ЕСТЕТИКА

AESTHETIC

SIMULACRUM, AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND MODERN ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF PRINCIPLE "INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE OBJECT"

O. P. Polishchuk[*]

The object of this study is the aesthetic and artistic experience of contemporaries in the processes of symbolic production and exchange. In addition, we were interested in the experience of urban residents formed by the influence of the public space of everyday life. We are hypothesized to relate the degree of aesthetic experience, artistic tastes of a person, as well as the significant public interest in a quasi-aesthetic (or "aesthezi") phenomenon with the "sensory hunger" phenomenon. Methodologically important for the study was the principle of "incomplete comprehension of the object", since we analyze human sensuality by considering a specific product of human social activity. They serve as the macro level of analysis, the results of contemporary artistic practices, including visual art, street art, etc. We also take into account the social request of contemporaries to search for artistic innovations, not only through exhibitions, opening hours, museum exhibitions, etc. We take into account that many contemporaries find satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the results of current artistic practices due to the mass media, individually paying attention to color, silhouette, outline, composition, subject matter of the image (micro level of analysis). The semiotic analysis of the visual object and the hermeneutic method were relevant for this study.

We have analyzed a specific quasi-aesthetic phenomenon, namely simulacra. The role of simulacra in the informational interaction of human beings in post-industrial society is explored in this article and the typical and specific features of this socio-cultural phenomenon are explored. They are considered as a kind of simulacra with a visual presentation. We argue that in the spiritual life of modern man and society, the aesthetic and artistic components no longer have ancestral subordination. The reason for this is that harmony, the improvement of human tastes in the "sphere

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of sensual phenomena" is no longer a mandatory requirement on the part of society for artistic practices, in particular contemporary art.

Keywords: *Symbolic Production and Exchange, Everyday Life, Intellect Practices, Modern Art, Street Art, Urbanized Space, Visual Anthropology, Post-Industrial Society*

СИМУЛЯКР, ЕСТЕТИЧНИЙ ДОСВІД І ХУДОЖНІ ПРАКТИКИ СУЧАСНОСТІ В КОНТЕКСТІ ПРИНЦИПУ "НЕПОВНОГО ОСЯГНЕННЯ ОБ'ЄКТА"

О. П. Поліщук

Об'єктом даного дослідження виступили естетичний і художній досвід сучасників у процесах символічного виробництва та обміну; до того ж ми цікавилися досвідом мешканців міст, сформованим під впливом публічного простору повсякденного життя. Нами припущено, як гіпотезу, про зв'язок ступеня естетичного досвіду, художніх смаків людини, а також значним інтересом публіки до квазіестетичного (чи "естезі") із феноменом "сенсорного голоду". Методологічно важливим для дослідження став принцип "неповного осягнення об'єкта", оскільки ми здійснюємо аналіз людської чуттєвості через розгляд специфічного продукту соціальної активності людини. Ним виступають, як макрорівень аналізу, результати сучасних художніх практик, зокрема візуального мистецтва, стріт-арту та ін. Також нами враховується соціальний запит сучасників на пошук художніх інновацій не лише завдяки виставкам, вернісажам, музейним експозиціям та ін. Враховуємо, що задоволення/незадоволення від результатів теперішніх художніх практик багато сучасників знаходять завдяки мас-медіа, індивідуально звертаючи увагу на колір, силует, контур, композицію, тематику зображення (мікрорівень аналізу). Для цього дослідження мали значення метод семіотичного аналізу візуального об'єкта та герменевтичний метод.

Нами здійснено аналіз специфічного квазіестетичного явища, а саме симулякра. Роль симулякрів у інформаційній взаємодії людини постіндустріального суспільства досліджено в цій статті, а також з'ясовано типові та особливі ознаки цього соціально-культурного явища. Розглянуто такий їх різновид як симулякри із візуальною формою презентації. Нами стверджується, що в духовному житті сучасної людини та суспільства естетичний і художній компоненти вже більше не мають родовидового підпорядкування. Причина цього полягає в тому, що гармонія, вдосконалення смаків людини у "сфері чуттєвих явищ" більше не є обов'язковою вимогою з боку суспільства до художніх практик, зокрема сучасного мистецтва.

Ключові слова: *символічне виробництво та обмін, повсякденність, інтелектуальні практики, сучасне мистецтво, стріт арт, урбанізований простір, візуальна антропологія, постіндустріальне суспільство*

Introduction of the issue. One of the important types of social activity is symbolic production and exchange. They are necessary for every person, as well as solving material problems, raising children and caring for loved ones, etc. However, in the post-industrial society, informational interaction between people becomes more diverse and complex. This is due to the significant saturation of the modern urbanized space with artificial visual signals and messages: posters, billboards, and a creeping line of information boards or advertising vehicles. Illustrative materials, screensavers and symbols of the World Wide Web or social networks, television, video game consoles, and video games have also begun to play an important role in everyday life of a modern person. In modern informative space simulacrums began to occupy the special place. Simulacra with a visual form of presentation are their special kind.

They arise due to computer animation and graphics, virtual art, Internet art, etc. In addition, contemporary art practices

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offer not only traditional, but also new, interesting visual forms (from visual art and environmental design to food art, web design, make-up staling and etc.).

Such a variety of visual influence forms on contemporaries makes the idea of a person as Homo ludens, and not just as Homo sapiens, more and more relevant. But the problems of man's moral choice and harmonization of his everyday environment in the era of "total game and entertainment" also become no less relevant.

Current state of the issue. When analyzing the complex and dynamic processes of modern urbanized space, visual culture and mass media technologies, art practices and post-industrial society art by aesthetics, cultural experts, and artistic critics, the concepts of aesthetic experience, simulacrum and simulation are often used. Due to J. Baudrillard [1], the "copy of copies" problem or "copy of shadows" as a specific phenomenon related to the unreal and intriguing has attracted the attention of many researchers of aesthetic phenomena and artistic practices of recent decades. First of all, we draw attention to the works by N. Zinchenko [3], E. Skalatskaya [7], V. Ferroni [8] and others. As N. Mankovskaya considers simulacrum is a similitude to things that are real; in content this concept is connected with the mimesis and it's "neutrally" [5: 56]. But now it's "the model, the ersatz of reality" [5: 57]. Our attention was also drawn to the interpretation of this phenomenon as contemporaries' "phantom of consciousness". According to S. Lebedev (Сергей Лебедев), it is justified to consider a simulacrum as "an element of consciousness, in relation to which it is difficult, impossible or pointless to talk (ask) about its objective (external-subject) referent" [4: 532]. Then such a feature of a simulacrum, as a phenomenon in modern popular culture, raises the question of person's inner life

value (as an author or layman, whose attention this phenomenon attracts).

The outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article. Therefore, it is important to study and deeply understand the interaction of "emotional hunger" phenomenon, on the one hand, and the excessive load in everyday life of a person from the elements of modern visual culture, on the other. Within it, in our opinion, an analysis of the role of aesthetic and artistic experience in the symbolic exchange of modernity, when both of them are taken into account simultaneously, is necessary. This becomes an important subject of modern science analysis, primarily visual and aesthetic anthropology, social philosophy, cognitive science and urban studies.

The aim of the article is an assessment of aesthetic and artistic components interaction in daily life of a modern person, as well as their role in modern symbolic production and exchange. Also we want to analyze the reasons for the interest of contemporaries in artistic simulacra, as well as the identification of the main features of simulacrum as a special socio-cultural phenomenon. As a *hypothesis*, it is assumed that now the aesthetic and artistic components in the spiritual life of a contemporary are no longer dependent one to other as in classic artistic practice (focusing on harmony, improving the taste of a person is no longer mandatory). The concept of artistic thinking as the phenomenon of human's existence and culture is development here [12]. The goal of the study is realized in the analysis of such a phenomenon in modern popular culture as simulacrum and art street, this is the *object* of our research. We recognize the *methodological value of the principle* of "incomplete understanding of the object" in analysis of such phenomenon.

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methodological, and practical problems" (Registration No. 0114V003873, Ukrainan Center for Scientific, Technical and Economic Information).

Results and Discussion. More precisely, we are talking about excessive focus on themselves and their inner world of those who value simulacra. In our opinion, a person who is interested in simulacra is a person who is used to excessive stress from a multitude of visual signals and messages (advertising, social networks, television, games and entertainment). But he does not feel comfortable in a modern urbanized space. However, this is not only a question, the layman's interest in simulacra and their simulation in everyday life, first of all, speaks of "emotional hunger". It seems that it is layman who makes the explanation of the reasons for the interest in simulacra difficult in the artistic or mass media practices of our time.

In addition, S. Lebedev points to other features of this phenomenon in our lives: "These are not only the designations and facts of the subject's inner experience: his mood, emotions, hunches, but also many "objects" of modern scientific knowledge and their concepts ("Ideal objects" of mathematics, logic, theoretical science, not to mention the symbols and construction of socio-humanitarian knowledge)" [4: 532]. In this case, his idea of a simulacrum as an ideal phantom in the spiritual life of people, which can significantly influence the values, ideals, and, accordingly, the behavior of the latter, draws attention.

We will point out that this ideal phantom has a complex nature of determination. On the one hand, it's associated with the expectation of positive from the outside world and, on the other hand, it is associated with one's own complex, intense inner world of a person. Then the lover of simulacra is actually a person who believes in miracles how paradoxical it may sound. Moreover, this person is already

accustomed to believe in miracles through our visual culture and even science [13: 64]. For example, during the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, many people willingly believed in the existence of succubuses and incubuses, based on the myths, religious doctrines and artistic works circulating in society at that time (just look at the chimeras of Noterdam de Paris).

We also draw attention to the fact that in recent years there have been many new discoveries in the natural sciences and technology, the results of which significantly influenced the mythologizing of social consciousness. Paradoxically, isn't it? For instance, the discovery of the ruins of Gebekli-Tepe revived the discussion about floods and other natural disasters as possible causes of fluctuations in progress/regression in the development of society. This discussion has not always exclusively scientific in nature. The discoveries of nanotechnologists increased interest in fairy tales and myths (the plot about the cap-invisible, etc.). Also the mythologizing of social consciousness happened thanks to the new technical capabilities of the film and animation industry; "through the mass media as the works of popular literature or cinema and, even, scientific researches in intellectual practices" [13: 63]. For example, films from the Lord of the Rings trilogy or Avatar made the unreal world sensually real, visible to the audience. The result of this, in our opinion, was a decrease in the criticality threshold in human thinking.

Now critical thinking, logic, and the search for causal relationships are no longer a priority for the layman. Fantasy and dream have become a more important priority for him, and so the "door to miracles" opens. (Note that the curricula of many universities, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, quickly adapt to such a public request).

And S. Lebedev has next interesting idea. He notes: "The world of simulacra

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is a large and complex world of subjective reality, constructed by each person separately and by humanity as a whole, in which they directly live. Part of this world is aimed at modeling, representing the world of objects external to a person. But not only the external world of objects, also the world of simulacra arises as an objective reality for a person" [4: 532]. In other words, simulacra in modern society are becoming important elements of the constructed urbanized space, especially if they have a visual form of existence.

Such an assessment of simulacrum role in the life of modern people, in our opinion, determines the need for its further development in the theoretical and methodological aspect. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the connection of spiritual, aesthetic, art-forming and commercial interests in the symbolic production of modern society.

First of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the game and pleasure with the symbolic exchange and remote manipulation of human sensuality. Why are computer games now popular? Why are children and adults willing to play them? But this is a phenomenon of the 21st century, and we must reckon with it. For instance, British researcher C. O'Connor points out the difficulty of identifying the causes of interest in the game among contemporaries. Thus, "there is no canonical way to pick out properties that are the objectively natural ones. The properties we care about are usually the ones that are already relevant to our payoff in some way" [9: 720]. Also he points out that a mode of production or a means of mass production are "historical processes that tend to generate objects with similar properties. Manmade objects are often created using a template and so tend to resemble manmade objects of the past" [9: 721]. To be clear, we do not necessarily endorse all his views, but this idea is real interesting. Furthermore, we consider the phenomenon of "sense

hunger" is one of important reason of this social process. When a person is provided with a large amount of visual space of his daily life, in particular, and visual culture, in general, ideal phantoms that are interesting and intriguing his imagination, this can be considered as entertainment and a game. But when there are too many such phantoms, an unusual consequence arises. Then the "revelry of fantasy" leads to the belief in the unreal and uncritical thinking of many people.

Why, one might ask, is this idea useful in this case? We recognize the methodological value of *the principle of "incomplete understanding of the object"*. Therefore, we consider that the popularity of simulacra not related to the rational sphere of life by contemporary, but to the *"another logic"* of life [6: 12] or the *phenomenon of "a-logic"* [11: 40-41]. What is it? It is the logic of values, where, first of all, sensuality and sensory experience become a value. We believe, this is phenomenon that needs to be understood by visual anthropologists. Also it must need to research "both by cultural anthropologists and by specialists in aesthetics or other scientific fields" [13: 66].

For instance, several images of antic Spartacus were created in the newest visual art. Thus, the real information of cultural heritage of mankind is distorting. Spartacus became a mythological pattern, and modern artistic myth about him creates an alternative history and an alternative reality, causing the reader or viewer to perceive the social reality as the phenomenon of "a-logic" [11: 41]. There are the film *Spartacus Rise* in the television program *Seven Days of History* (2011), movies *Spartacus* (1960, 1976), the American mini-series *Spartacus: Blood and Sand* (TV-canal *Stars*, 2010), *Spartacus: Gods of the Arena* (TV-canal *Stars*, 2011), or the cartoon announcement for the game *Rubin-Spartacus* (*Рубин-Спартак — in Russian*) (2014), and etc. This is an example of the

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simulacrum that contemporary visual practice has created. The artistic myths of newest day create many simulacra. There are Kievan Lord Vladimir and his three medieval knights which are created in the Russian animated films [13: 64-65]. Such Kievan Rus' Lord Volodymyr became a mythological pattern. This artistic double is an example of creating a popular simulacrum in the public consciousness of the Central and Eastern European countries. But such artistic heroes are a kind of revision of the cultural heritage [13: 65-66].

Also we give another example from modern artistic practice. In 2014, a mosaic which was made from many photographs of Barcelona residents appeared on Isidre Nonei Square. Such a mosaic may be a simulacrum, isn't it? Photographer and artist *Joan Funtcubert* created such an unusual art object. As a result of the contest, he selected 4,000 photos, of which he composed an image of a kiss. Image occupies more than 30 square meters. Therefore, an image of a kiss can simply not be noticed. A passerby on a city square sees photographs of real moments from the life of many real people and may be ask himself the question: "What is it?" To mine mind, such art object is a result of simulation. But is this mosaic a simulacrum? This street art object is a result of original idea; it is an example of original artistic form of newest days.

Let us explain our thought in more detail. Why is this specified art object not a simulacrum? It is not a simulacrum because there is not substitution of concepts, and not epigone as an imitator of something and less distinguished follower someone, especially an artist or philosopher. This is worth mentioning, firstly. This is not an artistic object with the task of translating thinking into new categories or standards presenting a 'new theology' to contemporaries and active using of publicity or poster advertising and etc. Yes, it's no ordinary art object, challenging tradition and classical artistic forms. But it implements kea idea: the idea of the value of sincerity and love in human life. The visualization of this artistic object is unusual, since ready-made technic forms are used as the basis of the artistic image. In addition, these are just everyday objects of contemporaries. This is worth mentioning, secondly.

And this artistic object also has an unusual place for exhibiting, because the viewer of such a street art work is an accidental passerby from a city street or square. This is not a work of easel painting or the classical form of monumental painting. And this artistic object also has an unusual place for exhibiting, because an accidental passerby from a city street or square may see such street art work every day. This is not a work of easel painting or the classical form of monumental painting. Such product of modern artistic practice is available to everyone. But a humanistic message is, most often, in the objects of street art. They involve a casual passerby in a "speechless" dialogue with the author and unusual communication in the urban environment. We point out the work of graffiti artist *Keith Haring*. The main theme in his work was love and unity, and the *Radiant Baby* became the most famous symbol. Recall, for example, street art objects created by *Benksy*, which call to think about the value of life, human dignity, anti-war movement, etc. These are such works as *Girl with a Balloon*, *Mobile-Lovers*, *Slave Labor* and other. The author, as it were, thinks, creating his work: "I am a humanist. I'll stay here till end!" Both in the work by Joan Funtcubert and the works by Benksy, the aesthetic experience of the author through an art form tries to "reach out" to contemporaries. We want to note this, thirdly.

The simulacrum doesn't have this, we pay attention to it. For the creator of simulacrum, humanism is not important, as it seems. His author has

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other incentives for creativity and other messages to other people and society. (As an example, we indicate the graffiti of Muscovite *Pasha183*, who is sometimes called the "Russian Banksy". This graffiti author didn't have his own style, he imitated style others).

In Program in Media Arts and Sciences at School of Architecture and Planning (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) by P. Nemirovsky is present the hypothesis that aesthetic forms of expression (such as painting, music or video) can be used for special information delivery. Nemirovsky considers these aesthetic forms stimulate more direct, emotional response in contrast to text or verbal narrative techniques, which require a conscious act of transcoding [10: 2].

Therefore, it is reasonable to turn to the analysis of symbolic values (value-symbol and value-sign) and their "aesthetic clothing" or artistic form, which is sometimes perceived in modern times as "world aesthetization" (J. Baudrillard). According to E. Pavlova (Олена Павлова), "the boundaries of the disciplinary space of traditional aesthetics" are now expanded through "new problems, such as imageology, aesthetics of communicative action, design (not only of individual things, but the landscape of culture as a whole), advertising and the aesthetics of virtual reality of electronic networks", and, therefore, now the subject field of aesthetics is "sensual self-affirmation of a person" [2: 29]. In this context, we note the need to distinguish between the phenomena of aesthetic human experience and artistic experience.

We point out that in modern conditions, due to the significant commercialization of artistic activity and the increasing role in media, a phenomenon has arisen that we called "aesthesi" [6: 7]. We use this term in contrast to the phenomenon of aesthesis that has humane potential using symbolic values and reliance on human sensuality as kalokagathos. But

a phenomenon of "aesthesi" can serve as "a mean of manipulation of the public consciousness" [13: 69]. That is, in the realities of modernity, the aesthetic sphere of society and the art or art space, to mine mined, are in the "zone of intersection", and not of the kind of dependence [6: 8]. Indeed, quasi-aesthetic products of contemporary artistic practices often have a different value basis than those created due to aesthetic needs and aesthetic experience [6: 14].

In the commercialization of artistic activity or any other practice (for which it is important to use a visual image and its artistic modeling), the harmony or spiritual development of a person, as a means of humanizing social life, are not always as significant as profit (especially with modern mass media practices). Under such conditions, in our opinion, such cultural phenomena as simulacrum and quasi-aesthetic facts (the phenomenon of "aesthesi") are links in a single causal relationship.

Conclusions and research perspectives. Consequently, the prospect of strengthening this trend in the development of contemporary art culture, and with it the aesthetic tradition of a particular community, in particular Ukrainians, requires in-depth analysis.

Therefore, when analyzing the popularity of simulacra among contemporaries, we can indicate such signs of the latter.

1) A simulacrum arises through awareness of the author's actions during its creation (if it is a phantom of consciousness). In other words, the creator of a simulacrum (producer) has a plan when creating a simulacrum. The producer of simulacrum always has goal-setting in his actions.

2) The simulacrum is a fact of the subject's inner experience, that is, it arises as a result of reliance on the individual experience of the creator, primarily emotional and sensory states, impressions, or mood. But the simulacrum attracts the attention of another person (recipient) just as last

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one. Own sentimental experience is replaced by sensory experience (most often it is a visual experience when meeting with a film, fiction, television talk show, advertising image, and video from YouTube, Twitter or Facebook).

3) The simulacrum models the world on the basis of the "fuzziness" of the value foundations of a person's life or the group to which he belongs. A simulacrum is interesting to those people for whom conformism or social mimicry is inherent.

4) In it, an excessive appeal to human subjectivity is perceived as individual entertainment and brings a kind of pleasure, often as a challenge to values, traditions, and standards of decency. (As an example of the latter, we can indicate prank and the activities of prankers in the modern media sphere).

5) Simulacrum effectively affects the human worldview and the behavior of the perceiver (recipient). But at the same time, the recipient does not pay the necessary attention to the true intentions of the producer of this phenomenon. They are veiled for him, not obvious because of the presence of various semantic layers, as a certain message (possibly as information with many "codes for the initiates").

6) Simulacrum is closely connected with the symbolic values of a concrete historical community. This is especially evident when it comes to visual art and contemporary artistic practices. And this is not only about allusion, litota and other elements of symbolization when stimulating such phantoms to popularity.

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