

**Lomonosov Moscow State University
St. Petersburg State University**

Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art

IV

Collection of articles

**St. Petersburg
2014**

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Московский государственный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова
Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет

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Сборник научных статей содержит материалы Международной конференции молодых специалистов, проходившей на историческом факультете МГУ имени М.В. Ломоносова 21-24 ноября 2013 г. и посвященной актуальным вопросам истории искусства и культуры от древности до современности. В статьях отечественных и иностранных авторов (на русском и английском языках) представлены результаты исследований в области изучения искусства Древнего мира, Византии, Древней Руси, Западной Европы от Средневековья до Нового и Новейшего времени, России XVIII-XX вв., а также теории искусства.

Издание предназначено в первую очередь для специалистов. Может быть использовано в учебной, научно-практической деятельности, а также интересно широкому кругу любителей искусства.

The collection of articles presents the materials of the International Conference of Young Specialists held at the Faculty of History of Lomonosov Moscow State University on November 21-24, 2013. It deals with the actual problems of art history and theory from Antiquity to the present day. The articles by Russian and foreign authors (in Russian and in English) present the results of research in the art of the Ancient World, Byzantium, Medieval Russia, Western Europe from the Middle Ages to the 20th c., Russian art from the 18th to the 20th c., theory of art.

The edition is addressed to art historians, historians, art students and art lovers.

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Предисловие организаторов конференции «Актуальные проблемы теории и истории искусства»

Всякое начинание, особенно в области гуманитарных наук и исследований, связанных с творческой деятельностью, требует не только трудовых затрат, интеллектуальных и эмоциональных вложений, но и поддержки чисто практической. Этот дуализм творчества, которое затухает без заинтересованного материального участия, был осознан еще в глубокой древности, когда не ставшее еще нарицательным имя римского патриция Мецената с почтением упоминали в своих сочинениях облагодетельствованные им Овидий и Гораций. Вклад, который сегодня вносят в развитие научных исследований отдельные предприниматели и целые фонды, необходим для сохранения высокой планки гуманитарного знания — залога того созидательного начала, которое движет нас по пути сохранения всего лучшего, чем располагает современное общество из наследия прошлого.

Проведение IV Международной конференции молодых специалистов «Актуальные проблемы теории и истории искусства» в 2013 году и издание сборника статей по материалам ее работы было осуществлено при финансовой поддержке фонда «Русский художественный мир». Организационный комитет и участники конференции выражают свою глубокую признательность директору фонда Елене Казимировне Жуковой и надеются на дальнейшее плодотворное сотрудничество.

*От имени Организационного комитета и участников конференции,
А.В. Захарова, С.В. Мальцева*



Предисловие директора фонда «Русский художественный мир»

Основной целью своей деятельности фонд «Русский художественный мир» (РХМ) считает содействие реализации культурных и научных программ и мероприятий — выставок, лекций, семинаров и конференций, способствующих изучению культурно-исторического, архитектурного и художественного наследия нашей страны. В рамках этого направления деятельности Фонд принимает участие в разработке программ взаимодействия научного сообщества России и других стран в обмене идеями и ознакомлении с результатами исследований. Те же задачи ставят перед собой и организаторы Международной научной конференции «Актуальные проблемы теории и истории искусства». Поэтому мы с радостью поддержали проведение в 2013 году IV Международной конференции и издание сборника статей по материалам работы конференции в 2014 году. Отмечу, что особое внимание Фонд уделяет проектам, связанным с изучением искусства Византии и Древней Руси, а также искусства России XX и XXI веков, что делает нашу программу содействия работе конференции в буквальном смысле адресной.

Участие Фонда в подготовке и работе конференции «Актуальные проблемы теории и истории искусства» проходит в рамках Соглашения о сотрудничестве между МГУ имени М.В. Ломоносова и Фондом «Русский художественный мир». Среди других проектов РХМ в настоящее время — участие в организации и проведении в марте 2014 года в Лондоне Международной научной конференции Института Курто, Кембриджского университета и МГУ имени М.В. Ломоносова. Мы всегда рады сотрудничеству с ведущими университетами и научно-исследовательскими центрами мира, так как видим в этой деятельности высокую цель — сохранение творческих и интеллектуальных богатств и, в первую очередь, развитие отечественного научного потенциала и гуманитарного образования.

*Директор фонда «Русский художественный мир»
Елена Жукова*

СОДЕРЖАНИЕ CONTENTS

Предисловие Foreword.....	12
------------------------------	----

ИСКУССТВО ДРЕВНЕГО МИРА ART OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Е.В. МОГИЛЕВСКАЯ. Миниатюрная ойнохоя из собрания Государственного Эрмитажа: к проблеме датировки, атрибуции и семантики росписи EKATERINA V. MOGILEVSKAYA. A Miniature Oinochoe from the State Hermitage Museum: Problems of Date, Attribution and Semantics of the Image	20
Д.С. ВАСЬКО. Об одной пелике Керченского стиля из собрания Государственного Эрмитажа DMITRII S. VAS'KO. On a Kerch Style Pelike from the State Hermitage Museum	29
Т. КИШБАЛИ. Смерть македонца в Писидии: о термесской «гробнице Алкета» TAMÁS KISBALLI. Death of a Macedonian in Pisidia: The "Tomb of Alketas" in Termessos	39
Е.Н. ДМИТРИЕВА. Хранители и коллекции. Исследование эрмитажного собрания античных резных камней в XX веке ELENA N. DMITRIEVA. Curators and Collections. Studies of the Hermitage Collection of the Antique Engraved Gems in the 20 th Century	50
Н.К. ЖИЖИНА. Образы античности в искусстве XX века. Вновь об актуальности прекрасного NADIA S. JIJINA. Classical Antiquity and the Art of the 20 th Century. More about Actuality of Beauty	61

ВОСТОЧНОХРИСТИАНСКОЕ ИСКУССТВО EASTERN CHRISTIAN ART

С.В. ТАРХАНОВА. Проблема перестройки языческих святилищ в христианские храмы на примере архитектуры северной Палестины позднеантичного периода SVETLANA V. TARHANOVA. The Problem of Transforming Pagan Temples into Christian Churches. The Case of North-Palestinian Architecture of Late Antique Period	79
ФРЕЗЕ А.А. Монастырская архитектура и традиция столпничества в Византии и Древней Руси в IX – начале XIII века ANNA A. FREZE. Monastic Architecture and Tradition of the Stylites in Byzantium and Ancient Rus' in the 9 th – Early 13 th Centuries	90
Д.Д. ЁЛШИН. Об устройстве и расположении лестницы на хоры Десятинной церкви в Киеве DENIS D. JOLSHIN. On the Design and the Position of the Staircase to the Gallery of the Desyatinnaya Church in Kiev.....	99
А.В. ЗАХАРОВА. Принципы группировки изображений святых в византийской монументальной живописи до и после иконоборчества ANNA V. ZAKHAROVA. Principles of Grouping the Images of Saints in Byzantine Monumental Painting before and after Iconoclasm.....	109
Д.А. СКОБЦОВА. Художественные особенности фресок южной капеллы Спасской церкви Евфросиниева монастыря в Полоцке DARIA A. SKOBTSOVA. Artistic Features of the South Chapel Frescoes in the Church of Our Saviour of St. Euphrosyne's Convent in Polotsk	123

С.В. МАЛЬЦЕВА. Триконхи в сербской архитектуре Моравского периода: обзор основных проблем изучения SVETLANA V. MALTSEVA. Triconchs in Serbian Architecture of the Moravian Period: Survey of the Basic Problems.....	131
А.Н. ШАПОВАЛОВА. Роспись церкви Михаила Архангела Сквородского монастыря в Великом Новгороде: архивные документы, экспедиционные исследования и актуальные проблемы изучения ALEKSANDRA N. SHAPOVALOVA. Rediscovering Frescoes of Archangel Michael Church in Skovorodsky Monastery of Novgorod the Great: Archival Documents and Field Research.....	144
П.Г. ЕРШОВ. К проблеме датировки Успенского собора Старицкого Успенского монастыря PETR G. ERSHOV. Assumption Cathedral of the Assumption Monastery in Staritsa: On the Problem of Dating.....	155
Д.С. СКОБКАРЕВА. К истории изучения псковской архитектуры XVI в. DARIA S. SKOBKAREVA. Regarding the History of Studying the Pskovian Architecture of the 16 th Century ...	162
Ю.Н. БУЗЫКИНА. Храмовый образ из Спасо-Преображенского собора Соловецкого монастыря: новооткрытое произведение новгородской иконописи XVI века IULIA N. BUZYKINA. Icon of the Transfiguration from Solovki Monastery: a Newly Discovered Masterpiece of the Novgorodian Icon Painting of the 16 th Century.....	173

ЗАПАДНОЕ ИСКУССТВО СРЕДНИХ ВЕКОВ И НОВОГО ВРЕМЕНИ WESTERN ART FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE 20TH CENTURY

И.Б. АЛЕКСЕЕВА. Интерпретация евангельской притчи о богаче и Лазаре в западноевропейском искусстве XI–XIII веков: пути сложения иконографии IRINA B. ALEKSEVA. Interpretation of the Evangelic Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the West European Art of the 11 th –13 th Centuries: Origins of Iconography	187
К.Ш. БАРЕКЯН. Средневековый акваманил: оригинал и копия. Новый взгляд на атрибуцию акваманиллов из коллекции ГМИИ имени А.С. Пушкина KRISTINA SH. BAREKYAN. A Medieval Aquamanile: Original and Copy. A New Look at the Attribution of the Aquamaniles from the Collection of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.....	194
К.Й. ФЭЛТ. Вопросы изучения средневекового церковного искусства в Финляндии — Страстной цикл в визуальной и материальной культуре средневековой Финляндии KATJA J. FÄLT. Challenges in Researching Medieval Ecclesiastic Art in Finland — The Passion of Christ in the Visual and Material Culture of Medieval Finland	204
М.В. ДУНИНА. Типология ренессансного палаццо: образ жизни и характер интерьера (на примере палаццо Даванцати) MARIA V. DUNINA. Typology of Renaissance Palazzo: Lifestyle and Design of the Interior. The Example of Palazzo Davanzati	213
У.П. ДОБРОВА. Фреска «Вознесение» Мелоццо да Форли в церкви Санти Апостоли в Риме. Специфика заказа ULIANA P. DOBROVA. “The Ascension of Christ” by Melozzo da Forli in Basilica dei Santi Apostoli in Rome. Specificity of the Commission	222
П.А. АЛЕШИН. Письмо Аньоло Бронзино о скульптуре и живописи PAVEL A. ALESHIN. Bronzino’s Letter about Sculpture and Painting	230
В.Н. ЗАХАРОВА. Дух и форма: Генрих Вёльфлин о портретной живописи итальянского Ренессанса VERA N. ZAKHAROVA. Spirit and form: Heinrich Wölfflin on Italian Renaissance Portraiture.....	238
Л.В. МИХАЙЛОВА. «Триумфальная процессия» императора Максимилиана I. Этапы воплощения проекта LIUDMILA V. MIKHAILOVA. “Triumphal Procession” of the Emperor Maximilian I Habsburg. Project Realization Stages.....	253
М.И. ПОЗДНЯКОВА. Порттики западных фасадов в церквях середины XV – начала XVI века во Франции. Поздняя готика в поиске новых форм MARINA I. POZDNYAKOVA. West Façade Porches in the Churches from the Middle of 15 th to Early 16 th Century in France. Late Gothic in the Search for New Forms.....	261

А.А. САВЕНКОВА. Готическая традиция и архитектура загородных поместий елизаветинской Англии ALEXANDRA A. SAVENKOVA. Gothic Tradition and the Architecture of Elizabethan Great Country Houses.....	270
С.А. КОВБАСЮК. Кермессы и карнавалы: хроматика народных празднований в ренессансных Нидерландах STEFANIYA A. KOVBASIUK. Kermises and Carnivals: Chromatics of Popular Feasts in Renaissance Netherlands.....	279
А. ШЁНИНГ. «Клевета Апеллеса» Даниэля Фрезе — образ, текст и контекст ANNIKA SCHÖNING. Daniel Frese's <i>The Calumny of Apelles</i> — Image, Text and Context.....	287
Я. ЗАХАРИЯШ. Продолжение и возрождение византийской традиции в творчестве Эль Греко JAN ZACHARIAS. Survival and Revival of the Byzantine Tradition in the Art of El Greco.....	295
П.В. ФЕДОТОВА. Французское часовое искусство XVI–XVII веков. Школа Блуа POLINA V. FEDOTOVA. French Horology of the 16 th –17 th Centuries. The School of Blois.....	301
О.Ю. ПЕРЕВЕДЕНЦЕВА. Цветочный натюрморт XVII века: от созерцания — к изучению природы OL'GA YU. PEREVEDENCEVA. Floral Still Life of the 17 th Century: from the Contemplation to the Studying of Nature.....	311
М.А. ИВАСЮТИНА. Пьер-Анри Валансьен — теоретик и живописец MARINA A. IVASYUTINA. Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes: Theorist and Painter.....	318
Е.А. ПЕТУХОВА. Западноевропейский и американский плакат конца XIX века на первой Международной выставке художественных афиш в Санкт-Петербурге 1897 года ELENA A. PETUKHOVA. West European and American Poster at the First International Poster Exhibition in Saint-Petersburg (1897).....	325

ЗАПАДНОЕ ИСКУССТВО XX ВЕКА И ТЕОРИЯ ИСКУССТВА WESTERN ART OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND THE THEORY OF ART

Е.М. ПОНОМАРЕНКО. Фотографические практики итальянского футуризма. Теория визуального EKATERINA M. PONOMARENKO. The Photographic Practices of the Italian Futurism. Visual Theory.....	333
А.В. АЛЕКСЕЕВА. Значение принципов нотной записи для развития языка абстрактного искусства Пауля Клее ANNA V. ALEKSEEVA. The Importance of Musical Notation for the Development of Paul Klee's Abstract Art.....	339
Д.Н. АЛЕШИНА. Британская абстракция. Картины-рельефы Бена Николсона DINA N. ALESHINA. The British Abstraction. Paintings-Reliefs of Ben Nicholson.....	346
А.А. ЗОРЯ. Скульптура Луиз Невельсон: модернистская традиция как основа художественного языка мастера ALINA A. ZORIA. Louise Nevelson's Sculpture: Influence of Modernism on the Artist's Individuality.....	352
А.А. БЕРДИГАЛИЕВА. Феномен отказа от живописи в искусстве XX века ALIYA A. BERDIGALIEVA. The Phenomenon of Rejection of Painting in the 20 th Century Art.....	360
И.А. ШИК. Интерпретация концепции <i>стадии зеркала</i> Жака Лакана в сюрреалистической фотографии IDA A. SHIK. Interpretation of the Jacques Lacan's Concept of "the Mirror Stage" in the Surrealist Photography.....	368
М.В. РАЗГУЛИНА. Антон Эрэнцвейг и проблемы психологии абстрактного искусства MARIA V. RAZGULINA. Anton Ehrenzweig and the Problems of Psychology of Abstract Art.....	374
А.В. РЫКОВ. Дискурс эстетизма/тоталитаризма (К социополитической теории авангарда) ANATOLII V. RYKOV. Discourse of Aestheticism/Totalitarianism (On Sociopolitical Theory of Avant-garde).....	381
С.В. ХАЧАТУРОВ. Феномен пустой рамы в искусстве Нового времени SERGEY V. KHACHATUROV. The Phenomenon of an Empty Frame in the Art of the Modern Times.....	392

РУССКОЕ ИСКУССТВО XVIII – НАЧАЛА XX ВЕКА RUSSIAN ART OF THE 18TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Е.Ю. СТАНЮКОВИЧ-ДЕНИСОВА. Чертежи петербургских церквей 1740-х годов из Тессин-Хорлеманской коллекции EKATERINA YU. STANYUKOVICH-DENISOVA. The Architectural Drawings of St. Petersburg Churches of 1740's from the Tessin-Hårlemann Collection	401
З.В. ТЕТЕРМАЗОВА. Обратное «отражение». К вопросу о живописных портретах второй половины XVIII века, исполненных с гравированных оригиналов ZALINA V. TETERMAZOVA. Reverted "Reflection". On Painted Portraits of the Second Half of the 18 th Century Created After Engraved Originals.....	424
В.С. НАУМОВА. Итальянская живопись в собрании К.Г. Разумовского VERA S. NAUMOVA. Italian Painting in the Collection of Kirill G. Razumovsky.....	431
Е.Е. КОЛМОГорова. Мотив «портрета в портрете» и тема семьи в русской живописи второй половины XVIII – начала XIX века EKATERINA E. KOLMOGOROVA. "Portrait in the Portrait" Motive and Family Representation in the Russian Painting of the Second Half of the 18 th and Early 19 th Centuries	441
Е.А. СКВОРЦОВА. Гравер Джеймс Уокер (около 1760 – не ранее 1823): Англия и Россия EKATERINA A. SKVORTCOVA. Engraver James Walker (circa 1760 – not earlier than 1823): Great Britain and Russia.....	447
Д.А. ГРИГОРЬЕВА. Уильям Хогарт и русская художественная жизнь DARYA A. GRIGORYEVA. William Hogarth and Russian Art Life.....	457
А.К. МИНИНА. О путешествиях Льва Владимировича Даля по России в 1874 и 1876 годах «с научно-художественной целью собирания материалов по архитектуре» ANASTASIA K. MININA. About the Travel of Lev Vladimirovich Dahl across Russia in 1874 and 1876 "with Scientific and Artistic Purposes of Collecting the Materials for Architecture	466
А.О. ДОБИНА. Система обучения в Центральном училище технического рисования барона А.Л. Штиглица в период директорства М.Е. Месмахера ANASTASIA O. DOBINA. Educational System in Baron Stieglitz Central College for Technical Drawing during the Directorship of M. Mesmakher.....	477
Ю.И. ЧЕЖИНА. А.С. Попова-Капустина: неизвестная петербургская и известная сибирская художница YULIA I. CHEZHINA. Augusta Popova-Kapustina: an Unknown St. Petersburg and a Well-known Siberian Woman-artist.....	483
Э.Р. АХМЕРОВА. Границы жанра. Русская живопись конца XIX – начала XX века ELMIRA R. AKHMEEROVA. The Boundaries of Genre. Russian Painting of the Late 19 th – Early 20 th Century.....	492
И.М. ВОЛКОВ. Новое понимание портрета в русской фотографии начала XX века IGOR M. VOLKOV. The New Vision of Portrait in Russian Photography of the Early 20 th Century	499

РУССКОЕ ИСКУССТВО XX ВЕКА RUSSIAN ART OF THE 20TH CENTURY

А.И. ДОЛГОВА. Интерьеры особняков архитектора Карла Шмидта. Диапазон стилей ANASTASIA I. DOLGOVA. The Interiors of the Mansions of Architect Carl Schmidt. The Range of Styles	509
Е.А. МЕЛЮХ. Реставрация Д.В. Милеевым деревянной Богоявленской церкви Челмужского погоста к празднованию 300-летия дома Романовых в 1913 году EKATERINA A. MELIUKH. The Restoration of the Church of the Epiphany in Chelmuzhi in 1913 by D.V. Mileev to the Celebration of 300 Anniversary of the Romanov Dynasty	518
К.В. РЕМЕЗОВА. В преддверии авангардной практики: экспонирование детских рисунков на 5-й выставке «Нового общества художников» KSENIJA V. REMEZOVA. Eve of the Avant-garde Practice: Exhibition of Children's Drawings within the Fifth Exhibition of the "New Society of Artists.....	525

И.В. СЕВЕРЦЕВА. Первый педагогический опыт В.В. Кандинского — шесть писем из Мюнхена к начинающему художнику. К постановке проблемы INGA V. SEVERTSEVA. The First Pedagogic Experience of Vasily V. Kandinsky — the Letters from Munich to the Young Artist. Stating the Problem	532
О.В. ФУРМАН. Лучизм Наталии Гончаровой в координатах беспредметной живописи OLGA V. FURMAN. Natalia Goncharova's Rayonism in Coordinates of Abstract Art	540
Е.Н. КАМЕНСКАЯ. Александр Яковлев — художник-путешественник. Рождение образа ELENA N. KAMENSKAYA. Alexander Iacovleff — the Artist and the Traveller. The Birth of the Image	548
О.А. ГОЩАНСКАЯ. Творчество художника Николая Ивановича Прокошева OLGA A. GOSHCHANSKAYA. Art of the Painter Nikolay I. Prokoshev	557
П.К. МАНОВА. Традиции классицизма в монументально-декоративной пластике на примере творчества И.В. Крестовского POLINA K. MANOVA. The Classical Tradition in the Monumental-Decorative Sculpture Exemplified by the Works of Igor V. Krestovsky	566
Л. МИТИЧ. Выставка четырех советских художников в Белграде в 1947 г. LORA MITIĆ. The Exhibition of Four Soviet Painters in Belgrade, 1947	576
П.А. ШИШКОВА. Живописное наследие Вячеслава Афоничева в процессе развития петербургского неоксpressionизма POLINA A. SHISHKOVA. Pictorial Heritage of Vyacheslav Afonichev in the Process of St. Petersburg Neexpressionist Development	584
М.А. ЧЕКМАРЁВА. Петербургский текстиль на рубеже XX–XXI веков. Свой путь MARINA A. SHEKMAREVA. Contemporary Textiles of Saint-Petersburg. Their Own Way	590

Иллюстрации

Plates	596
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Список сокращений

List of abbreviations	659
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L. Mitić

The Exhibition of Four Soviet Painters in Belgrade, 1947

The case of the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY), a small country in the Balkans, was more than specific and complicated during the postwar years. Coming up to the world stage during the war, Yugoslav politics experienced big change. With its Communist party (CP) as the leading one, after the elections in 1945, it was under the direct influence of the USSR. The influence was strongly felt in every aspect of life in the country, including culture and art.

The fight against the fascism brought the FPRY to the sphere of people's democracy. The country was devastated by the war, with destroyed economy, great poverty and illiteracy, but with the powerful communist ideology put on airs through political apparatus.

Socialist realism, established at the Union of writers in Moscow in 1934 and elaborated by Zhdanov, became an ideological model implied to the culture and art in Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1950. In that period, it was political art orchestrated by the Communist Party in its attempt to adopt the Soviet pattern in many aspects of life and culture in the first years after the war when Yugoslavia was in close relations with the USSR.

In the summer of 1946, the FPRY and the USSR signed the agreements on economic cooperation and in autumn the 1st Congress of writers was held in Belgrade in the spirit of socialist realistic ideas with the important speech of Radovan Zogović, one of the most passionate ideologists. The political turn in that moment was towards the East, but it didn't last long. The reason can be found in the specific position of the FPRY during these years, at the very beginning of the cold war. Yugoslav-Soviet relations were good before Tito's refusal to adopt the Resolution of Cominform in June 1948, which put the country to a dangerous state and was an example of bad behavior offered to other communist countries.

Only one year earlier, in 1947, Cominform was created in Poland, and Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, became its headquarters. The good political relations between the USSR and the FPRY during this period were the proscenium for the cultural exchange between them. The exhibition of Soviet painters held in Belgrade and other large Yugoslav cities was the obvious symptom of this.

From the very beginning, after elections in 1945, the main aim of the Communist Party in the FPRY was to keep the leading position in the country and to use all forces to create society based on the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin, as much as on the experience of Stalin's USSR [5, p. 15].

For that purpose, all spheres of life had to be put to radical change and the only way to do that was with strong bureaucratic and administrative tools controlled by the Com-

munist Party. Despite the poverty, economic instability, abnormal illiteracy and war devastation, Yugoslav political apparatus knew that culture as one of the most important spheres of life, had a great power to transfer ideas and to be active element in creating a new society. The system of Agitprop organizations was taking care about the orthodoxy of ideas and its correct implementation, it controlled culture, among the other things.

With the strong realistic tradition in artistic production, the Soviets created a powerful tool for transferring communist ideas in the world changed by the big war. Once being proclaimed by Zhdanov, as the only artistic expression in literature, art and etc., socialist realism became imperative for all other countries under the Soviet paw. The elements of Western ideas in art, literature, music, philosophy had to be destroyed and their appearance was forbidden.

In that kind of atmosphere, the appearance of the Soviet painters in Yugoslavia is a logical consequence of strong relations between two communist allies. Knowing that in the period of 1945–1950 only 17 permanent exhibitions were held in Yugoslavia, we can imagine how important this event was for our state in that moment [5, p. 29]. Many documents from the Yugoslav Archive illustrate vivid cultural exchange between FPRY and the USSR in the field of music, literature and visual art. The institutions responsible for this cooperation were the Committee for Culture and Art, Society for Cultural Cooperation with the USSR on behalf of the FPRY, the USSR Embassy in Belgrade and the VOKS (Federal Soviet service department for foreign relations) on behalf of the Soviet Government [2, p. 278].

The Contract about friendship, mutual support and postwar cooperation was signed by the FPRY and the USSR on the 11th of April 1945 and in November 1947 the plan for Cultural Conventions between two countries was created. It implied exchange of books, magazines, newspapers, educational materials; cooperation in the field of radiophonics, film production, theatre; activities of news agencies and reporters, mutual visiting of journalists; organization of exhibitions, lectures of all kinds, concerts, language courses; exchange of museological materials; publication of scientific, journalistic, literary works in good translation; organization of touristic activities¹.

All these activities were conducted with strong belief in mutual interest of the both countries. One look at the documents about postwar Yugoslav-Soviet relations will lead us to the conclusion that the cultural exchange between them was most vivid in the field of literature, music, film and theatre. After many concerts, theatre plays, published books, visiting artists, writers and etc., a representative display of the Soviet official art was offered to Yugoslavian people. It was the first Soviet exhibition abroad after the Great Patriotic War, it came to Belgrade after touring Vienna, Prague and Bucharest with a big success, according to Soviet resources. After Belgrade it was set in Zagreb and Ljubljana.

The exhibition was held during September 1947 in Art pavilion in Kalemegdan, which was one of the few places suitable for the exhibitions in that time in Belgrade. It was the first Soviet exhibition in Belgrade and it is very important to know that it also

¹ Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Politička arhiva, Fond SSSR, File 106, 1947, p. 258a.

was the last in the period of cooling in Soviet-Yugoslav relations caused by the “fight” between Tito and Stalin.

It was opened on the 30th of August by Vladislav Ribnikar, the president of Committee for Culture and Art in the presence of the most important statesmen — vice-president of the National Assembly of the FPRY, ministers of the federal government, the president of Pan-Slavic Committee, the president of Central Board of Workers union and other important people of culture and education. On behalf of the Soviet diplomatic corpus from Belgrade: ambassador of the USSR — A.J. Lavrent’ev with Embassy staff, ambassador of Czechoslovakia — J. Korbel; ambassador of Poland — J. Karol Vende.

The concept of the opening ceremony with all these guests invited proves how important for both sides this exhibition was².

The fact that one month before the opening, Aleksander Gerasimov came to Yugoslavia, speaks in favor of this. He spent some time in Belgrade and visited Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, Adriatic coast. This was a good occasion for our artists to meet with him and discuss art issues. His words can evoke the atmosphere of this meeting: “Our way is the way of socialist realism which completely reflects and expresses the soul of the Soviet people. In the USSR, modernistic and decadent art fell off by itself, because it was rejected by the people. The great Stalin’s definition that socialist realism has to be a method of the Soviet art becomes the flag under which the Soviet artists are gathered and under which they create. We understand that method this way: the form is realistic and the content is socialistic”³.

When we know all these details, we can surely say that the exhibition of the Soviet painters that toured other European countries and came to Belgrade, was the part of the Soviet cultural propaganda after the World War II.

The exhibition contained oil paintings and watercolors, just to name the most famous: Aleksander Gerasimov, oil paintings: *The Tehran conference*, 1945; portraits of Stalin (1939), F.I. Tolbukhina (1945), O.V. Lepeshinskaia, (1939), A.K. Tarasova (1940), etc.; watercolors: some scenes from Florence, Paris, Moscow, some portraits, sketches for the decorations of the opera “Taras Bul’ba” etc.

Sergei Gerasimov, oil paintings: *The Kolkhoz celebration* (1937), *Kolkhoz guardian* (1935), *Novgorod Kremlin* (1944), *The Church of Savior in Neredica Destroyed by German Fascists* (1944), *Winter in Samarkand* (1943) etc.; watercolors: *Caucasus* (1935), *Travel album Moscow-Samarkand* (1941) etc.

Alexander Deyneka, oil paintings: *The Wings of Slave* (1940), *On the Outskirts of Moscow* (1942), *Portrait of the Artist’s Wife* (1944), *Sevastopol* (1943) etc.; watercolors/tempera: scenes from Sevastopol, Paris, Rome and Berlin from the period 1934–1945.

Arkady Plastov, oil paintings: *The German Flew* (1943), *To the Partisans* (1942), *First Snow* (1946) etc.; watercolors: *Stalingrad Front* (1943), *The Glass of Milk* (1946).

The Catalogue printed in Serbian offers short texts about each artist and has an interesting preface explaining the essence of the contemporary Soviet art (*Ill. 90*). We

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

can see a strong accent put to the link between the people of the USSR and art, as the main quality of the Soviet art: "Soviet art lives by the lives of the Soviet people. Thoughts, emotions of people, their hopes and historical destiny — that is the content of that art" [6, p. 7].

Another quality of this art is the continuum with the realistic tradition as the only appropriate form. The most important is the role of the Soviet art in society: "Soviet art doesn't only reflect our reality truly, moreover, it helps its development. Soviet art with its deeds participates in educating people, in forming the best characteristics of the Soviet people... In the period of the Great Patriotic War it participated in the sacred fight against enemy... Soviet art is realistic art" [6, p. 7].

Also, the rejection of modernist art as something alienated from life, is an indispensable element of socialist realistic rhetoric.

According to the archival documents, the exhibition in Belgrade had 56041 visitors, of which 26196 were individual visits, and the rest were collective visits by organizations of People's Front, Syndicate of People's Youth, foreign youth working brigades, soldiers of the Yugoslav Army⁴. People from other parts of Serbia, Vojvodina, Kosovo and Metohia, Macedonia came to see it. Marshal Tito visited exhibition as well. It was noted that this number of visitors reflects a high interest and love of our people for the Soviets and their art⁵. All these facts point that exhibition was very well planned, organized and was supported by administration of the both states. The main aim of the USSR was to show to other countries the artistic model that fully met the reality of the Soviet country: "Soviet art, that is realistic art. It stands firmly, consistently, in principle on the positions of socialist realism" [6, p. 8].

However, that model in art and culture should have been imposed to other countries which after the World War II became the part of one great "socialist" reality, no matter how different artistic experience these countries had previously.

Apart from the idealistic pictures that we can get from official reports written by state workers, or almost stunning catalogue preface about the glorious role of art in creation of a better society, we are interested in getting the right impression about this exhibition in our cultural environment, as an important attempt of the Soviet state to spread its dogmatic model and its own sphere of influence.

Unfortunately, we do not have many writings about this exhibition, but this fact can be also important for general conclusion about its impacts.

On the 19th of September, encomiastic text devoted to the exhibition was published in a political newspaper "Borba". It was written by Eli Finci, one of the passionate socialist realism ideologists who would transform into a supporter of modernism, very soon after that. In his text Finci explains what are the real qualities of the Soviet painting and its significance. They lay in the sort of novelty which can be perceived by the visitor at the first sight if he throws away common prejudices of narrow aesthetic conceptions: "In that returning of painting to its true wellhead — rich and diverse reality of life; in

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

its approaching to its true admireres — masses of the working people... That is its social and historical mission in art” [3]. Finci praises the Soviet artists because they are “tightly connected to the life of people, they are active participants in the creation of it, they are inspired by bright heroism of soldiers, rational politics of leaders, kolkhoznik enthusiasm for work, positive attitude of young people... the beauty of human venture...” [3].

On the opposite side of this meaningful painting full of heroic ideas, Finci put a dark and decadent Western art. He did not hesitate to use very strong words: “... Western painting is staggering helplessly in airless space of unfruitful abstract, aesthetic pre-occupations...” [3].

Here, we can see the main ideas that were proclaimed by communist parties, Soviet and Yugoslav, regarding the nature of art. We don't need any more texts to understand the dimensions of ideological content that was put to the complex nature of art.

Finci was not the only voice of this ideology that appeared in this period. Grga Gamulin, Branko Sotra, Jovan Popović, Radovan Zogović, Boris Zihelr and others were also the figures who participated very vividly in elaboration of the socialist-realistic ideology in Yugoslavia, and were its persistent guardians.

So to speak, during the period of socialist realism in art, an art critic gained important role in society which was at some extent bigger than the role of the art works.

Looking at the newspapers from that time will lead us to the conclusion that socialist realism caused constant debates about its ideas, their implementation, development.

But, what was the real reception of the soviet artistic model offered through the exhibition of the Soviet painters?

In literature it is said that four painters from the USSR didn't have a big success in our country, on the contrary, they caused some dissatisfaction among our socialist-realists. According to some other sources, the exhibition was not well attended [10, p. 358; 1, p. 23].

And surely, among those dissatisfied ones we can also hear the voice of Grga Gamulin whose negative remarks about this exhibition appeared three years after it.

They were the part of his broader opinion about the actual artistic scene in Europe, presented in the text “On the Position of our Art”, published in *Knjizevne Novine*, 1950. Talking about the position of Yugoslav art, its perspectives, tasks and actual problems in the difficult period after the Resolution of Cominform, when Yugoslav people with its Communist Party suffered unfair attacks, degradations and charges, Gamulin gives a sort of negative overview of the actual artistic scenes in both East and West using the examples of two great shows — Venice Biennale in 1948 and the exhibition of the Soviet painters in Yugoslavia in 1947.

Gamulin finds that “...what is more tragic than hopeless situation in art life of the West is absolute confusion... that reigned in the pavilions of the national democracy countries... symptomatic lack of ideas seen in the exhibited contents of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria” [4]. Also, without hesitations, Gamulin tackled the official Soviet art, shown at the Exhibition in 1947: “It is enough to recall those dancers sloppy and poorly painted; those tractor drivers undressed and pornographically observed by A. Gerasimov (probably, they ought to present us the heroes of socialistic work?) and

empty poster compositions by A. Deyneka...” Gamulin expresses his great disappointment with the exhibition because it was accepted with great hospitality, respect and hope that it would have offered “the image of a new socialistic man”, but it only brought a confusion among our artists and our public [4].

Gamulin finds that many famous compositions (Gerasimov’s *Tehran Conference*, Deyneka’s *Defence of Sevastopol*) suffer from empty rhetoric and theatrical decoration as the results of fading of the social awareness and revolutionary principles of the Soviet artists [4].

This kind of negative opinion about the Soviet art could have been put to airs in the years after the split with the USSR, when Yugoslav politics changed its turn towards West and the logical consequence was the softening of the rigid ideological system. The voice of Yugoslav critic, Grga Gamulin, was raised not against the socialist realism as the artistic model, but against its degradation for which the exhibition of Soviet painters was a good example, as he believed. It’s important to mention that socialist realism as the official art form was adopted in Yugoslavia after the break with the USSR, actually, in 1948 [8, p. 24]. The changing in good cultural cooperation among the two countries was felt since 1949. And from 1950 Yugoslavian culture experienced the liberation in many aspects.

One of the heralds of this liberation was Miroslav Krleža, famous Croatian writer, wellknown for his negative reactions against Stalin-Zhdanov’s dogmatism, who mentioned the exhibition of the Soviet artists of 1947 in his famous speech at the Congress of writers held in Ljubljana in 1952: “Unfortunately, Gerasimov and the others are neither Courbet nor Zola or versilibrists, but one provincial school of painting ...” [10, p. 363].

The other famous writer, Mihailo Lalić, at the meeting of writers titled “Literature and Politics” in 1955 recalled how Oto Bihalji Merin, one of the very important Yugoslav art critics from that time, took the whole staff of “Borba” to see the exhibition of the Soviet artists in 1947. He put special accent to Merin’s fascination with Gerasimov’s work *The Kolkhoz Celebration* [7, p. 420].

What is most interesting is that both critics who had been impressed by the Soviet exhibition, Merin and Finči, after a short period left their fascination with the rhetoric of Soviet socialist realist art and turned to adoration of the modern tendencies [7, p. 420].

All these facts lead us to conclusion that the echo of this exhibition held in our country was stronger in debates among the socialist realistic critics than in the works of artists who were active in that period. Maybe the reason for that is in the very nature of our version of socialist realism? It lasted only for a few years, and can be perceived as an ephemeral phenomenon in our history of art. It had a few real protagonists (Đorđe Andrejević Kun, Branko Šotra, Boža Ilić, Đurđe Teodorović etc.).

Many of the artists who were active in that period were raised on the modernist ideas, so when the influences from the USSR became strong after the war, a new way of dealing with them had to be found. Time showed that these attempts were not so fruitfull in our cultural space. The ideas of socialist realistic art according to the Soviet model were stronger than their concrete manifestation through artworks of our painters.

At the end, the words of Miodrag Protić, the great Serbian art historian, as one who witnessed all these processes in our postwar art scene, may be cited as a reasonable explanation of the specific reception of socialist realism according to the Soviet model in our country: “Those who had the opportunity to see Degas’ ballerinas and Manet’s characters, even in reproductions, couldn’t bear the solemn portraits of Stalin or Lepe-shinskaya; No one seriously wanted to give up Van Gogh, Cezanne, Bonnard and Picas-so because of Gerasimov and that was precisely the purpose of the ideological battle that took place” [10, p. 358].

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Название статьи. Выставка четырех советских художников в Белграде в 1947 г.

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Аннотация. Цель этой статьи — проанализировать характер восприятия выставки советских художников (Александра и Сергея Герасимовых, Аркадия Пластова, Александра Дейнеки), организованной в 1947 г. в Белграде. На этом материале мы хотели бы рассмотреть тесные связи между визуальным и идеологическим в период значительного советского влияния на Югославию, в течение первых лет после Второй мировой войны. Наша задача — поднять проблему степени проникновения советской художественной модели, а именно социалистического реализма, в культуру Югославии, используя пример рассматриваемой выставки.

Ключевые слова. Социалистический реализм, Вторая мировая война, югославское художественное общество, советское влияние.

Title. The Exhibition of Four Soviet Painters in Belgrade, 1947

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the reception of exhibition of the Soviet painters (Alexander and Sergei Gerasimov, Arkady Plastov, Alexander Deineka) in Belgrade in 1947. With this we want to examine the tight connections between visual sphere and ideology, in the period of strong Soviet influence in Yugoslav country, during the first years after World War II. Our aim is to problematize the real dimensions of applying the Soviet artistic model — socialist realism, in our culture, using the example of this exhibition.

Keywords. Socialist realism, World War II, Yugoslav artistic scene, Soviet influence.

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