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THE UKRAINIAN ART OF THE 20TH – EARLY 21ST CENTURIES: AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Abstract. *The article attempts to identify certain features inherent in modern Ukrainian art, which is caused by the need to understand those distinctive features by which it can be recognized in the world context. **Relevance of research.** Against the background of the processes of Ukraine's integration into the world cultural and artistic space, in connection with the need to fight for own right to national identity and demonstrate own achievements, natural questions arise: what is the uniqueness of modern Ukrainian art and what is its contextual model. **The purpose of the study** is to research the historical and cultural basis of the modern Ukrainian art formation, to outline the vectors of development and to find the features that distinguish national art in the world context. **Research methods.** The research methodology is based on a combination of general scientific, historical, cultural and art studies methods. **Research results.** The attention is focused on the significant achievements of Ukrainian artists of the academic and realistic school, which span from the end of the 19th century and until today. Thanks to thorough art education in Ukraine, strong foundations for high-quality academic and classical art education have historically been formed. Respectively, for Ukrainian artists until now, classic realistic forms of art are much closer, and Ukraine in international artistic context continues to be mostly associated with the academic and realistic school. Against the background of the modern visual practices development, Ukrainian art is also close to the art directions of European modernism of the beginning of the 20th century. In particular, post-impressionism, abstractionism and other modernist currents are still relevant methods of work. The innovative possibilities of the modernism aesthetics in Ukraine were deeply rethought on a national basis and are used to update the national outlook. Despite the fact that art of modernist trends occupies a significant place in the modern Ukrainian cultural context, in general, there is still a greater tendency towards objectivity. Ukrainian artists concentrate much more on materiality and sensuality than on objectlessness and incorporeality; they are characterized by picturesqueness, melodiousness, special importance is given to colour. Artists turn to plasticity as a means of artistic expression, to work with textures. Tendency of ideology, expansion of content with additional meanings, symbolic images or structural-plastic solutions is also highlighted, which refers to the art of non-conformism, to 'silent' protest and experiments of artists in times of total control over creative expression. Today, young artists in Ukraine broadcast Ukrainian uniqueness to the world and raise important issues of national identification. Currently, the following trends can be traced in creativity in various forms: vector of 'great ideas and contents' associated with academic school; vector of special sensuality and introspection, which gravitates to visual language of Ukrainian non-conformists; vector of artistic forms and tools of abstractionism, dominance of rhythm and pictorial plasticity, which is attributed to reflections of avant-garde; conceptual, spatial-installational and performative vector (the latter is almost not characteristic of Ukrainian art). **Conclusions.** Conclusions are made about the recognizable cultural trace characteristic of Ukrainian art. Uniqueness of Ukrainian art lies in its synthetic nature, in organic combination of strong academic traditions and innovation. On the one hand, Ukrainian art is strongly connected with achievements of the academic school artists. On the other hand, with the art of modernism*

development and Ukrainian avant-garde in the first third of the 20th century, achievements of which are consonant with our turbulent times. A special feature of Ukrainian art is its idealism, expansion of content with additional meanings, which is encoded in symbolic images or structural and colour solutions. At the end of the 1980s, in Ukrainian cultural environment, there was an experience of learning and integrating the directions of postmodernism, in particular, conceptualism and trans-avant-garde. The synthesis of such diverse phenomena became a platform for the formation of original ways of Ukrainian art in the 20th – 21st centuries.

Key words: *Ukrainian modernism, Ukrainian avant-garde, artistic academic education, academism, non-conformism, ‘Picturesque reserve’, ‘Southern Ukrainian wave’, Ukrainian art of the 20th century.*

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УКРАЇНСЬКЕ МИСТЕЦТВО ХХ – ПОЧАТКУ ХХІ СТ.: СПРОБА ІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЇ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО КОНТЕКСТУ

Анотація. *В статті здійснюється спроба визначення певних рис, притаманних сучасному українському мистецтву, що викликане необхідністю зрозуміти ті своєрідні ознаки, за якими його можна впізнати у світовому контексті. **Актуальність дослідження.** На тлі процесів інтеграції України до світового культурного і мистецького простору, у зв'язку із необхідністю виборювати своє право на національну ідентичність та демонструвати власні здобутки, постають закономірні питання: в чому полягає своєрідність сучасного українського мистецтва та яка його контекстуальна модель. **Мета дослідження** – дослідити історико-культурне підґрунтя формування сучасного українського мистецтва, окреслити вектори розвитку та віднайти ознаки, які вирізняють національне мистецтво у світовому контексті. **Методи дослідження.** Методологія дослідження базується на сукупності загальнонаукових, історичних, культурологічних і мистецтвознавчих методів. **Результати дослідження.** Увагу акцентовано на значних здобутках українських художників академічної та реалістичної шкіл від кінця ХІХ ст. і до сьогодні. Завдяки ґрунтовній мистецькій освіті в Україні історично сформувалися міцні засади для якісної академічної та класичної мистецької освіти. Відповідно, для українських художників досі значно ближчими є класичні реалістичні форми мистецтва, а Україна в міжнародному мистецькому контексті здебільшого продовжує асоціюватися з академічною та реалістичною школами. На тлі розвитку сучасних візуальних практик українському мистецтву також є близькими напрями мистецтва європейського модернізму початку ХХ століття. Зокрема, постімпресіонізм, абстракціонізм та інші модерністські течії досі є актуальними методами роботи. Новаторські можливості естетики модернізму в Україні глибоко переосмислювалися на національному підґрунті та застосовуються для оновлення національного світогляду. Попри те, що мистецтво модерністських спрямувань посідає вагоме місце в сучасному українському культурному контексті, загалом все ж більше спостерігається схильність до предметності. Українські художники більше концентруються на матеріальності й чуттєвості, аніж на безпредметності й безтілесності; їм властива мальовничість, мелодійність, особливе значення надається кольорові. Художники звертаються до пластичності як засобу художньої виразності, до роботи з фактурами. Також виокремлюється тенденція ідейності, розширення змісту додатковими сенсами, символічними образами чи структурно-пластичними вирішеннями, що відсилає до мистецтва нонконформізму, до «тихого» протесту й експериментів художників у часи тотального контролю за творчим висловлюванням. Сьогодні в Україні молоді митці транслиують у світ українську унікальність та піднімають важливі питання національної ідентифікації. Нині у творчості в різних формах простежуються наступні тенденції: вектор «великих ідей і змістів», пов'язаний з академічною школою; вектор особливої чуттєвості та самоаналізу, що тягнє до образотворчої мови українських нонконформістів; вектор художніх форм і засобів абстракціонізму, домінування ритму та живописної пластики, який відносять до рефлексії авангарду; концептуальний, просторово-інсталяційний та перформативний вектор (останній майже не властивий українському мистецтву). **Висновки.** Зроблено висновки про властивий українському мистецтву впізнаваний культурний слід. Унікальність українського мистецтва в його синтетичності, в органічному поєднанні міцних академічних традицій і новаторства. З одного боку, українське мистецтво міцно пов'язане із здобутками художників академічної школи. З другого – з розвитком мистецтва модернізму й українського авангарду у першій третині ХХ ст., досягнення яких є суголосними нашому буремному*

часу. Особливою рисою українського мистецтва є його ідейність, розширення змісту додатковими сенсами, що зашифровується в символічних образах чи структурно-колеристичних вирішеннях. Наприкінці 1980-х років у середовищі молодих українських художників відбулося набуття досвіду пізнання і застосування напрямів постмодернізму, зокрема концептуалізму і трансавангарду. Синтез таких різноспрямованих явищ став платформою для формування самобутніх шляхів українського мистецтва у ХХ–ХХІ століттях.

Ключові слова: український модернізм, український авангард, мистецька академічна освіта, академізм, нонконформізм, «Живописний заповідник», «південно-українська хвиля», мистецтво України ХХ століття.

Formulation of the problem. The attempt to define certain features inherent in modern Ukrainian art is caused by the need to explore the ways of its development, to outline the basis on which it rests, to understand the peculiar signs by which it can be recognized in the world. And, finally, to emphasize what distinguishes national art in the world context? These questions are due to significant work of Ukrainian museum and independent curators who, since the beginning of the Ukrainian Crimea Russian occupation in 2014 and the full-scale aggressive Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2024, have implemented a number of exhibition projects on the world cultural arena. Among them, the exhibition «In the Eye of the Storm» at the Belvedere Museum in Vienna, Austria (March 23 – June 2, 2024) should definitely be singled out. These projects, first of all, were aimed at presenting the artistic achievements of Ukrainians as a nation to the international cultural community, and also carried an educational mission aimed at decolonizing the names of world-famous Ukrainian artists, appropriated by Russia, to return to Ukraine its cultural heritage that was appropriated by the Russian Empire, the Soviet government and now Russia [1].

Relevance of research. Against the background of the obvious processes of Ukraine's integration into the world cultural and artistic space, which were significantly scaled up in connection with the need to fight for own right to national identity and demonstrate own achievements, natural questions arise: what is the uniqueness of modern Ukrainian art and what is its contextual model? How do global geopolitical shifts and upheavals affect the content and form of visual practices of Ukrainian artists? And the most distant question that needs to be studied and analyzed – how did Russia's war against Ukraine affect these processes?

Analysis of recent research and publications. In a number of domestic scientific works, the origins of the Ukrainian modernism art of the end of the 19th – the first third of the 20th centuries are researched. Among them, we should single out Yulia Babunych who consistently analyzes its theoretical background and manifestos, searches

for the artistic language transformation peculiarities. The scientist examines the problem of conceptual-theoretical basis of modernism in Europe and Ukraine, analyzes the theoretical works and texts of cultural figures of Ukrainian modernism, reveals that on the Ukrainian basis the innovative, for that time, aesthetic views were perceived as contributing to the formation of national worldview [2], [3], [4].

Filling the gaps in search for national identity of Ukrainian art, scientists shed light on the formation of individual modern phenomena and currents. Among the wide range of works, works dedicated to Ukrainian abstract art stand out. In particular, scientist A. Dubravina researches the origins of abstract art in Ukraine, interprets the genesis of Ukrainian abstract art, referring to artifacts of primitive culture. In her researches, she focuses attention on artistic and symbolic components of abstract language of the antiquity artists, which are connected to each other by the heritage of pictorial practice. It is based on the search for primary basis of visual art, which allows us to understand the peculiarities of the modern abstract practice of Ukrainian artists. Instead, researching the prerequisites and reasons for formation of abstract art in Ukraine on the basis of ancient cultures, the scientist seems to deny the transformation of the most ancient forms of creativity by theoreticians and practitioners of the late 19th – early 20th centuries, who sought the synthesis of various forms and types of knowledge in search of new visual practices [5].

V. Sydorenko [6], R. Shmagalo [7], I. Nebesnyk [8] and others were engaged in the study of art education in Ukraine and its separate schools at different times. Problems of art education in Ukraine in the 20th – 21st centuries and activities of art schools were studied by Ya. Kravchenko [9], M. Krivolapov [10], G. Sklyarenko [11], O. Fedoruk and others.

The following series of works, on which our research is based, is devoted to general issues of Ukrainian art, in particular, and art of non-conformism. Among these, the cultural and art history works of O. Rohotchenko with a thorough analysis

of the Ukraine art during the Soviet era [12], L. Smyrna on the art of Ukrainian non-conformism [13], and others stand out.

The purpose of the article. To research the historical and cultural background of the modern Ukrainian art formation, to outline the vectors of development and to find the features that distinguish national art in the world context.

Research methods. The methods of scientific research are based on the principles, approaches and methodology of scientific analysis, the application of which allows you to highlight and clearly substantiate certain generalized features inherent in modern Ukrainian art, as well as to find the roots of these features in historical and cultural context. The principles of methodological foundations are based on the need to analyze a wide range of issues of a socio-political, general cultural and art history nature, to connect the results and draw conclusions from the standpoint of the requirements of the modern art history paradigm. In particular, the study of the given problem will be based on the principles of objectivity, scientific reliability and comprehensiveness.

Among the approaches, the art critic was chosen, since the research used a significant source base that requires analysis and study, as well as a systematic approach, which involves studying the problem as a whole phenomenon. The systematic approach is the main one, and the art-based approach is complementary.

Methodology of this study is based on a combination of general scientific, historical, cultural, and art studies methods. Among general scientific methods, such theoretical methods as historical, terminological and systemic are used. A group of historical methods, in particular, the historical-chronological method, made it possible to research the general socio-cultural context. A typological and classification method was chosen from art history methods.

Presenting the main material. Historically, the Ukrainian national art school was formed in the 20th century, mainly based on traditions of academism and realism. High level of art education in Ukraine was contributed by artists who at the turn of the 19th – beginning of the 20th centuries studied at academies or other professional art institutions, often European, actively exhibited in world-famous art centres and integrated their experience into formation of Ukrainian art schools. Among them is the well-known Kyiv artist Oleksandr Murashko (1875–1919), a brilliant academician and, at the same time, an innovator. After receiving an education at the St. Petersburg Academy

of Arts, he actively exhibited at European exhibitions, in particular at the International Exhibition in Munich in 1909, where his work «Carousel» (1905) won a gold medal. It was he who was at the origin of creation of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts in Kyiv, a higher educational institution of European level. According to the scientist Yulia Babunych, «...М. Murashko's school developed the academic direction of painting, basis of creative work of its students was landscapes, household paintings, historical and portrait painting...» [2, p. 130–131]

In Lviv, the modernist artist Oleksa Novakivsky (1872–1935), who studied at the Krakyw Academy of Fine Arts, implemented fundamental pedagogical activities. One of the important centres of Western Ukrainian art was the art school he founded in Lviv in 1923, which gathered outstanding artists and talented young people around it. Other institutions of academic education in Ukraine, in particular, in Kharkiv and Uzhhorod, followed a similar path of formation.

Thanks to this, a high level of art education was formed in Ukraine, which is actual even for today. No matter what events took place in the socio-political life of Ukraine in the 20th century, no matter what global cataclysms occurred, no matter what restrictions were imposed by the nomenclature system in Soviet times, Ukrainian artists for many decades received high-quality art education in art institutions in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, and Odessa: from art schools and colleges to the academy, etc.

Ukrainian art education is still one of the strongest. The luminary educators of the academic and high-quality realistic school have long since passed away, but the main centres of art education in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Lviv remain strong.

Respectively, for *Ukrainian artists, classical realistic forms of art are much closer to this time. Today, in international artistic context, Ukraine continues to be associated primarily with the academic and realistic school, and, despite all modern challenges, it is clearly distinguished by a high artistic culture.* This demand for high craftsmanship is still relevant in world context, in particular, in art markets of the U.S. and Oriental countries.

Above, *attention was focused on significant achievements of Ukrainian artists of the academic and realistic school, which span from the end of the 19th century and until today.* But today Ukrainian art in the world is also identified with significant discoveries of modernism and avant-garde art of the first third of the 20th century. The Ukrainian avant-garde is one of the brightest phenomena

of national art of the first third of the 20th century, which was formed in the process of understanding new possibilities of visual language, searching for new means of expression, transformation with local artistic traditions, in particular, icon painting traditions or traditions of folk art, such as, for example, the group artists of the M. Boychuk school.

The first third of the 20th century in Ukraine was associated with activities of a whole generation of outstanding Ukrainian artists, whose names are well known not only in Ukraine, but also in the world. Among them are Oleksandr Arkhipenko, Kazimir Malevich, Volodymyr Tatlin, Vasyl Yermilov, David Burlyuk, Sonia Delaunay, Yakov Hnezdovsky and other masters born in Ukraine. Although Wassyl Kandinsky and Oleksandra Ekster were not born in Ukraine, their childhood and formative years were spent, respectively, in Odesa and Kyiv [2, p.137].

Abstraction, Suprematism, Cubism, Fauvism, Constructivism, Futurism, Cubofuturism and other directions of modernism took place with direct participation of Ukrainian artists. After all, a peculiar innovation of pictorial and formal artistic principles was often formed by them as a result of searches between discoveries of modernist art and national traditions. Analyzing the origins of national and international in formation of abstractionism and constructivism in context of Ukrainian art of modernism, the researcher of the Ukrainian modernism art Yulia Babunych convincingly traces how Ukrainian everyday life, cultural environment, ornamentation and plasticity of Ukrainian folk art, its colouristics become the basis for formation of new foundations of modern art. In particular, considering the creation of Kazimir Malevich's Suprematism and, among other things, his 'peasant period', she focuses on the following: «Impressions of colourful variety of Ukrainian folk art, peasant life, icon painting, wind-up dolls are poured into his «peasant» series of works of 1907–1912. These canvases testify to admiration for pure colours and simple artistic forms, to a special way of worldview of the master» [3, p. 22]. And then about the national character of Ukrainian constructivism, for which «...combination of rigid geometrism with ornamental and plastic motifs and traditional colouring of Ukrainian folklore is characteristic, which gave their work a unique national character...» [There the same].

It should be noted that exhibition «In the Eye of the Storm. Modernism in Ukraine» in the Belvedere Museum in Vienna (Austria), where outstanding artistic discoveries of Ukrainian avant-garde artists of modernism period, which

influenced the development of both Ukrainian and world art of the 20th century, were presented.

Analysis of theoretical works and texts of cultural figures of Ukrainian modernism, carried out by art critic Yulia Babunych, proves that the innovative possibilities of the modernism aesthetics in Ukraine were deeply rethought on a national basis and are used to renew the national outlook. In particular, revealing the essence of the theoretical processes taking place in Ukraine on example of activities of the monthly «Ukrainian House», the scientist notes: «Their discourse testified to intention to expand the framework of Ukrainian culture, to modernize it. The magazine published some translations of modern fiction and scientific works, which summarized the trend of reorientation of Ukrainian intellectual life» [4, p. 667].

The revolutionary events that took place at the beginning of the 20th century in the then Russian Empire forced artists to go abroad and develop their creativity in Europe. The centrifugal force of the world's art centres played not the least role. Respectively, before revolution of 1917, Ukrainian artists immersed themselves in artistic life of European cities, exhibited their works at European exhibitions, and received prestigious awards. In particular, they participated in the Venice Biennale almost from the beginning of its activity. For example, O. Murashko at the International Exhibition in Venice in 1910. In general, Ukrainians were able to present their artistic creations at European exhibitions until the beginning of the 1930s. So, from the beginning of the 20th century. and until the 1930s, Ukrainian artists actively explored the possibilities of modernism and avant-garde art. At the same time, many Ukrainian artists became famous in Europe already after emigration, and their work was not always connected with Ukraine in future. So, Ukrainian art has a grand background, famous names that changed the course of art at the world level.

Instead, since the 1930s, the USSR introduced the «iron curtain» policy, which blocked Ukrainian artists from any opportunities for cultural exchange. Strict censorship was established and the omnipotent power of the 'socialist realism' method was declared, which effectively stopped the development of modern forms of Ukrainian art, limiting it to academic forms and classical styles of past eras. In Ukraine, as well as in other republics of the former USSR, the method of 'socialist realism' was firmly planted starting from the 1930s. As a result, for many decades in a row, artistic creativity in Ukraine developed under pressure of normative canons

established by the totalitarian state. At that time, any formal experiments were rejected, innovative artistic searches were prohibited.

During the times of the USSR, Ukrainian art as part of the Soviet expositions was presented at international exhibitions, for example, at the Venice Biennale. In the context of the USSR's official policy of confrontation, such exhibitions exhibited well-known artists whose work either personified the achievements of the realist school, popularized Soviet values, or bore the imprint of the romantic spirit of the time. Despite this, Ukrainian art was able to declare itself as a bright, worthy phenomenon. Of course, only the chosen ones are lucky. For example, in 1956, T. Yablonska's classic work «Bread» (1949) was demonstrated.

The main requirement for creativity of the Soviet period was *academic principles and idealism of art, strong realistic traditions and templates*. But, despite this, in the middle and second half of the 20th century, Ukrainian artists were looking for ways to innovate within the limits of Soviet academic norms: they expanded realistic and plein-air techniques, they looked for opportunities for creative art research within the limits of the topics established by the authorities.

Respectively, it is possible to single out another special feature of Ukrainian art – its ideality, expansion of content with additional meanings, which are often encrypted in symbolic images or in structural-plastic solutions that require decoding and reading. The roots of this phenomenon go back to the Soviet times of the 1960s – 1970s, to the art of non-conformism, to the 'quiet' protest and experiments of artists in the times of total control over creative expression. According to researcher of Ukrainian non-conformism L. Smyrna, «non-conformism as a phenomenon of Ukrainian artistic culture focused on the search for intellectual content, on such meaningfulness of creativity, which was at odds with the stamps and methods of socialist realism» [13, p. 40]. This is where the complex semantic layering, symbolism, which «...has an intellectual-spiritual and deeply national character, imbued with the philosophy of religion and the essence of being...» [There the same]

At the end of the 1980s, in the domestic artistic environment, there was an experience of getting acquainted with some directions of postmodernism, in particular, conceptualism and trans-avant-garde. Integration of the latest forms into existing visual context of academism and realism prompted artists to actively update the visual tools of expression. Synthesis of such seemingly diverse

phenomena became a platform for the formation of original ways of Ukrainian art in the late 20th – early 21st centuries.

In the cultural life of Ukraine, the spread of postmodern aesthetics took place in the late 1980s – early 1990s. If we trace the line of the Ukrainian art development, which is based on certain aesthetic and semantic principles, then this, of course, is the «Ukrainian new wave» or «southern Ukrainian wave» is a Ukrainian post-modernist phenomenon of the late 1980s, which arose during the wave of «perestroika». The artists of the Ukrainian «trans-avant-garde» *built ideas for their works on a set of certain aesthetic and philosophical principles, on illogicality, skepticism and experimentation, which expanded the boundaries of knowledge and changed the focus of perception of reality*. Among its representatives are the current titans of Ukrainian conceptual art Arsen Savadov, Heorhiy Senchenko, Oleg Holosiy, Oleksandr Hnylytsky, Vasyl Tsagolov, Oleksandr Roitburd, Yurii Solomko and others. On the Ukrainian background, the cultural phenomenon acquired a characteristic politicization, which can also be outlined as one of the signs of national art. The 'icon' of the trans-avant-garde was the work of Arsen Savadov and Heorhiy Senchenko «Cleopatra's Sorrow» (1987), sold at the French art fair FIAC in 1987 for a record amount at that time. According to gallerist M. Gelman, the artists «...were definitely born in the Soviet Union – people of a different generation. They were attached to their artistic language, their school... If you were political, you had to either be a pro-government, pro-Soviet propagandist, or go to prison. That is why good Soviet artists tried to move away from any social theme or look for its very superficial, shallow aspects. And the best thing then was to turn to antiquity and talk about the connection with that period rather than about today...» [14].

Another vector of domestic art is generation of artists that formed at the end of the 1980s and developed various directions of pictorial visual language: from abstract painting to pictorial minimalism. Among them, the cult artistic association «Painting Reserve» with a programme of research into the possibilities of colour, texture and form in space, which arose at the turn of 1980-1990, should be singled out first of all. Its founder is Tiberii Silvashi, among the participants are Oleksandr Zhivotkov, Marko Geiko, Anatoly Kryvolap, Mykola Kryvenko and others. After a long period of strict censorship and socialist realism in art, 'thaw', 'stagnation' and 'perestroika', their creativity became 'a sip of fresh water'.

In general, this ‘plastic-painting’ vector can be correlated with the searches of Ukrainian avant-garde artists of the first third of the 20th century. Despite the fact that each of the masters works independently today, this direction is still successfully developing in Ukraine, and the works of the masters are actively exhibited in the world. For example, one of the most successful Ukrainian masters, Anatoliy Kryvolap, explores the possibilities of plasticity of colour.

It should be emphasized that Ukrainian artists of the Independence period are mostly active participants in cultural and artistic changes and respond to all important social changes. Since the history of Ukraine since Independence is a complex dynamic process of formation, full of heart-breaking jumps and falls, Ukrainian artists have become an integral part of this history, striving to reproduce the truth of life.

If we talk about young Ukrainian artists, the art of ‘great meanings’, philosophical reflections and purely Ukrainian issues in the period of the late 1990s – 2010s manifested itself rather in the images of the historical past, implementation of signs and symbols of ancient cultures, in particular, of Trypil, as well as in the form of plastic reflections of archaic forms or encoded expressions. Among them, we can mention Oksana Mas’s project «Post vs Proto-Renaissance» at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), created using modules of thousands of painted Easter eggs.

In the same period, a new generation of artists was formed in Ukraine, in whose work the ‘art of great content and ideas’ gave a way to the search for generalized creative ideas, better understood by the European audience. This was due to the fact that many young artists began to take part in international art residencies, where they received additional artistic impulses. They also had the opportunity to study at art schools and institutions in Europe. Gaining European experience in the creation of art, they transformed their language from academic foundations, with their thematic «significance and ideality» to modern visual forms. They wanted to integrate into the European art market, adapted to the conditions of the art business of other countries, immersing themselves in the contexts of European art.

But after Russia’s annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014 and Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war, everything changed – national identification became extremely important. Currently, the following trends can be traced in various forms in the work of young Ukrainian artists:

- vector of «great ideas and contents» associated with the academic school;

- vector of special sensuality and introspection, which gravitates to the visual language of Ukrainian nonconformists;

- vector of artistic forms and tools of abstractionism, the dominance of rhythm and pictorial plasticity, which is attributed to the reflections of the avant-garde;

- conceptual, spatial-installational and performative vector (the latter is almost not characteristic of Ukrainian art).

Today, Ukraine already has a powerful generation of artists known in Europe and the world, who are exhibited at the Venice Biennale, presented at world auctions, and exhibited in European museums. It is they who broadcast Ukrainian uniqueness to the world and raise important issues of national identification. As an example, we can cite Nikita Kadan’s project «Project of Ruins» (2019) at the Vienna Museum of Contemporary Art MUMOK, dedicated to the theme of the Soviet heritage and Russia’s war against Ukraine (installations, objects, drawings). In this project, Nikita Kadan researches contemporary socio-political events in Ukraine: the war in the east of Ukraine, decommunization. These processes have their origins in the Soviet Union, so the artist turns to the forms and monuments of those times and makes an attempt to highlight political paradoxes in Ukrainian art, to rethink the period of Ukrainian modernism and avant-garde art of the 1910s–1930s. In his research, Kadan turns to the biographies of avant-garde artists – Vasyl Yermilov and Ivan Kavaleridze [15].

It should be noted that, against the background of the modern visual practices development, Ukrainian art is still close to the art directions of European modernism of the beginning of the 20th century. In particular, post-impressionism and abstractionism are still relevant methods of work. Abstract art occupies a significant place in the modern Ukrainian artistic context, although, in general, there is still a tendency towards objectivity. Ukrainian artists concentrate much more on materiality and sensuality than on objectlessness and incorporeality. In particular, they are characterized by picturesqueness, melodiousness, special importance is attached to color. Artists turn to plasticity as a means of artistic expression, to work with textures. Radical expression is not characteristic, instead, softer forms of imagery dominate.

Conclusion. Undoubtedly, Ukrainian art in the world has a completely recognizable cultural footprint. It has a vivid history, important artistic discoveries that have significance in the

world context. On the one hand, Ukrainian art is strongly connected with achievements of artists of the academic school that developed in Ukraine starting from the end of the 19th century and develops to this day, having gone through a difficult path of trials and transformations as a result of the heart-breaking historical events of the 20th century. On the other hand, with the development of modernist art and the Ukrainian avant-garde in the first third of the 20th century. Achievements of Ukrainian modernist and avant-garde artists are still interpreted and explained by modern Ukrainian artists and are absolutely consistent with our turbulent times. Formal techniques and reflections, plastic solutions and colour combinations are embodied in modern compositions, updated and reinterpreted.

A special feature of Ukrainian art is its ideality, expansion of content with additional meanings,

which is often encrypted in symbolic images or revealed in structural and colour solutions. The roots of this phenomenon refer us to the Soviet times of the 1960s and 1970s, to the art of non-conformism, to 'silent' protest and experiments in the times of total control over artistic expression. Respectively, reflections and citations are an important component of postmodern aesthetics in Ukrainian contemporary art.

At the end of the 1980s, in our cultural environment, there was an experience of learning and integrating some directions of postmodernism, in particular, the art of conceptualism and trans-avant-garde. Synthesis of such seemingly diverse phenomena became a platform for the formation of original ways of Ukrainian art in the 20th – 21st centuries. The uniqueness of Ukrainian art lies in its synthetic nature, in the organic combination of strong academic traditions and innovation.

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