

The Tsars' Cabinet:

Two Hundred Years of Russian Decorative Arts under the Romanovs



Durnovo jewel casket, 1889, Firm of Ovchinnikov, Russia



Egg, c.1890, Imperial Porcelain Factory, Russia

The *Tsars' Cabinet: Two Hundred Years of Russian Decorative Arts under the Romanovs* features extraordinary objects that have been drawn from the finest private collection of Imperial Russian porcelain and decorative arts in the United States. Organized by the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William and Mary, this exhibition highlights the prolific production of craftsmen and artists under the Romanovs. This magnificent collection of 160 pieces was used publicly and privately by Tsars from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. Focal points include

porcelain services to glassware, enamel, silver gilt, and decorated eggs. Many of the pieces were produced by the Imperial Porcelain Factory and Imperial Glass Factory, and many display expert enamel work from the renowned firms of Fabergé and Ovchinnikov.

Grouped by Tsar, *The Tsars' Cabinet* reflects a wide range of social and political issues dealt with by the Romanov Tsars. Objects exhibited hearken back to such momentous circumstances as Peter the Great and the engagement of

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Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaevich Service, 1848-1852, Imperial Porcelain Factory, Russia



Egg, 1890-1900s, Imperial Porcelain Factory, Russia

the west; Catherine the Great and the enlightenment; the militarism and the Tsarist autocracy after the Decembrist Revolt; and the patriotism of the first year of World War I. The large array of imperial dinnerware exhibited conjures the essence of each Tsar's reign through the stylization and emblematic representations on each piece.

The famous Campana urns reflect the regimes' strong interest in antiquity and display the superior craftsmanship and technical achievements characteristic of artisans under Romanovs. These commanding urns were produced under Nicholas I, most likely designed for the Empress Alexandra

Feodorovna for the pavilion of Tsaritsin on an island in the lake of Olga. Stimulated at the time by excavations in Pompei, the piece embraces the classical style while expertly displaying the technical innovations of the time.

This exhibition provides a visual context for the vibrant period of Russian history from which the objects originate. Through their styling and evocation of daily life, the decorative peices are able demonstrate surfacing tensions between historical Russian culture and the awareness of European tradition that was so apparent at that time. The stylistically nationalist Durnovo Jewel Case adopts Old Russian style from the sixteenth

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Chamberstick, 1896-1908, Fabergé



Feodor Ruckert for Fabergé, Card case, 1896-1901
Feodor Ruckert for Fabergé, Cigar case, 1908-1916



Plate from the Coalport service, c. 1845, Imperial Porcelain Factory, Russia

and seventeenth centuries through its incorporation of pre-Petrine motifs in its timely European design, illuminating this mix of style and tradition.

Capturing our fascination, the items exhibited provide an 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. In viewing *The Tsars' Cabinet*, one is transported to majestic era of progressive politics and dynamic social change.



Figure of Justice, c. 1796, Imperial Porcelain Factory, Russia

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Workmaster Anders Nevalainen for Fabergé, Lukutin lacquer box, 1896-1908



Wineglass from the Nicholas Alexandrovich Service, c. 1914, Imperial Glass Factory, Russia



Snuffbox, c. 1775, Imperial Porcelain Factory, Russia

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works:
160

Organized by:
Muscarelle Museum of Art at the
College of William and Mary

Requirements:
High security; 2,700 square feet

Participation Fee:
\$50,000

Booking Period:
12 weeks

Shipping:
IA&A makes all arrangements;
exhibitors pay outgoing costs within the
contiguous US

Availability:
June 2011 to September 2011;
June 2012 to December 2012;
September 2013 to December 2014

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