**Lady with the dog**

The fall of year 1868, most likely after the wedding, which took place in October, can be considered as the time of creation of Eugenia Shishkina’s portrait "Lady with the Dog". Eugenia is already pregnant, daughter Lida came into the world in January, next year. Following the rules of genre painting with a hidden meaning of every detail, a dog, so to say «a symbol of loyalty», not just lying on her knees, but warms the future baby. The room is cool and quiet, the mistress grieved, looking at the icon, her thoughts are somewhere near a loved one, who is away. In the picture Shishkin made no reckoning of the interior details, although there are clearly visible objects on the table, in the picture on the wall it can be identified three racing horses. The portrait is filled with invisible feeling of love. She - the most significant person for him. The painter is fascinated by her bright sadness. He carefully paints familiar shape of the face, slightly flushes her cheeks and defines a line of wavy bang. It is as if his hands stroking her soft hair, tenderly touches the beautiful neck and shoulders. Probably this portrait can be considered as one of the most lyrical works of Shishkin’s art, better known to us as the painter of nature. Shishkin is being revealed here as the painter, who knows how to love and is able to convey human emotions by means of painting. Contemplation, admiring of nature, a sense of fullness brings this portrait closer to the best works of Venetsianov and students of his school. To the «painting, which seems to be a spring sun smile, unsophisticated and clear.» This affinity of souls seems to have passed through the lessons of Venetsianov’s student Mokritskiy, who was a tutor of Shishkin in the Moscow School of Painting and close friend when Shishkin turned into a famous painter.

After Eugenia’s death the portrait «Lady with the Dog» was remaining in the category of the most dearest works of Shishkin. The portrait was never exhibited and there is no mention of it either in the writings of Shishkin, or memories of his friends. This was a personal tragedy of an artist, he had been deeply enduring inside. «A dark line begins in a life of Ivan Ivanovich with her death; he starts to drink ... to sink morally, his character is spoiling, since nothing affects him so badly, as vodka.» Only a strong passion to the art, a belief in a superior destination of the artist and help of close friends, in particular Ivan Kramskoy, helped him out of this state. A few years later he met his second love, Olga Antonovna Lagoda. And the fate does not spare him again. Olga died shortly after the birth of her daughter Xenia. Shishkin is in despair. Support of the closest people helps him to grieve. From a letter of Shishkin’s friend Oznobishin: ... Of course, I will not be able to console you in loss and I cannot. I can only say to you: Be strong, my friend, and remember that you are an artist, marked by a great talent, that is the fatal gift of nature, which is being given to someone by a genius, who takes away human’s joy of his earthly life. Having survived a second loss, Ivan no longer married, but close was the woman who became his nearest friend, who was able to take care of him and his two daughters, Lydia and Xenia, arranging the life and comfort of their home, while he could live for the art, without worrying of anything. This was a sister of his deceased wife, Victoria-Virineya Antonovna Lagoda. Until the end We do not know their personal relationship to the most end, history has left no notes on this. It can only be noted that she considered herself Lagoda-Shishkina until the last days, she put that sign on her documents.