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Emily and Mary Shanks

Russian-Born Englishwomen
Among the Peredvizhniki

SPECIAL EDITION



Vasily Polenov Museum Reserve

The Vasily Polenov Museum Reserve in the Tula Region hosts a unique collection of Russian paintings by the artists who brought glory to Russian art: Ivan Shishkin, Vladimir and Konstantin Makovsky, Nikolai Yaroshenko, Illarion Pryanishnikov, Aleksei Bogolyubov, Konstantin Korovin, Isaak Levitan, Sergei Ivanov, Sergei Malyutin, Ilya Ostroukhov, Yeghishe Tadevosyan and Maria Yakunchikova. One of the jewels of the museum collection is "Anatomy Students" (also known as "Anatomy Class", "Before the Examination") painted by Polenov's younger sister Yelena Polenova.

Unlike her elder brother, Yelena Polenova could not

get a higher education in art at the Imperial Academy of Arts, the main art school of the time, as women were not admitted as full-time students. Polenova had to rely on self-education and spent some time abroad, taking inspiration from West European painters. She worked a lot in Russia, painted from life, and studied anatomy under the tutelage of Professor Aleksander Gubarev. It must have been this experience that prompted the idea for this painting. Two of the models are Emily and Mary Shanks, who were friends with Polenova. The artists visited the drawing sessions at the Polenovs' house where they met Yelena and made friends with her.

The painting was part of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The works for the Russian Pavilion were selected by a special commission appointed by the Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich, President of the Academy of Arts. The commission selected two works by Polenova for the exhibition – "After the Bath" was purchased at the exhibition, whereas "Anatomy Students" returned to Russia.



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Emily SHANKS

Gardeners

Oil on canvas

80 × 71 cm

© National Art Museum of the
Republic of Belarus, Minsk

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“These young folks have gradually made that inconspicuous turn from the old and dull way to art that is free and more pure, so to speak”¹.

Emily and Mary Shanks

Russian-Born Englishwomen Among the Peredvizhniki

Yulia Tulinova

Emily Shanks (1857-1936) and Mary Shanks (1866-1949) were born in Moscow to the family of James Steuart Shanks, descendant of a line of British merchants, who had come to Russia in 1852 at the age of 24. Shanks went into business with Henrik Bolin, a Swedish jeweller, and together they opened Magasin Anglais - The English Shop - in Kuznetsky Most, which quickly gained popularity with Moscow's wealthy elite. The shop owners rented premises in the Tretyakov brothers' Trading House in Kuznetsky Most (at the crossing of Kuznetsky Most and Rozhdestvenka; the house is still there) and offered exquisite fancy goods and drapery mostly imported from England. Pavel Tretyakov preferred that his wife, Vera, and his adolescent daughters buy apparel from James Shanks instead of other foreign shops and firms.²

The Shanks sisters were admitted to the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture as auditing students – Emily in 1882 and Mary in 1889. Both of them learned painting and drawing from such outstanding artists and educators as Vasily Polenov, Vladimir Markovsky, Illarion Pryanishnikov, Yevgraf Sorokin, Sergei Korovin and Nikolai Nevrev. The Polenov family played a pivotal role in shaping Emily and Mary as artists – the young women were still students when they became

frequent visitors at the Polenov home and made friends with Vasily Polenov's sister Yelena and wife Natalia. Twice a week, on Thursdays and Saturdays, the Polenovs hosted “painting gatherings”, which were attended by Ilya Repin, Viktor Vasnetsov, and Vasily Surikov. As well as Polenov's students, the family invited accomplished young artists, including Maria Yakunchikova, Isaak Levitan, Konstantin Korovin, Mikhail Vrubel, and Alexander Golovin.

The artists often worked at the studio at the Shankses' house, as well as their country cottage in Fili, right outside of Moscow. Yelena Polenova captured one of those moments in her painting “Anatomy Lesson” (“Before the Examination”, Vasily Polenov Museum-Reserve), where she depicted

← Emily SHANKS
My Toys. No later than 1896
Oil on canvas. 91.8 × 56 cm
National Art Museum
of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk

1. Igor Grba [Igor Grabar], “22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition” in *Niva*. 1894. No. 20. P. 471.
2. A.P. Botkina, *Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov in Life and Art*. Moscow, 2012. Pp. 501. 592.



The Peredvizhniki group.
The artists seated, left to right: Konstantin Savitsky, Vladimir Makovsky, Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky, Grigory Myasoyedov, Pavel Brullov, Yefim Volkov, Aleksander Kiselev,

Mikhail Nesterov, Emily Shanks, Vasily Baksheyev, Isaak Levitan, Pyotr Nilus. The artists standing: Andrei Schilder, Alexander Beggrov, Vasily Surikov, Nikolai Dubovskoy, Mikhail Klodt,

Serhiy Svetoslavsky, Georgy Khruslov, Appolinary Vasnetsov. In the background: the painting by Vasily Surikov "Suvorov Crossing the Alps" Photograph: Karl Fischer

a group of female art students preparing for a human-anatomy class in the studio at the Shankses' residence. We see Mary at the desk, absorbed in a voluminous folio, Emily sitting on the windowsill with a book in her hands, and Elena Karzinkina, another student of Vasily Polenov, in the foreground holding a human skull. The young artists took anatomy classes from Alexander Gubarev, Professor of medicine at Moscow University.³ The subject reflects the special attitude towards women engaged in creative pursuits that was prevalent in the second half of the 19th century. This was a time when women became significantly more active in various aspects of public life, and the woman's status in the society changed. As a consequence, there appeared many accomplished works by women in the creative professions, be it writers, poets, musicians, or artists.

Here is what Yelena Polenova wrote in a letter to Elizaveta Mamontova about the sisters' accomplishments: "Early morning on Tuesday (well, early for us: around ten o'clock), we ran to the exams at the Academy. Eight paintings were put forward for the grand medal there.

Our hearts smiled: eight freshly baked artists, of whom those who know what's happening in the artistic world are terribly sad that they hadn't been made into artists a year earlier and didn't exhibit anything this year on the Peredvizhnaya. [...] At two o'clock the Shankses came to do work for the academy. During the session, Vasily came back from the exam and, since outsiders are not allowed in during work, he called Natalya⁴ to report the results. Both Shanks girls turned white as a sheet. Natalya comes in, laughing and shouting: "Where are my English salts, otherwise they will feel faint." The two are lost – as it turns out, the older one received a medal for a painting, and Mary two medals for a study and a drawing in life class, i.e. she finished school. Such a bright girl, she passed the life class in only one winter."⁵

In 1888, Emily was awarded two minor silver medals for painting and drawing, and in 1890, her graduation year, she received a major silver medal for her painting "Reading a Letter" (1890, location unknown)⁶. Unfortunately, like most of Emily Shanks's paintings, this one was lost, and we only have access to black-and-white reproductions from exhibition catalogues, postcards or engravings based on her paintings.

3. *In Support of Women Students*. Collection. Moscow, 1901. P. 385.

4. Natalia Vasilyevna Polenova, wife of Vasily Polenov.

5. E.D. Polenova to E.G. Mamontova, March 30, 1890, in E.V. Sakharova, *Chronicle of the Artists' Family*. P. 451.

6. Lidia Iovleva, *Notes on Emily Shanks*. 1975. Russian Archive of Leeds University Library, UK.



Mary Shanks in the studio
of the Pokrovka house,
Moscow. 1890s
Photograph.
Family archive



Emily Shanks in the studio
of the Pokrovka house,
Moscow. No later than 1911
Photograph.
Family archive

Emily Shanks (left)
at the dacha at Fili,
Moscow Region. 1890s
Photograph.
Family archive

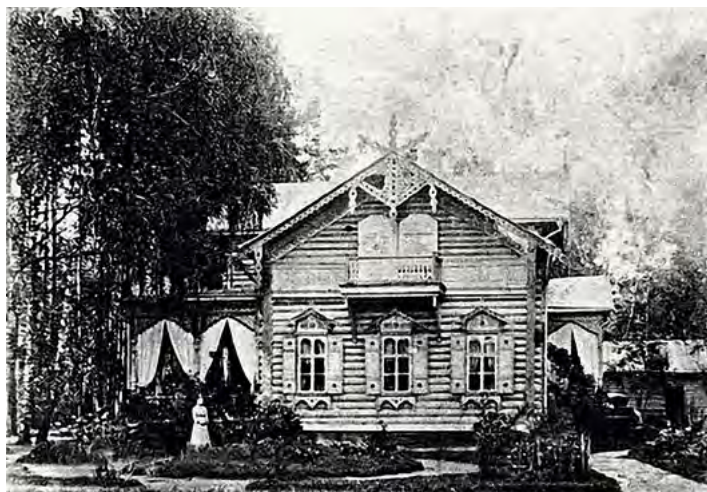




Interior of the Shankses' house in Pokrovka, Moscow
On the right wall, Emily Shanks's graduation painting "Reading a Letter"
Photograph.
Family archive



Interior of the Shankses' house in Pokrovka, Moscow
On the wall, Emily Shanks's painting "Busy Playing"
Photograph.
Family archive



Dacha of the Shanks family at Fili, Moscow Region
Late 19th century
Photograph.
Family archive



The father of Emily and Mary James Stuart Shanks in the ballroom of the family house in Pokrovka
No later than 1911
Photograph.
Family archive

Interior of the Shankses' house in Pokrovka, Moscow. On the wall, Mary Shanks's graduation painting "Hospital Scene" ("Visiting Grandma"), which was awarded a big silver medal; below are two paintings by Emily Shanks from the series "Kremlin Palaces" - "Golden Chamber, a Door" and "Golden Chamber, a Window". Photograph. Family archive



Only a year after Emily completed her studies, her painting "Older Brother" was accepted for the 19th Peredvizhniki exhibition. This was a genre scene with three excited teenagers conducting "science experiments" at home. For Emily, it was a very successful debut. First of all, her painting got high marks from the strict selection board of the renowned Peredvizhniki. In the words of Polenov, "even Makovsky was delighted with Shanks."⁷ Empress Maria Feodorovna also showed interest in the painting, and Polenov, who happened to be nearby, explained the meaning of the scene to her.⁸

The plot and composition of "Older Brother" would become a recurring theme in Emily's works, such as "Ink Spot" (1894, location unknown), "Bubbles" ("Children Playing Bubbles", 1897, Local History Museum of the Syzran Urban District), and "Puppets" (early 20th century, private collection). Images of children in a variety of everyday situations would become Emily's sig-

nature motif, which should not come as a surprise – the Shankses' home was always full of children. There were Emily's younger siblings, her nephews, nieces and their friends, as well as the children of family friends, so there were many models for portraits and many genre scenes to choose from.

The 20th Peredvizhniki exhibition (1892), which opened in St. Petersburg, brought Emily even greater recognition – the renowned art collector Pavel Tretyakov acquired her painting "New Girl" ("New Girl at School", Tretyakov Gallery)⁹. Upon visiting the exhibition, the well-known art critic Vladimir Stasov wrote about the painting: "Last year, the Peredvizhniki exhibition featured a cute piece by Miss Shanks, 'Older Brother'.

7. V.D. Polenov to N.V. Polenova, March 4, 1891, in E.V. Sakharova, *Chronicle of the Artists' Family*. P. 460.

8. V.D. Polenov to N.V. Polenova, March 7, 1891, in E.V. Sakharova, *Chronicle of the Artists' Family*. P. 463.

9. Tretyakov's decision to buy the painting was based on, among other things, advice given by Ilya Repin, who spoke favourably about it in his letter to the Moscow collector: "What a nice piece, the 'New Girl' by Shanks (classmates examining the new student). Very expressively and pleasantly made" (*Ilya Repin's Letters. Correspondence with Pavel Tretyakov. 1873-1898*. Moscow, Leningrad, 1946. P. 158).



Emily SHANKS
Hiring a Governess
(Difficult Task)
 No later than 1893
 Oil on canvas
 94 × 125 cm
 © Slovtsov Museum Complex,
 Tyumen

Emily SHANKS
A Case in Hospital
 53 × 65 cm
 Oil on canvas
 ©Tchaikovsky History
 and Art Museum,
 Perm Krai



Emily SHANKS
New Girl at School
 (New Girl). 1892
 Oil on canvas
 79 × 105 cm
 © Tretyakov Gallery

But this time, she has sent a picture which has even more grace and truthful expression. It is called 'New Girl',¹⁰ and the scene is in a girls' boarding school, in a classroom."¹¹

After the 19th exhibition, there were just a few mentions of Emily Shanks in the press dedicated to the Peredvizhniki exhibition ("Peterburgskaya Gazeta" No.72, March 15, 1891; "Peterburgsky Listok" No. 68, March 11, 1891). However, her participation in the 20th exhibition attracted much wider attention among the journalists and art critics who wrote about the exhibition.¹²

In 1893, at the 21st Peredvizhniki exhibition, Emily displayed her painting "Difficult Task". To date, the subject and location of the painting have remained unknown. However, a review by Alexei Novitsky sheds light on its subject: "Emily Shanks always treats her scenes in a very nice way. This time, she has presented recruitment of a governess and called the painting 'Difficult Task'.

The task is not at all an easy one. A very young girl, maybe a recent graduate, has come to be hired into a family. The lady of the house is lying back on a couch comfortably, scrutinising the girl. Two kids and a nanny are standing by the door, looking suspiciously and provocatively at the unknown new person."¹³ Thus, the painting by Emily Shanks currently known as "Hiring a Governess" (no later than 1893; Slovtsov Museum Complex, Tyumen) was first shown at the 21st Peredvizhniki exhibition under the name "Difficult Task".

10. The model for "New Girl" was Yevdokia Korablyova (1877–1966), the daughter of the carpenter who worked on restoring the Kutuzovskaya Izba log hut where Kutuzov stayed before the Battle of Borodino in 1812. Museum in Fili. The Shanks family had a cottage in that rural area, where they spent their summers.

11. V.V. Stasov, *Selected Writings. Painting. Sculpture. Graphics*. In 2 volumes. Moscow, Leningrad, 1950. Vol. 1. P. 269.

12. In St. Petersburg: *Novoye Vremya* No. 5743, February 24, 1892; *Novosti* No. 55, February 25, 1892, *Den'* No. 1346, March 8, 1892. In Moscow: *Novosti Dnya* No. 3187, May 8, 1892; *Moskovsky Listok* No. 109, April 20, 1892, *Moskovskaya Ilyustrirovannaya Gazeta* No. 118, April 30, 1892; *Russkiye Vedomosti* No. 115, April 28, 1892. In Kharkov: *Kharkovskiy Gubernskiy Vedomosti* No. 226, September 4, 1892. In Odessa: *Odessky Vestnik* No. 327, December 20, 1892.

13. A. Novitsky, "21st Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Artist* No. 29, 1893. P. 157.

Emily SHANKS
Older Brother

No later than 1891

Oil on canvas

70 × 63 cm

Location unknown

Reproduction from the book:

"Illustrated catalogue of the
19th Peredvizhniki Exhibition".
St. Petersburg, 1891.



Emily SHANKS

Ink Spot

No later than 1894

Oil on canvas

85 × 125 cm

Location unknown

Reproduction from the book:

"25th Anniversary Pered-
vizhniki Album". 1872-1897.
Moscow, 1900. P. 168.

Emily's work "Ink Spot" (location unknown) was exhibited at the 22nd Peredvizhniki exhibition in 1894. This is the description given by a contemporary: "In the children's room, three girls were very naughty and spilt ink right on the new dress of the girl who had come to visit her friends. Something should be done to get her out of trouble, and the girls have brought the washbasin, poured some water and started the laundry..."¹⁴

"Ink Spot" was acquired at the exhibition by the Moscow art collector Ekaterina Stanitskaya.¹⁵ After the 22nd exhibition in 1894, Emily was accepted as a member of the Society for the Travelling Art Exhibitions and became the first woman in the ranks of the Peredvizhniki. There is no doubt that this was a major challenge both for her and the other artists who belonged to the Society. Some of the eminent members of the governing body of the Society and other artistic associations were not at all thrilled about accepting young artists as members of these creative communities, not to mention women: "there is an abyss between the two generations, with literally nothing that could serve as a bridge between them, and not a trace of continuity. Would it be possible, for example, to look at the latest portraits and genre paintings presented at this exhibition (by Messrs Serov, Kasatkin, Shanks, Meshkov, Pasternak, Surenyants, Polenova, etc.) and find a single feature, as it relates to their [artistic] goals and interpretations, that they share with their predecessors, who undoubtedly influenced them in their time, such as Messrs. Repin, Kramskoy, Vladimir Makovsky, Yaroshenko and others? Is there anything in common between the landscapes and seascapes of the latest formation (Messrs. Levitan, Serov, Apollinary Vasnetsov, Mamontov, Sokolov, Pereplechikov, Dosekin and Zaretsky) and their closest forerunners, such as Shishkin, Volkov, Bogolyubov, Lagorio, and even Mr Polenov, who is actually closer to them? Decidedly there is nothing! The only similarity lies in the fact that both the former and the latter paint Russian life and nature," wrote Alexander Kiselyov in "Artist" magazine (#34, 1894) about the 13th Exhibition of Art Lovers.¹⁶

In 1894, Emily Shanks was chosen as a delegate for the First Congress of Russian Artists and Art Lovers, which was convened to mark an important occasion: the Tretyakov brothers donated their collection of art to the city of Moscow.

It was at the 22nd Peredvizhniki exhibition that Mary Shanks, Emily's younger sister, first showed her painting "I Await Your Verdict" (Latvian National Museum of Art,



14. "About Illustrations" in *Niva*. 1894, No. 19. P. 447.

15. Society for Travelling Art Exhibitions. 1871-1923. Encyclopedia. St. Petersburg, 2003. P. 167.

16. "13th Regular Picture Exhibition of the Society of Art Lovers" in *Artist*, 1894, No. 34, p. 219.



Emily SHANKS
Portrait of Natalya Polenova.
 Study, 1894
 Oil on canvas mounted on
 cardboard.

20.5 × 31.3 cm
 Vasily Polenov
 Museum-Reserve,
 Tula Region

Riga¹⁷) as an exhibitant. The artist painted herself showing her new work to Vladimir Stasov: the renowned art scholar and critic is studying the canvas with great interest and the young artist is frozen in anticipation of his judgement. However, a review in “*Peterburgsky Listok*” No. 66 of March 9, 1894, offers a different version – that of an artist’s widow selling her late husband’s painting to an amateur patron.

Obviously, the art community could not help comparing Mary’s painting with the work of her elder sister at this exhibition: “Technically, it is outplayed by “*Ink Spot*”, but there is much more vitality and originality in it. Its main drawback is the sketches flashily hanging on the wall. But the simplicity of composition, reserved expressiveness of the faces and truthfulness make this painting very pretty.”¹⁸

Mary showed her work at two more of the Peredvizhniki exhibitions, in 1896 and 1897. However, she remained in the shadow of her more accomplished older sister. Mary even changed one letter in her Russian signature to avoid

being confused with Emily, and yet critics did not always remember the existence of the younger sister. Thus, one review of the 15th Art Students’ Exhibition in 1893 stated the following: “I will not be writing about ‘*Visiting Grandma*’ by Miss Shanks, because this painting does not really belong here, and Miss Shanks shows her work at the Peredvizhniki exhibitions. On the whole, we must say that we expected more expressive and powerful work from this artist after her excellent ‘*New Girl*’. Still, her painting may just be the best genre scene that this exhibition has to offer.”¹⁹ However, the very next issue of the same publication included a correction: “There was an error in the article ‘*Christmas Picture Exhibitions in Moscow*’ in issue 26 of the ‘*Artist*’. ‘*Visiting Grandma*’ was not painted by the same Miss Shanks that showed her ‘*New Girl*’ at the 1892 Peredvizhniki exhibition, but by her sister.”²⁰

Along with genre scenes with children and adolescents, Emily Shanks made individual children’s portraits, in which her nephews and nieces served as her models. Except for a couple of known portraits including the one depicting Polenov’s elder daughter “*In the Flowers*”²¹ (no later than 1901, private collection), the children in her portraits do not sit for the artist – they are busy doing something that is important to them.

17. Received in 1946 from Moscow Purchasing Commission

18. V. Mikhchev, “22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition of the Society for Travelling Art Exhibition. Russian Art in 1894” in *Artist*, 1894, No. 37. P. 131.

19. Christmas Picture Exhibitions in Moscow (15th Students Exhibition and 12th Regular Exhibition) in *Artist*, 1893, No. 26. P. 200.

20. *Artist*. 1893, No. 27, February. P. 186.

21. 29th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1901.





Emily SHANKS
Portrait of Vasily Polenov's Daughter
 Study, June 18, 1890
 Oil on canvas
 21.7 × 14 cm
 © Vasily Polenov
 Museum-Reserve.
 Featured older daughter Yekaterina (1887–1980).

← Mary SHANKS
I Await Your Verdict
 No later than 1894
 Oil on canvas
 105 × 79.5 cm
 © Latvian National
 Museum of Art, Riga

Emily SHANKS
In Flowers
 No later than 1901
 Oil on canvas
 67 × 47.1 cm
 Private collection

In the portrait of the artist's niece, Leila McClelland (about 1900, private collection), the girl is lulling a doll to sleep. She looks to be five or six years old, but her pose, clothing, pensive focus on the doll, neat hairstyle and her peace and tranquillity suggest that she is not just playing with the doll, but assuming the role of a would-be mother or nanny. No wonder that one of the names of the portrait is “Nanny”.

At the All-Russia Industrial and Art Exhibition in Nizhny Novgorod in 1896, the public could see the works of both sisters. Emily exhibited “My Toys”²² (no later than 1896, National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk²³), and Mary the painting “Temptation”²⁴ (no later than 1896; Oleksiy Shovkunenko Kherson Art

22. Also displayed at the 25th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1897.
23. Purchased in 1954 from A.K. Kraitor, Moscow. Earlier kept in the collection of I.K. Kraitor, Moscow.
24. Also displayed at the 24th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1896.

Emily SHANKS
Portrait of Vasily Polenov's Daughter
 Study, 1890.
 Oil on canvas
 21.6 × 14.1 cm
 © Vasily Polenov
 Museum-Reserve.
 Featured older daughter Yekaterina (1887–1980).





Emily SHANKS
**Portrait of Leila McClelland
(Nanny)**
About 1900.
Oil on canvas
60 × 48 cm
Private collection, UK

Emily SHANKS
**Weeder (Girl Collecting
Cucumbers)**
No later than 1904
Oil on canvas
75 × 65 cm
Private collection



Marie Louise McClelland
About 1900.
Photograph.
Family archive

Museum). Both works are dedicated to children and are characterised by a bold social context.

Along with many members of the creative professional class, Emily and Mary Shanks used their art to shed light on social processes and important events in the life of Russian society. For example, social inequality is the topic of Emily's "Dining Hall for Poor Children"²⁵ (no later than 1907, location unknown) and "Fetching a Horse"²⁶ (no later than 1909, location unknown). In turn, Mary painted the striking portrait "Girl"²⁷ (Polenovo Museum-Reserve) featuring a poor young girl – dressed in hand-me-downs too large for her, with a frightened look in her wide eyes and a timidly outstretched hand, she stands at a doorstep begging for alms.

25. 36th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1907.

26. 38th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1909/10.

27. This is the only known painting by Mary Shanks in Russian collections.





The annual Peredvizhniki exhibitions served as the major exhibition venue for Emily Shanks as a member of the Society for Travelling Art Exhibitions. However, the Shanks sisters were members of other artists' associations. One of them is the Moscow Society for Art Lovers (MOLKh), with the two-level membership – amateur members and artist members. Emily and Mary became amateur members of MOLKh in 1890²⁸, while still students of the Moscow School of Art. As an amateur member, Mary participated in MOLKh exhibitions with her paintings “Sketch”²⁹ (no later than 1892, location unknown) and “Portrait of NN”³⁰ (no later than 1893, location unknown). She was granted the status of an artist member earlier than Emily – in 1895, for the painting

Mary SHANKS
Temptation
 No later than 1896
 Oil on canvas
 96 × 96 cm
 © Oleksiy Shovkunenko
 Kherson Art Museum

28. *Moscow Society of Art Lovers and the Cultural Life of Moscow. Reference book.* Moscow, 2017. P. 447.
29. 4th Exhibition of Sketches of Russian Artists, Society of Art Lovers in Moscow, 1892.
30. 13th Regular Exhibition of Moscow Society of Art Lovers, Moscow, 1893.



Mary SHANKS
Girl. Study
 Oil on canvas
 52 × 23 cm
 © Vasily Polenov
 Museum-Reserve

“In Summer”³¹ (“Making a Bouquet in Summer”, no later than 1894, location unknown), first displayed at the 15th regular MOLKh exhibition in Moscow in 1894. Later, in 1903, the painting was raffled off in a free lottery after the annual general meeting and report of MOLKh for the year 1902 (the winner of the painting was P.L. Cherkasov).

Emily Shanks was admitted into the artist-members of MOLKh in 1899 for the painting “In the Nursery”³² (no later than 1899, location unknown). As an artist member of MOLKh, she exhibited her paintings “Shura” (no later than 1900, location unknown)³³ and “With a Candle”³⁴ (no later than 1907, location unknown). Emily participated in fundraising for the monument of Pavel Tretyakov, contributing to the sales exhibition in 1916 her painting “Bubbles”³⁵ (no later than 1897, Local History Museum of the Syzran Urban District)³⁶.

The Moscow Association of Artists is another organisation of which Emily was a member. At the exhibitions of the association, she presented her works “Portrait of Vera Kirshner”³⁷ (no later than 1894, location unknown) and “Little Teacher”³⁸ (no later than 1895, location unknown).

The Society of Moscow Women Artists (1914–1915), which existed for just over a year and brought together 36 professional female artists and enthusiasts, was among various other organisations that contributed to both the changing position of women in Russian society and the new status of women artists. In December 1914, the Society organised its first and only exhibition, which showed the work of all its members, as well as Ilya Mashkov and Leonid Pasternak, whose participation added value to the status of both the Society and the exhibition. All proceeds from the exhibition, as well as a quarter of the funds from the sale of the paintings, were donated to the families of those serving in the army. Emily Shanks contributed her painting “In the Public Garden” (no later than 1914, location unknown).

31. Ibid. P. 167.

32. Ibid. P. 185.

33. 20th Regular Exhibition of Moscow Society of Art Lovers, Moscow, 1900-1901.

34. Sale Exhibition of Paintings at the premises of Moscow Society of Art Lovers, Moscow, 1907.

35. *Moscow Society of Art Lovers and the Cultural Life of Moscow*. Reference book. Moscow, 2017. P. 249.

36. Displayed at the 25th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1897.

37. 2nd Exhibition of Moscow Artists, Moscow, 1894.



Emily SHANKS
Children Playing Bubbles (Bubbles)
 No later than 1897
 Oil on canvas. 77 × 97 cm
 Detail
 Local History Museum of the Syzran
 Urban District

During her last years in Moscow, Emily regularly exhibited her works at the Lemerrier Gallery. The public could see her paintings “Hall in the Manor House”³⁹ (no later than 1909, location unknown), “Girl”⁴⁰ (no later than 1911, Veliky Ustyug State Historical-Architectural and Art Museum-Reserve(?)), “Landscape”⁴¹ (no later than 1911, location unknown), “Rowan Tree”⁴² (no later than 1912, location unknown), “Girl with a Rake”⁴³ (no later than 1912, location unknown), “Boy with a Fishing Rod”⁴⁴ (no later than 1913, location unknown), and “Girl with a Book”⁴⁵ (no later than 1913, location unknown).

In Russia, Emily’s works were displayed in 1909 at the Contemporary Russian Art Exhibition in Kazan – the

paintings “Distribution of Report Cards”⁴⁶ (no later than 1901, location unknown), “Frog” (no later than 1908, location unknown), and “Putting on Boots”⁴⁷ (no later than 1908, private collection); in 1913 at the Peredvizhniki Exhibition of Studies, Drawings and Sketches in Moscow and in 1914 in St. Petersburg (12 studies); in 1915 at the Exhibition of Russian Painters (Old and New Schools) at the Alexander III Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow –

- | | |
|---|--|
| 38. 3rd Exhibition of Moscow Artists, Moscow, 1895. | 42. Exhibition of Russian Artists. Lemerrier Gallery, Moscow, 1912. |
| 39. 1st Exhibition of Contemporary French and Russian Artists. Lemerrier Gallery, Moscow, 1909. | 43. Ibid. |
| 40. Exhibition of Russian Artists. Lemerrier Gallery, Moscow, 1911. There is no illustration in the catalogue, so it is not possible to determine for certain the location of the painting by its name. | 44. 12th Exhibition of Russian Artists, Lemerrier Gallery, Moscow, 1913. |
| 41. Ibid. | 45. Ibid. |
| | 46. Also displayed at the 29th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1901. |
| | 47. Both works were displayed at the 37th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1908-1909. |



← Emily SHANKS
Gardeners
 Oil on canvas
 80 × 71 cm
 © National Art Museum of the
 Republic of Belarus, Minsk

Emily SHANKS
Girl. No later than 1911
 Oil on panel
 100 × 69 cm (without frame)
 © Veliky Ustyug State
 Museum-Reserve

↓ Emily SHANKS
Putting on Boots
 No later than 1908
 Oil on canvas
 86 × 58 cm
 Private collection

“Swinging” (no later than 1915, location unknown), “View from the Window”⁴⁸ (no later than 1911, private collection, UK); and in 1919 at the 3rd Exhibition of Paintings in Ryazan – “At the Artist’s Studio” (no later than 1919, location unknown).

Emily participated in international art exhibitions outside of Russia at least twice. In 1911, her painting “Fetching a Horse” was displayed at the International Art Exhibition in Rome (Italy) and, in 1913, the artist took part in the 11th International Art Exhibition in the Glass Palace in Munich with her work “Study”.

The artwork of the Shanks sisters features the world of childhood – everyday scenes, games and other activities. Intentionally isolating children from adults in their works, the artists emphasise the self-reliance of the children’s world, even if it is conditional and controlled by grown-ups. Certain subjects in Emily’s paintings dedi-



cated to children are repeated in several works with various characters, whereas others are focused on some innovative topics.

Diligence and patience are immensely important qualities nurtured in children from an early age. Today, it would be amazing to see a child holding a needle with a thread, to say nothing about knitting needles and yarn. One might guess that all children in the Shanks family learned needlework. In at least five paintings by Emily, small children are preoccupied with simple operations with a needle and thread or knitting something. One of them, “Diligence”⁴⁹ (no later than 1899, Kharkov Art Museum (?))⁵⁰, shows a girl knitting a stocking with the diligence of an adult.

A boy and a girl of about 9 or 10 are putting together an airplane model (“Airplane”⁵¹, no later than 1909, location unknown) – quite an unusual activity for children at that time. The era of aviation had just started, and very few people flew on or even saw airplanes. Nevertheless, the future of aviation was evident and the children were eager to bring it closer by making aircraft models. A reviewer of the 38th Peredvizhniki exhibition wrote the following about

48. Also displayed at the 40th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1911-1912.

49. 27th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1899.

50. Information from the Catalogue of Kharkov City Art Museum, 1917.

51. 38th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1909/10.



52. "About Illustrations" in *Niva*, 1910, No. 28. P. 508.

53. 24th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1896. Arrived in the gallery from a private collection. Introduced into art history discourse in the book by Julia Yancharkova, *Russian Paintings, Drawings and Graphics from the 19th to mid 20th century from the Collection of the Gallery of Fine Arts in Náchod* [J. Jančárková, *Ruská malba, kresba a grafika od 19. do poloviny 20. století ze sbírky Galerie výtvarného umění v Náchodě*], GVUN, Slovanský ústav AV ČR, Arbor vitae. Prague, 2015. P. 268–269.

54. A.P. Novitsky, *Peredvizhniki and Their Impact on Russian Art. 1872–1897*. Moscow, 1897. P. 162.

55. *In Support of Women Students. Collection*. Moscow, 1901.

56. 28th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1900.

57. *Call for Action: Press Day. Album in Support of War Victims*. Moscow, 1915.

Emily's work: "Among genre painters, Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky, Emily Shanks and Afanasy Razmaritsyn attracted special attention [...]. "The Curious" by the first artist is a cute study with two peasant boys gazing with a shy curiosity at some miracle. Equally cute are the children in Emily Shank's painting – they are building a toy airplane. One can imagine that their peers from Bogdanov-Belsky's picture are staring at this wonderful airplane."⁵²

Among her genre scenes with a large number of characters, a special place is occupied by the painting "Guest at the Institute"⁵³ (no later than 1896, Gallery of Fine Arts in Náchod, Czech Republic): an alumna of the Institute for Noble Maidens has come to visit the students. The girls are looking eagerly at the beautiful, cheerful young lady who represents their fabulous future life. Comparison of the catalogue reproduction and the painting

in Náchod reveals that the artist made some changes to the painting after the 24th Peredvizhniki exhibition, reducing the number of characters in the scene.

Art critics of the late 19th century were unanimous in defining Emily's place among Russian painters, describing her as an artist who "paints extremely sweet scenes primarily from children's life."⁵⁴ However, the range of her subjects was much wider.

In 1901, "In Support of Women Students"⁵⁵, a collection presenting 37 biographies of prominent female representatives of the Russian creative intelligentsia, was published. The anthology included biographies of Zinaida Gippius, Maria Yakunchikova-Weber, Yelena Polenova, Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik and Emily Shanks, as well as prose and poetry by female authors with 85 illustrations by female artists, all Russian. Emily Shanks illustrated two short stories, "In the Evening" by Shchepkina-Kupernik and "Smoke" by Eliza Orzeszkowa. Her paintings were represented by a reproduction of "Busy Playing"⁵⁶ (no later than 1900, location unknown).

"Call for Action. Press Day"⁵⁷, published in 1915 to help victims of the First World War, was a 248-page

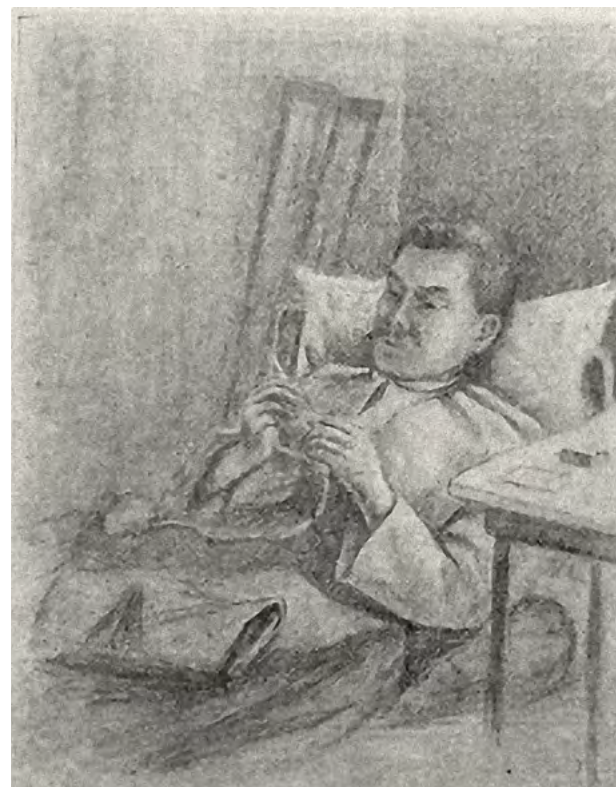


← Emily SHANKS
Guest at the Institute
No later than 1896
Oil on canvas
160 × 215 cm
©Gallery of Fine Arts in
Náchod, Czech Republic
Photograph: Oto Palán

Cover of the book in support
of war victims "Call for Action.
Press Day"
Moscow, 1915

Cover of the book "In Support
of Women-Students". Typoli-
thography of Kushnaryov and
Co. Partnership Moscow, 1901.

Emily SHANKS
**The Wounded Knitting for
Their Comrades**
Illustration for the book in
support of war victims "Call
for Action. Press Day" (Mos-
cow, 1915. P. 129)
Pencil on paper.



compilation of short stories, excerpts from theatre plays, poems, musical scores and, naturally, reproductions of paintings and drawings by contemporary artists. Representatives of the creative classes donated their works to be included in this collection. Among them, we should note Leonid Andreyev, Konstantin Balmont, Alexander Blok, Valery Bryusov, Ivan Bunin, the Vasnetsov brothers, Vikenty Veresaev, Alexander Grechaninov, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Mikhail Nesterov, Leonid Pasternak, Vasily Polenov, Mikhail Prishvin, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Ilya Repin, Alexander Serafimovich, Alexander Scriabin and Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik. The publication was financed by prominent businesses, such as Muir & Mirrielees, a British trading company founded by Scottish immigrants, and William Howard's stationary manufacture. Emily Shanks contributed two works: a reproduction of her anti-war painting "The Wait is Over"⁵⁸ (no later than 1902, location unknown), and a drawing called "The Wounded Knitting for Their Comrades."

This compilation was published after Emily Shanks left Russia for England in 1913. The decision to move to her ancestral homeland was prompted by her father's death in 1911 and the fact that other family members and friends were leaving Russia. There is no doubt that it was difficult for Emily to leave behind the life she was used to, as well as her circle of friends. Before the departure in 1913, her solo exhibition was held in Moscow, with more than 50 paintings displayed.⁵⁹

In her letter to a Moscow acquaintance, Emily wrote of the sorrow that having to leave Moscow caused her:

58. 30th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1902; also published in *Rodina* magazine No. 3, 1903.

59. A catalogue was published for the exhibition: *Emily Shanks Exhibition Catalogue*. Moscow, 1913.



Opening of the public library in Yasnaya Polyana. Left to right, first row (behind the group of peasant children): Leo Tolstoy, Pavel Dolgorukov, Taras Fokanov, Ilya and Sonya Tolstoy, Tanya Sukhotina;

second row: Valentin Bulgakov (2nd left), Pavel Biryukov, Mary Shanks, Mikhail Sukhotin, Aleksandra Tolstaya, Tatiana Sukhotina, Olga Tolstaya, Varvara Feokritova. January 31, 1910 Photograph: Aleksander Savelyev

37 Pokrovka

March 3, 1913

Dearest Sergei Terentievich,

I am deeply touched by your kindness and would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the portrait and the book. Still, I expect to see you often, because it is not quite true that I am leaving Moscow for good. There is too much that binds us to it to break everything off all at once.

With sincere respect,

Emily Shanks⁶⁰



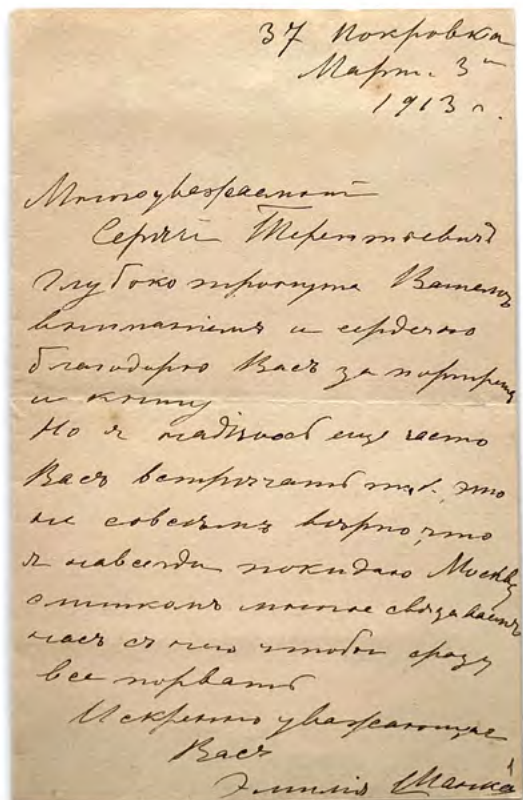
Emily SHANKS
Ear Inspection
No later than 1898
Oil on canvas
106.6 x 88.8 cm
©Chelmsford Museum, UK

60. Letter of Emily Shanks to S.T. Semyonov. March 3, 1913. Moscow. Leo Tolstoy Museum, Moscow.

↓ Letter from Emily Shanks to
S.T. Semyonov. March 3, 1913.
Moscow
Leo Tolstoy Museum, Moscow

Mary SHANKS,
Natalia JENKEN
**Illustration to Leo Tolstoy's
short story "Where God Is,
Love Is"**
Monograms MS and NJ in the
lower left-hand corner

Sergei Terentievich Semyonov, like the Shanks sisters, belonged to the circle of Leo Tolstoy's followers, a group of people who played a very important role in their lives. Their older sister Louise was married to Aylmer (Alexei Frantsevich) Maude, a translator, publisher and biographer of Tolstoy, and she also translated his literary work. Mary Shanks made friends with the writer's eldest daughter, Tatyana Tolstaya-Sukhotina, way back when Mary was studying at the School of Art. Indeed, Mary, Emily and Louise were close to the Tolstoy fami-



ly and both the writer and his wife, Sophia, mentioned them in their diaries – the Shanks sisters often visited the Tolstoy family at their home in Yasnaya Polyana, helped Tolstoy translate his correspondence into English and socialised with the family's friends and Tolstoy's followers from many countries.

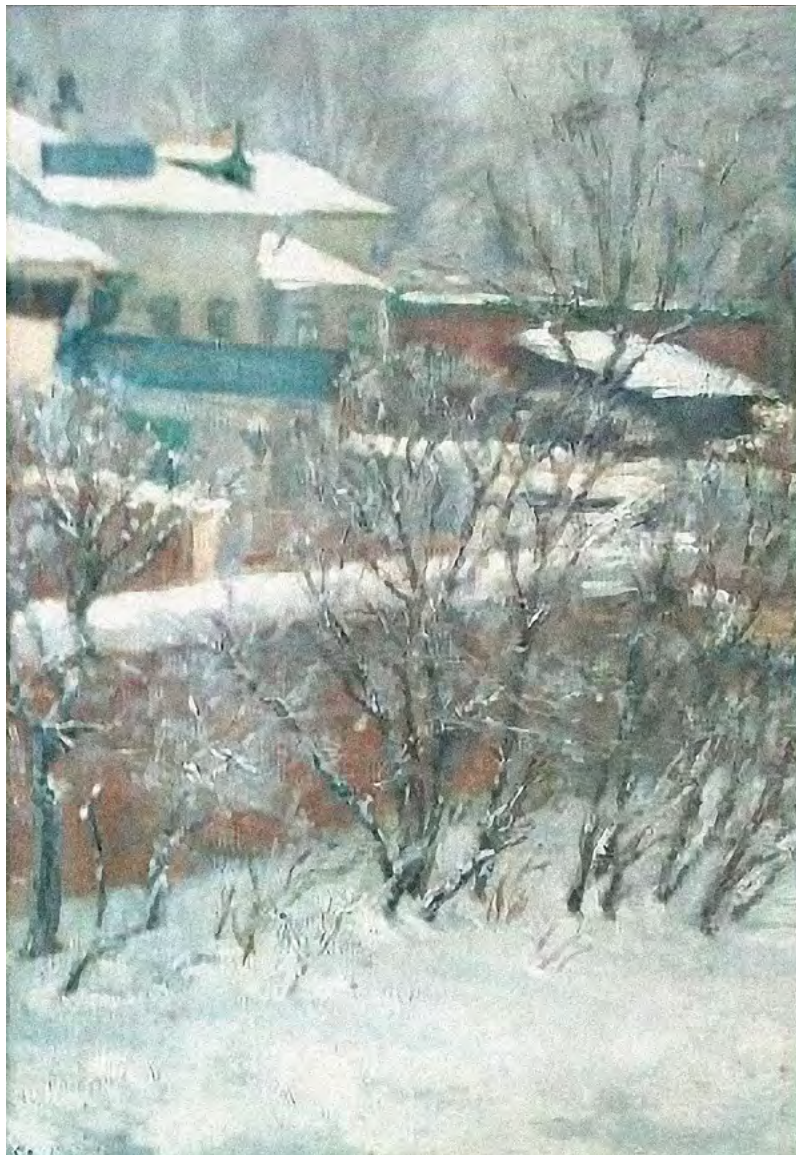
Mary Shanks and her friend from the School of Art, Natalya Jenken, were especially active in the circle of Tolstoy's followers. A Russian subject originally from Germany, Natalya Jenken (1863–1927) was an artist who changed her life under the influence of Tolstoy's views.

When, in the 1890s, the persecution of Tolstoy and his followers began, Mary, Natalya and her adopted daughter Anya escaped to England and stayed at the house of Louise and Aylmer Maude in a small town near Chelmsford, Essex, and and, a few years later, moved to Teignmouth in Devon, as recounted in the memoirs of Anna Troup, Natalya's adopted daughter.⁶¹ Sometimes, Mary was commissioned to create illustrations for books. Thus, she and Natalya illustrated Tolstoy's short story "Where God Is, Love Is". Their connections with Russia were not broken.

So, what did Mary and Emily Shanks do after moving to England? Mary lived in England for another 50 years (until 1949), first in Essex and later on in Devon, and was active in the local community of Tolstoy's followers. She probably did some drawing and painting for pleasure – today, her family owns one of her land-

61. Anna Horsburgh-Porter, *Memoirs of Revolution: Russian Women Remember*. Routledge, 1993.

Emily SHANKS
View from the Window
No later than 1911
Oil on canvas
47 × 33,5 cm
Private collection, UK
View from the Shankses'
house in Pokrovka



→ Emily SHANKS
Rooftops
No later than 1911
Oil on canvas
Private collection, UK

Emily SHANKS
Still Life
Oil on canvas mounted
on cardboard.
32 × 39 cm
Private collection





scapes, a picture of the small cottage where she lived in the country.

Emily spent the last 20 years of her life in London (she died in 1936). She brought about a dozen of her works with her from Russia and, during the first few years after the move, she occasionally went back to Russia and even took part in the Peredvizhniki exhibitions all the way up to 1915. In 1916 and 1918, Emily showed her work at the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy of Arts in London – for these, she chose two canvases she had painted while still in Russia, “A Bit of Moscow” and “Peaceful Moscow”. We know that she also painted portraits of her family, as well as landscapes in London, the Swiss mountains, the Pyrenees and elsewhere in France. A museum in Chelmsford houses Emily’s painting “Ear Inspection”⁶² (no later than 1898). The museum received this painting as a gift from the descendants of Louise and Aylmer Maude.

The author found several works by Emily Shanks that must have been completed after she left Russia, as her signature is in English. One of them is “The Red Scarf”, a portrait of a young girl in a Russian sarafan dress and a traditional red headscarf. As of today, this may be the

only extant work by Emily Shanks with a pronounced Russian national flavour.

English by birth, Emily and Mary Shanks naturally integrated with their art into Russian culture, enriched it and found their own path.⁶³ They became distinctive figures in Russian painting of late 19th and early 20th centuries.

We would like to thank Guy Roberts, who represents the current generation of the Shanks family, for sharing photographs and information from the family archives with us, and other descendants of the Shanks family for their permission to publish paintings from their collections.

62. 26th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, 1898.

63. Currently, there are 96 known paintings by Emily Shanks and three drawings, with 68 images of her work. Also known are eight paintings and four drawings by Mary Shanks.



Emily SHANKS
Older Brother



Emily SHANKS
New Girl
(New Girl at School)

“Three Kids in your Picture...”

Press Reviews on the Shankses' Paintings at the Peredvizhniki Exhibitions

Emily SHANKS. Older Brother

Three kids in your picture...

So thin...It's not hard

To guess at first glance

They are from Petrograd.

“Among the Peredvizhniki” in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 72, March 15, 1891. P. 2. Signature: Borimir

Mr Shanks's painting “Older Brother” represents an adorable scene from children's life. Mr Shanks is still a young artist, and even though this work is not large, it demonstrates his big talent in painting children.

“Peredvizhniki Exhibition” in *Peterburgsky Listok* No. 68, March 11, 1891. P. 2.

Emily SHANKS. New Girl

On a gloomy autumn morning, a “new girl” sets off to school bundled up by her caring mother and encouraged by her family. She feels a stranger in this huge stone house, with its wide staircase, a frowning guard and a large frightening blackboard with long, terrifying white figures – to say nothing about the spunky girls gathering around this shy newcomer. Their faces glow with curiosity, boldness and enthusiasm. The new girl is bombarded with questions and advice. And she is not sure if they are speaking seriously or joking, whether she should smile or listen respectfully. Only two girls seem to ignore her: they are diligently preparing for the lesson. One of them is trying to memorise something, having plugged her ears with her fingers, while the other, who is less hard-working, is listening to the timid murmur of the new girl. The author of the painting is a talented artist Miss Shanks, well-known for her genre paintings dedicated to young kids and schoolchildren.

“About Pictures” in *Niva* No. 49, 1895. P. 1175.

Emily Shanks depicted a classroom in a girls' school, where a new girl has just arrived. The title of the painting is “New Girl”.

“Peredvizhniki Painting Exhibition” in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 56, February 27, 1892. P. 2.

Emily SHANKS. Difficult Task

Having picked out from the genre section Zagorsky's paintings, which are not bad in drawing (Nos. 38 and 39), and the excellent painting “Difficult Task” by the young artist Mr Shanks depicting the hiring of a governess, we will finish this section and move on to the landscape, which we will talk about tomorrow.

“21st Peredvizhniki Exhibition” in *Peterburgsky Listok* No. 44, February 15, 1893. P. 2.

A propos: we apologise for some inaccuracies that occurred due to an oversight in our report yesterday on the exhibition. Thus, we referred to the author of the painting “Difficult Task” as Mr Shanks, whereas she is, in fact, Miss Shanks...

“21st Peredvizhniki Exhibition” in *Peterburgsky Listok* No. 45, February 16, 1893. P. 2.

A canvas, some brushes

And paints you have bought...

But the task of an artist

Is harder than you thought.

“Little Bees. My catalogue of the 21st Peredvizhniki Exhibition” in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 44, February 15, 1893.

P. 3. Signature: Grib.

Emily Shanks's paintings always depict charming scenes. This time she has presented the hiring of a governess and called the painting “Difficult Task”. The task is not at all an easy one. A very young girl, maybe a recent graduate, has come to be hired into a family. The lady of the house is lying back on a coach comfortably, scrutinising the girl. Two kids and a nanny are standing by the door, looking suspiciously and provocatively at the unknown new person.

A. Novitsky, “21st Peredvizhniki Exhibition” in *Artist* No. 29, 1893. P. 157.



Emily SHANKS
Difficult Task
(Hiring a Governess)

Among other genre paintings (which are comparatively numerous at the current exhibition), we must mention "Petition" by Mr Kishinevsky, "First-Born" by Mr Kostandi, "Real-Life Prose" and "Searching Advice" by Mr Baksheyev, "Fortune-Telling" by Mr Pimonenko, "Difficult Task" by Mr Shanks (the subject is quite obscure), as well as "Hard", "Before Parting", "Own Place", "Girl-Friends", and "Last Wish" by Mr Kasatkin.

V. Chuiko, "21st Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Vsemirnaya Illustratsiya* No. 1,258, 1893. P. 171.

Emily SHANKS. Ink Spot

In the children's room, three girls have been very naughty and spilt ink right on the new dress of the girl who had come to visit her friends. Something should be done to get her out of trouble, and the girls have brought the washbasin, poured some water and started the laundry, hoping that everything will work out. Their mother is not at home, the governess has also gone somewhere, and the old nanny is always in the kitchen. They are completely absorbed in their activity, and apparently it gives them immense pleasure. You can see it in their pretty faces and eyes that show no anxiety: they have completely forgotten about their mother and the governess. They will keep playing and splashing water until someone interrupts them. The author of the painting is Emily Shanks, the first woman selected to be a member of the Association of the Travelling Art Exhibitions. She has been exhibiting her works at the Peredvizhniki Exhibitions for several years in a row. The talented artist always creates her paintings from children's life, which she knows very well and treats with great love and sincerity. "Ink Spot" is one of the best pieces of the Peredvizhniki Exhibition.

"About Pictures" in *Niva* No. 19, 1894. P. 447

Emily Shanks presented a charming picture named "Ink Spot". Three girls of the same age had been fooling around and spilled ink. They did their best to wipe the ink off the table with paper, but the stains remained on their hands and on a white dress of one of them. Two girls are diligently washing their hands in a large washbasin, and the third wipes the ink from the table with a piece of paper. The stains will remain, everything will obviously be revealed, and Mother will leave them without sweets. So, they use every effort to wash away the traces of the crime, but all in vain.

Nedelya No. 14, 1894. P. 450. Signature: S.S.

Illarion Pryanishnikov died recently and three new members have been selected to take his place: Sergei Miloradovich,



Emily SHANKS
Ink Spot

Valentin Serov and Emily Shanks, the first woman to become a member of the Association.

It was these young forces that gradually made this subtle turn from the old and dull art to art that is free and more pure, so to speak.

There is so much life in Emily Shanks' painting "Ink Spot".

Igor Grba [Grabar], "22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Niva* No. 20, 1894. P. 471.

Judging by her previous works, this artist is undoubtedly talented. However, this time, in her colourful and lively painting, she has depicted children who are not washing off the ink stain, but pretending that they are doing it, and even pretending somehow sluggishly and with no spirit. You will certainly feel it if you know the spontaneous nature of children, and if you saw it depicted in the previous paintings of the same author – "New Girl" and "Governess".

V. Mikheev, "22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition of the Society for Travelling Art Exhibition. Russian Art in 1894" in *Artist*, 1894, No. 37. P. 131.

The current 22nd Peredvizhniki exhibition produces a remarkably good impression. It is just as evenly composed as the academic one, but in some sections – as, for example, in landscape – it surpasses it. Considerable plenitude is also noticeable in the genre paintings, thanks to the splendid works by Vladimir Makovsky, Kirill Lemokh, Leonid Pasternak, Emily Shanks, Andrei Ryabushkin and others.

From Mr Miloradovich, let us pass on to the superb genre painting "Ink Spot" by Emily Shanks. The picture is quite large, with quite a simple plot, but very true to life: while playing with dolls, the children spilled ink and spoiled the girl's white apron. One can feel the fear and anxiety of the girls. In an instant, they brought a washbasin and started hiding the traces of their mischief. Next to this excellent painting...

"22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgsky Listok* No. 65, March 8, 1894. P. 2

At this exhibition, the works that deserve special attention are those by Mr Kasatkin, one of the new members of the Association, as well as paintings by the following exhibitors: Bogdanov-Belsky, Baksheev, Bukovetsky, Yendogurov, Kishenevsky, Kostandi, Levitsky, Meshkov, Nilus, Nikolai Orlov, Pasternak, Pervukhin, Pimonenko, Razmaritsyn, Ryabushkin, Surenyants, Serov, Kholodovsky and Miss Shanks...

"22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 67, March 10, 1894. P. 3.



Emily SHANKS
The Wait is Over



Emily SHANKS
Airplane



Emily SHANKS
Distribution of Report Cards

Emily SHANKS. The Wait is Over

Among the paintings worth mentioning are the landscapes of Nikolai Dubovskoy ("Evening", "From the Volga", "Noon", etc.), genre paintings by Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky ("Unction", "Young Master"), Nikolai Pimonenko ("Marching Out", "At the Witch"), Aleksei Stepanov ("Sheep Pen"), Emily Shanks ("The Wait is Over"), <...> "Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 54, February 24, 1902.

Emily SHANKS. Airplane

Among genre painters, Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky, Emily Shanks and Afanasy Razmaritsyn attracted special attention [...]. "The Curious" by Bogdanov-Belsky is a charming study of two peasant boys gazing with a shy curiosity at some wonder. Equally adorable are the children in Emily Shanks' painting – they are building a toy airplane. One can imagine that their peers from Bogdanov-Belsky's picture are staring at this wonderful airplane.

"About Pictures" in *Niva* No. 28, 1910. P. 508

Mary SHANKS. I Await your Verdict

Mary Shanks was more successful [than Emily Shanks and her "Ink Spot"] with the painting "I Await Your Verdict". Technically, it is outdone by "Ink Spot", but there is much more vitality and originality in it. Its main drawback is the sketches flashily hanging on the wall. But the simplicity of the composition, reserved expressiveness of the faces and truthfulness make this painting very appealing.

V. Mikheev, "22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition of the Society for Travelling Art Exhibition. Russian Art in 1894" in *Artist*, 1894, No. 37. P. 131.

That's it for the genre section of the Peredvizhniki exhibition. From the rest of the paintings, perhaps, one can distinguish the following reasonably good genre paintings: "Congratulations" by Klavdy Lebedev <...>, Ivan Bogdanov's "Conversation" (young people discussing scientific issues), Nikolai Pimonenko's "Young Boys" and "I Await your Verdict" by Mary Shanks. The artist's widow is selling her late husband's painting to an amateur patron.

"22nd Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgsky Listok* No. 66, March 9, 1894. P. 3.

Mary SHANKS. Temptation

An amazing coincidence: two Peredvizhniki artists have chosen the same genre theme and implemented it in the same way. Both were inspired by the idea of illustrating temptation in children's faces, and both depicted mothers as workers of a candy factory. Both mothers in Mr Grachkovsky's and Mr Shanks' paintings are wrapping red lollipops in paper, while the children are standing right there and staring at the tasty-looking sweets. Both paintings are quite charming. However, would not a single lollipop from this pile fit into the category of rejected? All kinds of manufacturing are supposed to have rejected items, and I will never believe that a mother who is wrapping candies would not find a few rejected pieces for her children.

"24th Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 46, February 17, 1896. P. 2. Signature: R.Ch.

Emily SHANKS. Distribution of Report Cards

Selection of the works by Fyodor Bronnikov, Mikhail Klodt, Kirill Lemokh, Nikolai Pimonenko, Konstantin Savitsky, Aleksei Kharlamov and Emily Shanks for participation in this exhibition can only be explained by the fact that the authors of these paintings are members of the Peredvizhniki Association and are not subject to a "jury's" decision.

"29th Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 48, February 19, 1901. P. 2.

Emilia Yakovlevna Shanks (born in 1857), an artist with a good knowledge of child psychology and a rather colourful palette, demonstrated a unique talent in her attractive and sincere genre paintings, mainly about school life. We reproduce here "Distribution of Report Cards" (p. 139).

V.A. Nikolsky, *Russian Painting: Art and Historical Reviews*. St. Petersburg, 1904. P. 143.

Emily SHANKS. Catch!

Nothing good can be said about either Vasily Polenov, who displayed a poorly executed academy-level piece under the title "Ghosts of Hellas", or Miss Shanks, whose children now look like dolls, or about Pyotr Nilus, who just imitates Musortov and Somov. "Peredvizhniki Exhibition" in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* No. 62, March 4, 1907. P. 2.



Vasily Polenov Museum Reserve

The Vasily Polenov Museum Reserve in the Tula Region hosts a unique collection of Russian paintings by the artists who brought glory to Russian art: Ivan Shishkin, Vladimir and Konstantin Makovsky, Nikolai Yaroshenko, Illarion Pryanishnikov, Aleksei Bogolyubov, Konstantin Korovin, Isaak Levitan, Sergei Ivanov, Sergei Malyutin, Ilya Ostroukhov, Yeghishe Tadevosyan and Maria Yakunchikova. One of the jewels of the museum collection is "Anatomy Students" (also known as "Anatomy Class", "Before the Examination") painted by Polenov's younger sister Yelena Polenova.

Unlike her elder brother, Yelena Polenova could not

get a higher education in art at the Imperial Academy of Arts, the main art school of the time, as women were not admitted as full-time students. Polenova had to rely on self-education and spent some time abroad, taking inspiration from West European painters. She worked a lot in Russia, painted from life, and studied anatomy under the tutelage of Professor Aleksander Gubarev. It must have been this experience that prompted the idea for this painting. Two of the models are Emily and Mary Shanks, who were friends with Polenova. The artists visited the drawing sessions at the Polenovs' house where they met Yelena and made friends with her.

The painting was part of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The works for the Russian Pavilion were selected by a special commission appointed by the Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich, President of the Academy of Arts. The commission selected two works by Polenova for the exhibition – "After the Bath" was purchased at the exhibition, whereas "Anatomy Students" returned to Russia.



Virtual tour
 "Polenovo 360"
<https://polenovo360.com/>



на линии солнца

15 октября - 11 декабря

Ринат Ахметов

персональная выставка



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