LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2020 was a groundbreaking year for us. The Covid-19 pandemic forced the closure of public operating in mid-March. Our staff, however, continued to work on creative programs and exhibitions, building our membership and fundraising base, submitting our American Alliance of Museums re-accreditation application and implementing the steps of our Strategic Plan. Thanks to the federal government Payroll Protection Plan we were able to retain our entire team for these valuable efforts: the show went on.

And what a show it was. Annual Appeal giving broke records, and we witnessed membership retention and even modest growth during a difficult year. Attendance at virtual programs exceeded our expectations, surpassing the numbers at in-person programs. Expanding our virtual reach had long been a goal of the Board of Trustees and staff, as the key to reaching new members and international audiences and attenuating the relative geographical isolation of the Museum. Well, circumstance forced us to accelerate the process and the results were eye-opening. We can indeed have the best of both worlds as a Museum: celebrate our beautiful location in this small Central Massachusetts town and maintain our community relations while at the same time inviting participation from scholars, artists, and audiences anywhere in the world.

We received a number of very important donations to the collection in 2020, in particular fine lacquer boxes from the Dennis and Marion Pruslin Collection, and a capstone work of art, an Egyptian mummy mask called a Fayum portrait donated by Argie and Emmanuel Tilikios. One noted exhibition was Tradition and Opulence: Easter in Imperial Russia, featuring objets de luxe intended as gifts selected from loans from important collections from across the nation, including the fabulous McFerrin collection of Fabergé. The show was guest curated by Karen Kettering, Dmitri Gurevich, and Nicholas Nicholson, and the exhibition was accompanied by an exquisite and fully illustrated catalog.

I will let the team describe their extraordinary accomplishments within each individual departmental report. They have done an amazing job this year. Special gratitude goes to the Lankton family for their ongoing support as well as to our generous and hard-working Board of Trustees. Under the leadership of Jack McCabe as president, they have assumed the full responsibility of governing the Museum of Russian Icons. And as always, sincere thanks to each one of our loyal members and supporters.

Kent Dur Russell
Executive Director
I want to thank the Visitor Services team for their hard work and dedication during these turbulent times. While closed, the team rallied and assisted with a number of behind-the-scenes projects, such as developing social media content and researching programming ideas. Reopening to the public presented its own challenges. Months of planning went into developing the Museum’s reopening protocols, ensuring visitor and staff safety. While we sadly had to temporarily remove many of the interactive elements in the Museum, we found that the interaction most missed was that between staff and visitor. The team maintained their exceptional level of customer service, making each visitor feel safe and welcome. The team also adapted quickly to the new COVID-19 protocols, diligently sanitizing the Museum throughout the day, and monitoring the galleries.

The challenges of 2020 resulted in unexpected positive growth. It forced us to rethink engagement, our audience, and the tools we use to make connections. As we move forward and into our fifth year of operation, the team developed the Museum’s reopening protocols, ensuring visitor and staff safety. The team maintained their exceptional level of customer service, making each visitor feel safe and welcome. The team also adapted quickly to the new COVID-19 protocols, diligently sanitizing the Museum throughout the day, monitoring the galleries.

The Pandemic Waste team worked with two teams of students to solve ongoing issues at the Museum. The Pandemic Waste team (Yicheng Si, Sophia Islam, Kaeden Benny, Eusheko Quintana, Krishna Gavan, Steven Robinson) examined the ways in which the Museum could lower the cost of supplying PPE and cleaning supplies, while maintaining the safety of staff and visitors and reducing the Museum’s carbon footprint. The Sustainable Electricity team (Colleen Henderson, Evan Apinis, Juan Carlos Mantica, Kevin Menenello, Shivank Gupta, Lenry Fils-Aimé) reviewed the Museum’s energy use, identified the main sources of energy consumption, and provided solutions to make the Museum more energy-efficient.

**2020 HIGHLIGHTS**

**Featured Collaborations**

In 2020, the Education Department provided more outreach programs than in years prior. The year began with a Lenten Learning series at Church of the Good Shepard Lutheran in Westminster MA, a collaboration that was put on hold due to the pandemic and will resume in Spring 2021. In the Spring, tours of the Museum were provided to Emmanuel College, Marshfield Council on Aging, University Art Museum, Tewksbury Public Library, Trinity Episcopal Church, University of Michigan, Walters Art Museum, and Watertown Council on Aging. The Museum continued its partnership with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and WPI’s Sustainable Electricity team (Colleen Henderson, Evan Apinis, Juan Carlos Mantica, Kevin Menenello, Shivank Gupta, Lenry Fils-Aimé) reviewed the Museum’s energy use, identified the main sources of energy consumption, and provided solutions to make the Museum more energy-efficient.

**Visitor Services**

The Museum received a 2020 TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence, the highest award any public or private venue can receive from the popular review site. This is the 9th consecutive year the Museum has won this award.

**Grants and Sponsorships**

This year marked the highest level of support, grants, and donations to the Annual Appeal since the Museum opened in 2006. The Long Way Home: A Photographic Journey with Gordon Lankton exhibition opened in 2006, funded by The Lankton Family Foundation. Dr. Karen Kettering, Chair of the Lankton Family Foundation, delivered a Zoom presentation.

The Museum was able to maintain its commitment to offering two paid internships per year by shifting to a remote internship model. Interns Clement Doucette and Erik Livingston successfully balanced Zoom meetings with independent research to complete their projects. Clement focused his area of research on connecting the icons to Russian poetry, and Erik translated and researched the Museum’s collection of literature. The Museum’s collection of Russian lacquer boxes. Their internships culminated with a Zoom presentation.

**Intens**

The Museum was able to maintain its commitment to offering two paid internships per year by shifting to a remote internship model. Interns Clement Doucette and Erik Livingston successfully balanced Zoom meetings with independent research to complete their projects. Clement focused his area of research on connecting the icons to Russian poetry, and Erik translated and researched the Museum’s collection of Russian lacquer boxes. Their internships culminated with a Zoom presentation.
Nobility Association (NYC) and supported the exhibition with private donations from their own funds. The Nypro Foundation once again supported the Museum to offer Free First Sundays as well as a scholarship for a deserving individual to attend the Proposed Icon Workshop held at the Museum annually. The Museum continued its partnership with the Highland Street Foundation to present a day for free public access. The Greater Worcester Foundation, the Pipp Family, the Plato Foundation, and the Peter Timms Endowment all contributed to this fantastic year.

Collaborations
Artscope Magazine
Blue Star Museums (National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and the Department of Defense)
Church of the Good Shepard Lutheran
Collette Tours
Emmanuel College
Fitchburg Art Museum
Dmitry Gurevich, The Russian Store
Marshfield Council on Aging
Nypro Foundation
Princeton University Art Museum
Tewksbury Public Library
Trinity Episcopal Church
University of Michigan
Walters Art Museum
Worchester Council on Aging
Worcester Business Journal, the Lowell Sun, the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Artfix Daily, Broadway World, the Wellesley Townsman, the Mford Daily News, the Hanard Press, and more.

Marketing
Despite the pandemic, the Museum has continued to grow its audience reach this year via weekly e-newsletters. Fifty-seven eblasts reached over 184k email addresses with an average open rate of 29%, which is well above the industry average of 16%, and a 9% click-through rate, which is on par with the industry standard.

Electronic Mail
66 emails sent to 201,462 addressees 26% open rate, 7% click rate

Editorial
30 articles

Social Media
6,889 Facebook followers
4,474 YouTube viewers
1,226 Instagram followers
435 Twitter followers

Website
37k users, 50k sessions

The Museum closed on March 14, 2020 and reopened with reduced hours on July 10th. Visitor Services, Curatorial, and Education were impacted.
APRIL: 64
Saturday, April 25: Virtual Lecture: "Today I Am"

MAY: 68
Saturday, May 9: Virtual Roundtable: Tradition and Opulence

JUNE: 120
Sunday, June 7: Virtual Lecture: Sacred Space, Sacred Time
Sunday, June 14: Virtual Lecture: Sacred Space, Sacred Time
Saturday, July 5: Virtual Lecture: "Icons in the Time of Trouble"

JULY: 257, 89
Saturday, July 25: Virtual Workshop: Family Icon Comics Workshop

AUGUST: 356, 42
Saturday, August 15: Virtual Round Table: "Exploring the Long Way Home Exhibition"

SEPTEMBER: 467, 61
Sunday, September 13: Virtual Contemporary Russian Literature Book Group: Jacob's Ladder by Ludmila Ulitskaya

OCTOBER: 120
Saturday, October 2: Virtual Workshop: Discovering Cyrillic Calligraphy and Illumination

NOVEMBER: 295, 164
Sunday, November 1: Free First Sunday
Tuesday, November 10: Virtual Gallery Talk: "Russian Lacquer Boxes"
Friday, November 13: Virtual Lecture and Interview with Anne Bobroff-Hajal in partnership with the Wandsworth Museum
Saturday, November 21: Virtual Panel Discussion: "Visual Representations of Russian History"

DECEMBER: 108, 172
Saturday, December 5: Virtual Workshop: Painted Christmas Angels
Sunday, December 6: Virtual Lecture: "Christmas with the Romanovs"

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Opened in 2019

Nuts about Nutcrackers
November 14, 2019 — March 8, 2020
Curated by Lara Gantry-Arquitt
A mini-exhibition of unique nutcrackers on loan from the Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum in Leavenworth, Washington and nutcrackers on loan from the Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum.

The Lore of Saint Nicholas
November 14, 2019 — March 8, 2020
Curated by USC Professor B.A. Nicholson
Postcards and letters from collectors around the world, explored the mysterious and wondrous persona of Saint Nicholas. It featured more than 100 letter-ekins of the saint taken from the Museum’s collection storage.

The Long Way Home: A Photographic Journey with Gordon Lankton
July 17 — September 27, 2020
Curated by Chris Stratford
On November 6, 1956, armed with a camera, maps, and little else, 25-year-old Gordon Lankton left New York City on a trip that would take for the next 50 years.

Opened in 2020

The Long Way Home: A Photographic Journey with Gordon Lankton
July 17 — September 27, 2020
Curated by Chris Stratford

Table: "Exploring the Long Way Home Exhibition" included works by the Fabergé firm and its competitors, ceramic eggs, and vintage Easter postcards from collectors around the country and abroad.

Group of Russian porcelain eggs displayed as a still life, c. 1950
From Tradition and Opulence (above)
Miniature Masterpieces: Russian Lacquer Boxes
October 30, 2020 — May 23, 2021
Curated by Laura Garrity-Arquitt
The development of Russian lacquerware, widely renowned for its exquisite detail and bright colors, is a fascinating story of artists adapting local traditions to produce new enterprises. This exhibition featured more than 100 lacquer boxes from the villages of Fedoskino, Paleish, Khoulis, and Mitera. This exhibition is made possible through the generous gift of lacquerware from the private collection of Dennis H. and Marian S. Pruslin.

Pyramid: Symbol of Renewal
August 14, 2020 — May 9, 2021
Curated by Laura Garrity-Arquitt
Maine-based contemporary artist Lesia Scohor's series Pyramid: Symbol of Renewal is inspired by the beautiful tradition of intricately decorated Ukrainian Easter egg painting. Scohor creates a visual link to her ancestral roots by continuing the tradition of Pyanky and depicting the symbolic meanings and traditional motifs in oils and watercolors.

Playground of the Autocrats
October 2 — December 20, 2020
Curated by Laura Garrity-Arquitt
Anne Bobroff-Hajal's series Playground of the Autocrats is comprised of multilayered panels that reflect the artist's interests in history and contemporary animation. The series was originally conceived as a series of short animated films but developed into collage-like polyptychs. Bobroff-Hajal's body of work is visceral in form and yet confronts the darker moments of Russian history reflecting the artist's belief that histories and tragedies can be best understood through imagination and humor.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS (continued)

NOTE FROM THE CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS
In September 2020, I joined the Museum of Russian Icons as Curator of Exhibitions and Collections. I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of the Museum’s wonderful team and to participate in all aspects of our Museum’s life. The past few months have been busy and productive. As we continue to adjust to life during the pandemic, we have taken steps to make our museum more accessible to audiences around the world by putting much of our content online. This applies to the permanent collection, special exhibitions, resources, and programs. Along those lines, I am currently organizing an international conference titled Collecting Orthodoxy in the West (www.museumofrussianicons.org/conference), which will take place virtually on June 11 and 12, 2021. We have a fantastic lineup of speakers and hope that many of you will join us for this important event. Discounted registration runs through April 1. I am looking forward to many exciting projects in 2021, our fifteenth anniversary year, and hope to connect with many of you online and in-person.

Lana Sloutsky
Curator of Collections & Exhibitions
The Museum received a gift of 71 icons, artifacts, and cultural objects from the Estate of Gordon Lankton.

R2020.01.002a Mother of God of the Sign
R2020.01.004 Crucifix with Feasts and Saints
R2020.01.005 Cross
R2020.01.006 Crucifix
R2020.01.007 Crucifix
R2020.01.008 Cross
R2020.01.009 Cross
R2020.01.010 Crucifix with the Mother of God and Saints
R2020.01.011 Cross
R2020.01.012 Cross
R2020.01.013 Silver Chain for Pendant
R2020.01.014 Portrait of a Girl
R2020.01.015 Mother of God Hodigitria
R2020.01.016 Mother of God Hodigitria
R2020.01.017 Mother of God
R2020.01.018 Saint Basil's Cathedral
R2020.01.019 Saint Sergius
R2020.01.020 Monk
R2020.01.021 Image Not Made By Hands
R2020.01.022 Mother of God, Hodigitria
R2020.01.023 Mother of God, Oranta
R2020.01.024 Mother of God, Hodigitria
R2020.01.025 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.026 Image Not Made By Hands
R2020.01.027 Image Not Made By Hands
R2020.01.028 Image Not Made By Hands
R2020.01.029 Mother of God
R2020.01.030 Christ Pantocrator
R2020.01.031 Mauson with Surrovet
R2020.01.032 Mother of God Tenderness
R2020.01.033 Image Not Made By Hands
R2020.01.034 Image Not Made By Hands
R2020.01.035 Architecture of Moscow
R2020.01.036 Egg with Icons
R2020.01.037 Mausons with Icons
R2020.01.038 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.039 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.040 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.041 Winter Mauson with Animals
R2020.01.042 Nesting Politicians
R2020.01.043 Mausons with Religious Objects
R2020.01.044 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.045 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.046 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.047 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.048 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.049 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.050 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.051 Zagorsk Mauson
R2020.01.052 Concert Mauson
R2020.01.053 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.054 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.055 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.056 Nesting Doll
R2020.01.057 Mauson with Icons

The Museum received a gift of 3 large scale cast bronze icons from Franklin Sciacca.

R2020.03.003 The Holy Trinity
R2020.03.004 Saint Nicholas
R2020.03.005 An Ethiopian Triptych with Book Stand
R2020.03.006 Set of 13 Festival Ceramic Icons


The Museum received a gift an icon of the Nativity of Christ, about 1880, from Nicholas B. Nicholson.

The Museum received a gift of icons from Edward and Joan Simpson.

The Museum received the gift of a Fayum Portrait from Argie and Emmanuel Tiliakos.
ANNUAL SUPPORT, January 1 – December 31, 2020

$1,000 AND ABOVE

Paul Bankovich
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MEMBERSHIP & STAFF

MEMBERSHIP

Museum Members: 427
Corporate Members: 3
Institutional Memberships: 19
Philanthropists: Members: 101
Individual, Family, Student, and Senior Members: 254
Complimentary Members: 50

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Newfield Free Public Library
Shrewsbury Public Library
Southborough Public Library
Taunton Public Library
Thayer Memorial Library (Lancaster)
Townsend Public Library

The Museum is pleased to recognize all of our donors this year and thank our docents, volunteers, and interns who graciously volunteered with their time and support this year.

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Please consider becoming a member or donating to the Museum of Russian Icons. The Museum is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by the IRS. Information is available on our website: www.museumofrussianicons.org/ways-to-give.

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