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**UKRAINIAN AVANT-GARDE IN THE ARTS-SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE**

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*The subject of the research is the comprehension of the heritage of Ukrainian avant-garde art in the modern scientific space. The purpose of this paper is to publish the results of scientific studies of the problem of Ukrainian origins in the European avant-garde movement of the first third of the twentieth century. The toolkit for studying the artistic processes of the Ukrainian avant-garde is based on a set of axiological (value), ontological (existential), hermeneutic, historical-chronological, comparative, formal-stylistic, art history methods. The scientific results obtained thanks to the chosen methodology correlate with the significant achievements of the national school of art history.*

*The term «Ukrainian avant-garde» is of the Western European origin; it appeared in the late twentieth century. In the academic discourse, Ukrainian art critics began to study the problem of ethnicity of the avant-garde in Ukraine during the period of gaining of the state independence. It is stated that the state building and development of the artistic culture are interrelated processes, which led to the revival of the scientific and creative interest in the avant-garde. The philosophic and aesthetic foundations of the Ukrainian avant-garde, its artistic and stylistic features, the problem of conventional and authorial, biographies of artists, their creative heritage and theoretical search for something new in art are studied.*

*Results of work. For some time, de-nationalism was an attractive side for the Bolshevik power and contributed to the use of the potential of the avant-garde as a tool in the political indoctrination of the Soviet society. However, the avant-garde is Ukrainian by its origin, territorial belonging and affiliation of artists and their search for something new in the eidetics of folk expression. Avant-garde achievements are used in new areas of artwork, especially in abstract painting. Under the influence of socio-political processes of Ukrainian statehood, exclusively territorial feature of the avant-garde was transformed into the national cultural heritage, as a part of Ukrainian art.*

*Conclusions. The understanding of the Ukrainian avant-garde in the fine arts is currently taking place through the prism of the development of pan-European avant-garde trends and directions of the first third of the twentieth century. The legacy of prominent artists, whose work centuries ago was considered «left» or «formalist» is now gaining new cultural meanings. The Ukrainian avant-garde emerged from obscurity and organically entered the national artistic space.*

*Key words: avant-garde, Ukrainian avant-garde, art history discourse, first third of the XX century.*

*аспірантка Лимар Г.М., Український авангард у мистецтвознавчому науковому дискурсі / Національна академія керівних кадрів культури і мистецтв, м. Київ*

*Предметом дослідження є осмислення спадку українського авангардного мистецтва у сучасному науковому просторі. Метою статті є публікація результатів наукового студювання проблеми українських витоків в європейському авангардному русі першої третини XX століття. Інструментарій вивчення мистецьких процесів українського авангарду базується на сукупності аксіологічного (ціннісного), онтологічного (буттєвого),*

герменевтичного, історико-хронологічного, компаративного, формально-стилістичного, мистецтвознавчого методів. Отримані завдяки обраній методології наукові результати корелюються із вагомими досягненнями національної мистецтвознавчої школи.

Термін «український авангард» має західноєвропейське походження і виник наприкінці ХХ століття. Українські мистецтвознавці в академічному дискурсі проблему етнічності авангарду в Україні розпочали студіювати у період набуття державної незалежності. Констатується, що державотворчий процес та процес розвитку художньої культури взаємопов'язані, що обумовило відродження наукового і творчого інтересу до авангарду. Досліджено філософсько-естетичні основи українського авангарду, його художньо-стильові особливості, проблему конвенціонального та авторського, біографії митців, їх творчий спадок та їх теоретичні пошуки нового в мистецтві.

Результати роботи. Певний період денаціональність була привабливою стороною для більшовистської влади і сприяла використанню потенціала авангарда в якості інструментарію у політичній індокринації радянського суспільства. Проте, авангард є українським за походженням, територіальною ознакою та приналежністю митців і їх пошуком нового в ейдетиці народного самовираження. Досягнення авангарда використані у нових напрямках художньої творчості, а особливо у абстрактному живописі.

Висновки. Осягнення спадщини українського авангарду в образотворчому мистецтві наразі відбувається крізь призму розвитку загальноєвропейських авангардистських течій і напрямків першої третини ХХ століття. Спадщина видатних митців, творчість яких століття назад вважали «лівою» або «формалістською» нині набуває нових культуротворчих сенсів. Під

*впливом суспільно-політичних процесів українського державотворення, виключно територіальна ознака авангарду трансформувалася у національне культурне надбання, як частка українського мистецтва. Український авангард постав із забуття та органічно увійшов до національного художнього простору.*

*Ключові слова: авангард, український авангард, мистецтвознавчий дискурс, перша третина ХХ століття.*

**Introduction.** The avant-garde trend in art originated in Europe in the early twentieth century and existed for two bright decades. This brightness is engraved both in theoretical works and objects of art created by the artists and devotees of the new art. Decoding of the reflected ideas of artists in the pictorial, literary and other works of the avant-garde using the modern methods of the art criticism on the historical background of development of the artistic culture of the society raises many controversial issues, and sometimes problems. The thorough philosophic understanding of one of the outstanding phenomena of the Ukrainian art demands the heuristic approach to searching for answers to the factors of the cultural transgression and hermeneutic comprehension of the avant-garde essence.

The issue of the national in the avant-garde is the debatable one, since this trend began to be defined as Ukrainian in the 1970s, that is, in almost half a century after the peak of its blooming in Ukraine. Valentina Marcadé, studying the peasant themes in the artwork of Kazimir Malevich in the 1970s, first spoke about the Ukrainian avant-garde [1]. In the same years, Andriy Nakov, researcher of the works of avant-garde artists, introduced the concept of the Ukrainian avant-garde [2]. The reason for such historical gap in time is not only the decline of avant-garde as an artistic phenomenon, but also the policy of the party and, consequently, the state support for the style of socialist realism in this period, which prevented the existence of other art

styles. It can explain the significance of the term «Ukrainian avant-garde» originated by the researchers in France and England and ultimately supported by Ukrainian scholars.

**Formulation of the purpose of the article and tasks.** The goal is to outline the specifics of understanding the Ukrainian avant-garde at the present stage. The task is to identify the development of scientific discourse on the heritage of Ukrainian avant-garde artists.

**Presentation of the main material of the article.** The process of revival of the Ukrainian statehood, marked by the end of the XX century and beginning of the XXI century, helped to draw attention of the artists and art critics to the national theme in art. At this time, the works emphasizing the national, the Ukrainian origins of the avant-garde, the relationship with culture and folk traditions, appeared. These new works and publication of previously unknown theoretical writings of the avant-gardists allows carrying out the scientific analysis of the historiography of the Ukrainian avant-garde arts discourse.

### **1. Historical and cultural model of the Ukrainian avant-garde**

The Ukrainian scholar Volodymyr Lychkovakh conducts the comparative analysis of the Ukrainian and Polish avant-garde in the common European paradigm. His study of the avant-gardism aesthetic sphere in its theoretical and artistic-imaginative dimensions emphasizes the conclusion of Dmitro Gorbachov about the national features of the Ukrainian avant-garde [3]. The relationship between the Ukrainian and Polish avant-garde in the fine arts is revealed through the categories of transgression, anti-style, and eccentricity in the artistic languages of objectless art. Volodymyr Lychkovakh sees the national peculiarities of the Ukrainian and Polish avant-garde in the vitatism and energy-information aesthetics of the “sacred attitude”. The semiotics of avant-garde imagery is

shown by the sign-symbolic discourse of the artistic language of the Lviv-Warsaw philosophical school [4].

The Ukrainian avant-garde researcher Olena Shchokina analyzes the theory of the Ukrainian avant-garde and examines the views of the founders of this artistic trend on a person. She concludes that the avant-garde is the art on the individual, on his/her essence, echoing the Nietzsche's «superman». In her opinion, the thinking of the avant-garde followers is most clearly expressed in the definition of the category of a human being and the understanding of humanism. “Mad man (savage, barbarian, animal) and rational (absolute, perfect) man; man-God and man-Nothing, man-prophet and messiah; a person of the renewed free artistic consciousness and conservative person – these are the most vivid, characteristic and contradictory ideas about the essence of a person and individual considered by the philosophy of the avant-garde art”, as is argued by Olena Shchokina. An individual in the theorization of the avant-gardists is a collective image, the central meaning-making definition of the avant-garde philosophy [5].

Volodymyr Lychkovakh considers the artistic language of the objectless art through the category of transgression, i.e. the rejection of traditional values and the search for new ones. The avant-garde, in essence, reflects this transition to newly formed values. This opinion is supported by Olena Shchokina who uses the category of “destruction” to describe the essence of the avant-garde [6]. Destruction like transgression is a characteristic feature of groundbreaking historical and artistic events. The concept of “destruction” in the theorization of the avant-garde is the destruction of the traditional conservative ideas about the social roles of an individual. The avant-garde, as a product of destruction and transgressive changes, illustrates this transitional period in the human history. Destruction is seen

by avant-gardists as a necessary step towards unlimited freedom of an individual.

The heuristics of the Ukrainian avant-garde is analyzed by Olena Shchokina on the basis of the theoretical works of its founders (V. Kandinsky, K. Malevich, O. Arkhipenko) who considered the problem of the relationship between rationality and irrationality in art through the prism of the categories of intuition and irony. According to O. Shchokina, avant-gardists proclaim the prevalence of intuition over the practical reason, because for mental and rational actions it is important to analyze the reality, and for creativity the human emotions and experiences, as well as inner condition, are things that matter [7]. Continuing the anthropic approach to discovery of the theoretical essence of the avant-garde, O. Shchokina analyzes the philosophy of the absolute in the philosophic «inquiry» of O. Bogomazov, idealism of V. Kandinsky, «empathy» of M. Gershenfeld [8].

Anna Bila explores the basic principles of avant-garde aesthetics in futurism [9]. She develops in her monograph the thorough discourse of futurism, studies the historical and ideological genesis and stages of formation, basic principles and directions of development. The author claims in this study that futurism emphasizes the avant-garde aesthetics and meets the spiritual needs of its historical era by presenting a radically new ideology. The art is on a par with science, technology and life space, and the artist intervenes in this space with his/her own art project.

In the second part of the monograph, Anna Bila raises the issue of understanding the Ukrainian in futurism. It is an important issue in the context of the term of Ukrainian avant-garde. The author criticizes the researchers of Russian futurism for not seeing the specific Ukrainian origins of this powerful international phenomenon. Based on this logical construction, we can assume that the researcher sees the Russian component in the international essence of futurism. However, in the opinion



of the author of dissertation, Anna Bila does not single out the Ukrainian component in the general international movement, highlighting nevertheless the «Ukrainian cradle of futurism» in it.

Analysis of the works of Ukrainian artists M. Boychuk, P. Kuznetsov, G. Narbut, O. Ekster, K. Malevich, M. Andrienko-Nechitaylo, D. Burluk allowed O. Tarasenko to approach to the problem of the national in the avant-garde painting [10]. The problem of avant-gardist artwork was considered by O. Noga, considering the Ukrainian avant-garde painting of 1905-1918 in the European context [11], I. Kodlubai, T. Devdiuk, B. Savitsky, Ya. Bobosh [12], and V. Gabelko [13]. In 1995, B. Lobanovsky prepared the paper “Avant-Garde” for the first volume of the “Art of Ukraine” encyclopedia, summarizing the experience of Ukrainian artists in this area, pointing out its origins in the old folk culture [14].

The academician O. Fedoruk considers the Ukrainian avant-garde as an integral part of the European artistic phenomenon, pointing out that «formation of the Ukrainian avant-garde, like the avant-garde of all European nations, is a single whole, marked by certain national differences and features» [15, p. 10]. He characterized the processes and creative work of artists in the period of formation of the Ukrainian avant-garde and proposed his own periodization of the Ukrainian avant-garde where he singled out the late period of modernism and secession (1908-1914) and the stage caused by the revolutionary events of 1917, dominated by the utopian hopes of changes in the domain of art and culture [15, p. 11]. M. Pysanko agrees with this, characterizing the abovementioned second stage as a break of the artistic paradigm and transition to dialogue with the mythology of ethnic consciousness and pictorial art [16]. The problem of the national culture in modernism and avant-garde was considered by M. Stankevich, who found the features inspired by folk art in the stylistics and form-making [17], and L. Savitska, having concluded that the dialogue with



folklore determined the development of the Ukrainian art and influenced the formation of a new artistic consciousness [18]. V. Sydorenko considers the avant-garde as a national artistic practice appealing to its own sources and senses, and its evolutionary progress was a part of the general cultural process [19, p. 22].

The issues of the national and European tendencies in the art of modern, modernism and avant-garde were discussed in the scientific research and papers of the Ukrainian scholars, in particular, T. Kara-Vasilieva [20], I. Dychenko [21], T. Yemelianova [22], N. Kanishyna [23], O. Kashuba-Volvach [24], T. Pavlova [25], O. Petrova [26], G. Skliarenko [27], V. Susak [28] etc. In general, the scholars noted the integrity of the national and European context being the condition for the formation of theoretical foundations of the art and creativity of artists.

The Ukrainian gallerists have also contributed to the discourse of the Ukrainian avant-garde. In particular, in 2019 the M17 Contemporary Art Center organized the international forum «New Life Cycle: Artist and His Generation» in Kyiv. This forum turned out to be, in effect, a kind of meeting of experts who studied the avant-garde in terms of its Ukrainian content. Actually, the forum itself was devoted to validation of the concept of «Ukrainian avant-garde» as a conceptual arts approach to its study. Discussion panels and round tables, performances, lectures and presentations, premiere of the film about Kazimir Malevich were complemented by the exhibition “Avant-garde: search for the fourth dimension”. In the opinion of the organizers, a comprehensive consideration of the emergence and spreading of the avant-garde should have proved the thesis on the Ukrainian component of the avant-garde on a par with others – «the creation of a new national brand called Ukrainian avant-garde» [29]. By the way, Dmytro Gorbachov and Jean-Claude Marcadé, the pioneers of the thesis on the Ukrainian avant-garde, also spoke at the forum. In this

context, Polina Limina says that the Ukrainian avant-garde distinctiveness lies in the fact that Ukrainian artists by the territorial origin went to other countries to get acquainted with futurism, cubism, abstractionism and other artistic trends and practiced these styles on return. Separately, the Ukrainian avant-garde was enriched by the fact that artists from other countries came to the iconic artists, making their own contribution to the development of the «local» avant-garde and adopting its experience [30].

Along with the exhibitions and forums, art critics publish the texts of the avant-garde devotees themselves. Tetiana Filevska refers to the Kyiv period of epistolary work of Kazimir Malevich and publishes a collection of his papers [31]. Nevertheless, more than a half of the texts belong to the authors who spoke at the international conference «Kazimir Malevich. Kyiv aspect (October 6-9, 2016, Kyiv). Revealing the purpose of the publication, Tetiana Filevska writes: “strengthening and consolidation of this new wave of active interest in the Ukrainian avant-garde, which should end in the exhibitions in world museums and inclusion of the Ukrainian avant-garde in the modern academic discourse”» [31, p. 12]. This important explanation proves the incompleteness of the arts discourse with regard to assertion or denial of the thesis about the Ukrainian nature of the avant-garde and its distinctiveness or difference from the Russian one with which it is identified in the world arts discourse.

Dmitry Gorbachev emphasizes that «we are at the beginning of the study ... of the Ukrainian avant-garde» and it is facilitated by the publication of the written heritage of artists. The anthology of theoretical tractates of the Ukrainian avant-garde artists reveals the picture of artistic trends of the first third of the XX century in all their complexity and inconsistency of development. According to the compilers, publication of the artists' written works provides an idea of the thematic, personal and ideological diversity of views on the creative organization of art forms in the Ukrainian visual art of

1910–1930 [32]. In the introductory word to this edition, Marina Dmytrieva states that the Ukrainian avant-garde is in the shadow of the Russian avant-garde being at the same time an integral part of it [32, p. 9]. Nevertheless, the art critic Maryna Yur rightly points out that the origins of the Ukrainian avant-garde are connected with the Ukrainian folk art [33].

The eidetics [34] of the folk art is manifested as the «pure nature» of a person and primacy of art as «pure creativity». The culturological theory of Clifford Hirtz in the interpretation of Natalia Sirotinska and Viktor Karpov [35] is important for the approval of conceptual approach to the study of the Ukrainian avant-garde, when analyzing the ideological and artistic forms of interaction of the society. It is a major driver in forming a holistic historical and cultural model of the human development. This model comprises the ideological bases, their basic structures (archetype, symbols) and elements of the culture or art forms reflecting priorities of the society in the context of its aesthetic experience.

At the turn of the XIX-XX centuries, a new model of human development is formed on the basis of transgressive transition beyond the established concepts; the value orientations are changing sharply due to both the progress of science and disappointment in ideals of the society. Ideological basis of the new model structure is the human subconscious. The scholars propose to include invariants of relations going beyond the moral and artistic-and-aesthetic norms, the substitution of concepts, in the basic structures. The aesthetics of pluralism and destructiveness become the elements of culture or cultural and artistic forms, which reflect priorities of the society in the context of its aesthetic experience [35, p. 112]. The avant-garde is becoming one of the artistic forms of the new historical and cultural model of the human development.

Based on the statement that the avant-garde is an aspect of Ukrainian culture, Oleg Ilnytsky in the preface to the anthology of the Ukrainian avant-

garde poetry states that all European avant-garde fed on the foreign contacts, and Ukrainian avant-garde movements are no exception. For O. Ilnytsky, the Ukrainian avant-garde is a recognized phenomenon with the independent sounding and meaning. At the same time, he notes that in practice and in theory there are significant influences of the Italian and Russian futurism, dadaism and the German impressionism on its development [36].

Therefore, the discourse on the Ukrainian in the avant-garde supported the intention of the Ukrainian art critics to single it out as a separate phenomenon of the Ukrainian culture. However, the historical and cultural model of the Ukrainian avant-garde needs to be worked out to fully reflect its ideological foundations, symbols and archetypes on which the artistic forms of the avant-garde are based. The theory of the Ukrainian avant-garde became a part of the process of formation and development of the national arts history in the stream of artistic creativity.

## **2. National, conventional and authorial in the Ukrainian avant-garde**

Based on the thorough study of the historiography of Ukrainian art culture of the avant-garde period, Maryna Yur concludes that the national, conventional and authorial features in the Ukrainian painting were not considered comprehensively, with no contextual reconstruction and assessment of these disproportionate elements in a single coordinate system performed. Besides, phases of their activation or decline were not traced, and, accordingly, the interrelation of the main contextual factors of painting development, such as the national idea, author's concept, conventionality, which give an understanding of the progress of artistic processes in the dynamics of culture, was not shown [37].

Proceeding from the ratio of the national, conventional and authorial in the artist's work, she proposes the concept of "authorial model of painting",

the meaning-making basis of which determines the world-view and values of the artist, and principles of painting form the artistic basis. In her opinion, the author's model of painting was created by diverse artistic practices, where the sporadic or programmatic experiments were equivalent.

In case of the avant-garde, there is a need to explain the conventional influence on the artist's work. Marina Yur defines the criteria of conventional painting at the level of «artist-power» within the experiment and ideologically motivated socialist realism, principles of formation of a conceptual «conventional model of painting», the meaning-making basis of which is defined by the concepts of leadership, ideology, politics, totalitarianism, normativity, unification, socialist realism, ideologemes, attributes (signs and symbols), mythologization of glorification, national character, mass culture, and the artistic side of such model is reflected in the constructive idea, composition, geometry of space, artistic space, form, and language. It is worth agreeing with her conclusion that in the period of totalitarianism in the 1920s-1980s, the conventional painting was distinguished by artificially created mythological meanings and signs, but the artistic language remained the field of creative experiment [37, p. 33].

In essence, we are talking about the use of the artistic language as the creative potential of artists in political work with the society. Indoctrination of the consciousness by means of artistic expression and innovative leitmotif of the avant-garde art in a certain historical period form the resonant amplitude distorting the traditional ideas about the art and the nature of social development. In this context, a striking example is the work of El Lissitzky (Lazar Lissitzky), one of the founders of «Culture League» in 1918 in Kyiv. The objective of this avant-garde artistic and literary association was to create a new Jewish national art. Lazar Lissitzky is also known for working with Kazimir Malevich on development of the foundations of suprematism.

The innovative leitmotif of avant-garde art, expressed in his work on two squares, is aimed at indoctrination of the consciousness by means of artistic expression [38]. It should be noted that this work was created by the author in 1920 when he lived in Vitebsk and published in 1922 by the Skify publishers in Berlin. Socio-political events of those years are known for the end of the Bolshevik War and formation of the Soviet Union in 1922.

The cover of this booklet is a simplified combination of the word «about», the number «2» and geometric figure in the form of a red square. The essence of this suprematic work is conveyed through the text:

«To all the guys

El Lissitzky/Suprematic tale/ about two squares/in 6 buildings

Do not read/take/papers/columns/wood/fold/paint/build

Here are/two/squares (the picture shows the black and red square)

Flying/on/Earth/from/far/and (the picture shows the red circle with geometric shapes resembling the city buildings and two squares above them)

And/see/blackly/anxiously (there is a suprematic composition of rectangles of different sizes in a black and white palette in the picture)

Strike/all/scattered (the picture shows the red square breaking the suprematic composition)

And/over/black/there is/red (the picture shows the black square containing a composition of rectangles, cubes and other geometric shapes aimed at the viewer, with the ends painted red)

This is the end (suprematic composition in the form of a red square, covering the black circle on which there are red geometric shapes with the smaller black square at a distance from them) [39].

According to the author's ideological plan, the red defeats black and everything turns red. If the artist's work is combined with historical socio-political events – the end of the liberation struggle in Ukraine and other

territories of Russia and establishment of the Soviet power – the political motive of this suprematist work becomes evident. Its task is also obvious – influencing the subconscious of the viewer and the reader in order to establish the ideological concept of the victory of the red, which embodies the Bolshevik power. The conventional nature of the avant-garde in the light of socio-historical transformations and changes in values and preferences of society is objective one, because Volodymyr Lenin, the ideologist of the Soviet power, determined the artist's dependence on the social processes, with the dominating influence of the power on art, which caused the transgression of artistic paradigm of the Ukrainian art.

The back cover of Lazar Lissitzky «Suprematic tale» features a drawing, which differs from the general concept of the work: it depicts a gray rectangle with black shadow, over which, like the moon above the earth, a black circle hangs like a dot. There is no red color in the picture. This suggests that the author veiledly expressed his attitude to the theme of the work and his own «authorial model of painting», as noted by Marina Yur, the meaning-making basis of which is determined by the world-view and values of the artist. It is possible to assume that axiological preferences of the artist are indicated in this picture. This fact can also indicate the influence of power on the artist and his ideological disobedience to political dictate.

**Conclusion.** The avant-garde occupies one of the leading places in the scientific discourse of art critics and artists, due to its multidimensionality and insufficient study, which opens up opportunities for new research, hypotheses and substantiated statements. There is an attempt to determine its place and role in the artistic culture of Ukraine. It should be noted that the essence of the national in the avant-garde is a debatable issue, despite the proven and stable use of this concept. The avant-garde does not mean the national, because it is not based on the



cultural and artistic traditions of the Ukrainian social medium. In cultural senses, it is rather cosmopolitan and global trend. Its de-nationalism was an attractive side for the Bolshevik power, which was reflected in the conventionality and political indoctrination of the society. However, the avant-garde is Ukrainian by its origin, territorial belonging and affiliation of artists and their search for new in the eidetics of folk expression. Over time, in the process of development of art and use of avant-garde achievements in new areas of artwork, especially in abstract painting, under the influence of socio-political processes of Ukrainian statehood, exclusively territorial feature of the avant-garde is transformed into the national cultural heritage, combined with the Ukrainian art space. The Ukrainian avant-garde emerged from obscurity and became the part of the national artistic space.

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