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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 The practical significance of the study was determined by presentation of unpublished archival materials from the collection of the National Art Museum of Ukraine related to Abraham Manievich's participation in group exhibitions.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 20th 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 20th 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 24th 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 31st 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 20th-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 Lemercier 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 paintings from the American period was transformed (Fernández, 2024). O. Zhbankova (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).

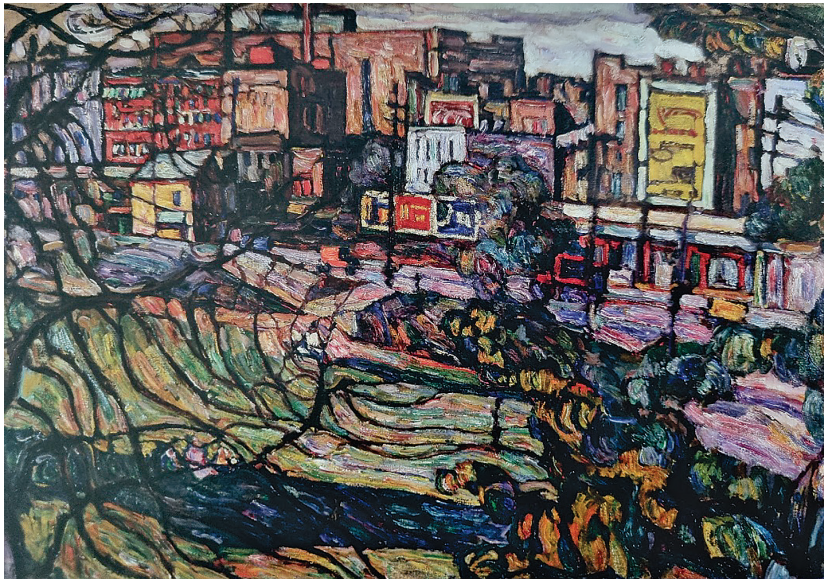


Figure 1. Eagle Avenue. Bronx, 1924. Private collection

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 150th 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.)

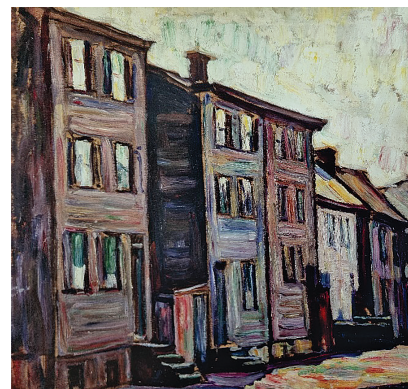


Figure 3. Camden, New Jersey, 1922-1923.

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 Azbe'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 26th to June 22nd, 1931, the artist's work was exhibited at the Albright Gallery in the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy's at 25th Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American artists (1929). Abraham Manievich took part in the 128th 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).

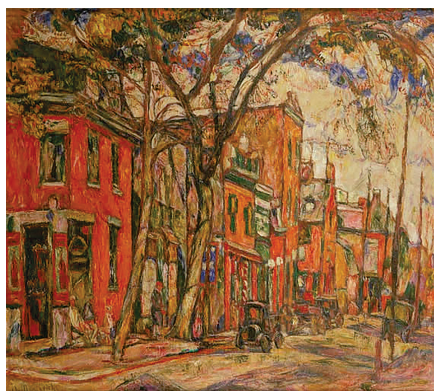


Figure 5. Napoleon Street: Montreal, 1930

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 18th-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 20th 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.

Acknowledgements

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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