



THE MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Simon Morsink Appointed Executive Director of The Museum of Russian Icons

CLINTON, MA – Dutch art historian and icon expert **Simon Morsink**, director of the Morsink Icon Gallery in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, has been appointed the new executive director of the Museum of Russian Icons.

Morsink replaces Founding Director **Kent dur Russell**, who recently announced his retirement after 16 years at the Clinton museum.



A leading specialist in Russian icons, Greek icons and Ethiopian and Byzantine Art, Morsink is well known to private collectors and museum curators worldwide. For more than 30 years he has run, together with his brother Hugo, the internationally renowned Morsink Icon Gallery in Amsterdam that specializes in icons created between the 15th and 19th centuries. He served as Senior Consultant in Russian and Greek Icons for Sotheby's in London from 2007-2020.

Morsink contributed essays to two Museum of Russian Icons' publications, *Two Museums | One Culture* and *Twenty Treasures from the Museum of Russian Icons*; and was a speaker at the Museum's 2021 international conference "Collecting Orthodox Art: A History and a Look Towards the Future."

"I am delighted that Simon will join our administrative team as the new executive director," said **Jack McCabe**, president of the Board of Trustees. "He is uniquely qualified to guide the Museum into its next phase. His profound knowledge of icons and the orthodox world, coupled with his business acumen, entrepreneurial spirit, and global professional network will invigorate and amplify the role the museum can play in the local and global community. Simon's appointment comes in the middle of a busy year of returning, rebuilding, and reimagining at the Museum of Russian Icons after the pandemic, passing of founder Gordon Lankton, and retirement of longtime director Kent Russell. His existing knowledge of and connection to the museum will be invaluable."

Morsink (b. 1967) studied Art History and Slavic Studies in Leiden (the Netherlands) and Leuven (Belgium). In 1991 he obtained his master's degree with a dissertation on Sergius of Radonezh, founder of the Trinity Monastery near Moscow. Since 1994, he and his brother Hugo have been running the Morsink Icon Gallery in Amsterdam, which was founded in 1977 by their father Jan Morsink.

As an art dealer and icon expert, Morsink has built strong relationships with private icon collectors worldwide, as well as with the relevant curators of major museums in Russia, Europe, Great Britain, and the USA. He has been involved in creating several international private collections and was instrumental in the acquisition of important icons by the Icon Museum in Recklinghausen in Germany, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Museum of Russian Icons, among others.

Morsink has curated numerous exhibitions at his gallery and in European museums; and published several catalogues, most notably *The Power of Icons* (2006), *Collecting Old Icons* (2012), and *The Colours of Heaven: 15 Cretan Icons from a European Private Collection* (2018).

“I look forward to strengthening the Museum’s role as a crossroads for dialogue on the fascinating world of icons and orthodox art, and their place in world culture,” says Morsink. “I strongly believe that the path forward for a sustainable and modern icon museum is in carefully balancing the academic world with the interests of the general public, which is increasingly socially engaged and diverse. With this in mind, I feel very motivated to lead the museum into a successful future.”



Morsink, pictured here with Museum of Russian Icon's late Founder Gordon Lankton, will begin his tenure at the 15-year-old Clinton museum on July 1.

EXHIBITIONS CURRENTLY ON VIEW

Images of Atheism: The Soviet Assault on Religion

May 5 – October 2, 2022

Images of Atheism explores the role of visual propaganda in the Communist Party's seven-decade war against religion (ca. 1920– 1990). With their eye-catching design, strident slogans, and stereotyped characters, the posters and publications of Soviet atheism demonized the world's religions and jeered at those who practiced them. Above all, they appealed to young people by promising a new world of abundance and moral values replacing the superstitions and injustices of the past. Intended mainly for domestic consumption, this remarkable campaign to eradicate faith is among the least known aspects of Soviet visual culture.

Pysanka: Symbol of Renewal

Through July 24, 2022

In support of the Ukrainian people, The Museum of Russian Icons reinstalled Maine-based contemporary artist Lesia Sochor's *Pysanka: Symbol of Renewal*, an exhibition inspired by the beautiful tradition of intricately decorated Ukrainian Easter egg painting. Three new works created in response to the current crisis in Ukraine are featured in the exhibition.

Tea is for Tradition

Through October 2, 2022

The objects associated with Russian tea are tactile reminders of this important tradition and evoke warmth, home, and family. Much of tea's popularity is owed to Russia's literary greats and decorative artists, for it is in their craft that tea becomes immortalized as a central aspect of the Russian identity. This mini-exhibition in the Museum's lobby explores the permeation of tea culture in Russian art, craft, and literature.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Museum of Russian Icons preserves and exhibits one of the world's largest collections of Orthodox Christian icons, bronze crosses, and Slavic folk arts. Spanning over six centuries, the collection showcases the development of the Russian icon from its Egyptian and Byzantine roots and explores the spread of Orthodoxy across cultures.

The Museum serves as a leading center for research and scholarship through the Center for Icon Studies and other institutional collaborations. It is the only Museum in the US dedicated to Russian icons, and the largest collection of icons outside of Russia.

MUSEUM HOURS

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10am-4pm. Closed Monday–Wednesday.

Admission: Adults \$12, seniors (59+) \$10, Students \$5, Children (13-17) \$5, Children under 13 Free.

Follow the Museum of Russian Icons on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Youtube](#).

Visit the website, www.museumofrussianicons.org, home of the Online Collection (including research papers on individual icons), a virtual tour of the Museum, the Journal of Icon Studies, and the British Museum's Catalogue of Byzantine and Greek Icons.