

## International Confederation of antique and art dealers in Russia and CIS (MKAAD) to protect heritage Natalia Goncharova

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*In this special document the CIS & Russian International Confederation of Art & Antique Dealers (ICAAD) wishes to come out in support of the heritage of the Russian avant-garde artist Natalia Goncharova after the recent publication of questionable research in the West. In the opinion of ICAAD the publication of monographs by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux damage this artist's reputation and can cause a misinterpretation of her role in the History of Art.*

Natalia Goncharova is one of the greatest artists of Russia, a bright innovator, a world-recognized epoch-making painter and, according to auction sales data, now the world's most expensive female artist. Her works are the focus of permanent research both in Russia and abroad. In 2010 and 2011 two illustrated foreign monographs about Goncharova were published in the West: 'Goncharova. The Art and Design of Natalia Goncharova' by Doctor Anthony Parton<sup>1</sup> (referred to herewith as the book by Parton) and the first volume of 'Natalia Goncharova. Her works. Between traditions and actuality' by another art historian, Denise Bazetoux<sup>2</sup> (referred to herewith as the book by Bazetoux).

In theory, any attention of Western art historians to works by this Amazon of the Russian avant-garde and the popularization of the her heritage should only be welcomed. Sadly, a first glance at the illustrations published in these books have not only disappointed but also amazed ICAAD members, Russian Art experts, collectors and connoisseurs of works by Natalia Goncharova. In the pages of the books by Parton and Bazetoux those unquestioned masterpieces from museum and private collections are published in conjunction with reproductions of works which, at the very least, should be referred to as questionable from the point of view of authenticity (and do not be fooled by the juridical neutrality of this statement).

These 'discoveries' have been found in part among those works connected with the period of Goncharova's greatest innovativeness – those created during her life in Russia. It should be noted that the point under discussion is not one or two 'discoveries', which could potentially be explained by mistaken attribution on behalf of the authors, but about 150 clearly strange works which have caused bewilderment among Art experts. For instance, the first volume of the monograph by Denise Bazetoux includes about 430 works (painted before 1915)<sup>3</sup>. 148 of these works are from museums and another 130 as having a relatively detailed provenance. Therefore, Bazetoux's book includes about 150 oils from private collections without provenance<sup>4</sup>.

### **Quantity And Moving Of Works By Natalia Goncharova, Created Before 1915**

It is theoretically possible that original works by Goncharova created before 1915 with obscure provenance exist, but it is scarcely probable: this period has been well investigated by art historians, whilst the artist's works were actively exhibited and recorded in catalogues. There is also an authorized list of works by Goncharova published in the brochure by Eli Eganbyuri in 1913 (I. M. Zdanevich; referred further as the brochure by Eli Eganbyuri) and a further list of works made by N.D. Vinogradov (more information on this later). The fate of the artist's works which were left in Russia after her emigration to France with Larionov is also no.

In the Spring of 1914, Goncharova and Larionov took about 50 paintings to Paris for their joint exhibition at the Paul Guillaume Gallery between 17th and 22nd June (there are actually 55 works listed by Goncharova in this catalogue). After the conclusion of this exhibition 36 works were to be shown at the Der Sturm Gallery in Berlin but the outbreak of war this. These paintings were in Berlin until early 1921 (this is recorded in the Tretyakov archives on 27/1/1921) when they were returned to the artists.

In 1915 Larionov and Goncharova left Russia permanently and the greater part of their works were left in their Moscow flat on Trekhprudny Lane. Between 1918 – 1919 some of the works were bought by the Department of Fine Arts of Narkompros (an abbreviation for the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment)<sup>5</sup> and were transferred to the Museum of Painting. Later these works were handed over to the State Tretyakov Gallery and various provincial museums. Another significant part of their heritage was removed by N.D. Vinogradov, an architect, from the flat into a Moscow Depository of Contemporary Art works founded by Vinogradov himself. On the reverse sides of these paintings special labels were stuck with the abbreviation of the depository - 'МХПСИ', the first letters of the artists' names 'Г' and 'Л' and numeration. Between 1925-1926 L.F. Zhigin, an artist, in accordance with Larionov's instructions,

organized the shipment of these works to Paris. '... Before transportation on the reverse of (Larionov's and Goncharova's paintings) inscriptions with the consignee's name were made (purportedly by Zhegin): 'Larionov' and 'Ларионов (this referred to the addressee as opposed to the author)'' writes Irina Vakar<sup>6</sup>, a senior specialist of the State Tretyakov Gallery on Russian Art of the first half of the 20th century in her catalogue.

Thus, most part of the works created before 1915 have special marks on the reverse of the paintings. In the publications by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux this important information (concerning these reverse sides) is often missed. These characteristic inscriptions, marks and stickers, well-known to specialists, could have thrown light on the movement and exhibition history of these questionable works. One can only guess at the reason for the absence of such information.

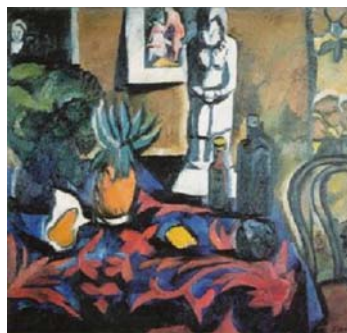
- <sup>1</sup> Anthony Parton. Goncharova. The Art and Design of Natalia Goncharova. Suffolk: Antique collectors' club, 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> Denise Bazetoux. Natalia Gontcharova. Son oeuvre entre tradition et modernité. Neuilly-sur-Marne: Artprint, 2011.
- <sup>3</sup> There are altogether 1529 of painting and graphic art works presented in the catalogue list in the book by Bazetoux; over 817 of these works were created by the artist before leaving Russia, i.e. before 1915.
- <sup>4</sup> Lack of persuasive data concerning provenance means that an art work from a private collection has not participated at exhibitions within hundred years and information about it has been firstly published after the year 2000, when mass emerging of fakes has been fixed.
- <sup>5</sup> Eganbyuri Eli 'Natalia Goncharova. Michail Larionov'. Moscow. 1913.
- <sup>6</sup> I.A. Vakar. Annotation to catalogue of works of Natalia Goncharova // State Tretyakov Gallery. Collection catalogue. Painting of the 1st half of the 20 th cent. Vol. 6, book one (A-I), Moscow, 2009, p. 191.

### Art Historic Analysis Of The Works By Natalia Goncharova

The doubts of Russian researchers as to the authenticity of a whole section of works and the apparent absence of a responsible approach to the material chosen by these authors is based on numerous art historical facts:



Picture 1. Natalia Goncharova (?) 'Still life with a coffee pot and a fan'. 1909. Oil on canvas. 89 x 88 cm Anthony Parton: ill. 46; Denise Bazetoux – ill. 191



Picture 2. Natalia Goncharova 'Still life with pineapple'. The State Tretyakov Gallery.



Picture 3. Natalia Goncharova 'Flowers and a coffee pot'. The State Russian Museum



Picture 4. Natalia Goncharova (?) 'Still life with four sun-flowers'. 1909. Anthony Parton: ill. 47.

Firstly, several of the works reproduced in the books of Parton and Bazetoux were analyzed at an earlier date by Russian specialists and were given negative certificates of authenticity. By way of an example, we would like to present some of the conclusions as laid out in these certificates of two paintings dated as 1909 by Parton and Bazetoux.

'Still life with coffee pot and fan' (Denise Bazetoux: ill. 46; Anthony Parton: ill. 191; picture 1) and 'Still life with four sun-flowers' (Anthony Parton: ill. 47; picture 4) lack creative compilation. In the former, the blue drapery with raspberry-coloured motifs is reminiscent of the table cloth from the painting 'Still life with pineapple' (the State Tretyakov Gallery; picture 2) and the teapot – the analogical pot from another painting 'Flowers and coffee pot' (the State Russian Museum; picture 3).

The shape of the coffee cup in the Russian Museum painting is cubist, but completely recognizable: it is a tall, visible, metal coffee cup with a conical lid and round handle.

In the painting offered for analysis both objects have a slightly bent look: the white (it looks like porcelain) coffee pot has become twisted, arched, the lid reminds one of the top of scent bottle, the

handle and the tray have become rectangular. This betrays a lack of confidence on behalf of the author. It is unsure whether the coffee pot is multi-layered or smooth nor how many corners the objects should have. The profusion of objects creates a composition that is confused and lacks Goncharova's characteristic energy and colour definition.

A questionable 'Still life with four sun-flowers' is similar to the abovementioned painting. Bunching of objects, lack of compositional logic is felt here to the greater extent: objects shut out each other, get in each other's way, drapery conceals space proportions a phenomena at odds with still lifes by Goncharova.

Interpretation of forms of the presented objects amazes as well. Thus a cap with a square handle and a saucer of the same form look like design experiment of the 1920s not as a cubist stylization of forms. Moreover all other objects – apples, vases, bottle, flowers, figurine – have no traces of cubism at all. The figurine deserves a special note. It is similar to a snow maiden paper-mache figure of the 1950s. It is stylistically differs from all the other objects, her features presented in far greater detail and the image itself is notable for excessive sentimentality at odds with the work of Goncharova.

The absence of Goncharova's style in the way the sunflowers (one of her favorite motifs) are painted is particularly obvious. Goncharova painted sharp, 'prickly', bright petals, as if absorbed by sunlight. In this picture the flowers are pale and fading with curvilinear forms of petals. The still life is realized in crude, 'soapy' inert manner; its color scheme is dominated by blue and cold green colors which are not common for Goncharova's vision. Goncharova used bright color contrasts - sunflowers clashing with the background, for example or contrasts of light and shade. Such contrasts are not present in the analyzed works.

Both works have signatures in Latin letters of the same period as the paint layer. Such a signature is a major rarity for works by Natalia Goncharova of her Russian period. Generally, it is missing or she used initials. Goncharova only began signing her paintings in Latin after her move abroad and usually before sending a painting to exhibition. Neither of these paintings have ever been exhibited either during or after her life, there is no mention of them in catalogues and the reverse sides have no exhibition labels.

The provenance is also obscure. The lack of any markings on the reverse show the lack of provenance. On the majority of paintings from the collection of A.F. Larionova-Tomilina in the State Tretyakov Gallery, there are signatures made by N.D. Vinogradov, L.F. Zhegin or others who were responsible for the shipment of works from Moscow to Paris in 1927 as well as labels and the numbers of the Moscow Depository of Contemporary Art. A.F. Tomilina herself also signed (in French) and dated works which belonged to her Foundation.

The absence of inscriptions and numbers on Goncharova's early works is seldom found and tells us that these pictures did not take part in her personal exhibitions of 1913-1914 where Goncharova even showed smaller studies. Neither of the paintings offered for expertise are on the list made by Ilya Zdanevich in 1913 and the pictures differ stylistically from those by Goncharova of this period.

#### 'Double paintings'

Included in these catalogues by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux are a significant number of 'double'-works – dubious paintings which have similar subject matter and themes.



198.– Les lutteurs

Musée russe, Saint-Petersbourg (Inv.: JB-1595). Entrée en 1925 (reçue du Musée de la Culture picturale, Leningrad, par l'intermédiaire de Guingkoukk).

**Expositions:** 1910-1911. Moscou, « 1<sup>re</sup> exposition du Valet de carreau », décembre-janvier 1911, n° 37. 1910-1911, Odessa, « 2<sup>e</sup> Salon Lédéby, salon international de tableaux, sculptures, gravures et dessins », décembre 1910-janvier 1911, n° 95. 1913, Moscou, Salon de peinture, « Rétrospective N. Gontcharova 1900-1913 », 30 septembre-5 novembre, n° 440. 1914, Saint-Petersbourg, Bureau artistique de N. E. Dobytychina, « Rétrospective N. Gontcharova 1900-1913 », n° 22. 1981, Moscou, Pouchkine Museum of Fine Arts, « Paris-Moscou, 1900-1930 » cat. p. 307. 1995, Paris, Musée national d'Art moderne, « N. Gontcharova-M. Larionov », 21 juin-18 septembre, repr. cat. p. 30. 2002, Saint-Petersbourg, Musée russe, « Natalia Gontcharova », printemps/été, n° 58, repr. cat. 2004, Monaco, « Exposition des peintres russes du Valet de carreau », organisée par la fondation Ekaterina et la direction des Affaires culturelles de la principauté de Monaco, 11 mars-12 avril, n° 14, repr. cat. p. 74 (Les Athlètes). 2004, Saint-Petersbourg, Musée russe, « Le Valet russe dans l'Avant-garde russe », automne, repr. cat. p. 89. **Intérim:** 2005, Moscou, Galerie Trétiakov, à partir de février. **Bibliographie:** Eganbury, C. VIII. 1972, Mary Chamot, *Gontcharova*, Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, cité p. 32. 1974, Donald Gordon, *Exhibition 1900-1916*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, n° 666, repr. nbs. p. 184. 1981, Bakos Katalin, *Gontcharova*, Collection A. Művészeti Kiskönyvtára, Budapest, Corvina Kaido, repr. pl. 16. Chagall, *Kandinsky, Malevitch und die Russische Avant-garde*, Verlag Gerd Hatje, repr. coul. p. 107. Hamburger Kunsthalle-Kunsthhaus Zurich.

198.– Les lutteurs

1908-1909 – Huile sur toile – 100 × 122 cm – Monogrammée au dos.

Picture 5. Natalia Goncharova. 'Wrestlers'. 1908 – 1909. State Russian Museum. Denise Bazetoux; ill. 198

### 199.- Les lutteurs

1909-1910 – Huile sur toile – 118,5 x 103,5 cm – Non signée, non datée – Au dos de la toile, une inscription en cyrillique par une main non identifiée: « Mich. Larionov/Les lutteurs/M. Larionoff » – Collées au dos de la toile, deux étiquettes de l'inventaire, du Musée de la culture picturale, Moscou.

Musée national d'Art moderne, Paris (Inv.: 1988-878).

**Provenance:** Atelier, Moscou. Dans les années 1920, immatriculation par le Musée de la culture picturale, Moscou. Fin des années 1920, restitution à l'artiste (Paris), par Jev Leguine. 1988, donation de l'État soviétique à l'État français.

**Expositions:** 1910-1911, Odessa, « 2<sup>e</sup> Salon Izdebsky, Salon international de tableaux, sculptures, gravures et dessins », décembre 1910-janvier 1911, n° 95. 1913, Moscou, Salon de peinture, « Rétrospective N. Gontcharova 1900-1913 », 30 septembre-5 novembre, n° 439. 1914, Saint-Petersbourg, Bureau artistique de N. E. Dolbychina, « Rétrospective N. Gontcharova 1900-1913 », n° 22. 1963, Paris, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, « Gontcharova-Larionov », 27 septembre-novembre, n° 23. 1969-1970, Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, « N. Gontcharova », 21 décembre-8 février, fig. 7 n° 22. 1995, Paris, Musée national d'Art moderne, « N. Gontcharova-M. Larionov », 21 juin-18 septembre, n° 10, repr. cat. p. 30. 1996, Milan, Fondazione A. Mazzotta, « Larionov-Gontcharova », 25 février-26 mai, repr. coul. pl. 10 p. 71. 2002, Saint-Petersbourg, Musée russe, « Natalia Gontcharova », etc., n° 59, repr. cat. 2006, Madrid, Fondation Thyssen Bornemisza, « Vangandias Rusas », 14 février-14 mai.



199.- Les lutteurs

**Bibliographie:** 1962, Mary Chamot, *Gontcharova*, Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, cité p. 32. 1968, C. Gray, *L'Avant-garde russe et l'Art moderne, 1863-1922*. Cité des Arts, L'Âge d'homme, Lausanne, cité p. 118. 1972, Mary Chamot, *Gontcharova*, Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, cité p. 48. 1989, Anonyme, « Un cas exemplaire (donation de l'État Soviétique) », *Connaissance des Arts*, n° 452, repr. coul. en couverture. 1990, Marina Tsveteva, *N. Gontcharova, sa vie, son œuvre*, Paris, Clémence Hiver, repr. coul. p. 140. 1995, J.-C. Marcadé, *L'Avant-garde russe, 1907-1927*, Paris, Flammarion, repr. coul. pl. XIV.

Picture 6. Natalia Goncharova. 'Wrestlers'. Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou, Paris. Denise Bazetoux: ill. 199

### 199.- Les lutteurs

1909-1910 – Huile sur toile – 118,5 x 103,5 cm – Non signée, non datée – Au dos de la toile, une inscription en cyrillique par une main non identifiée: « Mich. Larionov/Les lutteurs/M. Larionoff » – Collées au dos de la toile, deux étiquettes de l'inventaire, du Musée de la culture picturale, Moscou.



Photo 148. The Wrestlers, 1909-1910. Oil on canvas, 118.5 x 103.5 cm. Musée national d'Art moderne, Paris.



Photo 149. Un tournoi de lutte professionnelle (photographie). Centre national d'Art et de Culture Georges-Pompidou, Paris.

Picture 7. Natalia Goncharova (?) 'Wrestlers'. Private collection. Anthony Parton: ill. 124. Lower left – All-Russian Yubilee Championship of French Wrestling, Saint-Petersburg, photograph, 1910.

'Wrestlers' (Anthony Parton: ill. 124, Denise Bazetoux: ill 200; picture 7) is among the most obvious examples. It is well known among art experts that Eli Eganbyuri's brochure is the most comprehensive list of works by Natalia Goncharova up until 1913. On pages VIII-IX are shown two paintings of this name. One is in the State Russian Museum now (picture 5) and at the Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges-Pompidou (picture 6). In Bazetoux's book is a third example (from a private collection), which is not mentioned in Eganbyuri's list.

Both museum works have a detailed exhibition history from 1910, have inscriptions and stickers on the reverse. The third picture has no exhibition history, nor inscriptions, nor stickers. Notwithstanding an apparent history that the picture moved from one private collection to another (as listed above) there is no mention of it in any publications. In addition we are talking about a major picture, not an etude, vital to the oeuvre of Natalia Goncharova. There are similarities with the museum works, the intense red floor, the grey-white walls, but the composition is substantially different.

In the museum pictures the fighters take up the whole canvas, barely fitting into it creating a sense of tension and dynamism. In the painting from a private collection both figures are carefully placed on the background of the floor and yet the poses are stilted with an overuse of details in the faces, hair, biceps and others. The composition clearly reminds us of the photo of 1910 shown above, the original source of the painting, literally cut, pasted and transferred onto the canvas a characteristic totally unlike Goncharova.

This compositional inaccuracy, the wooden forms, the absence of colour energy are all concepts that bear little resemblance to the work of Goncharova of 1910, the period of the greatest flowering of her art.

### "Variations on a theme" of Goncharova

A number of the paintings published by Bazetoux are considered variations – on a theme by Russian specialists.

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Serpukhov. Inventaire: 228.  
*Provenance:* Reçu du fonds des Musées Nationaux en 1924.  
*Expositions:* 1911, Moscou, « Le Monde de l'Art », printemps, n° 84. 1911-1912, Moscou, Union des artistes du Salon de Moscou, « Salon de Moscou », n° 102. 1913, Moscou, « Rétrospective N. Goncharova 1900-1913 », n° 317. 1914, Saint-Petersbourg, Bureau artistique de N. E. Dobytchina, « N. Goncharova-1900-1913 », 15 mars-20 avril, n° 52. 1987, Musée de Serpukhov, n° 26. 2000-2001, CWA, p. 53. 2002, Saint-Petersbourg, Musée Russe, « Nathalie Goncharova », printemps/été, n° 29. 2004, Monaco, « Les Peintres russes du Valet de carreau », exposition organisée par la Fondation Ekaterina et la Direction des Affaires Culturelles de la Principauté de Monaco, 11 mars-12 avril, n° 12, rep. cat. p. 87. *Bibliographie:* 1913, Eganbury, 1933, John E. Bowl and Nicoletta Milder *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection-Twentieth Century Russian and Best European Painting*, Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd, Londres, cité p. 128.



130.- La tonte des moutons

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1907 – Huile sur toile – 118 × 102 cm – Au dos, un numéro d'ordre et de valeur de l'œuvre: « N 317a. 600 r. ».  
 Picture 8. Natalia Goncharova. 'Sheep shearing'. 1907. Museum of art history. Serpuhov. Denise Bazetoux; ill. 130, p. 221



131.- Les travaux des champs

**131.- Les travaux des champs**

1906-1907 – Huile sur toile – 55,5 × 68,5 cm – Monogrammée en bas à droite en cyrillique.

Collection particulière. *Provenance:* SNZ Galleries, Wiesbaden.

Picture 9. Natalia Goncharova (?) 'Workers in the Fields'. Private collection. Denise Bazetoux; ill. 131.

Compare 'Workers in the Fields' (Denise Bazetoux: ill. 131; picture 9) with the original museum work 'Sheep shearing' (Anthony Parton: ill. 140; Denise Bazetoux: ill. 130; picture 8), created in the same year - 1907 one can see that similarity of the themes of both paintings (agrarian work, peasants in fields) only accentuates the different interpretation of themes. First of all the difference in colorific interpretation is inexplicable for works with close dates of creation. The work from the Serpukhov museum is made with thick color mass, limited with sharp outlines. The main feature of the painting is a compositional definition.

Among the main features of the 'Workers in the Fields' from a private collection are the motley of colors, plastic indefiniteness, fractionality of forms, lack of structure or clear logical system. There are obvious differences in the interpretation of space – decorative-horizontal in the museum work and pseudo-plein-air in the work from a private collection. The foreground of the 'Workers in the Fields' is obviously 'broken down' whilst the bright colors of the background take the leading role. It appears that the author of the painting had been inspired not by Natalia Goncharova but by David Burluk. Again, there are no inscriptions, nor labels on the reverse so the provenance is also obscure.

**'Variants', 'sketches', 'études' for original works by Natalia Goncharova**

In the monographs by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux are works which in the opinion of art experts' should be considered as variants, sketches or études for well-known works by Goncharova.



547.- Le paon multicolore

*Les possibilités artistiques sur le thème du paon*  
 • Version dans le style de la broderie russe;  
 • Paon dans le vent ou paon cubiste;  
 • Paon en plein soleil ou paon égyptien;  
 • Paon blanc;  
 • Paons dorés d'aspect égyptien mais traités selon la technique de « l'haboussement ».  
*Bibliographie:* 1972, Mary Chamot, *N. Goncharova*, Bibliothèque des Arts, p. 46.

**547.- Le paon multicolore**

1910 – Huile sur toile – 50 × 65 cm – Monogrammée en bas à gauche en cyrillique, datée en bas à droite « 10 ».

Collection particulière.

Picture 10. Natalia Goncharova (?) 'Peacock in various colors'. 1910. Private collection. Denise Bazetoux; ill. 547.



548.- Le paon (style broderie russe)

Picture 11. Natalia Goncharova 'Peacock in spring' (Russian embroidery style). 1911. The State Tretyakov Gallery, Denise Bazetoux: ill. 548.

549.- Un paon en plein soleil (style égyptien)

1911 - Huile sur toile - 129 x 144 cm.

*Not.* Ce tableau fait parti de la série « Les possibilités artistiques à propos du paon ».

Galerie Trétiakov, Moscou (Inv.: Nr 10931). Reçu en 1929 du Musée de la culture artistique de Moscou.

*Expositions:* 1912, Moscou, École d'Art Strogonov, « La Queue de l'âne », 11 mars-8 avril, n° 44. 1913, Moscou, Salon de peinture, « Rétrospective N. Gontcharova, 1900-1913 », 30 septembre-5 novembre, n° 566. 1914, Saint-Petersbourg, Bureau Dobychina, « Rétrospective Natalia Gontcharova, 1900-1913 », n° 92. 1976-1977, Francfort/Main, Städtisches Kunstinstitut und Südliche Galerie, « Russische Malerei, 1890-1917, Bilder aus Museum des USSR », 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 1976-9 janvier 1977, n° 49, repr. cat. 2000, Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, « Kandinsky, et la Russie », 28 janvier-12 juin, n° 76, repr. cat. p. 186. 2002, Saint-Petersbourg, Musée russe, « Natalia Gontcharova », printemps/été, n° 134, repr. cat. *Bibliographie:* Eganbury, C. XI. 1972, Mary Chamot, N. Gontcharova, Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris p. 72. 1979, Mary Chamot, Gontcharova, *Stage Design and Paintings*, Londres Oresko Books, n° 19, repr. 1981, Bakos Katalin, Gontcharova Collection A. Múvészeti Kiskönyvtára, Budapest, Corvina Kiadó, repr. pl. 25. 1984, cat. du Musée russe, repr. p. 130.



549.- Un paon en plein soleil (style égyptien)

Picture 12. Natalia Goncharova 'Peacock under bright sun' (Egyptian style). 1911. The State Tretyakov Gallery, Denise Bazetoux: ill. 549.

548.- Le paon (style broderie russe)

Ven 1910 - Huile sur toile - 130,5 x 145 cm - Au dos une inscription.

Galerie Trétiakov, Moscou (Inv.: 1610). Entrée en 1989, par legs testamentaire Larionov-Tomilina, Paris.

*Expositions:* 1912, Moscou, n° 48, (le paon au printemps). 1912, Moscou, « La Queue de l'âne », 11 mars-8 avril, n° 46. 1913, « Rétrospective N. Gontcharova, 1900-1913 », 30 septembre-5 novembre, n° 488. 1914, Saint-Petersbourg, n° 163. 1999-2000, Moscou, Galerie Trétiakov, « M. Larionov - N. Gontcharova, Masterpieces from the Parisian Heritage », 4 octobre-20 janvier n° 31. 2002, Saint-Petersbourg, Musée russe, « N. Gontcharova », printemps/été, n° 93, repr. cat. 2004-2005, Groningen, repr. p. 61. 2005-2006, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, « L'Art russe dans la seconde moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle », 20 septembre-8 janvier, n° 211, repr. cat. p. 47.

Among these works under discussion is the painting 'Peacock in various colors' (Anthony Parton: ill. 629; Denise Bazetoux: ill. 547; picture 10). In 1912 at the 'Donkey's tale' exhibition (Osliniy khvost) Goncharova showed a series of works named 'The Artistic possibilities of the Peacock'. There were five such paintings, as declared by the artist herself, in different styles. Three have been preserved: two- 'Peacock in spring' (Russian embroidery style, picture 11) and 'Peacock under bright sun' (Egyptian style, picture 12) are in the State Tretyakov Gallery (both works are dated 1911).

All the three famous 'Peacocks' are panel-painting of the same format (almost square), in which the artist investigates various forms of decorative manners. The peacock itself is used here as a subject for formal play with various styles. The peacock image is strictly stylized. Thus in the work 'Peacock under bright sun' the bird is painted inside an oval and the form of the oval is repeated in presentation of the peacock's spread tail, and the tail itself is a symbol of a bright sun. It is a work with simple horizontal composition, all the brush strokes are exact, firm and energetic.

The work from a private collection is close in its colour but has significant differences from the other painting such as lack of artistic goal and other aspects of an artist's skill. The main attention of an author is concentrated on the peacock itself. It's awkward plastically weak figure with sticking-out chest paces highly lifting its legs in some indefinite space. The format of the painting is also different. It is horizontally spread and the plane solution is substituted by unclearly marked plans. Decorative solution has not been realized. Goncharova's expression in colors is not represented. The painting could not be referred as an etude, there are no traces of ideas, logically concerned with the aforementioned series. Anatomic faults in the peacock presentation, general apathy of the work, mannerism of the peacock's pose and meaningless of the general solution make the 'Peacock' from a private collection looks like a parody of Goncharova's masterpiece.

### Disputable graphic works

Among graphic works published in the monographs by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux are sketches for 'The Golden Cockerel' ballet in which art experts have found a number of disputed works.



Plate 406a. Costume design for a maiden in *Le coq d'or*, 1914. Watercolour & gouache on paper, 25.5 x 20.3cm. (Collection Professor Stavrovski, New York)

Picture 13. Natalia Goncharova (?) 'A girl'. 1914. Sketch for 'The Golden Cockeref'. Anthony Parton: Il. 406a



Picture 14. Natalia Goncharova 'Household girl'. Sketch for costume. Paper, aquarelle, graphite, bronze paint. 32,8x21,6 cm. Before 1936. The Bakhrushin State Central Theater Museum, Moscow.



Picture 15. Natalia Goncharova. 'Dancing girl'. Sketch for costume for 'The Golden Cockeref' ballet. 1937. Paper, aquarelle, graphite. 45,5x30 cm. The State Tretyakov Gallery. (Donated in 1983 by E. Kurnan, earlier -T.K. Pankova collection).



Plate 402. Costume design for the Golden Cockeref in *Le coq d'or*, 1914. Gouache on paper, 36.7 x 26.5cm. (The Collection of Jon D. and Pamela J. Dorsey)

Picture 16. Natalia Goncharova (?). 'Srin'. 1914. Private collection. Anthony Parton: Il. 402



Picture 17. Natalia Goncharova 'Srin Bird' 1914. The State Tretyakov Gallery



Picture 18. Natalia Goncharova 'Srin Bird' Sketch for costume. 1914. Paper, aquarelle, bronze and silver paint, graphite. 34,5x49 cm. The Bahrushin State Central Theater Museum

Comparison of a drawing 'Girl' published in the Anthony Parton book (ill. 406a; picture 13) with sketches 'Household Girl' from 1914 (The Bakhrushin State Central Theater Museum; picture 14) and the author's later replica 'Dancing girl' for performance of 1937 in the collection of the State Tretyakov Gallery (picture 15) the difference is striking.

Both works from the museum collections have a clearly traced provenance. Whereas the work presented in the Anthony Parton's monograph has a the character of a copy. Proportions of figure and character of the costume interpretation are changed. A loose-fitting, spacious shirt traced under the

breast is turned into an obscure detail of a Russian sarafan. In both sketches by Goncharova the figure's face is not painted over and face glow is akin to Russian-style pottery toys – using round spots. In the disputed sketch the figure is stumper, with violated proportions, its face and hands are painted over and face glow is made in accordance with cosmetic make-up principles (depending on the form of cheek-bones). Colour range of the costume is dark and unclear while the costumes of 1914 were realized in the bright deep colour range which had so impressed the Paris theatre audience.

The character of signature (in gouache) is not typical for sketches for 'The Golden Cockerel' ballet of 1914. All original sketches were signed by ink, in Cyrillic letters or -more rarely - in pencil. Handwriting and type of spelling of letters at the disputed sketch differs from Goncharova's handwriting. And finally, it is notable that all sketches for 'The Golden Cockerel' of 1914 are made on paper of a definite format.

Similar doubts surround another sketch for 'The Golden Cockerel'. A sketch for a Sirin-bird.

The sketch 'Sirin' published in Parton's book (ill. 402; picture 16) differs from its original in realization. Unlike similar drawings of 1914 from the State Tretyakov Gallery (picture 17) and the Bakhrushin State Central Theater Museum (picture 18) the 'Sirin' from a private collection has a clearly expressed deliberately-decorative character with plane horizontal schematic interpretation of forms. The museum sketches have an evidently more independent manner of working, with paint layers and character of interaction of colours and lines. Goncharova presents the moving figure whilst in the sketch from the Parton's book the figure is almost still. Moreover, marks in French and their positioning on the sheet of paper are atypical for sketches for 'The Golden Cockerel' of 1914.

### 'Quotations' and compilations

A whole series of paintings in Parton and Bazetoux's books have all the qualities of a crude compilation. The low artistic quality of 'improvisations' clouds their thoughtlessness and the absence of a feeling of measure.



Picture 19. Natalia Goncharova. 'Bicyclist'. 1913. The State Russian Museum. (Ill. 770) Natalia Goncharova (?) Denise Bazetoux : ill. 765-769, 771, 772, p. 309)



Picture 20. Natalia Goncharova (?) Automobile. 1911. Private Foundation, Anthony Parton: ill. 185.

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| 765 - La camionette<br>Nata 1912-1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 53 x 84 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 766 - La camionette<br>Nata 1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 50 x 73 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 767 - La camionette<br>Nata 1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 50 x 73 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 768 - La bicyclette<br>1912-1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 53 x 84 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 769 - La bicyclette (étude)<br>1912-1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 53 x 84 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 770 - La bicyclette<br>1912-1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 53 x 84 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 771 - La bicyclette<br>1912-1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 53 x 84 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière | 772 - La camionette<br>1912-1913 - 1 hab. sur route - 53 x 84 cm - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris<br>Collection particulière |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

In Eganbury's list of 1913 is the painting 'Cyclist' from the State Russian Museum (Anthony Parton: ill. 217; Denise Bazetoux: ill. 770: picture 19) In Bazetoux's book this work is surrounded by compositions with automobiles, bicyclists etc. (Anthony Parton: ill. 185 (picture 20) and ill. 220; Denise Bazetoux: ill. 765, 766, 767; picture 19) , bicyclists (Denise Bazetoux: ill. 768, 769, 771,772; picture 19) etc. moving along the same street as the figure in the original painting. This figure is in profile with a townscape background with shop signs.

Illustration № 769: is referred as an 'etude for the painting', № 768: presents the same bicyclist moving in the opposite direction and on the background of different shop signs; № 771: the hero also moves in opposite direction but the shop signs are the same as the original painting; the only difference is that advertisement for beer has moved from right side to the left; № 772: the same personage drives a child's scooter; № 765, 766 and 767: a new hero wearing helmet and glasses drives a car and the same background with beer mugs; № 780 and 781: a new second figure appears in the car – a woman wearing a hat with feather; № 769: a third



one – a man wearing a bowler hat appears. Background for most of the abovementioned works are shop signs bearing the legend: 'Hats', 'Silk' and a mug foaming beer, as at the painting in the State Russian Museum. Under the wheels of cars, bicycles and scooter there are the same cobbles as on the original.

Such mechanical repetition shows an alarming lack of imagination. Perhaps, later in life, as her career waned, Goncharova varied this motif? But these paintings are dated as 1912-1914 by Bazetoux. Goncharova amazed her contemporaries with her bravery, creativity, use of new experimental forms and sharp changes of style. But in Bazetoux's book these themes are shown over and over again. It is hardly worth mentioning that not a single one of these 'discoveries' on the theme of transport has any inscriptions, nor stickers on the reverse, to say nothing of the lack of provenance and exhibition history.

Andrey Sarabiyonov, an outstanding art expert, expressed his opinion concerning compilations in Anthony Parton 's book in his article, 'The Alternative Goncharova': 'It is not Natalia Sergeevna Goncharova, whom we know through museum collections, exhibitions and catalogues (especially after the publication of a whole collection of her works donated to the State Tretyakov Gallery by A.K. Tomilina). It is a different Goncharova, bizarre and thought-up. It is a shame that she could have so misled an expert as in Russian Art as well-known as Dr. Parton'<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Сарабьянов Андрей. Альтернативная Гончарова // Артхроника. 2011. № 3.

### Material sources and provenance

Choice of reference material and a sloppy approach to the checking of provenances has also amazed connoisseurs of Goncharova and specialists in the sphere.

295.- Femme avec enfant au puits  
Vers 1910 – Huile sur toile – 100 x 80 cm – Restaurée en 2000 à Bonn.  
**Provenance:** M. Bogoslovskij (peintre), Moscou. Dépôt II du Commissariat de l'État (tampon au dos de la toile), 1924. Collection M. Fomin. Héritiers de M. Fomin. Collection M. Laven, Allemagne, 1992. Collection particulière, Cologne, 1999.  
**Expositions:** 1910-1911, Moscou, Karo Bube.  
**Bibliographie:** 2001, in *N. Goncharova-M. Larionov*, Moscou, Hayka, repr. nls.

Picture 21. Natalia Goncharova (?) A woman with child by the well. Denise Bazetoux: il. 295



295.- Femme avec enfant au puits



Неизвестный художник. Сцена у колодца, х., м., часть собр.

Picture 22. Illustration from the article by M. L. Viculina 'Comparative analysis of creative method of M. Larionov and N. Goncharova' in the book "

'A woman with child by the well' is especially representative in this respect (Anthony Parton: ill.: 182; Denise Bazetoux: ill. 295; picture 21). In the bibliography corresponding to the painting - the work has been published in the book "N.S. Goncharova and M.F. Larionov. Investigations and publications"<sup>8</sup>. It is fact: the painting is discussed in the article by M.L. Viculina 'Comparative analysis of creative method of M. Larionov and N. Goncharova' (pages 154-155). Here is the author's quote: 'The second painting presenting the scene by the well (picture 22) is cruder. An author of this composition has tried to create a painting on the basis of his or her own vision of N. Goncharova's manner, choosing an appropriate theme. Nevertheless both his or her vision and the chosen theme have nothing common with the special language of painting by Natalia Goncharova. The painting is not signed and should be characterized not as a fake but as a work of unknown artist trying to work in Goncharova's manner'.

In opinion of art experts, the publication of this work alone in the catalogue-raisonne is reason enough to discredit the scientific research made by Denise Bazetoux.

The catalogue by Bazetoux includes about 150 works without any satisfactory provenance. It is also known that neither Anthony Parton nor Denise Bazetoux have ever visited the State Tretyakov Gallery where they could work with the largest museum collection of works by Natalia Goncharova in the world - 411 art works - including the most valuable paintings of the avant-garde period. The decision of these authors to ignore such an opportunity adds further to the lack of confidence shown in the professional level of both publications.

### **Conclusion**

This publication can have a negative effect on attitudes to this artists' heritage and market for her works for decades. The great innovator Natalia Goncharova seems to have become a very unstable and often weak artist practicing numerous replicas of the same themes with shallow compilations for those who read the two aforementioned catalogues. The reproduction of disputed works is harmful for the scientific experience of professional art experts, for young specialists in art history - it is potentially fatal. Unless appropriate action is taken today, these publications could be seen as a ticking timebomb as far as future research is concerned, to say nothing of the confusion they can cause to future collectors and investors on the art market.

The catalogues have provoked an immediate, public, and unanimous reaction amongst the Russian art community, ICAAD members and Russian officialdom. On April 26, 2011 a special press-conference with the title, 'Falsifications in art: Russian experts defend Natalia Goncharova's heritage' was organized in Moscow at the RIA Novosti State Information Agency. Irina Lebedeva, the General Director of the State Tretyakov Gallery, Victor Petrakov, the Head of the Federal Office for Legislation Supervision in Mass-Communications and the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (Rosokhrankultura) and Peter Aven, President of Alfa-Bank a connoisseur and collector of works by Goncharova and Larionov, were among the participants.

These and other concerns determine the motives of the CIS & Russia International Confederation of Art & Antique dealers to declare clearly its position of professional distrust towards the abovementioned monographs by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux. The CIS & Russia International Confederation of Art & Antique Dealers wishes to inform CINOA members about this position in an attempt to warn our colleagues and auction-house specialists to prevent using these books for research or as reference publications. Moreover, we recommend not considering these books as a catalogue-raisonne (as Bazetoux has referred to her book in some publications).

ICCAD also addresses collectors and investors and recommends not to rely on illustrations in the books by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux and not to consider them as reliable lists of works by Natalia Goncharova.

In the opinion of the CIS & Russia International Confederation of Art & Antique Dealers publication of the catalogues by Anthony Parton and Denise Bazetoux distorts the important role of Natalia Goncharova in the History of Painting and damages her professional reputation. The ICCAD would like to express the hope that this special report addressed to Russian and international professional community will reduce the negative effect of publication of these catalogues with their disputed interpretation of works of art.