

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****CAPITALIST PARADIGM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AS AN  
ONTOLOGICAL PROBLEM**

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***Abstract***

Contemporary art has become autonomous in relation to the viewer and his taste preferences, that is, in relation to the public taste. "Elite artist" offers, sometimes even imposes on the viewer what he has. Or are the curators of the so-called "world art" allowing him to impose it?... To deal with this issue, the authors of the study take a historical and philosophical excursion into the essence of the issue. It is shown that in the conditions of the capitalist paradigm of art, carriers of traditional, artistic-figurative art do not have the ability to fully integrate into the system of the so-called "world art". To convey sincerity of feelings in art, it is necessary to selflessly serve beauty. The embodiment of this sincerity from a potential opportunity into a practically realized reality is only possible with a soul-open and sensitive to the world around, and its changes in the personality of the artist. However, in the capitalist paradigm of art at the present stage of its development, there is no place for the value-semantic strata of human existence, the spiritual and spiritual phenomena of his being. Since contemporary art is often based on principled, consciously cultivated tastelessness, absurdity, and formlessness, the complex unity of the artistic, social, and humanistic functions of art, which are its most important ontological links, is being destroyed. Due to the elimination of the essential, aesthetic function of art and the expulsion of the image from the picture, the ontological problem of the latter is exposed.

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**Keywords:** Contemporary art, modernism, art-figurative, vague art, capitalist paradigm.



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## 1. Introduction

Under the well-known and already axiom-like phrase “art reflects the ideas and views of the era”, we see a simple pattern: these ideals and the associated taste preferences, on the one hand evolved gradually and objectively, but on the other hand, they are the consequences of subjective desires and aspirations to perpetuate your name, just a love for aesthetics, sacred tasks, etc., of specific customers (as a rule, those in power or simply wealthy).

Art as a living organism is part of another, more global organism – human civilization. Modern civilization is post-industrial, technotronic, which is primarily associated with the ongoing development of technology, information and nanotechnology. The connection between art and civilization is interdependent: art inevitably “penetrates” into other spheres of life and vice versa. New types of visual arts appear, digital painting, already recognized by all, is developing, etc. Various branches of the national economy (architecture and construction) draw on artistic techniques and forms: “Contemporary art (including its archaic appearance like painting) owes much to the development of civilization. Pointillists were among the first to use the scientific achievements of their time as a result of the development of human civilization” (Demenev, 2019, p. 378).

Modern, so-called “elitist” art has now become autonomous, and the artist – the subject of the creative process – relatively independent. Autonomous in relation to what and to whom? Autonomous in relation to the viewer and his taste preferences, that is, in relation to the public taste. The “elitist artist” offers, sometimes even imposes on the unprepared viewer what he has. Or are curators allowing him (to oblige) to impose it? ... Next, we will try to figure it out.

## 2. Problem Statement

In art at the present stage of its development, two wills coexist: the will of a modern artist and the artistic will. As an example of the “will of the artist”, and purely “subjective,” we can cite the following excerpt from the article by Livshits (1978) “An artist instead of art”: “As a result of consistent formalistic experiments, the art of the so-called “avant-garde” comes to the negation of the objective elements of artistic creation: drawing, chiaroscuro, color – all these requirements are a thing of the past. All that remains is the expression by the artist of his will, his personality” (para. 9). The same logic leads to the following reflections: if really, in art it is not the embodiment of the artistic image that is important, but the subjective “will of the artist” (for example, an artist who corrects his natural needs in front of the public or sews his mouth up with thread), then it becomes it’s just possible, but even “logical” to give birth to “works” of this kind: “...the experience of denial and protest turns out to be valuable... Now the feeling of the sublime rhymes with the disgusting and creepy ... the incomprehensible, the absurd comes to the fore, unnecessary, that is, negative” (Podoroga, 2016, p. 20).

It seems that all of the above should be attributed to the concept of “will of artist” and not “artistic will”, since the factor of subjectivity of the will of the artist allows creating a work of so-called contemporary art in an “empty shell of form” (not a work, but an action, often an “empty action”), but not always creating a highly artistic work as an aesthetized product. In contrast, artistic will “would limit the boundless omnipotence that an autonomous artist (imaginarily) requires for himself” (Sedlmayr, 1999, p.

106). At first glance, such a distinction regarding the problems of all art may seem radical and alien to the nature of the latter. However, the above example of modernist art leads to the realization of the ambiguity of the whole situation ...

The subjective will of the author is nothing more than the desire for novelty, which, in turn, is the desire to surpass others, the result of intellectual aggression. The desire for novelty is a sign of creativity: “Creativity is a category open to a wide variety of interpretations, each of which may have its own special meaning and field of application” (Borovinskaya & Surovtsev, 2019, p. 18). But in pursuit of novelty, and as a result of the “soft pressure” of the curators of the Biennale and art managers, the artist may miss the main, essential component of art – the transformation of the world according to the laws of beauty, ontologically based on spiritual and spiritual “bonds”.

The contradictions between the first and second allow considering them as binary opposition, revealing the complex unity of the proper artistic and social, humanistic functions of art. However, contemporary art bears the "seeds" of self-destruction. A certain balance is needed that impedes this process.

Further, aesthetics, today both as a form of philosophical thought, and as a form of practical implementation in the life of a work of art, today can be (extremely generalized) divided into classical, non-classical and aesthetics of mass culture. In the works created within the framework of the so-called non-classical aesthetics, one can observe the manifestation of the “will of the modern artist”. In the works created within the framework of classical aesthetics, one can observe the manifestation of “artistic will”.

In ideological terms, classical aesthetics is based on an ontological and epistemological and axiological foundation, rooted in ancient art as an ideal aesthetic example. Classical aesthetics is based on the dichotomy “sublime”-“ignoble” and operates with such basic categories as: aesthetic consciousness, aesthetic experience, game, beautiful, tragic, comic, ugly, etc. The main point about the source of creativity as the whole aesthetically diverse reality in its development, contradictions, struggle, and not only in its perfection and beauty. The proper artistic and socio-humanistic functions of art function in this aesthetics in unity.

In the second half of the 20th century, in connection with a kind of “annihilation of values” and in the pursuit of novelty, various artistic movements of a transgressive direction (elite “advanced” art practices) emerge, gravitating to aestheticization of the ugly, disharmonious, immeasurable: “This non-classical aesthetics based on the principle, consciously cultivated "bad taste", more precisely, a kind of conventionality, the rejection of taste; it has another ontological function: to destroy the unity of man with the Universe” (Demenev & Belousova, 2019, p. 286). As a result, the complex unity of the proper artistic and social, humanistic functions

### **3. Research Questions**

To clarify the essence of this problem, you can refer to the article by the famous contemporary artist Paramon (2010) “Art to the people?”. The author of the latter since 1970 explores the method and patterns in artistic creativity, and since the late 80s of the last century, lives in Europe and participates in personal and group exhibitions around the world.

Paramon (2010) suggests recalling the situation in Europe of the 19th century: starving, in feuds inside and out, when it becomes the owner of the latest technologies, capital is intensified and concentrated from manufactories to military equipment. All this against the background of the struggle of the working class. It was then that Le Corbusier appeared with the concept of high-rise buildings where workers could be accommodated. Then the role of printing production was growing. Printing houses and publishing houses are booming. Management and revenues from the press and art itself are in the center, at the very top. And then, or maybe earlier, the question arises: what to print? Rubens, for example. Yes, people do not understand... Why relax people who are meant for work. The market suggested that you print. Something simple or incomprehensible is proposed to put on the walls (Paramon, 2010).

This concept suited everyone: on the one hand, an unpretentious public, on the other a merchant. The merchant by that time becomes the legislator, that is, the powers that be. They begin to regulate the process and turn it into an element of ideology. In abstract culture, an associative series may arise, which, with good advertising, will literally make a mountain out of a molehill. A sign painting is better suited for this: "Signs used in art are characterized by varying degrees of conventionality in terms of the arbitrariness of the connection between their usual use outside of art and the meaning that they acquire inside the art system" (Lotman & Uspensky, 2000, p. 99).

It was at this time that the sign system was actively offered to homes. A suitable term was chosen, "modernism". If such a "sign" appears in a house, the thematic load disappears, the rooms are cleared of the obsession contained in the realistic picture. After all, the girl in Vermeer's painting, as she has been looking from the canvas for more than one century, will continue looking forever! An abstract thing is tied only to architecture and leaves a person open to any information; in addition, being next to such a picture, you involuntarily begin to build an idea, even if it does not exist! With this comes the culture of everyday life, the nature of relations between people, the profile of cities, the style is formed, design appears. And the people cease to be an inert mass, become thinking, in a sense: the environment obliges. Architecture, for its part, dictates attention to the material. In this case, we can say that art belongs to the people! Design has become part of everyday life, part of people's thinking.

However, further, Paramon (2010) quite rightly asks the question: but is this a full-fledged culture? - After all, Western architects offer an interior, but without paintings.

How is this achieved? Answering his question, he says: "All kinds of media actively help the lack of pictures. ...The emergence of style at the household level in the West is a phenomenon! Only one feature is persistently removed in the European design, the human, spiritual component. That is, the design, as it were, replaces the easel picture, based on the abstract, the absurd, the ugly" (Paramon, 2010, p. 14). And this is a sign of non-classical aesthetics. If we remove the spiritual and spiritual component from art, leaving only the physical, technological, albeit creative, then it will result in nothing more than a "dead" (in the artistic and figurative sense) process that produces a dead product: "The specificity of art as a special type of production by Compared with material production, it means that it is spiritual production, and production is mainly of ideas, not things" (Bezklubenko, 1982, p. 64). But this is just one of the many components of the artistic process. In addition, there are many others, no less significant.

According to the author of the article "Art to the people?" there is one more curious nuance why the abstract, absurd, flawless became an integral part of Europe, "Latin Europe". At some time, Europe

was divided into eastern and "Latin". And they were distinguished, among other things, by their attitude to the image. Recall the theme of iconoclasm. Since the image in those days was of a cult nature, the meaning of the discrepancy was whether it is possible to worship the image or reject it. Paramon (2010) believes that: "By controlling the media, capital not only becomes the successor of the iconoclasts, but leaves this principle as the cornerstone of ideology" (p. 15).

What is a forum, a biennale, and other high-profile names that offer as much as "world art", where almost only modernism is represented?

The first Venice Biennale took place in 1895 with the participation of several countries. It is characteristic that each country carried out and paid for the selection of works and artists. This model was picked up by other cities, as it was of commercial and advertising interest. Here is another characteristic detail: from some time, namely from the Sydney Biennale, the management of festivals and the selection of works were provided to the individual. Around the seventies there have been a position of curator. Of course, this person in every sense corresponds to the venue. Now this is not only a commercial enterprise, but also an ideologically predictable business! It is impossible to become a participant in the show from the outside. How commercially viable is this, let us evaluate on the example of the project "Document", held in Kassel (Germany) in 2009–2010.

Then the exhibition was visited by 650 thousand people. The entrance fee was 18 euros. A quarter of visitors from abroad, plus the cost for each square meter paid by the participating countries, plus two thousand critics. This was printing, merchandize and more, plus more than four thousand publications, a huge amount of beer sold, cola plus hotels, hotels, shops, cafes and so on. Initially, exhibition space was paid by participating countries. With a competent organization, the commercial risk was reduced to zero. With the advent of a curator, that is, a stylist leader, the effect of exclusive rightness is staggering! All in one manner! Everything that is supported by money is impressively sterile, comfortable and on a grand scale! This can only mean one thing: everything that hangs there is truly "world culture"! However, there is no traditional art-shaped picture. Even in the USSR, despite the regime, the concept of a realistic easel picture did not disappear, and how the form in art continued to exist, and therefore, develop. What cannot be said about the Western world, where the picture was deliberately replaced by everyday design. In addition, the Western world is also a regime, the dictatorship of capital, which throughout the XX century meticulously built its own capitalist "art paradigm" based on modernism.

Let us ask ourselves: why is modernism so obsessively offered to Russia? V. Paramon replies: "The answer is obvious. ... This is a huge concern-pyramid and not one concern "...

Probably, work is underway to make Russian culture an asset, to shake up the national "yesterday" at a competent scientific level. East and West, here begins the opposite, which Russian craftsmen from the Kremlin are trying to equalize, like a field by a plow. As for the cultural field, if the tendency persists, then one thing will survive, and it will be called: "world culture," as the curators of various biennials understand it" (Paramon, 2010, p. 16).

For the artistic environment there is always the need to create certain conditions, cleared of public viruses, manipulations, political slogans, their own stylistic background, characteristic of a large state. This does not mean "to close and keep out." Artists are not always able to understand and explain what is happening. And not only them, but also employees of museums, even such as the Tretyakov Gallery.

Only special studies can explain and dispel fashionable myths from across the ocean, which are now beginning to prevail in the artistic environment. And since the capitalist paradigm of "elitist", ugly art begins to be supported "in the highest echelons of power", carriers of traditional, artistic-figurative art do not have the ability to fully integrate into the system of the so-called "world art". They, with their work, contradict the entire capitalist ideology and its aims to preserve a consumer society...

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The problem outlined above determined the purpose of this work: to analyze the "capitalist paradigm of art", where, in pursuit of novelty and also as a result of "soft pressure" of the biennale curators and art managers, the artist may miss the main, essential component of art – the transformation of the world according to the laws of beauty ontologically based on spiritual and spiritual "bonds".

#### **5. Research Methods**

It was impossible to use the following methodological tools to comprehend the studied problems: the method of hermeneutic interpretation of practical artists (authors of the article), the principles of historical and logical, the contradictory nature of being, the unity and struggle of opposites, the negation of negation, as well as the general scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, analogy, modeling. In addition, an activity approach and elements of structural-functional analysis were used.

#### **6. Findings**

Russia is also a global market with a potentially wealthy working mass. Therefore, modernism is torn here. In addition, the phenomenon of iconoclasm, embedded in modernism, will create an environment designated as "world art", a monopoly on which has long been declared. It turns out that large Russia automatically becomes part of the "*capitalist paradigm of art*". Since the latter is based on the principle, consciously cultivated tastelessness, absurdity, and formlessness, this destroys the complex unity of the artistic, social, and humanistic functions of art, which are its most important ontological links.

#### **7. Conclusion**

To convey the sincerity of feelings in art, it is necessary to selflessly serve beauty. The embodiment of this sincerity from a potential opportunity into a practically realized reality is only possible with a soul-open and sensitive to the world around, and its changes in the personality of the artist. However, in the capitalist paradigm of art at the present stage of its development, there is no place for the value-semantic strata of human existence, the spiritual and spiritual phenomena of his being. Does a person like any color, what he thinks about him, what associations it evokes in him, what sense and meaning the artist puts into the form and content of the work – neither the curators of the modern biennial, nor even the owners of the exhibition venues are interested in those. In its worldview potential, this art paradigm is purely anti-humanistic, demonstrating the limitations of its approach not only to man

and nature, but also to art itself. Due to the elimination of the essential, aesthetic function of art and the expulsion of the image from the picture, the ontological problem of the latter is exposed.

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