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Post-Invasion Reflection in the Works of Budzhak Artists

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Abstract: The 2022 war became a serious trigger for the artists of Budzhak and all of Ukraine to comprehend the tragic turning point in the life of the country associated with the attempt of the aggressor country to destroy the national identity of the Ukrainians. The article deals with the main concepts and symbols of the new post-invasion reality in the regional art (house, key, fire, well, prayer, holy patronage).

Keywords: post-invasion regional art; symbols; technique; creativity

Introduction

Ukraine found itself at the epicenter of the modern geopolitical crisis. It is possible to provide objective historical and political assessments of events only decades after. So far it is important to observe the events and record them – in diaries and artistic works: poems, essays, prose, paintings, all of which will later become documents of the war period. How do Ukrainian artists react to this terrible challenge of history?

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine almost all the artists (painters, poets, even researchers) stated that they had felt shock, stress and inability to tear themselves away from the horrific flow of news from both the occupied territories and those under constant fire during the first weeks of the war. For a while the creative process stopped completely... And no wonder! It is impossible to abstract from the horrors of war and create an attractive world of love, goodness and beauty. After a while

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aesthetic reflection switched to what worried us and what continues to concern us most: the fate of Ukraine and belief in the complete victory of our country.

War poster as one of the popular genres of the latest post-invasion Ukrainian art. Inherent components of the genre of poster aesthetics are accessibility, visual component and content code of slogans. If in the 20th century the power structures of the militarized countries of Europe invested considerable funds in the development of campaign materials and made state orders, involving talented artists, then in modern Ukraine artists organized themselves, working in this direction. A series of posters can be seen on the official page of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine on the Facebook social network:



On the posters dedicated to the cities of Ukraine some recognizable feature of this or that city is highlighted, by which it was remembered during the attacks or temporary occupation: new types of electronic support (Kyiv), powerful bombing (Kharkiv),

almost complete destruction and total violation of basic rights and freedoms (Mariupol, Volnovakha), powerful partisan resistance (Sumy, Chernihiv), efforts to preserve cultural heritage (Odesa), an unprecedentedly high level of resistance and civic consciousness in Kherson, occupied on the third day of the war. The image of the entire country is embodied in a poster that depicts people running chaotically to the sound of sirens for shelter...

Budzhak's artists actively reflect in the new, post-invasion reality. After the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many artists from the southern Odesa region testified during the meetings in Izmail Art Gallery that in the first weeks of the war they felt shock, stress, complete immersion in the terrible flow of news coming from the occupied territories and those that were under constant fire. For a while, the creative process froze... And no wonder! It is impossible to abstract from the horrors of war and create a beautiful world of love, goodness and beauty. After a while the aesthetic reflection switched to what worried and now worries the most: the fate of Ukraine and faith in the unconditional victory of our country. Therefore, a new reality appeared in its entirety on the canvases of Budzhak artists.

In March Kiliia artist Valeriia Leventsova (*Valerya Leventsova site*) posted two of her watercolors on the social network Facebook, based on the well-known saying of the Ukrainian border guard from the Snake Island: “The Russian ship – go to...” with the following comment:

“On May 9, I wanted to draw lilacs or dandelions, but due to the alarming situation in Odesa, after another bombing of my beloved city, I decided to calm my nerves – I made my own version of” “The Russian ship – go to...”. Although I am an intelligent person, knowing about the atrocities of the Rashists, it is difficult to survive all this, to be constantly in the zone of real threat of a missile attack...



“The second version of the work “The Russian ship – go to...” , 12/05/2022 (collage, paper, coffee, notebook cover, A2 format) was done at night during prolonged anxiety”.



Why did the saying about the Russian warship as an ideologeme of modern post-invasion discourse become a symbol of national resistance? The point is the archetypal depth of the “ship-state” metaphor, which was widely used in antiquity and literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. Ancient philosophers and poets Plato, Alcaeus, Horace resorted to likening the state to a ship, caught in a storm (symbolizing its internal or external political problems). Among the modern poets are Longfellow, Walt Whitman (the famous poem “O Captain, My Captain!”), Leonard Cohen (“Democracy”). So, the Ukrainian people liked the phrase of the Ukrainian border guard from the Snake Island “The Russian warship, go to ...!” as it expressed the valor of our soldiers, who are able to resist the racist militarized invading ship-state.

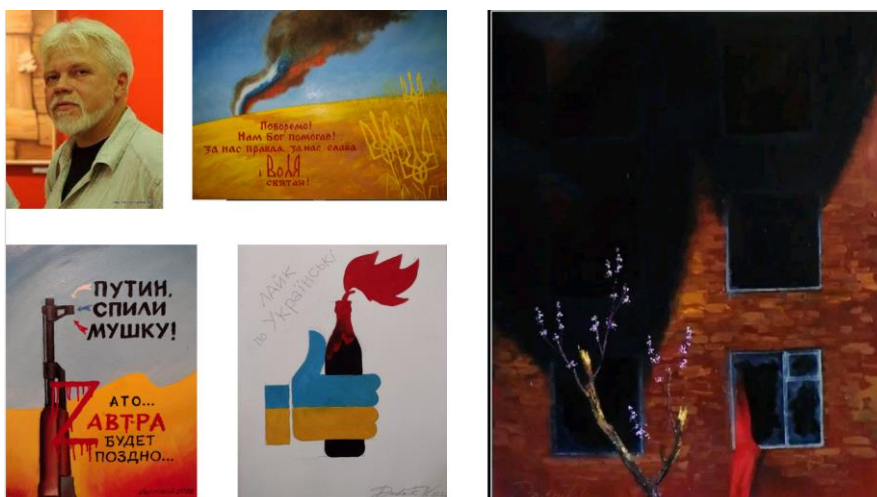
The concept of home is updated in the works of most of the artists, since many Ukrainians have lost their homes, become refugees and forced migrants. One of the best works of contemporary Bessarabian artists related to the motif of the lost home in the post-invasion reality is the work of Larisa Chakir (*Larisa Chakir site*) “The keys to the house... We will return” (2022):



The canvas depicts a young woman with the signs of the Virgin (nimbus, wings, hands folded in prayer, deliberately elongated body shape). The new reality is symbolized by a stone arch with the keys to the lost homes. A small village house (like a dream) is located in a promising idyllic space. There is a towel with the tree

of life and modest dishes in the foreground, but there is no table under it... A significant number of dream homes, like birds, have frozen in the air, symbolizing the lost and dream home as the main value of the personal space of the Ukrainians affected by the war.

The works of the Bessarabian artist Volodymyr Dudnyk (*Volodymyr Dudnyk site*) reflect the general desire of modern Ukrainian artists to convey emotions in the accessible language of a poster with appropriate slogans (“Like in Ukrainian”, “Putin – shot a fly”, etc.) and to convey the drama of modern Ukraine associated with the bombing of peaceful cities and civilian population. The work “Spring 2022” depicts a burning house, against the background of which a fruit tree, affected by the explosion, blooms timidly:



The post-war works of Pavlo Makedonskyi (*Pavlo Makedonskyi site*) are appalling in content. In the watercolor “Premonition” (2022), we see a bloodied naked person in the position of an embryo, lying on the black ground against the background of overanxious villagers and an alarming red sunset. A series of works by the artist is dedicated to the angels who receive the souls of the innocent victims:



The dream of peace and prayer motifs permeate the creative work of Zlata Shishman. On the canvas “Prayer for Peace” (2022) the author depicted her family, whose members humbly pray for peace in the state. Among them is a well-known Ukrainian artist – Honored Artist of Ukraine, icon painter and restorer Ivan Shishman (*Ivan Shishman site*), his wife with small children, brother and husband of the paintress.



Referenses

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