



*Two-Sided Mineia, April
About 1560
Stroganov School, Russia
Egg tempera on wood*



MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS
2022 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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

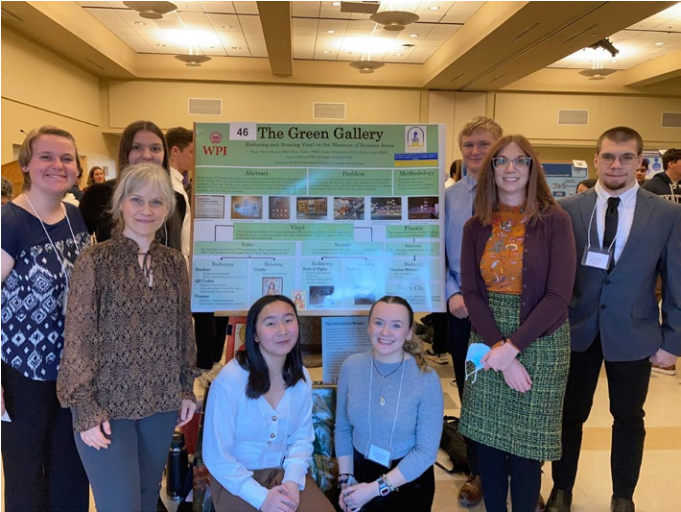
Respect – Valuing every individual, culture, and expression

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



2022 WPI student team on presentation day with the Museum’s Executive Coordinator and Director of Interpretation

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 Vieltette!

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

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

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



Wellesley Russian Department trip

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.



Museum staff, Clinton Presbyterian youth and mentors, and Rep. Meg Kilcoyne at the Clinton Community Garden

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 WHEAT 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.



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

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.




35,011 views
@RussianIconsChannel



8.1k followers
@themuseumofrussianicons



1,994 followers
@russianicons



776 followers
@mrussianicons





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 fifteenth 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. Uniting 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

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS *(continued)*

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

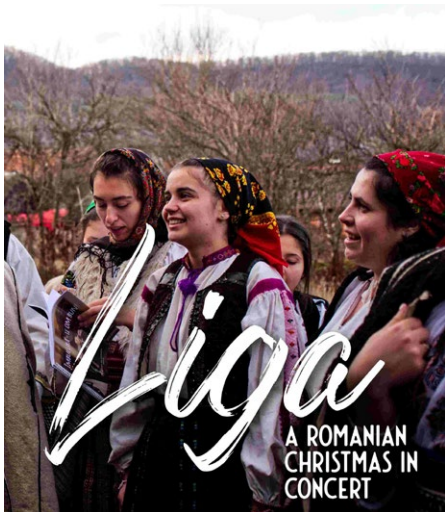
November 10, 2022 – February 26, 2023
Curated by Yana Veselova

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.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES



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

Free Sunday
Sunday, January 23

Byzanfest Double Feature: Liga and 500
Sunday, January 23 and Sunday, January 23

Virtual Workshop: Russian Winter Painting
Saturday, January 29

FEBRUARY

Virtual Art History Course: Early Christian Art and Visual Culture (continued)
Saturday, February 5

Free First Sunday
Sunday, February 6

Virtual Lecture: Tolstoy: Many Faces of Love with Dr. Svetlana Nikitina
Saturday, February 12

Film: Anna Karenina (1935)
Sunday, February 13

Virtual Lecture: Reverse Perspective, the Politics of Space, and Contemporary Art Practice: On a Book and Exhibition with Dr. Clemena Antonova
Thursday, February 17

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



Piano Concert: Iconoclasts and Cosmopolitans with Dr. Anastasia Seifetdinova
Saturday, May 21

Virtual Russian Contemporary Literature Book Group
Sunday, May 22

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

Prosopon School of Iconology Icon Workshop with Vladislav Andrejev
Monday-Saturday, August 1-6

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

Contemporary Russian Literature Book Group
Sunday, September 11

Smithsonian Magazine Museum Day
Saturday, September 17

Film: Sergei Eisenstein's STRIKE (1925)
Saturday, September 17

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 Sardella
Sunday, 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 19

DECEMBER

Member Holiday Open House
Saturday, December 3

Free First Sunday
Sunday, December 4



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



Double Sided Diptych with Selected Feasts and Saints
Late 17th/ Early 18th Century
Ethiopian
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

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

500-999

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

250-499

- Jane & Lawrence Breck
- Anne Butterfield
- Christine Edwards
- Ann Lisi & Joel P. Greene
- Frank Reis & Sarah Phillips
- Joanne Wuschke

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- Lila Packer *in honor of the Tolmachev Family*
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- Leslie Gold *in memory of Charles Wilson Thrash, Jr. & Alex Gold, Jr.*
- Donald Bisset *in memory of Jennie Corchemny*
- Stephen Humble *in honor of Kent Russell and in support of Ukraine*
- Thomas A. & Susan C. O'Connor *in honor of the Museum staff*
- Randall S. Barko & Marie-Elissa Boisvert *in memory of Gordon Lankton*
- Mr. & Mrs Peter V. Cooper (Patricia) *in memory of Gordon Lankton*
- Ms. Sylvia M. Cotter *in memory of Robert W. Cotter*
- Vincent & Teresa Issenmann *in memory of Gordon Lankton*
- Richard Hoeske *in memory of Gordon Lankton*
- Dorothy Tutko *in memory of Paul Tutko*
- Ruah Donnelly and Steve Dinkelaker *in honor of Kent Russell*

GORDON B. LANKTON COLLECTIONS FUND

1000 AND ABOVE

- Ruah Donnelly & Steve Dinkelaker
- Plato Malozemoff Foundation – Irene Weigel

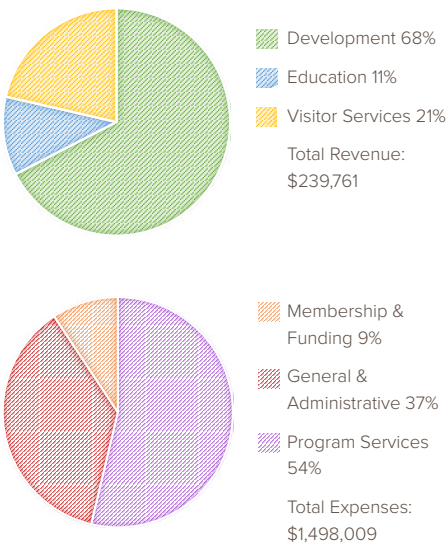
500-999

- Jack & Leslie McCabe

250-499

- Anonymous
- Nancy Patterson-Ševčenko

OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSE



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

Clinton Savings Bank

CORPORATE SUPPORTER \$500

Clinton Savings Bank

CORPORATE DONOR \$250

Protective Services

PLATINUM \$1,000

Warner & Mary Fletcher

Margaret Patel

GOLD \$500

Sari Bitticks

Willa Chamberlain Bodman

Dr Elaine Davies

Steve Dinkelaker & Ruah Donnelly

Catherine Mannick

Tom & Beth Vetras

SILVER \$250

Wendy Margo

Eric Prouty

Peter & Bliss Rand

Kent Russell

Donna Stegner

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Ayer Public Library

Auburn Public Library

Beaman Memorial Library (West
Boylston)

Bigelow Free Public Library
(Clinton)

Boylston Public Library/Berlin
Public Library

Clinton Rotary Club

Conant Free Public Library
(Sterling)

Dover Town Library

Forbush Memorial Library
(Westminster)

Harvard Public Library

Hopkinton Public Library

Lawrence Library (Pepperell)

Leominster Public Library

Levi Heywood Memorial Library
(Gardner)

Lunenburg Public Library

Maynard Public Library

Newton Free Library

Sargent Memorial Library
(Boxborough)

Shrewsbury Public Library

Southborough Public Library

Tewksbury Library

Thayer Memorial Library
(Lancaster)

Townsend Public Library

UMass Medical School Lamar
Soutter Library

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Larissa Dyan

Serena Domolky Howlett

Patricia Kerrigan

Sandra Larson

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Brett Donohoe

Thomas Feerick

Simone Tricca

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Executive Director (retired May 2022)

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Visitor Services Assistant

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Visitor Services Assistant

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Executive Coordinator

Olivia Trottier-Mitcheson
Visitor Services Assistant

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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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**MUSEUM OF
 RUSSIAN ICONS**

203 Union Street
 Clinton, MA 01510
museumofrussianicons.org
 978.598.5000

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 MUSEUM ASSOCIATION



NYPRO EST 1988
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