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ABSTRACTION IN THE FINE ARTS: EXPLORATION OF ODESSA

The paper is a study that comprehensively examines abstract artistic expression in the context of artistic culture of Odessa, it is analyzed the premise of the emergence, formation, and features of the manifestations of the abstraction in the fine arts of this South-Ukrainian cultural center. It is offered a new view of abstraction as a unique artistic form, based on universal cultural codes that operate from the past to the present. The methodological and theoretical concept of this research determined the complex approach and consisted in applying the system-analytical and comparative-historical method in the studied features of the development of abstract elements in the Fine Arts of Odessa's cultural and artistic region. It is provided objective representations and knowledge about the reliability of their properties, features, content, and dynamics of their development. In this context, the formal method used to analyze the artistic achievements of Odessa artists in the sphere of Abstract Art. The analysis of the processes of formation and manifestations of abstraction in the art practices of the Odessa region demonstrates a stylistic connection to the heritage of Ukrainian Folk Culture, Ancient Artistic Culture and is based on the assets of the Ukrainian Avant-Garde. It is noted the interdependence of spatial and temporal relations, having certain milestones of activation in development and conditioned by socio-political processes. Scientific novelty of the study consisted of a new view to abstraction as a transhistorical style of art, which expresses the centuries-old ethnocultural and artistic experience of generations. It is expanded the established inferences of domestic and foreign art studies, which connect it with manifestations of abstractionism as one of the directions of the art of modernism. Practical significance is due to the expansion and deepening of the theoretical and methodological basis for the scientific research of the modernization processes that take place in contemporary culture and the Non-Objective Art.

Key words: Cultural and Artistic center, Abstract Art, Sign, Abstraction, Art practice.

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АБСТРАКЦІЯ В ОБРАЗОТВОРЧОМУ МИСТЕЦТВІ: ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ОДЕСИ

У статті досліджено вияви абстракції як форми образотворчості в контексті художньої культури Одеси. Проводиться мистецтвознавчий аналіз передумов виникнення, становлення й особливостей її проявів в образотворчому мистецтві південного культурно-мистецького регіону України. Пропонується новий погляд на абстрактну образотворчість як на унікальну художню форму мистецтва, в основу якої покладено універсальні незмінні культурні коди, що константно відтворюються від минулого до сьогодення. Методологічна та теоретична концепція цього дослідження визначила комплексний підхід і полягала в застосуванні системно-аналітичного та порівняльно-історичного методу в досліджуваних особливостях розвитку абстрактних елементів в образотворчому мистецтві Одеського культурно-мистецького регіону. Це забезпечило об'єктивні уявлення та знання про унікальність їхніх властивостей, змісту, динаміку їхнього розвитку. У цьому контексті формальний метод використовується для аналізу мистецьких досягнень одеських художників у сфері абстрактних художніх практик. Аналіз процесів становлення та проявів образотворчої абстракції в мистецькій практиці Одещини демонструє стилістичний зв'язок зі спадщиною української народної художньої культури, стародавньої образотворчої культури та ґрунтується на надбаннях українського авангарду. Відзначається взаємозалежність просторових та часових відносин, що мають певні віхи активізації в розвитку й зумовлені суспільно-політичними процесами.

Наукова новизна дослідження полягає в новому погляді на абстракцію як на трансісторичну форму мистецтва, що транслює багатовіковий етнокультурний та художній досвід поколінь. Це розширює усталені умовиводи вітчизняного та закордонного мистецтвознавства, які пов'язують її із проявами абстракціонізму як одного з напрямів мистецтва модернізму. Теоретичне та практичне значення одержаних результатів може слугувати теоретико-методологічною основою для наукових досліджень процесів, що відбуваються в сучасній культурі та безпредметних мистецьких практиках.

Ключові слова: культурно-мистецький центр, абстрактне мистецтво, знак, абстракція, художня практика.

The relevance of the topic. Abstraction in fine arts as a form of artistic creation has come about since the appearance of primitive graphic elements, ornamentation, symbolic structure and it is an essential aspect of artistic culture. It was formed during the late Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Neolithic periods as abstract signs and it is the oldest manifestation of human artistic activity and the initial attempt of self-awareness and knowledge of the surrounding world. Subsequently, abstraction as a kind of fine culture is focusing on traditional elements of Ukrainian folk decorative art and acquired the further development of abstract signs and symbols in the system of Ukrainian symbolism. Archaic ornamental language from ancient times to this day demonstrates the continuous cultural connection of generations, and it is actualized the study of abstraction in contemporary fine arts in the context of the artistic culture of Ukraine. Odessa as a cultural and artistic center is one of the most influential centers of creative activity of Ukrainian artists, especially in the field of abstract artistic creation and this requires careful exploration.

Analysis of existing studies and publications. Abstraction in fine arts as an object of research and the phenomenon of the artistic culture studied in domestic and foreign art criticism was often associated with manifestations of the non-objective art: Supremacism, Abstract Expressionism, Neoplasticism, Orphism, Tachisme, which forms the phenomenon of abstractionism as one of the forms of fine arts of modernism.

The study of this problem in the context of the cultural and artistic life of Odessa conducted was noted by V. Basanets (Басанець, 2014: 1), Ye. Holubovskiy, O. Kotova (Котова, 2013: 3), A. Lichkovak (Личковак, 2009: 4), L. Medvedeva, O. Petrova, O. Savytska, V. Savchenko, V. Sydorenko, O. Tarasenko, O. Fedoruk (Федорук, 2014: 6), R. Yatsiv (Яців, 2006: 8) and others. However, the understanding of abstraction as a universal form of fine arts, which has undergone a complicated evolutionary path and it is provided the basis for studying the historical and aesthetic forms of its expression in the cultural and artistic center of Ukraine, where it has acquired extraordinary development.

The purpose of the article is an analyze the premise of the emergence, formation, and features

of the manifestations of the abstraction in the fine arts into the art space of Odessa.

Statement of the primary material. Odessa, as one of the leading centers of cultural and artistic life in Ukraine, declared itself at the beginning of the twentieth century with the activity of the avant-garde movement, which it is represented by V. Baranov-Rossine, D. Burluk, S. Delone, O. Ekster, V. Izdebskiy, V. Kandynskiy, V. Kruchenikh, V. Khlebnikov and others. At this time in the South region appear first community art and creative unions, including the "Society of South Russian Artists" (1890–1922), Salon of V. Izdebskiy (1909–1910), "Gilea" (1910–1913), "Association of Independent artists" (1916–1920), who practiced progressive philosophical ideas and a new vision of art forms (Dickerman, Affron, 2012: 9). In the future, the desire for creative freedom, the ability to generate artistic goals and objectives, as well as the propensity to unite the artists of the south will grow into a stable feature.

The aspiration of creative freedom characterizes the essence of the artists of the cultural and artistic center of Odessa. Despite the years of forced suspension of innovative activity, which was caused by the establishment and strengthening of Soviet power and the domination of the official trend in art: Socialist Realism, and for many years, it has stopped progressive quest. However, this gave an impetus to a revival in the 60's of the XX century among very young artists such as O. Anufriev, V. Strelnikov, V. Basanets, V. Bulanyi, V. Maryniuk, L. Yastreb, they then were students of the Odessa Art College named after M. Grekov. Subsequently, this activity becomes artists signs of a cultural and artistic phenomenon known as "Nonconformism of Odessa".

The modern search by artists of Odessa, as claimed O. Fedoruk: "It has always been distinguished by originality, uniqueness, naturally avant-garde character of creativity, maximalism and it was fed by the healing milk of the underground and the richness of the traditions of the artistic past, valued before mutual commitments and individual taste preferences that respond to the priorities of the development of the public" (Федорук, 2014: 6).

Nonconformism as a cultural and artistic phenomenon is understood as an antithesis to the ideological orientation of official Soviet art. The desire of artists to revive the heritage of the avant-garde movement

and combine them with European practices postmodern second half of the XX century was to find alternative forms of artistic manifestations and ideological fullness (Яків, 2006: 8). Instead, unlike the political orientation of Russian non-conformism, representatives of Odessa “underground” interested purely artistic problem. This is a search for new artistic techniques and artistic language. Instead, unlike the political orientation of the Russian non-conformism, Odessa artists were interested in experimental art problems. It is noted in the writings of O. Kotova as a phenomenon “more elitist than the mass, incomprehensible to the majority of the population, however, it was supported by a thin layer of intellectuals, kept within the style, forms with the aggravation of modernist and national features” (Котова, 2013: 3).

Thereby, the proximity to the aesthetics of modernism in the work of the Odessa artists is evident. In their artworks is underlined the exclusiveness, separation from the political context, the desire to renew the artistic form and originality, and most importantly, the aspiration to the conditionality and, as a consequence, open the way to abstraction.

I. Bozhko, O. Stovbur, V. Savchenko, V. Sad, V. Tsiupko, S. Yusym added to the group of artists of experimental art in the late 70's. This period, as noted V. Basanets: “It is determined high degree of creative tension” and is “the most heroic period in Odessa” (Басанець, 2014: 1). A new level of experimental research in the works of artists required a new space and level of reflection. The first experimental exhibitions are organized in the apartments of artists and their fans in Odessa, Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg), and as a traveling exhibition of Ukrainian authors in Munich, London, Paris and New York, which was the first breakthrough of the “Ukrainian underground” in the Western European cultural and artistic space.

It should be noted that the development of abstract art in the Odessa region, one of its ascents took place in the 80's, and characterized neo-folklore features. Particularly active experimental work took place in the field of monumental painting. According to V. Tsiupko: “This work becomes a powerful impetus for creative achievements, an invaluable laboratory of methods and forms of modern art, and the first free territory from the official Soviet art” (Цюпко, 2014: 7). Therefore, the artistic achievements of Odessa artists, whose works are characterized by various manifestations of abstraction in artistic creativity, require attention.

The independence of Ukraine (1991) provided a new start for the development of Odessa's artistic space. Hence, Odessa artists are gathered together in a creative association (“The Way”, 1990), which was based on the personal spiritual affinity and ideas of national

revival, and they seek to find new expressions of artistic form in primary cultural sources. The creative group of artists “The Way” in 1991 turns into a new alliance “Creative association of artists”. Subsequently, in 1992, this association became the gallery of contemporary art “The Boat”, where the core of the artistic community (V. Basanets, I. Bozhko, V. Maryniuk, S. Savchenko, V. Sad, M. Stepanov, O. Stovbur, V. Strelnykov, V. Tsiupko) in 1998 created the new informal group “Mamay”, which exists to this day (Модерністи Одеси, 2014: 5). In Odessa was formed a powerful center of abstract art practice as a consequence and contrary to the official prohibition of the Soviet political elite, and as a fact of confrontation and the desire for creative freedom, well-known outside of Ukraine. The creativity of members of this group of artists is as evident as possible represents the expression of abstraction in the fine arts in the specified region.

The basis of artistic images of creativity by S. Savchenko is an element similar to a circle, which has a direct identity to one of the main symbols of the Ukrainian folk-art culture – Easter egg. Understanding the meaning of this symbol is based on the archaic awareness of the egg as a “Sunbird”, like an anciently sacral sign of the triumph of life and its infinite rebirth. This element is the basis of the artist's paintings and sculptural compositions: “Counter form” (1998), “Theme” (2000), “The White Version of the XII” (2005), decorative sculpture (2004–2008), decorative objects “Tarakutsi” (2007–2009) and others. It is worth noting the dominance of the abstract linear sign of black and red, which is one of the essential elements of ornamentation of Ukrainian folk decorative art. This color combination has a sacred status, symbolizing the inextricable connection of the existence of the people with the bounties of the earth, which gives and supports life. The comparative analysis of creative works by S. Savchenko showed the affinity with Ukrainian folklore in the selection of colors and forms, and this confirms the apparent spatial and temporal unity of abstract elements.

Also, in the works of V. Maryniuk, the proximity to the visual component of Ukrainian folklore is observed. He bases his abstract paintings (“A composition with a red square” (1978), “The Squares” (2000), “The Composition with the Red” (2002), “The Squares” (2006), “Red with the Black” (2007)) on the foundation of the ornamental culture of folk decorative art, using the most commonly used geometric shapes (square, cross) and dominant colors (red and black on a white background).

V. Sad used different types of scratching on the surfaces of the paintings, and also puts concavities on some metal reliefs, as a method of artistic expression.

This demonstrated an artist's understanding of the connection between modernity and Paleolithic and Neolithic archaic. The oldest abstract sign is "cavities", a symbol of the sun and a sign of hunting activity, acquires new meaning in "Symphony of the Kalashnikov" (2001) and the reliefs "Untitled" (2006–2009). It gives to contemporary works of the timeless author significance, emphasizing the inextricable connection of generations, which is broadcasted through the ages by simple abstract elements of a geometric character.

S. Sokolov was a loyal supporter of the form of abstraction in fine arts, as claimed V. Basanets: "He was the first in the 50's of the XX century who engaged in modernist traditions in Odessa" (Басанець, 2014: 1). Also, he created on the platform of the Museum of Oriental and Western art the first personal exhibition of contemporary art. This artist was inclined to the synthesis of arts in the creative work, continuing experiments of the avant-garde and trying to combine color, rhythms and fonts. The central element of S. Sokolov's graphics is a line that has a symbolic load and is often supplemented by text comments. It should be noted that the images in the works of this artist resemble a system of codes. This is demonstrated by an attempt to create a peculiar message, taking into account the influence of the actual problems of that time like space exploration, where abstract signs serve as a universal means of information transfer.

The abstract works of O. Stovbur are characterized by coloristic restraint of the painting's method. The surfaces of the canvases are similar to sculptural carvings and have different textures. It is worth noting the identity of the directed vector of search work with the representative of the avant-garde movement K. Malevich, especially in experiments on the combination of simple geometric forms. The central element of the symbolic construction of the artist's levkas is an abstract sign of the cross. This is the most important iconographic symbol of Ukrainian artistic culture, which incorporates the ideas of the Christian worldview. Also, this is the oldest sign of awareness of the ancient human and a symbol of his connection with the outside world. The perpendicular combination of two lines, with the formation of a cross-shaped sign, represented on the bones of the mammoth, the walls of caves and ceramic products of the ancient time, it is preserved and is further developed in the ornamentation of Ukrainian folk culture. Now is used at the modern level in the works of the artist, demonstrating the spatial-temporal essence of abstraction in fine arts.

V. Strelnykov used in his compositions warm terracotta colors in combination with the rounded geometric ornamental forms. This visually related his abstract works with objects of culture Trypillya (the

series of works "Untitled", 2008–2011), reviving ancient sacral images.

The system of artistic images of a painting by S. Yusym is characterized by multi-levelness. The artist in her works "The Light of the Desert" (1995), "Copper and Stone" (1997), "Ashes and Flames" (2008) symbolically demonstrated a panorama of the Paleolithic and Neolithic visual heritage, as if calling to return to historical sources and foundations of true essence. In the paintings from the series "Autographs" (2000–2002), "Expression" (2008), "White on white" (2008) appear in graphic rhythms ancient petroglyphs. The author conducts an experiment, trying to find specific visual codes, the vibrations of which will find a real emotional response from modern viewers.

The problem of constructing individual abstract sign systems is actual in V. Tsiupko's creativity. Compositions of the author, filled with symbols, create the similarity of the mysterious alphabet ("Untitled 90" (1992), "Freefall" (2001), "Signs" (2011) and others) and reflect not a specific object, but an encrypted message. Abstraction geometric forms emphasize the active color system of paintings of the artist. The master's palette is based on the contrast of black and white, also he adds red, brown, green, yellow, blue, and it is embodied in the forms of the main elements of abstract meaning of the Ukrainian folk decorative art. These are the elements: "windows" (carved pattern of Bukovina, Podillya and Prykarpattia), "lattices" and "keys" (alternating rhombs and squares), "kryvulky" (spirals), "kryvonih" or "bez konechnyk" (spiral), "crosses" (the most ancient and most used sign), "svarha" (the symbol of the evolutionary movement). The artist using these elements consciously or subconsciously gives to artworks of timeless expressions. So, this confirms the opinion of the researcher V. Lychkovakh: "Things in the aesthetics of modern art act as linguistic signs, images, and symbols as visual carriers of the language of culture, they materialized the cultural, social and historical experience of mankind" (Личковах, 2009: 4).

The precise geometry is built up by the dynamics of signs and symbols in the abstract compositions by I. Bozhko: circles (ancient solar signs) and rectangles (ideograms of the sown field). The combination of these elements in the semiotics and mentality of crops, which has long been Ukraine, is the basic forms of the Universe (Дубрівна, 2017: 2). The author in the series of works "Planets" ("Misty Planets" (2007), "Planets" (2007), "Birth of the Planets" (2012) and others) divides the plane of the canvas into three horizontal segments. This means in most archaic cultures symbols of the structure of the world. This indicates dividing into the underworld, the visible world of living beings and the world of heaven. Also, the artist distinguishes between the four

vertical zones that correspond to the basic understanding of the structure of being (elements, sides of the world, seasons, etc.), and this gives the artworks of I. Bozhko a cosmic meaning in an attempt to cognize and reflect the essence of the being.

Conclusion. The artistic achievement of the Odessa region is a complex synthetic and systemic phenomenon characterized by extraordinary cohesiveness of artists. In the abstract art of the Odessa's cultural and artistic region, there is a stylistic connection to the heritage of Ukrainian folk culture and ancient culture, which manifests itself through the color and form in the artistic works as a construction of the modern artistic language.

The creative searches of Odessa's artists are based on redefined achievement of the Ukrainian avant-garde. There is an influence of postmodern aesthetics on the peculiarities of the Odessa's artistic center, which softens modernist maximalism, provides greater openness and directs of the vectors of activity

in the direction of intercultural interaction with the involvement in the world cultural and social space.

The activation of artistic work in the abstract art in the Odessa's cultural and artistic region took place: 10–20's of the XX century (a period of the European and Ukrainian avant-garde experiments); 60–80's of the XX century (stylistic tendencies of the phenomenon of non-conformism in the times of the USSR); 90's of the XX century (due to the receipt of Ukraine's state independence); from 2013 year to the present day (due to Euro-integration processes in Ukraine).

The abstraction in the fine art of Odessa manifests itself in universal forms: line, dot, cross, circle, square, triangle and their transformation. This demonstrates the global connection founded in the cultural and historical memory of generations. Abstraction as a form of fine arts is the first expression of human self-awareness, a symbol of connection with the Universe, sign of hereditary unity and for this time being actively used by contemporary artists to solve creative problems.

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