

Sacred Art

THE ALBIN POLASEK MUSEUM & SCULPTURE GARDENS PRESENTS HOLY WORKS FROM PRE-SOVIET RUSSIA.

For Orthodox Russians, icons were relic-like objects directly linked to the holy figures they depicted. They were seen as powerful guardians that could bring rain, ward off fires and heal physical ailments, and they appeared everywhere in pre-Soviet Russia. Now, the Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens is showcasing sacred works from the 17th to early 20th centuries that reflect the opening up of Russia to Westernizing influences during the Romanov era.

Since the 11th century, Russian icons remained remarkably unchanged, but in the 18th century, with the ascension of the Romanov tsar, Peter the Great, some began to show the influence of Western European Renaissance painting. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Stalin sought to abolish religion. In the spirit of revolution and through intimidation, thousands of families destroyed their icons or gave them to government officials to destroy or sell on the Western market. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country encouraged the foreign sale of icons from the Romanov era.

Part of a collection assembled by Florida art restorer Gary Hollingsworth, the 125 sacred images on view in *The Holy Art of Imperial Russia* are of a kind once readily found in even the humblest homes of Russia. The exhibit includes painted panels, carved items and pieces cast in brass and silver, demonstrating the rich variety of styles and techniques of Russian icons from this period. [oam](http://oam.org)



St. John the Forerunner, early 20th c., tempera, oil, gold leaf/wood, 18" x 11"

COURTESY HOLLINGSWORTH FINE ARTS (5)



Unidentified Prophet, late 18th c., oil/wood, 18" x 18"



Christ Entering Jerusalem, 18th c., oil/wood, 14" x 17"

The Holy Art of Imperial Russia • November 5 to April 13
Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens • 407.647.6294 • polasek.org



The Head of Christ, 18th c., tempera/wood carving, 12.75" x 10.5"



Seeker of the Lost Mother of God, 19th c., tempura/wood, 12.5" x 10.5"