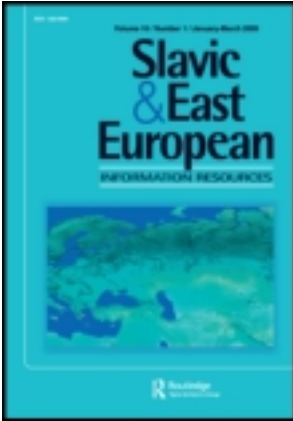


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## Slavic and Eastern European-Related Graphic Collections in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

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Version of record first published: 08 Sep 2010.

To cite this article: Helena E. Wright (2010): Slavic and Eastern European-Related Graphic Collections in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, *Slavic & East European Information Resources*, 11:2-3, 226-245

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15228886.2010.501455>

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# **Slavic and Eastern European-Related Graphic Collections in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History**

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*Works on paper depicting Russian and Eastern European subjects at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History include fine art and popular prints, photographs, posters, bookplates, sheet music, and other illustrations. This article discusses these works in the context of French influences on Russian art as well as documenting some aspects of the representation of US-Russian relations in illustrated popular media. It also describes an important group of prints and photographs in the Gustavus V. Fox Collection of Russian "souvenirs," acquired as a diplomatic gift in 1866 and donated to the Smithsonian in 1909.*

**KEYWORDS** *Franco-Russian artistic connections, Anglo-Russian artistic connections, Gustavus V. Fox Collection, National Museum of American History, Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich, icons, maps, military uniforms, sheet music, Science Service photograph collection*

## INTRODUCTION

It may seem surprising that there are Russian works in the National Museum of American History. The Museum (hereafter NMAH) is part of the Smithsonian

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This essay is based on the panel presentation "Treasure Troves' of Works on Paper for the Study of Russian and Eastern European Art and Architecture: Little-known Resources in Washington, DC," at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, November 18, 2006.

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Institution, a complex organization that encompasses the U.S. National Museum, as it was known for more than a century. The construction of separate buildings and some name changes over the years may have affected the way people think about the NMAH (formerly the Museum of History and Technology), but its collections retain a comprehensive scope that reflects important people and events in an international context. This is the function of national museums, bringing the world home to their people and reflecting their relationships to the world. Print collections and numismatic cabinets in particular comprise important international holdings in many national museums.

In the NMAH there are a number of collections relating to Russia and Eastern Europe that will be of interest to scholars in Slavic studies. Some graphic works are in the Division of Graphic Arts, the oldest public print collection in the nation, formed to represent the history and technology of printing and printmaking worldwide. Its scope encompasses all periods and countries, from Albrecht Dürer's works to digital imaging, so Russian prints are not out of place. In addition there are graphic works acquired by other divisions for their subject associations, as well as numismatic items and a group of metal icons included for their pictorial interest.

Among the religious objects in the NMAH Division of Home and Community Life are some 300 icons acquired in 1892 for their research value in religious and ethnographic studies. Many of these icons were purchased in 1891 at the annual fair in Nizhnii Novgorod by George Kunz, agent for Tiffany & Company, and they came to the Smithsonian in the following year. NMAH curator Richard Ahlborn mounted an exhibition of fifty of these icons and crosses in 1988. He and several collaborators published their work on the Russian Icon Project as a monograph in the Smithsonian Studies in History & Technology series in 1991.<sup>1</sup>

At NMAH the National Numismatic Collection holds more than 10,000 Russian coins and 1,250 medals once owned by the Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich, nephew of Tsar Alexander II. It is considered the finest collection of Russian coins outside of Russia, and it includes many rarities and pattern pieces, such as the "Beard" tokens of Peter the Great, and a prototype Constantine ruble of 1825.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will identify Slavic-related works on paper and discuss how they fit within the context of the history of the graphic arts. A number of these works have a French connection, and they represent the tradition of collaboration between French artists and Russian clients to produce artworks in many media and formats, especially painting, portraiture, and the decorative arts. Other graphic works inform the history of US-Russian relations, covering episodes such as the celebratory 1863-4 visit of the Russian fleet, the role of American mediators at the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War, and the production of joint Allied propaganda during World War II.

## GUSTAVUS VASA FOX COLLECTION

The most famous Slavic collection in NMAH is that acquired by Gustavus Vasa Fox (1821–1883) on a political mission to Russia in 1866 and donated to the Smithsonian in 1909 following his widow's death.<sup>3</sup> Fox served in the U.S. Navy from 1838 to 1856. President Lincoln named him Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the Civil War, and he went to Russia just after the war, where, it was said, he “took an active part in the negotiations that resulted in the acquisition of Alaska by the US.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this visit represented the still-clandestine early stages of these negotiations. Fox's true purpose was not announced as such, but rather it was cloaked in the guise of a more celebratory gesture to honor Alexander II's survival of an unsuccessful assassination attempt. President Andrew Johnson and the US Congress prepared messages congratulating the Tsar and his people on this fortunate escape, and Fox served as a special envoy carrying the Congressional resolution. He arrived at Kronshtadt on August 6, 1866, and was received by Tsar Alexander in St. Petersburg on August 8. He visited Moscow, Nizhnii Novgorod, Kostroma, and Tver'. At every turn he was presented with books, photographs, prints, and *objets d'art*. Due to the political nature of Fox's mission, today these works are housed in the NMAH Division of Politics and Reform.

Individual objects, like the spectacular box constructed of Siberian malachite to hold the document making Fox an honorary citizen of St. Petersburg, have been exhibited at the museum, but many other items have never been on view. Among the works on paper are three lithographic panoramas comprised of individual sheets mounted on linen, intended to be unrolled like a scroll for viewing. Two are the well-known panoramas of the north and south sides of Nevsky Prospect after the watercolors of Vasili Sadovnikov (1800–1879), lithographed by Ivanov, and published by Prévost in the early 1830s. These lively renderings present not only the monumental buildings of St. Petersburg but also complete streetscapes that convey the vitality of commerce, bustling with carriages and foot traffic, in a remarkable record of what has been called the most famous street in Russia. The NMAH copy in the Fox Collection has superb contemporary hand coloring, and it is one of only three sets in the US (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> There is also a gathering of fourteen separate prints from the panorama, uncolored, in a marbled-paper binding. A third panorama, printed with a buff background tint characteristic of early lithography, represents views of Moscow, drawn about 1850 by an unknown artist from inside the Kremlin (see Figure 2). Fox also received a series of sixteen individual black and white lithographic views of St. Petersburg, including parks and other sites beyond the main thoroughfare. *Vues de S. Petersbourg & des environs*, with titles in French and Russian, also was published about 1835 by Henri Prévost. Perhaps this smaller set, still in its original printed wrapper, was intended as a companion piece to the more elaborate Nevsky Prospect panoramas.

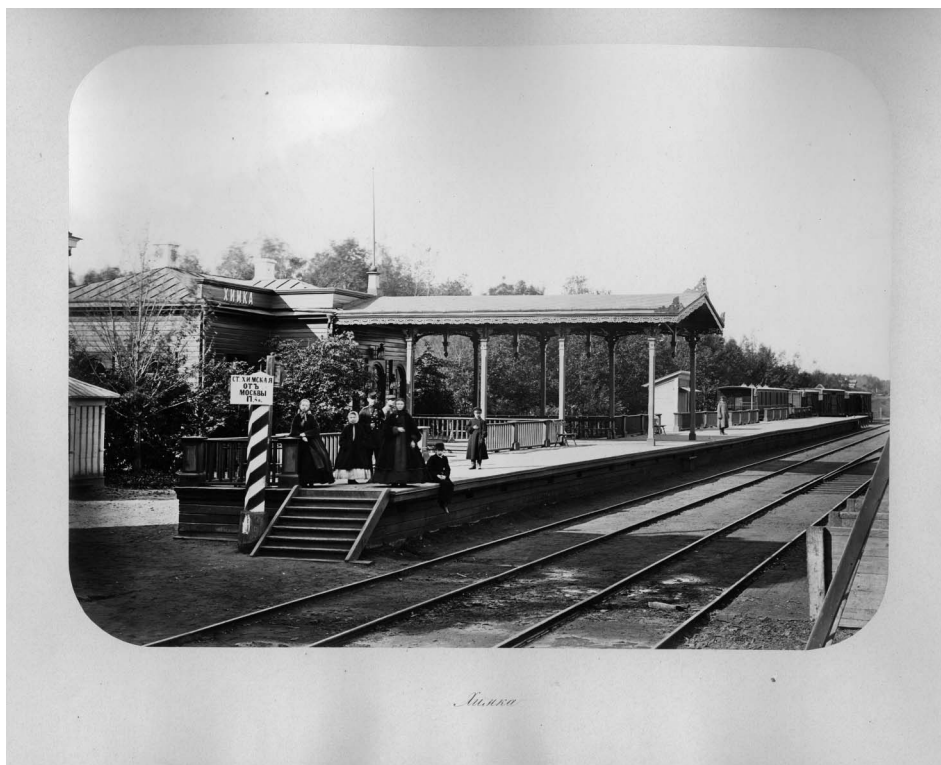


**FIGURE 1** *Vue de la Place du Palais d'Hyver*. . . [View of Winter Palace Square, section from Nevsky Prospect panorama]. Lithograph, hand colored, published by H. Prévost after V. Sadovnikov, ca. 1835. Fox Collection, Division of Politics and Reform, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.



**FIGURE 2** [Section from Moscow panorama]. Lithograph, tinted, ca. 1850? Fox Collection, Division of Politics and Reform, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

The Fox Collection includes many early photographs of Russian nobility, architecture, and landscapes. There are fifty-six mounted albumen prints, each measuring about 23.5 by 32.5 cm, documenting the Nikolaevskaia Railway between Moscow and St. Petersburg, probably made sometime during the decade after its completion in 1851 (see Figure 3).



**FIGURE 3** Khimka station on the Nikolaevskaia Railway. Photograph by I. Goffert, ca. 1866. Fox Collection, Division of Politics and Reform, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

These photographs do not appear to have been published in the West, and they may not be known to American railroad historians, even though the chief engineering consultant and virtual designer of the road was Major George Washington Whistler (1800–1849).<sup>6</sup> His knowledge and experience so impressed the Russian committee of engineers sent to investigate European and American practices that Whistler was invited by Tsar Nicholas I to consult on the construction of the line, and he worked in Russia from 1842 until his death in 1849. The American-Russian connections inherent in this project surely prompted the gift of these photographs to Fox.

Among the books are richly illustrated volumes that cover such topics as Tsar Alexander II's coronation, antiquities of the Russian Empire, an ethnographic study of the Russian people, the arms collections of Tsarskoe Selo, plans of churches, and an illustrated edition of Karamzin's history. Due to Fox's maritime background, he received numerous works on naval and yachting facilities and the Russian fisheries, and he was photographed with Admiral Lessovskii (see Figure 4).



**FIGURE 4** Admiral Lessovskii (left) and Gustavus V. Fox (right). Photograph by Levitskii, 1866. Fox Collection, Division of Politics and Reform, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Coins and medals received with the Fox Collection are housed in the NMAH National Numismatic Collection. While Edward Kasinec's *Solanus* article mentions some historic documents that Fox gave to Secretary of State William Seward at the time of his return in 1866, there is no record of these items ever coming to the Smithsonian from the State Department. The Fox Collection now at NMAH came from the family following his widow's death in 1909.

## FRANCO-RUSSIAN ARTISTIC CONNECTIONS

As a print curator, I was delighted to discover the rare panoramas given to Fox, and to learn more about the connections between French printmakers and Russian topics in the early nineteenth century. It is clear that, despite the hostile military conflict of the Napoleonic period, French artists both resident and transient produced significant works in and about Russia during the nineteenth century, building on the tradition of such cultural exchanges begun in the eighteenth century. French artists and publishers also produced Russia-related works in Paris. The *Image of France* database available on the Internet includes an index of all printed imagery (engravings, lithographs, and woodcuts) authorized for publication in France from 1795 to 1880. This record of legal deposit can be searched by keyword for Russian subjects, and it provides a detailed listing of this brisk trade in images that enriched the visual culture of both nations.<sup>7</sup>

In the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection is a handsome stipple and aquatint portrait of Tsar Alexander I, featured in a profile medallion held by figures representing Athena and Apollo (see Figure 5).

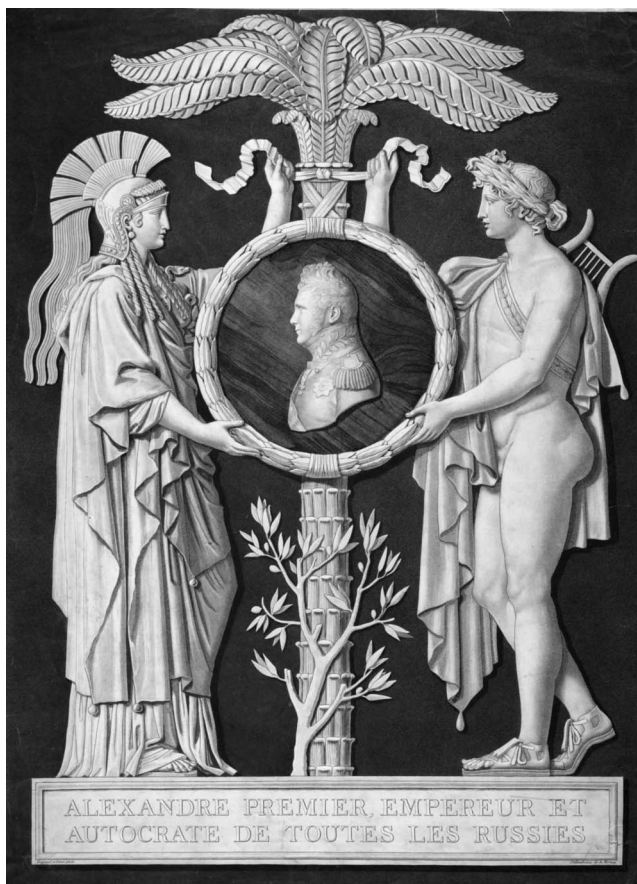
It was designed by Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard (1780–1850), son of the Rococo painter Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806). Stylistically it relates to other neo-Classical work by the younger Fragonard, and it may have been intended for use on a decorative object, as several members of the Fragonard family produced designs for the Sèvres porcelain works. The same image could have been produced in biscuit to be applied to a panel or piece of furniture, beyond its function as a print.<sup>8</sup> The portrait was published in Paris in 1815 by Sallandrouse de la Mornay, who had issued a series of views of St. Petersburg in 1812.<sup>9</sup>

From the graphic arts perspective, it is clear that certain personalities and events prompted the publication of prints and popular illustrations of Russian subjects in the West. Portraiture is a prime example. Based on the number of portrait prints issued as a reliable indicator of popularity or renown, Alexander I's reputation was considerable in the world opinion of his day. A large number of Alexandrine portrait prints were registered in Paris in 1814.<sup>10</sup> Obviously he was a hero to French Royalists, and to other anti-Napoleonic interests. His portraits are widely held in American repositories, including examples in the New York Public Library and the NMAH. French artists also depicted other Russian rulers and foreign heads of state. A portrait of Catherine II in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection, engraved by Charles Regnault after Gustave Staal, was issued in Paris in 1864. It is but one of many such printed images that continued to link France and Russia through much of the nineteenth century.

## ANGLO-RUSSIAN ARTISTIC RELATIONS

A mid-nineteenth-century American scrapbook in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection includes prints of Alexander I and Peter the Great taken from *The*





**FIGURE 5** *Alexandre Premier, Empereur et Autocrate de Toutes les Russies* [Alexander I, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias]. Stipple engraving and aquatint, hand colored, published by Sallandrouse de la Mornay after Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard, 1815. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

*Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science and Art*, an American monthly periodical that reprinted European articles but added American illustrations, many produced by the prolific Philadelphia engraver John Sartain (1808–1897) and some by his son Samuel Sartain (1830–1906). Both plates were removed from the March 1860 issue that included a short story, “The Czar and the Skeptic,” originally published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, plus biographical sketches of the two tsars, without attribution, but probably based on the *London Encyclopedia* (1829), used for other articles.

The portrait of Alexander I is quite straightforward, a bust-length image of the Tsar in uniform (see Figure 6), after the full-length portrait by George Dawe (1781–1829) now in the Hermitage.



**FIGURE 6** *Alexander I, Emperor of Russia.* Engraving by John Sartain after George Dawe, from *The Eclectic Magazine*, March, 1860. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Dawe, an English artist, lived in St. Petersburg for a decade, where he and his Russian assistants painted more than 300 portraits of generals from the Napoleonic period for the War Gallery of 1812 in the Winter Palace. His brother and son-in-law engraved Dawe's paintings, and these prints reached a wide audience, including presumably the Sartain family. John Sartain acquired a large print collection that he used as a working visual library for his engraving commissions.<sup>11</sup> In commenting on the Tsar's portrait, the magazine's editor noted that he was an important figure in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and that portraits of his successors, Nicholas I and Alexander II, had

already “adorned” the journal. Alexander II’s portrait appeared in the issue of January 1857, and again in June 1869; Nicholas also appeared twice, in August 1852 and March 1858. Later issues of *The Eclectic* also featured illustrations of Russian subjects, including portraits of Catherine II and Prince Gorchakov, and the coronation of Alexander II.

The youthful Peter was represented as a character of legend as well as history. *Peter the Great Saved by His Mother*, a mezzotint engraving by Samuel Sartain after a painting by Carl von Steuben (1788–1856), is a melodramatic rendering of the incident when the *strel'tsy* tried to capture the youth (see Figure 7).<sup>12</sup>

Steuben, born at Bauerbach in Germany, was the son of a Russian army officer. He began his studies at the art academy in St. Petersburg but then moved to Paris where he trained in the studios of several French artists. He exhibited at the Salon from 1812 to 1843, and his career represents another model of a French-trained artist who painted Russian subjects. The younger Sartain’s plate was used by *The Eclectic* twice, first for the February 1853 issue,



**FIGURE 7** *Peter the Great Saved by His Mother*. Engraving by Samuel Sartain after Carl von Steuben, from *The Eclectic Magazine*, March, 1860. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

and again in March 1860. No other Russian subjects were featured in the 1853 issue, and the only text was a brief paragraph about the Tsar's subsequent devotion to his mother, based on her "daring and presence of mind" during the incident. For the 1860 issue, the editors included a two-page biography of Peter to accompany the print, "illustrating the position of the parties before the altar in the convent, which will give the reader a graphic picture of the personages alluded to."<sup>13</sup> Magazine publishers competed for readers by adding engravings to their issues, and the occasional reuse of such "embellishments," as they were known, apparently did not diminish their appreciation.

The British were interested in the Russian imperial family due to its connections with their own royalty. In the 1860s a number of images in various media featured the Danish sisters who became Queen Alexandra and Empress Maria Feodorovna. *Cartes-de-visite* photographs, a small format popular worldwide, were produced for inclusion in albums. The Fox Collection includes such an album in which *cartes-de-visite* of the two sisters appear, along with other members of the Russian imperial family and nobility. Presumably it was assembled specifically for presentation to Fox. A generation later, the November 1894 wedding of Alexandra's niece by marriage, Princess Alix of Hesse, to her second cousin, Maria Feodorovna's son Nicholas II, was commemorated by color woodcut portraits of the bride and groom issued as part of the *Imperial Wedding Supplement* to the popular British periodical *The Graphic*. These portraits are part of the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection.

Paintings in the Hermitage were perennially popular subjects for reproductive prints and photographs. When the Earl of Orford's art collection was sold to Catherine II in 1779, the London publisher John Boydell commissioned an edition of large framing prints known as the *The Houghton Gallery* after the Earl's residence, Houghton Hall in Norfolk. In this way the English people would have some record of the paintings after their removal to Russia, and the prints also were popular with American collectors well into the nineteenth century. The two-volume, large-folio *Houghton Gallery* set has been part of the Smithsonian's collection since 1849, and a number of the prints have been used for Graphic Arts exhibitions over the years. European artists continued this reproductive tradition during the nineteenth century, issuing several series of prints after paintings in the Hermitage. Many of these publications were bilingual, with titles in Russian and French.<sup>14</sup>

The Russians considered these masterpieces among their national treasures, and they presented Fox with a special boxed set of photographs after paintings in the Hermitage collection, published by Charles Müller & Co., with a printed title page reading *The Museum of the Imperial Hermitage: Photographic Reproductions of the Most Eminent Paintings, Statues, etc., Presented by order of His Imperial Majesty Alexander II to the Officers of the Fleet of the United States of America* (St. Petersburg, August 1866). Presumably these photographs were already available as standard tourist souvenirs, but a selection was presented to Fox in a red cloth box, custom-made in the style of

an album, with a leather spine and gold clasp. With its white moiré silk doublures, and the gold crest of the Tsar stamped on the cover, it made a most impressive gift. Another assortment of photographs was encased in a magenta portfolio, with the same white silk doublures and gold crest, this one being *The Romanow-Gallery in the Imperial Winter-Palace: Photographic portraits of the sovereigns of Russia, Published by A. J. Klynder* (St. Petersburg, 1866). These card-mounted photos, somewhat smaller than those of the Hermitage paintings, also probably were sold to gallery visitors, but were packaged in a splendid case for presentation to Fox's mission.

## GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION

In the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection there are four nineteenth-century reproductive etchings by Nikolai Mosolov (1847–1914) after Rembrandt's works in the Hermitage. Mosolov (or Massaloff), a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts, etched a number of plates reproducing paintings by Rembrandt and other masterpieces from the Hermitage. The plates were printed in Paris, and the volumes were published in Leipzig during the 1860s and 1870s. These works reached an international audience, as indicated by the surviving copies of the portfolios in European and American libraries.<sup>15</sup>

Maps offer another graphic medium for presenting Russia and Eastern Europe to the world. Engraved maps dating from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection include four Hungarian town maps engraved after the Flemish artist Joris Hoefnagel (1542–1601) from Braun and Hogenberg's atlas, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* [Cities of the world], published in Cologne between 1572 and 1617, and reissued in Amsterdam by Jan Jansson in 1657. Two small maps, "Moscovia or Russia" (see Figure 8) and "Georgia," date from the end of the seventeenth century and were made by the English cartographer John Seller.

Somewhat larger examples, probably from John Senex's *New General Atlas* published in London in 1721, are maps of Poland, Moscovy, and Moscovy in Europe. A map of the Russian Empire in Europe and Asia by Rigobert Bonne (1727–1795), the official French Naval hydrographer, was issued in Paris about 1790. An engraving of Wratislava or Breslau in Silesia (now Wrocław, Poland), published by Mattheus Merian in Frankfurt in 1649, offers a charming view of the city on the banks of the Oder.

Eastern European printmakers are also represented in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection. Two Czech etchings have particularly poignant inscriptions dating from the spring of 1939, when they were presented to the American Minister Wilbur J. Carr by the artist J. C. Vondrous (1884–1956). Vondrous was born in Czechoslovakia, but he came to the US as a boy and was educated in New York. He returned to live and work in Prague in the late 1920s where he made the two prints now at the Smithsonian. He presented one etching, *View from the Bridge of*

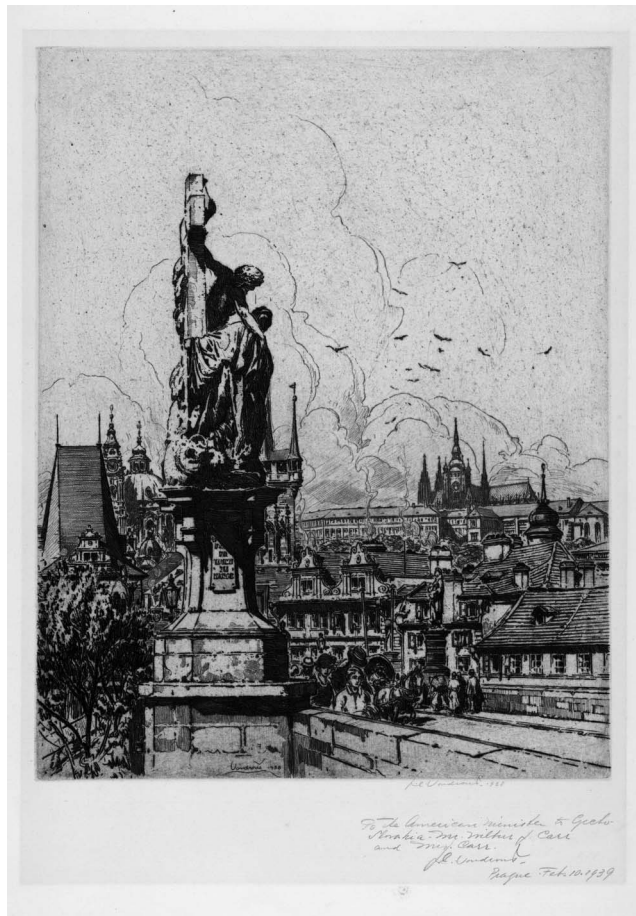


**FIGURE 8** Map of *Moscovia or Russia*. Engraving. [Published by John Seller, ca. 1696.] Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

*Charles IV, Prague*, (see Figure 9) to Mr. and Mrs. Carr on February 10, 1939, and another, a color aquatint, *Prague—the Cathedral, Springtime*, on behalf of the Prague English Club to Carr as its honorary president, in March, the month the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia.

Late nineteenth-century western popular media represented Russia with a visual vocabulary of familiar stereotypes. These romanticized, folkloric depictions reference elements in the complicated political debates between the Slavophiles and pro-Western interests. An American chromolithograph in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection, *Russian Wedding Feast*, after Konstantin Makovskii (1839–1915), suggests something of the popularity of these images (see Figure 10).

Makovskii's original 1883 painting, *The Boyar Wedding Feast*, now at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens in Washington, D.C., was purchased in Antwerp in 1885 by an American jewelry merchant, Charles W. Shumann. He displayed the canvas in his New York City store where it attracted so much attention that he was forced to charge a modest admission fee to provide some crowd control. Schumann commissioned a second painting from Makovskii,



**FIGURE 9** *View from the Bridge of Charles IV, Prague.* Etching by J.C. Vondrous, 1929. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

*The Choosing of the Bride*, in 1886 and sent the two canvases on tour around the US. He published an accompanying booklet, *Art and Gems*, and presumably the print, issued by the Manhattan Art Company, was part of Schumann's promotional effort, in response to popular demand.<sup>16</sup>

Another romanticized treatment is a wood engraving by William B. Closson after Albert Edelfeldt's painting, *Russian Girl*. Albert Edelfeldt (1854–1905), a Finnish artist, studied in Paris and exhibited at the Salon. His work attracted the attention of Tsar Alexander III, and he was invited to come to Russia where he made a number of paintings during the 1880s. His illustrations for a series of articles on Peter the Great appeared in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1880, and Closson's wood engraving after Edelfeldt's painting probably appeared in an American periodical, as Closson reproduced many art works



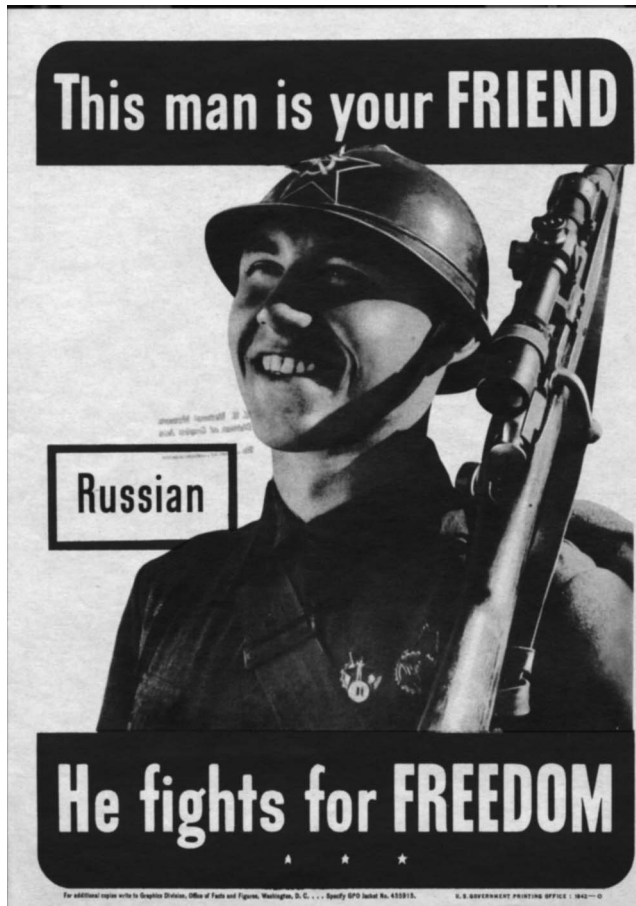
**FIGURE 10** *Russian Wedding Feast*. Chromolithograph published by Manhattan Art Company after Konstantin Makovskii, ca. 1890. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

for *Harper's* and the *Century Magazine*. A proof impression of *Russian Girl*, like the one in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection, was exhibited in a display of Closson's work at the Detroit Museum of Art in 1914.<sup>17</sup>

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

A number of images appeared in the West when Russia was in the public eye, such as during the Crimean War and the Russo-Japanese War. The latter proved to be of special interest to Americans when the peace treaty was negotiated in New Hampshire. President Theodore Roosevelt was pictured with the "envoys of the Mikado and the Czar" in one image from a boxed set of Russo-Japanese War stereographic views, issued in 1905 by Underwood & Underwood, now in the NMAH Photographic History Collection. Stereographs, double photographs mounted on card stock for use with a viewer, were widely available in homes, schools, and libraries, so many people would have seen these images in all their three-dimensional impact. As historian William Darrah noted, "Stereographs of the Russo-Japanese War are, in many respects, the most action-packed and successful war views ever published. ... Scenes of the siege of Port Arthur convey feelings of





**FIGURE 11** *This man is your FRIEND—Russian*. Color lithograph published by US Government Printing Office, 1942. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

involvement and immediacy.”<sup>18</sup> Underwood published about 300 different titles on this subject, with a one-hundred-card selection being offered as a boxed set. Other companies published sets of fifty, eighty, and one hundred views.

In 1863 Winslow Homer drew an illustration for *Harper's Weekly* of the *Grand Russian Ball at the Academy of Music*, held in honor of the officers of the Russian fleet who visited New York and Washington during the winter of 1863–4.<sup>19</sup> The fact that Russia sympathized with the North during the Civil War was important to the US, as was their eventual alliance during World War II, depicted in propaganda posters such as “This man is your FRIEND,” (see figure 11) identifying a Russian soldier in uniform in order to avoid a potential case of mistaken identity or “friendly fire.”

Another form of propaganda found in the NMAH Graphic Arts Collection are six “TASS Window” posters and a related group of smaller anti-Nazi exhibition

prints that came to the Smithsonian in 1943 through VOKS, the Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Nations. After the breakdown of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, the Soviet news agency TASS issued a series of propaganda posters. Beginning in June 1941, the Union of Soviet Artists established a publishing collective to produce the posters on almost a daily basis. Because they were displayed in the windows of the news agency's Moscow office, they became known as TASS window posters. Well-known artists and poets worked on the designs and captions, and most of the posters were produced in limited editions using the stencil process for both graphics and text. Many posters were completed and reproduced within twenty-four hours, making them very responsive to political issues and war news. Four of the NMAH posters feature anti-Hitler and anti-Nazi caricatures, and two represent Socialist Realist art encouraging production for the war effort. Their messages helped present the USSR favorably to its new allies, including the US.<sup>20</sup>

### MILITARY AND DIPLOMACY COLLECTIONS

The NMAH Military and Diplomacy Collections include modern Kalashnikov rifles and a more antiquarian focus, as found in the collection of military books and prints donated to NMAH by Lt. Colonel William E. Shipp in 1959. The primary subject represented in the Shipp Collection is military uniforms, and there are a significant number of Russia-related items in several media, dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among the prints and book illustrations are military images and caricatures published in France, including works after Horace Vernet, as well as a few published in Germany and Spain of Russian subjects. Many of these works were purchased by Col. Shipp in Moscow, Leningrad, Helsinki, and Riga in 1934–35. One volume, an album of uniform regulations of the Imperial Russian Artillery in the time of Count Arakcheev, was published in 1807 with forty-four etched plates and bears the bookplate of Tsar Alexander II. There is also a book on the uniforms of the Romanian Army, 1830–1930. A series of thirty-five early nineteenth-century Russian watercolors of officers' uniforms dates from the period of Tsar Alexander I, 1801–1825. There are also approximately fifty works representing the uniforms of the armies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which includes some Eastern European regiments, such as a lithograph illustrating historic uniforms of the Austrian army, featuring a Slavic soldier of 1782 and a Cossack of 1807.

### CONTEMPORARY ART

Not every image in the museum is antiquarian in nature. In the spring of 1991, the Graphic Arts Collection acquired a group of prints made by contemporary Russian artists using traditional media to articulate provocative themes. Some are



**FIGURE 12** *Still Life with a Star*. Etching by Vladislav Stanishevskii, ca. 1990. Graphic Arts Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

bookplates; others are small framing prints or book illustrations. Twenty-five prints by a dozen artists include wood engravings, etchings, lithographs, and linoleum cuts featuring strong Russian imagery and use of color. All were created with skill and imagination, with some depicting topics that seemed risky for the time, despite the growing atmosphere of *glasnost*. One print commemorates Andrei Sakharov; in another, Stalin's head, toppled from a statue, is connected by flayed ends of skin and hair to a group of skulls that represent his victims (see Figure 12). This etching, from an edition of ten, is titled *Still Life with a Star* from the series "Russia of XX century," by Estonian artist Vladislav Stanishevskii. Other artists represented are Iuri Liukshin (b. 1949), Valerii Mishin, Mikhail Verkholantsev (b. 1937), and Vladimir E. Vereshchagin.

## CONCLUSION

This brief overview indicates something of the eclectic and perhaps surprising nature of Russian and Eastern European works at the National Museum of American History. There are important archival collections as well, including the deVincent sheet music collection in the NMAH Archives Center, which

features illustrated sheet music covers organized in geographical series that include Russian and Eastern European titles issued by American publishers.<sup>21</sup> Dispersed across several Smithsonian units is the Science Service photograph collection that includes images of twentieth-century features such as the Dnieper dam, captioned as “Soviet Russia’s greatest hydroelectric project” in 1941.<sup>22</sup> Other Smithsonian museums and the varied resources of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries and the Smithsonian Institution Archives offer further opportunities for Slavic studies research, and we welcome visits from scholars in all disciplines.

## NOTES

1. Richard E. Ahlborn and Vera B-B. Espinola, *Russian Copper Icons and Crosses from the Kunz Collection: Castings of Faith*, Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology, 51 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991). The monograph is available online at [http://www.sil.si.edu/smithsonian-contributions/HistoryTechnology/sc\\_RecordSingle.cfm?filename=SSHT-0051](http://www.sil.si.edu/smithsonian-contributions/HistoryTechnology/sc_RecordSingle.cfm?filename=SSHT-0051), searchable by author or keyword.

2. See the dedicated section of the NMAH Web site at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/numismatics/russianc/russ.htm>.

3. Edward Kasinec with Robert H. Davis, Jr., “The 1866 ‘Russian Souvenirs’ of Gustavus Vasa Fox,” *Solanus: International Journal for Russian and East European Bibliographic, Library, and Publishing Studies*, n.s., 19 (2005): 113–119. See also J. F. Loubat, *Narrative of the Mission to Russia in 1866 of the Hon. Gustavus Vasa Fox...*, ed. John D. Champlin, Jr. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874).

4. I. M. Casanowicz, *The Gustavus Vasa Fox Collection of Russian Souvenirs in the U.S. National Museum* (Washington: GPO, 1910). Originally published in the *Proceedings of the U.S. National Museum* 38 (1910): 1–15.

5. Another full set is at Yale, in the British Art Center. It is described as colored, while the Getty Research Institute set is uncolored. According to Kasinec, Harvard and the New York Public Library each have one half of an uncolored set.

6. Today he is perhaps better known as the father of artist James A. McNeill Whistler, but Major Whistler was a West Point graduate who worked for several early railroads and other civil engineering projects in the United States during the 1820s and 1830s. For an account of his accomplishments and career, see Albert Parry, *Whistler’s Father* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1939).

7. *Image of France, 1795–1880 at ARTFL*, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/mckee/>.

This Web site provides copious evidence of Russian subjects published by French printmakers throughout the nineteenth century.

8. A Sèvres cabinet made about 1825, now in the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, features porcelain panels with classically themed center medallions designed by A.-E. Fragonard.

9. *Vues et monuments, gravés et coloriés, de Saint-Petersbourg* was published in three parts of four plates each between February and December 1812. See the *Image of France* Web site.

10. See the *Image of France* Web site.

11. See Katherine Martinez, “John Sartain (1808–1897): His Contribution to American Printmaking,” *Imprint: Journal of the American Historical Print Collector’s Society* 8, no. 1 (1983); Helena E. Wright, “Prints in the Sartains’ Circle,” in *Philadelphia’s Cultural Landscape: The Sartain Family Legacy*, ed. Katharine Martinez and Page Talbott (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 25–38.

12. Steuben’s original canvas is now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Valenciennes, France.

13. *The Eclectic Magazine* 49 (March 1860): 412–13.

14. See, for example, *Imperatorskaia ermitazbnaia galereia [...] = Galerie impériale de l’Ermitage* (St. Petersburg: M. Olkhin for Gohier Desfontaines and Paul Petit, 1845–1847), a two-volume work of more than 100 lithographs prepared by French artists working in Russia.

15. Mosolov's etched works include *Dix eaux-fortes d'après Rembrandt* (Leipzig: Drugulin, 1866), with 10 plates; *Les chefs d'oeuvre de l'Ermitage impérial de Saint-Petersbourg* (Leipzig: 1872), with 20 plates; and *Les Rembrandt de l'Ermitage impérial de Saint-Petersbourg* (Leipzig: Drugulin, 1872), with 40 plates.

16. For an account of the role of these Boyar paintings in Makovskii's reputation, see Anne Odum, "Konstantin Makovskii: 'A First-Rate Boyar'," *Hillwood Studies* 3, no. 1 (1996): 3–14. I am grateful to Kristen Regina for bringing this article to my attention.

17. William Baxter Closson, *Exhibition of Wood Engravings and Paintings by William Baxter Closson, Detroit Museum of Art, October 30th to November 15th, 1914* (Detroit: Detroit Museum of Art, 1914).

18. William C. Darrah, *The World of Stereographs* (Gettysburg, PA: Darrah, 1977), 187.

19. See *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 5, 1863, and Kasinec, "The 1866 'Russian Souvenirs' of Gustavus Vasa Fox," 114.

20. It is estimated that about 1,500 different TASS window posters were produced between 1941 and 1945. Six of these posters are pictured on the NMAH Web site, and can be found via its index, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/index.cfm>. Other collections outside Russia include the University of Nottingham in England, and Columbia and Cornell Universities in the United States.

21. The finding aid for the deVincent Collection is available online at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/d5300.htm>.

22. See the Science Service Web site at <http://scienceservice.si.edu/>.