

DMITRI VRUBEL

LIMITED EDITIONS

Selected Works from the Estate



ESTATE OF DMITRI VRUBEL · 1960–2022

INTRODUCTION

Dmitri Vrubel (1960–2022) was an artist who repeatedly transformed political history, mass-media imagery, private experience and collective memory into powerful contemporary icons. He is known internationally for the mural he painted on the Berlin Wall in 1990, in which Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker meet in a socialist fraternal kiss — an image that became one of the defining pictures of the end of the twentieth century.

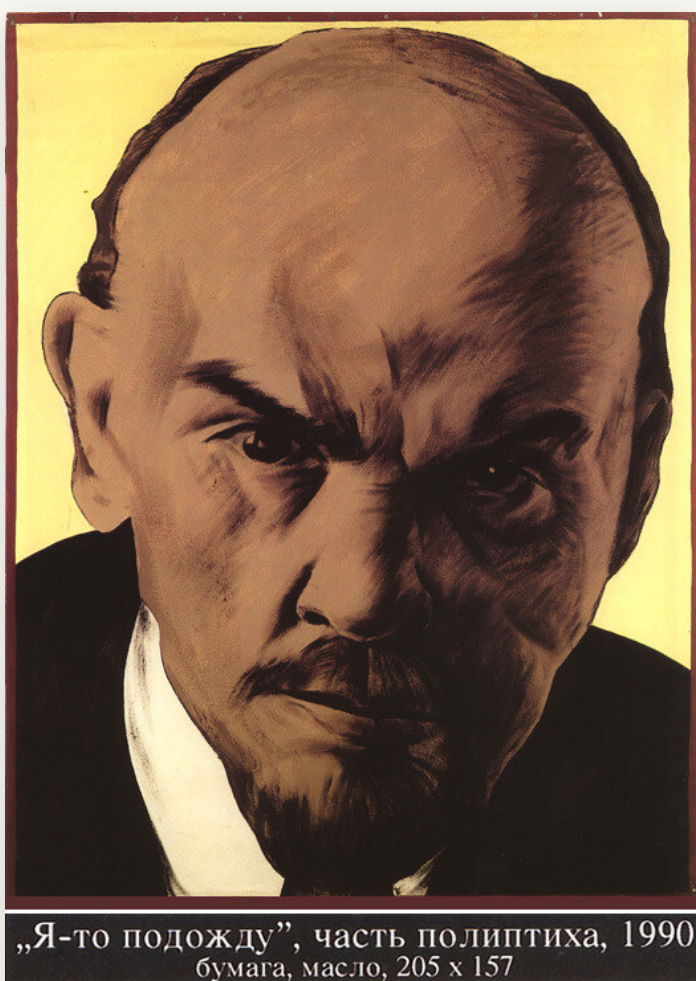
Yet Vrubel's work reaches far beyond that single, world-famous picture. Across four decades he moved between the icons of Soviet and post-Soviet power, the rituals of ideology and faith, and the quiet lives of ordinary people — old age, tenderness, mortality and the human face. Many of the works shown here belong to his long-running project the Artist's Diary; together they bring that wider world into one place: political portraits and Soviet memory alongside grandmothers, children, believers and the intimate human condition.

The Estate of Dmitri Vrubel has begun to develop a dedicated programme of limited editions, returning selected significant images by the artist to circulation in controlled, limited form. The works shown here are presented as Estate editions produced after the artist's lifetime — they are not physical prints made or signed by Dmitri Vrubel himself. Each brings a single image from his body of work back into view for a new generation of viewers and collectors.

I — Section

Power & History

Vrubel treated political power as both spectacle and psychology. From Lenin to the oligarchs of the new Russia, he took the official image — the icon designed to command belief — and turned it back into a human face, at once monumental and unnervingly close.



«Я-то подожду» *“I Can Wait” — from a polyptych*

DMITRI VRUBEL · ORIGINAL WORK,
1990 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE
LIMITED EDITION

Painted as part of a polyptych, this monumental head turns the most reproduced political icon of the twentieth century into a psychological portrait. Lenin appears not as poster or monument but as a heavy, brooding presence — brows drawn, gaze fixed somewhere beyond us. The inscribed phrase, roughly “As for me, I’ll wait,” lends the image a cold patience, as if the idea he embodies were biding its time. Vruble works here with the memory of the Soviet era itself: the way its icons still watch, and still wait.

Roma and the Birch

«Рома с берёзой» · Roman Abramovich

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Roman Abramovich, a young man in a dark suit, steps out from behind a birch — the tree of Russian folklore and national landscape — half-hidden, half-presenting himself. Where Vrubel's Soviet portraits confront ideology, here he turns to the new post-Soviet world: private capital, sudden visibility, the emerging Russian elite of the 1990s and 2000s. The pose is deliberately ambivalent, part portrait, part appearance, as though the sitter were still deciding how much to be seen. Power has changed its costume; the birch, and Vrubel's steady attention, remain.





Berezovsky and Abramovich *Diptych*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Two panels, two faces of the post-Soviet moment. On the left, Boris Berezovsky is caught mid-gesture in charcoal, hand to mouth, the drawing still open and searching; on the right, Roman Abramovich stands beside the ever-present birch. Left as visible working surface — measured margins, construction lines — the diptych lets us watch the political portrait being built, from raw study to public image. It becomes a meditation on how the faces of a new elite are made, and on the distance between the private man and the figure prepared for public view.



Untitled (Policeman) *Working title*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

A uniformed officer fills the foreground, radio in hand, against the white walls and gold domes of a Russian townscape. Vrubel sets institutional authority — cap, insignia, a watchful sideways glance — directly in front of the church and the everyday city, so that power and faith, state and street, share one frame. The image belongs to his ongoing attention to the visual environment of post-Soviet Russia, where the presence of the uniform is simply part of the scenery. Neither heroic nor caricatured, the figure is observed with the same level gaze Vrubel gives his leaders.

II — Section

Putiniana

Begun in the 2000s, Putiniana is Vrubel's growing portrait cycle in which he takes the official image of the head of state and runs it through the masks of the age — leader, icon, penitent, actor. The familiar face becomes a mirror of how a country sees, and constructs, its power.



The Captain *Putiniana*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE PUTINIANA SERIES · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

The head of state appears as a naval captain — anchored cap, striped telnyashka beneath the greatcoat, a heavy frontal stare. Vrubel dresses a familiar face in a ready-made heroic costume drawn from mass culture and leaves us alone with the gap between the role and the man. The official portrait turns into a question about who is steering the ship, and where.

Black Square *Putiniana*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE
PUTINIANA SERIES · PRINT ON
CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

The head of state sits at a table beneath a floating black square — a direct nod to Malevich, the icon of the Russian avant-garde that became a symbol of the zero point. Vrubel mounts power and radical emptiness in one frame: behind the leader hangs neither crest nor icon but a black void that has swallowed a whole century of Russian art and utopia.





Prayer *Putiniana*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE
PUTINIANA SERIES · PRINT ON
CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Hands folded in prayer, eyelids lowered, a wedding ring — the leader is shown in a moment of private humility. Vrubel takes a public figure and catches him in a posture reserved for faith, leaving open whether this is sincere appeal or one more gesture of power. The silence of the portrait is what makes it unsettling.

III — Section

Soviet Memory

The red tie, the pilotka cap, the collective line: Vrubel returned again and again to the imagery of Soviet childhood. Under his hand these symbols of a vanished system become studies of belonging, innocence and the long afterlife of ideology.



Three Pioneers

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Three children stand in profile in red pilotka caps and neckerchiefs, ranged in a line beneath a vast, darkening sky. The bright red of the Pioneer uniform — youth, the collective, faith in the future — glows against storm-heavy clouds. Vruble isolates the children against weather rather than place, turning a familiar emblem of Soviet childhood into something closer to a premonition. Belonging and unease sit together: the line of small figures is at once a portrait of collective identity and a memory of the system that shaped it, now dissolving into the sky.



Pioneer

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

A single boy in a red pilotka and neckerchief, caught mid-cry on the edge of a bare provincial settlement, a battered “7Б” sign on the fence behind him. Where *Three Pioneers* gives us the collective, here Vrubel narrows to the individual: one child inside the vast machinery of Soviet memory. The meticulous graphite rendering and the single note of red concentrate all attention on the boy's face. The grand ideology recedes to a dusty backyard, and what remains is a particular, unrepeatable person — small, unguarded, entirely real.

Untitled (Girls) *Working title*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Two young figures, drawn in dense black-and-white, wear extravagant bursts of painted colour where headdresses would be — the only chromatic event in the image. Vrubel sets his characteristic documentary precision against a sudden, almost violent artistic intervention, so that ordinary figures are crowned with pure paint. The contrast is the subject: the pull between the observed, everyday world and the hand that transforms it. Neither anecdote nor portrait, the image holds two young lives at the meeting point of document and invention.



IV — Section

The Human Condition

Between the politicians and the icons stand ordinary people. Here Vrubel turns from history to the individual — old age and dignity, unexpected tenderness, and the nearness of death — the private human experience that his political work never lets us forget.



Grandmother

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

After the leaders, the oligarchs and the icons of power, an old woman's face emerges from pure black, wrapped in a red headscarf. Nothing surrounds her; everything is in the lines of the face and the steadiness of her gaze. Vruble gives this anonymous figure the same monumental attention he gives the powerful, and the shift is deliberate — the catalogue turns from history to the private human being. Age, dignity and memory are held in a single warm, unhurried look. It is one of the works that gives the collection its human centre.



Untitled (Death & Memory) *Inscribed: “Lately I often think that no one will come to my funeral.”*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

A man lies stretched on a concrete kerb as if asleep or dead, a bottle beside him, while behind him a solemn funeral unfolds in black and white. Across the base runs the line, in Russian: “Lately I often think that no one will come to my funeral.” Vrubel folds the private fear of being forgotten into the public ritual of mourning, setting the isolated figure of the present against the gathered grief of another time. Mortality, loneliness and the dread of oblivion meet in a single, unflinching image.

V — Section

Faith & Conflict

Vrubel was drawn to religious imagery and to the way ancient human stories repeat themselves inside modern history. Faith, mourning and conflict meet in compositions that place timeless gestures within a contemporary frame.



The Annunciation *from the Gospel Project*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE GOSPEL PROJECT · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Against an armed soldier and a blank wall stands an elderly woman in black, while the words of the Annunciation run above and below: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured...". Vrubel transplants the Gospel scene into a present-day conflict zone, where the angelic greeting sounds over weapons and fear. The ancient story of tidings and submission collides with a modern war.



Palestine *from the Artist's Diary*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY, 2005–2012 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

A crowd of women in vivid robes — yellow, blue, green, deep red — presses together across a large, mural-like field, one figure rising with outstretched arms. Faces are veiled or turned away; a child sleeps at the lower edge. Working within the Artist's Diary, Vrubel draws on the language of religious painting and on the recurring human images of grief, supplication and conflict, setting timeless gestures within a charged contemporary surface. The saturated colour lifts the scene toward the sacred while keeping it bound to the present — at once a modern crowd and an ancient chorus of mourning and appeal.



И, бросив сребренники в храме, он вышел, пошел и удавился.

Judas *Gospel text: "...he departed, and went and hanged himself."*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE GOSPEL PROJECT · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Bare feet of a hanging body in grey haze, and the line: "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." Vrubel gives the Gospel episode of Judas's suicide as a single merciless fragment — no face, no moral, only a body and a word. Betrayal, guilt and reckoning are reduced to what remains: hanging feet and the text that names it all.



Pope and Kitten *Pope Francis*

DMITRI VRUBEL · FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Pope Francis, in white, bends to press his face to a tiny kitten, the whole image built from fine, almost nervous lines against deep black. After images of authority, Vrubel offers unexpected tenderness: a moment of care between the highest of offices and the smallest, most vulnerable of creatures. The near-monochrome drawing strips the scene of everything but gesture and touch. Whatever the office, what remains is simple human warmth — the willingness to lean down toward what is fragile.

VI — Section

Media & Cultural Memory

Working from the language of photography, cinema and mass culture, Vrubel took the found image — already loaded with memory — and remade it as painting, holding the familiar just long enough for it to become strange.



Vika and Brando *Grey Exhibition*

DMITRI VRUBEL · 1997 · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

The artist's companion, Vika, is set into a film still beside Marlon Brando, the whole image carrying the grain and colour of old cinema. Working from the shared language of film and mass culture — a gesture we feel we have seen before — Vrubel remakes the found frame as painting, folding a private figure into a public, cinematic memory. Made for the Grey Exhibition of 1997, it holds the familiar just long enough for it to turn strange, so that a romantic screen image becomes a question about how desire and memory are manufactured and passed on through pictures.

THE IMAGE THE WORLD KNOWS



The Brotherly Kiss *“My God, Help Me to Survive This Deadly Love”*

DMITRI VRUBEL · ORIGINAL WORK, 1990, BERLIN WALL / EAST SIDE GALLERY · PRINT ON CANVAS · ESTATE LIMITED EDITION

Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker meet in the socialist fraternal kiss, beneath the words “My God, help me to survive this deadly love.” Painted by Vrubel on the East Side Gallery of the Berlin Wall in 1990, it became one of the most recognised images of the twentieth century’s end — political intimacy, ideological ritual and the absurd tenderness of power, made at the very moment the system it depicts fell apart. We arrive at it last, having first seen the wider world of Dmitri Vrubel: only then do we return to the icon the whole world already knows.

DMITRI VRUBEL ESTATE

The Estate of Dmitri Vrubel preserves, researches and presents the artistic legacy of the artist (1960–2022) and develops a programme of limited editions of selected individual works. The Estate is directed by Alexander Vrubel, the artist's son and heir.

LIMITED EDITIONS

The Estate's limited editions return chosen images by Dmitri Vrubel to circulation in limited, controlled form. Each is produced after the artist's lifetime by the Estate; none is a print made or signed by the artist himself.

Edition size — set per work when specific works are selected

Technique — print on canvas

Dimensions — confirmed per work by the Estate

Certificate — each edition accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from the Estate

Availability & price — on request (Alexander Vrubel)

ENQUIRIES

Contact

For any enquiry about the works in this catalogue — availability, dimensions, editions and acquisition — please contact the Estate directly.

Vrubel Estate

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