In September 2022 I arrived at the Museum of Russian Icons as the successor to Kent Russell. After my career as an Amsterdam-based art dealer and specialist in icons and Eastern Christian art, I felt the need to give back, to share my experience and knowledge in this field with a wider audience. Our museum, the only specialized icon museum in the USA, with its unique collection of Russian icons and its scholarly Center for Icon Studies, gave me this opportunity. What a great place to land! Since then, I have been working in a real treasure box. However, it is not just its collections that make this Museum such a special place, it is the people too. Our extraordinary team of docents, who answer questions and give tours, our Library volunteers, our Trustees, the participants in committees and task forces, our members, and our dedicated staff all greatly contribute to the Museum’s success. And last but certainly not least: our visitors. They energize and inspire us every day with their curiosity, amazement, and wonder.

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Like so many people all over the world, we at the Museum are horrified by these unrelenting and brutal acts of aggression. To make our stance very clear, the Museum immediately issued a statement expressing our continuous support for the courageous people of Ukraine and of Russia who oppose this senseless war. We adjusted our exhibition schedule, and Frank Sciacca of our Collections Committee initiated the exhibit Artists for Ukraine: Transforming Ammo Boxes into Icons, generously supported by Museum Trustees Catherine Mannick and Ruah Donnelly. A striking installation of three modern icons, painted on the boards of ammunition boxes from Ukrainian battlefields, was displayed in the West Gallery to raise awareness of the ongoing war. These three icons were painted by Oleksandr Klymenko and Sofia Atlantova, a husband-wife artistic team from Kyiv. Reusing these panels to create icons “transforms death into life” in the artists’ words: funds from the sale of the icons are donated to the Pirogov mobile hospital, operating at the front lines of the war.

Over the past few months our staff, Trustees, and friends have joined forces to create a new strategic plan for the Museum for the coming five years. We have envisioned a new path forward and our ambition is to build an institution that serves as a crossroads for icons and Eastern Christian art serving our community, the region, and the world. We will broaden and diversify our audiences and establish ourselves as a destination and leader in our field. I very much hope that you will join us in this exciting new chapter in the history of our young institution, and I look forward to welcoming you to the Museum and to sharing my passion for these wonderful works of art.

Simon Morsink
Executive Director
Our Mission:
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.

Our Goal:
The Museum of Russian Icons is recognized as the leading icon museum in the U.S.

Our Values:
“We value every visitor and the worth of every individual.” Founder Gordon B. Lankton

Inspiration – Inspiring curiosity and discovery
Respect – Valuing every individual, culture, and expression
Integrity – Maintaining the highest ethical standards in all activities and research
Accessibility, inclusion, and diversity – Ensuring all visitors have a meaningful experience

Approved by the Board of Trustees, June 2020
**2022 HIGHLIGHTS**

Eurasia in Global Dialogue Programme at the Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna
Grunya Ensemble
Museum for Change
Slavic Tunes Choir
Spanish Language Book Club

**FEATURED COLLABORATION**

The Museum continued its partnership with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Under the guidance of Professor Svetlana Nikitina, students in the Great Problems Seminar are tasked with solving real-world challenges. This year’s project, The Green Gallery, tackled the use of vinyl exhibition banners and text panels, which are not currently recyclable. The student team researched alternative materials and brainstormed ways to reuse these materials. Thank you to Trevor Bowen, Wren Carter, Isabel Friedrichs, Dylan Galex, Lucy Sullivan, and Megan Viellette!

**EDUCATION**

The Museum maintained a robust lineup of virtual and in-person programs that explored a variety of topics and engaged audiences across the globe. Museum staff delivered a record number of educational outreach programs at libraries, senior centers, and colleges: Acton Memorial Library, Cambridge Neighbors, Emmanuel College, Haverhill Public Library, Linden Ponds, Lumen Verum Academy, Mansfield University, McAuliffe Branch Library, Saint Botolph Club, and Southgate Women’s Circle.

**EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS**

Ballets Russes Arts Initiative
Bigelow Free Public Library
Clinton Historical Society

**THE RAOUl AND MARY SMITH DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT**

The first annual Research Grant was awarded to Brett Donohoe, Harvard University. Brett spent two intensive weeks studying the Museum’s collection of Dormition icons and related research materials.

**INTERNSHIPS**

Astara Bastille, Wellesley College, Education intern
Conor Bellone, Emmanuel College, Curatorial intern
Thomas Feerick, Northwestern University, Curatorial intern
Simone Tricca, Smith College, Curatorial intern

**SCHOLARSHIP**

The Education Committee awarded the second annual Museum of Russian Icons Community Scholarship to Samantha Forde, Class of 2022. The scholarship is awarded to a Clinton High School graduating senior who has active involvement in the Clinton community through school, volunteering, or work.

**THE CENTER FOR ICON STUDIES**

Organized and sponsored by the Center for Icon Studies at the Museum of Russian Icons, the virtual conference *The Visual Culture of Iconoclasm and Atheism* was presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Images of Atheism: The Soviet Assault on Religion* curated by conference chair Dr. Wendy Salmond. The conference explored topics such as ‘godless corners,’ ritual in the Soviet Union, state-sponsored propaganda, and sacred images in hiding.

The library cataloging project, in partnership with the College of the Holy Cross, continued this year by refining the collection and redefining the scope of collecting. A special thanks to library volunteer Karen Reilly for spearheading this project.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Museum increased its engagement with Clinton’s community organizations by participating in the Community Garden, Sidewalk Sales Day, Halloween Walk, and Volunteer & Beer event sponsored by the newly formed Clinton Chamber of Commerce, of which the Museum is a founding member. The Museum also organized a school supply drive through WH-EAT Community Connections and a holiday toy drive through Clinton Elementary School.

**GRANTS**

MassHumanities Bridge Street Sponsorships funded the virtual program *Growing up Jewish in the Soviet Union* with author Margareta Gokun Silver. The Highland Street Foundation enabled us to offer the free August Adventures program, and the Nypro Foundation once again generously sponsored Free First Sundays in 2022.

**Wellesley Russian Department trip**

Youth Curators: Discovering Fairy Tales through Artifacts with the Museum’s Registrar during the August Adventures program

**Museum staff, Clinton Presbyterian youth and mentors, and Rep. Meg Kilcoyne at the Clinton Community Garden**
The Museum is proud to announce the continuation of its accessibility overhaul, thanks to the support of the Ruth H. & Warren A. Ellsworth Foundation. Building on the success of Phase I, which saw the installation of an automatic door opener sponsored by the Schwartz Foundation, Phase II (entry and reception renovation) is underway. We deeply appreciate the support of both foundations.

VISITOR SERVICES
Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion initiatives continue to be among the museum’s top priorities. The staff and docents participated in training provided by the Autism Alliance and the museum is now deemed an Autism Welcoming community business. The museum continues to work with amazing partners such as the Wonderfund who provide access to reduced admission to foster families. Blue Star Museums which offers free admission to active military families, and Museums For All and Card To Culture, two programs that help extend reduced admission costs to visitors who are receiving benefits from the Department of Transitional Assistance. The Nypro Foundation continues to generously support the First Free Sunday program which allows the museum to extend free admission to all visitors on the first Sunday of every month.

CURATORIAL
Museum founder Gordon Lankton became a passionate collector from a young age. Throughout his life, he built many impressive collections, the most significant being Russian Icons. In 2021 the Museum established the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund to honor his legacy, which quickly grew through the generous support of our community. In 2022 these funds were utilized to acquire several icons to begin to expand the collection beyond its original scope, encompassing the global orthodox community. The new acquisitions include rare and unique icons from Greece, Ethiopia, Mount Athos, and the Volga region in Russia.

THE MUSEUM SHOP
The Tea Room reopened for visitors to enjoy the selection of teas and snacks that are available to purchase. Donations have been pouring in for the Library Book Sale shelf in the gift shop. This has been a great success for the museum as all funds collected for these books are put into the Research Library Acquisition Fund.

MARKETING
2022 brought marketing challenges and opportunities to the Museum. The brutal war in Ukraine, which began on February 24, brought swift condemnation from the Museum. The reinstallation of Ukrainian-American artist Lesia Sochor’s exhibit, Pysanky: Symbol of Renewal resulted in interviews on Open Studios with Jared Bowen, the Boston Globe, the Portland Press Herald, and the Telegram & Gazette, among other outlets, as the media explored implications of the war close to home.

Founding Executive Director Kent Russell retired, and the Board of Directors hired new Executive Director Simon Morsink. Both were interviewed extensively by radio and in print.

The media plan included paid print and digital advertisements in the Boston Globe, Art New England, Artscope Magazine, WGBH and WBUR radio, WBUR’s Last Seen podcast, and various local guides. CTM Media distributed over 33,000 rack cards to hotels, travel centers, and attractions throughout Boston and Central Mass.

The weekly electronic newsletter remains the primary source of program registrations. Seventy-nine e-newsletters garnered an average open rate of 41%, an increase of 11% from 2021. In addition, our social media audience grew and continued to engage our audience with daily posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Icons for Our Time: Orthodox Art from Around the World

October 14, 2021 – April 3, 2022
Curated by Dr. Clemena Antonova

Icons for Our Time celebrated the fifteen anniversary of the Museum’s founding with an exhibition of fifteen icons by some of the most important contemporary icon painters. New works by artists from Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, Japan, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, the UK, and the US were especially commissioned for this anniversary exhibition.

Tea is for Tradition

February 3 – October 2, 2022
Curated by Amy Consalvi

Tea holds a special place in Russian life, and no Russian home is complete without a samovar, the portly metal urn used to boil water. But how did this ancient beverage come to hold such a place of prominence in Russia? This mini exhibition explored the objects associated with tea drinking and the permeation of tea culture in art, craft, and literature.

Images of Atheism: the Soviet Assault on Religion

May 5 – October 2, 2022
Curated by Dr. Wendy Salmond

Images of Atheism explored the role of visual propaganda in the Communist Party’s seven-decade war against religion (ca. 1920–1990). The exhibition showed the shifting strategies deployed by the Soviet government, at times appealing to science and reason, at others stoking fear and resentment, or exposing individual expressions of faith to ridicule. Among the exhibit’s highlights were a virtual “Godless Corner” showing how atheist materials were to replace icons in the public space; a rare portfolio of antireligious alphabet cards targeting schoolchildren; and posters from the Brezhnev era meant to stem the growing religiosity of Soviet citizens as communism approached its end. Unit the images across this seventy-year span is a visual language of right and wrong, us and others, whose coercive power can still be felt today.

Pysanka: Symbol of Renewal

March 17 – July 24, 2022
Curated by Laura Garrity-Arquitt

Maine-based contemporary artist Lesia Sochor’s series Pysanka: Symbol of Renewal is inspired by the beautiful tradition of intricately decorated Ukrainian Easter egg painting. Sochor creates a direct link to her ancestral roots by continuing the tradition of Pysanky and depicting the symbolic meanings and traditional motifs in oils and watercolors.

Artists for Ukraine: Transforming Ammo Boxes into Icons

November 3, 2022 – February 13, 2023
Curated by Franklin Sciacca

The Museum showcased three icons painted on the boards of ammunition boxes by Oleksandr Klymenko and Sofia Atlantova, a husband-wife artistic team from Kyiv. The project “Buy an Icon—Save a Life” was developed by Atlantova and Klymenko after the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine
when Klymenko encountered empty wooden ammunition boxes from combat zones and noted their resemblance to icon boards (doski). By repurposing the panels, the project strives to “transform death (symbolized by ammo boxes) into life (traditionally symbolized by icons in Ukrainian culture). The goal, this victory of life over death, happens not only on the figurative and symbolic level but also in reality through these icons on ammo boxes.”

Exhibitions of the ammo box icons have been staged throughout Europe and North America to raise awareness of the ongoing war in Ukraine. In addition, sales have provided substantial funds to support the Pirogov First Volunteer Mobile Hospital, the largest nongovernmental undertaking to provide medical assistance to the Donbas region. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 strengthened the resolve of Atlantova and Klymenko to continue painting icons on boards taken back from the frontlines.

**Tree of Life: Birch through the Ages**
November 3, 2022 – January 29, 2023
Curated by Simone Tricca

The birch tree serves many purposes in Slavic culture – it is a versatile material for traditional crafts, an ancient symbol of sorrow and renewal, and a representation of the land and people. Centered around six unique icons created by Siberian artist Vladimir Tulyak from layers of birch bark, this installation brings together representations of birch in Slavic art, poetry, and craft. Seen together, these works create connections between the traditional, pagan roots of the birch motif and its later uses in Christian belief and contemporary Slavic life.

**Swan Lake: 145 Years of History and Triumph**
November 10, 2022 – February 26, 2023
Curated by Yana Veselova

An exhibition of photographs, costumes, and historical documents from a private collection.

On February 20, 1877 the ballet Swan Lake premiered at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. The ballet was first met with harsh criticism; Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s composition was deemed noisy, and the ballerinas disliked the fast-paced movements. Years later, a revival of the production at the Mariinsky Theatre generated a new appreciation, helping to shape it into one of the most famous ballets today. As part of an educational project “Ballet of the 20th Century,” organized by collector Yana Veselova, this mini exhibition works to preserve the memory of the choreography and ballet dancers of the 19th and 20th centuries through original black and white photographs, costume pieces, and theater playbills from France, Russia, Australia, England, and the United States.
**JANUARY**

Virtual Art History Course: *Early Christian Art and Visual Culture* with Dr. Bettina Jungen
- Saturdays, January 15, 22, and 29

Virtual Lecture: *Discovering a Masterpiece* with Mallory Mortillaro
- Wednesday, January 26

Virtual Contemporary Russian Literature Book Group
- Sunday, January 16

Virtual Lecture: *The 16:9 Icon: Cinema and Orthodox Spirituality* with Christopher Vlahonasios
- Saturday, January 22

**MARCH**

Virtual Lecture: *Icons in the Modern World: A New Way of Seeing with Aidan Hart*
- Saturday, March 5

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, March 6

Virtual Contemporary Russian Literature Book Group
- Sunday, March 6

Workshop: *Ethiopian Icon Painting with Christopher Gosey*
- Saturday and Sunday, March 12-13

**APRIL**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, April 3

Ukrainian Egg Decorating Workshop with Hanka Robertson
- Friday and Saturday, April 8-9

**MAY**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, May 1

Free First Sunday Concert: *Slavic Tunes Choir*
- Sunday, May 1

Slavic Language Exploration Day with Education intern Astara Bastille
- Saturday, May 14

Folk Concert: *Grunya Ensemble*
- Sunday, May 15

**JUNE**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, June 5

Center for Icon Studies’ Third International Conference: *The Visual Culture of Iconoclasm and Atheism*
- Friday and Saturday, June 10-11

Growing Up Jewish in the Soviet Union with author Margarita Gokun Silver, sponsored by Mass Humanities and the Bridge Street Fund
- Saturday, June 18

**JULY**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, July 3

Museum After Dark: *Unearthing Red*
- Thursday, July 7

Lecture: *Saving Ukrainian Art with Oleksandra Kovalchuk, Odesa Fine Arts Museum*
- Saturday, July 9

Gently Led Yoga and Meditation for Peace
- Tuesday, July 19

**AUGUST**

Prosepop School of Iconology Icon Workshop with Vladimir Andrejev
- Monday-Saturday, August 16

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, August 7

Gently Led Yoga and Meditation for Peace
- Monday, August 8, Tuesday, August 16, and Thursdays, August 11 and 25

August Adventures Free Day, sponsored by the Highland Street Foundation
- Friday, August 19

One-day Artist-in-Residence with Christopher Gosey
- Saturday, August 20

Clinton, MA Public Schools: *Beat the Heat Neighborhood Read-Alouds*
- Wednesday, August 24

**SEPTEMBER**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, September 4

Book Launch and Author’s Talk: *Visible Image of the Invisible God: A Guide to Russian and Byzantine Icons with Dennis Sardeilla*
- Saturday, September 2

Mini Exhibition Opening, Swan Lake: *145 Years of History and Triumph*
- Sunday, September 13

Workshop: *Mushroom Tinctures with Rachel Goclawski*
- Saturday, September 25

**OCTOBER**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, October 2

Member Exhibition Opening for Images of Atheism: The Soviet Assault on Religion
- Thursday, October 20

Virtual Lecture: *Mary’s Spirit: Icons of the Dormition and Other Haunting Presences with Brett Donohoe, PhD candidate*
- Saturday, October 22

**NOVEMBER**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, November 6

Book Launch and Author’s Talk: *Visible Image of the Invisible God: A Guide to Russian and Byzantine Icons with Dennis Sardeilla*
- Saturday, November 6

Virtual Lecture: *Think of a Door with Zara Worth*
- Saturday, November 12

Mini Exhibition Opening, Swan Lake: *145 Years of History and Triumph*
- Sunday, November 13

Workshop: *Mushroom Tinctures with Rachel Goclawski*
- Saturday, November 20

**DECEMBER**

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, December 4

Member Holiday Open House
- Saturday, December 3

Free First Sunday
- Sunday, December 11
ACQUISITIONS

Mother of God of the Life Giving Spring
Mid 17th Century
Veneto-Cretan
Gift of Dr Emilio Bizzi

Saint Alypius the Stylite
Late 17th Century
Veneto-Cretan
Purchased with the GBL Collections Fund

Scenes from the Life of Saint John the Forerunner
Late 17th Century
Russian, Volga Region
Purchased with the GBL Collections Fund

Triptych with Feasts
17th Century
Mount Athos (?)
Purchased with the GBL Collections Fund

Double Sided Diptych with Selected Feasts and Saints
Late 17th/ Early 18th Century
Ethiopian
Purchased with the GBL Collections Fund

ANNUAL SUPPORT: JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2022

ANNUAL APPEAL

1000 AND ABOVE
Randall Barko & Marie-Elissa Boisvert
Margery Dearborn
Ruah Donnelly & Steve Dinkelaker
Vincent & Teresa Issenmann
Ted Lapres
Catherine Mannick
Jack & Leslie McCabe
Margaret Patel
Jan Seymour & Eric Brose
Bill Singleton & Professor Amy Adams
David Stadtherr

1000 AND ABOVE
Randall Barko & Marie-Elissa Boisvert
Phyllis Carneiro in honor of Robert Carneiro
Simon Chiasson in honor of Eleanor Abowd
Rebecca Sheehan Purcell in honor of Simon Marink
Patricia McCarron Scagnoli in memory of Arodeine Shilaeff
Leslie Gold in memory of Charles Wilson Thrash, Jr. & Alex Gold, Jr.
Donald Bisset in memory of Jennie Coarchemy
Stephen Humble in honor of Kent Russell and in support of Ukraine
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Joyce Carpenter-Henderson
Barbara Gerzonich
Leslie Gold
Wayne Huntoon
Marian Pruslin
Peter & Bliss Rand
Kent & Asiling Russell
Wendy Salmond
Jean Carol Spoolstra

500-999
Joyce Carpenter-Henderson
Barbara Gerzonich
Leslie Gold
Wayne Huntoon
Marian Pruslin
Peter & Bliss Rand
Kent & Asiling Russell
Wendy Salmond
Jean Carol Spoolstra

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Anne Butterfield
Christine Edwards
Ann Lisi & Joel P. Greene
Frank Reis & Sarah Phillips
Joanne Waschke

250-499
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Anne Butterfield
Christine Edwards
Ann Lisi & Joel P. Greene
Frank Reis & Sarah Phillips
Joanne Waschke

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Lila Packer in honor of Robert Carneiro
Phyllis Carneiro in honor of Robert Carneiro
Simon Chiasson in honor of Eleanor Abowd
Rebecca Sheehan Purcell in honor of Simon Marink
Patricia McCarron Scagnoli in memory of Arodeine Shilaeff
Leslie Gold in memory of Charles Wilson Thrash, Jr. & Alex Gold, Jr.
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OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSE

Development 68%
Education 11%
Visitor Services 21%
Total Revenue: $239,761

Membership & Funding 9%
General & Administrative 37%
Program Services 54%
Total Expenses: $1,498,009
MEMBERSHIP & STAFF

MEMBERSHIP
Museum Members: 469
Corporate Members: 4
Institutional Members: 24
Philanthropic Members: 116
Individual, Family, Student, and Senior: 272
Complimentary Members: 53

CORPORATE SPONSOR $1,000
The Russian Store
Tucker Mechanical
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Leominster Public Library
Levi Heywood Memorial Library (Gardiner)
Lunenburg Public Library
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smorsink@museumofrussianicons.org

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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