



VIRGIN OF VLADIMIR

A Beloved Image in Enamel



This brochure presents an original work by the artist Ekaterina Fornell – the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God.

The image of the Virgin Mary is created using the technique of overglaze painting on hot enamel.

2022 - 2024. Silver, enamel, silk cord.

The Vladimir Icon is the earliest known surviving image and one of the most venerated miracle-working icons of the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to Sacred Tradition, the iconography was created by the evangelist Luke.

Here, the artist has adapted it to the technique of miniature enamel painting and added a simple, modest silver frame inspired by pre-Art Nouveau and the style of the Tyablov iconostasis.

The work took around 100 hours to complete and was done by hand.

After sketching, the work began with the sawing of a silver plate. It was then shaped to a convex form. Enamel deforms less on a properly curved surface, and the colors appear more vivid when light passes through the enamel, reflecting off the silver beneath.

Next, the silver is textured, and the plate is coated with a very thin layer of enamel – powdered glass, which melts during firing at 800°C and covers the surface of the silver.

The most complex stage begins with the painting using overglaze colors. Pigments are carefully ground with a special medium to a creamy consistency and applied, layer by layer, color by color, onto the plate.

To achieve the desired miniaturization, the work is mainly done with an extremely sharp needle, as a brush would give a rougher result. This technique is called “pointillist” or “dot painting”, where pigments are applied as small dots (points) rather than brush strokes, allowing for exceptional precision. For example, this technique makes it possible to depict a baby’s hand with five fingers, each only 1 mm in size.

Day by day, under a microscope, the general composition is created first, followed by the details. The overglaze colors are fixed on the glass with multiple firings at 800°C. For this work, 6 firings were performed, each a sensitive and delicate moment in the process.



The finished plate without the frame.



The pointillist technique allows for detailed control over the design.
The most important part – the Faces.



And here is the work already framed. To create the finished piece, the artist manually crafted a 950 silver pendant, resembling a small box or casket, with a cylinder for the cord or chain.



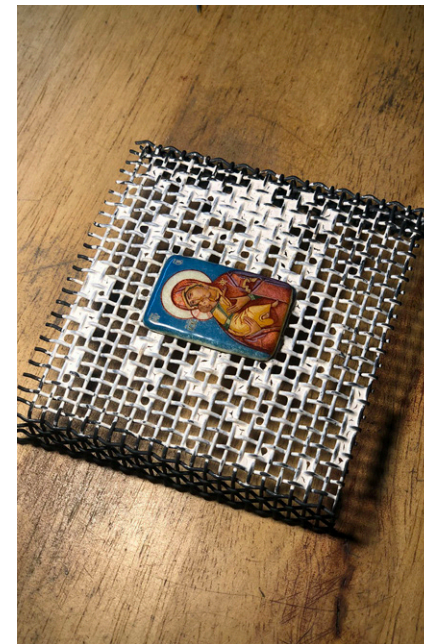
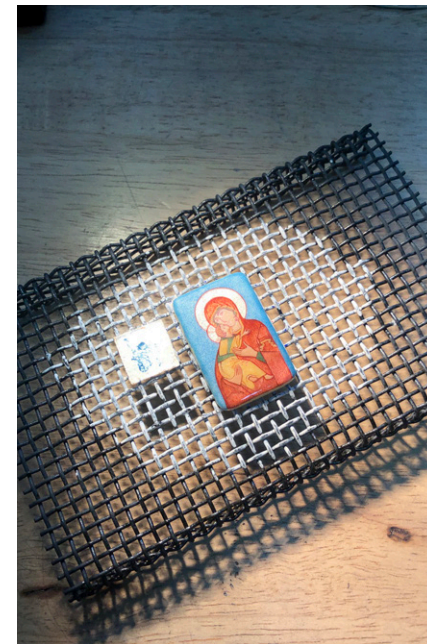
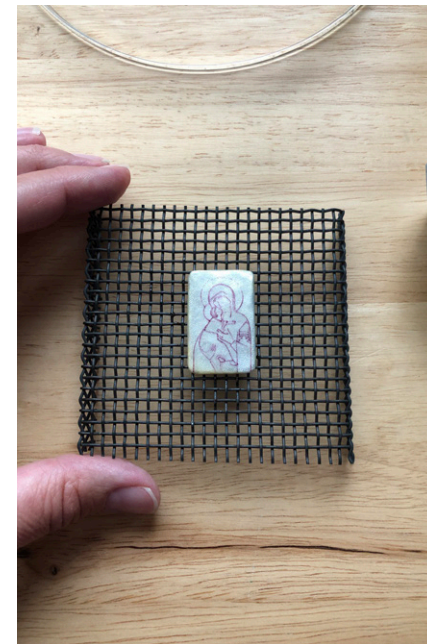
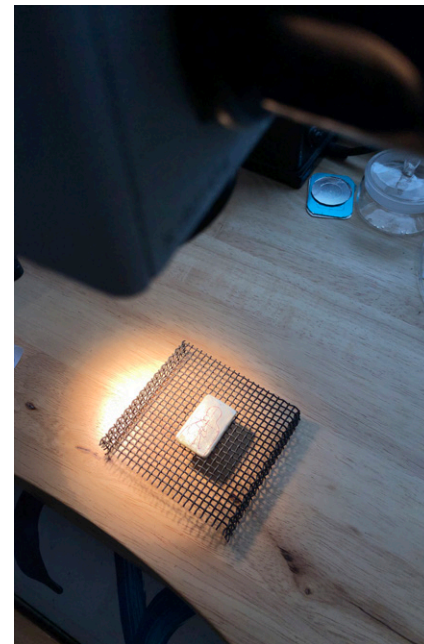
The front and side surfaces were hand-engraved. The straight lines, covered with a repeating geometric pattern, refer to the style of a templon.

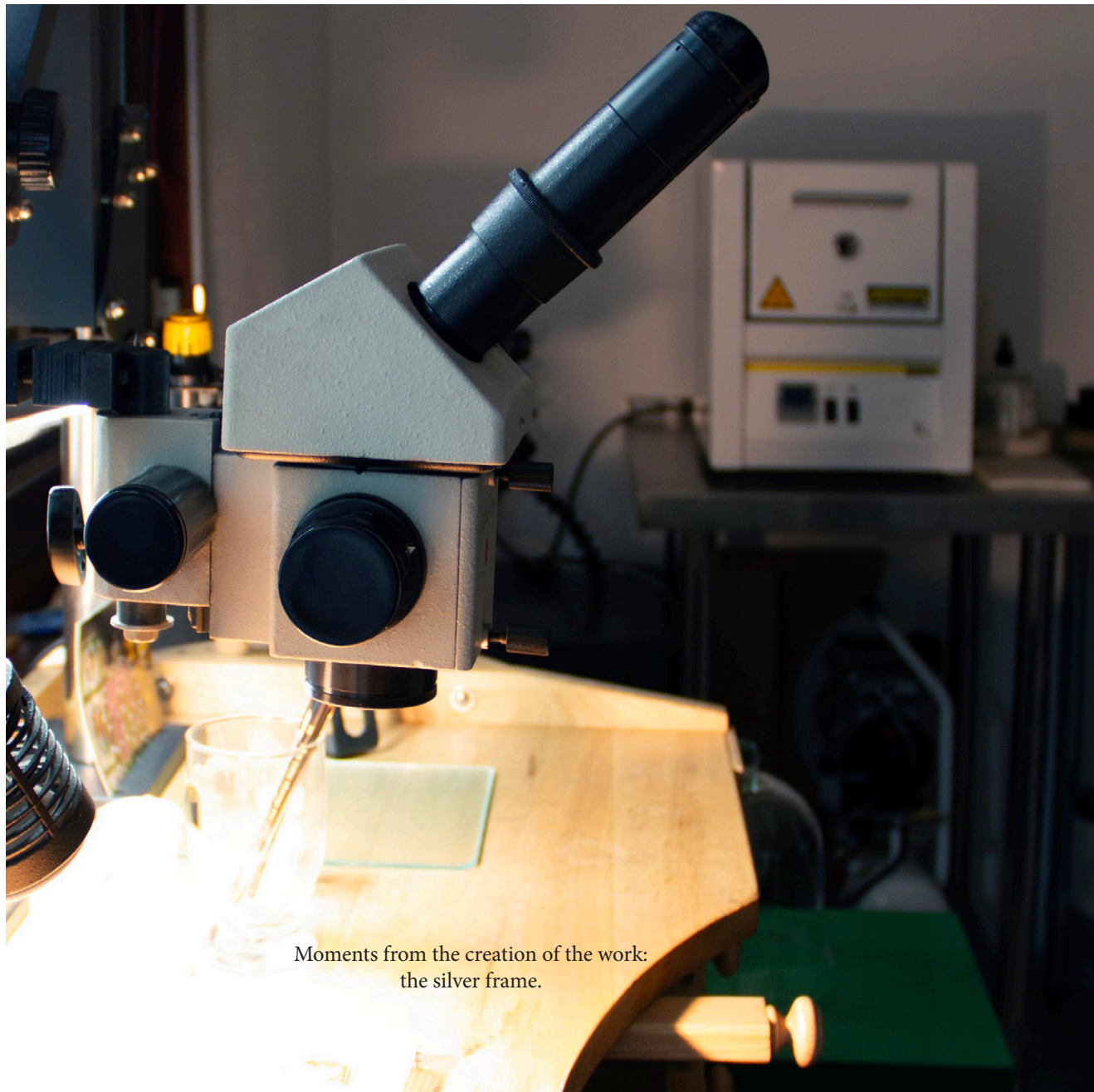


The back plate, with texture and patina, is secured with pins. It covers the back side and holds the enamel plate in its "precious casket."



Moments from the creation of the work: the enamel plate.





Moments from the creation of the work:
the silver frame.





The finished work: a pendant icon on a silk cord.



The finished work: a pendant icon on a silk cord.



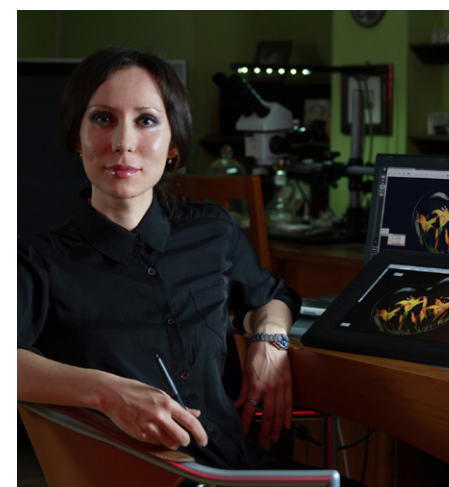
The back side, detail.
According to the law, every piece of jewelry created in France must have the artist's registered hallmark — poinçon de maître.



The back side with texture and the artist's hallmark, surrounded by hand engraving.
Here, the dark tone achieved through special patination is clearly visible.



The Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, detail.



About the artist.

Based in Chamonix, France, Kiki Fornell specializes in artisanal, hand-crafted jewelry. Each piece is meticulously created in the artist's own workshop, blending timeless techniques with contemporary design.

The brand is the vision of its founder, Ekaterina Fornell, a member of the Moscow Region Artists' Union, whose works have been recognized as finalists in prestigious international competitions and showcased on art platforms in the Netherlands, Poland, Italy, and Lithuania. The artist works with natural gemstones, hot enamel, and engraving, creating jewelry that is both exquisite and enduring.

The project's web-sites:

<https://helwig.design/virgin-of-vladimir>

<https://kikifornell.art/>



Chamonix, 2024