Exhibition of Albert Benois' works opens in Russian Orthodox Religious and Cultural Centre in Paris



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In the evening of 13th March 2025, an exhibition of the works of Albert Benois (1888-1960), a Russian architect, painter and icon-painter, opened in the Russian Orthodox Religious and Cultural Centre in Paris. Albert Benois played a remarkable role in spreading the Russian art and Orthodox architectural tradition in France and other Western European countries.

Among those who took part in the opening ceremony were Mr Alexei Meshkov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the French Republic; Metropolitan Nestor of Korsun and Western Europe, Patriarchal Exarch of Western Europe; Metropolitan John of Dubna, head of the Archdiocese of Orthodox Churches of Russian Tradition in Western Europe; Ms Anna Kotlova, director of the Russian Orthodox Religious and Cultural Centre in Paris; staff members of the Russian diplomatic mission; clergy from the Orthodox churches in Paris; and representatives of the mass media.

Displayed at the exhibition are Benois' sketches, designs and paintings, website of the Korsun Diocese **reports**.

"This is the first exhibition of such scale of Albert Benois' works in Paris," the Russian Ambassador said in his speech," "Benois became one of the leading representatives of the Russian religious art in France. He painted frescoes for St. Nicholas Church in the Russian Veterans House in Montmorency and for the lower church of St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Paris. Some of the icons and frescoes in the sanctuary of the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Bari, Italy, were also painted by him. Thanks, among other factors, to the efforts of the Korsun Diocese clergy, the part of that iconostasis which has survived to this day was delivered from Bari to Paris a week ago and was included in this exhibition," Mr Meshkov added.

Among other works on display are Benois' architectural projects, starting from his student works and ending with the designs of the Holy Dormition Church in Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois and the Memorial Church commemorating Russian Soldiers in Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand. Visitors can also see watercolours, archival documents and photographs from family albums.

As Metropolitan Nestor of Korsun and Western Europe noted in his speech, "Benois' works are truly masterpiece examples of the neo-Russian style."

Ms Anastasiya Nikolayeva, the exhibition curator, pointed out that Benois' works serve as a striking manifestation of simplicity and power of the Russian national character, "which is surprising, considering that he was a Frenchman, not Russian." "It is symbolic that the exhibition opened in the week that followed the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, since Benois' works can be called the triumph of Orthodoxy here, in France," Ms Nikolayeva added.

A special book has been published to mark the exhibition's opening. It contains a lot of archival documents, valuable photographs and historical accounts of Albert Benois' life and work. The exhibition closes on May 4th. Entry is free for all visitors.

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