

Values, Trends, Technology and Artistic Product in Contemporary Visual Art of Kazakhstan

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Abstract—Modern artists are increasingly using computer technology. This can be a digital painting or graphics programs to create outline options. The Internet and digital technologies are an integral part of our world. It becomes more difficult to classify the visual arts, to determine its forms and ideas as well as to realize the role of the artist with its artistic product as a unique creative unit. The authors describe trends and values in modern Kazakhstan painting and their correlation with traditional perceptions about artistic work of authorship. Here is the problem of creative interpretations, reminiscences and plagiarism.

Keywords—visual arts, digital technologies, artistic product, Kazakhstan

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, digital technology is a part of our everyday life. In addition to usual social contexts, communications, production, etc., the digital world penetrates deeper into artistic creativity. This happens not only in the informational support (already an habitual area for us), but in the creative process. Values and meanings of an artistic product (for example, a picturesque), previously in general inviolable, are now increasingly being questioned.

Art critics challenge increasingly or support initiatives of modern visual culture, where ordinary objects and phenomena (television, the Internet, films, video games, events organized in large shopping centers) are an integral part of it. And at the same time, it is an up-to-date projection of the social, ideological and often even political picture of the world.

Visual art space has become a kind of extravaganza of digital interactive exhibition content, a synthesis of styles and manners, types of artistic creativity, old and new views about the place and role of an artist in all this process (1).

The current process in fine arts asks more questions than gives answers. Digital technology, creating artistic product ways, its exposition, a further promotion, a practice of archiving is often associated with certain problems. We talk about the perception by the author, creative community and society.

In the opinion of the Francis T. Marches the understanding of digital world in art will depend on renewed thinking and practical action of artists, art critics and curators (2). Now more artists use Photoshop, and it is, in fact, not on a

computer painting, but on the use of this program, for example, to create a sketch, a composition, a selection of an indicative color and so on.

Then, an artist can work in the usual format - by real brushes and paints. However, the questions appear inevitably. Would the simplification and acceleration have impact on the artistic value of the paintings? Would this approach distract the author from the process of creative search?

The digital world allows to search quickly and look at gigabytes of visual information, thousands of paintings, illustrations and photos. The artist may find interesting topics, formats and artistic methods for reflection and inspiration. A significant factor here is an opportunity to know current style trends in art market. But the Internet unwittingly becomes the source of reminiscence, replicas and frank copy.

The main objective of the article is the analysis of current dominant values and trends in the picturesque space of modern Kazakhstan including the technical and technological aspect. In the research the authors focus on an artistic product, which most often is positioned as a national identity medium in the art stores and galleries. It claims the "historical accuracy as well as extends to a highly competitive platforms of the republican and national format, the most prestigious events in the creative life of the country for twenty-five years of its independence.

The authors do not intend to apply to the specific personalias. Here it is much more important to present an analytical comprehension of value orientations and trends given a lead in modern Kazakhstan artistic process.

II. DESCRIPTION OF METHODS

The methodological basis of the study is artistic, philosophical and cultural-historical methods. Axiological tools allow to identify some value orientations of modern domestic visual art. The authors also used analytical, historical and comparative-historical approaches.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The era of independence has led to the realization of one of the key challenges in the Republic - the creation and promotion of national idea. It is a basics of identity, which could become the core of many processes. Over the past three to five years, Kazakhstan has adopted a number of very

important decisions in the state cultural policy (the concept of cultural policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the project Rukhani Zhanryru, certain provisions of the message of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev to the people of Kazakhstan Third modernization of Kazakhstan: Global Competitiveness) [3-5].

These significant steps were a logical continuation of the processes that were raised in 1970s and 1980s and openly have unfolded in 1990s. Considering the polyethnic specificity of Kazakhstan, since 1990s multi-culturalism became a basic element. On this basis, for more than twenty-five years a new cultural identity has been formed. And although this process is very difficult, it is confidently going on [6-9].

Cultural identity became the core idea of the modern Kazakhstani visual art. The flow of artistic content, an encouragement of national identity has increased. Of course, there are decent works combined creativity, taste, professionalism and understanding of the moment. However, the majority of contemporary pictorial and graphic products is result of literal representations of "return to basics". It is often visualized through numerous appropriations, reminiscences, and replicas.

Salon art became open and understandable to all by its artistic-shaped the organization. In the case of actual art, the situation is more difficult. It is not a result, but an artistic process, search, which is a backbone of original artistic practices formed during the second half of the last century.

Even a shallow examination of artistic content, which is available in virtually in every domestic commercial art-salon, gallery, etc., indicates that the same topics are in trend like 20 years ago. It is standard "national motives": pathos events with hunting, proclamations of khans, batyrov's vows, farewells with warriors, battles, etc.; allegorical and symbolic topics related to abstract subjects (a heritage, long distance road, the eternal camping, etc.), rituals, customs and holidays, dastarkhans, a marriage brokerage, etc.; genre scene (guests and refreshments, cooking, mother and child, etc.).

Of course, these motives are universal and eternal. In many ways, they are basic because they are peculiar anchoring points of ethnic memory and mythopoetics. However, the problem lies not in plots, but in a perception of artists and in the way, they represent them in their works.

A very bright example is the results of the first republican contest Kazakh folk epos. The history and traditions of the Kazakh people initiated by the State Museum of Arts of the Republic of Kazakhstan named after A. Kasteev of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the company ArLine. This major cultural project was aimed at the creation of highly artistic paintings.

Domestic professional artists with higher or secondary artistic education were invited to participate in this event. Works had to be established in 2012, to be a large format, to be painted in oil and in academic realistic manner.

In addition to the demonstration of professionalism level of art schools, a key objective was a creation of works for the best museums. They had to be an aesthetic embodiment of the

different aspects of the national ideas through one of the most striking its facets - traditional epos.

Works presented for the contest for the most part were illustrations of customs and traditions - regular themes. The epos was attended by only a few pictures. Other authors have depicted the standard epos accompanied by ambitious showiness of execution, a sign of salon style.

In general, the jury and many visitors noted that the artistic level of paintings identified in the requirements of the contest was much lower than expected. A majority of works had no folklore topics; and in the remaining part representations of epos were wear, accordingly, they were not expressed by authors.

Here are two important conclusions: The modern Kazakhstani professional art school is in stagnation. They have in to salon and conceptual art. There is a significant value weakening in knowledge and culture understanding. As results of the fact we have the superficial attitude to traditions, folklore, and national history.

This contest outlined the ideological, scene and technical problems in creative environment, and provided an opportunity for young artists (especially those from regions) to compete. It should be emphasized that this contest, perhaps for the first time in a very long time, raised the issue of responsibility of an artist for his product. An author's work for sale in the passenger compartment and the another one that pretends to participate in the republican contest with very strict requirements to the artistic value are often different things.

We believe that in history and folklore artists decided to represent important and key events should have a high degree of moral and ethical obligations [9, 10].

A few years later in 2016 another contest Babalar ańsaǵan Tǵuysızdık (Independence left by ancestors) took place, which has the status of the national one. This is a joint project of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the State Museum of Arts named after A. Kasteev to create beautiful and sculptural works devoted to the history of the Kazakh people. This event was correlated with the 25th anniversary of the independence of the country.

Considering the previous experience, project organizers put forward competitive requirements indicating the purpose, goals and recommended ways to implement them. The results of the contest were available for public viewing in two large-scale exhibitions in Astana and Almaty as well as in the exhibition catalog.

The aim was "to promote patriotic upbringing by an artistic reflection and an embodiment of important historical events and personalities of our state in the context of values of the national idea of Мәңгілік ел; an improving and an upgrading artistic skill and a creating of competitive environment for artists". Along with historians, scientists, writers and philosophers, artists were declared as chroniclers of history, spiritual culture, the life of the nation and the country (10).

Along with the familiar requirements there were such requirements as: a professional art education, a work originality (not earlier than 2016), a realistic manner, a canvas-oil (for painting), bronze and aluminum-marble (for sculpture), the large size of works. Two fundamental requirements were nominated were highlighted: topics: specific historical episodes of national history up to the beginning of the 20th century inclusive; the jury pay attention on works with original, meaningful and clear visualization of little-known topics of the history of Kazakhstan.

In contrast to the competition of 2012 there were two qualifying rounds. At the first one the sketches of future works were reviewed and approved. The sketch had to be accompanied by an explanation and justification for a historiography of a selected plot and a conceptual idea of an author. At the second stage works that satisfied all the requirements were permitted to the contest.

Considering the importance and magnitude of the competition as well as the degree of artist responsibility, the State Museum of Art organized an open auditorium inviting the leading historians and art experts of the country. There were several lectures from leading scientists and art historians of the Republic on the history of Kazakhstan and on the special features of the historical genre in the world of painting.

Some works were rejected already in the first stage for “technical” reasons: a discrepancy between sizes and themes of the work, professionalism, manner, and time. Some artists ignored clear scene requirements and then used the academic standard of a national topic (dastarkhans, caravans, eternal camping, etc.). Not all authors could represent the historically objective justification for the selected scene. Some works were made not in the desired realistic technique and/or were professionally weak.

The hard selection made this contest a serious symbolic national project. Approved works showed that the Kazakhstani artists were in earnest about the task of the contest. It should be noted that in the framework of this project, in addition to the usual pathos motives many participants really tried to focus on the specific and little-known historical episodes and characters.

Critically analyzing the results of this contest, it is obvious that, in spite of the ambition of the project, the national status, prestige and prize money of the contest and the opportunity to significantly increase credibility in the domestic creative community, the total number of participants was less than in 2012; and from 90 announced artists, only about 70 people could make the qualifying cut.

We believe that the reason for it can be very challenging requirements, holding participants responsible. Not all domestic painters and sculptors have a different professional realistic manner. Still less those who seriously work in the historical genre and avoids the stereotyped salon scenes.

The painters marked by prizes mainly applied to real historical events related to the period of the Kazakh khanate. Tragic historical events of Kazakh-zhungar wars, the beginning of the collectivization and peaceful topics with real historical personalities were depicted. Although there were

pathos scenes claiming to having historicity, the remaining authors once again plunged into the amorphism of salon trends.

In this project, not all objectives were achieved, but, nevertheless, the results were very significant. Among the winners were young artists; and the general composition of participants has significantly rejuvenated. Some of merited masters decided to participate only in the final exhibition, rather than the contest. The most important result we see that some young participants sought the accuracy to fulfill all the conditions of competition, especially the requirements for the plot of work.

The results of these two competitions demonstrate current values and trends in the visual art of Kazakhstan. Visitors could see which topics, genres and styles are dominated, and which plots are forgotten.

Unequivocally, such contests of this scale were carried out in the country for the first time, and because to a large extent, they mobilized the entire cultural environment: artists painted, journalists and the public discussed, art historians and teachers received food for thought. Different areas in understanding human beings and their history and cultural heritage became revealed. Many young artists began to better understand the importance of their capabilities and their mission, the strengthening of national ideas and the creation of value orientations.

In our view, in modern artistic creativity important contexts were highlighted. We are talking about the technological aspect, which with the active inclusion of Kazakhstan in global communications and in the format of the third industrial revolution. It has a significant impact on artistic process.

It is not a secret that today many artists use the capabilities of modern technology, including a digital one. This is not only Photoshop as an invaluable support in building a composition and a formation of a sketch, but also, for example, as a projector, with which an artist can faster transfer the sketch on the canvas. Some artists generally print out underpaintings on canvas by a large-format printing, and then only to shape up with oil or acrylic.

It is known that it extremely reduces time of working. But it can also lead to questions about the authenticity of artistic process, where a hand of an artist is involved not in full.

Another extremely important and debatable point is a problem of storyline and compositional lack of imaginativeness or a plagiarism. The issues of borrowings and replications is long-standing and still outstanding. Fine arts, music and literature are the most vulnerable areas of artistic creativity. In the Middle Ages, the attempts have been made to protect copyrights, but especially this process has deepened in the 18th century and since then it has been remained relevant [11].

In our opinion, in general, in the context of works for sale, personal exhibitions and participation in collective private viewings the attention to Kazakhstani painters was not

observed. But the contests of 2012 and 2016 aroused great interest in the society, heated discussions and polemics.

The works were judged by the jury and visitors of exhibitions and were highlighted in the media and social networks. As a result, the sharp surge of interest to all domestic art and subtleties of artistic processes was observed. As a consequence, one of the most contentious issues became a differentiation of the appropriation as a possible shock to the creation and realization of own original decisions; reminiscences having predominantly intellectual context; compilations (iso-sampling), and frank plagiarism.

In this regard, the possibilities of the Internet can provide a positive influence on artists (to know domestic and world trends, to get access to global artistic content, to inspire by the best creative samples, to make themselves recognizable and etc.) and negative (critical discussions of creativity, comparisons, including the subject of plagiarism, because the available to the author content is available for everyone).

“The orientation of some contemporary artists from time to time has transformed into something mediated in their view. However, in reality an imitation is visible; a majority of artists makes no special efforts to rethinking.” Not noticeable foreign artists and illustrators of the 20th century have become these victims in Kazakhstan. Although there are exceptions, when works of famous masters have been tested.

IV. CONCLUSION

Global world has its requirements to the modern artist who can work in the format of "old school" or become a supporter of the digital artwork. In any case, art requires the wide spectrum of knowledge. According to Ann Sophie Lehmann, today a concept, a production and a technology are so closely bound. Previous practices should be adapted to the new artistic realities, but present technologies inspire and create new values and contexts [12]. And the past experience with digital world opens up for the artist opportunities and creates new value.

But along with the positive trends, negative trends are formed. They lower artistic and semantic value of the creative product. An imitation is a hardly noticeable fact for wide public. However, it is quite disturbing in terms of analysis and prospects of development of the domestic art market.

But if such an artistic product is proposed on famous contests and exhibited in the museum, this, in turn, immediately increases its status and its cost as results. Because of this fact a steady trend can be formed. It justifies not only

an absence of high professional and civil level of an author, but also discredits relevant key values for the country.

Art is one of the most effective methods to draw attention to the society problems. A keen intuition and specific vision place artists in the avant-garde of socio-cultural development of society. Therefore, their role in the formation and promotion of the most important values and meanings is invaluable.

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