



***Holy Image, Sacred Presence:
Russian Icons, 1500–1900***

March 12–June 5, 2011

The icon, a form of holy image first documented in the second-century Roman Empire, is integral to Orthodox Christian worship and everyday life. The Russian icons exhibited here date mainly from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. They represent “portraits” of Christ and the saints as vehicles for prayer, and also narratives of the major feast-days that re-enact the history of the Christian faith.

Orthodox theologians such as Theodore the Studite (759–826) argued that the believer did not worship a material object but instead venerated the figures whose presence was evoked by the icon. That is, icons are a point of access to the sacred. The icon’s efficacy depended on the perceived authenticity of the likeness; thus, traditional depiction was favored over innovation, and copying venerable models was considered a virtue.

After the Kievan prince Vladimir converted to Orthodox Christianity in 988, icons and image-veneration practices from Byzantium were adopted in the Kievan Rus and the later Russian state. Early Russian icons conformed to Byzantine types, but Russian icon painters developed their own distinct styles and introduced new themes and local saints. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, individual icon painters such as Simon Ushekov began to paint in a more illusionistic style following European models, but it was particularly under Tsar Peter the Great (1772–25) that Russian icon painters were officially encouraged to embrace European artistic traditions. Traditional icons were still made for more conservative believers.

The 1917 Russian Revolution temporarily disrupted Russian Orthodox culture. The Bolsheviks saw icons as a reminder of the Tsarist past and removed them from churches to be displayed as “art” in museums. Later, Western-style icons and contemporary copies of earlier icons, sometimes “antiqued” to make them appear older, were sold to foreigners to support the Soviet economy. In the 1930s Americans began collecting the later Russian icons sold in government shops, and at this time the core of the Chazen’s icon collection was acquired by Joseph E. Davies, American ambassador to the Soviet Union (1937–38).



Handout for Chazen Museum of Art Docents
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Icon traditions, kept alive by émigrés in Europe and the United States, were vigorously revived in Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed. The sentiments expressed by a Russian iconophile in 1915 might apply to the today's icon culture:

“A foreigner will remain unmoved before these icons, whereas we are overcome by their mysterious power. Because before these icons, or ones like them, the souls of our forebears poured out their most powerful feelings, because before them they experienced rare flashes of great joy and powerful waves of that great sorrow that faith and faith alone could help them beat.”

Related Events

March

24 Thursday

7:30 p.m. “Eastern Orthodox Icons: Venerable Paintings and their Makers.” Lecture by David Giffey, icon painter. *Artist David Giffey will give an illustrated lecture on the working methods, materials, and context of Byzantine icon painting. He has traveled in Eastern Europe and the Middle East documenting historic examples and painted the iconography at the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, Madison. Gallery hours will be extended to 7:30 prior to the lecture.*

25 Friday

5:30 p.m. Lecture on *Holy Image, Sacred Presence: Russian Icons, 1500–1900* by Thomas E. A. Dale, exhibition curator and professor of art history, UW–Madison

6:30-8 p.m. Reception for *Holy Image, Sacred Presence: Russian Icons, 1500–1900*

26 Saturday

7 p.m. *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors (Tini zabutykh predkiv)*. USSR, 1966, 97 min., directed by Sergei Paradjanov, in Ukrainian with English subtitles

UW Cinematheque, 4070 Vilas Hall, 821 University Ave. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

April

15 Friday

Symposium: “Russian Icons in Context.” Offered in conjunction with the exhibition *Holy Image, Sacred Presence: Russian Icons, 1500–1900*. Symposium continues April 16.

5:00 p.m. Keynote lecture: “Russian Icons and the Making of Sacred Spaces” by Alexei Lidov, director of research at the Institute for World Culture at the Moscow State University. The symposium is free and open to the public. For more information call 608-263-2340.

16 Saturday

9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Symposium: “Russian Icons in Context”

Morning session: 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. “History, Collecting and Perception of Russian Icons”

Afternoon session: 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. “New Research on Russian Icons in the Chazen Museum of Art—Iconography, Ritual, Sacred Space.”

Please refer to the Chazen Calendar for events in May and June 2011

Generous support for this exhibition has been provided by the Chazen Museum of Art Council and by the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



What is This?

QR Codes

You may have seen these little square patterns in advertisements, marketing campaigns, and even video games. QR codes are matrix barcodes, and one common application is to map a URL that provides additional content related to the immediate material.

In this gallery, each object has a QR code for a web page on the UW–Madison Art History Department website. This exhibition was researched and curated by Thomas E. A. Dale’s Icons and the Senses art history class and the web pages are provided by the Art History Department.

To access these pages, you need a smartphone. Download a QR Reader app, which is simple to use—just open the app and point your mobile device camera at the code. There are many free QR readers available in smartphone app stores. These two are well reviewed and should be available for iPhone, Blackberry, Windows, Android.



BeeTagg
UpCode

Video

These photographs demonstrate the uses of Russian icons. They offer a window into Russian Orthodox architecture, the broader history of Russian icons, and the ritual use of icons up to this day. The accompanying Russian liturgical music is from the late eighteenth to early twentieth century.

Making Icons

Russian icons were made mainly from lime wood, alder, birch, oak, and imported cypress. Battens (*shponki*) were inserted in channels on the panel's back to prevent cracking, and a recessed space was created on the front for the primary icon scene. The front was covered with linen overlaid in a fine plaster (*levka*), composed of alabaster or chalk dust and applied in several thin layers to create a smooth painting surface. A preliminary drawing was made with brush or pencil following a well-known model, then the drawing was incised into the surface. When gold was used for background and haloes, these areas were prepared with clay-based bole containing an adhesive to which sheets of gold leaf were applied. The remaining areas of figures, landscape, and buildings were painted in egg tempera (pigments suspended in egg yolk), which was applied in gradations of a single hue ranging from the basic dark tone to the lightest highlight tone. The darkest tone was used to reinforce figure contours. Sometimes gold was applied to create fine linear highlights on clothing. Finally, the icon was sealed with *olipha*, a boiled linseed oil usually containing amber, which warmed the overall color scheme and darkened over time.

From the eighteenth century, Russian icon painters frequently substituted oil paints for tempera, which allowed the painter to conceal brushwork, transition gradually between areas of light and shadow, and create a perspectival illusionism comparable to Western European models.

1.

The Nativity of Christ

Russian (Moscow), late 16th-century, repainted mid-to-late 19th-century

Tempera and oil panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.2

Likely displayed on the lower level of an iconostasis, the center of this large panel features the Mother of God reclining and the infant Christ receiving the Magi in a grotto. Pigment analysis reveals that the original 16th-century icon was repainted after the mid-19th century; the present transparent paint layer, which reveals underdrawings, is the result of over-cleaning.

Icons in the Church

The primary place for icon veneration is the church. In this sacred space, a believer encounters numerous manifestations of holy imagery, such as the iconostasis, *proskynetaria*, and portable icons. The iconostasis, a screen dividing the congregational space from the sanctuary, consists of three to five rows of icons. The lowest tier is devoted to icons of Christ and the Virgin and Child, adjacent the sanctuary doors, and other icons of local importance. The Deësis tier includes depictions of Christ, John the Baptist, and the Mother of God, as well as additional saints. Additional tiers are devoted to the prophets and ancestors of Christ. A feast row includes narratives of Christ's life, such as the Crucifixion and Pentecost. Minor feasts are depicted in portable icons placed closer to the congregation on stands (*analoy*). Through liturgical use, many of these images conflate the immediate sensory experience of worship with the cyclical calendar of the festal church year, evoking the presence of eternal time.

For believers, icons are inseparable from the ritual of sacred space where images, sounds, and emotions come together. Greek writer Georgios Vizyenos described such an experience in the short story “My Mother’s Sin” (1883):

“The faint light of the lamps in front of the iconostasion, barely able to illumine it and the steps in front of it, rendered the darkness around us even more dubious and frightening than if we had been completely in the dark. Whenever the flame of a candle flickered, it seemed to me that the Saint on the icon facing it had begun to come to life and was stirring, trying to wrench free of the wood and come down onto the pavement, dressed in his broad, red robes, with the halo around his head, and with those staring eyes on his pale and impassive face.”

2.

Three Iconostasis Panels from the Deësis (Intercession) Tier
Russian (Moscow), 19th century (in 16th-century style)
Oil on panel
Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.5–7

These panels showing St. John Chrysostom, the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist originally formed part of the Deësis tier on an iconostasis. The faces and hands of the figures are turned towards the central Christ (now lost) in supplication, emphasizing their role as intercessors for the believer.

3.

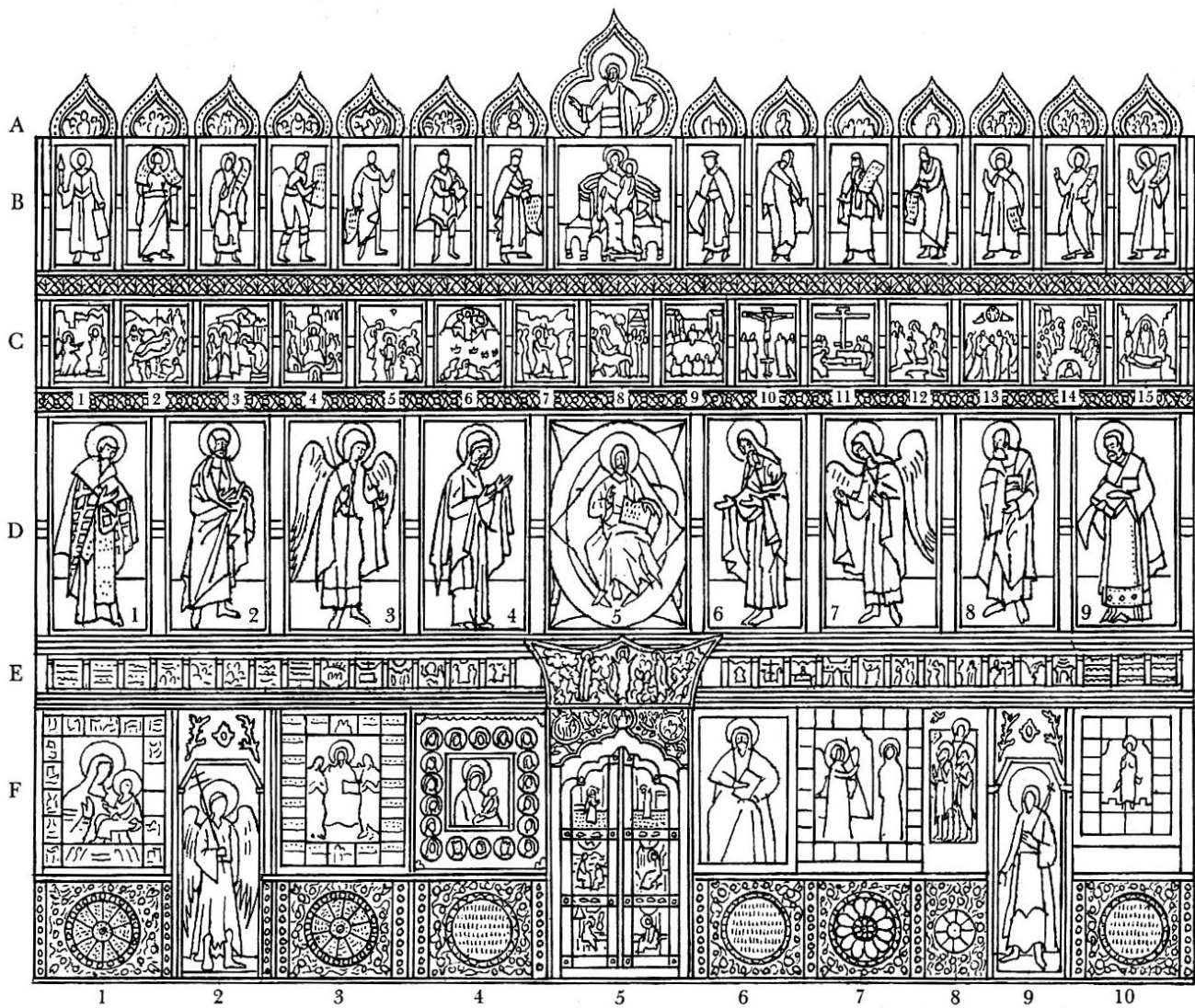
Saint George, Bishop of Mytilene
Russian, (Northern Master), mid-19th to early 20th century (in late-16th-century style)
Oil on panel
Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.4

This Deësis (Intercession) tier panel of an iconostasis depicts the 9th-century bishop saint George of Mytilene, dressed in a white *chasuble* (outermost vestment) and *omophorion* (stole) adorned with crosses. He was venerated for his support of icons during the reign of the iconoclastic Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian (717–741).

4.

Six Saints from Deësis (Intercession) Tier of Iconostasis
Russian, 19th century (in 16th-century style)
Oil on panel
Friends of the Elvehjem Museum of Art purchase through the Glenn McHugh Bequest,
1978.12–17

From left to right appear St. John Chrysostom (4th-century author of an Orthodox liturgy), Saint Peter, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, St. Paul, and St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. The saints extend arms in prayer and turn toward Christ, who would originally have occupied the central position of the series. The linear highlights, muted color scheme, and absence of illusion of space are typical of earlier 16th-century icons, a style copied in the 19th-century icons made for traditionalist communities.



Iconostasis (Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin, Moscow)

A Tier of patriarchs, with the God of Sabaoth in the middle

B Tier of prophets, with the Virgin Hodigitria enthroned in the middle (16th century)

C Feast-day tier: 1 Annunciation 2 Nativity 3 Presentation in the Temple (Purification of the Virgin) 4 Instruction (Mid-Pentecost) 5 Baptism of Christ 6 Transfiguration 7 Raising of Lazarus 8 Entry into Jerusalem 9 Last Supper 10 Crucifixion 11 Deposition 12 Christ's Descent into Hell (Anastasis) 13 Ascension 14 Descent of the Holy Ghost 15 Assumption of the Virgin

D Deesis tier: 1 St Basil the Great 2 St Peter 3 Archangel Michael 4 the Virgin 5 Enthroned Christ 6 St John the Baptist 7 Archangel Gabriel 8 St Paul 9 St John Chrysostom (tiers C and D 1405)

E Icons of the months (18th century)

F Veneration tier: 1 Virgin of Tikhvin (16th century) 2 Archangel Uriel, on the door to the prothesis (18th century) 3 Enthroned Saviour (17th century) 4 Virgin Hodigitria (16th century) with medallions of women of the Old Testament (18th century) 5 Royal or Paradise Door, with panels depicting the Annunciation and the evangelists 6 Enthroned Saviour (1337) 7 Annunciation of Ustyug (17th-century copy) 8 John the Baptist, the Apostle Peter, Alexis 'the Man of God' (1683) 9 Archangel Raphael on the door to the diakonikon (18th century) 10 Saviour of Smolensk (16th century)

5.

Portable Iconostasis

Russian, mid-16th century

Tempera on panel

Milwaukee Art Museum, gift of Dr. John E. Sinsky, M2000.191

This fifteen-panel iconostasis replicates the format of the monumental icon screen in Russian Orthodox churches, including three of its five distinct zones, those dedicated to the Deësis (Intercession), the liturgical feasts, and the prophets. Larger than the Chazen's portable iconostasis featured in this exhibition, this example was probably designed to create a private chapel space in an aristocratic home.

Icons in Everyday Life

“Each Christian must, in all rooms, hang by seniority holy images, adorning them beautifully, and place light-holders in which candles are to be lit during prayers in front of the holy image.” (Book of Household Management, Russia, ca. 1550)

Before the 1917 Revolution, icons were not only venerated in churches but also in the home and public spaces such as the workplace, street corners, above shop entrances and city gates. They were carried in village processions in times of need or during special feast days. In the nineteenth century, it was common to create a “beautiful corner” (*krasny ugal*), an array of icons that furnished a focus for prayer and sanctified and protected the space of the home.

The faithful interacted with icons in various ways. Metalwork revetments provided a protective surface that could be touched or even kissed (*aspasmos*). Devotional gestures during prayer before an icon include prostration (*proskynesis*), or a quick bow of the head to an icon before leaving the home or workplace or when passing an icon outside. In private homes a candle or candles would be kept burning in front of icons. The light playing on an icon's gilded surface and metal revetment activated sacred presence by engaging the senses.

Personal sacred space was also created by unfolding small-scale triptychs, usually featuring the Deësis—an intercessory group including Christ, the Mother of God, and John the Baptist and other saints—or by portable iconostases that reproduced in miniature the screen dividing the church sanctuary from the congregational space.

6.

Saint Michael Archistrategos (“Commander of Heavenly Hosts”)

Russian (Kamenetz-Podolsk, Ukraine), icon: late 18th century; basma: by BYC,
active after 1764

Oil on panel with gold-plated silver basma (frame) with smoked topaz

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.27

The Archangel Michael, a favored patron saint of the Russian Tsars, is depicted in a Western European style within an expansive landscape. Mounted on horseback, Michael spears the devil while holding the Book of Life, blowing a trumpet, and swinging a censer. Based on Revelation 12:7–9, this theme first appeared in Russia in the 17th century.

7.

St. Nicholas Thaumaturge (“The Wonderworker”)

Russian, (Moscow?), late 18th century

Oil on panel

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.25a

Alexei Krutikov (Russian, active 1860s)

St. Nicholas Thaumaturge

(“The Wonderworker”), 1869

Gold-plated silver riza

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.25b

St. Nicholas, a 4th-century Greek Bishop of Myra, was adopted as a miracle-working protector in Russia. He wears a bishop’s mitre (head-dress), omophorion (stole), and englion (an icon necklace) to symbolize his ecclesiastical authority. 1992.25 follows traditional medieval conventions in its bust-length format and gold background. 1992.26, which depicts Nicholas standing on the threshold of the sanctuary, is painted in the more naturalistic style typical after Peter the Great’s call for artistic reforms in the late 17th century.

8.

St. Nicholas Thaumaturge (“The Wonderworker”)

Russian, Moscow (?), late 18th–19th century

Oil on panel

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.26a

Dubimin Nicolaus Dimitriev (Russian, active 1849–54)

St. Nicholas Thaumaturge (“The Wonderworker”)

Gold-plated silver oklad

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.26b

9.

Saints Bishop Arseny and Prince Michael of Tver
Russian (Tver or Moscow), 19th century

Oil on panel

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.24a

Michael Pivert (Russian, active 1850s)

Saints Bishop Arseny and Prince Michael of Tver, 1851

Gold-plated silver oklad

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter,
1992.24a

This icon depicts two Northern Russian saints, Prince Michael of Tver (1333–1399) and Bishop Arseny (r. 1390–1409) standing in a landscape with Christ above. The buildings in the background, which may represent the Zheltikov (Uspensky) Monastery, founded by Arsenius in 1394 during Michael's reign, suggest that the icon may have served as a pilgrim's souvenir from Tver.

Holy Frames and Celestial Light

Many icons in the Chazen collection have revetments (metal covers) that protect the icon and are embellished with precious metal and gems. There are four types of revetments: A *basma* frames the icon, covering only the border and leaving the entire image open to view. A *riza* covers the surface and leaves only the painted holy figures visible. An *oklad* covers the entire image except for the holy figure's face, hands, and feet. Icons can also have decorative halos, crowns, and collars made of metal and semi-precious stones.

Metal revetments originated in eleventh-century Byzantium, where they were relatively rare. They became much more common in Russian Orthodoxy. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some icon painters left parts of the panel unpainted since at that time icons were designed to include a revetment.

The metalwork frames offer a liminal zone—a threshold for Orthodox believers to physically and visually access the sacral world. The revetments were designed to reflect flickering candlelight or lamplight, evoking the celestial light of heaven. Writing of Russian icons in their oklads in the Moscow Kremlin, Paul of Aleppo (1627–70) writes, “no goldsmith, however skilled, could estimate the great stones, diamonds, rubies and emeralds, set upon the icons and haloes of Our Saviour and our Lady: the jewels glow in the darkness like burning coals.” This holy light was especially important to Russians because they saw their country itself as a radiant second heaven, “shining forth with the all-splendid light of piety” (Simon Denisov, 1682–1741). Revetments capture this light and remind worshipers of the importance of personal piety.

10.

Saint Basil the Great and Saint Basil “the Fool” adoring the Holy Trinity
Russian (Moscow), 19th century
Oil, tin, and enamel on panel
Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.15

This icon depicts two saints, Bishop Basil “the Great,” who authored the Orthodox liturgy, and the ascetic Basil “the Fool,” facing each other adoring the Holy Trinity, represented by three angels, shown above in grisaille (monochrome) on the raised frame.

11.

Saint Theodore of Tryon
Russian, 19th century
Tempera and gold on wood panel
Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.18

A Roman legionary at the time of Emperor Maximian’s persecution of the Christians in 303, Saint Theodore of Tryon is depicted fully armed, holding a cross and palm of martyrdom in one hand and a shield in the other. The composition is set within an elaborate Baroque style frame.

12.

Saint Barbara
Russian (Palekh), ca. 1900
Tempera, oil, and gold on panel
Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.20

The early Christian Saint Barbara wears a martyr’s crown. The scroll is inscribed, “I revere the Holy Trinity.” The painter has combined a traditional frontal pose and gold ground with a naturalistic, European-style of modeling head and body typical of icons painted at Palekh during the reign of the last Romanov Tsar.

13.

Saint Sergei of Radonezh
Russian (Palekh, after Dmitri Korin), ca. 1900
Tempera, oil, and gold leaf on panel
Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.21

Sergei of Radonezh, a 14th-century monastic saint, was a spiritual father to icon painter Andrei Rublev. This icon’s small size suggests that it was intended for inclusion among the many icons in a home’s krasnyi ugol (beautiful corner).

14.

Elijah in the Dessert

Russian (Moscow), late 19th–early 20th century (in late 16th-century style)

Oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.14

The prophet Elijah was frequently represented in Russian icons as a model of the ascetic life. Here he appears in the desert at the mouth of a cave, with a staff and scroll of his prophecy in hand.

15.

The Madonna Tikhvinskaya with Saints Sergei and Stephen

Russian, 19th century

Oil on panel with silver gilt oklad

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter, 1992.29a–b

The Tikhvinskaya, a variation of the Byzantine Hodegetria icon that shows Mary pointing to the Christ-child, is said to have miraculously appeared to fishermen over Lake Ladoga in 1388. It quickly became the focus of a monastery at Tikhvin, and due to many healing miracles and visionary appearances it gained great popularity in the 19th century. An icon within an icon, it is shown flanked by Saint Sergei of Radonezh and the Archdeacon Stephen, the proto-martyr.

16.

Saint George and the Dragon

Russian (Moscow), 19th century

Gold-plated silver riza

From the Collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter, 1992.31a–b

17.

The Virgin of the Sign (Blachernitissa)

Russian, 17th century, repainted in the 19th century

Tempera and oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.3

Based on the Byzantine Blachernitissa, this icon features the Christ-child in a medallion hovering over the bust of the Mother of God, who extends her arms in prayer. The Sign was increasingly venerated as a miraculous icon in Russia after a version in Novgorod was credited with saving the city from the invading Suzdal army in 1170.

The Feast Tier of the Iconostasis

These four icons depict narratives from the life of Christ and the Virgin. The common size and style suggest they belong to a single series, possibly adorning the feast row of a monumental iconostasis. The panels follow iconographic and stylistic models that go back as early as the 16th century, but are painted on relatively modern material with machine-ground pigments, and may have been deliberately antiqued to make them more saleable in the early 1930s, the time they are documented as being inventoried by the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.

18.

The Nativity

Russian (Moscow), 19th century (in 17th-century style)

Oil on panel with silver basma and silver filigree haloes

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.23

This multi-scenic narrative of the birth of Christ in a cave is adapted from Byzantine icons. In addition to Mary and the Christ-child at center, the panel depicts the three Magi following the star of Bethlehem on horseback, the angels announcing the birth to shepherds, and two Apocryphal scenes in the foreground: the midwife Salome bathing the child, and Thyrsus questioning Joseph.

19.

The Crucifixion

Russian, late 19th or early 20th century (in 16th-century style)

Oil and gold on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.11

Set against the walls of Jerusalem, The Crucifixion conforms closely to 16th-century Russian icons in which Mary and John the Evangelist lament Christ's death. His eventual victory over death and his role as "new Adam," redeeming and resurrecting the old Adam, is suggested by the blood dripping from his wounds to Adam's skull at the base of the cross.

20.

Pentecost

Russian, late 19th or early 20th century (in 16th-century style)

Oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.12

The Pentecost celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit to the twelve apostles, shown here seated on a curved bench. The crowned ruler at the base of the icon is the King of the World, shown in the guise of a Russian Tsar. The inscription reads "The man made into the image of God is now possessed of the sins of Adam. The entire world is plunged into darkness of disbelief. Before this man was clothed in a royal mantle; now he is clothed in the vesture of Satan. The Tsar's crown is upon the man because sin reigned in the world. In his hand He holds the priestly veil, which is the knowledge and enlightenment of the world."

21.

Christ's Descent into Hell (Anastasis)

Russian (Moscow), 19th century

Oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.13

This Russian variation on the traditional Orthodox icon for Easter shows Christ resurrecting Adam and Eve, who emerge from the hellmouth (lower left), as well as throngs of Old Testament ancestors, who are led by the Archangel Michael into the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem (upper right).

22.

Christ's Descent into Hell (Anastasis)

Russian, late 19th or early 20th century (in late-16th-century style)

Oil and gold on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.10

Christ appears at center within a mandorla (almond-shaped aureole of light) signifying his active divine nature, which enables him to release from death his ancestors, including Adam and Eve, who appear at his immediate right as he tramples the gates of hell.

23.

Our Lady of the Mantle (Pokrov)

Russian (Moscow), early 20th century (in late 16th-century style)

Oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.8

The Russian Pokrov (protection) icon commemorates St. Andrew the Fool's miraculous vision of the Mother of God in the Blachernae Church in 10th-century Constantinople. Set within a tall Russian-style domed church, Mary hovers above the holy doors of the sanctuary with angels holding her protective mantle as she extends her hands in prayer toward Christ.

24.

The Baptism of Our Lord

Russian, late 19th or early 20th century (in 16th-century style)

Oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.9

The Baptism of Christ, also known as the Theophany (revelation of God), is celebrated January 19 in the Russian Orthodox calendar. John the Baptist, at left, baptizes Christ, who stands in the Jordan River as three angels bow their heads in reverence, and a dove descends from heaven to confirm that Jesus is the Son of God.

Cases

25.

Saint John the Evangelist

Russian, 19th century

Oil on panel

Gift of Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.19

This icon once belonged to a set of four roundels of the Evangelists adorning the holy doors of an iconostasis. Its dramatically lit, illusionistic style, based on European Baroque painting, is complemented by an atypical iconography for Russian icons, in which the Evangelist's symbol, the eagle, appears at St. John's shoulder as a source of inspiration.

26.

Mandylicon

Russian (Moscow), icon: 19th century; oklad: Larion Emilov, 1875

Oil on panel, silver oklad with semi-precious stones

From the collection of Michael P. Kluppel, given in memory by Dolores Kluppel Vetter, 1992.28a–b

The Mandylicon represents the Holy Face of Christ on a cloth. Orthodox tradition records that Christ pressed his damp face into a cloth, which he sent to heal King Abgar of Edessa. Revered as a relic in Constantinople from the 10th century, the original mandylicon was considered the first icon of Christ and deemed miraculous since it was an *acheiropoieton*, (an icon not created by human hands). It is exhibited here in its own case to evoke the *proskynetaria* (icon stands), which display icons for intimate veneration in Orthodox churches. The silver oklad protects the icon when it is kissed or touched by the faithful, and frames the holy face with radiant light suggesting Christ's divine nature.

27.

Tablet Icon with Narratives from the Life of Christ

Front: Doubting Thomas, Women at the Empty Tomb, Jesus Healing the Paralytic, Samaritan Woman at the Well

Reverse: Disputation in the Temple,

Jesus Healing the Blind Man, Ascension, Trinity

Russian (Moscow), late 17th–19th century

Tempera and gold on leather

Bequest of Alexander and Henrietta W. Hollaender, 1992.331

Starting at top left and continuing left to right, the eight images on this double-sided tablet icon correspond to the liturgical feasts of the Russian Church from Easter to the Pentecost. The delicate architectural backdrops and elongated figures echo the miniaturizing style of the Stroganov School, later revived in the 19th century.

28.

The Miraculous Draft of Fishes
Russian (Palekh?), 18th–19th century
Tempera and gold on wood panel
Joseph E. Davies, 37.1.17

Gift of

Depicting an early miracle in the life of Christ from the Gospel of Luke (5:1–11), this icon uses traditional Russian painting techniques—incised lines for underdrawings and applied gold leaf—but reflects the Russian artistic turn to Western European models in its subject matter and perspectival view of the landscape.

29.

Great Deësis (Intercession)
Russian (Moscow), 19th Century
Oil on panel with gilt silver oklad
Gift of Joseph Davies, 37.1.16 a–b

The Deësis is here expanded beyond the typical three-figure group gathered around the enthroned Christ to include Saint Nicholas of Myra, Prince Gabriel, and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel (second row), the Russian warrior Saint Artemi, and monastic saints Zosima, Savati, and Alexis (frame). The Holy Trinity appears in the form of three angels on the upper border.

30.

Portable Icon Triptych of the Deësis (Intercession)
Russian, late 18th to 19th century
Tempera on wood panel, with brass and enamel revetment
Gift of Elizabeth R. Holmes, 1982.62a–c

This portable triptych depicts the bust-length figure of Christ, flanked by the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist, to form the Deësis. Possibly worn around the neck, this icon was used for physical protection and private prayer during travel. Christ's book is inscribed, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

31.

Portable Iconostasis
Russian (Moscow), 17th century
Tempera and gold on panel
Gift of Joseph C. Bradley, 62.4.2

This portable iconostasis functioned as the devotional focus in Russian Orthodox homes; it mediated the believers' prayers before Christ and the saints in heaven and recorded the primary feasts of the church year. The images of the monumental iconostasis were replicated to re-create the church's sacred space when the panels were opened at home or on travels.

32.

Portable Triptych with Great Deësis (Intercession)

Russian (Moscow), 1652–1675

Tempera and silver on panel with copper frames

Gift of Joseph C. Bradley, 62.4.1

On the wings of this portable triptych, possibly made for a Russian bishop, the metropolitans of the Russian Church, led by the Archangel Gabriel, at left, are depicted as successors to those of the Byzantine church, led by the Archangel Michael.