

The Face of Russia: Anguish, Aspiration \u0026 Achievement in Russian Culture By James H. Billington

James Hadley Billington the Librarian of Congress Emeritus was a leading American academic and author who taught history at Harvard and Princeton before serving for 42 years as CEO of four federal cultural institutions. I don't see the point of it though Billington says it multiple times: the Russians take over a creative medium from a more advanced culture then they make major original works and then once they've done this they toss it out breaking it up. The Face of Russia: Anguish Aspiration \u0026 Achievement in Russian Culture Author James Billington American academic and one of the world's leading non-Russian experts on Russia tells the biography of the country through Russian art and culture. I am not a Russophile but I do appreciate a good writer and Billington writes well interweaving the works of major cultural figures such as painter Rublev architect Rastrelli writer Gogol composer Musorgsky and director Eisenstein with both their impact on Russian thinking and how Russian society and politics changed their art in response. To be honest I found the artistic perspective a little pretentious and yearned for the prose of a standard history book: I love reading about dates and battles and military strategy and real-life political intrigues. However the artistic perspective was a novel approach that gave a different appreciation of historical events bringing a more human touch to the way war and other societal upheavals affect a nation. The book was published just before the turn of the millennium when Boris Yeltsin was in charge; it might be time for a new edition with the events of the past 14 years showing their effects on the culture of this fascinating tumultuous and ever-changing country. In exploring these cycles of explosive creativity leading to destruction we may discover what the legacy of Russian art and culture portends for the future of Russia's political institutions, He served as the 13th Librarian of Congress after being nominated as 13th by President Ronald Reagan in 1987 and his appointment was approved unanimously by the U. Of course he makes his argument by choosing which artists to focus on, Starting with paintings in particular religious icons he moves on to artchitecture literature music and film, The Face of Russia: Anguish Aspiration \u0026 Achievement in Russian Culture



In The Face of Russia the renowned scholar James H, Billington explains how Russia's rich tradition of art spirituality and culture has affected the country's political processes and its struggle toward democracy. Through profiles of Russia's supreme practitioners of art and culture Billington has identified a recurring pattern in the Russian creative process, First the Russians take over a new form of creative enterprise from a more advanced foreign civilization: Second having acquired the new medium of expression the Russians produce stunningly original ambitious works re-creating the art form. Then having raised the art form to a new level the Russians cast in down and break it apart leaving only fragments for future generations. The Face of Russia: Anguish Aspiration \u0026 Achievement in Russian Culture.

.S. Senate. He retired as Librarian on September 30 2015.(Source: Wikipedia)I skimmed this. I don't see it. But I still just don't see it. It seemed tedious to me