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## THE CONCEPT OF "CONTEMPORARY ART" AND "AESTHETIC SITUATION" IN POLISH AESTHETICS

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*The interpretation of the term "contemporary art" is of concern today by theorists. The semantic definition of the ambiguous concepts, which also includes the concept of "art", has always been quite complex, there are now more than a dozen variants of its interpretation. Therefore, when analyzing contemporary art as such, it is important not only to clarify the essence of the concept, but also to outline its important aspects that will be the focus of our attention in this study.*

*It also makes sense of the relation in contemporary art to tradition such as possible reference to academism, etc. In addition, the phenomenon of art synthesis as one of the characteristic features of modern symbolization practice and creation of artistic images is analyzed. The transformation of the basic elements of "aesthetic situation" phenomenon by the Polish esthetician R. Ingarden is made in modern terms.*

*The author analyzes the main approaches by Polish aesthetics to the understanding of the essence of "contemporary art" concept which has been historically developed. At the same time, we pay attention to the main features of the latest artistic practices, possible incentives for contemporary artistic creativity. In particular, we characterize the content and specificity of "novelty in art" concept, "original creativity", which are often correlated with the concept of contemporary art.*

*Views on the specifics of contemporary art in general and criteria for evaluating individual artistic innovations as socio-cultural or aesthetic phenomena are considered (M. Gołaszewska, A. Książek, J. Margolis, S. Morawski and others). It stated that the criteria, principles of art analysis and the latest artistic processes specified by the researchers allow modern aesthetics to carry out an adequate assessment of their importance for the positive development of modern society.*

*The significance of sociocultural changes in modern society, its symbolic production and exchange for the formation of social incentives to the latest artistic creativity and practice are revealed.*

**Keywords:** *Aesthetic Experience, Artistic Practices, Symbolic Production and Exchange, Concept of "Novelty in Art", Concept of "Original Creativity", Cultural Heritage, Aesthetic Anthropology*

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## ПОНЯТТЯ "СУЧАСНЕ МИСТЕЦТВО" ТА "ЕСТЕТИЧНА СИТУАЦІЯ" У ДОСВІДІ ПОЛЬСЬКОЇ ЕСТЕТИКИ

К. С. Шевчук

Трактування поняття "сучасне мистецтво" викликає на сьогодні заклопотаність з боку теоретиків. Змістове окреслення багатозначних понять, до яких належить також й поняття "мистецтво", завжди було доволі складним, зараз існує понад декілька десятків варіантів його тлумачення. Об'єктом аналізу стали здобутки польської естетики про зміст поняття "сучасне мистецтво", історично нею напрацьовані.

Методологічною основою дослідження виступили семіотичний метод при розгляді творів мистецтва кінця ХХ – початку ХХІ століть, герменевтичний метод та аналіз трансформації в сучасних умовах основних елементів концепту "естетичної ситуації", вказаної польським естетиком Р. Інгарденом. Припущено, як гіпотеза, що напрацьовані ним критерії, принципи аналізу новітніх художніх процесів дають змогу сучасній естетиці здійснювати адекватне оцінювання їх значення для позитивного розвитку сучасного суспільства, виявляючи вектори подальших змін.

При цьому нами звертається увага на основні ознаки новітніх художніх практик, можливих спонук сучасної художньої творчості, зокрема новаторство. Зокрема, нами охарактеризовано зміст та специфіку поняття "новизна у мистецтві", "оригінальна творчість", які часто співвідносять з поняттям сучасного мистецтва.

Розглянуто погляди про специфіку сучасного мистецтва загалом та критерії оцінки окремих теперішніх художніх інновацій як соціально-культурних чи естетичних явищ (М. Gołaszewska, А. Książek, J. Margolis, S. Morawski та ін.). Також осмислено відношення у сучасному мистецтві до традиції, наприклад до академізму тощо. Крім того, проаналізовано явище синтезу мистецтв як однієї з характерних рис сучасної практики символізації та створення художніх образів.

Як висновок, встановлено зв'язок соціокультурних змін у способі повсякденного життя сучасної людини, символічному виробництві й обміні теперішнього суспільства та соціальної стимуляції митців до постійного новаторства у художньої творчості й практиці. Тобто, митець став прірівнюватися до інноватора.

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**Ключові слова:** естетичний досвід, художні практики, символічне виробництво та обмін, поняття "новизна у мистецтві", поняття "оригінальна творчість", культурна спадщина, естетична антропологія

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**Introduction of the issue.** It is quite difficult to understand the motives of artistic creativity and many works of contemporary art. Meeting with new image-creating, more often modern viewer, less often listener may be disoriented, contemplating artistic innovation, a work of art. He is not always able to fully apprehend and adequately appreciate the latest artistic phenomena or artistic trends. Sometimes people feel very distraught because they do not know, if what they are dealing with has anything to do with the field of art.

The latest artistic practices and works of art are often striking in their formative searches, raising the question: "How is this possible?" Suffice it to mention the drawings

from the sand by X. Simonova (Xenia Pascal; Ксенія Симонова or Ксенія Паскар) as winner of the TV contest *Ukraine Has Talent* (2009). Sand animation challenges the value of a work of art as something more or less lasting in time when it is a painting, a canvas, etc. However, its visual images are of interest to many contemporaries. The unusual technique of the author and the materials caused the audience and critics astonishment: one picture created two images. These are works by *Sergi Cadenas* which exhibited in December 2018 at the *Galeria d'art Jordi Barnadas*. The collection of his works had the symbolic name: *Getting Old* and made it possible to see the metamorphosis of the

human face. It all depended on the point from which the viewer looked at the pictures. That is, two patterns of this work are seen by the visitor of the exhibition, in particular the face of a young man and a man of a more mature age. The hologram effect created an unusual artistic image, filling it with unusual symbolism. Such work of art is knowledge-intensive, where the artistic image arises with the latest scientific or technical innovations. The following, of course, raises the question of the innovation role and tradition in art, of the connection between science and art.

In modern times, it has proven that classical aesthetic theory is often unable to cope with the challenges that have arisen in the field of art, artistic practices since the beginning of the twentieth century, and were caused by the emergence of new, often-provocative artistic actions and rather bold creative experiments. The problems encountered by aesthetic theory in the 21st century in the face of artistic innovation became even more clearly delineated and caused by both external and internal factors. The arsenal of tools, methods, approaches used by traditional aesthetics previously does not allow to fully grasping the essence of much of modern art manifestations. Therefore, the need for rethinking and developing the methodological foundation of aesthetic theory has become quite acute, and there is a need to develop new terminology adequate to the existing realities. But the biggest challenge for aesthetics, and not only that, was that a whole host of contemporary art phenomena was consciously challenged with traditional aesthetic ideals, consciously provoking, shocking and striving to evoke negative feelings in the public, art critics and "work colleagues". Today, it is obvious that there is no adequate understanding of the trends in the development of the latest artistic practices by both modern society and scholars. Therefore, a complete theory of art cannot ignore the social functions of art as a socio-cultural phenomenon or ignore its axiological character.

The theoretical and methodological "baggage" of Polish aesthetics, its interest in aesthetic and anthropological issues for a long time, seems to allow us not only to deepen our understanding of the current artistic practices specifics, but also to enrich the thesaurus of modern aesthetic theory. However, it is not widely known not only in Ukraine but also in other countries of the world. It makes this research relevant.

**The purpose** of the article is to review the historically Polish-established ideas about aesthetics motives of contemporary art and new accents in the sense of the term. As a *hypothesis*, the idea of an "aesthetic situation" which developed in Polish aesthetic thought is an important component of the theoretical "baggage" of aesthetic anthropology, important for the study of modern processes in art.

**The outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article.** *The object* of the study were the aesthetic works of such Polish scholars: M. Gołaszewska (2001), R. Ingarden (1958), W. Juszcak (1970), P. Krakowski (1984), A. Książek (2000), J. Margolis (2004), S. Morawski (1999), M. Wallis (1985) and others. Our tasks are: 1) identify the tendency of change of ideas about the value of aesthetic experience in artistic practices at the turn of the XX - XXI centuries; 2) we also want to find out the importance and relevance of the contribution of Polish researchers to the development of modern aesthetic theory, especially when it comes to its anthropological component.

**Current state of the issue.** Some theorists, such as Maria Gołaszewska, have noted that something like *Copernican art revolution* has taken place in contemporary art [2: 33]. There are many reasons for this, but without their deep and comprehensive analysis, it is impossible to discover the true perspectives of art and its significance for contemporaries.

Andrzej Książek proposes such an understanding of art in contemporary realities. He says: "Art is called the work of human activity, which places aesthetic implication in the plane of current or past, constantly

changing sphere of art in view of certain characteristics that reject all previously known practical functions of these "objects" as well as in view of our disinterested setting on them" [6: 242]. In addition, he calls this definition analytical and historical. He has an emphasis on such features of art as novelty, non-commercial nature. However, he points out that the metaphysical (trans-historical) aspect of this phenomenon should be pointed out. The researcher acknowledges the difficulty of this definition.

J. Margolis's argument is interesting, emphasizing that the mistaken view is that "modern," "contemporary" or "Postmodern" is a new era that radically rejects all the refined canons of the past. Closer to the truth, in his view, is the view that, in recent times, we have begun to pay more attention (at least in art, much less in science and philosophy) to the historicity of our world and thought [7: 28]. Novelty is one of the fundamental components of the value of artistic work because it is not an autotelic quality. It derives its potential from other values that come with it.

**Results and Discussion.** In order to better define the term "Contemporary Art" it is important to focus on understanding its key features and qualities. One of the most characteristic features of contemporary art is its novelty. An example is the work of Ukrainian artist Alexey And\* who, based on symbolism, is a portrait of one of the founders of the "modern computer world", applies not only the idea of a triptych: the central element is, in fact, the image of a famous person, and additional side panels create a "sensual note" of the work. (Composition *Apple of Temptation. Steve Jobs*, 2019, 200x200). However, an unusual, symbolic layer of the artistic work does not arise only because of this. The unexpected element is a real computer chip that causes a game of imagination and a lot of thought when looking at a triptych. Therefore, the subject of everyday life becomes an important element of the artwork. (In this way, the artist implements his concept of "associative symbolism"). However, this element is a man-made form.

Such terms like "originality" and "innovation" are also related to novelty. After all, in the process of creation and perception, it is quite valuable to use new elements, new techniques and means of art or form, that testifies to the creative nature of artistic activity in general. However, it should be noted that over time, the constant desire for innovation, stimulated by the search for new forms, has grown into a kind of tradition, and the artist began to be equated with the innovator. Thus, in the twentieth century, especially in its third quarter, the desire for formative innovation, sometimes radical, began to acquire the outlines of fashion and "good tone" in the work of artists. Therefore, it requires an in-depth study of both this issue and the issue of external incentives in contemporary artistic practices to radicalism, or even public outrage. We need to find out why this is often favorably received even when it is pastiche, simulacrum, etc.

As noted by the prominent Polish esthetician M. Wallis, modern aesthetics needs new research techniques and tools, new concepts to take into account the changes that have taken place in the arts and culture in recent years. After all, they caused significant changes in the attitude to the sensuality and aesthetic experience of a man. According to the researcher, aesthetics should be as sympathetic to works of contemporary art as to works of ancient art [12: 18]. Such an authoritative position has supporters and opponents. It arose at the intersection of the discussion, firstly, about the purpose of the work of art. The representative of institutional theory, G. Dickie, is convinced of the need to find the conditions that a work of art must fulfill. Thus, it is necessary to formulate such a definition of art that would cover all phenomena pertaining to contemporary image creating.

It should be noted that Dickie's reasoning has some difficulty, in agreeing on the meaningful filling of the notion of "work of art" (it gives the object that it captures a specific value, with the apparent absence of such values in the objects of everyday life).

As an example, it is not easy to answer the question that makes M. Duchamp's bicycle wheel a work of art. Can the desire of the media to produce a sensation or only the high-level authority of this artist or modern fashion over-originality? (The identical wheel in the store it is not, it is a commonplace item from everyday life). Dickey believes that each work belongs primarily to the expectation of a particular social group or "Art World" (the concept of Danto, which means people, traditions, artistic institutions, and the atmosphere of origin of the work of art).

Trying to clarify the essence of the "contemporary art" concept, we must bear in mind that the boundaries of art, as noted by M. Weitz [13: 353-354], J. Białostocki [1: 9] are variable, and the scope of the concept of art historically is like this. As a result, the expression "art" has undergone significant changes in different epochs and periods of social development. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about some single concept of art; it's worth considering the existence of many definitions of this term.

Let us say that for modern definitions of art it is characteristic that scope of the "artistic" concept is determined by the intention of the artist, painter, composer, etc. However, according to the creators of neo-avant-gardism, there is no distinction between art and non-art. The scope of the expression "art" thus overlaps with the scope of the expression "all" - all that is created (as a result of artistic creativity or artistic practice). In addition, a recipient may also be in the role of the author, there is co-creation. Therefore, there is a problem of unequal interpretation of art in contemporary aesthetic theory and artistic practice. (In this regard, we may recall the famous words from the song *Bad Date* by Leonid Utesov (Леонид Утесов) about the different expectations of two people on a date when they say: "So tomorrow, at the same place, and at the same time!" After all, each of these people thought about different times and different places). Another reason for the debate is that there is no common trait inherent in all works of art. In another,

H. Reed once insightfully observed; all problems of definition of art are connected with the identification of art and the beautiful [11: 7-8]. That is, art does not have to be beautiful, as it was in accordance with traditional aesthetic ideals and concepts of classical estheticians.

It is worth mentioning that, according to M. Weitz, the American esthetician, traditional definitions of art are based on a logical fallacy: in aesthetic theories, it is believed that the concept of art can be defined with the necessary and sufficient for the list of features. According to the researcher, art is an open concept that is constantly changing, expanding its range with new cases [13: 348, 350]. Weitz has endorsed many contemporary estheticians, including W. Kennick.

Contrary to the basic principles of neo-avant-garde, the concepts of novelty and innovation have become the basis of modern art. Perhaps, as Białostocki [3] points out, the mystery of contemporary artistic practice lies somewhere in the midst of a total commitment to standards and the futility of a solid drive for innovation. According to T. Szkolut novelty always determine the authenticity of art. The most important stages in the development of art are the works that are characterized by formal or technical, or substantive innovation. Instead, the works that are most endowed with this feature but which also carry aesthetic qualities (structurally and constructively), together with the culmination of the most important achievements of mankind are now called original works or simply masterpieces [15: 169]. This definition of masterpiece is related to the modern understanding of this concept. Traditionally, in aesthetics and culture of earlier times, masterpieces were associated with the category of excellence. However, the situation has changed nowadays. Let us say that the consideration of unexpected novelty value in the art of the XX-XXI centuries began, perhaps, from the question of Th. Eliot: "Is it possible to create something out of nothing in art?" (Essay *Tradition and individual talent*, 1917). The

meaning of this question is related to the idea that the present is largely determined by the achievements of the creators of the past. On the other hand, every innovative work modifies the existing hierarchy of creative achievements, changing the existing list of artistic values.

Interesting, in the aesthetic concept by R. Ingarden, novelty is a positive value of a work of art (it testifies to the creative ability of the artist, his rich imagination, etc.). It is the use of new themes in art or new techniques in image creating that oppose the use of stereotypes in art. However, let us say that nowadays novelty is proclaimed the most important quality of artistic innovation. This is the basic principle of art, associated with the opposition of tradition, but also the rejection of the basic requirements of classical aesthetics (above all, the need for the ideal of the perfect to improve the human taste). However, the desire for novelty in the artistic practices of nowadays is sometimes more like an outrageous audience, creating a surprise to attract attention.

It should be emphasized that the opposition to traditional art is not only connected with the advent of avant-gardism, but the emergence of neo-avant-gardism is also associated with a break with the traditional understanding of the creative process. At such work as *Art against art. From the theory of avant-gardism of the twentieth century* A. Książek examines the phenomenon of "Academic Art", in particular, the relativity of this concept, and also draws attention to the concept of avant-garde art. He notes that avant-garde artists have expressed opposition to their academic art. (In the first half of the twentieth century, academic art was realistic, naturalistic, and the art of Cubism, abstract art, surrealism, futurism, and constructivism constituted avant-garde art). The artists of the second half of the twentieth century who represented the New Avant-garde, expressed opposition to academic art but in the first century it became the avant-garde art. Thus, avant-gardism stood against avant-gardism [6: 28]. Therefore, the notion of

avant-gardism is also relational. S. Morawski also said about this [8: 176].

An important characteristic of contemporary art is the desire to apply the synthesis of several types of artistic creativity. For example, during the interwar twentieth century, proposals were constantly made for painting and sculpture to be broadly integrated into architecture. It is revealing that thought about the synthesis of art is contained in the works of Roman Ingarden, who, in particular, believed that the work of cinema was a work of art, which is at the intersection of many arts, which, through their interaction, are interwoven into entirely special works. He emphasized: "Cinema, on the one hand, overlaps with works of literature, and on the other, it converges with a theatrical performance, although it differs significantly from it, and also contains significant moments of a musical work" [4: 303]. He further notes that cinema is at the intersection of the following types of art: painting and literature. In the ninth paragraph, "On unpredictable "abstract" paintings" (*O obrazach nieprzedstawiających «abstrakcyjnych»*) of his works *On the structure of the picture (O budowie obrazu)* Roman Ingarden points out that some works of abstract art are boundary works, because they are between painting and architecture [3: 81]. In reviewing Pablo Picasso's work, Ingarden states that although the painting is here at the intersection of painting and literature, because of its structure, it introduces the viewer beyond the painting itself, introducing it into the realm of imaginary objects, and thus leaving him much greater freedom of imagination than this occurs in a painting on historical subjects [3: 88].

Another important feature of contemporary art is the transformation of the main components of the "Aesthetic Situation", according to the Polish esthetician. Among its components, the Polish esthetician distinguished the works of art, creator, recipient, aesthetic experience, and aesthetic value. However, all elements of the aesthetic situation are related to the

problem of aesthetic values, insisted R. Ingarden. The artist creates the work with the aim of creating a certain aesthetic value. The recipient in communicating with the work of art seeks to know the aesthetic experience. In turn, a work of art is an embodiment of aesthetic value, since (according to Ingarden's aesthetic concept) only the presence of this type of value is an argument for recognizing the work as a work of art. Already in avant-garde artistic practice, the scheme of aesthetic situation is changing. In traditional art, which is guided by the principle of "compositional correctness", the artist took care of the transparency of the arrangement of the elements of the work. In modern art, a new technique of element construction, called decomposition (compositional chaos), has emerged. There was also a departure from the beautiful (it has for centuries been recognized as the main aesthetic value), as well as the skill of execution, which depended on the degree of professional training.

In addition, instead of the creator, we are dealing here with an innovator, whose role is often limited to the organization of a particular artistic event: installations, happening, etc. A work of art in earlier times that Ingarden believed should have unfolded in time and seemed to be separated from the world. Now the work is actively incorporated into reality, becoming one of its elements. In other words, the boundary between the work and what it is not is blurred. The recipient becomes a co-organizer of the art event, its participant. Some phenomena of contemporary art (for example, phenomenon of "Sand Animation") do not at all imply the presence of the artist, his creative actions. There is also no finished work of art here (this also applies to conceptualism).

A fracture in art is related to the disintegration of an object in a painting. Ready-mades appear, which have given impetus to a new understanding of art. For example, P. Krakowski indicates that this causes a change in the position of the artist, who, as a result of a creative act of choice, magnifies the "ready-mades", and thus places it in the world of art. Ready-mades

requires a different set-up of the recipient: "the new name given by the artist to the selected object causes the recipient's imagination to seek new, more or less distant, links between the object and the name" [5: 81]. Thus, the transition from one period to another in contemporary art leads to a change in all elements of the traditional understanding of the aesthetic situation. At the same time, the world around us is changing, as is the model of the artist. However, similar views were expressed by Morawski in his work *Art as a form of self-Consciousness (Sztuka jako forma samoświadomości)* [10: 89-109].

The reasons for the "Copernican Artistic Revolution" in the current artistic practice Gołaszewska considers: 1) challenges of the socio-political plan, 2) revolutionary discoveries in the exact, natural sciences (mainly in physics) resulting in, 3) a change in understanding of the basic principles of human perception of the world. In the view of the researcher, this has led to tremendous transformations of plastic arts [2: 33].

#### **Conclusions and research perspec.**

Changes in contemporary art have a number of reasons, one of which is the current social expectations of novelty. Nowadays human, for some reason, is striving hard for it. Therefore, innovation is not so much an improvement made by the precursors in the formation. Innovation goes into something else the artist is required to become an innovator. Nowadays is regarded as something desirable, important and positive.

However, the desire for innovation also causes changes in aesthetic ideals. After all, the aesthetic value of art can be defined as an attempt to express in artistic images the extra-rational factors of human life. This is a testament to the change in our era of dominant ideological values and standards of everyday life of modern human.

The active use by modern domestic estheticians of Polish aesthetic thought in recent decades will, in our opinion, be useful and heuristically fruitful. First of all, it concerns the concept of aesthetic situation. We believe that the appeal to the theoretical baggage by Polish aesthetics and

its development will enrich the humanities not only of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Such ideas are fruitful for the development of modern aesthetic theory as aesthetic anthropology.

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