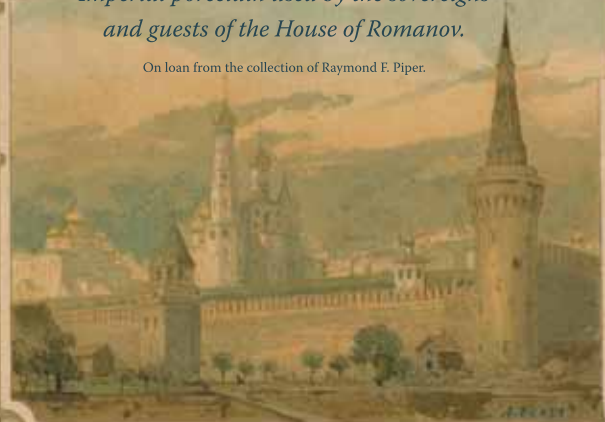


*The House of Romanov
and The Museum of Russian Art
request the honour of your presence at,*

Dinner with the Tsars
**RUSSIAN IMPERIAL
PORCELAIN**

*The exhibition features rare pieces of
Imperial porcelain used by the sovereigns
and guests of the House of Romanov.*

On loan from the collection of Raymond F. Piper.



Bowl, ca. 1763
From the Orlov Service



Plate, 1809-1816
From the Guriev Service



Plate, 1895
From the Raphael Service

The Orlov Service was presented by Catherine II to Grigory Orlov after her ascension to the Russian throne. The service was intended for use in the morning and included coffee cups and saucers as well as containers for perfume, jewelry and shaving utensils.

The Guriev Service was presented to Alexander I by the Director of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, Count Dmitry Guriev, to commemorate Russia's victory over Napoleon. One of the most elaborate projects of the Imperial Factory, the Guriev Service included over four thousand pieces.

Alexander III was directly involved in the design of the service that turned out to be the last of the great achievements of the Imperial Porcelain factory. It was the most expensive porcelain service that the Imperial factory ever produced. Intended for the splendid Catherine Palace in Tsarskoe Selo, the Raphael Service had its own mark: the red and gold monogram of Alexander III in the old Russian script.



THE MUSEUM OF
RUSSIAN ART

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**RUSSIAN IMPERIAL
PORCELAIN**



For centuries, the delicate splendor of Chinese porcelain bedazzled European royalty. Imported porcelain rarities were among the most treasured possessions of Europe's sumptuous royal homes. The first true European porcelain was made in Saxony in 1710, and in 1744 the Empress Elizabeth founded what was later renamed the Imperial Porcelain Factory. It was Catherine the Great, however, who turned the factory into a world-class porcelain manufacturer catering to the needs of the court and Imperial family. The Imperial Porcelain Factory endured through wars and revolutions—outlasting the Imperial dynasty it served for almost two centuries.



ELIZABETH

A beloved daughter of Peter the Great, Elizabeth inherited her father's genius for the affairs of state and governed the huge country with shrewd determination. She also founded the Porcelain Manufacture, as it was then called. The first porcelain piece made at the factory was a snuffbox, and in 1756 the first Russian dinner set was made.



CATHERINE II

After the death of Elizabeth, Peter III became Tsar, but a mere six months after his accession to the throne, Catherine deposed her husband in a coup d'état supported by the Imperial Guards. Her supporters were rewarded and her favorite, Grigory Orlov, was granted a castle and a porcelain service bearing his monogram. Catherine's palaces served as a dazzling backdrop for her glamorous court functions, and porcelain wares were an important part of the ceremonial dining.



PAUL I

Thwarting the privileges granted by Catherine II to the Russian nobility, Emperor Paul I antagonized many. If nothing else, Paul shared Catherine's appreciation of porcelain. The last Imperial porcelain service of the eighteenth century was made for Paul's new castle in St. Petersburg, where he was killed in his own bedroom by a group of nobles in 1801.



ALEXANDER I

The oldest of Paul's ten children, Alexander was raised by his doting grandmother Catherine II in her palace at Tsarskoe Selo. Coming to power, the young Emperor undid many of his father's acts, restoring freedoms and privileges the nobility enjoyed under Catherine II. Alexander's great victory over Napoleon was commemorated in numerous works of art; including the famous Guriev Service, pieces of which are displayed.



NICHOLAS I

Nicholas came to power amidst the turmoil of a coup staged in St. Petersburg on December 14, 1825. The Decembrist uprising haunted the young Emperor, reviving his father Paul I's fear of Western influences and love of military discipline. The famous motto "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nation" was devised during Nicholas I's reign. Russian style was back in vogue, and Imperial porcelain soon followed suit.



ALEXANDER II

The eldest son of Nicholas I, Alexander II made history with his policy of Great Reforms. In 1861, he freed 23 million Russian serfs—over a third of the entire Russian population. Alexander's reforms triggered political unrest. Considered an unnecessary luxury, the Imperial Porcelain Factory went into decline, with several notable exceptions.



ALEXANDER III

Tall and physically strong, Alexander III seemed to embody the legendary Russian bear. His autocratic grip on the enormous country was equally powerful. In 1883, Alexander commissioned the splendid Raphael Service for Catherine's Palace in Tsarskoe Selo. It took twenty years to produce the service, and in 1904, it was finally delivered to the court of his wife, the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna.



NICHOLAS II

"Nicholas inherited from his ancestors not only a giant empire, but also a revolution," wrote Leon Trotsky. The disastrous war with Japan, the rising Marxist movement, WWI and finally, the Bolshevik Revolution took place during the twenty-two year reign of Nicholas II. Despite wars and revolutions, the final decades of the Russian Empire witnessed a great flourishing of the arts; including porcelain figurines.