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Second International Solbinskie Readings at Nikolo-Solbinsky Monastery

Abstract. The significant scientific conference marking the 25th anniversary of the revival of the monastery was held at the Nikolo-Solbinsky Monastery. The Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) played a very active role in the Second International Solbinskie Readings.

Keywords: Nikolo-Solbinsky monastery, Solbinsky Readings, Higher school of folk arts (academy), monastery, monastery, traditional arts and crafts, education.

The Second International Solbinskie Readings took place at the Nikolo-Solbinsky Monastery (Yaroslavl Region) on November 24-25, 2024, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the revival of the monastery. The event focused on discussing traditions and innovations in traditional arts and crafts, as well as decorative-applied arts (Fig. 1)⁴.

The first day of the readings began festively, starting with an archpriest's service. The solemn opening ceremony was accompanied by warm greetings from organizers and participants. From the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy), V.F. Maksimovich, president of the university, academician of the Russian Academy of Education, doctor of pedagogical sciences and professor delivered a welcoming speech.

On Sunday, the event continued with the opening of exhibitions and workshops. The Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) presented an exhibition of traditional arts and crafts, as well as jewelry: organizers, participants and guests admired the exquisitely executed Mstyora and Kholuy lacquer miniature paintings, Zhostovo decorative painting, "Moscow letter" painting, Kholmogory bone carving art and Bogorodskaya wood carving, along with jeweler's masterpieces and icons created by academy students (Fig. 2-6).



Fig. 1. Nikolo-Solbinsky Monastery

⁴ Fig. 1-6. Photo by Yu.A. Besshaposnikova, head of the Department of lacquer miniature painting at the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy).



Fig. 2-6. Exhibition of works by students of the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) in traditional arts and crafts.

As a gift to mark the opening of the conference, the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) organized a fashion show featuring graduate qualification works by students – masterpieces of artistic embroidery and lace-making. The fashion show, naturally, did not take place within the monastery walls but nearby – in a specially erected tent that served as an assembly hall. The festive day concluded with the play "That Very Duckling!" performed by the Children's Theater on Solba, which impressed the audience with its professionalism, masterful choreography and creative reinterpretation of H.C. Andersen's famous fairy tale.

The second day of the conference brought together scholars, educators and students from Russian and foreign universities, monks and nuns from Orthodox monasteries, and researchers from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Serbia, Spain, Cuba, Sri Lanka. They shared results of research in the fields of arts and crafts, decorative-applied arts, Christian art, and contemplated the educational activities of monasteries and the role of handicrafts in monastic life.

Students from the Fedoskin Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting and the Bogorodsky Institute of Wood Carving of the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) presented their papers.

Over the past 25 years under the leadership of abbesses Erotiida the scope and scale of activity in the monastery are impressive, especially considering that in the 20th century the monastery buildings were repurposed into a children's home, an internat for disabled individuals, and even a regional psychiatric hospital.

The abbesses Erotiida managed not only to revitalize the monastery but also make it a cultural hub and attraction for local residents. The monastery now boasts amenities such as electricity, gas, fiber optics, good roads, and nearby villages that have been gasified.

Remarkably, despite its remote location in the forest, far from major cities, the monastery operates a modern medical center, hosts the First Orthodox College, runs an educational school "Dobraya shkola na Solbe" and a kindergarten.

The college offers secondary vocational education in areas such as choir conducting, cooking and confectionery, clothing design, technology, and decorative-applied arts and folk crafts specializations: ceramics, embroidery, iconography, economy and accounting.

Workshops for turning, machine embroidery and pottery have been opened, and local ceramics are becoming recognized for their quality and innovative designs, positioning themselves as a potential new form of artistic expression.

Today, Solba is associated with a vibrant spiritual and cultural life, upholding traditions of hospitality. The Second International Solbinskie Readings provided an important platform for discussions about further collaboration between the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) and the Nikolo-Solbinsky Monastery, where education plays a significant role. In fact, the Nikolo-Solbinsky Monastery is actively engaged in educational activities related to traditional arts and crafts, and the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy), with its extensive experience in designing and implementing professional education programs, stands ready to share its expertise in preparing highly-skilled professionals for this unique area of art.