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Arshile Gorky
(Khorkam c. 1904 – Connecticut 1948)

Untitled (Rooster), c. 1932-41

Oil on canvas mounted on canvas board by the artist

13 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (34.6 x 24.1 cm)
21 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ (54.3 x 43.8 cm), framed
Signed (lower left)

Provenance

The artist;
Mary Burliuk Holt;
Dean Borghi Fine Art, New York.

Exhibited

Bohemian Paradise: David Burliuk, Nicolai Cikovsky, and the Hampton Bays Art Group. Long Island Art Museum. February 2 - July 13, 2008. Stony Brook, New York.

Bibliography

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Arshile Gorky was born Vosdanig Adoian in the village of Khorkom, near Lake Van, in an Armenian and Kurdish province on the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire. As a child Gorky experienced the genocide of his people, the Armenians, which drove him and thousands of others out of Van. These traumatic events culminated in the early death of his mother from starvation in December 1919, during a winter of severe deprivation for the Armenian refugees in Yerevan. Gorky and his younger sister Vartoosh emigrated to the United States in 1920, where he eventually changed his name to Arshile Gorky.

Gorky settled in New York City in 1924, and enrolled at the National Academy of Design and the Grand Central School of Art, where he quickly became an instructor. Despite some formal art training, Gorky was essentially self-taught, obtaining most of his education through visits to museums and galleries, and reading art books and magazines. By doing so Gorky became familiar with the European avant-garde, embarking on a study of its masters and their origins, notably Paul Cezanne, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Fayum portraiture, and Paolo Uccello. To friends and colleagues who criticized his approach as derivative, Gorky stressed the importance of technique, continuity and his disdain for the concept of originality.

In the 1930s Gorky began living and working from 36 Union Square, in New York City, where he would remain for the rest of his life. He established close artistic friendship with Willem de Kooning and the two are considered the fathers of Abstract Expressionism.

Gorky exhibited works at numerous galleries and museums, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, where he participated in almost every contemporary painting and drawing annual from 1936 until his death. By 1937, the Whitney purchased its first Gorky painting. He would eventually see his works in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Joseph H. Hirshhorn, and Peggy Guggenheim.

Until his death in 1948, Gorky painted highly original abstractions that combined memories of his childhood with direct observations from nature and art. A sequence of catastrophic events beginning in the mid 1940s, however, would leave the artist in physical and emotional agony. A fire in his studio, a terminal diagnosis of rectal cancer and consequent operations, a debilitating automobile accident, and marital breakdown led Gorky to commit suicide on July 21, 1948. Despite his early death, the unique and impressive body of work that Gorky left behind made a profound impact on American Art, securing his reputation as the last great Surrealist painter and one of the first Abstract Expressionists.

On the 2008 Long Island Art Museum Exhibition & David Burliuk:

In the early twentieth century, a group of artists created a dynamic Long Island art colony they called the Hampton Bays Art Group. Primarily émigrés from eastern Europe, they found a haven on Long Island's South Fork. Earlier they had used the streets and people of Manhattan as their subject matter. Now they would rely on the fields and waters of Long Island, and the people who lived and worked here, for inspiration.

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The bohemian paradise the group created became a place of refuge from a society these men and their families found repressive -- a place where they and other artists from varied backgrounds could share lively intellectual discussions, artistic camaraderie and take a break from the pressures of a world they saw as increasingly alienating.

David Burliuk, the informal leader of this informal group, made his home in Hampton Bays its center, arranging exhibitions, concerts, readings -- and raucous parties. His friend and fellow Russian émigré artist Nicolai Cikovsky became an early convert to the appeal of Long Island, moving into a house in the North Sea where he spent more and more time painting. Soon other artists joined them, including Moses Soyer, Raphael Soyer, Arshile Gorky, George Constant, Milton Avery, and John Graham.

The varied backgrounds of the members contributed to the vibrancy of the group. While the core members -- Burliuk, Cikovsky, the Soyers and Graham -- shared a common Russian heritage, their circle grew to include members from other ethnic backgrounds Constant was from Greece and Gorky from Armenia. Avery, the exception, was born in the United States. Whatever their backgrounds, all shared the same desire to create art in a free society that reflected the changing world around them.

The art they created was as diverse as their backgrounds. Burliuk and Cikovsky were already established artists and their work reflected the wave of Modernism that swept across Europe during the 1910s and 1920s. The Soyers were trained in Manhattan, and their realist portraits of dancers, factory and office workers, and the unemployed had a decidedly American appearance. Constant, Avery, Gorky and Graham worked in a range of mediums and styles, resulting in exhibitions that were varied in content and visually interesting.

nostalgic scenes the members of the Hampton Bays Art Group created on Long Island. Although their styles differed, their intent was the same: to create a refuge from the complicated world in which they could celebrate the arts and each other.

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В. В. МАЯКОВСКОМУ БУДЕТ ПОСТАВЛЕН ПАМЯТНИК. 1930.

В. В. Маяковский в городе Ленинград. Трудовой подорожник Владимир Маяковский в городе Ленинград. Трудовой подорожник Владимир Маяковский в городе Ленинград.

В. В. Маяковский в городе Ленинград. Трудовой подорожник Владимир Маяковский в городе Ленинград. Трудовой подорожник Владимир Маяковский в городе Ленинград.



АМЕРИКАНСКАЯ ПРЕССА ПРОДОЛЖАЕТ ГОВОРИТЬ О ВЛ. ВЛ. МАЯКОВСКОМ

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...with all the might of his vast, restless vision. When comrades were made on his behalf, he expressed on the importance of speaking. For him, the act of speaking was not a mere act of oratory, but a kind of social engineering, the medium being words instead of steel. He did his best to put steel into his speech. I saw him, again, at a Christmas party in the same studio—some good party comrades had been there, though in the instance the tree was decorated with glacial pine ornaments for the household's pet mouse. On this occasion, Mayakovsky pressed the point that his business as an artist was to make propaganda for a machine civilization.

In Moscow he was well-known about America's mechanical arts. When he had once seen these things, he went home to write poems on such topics as Broadway, Brooklyn Bridge, Chicago, the burden of them being: If you have lost the habit of having the capitalist order, O Russian citizen, come to New York. An American poet who met him here described him as an empty sky-scraper: the essence of modernity without warmth and light. It has been said that Mayakovsky committed suicide not because he could not win the poetic acclaim which at the moment he desired, but because, for all his volcanic ardor of the new order, he was afraid of it. Whatever the truth may have been as to his reasons for withdrawal, his last word was that the future lies with the cause to which he had dedicated his pen.