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Russian Legends: Folk Tales and Fairy Tales

David Jackson, Patty Wageman

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"The Magic Carpet" by Russian-born Victor Vasnetsov depicts a man placidly hovering on an oriental rug, flanked by three owls, above an eerie, moonlit landscape. Painted in 1880, it evidences the influence that Russian fairytales (in which magic carpets figure heavily) had on Russian painters and illustrators of the time. These stories were not only, as is often thought, used in traditional crafts like lacquer work and embroidery. Nineteenth-century artists blended imagery from fairytales and legends with references to what was happening politically, economically and socially in Russia and the rest of the world--creating a unique picture of the Russian psyche. An engaging survey of an under-explored phenomenon, *Russian Legends, Folk Tales and Fairy Tales* includes more than 80 works by artists like Vasnetsov, Nicholas Roerich, Ivan Bilibin, Vasili Kandinsky, Elena Polenova and Michail Vroebel alongside summaries of the depicted fairytales. Some of the works included are book illustrations, others large paintings on canvas. A great resource for understanding how and why Russian artists utilized fairytale imagery, this book also serves as an introduction to the repeating themes and humor in the stories.

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