



Exhibit of the Month

INKWELL

Museologist Simona Gustaitytė

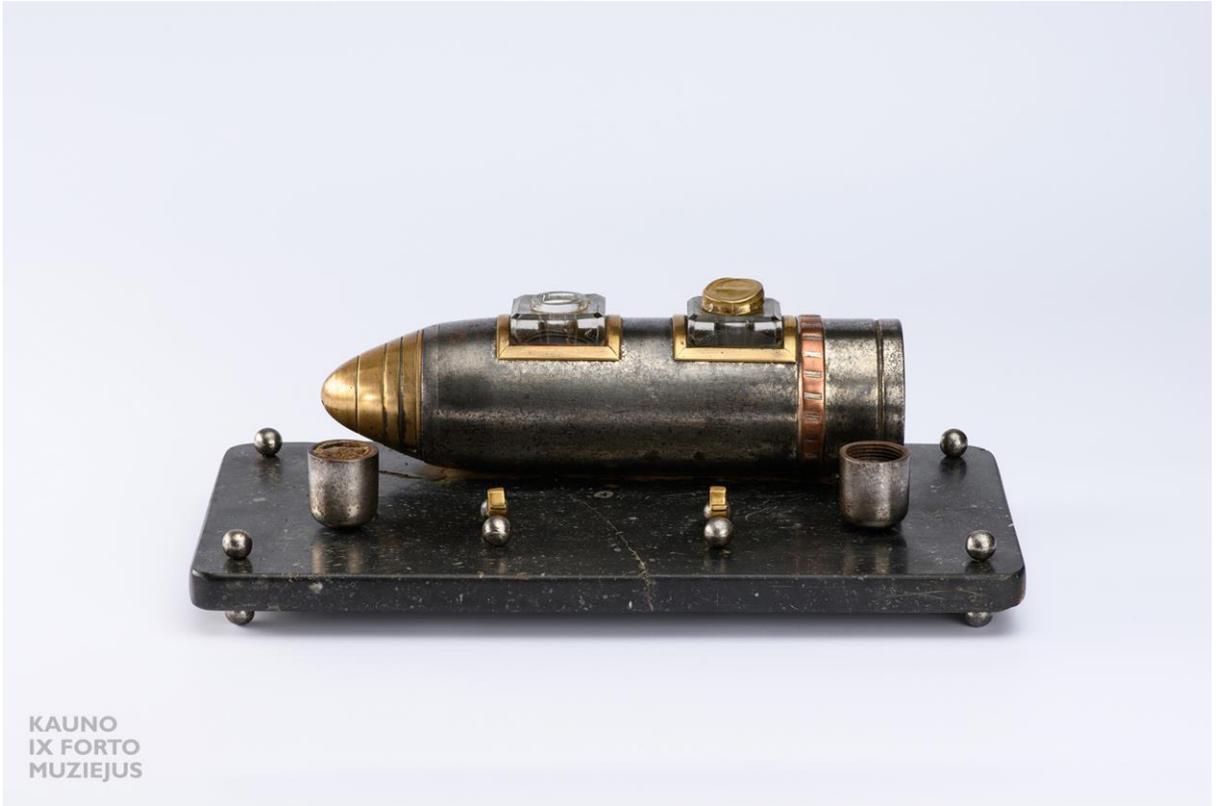
- Materials - iron alloy, copper alloy, marble, glass;
- Processing techniques - drilling, cutting, turning, grinding;
- Length (at base) - 37 cm; width (at base) - 19 cm; height - 13 cm;
- Length of the projectile - 28 cm, width – 7.6 cm;
- Ink bottles in the projectile: length – 4.4 cm; width – 4.4 cm;
- Shrapnel diameter – 1.4 cm;
- The German Empire (the territory of present-day Lithuania), 1915-1917.

During the First World War (1914-1918) and especially in the second half of the war, the so-called "trench art" became popular as the eastern and western fronts settled. The production of souvenirs made of various military objects became widespread among soldiers. One of the most common and accessible objects for the art was the nozzles of artillery shells and the cartridges of light firearms. These were transformed into artistically carved vases, candlesticks, jugs, letter openers and other interpretations of household objects. This "trench art" trend was inspired by several factors. The works became a reminder of service in the army and participation in the war as well as a beautiful gift for relatives, friends or officers. On the other hand, the creation of decorative and highly artistic

objects also testifies to the desire to escape the reality of the war and to seek and create beauty in a destructive and cruel environment.

A unique exhibit of Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum is a self-made inkwell, which was added to the collections in 2009. It was made from a 76.2 mm calibre projectile fired by the artillery of the Russian Empire, which did not explode. This is evidenced by the evenly spaced gouges on the copper ring at the base of the projectile, which were made as the projectile was moving down the barrel of the cannon. Two square-shaped cavities were cut in the middle of the projectile body, in which two glass ink bottles were mounted. One bottle still has a brass stopper and the other has remnants of red ink. The projectile is attached to a rectangular black marble base. Shrapnels (8 in total) of 1.4 cm in diameter are screwed into the corners of the base: four shrapnels are attached to the bottom of the marble base (as feet), and other four shrapnels are visible in the corners of the upper part of the base. Two semicircular iron vessels made of artillery shell caps (the screw-threads for their attachment are preserved inside) are also attached to the base. One such vessel contains fragments of soft and spongy material in order to dry the nib of a pen and to wipe off excess ink. Two semicircular brass holders are attached to centre of the marble base to support the pen. Each of the holders is decorated with two shrapnels on either side.

The exhibit can be seen in the exhibition on the First World War at Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum.



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