

ATTRIBUTED TO  
ANDREY YEFIMOVICH MARTYNOV

(St. Petersburg 1768 - Rome 1826)

*The Port of Nikola at the Mouth of the River Angara*



*View of Irkutsk*

both inscribed 'Haupt' (lower right) in ink and further inscribed with descriptions of views  
watercolour and ink on paper, a pair  
both 27 x 37 cm (10 x 14 in) (2)

**I**N THIS PAIR, TWO VERY DIFFERENT SETTLEMENTS ON the River Angara in Siberia are depicted. *The Port of Nikola at the Mouth of the River Angara* shows a small but busy village, where a large amount of timber has been unloaded onto the bank on the left-hand side of the work. Of the many labourers who mill about on the shore there is a contrast between those who relax around the fire, and others almost bent double as they haul a heavily laden vessel to shore. The village itself is tiny, the small wooden church the only notable building. The River Angara runs from the foreground of the work, straight back into the composition where it expands into Lake Baikal, the oldest and deepest lake in the world. The Angara is the only river flowing out of the lake and the scene shown in the present work was a common one, as shippers would unload the cargo and make the last leg of the journey by land, rather than struggle against the current at the mouth of the river.

*View of Irkutsk* shows a very different type of settlement, forty-five miles further down the river. Irkutsk was one of the largest cities in Siberia, a key point for Russia's trade, particularly with China. However, the city's trade does not seem to be the focus of the present work: the port is seen here as part of the beautiful river landscape. In fact, were it not for the gabled towers of the city's churches punctuating the skyline, the urban



Andrey Yefimovich Martynov, *Irkutsk*, 1821-1822,  
State Pushkin Museum, Moscow (Figure 2)

aspect of the composition would be scarcely noticeable as the viewer looks across the width of the Angara, where the foothills rise to meet the vast expanse of sky. In the foreground, figures fish off a pontoon, animating the landscape. In both works the figures are little more than staffage, the depiction of the wild beauty of Siberian nature is the focus of the pair.

Andrey Yefimovich Martynov travelled throughout Russia, making idealised watercolour views of the countryside, in particular the area around Lake Baikal. Martynov adored the beauty of that landscape, saying of Lake Baikal, 'It is surrounded by the Sayan Mountains, whose endless chain and picture-like diversity bring to the traveller's gaze the infectious grandeur of nature'.<sup>1</sup> This vision of the Siberian countryside is reflected in works such as *Lake Baikal* (fig. 1). This work is comparable to the present pair in its ordered composition and idealised panoramic vision of nature, with its vast expanses of water and sky. Like *View of Irkutsk*, Martynov's *Irkutsk*, focuses more on the surrounding landscape than the city itself (fig. 2). These very Classical compositions are entirely devoted to the celebration of the beauty of nature.



Andrey Yefimovich Martynov, *Lake Baikal*, 1821-1822,  
State Pushkin Museum, Moscow (Figure 1)

<sup>1</sup> Petrova, Y, *Drawings and Watercolours in Russian Culture: The First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (State Russian Museum, 2005), p.160.

