



BOGATYRS by Viktor Vasnetsov, Russia, USSR

The Artist's Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born in Vyatka Governorate (1848 – 1926). • Entered the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg (1867). • Joined Peredvizhniki colony in Paris (1876-1877). • Concentrated on illustrating Russian fairy tales and epic narrative poem - Bylinas (1870s). • Turned to religious subjects, executed a series of icons for Abramtsevo estate (1880s) • Painted frescos in the St. Vladimir's Cathedral of Kiev (1884 -1889). • Worked on stage designs and costumes for the opera <i>The Snow Maiden</i>. • Designed the façade of the Tretyakov Gallery, was its regent. • Created <u>budenovka</u> - a military hat, reproducing the style of ancient Rus' cone-shaped helmets. • Specialized in mythological and historical subjects, is the co-founder of Russian folklorist and romantic nationalistic painting. • A key figure in the Pseudo-Russian style movement.
The History of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil on Canvas (446x295,3 cm) bought by Tretyakov, now exhibited in the Tretyakov Gallery. • Painted the most notable picture <i>Bogatyrs</i> - the embodiment of the Russian spirit (1881 – 1898). • Started this most famous epic painting in Kiev which took him many years to create. • Mythological painting (Romanticism, Symbolism). • Patrons: Pavel Tretyakov, Savva Mamontov.
The Theme of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The picture presents 3 mythical Russian knights - Dobrynya Nikitich, Ilya Muromets and Alyosha Popovich, a famous trio who served Prince Vladimir I of Kiev, each man known for a specific trait: wits, courage, spiritual power. • The picture is a glimpse of a long adventure story of the knights. • Every hero is adored by the people as they defended their land and fought the enemies. • They are guarding the Russian borders on horseback. • The men belong to different social orders: the princely family, the peasant and the son of a priest, this is obvious from their clothes and horses.
Cultural Value of the Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the most iconic paintings representing entire Russian genre of bylina. • Since childhood the Russians are familiar with Viktor Vasnetsov's "Bogatyrs" ("The Epic Heroes") from school textbooks. • In search of elevated feelings, the painter turns to the old days of Russia, to the bylinas and fairytales. • His depiction of Russia's epic heroes has captivated many generations. • It made the great contribution to the understanding of the uniqueness of the nation's cultural heritage.