



## THE MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS

203 Union Street, Clinton, MA 01510 | [www.museumofrussianicons.org](http://www.museumofrussianicons.org)

Nina Berger, Public Relations | [ninajberger@gmail.com](mailto:ninajberger@gmail.com) | 617.543.1595

Mary Delaney, Marketing Director | [mdelaney@museumofrussianicons.org](mailto:mdelaney@museumofrussianicons.org) | 978.598.5000 x111

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Museum of Russian Icons Celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with “Icons for Our Time,” a Special Exhibition of 15 Contemporary Icons from Around the World  
October 14, 2021 – April 3, 2022**



**CLINTON, MA** – The Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, Massachusetts, will celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding by presenting *Icons for Our Time: Orthodox Art from Around the World*, an exhibition of 15 commissioned icons by some of the most important contemporary icon painters. New works by artists from Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cypress, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, Japan, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, the UK and the US have been especially commissioned for this anniversary exhibition.

On view October 15, 2021 – April 3, 2022, *Icons of Our Times* will examine the spread of Orthodox Christian art through the medium of icons and explore three paradoxes: the icon as a living tradition, the icon as a signature feature of Orthodox Christianity, and the concept and relevance of the contemporary icon in modern culture.

According to guest curator, **Dr. Clemena Antonova**, “These three paradoxes pose some immediate questions and problems for contemporary icon-painters, viewers of religious images, as well as to museums that exhibit religious art. Is the icon mainly a medieval art form, which we view inspired by our interest in history, in the same way that we experience an ancient Greek temple? Or is it a living,

constantly evolving artistic tradition, which has the capacity to respond to the concerns and needs of our times? Is the icon inextricably tied to Eastern Orthodox Christianity? Can one create or experience an icon without any knowledge of Orthodox culture and theology? Does the icon make sense in a context stripped of religious meaning?”

“These are not easy questions and very likely neither a [conference](#) nor the present exhibition will offer straight-forward answers,” continues Antonova. “What we aim to do with this exhibition is to create a space which provokes us to reflect on the meaning and function of **icons for our times.**”

“There will be pieces by artists from all over the world – some are from Orthodox countries like Greece and Bulgaria, but there will also be works from Britain and Japan. Some of the artists identify as religious believers (Eastern Orthodox or other), some do not. Few of the icons strictly follow the traditional canon. As a curator, working with some of the big names in contemporary icon painting, I wanted to leave as much freedom as possible to each artist – so long as their work could be described, experienced, and felt as an *icon.*”

The artists who will be featured in the exhibition are Haik Azarian, Armenia; Saint Elizabeth Convent, Belarus; Luba Stefanova, Bulgaria; Charalambos Epaminonda, Cypress; Stephane Rene, Egypt; Ouresis Todorovich, Greece; David Khadashveli, Georgia; Maria Hideko, Japan; Marija Radevic Encinias, Montenegro; Vladislav Andrejev, Prosopon School, Russia/US; Alexandr Stalnov, Russia; Todor Mitrovic, Serbia; Aidan Hart, UK; and Pat Prebe, US.

## **A MULTI-SENSORY EXPERIENCE**

In addition to engaging audiences visually, the exhibition will offer a multi-sensory experience for visitors to explore the icon tradition in a recreated sacred space unique to each icon’s country of origin. Minimal lighting will direct the eye to the icon; accompanied by Orthodox chants from the countries represented in the exhibition. Reminiscent of its original church icon setting, the scent of incense, wax, wood, and candles will be available at scent stations throughout the gallery. At a tactile station featuring an iconographer’s workbench, visitors will be encouraged to handle icon boards, tools, and other materials used by iconographers past and present. Finally, to address the sense of taste, the visitor will leave with a printed booklet of recipe cards from each featured country.

## **ABOUT GUEST CURATOR CLEMENA ANTONOVA**

**Clemena Antonova** is an art historian, specializing in the art of the icon. Among her latest publications are *Visual Thought in Russian Religious Philosophy: Pavel Florensky’s Theory of the Icon* (Routledge, 2020) and her contribution, “The Icon and the Visual Arts at the Time of the Russian Religious Renaissance,” *Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Thought* (OUP, 2020). She also guest-edited a special journal issue, “The Science of Art: Visuality at an Interdisciplinary Crossroads,” *Leonardo* (Just accepted, 2020) and is preparing another, “Stories of Art: Alternative Art Histories from Russia.” At

present, she is the Research Director of the Eurasia in Global Dialogue Programme at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna.

## **RELATED PROGRAMMING**

### **Virtual Curator's Lecture** with Clemena Antonova

Sunday, October 24, 1:00-2:00pm EDT

Members free, Nonmembers \$5, the Zoom link will be sent out the morning of the program.

### **Byzantfest Film Festival 2021**

Established in 2014, Byzantfest is an international film festival showcasing cinema which reflect Orthodox Christian themes, beliefs, culture and values. The name 'Byzantfest' is in honor of the great Byzantine Empire, a place of wisdom, art, and faith. Film selections will be announced mid-September on the Museum's website.

#### *Short film screenings*

Thursday, November 4, 12:00pm

Free with admission

#### *Short film screenings*

Friday, November 5, 12:00pm

Free with admission

#### *Feature film screening*

Saturday, November 6, 1:00pm

Tickets \$8 plus admission

### **First Sunday Drop-in Craft (family program)**

Sunday, November 7, 12:00pm and 2:00pm

Free

Families can choose from a variety of materials to create their own icon-inspired art.

### **Workshop**

2-Day St. George icon painting workshop with artist Marina Forbes

Saturday, November 13 – Sunday, November 14, 12:00-4:00pm

Members \$375, Nonmembers \$400 plus \$20 supply fee paid directly to the instructor

Limited to 10 participants, registration required by Friday, November 5

Today, iconographers in Russia use a variety of surfaces and materials to create icons. Artists Marina Forbes will guide students through the process of making a folk icon of Saint George and the Dragon, using prepared ceramic tiles and water-based pigments. Students will learn about painting surface preparation, gessoing, image rendering, pigments, brush strokes techniques, detailing, highlighting,

gilding, Old Slavonic lettering, and varnishing. Marina will also provide a short presentation on the iconography of Saint George. No experience required.

Marina Forbes is an artist and master Iconographer with 25 years of experience teaching icon painting in the US, Europe, and Russia. Marina is on the New Hampshire Humanities Council Roster as a speaker on Russian Arts, History and Culture as well as on the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts' Rosters for Traditional Arts, Arts in Education, and Arts in Healthcare.

## ABOUT THE MUSEUM



The Museum of Russian Icons inspires the appreciation and study of Russian culture by collecting and exhibiting one of the world's largest collections of Russian icons — sacred paintings used for worship in the Orthodox tradition. With more than 1,000 icons and related artifacts spanning six centuries, the Museum offers a unique and personalized experience rich with art, history, and culture.

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

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 11am-5pm. 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](#), and [Instagram](#) and [Youtube](#), for the latest updates on the Museum, spotlight tours, children's storytime, and read what the docents are saying about individual items from the collection.

Visit the website, [www.museumofrussianicons.org](http://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.

**Image credits:** David Khadashveli, *Saint Grigol Peradze*; Marija Radevic Encinias, *Mother of God*; *Saint Paraskeva*, about 1600