

Fabergé's Imperial Easter Eggs: Extravagance and Intrigue

This exhibit describes the captivating tale of Fabergé's Imperial Easter eggs. Fifty original rare, multi-million-dollar pieces of decorative art were made around the turn of the 20th century; over 40 have found their way into modern collections and museums. Their stories and artistry, shown on postcards wherever possible, are presented here. Seven are thought lost to history. Unless otherwise noted, the cards shown were produced using photochrome technology.

1. Introduction

2. The Beginning: Alexander III

3. Reign of Nicholas II

4. Russian Revolution & Its Aftermath

5. Modern Aficionados

- a. Emanuel Snowman
- b. Armand Hammer
- c. Malcolm Forbes

6. Whereabouts Today

- a. The Kremlin Armoury Museum
- b. The Fabergé Museum
- c. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
- d. Matilda Geddings Gray Foundation
- e. The Royal Collection
- f. Hillwood Museum
- g. Other Eggs in Public & Private Collections



The building shown in the picture's far right housed premises that one visiting journalist and diplomat described as "the warm and brilliant shop of Carl Fabergé." Above the ground floor shop were the studio and workshops as well as the top-floor apartments for Fabergé's family.

Left: Picture postcard with Fabergé's shop identified by his name in two languages: "C. FABERGÉ" above the ground floor and "К. ФАБЕРЖЕ" one floor up. Divided back. Publisher; Sherer, Nabholz & Co. (Moscow: pre-1917)

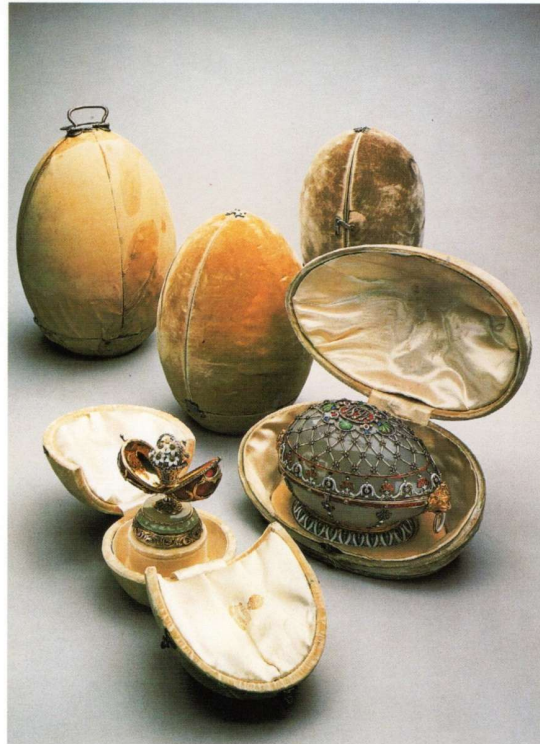
On initial presentation, the exquisite Imperial Easter Eggs were in velvet cases. The cards below (left and right) show two different groupings of Fabergé cases. All were once part of the Forbes Collection

1. Introduction

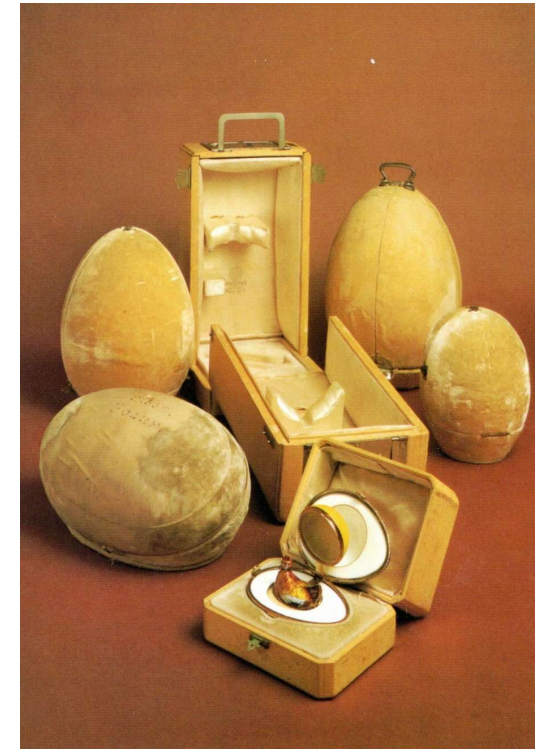
Carl Gustavovitch Fabergé was born May 5, 1846, to a family of jewelers. His formal education was carefully planned to prepare him to take over the family business, including schooling in Germany and a grand tour to visit jewelers in England, Italy, and Paris. While Fabergé is usually referred to as a jeweler or goldsmith, he never crafted anything entirely with his own hands. It is the quality of the workmanship that has allowed his work to be admired even after periods of political upheaval and the whims of fashion.



Above: Carl Fabergé sorting a pile of loose stones. Photographer: Hugo Oeberg.



Right: Prestel Publishing (Munich, 1996).



Above: Prestel Publishing (New York, 1990).