

## Foreword

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Reading \*\*\*"Consideration of Contemporary Russian Paintings—The Tale of my collection—“, I was greatly surprised that Mr. Ishii succeeded in disclosing with non-Russian eyes the very thing that is peculiar to Russian artists, that is to say, the deep insight and enthusiastic attitudes of the artists towards the Russian landscape, and the traditions of Russian realism school, on the foundation of which a large number of talented artists not only of the national level, but also of the international scale have always been produced till now and will be produced in the future as well.

When I was still young, that was quite some time ago, in a period when Russian art was first introduced to Japan and was achieving success, to which Mr. Ishii referred in his book, too, I learned from the response of the Japanese newspapers that Russia had saved realism art for the entire world. And time confirmed that this thought was correct. Entering the 21st century, we can verify that a school, without which any attempt to engage in realism paintings would not be fruitful, has been preserved to function properly only in Russia and nowhere else in the world. Just the same as in case of ballet and music, namely, dancing, opera and performance of music, a serious school is indispensable to realism paintings. It's not my job to make it clear why the school of realism has disappeared in the developed countries of the world. So, returning to Mr. Ishii's book, the thought occurred to me that it was not a foreigner who had written this book, but a Russian. This is because so uniquely and so emotionally does the author feel what the Russian artists have put into their canvases.

Mr. Ishii started to collect paintings after he was transferred to Russia for work. Each of the works introduced in his book is of a sufficiently high artistic level, but even so, all of them are not necessarily the works of great masters. I understand quite well the difficulties arising in the course of looking for the masterpieces of Russian artists. In such a noble act of collecting art, plural earnest advisors and the financial possibilities are quite essential, which would have been necessary to raise the Mr. Ishii's collection

to a level in line with the true achievements of the masters of Russian realism. I dare to say realism as Russian realism despite the fact that essentially there is no ethnic definition in the concept of realism. But I said so because true realism had been developed only in Russia.

Anyway, Mr. Ishii has acquired almost all the paintings in galleries. He must be a person who does possess very sharp discerning eyes. That's why he could select such level of works as those introduced in this book, relying only on his own sensibilities and spending much time in looking for them. The number of paintings he has collected is not so large, and yet the author took great pains to introduce the paintings of my country to Japanese art lovers and for this I feel that no matter how highly we praise him, it cannot be too much.

I know that the author has a plan to publish this book in the West, where Russian realism of the second half of the 20th century is not well known. Just as Russian school was opened up to the world at the beginning of the 20th century, Russian realism of the 19th and 20th centuries shall be opened to the people in the world and it is not so long.

Consequently, this book introducing Russian paintings to Japanese society should not only be warmly welcomed, but also we must offer him any help in this labor from every side, considering that until now there has been no one among Russian art scholars who could accomplish the same like undertaking and besides I regard the undertakings of Mr. Ishii as the conducts which can be achieved only by a person who has a noble mind and does love painting art from the bottom of his heart.

Finally, speaking figuratively, I do hope that in the land of the rising sun, with the assistance of the author of this book, the sun would shine light on the significance and true meaning of Russian paintings of the second half of the 20th century, and thus is removed a thick curtain which has blocked familiarizing with the painting works by Russian masters. The world must know about fine art of my country which is founded on unselfish, limitless service and love for the fatherland, person and nature.

\*In the Soviet era, there existed the People's Artist of the Republic and the People's Artist of the USSR. Because these titles were different to some extent in value, "USSR" is still used for the People's Artists even now after the collapse of the USSR.

\*\*The title of this book is translated from the original title in Japanese, but the title of the book translated into Russian is especially named as "Contemporary Russian Paintings through the Eyes of Some Japanese".