

*Saltanov M.A., candidate of pedagogical sciences, director of the Fedoskino institute of lacquer miniature painting - a branch of the Russian University of traditional art crafts, 141052, Fedoskino settlement, Lukutinskaya st.,33, e-mail: fhpu@mail.ru*

### **200 years of Zhostovo artistic painting: history and current state of professional education**

**Abstract.** The article analyzes the development of professional education for artists specializing in Zhostovo decorative painting at the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting. It examines the experience of cooperation between the Fedoskino Institute and LLC "Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting" as an essential component in preserving and advancing the traditions of the Zhostovo craft while implementing a system of continuous professional education.

**Keywords:** Zhostovo art painting, trays, first graduates, master classes, vocational training, Zhostovo Factory LLC, cooperation, craft.

The Zhostovo artistic painting is one of Russia's globally renowned lacquer crafts, celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2025. This art form originated in the Moscow region villages and hamlets of Khlebnikovo, Ostashkovo, Troitskoye, Novoseltsevo and Zhostovo. In the first half of the 19th century, workshops producing lacquered items made from papier-mâché were established here. The beginnings of the lacquer trade in the village of Zhostovo are linked to the activities of the Vishnyakov dynasty—masters of the lacquer craft. In 1825, F. Vishnyakov sent his son Osip to apprentice under Taras Vishnyakov's workshop located in the village of Zhostovo [4, p. 14].

The history of the emergence of Zhostovo painting is closely connected not only with the "territorial proximity of the villages but also with the similarity of artistic techniques used by many masters who had experience working both in the Fedoskino and Zhostovo crafts" [8, p. 190]. The technique of multi-layered oil painting on papier-mâché products, developed by Lukutin masters in the village of Danilkovo, was transferred to metal products using the same grounds, varnishes and oil paints.

Initially, trays were made from papier-mâché, along with boxes, snuffboxes, match holders, and caskets (Fig. 1). By the mid-19th century, tin trays began to replace papier-mâché products due to their simpler manufacturing process. Over time, "the



Fig. 1. Barrel "Meeting."  
1882-1888. Workshop of  
O.V. Vishnyakov and Sons

meticulous technique of Fedoskino miniatures gave way to broad, freehand brushwork" [12, p. 148].

Over time, the main motifs of Zhostovo painting have been developed and perfected — floral bouquets combining large and small flowers, fruits and berries, executed on trays of various shapes and sizes. A vast collection of painting elements and ornaments has been accumulated: grass, loops, clouds, sails, hooks, braids, etc. (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Tray "Scattered Bouquet." 1880.  
Workshop of O.F. Vishnyakov and Sons

In the 200 years since the establishment of the Zhostovo craft, over 150 different forms of trays have been created, ranging from miniature to enormous "tablecloth-sized" ones. The production of many of these forms has been mechanized at the factory: a sheet of iron is cut out and then shaped using a press into oval, round, rectangular or octagonal forms [2]. Some shapes continue to be hand-forged. Artists such as P.I. Plakhov, V.N. Pyzhov, G.S. Toptygin and others personally forged trays of unusual shapes [7, p. 18].

In 1922, the "Novoseltsevskaya Labor Artel" was formed in the village of Novoseltsevo, which produced lacquered iron trays. In 1924, two labor artels opened in the village of Zhostovo: the "Zhostovskaya Labor Artel" and "Spetzkustar". In 1925, another artel called "Lakirovshchik" was founded, and simultaneously, the "Svoy Trud" artel was established in the village of Troitskoe. All of these artels merged in 1928 into a specialized union named "Metallopodnos" ("Metal Tray"), which was later transformed into the Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting in 1960 [3, p. 11].

By decree No. 1847 issued by the President of the Russian Federation on November 6, 1993, titled "On the inclusion of certain objects in the state register of

especially valuable cultural heritage sites of the peoples of the Russian Federation," the Zhostovo Order of Honor Decorative Painting Factory (Zhostovo Craft, Moscow Region) was included in the "State Register of Especially Valuable Cultural Heritage Sites of the Peoples of the Russian Federation" [11]. In 2005, the enterprise was reorganized into LLC "Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting." The next step in the development of the enterprise was its inclusion in the "list of organizations engaged in folk arts and crafts that receive support through federal budget funds" [9].

A significant milestone in the history of the Zhostovo craft was the development of professional education for artists. In 1940, a department dedicated to Zhostovo artistic painting was established within the Fedoskino Vocational School, now known as the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting—a branch of the Russian University of traditional art crafts. Leading artists of the Zhostovo craft, including A.P. Gogin, P.I. Plakhov and V.I. Dyuzhaev, became the first teachers of professional disciplines. (Fig. 3-5<sup>15</sup>) [1, p. 150].

Despite the challenging circumstances during The Great Patriotic War, the training of future artists continued uninterrupted and in 1944, the first cohort of 15 students graduated.

Gradually, a systematic approach to teaching Zhostovo decorative painting began to take shape. The faculty of the Fedoskino school developed educational programs titled "Production Training" and "Fundamentals of Composition." Students learned about materials and tools necessary for their work, acquired professional terminology, studied various types of semi-finished products and, most importantly, absorbed painting techniques, writing methods and secrets of step-by-step execution from their instructors.

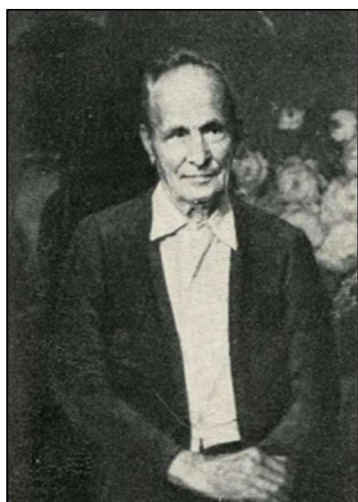


Fig. 3. A.P. Gogin, teacher of the Zhostovo department at the Fedoskino Vocational School



Fig. 4. V.I. Dyuzhaev, teacher of the Zhostovo department at the Fedoskino Vocational School



Fig. 5. P.I. Plakhov, teacher of the Zhostovo department at the Fedoskino Vocational School

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<sup>15</sup> Fig. 3-11. Photos from the archives of the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting.

After mastering individual elements of Zhostovo painting, such as rowanberry, poppy and peony, students moved on to creating simple floral compositions. They learned how to combine different elements into cohesive designs, applying technical and decorative techniques characteristic of Zhostovo painting: “tenezhka” (shading), “prokladka” (outlining), “privyazka” (attachment), “chertezhka” (drafting) among others.

Currently, the traditions of Zhostovo decorative painting, laid down by the first teachers, are being further developed and passed on to students. A new generation of artists is being nurtured—artists who not only possess a unique painting technique, understand its history and artistic-stylistic features, but are also prepared for independent creative activity.

In this process, the interaction and collaboration between the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting and LLC "Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting" play a crucial role. Establishing partnership relations enabled significant improvements in educational preparation aligned with modern production needs. The company shows keen interest in young artists.

In 2020, the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting resumed training students in the Zhostovo decorative painting program (vocational education level), which had been suspended since 2008.

Another significant step towards improving professional training was the signing of an agreement in 2021 to establish a basic department of Zhostovo decorative painting at the Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting [6, p. 11]. Training personnel at the site where the craft traditionally thrives, on an active enterprise, offers several undeniable advantages: a uniquely historically evolved educational environment, interaction with representatives of dynasties of Zhostovo artists—bearers of the traditions of Zhostovo painting, who have experience working in various historical and economic realities.

The mastery of higher education programs at the basic department "Zhostovo Artistic Painting" takes place through part-time study formats, fostering the development of research activities and assisting graduates in securing employment according to the selection criteria adopted by organizations.

At present, the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting at the Russian University of traditional art crafts has implemented a system of continuous professional education in the field of Zhostovo decorative painting.

Conducting industrial practices for students of the Zhostovo department in the workshops of the Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting allows them to deeply immerse themselves in the production process, gain essential hands-on experience and adopt unique techniques and approaches from leading craftsmen.

In the factory's production departments, students can observe the entire cycle of operations involved in making a tray: stamping the shape, forging, priming, painting and varnishing. During these practical sessions, they meet leading factory artists like M.V. Lebedev, T.N. Sholokhova, N.E. Frolova, N.A. Solomatina and others, studying their individual painting styles. B.V. Grafov emphasizes that "each Zhostovo artist is an individual, each with their own sense of self" and that "everyone

strives to execute their paintings in their own unique style, color palette and design" [3, p. 16].

Students of the Zhostovo department at the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting not only learn the basics of their profession but also engage in research activities. They explore the history of the craft, analyze the works of prominent artists, study their painting techniques and decorative solutions and develop their own creative projects.

The results of their research are presented by students at international scientific conferences and forums, where they deliver reports, conduct masterclasses and participate in career guidance activities (Fig. 6).

At the III International Forum of Students, Postgraduates, and Young Scientists titled "Culture of Russia in the 21st Century: Past in the Present, Present in the Future," D. Pushkarev, a second-year student of vocational education, presented a report focused on researching the types of floral compositions in Zhostovo painting. At the IV International Forum with the same title, E. Zatenatskaya, also a second-year student, delivered a presentation exploring the legacy of the Belyaev-Goncharov family of Zhostovo artists and their contributions to the development of Zhostovo decorative painting.

The III International Forum "Traditional Artistic Crafts and Specialized Higher Education: Modern Challenges, New Opportunities and Prospects," held in 2024 at the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting, showcased unique examples of Zhostovo decorative painting to participants and guests. Students from the Zhostovo department conducted a vibrant and memorable masterclass titled "Depicting Flowers Using the Multi-Layer Technique of Zhostovo Decorative Painting" (Fig. 7).

The team of the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting compiled and published a catalog titled "Traditional Artistic Crafts of the Moscow Region," which brought together three types of traditional applied arts: Zhostovo decorative painting, Fedoskino lacquer miniature painting and Bogorodskoye woodcarving [10]. Many works from the collections of the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting and the Bogorodsky Institute of Wood Carving, featured in the catalog, were published for the first time.



Fig. 6. Fair of Educational Institutions. "GIA. Awareness. Career Guidance." Mytischki City, 2024



Fig. 7. Master class "Depicting Flowers Using the Multi-Layer Technique of Zhostovo Decorative Painting." 2024

The commemorative events of 2025, dedicated to the Zhostovo craft at the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting, were inaugurated by a lecture titled "200 Years of Zhostovo Artistic Craft: History, Current Status and Perspectives" delivered by M.V. Lebedev, Honored Artist of the Russian Federation and Chief Artist of the Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting LLC (Fig. 9).

Mikhail Viktorovich spoke about the history of the Zhostovo craft, the characteristics of an artist's work in a production setting and potential career paths in the profession. He actively advises students during the preparation of their final qualification projects and shares his expertise through masterclasses (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Masterclass on Zhostovo decorative painting by M.V. Lebedev. 2024



Fig. 9. M.V. Lebedev delivering a lecture to students of the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting on Science Day. 2025

Another important aspect of promoting Zhostovo decorative painting is the exhibition activities organized by the Fedoskino Institute of Lacquer Miniature Painting. Noteworthy exhibitions featuring Zhostovo trays include the annual Russian forum "Culture. Traditions. Heritage" (2024); the exhibit at the International Scientific-Practical Conference "II Solbinskie Readings: Tradition and Innovation in Decorative and Applied Arts and Folk Art" (2024); and the fifth Art and Industry Exhibition-Forum "Unique Russia" (2025).

The highlight of the 2024 exhibition calendar was the display of traditional artistic crafts created by students of the Russian University of traditional art crafts in Paris. In April, the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation, in conjunction with the Russian University of traditional art crafts, hosted an exhibition titled "Splendor of Russia's Artistic Heritage" at UNESCO headquarters. Timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of Russia's entry into UNESCO, the event attracted considerable attention from delegations of various countries. The exhibition featured over 120 pieces representing 22 different types of artistic crafts [5, p. 45]. The public's strong interest in the works underscores the importance of preserving and developing traditional centers of artistic craftsmanship in Russia.

In 2024, an exhibition dedicated to traditional applied arts of the Moscow Region took place at the Russian House of Science and Culture in Paris (Fig. 10, 11). On display were exhibits of Bogorodskoye wood carving, jewelry art, embroidery, Zhostovo decorative painting and Fedoskino lacquer miniature painting.



Fig. 10. M.A. Saltanov conducting a tour at the exhibition in the Russian House of Science and Culture. Paris, 2024



Fig. 11. M.A. Saltanov conducting a masterclass "Zhostovo Flower in Ala Prima Technique." Russian House of Science and Culture. Paris, 2024

Guided tours were offered to visitors, allowing them to admire the beauty of the exhibited items and learn about lacquer painting techniques, as well as the current state of production at enterprises such as the Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting LLC and Fedoskino JSC. Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to try their hand at painting during masterclasses on Zhostovo decorative painting, learning the basics of brushwork and executing a traditional Zhostovo flower using the ala prima technique.

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