

Мистецькі постаті

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<https://doi.org/10.37131/2524-0943-2024-53-15>Olena **Yakymova**

Candidate of Art Criticism, Senior Lecturer of Glass Art
Department of Lviv National Academy of Arts
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3121-6480>

Andriy Petrovskyi Early Years Artistic Approach: from the Glassblower to Professional Artist

Annotation. Andriy Petrovski is widely recognized in Ukraine's artistic community, particularly in Lviv, as well as abroad as a glass artist. In 2024, he was awarded the Regional Prize of Lviv oblast (region) named after Zenoviy Flynta in the field of culture, literature, art, journalism, and architecture for his series of creative works titled "Thoughts about...". The series was created between 2021 and 2024 and is likely to continue.

Andriy Petrovski's art pieces are in high demand on the international market, being sold on global online platforms such as Artsy and Wright, as well as featured in various auctions. However, his path toward becoming a professional artist remains relatively unknown. His formal and informal mentors in the glassblowing and, subsequently, glass art were glassmakers from the Lviv Ceramics and Sculpture Factory (LKSF) and a generation of glass artists who were the pioneers of the studio glass movement in Ukraine, exactly in Lviv, particularly A. Bokotey and F. Chernyak.

Based on interviews with the artist himself, this study reveals the phenomenon of his creative method, which began to take shape during his time as a master glassblower at the Lviv Ceramic and Sculpture Experimental Factory and continues to evolve today. Using photos provided by the artist and the data gathered during interviews, the article describes the visual and artistic-plastic characteristics of his glass works. It also analyzes the artistic and conceptual aspects of his creations, starting with his earliest experiments in serial production at the LKSF, followed by his exploration of form and artistic language during his studies at the Lviv Academy of Arts to his first

independent works.

One of the defining characteristics of Petrovski's glass pieces has been the use of colorless glass and experiments with materials that could give it color and texture. At the same time, he explored form itself and its possibilities, particularly its scale, in creating large-scale glass sculptures – an important professional challenge for the young artist.

Keywords: creativity, experiment, art, artistic image, artistic features, decorative art, studio glass, international studio glass movement.

Blown glass is an art that captivates with its unpredictability and unique magic. This magic is directly related to the process of its creation in the crucible of a blow furnace where the glass mass is cooked, from which in the skillful hands of the master vases, jugs, glasses, and original works are obtained. Ukrainian blown glass has been known since Kyiv Rus times. Its research in the context of utilitarian functions and visual characteristics was included in several recognized monographs and collective research works about decorative and applied art since Soviet times. Glass art pieces are a significant component of the collections and exhibitions in many Ukrainian museums, in particular the National Museum of Decorative Arts of Ukraine and the Museum of Glass in Lviv. At the same time, the value of Ukrainian blown glass does not raise any doubts about its place in the development of the glass industry in Europe. In the 19th - 20th centuries on the territory of western Ukraine more than 20 hutas and factories operated. High-quality samples of mass-produced products from high-quality colorless and colored glass were produced there. It can also be safely stated that glass art is an important part of the heritage and development of Ukrainian applied and fine arts. At the same time, due to changes in consumer needs and several economic factors, artists who worked and are working with this material are now more clearly developing the variety of the author's glass art within the international studio glass movement. One of the bright and original representatives of the middle generation of this movement is the glass artist Andriy Petrovskyi. In 2024, he was awarded the Zenovy Flinta

Regional Prize of Lviv Oblast in the field of culture, literature, art, journalism, and architecture for the series of creative works "Thoughts about...". This series was created over the past three years (2021 - 2024). Each artwork is a kind of the artist's reflection on the situation all around. In these artworks, he appears as a well-established artist with a clearly expressed author's style, which is recognizable not only among professionals and colleagues of the artist but also among art connoisseurs. At the same time, printed and online sources about glass art contain almost no data about the artist's creative path and the ways of his evolution as a creative personality. It is worth paying attention to the artist's works of that period. It could be described as transitional. It was the period of his studies at the Lviv Academy of Arts and the transition from mass production to the author's art pieces with distinct content at a time of significant changes in the perception of the artist and his tasks, in particular in the field of glass art.

The study of the processes that formed the new artistic environment, as well as the personalities of the artists who still participate in its formation, is rather poorly covered in the art historical discourse of Ukraine. The studies about Ukrainian, in particular Lviv, glass art are devoted to the works of O. Fedoruk ("Maestro of Art Glass"), Z. Chegusova ("Glass of Ukraine", "Professional Decorative Art of Ukraine in the Age of Globalization", etc.), articles by M. Bokotei, R. Fur, N. Benyakh, L. Smakova. The mentioned monographs and articles highlight the stages of development and formation of the studio glass art movement in Ukraine, as well as individual personalities, in particular Andriy Bokotei, Franz Chernyak, Oles Zvir, etc. The continuous activity of the International Blown Glass Symposium in Lviv, which has been held every three years since 1989, is sufficiently fully disclosed in the publications of the above-mentioned authors. At the same time, the names of the middle generation of artists, in particular Andriy Petrovsky, are only briefly mentioned. The opportunity to use the materials of interviews with the artist and his photo archive provides prospects for studying the work of this artist.

The art of blown glass created by the free-blowing method is primarily a collaboration between a master glassblower and an artist. Often the role of the master is downplayed, and only the author of the idea is mentioned in catalogs and exhibition labels. Today, there is much talk in art circles about making the mention of the master mandatory, because most

of the time it is his hands that make the work. In the history of blown glass, of course, there are many examples when these two roles were combined in one person. It is important to note that at the time when the studio glass movement was emerging, most masters, eager to experiment with glass as a material and wanted to discover its not utilitarian, but artistic properties, worked with hot glass independently. Artists commonly were moving from other branches of decorative art, in particular ceramics, and wanted to master glass as a medium with all its artistic possibilities.

Thanks to the activities of Andriy Bokotey, the international studio movement in the 1980s gradually became a component of the artistic processes that took place at the Lviv Experimental Ceramic and Sculpture Factory and at the Lviv Academy of Arts [4]. Mostly all glass blowers were migrating between different factories and institutions. Also, Andriy Petrovsky's path in the field of art began with his work as a glass blower, when he had the opportunity to perform his own art pieces outside of his main job on specially designated days. Working as a master at the academy's training furnace, the future artist learned the craft from the best glass blowers, to whom he owes the development of his artistic talent. As the artist himself notes, development is possible only when you understand that "you have already done this and that... you need to try something different. And you start looking forward to a new idea..." [1]. The desire to develop your artistic talent prompted the future artist to enroll in the Lviv Academy of Arts. He combined the work of a glass blower and studies, working in parallel as a training master at the training furnace at the academy. In part, as the artist himself notes, this became the basis for possible creative experiments as he worked alone. Wanting to move away from the traditional form of typical production and its usual color, he began to use various additional chemical substances in combination with ordinary transparent glass. Glass, in particular colored glass, which is formed through chemical reactions with red-hot glass mass, has always been a rather expensive material. Technologically, it is impossible to simultaneously prepare glass of different colors in one furnace, so only transparent colorless glass was mostly available. It received its color by treating the colorless surface with various chemicals and their reaction with hot glass. First of all, these were copper sulfate, copper oxide, and later nickel and manganese, which were used for internal or external reactions with hot glass. The color scheme that the artist achieved was

usually limited to a palette of blue-green and gray-violet colors. Also, some of the first experiments were associated with the use of sandblasting of ready-made products of a non-usable nature. The traditional form of a vase began to transform into an original thing in the hands of the artist. It gradually moved away from its utility in favor of the creative realization of the idea. Form-making and technological searches in this case were a single whole of the creative process. The main feature of the products was that they were made based on a solid jar. There were no elements that would be glued using hot glass. From the artist's words, we can notice that the main reason for this was the fact that he worked alone, without assistants. All parts, and there could be up to eight of them, were created from a single mold. At first, a simple shape was created by the free molding method of glass blowing, and then it was divided, pierced, and pulled out. It is important to emphasize that due to these manipulations, the shape of the product, in particular the vase, was amenable to twisting and authorial modeling. Also during this period, artist began to use soda to achieve a matte surface texture. The reaction of sodium carbonate with hot glass makes it possible to visually deform the usual perception of the glass surface as a shiny material. Another characteristic property of glass, which has always been appreciated in this material, is its transparency. In his experiments, Andriy Petrovsky somewhat "neglects" this property. The combination of transparent and tinted elements becomes a characteristic feature of the artist's works. Also, working on solving student tasks, he combined various materials, in particular glass with wood, stone or metal.

The next stage, when, in the opinion of the young artist, he exhausted the possibilities of transforming applied art objects, there was a need to begin searching for a new, more figurative form for expressing ideas. The transitional stage can be considered the moment when he created spatial compositions in which several elements formed a more massive structure. At the top, the shape remained completely reminiscent of a traditional household vase, and towards the bottom, it transformed into a kind of Tower of Babel. The modularity of the composition made it possible to reach a height of up to one meter. This work will later be exhibited at the artist's personal exhibition in the Netherlands.

Studying at the Academy of Arts allowed not only to reproduce ideas using an intuitive method. It

formed a clear understanding of the importance of a methodological approach to work, which in the future the artist will instill with his students. Using a fairly traditional method of stylization and transformation, Andriy Petrovsky took as a basis a classical antique vase and its reliefs. In fact, he clearly transferred the ceramic form to glass, subsequently cutting and refining the figures. Then the artist began to make small stamps, cast small glass elements and glue them to the glass "hot". Thus, the idea of creating a diploma project "Odyssey of Glass" arose [6] and consisted of 13 pieces. Although the development of this theme in the artist's work continued for several more years after completing his studies. Experimenting, he continued to look for opportunities to develop this theme. The work went beyond the boundaries of the workshop and, thanks to this, the traditional form of a vase was abandoned. At the same time, images inspired by antiquity continued to shape the content of the works, although they only remotely resembled classical forms. The fascination with antiquity and its forms also formed the basis of the Three Elements series. In this case, the direct basis was nature and its most powerful forces: fire, wind and water. It was in this series that he began to use and actively combine glass with other materials, in particular with metal and wood. Glass was the dominant material, which was supplemented (no more than 30 percent) with other elements. The approbation of this project took place in the Kyiv Planetarium as part of a personal exhibition.

While studying at the Academy of Arts, the artist mastered sculptural techniques for creating form, and this prompted him to new form-making searches. Starting with samples of smaller sculptures, in particular female and male torsos, as well as full-figure compositions. For them, he developed a preparatory form. Then, a general figure was poured into it from blown glass, which later acquired elegant plastic forms using cold glass processing methods. In larger-scale works, the artist initially continued to adhere to the shape of a vase, but already made of several parts. Compositions blown from several elements were finished using sandblasting and assembled into a single form. During further experiments, the form was turned over and began to resemble a sculpture more, but with one feature - it was made of blown glass. In order to avoid duplication and reveal the specificity of glass as a medium, while working with hot glass, elements that could not be simply molded were glued and added. The glass sculptures became even

more unique and consistent with the material when A. Petrovsky began to cut them, adding layers of glass between the parts, thus fragmenting the whole image. The desire to create larger, sculptural forms following the example of American glass artists prompted the search for technical solutions in the implementation of ideas into life. In fact, in this case, the powerful training of the artist as a professional glassmaker played an important role.

In the 90s of the twentieth century, certain changes were observed in the curricula of the Glass Department of the Lviv Academy of Arts, which mainly specialized in training designers of mass-produced products. The period of Andriy Petrovsky's studies at the Lviv Academy of Arts fell on a period when the direction of the Glass Department shifted from completely consumer to author's glass. Within the framework of educational tasks, students were allowed to search for more modern forms of expression. Young people with their inherent expression began to use elements of installation, performance, and kinetic art in their works. In particular, one of Andriy Petrovsky's semester works was constructed from glass tubes and auxiliary elements. This gave it kineticity. Its parts could move and modify the image. Not only semester but also diploma works began to correspond to the latest trends of the time. Most of the diploma projects were already consonant with the time, exhibited in the form of installations, and reflected certain philosophical ideas.

In general, the series of works "Antiquity" (1994), the composition "Towers of Babel" (1997), the cycle of works "Odyssey of Glass" (1998), the project "Three Elements", the decorative plastic "Cepheus" created during the period of study [8] and formation of the artist's creative method, clearly outlined his interest in the ancient heritage and the strong foundation that the academy provided in the study of basic disciplines, in particular the history of art. They trace the continuity of the tradition of the Lviv school of blown glass. As one of the artist's teachers, Andriy Bokotey, noted, in Andriy Petrovsky's work, "the synthesis of tradition and modern concepts of fine art" is noticeable [1].

Participation in the International Symposiums of Blown Glass in Lviv (1992, 1995) as a master glassblower and an independent artist had an impact on the young artist. Cooperation, interaction, and exchange of experience, characteristic of the work of the symposium, expanded the possibilities of Andriy Petrovsky. Sometimes foreign artists came to Lviv as

private initiatives at the invitation of Lviv colleagues, in particular Andriy Bokotey. For Andriy Petrovsky, interaction with the world community of glassmakers also actively took place through exhibitions, including personal ones, and several months of internships abroad, in particular in Canada.

While still studying at the academy, he demonstrated his work in Ukraine and abroad, in particular at personal exhibitions in Austria in Bad Leonfelden "Sparkasse Galerie" (1996) and the Netherlands in Utrecht at "Galerie Pavlovsky" (1996).

Having undoubtedly gone through the path from a master glass blower to a professional artist, Andriy Petrovsky was able to comprehend all the secrets of the craft and reach a qualitatively different level in his work. Understanding the chemical and technological processes of working with hot glass, and experimenting, he gradually formed a delicious recognizable artistic "handwriting". It is precisely technological experiments that are consonant with the visual properties that are characteristic of the artist's art pieces today. Among the artistic and stylistic features of Andriy Petrovsky's works of this period, one can single out the attraction to classical forms based on which formal training took place at a higher education institution. In particular, the curriculum was saturated with copying and rethinking of classical ancient forms. While studying at the academy, and working on semester assignments, the young artist experimented not only with the physical and technological properties of glass. He was looking for a way to embody the idea of that classical ideal, in particular an antique vase or figurative sculpture. Therefore, it was the familiar vases and torsos that acquired modern forms and unusual meanings in the early period of Andriy Petrovsky's work.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Олена Якимова. Художній метод у ранній творчості Андрія Петровського: від майстра складова до професійного митця. Андрій Петровський широко відомий в мистецькому середовищі України, зокрема Львова, а також за кордоном художник-скляр. 2024 року він отримав Обласну премію Львівщини в галузі культури, літератури, мистецтва, журналістики та архітектури імені Зеновія Флінти за серію творчих робіт «Думки про...». Ця серія була створена впродовж 2021–2024 рр. та цілком ймовірно матиме продовження. Твори Андрія Петровського мають значний попит на міжнародному ринку, зокрема продаються на таких всесвітніх платформах як Artsy, Wright тощо, а також представлені на різноманітних он-лайн аукціонах. Водночас, шлях становлення Андрія Петровського як митця маловідомий. Формальними та неформальними провідниками у професію гутника та в подальшому митця-скляра стали для нього старші гутники Львівської кераміко-скульптурної фабрики та плеяда митців-склярів, які формували студійний рух художнього скла України та Львова, зокрема А.Бокотей та Ф.Черняк. На основі інтерв'ю з самим художником розкрито феномен його творчого методу, що почав формуватися ще в часі роботи майстром-гутником на Львівській кераміко-скульптурній експериментальній фабриці та продовжує вдосконалюватися і сьогодні. Базуючись на фотоматеріалах наданих митцем та даних виявлених під час інтерв'ювання було зроблено опис візуальних та художньо-пластичних властивостей, а також проведено аналіз художньо-образних характеристик творів митця починаючи від перших експериментів на основі тиражної продукції кераміко-скульптурної фабрики, а в подальшому пошуків форми та мистецької мови під час навчання у Львівській академії мистецтв і перших самостійних творах. Виявлено, що однією з характерних особливостей стало використання безбарвного скла та експериментів з матеріалами, які б могли надати йому кольору та фактури. Водночас велася робота з самою формою, зокрема її розмірами, для створення скляних масштабних скульптур, що стали важливим професійним викликом для молодого митця.

Ключові слова: творчість, експеримент, мистецтво, художній образ, художні особливості, декоративне мистецтво, художнє скло, міжнародний рух студійного скла



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