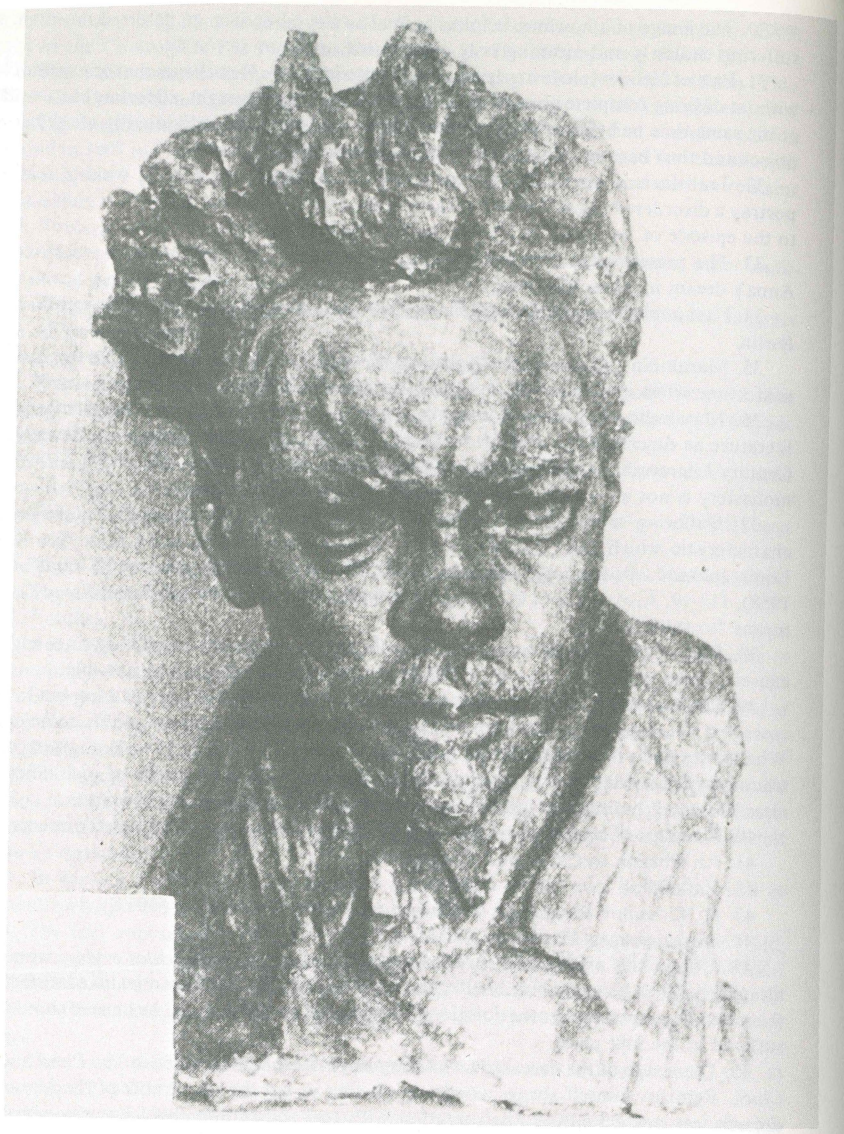

Anna Semyonovna Golubkina, Bust of Remizov, c. 1911.

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Colors and Words: The Visual Art of Alexei Remizov

One of Remizov's principal contentions was that the word and the visual image were inseparable and that drawing and painting were natural extensions of literature. Remizov's own artistic career proved the validity of this assumption, and Remizov the writer cannot be fully appreciated without due recognition of Remizov the calligrapher, the draughtsman, and the painter. The artist Yury Annenkov, a life-long friend of Remizov, implied this when he wrote: "His interpretations, his verbal combinations, his fractures and inflexions were sometimes so visual that it seemed often that I had before me an illustrated book."[1] Remizov, of course, was not an exception to the Russian literary tradition since many poets and prose writers, both before and after the Revolution, drew or painted with varying degrees of success. Pushkin's sketches, and Lermontov's water-colors are well-known; Gogol and Dostoevsky also drew (although not very well). During the modernist era, when the question of synaesthesia became a very popular one, many intellectuals were attracted to the visual arts, not least Andrei Bely and Olga Forsh; correspondingly, several artists tried their hand at writing, e.g., Lev Bakst and Alexander Benua (Benois). One of the most accomplished author-artists of the Russian Silver Age was Maximilian Voloshin whose delicate landscapes can withstand favorable comparison with the Symbolist *plein airs* of Konstantin

Bogaevsky and Viktor Borisov-Musatov. Like Voloshin, Remizov did not distinguish between sight and sound, and he once wrote: "I both saw and heard the Moscow bells."[2] That is why, incidentally, Remizov could create a picture entitled *Red Ringing* (1933)—just as the composer and painter, Mikhail Matyushin, did in 1913.

Although Remizov was little concerned with the academic rules of drawing and painting, he regarded the visual media as more than a casual pastime. For him they constituted an essential means of communication whereby he could express the intricacies of his inner landscape. Remizov, in fact, maintained that ideas could be visualized as well as written down: "Our thought process is a linear one and, therefore, it can be depicted. *The graphic arts:* you can think of something such as a file of papers, a horse, food, baccarat, a dog; but when you draw, you don't have to think: the hand guides itself. Above all, draw with boldness and strength."[3] Remizov's best graphic work certainly expressed an acute visual sensitivity and it was filigreed as subtly and as harmonically as his prose. However, Remizov cannot be considered as a "great artist" of the twentieth century, and to the eye nurtured on Expressionism, Surrealism and non-objective painting, Remizov's visual work transmits little of innovative value, except for the abstract collages of the 1940s. This is not to say, however, that this sphere of Remizov's *oeuvre* can be, or should be, neglected.

To investigate and to appraise Remizov the artist is not an easy task. Although he was a prolific draughtsman and calligrapher, his works are now scattered throughout many countries, and practially all his early endeavors (e.g., his first illustrated, manuscript books of ca. 1907) are in public and private collections in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, little has been written on Remizov the artist,[4] nothing has been published on the subject in the Soviet Union, and even the scholarly series *Iskusstvo knigi* has so far ignored Remizov completely.[5] Matters are complicated still more by the frequent confusion of Alexei Remizov with the caricaturist and stage designer Nikolai Vasilievich Remizov (known as Re-mi) and the latter's sister, Alexandra (known as A. Miss), also a graphic artist. Such misattribution is inexcusable since all three artists possessed very different styles, even if they did live and work at the same time, and Alexei Remizov, whether early or late (at least until 1940), was instantly recognizable as Alexei Remizov. If we are to believe his memoirs, then Remizov began to draw at a very young age, when he used to observe his mother's "Gothic, German calligraphy."[6] Both before and after the Revolution, Remizov ardently pursued his second métier, although his important collections, especially the portraits and illustrations to his own tales, were executed mostly in emigration. During the 1920s and 1930s, resident in Berlin and then in Paris, Remizov made thousands of drawings: in 1932-33 alone he produced 45 albums containing 285 pages of text and 80 illustrations. Although Remizov accomplished his most original work during emigration, we should give some attention to his formative period before proceeding to a discussion of the Berlin and Paris years. In any case, the origin and derivation of Remizov's artistic career have so far remained unexplored.

The Russian Symbolist movement with which the early Remizov coincided was an eclectic and a synthetic one. As Bely once wrote: "At the moment we are experiencing all ages and nations in art: the past rushes before us. This is because we are standing before a great future."[7] Concepts such as the "dérèglement de tous les sens" and the *Gesamtkunstwerk* were an essential part of the Symbolist lexicon, and they inspired numerous experiments in color-music, musical poetry, etc. Although the Russian Symbolists wished to restore a lost sensibility to the word, the color and the sound, they still approached art very much in terms of a hierarchy of media with the time arts (music, poetry) at the top and the space arts (painting, sculpture, architecture) at the base. For Bely, the more musical and more abstract the work of art, the "better" it was, i.e., the closer it stood to the absolute.[8] Remizov, on the other hand, did not support this rigid categorization. For him the arts were equal parts of a totality, and he happened to discover a certain fluency in drawing and painting denied to him in music and sometimes even in language. Still, Remizov's methods of drawing can be accommodated comfortably within the general artistic code of the Symbolist age. His cult of line, his diligent use of *blanc et noir,* his preference for the miniature, his erotic and exotic imagery—such concerns identify Remizov as an artist of the Russian fin-de-siècle.

To a considerable extent, Remizov was a self-taught artist, and he drew "for myself and from myself."[9] He hardly intended to transmit a particular philosophical system or to make a living from his art as his 18th century ancestors, Moscow house painters, had done. Remizov's training in art was brief and superficial. He refers to a certain "Nikolas" who gave drawing lessons to him and his brother at home until "Nikolas suddenly disappeared;"[10] Remizov also enrolled at the Moscow Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and attended the classes of Kapiton Turchaninov. The Academician Turchaninov was a celebrated teacher of his time and was a competent landscapist, but, needless to say, he did not appreciate Remizov's "monsters" and constant disregard of "nature."[11] Outside of this course at the Moscow Institute, Remizov had no formal art education. Moreover, while Remizov does mention Bosch, Breughel et al, in his writings and, thanks to his ethnographical researches and personal acquaintance with many contemporary artists, had an extensive knowledge of cultural movements, he was not an "art historian" and scarcely concerned himself with the development of modern art or with abstruse questions of aesthetics (unlike, say, Pushkin or Blok).

Remizov looked inwards rather than outwards, and his main source of pictorial inspiration was his own enigmatic world of "monsters." Even so,

certain external influences on his artistic development can be detected and discussed. A primary stimulus, for example, was provided by Old Russian calligraphy and engraving. Most of Remizov's drawings are essentially calligraphic: they narrate and depict simultaneously and rely as much on a sequence of linguistic signs as on a complex of geometric forms. This ambiguity in Remizov's pictures reminds us, albeit distantly, of the Constructivists' attempts to emphasize the plastic and purely visual impact of typography during the 1920s. As El Lissitzky wrote: "As sound, the letter is a function of time, as depiction, it is a function of space .... Space factors are *divergent,* time factors are *sequential."*[12] Remizov received professional instruction in the art of calligraphy both at his Moscow Gymnasium and at the Stroganov Institute there, and, according to one biographer, Remizov's ambition was to be a teacher of calligraphy.[13] Remizov's graceful penmanship, evident, for example, in *Rebiatishkam kartinki* (1915), could well have belonged to one of those patient, but anonymous scribes of the mid-17th century who divided their energies between documents of state and ABC books such as the famous *Azbuka slavianskogo iazyka i napisaniia skoropis'iu uchit'sia pisat'* (1652-53). It was the more florid, more malleable style of *skoropis'* that attracted Remizov rather than the austere and static conventions of the uncial and ligatured scripts. Remizov's paleographical studies also brought him into contact with the motifs and forms of early engravings to Russian Bibles. The animals that decorate the 17th century frontispieces to the Gospels of Mark, Luke and John, the narrative borders of their illustrations—these elements proved to be a valuable iconographic source for Remizov the artist.

A second important point of departure for Remizov was the graphic work of the St. Petersburg World of Art group *(Mir iskusstva).* Remizov was very close to members of this group, especially to Lev Bakst, Mstislav Dobuzhinsky (Dobujinsky), Konstantin Somov and, later, Ivan Bilibin, Sergei Chekhonin and Boris Kustodiev. Bakst, for example, designed the phallic illustrations to Remizov's *Tsar Dodon* in 1921 (which Remizov, as a matter of fact, did not like);[14] Somov illustrated the piquant *Chto est' tabak* (1907); Dobuzhinsky designed the 1907 editions of *Prud* and *Morshchinka* and also created the sets and costumes for the 1907 production of *Besovskoe deistvo* at the Antique Theatre in St. Petersburg. The *miriskusniki,* especially Dobuzhinsky and Somov, were, above all, graphic artists and their mastery of the book illustration, the silhouette, the pencil portrait was a primary stimulus to the renaissance of the Russian decorative arts in the Silver Age. For these artists line was the most expressive and emotive ingredient in the work of art—it both delineated images and connected them. Line acted as a melodic device integrating the disparate elements of the composition: "mit den Linien der inneren und äusseren Kontur muss er [der Künstler] die ganze Vielseitigkeit der runden und eckingen Formen umfassen können."[15]

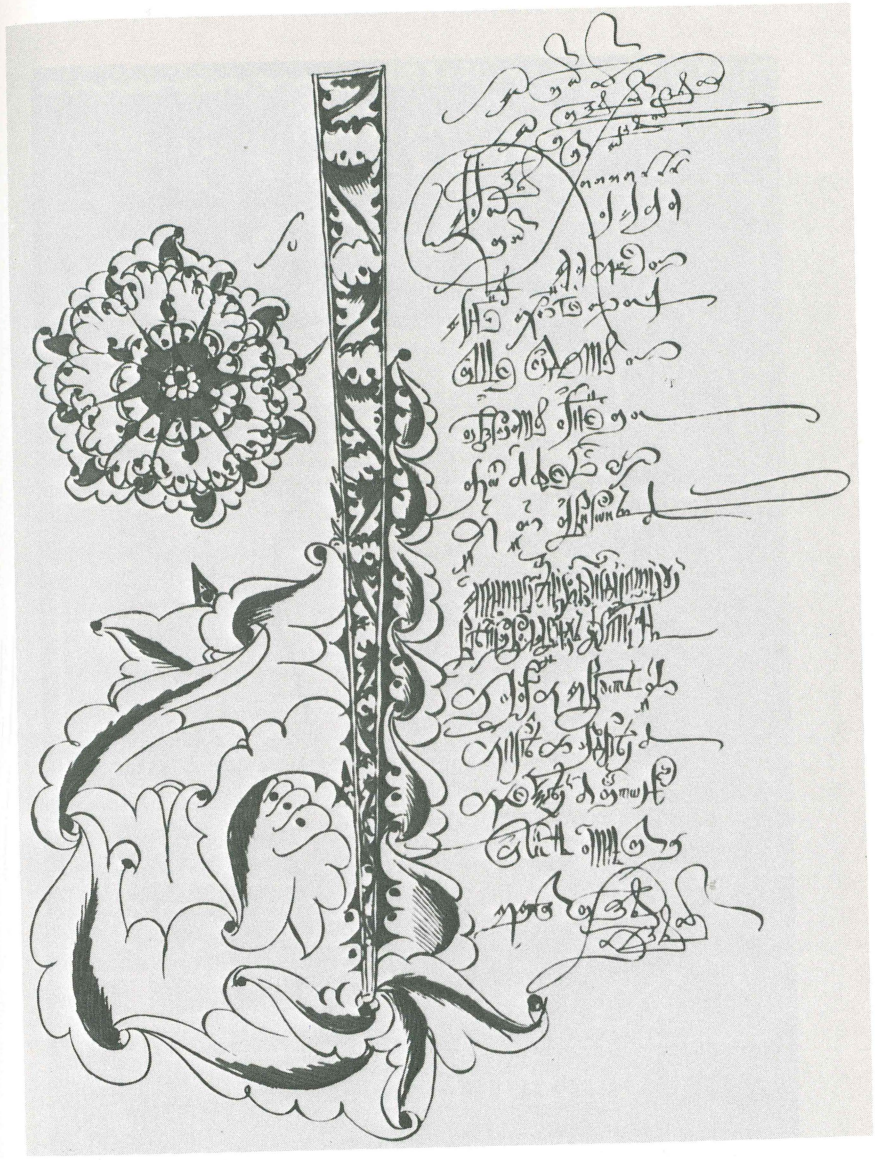
Of course, the World of Art artists (except for Benois) had a sound academic training, and Remizov could not pretend to rival them in their expertise. But there is no doubt that their subtle and precise use of ink, pencil, charcoal and water-color introduced Remizov to new artistic possibilities. Furthermore, Remizov shared their love of "everything curious and childishly naive"[16] and was a frequent guest at their social gatherings. That Remizov enjoyed their sympathy is evident from his amusing description of the World of Art milieu in his story *Statuetka* (1949); Remizov also recalled the World of Art company in some of his drawings such as *Diaghilevan Evenings* of 1934. As implied in *Statuetka,* Remizov shared the intense erotic interests of the World of Art members and there are thematic parallels between Remizov's own dream landscapes and, for example, Somov's pornographic *fêtes galantes.* It is understandable, therefore, why Remizov was a popular subject for his contemporary artists: Kustodiev, with whom Remizov shared particular interests in erotica and the *lubok,* did at least two portraits of Remizov; Somov did a sketch of him; in addition, there are portraits by Annenkov (for which Annenkov was honored by membership to the Monkey Order), Leonid Pasternak and the sculptress Anna Golubkina. For his part, Remizov propagated the work of the World of Art artists in his writings. For example, he contributed an eloquent interpretation of Nikolai Roerich's work to the splendid monograph on Roerich published in 1916.[17]

Remizov's relationship with the World of Art artists was not exclusive, and he was in direct contact with other modernist groups, for example, with the Blue Rose, active in Moscow 1904-08. One of the Blue Rose artists, Nikolai Krymov, drew the illustrations for the 1907 edition of *Posolon'* reproduced in *Zolotoe runo* (the philosophical organ of the Blue Rose)[18] and Nikolai Ryabushinsky, its financial patron, was an enthusiastic reader of Remizov's stories. The Blue Rose, as opposed to the World of Art, was part of the "second wave" of Russian Symbolism, and it supported an intricate philosophical system that owed much to the cult of the Eternal Feminine. Of course, Remizov would not have been drawn to this abstract and metaphysical condition; what was of more interest to him, both then and later, was the primitivizing tendency of the Blue Rose. Reviewing the Blue Rose exhibition of March/April, 1907, the poet and critic Sergei Makovsky wrote: "[These artists] have heralded that *primitivism* to which modern painting has come in its search for regeneration at its very sources in spontaneous creation unweakened by the weight of historical experience."[19] Remizov understood this endeavor to pass beyond contemporaneity to a more instinctive, more essential level of existence, and, like the Blue Rose artists (especially Pavel Kuznetsov), escaped to a dream world of embryonic figures and primordial forms. Remizov, of course, also resorted to the ancient myth and the fairy-tale in

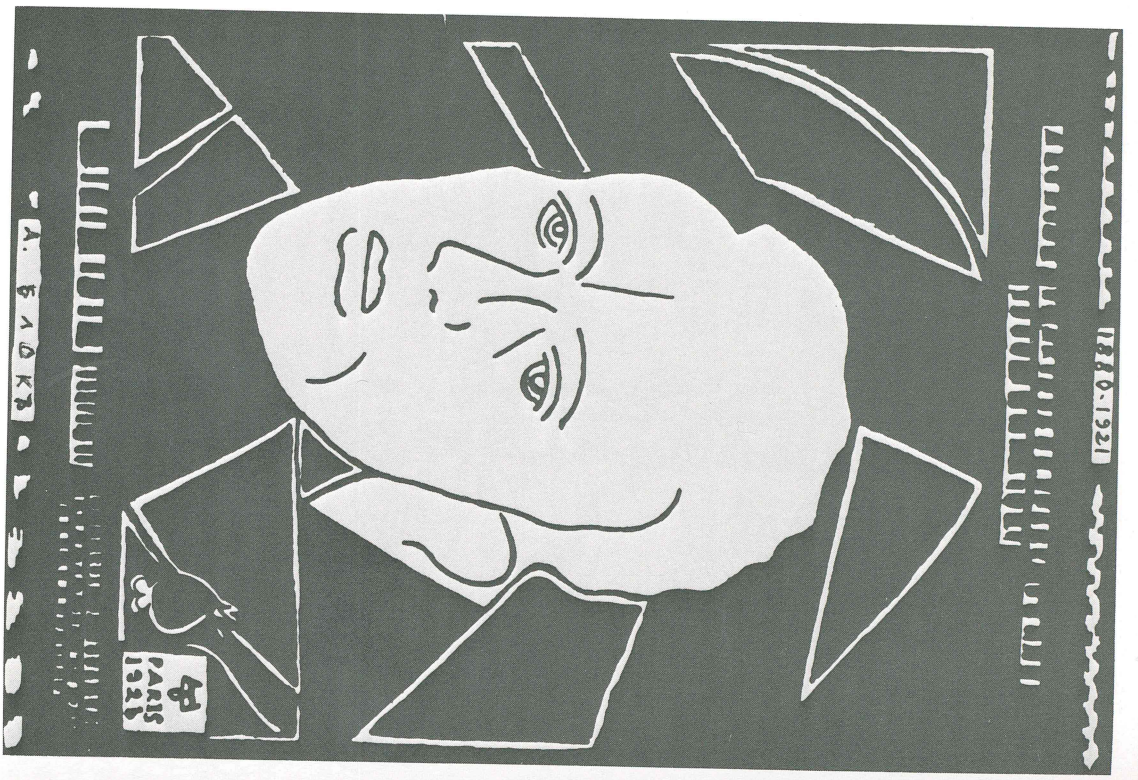
order to recapture this pristine condition—in which respect he had affinities with other Symbolist artists such as Roerich, Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Vrubel'.

Mention of the Blue Rose and of Remizov's proximity to it leads us, in turn, to a question of particular relevance, namely, Remizov's relationship to the Neo-Primitivist movement active in Russia ca. 1908-ca. 1912. This movement, which included David Burlyuk, Natalya Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Shevchenko et al., was born from the intense interest in Russia's indigenous arts and crafts that emerged in the late 19th century. There is no evidence to assume that Remizov was allied with the Neo-Primitivist group, although, later on, Goncharova and Larionov praised his work very highly. Whatever their differences (by 1908 Remizov was already a "man of great erudition, a bookman, an extraordinary connoisseur of Russian folklore,"[20] while the Neo-Primitivists were at the very beginning of their avant-garde careers), they shared common sources of inspiration and concern. The Neo-Primitivists, for example, drew attention to art forms such as the icon, the *lubok* and children's drawing, and they reminded the spectator that intuition and "aconstructiveness" were artistic principles as valid as the classical systems.[21] In the bright colors, assertive lines and intense stylization of primitive Russian art, the new generation of artists found a vitality and potential that the conventional artistic routine lacked. In view of this, it is not surprising that, despite the considerable debt of modern Russian art to French influence, the Neo-Primitivist apologia, issued in 1913, could reject Western art and proclaim Russia and the East as the real birth-places of Neo-Primitivism, Cubism and Futurism.[22] Whatever the validity of this assumption, Russian art at this time was, indeed, injected with a coarse and lapidary strength manifest in the vulgar subjects of Larionov, and the infantile doodlings of Remizov. But at this moment "art" ceased to have "meaning;" its intuitive impulse contravened all aesthetic criteria; Larionov and Remizov suddenly became incomprehensible.

Remizov's primitive stories and drawings appealed in particular to David Burlyuk who himself was also a writer and an artist. Burlyuk's sketches and paintings, absurd, vulgar, exuberant, had much in common with Remizov's art, although, ultimately, the two men belonged to two different intellectual camps. Not surprisingly, therefore, Burlyuk invited Remizov to contribute some of his calligraphic pieces to the exhibition called *The Triangle* in St. Petersburg in April, 1910: this was the first time that Remizov showed his art publicly. The Triangle group was actually led by Nikolai Kul'bin, the "doctor of Russian Futurism" and eccentric dilettante who also painted and wrote. He and Burlyuk organized the Triangle exhibition in order to present not only modern Russian artists but also writers as artists. The latter constituted a large section within the exhibition and included drawings by 19th century authors such as Pushkin and Tolstoi as well as by contemporaries such as Andreev, Blok,



Example of *skoropis'* from *Azbuka slavianskogo iazyka* (1652-1653).



Remizov's drawing of Alexander Blok, 1926.

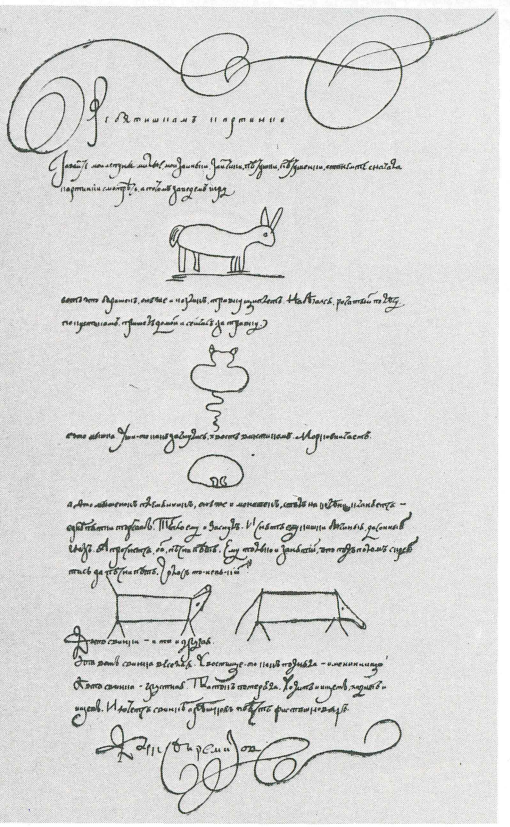
Давайте, мои лепуны милые, мои заиньки, зайчики, пѣтушки, пѣтушенки, станемте сначала картинки смотрѣть, а потомъ заведемъ игру.

Вотъ это барашекъ, онъ же и козликъ, травку щиплетъ. Набѣгался, рогатый, по лѣсу, по кусточкамъ, пришелъ домой и сейчасъ за травку.

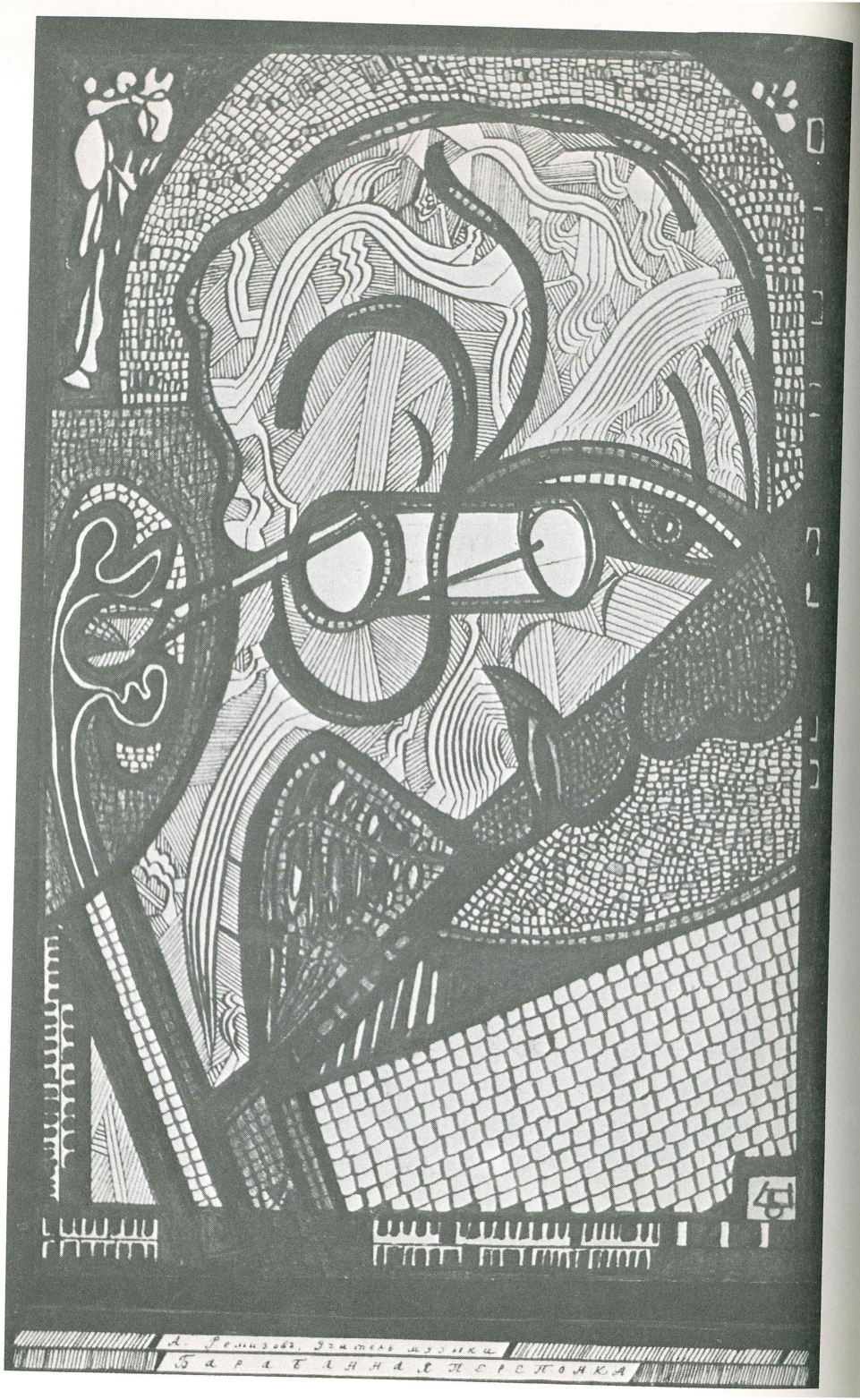
А это, мышка. Уши-то какъ загнулись, хвостъ винтикомъ. Морковничаетъ.

А это мышенокъ племянникъ, онъ же и монашекъ, сталъ на колѣни, кланяется—однѣ пятки торчатъ. Тепло ему и заснулъ. И снятся ему кишки бычиныя, да сонный глазъ. А проснется, ой, пѣсни пѣть. Ему только и занятій, что подъ поломъ скребшись, да пѣсни пѣть. Голосъ то-нень-кій!

А это свинки—и та и другая.
Эта вотъ свинка веселая. Хвостище-то какъ подняла—именинница! А эта свинка—грустная. Платокъ потеряла. Ходитъ и ищетъ, ходитъ и ищетъ. И хочется свинкѣ орѣшковъ поѣсть фисташковыхъ.



Pages from Remizov's "Rebiatishkam kartinki," *Strelets*, Pg., 1915, pp. 84-85.



Gorodetsky and Remizov. In addition, the exhibition carried examples of modern furniture, peasant sculpture, Japanese engravings and French and Dutch posters. Among this pot-pourri of artifacts, Remizov's calligraphy went unnoticed by the public and the press.

Contact with the St. Petersburg bohemia prompted Remizov to participate in a number of Futurist endeavors. It was thanks to Kulbin and the poet Alexander Belenson, for example, that Remizov's graphic work was reproduced for the first time—in the almanac *Strelets* for 1915. Remizov's *Rebiatishkam kartinki* (illustrated descriptions of animals) seemed out of place next to the more effusive contributions by Burlyuk, Kamensky, Wyndham Lewis, Mayakovsky etc., but the very fact that this piece and an essay on paleography were included indicated the esteem in which Remizov was held. Remizov's drawings attracted the attention of several younger members of the Russian avant-garde, especially Annenkov, Lev Bruni and Pyotr Miturich, and in 1916 Remizov invited Annenkov to design sets and costumes for his mystical ballet *Yasnia* (not produced). It is amusing to recall that, just after the Revolution, Remizov received extra rations of kerosene because a Soviet inspector was impressed by his art—not by his literature.[23] Even so, neither the extra rations, nor the hospitality of the House of Arts (where Annenkov, Dobuzhinsky, Forsh and many others congregated) alleviated Remizov's material position and, at the end of the summer of 1921, an "unbearable headache"[24] forced him to leave Soviet Russia.

Remizov was forty-four when he arrived in Berlin and, although mature as a writer, he was still at the beginning of his artistic career. In Russia Remizov had produced only calligraphic designs and had scarcely explored the media of visual expression. In Berlin, however, Remizov concentrated on his second métier and quickly produced portraits, dreamscapes and illustrated albums. Most of these were ink compositions, sometimes with paint and crayon, they combined visual image and orthographic sign, and they often depended for their effect on a literary border and/or an extended caption. In format, these pieces were reminiscent of Persian miniatures and Old Russian engravings, although in addition to traditional elements, Remizov also experimented with various materials and methods. One of his important artistic developments at this time was his discovery and manipulation of collage. In general, Remizov's *assemblages* relied on small triangles and oblongs of colored paper applied to the surface of the picture. In some cases, Remizov used silver and gold paper so as to imbue the work with luminosity and reflectivity; in other cases, he used *objets trouvés* such as the stub of a bus ticket or the label from a cigarette pack in order to emphasize the textural value of the composition. Remizov's *appliqué* work—which, however, was still figurative at this stage—bears some resemblance to the abstract collages of Kurt Schwitters of approximately the same period. Remizov's

dissonances of form and texture, his reliance on the spontaneous impulse do, in fact, bring him close to the German Dadaists.

As documents of the Berlin diaspora, the Remizov portraits of the early 1920s have definite value and, momentarily, they attracted the attention of fellow emigres. The avant-garde artists Ivan Puni (Jean Pougny) and Khana (Kseniya) Boguslavskaya (Puni's wife), who had arrived in Berlin in 1920, thought highly of Remizov's portraits and designs, and encouraged German critics and connoisseurs to give serious attention to Remizov's art. The result was that some of Remizov's albums were purchased by German collectors, that his works were illustrated in Berlin magazines (e.g., *Das Kunstblatt,* 1925, August) and that Remizov was honored with a one-man show at Herwarth Walden's prestigious gallery *Der Sturm* in 1927. Just before and after the First World War, *Der Sturm* was synonymous with the European and Russian avant-gardes: the Burlyuk brothers, Kandinsky, Kulbin, Larionov, etc., all exhibited there at one time or another. Still, the Remizov exhibition had little impact on the Berlin public, either German or Russian, no catalog was issued, and most of the works went back to Remizov then living in Paris.

In France, where Remizov moved to in 1923, he had little success as an artist or, for that matter, as a writer, even among his fellow countrymen. As Remizov observed wistfully in an article of 1938: "Over recent years, when I was left with no hope of seeing my books published, and when there turned out to be 'no place' for me in the Russian periodicals .... I decided to make use of my calligraphy: I began to make manuscripts, illustrated albums in an edition of one."[25] The publicist Nikolai Otsup did invite Remizov to contribute to his exhibition of Drawings by French and Russian Writers in Paris in 1923 and ran an article on Remizov the writer and artist in his journal *Chisla* in 1933.[26] Remizov also maintained his connections with the World of Art artists in emigration, especially with Chekhonin, Somov and, after 1925, with Ivan Bilibin. But, as Nina Berberova has pointed out, Remizov was the kind of person who chose to live among "statics," not "dynamics"[27] and whose art could rarely appeal to anyone beyond the immediate circle of his tea-table. Isolation, self-inflicted or otherwise, did not lessen Remizov's output, and Annenkov has recalled that Remizov produced at least two or three drawings a day: "Nulla dies sine linea."[28] During the Paris period Remizov continued to draw portraits of contemporaries including Bely (1925), Gorodetsky (1926), Mochulsky (1928), Puni (1927), Shestov (1926) and Stepun (1927). He also compiled many albums of mystical drawings such as *Posolon'* (1932-45), *Vzvikhrennaia Rus'* (1933-35), *Sny Turgeneva* (1935), *Sibirskii skaz* (1940-41) and *Tristan and Isolde* (1951). Over one thousand of such drawings were shown at the exhibition of Remizov's work organized by the artist Nikolai Zaretsky in Prague in 1933-34. Some of the albums were described and systematized in the journal *Nov'* (Revel [= Tallin] 1935, No. 8).

Between 1932 and 1938 Remizov produced 230 albums containing 2000 drawings. Although it is difficult to generalize about this vast output, there are certain distinctive traits that can be discerned. The calligraphic element is still dominant, but, in contrast to the Berlin period, the later drawings appear to be more compact, more organized, more concentrated. If anything, the imagery of the 1930 albums is even more oneiric, even more introspective than before. If we examine the picture called *The Eardrum* (1934), an illustration to *Uchitel' muzyki,* then we find that the artist presents us with an "x-ray" close-up of the inside of the cranium. What we see is the outline of a head and the cellular structures within it. Both in conception and rendition, *The Eardrum* forms an intriguing parallel with the painting of Pavel Filonov (cf. Filonov's *Untitled* [1924] and *The Head and the Thumb* [1925-26]). Filonov believed that the artist should paint not just visible dimensions of reality, but also "its own pulsation and that of its orbit, its biodynamics, intellect, emanations, interfusions, geneses, processes in color and form—in short, life as a whole ... the reality of the object and its orbit is eternally forming and transforming its coloristic and formal content and its processes (this is absolute analytical vision)."[29] This physiological or biological extension of art would seem to be especially applicable to Remizov's work at this time.

Throughout the 1930s Remizov produced many such "intravenal" landscapes, although they remained figurative, narrative or, at least, representational. Only in 1940 (not, it would seem, earlier) did Remizov turn his attention to non-objective art, although he continued to draw his "monsters" and to write prose in his traditional manner. What caused this abrupt development in Remizov's art? Remizov himself alluded to one reason when he wrote in his article on writers' drawings of 1937: "[There are] drawings on manuscripts and drawings that the writer makes when he puts himself forward as an artist."[30] Remizov went on to state that his art had already moved from the first to the second category, i.e., he was no longer an illustrator or commentator but rather an independent artist. Still, there was surely a more compelling explanation of Remizov's development, one that was linked to the idea of totality and interfusion mentioned above. Remizov wearied of his "servility to Euclid"[31] and attempted to break down the conventional categories that Euclidian geometry imposed. Already in his later figurative pieces as, for example, in his *Dream Picture,* it is difficult to perceive where one image ends and another begins. Devils, angels, animals, humans seem to "pulsate, emanate, interfuse" (to paraphrase Filonov) and to constitute a relentless rhythm or melody, what the Symbolist painter Viktor Borisov-Musatov referred to as an "endless line".[32] However allegorical their connotations, these figurative elements are, in most cases, meaningless to the spectator just as many children's drawings are. Remizov seemed suddenly to realize this and, convinced of the inexpressibility of his mystical visions, removed the literary eccentricities from his art.

The more myopic Remizov became, the more abstract became his pictures. In 1940 he began to produce works which, had they been done 20-25 years before, would have surpassed Larionov's Rayonism or Lyubov Popova's architectonic paintings. Remizov, allegedly, reached his abstract conclusion when a window in his apartment, blown out by a bomb, needed to be filled. Instead of installing a new window, Remizov decided to block the space with a painting. The result was a style of picture reminiscent of a window in its fragmented surface, its interpenetration of planes and refractivity, and was quite devoid of any narrative property.

From his earliest days, Remizov had sensed a "network of waves" that joined all objects and a "radiant glow" that surrounded them, exuded from within (what Remizov referred to as the *ispredmetnyi element*).[33] But only towards the end of his life did Remizov decide to renounce the objects themselves and to transmit only this glow. This notion of light emission brings to mind the endeavors of the old icon-painters, especially Theophanes the Greek, to render the presence of Divine Light by streaks of white emanating from the bodies of Christ and His Saints. Both the theory and practice of Remizov at this point also resemble Larionov's abstract style called Rayonism: "We do not sense the object with our eye, as it is depicted conventionally in pictures and as a result of following this or that device .... We perceive a sun of rays proceeding from a source of light; these are reflected from the object and enter our field of vision."[34] The Symbolist artist Mikhail Vrubel' had also seen reality in this manner: "The contours with which artists normally delineate the confines of a form in actual fact do not exist—they are merely an optical illusion that occurs from the interaction of rays falling on to the object and reflected from its surface at different angles. In fact, here you obtain a 'complementary color'—complementary to the basic, local color...."[35] Remizov saw through this optical illusion and produced, at last, an art that was foreign to literature. Remizov once said to Annenkov: "When a painter's colors assume only an auxiliary character, his painting loses its quality."[36] Remizov's abstract compositions, dependent only on linear interactions and color contrasts, prove the validity of this statement. They are self-sufficient works, angular and prismatic, that seem to transmit the luminous energy of matter itself. How ironic it was that Remizov saw this light only as he began to go blind.

NOTES

1. Iu. Annenkov, *Dnevnik moikh vstrech,* New York: Inter-Language Associates, 1966, vol. 1, p. 217.
2. A. Remizov, *Podstrizhennymi glazami,* Paris: YMCA, 1951, p. 50.
3. Unpublished statement by Remizov of 1947. Coll. N. Reznikoff, Paris.

4. The only substantial published contributions on Remizov the artist are: N. Zaretsky, *Russische Dichter als Maler und Zeichner,* Recklinghausen: Aurel Bonger, 1960 (one section on Remizov); V. Kukovnikov [pseudonym of Remizov], "Rukopisi i risunki A. Remizova" in *Chisla,* Paris, 1933, No. 9, pp. 191-94. Some data, with Remizov statements from the Zaretsky book, are in E. Steneberg, *Russische Kunst Berlin 1919-1932,* Berlin: Mann, 1969, p. 6 et seq.
5. *Iskusstvo knigi* is an annual publication dealing with Russian and Western book designers and illustrators. It began to appear in 1958. The latest issue is No. 8 for 1975 (M: Kniga).
6. Remizov, op. cit., p. 60. Remizov stated in an interview with Zaretsky in Berlin ca. 1922 that: "Zeichnen habe ich nirgends gelernt, aber Zeichnen is für mich das, was für einen armen Fischer das Fishchefangen ist, Zeichnen das ist meine Leidenschaft!" [Nowhere have I learnt drawing, but drawing is for me what fishing is for the poor fisherman, drawing is my passion]. (Steneberg, op. cit., p. 28). Remizov's statement should be qualified to some extent since he did receive at least a minimum of art training.
7. A. Bely, *Simvolizm,* M: Musaget, 1910, p. 143.
8. See Bely, ibid., pp. 178-80, 219-20.
9. Kukovnikov, op. cit., p. 191.
10. Remizov, op. cit., p. 64.
11. Ibid., p. 55.
12. First part of quotation from El Lissitzky, "Kniga s tochki zreniia zritel'ogo vospriiatiia—vizual'naia kniga" (1959), in *Iskusstvo knigi,* M, 1962, No. 3, p. 165; second part of quotation from S. Lissitzky-Küpper, *El Lissitzky. Life. Letters. Texts,* London: Thames and Hudason, 1968, p. 19
13. This according to Kukovnikov (=Remizov), op. cit., p. 191.
14. This according to N. Kodrianskaia, *Aleksei Remizov,* Paris: Etoile, 1959, p. 116.
15. N. Radlow, *Der moderne Buchschmuck in Russland 1914* (compiled by S. Makowsky), St. Petersburg: Golicke and Willborg, 1914, p. 6.
16. M. Dobuzhinsky, *Vospominaniia,* New York: Put Zhizni, 1976, p. 336.
17. i.e., *Rerikh,* Petrograd: Svobodnoe iskusstvo, 1916. Texts by Yu. Baltrushaitis, A. Benois, A. Gidoni, A. Remizov and S. Yaremich. Remizov's text is entitled "Zherlitsa druzhinnaia" and appears pp. 87-124.
18. *Zolotoe runo,* M, 1907, No. 5. Krymov's illustrations to Remizov's *Chortik* also appeared in *Zolotoe runo* (1907, No. 1).
19. S. Makovsky: *Stranitsy khudozhestvennoi kritiki,* St. Petersburg: Panteon, 1909, p. 147.
20. Dobuzhinsky, op. cit., p. 335.
21. See, for example, V. Markov (pseudonym of W. Matvejs), "Printsipy novogo iskusstva" in *Soiuz molodezhi,* St. Petersburg, 1912, No. 1, pp. 5-14; No. 2, pp. 5-18.
22. A. Shevchenko, *Neo-primitivizm. Ego teoriia, ego vozmozhnosti, ego dostizheniia,* M, 1913. Also see his *Printsipy kubizma i drugikh sovremennykh techenii v zhivopisi vsekh vremen i narodov,* M, 1913.
23. This according to Kukovnikov, op. cit., p. 194.
24. Annenkov, op. cit., p. 225.
25. A. Remizov, "Risunki pisatelei" in *Vremennik obshchestva druzei russkoi knigi,* Paris, 1938, No. 4, p. 29.
26. i.e., Vasilii Kukovnikov (=Remizov), "Rukopisi i risunki A. Remizova," *Chisla,* Paris, 1933, No. 9, pp. 191-94.
27. N. Berberova, *Kursiv moi,* Munich: Fink, 1972, p. 304.
28. Annenkov, op. cit., p. 228.
29. P. Filonov, "Deklaratsiia 'Mirovogo rastsveta'" in *Zhizn' iskusstva,* Petersburg, 1923, No. 20, pp. 13-14.
30. Remizov: "Risunki pisatelei," op. cit., p. 27.

31. Remizov, *Podstrizhennymi glazami,* op. cit., p. 72.

32. Borisov-Musatov ,in a letter to Benois of 1905. Quoted from A. Rusakova, *V. E. Borisov-Musatov,* L-M, 1966, p. 195.

33. See Kodrianskaia, op. cit., pp. 98-99; also Remizov, *Podstrizhennymi glazami,* op. cit., p. 56.

34. M. Larionov, "Luchistskaia zhivopis' " in *Oslinyi khvost i mishen',* M, 1913. Translation in John Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902-1934, New York: Viking, 1976, p. 98.*

35. M. Vrubel'. Quotation from N. Prakhov, *Stranitsy proshlogo,* Kiev, 1958, pp. 159-60. Original source not indicated.

36. Annenkov, op. cit., p. 214.