

Majestic river and proud character: SibFU art historians reveal the image of the river Yenisey in painting and graphics

Scientists of Siberian Federal University and Krasnoyarsk Surikov Art Museum [studied](#) the image of the Yenisey in the paintings and graphic works of Krasnoyarsk artists, highlighting the main hypostases in which the Siberian river appears. Also, the researchers attempted to compare the images of the Yenisey with the peculiarities of self-presentation of Siberians and explain the phenomenon of the Siberian character.



"All the studied works are in the collection of the Krasnoyarsk Surikov Art Museum. They were created by famous Krasnoyarsk artists and most vividly represent the image of the Yenisey and Siberia as a place of living and a sign of identity."



How did various artists see the Yenisey river? What are we, those living on the banks of this river, and what is the famous Siberian character? To answer these questions, we studied the tradition of depicting the Yenisey by representatives of the Krasnoyarsk art school since the middle of the 20th century and tried to understand how these works interact with the viewer - what kind of message they contain, what actions they motivate," says **Anastasia Kistova**, the co-author of the study, associate professor of the Department of Cultural Studies and Art Criticism, Siberian Federal University, Deputy Director for Scientific Work of the Krasnoyarsk Surikov Art Museum.

On the canvas by T.V. Riannel, "The Birth of the Yenisey", the river is presented in the form of a stormy stream escaping from the close embrace of the surrounding rocks. This Yenisey heroically overcomes the boundaries and resistance of the stone, "splashes" towards the viewer with sharp peaks of multicolored waters. The authors draw attention to the image of a young cedar "climbing" a cliff - just as this tree is not afraid of difficulties and extreme living conditions, so the Siberians are full of courage, resilience, and courage. They are real conquerors of new frontiers.

"In the graphic work by R. K. Ruiga "Brother of the Ocean (Yenisey)" we see a different image. Water and sky converged on the sheet - both boundless, immense, spacious, equal in power. In the north, below the mouth of the Podkamennaya Tunguska, the Yenisey is wide like a sea. The Yenisey here is a real primal element, and only people who are not only physically but spiritually truly strong, can master the distant and alluring North and make it their home after having endured all hardships," says **Ksenia Bulak**, senior researcher of the Krasnoyarsk Surikov Art Museum.



The "businesslike" and "tamed" Yenisey, which serves as a transport artery and has become a full-fledged part of the urban environment, is presented in the painting by V.A. Sergin. It is no coincidence that the artist immortalized the silhouette of the first Krasnoyarsk bridge that connected the two banks. According to researchers, here the river appears as a connecting beginning, a bridge between the past of the city,

dating back to the times of the first settlers, and its industrial future.

“The work “The Yenisey is blocked” by the artist A. M. Znak shows the completion of the dam during the construction of the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydroelectric power plant, one of the largest in the world. The artist shows figures of people and construction equipment that cannot be compared with the scale of the taiga and the sheer cliffs surrounding them. Nevertheless, these people skillfully conquer nature, create the future of the country with their own hands. There is an atmosphere of triumph in the picture, but the builders do not look like invaders of this space. Rather, they are intelligent hosts. And groups of people are depicted in such a way that they are compared with a monolith of rocks. By the way, we see one special figure, i.e. a woman builder “flying up” in the arms of her friends. Against the background of the blue waters of the Yenisey, it looks like flying, and only in this way, overcoming the limitations of possibilities, a person organically joins this power of the natural space of Siberia,” says **Natalia Pimenova**, associate professor of the Department of Culturology and Art History of SibFU.



The scientists emphasized that this work is part of a large-scale study dedicated to Siberian and Krasnoyarsk identity.

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