

## **Traditions and Innovations in the Art Culture of Russia at the Turn of the 20th–21st Centuries**

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### ABSTRACT.

Sociocultural situation at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries is determined by two main characteristics: globalization development and postmodernism advent. These phenomena are interdependent, on the one hand, by the fact that postmodern philosophy reflects the essence of post-industrial society (consumption, new technologies and communications society), on the other hand, in post-industrial society, culture takes over the economy: globalization introduces a new balance between economy and culture, as well as their integration into the world system, which exceeds the previous division and difference. T. Adorno has expressed the opinion that “we live in the time of cultural industry expansion, which becomes way more significant than production as a whole” (Kristofek, 2002). The problem of correlation between civilization and culture, traditional and popular art at the turn of 20th-21st centuries affects not only the relationship between art and economics, but also the problem of spirituality and artistry in humanitarian knowledge. Creativity in the 21st century is a challenge to the existing social, cultural and economic order. Creativity is considered as a system-forming element of a future culture; this definition forms the main ways of the civilization development. The comprehension of this problem is far from conclusion, because the development of it is under way in contemporary cultural studies and art history. The purpose of the article is to identify the spirituality’s role in traditional and popular culture in Russian artistic space on the basis of sociocultural situation analysis at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Keywords: mass culture, spirituality, criteria of artistry, tradition, province, ethnicity

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## Tradiciones e innovaciones en la cultura del arte de Rusia en el cambio de los siglos 20 y 21

### Resumen.

La situación sociocultural de principios del siglo XX y XXI está determinada por dos características principales: el desarrollo de la globalización y el advenimiento de la posmodernidad. Estos fenómenos son interdependientes, por un lado, por el hecho de que la filosofía posmoderna refleja la esencia de la sociedad postindustrial (consumo, nuevas tecnologías y sociedad de las comunicaciones), por otro lado, en la sociedad postindustrial, la cultura se apodera de la economía. : la globalización introduce un nuevo equilibrio entre economía y cultura, así como su integración en el sistema mundial, que supera la división anterior y la diferencia. T. Adorno ha expresado la opinión de que "vivimos en el momento de la expansión de la industria cultural, que se vuelve mucho más importante que la producción en su conjunto" (Kristofek, 2002). El problema de la correlación entre la civilización y la cultura, el arte tradicional y popular a finales del siglo XX y XXI afecta no solo la relación entre el arte y la economía, sino también el problema de la espiritualidad y el arte en el conocimiento humanitario. La creatividad en el siglo XXI es un desafío al orden social, cultural y económico existente. La creatividad es considerada como un elemento formador de sistema de una cultura futura; Esta definición forma las principales vías del desarrollo de la civilización. La comprensión de este problema está lejos de concluir, ya que su desarrollo está en curso en los estudios culturales contemporáneos y en la historia del arte. El propósito del artículo es identificar el papel de la espiritualidad en la cultura tradicional y popular en el espacio artístico ruso sobre la base del análisis de la situación sociocultural en los siglos XX y XXI.

Palabras clave: cultura de masas, espiritualidad, criterios de arte, tradición, provincia, etnicidad.

## 1 Introduction

At the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries the creators started using new sources of light, sound and color, unknown in the art before. One of the areas to apply multimedia technologies is the presentation of art works. Through the use of modern multimedia technologies, you can hear classical music, see masterpieces from the best museums' collections in the world, watch movies and theater productions, but mass production and reproduction of art works turn into the appearance of a standard in the material and spiritual spheres; this leads to the averaged aesthetic sense. Standardization of aesthetic sense contributes to averaging the level of art works. Art begins to obey the laws of the market, where the creation of art works depends on supply and demand, since the market forms the material basis for the development of artistic culture, influences the creation and existence of works of fine art, and the artistic life of the regions. There are fewer and fewer visitors in museums and philharmonic societies, whereas in contrast shows and blockbusters are gathering full houses. It is due to the fact that sensual expression and quick pleasure dominate in mass culture. It is difficult for a recipient to distinguish artistic from inartistic in art works, art from pseudo-art, traditional evaluation criteria no longer reflect the essence of works, and new ones are not completely formed yet.

The 20th century's Spanish culturologist J. Ortega y Gasset proposed the concept of elite and mass culture. Even in the Middle Ages, when society was divided into two social strata - the nobility and the plebeians - there was a noble art that was conditional, idealistic, that is, artistic, and the people's - realistic and satirical (Ortega y Gasset, 1991). Another modern thinker H.-G. Gadamer contemplates on the origin of the kitsch, "bad taste in art", related to the lowest layers of mass culture: "A person is able to hear only what he once heard, he does not want to listen to anything else (Gadamer, 1991).

## 2 Materials and Methods

The research concept includes the use of complex methodology for studying the problem of preserving spirituality and identifying the criteria for artistry in contemporary art. The main theoretical and methodological approaches are: historical-system, multifaceted. Conceptually important for the study are the works of foreign authors H.-G. Gadamer, J. Ortega y Gasset, K. Christophe, I. Grav, M. Baskara and local authors: T.M. Stepankaya, L.I. Nekhvyadovich, V.F. Chirkova, M.V. Davydenko. In these works, culture is considered as modern humanitarian knowledge's important element.

## 3 The Traditional Art's Role in the Conditions of Globalization

At the beginning of the 21st century, a work of art acquires the status of a special kind of product – a product of art, which is the result of the creative work of an artist. A cultural product is included in the category of special assortment goods, when the consumer makes efforts and uses means to purchase the product, based on the criteria of artistic merit.

The market of symbolic values turns out to be a particularly complex mechanism for regulation and management. Practical significance of product in it is replaced by aesthetic factors, which directly depend on fashion and public preferences; they are very difficult to predict. In this regard, the interest in this or that art project is formed artificially. The combination of the gift of foresight with the competent organization of the PR-company is the most effective means for finding your niche in the market of symbolic values. Since the 1990s, two strategies have been singled out among the strategies for the promotion of fine arts and artistic projects: "intellectual", which continues the philosophical search for the past and uses calm enough forms of expression of creative thought; "Shocking-epatage", featuring the boldness of presentation of an art project.

Artists and curators A. Osmolovsky, A. Breper, O. Kulik, A. Ter-Oganyan and others began to present the "shocking-epatage" strategy in the art of Russia. For them, the most important is not the idea they promote, but the memorable and original version of its embodiment. The main tool of such practices in this case is scandal – the easiest way to make a name for yourself. The first loud scandal is connected with the name of A. Osmolovsky, who became the founder and the leader of the art movement "ETA" (Expropriation of the Territory of Art – 1990-1992). A. Osmolovsky's projects are provocative actions aimed at opposing social norms and traditions. For a long time this was a part of his activity, but radical artistic actions gave way to quite traditional pictorial forms (an exhibition of decorative and interior abstract objects "How Political Positions Transform to Form" in the "Stella" gallery). The artist A. Osmolovsky explains the reason for these metamorphoses as follows: "In the 1990s, artists felt themselves more like political revolutionaries than like creators. In 2000, it became clear that it is impossible to be at once both harmonious as an artist, and effective as a politician. There was a choice: politics or art. I chose art" (Barabanov, 2008).

A. Brener, who was named "king of the scandal" among art critics, contributed to the promotion of the epatage strategy in the art culture of Russia. The nature of his actions (the emptying near the Van Gogh's Sunflowers in the Pushkin Museum, the challenge of President Yeltsin to a boxing match, the destruction

of the installation of the New York Chinese Venda Gu, woven from the donated hair of Swedish women at the Stockholm exhibition "Interpol", the application of a dollar sign with a green sprayer on the "The White Square" by Malevich in Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam) is beyond the permitted, which is confirmed by frequent arrests of the artist and categorical rejection, misunderstanding and even condemnation of his creativity by society. Nevertheless, the author gained world recognition and actively continues to function in the artistic community.

O. Kulik is given a special place among the representatives of the shocking-epatage trend. O. Kulik began his creative activity in the gallery "Regina", where the artist organized a series of exhibitions with a clearly innovative solution. He placed the paintings not on the walls, but in the hands of soldiers-supernumeraries; contributed to the organization of a public act of birth of a child, or, on the contrary, to the murder of a pig. Such an expression of artistic concepts brought to O. Kulik the fame of a scandalous artist and curator. The trend to shock impact on the audience, so popular in the 1990s, at the beginning of the 21st century in Russia is losing its positions.

The analysis of postmodernism, which has become a philosophy and aesthetics of cultural development in a postindustrial society, allows us to identify the special characteristics of fine art at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries:

1. The trend to erase the modernistic boundaries between high (elite) art and the so-called mass or commercial art (the populism phenomenon) (Jamison, 2001).
2. The predominance of visual patterns over verbal in the art as a reflection of the tendency that culture changes from verbal to visual and operates mainly with visual patterns and representations.
3. The eclectic style variety's predominance.
4. The tendency to lose integrity, globality, orderly systematism; instability phenomena domination, uncertainty, unusualness; the promotion of repetition and fragment.
5. The convergence of traditional types and genres of art, as well as the development of new synthesis trends based on the contradictory combination of traditions and style forms belonging to different cultures and periods: the manifestation of arts' synthesis as a tool for artistic mastery of reality in order to create an integral picture of the world.
6. Commercial art forms' active development, universal commercialization of art, cultural industries development, cultural entrepreneurship. The Dutch culturologist J. Huizinga, criticizing modern culture, believed that mechaniza

tion, the pursuit of effects and the emergence of art market led to a loss of the game principle and crisis phenomena in art.

7. Introduction of new forms of trade in the sphere of the art market: online auctions and electronic commerce (Chernyaeva, Stepankaya and Sino, 2016).

The historian of art and art critic I. Grav points out that gallery owners increasingly believe in the market, in commercial success, and not in art itself, as it has been quite recently (Grav, 2016). An example is the activity of contemporary art galleries in Russia, founded in the turn of the 21st century: the gallery "Fine Arts" (1992), the gallery "XL" (1993), "11.12 GALLERY" (2005), "Gallery 21" (2010), "Osnova Gallery" (2014), "Triangle Gallery" (2015), "ARTIS Gallery" (2017).

One of the first private galleries of contemporary art in Moscow, founded by V. Ovcharenko in 1990 in Moscow, was the art gallery "Regina Gallery". Since the mid-1990s, "Regina Gallery" has been a regular participant in international fairs, including Art Basel and Frieze. The gallery cooperates with the authors, interesting with their ideas and works on the world stage: V. Alimpiev, S. Bratkov, S. Zarva, P. Pepperstein, I. Chuikov, S. Faibisovich. Among the projects of the gallery, carried out in 2017 and reflecting current trends and innovative concepts in contemporary art, we will mention exhibitions of V. Alimpiev "Centimeter: a Color Segment of Darkness, Calculable Alga, the Same as Smoke" (painting), S. Bratkov's "The Empire of Dreams" (painting), S. Pakhomov's "Living Water", A. Kutovoy's project "Pour Into the Things" (painting, sculpture), E. Koshelev's exhibition "Palazzo Koshelev". The art of E. Koshelev stands out against the backdrop of the actual Russian art life in the fundamental non-observance of the generally accepted in the local community creative strategies. Regardless of the forms used, whether easel or monumental painting, graphics, objects or installations, E. Koshelev consistently and purposefully moves towards the creation of a special synthetic artistic space. Creativity of these artists organically fits into the rapidly developing cultural industry of the beginning of the 21st century. The measure of art commercialization in the metropolitan cities differs significantly from the regional, primarily the different balance of artistic forces and their greater concentration, in addition, this is due to the orientation toward Russian consumer who is able to purchase art works of high cost, to the Western market. The provincial consumer will certainly try to check his taste with the Moscow experts. Various existence conditions of regional and metropolitan modern art make impact in the entire local art

market.

Modern multimedia utilizing, computer technologies in the promotion of art works on the market, in creating the image of individual artists and art galleries contributes to erasing the boundaries between metropolitan and provincial contemporary art, but does not completely eliminate them. However, the art critic and curator V. F. Chirkov quite clearly demonstrates the process of art decentralization in Russia at the beginning of the 21st century and the acquisition of the status of regional cultural centers by the provincial cities (Chirkov, 2016). The evidence for this idea was All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference - IXth Siberian Art Criticism Readings "Innovative Practices in the Modern Art of Siberia: Galleries, Private and Corporate Collections, Collectors", which took place on 22nd-23rd March 2016 as part of a charity exhibition "100 artists of Siberia", dedicated to the 300th anniversary of Omsk.

During the process of contemporary art works' evaluation, the issue of artistry is extremely challenging. The problem of artistry is actively discussed in the field of literature, photo art, theater, cinema and fine arts. Most authors (V. A. Asatiani, O. A. Krivtsun, B. Denisov, V. I. Mil'don, V. V. Bychkov, M. V. Davydenko), "... discussing the problem of artistic quality, formulate the thesis that the artistic practice of modernity is much ahead of the theory ... the consequence of this is the reduction and erosion of the artistry criteria. The authors see the origins of this phenomenon in the specific features of the world and national culture development in the 21st century" (Davydenko, 2010).

Modern art is characterized by two main principles: the rejection of unified simplified models, a view of the world as a fragmentary multiplicity, where different models confront and compete among themselves; the idea that there are not stable, but complex, multidimensional dynamic models prevail in the world. Undoubtedly, mass culture has its positive moments: bringing sensual pleasure, entertaining, it gives the individual the opportunity to forget about his problems and to rest.

In the 21st century, Russia actively assimilates Western culture values, but its own folklore continues living – song, decorative, fairy, dancing; it lives and inspires professional composers, artists, poets, choreographers, folk artists. The attribute of continuity, cultural dialogue development, based on a simple model appeared in Siberia: the mutual transfer of cultural traditions. Artistic space is formed under the direct influence of nature, ethnographic environment, features of historical development, mythopoetic perception,

religious culture. Siberian artistic space is characterized by a diversity of ethnic, cultural and spiritual origins. Cultural and spiritual integration is a stable vector of Russian and regional culture development (Stepanskaya, Naumova and Chernyaeva, 2016).

Reliance on the national cultures' ethnic traditions became a specific tendency of artistic works at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries. Ethnocultural originality of Siberian art traditions was created under the conditions of natural and geographical environment uniqueness, the past commonness, multiethnicity, multireligious reality, mythology, folklore, arts and crafts patterns, a creative method as the complex of art reflection principles of ethnic world image in the fine arts (Nekhvyadovich, 2014). Modern ethnocultural science considers essential characteristics of Russian tradition through a prism of natural, geographical and sociocultural factors. It studies such components as an ethnic image of the world, a faith, Russian mentality, national character, national consciousness. The Russian ethnocultural tradition is defined as the mechanism of saving, development and transmission of Russian people's ethnocultural experience, as well as values created in historical development process.

An example is the enlightening activity of the "Universum" gallery (Altai Territory, Barnaul). Traditionally, the gallery hosts international exhibitions: photo exhibition "Dialogue of Worlds: Russia through the Eyes of Chinese Students, China Through the Eyes of Russians"; exhibition of the works of the artist Chen I., watercolors of Sino Guan – teacher of the University of Hubei (China). These exhibitions contribute to the mutual enrichment of cultures. In the halls of the galleries, the final qualification works are defended. The gallery is the organizer of the annual traditional exhibitions: "We Celebrate the Christmas Holiday", "Altai Masters" (an exhibition-competition for the awarding of the honorary title "People's Master of Altai"). Thus, the gallery educates the religious culture of students and the culture of historical memory. At the Christmas exhibition works of children from the centers of aesthetic education, schools of arts, Sunday schools from 35 districts of Altai territory are represented. These are watercolors, drawings, models, embroideries, beadwork, compositions from various materials on the themes of the Christmas holiday. Usually, more than 800 exhibits from 25 educational institutions and centers are presented. The Christmas exhibition attracts spectators – teachers, students, schoolchildren and their parents. It is here that the

audience is reminded that in Russian art there is folk art – Palekh, Khokhlova, Gzhel, weaving, ceramics, dolls. The traditional exhibition "Altai Masters" has educational and training character. The works of the masters from various regions of the Altai Territory are sent to this exhibition. The works are made by masters in a variety of techniques and traditions – patchwork, woodcarving, metal painting, willow wicker-work, and also folk musical instruments. Folk masters of the Altai Territory are the creators of studios, public organizations, which lead educational and creative activity for the revival and development of Russian folk crafts. Traditions are the soul of the people, in them the national notions of beauty, harmony, unity of nature and man are expressed, i.e. all that constitutes the spirituality of the individual and of the whole society.

Siberian artistic life experience, formed by the beginning of the 21st century, is very representative. The following things are indicative for it: stylistics abundance, a variety of galleries, the opening of higher and secondary professional institutions, various projects' implementation, publishing activities, the gradual formation of Siberian art criticism school (Stepanskaya and Chernyaeva, 2016).

According to the researcher U. Borev's opinion, "...art works that reflect issues, concerning people of different nationalities and different epochs, have the status of universal values, which allow great creations to preserve their value in the ages and to break through to the consciousness of people of a new era who have different value orientation. The beautiful is the main quality of true art work. Mastering the world and its phenomena according to the laws of beauty, the artist invariably evaluates them from the viewpoint of meaning for humanity. The all-human origin turns out to be in the groundwork of artistic creativity, which is humanistic and interethnic" (Borev, 1997).

#### 4 Conclusion

At a turn of the 20th – 21st centuries Russian architects, painters, sculptors, masters of different art types have had an opportunity to widely represent the creativity on various exposition platforms: showrooms, the high school cultural centers, exhibition platforms at libraries, the information youth centers, private art galleries. Expositions are formed on free democratic principles: the most important selection criterion of the work is an artistic image expressiveness. On Siberian exhibition platforms authors of different

styles represent the creativity, there are professional level decrease tendency and progradation of artistry criteria, that appear in the analysis of expositions. There are several reasons for that: lack of computer skills – this is important point because computer technologies actively influence traditional art; lack of an esthetic, moral, ideological comprehensive ideal; provincial rearrange; the conditions of chaotically forming art market compel artists to pander to buying preferences; erosion of classical criteria of artistry; noted by philosophers the tendency of changing mind under the influence of mechanization and “machine mind” towards aggression increase, estrangement from the nature and, as a result of it, formation of illusion about human self-sufficiency and domination over the world.

Thus, the socio-cultural situation in Russia at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries is defined as eclectic, mosaic and plural in form and content. Its keynotes are mass culture, polystylism, elements of the global computer and information society culture. Nevertheless, it is the traditional culture that determines the unique development of the region’s artistic space, it is the source of mutual enrichment of cultures and it shapes its spirituality. The role of art in the context of globalization is of great importance because of its general humanistic origin. People’s living conditions, their psychological stereotypes, customs are changing, but philosophical questions about human being and a person’s happiness stay the same; the search for harmony in people’s relationships, as well as in the relationship of the individual and society, goes on.

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