

Aesthetic phantoms. On the issue of the phenomenon of realism on the example of the work of the Tkachev brothers

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"... the alpha and omega of the Academy of Arts and the Institute was realism: realism, realism, realism. Every work begins with the word "realism". But then they began to cool down to this, they began to argue about what realism is - before that realism was indisputable, and then they began to argue about what realism stands for, what realism is, and in general, all idea of realism was lost."

E. I. Rotenberg (L. S. Chakovskaya "Conversations with E. I. Rotenberg")

Abstract. The concept of socialist realism and modern approaches to its understanding are investigated. An attempt is made to interpret the topic in new semantic categories. The term aesthetic phantom is put forward, to which, apparently, socialist realism can also be ranked. In the context of the topic, in connection with the process of world economic, cultural integration and unification, the phenomenon of realism is analyzed. On the example of the work of the Tkachev brothers, the peculiarity of artistic search and the acquisition of new meanings in the heritage of artists is revealed. It is argued that despite the modern processes of globalization, which affects, among other things, approaches to the perception of art, there are painters who are unique in the primary elements of their plastic-visual language.

Keywords. Realism. Socialist realism. Phantoms. Art of the XX century. Domestic art. Globalization. Tkachev brothers. Regional specificity.

It seems possible that it is not so difficult to give a short logical definition of the concept of the term realism, which will contain its most essential features. Representing the Latin origin (*reālis* - "real") and being co-root with the word reality, it is essentially a synonym for reality. Nevertheless, applying the term "realism" as a style, method, canon, form, system or artistic program, we are faced with specific works, schools, artists, not to mention certain periods in the development of fine art.

Discussing the living phenomenon of realism, Alexander Ilyich Morozov reported that writing about realism in connection with the latest Russian art is not an easy task, but most of all and not a pleasant one [6, p. 195]. In the book "Socialist Realism and Realism", the author not only examines "Russian realisms" in the stream of their natural development (the traditions of itinerant movement, impressionism, innovative searches for modernism), but also reveals the non-identity of

the official art of socialist realism and realistic creativity. It can be considered that the reflection of socialist realism, as an artistic method in the art of the Soviet period, still has an ambiguous assessment both in the professional environment and among art lovers. The heritage of the masters of the second half of the XX century is viewed under the prism of an ideological cliché, taking into the background the artistic merit of the works. These problems were directly or indirectly touched upon in their publications by art critics V.V. Vanslov, A.I. Morozov, V.A. Lenyashin, M.A. Chegodaeva and others.

The purpose of this study is to try to delimit the concepts (prevailing opinions) on the one hand about "socialist realism", understood as an artistic method in art, politically and socially subordinate to the state doctrine of the Soviet state, which considers culture as a means of agitation, and on the other hand, the creative heritage of painters who "Are unique in the primary elements of their plastic-visual language" [6, p. 201]. The article attempts to interpret the topic in new semantic categories.

In this regard, the author assumes that the very term "socialist realism" as a label is hung on the work of artists who gained fame in the second half of the XX century and does not allow to distance themselves from this political background, largely underestimating the perception of the actual creative heritage of one or another famous master.

In this study, "socialist realism" is interpreted as a kind of aesthetic phantom of a special kind. In this regard, a purely epistemological question may arise: how appropriate and justified is the use of this word - a phantom, in relation to the concept of socialist realism as an artistic method in art, firmly entrenched in the consciousness of the cultural life of Soviet Russia. For this, it is necessary to dwell, first of all, on the use of this concept in scientific vocabulary and literary speech.

The word "phantom" in the dictionary of V. I. Dahl is explained as pictures, phenomena of phantasmagoria, or as a doll, on which obstetric art is studied [4, p. 532]. S.I. Ozhegov, interpreting the phantom as "a bizarre phenomenon, a ghost" [7, p. 846]. In the Academic Dictionary of the Russian Language, a phantom is interpreted in three senses: as a ghost, a ghost; as fiction, imagination; and as a life-size model of a body or part of it, serving as a visual aid [10, p. 513]. In the "Psychological Dictionary" the concept of phantoms is associated with phantom pains in the postoperative or subsequent stage of life after a concussion, injury, surgery, when, for example, arms or legs, but a person at certain moments feels them through pain as real [8, p. 389]. And although the last definition appeals to a narrowly professional vocabulary (in this case, to a medical one), we are faced with a special phenomenon when there is no physical reality, but at the same time its imaginary existence is an objective reality, since it brings quite tangible experiences and feelings.

Phantom memories of certain events in a person's life proceed in almost the same way, when they make painful experiences with the same intolerable acuteness as at the moment of their manifestation in the past. This set of definitions cannot be regarded as exhaustive, nevertheless in the ancient Greek language, and in Latin, that is, a priori, the phantom is translated as "phenomenon" or "ghost" - an image of something: usually from the past. The USSR, as a state disappeared from the space of the world community, and today everything that was associated with Soviet art is perceived as pain, memory, phantom, and the art of socialist realism, in many respects is a phantom in its categorical meaning.

It can be considered that "socialist realism", as an image from the past, the image of totalitarian influence on art has become a kind of aesthetic phantom, which sometimes obscures the picturesque, plastic and other advantages of the picture, perceiving it only as a work commissioned to demand the praise of the Soviet system. It is difficult for the modern viewer to distance themselves from the political background when looking at paintings created in the second half of the XX century. Moreover, for many, the concepts of "socialist realism" and "realism" are synonymous in its artistic manifestations. How realism came to be understood as an official, sanctioned art and presented as a pivotal tradition of Russian culture is explained in detail in the book by A.I. Morozov. Thus, the works of the Tkachev brothers are classified according to the time and subject matter to socialist realism. In the context of the stated topic, apparently, it is possible to raise the issue of the complexity of the contradictions in the perception of works created in the spirit of socialist realism and not accepted with enthusiasm at official exhibitions.

One of these is the large monumental painting "Mothers" by the Tkachev brothers. Having chosen a plot with the utmost simplicity, literally snatched from life - women of different generations sit side by side on a bench, the authors, with their artistic means and their talent for feeling the beingness of an ordinary moment, give this everyday scene a symbolic and metaphorical character. The passage of time is inexorable, people are born and grow old in this eternity, this is the theme of birth and death, the immortality of nature, raised by artists and solved simply and expressively through the image of a woman-mother, includes this picture in a number of national treasures of national culture. It is interesting to remind in this connection that the painting "Mothers" included in the exposition of the 1961 All-Union Art Exhibition was criticized by officials. The absence of an optimistic component, which was one of the characteristic features of the format of pictures of socialist realism, the distortion, according to the Minister of Culture E. Furtseva, of the image of the Soviet mother, put the picture in a row not exhibited. A number of artists, including A. Plastov, supported young artists. This work was included in the catalog of the exhibition under the title "On the Bench", thanks to this compromise, the picture was able to remain in the exhibition space, and, subsequently, ended up in the State Tretyakov Gallery. For the

Tkachev brothers, the civic position of a famous artist who made a huge contribution to the development of national culture and became one of the examples of high service to art for painters was very important. Platov's painting "The Tractor Driver's Dinner" was also criticized at one time for alleged rudeness, humiliation and ignorance of life. Igor Dolgoplov figuratively writes about this story in his book *The Masters*. At an exhibition in 1958 in London, President of the Royal Academy of Arts Charles Wheeler, impressed by Plastov's painting, said:

– How much such art gives! Realism. You know, I somehow understood now with particular clarity why you Russians were able to withstand the war and win. Who can work so enthusiastically, oh, that is not easy to overcome! [5, p. 557].

It can be considered that one of the phenomena of realism is its richness and expressive imagery, which artists can implement in volumetric-spatial solutions. At the beginning of the new century, a number of exhibitions related to the representation of realism were held in the capital cities, where they tried to move away from the term "socialist realism" in the names of projects. In 2012, in St. Petersburg, the exposition of the exhibition "Realism in Russian Art of the Second Half of the XX Century" consisted of paintings by the classics of Soviet art - Geliy Korzhev, Valentin Sidorov, brothers Sergei and Alexei Tkachev. In 2015, the exhibition "Romantic Realism. Soviet Painting 1925-1945", which also tried to destroy the cliché about the lack of artistic merit in the paintings created at that time. Moreover, a month later, in December, a round table "Socialist Realism: Research Perspectives and Deadlocks" was initiated at the Avant-garde Center, where a range of research approaches to the topic of socialist realism and even the possibility of redefining the term were discussed. Thus, this layer of domestic culture requires further research, and the proposed approach to socialist realism as an aesthetic phantom is a method of abstraction from the established dogmas.

Without delving into the polemics of the preservation of the traditions of realism or into discussions about the main course of the national fine arts, we will quote the words of art critic A.I. Morozov. "There are rich houses in America and Europe, whose interiors are decorated with paintings by Vasily Nechitailo, the Tkachev brothers, Valentin Sidorov, Geliy Korzhev in gold frames, just like other salons are decorated with paintings by Italian or French masters of the XVII-XVIII centuries. This means something quite remarkable for us. Namely, in the course of time, the works of Soviet artists are removed from the too familiar domestic context with its arenas, bulldozer exhibitions and transferred to a large field of world culture, where some urgent questions for us arise in the air from century to century and look completely ambiguous" [6, p.15].

Modern artistic processes globally and non-standard interpret approaches to the perception of art. At the same time, in the space of national culture there are personalities-artists, whose work, which developed during the second half of the XX century, the time of Soviet art, is acquiring new

meanings today. One of the important qualities of such painting is sincerity in the choice of a natural motive, the vision of color in space, the full-bloodedness of a pictorially plastic statement. These artistic characteristics fully apply to the works of the Tkachev brothers. People, events captured in the paintings of the Tkachev brothers are perceived as part of living life, because realist artists wrote sincerely about what is dear and close to them. The canvases of the artists are distinguished by a thoroughly developed plot, the depth of thought and the clarity of its presentation, as well as the density and power of painting.

Interesting statements by Alexei Petrovich and Sergei Petrovich Tkachev on the theme of trends in art and, in particular, realism itself: "There are only two areas - talented and mediocre. A talented impressionist is more expensive than a mediocre realist. And at the same time, a gifted realist is much more needed than an empty impressionist"[1, p.236].

Modern artistic processes in Russia (the development of domestic tourism, the creation of regional centers, etc.) are paying more and more attention to the cultural life in the region, perhaps drawing energy and strength from the spaces of a large country, just as artists tried to get themselves drunk emotions and a sincere sense of inspiration going to the open air.

Since 1995, the Tkachev Brothers Museum has been operating in the city of Bryansk, the homeland of USSR people's artists. Such a unique collection, the basis of which is made up of works belonging to two authors (co-authors), as well as individual paintings and graphic works of each of them in Russia, and perhaps not in the world. Today the collection of the museum contains more than 1000 works of artists: paintings, graphic sheets, the richest sketch and sketch material for paintings. The legacy of the recognized masters of Russian art, who sounded vividly with their works in the 60-70s of the XX century and continue to work until today, allows you to study the phenomenon of realistic art. On the example of the creativity of the Tkachev brothers, it can be seen in the skill of creating a volumetric-spatial picture, in the living language of "plein air painting", in a thoroughly worked out internal drama, in a single creative and life position.

Undoubtedly, the definition of realism, despite the seeming natural simplicity of expression, exhibits deep philosophical and cultural aspects. According to Alexander Ilyich Morozov, Artistic realism by its nature is a living phenomenon, constantly transforming, both at the level of individual creative efforts of the author, and at the level of changing styles of the era, as well as collective style preferences [6, p.200].



A.P. Tkachev, S.P. Tkachev. New life.



Tkachev brothers.



S.P. Tkachev. House-Museum of F.I. Tyutchev in Ovstug. 1990.

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