

# BORIS DMITRIEVICH GRIGORIEV

(Moscow 1886 - Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France 1939)

## *Cattle at Rest*

signed 'Boris Grigoriev' (lower left)  
gouache on paper  
40 x 55.5 cm (15¾ x 21¾in)

**Provenance:** Acquired from the son of the artist by the previous owner.

A SERENE HERD OF CATTLE BASK IN THE WARMTH of the sun. Their languid movements enhance the tranquil feel of this enjoyable gouache. The skill with which Boris Dmitrievich Grigoriev has depicted the bodies of the animals, in what appears to be one smooth brushstroke, reveals the artist's technical mastery, and seems to anticipate the simplified, silhouetted forms of Picasso's (1881-1973) later group of *Toros* and *Toreros*. Grigoriev expertly conveys a variety of textures, from the arid tufts of grass in the foreground, picked out by the use of a dry brush on the rough surface of the paper, to the muddy furrows of the field, suggested by thick layers of gouache.

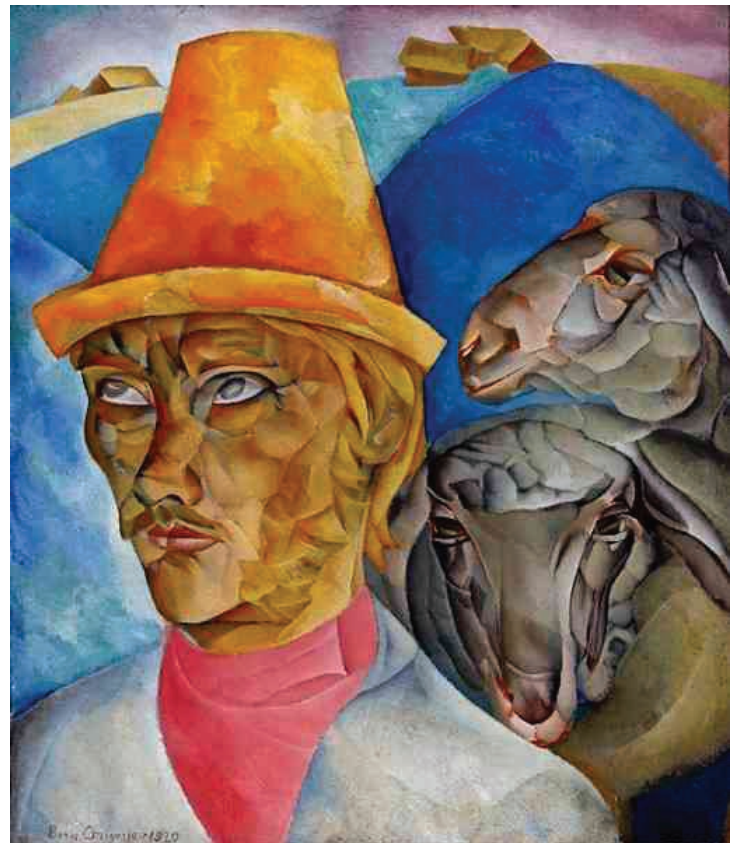
The warmth of the palette, in particular the dominance of reds and browns, and the landscape in *Cattle at Rest* suggest that the work perhaps relates to one of Grigoriev's South American trips. Grigoriev travelled to South America in 1928 and again in 1936, visiting Chile, Brazil, the Amazon, Ecuador, Uruguay, Argentina and Cuba. His second trip to South America saw the artist spending more time in Brazil, where he visited the Amazon and executed numerous gouaches detailing the tropical flora. Works executed during Grigoriev's South American trips were later exhibited in the Lilienfeld Galleries in New York in January 1938.

Grigoriev's works span a series of styles from traditional realism, in line with 'The Wanderers' movement, through to Cubism and Expressionism, then returning to a form of realism in his later career. Grigoriev studied at the Stroganov Institute, Moscow from 1903 to 1907 under Dmitry Shcherbinovsky (1867-1926), and then at the Academy of Arts until 1912 under Dmitry Nikolaevich Kardovsky (1866-1943). Whilst at the Academy of Arts, Grigoriev participated in several exhibitions including the 'Fellowship of Independents' and 'World of Art'.

In the early 1920s, whilst living in France, Grigoriev worked on his celebrated cycle *Faces of Russia*. This followed on from his earlier series of portraits, *Rasseia*, of which his *Shepherd of the Hills*, formerly belonging to the Berkshire Museum, is the most celebrated (fig. 1). These works, depicting the Russian people, concentrated particularly on portraits of peasants and demonstrate a keen understanding of the psychology of mankind. During this decade, Grigoriev began to exhibit widely and his fame preceded him wherever he went. With the assistance of the curator Christian Brinton (1870-1942),

who widely promoted his works, Grigoriev built up a solid network of clients encompassing a broad group of collectors in Western Europe and America.

In 1927, he moved to Cagnes-sur-Mer where he built a house called *Borisella*, a name derived from the fusion of his own, and that of his wife. Although he continued to travel until his death in 1939, he painted the majority of his later canvases at Borisella, including the epic *Visages du Monde*.



Boris Dmitrievich Grigoriev, *Shepherd of the Hills*, 1920, Private Collection (Figure 1)



Boris Grigoriev