

An Offering from an American Artist

Editor's note: Some time ago, I found an article from a Russian Magazine (magazine name and date unknown). I sent a copy of the article to our resident Russian expert, Mitya Kiselev and asked him to translate. He not only sent back a perfect translation but also located two photographs of Kent and Sally at the Russian exhibition. We present a copy of the article followed by Mitya's translation and the photos:



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Three years ago, we had a chance to explore works of the American artist Rockwell Kent in his personal exhibition that traveled several cities all over the USSR. The short documentary “Rockwell Kent”, produced by screenwriter V.Popov and cameraman Y.Tolchanov at the Mosnauchfilm Studio, was dedicated to this event.

Last year Rockwell Kent donated hundreds of his artworks to the Soviet nation. The artist’s generosity was welcomed by comrade Nikita Khrushchev.

The works, brought by Kent to the Soviet Union, formed another large-scale exhibition, pictured by the Central Documentaries Studio in its new film “An Offering From an American Artist”.

Numerous paintings and graphical works by Rockwell Kent show us a bright harmonious world, reflecting his continuous belief in the lofty mission of man and greatness of the human spirit.

Since his young years, the artist traveled a lot. His vivid impressions turned into excellent landscape paintings, illustrating his great fondness for nature, as well as his ability to see and translate the beauty “of day and night, of mountains and seas, of deserts and green farmlands” – the main focus of Kent’s art by his own admission.

The landscape works by Rockwell Kent are divided into several series – Alaska, Greenland, Tierra del Fuego, Adirondack Mountains, the Maine’s scenery. The most impressive are his Greenlandic paintings. The artist visited this inhospitable region twice – first in 1929, then in 1932-1934, both times spending months among Eskimo people.

Greenlandic works by Kent are striking in terms of their artistic completeness and perfection. No one can reject the amazing logic of their pathetic composition. Spectacular, almost sculptural peaks, dominating over the flat icy desert. Blue frozen skies. Brown rocks. The sea – cold, inaccessible, calm... On this colossal, seemingly dead island, a hard and selfless aboriginal life is passing day by day.

For Kent, nature is the scene of human activity, full of hardships and heroic patience. He shows us the life of courageous commoners – American farmers, Inuits, Aleuts.

Authors of the new documentary managed to uncover that combination of poetic, monumental and heroic elements in the Kent’s art. However, the focus of the film is the story of artist himself, his visit to Moscow and personal involvement in the exhibition.

The best qualities of Rockwell Kent – his optimism and endless interest in nature and people – are shown in his contacts with the Soviet audience, in meetings with artist Orest Vereisky, in Kent’s vision of Moscow that appears in scenes of his walks around the Soviet capital.

The film gives a closer look of Kent’s best works, presented in his exhibition. It helps to feel deeply the vital and humanistic appeal that make Kent a significant figure of the modern artistic world.

By E.Levitin

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About the author

Born in remote Kamchatka Peninsula, Northeast Siberia, Dmitry (Mitya) Kiselev is a polar historian, avid traveler and expedition guide, working for Silversea Cruises. When not travelling to the Arctic, Antarctic or other remote parts of the world, Mitya and his family live on Cyprus.



Mitya lecturing about Kent on a recent cruise