Pavel Tretyakov and the Origin of his Fine Art Gallery
On the Nascence of Russian Art Patronage

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ABSTRACT: The history of Russian art patronage has to this date not yet been comprehensively treated in Czech, Slovak, or other foreign scholarly literature. It is only within the Russian scholarly context that several interesting publications have been released on this subject in the past few years. However, they focus on Russian art patronage from an art historical and sociological perspective. This study, therefore, aims to analyze Russian art patronage from a historical perspective, within the context of historical events. Thus, the historical rather than the art historical perspective is fundamental. Its objective is to treat the emergence and development of Russian art patronage and, using the example of one of the most eminent art patrons and collectors of the second half of the 19th century, the wealthy Moscow merchant Pavel Tretyakov, to illustrate why and how this patronage evolved. It then discusses the benefits for Russian society that were realized through the development of patronage generally, and in particular through Tretyakov’s establishment of a gallery that was made accessible to the general public.

Keywords: Russia, Russian history, nineteenth century, fine arts, values in art, Pavel Tretyakov

The history of Russian art historical patronage has to this date been only minimally treated in Czech, Slovak, and other foreign literature. Although in the past few years several interesting publications about Russian art patronage, especially art-historical works, have been published in the Russian academic press, and there have also been recent sociological analyses, but these have only rarely managed to contextualize patronage within the historical conditions of the period. The study brought forward here therefore proposes to familiarize a primarily Czech and Slovak readership with the subject matter framed in a historical perspective and context, and thereby contribute to the diffusion of knowledge about the cultural history of East Europe. This work discusses the nascence and evolution of Russian art patronage, and using the example of one of the most distinguished art patrons and collectors in the second half of the 19th century, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov, it discusses the benefits for Russian society that were realized through the development of patronage generally, and in particular through Tretyakov’s establishment of a gallery that was made accessible to the general public.
On the last day of August in 1892 the town council of what was at that time the second capital city of the Russian Empire, the Moscow Municipal Duma, received a letter from the Moscow citizen Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov (1832–1898). He informed them that he intended to fulfill the wishes expressed by his beloved brother in his last will and testament, and at the same time contribute to the development of art in the Russian Empire by bestowing his art gallery including all the works he and his brother had amassed over the course of several decades to the city of Moscow, so it would be enshrined in perpetuity. One week later after hearings in the Moskow Municipal Duma “gradonachalnik”, Prince Vladimir M. Golitsyn, officially accepted his gift. On 16 May 1893 the “Pavel and Sergey Tretyakov City Art Gallery”, later renamed the “State Tretyakov Gallery”, was opened up to the public.

The donor of this extraordinary gift, Pavel Tretyakov, was known in Moscow not only because he liked to buy pictures in order to surround himself with them, but also because he so generously supported their creators – and other artists as well. He was one of the most noteworthy patrons of Russian art in the second half of the 19th century.

Russian art patronage already had a fairly rich tradition. Its roots reached back to the period of tsar – emperor – Peter I’s reign (1682–1725), a period in which the society the civil service nobility were ever more conspicuously asserting themselves. This group attempted not only with its position but also with its wealth to compete with the rich traditions that were so replete in the Russian traditional titled nobility. But the new aristocrats did not only want to become the equals of the older ones, but also to define themselves against them, and at the same time keep themselves clearly and recognizably distinct from them. This was a power struggle within which it was necessary to emphasize their particular virtues. These virtues were associated with some rather different values than those held by the titled nobility. Among them, we find that the endeavor to identify themselves as an entirely different social unit played a particularly important role in their activities. In order to make themselves distinct, they emphasized what they judged to be authentically Russian. And that was assessed according to the new Russian values; not those of the Holy Rus, but Russia as a great empire. They were thus a social group whose values emerged from the Russia’s multinational empire.
The Russian civil service nobility distinguished itself from the titled nobility and even from the whole rest of the world by actively supporting everything that seemed to have the qualities of imperial Russianness, both in the sense of the Russian state and also its society. This was not limited to only an elitist segment of Russians, in the sense of titled nobility or the historical Grand Duchy of Moscow, as a Russia that was broadly conceived as multi-ethnic and multi-social – “rossijskogo”. That is, imperial.

However, these developments that took place within the context of the Russian civil service nobility attempting to set itself apart from its aristocratic rivals during Peter I.’s reign only represent the roots of Russian art patronage. Its real flowering and the accomplishment of creating this distinction took place later, during the reign of the tsarevna–empress Catherine II. (reigned 1762–1796). In this period political (though not only political) posts had already been firmly established for members of the civil service nobility. And accordingly, they no longer needed to so vehemently differentiate themselves from the titled nobility or to compete so intensely with them. Moreover, the traditional nobility was already on the defensive by then. If they hoped to retain at least some of their posts, they would have to adapt to the trends that had been established by the civil service nobility. However, the Russian civil service nobility was soon to face a new competitor: foreign bourgeoisie and aristocrats. The native Russian civil service nobility now needed to defend itself even more against these newcomers than it previously had to against the old Russian titled nobility. But this was nothing new. Even back in the Romanov dynasty, Russia had been opening up to foreign experts. The greatest numbers of them entered Russia during the reign of Peter I., but some were already coming in during the reigns of his predecessors, particularly under the rule of the first Romanov, Mikhail I. (reigned 1613–1645). But they were there even earlier than when a Romanov first sat upon the Russian throne. For example, one of the most significant agents who developed this precedent was a non-Romanov predecessor, Tsar Boris Godunov (reigned 1598–1605). Until the period of Peter I.’s rule, however, the extent of the immigration was actually limited to individuals who filled the role of expert advisors. It was only Peter I.’s successors who began to greatly favor and even prioritize the foreign civil service nobility. They did this became they didn’t trust the Russian nobles, and foreigners in Russia seemed to them to be a more reliable support.5

Catherine II. maneuvered between the native Russian civil service nobility and their foreign counterparts. She was aware of the uncommon emphasis that Russians placed on their traditions, way of life, and national character. And this is why, even though she herself was a foreigner in Russia, she conferred advantages to those upon whom she could rely most, without regard for whether they were from the domestic or foreign nobility. The main thing was that they were absolutely obedient to her, which meant that the condition for her favor was that individual lieutenants would provide her unlimited support. Naturally, she found a number of those

who willingly, in the interest of the privileges they could gain for themselves and for their civil service aristocratic status, did just what she wanted. With great pleasure they took advantage of the perquisites that they had gained in this way, in particular ostentatiously showing off their material wealth for all to admire. And this also included all the outward signs that helped them make it obvious that they could compete with the highest echelons with their assets. Although from a moral point of view this was not in any way a positive development, it did nevertheless have a positive impact on Russian society in the sense that it enabled and supported the development of patronage. Count Grigory G. Orlov (1734–1783), for example, built up Gatchina, which he had received from Catherine II. as a gift, into a palace with a huge library that was to serve a wider public.6 Count Nikolai P. Rumyantsev (1754–1826) also established a similar large library accessible to the public in Moscow, and eventually this became the foundation for the future Russian State Library. At another level of patronage, Count Nikolai P. Sheremetev (1751–1809) excelled in supporting the theater arts. Among other acts, he created a serf theater troupe that performed at his manor in Ostankino, and they played for the general public. Yet another important representative of the Russian civil service nobility was the future president of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences, Baron Alexander S. Stroganov (1733–1811). He created an extraordinary picture gallery, and also displayed collections of prints, and of medals and coins.7

Patronage of the fine arts that was associated with support for painters and collection of their works was still developing only on an individual basis in the 18th century. It only acquired a more widespread popularity in the first half of the 19th century. What drove this in that direction was the French invasion of Russia in 1812, an event known in Russia as the “Patriotic War”. The tsar-emperor Alexander I. (reigned 1801–1825) and his government functionaries were aware from the very beginning that a clash with Napoleon would be very dangerous for them. And therefore, in the interest of preserving their empire in one piece they decided to play a game using utilizing the various social strata to their advantage. In the spirit of the early 19th century moral code (which was created under the undeniable influence of the Great French Revolution) that placed great emphasis on the activity of the people (in Russian this is terminologically identical with the concept of the “nation”), they deemed defense against Napoleon as a matter of patriotic honor. The great commander Mikhail I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov (1747–1813) highlighted the importance of great Russian military leaders and accentuated the ability of people, when they are led by an extraordinary personality to preserve their Holy Rus

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6 The first mention of Gatchina as a village is from the year 1499. Under Catherine II. the construction of a grandiose palace and park was initiated. However, Catherine gave Gatchina along with its surroundings as a gift to Grigory Orlov in 1765. He had a residence constructed with 600 rooms, a landscape park whose grounds encompassed seven km² and a triumphal arch according to designs by the Italian architect Antonio Rinaldi (1709–1794). After Orlov’s death, Catherine gave Gatchina to her son, the future Tsar Paul I. (reigned 1796–1801). In 1796 he then raised its status to Imperial City and made the palace the official imperial residence.

(which then became terminologically identical with imperial Russia) against the French occupiers.\textsuperscript{8}

At a casual glance there seems to be a paradox here, particularly in the period of Tsar Nicholas I.’s reign (1825–1855). Because he was known for his conservative actions, it may seem surprising that art flourished and support for it was so intensive. However, upon closer examination of course we find that this was a logical development resulting from the contradictions that characterized this period. At a time when, for example, Russia was closed off from the outside world, there was great interest and participation in study tours abroad. Naturally, this only pertained to those who were loyal to the regime and were able to show spotless records.\textsuperscript{9}

The Russian politician – privy councilor Fedor I. Pryanishnikov (1793–1867) became one of the first great collectors and patrons of the arts in the first half of the 19th century. Pryanishnikov was an important official from the era of Nicholas I.’s reign, then later, starting in 1857 served as the General Director of the Postal Department and he significantly shaped the postal reforms that made regular foreign relations possible. His initiatives resulted in postal treaties being concluded with Austria, Prussia, Sweden and Greece, and therefore regular delivery of foreign newspapers and magazines into and out of Russia ensued. Another aspect of these reforms was the institution of unified fees for postal services. In the year 1833 Pryanishnikov became an honorary member of the Imperial Philanthropic Society, superintended the Petersburg Nicholaevsky and Alexandrovsky orphanage and also worked in the Society to Aid the Poor. He was a member of the Petersburg Council of Trustees and the board of trustees for women’s college courses. Pryanishnikov donated a number of valuable books, prints, and pictures to the public library, gave two thousand books on history to the Novorossiysk University, and also bestowed many pictures and art historical publications to the Rumyantsev Museum. For many years he was a member of the Imperial Academy of Arts, the Moscow Art Society, and the Association for Supporting the Arts, and at the same time he also collected pictures and supported individual artists. Naturally, he not only supported them with money, but also by buying canvases, paints, and other supplies.\textsuperscript{10}

The true golden age of Russian patronage of course only came about in the second half of the 19th century in connection with changes that came about in Russian society after the Crimean War in Russia. This particularly concerned the growing role of the bourgeoisie, who were increasingly taking over the leading positions once occupied by the old nobility. They did not only support literature and art, but also science and charitable activities. For example, in the year 1900 the city of Moscow alone boasted 628 charitable associations and societies. Most of them were supported by wealthy Moscow burghers who were engaged in commerce and industry.\textsuperscript{11}


The fact that the Russian Empire had achieved an industrial revolution in the 1870s also had an unmistakable influence on the further development of Russian patronage. This enabled the hoarding of capital means and not only their reinvestment, but also their use for science and art. Even though in comparison with most other European countries the industrial revolution had taken place later in Russia, for that the process was all the more intense over the subsequent two decades, and in the last decades of the 19th century Russian patronage was also all the more intense. The rate of the Russian industrial revolution was so rapid that a “Russian economic miracle” was even spoken of, and it would be analogous to speak of a miracle in Russian patronage as well. In the key branches of heavy industry – metallurgy, production of coal and diesel and in the chemical industry achieved in this period an interim growth of 12%. The production of iron grew in the years between 1887 and 1900 from 114 million rubles to 357.8 million rubles, in mining from 185.8 million rubles to 671.6 million rubles, and in chemicals from 54.8 million rubles to 131.2 million rubles. The aggregate volume of production grew from 1400.9 million rubles to 3086 million rubles, which was more than 200%. Thus, Russia worked its way up to fifth place in the world, coming in behind the USA, Great Britain, Germany and France.

Whereas in 1893 in Russia there existed “only” 522 commercial-industrial companies with yearly revenue of 601 million rubles, in 1900 there were nearly 1400 and their revenue amounted to 1.800 million rubles. The number of railway lines also grew phenomenally. Only between the years 1893 and 1899 the railways grew from 27,818 versts to 39,787 versts, which meant that every year more than 1700 versts were added. In the years 1880-1886 the Trans-Siberian Railway became strategically important. The state budget increased between the years 1890 and 1900 by 50% and it was balanced. At the same time, in 1856, after signing the Treaty of Paris that ended the Crimean War, the state debt reached the dizzying height of 1.155 million rubles. Only 10% of the state’s income at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries came from direct taxes. A full 40% was made up of indirect taxes, primarily taxes from revenue. The reserves of Russian gold tripled between 1886 and 1914. They exceeded a value of 1.695 million golden rubles and they were the largest reserves in the world.

If Russia had kept up the temp of its industrial development longer, surely after several decades it would have achieved a similar status to that of most of the industrially-developed countries. The standard of living would have risen proportionally to the development of industry, and the social problems of the masses would have

14 A “verst” is an obsolete Russian unit for measuring length, which is sometimes also referred to as a Russian mile. It is defined as 500 sazhens, or 1500 arshins, i.e., 1066,781 meter. An infrequently-used related unit of measure was the square verst, which had a converted value of 1.138 km.
15 2/3 of this gold turned up in foreign countries before the October Revolution. The imperial and then afterwards the Provisional Government of 1917 paid with it for delivery of foodstuffs, consumer goods and industrial products, including weapons that were supplied by Great Britain, France, the USA, and Japan. Cf. SIROTKIN, Vladlen G. Zarubežnoje zoloto Rossi. Moskva : Olma-Press, 2000, pp. 8-9.
shifted from a priori negatively-conceived problem that devolved into revolution, toward a reform approach that sought a way to improve the living conditions and into trade-union negotiations rather than revolutionary action. After all, on 1 July 1882 legislation was adopted that limited labor by underage workers and children in factories, and at mandatory inspections were instituted that were intended to monitor compliance with the laws in factories. Three years later the legislature then introduced a law that forbade night work in factories for children, minors, and women. In 1887 a law was adopted in Russia that limited the working day in factories to 11.5 hours and mandated a day of rest. With justification it is possible to suppose that all of these facts were to a greater or lesser extent projected into the phenomenon of patronage, but even after this boom it never became an occupation for the masses. Russian patrons were always only individuals, specific personalities who, thanks to the industrial revolution, had gained the financial means, and who for moral or other reasons also the conviction that it is befitting (and, as a legacy for future generations also expedient) to invest part of these means into support for science and art. Certainly, here and there the individual desire to surround oneself with beauty – pictures, statues, and splendid architecture played a role.16

Russia had worked its way to the “economic miracle” mainly thanks to a set of reforms by Sergei Yu. Witte (1849–1915) who stood at the head of the Ministry of Finance between 1892 and 1903. Witte’s reforms, based on the principle of state protectionism for selected branches of industry and central control over them, did not simply appear overnight like a “deus ex machina”, but followed in the footsteps of Witte’s predecessors in the function of Finance Minister – Ivan A. Vyshnegradsky (1830–1895) and Nicholas Kh. Bunge (1823–1895).17 Witte’s actions continued to stabilize the budget and enabled the national economy to grow. In the second half of the 19th century Russia enjoyed several excellent finance leaders who knew just what Russia needed and how to over both the short and long-term perspective preclude a violent eruptions of social dissatisfaction. In Russia the tax on salt was abolished in the year 1880, as well as the import duty on iron and cast iron. This, however, did not avert the industrial crisis that affected the country in the years 1882–1886. With the goal of overcoming it in June 1885 the previous Bank of the Nobility was reorganized as the state Nobles’ Land Bank. With the same goal, a conversion of state loans that reduced their dividends was implemented in the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s. Another no less economically significant enterprise from the point of view of commerce was the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway 1891-1905. But unfortunately, from 1891 to 1892, and then periodically almost every year the European part of Russia was afflicted by famine as a result of drought and crop failures. In connection with diseases that Russian

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16 Cf. PAXTON, “Imperial Russia”, pp. 94-98.
17 The Minister of Finance, Nicholas Kh. Bunge advocated the idea at the beginning of the 1880s that the production of grain would provide for Russia’s required import of industrial goods and capital. Growth in imports required sufficient exports, so in the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s Russia annually exported 3775 mil. poods, which after conversion in which one pood corresponds to 16.38 kg, represented approximately 600 mil. tons of grain. Cf., for example, FLORINSKY, Michail T. Russia : A History an Interpretation in Two Volumes. New York : Macmillan, 1953, p. 940.
health care was unable to treat, this meant the death of millions.\textsuperscript{18}

Culture in itself does not create material value, but requires it for its own development. In Russia, thanks to the industrial revolution and the breadth of the economic expansion, there were optimal conditions for such development. The end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century could therefore be grandiose for Russia, even in terms of the exceptional flourishing of her culture. The development of Russian culture was so magnificent that in Europe a “Russian renaissance” was spoken of. Often the epithet “silver era of Russian culture”, which was a comparison to the the “Golden Age of Pushkin”, was applied to this period, and was meant to denote the second most wonderful stage in the history of Russian culture.\textsuperscript{19} This was not in the least mean to be an exaggeration, for among writers Anton P. Chekhov (1860–1904) excelled in his art, as did Konstantin S. Stanislavsky (1863–1838) in the theater. Vladimir S. Solovyov (1853–1900) ranked among the finest philosophers, and in 1904 the first works by Alexander A. Blok (1880–1921) appeared. In 1880-1882 the Pushkin Theater in Moscow operated under the direction of A. A. Brenk, and in 1882 Fedor A. Korsh (1852–1923) founded the Russian Dramatic Theater in Moscow. At the same time, the monopoly of imperial theaters was abolished for public performances. In 1880 under the initiative of Vukol M. Lavrov (1852–1912) a monthly literary-scholarship publication called \textit{Russkaya mysl} began to be published in Moscow. In 1889 at the Paris Exposition concerts of Russian music were heard for the first time.\textsuperscript{20}

However, it was not only culture, but also Russian science and arts that achieved a world-class level. On 20 July 1885 by the village of Krasnoy near St. Petersburg the first powered flight in the world took place in a flying machine constructed by the mechanical designer Alexander F. Mozhaysky (1825–1890). In April 1895 at the conference of the Russian Physical Chemical Society Alexander S. Popov (1859–1905) demonstrated a radio receiver, which was also the first in the world. From 25 May 1885 to 26 June 1889 Captain Stepan O. Makarov (1849–1904) guided a circumnavigation of the globe with the goal of conducting systematic hydrological and meteorological observations. Ivan P. Pavlov (1849–1936) worked during this period at the Institute of Experimental Medicine in St. Petersburg, and was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1904 for his findings in the field of physiology, particularly of the digestive system.

Into the same period also falls the production by the outstanding painter and professor of the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg Academy, and also works historical portraits created by Ilya Y. Repin (1844–1930). Other brilliant painters included, for example, Viktor M. Vasnecev (1848–1926) and Mikhail V. Nesterev (1862–1942), who imitated medieval church art. In this period Vasily V. Vereshchagin (1842–1904) was working, and Pavel M. Tretyakov (1832–1898) culminated the creation of his remarkable art collection. In 1907 Marc Z. Chagall (1887–1985)

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came to St. Petersburg. At this time, Russian ballet and symphonic art also achieved a very distinguished level. Remarkable works were composed by Nicholas A. Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) and Igor F. Stravinsky (1882–1971) was just beginning. A little later than Stravinsky, Sergei S. Prokofiev (1891–1953) completed his studies at the conservatory. In the year 1890 the world premiere of Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky’s (1840–1893) ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* took place in the Petersburg Mariinsky Theater, and then two years later Tchaikovsky’s ballet *The Nutcracker* premiered, and after two more years, *Swan Lake* was introduced by the same author. New theaters were also opening at the same time. An especially noteworthy year was 1898, when Konstantin S. Stanislavski (1863–1938) and Vladimir I. Nemirovich-Danchenko (1858–1943) established the MChT (Moscow Art Theater), which was later to be called the Moskovskiy Khudozhestvenny Akademichkiy Teatr (MChAT). There, many world premieres were presented, particularly of works by Anton P. Chekhov (1860–1904). With his MChAT project Stanislavsky was following up on the experience he gained leading the popular dramatic section of the Society of Art and Literature, which had been founded in Moscow in 1888. Ten years later, in 1898, at the initiative of the artist Alexandre N. Benois (1870–1960) and impresario Sergey P. Diaghilev (1872–1929) the artistic movement and magazine World of Art (“Mir iskusstva”) was founded in St. Petersburg.

New cinemas and concert halls also sprung up. In 1901 the tsar-emperor Nicholas II. (reigned 1894–1917) had the People’s House built in St. Petersburg, in which even common people had the opportunity to listen to excellent Russian music. The cost of admission there was only symbolic – 20 kopecks. This is one example of the tsar’s large-scale patronage activities, with which he served as an example to others, in particular the emerging wealthy bourgeois society. Two among their ranks were the collectors of great art works Ivan A. Morozov (1871–1921) 21 and Pavel S. Tretyakov (1832–1898). However, the tsar did not only sponsor cultural and artistic facilities and specific artists, but also therapeutic and social institutes, and he annually spent more than one million rubles on this. It was indeed positive that even while providing this support he also managed to inspire wealthy businessmen, merchants and nobles to acts of patronage such as, for example, the Morozov family who provided aid for the sick and socially disadvantaged. There were also other positive impacts upon the society as a whole: in connection with the reactionary-nationalistic propaganda promulgated in the 1880s and 1890s by the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin P. Pobedonostsev (1823–1907), the Russian national feeling was revitalized.22

21 In 1903 Ivan A. Morozov purchased the first important work of Western fine art. This work became the basis for the collection of Western European art that Morozov later assembled, and eventually helped found the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. In the same year Ivan A. Morozov together with his brother Mikhail donated 30 thousand rubles for the establishment of the Moscow Oncology Research Institute. Cf. FIGES, Orlando. *Natašin tanec. Kulturní historie Ruska*. Praha : Beta-Dobrovský, Plzeň : Ševčík, 2004, pp. 186-190.

Let us, however, return to the beginning of our story: it is 31 August 1892 and the members of the Moscow town council are just now reading through a letter in which a man they know, the Moscow citizen Pavel M. Tretyakov informs them that he has decided to donate his picture gallery to the city of Moscow. But who was Pavel Tretyakov actually? How did he come by the financial means required to buy so many interesting pictures and also to support other artists in their creative work?

Pavel M. Tretyakov descended from an old Russian merchant family that had lived for centuries in Maloyaroslavets in the Kaluga Region. In 1774 Pavel’s great-grandfather, Elisei Martynovich, moved to Moscow. His son, Pavel’s grandfather Zakhar Eliseevich, began to trade in linen in Moscow. Pavel’s father Mikhail Zakharovich took over the business and greatly expanded it: he became a wholesale dealer. Pavel M. Tretyakov and his brother helped their father run his business since their youth. This was taking place shortly before the midpoint of the 19th century, in a period when many young people from (though not exclusively from) the merchant classes took an interest in the flowering of Russian painting. Among young Muscovites it was also popular to form thematic interest groups and discuss various topics with them at evening get-togethers. Some preferred to analyze the political scene, but others talked more about art. It was the latter that so captivated the brothers Sergey and Pavel Tretyakov. At the home of the Tretyakovs, who were, as a fairly wealthy mercantile family, considered to belong to a certain elite level of society, they began to get together with other similarly-minded intellectuals. And so all of them, in the company of artists, especially painters, discussed art at the Tretyakovs’ home in the evenings over tea, vodka and sweets. By contrast with the Slavophilic and pro-Western circles, this society came together over an attractive, apolitical topic. Although from time to time the discussion degenerated into polemics of a purely political character, because this circle was also visited by ladies, and in the Russia of that time it was not considered appropriate to speak about politics in front of them, political topics were quickly abandoned.

Pavel’s father Mikhail Zakharovich died in 1850 at the age of 49. Pavel, as a first-born son inherited his profession, even though Mikhail’s wife, the widow Alexandra D. Tretyakova still officially ran the business for several more years. Pavel did not only inherit his father’s mercantile profession, but also a lively interest in art and art collecting. And so it is no wonder that he began to invest money set that he aside from the business into collecting: as an eighteen-year-old; that is, in the year 1850, he purchased insignias, books, a sketch and his first 11 prints. The prices he paid for the prints ranged between three and eight rubles.

In business Tretyakov, along with his brother Sergey who was his partner, enjoyed remarkable success. Therefore, along with his mother and his brother in 1852 he was able to purchase a spacious homestead in Tolmachy, not far from Moscow. This was also to be an important step in Pavel’s collecting career. In the Tolmachy

23 Sergey Tretyakov was two years younger Pavel Tretyakov.
house he had enough space to store the pictures he had bought, as well as to accommodate visiting artists. And when after several decades the space already began to feel tight, he was able to build on extensions.

Pavel, like his brother Sergey, first began to buy artworks without a clear artistic profile, and they were the cause of Pavel’s trips to St. Petersburg. He undertook the first journey in September 1852, not only for business purposes, but also in order to, as he wrote in his diary, visit the Imperial Academy of Art, and also the Petersburg churches, libraries and museums. On his visit to St. Petersburg he did not neglect to take a look at the Hermitage. And there, several thousand pictures by great Russian masters, innumerable statues and busts, hundreds of vases and other works of art deeply moved him. In October 1854 he again set off for St. Petersburg, this time not only in order to thoroughly examine the collections at the Hermitage again, but also to buy some specific artworks: at the Sucharev street he purchased nine oil paintings by Dutch masters.26 He spent 900 rubles for them; however they were not his only investment in art in that year. In 1854 he spent altogether 1641 rubles on artworks.27

In the spring of 1856 Pavel set off for St. Petersburg for the third time. His goal was again to visit the Hermitage and there to pay particular attention to the collections of pictures by the head of the Postal Department and the important patron of Russian artists Fedor I. Pryanishnikov (1793–1867). Tretyakov had found out about Pryanishnikov’s collection three years earlier from reading a catalogue that was issued when it was completed. He was interested not only in individual pictures, but also – primarily – in their composition into groups: this was a collection of artworks that represented only the Russian milieu.28

When Tretyakov had viewed Pryanishnikov’s collection in the Hermitage, the thought of doing something similar, and – if at all possible – to also acquire Pryanishnikov’s collection for himself and continue building on it in the Russian dimension, enraptured him. And so the thought of creating a collection of exclusively Russian artworks that would tell a story about Russia took root in Tretyakov. This collection would differ from Pryanishnikov’s in that his would not be limited only to already-finished works. Tretyakov made up his mind that he would also (and later it was to be primarily) collect pictures that would be made to order. In this way he would be able to acquire pictures that would truly speak about Russia and her character. He noted in his diary that a collection that would thus arise would bring benefits in the perception of the Russian soul and bring fame to Russian painting all over the world. Let us add that this vision also had a profound effect on the authors of such artworks. Tretyakov did not only want to remunerate them for finished works, but also support them during the process of their creation. And not only the artists, but also their families. It is also noteworthy that he did not only want to reach out to renowned artists. On the contrary! Frequently it was when Tretyakov

26 The historian V. A. Gilarovsky reminds us that these were not actually original works by Dutch masters but only very well rendered copies. Cf. Ibid, p. 21 a <http://www.tretyakovgallery.ru/russian/history/1774-1898>.
27 Cf. BOTKINA, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov, p. 21.
28 Cf. LOPUCHINA, Samyje znamenityje mecenaty, pp. 113-116.
promoted them by exhibiting their pictures in his gallery that painters were made into prestigious representatives of Russian fine art.29

When Tretyakov several years later found out that Pryanishnikov had stopped adding his collection and had was planning to sell it, he was overcome with excitement: he would finally be able to buy it and it would serve as the basis of the national collection he had been dreaming of. The price that Pryanishnikov opened negotiations with, however, was out of his range. He was not willing to invest the seventy thousand rubles Pryanishnikov was asking for into art all at one time, but he nevertheless did not give up the thought of buying the collection. In 1860 it even became a wish that he wrote into his first will and testament.30

In 1867 Pryanishnikov died and his collection devolved to the state: it became part of the art collection of the Rumyantsev Museum. But even after this happened, Pavel did not give up his intention to acquire it. In 1895, three years before his death, he wrote to his friend, the critic Vladimir V. Stasov (1824–1906): “If Pryanishnikov’s collection were to be united with ours, I would be very glad ... after they would be received into our gallery, some of the things would very suitably complement ours ... ”31

Finally, this longing was to be fulfilled, though it was not to be until after his death: in the year 1925 Pryanishnikov’s collection as part of the Rumyantsev Museum collections was incorporated into the Tretyakov gallery.

Tretyakov’s third sojourn to St. Petersburg did not provide the opportunity he had wished for to acquire Pryanishnikov’s collection, but despite this it did become the real beginning for his national gallery, for this is when Pavel Mikhailovich commissioned his first works by Russian painters for his collection. Tretyakov’s very first picture that was painted and purchased to order was a work by the lesser-known artist Nikolai G. Shilder (1828–1908), Temptation. After this followed Skirmish with Finnish Smugglers by the painter Vasily G. Khudyakov (1826–1871). “I only collect what I find to be essential pro a comprehensive picture of our painting”, Tretyakov later wrote to the author Leo N. Tolstoy (1828–1910).32 And he focused on contemporary realistic paintings, even though he also did not cease to be interested in pictures by Russian artists from the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, and even collected some works by old Russian masters; yet he was placing ever greater emphasis on portraits. At the end of the year 1860 he noted in his diary that his goal is to create: “a portrait gallery of Russian writers, composers and other important Russian artists.”33

Interest in portraits of important personalities was not anything out of the ordinary in Tretyakov’s period. In Russia collecting pictures had been a prerogative of the aristocracy for centuries. From 18th into the 19th century, the increasingly self-

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29 Thanks to these activities of Tretyakovov’s, one of the most significant organizations or movements of Russian artists in the second half of the 19th century – the “peredvizhniki”, to whom belonged painters such as Repin, Perov, Vereshchagin and Surikov – soon achieved fame. Cf. FIGES, Natašin tanec, pp. 210-216.


31 Cf. NENAROKOMOVA, Pavel Tretyakov, p. 33.

32 Cf. BOTKINA, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov, pp. 114-115.

33 Cf. NENAROKOMOVA, Pavel Tretyakov, p. 45.
confident elite of successful Russian merchants and businesspeople desired to, at least in outward ostentation become the equals of the nobility. However, at the same time they also wanted to surpass them, doing so with the proclamation of “service to the nation”. This, in connection with the so-called official patriotism led to, among other things, the assembling of portrait galleries that were to introduce great figures from Russian history to a wider public. This was nothing other than the typical Enlightenment ideal that was already well developed Western Europe, which emphasized the importance of specific personalities for the past and present life of the society. Midway through the 19th century interest in portraits, and in collecting and exhibiting them, had grown so much both in Western Europe as well as in Russia that this activity, which was practiced for the exaltation of national identities became a worldwide fashion trend. It was launched in 1856 with the opening of the London National Portrait Gallery. And so we cannot wonder that even Pavel Mikhailovich succumbed to this “mania”. For he, by his own words, was charged with a goal of creating a kind of museum within a museum in Russia: to show his contemporaries the greats of Russian art and culture and to leave for future generations a memento of significant personalities. Therefore, Tretyakov acquired portraits of the writers Alexander N. Ostrovsky (1823–1886), Fyodor M. Dostoyevsky (1821–1881), Apollon N. Maykov (1821–1897), Mikhail P. Pogodin (1800–1875) and Ivan S. Turgenev (1818–1883) created by contemporary Russian painters such as Vasily G. Perov (1834–1882), Ivan N. Kramskoi (1837–1887), Ilya Ye. Repin (1844–1930), Vasily V. Vereshchagin (1842–1904), Vasily I. Surikov (1848–1916), and Nikolai A. Yaroshenko (1846–1898), among others.34

From the very beginning of Tretyakov’s cooperation with painters the relationships with them were not circumscribed by the commercial nature of relations between a client and painter. They operated on the principle of mutually friendly and deeply human relations. The artists became his artistic and also commercial advisors, and some of them even his assistants who informed him about the work of their colleagues, about various exhibitions, and interesting new pictures and, in that case, about their possible sale. For all this, Tretyakov (though never entirely disinterestedly) supported the artists with money and advice, and he helped many of them sell their pictures to other merchants and he even managed the financial affairs of some.

At that time the Tretyakovs’ villa in Tolmachy on the outskirts of Moscow was a place where artists got together and held discussions more and more frequently over time. And if, painters from, for example, St. Petersburg were coming into Moscow they could even stay at the Tretyakovs’ home. But not only stay there. As a representative sample of those who were more frequently accommodated at the Tretyakov villa let me mention the forenamed Ilya E. Repin, Vasily I. Surikov, Vasily G. Perov and Ivan N. Kramskoi, as well as the previously unmentioned painters Vasily D. Polenov (1844–1927), Viktor M. Vasnetsov (1848–1926), Nikolai V. Nevrev (1830–1904), Ivan P. Trutnev (1827–1912), Vasily G. Khudyakov (1826–1871), Apollinary G. Goravsky (1833–1900), Nikolai Ye. Sverchkov (1817–1898), Ivan I. Sokolov

34 Cf. Ibid, pp. 45-47.
The Tretyakovs’ home of course was not only visited by painters. Other frequent guests, for example, were the writer Ivan S. Turgenev, the pianist Nikolai G. Rubinstein and the composer Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky. It is also naturally very interesting that some of the leading Russian artists and patrons of Russian art were related to the Tretyakovs through family ties: Anatoly, the brother of Pyotr Tchaikovsky, married the niece of Pavel Mikhailovich and the wife of the painter Vasily D. Polenov, N. V. Yakunchikova, was the niece of Pavel’s wife Vera Nikolaevna. Pavel Mikhailovich was a member of a clan in which the mercantile trade had already been passed down for four generations, so he was not even capable of imagining that his daughters would not also marry merchants. However, when there was an artist in question, his opinion quickly changed, so in 1887 his daughter Vera was able to marry the pianist Alexander Siloti, who was the cousin of the composer Sergei V. Rachmaninoff. It was similar with his second daughter, Alexandra, who took for a husband the physician and art collector Sergey P. Botkin (1832–1889). His brother Alexander, who was a renowned traveler and explorer of the Russian North then married Pavel’s third daughter, Masha. In May 1894 Lyuba, the fourth daughter, married the artist Nikolai N. Gritsenko. She was widowed in 1900, but married again, with the outstanding painter and graphic artist Léon N. Bakst.

Wherever Tretyakov’s business activities took him, everywhere he went, he met artists. Besides trips to Moscow and St. Petersburg, he mainly traveled to Nizhny Novgorod and Kostroma, where Pavel and Sergey had established a textile manufactory. Everywhere Tretyakov met with artists, he shared their concerns, took an interest in their health, and helped them also their families in times of need. Paradoxically, we have learned about all of this only from letters written by the artists themselves, because Tretyakov’s correspondence is parsimonious with this kind of information: Pavel Mikhailovich never clearly wrote about such things. For example, the painter Ivan P. Trutnev wrote to the collector: “... I do not know how to thank you for finding a purchaser for my picture ... takes care, my good Pavel Mikhailovich, to sell it as dearly as possible”.

Besides letters of this type, there have also been preserved some in which the painters appealed to Tretyakov, for example, with a request to borrow money. When they did so, they were usually heard out. In return, but not only for this, the painters would sell their works to Pavel Tretyakov for lower prices than they would to others. The main reason for these “dumping” prices was the importance that was soon ascribed to the pictures in Pavel’s gallery: once a work had appeared as Tretyakov’s, it meant that it had already been publicly recognized as worthy.

Tretyakov’s art patronage went hand in hand with his other charitable activities. For example, he also financially supported the Arnoldo-Tretyakov School for Deaf-Mutes: from his monetary contributions a two-story building was erected on Donskoy Street in Moscow. Starting in the year 1867 Pavel’s wife Vera Nikolaevna

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36 Cf. NENAROKOMOVA, Pavel Tretyakov, p. 36.
acted as the patroness of one of the city’s most prestigious primary schools.37

Tretyakov was primarily drawn to patronage by his deep interest in Russian art. However, he could not have afforded to be so generous if he had not been so successful in business. For Tretyakov’s patronage it was especially significant that not only at the end of the 1850s and beginning of the 1860s, when the Tretyakov brothers established several branch commercial centers and factories for processing linen, but also the entire decade of the 1860s were for very successful for them from the business point of view. Additionally, to a significant extent in contradiction with old cliché of backwardness, during this period Russia was experiencing the beginning of an economic, and in particular, an industrial boom. The example of the Tretyakovs only underlines the fact that capable businessmen (of which, of course in the Russian context were not many in number) could thoroughly take advantage of these conditions. At that time the Tretyakovs owned four manufactories in Moscow, which also had affiliated branches operating in other cities. In 1860, for example, the Tretyakov brothers established the Large Kostroma Linen Manufactory in Kostroma. Its nominal capital tripled during its first ten years of its existence. And so the older brother, Pavel, also began to operate in the sphere of finance: he was one of the founding shareholders of the in the First Moscow Burgher Bank, and remained a member of its board of directors until the end of his life. The Tretyakovs were also founding members of the second Moscow commercial bank – the Moscow Burghers’ Mutual Credit Union. They were even had a concern in the Moscow Accounting Bank and were repeatedly elected onto the board of the Moscow Stock Exchange.38

In 1860 Pavel and Sergey’s mother Alexandra Danilovna gave up running the family’s business. As the oldest son, Pavel Tretyakov took it over from her. At the same time, he and his brother Sergey and brother-in-law Vladimir D. Konshin founded “business in textile, paper, and woven, products of Russian and foreign provenience, an emporium P. and S., brothers Tretyakov, and V. Konshin in Moscow, on Ilyinka, across from the building of the Iosifsky Monastery”. In the name, the use of the word “foreign” was meant very seriously. Even though he was a rather fanatic patriot, in business Pavel Tretyakov did not intend to orient himself only towards Russia. Just like his uncle, who was a wholesale merchant of oil, he wanted to export his products, especially to Great Britain. His first foreign destination, however, was Italy. Even though more detailed reports on this trip have not been preserved, it is more than likely that the reason he went there was again art. Although Pavel concentrated on Russian painters, his brother Sergey focused on foreign ones. Pavel did not reproach him; on the contrary, he ardently supported his brother in this. And for that matter, foreign lands also inspired him. At the very least, they served as a basis for comparison. And that was presumably the main reason for his visits to Italian museums in the year 1860. Of course, it’s also rather interesting that before

37 Cf. BOTKINA, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov, pp. 281-282.
38 The Tretyakovs were able to also handle social conflicts. When a strike broke out at their factory in Moscow that processed cotton, the Tretyakovs fulfilled the reasonable demands of the workers: they raised their pay from three kopecks to eight, discounted the prices for food in the company cafeteria, and arranged for them to be able to bathe in the company sauna twice rather than once per month.
he departed he drew up the above-mentioned first will and testament. Among other clauses, it said: “I bequeath capital in the amount of 150 thousand silver rubles for the establishment of an art museum or picture gallery in Moscow”.

Everything that has been discussed above led to Pavel Mikhailovich becoming increasingly well known and popular in circles of both Russian artists and also art scholars. For this reason, when at the beginning of 1860 the Moscow Society of Art Amateurs was founded, Tretyakov couldn’t be absent among its founders. This society included amateurs as well as professionals, and Pavel Mikhailovich created a kind of bridge between the two groups. By the criterion of specialist education he was an amateur, but thanks to his numerous contacts with Russian painters he had learned a great deal. He became a true connoisseur of Russian art, which, in connection with his popularity made him into a respected personality. Therefore it is no wonder that he was soon elected an honorable member of the association, and should not even be necessary to emphasize that fact that every year he contributed to the society’s running expenses with generous sums of money.

Tretyakov also carried on organizational and support activities to the same extent with the Moscow Society of Art Amateurs, which was connected with the Association of Traveling Art Exhibits. The latter group was founded ten years later, in 1870. By contrast with the Society of Art Amateurs, it was characterized as a professional association that brought together primarily realistic painters. But not only realistic painters. Their patrons and admirers or supporters were also eligible to become members. The one requirement was joining in the shared task to attempt, by means of pictures, to illustrate the character of Russian society. The creed of this society was entirely consistent with Tretyakov’s ideas about the art collector’s mission, because even he was primarily concerned with serving the interests of the Russian nation through the media of fine arts. His participation in the Association’s activities enabled him to keep drawing attention to the Russian soul, Russian traditions, and its modern context through picture exhibitions. And so, from the very founding of the society, Tretyakov was one of its most active members: even at the first exhibition that the society arranged in 1871, he took on the lion’s share of the organizational work, and his collections were very well represented within the exhibit. And so it went the next time as well. At the same time, Pavel Mikhailovich was also one of the most active members of the group even when organizing other exhibitions, securing their financial backing, and in assembling collections of pictures to be exhibited. One cannot therefore be surprised that members of the Association of Traveling Art Exhibits were sometimes nicknamed the “Tretyakov School”.

Because Tretyakov’s collecting activities so significantly influenced the Russia’s artistic life, even the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and Sciences could not ignore it. In September 1868 Tretyakov received a letter of thanks from the vice-president of the Academy for having dedicated himself to artists, supporting them and buying their pictures. Pavel Tretyakov was so honored by this that the following year he donated a large collection of lithographs by European masters that he had col-
lected during his travels around Europe to the Academy. For this, Tretyakov was appointed as a corresponding member of the Academy. And even though Tretyakov’s relations with the Academy had always been strainedly official, he took part in drafting up their charter in the 1890s.

Thanks to the growing incomes from his businesses, Pavel Tretyakov was able to spend increasingly generous financial sums on expanding and filling in his collection, as well as providing material support for the authors of individual works. And so the number of pictures acquired by Tretyakov constantly increased. For their categorization and systemization of course only a few moments can be considered noteworthy. These were the times when the collection was made to be extraordinary not only in terms of its extent, but also, and primarily, in terms of its content. For example, shortly before his wedding; that is, when Pavel Tretyakov in 1865 wed Vera N. Mamontova, whose family had always had a very positive relationship to art, he visited an exhibition and saw a picture that depicted a historical subject, and it caught his interest. This was the work of the painter Konstantin D. Flavitsky (1830–1866) entitled “Princess Tarakanova in the Peter and Paul at the Time of the Flood”. Pavel Tretyakov entered into negotiations with the artist to purchase the painting, but they did not come to an agreement on the price. It was not until 1867, after Flavitsky’s death, that Tretyakov obtained it for a huge sum from the artist’s brother. Soon this canvas was joined by other by Alexey P. Bogolyubov (1824–1886), Ivan K. Aivazovsky (1817–1900), Alexander A. Riccioni (1836–1902), Mikhail K. Klodt (1832–1902) and others. And thus Tretyakov’s collection was enriched by portraits of historical personalities.41

Certainly, everyone who enters the Tretyakov Gallery is enchanted by the works of Vasily V. Vereshchagin. Tretyakov acquired them gradually, starting in 1872. Owing to the dimensions of some of the canvases, however, he had a problem finding places to hang them, so he decided to donate them to the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. However, due to a lack of space they likewise declined the gift. Tretyakov therefore committed Vereshchagin’s collection to the Moscow Society of Friends of Art, but on the condition that within three years they would find adequate space for it. They were not able to find such a space, so the collection was returned to Tretyakov 1881. After these peregrinations Pavel Mikhailovich decided to acquire a new, larger house, in Moscow on Lavrushinsky Lane. There he was able to place the entire collection, including the ensemble of Vereshchagin’s pictures numbering 78 pieces.42

It was only his own portrait that Tretyakov never commissioned, but one was nevertheless created thanks to coincidence. In January of 1876 the painter Ivan N. Kramskoi came to Moscow. Tretyakov, who had been good friends with Kramskoi for many years, requested that he paint a portrait of his wife Vera Nikolaevna, and Ivan Nikolaevich thus spent the next three months at the Tretyakovs’ residence. In the evenings they discussed various matters, but as far as the portrait of Vera Nikolaevna went, the work progressed poorly. On the other hand, the portrait

42 Cf. FIGES, Natašin tanec, pp. 353-355.
of Pavel Mikhailovich turned out very well. Apparently, he never posed for it, but he was debilitated by gout and unable to move anyway. Ivan Kramskoi took advantage of this.43

Pavel Tretyakov’s collection of pictures was originally placed in the villa in Tolmachy, and then later in his family’s home on Lavrushinsky Lane, but then after an agreement with the collector, they were made accessible to individual visitors. But still, the number of pictures kept increasing. In 1872 they numbered more than 150, and they filled up all of the habitable rooms in the house, including the reception parlor.44 At the same time, for several years Pavel had already been exuberant with the vision that his collection would serve a public function and provide benefit to society. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1870s he decided to undertake further renovations. The goal was to construct an independent gallery part of the building. He submitted the already drawn-up project to his son-in-law, the architect Alexander S. Kaminsky. With him, Tretyakov then went over all the various details of the building. In August 1872 even the budget was completed – more than 27 thousand rubles.45

In September 1872 Tretyakov and his wife left for two weeks to Crimea and then to Germany, but before their departure he performed a ceremonial act to which he invited many artists, both renowned and less well known: he laid down the foundation stone for the gallery in Lavrushinsky Lane. Into part of the foundations that were already dug Pavel Mikhailovich placed the first brick and a priest from the Church of St. Nicholas in Tolmachy blessed this foundation stone. The actual construction began one month later. The building was planned as a two-story structure that abutted against the south wall of the house and led all the way to the enclosing wall of the Church of St. Nicholas in Tolmachy. The construction process took place throughout the year of 1873. After it was completed, in March 1874 they began arranging the pictures in the new exhibition spaces. And so the year 1874 became an important milestone in the history of Russian art collecting. It is thanks to Tretyakov that a truly independent gallery came into being, one that was not part of any dwelling space. Although the extensions to the gallery were the same height as the residential home, it was still possible to enter the gallery independently of it.46

In 1881 Tretyakov decided to open the gallery up to the public, but this would not be possible without first going through some amount of red tape. He had to clear some formidable administrative hurdles in order to gain a gallery statute. Surprisingly (within this Russian context), he was able to manage this quickly, as well as gaining the approval of the municipal authorities so that even though this was to be a private gallery, anyone at all could visit it, any day of the week would be able to visit it without paying for admission. Over the next few years the gallery expanded several times, and new halls were built on. At the beginning of the 1890s the gallery

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43 The second portrait of the gallery’s founder was painted by Ilya Repin in 1883. According to the words of Tretyakov’s daughter Alexandra, Pavel hadn’t wanted it or ordered it. Repin must have created it according to Kramskoi’s design, originally only for himself. Cf. Ibid, pp. 210-213.


45 Cf. NENAROKOMOVA, Pavel Tretyakov, p. 79.

46 Cf. Ibid, pp. 79-80.
enclosed the Tretyakovs’ home on three sides. Pavel could be satisfied that his lifelong dream had been fulfilled. However, at the end of June 1892 his brother Sergey suddenly died. He, too, had amassed an interesting collection of pictures. Even though during his life he had not supported artists as ardently as Pavel, Sergey’s picture collection was no less interesting, and it included various foreign and Russian pieces. But most importantly, Sergey Mikhailovich owned one of the best collections of French paintings from the second half of the 19th century. According to his will, he bequeathed the entire collection to his brother Pavel. Even through a considerable part of Sergey’s collection was originally stored next to Pavel’s pieces, the juxtaposition with Pavel’s art would at that time have created a collection that would have been very difficult manage within the family. And so in August 1892 at the urging of his wife, Pavel decided to bestow it as a gift to the city of Moscow. The collection at that time comprised 1287 paintings, 518 drawings, and 9 sculptures by Russian artists and 75 paintings and drawings by European masters, primarily French and German, from the second half of the 19th century. The value of the Tretyakov brothers’ gift, as officially recorded in the records office of the Municipal Duma, was estimated at 1,429,000 rubles. This naturally aroused great interest in the public. The Duma reacted promptly: as an expression of their esteem for Pavel Tretyakov’s high-minded deed he was named an Honorable Citizen of Moscow. The museum was opened already in May 1893 as the “Pavel and Sergey Tretyakov Moscow City Art Gallery”. Pavel Mikhailovich became its permanent curator and lifelong administrator. In addition, he continued purchasing pictures for the gallery, not only with the city’s funds, but also with his own. The newly-acquired pictures were also donated to the museum as gift. Thanks to these later efforts by Pavel Mikhailovich more than 200 artworks were added to the gallery’s collections between the years 1893–1897. And in addition to all of this, starting in 1893 Pavel Mikhailovich also funded the creation of collection catalogs.

Pavel Mikhailovich’s last great acquisition was the purchase of the painting *Bogatyrs* by the famous Russian painter Viktor M. Vasnecov. This happened only shortly before the life journey of the gallery’s founder culminated on 4 December 1898. Pavel Tretyakov’s last words before he died were reportedly: “Preserve the gallery and be healthy, everyone”. After Tretyakov’s death the gallery was administered by a board of trustees established by the city with the mayor of Moscow’s Municipal Duma, Prince Vladimir M. Golitsyn at its head. This council, among other things, categorized the gallery’s holdings into several different sections and incorporated old Russian artworks into it. These were 62 icons Tretyakov had preserved separately, as an exclusively private collection. Pavel’s heirs consigned the icons to the gallery in 1899.

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48 The most complete catalog of the Tretyakov Gallery’s prewar collections was issued in the year 1898. However, it was printed only after the collector’s death, at the beginning of the 20th century. 1635 paintings are listed in this catalog.  
49 Cf. NENAROKOMOVA, Pavel Tretyakov, p. 279.  
50 Vera Nikolaevna survived her husband by only four months. Their above-mentioned daughters became the couple’s heirs.
For centuries, Russian society had been mired in the dilemma of whether to emphasize Russian distinctiveness and isolate itself from non-Russian, particularly Western influences, or to seek a path to modernization, whose pattern would be rooted in foreign, primarily Western European societies. Most frequently this eternal dilemma has been illustrated through the examples of the Slavophiles and pro-Westerners, the largest factions of Russian intellectuals who had significantly influenced the thinking of Russian society in the 19th century. However, this analysis is excessively circumscribed and oversimplified. Certainly, the dilemma discussed between Slavophiles and pro-Westerners was not exclusively their domain. Many other Russian intellectuals also believed it was necessary to reckon with the West – East; Russia – Europe discourse. Whether this was accomplished utilizing Western or native Russian paradigms for their interpretation is not essential. What is important for us is that they attempted to give Russia and her soul visual semblance, and to present them as something wonderful, extraordinary, something that could comprehensively surpass the West or, rather humble it.

The life of Russian artists was very seldom a blissful idyll. However, in the 19th century, the situation greatly improved for some of them. This was because it became fashionable and prestigious for successful businessmen to support artists, in particular painters. Patronage became something like a national pastime for the elite of the emerging Russian capitalist society. Everyone who wanted to join this elite had to clearly evince their love for Russian culture, and providing direct support for artists and accumulating their creations became the highest-impact way to do so. From this milieu of like-minded intellectuals emerged one of the most distinguished personalities of Russian art patronage, supporter of his contemporary Russian painters and creator of the celebrated Moscow art gallery: Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov.