

RUSSIAN MAECENAS

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With
Russian
pages

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is Famous For *p. 8*

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in the Orient *p. 28*



Lamp. Egypt, 11th c. Mounting: Italy, 14th c.
Rock crystal, gold, enamel. State Hermitage.
Restored in 2016 with the participation of Cartier.

*Fair Government
Strong Business
Prosperous Citizens*

RUSSIAN  MAECENAS

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Cover image:

Fragment of façade frieze depicting angels from the bell-tower
of the Church of St. Anna the Righteous of Kashin. Restored by *Pallada*.
Keramarkh Museum of Architectural Ceramics, St. Petersburg.

Welcome!

The Need for a Museum

People on Earth have this need — to preserve the
historical and cultural memories embodied in works
of art, documents, artefacts and lives. That is why there
have been museums since the time of Ptolemy.

I do not mean only great repositories — a museum
can be for the relics of a school, a factory or a football
club, but creating even a small museum is not an easy
undertaking. The founders are usually enthusiasts like Irina
Snegovaya, who has managed to set up the *Kellomäki-
Komarovo Museum* in an unconverted location, highlighting
the cultural phenomenon of this dacha settlement.

These people are not necessarily driven by a sense
of mission — occasionally it is simple curiosity. Some
publishers from Minsk whom I knew in the early 1990s
bought land for dachas near the village of Dudutki,
and what did they not find out about it! The road there,
according to the chronicles, was the one along which
the Polotskian prince Vseslav the Sorcerer galloped 'like
a wolf to the Nemiga from Dudutki, having learned about
the siege of ancient Minsk', and musical life was thriving
in the estate of the Yelsky family. Now Dudutki has not
just a museum but a whole ethnographic centre.



It is amazing that, in spite of all the difficulties,
museums of various types and status continue to appear.
2017 saw the opening of the Museum of the History
of the St. Petersburg Eparchy, encompassing the period
from 1742, but the section that leaves the deepest
impression describes the repressions suffered by priests
for their faith in the 20th century. A museum is always
an opportunity to gaze into the mirror of time and take
a look at yourself.

A few days ago, the city's Acting Governor Alexander
Beglov lent his support to the idea of Hermitage Director
Mikhail Piotrovsky to open branches of the Museum
of the Defence and Blockade of Leningrad. This will bring
other museums linked to the theme of the blockade —
the Tram Museum, the Museum of the Bakery once
named after Badaev and now *Karavay* — into one large
museum. This is our history, our memories which we
have no right to lose.

*Arkady Sosnov,
Editor-in-Chief
of Russian Maecenas*



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I find Tchaikovsky's passionate Herman more interesting than Pushkin's calculating Hermann — I can sing it endlessly, and every time it adds to my experience; the role grows... I don't stand still and repeat what I have done before. Each time I look for something new in the character. And if you dig, you always unearth something!

*Vladimir GALOUZINE, Mariinsky Theatre soloist,
People's Artist of Russia / p. 18*

A Celadon Story

A GIFT TO THE MUSEUM HELPS TO UNCOVER PALACE MYSTERIES

Maria MENSHIKOVA, Senior Researcher and Curator of the Collection of Chinese Applied Art in the State Hermitage Oriental Department

Photos: Anastasia Abramova, Sergei Soloviev. Portraits: P. S. Demidov. © State Hermitage, St. Petersburg, 2019



Dish — ceramic, with light-blue transparent glaze. Mounting — gilded bronze. France, 1740s–1750s. State Hermitage.

On Maecenas Day in 2018 the collector Yury Abramov donated to the Hermitage a ceramic dish with engraving and light-bluish glaze in a bronze mounting. Although the first-class gilded bronze is immediately noticeable, the value of the gift could be established only after lengthy painstaking research.

The piece had been altered so much over time that it was unrecognizable, but step by step we managed to reconstruct its history. In the first place, the elements of this table decoration are not coeval: the gilded bronze — ormolu mounting is French work from the mid-18th century, whereas the dish was made in Russia in the early 20th century. It is now only remotely similar to 14th–15th century Chinese ceramics with olive-green glaze that were called *celadon* in Europe.

In the early 18th century Chinese ceramics were luxury items that few could afford. The earliest documented oriental objects in France relate to the collections of Louis XIV (1643–1715). In the Sun King's reign palace interiors were richly decorated in *La Chine* style (also called *chinoiserie*). From the 1720s, with the arrival of the rococo style, gilding of walls, furniture and mountings of various objects became fashionable. This fascination with the Orient intensified during Louis XV's reign, particularly between the 1740s and 1760s. Expensive oriental porcelain began to be mounted in gilded bronze so that it would blend into an interior. Chinese porcelain vases changed their shape and purpose with these added ormolu mountings: they became pitchers with metal handles and bases; large deep dishes — bowls for fruit

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which served as table decorations (surtouts-de-table); vessels for potpourri; candelabras, lampions...

In 18th century Paris there were special ateliers managed by *marchands-merciers* (literally — merchant-traders). Journals of sales and purchases of some antique dealers have survived, for example that of the court purveyor Lazare Duvaux. The journal of his company *Le Chagrin de Turquie* for 1748–1758 records hundreds of objects, including porcelain pieces in mountings. Sometimes the names of the purchasers are recorded: Louis XV, Madame Pompadour, the Duke of Orléans and others, as well as the names of the master bronzers who made the ormolu mountings. We quote a description ‘of May, 6th day, 1750’. It first mentions the substitution of two potpourri vases for two light-blue vases at a price of 360 livres, then: *‘Deux morceaux de porcelain celadon à reliefs, avec leurs terrasses dorées, 720 l.’* (‘two pieces of celadon porcelain with reliefs, with their sloping sides gilded’). It is possible that they were purchased by le Comte de Luc, the king’s illegitimate son.

The 18th century was a time of close contacts between Russia and France and the rulers exchanged valuable gifts. Porcelain and bronze items were presented to Elizaveta Petrovna and Ekaterina Alexeyevna, as well as to Pavel Petrovich and Maria Fyodorovna. How did the dish with the gilded bronze mounting come to be in Russia and where was it kept? A detailed study of archive material enabled us to find a fair amount of information about its time in St. Petersburg.

An inventory of various objects from the collections in the imperial palaces in St. Petersburg and its suburbs was drawn up in the 1870s and 1880s. The list of items in Tsarskoye Selo compiled by Dmitry Grigorovich is important to us, in particular: *‘List D. items of principally artistic significance’*. In the ‘Old Palace’ section we read: ‘First floor. Maria Fyodorovna’s quarters: bowl with a lid and a fire-clay dish with a relief foliate design, extruded in shape, and covered in a glasslike glaze of a celadon colour. The lid, the edges of the bowl,



the handles and edges of the dish are decorated with gilded bronze ornaments in the rocaille style. French work of the 18th century, in all probability by Meisssonier or Caffieri’. Maria Fyodorovna’s chambers remained untouched after her death in 1828 and were kept as memorial rooms.

It is difficult to recognize a specific piece from such a short description, but fortune smiled on us once again. In the 1890s draughtsmen from the Society for Encouragement of the Arts did a great deal of work in recording interior objects in various St. Petersburg palaces. Among these depictions, which were transferred to the Hermitage in the 1930s, was a watercolour drawing of the bowl and dish mentioned by Dmitry Grigorovich. The drawing, which shows the dish from two angles, is signed by

Yury Abramov’s gift is studied in the Hermitage. March 2018.



Dish with relief ornament.
Ceramics, olive-green (celadon) glaze.
China. 15th century.
State Hermitage.

Portrait of Louis XV.
Jean-Marc Nattier. Canvas, oils.
18th century. State Hermitage.

Portrait of Empress Elizaveta Petrovna.
Unknown artist. Canvas, oils.
18th century. State Hermitage.



Dish with olive-green glaze
and bowl with lid mounted in bronze.
Pencil and watercolour drawing on paper.
Maria Zvolyanskaya. 1894.
State Hermitage.



the artist: *M. Zvolyanskoy*, 1894. It exactly conveys the colour, the decoration of the dish and the features of the mounting. Since the colour on the drawing corresponds to the olive-green glaze typical of Chinese pieces from workshops in Longquan, the question again arises about the attribution of the ceramic dish in the mounting.

We also managed to find in the Hermitage the bronze-mounted dish that once graced Empress Maria Fyodorovna's chambers and was drawn by Maria Zvolyanskaya. It is a large, deep ceramic dish from the workshops of Longquan in China dating from the first half of the 15th century: on the mirror it is decorated by netting, on the bevelled side by a spiral plant shoot in deep relief, and it is covered in an olive glaze.

With the invention of photography many objects in Tsarskoye Selo were photographed. In 1910 Alexander Benois published his description of *Tsarskoye Selo in the Reign of Elizaveta Petrovna*, and

included in it is a photograph by Wilhelm (Vasily) Lapré (?–1894) of a Chinese bowl and dish in French ormolu mountings — evidently a single composition. Unfortunately, neither Alexander Benois nor other sources give any information about how the piece came to be in Tsarskoye Selo, nor by whom it was purchased and whether it was in the palace before Maria Fyodorovna's time.

Whereas the dish and its mounting, albeit separated, remained in the environs of St. Petersburg, the bowl with a lid mentioned by Dmitry Grigorovich, drawn by Maria Zvolyanskaya and photographed by Wilhelm Lapré, left Russia. It was put up for auction at Christie's in London in 2001 as a potpourri: *a Louis XV ormolu mounted 15th century celadon porcelain vase and cover, most likely the work of Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonnier or de Lajoue*. The bowl was sold to a private buyer for over £860,000. There was no doubt about its provenance, which was confirmed by the preserved inventory numbers of the

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collection of the palaces at Tsarskoye Selo written on the piece. At the auction nobody knew that the composition originally included not only the bowl with a lid but also a dish...

We managed to discover that a composite table decoration of celadon pieces from 15th century Chinese workshops in a gilded bronze mounting made in France in the 18th century was in Empress Maria Fyodorovna's rooms at Tsarskoye Selo in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The objects were separated in the 1920s and 1930s: the bowl with cover was sold abroad, but the Chinese dish remained in Russia. It was probably transferred to the Museum of the Baron Stieglitz College and later to the Hermitage. The celadon dish was replaced by a copy (it is not known why), which was inserted into the original mounting.

We agree with Alexander Benois in his book *Tsarskoye Selo in the Reign of Elizaveta Petrovna* that the composition came to Russia during her reign. It is known that Peter I wished to give his daughter



Composition of Chinese bowls and dish mounted in French bronze. Photograph by Wilhelm Lapré. Reproduced in publication: A. Benois, 1910.

Portrait of Empress Maria Fyodorovna. Type of Gerhardt von Kügelgen. Unknown artist. First half of the 19th century. State Hermitage.

to Louis XV in marriage. The marriage did not take place, but the two monarchs corresponded for the whole of their lives and maintained friendly relations. The king gave the empress financial support and even sent her his physicians. There is no doubt that the rulers also exchanged valuable gifts as confirmation of their warm feelings. Could the composition of Chinese celadon items mounted in French gilded bronze have been one of Louis XV's gifts to Elizaveta Petrovna in the 1740s and 1750s?

The stages of the piece's history in the 18th and 20th centuries require further research. Unfortunately, reconstructing that history is difficult as the bowl is now in a private collection in the USA. However, the Chinese dish can now be inserted into the French mounting thanks to Yury Abramov's gift, and part of the piece which undoubtedly has *principally artistic* significance can be reconstructed.



Vase and cover. Christie's. London, 5 July 2001, lot № 0100.

What Kochubey is Famous For

THE HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS IS OPENING A CULTURAL-EDUCATIONAL CENTRE IN AN HISTORIC ESTATE IN PUSHKIN
Sergey ARKADIEV. Photos: Timur Turgunov, Sergey Vdovin, the Higher School of Economics Kochubey Centre archive



As they step over the threshold of this mansion, many visitors doubtlessly recall Pushkin's 'Rich and famous Kochubey...' — the beginning of the poem *Poltava*. Rich and famous indeed was Vasily Leontevich Kochubey, Principal Judge of Little Russia, who was executed by the hetman Mazepa in 1708. When he discovered the hetman's treachery (of which Kochubey had warned the monarch, leading to his torture and execution), Peter I drafted Kochubey's sons and grandsons into state service.

One of the family's direct descendants — Vasily Petrovich Kochubey, Full Councillor of State and Principal Master of Ceremonies at the Court of His Imperial Majesty — built a stone mansion in Tsarskoye Selo in 1911–1913 with the permission of Emperor Nicholas II. It was a real palace in miniature with a neoclassical façade and well-planned sumptuous interiors.

According to the recollections of contemporaries, 'the mansion was full of music, the laughter of children (Vasily Petrovich and his wife Varvara had eight: four boys and four girls), the sonorous voices of guests and the extraordinary cordiality of the hosts'. The head of the family, like all the Kochubeys, was very well educated: he had graduated from St. Petersburg University 'in the category of natural sciences' and was fluent in seven foreign languages, five of them Oriental. He inherited — and added to — his father's collection of painting, graphic art, bronze, furniture and minerals, as well as his extensive library — books were his great passion.

After the revolution the People's Commissar for Education Anatoly Lunacharsky offered Kochubey a post in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, to which Vasily Petrovich replied: 'I swore allegiance to the Emperor and will not work for any other government'. Obligated

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to leave his home in Tsarskoye Selo before emigrating, he left a note: 'I received this from Russia — to Russia I return it'.

In 1927 the Home for Veterans of the 1905 Revolution was housed in the mansion. From 1941 to 1944, when the town of Pushkin was occupied, the mansion became the secret headquarters of the Gestapo (the decoration of those two rooms was lost and the Kochubey family coat-of-arms with the Latin inscription *Elevor ubi consumor* ('I rise when I perish') disappeared. In 1947–1948 the former 'noble nest' was refurbished and became a rest home for party workers.

In 1987 a Management Training Centre was opened in the mansion, becoming part of the Higher School of Economics in 2012. The rare items in the mansion have remained 'of limited access' — now only for participants in higher qualification courses. To the university's credit, it has taken vigorous steps to open the estate to colleagues, friends and guests and to make it a platform for various initiatives. The most obvious of these, but by no means the easiest, is to acquaint a wide circle of people interested in Russian history and culture with the mansion's unique furnishings. The first step, on the initiative of Sergey



The mansion's main entrance.

Vasily Petrovich and Varvara Vasilievna Kochubey. 1906.

Fireplace in the study. Photo by Vasily Petrovich Kochubey. 1914.



Kadochnikov, Director of the Higher School of Economics, was to propose a joint exhibition with the Tsarskoye Selo Museum Reserve. The museum's staff readily agreed: the life and times of the imperial family's inner circle had long been of interest to them. The exhibition — 'The Kochubey Mansion. A Noble Nest in Tsarskoye Selo' in the Zubov Wing of the Catherine Palace (2016–2017) enjoyed enviable popularity. The majority of visitors were residents of Pushkin who were consumed with curiosity, at long last having the opportunity to discover what was behind the gates which were normally shut.

Exhibitions have a tendency to finish, though, so in May 2017 the 'Smart Weekends' project was launched — a series of guided tours and musical soirees in the mansion for groups and individual visitors. Occasionally the two are combined and visitors are offered a musical tour in the form of a promenade concert with an account of the

Page 8:
Laughing Child. Jean-Antoine Injalbert.
Bronze, gilding. Early 20th century.

Concert by Igor Smirnov, prize-winner of international competitions.

The Gold Drawing-Room.



Child Carrying a Cockerel. Bronze, patination. Second half of the 19th century.

Collection of toys in the elder sons' room.

festive receptions and ceremonies devised by the master of the house. The weekends blend perfectly into the large-scale 'Open City' project in St. Petersburg, designed to lift the cloak of secrecy from historical and cultural monuments where visitors have previously never trod.

An important marketing step was also taken: the Management Training Centre was given the second, catchier title of 'The Kochubey Centre'. Doctor of Psychology Oksana Pikuleva, who has been Director of the centre since October 2016, says that the main idea was to create a smart space in every dimension (inheriting the intellectual capital of the Kochubey family); to run intellectual guided tours with quizzes and quests revealing the purpose of the objects of a noble household; to develop a fundamental educational project which, by no coincidence, is entitled 'Best University Practice', since what is intended is not the missionary priority of the Higher School of Economics but a collaboration of higher educational establishments with equal rights, each of which can share its experience and achievements, the result being that twenty Russian universities have already been leading speakers in various thematic seminars; to attract intelligent



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businesspeople as allies by means of in-demand programmes in the field of digital economics — the educational project ‘Must-have for Business’ is helping in this; and, of course, to develop the most promising dimension — that of children and teenagers. The project ‘Managing Talents — Generation Z’ encompasses summer and winter schools in the whole spectrum of knowledge, educational forums and olympiads, master-classes and festivals (fortunately, the mansion also has fine musical instruments).

The main problem facing Oksana Pikuleva and her team is how to combine the functions of a museum and an educational institution in the Kochubey Centre. The problem has been solved very elegantly on account of the imperceptible but precise layout of the rooms: in some of them are displays (but no restrictive tapes), in some — seminars, in others — concerts and children’s parties. The design of the new areas is impressive: for instance, a former office contains a collection of historical furniture, bookcases filled with old folios and modern literature, archive photographs — you can feel the aura of the mansion of the Kochubeys, who were bibliophiles, collectors and educators.



The mansion’s historic collections have inevitably been eroded. Many of the valuable items can be traced to the Tsarskoye Selo transit in Olga Paley’s palace, from where they were forwarded to Soviet museums or sold. The famous library vanished without trace. Just before the Great Patriotic War, the new party status of the mansion ensured that its property was evacuated to the Yaroslavl Region and was returned after the war... but not all of it: five items remained in the region’s local history museum. In the Soviet period and the early post-Soviet years restoration was replaced by refurbishment and redecoration. As a result, some of the interiors have become poorer: it is sufficient to compare their current appearance with photographs from Vasily Petrovich’s personal archive. However, quite a few ‘native’ items have survived, and they are, of course, essential for true museum use: the tapestry upholstery of an 18th century suite in the jewel of the palace — the Gold Drawing-Room; the water-seasoned oak tables for Russian billiards with a surface laid with granite slabs from Ravenna in the Grand Study; the bronze and malachite clock with an equestrian statuette of the future Emperor Alexander II; and Lady in a Veil, a marble masterpiece by Viktor Brodzsky. And the gaps have been filled by later acquisitions. For example, by two pianos: a ‘lace’ Becker of carved rosewood — a gift from the emperor and empress for the Kochubeys’ house-warming, and an antique Bechstein from the house on the Petrograd Side which was destroyed during the siege — it initially went to the Leningrad Philharmonia, then to a colony for juvenile criminals in Metallostroy, and finally ended up in the mansion. The Becker is still played, as it once was by the Kochubeys, but the other is now just a beautiful art object.

The transformation of a noble nest, albeit deformed by time, requires a delicate approach. The current owners are endeavouring to revive the mansion’s traditions — for instance, the balls that were held here in the early 20th century. Why not highlight the link between past and present by means of a dialogue between the Empire-style architecture and modern dance records in The Beat of Time project? The effect of the family’s living presence is achieved in

Lyudmila Usacheva (Bantikova)
by the Kochubey family tree.

Ancestral fireplace and plate with
the date 1547 in the study.





Oksana Pikuleva by the dressing table in the chambers of the mistress of the house.

Irina Matvienko by the 'At Tea' display.

Varvara Kochubey's chambers and the rooms of her elder children: a quaint selection of elegant ladies' knickknacks on a pier-glass, appliances on the tea table by the window and slightly disordered children's toys.

'We imagined that it was December 1913, a Saturday morning. The children ran to their mother and asked if they could play in her bedroom,' says Doctor of History Irina Matvienko, a member of the Kochubey Centre's staff. 'All the toys are authentic, historical, antique. Many of them were taken by their owners when they emigrated and have returned to Russia through the efforts of our Director.'

'I am now a regular at flea markets, auctions and antique shops,' smiles Oksana Pikuleva. 'When I buy a toy, I am always interested in its history, and sometimes there are stunning finds linked to the names of Russian aristocrats whose children took what was most dear to them — their favourite toys — with them to a foreign land. Of course, I realize I am not a collector, just an obsessive accumulator.'

The collection is supplemented by donations from Russia and abroad. They include items made by noble Russian ladies in emigration — handbags embroidered with beads, for example. These ladies, who were superb embroiderers, earned money in the foreign country by working in fashion houses and ateliers. A study of the history of the imperial children's toys revealed that Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna helped her children to make doll costumes of all the peoples of Russia. The owners began looking for similar dolls. Next to this installation, quite logically, are portraits of the children of the last Russian emperor. What is more, pieces of furniture from Tsarevich Alexey's room were kept in the mansion's basement for the whole of the 20th century — last year they were transferred to Tsarskoye Selo Museum-Reserve.

In the Grand Study the eye is drawn like a magnet to the family fireplace, its facades decorated with mysterious relief ornamentation. At its foot is a granite slab which Vasily Petrovich brought back from a family funeral, after which he covered up the fireplace and never used



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it again, as though he had sealed the heart of the family in it. The slab bears the date 1547 (the date of Andrey Kochubey's death) and the family's symbols. Nobody has yet been able to interpret these symbols — it is a subject for a dissertation.

The Kochubey family tree in the owner's study is the work of art historian Lyudmila Usacheva (Bantikova), a specialist at the centre. Since 1992 she has been occupied in the artistic design of the mansion's interiors, but as early as 1997 she became interested in genealogical research, in particular the genealogy of European families. According to her, the Russian Kochubeys are just a page in the family's history; dotted lines show the dynastic links of the Kochubeys with the wealthy Crimean Tatar family Kuchuk-Bey, and there is a desire to dig back to the most distant ancestors, to the roots...

Those who took part in the first international Kochubey readings, highlighting the role and significance of private collections for the preservation of cultural heritage, were able to appreciate the results of



the renewal of the noble nest. The readings took place in the mansion last October and were timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Vasily Petrovich's birth. Those attending included representatives of the ancient family — Andrey, Vasily, Peter and his wife Elena Spechinskaya, authoritative experts — Countess Alberta Cavazza, co-owner of the Villa Borghese on Isola del Garda (Italy), Bruno Henri-Rousseau, Director of the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild (France), Joost Schokkenbroek, Director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum (Canada), Aleksandra Murre, Director of the Kadriorg Art Museum (Estonia), Natalia Avtonomova, Head of the Private Collections Department at the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum (Moscow), Arkady Izvekov, General Director of the House of Cartier in St. Petersburg...

One of Oksana Pikuleva's most cherished memories is the emotional response of Elena Spechinskaya: 'When she saw our collection of toys, she was in raptures: 'Now I know to whom to give my father's doll which he took with him when he left Petrograd with his parents.'

Photo by Alexander Plotnikov, The Beat of Time project with the support of Nova Fundaziun Origen, 2018.

The girls in the Kochubey family may well have had a doll like this.

Fragment of the fireplace in the study.



A Blast from the Past

WHAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD FROM TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF ONE'S NATIVE VILLAGE THROUGHOUT ONE'S LIFE

Lyudmila TABOLINA. Photos: the author and Ivan Pavlov



The village of Ladygino, lost in the expanses of the Valdai Hills in the Vyshny Volochyok District of the Tver Region, consists of about twenty homesteads. If you go three kilometres to the north along a farm track you come to the Bezhetsk road, and from there you can get to any point on the globe. This is my point on the globe — when I was a child, I was convinced that there was nowhere in the world more beautiful.

I am sitting at the window of my family home in the village and wondering what to write about first. Probably the stove, which has warmed me throughout my life.

I was born in Vyshny Volochyok on 2 June 1941, just twenty days before the war began. Father was posted to the front and mother and I went to live with my grandmother in Ladygino. Mum was a schoolteacher in the settlement of Ovsische (about three kilometres from our village). Granny worked there too — as a hospital orderly.

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My grandfather had been arrested in 1937 as an 'enemy of the people', so I never knew him.

From my early childhood I spent a lot of time at home on my own. The stove was my protection, my support and my amusement. It was warm and cosy to lie on it, examining the patterns of the wood on the ceiling. After the aerodrome in the next village was bombed, I began to be afraid of aircraft. As soon as I heard the hum of an engine I would run to the stove and hide behind the pipe so that the aircraft would not see me through the window.

When the war ended and father returned from the front, my parents moved back to Vyshny Volochyok and I stayed with my grandmother. She stopped working at the hospital and she and I went to work on a collective farm. On winter evenings we would light a little stove, watch the fire, bake potatoes and sugar beet, from which Granny made sweets. What a joy it was to wake up in the morning and see the light of the lamp in the kitchen! I would lie quietly and watch from my corner to see what Granny was doing at the stove. And a straw mattress on a chest is the most comfortable bed in the world. I can't remember any other occasion when there was such a total sense of peace and bliss.

At the age of seven my happy village life came to an end: my parents took me to the town to go to school. The village was only for holidays after that. I always looked forward to the holidays and would rush back to Ladygino.

The birch trees planted outside the window by my grandfather formed the customary landscape when I was a child. I still remember the smell of the first snow and the spring thaws; the fragrance of the May blossom and the warbling of the birds; then the haymaking with the smell of drying hay and the wind blowing the leaves off the birches in autumn.

My favourite place as a young girl was the porch, where on summer evenings I would admire the endless variety of colours of the sunset. When I was a little older, I added sunrises and sunsets



on the lake, trips to the club in the next village to watch films or go to dances, the sound of the accordion, songs and rhymes and the bottomless depth of the August night sky.

All these impressions filled me with ineffable delight and attempted to express themselves in some kind of material form. I tried keeping a diary, writing poetry and painting watercolours, but my efforts were so clumsy and so unlike what I actually felt that I gave them up.

I would have carried on living without expressing myself if God had not taken pity on me and given me a camera. It happened when I entered the Leningrad Technological Institute. The girl I shared a room with in the student hostel happened to have a camera. We became friends, I bought a 'Smena-6' camera and started taking photographs like her. At first I just snapped everything and was almost never without my camera. And, of course, from 1964 onwards I took photographs in Ladygino every summer.

This photograph taken by Ivan Pavlov shows the residents of Ladygino by the Baskalovs' house in the late 1920s. I look at the faces, find familiar ones and try to identify the unfamiliar ones. There is my father, Sergey Tabolin. He was born in Petrograd in 1914, so in the photograph he is aged 13 or 14. In front of him is a little girl of five — his sister Nadya. I can recognise another 10–15 adults who I knew as a child or who are familiar from archive photographs of relatives and neighbours. The children are impossible to identify. The adults had already lived through the First World War, the revolution and the Civil War. The future would bring them collectivization and 'the liquidation of the kulaks as a class'. It may be that the photograph was taken immediately after the organization of the Muravey (Ant) collective farm, with barefoot 'little ants' in the foreground. There is now nobody left to ask.

Page 14:
People's get-together. 1979.



Tanya Efremova's wedding. 1973.

Page 17:
My grandmother's funeral. 1980.

Make merry, village! 9 May 1999.

A lesson at the primary school.

The primary school in the village of Bystroe, Vyshny Volochyok District, Kalinin Region. 1964. Over half a century has passed. 1st to 4th year pupils in one room. Girls with identical plaits. A round Dutch stove. Coats and hats on a hanger in the corner. How long ago it was... The girls and boys are now grandmothers and grandfathers, but here they are all writing with chalk on the blackboard. And teacher Alexandra Neksina calls them all out in turn, older and younger, so she can teach them all.

There is no point in listing the ordeals the village had to endure in all those years, from the arrival of the maize in the farm's fields to the invasion of land 'improvers' armed with bulldozers who radically altered the historic landscape, leaving the land without a soil layer and ruining the surrounding forests with impassable obstacles along the edge. I watched a cutting being hacked through the Ladygino forest, followed by the electricity pylons from the nearby Kalinin nuclear power station. I watched the collective farm being transformed into a state farm...

But life in the village went on at its own pace and in the long-standing order: every morning the stoves were lit, the cattle were turned out into the field, the foreman gave out tasks, children grew up, the kitchen gardens became green, weddings were celebrated.

The arrival of electricity fundamentally changed life in the village. Paraffin lamps and stoves were put away in the pantry and the attic and that is where all the obsolete objects were stored: looms for weaving, which used to be in every home, spinning-wheels, sickles, seed drills, etc.

It also led to a reduction in the population of Ladygino. In 1926 there were 119 inhabitants, in 1969 — 45 and in 1980 — 31. And when the state farm was wound up in the 1990s, all the able-bodied population moved to the town and by 2002 only 13 people remained in the village.

And I photographed everything I witnessed. I would take my bag with undeveloped films back to the town and for several days my bathroom became a photographic laboratory. From the developed films I selected the essential minimum of shots 'for home, for family' and printed them, then put all the films in a box marked 'Photo Archive' and there they lay, awaiting their probable sad fate.

A few years ago, I came across this box during a clear-out. I wanted to scan the old negatives and see what was on them. I chose a package with the inscription 'Village, 1964–1989'. I switched on the scanner and a time long past stared at me from the computer screen. I felt, as Nabokov wrote, a blast from the past — faces of children who had long since been adults, laughing people stepping into a different world, glimpses of landscapes which are no longer there. And now these films were no longer mine. I looked at the images with an entirely detached view. This led to a 'Family Album' of photographs which had come to light by chance.

Now nobody is registered in Ladygino, but two families from the town live there all year round. And when summer comes grandchildren visit their grandmothers' houses and the village comes to life: flowerbeds bloom, vegetable gardens are filled with greenery, fruit and berries ripen and children's voices ring out. And the local lakes are dearer to them than warm seas, and wild strawberries and blueberries tastier than exotic fruit. There is also now a tradition of seeing in the New Year in Ladygino and there were lights in five houses on 1 January 2019. So the village lives on!

And I have started to write a history of Ladygino, because while we remember our ancestors and preserve our language, we are Russians.



Operatic Anomalies

FAMOUS OPERA SINGERS REFLECT ON THE VICISSITUDES OF THE PROFESSION BEFORE THEIR PERFORMANCE
IN THE HERMITAGE THEATRE ON MAECENAS DAY 2019

Arkady SOSNOV. Photos: Natasha Razina, Svetlana Tarlova, Leonid Toropov, Timur Turgunov and from the Galouzine family archive



At the very end of last year the first live concert of classical music took place in the M-1 Arena Sport & Entertainment Centre in St. Petersburg. The audience were participants in an unusual experiment at this innovative venue whose acoustics are comparable with those of leading opera houses. The effect of soaring sound is achieved by the wooden dome above the arena, similar in shape to the Colosseum in Rome. Venues with acoustics such as these are perfect for symphonic music and opera performances, and this is what guided the inspiration behind the 'Opera in the Arena' project, Art Director Sophia Rukina.

International opera stars responded to her invitation, including the legendary tenor and People's Artist of Russia Vladimir Galouzine (Mariinsky Theatre), considered to be the

Heritage

best interpreter of the role of Herman in *The Queen of Spades*, and his wife Natalia Tymchenko-Galouzine, a prize-winner at international competitions whose career took off thanks to the Mariinsky Theatre Academy of Young Singers. We met the couple in Galouzine's dressing-room in a break between rehearsals. They spoke of their love for music as part of their family values and of the importance of opera in developing the personality. They were emotional and frank in their replies and readily recalled their first steps towards the stage and on it...

'You were born far away from opera centres, were you not?'

Vladimir: In Rubtsovsk in the Altay Region where I was born opera was never mentioned and nobody instilled a love for it in me, though my mother, an accountant, and my father, a fitter in a locomotive depot, both loved to sing. As far as I remember, I always used to sing too. It's obviously an anomaly of nature... (laughs).

Natalia: When we visited Volodya's family in Altay with my parents three years ago, his cousin started to sing. She was a



wonderful mezzo-soprano! I asked her why she had not studied singing with a voice like that, better than his. She sang a Ukrainian song which even I, who am half-Ukrainian, didn't know.

Vladimir: There was nothing for us boys to do but play football in the yard, but I had been an organizer since the age of five and I got boys of my age together to play at theatre. We hung a sheet that my mother had given me between apple trees for a curtain and performed songs. Remember: 'Eaglet, eaglet, with an exploding grenade...', and we showed how 'the enemy was wiped out with an exploding grenade from a hill'. Or the song about the lame king: 'Tiryam tiryarim tyam tiryam'. Our enthusiasm and passionate desire to perform on our homemade stage excited our parents — you rarely come across such a grateful audience these days.

Natalia: You got top marks in singing at school.

Vladimir: That's right! My inclination for acting took me to a 'culturally hopeless' school, and from there to the Siberian Military District song and dance ensemble. I was lucky: one of my colleagues there was Sergey Alexashkin, who by a remarkable coincidence is now also a soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre. He had a book of Chaliapin arias and romances and I sang through the whole book from cover to cover in a bass voice. My fate was decided by another happy accident: our platoon was fined, our leave was cancelled and we were sent to see *Boris Godunov* at the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theatre. Boris was played by Alexey Levitsky, who was the best bass I had heard in my life — and believe me, I had heard quite a few. The Novosibirsk Theatre is approximately the same construction as this arena. Just imagine: the scene in Red Square, Boris Godunov's coronation, the chorus comes on stage, the music starts, and you catch your breath — it is as though you are watching a real historical event through a magnifying glass from the upper circle... I remember tears welling up. Nobody could be left indifferent by such an opera.



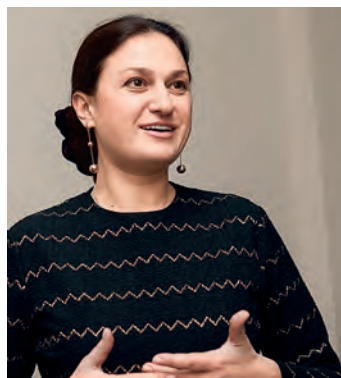
The Queen of Spades. Mariinsky Theatre.

Eugene Onegin. Mariinsky Theatre.





The Gambler. Mariinsky Theatre.



Natalia: I also come from a musical family. My grandfather was an excellent guitarist, my grandmother sang in a choir, my father is a saxophonist who used to play in an amateur ensemble — there were no professional groups in the little town of Zmiev near Kharkov where I grew up. None of our family went to music school. My father was self-taught — he knew all the songs from Soviet films by heart.

Vladimir: When Natalia and I visit them, we always sing at the table. And if we forget the words, he prompts us.

Natalia: At the age of five I was already trying to play the piano and dreaming of studying at music school like my friends, who were older than me. I was told it was too early. When my mother was at work, I went to school with my friend. The teacher devoted her attention to her, then asked me: 'Girl, what are you doing here?' 'I also want to study'. She listened to me: 'You sang purely. Next time come with your mother'. I ran joyfully to

my mother at work: 'I've been accepted for music!' My mother couldn't understand it... After music school I entered the singing department of the Kharkov College of Music. At first I saw myself as a pop singer — I performed with a group and even wrote songs, but I wanted more than that — the unity of poetry, music and acting, the harmony that only chamber or opera singing can give.

'Can you name one person who determined your career?'

Natalia: I had an interesting encounter in my first year at Kiev Conservatory. Ukraine was holding Days of Bulgarian Culture. I was so impressed by the Bulgarian singers that I went backstage to congratulate them and... met the Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who suggested I go to study in the Sofia Conservatory on an exchange scheme — after an audition, of course. My teacher there was Professor Kristina Vachkova, my first mother in art. She said I had a sunny voice, but she also tormented me quite a bit (laughs). My second mother was Larisa Gergieva, who heard me at Placido Domingo's Operalia Competition when I was already a soloist at Kharkov Opera House and invited me to the Mariinsky Theatre Academy for Young Singers. What I would say is this: if you have good opera teachers, you will develop along the right lines both as a singer and as a personality.

Vladimir: My first serious opera teacher was Isidor Zak, the man of his time in conducting. When I sang in *Madam Butterfly* for the first time at the Novosibirsk Theatre, he saw my back a couple of times from his seat and asked me in the interval: 'Do you think yourself a great actor like Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko? Shall I get another tenor for the third act?' I didn't like to say that I was only carrying out the wishes of the director, but in the third act I sang only towards the auditorium. This time the director was unhappy, but you cannot serve two masters. Isidor and I became great friends, and when I took the decision to leave for St. Petersburg, he gave me his blessing.

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'It is no secret that many people find opera boring. Is there anything to which you take exception?'

Vladimir: Sometimes you can be putting your heart and soul into a performance and people are glued to their gadgets. But they are mainly those who have come by chance, not opera lovers. True fans either delight in your success or gloat over your failure (laughs).

Natalia: It depends whose side they are on.

Vladimir: Genuine opera connoisseurs are becoming fewer, so it is harder to fill theatres, but getting an audience at any price is unacceptable. These days directors desecrate the classics with impunity — the greater the scandal, the more contracts they receive. One high-profile director said that an opera house should not be a museum. My reply to that would be: we go to a museum to see paintings by Rembrandt and Rubens, even though as children we may have drawn moustaches on reproductions of

their portraits. That's more or less what you are doing by showing historical characters in modern dress and making actors run naked across the stage.

Natalia: That kind of interpretation, in my opinion, dumbs down the public.

Vladimir: The result is that people go to the opera for titillation, to be amused. To watch Othello running after Desdemona in his underpants! The audience will watch it and say: the cinema is better. Most importantly, they will not understand why Othello strangled Desdemona. Some of them will understand it in their own way from the director's interpretation: she was in the way of Othello's love for Iago... Directors straining for innovation sometimes have no idea of the period in history, have not read the original and don't know the libretto very well. I mean, how can one of Tchaikovsky's greatest operas *Iolanta*, whose action takes place in France, feature Russian matryoshkas? The French laugh at us when they see that.

The Queen of Spades. Mikhailovsky Theatre.





The Tale of Tsar Saltan. Mariinsky Theatre.

In my opinion, Othello should be in Venetian costume. When I dress like that I feel like a real Moor and my voice fills out in a different way, blending with Verdi's brilliant music; even those sitting with their gadgets forget about them when they feel the resonance on their heartstrings.

Natalia: Of course, people have to be educated, to be brought into contact with opera as children. There is such a lot of material — almost everything by Rimsky-Korsakov, including *The Golden Cockerel*, *The Snow Maiden*, *Sadko*! There are plenty of children's operas...

Vladimir: And when those children are older, don't bring them to productions that distort the essence of the opera. I have

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sung *The Queen of Spades* in Toulouse, in Paris and in New York, occasionally with very modern scenery. My sense of my voice and the music itself is lost in a closed empty space. And when I come back to Yury Temirkanov's production at the Mariinsky Theatre (the Summer Garden, a baroque staircase, columns) it is like a holiday. My perception of my voice and the music is completely different. And the piercing truth 'What is our life? A game!' takes on a new meaning. And the thought occurs to me that my God-given talent does not only belong to me.

'Do you ever think about a successor?'

Vladimir: I think that to cast all my experience to the winds would be a sin. But what sometimes happens is that I am the first to come to a rehearsal, even though I may have sung the part a thousand times. Then a young colleague rushes in out of breath at the last minute, we bash through it and he quickly disappears after the rehearsal. I dream of finding somebody who has not only studied at the Conservatory and is musically gifted but is obsessed by striving to reach the top of this profession: to learn dramatic, psychological acting, master the art of movement and improvisation. If such a successor appears, I would work with him fanatically and free of charge.

Natalia: Spending time, energy and life is philanthropy. We are often asked to sing in charity concerts and sometimes organize them ourselves... We have performed for the *Golden Pelican* movement in St. Petersburg, we have sung in Dusseldorf, in Berlin, in Paris, in Batumi. We never refuse unless we are already committed on the day in question and the contract has been signed.

On 24 May we are giving a charity concert in Marseille — all the proceeds will go towards the treatment of sick children. But before that, on 13 April in the Hermitage Theatre, we will take part with pleasure at the traditional Maecenas Day.



The Queen of Spades at the Mariinsky Theatre and the Mikhailovsky Theatre. Productions of various years.

'I find Tchaikovsky's passionate Herman more interesting than Pushkin's calculating Hermann — I can sing it endlessly, and every time it adds to my experience; the role grows in terms of psychology, mise-en-scène and movement. I don't stand still and repeat what I have done before. Each time I look for something new in the character. And if you dig, you always unearth something!'

Vladimir GALOUZINE

Abaza Lessons

A ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND TRADITIONS OF MINORITY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WAS HELD IN THE KARACHAY-CHERKESS REPUBLIC WITH THE SUPPORT OF *RUSSIAN MAECENAS*

Sergey TEPLOV. Photos: the author, Amiran Dzugov and Andrey Tarasov



It was a little miracle — Academician Nikolay Kazansky, Scientific Director of the Russian Academy of Sciences Linguistic Research Institute, who the day before had been reciting Virgil at Moscow University in a master-class for Latin teachers from all over the country, stepped into the folk museum in the village of Elburgan in the Abaza District of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic. He took a lively interest in the objects of Abazin life which have been collected over a good fifty years by the museum's founder, schoolteacher Mukhamed Tukov. The guest from the capital clarified the Abaza names for bullock harness, stone axles, clay pots, tools for threshing and refining grain and for currying leather — it is essential to preserve these fragments of the language for future generations, like the rare objects themselves. He looked intently at the depictions on a bronze pitcher donated to the museum by the daughter of an aged resident. They are reminiscent of

the pictograms on artefacts from the Maykop burial-mound, whose examination enabled the Soviet linguist Georgy Turchaninov to come to the conclusion that the ancient Ashuytsi, the ancestors of the modern Abazins, had had a written language as long ago as the 3rd millennium BC. His book *The Discovery and Deciphering of Ancient Written Languages of the Caucasus* occupies a place of honour in the museum. Kazansky had met Turchaninov as a postgraduate, and this point of contact was all the more symbolical on the eve of a round-table discussion devoted to the experiment of preserving the language and culture of the Abazin people.

We described this experiment in the last issue of the almanac ('Preserving his People' *Russian Maecenas* № 28, November 2018), as well as the creation of a virtual version of the museum in Elburgan, the annual Abazin cultural-sporting festival and other projects of the

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Alashara International Association for Assisting the Development of the Abazin-Abkhaz Ethnic Group. It was gratifying to know that it is developing. A year ago, the young director Zurab Kopsergenov received a grant to set up a puppet theatre, and now that theatre tours widely in the Stavropol Region, is about to go to Dagestan and staged a show based on themes from Abazin folklore in Russian and Abaza especially for Nikolay Kazansky and Arkady Sosnov, editor of *Russian Maecenas*. The theatre has bought a minivan for convenience of travel and Zurab intends to open a training studio — not for the sake of additional income, but to bring people closer to art. The same applies to a museum in Elburgan: he will get his own apartments in a prestigious neighbourhood with the new village administration building, also constructed with the support of *Alashara* and the participation of the villagers.

At the moment the museum is in one of the rooms in a secondary school; the school's headmistress Fatima Shaeva told her visitors that the Abaza language is taught for three hours a week in the Abazin village, and that this is supplemented by clubs. But there was a time, as Mukhamed Tukov reminded us, when primary school children were taught only in the Abaza language, which stood them in good stead for the rest of their lives. Teachers are afraid that the introduction of a second foreign language into the curriculum would take another hour from the children's native language. Nikolay Kazansky agreed that this should not be allowed to happen, that every national language in Russia is our common property. And what can be done here and now is to set up a parallel version on the school website in the Abaza language for students' comments and compositions. That would also serve as an example for other schools in thirteen Abazin villages. The Abaza language is not dying, he assured us, but it is necessary to publish an Abaza-Russian phrasebook, to constantly update the textbooks for various classes and, of course, the educational aids for teachers.

The question is: where are these teachers to be found? As one participant in the conversation — Professor Sergey Pazov, Scientific



Pro-rector of Karachay-Cherkessia State University named after Umar Aliev — remarked, he is expecting an influx of Abazin students into the Department of National Languages and Literatures in the Institute of Philology, thanks to the fact that *Alashara* has allocated stipends for young people specializing in languages and grants for young Candidates of Science defending theses on Abazin themes. One such grant has already been awarded. However, free places for postgraduate study have reduced by ten times, from 41 in the early 2000s to four, and it is by no means certain that there will be a philologist among the four. 'We will fight for every talented final-year student, with the aim of a postgraduate course', emphasized principal Sergey Pazov. There is no plan for defending theses in the Abaza language in the near future.

The hopes of the Abazin community for collaboration with the Linguistic Research Institute also include sending nominees from Karachay-Cherkessia on special courses and postgraduate study, and

Mukhamed Tukov shows Nikolay Kazansky objects of Abazin life.

As the saying goes, if you want to help a hungry man, don't give him a fish, give him a fishing-rod. Alashara is not only supplying the rod but is also teaching people to fish, organizing free language courses for various age groups, publishing textbooks and works by classic Abazin writers, translating popular children's cartoons into the Abaza language, running its own YouTube channel and providing grants to amateur theatres and ensembles.

The round-table discussion included the presentation of Russian Maecenas almanac. Many of those featured in the previous issue were present.



In the Elburgan village museum.
Nadezhda Emelyanova and Fatima Shaeva.



The pitcher with depictions.
Nikolay Kazansky advised that
it should be dated and the drawings
thoroughly studied.

Alashara will cover their living expenses in St. Petersburg. This was the reason for inviting a celebrated linguist to the republic and immersing him in 'Abaza country.' They began with the museum of Abaza history and the people's structures in Elburgan and Inzhich-Chukun, where a beautiful park is being created by the villagers' efforts in a former flooded area. The project was also initiated by *Alashara* and is in keeping with its motto: 'Together we can do a great deal!'

Murat Mukov, head of the regional department of *Alashara*, told Kazansky of the upheavals in the history of his people, not only during the Caucasus war but also in relatively peaceful times, and what is now being done to preserve and develop the language. Lessons in the Abaza language are held in kindergartens in villages, not only in the Abaza District, and are now appearing in the curricula of primary classes. This programme, devised and successfully introduced by *Alashara*, is not limited to teaching the language but encompasses all spheres of Abazin life. Particular attention is paid to a healthy lifestyle. 'The aim of *Alashara* is that there should be more Abazins and that the percentage of educated people among them should be higher,' concluded Murat. 'You will agree that it is a reasonable approach when there are less than 45,000 of them in Russia!'

Nikolay Kazansky assured him that he would be glad to meet those who are 'concerned about the Abaza language' and the education of their people. He also has his own interest in this: to revive Caucasian studies little by little in St. Petersburg. That will be possible if the republic's emissaries, in addition to their studies, hold sessions with the institute's staff as native speakers — informants. He suggested that, along with their main postgraduate studies, they should consider the possibility of short-term courses based on the institute — not only for students and young scientists, but also for schoolteachers from Karachay-Cherkessia.

This conversation in Elburgan over a cup of tea with traditional Abazin delicacies was a rehearsal for the round-table discussion 'The Creation of a Basic Model for the Preservation of the Language,

Culture and Traditions of Minority Indigenous Peoples' to be held the following day in Cherkessk. That discussion was, of course, much more imposing, but the essence was the same. It is proposed to base the model, which is needed in our multinational country, on the experience of preserving the language and culture of the Abazins. What are the characteristics of the model?

- State support (even if the ambiguous amendments to the Federal Law 'On Education in the Russian Federation' are not taken into account): Karachay-Cherkessia designated last year the Year of Language of its peoples. As Fatima Bekizheva, the Karachay-Cherkessk Republic's Deputy Minister of Education, remarked, the republic's government allocates three million roubles annually for the publication of textbooks.
- Involvement in the problem of preserving native languages at the university, e. g. by holding festivals of native language and literature.
- The huge contribution of *Alashara* and other social organizations.
- The selfless devotion of the scientist, businessman and philanthropist Mussa Ekzekov, Chairman of the Council of the 'World Abkhaz-Abazin Congress', initiator and President of *Alashara*. His new book 'The Policy of Protecting the Rights of Minority Indigenous Peoples of Russia in the Northern Caucasus' was presented at the session by Nadezhda Emelyanova, Senior Researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Russian History.

So a combination of factors has been found that make this model viable and suitable for other minority peoples, and there are 47 of them, only according to official statistics.

It goes without saying that the model is not perfect. Many Abazins, especially those living in cities, do not speak, read or write in their native language (which they admit with chagrin and even shame), but everything falls more and more frequently into the orbit of *Alashara*'s mass cultural-sporting events. One of the steps to supplement the model suggested by Nikolay Kazansky is creating a national Abaza primer with grammatical markings, the systemizing and preserving vocabulary,

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including the names of objects no longer in use (perhaps by compiling an Abaza encyclopaedia), raising the level of philological education and training scientific personnel in Abaza linguistics.

Meanwhile, the ‘personnel’ — about fifteen potential trainees — patiently awaited the end of the round-table discussion to speak to the maestro personally, and he devoted sufficient time to each of them. Among those ready to tread the path of science were Armida Tauzheva, Deputy Head of a school in Cherkessk who has two degrees — in pedagogics and in municipal management, and Elena Knukhova, a teacher-psychologist Elena who has already chosen the subject for her thesis: ‘The Characteristics of Abkhazian Bilingualism’. They have both applied for postgraduate study at Abkhazia State University but are keen to study in St. Petersburg. Kazansky advised them not to change their plans but to come to St. Petersburg for a short course. On the other hand, Ruslan Klychev, a graduate of Karachay-Cherkessk State University, had completed his postgraduate study but had not defended his thesis on numerals in the Abaza language. He now regrets this and is continuing to study independently. Nikolay Kazansky considers this to be a promising trend: progress has been made in the study of Russian and Indo-European numerals and literature is being published on the subject — it can be studied in the Academy of Sciences Library. A cherished course of study at the Linguistic Research Institute will enable Ruslan to include his research in the international academic context. Mussa Ekzekov has promised to support these scientific ambitions. Every Abazin is dear to him.

As far as the short courses are concerned, it is proposed to form groups of 5 to 7, of which 2 or 3 would be Abazin students. For two weeks they would be able to attend lectures and visit museums in St. Petersburg. It is proposed to outline the framework of this collaboration in a trilateral agreement between the Karachay-Cherkessk Republic, *Alashara* and the Linguistic Research Institute. The materials from the round-table discussion will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education and the Federal Agency for the Affairs of



Nationalities — the institutors of the Foundation for the Preservation and Study of the Native Languages of Peoples of Russia, created by a presidential decree at the end of last year.

The participants in the discussion called it an important landmark in the history of the Abazin people. The significance of the event was also evident in the heightened interest of journalists. One of the questions to Nikolay Kazansky sounded provocative: ‘What is the point of knowing one’s native language in a country where everybody speaks Russian, and for international communications English is used — and in the future, Chinese?’ Nikolay Kazansky instantly replied: ‘Every language, particularly one’s native language, is a system for interpreting the world. The loss of any of these systems is a loss for the whole of mankind. Besides, it is much harder for someone without a taste for his native language to master another.’

Academician Nikolay Kazansky and Professor Sergey Pazov with potential trainees.

In the TV studio in Cherkessk.



Our People in the Orient

THE PETER THE GREAT POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY IN ST. PETERSBURG HAS ESTABLISHED
FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH HOUSES IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

Arkady SOSNOV. Photos: Polytechnic University's Media Centre



I met Qingsheng Wang, head of the Chinese ENV company, in St. Petersburg during the celebrations for the 120th anniversary of the Peter the Great Polytechnic University. He was chatting informally over coffee with Professor Anatoly Popovich, Director of the university's Institute of Metallurgy, Mechanical Engineering and Transport. And how could there have been any formality when Wang had completed his master's degree under the professor's guidance at the Far East State Technical University in Russia developing materials for electrical batteries, including with the use of rice pods? The pods were necessary for the production of pure amorphous silicon powder, which was added to anode material in order to increase its capacity.

When he came to the Polytechnic University in 2011 Anatoly Popovich invited Qingsheng Wang to St. Petersburg to develop the theme of lithium-ion energy storage. He could have chosen

Over the Barriers

somebody closer at hand — from his own students, but Wang was valued not only as an expert in lithium-ion technology and a keen researcher, but also as an investor. In 2013 a Russian-Chinese laboratory of functional materials opened in the university's chemistry block and Wang invested his company's funds into research and development. In 2016 he defended his thesis on future materials for lithium-ion power sources.

'For Wang this subject is his whole life — a hobby, a science and a business,' Professor Popovich told me. 'After completing his bachelor's degree at Harbin Polytechnic University, he even sold his flat in the city centre to set up a small company making batteries — nickel-cadmium batteries at that time. And now Wang is a prosperous and established businessman and scientist.'

Qingsheng Wang has an experimental-industrial production facility in the small Chinese town of Changxing and is also finishing construction of a large factory to produce lithium polymer batteries, a safer modification of lithium-ion batteries. The technology is based on his joint developments with the Polytechnic University in materials science. An Innovations Institute has also opened in Changxing, where Russian specialists, mainly from the Polytechnic University, work alongside their Chinese counterparts on year-long contracts, with an option to extend. With their arrival, on Professor Popovich's initiative, a line that is new for ENV is being developed: additive technologies, whose use in medicine will enable 'duplicates' of damaged human organs to be created by prototyping methods. A year ago, the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University and ENV jointly organized the scientific-educational centre *Additive Technologies and Functional Materials*, which is beginning to train specialists in key areas of collaboration. So now two sites are operating and developing: scientific at the Polytechnic University, scientific-practical in Changxing.

'The result is that we develop materials in St. Petersburg and specialists in China, mainly from our university, participate in their



introduction,' I was told by Pavel Novikov, Deputy Director of the joint Scientific Institute. He is also a pupil of Professor Popovich and is involved, in particular, in 'casting' for Changxing. There are two criteria for the selection of personnel — an active interest in research and preparedness to immerse themselves in a specific environment, far away from family and friends.

Wang, who was wearing the diamond-shaped badge of a Polytechnic University graduate on his lapel, outlined the situation in his own way: in China there are far more specialists who have

Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences Andrey Rudskoy, Rector of the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Qingsheng Wang and Professor Anatoly Popovich at the university's 120th anniversary celebrations.

Page 28:
Ivan Rey, a Polytechnic University graduate, already feels at home in Changxing.



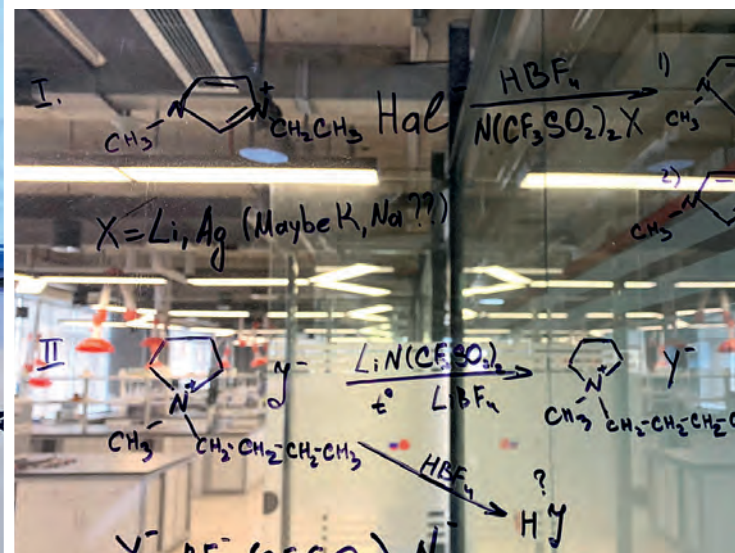
The delegation from St. Petersburg Polytechnic University blended in well with the participants in the ceremony for the signing of an agreement between ENV and a strategic investor.

Behind this glass partition optimal compositions of lithium polymer batteries are developed.

been educated in the USA and European countries than in Russia. Many companies are looking for good technologists, but he has already found them, collaborating with Russian specialists with a high standard of engineering and technological training. He intends to defend his doctoral thesis in Russia, but first he has to get his factory up and running! 'Come and see it for yourself,' he said in conclusion.

Changxing is a village by Chinese standards, with a population of 620,000. It is dotted with skyscrapers like a seamstress's pin cushion and is well cared-for and maintained to the envy of the average Russian regional centre: modern supermarkets, hotels, excellent roads. ENV occupies 7 of the 24 floors in one of the business centres: chemical and analytical laboratories, staff offices, administration, a BMS (Battery Management System) for electronic monitoring of the condition of the batteries and experimental production. And everywhere there are stickers with the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University logo and stands with information about the university.

Over the Barriers



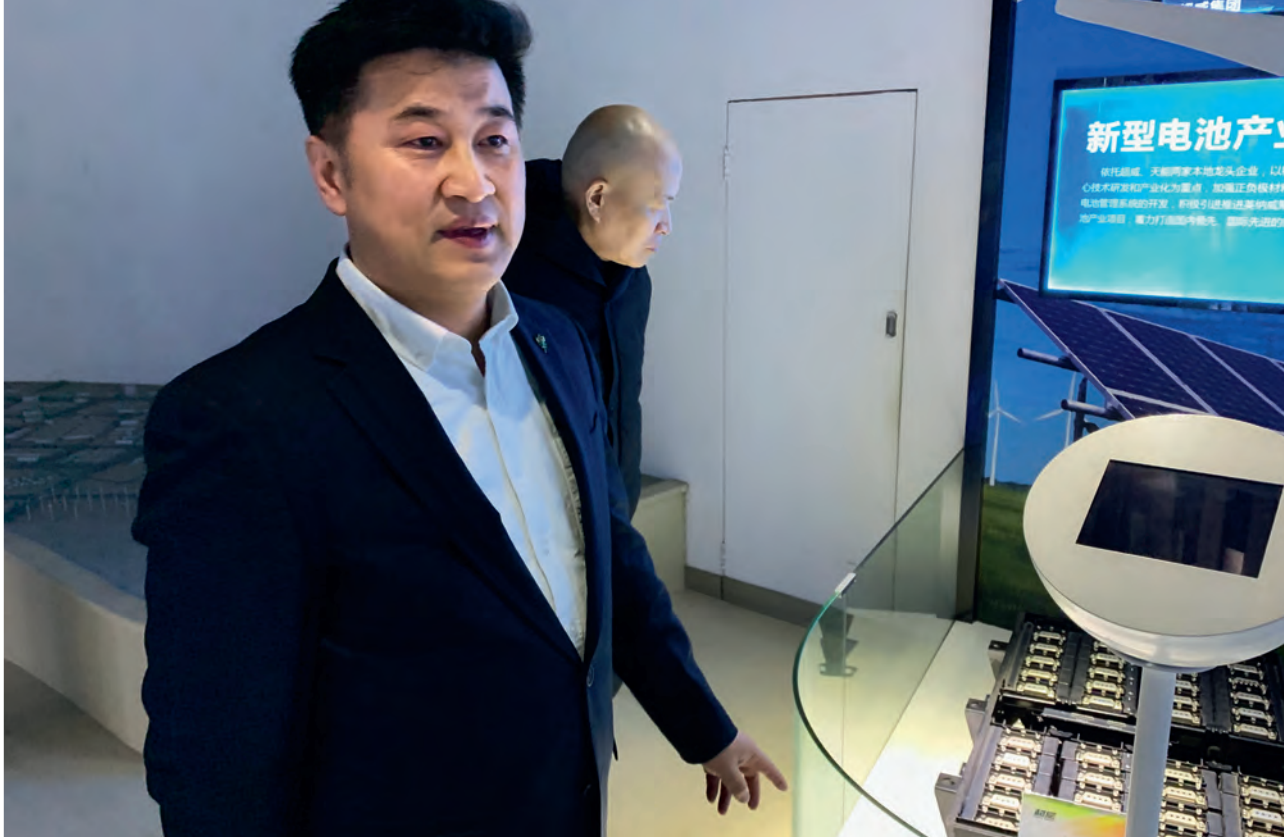
We arrived on an important day: Wang had acquired a strategic investor. He signed a cooperation agreement with the Chinese GSR (Gold, Sand, River) Group, which incorporates around thirty hi-tech companies. The essence of the agreement is that GSR will invest in the development of the factory and the institute. As I was told by ENV staff, the boss had expended a great deal of energy (which he certainly does not lack) in order to create this profitable alliance, travelling to Beijing several times and attracting partners in Changxing. Welcoming speeches were made in the vestibule of the business centre and one of the managers of the GSR Group thanked the Polytechnic University for training such advanced personnel as Qingsheng Wang.

The ceremony made an impression on the young Polytechnic University graduates whom we managed to meet. Ivan Rey and Evgeny Maltsev were unanimous in declaring that substantial plans would follow this agreement: the scope for creativity would be

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greater. Ivan graduated from the Institute of Metallurgy, Mechanical Engineering and Transport only last year, in the *Theoretical Fundamentals of Welding* Department. Friends who had come here earlier called him and he followed them as soon as there was a vacancy. He was attracted by the opportunity of proving himself, plus the material factor. In less than a year he was heading the Additive Technologies Department, so his basic knowledge in metal science gained at the Polytechnic University came in very useful. Evgeny's story was somewhat different: in 2016 he graduated from the Institute of Physics, Nanotechnologies and Telecommunications in the Department of Microelectronics and Nanotechnologies, but could not find employment in his specialization. He worked in a bank and looked for vacancies on the Internet. Everything was decided by meetings with Pavel Novikov and Qingsheng Wang, who had come on a visit — Evgeny has been here since November 2018, developing materials for solid electrolytes.



The foreign specialists are highly valued at ENV and enjoy excellent conditions. Firstly, the company pays for their visas, residence permits, flights, medical insurance, overalls and food. They live in a new microdistrict with all amenities called *Public Apartments for Talented People*. One small detail: masters and candidates of science do not pay rent in their first year and are given a 50% discount after that, but that is down to the company — candidates of science do not even pay for utilities. In general, their knowledge is valued in literal terms: they are paid exactly in accordance with their level of education — for instance, a candidate of science earns twice as much as someone with a bachelor's degree. In addition, so that his colleagues will not become nostalgic for Russian cuisine, Wang has employed a cook named Lena who treats them every day to borsch, blini or delicious salads.

But the most important thing for a scientist is the opportunity to work in his specialization and to control every

In the laboratory of the joint Innovations Institute.

Qingsheng Wang's mainstays are scientists and specialists from the Polytechnic University and he always stresses the insoluble link with his alma mater.





Qingsheng Wang in the factory building.

Soon production will be in full swing here.



In an area of 80,000 square metres there will be a technological chain for the manufacture of lithium polymer batteries with solid electrolytes and a capacity of 25–50 Ah, producing energy of 190–220 Wh/kg

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stage of a design — from the idea to the experimental stage, and then to mass production. ENV's Deputy Director, Candidate of Technical Sciences Vadim Yudovich, gave us a guided tour of the company. He had worked in various Russian 'offices' after graduating from the St. Petersburg State University and admitted that he had never come across such high-class equipment, both for complex mechanochemical syntheses and for precise analysis. For example, a unit for the application of experimental materials with the thickness of an atom on to a substrate by laser evaporation.

The company is devising a formula of the functional materials in all the components of a battery — the anode, the cathode, the electrolyte and the separator, each of which has its own narrow places. This is how the plan works: once they achieve improvements in the characteristics of the cathode, they test to see how far these changes affect the parameters of the system as a whole. Then if they improve the anode, they test... and so on. Altering several parameters at one would be like telling your fortune by coffee grounds. Vadim invited us into the holy of holies: a room with controlled temperature and humidity where models of future batteries are assembled, examined for safety, capacity and resistance to cyclical loading... but he would not allow us beyond the glass doors covered with formulae. He remarked that only Russian specialists were engaged in scientific investigations in the form of improvisation. As soon as an optimal formula is found, a prototype of a real battery is made as part of an experimental series — for this there is a separate equipment complex, which we also visited.

What else is important? The scientists who are creating a product of a certain type feel their own necessity. China, which has been the largest car market in the world since 2009, doubles its production of electric cars each year and they are charged by lithium-ion batteries. Beijing recently set an ambitious target: to sell at least seven million electric cars a year by 2025 and to absolutely forbid the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2040. Chinese legislation allows for

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measures to stimulate the production and purchase of electric cars — for example, a simplified procedure for obtaining number plates. More and more cars with green number plates can now be seen on Chinese roads. In this sense ENV is occupying a very appropriate niche.

After the signing of the agreement with the GSR Group, Wang invited us to look around the factory — the building has already been constructed and is just awaiting the installation of equipment. In the factory, which is 80,000 sq. m. in area, there will be a production chain of lithium polymer batteries with a solid electrolyte, enviable capacity and energy. He was euphoric: the project to which he had devoted twenty years of his life was now close to completion; the technology uses cathode materials designed by him. Clutching the tie he had taken off after the official ceremony, Wang told us that 500 million yuan had been invested in the project, but the annual profit will be one billion yuan, so the factory will pay for itself in

six months. The market is mainly Chinese: besides the powering of electric cars, there is the charging of computers, mobile phones and light fixtures.

‘Is it easy to do business in China?’, I asked.

‘If you have a good product, it is easy’, laughed Wang. ‘A company is technology and product. There are about 3,000 companies in China manufacturing lithium-ion and lithium polymer batteries with a liquid electrolyte, but only one, apart from ours, producing batteries with a solid electrolyte.’

The principal merit of these batteries is that they are safe: they do not explode or burn under depressurization and overcharging (that has already happened and has led to accidents with electric cars and fatalities). The introduction of the solid electrolyte is a new twist in the development of lithium-ion systems. However, there is a problem which the designers have already run into: a reduction in the battery’s capacity under rapid discharge. The solution to this

The company’s equipment makes it possible to complete the most complex technological tasks.





Yu Yao with Vladimir Khizhnyak, Head of the International office, the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University.

Chinese specialists from ENV are also being drawn to the Polytechnic University. Yu Yao, head of the quality control department, who graduated from the Scientific-Technical University in Baotou (Inner Mongolia), has been involved in the making and analysing of cathode materials for the past 2.5 years. He wants to study for his master's degree at the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, inspired by the high level of training of his colleagues and the company's head. The university's rating and the cost of study are all acceptable — there is even a suitable master's programme in English on New Materials and Additive Technologies.

problem will avoid losses when working with high-tension currents, and specialists in St. Petersburg and Changxing have already come up with various ideas for modifying the solid electrolyte.

Wang tries to speak Russian, even when there is an interpreter present, and the Russian staff understand him well. The Russian team believe in the future of solid-state batteries, are studying new materials for making them and are looking for ways of increasing their capacity. This process is reminiscent of the steady increase in the efficiency of solar elements, which represent the future of electricity. Of course, moving to faraway China for a lengthy period was a challenge for them all — as we know, 'the Orient is a delicate matter', but they have made their choice and have no regrets. They have a quiet, safe environment, excellent medical care and no language barrier — in their little community

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they speak Russian (including the head of the company) and English, though Alexander Kalabuskin, a Polytechnic University graduate of an older generation and a Candidate in Physics and Mathematics, started learning Chinese to translate technical documentation, and became fascinated by it. For instance, the Chinese word for 'battery' consists of two hieroglyphics meaning 'electrical' and 'lake'. Beautiful!

You leave Changxing with mixed feelings: pleasure at an outstanding individual, a sincere friend of Russia and a graduate of our leading technical university, but a certain chagrin that an innovative enterprise based on the designs of Russian specialists did not originate in this country. But there are objective reasons for this, as I heard from Pavel Novikov on my return to St. Petersburg. The world started using lithium-ion batteries for commercial purposes in 1991, when the Russian economy was not ready for them — the civilian market in Russia has been formed only in the last 5–7 years. Batteries mass-produced in China cost 30–40% less than Russian batteries. Even if the cost were equal, the energy of our batteries is substantially less than that of Qingsheng Wang's batteries. Catching up is always difficult, and China is way ahead in this field. We therefore have to go by the way of collaboration so as not to fall behind international trends, and this is what the Polytechnic University is doing.

'Our contribution is research and development of forward-looking cathode materials. The technologies of inserting a cathode mass into a network, obtaining an anode, a separator, an electrolyte and the assembly of the battery are all Chinese, partly Wang's', explained Professor Anatoly Popovich. 'We are attempting to bring Chinese experience in battery production to Russia. The first step has already been taken — a subsidiary of ENV has been organized in Russia. The future federal technopolis based on the Polytechnic University will open new horizons in our collaboration.'

Over the Barriers

Andrey RUDSKOY,

*Rector of the Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University,
academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences:*

‘Our collaboration with the People’s Republic of China is the cornerstone of our international relations. Our university opened an official branch in China three years ago — in Pudong, a new district of Shanghai. It has been a very successful project, the first and, unfortunately, the only one among Russian universities. China is a great country with a rapidly developing economy, an ancient history and special traditions, philosophy and psychology. And we realized that we needed to set up a centre, which would be headed by a Chinese graduate of the Polytechnic University, as a platform for negotiations and the promotion of joint educational programmes, engineering design and fundamental research, in order to raise the university’s profile and competitiveness not only in China but in the whole Asia-Pacific Region. A great deal has been achieved in those three years. For example, we have opened a Joint Engineering Institute in the Pedagogical University in Jiangsu Province, where there are 562 students on bachelor’s degree courses and 36 studying for master’s degrees. Jiangsu has become the largest university in China in terms of the number of students learning Russian and training in technical specializations. Integrated study plans have been devised: for instance, after two years in the Joint Engineering Institute, the students spend the following two years at the Polytechnic University and receive our bachelor’s degree, then, after defending their theses in China, they are awarded a bachelor’s degree by the Joint Institute. There is a similar scheme for master’s degree students. The lectures are given by Russian and Chinese lecturers, and we help the latter to improve their qualifications.

We have also opened a joint Innovations Institute in the town of Changxing in Zhejiang Province for the production of lithium-ion batteries and the development of additive technologies, where our Polytechnic University graduates work alongside Chinese specialists headed by Qingsheng Wang, a pupil of Professor Anatoly Popovich. We have achieved a breakthrough in the Chinese car industry. The news recently hit the mass media: Russian engineers have taught their Chinese colleagues to design cars. That is not hyperbole: Polytechnic University graduates took part in the design of an off-road vehicle for BAIC, the largest state car corporation in China. Using tools of computer engineering (the creation of digital doubles of items in the production process, virtual proving grounds



and test facilities), they were able to reduce the weight of the vehicle by 7.5 % — a huge achievement for mass production. The research and development were completed in 2.5 months — at least three times quicker than by traditional methods. What is more to the point for the market, including in Europe: with the aid of digital models we have regulated the testing of Chinese cars for safety.

With the active participation of our ‘plenipotentiary’ in the People’s Republic we are forming teams of Russian and Chinese engineers and scientists in a wide range of disciplines — from molecular biology and medicine to energy. The teams are winning BRICS grants and setting up joint laboratories, as, for example, in the East China Pedagogical University. The Polytechnic University’s branch is not an abstract concept: we keep our numerous partners in higher education, science and industry informed about its activities and they can count on our support. Academicians of the Russian Academy of Sciences Evgeny Shlyakhto, General Director of the Almazov National Medical Research Centre, and Mikhail Pogosyan, Rector of the Moscow Aviation Institute, and others have already had meetings and negotiations with Chinese colleagues in our branch. We are working for the whole of Russia. China has been and remains our most important strategic partner’.

Andrey Rudskoy opens
the Peter the Great St. Petersburg
Polytechnic University’s Chinese branch.
Shanghai, April 2016.

The branch organizes cultural events, helps to select undergraduates for our university and holds video link-ups for them with Chinese students and postgraduates from the Polytechnic University — and there are about two thousand of them here. On this basis we plan to develop tourism for school-leavers and university entrants, arrange for groups of prospective Chinese students to come on acquaintance visits to the Polytechnic University and other higher education establishments in the city.

Which Way to the Library?

THE FINNS HAVE GIVEN A SPECIFIC ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION FROM A CULT SOVIET COMEDY FILM
Arkady SOSNOV. Photos: the author, Tuomas Uusheimo and the Helsinki Central Library Oodi



As the train slowed down and smoothly approached Helsinki Central Station, the oblong silhouette of Oodi could be glimpsed through the carriage window, like a goldfish in an aquarium. The new library, which opened at the end of last year next to the massive Parliament building, the emerald-green House of Music, the white marble Finlandia Hall, the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art and the glass skyscraper of the Helsingin Sanomat newspaper, is quite marvellous. But why was it necessary to build it in a city centre already full of large structures, filling the last site stretching down to the Töölönlahti bay?

There is already no shortage of libraries in Helsinki!

According to official statistics, in 2017 there were 37 libraries for a city with a population of 643,272, with a total of 1.8 million books and other items in 132 languages. Borrowings are close to 9 million,

there are 240,000 active users and around 13 million visits to library websites. Perhaps that is why it was decided to open another library — to gild the lily, so to speak?

Libraries appeared in these parts much later than saunas, and nevertheless: from the 18th century only literate couples were allowed to marry in church — that was one incentive for reading, and in the mid-19th century the Grand Duchy of Finland, then part of the Russian Empire, started to introduce a system of schools for the people. The intelligentsia were hell-bent on ensuring that the priority language used for teaching was Finnish. After Finland gained independence, this became the norm. Oodi was conceived as the main gift for the centenary of the country's independence, and that is symbolic in itself: not a sophisticated weapon or a granite monument, but a source of knowledge. The idea put forward twenty





The first international competition won by Samuli Woolston and his friends was to design a theatre-concert complex in Kristiansand (Norway) in 2005. They were then young university graduates who had not yet founded their own company and, if the competition entrants had not been anonymous, they would have had little chance of winning. In addition, they took the precaution of making their application in Norwegian. That's 'naive Finns' for you!

Romeo Pulli monitors a robot's work.

Returning a book is easy.



years ago by Minister of Culture Claes Andersson turned out to be wonderfully viable. The cost of the 'gift' was 98 million Euros — 30 million by the state and the rest by the city.

No less important was the fact that the decision to build the library was a matter of public agreement, and such a consensus is worth a great deal. There were differences of opinion on details, but the majority of those questioned agreed that it should be a modern, multifunctional building (not just for borrowing books and reading newspapers, but also for sitting at a computer, engaging in useful handicrafts, recording songs in a studio, watching films, teaching children or simply chatting with friends over lunch or a cup of coffee). On the basis of numerous workshops, a task for competitors the size of a large book was drawn up. Designers had not only to provide the building with useful functions in strict accordance with the demands, but also to make it blend into its surroundings — and they had to achieve this without deep foundations, as a road tunnel was planned to run beneath it!

Samuli Woolston, one of the co-founders of ALA Architects, which won the anonymous international competition of 544 designs, admits: when the company was one of the six candidates chosen for the second round still anonymous, he had no doubt that they would win. A little healthy self-confidence does no harm when it is based on experience of designing public buildings since his student years. The trump card of ALA's concept was the division of the library's functions into three floors with different profiles, each of them an extensive self-contained space. This was achieved by the unusual construction of the building, which is supported by two steel arches, each over a hundred metres in length. This happy solution meant there was no need for the uneconomic atrium that featured in most of the other designs, nor for cheerless columns or a heavy foundation. On the other hand, there is plenty of room to walk around on each floor.

The ground floor is a public communications area: a multipurpose hall, the cinema of the National Audio-Visual



Institute, an EU information centre, an exhibition space by the Helsinki City Planning Department, a service point of the Helsinki Info, a restaurant and a play area. On account of its glass façade and elegant awning of golden planks of Finnish spruce, the latter will dovetail with an open-air children's park which will be ready by summer. Here books can be returned without queuing: a machine reads the titles and removes them from the visitor's electronic record. The books are sent to the basement on a conveyor belt, where smart hands (robot-manipulators) sort them into boxes and transfer them to robotic cars which summon the lift and deliver the valuable cargo to the third floor, to the correct shelves in the so-called 'book heaven'.

We had not yet reached heaven, but meanwhile Samuli took me to the second, business floor: a concentration of offices, niches and corners of varying formats. Here are the promised recording studios (in one we saw a popular Finnish deejay), playrooms and negotiating rooms, computer classes for the elderly, a hire office (you can hire a violin, skis or a drill) and a training kitchen where people can cook something tasty for their friends. As we walked, we passed

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workplaces for laser cutting of wood and metal, for 3D printing and printing on glass, paper or fabric, for precision soldering of microchips. Then we came to an amphitheatre, where young people sat on the steps with laptops and sufficient plugs for their gadgets. 'If you need to shorten your trousers, we have a sewing machine,' commented Samuli. The original design also included a sauna, but at the last moment the library administration decided against it. The owner would have charged for the sauna, but at Oodi the basic services are free of charge on principle. But in the future, who knows? The zoning of subjects is also useful, so new services may be introduced and localized.

At last we came to the third floor — the actual library, but also not of the customary kind. The 'book heaven' is right up in the air, hovering above the ground, and that creates an atmosphere of comfort and tranquillity; trees grow beneath the wavy white ceiling, as they should in heaven — nine rare Bucida Bucheras trees, native to Mexico. Samuli jokes that the climate of the prairies has been recreated under northern skies. And whereas on the first floor the transparent façade provides natural light and a link with the adjoining Kansalaistori, here the huge windows are slightly tinted to protect readers from sunlight, especially in summer. The shelves are not tall, on the recommendation of the librarians, and do not break up the space, the ends of which are tapered like the bow and stern of an Ancient Greek ship, so these 150 metres are not boring or monotonous. At one end there is a café (how could they do without one?) and a children's area with a colourful carpet, where the library staff read the children stories.

Comparatively few books and other items are kept at Oodi — around 100,000, but others can be ordered free of charge from other libraries using a membership card of the capital region's (cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen) HelMet system. The store of books and other items at the main library in Pasila is much larger. There is also a Russian library at Espoo and a truly multilingual

library — books in 80 languages — at Pasila. Because of its location, Oodi is considered to be the Central Library. Librarian Leena Eskelinen took us to the Russian section: Aksyonov, Viktor Yerofeyev, Grishkovets, Alexander Ilichevsky, Max Frei, Andrey Ivanov, Zakhar Prilepin, literature in translation and popular science. And in the rows of books, as on the other shelves, there were large empty spaces: the books are in demand!

A special group manages the Russian section and Leena, as a Russian speaker, is part of that group. She has worked in the library system for nearly 30 years and was transferred to Oodi to help in organizing the work. The staff of 54 people, each of whom was interviewed, is a balance of young and more experienced employees. Leena remarked that the principle 'not only books, but also services' operates in many libraries in the system, but, of course, they do not have the architecture, design and...robots that the Central Library has. The robots, like the logistics as a whole, are managed by Romeo



Tinning, soldering, 3D printing — all these are available at Oodi.

Love of books is instilled in children from a very young age.





Over the Barriers

I noticed some attractive young mothers with babies in the children's play area and decided to ask what had brought them to Oodi. When I got closer, I saw that they were unobtrusively breast-feeding their infants. It was too late to withdraw, and the mothers, without any embarrassment, told me that they were friends who lived in Espoo and, by way of a change, had arranged to meet in the new library. They liked it and would certainly come again. They could not be called readers — they were just visitors, but one of them had already been with her baby to the 'secret room,' which was like a cave with magical lighting, its entrance hidden behind a bookshelf. Meanwhile, her child, with typical Finnish persistence (*Sisu*), was crawling along the floor towards a colouring book. It occurred to me that if these kids take their first steps at Oodi, they will come to books earlier than other children of the same age.

A nursery and soldering may be unthinkable in a classic library, but Oodi is an innovative version — a public institution where, although surrounded by other people, it is possible to be alone with a book. And why should it not be so in the 21st century?

Oodi's openness is emphasized not only by its transparent facades, but also by the fact that it has three entrances, and the one from the station, equipped with an escalator, is the shortest route to the 'book heaven.' The idea is that people hurrying to catch a train will take a book with them on their journey. You can stock up with literature even quicker than that: there is a stall with new books and pocket bestsellers on the ground floor — they are lent for 14 days, other books for a month. As Samuli explained, the arched outlines of the roof attract people, as they mark an assembly point. The same function is performed by the figured awning of Finnish spruce, which makes the outside space a continuation of the inside of the building — it may provide space for a café, an exhibition of a book fair. Certainly no other building in Helsinki blends so well into the city's landscape.

Stubba Nikula, director of the city administration's foundation for festivals and spectacles whom I met in the 'book heaven,' already

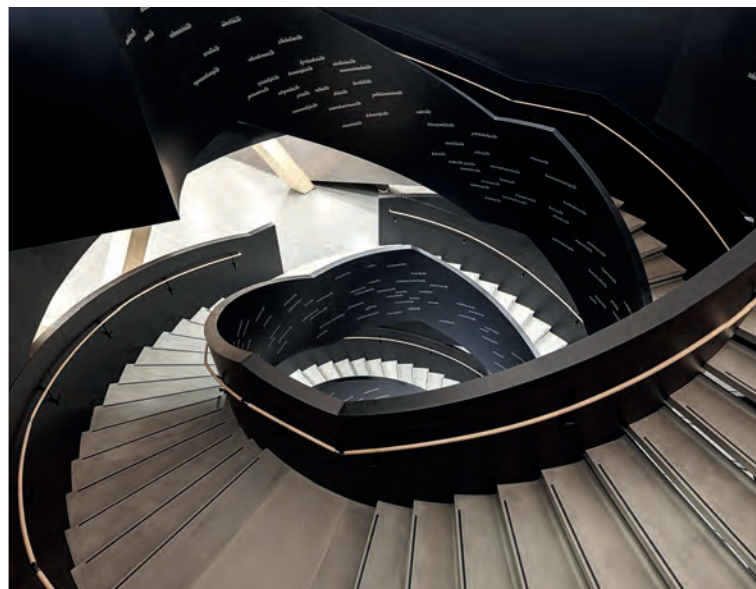
Oodi fully lives up to its name (Oodi is Finnish for 'ode').

Pulli, a young graduate of Turku University: 15–16,000 books are transported between departments every day. Young people with a technical bent come to the library, which is a good sign. Romeo admitted that his prestige has noticeably increased in the last couple of months: friends often ask him to show them the new library.

Oodi was inundated immediately after it opened — 50,000 people a day queued to see with their own eyes this masterpiece of glass, wood and steel. That initial passion gradually abated, but 10–12,000 people still visit the library every day. They include a lot of young people, who are attracted by services not typical of a library. With her practised eye Leena has noticed a new trend among visitors — families with children. And even the number of the most passive readers — young men — has noticeably increased. When Oodi opened, many people who had not used a library for years wanted to obtain a HelMet membership card.

With a HelMet card you can obtain books and other services in any library in the Helsinki region.





Oodi is the material embodiment of the Finnish Law on Public Libraries, the most recent edition of which has been in force since last year. It precisely sets out the purpose of libraries: to provide equal access to culture and information for all sections of the population, active citizenship and freedom of expression, reading and literacy skills, education throughout life. For Finns a library is a vitally important democratic institution.

The artistic embodiment of this is the winding staircase leading to the 'book heaven'. On its walls are 381 words designating the people whom, in citizens' opinion, the library should serve: WAR VETERANS, THE LANKY, GRANDMOTHERS, MINISTERS, ALLERGY SUFFERERS, GAYS, SERVICEMEN, BUSINESSPEOPLE, THE SHY, DIRTY PEOPLE, LOVERS, YACHTSMEN, THE ILLITERATE, HONEST PEOPLE, MOTHERS, DOG LOVERS... (The design of the staircase is by ALA, the artwork/the words installed on its surface is by Otto Karvonen.)

And another meaningful aspect: the floor of the 'book heaven' is on the same level as the vestibule of the Parliament building, so the authorities and the people can look one another in the eye.

has his eye on the library: he is pondering how to use its splendid acoustics and bright atmosphere for city events. Oodi is part of an interactive architectural ensemble consisting of buildings of various styles and purposes, which provides unique opportunities for a creative combination of art, science and hi-tech. The hub of the city's life is gradually moving here from the historic Senate Square.

The birth of Oodi was a Finnish national project. ALA's partners in the design and construction of the building were exclusively Finnish companies for whom it was a matter of honour. Finnish professors have established that spruce endures the weather conditions better than other types of wood; it may lose its lustre over time but does not bend. They devised an algorithm of sawing which guaranteed a pattern that was as even as possible. The library's robots were also developed in Finland. The floor in the 'book heaven' is made of imported oak, since in Finland that tree is included in the Red Book.

Oodi's three very different floors.

Under the Aegis of Pallas Athene

A MAN WHO ONCE DREAMED OF BEING A COSMONAUT FOUND HIS COSMOS IN CERAMICS

Inna ELISEEVA. Photos: Timur Turgunov and from the *Pallada* archives



In October 2018 the 'Keramarkh' Museum of Architectural Artistic Ceramics opened in the Sovereign Bastion at Peter and Paul Fortress. The display includes over 200 items, delighting visitors by their bright colours and diversity: tiled stoves and fireplaces dating from the 18th to early 20th centuries; icons painted on a ceramic base, in multicoloured ceramic cases; exquisite Dutch tiles which complemented the unique furnishings of the Menshikov Palace at Oranienbaum. Of particular interest are examples of décor from famous buildings in St. Petersburg: the domes of the Cathedral Mosque, the capitals from the façade of the former Petrograd Provincial Credit Society (now Dom Kino, House of Cinema), roof tiles from the Suvorov Memorial Museum and, finally, the largest exhibit — a seven-metre panel with a grotesque composition from the façade of a building in Ploschad Truda (Labour Square).

The birth of a new museum is always the fruit of the efforts of many people and organizations. The nucleus of the display consists of items from the State Museum of St. Petersburg's collection of architectural details, swelled by exhibits from the State Hermitage, Peterhof State Museum-Reserve, the Russian Academy of Arts Scientific Research Museum, the State Museum of Ceramics and the 18th century Kuskovo Estate, the Orekhovo-Zuyevo Local History Museum, the Irkutsk Region Local History Museum, and other leading Russian museums. A particular contribution to the museum has been made by the 'Pallada' Restoration and Construction Company in St. Petersburg. Suffice it to say that 'Keramarkh' was given over forty items from the personal collection of Konstantin LIKHOLAT, founder and director of 'Pallada'. But numbers are not everything...

Enthusiasts

As a child, Kostya Likholat dreamed of being an astronaut. After graduating from school in Alma-Ata with the gold medal, he entered the Dmitry Ustinov Baltic State University ('Voenmech') in Leningrad which, as is well known, sent Georgy Grechko and Sergey Krikalev into orbit... The student of the aerospace faculty was systematically moving towards the fulfilment of his dream: he specialized in 'Space Vehicles and Upper-Stage Modules', completed military flying courses, clocked up parachute jumps and flying hours in training aircraft. However, when he graduated from university in 2002, there was no longer any system for the distribution of young specialists; each of them had to make his own way in life according to his own strengths and abilities. The graduate travelled to Moscow, Korolyov and Zagorsk, visiting the personnel sections of scientific research institutions dealing with developments for outer space.

'None of them welcomed me with open arms', says Konstantin, 'so in the end I ended up at the Institute of High Frequency Currents in St. Petersburg, where for several years I designed benches for ultrasonic welding. And I don't consider that as wasted time!'

While still in his last year at university Konstantin had set up a regional organization to support students who had come to Leningrad from Kazakhstan, like him, and from other former Soviet republics. The organization provided them with legal and financial support in the transfer of money. It came to agreements with telephone companies concerning discounts for students and their parents for which special cards were issued and found partners to assist in the regular delivery of parcels in vehicles from Kazakhstan and distribution around St. Petersburg. Konstantin also managed to organize four trailers from St. Petersburg to Alma-Ata via Astana. In this way, he



was gaining experience not only in flights but also in business communications of the new age.

'It is no coincidence that we named our organization after Pallas Athene — Pallada', Konstantin explains. 'After all, she was the goddess of wisdom and knowledge, the patroness of sciences and an invincible warrior, and we had to make our way in difficult circumstances.' And he adds with a smile: 'I later found out that Pallas was also the guardian of craftsmen and, perhaps, took particular care of potters...'

By 2001 the demand for his small organization had reduced — communications in the post-Soviet era had normalized. Promising projects at the institute were coming to an end, but his soul still desired movement, dynamism and flight. It was, perhaps, at this moment that Pallas Athene waved her hand, suggesting that Konstantin try his

'Ceramics have been known since ancient times and have always been known for their combination of beauty and functionality. We are now going back to the age of ceramics because of their endurance, durability and aesthetic quality and are opening up new horizons for the craft, which has become an art. It will invariably attract people, like outer space'.

Konstantin LIKHOLAT

Page 42:
Fragment of the ceramic façade of the Petrograd Provincial Credit Society (Dom Kino) — *Gryphon with the Head of a Lion*. Restored by Pallada. Keramarkh, St. Petersburg.



Installation of the ceramic cupolas of the Church of St. Igor of Chernigov (Novo-Peredelkino, Moscow), made at the *Pallada* workshop.

Restoration of an historic ceramic wash-basin. Restorer Olesya Simonova.

Plafond for a chandelier from the Eliseevs' house (14 Birzhevaya Liniya, St. Petersburg). Restorer Tatiana Korol.

Beauty is created by daily painstaking work.



hand in a new field. He enthusiastically agreed and became executive director of the *Guild of Masters*, which made ceramics.

He already had experience of organizational work, but no knowledge of ceramics apart from a course in the study of materials at university, and here he was involved in projects which required a high degree of professionalism and a fast and full immersion in the subject. Together with the general contractor, the Baltic Construction Company, the *Guild of Masters* restored the Church of the Life-Giving Trinity in Kashirsky Highway in Moscow, no less in dimensions than the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. They made the world's largest five-tier tiled iconostasis for the interior of the church and thousands of square metres of ceramics for the exterior facing: cornices, an excerpt from the Lord's Prayer on the central drum and terracotta ceramics on the tower. The church was restored to coincide with the thousandth anniversary of the Baptism of Russia. Another

responsible commission was to make a fireplace at the Russian President's residence at Novo-Ogarevo (the tiles are now often seen in TV reports and photographs of official events hosted by Vladimir Putin). It was necessary to assimilate the specifics of production very quickly — they were helped in this by their first instructors in ceramics: Arnold Erik, Alexander Khustochka and Vadim Postnikov.

While supervising these projects, Konstantin became interested in the production process of architectural ceramics, and later in the restoration and preservation of stoves and fireplaces and in the amazing beauty of tiles. Working with specialists from KGIOP (Committee for State Control, Use and Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments), he discovered unique examples of ceramics in resettled buildings in St. Petersburg. He thought it was unthinkable that masterpieces created by the hard work and talent of craftsmen of past generations could perish

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and pass into oblivion. This caring attitude was communicated to those around him — foremen who found half-destroyed fireplaces or tiles in the course of the refurbishment of buildings called him and asked him to take them. That is how Konstantin Likholat's collection started.

'I think it is all in my genes,' says Konstantin. 'My father Viktor Likholat was a well-known collector of antiquities and celebrities' autographs in Kazakhstan; he was an obsessive numismatist with a collection that had no equal in Central Asia. I remember as a boy looking at old coins with him through a magnifying glass. It's from him that I get my interest in archaeology, research, working with archives...'

In order to reach a higher professional level, find out about artistic schools and genres and get to know all the leading masters of architectural ceramics, he decided to study for a degree as an art historian. Without taking a break from work he



graduated from the Repin State Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. He gradually realized that he had discovered his life's work, that the world history of ceramics is not a part of applied art but a whole Cosmos.

In almost seven years at the *Guild of Masters* Konstantin accumulated the potential for progressing further. He wished to set himself new creative targets — he was now well versed in production equipment. He worked for a short time as Deputy Director at the Leningrad Experimental Porcelain Factory, which added administrative skills but not the freedom to make decisions.

He decided not to form a new company: *Pallada* was still operating and had spent all those years searching for projects and partners. Under this tried and trusted brand he opened his own workshop, originally with a single but very up-to-date German kiln. And he immediately started attracting associates for joint work on projects connected with ceramics.

Restoration of fragment of a frieze from the bell-tower of the Church of St. Anna of Kashin. The toning of the replaced lost sections is carried out by *Pallada* restorers Ekaterina Golubeva and Viktoriya Kovaleva.

Master-class in the *Young Restorer* study programme of the Russian Association of Restorers in *Keramarkh*. Konstantin Likholat, project leader Tatiana Chernova, ceramics teacher Tatiana Emelyanova.

In conjunction with Father Alexander (Tkachenko), *Pallada* hosts Sunday school lessons in the ceramic workshop, collaborates with a children's hospice founded by Father Alexander and with schools for hard of hearing and partially sighted children.



Behind these doors is a world of ceramics.

Guided tour for members of the Friends of the Museum of the History of St. Petersburg.

For three years the company has interacted with the Leningrad Region Multicentre of Social and Labour Integration in Vsevolozhsk (Director Irina Drozdenko). Its pupils come to Pallada for practical work, and a production section with kilns has been set up in the centre with the company's support. Here young people can acquire professional skills that will enable them to progress to an independent working life.

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Konstantin Likholat conducts a guided tour of the museum.

Keramarkh runs special lessons for children aged from 3 to 5 and their parents.

Today *Pallada* has ten large kilns, including a 35-metre tunnel kiln which is soon to be replaced by a more up-to-date version. The company's specialists have learned how to recreate the tiles of the celebrated Kikerino workshops, Pyotr Vaulin's Russian majolica and pieces from the Lyadov and Balashov factories, and how to restore stoves of which only details have survived. When refurbishing their flats, people often get rid of fireplaces which take up a lot of space. In such cases *Pallada*, which is compiling an inventory of St. Petersburg fireplaces, is immediately on the alert and obtains some magnificent examples which it restores and copies. Two years ago some of them graced an exhibition devoted to the modernist period in the State Museum of the History of St. Petersburg.

The company began to receive commissions from cities in Russia and abroad; it considered it an honour to donate eight stoves to the State Hermitage and to restore an old Belgian stove from the Hermitage collection. Likholat no longer went to consultants in search of knowledge: people came to him for advice and listened to his opinion. He established permanent links with curators of ceramics in leading Russian museums. His own collection was also growing. This probably shows professional recognition of him as a businessman, ceramicist, restorer, historian and renovator of churches.

He had the idea of creating a specialized museum of architectural ceramics — a multifunctional museum with a display of high ceramic art and a workshop where visitors could observe



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the process of making ceramic objects, feel the pliability of clay and try to make something themselves; a museum as a place for meetings and discussions among specialists. He started to bring his idea to fruition: a leisure centre appeared in the *Pallada* workshop where children and their parents could get close to the aesthetic of ceramics and make items in accordance with examples by masters. It was not easy to find a venue for the new museum: he tried including it in the workshop and there were other tempting alternatives, but in each of them one of Likholat's key functions was missing.

Then in February 2018 he received a telephone call from the State Museum of the History of St. Petersburg, which was celebrating its centenary: 'Come and see us, we need to talk.' One of the State Museum's ambitious projects was the creation of a Museum of Architectural Ceramics in seven rooms of the Sovereign Bastion. The State Museum had some excellent examples of ceramics in its reserves, but many of them were in a parlous condition — they were in need of restoration, a partner-investor. And so a state museum and a private company not only found one another, but also found allies. The idea of *Keramarkh* was actively supported by Andrey Rodenkov, a researcher of the history of architectural ceramics who became one of the museum's 'parents' — he worked in archives, some of them in Finland and Germany, to attribute the exhibits. Specialists from KGIOP also took part in the starting development of the concept. The author of the concept of the museum and the curator of the display was architecture historian Maria Makogonova. *Pallada* invested 23 million roubles in the project. In record time — by October 2018, the rooms had been refurbished and the display had begun to take shape. The number of people at the opening of *Keramarkh* showed how necessary it was to St. Petersburg's residents and visitors. Konstantin's dream had been fulfilled.

And what about the multifunctionality of the museum? That has been achieved thanks to the State Museum's infrastructure: an excellent conference hall in Peter and Paul Fortress, a lecture hall



Exhibits for the museum have also been provided by the Nizhny Novgorod State Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve, the Gamel Palace and Park Ensemble, the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology and the St. Petersburg State Technological Institute (Technical University).

The museum features examples produced by the Leopold Bonafede Ceramic Studio, the Matvey Kuznetsov Porcelain and Earthenware Partnership, Heldwein — Vaulin Ceramic Art Manufacture, the Rakkolanjoki Pottery Factory, the 'Abo' Factory, the Ernst Teichert Saxony Kiln Factory in Meissen; works by architects Alexander Bryullov, Fyodor Lidval, Alexander Stakensneider and Uno Ullberg, the ceramic artist Pyotr Vaulin and others.



Fragment of a panel for the entrance to the office of the Heldwein-Vaulin Ceramic Factory in St. Petersburg. *Keramarkh*, St. Petersburg.

Early 20th century kiln. Ernst Teichert Factory, Meissen, Germany. From Konstantin Likholat's collection. *Keramarkh*, St. Petersburg.

as a place for discussions and a Fun Academy in which children and families can learn the art of ceramics. It is already planned to update the display in three rooms: *Pallada* is prepared to supply about 80 items for it, and how many masterpieces languish in museums' repositories, how many talented masters can rally around *Keramarkh* and support it with their works!

The opening of the museum was accompanied by the first issue of a professional magazine in Russian and English entitled *Architectural Ceramics of the World* (founder and editor-in-chief Konstantin Likholat, scientific editor Andrey Rodenkov). It includes two articles by Konstantin himself: on the attribution of an outstanding example of church ceramics — a majolica icon-case made in the Kikerino workshops in the first quarter of the 20th century, now in the Nizhny Novgorod Museum, and on the work of the original artist Georgy Kupriyanov (1934–2008), who made unique ceramic iconostases for the churches in the Vysokopetrovsky Monastery in Moscow. Konstantin Likholat seems to have time for everything: the modernization of production at *Pallada*, scientific investigations, the development of the *Keramarkh* website and the creation of the concept of a virtual Museum of Ceramics whose display would encompass about a hundred museums and exhibition halls around the world.

Thirty years ago, an event devoted to the reconciliation of countries after the Afghan War was held on the beach at Peter and Paul Fortress. The participants included Russian and American ceramicists. Konstantin wants to repeat the event, making it more celebratory and on a larger scale, since in the neighbouring Sovereign Bastion there is now a profile museum which was not there at that time. International feuds do not bother him — he is convinced that this ceramic platform can only serve to bring nations together. His patroness Pallas Athene will certainly support such a beautiful and audacious project. At any rate, Konstantin's experience shows that dreams do come true.

