

Boris Anisfeld

Born in Russia, Boris Anisfeld was a sculptor, lithographer, painter, illustrator, set designer and long-time teacher at the Art Institute of Chicago. From 1901 to 1909, he studied at the Odessa School of Art in the Ukraine and at the Imperial Academy of Arts in Petrograd. Among his influences were Ilya Repin, realist painter and sculptor, and Igor Grabar, an impressionist painter, who encouraged Anisfeld to work in a style that led to Anisfeld's painting being accepted by Sergei Diaghilev for a 1905-1906 exhibition in Russia and Paris.

Anisfeld's career evolved from book design and illustration to stage design. In 1911, Diaghilev, Director of the Ballet Russe, chose Anisfeld to design the production of Sadko because of Anisfeld's interest in fantasy, and this commission began his career with that company until the outbreak of World War I.

Anisfeld immigrated to the United States in 1917, and, living in New York City, did stage designs for the Metropolitan Opera including The Snow Maiden in 1922. During this period, The Brooklyn Museum had a traveling exhibition of his work to 20 American cities.

From 1928 to 1968, Anisfeld lived in Chicago, where he headed the School of Advanced Painting at the Art Institute. During the summers he ran the Anisfeld Summer School in Central City, Colorado.

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