This title is another attractive work by the trio (Fleming and Rowan along with James A. Chambers as photographer) responsible for *Folk Furniture: Of Canada’s Doukhobors, Hutterites, Mennonites and Ukrainians* (University of Alberta Press, 2004). This book, greatly expanded in scope, has more than 425 artifacts with captioned photos from the nineteenth century through the 1950s. The authors emphasize material culture, reference fine art versus craft, and let in the fresh air of association and identity. With unique thematic arrangement they encourage personal response to the aesthetic of objects as one might to fine art. The rich images of objects are split up by theme, but not genre, and create “visual poetry” inviting personal connections. The authors’ goal is to examine attraction to and collection of traditional arts and to wonder about their “necessary and enduring value.” They succeed.

The emphasis is on evoking “affinities,” capitalizing on narrative form rather than history. For example, portable musical scales, rendered in wood and ink on linen is in the “Games and Leisure” chapter alongside a snowshoeing painting on a shovel and more obvious inclusions. The authors investigate regional motifs (for example beavers and maple leaves from eastern Canada) as well as more universally appealing themes. In looking at the art work, they also examine decoration and its symbolism and analyze technique such as scherenschnitte. Their explanation of certain symbols, like snakes, is conservative, reflecting a more rural, less global interpretation. Their approach to folk art “as a metaphorical walk through the streets and countryside in which we live...” has as its center a unique variety of objects and along with Chambers’s strikingly beautiful color photographs complement older books on Canadian folklore.

The nearly squared, heavy paperback binding with sewn signatures, sits surprisingly well on the lap despite its nearly five-pound weight. It has a preface, table of contents, bibliography, and index listing genres and notes with documentation. Two distinct voices of the authors present unevenness: one scholarly, sometimes obtuse comeingles with an unexpected jovial, colloquial tone. Known creators are attributed, yet, none of the objects’ owners from private and institutional collections are cited, which is a drawback for researchers. Chapter introductions share a brief history and social context while the captions note geographical origin if known, media, and measurements.

Some of the curious objects, like the threatening black snake-sculptural-picture-framed portraits make this a visual antiques market extravaganza. It showcases beauty, cleverness, and skill of fine specimens that could so easily be lost to posterity had it not been for this excellent compilation.

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