



THE MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS

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SPECIAL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS AT THE MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS

Gallery Talk: Corncobs to Cosmonauts | *Saturday, December 22 at 1:00pm*

Pop-Up Makerspace: Cosmonaut Edition | *December 26-30, 11:00am-5:00pm*

Lecture and Reception: Ringing in Russia's Old New Year | *Saturday, January 12, 1:00-4:00pm*



CLINTON, MA - The Museum of Russian Icons will be presenting several special holiday programs celebrating the featured exhibition, ***Corncobs to Cosmonauts: Redefining the Holidays during the Soviet Era***, that transforms the Museum's West Gallery into a Russian Winter Wonderland.

Gallery Talk: From Corncobs to Cosmonauts

Saturday, December 22 at 1:00pm

Free with Admission

Registrar Laura Garrity-Arquitt gives a guided tour of the special exhibition *Corncobs to Cosmonauts: Redefining the Holidays in the Soviet Era*.

Pop-up Makerspace: Cosmonaut Edition

Wednesday, December 26-Sunday, December 30, 11:00am-5:00pm

Free with Admission

Drop in to the Museum's Pop-up Makerspace, inspired by the exhibition *Corncobs to Cosmonauts*. Activities include daily design challenges and crafts for children and adults.

Lecture and Reception: Ringing in Russia's Old New Year: A discussion of holiday traditions with writer and historian Jennifer Eremeeva

Saturday, January 12, 1:00-4:00pm | Members \$12, Nonmembers \$18

Throughout Russia's turbulent history, abrupt social change, and mass immigration, holiday traditions have managed to survive and even thrive often despite active government repression. Join writer and historian Jennifer Eremeeva for a celebration of Russia's "Old New Year" with tea, gingerbread, homemade strawberry jam, and a discussion of the unique fusion of pagan folklore, agrarian

influences, Christian traditions, and Soviet modifications that have molded modern Russia's numerous public and professional holidays.

In celebration of *Corncobs to Cosmonauts*, the museum shop will have vintage and modern Russian ornaments, Christmas and holiday décor, and gifts for sale throughout the holiday season.

ABOUT CORNCOBS TO COSMONAUTS | On view through January 27, 2019

The centerpiece of *Corncobs to Cosmonauts* is more than 150 Soviet-era ornaments displayed alongside various-sized decorated "New Year's Trees," together with holiday toys, books, and cards. The ornaments, mostly donated to the museum by collector **Frank Sciacca**, depict a variety of non-religious objects that were important to both the average Russian citizen and the Soviet state. These include folk heroes and cartoon characters, funny clowns and chubby babies, state emblems and objects that celebrate the productivity of farms and factories.

Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, the anti-religion Bolsheviks discouraged Christmas and New Year celebrations since the gift giving and extravagance that accompanied the holidays symbolized the greed and excess of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The tradition of celebrating *Novy God* (New Year) re-appeared in 1935 as a secular holiday symbolizing Soviet children's prosperity and happiness.

The New Year's tree, or *yolka*, was repurposed as the main symbol of the celebration but with all religious references removed. The Red Army's ruby star replaced the tree-topping star of Bethlehem; and the tree was decorated with non-religious ornaments depicting animals, plants, Kremlin architecture, airplanes, and the communist hammer and sickle. After the Soviets launched Sputnik 1 in 1957, figures of cosmonauts, rockets, satellites, and planets became popular. Ornaments that celebrated the country's achievements in agriculture—like peppers, grapes, and carrots—were sold during Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's time; the most popular being corncobs because of Khrushchev's infamous "corn campaign" that was introduced as a solution to livestock shortages.

In the early years of the Soviet regime, the Russian fairytale figure *Ded Moroz* (Grandfather Frost), who delivered gifts to children in a horse-drawn sleigh accompanied by his beautiful granddaughter, *Snegurochka* (The Snow Maiden), was portrayed as an unacceptable link to old Russia. In later years he became the symbol of *Novy God*, a move taken by the government as a way to stop the advance of the western tradition of Santa Claus. Ornaments and statues of *Ded Moroz*, sometimes with *Snegurochka*, became popular decorations for New Year's trees and family rooms during winter festivities.

EXHIBITS ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM THIS HOLIDAY SEASON...

OPULENCE REDISCOVERED: The Romanov Liturgical Silver

Through January 13, 2019

This extraordinary set of Orthodox silver liturgical implements were part of the Imperial dowry of Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna Romanova (1853-1920), daughter of the Russian Emperor Alexander II. She married Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh in 1874, and used this set in her private chapel in a British royal residence in London.

MATRYOSHKA IN WINTER

Through February 17, 2019

The mini- exhibition, *Matryoshka in Winter*, features a selection of nesting dolls from the Museum's collection that celebrates Russian winter and the Christmas season. Some dolls tell the story of Grandfather Frost and the Snow Maiden, who are said to bring joy and presents to children on New Year's Eve, while other toys depict Santa Claus, Nutcrackers, and the joyful activities of Russian winter.

THE ART OF ALEXANDER GASSEL

Through February 24, 2019

A solo exhibition of contemporary paintings by Russian-American artist and designer Alexander Gassel, whose work blends the avant-garde with traditional Russian iconography, combining ancient symbols with contemporary subjects, Gassel creates surrealist works that reflect his cultural heritage alongside his experience of life in America.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Museum of Russian Icons inspires the appreciation and study of Russian culture by collecting and exhibiting icons and related objects; igniting the interest of national and international audiences; and offering interactive educational programs. 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 it is the largest collection of icons outside of Russia.

Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 11AM to 4PM; Saturday and Sunday, 11AM to 5PM. First Sunday of the month: free admission! Closed Mondays.

Admission: Adults \$10, seniors (59+) \$7, Students \$5, Children (3-7) \$5, Children under 3 Free. For more information, please visit museumofrussianicons.org.