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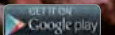
# WINGS OF OMAN

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# The Day of the Hermitage at the National Museum

Here, the National Museum's Director General, Jamal al-Moosawi, and the Head of Curatorial Unit, Moza al-Wardi, discuss some of the exquisite Hermitage Jewellery Collection from Russia's State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg – which will be on display at the National Museum from 11 March – 10 May 2019.

## The Hermitage Jewellery Collection

The State Hermitage Museum has a rich collection of jewellery. Originally consisting of personal jewellery items from royalty, it was one of the largest and most diverse in Russia. The collection was started by Peter the Great; founder of St Petersburg, the new Russian capital. Many objects were acquired during the reign of Russian Empresses Anna Ioannovna and Elizabeth Petrovna.

With the accession of Catherine II to the throne, the collection of personal items expanded to become a large jewellery complex. On the premises of the Winter Palace, the Empress arranged the Diamond Room where jewellery and royal regalia were kept together – including the imperial crown, sceptre and orb. This treasure gallery, aimed at demonstrating social prestige, also had museum functions, and only the best pieces of jewellery art were kept there.

From the mid-19th century, the treasure collection was located in the buildings adjacent to the Winter Palace. Apart from jewellery articles, there were also collections of the best silver, ivory and porcelain artworks. Porcelain, known as “white gold”, was particularly valuable.

The exhibition presents two late 18th century imperial gifts – a sabre with the monogram of Empress Catherine made by Joachim Hasselgren; and a snuffbox with a portrait of Catherine by Jean Francois Xavier Boudde. The exhibition also features a vase with the imperial emblem and inscriptions in Arabic.

The jewellery collection of the State Hermitage Museum is still being replenished with artworks and constitutes one of the most interesting parts of the Museum fund.



Image: © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2019.  
(Photo: Svetlana Ragina).

### Sabre Presented by Catherine II to Count Alexey Orlov-Chesmensky

This sabre is a fine example of a ceremonial award weapon with a steel blade sheathed in a wooden scabbard, covered with gold-tooled black leather adorned with rubies, diamonds and enamel. The crossguard bears a medallion with the monogram of Empress Catherine the Great, made of diamonds and rubies. Delicate golden overlays shaped as bouquets and stylised floral branches on the handle are also decorated with abundant precious stones. The sabre's maker is Joachim Hasselgren, from Sweden, who joined the foreign jewellers guild in St Petersburg in 1764 and came to prominence for a variety of items of high artistic quality.

The sabre was commissioned by Catherine the Great and presented to Count Alexey Orlov-Chesmensky. As the legend goes, Orlov's daughter Anna Alexeevna gave it as a gift to Count Mikhail Miloradovich, who, in his turn, presented it to another member of the Orlov family, who bequeathed it to the crown prince Nikolay Alexandrovich. Following the latter's death, the sabre was kept in the Tsarskoe Selo Arsenal to finally make its way to the Hermitage Museum in 1886.

**Maker:** Joachim Hasselgren  
**Origin:** St Petersburg  
**Materials/Construction:** Gold, silver, diamonds, rubies, leather, enamel; chasing, polishing, guilloche and painting  
**Period:** Late 18th century CE



Images 1-3 : © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2019.  
 1 & 2: Yuri Molodkovets  
 3: Vladimir Terebenin

### Snuffbox with a Portrait of Catherine

This elegant snuffbox never fails to catch the eye of the visitors who come to see the Hermitage's jewellery collection. In the centre of the lid is a painted enamel miniature, edged with diamonds and showing Catherine the Great wearing a mantle with a small crown, chain and badge of the Order of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called. Produced after the original by Fyodor Rokotov – Alexander Roslin, this representation was to the Empress's liking, which is why a multitude of similar portraits can be found in other works of applied art. The border and the bottom of the snuffbox are decorated with transparent enamel painted in imitation of dendrite, highly fashionable and valued in the last quarter of the 18th century.

The snuffbox was executed by the French jeweller Jean Francois Xavier Bouddé, who moved to St. Petersburg from Hamburg in 1765 to join the foreign jewellers guild, of which he later became a warden. He definitely had knowledge of the works of European jewellers, and his snuffboxes strongly resemble the items produced by his French contemporaries. Bouddé's legacy has a very broad scope and encompasses church plate, ceremonial dishware, weapons, jewellery and snuffboxes. Among his customers were members of the St. Petersburg nobility and the Imperial court.

**Maker:** Jean Francois Xavier Bouddé  
**Origin:** St Petersburg, Russian Empire  
**Material/Construction:** Gold, silver, diamonds, enamel; chasing, engraving, guilloche and painting  
**Period:** Circa 1780 CE



Image: © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2019.  
 (Photo: Vladimir Terebenin).

### The National Museum: Visitor Information

**Telephone:** (+968) 22081500  
**Facebook:** NationalMuseumOman  
**Twitter:** NM\_OMAN  
**Instagram:** NM\_OMAN  
**E-mail:** booking@nm.gov.om

The National Museum is open daily from 10:00am – 5:00pm (Friday timings 2:00pm – 6:00pm). The ticket desk closes half an hour before the Museum's closing times.