

RUSSIAN FOLK ARTS. By *Alexander Pronin* and *Barbara Pronin*. South Brunswick and New York: A. S. Barnes & Company. London: Thomas Yoseloff Ltd., 1975. 192 pp. Photographs. \$20.00.

Russian folk art has flourished in obscurity. Public notice has rarely served it well, and the present work is no exception. The authors of this popular introduction follow the organization of the *al'bom* from the Second Russian National Handicrafts Exhibition in 1913 and echo the outlook of that promotional endeavor. Crafts patronized by the state, the church, and the well-to-do—from icons and decorative tiles to carved bone, lacquerware, and porcelain—or articles mass-produced for the urban market—such as *lubki*, toys, and Khokhloma utensils—dominate the display. The art that lived in the villages receives only fitful attention.

Within their focus, the authors relate the history and technique of the more conspicuous crafts. Their stories come with excess packing material: verbal descriptions of objects without pictures for reference, and fragmentary facts—"Wooden dippers of outstanding shape were produced on the lower course of the Sheksna and Mologa rivers" (p. 61). Still, the text contains much to nourish the initial curiosity of students, tourists, and collectors of folk art.

The illustrations do less. Most, if not all, were evidently copied, *without any acknowledgment*, from recent Soviet publications—and ineptly copied at that. In this reviewer's copy the black and white pictures come out fog gray, blurring or obliterating the clear designs of popular art. The scattered color plates are better, but few readers will glimpse the distinctive beauty of Russian folk art in the "over 200 illustrations" presented here.

Compared to the photographically splendid albums of folk art now being published in the Soviet Union, the present volume is an embarrassment. Yet it will probably preempt the Russian niche in the folk art shelf of public libraries, thus extending that veil of benign incomprehension which has surrounded the art of the Russian people.

ANTHONY NETTING  
*Fauquier, British Columbia*

SERGEI IUR'EVICH SUDEIKIN, 1884–1946. By *D. Z. Kogan*. Moscow: "Iskusstvo," 1974. 216 pp. 2.85 rubles.

This is the first monograph to have been published on the studio painter, stage designer, and poster artist, Sergei Sudeikin, and it is long overdue. It has been preceded by an increasing number of references to Sudeikin's work in recent Soviet publications on modernist stage design and in the spate of Western articles, exhibitions, and auctions connected with the recent centenary of Diaghilev's birth. Although the subject is a novel one for a Soviet art historian, Kogan has done a very thorough job, presenting us with an accurate and stimulating account of the artist's life and work during both the pre- and post-revolutionary periods.

Like Nikolai Sapunov (in many ways his rival), Sudeikin contributed much to the evolution of Russian stage design and, with a few major exceptions in his easel work, deserves to be remembered particularly for his stylized, "miniature" sets for Meyerhold, Vera Komissarzhevskaja, and others just before the Revolu-