



Boyarynya Morozova by Vasily Surikov, Russia

The Artist's Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born in Krasnoyarsk, Yeniseysk Governorate (1848 – 1916). • Graduated from the Imperial Academy of Arts in St.Petersburg (1875). • Painted a series of historical paintings. • Had his first exhibition with the Peredvizhniki. • Visited Switzerland and painted <i>Suvorov Crossing the Alps</i> (1897), which was purchased by Tsar Nicholas II. • Russian Realist history painter. • Patron: Pavel Tretyakov.
The History of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted one of the most famous and notable pictures <i>Boyarynya Morozova</i> (1887) oil on canvas (304 x 587,5 cm), exhibited in the Tretyakov Gallery. • Realism, History painting (style) • Famous for its gigantic size. • The picture is amazingly well organized despite the rare multiplicity and variety of types. • Surikov was attracted not only by the exotic side of the past, but also by the invariable strength and steadfastness of the people's spirit.
The Theme of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents the victorious image of an unbroken woman being carried in the sledge to prison for her religious principles. • The historic period dates to the 17th century. • Boyarynya, dressed in expensive clothes, is chained. • Her character shows how insanely devoted to her faith this old-believer is, who would never refuse it even at the cost of her life. • People in the crowd have mixed feelings: they display fanaticism side by side with fervent belief and naïve curiosity. • To the artist history is a drama, and its main characters are people. • The main character of the picture is the embodiment of the strong spirit and faith.
Cultural Value of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the most iconic paintings representing Russian history. • The picture combines epic force with the finest lyricism in art. • The masterpiece strikes the viewers with its depth and convincing restoration of old Russian life, types, costumes. • The artist conveys the complex interplay of passions and the emotive state of numerous personages. • The image of Boyarynya in her black clothes is one of the most dramatic images in Russian historical painting known to most Russians since childhood from textbooks.