

AMSTERDO

EXHIBITION DINING WITH THE TSARS AT HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM



From the 6th of September to the 1st of March 2015 the Hermitage in Amsterdam will be displaying a unique and exquisite anniversary exhibition 'Dining with the Tsars: Fragile Beauty from the Hermitage'. From the collection in Hermitage St. Petersburg, the exhibit will display the lavish porcelain, cream ware and decorum that was used in the banquet halls and ballrooms of the Tsars.

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Photo: Janiek Dam

More than 1,000 pieces will be exhibited and laid out on immense tables in a traditional and authentic way with models of the dining halls to recreate the banqueting culture in the 1700's under Catherine the Great's reign. The idea is that guests be made to feel that they have walked into the Winter Palace for a grand banquet. When the last tsar Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra abdicated, the grand ball customs that were the highlight of the courts faded into obscurity after the end of Imperial Europe.



Photo: Evert Elzinga

The highlights of the exhibition are the dinnerware collections of Catherine the Great including the Green Frog service, Cameo Service and Berlin Dessert Service. The services show unique pieces that were produced by some of the finest porcelain manufacturers including Meissen, Sèvres, Gardner and Wedgwood. The collections will be exhibited to show all the complex etiquettes and rituals with magnificent centrepieces, crystal glassware, candelabras, extravagant vases, intricately detailed silverware and wall décor.



Items from the Cameo Service, Sèvres. 1778-79 © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Not only is the exhibition offering a look at the collections but also the culinary view of imperial dining customs. Dessert was a highlight and an ideal time for the host to show off their wealth with richly decorated delicacies. Gossip and scandal was a feature of any banquet or ball and will also feature in the exhibit with revealing quotes from the memoirs of Marie Cornélie van Wassenauer Obdam who visited the Winter Palace in 1824.

Another surprising highlight is the service collection given to Stalin by the Hungarian people in 1949. It's never been used or exhibited until now and is one of the last significant exchanges where dinnerware played a diplomatic function in the twentieth century.



Items from the Service with the 'Great Hungarian Motif' (Motif hongrois Grand), Herend Porcelain Manufactory. 1949 © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Don't miss this rare opportunity to see the exquisite collection that has never been exhibited outside of the Hermitage in St Petersburg. The Hermitage is open daily from 10am to 5pm. For more information and tickets visit www.hermitage.nl

Hermitage Amsterdam
Amstel 51, Amsterdam



LUCY STONES

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