



SVETOSLAV  
ROERICH

"Let striving for the Beautiful become our everyday prayer... It is the pursuit of Beauty that will bring people together and save the world. At difficult moments of life, one should think of Beauty."

*Svetoslav Roerich*

**T**he name of Svetoslav Roerich (1904–1993), the youngest son of Helena and Nicholas Roerich is related to many key events in the spiritual and cultural space of our planet in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was an artist, fine arts expert, architect, engineer, naturalist, ethnologist, religious scholar, thinker, entrepreneur, educator and public figure. Like all the members of his unique family, Svetoslav Roerich was marked out for a rare synthesis of various talents and spheres of their application. He painted thousands of pictures, wrote several books and was engaged in cancer treatment research. He was also the initiator and head of large cultural and educational institutions. Svetoslav Roerich coordinated the work of many non-governmental organizations within the territory of a few continents, laid the foundations of a new spiritual science, education and enlightenment, revived and strengthened the principles of mutual cooperation between two Great Powers – India and Russia.

Svetoslav Roerich was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 1904, in Saint-Petersburg, two years after the birth of his brother George. His vocation for painting manifested itself since he was a child. He used to draw or model something from his earliest infancy. Later he attended classes at the School of the Impe-

Svetoslav Roerich.  
Sacred Words  
(Words of  
the Teacher).  
1944



Svetoslav Roerich.  
Portrait  
of N.K.Roerich.  
1918

rial Society for the Encouragement of Arts presided by Nicholas Roerich. At the age of 12, he became an apprentice to his father. He helped him to stretch canvases and make up paints. A year later he proved to be a born portraitist, when he painted the first portrait of his father. At 15 he made his contribution to the triumph of the Russian theatrical decorative art abroad. On his father's instructions, Svetoslav created sketches of details for theatrical backdrops and costumes for Diaghilev's theatre productions (1919) in the famous Covent-Garden in London and even took part in the creation of the backdrops.

He displayed an equally great interest in the natural sciences and in architecture (especially in engineering). As a result he opted for the latter while continuing his education in the USA, where the Roerichs had moved from England in the

Helena Roerich  
with her sons and  
their governess.  
[1913]







autumn of 1920. After a year of intense studying at the Columbia University School of Architecture in New York, Svetoslav Roerich entered the Harvard Graduate School of Architecture, where he took an accelerated course in architecture, attending concurrently a sculpture course at the University of Massachusetts. In addition, Svetoslav combined all these activities with a deep immersion into the History of Art. By 1923, not even 19 years old, he was prepared to enter upon life on a par with his elder brother, an orientalist. By that time he had already gained a reputation of a talented theatrical artist. In 1922 he debuted in Boston as a scene and costu-

Svetoslav Roerich.  
Saffron Vendors.  
[1924]

me designer and co-author of the modern one-act ballet "Light and Darkness." Soon afterwards, he started conceiving new ideas for envisaged cooperation with Sergey Diaghilev's theatrical enterprise in Paris. Svetoslav created scenario outlines for several ballets and hundreds of costume sketches that were exquisite in style and decoration. He excelled as well as a book illustrator, having featured a series of distinctive drawings for a collection of Oriental tales at the exhibition of foreign Russian painting in New York.

In May 1923 Svetoslav Roerich with his parents crossed the Atlantic. After their six months' sojourn in France, Italy and Switzerland, the whole family headed for India. The Roerichs visited major historical sights of the country and established contacts with prominent representatives of Indian science and art. Then they settled in the independent



Svetoslav Roerich.  
Chinese Man.  
Costume Design.  
1924

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