Russian Lacquer Paintings
Images of the People

Presented by The Hyde Collection

Links to Video:
https://www.facebook.com/TheHydeCollection/videos/208424413780630/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlrsrPIHSY4&list=PLKSGoM6Yu_lr3oQFdX6P3JfwEOFSnhMJ&index=2&t=2s
The exquisite lacquer paintings exhibited here are by artists from the historically famous “Icon Village” of Palekh in Russia’s Central Federal District. This lies approximately 200 miles northwest of Moscow and has been famous since the sixteenth century as a center for icon production. That history came to an abrupt end in 1917 with the Bolshevik Revolution.

Faced with the loss of their livelihood, icon painters reinvented themselves as illustrators of Russian history and folk tales, executing jewel-like decorative panels on the sides of small lacquer boxes. While the traditional elements of miniature painting—brilliant colors and fine details highlighted in gold—suited the depiction of popular fables and tales from medieval history, revolutionary artists also adapted them to the depiction of the Soviet drive to industrialize and collectivize society. During World War II, painters celebrated the achievements of the Red Army and painted portraits of individual soldiers as keepsakes for family members left at home. Presented as a traditional Russian art form, these painted lacquer boxes were sold to Western collectors as a means to raise hard currencies for the Soviet state.

The communist authorities organized the painters of Palekh into an official school. Training was rigorous. Graduation followed the submission of a diploma piece, a holdover from the Tsarist apprenticeship system. Indeed, even under communism, painting in Palekh was dominated by family dynasties, such as the Fedotovs, father Valentin, son Andrei, and daughter Irina, and couples like Andrei and Natalia Arapov.

Just as Palekh artists attained an extraordinary level of refinement as evident in Nikolai Lopatkin’s tiered box, decorated with scenes from the Lay of Prince Igor’s Campaign, communism collapsed. The Soviet Union broke apart and artists in the new Russian Federation reclaimed their pre-Revolutionary traditions. Palekh’s artists have reverted to painting religious icons, thus making the period of secular image production a distinctive era in the village’s long history of miniature painting.
Could one have supposed that icon painting, the most conservative craft, might have enabled Palekh craftsmen to arrive at their present perfect mastery which evokes admiration...Palekh, its history is a striking example of how wisely the revolution can link the past with the present. Palekh will always represent poetic images of the people.

Maxim Gorky (1868-1936)
Irina Valentinovna Fedotova (Russian, b. 1974)

*Duke Stepanovich*, 1992

Egg tempera on small pyramid-form lidded lacquered papier-maché chest

4 ½ by 7 ¾ by 1 1/8 inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Valentin Petrovich Fedotov (Russian, b. 1935)

*The Golden Fish*, 1992

Egg tempera on a small lidded lacquered papier-maché chest

1 ¾ by 2 3/8 by 2 ¾ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com

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Valentin Petrovich Fedotov (Russian, b. 1935)

*Ilya Murometz*, 1993

Egg tempera on small pyramid-form lidded lacquered papier-maché box

4 3/4 by 7 7/8 by 1 ¼ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Fedotov, *Ilya Murometz*, 1993
Valentin Petrovich Fedotov (Russian, b. 1935) and Andrei Valentinovich Fedotov (Russian, b. 1967)  
*The Nightingale Budin*, 1992

Egg tempera on lidded lacquered papier-maché jewel chest  
4 ¼ by 6 by 6 ½ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
V. Fedotov and A. Fedotov
*The Nightingale Budin*, 1992
Valentin Petrovich Fedotov (Russian, b. 1935)

*The Princess and the Seven Bogatyres*, 1989

Egg tempera on a hinged lidded rectangular lacquered papier-maché tall box

3 by 2 ½ by 3 ½ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Fedotov, *The Princess and the Seven Bogatyres*, 1989
Alexandre Ivanovich Kovalyov (Russian, b. 1934)
Winter Fairy Tale of Father Frost and the Maiden (Morozko), 1992
Egg tempera on a round, lidded lacquered papier-maché round box, 2” x 2” (diam.)
Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Nikolai Pavlovich Lopatin (Russian, b. 1947)

*Prince Igor, the Lay of Igor's Campaign*, nd.

Egg tempera on a four-section lacquered papier-maché jewel chest
9 by 6 ½ by 9 ½ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Lopatin, *Prince Igor, the Lay of Igor’s Campaign*, nd.
Alexei Nikolaevich Lopatin (Russian, b. 1970)
*The Princess and the Seven Bogatyres*, 1993
Egg tempera on a round, lidded lacquered papier-maché miniature chest
1 ¾ by 1 ¾ by 2 ¼ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Lopatin, *The Princess and the Seven Bogatyres*, 1993

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J-muCScjis&list=PLKSGoM6Yu_lr3oQFdX6P3JfwEEOFSnMJ&index=4
Nikolai Pavlovich Lopatin (Russian, b. 1947)
*Ruslan and Ludmila*, c. 1992
Egg tempera on a round, lidded lacquered papier-maché box
3 1/8 diameter by 2 3/4 inches
Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com

Link to video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYaN5ITjHeE&list=PLKSGoM6Yu_lr3oQFdx6P3JfwEEOFShnMJ&index=2

Svetlana Vyacheslavovna Astakhova (Russian, b. 1968)  
*Tsar Sultan*, 1993  
Egg tempera on hinged folding three-panel lacquered papier-maché travel “skladen, 6 by 4 ½ by ½ inches (9 inches when open), Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Andrei Vasilievich Arapov (Russian, b. 1956) and Natalia Nikolaevna Arapova (Russian, b. 1961)  
The Golden Cockerel, 1993  
Egg tempera on a lacquered papier-maché wall panel  
14 5/8 by 8 3/8 by 1.4 inches  
Private Collection,  
Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com  

Link to video:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4qdkcLr4bM&list=PLKSGoM6Yu_lr3oQFdx6P3JfwEEOFShnMJ&index=3
Andrei Vasilievich Arapov and Natalia Nikolaevna Arapova
*The Golden Cockerel*, 1993
Natalia Nikolaevna Arapova (Russian, b. 1961)

_Snow Maiden_, 1991

Egg tempera on a hinged lidded rectangular lacquered papier-maché box

5 5/8 by 9 ¾ by 1 ¾ inches, Private Collection, Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
Nikolai Pavlovich Lopatin (Russian, b. 1947)
*Fire Bird*, c. 1992
Egg tempera on a round lacquered papier-maché brooch in a red cloth pouch
2 inches diameter, Private Collection
Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com

N. Volkov (Russian, nd.)
Egg tempera on a lidded lacquered papier-maché round “powder” box
1 1/8 by 5 5/8 inches (diameter), Private Collection,
Photography: mclaughlinphoto.com
The Hyde Collection
Online Exhibition Series

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