

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 17

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RUSSIAN DESIGNER BRINGS FABERGE-STYLE EGGS TO MOUNT JOY, PA

Artist shares love of craft with visitors at special event March 18-20 at Koser Jewelers

MOUNT JOY, PA – Noted Russian artist Ilya Abelsky, creator of a unique collection of Faberge-style eggs, will visit Lancaster County to display his handcrafted miniatures in a special, three-day *Eggstravaganza* exhibition hosted by Koser Jewelers in Mount Joy, PA on March 18-20.

The vibrant color, exquisite styling, and expert craftsmanship of Abelsky's Russian Faberge Style miniature eggs are recognized around the world. The innovative artist has exhibited his tiny custom creations in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin along with displays and travels in major cities across the United States. His events draw hundreds of visitors looking at hundreds of his designs over the course of a three-day visit.

"Ilya's artistry is very unique and people are captivated by the attention to detail that's required in something so elegant and distinctive," says Betsy Wolgemuth, co-owner of Koser Jewelers. "He has a way about him that endears him to his audience and they are intrigued by his stories, attention to detail and love of history. It's a fun event for us and a way to give to our greater community." All proceeds from this year's event will benefit Chilean Earthquake Victims through the Mennonite Central Committee's relief efforts.

The artist Abelsky became intrigued with the eggs created by Russian-born Carl Faberge when he was a boy growing up in St. Petersburg and now, carrying on the tradition of the renowned 19th century jeweler of the Russian Imperial family, Abelsky will be on hand at the *Eggstravaganza* event to discuss the artistry and history that defines his collection. His creations - sold as beautiful necklaces— typically retail for \$100-\$400. Visitors can expect to meet an artist who is passionate about his craft and who dedicates several such events a year to educational and informative opportunities, a fun and informal way to meet with the public at large. The father of two enjoys interacting with jewelry enthusiasts as well as younger children in awe of his craft or intrigued with the trivia of Russian history or the art of Faberge.

- Jeweled eggs are an important part of Russian culture and are traditionally given as gifts.
- The brilliant color, sophisticated styling and expert "Old World" craftsmanship of Abelsky's Russian miniature eggs are considered unique in the jewelry industry.
- Abelsky's eggs are often mistaken for Faberge eggs— although the master did only 48 miniatures that are known to exist in private collections and museums all over the world.

While original Faberge eggs are kept behind glass and are untouchable in the world's finest museums and private collections, Abelsky's creations are affordable and touchable keepsakes for all. Abelsky's miniatures are approximately ¾ inch tall. They are made out of sterling silver with 24 carat gold overlay and brilliant, multicolored enamel. The secret, Abelsky says, is in the hand enameling. "The enamel process is a lost art that it is very labor-intensive, with each piece painted by hand and unique from the others."

Although Faberge inspires many of Abelsky's designs, there are a range of styles and themes reflected - from the light-hearted and carefree, to bold, beautiful, and even patriotic. Special U.S. Marine Corps egg pendants are a new addition to the collection, designed to mark the recent 234th anniversary of the Marine Corps. The detailing consists of 20 stars on each egg, as well as the motto, *Semper Fidelus*, all which must be painted with a single bristle of a brush. Now an Atlanta resident, Ilya Abelsky explains that he feels fortunate and privileged to be a citizen of the USA and is indebted to the men and women of the armed forces.

To see Abelsky's collection of hundreds of eggs on display at Koser Jewelers, visit Thursday 5-8 p.m., Friday at 12 noon to 8 p.m. or Saturday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at 811 E. Main St., Mount Joy Pa. For more information about the event, call 717-653-4941.

For photos or other information specific to the art of Ilya Abelsky, visit www.jeweledeggs.com, call 877-897-3447, or email eggstra@bellsouth.net