



## The History Reflected in Colors

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### ABSTRACT

This article describes the life and creative path of Vasily Ivanovich Surikov, one of the brilliantly talented Russian artists who created effectively in the historical genre and made a great contribution to the development of the Russian art school, as well as a collection of perfectly crafted compositions and human figures in the artist's works. skillful ability; fine sense of colors and well-thought-out coloring of pictures; referring to Russian history, the main features of the art of re-creating historical situations are discussed.

### Keywords:

Painting, composition, historical genre, sketch, plot

Vasily Ivanovich Surikov was a prominent Russian artist who played a significant role in the development of the Russian art academy, particularly excelling in historical paintings. He was born on January 24, 1848, in the city of Krasnoyarsk, Siberia.

Surikov's works brought to life the world of past eras in Russian history. Renowned for his meticulous attention to color and composition, Surikov's artistry positioned him as a leading figure in the historical genre of painting.

His father, Ivan Vasilyevich Surikov (1806-1859), served as a provincial registrar in Krasnoyarsk. According to Surikov's recollections, his father possessed a strong voice and enjoyed playing the guitar and singing traditional Cossack songs in the evenings. Following his father's passing in 1859, the family faced severe financial hardships. His mother, Praskovya Fedorovna Torgoshina (1818-1895), was compelled to rent out the second floor of their home. In

adherence to Cossack customs, girls were taught various crafts, and this upbringing proved beneficial for Praskovya, who became a skilled artisan after being widowed at a young age. To support her family, she engaged in embroidery, weaving carpets, crafting wickerwork, and selling mats and flowers, even reproducing her own artworks. According to Surikov's reminiscences, his mother had a refined sense of color and a keen understanding of motifs.

While Praskovya Fedorovna was known for her strong-willed character, she recognized her son's artistic prowess and sent him to St. Petersburg for a better life. Surikov, in turn, always found ways to express his gratitude to his mother, whether by sending her a new shawl or a warm, fur-lined coat. His affection for his mother was profound. In 1887, he painted a portrait of his mother, Praskovya Fedorovna Surikova, which is now housed in the State Tretyakov Gallery.



*V.I. Surikov. Portrait of Praskovya Fedorovna Surikova, the artist's mother. 1887.*

*Canvas, oil. State Tretyakov Gallery.*

Surikov had great success with his first mentor and teacher, N. Grebnev. When Surikov entered the Krasnoyarsk provincial school of arts, he received his initial training from Nikolay Vasilievich Grebnev. Grebnev recognized a great potential in Surikov and began guiding him towards the right direction with confidence and determination.

The main features of Surikov's work include polyphonic compositions worked with

perfection, the ability to draw each character's individuality and the totality of human figures; the delicate use of colors and the well-considered colorfulness of the paintings; and referencing Russian history, the ability to recreate historical events. In 1861, after completing his education at the Krasnoyarsk provincial school, he joined the provincial administration as a clerk. It was during this time that he decided to become a painter.



*Vasily Surikov's painting "The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy" was created in 1881. It is an oil on canvas measuring 218 × 379 cm. This artwork is housed in the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.*

Vasily Surikov's works such as "The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy," "The Boyar's Wife Morozova," "Menshikov in Berezovo," and "Taking of a Snow Town" were highly

acclaimed and established him among the renowned artists of the time.

"Working on a composition can be divided into several stages. That is, the content and form are first conceived as a single idea, and then the

content is directed and generalized. For this purpose, it is appropriate to divide the sketching process into several parts and elements. One of the important aspects of the creative process is the initial formation, development, and depiction of the idea. These processes depend on the method of working on the composition.

The birth and development of an idea can be based on impressions and ideas. For this, the artist's many years of observation, accumulation of impressions, imagination, intelligence, strength and power, study of life, and its preservation in memory and understanding play a significant role. The birth of an idea is related to the artist's individuality, that is, his artistic creativity, and consequently, his talent level. Although the elements of the composition are approximate at the initial stage of the idea's formation, it eventually leads to the clarification of the content and idea, form and details."<sup>1</sup>

Surikov first arrived in St. Petersburg in 1869, but despite his efforts, he was unable to enter the Academy on his first attempt. However, he did not lose hope and began studying at the Society for the Encouragement of Arts. Afterward, despite being accepted to the Academy as a non-registered student, Surikov independently completed the three-year program in August 1870 and became a full-fledged student of the Academy that summer. His talent was recognized by the Academy leadership on several occasions, and he was awarded the silver medal four times.

Surikov's first major work after completing his education was not a painting, but rather frescoes at the Church of the Savior on Blood in Belokamenny. In 1876, he signed a contract with the commission to create the Church of the Savior on Blood in Moscow, which was his only official commission in life. He had to create sketches for the frescoes dedicated to early Christian history. At that time, he was assigned a studio in St. Petersburg. Once the sketches for the scenes with many figures were ready, he moved to Moscow to start painting

directly on the walls. While working on the frescoes for the Church of the Savior on Blood posed some difficulties for the painter after completing his education, he painted as demanded by the commission. In the summer of 1878, he was awarded the III degree Order of St. Anne.

In 1931, the Church of the Savior on Blood was destroyed by the Bolsheviks, along with Surikov's original paintings. Surikov remained in Moscow, where he was very close to the city, and where some of his most famous paintings were created.

Despite completing his education, the artist was offered to travel to Europe as part of his academic studies at the Academy of Arts, but he declined the offer and preferred to focus on painting the frescoes of the Church of the Savior on Blood. Although he never traveled to Europe, at first, Surikov aspired to achieve financial independence. This led to Pavel Tretyakov buying Surikov's painting "The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy" for a large sum of money at that time. He began teaching at the Academy of Arts and the Moscow School of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture three times.

Surikov did not become a professor at the academy at the beginning of his career. Most of his famous paintings, which reached fame, were created in the historical museum hall.

From his appearance, Surikov was a very modest, unassuming, and unpretentious person. However, undoubtedly, he showed respect for his own talent. His works have always been highly praised.

Regarding Vasilii Ivanovich's personal life, here he found his only love and Share's parents approved their marriage. On January 25, 1878, he married Elizaveta Avgustovna Share in the Vladimir Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

Surikov informed his mother about his marriage only after the birth of their first daughter, Olga. Soon after, their youngest daughter Elena was born. Elizaveta Avgustovna often posed as a model for Surikov's paintings, for example, for the portrait of the girl in the painting "Menshikov in Berezovo," she is depicted in the foreground with a black dress.

<sup>1</sup> Jabbarov.E.Kh. "Composition" /textbook/ Tashkent - "Innovatsiya-Ziya", 2021, 87 p.

The artist knew about the heart condition of his beloved before the wedding, but did not attach much importance to it. After ten years of happy marriage, Lilya died of a serious illness in the spring of 1888. The untimely death of his wife was a real tragedy for Surikov. He did not touch the brush for two years. However, his work "Healing the Blind Man by Jesus Christ" is related to 1888. But the painting was not intended for public viewing: "I painted it for myself," said the artist. In 1889, hoping for eternal rest in the "city of children," he went to Krasnoyarsk with his children. However, on his return to his Homeland, he fell into depression and lost his inspiration. Working on the painting "Menshikov in Berezovo" helped him overcome the depression. The subject was suggested by his brother Alexander, and Vasilii Ivanovich was interested in this ancient Siberian game from his childhood.

The game of "Winter Town" was usually played on the last day of Shrovetide. Snow and ice figures and groups were built on the walls of forts and snow-covered villages. Players played defenders and attackers. Defenders intimidated attackers with sticks, whips, and even empty gun barrels. Attackers had to go through the gates, attack the gate, and hit the target. The local population replicated the snowy city's architecture and organized the snow attack to defend their dear Homeland. For the image of a man in a fur coat, the artist used the image of his brother Alexander, and in the tent, there are two women—Tatyana Dojomilova, Surikov's wife, and the nurse of Krasnoyarsk, Pyotr Rachkovskiy's companion, Ekaterina. The tents were decorated with a carpet bought from Tyumen. Vasilii Surikov's painting "Taking the Snow Town" came to the world like a photo of his happy childhood. "Later, I brought an unusual spiritual strength from Siberia," said the grateful artist upon completion of the work. He exhibited the painting at the 1891 XIX art exhibition. In 1900, the painting "Taking the Snow Town" was awarded the silver medal at the World Exhibition in Paris. Philanthropist Vladimir von Meck bought the painting for 10,000 rubles.

In the autumn of 1890, when he returned to Moscow, Surikov was eager to create and

began creating new narrative works that continued to captivate audiences with their rich content and vibrant color palette.

The artist often appealed to self-portraits. In 1879, Surikov painted himself looking at the approving gaze of a romantic, gallant youth.

The famous master portrayed himself with pride in 1894, in a gentle impressionistic style, in the background of being captured by Yermak. The famous Maestro's 1902 self-portrait, painted with strong and closed eyes, was painted when he was three years old and had already come to terms with his health, reflecting on his character. We see a man who, against a blank neutral background, gazes at us with a thoughtful gaze.

"If I hadn't lost my finger, I would have had a guitar in my hand," Surikov said. In the Krasnoyarsk museum-house, his seven-stringed guitar, the only one in the world, is kept.

In his youth, Surikov loved to play the guitar and piano and enjoyed listening to Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Music had a great influence on his work, both in terms of rhythm and melancholy. At the Academy, he was given the nickname "choirmaster" for his skill in working on the composition of paintings. Surikov loved opera, played the guitar. Among the portraits created by the artist are portraits of his friend and music teacher, guitarist Fyodor Peletsky.

Upon returning to Moscow, Surikov continued to be active. In 1881, he became a member of the "Kochma" artistic expedition. As part of the "Kochma" collaboration, Surikov exhibited his famous paintings, including the painting "Menshikov in Berezovo," which he bought for his collection, to Pavel Tretyakov. With the money he received, Surikov finally traveled to Europe. He visited Italy, France, Germany, and Austria. Surikov spent the rest of his life creating new narrative paintings that were always presented among the "travelers," characterized by fresh content and a search for new artistic forms.

The artist rarely turned to self-portraits. After 1881, he began working on the famous painting "The Boyar's Wife Morozova." After that, he created historical paintings such as "The

Conquest of Siberia by Yermak Timofeyevich," "Suvorov's Crossing the Alps," and "Stepan Razin." In 1893, Vasily Surikov's works were highly praised by the artistic community, and he became a full member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts. In 1907, Surikov left the "Vedmits" and joined the ranks of the Russian Artists Union.

Several years later, with the direct participation of Vasily Surikov, an art school was established in his beloved homeland of Krasnoyarsk. In his youth, in the city, he created several works that reflected the beauty of Krasnoyarsk and the charming places of the Yenisei.

In his later years, Vasily Ivanovich traveled frequently. He visited Siberia, Crimea, Oka, and the Volga. He visited Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and France. Surikov achieved great successes in his later years. Unfortunately, the paintings "Krasnoyarsk Uprising," "Pugachev," and "Queen Olga" remained unfinished. In 1915, during his stay in Crimea for treatment, Surikov created his last self-portrait, which became characteristic of his spirit, just before his death.

The famous Russian painter Vasily Surikov died of a heart disease on March 19, 1916, and was buried beside his beloved companion. He was laid to rest at the Vagankovo Cemetery in Moscow.

Surikov's daughters donated the museum to Krasnoyarsk in 1948. The upper and lower floors of the large house are preserved. In the museum-house, you can see

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