Ана Дьяконицкая

СИЛА ПРАВДЫ

Братья Ткачевы

Ретроспективная выставка Алексея и Сергея Ткачевых, открытая в Инженерном корпусе Третьяковской галереи с 15 апреля по 17 июля 2011 года, представляет мастеров, во многом определивших судьбу национальной школы живописи во второй половине XX – начале XXI столетия. В экспозиции собрано около 180 произведений, связанных с основными этапами их пути в искусстве и раскрывающих главные направления художественных поисков. Здесь и масштабные «хрестоматийные» полотна из собрания галереи, исполненные Ткачевыми в соавторстве, и картины раннего периода, написанные каждым из братьев самостоятельно, и обширный этюдный материал. Все это лишь часть огромного творческого наследия мастеров, по сей день продолжающих работать над новыми композициями.

Анна Дьяконицкая

Серьёз (род. 1925) и Алексей (род. 1922) Ткачевы принадлежат к поколению, в судьбе которого неизгладимый след оставила война. Многих заставила она повзрослеть до времени, перечеркнув все, что было в прошлом. Так, война стерла с лица земли деревню Чучуновку, где родились будущие художники. Не пощадила она и дом в Бежице (пригороде Брянска), куда семья Ткачевых переехала в 1929 году. Именно здесь в предвоенное десятилетие начался путь Ткачевых в искусстве, когда в 1938 году Сергей Ткачев был в годовалом возрасте зачислен в Витебское художественное училище, известное своей историей и профессиональными традициями. Проучившись три года, он уехал в армию, вновь был ранен, после выздоровления вновь вернулся и трудился в госпиталях. С тех лет хранит этот этюд «Фронтовой сапожник», написанный им в 1944 году (собственность автора). Впоследствии этот набросок определяет облик главного героя картины «В трудные годы» (1957, Харьковский государственный музей изобразительного искусства).

Алексей Ткачев как победитель всесоюзного конкурса, объявленного в 1939 году журналом «Юный художник», был без экзаменов принят в Московскую среднюю художественную школу – уникальное учебное заведение для творчески одаренных детей, отбор которых проводился по всей стране. Трудности и лишения тяжелого времени пришлось испытать и ему. Более полугода он проработал на военном заводе Уралмаш. «Трудился, как и все рабочие, без скидок на молодость на разметке танковых моторов. Особенными ночные смены, неодолимо хотелось спать, а уж голод был постоянным спутником», – вспоминает Алексей Петрович. Дальнейшие события стали настоящим подарком судьбы для молодого таланта. Рассылив адрес школы в эвакуации, Алексей Ткачев отправил письмо одному из преподавателей и вскоре получил вызов, позвольяющий присоединиться к соученикам и продолжить занятия любимым делом.

Алексей Ткачев как победитель всесоюзного конкурса, объявленного в 1939 году журналом «Юный художник», был без экзаменов принят в Московскую среднюю художественную школу – уникальное учебное заведение для творчески одаренных детей, отбор которых проводился по всей стране. Трудности и лишения тяжелого времени пришлось испытать и ему. Более полугода он проработал на военном заводе Уралмаш. «Трудился, как и все рабочие, без скидок на молодость на разметке танковых моторов. Особенными ночные смены, неодолимо хотелось спать, а уж голод был постоянным спутником», – вспоминает Алексей Петрович. Дальнейшие события стали настоящим подарком судьбы для молодого таланта. Рассылив адрес школы в эвакуации, Алексей Ткачев отправил письмо одному из преподавателей и вскоре получил вызов, позволивший присоединиться к соученикам и продолжить занятия любимым делом.

Анна Дьяконицкая

СИЛА ПРАВДЫ

Братья Ткачевы. Художники о себе. М., 1999. С. 37 (далее – Художники о себе).

Анна Дьяконицкая

СИЛА ПРАВДЫ

Братья Ткачевы. О том, что в памяти. М., 2007. С. 49 (далее – О том, что в памяти).
Anna Dyakonitsyna

THE FORCE OF TRUTH

The Tkachev Brothers

A retrospective exhibition of the artist-brothers Alexei and Sergei Tkachev, running in the Engineering Wing of the Tretyakov Gallery from April 15 through July 17, presents the oeuvre of two figures who in many respects define the trajectories of the Russian school of painting in the second half of the 20th and at the start of the 21st centuries. The exhibition features around 180 pieces representative of the main stages of their work and the main directions of their artistic explorations. The pictures on view include large-scale “exemplary” compositions, the results of the brothers’ collective effort from the gallery’s collection, as well as earlier paintings, from their Moscow studio, created by one or the other brother independently, and a large assortment of sketches. All this is but a fraction of the vast body of work created by the artists who continue working to this day.

Sergei (born in 1922) and Alexei (born in 1925) Tkachev are a part of the generation on whom World War II left an indelible mark. The war forced many from their generation to grow up prematurely, wiping out their entire pre-war past. Thus, the war destroyed the village of Chu-chunovka, where the future artists were born. It also destroyed their house in Bezhitsa (a town near the city of Bryansk), where the Tkachev family settled in 1929. It was in Bezhitsa, in the decade before the war, that they started on their path as artists: following the example of their elder brother, Viktor, the three younger brothers – Sergei, Alexei and Vasily – began to attend a young artists’ group at a local Young Pioneer Club. But it was Sergei and Alexei who took up art for life, and their creative cooperation became a landmark in Russian-Soviet art.

When they were young, their lives followed different courses. In 1938 Sergei Tkachev became a student at the Vitebsk Art College, famous for its historical legacy and professional traditions. After three years of instruction, he was conscripted, fought in the war, was wounded, and after recovery was again sent to the battlefield. A relic of the time, Sergei Tkachev’s 1944 sketch “A Military Shoemaker” has survived. Later this sketch was used for the image of the main figure in the composition “In Difficult Years.”

Alexei Tkachev by the start of the war was studying at the Moscow Art School, a unique educational institution for artistically gifted youngsters who came there from all over the USSR. Like others, Alexei experienced in full measure wartime hardships and deprivations. When the German units were approaching Bryansk, the family was evacuated to Sverdlovsk. “So I was separated from the school I loved, my friends and all that I cherished and treasured,” Alexei Petrovich reminisced. He worked at the Uralmash military factory for several months. After the war, Alexei finished the Moscow Art School and began working with his brother Sergei. Together they created the two large-scale compositions that served as the basis for the big exhibition on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1941–1945 Great Patriotic War. The Tkachev brothers are rightly considered co-founders of the Soviet realist painting of the 1950s–1960s.

Unless otherwise mentioned, all works remain in the collection of the artists.

Anna Dyakonitsyna

THE TRETYAKOV GALLERY  |  CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

THE FORCE OF TRUTH

The Tkachev Brothers

A retrospective exhibition of the artist-brothers Alexei and Sergei Tkachev, running in the Engineering Wing of the Tretyakov Gallery from April 15 through July 17, presents the oeuvre of two figures who in many respects define the trajectories of the Russian school of painting in the second half of the 20th and at the start of the 21st centuries. The exhibition features around 180 pieces representative of the main stages of their work and the main directions of their artistic explorations. The pictures on view include large-scale “exemplary” compositions, the results of the brothers’ collective effort from the gallery’s collection, as well as earlier paintings, from their Moscow studio, created by one or the other brother independently, and a large assortment of sketches. All this is but a fraction of the vast body of work created by the artists who continue working to this day.

Sergei (born in 1922) and Alexei (born in 1925) Tkachev are a part of the generation on whom World War II left an indelible mark. The war forced many from their generation to grow up prematurely, wiping out their entire pre-war past. Thus, the war destroyed the village of Chu-chunovka, where the future artists were born. It also destroyed their house in Bezhitsa (a town near the city of Bryansk), where the Tkachev family settled in 1929. It was in Bezhitsa, in the decade before the war, that they started on their path as artists: following the example of their elder brother, Viktor, the three younger brothers – Sergei, Alexei and Vasily –

began to attend a young artists’ group at a local Young Pioneer Club. But it was Sergei and Alexei who took up art for life, and their creative cooperation became a landmark in Russian-Soviet art.

When they were young, their lives followed different courses. In 1938 Sergei Tkachev became a student at the Vitebsk Art College, famous for its historical legacy and professional traditions. After three years of instruction, he was conscripted, fought in the war, was wounded, and after recovery was again sent to the battlefield. A relic of the time, Sergei Tkachev’s 1944 sketch “A Military Shoemaker” has survived. Later this sketch was used for the image of the main figure in the composition “In Difficult Years.”

Alexei Tkachev by the start of the war was studying at the Moscow Art School, a unique educational institution for artistically gifted youngsters who came there from all over the USSR. Like others, Alexei experienced in full measure wartime hardships and deprivations. When the German units were approaching Bryansk, the family was evacuated to Sverdlovsk. “So I was separated from the school I loved, my friends and all that I cherished and treasured,” Alexei Petrovich reminisced. He worked at the Uralmash military factory for several months. After the war, Alexei finished the Moscow Art School and began working with his brother Sergei. Together they created the two large-scale compositions that served as the basis for the big exhibition on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1941–1945 Great Patriotic War. The Tkachev brothers are rightly considered co-founders of the Soviet realist painting of the 1950s–1960s.

Unless otherwise mentioned, all works remain in the collection of the artists.

Anna Dyakonitsyna

THE TRETYAKOV GALLERY  |  CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

THE FORCE OF TRUTH

The Tkachev Brothers

A retrospective exhibition of the artist-brothers Alexei and Sergei Tkachev, running in the Engineering Wing of the Tretyakov Gallery from April 15 through July 17, presents the oeuvre of two figures who in many respects define the trajectories of the Russian school of painting in the second half of the 20th and at the start of the 21st centuries. The exhibition features around 180 pieces representative of the main stages of their work and the main directions of their artistic explorations. The pictures on view include large-scale “exemplary” compositions, the results of the brothers’ collective effort from the gallery’s collection, as well as earlier paintings, from their Moscow studio, created by one or the other brother independently, and a large assortment of sketches. All this is but a fraction of the vast body of work created by the artists who continue working to this day.

Sergei (born in 1922) and Alexei (born in 1925) Tkachev are a part of the generation on whom World War II left an indelible mark. The war forced many from their generation to grow up prematurely, wiping out their entire pre-war past. Thus, the war destroyed the village of Chu-chunovka, where the future artists were born. It also destroyed their house in Bezhitsa (a town near the city of Bryansk), where the Tkachev family settled in 1929. It was in Bezhitsa, in the decade before the war, that they started on their path as artists: following the example of their elder brother, Viktor, the three younger brothers – Sergei, Alexei and Vasily – began to attend a young artists’ group at a local Young Pioneer Club. But it was Sergei and Alexei who took up art for life, and their creative cooperation became a landmark in Russian-Soviet art.

When they were young, their lives followed different courses. In 1938 Sergei Tkachev became a student at the Vitebsk Art College, famous for its historical legacy and professional traditions. After three years of instruction, he was conscripted, fought in the war, was wounded, and after recovery was again sent to the battlefield. A relic of the time, Sergei Tkachev’s 1944 sketch “A Military Shoemaker” has survived. Later this sketch was used for the image of the main figure in the composition “In Difficult Years.”

Alexei Tkachev by the start of the war was studying at the Moscow Art School, a unique educational institution for artistically gifted youngsters who came there from all over the USSR. Like others, Alexei experienced in full measure wartime hardships and deprivations. When the German units were approaching Bryansk, the family was evacuated to Sverdlovsk. “So I was separated from the school I loved, my friends and all that I cherished and treasured,” Alexei Petrovich reminisced. He worked at the Uralmash military factory for several months. After the war, Alexei finished the Moscow Art School and began working with his brother Sergei. Together they created the two large-scale compositions that served as the basis for the big exhibition on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1941–1945 Great Patriotic War. The Tkachev brothers are rightly considered co-founders of the Soviet realist painting of the 1950s–1960s.

Unless otherwise mentioned, all works remain in the collection of the artists.

Anna Dyakonitsyna
В военной и суровой Москве мы увидели впервые художников, вспоминают тот период как одна из самых ярких и трудных в будущем важную роль в формировании натуры в мастерских, слушали замечательных педагогов – В.М.Доспехова, С.П.Михайлова, В.В.Потапова и других замечательных педагогов – они не бросили нас на произвол судьбы. В военную и суровую Москву мы увидели, что искусственное жить и дышать.*

В 1944-м на ежегодной выставке коллекции галереи. Это событие было признано как настоящий праздник. Вместе с другими учениками МСХШ Алексей и Сергей Ткачевы показали картины по залам постоянной экспозиции. «Победная» прозвала в одном из них, названная ими “Венеция”, “Офеля и Гамлет”. Несмотря на волнение и напряжение, они не бросили нас на произвол судьбы. В военную и суровую Москву мы увидели, что искусственное жить и дышать.*

В 1944-м на ежегодной выставке коллекции галереи. Это событие было признано как настоящий праздник. Вместе с другими учениками МСХШ Алексей и Сергей Ткачевы показали картины по залам постоянной экспозиции. «Победная» прозвала в одном из них, названная ими “Венеция”, “Офеля и Гамлет”. Несмотря на волнение и напряжение, они не бросили нас на произвол судьбы. В военную и суровую Москву мы увидели, что искусственное жить и дышать.*

В 1944-м на ежегодной выставке коллекции галереи. Это событие было признано как настоящий праздник. Вместе с другими учениками МСХШ Алексей и Сергей Ткачевы показали картины по залам постоянной экспозиции. «Победная» прозвала в одном из них, названная ими “Венеция”, “Офеля и Гамлет”. Несмотря на волнение и напряжение, они не бросили нас на произвол судьбы. В военную и суровую Москву мы увидели, что искусственное жить и дышать.*
Among the pieces created at the institute, such as drawings from nature and compositions accomplished by students indoors, as a part of the general curriculum, the works created by Alexei and Sergei Tkachev during summer holidays stand out. Leaving Moscow, they travelled along the Oka and Volga rivers, visited their parents, who were settled in the Nizok village on the Oka and Volga rivers, visited their parents, who were settled in the Nizok village. The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days. The Tkachevs’ brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days. The Tkachevs taught, who were settled in the Nizok village

During our first years at the school <…> our teacher and friend. You can say that during our first years at the school, <…> our teacher and friend. You can say that during our first years at the school, <…> our teacher and friend. You can say that during our first years at the school <…>

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.

The Tkachevs brought lots of artwork: portraits, landscapes, genre compositions which captivated not only the motif but also the visual texture of works accomplished in their student days.
massters’ atvory became an example to look up to for the young artists who emerged in the cultural arena after the war. Relying on such a tradition, the Tkachev brothers were seeking out their path in art as well.

In the second half of the 1950s their artistic language started to come into its own, and that period witnessed the creation of a number of remarkable works. The show features a couple of them – portraits produced as drafts for future artistic language started to come into its path in art as well.

Relying on such a tradition, the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, as related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachevs, going on to settlement in Vyshny Volochok, as related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration, more than 300 sketches and a near-ly finished version of the painting rejected by the artists. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.

The storyline of this painting, created by the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, is related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.

The storyline of this painting, created by the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, is related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.

The storyline of this painting, created by the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, is related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.

The storyline of this painting, created by the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, is related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.

The storyline of this painting, created by the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, is related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.

The storyline of this painting, created by the Tkachev brothers during their stay at the Akademicheskaya Dacha (Academic Countryside Retreat) near the town of Vyshny Volochok, is related to the artist’s life. Alexei Petrovich, a young artist at the time, met at a dance party there a girl, a native of the area, whom he married and who became his life-long companion. So the Tkachevs, who worked at the Akademicheskaya Dacha for several years, went on to settle not far away, and in this neighbourhood near the city of Tver they conceived the ideas for and executed the bulk of their landmark works.

In the late 1950s-early 1960s the Tkachev brothers became famous for compositions in which they tackled the task of creating a grand painting significant both in form and in substance. The exhibition features their large painting “Between Battles” (1958–1960) – the first production of the Tkachev brothers. All these pieces not only helped to trace the history of the creation of the final version, but also demonstrate very clearly the features of the Tkachev brothers’ creative method as set up in the 1950s. Though it changed from one painting to another, this method nevertheless for many years remained intact in several very important characteristics. At the stage of sketches each brother usually works independently. And then, in the course of joint work, they discuss their studies of the episode with every alteration.
of the brothers, when it comes to large compositions produced by them both, we can speak about the birth of a new artistic “self”. Indeed, when incorporated into the final composition, the sketches become an integral part of it.

Overall, one cannot remain unimpressed by their utmost thoroughness and exceptional focus on detail in their large compositions. Thus, for the painting “Between Battles” the artists found an appropriate school building not far from the Dacha and “thinking out every little detail, carefully chose the clothes and the shoes, a Red Army soldier’s spiked helmet (budennovka)” was fashioned relying on a sewing pattern borrowed from the Museum of the Revolution, the book with a red cover which the young soldier holds was found at the same museum. 79

Not only history or literature, but often life itself has suggested themes for the Tkachev brothers’ pictures. This is precisely how the composition “Mothers” (1960-1961) came into being, to become one of the key works of the post-World War II art on display in the Tretyakov Gallery’s permanent exhibition. The artists had to say about women featured in the painting: “On a wooden bench at side by side women of different ages: an expectant mother in white, next to her a mother holding a child. And finally, on its right flank the composition is rendered out with the figure of a young woman who looks rather like a city woman on a visit to a village. 80 The new goal was matched with a new artistic approach, especially since the artists worked on the composition not only in their workshop but also in the open air. Sometimes we brought the painting out onto the courtyard to look at it from afar, to make sure we’d got the proportions right, and we added some details directly onto the canvas. Our models were at hand, there was always someone seated on our small bench near the bathhouse. 81

“Mothers”, ready for display at a Soviet national exhibition, unexpectedly became a target of criticism from the Soviet Ministry of Culture. 82

The expressive genre element in a monumental painting seemed too unconventional. “The future of our piece was hanging by a thread, so to say. We felt like we were on the epizode of a drama untiring in dramatic turning points in the nation’s history. But there are even more pressing issues surrounding the simple joys of life. “In a Bathhouse” (1974, Tretyakov Gallery). “Wedding Beneath the Moon” (1979), “Summer” (1991), “Two Mothers” (1990-1991) and “A Day of Heat” (1995). These works are arranged by series, each devoted to one theme, treated differently and framing novel compositional arrangements in each piece.

The Tkachev brothers’ entire art work – from their early painting experiments to their most recent pieces – is distinguished by a particular responsiveness and attention to realities and events of the world and to people’s destinies. Thus, it is no accident that their one which not only incorporates a colossal ethnographical material, but also affirms the artists’ civil and ethical position, their perception of the country’s past and future. This ambition “to make beauty and truth”, incorporating a focus on substantive aspects of art, is one of the features of Russian national cultural identity. 

The Tkachevs’ pictures, when it comes to large compositions produced by them both, we can speak about the birth of a new artistic “self”. Indeed, when incorporated into the final composition, the sketches become an integral part of it.