

THE **ICON** MUSEUM
AND STUDY CENTER

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

www.iconmuseum.org



ILLUMINATING THE ART OF THE SACRED ICON

EXPLORE THE ETERNAL BEAUTY, FASCINATING
HISTORY, AND DEEP SPIRITUALITY OF ICONS.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

What a year this has been, my dear friends of The Icon Museum and Study Center! After months and months of painstaking work, carefully crafting our new strategy in close collaboration with staff, board, museum members, community members, colleagues, and many others, we proudly finally unveiled the new name, logo, and direction of the Museum at our "Big Reveal" party on October 17th. The new name clearly respects our history and acknowledges our expanding scope and was very well received by the public.

In October the Main Gallery was rebaptized the Gordon B. Lankton Gallery, newly reinstalled with a selection of the finest Russian icons from Gordon's collection. In the entry, we created a Greek Gallery, containing some extraordinary Greek and Veneto-Cretan icons and an almost 2000-year-old Fayum portrait. Wilcox Design from Cambridge did an excellent job building our new contemporary-looking website (iconmuseum.org) also launched this fall, an invaluable resource for anyone interested in icons and Orthodox art, wherever you are located worldwide.

A number of familiar faces left the organization early in the year and we thank them for their service. We are very proud of our team who accomplished all of the above. Others were also instrumental in the success of the Museum in 2023: I want to especially mention our corps of docents, our library volunteer, participants in committees and task forces, our members, and our Board of Trustees. A big thank you to you all.

What is a museum without visitors? Our visitors energize and inspire us every day with their curiosity, amazement, and wonder. Last year we envisioned a new path forward with the ambition to build an institution that serves as a crossroads for icons and Eastern Christian art serving our community, the region, and the world. I very much hope that you, our visitors, 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 in 2024!

Simon Morsink,
Executive Director

EXHIBITIONS & INSTALLATIONS



SWAN LAKE: 145 YEARS OF HISTORY AND TRIUMPH

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

Swan Lake ballet premiered on February 20, 1877, at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre. It was initially criticized for Tchaikovsky's "noisy" compositions, and the ballerinas disliked the fast-paced movements. However, a revival at Mariinsky Theatre helped it become one of the most famous ballets today. An exhibition of photographs, costumes, and historical documents from a private collection.

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. Their project "Buy an Icon—Save a Life" repurposes the panels of empty wooden ammunition boxes from combat zones into icons, symbolizing the victory of life over death.

TREE OF LIFE: BIRCH THROUGH THE AGES

November 3, 2022 – January 29, 2023
Curated by Simone Tricca

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.

ICONS & RETABLOS: IMAGES OF DEVOTION

March 2, 2023 – August 27, 2023
Curated by Dr. Elizabeth Calil Zarur

This bilingual (English and Spanish) exhibition, created in collaboration with New Mexico State University, compared Orthodox icons and Mexican retablos, which convey artistically similar themes but with different materials, styles, and iconographies. The exhibition shed light on the understudied iconographic and ideological contrasts between icons and retablos, contextualizing the traditions of devotion in Latin America and the Eastern Orthodox world.



EXHIBITIONS & INSTALLATIONS

HOLY WARRIORS

March 23, 2023 – June 4, 2023
Curated by Laura Garrity-Arquitt

Christian tradition has always valued stories of saints as examples of Christian morality. Among these saints, there is a group of warrior or soldier saints known for their bravery and resilience. This exhibit features icons that depict these saints in action, telling the story of their great deeds.



SPIRITUALITY IN EASTERN CHRISTIANITY: IMAGES OF A LIVING TRADITION

September 22, 2023 – March 3, 2024
Curated by Alain de Lotbinière and
Simon Morsink

Spirituality in Eastern Christianity: Images of a Living Tradition was an exhibition of twenty-six black and white photographs by Alain de Lotbinière. These images captured the Eastern approach to faith and spirituality, taken during several trips to Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Russia, Turkey, and Egypt.



GORDON B. LANKTON GALLERY

In 2023, the Museum's Main Gallery was renamed the Gordon B. Lankton Gallery in honor of our late founder. This newly installed gallery displays a selection of the finest icons from Lankton's collection, alongside icons recently acquired through the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund, offering a comprehensive overview of the history of Russian icon painting.

GREEK GALLERY

The new Greek Gallery (formerly Entrance Gallery) houses an ancient Fayum portrait, the gift of long-time friends of the Museum Emmanuel and Argie Tiliakos. This gallery features a fine selection of Greek and Veneto-Cretan icons, including the splendid Virgin of the Life-Giving Source generously donated by Dr. Emilio Bizzi and a fascinating 15th-century Pietà attributed to the famous icon painter Nikolaos Tzafouris, which was recently received on long-term loan from a private collector.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Programs & Activities

First Annual Kent dur Russell Lecture: *Ethiopia at the Crossroads*

Speaker: Dr. Christine Sciacca

Lecture: *Rus', Ukraine, Moscovia, Rossia: Historical Cartography in Times of War*

Speaker: Dr. Dennis Khotimsky, moderated by Dr. Svitlana Malykhina.

Virtual Lecture: *Orthodox Rituals and Practices of Peasants in Late Imperial Russia*

Speaker: Professor Christine D. Worobec

Virtual Lecture: *Exciting Discoveries in Art History*

Speaker: Mallory Mortillaro
Presented in partnership with the Bigelow Free Library of Clinton and other area libraries.



Virtual Art History Course: *Early Christian Art and Visual Culture*

Instructor: Dr. Bettina Jungen

Six-Day Byzantine Icon Painting Workshop

Instructor: Theodoros Papadopoulos

First Free Sunday

Free admission on the first Sunday of each month, courtesy of the **Nypro Foundation**.

A Day of Ballet

Presentation and workshop by Yana Veselova, supported in part by a grant from the **Clinton Cultural Council**, supported by the **Mass Cultural Council**.

Birch Tea Lecture and Ceremony

Presented by Marina Smirnov.

Film: *Rachmaninoff Revisited*

Q+A with director Peter Rosen.

Short Film: *Testimonio (Testimony): Emilio Jarufe* BYZANFEST 2021

Ukrainian Egg Decorating Workshop Series

Instructor: Hanka Robertson

Flamenco Guitar and Harp Concert

Performers: Victoria Dehesa and Jesús Zamora

Easter Folk Concert

Performers: Grunya Ensemble

Music of Mexico workshop

Performers: Fiesta del Norte

Giselle Piano Concert

Performer: Ekaterina Willewald

Music of Mexico outdoor concert and workshop

Performers: Fiesta del Norte

April School Vacation Week Drop-in Craft: Papel Picado

Partnerships

Bigelow Free Public Library

Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce

Clinton Public Schools

Clinton Parks & Recreation

Lancaster Boy Scouts

Worcester Chamber of Commerce



Grants

A memorable year began in a memorable fashion, as the Museum received a grant of \$75,000 from the Mass Cultural Council (MCC) through its Cultural Sector Fund for Organizations Pandemic Recovery Grant Program.

This vital funding was allocated to accessibility renovations and to the year's major project: a collaboration with the firm Wilcox Design to develop and launch a new name and visual identity.

The Museum gratefully acknowledges this critical support and the representatives who advocate for Massachusetts' cultural institutions.

A Mass Cultural Council Festivals & Projects grant also supported performances by the band Fiesta del Norte during our temporary exhibit *Icons & Retablos: Images of Devotion*, and a stipend from the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area: Hidden Treasures funded a

concert with pianist Ekaterina Willewald. A grant from Clinton Cultural Council funded the program Day of Ballet, an interactive tour on the history of ballet with workshop by dancer and choreographer Yana Veselova.

The Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce granted us a Small Business Energy Relief Grant to help with rising electricity costs, and the Schwartz Charitable Foundation generously funded new lighting for the redesigned entry and upper galleries. Finally, we gratefully recognize the unwavering support of the Nypro Foundation in support of the 2023 Free First Sundays program.

Rebrand

October's Big Reveal simultaneously celebrated the Museum's seventeenth birthday and launched its new name, chosen to showcase the dual focus on exhibition and scholarship, and reflect the movement to expand the core collection of Russian icons to embrace the wider Eastern Christian world.

The renaming of the Museum grew out of a nearly year-long strategic planning process that involved input from the surrounding museum community, following the

death of founder Gordon Lankton and the retirement of founding director Kent dur Russell.

Created by Wilcox Design of Cambridge, MA, the new brand identity visually embodies the Museum's revitalized and expanded mission. According to principal Jean Wilcox, "The new logo features a typographic rendering of the halo. The negative space indicates a head and shoulders, the golden color is a bright, warm, illuminating color and connects to the gold leaf embellishment featured on icons."

The Museum's redesigned website (www.iconmuseum.org) and its refreshed social media platforms enable users to view current events, browse the online collection, and access icon scholarship.

Our vision for the future is to offer visitors and scholars opportunities to situate Eastern Christian art within a global context and to explore its ties to contemporary issues.

With two recently reimagined galleries and enhanced lighting, the Museum remains an unparalleled contemplative space for experiencing the beauty and spirituality of the icon.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

A Saint

Early 16th Century
Russia
Egg tempera on wood
31.2 x 10.2 x 2 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Hôtel des Ventes de Coulommiers, France, 2023
From the private collection of Dr. Xénia (Ksenia) Mikhailovna Muratova (1940-2019)

Three Scenes from the Vita of the Mother of God Tikhvinskaya

19th Century
Russia
Egg tempera on wood with metal basma
14.5 x 37.6 x 2.5 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Schuler Auktionen AG, Switzerland
From a private collection, Switzerland

Fragment of a Cross

Mid-18th Century
Ukraine, Carpates
Wood
31.5 x 4.5 x 2.3 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Nagel Auktionen, Germany, 2023
From a private Bavarian collection, assembled between the 1950s and the 1980s

Mother of God of the Life-Giving Spring

17th Century
Crete
Egg tempera on wood panel
38.3 x 30.4 x 4.2 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Litchfield Auctions, USA, 2023
From the Estate of T. Leslie Shear Jr., Professor of Classical Archaeology at Penn Medicine Princeton Medical Center

Mother of God Hodigitria

Early 16th Century
Crete
Egg tempera on wood
27.5 x 21 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Uppsala Auktionskammare, Sweden, 2023
From a private collection, Switzerland

The Song of Songs

Attributed to Matteo da Chio
17th Century
Venice
Egg tempera on wood
33 x 48 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Uppsala Auktionskammare, Sweden, 2023

The Distribution of Wealth

Attributed to Matteo da Chio
17th Century
Venice
Egg tempera on wood
33 x 48 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Uppsala Auktionskammare, Sweden, 2023

The Mother of God Tenderness with Christ, Man of Sorrows

16th Century
Crete
Egg tempera on wood
25 x 18 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Cambi Casa d'Aste, Italy, 2023
From a private collection in Rome

The Annunciation

Late 17th Century
Ionian Islands
Egg tempera on wood
44 x 36.5 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Schloss Ahlden Fine Art Auctioneers, Germany, 2023



The Distribution of Wealth, Venice, 17th century, egg tempera on wood. R2023.5.2.2



The Song of Songs, Venice, 17th century, egg tempera on wood. R2023.5.2.1

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

17th Century
Crete
22 x 18 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Osenat Auctions, France, 2023

Icon of the Mother of God with Selected Scenes and Saints

Late 19th or 20th Century
Ethiopia
Paint on goatskin
91.44 x 66.04 cm
Museum purchase, funds provided by the Gordon B. Lankton Collections Fund
Sold by Sloans & Kenyon, USA, 2023



Fragment of a Cross, Ukraine, mid-18th century, wood, R2023.03



Mother of God Hodigitria, Crete, early 16th century, egg tempera on wood. R2023.5.1



Icon of the Mother of God with Selected Scenes and Saints, Ethiopia, late 19th or 20th century, paint on goatskin, R2023.09



LOANS

Rushnyky: Sacred Ukrainian Textiles

**Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center
New Haven, CT**

March 25, 2023 - September 10, 2023

“A house without a rushnyk is not a home.”
– Ukrainian proverb

The word rushnyk derives from ruka, “hand,” and while it can refer to an ordinary towel, the ceremonial rushnyk is distinct in its ornamentation and its importance. In almost any Ukrainian home, the family icons—and, more recently, family photographs—would be draped with rushnyky. They are believed to offer protection to family, home and village. The cloths appear in all family rituals, infants are wrapped in them at birth and they play a significant role in betrothal and wedding ceremonies. Remarkably, even after the turmoil of the twentieth and twenty first centuries the use of rushnyky is still an integral part of Ukrainian culture.

The Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center hosted this travelling exhibition from The Icon Museum and Study Center, featuring rushnyky and related artifacts from the collection of Franklin Sciacca, Associate Professor of Russian Language and Literature at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

Other locations with small loans include:

**Bigelow Public Library
Clinton, MA**

**Forbush Memorial Library
Westminster, MA**

**Newton Public Library
Newton, MA**

Miniature Monumental

**Bristol Art Museum
Bristol, RI**

February 4, 2023 - March 31, 2023

Miniature Monumental, featured artwork that could be held in the hand or measured less than twenty-five square inches in size, exhibited with miniature art created and submitted by Bristol Art Museum members, displayed salon style.

The exhibit also featured miniature Russian lacquer boxes on loan from The Icon Museum and Study Center. A lecture on the history of Russian lacquer boxes by Registrar Laura Garrity-Arquitt was held to complement the display of boxes.



ANNUAL GIVING

\$20,000 and Above

Ruah Donnelly & Steve Dinkelaker
Lynette & Brandon Hull
Catherine Mannick
Margaret Patel

\$5,000 and Above

Eric Brose, Brose Hie Hill Foundation
Ted Lapres & Connie Keeran
Jack & Leslie McCabe

\$1,000 and Above

Sarah Cupp
Margery Dearborn
Mary Glasspool
Leslie Gold
Vincent & Teresa Issenmann
Daniel McCarthy
David Stadtherr
Kent & Aisling Russell
Irene Weigel, Plato Malozemoff Foundation

\$500 and Above

Randall S. Barko & Elissa Boisvert
Barbara Gerzonich
Wayne & Carmen Huntoon
Peter & Bliss Rand
Mark & Elise Forbes Seeley

\$250 and Above

Sylvia Cotter
Joel Green and Ann Lisi
Arthur Norman
Marian Pruslin
Kay Robert
Steven & Dorothy Ruse

The Rt. Rev. Gordon P. Scruton
Nancy Patterson Ševčenko

Christine Worobec

Donations Made In Honor of

John & Susan Metzidakis in honor of their 50th Wedding Anniversary

Scott Archard in honor of Eric Brose

Christine Edwards in honor of Loretta Ivanoff

Thomas A. & Susan C. O'Connor in honor of the Staff & Volunteers

Amy Thompson West in honor of Maureen Thompson Phillips

The Rt. Rev. Gordon P. Scruton in honor of Elaine Davies

Ruah Donnelly & Steve Dinkelaker in honor of Kent Russell

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Peter & Patricia Cooper in memory of Gordon Lankton

Randall S. Barko & Elissa Boisvert in memory of Gordon Lankton

Sylvia Cotter in memory of Robert W. Cotter

Vincent & Teresa Issenmann in memory of Gordon Lankton

Donald Berth in memory of Gordon Lankton

Marie Leen in memory of Edward Leen

Stephen Humble in memory of Gordon Lankton

Daniel & Margaret McCarthy in memory of Gordon Lankton

Wayne & Carmen Huntoon in memory of Gordon Lankton

Patricia McCarron Scagnoli in memory of Ariadne Shilaeff

Lila Packer in memory of Knezevic & Tolmachev Families

John & Susan Metzidakis in eternal memory of Prifteresha Sarah Lionlin & Archbishop Nikon

Donald Bisset in memory of Jennie Corchemny

Robert Latini in memory of Gordon Lankton

Rose Hartman in memory of her husband Lee W. Hartman

Margaret Turchette in memory of Anna Pavlova

Lida Stinchfield in memory of Gordon Lankton

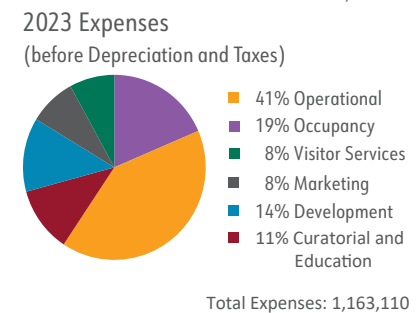
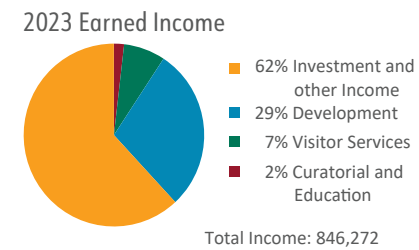
Kim M. Ciborowski in memory of Henry & Elaine Ciborowski

Randy White in memory of Gordon Lankton

Leslie Fraser Gold in memory of Charles Thrash, Jr.

John & Claudia Chani in memory of Peter & Tefte Chani

Special thanks to Zoë Rayn Evans & Edward Russell for funding the first Annual Kent dur Russell lecture.



MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF

Museum Members: 420
 Corporate Members: 4
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 Philanthropic Members: 120
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 Lifetime Members: 9
 Complimentary Members: 34

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 Paige Memorial Library (Hardwick)
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OUR MISSION

The Icon Museum and Study Center illuminates the art of the sacred icon for a global audience. We serve as a leading center for dialogue on icons as a diverse and living tradition. We inspire learning and understanding through innovative exhibitions, programs, and scholarship.

OUR CORE VALUES

Inspiration – Exciting curiosity and discovery

Diversity – Embracing all individuals, cultures, and expressions

Accessibility – Ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment

Integrity – Maintaining the highest ethical standards in all we do



Please consider becoming a member or donating to The Icon Museum and Study Center. Information is available on our website:
www.iconmuseum.org/support/

Photography: Andy Ryan, Norm Eggert, Eddie Vargas, and Elyse Heise

