

The Rybinsk State History, Architecture and Art Museum-Preserve

Russia

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Rybinsk (Рыбинск) is a city in Yaroslavl Region, Russia, at the confluence of the Volga and Sheksna rivers. It has been known from the year 1071. The 12th-century village of Rybnaya sloboda became the town of Rybinsk in 1777. It has been a trade and shipping center for traffic between Moscow and Arkhangelsk since the 16th century. The Mariinsk Waterway, built in 1810, linked Rybinsk with the Baltic for the first time. In the 1870s it was developed as a shipping point to St. Petersburg. The construction of the Volga-Baltic canal system increased its importance as a river port. The Rybinsk reservoir is the southernmost component of the Volga-Baltic Waterway. This artificial lake, with 5.200 km², was

constructed in 1941 between the upper Volga River and its feeders, the Mologa and Sheksna rivers, with the completion of the dam and hydroelectric station at Rybinsk.

The Rybinsk State History, Architecture and Art Museum-Preserve museum

(www.rybmuseum.ru/ - Russian language only), one of the oldest and the best museums of the Upper Volga Region, was founded in 1910. Now the museum houses more than 120 thousand exhibits: from saurian bones to paintings of famous artists. The main museum building is on the Volga bank, and was built in 1912 by Moscow architect A. Ivanov for the Corn Exchange.



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The building resembles a fairytale house. Inside the building may still be found the original decoration including wrought iron banisters and ceiling plasters.

The exhibition space of the museum includes a part of the corn, or flour trading yard. This is a square with two-level shops built at the end of the 18th century. The museum also occupies the classic style Old Exchange building (1806-1811), now closed for reconstruction. This is the first exchange building in Russia outside Moscow and Saint-Petersburg.

17 October 1910 the Rybinsk branch of the Yaroslavl Natural History Society has opened a natural history museum. By 1913 the museum had five departments: mineralogical, geological, zoological, botanic and anthropological. 14 December 1919 one more museum was opened in Rybinsk to keep several private collections of noble people nationalized by the Soviets after the revolution. 5 January 1927 the natural history museum and the art historical museum were merged to form one large regional museum. In 1920 - 1930 the museum integrated hundreds of museum items from small museums of the region. Now these collections are kept in the museum of Mologa district history situated in the former oratory of the Afanasiev women's monastery, this is a branch of the Rybinsk museum. When the town of Mologa and some nearby villages were submerged in the thirties when the Rybinsk reservoir was created, the inhabitants moved to Rybinsk.

The Rybinsk museum's collection of Foreign Art is the most valuable in the region. West European graphics of the 16th - 19th centuries includes works from Italy (Ag. Carracci, O. Fialetti, S. della Bella, G. B. Galestrucci), the Netherlands (H. Goltzius, I. Swanenburg),



A portrait of a boy with the ABC book
by an unknown end-of-18th-century artist from the estate of the Counts Musin-Pushkins.

Germany (I. Major, Ch. W. E. Dietrich), France (R. Nanteuil, G. Edelinck, C. Gillot, F. Boucher) and the United Kingdom (F. Bartolozzi, R. Earlom, V. Green). The West European painting collection represents the Netherlands, French, German and Italian art schools (M. de Hondecoeter, A. Edelfelt). The department of West European Sculpture of 18th - 19th centuries keeps valuable works of P. F. Thomire, M. Clodion, A. Barye, C. Fratin. The museum possesses samples of the leading ceramic and porcelain centres of Europe.

Russian Orthodox Church art includes collections of copper casting plastics of the 11th - 19th centuries, Cyrillic books of the 17th - 19th centuries, Old Russian icons from the 16th



- 15th centuries and many 18th - 19th century works. The collection of Russian art gives the full picture of the Russian art evolution in the 18th - 20th centuries. The museum also keeps and exhibits folk art, history, archeology and natural science collections.

All these treasures are practically unknown to Europeans. Thanks to Europeana, users will be able to explore valuable collections of the Rybinsk State History, Architecture and Art Museum-Preserve and after that they may plan a visit to this interesting city on the Volga river. The museum's collections of West European art will be integrated for the first time by Europeana with collections of European mu-

seums to show the full picture of European art evolution and expansion. Museum items accessible in Europeana will show to users throughout the world the life of a small provincial town of Russia through centuries.

The Rybinsk State History, Architecture and Art Museum-Preserve is the first museum in Russia that has opened the full museum catalogue on the Internet

(www.ryb-museum.ru/query/SQuery).

That is why the museum is glad to participate in ATHENA and use ATHENA services to promote Russian culture and history in Europe.

