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The folk crafts of Russia and England

Each culture has own language and history. The world of things expresses the national spirit and the folk crafts are an ancient type of art, which were connected with the human civilization. The word “the beauty” has been reflected in the folk crafts of Russia and England.

The main crafts of Russia are painting dishes and other household items, ceramics, making wooden and clay toys, lace-making. In England, the most common crafts are wood carving and ceramics. Each folk craft of Russia and England has its own style which appeared due to the history of the country traditions.

Lacquer miniature is an art of painting. Masters make small images on papier-mache by hand and cover them with varnish. The main schools of lacquer miniature painting are: Fedoskino, Palekh, Kholuy, Mstera.

Fedoskin’s school, the oldest one, started the production of papier-mache snuffboxes when the artists used oil paints and metal powders that shone through the paint. A special technology of painting allowed things to get some extra volume. The main creations of Fedoskin's artists are landscapes, portraits, historical and fairy-tale themes.

Palekh’s lacquer miniatures distinctive features are a large amount of gold and bright colours on the black tone. There are many small details, clothes painted in gold, shapes and faces like icons. Then, an art group was created, which made own unique style of painting. Their creations present themes of folk festivals and songs, fairy tale and epic stories, as well as everyday scenes.

Mstera artists began to present the life of the Russian village in the lacquer miniature when the icons were almost forbidden. At the beginning, they painted wooden products using tempera. The masters followed by traditions of icon painting the artists avoided choosing the black tone and made the miniatures seem transparent. Mstera lacquer paintings are realistic in nature with a special understanding of art production.

The art of carving is associated with the people’s cultural level. Therefore, wood carving has own technique and style. In the ancient times, people considered the tree to be a link between a man and the sun. The abundance of forests made wood the most affordable and convenient material. Bogorodskaya carving was originated in the village Bogorodskoye more than 300 years ago. The main carving feature is the creation of moving toys from tree species: such as aspen, linden, alder. The carved toys reflect the scenes and motifs of rural life: a man and a bear are knocking hammers and chickens are pecking the grain. The finished items are not painted – so, this technique allows everyone to see not only the carving beauty but the natural beauty of wood.

In England as well as in Russia people are sensitive to the folk crafts traditions. There are many skilled craftsmen in England who specialize in various branches of folk crafts. The traditions of art pass down from generation to generation, having a significant impact on the development of modern decorative art in England.

Ceramics crafts are especially developed among English people because they have a plenty of clay in their regions. Ceramic dishes are covered with multicolored glaze - plates, jugs, and mugs are light brown or yellow in color. Their items present birds, animals and mythical creatures combined with geometric ornaments. The china products are distinguished by smooth lines a lot of details and elegant floral motifs. Also, a type of fine ceramics was firstly invented in England - such products are famous all over the world and they still decorate the mantelpieces every English home.

An old form of English folk art is a wood carving: massive oak chairs, benches, chests of various styles and sizes are covered carvings mainly geometric ornaments (rosettes, rhombuses, woven circles, flowers, leaves, etc.). The wood carving masters made sculptures of various sizes and shapes, usually

human figures or animal heads. Besides, the surface of the wood figures is covered with carvings of spirals and plant patterns. They were widely used to decorate the facades of English rural houses. Small wood products are carved sticks and smoking pipes are the traditional English souvenirs.

The role of folk crafts is to unite peoples. Annual international craft festivals are a great contribution into this activity.

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