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**Lyrical aspects in the intimate landscapes of Zoltan Sholtes**

**Abstract.** The relevance of the research lies in the need for a deeper understanding of Zoltan Sholtes's contribution to the formation of the Transcarpathian school of painting. Despite considerable interest in the Transcarpathian school, certain aspects of Sholtes's work remain underexplored. This study aimed to identify the defining features of Sholtes's landscape painting and to analyse the artistic means and conceptual approaches that shaped the emotional content of the artist's chamber works. The study revealed that the main directions in Zoltan Sholtes's landscape art were lyrical landscapes as depictions of nature, "humanised" landscapes, rural landscapes, and architectural landscapes. Particular attention was given to the emotional dimension of his works, in which nature acquired symbolic meaning and reflected the inner states of the human soul. The study highlighted the differences between Sholtes's lyrical chamber landscapes and his epic panoramic compositions, with a focus on the compositional, colouristic, and technical means the artist used to convey deep emotional content. The key artistic and stylistic approaches in his work included realism with detailed composition; impressionism with the generalisation of form; and a colour-textured expressionism, where emotional colour qualities and rich painterly textures dominate. The lyrical landscape in Sholtes's oeuvre emerges not only as a genre form, but as a philosophical tool for contemplating nature and the human inner world. Through the use of varied compositional, colouristic, and technical techniques, the artist imparts depth and multifaceted meaning to his works. The findings contributed to a deeper understanding of the aesthetic and artistic principles of the Transcarpathian school and underscore the significance of Sholtes's individual style within the artistic processes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The practical value of this research can be found in art history, where the artist's experience can serve as an example for developing methods to convey the emotional components of landscape painting

**Keywords:** Transcarpathian school of painting; creative method; artistic language; composition; lyricism; intimacy; plein air

**Introduction**

An urgent issue in contemporary art studies is the objective investigation of art schools and artistic phenomena in Ukrainian visual arts, which have shaped national identity and stylistic features of specific eras. The analysis of Zoltan Sholtes's work, a prominent representative of the Transcarpathian school of painting, clarifies its ideological and artistic characteristics and reveals the

significance of the artist's individual style in the development of modern Ukrainian landscape painting. Over the period from 2020 to 2025, scientific research has demonstrated a sustained interest in local artistic phenomena as essential components of the national artistic tradition and as expressions of cultural identity that have shaped the broader development of fine arts. The

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Transcarpathian school of painting has attracted considerable scholarly attention. O. Kashshai (2018) studied this school in the context of its artistic and cultural value, as well as within specific historical and cultural periods. The author focused on specific steps in the formation of this art school, emphasising the role of A. Erdélyi and J. Bokshay. Building on these findings, O. Kashshai (2020) emphasised the artistic value of the Transcarpathian art school's output, arguing that its wide recognition in contemporary Ukrainian visual culture was rooted in its high level of professionalism and distinctive visual language.

Researcher H. Skliarenko (2021) analysed the development of the Transcarpathian school in the 1960s, focusing on a return to modernism and examining the preserved traditions of European modernism filtered through the prism of the region's folk art. T. Ivanytska (2023) investigated Transcarpathian portrait painting in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in various contexts – both as a general phenomenon and from the perspective of specific figurative and ideological tasks, including traditional and innovative tendencies. Individual artists have also been the subject of focused scholarly studies. The work of A. Erdeli was explored by O. Lagutenko & A. Seitسانova (2024), who examined the late period of A. Erdeli's work from 1945 to 1955, identified the development of a new method based on the combination of the decorative, expressive realism of earlier years with the demands of socialist realism. This resulted in greater descriptiveness and detail across all genres.

The figurative, thematic, and artistic features of V. Prykhodko's still lifes were analysed by E. Mykula (2021). By examining the relationship between the semantic, object-based, and painterly-formal levels of depiction in V. Prykhodko's still lifes, the author identified several directions and defined their specific features. N. Belichko & A. Cheipesh (2022) dedicated several studies to the impact of historical events on the work of E. Konratovych. A. Cheipesh (2020) examined the expressionist style of E. Konratovych in the context of depicting the tragic aspects of the social condition of the Transcarpathian people. Researchers O. Melnyk & V. Shtets (2024) studied the professional activities and creative collaborations of Zoltan Sholtes within the cultural and political life of Transcarpathia from 1933 to 1948. Despite the fact that Zoltan Sholtes's work was occasionally referenced in most studies on the Transcarpathian school, there has remained a lack of comprehensive research that systematically examined the artist's stylistic features, creative method, and evolution of artistic language within a broader European context.

The scientific significance of research on Z. Sholtes's work lies not only in expanding knowledge about Ukrainian art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also in a deeper understanding of the principles of lyrical painting and the technical aspects used to create emotionally rich landscapes. This study aimed to identify and analyse the lyrical aspects of Zoltan Sholtes's intimate landscapes,

to determine the artistic techniques that conveyed emotional states and the subjective perception of nature, and to clarify their significance within the broader context of the Transcarpathian school of painting's development. The objectives of the study were to identify lyrical aspects in Z. Sholtes's chamber landscapes during both the early and mature periods of his work; to systematise and conduct an art-historical analysis of paintings based on thematic and narrative characteristics; and to outline the prospects for applying Z. Sholtes's creative method in contemporary plein air practice.

## Materials and Methods

The methodology of the research involved a comprehensive approach, incorporating system-comparative and analytical methods, historical-cultural and periodisation methods, iconographic and comparative-typological methods, as well as compositional, stylistic, and art-historical analysis. The system-comparative and analytical methods were employed to identify the key features of Sholtes's artistic strategy across different periods of the artist's creative activity, as well as to reveal the distinctive characteristics of Zoltan Sholtes's individual artistic language within the context of the local artistic tradition. The historical-cultural approach was employed to study the artist's work in the context of the socio-cultural processes of Transcarpathia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The method of periodisation was applied to highlight the stages of the artist's creative evolution, identifying characteristic changes in subject matter, stylistics, colour schemes, and compositional approaches across different time periods. This division made it possible to trace how Z. Sholtes's artistic language transformed from early explorations to a mature individual style, as well as to identify the key features of each creative period in the context of shifts in the sociocultural environment. Iconographic and comparative-typological methods were applied to analyse the subjects and images in the artist's landscapes, taking into account their symbolic and emotional content. The methods of compositional and stylistic analysis were used to examine the features of spatial construction, rhythm, scale, and interaction of elements in the artist's landscapes, as well as to identify the key characteristics of Z. Sholtes's individual style. Art-historical analysis was applied to interpret Sholtes's artistic language, particularly by studying the artist's use of colour, painting techniques, materials, plastic means, and the emotional and figurative content of his intimate landscapes. This allowed for the identification of the general patterns of his creative style and the specific interpretation of the landscape genre in chamber paintings. The research was conducted in several stages. At the first stage, source collection was carried out, including the review of scholarly literature and exhibition catalogues. The visual analysis stage involved the study of Z. Sholtes's paintings in private collections, including direct examination of the artworks. The next stage consisted of thematic and

narrative systematisation of the works according to the stages of the artist's creative development and subject matter. In the final synthesising stage, conclusions were formulated and prospects for further research were identified.

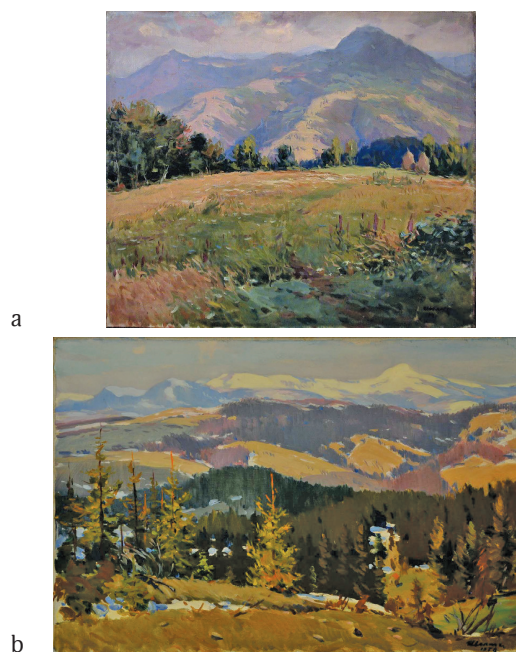
## Results and Discussion

The formation of Z. Sholtes's individual artistic language was based on the theoretical and practical principles of the school of József Bokszay and Adalbert Erdélyi. At the same time, a decisive role in the artist's development was played by his personal perception of the world, mental affinity with national archetypes and native land, as well as a deep emotional involvement with the depicted subject, which was particularly vivid in his landscapes. It was this genre that became the primary field for the artist's self-expression, allowing him to combine external observation of nature with an internal experience of reality. In Z. Sholtes's landscape works, one can discern not only the influence of the academic school, but also his unique ability to transform natural impressions into symbolically rich images, imbued with lyricism, emotional depth, and national colour.

Art-historical analysis of Z. Sholtes's landscape works revealed the characteristic features of their compositional solutions, stylistics, colour structure, and image composition. This approach helped classify the artist's landscapes according to their interpretation of nature, plot-compositional parameters, and stylistic manner, while also allowing for the tracing of the poetic and lyrical traits inherent in the artist's chamber landscapes. To avoid a purely descriptive approach to analysing the artist's landscape works, it was necessary to consider the full range of artistic means the painter employed. As researcher B. Kuzma (2007) noted, the essence of Z. Sholtes's method lies in the clarity and accessibility of the artistic language of compositional landscape painting. The artist's landscapes tended toward the realist tradition, yet the realism in his style blended with the expressive power of the image, an impressionistic sense of light, as well as elements of romanticism and symbolism. The latter were determined by the artist's deep need to convey his emotions through form and colour. Symbolism in Sholtes's works was vividly expressed, with distinct individual traits, reflecting the national mentality – a love of life, optimism, and a folk perception of the world. The panoramic Carpathian landscapes in his works often had an epic tone, while in his intimate landscapes, the grandeur of nature was balanced by the presence of human beings – mountain dwellers for whom these spaces were a source of stability, labour, and spiritual rootedness. Homes, churches, field paths, haystacks, and peasants engaged in daily activities – these motifs fill the artist's canvases, forming the foundation of his worldview, which was based on the harmonious coexistence of humans with nature. Another important feature of Sholtes's creative method was the

combination of poetic admiration for the beauty of the surrounding world with a rational, prolonged observation of nature in its constant changeability.

The landscape legacy of Zoltan Sholtes revealed several key thematic directions that the artist explored in his practice. Among them, it is worth highlighting the intimate lyrical landscape and the monumental scenery with an epic resonance. Monumental landscape painting was a key element in Zoltan Sholtes's artistic legacy during his period of creative maturity. The beauty of the Carpathian nature, the expansive horizons, and the endless mountain spaces inspired the artist to create largescale panoramic compositions that impressed with their epic quality. The first panoramic works in the artist's career can be traced back to the late 1930s, when he began to move beyond the intimate format, gradually expanding his field of view from the secluded corners of Transcarpathia to symbolic, generalised representations of nature. In works such as *Above Rakhiv* (1951) and *Under Pikuy* (1958), there was a shift from local lyricism to epic grandeur – with rhythmic lines of panoramas, an elevated horizon, and a sense of spatial infinity (Fig. 1). Sholtes did not simply depict natural motifs; his goal was deeper – to convey the spirit of the Carpathians, their grandeur through the painted representation of mountain ranges, meadows, and ridges.



**Figure 1.** The epic panoramic works of Z. Sholtes  
**Note:** a – *Above Rakhiv*. Canvas, oil, 100×85 cm (1951);  
 b – *Under Pikuy*. Canvas, oil, 80×120 cm (1958)

**Source:** photo by the authors

The artist's paintings were not mere visual impressions, but rather an attempt to comprehend nature's elemental force as a source of spiritual uplift and emotional energy. Unlike the epic panoramic landscapes, in lyrical

works the artist focused on individual, often highly personal fragments of the Carpathian landscape – these could be solitary trees, mountain paths, calm river pools, or traditional Hutsul homes, as seen in works such as *Landscape with a River* (1947), *Winter Evening in the Village* (1973), and *Early Spring* (1970). These landscapes were imbued with mood: the changing states of nature were associated with the artist’s personal inner experiences, creating an emotional connection between the depicted scene and his worldview (Fig. 2).

Thus, unlike the way nature was interpreted in epic landscapes (expanded composition, high horizon line, bird’s-eye view, universality of the image, grandeur of nature), lyrical intimate landscapes were characterised by limited composition, detailed interpretation that contrasted with background generalisations, a poetic approach to everyday subjects, and idyllic qualities. In such works, nature was presented intimately, as if seen from within – through the lens of personal experience. While the epic landscape sought to convey the grandeur of nature, often emphasising symbolic or elevated motifs, the intimate landscape, by contrast, focused on a limited fragment of reality, where scale was less important than atmosphere and emotional depth. The composition of intimate landscapes was typically compact, with careful attention paid to foreground details, which were often rendered expressively and realistically. This created a contrast with the background, which remained generalised and more decorative in character. The poetics of these works lies in the ability to discover beauty in the ordinary: a familiar rural view, a path winding through grass. Such landscapes often conveyed a sense of idyll, serenity, and harmony – emotions that evolved into a profound personal experience of nature. All of this formed the distinctive visual language of the intimate landscape, where the primary goal was not spatial representation, but the expression of inner state, mood, and a quiet dialogue between the individual and the world (Table 1).



**Figure 2.** The lyrical intimate landscapes of Z. Sholtes  
**Note:** a – *Landscape with a River*. Canvas, oil, 68.5×98 cm (1947); b – *Early Spring*. Canvas, oil, 98×80 cm (1970); c – *Winter Evening in the Village*. Canvas, oil, 60×80 cm (1973)  
**Source:** photo by the authors

**Table 1.** The features of nature interpretation in Zoltan Scholtes’s epic and lyrical landscapes

Epic landscape painting	Lyrical intimate landscape
Characteristic features of landscape composition and methods of forming the emotional image of nature	Characteristic features of landscape composition and techniques for creating the emotional image of nature
Extended composition	Limited composition
High horizon line	Detailed interpretation
View from above	Background generalisations
Universality of the image	Poetics in everyday subjects, revealed in detail
Grandeur of nature	Idyllic qualities, revealed in the subject

**Source:** developed by the authors

Lyricism is the presence of heightened emotionality, sincerity, and intensity in works of literature and art; it is characterised by a distinct subjective mood and emotional experience (Lyricism, n.d.). When addressing the concept of lyricism in art, it is important to trace not only its formal manifestations in the visual language of a

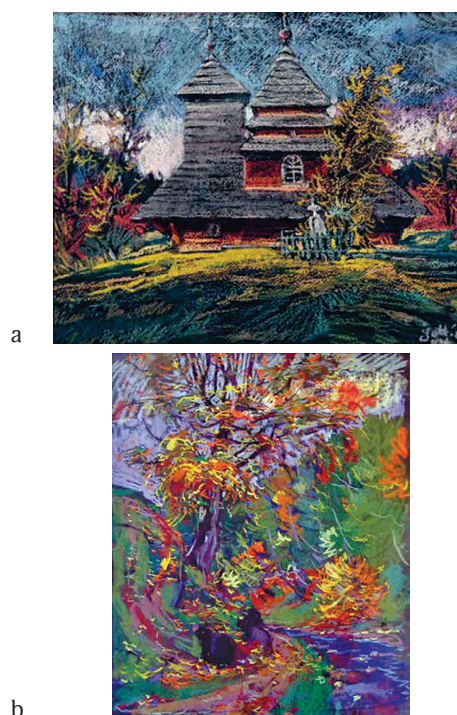
work – such as soft colour palettes, fluid lines, and chamber composition – but also the deeper semantic levels related to the intimacy of experience, the author’s subjective worldview, and the image’s ability to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. In this context, lyricism emerges as an artistic means of conveying

a personal attitude towards the world, as a metaphor for the emotional dialogue between the artist and the viewer. This trait is especially evident in the work of artists inclined towards a chamber, poetic interpretation of reality. For example, in the works of Ukrainian painter V. Zakharchenko, as O. Zhadeyko (2019) emphasised, “lyricism appears not as a secondary aesthetic category, but as a key to understanding the artist’s creative method”. A similar kind of emotional immersion in the depicted can be observed in the works of Caspar David Friedrich, where nature became a mirror of the human inner state. According to H.-G. Gadamer, art is not merely a means of expression, but an event of understanding; thus, lyrical art reveals the inner truth of subjective experience (Trufanova, 2021). This approach resonates with phenomenological perspectives in European aesthetic discourse, particularly in the works of M. Diaconu (2006), who explored the emotional sensibility of art as a space of intimacy and experience.

For Zoltan Sholtes, nature was not merely an object of contemplation or a background for events, but a sacralised space where the artist’s emotional drama unfolded. Sholtes’s landscape lyricism resonated with the traditions of the Romantic vision of nature characteristic of 19<sup>th</sup>-century German art, yet at the same time remained deeply rooted in the local Transcarpathian aesthetic of perceiving the environment as a living, spiritualised medium. In the works of Caspar David Friedrich, the landscape functioned as a visual metaphor for solitude and spiritual searching. In the art of Z. Sholtes, nature became a space of silence, contemplation, and empathy, where visual lyricism served as a form of philosophical reflection on the existence of mountain dwellers, and each canvas was an attempt to convey this aesthetic and emotional experience to the viewer. It was lyricism, as the emotional attunement of the painting, that became the key to understanding the artist’s inner world. Sholtes did not merely depict nature – he conveyed through it his feelings, memories, philosophical reflections on life, and his connection to his native land.

Lyricism in Zoltan Sholtes’s works was not a decorative element, but a profound emotional component that shaped the overall resonance of the landscape. In further art-historical analysis, it was precisely this aspect that allowed a deeper insight into the essence of the figurative structure of his works. The early landscapes of Zoltan Sholtes, though represented by only a few surviving works, constituted an important stage in his artistic development. They reflected the artist’s first attempts to comprehend the surrounding world through the prism of personal emotional perception. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Sholtes actively worked in watercolour, pastel, and oil painting media, often in plein air conditions. The artist’s early works were characterised by intimacy, refinement, and a profound lyricism that conveyed a sense of inner harmony between the artist and

nature. In the works of this period, the influence of the impressionist tradition was particularly noticeable, manifesting itself in the attention to the changing states of light, the seasonal dynamics of the landscape, and the emotional atmosphere. In particular, his pastel studies created during journeys through the Uzh valley capture the beauty of the Transcarpathian landscape through a light, almost elusive play of colour and light. In such works as *Church in Uzhok* (1936) and *Stream* (1936), one can observe not only the artist’s professional growth, but also the formation of his aesthetic vision (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** The early landscapes of Z. Sholtes

**Note:** a – *Church in Uzhok*. Paper, pastel, 42×53 cm (1936);  
b – *Stream*. Paper, pastel, 64.5×49.5 cm (1936)

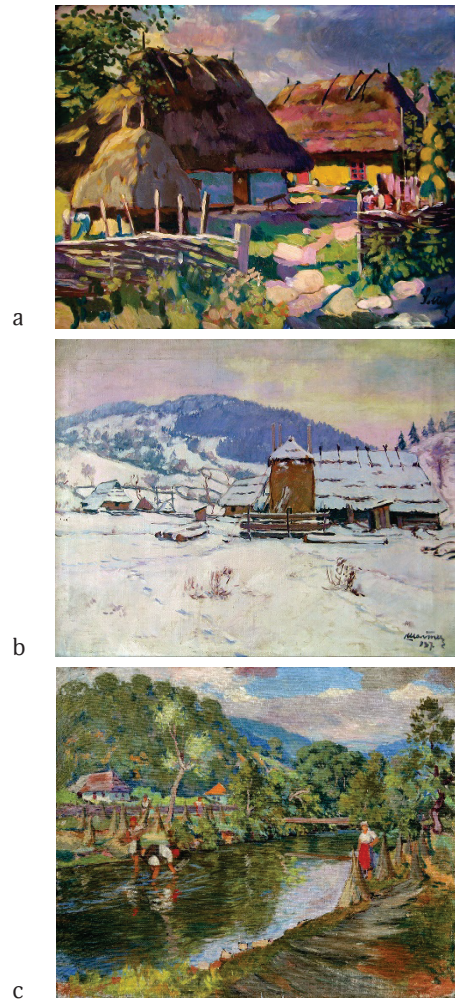
**Source:** photo by the authors

Here, the landscape appears not as an objective reality, but as an artistic image imbued with emotion, inner silence, and contemplation. Sholtes paid particular attention to colour harmony, tonal transitions, and texture, making the paintings feel less like studies from nature and more like refined lyrical moods. The lightness of the pastel stroke added delicacy, almost transparency, to the images, emphasising the intimacy of the artist’s perception. The lyricism in Sholtes’s early landscapes was also revealed in the absence of dramatic contrasts or heroic narratives. The artist deliberately focused on the everyday yet poetic world of rural outskirts, forests, streams, churches, and mountain silhouettes. His interest lay in quiet contemplation, in capturing the invisible connections between humans and nature, and in conveying the rhythm of life through

light and colour. This became one of the key features of his style – retained in later works – but it was in the early landscapes that it manifested with particular sincerity and immediacy. Thus, the early period of Zoltan Sholtes’s work demonstrated his formation as an observant and lyrical artist, who perceived the landscape not merely as a spatial form, but as a bearer of emotional tension, silence, and peace. These early works laid the foundation for his future aesthetic language – delicate, evocative, and intimate – which would eventually define his place in the history of Ukrainian painting as one of the most sensitive interpreters of the beauty of his native landscape (Tarasenko & Tarasenko).

In the 1930s and 1940s, Zoltan Sholtes continued to work on lyrical, intimate landscapes, discovering romantic corners of nature and village streets in Transcarpathia. These works, in the words of researcher O. Moshay (1989), were imbued with a “patriarchal idyllic quality” that reflected the lifestyle of the local peasantry. The landscapes *Village Yard* (1936), *In Winter* (1937), and *Village by the River* (1946) depicted fragments of the artist’s everyday surroundings (Fig. 4). In these works, the artist did not merely depict nature, but conveyed the unique mood of each moment through his colour palette, use of light, and brushwork. In *Village Yard*, one senses the tension of an impending storm through the saturated, contrasting palette. By modelling objects with impasto strokes, the artist emphasised the atmosphere, conveying the dynamics of the elements. In contrast, the landscape *In Winter* (1937) evokes morning calm and silence. The artist employed a cool, nuanced colour range with a warm yellow-pink sky and soft glazing, creating a misty effect and dissolving forms into the surrounding environment.

A completely different approach was demonstrated by the artist in *Winter Landscape* (1941), where ochre-yellow accents were used against a cool colour palette to achieve an optimistic, lifeaffirming mood (Fig. 5). This work marked the first appearance of a human figure – an element that would become essential in the artist’s later landscapes. In subsequent works, human figures were organically woven into the natural environment, as seen in *Transcarpathian Landscape* (1946) and *Landscape with a River* (1947), where human presence did not disrupt the harmony, but rather emphasised unity with nature. Sholtes perceived the relationship between humans and the landscape as part of a holistic Carpathian microcosm, in which every detail carried symbolic and spiritual meaning. Thus, the creative method of the early Sholtes was distinguished by plein air practice, experimentation with colour and light, and a combination of realistic and impressionistic techniques. His early landscapes revealed an ability to convey not only visual impressions but also a profound mood and philosophical reflection on nature as the living environment of humankind.



**Figure 4.** The lyrical intimate landscapes of the 1930s-1940s

**Note:** a – *Village Yard*. Canvas, oil, 70×84 cm (1936); b – *In Winter*. Canvas, oil, 80×100 cm (1937); c – *Village by the River*. Canvas, oil, 68×88 cm (1946)

**Source:** photo by the authors



**Figure 5.** *Winter Landscape*

**Note:** Canvas, oil, 70×84 cm (1941)

**Source:** photo by the authors

In the mature period of his artistic activity (1949-1990), Zoltan Sholtes’s lyrical, intimate landscapes acquired a more diverse thematic and narrative direction:

- landscape as an image of nature – a generalised, poetic vision of the surrounding environment, focused on conveying mood, harmony, and emotional state;

- “humanised” landscape – nature integrated into human everyday life: footpaths, benches, distant villages, traces of human presence;

- rural landscape – depictions of the countryside with houses, farmyards, and elements bordering on genre scenes of everyday life;

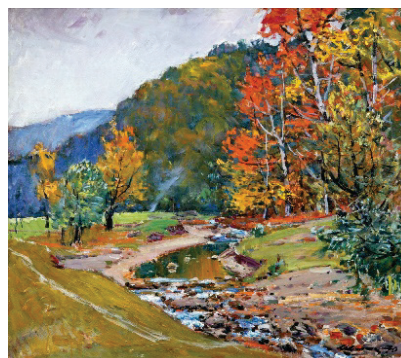
- architectural landscape – views featuring prominent architectural forms, often carrying ethnographic and historical significance, such as castles or sacred buildings.

O. Arkhypenko (2012) wrote that, when analysing a work of art, it was important to consider not only the external aspects – style, technique, or composition – but also the inner meaning, psychology, spirit, and esoteric dimensions of the work. Accordingly, the study of Zoltan Sholtes’s intimate landscapes took into account both material elements (form, colour, texture, technique) and abstract characteristics (space, balance, rhythm, harmony, energy). The analysis focused on characteristic works from different years, grouped into four typological categories: landscape as an image of nature (*Stream in the Forest* (1970); *Clear Day* (1980); *Oaks* (1989)); humanised landscape (*Evening over the River* (1958); *Autumn* (1979)); rural landscape (*Winter in Stavne* (1957); *Black Tysa* (1973)); and landscape with architectural motifs (*Danyliv Wooden Church* (1968); *Architectural Monument* (1985)).

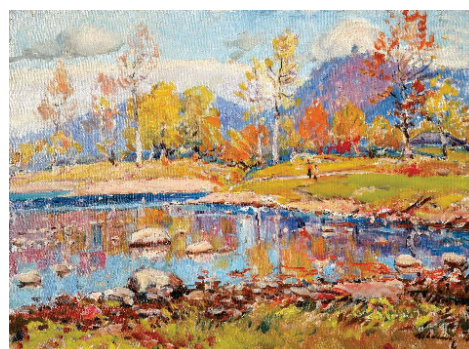
All of the studied works by Zoltan Sholtes were executed in the *alla prima* technique, with careful selection of motifs and points of view. A characteristic sequence was noticeable: sketching, applying primary colour patches, semi-transparent detailing, pasty highlights, and transparent shadows. The artist’s unique method of “modelling” with colour, without mixing tones and using repeated layers, ensured the freshness of the painting and the expressiveness of the artistic vision. This technique, developed during his student years through shared plein air sessions with J. Bokshai, remained consistent throughout his life (Filip, 2003). At the same time, in the later periods of his work, there was a noticeable increase in abstraction, more complex spatial and colour solutions, and experiments with composition, reflecting the dynamic evolution of his artistic language.

Zoltan Sholtes’s lyrical landscapes, including *Stream in the Forest* (1970), *Autumn* (1976), and *Clear Day* (1980), stood out for their intimate, chamber-like space, focusing on a single, poetically interpreted fragment of nature. The artist consciously selected closed compositions with natural motifs that invited viewers to immerse themselves in the silence and harmony of the depicted environment. Despite the absence of human figures, these corners of nature do not appear wild or alien – Sholtes masterfully created a sense of emotional inhabitation through subtle hints of human

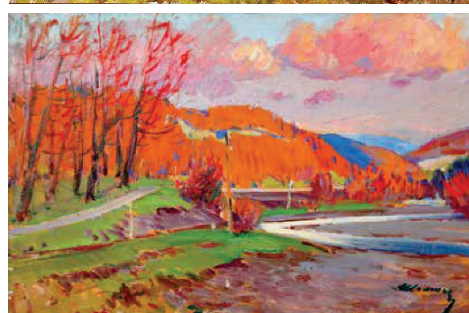
presence: a path, haystacks, a faint wisp of smoke in the air. The landscape was presented as a deeply felt, intimate space that preserved traces of interaction with humanity (Fig. 6).



a



b



c

**Figure 6.** A focus on a specific, poetically interpreted fragment of nature

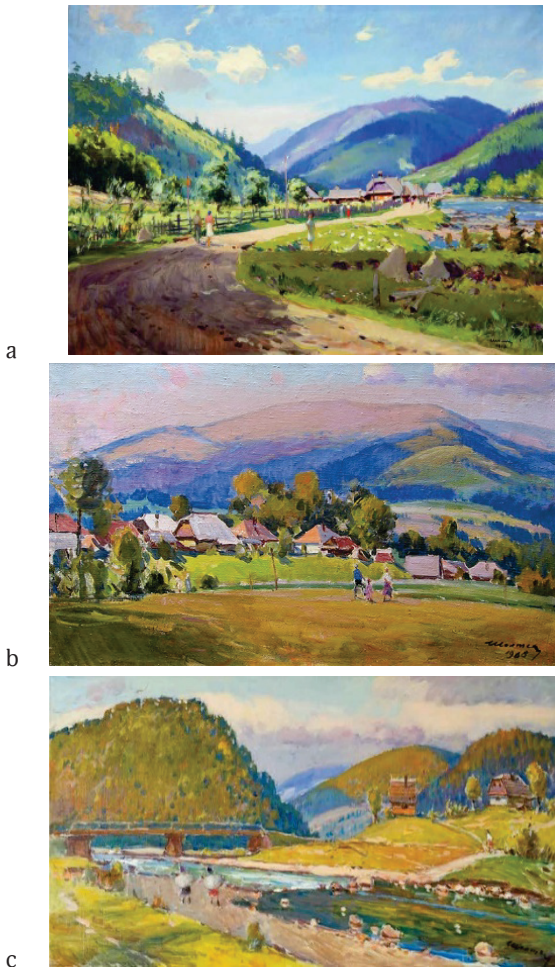
**Note:** a – *Stream in the Forest*. Canvas, oil, 90×100 cm (1970); b – *Autumn*. Canvas, oil, 65×85 cm (1976); c – *Clear Day*. Canvas, oil, 50.5×90.5 cm (1980)

**Source:** photo by the authors

Autumn landscapes occupied a special place in Sholtes’s lyrical works, as autumn allowed the artist to most fully express the colouristic richness, mood, and profound emotional essence of nature. Rather than a detailed depiction, Sholtes chose the path of abstraction, with the main motifs emphasised by broad colour planes and clarified by the detailing of individual elements, creating a sense of unity and depth in the image. For instance, in *Clear Day*, the dominant warm shades of green and orange not only reflected the vibrancy of autumn nature but also conveyed its emotional tone. As a result, the painting radiated light and warmth, affirm-

ing a sense of harmony and inner peace even against the backdrop of inevitable autumn decline.

A significant segment of Zoltan Sholtes's work consisted of pieces in which nature was explored in the context of integration with human existence. In these compositions, elements of landscape and genre painting were organically combined: human figures or their traces not only introduced an element of narrative but also served as a catalyst for deepening the meaning and emotional structure of the work. As H. Ostrovskiy (1974) pointed out, even with minimal figurative presence in the composition of the canvas, the idea of the natural unity of humankind and the landscape was embedded. In paintings such as *Spring in the High Carpathians* (1957), *Summer in the High Carpathians* (1968), and *Stuzhucia* (1968), human figures acted as spatial and psychological markers, intended to enhance the visual and emotional perception of the environment (Fig. 7).



**Figure 7.** Humanised landscape

**Note:** a – *Spring in the High Carpathians*. Canvas, oil (1957); b – *Summer in the High Carpathians*. Canvas, oil, 60×99.5 cm (1968); c – *Stuzhucia*. Canvas, oil, 51.5×116.5 cm (1968)

**Source:** photo by the authors

A particularly illustrative example is the painting *Summer in the High Carpathians*, where the space is structured using four roughly horizontal planes, ensuring a gradual visual immersion for the viewer. The central part of the composition, where a group of trees and houses is concentrated, is highlighted with a rich colour palette that enhances the sense of movement and depth. The three figures on the path do not play a dominant role, but they create an important spatial accent, essential in a composition where the logic of colour prevails over that of tone.

The next thematic layer of Zoltan Sholtes's work consisted of landscape scenes depicting rural life, where the architecture of the village – homes, streets – became the compositional axis of the image. As the artist himself noted, these motifs were most characteristic of his worldview (Ostrovskiy, 1974). Intimate in mood and lyrical in content, these works convey the distinctive spiritual atmosphere of the Transcarpathian microcosm, embodying the idea of the inseparable unity of nature, humanity, and the cultural environment. Notable examples of this aspect of Sholtes's work include *Winter in Stavne* (1957) and *Village in the Mountains* (1979). These paintings not only reflect the aesthetic principles of Sholtes's creativity, but also his deep emotional experience of the rural landscape as a source of continuous creative inspiration. For the artist, the village was not an idyllic space of peace but a field for continuous reflection and experimentation with colour and light effects (Fig. 8).



**Figure 8.** Rural landscape

**Note:** a – *Winter in Stavne*. Canvas, oil, 72×100 cm (1957); b – *Village in the Mountains*. Canvas, oil, 84.5×120 cm (1979)

**Source:** photo by the authors

The painting *Winter in Stavne* (1957) is a vivid example of spatial depth, luminosity, and exquisite colour harmony, characteristic of Sholtes's winter landscapes. As many critics noted, it was in his winter compositions that Sholtes fully manifested his mastery as a colourist. For instance, O. Moshay (1989) observed, "... few Transcarpathians can compare to him in feeling and reproducing the snow-covered Carpathian landscapes, filled with fresh air and bright sunlight". The colour composition of *Winter in Stavne* was based on a complex combination of pure and reflective colours: the bright whiteness of the snow in the foreground contrasted with warm glimmers and cool half-shadows, creating the effect of festive clarity on a winter's day. In the deeper layers of the composition, the palette became more complex: warm purple resonated with yellow-orange shades, while the madder and olive-ochre hues of the rooftops and fences added depth and richness to the colour scheme. The compositional structure also merits attention: the lower part of the canvas is an almost empty snow-covered field with delicate shadows, while the upper part is filled with architectural and natural motifs that create the focal point of the image. As O. Arkhyenko (2012) observed, the individuality of the artist is revealed through the strengthening of his distinctive plastic means. For Sholtes, this dominant feature was the delicate harmonisation of colour relationships, which formed a unique "linguistic intonation" in the visual representation of the Transcarpathian world.

A distinctive group in Zoltan Sholtes's work consisted of landscapes with architectural motifs, where buildings acted as self-sufficient compositional elements. Unlike generalised rural huts, these works captured masterpieces of Transcarpathian wooden architecture – churches, bell towers, and fortifications. Often, the artist repeatedly revisited the same motif, experimenting with colour and light depending on the time of day or season: the *Sturkivska Church in Yasinya* (1970, 1974, 1982, 1989), churches in *Oleksandrivka*, *Urmeziv* (Rus'ke Pole), *Bukovets*, *Uzhhorod Castle*, and castles in *Nevyt'ske* and *Mukachevo*. Sholtes's architectural landscapes also held ethnographic significance, as they documented objects that no longer exist. An example is the wooden Church of St Nicholas in Rus'ke Pole (17<sup>th</sup> century), which was destroyed in 1965. Sholtes managed to capture it in several sketches in the early 1960s, although he completed them decades later, which aligned with his usual creative practice. The landscapes with the motif of the churches in Rus'ke Pole (1986, 1989) demonstrate the artist's ability to achieve emotional expressiveness through colour, light, and composition (Fig. 9).

The summer study of 1986 stands out with its warm palette and life-affirming play of light on a sunlit meadow, contrasted with the heavy grey mass of the sky. At the same time, the winter work *Monument of Wooden Architecture* (1989) has a troubling, dramatic character: the composition is built on the relationship between

transparent, almost graphic silhouettes of the church and trees against a multi-layered, cold sky. The grey snow in the foreground intensifies the overall feeling of inevitability. A significant role is played by the rhythmic echoes of forms: church crosses and tree branches create a unified system, enhancing the emotional tone of the works. Thus, the main artistic means of achieving emotional expression in these landscapes were well-considered colour schemes, contrasts of tone and temperature, variations in painting techniques (transparent strokes vs. impasto strokes), and rhythmic organisation of the compositional space.



**Figure 9.** Architectural landscapes capturing objects that no longer exist

**Note:** a – Architectural Monument. Canvas, oil, 50.5×70 cm (1986); b – Monument of Wooden Architecture. Canvas, oil, 51×70.8 cm (1989)

**Source:** photo by the authors

One of the leading architectural motifs in Zoltan Sholtes's work was the Church of the Ascension of the Lord in Yasinya (*Strukivska Church*) – a notable Monument of Wooden Architecture in Transcarpathia (Fig. 10). The perfection of proportions, form, and texture of the church and bell tower created a harmonious ensemble closely linked to the spiritual and daily life of the community. The study of this monument required the artist not only to carry out a careful analysis of the architecture but also to gain a deep understanding of its sacred essence. In the painting *Church in Yasinya* (1970), Sholtes depicted a harsh winter atmosphere, building the colour palette on contrasts between complementary colours. The saturated range is softened through the interpenetration of colours and their scattering in the air. The lack

of active lighting is compensated for by a three-tiered composition: the empty foreground and the sky draw attention to the central architectural ensemble. The spatial solution embodied profound symbolism: the earth as the pure canvas of human life, the sky as the divine sphere, and the church and bell tower as intermediaries between them. The stately quality of the composition and the silhouette of Hoverla highlighted the idea of the immutability of spiritual values. In the work *Strukivska Church* (1974), another emotional state was conveyed: the sunny day dictated a bright, open colour scheme and an optimistic mood. At the same time, the artist consciously departed from atmospheric perspective: the intensity of colour was maintained across all planes, emphasising the decorativeness of the composition and the integrity of the sacred space's image.



a



b

**Figure 10.** The motif of the Strukivska Church in the village of Yasinya

**Note:** a – Church in Yasinya. Canvas, oil, 49.4×79.5 cm (1970); b – Strukivska Church. Canvas, oil, 99×125 cm (1974)

**Source:** photo by the authors

Zoltan Sholtes also turned to urban themes, particularly the architectural landmarks of Uzhhorod and Mukachevo. Various depictions of Uzhhorod Castle demonstrated differences in the artist's creative method when working in urban settings compared with rural areas. The compositional scheme and viewpoint remained constant across all works – the northern side from Podhradska Street, which provided the best view of the tectonic qualities of the architectural masses. The chosen viewpoint allowed the artist to emphasise the steep slope, defensive walls, and the monumentality of the architectural complex. In three works, the castle was

depicted in winter, but despite the compositional similarity and the same season, Sholtes avoided repetition in colour, light-tonal solutions, and emotional tone. The most finished work is *Uzhhorod Castle* (1974), executed in a cold palette with accents of warm ochre (Fig. 11). The artist delicately conveyed nuances of colour, the vibration of cold air, and the texture of snow. The composition was characteristic of Sholtes: a lowered viewpoint, a high horizon, and a horizontal division of space with the traditionally empty foreground. The main emotional element was the sky, which, despite occupying only a small part of the canvas, defined the mood of the work through a soft gradient from warm to cold blue, accented by warm clouds. In the 1976 work, while maintaining the compositional structure, the colour solution changed: a warmer palette and more active use of aerial perspective created an effect of dreaminess and tranquillity. The palace structure almost dissolved into the atmosphere of the sunset, conveying the dampness and freshness of a frosty evening.



a



b

**Figure 11.** The architectural landscape

**Note:** a – Uzhhorod Castle. Canvas, oil, 75×105 cm (1974); b – Uzhhorod Castle in Winter. Canvas, oil, 70×90 cm (1976)

**Source:** photo by the authors

The motifs of Mukachevo Castle had a different emotional direction. In the works of 1959 and 1971, the architectural structure was depicted against the backdrop of a bright summer day. Sholtes used an expanded light palette dominated by olive-yellow, salad green, ochre-silver, and blue tones. The use of backlighting allowed the artist to convey the intensity of colour in light and shadow. The composition was filled with light and air, combining the solemnity and plasticity of architec-

tural forms with the vibrant poetics of the landscape. In the 1971 work, the castle was depicted in the background, shifting the emphasis from architecture to the integrity of the environment. The architectural form was rendered with less plastic emphasis; instead, the artist integrated it into the landscape, creating a balance between space and mass through colour and tone. Through impressionistic techniques of capturing fleeting impressions and emotions, Z. Sholtes merged objective reality with subjective experience (Fig. 12).

The analysis of Z. Sholtes's intimate landscapes revealed that the main artistic and stylistic methods employed were realism with detailed compositions; impressionistic landscape studies with the generalisation of forms; and colour-textural expressionism in the construction of landscape imagery, where the emotional characteristics of colour and painterly texture dominated. The artist's creative method in these works fully aligned with the general plein air practice characteristic of Transcarpathian painters – his contemporaries. This approach was employed by A. Kotska, E. Konratovych, A. Boretskyi, and A. Kashshay, and it was precisely this method that defined the specificity of the local school of painting, which combined a profound sensitivity to nature, attentiveness to the conditions of light, colour, and texture, as well as a striving for emotional generalisation of the image. The stylistic means inherent to Sholtes – a synthesis of realism, impressionism, and expressionism – also formed the basis of the artistic language of E. Konratovych, A. Boretskyi, and I. Shut'yev. In contrast, Z. Sholtes rarely resorted to formalist experimentation or decorative stylisation, as was typical of A. Kashshay or G. Gluck. At the same time, this

selective use of stylistic tools emphasised the artist's particular focus on profound emotional expression, which distinguished him from other representatives of the local school. Lyricism in the artist's work manifested at several levels: composition, colour palette, texture, and painting technique (Table 2).



**Figure 12.** The motif of Mukachevo Castle  
**Note:** a – Mukachevo Castle. Canvas, oil, 70×90 cm (1959);  
 b – Mukachevo Castle. Canvas, oil, 70×90 cm (1971)  
**Source:** photo by the authors

**Table 2.** Artistic-stylistic methods of working on landscape and levels of lyricism expression

<b>Realism with detailed compositions</b>	Levels of lyricism expression	Composition level	Predominance of intimate, chamber-like motifs (cosy village streets, natural corners without vast panoramas), creating an impression of personal, emotional contemplation of the world
<b>Impressionistic landscape studies with form generalisation</b>		Level of colour scheme	Use of soft, nuanced tonal transitions, warm autumn or fresh winter colour schemes, conveying the changing states of nature and the emotional mood of the artist
<b>Colour-textural expressionism</b>		Level of texture	Delicate brushwork, light impressionistic, transparent or impasto accents, which convey the lively mobility of light and air

**Source:** developed by the authors

The identified patterns of artistic-stylistic techniques in Z. Sholtes' intimate landscapes provided grounds for refining the characteristics of this genre in Ukrainian art of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the nature of lyricism and creating a methodological foundation for further analysis of the visual language of Transcarpathian landscapes. In the scholarly art-historical discourse, the name of Zoltan Sholtes was mentioned in individual studies devoted to the Transcarpathian school of painting; however, most publications present his artistic work merely as part of this school.

Researcher H. Ostrovskiy (1974) presented a broad overview of the region's visual arts and devoted attention to Z. Sholtes, though somewhat biasedly characterised him primarily as a realist. I. Nebesnyk (2005) provided brief factual information about the artist's life and creative activity. I. Lutsenko (2014) focused on the ideological and creative foundations of the Transcarpathian school of painting, mentioning Z. Sholtes only in passing as one of its representatives. Biographical aspects of the artist's life and creative path, along with commentaries on his paintings, were provided in the studies of L. Popova (1999) and V. Shtets (2009). More detailed

information on his artistic achievements can be found in periodical publications, as well as in prefaces to catalogues and brochures accompanying his solo exhibitions. The overview nature of articles by scholars, which covered certain stages of the artist's creative activity, did not provide a thorough scholarly assessment of his work. For example, H. Bykova (1971) provided a complete list of the exhibited works, expanding the understanding of Z. Sholtes's exhibition activity, although without offering any analytical commentary. In an accompanying article for a later exhibition, O. Moshay (1989) mentioned Sholtes's portrait work and expressed regret over the limitation of his creative range to landscape painting. The article by L. Filip (2003), written on the occasion of the opening of Z. Sholtes's memorial room at the Transcarpathian Regional Museum, included biographical information and recollections about the artist from his contemporaries. However, the content-related and stylistic features of his painting still remain insufficiently explored and require more detailed theoretical analysis. In this regard, it became necessary to identify those aspects of his artistic practice and to interpret the personality of Z. Sholtes not only as a typical representative of a regional school, but also as an artist with a distinct creative stance and his own system of figurative thinking. The study of his legacy in the contemporary context may contribute to a deeper understanding of the development of Ukrainian art.

### Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was determined that Zoltan Sholtes conveyed not only the objective features of nature, but also its emotional and spiritual dimensions. The stylistic and technical diversity revealed in the realist-impressionist synthesis reflects the artist's flexibility in searching for expressive means to achieve the desired artistic effect. The study revealed that, in contrast to the treatment of nature in epic landscapes – characterised by expansive compositions, a high horizon line, a top-down viewpoint, universal imagery, and the grandeur of nature – Sholtes's lyrical chamber landscapes were marked by limited composition, detailed treatment set against generalised backgrounds, the poetics of everyday subjects, and an idyllic tone. The artist frequently returned to variations of the same motifs and locations, each time subtly conveying a different atmosphere – reflecting seasonal changes, time of day, weather conditions, or psychological mood. This

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demonstrated the artist's ability to transform real natural phenomena into symbolic images imbued with inner meaning. In Sholtes's interpretation, the lyrical landscape emerged as a genre that transcended the mere depiction of visual reality, becoming an instrument of profound aesthetic and spiritual reflection on the world. This was manifested through four general thematic lines: landscape as an image of nature; the "humanised" landscape; the rural landscape; and the architectural landscape. Each artwork represented not only contemplation of nature, but also its personal interpretation – an emotional projection of the artist's inner self. Sholtes's attention to the quality of light, subtle colour nuances, plasticity of line, and the textural richness of the brushstroke attested to the depth of internal engagement with each image. In such an approach, the landscape ceased to be a mere backdrop and became a self-sufficient bearer of meaning and emotion. It acted as a mediator between the external and the internal, the natural and the human, the rational and the emotional. The analysis of Sholtes's artistic language made it possible to propose new didactic approaches to teaching landscape painting. The study of his legacy highlighted the importance of observation, emotional sensitivity, analytical thinking, and the formation of an individual style. This experience was valuable both in the context of understanding local painting traditions and within the broader academic and educational discourse on artistic expression.

Future research perspectives may include a comparative study of Sholtes's pictorial language with that of other representatives of the Transcarpathian school of painting, particularly in the context of the lyrical landscape, as well as an iconographic interpretation of recurring motifs in his works as symbols shaping the artist's personal worldview. Another promising direction is the development of methodological materials based on his artistic legacy for teaching landscape painting in higher art education.

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### Conflict of Interest

None.

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## Ліричні аспекти у камерних пейзажах Золтана Шолтеса

■ **Анотація.** Актуальність дослідження полягає у необхідності глибшого розуміння внеску Золтана Шолтеса у формування закарпатської школи живопису. Попри значний інтерес до закарпатської школи, окремі аспекти творчості Шолтеса залишилися недостатньо дослідженими. Метою цього дослідження було виокремлення визначальних рис пейзажного живопису Шолтеса та аналіз художніх засобів і концептуальних підходів, що формували емоційний зміст камерних творів митця. У ході дослідження встановлено, що основними напрямками у пейзажному мистецтві Золтана Шолтеса були ліричні пейзажі як зображення природи, «олюднені» пейзажі, сільські пейзажі та архітектурні пейзажі. Особлива увага приділялася емоційному виміру його робіт, у яких природа набувала символічного значення та відображала внутрішні стани людської душі. У дослідженні підкреслено відмінності між ліричними камерними пейзажами Шолтеса та його епічними панорамними композиціями з акцентом на композиційні, колористичні та технічні засоби, які художник застосовував для передачі глибокого емоційного змісту. Ключовими художньо-стилістичними підходами у його творчості виступали реалізм із детальною композицією; імпресіонізм із узагальненням форми, а також колірно-текстурний експресіонізм, де домінували емоційні якості кольору та насичені мальовничі фактури. Ліричний пейзаж у творчості Шолтеса постав не лише як жанрова форма, а й як філософський інструмент для осмислення природи та внутрішнього світу людини. Завдяки застосуванню різноманітних композиційних, колористичних і технічних прийомів митець надав своїм творам глибини та багатозначності. Отримані результати сприяли глибшому розумінню естетичних та мистецьких принципів закарпатської школи й підкреслили значущість індивідуального стилю Шолтеса в художніх процесах ХХ століття. Практична цінність цього дослідження виявляється у мистецтвознавстві, де досвід митця може слугувати прикладом для створення методів передачі емоційної складової пейзажного живопису

■ **Ключові слова:** закарпатська школа живопису; творчий метод; художня мова; композиція; ліризм; інтимність; пленер



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## Expressive features of a music and visual project

**Abstract.** This study aimed to identify the expressive features of music and visual projects in contemporary academic and public art, with a focus on how visual elements influence the reception, dramaturgy, and emotional perception of music. The methodological basis of the research was a comparative analysis of three representative formats of music and visual projects, carried out using fixed video recordings and critical reviews. The analysis, which encompassed three music and visual projects – The Seasons, Piano Light Show performed by Oleksii Botvinov, and Contrapunctus 14 by J.S. Bach – demonstrated that the visual component in each format served not only an aesthetic, but also a structural function, significantly enhancing the artistic expressiveness of the music. In the concert format, specifically in The Seasons project, it was established that multichannel video projections integrated into the architecture of the multimedia New World Center concert hall created an immersive effect and spatial interaction between music and image. The visualisation resonated with the musical dramaturgy of the piece, emphasising cyclicity, dynamic transitions, and emotional accents, forming a complex audio-visual unity. In the public format of the Piano Light Show project, it was shown that video mapping in open-air settings or on stage (including projections onto the piano itself) served a communicative function, making classical music more accessible to a wider audience. The improvisational interaction between the pianist and the Video Jockey (VJ) enabled real-time visualisation of the music, fostering a high level of emotional engagement among the audience. In the studio format, particularly in the Contrapunctus 14 project, the visual sequence acted as a tool for interpreting the fugal structure of Bach's composition. The video provided a narrative understanding of the musical material, highlighting thematic elements and symbolism, while also constructing a metaphorical space that visualised ideas of incompleteness, autobiographical reference, and the search for meaning. The results obtained have practical significance for the practice of performing arts, music education, digital directing, and cultural management, and are useful for application in the field of cultural management, for the development of multimedia programmes of academic and interdisciplinary orientation

**Keywords:** concert format; screen presentation; visual component; multimedia art; intermediality

### Introduction

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, musical art has undergone significant transformation under the influence of digital technologies, which have radically altered both the modes of performance and the ways in which music is perceived. With the advent of television, digital platforms, and the online environment, a coincidence of auditory and visual channels has emerged, giving rise to new artistic practices in which music no longer functions as an autonomous phenomenon but rather in

combination with visual representation. In this context, there has been growing interest in so-called music and visual projects – synthetic forms of screen-based presentation in which classical music performance is complemented by a thoughtfully constructed visual component. These projects not only renew the format of communication between performer and audience, but also reshape the artistic experience, transforming the listener into an active viewer. On the one hand, this leads to the

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disappearance of certain attributes of the traditional concert act – such as live presence, formality, and emotional authenticity. On the other hand, new screen formats create alternative opportunities for aesthetic engagement, allowing for a focus on the inner dramaturgy of the work, the visual structuring of complex musical forms, and the highlighting of thematic or affective elements. Thus, the music and visual project emerges as an independent phenomenon of contemporary art, requiring systematic theoretical analysis from the perspectives of intermediality, artistic expression, and the transformation of musical performance in the era of screen culture.

Music video projects represent a new form of presenting a musical work. From the perspective of authorship and artistic design, this format of communicating music of the academic tradition to the listener remains largely unexplored in musicology. A musical video project refers to the synchronous integration of relatively autonomous artistic video imagery – displayed on screen – into a traditional concert performance. These visual components are coordinated with the artistic content of the chosen musical work and with the musical performance process itself.

Despite the rapid spread of such formats as the video concert and audio-visual composition, the research field concerning music and visual projects remains insufficiently defined in scholarly literature. Within Ukrainian musicological discourse, the interpretation of musical text has mainly been developed through the lenses of the theory of musical semantics and the phenomenology of perception. O. Shyian (2022) examined the transformations in the operations of Ukrainian concert institutions – particularly the National Philharmonic – in the context of digitalisation. The author highlighted the challenges of transitioning to online communication formats, adapting marketing strategies to new media formats, and shifting audience expectations regarding the quality and modes of music presentation. However, aesthetic aspects of the screen representation of music were left outside the scope of this analysis. T. Sydorchuk (2023) explored the genre and stylistic specificities of musical screen formats, identifying such types as video albums, musical short films, conceptual video recordings, and other hybrid forms. Nevertheless, her research remained primarily focused on popular music culture, without reference to the academic repertoire or an analysis of multimedia practices within the classical domain.

Within the European tradition of the interpretative approach, S.C. Izen *et al.* (2023) viewed music as a form of sociocultural discourse, emphasising its communicative potential. However, their approach overlooked the visual dimension of musical experience, limiting the applicability of their analysis to multimedia projects. S. Finke & M. Solli (2024) examined the instability and polysemy of musical meaning that arises during performance, highlighting the significance of interpretative agency. At the same time, they did not consider visual mediation as an

integral element of the artistic process, leaving room for further research in the field of audio-visual synaesthesia. Significant attention to synaesthetic perception was given by C. Spence & N. Di Stefano (2024), who, based on empirical observations, demonstrated that sound and image form a unified multisensory experience. Their findings confirmed the idea that audio-visual signals are not perceived in isolation but as interdependent channels of aesthetic information, which directly pertains to music and visual projects.

In the field of digital music visualisation, P. Georges & A. Seckin (2022) employed innovative methods for visualising sonic relationships, which enabled the identification of new patterns of stylistic influence. The authors showed that such visualisations may function not only as analytical tools but also as means of aesthetic mediation, tailored to the expectations of contemporary listeners. A.B. Melchiorre *et al.* (2023) analysed the EmoMTB interface as a means of organising musical space according to emotional criteria, in which colour and spatial structures guide the user toward a selected mood profile. This example highlights the importance of visual design as a factor in emotional engagement with music. In the study by J. Borgohain *et al.* (2023), it was shown that music induces visual imagination shaped by the listener's emotional states. Particular attention was given to the cross-cultural aspects of this phenomenon, with a comparison of Western and Indian classical traditions, thereby enhancing the relevance of the findings to various types of music and visual practice.

In the context of the concert format, S.P. Sekar (2024) examined the audience's receptive experience at film-with-live-orchestra events, emphasising the significance of the "presence" effect as a component of aesthetic impact. The researcher demonstrated that the emotional intensity of perception increases precisely through the real-time synchronisation of music and image. P. Gomes-Ribeiro & A. Malhado (2024) drew attention to the tension between the academic status of musical content and its commercial functionality, which is often apparent in multimedia formats. Their study underscored the importance of overcoming hierarchical biases in musical discourse to enable a comprehensive analysis of visualised forms.

Despite the presence of certain interdisciplinary approaches, the music and visual project as a form of presenting classical music has yet to receive systematic scholarly attention. Comprehensive classifications of music and visual formats are lacking, and the boundaries between concert video recordings and synthetic artistic acts remain ill-defined. Key questions remain open, including the transformation of a work's intonational structure under the influence of visual imagery, the emergence of new forms of reception, and the aesthetic autonomy of the visual within a musical context. This study aimed to examine the specificity of the music and visual project as an intermedial genre that combines

elements of classical music performance with artistic visualisation, with a focus on its expressive features and reception. In pursuit of this aim, the following research objectives were set: to analyse three formats of the music and visual project – concert, public, and studio – using representative examples; to investigate the nature of the interaction between musical and visual components in each format, taking into account their artistic structure, technical environment, and receptive dynamics; and to conduct a comparative analysis of the results in order to identify the typological features of the music and visual project as a form of cultural communication.

### Materials and Methods

The study of the expressive features of the music and visual project as a contemporary intermedial genre was conducted during 2024-2025. It was directly linked to the exploration of modern forms of screen-based presentation of classical music, which have emerged in response to the societal demand for new channels of musical communication. The focus was placed on the music and visual project as a distinct form that combines elements of concert film and music video, yet is characterised by a heightened degree of artistic interaction between the sonic and visual layers, as well as a more complex receptive structure. The analysis was based on three representative examples of music and visual projects, each reflecting a different type of realisation: a concert format as embodied in *The Seasons* by John Cage, performed in 2013 at the New World Center in Miami under the direction of M. Tilson Thomas (*Making the right choices...*, 2024); open-air multimedia performances by Ukrainian pianist O. Botvinov (*Piano Light Show*, 2021) in collaboration with the group Videomatics; and a studio format in the form of a video interpretation of *Contrapunctus 14* by J.S. Bach (*Bach: Contrapunctus 14, BWV...*, n.d.). The selection of these projects was guided by their distinctive artistic structure, varied visual strategies, and differing degrees of audience immersion in the performance process.

The work with each example involved a frame-by-frame analysis of the video material alongside an audio examination of the musical texture. A synchronised timeline layout was used for both audio and video fragments in order to identify points of intersection between musical and visual form-building. Particular attention was paid to the correspondence between colour, spatial, and cinematic imagery and the rhythmic and harmonic structure of the music. In *The Seasons* project, visual dominants were analysed in detail, especially those associated with the associative use of colour in each section, guided by symbolism derived from Indian philosophy, which underpinned the lighting design concept. In Botvinov's projects – particularly *Piano Light Show* and the studio video version of Ludovico Einaudi's *Fly* (Alexey Botvinov *PIANO LIGHT SHOW...*, 2019) – the technical aspects of projecting visuals onto the surface of the instrument

were examined, as well as the role of architectural space in shaping the screen composition and the enhancement of intonational expressiveness through colour and light orchestration. A defining feature was the integration of digital noise, lighting effects, and the pianist's musical gesture into a three-dimensional unity of visual expression.

The studio format, represented by the interpretation of *Contrapunctus* by J.S. Bach, was examined as an example of chamber visual dramaturgy. The video sequence was analysed in terms of its function in expanding the musical narrative, with attention given to visual details that directed the viewer towards an awareness of the psychological tension within the work. The metaphorical imagery – such as a fireplace, sunlight, forest, and sheets of music – accompanying the musical themes was studied, along with the sequence of video transitions as a formal expressive device. The research methodology involved a multi-stage process: an initial description of the projects; formalisation of their structural parameters; analysis of the expressive means in both channels (musical and visual); identification of points of integration and contrast between them; and comparison of the results to determine the typological features of the music and visual project as an artistic phenomenon.

### Results

#### Concert-based music and visual project in a multimedia space (New World Center)

The concert-type music and visual project is exemplified by the New World Center – a state-of-the-art concert hall specifically designed for multimedia performances and the digital integration of visual art into classical music practice. Located in Miami Beach, USA, the New World Center is a pioneering venue that combines the traditional symphonic concert with advanced visual technologies and new forms of audience engagement (Herring & Hall, 2021). The hall's architecture, designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry, features a fundamentally new approach to spatial design: integrated into the structure are unconventional projection surfaces, known as "sails", positioned above the stage and around the auditorium, forming a multi-level audiovisual arc (Fig. 1).



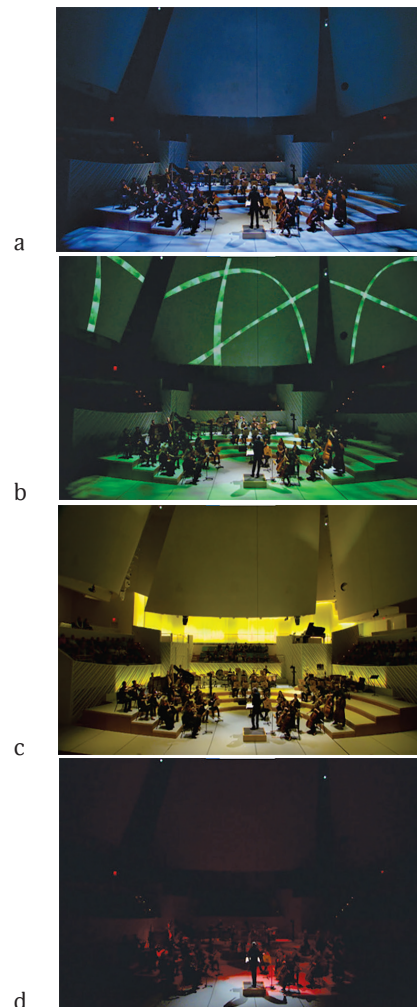
**Figure 1.** Interior of the New World Center concert hall  
Source: New World Center/Gehry Partners (2011)

This architectural solution enables full-scale video projection onto the interior walls of the hall during musical performances, transforming the traditional concert into a spatial multimedia event. Instead of a conventional stage separated from the audience, an immersive effect is created, placing the listener at the centre of an interaction between sound and image (Suchkov, 2024). Projections can be cast not only onto screens, but also onto the architectural features of the space itself, turning the hall into a unified panoramic scenographic surface. The technical equipment of the complex has been one of the key prerequisites for such integration. The media infrastructure includes a system of multichannel projectors, notably high-powered Christie Roadie HD devices (Canada), each capable of projecting at a brightness level exceeding 30,000 lumens, along with Coolux Pandora's Box media servers (Germany), which enable the synchronisation of visual content with live musical performance in real time. This equipment allows for projection across more than 600 square metres of interior surfaces, making it possible to display visuals with maximum precision concerning the musical structure, including instantaneous responses to changes in tempo, dynamics, or articulation during the performance.

The visual and structural characteristics of this type of project lie in the meticulous synchronisation of the video sequence with the musical form. Projections within the hall may be either abstract (geometric shapes, colour fields, lighting effects) or figurative (photographic or animated imagery), depending on the nature of the musical work. This format of interaction requires the careful coordination of audio and visual layers: changes in musical dynamics, tempo, texture, or form are accompanied by corresponding shifts in the visual imagery – both in stylistic tone and in the rhythm of the visual montage. The visual element thus serves not merely a decorative or illustrative role but contributes to the creation of the work's semantic structure. During performances of works with a clearly defined programme, the visual component may directly illustrate the music's narrative content. In the case of abstract compositions, video projections acquire a symbolic character – conveying the emotional atmosphere and structural essence of the work through colour, form, and motion (Budmen, 2025).

A striking example of a concert-based music and visual project is the staging of *The Seasons* by John Cage, performed by the New World Symphony under the direction of M. Tilson Thomas (Making the right choices..., 2024) at the New World Center. This project formed part of the large-scale festival Making the Right Choices: A John Cage Centennial Celebration, marking the composer's centenary, and became a model of innovative synthesis between music, scenography, and digital visualisation. The multimedia design of the concert completely reimagined the traditional format of classical performance. During each part of the cycle – Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall – artistic video imagery was projected onto

the interior surfaces of the hall, visually conveying the symbolic qualities of each season in accordance with Cage's concept. These images did not serve as direct illustrations, but instead created a stage-visual environment aligned with the ideas of transformation, cyclicity, and the spiritual dimension of the musical material. Figure 2 illustrated the visual palette and lighting solutions used in the multimedia staging of *The Seasons*. In Winter, conceived as an image of stillness and suspended motion, the visual effects were based on a muted colour scheme and a slow lighting rhythm. Spring featured animations with floral elements and abstract forms that gradually "blossomed" in synchrony with the unfolding of the music. In Summer, the visuals reached a high level of intensity: bright light, rhythmic image fragmentation, and rich colour saturation. Finally, Fall included visual allegories of decline and decay: dimming light rhythms and projections in deep, blood-brown tones created the effect of colour slowly falling away.



**Figure 2.** Visual highlights during the performance of *The Seasons* by John Cage at the New World Center  
**Note:** a – Winter section; b – Spring section; c – Summer section; d – Fall section

**Source:** *The Seasons* (1947) by John Cage (2013)

The visual sequence was created with consideration of Cage's musical structure, which is not traditionally narrative, but follows an internal rhythmic and textural logic. This logic was translated into video through a combination of colour language, spatial transitions, and tempo-rhythmic editing. As a result, a visual narrative was formed that resonated with the music not in terms of content, but through compositional logic, texture, and dynamics. This approach positioned the visual layer not as an illustration of the music, but as an independent artistic system that interacts with it, creating a complex polyphonic relationship between auditory and visual experience.

The outcome was a performative unity in which the listener also became a viewer, immersed in a synaesthetic environment. This contributed to a deeper reception of the musical work: emotional accents were enhanced through light and visual movement; structural transitions in the music were visually marked by shifts in colour or geometric form; and the very architecture of the hall – with its multi-level projection surfaces –

was transformed into an integrated visual instrument. It is also worth noting that the multimedia capabilities of the New World Center are used not only for the audience inside the hall, but also externally. The outer wall of the building serves as a giant screen for WALLCAST® projections – open-air concert broadcasts for the public gathered in the adjacent park (Fig. 3). This expands the boundaries of the concert space: the music and visual project encompasses both indoor and outdoor settings simultaneously. From a technical standpoint, high-definition video is synchronously transmitted to the façade, which covers approximately 650 m<sup>2</sup>, accompanied by powerful sound via an external acoustic system (WALLCAST® concerts and park events, n.d.). In this format, the visual layer serves a dual function – accessibility and spectacle. On the one hand, large-scale projection makes classical music accessible to a broader audience beyond the concert hall (including passers-by); on the other, the very format of the broadcast transforms the concert into an urban audio-visual event.



**Figure 3.** WALLCAST® concert broadcast on the façade of the New World Center

Source: WALLCAST® concerts and park events (n.d.)

Thus, the concert-based music and visual project in a multimedia venue demonstrates how modern technologies can enrich traditional performance: video content integrated into the concert space enhances the artistic expressiveness of the music, clarifies its meanings, and broadens its audience – without altering the musical text itself, but instead complementing it with a visual dimension of the work.

### **Public music and visual project with visualisation (case study: Oleksii Botvinov)**

The public type of music and visual project in this study was explored through the creative work of Ukrainian pianist O. Botvinov (Piano Light Show, 2021), particularly his original multimedia concert *Visual Reality of Music*, widely known under the title *Piano Light Show*. The project was positioned as a new format of concert performance that combined classical piano interpretation with real-time digital video art. It represented not only an

artistic innovation, but also a conceptual synthesis of audio and visual expression in public art.

In contrast to projects implemented in fixed multimedia venues with established technical infrastructure – such as the New World Center in Miami – the *Piano Light Show* was distinguished by its mobility and adaptability to different spaces. Botvinov's performances took place in a wide variety of settings, ranging from traditional classical venues (e.g., Odesa Regional Philharmonic, Lviv Opera Theatre) to open-air public spaces, such as the Potemkin Stairs in Odesa, Sofia Square in Kyiv, the Colonnade of the Vorontsov Palace, and other sites of notable urban significance (*Piano Light Show...*, 2021). This spatial variability became a defining feature of the public music and visual project, which was oriented not only towards aesthetic experience, but also towards a sociocultural function – engaging new audiences with classical music by making it more accessible and relevant through visual technologies (van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2020).

Regardless of the architectural parameters of the venue, the visual component functioned not as an auxiliary element, but as an equal and integral part of the performance. The video sequence was projected onto large screens, building façades, or stage objects – including the instrument itself: a white concert grand piano specifically designed for video-mapping purposes. During the performance, real-time visuals were projected directly onto the surface of the piano, evolving in accordance with the musical structure – its rhythm, dynamics, harmonic shifts, and timbral nuances. This created a powerful effect of total fusion between image and sound, transforming the instrument into a living screen that visualised the music not as mere illustration, but as spatial energy in motion. This approach was especially striking in the performance of *Fly*. The visual layer was structured according to video-mapping principles: the imagery was projected not only onto a background screen, but directly onto the piano itself, which was visually transformed into part of a cosmic landscape. In the opening minutes of the piece, the audience saw a deep, dark sky gradually filled with stars, the silhouette of a planet, and pulses of light. This visual space did not simply illustrate the music – it resonated with it, unfolding in parallel, conveying its inner meanings, moods, and philosophical undertones. The visual effects were carefully selected to align with the distinctive musical language of Einaudi. The repeated harmonies and gradual build-up in dynamics were enhanced by an increasing number of light and colour layers, the acceleration of animation tempo, and the expansion of the image scale. During climactic moments – when the music reached its full resonance and the texture became more saturated – the visual space exploded with streams of light, vivid outlines, and shimmering effects, creating a sense of emotional spatial expansion (Fig. 4). In contrast, in quieter or repetitive passages, the video slowed down and the image “froze”, producing a pause not only in the music but also in the visual experience. This established a profound interdependence between the auditory and visual layers.



**Figure 4.** Moment of piano performance of Ludovico Einaudi's *Fly* in the Piano Light Show project  
**Source:** Piano Light Show a new dimension of visual reality of musical classics (2021)

Thus, the expressive features of the public music and visual project *Piano Light Show* found their fullest realisation in the interpretation of *Fly* by the Italian composer Ludovico Einaudi (Alexey Botvinov *PIANO LIGHT SHOW...*, 2019). This performance exemplified the synthesis of classical piano artistry and real-time interactive video art, created through collaboration between pianist Oleksii Botvinov and visual artist Video Jockey (VJ) Videomatics. The selected piece – a meditative, emotive composition with a recognisable harmonic language and fluid melodic development – provided ideal conditions for a synaesthetic reading through the fusion of sonic and visual dynamics.

A defining feature of this project was the improvisational interaction between the performer and the media artist. Although the visual material – comprising a set of abstract scenes, thematic elements and graphic styles – was prepared in advance, the actual process of projecting the video within the stage space was not rigidly predetermined. During the performance, the VJ adjusted the visual sequence in real time, responding to the tempo, dynamics, pauses, accents, and mood shifts in the piano playing. This collaborative format resembled a jazz “jam session”, where the musician and the visual artist co-created an integrated audio-visual event characterised not by a fixed hierarchy, but by an equal artistic partnership (Pogrebniak, 2023).

In the case of *Fly*, the semantic richness of the project was not linear. The visual imagery did not replicate a narrative based on the composition but instead created a space for interpretation. Images of the cosmos, stars, the Earth's rotation, light and darkness could be perceived as metaphors for flight, introspection, self-immersion, or transcending boundaries. This approach is closely aligned with Einaudi's own compositional concept, which avoids overt programmatic content in favour of emotionally immersive listening. Additionally, the use of visual metaphors contributed to an expanded sense of time and space within the piece. In synthesis with the music, the imagery is transformed at the level of aesthetic experience: simple harmonies acquire new associations, the inner rhythm of the piece resonates with the pulsation of the visuals, and the image of the instrument dissolves into silhouettes of light that envelop the viewer. In this way, *Fly*, as performed by Botvinov, takes on the qualities of an artistic installation, in which music, image, and the listener's presence merge into a unified synaesthetic experience. This type of public music and visual project invited a rethinking of the boundaries of academic musical art. While preserving the technical virtuosity and depth of musical interpretation, it presented the music in a renewed format, responsive to the expectations of audiences in the digital age. The visual channel here played not a supporting role, but becomes an equal component of the artistic gesture. Notably, the synthesis of music and video enhanced the audience's emotional engagement – listeners are not passive



When the B-A-C-H Theme begins its development within the fugue, the musical score abruptly breaks off – this is precisely, where the composer stopped, unable to complete the work. Historically, this interruption has often been interpreted symbolically, as if Bach departed from life, leaving his musical “signature” unfinished. In the studio project, a unique vision of the fugue’s conclusion was realised. By developing the B-A-C-H motif along with the previously introduced themes, the work was brought to an artistically and compositionally satisfying coda. The ending is rendered in the style of late Romanticism – “with restrained Busoni-esque sweep” – adding a new emotional depth to the piece (Distler, 2022). This interpretation is itself a form of expressive act – a dialogue with the composer across centuries – and it undoubtedly influences the construction of the visual sequence in the studio project.

A visual-structural analysis of the studio video *Contrapunctus 14* reveals that the visual narrative is shaped by the musical form, though it employs entirely different artistic means than the previous two project types. While in concert performances the main “spectacle” is the musicians on stage and the surrounding projections, in the studio video, the performer and setting themselves become part of the symbolic concept. The directorial treatment of the visual layer is executed with great precision. Every visual image, change of perspective, or lighting shift is coordinated with the progression of the fugue. The music and visual project opened with a stage composition centred on the figure of a person seated in a dimly lit room, immersed in contemplation (Fig. 8). The atmosphere of restraint and focus was enhanced by soft lighting, the stillness of the interior, and the soundscape – the gentle crackling of a

fireplace created a sense of presence, emphasising the intimate nature of the space.



**Figure 8.** Opening stage composition of the studio project *Contrapunctus 14*

**Source:** Bach: *Contrapunctus 14*, BWV 1080, 19 (Compl. Trifonov) (n.d.)

In this context, the first Theme of *Contrapunctus* began to sound, accompanied by shots of the pianist’s concentrated gaze, sheets of music pinned to the wall, and an open grand piano (Fig. 9). These visual elements conveyed a sense of symbolic anticipation for the completion of the work left unfinished by Bach. As the video progressed, the imagery gradually shifted towards brighter visuals – sunlight streaming through a window, transitions between spatial planes, and dynamic camera movements. These visual changes resonated with the development of the musical theme, encouraging a deeper emotional engagement. Gradually, the camera focused on details – particularly the pianist’s hand movements – which intensified the effect of a complete fusion between auditory and visual impressions, drawing the viewer closer to the musical action as though it were a visual canvas.



**Figure 9.** Visual frames from the studio project *Contrapunctus 14*

**Source:** Bach: *Contrapunctus 14*, BWV 1080, 19 (Compl. Trifonov) (n.d.)

The visual narrative of the project unfolds along two parallel planes: the first is the figure of a protagonist, who metaphorically searches for a lost page of the musical score; the second is the smooth, continuous development of the fugal structure in *Contrapunctus*. Their interplay creates a complex dramaturgy of internal searching, reflected in movement, fluctuations, and shifts in lighting. The musical development of the second Theme is accompanied by increased dynamic tension, which is visually expressed through heightened contrast in the frame, a faster editing pace, and a transition in colour palette – from a dark, chamber-like atmosphere to an open natural landscape, particularly to scenes of a vivid emerald forest. In this context, the forest functions as a symbol of deep introspection, of unity between the human being and nature, and of a return to origins – a kind of metaphorical homecoming.

In the third episode of the fugue, based on the cryptogram B-A-C-H, which serves as the composer's musical signature, the visual imagery takes on a symbolic character. The B-A-C-H motif (B $\flat$ -A-C-B $\sharp$ ) signifies Bach's autobiographical presence in the work and represents the completion of a life and creative cycle, emphasising the polyphonic intricacy and profound spiritual depth of the music. The key characteristics of the visual interpretation include:

- a subtle yet clearly structured narrative unfolding in parallel with the musical dramaturgy;
- a focus on the physical act of performance – close-ups of the pianist's hands, interaction with the keyboard, and the instrument's mechanical details;

- the use of natural symbolism (fire, forest, light), which adds artistic depth and evokes semantic associations;

- an emphasis on visually supporting the structure of the fugue through colour, lighting, and rhythmic editing.

Overall, the studio-based music and visual project is characterised by the highest degree of conceptual cohesion, with each visual element carefully planned and filmed in advance. This allows for a strong unity of ideas between the audio and visual components. The result is a fully realised art film, in which the piano performance is only one element alongside direction, cinematography, and editing. The analysis of this example demonstrates that the visual layer in a studio project can do more than reinforce the music – it can interpret it. Through imagery not possible in a concert setting, it adds an additional narrative dimension, making visible what remains hidden in the music. The video version of *Contrapunctus 14* serves simultaneously as a scholarly commentary – revealing the structure of the music and illustrating each theme – and as an artistic meditation on life and death in Bach's work, expressed through the symbols of incompleteness and their resolution in the final scene. This in-depth approach exemplifies how studio-based music and visual projects can convey the complex meanings of classical music to contemporary audiences using the language of cinema. The summarised findings of the analysis of the three examined types of music and visual projects are presented in Table 1. Each type has distinct features in terms of spatial organisation, visualisation method, semantic focus, and the nature of interaction between musical and visual components.

**Table 1.** Comparative characteristics of music and visual project formats

Type of project	Performance space	Nature of visualisation	Semantic emphasis	Interaction between music and visuals
Concert-based (multimedia hall)	Fixed indoor venue (New World Center)	Multi-channel projection onto architectural surfaces of the hall; panoramic screens surrounding the audience	Enhancing the emotional atmosphere of the work; visual clarification of musical imagery	Precise synchronisation with musical form and dynamics; visuals shift according to musical sections and climaxes; technological integration into the architecture of the hall
Public (open-air or traditional stage + video art)	Open urban spaces or traditional concert venues (e.g., projects by O. Botvinov)	Real-time VJ projection onto screens or stage elements (e.g., video mapping on the piano)	Engaging wider audiences; offering new meanings to works of the academic tradition; increasing emotional impact through visual spectacle	Flexible visual response to live performance; improvisational interaction between pianist and projection; musical climaxes emphasised through intensified visual effects
Studio-based (music and visual project with elements of a music video)	Studio recording without an audience (staged video – <i>Contrapunctus 14</i> )	Post-production video, cinematic imagery; symbolic visual dramaturgy structured through editing	Interpretation of the work's deeper meaning; highlighting the composer's intent (e.g., the B-A-C-H Theme as a symbol); dialogue between past and present	Close parallelism between visual editing and musical form; each theme/section accompanied by a corresponding visual motif; use of cinematic symbolism to express what is musically implicit (rendering the invisible visible)

**Source:** based on WALLCAST® concerts and park events (n.d.), Bach: *Contrapunctus 14*, BWV 1080, 19 (Compl. Trifonov) (n.d.)

The analysis of the table has made it possible to identify the key differences between concert-based, public, and studio music and visual projects. First and foremost, the spatial context influences the methods of visualisation and the nature of interaction between the audio and video components. In concert formats, static multi-channel projection predominates, integrated into the architecture of the venue to provide full immersion in the musical space. By contrast, public projects focus on flexible, dynamic interaction with audiences, which necessitates the use of VJ techniques, video projections onto architectural objects, and improvisational presentation. The studio format is characterised by post-production direction and edited dramaturgy, in which imagery is not created in real time but conceptualised in advance. This allows for a high degree of semantic density and profound symbolism. Thus, the differences between formats are linked to the level of control over the audio-visual composition, as well as to the communicative purpose – from eliciting an immediate emotional response in a public setting to offering complex interpretations of the composer's ideas in a studio environment. The findings demonstrate that music and visual projects significantly expand the expressive possibilities of musical art. Despite differences in format, all three types share a common tendency: the visual component enhances and complements the musical one, creating a synergistic effect.

## Discussion

The findings of the study have confirmed that the visual component plays a significant role in shaping the expressiveness of musical projects across various formats. This involves not merely an aesthetic supplement, but a profound transformation of artistic expression, in which imagery functions as an equal bearer of meaning alongside the sound. In all three analysed cases – concert-based (New World Center), public (Piano Light Show), and studio (Contrapunctus 14) – the integration of music and visual imagery demonstrated the potential to broaden the horizons of reception, intensify emotional engagement, and reveal new dimensions of artistic expression. In each format, the visual element fulfilled its own functional and aesthetic role: from spatial-architectural immersion in the New World Center concert hall to interactive audience engagement in an open urban environment, and to intellectually symbolic interpretation of polyphony in the studio video. All three cases confirmed that audio-visual unity not only extends the boundaries of musical communication, but also fosters a new quality of perception, in which music acquires a visible – and therefore multi-layered and deeper – interpretation. The results obtained may be applied in the integration of visualisation into the teaching of music theory and the development of multimedia educational programmes. Furthermore, the analysed presentation formats could serve as a reference point

for concert organisers, artists, and creative teams in exploring new ways of engaging audiences.

The findings of this study align with numerous scholarly works that demonstrate how the integration of music with visual media significantly enhances the emotional expressiveness of an audio-visual composition. In the analysis of Oleksii Botvinov's Piano Light Show, it was observed that visual effects constructed in alignment with the colour palette and rhythm of the music's emotional tone elicited heightened arousal and satisfaction among the audience. These observations directly correlate with the conclusions of M. Franěk & J. Petružálek (2024), who showed that even background musical accompaniment can transform the perception of visual imagery. In the case of this study, the video component did not serve merely as a backdrop but as an organic part of the composition, contributing to a cohesive sensory experience. In line with the Intention-Attention-Reaction-Retention model proposed by J.N. Dasovich-Wilson *et al.* (2022), the results indicated that video synchronised with the musical intonation (as exemplified in the piece Fly) enhances attention, supports better retention of musical content, and creates a lasting emotional impression.

Although no experimental measurement of cognitive engagement was conducted in the studio project Contrapunctus 14, qualitative analysis of the video sequence enabled the formulation of a theoretical assumption: cognitive concentration appears to increase at moments of structural climax, particularly during the introduction of the B-A-C-H theme. A similar rationale was confirmed by the study conducted by S. Tanaka (2021), which demonstrated that the presence of visual imagery activates mirror neuron mechanisms, while its absence reduces the effect of emotional empathy. Thus, although the present analysis was based on visual-structural and content observation, it resonates with empirical findings from previous research and supports the assumption that cohesive visual direction enhances the perception of musical and dramaturgical content. In this respect, the findings of this study contribute to existing understandings of the mechanisms of emotional and cognitive interaction between the visual and auditory within a music and visual project.

The results of the study by J. Millet *et al.* (2021), which showed that music in film can alter the emotional perception of visual content, align with the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the public music and visual project Piano Light Show. In Botvinov's performances in particular, the visual effects (such as colour modulation and flashes of light) amplify the emotional tone of the music, producing an integrated artistic impression comparable to the effects of cinematic music scoring. Moreover, the analysis confirmed that the visual component does not merely accompany the music but also introduces additional layers of meaning, similar to film practices. Findings on the influence of facial expressions and gestures on the perception of musical content, as report-

ed by P. Miksza *et al.* (2024) and N. Moura *et al.* (2024), were partially reflected in the case of Piano Light Show, where significant emphasis is placed on the visual representation of the pianist during performance. These observations are also demonstrated in the study by M.-L. Juntunen *et al.* (2023) which highlighted the importance of beat gestures, iconic and metaphoric gesticulation in creating visual-musical correspondences. Here, gestures are not merely elements of stage presence but act as carriers of musical meaning – they embody form, emotion, and even structure in a bodily form that is accessible to the audience. In contrast, the studio project *Contrapunctus 14* frequently replaces the performer's visual presence with a metaphorical video sequence, offering a more abstract mode of visualisation. This partially diverges from the research data, emphasising the dominant role of facial expressions: in this case, it was the abstract imagery rather than the physical presence of the performer that ensured deep audience engagement.

Similarly, the results of J. Kim & N. Pellegrino (2023), who reported improved comprehension of music through visual accompaniment, are echoed in this study through the analysis of video interpretations, particularly in the case of *Contrapunctus 14*. The visual layer, synchronised with the musical form, helped the audience follow the development of the fugue, while the introduction of new themes was marked by changes in lighting, camera focus or colour palette, supporting the cognitive structuring of the composition. These observations are consistent with the findings of A. Czepiel *et al.* (2021; 2025), who noted the activation of orienting responses in reaction to shifts in the audio-visual stream. Inter-brain synchronisation, recorded by V. Müller & U. Lindenberger (2023) during collective viewing of a concert video, supports the assumption of a similar effect in this study's examination of public formats, where emotional resonance among the audience was achieved through the combined impact of powerful visual and musical elements. Although the present research was not empirical in a psychological sense, the observational results confirmed the presence of collective emotional engagement in open-air settings (such as the *Potemkin Stairs*), where the music and visual event functioned as a large-scale aesthetic experience. The findings also confirmed that the effectiveness of visual media largely depends on its semantic alignment with the musical context.

The analysis of concert, public, and studio projects demonstrated that when the visual sequence resonates organically with the dramaturgy and emotional tone of the music, the audience's perception of the piece becomes more cohesive and profound. For instance, in the studio video project *Contrapunctus 14*, it was the visual accompaniment that drew attention to the moment of the B-ACH theme's introduction, creating a sense of tense anticipation and closure, which enhanced the overall expressive impact. These findings align with the conclusions of A. Cheţan & I. Iancu (2023), who argued

that the authenticity of the visual image – including the artist's style and scenography – generates a powerful emotional and semantic field. At the same time, research by P. Modestini & C. Weining (2025) highlighted the risk of reduced engagement in digital broadcasts due to the absence of the performer's visual presence. This conclusion partly corresponds with observations from the current study regarding the studio format: although the visual elements in *Contrapunctus 14* compensated for the lack of a live stage, it was the symbolic visual narrative – rather than the pianist's physical presence – that proved crucial in achieving the emotional effect. Thus, the research confirms the broader trend but clarifies that it is not necessarily the performer's physicality or facial expressions that are central. In some cases, a well-conceived visual strategy that reflects the meanings embedded in the musical material may be sufficient. This clarification adds nuance to ongoing discussions about the role of visual context in musical reception.

In conclusion, the results of the study align harmoniously with the academic tradition while simultaneously highlighting the need to examine the role of visual semantics, spatial modalities (stage, studio, public environment), and audio-visual congruence in conveying the artistic expressiveness of a musical project. The discussion of the findings demonstrated that the integration of visual technologies with musical performance significantly affects not only the character but also the intensity of artistic expression. Such synthesis has a complex impact on both emotional and cognitive perception, opening new channels for meaning-making that are not available within the confines of purely sonic art. Each of the formats examined contributed its own nuances to the overall picture, showing that the spatial, technical, and communicative conditions of realisation directly influence the form, structure, and rhetoric of music and visual expression.

## Conclusions

The study established that the integration of visual elements into musical performance greatly enhances expressiveness, emotional perception, and communicative effectiveness. Visual components were not merely auxiliary features, but instead constitute a fully-fledged artistic layer that revealed the deeper meanings of the music, reinforced its dramaturgy, and shaped the channels of communication with the audience. Based on the observations and analysis of music and visual formats, it can be concluded that the interaction between sound and image enabled academic music to move beyond a narrow elitist framework, making it more accessible to a broader audience of listeners and viewers. It was established that in a concert multimedia hall such as the New World Center (Miami), the use of high-tech visual projections – including panoramic video, interior lighting, and synchronised graphics – created a fully immersive artistic experience. This spatial-temporal integration of

audio-visual signals enhanced the reception of musical material, particularly in complex instrumental genres. The findings confirmed the effectiveness of coordinated interaction between music and image in amplifying emotional resonance, increasing audience engagement, and generating a multisensory perception of the work. In the public format, as exemplified by the Piano Light Show project, it was demonstrated that digital visualisation in urban spaces activated new models of cultural consumption and established alternative channels of communication. In particular, audiences, who do not typically attend classical concerts showed greater engagement, specifically due to the accessibility of the visualised format. In the studio format, as illustrated by the video project *Contrapunctus 14*, it was found that carefully crafted visual design served not only an illustrative, but also an analytical function. The visual narrative in such projects acts as an interpretative tool, enabling the exposition of the internal structure of complex polyphonic material, the highlighting of semantic focal points, and the symbolic framing of musical events. The resulting qualitative indicators include a differentiation of the functions of the visual layer according to format: dramaturgical (in the concert hall), accentual (in public space), and symbolic and didactic (in the studio format).

The results obtained hold significant practical value for musicology, stage art, interdisciplinary performance practice, and multimedia pedagogy. They may be applied in the development of concert programmes, the design

of enlightenment project in intermedia art, the formation of multimedia cultural policies, and the engagement of new audiences with classical music. It is recommended to further deepen and expand the practice of multimedia interpretation, to create specialised intermedia platforms, and to incorporate VJ art into philharmonic or chamber performance formats. Among the limitations of this study is its focus on only three case studies, which does not allow for a comprehensive typology of all existing visual strategies. To address this limitation, future research should expand the empirical base by employing tools such as surveys, biometric analysis, neuropsychological monitoring, and experimental studies involving alternative genres and performance spaces. Further investigations may focus on comparing audience responses to different types of visualisations (from schematic to metaphorical), examining the neuroaesthetic mechanisms of audio-visual perception, and developing classifications of visual strategies relevant to specific musical genres and sociocultural contexts.

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## Виразжальні особливості музично-візуального проєкту

■ **Анотація.** Метою цього дослідження було виявлення виразжальних особливостей музично-візуальних проєктів у сучасному академічному та публічному мистецтві, зосередження уваги на тому, як візуальні елементи впливають на рецепцію, драматургію та емоційне сприйняття музики. Методологічною основою дослідження став порівняльний аналіз трьох репрезентативних форматів музично-візуальних проєктів, здійснений на основі фіксованих відеозаписів та критичних оглядів. У результаті дослідження, що охоплювало аналіз музично-візуальних проєктів – «The Seasons», «Piano Light Show» у виконанні Олексія Ботвінова, а також «Contrapunctus 14» Й.С. Баха, було доведено, що візуальний компонент у кожному з форматів виконує не лише естетичну, а й структуроутворюючу функцію, суттєво підсилюючи художню виразність музики. У концертному форматі, а саме в проєкті «The Seasons», було встановлено, що багатоканальні відеопроєкції, інтегровані в архітектуру мультимедійного залу New World Center, створюють ефект занурення та просторової взаємодії музики й зображення. Візуалізація резонує з музичною драматургією твору, підкреслює циклічність, динамічні переходи та емотивні акценти, формуючи складну аудіовізуальну єдність. У публічному форматі проєкту «Piano Light Show» показано, що відеомапінг у відкритому просторі або на сцені (зокрема проєкції на рояль) виконує комунікативну функцію, роблячи академічну музику доступною ширшій аудиторії. Імпровізаційна взаємодія піаніста з Video Jockey (VJ) дозволяє візуалізувати музику в реальному часі, що зумовлює високу емоційну залученість публіки. У студійному форматі, зокрема в проєкті «Contrapunctus 14», візуальний ряд виступив інструментом інтерпретації фугальної структури твору Баха. Відео наративно осмислило музичний матеріал, акцентуючи теми та символіку, і водночас сформувало метафоричний простір, що візуалізував ідеї незавершеності, автобіографічності та пошуку сенсу. Отримані результати мають прикладне значення для практики сценічного мистецтва, музичної освіти, цифрової режисури та культурного менеджменту й корисні для застосування у сфері культурного менеджменту, для розробки мультимедійних програм академічного і міжпредметного спрямування

■ **Ключові слова:** концертний формат; екранна презентація; візуальний компонент; мультимедійне мистецтво; інтермедіальність

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## Watercolour painting: Ideas and learning through the lens of individual experience

**Abstract.** A key factor in the modernisation of education in Ukraine is the study, preservation, and implementation of effective and rational pedagogical experience – an experience that has not only been realised in the teaching and upbringing of the younger generation, but also possesses the potential to serve as a model for future educational practice. This research aimed to uncover the secrets of technical approaches that can captivate young people and contribute to the further development of visual arts techniques. The article focused on the artist's path to mastering the use of watercolour, highlighting the importance of children's art studios, which nurtured creative interest, instilled an appreciation of beauty in everyday surroundings, and developed practical painting skills. Attention was also given to the figure of Zoltan Bakonii, a renowned art educator in Transcarpathia and beyond. His name and activities in the minds of contemporaries from the middle and older generations, former students, were closely intertwined with the names of the luminaries of the Transcarpathian school of painting. Yosyp Bokshai played a significant role in popularising the remarkable achievements of the visual arts studio, which contributed to the upbringing of several generations of admirers and artists, who joined the ranks of the Transcarpathian painting school. The artistic-pedagogical system of Zoltan Bakonii has withstood the test of time, proven and demonstrated its effectiveness, and continued to exist through the efforts of its followers. This system was modernised and enhanced with creative innovations, fulfilling a crucial social role in nurturing well-rounded individuals and responsible citizens within new socio-historical contexts. Given the rise of digital technologies and their widespread use among young people, there has been a noticeable decline in interest in classical painting techniques. The practical value of the research lies in the emphasis on the specifics of working with demanding equipment, which requires technical proficiency and a deep understanding of composition, selection, and generalisation

**Keywords:** painting school; aquarelle; art; visual arts studio; art institutions

### Introduction

At the modern stage of educational development, pedagogical theory and practice increasingly turn to the arts as a vital means of shaping young people. Its primary aim is to elevate the individual, foster dignity, nurture inherent abilities, and affirm belief in one's unique purpose. A conscious engagement with artistic values, combined with personal life experience, enables young people to develop both creative potential and moral integrity, allowing them to assert themselves as determined and

purposeful individuals. The arts serve as a form of understanding reality, exerting a multifaceted influence on young people's development. They provide a foundation for knowledge acquisition, spiritual resilience, and the formation of a coherent worldview. Art embodies universal human values and ideals, which form the basis of spiritual growth and the humanisation of the individual. In a rapidly changing world, there is an increasing need to enhance and further develop the emotional-aesthetic

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and moral-spiritual education of youth, as a counterbalance to the moral indifference observed among some segments of the younger generation.

Contemporary art education faces challenges posed by digital technologies, which influenced the teaching of traditional techniques (Fernández, 2024). It was essential to engage students with the unique and improvisational nature of these techniques – qualities that cannot be fully replicated by digital algorithms. This raised the pressing question, of how to reawaken interest in classical methods, which were deeply personal and offer vast potential for creative interpretation. These very characteristics of watercolour painting – its individuality and improvisational richness – remained irreplaceable by technology, which operated within fixed algorithmic constraints.

A number of scholarly studies proved significant for this article, particularly those addressing the history of painting schools, both traditional and contemporary techniques, practical guidance on watercolour painting, and the development of creativity and artistic innovation in the modern artist. Researcher L. Ilnytska (2022), drawing on international pedagogical practices for organising creative and practical tasks in watercolour, explored the use of basic techniques known as “watercolour washes”. The author emphasised that a novice artist, who seeks to expand the potential of specific watercolour methods was thereby enabling further professional growth. Although watercolour was a technically demanding medium, it offered opportunities to explore the properties of colour and harmonious combinations. Proficiency in watercolour technique, including repeated practice with washes, led to effectiveness and refinement, ultimately reaching a professional standard. According to V. Grigorieva (2021), the creative potential of watercolour depended greatly on the artist’s imagination and creative vision. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, watercolour painting in Ukraine experienced a revival, spurred by a growing community of enthusiasts, who contributed to its rapid development. Increasingly, the term “Silver Age” of watercolour began to appear among art critics, artists, and admirers of the medium. When analysing Ukrainian pedagogical approaches to watercolour washes, it was important to highlight the teaching expertise of I. Batalia (2020), which encouraged students in art institutions to actively engage in exercises focused on mastering watercolour techniques. These included painting on wet paper, working with colour and tonal washes, and blending one colour into another.

N. Veligura (2018) examined watercolour painting within the broader context of artistic culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Researcher’s study traced the historical development of watercolour traditions and explored the emergence of innovative trends. The author analysed the evolution of both traditional techniques and experimental methods, presenting them as a significant phenomenon within artistic culture. Watercolour techniques were identified as an integral part of the

creative process. In contemporary art, increasing numbers of artists were turning to watercolour, combining classical methods with personal interpretations, distinctive styles, and unique creative signatures.

The author V. Chernyavskiy (2019) analysed the training of visual art teachers, identifying the methods, forms, and teaching tools used in conjunction with information and communication technologies. O. Kashshai (2021) explored the history and development of the Transcarpathian school of painting. The author’s research also examined the artistic evolution of Anton Kashshai (1921-1991), highlighting his significance in the cultural and artistic landscape of Transcarpathia and, in particular, his contribution to the formation of the Transcarpathian school of painting. The scientist S. Lee (2021) provided experimental evidence of the importance and effectiveness of pedagogical conditions in developing creative competence among future specialists in decorative and applied arts. Researcher proposed the use of training exercises aimed at enhancing creative thinking and professional skills.

M. Yur (2023) investigated the patterns in the development of Ukrainian painting from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, taking into account the value-based aspects of national culture, socio-political processes, and individual artistic perspectives. Researcher noted that central themes in Ukrainian art have consistently included the natural landscape, national traditions and culture, and historical narratives. This national orientation was evident in Ukrainian modernism, the work of the Sixtiers, and the period following Ukraine’s independence. The study also addressed the concept of the “authorial” perspective in the contemporary representation of the artistic worldview and the role of personal artistic visions in the progression of Ukrainian painting within the frameworks of modernism, avant-garde, and postmodernism.

The scholar N. Mandra (2021) examined the historical preconditions for the development of art history concepts within Ukrainian culture across several paradigmatic dimensions. The author developed and substantiated the interrelation between art historical concepts and the broader cultural system using systemic and functional approaches. I. Baltazyuk (2022) investigated the symbolic language of artworks by applying interdisciplinary methods drawn from art history, cultural studies, history, philosophy, and psychology. This approach broadened the interpretative possibilities for understanding the symbolism found in the work of Kyiv-based artists in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The study also identified the significance of historical memory in shaping cultural symbols associated with concepts such as resilience, historical awareness, continuity, identity, vitality, heritage, selfawareness, and self-identification.

A. Baranovska (2024) explored theoretical developments in both Ukrainian and Western art history concerning the issue of realism in contemporary painting. Scientist analysed the work of Ukrainian and

international artists, who employed realist forms of expression, focusing on the influence of artistic traditions. The study asserted that contemporary art schools continued to preserve traditions of academicism and Western European classical art, while also recognising region-specific achievements in the Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Transcarpathian schools of painting.

A key element of this research was the historical dimension relating to the painter and educator Zoltan Bakonii. The visual arts studio at the Uzhhorod Palace of Pioneers served as a launching point into the wider world of art for many aspiring artists. This study aimed to uncover the specific techniques of watercolour painting and their relevance to nurturing the next generation of artists.

### Materials and Methods

The methods employed in the preparation of this article were selected based on a comprehensive approach to the stated aim and objectives. A systems analysis was used to process periodicals, literary sources, and online materials relevant to the topic. The specific-search method enabled the identification and theoretical examination of art historical, methodological literature and academic research in the field. Analytical methods were applied in describing the initial steps for aspiring artists, particularly in stimulating motivation and interest in watercolour painting, mastering technical aspects of the medium, and addressing challenges encountered during the learning process. These difficulties were considered in the context of developing and refining artistic skills. Historical analysis was used to explore the activities of Zoltan Bakonii's visual art studio at the Uzhhorod Palace of Pioneers (1946-1989), where structured efforts were made to improve students' technical proficiency in watercolour painting. The studio also fostered creative collaboration between pupils and professional Transcarpathian artists during open-air painting excursions. A figurative and stylistic comparison method was used to describe artworks by young artists held in the collection of the modern Uzhhorod Palace of Children and Youth. Art historical methods were employed to analyse the drawings and to assess their artistic and stylistic features, as well as their genre-specific characteristics. The article included a description of traditional watercolour techniques, outlined their key features, and provided a selection of practical exercises aimed at helping young artists enhance their proficiency in watercolour painting.

Empirical methods were employed to observe the creative process and to analyse the outcomes and achievements of both pedagogical and artistic practices. The experimental method was used to stimulate creativity through experiments involving various watercolour techniques, materials, and subject matter. The case study method was applied to describe specific examples of the use of watercolour in an artist's creative practice. Reflective analysis contributed to the articulation of emotions

associated with watercolour painting. The comparative method enabled the topic to be considered within the broader context of historical and artistic development. Finally, the method of information synthesis was used to analyse trends in the development of watercolour painting in Ukraine and to formulate objective conclusions.

### Results and Discussion

The painting practice of 20<sup>th</sup>-century realist artists clearly demonstrated their ability to construct form and colour based on a comprehensive understanding of the subject as it existed in reality. This depth of knowledge provided the impetus for the development of painting distinguished by precise form construction, conveyed through colour, materiality, unity, and a coherent chromatic approach. Thus, only an artist, who has confidently mastered the fundamentals of visual representation was truly able to express personal views and ideas and reveal a distinct creative identity.

Compared to other forms of painting, working in watercolour offered little room for error: the paper quickly became overworked, the colours lose their freshness, and the technique may forfeit its characteristic lightness and spontaneity. A defining feature of watercolour was its fluidity – paint flows easily from the brush, responding to the slightest movement or pressure. This imparts a sense of effortlessness to the painter, which in turn was communicated to the viewer. The result often appeared to have been created with ease, as if “flowing like a song”.

Mastery of the watercolour technique depended largely on acquired skill, making the teacher's own experience with the medium particularly significant. Working with watercolour can be likened to keeping a diary – one composed not of written entries, but of visual impressions. Each work captured a unique experience, often reflecting the romantic associations of unhurried walks and fleeting moments. It was also worth noting that the Transcarpathian region has produced numerous figures of great importance to its cultural history. Widely recognised was the phenomenon of the Transcarpathian school of painting, whose founders – Yosyp Bokshai and Adalbert Erdeli – earned acclaim far beyond the region and mentored a generation of outstanding artists.

Zoltan Bakonii, a student of Yosyp Bokshai, played a leading role in preserving and advancing the artistic and pedagogical legacy of his mentors. His life was wholly devoted to teaching; from 1946 to 1989, he served as head of the visual arts studio at the Uzhhorod Palace of Pioneers. Throughout his career, approximately 8000 creatively gifted children passed through his studio, with more than 400 going on to become distinguished artists, art historians, and educators. The studio had a significant influence on fostering an early enthusiasm for painting *en plein air* with watercolours. For many, this interest began in childhood – perhaps with their first visit to the studio under the guidance of the talented artist and teacher, Zoltan Bakonii. It was here that young people

learned to recognise the uniqueness and unrepeatable beauty of their surroundings, while acquiring the foundational skills of visual art. Students eagerly completed a wide range of tasks not only during group sessions, but also independently, developing their artistic awareness by engaging with works of art and attending exhibitions of Transcarpathian artists.

Thanks to Zoltan Bakonii's strong organisational skills, students of the visual arts studio regularly took part in open-air painting trips across Transcarpathia during the summer holidays. The region's magnificent natural landscapes inspired young artists to engage deeply with their creative practice and improve their artistic abilities. This environment fostered a sense of healthy competition, with each student striving to produce better work and complete as many sketch studies as possible. Throughout the day, the students painted in watercolour, and after finishing their outdoor sessions, they would display their works for discussion, exchange feedback, and analyse specific elements they aimed to improve in future pieces. These plein air excursions also took place during the winter holidays, made possible through agreements between the regional education authority and rural schools, which supported the young artists' stays. "Various picturesque locations in Transcarpathia became the sites for these plein air sessions: Stavne Village, Volosianka Village (Velykyi Bereznyi District) (1950-1953); Perechyn urban-type settlement, Dubrynychy Village, Velykyi Bereznyi urbantype settlement, Stavne Village, Volosianka Village (1954); Bohdan Village, Kosivska Poliana Village (Rakhiv District), banks of the Bila Tysa, lowlands beneath Hoverla (1955); Nyzhni Vorota urban-type settlement (Volovets District) (1956-1958); Yasinia Village (1959); Chynadiievo Village (Mukachevo District), Synevyr Village, Kolochava Village, Synvirska Poliana Village (Mizhhiria District), banks of the Chorna Rika River, Zhornava Village, Uzhok Village (Velykyi Bereznyi District), Lumshory Village (Perechyn District) (1960-1967)" (Bakoni, 1952).

An important component of the plein air sessions was collaboration with prominent artists – members of the Transcarpathian branch of the Union of Artists of the Ukrainian SSR. These included the Honoured Art Worker and Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Arts, Yosyp Bokshai; the Honoured Artist of the Ukrainian SSR, Zoltan Sholtes; the People's Artist of the Ukrainian SSR, Anton Kashshai; the Honoured Art Worker, Andrii Kotska; and the professional artist Oleksandr Petki. These artists worked alongside the studio students, inspiring them creatively and offering valuable guidance and feedback to each young painter. Such moments played a vital role in enhancing the technical skills and artistic maturity of the students' work (Personal archive of Z. Bakoni, 1952).

The most lasting impressions among the students were formed during sessions in the villages of Stavne

and Zhornava in the Uzhhorod District. Painting outdoors in low temperatures generated considerable interest and required rapid application of paint, which would freeze almost instantly upon contact with the surface. These experimental conditions contributed significantly to the development of artistic skills, as unique textural patterns emerged directly during the painting process. These patterns held aesthetic value and motivated continued creative engagement despite challenging weather. However, sudden temperature changes often caused the painted effects to blur, highlighting the importance of allowing watercolour layers to dry gradually in order to preserve the artistic result. Such experimental experiences sparked creative curiosity, encouraged exploratory practices, and contributed to the development of new techniques in watercolour painting (Skakandi, 2023).

For outstanding achievements, students of the studio were eligible to receive scholarships from the Ministry of Education of Ukraine. One contributing factor may have been the visit to Transcarpathia and the visual arts studio at the Uzhhorod Palace of Pioneers – led by Zoltan Bakoni – by the People's Artist of Ukraine, Tetiana Yablonska, who held the creative work of the young artists in high regard. Her recognition may have served as an impetus for some students to pursue further development of their artistic skills and creative potential at other educational institutions. The studio's effectiveness was evident in the numerous international exhibitions of students' artwork held in more than 50 countries worldwide – including Japan, the USA, Canada, and Argentina – where their work received acclaim from expert juries and the general public (Fig. 1). Following the international exhibition of Ukrainian visual and decorative arts held in 1959 in the Czechoslovak Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic, England, and Japan, young artists from the studio – M. Ach, K. Hrabar, Ye. Kovach, V. Lehyrda, T. Lutak, Ye. Males, I. Myhovych, V. Pushkash, Ye. Svadeba, V. Skakandii, Yu. Skakandi, S. Sholtes, and A. Fazekash – were commended for their active participation and the high artistic quality of their work. They received certificates of recognition from the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the Leninist Communist League of Youth of Ukraine (LKSMU), along with prizes such as cameras, musical instruments, footballs, paints, sketchbooks, and books (Bakoni, 1958). In addition, V. Skakandii was awarded a diploma and a prize – a decorative casket and reproductions of paintings by I. Repin and V. Surikov – for his works presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> all-Union Exhibition. Yu. Skakandi received third prize for his landscape compositions and genre scenes (Varvarinets, 1959). Figure 1 demonstrated the artists' mastery of watercolour technique, harmonious use of colour, and high proficiency in technical approaches to watercolour painting, with works preserved in the collection of the modern Uzhhorod Palace of Children and Youth.



**Figure 1.** Autumn in the Carpathians

Source: photo by the author

The drawing Cowshed in the Village of Domanyntsi (Fig. 2) was characterised by its division into foreground, middle ground and background, as well as the use of linear, aerial, and tonal perspective – indicative of the artist’s knowledge of the fundamentals of visual art.



**Figure 2.** Cowshed in the Village of Domanyntsi

Source: photo by the author

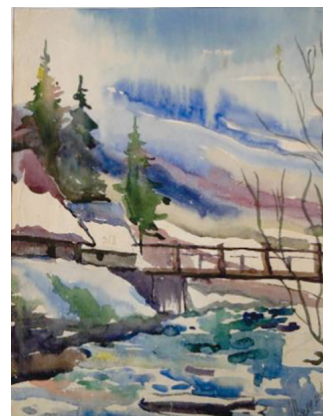
The painting By the River (Fig. 3) depicted the architecture of a Transcarpathian village and the natural scenery of the Carpathian Mountains. Wooden churches often became central subjects in the children’s works created by young artists of Zoltan Bakonii’s studio.



**Figure 3.** By the River

Source: photo by the author

The level of proficiency demonstrated by the studio participants enabled many to continue their studies at the Uzhhorod Art College, where, among others, talented artist-educators Edita and Mykola Medvetski taught. Their contributions became significant within the field of art education. An artist must work consistently to achieve meaningful progress in creative self-expression. However, inspiration arose not from mechanical persistence, but from creative experience. It was worth noting that numerous artistic ideas, once conceived, call for realisation, as watercolour painting was an engaging and expressive form of art. When a concept emerged and the moment for its execution arrived, swiftness became essential. The works presented in Figure 4 demonstrated a high level of professional skill in watercolour painting.



**Figure 4.** Examples of drawings by young artists from the studio at the Uzhhorod Palace of Pioneers under the guidance of Zoltan Bakonii  
Source: photo by the author

It proved useful in this study to outline guidance concerning watercolour painting techniques. Beginners often face the question of how best to paint landscapes – directly from life or from memory on a daily

basis. For those seeking to gain artistic experience, it was important to avoid a mechanical approach devoid of creative inspiration. Many watercolour works were produced *en plein air*, which required prompt decision-making regarding subject matter, composition, colour palette, and overall concept. When working with watercolour outdoors, it was advisable to employ the *alla prima* technique on wet paper. As the painting dries, it can gradually be brought to a finished state on a dry surface, allowing for either detailed refinement or greater generalisation. Individual sketches may later serve as the basis for complete compositions, paintings, or creative projects. Drawing upon the traditions of the Transcarpathian school of painting simultaneously encouraged the development of a personal style – one capable of conveying the essence of the natural landscape and cultural heritage of the region through the lens of individual perception (Skakandi, 2023).

The founders of the Transcarpathian school of painting were the renowned artists and educators Y. Bokshai and A. Erdeli, together with their like-minded contemporaries – F. Manailo, A. Kotska, E. Konratovych, H. Hliuk, and A. Kashshai. Their works were distinguished by vibrant colours and refined chromatic harmonies that reflected the enchanting landscapes of the Carpathians and the image of the human figure in traditional attire. In their art, colour played a central role as a medium for conveying thought and emotion, imbued with philosophical meaning and a distinctive resonance (Skakandi, 2023).

As of 2025, some representatives of the younger generation have begun to deviate from the traditions of the Transcarpathian art school, resorting instead to derivative compositions, formulaic approaches, and art of low aesthetic quality. The use of bright yet often discordant colours had at times resulted in superficial visual appeal lacking a deeper philosophical or professional foundation. This was occasionally evident in attempts to imitate or replicate the creative style of the People's Artist of Ukraine, A. Kashshai. In many recent works, artists have attempted to portray the beauty of the Carpathian Mountains not only through bright, major-key palettes, but also by employing more austere and dramatic colour solutions. The Carpathians can be not only picturesque, but also powerful and majestic, reacting sensitively to reckless human interference – actions that may lead to environmental catastrophes such as floods. An artist, as a patriot of their native land, should not only celebrate its beauty, but also use their creative work to address pressing ecological concerns, drawing attention to the urgent need for environmental preservation.

The watercolour series *The Strict Carpathians* was dedicated to this theme, created following a plein air session in the Mizhhiria Region. Executed in the *alla prima* technique using a grey-green palette, these works depicted the landscapes of Mizhhiria during the season

of mist and late autumn, when nature entered a state of stillness in anticipation of winter. The majestic mountains and mountain passes, veiled in dense fog, appear as symbols of wisdom, filled with history, people, molars, and the living beings inhabiting the ancient forests, rivers, and highland expanses. This concern was also expressed in works such as *Pylypets Village*, *Church Between the Mountains*, *Winter Carpathians*, *Pulse of the Carpathians*, as well as the *Rhythms of the Carpathians* series. Through the use of grotesque and decorative stylisation, the artist sought to influence the viewer and warn against the consequences of irresponsible, exploitative attitudes towards the Carpathian environment (Skakandi, 2023).

The scholar Ye. Antonovych (1997) outlined methodological principles for the aesthetic education of adolescents by engaging them with traditional folk art. The author analysed the influence of folk crafts and folkloric heritage on the development of aesthetic values among young people. L. Babenko (2001) conducted a comprehensive review of the stages of development in Ukrainian visual art, including painting, graphic art, and sculpture. The study emphasised the national specificity of artistic creativity and the contribution of Ukrainian artists to the global cultural space. V. Badyak (1990) provided an analytical overview of the development of artistic culture in the western regions of Ukraine, examining the influence of historical events and sociocultural factors on the formation of the region's artistic landscape. In a collaborative monograph, V. Gomonnai *et al.* (1997) examined the historical development of school education in the Transcarpathian region, with particular attention to the role of national traditions and the region's cultural features in shaping the educational environment. L. Masol (2006) outlined the theoretical foundations and practical approaches to general arts education in Ukraine. The author explored methodological strategies for teaching art and highlighted the importance of aesthetic education in personal development. A. Voloshchuk (2009) presented practical experience in organising plein air excursions aimed at fostering children's creative abilities. The study included examples of the pedagogical work of art teacher Zoltan Bakonii, emphasising the effectiveness of this method in arts education.

An analysis of research addressing the challenges of watercolour painting identified several studies as particularly relevant. These explored general painting techniques, outlined methodological and technological approaches, analysed compositional strategies, and discussed the theory of light and colour in visual art, with special attention to the role of colour harmony in watercolour. Art educators contributed their own insights into the diverse applications of watercolour in preparing young artists. They provided step-by-step explanations of multilayered painting techniques (glazing), working on wet paper followed by detailed refinement and the *alla prima* approach.

## Conclusions

Art, as a social phenomenon, gains strength and significance, when grounded in historical experience and accumulated cultural heritage, while simultaneously embracing innovation and shaping future trends. Without a comprehensive understanding and study of the traditions of art education in Ukraine and its individual regions, the perception of the spiritual values of the Ukrainian nation remained incomplete. This article explored the principles of pictorial representation, the properties of watercolour materials, and the technical methods specific to watercolour painting. It examined the unique characteristics of the medium and its capacity to convey the colours of objects and natural phenomena.

Particular attention was given to the creative process and the search for an individual style among emerging artists. The article emphasised that imaginative thinking – shaped through the indepth study of painting techniques – served as the foundation of creative expression. It also addressed the principles of colour harmony, the influence of light, the qualities of materials, the importance of pigment quality, and the educational and professional value of watercolour painting in artistic training.

The article highlighted the role of the extracurricular visual arts studio, led for 43 years by the Honoured

Teacher of Ukraine and artist-educator Zoltan Bakonii, in nurturing a generation of artists, who later joined the Transcarpathian Union of Artists. The art plein airs, organised during both summer and winter seasons, engaged renowned regional artists and aimed to refine watercolour techniques, cultivate creativity and talent among young artists, and foster greater interest in visual art among youth.

Promising directions for further research include the study of watercolour painting as a leading technique in higher art education institutions; the technical potential of watercolour in plein air painting; the traditions and contemporary practices of the Zoltan Bakonii extracurricular visual arts studio; and the development of art education systems by Zoltan Bakonii's pedagogical successors.

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None.

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## Акварельний живопис: ідеї та навчання через призму індивідуального досвіду

■ **Анотація.** Важливим чинником модернізації освіти в Україні є вивчення, збереження та впровадження дієвого і раціонального досвіду педагогів, який був реалізований у навчанні й вихованні молодого покоління, так і в здатності в майбутньому стати взірцем і прикладом для педагогічного наслідування. Мета дослідження полягала у розкритті таємниць технічних прийомів, що здатне захоплювати молодих людей, сприяти подальшому розвитку образотворчих технік. Саме шляху зростання вправності митця у використанні акварельного живопису присвячена стаття, підкреслена важливість дитячих мистецьких студій, які формували основи зацікавлення творчістю, заклали основи бачення краси у повсякденному просторі та привили навички роботи живописними засобами. Також, у статті було приділено увагу постаті відомого на Закарпатті та за його межами педагога-художника Золтана Баконія. Його ім'я та діяльність в уяві сучасників середнього та старшого покоління – колишніх студійців тісно переплетені з іменами корифеїв закарпатської школи живопису. Йосип Бокшай відіграв велику роль в популяризації визначних здобутків студії образотворчого мистецтва, яка сприяла вихованню кількох поколінь шанувальників та митців, які поповнили лави закарпатської живописної школи. Мистецько-педагогічна система Золтана Баконія пройшла апробацію часом, довела та продемонструвала свою результативність, продовжила існувати зусиллями послідовників, модернізувалася, доповнилася творчими інноваціями, виконала дуже важливу соціальну функцію виховання всебічно розвиненої особистості та громадянина в нових суспільно-історичних реаліях. Зважаючи на зростання цифрових технологій і їх широкого використання молодими людьми, прослідковувалася втрата інтересу до класичних живописних технологій. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в тому, що акцентовано увагу на специфіці роботи з вимогливою технікою, яка потребує технічної вправності та глибокого розуміння композиції, відбору та узагальнення

■ **Ключові слова:** живописна школа; акварель; мистецтво; образотворча студія; мистецькі заклади

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## The role of national folk dances in shaping the cultural identity of the Ukrainian people

**Abstract.** The relevance of this study is driven by the need to preserve and promote national folk dances as a means of sustaining the cultural identity of Ukrainians, particularly in the face of external threats from the Russian Federation. This research aimed to thoroughly examine the role of national folk dances in shaping the cultural identity of the Ukrainian people. The following methods were employed: a literature review for a comprehensive analysis of various sources, a comparative method to identify the interconnections and unique features of Ukrainian folk dances in the context of world cultures, and a historical method to study the evolution and role of dances in shaping cultural identity. The article revealed how national dances contributed to the formation and preservation of cultural identity, transmitting traditions, values, and shared characteristics of the Ukrainian nation from generation to generation. The research analysed the main national dance styles, such as the hopak, arkan, kolomyika, kozachok, and others. It also analysed the influence of folk dances on contemporary Ukrainian cultural trends and national self-consciousness. The revival of interest in traditional dances in contemporary society had led to the emergence of numerous dance ensembles and schools that promoted Ukrainian dances both within Ukraine and abroad. These initiatives contributed to the preservation and promotion of Ukraine's cultural heritage, as well as strengthening national identity. Particular attention was given to the role of folk dances in reinforcing ties between the diaspora and the historical homeland, as Ukrainians living abroad maintain a connection to their roots, history, and culture through national dances. This study also examined the dance traditions of Greece, Georgia, and Hungary, allowing for a comparison and analysis of the role of folk dances in shaping the cultural identity of each of these countries. The practical significance of this study lies in its application to cultural and educational programs, both in Ukraine and among the diaspora. Schools, cultural centres, and dance groups can utilise the obtained data to develop educational courses and promote Ukrainian culture

**Keywords:** hopak; arkan; kolomyika; traditional dances; national dance styles; folk rituals; culture; choreography; dance ensemble

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## Introduction

Folk dances are a vital component of Ukrainian culture and national identity. They embody the richness of traditions, rituals, and customs developed over centuries and serve as a means of preserving and passing on cultural heritage to future generations. Despite this, insufficient attention is given to their significance in shaping the national consciousness of Ukrainians, particularly outside of Ukraine. Furthermore, many regional dance styles remain under-researched and under-promoted, limiting a full understanding of their role in the cultural history and contemporary life of the Ukrainian people. Therefore, the urgency of this research lies in the need for a deep analysis and systematisation of information about various national dance styles to ensure their preservation and promote their more active inclusion in cultural practices. This will not only revitalise interest in folk dances but also strengthen cultural ties among Ukrainians worldwide, enhancing their understanding of, and pride in, their unique cultural heritage.

In contemporary research, the focus was on studying the history of folk dances, their various styles and performance techniques, and on popularising individual dances at both national and international levels. For instance, L. Eltifi (2023), as well as V. Synieok & K. Kaliievskiy (2023) in their studies, explored Ukrainian folk dances as expressions of the culture, history, and diversity of the Ukrainian people. Their research focused on analysing different styles and types of folk dances, their regional peculiarities, and historical development. The authors examined the primary styles of Ukrainian folk dances, such as the hopak, kolomyika, arkan, kozachok, and others, highlighting their unique features and symbolism, and analysing how these dances reflect the historical experiences, values, and worldview of Ukrainians.

Author D. Karpenko (2022) focused on analysing the symbolism of movements, gestures, and dance elements, which have a profound impact on cultural heritage and national identity. The author explored how contemporary choreography combined traditional folk elements with modern dance techniques and approaches, leading to the creation of a new artistic style. K. Pletsan (2022) demonstrated the importance of ethno-festivals in preserving and transmitting historical and cultural heritage. The author analysed the influence of creative industries on the organisation and development of such events, emphasising their role in promoting and supporting traditional art forms. The study included examples of successful ethno-festivals that played a key role in reviving cultural heritage. In the study by S. Karlytska & O. Kopievsky (2020), an analysis was conducted of the artistic language and motives behind contemporary folk and stage choreography, highlighting the changes that have occurred in this field in recent years. Researchers T. Drach & M. Pogrebnyyak (2022) explored the role and contribution of Western Ukrainian choreographers to

the development and contemporary perception of dance art. The authors analysed the influence of these choreographers on the development of contemporary dance, their creative approaches, and innovation in creating dance productions. D. Degtyar (2021) addressed modern issues in folk and stage choreography, focusing on the artistic language and motivations of choreographers. Researcher analysed the challenges faced by contemporary choreography and highlighted the impact of artistic preferences and motivations on the creative process. The research included recommendations for overcoming these challenges and improving the development of contemporary choreography.

V. Volchukova & O. Tishchenko (2023) focused on the interaction between Ukrainian folk stage dance and dances from other European countries at various levels, including historical, cultural, and artistic aspects. The article also analysed the influence of European dance styles on the development of Ukrainian stage dance and, conversely, the impact of Ukrainian dance traditions on European cultures. On the other hand, O. Boiko (2020) explored which aspects of Ukrainian dance were highlighted in the mass media and the methods used for their presentation. Scientist analysed the extent to which the media turns to traditional Ukrainian dances and their contemporary interpretations, as well as how cultural events related to Ukrainian dance, such as festivals, competitions, performances by ensembles and dance schools, were covered. F. Petkovski (2021) examined the role of folk dance in shaping national identity. Researcher explored how performances involving folk dance contributed to the affirmation and reproduction of national characteristics in various cultural contexts. The study also included an analysis of contemporary performances and their impact on the formation of collective national norms and values.

Researching the role of national dances in other countries and cultures was crucial for understanding the complexity and diversity of the global cultural heritage. Dance served not only as an art form, but also as a means of preserving and transmitting traditions, history, and values. Studying how different countries and cultures preserve, develop, and interpret their national dance traditions contributed to a better understanding of global cultural diversity and promoted intercultural dialogue and exchange (Brosius & Polit, 2011; Petkovski, 2024). The significance of this research also lied in its ability to identify both commonalities and unique differences in the dance traditions of not only Ukraine, but also other peoples, fostering the development of global respect and mutual understanding. So, this research aimed to conduct a comprehensive analysis of various regional dance styles and their impact on the national identity of Ukrainians both within Ukraine and abroad. The study sought to test the hypothesis that folk dances have a significant influence on maintaining national identity and

cultural heritage among Ukrainians, including those living outside of Ukraine.

### Materials and Methods

The first step in conducting the research was a literature review, which provided a comprehensive examination of a variety of sources, such as scholarly articles, monographs, books, ethnographic reports, historical materials, and dissertations, dedicated to Ukrainian national dances and their impact on cultural identity. When selecting sources for the review, priority was given to articles and monographs that provided detailed descriptions of the history and cultural context of Ukrainian folk dances. Subsequently, a review of academic works on dance ethnography and anthropology was conducted to understand the role and significance of dance in various cultures. Regarding the selection of specific dances for analysis, their popularity and significance in Ukrainian dance heritage were taken into account. In particular, dances such as the hopak, arkan, kolomyika, kozachok, and others were studied in detail, as they reflect the diversity and richness of Ukrainian culture. Additionally, regional variations of these dances were analysed to better understand their specificity and influence on local dance traditions.

The literature review outlined the key concepts of the research, ranging from the history and evolution of Ukrainian dances to their role in shaping national consciousness. The review encompassed various areas related to the research topic, including the historical development of Ukrainian folk dances, their origins, symbolism, performance techniques, and regional variations. This review also helped to elucidate how dances interact with other elements of Ukrainian culture. Based on the results obtained, a comparative method was applied, which involved analysing the relationship between Ukrainian dances and other cultural elements, including songs, music, and traditional costumes. Comparison helped to identify the unique characteristics of Ukrainian folk dances and their role in shaping cultural heritage and national identity. In this study, a comparison was also conducted to identify regional features of Ukrainian dances. When studying the diversity of dance styles, the focus was on how these traditions changed depending on geographical location, historical context, and the socio-cultural conditions of different regions of Ukraine. This made it possible to identify unique aspects of dance traditions in each region and their influence on cultural identity and national identity.

Subsequently, the results of the literature review and comparison were systematised and combined to form a deep understanding of the role of national folk dances in shaping the cultural identity of the Ukrainian people. This approach allowed for a comprehensive view of how dance practices influence the preservation and transmission of Ukrainian cultural traditions. The historical method was used to trace the evolution of Ukrainian folk

dances from ancient times to the present day. An analysis of historical sources allowed for tracing the development of dance traditions, their changes, and adaptations to different historical periods. The historical method provided a context for understanding contemporary Ukrainian dances and their connection to national identity. Thus, the application of various research methods allowed for obtaining a complete and holistic picture of the role of national folk dances in shaping the cultural identity of the Ukrainian people. Through these methods, various aspects of the topic were analysed, and important conclusions were drawn about the significance of Ukrainian dances for preserving cultural heritage and national identity.

In the final stage, attention was paid to the importance of national dances in other countries and cultures, namely, an analysis of the dance traditions of Greece, Georgia, and Hungary to study their impact on the cultural identity of each country. This contributed to a deeper understanding of the global cultural heritage and created opportunities for intercultural dialogue and cooperation. Such an analysis provided valuable information on ways to popularise and interpret dance forms in various contexts. This, in turn, also contributes to raising awareness of the diversity of global dance art and helps to identify best practices that can be used to preserve and develop national dances.

### Results

The influence of various historical epochs on the formation of dance styles and traditions in Ukraine is crucial for understanding the complexity and uniqueness of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Each historical period left its mark on the development of dance traditions, shaping a variety of styles and performance techniques. This section explores how different historical periods influenced the formation of dance styles and traditions, providing specific examples to illustrate. During the period of Kyivan Rus, dances were an important part of cultural life and were performed during holidays and rituals. Dances in this period reflected the everyday aspects of life and the spiritual beliefs of people. Although there are few written sources from this period regarding dances, it is known that dances were an important way of expressing cultural values and traditions, as well as reflecting various important events in a person's life, such as weddings or religious rituals. Ukrainian dances have their origins in ancient rituals and ceremonies that were an integral part of agrarian and everyday life. For example, spring dances, such as "vesnianky" and "haiivky", were combined with rituals of awakening nature and the beginning of the sowing season. They were often accompanied by songs and music, creating cohesive rituals that combined various aspects of cultural expression. Such dances were a symbolic gesture of the beginning of a new cycle, which in many cultures was accompanied by the celebration of new life and fertility. Autumn dances, such as

“zhnyvarski” or “zhnyviani”, accompanied the completion of the harvest and preparation for winter. Such dances reflected the everyday concerns of people, their beliefs, and their ideas about the world. For example, harvest dances symbolised the joy of the harvest and the completion of a difficult agricultural cycle.

Vechornytsi were traditional Ukrainian evening gatherings for young people, typically held during the autumn and winter periods when fieldwork was complete, and people had more free time. They provided an opportunity for young people to come together for socialising, meeting new people, and engaging in various folk customs and traditional activities. Vechornytsi played a significant role in the social life of Ukrainian youth, fostering community and cultural values. Usually, vechornytsi were held in homes or specially equipped premises provided by hosts or homeowners. Young women and men would gather to spend time on traditional activities such as embroidery, weaving, sewing, or making various crafts, as well as dancing and singing. Girls often worked on handicrafts, creating items for their future households, while boys engaged in men’s work or told stories, joked, and sang. Additionally, vechornytsi provided an opportunity for young people to meet potential partners and express interest in each other. This was significant in terms of establishing future family ties and maintaining traditional family structures. Dancing and music were an integral part of vechornytsi. Young people performed folk dances such as the “kolomyika” or “kozachok”, accompanied by folk instruments like the bandura, sopilka, or violin. These dances were a form of entertainment and also helped young people to showcase their abilities and character. A variety of games and competitions could also take place during vechornytsi, contributing to a friendly atmosphere and maintaining interest in traditions. For example, young people could compete in riddles, sing folk songs, or participate in various humorous contests. Vechornytsi also had a ritualistic aspect. During gatherings, rituals could be performed related to calendar holidays, such as Christmas or Masliana, or certain periods of young people’s lives, such as the transition from a single to a married life. One example of a traditional vechornytsi is the celebration of the feast of St. Basil the Great, which takes place on the night of January 13-14. During this holiday, young people gathered to celebrate the beginning of the new year, performing traditional songs and dances, and conducting rituals related to the future harvest and a happy life. These gatherings were crucial for creating future family ties and supporting traditional family structures. Dancing and music were not just entertainment but also served as a way to strengthen community bonds and preserve cultural heritage. By participating in vechornytsi, young people learned about their traditions, values, and social roles, ensuring the continuity of Ukrainian cultural heritage.

Traditional Ukrainian dances are closely intertwined with religious beliefs and rituals, as they reflect the

spiritual essence of the people and their understanding of the world. Dances accompanied important events on the church calendar, emphasising the connection between people, nature, fertility, and life cycles. They also played a significant role in wedding ceremonies, symbolising the transition to a new stage of life and strengthening family ties. Performing dances during religious holidays created unity among the faithful, bringing them together in a shared spiritual experience. Dances played a crucial role in the wedding itself. The bride performed the “rushnyk dance”, where the rushnyk symbolised the path of a shared life. Also popular were the “weaving a wreath” dance, during which the bride weaved a wreath of flowers, and the “dance with a wreath”, symbolising the transition from single life to married life. During the wedding feast, dances continued to accompany the celebration. For example, the “bride’s dance”, performed by the bride with young women, reflected the joy of the newly formed family. Dances at weddings were a way of expressing joy, community, and unity; they helped to involve guests in the celebration and lift their spirits.

Ukrainian religious rituals were also accompanied by dances that were part of the cultural and spiritual life of the people. The feast of Ivan Kapala, an ancient holiday dedicated to the summer solstice, was accompanied by dances around a bonfire. Participants celebrated by performing “Kupala” dances, which symbolised purification and unity with nature. During Christmas, Ukrainians performed “koliadky”, which were accompanied by dances. These songs and dances were part of the carolling ritual, when groups of people went from house to house, singing carols and greeting the hosts. During the celebration of Easter, various ritual dances were performed, accompanied by solemn songs. For example, “haiivky” were performed – spring dances dedicated to the resurrection of nature and the celebration of spring. Other religious holidays, such as Trinity, were also accompanied by dances. For instance, on this day, dances were performed around trees, symbolising fertility and a connection with nature.

The Cossack period had a significant impact on the development of dance, particularly styles such as the hopak and kozachok. Cossacks were renowned for their dancing prowess, which demonstrated their agility, strength, and courage. The hopak became a symbol of Cossack bravery and freedom, and its popularity has endured to the present day. The hopak, one of the most famous Ukrainian dances, was performed by Cossacks during festive events, especially after victories in battle. By dancing the hopak, Cossacks demonstrated their courage and skill in military manoeuvres. This dance often involved complex jumps, spins, and rapid movements that reflected the Cossacks’ military expertise. Other dances from this period, such as the “kozachok”, were linked to military traditions and reflected the heroism of the Cossacks. The kozachok had rhythmic and lively movements that reflected the fiery nature of Cossack celebrations.

Khorovods, narrative, and everyday dances are fundamental categories of Ukrainian folk dances that play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage by conveying the traditions, rituals, and customs of the Ukrainian people. Each category has its own distinct characteristics and varies in style, theme, and symbolism. Khorovods are among the oldest folk dances in Ukraine. They are performed in a circle, with participants holding hands or placing their hands on each other's shoulders. Khorovods are accompanied by singing and are performed during festive occasions such as weddings, Easter, Ivan Kupala, and other calendar celebrations. For instance, the "Vyshyvanyi Khorovod" is a popular wedding dance performed during the festivities honouring the newlyweds. Participants move in a circle around the bride and groom, highlighting their unity and wishing them a happy married life. The "Vesn-yanka" is a spring khorovod that is executed during the celebration of spring's arrival and the awakening of nature. It is characterised by slow and fluid movements that symbolise renewal and rebirth.

Narrative dances told stories or depicted specific scenes from everyday life. They often had a dramatic character, and the dancers played the roles of characters involved in certain events. For example, the hopak was a narrative dance that told about the heroic feats of the Cossacks, their courage, and their strength. The "Kryvyi dance" was also a narrative dance that told about the process of working in the field or harvesting. Dancers performed movements that symbolised various stages of agricultural activity, such as ploughing, sowing, and harvesting. Everyday dances were more casual and were performed during various informal gatherings, parties, or celebrations. They often had a playful or humorous character and could include improvisation. For instance, the kolomyika is an everyday dance accompanied by songs of the same name. It is characterised by a lively tempo, turns, and jumps. Dancers often improvise, creating their own variations of the dance. The "Horlytsya" is another example of an everyday dance accompanied by melodic love songs. It is performed by couples, emphasising the tenderness and grace of the movements. Khorovods, narrative dances, and everyday dances have a significant impact on preserving and transmitting Ukrainian cultural heritage. They help to convey traditions, rituals, and customs that shape the national identity of Ukrainians. Through their performance during festive events, festivals, and other events, these dances remain a living part of Ukrainian culture. Dance groups, ensembles, and schools play an important role in popularising khorovods, narrative, and everyday dances. They provide opportunities for young generations to learn these dance forms and maintain a connection with their cultural heritage. Thus, khorovods, narrative, and everyday dances are important components of Ukrainian folklore heritage, contributing to the preservation of traditions and their transmission to future generations.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of national consciousness contributed to a renewed interest in Ukrainian folk dances. Ethnographers and researchers began to record folk dance traditions, preserving them for future generations. For instance, Pavlo Chubynsky, a renowned Ukrainian ethnographer, recorded the dance and song traditions of the Ukrainian people, contributing to the preservation of this heritage. During this period, dance ensembles developed, popularising Ukrainian dances throughout the country. Some of the most popular dances of this period included the kolomyika, which was widespread in Western Ukraine and was noted for its rhythm and melody, reflecting the characteristics of Ukraine's mountainous regions.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Soviet cultural policy aimed to standardise and ideologise Ukrainian folk dances. Professional ensembles, such as the Pavlo Virsky Ukrainian National Folk Dance Ensemble, were established to perform adapted and modified versions of these dances. While Soviet ideology influenced the content of the dances, many traditional styles and techniques were preserved and developed thanks to the work of professional dancers and choreographers like Pavlo Virsky and Vasyl Avramenko, among many others, who made significant contributions to the development of Ukrainian dance. Following Ukraine's independence, the country began to restore authentic Ukrainian dances and support their development. Numerous dance groups and schools popularise Ukrainian dances, enriching the country's cultural life. For instance, the Pavlo Virsky Ukrainian National Folk Dance Ensemble (Fig. 1) continues the traditions of classical Ukrainian dance and develops new styles that combine elements of contemporary choreography with folk motives.



**Figure 1.** Pavlo Virsky Ukrainian National Folk Dance Ensemble

**Source:** The Virsky Ensemble will perform in Uzhhorod as part of an all-Ukrainian tour (2015)

Therefore, the influence of different historical epochs on the formation of dance styles and traditions in Ukraine has contributed to the creation of a unique cultural heritage. Each period added its own features to the development of Ukrainian dances, ensuring their

vitality and dynamism. In the modern world, Ukrainian dances are an integral part of the cultural heritage and have great significance for the national identity of the Ukrainian people. An analysis of different regional styles of Ukrainian folk dances has revealed the unique characteristics of each dance style, reflecting the richness and diversity of the country's cultural heritage. Geographical location, historical circumstances, and cultural factors have significantly influenced the formation of the dance traditions of each region.

The hopak is one of the most famous and vibrant Ukrainian dances, originating in the steppe regions of Ukraine, particularly in areas associated with Cossacks, such as the Zaporozhian Sich. Characterised by its energy, acrobatic movements, jumps, and high leg lifts, the hopak symbolises courage, strength, and freedom, reflecting the Cossack spirit. A traditional example of the hopak's performance is its role in Cossack military victories, where it was danced after battles to celebrate their bravery and triumph. Today, the hopak is one of the most popular dances, performed by dance companies and ensembles both in Ukraine and abroad. The arkan is a mountain dance originating from the western part of Ukraine, especially the Carpathian regions such as Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv oblasts. Performed by Hutsuls, this dance is known for its masculinity and coordination, as it was performed by men who formed a circle, holding each other's belts. The arkan has a slow, rhythmic character and is accompanied by the playing of the trembita or sopilka. Reflecting the mountain traditions, courage, and mutual assistance that were essential for life in mountainous conditions, the arkan is a symbol of Hutsul culture. It was also often performed during festive events such as weddings.

The kolomyika is a lively and melodic dance popular in the western regions of Ukraine, particularly Galicia. It is often accompanied by a song of the same name, performed at a fast tempo and with a unique metrical structure. The kolomyika is known for its rhythm, melody, and humorous song lyrics that accompany the dance. The performance of the kolomyika involves a variety of movements related to turning, jumping, and leaping. Dancers often improvise during the performance, adding a special charm and unpredictability to the dance. The kozachok is a fiery dance associated with Cossack traditions. It is characterised by a lively tempo, sharp movements, jumps, and stomps. The kozachok reflects the energy and agility, as well as the skills of Cossack warriors. An example of the kozachok's performance is its role in wedding celebrations, where men would demonstrate their dancing prowess. This dance was popular in the steppe regions of Ukraine, such as Dnipropetrovsk and Kherson regions. In addition to the mentioned styles, other regional dances have their own unique features. For example, the "kryvyi dance" is a traditional dance performed in various regions of Ukraine. It is known for its serpentine or "crooked" line formed by the dancers

during the performance. The "Podilski dances" are also known for their speed and playfulness. They are accompanied by cheerful melodies and movements that reflect Podillia's culture and traditions. Thus, geographical location and cultural factors significantly influence the formation of dance traditions in each region of Ukraine. Mountainous regions, for example, have their own characteristics associated with the conditions of life in the mountains, which is reflected in the style of the arkan. Steppe regions, associated with Cossack traditions, have formed dances such as the hopak and kozachok. Therefore, different regional styles of Ukrainian folk dances reflect the richness and diversity of the country's cultural heritage. Each dance has its unique features, linked to the history, geography, and cultural characteristics of the region from which it originates. This creates a unique character of Ukrainian dances, which remain an important element of the nation's cultural identity.

The specific techniques used to perform folk dances, as well as the symbolism of movements, gestures, and dance elements, have a profound impact on the transmission of cultural heritage and national identity. Ukrainian folk dances are distinguished by a variety of styles and performance techniques. For example, the hopak is characterised by complex acrobatic elements such as high jumps, turns, and various figures. Men perform the movements with great strength and energy, demonstrating their agility and courage. The kolomyika is a lively dance accompanied by a song of the same name. The performance of the kolomyika involves rapid footwork, turns, jumps, and lifts. Dancers often improvise during the performance, adding individual characteristics and emotionality to the dance. The arkan, a mountain dance from the Carpathians, is performed by men who form a circle, holding each other's belts. The arkan has a slow and rhythmic character, but it also includes sharp and clear movements that reflect strength and courage. The performance of the arkan is accompanied by the playing of the trembita or sopilka. The kozachok is a lively dance characterised by a fast tempo, jumps, and stomps. Performing the kozachok requires high skill and physical preparation, as it involves complex movements and tempo changes.

Research into the impact of dance on the national identity of Ukrainians demonstrates that folk dances play a significant role in shaping and strengthening national identity. Ukrainian dances not only transmit cultural values and historical heritage but also contribute to Ukrainians' awareness of their belonging to a particular cultural and national community. They are a means of preserving and passing on traditions from generation to generation, fostering national identity and pride in one's cultural heritage. The influence of dance on the national identity of Ukrainians can be seen on various levels. On the one hand, dances have an educational function, as young people learn and master dance traditions, helping them better understand the history and culture of their

people. On the other hand, dances contribute to bringing people together in communities, allowing them to develop a sense of belonging to a particular group and nation. The influence of dance on the national identity of Ukrainians can also be traced in the context of contemporary culture. Contemporary Ukrainian musicians and choreographers often use elements of folk dances in their work, combining traditional and modern styles. This helps to preserve traditions but also gives them new life and relevance for the younger generation.

Contemporary dance companies, ensembles, and schools play a crucial role in popularising Ukrainian folk dances, preserving their authenticity and passing them on to future generations. These organisations

showcase the richness of Ukraine's cultural heritage on national and international stages, attracting new audiences and disseminating knowledge about Ukrainian dance traditions. The aforementioned Pavlo Virsky Ukrainian National Folk Dance Ensemble is one of the most famous dance companies in Ukraine and the world. Founded by Pavlo Virsky in 1937, the ensemble combines classical and contemporary elements in its performances while preserving the authenticity of Ukrainian dances. Renowned for its choreographic numbers, the Virsky Ensemble tours the world, promoting Ukrainian culture. For easier understanding, examples of some other well-known Ukrainian folk-dance ensembles are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Famous Ukrainian folk-dance ensembles

Name	Location	Achievements
State Honoured Academic Ensemble of Dance of Ukraine "Zhuravka"	Cherkasy	Performances on national and international stages, with a wide repertoire including various regional styles of Ukrainian dances
Folk Dance Ensemble "Veselka"	Lviv	One of the oldest groups, specialising in traditional Ukrainian dances, including Hutsul, Podillia, and Bukovinian styles
State Academic Ensemble of Dance of Ukraine "Nadiia"	Kharkiv	Extensive repertoire, including Ukrainian dances and contemporary choreographic compositions, with performances at international festivals
Kyiv Municipal Academic Ensemble of Dance "Kyianka"	Kyiv	Specialises in traditional Ukrainian dances such as hopak and kozachok, as well as contemporary choreographic pieces
Folk Dance Ensemble "Vesnianka"	Khmelnitskyi	Promotes Ukrainian dances internationally, participating in international festivals and competitions, and representing various styles of Ukrainian dance
Children's School of Folk Dance "Barvinok"	Kyiv	Specialises in teaching Ukrainian folk dances, preparing participants for leading dance companies, and contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage

Source: developed by the authors

These dance groups, ensembles, and schools play a crucial role in popularising Ukrainian dances, ensuring their preservation and dissemination. They provide opportunities for young talents who aspire to master the art of folk dance and also represent Ukrainian culture on the international stage. Thanks to their efforts, Ukrainian dance traditions continue to live and evolve, supporting the national identity and cultural identity of Ukrainians. Folk dances play a crucial role in the lives of the Ukrainian diaspora, fostering a sense of national identity among Ukrainians abroad (Bobesky & Mulvaney, 2019; Hong, 2022). They serve as a means of preserving cultural heritage, uniting Ukrainian communities, and passing on traditions to future generations. Ukrainian dance companies and ensembles in the diaspora organise performances, festivals, and educational programs that popularise Ukrainian culture and strengthen ties with the historic homeland.

The Ukrainian dance ensemble "Veselka" in the USA is one of the oldest and most well-known Ukrainian dance groups in the United States. Founded in 1949 in New York, "Veselka" popularises Ukrainian dances and culture among Americans and the Ukrainian

diaspora. The ensemble participates in numerous festivals and cultural events, showcasing various regional styles of Ukrainian dance (Ukrainian San Antonio, 2024). The "Barvinok" Ukrainian dance school in Canada is an educational institution in Toronto that specialises in teaching Ukrainian folk dances. The school offers classes for children and youth, providing an opportunity to learn traditional Ukrainian dances and maintain a connection with their cultural heritage. Graduates of the school often join dance companies and ensembles, continuing to promote Ukrainian culture (Barvinok Ukrainian dance school, 2017; "Barvinok" dance school..., 2019; Church, school, and creativity..., 2020). The "Vyshyvanka" dance school in Chicago is referred to as "Ukraine beyond Ukraine" (Dance school "Vyshyvanka" in Chicago..., 2019; "Vyshyvanka" dance school..., 2023). These dance groups, ensembles, and schools serve as vital hubs of Ukrainian culture within the diaspora, contributing to the preservation and popularisation of Ukrainian dances. They provide opportunities for Ukrainians abroad to maintain connections with their roots and pass on traditions to future generations. Thanks to their efforts, the Ukrainian diaspora can uphold its national identity

and preserve its cultural heritage, remaining part of the broader Ukrainian community. Research into the role of national dances in other countries and cultures has revealed a wide range of ways to preserve, develop, and popularise dance heritage in various contexts (Edensor, 2020; Pavlicová, 2021). Studies have shown that dance traditions are a significant carrier of cultural identity, reflecting the historical, social, and religious aspects of people's lives. Examining the role of national dances in other countries and cultures has revealed the diversity and richness of dance traditions around the world. Studying dance culture in countries such as Greece, Georgia, and Hungary highlighted the importance of these traditions for preserving and developing national identity.

In Greece, national dances such as the sirtaki and hasapiko have deep historical roots and are a vital component of the country's cultural heritage (Aristidou *et al.*, 2022; Filippidou, 2022). These dances not only reflect the traditional values and customs of the Greek people but also embody their harmony with nature and society. They are often performed during national holidays, festive events, and religious ceremonies, symbolising the unity, joy, and spirituality of the Greek people. Greek dance companies have a significant impact on popularising and preserving these dances both domestically and internationally. Their active participation in international festivals and competitions contributes to the spread of Greek culture and traditions in various countries around the world. Through performances and workshops, Greek dancers share the richness of their heritage, inspiring audiences to learn and perform Greek dances and songs.

Georgian folk dances are not only a captivating spectacle but also a significant part of the national culture that has been passed down through generations. Performed with great skill and technical complexity, these national dances are a crucial element of Georgia's cultural identity, illustrating its historical experiences, social norms, and religious beliefs. Each Georgian folk dance possesses unique characteristics reflecting the specific region from which it originates (Samsonadze, 2021). For instance, the kartuli dance, symbolising mutual respect and love between a man and a woman, is renowned for its elegance and grace, where men and women perform movements with great care and precision. In contrast, the khevsuruli embodies more aggressive motives imitating battle actions with swords and shields, reflecting the warlike spirit of the Georgian people. The khorumi dance, recreating scenes of battle, is an expression of the courage and strength of Georgian warriors who historically defended their land against numerous enemies. Acharuli, on the other hand, demonstrates fun and playfulness, with vibrant costumes and joyful interaction among dancers, emphasising the community and joy of the Georgian people. Dances are passed down through families and dance schools, where older generations of teachers impart their knowledge and skills to younger ones. This process not only preserves traditional

movements and steps but also recreates the cultural and social contexts in which these dances were created. The significance of Georgian folk dances as a crucial part of Georgia's intangible cultural heritage is supported by various cultural institutions and artistic groups that organise performances both domestically and internationally. Georgian folk dances are a vivid expression of the country's cultural identity, allowing the preservation of history and traditions for generations to come. They reflect various aspects of Georgian society, from the heroic to the romantic, and serve as an important means of personal self-expression.

Hungarian folk dances are a vibrant expression of national identity and cultural heritage, showcasing the country's rich history and diverse traditions (Shay, 2023). Among the most famous of these dances is the Csárdás, known for its energetic and passionate music, which emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This dance embodies the essence of the Hungarian spirit, characterised by a fast tempo, complex steps, and dramatic changes in pace. Another significant dance is the Palóc, which represents the cultural heritage of the Palóc community, embodying their unity and cultural pride. Similarly, the Kanásztánc, typically performed by men, imitates the movements of herdsmen, reflecting the pastoral way of life deeply rooted in Hungarian culture. The legényes, a solo dance for men, is known for its energy and acrobatic elements, celebrating the stamina of youth and rural Hungarian traditions. The Táncház method is renowned as the Hungarian model for transmitting intangible cultural heritage, having been recognised and included in UNESCO's register of best practices for safeguarding in 2011. Táncház is a cultural and social phenomenon that emerged in Hungary in the 1970s as a response to policies limiting cultural expressions, aiming to revive and promote traditional Hungarian folk music, dance, and culture. Táncház involves gathering people in community centres, homes, or other venues to learn and participate in traditional Hungarian folk dances accompanied by live music. This method allows participants not only to learn traditional dances but also to feel a connection to the culture through direct interaction and creative engagement with others. This approach preserves and transmits Hungarian folk dances and music as a living cultural practice, engaging new generations and fostering greater cultural awareness. Táncház has become not only a method of cultural preservation but also an effective way to support and develop national identity on the international stage.

Folk dances play a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of the Ukrainian people, reflecting their historical traditions, social customs, and cultural values. These dances serve as a means of preserving a unique cultural heritage, passing on not only the technique of performance but also deep emotional and historical contexts from generation to generation. Thanks to the diaspora, Ukrainian folk dances are also actively developing and

popularised abroad, becoming part of the global cultural mosaic. A similar situation can be observed in other European countries, where folk dances are an integral part of national identity. They play a key role in preserving cultural heritage, strengthening the connection of modern communities with their historical roots and promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange between countries. Through national dances, one can see how the cultural features of each country are interwoven into the broader context of European culture, allowing for a better understanding of their uniqueness and significance. Thus, folk dances not only entertain but also serve as a means of cultural enrichment and preserving identity at various levels – from local to global.

## Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate the significant influence of national dances on the formation of national identity and cultural heritage. They have confirmed the importance of national dances in preserving and transmitting traditions to future generations, as well as their role in maintaining the connection between the past and the present. The research has shown the interconnectedness between Ukrainian national dances and the dance traditions of other countries, revealing commonalities and differences in approaches to preserving and developing dance traditions. Folk dances of Ukraine and other European countries reflect a deep cultural connection of each nation with its history and traditions. They are a means of transmitting cultural heritage from generation to generation. Common to all of them is the use of dance as a form of folk self-expression, where dance movements and rhythms serve as a language that tells about important historical events, social rituals, and everyday life. At the same time, the methods of preserving dance traditions vary: for example, in Hungary, the *Táncház* movement plays a significant role, actively involving the public in learning and practising traditional dances, while in Ukraine, there is a significant emphasis on folk festivals and academic study of folk dances. The study also highlights the importance of intercultural interaction and exchange of experience in the field of dance.

For example, J.C. Van Camp (2019) examined the issue of identity in dance, focusing on its impact on the art form. The author investigated how the concept of identity in a dance context has changed over time, and how these changes have influenced dance practice and perception. Common to both J.C. Van Camp's (2019) research and this study was a focus on the role of dance in shaping national identity and cultural heritage. Both studies paid attention to the impact of dance art on preserving traditions and transmitting values to future generations. Both studies also emphasised the importance of intercultural interaction and exchange of experience in the field of dance. The differences between the studies lie in their approaches and contexts. The author's research focused on the changing understanding of identity in dance from

a historical perspective, and on exploring how these changes have influenced dance practice. In contrast, this study focused on the role of national dances in shaping national identity, specifically on concrete examples from other countries and cultures. Furthermore, this research encompassed a broader range of issues, including the preservation of dance traditions, the symbolism of movements, and the influence of dance in supporting the national identity of Ukrainians. J.C. Van Camp (2019) concluded that dance was a key factor in shaping cultural identity, although its influence can change over time and depend on context. Researcher also emphasised that understanding dance as a means of expressing identity was a complex process that required attention to social, cultural, and historical factors. When comparing these findings with the results of this study, one can observe a commonality in the significance of dance as an element of cultural identity. Both studies recognised the impact of dance on the formation of identity and highlight its importance as a factor in cultural self-expression. However, this research further concentrates on the role of specific folk dances of the Ukrainian people, thereby providing a deeper understanding of their contribution to the formation of cultural identity and the uniqueness of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Thus, Van Camp's study and this research complemented each other, offering different perspectives on the issue of identity in dance and its impact on culture. Both studies underscored the significance of the art of dance in shaping identity and preserving cultural heritage.

J. Zhang (2020) explored folklore identity and its significance within the context of various cultures. The research focused on how folkloric identity is formed, maintained, and transmitted through various folkloric mediums such as dance, music, storytelling, and other traditions. The author explored the role of folklore in shaping and sustaining cultural identity, as well as its impact on society. Their findings highlighted folklore as a pivotal component of cultural self-awareness, reflecting a people's unique traditions and values through music, dance, rituals, and crafts. The study emphasised that folklore contributes to the affirmation of national identity and the preservation of national heritage. A commonality between scientist's work and this research is the emphasis on the importance of folkloric heritage in shaping and sustaining national identity. Both studies underscored the role of folklore, particularly dance, in transmitting traditions and values to future generations. They also drew attention to the influence of folklore on society and cultural development. However, the two studies differ in their approaches and contexts. Research by J. Zhang (2020) adopted a broad perspective, examining folkloric identity and its role in shaping culture across various nations. In contrast, this study focused specifically on the role of national dances, particularly in Ukraine, and their impact on national identity and cultural heritage. This research analysed specific dance styles,

their symbolism, and their significance in maintaining Ukrainian national consciousness.

The study by D.J. Jackson (2020) on the festivals of the Polish-American community highlighted their role in supporting and expressing Polish-American identity through cultural practices such as music and dance. These elements were crucial for preserving traditional values, aligning with the findings of this research into Ukrainian dances. Both studies underscored the significance of cultural festivals and performances in strengthening ethnic identity and connections within the diaspora. Cultural expressions, as demonstrated in both studies, served as mechanisms for sustaining the continuity of identity across generations, and adapting to new social contexts within the diaspora. Both Polish and Ukrainian folk dances played a pivotal role in shaping cultural identity, which is transmitted from generation to generation. They ensured the preservation of unique cultural heritage and serve as a bridge between the past and the present for Ukrainians and Poles abroad, evolving and adapting to changes in the global context. This research indicated similar trends in the development of national consciousness through cultural practices among Ukrainians, supported by a study by D.J. Jackson (2020), demonstrating the universality of this phenomenon across different ethnic communities. Both studies also highlighted how cultural festivals and dance performances serve as vehicles for educating younger generations, fostering appreciation for their culture, and promoting deeper understanding and mutual respect between different cultures. They acted as platforms for the exchange of cultural experiences and knowledge, encouraging their participation in the cultural life of their communities. Thus, an analysis of the cultural role of dance in Poland and Ukraine, as well as among their diasporas in other countries, confirmed that folk dance is a powerful tool for preserving national identity. It helped maintain cultural roots and transmit important traditions and values to subsequent generations, which was key to safeguarding cultural heritage in the face of globalisation. This study of Ukrainian dance, along with researcher's work, has shown that regardless of geographic location, cultural traditions continue to form the foundation of national identity and contribute to strengthening cultural identity across generations. These findings encouraged further study and support for traditional art forms, which play a crucial role in contemporary cultural diversity and intercultural understanding.

Researchers H. Payne & B. Costas (2020) explored the potential benefits of teaching creative dance in state primary education. The authors focused on how dance can contribute to the socio-emotional, artistic, physical, and cognitive development of children aged 3-11, which aligns with the UK's national curriculum. Similarly, this research highlighted how Ukrainian folk dances influence national identity and cultural awareness, reflecting similar aspects explored by H. Payne & B. Costas (2020).

Both studies acknowledge that dance not only served a physical development function, but also fostered critical thinking, creativity, and social interaction. H. Payne & B. Costas (2020) concluded that dance played a vital role in education and should be given a more central place in the curriculum. This opened the door for the further integration of dance programmes into school lessons worldwide, positively impacting child development. When analysing this research in the context of H. Payne & B. Costas (2020), a common trend emerges: dance is a significant component of cultural education that contributes not only to physical development but also to the psychological and social growth of individuals. These findings underscored the need for further research and development of dance programs in educational institutions, which could enhance the role of dance in shaping well-rounded and healthy young people

Researchers K. Chappell *et al.* (2021) conducted an in-depth analysis of the impact of dance on health and well-being across various life stages through a systematic review of existing studies. The authors identified that dance contributed to several key aspects of personal development: self-expression, identity, a sense of belonging, self-esteem, aesthetics, affective responses, and creativity. They highlighted the significance of dance as a form of expression that has a profound impact on social, emotional, and cognitive processes, providing a multifaceted approach to assessing health and well-being. Specifically, dance was found to enhance physical health by promoting physical activity and to contribute to emotional well-being through expressiveness and emotional freedom. The research also indicated that dance can play a crucial role in shaping both personal and collective identity, helping individuals feel part of a community and maintain social connections.

The authors also highlighted the importance of integrating dance programmes into social and educational initiatives, given their positive impact on personal development and overall well-being. They emphasised the need for broader recognition of dance as a tool for promoting health and well-being, calling for further research and policy development in this area. These findings resonated with this study on the impact of Ukrainian folk dance on national identity. This research demonstrated that dance not only serves physical development, but also played a critical role in preserving cultural heritage and supporting cultural identity. Both studies underscored that dance practices can be powerful tools for strengthening social cohesion and identity. They indicated the potential of dance as a tool for cultural and educational policy through the integration of dance programmes into broader social and educational frameworks to ensure holistic personal development. This affirmed the necessity for further research and the development of programmes that incorporate dance elements as a means to achieve wider social and educational goals.

## Conclusions

This research has established that national dances played a pivotal role in maintaining a connection to the historical past and cultural heritage, preserving traditions for future generations. The findings confirmed the influence of national dances on national identity and cultural self-awareness. It was revealed that dances serve as a means of shaping and expressing Ukrainian culture, providing people with a sense of belonging and pride in their heritage. An analysis of the symbolism of movements and dance styles has unveiled the multifaceted nature of Ukrainian culture and its historical development. The research results highlighted the deep connection between national dances and the history of Ukraine. It reflected the rich cultural heritage of the country, encompassing various historical periods, including the times of Kyivan Rus, the Cossack era, and other significant phases in Ukraine's history. Dances are unique chronicles that convey folk legends, historical events, everyday life, and traditions. As such, they served as a bridge between the past and the present, preserving the memory of important events and the heroic deeds of ancestors. This connection to history not only helped to preserve cultural heritage, but also strengthened the national identity of Ukrainians.

It was noted that the preservation and popularisation of national dances contribute to cultural development and intercultural exchange. In particular, further study of regional variations in national dances, focusing

on their unique characteristics and historical context, is crucial for maintaining the authenticity of dance traditions. Preserving authenticity helps maintain cultural diversity and the uniqueness of each region. This research also highlighted the importance of dance technique and its influence on the preservation and transmission of traditions. The research addresses how folk dances influence the formation of cultural identity among Ukrainians and the preservation of their traditional values, fostering a connection between the Ukrainian people and their cultural heritage. For future research, it is recommended to focus on a deeper analysis of dance culture and its impact on cultural identity, particularly among the Ukrainian diaspora abroad. It is also important to broaden the scope of research by including comparisons with other cultural contexts and conducting a detailed analysis of the historical and contemporary aspects of national dances. This could involve interviews with experts and dancers to identify key factors in their preservation and development.

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None.

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## Роль національних фольклорних танців у формуванні культурної ідентичності українського народу

■ **Анотація.** Актуальність цього дослідження обумовлена необхідністю збереження та поширення національних фольклорних танців, як засобу підтримки культурної ідентичності українців, особливо в контексті зовнішніх загроз від російської федерації. Мета дослідження полягала в глибокому вивченні ролі національних фольклорних танців у формуванні культурної ідентичності українського народу. У дослідженні були використані наступні методи: літературний огляд для всебічного аналізу різноманітних джерел, метод порівняння для виявлення взаємозв'язків та особливостей українських фольклорних танців в контексті світових культур, а також історичний метод для дослідження еволюції та ролі танців у формуванні культурної ідентичності. У статті було розкрито, як національні танці сприяють формуванню та збереженню культурної ідентичності, передаючи традиції, цінності та спільні риси української нації з покоління в покоління. В роботі було проведено аналіз основних національних танцювальних стилів, таких як гопак, аркан, коломийка, козачок та інші. Також, проаналізовано вплив фольклорних танців на сучасні українські культурні тенденції та національну самосвідомість. Завдяки відродженню інтересу до традиційних танців у сучасному суспільстві, з'явилися численні танцювальні колективи та школи, які популяризували українські танці як на території України, так і за кордоном. Ці ініціативи сприяли збереженню та популяризації української культурної спадщини, а також зміцненню національної ідентичності. Особлива увага приділяється ролі фольклорних танців у зміцненні зв'язків між діаспорою та історичною Батьківщиною, адже українці, які проживають за кордоном, через національні танці зберігають зв'язок зі своїм корінням, історією та культурою. У даному дослідженні також було розглянуто танцювальні традиції Греції, Грузії та Угорщини, що дозволило порівняти та проаналізувати роль народних танців у формуванні культурної ідентичності кожної з цих країн. Практичне значення цієї роботи полягає у її застосуванні в культурних і освітніх програмах, як в Україні, так і в діаспорі. Школи, культурні центри та танцювальні колективи можуть використовувати отримані дані для розробки навчальних курсів та популяризації української культури

■ **Ключові слова:** гопак; аркан; коломийка; традиційні танці; національні танцювальні стилі; народні обряди; хореографія; культура; танцювальний колектив

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## Interpretation of ancient Egyptian mythological texts on the territory of Ukraine

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to explore the hermeneutics of ancient Egyptian written monuments as interpreted by representatives of Ukrainian culture and monumental art. Art historical analysis revealed that the interpretation of ancient Egyptian written and pictorial monuments of transcendent content had its representatives in Ukraine from the time the texts were first translated. One of the earliest translators of the “Pyramid Texts” was Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy, a representative of Ukrainian Egyptology, who proposed the idea that ancient Egyptian religious texts were informative not only from a mythological standpoint, but also provided insights into all spheres of societal life. The stages of the journey to the afterlife, depicted on scrolls, contained information about the cultural, artistic, and technological knowledge and skills of the Egyptians. The inheritance of the traditions of ancient Egyptian writing and visual art by Ukrainian monumentalists was demonstrated through the example of a relief panel in Kyiv’s “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre by Oleh Yerzhykovskiy. In system of signs and symbols, the artist revealed the process of filmmaking – a result of the activity of professionals from various areas. Cinematic production came to life thanks to creative achievements and technological advance. The composition of the alabaster bas-relief was based on a modernised, minimalist reinterpretation of the pictographic and hieroglyphic systems of ancient Egypt. The rhythm of the carved elements with a random repeat pattern on the wall of the cinema in the public centre of the 1960s references the monumental imagery of temples and tombs of ancient civilisations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. The practical value of the study lies in significance of ancient Egyptian semiotic systems in contemporary art and design, emphasising their intercultural and interdisciplinary potential

**Keywords:** Ukrainian Egyptology; monumental and decorative art; hieroglyph; infographics; semiotic language

### Introduction

The “Pyramid Texts” were unique monuments representing the mortuary literary genre of Egypt’s Old Kingdom, directly connected with funerary practices ensuring the deceased’s well-being in the “other world”. Later works, such as the “Coffin texts” and “The Book of the Dead”, continued the tradition of the “Pyramid Texts”, incorporating most of their spells and mythical concepts.

Deciphering the ancient Egyptian language became a major goal for the global scientific community, enabling the reading of Egyptian texts and a detailed analysis of ancient myths. This effort opened a window into the lives of one of the world’s oldest civilisations.

If at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a work that highlighted prominent issues of the artistic culture of Egypt could

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be called “Egyptian archaeology”, then at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the same problems were already presented in a more detailed form under the title “Essays on Egyptian art”. The emancipation of Egyptian art history from the broader field of Egyptology gained momentum, with a growing focus on development patterns, schools, and individual artists. Beyond purely archaeological questions, researchers increasingly engaged with Egypt’s literary and visual heritage.

While Ukraine lacked its own Egyptological school, there were notable contributions in this classical field, including influential figures in Egyptology. One of the first to recognise the cognitive richness of ancient Egyptian mythological texts was Ukrainian historian and Egyptologist Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy. Equally significant was examining, how Egypt’s cultural monuments influenced monumental art in Ukraine, which boasts major achievements despite their limited number.

Research on ancient Egyptian texts, particularly the studies of G. Maspero (1889) and A. Erman (1971), continued to be relevant due to their profound analysis of texts, providing pathways for examining the cultural and religious aspects of the Egyptian world. Their studies served as the foundation for modern research on the linguistic structure and content of mythological texts, which were a primary source of knowledge about the culture and art of ancient Egypt. British Egyptologists J. Taylor (2001) stood out, focusing on archaeological findings and museology, who specifically examined the role of women in Egyptian mythology. T. Wilkinson (2023) studied the influence of Egyptian myths on the functioning of political and social structures. Among Ukrainian Egyptologists, O. Romanova (2011) focused on the activities of Ukrainian Egyptology representatives, while M. Tarasenko (2022) researched the variations in the design and presentation of texts in ancient Egyptian documents.

The early 21<sup>st</sup> century saw heightened interest in Ukraine’s monumental and decorative art. G. Sklyarenko (2022) addressed the development of Ukrainian monumental art in the 1960s-1970s. A modern reassessment of Soviet-era artistic heritage had uncovered and paved the way for preserving the previously undervalued monuments. Oleh Yerzhykovskiy’s artistic legacy was analysed in a publication by A. Budnyk *et al.* (2023). However, these publications lack art-historical explanations for the stylistic synthesis employed in the monumental panel at the “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre.

The purpose of the study was to determine the ways of interpreting ancient Egyptian mythological texts by representatives of Ukrainian culture and their significance for further scientific and creative achievements. The scientific originality of this study lies in identifying interpretations of ancient Egyptian written monuments of mythological and religious content by Ukrainian cultural scholars and artists. The study also presented the first art-historical analysis of Oleh Yerzhykovskiy’s monumental relief panel in the “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre.

## Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of this study included the following scientific research methods: analytical, systematic analysis, historical-chronological, and methods of art analysis and comparative analysis. The analytical method was applied to investigate the research status of the chosen subject and to identify the studies, monographs, and articles in periodicals that covered the process of deciphering and understanding the content of ancient Egyptian mythological texts; the genesis of Egyptology in Ukraine and the contributions of Yevhen Kaharov and Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy to its development; and specific works from the monumental legacy of Oleh Yerzhykovskiy. Systematic analysis helped identify the locations of pyramid text scrolls in museum collections worldwide, highlighting the most significant ones for further research. The method of generalisation helped to integrate various aspects of the perception of the ancient Egyptian funerary cult into a holistic understanding. Photography served as a valuable tool to showcase examples emphasising both continuity and innovation in the use of the hieroglyphic writing system in design projects. The comparative method was employed to compare researchers’ interest in the content of Egyptian texts across different periods, which enabled the identification of an increase in interest at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It also noted the rising interest in Ukraine’s monumental and decorative heritage at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition, the comparative and historical-chronological methods revealed a surge of interest in Ukrainian Egyptology over the 2000-2020 and increased participation of Ukrainian researchers in international events dedicated to the art analysis of ancient Egyptian written monuments. This revealed the distinctive use of hieroglyphic writing symbols to capture the attention of museum visitors and to emphasise the pyramid texts as carriers of exceptionally significant information about the culture and art of one of the world’s oldest civilisations. The method of art analysis was applied to study the design of the entrance area of the Grand Egyptian Museum. The art analysis method also contributed to identifying the influence of rhythmic, compositional, and figurative-expressive techniques of the monumental art of the ancient World – Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece – on the design of the relief panel of the “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre in Kyiv, created by Oleh Yerzhykovskiy.

## Results and Discussion

The most renowned of ancient Egypt’s written monuments, “The Book of the Dead”, was not a single text but a collection of spells intended to safeguard the deceased on their perilous journey to the realm of the gods and ultimate eternity. One of the versions of the book, “The Book of the Dead of Iuefankh”, can be found at the Egyptian Museum in Turin (The Egyptian Book of

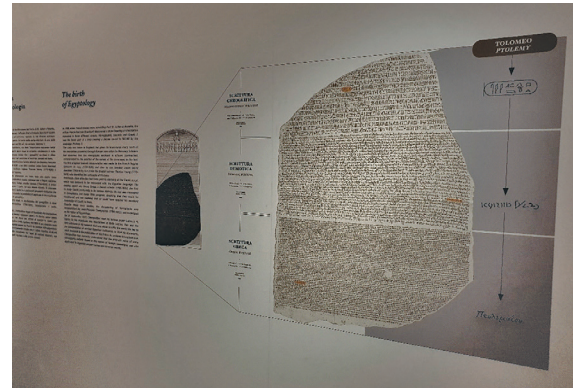
the Dead..., 2012). Each spell is unique, often accompanied by colourful vignettes depicting the imagined landscapes of the underworld, deities, demons threatening the deceased, and the dramatic weighing of the heart – a ritual determining whether the traveller would be granted access to the afterlife or condemned to annihilation by the Devourer.

The earliest form of human communication through language gave rise to myth, the oldest form of verbal creativity, where imagination was perceived as reality. “Language is the principal and archetypal instrument of mythical thinking... without words, no storytelling or any level of human knowledge would be possible” (Potebnya, 1905). By understanding language, literary scholars paved the way for grasping a people’s mythology and the deep, authentic meanings of their art forms. Egyptian language has no word for “myth”. Thus, its essence should be understood as a traditional story “set in the past, involving supernatural elements, used to explain or justify what would otherwise be incomprehensible” (Tyldesley, 2011). Egyptian myths, based on their plots and sequence of emergence, can be classified into three principal groups:

- Understanding the World and Human Nature: mythologems of global and universal plots, such as creation, the first human, death, and rebirth.
- Religious and Ideological Concepts: myths explaining the divine origin of royal power, such as the transfer of authority from Amun-Ra to the pharaoh.
- Non-Canonical Texts: variable texts dedicated to the life and death of ordinary Egyptians, predominantly passed down orally through generations.

One of the monumental events of ancient Egyptian civilisation in understanding the culture and art, and thus the mythological concepts, was the deciphering of hieroglyphic writing. According to T.A.H. Wilkinson (2011), archaeologists debate on where the idea of writing first originated: in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Most probably, it occurred in Mesopotamia, from where the concept, but not the system itself, spread to Egypt. Hieroglyphs suited the Egyptian language so perfectly, and individual signs so clearly represented surrounding objects, that they must be considered a local invention. The initial symbols and drawings that constituted pictographic writing eventually evolved into hieroglyphs, which represented individual sounds, enabling the recording of words and sentences and, consequently, the emergence of writing (Demchuk, 2023).

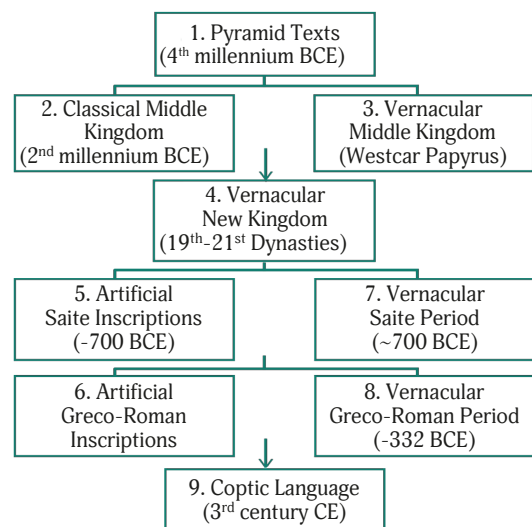
A significant breakthrough in the development of research came with the discovery in 1799 of the so-called Rosetta Stone, inscribed with three texts. Thanks to these texts, two decades later, Jean-François Champollion succeeded in deciphering the ancient Egyptian script (Fig. 1). Words could now be read, material was continuously accumulated, but the scientific methods for studying the Egyptian language were only beginning to take shape.



**Figure 1.** Deciphering of the Rosetta Stone. Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy

Source: developed by the authors

It was prudent to recall the opinion of Professor and Doctor of Kharkiv University, Ye. Kaharov (1914), who emphasised that without a detailed study of the linguistic inventory and structure of the ancient Egyptian language, further progress would have been impossible. This is where the talent and diverse expertise of the German Egyptologist and lexicographer A. Erman (1894) played a crucial role. The author held one of the most distinguished positions in the history of the study of ancient Egyptian writing. By connecting scattered facts, researcher succeeded in establishing the laws of the Egyptian language and explaining the mechanism of its complex hieroglyphic writing system. In the field of grammar, A. Erman (1894) authored numerous articles and works characterised by a profound linguistic intuition, precise observations, and extensive knowledge of ancient Egyptian texts. The scientist also introduced the first chronological division of the history of the Egyptian language into periods (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Stages of development of the ancient Egyptian language

Source: based on A. Erman (1894)

Ye. Kaharov (1906) noted that A. Erman constructed the framework of a scientific grammar for the Egyptian language. Adolf Erman's academic talent and pedagogical skill fostered the creation of the Berlin Egyptological School, which included renowned scholars such as G. Steindorff, K. Sethe, W. Spiegelberg, L. Borchardt, H. Muller, H. Schäfer, G. Roeder. His students also included researchers from other countries, such as A. Gardiner in England, J. Breasted in America, G. Farina in Italy, and O. Kotseyovskiy in Ukraine. Thus, the school eventually gained international recognition, and the classical works of A. Erman and his school became the foundation of modern Egyptology in several countries (Gamaliia, 2014).

Unlike the study of ancient art, the study of ancient Eastern art, particularly ancient Egyptian art, was represented in Ukraine by a significantly smaller number of scholars and printed works, which was explained by objective, including political, reasons. However, despite not having its own Egyptological school, Ukrainian science took part in the development of Egyptological research. Egyptology was part of the curriculum of disciplines that were taught and scientifically developed in Ukraine according to the university statute of 1834. At Kyiv University, it was included in a three-year course on the history of ancient Eastern arts, which was taught from 1887 to 1897 by Professor of the Department of the History of Fine Arts, Adrian Prakhov. In 1909-1910, the author attended the summer seminar of A. Erman in Berlin, under whose influence he published a treatise on the history of Egyptology in Western and Eastern Europe.

At the Department of General History of the Novorossiysk University, the course on Egyptology was taught by historian, philologist, and Egyptologist Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy, whose work deserves special attention. Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy was born in a family of a notary in Chernihiv province, studied at Kyiv's first gymnasium and later attended the historical department of the Historical-Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg University. In 1913, the author undertook an internship in Berlin, where he studied Egyptology under the supervision of professors A. Erman and H. Muller and Assyriology and ancient Hebrew under H. Strack. After returning in 1914, he taught courses in Egyptology, the history of the ancient East, and the history of ancient Eastern art, as well as specialised courses "Muhammad" and "Egyptian religion" of the Imperial Novorossiysk University. During his work at the Odesa branch of the Imperial Society for Oriental Studies in 1916-1917, the author took an active part in meetings, where topics related to the status of women in ancient Egypt and the religious aspect of the pharaoh's power and the "Pyramid Texts" were discussed. Finally, in 1919, researcher defended his Master's thesis at Kharkiv University on the interpretation of the "Pyramid Texts", which he had translated (Levchenko, 2022). O. Kotseyovskiy intended to dedicate six volumes to the "Pyramid Texts": the first three volumes would contain the Russian translation of the texts, the

fourth volume would be a historical-literary study of the "Pyramid Texts", the fifth volume would describe the religious ideology reflected in them, and the sixth volume would provide information on various aspects of ancient Egyptian society as recorded in the texts. However, due to illness and subsequent death, he was unable to do so (Ursu, 1994). The single volume of the "Pyramid Texts", published by O. Kotseyovskiy (1917) during his short creative life, laid the foundations for Ukrainian Egyptology.

During his internship in Berlin, O. Kotseyovskiy (1917) was particularly drawn to studies on ancient Egyptian writing, among the wide range of Egyptological research conducted by Erman's school. The terminological framework for his dissertation focused on the first stage of the historical development of the Egyptian language based on A. Erman's periodisation: "The oldest language of religious writing, vividly reflected in the Pyramid Texts (circa 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE)". In ancient Egypt, where literacy was the prerogative of priests, public institutions such as theatres or arenas did not exist. Oral storytelling served as a primary source of information and entertainment for all social classes. Visual arts played a crucial role in preserving and disseminating these oral traditions. Vivid paintings and inscriptions on palace and temple walls, akin to modern-day comics, unfolded the narratives of myths before an illiterate audience, fostering belief in the reality of fantastical figures.

A close examination revealed that the Egyptians' primary concern was not death itself, but the quest to overcome it. The idea of transcendent life after death, in the company of gods, transformed funeral practices. Hope for a better existence in the afterlife became dominant. ancient Egyptians developed the key concepts of original sin, an underworld inhabited by demons, a final judgment before a supreme god, and the promise of glorious resurrection. These ideas echoed through later civilisations, ultimately shaping Judeo-Christian traditions. Myth and religious cult became mutually reinforcing: myths justified divine worship, while cult rituals reenacted them, solidifying the mythology.

Crossing the boundary of death was perceived as analogous to the mysterious and perilous process of birth. Posthumous existence, much like life, could be fraught with challenges and dangers. Since magic was regularly employed for protection and aid in birth, illness, or loss (Fig. 3), it was believed even more essential for navigating the unknown realities of the afterlife. Magic was expressed not only through spoken incantations, but also in written form, inscribed on tomb walls or funerary objects. These texts empowered the deceased to control their posthumous destiny, freeing their eternal spirit from earthly dependencies.

In its evolution, by approximately 2350 BCE, all magical texts were consolidated into a single compilation known as "The Book of the Dead". By the 17<sup>th</sup> century BCE, this collection had become the definitive body of funerary texts for significant individuals. These spells

were inscribed on sarcophagi, mummy wrappings, tomb walls, or amulets. A widespread practice was to write them on papyrus scrolls placed within the sarcophagus alongside the body. Thanks to these texts, the soul (“ba”) could exit the tomb at will and later return safely. The spells varied in length, but were invariably accompanied by illustrations (vignettes) imbued with magical properties equal to those of the words (Fig. 4). These illustrated manuscripts, masterpieces of art and calligraphy, vividly convey the hopes, fears, and aspirations of the Egyptians. Pre-prepared copies, requiring only the deceased’s name to be added, were widespread and relatively affordable (Taylor, 2010).



**Figure 3.** A papyrus with incantations for protection against snakes and treatment of eye ailments. Middle Kingdom, 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> dynasties (1980-1700 BCE). Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy  
Source: developed by the authors



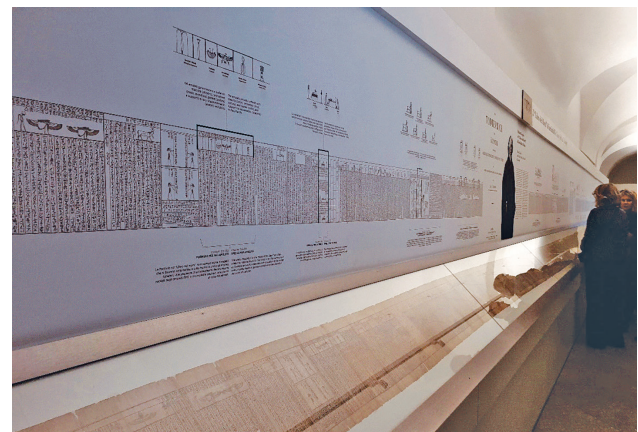
**Figure 4.** Interpretation of “The Book of the Dead of Iuefankh”. Detail. Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy  
Source: developed by the authors

Considering that the ritual inscriptions carved on the walls of corridors and burial chambers of Egyptian pyramids were the oldest known examples of Egyptian religious and funerary literature, Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy (1917), in the preface to his translation, saw the potential in these texts to “get acquainted, if not with the original religion, then with the religion of perhaps the

earliest period accessible to our study. Hence, it is clear what immense interest they held not only for historians of Egypt, but also for anthropologists, ethnologists, specialists in comparative mythology, and the like. They can reveal the political environment that existed at the time of their origin and perhaps even the scientific knowledge of the ancient Egyptians”.

The “Pyramid Texts” were published in French, German, and English. Their collection was first published by G. Maspero (1894) under the title “Inscriptions of the Saqqara Pyramids”; K. Sethe (1922) published the “Ancient Egyptian pyramid texts” with commentary and translation into German. This edition continues to be a foundational work in studying the “Pyramid Texts”. Later translations appeared in French and in English. Selected “Pyramid Texts” were also published in Czech as early as 1921 by F. Lexa (Zamarovský, 2001). A collection of 300 texts translated by Ukrainian Egyptologist O. Kotseyovskiy (1917), published over a century ago stays the only translation available in Russian.

For modern researchers, the true treasure of Egyptian written heritage is “The Book of the Dead”, translated from the original Egyptian title as “Utterances for going forth by day”. One can view the cypress scroll of “The Book of the Dead” from the Ptolemaic period (332-30 BCE), 18.5 meters long, found in one of the Saqqara tombs, at the Museo Egizio in Turin, the oldest museum dedicated to ancient Egyptian civilisation (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** “The Book of the Dead of Iuefankh”. Cypress papyrus, Ptolemaic period (332-30 BCE). Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy  
Source: developed by the authors

The study of the texts of “The Book of the Dead” led to the implementation of the most expensive international humanitarian project in history, the “Bonn Book of the Dead” (The Egyptian Book of the Dead..., 2012). Within the framework of this project, approximately 3000 samples of the Book stored in various countries have been documented. In Ukraine, six fragmented Egyptian papyri, including texts from “The Book of the Dead”, were recently stored at the Odesa

Archaeological Museum of the NAS of Ukraine. Thirty-six fragments of Egyptian papyrus were discovered in the Manuscript Institute of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine in the collection “Library of St. Vladimir’s Kyiv University”, in Kyiv. One active participant in the project was Ukrainian Egyptologist M. Tarasenko (2016), who identified excerpts from chapters of “The Book of the Dead” on the fragments of the Kyiv scroll.

There has been an increased interest in Ukrainian monumental art of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, in the unique creativity of Oleh Yerzhykovskiy. One of his monumental creations, a relief panel completed in 1967 for the innovative “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre in Kyiv, was directly related to the theme of this publication. The sculptor crafted an alabaster relief on the interior wall near the entrance to the cinema. The artist was passionate about the history of art and science throughout his life, as evidenced by his personal notes (Budnyk *et al.*, 2023). The arrangement of figures in the relief clearly alludes to the written records of ancient Egypt, not only in the generally accepted monumental convention of depicting the face in profile, the torso in frontal view, and the limbs in profile, but also through a deeper conceptual analogy. The symbolic figures representing cinematic activities were arranged in a ribbon-like relief that resembles the text of the Rosetta Stone more than “The Book of the Dead”. At the same time, the inclusion of cinematic attributes, poses, and movements that narrate the sequential process of filmmaking elevates the depiction to the expressive heights of not only written, but also monumental heritage from the ancient world (Fig. 6). The sculptor’s creative inspiration clearly draws analogies to the impressions of ancient Mesopotamian cylinder seals in the technique of counter-relief carving, the minimalist simplification of figures, and the ribbon-like composition. However, unlike the repetitive motifs produced by rolling a Sumerian stone seal, Oleh Yerzhykovskiy’s Kyiv relief was enlivened by the seemingly random repetition of eleven imprints featuring mini-compositions. Each of these miniatures can exist independently, detached from its counterparts, much like an individual frame of a film reel. What captivates the viewer was the discovery of scenes, such as an accompanist with a singer, a pair of actors in a love scene, and a costume designer working by a mannequin.

Analysing the “frame-by-frame” nature of the alabaster wall of the cinema, another basis for its creation becomes clear: the ribbon-like reliefs of the order system of ancient Greece, the Mecca of all sculptors and an undeniable source of inspiration for the author. However, the era of mature socialist realism, with its restrictions, significantly differed from the flourishing beauty of art during the humanitarian heights of Greece. Thus, we return to the specifics of the progressive monumental art of the 1960s-1970s, coded from official censorship, where free artistic expression gave

way to the laconicism of symbols and signs. The artistic achievements of ancient civilisations were conveyed to the present through abstracted figure-symbols resembling hieroglyphic sets. The collection was short, only eleven, but their alternation and repetition, the interplay of illuminated and recessed darkness, create movement, dynamics, rhythm, and a sense of mass art, techno-art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cinematography. The relief “papyrus wall” narrates the creation of mysterious cinema, so coveted by all yet so unattainable. “The Book of the Dead” resonates connotatively in this narrative: the film industry unfolds as stages of the “path to light”, with the ultimate outcome revealed behind the “magical doors” to the cinema hall. Only the initiated will understand the essence of the process, and only the admitted will attain eternity.



**Figure 6.** Oleh Yerzhykovskiy. relief in the cinema hall, “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre. Kyiv, post-1967

**Source:** The advertising brochure of the “Pivnichnyi” Trade Centre (2025)

It was worth mentioning the example of using ancient Egyptian writing in an unconventional design solution for a new generation archaeological museum. The development of the Egyptian Museum found 2 kilometres from the Giza Plateau, began in 2012 according to the master plan known as “Giza 2030”. As of 2024, the museum was almost completed, and part of it was already open to visitors. Ten years before the construction started, a competition was held, with over 1500 projects from 82 countries submitted. The project of Irish architect and designer Róisín Heneghan, co-founder of the architectural, landscape, and urban planning bureau Heneghan Peng Architects, won the competition (Markowski, 2025).

The innovative decorative design of the Grand Egyptian Museum features a translucent stone facade that changes according to the time of day, thanks to the latest technologies. The fractal design of the museum’s facade alternates in a rhythm with triangular shapes, characteristic of the Egyptian pyramid. In the centre of the facade, the entrance portal stands out, with a volumetric design that resembles the pyramid’s faces, unfolding before

visitors, leading them into the mysteries of the pyramid. Depending on the angle of the sunlight, a play of colours appears on the facade, revealing ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, applied in gold on a dark blue background of the tiles. The pixel-like tiles with hieroglyphs form something akin to the Egyptian royal clef, flanking the portal. It created the impression that the very decoding of these ancient Egyptian linguistic symbols opened the doors to the world's largest archaeological museum (Fig. 7).



**Figure 7.** The entrance to the Grand Egyptian Museum. Cairo, German Press Agency DPA

**Source:** Long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum opens for trial run (2024)

The use of hieroglyphic writing in the design examples of two entrance areas in public spaces demonstrated the relevance of the semantic meanings of the ancient Egyptian sign-symbol system. Of particular significance was the interpretation of the hermeneutics of mythological texts by the Ukrainian monumental artist Oleh Yerzhykovskiy.

### Conclusions

Ukrainian Egyptologist Oleksandr Kotseyovskiy belonged to the ranks of the first researchers and translators of the “Pyramid Texts”. The scientist highlighted the significance of ritual funerary inscriptions of ancient Egypt for researchers in various fields of science and

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culture, considering these written documents an invaluable treasure trove of information not only about the societal structure of Egyptian life, but also about certain scientific and artistic achievements.

The study showed that the hieroglyphic and visual components of “The Book of the Dead” provided Egyptians with a visualised organisation of the stages of the “path to light”, the desired afterlife, affirming the reality of mythical images. Among the monumental works of Ukraine, the relief by Oleh Yerzhykovskiy in the Public-Commercial Center “Pivnichnyi” stood out, whose compositional and spatial solutions, inspired by the art of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, depict the filmmaking process. The symbolic systems used in the relief adapt narratives of Egyptian writing and art in synthesis with 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernism. Against the backdrop of the “frames” of the alabaster composition, an evolution from pictographic writing to infographics can be traced. The design of the facade of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo demonstrated the potential use of written symbolic systems of ancient civilisations in modern design, as well as the foresight of Ukrainian monumental artist Oleh Yerzhykovskiy.

The systematisation of knowledge about Ukrainian researchers of Egyptian myth-making and writing provided a foundation for a more thoughtful utilisation of their achievements. The emulation of ancient Egyptian stylistics and the social reincarnation of hieroglyphs in modern symbolic systems of computer graphics (emojis, likes, and stickers) called for further meticulous study. Ukrainian monumental art, which served as a unique witness to its era and is imbued with encoded meanings and messages, also awaits focused attention for future research.

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None.

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## Інтерпретація давньоєгипетських міфологічних текстів на території України

■ **Анотація.** Метою цього дослідження було вивчення герменевтики давньоєгипетських письмових пам'яток у трактуванні представників української культури та монументального мистецтва. Мистецтвознавчий аналіз засвідчив, що інтерпретація давньоєгипетських письмових і зображальних пам'яток трансцендентного змісту мала своїх представників в Україні ще з моменту перших перекладів цих текстів. Одним із перших перекладачів «Текстів пірамід» був Олександр Коцейовський, представник української єгиптології, який висунув ідею про те, що давньоєгипетські релігійні тексти є інформативними не лише з міфологічної точки зору, а й дають уявлення про всі сфери суспільного життя. Етапи подорожі у потойбіччя, зображені на сувоях, містили відомості про культурні, мистецькі та технологічні знання й навички єгиптян. Наслідування традицій давньоєгипетського письма та візуального мистецтва українськими монументалістами продемонстровано на прикладі рельєфної панелі в торговому центрі «Північний» у Києві авторства Олега Єржиковського. У системі знаків і символів художник розкрив процес створення кінофільму – результат діяльності фахівців із різних галузей. Кіновиробництво оживало завдяки творчим досягненням та технічному прогресу. Композиція алебастрового барельєфа базувалася на модернізованому, мінімалістичному переосмисленні піктографічної та ієрогліфічної систем Давнього Єгипту. Ритм різьблених елементів із випадковим повтором на стіні кінотеатру в громадському центрі 1960-х років відсилав до монументальних образів храмів і гробниць таких давніх цивілізацій, як Месопотамія, Єгипет і Греція. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в актуальності давньоєгипетських семіотичних систем у сучасному мистецтві та дизайні, що підкреслює їх міжкультурний та міждисциплінарний потенціал

■ **Ключові слова:** українська єгиптологія; монументально-декоративне мистецтво; ієрогліф; інфографіка; семіотична мова

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**Abraham Manievich in group exhibitions 1905-1938:  
Based on the National Art Museum of Ukraine archives**

**Abstract.** The study aimed to analyse documents about Abraham Manievich from the archive of the National Art Museum of Ukraine related to the artist's participation in group exhibitions, to reconstruct these events chronologically and examine the visibility of the artist in their context. The research involved the examination of archival materials, including exhibition catalogue copies, newspaper reviews, and press clippings preserved in the artist's collection at the National Art Museum of Ukraine. At least sixteen group exhibitions, in which Abraham Manievich participated during the lifetime were identified. These exhibitions were hosted in various cities and artistic institutions, including Kyiv, Paris, New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Scranton, spanning from 1905 to 1938. Although the archival materials provided uneven coverage of these exhibitions and the artist's involvement, they highlighted the stages of the professional development and gradual integration into both European and American art scenes. At the same time, the study highlighted Manievich's role in shaping the image of the Ukrainian artist as a participant in global modernist processes, particularly within the dialogue between European and American traditions. The practical significance of the study was determined by presentation of unpublished archival materials from the collection of the National Art Museum of Ukraine related to Abraham Manievich's participation in group exhibitions. These materials are relevant both for exploration the artist's work and for examining the broader international context of modernism involving Ukrainian artists

**Keywords:** Ukrainian art; Ukrainian modernism; Ukrainian émigré artists; Jewish émigré artists; museum research; archival research

**Introduction**

Abraham Manievich (1881-1942) was an artist, whose creative vision, rooted in perception of nature, evolved through a synthesis of various stylistic and thematic influences. Although personally reserved, painter actively engaged with artistic communities across Ukraine, Russian Empire, Europe, the United States, and Canada. Along with solo shows, the artist regularly participated in group exhibitions, establishing popularity in international artistic circles. Archival materials at the National Art Museum of Ukraine document the artist's participation in such events from 1905 to 1938, offering valuable insight into career and global artistic presence. The research relevance was determined by the fact that

Manievich's exhibition history, particularly group exhibitions, remain insufficiently studied. This gap obscured critical aspects of artistic development and the transnational dimensions of career. These exhibitions reflected the integration of the artist's art into diverse environments and highlighted the broader role of émigré artists from the former Russian Empire in shaping early 20<sup>th</sup> century art scenes.

I. Pavelchuk (2020) explored the work of Abraham Manievich in the context of Ukrainian modernism. The study stated that "these influences are manifested in linear Secessionist ornamentality and an Impressionist sense of colour", yet the Anton Azbe school, which

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significantly shaped the artist's visual language, remains unmentioned. Among relevant publications, some works address modernist art in general or cover specific aspects of A. Manievich's life and work. I. Pavelchuk (2019) examined Cézannism's impact on Manievich's early American period (1921-1927), noting the transition "from impressionist explorations to constructivist-analytical painting".

The author V. Petrashyk (2019) analysed archival sources from the Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of Ukraine, revealing that Tulchynskiy met Manievich in Munich in 1908 and owned the largest pre-emigration collection of the artist's works. R. Manevych (2021) presented recollections of Abraham Manievich's solo exhibition held at the Kyiv City Museum (National Art Museum of Ukraine) in 1909-1910. The publication consisted of a translated memoir by the artist's wife. It was accompanied by a text by O. Zhabkova (2003), offering a brief biographical overview of the artist, education, and the beginning of professional career. I. Melnychuk (2021) explored Manievich's teaching role at UAA, emphasising artist's development of a method combining post-impressionism and Ukrainian national traditions.

O. Mosendz (2023) highlighted the artist's absorption of impressionism through a Munich variant, arguing that such classification required nuance, especially given the artist's studies at the Ažbe school and engagement with Art Nouveau. O. Karpenko (2021) discussed the foundational impact of impressionism on avant-garde painters. The study noted that "almost all representatives...passed through impressionism", including Manievich, whose training at Anton Ažbe's school significantly shaped visual language. Z. Yang (2023) explored how immigrant communities in New York shaped artists' creative expression. The study noted that "the struggle has produced a kind of strength, even beauty", demonstrating how Manievich and others synthesised cultural displacement with modernist innovation. A. Pohorilyi (2024) detailed how European training shaped these artists. Manievich's studies at the Anton Ažbe School (1905-1906) and early exhibitions at the Munich Kunstverein (1907), Vienna Secession (1908), and Paris Spring Salon were shown as crucial milestones in development within modernist art networks. The study aimed to investigate archival documents from the Abraham Manievich collection housed at the National Art Museum of Ukraine.

## Materials and Methods

The study was based on the analysis of materials from Abraham Manievich's archive preserved at the National Art Museum of Ukraine (n.d.) that documented the participation of the painter in group exhibitions held during in the lifetime across Europe and the United States. The research relevance was determined by the need to further analyse the artist's creative trajectory and integration into global artistic processes. Although Abraham

Manievich was recognised as a prominent modernist landscape painter, group exhibition activity – an essential component of professional visibility and cross-cultural engagement – remains insufficiently studied. Reconstruction of the chronology of these exhibitions, identification of participating institutions and artists, and their contextualisation within the broader art scenes during 1905-1938 were crucial for tracing the networks that shaped Manievich's development and influence. This approach also further appreciated the artistic legacy as a Ukrainian-born émigré, who contributed to both European and American modernism.

The methodology of the research combined three key approaches. First, the historical-chronological method was used to reconstruct the timeline of Abraham Manievich's participation in group exhibitions between 1905 and 1938, based on exhibition catalogues. This traced the artist's evolving visibility within the institutional art world. Second, the comparative method was applied to examine the cultural and social environments, in which these exhibitions were held. This included analysing the cities, galleries, and cultural institutions involved, as well as the artistic trends and political circumstances of the time. Finally, the cross-cultural method was employed to interpret the painter's creative practice as a synthesis of diverse influences, ranging from Ukrainian national art traditions to French impressionism, the Munich Secession, and early American modernism. Together, these methods provided a multidimensional framework for exploring how Abraham Manievich's group exhibition history reflected the artist's navigation through multiple artistic spheres, and how these experiences formed the evolution of the artist's visual language and professional identity.

## Results and Discussion

Abraham Manievich was a distinctive painter, whose life involved extensive travel and emigration, experiences, that enriched the art with new themes and trends. Despite being in constant artistic search, the artist never lost individuality, which attracted the attention of viewers and experts on both sides of the Atlantic. Artist's work served as a vivid example of the trends, that existed in the new Ukrainian art of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which developed in close contact with Europe and later evolved into an experimental synthesis of individual artistic pursuits. O. Karpenko (2021) noted that "When dividing the stages of the Ukrainian avant-garde into periods, Ukrainian avant-garde scholar O. Fedoruk and French researcher V. Markade propose a division into two phases: the first wave of the avant-garde begins from 1907 to 1914, when Ukrainian artists assimilate the artistic achievements of European masters. The second – from 1917 to 1934 – is a time of self-awareness and national identification of the Ukrainian avant-garde, followed by its abrupt end at the peak of its development due to ideological suppression". Having gained diverse experience

in Munich and Paris, A. Manievich later used this foundation as a basis for further artistic explorations.

N. Asieieva (1989) emphasised that the artist's professional journey began at the Kyiv Art School, where Manievich developed an appreciation for the lyricism of Ukrainian landscape painting – an element that would later become one of the foundations of artist's shift toward greater decorative stylisation. Artist first participated in an exhibition, while still being a student at the Kyiv Art School. A. Manievich's works were presented at the 24<sup>th</sup> Periodical Exhibition (1905) of the Moscow Society of Art Lovers. This marked both first group exhibition and the artist's exhibition debut. The young artist continued the studies in Munich at the Academy of Fine Arts and in the private studio of Anton Ažbe. O. Karpenko (2014) noted that Ažbe's school, which emphasised the study of nature and the achievement of volumetric form, was substantial. The teaching methods of this school had a considerable impact on the plastic qualities of A. Manievich's painting. The author's works from the Munich period were exhibited in 1908. The magazine "World of Art" and O. Filippov organised an exhibition (Exhibition of the magazine "World of Art", 1908) in Kyiv that featured artists from Kyiv, Odesa, and Kharkiv. Among the participants were K. Ivanytska, A. Krüger-Prakhova, Y. Manyura, I. Protashevych, M. Roerich, I. Buriachok, G. Burdanov, G. Holovkov, F. Shavryn, S. Yaremych, O. Ekster, and Abraham Manievich, who exhibited fifteen works. This exhibition preceded the major presentation at the Vienna Secession, where the 31<sup>st</sup> Exhibition of Modern Russian Art was held from November 7, 1908, to January 6, 1909, and featured more than 300 paintings (National Art Museum of Ukraine, n.d.).

A significant milestone in the painter's international recognition was a solo exhibition in Paris at the Paul Durand-Ruel Gallery in 1913. According to O. Ivanenko (2009), Manievich's exhibition at the gallery attracted attention from prominent art critics, including those writing for *La Revue des Beaux-Arts* and *Liberté*. The display, which featured the artist's paintings alongside works by major figures of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Western European art, such as Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Édouard Manet, Auguste Renoir, and Claude Monet, was noted for its strong critical reception and the artist's successful integration into art. V. Susak (2010) noted, that the artworks reportedly attracted considerable interest among demanding French viewers, with the only remarks of criticism directed at their modest framing rather than the paintings. These biographical details were essential for research of the artist's later creative activity in emigration to the United States, where artist would apply the knowledge and experience gained in Europe to transform personal visual language in a new environment. Yu. Babunych (2016) highlighted that the influence of French impressionism and post-impressionism was substantial for the artist's further artistic

development – an early stage also common to many prominent Ukrainian avant-garde artists. In the artist's case, this influence manifested especially in the artist's treatment of the tree motif, through which painter reimagined natural forms as symbolic structures, where the tree appeared not merely as a landscape element, but as a metaphor for existence itself.

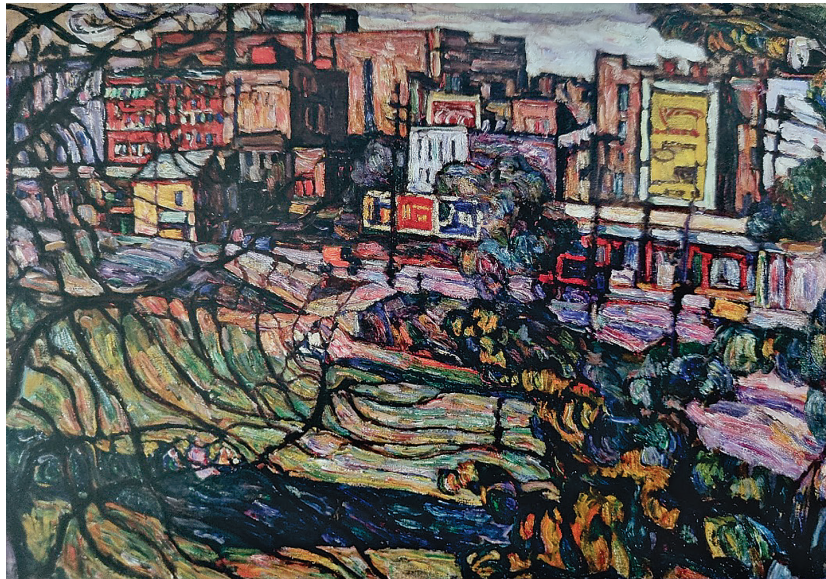
In 1917, the Jewish Society for the Promotion of Art (founded in 1916) held an exhibition at the Lemerrier Gallery in Moscow (Sudhalter, 2023). A. Manievich, a member of the society, contributed ten works. The exhibition included paintings, sculptures, and graphic works by N. Altman, M. Antokolsky, L. Bloch, M. Bloch, F. Brenson, I. Brodsky, M. Katz, B. Kratko, A. Lakhovsky, L. Lysytskyi, S.B. Rybak, Sandomirskaya, M. Solomonov, Z. Strazh, Ya. Troupyansky, R. Fernkel-Maniussone, P. Khentova, M. Chagall. Some of Manievich's exhibited works were already part of private collections. The catalogue listed "Harmony of Autumn Colors", "Château", "Spring Etude", and "Factory" belonging to Ya. F. Kagan-Shbas-hai, and "In the Small Town" as owned by A.L. Polyakov.

In 1922, Abraham Manievich arrived in the United States with the family. A. Pensler & M. Ginsberg (2011) observed that the emigration was preceded by the tragic events of the Civil War, during which the artist's son was killed in battles near Trypillia. In the New World, the artist experienced profound changes that directly influenced the works. Particularly, the thematic and narrative content of his paintings from the American period was transformed (Fernández, 2024). O. Zhabkova (2003) explained: "In the landscapes created in homeland, Manievich rarely depicted human figures; they were merely imbued with the invisible presence of a human spirit. Now, human figures become an inseparable part of the life the artist portrayed – life unfolding among cheap shops, cafés, garages, and gas stations". There, artist gained recognition and actively participated in exhibitions, the first group exhibition in the United States was The Exhibition of Russian Painting and Sculpture at the Brooklyn Museum in New York (Russia's new art is put..., 1923). Among the participating artists were D. Burliuk, A. Feder, L. Gudiashvili, W. Kandinsky, S. Sorin, and sculptors such as O. Archypenko, N. Patlazhan (Fox & Brinton, 1923). Manievich presented sixteen paintings created in Kyiv, Moscow, and Petrograd.

In 1924, the painter's work "Through the Branches" was exhibited at the international exhibition This is Painting: Pastel, Watercolor, and Drawing. Foreign Schools at the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris (Bénédite, 1924). Artist also participated in the thirty-eighth annual exhibition of American paintings and sculpture (Catalogue of the..., 1925) at the Art Institute of Chicago, which was held from October 29 to December 13, 1925. The show included 302 works by over 200 painters and more than 50 sculptors. The catalogue listed Manievich's painting "Bronx", under number 129. From October 15 to December 6, 1925, A. Manievich

participated in the International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh (Carnegie Museum of Art, 1925). The exhibition also featured works by

O. Lysenko, V. Grinberg, D. Romanovsky, Z. Serebriakova (Bénédite, 1924). Abraham Manievich presented the "Eagle Avenue. Bronx" (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Eagle Avenue. Bronx, 1924. Private collection

Source: based on A. Pensler & M. Ginsberg (2011)

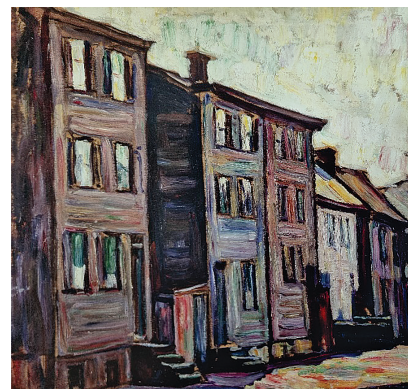
This landscape featured a Secessionist tree motif characteristic of the artist's work in the mid-1910s, as well as a distinct linearity typical of this subject. However, artist enhanced the familiar composition with more saturated colours and more expressive brushstrokes, blending the natural motif with an urban landscape. From May 31 to November 30, 1926, the Sesquicentennial International Exposition took place in Philadelphia, commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence (Kendrick *et al.*, 1926). As part of the event, there was a dedicated exhibition of painting, sculpture, and graphic arts, divided into national sections: American, Canadian, Russian, German, French, Yugoslavian, Persian, Medieval, Japanese, Belgian, Spanish, and a separate section for graphic works. The Russian section in Galleries 20 and 21 featured several Ukrainian-born artists, including A. Manievich, D. Burluk, O. Archypenko, W. Kandinsky, and K. Malevich. Abraham Manievich exhibited the following works: "Early Spring. Bronx", "Autumn Fantasy", "Camden, New Jersey", and "Destruction of Ghetto" (Fig. 2).

The works "Destruction of Ghetto" and "Camden, New Jersey" (Fig. 3) featured a tendency toward the geometrisation of form, through which the artist emphasised the urban character of the compositions. The colour choices and brushstroke layering was also notable, contributing significantly to the overall mood of the cityscapes. D. Burluk (1926) admired the artist's paintings, praising their colours as transparent, "like the crystal of an autumn evening".



**Figure 2.** Destruction of Ghetto, 1919

Source: The Jewish Museum (n.d.)



**Figure 3.** Camden, New Jersey, 1922-1923.

Private collection

Source: based on A. Pensler & M. Ginsberg (2011)

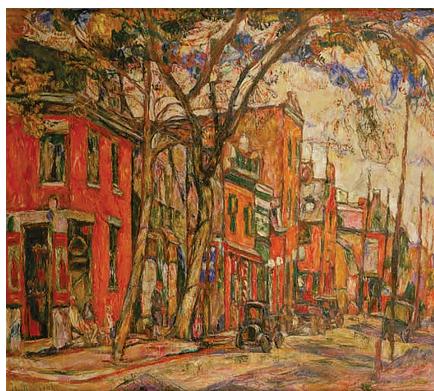
In November 1929 (1-28) at the Brummer Gallery in New York, an exhibition was held dedicated to a famous actress, model, and modernist's muse, Maria Lani (*Portraits of Maria Lani...*, 1929). Fifty-one painters presented their portraits of Lani, including A. Manievich. The artist created the portrait of Maria Lani in Paris in 1925. Works of primarily French and Jewish emigre painters among the members of the exhibition were presented: Bonnard, Henri-Matisse, Bosshard, Hermine David, Bourdelle, Kissling, Braque, Kramstycyk, Laboureur, Laprade, Laurens, Le Fauconnier, Leger, Lhote, Lurcat, Man Ray (*Cocteau et al.*, 1929). In the portrait of Maria Lani (Fig. 4), the influence of Anton Ažbe's school was evident, particularly in Manievich's use of the "grand form" and "grand line", as well as in approach of dividing nature into simple geometric shapes that served as the basis for subsequent tonal modeling of each form (Urazbaieva, 2024).



**Figure 4.** Portrait of Maria Lani, 1928

Source: based on J. Cocteau *et al.* (1929)

From April 26<sup>th</sup> to June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1931, the artist's work was exhibited at the Albright Gallery in the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy's at 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American artists (1929). Abraham Manievich took part in the 128<sup>th</sup> annual exhibition (*Catalogue of the...*, 1933) at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from January 29 to March 19, 1933. The artist presented "Still Life in Red" and "Napoleon Street: Montreal" (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Napoleon Street: Montreal, 1930

Source: The Jewish Museum (n.d.)

The painting presented a composition typical of the urban landscapes from Manievich's American period: a side perspective that followed the street receding into the distance. Additionally, Manievich used red as the dominant colour – a hallmark of artist's painting style in the 1930s. In May 1935, Hammer Galleries organised an Exhibition: One hundred and fifty years of Russian painting (1935). Among the 86 artworks presented were two pieces by a painter: "Still Life" and "Landscape". The gallery's founder, Armand Hammer, was sympathetic to the Soviet Union, and the show featured paintings from both the Russian Empire and Soviet collections. Notably, the exhibition also included works by Ukrainian-born 18<sup>th</sup>-century painter Volodymyr Borovikovskyy. According to a contemporary review, "several of the Russian artists display a highly accomplished technique", and among the names. A. Manievich was highlighted (*Russian art displayed...*, 1935). In the summer of 1937 (July 12-31), the Young Women Christian Association Building hosted a joint exhibition of paintings by Abraham Manievich and Morgan Hart (National Art Museum of Ukraine, n.d.). Manievich displayed 26 works, encompassing landscapes, still lifes, and portraits that reflected European training and a strong emotional character (*The Press Union*, 1937a). The press also mentioned the widespread recognition of both artists character (*The Press Union*, 1937b).

In May 1938 and February 1939, Abraham Manievich took part in the The Second annual membership exhibition (*The Second annual...*, 1938). In 1938, "Landscape" was exhibited, and in 1939, St. Agatha, Canada. Initially, the AAC was regarded as a mere artistic extension of the Communist Party to protest against the fascist ideology; however, it soon established independence and evolved into a self-governing association of artists with its agenda and vision for implementation. However, Abraham Manievich didn't express political preferences, assuming that, as a Jewish emigre, artist couldn't ignore the anti-fascist agenda. Among members of Congress was also another Ukraine-born Jewish artist, Louis Lozowick. In 1938, the artist's paintings were exhibited at the First exhibition of painting, sculpture, graphic arts and Yiddish books and press (1938) by the American Art Section of the World Alliance for Yiddish Culture, "YKUF". Yiddish Kultur Farband was rooted in the Kyiv-based original Yiddish Culture League (*The Kultur-Lige*), which began the organised Yiddish movement, and of which A. Manievich also became a member in 1918 (*Skrypnyk & Kara-Vasylieva*, 2007).

This study highlighted Abraham Manievich's active involvement in the artistic life of Europe and the United States from the early years of career. The geographical scope and thematic diversity of the group exhibitions, in which the artist participated, present the artist as an engaged and in-demand painter, who embraced creative experimentation and showcased the works in various venues. A. Puzyrkova (2018) noted that the major

artistic currents of European modernism – such as Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism – found their way into Ukrainian art in various forms, while at the same time Ukrainian artists maintained certain distinct stylistic features. These tendencies were vividly expressed in the painter's work, as artist was not confined to the strict boundaries of any particular style. Instead, painter borrowed elements from various movements and synthesised them to achieve the desired artistic expressiveness. As mentioned by I. Pavelchuk (2019), Manievich's modulation of shapes highlighted nature's structural aspects and conveyed depth and volume exclusively by means of colour. The diversity of the artist's creative experience was evidenced by the wide geographical range of group exhibitions, in which the artist's works were presented.

By the late 1910s, the artist was already established as a recognisable master with a distinctive artistic style. O. Kashuba-Volvach (2015) characterised the artist as follows: "The artist skillfully combined the intimate tone of landscape motifs with emotionally rich colouration, reinterpreting the artistic traditions of Ukrainian and Jewish cultures. The decorative quality of form, experimentation with colour, and the textured painterly surface of the canvas became defining features of creative style". This became an important foundation for further development in emigration, where a new social status and living conditions posed fresh challenges. The harsh realities faced by immigrants in the United States, especially in large urban centres such as New York, frequently became a source of artistic reflection. Many immigrant artists, drawing from personal experiences, turned to themes of social struggle, poverty, and marginalisation. The urban environment and the specific atmosphere of immigrant neighbourhoods brought to light pressing social issues that found indirect expression in their visual language. In the paintings, Manievich conveyed the everyday, often unembellished reality of American life, interpreting it through a personal lens shaped by perception of existence and aesthetic values. The artist's significance was demonstrated through participation in major national exhibitions across the United States, being represented both as an immigrant and as an American artist. The works were noteworthy within the context of Jewish émigré artists, whose activities flourished in the late 1930s.

### Conclusions

The study provided a comprehensive reconstruction of Abraham Manievich's participation in group exhibitions between 1905 and 1938, illuminating the artist's

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evolving visibility across diverse cultural landscapes. Based on archival materials from the National Art Museum of Ukraine, the research traced the trajectory of a painter, who remained actively engaged with artistic communities throughout Europe and North America, despite the challenges of emigration and shifting political circumstances. Painter's exhibition history underscored not only the breadth of the engagement – from early shows in Kyiv and Vienna to major presentations in New York, Paris, and Chicago – but also the adaptability of visual language in response to changing social and cultural environments.

The research identified sixteen documented group exhibitions revealing the extensive geographic scope of Abraham Manievich's artistic networks. This documentation methodology demonstrated the value of systematic archival research in reconstructing émigré artistic careers and suggested potential for similar studies of other Ukrainian modernist painters. The documentation of participation in exhibitions organised by diverse institutions – ranging from the European avant-garde circles and Jewish artistic societies to modernist salons and American art academies – demonstrated the scope of the painter's involvement in transnational networks. Artist's artworks reflected a continuous synthesis of stylistic tendencies, merging elements of Ukrainian landscape traditions, Munich Secession, French Impressionism, and American modernism into a distinct and expressive idiom. Furthermore, the study highlighted, how group exhibitions functioned as a critical platform for Abraham Manievich's professional visibility, offering opportunities to position himself as both an émigré and an American modernist. Manievich's art not only documented personal and collective experiences of displacement, but also contributed to the broader narrative of émigré contributions to early 20<sup>th</sup> century art. By examining these previously understudied group exhibitions, tharticle study contributed to artist scholarship, while opening new vectors for research into the international dimensions of Ukrainian modernism and Jewish diaspora art within broader modernist movements.

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### Conflict of Interest

None.

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## Участь Абрама Маневича у групових виставках з 1905 по 1938 рік: за матеріалами архіву Національного художнього музею України

■ **Анотація.** Метою дослідження було проаналізувати документи про Абрама Маневича з архіву Національного художнього музею України, що стосувалися участі митця в групових виставках, хронологічно відтворити ці події та дослідити видимість художника в їхньому контексті. У дослідженні було вивчено архівні матеріали, зокрема копії каталогів виставок, газетні рецензії та вирізки з преси, що зберігаються в колекції художника в Національному художньому музеї України. Було виявлено не менше шістнадцяти групових виставок, у яких Абрам Маневич брав участь за життя. Ці виставки проходили в різних містах та художніх установах, зокрема в Києві, Парижі, Нью-Йорку, Філадельфії, Баффало та Скрантоні, охоплюючи період з 1905 по 1938 рік. Хоча архівні матеріали надавали нерівномірне висвітлення цих виставок та участі художника в них, вони висвітлили етапи професійного розвитку та поступову інтеграцію в європейську та американську арт-сцени. Водночас дослідження підкреслило роль Маневича у формуванні образу українського художника як учасника глобальних модерністських процесів, зокрема в діалозі між європейськими та американськими традиціями. Практичне значення дослідження визначається представленням неопублікованих архівних матеріалів з колекції Національного художнього музею України, що стосувалися участі Абрама Маневича в групових виставках. Ці матеріали є важливими як для вивчення творчості художника, так і для дослідження ширшого міжнародного контексту модернізму за участі українських художників

■ **Ключові слова:** українське мистецтво; український модернізм; українські художники-емігранти; єврейські художники-емігранти; музейні дослідження; архівні дослідження

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