













Category: Arts and Humanities

ORIGINAL

Evolution of S. Hordynsky's views on art practice and theory in the late XX century

Evolución de las opiniones de S. Hordynsky sobre la práctica y la teoría del arte a finales del siglo XX

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze and elucidate the development, contradictions, and influences of Ukrainian artists in America, focusing on the theoretical and practical contributions of Sviatoslav Hordynsky to both American and Ukrainian art traditions. The methodology employed includes a comprehensive historical analysis of archival materials, a comparative analysis of Ukrainian and American artworks, a thematic analysis of recurring motifs in Hordynsky's writings and works, and an interpretative analysis of critical reviews and scholarly articles on Ukrainian artists in America. The main findings reveal how Ukrainian artists integrated into and influenced the American art scene, adapting their styles while maintaining their cultural identity. The study highlights Hordynsky's role in bridging Ukrainian and American art traditions, showcasing his contributions to the development of a unique Ukrainian-American artistic identity. Furthermore, it uncovers the intellectual and artistic currents that shaped the creative processes of Ukrainian artists in America, emphasizing the significance of national identity and cultural integration. In conclusion, this research provides a nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between Ukrainian and American art traditions in the second half of the twentieth century, underlining the pivotal role of Hordynsky in this cultural exchange. The study contributes to the broader discourse on the evolution of art in diasporic contexts and the preservation of cultural heritage amidst dynamic socio-political landscapes.

Keywords: Ukrainian Artist; Art; Paintings; Development of Ukrainian Artistic Culture.

RESUMEN

Las contradicciones entre Y. Soloviy y S. Hordynsky son de doble naturaleza: por un lado, Y. Soloviy criticó sin razón el entorno artístico ucraniano, olvidándose del origen y no reconociendo su propio potencial creativo. Esto está estrechamente relacionado con el problema de la educación estética de la sociedad, que a menudo se caracterizaba por un sabor no moderno y provinciano. S. Hordynsky se ofreció a crear un arte aceptado por los círculos más amplios de nuestra sociedad, teniendo en cuenta elementos del estilo nacional ucraniano, independientemente de que fuera «conservador» o «moderno». Las posiciones teóricas de S. Hordynsky se basan en gran medida no sólo en la comprensión de la sincronicidad, sino también en la síntesis de procesos, ideas y conceptos artísticos. Un papel igualmente importante en la formación de las posiciones de visión del mundo de S. Hordynsky lo desempeñaron los debates altamente complejos y acalorados que dirigió. Al

principio, en los años 50, el artista se dedicó más a las naturalezas muertas y los retratos, pero más tarde - a los paisajes. S. Hordynsky siguió trabajando en la mejora del diseño formal y estilístico de los cuadros de caballete, pero no estaba al mismo nivel de las tendencias actuales que en el periodo parisino. En la segunda mitad del siglo XX, S. Hordynsky se mostró sobre todo en el arte de la pintura de caballete y de iconos monumentales. Un lugar importante en su arte lo ocupan los iconostasios.

Palabras clave: Artista Ucraniano; Arte; Pinturas; Desarrollo de la Cultura Artística Ucraniana.

INTRODUCTION

Sviatoslav Hordynsky is a Ukrainian artist, graphic artist, art historian, a translator who immigrated to the USA during the Second World War and lived there for the rest of his life. The Ideologically-thematic and genre specificity of S. Hordynsky's works in the United States has changed dramatically. The artist turned from graphic art and painting. Occasionally he produced numerous pictorial portraits, landscapes and still-lives. Several dozens of these works S. Hordynsky created during his more than fifty years stay in the United States, with occasional trips to Europe, Australia and Canada. The artist possessed a special stylistic of images interpretation in a straightforward perspective, based on a Byzantine aesthetic with a distinctive spirit of the Proto-Renaissance. The iconography of S. Hordynsky's images iconography stretches to the synthesis of the Eastern (Byzantine) face and European-Slavic type, interpreted in the artist's original stylistic manner.

The strength of the paradigm of S. Hordynsky's art was theoretical legacy, which includes more than 300 scientific-polemical works. A lot of Ukrainian researchers on immigration wrote about the S. Hordynsky, such as E. Blakytyny, L. Drazhevska, I. Zelyk, Z. Pelensky.^(1,2,3,4) Moreover, during Ukraine's Independence, a lot of scholarly debates have appeared in the Ukrainian artistic discourse between H. Berehovska, B. Horyn, V. Fedoruk, R. Lubkivsky, M. Slaboshpytsky in particular about the Ukrainian-American artist.^(5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13) A large corpus of publications consists of articles written in the second half of the twentieth century by S. Hordynsky himself which have allowed analysing the evolution of his views on contemporary problems of art practice and theory.^(14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33)

The role of S. Hordynsky in the theoretical reflection on the development of the twentieth-century Ukrainian artistic culture is quite remarkable. The artist tried, often successfully, to eliminate the stereotype of artistic secondariness of Ukrainian culture, trying to prove the uniqueness of the aesthetic nature of Ukrainian art in his theoretical works. In particular, he developed his own approaches to studying the problems of Ukrainian art development in different socio-cultural environments, art and culturological contexts, taking into account the conditions of lifestyle and creative activity of "Ukrainians in Ukraine", "Ukrainians in Europe" and "Ukrainians in America".

Theoretical positions of S. Hordynsky to a large extent are based not only on the understanding of synchronicity, but also on the synthesis of artistic processes, ideas, and concepts. An equally important role in the formation of world-view positions of S. Hordynsky was played by the highly complex and heated debates he led with leading art historians and critics of the Ukrainian art scene, especially when he lived and worked in the United States. These discussions, which were often reflected on the pages of migrant periodicals, allow identifying the varied personality of the artist more clearly and, most importantly, to understand the interrelationship between his artistic-creative method and art-critic views.

In view of the importance of discussing the discursive and often controversial aspects of S. Hordynsky's creative activity, the debates between him and Y. Soloviy should be considered, which were going on for many years on issues of Ukrainian art in the conditions of immigration, the role of Ukrainian migrants in world art processes, exhibition activity, and more. Y. Soloviy was one of the few who joined S. Hordynsky in a culturological "debate", especially about the level of the Ukrainian "artistic product" at exhibitions. For example, the exhibition of Ukrainian graphics and sculpture at the People's House in New York City in 1959. The exhibition demonstrated the catastrophic situation regarding sculpture which, as it turned out, had absolutely no place in the lives of Ukrainians. Y. Soloviy attributed everything, except the lack of financial means, to "the underdeveloped intellectual level of our population, which at the same time creates an anti-creative climate...".⁽²⁸⁾

The purpose of this article is to analyze and elucidate the development, contradictions, and influences of Ukrainian artists in America, focusing on the theoretical and practical contributions of Sviatoslav Hordynsky to both American and Ukrainian art traditions.

METHOD

This study employs a comprehensive methodological approach to analyze the development and influence of Ukrainian art in America, focusing particularly on the contributions of Sviatoslav Hordynsky. The methods

utilized in this study are as follows:

The first method involves a thorough historical analysis to trace the evolution of Ukrainian art and its integration into American culture. This approach includes the examination of archival materials such as periodicals, monographs, and correspondence from key figures in the Ukrainian art diaspora. Primary sources, including letters and personal documents of artists like Hordynsky, are scrutinized to gain insights into their personal experiences, motivations, and the socio-political contexts that influenced their work. This historical context provides a foundational understanding of the temporal and cultural shifts that impacted Ukrainian art's development in the American milieu.

The second method is a comparative analysis, which juxtaposes the works of Ukrainian artists with those of their American contemporaries. This analysis focuses on identifying stylistic convergences and divergences, allowing for a deeper understanding of how Ukrainian artists adapted and transformed their styles within the American environment. The comparative approach involves detailed visual and contextual examinations of selected artworks, comparing elements such as technique, themes, and stylistic influences. By analyzing these components, the study uncovers how Ukrainian artists both integrated into and influenced the broader American art scene.

A thematic analysis is employed to explore the recurring motifs and themes in Hordynsky's theoretical writings and artistic works. This method involves coding and categorizing themes across various texts and artworks to identify patterns and ideologies that shaped the artistic expressions of Hordynsky and his contemporaries. Key themes such as national identity, cultural integration, and the interplay between tradition and modernity are examined. This thematic approach provides insights into the intellectual and artistic currents that influenced the creative processes of Ukrainian artists in America.

Finally, an interpretative analysis of critical reviews and scholarly articles on Hordynsky and other Ukrainian artists in America is conducted. This involves synthesizing critiques from a range of sources, including art historians, critics, and contemporaneous reviews, to present a balanced view of the artists' contributions to both Ukrainian and American art traditions. This analysis considers the reception and impact of Ukrainian art within the American context, highlighting how these artists were perceived and evaluated by the art community and the public. The study integrates these methodologies to construct a comprehensive narrative of Ukrainian art development in America. By combining historical context, comparative visual analysis, thematic exploration, and interpretative critique, the research provides a multifaceted perspective on the contributions of Ukrainian artists. This integrative approach ensures a nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between Ukrainian and American art traditions, emphasizing the role of Sviatoslav Hordynsky as a pivotal figure in this cultural exchange.

The development of American art

The contradictions between Y. Soloviy and S. Hordynsky are of a dual nature: on the one hand, Y. Soloviy unreasonably criticised the Ukrainian art environment, forgetting about origin and not recognising his own creative potential. Without attaining a certain level of fulfilment of the formal tasks of contemporary art at that time, which was moving in the dynamic stream of actual stylistic trends, the artist himself tried to reproach his peers for their inability and their "erroneous artistic taste with which they infected the public".⁽³⁰⁾ On the other hand, the competition always tries to keep the opponents in form. The constant reproaches of Y. Soloviy to S. Hordynsky and UAA (Ukrainian artists of America) gave the opportunity to reconsider their own possibilities, passing the test for the level of propriety, relevance and creative specificity in the mainstream of American culture.

This is closely linked to the problem of the aesthetic education of society, which was often characterised by a non-modern and provincial flavour. Sviatoslav Hordynsky offered to create art accepted by the widest circles of our society, taking into account elements of Ukrainian national style regardless of whether it is "conservative" or "modern".⁽³⁰⁾ There were many differing opinions on UAA: some were dissatisfied with its lack of art policy; others saw uniting by ethnic origin as a true ghetto. The majority of the migrants artists felt self-sufficient without consolidation. However, there had to be an institution or person responsible for the integrity of Ukrainian art life in the diaspora. So UAA was it - a gathering of artists by their national identity of different generations and orientations, aware of their historical responsibility in the face of artistic and cultural processes, who have followed the new directions in world art and have fractionally introduced in their own works.⁽²⁸⁾

S. Hordynsky as head of the Ukrainian artists of America, noted that the art of Ukrainian immigrants has a range of creative personalities: neorealists Y. Hnizdovsky, L. Molodozhnyn and M. Chereshnyovsky; expressionists O. Hryshchenko, M. Butovych, M. Nedilko, M. Moroz; the Neo-Byzantists P. Kholodny, M. Osinchuk, as well as modernists - world-famous sculptor O. Arkhypenko, painters M. Levytsky, H. Mazepa, L. Hutsalyuk, T. Virsta, A. Olenka-Petryshyn, K. Milonadis.

In the words of the researcher, they took part in the general vortex of world art, often staying in its

vanguard, creating art in forms related to the Ukrainian worldview. Ukrainian artists have always sought new creative expression ways based on the old traditions, constantly linking their art to their ethnogenetic roots: on the one hand, they preserved their own spiritual values, while on the other they absorbed the values of other cultures. S. Hordynsky identified a separate place in his theoretical work for sculpture, dividing it into two groups: abstract, represented by O. Arkhypenko and K. Milonadis, and realistic and academic, represented by A. Dragan and M. Cheresnyovskyy, H. Kruk, however, the realism of the latter oscillated between monumentalism and expressionism.⁽³⁰⁾ S. Hordynsky considered the artistic value of the work itself to be the most important criterion, regardless of the direction in which it was created.⁽⁹⁾

In the middle of the twentieth century the dominant styles in American art were abstract expressionism and neorealism. The homogeneity of American life had its effect on art. Thus, we can understand the escape of American artists to abstraction as a mathematical rule. Due to S. Hordynsky, Jacques Maritain was the one who properly summed up the task of the new painting. Maritain said “Only when contemporary painting understands that there is only one way to effective transposition, deformation, a transformation of natural forms and that is through poetic intuition, it will come out of its state”.⁽²⁴⁾ The Ukrainian artist, who lived in this environment, had to decide whether to create “only for himself”, preserving his individuality by resolving complex formal problems of volume and colours or to create according to the demands of the society.

“American artists understood art as uncontrolled painting”, a solid mass of paint, not caring about technology, but rather engaging in the occult.⁽³⁰⁾ At the same time, the French art of painting was getting closer to pure painting, with harmonious integration of ideas and techniques. Critics have sometimes accused American painters of lacking a national character. This was witnessed at the World Exposition Montreal in 1967, where various art galleries were represented: Italian, French, English and others. The participants were artists who represented the culture of the USSR: T. Yablonska, V. Kasian, V. Lytvynenko, H. Yakutovych.⁽³⁰⁾ S. Hordynsky published information not only about Ukrainian art and artists who were members of the “association of artists”. S. Hordynsky agreed with the statements of the English critic Herbert Read in “The Philosophy of Modern Art”, who spoke primarily of the absence of a root of American art, filled with rebellious individualism, and the absence of a national school.⁽²⁴⁾

S. Hordynsky as an art historian has broken fundamental theoretical questions about the creative status of twentieth-century Ukrainian foreign artists - their self-affirmation as modernists or postmodernists. Highlighting their assimilation and their partial organic integration into global art circles, the author illustrated the structure of their new world view in the struggle for recognition to become part of world art scene. The author has repeatedly risen the problem of interpreting the Ukrainian contribution to world culture as secondary: “there is a tendency to relegate everything Ukrainian to insignificant, as an appendage to Russian...”.⁽²⁾ S. Hordynsky also analysed the creative reaction of Ukrainian artists to the development of American art, arguing that Ukrainians do not have to fully adapt to American trends, limiting their works to illustrations. For example, one of the most popular American painters of the 50s, N. Rockwell, described in his monograph how he painted the compositions not from nature, but from colour photographs: he was launching the projection apparatus onto the canvas, thus copying nature.

Development of Ukrainian art in Ukraine

Ukrainian artists understood that modern art by its very nature is set up for experimentation, for the search of new formal and psychological means of expression, and modernists, often having for themselves the experience of artistic epochs, create paintings which are refined by the look of the form and manner of transmission.

It is always interesting to trace the course of development of each artist based on his time and varied, often conflicting artistic tendencies. In the 1950s, modern world art gravitated mainly towards two styles - the cubist-constructive and the expressionistic, with a strong tendency of these styles towards unrealistic and abstract. “Action painting” was particularly popular in the American art of painting, where the painter used large volumes of paints applied with different brushes, knives and spatulas to subconsciously express his creative energy. It is worth mentioning such artists as H. Hoffmann and J. Pollock. People trained in the spirit of European naturalistic traditions find it difficult to believe that their art is great art with aesthetic criteria. In the opinion of S. Hordynsky, the Ukrainian artists did not follow such models. They instinctively gravitated towards Paris, where the principles of modern art were, in fact, the same as those of the United States, and aesthetic problems had their value. From the beginning, the Ukrainian art considered the synthesis of the Eastern and Western influences as its main task, which corresponded to the geographical location of the country between Asia and Europe. This inborn “creative” nerve was brought by Ukrainian artists, including V. Hutsalyuk, H. Mazepa and V. Tsymbal. They were influenced by different cultural factors (French, American), but as one can see from their works, they always considered synthesis as search for a certain creative balance. According to S. Hordynsky, the task of the art critic and historian is to find that “harmony” that determines the material, and even more, the spiritual side of creativity. As long as the artists are free to do what they want,

the critic also has the right to build his theories in a “magical way”.⁽²¹⁾

The next topic S. Hordynsky touched upon was the development of Ukrainian art in Ukraine.⁽²⁷⁾ The author in his publications emphasised the strong dependence of Ukrainian art on Russian art, that the “progress” of Ukrainians was based on “nexus with advanced Russian culture”. The art of all totalitarian regimes, according to the researcher, was realistic because it played a purely service role. The longevity of this art is not exceeded by the life of the regime itself. The art of Hitler’s Germany, while attempting to be realistic, did not go beyond the form and aesthetic tastes of average citizens, who were the main enemy of totalitarianism. As the Nazi regime fell, the citizens quietly returned to their old forms and tastes, only changing the theme. A similar process was witnessed in the USSR, particularly in Ukraine.⁽²⁷⁾

S. Hordynsky did not accept that Ukrainian art has been forced to follow a single path, which “was once and for all designated by Stalin” as “The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia” reports.⁽²⁸⁾ However, the researcher’s colleague V. Kasian, being truthful, claimed that social realism allowed Ukrainian migrants to cultivate their individual styles, and mentioned that the French writer Louis Aragon named the paintings of T. Yablonska presented in Venice as Ukrainian because of their colours and that “only a blind man can deny that the work of, for example, Deregus is Ukrainian”.⁽²⁸⁾

However, the Ukrainian artists in immigration, including S. Hordynsky, attentively watched the artistic process in Ukraine: they could see the struggle for the lost positions, the barriers which hindered the normal development of creativity. They realised that the Ukrainian Soviet art was unnoticed anywhere in the world. C. Hordynsky compared Soviet art to the work of Mexican artists such as D. Rivera, J.C. Orozco and D.A. Siqueiros: “They were all the members of the Communist Party, but they never left behind the problems of global art - constructivism, expressionism, unrealism, monumentalism. The art they created is entirely national in its Mexican form and content, and at the same time global for its general artistic problems, which troubled Picasso, Braque, Arkhypenko and Boychuk.

In the post-war times, Soviet Ukraine was exposed to important changes. The turning point was the end of the “cult of personality”. Of course, this turn in the minds of artists was the main stimulus for a revision of artistic attitudes and often a return to the positions of the twentieth century. Sviatoslav Hordynsky was actively interested in Ukrainian migrants in Europe, followed information about them in various periodicals. Prominent for him was the collection “Artistic Lexicon”, which provided information on significant representatives of world art. Prior to the Second World War, Ukrainian art was almost entirely absent in the collection, because even the ones that were included were attributed to the section of Russian art. Thanks to S. Hordynsky UAA distributed its publications, including catalogues, to over 50 institutions around the world - museums, libraries, and art associations. For example, in 1960 the editors of the “Artistic Lexicon” in Leipzig (Germany) received our catalogues. Thus, in their publications, we found mentions of such famous artists as O. Arkhypenko, O. Hryshchenko, M. Hlushchenko, V. Chmelyuk.⁽¹⁶⁾

The works of Ukrainian artists asked the same questions the whole world of art was interested in. Our unique feature was folk geometric-abstract art with its own laws. However, in the opinion of the researcher “We have exhausted psychologically in this art, so pure abstraction without elements of rhythm and harmony does not convince us. Ukrainian abstract art has its own ideals and will have them in the future”.⁽²⁸⁾ Ukrainian artists, due to S. Hordynsky, in Europe are too scattered and not numerous to be able to create any artistic organisation, therefore their works gain features of foreign art, growing in the French or German environment. The researcher used as an example the sculptures by H. Kruk and mosaic works by S. Borachek or the paintings by S. Zarytska and M. Krychevsky. The main aim of the modernist artist was to attempt to create every time new forms, unlike any other artistic style. Behind this endeavour there was a philosophical and artistic vision complex, which descended to the first geometrised forms, the so-called “pure form” - when the object is minimised to its own idea, expressed wholly in space and movement, as the Egyptians and the ancient Greeks created before epoch - by large simplified forms, which did not follow nature, but created new, parallel to it images.

In the opinion of S. Hordynsky, O. Arkhypenko entirely realised the basic rule of nature. This became the main aim of his art. He created polysemantic forms in real and ideal spaces within the limits of our consciousness. The sculptural work became a creature which was subject to transcendental laws, like our being. This is a demonstration of the spirituality of the Arkhypenko’s art, which has reached the initial levels of form-making, opening up new possibilities for sculpture. Thus Arkhypenko’s works are an expression of his individuality, shaped by a number of factors that express themselves as an inner desire to create in a new way, based on rhythm.

At all stages of S. Hordynsky’s creativity he was interested in the Ukrainian tradition: whether it has been implementation or interpretation in the art of the twentieth century. In tradition, he emphasised a cult of the rhythm of line and strict, almost graphical drawing. A clear method of adaptation of tradition he found in the works of his colleagues: P. Mehyk, H. Mazepa, M. Levytsky.

The ethnographism of H. Mazepa’s painting is recognizable. The author takes a synthetic approach to folklore

material as an inexhaustible source of form and colours. H. Mazepa derives from the folk-art typical features: arealistic approach to the depicted, a clear graphics with always a rhythmic line and black and yellow colour scheme. The artist focused in her works primarily on the geometric ornamentation. At first glance, her works remind the icon. However, H. Mazepa focused not so much on the icon of a formal type, that was created by a number of artists in modernised non-Byzantine form, but on “nationalised” icons, images of Kozak Mamay and popular painting on the slope. In many of her works the long-established Ukrainian tradition completely merged with various new flows, indicating that her works belong to the “Ukrainian style” in painting.⁽³⁶⁾

M. Levytsky primarily sought to express in colour and form the abstract quests of contemporary painting. For example, in his “Self-portrait” the viewer at first glance observes only an abstract mass of green paint with a few red spots. When fully realising the juxtaposition of these tones, viewer observes how the green becomes a figure - a metaphysical self-portrait that balances between the real and the fantasy world.⁽³¹⁾

S. Hordynsky supported the idea that in the twentieth century art tends to identify the possibility of “another revival of the spiritual form”, but now along the path of a free, secularised search for the artistic truth of the traditional canon, regardless of its Western or Eastern origin. The artist believed that genetic memory was the main factor in the formation and development of the Ukrainian art of the twentieth century. S. Hordynsky as an artist most clearly adhered to tradition in monumental art, to which he turned in the second half of the twentieth century. In his sacred creations he never forgot that Byzantine painting was primarily decorative, and that for this purpose it operated with clearly defined themes of forms and colour. He realised that the mechanical transfer of the old style will not solve the problems of monumental painting so new methods have to be sought.⁽²⁶⁾

In the context of theoretical study of the traditions of Ukrainian icon painting, the author occasionally turned to the problems of Byzantine tradition and sacred art in general. He believed that on the international art market sacred art lacks features of universality and is the art of certain limited groups, whose views are religious, historical, ethno-national, national-domestic and political. A detailed analysis of tradition and its expression in various European cultures was given by the French critic E. d’Ors, whose thoughts are worth reviewing today. “He sees the problem not in the reproduction of the past, but in the creation of the new. Basing on ... cubism as a system, the Italian artists turned to the closest in spirit models - Pompeian mosaics and Proto-Renaissance art - taking from them such elements as monumentalism, the wholeness of composition, the simplicity of details. A number of futurist artists appear - G. Severini, C. Carra, M. Tozzi, E. Prampolini. They took away accidentality from paintings, and what seems to be the bold fantasy in their works, is a result of forethought, where everything is envisioned and deliberate”.⁽²⁹⁾ To these lines S. Hordynsky added his commentary, which is still, we believe, relevant: “Our art, albeit within a narrower framework, faces similar problems of spiritual transformation and rebirth of our old spiritual values. The path may follow in the same direction as that taken by the Italian artists: the use of the past on the basis of consciously accepted and understood styles of our time”.⁽²⁹⁾

S. Hordynsky was convinced that in modern art, the painter turns from imaging objects to imaging ideas. He doesn’t consider the outer dimension and only focuses on the subjective perception of the inner, perceiving reality through the prism of the idea: art begins where human ends. S. Hordynsky believed that realistic artistic means no longer meet either the canon or the aesthetic tastes of the people, which had cultured an exquisite folk art that had always been synthetic and anti-realistic in its fundamentals. The modern image of our churches was created by various artists, sometimes successfully, sometimes without knowledge of the basics of icon-painting. In fact, S. Hordynsky, on the example of M. Osinchuk, studied old icons, murals and mosaics, old techniques of tempera painting, acquainted with historical and folk ornamentation, its composition, colours and rhythmic basis.⁽²⁸⁾

S. Hordynsky had his own views on sacred art, believing that the situation with adoption of foreign or copying has become dual. One group of artists, not sticking to consistent selection, “re-painted” in their works beloved works of famous Ukrainian or world art, when other group (followers of ultra-formalist ideas) recast their art as an extract of minimalist methods and constructive approaches. Both two groups had no practical study of the theoretical material from which they drew their ideas.

The Byzantine and Baroque styles of Ukrainian folk art became the starting point of new search flows. The strong formalist features of the old Ukrainian art and its anti-naturalism allowed Ukrainian artists creating on a more self-built, “folk” basis. It was the Byzantine discipline which prevented our artists from using in iconography extreme innovations, e. g. occultism or degenerative formalism, which filled the religious art.⁽²⁴⁾ Our artists abroad, overseas, having acquired the knowledge and analytics of authentic folk art and the synthetic Byzantine tradition, created images that were clearly understood by the viewer, in line with their mentality and genetic sensibility.

The artist must use sacred art to help people return to their devastated “Self” and restore the damaged harmony between the world, society and the “Self”. From these positions the interest of the people in folk art grows. “Only strong, autonomous individuals who can look at the world with their own eyes will find their true

path in art based on national traditions”.⁽¹⁾

It was the national tradition that has been the most convincing and unmistakable source of inspiration for the art of Ukrainian immigrant artists. The essential feature of Ukrainian art overseas was ethnic identity: a sense of belonging and the importance of cultural heritage, even the self-designation of oneself (“American”, “Ukrainian” or “Ukrainian American”). The originality can be manifested depending on the reaction to aspects of tradition, culture, language, history and religion.⁽³⁾

For S. Hordynsky the main requirements for sacred art were harmony and stylistic cohesion. He considered eclecticism and the loss of unique features was the great danger which posed the risk of the art losing its characteristic qualities. S. Hordynsky both in his theoretical studies and in practice relied on an understanding of speech structure, but not on its abstract form. So, at the heart of his oeuvre there “colour tone value”, and then the linear rhythm can be observed. The sacred art of S. Hordynsky was of national-identification character. The sphere of church art was then strongly supported by Greek Catholic clergy. They stimulated the excursions of the artists into the depths of the ethnocultural tradition.

In his own works of sacred art S. Hordynsky spoke of the harmony between the complete and the infinite, the human and the divine, and aspired to create an image of Christ as a mediator between these two planes. He saw this in Giotto, who sought to simplify the image into a “prayer image”, thus encouraging the viewer to become psychologically engaged in the liturgical action. Giotto, by paying greater attention to the periphery of the painting, introduced a professional orientation of the depicted faces, thereby setting it within a system of present individual signs, with a self-contained plot. The mosaic “Eucharist” at St Sophia’s Cathedral in Rome (Italy) is an example of this borrowing of the Proto-Renaissance artist.

The artist crossed a line between the notions of “sacred” and “religious”. According to S. Hordynsky the difference between these two notions is drastic: “sacred art is strictly bound to the requirements of this rite and does not allow for self-willed changes, whereas any works with a religious content belong to the painting of the religious one. In fact, the perfection of form allowed the old artist expressing the religious idea in the best way possible, which was the icon’s purpose. This perfect combination of idea and form was the greatest achievement of the old iconographer, and this is what distinguished the icon from the common image of a religious content, which was only a religious illustration”.⁽³¹⁾ Hordynsky, in this context, singled out the iconography of our artists outside of Ukraine. He believed that they created a new religious art on a traditional basis, which had no small chance of developing in the motherland.

S. Hordynsky’s “Ukrainian iconography of the 12th-18th centuries” is a fundamental study.⁽²⁸⁾ This was his own research on Ukrainian icons in the museums of Lviv before 1943, in collaboration with renowned art historians: I. Svientsitsky, M. Dragan and L. Gets. In this book S. Hordynsky outlined the evolution of the iconography from the early Christian era, focusing specifically on the iconography of the princely times, Galician icons of the XVI-XVII centuries, Baroque iconography of the XII-XVIII centuries and the characteristics of the Lemkys and Transcarpathian icons.

Aside from the general interest in Ukrainian iconography within the Western European icon-painting, S. Hordynsky turns to the phenomenon of modern art - the Ukrainian Neo-Byzantine school of icon-painting, which, due to the scholar, revived the Ukrainian religious art from the decay it suffered at the same time with all world art in the nineteenth century. S. Hordynsky task was not only to show examples of old Ukrainian art, but also to identify its place in the context of world culture.⁽²⁸⁾

In the opinion of S. Hordynsky, an element of critical and scientific approach is of a great significance in the religious art. The idea is to find the roots of an artwork, to find out how and why these rather than other types of icons appeared; which of them are original works by the creators of this nation, and which are simple copies; why the particular types of saints were cultivated at a certain time and in a certain territory; and finally, what were the artistic styles of these icons, which point to a link to the great styles of world art? This is a wide range of problems that the researcher tried to touch on and discuss, where possible.⁽²⁴⁾

According to S. Hordynsky, by its formal comprehensiveness, the Byzantines let different peoples create their own national art. Naturally, this process took place on the basis of religion, which was a spiritual and general cultural factor for the peoples within that Byzantine culture. This enabled peoples with often different ethnic structures to create their own original art - Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Russian in unique way, reflecting in that art only the attributes of their national character.⁽²⁴⁾

In the context of the study of Ukrainian iconography S. Hordynsky paid much attention to the problems of ornamentation. Many of his manuscripts about ornaments for monumental planes has been preserved. S. Hordynsky found an individual approach to the design of modular ornaments, especially in the interpretation of ornaments as a system of decoration of sacred images. The artist being in Paris became acquainted with works of modernist artists, as well as their theoretical ideas about ornament, including works of H. K. Van de Velde, O. Redon, O. Beardsley.

The combination of creative and decorative methods led to the reorganisation of the ornament. The ornament was not against the form but was its symbolic and structural component. For example, arabesque,

which is based on the tight combination of lines and plant motifs, where lines are assigned a leading role. O. Redon wrote about the line as one which “stimulates the imagination”. O. Beardsley understands ornament in a similar way, he considers the arabesque the universal form of expression and experience of the world. The gesture of the line is spiritual, due to G. K. Van de Velde.⁽³²⁾

Having added the theoretical knowledge about the ornamentation of famous modernists to his painting art, S. Hordynsky used his “arabesque” in the decoration of temple interiors. In particular, we can observe it in the Ukrainian Church of Saints Volodymyr and Olha in Winnipeg (Canada), where the author put into the basis of the ornamental module the antique and West-Byzantine elements, simplifying their decorativeness and detailing.

S. Hordynsky considered the problem of ornamentation in the context of philosophical works he, in younger age, was introduced to in Germany by a professor of Byzantology V. Zalozetsky. The Byzantologist has always claimed that a deeper understanding of the “concepts of being” requires knowledge of philosophy, in particular, he used the works of H.-G. Gadamer, H. Jauss, P. Ricoeur. S. Hordynsky supported their philosophical and aesthetic reflections on the protection of cultural and historical tradition, which have become endangered in the industrial civilisation.⁽³⁴⁾

S. Hordynsky adopted from H.-G. Gadamer a subjectivist approach to the analysis of art: he emphasised its subjective beginning, when the main role is assigned to the spiritual state of the artist who creates art. German researcher H. Jauss is drawn to the idea of different types of perception of artistic content, which is seen as a result of interaction between the artistic image, creative text and the viewer. The researcher viewed the artist as a multifaceted person - as a critic, a theorist, an artist, an organiser. Such a model of a creative personality was close to S. Hordynsky. The artist was also drawn to the statements of P. Ricoeur, a French, who spoke on a holistic concept of the interpretation of old styles of art, on the basis of which a certain national culture was formed. In the case of S. Hordynsky it was the art of Byzantium and Kyiv Rus.

In the 1990s, S. Hordynsky paid a great attention to the philosophical works of J. Ortega y Gasset. He was close to the ideas of separating art into two classes: art intelligible and art incomprehensible. S. Hordynsky was not fully open to the new currents of postmodernism and considered Gasset’s theory of the “dehumanisation of art” to be still relevant in the 1990s, especially his statements that the new style is full of ironism and avoids life-like forms, when art as a game is not overpowered by originals, but by the mediocrity.⁽³⁵⁾

S. Hordynsky considered himself as a renaissance type of person, open to various problems in art, art history and literature. Throughout his life he has tried to keep himself within the format of a universal and complex artist. In his critical articles he wrote the following on this issue: “Renaissance artists were always knowledgeable in all fields of art, their environment demanded that they should be such creators of the world of beauty. The public needed them to attain a high cultural standard in those times. A responsible critic, even more so an art historian, will not look at the art of his time from the point of view of a single style which is the work of a limited time span - he will look in this art for permanent and long-lasting elements which are not subject to change”.⁽³¹⁾

The researcher was critical of the artists who believed it was enough to “arrange” ready-made forms and colours, and knowledge of drawing (and most importantly - anatomy) is not very important. In this context, he believed that modern art had exhausted all ideas and had few prospects and that in pursuit of purely optical effects it had neglected the spiritual aspects of being. S. Hordynsky believed that the transmission of spiritual substance should be the main task of artistic creativity.

S. Hordynsky has always been a supporter of the artists, who have adhered to a certain style, who have not succumbed to the new paintings effects based on the processes of the subconscious. Thus, they sought balanced forms and shades, striving for a realistic rendering of the traditional, but in the sense that they did not copy nature, but rather interpreted its forms in a unique way according to the principle of rhythm. Their works have always been based on the principle of composition, which arranges all elements and removes the unnecessary.⁽³³⁾

In the early 90s, S. Hordynsky turned to the question of Ukrainian art again. Summing it up he identified its main problems at the present stage of development. In particular, he wrote about the inability of many artists to integrate the Ukrainian tradition with the “standards” of world art, their lack of recognition by other arts (working in their own narrow direction); a desire for rapid assimilation in a new cultural scene, without a stable core in place, resulting in a loss of uniqueness and originality of artistic methods; willingness to engage in various forms of creativity in order to maintain the place in artistic scenes while losing its creative potential, resulting in an inability to create a work of a genius. This opinion speaks also about the position of S. Hordynsky himself in his artistic legacy. He tried to be present in all art spaces that made up his cultural environment. The author understood that by choosing this position he is subjected to the risk of not being globally present in any type of art. However, as an extrovert, the artist idealistically saw the ability in himself to implement his own ideas in different artistic dimensions.

CONCLUSIONS

S. Hordynsky's move to the USA marked a significant step in his residual emigration to the West. Despite physical isolation from Ukraine, his theoretical and creative conceptions remained intact. His artistic legacy in the United States is prominently represented by monumental church art, including mosaics, paintings, iconostasis, and stained glass. In the American immigrant environment, Hordynsky actively engaged in civic activities, leading the "Ukrainian Artists of America" and documenting Ukrainian art developments in periodicals and monographs.

Hordynsky's monumental art emphasized the synergy between the image and the viewer, with significant works like the mosaics in the Basilica of St. Sophia in Rome. He adeptly synthesized Byzantine-Kyiv traditions with Renaissance and modern elements. His theoretical works from the second half of the twentieth century discussed historical and contemporary artistic processes, highlighting the synthesizing development's impact on Ukrainian art. He analyzed Ukrainian art's role within the American cultural space and explored the contributions of prominent Ukrainian artists.

Hordynsky also examined the role of Ukrainian artists in Western Europe and Soviet Ukraine, focusing on Ukrainian tradition as a canon of normative action open to interpretation. His theoretical concepts, developed alongside practical experience, significantly influenced artistic methods and creative ideas. This study underscores Hordynsky's pivotal role in bridging Ukrainian and American art traditions, contributing to a unique Ukrainian-American artistic identity and preserving cultural heritage in a dynamic socio-political landscape.

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