



BEAR WITH BABY Toy

Vyatka, RSFSR

1925

About the project

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

Clay, Dutch foil, sculpturing, firing, priming, painting with tempera





SELECTED BY

Vera Yarilina,

Methodologist for Museum Educational Activities in 2017–2023, initiator of the Children's Tsaritsyno project



I saw the Dymkovo bear in the first months of my work at the museum. Over the next six years, it became not only a symbol of Children's Tsaritsyno, but also my personal talisman and assistant.

When we first met each other, I was looking for a subject for the first exhibition addressed primarily to a family audience. The Children's Museum was still only planned, but my colleagues and I wanted an exhibition space with an atmosphere of comfort, creativity and play.

Animals holding their babies in their paws is a common subject. However, the Dymkovo bear was tenderly hugging not a bear cub, but a human baby.

First of all, we thought about toys: we knew that part of Tsaritsyno's rich collection of ceramic toys was once a property of collector and actor Nikolay Tseretelli.

I thought that was a wonderful image for a children's section of the museum: a simple and funny character that helps a little visitor take their first steps.

We visited the museum depository to get acquainted with him. Of all the variety of toys put on the table by the curator, I immediately singled it out. Just as children's speech begins with imitating animal sounds, simple and funny images of animals will help us support the child's imagination and observation. This is how the exhibition 'Why Does a Child Need a Bear?' appeared. It was destined to live a long life by museum standards due to the pandemic. The Bear helped us out once again during this difficult time. It headed the museum's psychological assistance service and opened the Bear Mail, where anyone could send letters and postcards, and then receive answers and even gifts.

Support turned out to be crucial not only for children and not only during the pandemic: the post office has been operating for three years and has become international during this time.

Bear even has assistants from different museum departments, thanks to whom it manages to cope with the New Year's rush.

In 2022, a new children's exhibition opened. This time it tells visitors about a wooden toy, and it also has a mailbox and a house for the wooden brothers of the Dymkovo Bear. In 2023, the Potanin Foundation helped Bear release a series of children's routes around the park, developed with the help of our regular visitors: children and parents.

During this time, the Dymkovo Bear became a symbol of the tender relationship between children and the museum. I am now sure that not only does the child need a bear, but the bear also needs a child.