



The Hunters at Rest by Vasily Perov, Russia

The Artist's Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian painter, one of the founding members of Peredvizhniki. • Born in Tobolsk (1834 – 1882). • Being perfect in calligraphy took pseudonym Perov. • Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (1853). • Received the title of an academician (1866). • Became Professor at Moscow School of Arts, joined Peredvizhniki (1871). • A key figure of the Russian Realist movement. • Patron: Pavel Tretyakov.
The History of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted 2 versions of <i>Hunters at Rest</i> (1871; 1877) oil on canvas 119 x 183 cm (the 1st exhibited in the Tretyakov Gallery and the 2nd in the State Russian Museum). • Style: Realism. • Famous due to the high quality of painting and popularity of hunting in the 19th century (Perov was an avid hunter). • All the depicted characters have real prototypes: artist's friends, doctors, also avid hunters. • It accurately reflects the emotional state of the characters. • It is compared to the hunting stories of Ivan Turgenev.
The Theme of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The picture is packed with encrypted messages in its details: clothes, trophies, weapons. • The main feature of the picture is the psychological portraits of the heroes. • Perov's painting conceals deep philosophical meaning of collision of old age, youth and maturity. Old age is represented by an elderly hunter, living with memories and idealizing the past. Youth is represented by a young hunter, who enthusiastically believes everything he is told. Maturity is represented by a middle-aged hunter who is not easy to outwit, but relies only on his life experience. • It represents a usual life scene from the life of typical hunters of that time, though everything is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. • The background depicts a rather gloomy autumn landscape, which brings a disturbing connotation to its comic content. • It combines several painting genres: portraits, a landscape and a still life with game and hunting equipment.
Cultural Value of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic painting representing Russian hunting traditions of the 19th century. • Known to anyone in Russia. • Presents qualities of the hunters alluding to national character traits and the perception of nature. • Has a literary element, a characteristic feature of Russian painting of the 2nd half of the 19th century. • This canvas breathes with optimism and enthusiasm, which is part of the Russian character.