

# IVAN AIVAZOVSKY (1817 – 1900) :

## SONGS TO THE BLUE SEAS

This single-frame thematic exhibit presents great Armenian Russian painter Ivan Aivazovsky's (Hovhannes Ayvazian) fascination with the sea (through his major paintings. Life (beyond birth and death) and life-time accomplishments of the artist are not included in the scope of this exhibit.

### Plan

#### 1. He Was Born Mortal...

- 1.1 - Birth of the Artist
- 1.2 - Fascination with Sea

#### 2. Song to the Calm Sea

- 2.1. - *A lone white sail shows for an instance  
In bright-blue brilliance of sea haze...*
- 2.2. - *Below the sail are sky-blue currents,  
Above are golden rays of sun...*

#### 3. Roaring Song to the Tempest

- 3.1. - *The waves break fast, the wind is clipping,  
The mast is creaking as it sways...*
- 3.2. - *It is not joy the sail is seeking  
Nor is it happiness it flees!*

#### 4. Sinister Song to the Sea In Wartime

- 4.1. - *Flames disrupt the sky. The work is begun.  
"Action!" My guns crash, flame, rock, and stun...*
- 4.2. - *Their sides were pocked with gun-shots  
And their guns were battle-worn...*

#### 5. Tribute to Pushkin

#### 6. ... Has Left on Himself Immortal Memory

Note:

- red frame signifies rare, scarce or important items.

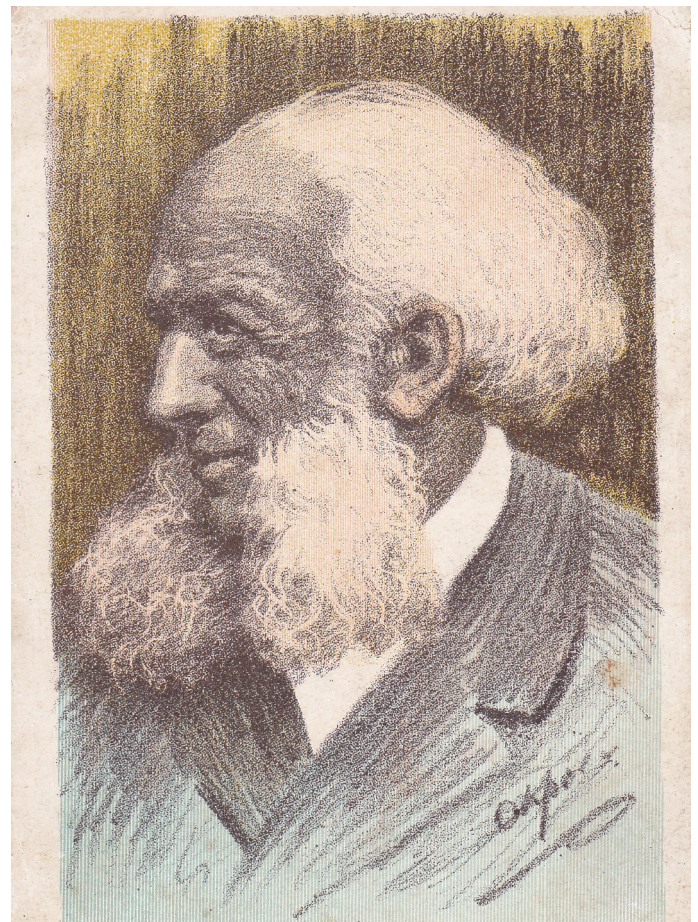
### 1. He Was Born Mortal ...

*He was born mortal - has left on himself immortal memory*, - these words are written on his tombstone. So romantic was his art that it seemed the artist was singing an ode to the sea. This inspired the exhibitor to use poetry written by both Russian (in English translation) and American poets as illustrations to some of his paintings, as well as the heads of the subchapters.

Verses from American poets Henry W. Longfellow, Robert Nicols, Patrick MacGill, Russian poets Mikhail Lermontov and Alexander Pushkin resonate beautifully with the artist's perception of the seascapes.



Perforation error



Divided back picture postcard. Published by Ani Art Publishing Co. Saint Petersburg, circa 1910. Print run unknown, seen only once.



## 1. He was born mortal...

### 1.1 - Birth of the Artist

**Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovsky (Hovhannes Ayvazyan)** was born on July 29, 1817 in the ancient city of Theodosia on the Crimean peninsula to Armenian parents.



His father Konstantin (Gevorg) was an Armenian merchant from the Polish region of Galicia whose family immigrated there from Turkish Armenia in the 18th century.



He left Galicia for Moldavia, later to Bukovina, prior to settling in Theodosia and marrying Ivan's mother Ripsime, a Theodosia Armenian.



Closed letter posted in 1895 from Helsingfors (Helsinki) through Moscow to Theodosia by South Railway.



The Karim Fountain and the house (right) where Ivan Aivazovsky was born.

Divided back picture postcard posted in 1914. Publisher I. Wassermann #24 in series printed in Theodosia, Russian Empire. Most of his postcards bear inscription "Do not duplicate", which was a rare occasion at the times. Only two have been seen within last 10 years.



## 1. He was born mortal...

### 1.2 - Fascination with the Sea

Their small house stood on an elevation and had an unobstructed view of the sea. The sea, the sky above it and picturesque landscape of Crimea strongly affected his future life. The sea, gentle at times, rampant at others, changing color from crystal clear turquoise at calm to deep black at storm, always attracted the young boy.



Crimea. Bay at Yalta



Crimea. Sea view



Crimea. Sea view with palm trees

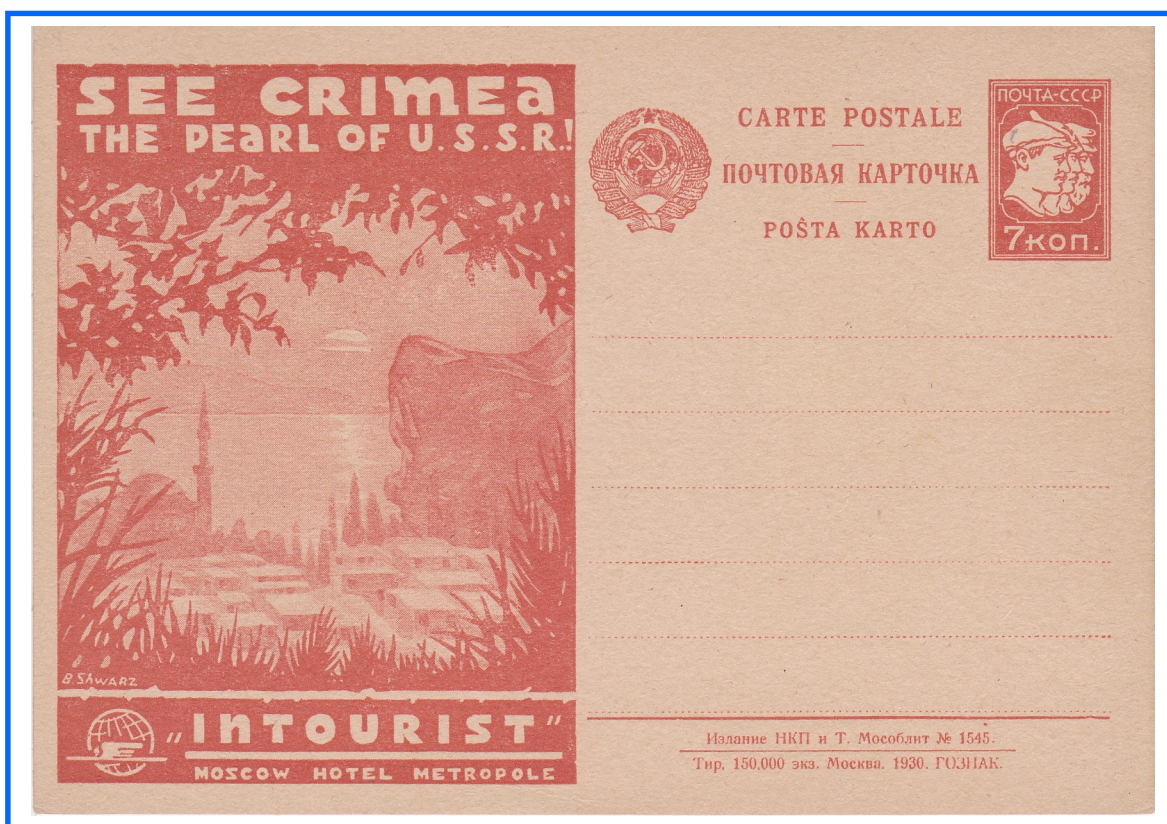


Crimea. Yalta. The Swallow Nest



Crimea. Yalta. Sea view

These landscapes, in whole or in part, were later used in the artist's paintings depicting Crimea and Theodosia.



Undivided back advertizing postal stationery, circa 1930. Editor - NKП&Т (People's Commissariat of Posts & Telegraphs, aka USSR Postal Service). Censor #1545, printed by GOZNAK in Moscow, print run—150,000 copies.



## 2. Song to the Calm Sea

### 2.1 - A lone white sail shows for an instance In bright-blue brilliance of sea haze...



*Ship Twelve Apostles, circa 1897.  
Aivazovsky National Gallery,  
Theodosia, Russia.*



*Crimea, circa 1852.  
State Museum Peterhof,  
St. Petersburg, Russia*



*Ocean (detail), circa 1896.*



*Sunrise Over Shores of Crimea, circa 1895.  
Postal stationery posted from Kishinev in 2015*



## 2. Song to the Calm Sea

2.1 *A lone white sail shows for an instance  
In bright-blue brilliance of sea haze...*



*Marina. Unidentified painting. Similar paintings exist, but with different details.*



*Sea. Study, circa 1898.  
Lugansk Regional Art  
Museum, Lugansk,  
Ukraine*

⇒  
*The name, date of the  
painting and its location  
was not identified. It is ei-  
ther in private collection  
and thus escaped catalogu-  
ing, or was lost at sea as  
some of other Aivazovsky  
paintings*



Divided back photo postcard posted in 1907 from Obolets, Russia. Publisher unknown.



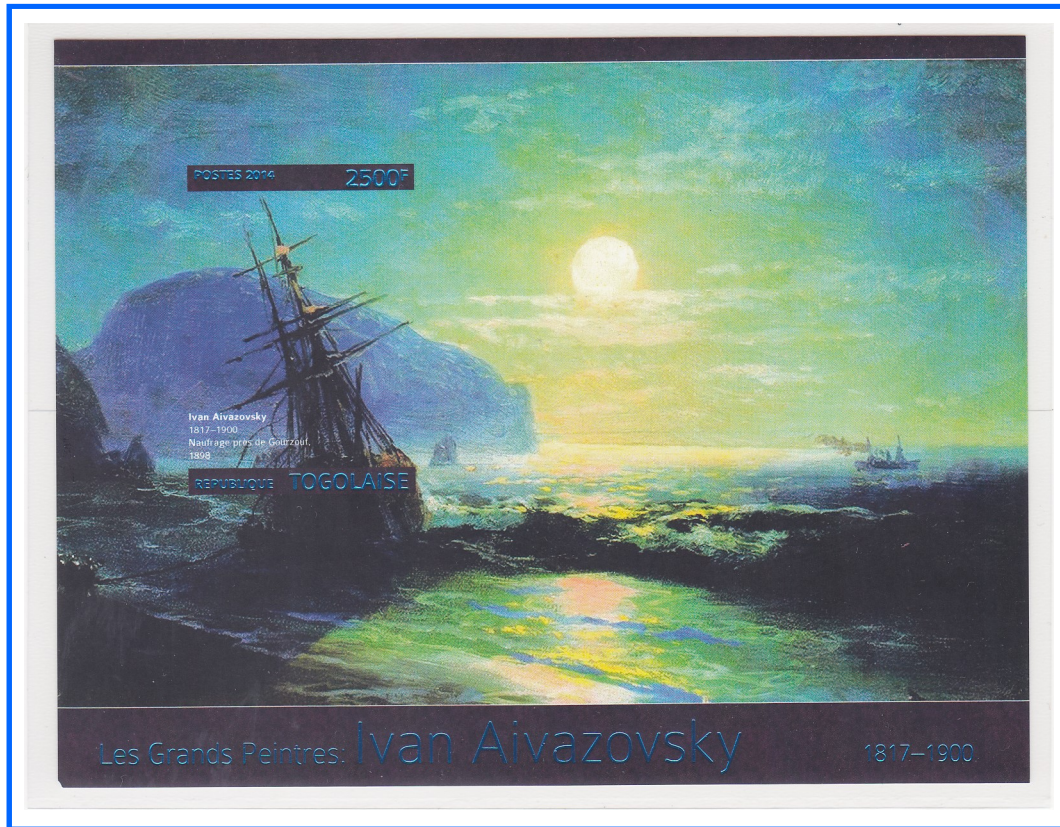
*View of Odessa by  
Moonlight, circa 1846.  
Russian Museum.  
St. Petersburg, Russia*

Divided back picture  
postcard posted in  
1936 from New York.  
Publisher IZOGIZ,  
printed in Leningrad in  
1933



## 2. Song to the Calm Sea

### 2.2. - *Below the sail are sky-blue currents, Above are golden rays of sun...*



*Shipwreck off the Coast of Gurzuf, circa 1898. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia. Imperforate variety.*



*Left: Sea. Koktebel, circa 1853*

*Center: Label, Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia*

*Right: Towers on the Rock Near Bosphorus, circa 1859*



*Fishermen at the Coast of the Sea, circa 1852.  
National Gallery of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia*



*Italian Landscape, circa 1857. Aivazovsky  
Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.*



## 2. Song to the Calm Sea

2.2. - *Below the sail are sky-blue currents,  
Above are golden rays of sun...*



*Crimean Seascape, circa 1866.  
National Museum of Fine Arts, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan*



*The Squadron of the Black Sea in Theodosia.  
Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia*



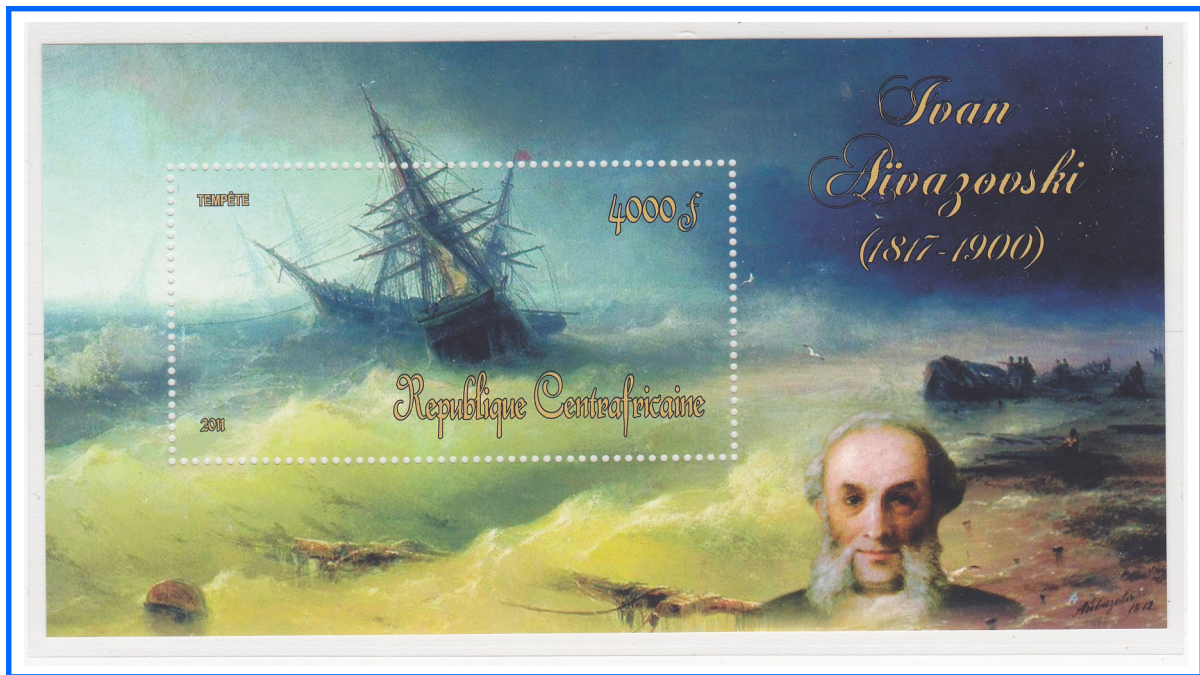
*Monastery of George, circa 1846. Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.  
Maximum card prepared by the USSR Ministry of Communications in 1974*



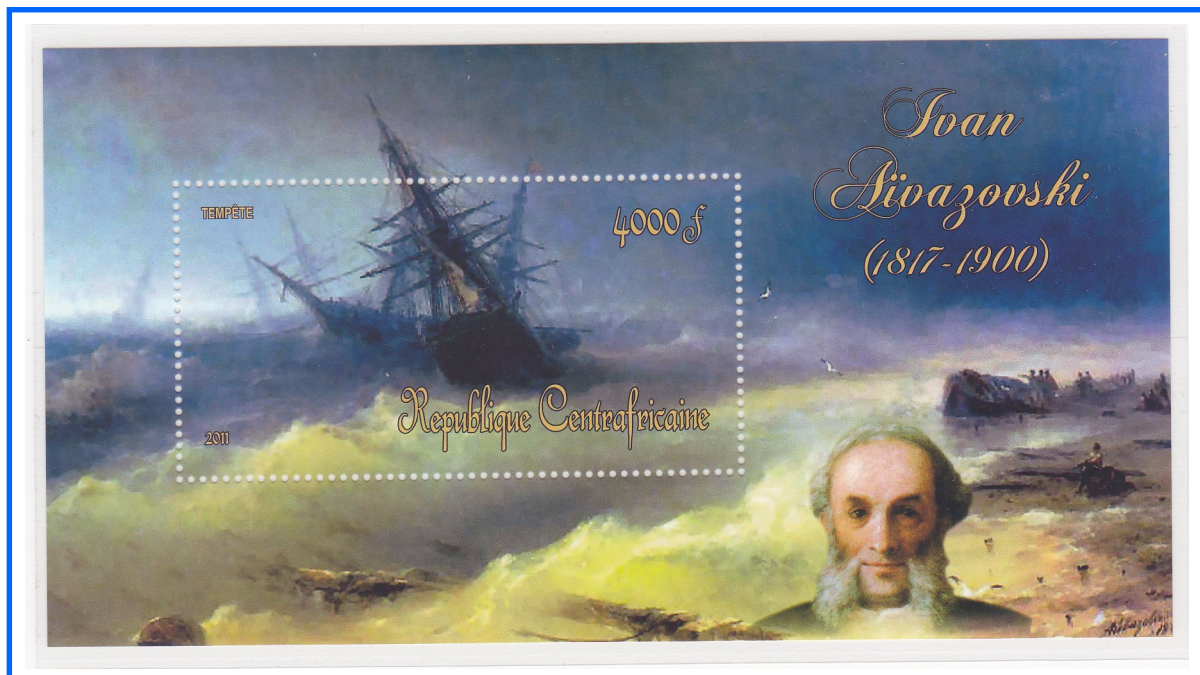
*The Arrival of Fleet of Columbus, circa 1880.  
In private collection, sold at Sotheby in 2006 for \$1,665,000*



### 3. Roaring Song to the Tempest



*The Storm, 1872, circa 1872.  
The State Museum of Russian Art, Kiev*



Color Variety



### 3. Roaring Song to the Tempest

*And yet for storm it begs, the rebel,  
As if in storm lurked calm and peace!*

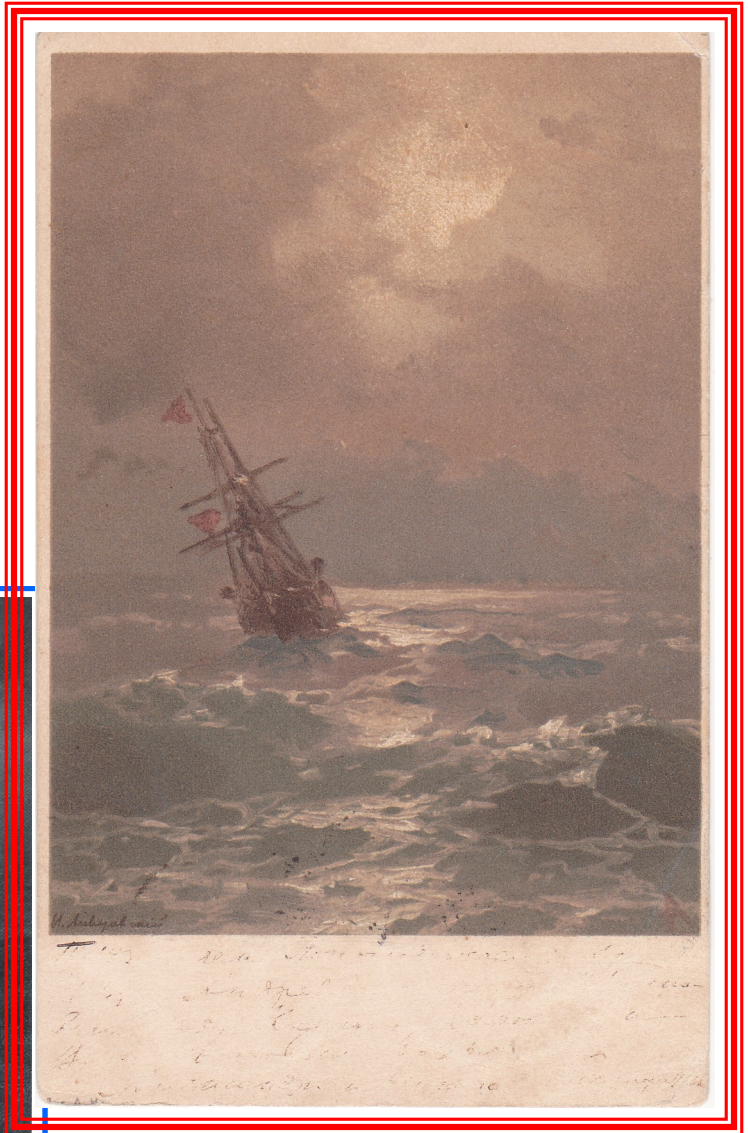


*Approximation of the  
Storm, circa 1877.  
In private collection*

*The name, date of the  
painting and the location  
of the painting below was  
not identified. It is either  
in private collection and  
thus escaped catalogu-  
ing, or was lost at sea as  
some of other Aivazovsky  
paintings.*



*Storm on the Arctic Ocean, circa 1864.  
Theodosia Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia*



Undivided back picture postcard posted in 1903 from  
Saint Petersburg. Publisher - Community of St. Eugene,  
aka Red Cross Publishing, Russia



*The Signal of a Storm, circa 1851.  
Tula Regional Art Museum, Tula, Russia*



Divided back picture postcard. Galleria Publishing House,  
Russia. Circa 2014. Design - A. Pompeyev



### 3. Roaring Song to the Tempest

#### 3.1. - *The waves break fast, the wind is clipping, The mast is creaking as it sways...*



*The Billow, circa 1889. State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia*



*Stormy Sea, circa 1868. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia.*  
Maximum card prepared by the USSR Ministry of Communications in 1974



*Storm at the Sea, circa 1850.*  
National Gallery of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia



*The Storm, circa 1851. State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia*



### 3. Roaring Song to the Tempest

#### 3.2. - *It is not joy the sail is seeking Nor is it happiness it flees!*

Tradesmen or fishers' humble boat  
Glides bravely, guarded by your will,  
Amid the waves, for days afloat...



*On the Island of Crete, circa 1867.  
Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia*



*View of Kerch, circa 1839. Regional  
Museum of Fine Arts, Orenburg, Russia*

...But you turn rough, impregnable...  
And schools of ships go down your throat.



*The Last Breath of the Ship, circa 1889. Belarusian National Art Museum, Minsk, Belarus*  
Divided back picture postcard posted in 1924 from Smiltene, Latvia. Publisher unknown, circa 1910-1920



*The Ninth Wave, circa 1850. State Russian  
Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia*



*Shipwreck, circa 1876.  
Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.*



#### 4. Sinister Song to the Sea in War Time



*Review of the Black Sea Fleet, circa 1849.  
Central Naval Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.*



*Black Sea Fleet in the Bay of Theodosia, circa 1870.  
Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.*



*Brig Mercury Attacked by Two Turkish Ships, circa 1892.  
Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.*



*The Great Roads at Kronstadt, circa 1836. The State Russian Museum. St. Petersburg, Russia  
Airmail letter posted in 2013 from Bujumbura, Burundi*



#### 4. Sinister Song to the Sea In Wartime

##### 4.1. - *Flames disrupt the sky. The work is begun. "Action!" My guns crash, flame, rock, and stun...*



*The Battle of Sinop, circa 1852.  
Central Naval Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia*



*The Battle of Navarino, circa 1848.  
Naval College, St. Petersburg, Russia*



*The Battle of Sinop, circa 1853. The Central Naval Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia*



*Battle of Sinop, circa 1853. The Central Naval Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia  
Postal stationery mailed in 2015 from Penza, Russia*



#### 4. Sinister Song to the Sea In Wartime

##### 4.2. - *Their sides were pocked with gun-shots And their guns were battle-worn...*



*Sea Battle at Navarino  
on October 2, 1827. circa  
1846. Dzerzhinsky  
High Marine Engineer-  
ing College, St. Peters-  
burg, Russia*

Divided back picture post-  
card. Galleria Publishing  
House, Russia. Circa 2014.  
Design - A. Pompeyev

Divided back picture post-  
card posted in 1908 from  
Tiflis. Publisher unknown.



*The Battle in the Chios  
Channel, circa 1848. Ai-  
vazovsky Art Gallery, Theo-  
dosia, Russia.*



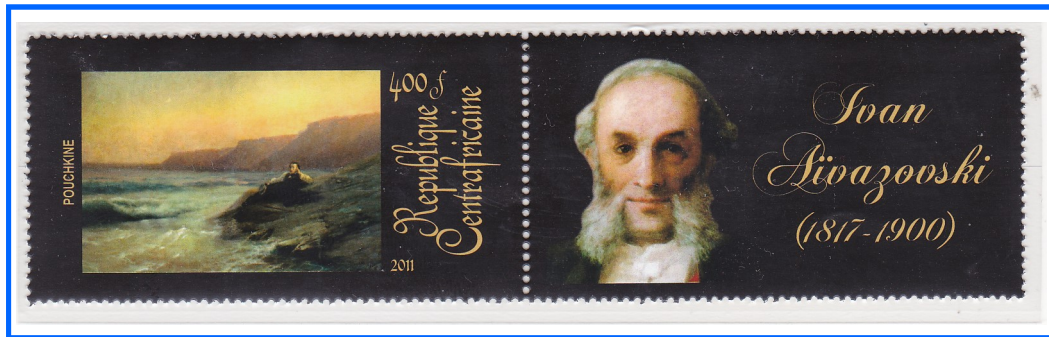
*Battle of Chesma at Night,  
circa 1848. Aivazovsky Art  
Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.  
The stamps erroneously states  
1856*



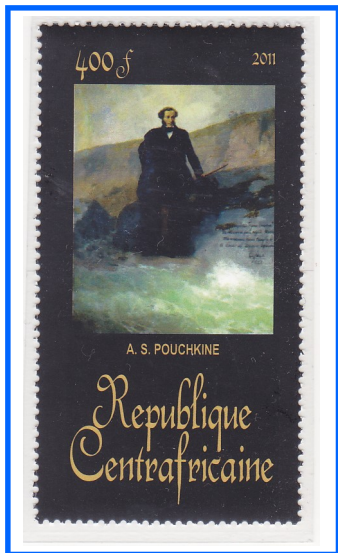


## 4. Tribute to Pushkin

A passing acquaintance with great Russian poet Pushkin greatly influenced the artist. Through the rest of his life Aivazovsky would measure his images on the canvas with high poetry of Pushkin. Some of his paintings seem to be illustrations to Pushkin's verses.



*Pushkin on the Black Sea Coast, circa 1887. Vereshchagin Art Gallery, Nikolaev, Russia.*



*A.S. Pushkin on the Black Sea, circa 1897. Odessa Art Gallery, Odessa, Ukraine.*

*One lofty crag, a glorious tomb...  
There stately memories dwelled on  
And plunged in sleep of cold and gloom:  
There faded great Napoleon. (Pushkin)*



*Napoleon on the Island of Saint Helen, circa 1897. Aivazovsky Art Gallery, Theodosia, Russia.*

*Farewell, free element, o Sea!  
For one last time I watch your tide  
Roll azure waves in front of me  
And shine in beauty full of pride.  
(Pushkin)*



*Ocean, circa 1896. State Museum Association of Art Culture of the Russian North, Arkhangelks, Russia*



Divided back picture postcard posted in 1902 from St. Petersburg. Publisher unknown.



## 5. ...Has Left on Himself Immortal Memory

Aivazovsky died on April 19, 1900. and was buried in Theodosia. His second wife Anna Sarkisova (Buniatian) whose portrait he painted in 1882 is buried next to him.

These words written by famous English marine painter, Joseph Mallord William Turner, could be an epitaph to the artist:

*Oh, noble moment, by art betrayed...  
And how may one not delight in thee,  
Oh thou young boy, but forgive thou me...*

*...If I shall bend my  
white head  
Before thy art divine  
Thy bliss-wrought  
genius...*

Aivazovsky Art  
Gallery, Theodosia,  
Russian Federation.



Aivazovsky's grave  
and the Armenian  
church, Theodosia.



Registered illustrated postal stationery card mailed in 1980 from Theodosia. Additional stamp makes for registered mail rate. The commemorative postmark says "100th Anniversary of Aivazovsky Art Gallery".



Divided back picture postcard. Publisher I. Vasserman, #10 in series, printed in Theodosia, Russian Empire. Only five copies have been reported so far.

