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Overseas master classes as a factor in popularizing zhostovo artistic applied painting

Abstract. The article investigates the role of masterclasses and exhibitions organized by the Fedoskino institute of lacquer miniature painting in Paris during 2024–2025, analyzing their impact on promoting Zhostovo artistic painting abroad. The author reveals methods for adapting educational programs in Zhostovo artistic painting to meet the specific needs of international target groups. Special attention is given to studying how these events contribute to shaping Russia's positive image and preserving cultural heritage.

Keywords: zhostovo art painting, trays, traditional applied art, international exhibitions, cultural exchange, workshops.

Each nation possesses traditions and customs that form its unique cultural code. In Russia, which holds a special place on the map of global cultural heritage, this statement acquires particular significance. Many types of traditional handicrafts, including Zhostovo artistic painting, Kholuy white smoothness, Palekh lacquer miniatures, etc., are included in the Register of objects of intangible cultural heritage of the peoples of Russia [3].

The Russian university of traditional art crafts plays a key role in preserving and updating these traditions. Annually, the university organizes more than 50 exhibition projects and educational initiatives, including temporary exhibitions both in Russia and abroad [4; 5].

Establishing partnership relations with European countries has become one of the promising directions of the development strategy of the Russian university of traditional art crafts, opening new vectors for intercultural dialogue with European organizations such as UNESCO headquarters and the Russian house of science and culture in Paris.

Exhibitions of traditional applied art products created by students and master classes provide extensive opportunities for foreign audiences to learn about Russian culture, ancient techniques and lacquer painting practices lost in Europe.

In 2024–2025, the university organized three student works exhibitions covering different types of traditional applied arts in Paris, each lasting a month.

In April 2024, at the Miró Hall of UNESCO headquarters, works from all branches of the university were exhibited, covering 22 areas of traditional applied arts [4, p. 7].

In October, an exhibition titled “Traditional applied arts of Moscow region – masterpiece of Russian culture” was held at the Russian house of science and culture in Paris. The exhibition featured works by students from various branches of the

Russian university of traditional art crafts: Bogorodskoye institute of wood carving, Sergiyev Posad toy institute and Fedoskino institute of lacquer miniature painting. During the exhibition period, visitors had the opportunity to attend workshops on Fedoskino lacquer miniature painting and Zhostovo artistic painting (Figs. 1¹⁵, 2).

In March 2025, the exhibition "Splendor of Russian artistic heritage" took place, featuring student works in artistic lacemaking, jewelry art and lacquer miniature painting. Visitors attended master classes on Zhostovo decorative painting [2].

Zhostovo decorative painting is executed using oil paints following a specific sequence: the first stage, "zamalyovka," involves sketching out the overall composition; the second stage, "tenyozhka," entails laying down dark base colors; the third stage, "prokladka," focuses on detailed rendering of the image; the fourth stage, "blikovka," highlights accents and reflections. The final stage includes adding finishing touches and detailing grass blades, completing the composition of the piece. Each layer of painting is covered with varnish and dried. The complete cycle of decorating an item can take several weeks, making it challenging to present multi-layered Zhostovo painting to a broad audience.



Fig. 1. Workshop "Zhostovo artistic painting".
Russian house of science and culture.
Paris. 2024



Fig. 2. Tour "Decorative finishing of
papermâché products".
Russian house of science and culture.
Paris. 2024

Workshops offer participants the chance to experience being an artist themselves. An educational program for master classes in Zhostovo artistic painting was developed specifically for foreign citizens, structured according to age characteristics and level of preparation of participants. It targets the following audiences: children of primary school age and adults without prior creative experience; individuals who have acquired basic skills in painting and wish to gain knowledge about Zhostovo painting technique; teachers from Russian and French

¹⁵ Figs. 1-6. Photos by the author of the article.

educational institutions not associated with traditional crafts, having completed previous levels. This differentiated approach allows everyone to immerse themselves in the world of Zhostovo decorative painting and achieve tangible results, regardless of initial skill level.

The essence of this approach lies in gradually learning the basics of Zhostovo painting: starting with simple techniques and progressing to complex ones. Training begins with elements of brushwork that are easy to understand and repeat at any age.

For schoolchildren aged 8-12 years old, this involves practicing key Zhostovo strokes while controlling pressure; training the stroke used for drawing leaves and petals; combining simple elements into flowers.

Participants create the silhouette of a poppy flower using the "alla prima" technique (Fig. 3). The workshop consists of theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part introduces tools, safety rules and fundamental principles of painting; the practical part focuses on acquiring basic elements of Zhostovo painting in the "alla prima" technique on paper or cardboard.

During the masterclass for younger elementary school children, the following objectives are achieved:

- familiarization with the features of Zhostovo artistic painting through examples of finished items;
- providing an opportunity to perform a simple task using the "alla prima" technique;
- practicing coordination of movements and developing fine motor skills when working with a brush.

For high school pupils and older people, tasks become more complicated. They are offered to practice classical Zhostovo strokes; paint more complex flowers; study the principle of bouquet construction; work on volume and light-shadow within an element; familiarize themselves with the stages of executing "tenyozhka" (the main background color of the flower) and "prokladka" (the main tone); refine details of the painted element—veins on leaves, stamens.

Tasks are designed so that participants can create a coherent image from simple painting elements. "Painting fragment with 'poppy' motif in



Fig. 3. Sample for painting class
"Creation of poppy flower
silhouette using 'alla prima'
technique"



Fig. 4. Sample for painting class
"Execution of simple motif painting fragments 'poppy' in
multi-layer painting technique"

multilayer technique" is one of the assignments aimed at participants with basic painting skills (Fig. 4).

The master class program includes a theoretical section focused on exploring the history of the Zhostovo art craft, its place in Russian culture, acquaintance with glazing technology and multi-layer writing stages, which include: zamalyovok (composition sketch), tenyozhka (formation of shadow basis), prokladka (detailing), blikovka (application of light accents). During the practical part of the master class, participants are invited to paint a poppy flower using a sample in multi-layer painting technique on cardboard or tray, adhering to the color palette and sequence of painting stages.



Fig. 5. Sample for painting class "Creation of own composition on tray using multi-layer painting technique"

A master class program has been developed to enhance the qualifications of educators from Russian and French educational institutions, aiming to address the following challenges:

- developing skills for precise reproduction of traditional elements of Zhostovo painting;
- enhancing creativity in creating unique pieces with artistic painting;
- acquaintance with diverse painting techniques, their stylistic and technological peculiarities (Fig. 5).

The theoretical part provides information on the historical development of the Zhostovo art craft and analyzes its relevance in contemporary art; it also covers the study of compositional principles of Zhostovo painting.

The practical part of the master class includes several tasks:

- creating a poppy flower using "alla prima" painting technique and multi-layer painting;
- designing an original composition on a tray, adhering to the compositional and coloristic features of Zhostovo painting.

During the master classes, participants studied the properties of oil paints (glazeable, semi-glazeable, opaque), prepared materials and tools for work, and gained experience in step-by-step execution of Zhostovo painting elements.

The goal of the master classes was to foster a sustained interest in traditional art through hands-on practice. By creating their own pieces, participants received additional motivation to further explore multilayer painting techniques and deepen their skills.

During the master classes, instructors analyzed individual characteristics of participants (cognitive abilities, emotional state), planned the structure of the sessions considering anticipated difficulties and flexibly adapted teaching methodologies according to the audience's level of preparedness.

The metal-painting exhibit was carefully designed to integrate with the activities of the master classes. The trays displayed in the exhibition were executed in various painting techniques, such as "alla prima", multi-layer painting and mixed media. Participants could not only see different painting techniques but also try to execute traditional elements of Zhostovo painting (Fig. 6).

Master classes and exhibitions of Zhostovo artistic painting abroad serve a dual function: they introduce international audiences to the history and technologies of this unique Russian art craft, while simultaneously becoming an important element of cultural communication. These events act as instruments of "soft power", contributing to the formation of a positive image of Russia by highlighting its rich artistic heritage and creative potential.

The practical value of master classes lies in their ability to engage participants in active dialogue with Russian culture. Through creating their own works under the guidance of masters, participants acquire skills and are inspired by the beauty of traditional applied artworks. A significant advantage of conducting master classes is addressing the lack of creative environment for children abroad [1, p. 76].

Such events shape a positive image of Russia, open up new horizons for traditional art crafts and ensure their preservation for future generations [3, p. 54]. Further interaction with foreign countries may involve virtual exhibitions, collaboration with overseas brands and expanding the geography of events. Thus, traditional applied art, maintaining a connection with centuries-old tradition, becomes a "bridge" between cultures and a guarantor of sustainable development of Russian artistic heritage in the 21st century.



Fig. 6. Workshop "Zhostovo flower in 'alla prima' technique". Russian house of science and culture. Paris. 2025

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