The Holy Art of Imperial Russia

Icons from the 17th to early 20th century

See Page 3

2014 Winter Park Paint Out
April 20 thru 26, 2014

“A Polasek Welcome” by Berto Ortega, 2011
Our Mission: To promote the legacy of internationally known Czech-American sculptor Albin Polasek, N.A., and to encourage study, appreciation and furtherance of representational art.

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The Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens is a 501(C)(3) public charity, nonprofit organization whose budget is funded by donations and memberships. All donations and dues go to support its preservation, maintenance and operation. Please give generously. We need your support!

Dear Friends of the Polasek,

A few days ago I walked into the east gardens, now a construction site with raked ground and leafless twigs strewn here and there. Owning nearly the full width of that once lush and tranquil setting sat the two halves of the Capen-Showalter House. Their presence, looming over dwarfed and tumbled plantings, asked me to stop and imagine what will be.

So many wonderful people and organizations have been working faithfully for a cause that has taken this storied structure on a journey, surgically separated into two sections, barged across the full expanse of Lake Osceola and carefully lifted and placed, still separate, onto what will become its future home.

For some reason my mind went to a portrait medal of Leon Battista Alberti cast by Matteo de’ Pasti, probably in the 1430s during the Renaissance. Not an impressive coin except that it was created for Alberti during his lifetime and had on it a Latin motto that has been the query of many scholars since. *Quid Tum*, with a literal translation to ‘what then?’ But its intention or meaning has been debated. ‘So what’, ‘what now?’ ... and others. You may have also been asking yourself, so what? Why should I help complete the task of reconnecting the Capen-Showalter House, form its new foundation and support the myriad of other requirements that must be met, foreseen and unforeseen, in order to open its doors for the community’s use?

I see *Quid Tum* as ‘What’s Next?’ ... This historic structure has more life in it yet and needs your support. To answer the question, what’s next? For this adventure, ‘next’ means to find the funding needed to finish the job we began just six months ago. On this writing, we still need about $70,000 to reach our original goal of $650,000. In addition we need to fund the unforeseen requirement to reposition our sewer line. Along with a few other items, that adds about another $50,000 to our immediate need.

If you have already given to this effort, we are truly grateful. Thank you. If you have not, this is the perfect time to join the community in funding ‘What’s Next?’ for the Capen-Showalter House.

Your friend,

Mark Terry, President
Capen-Showalter House on the Move
(see pages 4 and 5 for more details)

Ariel view of move
Contractor Frank Roark and Timmy LaRue
House mover Tim LaRue oversees the action from his boat
We still need your help! Fred is on shore waiting for Ginger to come back to his side.
Debbie Komanski and Christine French
Supporter Ann Polasek interviewed during the house moving
Ginger arriving at the Polasek.
What Next? Connect the Capen!
By Christine Madrid French, Project Director, Preservation Capen

Maybe you missed the big event, but with your help the Capen-Showalter House was saved and successfully moved across Lake Osceola! This landmark effort was led by Frank Roark, our general contractor, who managed a construction team that disconnected the house from its foundation and expertly cut the structure in half. Tim and Timmy LaRue, a father-son team that operates T&T House Movers, stabilized the buildings, placed wheels beneath “Fred” and “Ginger” and sailed both parts across the water using a barge imported just for this purpose.

The one-of-a-kind spectacle was filmed, photographed, and documented for the generations. Three media helicopters, two radio-controlled flying camera drones, a league of reporters, and an enthusiastic public audience came to the gardens of the Polasek Museum to watch and record the event.

In the next year, the Polasek Museum plans to restore the house and create a beautiful Victorian-inspired garden landscape. The grounds will include an outdoor-sculpture walk and a lakeside dock for enjoying the natural serenity of Central Florida. New exhibit areas inside the 1885 house will complement the permanent and rotating exhibits in the galleries of Albin Polasek’s home next door. We expect to open the house in late 2014 and can’t wait to welcome you in!

A special thank you to our donors, volunteers, staff, and board members working in leadership and project management!

We could not have saved the house without your skills, talents, generosity and dedication to the cause.

Preservation Capen Co-Chairs: Thaddeus Seymour and Lawson Lamar

Project Director: Christine Madrid French; Polasek’s Executive Director: Debbie Komanski

Cooperating Organizations: Friends of Casa Feliz, Betsy Owens and Winter Park History Museum, Susan Skolfield

Leadership Team: Jennifer Anderson, Karen Blumenthal, Mayor Gary Brewer, Ivy Crowder, Todd Deery, Barbara DeVane, Steve Feller, Mayor Terry Hotard, Mayor Dave Johnston, Julie Lamar, Lizzie Lovern, Ron & Marilyn Lowry, Linda Kulmann, Mayor Kip Marchman, Miles McDonnell, Jr., Pat Mica, Jack Miles, Ann Murrah, Stephen & Kristin Pategas, Frank & Angela Roark, Pat Robertson, Carol Rosenfelt, Kathryn Saugstad, Rob Sharpstein, Bob Showalter, Mayor David Strong, Mayor Joe Terranova, Mark Terry, Mayor Allen Trovillion, Susan Vernon-Devlin, Chip Weston, Carol Wisler

We still need support from you to “Connect the Capen”! Preservation Capen and the Polasek Museum need just $70,000 more to reach the initial $650,000 goal for saving and opening the house to the public. You can donate to the effort on our website at www.preservationcapen.org.

$100,000 or More
Albin Polasek Foundation
Galloway Foundation

$25,000 to $99,999
Anonymous
Judy Duda
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Ann and John Polasek

$10,000 to $24,999
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Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival

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Erik Larsen
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Elizabeth Blanchard
Gordon Blitch and Dr. Judith Marlowe
Elise Bloom
Sharon Bozarth
Alexander and Jennifer Calder
Patrick Chapin
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David Day
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Elizabeth Blanchard
Gordon Blitch and Dr. Judith Marlowe
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Jay Hughes
John Hughes and Stephanie Wood
John King and Lawrence Prossen
Erik Larsen
Ed and Janet LeMasters
Enrich lives through the power of inspiration, which people experience in The Polasek’s STORY, SETTING and ART.
Staff Update . . . A Welcome and a Farewell

Executive Assistant: Carynn Jackson
I am happy to take this opportunity to introduce myself! My name is Carynn Jackson and I have recently joined the museum staff as Executive Assistant. I am thrilled to be coming aboard during such an exciting time. Although I am a 5th generation native West Palm Beacher, I fell in love with this area during my time as a UCF Anthropology and History student and decided to replant my roots in Central Florida. Ever the history nerd, I participated in various Orange County history and preservation projects as a student, contributing to my love of the region, its people, and its culture. The Polasek Museum is certainly a very special part of Central Florida’s culture, both artistically as well as historically, and I feel grateful to have joined the team. My position within the museum will allow me to combine my professional experience in business management with my passion for preserving the arts and local history. Moreover, with all of the excitement buzzing about the Capen-Showalter House project, I happily predict a lack of dull days! I look forward to my future at the Polasek Museum and to meeting more smiling new faces. I welcome your questions and conversations. My email is cjackson@polasek.org.

Event Staff: Amanda Concelman
My name is Amanda Concelman and I am happy to introduce myself as the new Event Rental/Venue Coordinator. My passion for the Weddings industry and my love of art and history makes The Polasek Museum the perfect fit for me. With the Capen-Showalter project progressing, this is such an exciting and eventful time to join The Polasek team. I look forward to meeting and working with all of you in the near future. If you would like to schedule an appointment to discuss event rentals at The Polasek Museum, Please call 407-647-6294 or email event@polasek.org.

Director of Operations:
Claire Ponsonby
It is with deep gratitude that I reflect on the past fourteen years of being at the Polasek. There has been tremendous growth to our beautiful museum and sculpture gardens as we continue to enrich the cultural fabric of our community with the story of Albin Polasek which underscores the influence of art in our daily lives. I will be relocating to Portland, Oregon this spring and will forever value the privilege of serving on staff. Thank you!

“A Hope” is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops - at all -
---- Poems of Emily Dickinson

Enrich lives through the power of inspiration, which people experience in The Polasek’s STORY, SETTING and ART.
The sacred images on view in this exhibition are of a kind once readily found in even the humblest homes of Russia, as well as its churches and public shrines. Centuries-old artistic conventions are juxtaposed with new, Westernized formal elements and vernacular interpretations of these new forms. For Orthodox Russians, icons served as more than just religious paintings; they were relic-like objects directly linked to the holy figures they depicted. They were seen as comforters and powerful guardians. Icons were the direct line from the real world to the spiritual and appeared everywhere in pre-Soviet Russia. The exhibition is on loan from Hollingsworth Fine Art.

Spring Events on the Horizon: These two FREE open-house events are tailor-made for families and culture lovers! Be sure you mark your calendars NOW for these two upcoming spring events that you won’t want to miss out on!

“Spring Welcome”:
Maslenitsa Day at the Polasek
Sunday, March 2nd – 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Join us for a FREE day of Russian culture; pancakes, activities, art and Icons. The name of the holiday, Maslenitsa (derived from the word maslo, meaning butter or oil in Russian) owes its existence to the tradition of pancakes (or blini, in Russian). Pancakes are essential as they represent the sun, new birth, and the coming spring. Explore the roots of this tradition; find out what a corn/straw maiden has to do with the festival and make one for yourself! Grab the kids, or the big kid in you, and decorate a blini just the way you like it with Russian toppings and eat your artwork. The Orlando International Folk Dance Club will be in garden demonstrating traditional Russian dances and they highly encourage audience participation! At 2:00 pm learn about the connections between icon painting and ancient pre-Christian beliefs and tradition with a special presentation by Rollins professor, Dr. Alexander Boguslawski. The beauty and symbolism of the Russian Icons will take on new meaning after his presentation; you’ll want to take a second look at the icon exhibit! As with many ancient holidays, Maslenitsa has a dual ancestry: pagan and Christian. The tradition of Maslenitsa dates back to pagan times, when Russian folk would bid farewell to winter and welcome spring on the vernal equinox day. On the Christian side, Maslenitsa was the last week before the onset of Lent, giving the last chance to bask in worldly delights. This Mardi Gras-like celebration is practiced today in Russia, as well as other Eastern Slavic regions of Europe, and the UK.

An Artful Easter!
Sunday April 20th
1 to 4 p.m.
Not sure how to spend your Easter afternoon once church is over and the brunch dust has settled? Grab your entire family and join us at The Polasek for an Artful Easter Celebration in our picturesque spring gardens. On the first day of the 2014 Winter Park Paint Out, watch as our 25 selected Plein Air Artists capture the people, gardens, color, and excitement of the afternoon before your eyes! It is possible that you may find yourself the subject of a work of art! Sunday kicks off an entire FREE week of admission at The Polasek, so if you’ve always wanted to visit, this is the perfect chance! The first paintings of the week will be available for sale in the Museum’s wet-room gallery. Beautiful floral and Easter-themed still-lifes will be set up in the gardens for complementary sketching and watercolor painting for children and family activities. Or sit down and decorate a wooden egg in the traditional style of “pysanky” eggs.

Mr. Polasek’s vivid collection of Eastern European pysanky eggs will be on display to inspire your designs. Go inside Polasek’s historic home and studio and see if you and your little ones can find the 20 hidden pysanky eggs tucked among Polasek’s Collection. Easter fun and fine art in perfect harmony!

Visit www.winterparkpaintout.org for a complete schedule of Paint Out events.
Notes from the Garden . . .

Capen-Showalter House and the Next Garden Chapter

The east gardens of the Polasek are remembered as the cool and deeply shaded home of Polasek’s mythical folk sculptures; the place to retreat from summer’s heat, planted with well-developed collections of begonias, bromeliads, and ferns; and the site of that most dramatic of trees and the subject of many a plein air painting, the Rainbow Eucalyptus (Eucalyptus deglupta). And it all had to go. Somewhere.

One doesn’t have to garden very long to learn that gardens are not static. Plants come and go and while we may document our favorites with photographs and paintings, these are but snapshots of that which is often impermanent. The dismantling of the garden, we must understand, is just a phase of our garden development.

With the pending arrival of the Capen-Showalter House, the garden volunteers were gripped by the understanding that we would see many landscape changes necessary to the relocation of this significant historic home. We diligently set about to relocate, preserve and pot up as many of each variety as we had time and spare pots. The west garden between Pilgrim and Risen Christ has become a collecting area and something of a hodgepodge of homeless shade plants in need of irrigation. The area behind the Stations of the Cross is a way station for bromeliads who tolerate more sun. Five stately ligustrums have been moved to the parking lot. Small oaks were relocated about the property. The grove of graceful and sculptural arecas has been dispersed to varied holding areas. Camellias and crapes have been potted. These were mature specimens all whose ability to withstand the upheaval is not yet known. Time will tell. We are sure to find places in the landscape where they will flourish once again. Alas, we were not able to spare all from the chainsaw.

The Capen-Showalter House has made it to the property and we are ready to settle her in with a new landscape worthy of her charm. We are very excited to be working with Landscape Architect/Designers Stephen and Kristin Pategas, who will bring fresh eyes and ideas to the area. We will certainly be planting new trees and restoring the shady canopy for future Polasek visitors to enjoy. And of course, we’re on the trail of a young Rainbow Eucalyptus to quickly fill in some of the gaps. Did you know they can grow nine feet a year? It will be big in no time!

New Volunteer Welcome

The Garden Gang extends a warm welcome to new volunteers:
- Gregg Buckingham
- Miles Coady
- Mary Kelsh
- Alberta Okoro

They have all hit the soil running as we gardeners say! We’re glad you found us!
**On the Lighter Side:**

**Beware The Evil Pass-along Plant**

I’m going to take a moment to talk about me and my garden. And maybe yours. I confess, I’m thrifty, frugal. No, the reality is I’m cheap and I know many of you gardeners, if you’ll just ‘fess up’ are just like me. Why buy a plant when you can get one, a pass-along plant, from your friend for free? Let me tell you why!

Plant propagation is an amazing and wonderful thing. A little snip here, a little soil there, plunk your cutting in the shade near the irrigation and a few weeks later that sprig from your neighbor’s gorgeous shrub, vine or perennial is ready for inclusion in your garden.

Socrates said, “Know thyself.” He forgot to mention your garden. Know your plants and your garden design. There is a reason your neighbor is trying to fob off those extra plants on you. They are very often aggressive spreaders or re-seeders and you too will soon be looking at your once tidy and orderly yard exclaiming at the jungle. I once proudly proclaimed I had a “cottage garden”, a euphemism for a garden with one of everything. That only meant I couldn’t make up my mind about my garden design and I couldn’t resist a free plant when offered one. One of everything until of course, the naughty ones spread like wildfire throughout the yard.

Here are a few things I wrestled out of the ground at my house this morning:

**Macho fern** - When someone offers this to you it’s a sure bet they are not your friend. A tall, hand-some and muscular fern that spreads rapidly on stolens or runners, accept this bad boy into your life at your peril.

**Mexican petunia** - Ruellia britonnia, with its lovely upright purple blooms, is listed as a Florida invasive species. While there are sterile and well behaved cultivars in this species, I promise you, that is not what your generous gardening pal is offering you. Resist the seduction.

**Peacock ginger** - As charming as its name, this lovable low grower with the sweet purple flowers grows in the shade from May to December. It is a shifty little devil and you will find it staring sweetly at you from places you know you never planted it. The good news is it goes away in December, but like the Terminator, it will be back. It is able to be tamed but know it will never go away, ever. We have lots at the Polasek, if you’d like some. (Wink, wink)

Those are just a couple that I have struggled to keep in bounds. Eradication seems almost impossible. Right plant, right place means choosing the plant for your garden and the design, not having the plant choose you.

When we began our gardens at the Polasek, we depended on the generosity of our gardening members and our friends at Leu Gardens and Bok Tower gardens to share their “extra” plants with us. We still enjoy the surprise drop offs, most recently a bounty of coonties, cannas, and heliconias, but we are much more careful and discriminating about what we plant. I know, planting the wrong plant simply creates too much work!

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**Wish List**

Many thanks to the many of you who have so generously made donations, large and small, to save the Capen-Showalter House and bring it to the Museum. Throughout the year you have responded to our garden needs. We have such a generous community!

Our Wish List is blank right now, but please know we all will be called upon in the near future to assist with the restoration of the gardens. Capital improvements to the irrigation system must be made. Hardscape, i.e., patios, sidewalks, fencing and lighting will be installed to make the entire property accessible and safe. Benches for your comfort will be installed. Our grass has taken a severe beating. Sod, trees and shrubs will need to be added to the landscape. The list of needs will be long. We will all have an opportunity for creativity in the garden.

Please consider a gift to the garden to help return it to its former charm and to provide a delightful setting for the Capen-Showalter House.

Thank you!
on a more intimate scale. Figurines in general tend to be more “collectable” than larger sculpture simply for the fact that their smaller scale makes them lighter, portable, and less expensive to produce and in turn, to purchase. In his later years, Mr. Polasek was fond of sharing his works and revisited sculpture he created in previous years, creating slightly different or smaller versions. In 1964, he poured multiple castings of “The Eternal Moment” perhaps to give as gifts to friends or by request. While each casting from this one mold is a unique work of art, with distinct marks, it is not necessary to collect or to display all the redundant castings. Nevertheless, calling them “copies” would not be accurate. When a museum or an individual collector seeks out new acquisitions, they probably would not be interested in seeking out multiple castings that they already own, however, in this case, there was something unexpected. While all of the seven (yes, seven!!) “Eternal Moment” figurines in the Polasek Collection were cast in white plaster; this new gift was done in a clear resin.

That one decision by the artist, to change the material, caused such a dramatic effect! The clear resin figurine looks like a completely different sculpture, and is a special experience for the viewer. The sculpture in plaster appears sturdy, the figures rooted to the ephemeral earth they inhabit. The clear figures, on the other hand, are part of the ether, swept up in pure light and love.

I can’t help but marvel at the shape of each muscle, and to be able to see through them and watch the changing light play and brighten the angles is a delight. This sculpture, while on paper redundant, becomes special and highly “collectable” because of the addition of a new medium. A clear resin sculpture is not uncommon in contemporary sculpture and is relatively easy and cheap to mold. But for Mr. Polasek to select this material does seem like a sharp departure from his classical sensibilities. During the 1950s and 60s there was a flood of experimental sculpture and mediums; and Polasek, ever the student of art, dabbled in new materials such as aluminum, epoxy, polyester fiberglass, and resin. The result is a classic sculpture with bold new flair that was so characteristic of the post-war era. Look for this new addition to our collection in the Historic Home Salon, displayed on Polasek’s piano.

Many thanks to all the generous donors who gifted sculpture, or contributed to acquisitions funds for 2013, and to all those who continually support the Museum’s many conservation efforts! Thank you for making it possible to preserve the sculpture and tell new stories. There will be many upcoming conservation projects that we’ll need your help with in 2014, but we’re so grateful for all the many improvements. Onward! To learn about projects that you can help with please visit the Polasek’s page on www.powertogive.org. Now go forth and seek out and find those special pieces that beg for a second look to add your own collection; and until next time, happy collecting!
This time of year, during the long cold stretch of winter, I have a tendency to feel a bit flat (and fat but that’s a different article). The excitement of the holidays are over, you’re trying to get back into the swing of things at home or work; and if you’re like me, you’re trying to figure out what to do or where to put the odd assortment of presents you may have received for Christmas. My own present haul includes some “interesting” items whose package boasts the term, “collectable!!” Beware – or at least be wary and certainly take some time to assess before enrolling more stuff into your home or collection. Do you really need another Lord of the Rings action figure or a Thomas Kinkade print? Always, always avoid having too many multiples within your collection. Just say no.

Historic home museums (and my mother) are notorious culprits of collecting unnecessary multiples of the same type of objects. A historic home I had the pleasure of working for in Kansas was constantly bombarded with donations of period clothing from the community. Not bad on the surface, but when I entered their collection storage area in the attic, I was utterly dumbfounded by the floor-to-ceiling stacks of clothing! It was a mess and not to mention, a fire hazard! I asked, “What is all this stuff and why do we keep accepting this?” The staff person shrugged and said, “people keep donating,” and added another frock to a pile. Keep in mind this was not a costume or textile museum, so clothing should not have been the majority of their new accessions. On closer examination, the piles were mostly all “multiples” of early 20th century undergarments. At this point I have to wonder, exactly how many slips and petticoats unfit for display does one collection need?

Along that same vein, my dear sweet mother, who is a geology teacher, cannot resist snatching up just one more rock wherever she goes. She seems to have stacks and boxes of eerily similar-looking rocks. When I point this out to her, she says, “Rachel, that’s just not true! They’re all so special.” Which brings me to my next point; if you feel you must collect multiples, then at least strive for variation within the common set, such as paintings that all share a seaside motif but done in different styles or mediums. Pay attention to these subtle variations and seek out pieces that are “standouts” and have true individuality while remaining true to your mission or collection. This diversity is important for a valuable collection and will save you lots of storage headaches if you selectively collect.

Shortly before Christmas, The Polasek was fortunate to receive a sculpture donation. This gift did not necessarily fit the above mentioned rules; it was a “multiple” of something we already have. It was a small figurine, the sculpture of “The Eternal Moment.” For those of you familiar with The Polasek Museum you may recognize that title. This particular sculpture can be seen in the historic home and also found outside in the sculpture gardens. It is a beautiful piece indeed, arguably Polasek’s most romantic work. Polasek originally created “The Eternal Moment” in 1909 when he was a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. A Philadelphia publication declared his life-sized sculpture a “daring group,” and Polasek is quoted in a Fine Arts Journal saying simply, “Life is only a moment, but love is eternal.” With this ten-inch version, the viewer can relive the moment of budding love....
Relaxation Breathing & Tai Chi in the Gardens

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5

Instructor Bill Burnette will lead beginners & Tai Chi enthusiasts in the practice of Tai Chi Chuan:
• Enhance flexibility and body awareness
• Improve balance and coordination
• Increase your ability to de-stress and relax
• Enhance your vitality and well being

All classes will be held rain or shine.
Wear comfortable clothing.

General Public: $60/series
Museum Members: $55/series
Register at www.polasek.org or by phone 407.647.6294