

**Annekathrin Knoth, *Marianne Werefkin's Russian Roods – A new Interpretation of her Oeuvre*, Diss. Trier 1996.**

The painter Marianne Werefkin (born 1860; died 1938), from the circle of artists known as the Blue Rider (*Der Blaue Reiter*) in Munich and lifelong companion of Alexej Jawlenskys, lived in Russia and Latvia the first 36 years of her life. She received her artistic education in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Nevertheless the influence of Russian art on her Munich creative phase has been until now been omitted from research literature. Hence it lacks an important basis for the understanding of her creative output. In many respects Marianne Werefkin led the way in bringing the goals of so-called Russian Realism (*russischen Realismus*) onto another level, one in which the transmission of emotions was seen as a central aspect. The way the pictures of her teacher Ilja Repin had nothing to do with superficial emotion through simple moralistic categorization, but rather the painter demonstrated life's interconnectedness. After a new artistic beginning in Munich Werefkin took out the historical-daily context from her motifs, since, in the spirit of her time, she had recognized that everything visible was illusion. However she made use of actual reality as a repertoire of symbols for her own feelings, representing universal situations and allowing the total picture space to be the bearer of emotions. In that respect she is different from Wassily Kandinsky, who employed abstraction until reference to reality dissolved. Art for Werefkin involved no self-purpose, but should have a positive influence upon the observer. Narrative instruction is pushed to the background through the way it interacts, which depends upon knowledge of psychology and spiritual groups.