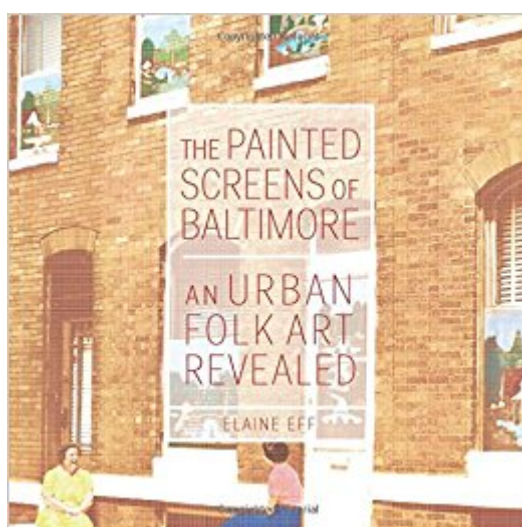


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# The Painted Screens Of Baltimore: An Urban Folk Art Revealed (Folklore Studies In A Multicultural World Series)



## Synopsis

Painted screens have long been synonymous in the popular imagination with the Baltimore row house. Picturesque, practical, and quirky, window and door screens adorned with scenic views simultaneously offer privacy and ventilation in crowded neighborhoods. As an urban folk art, painted screens flourished in Baltimore, though they did not originate there—precursors date to early eighteenth-century London. They were a fixture on fine homes and businesses in Europe and America throughout the Victorian era. But as the handmade screen yielded to industrial production, the whimsical artifact of the elite classes was suddenly transformed into an item for mass consumption. Historic examples are now a rarity, but in Baltimore the folk art is still very much alive. *The Painted Screens of Baltimore* takes a first look at this beloved icon of one major American city through the words and images of dozens of self-taught artists who trace their creations to the capable and unlikely brush of one Bohemian immigrant, William Oktavec. In 1913, this corner grocer began a family dynasty inspired generations of artists who continue his craft to this day. The book examines the roots of painted wire cloth, the ethnic communities where painted screens have been at home for a century, and the future of this art form.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“An un-ironic (thank God) treasure-trove of amazingly researched information that elevates the most Balto-centric one-time row house kitsch to its proper place in art

history.” —John Waters “The Painted Screens of Baltimore: An Urban Folk

Art Revealed is a stunningly beautiful book that traces the history of painted screens in Baltimore. Elaine Eff profiles three generations of screen painters and lovingly shows how these artists crafted a unique identity for their city. Eff's majestic portrait of a city, its people, and their art will forever stand as a model study for the fields of American art and folklore. William Ferris, author of The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists

An exploration of a homegrown tradition of unexpected beauty and privacy

"That's my uncle!" "My daughter lives up that street!" It's great to be so close to an art movement, looking from the painters' side, not the museum curators'. Going through a gallery, it's easy to forget what physical work goes in to most art, but you can't forget that blue-collar side of screen painting. This book is a good history/overview/guide/how-to of an art that ought to be more widespread. Why don't we paint gazebos to blend with their gardens? Put out specially painted screens for the Fourth of July?

This book really struck home. As a kid, growing up on our house on Port Street, I was quite familiar with the Octavec's Store on Monument Street. Our family were friends with them and I was quite friendly with their son Richie. I also knew Johnny Eck. He lived across the alley from us on Milton Ave. I still remember the times when he would take us neighborhood kids for a ride in his little race car shown on page 133. This book brought back a lot of memories.

This book is so well written and put together, I was surprised that it didn't say "Winner of the National Book Award" on its cover.

This was purchased as a gift for my sister-in-law and her husband. They're big fans of this folk art form and are very pleased with this book.

This represents a lifetime of work for the author. It is full of incredible research, charming stories, and beautiful illustrations.

A tip of my cap to Ms. Eff for a beautifully put together book. I lived in Baltimore from 1948 to 1972 and loved the painted screens. I purchased three of them from Anna Pasqualucci after reading this book. Anna is as beautiful as the book and her screen painting is also top notch.

I chose this rating because I think this is the best. I chose this book because when my cousin (her gift from me)we grew up in Highlandtown & everyone had painted screens.It reminds us both of our childhood.Thank you,Diane Cruse

Purchased this for friends who just moved to Baltimore. The American Visionary Museum has a great small collection or example of the doors you can see in person. The book has a tremendous amount of history and pictures. Great quality. Perfect gift!

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