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Faberge Museum to Open in Hermitage

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ST. PETERSBURG — The State Hermitage Museum will pay tribute to Carl Faberge, one of the most famous jewelers of all time in 2014 by opening a Carl Faberge Museum to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the Hermitage.

According to the plans, the new museum will occupy three rooms in the East Wing of the General Staff Building. In the largest room, works of art from the House of Faberge and the work of Russian jewelry artists from the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as the Khlebnikovs, Ovchinnikov, Kekhli and many others will be on display.

Faberge, who created finely crafted jeweled Easter eggs and other exquisite gifts for generations of Russia's imperial family right up until the 1917 Revolution, devoted a large part of his life to working in the Hermitage, where he was involved in restoration work, which helped him to develop as an artist and find his personal creative style.

"We are going to exhibit the best works from the House of Faberge and by Carl Faberge himself, which will allow us to show different aspects of his work," said Marina Lopato, head

of the metal and stone crafts section of the Hermitage at a news conference devoted to the Faberge project earlier this month.

The Hermitage's collection of Faberge works does not include any of the master craftsman's celebrated Easter eggs, but does include models of imperial regalia for which Faberge was awarded first prize at the Paris World Exhibition in 1900.

Pieces from the House of Faberge such as a dish made of rock crystals, a silver lamp and a necklace with precious gems have been restored and will soon become part of the Faberge Museum collection. They can currently be seen in the Hermitage's Treasure Gallery.

The Hermitage also possesses a large collection of sketches from the House of Faberge created during a period of 25 years. These items will also go to the Faberge Museum. The collection includes drawings by Carl Faberge's brother, Agathon Faberge. According to Lopato, it was Agathon who guided the creative mind of Carl Faberge.

"The collection of sketches is important due to its ability to show how the art of Russian jewelry developed during a quarter of a century," Lopato said.

A large part of Faberge's early work is spread all over the world and concentrated in private collections. Organizers hope the Hermitage collection will be supplemented by works held in other Russian and foreign museums as well as in some private collections.

The Faberge Museum will also be a space for housing temporary exhibitions by contemporary Russian and foreign artists.

"Only a few pieces of art have already been chosen, but a large part of the work still remains ahead of us; we're trying to choose the best exhibits for the museum," said Mikhail Piotrovsky, the director of the State Hermitage Museum.

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