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Evolution of Oleh Minko's Creative Method as an Example of Developing the Typology of Modernism in Lviv Art in the second half of the XXth century

Анотація. Богдан Мисюга. Еволюція творчого методу Олега Мінька, як приклад розвитку типології модернізму в мистецтві Львова другої половини ХХ ст. У статті проаналізовано основні етапи становлення творчого методу О. Мінька в контексті розвитку модерністської типології у мистецтві Львова. Першим етапом можна вважати період навчання О. Мінька в «підпільній академії Карла Звіринського» упродовж 1959–1963 рр., коли молодий студент освоїв художні течії класичного авангарду: аналітичний та синтетичний кубізм, фовізм та метод переведення перцепції у символ. Другим етапом був аналіз форми давніх культур та методичні вправи із формою архетипа 1963-1966 рр., що прикметно для художніх практик високого модернізму. Третім етапом можна вважати творчість середини 1980 – середини 1990-х, де О. Мінько в натурних замальовках «розбудовує внутрішній світ», за прикладом європейських сюрреалістів. Останній етап припадає на середину 1995–2000 рр., де художник формує самобутній тип образної структури «ієрархії». Образна типологія Мінькових творів другої половини ХХ ст. гранично наближена до контексту мистецьких явищ високого та пізнього пізнього модернізму в Західній Європі.

Lviv artist Oleh Minko is the titular representative of the Lviv alternative art of the 1960s–1980s, which, according to many features (worldview, ideological content, formal), can be perceived in the context of Western modernist movements and ideological movements of the second half of the 20th century. The purpose of this publication is to trace the emergence and development of these features in the works of Oleh Minko in the 1960–2000s, drawing on

a large array of his still unknown works from the family collection of the artist.

The first group of works by O. Minko, which should be considered in the context of modernist artistic practices, constitute works of the period of his study at the underground academy of Karl Zvirynsky (1959–1966). The charismatic teacher encouraged his students to study the theory of classical avant-garde, to be interested in novelties of the music world and philosophical thought, and provoked a wave of methodological reflection on each method of Western European phenomena.

«This happened in such a way that each one of us was preparing some topic about the phenomenon in art (in Karl Zvirynsky house there was a large artistic library used by students), and then we performed tasks on this subject: they reflected on the direction or on a new style in art ...» recalls one of the students of the «underground academy» [1].

Methodical development of the painting plane by K. Zvirynsky himself began with colored applications in the mid-1950s, when he studied the properties of the color mass, the marks and the texture. Zvirynsky was familiar with the theoretical works of Paul Klee and Johannes Eitten published in Poland [5, p. 209]; In addition, such applications for the study of the form were made a little earlier by the Lviv avant-garde of the older generation, with whom K. Zvirynsky closely contacted: Leopold Levytsky, Roman Selsky and Vitold Manastyrsky.

«... I made many applications immediately on colored marks. It should be a denial of all that was at the institute. I constantly introduced them (my students) in the course of things that I did ...» recalls in his memoirs Karl Zvirynsky [5, p. 145].

The capture of Karl Zvirynsky by synthetic cubism, and especially the creativity of Georges Braque [5, p. 204], was also passed on to his students. Therefore, in the abundance of Oleh Minko's abstract compositions from 1961–1965 there are plane forms of perceptual reflection and balanced chords of synthetic cubism. As if displaced in the collage, the perspective plans of the subject environment reveal the Picasso method of synthesizing the tactile qualities of objects as their symbols and the image of the objects themselves.

«...The canvas should be pulsating», taught Karl Zvirynsky [5, p. 205], and Oleh Minko made a lot of attempts to achieve that effect.

The method of transforming this phenomenon in other works by Minko is a special one, because it is based on the visual forms of folk art and the semantics of the nature of the steppe of the Donets'k region. In a number of plane compositions, he introduces symbols of flora and silhouettes of everyday objects. Later, his sentiment to this steppe flora appears even in poetic lines, but then – the intertwining of real objects into abstract compositions was "a touch of the living world." According to the very ideologue of Cubism, Georges Braque, the introduction to abstract compositions of the silhouettes of the objective world was a sign of animation and a return to a sensual source in art [18, p. 121].

Among the formal tasks developed by K. Zvirynsky (from the memoirs of the artist), there was also an abstract reflection on children's dreams [5, p. 202]. Here we can only guess that he gave the same tasks to his students, since among the early abstract works there are those containing the etymology of the dreams of O. Minko: images of cuckoo, storks and boats (mentioned in his poetry) as well as objects of rural life.

Another level of development of O. Minko's abstract sketches – his minimalist compositions with a blue-green background and objects-signs, deprived of the laws of earth's gravitation. As in surrealist Joan Miro's compositions – they seem to create an image of underwater life.

The method of transforming the medium into a sign system was peculiar to the whole circle of Zvirynsky: Zenovij Flinta made abstractions of stylized details of ethno-interior [10], Roman Petruk sought the correspondences in ancient forms of ceramics [13, p. 18–19], the Teacher himself – in the nature of things that man touched [5, p. 210].

"... The guides were such that they reconstructed what they saw so emotionally that it would be impressive. And then, what was most striking – to make from that a design, to make from that a sign! To remember, make and see ... the sign of the thing, the hieroglyph – is the most capacious. Whether it will be a landscape, whether it will be a human figure, or whether it will be the vision of an idea – if it already went on," recalls Roman Petruk [13, p. 18–19], one of Karl Zvirynsky's students.

In general, in Oleh Minko's abstract compositions from the early 1960s, a number of universal modernist types of compositions are

traced, which are mentioned by well-known western analysts of modernism, Clement Greenberg [16] and Rosalind Kraus [7]. These compositions were not only a part of the educational process by K. Zvirynsky, but they also quite eloquently declare the desire of the younger generation of the 1960s to get rid of the literary in art for the sake of visual expressiveness of artistic form. When the examples of synthetic cubism, with its properties of «shimmering surface» and «artificial space» gained popularity in the alternative art of Ukraine, at the same time in the art of Western Europe appeared a «tactile abstraction» by the Italians Alberto Burri and Lucio Fontana, which declared «a new sensuality» [14, p. 184] of post-war humanists and, in fact, continued the formal invention of synthetic cubism.

The next evolutionary step for Oleh Minko's method was the development of an archetype.

The relation to archetypal thinking in Oleh Minko's creative work was seen from the early years: by way of traditional forms of fairy tales, songs and various types of folk customs, which parents and relatives taught him [12, p. 26]. The mythical poetic language was typical of his early images of the Donets'k steppe, where the artist imagined himself to be a bird flying over the idyll of «steppe paradise» [11]. It is from the standpoint of the bird or the position of the «third eye» that he imagined the Motherhood, where, as in Shevchenko's poems: «The fields around like a sea ...». In the early drawing with this name then, back in 1959, his «personal unconscious» manifested itself as a form of grief over the native land, as well as a feature of the «collective unconscious»: the ancient signs of the earth and wind (the motif of «Svarga» and «infinity»), which are found in the decor of local prehistoric ceramics (Cherniakhiv culture). In the center of the composition he painted the graceful silhouette of the horse as a personification of his youth. Although in the format of interpretation of the subconscious it could also mean the image of «force» or «resistance» [4]. Somewhere in the depths of the heart he felt that sanctity of the steppe region, especially in the distance, when it was necessary to concentrate on the spiritual foundations of his method (this is also noticeable in his poetic works of those years).

The ancient cultures of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon Oleh Minko studied both at the art institute and in the studio of Zvirynsky. Only the last one – opened eyes to the peculiarities of the ancient form, its national specificity and age-old features. The study of

ancient cultures in the studio of Zvirynsky was also accompanied by independent tasks on the motif ... Therefore, the first attempts to use the archetype (zoomorphic and anthropomorphic silhouettes) in his reflections concerned ancient Egyptian and ancient Greek cultures. It is worth stressing here the plane interpretation of the space, its transcendental dimension, which O. Minko first used for the ancient Egyptian forms, and later – to those that resembled the typology of the Ukrainian archetype. Compositions with the material of Ukrainian culture by Oleh Minko have a very natural sound - they resemble either fragments of rocky reliefs («White Cave»), or plans of Trypillian settlements («Ceramics»). Even at the tactile level, Oleh Minko managed to recreate the ancient form of the Earth, avoiding banal designs with a sky or hint of a linear perspective.

In his "worldly life", the artist owed much to the family of Petro Linynsky, a famous Lviv antiquities collector [12, p. 26]. He lived in his home for some time, so he could not help absorbing the semantics of a unique collection of folk art – especially ceramics, in which the most ancient symbols are concentrated.

The emergence of archetypal structures in the work of Oleh Minko and other artists of the alternative environment of Lviv is primarily attributed to the tendencies of structuralist thinking, which, in the understanding of the leading analysts of the art of modernism, is «the final stage of resistance to the textuality and imperative of history».

The next turn of modernist practices can be considered Minko's «World Building» (1988–1996) – a kind of visualization of the individual ontologism of the artist, where he, contrary to the massive tastes and normative «rules of the Soviet man» since the end of the 1950s, cultivated the world of «other» values, different from the conventional: mythological and poetic worldview of «the early sixties» with its deepening into Ukrainian history, folk customs and mythology [9]. Many of the things which the artist planned but could not express at the time of the ideological pressures and creative crisis in the 1970s [12, p. 2639–40], he expressed at that time – in the late 1980s. The creativity of this period is the world of Minko's mythologemes which grew up from his philosophical naturalism: painting field flowers and birds, romantic sketches of the Svityaz' Lake, including the visualized memories of childhood, – up to large-scale surrealist plots as models of his microcosm. In the symbiosis of painting and his poetic notes of that time, one can also observe a kind

of reflection on the all-Ukrainian events of the national revival in the late 1980s, when the phenomenological themes of «reincarnation», «resurrection», and «manifestation of spiritual hierarchies» were showcased.

Recognized Roman classics as a prevailing aesthetic standard in the official art of Ukraine in the second half of the XX cent. was for Oleh Minko symptomatically the same as what was for the Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico – the culture of the conservative Italy of the 1920s. De Chirico ironized over the frozen pedestals of the Roman gods by hypertrophying their faces beyond all recognition, – thus outlining the context of the «dead territory», where a person feels abandoned [14, p. 110]. It is noteworthy that Min'ko had his own era of «dreadful landscapes» during the time of personal depression. From the culture of the Roman classic, de Chirico brought out pre-apocalyptic tension and despair, whereas O. Minko – a sarcasm of modern imitation. Unlike de Chirico's, Oleh Minko's childhood was emotionally happy, that is why his memorable fragments brought about subsequent mythologemes, in addition to the classic «cuckoo», «princess», and «silver water». These mythologemes are a kind of natural morality, through which he tried to perceive the world. Oleh Minko's etymology of dreams always has a positive meaning – as the projection of Paradise. He saw this «Paradise» with birds in the grass and the high sky every night, and, in images of Paradise, he sang about «the truths of a virtuous life». Once he said to his daughter Iryna that he felt the best in his dreams: there there was no need to compromise with himself, to meet insincere people ... [11].

A special «Minko's natural philosophy», where God's beauty can be found in the forms of poisonous fly agaric, is just one of the ways of emotional learning of the surrounding world: in immeasurably rich polyphony of colors and visual features of the sensual contemplation of the form.

A significant part of the artistic observations of the artist is his undisguised curiosity towards a particular type of people who can share kindness and wisdom. So among his «Paradise of Field Flowers, Flies and Herbs», there are social models of «righteous»: mother, aunt-fortuneteller, father. They are depicted in the format of iconographic semiotics – with halos and mandorlas, with a symbolic accent on the color of clothing and background. Among those models are also biblical symbols, and those that are visualized in the form of

esoteric transparent «auras» or energy fields. It is during this period of creative work that Oleh Minko is developing his semiotic alphabet: good and evil forces, models of time comprehension (with images of chronometers, apocalyptic signs), personification of concepts such as «betrayal», «evil tongues», «eavesdroppers» etc. Another social type - «tepid» or «evil» people – the artist takes beyond the picture, giving them the definition of sometimes non-anthropomorphic images: black ravens, cats or simply blurred silhouettes.

In the process of creating «his own world», of great importance for the artist was studying the ideological forms of various religions and myths. Symbolically-metaphorical models of Christianity, Buddhism, and Judaism manifested themselves in his artistic ontology in the image of the material nature of people and things and personification of abstract concepts. In Minko's compositions from the early to mid-1990s, coexist «antique centaurs» and «apocalyptic beasts» from John's prophecies, the types of «Buddha» and evangelical prophets.

The principle of «spiritualization» and then «encoding» of objects used in the method of K. Zvirynsky [5, p. 210–211], and before that – in the creative works of well-known European modernists such as K. Malevich [8, p. 252], Paul Klee [21, p. 97–107], Antoni Tapies [15, p. 98], – in Oleh Minko's creativity developed into a large-scale original form of «world building», which in compositions of a different nature, «philosophical dialogues» or «hierarchies», has a function of construction and cause-effect relationship.

In the early 1990s, at the time when those canvases were being created, in the Ukrainian society there was a high demand for a new ideological construct, on which the relations of the new post-totalitarian society could be built.

In the second half of the 1990s, the following themes appeared in the work of O. Minko: «pharisees and treason», «Diogenes' strangeness»; as if in theatrical scenery, here you will see the also the images of Pontius Pilate and the triumphant march of Don Quixote. The artist would always use the grotesque irony, as a means of absurd protest, knowing that nobody would probably get to the full reading of the characters ... Sometimes this grotesque form for the author was too acute and, when drawing small compositions, he did not always plan to exhibit them at all.

Oleh Minko's philosophical dialogues are almost graphic in their decision so as not to emphasize unnecessary details. It is important

here to recognize the grotesque images of antagonistic characters, their metaphorical definition or hidden role. In those compositions, the very symbolism of colors is selected very carefully: if it's the dialogue on high matter – then there's an antagonism of blue and dirty brown, if it's «earthly themes» – then there are contrasts with negative semantics: red and dirty green, black and white, dark blue and pale-gold.

All the works of this period are read accurately only if you know the whole semiotics of Minko's encodings: a black triangle with a slit of red tone – the prototype of the Soviet informer; a female profile of light tone – a symbol of truth. In each dialogue there are also the symbols of universal concepts: «Clock with a Cuckoo» – the inevitability of death; silhouette «Crucifixion» – an image of suffering; a sitting man with peculiar gesticulation at his head – a sage, a chessboard – talking about strategic actions, and so on. In addition, the characters of these works are actively gesturing: sometimes, in a pleading manner, they are «lining up to the Last Judgment», or, while arguing, they are dynamically waving their hands, or, as if cautioning against something, – showing the index finger. The gesturing language of Minko's images is too large for the list – it is rich to the extent that is required by the tension of the conversation between the artist and the viewers.

It is noteworthy that O. Minko's philosophical dialogues coincide with the actual issues of «paper independence» of 1991–2013 [3, p. 489], when Ukrainians, who «allegedly won their State» and got rid of control of the repressive car, remained, in fact, slaves in their worldview: in their attitudes toward personal freedom, spiritual values, private property and the common good.

Much of what O. Minko touches upon in his «dialogues», somehow was already expressed in the writings of the famous thinkers K. G. Jung [20], E. Ionescu [17] and J.-P. Sartre [19] in the late 1950s and mid-1960s. Then the forerunners of new humanism in western culture emphasized the critically small mass of moral intellectuals in the world. Their warning «bell beating» to a large extent concerned the frivolous attitude of the world community towards the great historical lessons of the Second World War, where millions of innocent people were killed due to the opposition of political ideologies. In the center of the problematics of the existentialist philosophers of that time was the Man with his sacramental sense of personal space and individual

value orientations. The temperature of the western existential revolt of the 1950s was kept with a post-industrial resistance syndrome in the mid-1960s, where attention to Man already had the character of a pessimistic statement: «progress kills everything human in man» [2, p. 167]. Given that O. Minko was interested in the progressive philosophical ideas of the Western world, his «philosophical dialogues» could be imposed on the model of social analytics of the history of Ukrainian society from the mid-1990s to the beginning of the 2000, with its cynical projections on the political and state systems.

A group of these artistic works by Oleh Minko is well suited for popular social models of artistic analytics in the West, when social patterns of behavior or actual discourse contexts can be read in vertical content structures. To a certain extent, the investigated artistic phenomena of totalitarian and post-totalitarian societies today give an insight into the Ukrainian alternative context, with its universal phenomena of social exclusion and the struggle against stereotypes of mass culture.

All of Oleh Minko's creativity is imbued with the idea of «finding spiritual references». The formation of this artist took place at the time of leveling moral values. His aesthetic position began with the value opposition to the official doctrine. Therefore, among the phenomena of Lviv alternative art of the second half of the twentieth century, it is his way in art that is most closely related to the European non-classical practices of the twentieth century, where art was also closely linked to the value manifesto. In the typology of the «hierarchies», which in Western culture gained its development back in the 1950s, revealed itself his empirical and sensory experience in art (the transfer of perception into a sign), also, the ability to encode its own ontological forms (to create his artistic model of the world) and his own value position (images of «good» and «evil» on the basis of mastered spiritual practices and mythology).

The artist himself never called the works «hierarchies», but from the late 1990s he painted even landscape compositions with copyright marks. This inner need to saturate the land with «the images of dead heroes», bodies of water – with biblical symbols of forces of nature, the horizon – with the mythical characters of "centaurs" and "pegasus" – showed the structuring of his spiritual world.

Oleh Minko also reconsidered all the «classical hierarchies»: he

took much from the «mistagogy» of the eastern icon and the mediative spheres of the eastern religions. However, his experiential coordinates remained stable: moral authorities from his own life, people of good fame and ordinary wise men. In many respects, the artist deliberately speaks with irony of the status of «traditional saints», giving them in the hands of a cane (stick) instead of keys from the temple. So he positions his own attitude toward holiness: not as part of dogma, but as a sense of proximity to Christ's virtues. In Minko's hierarchies the same roles are taken by scenes of the Lord's Passion, «Riders Without a Head» and «Faces of Travelers» – as if emphasizing the new relevance of simple stories, where the categories of love, forgiveness and rest are determinative.

It can be assumed that Oleh Minko's works of this group and those, similar by typology, in the work of other Ukrainian artists, complete the so called «era of structuralism», which was chronologically delayed in all countries of Eastern Europe until the mid-1980s. Its accompanying historical forms – restoration of tradition, national self-affirmation, restoration of religious cults – implies the perception in an artistic product, in addition to horizontal reading (plot and themes), of several vertical structures at once (archetypal models, historiosophical metaphor, context of subconscious collective ontology, and existential reflection).

In O. Minko's creative work, the positional typology of Western modernism was manifested. His storytelling hero at some point watches the world, as the events in Paradise, from the sinner's position (the icon-painting line of the earth), at the other point – looks at everything from above, as if «flying like a bird». His contemporaries from the West at one time perceived engaged opposition to the bodily world as a new ideology. It was also a peculiar ideological ideology for O. Minko, as for the majority who was in the context of the intellectual rebellion of the 1960s. Oleh Minko's sublime world is turning back to the center of human existence, where the problems of individual creative freedom and the establishment of national identity converge. His creative work, as well as the nature of European unreal trends, is also reversed against a global falsehood: at all stages of his creative evolution, he was sensitive to all manifestations of social injustice and marginal phenomena that had a root in the «Soviet system» The formal nature of Minko's works is extremely close to the context of the artistic phenomena of late modernism in Western Europe, where

artistic content has crossed the boundaries of visual reach, and the plane of the picture is no longer a platform for the definition of reality.

The formative experience of the artist greatly influenced his attitude to the methodology of teaching artistic disciplines at the textile department of the Lviv National Academy of Arts, where he worked for the last thirty years. One can even say that O. Minko's creative principles influenced the formation of a modern school of Lviv textile, where among the strategic tasks of the educational process is to maintain a connection between the traditional basis of ancient crafts and contemporary artistic thinking. The artist's abstract composition "eternity" is not accidentally chosen for the title page of this catalogue since in it there is the quintessence of Minko's creative method – «to make the sign from the seen».

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ANNOTATION

Bohdan Mysiuha. Evolution of Oleh Minko's Creative Method as an Example of Developing the Typology of Modernism in Lviv Art in the second half of the XXth century. The article analyzes the main stages of the evolution of Oleh Minko's creative method in the context of the development of modernist typology in the art of Lviv. The first stage is the period of Oleh Minko's study at the underground academy of Karl Zvirynsky during 1959–1963 when the young student mastered the artistic trends of the classical avant-garde: analytic and synthetic cubism, fauvism, and the method of translating perception into a symbol. The second stage (1963–1966) was the analysis of the form of ancient cultures and methodical exercises with the form of archetype, which is remarkable for the artistic practices of high modernism. As the third stage (1980–90s), those creative works can be considered where Oleh Minko, in full-scale sketches, "builds the inner world" on the example of European surrealists. The last stage falls on (1995–2000), where the artist forms a distinctive type of figurative structure of the "hierarchy". Specific typology of Minko's works of the second half of the twentieth century. is extremely close to the context of artistic phenomena of high and late modernism in Western Europe.

Key words: creative method, Oleh Minko, typology, modernism, Lviv art.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Богдан Мысюга. Эволюция творческого метода Олега Минько, как пример развития типологии модернизма в искусстве Львова второй половины XX в. В статье проанализированы основные этапы становления творческого метода Олега Минько в контексте развития модернистской типологии в искусстве Львова. Первым этапом можно считать период обучения Олега Минько в «подпольной академии Карла Зверин-

ского» на протяжении 1959–1963 гг., когда молодой студент освоил художественные течения классического авангарда: аналитический и синтетический кубизм, фовизм и метод перевода перцепции в символ. Вторым этапом были анализ формы древних культур и методические упражнения с формой архетипа 1963-1966гг., что примечательно для художественных практик высокого модернизма. Третьим этапом можно считать творчество сер. 1980–1990-х, где Олег Минько в натуральных зарисовках "развивает внутренний мир" по примеру европейских сюрреалистов. Последний этап приходится на 1995–2000-е гг., где художник формирует самобытный тип образной структуры "иерархии". Образная типология произведений художника второй половины XX в. предельно приближена к контексту художественных явлений высокого и позднего модернизма в Западной Европе.

Ключевые слова: творческий метод, Олег Минько, типология, модернизм, искусство Львова.