

# *Tatting in Russia*

## *BEANILE & ANKARS*

By Nina Libin

Revival of tatting in Russia started in mid 1980s in Leningrad (now St.Petersburg). In the first group taught by Natalya Egelskaya there were about 10 students, unfortunately I remember very few names: Anna G. Vecherskaya, her sister Evgenia G., Vera P. Alyoshina, Nina G. Libin.

We all met in Egelskaya's class on bobbin lace, and talked her into teaching a few lessons in basic frivolité (tatting came to Russia from France and kept French name).

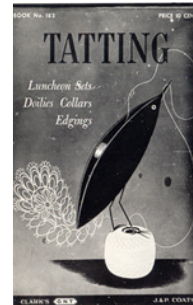
After mastering double stitch, ring, chain, picot, and two basic joins we were so enchanted that decided then and there that portable and beautiful tatting had to be spread around and shared.

We (a few very enthusiastic women from that first class) have started looking for teaching material/instructions. In Egelskaya's class we used a bunch of separate pages, our only available source in Russian at that time, (these pages happen to be part of a Chapter on tatting) from *The Complete Encyclopedia of Needlework* by Thérèse de Dillmont, published in 1902.

We had to find, then re-write and/or write instructions, find people to make shuttles, put together comprehensive 'how to' book, and start teaching.

Then someone brought photocopies from American Tatting books #183 and #207. When I translated the text and patterns from these books, we all agreed that it would be best to use short hand notation: R 2 – 2 – 2 – 2.

Evidently many tatters in various countries came to the same conclusion at the same time.



Then someone brought from Germany (then DDR) this issue of BURDA, and we discovered diagrams!

First regular course in tatting took place in Leningrad in late 1980s, and A. G. Vecherskaya was the first teacher. After graduating from that course some students started teaching, then their students started teaching and sharing their skills, and so on. The material for and feed back from these regular classes was included into Vecherskaya's book "FRIVOLITÉ – Practical Course of Shuttle Tatting", Moscow: "Starozhil Moscv". 1991, 23 pages, which made it the very first tatting book in Russian.



In Moscow the first regular Tatting course based on Vecherskaya's method opened in 1990-91. People who graduated from this course, started teaching, designing new patterns, following their own ideas, and writing books.

In 3 decades tatting has conquered hearts of Russian needle workers, and keeps moving on. There are dozens of new designers and the whole library of tatting books in Russian. Georgia Seitz with the help from Anastasija Yelisejeva (a tatter from St.Petersburg), has put together the list of Russian Tatting Books and the list keeps growing.

It seems worth mentioning that two forms combining tatting and beads have originated in Russia within a decade of tatting revival.

By two forms I mean '**BEANILE**' in mid-eighties and '**ANKARS**' a decade later.

### **1985 BEANILE**

Tatting proves to be an ideal technique to organize beads into open beadwork, finished pieces hold shape and look spectacular!

By 1986 bead tatting became my major interest and the technique got its name '*BEANILE Lace.*'

The design possibilities of *BEANILE Lace* have seemed (and still are) unlimited; the ideas kept developing and to share this interest and discoveries in bead tatting I've organized:

- numerous 'show and tell' events in Leningrad (now St.Petersburg) and Moscow (1986-92),
- published an article about BEANILE in Decorative Art Magazine (1988) and
- contributed the part on tatting with beads to Vecherskaya's first book (1989-90), but it took me 10 years to put together and
- write the book 'Tatted Lace of Beads, the Techniques of BEANILE Lace' (LACIS 1998).
- In 2003 I've started the series 'Lace of Beads' - collections of BEANILE patterns usually grouped by theme or technique; the 19<sup>th</sup> issue of the series has been published in August 2015, the 20<sup>th</sup> issue is in work.
- The book "Beads & Knots", New York, 2013 is the collection of patterns and techniques for needle and shuttle tatters, it features 25 jewelry pieces.

### **1994 ANKARS**

In 1991 Angelina Rozanova graduated from Moscow Tatting course and in 1992 she and her daughter Rina (Ekaterina) Stepnaya were already teaching.

While looking for threads to tat they realized the unlimited possibilities of fine, slick, and very smooth synthetic threads (kapron and lavsan).

Unlike other tatters who considered these threads difficult to work with and not worth the effort, the founders of ANKARS envisioned that these 'difficult' threads could give the filigree look to their tatting and the finished pieces would be considered jewelry.

To keep using these threads as their main tatting material the ANKARS designers have somewhat changed the process of forming the double stitches. They slightly loosened their knots compared to regular tatting, as a result a completed ANKARS element tightens easier without extreme pulling the core thread; the finished rings or chains look firm and the whole tatted piece makes a rigid tatted foundation strong enough to support large and heavy beads, the distinct decorative feature of ANKARS.

For those interested in the technique:

- The first book on ANKARS Technique "Фриволите-АНКАРС" ("Frivolite-ANKARS") by Ekaterina Stepnaya was published in Moscow in 2000.
- You can see the amazing work by Angelina Rozanova in the special issue of the magazine "Чудесные мгновения" ("Enchanting Moments"), Moscow, 2001; the featured pieces were designed and made by 1997.
- A comprehensive study and detailed description of the technique "Плетение в технике АНКАРС" ("Tatting in ANKARS Technique") is the second book by Ekaterina Stepnaya, Moscow, 2007.