



Aleksandr Zadorin  
(1941–2006)

## SHUROCHKA

Leningrad, USSR

1988

*Grog, painting with enamel paints,  
hatchwork*

About the project

<https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/special/p/lyudi-i-fondy-eng/>





SELECTED BY  
***Olga Khrabrova,***  
*Leading Methodologist*



This year is an anniversary for me as well, as I have been working here for 20 years. First I worked as a tour guide, then as a leading methodologist. One of the first tasks that I had upon taking up my new position was to prepare the text of an audio guide for people with visual impairments for the exhibition 'Art Within the Borders of the USSR'. The first part presented the works of craftsmen. There were no particular difficulties in describing these items. The second section covered independent arts. In the centre of one of the halls, the decorative sculpture 'Shurochka' by artist from Saint Petersburg Aleksandr Zadorin was exhibited.

How to describe this complex work? Why did it end up in the museum's collection? What is the value of the work? I wanted to find answers to these questions. Only after learning about the complexity of working with ceramic layer did I appreciate this work.

I will start by describing it. The sculpture, 1.5 meters high, is made of a layer of grog — fireproof clay, fired until it loses its plasticity at a temperature of 1300–1500 degrees C. Grog is used in the laying of stoves, lining of fireplaces, and in the manufacture of refractory bricks. In the second half of the 20th century, pottery artists began to work with grog to create decorative compositions. This kind of work — modeling from a clay layer — requires special skills and experience.

The artist must feel the material. The layer cannot be dry, but it must be soft and pliable enough to hold its shape well, bend, but not crack.

This is especially important when working with large formations. You should consider that the item shrinks during firing. If the layer is large or the item has a rectangular shape, then deformation is possible.

Aleksandr Zadorin has a good feel for the material. The artist's skill and extensive experience in working with layers allowed him to

create a sculpture like 'Shurochka'. He made the sculpture and conveyed his attitude, his mood. Look at 'Shurochka' again. I hope you will smile when you see the lyrical image filled with light humor created by Aleksandr Zadorin.

Subsequently, 'Shurochka' participated in other museum's exhibition projects: 'Art of the Big Style', 'Ceramics. Paradoxes'. Every 'meeting' with this sculpture never failed to evoke a feeling of joy and warmth, like meeting an old friend.