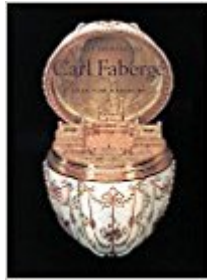




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First Impressions: Carl Faberge



Synopsis

A biography of Carl Faberge (1846-1920), one of the world's best-known jewellers and goldsmiths. Photographs of Faberge objets d'art, along with archival photographs of Faberge and his family, document the life and work of a remarkable craftsman.

Book Information

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Grade Level: 8 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up-A truly beautiful and authoritative book that is well organized, easy to read, and full of Russian history. It is the story of the artist who created lavish works for the ruling classes of late 19th-and 20th-century Europe, and fantastic jeweled Imperial Easter Eggs for the last two Czars of Russia. Von Habsburg recounts how training, hard work, and luck characterized the designer's career and notes his shrewdness as a businessman. The demise of the Russian Imperial family meant the end of his wonderful art objects, many of which are housed in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. High-quality, full-color photographs (including a large center fold-out section) showcase the artist's talent. Judy R. Johnston, Auburn High School, WA Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6-10. Beginning with his birth in 1872 in czarist Russia and concluding with the world's continuing fascination with his art, this biography of Faberge provides a fabulous glimpse of an era in which an artisan's style and designs influenced a culture. The writing style is clear and engaging,

successfully conveying Faberge's political astuteness, his drive, and the delight he took in his work, and the black-and-white photographs from the period, as well as exquisite color pictures of Faberge's works, augment a sense of the people, the place, and the times. The book is, however, uneven in its historical detail, the index is anemic, and there are no sources. A list of illustrations helps compensate for sometimes awkward placement of the pictures, but the fine selection of outstanding photographs will still leave a lasting impression. Karen Simonetti

Jewels and jeweled items were fixtures in the lives of nobility in the waning years of the European Empires. The scope of the jewelry trade carried on by the Faberge' workshops was astounding. The standard of perfection, innovation in enamels and guilloche techniques, and of course the incredible eggs. Faberge's works were commonplace gifts among nobility and rulers alike. In addition to the life of Faberge, the lives of the last ruling families of Russia are sketched in this well-written book. Much of general Russian history from 1880-1918 is woven into the text. I have read extensively on the last ruling Romanov family and so I take issue with the last chapter of this book. I found many discrepancies between my research and what was put forth. The last chapter is a simplistic summary of the "politically correct" scenario put forth for some decades after their assassination. This is just one instance of many. On page 78 "...the czarina was hated by the masses because of her haughty manner." From my readings I believe that the St. Petersburg nobility, the majority of whom were living decadent lives at this point in history, did intrigue against the czarina and the royal family in general. The "masses" of the Russian population were not nobility, did not live in St. Petersburg, and were quite devoted to their sovereigns. The last czarina of Russia was very shy and oriented toward family and faith. Her disinterest in the shallow life of the court personages and their intrigues was poorly accepted by fashionable society. One could almost argue that a sovereign needs to participate in fashionable society to a larger degree in order to keep abreast of, and influence, public sentiment. Were it not for the heir's hemophilia this would have been more possible.) I recommend that the reader take this last chapter with a grain of salt. The description of jewelry techniques was very well-done. I think any reader, ages 10-90, would find them both interesting and understandable. There are many color plates of the jeweler's art as well as historical black and white photos of the Faberge's and the last royal families of Russia.

This book has photos about Mr. Faberge' that are hard to find in other books. There are color photos of his eggs that are not found in other books. The only drawback I found was that "all the czars family were killed" and there is still a mystery about Anastasia. Otherwise it is a great addition

to any Faberge' library.

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