting style is close to Novgorod art of the beginning of Macarius' time, the painting of the faces, the poetization of images, the colour combinations, the attempt at creating three-dimensional sculptural figures, and especially the active use of fluid flaring lights on the faces and clothes, to a greater extent allows one to assume the work is of Moscow origin. Similar colours, including pink hills with rich cinnabar and green tones, are found among the icons of ancient Dmitrov, which was considered a major art centre in the first third of the XVI century, as the local aristocracy would commission works from Moscow artists.



THE MIRACLE OF ARCHANGEL MICHAEL WITH FLORUS AND LAURUS

First third 16th century. Great Ustyug (?)

58,5 x 51 cm

Wood, three boards, two overhead sunk dowels, ark, linen, gesso, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

Sotheby's 15 Dec 1993, lot 243.

Private collection, London.

Collection of I. Samarina, London.

In collection since 2007.

PUBLICATIONS

Catalogue. Sotheby's 15 Dec 1993, lot 243.

This small icon, probably part of the interior of a wooden chapel, is dedicated to a common subject of the Northern regions: the martyrs Florus and Laurus, who were specially venerated there and were considered to be patrons of horses. However, the composition does not have any close analogies among other artworks. This icon omits the most traditional motif where Archangel Michael passes the reins of two saddled horses of different breeds to Florus and Laurus. The raised outstretched wings of the Archangel are a visualization of the words from the church service addressed to the Archangel: 'cover us with the shelter of your wings', which is a testament to the protective function of St. Michael. As per tradition, the lower part features three martyr brothers: Speusippus, Eleusippus and Meleusippus, saints revered by horsekeepers in Rus, as they drive a herd of horses entrusted to their patronage to drink water. At the same time, their location in the composition and enlarged figures are unusual and, unlike the upper composition, which embodies strength and balance which is emphasized by the arched wall that embraces the composition, the images of the three martyr brothers are full of movement. They are graceful and even poetic. They are riding horses of different breeds, which are complemented by the colour combinations of the other horses in the herd, characterized by their flowing and elegant depiction. The dense impenetrable gold and the delicate combinations of pink and light green with contrasting rich blue and red colours are reminiscent of some early icons from Veliky Ustug. **On account of the popularity of this scene among icon painting connoisseurs, the extremely high quality of the painting, and the rarity of extant icons from this painting centre, this work deserves special recognition.**



RESURRECTION – THE DESCENT TO HELL

Second quarter 16th century (1520–1530s). Novgorod

84 x 60,5 cm

Wood (linden), board in two parts, two sunk counter dowels, ark, gesso, linen, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

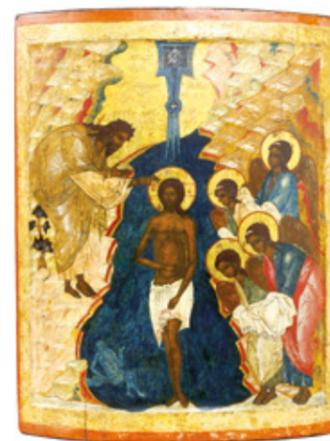
Undefined origin.

Sotheby's 15th Dec 1993, lot 199.

Until 2014 – collection of Jorge Osvaldo Galante, Chicago.

In collection since 2015.

This icon was part of the Feasts tier of quite a large iconostasis. The composition emerged in Russian art in the early fifteenth century and was known both in Moscow and Novgorod. The oldest surviving icon of this subject is from Tikhvin (State Russian Museum). From the second half of XV century throughout the XVI century this version was widely used for the Feasts tiers of Novgorod churches. This iconography appears in G. Tatintian's collection, dating back to the image of the Assumption Church in Volotov from the third quarter of the XV century (Novgorod Museum). The artist repeated the same pattern, while adding new features, more characteristic for the Macarius era. While the multi-layered round 'glory' is preserved, the large cross in the hands of the Saviour was omitted. The rocky hills also acquire a new look, seen both in the background and in the opening of the infernal abyss – a detail found in a number of Novgorod pieces. Local traditions are apparent in the bold colours, especially the colours of the clothes. While the icon is highly picturesque, the calligraphic graphics play a more important role, i.e. the unifying silhouettes, the geometrically precise lines of the drapery of the clothes, the long stalks of plants and the precisely calculated circumference of the halos. Original drawings and attention to a graphic foundation became characteristic of Novgorod iconography during Archdiocese of Macarius, who was archbishop from 1526 to 1542. During this time, the interiors of urban and village churches were renovated to include tall iconostases with lavish Feasts tiers. This icon seems to have belonged to one of them. **Judging by the nature of painting of the faces, the 'trickling' hill slopes, and the colour combinations, this icon can be attributed to the earliest years of Macarius' time, which makes it one of the rarest surviving pieces of its kind.**



EPIPHANY, FROM THE FEASTS TIER OF THE ICONOSTASIS

Second quarter 16th century. Arkhangelsk lands

75 x 62 cm

Wood (linden), board in two parts, two sunk counter dowels, ark, gesso, linen, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Brought from Vologda region.

Until 1976 – collection of S. Vorobyev.

Private collection, London.

In collection since 2014.

EXHIBITIONS

Old Russian painting. New discoveries (from private collections). Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Art, Moscow, 1975.

PUBLICATIONS

Old Russian painting. New discoveries (from private collections). Andrey Rublev Museum of Ancient Russian Art, Moscow. Exhibition catalogue. Moscow, 1975/ A. Loginova. Moscow, 1975. Cat. № 47.

CONSERVATION BY

1970. K. Sheikman (The Grabar Art Conservation Center).

This iconography was used in all the Moscow Feasts icons of the Rublev circle in the first quarter of the XV century. It includes an en face image of Christ girded in the waters of the River Jordan, the same positions and gestures of the four angels, the unique composition of the hills, and the outline of the Jordan River. The closest analogy to this piece from G. Tatintian's collection is the Feast icon of the Kashin iconostasis (1430s), which also features the figure of John the Baptist gently bent over, positioned high in the composition. The painting of the Prophet's clothes is very similar, even to smallest details. **The rare features of this work include the earth under the Saviour's feet, that dates back to the Rublev icon of the Feasts tier of the Assumption Cathedral in Vladimir (1410), where the hills come together at the bottom of the centrepiece, but that piece also includes the traditional depiction of Jesus standing in the river.**

The bright and very distinctive features of this painting imply that it was part of one of the largest iconostases of the Arkhangelsk region. This attribution is evidenced by a very light colour palette of diluted paints dominated by semitones of pale blue, yellow, and green, with dynamic flashes of colour on the hills. The graphic basis on the composition is accurate and laconic. The image follows the traditions of Novgorod art from the second quarter of the XVI century. The same can be said about the abundant white spaces on the clothes, but the general lyrical state of this poetic image resembles works of the Rostov circle of an earlier time. This combination of different stylistic components and a highly individual painting styl, as well as the bright expressiveness of the face, are inherent to the art of the North, especially from Arkhangelsk, which became a major economic and artistic centre of Russia in the XVI century. **As only a small number of early works from this region have survived, this icon is of special importance, worthy to be exhibited in a museum.**



ROYAL DOORS. THE ANNUNCIATION AND THE EVANGELISTS

1540s – circa middle of 16th century. Novgorod

175 x 96 x 8 cm (size of both folds).

Wood, gesso, carving, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Comes from the iconostasis of the Church of the Great Martyr Dimitry Solunsky in Old Ladoga.

1930s – sold by government to the West through 'Antiques'.

1970s – auction in Athens (Greece).

1988–1992 – Private collection, Germany.

1993–2012 – Private collection, Cyprus.

In collection since 2012.

PUBLICATIONS

[http://russianartconsultancy.com/pictures/viewer\\$177.html](http://russianartconsultancy.com/pictures/viewer$177.html) (identified as a Moscow monument of the middle of the XVI centuries).

Art of Novgorod. Epoch of Saint Macarius / I. Shalina. Saint-Petersburg, 2016. pp. 122–123. Cat. № 75. Il. 140–142

A. Preobragensky. Attributive notes on some icons of the XVI century from Russian and foreign collections // Ancient Russian art. Byzantine world: regional traditions in artistic culture and problems of their study. To the anniversary of E. Smirnova. Moscow, 2017. pp. 344–346.

CONSERVATION BY

Prerevolutionary conservation

EXPERTISE

A. Preobragensky, 2014

These monumental Royal Doors are a perfect example of Novgorod art of the 1540s. They were created by the leading artisans of Archbishop Macarius' circle (1526–1542). The highest quality of painting and its unique design show that this icon was part of the quintessential, elitist iconography of the second quarter of the XVI century.

Though the piece originates in a small wooden Church of the great martyr Demetrios of Thessaloniki in the fortress of Staraya Ladoga, **the doors are one of the central works of Novgorod art of the Macarius era. They were created at the peak of the last and most vivid period of artistic flourishing of the ancient centre. The Royal Doors stand out not only because of their large size, integrity and excellent preservation, but also because they are accompanied with precise information about their provenance, which is an extraordinary thing for works of this period.**

Their provenance was discovered through archival photographs (Institute of History of Material Culture, the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg), made in 1912 by photographer V. M. Mashechkin, who accompanied the famous archaeologist N.I. Repnikov in his research of the antiquity of the Novoladozhsky district (St. Petersburg Governorate). The photos of the interior of the Demetrius of Thessaloniki Church clearly show these Royal Doors with their canopy and columns still intact.

The Royal doors from G. Tatintian's collection are also unique because of the graphic programme of the folds that combines the writing Evangelists and their Holy symbols that crown every scene. **This is one of the earliest, if not the earliest example of such a composition**, very characteristic of the era of Archbishop Macarius. Macarius was famous for initiating innovations in ancient Russian iconography at the time of Ivan the Terrible. The artistic features of the work are typical of Novgorod art of the 1540s: striking compositions with an intricate architectural background, expressive forms, and emotional characters. However, its main feature is its exquisite, artistically whimsical calligraphic techniques of drawing. It plays a big role in the design of forms, which reveals the genetic relationship of this style with the art of book miniatures. This monument is akin to other famous icons like The Virgin of Mercy, fragments of the North altar gate from N.P. Likhachev's collection (State Russian Museum). This icon is extremely similar to these and other famous works of the Macarius circle, which is evidenced by the colour palette of the Royal Doors, the combinations of bright dynamic, almost enamel, dense colours and a complex translucent tonal glaze on the garments.



NATIVITY OF MOTHER OF GOD, FROM THE FEASTS TIER OF THE ICONOSTASIS

1520s. Vologda

78 x 56,5 cm

Wood, two boards, dowels, ark, linen, gesso, tempera, gilding.

PROVENANCE

Undefined origin.

1991–1992 Sotheby's.

Private collection, London.

In collection since 2014.

CONSERVATION BY

Laurence Morrocco, London, 1990s.

Judging by the size of this icon and its subject, we can say it was part of the Feasts tier of a fairly large iconostasis. The author uses rare iconography to create the traditional scenes of the Mother of God cycle. Such techniques are not found in any other early works.

The sparse and laconic composition is reduced to two virgins who came to congratulate the woman in labour, but the author retains the developed architectural staffage with large high-walled chambers painted at different angles that separate all the mise-en-scènes and highlight the fragile moving figures, painted as though they exist independent of the panel they are on. The unusually high raised bed, the naked and outstretched arms of the righteous and, especially, the posture of the Anna, as she is seated, are unusual, as in all other icons she is supported by one of her maids on the left.

The colour palette is also original, with concentrated blues and greens, rich yellows and large sections of white and brown. The noticeable mobility and lightness of the painted surface is achieved through the white and coloured draperies of the clothes. The piece vibrates and moves, which only emphasizes the individual style of the artist. The painting techniques used on the faces, with abundant thick pink ochre, are executed just as skilfully. The author tends to paint faces in profile with unusually large features, emphasized by wide contours. This icon is rare in style and in old times it was decorated with a rich silver frame (as is evidenced by markings of nails). It allows us to expand our understanding of the complex history of the local iconography traditions. It represents an artistic trend which can be confidently traced back to the Vologda region.



ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATED ON VELLUM

**A fragment from a Gospel Book, in Armenian,
illuminated manuscript on vellum**

[?Constantinople], 1675

110 x 90 mm

PROVENANCE

A colophon facing the miniature of the Crucifixion dates the manuscript to 1675.

Hubert de Ganay.

Christie's - Bibliothèque de Martine de Béhague et des comtes de Ganay - Première partie SALE 18470^ PARIS,
26 November 2019, Lot 11

Private collection

iii + 20 + iii leaves, 2 columns of 23 lines in bologir, 10 full-page miniatures, table of Canons with 8 illuminated headers and columns decorated with trees, animals and birds, 3 illuminations at the head of the Gospels and the Letter from Eusebius to Carpian, 7 pp. with flamboyant decoration on the edge (fragment: most of the text is missing and probably many miniatures; the leaves remain bound in disorder, except for the Canons, marginal spots, some loss of gold and pigment). Modern binding signed «G. Mercier Sr of his father - 1920»: lavallière morocco, back to nerves.



THE FOUR GOSPELS, IN ARMENIAN

Armenia (Havuts Tar Monastery)
Dated 1471
Manuscript on paper
4to (185 x 140mm.)

PROVENANCE

1. There are two colophons: the first records that the book was written and decorated by Stephanos "abegha" (monk) at the monastery of Havuts Tar, in the year 920 of the Armenian Era (i.e. 1471 CE), bound by Yovhannes "abegha", monk, and that it was owned by Stephanos, a priest;
2. The second (written by Martiros "yerets") mentions the acquisition of the manuscript by Murad in 1121 (1672 CE).
3. Boisgirard-Antonini, Paris, Arts d'Orient, 14 February 2002, lot 291 (with description loosely inserted).

In collection since Decembe 2018, through Sotheby's. Lot 22 (Music, Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts and Continental Books)



SHARAKNOTS (OR BOOKS OF HYMNS FROM THE ARMENIAN CHURCH)

Painted by Arak'el of Geghama
Armenia, Erzerum
Late 16th century
120 x 71 mm; ink, tempera and gold on parchment; 364 folios

PROVENANCE

Acquired in Lahore (an important Armenian commercial centre)
NOTE: A handwritten note from the first half of the 20th century in French is included in the manuscript on a notecard: 'I bought the manuscript in Lahore at the museum, in the section reserved for private individuals, who exhibit items or curiosities with prices that they want to get rid of; when I was there, this manuscript was up for sale.' (The note is probably for Henri Scrive)
Henri Scrive, Lille
Private collection, France
In collection since February 2019



EVANGÉLIAIRE (TÉTRAÉVANGILE)

En arménien, manuscrit enluminé sur papier oriental
Turquie [Vaspourakan ?]

Late 16th or early 17th century

Dimensions: 130 x 175 mm
Avec 20 miniatures à pleine page.

401 ff., quelques manques en fin de manuscrit, écriture cursive du type "bolorgir", texte sur deux colonnes (justification : 90 x 125 mm), réglure à la pointe sèche, rubriques en rouge, initiales peintes en vert pâle et rouge, plus grandes initiales aquarellées (teintes de rose, d'orangé et de vert) avec têtes, figures grotesques et bestiaire, 20 grandes miniatures à pleine page (gouache et aquarelle). Mentions de copiste indiquées sur des signets en traduction française (fol. 142v : "Souvenez-vous en vos prières de moi, le pecheur Hohanes"; fol. 327 : "Souvenez-vous du scribe Hohanes et que Dieu se souvienne de vous"; fol. 338 : "Souviens-toi de moi le pecheur Hohanes"). Reliure traditionnelle arménienne estampée à froid avec au plat supérieur trace d'une croix fixée (lacunaire) dans un encadrement de motifs tressés avec fleurons et au plat inférieur un rectangle rempli de motifs entrelacés, traces d'attaches (lacunaires), rabat en cuir (accidenté) [par certains motifs, cette reliure est à rapprocher du type trouvé par exemple sur Paris, BnF, manuscrit arménien 23]. Reliure fatiguée et accidentée mais néanmoins d'origine; quelques feuillets en fin de manuscrit accidentés avec perte de texte; un feuillet détaché (fol. 46), mouillures, peinture parfois effacée mais couleurs toujours vives.

HYMNAIRE

En arménien, manuscrit enluminé sur parchemin
Turquie, Khisan (Vaspourakan)

14th century

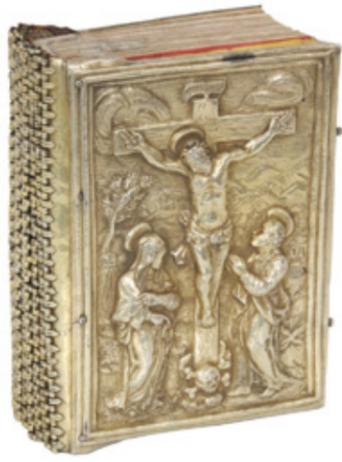
Dimensions: 75 x 110 mm

PROVENANCE

Collection du Docteur Jean-Michel THIERRY de
CRUSSOL des EPESSES, arménologue. (1916-2011)

Experts: Monsieur Jacques Benelli et Madame Ariane Adeline.

277 ff., sans doute quelques manques, écriture cursive du type "bolorgir", texte sur une seule colonne (justification: 45 x 75 mm), initiales ornées de fleurs ou historiées, certaines avec bestiaire, volucraire ou créatures zoomorphes, d'autres représentant des scènes identifiables (musicien (fol. 13); Jonas dévoré par le poisson (fol. 50v); Georges terrassant le dragon (fol. 68v); Adam cueillant le fruit de l'Arbre interdit (fol. 90); Vierge ou sainte (fol. 199v); Christ bénissant (fol. 205v); ange (fol. 232v); moine bénissant (fol. 234v), une grande miniature à pleine page au verso du fol. 2 (Vierge à l'enfant avec deux personnages en prière). Reliure à décor estampé à froid sur ais de carton, dos lisse (accidenté), couture à la grecque, beau décor mauresque à entrelacs et besants (Reliure du Levantin XVe siècle?). Reliure accidentée, traces d'attaches (lacunaires), néanmoins reliure ancienne fort précieuse; feuillets fragilisés par endroits, traces de mouillures, traces lie-de-vin, quelques feuillets rongés mais texte relativement préservé.



ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPT

Armenian Manuscript with silver cover

Constantinople, 16-17 century
15,2 x 11,4 x 6,3 cm

