

**Title:** Kaverin's *Artist Unknown: An Unrepentant Painter Re-Painting the World*  
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In his novel *Artist Unknown* (1931), Veniamin Kaverin presents two conflicting views on social development: one is focused solely on technological advancement, while the other is concerned with moral character of the Soviet people. In a modified form, this juxtaposition is a continuation of an old debate regarding western rationalism and eastern spirituality. In response to ideological arguments that were taking place in the Soviet creative circles in the late 1920s, Kaverin places his characters within the Soviet context and uses visual art as an entry point into the debate. Using James Elkins' discussion of the poetics of perspective and its metaphorical meaning, I show that Kaverin attempts to blend what up to that point had been viewed as two distinct approaches to visual depiction of reality – linear (Western) and inverse (Eastern) perspective – and at the same time presents his quixotic protagonist, the artist Arkhimedov, as a typical Russian monk icon-painter. Such a conglomeration of ideas not only illustrates the state of ideological commotion in which the Soviet society found itself in at the late 1920s-early 1930s, but appears to support Erwin Panofsky's claim that perspectival arrangement of pictorial space is bound to a culture that produced it.