

Slovak
Folk Painting

folkart eggs

HARVEST HOME

It's harvest time again and we have a cornucopia full of folkart eggs in this issue. Since this is the third in the Slovak series, all the eggs pictured on the cover were made in different areas of the country. They reflect, not only the differences in location but also the differences in individual talents among their makers.

The major distinction which sets these eggs apart from all the others is that they are made primarily to be hung, rather than perched on a stand or laid in a basket. Likewise, although some may have actually been made in the spring, they would not be used until the fall.

Harvest eggs were the farmers "thank-you" notes to nature for a successful planting season. Many were buried in the ground or hung from rafters in the barn. The livestock were remembered too. Eggs, were hung in stables, stys & dairies in thanksgiving for their contributions to the welfare of the farmers' family.

The other most notable difference is their great variety. Although of a similar design, not one of those pictured has been produced by use of the wax resist method - such as a pysanky. Yet the patterns are very familiar to us all, in a very free flowing & uninhibited manner. Not at all like the very precise & formal patterns of pysanky.

These are ones full of joy for a job well done for a life well lived and a future safe and secure for another year of

LOVE !

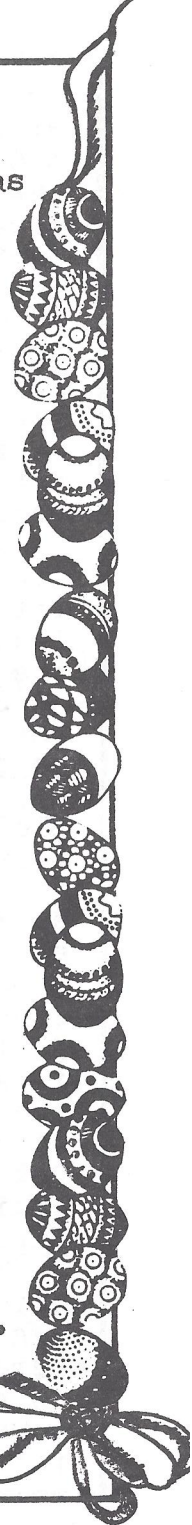
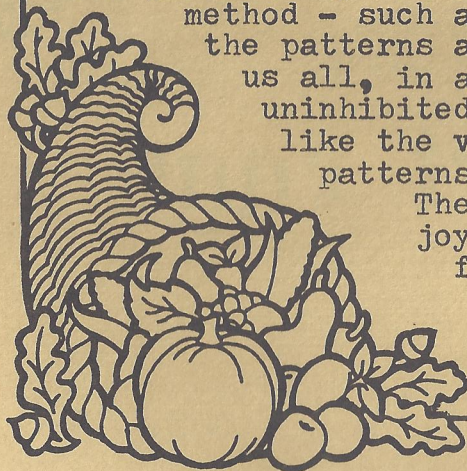
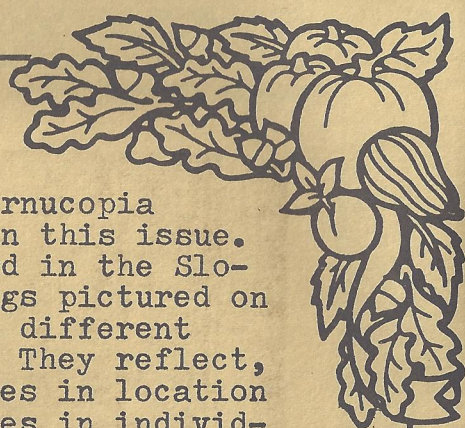
All of these eggs fall under the heading known as "folk" painting. A category which can be defined simply as "the decoration of utilitarian objects". The methods, formulas and traditions have been developed and preserved by the common folk of many countries and reflects their search for beauty in everything they see around them.

The designs are simple yet poetic. The patterns are limited to floral & uncomplicated geometric motifs with some representation of imaginary fantastic creatures. The accent is on the imagination which is inexhaustible - each version is different; never precisely the same. Each one is an improvisation done without preliminary drawings.

Each egg springs from the heart & spirit of the mind's eye and not from the reality of the visible world. These, then do not require "talent" to create an exact replica of an existing reality. All they need is the effort to bring them to life from the shadow world of fantasy.

The rhythms of these decorations, gently follow the contours of the shell. Twisting vines and flowers with coiling leaves, flow gracefully over the curving shell surface. There are no straight or formal lines to block out an area. Rather it is done in a bold manner of color harmony and a bright color range.

Large blank spaces may be left open to produce a light & airy effect. Or they may be "doodled" in to fill a space with whimsy wanderings which may tie two entirely different themes together.



Another great modern technological tool for folkartists is the felt tipped pen. They come in a variety of styles and a multitude of colors. I have found those known as "Sharpie", especially the black, to be ideal for the basic outlines. And those which are used as "highlighters" in school text books to be excellent for the adaptations of pysanky patterns. I'm a little partial to the yellow, orange, pink and green fluorescent ones; if used separately with black can be a striking contrast.

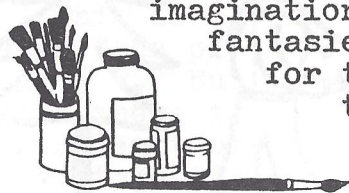
Eggs # 2 & # 5 are fine examples of this two color simple pattern technique. Some may find these colors to harsh & gaudy, especially on a white egg. But the same colors & patterns on a brown egg is very subtle. In fact, all these designs work well on brown eggs, even the little darker brown freckle marks add a bit of interest, not found on white eggs.

So experiment with your own variety of eggs and realms of talent. Many Traditionalists may disagree with these so called pseudo-pysanky and criticize their worth. But these are made for different purposes and with different tools so they cannot be judged by the same standards.

Our dapper young rabbit out for his afternoon stroll on egg # 4 is every bit as delightful as our two smiling pansy faces on egg # 6 ! And that's all they are meant to be - an enjoyable, charming pleasure to behold and to create.

Use the patterns on the preceding page to outline your eggs or use your own vivid imagination to create your own fantasies. The only boundaries

for these folkart eggs are those which you yourself create in the windmills of your mind - begin - the wind is blowing!



Because of the many different types of paints used to make the eggs featured in this issue, one specific finish to cover & protect your work is difficult to recommend.

On the whole, however, I would suggest any clear SPRAY (either gloss or matte) as opposed to a brush-on finish. If the paints have not dried properly or are not waterproof, the simple brush stroke is enough to cause the colors to run & blur together.

A SPRAY will minimize these hazards while still providing a layer of protection from dirt & grime. As with any type of spray application of chemicals, make sure the room is well ventilated. And no matter how rushed you are - PLEASE apply 3-5 LIGHT coats rather than 1 or 2 heavy thick ones. After all that work a blob or drip from a running finish coat is enough to start the whole thing blurring into one fine mess ! Believe me, I know from experience "haste does make waste..."

Any of the clear non-yellowing ceramic fixatives are ideal for poster paints, ceramic stains & felt tipped pens. The polyurethanes provide an excellent protective film over any coloring agent, while sealing both the paint & shell from "outside influences".

Since these eggs are to be hung anyway, attaching their ribbons first also solves the problem of how to hold them when spraying & drying; and protects the ribbons too.

Since the eggs featured in this issue are generally made to be hung, I thought we might explore the European method of stringing an egg.

The first noticeable difference with these eggs is the size of the blow hole. By our American standards, these are quite large - ranging up to $\frac{1}{4}$ or even a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide. Some areas will place tape (cellophane or adhesive) across the opening and then paint over it. Others will leave it alone entirely & merely thread a ribbon through it or tie a knot in each end, - closest to the hole.

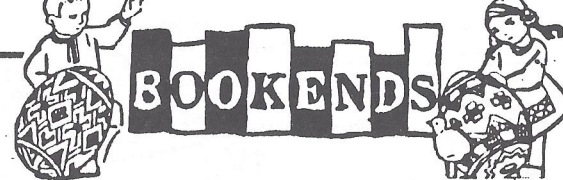
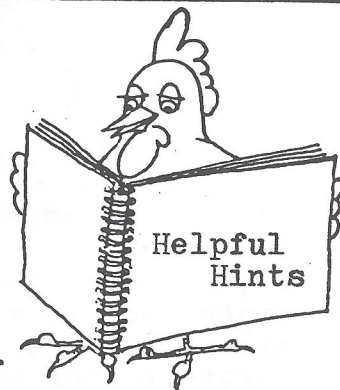
The most ingenious solution to the problem is best exemplified in egg # 1. A small circle, about the size of a dime is cut from a piece of felt & placed along side the hole on either end of the egg. So that when the string, elastic or ribbon is drawn through the egg, this felt piece, acts like a little "washer" to keep everything in place.

They actually look like little hats and boots on the egg, but are quite an effective method of hiding holes.

"Holes", on the whole, are not necessarily bad things & as such do not necessarily have to be covered at all in folk-art eggs. They are viewed as an extremely economical & frugal way of getting " 2 for 1", ie..... egg yolks & egg whites to eat and egg shells to decorate.

In fact, in pysanky, the holes further attest to the artist's ability to remove the insides without hindering the shells' beauty outside.

Holes are O.K.



As I do researches into the particular style of folkart featured in each issue, I frequently find excellent books which are a good source of design & color combination applicable to egg decoration.

Most can be found in your local library or requested through their inter-library loan program. Look under the subsection of Folkart in the Art category of the card catalog - some will even have an egg decorating section too!

The ones listed below will be very helpful for some "bright ideas" :

1. Easter Eggs for Everyone, by Evelyn Coskey, Abington Press, Nashville Tenn., 1973.
2. Egg Decorating, Plain & Fancy, by Arden J. Newsome, Crown Publishers, New York, 1973.
3. Folkart of Rural Pennsylvania, by Frances Lichten, Bonanza Books, New York, 1976.

The Dover Publishing Co. puts out several inexpensive paperbacks full of patterns & designs. Write to them directly for a FREE catalog to : Dept. Pictorial Archive Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10014. These titles will be most helpful:

1. Peasant Designs for Artists and Craftsmen, by Ed Sibbett, Jr.
2. Hungarian Folk Designs for Embroiderers and Craftsmen, by Anne Szalavary.
3. Folk Art Motifs of Pennsylvania by Frances Lichten.
4. Russian Punchneedle Embroidery by Gail Bird.
5. Charted Folk Designs for Cross-Stich Embroidery, Maria & Andreas Foris.



Calendar of Events

Sept. 7-8 Indy Egg Show, Sheraton Meridian, Indianapolis, In. SASE to : Carolyn Lyons, 3122 Bluebell Lane, Indianapolis, In. 46224.

Sept. 15 - German Festival

Sept. 22 - Scottish Festival

Sept. 29 - Slovak Festival

All the above listed festivals will be held at the Garden State Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J. (P.O. Box 116, Holmdel N.J. 07733).

Oct. 5-6 Megokla Eggshell Art Exhibit, Holiday Inn Northwest, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. SASE to: Megokla, P.O. Box 1164, Danville, CA 94526.

Oct. 12 Holiday Craft Boutique, St. Demetrius Center, 691 Roosevelt Ave., Carteret, N.J. SASE to: Pauline Konowka, 44 New York Ave., Carteret, N.J. 07008.

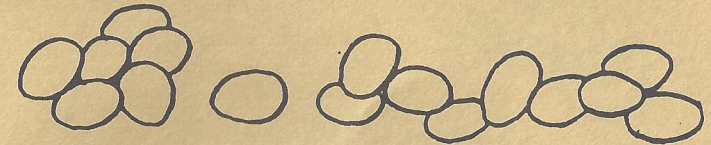
Oct. 12-13 "The Egg is Forever" Egg Show, Hilton Center, Allentown, Pa. SASE to : Sally LeVan, 2704 Boyd St. Bethlehem, Pa. 18017.

Oct. 26-27 Central N.Y. Egg Club Egg Show, Hilton Inn, Syracuse, N.Y. SASE to: Joy Flodd, 205 Germanic Ave., Syracuse, N.Y. 13219.



Nov. 2-3 Northern Illinois Egg Show, Moose Hall, Rochelle, IL., SASE to : Ruth Burhenn, Box 52, R #1, Ashton, IL. 61006.

Nov. 9-22 Cottage Crafts Holiday Boutique, SASE to: Anita Means, 700 Bowne Rd., Wayside, N.J. 07712.



"MAGIC MOMENTS", Sept. 22-23
The Autumnal Equinox !

Remember ? This is the second most powerful date to make an egg stand up by itself & unsupported. The others being : Dec. 21-22, March 21-22 & June 21-23.

For those of you still having problems; begin with a room temperature egg. Place it on a non-skid level surface. A napkin or paper towel may help prevent it from slipping, without actually "supporting it".

Cradle the egg between the fingertips of both hands until the yolk inside can find its own center of gravity within the egg white. Occassionally, you may have to make slight adjustments as the yolk seeks its center space as it settles into the upright position.

When it does, slowly & carefully, withdraw your fingertips away from the shell. Relax, and watch this "magic moment" - your little egg just sitting there in complete & perfect harmony with the Cosmos.

For complete details & further explanations, send \$2.00 (plus 50¢ postage) for an 8 page pamphlet on this natural phenomenon to me c/o Myque's Egg Tree, 34 Farmbrook Dr. Old Bridge, N.J. 08857.

HAPPY "EGG" EQUINOX !



FOLKART EGGS is a
quarterly publication of
Myque's Egg Tree.

Sample copies are \$ 3.00

Annual Subscription
\$ 12.00

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