In the summer of 1860, the young collector Pavel Tretiakov (1832–98) visited Britain for the first time. His impressions there were mixed, as a letter from his sister of June 22 reveals:

Pasha, I see from your letter about London that it has made the same impression on you as it does on everyone who sees it for the first time: it struck you with its wealth, immense size, and extraordinary activity. But that was your first impression, which seems to have been followed by you getting bored. To tell the truth, I cannot understand how someone as curious as you could get bored in a city as interesting as London. [...] Is it perhaps that the weather, with its fog and rain, is enough to make anybody bored!\(^1\)

Happily, Tretiakov’s apparent ennui did not deter him from returning to Britain a further eight times, his final journey taking place in the spring of 1897, just eighteen months before he died. During these visits, he pursued business interests in London, Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, as well as making time to see many art works, collections, and exhibitions.

He was also sufficiently intrigued by London and its developing art scene to lend paintings to the International Exhibitions which took place there in 1862 and 1872.

Tretiakov’s participation in the 1862 exhibition was, on the face of it, particularly remarkable. Then aged thirty, he had bought his first Russian paintings just six years previously, yet his collection was already of sufficient calibre for the Imperatorskaia akademiiia khudozhestv [Imperial Academy of Arts] in St. Petersburg to desire works from it for the Russian submission to the London event. This was no common request, for Tretiakov was one of only five named private collectors, along with members of the Imperial family, whose paintings were included in the Russian section. Notable, too, is that the genre paintings which Tretiakov lent added spice to what was otherwise a rather routine academic display. In

\(^1\) “Из твоего письма о Лондоне, Паша, я вижу, что и на тебя он произвел такое же впечатление, как и на всех, видевших его в первый раз: он поразил тебя своим богатством, громадностью, своей необыкновенной деятельностью, но это было первое твое впечатление, а потом ты, кажется, заскучал, но, по правде сказать, я не понимаю, как ты при своей любознательности можешь в таком интересном городе, как Лондон, скучать ... Уже это не погода ли туманная и дождливая имеет такую способность наделять всех скучой!” Galina Andreeva, “Pavel Mikhailovich pobytval kak obychno v Anglii …,” *The Tretyakov Gallery Magazine* 1 (2004): 21—22. All translations are the author’s.
In this respect, Tretiakov’s contribution to the International Exhibition in 1862 could be seen to foretell his later patronage of the Peredvizhniki [Wanderers], who similarly unsettled the academic status quo.

Yet one small but telling fact disrupts this seamless narrative of a collector who, from the start, was prepared to champion the innovative and the marginalised. The paintings from his collection which were displayed in London in 1862 were not those that Tretiakov originally suggested for the International Exhibition, but an alternative selection put forward by a stalwart of the Academy. Far from confirming an image of Tretiakov as a nonconformist whose pioneering vision shook up the practices of the establishment, the case of the 1862 exhibition thus sees the binary which has often been drawn between this ground-breaking collector and the hidebound conservatism of the Academy significantly reversed.

When the famously outspoken critic Vladimir Stasov (1824–1906) wrote that the 1862 International Exhibition in London was more important for Russia than for any other nation, one could understand the grounds for his claim. While Russia had participated in the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the commissioners of the Russian section had struggled to persuade manufacturers, industrialists, and artists to contribute; the exhibits had arrived late, delayed by ice in the Baltic; and—particularly telling for Stasov’s purposes—the eventual display had not included any fine art. In general, Russia was seen to have performed poorly in this tantalising new forum for international competition. By the second event—the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855—Russia was at war with Britain and France in the Crimea and did not take part at all. 1862 therefore marked the first time that Russia committed wholeheartedly to an international exhibition and included a section of Russian art. This comprised 126 works by 69 artists, selected by the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg and first shown at a preliminary display there in January 1862. On their arrival in London, many of the artworks took their place in Russia’s designated section which occupied 13,000 square feet of space in the northwest corner of Francis Fowke’s celebrated exhibition halls, jockeying for position with Turkey, Brazil, Greece, and a combined display from Sweden and Norway. Across the aisle lay the splendours of Spain and the mighty submission


of the French Court. Some of the Russian paintings, however, were evidently separated from the other Russian exhibits and hung in the general picture galleries on the south side of the exhibition site (fig. 1)—an infelicitous arrangement which attracted adverse comment, as we will see.

The Russian art section included 78 paintings which comprised in part a roll call of the Academy’s more famous members or associates of the previous hundred years. There were three of the celebrated portraits of the Smolny Institute boarders by Dmitry Levitsky (1735–1822) alongside his stately Portrait of Catherine II the Legislatress⁴ [Portret Ekateriny II v vide zakonodatel’nosti v khrame bogini Pravosudia] (early 1780s) and a view of the Zwinger in Dresden⁵ by Fedor Alekseev (1753–1824). Orest Kiprensky’s (1782–1836) enigmatic portrait of his foster father⁶ vied for attention with a self portrait⁷ by Karl Briullov (1799–1852). Religious painting was represented by Anton Losenko (1737–173), Aleksei Egorov (1776–1851), Fedor Bruni (1799–1875), Aleksandr Ivanov (1806–58), and Fedor Moller (1812–74). And four landscape paintings by Ivan Aivazovsky (1817–1900) jostled for space with those by Silvestr Shchedrin (1791–1830), Aleksei Bogoliubov (1824–96), Mikhail Lebedev (1811–37), and Lev Lagorio (1827–1905). There was also an eclectic selection of genre painting, including A Dying Peasant Girl Receiving Holy Communion⁸ [Prichashchenie umiraiushchei] (1839) by Aleksei Venetsianov (1780–1847), The Major’s Courtship⁹ [Svatoostvo maiora] (1848) and The Widow¹⁰ [Vdovushka] (c. 1850) by Pavel Fedotov (1815–52), and works by Aleksei Korzukhin (1835–94), Aleksandr Morozov (1835–1904), and Nikolai Sverchkov (1817–98). The accompanying catalogue, published in both Russian and English, listed the ownership of many of these paintings, the majority of which came from the collections of the Academy, the tsar or members of the Imperial family.¹¹ Also listed was a handful of private collectors who had lent paintings to the exhibition, among them “Mr Tretiakof.”

⁴ Портрет Екатерины II в виде законодательницы в храме богини Правосудия, early 1780s, oil on canvas, 110 x 76.8 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 5813.
⁵ Вид Цвингера в Дрездене, 1779-early 1790s, oil on canvas, 48.4 x 64.8 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 5019.
⁶ Портрет А. К. Швальбе, 1804, oil on canvas, 78.2 x 64.1 cm, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. Zh-5128.
⁷ Автопортрет, 1848, oil on board, 64.1 x 54 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 5051.
⁸ Причащение умирающей, 1839, oil on canvas, 76 x 94 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 5062.
⁹ Свадовство майора, 1848, oil on canvas, 58.3 x 75.4 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 5210.
¹⁰ Вдовушка, c. 1850, oil on canvas, 57.8 x 44.8 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 5207.
Tretiakov was then far from the household name he would later become, though he had already determined to create a public art gallery, writing in his first will of 1860 that he intended to bequeath 150,000 silver roubles for the foundation of “an art museum or a public picture gallery” in Moscow. He had also begun to attract attention with acquisitions which prompted controversy or exerted lasting appeal, among them *The Prisoner’s Halt* [Prival arestantov] (1861) by Valery Jakobi (1834–1902) and *Last Spring* [Posledniaia vesna] (1861) by Mikhail Klodt (1835–1914), both of which Tretiakov bought directly from the artists in 1861. These confirmed the collector’s growing interest in genre painting of the critical Realist variety. When it came to proposing paintings for the International Exhibition, however, Tretiakov’s four suggestions were decidedly conventional, including Borovikovsky’s *Portrait of Duchess Kutaisov* [Portret grafiny Kutaisovoi], Bruni’s *Madonna* [Bogomater], and Briullov’s *Portrait of Michelangelo Lanci* [Portret Mikelandzhelo Lanchi] (1851). Only Tretiakov’s fourth proposal, *Cacciatore* by Vasily Khudiakov (1826–71), showed any affinity with the Realist painting for which his collection became famed—but even Khudiakov had been elected an academician in St. Petersburg over a decade previously, in 1851. In short, all four of Tretiakov’s suggestions were by artists who had been lionised by the Academy and had held important teaching or leadership roles there. They were in no way designed to subvert the standard fare of academic exhibitions at the time.

Tretiakov’s selection never made it to Britain, however, as he was overruled by Fedor Iordan (1800–83), a renowned engraver and professor at the Academy who knew London well from his time as a student there, and was consequently appointed one of the main curators of the artistic section for the London Exhibition. Familiarising himself closely with Tretiakov’s collection in Moscow, Iordan made a different selection from it for the preliminary display of Russian exhibits which opened in St. Petersburg in January 1862. Briullov’s *Portrait of Lanci* was retained from Tretiakov’s initial list, but it was now joined

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13 Привал арестантов, 1861, oil on canvas, 98.6 x 143.5 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 354.
14 Последняя весна, 1861, oil on canvas, 71 x 100 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 536.
15 Портрет графини Кутайсовой. The details of this painting, which is no longer in the collections of the State Tretiakov Gallery, are unknown.
16 Богоматерь. The details of this painting, which is no longer in the collections of the State Tretiakov Gallery, are unknown.
17 Портрет Микеланджело Ланчи, 1851, oil on canvas, 61.8 x 49.5 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 225.
18 Каччиаторе. The details of this painting, which is no longer in the collections of the State Tretiakov Gallery, are unknown.
by Klodt’s *Dying Musician* [Больной музыкант] (1859),\(^{19}\) *Peddler Selling Lemons* [Разносчик] (1858) by Valery Iakobi (1834–1902),\(^ {20}\) *Village Dance* [Хоровод в Курской губернии] (1860)\(^ {21}\) by Konstantin Trutovsky (1826–93), and *Oranienbaum Landscape* [Вид в окрестностях Ораненбаума] (1854)\(^ {22}\) by Aleksei Savrasov (1830–97). Of these, the Academy Council eventually chose three to send to London: Klodt’s *Dying Musician*, Trutovsky’s *Village Dance*, and Iakobi’s *Peddler Selling Lemons*.\(^ {23}\) These three paintings presented a very different aspect to the works which Tretiakov had suggested. While his proposed selection would have showcased the skills of two of the Academy’s finest portraitists (Borovikovsky and Briullov) and its most loyal modern history painter (Bruni), together with a genre painter who had achieved the prestigious rank of academician (Khudiakov), the Academy instead put forward one critical Realist painting and two light-hearted anecdotal scenes by younger and less established artists. So it was that the trailblazing collector proposed a relatively traditional selection, while Iordan and the Academy made the more unconventional choice.

On their arrival in London, the Russian paintings took their place among a glorious eclectica of national bedfellows. There were rails and fittings for railways, models of ships, weapons and vases, and garments made of everything from linen and silk to fur and papier-mâché. Samovars, glassware, and a cacophony of different bells (for churches, boats, and troikas) nestled among spades, axes, and a graphite bust of the tsar. The London *Times* was full of praise, writing of the Russian section: “there are few portions of the Exhibition which have been more attractive, or which better repay careful examination.”\(^ {24}\) Certain Russian visitors were less impressed, however, condemning the display as crude and chaotic. They also regretted its inaccessibility to foreign audiences as there were no explanatory texts in English, the catalogue was only available after the opening date, and even then its contents did not mirror the items on display. These and other reactions suggest that, while British visitors enjoyed the novelty of the Russian exhibits (which on the whole fared well, winning

\(^{19}\) Больной музыкант, 1859, oil on canvas, 39 x 51.2 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 535.

\(^{20}\) Разносчик, 1858, oil on canvas, 67 x 52.8 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 353.

\(^{21}\) Хоровод в Курской губернии, 1860, oil on canvas, 67 x 98 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 343.

\(^{22}\) Вид в окрестностях Ораненбаума, 1854, oil on canvas, 78 x 118 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. 824.

\(^{23}\) For the various stages in the selection of paintings from Tretiakov’s collection, I am indebted to Andreeva, “Павел Михайлович,” 30–31.

a total of 177 medals and 128 honourable mentions), Russians who were familiar with this sort of material had severe misgivings about its selection, interpretation, and display.25

Responses to the Russian art section were similarly mixed. Unsurprisingly, Iordan presented it as a resounding success: “One could see the surprise of those viewing the Russian school for the first time,” he trumpeted, and claimed to have heard many positive comments about the Russian display.26 His view was partially confirmed by Théophile Thoré (1807–69) who, writing under the pseudonym of William Bürger for L’Indépendence, declared: “C’est comme une naissance, cette apparition inattendue des artistes russes au meeting international! Les autres peuples ne sont point encore habitué à compter un art russe.” Extending a welcome to the newcomers, Thoré gave a brief résumé of some of the artists’ careers and reserved special commendation for Levitsky, whose smolianki portraits were “charmants;” Kiprensky who, judging from his portrait of his foster father, was “probablement le plus fort de toute cette pléiade primitive;” and Iakobi, of whom the French critic wrote: “C’est pourtant le plus adroit et le plus spiritual de tous les peintres de genre, avant celui qu’on n’a pas craint de baptiser Hogarth. Le Marchand de citrons, par M. Jacoby, est très-fin de physionomie, très-juste de lumière et très-harmonieux de couleur.”27 Significant here is that Thoré should single out a painting from Tretiakov’s collection which had been selected by Iordan and endorsed by the official commissioners. By contrast, the French critic was indifferent to Borovikovsky, Bruni, and Briullov, all of whom had been on Tretiakov’s original list. If Thoré’s opinion is anything to go by, it would seem that Iordan and the Academy Council had a keen sense of what might find favour abroad.

While Thoré had praise for Levitsky, Kiprensky, and Iakobi, in general he found the Russian school disappointingly derivative (“il y a peu d’œuvres remarquables”), and urged it to develop its own distinctive identity:

La Russie ambitionne d’avoir une école, et elle a raison. Mais, pour cela, il faut que les artistes ne se tourmentent pas trop des écoles étrangères; il faut qu’ils puissent dans leur propre fonds et qu’ils conservent franchement leur caractère autochtone. Avant tout,

25 I am indebted here to Fisher, “Especially, Peculiarly Russian.”
soyez Russes, comme Leonard est Italien, Velazquez Espagnol, Rubens Flamand, Rembrandt Hollandais et Reynolds Anglais.\textsuperscript{28}

In this respect, the Frenchman was echoed by several Russian visitors. For the writer and critic Dmitry Grigorovich (1822–1900), the exhibition betrayed the lack of originality of the Russian school of painting, which “imitates now Italy, now France, now Belgium.”\textsuperscript{29} For Stasov, it was an underwhelming and one-sided display, lacking any of the liveliness and power of modern Russian art.\textsuperscript{30} Tretiakov’s sister, Sofia, who visited the exhibition with their mother in May 1862, was similarly unimpressed:

What struck all of us was the poverty and awkwardness of the Russian arrangement. Even our pictures are not hanging in one place, with some in the same room as the [Russian] goods, and the rest in the picture galleries. Our doctor is furiously berating Russians for the paucity of exhibits, and for the fact that the paintings on display are few and not very good.\textsuperscript{31}

When Tretiakov followed in his sister’s footsteps and visited the exhibition himself in August, he, too, was unhappy with the Russian display. Indeed, this reserved and often laconic man was sufficiently exercised to write in his diary: “The Russian school. A grand total of 78 paintings; has the Russian school really produced only 78 works worthy of being sent to an exhibition? No. To save the Russian school from shame the following of the chosen 78 pictures should not be sent.” Interestingly, among the ensuing list of works which Tretiakov would have liked to exclude is one by Iakobi, while a separate list he appended of “deeply unsuccessful” paintings included one by Borovikovsky and two by Briullov. As an afterthought, Tretiakov added that “the selection of Bruni’s paintings was also unfortunate.”\textsuperscript{32}

Borovikovsky, Bruni, and Briullov were, of course, artists whom he had hoped to represent

\textsuperscript{28} Thoré, “Exposition Internationale,” 309.
\textsuperscript{30} Stasov, “Nasha khudozhestvennaia proviziia,” 36-45.
\textsuperscript{31} “что особенно всем нам бросилось в глаза, так это бедность и некрасивость размещения русских товаров, даже и картины-то наши повесили не в одном месте, часть их находится в одной комнате с товарами, а другая часть в отделении картин. Доктор наш ужасно ругает русских как за то, что товаров чрезвычайно мало, так и за то, что и картин выставили мало и не совсем хорошие.” Andreeva, “Pavel Mikhailovich,” 24.
\textsuperscript{32} “Русская школа. Всех картин 78, неужели Русская школа произвела только 78 произведения, достойных для отправки на выставку? Нет. Чтобы не срамить Русскую школу, и из этих 78 картин не должны бы быть посланы:” “крайне неудачно,” “Бруни картины тоже выбраны неудачно.” Aleksandra P. Botkina, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretiakov v zhizni i iskusstve (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1995), 37.
from his own collection, while a work by Iakobi was one of Tretiakov’s paintings which Iordan had chosen in their stead. Could it be that the usually mild-mannered collector was sufficiently wounded by the Academy’s rejection of his suggestions to denigrate the alternatives which had been sent? It is impossible to draw firm conclusions, as Tretiakov does not list the specific paintings which he had in mind. It nonetheless seems reasonable to infer that his criticism of the exhibition, which has largely been attributed to his farsighted support for modern Realist painting, was at least in part inflected by his pique at not having his chosen works on display.

If Tretiakov was damning about the Russian art on show in 1862, he took a healthy interest in other European schools. We have vital evidence of this in a travel notebook he kept which, along with a record of such practical issues as expenses, itineraries, and accommodation, has page after page of comments on the paintings on show in Fowke’s vast exhibition halls. The British school was subjected to close scrutiny, with Tretiakov commenting on no fewer than thirty genre paintings, fifteen landscapes (including marine paintings), twelve historical images, and ten portraits. Next to his entry on each painting is a careful note of its genre, confirming the collector’s attentiveness to artistic typology. The preponderance of genre paintings reflects Tretiakov’s gravitation towards everyday scenes, with the work of William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), George Morland (1763–1804), David Wilkie (1785–1841), Thomas Webster (1800–86), and William Collins (1788–1847) singled out for praise. The notebook also details important British painters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Joshua Reynolds (1723–92), Thomas Gainsborough (1727–88), William Hogarth (1697–1764), Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), and John Crome (1785–1841)), as well as more recent British artists whom Tretiakov admired, among them Charles Leslie (1794–1859), Charles Eastlake (1793–1865), Richard Parkes Bonington (1802–28), Edwin Landseer (1802–73), John Constable (1776–1837), and Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851).33 Eastlake was particularly prominent in the Victorian art world, having been appointed Secretary of the Fine Arts Commission in 1841, President of the Royal Academy in 1850, and first Director of the National Gallery in 1855. He continued to hold the latter two posts until his death in 1865 and was thus at the helm of two of London’s most important artistic institutions during the exhibition of 1862. Tretiakov’s awareness of Eastlake may have fuelled his desire to acquaint himself thoroughly with London’s modern art scene. He certainly visited the National Gallery and would surely have been curious about the National

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33 For Tretiakov’s notebook and its contents, see Andreeva, “Pavel Mikhailovich,” 31–32.
Portrait Gallery, which had opened in 1856 (the year of Tretiakov’s first Russian acquisitions) and shared his fascination with portraiture as a peculiarly vibrant art form.

British painting apart, the art which most captivated Tretiakov at the exhibition of 1862 was that of the French school. If it was the genre painters who stood out for him among British artists, the French submission caught his eye with the landscapes of the Barbizon school, among them those of Charles-Francois Daubigny (1817–78), Theodore Rousseau (1812–67), Constant Troyon (1810–65), and Jean-Francois Millet (1814–75). The vogue for paintings by the Barbizon school was on the ascendant in Russia. They figured prominently in the Kushelev-Bezborodko collection, which had been bequeathed to the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg and opened to the public there in 1862, the very year of the London exhibition. Tretiakov’s younger brother, Sergei (1834–92), was also later an avid collector of paintings by the Barbizon artists. Pavel Tretiakov’s attention to the French section at the exhibition of 1862 was therefore in step with an important new trajectory in Russian patronage, as his compatriots began to shift their focus away from the time-honoured artists of the Renaissance and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries towards the modern European schools.

Tretiakov maintained his voracious appetite for museum visits and the visual arts during his later journeys to Britain. The verve and ambition of these is evident from two diary entries during his visit of 1895. On May 2, he wrote: “Yesterday I saw four exhibitions and the National Gallery. Here exhibitions are open from eight in the morning till seven at night and museums also work from ten till seven (in summer, of course), so you can see a lot.” He was still at it two days later, writing: “On Tuesday I visited the Kensington museum and some small exhibitions, and I spent yesterday in Oxford. Today is my last day. I am going to various museums and tomorrow, at eight in the morning, I am leaving.”

Tretiakov’s awakening to London’s artistic scene in 1862 thus set a pattern of artistic exploration in Britain that lasted throughout this life. Moreover, the negotiations over which paintings to

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35 See Tatiana Iudenkova, Drugoi Tret’iakov: Sud’ba i kollektsiia odnogo iz osnovatelei Tretiakovskoi galerei (Moscow: State Tretiakov Gallery, 2012).

36 “Вчера я осмотрел четыре выставки и Национальную галерею. Здесь выставки открыты с 8 утра до 7 вечера и музей с 10 также до 7 вечера (разумеется, в летнее время), можно много успеть осмотреть. […] Вторник был в Кенсингтонском музее и на разных мелких выставках, вчера день провел в Оксфорде; сегодня последний день, буду в разных музеях, а завтра в 8 ч. утра уеду.” Andreeva, “Pavel Mikhailovich,” 28.
display in 1862 question Tretiakov’s supposed primacy in promoting Russia’s artistic vanguard. On this occasion at least, it was the establishment which weighed in with support for some novel young artists, while Tretiakov would have been happy to uphold the priorities of the Academy on a singularly public and international stage.