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## Creative experimentation and the generation of innovative ideas in artistic design

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**Abstract.** The creative component of the design process is fundamental, as it is associated with the search for innovative solutions. In the creative process, the designer’s imagination plays a leading role – it serves as the foundation for shaping and transforming the vision of the functional and aesthetic image of the future object. This study was aimed to identify and systematise the main strategic directions and techniques that stimulate the creative process in generating innovative solutions within modern design practice. The research methodology included the analysis of information sources on design methods; tools for form development in architectural, industrial, and environmental design; structural and systematic analysis; and synthesis of research results. It has been demonstrated that human imagination operates on the basis of previously formed visual images through perception. The strategic approach to creativity development is shaped by visual-operational experience. It has been established that the main method of generating new ideas is creative experimentation. To stimulate the creative process during the ideation stage, it is advisable to apply techniques such as decomposition, alteration of visual modelling tools, combinatorics, the use of simple and flexible tools, references and analogies, brainstorming, and design heuristics. The practical significance of these findings lies in their application to design practice, the education and training of specialists in artistic and creative fields, and further research in art history, cultural studies, architecture, and design

**Keywords:** project visualisation; form development; artistic modelling; visual image; imagination

### INTRODUCTION

Innovative activity is one of the main objectives of design, and it has become increasingly significant in the modern era of automation, technical progress, and the advancement of computer technologies. The issue of idea generation remains insufficiently studied,

particularly at the form-development stage, having been examined only from specific perspectives in various fields of creative activity. Thus, a comprehensive study is required to establish a complete picture of the methodology and principles of creativity design.

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Among the studies of the 2020s, it is worth considering the most relevant publications by foreign authors. For example, in an article by J. Boudier *et al.* (2023), the authors examined how experts assessed ideas and overcame cognitive fixation to create new directions for product and service development. The importance of idea evaluation was highlighted as a process aimed at identifying ideas with the highest potential for organisations while filtering out less valuable ones. The article also addressed challenges related to idea evaluation, which included the high level of uncertainty faced by evaluators, partially stemming from the unfinished nature of early versions of ideas and the originality of the concepts. The research provided insight into combining different theoretical perspectives to understand how ideas emerge through the gradual development of fragments.

B. Bucur *et al.* (2023) explored the generation of creative ideas in toy design, emphasising the importance of play as a method to stimulate creative thinking. The role of motivation in the creative process was also emphasised. The article proposed a creative approach to idea generation for toy design – specifically, a children’s toy set in the form of a cup. The research drew upon creativity stimulation techniques adapted through play. During the process, a gradual transition took place from the initial idea to a manual sketch, digital modelling, and eventually, the physical creation of the entire set. The study introduced a new approach to creativity and idea generation, aimed at enhancing socialisation among both children and adults of various age groups, with potential applications in professional education.

An article by J.W. Lee *et al.* (2021), examined the challenges faced by both novice and experienced engineers in generating new ideas. The practical skills of students in idea generation, development, and selection were explored through “think-aloud” experimental sessions and post-session interviews. This study demonstrated that specific sessions focusing on learning blocks grounded in scientifically established design practices could help students develop clear approaches and goals at each stage of idea generation, development, and selection. The authors argued that supporting student design practices could equip them with the skills necessary to develop innovative solutions for solving complex openended design problems.

R. Bender-Salazar (2023) explored design thinking as a methodology for solving complex problems. This research used an enhanced version of design thinking, built on key themes of inspiration, ideation, and implementation, which was applied within the social sciences, specifically in systems thinking, organisational learning, and action research. S. Wu *et al.* (2024) highlighted the primary role of inspiring examples and references in design tasks intended to create visual properties that elicit the expected emotional response from the consumer.

Among the research conducted by Ukrainian scholars on the topic, the article of Professor O. Bodnar (2023) is noteworthy, as they investigate experimental directions in the design of architectural environments that emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine. This research clarifies the significance of experimentation and its forms of implementation in architecture and design, focusing on experimental directions such as rethinking geometrical-spatial concepts, applying geometry in design and architectural form development, the development of kinetic design practices, the spread of experimental design, and the development of bionics in experimental creativity and research from the 1960s to the 1980s. This study aimed to study methods of stimulating the creative process at the stages of conceptual development and sketching in design, as well as the role of creative experimentation in solving artistic design problems and developing professional skills for innovative thinking.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was shaped by the research of Ukrainian and foreign scientists specialising in the composition of architectural objects, design, and plastic arts, as well as by the work of architects, design practitioners, and teachers. The research drew upon developments in the fields of psychology of visual perception and creativity, technical aesthetics, applied geometry, information systems, machine intelligence, and the theory of inventive problem-solving. Theoretical studies on the generation of innovations, analysis of specific aspects of the creative process in engineering and design, and systematisation of innovative approaches to solving complex engineering problems were analysed. Particular emphasis was placed on research aimed at creating tools for effective idea generation based on scientific knowledge and technology. The methodological tools used included citation analysis, keyword search, search operators, machine learning algorithms for literature recommendations, and specialised databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.

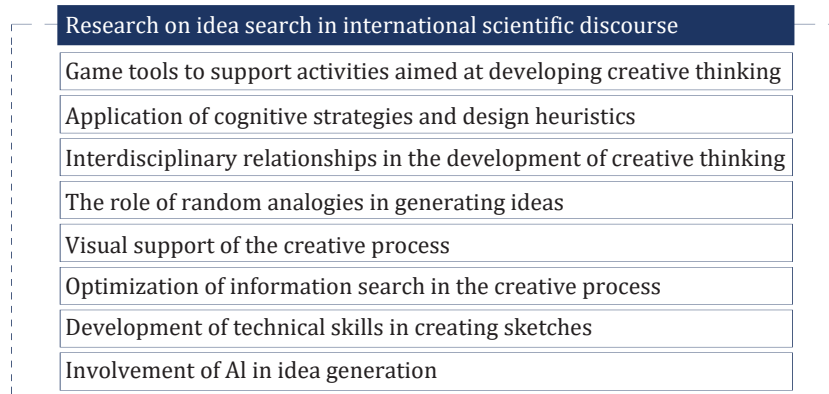
## IDEA-SEARCH STRATEGIES IN INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE

In modern design practice, the creative component is the primary element that enables the generation of solutions characterised by originality and novelty. The process of creation is distinguished by the fact that it does not follow a fixed logical sequence, as in many other forms of activity, and the results of creativity are often associated with the so-called “insight”. Most psychologists agree that a truly breakthrough creative solution to a problem is not accidental or merely a manifestation of giftedness but rather the result of prolonged work on the problematic situation (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2020).

A well-known example that supports this is the use of artificial intelligence in areas where creativity is crucial. A notable case is the historic match in 2016, where

the world champion of the Korean national game Go, Lee Sedol, lost to the AlphaGo programme, developed by DeepMind (owned by Google). AlphaGo won 4-1, marking a significant milestone in AI development, as Go is considered much more complex for computers than chess due to the enormous number of possible moves and strategies. This drew attention to the “creative approach” of the machine, capable of deep learning.

The creative potential of artificial intelligence is being realised in traditionally artistic fields such as painting, architecture, music, and literature, proving that, while complex to describe and formalise, the creative process has a certain structure and can be analysed. This was discussed in the study by N. Leach (2023). Research on the issue of idea generation is actively progressing in scientific discourse across multiple areas (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Directions of scientific research into idea generation in the 2020s

**Source:** created by the authors'

Research on various idea-search strategies is actively progressing in international academic discourse. Researchers M. Samaniego *et al.* (2024) identified and analysed characteristics related to creative thinking, particularly in the field of art and design education. The authors concluded that the most common or recommended educational method for fostering creative thinking is hands-on learning. Educational methods and practices most frequently used to support creative thinking emphasise interdisciplinary projects. Technological tools supporting activities aimed at fostering creativity include game-based applications or platforms, which motivate and facilitate learning by providing contexts rich in sensory stimuli. The identified skills associated with creative thinking include originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration.

Modern studies confirm the primary role of cognitive strategies that can be implemented by individual designers for successful concept creation. Design heuristics – mental shortcuts or empirical rules that significantly accelerate decision-making processes – facilitate the generation of new concepts at the early, conceptual stage of the design process and throughout idea development, according to many researchers. For design and engineering students, having a repertoire of design heuristics can enhance the diversity and creativity of concepts generated (Yilmaz *et al.*, 2015).

Authors X. Jin & H. Dong (2020) identified ten specific design heuristics (Adding Drone Technology, Changing Functions via Turning, Utilising Display Technology, Utilising Lights and Sounds, Utilising Foldable Structure, Adding Sharing Service, Adding Smart

Function, Manage and Control Remotely, Shaking Product for Novel Effects, Smart Reminder) that helped designers create innovative ideas during the conceptual design stages. The results demonstrated the potential of design heuristics. The new DHS (Design Heuristics System) proved useful in generating concepts with diverse “new” features, illustrating the potential of new design heuristics for supporting rapid and varied concept generation in industrial design.

Research by X. Gu *et al.* (2023) sought to develop a creativity course for university students, incorporating STEAM activities to practice and strengthen creative thinking skills. STEAM-based education – science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics – emphasises building connections across different disciplines and is considered by the authors a promising approach to developing general creative thinking skills in design and related fields. The findings indicate that integrating creativity education with practical activities can be an effective approach to fostering creativity.

S.M. Hassan (2023) examined the use of SCAMPER to generate ideas and enhance students' creative potential. SCAMPER – an acronym for seven techniques: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Maximise or minimise, Put to other uses, Eliminate, and Rearrange or reverse – is a unique brainstorming and creativity tool designed to facilitate active idea generation. It can be used to generate a continuous flow of ideas or offer a fresh perspective on a problem; it is especially effective in overcoming creative blocks. SCAMPER employs a set of structured questions to modify the task being considered, exploring various aspects for improvement. This widely

recognised learning tool promotes perception, viability, fluency, flexibility, and originality. The process is stimulated by posing questions that are not typically considered. Hassan's study results demonstrated that using SCAMPER positively influenced graphic design students, accelerated idea generation, and fostered a stimulating environment for practising creative thinking.

Large language models (LLMs) present new opportunities and challenges for involving AI agents directly in brainstorming sessions. M. Muller *et al.* (2024) developed an AI agent to act as an interactive participant in online conversational brainstorming sessions for a distributed workforce. Humans and AI collaborated in developing, evaluating, refining, and selecting numerous ideas using five different development models. Authors K. Ma *et al.* (2023) found that, with brief training, LLMs could generate design solutions comparable to crowd-sourced solutions; however, limitations were identified regarding the diversity of solutions that LLMs were capable of generating.

H. Li *et al.* (2022) proposed a Generative Design Approach (GDA), which was considered an effective method for exploring an extensive design solution space by transforming the design problem into a configuration problem. Thus, the design solution space could be explored more effectively by adjusting variable design elements through iterative design processes.

In his study, researcher J. Grigg (2020) examined the ability of visual materials to dynamically express the properties of what is depicted, thus shaping the language of graphic design. The article highlighted the importance of understanding graphic techniques, carefully selecting tools, and implementing them appropriately. Materials and tools were analysed as catalysts for conceptual invention in graphic design. Accordingly, modifying tools or graphic techniques can influence the creative search process and idea generation. Researchers M. Žujović *et al.* (2022) argued that integrating 3D printing (3DP) technology into the design process can stimulate creative thinking, leading to more complex design solutions than those produced through traditional teaching methods. Compared to conventional approaches, 3DP technology enables the creation of physical models that are conceptually and geometrically more intricate. A. Al Ruheili & S. Al Hajri (2021) demonstrated the feasibility of using 3DP methods in the teaching and learning of landscape architecture, noting increased student engagement in projects and improved comprehension and representation of spatial and design concepts.

According to C. Chavula *et al.* (2022), information searching is an integral component of the creative thinking process. Their study sought to identify the creative thinking processes and search strategies students employ to generate new ideas in academic and everyday life. The article outlined four distinct yet interconnected processes of creative thinking: planning

creative search tasks, seeking new ideas, synthesising search results, and structuring ideas. Based on the findings, the authors advocated for the development of search systems that support creative thinking processes. The researchers suggested that additional features in search systems could enable users to explore information from multiple perspectives and synthesise ideas more effectively.

The article by Y. Zhang *et al.* (2020) also examines information search. The authors identified six types of information crucial for creative projects related to design: procedural information, domain knowledge, ready-made examples, advice/opinions/recommendations, topic-specific information, and inspiring/motivating information. The researchers argued that enhancing search support during creative tasks can lead to results that extend beyond traditional understandings.

S. Sinha & B.K. Chakravarthy (2023) refer to the theory of synectics, which suggests that triggers for creative thinking arise from analogies that create connections between rational and irrational perspectives on a problem. To create a structured mechanism for creative production, the researchers explored the role of ideas triggered by random analogy as a means of embedding potential solutions to catalyse the creative process. J.C. Kaufman & R.J. Sternberg (2020) emphasised the role of motivation in creativity in their book. Drawing on a substantial body of research, the authors demonstrated that intrinsic motivation and the positive effect associated with it correlate with greater creativity. The findings of this study generally align with previous research, consolidating and expanding existing knowledge in this field.

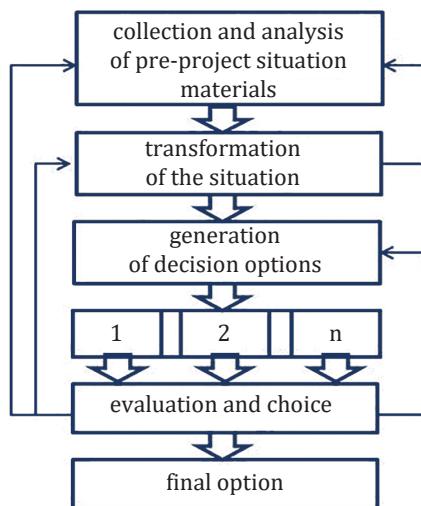
## STRUCTURE OF THE CREATIVE AND SEARCH PROCESS IN DESIGN

The unconventional thinking often attributed to the exceptional talents of a designer is more likely the result of in-depth professional mastery (What are the stages of creativity, 2021). Without undermining the role of individual abilities, it is important to acknowledge that experience plays a central role in generating creative solutions. The breadth of project scenarios designer has encountered shapes their ability to evaluate various factors and manage the structural components of a project across all levels. A product is considered truly if it performs a new function that no existing product currently fulfils. This was discussed in the article by S. Jagtap (2018), which examined methods for measuring novelty as a means of assessing creativity.

Methods of activating the creative process are well known and widely applied in many areas of fields (including science, business, and engineering design). These methods are founded on analysis, synthesis, and evaluative decision-making and include stages such as divergence (expanding the boundaries of the project situation), transformation (developing principles and

concepts), and convergence (refining and selecting the most effective solution for the given project context). The authors M-D. González-Zamar & E. Abad-Segura (2021) affirmed that the importance of creative thinking in young students lies in the fact that it encompasses both divergent and convergent processes. Motivation also plays a significant role in creativity. The data presented in the article by J. Kaufman *et al.* (2023) further indicated that both convergent and divergent thinking are integral to creativity. Researchers P. Childs *et al.* (2022) proposed a structure called the creativity diamond – a tool consisting of a divergent phase (focused on developing a wide range of ideas) and a convergent phase (centred on refining and selecting the most viable ideas).

The creative process in design practice, aimed at creating innovative products, is generally cyclical, with each cycle involving the reassessment of project factors, the refinement of tasks, and the progressive enhancement of the design object's model. At many stages, this process can branch out, potentially leading to alternative solutions (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Cyclical process of idea generation in design  
Source: created by the authors'

Certain stages of the design process (conceptual exploration) occur both through mental visualisation and by manipulating concepts and logical units, which involves the formation of abstract representations. However, the form-development process itself depends on visual aids, as its ultimate goal is the tangible representation of the object.

Professor M.I. Yakovlev (2007) determined that one key aspect of professionalism in design is the ability to use existing visualisation tools and capitalise on the visual resources embedded within them. The most significant qualities of the object being designed are typically conveyed through drawing, modelling, or computer graphics. A key characteristic of human perception's

is that the visual representation of an object, unlike a textual description, is immediately subject to aesthetic evaluation. According to psychologists, intuition plays a fundamental role in recognising the value of a solution, preceding the logical analysis that follows in assessing the relationships and properties of the depicted object.

The role of the sketch as a visualised design concept remains consistently significant. The sketching process itself serves as the primary strategy for design planning, facilitating the search for the optimal solution through the use of visual resources at all stages of the design process. The tools used in sketch-based exploration are highly varied, ranging from the traditional pencil sketch to artificial intelligence-based technologies described by M. Mazzone & A. Elgammal (2019). Authors B. Kim & E.-C. Jung (2023) asserted that sketching is about exploring concepts and transforming their components to reinterpret existing ideas.

An essential aspect of stimulating the creative process is the communicative interplay between the designer and the visual images that accompany the entire process of form creation. Imagination, which enables the formation and transformation of these images, is the key mechanism behind most design transformations. For the designer, it functions as the principal tool for cognition and modelling (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2020). The concept of the model, conceived during the thought process, often takes precedence in shaping the design and directs the designer's work at all subsequent stages. Fixing an idea into a specific visual image during the early stages of development typically reflects only its key characteristics (such as the general configuration of the form, the nomenclature and quantity of elements, and their spatial relationships). The author's inherent subjectivity and the highly generalised nature of the image provide the basis for an objective evaluation and further imaginative transformation and modelling of the project scenario.

During the design process, sketching documents the entire sequence of conceptual transformations, where the evaluation of each preceding image serves as the starting point for the next iteration of the idea. The conversion of concepts into a different visual form depends on the designer's intended objectives. Subsequent crucial compositional and structural tasks may include refining the geometric parameters of the form, searching for colour solutions, developing compositional frameworks, resolving the form's plasticity, and addressing its structural integrity. It is well established that any design situation can be divided into simpler, interconnected tasks that reflect the various aspects of creative development. Each visual modelling technique has its own method for describing and editing elements, shaping the overall transformation process and occasionally generating unexpected alternative branches in the idea's development. These deviations can sometimes lead to groundbreaking innovative discoveries.

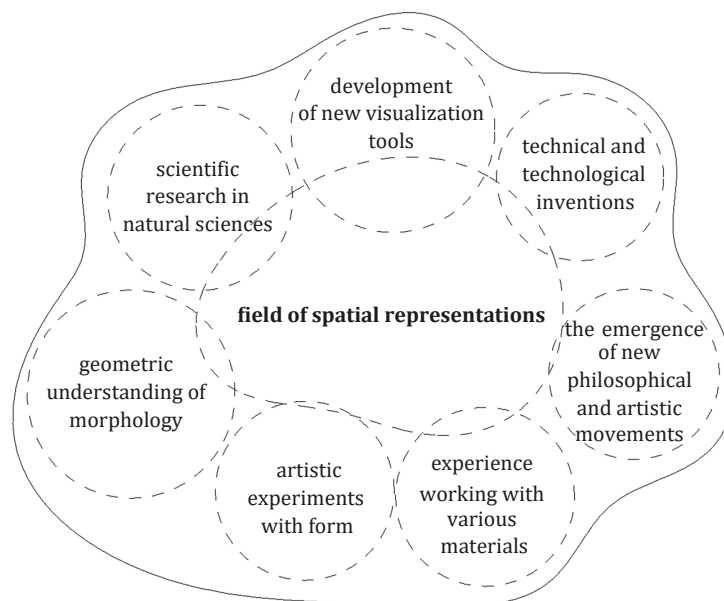
### VISUAL EXPERIENCE AS A FACTOR IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CREATIVE THINKING

Since imagination relies on sensory images derived from previously perceived objects and phenomena, it can be concluded that one of the key strategies for developing creative capabilities involves expanding the scope of imagination by consciously engaging with renowned architectural structures, design objects, and other visual artworks. In his book, R.W. Weisberg' (2020) examined how creative innovation depends on thinking outside the box. According to the author, creativity is rooted in prior knowledge and the ability to repurpose existing ideas to generate new ones.

An illustrative example of this is the formation of professional creative thinking in future design specialists. During their education, significant attention is paid to the compositional analysis of wellknown architectural and design objects. The morphological composition of a form is studied to understand the relative importance of key factors that effectively influence the user experience, situate the work within a socio-cultural context, and integrate other relevant aspects. These considerations ultimately play a crucial role in expanding the designer's repertoire of imagery. Both practical experimental experience and theoretical knowledge of form-development

tools are essential prerequisites for effective creative exploration during the sketching stage (Denysenko *et al.*, 2022).

Historical developments demonstrate the evolutionary progression of spatial and plastic structures within material culture. Spatial thinking emerged through the imitation of natural forms, the use of available modelling tools, experience with various materials, and advancements in processing new technologies (Fig. 3). Similarly, R. Burrows (2018) explored the evolution of geometry, its impact on technological innovations, and its role in shaping contemporary world-views. The transformation of intellectual paradigms led to a reinterpretation of the "magical" context of form, while shifting perceptions of the universe's structure aligned with the creative pursuits of artists across historical periods. Architects' and designers' mastery of geometric tools enhanced form-development methods and enabled the depiction of complex spatial surfaces. Developments in physics and engineering necessitated the invention of new structural systems and material configurations that fulfilled functional requirements. The advent of computational modelling tools further facilitated the diversification of spatial structures, allowing for more sophisticated design approaches.



**Figure 3.** Factors influencing the expansion of spatial representations

Source: created by the authors'

Visual representations evolved and diversified with the advent of new philosophical knowledge that reshaped the aesthetics of form and space, manifested in the experiments of leading artists. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed avant-garde movements whose representatives actively employed varied and in-depth research methods in their exploration of form, extending

their experimentation across all creative disciplines. The artistic techniques pioneered by the avant-gardists served as a catalyst for the emergence of a new aesthetic culture (Bodnar, 2023).

According to researchers, three-dimensional images in the imagination are constructed through the geometric perception and analysis of form morphology.

Architectural design prior to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century can be regarded as the result of modelling forms through planar or axonometric representations. Orthogonal projections, a highly effective tool for form modelling, were fully developed by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when the accumulated rules and methods of image construction were systematised by the French scientist Gaspard Monge in his book *Géométrie Descriptive*. This paved the way for further advancements in geometric methods of form construction, which eventually evolved into geometric modelling and the generation of complex surfaces.

A renewed interest in geometry as the conceptual foundation of form development among architects and designers emerged during the post-war period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, building upon new concepts of spatial comprehension. Many leading professionals focused on mastering novel sources and tools for shaping forms. The projects of Eero Saarinen from the 1950s and 1960s exemplify architects' and designers' ability to manipulate complex forms with precision (Fuxe, 2018).

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century saw creative explorations of form at the intersection of mathematics, projective geometry, crystallography, combinatorial theory, and computational form development (Bodnar, 2023). The development of geometric analyses of bionic forms, later brought to fruition through 3D computer modelling technologies, significantly gained traction. These innovative approaches to form development were reflected in the works of renowned designers and architects. A radical departure from the concept of orthogonality is evident in the works of Zaha Hadid, who actively employed new parametric design technologies to develop intricate "organic" forms. Fundamentally, she demonstrated the practical application of multidimensional

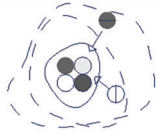
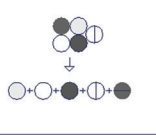
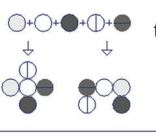
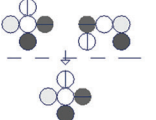
geometry (Arch20, 2020). Contemporary form-development approaches are often rooted in parametric design principles, where design elements are interconnected through mathematical or logical relationships. This framework facilitates the creation of complex and adaptive forms that can be efficiently modified and optimised based on specific tasks or conditions.

The development of visual representations is also evolving alongside advancements in visual communications, which have recently been rapidly integrated into the socio-cultural environment and have a strong influence on design processes, as comprehensively studied by N.V. Sklyarenko (2023).

In art and architectural education, one of the key approaches to developing creative potential and visual thinking involves experiments with abstract graphic and volumetric-plastic images, particularly at the initial stages of training. These fundamental exercises involve points, lines, shapes, planes, volumes, and spaces. Material and graphic technique experiments aim to develop an understanding of how to achieve a harmonious balance and expressiveness by comparing their formal properties and analysing the impact of changes in the qualitative indicators of the components on the perception of the whole.

#### STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVATING CREATIVITY IN DESIGN PRACTICE

The authors J.C. Kaufman & R.J. Sternberg (2020) argued that the primary condition for creativity is a focus on thinking in novel, unexpected, and compelling ways. Beyond the historical and educational context, when examining the structure of the modern design creativity process, several methods of activating the creative process can be identified (Fig. 4).

	<p><b>divergence methods</b> expanding the field of ideas</p>	<p>brainstorming references and analogies</p>
	<p><b>decomposition methods</b> allocation of components of the project task</p>	<p>change modeling tool brainstorming design heuristics</p>
	<p><b>transformation methods</b> search for ways to change the structure</p>	<p>combinatorics sketching design heuristics brainstorming creative experiment</p>
	<p><b>evaluation and selection methods</b></p>	<p>visual modeling analysis and testing</p>

**Figure 4.** Application of tools to stimulate the creative process at the stages of creative exploration  
**Source:** created by the authors'

One effective method for stimulating creative thinking is decomposition. The essence of decomposition lies in breaking the model into component parts to identify new relationships between them. By analysing various characteristics, a certain number of units can be isolated from the same object, such as structural blocks, functional zones, groups of objects, or typological units.

Indeed, the decomposition stage is present at all stages of the creative process, serving as the foundation for the next transformation of the design image. However, the methods and levels of decomposition can differ significantly depending on the visualisation tool employed. For instance, collage utilises shapes, vector graphics incorporate lines and shapes, modelling involves constructive blocks, and 3D modelling manipulates objects, elements, or polygons. The number of components should be moderated, as an excessively fragmented object does not yield the desired result, ultimately leading to the near-complete destruction of the image. Occasionally, changing the visual modelling tool (from drawing to sketch, from sketch to 3D modelling, etc.) can stimulate creativity, as each visual design tool operates according to its own principle of composition and decomposition. Thus, altering the tool can reveal new relationships in the design task.

Combinatorics is another method closely related to decomposition in achieving creative solutions. It involves finding optimal ways to position elements and the best combination of their characteristics by exploring possible arrangements. Combinatorics, as a transformation tool, often outpaces the imagination in predicting potential outcomes, as it generates a multitude of design alternatives, significantly expanding the scope of visualisations. Experimentation forms the basis of the combinatorial approach to form development, introducing heuristic methods for solving design and compositional problems. The application of combinatorial principles became possible with the introduction of computer graphics technologies. The communication process between the designer and the computer has become much more efficient with the development of generative artificial intelligence technologies, which can produce diverse variations in form and colour based on human sketches. Although these technologies are not yet perfect, more progressive designers believe this field will soon become a priority in design and exploratory processes. Research by A. Arias-Rosales (2022) offers insight into the promising functions of artificial intelligence in design, using their own development as an example.

One combinatorial method for enhancing creative thinking flexibility and breaking away from conventional thinking patterns is the use of heuristics. Design heuristics constitute a specific set of pre-developed rules that reflect cognitive strategies for creating new concepts. For example, design heuristics offer methods for altering functions (enlarging or reducing scale,

dividing continuous surfaces, mirroring forms, etc.). The authors X. Jin & H. Dong (2020) found that using multiple design heuristics can lead to interesting potential design options.

The use of simple and flexible visualisation tools stimulates the search for innovative solutions. The speed and technological simplicity of creating images enable the mind to work continuously and effectively engage the imagination, promoting the generation of creative solutions. Freeing the mind from storing unnecessary information and logic allows creative resources to be utilised more efficiently. Quick sketches from imagination, for example, help activate creative intuition, a crucial component of professional design thinking. In a study by T. Leblanc (2015), it was determined that generating a high quantity of ideas allows for the rejection of less interesting concepts, paving the way for creativity to emerge. Not only are drawing tools effective in the creative search process (although some authors, such as T. Page (2019), have suggested that the traditional design environment promotes a greater diversity of ideas, design strategies, and solutions than the digital design environment). Simple computer modelling tools that allow for rapid modification of the form and properties of the depicted object are also flexible instruments. Research by J.D. Camba *et al.* (2018) and W. Zhang & C. Ranscombe (2021) has shown that digital sketches can help create higher-quality results than those made using traditional methods. One such tool is the SketchUp 3D modelling application, which is noted for its ease of learning and use. Based on the intuitive paradigm of geometric modelling (where the primary constructive elements in 3D space are the plane and line), this application has gained significant popularity among architects and designers.

Brainstorming is a method for generating ideas, generally involving a group of people who aim to express as many solutions to a problem as possible, even if some ideas seem highly unconventional. In visual solutions for design tasks, this adapted method involves generating numerous images through quick sketch explorations. This process facilitates the creation and expansion of an idea bank, which is later organised systematised.

A related method to brainstorming in design activity is *clausura* (design sketches), which includes not only data about the objective properties of the future object but also images that show associative analogies – natural objects, artistic works, or fantasy images that the author relies on when developing the project concept. *Clausura* can also include explanations, diagrams, etc. Completing *clausura* within a set time frame helps develop the ability to think unconventionally.

The use of references or analogies for inspiration, analysis, and synthesis often helps overcome design crises and identify alternative directions for idea development. A reference does not have to be a direct analogue of the object being researched but can also include

visual images and forms unrelated to the project, which, due to their properties, can offer clues for further idea exploration. One effective tool for working with references is creating mood boards. The primary function of a mood board is to convey the atmosphere and mood, as well as the main associative characteristics of the work. Using mood boards, a specialist develops and refines a holistic vision of the result, as proven by A.M. Velasquez-Posada (2019). An interesting perspective on the point of view of the feasibility of using collage in the creative process is presented in the article by M. Hua *et al.* (2019). The paper conducts an empirical study to examine the potential of combinational visual stimuli in enhancing the creative search processes of designers. The authors demonstrate that combined visual stimuli best support design creativity, which is expected to have important positive effects both for design education and for the development of design support tools.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the evolution of spatial ideas demonstrates that innovation in artistic design is associated with experimental activities, stimulated by new philosophical and artistic movements, the mastery of geometric tools, the results of scientific research in the natural sciences, technological innovations, and the improvement of visual modelling instruments.

The methods for stimulating the creative process in modern design practice aim to create conditions for greater freedom of action in experimentation, breaking away from established templates, expanding the field of imagination, the ability to generate and identify possible connections faster, and evaluating potential alternatives. The foundation for creating innovative solutions is the visual experience gained through creative practice during educational processes, experimental creative tasks, the analysis of art and architecture, and practical experience.

The integration of scientifically based ideation practices into artistic and creative activities has the

potential to significantly increase innovation. In this study, the scope of information has been expanded, and techniques and approaches for addressing design tasks associated with experimental methods of generating innovative solutions in the field of artistic form development have been outlined for the first time.

Findings indicate that the processes of convergence and divergence form the basis of creativity. Incorporating new knowledge, random analogies, and expanding the reference base within the design problem can significantly enhance the novelty of solutions. It has been established that most strategies for stimulating the creative process are based on combinatorial principles. The expansion of the spectrum of combinatorial operations occurs at the morphological, conceptual, and functional levels, including when using controlled question techniques, sets of heuristics, etc.

The method of decomposition of the design problem defines the field of idea transformation and influences the effectiveness of idea development. Decomposition parameters are associated with modelling tools; therefore, increasing the range of visualisation tools can enhance the originality of ideas. The creativity-enhancing methods identified in the study can broaden the designer's range of techniques.

Future research prospects in this field lie in developing methodologies for incorporating creative thinking stimulation methods into design processes and creating theoretical principles and practical recommendations for applying a comprehensive set of visualisation tools in artistic and design activities.

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## **Творчий експеримент та генерація новітніх ідей в художньому проєктуванні**

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**Анотація.** Творча складова в процесі проєктування є основним розділом, оскільки пов'язана з пошуком інноваційних рішень. У творчому процесі провідну роль відіграє уява дизайнера – ключова сфера формування та трансформації бачення функціонального та естетичного образу майбутнього об'єкта. Метою даної роботи було визначення та систематизація основних стратегічних напрямів та прийомів стимулювання творчого процесу, спрямованого на генерування інноваційних рішень у сучасній дизайнерській діяльності. У дослідженні використано аналіз інформаційних джерел у галузі методів проєктування; інструментів формоутворення об'єктів архітектурного, промислового та середовищного дизайну; структурно-системний аналіз; узагальнення результатів досліджень. Доведено, що людська уява працює на основі раніше сформованих візуальних образів через сприйняття. Стратегічний напрям розвитку креативності визначався через візуально-операційний досвід. Встановлено, що основним методом отримання нових ідей є творче експериментування. Для стимулювання творчого процесу на етапі пошуку доцільно застосовувати такі процедури, як декомпозиція, зміна інструменту візуального моделювання, комбінаторика, використання простих і гнучких інструментів, референцій та аналогій, мозковий штурм і проєктна евристика. Практичне значення отриманих результатів може бути застосоване в дизайнерській практиці, в освітньому процесі підготовки фахівців мистецьких та креативних спеціальностей, а також у подальших дослідженнях в галузі мистецтвознавства, культурології, архітектури та дизайну

**Ключові слова:** проєктна візуалізація; формоутворення; художнє моделювання; візуальний образ; уява



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## Sacralisation of the female image during wartime in Ukraine and its reflection in graphic artworks

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**Abstract.** The purpose of the study was to analyse artistic strategies and visual mechanisms involved in the sacralisation of the female image in Ukrainian wartime graphics, particularly in posters, engravings, and illustrations from the periods of the world wars and contemporary armed conflicts. The study explored artistic techniques, symbolism, and iconographic traditions that shaped the sacral representation of women in war-related art. The methodological approach was based on a systematic analysis of artistic methods, compositional solutions, colour strategies, and stylistic features of the works examined. Findings demonstrated that the sacralisation of the female image in Ukrainian wartime graphics relied on established visual codes, which had evolved under the influence of socio-cultural and technological changes in art. A comparative analysis of Ukrainian, Soviet, German, French, and British graphic materials identified key tendencies in the depiction of the female figure, including their heroisation, mythological and religious attributes, and the use of artistic means to construct national identity. In contemporary Ukrainian graphic design, the sacred female image underwent a considerable transformation, shifting away from traditional allegorical frameworks towards expressive and personalised visual approaches. Increasingly, the female figure was portrayed not only as a national symbol or guardian figure but also as an equal participant in combat, thereby altering the visual narrative of wartime art. Contemporary posters frequently employed colour schemes combining blue and yellow, red and black, or stark monochromatic contrasts, enhancing the emotional resonance of the imagery. Digital technologies were widely utilised, enabling the integration of traditional graphic techniques with new visual strategies, including dynamic compositions, animated elements, and the adaptation of iconographic motifs to contemporary contexts. The study demonstrated that sacralisation of the female image in graphic art was achieved through the synthesis of traditional symbols, innovative visual strategies, and the reinterpretation of historical archetypes within a contemporary framework. Visual representation of women in wartime art continued to evolve, incorporating new stylistic tools and artistic concepts that expanded the communicative power and cultural impact of graphic design in the context of national identity and cultural resistance

**Keywords:** poster art; artistic representation; colour theory; stylistic features; visual semiotics; iconography; graphic design

### INTRODUCTION

During armed conflict, visual culture assumed particular importance, as it shapes public perceptions, reinforces national myths, and creates symbolic imagery that sustains collective identity. One of the key symbols reinterpreted and imbued with new meaning during military upheavals is the image of the woman. The sacralisation of the female image, understood as its elevation to a sacred or symbolically significant status,

has become a characteristic phenomenon in the art and national culture of Ukraine.

Female sacralisation in wartime has deep roots extending to archaic belief systems, in which women were associated with the source of life. In ancient mythologies across various cultures, the woman appears as a mother goddess symbolising birth, protection, and renewal (Crabtree, 2023). In Slavic tradition, central roles

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were occupied by deities such as Lada and Mokosh, who represented fertility, motherhood, and well-being. Similar archetypes are found in classical antiquity, where Demeter and Gaia were regarded as embodiments of life, regeneration, and abundance. These ancient associations gain renewed relevance during wartime, when the threat to societal existence elevates the image of the woman as a symbol of hope, continuity, and post-destruction renewal.

Throughout times of war, the female image has traditionally reflected two principal archetypes: the Motherland figure and the Woman-as-Warrior. As G. Golubnycha (2022) observed, in the former, the woman emerges as a symbol of the nation, the bearer of traditional values, a guardian of spiritual heritage, and frequently a catalyst for social mobilisation. In the latter, personifies struggle, active resistance, and participation in military engagement. Visual representations of these archetypes evolved throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, shaped by shifts in socio-cultural contexts, political developments, and the strategic needs of state propaganda. The relevance of this subject intensified in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. According to I. Lokshuk *et al.* (2024), contemporary Ukrainian graphic design frequently portrays female figures in the context of heroism, resilience, and support for the armed forces, thereby contributing to the creation of new visual codes for national identity. This is evident in numerous digital illustrations, social projects, and poster art, where the female figure became a symbol of resistance and national spirit. The war catalysed a reassessment of traditional notions of women's roles, manifesting not only in artistic production but also in broader social processes, giving rise to a new visual language of resistance.

E. Wollney & M. Sternadori (2019) showed that graphic war art traditionally employed the female figure as a central element of visual communication, adapting it to the stylistic tendencies and artistic practices of its respective period. J. Tompsett (2024) noted that in British and French iconography of the First World War, the woman was most often depicted according to classical allegorical traditions, echoing academic painting and neoclassicism, emphasising monumentality and symbolic association with the state. N. Zalietok (2023) argued that Soviet wartime graphics during the Second World War greatly expanded the use of the female image, employing realist and socialist realist approaches. These styles integrated bold, dynamic forms and diagonal compositions to enhance the sense of action. C. Kiær (2024) further added that Soviet posters frequently portrayed women in labour or military roles, conveying the idea of collective struggle through visual language. This was achieved through compositional solutions involving rhythmic repetition of forms, the use of large-scale foregrounding, and minimal spatial depth.

Ukrainian researchers also made a significant contribution to the examination of the sacred female

image. In particular, I. Zaspá (2022; 2023) analysed archetypes of women in contemporary Ukrainian visual culture, emphasising their transformation and value in national self-identification. The researcher highlighted that the woman in wartime art not only reflects social reality but also contributes to the strengthening of identity by adapting historical symbols to contemporary conditions. Some researchers additionally examined the impact of military iconography on contemporary graphic design. As noted by S. Kot *et al.* (2024), the graphic representation of women during wartime may serve various roles depending on the artistic intent and the context in which it is employed, ranging from a symbol of patriotism to a tool of manipulation. J.J. Forrest (2021) underscored that contemporary digital design altered the dynamics of wartime imagery dissemination, expanding its usage across the media landscape. This development facilitated rapid responses to current events and the creation of new visual codes within design practices.

Nevertheless, considerable gaps persist within the academic discourse, particularly regarding the evolution of the female image across different wartime periods, and its stylistic transformations in the context of the First and Second World Wars and the current armed conflict in Ukraine. Further analysis of these changes is essential for understanding the developmental trends in wartime graphics and their influence on the contemporary artistic discourse. The purpose of this study was to identify the main trends in the transformation of the sacred female image during periods of war in Ukraine and to examine their impact on contemporary art and graphic design.

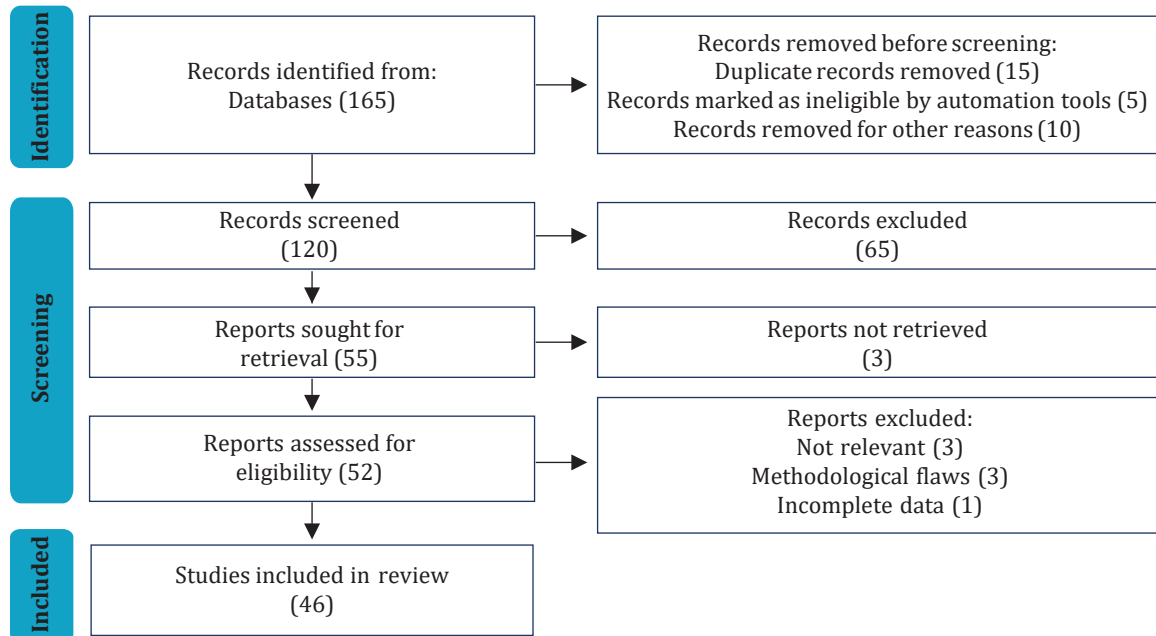
## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The analysis of visual representations of women during the First World War, particularly in posters, engravings, and illustrations, enabled the investigation of how artistic tools functioned in shaping patriotic rhetoric and national discourse. A key aspect of the study was also the comparative analysis of Soviet, Ukrainian, German, French, and British graphic materials from the Second World War. The selection of these countries was based on their active participation in the war and the stylistic diversity observed in the creation of propaganda posters.

This study was grounded in a systematic analysis of visual and textual materials depicting the sacralisation of the female image during wartime in Ukraine. The corpus included war posters, engravings, and illustrations produced during the First and Second World Wars and the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine. Academic databases such as JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar were used to gather relevant materials. Searches were conducted in English using keywords including: "sacralization of the female image in wartime", "women in war propaganda", "Ukrainian war posters", and "gender and visual culture in war".

The methodological approach was based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), which ensured a structured process for selecting and analysing scholarly sources. The initial search identified 165 records across the databases. Following a preliminary screening, 30 records

were excluded. Further review reduced the number of eligible sources to 55, of which 3 could not be accessed, leaving 52 for detailed evaluation. Ultimately, 46 sources were selected for in-depth analysis, while the remainder were excluded due to thematic irrelevance, methodological shortcomings, or incomplete data (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** PRISMA flow diagram for the systematic selection and analysis of sources in the examination of the female image transformation in military graphics

**Source:** compiled by the author

The selection of sources was guided by several key criteria. The final sample included materials that aligned with the subject under study, specifically: (1) publications dedicated to the analysis of the visual representation of women in wartime art; (2) studies exploring stylistic and iconographic features of graphic design during periods of war; (3) research focusing on the evolution of artistic techniques and methods used in propaganda illustration; (4) peer-reviewed studies examining the interrelationship between graphic art and social transformation; (5) monographs offering in-depth analysis of historical changes in the compositional approaches of wartime posters; and (6) representative visual materials illustrating key artistic trends across different periods. Conversely, materials that did not meet the established criteria were excluded from the final analysis. These included: (1) publications lacking analysis of wartime graphics or focusing solely on political aspects without considering artistic and aesthetic dimensions; (2) studies with methodological shortcomings, particularly those that failed to provide clear evaluation criteria for visual content; (3) sources with incomplete or unsubstantiated conclusions; (4) duplicate records; and (5) non-peer-reviewed studies. The selected visual materials were analysed using

the following criteria: (1) thematic content; (2) stylistic features; (3) ideological messages; and (4) their role in shaping collective memory and national identity.

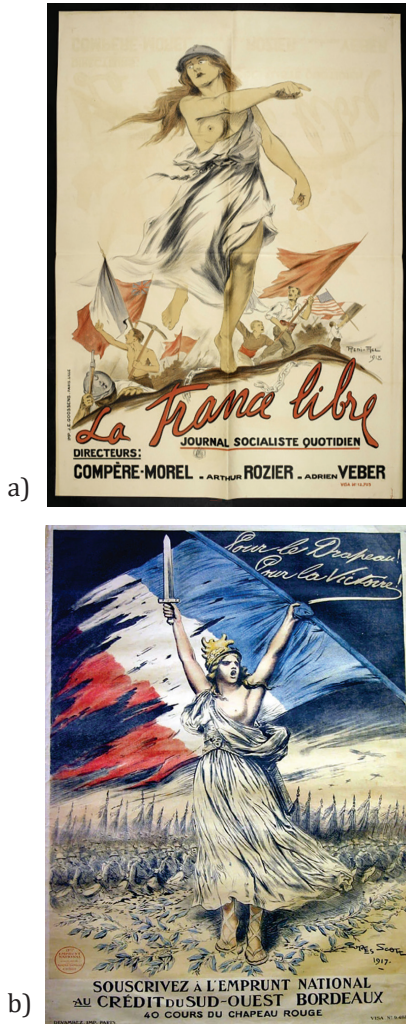
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Representation of the sacred female image in posters, prints, and caricatures of the First World War.

During the First World War, visual art played a pivotal role in shaping public perception, encouraging political mobilisation, and reinforcing national identity. Amid a global conflict that affected much of the world, propaganda and agitational imagery became a central means of communication between the state and society, aiming to bolster support for the war effort (Szurmiński *et al.*, 2022). An important aspect of these visual practices was the depiction of women, who acquired a powerful symbolic function. They appeared not only as bearers of traditional gender roles but also as allegorical embodiments of the homeland and moral duty to the nation.

Across various cultures, the female figure was employed as a symbol of statehood. French iconography, for instance, made active use of the figure of Marianne, who personified ideals of liberty and patriotism. In one prominent depiction, dynamic stance, extended arm, and wind-blown garments convey a sense of motion

and a call to action (Fig. 2-a). The composition follows a triangular structure, drawing visual emphasis to the female form. The colour palette is restrained, yet the presence of vivid red highlights enhances the image's combative and motivational undertones.



**Figure 2.** Marianne in French military graphics during the First World War

**Note:** a) Illustration “La France libre” (1918) in a socialist French journal; b) Propaganda poster “Souscrivez à l’Emprunt National” (1917)

**Source:** Domesticating the Goddess “Liberty”... (2017), A. Gunthert (2018)

A somewhat different approach is evident in the second image (Fig. 2-b). There, Marianne is depicted in a more static pose, with raised sword and flag highlighting steadfastness and militancy. The use of a centrally balanced composition lends the image a monumental character. The background scene of soldiers reinforces leadership status and endows the depiction with a sacral dimension. A contrast between cool blues and rich red tones generates a psychological impression of struggle and tension (Cojocar, 2024). The red functions as an emotional trigger, prompting viewer

engagement, whereas the lighter shades evoke associations with hope, purity, and sacredness (Petzold, 2021). This visual strategy allows the female figure to be interpreted within religious or heroic symbolic frameworks. In American propaganda, the state was personified by Columbia (Gilbert, 2021). In the poster “Columbia Calls”, the centralised composition unites firmness with a sense of dynamism (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Columbia in United States war propaganda – “Columbia Calls” poster (1916)  
**Source:** F.A. Halstead & V. Aderente (2020)

The figure of Columbia is presented in motion, conveying a sense of forward momentum, while her raised arm bearing the flag and the sword in her other hand underscore determination and military readiness. The colour scheme is based on patriotic hues – blue, red, and white – facilitating visual identification with national values (Suhaimi & Fauzi, 2021). Red accents intensify the emotional impact, and the white classical attire symbolises idealised virtue and moral purity. The combination of classical style with monumental form contributes to the sacralisation of the image, imbuing Columbia with symbolic significance in the context of patriotic mobilisation (Sward, 2022).

A similar symbolism was inherent in the military graphics of the Russian Empire, where the female image served as an allegorical personification of the state, embodying the ideas of imperial greatness, traditional power, and spiritual patronage (Muravska, 2021). One notable example is the illustration “Soglasie”, which employs symbolic female figures to represent the Entente powers – namely, the Russian Empire, France, and Great Britain (Fig. 4).

The composition is based on a principle of symmetry. The central position is occupied by a figure symbolising the Russian Empire, underscoring its dominant role within the military-political alliance. The figure’s pose is steady and calm, conveying a sense of monumentality.

France is represented through the image of Marianne, embodying revolutionary ideals of liberty. A key attribute is the Phrygian cap, symbolising revolutionary spirit and democratic values (Montandon, 2021). Its eyes are directed toward the central figure, highlighting the significance of the Russian Empire within the depicted hierarchy. Great Britain is depicted as the goddess Athena, who personifies military strength, strategic thinking, and wisdom. She holds an anchor, a traditional emblem of the nation's naval power. Its eyes are likewise directed toward the Russian figure. This compositional structure guides the viewer's attention to the visual interrelationships among the figures, emphasising the central image's dominance and authority. The spatial arrangement demonstrates a carefully conceived artistic concept, wherein the compositional choices harmoniously interact with the semantic content.



**Figure 4.** Allegorical representation of the Entente via female figures in Russian war propaganda (1914)  
**Source:** Rare Russian WW1 propaganda posters (2012)

The colour scheme plays a crucial role in shaping both the semantic content and the emotional resonance of the work. The golden hues dominating the central figure serve as visual markers of power, grandeur, and spiritual authority, enhancing the sacral or monumental character of the image (Noémi, 2021). The colour palette of Marianne, featuring blue, white, and red, acts as a device for reinforcing patriotic rhetoric, invoking ideas of revolution, liberty, and national identity. The use of red and green in the representation of Great Britain elicits associations with military discipline, stability, and strategic strength (Cusumano, 2021). Meanwhile, contrasting colour combinations across different areas of the composition establish a dynamic rhythm and ensure balance between the symbolic meaning and formal characteristics of the imagery. A crucial element of the spatial organisation is the detailed rendering of the background, which functions as a dramatic backdrop that enhances the expressiveness

of the central narrative. The burning sky, the darkened silhouettes of soldiers, and the airships generate visual tension that contributes to the viewer's psychological engagement. This artistic solution not only deepened the iconographic context of the work but also emphasised its conceptual multidimensionality by integrating colouristic, compositional, and symbolic aspects into a unified visual structure.

The illustration thus exemplifies a tendency characteristic of wartime and allegorical graphics: the sacralisation of the female figure, presented not merely as an aesthetic construct but as a bearer of profound ideological and symbolic meaning. The visual personification of nations through female figures reinforces the idea of spiritual guardianship, moral purity, and the steadfastness of national ideals. Through its compositional structure, use of colour, and incorporation of traditional iconographic motifs, the artwork transforms the female image into a sacred symbol embodying historical mission, cultural heritage, and the collective values of the depicted nations. Another important motif in wartime illustration was female sacrifice (Hayashida, 2021). The British propaganda poster "Women of Britain say – go!" presents the woman as a sacred symbol of support and sacrifice (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** The female image in British wartime propaganda in the poster "Women of Britain say – go!" (1915)  
**Source:** "Women of Britain say – go" (1915)

The compositional design of the poster was based on the interaction between two spatial zones. The first comprised a static group of female figures and a child positioned in the foreground, while the second features a dynamic scene of soldiers departing into the distance. This structure created a hierarchical composition in which the women appear as central figures, seemingly bestowing a blessing upon the departing soldiers. The direction of their gaze forms a visual axis between the

two pictorial spaces, intensifying the dramatic effect of farewell. The colour strategy likewise played a key role in constructing the work's semantics (Jaglarz, 2023). The use of warm, muted tones contributes to an emotionally charged atmosphere. The bright daylight symbolises future victory and hope, whereas the darker, warm interior tones underscore the safety and stability associated with the domestic sphere. Particularly significant is the yellow dress of the central female figure, which not only draws attention to the key character but also evokes associations with optimism and motivation, in alignment with the textual message of the poster (Kadlubovich & Chernyak, 2022). In this way, the poster functions not only as a tool of military propaganda but also as a manifestation of the sacralised image of womanhood in the context of war. The interplay of composition, colour, and textual message produces a visual narrative that underscores sacrifice, moral grandeur, and the role of the woman as a spiritual reference point in wartime society.

The mass mobilisation of men for combat during the First World War led to an acute labour shortage. This necessitated the extensive integration of women into various sectors of the economy, including industry, agriculture, healthcare, and administrative governance. In response, the warring states launched large-scale propaganda campaigns aimed at mobilising the female population in support of national war efforts (Chrystal, 2024). Wartime poster graphics from this period presented a broad spectrum of female representations, shaped by each country's political system, social conventions, and propaganda strategies. Within American visual culture, women frequently appeared as workers and symbols of national unity, whereas German propaganda often imbued the female figure with sacred attributes aligned with iconographic archetypes (Condell & Liddiard, 1987). The German propaganda poster "Deutsche frauen arbeitet im Heimatheer!" ("German women, work in the Home Army!") exemplified this conceptual approach. The image of a woman handing a weapon to a soldier constructs a symbolic narrative not only of economic involvement but also of spiritual participation in the war effort (Fig. 6). The female figure serves as a kind of moral guide, evoking scenes of ritualised farewell or blessing.

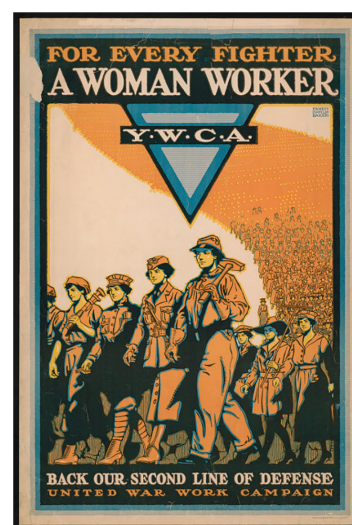
The chromatic palette of the poster plays a considerable role in its semantic impact. Limited to three primary tones – black, red, and white – the colour scheme draws attention to the central elements: the female figure and the accompanying text, both rendered in red. Traditionally associated with strength and action, red enhances the motivational tone and emotional intensity of the scene. The use of a monochromatic gradient aligns the visual style with linocut techniques, thereby contributing to the image's expressiveness and dramatic effect (Hughes & Vernon-Morris, 2023). The compositional arrangement relies on static interactions between the figures, each portrayed in clearly

defined poses, which emphasises the solemnity and monumentality of the depicted moment. The absence of background detail focuses the viewer's attention on the emotional core of the image – the interaction between the woman and the soldier.



**Figure 6.** The female figure in German wartime propaganda during the First World War (1914-1918)  
**Source:** Lore Wolf (n.d.)

The American poster "For every fighter, a woman worker" illustrated a markedly different approach to the representation of female identity when compared with its German counterpart (Fig. 7). At the centre of this image is not an individualised female figure embodying sacrifice or moral support, but rather a collective movement that underscores the mass mobilisation of women in support of the wartime economy. There, women are portrayed as an organised labour force, fulfilling a critical role on the home front and constituting a "second line of defence".



**Figure 7.** Visual representation of women's labour in American war propaganda during the First World War (1918)  
**Source:** E.H. Baker (1918)

The compositional structure of the poster emphasised dynamism and forward movement. The diagonal arrangement of the figures and their synchronised stride generate a sense of relentless motion, contrasting with the static and dramatically expressive compositions characteristic of German propaganda graphics. The absence of individual emotional emphasis reinforces the sense of unity, while the generalised depictions of women contribute to the construction of a universal narrative.

The combination of navy blue, orange, and white establishes a visual balance between stability, energy, and optimism. Blue is traditionally associated with trust and order, while orange symbolises labour, productivity, and strength (Gherasim & Gherasim, 2021). The complementary nature of these colours enhances the sense of dynamism and evokes associations with progress and the future. The principal artistic distinction between this poster and the German “Deutsche frauen arbeitet im Heimatheer!” lies in the use of contrasting compositional and colouristic approaches to generate emotional impact. The German poster is constructed around principles of symmetry and stillness, endowing the image with a sense of monumentality and solemnity. In contrast, the American poster employs a dynamic, deep-space composition that evokes rhythm and energy, transforming the poster into a visual metaphor of advancement rather than a static image.

Ukrainian graphic art during the First World War displayed distinctive approaches to portraying the female figure, setting it apart from Western European visual traditions. Unlike the allegorical figures such as Marianne in France or Columbia in the United States, Ukrainian artists drew upon alternative visual narratives that conveyed the drama of human fate. One such example can be found in the graphic works of Olena Kulchytska, in which the female figure acquires not only emotional but also sacral significance through compositional arrangement, colour use, and expressive line-work. The graphic piece “Under a foreign sky” is constructed around a strong contrast of light and shadow, which produces an intense emotional effect (Fig. 8).



**Figure 8.** The image of the Ukrainian woman in the illustration “Under a foreign sky” (1914-1915)  
Source: L. Kost (2022)

At the centre of the composition is a woman with an infant, serving as the visual focal point and compositional dominant. Her figure simultaneously embodies motherhood, national loss, and forced exile. While the movement within the composition is restrained, the figures appear to be walking forward; their postures and tense gestures, however, convey a sense of inner burden and helplessness. Repeating curved lines in the background heighten the atmosphere of unease, recalling Expressionist graphic techniques, where line functions not only as a structural element but also as an emotional device (Pandey, 2024).

Another of Kulchytska’s graphic works presented an even more allegorical interpretation of the female figure (Fig. 9). The central image of a woman in white clothing assumes a sacral quality through its stillness and compositional dominance. The vertical elongation of the figure creates a sense of monumentality, while her closed eyes and hands placed upon them serve as one of the strongest symbolic accents.



**Figure 9.** Sacralised image of a woman in the illustration “The horrors of war” (1915)  
Source: L. Kost (2022)

The colour scheme was based on a minimalist palette of grey and sepia tones, echoing traditional graphic techniques and historical documentary imagery. The absence of bright colours detaches the scene from a specific time frame, rendering it more universal and symbolic. The background is filled with chaotically arranged figures, which generates a sense of mass tragedy. The visual structure of the composition evokes scenes from religious art, where the central figure remains static while dynamic movement unfolds around it. Kulchytska's graphic work thus articulates a unique conception of the female image within Ukrainian wartime art. Rather than focusing on idealised allegorical figures, artist's works convey profound drama through expressive form, stark contrasts of light and shadow, and symbolic composition. The use of techniques drawn from both iconographic and Expressionist traditions allows these works to be interpreted as visual metaphors for national tragedy and spiritual endurance in times of war (Bruff, 2023).

An examination of war posters, prints, and caricatures from the First World War showed shared features of the visual culture of the period, including compositional clarity, strong colour contrasts, and the symbolic significance of the female figure. Women were often employed as personifications of the state, as in the case of Marianne in France or Columbia in the United States, or as moral guides and spiritual protectors, as seen in German and Russian art. Ukrainian graphic art, particularly the works of Olena Kulchytska, departed from allegorical conventions by employing expressive line work, contrasts of light and shadow, and realistic depictions of suffering. Colour schemes were typically constructed around combinations of red, black, white, and blue, which heightened the emotional resonance of the images. Compositions frequently featured multi-layered structures in which the female figure either dominated the scene or interacted with soldiers, thereby establishing a visual hierarchy. Wartime graphics combined

elements of neoclassicism, expressionism, and poster stylisation, contributing to the sacralisation of the female figure as a symbol of national identity, sacrifice, or social engagement.

**The representation of the female figure in Soviet, Ukrainian, and German graphic art during the Second World War.** Wartime graphic art from the Second World War displayed a wide range of artistic approaches to the representation of the female figure, which played a central role in propaganda strategies. The visual language of Soviet, Ukrainian, and German posters varied considerably depending on the political context, socio-cultural factors, and target audiences. Nevertheless, all employed sacralised archetypes of womanhood to underscore ideals of service to the state, sacrifice, and national resilience (Acan & Aygenc, 2022). Ukrainian wartime graphics also reflected the personal experiences of front-line artists, as shown in study by T. Nedoshovenko (2023), which connected the visual legacy of World War II with the realities of the current Russian-Ukrainian war.

Soviet graphic art of this period was characterised by dynamic composition and the extensive use of saturated colours, particularly red, symbolising struggle, socialist revolution, and collective labour (Balina & Oushakine, 2021). Women were frequently depicted as workers in wartime industry or agriculture (Fig. 10). Compositional structures often relied on diagonal movement to generate a sense of visual dynamism (van Herwaarden, 2024). This was especially evident in Figure 10-a, where the female figure dominates the composition. A uniformed female worker occupies the foreground, evoking associations with military discipline and labour heroism, while the industrial landscape in the background visually reinforces the theme of industrial might (Qian, 2024). The colour palette contrasts vivid red with blue-grey tones, highlighting themes of labour endurance and discipline.



**Figure 10.** Representation of women's labour in Soviet wartime propaganda during the Second World War  
**Note:** a) Poster: "We swore to our men, our heroic fighters, that we would forge their weapons day and night..." (1941); b) Poster: "A tractor in the field is like a tank in battle!" (1940)  
**Source:** P. Erizanu (2020), V. Ivanov & O. Burova (1942)

Typography in Soviet posters also played a considerable role in visual composition. Fonts were rendered in strict geometric forms, amplifying the propagandistic effect. Bold red lettering at the lower edge of the posters not only directed the viewer's attention toward the central message but also harmonised with the overall colour scheme. In the image shown in Figure 10-b, women are depicted as collective farm workers. The poster's composition is organised according to the principle of forward perspective, with tractors moving in a single direction to create a sense of coordinated strength. Compositional lines are designed to guide the viewer's gaze from the foreground to the background, where resources are actively being transported to the front. The colour scheme combines warm hues of yellow and red, which traditionally symbolise fertility, labour, and energy.

In addition to the image of the woman as a labourer, Soviet propaganda made extensive use of another sacralised representation – the woman as a personification of the state (Vattano, 2021), who appeared in the form of the Motherland, calling the people to arms, as seen in iconic posters such as “The motherland calls!” and “For the motherland!” Irakli Toidze (Fig. 11). The main artistic emphasis in these compositions lies in a minimalist colour palette centred around red, white, and black. Red functions as a key element, symbolising Soviet identity and revolutionary struggle, and serves as an emotional trigger to intensify patriotism and militaristic fervour. The white background and dark graphic lines produce a monochromatic, agitational style that heightens the dramatic impact of the scene.



**Figure 11.** The sacral image of the Motherland in Soviet military propaganda during the Second World War  
**Note:** a) Poster “The motherland calls!” (1941); b) Poster “For the motherland!” (1943)  
**Source:** Russian WWII propaganda posters (n.d.)

The compositional structure of the posters is based on the use of diagonal lines, which enhance the dynamic quality of the call to action. In the poster “The motherland calls!”, the female figure occupies nearly the entire visual space, creating an effect of monumental grandeur (Fig. 11-a). The raised arm gesture and direct gaze convey a resolute emotional message, appealing to duty and responsibility. The vertical composition reinforces the authoritative tone, while the dynamic diagonal line extending from the military oath to the raised hand directs attention to the headline, intensifying the semantic focus of the poster. Similarly, in the poster “For the motherland!”, the main compositional emphasis is also placed on the female figure, although the narrative shifts from one of command to one of combat (Fig. 11-b). The diagonal composition is achieved through the placement of a group of soldiers in the lower section of the image, generating a sense of offensive momentum. The depiction of a woman here is not only sacralised but also emotionally heightened by the inclusion of a child in arms. This artistic device amplifies

the emotional impact on the viewer, evoking associations with protection, sacrifice, and familial values.

Within Soviet wartime poster art of the Second World War, the image of the female victim played a crucial role in shaping an emotional narrative and enhancing the propagandistic effect. Such depictions were intended to evoke viewer empathy, intensify feelings of indignation, and mobilise through emotional shock (Toon, 2022). The compositional decisions employed in these posters were constructed around a contrast between the strength of the aggressor and the vulnerability of the woman, making use of dramatic lighting, expressive gestures, and symbolic details that established a clear opposition between victim and perpetrator. The poster “Red Army soldier, save us!” serves as a characteristic example of the use of selective lighting to accentuate emotional effect (Fig. 12-a). The central focus is on the figures of a woman and child in a threatening situation. The dark background conveys a sense of hopelessness, while the brightly illuminated faces form the compositional centre,

heightening visual tension. A diagonal line is defined by the direction of the bayonet, aimed at the woman and child, embodying an immediate threat. The colour

scheme combines dark tones with red, evoking not only danger but also an urgent call to action reinforced by the textual slogan.



**Figure 12.** The image of the female victim in Soviet military propaganda during the Second World War  
**Note:** a) Poster “Red Army soldier, save us!” (1942); b) Poster “Death to the Nazi murderers!” (1944); c) Poster “Kill the fascist monster!” (1944)  
**Source:** Russian WWII propaganda posters (n.d.)

A similar compositional approach can be observed in the poster “Death to the Nazi murderers!”, where a diagonal axis is formed through the interaction between the hands of the aggressor and the woman (Fig. 12-b). An additional compositional layer is created by the background, which includes Nazi military equipment and troops, thereby amplifying the sense of mass and total threat. The poster “Kill the fascist monster!” adopts a different artistic technique, employing grotesque and caricatured stylisation (Fig. 12-c). The dark background creates a grim atmosphere, while the enemy figure, rendered with exaggerated, monstrous features, intensifies the effect of dehumanisation. The contrast between the dark figure of the enemy and the lighter female figure accentuates the symbolic division between absolute evil and innocent victimhood. A dynamic diagonal is formed through the direction of the rope leading to the hanged woman.

The image of the female victim transcends individual representation, becoming an emotionally charged symbol designed to elicit viewer empathy through powerful visual dramaturgy. This became part of a broader tendency in Soviet wartime graphic art, in which the female image was constructed within established propagandistic frameworks: as a sacral symbol of the state, as a labour reserve supporting the economy, and as the embodiment of victimhood representing the collective national tragedy. Soviet-Ukrainian wartime graphic art from the Second World War demonstrated a complex synthesis of artistic styles and propagandist strategies, merging Soviet visual codes with elements of national symbolism. Within these images, the female figure played a dual role: represented sacred sacrifice, renewal,

and hope. A key compositional device involved positioning the female figure as the central element, thereby determining the emotional impact of the poster.

The poster “Fighter, Ukraine is waiting for you!” was constructed based on the contrast between a dark, threatening background and an illuminated female figure, which heightens the dramatic effect (Fig. 13-a). The image of the woman functions as an allegory of enslaved Ukraine; the woman’s pose, bound body and facial expression evoke a sense of helplessness and expectation of liberation. The vertical format of the composition reinforces the sacred dimension of the image – the woman is tied to a pillar with the inscription “Kyiv”, which resembles the crucifixion scenes in Christian iconography. The cold tones of the background and the overall dark colour palette amplify the tragic atmosphere, while the muted moonlight symbolises hope. The use of cinematic lighting, with a focused emphasis on the woman’s face, enhances the empathic effect, drawing the viewer’s attention to her suffering. In contrast, the poster “Glory to the liberators of Ukraine! Death to the German invaders!” offers an alternative interpretation of the female image (Fig. 13-b). There, the woman appears as a rescued civilian, supported by a Soviet soldier. Her light-coloured clothing contrasts with the soldier’s dark military uniform, creating a visual emphasis on the trusting interaction between the figures. The composition assumes a static, ceremonial character, structured around a three-layered spatial arrangement. The central scene with the soldier and woman symbolises liberation; the bayonet in the middle ground reinforces the military context, while the equestrian statue in the background establishes a connection to the setting of the events.



**Figure 13.** The image of the Ukrainian woman in Soviet wartime propaganda

**Note:** a) Poster “Fighter, Ukraine awaits you!” (1943); b) Poster “Glory to the liberators of Ukraine! Death to the German invaders!” (1943)

**Source:** Russian WWII propaganda posters (n.d.)

Ukrainian wartime graphics during Second World War, particularly associated with the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, present unique approaches to portraying the image of women, combining national identity with the war narrative. Unlike Soviet visual propaganda, where the female image often personified either the state or the victim of war, Ukrainian graphics offer alternative interpretations. Women appear as direct participants in armed resistance and as spiritual leaders of the nation. The first image depicts a female warrior in the uniform of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, positioned at the centre of the composition, emphasising leadership role in the fight (Fig. 14-a).

Her outstretched arm forms a clear diagonal, creating dynamic movement in the scene and conveying the emotion of a call to arms. The background, executed in a graphic style with contrasting black silhouettes and jagged lines, enhances the expressiveness of the image, adding dramatic tension. The contours of the figure are clear, visually highlighting her as the central element of the composition. The inscription at the top, rendered in an uneven handwritten style, imparts emotional expression and intensifies the propaganda effect. Particular attention is drawn to the national symbols on uniform, which clearly define the Ukrainian context of the struggle.



**Figure 14.** The female image in Ukrainian Insurgent Army propaganda postcards as the embodiment of struggle and compassion

**Note:** a) Postcard “Will you really sit idly by and watch brotherly blood flow?!” (1939); b) Postcard “Help the wounded soldier!” (1942-1945)

**Source:** M. Dmitrenko (n.d.), M. Mikhalevich (1939)

The second image offers an alternative interpretation of the female role in the war – the woman is depicted as a medical angel aiding a wounded soldier (Fig. 14-b). The composition is based on the harmonious interrelationship between the characters, with the angel bending over the soldier, creating a smooth, calm rhythm that contrasts with the dynamic and aggressive energy of the first image. The colour scheme is minimalist, consisting of three primary colours – green, black, and orange. The green background evokes safety and calm, the black contours provide graphic clarity, and the orange reflects the connection to the struggle. The use of traditional Ukrainian attire in the angel's costume merges national symbolism with the idea of spiritual protection, adding a sacred meaning to the image.

The artistic techniques used, such as contrasting graphic elements, symbolic colour choices, and expressive compositional accents, create a unique visual code for Ukrainian wartime graphics that differentiates it from the dominant visual styles of Soviet and Nazi propaganda. Nazi graphics depicting female images adhered to established visual codes that emphasised

the traditional role of women as mothers, guardians of the family, and the foundation of the German nation (Boterbloem & Pine, 2025). The compositional choices, colour schemes, and stylistic elements of these posters served to sanctify motherhood, domestic comfort, and national loyalty.

In Figure 15, both images showcase the traditional female figure in Nazi propaganda, highlighting maternity, family values, and the role of women within the state hierarchy. The use of soft, harmonious colours in shades of blue, golden, and warm beige creates an effect of stability, purity, and holiness. In the poster “Mutter und Kind,” the central image of a mother with a child echo religious motif (Fig. 15-a). The composition is structured in such a way that the viewer's attention is solely focused on the interaction between mother and child. A substantial compositional device is the light accent in the form of the sun behind the woman, which distinctly highlights silhouette, creating the effect of a sacred glow, akin to the Madonna in Christian art. The tenderness of the expressions, the mother's lowered gaze, and the smooth lines of the forms create an atmosphere of calm and harmony.



**Figure 15.** The sacralised image of woman as mother in Nazi propaganda during the pre-war period (1930-1938)

**Note:** a) Poster “Unterstützt das hilfswerk mutter und kind” (1935); b) Cover of the magazine “NS Frauen warte. Die einzige parteiamtliche Frauenzeitschrift” (1937-1938)

**Source:** Nazi posters: 1939-1945 (2001), The frauen warte: 1935-1945 (2002)

In contrast to the first poster, the cover of “The frauen warte” magazine (Fig. 15-b) presents the woman within a broader social context. A woman is depicted alongside a male soldier and a labourer, emphasising the ideological vision of the family as the foundation of the state. The composition is structured and hierarchical: the male figure in the background dominates, while the woman occupies a stable, traditional role as mother and caregiver. Her pose and facial expression remain static, reinforcing a sense of constancy and resilience within the societal order. The colour schemes employed in these images also plays a crucial role. In “Mutter und kind”, the blue tones symbolise trust, calmness, and

maternal care. In contrast, “The frauen warte” utilises warm hues that evoke familial unity and national pride. The second image features clearly defined contours and strong contrast, contributing to a sense of structure and ideological order consistent with the overarching principles of Nazi aesthetics.

The graphic design of wartime posters during the Second World War reveals a complex interplay between artistic techniques, ideological messaging, and social mobilisation. Several general trends define the visual language of this period. Firstly, emotional expressiveness emerged as a key characteristic, achieved through the use of high contrast between light and shadow,

dynamic compositions, and expressive typography. Soviet graphic art favoured vivid, saturated colours, particularly reds, which symbolised struggle and socialist ideals. German posters, by contrast, relied on warm, harmonious palettes that underscored traditional family values and national stability. Ukrainian graphics, especially within the context of the liberation movement, employed stark contrasts reminiscent of expressionist linocuts, highlighting the dramatic nature of events.

Secondly, compositional choices reflected specific ideological content. Soviet posters often adopted diagonal layouts to convey movement and action. German images displayed centred, balanced structures, emphasising stability. Ukrainian posters frequently employed a strongly vertical construction, sacralising the female figure through monumentality and expressiveness. Overall, wartime posters of the Second World War not only conveyed the ideological imperatives of their respective nations but also represented a powerful artistic phenomenon. They synthesised graphic techniques, symbolism, and emotional impact to construct public consciousness.

**Contemporary Ukrainian graphic design and the image of a woman in the context of war and national identity.** Contemporary Ukrainian graphic design plays a considerable role in shaping the visual narrative of war and national identity, employing the female image as a symbol of cultural resistance, resilience, and the lived reality of conflict. Since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, and especially following the full-scale invasion in 2022, artists have sought to reinterpret traditional female archetypes, adapting them to the emerging social realities.

In the early stages of the war, the visual narrative predominantly featured the image of the woman as a victim, symbolising the civilian population suffering under armed aggression. Such depictions made use of muted colours, cool tones, soft contours, and static compositions, which together heightened the impression of vulnerability and defencelessness (Cui *et al.*, 2023). Figure 16 serves as a representative example of the contemporary visual discourse of war. The portrayal of the woman merges traditional motifs of motherhood with themes of destruction, generating a complex visual message.

The colour palette is centred on pale, muted tones that form the background of tragedy, while the explosions and rocket fire are rendered in bright, warm hues that contrast sharply with the overall setting, symbolising the aggression of war. The composition is based on an asymmetrical balance, creating a sense of instability and helplessness. The central female figure is depicted in a static pose, which contrasts with the chaotic motion of the explosions, thereby accentuating the tragic sense of powerlessness in the face of war's destructive force.



**Figure 16.** The image of a woman in the work of Vlada Ralko (2013-2015)  
**Source:** V. Ralko (2019)

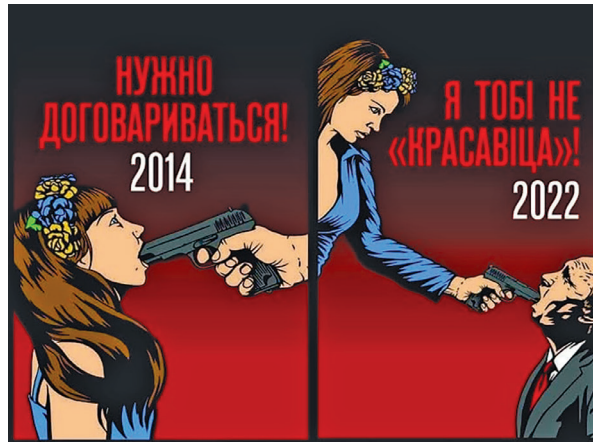
As the events of the war unfolded and Ukrainian resistance strengthened, the representation of women in graphic art underwent substantial transformations, reflecting a shift in societal perceptions of the female role during wartime (Biedarieva, 2024). Initially portrayed as a symbol of vulnerability and suffering, the female figure evolved into a powerful archetype of resistance, resilience, and active defiance. Figure 17 vividly illustrates this dynamic transformation. On the left, representing the year 2014, Ukraine is depicted as a young girl wearing a blue and yellow wreath, confronting a threat. The composition is marked by stillness, reinforcing a sense of powerlessness. On the right, reflecting 2022, the image of Ukraine changes dramatically; the passive victim is replaced by a resolute woman who dominates the scene, directing a weapon towards the aggressor. The visual composition adopts a diagonal and dynamic structure; the tilt of the body and the inclined perspective generate a forward-moving momentum, conveying the internal transformation of the female figure from a target of violence to an active participant in the struggle.

Colour also plays a pivotal role in shaping emotional perception. A dark background combined with a rich red creates a dramatic effect, emphasising the intensity of the scene. Red symbolises struggle, aggression, and revolutionary fervour, and when paired with black, it intensifies the impression of determination and the inevitability of change. The contrast between the blue and yellow wreath and the dark background reinforces associations with Ukrainian national identity, which remains constant across both images despite the radical change in role.

Contemporary Ukrainian graphic art engages actively with the historical visual tradition of propaganda posters, reinterpreting it in the context of modern challenges, particularly war and the fight for national

identity. While the female figure in classic twentieth-century propaganda posters primarily represented support on the home front, in Ukrainian design, the figure

acquires new meaning, reflecting the active involvement of women in armed resistance. A comparison of two posters (Fig. 18) clearly illustrated this transformation.



**Figure 17.** Evolution of the image of Ukraine in contemporary graphic art

Source: H. Lubenets (2022)



**Figure 18.** Reinterpretation of Second World War propaganda in contemporary Ukrainian graphic art

Source: D. Romanov (2022)

The British propaganda poster “Women of Britain come into the factories” from 1941 depicts a woman as a worker providing essential resources to the army. Her pose is dynamic, highlighting the heroism of labour. The warm colour palette, combining red and yellow tones, conveys a sense of stability and inspiration, consistent with the rhetoric of wartime mobilisation art of that period. In contrast, the 2022 poster “Women of Ukraine aid the war effort” reimagines this iconography by rejecting classical compositional schemes. The central female figure is presented in a posture that emphasises personal strength. Rather than portraying conventional factory work, the woman is shown actively engaging with the realities of war, rescuing injured animals from a combat zone. This reference imbues the image with a sense of authenticity.

The colour strategy of the poster is deliberately contrasting and expressive. Cool blue-green tones in the background sharply clash with yellow fiery highlights,

evoking national symbolism. The use of expressionist stylistic elements combined with aspects of social realism intensifies the drama of the composition. The tension of the lines and emphasis on the silhouette’s expressiveness establish an emotional connection with the viewer, inviting participation in a visual discourse that extends beyond traditional propaganda.

The poster “Liberation” (2022) serves as a stylistic homage to a 1942 French propaganda poster symbolising the liberation of France from Nazi occupation (Fig. 19). Its compositional structure nearly mirrors the original, with a female figure raising arms against a backdrop of light to signify triumph, renewal, and victory. However, the contemporary version is imbued with new symbols and meanings, tailored to the Ukrainian context. The central figure is depicted in a blue and yellow dress that directly references the Ukrainian flag, reinforcing national identity. The background also underwent reinterpretation. While the French version

remained minimalist, with a crowd depicted in the midground, the modern version incorporates greater

narrative depth, showing architectural elements and a larger group of people in the background.



**Figure 19.** Reinterpretation of Second World War propaganda in contemporary Ukrainian graphic art  
**Source:** D. Romanov (2022)

These examples illustrated how contemporary Ukrainian graphic art is capable of transforming classical visual codes into new, contextually relevant artistic statements. The use of expressive colour schemes, symbolism, dynamic poses, and stylistic references to twentieth-century war graphics produces a powerful emotional impact that bridges historical experience with contemporary struggle.

A clear illustration of the full integration of women into the military sphere is the poster “Joint front!” (2022), which portrays women as equals to men in a united effort (Fig. 20). The compositional structure is based on forward motion, symbolising unity, determination, and coordinated action among various participants in the resistance – soldiers, medics, engineers, volunteers, and civilians. The positioning of the characters conveys a strong sense of momentum, reinforcing the idea of collective progress towards a shared goal.

The image of a woman takes on a fundamentally new meaning, functioning not as a separate symbol but as an integral part of the collective front. Her position alongside male figures emphasises gender equality and the active participation of women in the military, technological and strategic spheres. Holding a drone – one of the key symbols of modern military technology – represents the evolving role of women in intelligence and tactical operations, reflecting the broader transformation of 21<sup>st</sup> century warfare. The styling of the figure, using sharp lines and clear contours, reinforces the sense of tension, focus and readiness for action.

The colour scheme of the poster is based on a contrast between a dark background and vivid accents. The deep yellow of the title “Joint front!” functions as a visual marker that captures attention, while the use of dark blue and greenish hues reinforces associations

with military aesthetics. The sharp outlines and graphic style, reminiscent of comic book art, contribute to the image’s dynamic quality and heroic narrative. A key compositional device involves the variation of size and positioning among the figures: those in the foreground appear larger, while those placed higher are rendered smaller. This approach intensifies the effect of perspective and collective movement, resulting in a balanced composition in which each figure symbolises a distinct aspect of the struggle, while collectively forming a united front of resistance. In this way, “Joint front!” not only visualises the contemporary transformation of women’s roles in the military context but also affirms their position as an essential element of the multidimensional national resistance.



**Figure 20.** The united front as a symbol of societal resistance in contemporary Ukrainian graphic art  
**Source:** A. Yermolenko (2025)

Contemporary Ukrainian graphic design increasingly engages with the visual tradition of allegorical personification of the state through the female figure – an approach rooted in deep cultural codes and historical archetypes. The featured illustrations exemplify

this tendency, combining traditional ethnic motifs with military symbolism to forge a newly canonised image of the woman as both warrior and guardian. This dual role positions her as an ideological symbol of national resistance (Fig. 21).



**Figure 21.** Personification of Ukraine through the image of a warrior woman in contemporary war art  
**Source:** R. Chaliy (2022), L. Pinko (2023)

Both works are characterised by centralised compositions in which the female figure occupies a dominant visual role. The first illustration conveys grace and strength through a poised yet determined stance, evocative of classical depictions of the goddess of victory, Nike. The white attire contrasts with red elements of traditional dress, symbolising readiness for battle, while the golden halo and floral wreath add a sacred dimension, imbuing the image with qualities of divine protection. The Ukrainian flag in the background contributes a sense of dynamism and reinforces national identity. In the second artwork, a more expressive visual language is employed. Saturated, contrasting colours, prominent flames, and stark symbolism such as skulls, underscore themes of righteous vengeance and unyielding struggle. The woman appears in a militant pose reminiscent of the goddess Kali, introducing a sense of dynamism to the composition. A shield bearing the Tryzub represents national defence, while the two-headed dead bird in hand alludes to the enemy's national symbol. The composition utilises concentric lines to generate a sense of tension.

The graphic strategies employed in both images demonstrated a synthesis of realism, contemporary digital painting, and mythologisation, positioning the female figure not only as an active participant in events but also as an ideological emblem of resistance. The use of vivid highlights, expressive colour schemes, and dynamic compositional structures contributes to the development of a contemporary visual code that merges traditional national motifs with contemporary military aesthetics.

Alongside the archetypes of the warrior-woman and the woman-as-state, contemporary Ukrainian graphic design also actively engages with the archetype of the woman as guardian, mother, and saint (Sinchenko, 2023). Within this context, one of the key artistic strategies is the reimagining of the traditional image of the Mother of God within a wartime framework. For instance, the artwork “Kyiv Madonna” fuses sacred aesthetics with the harsh realities of war (Fig. 22). The image of a mother and child taking refuge in a metro station from bombardment acquires religious connotations through the presence of a halo, stylised as a map of the Kyiv underground system. This functions not only as a visual symbol of safety but also as a profound artistic expression of the spiritual dimension of motherhood as a fortress and final sanctuary in times of war. The tonal composition, balance of light and shadow, and minimalistic colour palette create a sense of calm amid the destructive backdrop.

Another illustration that resonates with religious motifs is the image of the Mother of God holding a portable anti-tank missile system, the Javelin (Fig. 23). This depiction blends iconographic stylistics with elements of military symbolism. The artist adopts the classical visual code of Christian icons, incorporating soft lines, a frontally positioned figure, and traditional elements such as the halo and garments evocative of religious frescoes. However, the central semantic shift lies in the weapon held by the woman, which radically alters the standard interpretation of the image. The colour palette is based on a harmonious combination of green and blue hues, accented with yellow,

particularly in reference to national symbolism. The depiction of a sacred Orthodox figure bearing arms produces a visually charged juxtaposition that evokes both a sense of protection and military readiness. The artistic device of replacing the child with a weapon symbolises a transformation in traditional conceptions of women's roles during wartime. In this context, the woman is not only a guardian of life but also an active participant in the struggle.



**Figure 22.** The sacralised image of the woman as mother in contemporary Ukrainian war art  
**Source:** Head of the UGCC... (2022)



**Figure 23.** Iconographic representation of the woman as a symbol of national resistance in contemporary Ukrainian art  
**Source:** About “Bogoroditsa with Javelin”... (2022)

Contemporary Ukrainian graphic design increasingly adopts a minimalist aesthetic, merging satirical elements with symbolic contrast to produce striking visual messages (Fig. 24). The presented illustration is constructed on the principle of antithesis, achieved through the juxtaposition of two female figures, their attributes, poses, and stylistic treatments. This compositional technique enables the artist to emphasise not

only differing social roles but also the conceptual evolution of the image of woman in Ukrainian society under the conditions of war.



**Figure 24.** A satirical visual representation of the role of women in the military contexts of Ukraine and Russia  
**Source:** O. Grekhov (2023)

The composition is structured symmetrically, with each figure occupying an equal portion of the visual space, thereby establishing a clear sense of balance. The woman on the left is depicted in a civilian guise with a relaxed posture; colour palette is soft and pastel, evoking associations with passivity and neutrality. In contrast, the female soldier on the right is distinguished by a defined and assertive silhouette. The symbolism of the military uniform and the positioning of the weapon evoke associations with agency, decisiveness, and strength. The colour background remains muted and natural, ensuring the viewer's focus remains on the central conceptual message. The absence of depth and shadow is characteristic of digital poster graphics and contributes to the overall stylised, poster-like quality of the work. The inclusion of textual elements enhances legibility and draws the viewer's attention to the satirical and socio-political commentary embedded within the image.

Contemporary Ukrainian graphic design underwent a profound transformation of traditional visual codes and archetypes. Whereas earlier representations portrayed women predominantly as victims of warfare, artists increasingly shifted towards depictions of strong, determined participants in resistance. This trend reflects a broader socio-cultural shift in the perception of women's roles during wartime, as evidenced by the research of S. Saiedzh (2025). Nevertheless, the integration of traditional sacred motifs into the wartime visual discourse is evident, manifesting through the use of religious symbolism, allegories of national struggle, and the personification of Ukraine in the form of a female figure.

The analysis of wartime graphics demonstrated the persistence of key aesthetic principles despite technological advancements. As noted by E. Perzycka-Borowska *et al.* (2023), heightened expression, strong chromatic contrasts, and compositional tension are defining features of wartime art. Contemporary Ukrainian designers effectively adapted these principles within the digital environment, thereby enhancing the communicative effectiveness of the works. Minimalism plays a substantial role in this transformation, often combined with a satirical approach, particularly in socially critical illustrations that serve to reinterpret prevailing narratives and contribute to the formation of a new visual code of resistance culture.

A notable feature of recent graphic design is its engagement with gender-equal narratives. Unlike the wartime graphics of the twentieth century, in which women were often depicted as figures of rear-line support or allegorical symbols, contemporary Ukrainian designers emphasise women's active roles in military, volunteer, and humanitarian spheres. This approach is consistent with the findings of N.S. Udrys-Borodavko (2022), who observed that such imagery not only highlights the contributions of women to the war effort but also fosters a re-evaluation of traditional gender roles within the context of conflict.

The utilisation of historical archetypes within contemporary graphic art also proves significant. Findings indicate that Ukrainian design maintains a connection with classical poster-making techniques while adapting them to new technological conditions. As noted by K. Fahlenbrach (2025), the fusion of traditional symbols with digital stylistics results in visually compelling and conceptually rich imagery with high mobilisational potential. Colour plays a vital role in this process: the use of red, black, white, and blue-yellow hues enhances the emotional intensity and visual expressiveness of the artworks. Thus, the analysis of artistic strategies and visual mechanisms within Ukrainian wartime graphics allows for the identification of key approaches to the sacralisation of the female figure and its role in shaping collective consciousness. The findings offer insights into the characteristics of this phenomenon and underscore its cultural and symbolic importance in the context of wartime art.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrated that female image sacralisation in Ukrainian wartime graphics constitutes a long-standing tradition, one that adapts in response to historical and sociocultural contexts. This tradition is grounded in the use of symbolic codes, artistic techniques, and compositional strategies that contribute to the creation of a sacred symbol of national struggle. Graphic works across different periods consistently employed personification, mythologisation, and allegorical motifs, all of which shape a visual language

aimed at reinforcing collective identity and mobilising society.

The analysis of wartime graphics from the First and Second World Wars indicated distinctive features in the sacralisation of the female image across artistic traditions. In French and American graphic art, the female figure embodied ideals of liberty and national greatness through centred compositions, dynamic postures, and contrasting applications of light and shadow. In contrast, Russian and German visual cultures were marked by sacred motifs emphasising the mystical and spiritual dimensions of the conflict. Ukrainian graphic art, particularly the works of Olena Kulchytska, exhibited expressionist approaches, enhancing emotional resonance through dramatic compositions and high colour contrast. During the Second World War, Soviet graphic art constructed the sacralised female image through monumental compositions, vivid colour contrasts, and clearly structured diagonal arrangements. Ukrainian wartime graphics, shaped within the Soviet tradition, integrated elements of academic realism with propagandistic stylisation. Meanwhile, underground art tended to rely on archetypal representations that symbolised struggle and sacrifice.

Contemporary Ukrainian graphic design continues the tradition of sacralising the female image, while transforming it in line with new technological and artistic possibilities. Static allegorical figures have given way to dynamic compositions, bold colour schemes, and the fusion of digital and traditional techniques. A considerable development is the incorporation of sacred motifs into the visual language of resistance. The personification of Ukraine through the female figure is achieved by means of iconographic compositional canons, strategic lighting accents, ornamental details, and golden hues. Such an approach enables the creation of symbolically rich works that merge historical continuity with contemporary artistic innovation. The principal limitation of this study lies in its focus on official wartime graphics, whereas alternative artistic initiatives, underground art, and unofficial propaganda remain insufficiently explored. Moreover, reconstructing the artistic intentions of the creators proves challenging due to the absence of direct testimonies, which may affect the accuracy of interpretation.

Future research may concentrate on digital war art, particularly its operation within social media, digital art, and interactive design. A promising area involves comparative analysis between Ukrainian wartime graphics and similar practices in other countries, which could illuminate shared artistic trends and distinctive features within the visual culture of resistance. In addition, examining typographic and compositional strategies in wartime graphics and their influence on audience perception represents a relevant area of inquiry. Further development of this subject is likely to contribute to a broader understanding of the role visual

narratives play during times of war and their impact on collective memory and social processes.

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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## **Сакралізація образу жінки у воєнні періоди в Україні та відображення цього явища у графічних творах**

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**Анотація.** Метою дослідження був аналіз мистецьких стратегій і візуальних механізмів сакралізації жіночого образу у воєнній графіці України, зокрема у плакатах, гравюрах та ілюстраціях часів світових воєн і сучасних збройних конфліктів. Дослідження розкрило художні засоби, символіку та іконографічні традиції, що формують сакральний вимір жіночої репрезентації у воєнному мистецтві. Методологічний підхід ґрунтувався на систематичному аналізі художніх прийомів, композиційних рішень, колористичних стратегій та стилістичних особливостей творів. Отримані результати засвідчили, що сакралізація жіночого образу в українській воєнній графіці ґрунтувалася на використанні усталених візуальних кодів, що еволюціонували під впливом соціально-культурних та технічних змін у мистецтві. Порівняльний аналіз українських, радянських, німецьких, французьких та британських графічних матеріалів дозволив визначити ключові тенденції у зображенні жіночого образу, зокрема його героїзацію, наділення міфологічними та релігійними рисами, а також використання художніх засобів для формування національної ідентичності. У сучасному українському графічному дизайні відбулася глибока трансформація сакрального жіночого образу, що проявляється у відході від традиційних алегоричних схем на користь експресивних і персоналізованих візуальних рішень. Жіноча постать дедалі частіше зображується не лише як символ нації чи берегиня, а як рівноправна учасниця бойових дій, що змінює візуальний наратив воєнного мистецтва. Колористичні рішення у сучасних плакатах використовують поєднання синьо-жовтих, червоно-чорних і контрастних монохромних схем, що підсилюють емоційний ефект зображень. Активно застосовуються цифрові технології, що дозволяють інтегрувати традиційні графічні техніки з новими візуальними стратегіями, такими як динамічні композиції, анімаційні елементи та адаптація іконографічних мотивів до сучасного контексту. Дослідження засвідчило, що сакралізація жіночого образу у графічному мистецтві досягається через поєднання традиційних символів, новітніх візуальних стратегій та адаптацію історичних архетипів до сучасного контексту. Візуальна репрезентація жінки у воєнному мистецтві продовжує еволюціонувати, інтегруючи нові стилістичні засоби та художні концепції, що розширює можливості комунікації та впливу графічного дизайну у контексті національної ідентичності та культурного спротиву

**Ключові слова:** плакатне мистецтво; художня репрезентація; колористика; стилістичні особливості; візуальна семіотика; іконографія; графічний дизайн



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## Stylistic features of Western ceramics in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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**Abstract.** This study aimed to present and offer a comparative analysis of ceramic artworks – primarily porcelain – produced by Western artists in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a focus on identifying common stylistic features. The research methodology incorporated classification, art-historical analysis (including figurative-stylistic and formal approaches), and comparative analysis. The inductive method was applied to examine specific elements and details of the selected ceramic works. A historical and cultural perspective made it possible to trace changes in both the formal qualities of the pieces and the evolving consciousness of the artists and porcelain manufacturers who produced them. The article features artistic works created by prominent ceramic artists from Western Europe and North America during the specified period. The analysis of pieces by G. Locatelli, A. Reyley, M.R. Fischer, and V. Hegarty, among others – mainly crafted in porcelain – revealed recurring and comparable stylistic traits among artists working on different continents. A notable inclination towards the deconstruction of surface and form emerged as a defining characteristic of this period, echoing developments in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century painting. Destruction and fragmentation have stood out as dominant themes in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The artist served as a chronicler of history, inscribing it into material form. The tendency towards destruction was not only affirmed but also preserved by the oldest porcelain manufacturers in Europe: the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, Augarten in Vienna, and the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Berlin. Founded during the period when porcelain was regarded as “white gold”, these institutions provide their facilities and technological resources to showcase the spirit of a new age. This shift reflects not only an awareness of contemporary trends but an acceptance of the realities they express – destruction and anti-form. For the first time, a comparative analysis has been conducted, identifying shared stylistic features in the ceramic works of Western artists from the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some of which have been presented by Europe's most renowned porcelain manufactories. The practical value of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the theoretical shaping of a new, major artistic style. The comparative approach and resulting conclusions may be of use to research institutions in the development of scholarly and methodological resources, academic curricula, and lecture courses on the history of stylistic developments and contemporary decorative and applied arts

**Keywords:** ceramic works; porcelain; Chris Antemann; Graziano Locatelli; Annette Messenger; Anselm Reyle; Michael R.-Fischer

### INTRODUCTION

Decorative and applied arts, as a branch of art, respond to changes in eras, tastes, and trends. The study of artistic styles enables a deeper understanding and appreciation of the “spirit of the age” not only in architecture but also in everyday objects. By observing characteristic details, colours, and forms, and by understanding the historical context, specialists can attribute artworks and determine the century in which an object was created or which the artist was trying

to recreate. Recording contemporary forms and popular colours is a necessary component of an expert catalogue for future researchers. Considering that a major style develops over decades and spans multiple countries, contemporary art historians should make efforts to document as comprehensively as possible the artistic explorations of artists in various materials and across different regions, taking into account national influences.

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Ukrainian researchers have focused on studying the activities of major manufacturers and the work of individual figures within the country. Researchers O. Korus & M. Kozak (2023) detailed the history of the porcelain industry in Polonne, incorporating new archival materials, and presented an expanded database of biographies of sculptors who worked at the Polonne Artistic Ceramics Factory in Ukraine. O. Korus (2024) explored the biographies of specific Ukrainian porcelain artists, highlighting the diversity of their creative output and introducing these artists to the global community. Simultaneously, L. Karpinska-Romaniuk & T. Sazonova (2024) dedicated a monograph to the artist O. Zhnykrup. Both studies complement each other, providing a detailed account of the artistic contributions of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Ukrainian porcelain artist and offering valuable information for collectors.

L. Karpinska-Romaniuk (2023), having gathered archival materials and drawing on the recollections of contemporaries, published a study dedicated to the activities of the Korosten Porcelain Factory, its craftspeople, and their products. Ukrainian porcelain researcher O. Shkolna (2022) also focused on a 20<sup>th</sup>-century artist whose designs were implemented in production at the aforementioned factory – A. Zhdanova. The author emphasised that the artist's works can be identified by her distinctive artistic style and signature. The contemporary Ukrainian artist of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Ye. Ovcharyk is the subject of an article by M. Lampeka (2022), which highlighted the ceramic artist's originality, echoes of folk art, and national connections. S. Volska (2019) also wrote about Ye. Ovcharyk, a Ternopil artist seen as a bearer of Ukrainian traditions and distinctiveness, in conference proceedings.

The aforementioned Ukrainian porcelain researchers, despite having a significant collection of materials on Ukrainian ceramic artists, have not compared them or drawn parallels with foreign artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to understand commonalities and differences within the described time period. The emphasis has primarily been on a thorough cataloguing of the works of individual figures. Western ceramic explorations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century remain outside the scope of interest for the Ukrainian art historical community. A significant body of contemporary literature focuses on Eastern porcelain. The leading figures in the study of porcelain are not only adding new archival information in their latest research but are also examining porcelain from fresh perspectives. For example, the historian of East Asian culture, K. Chen (2023) has presented a new way of looking at ceramic vessels – as tools of global empires and a form of visual propaganda for ruling dynasties.

Analysis of Western porcelain production in recent decades has often been carried out by the craftspeople themselves, as seen in the research of B. Hunt (2003), as well as by academics who have dedicated

monographs to individual artists, such as G. Adamson *et al.* (2022). Artists' websites have also served as an important source of information, showcasing and describing their latest projects, for instance, Valerie Hegarty (n.d.). Similarly, Graziano Locatelli (n.d.) actively promotes his own work and is open to contact and discussion about his creative explorations. In contrast, the professional website of Michael R.-Fischer (n.d.) functions more like a business card and does not fully represent the scope of the artist's activities.

In the contemporary art world, the artist is no longer just a practitioner but also a theorist, capable not only of describing the creative process, which has often been overlooked by art historians but also of explaining the artistic intention without unnecessary additional layers of interpretation. New technological processes in ceramic production, as well as improved recipes for clays and glazes, which were detailed by P. Lane (2003), have also received attention. The book by M. Graves *et al.* (2023) presented ceramics as an artefact. The work not only described the art history of clay objects, materials, and manufacturing methods but also made comparisons and traced the characteristic features of works by artists from different continents. The study covered a highly relevant topic – the art of Africa; it described the 2019 Munich exhibition where curators presented a collection of African ceramics within the context of global design rather than as specifically African objects. This kind of analysis positively influences the understanding of current trends.

Just as the reflections of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century French “postmodernist” philosophers were summarised by American scholars, today, it is American researchers who focus on data collection, analysis, and the creation of certain generalisations. The emphasis is largely placed on the commercial aspect, specifically the audience of collectors, which leads to the selection and analysis of the most investment-worthy items, as observed in the research of P. Atterbury *et al.* (1999) and D. Akimov (2024). For instance, G.R. Brown (2009), an elected member of the International Academy of Ceramics in Geneva and a Professor at Kansas State University, made his own selection from 8,000 works and conducted an analytical description of 500 contemporary ceramic sculptures.

This study aimed to present contemporary European (German, Italian, French) and American ceramic artists and their works, to trace common stylistic features characteristic of these objects, and to investigate current trends in the products of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the main objectives of the research was to initiate discussion and conduct a comparative analysis of decorative and applied arts, specifically ceramic works, from the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century from Western European and American countries, where, according to E. Gombrich (2024), artists are not held back by the weight of tradition.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methods, aligned with the aim and objectives, involved drawing upon a broad range of scientific frameworks. The methodology included classification, art historical analysis (covering imagery, style, and form), and comparative analysis. To conduct this research, the author undertook a series of trips, which are periodically necessary for any scholar working in the field of art history to understand contemporary trends and changes. During a visit to the National Ceramics Museum in Sèvres (France) in the early 2000s, attention was drawn to the particular features of the exhibited works by contemporary ceramic artists. The exhibition did not have an overarching title, but the characteristic design elements and stylistic features indicated a certain ideological direction.

During a visit to the first European porcelain manufacturer in Meissen (Germany) and its museum in 2018, attention was paid to the nature of the exhibited works. The works of Chris Antemann, Anselm Reyle, and Arlene Shechet, created in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, revealed common features in the expression of certain emotional and stylistic motifs when subjected to comparative analysis. The use of the historical-cultural method allowed for analogies to be drawn with artistic processes of past centuries, as well as for tracing key changes in the forms of artworks, the creative approach of artists, and the activities of porcelain manufacturers. The contextual method facilitated a deeper understanding of the artists' vision within the contemporary cultural environment.

Further visits to ceramics museums in Berlin (Royal Porcelain Factory, KPM), Vienna (Imperial Porcelain Manufactory, Augarten), and other European cities in the 2020s allowed for a comparative analysis, comparing the work of different artists in varying geographical locations but within the same time frame. Photo documentation of all objects and sub-

sequent work with archival materials aided further research. The systematic method and the method of classification helped to comprehensively organise the ceramic objects into groups according to the objectives of this study. The biographical method, along with observation and modelling, was used for a better understanding and portrayal of 21<sup>st</sup>-century artists. The stylistic features of the porcelain pieces were determined using figurative-stylistic and formal analyses of the works, as well as methods of abstraction and deduction. Based on general information about art styles, attention was focused on fragments, details, and colour palettes that might indicate common features potentially characteristic of the emergence of a new artistic style or movement. The method of observation and logical conclusions helped to trace the key trends shaping contemporary art.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For centuries, humans have been creating ceramic objects for both religious rituals and purely practical use. The European discovery of the secret to porcelain paste initiated a new stage in the ceramic process and expanded the material basis for creating highly artistic objects. Just as it did three hundred years ago, Europe's first porcelain factory in Meissen continues to operate and present new ideas and explorations by contemporary artists. It was the 2018 exhibition at the Porcelain Museum in Meissen (Germany) and the contemporary works displayed there that inspired the author to analyse the activities of ceramic artists in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the 2018 exhibition, the Meissen porcelain manufacturer presented an art object made from a large quantity of damaged porcelain tableware (Fig. 1). Vessels of the same design, bearing the Meissen factory mark, were piled one upon another, giving the impression of factory rejects being displayed to the visitor.



**Figure 1.** Untitled, 2011

**Source:** author's photo, art object by A. Reyle (2025)

A similar “construction” can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, where, in the section on the history and technology of ceramic production, 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch earthenware plates are displayed which, during the firing process, fell and fused together into a single object. Such pieces are presented as manufacturing waste or flawed items (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Kiln waster. Netherlands, Delft, 1655-1670.  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
**Source:** author’s photo

The work displayed in the Meissen Porcelain Museum is not a factory defect but rather an artwork created in 2011 by the renowned German artist A. Reyle (2025) in collaboration with the Meissen manufactory (Reyle – Meissen). A. Reyle (born 1970) works with various materials, and his conceptual approach is sought after by numerous well-known manufacturers of decorative and interior design items, as well as clothing and accessory brands. The piece exhibited in the Meissen Museum was also noted by the Gagosian Gallery in Athens, where it was displayed at the end of 2011 (Gagosian Gallery, 2011). The theme of decline as an inevitable stage of cultural development can be traced in both the classical forms of the first European porcelain tableware and the architecture of Ancient Greece. Despite the fact that porcelain production continues to function and create new forms, the artist, through the lens of their own artistic interpretation, records the general trends of the time. In this context, the material component plays a secondary role, while the conceptual content and symbolic meaning come to the forefront. The demonstration of the work in Athens acquired particular semantic weight, although the porcelain sculpture itself was not created specifically for that space. Professional gallery owners sensed the prevailing trends of the time, successfully selecting relevant works, among which was the porcelain “sculpture”.

A. George (2017) draws attention to the specific characteristics of the artist’s work, noting that many of A. Reyle’s utilitarian pieces cannot actually fulfil their

functional purpose because each one has a deliberate flaw, such as a crack or gap, so obvious that it places these objects within the realm of art. The artist himself emphasises that art always tells something about the time in which it was created (Hanschke, 2021). Alongside A. Reyle, the exhibition in Meissen also featured several works by female artists: Chris Antemann (n.d.) and A. Shechet *et al.* (2015). The work of American ceramic artist A. Shechet echoes the piece by A. Reyle but is not as bold: the artist uses the form of a classic Meissen vase from previous centuries and decorates it with damaged, broken elements of tableware and other layers of indeterminate shape (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Huge Vase Blue. Meissen, 2013  
**Source:** author’s photo

By hand-painting the created object, the artist begins to position it as a transformation of ordinary utilitarian items into an element of luxury (Shechet *et al.*, 2015). The author of this article, as an art historian, uses this example, analyses the context, and draws parallels with other works from this period. A. Carlini (2012) highlighted that some artists create works subconsciously, which moves into the realm of empirical research methods. The porcelain sculpture by Chris Antemann (n.d.) had completely different forms: it presented groups of nude and semi-nude figures at a banquet table, characteristic of the artist’s work (Fig. 4).

As J. Pasquier (2021) noted, the cult of the image that defines a century is a valuable indicator of mentality, tastes, and lifestyle. This involves a certain poetics and, at the same time, amorality, decadent aestheticism, and a “fin de siècle” feeling that expresses an apocalyptic sense of the end of a phase of civilisation, something already encountered in world history a century ago, before the start of the First World War (Wilson & Lack, 2016). Around this same time, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a flourishing of “ceramic destruction” also occurred in the work of the Italian artist G. Locatelli (born 1977). In 2005, the artist first turned to ceramic tiles, work which effectively became his

hallmark (Fig. 5). G. Locatelli's ceramic works of the 2010s are characterised by the concept of destruction as an artistic device, expressed through the deformation of the surface and the fragmentation of form. His practice begins with the deconstruction of a conventional

wall laid with ceramic tiles, continues with depictions of the earth's crust fracturing, and culminates in a series of ceramic portraits. In this context, destruction acts not only as a physical process but also as a metaphor for the breakdown of staticity, ideals, and idols.



**Figure 4.** Feast and Folly (from different angles). Meissen, 2015

Source: author's photo



**Figure 5.** Inquietudine, 2005

Source: from Graziano Locatelli (n.d.)

The ceramic portrait of Giordano Bruno (2019), created using a surface cracking technique, visually recreates the process of decay, creating the illusion of inevitable tile crumbling (Fig. 6). However, within the context of contemporary art, to which G. Locatelli aligns himself, the primary role is played not by the material but by the conceptual content. In his work, Graziano Locatelli (n.d.) has not only managed to convey his own artistic intention but also to interpret one of G. Bruno's philosophical ideas about monads, which do not disappear but merely change their configuration through processes of connection and disconnection. In this context, the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century emerges as a period of disconnection.

G. Locatelli's ceramic works with fractures conceptually echo the work of Italian artist Lucio Fontana, who, as early as the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, used slashes and holes to open up new dimensions in his works (Crispolti & Barbero, 2023). His approach did not serve as an act of completion but, on the contrary, symbolised infinity and the extension of space beyond the canvas. Similar principles can be traced in contemporary ceramic art. If, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, G. Locatelli's works show an attempt to "break through" the density of the material, then in the 2010s, the destruction becomes more radical – the form disintegrates, focusing attention on the processes of deconstruction and decay (Fig. 7).



**Figure 6.** Giordano Bruno, 2019  
Source: from Graziano Locatelli (n.d.)



**Figure 7.** Fratture ricomposte 1, 2013  
Source: from Graziano Locatelli (n.d.)

The artist himself compares this to a mosaic, from whose elements a new reality will be born. Towards the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a “rebirth” does indeed occur, and a new series of works emerges with the addition of wood as an element of life (Fig. 8). Creation through destruction is a necessary process of evolution.



**Figure 8.** Broken 1, 2019  
Source: from Graziano Locatelli (n.d.)

Contemporary artists sense the instability and fragility of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, acknowledging the inevitability of destruction. However, Graziano Locatelli (n.d.), influenced by Eastern philosophy, sees the possibility of rebirth and the restoration of wholeness. His work draws on the principles of the Japanese art of *kintsugi*, in which fragments form a new aesthetic, and imperfection becomes part of beauty. Traditional Japanese restoration uses lacquer based on natural tree sap, whereas, in the Italian artist’s works, nature also acts as a unifying element, symbolising the ability of life to grow even through cracks and chaos.

Turning to the oldest European porcelain manufacturers, it is worth noting that in the exhibition hall of the Royal Porcelain Factory in Berlin in 2023, amongst works from the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a porcelain object from 2007 by German designer Michael Rautenberg Fischer (born 1941) was displayed (Communal Gallery Berlin, n.d.). The piece consists of interconnected, plastically deformed porcelain elements arranged on a stepped pedestal (Fig. 9). Regular, geometric, symbolic steps lead to a completely informal central composition. In the decorative and applied arts, even among such classic manufacturers, conceptualism is beginning to prevail, requiring the artist’s commentary.



**Figure 9.** Fontana di Orso. Berlin, 2007  
Source: author’s photo

Michael R.-Fischer (n.d.), in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, created objects that echoed the works of other artists, exploring the theme of destruction and transformation. The title of his works (of which several were created), *Gebrochenes Wies*, which translates from German as Broken White, reflects the concept of his art. Broken fragments of white porcelain are assembled into static objects, one version of which, in its form, resembles a ship (Fig. 10). However, this is merely the viewer’s interpretation, who, relying on established visual codes, seeks to recognise the familiar within the chaos of fragments. While 19<sup>th</sup>-century art celebrated

the romance of ruins, modernity appears as a radical destruction of familiar forms. The collected fragments record the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, reflecting its fragmented and unstable nature.



**Figure 10.** Gebrochenes Wies. Berlin, 2008  
Source: from Michael R. Fischer (n.d.)

“Cracked portraits” made from ceramics also appeared in the works of Valerie Hegarty (born 1967) towards the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Her series of portraits of George Washington, from 2017-2018, demonstrated the transience and destruction of everything: people, ideals, and materials (Fig. 11).



**Figure 11.** George Washington, Cracked. USA, 2018  
Source: from Valerie Hegarty (n.d.)

In 2018, the artist presented a series of glazed ceramic works on the theme of vanitas: *Dead Tulips with Roots, Bloom and Gloom*, and *Dead Dutch Flowers*, featuring colourful, glazed ceramic flowers that appeared to have withered in a vase. The work *Broken Rosebush* resembles a ceramic jigsaw puzzle and presents pieces of a once unified object assembled on a single surface. The buds and flowers are still whole, but the branches and roots are torn apart; even if reassembled, a true revival of what was is no longer possible. These “melting flowers” can be compared to the sculptural works of

N. Azevedo (2025), who, in the early 2000s, displayed a series of human figures made of ice melting before the eyes of viewers in various cities around the world.

The theme of the fleeting nature of existence at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was also reflected in the work of ceramic artists who presented their pieces in 2018 at an exhibition in the Manufacture and National Ceramics Museum in Sèvres. Indeed, the works presented by Myriam Mechita (n.d.), created in 2010, consist of porcelain skulls placed on glazed ceramic tree trunks, devoid of branches and leaves. In one piece, a skull is pierced by classic plates from the Sèvres Royal Manufactory. This same theme continues on the decorative vases of the aforementioned manufacturer: in 2021, three female artists (Ulla von Brandenburg, Hélène Delprat, and Annette Messenger) collaborated on a project to create and decorate Sèvres pieces. Referring to Gothic and Romanticism, “the devil is in the details”, noted C. Bois-Martin (2022) in his article, thereby confirming this general outline of the prevailing moods in artistic circles of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On the white monumental vase known as the *Grand Charpin* by A. Messenger (2021), two skulls are depicted in “classic”, porcelain-characteristic cobalt colours, joined together in the form of a heart, underscoring the paradoxes of modernity that humanity had already witnessed a century prior.

In the works of French artists working with porcelain, historical roots are very noticeable: Rococo and Mannerism lend a certain restraint to both the craftspeople and their creations. The emotional component is present, but it is more philosophical and not as “explosive” as seen in German and Italian artists, who already had a turbulent historical context underpinning their work. The principles of “destruction” are also very interesting to observe in Sèvres’ functional tableware, which, by its very purpose, did not give artists much room for creative manoeuvring. However, the graphic lines that “destroy” the surface do not create optical illusions – they are rather “straightforward” and simply symbolically cut and divide the tableware into sections. As an example, the artist François Morellet (1926-2016) presented a design on a plate in 2011 consisting of straight lines. The work, titled *Angel Wings*, was not simply black graphic lines intersecting at right angles on a white plate – it was a copy of a stained-glass window created by the artist, which in turn was inspired by the acute angle at the tip of an angel’s wing (Cernogora, 2020b). The philosophical interpretation of an angle as a dead end could fit into the destructive concept of early 21<sup>st</sup>-century art proposed by this research. One confirmation of the reflection of emotions and the spirit of the time in decorative and applied arts is the work of Annabelle d’Huart. This renowned artist, who presented the largest porcelain dinner service created by a woman for the Sèvres manufactory (Suire, 2021) – *Atlantis* (1996-2006) – is also interesting to study for

another of her works. The Ruhlmann Cup, a tribute to the form's creator, Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, comprised a pair (cup and saucer) with a design specifically created by the artist in 2005 (d'Huart, n.d.). In addition to the restrained colour decoration, thin, almost pencil-drawn lines are depicted on the white porcelain, creating the effect of cracks. What was previously concealed and considered a flaw or damage is brought to the surface, emphasised, and imitated. A. d'Huart compared the decoration of the Atlantis service to tectonic faults, reminiscent of the fragility of the earth (Suire, 2021), and this idea is also conveyed in the Ruhlmann set. According to A. Elkann (2018), the artist was aware of the fragility, impermanence, and vulnerability of the times and consciously conveyed this in her porcelain works.

The tendency towards destruction is a characteristic feature of art in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it takes on a new meaning, distinct from Gustav Metzger's "auto-destructive art" (Stiles, 2023), which was based on the ideas of action art, similar to the practices of Yves Klein. Contemporary destruction manifests more as a subconscious transformation with a negative connotation, reflecting a pull towards a black hole, a motif that has repeatedly appeared in art history. A. Reyle noted that his art resembles a film set where the works act as a backdrop, and humanity effectively creates this background of destruction, being its driving force. The dynamics of change in this process can be traced, for example, in the work of Michael R. Fischer (n.d.), who, after creating destructive compositions, turned to porcelain objects resembling interwoven threads. This is not an attempt to grasp "nothingness" or define the limits of emptiness, but rather a reflection of entanglement, indicating the impossibility of predicting the further development of artistic trends. The processes of contemporary art are too fleeting to be summarised or systematised; instead, only their recording within individual artistic practices remains possible.

The renowned Imperial Porcelain Manufactory in Vienna (Augarten), which has been operating for three hundred years and observing the changing styles and tastes (Augarten Porzellanmanufaktur Wien, 2024), installed a festive Christmas tree in its museum hall for the 2023-2024 holiday season, made from fragments of snow-white tableware bearing the manufactory's mark (Fig. 12). This could be called "porcelain Impressionism" – a recording of a moment and its feeling, conveyed through ceramic "dots". The "white gold" of the 18<sup>th</sup> century now plays a completely different function in the 21<sup>st</sup>.

The results of the conducted research were selectively presented at an international scientific conference (Reshetnova, 2023), marking the beginning of its discussion within the academic community. The topic presented for discussion is new within art history circles, as it encompasses contemporary ceramic art and a wide geographical area. Ukrainian art historians, as noted above, have mostly focused on Ukrainian artists

with the aim of education and promotion. V. Strilets *et al.* (2021) addressed the analysis of the development of the material environment of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries but focused on furniture design rather than ceramics. In their conclusions, the scholars provided rather generalised characteristics, noting that the design of decorative and applied arts (in the authors' case, furniture) should be considered directly in the context of the material environment, which reflects their own view and is characteristic of any period.



**Figure 12.** Porcelain Christmas Tree. Augarten, 2023  
**Source:** author's photo

The author's research on foreign artists has largely considered them within the context of their involvement in projects and collaborations with leading European manufacturers: those in Meissen, Vienna, Berlin, and Sèvres. Discussions, or rather announcements, took place in the mass media before and after the completion of these projects (the 2010s). The name of C. Antemann, following her collaboration with the Meissen manufactory, remained relevant in professional art historical discourse and was featured in publications by leading experts (Archer, 2014; Lutyens, 2018), as well as at exhibition events where her works were displayed within the Meissen context.

Notably, the curators of the *Homo Faber* Event, organised by the Michelangelo Foundation in Venice, D. Cameo (former director of the National Manufactory of Sèvres) and F. Bodet (former curator of contemporary collections at the National Ceramics Museum in Sèvres), commenting on their selection of exhibitors, emphasised the demonstration of different approaches to contemporary ceramic production (*Homo Faber* biennial & The virtuosos of porcelain, 2022). However, their aim was not to trace the stylistic features of the works but rather to identify commonalities and

differences between European and Asian (primarily Japanese) art. Antemann's characteristic compositions, which can be interpreted as "destructive bacchanalia" or, in E. King's (2022) definition, "fragmented absurd fantasy", are commissioned for museum collections.

In research concerning the most famous European manufacturers (which currently have their own museums or exhibition spaces), there is a greater tendency to focus on history and new attributions of pieces from past centuries. The work of contemporary artists, much like most of the news in lives, is captured as a flash and quickly replaced by the next piece of fresh information. Renowned researchers, on the other hand, work in a more conservative vein and primarily with archives. For example, one of the latest publications by A. Szkurlat (2024), known for her monograph on porcelain and faience production in Kores, is dedicated to Meissen porcelain and presents the manufactory's pieces in the museum collection of Warsaw Castle. The work is largely a catalogue with a comprehensive, almost inventory-like description of the objects. The researcher analysed individual depictions on the tableware and their origins. All the described items belong to previous centuries, but the researcher's work demonstrates professional cataloguing of porcelain objects, which is extremely necessary to do with the works of contemporary artists.

Contemporary exhibitions held at the Meissen Porcelain Museum are presented primarily informatively, as notes with brief commentaries, as indicated on the official Meissen Porcelain Museum website (2025), as well as on the online pages of the artists they collaborate with. A. Reyle (2025) provides exclusively illustrations without commentary or discussion, as confirmation of his collaborative work with the first German porcelain manufacturer. In his biographical information, as one of his latest monographs, the artist listed a gallery catalogue edited by the French art dealer and owner of the contemporary art gallery Opera Gallery – G. Dyan & J. Lahmi (2024). This highlighted the need for professional review and the insufficient amount of analysis. In November 2025, the Meissen Porcelain Foundation (Meissen Porzellan-Stiftung) planned a symposium, meeting, and discussion of the activities of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century artist J.G. Höroldt, who, in his time, developed a range of new enamel colours used for porcelain painting and gathered talented craftspeople around him, rather than contemporary artists.

Regarding 21<sup>st</sup>-century French artistic figures, the article by J. Cernogora (2020a), in describing new acquisitions of contemporary ceramics (identified as being from 1945 onwards) at the National Ceramics Museum in Sèvres, mentions a significant number of contemporary artists. However, only a few sentences provide information about the artists and a brief description of their works donated to the museum. J. Cernogora (2020a) also dedicated short articles to specific

objects and artists of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (F. Morellet, D. Montmollin, and others), in which a description of the works can be traced, but not a comparative analysis with artists from other countries.

The Viennese Augarten manufactory, excluding retrospective works and new attributions, is not examined in recent academic research from the perspective of searching for, creating, and analysing new forms, but primarily from a market, and marketing viewpoint. In the study by G. Bruckberger *et al.* (2023), the factory is considered solely as a successful brand, with the authors emphasising the role of "place", which plays an important role for consumers as it symbolically maintains a connection with past traditions. Philosophical perspectives on the "destruction" trend identified in the author's research can be traced in many works dedicated to the engagement with destruction by G. Metzger and his followers (Stiles, 2023). This theme, which was observed in the content and form of decorative and applied objects, is relevant in academic circles, where there is a renewed return to and engagement with the "destructive" thoughts and actions of figures from the last century. Researcher O. Şerban (2023) from the Centre for the History of Philosophical Ideas at the University of Bucharest, in her analysis of the metaphorical "liquid modernity", mentioned the sculptor M. Valdés, who also worked with broken porcelain. The scholar's research can be used as additional background for the analysis of the stylistic features of decorative and applied objects, but the author of this study sees more radical changes in forms, which are a prerequisite for a new stage and new philosophical reflections. In summarising the aforementioned, it is worth emphasising that the question of the stylistic features of Western porcelain in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires further, broader discussion.

## CONCLUSIONS

To analyse the stylistic features of ceramic works from the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the works of artists who collaborated with historically significant porcelain manufacturers were selected – the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, the former royal porcelain manufacturers of Berlin and Sèvres, and the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory of Vienna (Augarten). After an initial narrowing of the selection and a comparative analysis, the range of artists studied and the geography of their work were gradually expanded. Thus, the works of Chris Antemann, Graziano Locatelli, Annette Messenger, Myriam Mechita, François Morellet, Anselm Reyle, Michael R.-Fischer, Valerie Hegarty, Arlene Shechet, and Annabelle d'Huart were considered. The research included both small-scale sculptures and ordinary functional tableware.

As a result of the conducted research, it was possible to identify features characteristic of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which are reflected in specific

objects and generally in the work of the analysed artists. The tendency towards “destruction” is a characteristic sign of the times, evident in deliberately damaged pieces or the symbolism embedded in the decoration or form of objects. Common features of stillness and balance have been identified across all the selected works, even in cases of deliberate destruction and the absence of recognisable form; a division into graphic, asymmetrical elements that still retain a notional foundation and the basis upon which they were established, and an internal artistic connection. Thus, the ceramic works of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflect a process of destroying previous wholeness, deconstructing and breaking down established forms, which simultaneously opens up space for future explorations. The important question remains as to which direction art will take: will a radical rejection of traditions in the spirit of Dadaism, with an orientation towards new technologies and means of expression, prevail, or there will be a stage of “restoration” – a return to familiar forms and materials through the understanding and rebuilding of what has been lost.

Prospects for further research could focus on comparing the works of ceramic artists with the creations of sculptors using other materials, which would allow for the identification of commonalities and differences in approaches to shaping form. In particular, studying the theme of destruction in decorative and applied works made from various materials could become an important area of research. At the same time, art historians must record contemporary artistic explorations in order to form a palette of a major style in the future, reflecting the evolution of the plastic arts.

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## Стилістичні особливості західної кераміки першої чверті ХХІ ст.

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**Анотація.** Мета роботи полягала у презентації та компаративному аналізі керамічних творів (в основному – з порцеляни), виготовлених західними авторами у першій чверті ХХІ ст., та у виявленні спільних характерних стилістичних особливостей. Методологія дослідження включала класифікацію, мистецтвознавчий (образно-стилістичний і формальний) та порівняльний аналізи. При розгляді окремих елементів і деталей, представлених керамічних виробів, використовувався метод індукції. Історико-культурний метод дослідження допоміг простежити зміни, які відбулися у формах виробів та у свідомості митців й порцелянових мануфактур, які їх презентують. У статті представлено художні твори першої чверті ХХІ ст. відомих майстрів керамістів Західної Європи та Америки. Аналізуючи роботи Г. Локателлі, А. Райле, М.Р. Фішер, В. Хегарті та ін., виготовлені переважно з порцеляни, було простежено типові й подібні стилістичні особливості в працях авторів, які знаходились на різних континентах. Потяг до знищення площини та форми – ключова прикмета цього часового проміжку, яка апелювала до першої половини ХХ ст. у живописі. Руйнація – характерна ознака початку ХХІ століття. Митець – як фіксатор історії, викарбовував її у матеріалі. Тенденцію до знищення затвердили й музеєфікували найстаріші порцелянові виробництва Європи: порцелянова мануфактура у Майсені, Аугартен у Відні, Королівська порцелянова мануфактура у Берліні. Підприємства, засновані у період, коли порцеляна вважалася «білим золотом», надали свої площі й технологічні потужності для презентації віань нової епохи. Все це свідчило про розуміння та головне – прийняття тенденцій часу, які презентують його реалії – деструкцію та антиформу. Вперше зроблено порівняльний аналіз та простежено спільні стилістичні риси у керамічних роботах західних майстрів першої чверті ХХІ ст., частину з яких було презентовано найвідомішими фарфоровими мануфактурами Європи. Практична цінність дослідження полягала у можливості використання його результатів для теоретичного формування нового великого мистецького стилю. Порівняльний аналіз та висновки можуть бути використані науково-дослідними установами для формування науково-методичних посібників, навчальних програм та лекційних курсів з історії проблем стилів та сучасного декоративного-прикладного мистецтва

**Ключові слова:** керамічні вироби; фарфор; Кріс Антеманн; Граціано Локателлі; Аннет Мессаже; Ансельм Райле; Міхаель Р. Фішер



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## Implementation of elements of traditional art in the creation of a contemporary fashion collection

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the study was driven by the growing interest in combining traditional Ukrainian art with modern fashion, which contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and the development of creative industries. The purpose of this study was to explore the creative potential of the synthesis of Ukrainian art and fashion, to investigate the artistic and compositional features of the major works of the Ukrainian artist Paraska Plytka-Horytsvit for the purposes of designing a modern collection of women's clothing. The study employed the following methods: literary and analytical approach, historical and biographical methods for researching information sources; for the analysis of artistic features – visual-analytical method, system-structural, image-stylistic analysis. The study characterised the methods of adapting Ukrainian artistic heritage in the collections of international and Ukrainian design brands and covered their motivation. A series of international and Ukrainian brands (Maison Margiela, Rodebjer, Dior, Anna K, Vozianov, Serebrova, Syndicate, Bevza and Etnodim) were analysed, which confirmed the fact that the integration of traditional art into fashion has significant potential for innovation and identity development in contemporary design. The study revealed a close connection between art and fashion, highlighting the role of Ukrainian traditional art as a source of inspiration in contemporary fashion design. The study rethought the creative output of P. Plytka-Horytsvit in the search for methods of adapting the figurative properties of P. Plytka-Horytsvit's works to the artistic and figurative structure of modern costume. The significance of the cooperation of creative industries, namely the development and adaptation of artistic solutions of naive art in the development of modern clothing collections, was highlighted. The practical value of this study lies in the adaptation of the artistic heritage of Paraska Plytka-Horytsvit into modern clothing design, which will contribute to the development of fashion, creative industries, and the preservation of cultural identity

**Keywords:** fashion; naive art; culture; vytynanka; minimalism

### INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this study was conditioned by the rising trend for the return of traditional art and the interpretation of its elements into the modern fashion industry. Decolonial fashion played a key role as it required to resist Western standards in favour of the regeneration of authentic aesthetic practices. Thus, it was the answer to the problem of cultural globalisation, which

contributed to the standardisation of style, reduced the manifestation of cultural diversity and use of cultural heritage. According to M.A. Jansen (2020), decolonial fashion aimed not only to criticise colonial fashion in the fashion industry but instead demonstrated a better approach to the fashion industry system. Thus, fashion was established as a multifaceted phenomenon, in

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contrast to its globalised definition where it appeared as a standard that worked according to Western canons. In the context of the decolonisation of fashion, elements of the traditional culture of diverse ethnicities would no longer be perceived as exotic “details” in Western fashion, but as an equal way to express culture. This approach also allowed designers from all over the world to express their cultural origins.

L. Decker *et al.* (2019) stated that the African native technique of ornamentation of the textile batik combined craft, art, and design, and was influential for the world’s cultural textile heritage. The researchers described how it changed its form due to the consequences of trans-cultural processes. The researchers also suggested methodological implementations to improve the communication between the cultures. Thus, the application of the batik textile technique in the modern fashion industry was a prominent part of the decolonisation process. A. Diab (2025) described the influence of the traditional Mexican art and its creative enrichment of fashion collections. Mexican art was characterised by its variety of natural motifs, colours, and particularly its cultural diversity. It transformed under the external factors, while preserving at its core ancient traditions, thus inspiring modern fashion design. A. Pandey (2022) described how the traditional hand-crafted technique of Indian blue printing was used in modern times. The origin of the technique dates to ancient times in India, and presently it is used to create shirts for young people in a new ethnic interpretation. Based on this, ethical cooperation with local artisans was also a significant issue, as described by J.L. Foltyn (2024) in their study on Peruvian textile craftsmen. P. Krpan & L. Popinjač (2025) examined the relationship between sustainable fashion and artisanal practices. The study illustrated how slow, hand-crafted processes such as weaving, embroidery, natural dyeing, and repair contribute to resource conservation and the protection of cultural heritage. A. MacKrell (2005) analysed an analogous intersection of art and fashion, exploring how, historically, artistic movements and fashion trends mutually influenced each other – from Renaissance paintings to modern catwalks – thus reinforcing the aesthetic dialogue between fine art and clothing design.

In the Ukrainian context, L.I. Cymbala (2020) asserted that the use of elements of national traditional heritage by designers in their works was a crucial element of cultural identity. Specifically, for two reasons: as a response to the growing interest in local production and in the context of cultural globalisation. Fashion is not only an aesthetic phenomenon, but also a cultural practice that preserves traditions, adapting them to the modern context. This point was emphasised by V. Cherevach (2023). The convergence of tradition and innovation was also observed in the study by G.M. Mifetu & B.C. Trippeer (2025), who investigated the application of 3D printing technologies in fashion design

inspired by traditional African hair aesthetics. The study demonstrated how modern digital tools, combined with sustainable materials and cultural heritage, can generate new forms of wearable art. The purpose of the present study was to analyse the adaptation of cultural heritage to expressive cultural elements in modern fashion design and to define the key areas of the integration of ethnic elements into fashion collections.

## ■ MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literary-analytical approach was applied in the analysis of scientific studies on the interaction of traditional art and modern fashion design; the historical-biographical research method was employed to analyse the creativity of artists and designers who influenced the development of the modern fashion industry. The analysis of the artistic-compositional and stylistic features of traditional and modern clothing, the study applied the visual-analytical method. The systemic-structural method was used to study the connections between the decorative elements of traditional art, its techniques and forms, while the figurative-stylistic analysis helped to determine the stylistic features and symbolism that designers integrate when creating their fashion collections.

The study reviewed the following sources: scientific and art history literature on the interaction of traditional art and modern fashion design and the adaptation of its elements in the collections of modern designer brands; information that was presented on online resources of Ukrainian fashion publications for the analysis of collections of brands inspired by Ukrainian art: Margiela, Rodebjer, Dior, Anna K, Vozianov, Serebrova, Etnodim, Syndicate, Bevza. The studies of Ukrainian researchers and electronic articles were used for a comprehensive analysis of Paraska Plytka-Horytsvit’s works and for familiarisation with a large part of biographical facts, as well as to understand the significance of Plytka-Horytsvit’s figure in Ukrainian culture. The sketches of the collection were painted by hand, and the visualisations were made using the graphic editor Adobe Photoshop. The basis was the silhouettes of the catwalks of the 1990s.

## ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to R. Holyk (2017), culture is the memory of society. One of the most famous and widely used types of relationships in modern culture is the mutual influence of fashion and traditional art forms. The reason for this phenomenon lies in the combination of the steadfastness of the aesthetics of art trends and the variability of fashion, in the search for harmonious proportions in the aesthetics of the image created by the artist and its commercial relevance and attractiveness for the consumer of certain cultural standards and fashion products. Admittedly, there is a series of world-famous brands that can profit without going exclusively into commerce (Rubinstein & Steele, 1994). That is why

modern design brands constantly involve individual artistic images or complex solutions to give their projects artistic expressiveness and internal meaningfulness. H. Papeta (2020) focused on the works of designer Lyudmila Semykina and the ways in which she integrated ethnic motifs into her clothing collections. The designer combined traditional elements inherent in Ukrainian culture in synthesis with modern forms and materials. The result was innovative design solutions. This approach correlated with the approach of the present study, the purpose of which was to develop a clothing collection that would integrate cultural heritage and meet the needs of the modern consumer.

O.D. Rykhlytska & O.I. Kosyk (2021) stated that the use of folk art ornamental motifs in modern designer collections allows creating not only an aesthetic image, but also forming symbolically significant images, thereby creating stories that evoke emotions and form valuable images. This also corresponded to the approach of the present study. When designers adapt traditional ornaments into modern silhouettes, they create a harmonious connection between the past and the present. O. Lavreniuk (2022) and Z. Denysiyuk (2023) analysed how modern accessory brands integrate motifs of fine and applied arts into their designs. The researchers were convinced that motifs of traditional art integrated into the design of modern accessories contributed to the preservation of cultural heritage, emphasised national identity, and attracted art connoisseurs. The ideas highlighted by I. Syvash (2024) regarding the

adaptation in the field of graphic design could be easily applied in clothing design. In both areas, the use of elements of national culture contributes to the preservation of traditions and the strengthening of national identity. The collection developed by the authors of the present study, for instance, uses vytynanka ornaments in combination with modern clothing silhouettes.

Y. Lehenkyi & Y. Arefieva (2022) and P.V. Garkin (2024) examined how Ukrainian fashion brands incorporated ethnic elements into their corporate identity. Such integration helped to emphasise national identity and to attract consumers who value cultural heritage. This approach was valuable as it focused on the use of ethnic motifs in the overall brand concept. Foreign designers have actively turned to the adaptation of Ukrainian cultural heritage into costume design. The colour and diversity of national culture inspire world and Ukrainian designers to turn to the origins and reproduce them in their works. The clothing collection, in the development of which the Parisian designer B.S. Boré emphasised the connection between the promising collection of suits of the Fashion House Maison Martin Margiela and the works of the Ukrainian avant-garde artist K. Malevich (Margiela <3 Malevich..., 2014) deserved some attention. The designer of the Maison Margiela fashion house embodied the paintings of K. Malevich in real objects of use (Fig. 1). With this example, B.S. Boré demonstrated how great the influence of Ukrainian art can be on the world fashion industry.



**Figure 1.** Maison Margiela, Paris Fashion Week, Spring 2014, and Kazimir Malevich's paintings "Female Torso" (1933), "Torso" (1928-1929)

**Source:** Black Circle (1923) by Kazimir Malevich (n.d.), Female Torso (c. 1933) by Kazimir Malevich (n.d.), Margiela <3 Malevich... (2014)

Confirmation of such trends was also the fact that the spring-summer 2021 collection dedicated to Ukrainian folklore was the result of the trip to Ukraine by the designer of the Swedish brand "Rodebjer" (Radzikhovska, 2020). The motifs of Ukrainian folk art seen in the villages and the creative heritage of the Hutsul artist P. Plytka-Horytsvit were transformed into stylised prints on dresses and sportswear (Fig. 2).

A year earlier, to collaborate on its autumn-winter 2020 show as part of Copenhagen Fashion Week, the Rodebjer brand involved contemporary Ukrainian artist M. Reva, known for creating visually playful and surreal artworks and large-scale installations (Fig. 3), and Ukrainian stylist N. Shapoval, the founder of the Nadiia project of the same name (Rodebjer + Masha Reva collaboration, 2020).



**Figure 2.** “Rodebjer” spring-summer 2021 collection inspired by Ukrainian folklore

Source: E. Grothén (2020)



**Figure 3.** “Rodebjer” autumn-winter 2020 collection in the collaboration with the artist Masha Reva

Source: I. Hårstad & M. Magnus (2020)

The inspiration for the promising collection of the French brand “Dior Haute Couture” in the autumn-winter 2022-2023 collection included the works of Ukrainian artist O. Trofymenko. Designers of the brand became interested in Trofymenko’s works in the spring of 2021 during the exhibition of modern Ukrainian artists in Rome. The artist’s works in mixed media are a combination of painting and embroidery. The artist noted that she used embroidery in her paintings as “a pixel

that you could touch to feel the work” (Petter, 2022). Maria Grazia Curie, designer of the Dior brand, drew attention to Trofymenko’s small work and offered her cooperation in preparing the show of the future collection (Petter, 2022). Massive, embroidered panels by Olesya Trofimenko decorated the walls of the Rodin Museum in Paris, where the “Dior” show was held. The overarching theme of the show was the concept of the Tree of Life (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4.** “Dior Haute Couture” in collaboration with the artist O. Trofymenko

Source: O. Petter (2022)

Ukrainian designers also refer to cultural heritage assets and directly to the works of Ukrainian artists of the past and present, and do so in a very diverse way. For example, the “Anna K” brand presented a wide range of Ukrainian art to the European audience with its capsule collection in 2016 as part of the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Madrid (Ukrainian designer

Anna K..., 2016). The theme of the collection dedicated to the works of the national Ukrainian artist M. Prymachenko, whose paintings impressed the designer of the brand with their honesty and sincerity. The capsule collection featured individual motifs of M. Prymachenko’s paintings and used a unique technique of Ukrainian embroidery (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** “Anna K” collection dedicated to Maria Prymachenko, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Madrid, 2016  
**Source:** Ukrainian designer Anna K... (2016)

The approach of Fedir Vozianov, the designer of the Vozianov brand, to fashion was more constructive and was considered a component of artistic practices. Therefore, Vozianov dedicated his collection to Ukrainian Suprematism and the artist K. Malevich, who had inspired the designer for many years. In contrast to the expressive collection of the French fashion house “Maison Margiela”, dedicated to K. Malevich, the “Vozianov” collection was restrained in colour and contained complex designs. The motifs of the circle, square, and cross by K. Malevich are very consistent with modern fashion. The works include two principles that are extremely rare in art. The first is non-referential: what the artist painted does not reflect anything, it is not a fixation of nature, something,

or someone around, it is a fixation of the art itself. Analogous processes are currently taking place in fashion – fashion has become more non-referential, it does not reflect the situation around it, but concentrates on its own reality and constantly reproduces itself. Second principle is that K. Malevich used symbols as a basic element. Analogously, fashion operates with signs and symbols. In his collection, F. Vozianov proved that modern fashion has great innovative potential (Vozianov, n.d.). Many technological techniques that were not visible from the catwalk, e.g., fasteners and zippers, are used as a dimensional fixator. The designer deliberately placed fashion in the situation of art, even though there was much debate about whether they can even be compared (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** “Vozianov” spring-summer 2016 collection dedicated to Suprematism and Malevich  
**Source:** Vozianov (n.d.)

The next example of the adaptation of art artifacts in clothing design was the activity of the Ukrainian brand “Serebrova”, which presented the autumn-winter 2020-2021 collection “Secret of Genius”, created in collaboration with the Ukrainian artist I. Marchuk (Presentation of the Serebrova collection..., 2020). Designer A. Serebrova was inspired to create the collection by

paintings created in the author’s technique “Plontanism”: the artist applied paint to the canvas in such a way that thin lines intertwined at different angles and created the effect of volume. To create the models of the collection, the designer used silk, cotton with a waterproof coating, lace, as well as artificial fur with a 3D effect (Fig. 7).

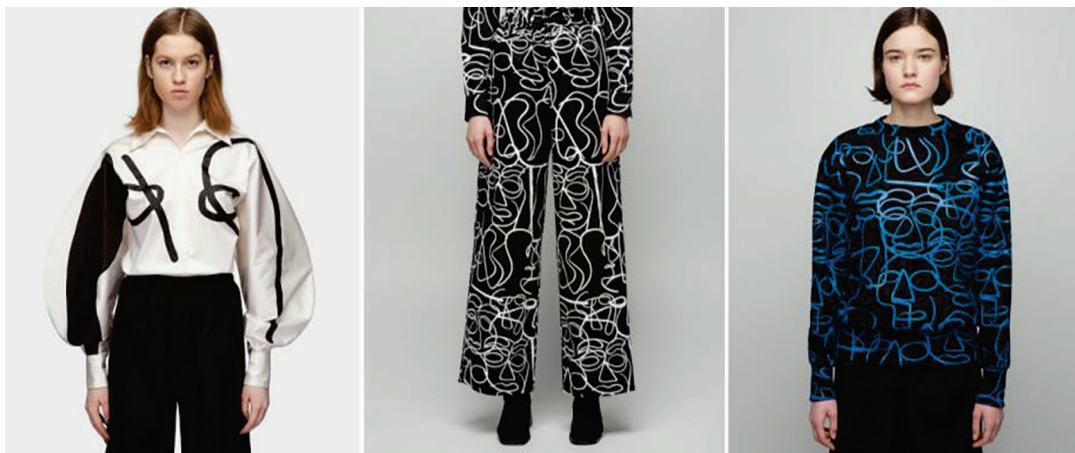


**Figure 7.** “Serebrova” in cooperation with I. Marchuk, autumn-winter 2020-2021

**Source:** Presentation of the Serebrova collection... (2020)

A vivid example of interaction and PR was the modern collaboration between the artist, designer, and illustrator M. Reva and the Syndicate Original brand (Viruk, 2019). Working on joint collections with “Syndicate”, M. Reva turned clothes into a painting canvas, developed and played with various graphic elements and colour forms that reproduce the silhouette of the human body. At the time, this was already the fifth joint capsule collection, which included raincoats, dresses, shirts, and sweatshirts with prints applied to the fabric using silk screen printing (Fig. 8). The brand of embroidered clothes “Etnodim”, to encourage its consumers to care about and to study the diversity of Ukrainian culture, approached its collections in an original way,

particularly by creating a shirt named after the “Slovo” building, specially built in the 1920s for artists in Kharkiv. The brand dedicated the shirt to the residents of the building – writers and artists, known now in the context of the “Executed Renaissance”. The shirt did not have a gender definition, the cut was deliberately chosen to be unisex (Fig. 9). In the article by M. Khemiy (2021), the brand’s designer A. Fesenko commented that for her, “Slovo” was an example of the government’s ruthless attitude towards cultural figures and brutal interference in their work. She also noted that the main task of the design was to accurately reveal the topic and convey it to customers so that everyone would know about this story and not remain indifferent to such complex topics.



**Figure 8.** Collection of the Ukrainian clothing brand “Syndicate” together with the artist M. Reva, 2019

**Source:** O. Viruk (2019)



**Figure 9.** Etnodim, beige linen shirt “Slovo”

**Source:** M. Khemiy (2021)

Designer S. Bevza and her eponymous brand “Bevza” subtly weaved national motifs into their characteristic minimalist design. In 2021, “Bevza” in collaboration with the ceramics brand “Nadiia” presented a collection of clothes and jewellery as part of New York Fashion Week. The leitmotif of the spring-summer 2021 collection was the heritage of Trypillia culture. The Trypillian civilisation placed women at the centre of its existence, it sacralised women, worshiped statues of the female figure, the embodiment of maternal instincts and female energy (The Trypillia Culture..., 2020). Among the historical moments there are also ears of wheat, which the brand used in earlier collections. Complementing the brand’s laconic clothing were ceramic jewellery, figurines, and household items, which were brought to life by the hands of the artist of the “Nadiia” brand as a result of careful research into the material heritage of Trypillian culture, namely the Kukuten district. The works combined the ancient symbolism inherent in this culture and the rough texture, thus reinterpreting the meaning of objects in the everyday life. A primitive talisman figurine of a pregnant woman, visually similar to an authentic Trypillian artifact, became the key object of the collection.

Thus, at the present stage of the development of Ukrainian fashion design one can observe a rethinking and adaptation of the artistic and figurative possibilities of traditional art forms in the development of a modern clothing collection for the sake of preservation and development of the national culture, namely, the inclusion of the creative work of the outstanding figure P. Plytka-Horytsvit, the discovery of new facets of reading the visual images of her work and their use in the images of the models of the clothing collection. Despite the agreement in cultural and expert societies on the exclusivity and significance of the heritage of the national artist P. Plytka-Horytsvit, at least for her community, and more globally for the Ukrainian cultural environment, her works had not become the subject of museum research to the present day. The artistic legacy of P. Parasky-Horytsvit stands out as an ethnographic source that recorded and detailed local rituals, life,

clothing, house interiors, and everyday objects. Even though the name of P. Plytka-Horytsvit is little-known, her artistic heritage demonstrates a bright representation of the Ukrainian naive art alongside such world-famous artists as K. Bilokur and M. Prymachenko (Buchatska *et al.*, 2019).

There were several exhibitions of her photo works. Subsequently, director M. Rudenko made a film-narrative about the found photo legacy of the artist “Portrait against the background of mountains” (Gorban, 2019). In October 2019, a large-scale exhibition of works by P.A. Plytka-Horytsvit opened in the Art Arsenal, which contributed to informing new interested people (Why you should visit the exhibition of artist Paraska Plytka-Horytsvit, 2019). Paper cut-outs became a part of Ukrainian folk art only from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the material became available, this unpretentious way of decorating quickly gained popularity. Decoration in the form of vytynanka has long been a part of the life of townspeople and peasants. It could be found on the windows of houses, walls, and on the masonry stove. Sometimes wall paintings were replaced with cut-outs (Fig. 10). Vytynankas of different localities have distinctive features inherent in a certain region (Shadryna, 2019).

Works cut out of paper accompanied P. Plytka in everyday life and creativity throughout her life. The author herself once talked about her passion for cutting, as she made vytynanka very simply. Firstly, she took the ordinary covers from school notebooks, scissors, then she cut them (Kachkan, 2008). P. Plytka-Horytsvit mostly made carpet patterns of vytynanka executed in the author’s interpretation of local traditions, according to which, Easter eggs and towels of the western regions were characterised by blurring and small ornamentation. The basis of the structure of the vytynanka was the variety of symmetry. The mirror structure was the most common: cutting paper folded in half, where the motifs were reflected. Most often, the slits were made in the form of abstract elongated waves and arcs. The artist freely placed the motifs on the background of the product, while leaving enough of the plane untouched, which created harmony with the smooth lines

of the cut-out ornament. A distinctive feature of P. Plytka-Horytsvit's cut-outs, according to the observations of the director of the Ivan Franko Literary Museum H. Lutsyuk, were rectangular shapes, while the crafts-woman cut out the square shapes characteristic of this region less often (Kosytska, n.d.). Notably, there were no plot motifs in the cut-out patterns, instead only abstract harmonious ornaments and sometimes symbols, such

as a "cross", "coat of arms", or "bird". The artist chose a wide variety of colours for her works – green, blue, red, pink, and most often left the background white or black. The choice often depended on the availability of paper material. P. Plytka-Horytsvit collected used packaging from photo paper, school notebooks, and sometimes completely random materials, such as ice cream wrappers (Buchatska *et al.*, 2019).



**Figure 10.** The interior of a traditional dwelling, decorated with cut-outs

**Notes:** The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Tymanivka, Vinnytsia region

**Source:** Z. Kosytska (2019)

The artistic work of the Hutsul artist was the basis for the development of the project image of modern fashion clothes, which harmoniously combined the internal cultural heritage of the centuries-old national culture and functional external manifestations and current trends in clothing design, inherent in the world's globalised fashion industry. Since the functionality of a modern suit was marked by the absence of decorativeness, it was characterised by restraint, while designing a collection of clothes involves strict compositions and geometric lines. Silhouette forms were simple, structured, in outerwear (coat) a trapezoidal silhouette prevailed, in the rest of clothing forms – fitted and X-shaped, which carefully emphasised the female figure, without diverting attention from the individuality of a person. When developing the clothing collection, a restrained, almost monochrome colour scheme typical of minimalism was chosen – it was black, grey, white, and beige, with the addition of the traditional colours of the Hutsul region – dark red or wine with shades of dirty pink (Fig. 11).



**Figure 11.** Colour range of the collection

**Source:** developed by the authors of this study

The main emphasis of the developed clothing collection was filling strict functional forms with restrained, but more plastic linear decor in the form of

cut-outs of the Ukrainian artist P. Plytka-Horytsvit and decorative seams. Another addition to the image were decorations and accessories, modified from those traditionally inherent in the Hutsul region (Fig. 12).



**Figure 12.** Key decorative elements and accessories of the collection

**Source:** developed by the authors of this study

The collection was designed for active life in megapolises and smaller cities. The range of the collection was characterised as elegant and restrained due to strict cut, balanced silhouette shape, and fullness, which served for more than one season. The colour range was limited and associatively perceptible – there were different shades of a monochrome palette with bright accents in the form of dark red or wine with shades of dirty pink; the nature of the lines was mainly geometric (Fig. 13). For the development of models and complete sets, compositional principles were borrowed from catwalk style of the 1990s, classic silhouettes were chosen, inherent in the style of minimalism with accents on reliefs that emphasised the female body (Melnyk, 2013). In these models, only the interpretation of the artist's creative work was used, as was done by designers and design brands that dedicated their works to artists or collaborated with them.



**Figure 13.** Front sketches of the collection

**Source:** developed by the authors of this study

In addition, the study presented a reference to the characteristic clothing style of P. Plytka-Horytsvit since the component was an integral part of the formation of a creative personality and its aesthetic preferences. The decoration of the functional cut became Plytka-Horytsvit's *vytynanka*, in the form of textile decoration. *Vytynanka* was applied with a certain degree of interpretation: assembly from separate parts of new ornamental motifs or complete citation. First of all, it promotes conscious consumption and a sense of choice for the person who would wear these clothes and, just as importantly, brings traditional art to the masses.

Since P. Plytka-Horytsvit was the creative source of the collection, textile decoration in the form of separate ornamental motifs and, in some places, completely borrowed artist's cutouts became an addition to the functional forms of clothing. On the other hand, the peculiarities of the texture can be seen only in the fabric from which the clothes were sewn, then this principle was used in the decorative decoration of the collection's models and, similarly to the "Bevza" brand, the main motifs of P. Plytka-Horytsvit's patterns are interpreted in various materials – accessories, prints, textile decoration. The original theme was characterised by combinations of textures of various materials. In addition, in the development of the collection, varieties of woollen fabric were used. Complements to the images created in the clothing collection were jewellery and accessories interpreted from those traditionally inherent in the Hutsul region. These were printed handkerchiefs tucked into rings, ceramic crosses, and ribbon necklaces.

### CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the conducted study, a close relationship between art and fashion was revealed, as well as

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methods of adaptation of Ukrainian traditional art in the development of fashion brands were determined. The artistic and figurative properties of Paraska Plytka-Horytsvit's work were analysed and the prerequisites for creating a collection of modern clothes based on the synthesis of cutouts and strict silhouettes of a minimalist style were outlined. Therefore, the significance of interpreting traditional art in modern fashion cannot be overestimated, as it provides an opportunity to create unique collections. The value of traditional art in modern fashion also cannot be overstated, as it provides the opportunity to create unique collections that combine cultural and aesthetic values of the past with innovative technologies and minimalist trends of the present day. This was determined based on analysis of collections of international and Ukrainian fashion brands such as Maison Margiela Rodebjer, Dior, Anna K, Vozianov, Serebrova, Syndicate, Bevza. Fashion designers of these brands collaborated directly with artists, or were inspired by their works when developing collections, but the designer of the brand Etnodim created its own ornament based on significant facts for Ukrainian culture. The study of traditional art and its adaptation to modern trends can become a source of fresh ideas and innovations in the field of fashion. There was the possibility to create methodological foundations for using cultural heritage motifs in modern clothing design.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors of this study declare no conflict of interest.

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## Впровадження елементів традиційного мистецтва у створення колекції сучасного одягу

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**Анотація.** Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростаючим інтересом до поєднання традиційного українського мистецтва з сучасною модою, що сприяє збереженню культурної спадщини та розвитку креативних індустрій. Мета – дослідити творчі можливості синтезу українського мистецтва та моди, вивчити художньо-композиційні особливості основних творів української художниці Параски Плитки-Горицвіт для створення сучасної колекції жіночого одягу. У дослідженні використано такі методи: літературно-аналітичний підхід, історико-біографічний методи дослідження джерел інформації; для аналізу художніх особливостей – візуально-аналітичний метод, системно-структурний, образно-стилістичний аналіз. В дослідженні охарактеризовано засоби адаптації української художньої спадщини у колекціях міжнародних та українських дизайнерських брендів, а також розкрито їхню мотивацію. Було проаналізовано ряд міжнародних та українських брендів (Maison Margiela, Rodebjer, Dior, Anna K, Vozianov, Serebrova, Syndicate, Bevza та Etnodim), що підтвердило той факт, що інтеграція традиційного мистецтва в моду має значний потенціал для інновацій та формування ідентичності в сучасному дизайні. Дослідження виявило тісний зв'язок між мистецтвом і модою, підкресливши роль українського традиційного мистецтва як джерела натхнення в сучасному дизайні одягу. Переосмислено творчий доробок П. Плитки-Горицвіт, у пошуку прийомів адаптації образотворчих властивостей творів П. Плитки-Горицвіт до художньо-образної структури сучасного костюма. Висвітлено важливість співпраці креативних індустрій, а саме розвитку та адаптації художніх рішень традиційного мистецтва у розробці сучасних колекцій одягу. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в адаптації мистецької спадщини Параски Плитки-Горицвіт у сучасний дизайн одягу, що сприятиме розвитку моди, креативних індустрій та збереженню культурної ідентичності

**Ключові слова:** мода; наївне мистецтво; культура; витинанка; мінімалізм



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## Principles and criteria of sustainable fashion in scientific discourse: A contemporary Ukrainian context

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**Abstract.** The process of change in fashion based on sustainability principles necessitates a re-evaluation of design practices, production approaches, clothing use, and attitudes towards fashion as a whole. However, a question arises as to whether the declared shift towards sustainable fashion is consistently reflected in the activities of designers and brands that position themselves as sustainable. In other words, what criteria should be used to identify the sustainability of a brand. This study aimed to determine the key aspects of scientific discourse on sustainable fashion based on clearly defined principles and criteria. The research employed a comprehensive approach, incorporating synthesis, comparative analysis of scientific literature, a review of reports and expert assessments, as well as an examination of practical cases involving Ukrainian clothing brands implementing sustainability principles. The fundamental principles and criteria of sustainable fashion have been identified. It has been observed that through the adaptation and interpretation of global sustainable fashion principles, Ukrainian designers have demonstrated unique approaches to utilising local materials, reviving and supporting traditional crafts. This has contributed to the creation of distinctive, high-quality products that align with both the functional and emotional durability of clothing. Specific sustainability assessment criteria for the local market have been identified, including the use of local materials and production, the integration of traditional craftsmanship elements, the adaptation of design to local needs, support for local educational initiatives, and the contextualisation of global standards. The implementation and application of clearly defined criteria, scientifically grounded approaches, and international standards will facilitate a high level of compliance with contemporary sustainability requirements in the fashion industry

**Keywords:** sustainable development; sustainable design; ecological clothing design; standards; sustainability indicators

### INTRODUCTION

In the context of global environmental challenges and the growing social responsibility of business, the concept of sustainable fashion has become increasingly important in the global fashion industry. Ukraine, as a country with a strong potential in design and the textile industry, has not remained aloof from these processes. Sustainable fashion, as a concept, covers a wide range of issues – from the environmental friendliness of production to the ethical aspects of labour and the social responsibility of business. In Ukraine, this topic has acquired particular importance due to several factors: the growth of environmental awareness of consumers, the need to increase the competitiveness

of Ukrainian producers in the international market, as well as the need to rethink approaches to production in conditions of limited resources.

The relevance of the study of the principles and criteria of sustainable fashion in the Ukrainian context is due to the need to adapt global trends to local realities and the formation of a scientifically sound approach to the development of sustainable fashion in the country. The creation of an environmentally oriented fashion industry, characterised by sustainable design, sustainable production and sustainable consumption, was considered a new economic driver for future industrial innovations.

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Scientists L. Jingjing *et al.* (2024) concluded in their study that fashion industry companies are placing greater emphasis on environmental protection. Circular fashion researcher P. Blum (2019) conducted an in-depth analysis of each stage of the process, focusing on the principles of circular fashion: reducing resource consumption, prioritising renewable materials, and promoting efficient and repeated use. Researchers M. Sellitto *et al.* (2019) examined eco-design as a fundamental aspect of environmentally responsible supply chain management, aimed at minimising the negative environmental and social impact of products throughout their lifecycle. This involved the use of eco-friendly materials and the reduction of consumption, emissions, and waste, to achieve sustainability without compromising other critical factors such as functionality, usability, or aesthetics.

In Ukraine, there has been a noticeable increase in academic interest in the concepts of environmental friendliness and sustainability in fashion between 2014 and 2024. Recent publications focusing on defining the criteria, characteristics and principles of sustainable fashion have been prioritised for this research. In their publication, O. Kolosnichenko *et al.* (2021) stated that “sustainable fashion” is based on the three pillars of consciousness: environmental friendliness (choice of natural materials, upcycling), ethics (decent jobs, humane treatment of animals), and resilience (creating a basic, smart wardrobe). Based on studies of upcycling and minimalism as core approaches to conscious and moderate consumption, researchers have further explored these aspects.

A comparative analysis of Ukrainian and global brands by A. Koriakina *et al.* (2024) identified the following key requirements for sustainable fashion: careful use of resources and energy, fair treatment of employees throughout the supply chain, and the use of materials that do not harm animals. N. Chuprina *et al.* (2024) outlined the requirements for ecological design and noted that one of the most sought-after environmentally oriented principles of modern fashion design has become the principle of artisanality. A.Yu. Hakhova (2021) highlighted the following basic principles of ecological design: conceptualism, innovation, efficiency, and social responsibility.

Exploring the evolution of the understanding of sustainability in fashion and clothing design, K.R. Pokhodenko (2021) addressed its criteria, emphasising that “sustainability in fashion and clothing design is a balancing of the goals of own stakeholders activity – designers, manufacturers, consumers, between four criteria – ecological, economic, social and ethical. The result of fashion and clothing design practice is sustainable when these four criteria are in a state of dynamic balance”.

The main directions of research only partially included the adaptation of global sustainability principles to the Ukrainian context, the development of

specific sustainability assessment criteria for the local market, and the analysis of practical experience in implementing these principles. At the same time, there is a need for comprehensive research that would combine the environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainable fashion specifically in Ukraine.

This study aimed to analyse and systematise the principles and criteria of sustainable fashion in the context of modern scientific discourse in Ukraine.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive approach was used in the research, which included methods of analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalisation of knowledge. The analysis method was used for a detailed study of scientific publications, reports and documentation on the principles and criteria of sustainable fashion. The synthesis method was used to form a holistic understanding of the problem under study based on separate data from various sources. The generalisation method enabled the formulation of the key principles and criteria of sustainable fashion within the Ukrainian context. A systematic analysis of scientific publications from 2014 to 2024, reports and documentation of international organisations was carried out: UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion (n.d.), The International Labour Organization (2024), Fashion Revolution (n.d.), The Fashion Pact (n.d.), Global Fashion Summit (n.d.), Ellen MacArthur Foundation (n.d.), Centre for Sustainable Fashion (2024). Additionally, sustainability standards such as the Global Organic Textile Standard (2024), OEKO-TEX (2024), Fair Trade Certification (2024), Bluesign (2024), and Cradle to Cradle Certified (2024) were analysed.

This study developed a methodology for evaluating the compliance of clothing brands with sustainable fashion criteria in the Ukrainian context. The methodology was based on a system of 10 key criteria covering the environmental, social, economic and ethical aspects of sustainable development in the fashion industry. The criteria were formed taking into account their compliance with international sustainable development standards, adaptation to the specifics of the Ukrainian market, the possibility of practical application and measurement, and the comprehensive coverage of various aspects of sustainability. The developed methodology envisaged a phased assessment process, which included the collection of primary data on the brand's activities, analysis of documentation and public materials, and systematisation of the information received following the identified criteria. It was taken into account that compliance with sustainability criteria is a dynamic process, the methodology provided for the establishment of clear quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring progress, the possibility of updating practices per new research and innovations, as well as the introduction of a reporting system to track progress. An important aspect of the developed methodology was

the consideration of the possibility of partial compliance with the criteria, provided there is a clear plan to improve performance. This approach made it possible to assess not only the current state but also the dynamics of brand development towards sustainability.

The SustainMeter methodology for evaluating sustainable development was studied. The methodology was designed to change how small and medium-sized enterprises in the fashion industry assess sustainable development, offering a faster and more accessible alternative to traditional methods such as sustainable development audits. The main feature of SustainMeter was a carefully developed questionnaire, created based on extensive academic research on sustainable development indicators. This tool not only collected data but also facilitated their detailed analysis, using a numerical scale from 1 to 7 for accurate quantification of each indicator. This scale captured subtle variations that were crucial for determining levels of sustainable development, where 1 is the least sustainable and 7 is the most sustainable. After completing the questionnaire, users were redirected online to an EcoScore review – a centre for in-depth analysis of results from a sustainable development perspective. The modular approach of the methodology, which provided the possibility of obtaining both multidimensional sustainability assessments and targeted recommendations for improving sustainable development practices, was of particular value to enterprises.

In the process of testing, the AttrakDiff framework was used, which provided an assessment of the convenience, practicality and aesthetics of the system interface. To enhance accuracy and objectivity, the methodology incorporated a fuzzy logic-based approach, overcoming the limitations of traditional assessment methods.

The methodology was developed with the possibility of further adaptation to the needs of other sectors of the economy, such as the cosmetics and food industries, thanks to open access to the program code, which contributes to its improvement by the specific requirements of various industries.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**International organisations and initiatives in sustainable fashion.** Sustainability in fashion is a concept characterised by a comprehensive approach to the processes, activities and stakeholders involved in creating a fashion industry based on ethicality, environmental integrity, social justice and economic stability. International organisations play an important role in the sustainable development of the fashion industry. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) promotes sustainable practices, in particular through the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion (n.d.) initiative. The Sustainable Development Goals developed are also aimed at the sustainable development of the fashion industry through various aspects, such as efficient use of

resources, fairness, etc.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) implements labour standards and norms aimed at protecting workers' rights, ensuring decent work and combating the illegal use of child labour (The International Labour Organization, 2024). Non-governmental organisations and initiatives also play an important role. The Fashion Revolution (n.d.) organisation promotes transparency in the fashion industry through campaigns such as #WhoMadeMyClothes, calling on brands to be responsible for creating proper working conditions for their employees. The Sustainable Apparel Coalition (Cascade) (2024) is a global alliance of brands, suppliers and other fashion industry stakeholders that uses the Higg Index to assess and improve the environmental and social impact of their operations (Blum, 2019). The Fair Wear Foundation (2024) works with brands, factories, traders and other organisations to improve working conditions in the textile industry. Life-Cycle Assessment is a methodology for assessing the environmental impact of a product throughout its life cycle, from raw material extraction to disposal or recycling, one of the main tools of environmental management in the European Union (Cimatti *et al.*, 2017).

Several relevant standards and certification bodies have been created, focusing on specific aspects or industries, taking into account their specificities in terms of achieving sustainability. Examples of important standards for the fashion industry. The Global Organic Textile Standard (2024) defines requirements for organic textiles, as well as environmental and social standards for their production. The OEKO-TEX system (2024) outlines the certification of textile products for their safety and the absence of harmful chemicals. Within the Fair Trade Certification (2024), standards for fair working conditions, transparency and poverty reduction in production chains are established. The Bluesign system describes environmentally safe textile production that minimises negative impact on the environment. With the help of Cradle to Cradle Certified (2024), an assessment of products is presented according to the criteria of environmental and economic sustainability, including the quality of materials, the possibility of their reuse and social responsibility (Blum, 2019).

Among the defining global initiatives, The Fashion Pact (n.d.) is an international coalition of companies in the fashion and textile industry aimed at stopping global warming, restoring biodiversity and protecting the oceans. The Global Fashion Summit (n.d.) is presented as the leading international initiative on sustainable development in the fashion industry, which organises the annual Copenhagen Fashion Summit (2024) – a global business event characterised by addressing sustainability issues in the fashion industry and vectors of its development, as well as defined by the publication of reports on achievements and challenges of sustainable development. The Ellen MacArthur Foun-

dition (n.d.), together with its partners, is working to implement the principles of a circular economy in the fashion industry.

An example of an educational and research institutions is the Sustainable Fashion Academy (SFA), which offers educational programs and conducts research in the field of sustainable fashion. The Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) (2024) at London College of Fashion conducted research and implemented educational programs aimed at developing sustainable practices in the fashion industry. The Sustainable Fashion Glossary (n.d.) developed testifies to a deep and holistic approach to the study of numerous aspects of sustainable fashion.

The Copenhagen Fashion Week (2023) serves as an example of the effectiveness of local initiatives. In 2022, the event established minimum requirements for designers participating in the show, based on the values of sustainable development. The new evaluation system for participants contained 18 certification criteria. These included, in particular, design requirements: durability of clothing, at least 50% of the collection being certified models, upcycling, recycling materials, and a ban on the use of fur. In addition, a list of permitted and prohibited materials was provided. The requirements for working conditions included safety and proper conditions for workers, and decent wages. Consumer involvement was also among the requirements, which is why employees should have a good understanding of the brand's sustainable development strategy and inform consumers about it. The packaging of clothing for both online and offline stores should have been carefully

considered in terms of materials and their disposal. The show itself should have taken place with the waste-free decoration of the stands. No disposable plastic was used behind the scenes of the show. Diversity and inclusion were taken into account during the casting of models by the Danish fashion ethical charter (n.d.).

The first show of the Ukrainian sustainable fashion brand TG Botanical (2024) was part of the official schedule of Copenhagen Fashion Week (2023), and the brand's first independent show took place during Copenhagen Fashion Week SS24 (2024). The brand's activities met all 18 criteria, which testified to the brand's holistic approach to the issue of sustainability. The brand, producing modern women's clothing with an emphasis on raw materials, uses hemp, flax, cotton and nettle fibres in its collections. The clothes were dyed using traditional and experimental methods: plant pigments obtained from tansy flowers, acorns, onion peels and coffee beans. TG Botanical paid considerable attention to ethical production methods.

The "Changing Landscapes" collection embodied the philosophy that the Earth is a constant source of renewal. Collaboration with Daryna Tsapenko's atelier resulted in the creation of five extraordinary products from TG Botanical's signature fabrics (Fig. 1), transformed using innovative techniques inspired by Savoy cabbage. Fungal inoculation, natural dyeing and cabbage juice infusion breathed new life into the clothes, creating organic, unique pieces that reflected the constant renewal of the Earth. The collection was a testament to TG Botanical's commitment to the principles of sustainable development (Bereza, 2024).



Figure 1. TG Botanical SS 2025 "Changing Landscapes"

Source: P. Bereza (2024)

**The development of sustainable fashion in Ukraine: Initiatives and practices.** The transition to sustainable development is a process of changing the value orientations of all stakeholders. The fundamental values of development, recognised at the international level, were freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. The national sustainable development goals are based on the political,

economic, social, environmental, moral and cultural values inherent in Ukrainian society. They define the direction of the strategy to care for the common good and protect the national interests of Ukraine (Sustainable Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2030, 2017). In Ukraine, among the key initiatives for the development and popularisation of sustainable fashion, the Ukrainian Fashion Week is identified, which organises

events aimed at promoting environmental responsibility and sustainable development in the fashion industry. Among them is action: Sustainable fashion (2024) – an educational program that revealed the social, ethical, economic and cultural aspects of sustainability in the stories of Ukrainian designers. The BE SUSTAINABLE! fashion Summit project is an annual summit dedicated to sustainable fashion, discussing global trends and local initiatives with the participation of international experts and Ukrainian designers. It is impossible to imagine the future of the fashion industry without a systematic sustainable approach, to which the VII Vogue Conference is dedicated (Vogue, 2024).

Among the local initiatives is Lviv Fashion Week. In 2019, with the support of the Ukrainian Cultural

Foundation, an environmental program for Ukrainian designers “Lviv fashion week for eco” was launched. The program included a five-day training part and a competition among participants for the best eco-oriented collection, the winner of which received an award – the production of a collection and its presentation at Lviv Fashion Week SS 2020 at the expense of the organiser (Lviv fashion week for eco, 2019). The project aimed to popularise the ideas of sustainable fashion among designers and consumers, and to encourage Ukrainian designers to integrate environmental criteria into their work. The EcoLogica project was created to promote young Ukrainian eco-brands in the fashion industry. The selection of collections for participation in the program was carried out according to the criteria listed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Selection criteria for collections to participate in the EcoLogica project

Criteria
Reuse/Secondary raw materials, recycling
Upcycling
Availability of material certification
Sustainable procurement approaches
Use of natural fabrics
Social indicators, ethical production
Attention to the social issues of the collection
Eco-friendly packaging/labels
Communication skills, ability to explain the environmental/ethical aspects of the activity

**Source:** Lviv Fashion Week (2021)

A.Yu. Hakhova (2021) determined that principles such as efficiency, innovation, and social responsibility are subject to the “6R concept”, which: “allows to extension of the life cycle of fashion industry products and include them in a fully closed system through recycling”. Accordingly, focusing on the principles of a circular economy, a fully closed system is appropriate and effective in the context of defining the principles of sustainability.

Focusing on the study of specific aspects of sustainable development that made it unique: innovation, cultural specificity, and local features, it is determined that these aspects add uniqueness to the concept of sustainability, expressing its specificity for each context and emphasising the need to integrate sustainable principles into unique areas of life and development of society (Velyka & Birillo, 2024).

At the legislative level in Ukraine, it has been observed that laws have been introduced that promote the responsibility of brands regarding the choice of production approaches. Law “On Basic Principles and Requirements for Organic Production, Circulation and Labeling of Organic Products” (The law of Ukraine No. 2496-VIII, 2018), which prohibited the uncontrolled use in Ukraine of the names “eco”, “bio”, “organic”, provides for fines and withdrawal of such products from sale by regulatory authorities.

**Principles and criteria for assessing sustainability in the fashion industry.** Through the study of a wide range of materials, the aforementioned global initiatives, research institutions, and scientific publications, the principles and criteria of sustainable fashion can be identified. Principles are defined as fundamental ideas and guidelines that outline the general direction and philosophy of the sustainable approach itself in the fashion industry. They have formed a solid foundation for decision-making and the development of effective strategies. The principles of sustainable fashion are based on environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects. Environmental responsibility is defined as minimising the negative impact on the environment, preserving natural resources, reducing the carbon footprint and using environmentally friendly and ethical materials. In the context of social responsibility, ensuring decent working conditions, supporting local communities, inclusiveness and diversity are outlined. Regarding economic viability, the key aspects are the creation of sustainable business models and a focus on the circular economy.

Transparency and traceability are characterised by brands openly informing about materials, production processes and supply chains. Durability is represented by the creation of high-quality, functional clothing designed for a long service life, which reduces the need

for frequent changes, minimises waste and counteracts the culture of rapid consumption. Initiatives for recycling and safe disposal are marked by the possibilities of reusing materials. Innovation and creativity are reflected in the search for sustainable creative solutions to rethink traditional approaches to fashion, including consideration of the entire life cycle of the item, in particular the creation of biodegradable clothing. The educational component is characterised by raising consumer awareness and promoting changes in consumer habits. Cooperation is defined as proper communication between all parties involved in the process. Local production is marked by the use of traditional craft techniques and manual work. Thus, it is recognised that: “The principles of sustainable design have led to a change in the sustainable way of design thinking and the creation of new tasks, motivated to design life cycles instead of the products themselves” (Niinimäki, 2014).

It is noteworthy how Ukrainian brands themselves have defined the principles of sustainable fashion for themselves. The brand Minnim (n.d.) stated: “part of our sustainability philosophy is the idea that each of us is responsible for preserving the planet’s resources, so we have developed six basic principles of sustainable development on which the Minnim brand is built”.

The list of sustainable development principles of the Minnim brand: organic materials, ecological and ethical production, ecological packaging, timeless design, responsibility for the life cycle of clothing, and optimisation of transportation logistics. The TG Botanical brand has developed an “Ethical activity strategy from the perspective of environmental and social responsibility”.

The goal of the Ukrainian brand Gnizdo (n.d.) was to create things that would be timeless and out of fashion, focusing on their durability, and clearly defining the principles of sustainable production. This brand focused on the locality of production, the use of natural materials, and thoughtful packaging.

Adapting and interpreting the global principles of sustainable fashion, Ukrainian designers have demonstrated unique approaches to the use of local materials and the revival of traditional techniques. The direction of artisanal fashion, aimed at creating durable things, is defined as an important component of the concept of sustainable fashion. The Litkovska (2024) brand, in its ecological demi-couture line of handwork “Artisanal”, emphasised timeless quality, which was a kind of “ode to traditions”, where the past and the future were intertwined (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Litkovska. “Artisanal” collection

Source: Litkovska (2024)

Therefore, the criteria of sustainable fashion are specific, measurable indicators or standards that are used to assess the compliance of fashion products, brands or practices following the principles of sustainability. They allow for a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the level of sustainability in the fashion industry. *Environmental*: the use of environmentally friendly materials, waste minimisation and reduction of environmental impact during production. *Social*: compliance with labour norms and standards, ensuring decent working conditions and fair wages for all workers in the production chain. *Economic*: support for the local economy, communities, transparency in supply chains, ensuring product durability and focus on a circular economy. *Ethical*: promoting an ethical and conscious

approach to consumption among consumers through education and awareness raising.

The criteria that are relevant for application in the Ukrainian context are highlighted, and an analysis of compliance with these criteria is carried out on the example of the TG Botanical brand (Table 2). Table 2 showed that the brand meets all sustainability criteria. This demonstrates the brand’s strong commitment to the sustainable principles embodied in its activities. It is important to emphasise that a brand may not meet all the criteria at once, but be persistent in consistently implementing the principles that will shape it as sustainable. In this case, it is worth formulating a statement of clear, measurable goals for improvement. Adapting to progress, focus on continuous updating and

improvement of practices based on the latest research and innovation in the field of sustainable development. And also pay attention to measuring sustainability indicators, regularly inform the public about efforts and progress: maintain and publish transparent reporting

on the implementation of sustainable development goals. In the publication by L. Ramos *et al.* (2024), a set of indicators is proposed to determine compliance with sustainability requirements for small and medium-sized enterprises in the fashion industry (Table 3).

**Table 2.** Analysis of the Ukrainian brand TG Botanical according to sustainable fashion criteria

No.	Criteria	TG Botanical brand
1	Ecological and ethical materials	Dyeing with natural pigments
2	Reduced resource consumption	Efficient use of energy
3	Use of renewable materials	Use of flax, organic cotton, hemp, nettle
4	Effective reuse	Waste recycling
5	Local production	Cooperation with local communities, traditional crafts
6	Design with life cycle in mind	Durability, the idea of "grown clothing"
7	Decent working conditions	Equality and respect, proper working conditions ensured
8	Transparency and openness	Cooperation with Dirt Charity in Earth Shop 1% of brand sales are transferred to soil regeneration on a global scale
9	Educational and awareness-raising activities	Providing training for employees on environmental responsibility and ethical standards
10	Innovation and research	Research and preservation of cultural heritage through the use of traditional methods of processing and dyeing materials

Source: Lviv Fashion Week (2021)

**Table 3.** Indicators for assessing the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises in the fashion industry

Indicator	Goal
<b>Economic</b>	
Material costs	Reduction of material costs
Labour costs	Reduction of labour costs
Lead time	Reduction of execution time
On-time delivery	Reduction of delivery time
Product quality	Improving product quality
<b>Environmental</b>	
Material usage	Reduction of material usage
Recycled material usage	Increasing the use of recycled materials
Water usage	Reduction of water usage
Energy usage	Reduction of energy usage
Emissions	Reduction of emissions
Waste	Reduction of waste generation
<b>Social</b>	
Employee satisfaction	Increasing the level of employee satisfaction
Customer satisfaction	Increasing the level of customer satisfaction
Community satisfaction	Increasing the level of community satisfaction

Source: L. Ramos *et al.* (2024)

In this study, indicators were rated "good" if efforts were directed towards increasing sustainability, regardless of whether this involved increasing or decreasing the values of the indicators. The same considerations were applied to "average" and "poor" ratings. For example, if a company made significant progress in reducing carbon emissions, this indicator should be rated as "high". Similarly, if a company demonstrated good results in increasing the use of recycled materials, this indicator should also be rated as "high". On the other hand, if a company poorly manages water use, leading to its excessive consumption, this indicator should be rated as "low".

The results of the study on the principles and criteria of sustainable fashion in the Ukrainian context correlated with the findings of many international scientists. The research of K. Fletcher (2020), who proposed a rethinking of the very concept of fashion and its relationship to sustainable development, was of great importance for understanding the principles of sustainable fashion. The author distinguished between the concepts of "fashion" and "clothing", which is important for the formation of sustainability assessment criteria. The researcher emphasised the need to go beyond purely material aspects when developing sustainability criteria, also taking into account the symbolic

and psychological needs of consumers. This confirmed the findings on the importance of ethical criteria and the need for a comprehensive approach to assessing the sustainability of brands. The study by A. Kozłowski *et al.* (2019) explored the challenge of implementing sustainability principles for clothing designers. The researchers proposed an innovative approach to categorising sustainable design tools, highlighting three archetypes: universal, participatory, and evaluative. This resonated with the findings on the need to adapt global standards to the local context, as different types of tools may be more or less effective depending on the specific circumstances and needs of designers. The five-dimensional model of sustainability proposed by the authors, specific to the fashion industry, could serve as an additional theoretical basis for the developed system of sustainability assessment criteria for Ukrainian brands. A valuable contribution to the understanding of the environmental aspects of sustainable fashion is the research by R. Pal & J. Gander (2018), who developed a model for assessing environmental value in the context of sustainable fashion. Their study offered a structured approach to assessing the environmental performance of fashion brands, which complemented the formulated system of sustainability assessment criteria. The emphasis on the relationship between business models and environmental responsibility is particularly valuable, which confirms the findings on the need for a comprehensive approach to the implementation of sustainability principles.

C.M. Armstrong & M.L.A. LeHew (2019) expanded this understanding by exploring the barriers and mechanisms for integrating sustainability principles into textile education. Their findings on the need for a systematic approach to education in the field of sustainable fashion resonate with the recommendations for the development of educational programs and raising awareness of all participants in the fashion industry. T. Bui *et al.* (2024) analysed the effectiveness of design practices to achieve sustainability in fashion and emphasised the importance of implementing the principles of a circular economy, in particular recycling and reuse, to improve environmental performance in the fashion industry. Their research, although focused more on the technological aspects of circularity, complemented the understanding of economic sustainability criteria formulated in the article. This idea was developed by K. Niinimäki & E. Karell (2020), considering the circular economy as a key aspect of sustainable fashion. For understanding the practical aspects of implementing sustainability principles, the research of B.V. Todeschini *et al.* (2017), who analysed innovative business models in the fashion industry, was relevant. The authors identified key entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges in implementing sustainability principles, which complemented the understanding of the economic criteria for evaluating brands. Their findings on the need for a balance

between economic viability and environmental responsibility confirm a comprehensive approach to assessing the sustainability of Ukrainian brands.

The results of the study by X. Zheng *et al.* (2021), which emphasised the need to rethink the role of culture in the context of sustainable development, were particularly important. The researchers proposed a conceptual framework for analysing the relationship between cultural values and the achievement of sustainable development goals, which confirms the approach used in this article to adapt global sustainability standards to the local cultural context. The need to adapt global standards to the local context has been confirmed by several relevant studies. S.S. Muthu & M.A. Gardetti (2020) highlighted the importance of transforming local knowledge and practices into global solutions, which confirms the approach to adapting international standards taking into account local characteristics and traditions. Thus, international studies have demonstrated the relevance and validity of the principles and criteria of sustainable fashion identified in this study, as well as the importance of their adaptation to the local context. At the same time, the study made a unique contribution to the understanding of the specifics of implementing sustainability principles in the Ukrainian context, in particular through an emphasis on the role of traditional crafts and local production.

## CONCLUSIONS

Sustainability in fashion is characterised by a comprehensive approach that encompasses the processes, activities and involvement of all parties in creating a fashion industry that is based on ethicality, environmental integrity, social justice and economic stability. It is determined that the principles of sustainable fashion are fundamental ideas and guidelines that form the basis for decision-making and strategy development in the fashion industry. Key principles are identified, including the use of environmentally friendly materials, consideration of the entire life cycle of an item, local production, and others.

The successful implementation of sustainable fashion principles in the Ukrainian context is demonstrated by the example of the Ukrainian brand TG Botanical, which is confirmed by the brand's compliance with all identified criteria. By adhering to the principles of sustainable development, sustainable fashion aims to create a more ethical and environmentally friendly industry. It has been revealed that by adapting and interpreting the global principles of sustainable fashion, Ukrainian designers simultaneously demonstrate unique approaches to the use of local materials and the revival and support of traditional crafts.

It has been established that the criteria for sustainable fashion are specific, measurable indicators that allow for the assessment of how fashion products, brands, or practices align with sustainability principles.

The main groups of criteria are: environmental (environmentally friendly materials, waste minimisation), economic (focus on the principles of a circular economy), social (ensuring decent working conditions), and ethical (promoting conscious consumption and production). They are focused on specific sustainability assessment criteria for the local market, namely local materials and production, integration of elements of traditional craft, adaptation of design to local needs, support of local educational initiatives and adaptation of global standards to the local context.

The identified clear criteria can serve as a starting point for concrete actions of clothing designers in Ukraine towards achieving sustainability. Attention is drawn to the prospects of research in a systematic approach to the mechanism of establishing

recommendations for the development of sustainable fashion in Ukraine, which should include strategies for implementing sustainability principles for business, proposals for regulation and support of the sector for relevant departments, educational programs for training students, measures to raise awareness and change consumer behaviour within communication strategies.

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## Принципи та критерії сталої моди в науковому дискурсі: сучасний український контекст

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**Анотація.** Процес змін у моді на засадах сталості передбачав переосмислення дизайн-практик, підходів до виробництва, способів використання одягу та ставлення до моди в цілому. Проте поставало питання, чи завжди задекларовані зміни в напрямку до сталої моди присутні в діяльності тих, чи інших дизайнерів/брендів, які позиціонують себе як сталі, тобто якими критеріями керуватися у процесі ідентифікації сталості бренду. Метою дослідження було визначення ключових аспектів наукового дискурсу, що стосувалися питань сталої моди на основі чітко сформульованих принципів і критеріїв. Дослідження базувалося на комплексному підході, що охоплював синтез, порівняльний аналіз наукової літератури, огляд звітів та експертних оцінок, а також вивчення практичних кейсів українських брендів одягу, що впроваджують принципи сталості. Визначено основні принципи та критерії сталої моди. Прослідковано, що в результаті адаптації та інтерпретації глобальних принципів сталої моди, українські дизайнери продемонстрували унікальні підходи у використанні місцевих матеріалів, відродженні та підтримці традиційних ремесл, що сприяло створенню унікальних, якісних виробів, які відповідають як функціональній так і емоційній довговічності одягу. Виокремлено специфічні критерії оцінки сталості для місцевого ринку: локальні матеріали та виробництво, інтеграція елементів традиційного ремесла, адаптація дизайну до місцевих потреб, підтримка локальних освітніх ініціатив та адаптація глобальних стандартів до місцевого контексту. Запровадження та використання чітко визначених критеріїв, науково обґрунтованих підходів і міжнародних стандартів сприятиме досягненню високого рівня відповідності сучасним вимогам сталості в індустрії моди

**Ключові слова:** сталий розвиток; сталий дизайн; екологічний дизайн одягу; стандарти; ознаки сталості



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## Interpretation of Lesya Ukrainka's feerie drama in the Panel Painting by R. Petruk, "Forest Song". School of M. Storozhenko

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**Abstract.** The study aimed to reveal the individual interpretation of Lesya Ukrainka's drama-feerie in the painting by R. Petruk "Forest Song". Hermeneutical, comparative, iconographic, iconological, historical and cultural methods were used. The correlation between the content of the drama and the mythopoetics of the pictorial image was analysed. The panel painting was studied concerning the theme of earthly and heavenly love in world art. The study analysed the nature of personification of images of natural elements; the conventionality of pictorial and spatial solutions; and the role of attributes in the creation of artistic images. The importance of the heritage of Ukrainian Baroque and world monumental, decorative and easel art in the creation of the personal style of the work was investigated. The compositional and plastic solution of the canvas was analysed. The creative method of R. Petruk was studied in the context of the school of M. Storozhenko and the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture. The study revealed the relationship between the metaphysical nature of Mr R. Petruk's painting "Forest Song" and the nature of Volyn. The innovative approach to creating a synthetic image of a drama-feerie by visual means was demonstrated. The individual nature of perception and interpretation of a literary work was highlighted. The traditions of national and world art, on which the artist relies, were revealed. The key role of the flute in the symbolism of the panel painting was demonstrated; the leading role of music in the harmony of the universe was determined. The author revealed the deep interconnection of the images of Lukash, Mavka, and Lesya Ukrainka with the mythological hero Orpheus. The study traced the common features of Mr. Petruk's painting with the theatre curtain and the Baroque iconostasis. The study emphasised that the peculiarity of R. Petruk's composition is the monumental and decorative mode. The study results are relevant for teachers and students of artistic educational institutions, in lecture courses on the history of Ukrainian art and music culture; for artists, cultural critics and art historians in creating a history of contemporary monumental and decorative art

**Keywords:** mythopoetic image; synthesis of arts; music; symbolism; creative method; intertext; West and East

### INTRODUCTION

The themes of earthly and spiritual love, betrayal and forgiveness, both temporary and eternal values, remain relevant throughout human history. In the visual arts, as in literature, each artist interprets these motifs through personal experience, uniquely contributing to the de-

velopment of cultural discourse. In contrast to literary studies, contemporary art studies on the drama-feerie "The Forest Song" in the visual arts are few. The study by T.V. Goranska & O.P. Spasskova (2023) on the artistic expression of the images of the drama-feerie in the cycle

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of easel graphics by V. Efymenko is noteworthy. The authors analysed the relationship between the illustrations and the text of the feerie drama. In writing this article, conversations with R. Petruk (Tarasenko & Petruk, 2018-2025) and articles by R. Petruk (2020; 2021) on the creative and pedagogical activities of M. Storozhenko were of significant documentary importance.

Since R. Petruk's diploma paper was considered in the context of Storozhenko's school, the scientific research of the Master's students, associate professors and professors of the NAOMA (National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture), who inherited moral and philosophical attitudes towards art, was relevant. In articles devoted to the teacher's artistic and pedagogical system, O.V. Solovei (2020; 2021) emphasised the metaphysical nature of M. Storozhenko's pictorial space, highlighted the synthesis of tradition and innovation that was fundamental to the system, demonstrated the role of the professor in the development of young artists, and emphasised the approach to each student. Developing the ideas of the synthesis of the arts, the rector of the NAOMA, Professor O. Tsugorka (2022) presented an in-depth analysis of the role of scenery in the formation of stage space. Professor I.Y. Pylypenko (2016) researched the history of the monumental painting workshop at the Academy of Arts in the 1920s and 1930s, thereby revealing the connection between the past and the present.

The general issues of the artist's work were explored by several art critics, whose articles were published in a monograph by R. Petruk (2020). R. Mykhailova (2018) on the connection between painting and music inherent in R. Petruk's work. Comparing the young artist to Mozart, the researcher noted the profound thoughts and high feelings, the emotionality and humanism, and the harmonious order of the contemporary painter's works, being similar to the great musician. Noting the role of Ukrainian poetry and folklore in the lyrical style of R. Petruk's art, R. Mykhailova pointed to the reflection of the image of the inspired Mavka from the feerie-tale drama "The Forest Song" in the ideal portraits of the artist's contemporaries. The professor confirmed that the basis of the worldview and practice of the art students of the painting and temple culture workshop created by M. Storozhenko at the NAOMA was the unity of academic realism and irrational religious principles. R. Mykhailova (2018) also outlined the wide range of themes and styles characteristic of R. Petruk's works: from the heritage of Christian Orthodox ritual art and Ukrainian icons of the Baroque period to bold experiments in contemporary secular painting.

O. Osadcha (2020) noted the principle of empathy as important in the creative and pedagogical activities of an artist. The researcher revealed the creative nature of R. Petruk's application of the "metaphysical transmobile" method inherited from M. Storozhenko, which influenced the viewer's subconscious through visual images. The method is used not only in individual practice

but also in the creation of compositions for academic productions. S. Stoian (2020) interpreted the coded meaning of the feerie-tale drama reflected in R. Petruk's composition; emphasised the moral superiority of the heroine Mavka; revealed the meaning of symbolic signs and attributes in the identification of characters; and showed the significance of the pipe in the emergence of the heroes' feelings of love. Indicating the unity of man with the primary elements of nature conveyed in the painting, the researcher defined it as the basis of vital creative energy. Noting the sacred and mystical language of R. Petruk's composition, S. Stoian, along with other researchers, confirmed the role of M. Storozhenko in shaping the creative individuality of talented students.

O. Tarasenko (2018) explored the theme of portrait images of M. Storozhenko and artists-professors of the National Academy of Fine Arts of Ukraine as the elite of the Ukrainian people in the work of a young artist. A. Tarasenko *et al.* (2024) analysed the monumental works of M. Storozhenko, who greatly influenced the students. Thus, the art analysis of the master's student's thesis is within the scope of interest of the authors of this article in the field of contemporary Ukrainian easel and monumental-decorative art. R. Petruk's composition "Forest Song", significant in its idea and figurative-artistic embodiment, requires further study.

The study aimed to interpret the content and identify the peculiarities of the style of R. Petruk's composition "Forest Song" in the context of the heritage of Ukrainian and world monumental, decorative and easel art.

To explore the profound essence and interpret the literary and visual content of Petruk's panel painting, hermeneutics (Heidegger, 2002; 2006) and the theory of the connection between hermeneutics and poetics (Gadamer, 2001) were used. The study was based on texts by E. Betti (2021) to interpret the meaning of the composition. C.G. Jung's analytical psychology determined poetic and artistic creativity (Jung, 1971) and defined the role of symbols and archetypes (Jung, 1968). The comparative method identified and revealed the mythologies of artistic images in Petruk's compositions in the context of world art (Collier, 1993). The method of artistic and stylistic analysis is used for the art analysis of works. The study applied the methods of iconography and iconology developed by E. Panofsky (1955; 1960). Iconography was used to identify the source of the pose of the Mavka figure in R. Petruk's panel painting and determine its connection with traditional Christian art. Contemporary researchers analysed compositional schemes as expressions of a certain meaning. Iconology has taken the interpretation of works of art to a higher level of meaning, found deep connections between art and culture of different eras, and expanded the temporal and spatial boundaries of the work under study. To introduce Petruk's panel painting "The Forest Song" into the context of world culture, a historical and cultural method was used. For the semiotic analysis

of the synthesis of arts revealed in Petruk's visualisation of Lesya Ukrainka's drama-feerie, the research of J. Kristeva (1969), who proposed the concept of "inter-text", was important.

### THE MYTHOPOETICS OF MODERNISM IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

In the creation of drama-feerie, Lesia Ukrainka (1871-1913) utilised pan-European and national mythopoetry, combining traditional images with personal existential experiences (Ukrainka, 2021). One of the leading artistic qualities of the work is an intimate reflection on the themes of love and death, which for the writer have gained particular depth due to long personal experience of fighting tuberculosis. According to L. Miroshnichenko (2011), this disease not only accompanied throughout life but also took the lives of close people, including Serhiy Merzhynskyy and Klyment Kvitka.

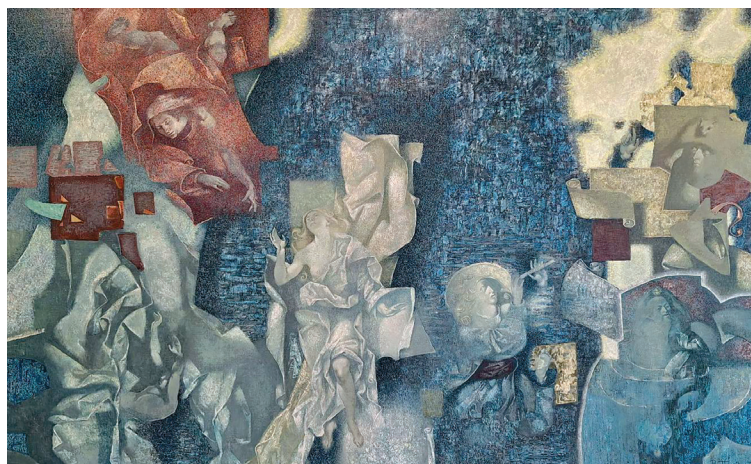
It is symbolic that the birth of Larysa Petrivna Kosach in 1871 coincides with the creation of the programmatic text F. Nietzsche (1872). The philosopher announces the loss and the need to return art to its foundation: "mythical homeland". Nietzsche describes myth as a "concentrated image of the world". Mythology presupposes integrity, since there is no conflict between the phenomenon and the mysterious essence, life and being. Myth has a binary unity of daytime, rational and logical world perception (Apollo) and nighttime, intuitive (Dionysus). The philosopher defined the time as the time of "Dionysian cognition", which is characterised by a "whirlwind of changing images".

Nietzsche was inspired by the mysterious music of Richard Wagner, who significantly influenced the culture of modernism. The aesthetic worldview of the reformist composer is expressed in theoretical texts where the author exclaimed a model of a work of art

of the future, and for a reference to the mythological origins of art (Wagner, 1850). The desire for origins, as one of the fundamental themes of cultural studies, was outlined by R. Wagner and F. Nietzsche and was later addressed by one of the leading cultural critics of the twentieth century, M. Eliade (1971). Mythological thinking, which reflects this aspiration, remains relevant in contemporary art, retaining the ability to form artistic meaning in new contexts.

The crisis-ridden nature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, has brought the metaphysical dimension of existence to the fore. In art, attention is focused on the *Axis mundi*: from the expression of the infernal (demonic) principle to the lofty heights of spiritual insight. R. Descartes (2008) explored the relationship between the soul and the body. M. Heidegger (2002; 2006) discussed the turn to the transcendent in the new ontology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The German metaphysical philosopher argued for the relevance of mythopoetic thinking, which was characteristic of the pre-Socratics. The monograph by V. Sheiko & Y. Bogutsky (2005) addressed the problems of culture and civilisation in the millennium. The cultural and historical metamorphoses of symbolism in European visual art are explored in the monograph by S. Stoian (2014). In mythological themes, literature and visual arts find a second plane, mystery and multidimensionality. Lesya Ukrainka's literary masterpiece "The Forest Song" suggests a departure from the three-dimensional space of everyday life and a connection with the vertical dimension of existence.

The centenary of the drama-feerie (created in 1911) inspired more than just new theatre productions. In the metaphysical panel painting "The Forest Song" (Fig. 1) by Roman Petruk (born 1991), Lesya Ukrainka's play-feerie is presented as an individually interpreted image of a symbolic painting of the present day.



**Figure 1.** Roman Petruk. "Forest Song". 2013-2015

**Note:** Canvas, author's technique. 200×300 cm. Diploma thesis. Workshop of Painting and Temple Culture of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences of Ukraine, Professor Mykola Storozhenko

**Source:** photo by the author of the study

The mythopoetics of modernism as a component of the cultural and philosophical discourse of the twentieth century is manifested in the desire of artists and thinkers to comprehend the primary forms of existence through archetypes, symbols, and myths. In this context, myth is not only a means of artistic modelling of the world but also a way of cognition that removes the contradiction between the physical and the spiritual, the common and the eternal.

### ■ A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GENERATIONS IN THE ARTISTIC TRADITION OF MODERNISM

The master's thesis was created in the studio of painting and temple culture of the National Academy of Arts and Architecture under the guidance of the outstanding Ukrainian artist Mykola Storozhenko (1928-2015). The compilation process lasted for three years (2013-2015). The choice of subject matter is largely due to a biographical factor: the author comes from Lutsk, a region associated with the poetic topography of Volyn, the birthplace of Lesia Ukrainka. This region, denoted by the symbolism of the "Blue Lakes", influenced the formation of artistic worldview and aesthetic guidelines. A general view of the composition evokes associations with the landscape of Ukrainian Polissya viewed from above. Hence the unifying spiritual colour scheme of the canvas. The blue colour of the sky is one of the main colours in canonical church paintings.

Professional culture is based on the interconnection between contemporary artists and their predecessors. R. Petruk received the initial creative development at the art school in Lutsk, studying under L. Manko-Gronska. A graduate of the Art and Graphic Design Department of the Odesa Pedagogical Institute (as of 2 October 1996, South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky), introduced the student to the work of the teacher V. Geghamyan (a student of M. Saryan). During the first years of studies at the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, Petruk studied under the folk artists of Ukraine V. Barinova-Kuleba and I. Kovtonyuk. In 2018, R. Petruk completed an assistantship internship at NAOMA under the guidance of O. Tsugorka. Thanks to M. Storozhenko, R. Petruk connected with teachers of the master and teachers of the master's teachers: T. Yablonska, S. Grigoriev, F. Krychevsky. Currently, R. Petruk is an Honoured Artist of Ukraine and a professor at the Department of Monumental and Easel Painting at the Mykhailo Boychuk Kyiv State Academy of Decorative Arts and Design.

M. Storozhenko set an example and guided students through life with the power of personality and work. The artist recounts efforts to capture the main features of Storozhenko's school in the painting: a focus on expressing the state of mind in the composition (Tarasenko & Petruk, 2018-2025). In one of the professional articles dedicated to the memory of the teacher, Petruk stated that for the Teacher, visual art was a dialogue

with Eternity. The master was fluent in the language of signs and symbols and taught students to perceive their deeper meaning and create pictorial images with their help (Petruk, 2021). For R. Petruk, it is important that Lesya Ukrainka's literary work itself was written for the theatre. In contrast to the illustrative approach, where the scenes of the feerie unfold sequentially, the artist sought to create a theatrical canvas embodying the mythopoetics of the entire "Forest Song". The artist's goal was not to realistically reflect reality, but to create a picturesque image (Tarasenko & Petruk, 2018-2025). The result was a panel painting that can be transformed into a theatre curtain.

The conventionality of the decorative solution, a high degree of generalisation of artistic images, laconicism, and large size refer to Petruk's painting of the panel as a kind of monumental art. In contrast to monumental painting, which is directly related to architecture, panels are free in nature, both in their creation and use (Mayer, 1969; Clarke, 2010). In this context, it is worth mentioning the study by Y. Lanchak (2023), who, among the images of visual identification of contemporary Ukrainian theatres, addressed the figure of Lesya Ukrainka, emphasising the symbolic role in the visual representation of national theatre culture. An example of a multi-figure composition for musical theatre is G. Semiradsky's curtain for the Lviv Opera House on the theme of Parnassus (1900) (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Heinrich Semiradsky, "Parnassus"

**Note:** A smaller version of the curtain of the Lviv Opera House. 1900. Oil on canvas. 91×47 cm

**Source:** Parnassus by H. Siemiradzki... (n.d.)

Storozhenko's workshop trained artists to create monumental and decorative works in a wide range of fields, including theatre. For example, Storozhenko's student and current rector of the National Academy of Arts and Architecture, O. Tshuhorka, is the author of the scenery, decorative panels and costumes for the ballet "The Lord of Borysfen" (2011) for the Taras Shevchenko National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre; creating a decorative panel for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Academy of Arts and Architecture "Apotheosis of Arts" (2017).

### INTERTEXTUAL PARADIGMS OF EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY LOVE

The theme of earthly and heavenly love is one of the main themes in world art. For instance, it is present in the images of Cupid and Psyche on Greco-Roman sarcophagi, in Titian's allegory "Love of Heaven and Love

of Earth" (1514). A peculiar analogue of the expression of love burning and wildlife presented in Petruk's composition can be seen in the ancient scroll by the Chinese artist Gu Kai-zhi "Feerie of the Lo River" (IV – beginning of V century), as well as its copy (mid-12<sup>th</sup> – mid-13<sup>th</sup> century) (Fig. 3).

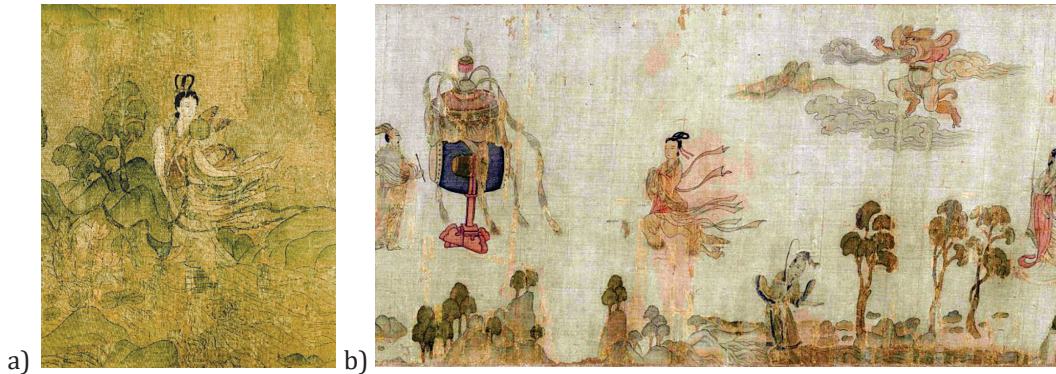


Figure 3. Gu Kai-zhi, "Feerie of the Lo River"

**Note:** a – Original, Gu Kai-zhi, The Feerie of the Lo River. A scroll on silk. Fragment. IV – beginning V art. Gugong Museum, Beijing; b – Copy of Gu Kaizhi's The Feerie of the Lo River. Fragment. Mid-12<sup>th</sup> – mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, ink and colour on silk, China, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

**Source:** Gu Kaizhi (n.d.)

The painting is based on a poem by Cao Zhi (192-232), which celebrates the love of a water feerie who was in love with a mortal man. The drama is that the lovers are in different dimensions and have to part ways. C. Laurent (2017) described a sequential narrative of miraculous events that are transcribed on scrolls from the Freer Gallery of Art. The style of Gu Kai-zhi's depiction corresponds to the figurative designation of the culture of "wind and stream" (fengliu). The linear-planar style conveyed the flexible, mobile nature of spiritualised nature on a single conventional tone of silk fabric. The figures of the feerie, with the fantastic accompanying creatures, the prince and retinue, are inscribed in the panorama of the landscape, which is in eternal transformation. Earth, water and sky are actively interacting, which is also characteristic of the image in the panel painting by the Ukrainian artist under study. The commonality is also present in the multidimensional depiction of space, which corresponds to the plot. In the modern composition, as in the ancient Chinese one, the figures are draped, and the faces are conventional. Thus, the most important emotional role is determined by the folds that convey the breath of passionate love.

### THE COMPOSITION STRUCTURE OF THE PIECE "FOREST SONG"

The idea of R. Petruk's panel painting, the antithesis of earthly and heavenly love, is expressed in the structure of the composition. In the triangle of figures in R. Petruk's painting: Mavka, Perelesnyk, and Lukash, natural love as physical passion is contrasted with the spiritual love of people. Mavka, the daughter of the forest, is not

human. A former lover is Perelesnyk. The artist depicted two Mavkas: in human form and the symbolic image of a flute (Tarasenko & Petruk, 2018-2025). The first act of the feerie tale depicts Mavka's dream and awakening. The forest maiden's soul is revived through music. Similar to Orpheus, Lukash brings the soul of the demigoddess out of winter sleep and non-existence. The tragic development of the plot tells of the young man's weakness and betrayal of love, which leads to punishment: Lukash is turned into a wolf. Lukash falls at the feet of the beloved and, forgiven after passionate repentance, becomes human again. Mavka's all-forgiving love frees beloved from animal form, echoing Orpheus. Mavka can be interpreted as a stage image of Lesya Ukrainka. The circle is complete: there is no beginning and no end. The theme of eternal love triumphs.

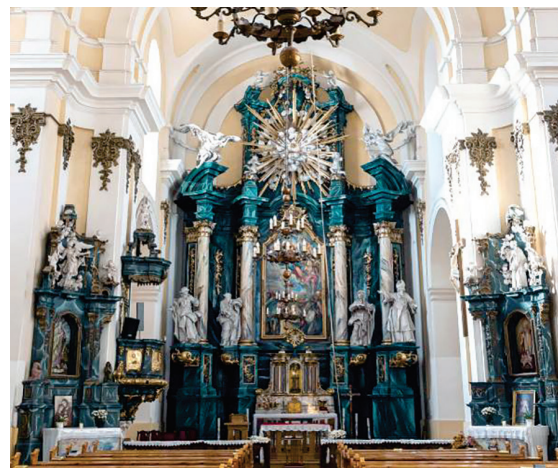
The pipe, as an image of harmony and peace in the world, is a key symbol in Lesya Ukrainka's feerie, as well as in M. Zhuk's panel "White and Black" (1912-1914), which was created at the same time. The Greek word for the pipe is surigx. Ovid describes the transformation of the nymph Hamadryad Sirinca into reeds, from which the suffering lover Pan made a pipe (Soucy, 2023). The pipe is similar to Orpheus' harp, with which the musician convinced Hades and Persephone to release Eurydice from the realm of the dead. The victor over death descends into hell to overcome the chaos of death with harmony. M. Storozhenko returns to the theme of music in a series of images entitled "Orpheus and Eurydice" (1992-1993); the illustration for P. Mirny's book "Among the Steppes" (1980) depicts children playing pipes.

In the composition “Forest Song”, R. Petruk depicted not all the participants in the feerie, but only those worthy, according to the artist (Tarasenko & Petruk, 2018-2025). In the blue sky reflected in the lakes of Polissya, there is no place for the greedy mother Lukash and the wife Kilyna, who sold the ancient oak tree (the tree of life) and, thereby, violated the unity of spirit and matter, man and nature, and broke the family ties of the living with the generations of their ancestors. In the central part of the canvas are images of Mavka floating in the air and Lukash kneeling with a pipe. According to the artist’s idea, the young man’s foot, depicted in a complex perspective, is a symbol of the contradictory path of life. The ascending vertical form in which the figure of Mavka is inscribed is characteristic of Christian art depicting the theme of ascension. Fire can be interpreted as the liberation of the soul. C.G. Jung noted that in Heraclitus, the highest degree of the soul is fiery and dry (Jung, 1968). The pipe in the hands of Orpheus-Lukas is a magic wand, the key to knowledge of the symbolic drama-feerie tale. With the help of music, matter is transformed, passing from the dense physical plane to the subtle plane of existence. Lukas’s straw hat evokes associations with a halo. Mavka turns into a pipe. A mythologem is born, a poetic metaphor of the pipe-Mavka: “Play, play! Give voice to my heart. It is all I have left” (Finale) (Ukrainka, 2021).

The side elements of the composition show personified embodiments of the elements: fire (Perelesnyk at the top left), and water (Rusalka, Vodyanik at the bottom left and right). The forest, which connects the earth and the sky through the world tree, is marked by a fragment of a wide trunk with a glowing golden crown cloud and the head of Lesovik in a shaggy cap made of marten fur. Lesovik’s gaze directs the viewer’s attention to Perelesnyk, uniting the characters. The basis for the image of Uncle Lion, the spiritual guardian of the connection between earth and sky for Roman Petruk, is M. Storozhenko, whom students called “the guardian of truth”. The lion, depicted as a sign of the solar zodiac, is located between Lesovik and Vodianik.

The descending Perelesnik is connected by a compositional triangle with the mermaid who is in love and the nymph who was once loved. The seducer’s gaze is directed at the water nymph, and the hand extends towards Mavka, but cannot touch because Mavka seeks human love, not the love of a natural element. The figure of the Mermaid playing in the water is not immediately recognisable in the lower part of the vertical composition. The girl’s arms are extended towards the beloved. The water nymph is immersed in the centre of a unique bouquet of wave folds. The element of water is located between the earth and the air. A body immersed in water loses its normal weight. According to Jung’s analytical psychology, water is a symbol of the unconscious; water is the spirit that has become natural (Jung, 1968). In the Chinese yin-yang system, water symbolises birth

and death, the beginning and end of the cycle of existence. In the lower right part of the composition, the Water Sprite is depicted with a “yellow jug” on the head and a sunflower of the Volyn water lily. The contemplative mood of the water spirits evokes allusions to the image of Bodhisattvas on a double lotus bowl pointing in different directions. The compositional and plastic solution of the work “Forest Song” is related to the character of the multi-tiered iconostasis of a Catholic church (for example, the altar of the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Buchach (1763) (Fig. 4).

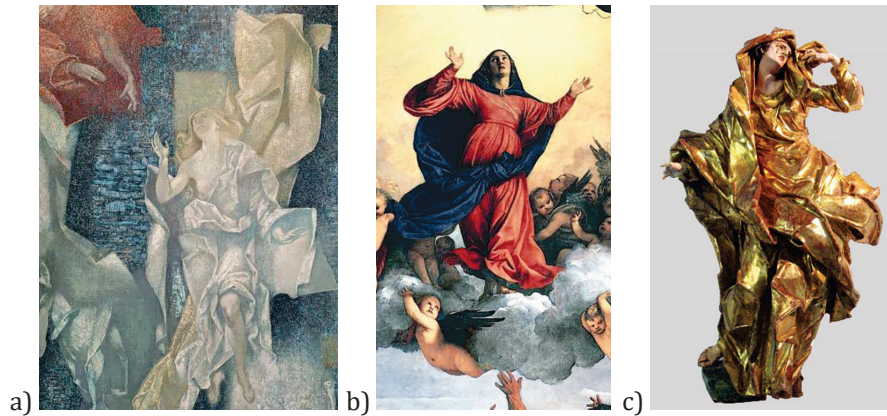


**Figure 4.** Altar of the Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Buchach, Ternopil Region

**Source:** Buchach (n.d.)

In M. Storozhenko’s workshop, students were taught to perceive iconostasis as a holistic, multifaceted spiritual image that exists in synthesis with architecture. Icon painting is directly related to symbolism (Stoian, 2014). Along with paintings, R. Petruk creates icons in which the spiritual plane is paramount (Petruk, 2020). Training tasks involving the multi-figure composition of the iconostasis, which is a portal from the sensory world to the supersensory, are reflected in the artist’s secular compositions, in particular, “Forest Song”. The composition of “Forest Song” has a three-part structure, marked by concentrated spatial pauses between the characters. The characters are inscribed in rhythmically organised decorative layers. The plastic solution is linked to monumental sculptural relief.

Authors of art dictionaries indicate that panels are used not only in wall decorations but also in altar compositions (Mayer, 1969; Clarke, 2010). This connection is important for the iconography of the image of Mavka, whose figure is directed upwards, similar to the image of the Virgin Mary in compositions of the Ascension (Fig. 5). Iconography traced the characteristic features of the image of Mavka in Petruk’s panel painting and determine its connection with traditional Christian art (the theme of the Ascension).



**Figure 5.** The iconography of Mavka

**Note:** a – Roman Petruk. Mavka. Fragment of the composition "Forest Song". 2013-2015; b – Titian. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Assunta). Fragment. 1518. Wood and oil on canvas. Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice; c – John Georg Pinsel. The Virgin Mary. Late 1750s. Linden wood, polychrome, levkas, gilding. Church in Godowice. Lviv National Gallery of Art named after B. D. Voznytskyi

**Source:** figure 5a courtesy of Roman Petruk, Assumption of the Virgin (Titian) (n.d.), Grand&Great (n.d.)

The composition lacks the usual straight perspective with a horizon line. The human space is not limited to the physical body. An example of this is the literary works of Lesia Ukrainka, the feerie on the connection between the human world and the universe. The artist is inspired by the art of European and Ukrainian Baroque, with its inherent multi-vector range. Petruk rejects the three-dimensional realistic depiction of the landscape. Anthropomorphic personalities of the spirits of natural elements, endowed with symbolic attributes, are created by the imagination. This demonstrated a connection with the root system of Slavic pantheism. At the same time, nature is spiritualised by Lukash's music and Mavka's forgiving love. There is a synthesis of pagan and Christian cultures. The characters float in a conventional space filled with energy. Abstract geometric shapes exacerbate the dynamics of organic forms inherent in nature (for instance, the square – symbolises the earth).

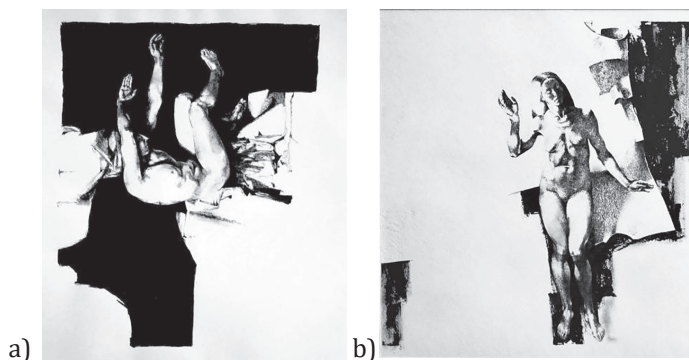
The physical space of the real world is "irrelevant" to R. Petruk's creativity; what is important is the "energy of the plane". According to the artist, everything is united by "One who sits in the rock", "One who breaks the dams", and the all-encompassing energy of wind and ether (Tarasenko & Petruk, 2018-2025). Air transforms the dynamics of folds and creates emotional tension. Creating a holistic space on the canvas, Petruk combines the elements of air and water, emphasising water as the basis of existence. The composition is united by the space of the emerald blue-green background. The cold tones, in which the artist often paints faces, correspond to the dominant spirit. The multi-layered texture, created by numerous brush and palette knife strokes, conveys the micro-vibrations that Roman felt in the forest atmosphere while painting en plein air. The trembling of the leaves in the gusts of wind finds a form of expression akin to pointillism and divisionism.

## THE ARTISTIC METHOD OF MYKOLA STOROZHENKO'S SCHOOL

R. Petruk mentioned that Storozhenko's academic productions are based on a metaphysical approach to material form (figures, drapery) (Petruk, 2020). Storozhenko's method was described by R. Petruk (2020) and presented in educational productions. The academic education system can freely express the plasticity of the human body. To find a clear image of the figure, artists drew it from complex angles (Fig. 6). For each figure in the composition "Forest Song", a detailed drawing of a naked body was created. For the drawing of the complex perspective of Perelesnyk, more than ten models posed for the artist. In the next stage, the figures were dressed in dynamic folds of different characters, designed to express the emotional state of the characters.

In the dynamic process of finding a compositional solution, many sketches were created (Fig. 7). The method of gluing new sheets of paper onto thick paper in correct places was used. At this stage, the sketch resembles an abstract composition, as the goal is to expressively solve large colour and tonal relationships and rhythm (Petruk, 2020).

M. Storozhenko shared with talented students the ideological scope of creativity and the language of visual arts that was developed over many decades. The master's artistic form absorbs the energy of different cultures (Storozhenko, 2008). The expression of R. Petruk's composition is based on multidirectional vectors of figures: Perelesnyk descending to the ground and Mavka ascending to the sky. The "entrance" into the metaphysical space of the canvas occurs from the top left to the bottom. The fiery energy of the sky bursts into the blue green of the lake Polissya-Volyn with the burning folds of Perelesnyk's clothes (Prelessnik, the demon Eros): "like fire itself" (Fig. 8).



**Figure 6.** Training performances in Storozhenko’s studio. 2014

**Note:** a – Roman Petruk. “Mermaid”. Drawing for the composition “Forest Song”, b – Roman Petruk. “Mavka”. Drawing for the composition “Forest Song”

**Source:** provided by Roman Petruk



**Figure 7.** Roman Petruk. “Forest Song”. 2013-2015. Sketch

**Source:** provided by Roman Petruk



**Figure 8.** Roman Petruk. Perelesnik. “Forest Song”.  
Fragment. 2013-2015

**Source:** provided by Roman Petruk

The role is similar to the Zephyr in Sandro Botticelli’s *Primavera* (1482) (Fig. 9), which represents the symbolic unity of earth and sky. In the quattrocento masterpiece, a winged blue-and-blue figure of air spirit spiritualises Chloride, after which the nymph

transforms into the goddess of flowers Flora, and the revived earth blooms. During a creative trip in 2014, Roman studied the art of Italy. The author perceived Botticelli’s paintings as “too corporeal” to convey flight.



**Figure 9.** Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, 1482  
**Note:** Wood, tempera. 203×314. Florence, Uffizi Gallery  
**Source:** *Primavera* by Sandro Botticelli (n.d.)

The element of the fiery nature of Perelesnik's passion has an analogue in the image of Cupid. For example, in Botticelli's painting *Primavera*, the formidable pagan god is depicted shooting a flaming arrow at young maidens. In the dynamics of the *Perelesnyk*, allusions to the expression of the mythological idea of the unity of earth and sky are present in Tintoretto's painting *The Origin of the Milky Way* (1575) (Fig. 10).



**Figure 10.** Jacopo Tintoretto, "The Origin of the Milky Way", 1575

**Note:** Oil on canvas, 149.4 × 168, National Gallery, London

**Source:** J. Tintoretto (n.d.)

In contrast, in Caravaggio's composition "The Seven Works of Mercy" (1607), angels descending from heaven visibly connect the earth and the sky with the movement of their hands and the sweep of their enormous wings (Fig. 11). The spatial silhouette of the wings evokes an allusion to an hourglass. Visitors to the temple, along with the characters depicted in the painting, witness the descent of heavenly forces to Earth. Depicted above the messengers of heaven, the Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus gazes upon the good deeds of people. The power of the earth is affirmed in the voluminous and plastic modelling of athletic bodies, in the concreteness of the drapery of clothing, and the warm tones of the night. In contrast to the earthly character of the altar image of the reformer of European art of the Baroque era, in Petruk's composition, following the idea of the triumph of love and the descent of Mavka, the element of the sky prevails.

Creating a symbolic space, the artist refuses to depict the earth. R. Petruk's departure from gravity evokes allusions to the plafond paintings of the Baroque monumental and decorative art. For example, M. Caravaggio's *Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto* (1597) (Fig. 12).

Similarly to M. Storozhenko, R. Petruk is influenced by the emotionality of Baroque art. Similar to theatre actors, the characters in the paintings are endowed with expressive gestures. Only faces and limbs are visible in the figures, and an expressive rhythm of folds prevails. The folds, which are unique to each character, convey emotions, while at the same time being interconnected and creating an overall dynamic relief. M. Storozhenko

was fascinated by the plasticity of I.G. Pinzel. The winds and time have not spared most of the sculptures of the master, but even deprived of colour, they impress with the primary depth of the material (Fig. 13).



**Figure 11.** Caravaggio, "The Seven Works of Mercy", 1607

**Note:** 390×260, Pio Monte della Miserecordia, Naples

**Source:** M. Caravaggio (n.d.)



**Figure 12.** Caravaggio, Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, 1597

**Note:** 300×180. Painting of the ceiling in Villa Boncompagni Ludovisi, Rome

**Source:** Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto by Caravaggio (n.d.)



**Figure 13.** Johann Georg Pinzel, "Angel", 1750s

**Note:** Tree, Museum of Sacred Baroque Sculpture I.G. Pinzel, Lviv

**Source:** Photo by Olga Tarasenko

R. Petruk noted that M. Storozhenko resembled the folds on the human figure to flowers on the “body” of a blossoming cherry tree, believing that it was necessary to convey not the dense fabric of the folds, but to express the invisible ether between them (Petruk, 2020). At the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NAO-MA (December 2017), R. Petruk’s composition “Forest Song” was exhibited in the assembly hall opposite M. Storozhenko’s monumental canvas “Premonition of Golgotha” (2015). A symbolic meeting of generations took place, continuing the life of the teacher in the student. On 25 February 2018, an exhibition of Petruk’s panel paintings opened at the Lesya Ukrainka Public Library in Kyiv. The artistic method of Mykola Storozhenko’s school, based on a synthesis of deep philosophical understanding, rich cultural heritage and expressive plasticity, found its continuation in the work of Roman Petruk. Through dynamic composition, ambiguous allusions to European and Eastern art, and emotional language of gesture and drapery, the artists affirm spiritual values and universal themes of love, suffering and transformation.

## CONCLUSIONS

The mythopoetics of Lesya Ukrainka’s drama-ferie was noted to be vital for the crisis of the late XX – and early XXI centuries, given the range of experiences of love and death, human attitude to nature, and perception of nature as a holistic living principle. The text of the feerie continues to inspire artists as a basis for personal interpretation. The analysis of the literature demonstrated that R. Petruk’s composition “Forest Song”, significant in its ideological content and artistic form, remains understudied. A range of methods (hermeneutics, analytical psychology, comparative studies, iconography and iconology) interpreted the contemporary work in an art historical manner, including it in the context of the art of the West and the East in a wide time range. Created under the guidance of M. Storozhenko, the large-scale composition by R. Petruk is suggestive in terms of the emotions and philosophical perception of

the feerie. The painting testified to the artist’s ability to perceive the dramatic essence of Lesya Ukrainka’s poetic images living on the verge of the physical and ideal world; to convey time, which combines the past and the present. R. Petruk abandoned the realistic depiction of the forest, creating conventional mythopoetic images of various elements. Following the idea of drama, the composition is painted with the dominant spiritual vertical. The idea of the work is related to the eternal theme: love brings harmony to the world through music.

The composition by R. Petruk is defined as a panel painting. The geometric schemes of the “pictorial fabric” reveal techniques inherent in monumental and decorative art. They contributed to the achievement of laconic expressiveness. The character of the multi-figure canvas evoked allusions to the theatrical curtain and the role it could play. The structure of the panel painting is in tune with the Catholic iconostasis. At the same time, the monumental and decorative basis suggests the possibility of transformation into a sculptural relief. In the polystylism of M. Storozhenko’s school, the heritage of Neo-Baroque, in which the master saw the embodiment of the national style of Ukraine, was central. The feerie-panel transferred the viewer out of everyday life and into the planes of existence. In the language of monumental and decorative art, the real three-dimensional space is transformed into a spiritual transcendental dimension. Prospects for further research on the chosen topic are based on the publication of the article “The Image of Lesya Ukrainka in Visual Art”.

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## Інтерпретація драми-феєрії Лесі Українки в картині-панно Р. Петрука «Лісова пісня». Школа М. Стороженка

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**Анотація.** Мета роботи полягала в розкритті індивідуального трактування драми-феєрії Лесі Українки в картині-панно Р. Петрука «Лісова пісня». У статті використовувалися герменевтичний, компаративний, іконографічний, іконологічний, історико-культурологічний методи. Проаналізовано відношення змісту драми з міфопоетикою живописного образу. Картину-панно досліджено у взаємозв'язку з темою земної і небесної любові у світовому мистецтві. Розглянуто характер персоніфікації образів природних стихій; умовність живописного та просторового рішення; показано роль атрибутів у створенні художніх образів. Досліджено значення спадщини українського бароко та світового монументально-декоративного і станкового образотворчого мистецтва у створенні особистої стилістики твору. Проаналізовано композиційне та пластичне вирішення полотна. Творчий метод Р. Петрука вивчено в контексті школи М. Стороженка та Національної академії образотворчого мистецтва і архітектури. Розкрито взаємозв'язок метафізичного характеру картини-панно Р. Петрука «Лісова пісня» з природою Волині. Показано новаторський підхід художника до створення синтетичного образу драми-феєрії візуальними засобами. Висвітлено індивідуальний характер сприйняття і трактування літературного твору. Виявлено традиції національного та світового мистецтва, на які спирається художник. Показано ключову роль сопілки в символіці картини-панно; визначено провідну роль музики в гармонії світобудови. Виявлено глибинний взаємозв'язок образів Лукаша, Мавки, Лесі Українки з міфологічним героєм Орфеєм. Простежено спільні риси картини-панно Р. Петрука з театральною завісою та бароковим іконостасом. Акцентовано, що особливістю композиції Р. Петрука є монументально-декоративний лад. Стаття може бути корисною для викладачів та студентів закладів освіти мистецького спрямування, зокрема, в лекційних курсах з історії української художньої та музичної культури; для художників, культурологів та мистецтвознавців у створенні історії сучасного монументально-декоративного мистецтва

**Ключові слова:** міфопоетичний образ; синтез мистецтв; музика; символізм; творчий метод; інтертекст; Захід та Схід



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## Character's visual image creation in multimedia projects

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**Abstract.** In the modern information society, character design plays a key role in shaping visual culture and effective communication in the media space. Characters become conductors of meaning, brand symbols, narrative elements that influence the emotional perception of the audience. The relevance of this study was driven by the rapid development of digital technologies, the integration of visual content into various fields (from education to advertising), and the growing role of characters in digital communications, where not only aesthetics but also the psychological persuasiveness of the image is significant. The purpose of the present study was to consider character design as a crucial element of multimedia projects, analyse animation works, and identify key stages that influence the formation of a visual image. The study employed an integrated approach that combines visual, comparative, and content analysis, typology, and descriptive methods. The study explored the process of creating and developing character design in animated films, video games, and other multimedia products. The artistic, technical, and conceptual solutions employed by designers were analysed, and the criteria for an effective visual image, such as recognisability, emotional expressiveness, adaptability, and stylistic relevance to the context were identified. Particular attention was paid to the influence of cultural, social, and psychological factors on the formation of characters and their role in the narrative structure of the artistic work. Based on the analysis of seven popular characters of different eras, styles, and formats, the study generalised the key features of successful design. It was found that the combination of simplicity of form, cultural symbolism, and design flexibility ensures an emotional connection with the audience and effective communication in the media. The findings of this study can be used in the practice of character design for animation, games, cinema, and interactive media

**Keywords:** character design; animation; multimedia design; graphic solution; emotional expression; adaptability; media

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## INTRODUCTION

In animated films, the central element is the character, which plays a key role in the perception of the storyline and the construction of the visual environment. The character's design features help to convey information about their character, functions, and the specifics of the environment in which they exist. The use of visual elements allows creating associative connections that contribute to a better understanding of the overall concept of the work by the audience. Characters are present not only in animation but also in various art forms, such as literature, painting, theatre, and folk art. Despite the growing interest in animation art, the issues of character design in the context of their artistic expression and role in projects are still understudied. Identification of the specific features that distinguish animated characters from images from other artistic fields is a relevant area of research.

In the scientific discourse, character design has been viewed as an interdisciplinary field that combines artistic expression, psychological depth, cultural representation, and technological innovation. Contemporary research has covered various aspects of character creation, from stylisation and semiotics of images to the impact of artificial intelligence and digital platforms on the creative process. Many researchers have focused on the visual style and cultural context of images. Y. Eldris *et al.* (2023) analysed the influence of fashion and style on the creation of unique video game characters, emphasising the significance of aesthetics as a means of creating character recognition. V.V. Parkina (2023) proposed a methodology for creating an illustrative character using digital graphics, factoring in the visual language of form and viewer perception. M. Kalmakurki (2022) explored the role of costume in the design of characters in feature-length animated films, emphasising the role of styling clothing as a means of visual characterisation. U.K. Nasution & A. Rahmi (2024) focused on the language of form in 2D animation, which allows creating images with a clear symbolic meaning.

The issue of technical embodiment of characters has been explored in studies on concept art, digital technologies, and the use of artificial intelligence. A. Seleznyova (2024) analysed the stages of creating a conceptual image using computer graphics, paying special attention to the silhouette, colour palette, and characteristic features. O.S. Vasylieva *et al.* (2021), O. Kolysnyk *et al.* (2022), O. Oliinyk (2023) explored the specific features of creating animated characters in the context of the rapid development of digital tools, focusing on the adaptability and innovation of approaches. M. Lataifeh *et al.* (2023) made a valuable contribution to the study of generative technologies. The researchers considered the possibilities of using generative adversarial networks (GANs) to increase the creativity of designers. M. Tang & Y. Chen (2024) developed an analogous topic, highlighting the effectiveness and

interface convenience of digital solutions, particularly in the context of inclusive design. X. Chen & J. Chung (2023) analysed the use of the Midjourney platform for character creation, which illustrated the shift in emphasis towards artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools.

Another group of researchers has been considering the psychological aspects of design. Thus, K. Isbister (2022) proposed a psychological approach to creating compelling characters for video games, focusing on the player's emotional interaction with the visual image. O.O. Slitiuk & K.A. Danylchuk (2022) stressed the role of animated images in conveying character and plot, while P. Bilotsyts (2022) explored the technique of dehumanisation in creating hostile characters in video games as a tool to influence the player through emotional distancing. M. Wegiel (2021) addressed the significance of details, specifically, bodily modifications and accessories, pointing out the value of these elements in the formation of a unique style. H. Hromko (2023) covered the cultural and historical aspect of image formation, which provided an overview of the evolution of animation art – from shadow theatre to digital animation. This approach allows tracing the transformation of the character's role from a conventional image to a full-fledged personality with a profound emotional profile.

Thus, the analysis of the above sources suggested a prominent level of scientific interest in the problem of character creation as a complex process that combines artistic vision, emotional communication, and technological innovation. The findings of these sources were valuable for the present study, as they helped to summarise existing approaches to character design, adapt the methodology to the current conditions of animation production, and outline the parameters of an effective visual image for the short film format. The purpose of the present study was to investigate character design in contemporary animation projects, analyse the artistic techniques, the design solutions used to create them, and identify the features of visual design, including the placement of key elements: character style, image, accessories, emotional expressiveness, etc.

The study examined the character design of seven multimedia projects selected by the criteria of recognisability, genre diversity, cultural context, and format of implementation. The analysis covered the following examples: Mickey Mouse (Steamboat Willie, Walt Disney Studios, 1928), Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega, 1991), Jack Skellington (The Nightmare Before Christmas, Touchstone Pictures, 1993), Groot (Guardians of the Galaxy, Marvel Studios, 2014), Jett ("Valorant", Riot Games, 2020), Kotyhoroshko ("The Tale of Kotyhoroshko and His Friends", Ukrainamovie, 1970), Mavka ("Mavka. The Forest Song, Animagrad, 2023). The study was based on the integrated use of qualitative methods: visual analysis – to assess the shape, colour, stylisation,

and facial expressions; comparative method – to compare characters with each other by key parameters; content analysis – to explore the narrative function of characters in the stories; typology – to classify the characters by the level of stylisation, emotionality, and adaptability; descriptive method – to summarise visual and behavioural characteristics. The character design was evaluated based on four indicators: recognisability, simplicity and expressiveness of design, adaptability to formats (2D, 3D, games, cinema), and relevance to the cultural context. The findings became the basis for drawing conclusions on effective design solutions in modern multimedia projects.

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CHARACTER EVOLUTION**

The character is a key element present in most art forms and plays a crucial role not only in artworks, but also in advertising and corporate identity, helping to attract consumers and increase brand awareness. Overall, a character serves as an actor in a work of art, which can be an embodiment of both anthropomorphic images and animate objects or natural phenomena. At the same time, the term “character” is emotionally neutral and defines a subject with distinct individual and psychological characteristics that bring it closer to real human images. Characters are mostly fictional but may have real-life prototypes. Character design plays a key role in revealing the plot and forming an idea of the world of the work, demonstrating its dynamism or, conversely, static nature. The character's visual characteristics, behavioural traits, and communication tools reflect the author's conceptual ideas, which helps to establish an emotional connection between the audience and the artistic work. As a result, characters in animated films often become objects of audience identification, allowing the audience to project their individual experiences and values onto the images presented in the visual narrative.

A historical analysis of character development in animation art requires a consideration of the stages of development of animation itself. One of the oldest manifestations of animation art is considered the shadowplay, which originated in China around 200 AD. This form of entertainment involved the use of flat images that were set in motion between a light source and a translucent screen, creating the illusion of animated figures. To identify the characters, silhouettes cut out of paper with distinctive shapes were used. In Europe, this technology gained popularity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in France, thanks to the missionary Jules Alod. Later, the development of animation art was driven by the improvement of optical mechanisms that allowed creating the effect of a moving image. Inventors, including the Lumiere brothers, Joseph Plateau, and other researchers, developed devices based on the principles of rotating discs or tapes with sequential patterns projected using a mirror system and a light source. The

official date of birth of animation is 30 August 1877, when French inventor Emile Renaud patented a device for frame-by-frame animation, which became the basis for the further development of this art form. This invention launched a technological process that later defined the principles of creating animated characters and their visual identity.

The character is the central element of animation art that defines the narrative structure of the work and forms an emotional connection with the audience. As animation has evolved, characters have gradually evolved, acquiring more complex visual characteristics that corresponded to the technological capabilities and artistic trends of certain periods. One of the first iconic animated characters was Felix the Cat (Fig. 1), who first appeared on 9 November 1919 in the animated film *Feline Follies* by Paramount Pictures. Thanks to its expressive silhouette, minimalist yet recognisable design, and plasticity of movement, this character became a reference example of an effective visual solution for animation at the time. His image demonstrated the value of graphic stylisation and visual expressiveness, which became the basis for the further development of animated character design.



**Figure 1.** Keith Felix, Paramount Pictures, 1919  
**Source:** Studio Paramount Pictures. Felix the Cat (n.d.)

Walt Disney made an enormous contribution to the development of animated character design by introducing the principles of classical animation, which are fundamental to the present day. Thanks to the introduction of colour, synchronous sound, and advanced animation techniques, characters became more detailed and expressive. Further development of the genre included experiments with form and style: iconic characters such as Tom and Jerry and the Flintstones appeared, expanding the target audience of animation to include not only children but also adults. The transition to computer graphics in the 1990s was revolutionary for character design. The use of 3D modelling made possible the creation of more complex shapes, textures, and effects, which greatly expanded the expressive possibilities of animation. This contributed to the emergence of new artistic solutions that allowed not only improving the realism of images but also developing innovative stylised images.

## **VISUAL AND FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FEATURES**

Contemporary character design is based on a combination of conventional artistic techniques and digital technologies, which allows creating both realistic and expressive stylised images. Animated projects actively use symbolism, colour codes, unique shapes and textures to enhance the personality of the characters and their relevance to the overall concept of the artistic work. Over the past decade, there has been a trend towards increasing the realism of animated characters in both physical and emotional aspects. Thanks to motion capture technologies, actors can give characters intricate detail and natural expressions. Furthermore, modern animation increasingly factors in the aspects of inclusivity, representation of diverse cultures and social groups, which helps to expand the range of characters and images. With the development of animation art, the role of the character has been changing, which has led to the emergence of distinct types and classifications. According to certain characteristics, the following types of characters can be distinguished:

- By significance: main characters (protagonists), antagonists (characters who oppose the main character), and secondary characters who perform a supporting function in the plot.

- By function: active characters that directly influence the plot development, and passive characters that create an atmosphere or complement the overall context.

- By complexity: multifaceted characters with a complex psychological structure and internal development, and one-dimensional characters with a simplified set of traits.

- By way of creation: realistic characters whose behaviour and appearance correspond to human characteristics, and fantastic characters with unique, unrealistic features.

- By form of existence: animated characters depicted in traditional or digital animation and virtual characters used in video games, advertising, or digital environments.

Determination of the character typology underlies the development of its visual design. The protagonistism as a rule, must be clearly distinguished from other characters to facilitate their identification by the audience. However, all characters, regardless of their role, should have distinctive features consistent with the overall concept of the artistic work. Characters in animation can perform various functions, including plot development, conveying ideas, creating conflict, forming an emotional connection, aesthetic value (they can have artistic value and become symbols of a certain style or era), comedic support (they act as humour elements that help diversify the narrative and balance its emotional tension). Thus, the design of a character in animation is determined not only by visual parameters but also by functional characteristics that

determine their interaction with the world of the work and the viewer.

Each animated short film has its unique features in style, plot, and expressiveness, as the runtime is limited. The character must be expressive and understandable, as the design should be memorable to the audience in a brief time, while leaving room for emotional depth. To determine the design for such a character, there are several things to consider. Firstly, brevity and simplicity are essential characteristics. A character that is not overloaded with details is more memorable. The simplicity of forms that can evoke associations makes it more recognisable and easier to perceive. Such a design emphasises the character's traits, which allows the audience to follow their development with engagement. Secondly, memorability is crucial: too simple a design can make a character get lost among other characters. However, expressiveness can also be determined by bright elements in the design, such as behaviour and appearance features. It can also be influenced by the choice of a colour palette that emphasises an emotional state or reinforces the story. One can also use special details, such as a favourite object or a unique habit, which can add to the character's complexity.

## **ARCHETYPES, DYNAMICS, AND STRUCTURE OF IMAGE CREATION**

To define the role of a character visually, they must have their "quick identification". One of these elements is an archetype – a universal image or type that is deeply rooted in the collective unconscious of humanity. Carl Jung developed this concept (Jung, 2018). Archetypes are the basis for creating characters, stories, and interactions in art, literature, film, and other forms of creativity. They evoke understandable emotions in people because they correspond to a shared cultural and psychological experience. Therefore, to make a character more recognisable, a strong archetype is created for them, making them understandable through their actions or appearance. Thus, the audience can instantly identify the character through the understandable signs of their archetype.

According to the generalised interpretation of archetypes based on the descriptions in Jung's book (Jung, 2018), there are nine main types. The Persona archetype reflects the social mask of the hero – the image that the character shows outwardly, not always corresponding to their essence. The Shadow archetype embodies hidden or repressed personality traits, such as aggression or fears, which can manifest themselves in stressful or critical situations. The Self archetype symbolises the integrated integrity of the hero – the unity of their conscious and unconscious. The Mother archetype, or the Goddess archetype, appears as the personification of care, protection, gentleness, and compassion. It is opposed to the Wise Old Man archetype, which is associated with a fatherly figure – experienced, authoritative, capable of mentoring. The Anima and Animus,

respectively, represent the feminine and masculine in the psyche of the individual, specifically as internal images that are often associated with the ideals of what is desired. The Trickster archetype represents a chaotic, dishonest character who breaks the rules and provokes conflicts. The Shapeshifter is someone who undergoes a significant transformation over the course of the narrative, changing their characteristics or moral guidelines. The Harbinger archetype is associated with characters who bring unexpected or disturbing news. The Femme Fatale is the personification of an attractive but dangerous force that is both admirable and threatening.

The character's transition between archetypes or the combination of several archetypes in them is a vital characteristic of development. Jung pointed out the need to include four archetypes (hero, villain, mentor, and object of desire) that form two pairs of opposites. The use of archetypes simplifies the creation of characters and facilitates the perception of the story. Gestures and facial expressions can be used to distinguish between characters with the same archetype. In a short format, movements and emotions convey more than words. Animators can use exaggerated facial expressions or behaviour to enhance understanding. These elements also include emotional depth in a short form. Character development can be achieved through context, which means that instead of long explanations, an environment or event is used to reveal the character. Thus, at the beginning, the character has their unique look and personality, but they cannot be stable all the time. As the story progresses, the character's personality and philosophy can be greatly affected, because circumstances and other characters influence the protagonist, and this happens due to the plot dynamics. The protagonist must change or have new experiences, even in a short story. This can be a change in emotional state or a rethinking of their purpose. However, as the plot develops, the short film should not lose touch with the main theme of the film. The character and the plot should reflect and convey the main idea and message of the film without losing the primary purpose. That is, if the theme is about friendship, then the character can have traits that emphasise this, such as interaction with other characters. If the film is about overcoming hardships, the character can start from a weak position but achieve inner strength.

One of the elements that can also be used is a minimum of dialogue. Short films often use non-verbal means of communication (gestures, music, sounds) to save time and maintain versatility. This also includes the individuality of the voice, which can highlight and emphasise the personality of the protagonist. Another prominent element is interaction with the environment, where the character must interact with the world around them so that their reactions and actions reinforce and correspond to the plot. Notably, creating a character for a short film means striking a balance between brevity,

expressiveness, and depth. The character must be visually striking, emotionally accessible, and closely related to the main theme of the artistic work. In this format, every detail matters, because they form the complete image of the character in the eyes of the audience.

To understand the process of creating a character, it is worth highlighting its main stages. At the initial stage of character development, the target audience is determined. It is crucial to consider the genre features, stylistic decisions, and emotional impact that the character should have on the audience. Accordingly, the role of the character in the story is analysed: their relationship to the narrative structure, their place in the plot composition, and their function in the story. It is determined whether the character is the protagonist, antagonist, or a secondary character, which directly affects the development of their personality, behavioural patterns, and visual image. The next stage is the formation of the character's personal features, which includes determining their motivation, values, internal conflicts, fears, and aspirations. At this stage, potential plot transformations of the character are analysed, which can lead to changes in their personality or reveal its hidden aspects. For example, a secondary character who initially appears to be the protagonist's ally may later turn out to be their antagonist, or, conversely, an adversary at the beginning of the story may transform into an ally.

After defining the conceptual basis of the character, the development of its visual image begins. First, a basic sketch is created that meets the established characteristics. At this stage, the project style, silhouette features, proportions, colour scheme, and visual elements that emphasise the character's personality are determined. A prominent aspect is to factor in the specific cultural, professional, and social features of the world where the character exists, which contributes to a holistic and authentic image. If necessary, supplementary concepts are developed that reflect the character in different periods of their life, as well as key events that influenced their development. The final stage is to detail and refine the image. The characteristic features that distinguish the character from others are identified: manner of speech, style of behaviour, symbolic or characteristic elements of appearance. Subsequently, the authors assess whether the created image is consistent with the original concept and the expected reaction of the audience. If necessary, adjustments are made to ensure maximum correspondence with the specified characteristics and impact on the viewers.

Despite the basic rules for creating a harmonious design, there will always be exceptions when designs are not quite successful and are often forgotten by the audience, while successful ones often stay memorable. As an example, it is worth considering the works of large studios to analyse their successful character designs that stay recognisable to many viewers. One of such characters is Mickey Mouse (Fig. 2) from the

Disney studio, who is known all over the world and is a kind of representative of the studio.



**Figure 2.** First design of Mickey Mouse, Disney studio, 1928

**Source:** Disney Pictures: Mickey Mouse (n.d.)

Since the Disney studio originally produced black-and-white projects, the colour palette itself also consisted of black and white with clear lines and shapes. It also helps to make the character emotionally expressive, with a strong emphasis on the eyes and clear facial expressions. It is thanks to this clear and uncomplicated design that Mickey Mouse is remembered by viewers, especially children. Even though the works became coloured over time and 3D technologies were employed, the design of the character itself did not undergo significant changes. The striking design elements were the shorts, which were made in red, and the shoes, which were made in yellow (Fig. 3), making the Mickey Mouse design versatile and adaptable to various formats and media.



**Figure 3.** Modern Mickey Mouse design, Disney studio, 2006

**Source:** Modern Mickey Mouse design (n.d.)

This also applies to many other early Disney characters who were transferred to new formats, adding

only colours and not making significant changes, such as Minnie Mouse. A character that is not vastly different from the previous one is Sonic the Hedgehog (Fig. 4) from the eponymous animated work. The character's design itself is also characterised by simplicity of form, but with more complicated shapes. His feature is a dynamic design with bright colours: blue and red, which are associated with speed. Against the background of other characters, which are mostly warm colours, Sonic stands out with a significant amount of cold colour. The silhouette also stands out greatly, making the character easily recognisable with its unique elements, namely spikes and large boots. Such design was developed for a correspondingly older audience, and therefore it was created in a modern and energetic way that attracts young audience. Notably, with the advancement of technology and the transition to 3D, the overall design has not changed, which may indicate its easy adaptability across various media.



**Figure 4.** Sonic the Hedgehog, TMS Entertainment, 2003

**Source:** Sonic the Hedgehog (n.d.)

Jack Skellington (Fig. 5) from the animated film *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is a representative for a more adult audience with a successful design. The work was created using 3D animation technologies and has its unique scary and no less enchanting atmosphere. But even though this character was not created for children, the silhouette and shape in the design are easily recognisable and simplistic with some pronounced elements that are easy to read. As in the style of the artwork itself, the character design is made in a minimalistic, but no less expressive style that emphasises the theme of a Gothic fairy tale. Another thing worth noting is the silhouette, as it has a contrast between a thin body and a large head, which adds to the stylised charm. In terms of contrast, the colour palette, albeit not distinguished by a large variety of colours, contrasts perfectly thanks to shades. At the same time, this character design can be easily adapted to various situations and media due to the versatility of facial expressions.



**Figure 5.** Jack Skellington, Tim Burton, 1993

**Source:** The Nightmare Before Christmas pictures: Jack Skellington (n.d.)

Considering the representatives of Ukrainian artistic works, it is worth mentioning such a character as Kotigoroshko (Fig. 6) from the children's fairy tale Adventures of Kotigoroshko and His Friends. Developed as an animated series and based on Ukrainian folklore, which many viewers have known since childhood, the character evokes a sense of national identity. Even though the design looks simplistic, it has significant elements that suggest the personality of the characters and their principal features. The characters have a heroic design with traditional elements (vyshyvanka shirt, etc.) and bright colours that contrast with each other. The characters are portrayed as positive heroes with a motivating image that is easily and successfully adapted for a children's audience.



**Figure 6.** Adventures of Kotigoroshko and His Friends, Ukranimafilm Studio, 2014

**Source:** "Adventures of Kotigoroshko" campaign for users of the "Children's World" portal (n.d.)

Considering newer projects, The Guardians of The Galaxy series of films by Marvel Studios deserves attention, where one of the characters is Groot (Fig. 7). His design stands out for its simplicity and uniqueness and is based on a plant texture that creates an association with nature. Furthermore, the character stands out not only for its design, but also for the feature that is

associated with a limited vocabulary consisting of the phrase "I am Groot". This is compensated for by the character's rich facial expressions and gestures, and during the plot he is helped to reveal himself by other characters in the film, which makes it much easier to understand the character. Additionally, Groot is amiable to many viewers due to his naive nature and loyalty.



**Figure 7.** Groot, Marvel Studios, 2014

**Source:** Marvel pictures: Groot (n.d.)

When discussing natural motifs, a character like Mavka (Fig. 8) from the “Mavka. The Forest Song” animation project by Animagrad animation studio can also be used as an example. Although many fans of the project preferred the original design, the current one was also well-received by many viewers. What made the design of Mavka stand out was that the design was based on Ukrainian culture and natural themes, with some emphasis on environmental awareness; natural motifs and organic elements can be traced in the character’s design, which are in harmony with the refined facial features, such as floral motifs on the dress, green hair reflecting elements of vegetation, emphasising the connection with nature. This has its own harmony and symbolism, because the colour palette is quite soft, with predominantly cool and warm colour accents that add natural charm. It is also worth mentioning the detailed texture and visual expressiveness, with the character embodying the mysticism and beauty of folklore images in a modern interpretation. Although the character’s silhouette is somewhat reminiscent of modern Disney models, this does not prevent it from expressing the emotional depth of the character and her story, which resonates with a modern audience.



**Figure 8.** Mavka, Animagrad studio, 2023

**Source:** “Mavka” outperformed “Avatar...” (n.d.)

However, it is not just animation projects that have examples of successful character designs; it is also worth considering video game characters, which are presently also distinguished by their themes, style, and design. One representative of the gaming industry is Jett (Fig. 9) from the game Valorant by Riot Games. Character design in such projects requires the creation of recognisable images with unique characteristics. Jett is distinguished by her silhouette, hairstyle, and colour scheme, which emphasises her speed and lightness. Her design combines visual expressiveness with technical optimisation for dynamic gameplay. The creators also factored in the cultural adaptation for a global audience and consistency with the overall style of the game, which combines futuristic technology with bright, stylised graphics.



**Figure 9.** Jett, Riot Games, 2020

**Source:** Jett (n.d.)

Jett’s design is sophisticated, with a look that matches her abilities, as well as clothing and weapons with technological elements that emphasise her playstyle. The choice of colours – blue, white, and grey – plays a notable role, conveying cold confidence and lightness. Jett’s short white hair not only makes her easily recognisable but also gives her a modern and rebellious look. Notably, Jett is from South Korea and her design contains subtle cultural references, as well as her cheeky smile and casual demeanour reflect her rebellious and self-assured nature. The design features are designed with the gaming audience in mind, with a strong emphasis on branded abilities. As a result, Jett from Valorant is one of the most recognisable characters in the game, and her design was created with the unique requirements of a shooter focused on team tactics and visual variety in mind.

Thus, the research findings confirmed that effective character design is based on simplicity, recognisability, emotional expressiveness, and relevance to the cultural context. These characteristics can be traced in most of the analysed images – from the stylised Mickey Mouse to the modern Jett from Valorant. A. Seleznyova (2024) and Y. Eldris *et al.* (2023) presented analogous conclusions, emphasising the significance of a concise visual image and stylisation to create a bright and memorable character. At the same time, the present study paid special attention to the relevance of the design to the cultural context.

Greater depth in the analysis of the character creation process was provided by the results of recent research, which should be considered in the context of multimedia practices. O. Berlach & O. Lesyk-Bondaruk (2020) focused on the artistic and technological aspects of vector animation, emphasising the need for harmony between creative intent and technical implementation. The researchers highlighted the significance

of simplifying the shape, colour schemes, and stylisation to achieve character expressiveness in the digital environment. Analogous approaches are also observed in projects with a short runtime, where the conciseness of the design is crucial. O. Levadnyi *et al.* (2021) focused on the imaginative potential of mascots, exploring them as culturally marked symbols in education, economics, and sports. Particular attention was paid to the character's ability to represent national identities in a global context. These conclusions correlate with contemporary approaches to cultural representation in design, which can be observed, specifically, in the cases of Ukrainian characters such as Mavka or Kotigoroshko. N.S. Vergunova & E.S. Stepanenko (2021) focused on the creation of concept art in computer games, with an emphasis on the design's compliance with the atmosphere and emotional tone of the project. The issues of detail and stylistic consistency are crucial in achieving an immersive effect, which is significant not only in video games but also in short animation.

L. Chen & R. Khynevych (2024) approached character design in the context of cultural self-sufficiency by analysing the visual solutions of Chinese animations. The researchers pointed out the ability of design to translate traditional cultural narratives through modern art forms, which contributes to the innovative transformation of heritage. This approach is especially relevant in projects where the character is a carrier of a cultural code. O. Levadnyi *et al.* (2021) and K.T. Nguyen *et al.* (2023) examined the aesthetic evolution of the character in animation, addressing the rethinking of the ideals of beauty and heroism. Changes in design reflect not only aesthetic trends, but also socio-cultural transformations, which indicates the character's relationship with the current social discourse. Analogous trends can be traced in global design, where characters should reflect the values of the modern time. Thus, these sources expanded the theoretical framework of the present study, emphasising the value of stylistic consistency, cultural identity, technological optimisation, and psychological expressiveness in character design. By considering these approaches, it is possible to form a multifaceted image that effectively communicates with the audience in various formats, from animation to interactive media.

The findings of U.K. Nasution & A. Rahmi (2024) focused on shape as a carrier of symbolism, which is consistent with the above observations on the role of silhouette and gestures in short form. O.S. Vasylieva *et al.* (2021) emphasised the significance of adaptive design, which was also confirmed in the presented analysis, specifically, by the examples of Groot and Sonic. The difference from the studies of M. Lataifeh *et al.* (2023)

and M. Tang & Y. Chen (2024) lies in the focus: the present study analysed implemented designs, while the above-mentioned researchers investigated automated methods of image generation. However, a clear visual code is crucial for both studies. Thus, the results of the analysis were consistent with the key trends in the scientific literature, while expanding them through a comparative approach and an emphasis on cross-format character adaptation.

## CONCLUSIONS

The character is one of the key elements in multimedia projects, as it is through them that the viewer or user establishes an emotional connection with the artistic work. An effective character design is created at the intersection of aesthetics, functionality, cultural symbolism, and the image's communicative ability. A crucial factor in the development process is the determination of the character's environment, which directly affects their appearance, personality, behaviour, and plot role. The findings of the present study revealed that the most effective designs have shared features: a recognisable silhouette, minimalistic but expressive shape, clear colour palette, characteristic accents (hairstyle, accessories, plastic), and compliance with archetypal models. The study found that the most emotionally convincing characters are those who combine simplicity of form with the depth of inner transformation. The analysis of archetypes revealed that it is the clear structure of the image that facilitates the quick identification of the character by the viewer. Particular attention was paid to the typology of characters in terms of their functional load and the degree of influence on the plot dynamics. Specifically, the study highlighted the role of design conciseness for short formats, where the time to reveal the character is limited. The analysis of examples from animation and video games confirmed that the adaptability of the image to various formats and platforms is one of the most significant characteristics of a modern character. Prospects for further research include investigating the effects of artificial intelligence on character generation, algorithmisation of design individualisation, and research into viewer interaction with the character in VR/AR environments.

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## Формування візуального образу персонажа у мультимедійних проєктах

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**Анотація.** У сучасному інформаційному суспільстві дизайн персонажа відіграє ключову роль у формуванні візуальної культури та ефективної комунікації в медіапросторі. Персонажі стають провідниками смислів, символами брендів, елементами нарративу, що впливають на емоційне сприйняття аудиторії. Актуальність теми дослідження зумовлена стрімким розвитком цифрових технологій, інтеграцією візуального контенту в різні сфери (від освіти до реклами) та зростанням ролі персонажів у цифрових комунікаціях, де важлива не лише естетика, а й психологічна переконливість образу. Метою дослідження був розгляд дизайну персонажа як важливого елемента мультимедійних проєктів, аналіз анімаційних робіт та виявлення ключових етапів, що впливають на формування візуального образу. У роботі застосовано комплексний підхід, що поєднує візуальний, порівняльний і контент-аналіз, типологізацію та дескриптивні методи. Було досліджено процес створення та розвитку дизайну персонажів в анімаційних фільмах, відеоіграх та інших мультимедійних продуктах. Проаналізовано художні, технічні й концептуальні рішення, що використовуються дизайнерами, а також визначено критерії ефективного візуального образу, такі як впізнаваність, емоційна виразність, адаптивність і стилістична відповідність контексту. Особливу увагу приділено впливу культурних, соціальних та психологічних факторів на формування персонажів і їхню роль у нарративній структурі твору. На основі аналізу семи відомих персонажів різних епох, стилів і форматів зроблено узагальнення щодо ключових ознак успішного дизайну. Визначено, що поєднання простоти форми, культурної символіки та гнучкості дизайну забезпечує емоційний зв'язок з аудиторією та ефективну комунікацію в медіа. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані у практиці дизайну персонажів для анімації, ігор, кіно та інтерактивних медіа

**Ключові слова:** дизайн персонажа; анімація; мультимедійний дизайн; графічне рішення; емоційна виразність; адаптивність; медіа



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## Creative approach to rhythmic gymnastics costume design

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**Abstract.** The present study aimed to investigate the evolution of rhythmic gymnastics costume design, in particular their aesthetic, functional and cultural components, with an emphasis on the integration of traditional national elements into the modern context. The study examined the costumes of athletes from such countries as Ukraine, China, the USA, Japan, and Uzbekistan. The materials included visual sources, technological documentation and the requirements of international regulations that define design standards, as well as scientific media publications. The study included an analysis of the historical stages of costume development, cultural symbols and innovative technologies used in their creation. The results of the study showed that the evolution of costume design reflects the complex interaction between cultural identity, technological progress and sports requirements. It was found that modern costumes strike a balance between functionality and artistic expression through the introduction of innovative materials, such as elastic mesh and thermoregulated fabrics, as well as the use of decorative elements such as rhinestones and appliqués. Ukrainian costumes demonstrated uniqueness through the integration of traditional ornaments into modern designs, while Chinese designs were marked by a harmonious colour palette that reflected cultural heritage. American costumes emphasised patriotic motifs through the use of national colours and intricate patterns. The analysis confirmed that international standards are an important factor influencing the creation of costumes, ensuring safety, comfort, and aesthetics. The conclusions of this study highlighted the importance of a harmonious combination of traditions and modern innovations in creating costumes that meet aesthetic and functional requirements. The findings open up new perspectives for research in the field of sportswear design, in particular in the context of the use of environmentally friendly materials and the impact on the psychological state of athletes

**Keywords:** cultural identity; national symbolism; decorative elements; aesthetics; ornament

### INTRODUCTION

Rhythmic gymnastics is one of the most expressive and aesthetic sports that combines physical skill, artistry and technical perfection. Since its inception, this sport has been the subject of scientific research, particularly in the context of its aesthetic, cultural and technological aspects. However, with the constant development of costume design, increasing requirements for functionality and compliance with modern environmental standards, there is a need for a detailed analysis of this topic. The design of rhythmic gymnastics costumes not only serves as a visual addition to the performance, but also acts as a tool to enhance expressiveness, comfort, and compliance with the requirements of modern international standards.

The scientific community has been actively researching various aspects of rhythmic gymnastics, including its aesthetic, historical and cultural dimensions. For example, C. Palmer (2022) drew attention to the symbolic significance of aesthetics in sports disciplines. The author emphasised that costumes, as well as visual elements of the performance in general, perform not only a decorative function but also play a pivotal role in the perception of rhythmic gymnastics as a unique combination of art and sport. This allows us to consider this sport as a form of artistic expression.

At the same time, D. Rayimberdieva *et al.* (2023) drew attention to the engineering and technological aspect of creating rhythmic gymnastics costumes. They

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studied in detail the properties of fabrics, including their elasticity, breathability, and ability to provide comfort during complex elements. The authors highlighted that the right choice of materials not only affects the comfort of the athletes, but also helps to boost their confidence, which is important for a successful performance. The combination of these approaches allows us to unlock both the creative and technological potential of rhythmic gymnastics.

Important observations on the impact of aesthetics on sport are also presented in the work by C. Mazumdar (2020), who analysed the evolution of tracksuits and their role in creating a “hyperfeminine” image in rhythmic gymnastics. The author showed how costume design has become a tool for enhancing expressiveness, but at the same time raised questions of gender stereotypes.

T. Boyle (2022) examined the visual aspects of the representation of the gymnastic body, which allowed for a deeper understanding of how costumes become an integral part of cultural discourse. The author showed that costumes can enhance or transform the image of an athlete, influencing the perception of the audience and judges. This study highlighted how visual elements serve as a tool for expressing artistic identity. Similarly, F.R. Menegaldo *et al.* (2023) focused on the artistic and expressive dimension of gymnastics, emphasising that a harmonious combination of aesthetics and technical excellence is a crucial factor in achieving impressive results. The authors noted that aesthetic elements such as choreography, music, and costume design not only enhance technical skill, but also create an emotional atmosphere that captivates the audience. They found that such performances form a deep emotional connection between athletes and audiences, turning gymnastics into a true art form that both inspires and amazes with the technical capabilities of the human body.

J. Sun & X. Song (2018) addressed the physiological aspect of costumes by investigating the impact of materials and cut on female athletes' blood circulation during performances. In their study, they used modern analysis methods to determine how clothing can enhance or limit physical performance. The results showed that excessive pressure or improper costume design can negatively affect the comfort and health of female athletes, while properly selected fabrics help to optimize physical performance.

C.O. Roberts (2020) focused on the psychological and aesthetic aspects, studying the impact of costumes on the emotional connection between the audience and performers. They pointed out that costumes are a key element in shaping the overall performance experience, helping the audience to better understand the choreography and storylines. Their review also includes an analysis of the different styles and materials that enhance the artistic expression of the performance.

Although previous research has covered many aspects of rhythmic gymnastics costume design, there

are gaps that require further analysis. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to how modern technology and environmental standards influence the design of rhythmic gymnastics costumes. It is also necessary to explore how traditional cultural elements can be adapted to the modern requirements of international competitions, which opens up opportunities for design innovation.

The aim of this study was to analyse the development of rhythmic gymnastics costume design, taking into account cultural traditions, modern technologies and environmental requirements. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set: to study the historical development of costume design, from the first samples to modern models, including the influence of cultural and social factors; to analyse technological innovations in the creation of costumes, including the use of innovative materials and technologies; to study the impact of international regulations and standards on modern costume design; to assess the importance of national and cultural motifs in the creation of costumes for international competitions.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study examined the costumes of female athletes from different countries, including Ukraine, China, the USA, Japan, and Uzbekistan. The choice of these countries is due to the diversity of cultural traditions, design approaches and the influence of international standards on their evolution. The following materials were used in the study: a list of international standards, including the regulations of the International Federation of Gymnastics (2024), European Gymnastics (2024) and “Rules of sports competitions in rhythmic gymnastics” approved by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (2021), which define the requirements for costumes in rhythmic gymnastics, such as safety, functionality, ethical aspects, as well as compliance of materials and design with modern standards; visual sources, including photographs, competition footage and media publications that reflect the evolution of costume design, as well as a description of design techniques, including the use of decorative elements such as rhinestones, sequins, lace and appliqués.

To achieve the research goal, an interdisciplinary approach was applied, which included several methods. First, the historical and analytical method was used to study the evolution of costumes. The main stages of their development in different countries were analysed – from the first dresses based on ballet patterns to modern functional and aesthetically sophisticated models. The influence of artistic periods, changes in judging criteria, and technological developments were taken into account. Secondly, content analysis was used to evaluate photos, videos of the competition and visual materials. It helped to identify the main trends in the choice of colours, materials and ornaments, as

well as in the use of cultural and decorative elements in costume design. Thirdly, the comparative analysis allowed us to compare the design approaches used in rhythmic gymnastics costumes in different countries. Finally, the review of standards provided an understanding of the requirements for materials, colours, and designs of costumes. Special attention was paid to safety, transparency of materials, lining, and restrictions on decorative elements.

The research process consisted of several stages. At the initial stage, materials were collected from international competitions, including the Olympic Games, World Championships and regional competitions. Authors also studied available publications on the development of costume design. The data collected was systematised into categories such as national characteristics, manufacturing techniques, materials used and compliance with standards. Cultural and decorative elements were separately identified. Cultural and national motifs were analysed through the analysis of colours, ornaments, and other symbolic elements used in the costumes. The materials were evaluated for their compliance with the criteria of flexibility, durability, comfort, and thermoregulation. It was also considered how the costume design affects the performance of complex technical elements. The design solutions of the costumes of female athletes from different countries were analysed using the example of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

## RESULTS

### Historical development of costume design

Rhythmic gymnastics, as an aesthetic genre, is located on the borderline between art and sports disciplines, which determines unique requirements for costume design. These costumes must combine aesthetic appeal, practicality, and compliance with the anatomical, psychological and kinetic aspects of movement. Costume design also takes into account didactic principles and achievements of sports science. This interdisciplinary approach, which encompasses style, materials, social and cultural aspects, ensures maximum compliance with the needs of female athletes and the requirements of international standards.

The first steps towards modern rhythmic gymnastics were made in the United States in the 1940s. This discipline emerged in the context of dance improvisations that were part of sports courses. At the beginning of its development, the athletes created their own outfits, focusing on the available materials and ideas of classical ballet costumes. Early costumes were mostly basic with a minimum of decorative elements, which limited their variability (Fig. 1). However, over time, costume design evolved to meet the requirements of modern competitions. The key element was the spandex leotard, decorated with crystal stones, sequins, and other decorative elements that provided both functionality and aesthetic appeal (Cleophas & Visser, 2024).



**Figure 1.** Costumes of the US gymnastics team, 1940s

**Source:** E. Rayment-Ward (2024)

Among the main factors that influenced the change in costume design are the evolution of musical periods, the development of technology, and changes in judging criteria. In the 1970s and 1980s, when rhythmic gymnastics became part of the Olympic Games, the emphasis on the visual component of performances increased significantly (Fuller, 2021). The costumes began to

emphasise the femininity and grace of the gymnasts, using more elastic materials and new decorative techniques (Fig. 2). The growing popularity of rhythmic gymnastics contributed to the professionalisation of costume design. At this time, new styles emerged that integrated ethnic motifs and modern fashion trends (Meyers, 2016).



**Figure 2.** Costume of Ukrainian Soviet rhythmic gymnast Irina Deryugina, 1981

**Source:** N. Puchko (2021)

In the 1990s, costume design reached a high level of individualisation. For example, the starting numbers were moved to the sleeve to ensure the visual purity of the upper part of the suit. At the same time, there was a search for new stylistic solutions that could combine comfort and decorativeness. Modern suits are often named after events or years of their creation, which helps to distinguish them from other models. In the 1990s, the growing interest in rhythmic gymnastics in post-Soviet countries led to the popularisation of monochromatic costumes (Fig. 3), which focused on the athletes' body lines (Kerr *et al.*, 2020). However, the style of costumes varied from country to country. Meanwhile, designers sought to ensure the comfort and practicality of the outfit, which allowed athletes to perform technically difficult elements.



**Figure 3.** Ukrainian rhythmic gymnast Kateryna Serebryanska's monochrome jumpsuit, 1993

**Source:** Rhythmic gymnastics leotard history in photos (2013)

Modern rhythmic gymnastics costumes are the result of the integration of advanced technology and the latest design concepts. The use of innovative materials such as stretch mesh, thermoregulated fabrics and environmentally friendly materials has become the standard in the industry (Krafte *et al.*, 2021). In the 2000s, new design solutions emerged, including the use of 3D printing to create complex patterns that make costumes bright and unique (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4.** Rhythmic gymnast costume at the 2000 Olympic Games

**Source:** Rhythmic gymnastics leotard history in photos (2013)

Cultural and geographical factors play a significant role in the design of costumes. In particular, Ukrainian national motifs, such as embroidery patterns, traditional colours and symbols, have actively influenced the development of rhythmic gymnastics costume design (Fig. 5). In the modern period, these elements are integrated into unique models that combine traditional Ukrainian symbols with innovative design solutions. Such costumes emphasise the harmony between Ukraine's rich cultural heritage and modern style, creating vivid and authentic images for female athletes.

The requirements for gymnasts' costumes set out in the International Federation of Gymnastics Technical Regulations 2024 and European Gymnastics Technical Regulations 2024-2025 aim to ensure a balance between aesthetics, functionality, and safety. They are also reflected in the "Rules of sports competitions in aesthetic group gymnastics" approved by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (2021). The main provisions include the use of materials that are not transparent, with mandatory lining in the torso area. Decorative elements, such as lace, are allowed, provided they do not compromise the integrity of the costume. It is noted that the costumes must be tight-fitting, providing

a clear view of the technical elements of the performance. The costume design excludes the use of additional accessories, such as separate socks or gloves, to avoid the risk of injury. It is important to prohibit asymmetrical colours on both legs, and the use of excessive or dangerous decorations, such as light-emitting diode (LED). The length and colour of the fabric covering the legs must be the same on both sides; the style and decor may vary, but harlequin style is not permitted. Skirts are permitted as long as they do not fall below the pelvic area, but a design resembling a ballet tutu is prohibited. Gymnasts can perform barefoot or in gymnastic shoes. Ethical norms are also taken into account: costumes must meet the standards of aesthetics and ethics, which excludes unacceptable words or symbols. Hair and make-up standards complement the requirements for appearance, ensuring the harmony of the image.



**Figure 5.** Ukrainian gymnast Hanna Bezsonova's costume design

**Source:** Ye. Gendina (2024)

In the context of researching innovation in rhythmic gymnastics costume design, these regulations are crucial for designers. On the one hand, they limit creativity within the framework of safety and ethics, while on the other hand, they stimulate the search for innovative materials and solutions, such as stretchy fabrics, safe decorative elements and technological improvements. Taking these requirements into account is essential for creating costumes that meet current trends while maintaining functionality and aesthetics.

Costume is an important factor in shaping the judges' impression of a performance. Compliance with the costume standards allows avoiding penalty points, while its harmony with the music, the style of the exercise and the overall aesthetics can positively influence the judges' subjective perception. For example, well-chosen colours, shape, and decor can enhance the artistic effect of a performance, drawing attention to the gymnast's movements and emphasising the dynamics of her performance. According to the FIG regulations,

violations of the costume or appearance requirements may result in a penalty of 0.3 points. This applies to the use of transparent fabrics without lining, mismatched styles, inappropriate jewellery or hairstyles, as well as violations of the rules regarding make-up or emblems. Even a minor deviation, such as underwear seams visible under a suit, can be grounds for a fine. On the contrary, compliance with all standards and a good presentation can increase the aesthetic component of the score, which can affect the final score in the artistry section.

### **Creative solutions in the creation of rhythmic gymnastics costumes in the international context, including Ukraine**

Staging a rhythmic gymnastics performance is a complex and multifaceted process that combines movements, choreography, music, and costumes. Each element has a key role in creating the overall harmony of the performance. The study of this aspect focuses on the design of costumes, in particular their aesthetic and functional characteristics, which are an important means of expression. The costume in rhythmic gymnastics plays a crucial role, as it not only reflects the theme of the performance, but also emphasises the athlete's movements, harmonising with her form and style. The key elements of costume design are colour, fabric, and shape. Each of these aspects contributes to creating an emotional impact on the viewer and helps shape the overall perception of the performance (Goldschmied *et al.*, 2020).

The choice of colour palette depends on the theme of the performance, the music, and the props used. The principles of colour theory provide numerous resources for creating costumes that can influence both the gymnast and the audience. For example, bright colours such as red or yellow are associated with energy and passion, while darker shades such as black emphasise elegance and strength (Fig. 6). The design also takes into account the cultural meanings of colours, which can vary from region to region. For example, yellow in some cultures symbolises joy and festivity, while in others it can be associated with light and wisdom (Østergaard, 2023). Ornaments and applications add uniqueness to the costume and support the emotional component of the performance.

Suits are made of fabrics with high elasticity, which ensures freedom of movement and comfort. Synthetic materials such as lycra, polyamide, and polyester with the addition of elastomer are popular (Zhu *et al.*, 2023). They are highly durable, resistant to wear and adapt to the shape of the athlete's body. Important characteristics of fabrics are their ability to absorb moisture, breathe and be pleasant to the touch. Elastic fabrics with minimal surface roughness create a second skin effect, which contributes to natural movements and avoids irritation. Fabrics with a glossy or matte finish add aesthetic expressiveness to suits, allowing one to highlight design details.



**Figure 6.** Ukrainian gymnast Hanna Rizatdinova's costume at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro  
**Source:** D. Sles (2016)

Innovative textile materials, such as 3D-effect fabrics, allow designers to create unique models that reflect technical excellence and purity of execution. Such fabrics are often tested for elasticity, breathability, and the ability to retain their shape even during intense movements. Modern approaches to suit design include the use of two-piece models that strike a balance between comfort and aesthetics. For example, fabrics with a special mesh are used to create a nude effect, adding sophistication and individuality to suits (Fig. 7). These solutions contribute to a harmonious combination of aesthetics and functionality.



**Figure 7.** The costumes of the American rhythmic gymnastics team at the Tokyo Olympics, 2021  
**Source:** B. Cassella (2021)

Rhythmic gymnastics costumes are decorated with rhinestones, sequins, lace, and appliqués. Rhinestones are the most popular decorative element due to their sparkle, lightness, and variety of shapes and sizes. They are arranged symmetrically or form complex patterns

that emphasise the theme of the performance. Sequins add dynamism and brightness to costumes during movements, creating a shining effect. Jewellery should be firmly attached to prevent it from falling off during the performance and match the style of the composition (Minaoglou *et al.*, 2024).

The design of the costume should ensure an optimal fit on the body, which contributes to the aesthetic perception of the performance. The silhouette of the costume must point out the lines of the gymnast's body while ensuring freedom of movement. Skirts should not exceed the length of the pelvic floor, and their cut should be such that the legs are visible during movements, which adds lightness and grace to the performance. The main focus is on the design of comfortable and safe leotard that allows performing technically complex elements. The costume should have a perfect fit that provides comfort and eliminates any restrictions (Porterfield & Lamar, 2020).

Nature has always been one of the main sources of inspiration for costume design. Elements of nature, such as textures, shapes, colours and movements, influence the choice of fabrics, embellishments, and construction. For example, some costumes feature motifs of flowers or birds to create the illusion of lightness and flight (Fig. 8). The colours of nature – from the rich green hues of the forest to the bright colours of spring blooms – are often used to enhance the emotional impact of a performance.



**Figure 8.** Japanese gymnast's costume at the 2021 Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships  
**Source:** B. Cassella (2021)

Cultural heritage plays an important role in the creation of rhythmic gymnastics costumes, especially when the design reflects national motifs. Traditional patterns, colours, and ornaments are integrated into the costumes to highlight the cultural roots of the gymnast or team. For example, the use of Ukrainian embroidery or ornaments typical of other nations can create an authentic look that reflects historical heritage and identity (Fig. 9). In traditional folklore, costumes often tell stories related to national myths or legends. This approach

allows for the integration of elements that symbolise collective memory and cultural values into costumes.



**Figure 9.** Design of the costumes of the Ukrainian rhythmic gymnastics team at the 2022 World Championships

**Source:** Ye. Gendina (2024)

Artistic periods such as Symbolism and Art Nouveau offer designers a wide range of ideas for visual design. Patterns, shapes, and colour combinations from these styles help to create visually intriguing and unusual costumes that harmonise with the choreography of the performance (Weiß *et al.*, 2022). Surrealism, for example, inspires the use of abstract elements that can reflect a unique theme or concept of a number. Such approaches can expand the emotional range of a performance, adding a new dimension to the aesthetic experience.

The creation of rhythmic gymnastics costumes is the result of a synergy between choreographers, costume designers, fashion designers and the gymnasts themselves. Each participant in the process contributes to the balance between aesthetics, functionality, and uniqueness. The success of a performance depends on a properly designed costume that meets the requirements of the sport and emphasises the individuality of the gymnast. The development of technology is combined with innovative approaches to costume design through the collaboration of fashion designers and costume designers. This collaboration combines elements of haute couture and sportswear to push the boundaries of aesthetic possibilities. Designers use the latest technologies, such as 3D printing and laser cutting, to create costumes that combine elegance and practicality (Rayimberdieva *et al.*, 2023). This approach helps to raise the status of rhythmic gymnastics, turning performances into an artistic show that attracts the attention of a wide audience.

Involving gymnasts in the development of costumes is a key aspect of modern design. The athletes provide on the functionality and comfort of the garment, which

allows us to improve its design. This approach ensures that costumes are created that are not only in harmony with the choreography, but also take into account the individual characteristics of athletes. The use of materials that provide comfort and freedom of movement, such as lycra, mesh and innovative synthetic fabrics, allows us to create costumes that meet high standards. The design takes into account the anatomical features of the body, ensuring a perfect fit and preventing discomfort during complex movements. The athletes' involvement in the selection of materials and decorative elements adds emotional value to the costumes, which has a positive impact on their performance.

Collaboration between designers and athletes creates a unique image system that increases the recognition of rhythmic gymnastics. Together with the gymnasts, designers essentially try to create original, unique artworks, and sometimes turn gymnastics into a kind of "fashion show" that can add value to the performance in the eyes of the audience and judges (Mykhailova, 2023). Costumes become part of the brand associated with specific athletes and their performances. They provide not only aesthetic pleasure, but also contribute to the popularisation of sport in the media.

### **The latest techniques and features of modern design when creating costumes for rhythmic gymnastics**

The early 2000s were marked by significant changes in the design of rhythmic gymnastics costumes, which resulted from the influence of modern trends and technologies. New forms of costumes appeared, such as jumpsuits, models with long pants, and styles using fabrics that match the colour of the skin. These innovations allow us to emphasise the dynamics of female athletes' movements while ensuring comfort and functionality. Advances in textile technology have led to the creation of materials with improved characteristics such as elasticity, moisture wicking and optimal microclimate. This provides gymnasts with comfort during complex exercises and reduces the risk of injury. The use of stretch fabrics with four-way elasticity – that is, fabrics that can stretch both horizontally and vertically – allows us to create costumes that perfectly adapt to the body's movements, providing freedom and naturalness of performance. These fabrics are different from "bilateral elasticity", where the material can only stretch in one direction (usually in width) (Rayimberdieva *et al.*, 2024).

The high level of technical characteristics and consideration of the gymnasts' movements are focused primarily on possible movements and tumbling. Therefore, the flared skirts (if any) are made of dense mesh or stretchy material, usually complemented by flounces. The top is also made of a dense and elastic material that is properly stitched to allow athletes to stretch, jump, and not restrict their body movements. The use of P-shaped

cuts and special seams guarantees stability and support when performing complex elements. Particular attention is paid to the selection of fabrics with high elasticity, the ability to wick away moisture and maintain an optimal microclimate. The production process involves the use of automated systems to create precise patterns and unique decorative solutions, such as airbrushed patterns or metal inserts. High-tech fabrics, including those with a glazing effect, meet modern standards and enhance the artistic impression. Durability is achieved through in-depth study of all technological operations. The costume must retain its attractive for a long time, as gymnastics involves active use and frequent washing.

The growing interest in sustainability is changing the way we approach costume design. Attention is being paid to methods that reduce the environmental impact, such as zero waste and seamless designs. Zero-Waste Fashion is a fashion design concept that aims to minimise or eliminate waste of textile materials during production (Rissanen & McQuillan, 2023). The main principles of this model include: efficient use of fabrics (patterns are designed to use all the material without leftovers); recycling of leftovers (any fabric scraps are used to create other garments or accessories); minimisation of overproduction. The Folded Garment Construction model is an approach to garment design where the key element is the folding or folding of fabric to create structured shapes without significant material loss (Kim, 2020). Characteristic features of this approach include: closed construction (patterns are designed so that the fabric folds into complete shapes without trimming); reduced seam count (this reduces the complexity of production and the use of resources such as thread and additional trim fabrics); stylish functionality (the garment remains modern and attractive while maintaining a minimal ecological footprint). In the context of rhythmic gymnastics leotards, this means creating models with precise calculations to reduce fabric residues and use them for decorative elements. These approaches aim to minimise waste and optimise the use of materials. Innovative eco-friendly solutions, such as the use of recycled fabrics or biomaterials, contribute to the implementation of sustainable design principles, which is an important step towards preserving the environment and supporting the biosphere (ISPO Munich 2024..., 2024).

Innovations in design include geometric and asymmetrical shapes that give the costumes a modern look and highlight the individuality of the athletes. Airbrushed and metallic colours are used for decoration, complemented by lace, rhinestones, sequins, and appliqués (Fig. 10). These elements contribute to the creation of sophisticated and vivid images that match the theme of the performances. Social media also plays an important role in spreading ideas and trends, creating a demand for unique and eye-catching (Bento-Soares & Schiavon, 2020).



**Figure 10.** Combination of different decorative elements in a rhythmic gymnastics costume  
**Source:** Rythmic gymnastic leotard history in photos (2013)

The costume designs also take into account the cultural and geographical features of the host cities or countries, which adds a local flavour to rhythmic gymnastics performances. Unique costume solutions that reflect national traditions or artistic motifs allow us to integrate historical and cultural aspects into modern sportswear. The innovative approach to costume design focuses on a harmonious combination of functionality, aesthetics and artistic expression that meets the high demands of modern sport.

The theme of the costume for a rhythmic gymnastics' performance is usually chosen by the athlete together with the coaching staff. The choice of theme can be arbitrary or pre-determined, but the basis for creating the costume and performing the exercises is the musical accompaniment, which sets the rhythm, creates emotional tension and immerses the gymnast in the artistic atmosphere of the performance. The costume should be in harmony with the rhythm and style of the composition, while effectively reflecting its interpretation. The colour, shape, and model of the costume must correspond to the character of the performer and the chosen theme. The colour scheme should be consistent with the emotional tone of the composition, avoiding excessive contrast or the use of overly bright colours (Goldschmied *et al.*, 2020). The costume should be of a balanced cut, with a well-thought-out structure of decorative and artistic elements. The shape of the costume, especially when choosing a model with a skirt or a basic line, should not interfere with the performance of the programme elements. In particular, the skirt should not cover the upper body during the exercises and prevent the implementation of rotational elements in the second phase of rotation. This allows maintaining the

aesthetic appeal of the costume and provides the full freedom of movement necessary to perform technically complex elements.

The costume makes up a significant part of the performance and broadly reflects the internal content of the programme. The leotard should be of high quality and comfortable, as it is worn on the naked body and should not cause discomfort to the gymnast. Leotard is a necessary and mandatory attribute for any rhythmic gymnastics programme. One of the main tasks of leotard companies is to develop exclusive and innovative designs that are not just leotards for rhythmic gymnastics programmes, but also a constantly relevant fashion item. When creating a collection, manufacturers consider the age category of gymnasts, distinguishing junior models from adult leotards to come up with offers that will suit both categories. The collection can include both monochromatic models and swimsuits with an expressive contrasting combination. Sequins and crystals can also be used for decoration, emphasising the bright details of the swimsuit design. However, when choosing

and creating a design for the programme, it is extremely important to take into account the athlete's personality and the programme music, the colours of which often become the basis for sketches and allow the use of various materials and ornaments.

At the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, rhythmic gymnasts demonstrated not only their athletic skills, but also unique design solutions that became an important part of their performances. This paper examines vivid examples of design solutions that combine functionality, artistic expression and cultural symbols. The analysis of the participants' costumes on the example of the Olympic Games in Paris allows us to explore current trends in sportswear design and their impact on the perception of rhythmic gymnastics.

The costumes of the national team of Ukraine are a vivid example of a successful interpretation of national motifs in modern sports design (Fig. 11). They are not only functional, but also emotionally charged, which makes them an important component of the team's visual identity in the international arena.



**Figure 11.** Costumes of the Ukrainian rhythmic gymnastics team at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris  
**Source:** O. Vasylyshyn (2024)

The costume is based on red and black colours, which symbolise Ukrainian tradition, in particular embroidery, where red and black are a classic combination. These colours not only emphasise national identity but also add drama and emotion to the performance. The costume has a tight fit that provides maximum freedom of movement and points out the athletes' physical shape. Transparent inserts on the upper part of the costume add lightness and sophistication to the look, while maintaining a balance between functionality and aesthetics. The combination of rich colours and patterns creates a dynamic visual effect while moving. Uzbek gymnast Takhmina Ikromova's costume for the ribbon

performance at the 2024 Paris Olympics is a successful example of a combination of art and sport (Fig. 12). Its design is inspired by Cubism, in particular the work of Pablo Picasso, which is expressed through asymmetrical graphic lines and abstract geometric motifs. The restrained colour scheme with an emphasis on black and white emphasises the conceptual nature of the image. The image of the Eiffel Tower on the back, which refers to French culture, and the ribbon in the colours of the French flag add another layer of symbolism. The costume harmoniously complements the composition, reflecting the synergy between music, movement and visual aesthetics.



**Figure 12.** Uzbek gymnast Takhmina Ikromova's costume at the 2024 Olympics in Paris  
**Source:** Ya. Kachkovska (2024)

The costumes of Chinese gymnasts are distinguished by their multi-layered and complex composition, which combines traditional oriental motifs with modern design solutions (Fig. 13). The central accent is the ornamentation inspired by the luxurious patterns of imperial clothing of the dynasties, which symbolises strength, harmony and cultural heritage. Rich red and gold colours are associated with good luck and prosperity in Chinese culture, while green accents add contrast and dynamism. Rhinestone and fringe decorations create a movement effect that harmoniously complements

gymnastic exercises. Symmetry in the placement of the ornaments emphasises the aesthetics of unity and synchronisation of the team, making the performance visually coherent and expressive.



**Figure 13.** Costumes of the Chinese rhythmic gymnastics team at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris  
**Source:** China becomes first non-European country to claim Olympic gold in rhythmic gymnastics (2024)

The US gymnasts' leotards for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris combine aesthetic sophistication with high functionality (Fig. 14). Each leotard is embellished with more than 10,000 Swarovski crystals, creating a sparkling effect under the stage lighting, emphasising the athletes' movements.



**Figure 14.** Costumes worn by American gymnasts at the 2024 Olympic Games  
**Source:** J. Sullivan (2024)

The design, developed by GK Elite, reflects patriotic motifs through the use of red, white, and blue colours to symbolise national pride. The use of four-way stretch fabrics provides the comfort and freedom of movement needed to perform complex elements. The process of creating the swimsuits took four years and involved a team of 50 people, which demonstrates the careful approach to every detail.

## DISCUSSION

The study examined the evolution of rhythmic gymnastics costume design, including the integration of traditional cultural motifs with modern technological innovations and environmental approaches. The results obtained show that designers successfully combine elements of cultural heritage with modern trends, which contributes to the aesthetic appeal and functionality of

costumes at the international level. The study results showed that the use of national motifs in the design of costumes enhances the identity of female athletes, makes their performances unique and creates an emotional connection with the audience. Such costumes become not only aesthetically pleasing but also culturally significant, promoting national art and traditions through sport. This is consistent with the findings of M.C. Nemeth *et al.* (2020), who investigated the relationship between body image and dressing behaviour among female team athletes. The authors found that national motifs in costumes also serve as a means of self-identification for female athletes, allowing them to feel proud of their cultural heritage. Such elements create a special visual accent that distinguishes performances at international competitions. This is in line with research findings that highlighted that costumes with aesthetically pleasing cultural details can increase support among both judges and audiences. The harmonious blend of traditional and contemporary elements in the design enhances the image of female athletes and helps them express their individuality through the art of gymnastics.

In addition, the results of the study showed that modern technologies such as laser cutting and 3D printing are actively used to create innovative costumes in rhythmic gymnastics. These technologies allow achieving high precision patterns, complex decorative elements and ensure the uniqueness of each costume. The use of such approaches significantly increases the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the costumes, making them perfectly adapted to the requirements of athletes. These observations are consistent with the study by A. Harlin *et al.* (2020), who emphasised the importance of using high-tech textile materials in sports. The authors found that materials with high elasticity, breathability, and wear resistance are critical to athletes' comfort and performance in competition. The integration of the latest technologies in the production of suits allows us to take into account the individual needs of athletes, ensuring not only comfort but also their confidence during performances. This demonstrates the synergy between innovation and practicality in sports fashion.

The issue of aesthetics and its impact on the perception of performances was one of the key aspects of the study, as costume design plays an important role in shaping the overall image of an athlete. L. Bosc (2023) investigated the relationship between positive body image and sports performance in rhythmic gymnasts. The author noted that costumes that highlight individuality and aesthetic expressiveness have a positive effect on the emotional state of athletes, increasing their confidence and, as a result, their performance in competitions. These conclusions are in line with the results obtained, which confirmed that stylish and comfortable costumes can create additional emotional support for female athletes, contributing to their psychological

preparation. A harmonious combination of aesthetics, functionality, and compliance with design standards not only provides visual appeal, but also helps gymnasts feel comfortable and confident, which is important for achieving high results.

The results of this study on the introduction of innovative materials and technologies in the creation of rhythmic gymnastics costumes were consistent with the findings of J. Wang (2022), who analysed marketing strategies on the example of Chinese rhythmic gymnastics in the context of the active development of social media. The author emphasised that the use of high-tech costumes with modern design solutions not only increases functionality and comfort, but also attracts the attention of the audience, creating a unique image of athletes. This approach helps to promote sports and build a strong national brand. Similar trends can be seen in this study, which notes that the integration of the latest technologies, such as 3D printing and laser cutting, significantly increases the aesthetic appeal of costumes, making them recognisable on the international stage. Such innovations not only improve the public's perception of sports, but also help female athletes stand out from the competition, contributing to their success on a global scale.

Some differences were identified when comparing the results of this study with the findings of L.J. Hackett & J. Coghlan (2023), who focused on the analysis of the transformation and control of female athletes' bodies through the prism of swimwear as a uniform. In their work, the authors raised the question of how sportswear standards affect the perception of female athletes' bodies, emphasising that uniforms can both help to highlight their skills and trigger discussions of gender stereotypes. In this study, while the issues of standards and regulation of costume design are relevant, the focus was on cultural and technological aspects. Particular emphasis is placed on how the use of national motifs and modern technologies contributes to the creation of unique costumes that harmoniously combine aesthetics with functionality. This approach avoids controversial discussions about the physicality of female athletes by focusing on their individuality and professionalism, which are enhanced by innovative design solutions.

In this study, the historical development of costume design was considered in the context of changes in materials, styles and decorative elements that meet the requirements of modern sport, as well as the influence of international standards on their formation. Particular attention was paid to the International Federation of Gymnastics regulations (2024) and their role in ensuring harmony between aesthetic and functional solutions that meet modern sports requirements. In the study by K. Krafte *et al.* (2023), the authors emphasised the importance of adapting visual communications to the specifics of young female athletes, which shapes their artistic style and meets their age characteristics

and noted that the standards strike a balance between safety and artistic expression. The comparison shows that both studies focused on the interaction between aesthetics and functionality, but this study paid more attention to the historical perspective and design solutions that cover all levels of rhythmic gymnastics. In contrast, K. Krafte *et al.* focused mainly on youth categories and their specific approaches to interpreting standards.

Innovations in costume design have become an important stage of development, including the use of the latest materials, such as elastic mesh and thermoregulated fabrics. T. Mykhailova (2022) studied the influence of artistic and technological solutions on the formation of images for Olympic ceremonial costumes. Her work discussed the importance of combining innovative materials with cultural symbols, which coincides with the approach of this paper to the integration of innovation into design. The difference lies in the focus: this study analysed in detail the practical aspects of using materials to improve the comfort of female athletes, while T. Mykhailova focused on symbolism.

Cultural and national motifs in the design of rhythmic gymnastics costumes are an important aspect that emphasises the individuality of athletes. J. Wang & D. Yao (2024) investigated the use of the colour palette of the Chinese national team's costumes as a semi-conscious construct reflecting the country's cultural heritage. This study also focused on the integration of Ukrainian traditional motifs into modern design. The similarity lies in the use of cultural symbols to reinforce the identity of athletes, but your study extends this aspect by analysing national symbols in a global context, while J. Wang & D. Yao limited themselves to the specific case of the Chinese team. The significance of colour and decoration in costume design is highlighted in this study through an emphasis on visual dynamics and highlighting the movements of the athletes. J. Wang & D. Yao considered colours as a tool for conveying cultural values and aesthetic characteristics.

In general, the results of this study are consistent with the trends identified by other researchers, confirming the importance of an integrated approach to rhythmic gymnastics costume design. The combination of aesthetics, functionality, technological innovation and cultural identity contributes not only to the improvement of sports performance, but also to the promotion of the sport at the international level.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study found that the design of rhythmic gymnastics costumes is a multifaceted process that integrates aesthetic, functional, technological and cultural aspects. The analysis has shown that the combination of traditional motifs with modern technologies allows for the creation of unique costumes that enhance the expressiveness of athletes' performances and their confidence in competitions. This underscores the importance of

preserving cultural identity in the context of the globalisation of sport.

The results of the study confirmed that the use of modern technologies, such as laser cutting and 3D printing, helps to improve the quality of suits. These technologies ensure precision in the manufacture of parts, comfort and functionality, which is critical for high-level athletes. The integration of these approaches allows designers not only to create aesthetically pleasing costumes, but also to ensure that they meet the specific technical requirements necessary for the comfortable performance of complex gymnastic elements. At the same time, the use of innovative materials, such as breathable and hypoallergenic fabrics, has a positive impact on the physical condition and performance of female athletes during performances, reducing the risk of discomfort and injury.

The analysis also showed that costumes with elements of national symbols help to strengthen the self-identity of female athletes, which confirms the importance of cultural aspects in design. The use of national motifs, such as ornaments, traditional colours or symbolic elements, allows female athletes to emphasise their cultural uniqueness. Such costumes form an emotional connection with the audience and judges, adding to the uniqueness and international recognition of performances. Furthermore, the results of the study stated that the harmonious combination of aesthetics and functionality in the costumes helps to increase the psychological confidence of female athletes, which, in turn, has a positive impact on their sporting achievements.

An important aspect of the research was the study of ecological approaches to the creation of costumes. The use of environmentally friendly materials that meet modern standards reduces the negative impact on the environment and at the same time opens up new opportunities for innovation in sportswear design. The usage of such materials contributes not only to environmental responsibility, but also to improving the characteristics of the suits, such as their lightness, elasticity, and resistance to wear.

Prospects for further research could include a deeper study of the impact of eco-friendly materials on the performance of female athletes, exploring ways to integrate eco-friendly technologies into mass production, and analysing the psychological aspects of the perception of costumes by both gymnasts and audiences. It is also worth investigating the interaction between designers, athletes, and coaches in the process of creating costumes to ensure that they meet the needs of all parties. Thus, this study points out the importance of a multifaceted approach to rhythmic gymnastics costume design that takes into account cultural, technological and psychological aspects.

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## Креативний підхід до дизайну костюмів для художньої гімнастики

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**Анотація.** Дане дослідження мало на меті вивчення еволюції дизайну костюмів для художньої гімнастики, зокрема їхньої естетичної, функціональної та культурної складових, з акцентом на інтеграцію традиційних національних елементів у сучасний контекст. У процесі дослідження було розглянуто костюми спортсменок із таких країн, як Україна, Китай, США, Японія та Узбекистан. Матеріали включали візуальні джерела, технологічну документацію та вимоги міжнародних регламентів, які визначають стандарти дизайну, наукові масмедіа-публікації. Вивчення охоплювало аналіз історичних етапів розвитку костюмів, культурних символів та інноваційних технологій, що використовуються у їх створенні. Результати дослідження показали, що еволюція дизайну костюмів відображає складну взаємодію між культурною ідентичністю, технологічним прогресом та спортивними вимогами. Виявлено, що сучасні костюми забезпечують баланс між функціональністю і художньою виразністю завдяки впровадженню інноваційних матеріалів, таких як еластична сітка і тканини з терморегуляцією, а також використанню декоративних елементів, як-от стрази та аплікації. Українські костюми демонстрували унікальність завдяки інтеграції традиційних орнаментів у сучасний дизайн, тоді як китайські зразки відзначалися гармонією кольорової палітри, що відображало культурну спадщину. Американські костюми акцентували увагу на патріотичних мотивах через використання національних кольорів і складних візерунків. Аналіз підтвердив, що міжнародні стандарти є важливим фактором, який впливає на створення костюмів, забезпечуючи безпеку, комфорт і естетику. Висновки даного дослідження підкреслили важливість гармонійного поєднання традицій і сучасних інновацій у створенні костюмів, що відповідають естетичним і функціональним вимогам. Отримані результати відкривають нові перспективи для досліджень у сфері дизайну спортивного одягу, зокрема в контексті використання екологічних матеріалів та впливу на психологічний стан спортсменів

**Ключові слова:** культурна ідентичність; національна символіка; декоративні елементи; естетика; орнамент



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## Sketching as a tool of creativity: Transformation of methods in fashion design

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**Abstract.** Modern fashion design exhibits a tendency towards experimentation, personalisation, and innovative solutions, which requires designers to develop creative thinking and flexibility in the search for new forms and concepts. The purpose of the present study was to conduct a comparative analysis of conventional and innovative fashion sketching techniques in the context of acquiring creative competencies by future fashion designers, to find strategies for their effective combination. An interdisciplinary approach was employed to investigate the relationship between the development of fashion design methods and the acquisition of creative competences by students. The techniques of fashion sketching were analysed based on comparative historical, cultural-historical, sociological, and formal-stylistic research methods. The effective combination of conventional and innovative sketches was presented using the modelling method. The study analysed the conventional sketching methods in fashion design, considered their psychological and emotional impact on student creativity, and proved the significant role of manual methods in the development of creative skills of future designers. Modern digital tools for creating clothing sketches were overviewed, the features of working with digital technologies were outlined – the speed of execution and flexibility in editing such sketches were highlighted, the high accuracy of drawings and designs made using computer software was emphasised. A comparative analysis of conventional and digital methods of creating clothing sketches was performed, the advantages and disadvantages of their use in the educational process were identified. The study assessed the effects of these methods on the development of creative skills and determined the best strategies for their combination in creating design products. The expediency of integrating digital tools into conventional sketching courses according to the stages of creation and tasks was argued. The practical significance of the present study lies in the fact that the findings obtained can be used to improve educational methods for training competitive specialists adapted to modern trends in the fashion industry

**Keywords:** fashion design; design education; fashion sketches; digital technologies; artistic methods; visualisation of ideas

### INTRODUCTION

In an environment of constant evolution of the fashion industry, the success and competitiveness of a designer is determined not only by technical skills, but also by flexibility and creativity of thinking, the ability to adapt to changes, find creative solutions to standard tasks, and openness to the implementation of innovative concepts in fashion design. The development of such creative competencies in future fashion designers is critical for both design education in Ukraine and the development of the industry as a whole.

Furthermore, role of visual communication is growing: a design sketch performs not only a technical but also a communicative function, helping to effectively present the idea, concept, and style of a future project. The relevance of the subject under study lies in the need to develop the creative competencies of future fashion designers in the context of the rapid transformation of fashion sketching methods, which is driven by the influence of digital technologies, the integration of 3D visualisation, and other graphic editors into the process

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of visualising a design idea. The study of this topic will help not only to better understand modern approaches to teaching fashion sketching, but also to propose optimised methods for developing the creative potential of future fashion designers.

The theoretical foundations of the development of creative competences were considered in the studies of many Ukrainian researchers who noted that creativity was a key quality of a modern fashion designer. Creative competence was viewed as the ability to generate innovative ideas, experiment with shapes, textures, and colours, as well as adapt to changes in the fashion industry. L. Kalinina (2017) analysed the methods and forms of teaching that contribute to the development of creative competence, as well as the role of teachers in this process. The researcher emphasised the need to introduce innovative technologies and create a favourable environment for students' creative expression. O. Bereziuk & M. Tymchenko (2024) addressed the pedagogical conditions for the development of creative abilities in design students through involvement in artistic and project activities.

A considerable number of studies covers the effects of innovative techniques and digital technologies on the fashion industry overall and the educational process specifically. L. Derman (2020) analysed the effects of digital technologies on the processes of designing and presenting clothing collections in the modern fashion industry. This study highlighted the significance of integrating digital technologies into fashion design and presentation processes, which enables designers to adapt to a rapidly changing environment and meet the demands of the modern market. Valuable for understanding the current challenges and opportunities for the development of fashion design education in Ukraine was the study by M. Melnyk (2016), where the researcher analysed how changes in the economic and cultural environment, as well as the influence of international trends, determined the vector of fashion education in Ukraine. The study also discussed modern educational programmes, interdisciplinary approach, and interaction between theory and practice in the training of young designers. Kirsten *et al.* (2024) outlined the changing landscape of fashion education, including the evolution of fashion sketching. The study discussed the integration of digital technologies and sustainable development, emphasising the need for an interdisciplinary approach to educating fashion designers. Current approaches to fashion sketching methods, consideration of advantages and disadvantages, conventional and innovative techniques, as well as ways to solve this problem can be found in the studies of M. Kovalova *et al.* (2022) and V. Mytsa (2024). The researchers analysed how digital tools were changing conventional methods of expression, opening new opportunities for creativity.

Y. Kawamura (2023) performed a thorough study of digital transformations in the fashion industry,

where the researcher examined the social, cultural, and economic aspects of fashion in the postmodern era, especially in the context of digital technologies. The researcher analysed the development of the fashion industry and the interaction of this development with the latest digital trends, exploring how digital platforms, social media, and other innovations affect the production, consumption, and distribution of fashion. The reviewed studies confirmed the significance of updating the methods and techniques for creating a fashion sketch in the context of the global digitalisation of the design and presentation of a design product, and the need to apply them in the training of future fashion design professionals. However, the issue of the best combination of conventional and digital approaches to sketching in the educational process, as well as the mechanisms for the effective development of students' creative and technical skills, is still understudied. This creates the basis for further research in this area.

An analysis of previous studies revealed that the transformation of fashion sketching (from conventional techniques to the use of digital technologies), as well as the effects of these changes on the development of creative skills of fashion designers, were most often considered in several scientific fields, including design theory, design education, and digital transformations in the fashion industry. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the effectiveness of conventional and innovative approaches in design education in Ukraine, to analyse modern methods of fashion sketching and their influence on the development of creative competences of future fashion designers, and to propose ways to improve educational methods to ensure high-quality training of fashion designers according to current market needs.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To obtain the most substantiated findings, the present study employed general scientific and special research methods. An interdisciplinary approach was employed to conduct a thorough study and expand the understanding of the issue: the analysis of design, psychological, pedagogical, art history aspects, as well as digital technologies, helped to comprehensively assess the principles of developing creative thinking in students. The theoretical scientific method helped to formulate the conceptual framework of the study, define key concepts, and consider the history and current state of development of this topic in the scientific literature. The use of empirical methods helped to collect factual materials on students' mastery of fashion sketching techniques and their effects on the development of creative skills. The techniques of fashion sketching were analysed based on comparative historical, cultural-historical, sociological, and formal-stylistic research methods. The conventional and innovative fashion sketches were compared by such indicators as technical complexity, creative freedom and artistic expression, speed of

execution and flexibility of editing, technical accuracy, material costs and environmental impact. Based on the analysis, using the modelling method, a clear strategy for the effective combination of conventional and digital sketching methods for the development of creative competencies of future fashion designers was proposed, following the stage of creating a design product, the goals set, and the skills mastered.

The materials of the present study included both theoretical and practical components that provide an integrated approach to the study of the topic. The theoretical framework of the study was formed based on scientific studies on fashion design, fashion history and fashion illustration, fashion sketching methods, as well as monographs and publications on pedagogy and psychology of creativity to assess the development of creative competencies in design students. The practical materials of this study included sketches and creative projects of students of the Lviv National Academy of Arts and the I. Trush Lviv Professional College of Decorative and Applied Arts. This group of materials included works made using conventional techniques (pencils, ink, charcoal, watercolour, markers, etc.) and digital sketches made in graphic editors such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial stage in the implementation of a creative idea, a designer clothing collection or a particular image is the design process, which includes the creation of visual prototypes of future products. The design and graphic part, sketching, and creating graphic illustrations are a prominent part of the design process, and therefore mastering these skills is essential for the competitiveness of future fashion designers. A fashion sketch was defined as a graphic or digital representation of a future product concept that conveyed the designer's core ideas regarding silhouette, proportions, constructive and decorative elements, texture, and colour scheme, as discussed by Y. Ji *et al.* (2002). Such a sketch can be made manually using conventional techniques and graphic tools (pencils, watercolours, markers, etc.) or in digital programs (Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Procreate, Clo 3D). Changes in project culture overall, and the growing interest in foreign practices in fashion design specifically, have led to the spread of a new format for graphic expression of creative ideas. The project process of a modern designer has been enriched by the concepts of sketch, sketchbook, sketching, portfolio, and fashion illustration. With the emergence of the latest technologies and tools of the design language, the content and form of the sketch and sketchbook were rethought, according to S. Povshyk (2015). The transformation of the hand sketch is strongly linked to the development of digital technologies. Historically, design students mastered the technique of drawing with pencil, ink, watercolour,

and markers on paper, a process that required high artistic skill but gave sketches artistic expression. With the advent of the first graphic editors in the 1990s, the sketching process revolutionised, the process of creating them became somewhat simpler, and it became possible to quickly edit details, change colours and textures of future garments. However, despite digital advancement, manual techniques are still crucial for the development of creative thinking and the shaping of a designer's unique style.

The characteristics of conventional design methods include aspects such as expressiveness and uniqueness, as each designer shows their personal signature through them. The use of varied materials, such as pencils, ink, watercolours, or pastels, provides artistic expression, conveying the atmosphere and texture of the future product. One of the main advantages is the speed of capturing ideas without the need for complex technical processing. Another prominent aspect is the tactile experience of working with paper, which helps to better understand the shape and composition. The quality of a sketch directly depends on the artist's skill level, including mastery of proportions and anatomy. Despite the development of digital technologies, hand sketches continue to be a valuable tool in the creative process, especially at the conceptual stage, when it is necessary to quickly convey the idea and character of the future product. As A.P. Dubrivna & K.A. Kruzhylina (2020) noted, conventional sketching is characterised by the use of fine art techniques that enable the illustrator to reveal the specific features of the author's graphic style, due to the technological features of each of them. Therewith, manual sketches have limited editing capabilities, as making changes can require considerable effort, especially when working with watercolour or ink, and the colour palette created manually by mixing materials makes it challenging to accurately reproduce shades in future versions.

In terms of the psychological and emotional impact of conventional sketching methods on the creative process, hand drawing promotes deeper immersion in the work, activating tactile perception and the connection between the hand and the brain, which enhances creative thinking. The physical interaction with materials – the texture of paper, the movement of a pencil or brush – creates a meditative effect, helping to focus and express emotional states through lines, strokes, and colour combinations. The impossibility of undoing the previous action stimulates courage and confidence in one's decisions, promotes deeper immersion in the artistic process, and facilitates experimentation and intuitive search for new shapes and textures. Furthermore, hand sketching allows designers to become emotionally attached to their work, as the creation process is personal and profoundly individual.

The emergence and deep rooting of digital fashion design methods is provoked by the emergence and

development of digital evolution, which has revolutionised people's lives not only in the field of art but also overall. As M. Kovalova *et al.* (2022) stated the transition to new values along with modern technologies is becoming the key to new philosophical thoughts, becoming the root cause of progress and the development of creative thinking and emotional prosperity. Digital technologies in sketching open new opportunities for designers, changing the process of creating fashion sketches towards efficiency, accuracy, and flexibility. The use of software such as Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, Procreate, Clo3D, and Marvelous Designer allows quickly editing shapes, colours, and textures without having to start over. Furthermore, learning about modelling and designing clothes using 3D technologies contributes to a better understanding of the technological aspects of creating clothes, facilitates work with structures and materials (e.g., visualisation of technically complex clothing models). Overall, the introduction of such methods into the educational process contributes to its modernisation, intensifies the creative process, and allows designers to collaborate more effectively with other professionals in their future professional activities (Shevchuk, 2024). Such digital editors provide high image accuracy, which is crucial for technical sketches and drawings. Therewith, the digital format of sketches simplifies the process of storing, organising, and presenting them. The use of 3D sketch visualisation software allows quickly assessing the future shape of clothing, plastic, and fabric texture, and its behaviour

on the figure without creating a real mock-up, which saves time and resources.

Digital sketching greatly expands the capabilities of designers, but it has a series of critical drawbacks that should be considered when training designers. First of all, this includes the lack of tactile experience, the loss of naturalness and artistic expressiveness of a fashion sketch, as well as the risk of losing creativity – graphic editors simplify the process but can limit the experimental nature and expressiveness of lines inherent in hand sketches. In some cases, the use of templates, presets, or other automatic functions can reduce the level of creativity by replacing manual labour and the intuitive approach of the future designer. Furthermore, creating high-quality sketches requires suitable software and hardware, which is often expensive and requires extra technical knowledge. Mastering the skills of conventional and digital fashion sketching represent two distinct approaches to the design process, both of which are significant in the training of future fashion designers. As K. Tallon (2008) observed, conventional methods promote the development of artistic skills, intuition, and creative expression, while digital technologies enable designers to work faster, more accurately, and with large amounts of information. Each of these approaches has its advantages and limitations, and therefore their comparative analysis helps to better understand their role in the development of professional skills and competences of future fashion designers (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Comparison of conventional and digital garment sketches

Comparison criteria	Handmade sketches	Digital sketches
Technical complexity	Requires specific skills and knowledge, a certain level of professional aptitude.	Ability to use ready-made templates and presets, technical knowledge to work in graphic editors.
Creative freedom and artistic expression	High emotionality, a sense of texture, experiments with line and stroke.	Lack of tactility, work with predefined elements: brushes, textures, and patterns.
Speed of execution	Depends on technique and experience, much slower than the digital method.	Fast sketching thanks to digital tools, copying, and templates.
Editing flexibility	Limited, error correction is not always possible.	Variable models, quick and easy sketch editing: change of proportions, details, colour, texture, etc.
Technical precision	Relative: depends on the technical skills of the designer, errors are possible.	High: accurate preservation of proportions, symmetry, scaling.
Material costs	Regular costs for paper, inks, markers, pencils, etc. Costs increase depending on the quality of the materials.	High initial costs for software and hardware, but more cost-effective in the long term.
Environmental impact	Consumption of paper and inks causes an environmental impact (deforestation, chemical dyes).	Smaller ecological footprint due to the absence of physical materials but consumes electricity and generates electronic waste.

**Source:** developed by the author of this study based on data from N. Pantus (2011), O. Zakharkevych *et al.* (2023)

A prerequisite for creating a high-quality creative sketch is a certain set of technical and creative skills. For instance, to create a fashion sketch by hand, one needs to know how to draw and paint in colour (watercolour, gouache, etc.), the proportions and features of the human figure, colour theory, and style. A fashion

sketch is not only a tool for creating a fashion design, but also a form of artistic expression that contributes to the development of an individual style (Hopkins, 2018). The development of a unique graphic language of a fashion designer is a complex and lengthy process that requires sufficient effort and creativity, while the

process of transforming a virtual idea into a final design product directly depends on these skills. The process of creating digital sketches of clothes is technically simpler. In this case, when visualising a design idea, one can use ready-made templates for both shapes and colour, texture and graphic solutions, while modern 3D modelling programmes create opportunities for virtual fitting of future clothes. The challenge lies in the need for relevant knowledge to work with software that is constantly being updated and changed. Therewith, the use of ready-made templates is less conducive to the development of students' creative competencies than creating a sketch manually, as the development of a creative idea will not be limited to template solutions.

The method of creating a fashion sketch also affects the level of creative freedom and expression of author's ideas. For instance, when drawing by hand, physical contact with the material (paper, pencil, paint) contributes to an intuitive creative process that includes high emotionality, a sense of textures and surfaces, and spontaneity of lines and shapes. Conventional sketching provides a tactile, hands-on experience. A prominent feature is the fact that the practice of sketching changes approaches to creativity, stimulates the emergence of innovative ideas, and develops skills in perceiving

and reproducing objects in space. As S.H. Pashukova & D.A. Chemberzhi (2023) pointed out, the visual aspect of sketching gives designers the opportunity to deeply consider and understand shape, proportion, colour, and texture, which improves their skills and affects the quality and expressiveness of their work. Digital sketching helps to overcome the physical limitations of materials: the transfer of textures and colours that are not available in conventional techniques, the ability to create digital brushes of different configurations for different visual effects. The lack of tactility and working with a list of ready-made elements such as colour palettes, sets of textures and prints, graphics, lines, and strokes, although it accelerates and stimulates the creative flow, yet at the same time limits the design idea to the tools at hand.

Using the example of the works by A. Peretiatko, a student of the Lviv National Academy of Arts, one can see that hand sketches (Fig. 1) are artistically expressive, evocative, graphic language and stylistic solution illustrate the design idea, create a certain mood that refers to a concrete consumer, while a vector digital sketch (Fig. 2) helps to successfully convey the shiny and matte texture of fabrics, although it is less emotionally coloured.



**Figure 1.** A series of sketches of outerwear. Watercolour, markers, pencils

**Source:** Student A. Peretiatko, teacher O. L. Myronovych, LNAA, 2024



**Figure 2.** Variability of outerwear model. Vector digital sketch

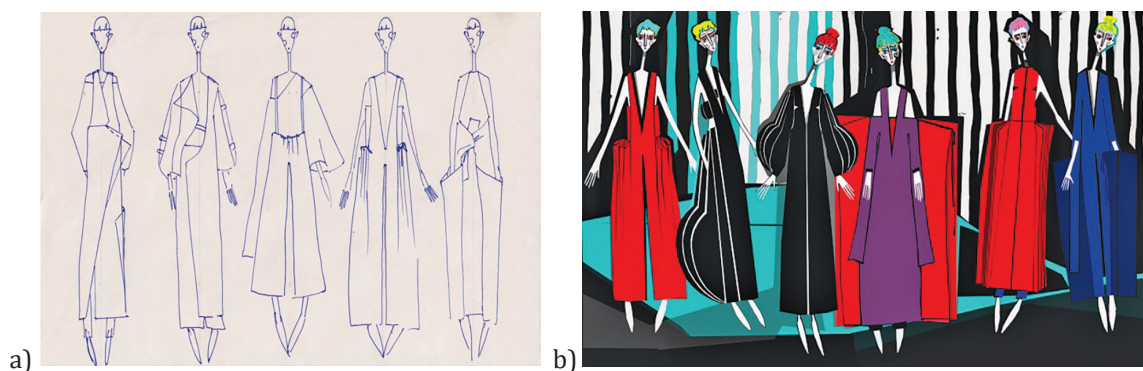
**Source:** Students A. Peretiatko, S. Mnykh, A. Pavliuk, teacher O. L. Myronovych, LNAA, 2024

A noticeable advantage of digital sketches over hand-drawn ones is the speed and efficiency of their execution. High-quality graphic representation of clothing using conventional techniques and tools requires considerable time and effort (e.g., drying a layer of paint before applying the next). Computer graphics systems make it easy to manipulate and modify the object being created. They provide the ability to use any materials, apply a wide range of colours, and model various scenes and situations in which the object of design may find itself (Bertola & Teunissen, 2018; Zaikina, 2020). Automation of processes (e.g., copying and modifying repetitive elements) also helps expedite the sketching process. The variability and ease of editing digital sketches is also significant (Fig. 2). One can make changes to such sketches right on the spot, as well as distribute and share them. Conventional hand-drawn sketches fall short in terms of flexibility and ease of editing. Modern computer software considerably improves the technical accuracy of garment sketches, making them not only artistically expressive but also as close as possible to real production. Programmes such as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Illustrator allow working with precise sizes and scales, while auxiliary lines and grids prevent inaccuracies and violations of anatomical proportions. Furthermore, the ability to work with digital palettes based on Pantone, RGB, or CMYK codes simplifies the process of colour selection and reproduction. However, the accuracy and clarity of fashion sketches always depends on the technical skills of the designer.

At first glance, the material cost of conventional sketches may appear significantly lower than that of digital sketches, as they do not require expensive software and equipment. However, the cost of materials for conventional sketches depends on the current state of the economy, while the need for these materials is

constant. Digital design requires an initial investment, but is more cost-effective in the long term, requiring fewer physical materials (Pros & cons: Traditional vs digital fashion design, 2023). In the context of environmental issues in the fashion industry, it is vital to reduce the negative impact of designers' activities. For example, digital fashion design has a lower environmental impact in the long term, as it reduces the use of paper, paints, and inks, which helps to reduce waste and chemical pollution. However, the production and disposal of electronic devices (graphics tablets, computers) creates the problem of e-waste and energy consumption. At the same time, conventional fashion sketching techniques, while not requiring electricity, cause deforestation for paper and chemical pollution due to the use of synthetic materials.

Having analysed the specific features of using manual and digital sketches in the education of fashion designers, it becomes clear that these are not mutually exclusive approaches. The point is not to choose one over the other. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, with successful designers often combining them to create a unique style (Pros & cons: Traditional vs digital fashion design, 2023). On the contrary, the interaction of these methods forms new perspectives for the development of creative competences of future fashion designers. The key is the targeted use of conventional and innovative approaches at the relevant stages of clothing design according to the goal and objectives. At the stage of developing the concept of a future design project, it is more fitting to use conventional handmade sketches. Such sketches allow quickly conveying ideas, emotions, and the overall image; hand drawing allows experimenting with composition, shapes, and colours, creating the first visual concepts that are not limited to technical requirements (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Preliminary design of a clothing collection

**Note:** a) Initial stage of sketching. Paper, ballpoint pen; b) Design of a clothing collection. Digital raster image

**Source:** Master's thesis. Student Kh. Konyk, teacher O. L. Myronovych, LNAA, 2018

Digital sketching simplifies the creation of different variants of first designs, enabling quick and easy changes of the proportions, colours, textures, and other details of products. Likewise, it is convenient to

create technical sketches or designs in graphic editors, as an elevated level of accuracy can be achieved, and such a sketch can be easily edited, adding accurate measurements and making the necessary corrections

(Fig. 2). The process of finalising the concept is very individual, depending on the designer's creative style and the theme and concept of the future clothing collection, and therefore in this case, both digital visualisations (e.g., 3D rendering) and graphic illustrations (watercolour, gouache, monoprints, etc.) can be employed (Fig. 4). At the stage of preparing materials for production, sketches need a universal graphic

language that can be read by multiple specialists, as well as clarity and accuracy to achieve the intended result, and digital drawing methods meet these requirements. Thus, the use of distinct types of sketches at each stage allows the designer to strike a balance between creativity and technical accuracy, ensuring an efficient and high-quality process of developing a clothing collection.



**Figure 4.** Sketches of ethnic style uniforms

**Note:** a) Paper, gouache, liners; b) Digital raster image

**Source:** Course work. Student A. Sledz, teacher H. I. Shevchuk, I. Trush Lviv Professional College of Decorative and Applied Arts, 2024

It is also critical that students master multiple types of sketching at the relevant stages of their professional development, as there is a relationship between creativity, intelligence, and personality characteristics (Barron & Harrington, 1981). Specifically, digital sketching training involves mastery of figure, clothing, and detail drawing, as well as a sense of colour and style. The development of a unique graphic style requires direct contact with the material, and therefore, admittedly, learning conventional techniques takes precedence. Mastering digital sketches without relevant training can lead to template design solutions and minimise the creative component of a design project.

Generating creative and imaginative ideas is one of the crucial components of design thinking. Design thinking is a structured methodology that stimulates the development of creative competences in future fashion designers. Design not only as a creative process, but also as a methodology for solving problems in uncertain situations was considered in the work of Ukrainian researcher O. Kostiuk (2023). The researcher analysed design thinking in a broad context, interpreting this multi-stage process (problem definition, idea generation, prototyping, sketching) as an innovative method of developing creative skills. Specifically, much attention was paid to the exploration of decision-making and teamwork, and the effects of design thinking on the professional environment. In contrast to the present study, O. Kostiuk's study focused more on the practical aspect, the nuances of using conventional and digital sketches and their significance for the development

of design thinking. Thus, the use of digital templates of shapes or colour schemes in the learning process can lead to a restriction of creative freedom, banality of artistic solutions, or repetition of ideas.

The growing popularity of digital technologies in the fashion industry suggests the need to investigate the specific features of their adaptation to the educational process of future fashion designers, as well as their value in the development of creative competences and original, author's style. The relevance of this issue is emphasised by the considerable interest in this topic among scientists. For example, studies emphasised that innovative technologies are essential for modern design education (Saprykina, 2019; Khramova-Baranova & Kudrevych, 2023), which correlates with the presented analysis of conventional and innovative sketching techniques. Although the cited study was more focused on the general educational process, it confirmed the significance of sketching and visualisation as basic skills of a future fashion designer. The present study supplemented the existing data with an in-depth analysis of the development of an individual design style through sketching, which is one of the key stages in the development of creative competences.

Furthermore, there is a wide range of innovations and the development of various technologies in fashion design. Despite the latest technological opportunities in the design and manufacture of design products, most researchers confirm the significance of combining conventional and digital methods in design (Chuprina & Struminskaya, 2017; Shcherban *et al.*, 2018;

Hämmerle *et al.*, 2020). The value of digital methods in fashion illustration was argued in a study that provided practical recommendations for working in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator (Tallon, 2008). Although the study mainly focused on digital sketching, the researcher also emphasised that digital sketching not only complements manual sketching methods but also provides new opportunities for creative expression.

When analysing the effectiveness of students' mastery of conventional fashion sketches in the context of the massive spread of digital illustrations and sketches, it is worth mentioning the analytical report by the Boston Consulting Group (Hämmerle *et al.*, 2020), which examined the digital transformation in the fashion industry and explained the need to introduce digital technologies at all stages – from design to production. The cited study also considered the effects of digital technologies on design education and professional training. Agreeing with the need to integrate modern technologies into the educational process, the present study proposed the best way to combine both traditional and digital methods of fashion design.

The integration of digital technologies into design education opens new opportunities for the development of professional skills of future fashion designers, but at the same time poses certain challenges for educational institutions and students. With the development of online education and platforms for selling design products, it is clear that digital sketches will become increasingly popular among fashion designers, but along with the introduction of the latest technologies, it is vital to preserve conventional teaching methods that promote the development of creativity and creative competencies. To maintain the quality of design education, educational institutions must constantly update their curricula to adapt to technological changes and ensure an adequate balance between conventional methods and the latest digital tools. Despite the use of technology, educational institutions should encourage students to maintain their creativity and artistic expression, as technology should complement the creative process, not negate it.

## CONCLUSIONS

The comparative analysis of traditional and innovative sketching techniques in fashion design revealed the significant role of this tool in design education, specifically for the development of creative and professional competences of future fashion designers. Manual methods and techniques of drawing a fashion sketch provide an academic foundation, create conditions for creative

experimentation and development of an author's unique style. The visual aesthetics and harmony of the finished sketch directly depends on the skills of the person who creates it, but conventional techniques allow creating artistically expressive, detailed sketches in various graphic techniques and styles. Furthermore, the design idea is not limited to template solutions, while the tactile sensations of the material complement such a sketch with the energy and mood of the creator.

The introduction of innovative sketching techniques in design education helps students to adapt to modern trends in the fashion industry. Digital sketches have a series of advantages: speed and convenience of their creation, ease and flexibility in editing such sketches, as well as the ability to create a variable range in terms of shape, proportions, colour, or texture. Furthermore, this approach is environmentally friendly and convenient for archiving or disseminating information. However, only a complementary combination of these two sketching techniques in the learning process will help to prepare a professional competitive fashion designer, as traditional and innovative approaches to design education have distinct effects on the development of creative competencies. In this context, the sequence of skills acquisition is also significant: from tradition to innovation. However, the ratio of digital and material environments also depends on the design concept and the initial conditions of the future project. The key areas for further research include exploring the global practices of integrating innovative techniques into design education, comparing conventional and digital sketching methods in well-known design schools, which will help identify the most effective methods of training designers in the context of global fashion trends.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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## Ескіз як інструмент творчості: трансформація методів у дизайні одягу

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**Анотація.** В сучасному дизайні одягу спостерігається тяжіння до експериментальності, персоналізації та інноваційних рішень, що вимагає від дизайнерів розвитку креативного мислення та гнучкості в пошуку нових форм та концепцій. Метою дослідження було проведення порівняльного аналізу традиційних та інноваційних технік модного ескізування в контексті набуття креативних компетентностей майбутніми дизайнерами одягу, пошук стратегій їх ефективного поєднання. Для дослідження взаємозв'язку між розвитком методів модного проектування та набуття здобувачами освіти креативних компетентностей застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід. Техніки модного ескізування проаналізовано на основі порівняльно-історичного, культурно-історичного, соціологічного та формально-стилістичного методів дослідження. Ефективне поєднання традиційних та інноваційних ескізів показано за допомогою методу моделювання. Проаналізовано традиційні методи ескізування в дизайні одягу, розглянуто їх психологічний та емоційний вплив на студентську творчість, доведено вагому роль ручних методів в розвитку креативних навичок майбутніх дизайнерів. Здійснено огляд сучасних цифрових інструментів для створення ескізів одягу, окреслено особливості роботи з цифровими технологіями – виділено швидкість виконання та гнучкість у редагуванні таких ескізів, акцентовано на високій точності малюнків та креслень, виконаних за допомогою комп'ютерних програм. Здійснено порівняльний аналіз традиційних та цифрових методів створення ескізів одягу, виявлено переваги та недоліки їх застосування в навчальному процесі. Проведено оцінку впливу цих методів на формування креативних навичок, визначено оптимальні стратегії їх поєднання в проектуванні дизайнерських продуктів. Аргументовано доцільність інтеграції цифрових інструментів у курсах традиційного ескізування відповідно до етапів створення та поставлених завдань. Практична значущість проведеного дослідження полягає у тому, що отримані результати можуть бути використані для вдосконалення освітніх методик з підготовки конкурентоспроможних фахівців, адаптованих до сучасних тенденцій модної індустрії

**Ключові слова:** дизайн одягу; дизайн-освіта; ескізи одягу; цифрові технології; художні методи; візуалізація ідей

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