

## SOVIET SOCIALIST REALISM

**ARTIST:** Stanislav Boleslavovich Kachalski (June 1915- ) Kemerovo

**TITLE:** *On the Bukhara-Ural Route* 1958

**MEDIA:** oil on canvas

**SIZE:** 35-3/4" x 45-1/4"

Courtesy of a private collector

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Stanislav Kachalski was born June 22, 1915, in the town of Taiga, Kemerovo region, an area north of the western edge of Mongolia. Although the young Kachalski discontinued secondary school before graduating, he entered the M. A. Vrubel Art School of Omsk, where he studied for the next four years. In 1938, he began working in the Omsk Partnership of Artists.

Kachalski was called up to the army in 1941, and for the duration of the war he served in the Transport Corps in Chelyabinsk. In 1945, he enrolled at the Repin Institute in Leningrad where his tutor was M. L. Avilov. In 1951, he painted his graduation picture, *Steel Workers*, in Chelyabinsk Metallurgical Factory and after graduating, moved to Chelyabinsk. There the principal theme of his painting became the life of workers in the Ural region, although he occasionally painted landscapes and portraits.

In 1954, Kachalski became a candidate for membership in the Union of Artists of the USSR, and six years later he was accepted as a member. During the 1960s and 1970s, he traveled all over the country. As a result of his travels, he produced a number of landscapes and portraits. He was later elected Chairman of the Chelyabinsk branch of the

Union of Artists of Russia. A personal exhibition, held in honor of the artist's 70th birthday, took place in 1984. His works now can be seen in the Chelyabinsk Regional Picture Gallery, the Art Museum of Karelia, and the Chelyabinsk Regional Museum.

Kachalski's painting *On the Bukhara-Ural Route* depicts military trucks crossing the Gobi Desert in the morning before it becomes too hot. One of the distant trucks holds a guided missile. The style of the painting is termed "Rough Style," which is a late Soviet Socialist Realist manner of painting. This painting is an early example of the style, which began during the mid-1950s and lasted until the late 1980s. The "Rough Style" is sometimes called the "Severe" or "Ugly" manner and is typified by combinations of modernist and traditional styles and techniques.

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## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, Criticism, Aesthetics)

When do you think this art was made? Why? Do you think this is a picture of a real desert and real military trucks? Where do you think this desert is? Can you tell which country these trucks might be from? Have you ever seen trucks like this before? Do you think these trucks and soldiers are having an easy or hard time crossing this desert? Why would they be in a place like this? Do you think it's early in the day or late in the day? Why? What do you see on the last truck? (Guided missile)

What feelings do you have when you look at this picture? What does it make you think about? Do you think it is a successful piece of art? Why or why not? Why do you think the artist painted this picture? What is your attention drawn to first in this painting? Why?

## ACTIVITIES

### Social Studies

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of conflict between countries through participating in small group and classroom discussions and producing their own individual product (poster, essay, dance, video, painting, skit, report, etc.) to show the possibilities of how people can live peacefully.

Using current events (at this moment, Feb. 1998, Iraq and United Nations conflict) discuss with students problems countries are having in getting along. Bring in what was going on between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R in this painting. Introduce the importance of seeing both sides of the conflict. Is our information correct? Is the press being honest or is the military being honest on both sides? Why would a government not be honest with its people? Bring discussion to the student's level; talk about conflicts in their classroom and on the playground. Do some role-playing with some of these ideas. Hand out slips

of paper outlining some conflicts you've noticed (one for each cooperative learning group) and have the groups discuss them and then present their solutions to the class.

Assign students to discuss current world conflicts with parents and other adults. Talk about conflicts in their own homes with their parents. Have students read selections from literature (for example, *The Big Book of Peace*) and discuss how those characters solved their conflicts. Tell students they are to produce a product which demonstrates their thinking about why we have conflicts and how we can get along despite them. This product may be any of the following: essay, poster, dance, video, painting, skit, report, diorama, etc.)

### **Science**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the different regions of the planet by working in a cooperative learning group and giving an oral presentation on an assigned region to the class.

Discuss with students what they already know about the Gobi desert. Have them find it on a world map or globe. Ask why it would have military trucks crossing it. What are the different regions on our planet? (Desert, rain forest, tundra, prairies, etc.) Let learning groups choose a region to learn about; the first group to agree and decide gets first choice. Have materials (books, videos, magazines, etc.) available for groups to use for research. National Wildlife has a series on various regions that is excellent. Give students time each day to work on this and monitor progress and be a gopher for students. At the beginning of this project, explain to students and their parents what the expectations are for the final presentation. You also should monitor how well each group is involving each student in the group, and help any groups having difficulty. At the end of the allotted time, have each group present its findings to the class.

### **Movement/Dance/Cooperation**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate the ability to work together to solve a group problem and demonstrate the various elements of dance.

When I observe this painting I get a strong sense of slow, determined, difficult movement. The following two activities will perhaps help the students express this. Bring some old bed sheets to school. You will need a non-carpeted area; the gym is a perfect place but if it is carpeted, hopefully your school will have an old hallway which is not carpeted. Tell your class the objective is to get their group across the floor of the gym keeping the whole group on the sheet. Do this in cooperative learning groups first, it is much easier to accomplish as a small group. If anyone touches the floor their group must go back! Usually small groups can achieve success in this activity.

After each group has made it across have the whole class do it together. Allow some time to discuss before you let them attempt this, They probably won't be able to make it very far before someone falls onto the floor or someone just steps off the sheet. After

allowing the group to try for 5 to 10 minutes, have them try again; and if they don't make it, then give them other chances in the future. As you process this activity with your students, you should have many opportunities to bring in ways students act in the classroom and at recess and how those actions affect the class and the student's progress through life.

This next activity can be done with inexperienced beginners or with students who have had many lessons and much practice with these elements in creating their own movements and dances. (Beginners will, of course, tend to create less sophisticated movement patterns. Pay attention to the response of the students and if they seem lost, limit the activity to its simplest form)

Discuss with the students how paintings and sculptures have elements of movement in them, and how an image frozen in time can inspire these feelings of movement within us. After viewing the slide of the artwork, discuss what kind of movement it inspires and what kind of music would go with it. Allow students to get into groups of 4 to 6 and begin talking about what kind of movements they could put together to form a dance of this painting. Have as many selections of music as there are groups in your class.

Some examples of music I have used are the following:

1. "Asylum," Daniel Lanois: Soundtrack to Sling Blade
2. Several songs from "Passion": Peter Gabriel
3. "The Desert Song" and "A Thousand Small Gold Bells," both from Earth Songs: Narada Collection Series
4. "Lament and Bulgarian Melody," Deep Forest: Boheme
5. "Night Song," Musrat fateh Ali Khan and Michael Book: Night Song
6. "1001 Nights and One Heart," Shadowfax: The Odd Get Even
7. "Awaken the Dawn," Hildegard von Bingen: Illumination

Play each selection and then have the groups choose their song. Allow several sessions for the students to work on their pieces and then have them perform their dances for the whole class.

## **Art**

**Objective:** The students will demonstrate their understanding of the five ways to make things appear near and far in a painting by being able to discover them through discussion and apply them in their own paintings or drawings.

While viewing the slide of *On the Bukhara-Ural Route*, discuss how the artist made the trucks appear to be at different distances in the scene. Show other landscapes to come up with the five methods artists use to make things look far and near: 1. Placement 2. Size 3. Overlapping 4. Detail 5. Contrast.

Have the students draw or paint several landscapes using these methods.

### **Art**

**Objective:** The students will demonstrate their understanding of value in paintings by using a designated number of values in their drawings or paintings.

While viewing the slide of the artwork, discuss how the artist has used very little color and has used no bright colors. Discuss why they think the artist has chosen to use low tones. To help the students practice values, have them fill in a blank sheet of newsprint with 4 or 5 scales of value using their pencils. They could use different shading techniques (scribbling, diagonal lines, cross hatching, stippling, etc.).

Now have the students create a landscape (perhaps from a photo, magazine picture, art print, or from their own experience) and use at least five values of light and dark.

When the students have completed their projects they can present their work to the others, explaining how they used the techniques successfully.