

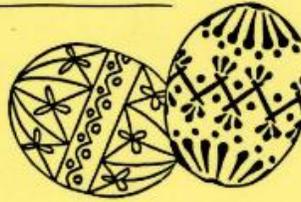
Basic Detail Report



Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford

Pisanki

POLISH EASTER EGGS



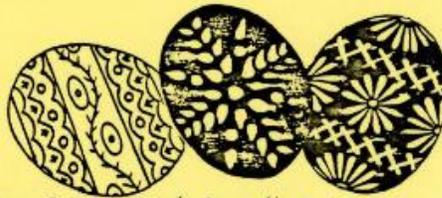
Decorating Easter eggs is a charming and colorful Polish custom dating back to early Polish history, a form of exquisite folk art still prevalent to this day in Poland. Just as the costumes vary in the many districts in Poland, so the eggs differ, too, in color and design.

There are three main techniques of decorating Pisanki. Eggs dyed a solid color through boiling or soaking in a dye are called *Kraszanki*, *Malowaniki* or *Byczki*. Eggs on which the outline of birds, flowers and animals are delicately scratched with sharp instruments after being cooked are called *Skrobanki* or *Rysowaniki*. Eggs batiked - that is, artistic designs that are etched with beeswax and dipped in coloring fluids several times are called *Pisanki*. The *Kraszanki* are popular in eastern Poland, *Skrobanki* in northern Poland, and *Pisanki* are designed in all parts of the country.

For etching, the Poles use various instruments bearing traditional names: The *Kulka*, *Pisak*, *Radelek*, *Kwaczek* and *Kistka*. The hand made tool used mostly is the *kistka*, also, an ordinary pin stuck into the eraser end of a pencil, or a nail with a small head hammered gently into the head of a small piece of wood or clothespin. The metallic end of a shoestring also is used by peasant village folk to create simple designs on colored eggs. A sharpened match-stick can be used, too.

In the past, vegetable dyes were prepared by home methods. For example a yellow dye was made from onion peels, saffron, or caraway seed; red, from beet juice; green, from spinach, young rye or alder bark; brown, from alder bark, oak bark, tea or coffee; blue, from logwood or mallow; black, from alder bark or alder pussies. The dyes were prepared by boiling the substance in water until the desired shade was obtained, then strained through a piece of cheese cloth. To make the colors more luminous, a little vinegar was added.

Food coloring in liquid or tablet form is used now; also, aniline (chemical dyes), or vegetable coloring in powder form. Fabric dyes may be used also for a greater variety of colors. However, eggs dyed with chemical or fabric dyes cannot be eaten. Beautifully decorated, they are a conversation piece and a lifetime Easter memento.



from *Pisanki Easter Eggs in Technicolor* by Anna Zajac Gacek, Sarmatia Pub. © 1969

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handout, Folk Paper-Cuts, "Wycinanki" , Polish Cultural Club of Greater

Hartford 2015.196.88.33: handout, Polish Easter of My Childhood, Polish Cultural

Club of Greater Hartford 2015.196.88.34: handout, The Legend of the Easter Egg,

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