

UKRAINIAN NONCONFORMISM ROLE IN PRESERVING THE FOUNDATIONS OF FREE CREATIVITY

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Ukrainian graphic art may be just as well considered a part of the general art process of the “thaw” period. That time was a starting point for a number of young Ukrainian artists: Heorhiy Yakutovych, Serhiy Adamovych, Anatoliy Bazylevych, Oleksandr Danchenko, Igor Selivanov, Georgiy Malakov, Oleksandr Hubarev, Heorhiy Zubkovskiy, Volodymyr Kutkin, Natalia Lopukhova. Young Ukrainian artists sought to restore self-sufficiency and importance of graphic art, to make it independent from painting. For that reason they turned to the most characteristic graphic techniques — woodcut and especially linocut. Graphic art flourishing of the time was tightly connected to the book design renaissance. Besides that, a lot of common traits could be found between the works of Ukrainian graphic artists (in the first place Kyiv-based) from the late 1950s to early 1970s and films of Ukrainian poetic cinema. Such features are: special interest in figurative language, symbolic use of color and its no less symbolic absence, sharpness of characters. Ukrainian poetic cinema directors and graphic artists used a similar material — ethnographical or historical one — for their projects on. It is characteristic, that Ukrainian poetic cinema and book graphic design “intersect” on the one person — Heorhiy Yakutovych. The most typical works from the Ukrainian graphic arts rise peri-

od are: *Land* by Olha Kobylanska, illustrated by Serhiy Adamovych (1960), *Riders* by Yuriy Yanovsky, illustrated by Igor Selivanov (1961), *Tronka* by Oles Honchar, illustrated by Volodymyr Kutkin (1964), *Yaroslav the Wise* and *Svichka's Wedding* plays by Ivan Kocherha (1963), *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* short novel by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky (1965), illustrated by Heorhiy Yakutovych, as well as Kutkin's and Havrylenko's illustrations of the jubilee edition of *Kobzar* by Taras Shevchenko (1963), that, however, did not manage to become truly organic and consistent book edition. Oleksandr Danchenko, who illustrated *No End to Cossack Stock* novel by Oleksandr Ilchenko (1964), showed unique way of reforming book graphic design.

The most influential Nonconformism centers formed in traditionally most important Ukrainian cities, where art environment was the most concentrated and intense: Kyiv, Odessa, Lviv, Kharkiv. Nonconformist movement in each of these cities had its roots, history, specifics and most prominent representatives.

In Kyiv, ideological center of Ukraine at the time, worked such painters as Alla Horska, Veniamin Kushnir, Hryhoriy Havrylenko, Anatoliy Lymarev, Fedir Tetianych, Yakim Levich, Victor Zaretsky, Ivan Marchuk, Oleksandr Dubovyk, Fedosiy Humeniuk, Anatoliy Summar, Valeriy Lam-

akh and others. In Odessa there were: Vladimir Strelnikov, Alexander Anufriev, Lyudmila Yastreb, Victor Maryniuk, Valeriy Basanets, Valentin Khrushch, Stanislav Sychov, Oleg Sokolov etc. In Lviv: Roman and Margit Selsky, Karlo Zvirynsky, Yevhen Lysyk, Ivan Ostafiychuk, Roman Petruk. In Uzhgorod: Yelyzaveta Kremnytska, Fedir Manailo; Volodymyr Makarenko in Dnipropetrovsk. Among other art categories, innovations could be seen in literature (Hryhir Tiutiunnyk, Yevhen Hutsalo, Ivan Drach, Borys Necherda, Lina Kostenko, Vasyly Stus), in theatre (Danylo Lider, Mykola Ivanytskyi), in music (Volodymyr Huba, Valentyn Sylvestrov, Yevhen Stankovych, Vitaliy Hodziatsky), in filmmaking (Serhiy Paradzhanov, Kira Muratova, Yuriy Illyenko), in choreography (Serge Lifar), where stage image emerges from the arts synthesis: soundtrack, literary and visual allusions.

Meanwhile, in the Western world more revolutionary neo-modernistic forms of art developed. Neo-avant-garde includes expressive abstraction, pop art, auto-destructive art, the idea of the total artwork, conceptual art, "death of the author" idea.

Obviously, Nonconformist environment was not homogeneous, though we study them in the same context. Everyone had his own way, however, they were united by rejection of official art, artificially narrowed in its development and one-track, they disapproved the dogmas, hampering creative work. Some artists (Valeriy Lamakh, Anatoliy Summar, Hryhorii Havrylenko), drifting away from socialist realism, immersed into the search for forms and colors and turned to abstractions. Others (Alla Horska, Veniamin Kushnir) were also involved into the dissident movement and sensed the spirit of national liberation and creative revival.

For instance, Kyiv-based monumental artists Valeriy Lamakh, Ernest Kotkov, Ivan Lytovchenko due to their education and professional background (and therefore the need in direct contact with architectural environment) repeatedly solved

a problem of increasing the expressiveness of local colors, free operating of the abstract spots, contrasting colors and harmonizing them. Painting works by Valeriy Lamakh of the 1960s strike with the outright "anti-figurativeness", powerful inner energy and archetypic orientation on the European Expressionism.

Anatoliy Summar, who received architectural education (alike one of the first Nonconformists Florian Yuryev), have been severely criticized as abstract artist. His works were marked with high culture of combining deep reserved colors, rhythmical sense of geometric spots (that is characteristic of folk art). Later on Summar renounced of commissions and after traditional for that time accusation in formalism, was forced to express his creativity in designing toys.

The name of Hryhorii Havrylenko had been erased from the pages of the history of art of Soviet Ukraine. He was an artist with a special gift, deeply sensitive colorist, master of daring experiments and Nonconformist of principle. Enduring political pressure, he nevertheless studied the European visual culture progress on his own, like many other artists did. Today it may be stated with every reason, that Nonconformist artists, living in almost complete isolation, continued to work in the context of global art.

In the late 1962 authorities started another stage of fighting against formalists and modernists. In Ukraine this stage resulted in a string of repressions and arrests, Ivan Svitlychny was imprisoned. And in 1964 governing body of the Taras Shevchenko University in one night destroyed the stained-glass window, created by celebrated artist Alla Horska along with Opanas Zalyvaka, Halyna Sevruk and Liudmyla Semykina. The well-known paned bore an inscription from Shevchenko's verse, "I shall glorify these small dumb slaves, / I shall put the word on guard beside them". Horska and her peers worked day and night to be on time to Shevchenko's jubilee. However, the governing body of the university considered Shevchenko on the panel to seem like

behind bars, that assumed Ukraine being suppressed. Mentioning small dumb slaves was as well offensive to authorities. What is left of the panel are its photos, paintings, sketches, and the panel itself became legendary.

Unique murals of the *Khreshatyi Yar* café in Kyiv, performed by Borys Plakhsy, were equally ill-fated. The café was a meeting place for young aspiring authors and artists, therefore depicting main stages of the city history seemed appropriate. Nevertheless, the artwork, not fitting the limitations, set by the party leaders, had been destroyed in a barbarian manner.

Victor Zaretsky, Alla Horska and Borys Plakhsy created wall paintings of the Kyiv restaurants *Poltava* and *Vitriak* (Windmill) in ethnographical-modernist manner. Alla Horska in her letter to the New York-based peer Liuboslav Hutsaliuk wrote, "These buildings stand between the past and the present. Closer to the past. In our works we sought contemporarity in colors, plasticity, composition. Main thing we wanted is to have a look on the world as Svetovid idol did, in the four directions simultaneously."

On November 28, 1970 Alla Horska left home for the last time. Several days later she was found murdered under suspicious circumstances. To this time it remains unclear, what really happened. Many blamed authorities, as Horska had been uncompromising in everything, a symbol of unbowed Ukraine, as Les Tanyuk said. It was she, who in 1967 went to Lviv for Viacheslav Chornovil's trial and during the court proceedings along with other activists and cultural figures from Kyiv protested against the series of intelligentsia arrests, carried out in Ukraine at that time. It was she, who sent a joint letter (along with Lina Kostenko, Ivan Dziuba, Yevhen Sverstyuk and Victor Nekrasov) to the *Literaturna Ukrayina* (Literary Ukraine) newspaper, regarding allegations in Oleksiy Poltoratskyi's slander article against Ukrainian cultural activists. It was she, who supported dissident historian Valentyn Moroz. When she was summoned for interroga-

tion to Ivano-Frankivsk, she refused to testify against him and afterwards submitted a protest to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic Supreme Court, stating unlawfulness and savageness of the sentence. This extraordinary woman had been ranked high among the dissident Sixtiers movement, along with the army commander Petro Hryhorenko, poets Vasyl Stus and Yuriy Lytvyn, teacher Oleksa Tykhyi, journalist Valeriy Marchenko.

Since 1965 arrests of Ukrainian creative intelligentsia had started. Horyn brothers, Opanas Zalyvakha, Mykhailo Osadchy were imprisoned. Painter Veniamin Kushnir in the space of his apartment created the *Scherzo* painting (colloquially known among acquaintances under the speaking title *Raped Ukraine*), in which he abstractly reproduced the fate of his defenseless homeland against aggressive and brutal inroad of savage outsiders and turncoats. Dark colors and sharp broken lines dominate the painting. Another symbolic artwork of the time — *Self-Portrait with the Candle* — pictures the artist barefoot, shirt worn outside trousers, protecting a trebling flame of the candle with his left hand. His figure is set against faceless human mass, carrying string bags (typical for the Soviet times) with groceries and toilet paper. The artist's posture suggests some Diogenes allusions, who had searched for a person in Athens, carrying a lamp in a full daylight. Around that time Kushnir creates one of his finest works *Kobza*. Andriy Okhrimovych wrote about the artwork, "Compactly sculptured kobzar's silhouette on the foreground and almost ghost-like Cossak rushing cavalry, painted in red, creates sensation of irreality, mystic effect. Horses from the *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* by Serhiy Paradzhanov come to mind. It is not unlikely, that these horses image emerged under some Kushir's influence, as the director was often guest to his studio."

A special place in Kyiv art environment holds a figure of Oleksandr Dubovyk. His artworks feature is unique ability to balance on the edge of

abstract and specific, of themelessness and association to certain themes and images. Halyna Skliarenko in the foreword to Dubovyk's catalogue (1996) characterizes his creative manner in such way, "In his works bold decorativeness and intellectuality, constructive structure and emotionality, "narrativity" and tendency for generalization of a sign are strangely combined. His works balance between figurative and non-figurative art, as they reproduce too much generalized, however real impressions, contain indirect repercussions of life events. His trademark stylistics, that he has been polishing for decades, does not rule out ironic eclecticism, typical to Transavantgarde, present in his works as a very creative idea, not the formal realization." This reveals another trait of many Ukrainian Nonconformist artists. Mostly they did not tend to stick to a certain avant-garde or postmodernist trend, trying instead to synthesize them, receiving new qualities from that. By these means a new way to creating original art values have been trailed.

A prominent phenomenon in Ukrainian cultural environment of the second half of the 20th century are artworks by Ivan Marchuk. In his creative work experiments organically combine with loyalty to national theme, to the constantly experienced tragedy of his nation. His *Shevchenkiana* series of paintings, with original emotional solution, undoubtedly, is an art supplement to scientific and historic context of Kobzar's studies.

Evaluating Nonconformism as a phenomenon, diversity of its expressions should be noted. Other features are large number of striking personalities and at the same time complete lack of definite groups or organizational structures. Such situation had been caused by the need in high level of secrecy for the oppressed art environment in Ukraine. Thus loners felt much more comfortable in such circumstances.

Odessa was particularly rich on Nonconformist artists for a number of reasons. Among them are historical specifics of the city that formed its creative environment, its geographic location

and importance for the cultural and art processes. Many world-class artists had links to Odessa, like Wassily Kandinsky, David Burliuk, Mykhailo Boychuk. Kiriak Kostandi founded the South Russian School of Painting there, that was alternative to Saint-Petersburg School. Influence of avant-garde traditions of the early 20th century have been intense in the city. Famous *Izdebskiy salons* repeatedly hosted the artworks of the globally renowned painters.

Odessa art environment always felt more free than in other cities, therefore artists grouped around certain figures. The term "Odessa School of Art" emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s thanks to Yuriy Yegorov. He formed the core of the group, that went underground from the start. Further Nonconformism development is associated with Vladimir Strelnikov and Alexander Anufriev. Their position, alike the position of the fellow artist Valentin Khrushch, is to a considerable degree defined by the educational talent of Vasyl Zaichenko, who had been their teacher at the art school. Characteristic fact of the time: Khrushch was expelled from the art school only for bringing Matisse and Picasso reproductions to the classes.

Odessa Nonconformist group, that unlike the Kyiv one was not politically involved, was complemented by Lyudmila Yastreb, Victor Maryniuk and Valeriy Basanets. Community of interests eased existence in ideologically controlled art world and added self-confidence. For instance, Alexander Anufriev mentioned, that without friendly support they would not have survived. In the Nonconformist circles tradition of so-called "apartment-exhibitions" had formed (eyewitnesses recollect, that in Odessa it had been started by Oleg Sokolov, the "first abstract artist" of the city). Characteristic was the fact of organizing a "fence exhibition", entitled *Sychik + Khrushchik* (referring to Stanislav Sychov and Valentin Khrushch) in 1966 (long before the well-known Moscow *Bulldozer Exhibition* in September 1974).

Odessa group have been gradually joined by

new artists. Its meeting places was often visited by students of art schools: Volodymyr Tsiupko, Oleg Voloshynov, Moisey Cheresnya. Since the late 1960s and till the early 1970s Nonconformist community had been truly powerful and united over thirty people. Among them were: Valeriy Basanets, Ivan Bozhko, Oleg Voloshynov, Nikolay Gaiduk, Lucien Dulfan, Yuriy Kovalenko, Mykhailo Kovalskyi, Ruslan Makoev, Victor Maryniuk, Mykola Matusevych, Lev Mezherberg, Vladimir Naumets, Yosef Ostrovsky, Yevgeni Rakhmanin, Victor Risovich, Oleksandr Richter, Vitaliy Sazonov, Mykola Stepanov, Aleksander Stovbur, Volodymyr Tsiupko, Moisey Cheresnya, Yuri Shurevich.

Nonconformists' activity caused emergence of the opposition wing in the local Union of Artists cell. It was this "left wing" support that helped to set up a group exhibition of Vladimir Strelnikov, Victor Maryniuk, Stanislav Sychov and Lucien Dulfan at the exhibition halls of the Union of Artists building in 1971.

The 1970s were the time, when relations between Odessa school of art and Moscow Lianozovo group established. Nonconformists initiated contacts with foreign diplomats and reporters, who were potential popularizers and buyers of their works. For example, one of the exhibits, mounted at the apartment of Moscow-based collector, was the first chance to present unofficial Ukrainian art outside Ukraine. Likewise, second such exhibition was held in spring of 1976, presenting works by Vladimir Strelnikov, Alexander Anufriev, Valeriy Basanets, Victor Maryniuk, Valentin Khrushch, Vladimir Naumets, Volodymyr Tsiupko.

Activity of a big Nonconformist group inevitably drew attention of the secret service. And consequences were fast to come. Vladimir Strelnikov and Alexander Anufriev were forced out of the country. In some time Vitaliy Sazonov also left the city; Valentin Khrushch moved to Moscow, as well as some young artist in the mid-1980s. There they created their own *Eau-de-Cologne*

group (in Ukrainian and Russian *Odekolon* is a homonymous contraction for *Odessa + colony*).

In 1981 a gifted abstract painter Lyudmila Yastreb departed. Her death was irreparable loss to Odessa art community. Yuriy Yegorov has called her "radiant". Indeed, her works radiate soft, tender light, that transforms everything—bodies, objects, spatial distances—into luminous cascades. *Grand Cascade* was her major work of these years. Odessa non-figurativeness of the 1970s and 1980s generally cascades with bright metaphors, Alexander Grin-like seaside carnival. Lyudmila Yastreb's artworks deeply reflect Odessa painting school typical features. Brightness, openness and ease, that dominated the works of the majority of local Nonconformists, served some kind of confirmation of their irrepressible life energy and faith, contrasting dramatically to the dimness of the era.

In spite of obvious losses, Odessa Nonconformist group stuck together. Victor Maryniuk, Valeriy Basanets and Volodymyr Tsiupko stayed in touch. Then they were contacted by Yevgeni Rakhmanin, Oleg Voloshynov, later — by Mykola Stepanov and Sergei Savchenko. According to Maryniuk's recollections, the core of the group were close friends, united by the same life values and plastic ideas. This group's backbone preserved great creative potential, cemented the group, helped to maintain significant position in culture and art through the 1980s.

Amid the power system slow disintegration dynamic art processes started in Odessa. The newly-created *Mamay* group (replaced with the *Choven* (Boat) group in 1998) united nine artists: Vladimir Strelnikov, Victor Maryniuk, Valeriy Basanets, Volodymyr Tsiupko, Aleksander Stovbur, Sergei Savchenko, Vasily Sad, Ivan Bozhko and Mykola Stepanov. Expatriate artists showed keen interest in the positive changes. For instance, Vladimir Strelnikov expressed deep concern for the homeland's fate, being in Germany, and wanted to do what was within his powers to support Ukrainian art, that entered European art scene.

Foundations of Nonconformism in Lviv were set by those few renowned creative personalities that had not emigrated west in the post-war times and stayed in the city. Their wise and balanced position united local artists, being a source and nourishment for the long-going opposition to official art. Unlike other art centers, socialist realism ideas were not popular in Lviv at all. After founding of the Lviv State Institute of Applied and Decorative Art, among the very few local professors invited to teach there versus mostly outsider teaching staff, were well-known artists Roman Selsky and his disciple Karlo Zvirynsky, who unofficially united creative youth.

Roman and Margit Selsky, the former members of famous avant-garde *Artes* group, pupils of the celebrated Fernand Léger, were adherents of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, experimented with the newest trends of the time. Being on friendly terms not only with artists, but with writers, photographers, musicians, scientists as well, they hosted them in their apartment for many years. Selsky family was often visited by such acclaimed artists as Roman Turyn, Leopold Levytsky, Danylo Dovboshynskiy, Vitold Manastytsky, Karlo Zvirynsky, Volodymyr Patyk, Volodymyr Rybotytsky, Mykola Shymchuk etc. Active exchange of opinions, recollections of renowned masters, who saw unique museum collections with their own eyes, visited the best European art schools and personally knew celebrated artists, helped to cast away sensation of depressing isolation from the outside world. Not all of Selsky's guests definitely could be considered Nonconformists, however their involvement in the phenomenon was obvious.

Karlo Zvirynsky was one of the most consistent Roman Selsky's pupils, though his passion for Impressionism and Post-Impressionism did not last long. The artist's sensible soul had been disturbed by dramatic live events, hypocrisy, insidiousness and insincerity that dominated everything. At certain point he consciously stopped depicting persons in his paintings. Instead he animat-

ed things, objects, decorative compositions that were quite complicated and verified to the smallest details. In the artist's paintings his unique, deep symbolism of color spots takes the main place, along with the sophisticated tonal comparison and unexpected texture effects.

Teaching activity in the Institute had been integral part of Zvirynsky's life. He fulfilled an idea to organize a study group for young peers, his own school. It gathered in the evenings at Zvirynsky's apartment. Selection criteria were simple: besides skill, moral qualities mattered. Later students assembled personal and group exhibitions in their apartments, organized discussions. Working together, young artists reached professionalism, experimented fearlessly, searching for new expressive means. Zenoviy Flinta recalled, that Zvirynsky's school became an integral part of his pupils' lives, a guiding star in art styles and movements, that helped to endure painful dissatisfaction in reality. Zvirynsky's pupils were the artists, now widely acclaimed in contemporary Ukrainian art: Andriy Bokotey, Bohdan Halytskyi, Lesia Tsehelska-Krypiakevych, Petro Markovych, Ivan Marchuk, Oleg Minko, Roman Petruk, Bohdan Soyka, Zenoviy Flinta, Stefaniya Shabaturova.

Mass transition to decorative and applied art was organic for Lviv artists; similar processes happened in other former Soviet republics as well. Using expression and symbols, typical for folk art, they moved closer to the form generating features of the Western European contemporary art.

For a more detailed survey of Lviv Nonconformism I will briefly characterize only three artists of different age, whose position always was uncompromising: Yevhen Lysyk, Roman Petruk and Vasyl Bazhai.

Yevhen Lysyk's problems with authorities had started, when he studied in the institute. His aversion to accept socialist realism foundations ended up in accusations in Formalism and expulsion due to "poor results". Lysyk's compositions are

pictorial, figurative, however free of tending to any external effects. The author accentuates inner emotions, urging a viewer for empathy. His unique gift to create a sense of monumentality in every, even the tiniest, picture or sketch, to penetrate though space, were later on logically concluded in Lysyk's long-term and prolific work as a stage designer.

Another unique personality is Roman Petruk. His expressive means and visibly dominating expressionist intentions are similar of Lysyk's. From the flatness of paper or canvas they transform into three-dimensional forms, acquiring unimitable individual characteristics. Inner life, dynamic elements of texture that manifest themselves on a surface out of the general mass, are typical to the artist's sculptures. Petruk works in ceramics, wood, plaster or broze with equal success. He consciously stayed out of official limelight and destroyed his works in minutes of despair. Only nowadays he received well-deserved acclaim and possibilities for the best display of his talent.

Vasyl Bazhai consistently adhered to Abstractionism foundations. The first time he had a chance to present his works was a personal exhibition in 1989. Later on he experimented with deeper philosophic comprehension of his projects, accompanying painting with installations and performance art.

Nonconformism manifestations in Kharkiv were totally dissimilar to the ones in other cities. As official art for over three decades had been closely watched by unchanging governing body of the local Union of Artists, fine art also showed signs of stagnation and "loyalty" to socialist realism positions. Avant-garde views and outstanding achievements of the renowned artists (e.g. internationally acclaimed Vasyl Yermilov, who was expelled from the Union of Artists for formalist activity, and his followers) became things of the past. The Khrushchev Thaw period inspired Yermilov to broaden his monumentalism palette in architecture (for instance, his

mosaic stylisation of the sainthood, various mosaic panels). He took his artistic concepts with him from the 1920s into the 1960s, creating abstract compositions. Obviously, his original projects did not pass the authorities' censorship. One of such projects was Monument to Lenin's era at Dzerzhinsky square in Kharkiv. In the previous years he decorated this square for many occasions; therefore he perfectly knew what was needed there. However, all formal applications were fruitless. Yermilov also worked on the Picasso monument project, sending his work past the deadline. Despite being late, he received positive answer for his application. This time his death prevented him from fulfilling his project; his sketch papers for the monument were later simply thrown away as a trash.

Another celebrated artist of the Ukrainian avant-garde period, along with Yermilov, was Boris Kosarev, who was still teaching. He had a lot in common with Yermilov, even their studios were adjacent. I was incredibly lucky to be his pupil. Spanning a time bridge between avant-garde and contemporary time, he fulfilled himself in his pupils, who generally worked in set design. The studying process turned into fascinating creative experiment with him, workmanship became mastery. For instance, he offered to find one hundred tones of white in different materials, including paper. And routine intarsia presented as a search for lines, colors, examination of wood texture. If the lesson's topic was portrait, he generally surveyed drawing in the art history, giving a detailed review of a portrait later. Kosarev's activity was truly manifold, breadth of his thinking astonished. He created numerous theatre set designs, saw Oleksandr Dovzhenko's film shootings, personally knew many film and theatre personalities, documented many historic moments on film.

He cultivated interest to photography and to other forms of depicting reality. He often used to say, that photo camera allows getting an illusional, though fixed, image of the world; mean-

while artist always stays free for self-expression. After such guidelines it was easy for us, his students, to turn to any form of visual art: set design, exhibition setting up, painting, photography.

Much later, I asked him as a friend about how he managed to survive under immense pressure and leveling of creativity; how he escaped ideological control. He told me, that after being awarded with the Stalin Prize, he had been implicated into admitting some “counter-revolutionary” activity. Sitting in the investigative authorities’ office, he had thought of nothing else but to turn to artistic device. Clockwise, like drawing a sun, he wrote three words: Stalin Prize winner, Stalin Prize winner etc. It made the trick, he escaped further interrogations that way and did not become a mouthpiece of socialist realism.

Thus, Kharkiv have always been a center for experimental art. Panel painting and industrial art surprisingly combined there. So there was no coincidence that Kharkiv Art Institute was reformed into Kharkiv Art and Industry Institute, nowadays being Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts. Many artists turned to graphic art, where they felt free to experiment with forms. Kharkiv graphic art was in its bloom in mid-1970s; presenting its achievements at the themed Moscow exhibition in 1973. Wide circle of professionals of the former USSR learned the names of Evgeny Jolos-Solovyov, Volodymyr Nenado, Oleksandr Martynets and others. Young artists grouped around such well-known personalities, as Vitaliy Kulikov and Vitaliy Lenchin (who had a studio in the local House of Architects).

In the situation of severe control the breakthrough have been made in a sphere, organizationally independent from the Union of Artists — in photography art. The situation with photography art had been in fact quite paradoxical. According to socialist realism guidelines, photography should seemingly be considered close to realistic reproduction of the world. Totalitarian system, though, did not need depicting true reality of social surroundings and everyday living con-

ditions, the more so with a camera of curious and emotional photographic artist. Photography could not create illusion, form “commissioned” images, so much needed by the regime.

Besides, photography appeared along with Modernism and was part of many processes, happening during the early 20th century. Photography caused some avant-garde experiments, as well as some changes in artistic perception: plain documentation combined with extensive media use and staged photography.

In 1929 in Stuttgart, Germany, landmark *Film und Foto* exhibition took place, presenting a wide range of international photographic practices and defining the increase of the role of photography in the 20th century. It marked new critical theory and historiography of surrounding environment and life events. Later Cindy Sherman shot a series of self-portraits in different positions and conditions. Each of the portraits consisted of fifty film stills, that created generalized image of the author: career girl, maid, hysteric woman etc. Critics, like Douglas Crimp, used these images to build their post-structuralist theories of authorship identification, originality, uniqueness. In the 1950s and 1960s Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes considered Sherman’s mirror reflection photographs as an example of a “death of the author”. Sherrie Levine re-photographed the works by Walker Evans, Edward Weston and Eliot Porter, presenting the photos as her own artwork and raising piracy issues towards the original artworks.

Thus, photography granted inexhaustible means for various experimental research, for developing art and other newest art trends on its basis. In the former USSR development of photography art has been almost completely blocked. Well-known photography schools ceased to exist after the revolution. For instance, pre-war Lviv had been a powerful photography center; local Art and Industrial School had a special department of photography. During the Soviet times photography as an art category completely vanished in the city.

Nevertheless, photographic art in Ukraine revived from time to time, e.g. in Kharkiv that has always been a unique city within Ukraine. Nonconformist energy concentrated there around photography art. The *Chas* group emerged back in the 1970s, uniting many photographers, who gained acclaim later on: Oleg Malyovany, Yevhen Pavlov, Vicot Kochetov, Alexander Sitnichenko. The photo series that should be noted are: *Gravity* by Malyovany, *Construction Battalion* by Sitnichenko, *Beautiful* and *Sweet* slide film series by Boris Mikhailov. The language of “live” photography has been used for speaking of aesthetic categories for the first time.

Boris Mikhailov, a world-renowned photographer, stands out of this list. He tends to search for daring image moves, seeks solving complicated, emotionally many-sided themes. The main object of his interest is human body, born harmonious and perfect, that in time gets wrecked and deformed by living conditions and way of life, by certain social and everyday life factors. A fight with post-totalitarian syndromes, with the rudiments, hidden deep in unconsciousness, in body and thoughts dominates his artworks. Turning to photography, he experiments in this field: for instance his *Luriki* series are coloured photograpgs.

In other Ukrainian cities there also were noted Nonconformist photographers, e.g. Andriy Antoniuk from Mykolaiv or Feodosiy Humeniuk, who had ties to Dnipropetrovsk and Saint-Petersburg (now lives and works in Kyiv). Their creative work, like the one of fellow Nonconformists, is marked with striking individuality. Meanwhile, artists' experiments of the 1970s and 1980s are representative, as they were based on organic unity of Ukrainian folk art traditions and Ukrainian avant-garde. For instance, in Humeniuk's works Mykhailo Boychuk's and Heorhiy Narbut's influence could be noted, as well as careful study of Cubism and Russian avant-garde (e.g. Humeniuk's methods of compositional occupancy of the canvas surface and aesthetic evaluation of the details “completance”). Constructivism in

structuring the artwork and romantic tendencies in interpreting the past became more visible after Humeniuk had studied achievements of Pavel Filonov and Kazimir Malevich.

So, the Nonconformist art movement was an organic cultural phenomenon, caused by radical social and political changes and induced deformations of established art concepts. The achievements of the movement could hardly be overestimated: due to their work Ukrainian art preserved foundations of free creativity and high potential energy for further progress. Nonconformism became a source for many other art processes, happening in contemporary art now. It had been a bridge, that spanned avant-garde of the early 20th century and modernism of the 1960s–1980s. Many avant-garde and early modernist artists were teachers of Nonconformists artists: e.g. for Vagrigh Bakhchanyan it was Vasyl Yermilov, for Pavlo Bedzir — Ernest Kondratovich, for Oleg Sokolov — Teofil Fraerman, for Karlo Zvirynsky — Roman Selsky. Nonconformist creatively re-interpreted Western modernist trends and art forms, such as assemblage, installation, performance.

One of the Nonconformist artists' main achievements had been “illegal” teaching (in the first place with personal example and hard life experience) of the new generations of creative youth. That was the way, how knowledge of the main real laws of art evolution outside totalitarian system had been transferred. Nonconformists' views and guidelines played highly important role during the totalitarian system desintegration and in the first years of the national renaissance, a landmark period for free development of Ukrainian culture and art. Obviously, we study Nonconformists' creative work mostly in ideological context, and not so much as an aesthetic category, that is caused by political and social conditions of the time. However, that does not diminish their importance in general development of Ukrainian art. Clearly, full and complete

“exoneration” of the Nonconformism as unique phenomenon and important component of the newest Ukrainian art history, returning the artists names and artworks from oblivion is urgent and significant objective of our days. Thorough and detailed study of their achievements is yet to be done.

Translated by Svitlana Kulinsky

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Сидоренко Віктор. Роль українського нонконформізму у збереженні засад вільної творчості

Анотація. Показано, що однією з найголовніших заслуг українських художників-нонконформістів було виховання в нелегальних умовах (переважно на основі власного прикладу і нелегкого досвіду) нових поколінь творчої молоді. Вони передавали їм знання про основні реальні закономірності розвитку світового мистецтва, яке існувало поза межами тоталітарної системи. Погляди і переконання нонконформістів відіграли надзвичайно важливу роль у часи її розвалу та в перші роки національного відродження, в засадничий період вільного розвитку культури і мистецтва. Звичайно, творчість нонконформістів ми розглядаємо не як естетичну категорію, а скоріше, в ідеологічному контексті, що зумовлено політичними і суспільними обставинами того часу. Проте це аж ніяк не применшує їх значення в розвитку українського мистецтва загалом. Очевидно, що повна і остаточна «реабілітація» нонконформізму як унікального явища і вагомого складника історії новітнього українського мистецтва, повернення імен і творчого доробку кожного художника є невідкладним і важливим завданням сучасності. Ґрунтовне і всебічне вивчення їхнього доробку є справою майбутнього.

Ключові слова: український нонконформізм, мистецтво України другої половини ХХ ст., ідеологія, опір.

Сидоренко Віктор. Роль українського нонконформізму в сохрании основ свободного творчества

Анотация. Показано, что одной из главных заслуг украинских художников-нонконформистов было воспитание в нелегальных условиях (преимущественно на основе собственного примера и нелегкого опыта) новых поколений творческой молодёжи. Они передавали им знания об основных реальных закономерностях развития мирового искусства, существовавшего вне тоталитарной системы. Взгляды и убеждения нонконформистов сыграли чрезвычайно важную роль во времена её развала

и в первые годы национального возрождения, в основополагающий период свободного развития культуры и искусства. Конечно, творчество нонконформистов мы рассматриваем не как эстетическую категорию, а скорее, в идеологическом контексте, что обусловлено политическими и общественными обстоятельствами того времени. Однако это отнюдь не умаляет значение нонконформистов в развитии украинского искусства в целом. Очевидно, что полная и окончательная «реабилитация» нонконформизма как уникального явления и весомого компонента истории новейшего украинского искусства, возвращение имён и творчества каждого художника является неотложным и важным заданием современности. Тщательное и всестороннее изучение их наследия — дело будущего.

Ключевые слова: украинский нонконформизм, искусство Украины второй половины XX в., идеология, сопротивление.

Sydorenko Victor. Ukrainian Nonconformism Role in Preserving the Foundations of Free Creativity

Summary. One of the Nonconformist artists' main achievements had been "illegal" teaching (in the first place with personal example and hard life experience) of the new generations of creative youth. That was the way, how knowledge of the main real laws of art evolution outside totalitarian system had been transferred. Nonconformists' views and guidelines played highly important role during the totalitarian system desintegration and in the first years of the national renaissance, a landmark period for free development of Ukrainian culture and art. Obviously, we study Nonconformists' creative work mostly in ideological context, and not so much as an aesthetic category, that is caused by political and social conditions of the time. However, that does not diminish their importance in general development of Ukrainian art. Clearly, full and complete "exoneration" of the Nonconformism as unique phenomenon and important component of the newest Ukrainian art history, returning the artists names and artworks from oblivion is urgent and significant objective of our days. Throughout and detailed study of their achievements is yet to be done.

Keywords: Ukrainian Nonconformism, Art of Ukraine of the second half of the XX cent., ideology, resistance.