



2nd INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC-PRACTICAL CONFERENCE

**“EUROINTEGRATION IN ART, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION:
EXPERIENCE, DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES”**

II МІЖНАРОДНА НАУКОВО-ПРАКТИЧНА КОНФЕРЕНЦІЯ

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ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ РОЗВИТКУ”**

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Foreword

The Second International Conference *EUROINTEGRATION IN THE ARTS, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES, PERSPECTIVES OF IMPLEMENTATION* is an event that demonstrates the support of Ukrainian scientists by Lithuanian colleagues and is dedicated to the topical issues of fine arts, culture and pedagogy.

For the second year in a row, researchers with many years of experience, as well as undergraduate and graduate students, meet in the scientific space of the conference, which is in line with the principle of equality and aims to combine traditions and alternative approaches.

The conference proceedings reflect the main goal of the event - to bring together European and Ukrainian researchers, to highlight non-standard opinions and to establish ways of interaction in the field of interdisciplinary research. Our tasks are to find answers to the questions of how intergenerational knowledge and diverse perspectives can improve the sustainable development of education and science, how to integrate theoretical achievements into life, and how to combine science and art in the context of new demands and requirements of society.

The publication of the proceedings in an online format is a deliberate move by the conference organisers, in consistence with one of the priorities of the European Green Deal - the rational use of natural resources and the development of an ecological consciousness in the global scientific community.

Compilers

Передмова

Друга Міжнародна конференція «ЄВРОІНТЕГРАЦІЯ В МИСТЕЦТВІ, НАУЦІ ТА ОСВІТІ: ДОСВІД, ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ РОЗВИТКУ» – захід, що демонструє підтримку українських вчених литовськими колегами, присвячений актуальним проблемам образотворчого мистецтва, культури і педагогіки.

Другий рік поспіль в науковому просторі конференції зустрічаються дослідники з багаторічним досвідом та студенти і аспіранти, що відповідає принципу рівності та спрямовано на поєднання традицій і альтернативних підходів.

Матеріали конференції віддзеркалюють головну мету заходу – об'єднання європейських і українських дослідників, висвітлення нестандартних думок та налагодження шляхів взаємодії у царині міждисциплінарних досліджень. Наші завдання – це пошук відповідей на запитання, як знання різних поколінь та різноманітні точки зору можуть покращити сталий розвиток освіти і науки, як інтегрувати теоретичні здобутки в життя та поєднати науку і мистецтво в контексті нових запитів та вимог суспільства.

Публікація матеріалів в онлайн-форматі – усвідомлений крок організаторів конференції, який відповідає одному з пріоритетних напрямів у реалізації європейського «зеленого курсу» – раціональному використанню природних ресурсів та формуванню еко-свідомості у світовій спільноті вчених.

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SERGEI BELIK'S PAINTING: THE FEELING OF DIVINE PRESENCE IN EVERYDAY SPACE

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Abstract. The role of the geometric body of the sphere in the creation of the ideal space of still life paintings by the Odessa painter-metaphysician Sergei Belik is considered. The role of light is revealed. The role of ordinary things (table, tablecloth, fruit) in the relationship with spiritual reality is shown. The compositions are studied in the context of “big time” art.

Keywords: still life of the millennium, fine art of Odessa, sphere, apple, symbol, archetype, iconology, hermeneutics.

Introduction. The goal of the Odessa artist Sergey Belik (born in 1953) is to express a personal feeling of divine presence in the ordinary space of a person. In Belik's compositions there is no depiction of man, as the hero is the artist himself. He is a guide for the viewer from physical space to spiritualized space. In his youth Sergei received a spiritual revelation: *“At the age of 16 I was struck by the idea of the finiteness of the universe, that it is closed and everything created is finite. Only God is infinite, because he is not created. I felt that the Cosmos, like the Earth, has its own spatiality. The mysticism of this experience is that beyond this world there are cocoons of other worlds. Beyond matter is the infinity of spirit”* (Tarasenko, Belik, 2005–2024).

Methodology. A comparative method is used.

Theoretical part

The ideal shape of the sphere is the key to the artist's creative concept. According to J. Cooper, the sphere is perfection, the original form containing the possibility of all other forms, the Cosmic Egg, the world, the soul, it is the Great Circle containing the universe, the hidden source to the mystery of existence, cosmic time and space (Cooper, 1995). In Sergei Belik's program work *Sphere* (2005) (Figure 1), an ideal geometric body is placed on a pedestal like a monument in the real space of a seascape.



Figure 1. Sergei Belik. *Sphere*. 2005. Canvas, oil. 100×100.

The universal image corresponds to a spatial structure that includes the elements of earth (pedestal), water and the dominant sky. Everything is united by the fiery element of the sun. Shown in a saturated light-air environment, the sphere acquires qualities inherent in living nature. The impression of pulsation of life is created with the help of pictorial texture. This achieves an unexpected, new sensation: the sphere breathes energy. In the artist's paintings the sphere appears not only as an abstract geometric body, but also in the images of fruits, jugs, bowls, tree crowns, clouds.

Sergey Belik lives and works in a port city in the south of Ukraine, where the discoverers of new ways in art M. Vrubel and V. Kandinsky grew up. Kandinsky, studied D. Burliuk, taught A. Exter.

Here in the 1910s were held the famous “Izdebski Salon”, where the works of the European avant-garde were presented. Immediately after graduating from the Odesa Art School (1975), various versions of the sphere were created. His feeling of “multidimensionality of the universe in different dimensions” turned out to be consonant with the penetration into the world of Divine geometry of his predecessors. First of all, icon painters (Figure 2), Leonardo da Vinci (Figure 3), avant-garde artists (Figure 4, 5).



Figure 2. The Savior in the Force. Icon. XV century.



Figure 3. Leonardo da Vinci. Vitruvian man. The Golden Ratio in the depiction of man. 1492



Figure 4. V. Kandinsky. Small Worlds IV. 1922

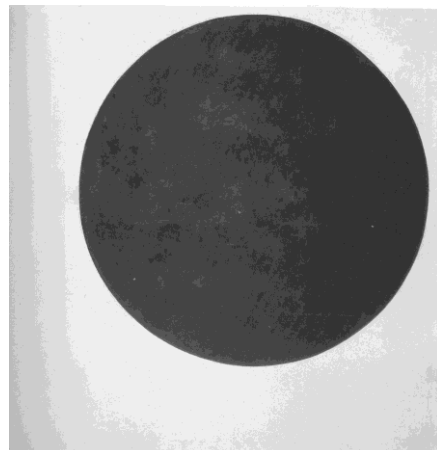


Figure 5. K. Malevich. Black Circle. Early 1920s

A comparison of Belik's "Sphere" with Malevich's composition "Black Circle" (early 1920s) (Figure 5) shows that the Odesa artist remains faithful to the plasticity of the sensual world of the Earth. Unlike Malevich's ethereal black circle, his sphere has volume. The origins of the plastic interpretation of the ideal sphere can be found in the Greek classics. What Malevich and Belik have in common is the abstract white background. White, according to Kandinsky, is "as if a symbol of the world where all colors, all material properties and substances have disappeared. This world stands so high above us that no sound from there reaches us" (Kandinsky, 2001). According to C. Jung's depth psychology, the self-archetype is the core of our personality. This imago Dei in man (self) is "indistinguishable from the image of God" (Jung, 1991). The self-manifests itself in the image of the mandala. By spontaneously drawing a circle, a cross, a square a person reproduces cosmogenesis.

Sergei Belik's goal is to convey "the embodiment of spirit in matter", to show it in a new – spiritualized quality. *"There is an inner spiritual assignment pulsating in me. I have to embody it through certain images - still lifes, landscapes. A narrative painting is not close to me because the plot turns to the ordinary."* (Tarasenko, Belik, 2005–2024). The passivity of the subject is important to the artist, so that he himself can be in the role of director. At the same time, the world of concrete objects and things gives credibility to his abstraction. He needs the object, like Morandi, for example, to convey his state of mind and spirit through its flesh. In a certain sense, his compositions fulfill a function inherent in the icon: to raise the human spirit from the sensual to the supersensual.

During his formative years as an artist, Belik constantly worked from nature. Since the objects he depicted varied in different still lifes, he studied them well. At present, the artist mainly works from memory. This method gives him an opportunity to escape from attachment to the subject and express his state of mind. *"It is better to paint without nature,"* says the painter. – *At the beginning there is a certain barely perceptible image, and you embody it. You can write in a week. But with nature, the work lasts for months. I used to perceive nature in a more uniplanar way, but now I see it much more broadly. That's why it's harder to concentrate, to solve it in a certain style"* (Tarasenko, Belik, 2005–2024). Belik's method of creativity can be defined as intuitionism, the ascent from the unconscious to the conscious comprehension of the ideal in the visible, material forms of natural existence (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Sergei Belik. Still Life with Red Apples. 1981.
Canvas, oil. 80 × 100

Archetypes. The subject world in Belik's paintings is simple. The artist is attracted by the universal archetypal form. The objects he shows pass through all times without undergoing significant changes. The painter is not interested in the history of the object, its owners. Tables, tablecloths, vessels, fruits have an abstract metaphysical character. Belik's perception of the archetypality of the familiar world of things was influenced by the study of O. Freidenberg's works (cousin of poet Boris Pasternak) (Freidenberg, 1997). "The whole world is a mystery, but it turns out everything is open and decipherable. All the tablecloths and tables are my mental forms. They are sacred to me," says the artist. Jugs, vessels are the original symbol of the procreative feminine. In ancient times a person was buried in vessels so that he could be reborn to a new life. Two-meter amphorae were installed by the Greeks as tombstones. Bowl, glass – symbolizes the space of the fertile earth open to the upper hemisphere of the fertilizing sky. Egg – a symbol of the mystery of the creation of the world, a model of the structure of the globe, a universal microcosm. Cosmic egg can be depicted as a sphere. Apple symbolizes immortality as a fruit from the Garden of the Hesperides or from the garden of Freya. It means fertility, love, wisdom, but also deceitfulness and death (temptation).

In the 1990s, light became increasingly important to Belik. In his compositions it has two aspects: the sunlight of the real world and divine non-temporal light. In the Gospel, the concept of light is expressed in the words of Christ: "Peace be with you. I am the light of the world." According to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, God as Good is the archetypal Light, standing above any other light. He "gives light to all that can receive it, and he is the measure of all beings and their principle of eternity, number, order and unity" (Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, 1992). According to the theology of Abbot Sugerius, divine emanation follows from abstraction to a denser form. S. Averintsev writes that visible, sensual light may well be perceived as an "icon of the invisible". Light is an "icon of divine energies" (Averintsev, 1973).

Like the Renaissance masters, the artist carefully depicts the shadow falling from the objects. Its formal role is that it defines the plane. The diagonal direction of the shadow brings dynamics into the static basis of the composition. It is not by chance that the shadow in the sacred texts of Ancient Egypt was an indispensable sign of earthly life.



Figure 7. Sergei Belik. Lonely apple. 1996. Canvas, oil. 90×100.

The sacredness is determined by the artist's state. When perceiving Belik's still lifes it is necessary to remember that a thing, an object is a dense component of the trinity: flesh (physical body) – state of mind (psychology) and spirit. The spirit is manifested through the flesh – embodied. It is not by chance that the variant of the composition “Lonely Apple” (Figure 7) has the title “Meditation” (2000). The extreme laconism of the components: a dark table half covered with a white tablecloth and a small red apple – contributes to focusing the viewer's attention on the flowing stream of light that enlivens the motionless objects. In Belik's interpretation, light is a sensual reality, akin in nature to the matter of the tablecloth. With the help of a painting technique reminiscent of a light pointillistic (point) brushstroke, the artist conveys the universal “matter of the world”. This quality makes him akin to the creators of Byzantine mosaics, to the masters of Art Nouveau and avant-garde – Vrubel and Filonov. The process of communication between the painter and the canvas is a kind of sacred action: “*You communicate with the spirit,*” says Belik. – *The main thing is how the artist “tamped” the surface. It is alive, it breathes»* (Tarasenko, Belik, 2005–2024).



Figure 8. Sergei Belik. White Objects. 2006. Canvas, oil. 55×70

In the composition “White Objects” (2006) (Figure 8) simple forms are chosen by the artist to express the idea of light. Preserving the subject basis allows Belik to avoid the dead-end situation in which Malevich found himself when he created the suprematist composition “White Square on White” (1918). To express the spiritual plane of being, the artist needs a physical component. The artist's aspiration to the Absolute is expressed in the appeal to the white color.

Conclusions. The philosophical perception of the world is relevant, as mankind will always strive to comprehend the mystery of the beyond. Through the visible there is an ascent to the invisible world. As in an icon. But in Belik's still lifes and landscapes there is no depiction of saints. Simple objects are transformed by the state of the artist's soul. In our time, the thing has lost its ritual role. A simple dining table, in front of which, as in front of an altar, a prayer was made before the meal, is no longer sacred. By showing objects in relationship with the world of the universe, with spiritual reality, rather than from the point of view of practical utility, the painter returns to the familiar world of things their significance. Sergei Belik's works are peculiar bridges to spiritual reality.

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