

Wood Presents and Collection of Art Lacquered Miniature Boxes in Art Store Online

If you feel delight an [wood art](#) casket with thin and smooth drawing on the black background plentifully decorated with gold shading know: before you - a Palekh lacquered miniature. It is based on a long local history of icon painting. Icon painting craft has arisen in the early thirties in village Palekh of the Ivanovo area. In spite of the fact that the church demanded to fulfill precisely every element of icon, Palekh artists did it in their own manner of writing faces, figures, elements of landscape, buildings, carriages and so on. On the icons you could see some domestic details such as furniture, clothes, arms, horse harness. Some of them have been kept in today's Palekh miniature art painting somewhat changed creatively. Palekh art wasn't born accidentally. It was a result of century-old traditions in new historical conditions based on the knowledge of icon-painting handicraft of many generations. Their methods were rich and varied. From the very beginning Palekh artists had been studying and keeping old Russian art traditions. Therefore an icon and a product executed in the spirit of palekh miniature have much common. After the 1917 Revolution, when the icon business went into the deepest of declines, Palekh masters tried their hands at decorating [art wood tableware](#), kitchen utensils, toys, dishes, porcelain and glass. As it turned out, the most interesting way was the painting of paper-mache boxes that became the black-lacquered miniature. The varnish miniature is executed by tempera paint on a papier-mache. Colour of palekh painting is based on a combination of three colours - red, yellow and green. The Palekh miniatures usually represent characters from real life, literary works, fairy tales, bylinas, and songs. They are painted with local bright paints over the black background and are known for their delicate and smooth design, abundance of golden shading, and accurate silhouettes of flattened figures, which often cover the surface of the lids and sides of the articles completely. Poetic magic of the Palekh characters, decorativeness of landscapes and architecture, and elongated proportions of the figures go back to the icon-painting traditions. The miniatures are usually set off with a complicated pattern made with gold dissolved in aqua regia. Palekh lacquered miniatures are painted on articles - caskets and boxes, brooches and hairpins for ties, a panel and ashtrays and great number of other little things made of papier-mache. The process of making Palekh articles is the following: The first operation in the making of these gems of folk art is the cutting out of the cardboard. The strips of cardboard are covered with flour paste, placed on circular or rectangular moulds and pressed. After that the material is given a coating of warm linseed oil. The carefully checked pieces are handed to the joiners. Then the undercoat is applied to the article with a steel palette knife. The outside of Palekh articles is painted with black lacquer. The inside is painted with red lacquer. The final operation before painting: about seven coats of transparent oil varnish is applied to the outside and inside of the article. Every coat applied is dried in the furnace for 9 hours at 90°C. The articles are now ready to be handed to the artists. The work of the artist begins with preparation of the paint. In Palekh the paints are mixed with egg emulsion. The yolk, separated from the white, is returned to the shell where a mixture of water and vinegar is added. Then the emulsion is stirred with a special brush. Before painting the article, the artist draws on the design. Then the composition is outlined in white lead with a very fine squirrel brush and the colours are then applied in strict succession. The work of the miniature painter requires not only creative inspiration, but also extreme care and precision which is why Palekh painters frequently make use of a magnifying glass. When the painting is over, the artist begins the gold work. The gold must be polished to give it the necessary shine. After having signed the article the artist coats it by transparent oil varnish and polish by hand. The village of Palekh is situated in 65 km to the east from Ivanovo town on the bank of the Paleshka-river, which flows among the hills covered by leaf-bearing forests. In the 15th century it was a part of the Vladimir Susdal lands and was one of the first ancient centers of the icon art. In the 17th and 18th centuries Palekh's craftsmen rose to become the most famous in all of icon art. They developed a unique style identifiably distinguished by the fine line tempera drawing saturated with gold of their own. These art works were valued for the depth of the images, the subtlety of color placement, their intricate and minute attention to detail as much as for their fairy-tale-like ornamental design. Palekh artists are universally regarded as the most highly trained of the Russian miniature painters. The discipline and masterful technique of the ancient art of icon painting is readily seen in works of the various artists. Luxurious [art presents](#) of wood tableware and Palekh, Mstiora lacquered miniatures you can look at [online Art Shop](#) site. It is amazing that what started out as a true folk tradition over hundreds years ago is still thriving and remains basically true to its roots, albeit on a more organized scale.

About the Author

Will Nilson, Art News Department of [online Art shop](#), 2007.

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