Education Packet





THE TSARS' CABINET: TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF RUSSIAN DECORATIVE ARTS UNDER THE ROMANOVS

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Two Hundred Years of Russian Decorative Arts under the Romanovs

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The Tsars' Cabinet: Two Hundred Years of Russian Decorative Arts under the Romanovs is developed from the Kathleen Durdin Collection and is organized by the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, in collaboration with International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.



The Tsars' Cabinet

This exhibition illustrates more than two hundred years of Russian decorative arts: from the time of Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century to that of Nicolas II in the early twentieth century.

Porcelain, glass, enamel, silver gilt and other alluring materials make this extensive exhibition dazzle and the objects exhibited provide a rare, intimate glimpse into the everyday lives of the tsars. The collection brings together a political and social timeline tied to an understanding of Russian culture. *The Tsars' Cabinet* will transport you to a majestic era of progressive politics and dynamic social change.

The Introduction of Porcelain to Russia

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Europe had a passion for porcelain. It was not until 1709 that Johann Friedrich Böttger, sponsored by Augustus II (known as Augustus the Strong) was able to reproduce porcelain at Meissen, Germany.

After Augustus II began manufacturing porcelain at the Meissen factory, other European monarchs attempted to establish their own porcelain factories. The earliest records of Russian attempts to obtain the secret to porcelain production occurred during the reign of Peter the Great, who was fascinated with Western culture, and perpetuated its spread in his own country.

Prior to Johann Friedrich Böttger's success and the establishment of the Meissen factory in Germany, all porcelain came from China. The high cost of transporting the delicate merchandise meant that ownership was confined to royalty and the very wealthy. Many sovereigns had entire rooms dedicated to the display of their porcelain treasures. Porcelain services were often given as gifts between monarchs.

The first Russian porcelain was produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory in 1747 during Empress Elizabeth's reign. Empress Elizabeth was succeeded by her nephew Peter III, whose reign lasted a brief 182 days before he was dethroned in a coup led by his wife Catherine II, also known as Catherine the Great.

Enlightened Despotism

Catherine the Great was a great proponent of the philosophies of the Enlightenment, and aimed to bring these ideals to Russia through culture, politics and military expansion. The enlightened despot's court attracted outstanding artists, architects and decorators from all over Europe. The Neoclassical style prevalent across Europe was reflected in Russia's architecture and decorative arts, and classical imagery was even used to support Catherine the Great's legitimacy as a ruler.

The practice of giving gifts of porcelain services among monarchs continued throughout the eighteenth century. Catherine continued her predecessor's patronage of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, and the first great ceremonial service, known as the Arabesque Service, was produced in 1784 and was followed a year later by the Yacht Service. With its founding in 1766, the Francis Gardner Factory became the first private factory to manufacture Russian porcelain, producing pieces for both imperial order and private commissions.

Militarism and Russian Historicism

Nicholas I was an even greater patron of the Imperial Factory than his grandmother, Catherine the Great. Military-themed plates became increasingly popular during the reign of Nicholas I. Painted by the finest artists of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, these plates represented specific military units and ranks, and were decorated with depictions of pieces of armament and equipment.

Among the most distinctive motifs of Russian historicism was a Russo-Byzantine style, using decoration from sixteenth and seventeenth century Russia. In 1830, Nicholas I commissioned Fedor Solntsev to copy items in the Kremlin Armory and wall ornamentation from Russian churches. Tsar Nicholas was so pleased with the work produced by Solntsev that he commissioned a large banquet service based on these designs for the Kremlin Palace, known as the Kremlin Service.

Nicholas I was instrumental in the perpetuation of the Russian porcelain tradition. He began the practice of producing additions to many of the earlier major services, whether Russian or foreign in origin, a practice that continued throughout the remainder of the empire. His successors, Tsars Alexander II and III, however, were less interested in the arts, and innovation at the state factories suffered. Items made during these reigns were most often additions to or continuations of previous designs and were often not as elaborate as some of those produced during the reign of Nicholas I.

The tradition of producing Imperial yacht services by the Imperial Porcelain Factory and the Imperial Glassworks began during Alexander II's reign. These yacht services were perhaps the most private of all those made in the nineteenth century, as they were intended for the Imperial family and their companions. Heavier and squatter than similar wares produced for the palaces, the items are practically shaped for greater stability on shipboard.

The other major exception to the remarkable production during the reigns of Nicholas' son and grandson is the Raphael Service—one of the most significant services of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Raphael Service was commissioned in 1883, during the reign of Alexander III. The decoration of this service featured allegorical figures derived from the frescoes by Raphael in the loggias of the Vatican and the project took twenty years to complete. Even the markings reflect the elaborate decoration of this service.

While raised in St. Petersburg where the culture focused on westernized motifs, Nicholas II became increasingly interested in the motifs of the Old Russian Style. He was particularly taken by the designs of seventeenth century Russia, during the time of his favorite tsar, Peter the Great's father, Tsar Alexei. Several of the important cultural events of Nicholas II's reign incorporate these seventeenth century styles. The Imperial Ball of 1903, the last one held at the Winter Palace, featured the court dress of the tsar's ancestors—Nicholas and Alexandra wore the attire of Tsar Alexei and his first wife, Maria Miloslavskaia. The Kremlin Service, decorated in the Old Russian style, was used during the 1913 celebrations of the Tercentenary of the founding of the Romanov dynasty, thus providing another visual link to the past.

The End of a Dynasty

Following the assassination of Grand Duke Franz Ferdinand and Grand Duchess Sophie in 1914, and the Austrian ultimatum against Serbia, Russia declared war on Austria. Initially, the country entered the war under a mood of national unity and patriotism. Crowds cheered the Tsar and his family in St. Petersburg and much of the decorative arts made during the early years of the war reflected this attitude of nationalism and austerity.

In 1917, Emperor Nicholas II abdicated and a provisional government was formed, ending the reign of the Romanovs. This short-lived government was overthrown in what was known as the Bolshevik Revolution.

children and many	other members of the	former Imperial	family were kille	d at Yekaterinbur	g.

Glossary

CARTOUCHE/ RESERVES An oval or oblong shape enclosing an image.

COLLECTION

An accumulation of objects that may be centered upon a medium or technique, a certain period or group of artists, or a subject, for instance; or they may be

encyclopedic.

CORONATION

The ceremony of crowning a king, queen, or other sovereign.

CACHE-POT

An ornamental receptacle to hold and usually to conceal a flowerpot.

CAVETTO

Sunken center of a flat dish, plate, or soup plate.

CHARGER

A Large, formal decorative plate.

CHARKA

A drinking vessel used in Russia, meaning vodka or tot cup.

CIPHER

A combination of symbolic letters; especially the interwoven initials of a name

(monograph).

CISELE

Metallic painting having a chased or chiseled appearance.

COMPOTIER/ COMPOTE A dish for holding compotes, fruit, etc.

EWER

A vase-shaped pitcher or jug.

EN GRISAILLE

A term for paintings executed entirely in monochrome or near-monochrome, usually

in shades of grey.

FILE

A special centerpiece that usually related to a theme of gardens, one taken from

mythology or various allegories.

FINIAL

A decorative end piece knob.

HIGH-FIRE UNDERGLAZE PAINTING Learned from Danish craftsmen, this technique was produced under the reign of Alexander III (1181-1894) and found on array of vases, often painted with scenes

recalling the haunting landscape of this northern land.

METALLURGY

The process of heating metal to give them a certain desired shape and technique of

compounding alloys or separating metal from their ores.

HARD-PASTE PORCELAIN Porcelain including a mixture of kaolin, feldspar, and quartz, fired at a very high

temperature producing a strong and translucent ceramic.

MOTIF

A recurring subject, theme, idea in both literature and art.

NEOCLASSICAL

A characteristic of a revival of the earlier classical style of ancient Greece and Rome.

NEOROCOCO STYLE A style variety of the mid- 19^{th} century that reflected the prevailing Western lifestyle

and conservatism of the court, during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855).

OVERGLAZE

A painted or printed decoration applied over a glaze.

PATTERN

Lines, shapes and colors that repeat.

PORCELAIN

A ceramic piece made from a mixture of clays and kaolin that was first used in China in

the 17th century. After firing in a kiln (clay oven), porcelain is hard, white and

translucent.

PUCE

A color ranging from deep red to dark gray or brown.

PROSPEKTMALERE

Also known as, *veduta esata*, the painting of recognizable cityscapes found on services commissioned by Alexander I (r.1801-1825) and Nicholas I (r.1825-1855). These paintings reflected Russian's growing national pride

paintings reflected Russian's growing national pride.

ROYAL BANQUET

A large gathering of the upper class usually consisting of dancing and an extravagant

meal.

RUSSIAN REVIVAL MOVEMENT

A term referring to the many different architectural movements in the 19th century in Russia. It was often classified as a combination of pre-Peterine Russian and Byzantine

architecture.

SERVICE

Tableware consisting of a complete and matching set of items – silver and porcelain

particular for dining or entertaining use.

SOFT-PASTE PORCELAIN The precursor to hard-paste porcelain, developed at various European factories such as Sèvres. The earliest formulations were mixtures of clay and ground-up glass (frit). These wares were of lesser quality than the later, or hard-paste, porcelain as they were not hard and vitrified by firing kaolin clay at high temperatures.

SOURTUT D'TABLE A special centerpiece that filled the center of the dessert table. It usually related to a

theme of gardens, one taken from mythology, or various allegories.

STRAP-WORK

Interlace designs of ropes and chains to form double-headed eagles and anchors.

UNDERGLAZE

Coloring or decoration applied to pottery before glazing.

Services

MEISSEN DESSERT SERVICE, 1745, MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, GERMANY Gifted to Elizabeth from Augustus III Elector of Saxony on the occasion of the marriage of her nephew Peter (Peter III) to Princess Sophia Anhalt-Zerbst (Catherine the Great.) Decorated with the Russian double-headed eagle and the Cross of St. Andrew alternating with flowers, this service began the tradition of special dessert services for banquets honoring the knights of Russia's principle orders, in this case, the Order of St. Andrew First Called.

HER MAJESTY'S OWN SERVICE, 1756, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY

A dessert service, the first to be made at the Imperial Porcelain Factory.

ORLOV BREAKFAST SERVICE, 1765, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY Produced in two parts and gifted by Catherine to Count Grigorii Orlov, the tea service and plates have Orlov's initials GCO in Cyrillic in gold within a wreath of laurel leaves, with flags, banners, and cannon in silver to the side. Tenting scenes encircle the cups and the rims of the plates. The second part of the service included a mirror and utensils for shaving and dental tools and is neoclassical in design, with military scenes painted in polychrome.

CAMEO SERVICE, 1777, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY Both a full dinner and dessert service, this soft-paste porcelain service was commissioned by Catherine the Great for General Grigorii Potemkin. The dessert centerpiece featured the "Russian Parnasus" with Minverva, goddess of wisdom on a pedestal surrounded by the Muses, a reference to Catherine's own wisdom, virtue and judgment. This service was created at the Sevres Porcelain Manufactory, France.

ARABESQUE SERVICE, c.1784, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY

A hard-paste porcelain service, the first full porcelain service produced by the Imperial Porcelain Factory. This service features a neoclassical design taken from a wall ornament found in the recently discovered cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum that had been destroyed by the eruption of Vesusius in August 79 AD.

YACHT SERVICE, c. 1785 IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY Similar to the Arabesque Service, the Yacht Service feature motif or medallion is the flag of the merchant marine. The merchant flag alludes to the prospect of increased commerce which the acquisition of the Black Sea ports promised. The Yacht Service was used interchangeably with the Arabesque Service and extended the theme of the powerful Catherine into the realm of commerce and new lands in the South.

EVERYDAY SERVICE, 1838, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY "Everyday" or "ordinary" services were used as everyday ware for all of the palaces. All featured similar motifs; some had a molded basket-weave rim, others had a plain rim, but all were decorated with so-called "Deutsche Blumen (German flower)" roses.

GATCHINA PALACE SERVICE, c.1830, MEISSEN PORCELAIN FACTORY, GERMANY

Named after the Gatchina Palace, where in several members of the Romanov dynasty lived, this service marked the change of order services no longer being used just for dessert.

GURIEV SERVICE, 1809, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY

Commissioned by Catherine's grandson, Nicholas I, this service is one of the grandest ever produced at the Imperial Factory and certainly the largest. Originally known as "the service with illustrations of Russian Costumes," it featured Tureens and ice pails painted with architectural views of St. Petersburg and its surroundings. Dessert plates featured ethnic types, tradesman, and artisans derived from various sources.

GURIEV SERVICE, 1826, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY

A service ordered by Nicholas I for his coronation in 1826, this service features the imperial coat-of-arms—the double-headed eagle, encircled by the Chain of St. Andrew, placed on an ermine mantel and surmounted by the imperial crown. Helmets, trophies and lion masks decorate the rims of the dinner plates, and griffins, the symbol of the Romanov family, and wreaths are found on the dessert plates. All are rendered in tooled gold on a cobalt blue background.

KREMLIN SERVICE, 1837 IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY

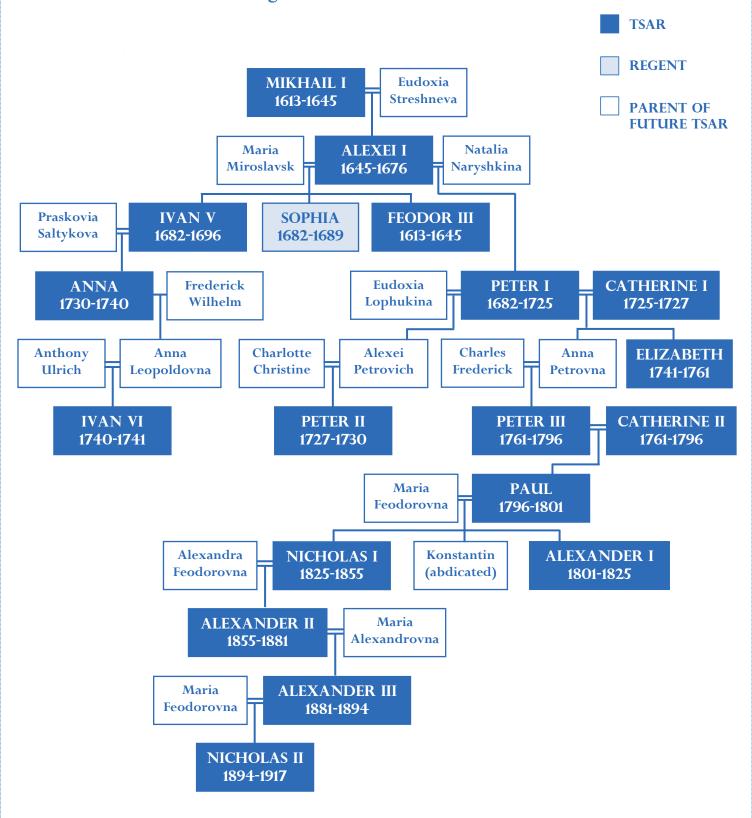
Also commissioned by Nicholas I, this service introduced a rich source of decoration into Russia's vocabulary of ornament. For the first time artists drew inspiration from old Russian motifs dating to the seventh century. The Kremlin Service was intended for five hundred people, with two thousand dinner plates, one thousand soup plates and one thousand dessert plates. It took over ten years to complete the painting of the entire service.

YACHT *DERZHAVA* SERVICE, 1871, IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY

The tradition of producing Imperial yacht services began during Alexander II's reign. These yacht services were perhaps the most private of all those made in the nineteenth century and were intended for the Imperial family and their close friends. These items were heavier and squatter than other wares produced for the palaces—practically shaped for greater stability on shipboard

The Romanov Dynasty

Below is a condensed Romanov family tree, limited to only those who became or begat Romanov rulers of Russia.



Meet the Romanovs

MIKHAIL I

1596 - 1645

REIGNED: 1613-1645

Mikhail Fedorovich became the founder of the Romanov dynasty when he was elected Tsar of Russia in 1613 by a national assembly. Only 17 years old, Mikhail was unanimously voted in by the boyars, Russia's ruling class.

ALEXEI I

1629-1676

REIGNED: 1645-1676

The son of Tsar Mikhail and Eudoxia Streshneva, Alexei ascended to the throne at the age of 16. Alexei's first wife, Maria Miloslvskaya, died shortly after bearing Alexei's 13th child. He then married Nataliya Kyrillovna Naryshkina in 1671. The decades of Alexei's reign were marked by tumult and revolution, with riots in Moscow, wars with Poland and Sweden, and strained relations with England after the Parliamentarian beheading of Charles I.

FEODOR III

1661 - 1682

REIGNED: 1676-1682

Feodor III, the eldest surviving son of Tsar Alexei, took the throne at 15 years of age. Despite suffering from paralysis and disfigurement, the highly educated Tsar Feodor led his country through significant reforms in the Church, as well as ridding Russia of the restrictive hierarchical system which granted citizens of noble birth higher posts in state and military, replacing it with a merit-based system. Childless, with a disabled brother next in line to the Russian throne, Feodor's death triggered the Moscow Uprising of 1682.

IVAN V

1666 — 1696

REIGNED: 1682-1696

The last surviving son of Tsar Alexei and Maria Miloslavskaya, Ivan V suffered from both mental and physical disabilities which made him reluctant to take his place on the throne. Ivan eventually became joint Tsar of Russia with his 10-year-old half-brother, Peter. Both unsuited to lead the country, their power was held by their older sister Sophia Alekseyevna until 1689. Ivan died young at the age of 29.

SOPHIA

1657 - 1704

REGENT: 1682-1689

The daughter of Tsar Alexei and his first wife Maria, Sophia Alekseyevna came to power when her brother, Tsar Feodor, died childless. With Ivan, a disabled 16-year-old, next in line to the throne, and the family of her step-mother pressing for the even younger Peter to become Tsar, Sophia became regent in order to ensure Ivan's position, and her family's power, was not usurped. Her reign ended seven years later when Ivan sided with Peter against her.

PETER I (THE GREAT)

1672 - 1725

REIGNED: 1682-1725

Peter I and his older half-brother Ivan were crowned joint tsars, with their half-sister Sophia as regent. Sophia was overthrown in 1689 and Ivan died in 1696, thrusting Peter to power as the sole tsar. Russia grew as the result of several successful wars during his reign, becoming increasingly powerful. Peter instituted a number of reforms to ingrain Western customs into Russian life and founded the city of St. Petersburg, which became capital of Russia in 1712.

CATHERINE I

1684-1727

REIGNED: 1725-1727

Catherine I, originally named Marta Helena Skowronska, became the second wife of Peter the Great when the couple secretly married in 1707. The marriage was commonly known to be very strong, and Catherine was officially made co-ruler of Russia in 1724. When Peter I died a year later, Catherine became the first female ruler of the Russian Empire, a precedent that paved the road for future generations of Romanov women to ascend to the throne.

PETER II

1715-1730

REIGNED: 1727-1730

Peter II, grandson of Peter the Great, rose to the throne at the tender age of 11 when his step-grandmother, Catherine I, named him heir. Because he was so young Aleksandr D. Menshikov, a close advisor to Catherine, acted as regent and even arranged for Peter to be married to his daughter. Peter rejected Menshikov, however, and turned to the Dolgoruky family. Under the advisory of the Dolgoruky family, Peter moved the capital from St. Petersburg to Moscow in 1728, and was set to marry Prince Dolgoruky's daughter. The wedding never took place as Peter II, the last of the Romonov male line, died of small pox on his wedding day.

ANNA

1693-1740

REIGNED: 1730-1740

Upon the death of Peter II the Supreme Privy Council named Anna, the daughter of Ivan V, as Empress. The Council intended to name her Empress under conditions that would limit her power, making her more of a figure head than an actual ruler. Upon her arrival in Moscow, Anna discovered their intention and abolished the Council. Anna held little interest in politics, and left matters to her lover, Ernst Johann Biron, and a group of German advisers. As Anna grew ill from kidney disease she named her grandnephew, Ivan VI, heir to the throne.

IVAN VI

1740-1764

REIGNED: 1740-1741

After Anna's death Ivan VI took the throne as an infant, and Anna's former lover, Ernst Johann Biron, became regent. Biron was overthrown three weeks later and Ivan's mother, Duchess Anna Leopoldovna became regent. Shortly after Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great, organized a rebellion that resulted in the imprisonment of Ivan and his family, isolating Ivan for his entire life until his death when his prison guards murdered him during an attempted rescue.

ELIZABETH

1709-1761

REIGNED: 1741-1761

Elizabeth, the second-oldest surviving daughter of Peter I and Catherine I was commonly known as the leading beauty of the Russian Empire. Elizabeth vowed that if she became Empress she would not sign a single death sentence, an unusual promise that she notably kept throughout her reign.

PETER III

1728-1762

REIGNED: 1761-1762

Peter III's reign as Emperor of Russia was short lived. An unpopular leader for his pro-Prussian sentiment, he was supposedly assassinated as a result of a conspiracy led by his wife, who succeeded him to the throne as Catherine II.

CATHERINE II (THE GREAT)

1729-1796

REIGNED: 1762-1796

Catherine II, later known as Catherine the Great, is known for being a great proponent of bringing the ideals and philosophies of the Enlightenment to Russia through culture, politics and military expansion. Catherine was also responsible for propagating the patronage of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, during which two of the largest ceremonial services were produced, the Cameo (1777) and Arabesque (1784) Services. She secured her legacy through the Neoclassical style reflected in Russia's architecture and decorative arts.

PAUL I

1754-1801

REIGNED: 1796-1801

Paul I was the Emperor of Russia between 1796 and 1801. In his mother's memoirs, Catherine II strongly implies that Paul's father was not Peter, but Sergei Saltykov. However, Paul does seem to have physically resembled the Grand Duke (Peter III) so one might doubt any claims of illegitimacy. Paul I was assassinated in March of 1801 in his bedroom in St. Michael Palace by a number of dismissed officers lead by General Bennigsen, a Hanoverian in the Russian military service.

ALEXANDER I

1777-1825

REIGNED: 1801-1825

Alexander I served as Emperor of Russia and was also the first Russian Grand Duke of Findland and Lithuania. Constantly torn between his grandmother and father, he succeeded to the throne after participating in a conspiracy that murdered Paul I, and ruled Russia during the chaotic period of the Napoleonic Wars. His unexpected death far from the capital caused persistent rumors that his death and funeral were staged so he could spend the rest of his life in solitude.

NICHOLAS I

1796-1855

REIGNED: 1825-1855

Nicholas I was raised for a military career and became heir to the throne when his older brother Konstantin renounced his claim to the crown. His accession was marked with the Decembrist Revolt, a protest led by Russian army officers against Nicholas I. Upon his death, the Russian Empire covered 20 million square kilometers (7.7 square miles), its largest expanse in the country's history.

ALEXANDER II

1818-1881

REIGNED: 1855-1881

Alexander II succeeded his father Nicholas I in 1855, during the Crimean War. Responsible for implementing a number of reforms in Russia, most notably liberating the serfs in 1861 and instituting local governance, trying to satisfy both liberals and conservatives. As anarchistic groups began to gain a foothold, Alexander II was the subject of a number of unsuccessful assassination attempts, until 1881, when he was killed by a bombing.

ALEXANDER III

1845-1894

REIGNED: 1881-1894

Known to be less liberal and less refined than his father, Alexander III reigned through reactionary policies he instituted building upon those his father created, Alexander's policies were later known to have sowed the seeds that culminated in the Revolution of 1917. The onset of Alexander's kidney failure was later attributed to a blunt trauma he suffered from in a train crash in 1888.

NICHOLAS II

1868-1918

REIGNED: 1894-1917

Nicholas II ascended to the throne upon the death of his father Alexander III in 1894. In 1917, Emperor Nicholas II abdicated and a provisional government was formed, ending the reign of the Romanovs.

SPEAKERS LIST

The following individuals may be available for speaking events at your venue. Please note that venues must bear all costs relating to travel, accommodations and fees. Please contact the speakers directly to discuss details.

Washington, DC

Dr. Scott Ruby

Associate Curator of Russian & Eastern European Art, Hillwood Estate, Museum, & Gardens sruby@hillwoodmuseum.org | 202.243.3911

Dr. Scott Ruby is available for lectures on Russian porcelain.

Honorarium plus expenses to be negotiated

Wisconsin

Elizabeth Krizenesky

Elizabeth.krizenesky@lawrence.edu | 920.725.0843

Elizabeth Krizenesky is available for lectures, guided tours, demonstrations, or other educational activities.

Honorarium plus expenses to be negotiated

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Videography



Treasures: The Czar's Faberge Eggs. A&E 50 minutes



Finding Anastasia. National Geographic (52 min.)



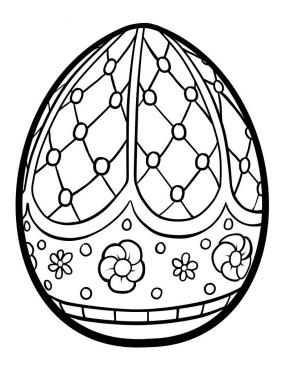
Russia's Last Tsar. National Geographic (64 min.)

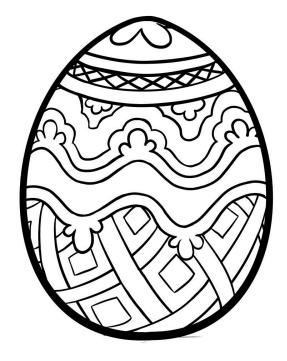


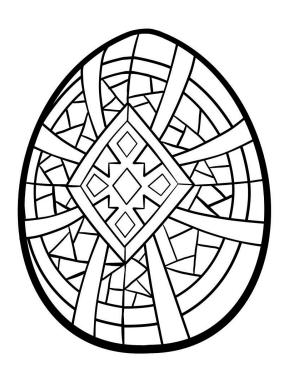
In Search of History: The Romanovs. History Channel (50 min.)

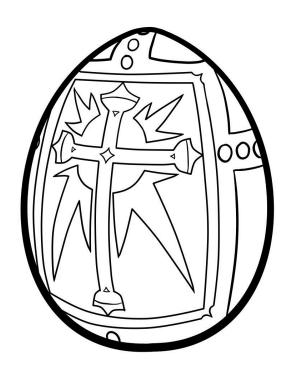
Children's Activities

Decorate your own Imperial eggs!









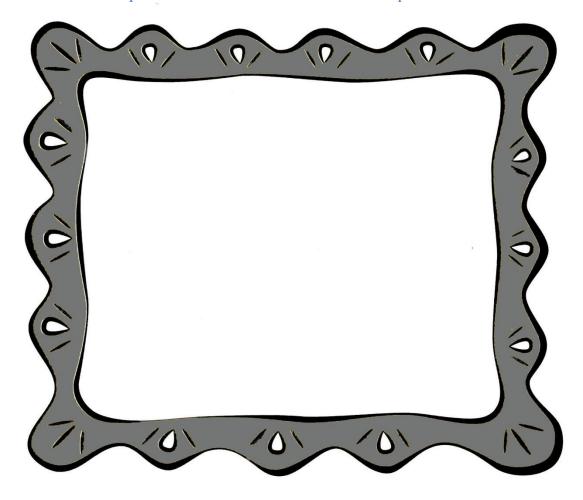


Imagine that the **IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY** invited you to design your own set of fancy dishes.

Design your own tea set here.

Courtesy of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Jacksonville, Florida

Look closely and find your favorite painted scene on a piece of **PORCELAIN.** Draw it in the space below.



SCAVENGER HUNT

Find the following on the PORCELAIN in this gallery. Check them off when you find them.

☐ flower	☐ tree	purple	□ blue
□ bird	□ boat	person	□ shield
□ cityscape	\Box red	□ crown	☐ flag
ogold gold	fruit	□landscape	palm tree

Courtesy of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Jacksonville, Florida