



American Folk

Gerald W.R. Ward, Abaigeal Duda, Pamela A. Parmal, Sue Welsh Reed, Gilian Ford Shallcross, Carol Troyen

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Folk art has been part of the American idiom for nearly as long as America has been a nation. Today it remains one of the best-loved and most fervently collected forms of American art, a diverse and authentic vernacular expression. *American Folk* presents over 60 remarkable objects from one of the country's most prominent collections of folk art, many of them never before published. Included are paintings, carvings, textiles, prints, "frakturs", furniture, and utilitarian objects, dating from the late 18th to the early 20th century. They include such masterpieces as Erastus Salisbury Field's lush "The Garden of Eden", E.L. George's surrealistic "Child in a Rocking Chair", a complex, monumental quilt by the former slave Harriet Powers, and Wilhelm Schimmel's extraordinary carved animals--as well as a remarkable assortment of whirligigs, windmills, decorated chests, figurines, and even carousel animals. The introductory essay by curator Gerald W.R. Ward discusses the elusive notion of "folk art" itself and presents the history of its acquisition by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Published in conjunction with a major exhibition at the MFA, *American Folk* is a vibrant and engaging introduction to one of our proudest cultural traditions. 9 x 10 inches, 88 color illustrations.

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