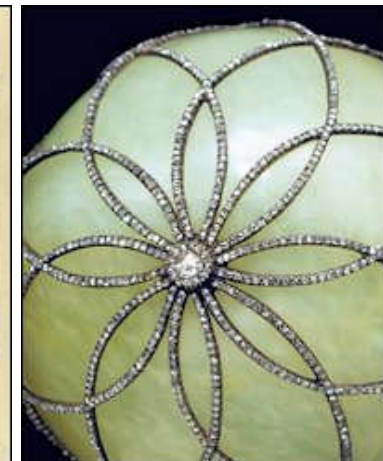


# The Wonder of Fabergé: A Study of the McFerrin Collection

Presented at the 2016 Houston Symposium

Ulla Tillander-Godenhjelm, Scholar and Author (Finland): *Fabergé in the Light of 20<sup>th</sup> Century European Jewelry*



Selection of Faberge *Objets d'art* from the Artie and Dorothy McFerrin Collection

In her after-dinner talk the presenter paid homage to the Russian court jeweler Carl Fabergé (1846-1920) by reflecting on his 34-year career - a surprisingly short time - to accomplish so much. Today, a century later Faberge *objets d'art* are treasured in museums, sought after in the auction market, and in the case of the McFerrin Collection have become a treasure trove for researchers.

**Galina Korneva**, Independent Researcher and Author (Russia): *Imperial Gifts Created by Fabergé for the Coronation of Nicholas II, New Archival Research*

Extensive archival documentation discussed in this paper proves the Faberge firm was the winner of a jewelers' competition before the 1896 Coronation. The most meaningful and expensive objects were presented to members of the Imperial family, the court, the military, and representatives of the church. Two Faberge snuff boxes in the McFerrin Collection created for Nicholas II's coronation were given to Russian Grand Dukes. The series of snuffboxes were made in four colors:

**Snuffboxes with Monogram of Emperor Nicholas II by Fabergé were given to Grand Dukes on the Coronation of Nicholas II**

**Red** enameled snuffbox with diamonds, № 29 (845 rubles), Fabergé № 1049, purchased by the Cabinet of HIM in March 1896. It was taken by His Majesty on June 28, 1896.

**Blue** enameled snuffbox with diamonds, № 30 (750 rubles), Fabergé № 1050, purchased by the Cabinet of HIM in March 1896. It was taken by His Majesty on June 28, 1896. **The box was gifted to Grand Duke Alexei Alexandrovich**

**Mauve** enameled snuffbox with diamonds, № 31 (800 rubles), Fabergé № 1051, purchased by the Cabinet of HIM in March 1896. It was taken by His Majesty on June 28, 1896.

**Green** enameled with diamonds snuffbox # 32 in 785 rub. with Fabergé # 1052 was purchased to the Cabinet of HIM in March 1896. It was taken by His Majesty on June 28, 1896. **The box was gifted to Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich**



Enameled Fabergé snuffbox in dark blue with the Nicholas II monogram was given by the Emperor to his uncle, Grand Duke Alexei Alexandrovich (1850-1908). At a cost of 750 rubles, Fabergé #1050, it was purchased by the Cabinet of H.I.M. in March 1896. (Portraits Courtesy Wikipedia)



Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich (1847-1909) received a green enameled Fabergé snuffbox, purchased by the Cabinet of H.I.M for 785 rubles, Fabergé #1052. An extant note reads: "Alix and I ask you to accept this small present as a souvenir of this day! Nicky"



The authors suggest two other snuff boxes (as yet unknown) were purchased by Emperor Nicholas II's Cabinet of H.I.M. (red, Fabergé #1049, 845 rubles, and mauve, Fabergé #1051, 800 rubles) as gifts from Nicholas to his other two uncles, Grand Dukes Sergei (1857-1905) and Pavel (1860-1919).

**Christel Ludewig McCanless**, Editor and Publisher of *Fabergé Research Newsletter* (USA), and **Timothy Adams**, Art Historian (USA): *Fabergé Smoking Accessories: Materials and Techniques of a New Art Form*



Smoking Accessories on Display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science

The Artie and Dorothy McFerrin Collection containing over 100 smoking accessories made by the Fabergé firm is currently on view at the Houston Museum of Natural Science in Texas. This study takes a closer look at a selection of cigarette and cigar cases, lighters (both table models and for personal use), and vesta or match cases. Snuffboxes, usually Imperial presentation pieces, are not included.

Materials and techniques of two major St. Petersburg studios of the Fabergé firm - Mikhail Perkhin, active from 1886-1903, and Henrik Wigström, active from 1903-1917, are discussed. Historical connections for a few accessories are highlighted. The entire Power Point [presentation](#) and accompanying [handout](#) which tied into the material and technique discussed in the morning session were demonstrated in the afternoon by the *Rock Stars*, volunteers at the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

**Mark Moehrke**, Independent Researcher (USA): *Fabergé Silver Mounted Art Glass - Exceptional Works in the McFerrin Collection*



Faberge Silver-Mounted Glass in the McFerrin Collection  
(Courtesy Christie's)

The presentation highlights several exceptional works of Fabergé silver-mounted art glass in McFerrin Collection, exploring these works in the context of the Fabergé firm's silver production and the firm's interaction with such renowned international firms as Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1913) and Émile Gallé (1846-1904):

### Fabergé Silver-Mounted Art Glass Lamp

The silver mounts: workmaster Viktor Aarne, St. Petersburg, 1899-1904, scratched inventory number 7968, the glass: unmarked; attributed to Loetz

Provenance: The Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, purchased from Fabergé's St. Petersburg shop on December 31, 1901 for 450 rubles

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### Fabergé Silver-Mounted Tiffany Favrite Glass Scent Flask

The silver mounts: workmaster Viktor Aarne, St. Petersburg, 1899-1904, scratched inventory number 5333, the glass flask: signed L.C.T. and numbered B583

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### Fabergé Silver-Mounted Tiffany Favrite Glass Vase

The silver mounts: workmaster Viktor Aarne, St. Petersburg, 1899-1904, the glass vase: signed Louis C. Tiffany, numbered O7233, circa 1900

Provenance: By repute, a wedding gift to the Prince and Princess Cantacuzène

**Dorothy and Artie McFerrin** in their talk, *Collector Tales*, with a Q&A session shared photographs and stories for a few of their favorite objects from a wide-ranging collection with a heavy emphasis on Imperial objects and awards.





Begun some 11 years ago, the collection includes a Nobel ice crystal pendant, two tiaras and a 1913 Tercentenary banner which relates to the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the beginning of the Romanov Empire. Faberge commemorated the historical event with the Romanov Tercentenary Egg now in the Armoury Museum of the Kremlin, Moscow.

**Wilfried Zeisler**, Curator of Russian & 19<sup>th</sup> Century Art, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens (USA) *From Canvas to Silver: Enameled and Repoussé "Paintings" in Russian Jewelry at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*



Enameled Feodor Rückert Casket of *The Boyar Wedding Feast* by Konstantin Makovsky Oil Painting, *The Boyar Wedding Feast*  
(Courtesy Hillwood Museum)

Engravings, sometimes made after paintings, have long been a source of inspiration for decorative arts designers. However, the presence of enameled or repoussé scenes after paintings on Russian jewelry boxes and caskets reveals the intricate connections between the decorative and fine arts during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such links illustrate the *Art Nouveau*'s fusion of the “minor” and “major” arts. The colorful paintings of Konstantin Makovsky were frequently translated into other mediums. This artist is renowned for his boyar series featuring the life and traditions of Old Russia. The famous painting *A Boyar Wedding Feast in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* at Hillwood epitomizes his style. This monumental work is considered a symbol of the Russian Revival style and stimulated the imaginations of Russian designers and craftsmen. The painting itself or select details from it were recreated on various objects using different kinds of enameling techniques. The painting is, for example, featured in cloisonné



enamel on a beautiful casket in the McFerrin Collection. Other works by Makovsky as well as those of contemporary artists are also presented on pieces in the McFerrin Collection and in the Post Collection at Hillwood Museum.

**Mikhail Ovchinnikov**, First Deputy Director of the Fabergé Museum (Russia) *Fabergé's Renaissance Style Objects in the Context of 19<sup>th</sup> Century European Revival Jewelry*



1894 Imperial Renaissance Egg (top) and the Resurrection Egg, Fabergé Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia  
(Courtesy Tim Adams)



Top of the 1894 Renaissance Egg  
(Courtesy Mikhail Ovchinnikov)

Revival styles were very popular in Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Renaissance revival style is seen in several objects made by the St. Petersburg jeweler Carl Fabergé, who as a young man studied historical pieces of

art throughout Europe, and was therefore exposed to the art of the master goldsmiths of previous centuries. On his travels he saw the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century three dimensional mosaic sculptures in *pietra dura* made by the Italian hardstone carvers in Venice and Florence. This influence is displayed Fabergé's hard stone portrait figures. During the time the young Fabergé spent at the Grünes Gewölbe in Dresden, Germany, he saw the wonders of the European Renaissance master goldsmiths, which in turn inspired some of his most important commissions, at least in two Easter eggs - 1894 Imperial Renaissance Egg and the Resurrection Egg. It has been suggested the Resurrection Egg may be the missing surprise for the 1894 Egg. Ovchinnikov believes the stylistic differences in the two eggs suggest they are not related. Fabergé volunteered as a young man to restore and repair pieces in the Gold Room of the Hermitage. This too exposed him to great works of art from previous centuries and one can conclude it greatly influenced his designs later in life.