

M. G. Borozna¹

Features of historical and theoretical comprehension of the role and significance of historical memory in the visual art of contemporary Belarus

Apart from the creative spiritual content, activities in the field of culture and art cannot be considered as a strategic resource for society development. The spiritual dimension of the space of art and culture of contemporary Belarus in its meaning and understanding is in a deep search for harmonious and promising co-existence and interaction in the world of partnership.

In professional art, forecasts about the future are still quite dotted, despite the traditional desire of culture for openness, as well as the observed stability of cultural import substitution over recent years, and awareness of the prospects of the initiatives “One Belt, One Road”, the BRICS in

¹ Rector of the educational institution “Belarusian State Academy of Arts” (Republic of Belarus). Candidate in Art History, Professor. Honorary Member of Russian Academy of Arts; Full Member of National Academy of Arts of the Kyrgyz Republic; Member of the National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO. The author of over 300 scientific and journalistic works, including monographs “Беларуская кніжная графіка 1960–1990-х гадоў” (2001), “Belarusian painting of the 1920s–1970s” (2006), “Мастацтва кнігі Беларусі ХХ стагоддзя” (2007), “Гісторыя выяўленчага мастацтва Беларусі ХХ стагоддзя” (2020), “Кніжная графіка Беларусі ХХ стагоддзя” (2020), “Выяўленчае мастацтва Беларусі ХХ стагоддзя” (2017), “Fine Arts of Belarus of the 20th century: Historical and Theoretical Concept” (2022). Curator of the Pavilion of the Republic of Belarus at the 54th International Biennale of Arts in Venice (2011).

Laureate of the Special Award of the President of the Republic of Belarus for Cultural and Artistic Figures (2001). He is awarded the medal of National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Belarus (2009; 2011), the medal “For Contribution to Art Development” of the Public Association “Belarusian Union of Artists”, the medal of Francysk Skaryna (2019). He has the Gratitude of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus (2011), the Gratitude of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus (2014), the Gratitude of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus (2012; 2017), the Gratitude of the Minister of Information of the Republic of Belarus (2021), is awarded the Order of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk (2022).

humanitarian collaboration and cultural exchange. The new cultural axis can be seen not only in magnetically attracting innovations, but also in generating progressive artistic trends by the new generation of artists. Herewith, it is appropriate to figuratively compare the current processes in culture and art with the discovery of a new island archipelago and establishment of effective links of internal interaction. Existence of “local cultures” and their development has a fascinating art history. The example of Japan is expressive, but it is not unique either: many countries have preserved traditions and have mastered international platforms for creative experiments, subsequently joining wider cultural spaces and art scenes. Today opens for the BRICS a megaproject of new humanitarian consolidation.

The new period of development of culture and art draws attention to historical parallels. The best achievements of the artistic culture of Belarus of the recent past, which radically expanded the context of artistic culture in the 20th century, will remain a bright example for new generations of artists, architects and designers. **Regardless of numerous modern trends, it is the culture of the last century that continues to play an essential role for creative experience of the coming decades, turning into the topical platform for searching an effective role of modern culture not only in the Eurasian space. In the 20th century, self-affirmation of national art schools took place, national features of the Soviet culture received expressive content.**

It is not only the immediate relevance to be important. The issue of fair treatment of the historical memory of the past remains relevant, the comprehensive awareness of which will be a necessary condition for progressive development in future. It is important to show in works of art not only modern social reflection, but also the level of rethinking by contemporaries the historical experience of society, principles of human

existence.

The processes that took place in the last century were difficult and often contradictory, but it is necessary to recognize the high ambition of the cultural space in the territory of the Soviet state. It was during this period that the problem of training personnel was solved, and, on the basis of previously accumulated experience, artistic achievements, scientific experience and active interaction with the cultures of other peoples, the modern national art school of Belarus was formed. The historical and theoretical views of scientists and the practice of art criticism played a special role in the progressive vector of development.

Recent years have shown that we are once again at a turning point in historical time. The beginning of the 21st century represented a large-scale turn for our countries' art – integration with the Western art scene, resulting in the unbalanced growth in influence of Western values weakening domestic culture. Now there appeared opportunities for more efficient use of the scientific and creative heritage of the period preceding the new century.

In this context, it can be argued that the inextricable link with the past has become a feature of the best artists of Belarus at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries. Of course, the contemporary's spiritual world reflected in an artistic image in professional art refuses to put up with things to cause loss of its integrity. In recent years, the concept of “historical memory” has been updated, a lot is being done to preserve it. In this process, secular culture and religious community act in common approaches. Visual arts, design and architecture are more relevant than ever in the ideological and educational process of patriotic education. The objects of monumental art reflecting the people's heroism and suffering during the Great Patriotic War are reconstructed, put in order, and restored. In recent years, many new

monumental works have appeared (the memorial “Ola”, “Trostenets”, the memorial sign “Operation “Bagration””, the monument to the families of border guards in the Brest fortress, etc.), where, along with venerable authors, young artists and architects perform.

Multilevel aspects of developing the population’s artistic and aesthetic taste are considered as the most important factor of the large-scale influence of professional art achievements. It seems relevant to support the forms of professional art and design, to improve the material and technical base and organizational support for the types of art that are effective in counter-propaganda work (graphic design, easel types of fine art, screen arts, monumental art, composing and performing arts, drama, theatrical and screenwriting skills).

It remains true that creativity contributes to efficient interaction of various national cultures. These processes are ongoing, and their analysis is significant in terms of not only theory, but also practice. The in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the processes that took place in art at the present stage and in the 20th century in the context of the inevitable loss of previous interest in the current Western art world will contribute to successful formation of progressive trends in the art of Belarus.

Artists’ works have a great emotional and aesthetic impact on the person, influence his/her formation as a personality with the holistic civic worldview. A distinctive feature of fine art is that, in addition to objective laws, artists’ subjective ideas and emotions, but verified in public utility, play an essential role in its functioning. Here, it is important to refer to expert assessments that differ in scientific ideas in the interpretation of historical facts.

There are many trends in the world of contemporary art. It is necessary

to take into account expansion of the types of modern artistic practice. Video, computer, and telecommunications are actively used for creative purposes as a means of expression that complement traditional forms of visual arts. The interactive relationship between the author and the viewer determines the nature of new trends in art. But today's generation of artists displays not only forms of actionism and technoid synthesis, many want to master secrets of academic literacy. And we are obliged to provide the opportunity for such training. Young authors need to be more actively involved in the work of art councils and expert commissions. Young people's exhibitions are needed, but they should not be spontaneous, with insufficient organizational elaboration. There are still few works by young authors devoted to historical and social themes. Creative unions and educational institutions of culture and art need to work more closely. It is necessary to take stimulating measures to attract creative youth to carry out significant art projects. Young people need established competitions for scholarships, grants for implementing an individual or collective project, sometimes even a small one in form.

It seems important to give consistency and dynamism to the processes of forming proposals for thematic plans for creating new works of art of a counter-propaganda orientation. Philosophers and art historians who have influence in the scientific and youth creative environment should play a significant role in implementing this task. It is important to exclude from the administration of creative processes persons who do not have the appropriate level of qualifications and work experience in the creative environment, sometimes expressing superficial judgments about the place and role of professional art in development of modern society.

It is necessary to agree with the opinion that "Along the entire perimeter of the problems, Belarus faced the *challenge* of modernity – as a

nation with rich spiritual tradition and high human capital, as a society seeking freedom and justice for all, as a state that had yet to assert itself. The civilizational pro-Western projects of reforming the country, based on an appeal to universal values of liberal democracy, have revealed their ineffectiveness outside of a specific place of development or national ground. Equally, futility and danger of ethnocentric focuses was revealed. The solution lies in transformation of universal human experience and values in the context of unique cultural and civilizational features of Belarus”ⁱ [1, p. 117].

Today, the high level of education in the field of art remains an essential element ensuring our confident presence on the world art scene. We need highly qualified personnel capable of solving the most difficult creative and scientific art criticism tasks. Preserving the traditions of academic excellence remains a strategic feature of the national art school, but at the same time, based on the requirements and tasks of the new time, young authors need first of all to rethink the experience of their predecessors. Forms of relationship between creative youth and masters of art can be very different. The goal is always the same – to help a young artist master not so much the heights of professional skill, but have a decisive impact on formation of the spiritual world of the personality in the new conditions of international cultural exchange.

Interaction with scientific institutes of humanitarian profile plays a crucial role in development of trends and the quality of training. Scientific community should continue making attempts to understand the place and importance of Belarus (primarily in terms of culture and history) in the cultural space of the modern world.

Returning to the aspects of art criticism, we note the special role of evaluating works and phenomena of creative life. The aspect of perception of

the period of formation of the statehood of the Republic of Belarus and its current state is important. The indissoluble connection with the past has become a feature of the fine art of Belarus at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries. Comprehending the previous epochs through the expressive means of fine art is far from complete. Screen arts, theater, fine arts, design, modern artistic practices not only figuratively reflect the life of the country, its role in modern social transformations, but also directly participate in building the spiritual-moral atmosphere that allows implementing tasks of the state's socio-economic development. For strengthening and developing artistic culture in the new vector of the world culture space, it is necessary to create conditions for popularizing the best achievements of professional art of both today and the distant past.

Scientific support within the framework of the theoretical construct relevant to the historical period is seen as an important factor in designing positive trends in developing professional art. Formation of new provisions of the historical and theoretical concept of developing professional art is seen as the most important scientific and creative process in new conditions, it becomes the task of scientific institutions of the humanities and research units of educational institutions of culture and art.

Without high progressive spiritual content corresponding to the development strategy of the Belarusian society, the activity in the field of professional art cannot be considered as a strategic development resource. The subject of the public-state order should reflect topics relevant for moral education: displaying the most important historical milestones in formation of society and statehood, showing the role of the personality in the country's progressive development, reflecting the best character traits of a contemporary, being highly spiritual guidelines.

¹ Lazarevich, A.A. Belarus: cultural and civilizational choice / A.A. Lazarevich, I.Ya. Levyash; scientific ed. by I.Ya. Levyash. – Minsk: Беларуская навука, 2014. – 379 p.