

Dymkovo Toys

Dymkovo toys, a unique phenomenon in Russian folk art, are among the most popular works of folk craftsmen of this country and all over the world. For many decades folk art exhibitions have invariably included the colored clay figurines and figure compositions.



The origin of Dymkovo toys goes back to ancient times, and is linked with the local festival of the Vyatka province, Svistoplyaska ("whistle-dance", dancing with and to whistles). The festival included commemoration of the ancestors, rolling clay balls down a steep slope of the river, play-fights, promenading and also rich bazaars selling sweets, nuts but mainly clay toys and whistles made by thousands in Dymkovo specially for the occasion.



The chief manufacturers of toys were women and children, who worked seasonally first, and later throughout the year. There were three types of clay toys, balls, whistles and dolls. The first two are of ancient origin connected with the heathen symbols of fertility, which must also account for the prevalence of women with children, domestic animals, and fowl among the figurine motifs.

With the passage of time pagan symbols gave way to everyday themes, and clay balls and whistles were substituted by figurines and groups that decorated window sills, cabinets like fashionable china.



However, still rooted in ancient traditions, Dymkovo toys were not imitations of porcelain, they developed into an original art, vital and always up-to-date. The toys prospered on new themes and subjects taken from life and, at the same time, modified by people's imagination.

Thus, a new world of Dymkovo toys was formed, with tradition and imagery of its own; new artistic media and standards became established, that were characteristic of the new art throughout its development. Dymkovo toys appeal to our contemporaries by their artistry, clear-cut characters, witty humor and optimism. These are the traits that make this original art superior to time.

