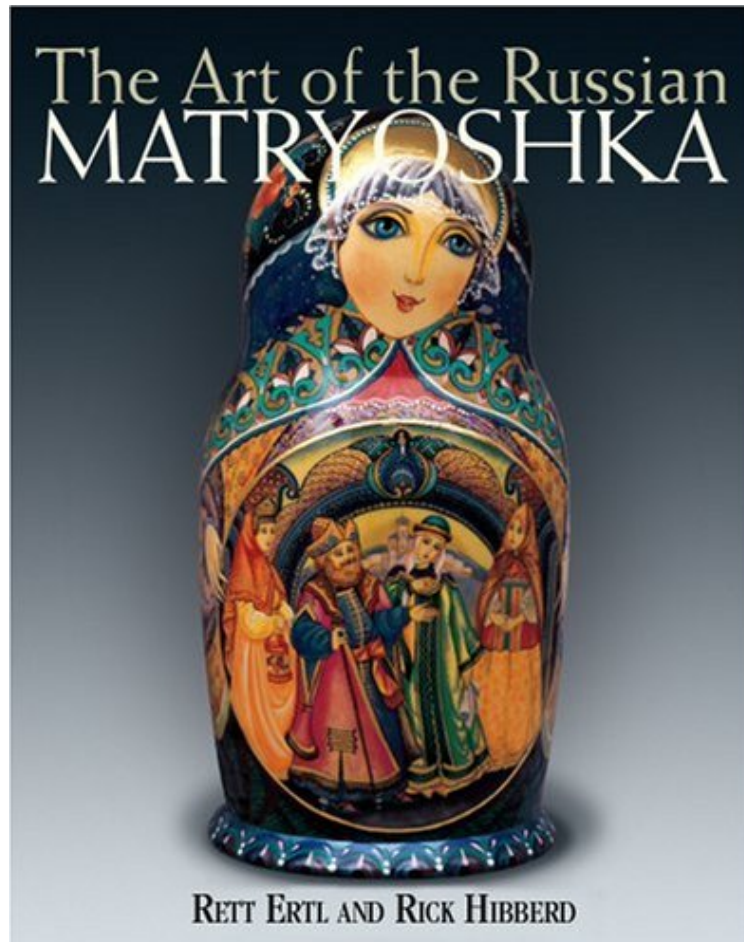


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## **The Art of the Russian Matryoshka**

**Rett Ertl, Rick Hibberd : The Art of the Russian Matryoshka** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of the Russian Matryoshka:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Not enough historyBy SusanHThis is a beautiful book, and the pieces illustrated are variously charming, complex, and gorgeous. However, if you are more interested in older dolls than contemporary ones, there are very, very few photographs of historical pieces, maybe (not a scientific count) six to eight in the entire book. This is really a book on the modern industry and its techniques and artists, with only a 12 page history at the beginning to cover all the past. If contemporary dolls are your interest, you will be thrilled, but if you like older, traditional ones (not the Clintons and the Beatles), then it seems there may still be a need for another book to be written.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Art Form, Not Just a ToyBy Nancy T.

HernandezBeautiful book with excellent information on the entire process of making a set of matryoshka. I was especially interested in the style involving the application of thin pieces of wood to the outside of a matryoshka. However, the authors were in error in calling the wood slivers "straw". Straw is not flat, and cannot be cut into

uniform shapes. The book addresses factory decoration methods, as well as spot lighting individual artists who work independently, and sign their work. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book! By a.c. larose I've wanted this book for 30 years. On my own over the years, I've pieced together the Matryoshka producing centers of Russia. This book confirmed my research. The history, including vintage photos is worth the price, but the marvelous color photos throughout are icing on the cake. I have had art Matryoshkas in my collection since the fall of the Soviet state, so here I've found the human side of these artworks. If you are a lover of these wonderful dolls, this book is for you. If you don't know Matryoshkas, you will fall in love. If you can only have two books on this subject, choose this and the earlier one by Michele Lefkovitz.

The book is the complete account of the history, production, varieties, and creators of the nesting doll that has become a symbol of Russian folk culture, if not Russia itself. Contributing to the history are commissioned studies from three of Russia's leading authorities on toys and folk art. The book includes 330 color plates, 200 of which are carefully selected examples of dolls. The examples include: historical dolls from museums in Russia; factory products made throughout the Soviet period in the villages of Sergiev Posad, Polkhovsky Maidan, Semyonov, Kirov, and Nolinsk; and artwork of independent artists, photographed in several of the artists' home-studios, in private collections, and in the inventory of importer-author Rett Ertl.

From Booklist Anyone who's ever enjoyed seeing or playing with a series of wooden nesting dolls--matryoshki in Russian--will gravitate instinctively to Ertl and Hibberd's lavishly illustrated tome. In it, several myths are quickly debunked: first, that these dolls were born in the Motherland (they emigrated from Japan); and second, that all are made from a single piece of wood (actually, one linden tree trunk yields about four or five blanks). The authors continue to reveal the world of matryoshki, including designs, manufacturing, themes, production centers, artists, and purchase of this native toy. The color photographs alone are worth the price, aiding a true appreciation of the art, whether readers admire the elegantly decorated Cinderella dolls or a wonderfully comic Bill Clinton and "family." Includes a useful glossary of English and Russian terms. Barbara Jacobs Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved ...unique... Recommended for all comprehensive decorative arts and Russian culture collections. -- Library Journal Throughout, the volume is marvelously illustrated... This book is clearly a labor of love... it comes off masterfully... -- Russian Life, Sept-Oct 2003 Paul Richardson From the Inside Flap The Art of the Russian Matryoshka is the definitive account of the wooden nesting dolls, covering their history, how and where they are made, the many variations and different styles of dolls, and their creators. Author Rett Ertl uses his thirty years of experience in Russia to present this information in a straightforward and engaging style, while tying the story of nesting dolls into the story of Russia's development. He concludes that matryoshki are not just dolls within dolls, but themes within themes and symbols within symbols. The first Russian doll was created in 1899. It was turned on a lathe by a master toy maker in Sergiev Posad, home of a well known monastery and several wooden toy workshops. The doll was soon widely produced, becoming the symbol of Russia that it is today. The tools and techniques for making matryoshki are essentially unchanged since the time of the first dolls. The book presents each step in the manufacturing process, from the cutting and drying of linden and birch logs, to preparing the wood and turning it on a lathe, to the priming, painting, and lacquering of the dolls. The photos reveal a Russia that most would think had disappeared long ago. In classifying and describing the immense variety of kinds, shapes, sizes and styles of dolls, Ertl brings to bear more than ten years as an importer of Russian crafts. He has applied the product and marketing sense of a businessman to survey the full range of these dolls, from toys to souvenirs to works of fine art. The chapter on cities and factories describes the "Matryoshka Trail," beginning in Sergiev Posad, which is still a major production center, moving to Polkhovsky Maidan, where matryoshka making is literally a backyard business, and including the large factories in Semyonov, Kirov, and Nolinsk. Matryoshka making has blossomed since the fall of the Soviet Union. Artists are now able to create whatever kinds of dolls they wish and to sell them freely. Creating matryoshki has also provided a living to people who have lost the jobs that they held in the planned economy. The chapter on artists gives a brief look into the lives of some of these independent matryoshka artists. Ertl draws on his decades of experience to give advice on collecting matryoshki in the final chapter. Dolls shown in this chapter and throughout the book come from Ertl's own shelves, several collectors in the United States, Russian museums, and other importers. Readers are invited to collect matryoshki as an accessible way to participate in a Russian folk art tradition that is tightly tied to the past, yet has evolved to reflect the fascinating changes occurring in Russia today.