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GENESIS AND FEATURES OF THE STILL LIFE GENRE IN FINE ART

The evolution and significance of the still life genre in the visual arts, particularly in the context of the use of mixed media in painting, is discussed in this survey. The study presents an analysis of the development of this genre, in particular, changes in terminology and artistic approaches to the depiction of everyday objects, labor, flowers, and fruits, as well as the symbolic meanings given to them. In particular, it reveals how still life, initially perceived as a purely decorative element, gradually transformed into a more conceptual genre with profound cultural and philosophical implications. The study substantiates the importance of still life as an independent genre formed in Europe in the 16th–17th centuries. It also emphasizes its development under the influence of changes in artistic priorities, when the realistic depiction of objects became an essential aspect of artists' work. It is found that in the first half of the 17th century, specific terms were introduced in Dutch painting to denote different types of still lifes, such as “ontbijtjes” for breakfasts, “bloemstukken” for flower arrangements, and “visstukken” for fish images. These terms emphasize the diversity of approaches to composition, which reflects the genre's evolution. Subsequently, at the end of the 17th century, the general term “stilleven” began to be used, which made it possible to conceptualize the genre into a single category. The article also explores using color as one of the artist's primary expressive means. The study revealed how coloristic practices changed from illusionistic to more abstract, where color plays a metaphorical role, rather than just reproducing the real world. The article focuses on the meaning of color and light in painting, particularly their interaction, which determines the color of the work. It is found that color in fine art creates visual reality and has a deep symbolic meaning, capable of conveying the artist's emotional state and conceptual ideas. The study also examines the role of light in the context of chiaroscuro, emphasizing how light and shadow interact to create the atmosphere of a work and enhance its expressiveness. Overall, the study presents a comprehensive analysis of still life as a genre in fine art, particularly in its historical changes, symbolic load, and the evolution of artistic techniques and expressive means, such as color and light.

Key words: still life, painting, color, tone, genesis, fine art.

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ГЕНЕЗИС ТА ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЖАНРУ НАТЮРМОР В ОБРАЗОТВОРЧОМУ МИСТЕЦТВІ

В статті розглянуто еволюцію та значення жанру натюрморту в образотворчому мистецтві, зокрема в контексті використання мішаної техніки в живопису. В дослідженні представлено аналіз розвитку цього жанру, зокрема, зміни в термінології та художніх підходах до зображення предметів побуту, праці, квітів, плодів, а також символічних значень, що були їм надані. Зокрема, виявлено, як натюрморт, спочатку сприйнятий як суто декоративний елемент, поступово трансформувався в більш концептуальний жанр з глибокими культурними і філософськими імплікаціями. В дослідженні обґрунтовано важливість натюрморту як самостійного жанру, що сформувався в Європі в XVI–XVII століттях, а також акцентовано на його розвитку під впливом змін у художніх пріоритетах, коли реалістичне зображення предметів стало важливим аспектом творчості митців. Виявлено, що в першій половині XVII століття в голландському живопису були введені специфічні терміни для позначення різних типів натюрмортів, таких як «ontbijtjes» для сніданків, «bloemstukken» для квіткових композицій, і «visstukken» для зображень риби. Ці терміни підкреслюють різноманітність підходів до композиції, що відображає еволюцію жанру. Згодом в кінці XVII століття став використовуватись загальний термін «stilleven», що дав змогу концептуалізувати жанр в єдину категорію. У статті також досліджуються аспекти використання кольору, як одного з основних виразних засобів художника. Дослідження дозволило виявити, як змінювались колористичні практики від ілюзійністичних до більш абстрактних, де колір відіграє метафоричну роль, а не лише відтворює реальний світ. У статті акцентовано на значенні кольору та світла в живопису, зокрема їх взаємодії, що визначає колорит твору. Виявлено, що колір в образотворчому мистецтві не лише створює візуальну реальність, але й має глибоке символічне значення, здатне передавати емоційний стан та концептуальні ідеї художника. Дослідження також розглядає роль світла в контексті світлотіні, підкреслюючи, як світло та тінь взаємодіють для створення атмосфери твору і посилення його виразності. Загалом, в дослідженні представлено комплексний аналіз натюрморту як жанру в образотворчому мистецтві, зокрема в контексті його історичних змін, символічного навантаження, а також еволюції художніх технік і виразних засобів, таких як колір і світло.

Ключові слова: натюрморт, живопис, колір, колорит, тон, генезис, образотворче мистецтво.

Problem statement. Still life, as a genre of fine art, has a deep history and multifaceted content, which has evolved along with the development of artistic styles, techniques, and concepts. However, the modern interpretation of still life requires a clear conceptual apparatus that covers its essential characteristics, aesthetic features, and methodological aspects of creation. The lack of a single established terminology and different interpretations of categories related to still life complicate its study as an independent artistic phenomenon. Systematization of theoretical aspects

of still life creation will contribute to their more profound understanding, the development of methodological approaches to the training of artists, and the expansion of scientific discourse on visual culture and art research.

Research analysis. Many leading scientists in the development of art have significantly contributed to the development of theoretical foundations and practical aspects. E. Gombrich (Gombrich, 1950) reveals aspects of mastering artistic styles, explores the work of outstanding artists, and analyzes the changing

conditions that influenced the development of art. R. Arnheim (Arnheim, 1974) explored the relationship between perception and fine arts. In particular, the author focuses on how we perceive form, color, and composition in art and how artists use these elements to create effective visual images. L. Sotnyk (Сотник, 2015) examines the role of color in fine arts and its emotional and symbolic meaning. O. Baluta (Балута, 2019) examines the development of the still life genre in art. The author focuses on how this genre reflected social, cultural, and historical changes, and also reveals the role of still life in the artistic practice of masters of different periods. P. Biletsky analyzes the linguistic means artists use to convey their ideas and emotions, and explores the role of color, line, form, and composition (Білецький, 1973).

Purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to study the principles of creating a still life in mixed media, in particular through the prism of the use of color and light, as well as to clarify the changes in the artistic interpretation of everyday objects and nature that have arisen in the process of evolution of the still life genre. The terminology and concepts related to still life were analyzed based on prominent art historians' works. Historical and theoretical approaches, analysis, and comparison were used. The historical and theoretical method was used to study the evolution of still life as a genre in the context of changes in artistic priorities and terminology development. The methods of analysis and comparison were used to consider different periods of the development of still life based on selected works of art to study changes in the use of color, chiaroscuro, compositional techniques, and other methods.

Presentation of the primary material. Art depicting objects has long been an integral part of any work, even before its transformation into an independent field of artistic creativity. Depending on society's historical conditions and tastes, objects participated to a greater or lesser extent in creating an image, emphasized the artist's intention, and were defined by various concepts. In the conceptual field of art history, the depiction of objects is traditionally defined as «still life».

As indicated in the terminology dictionary, «still life» (French *nature morte* – dead nature; English still life, German *Stilleben*) is a genre of fine art that shows inanimate objects placed in a real everyday environment and organized into a single group. Still life depicts objects of everyday life, labor, creativity, flowers and fruits, game, and caught fish, which are included in the context created by the artist. Still life offers all sorts of possibilities – from illusionistic «deceptions» that accurately reproduce the visual

world to the free interpretation of things and endowing them with complex symbolic meaning (Пасічний, 2008).

In his work, E. Gombrich (Gombrich, 1950) analyzes the development of the still life genre in European art, paying attention to its historical changes and the evolution of terminology. According to E. Gombrich, still life as an independent genre was formed due to a change in artistic priorities in the 16th–17th centuries, when artists began to pay attention to the realistic depiction of the objective world. In the first period of the development of still life, paintings were classified according to their content. For example, in Dutch painting of the 17th century, specific terms are found to designate different types of compositions: for breakfasts in the style of V. K. Geda, the term *ontbijtjes* was used, for flower still lifes – *bloemstukken*, and for images of fish – *visstukken*. However, a single general term covering the entire genre began to be established only at the beginning of the 18th century. The Dutch language used the expression *stilleven* (meaning «still life»), which was later adapted into German as *Stilleben*. The French term *nature morte*, meaning «dead nature», came into wide use only in the 19th century. According to E. Gombrich, this change reflected the perception of still life: from a purely decorative genre to a more conceptual understanding of the objective world and its symbolism (Gombrich, 1950).

In the context of the current study devoted to creating a still life in mixed media, which also involves the use of painting tools, we will reveal the meaning of this term. Unlike other types of art, painting embodies images in colors. Painting is the art of a plane and a single point of view, where space and volume exist only in illusion (Gombrich, 1950). In the history of painting, several systems of using color have developed. One of them is based on visual local color, on the coloring of each object in accordance with its color in nature or with the symbolic meaning of the object; in this case, colors are compared with each other, forming expressive combinations.

Another system is based on creating a coloristic analogy to the real color of the object and the colors of the environment: the application of paint to paint, their transparency, the system of tonality, contrasts, nuances, colored shadows and highlights, reflexes, values made it possible to determine the modeling of the form and its position in space, the distance from the viewer, the effect on the subject of light, atmosphere and their changes in the development of painting of the 19th – 20th centuries.

One can observe the disappearance of local and unchanging color, the victory of dynamic, changing

color, fragmented into the main tones of the spectrum, and then the transition to conventional color, to its metaphorical meaning, to color expression, expressing the subjective world of the artist, and, finally, to the color construction of the world and its forms using contrasts, warm and cold tones and other means developed in the course of the history of the development of painting (Блюміна, 1973).

It is also advisable to reveal the essence of the terms related to color graphics, coloristics, color (English colour, French couleur, German Farbe) – the property of any material objects to emit and reflect light waves of a specific part of the spectrum; the property of light passing through a colored medium to perceive its color. In a narrow sense, color is understood as a color tone (yellow, red, blue, etc.), which determines the originality and nature of each given color shade along with the color's lightness, saturation, and brightness (Пасічний, 2008).

Color in art is one of the most effective artistic means, allowing the artist to express the most complex ideas and subtle shades of thought and feeling (Сотська, 2016).

The inexhaustible variety of color in nature is based on an infinite number of gradations of light and dark, bright and faded, intense and soft within each tone, on the mixing of color creating new tones and shades, and on the interaction of the color of objects and the changing environment. In a broad sense, color means this complex and dynamic set of gradations, interaction, mixing, and varying tones and shades. Color in the plastic arts, reflecting the color richness of reality, has exceptional capabilities and special functions arising from the nature of art (Gombrich, 1950). Over the millennia of the development of the arts, complex associations associated with color and symbolic semantic meanings of color have been formed. All this makes it the most direct, comparable to music, a means of communication, and a way of transmitting emotions.

The visual function of color in art is based on the richness of color in nature. Still, it follows its own system, inevitably more limited in its capabilities, since the paints used by the artist are much lower than natural color in the range of luminosity, in the variety of shades, in the intensity and brightness of tones.

Art compensates for this limitation by organizing its color system, selecting tones and shades that make up the colorful range, proportionally varying the colors in luminosity, brightness, saturation (i.e., by the amount of pigment in a unit of binder), using relationships, gradations, transitions of tones and shades, color contrasts, primary colors and complementary colors, mixing colors on the palette and optically mixing them on the canvas (Сотник, 2015).

The concept of light (English light, shine, French lumière, jour, licht, schein) is related to color – electromagnetic optical radiation that includes the ultraviolet and infrared regions of the spectrum, along with visible radiation – light itself. Different bodies and substances emit, reflect, transmit, and refract light waves in other ways, which the eye perceives as various colors and their shades. The richness of the surrounding world's colors and diversity is perceived due to the different reflectivity (albedo) of the surface of each body (Пасічний, 2008).

The sensation of white color occurs when the rays of all seven colors of the solar spectrum, which are in a regular relationship (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet), are reflected and optically mixed (in the viewer's eye). Black color is the result of the absorption of almost all rays of the spectrum. An object's color tone is perceived because it reflects the rays of the color of the spectrum, and others are absorbed by it; passing through a transparent colored medium, light rays combine their own color with the color of the medium. As a result of reflection, absorption, and refraction of light rays, chromatic colors arise, which have a color tone different from achromatic ones – white, black, gray.

In the plastic arts, light is understood as the more illuminated parts of the work of art itself (if it is a material object – a building, sculpture, object) or (in painting and graphics) as the illumination of depicted figures, objects, spaces. Light is also a depicted source of lighting (sun, moon, candle, lamp, etc.). Light is the most crucial element of chiaroscuro, which creates and determines all its features in combination with shadow and penumbra. Directly, light is transmitted in the work by increasing the lightness of color and tone (Сотська, 2016).

The strength of light is expressed not only by the luminosity of color and tone, but also by means of contrasting and nuanced light effects and relations.

As a rule, in painting the most excellent brightness of light coincides with the most outstanding brightness of color, but with significant exceptions: a bright glare can be discolored, devoid of intense coloring; in Venetian painting of the 16th century, color reveals its nature in penumbra (in light, the paint seems to fade, discolor); in impressionist painting, strong sunlight corresponds to a uniform distribution of pure colors of the spectrum (Пасічний, 2008).

The word color is the origin of the term (Italian colorito, from Latin color – paint, color) – a system of color tones, their combinations, and relationships in a work of art. Color is one of the most important means of emotional expressiveness in painting, color graphics, and many works of decorative art. It is an essen-

tial component of the artistic image, which evokes emotions in response from the audience. The nature of color is a kind of interpretation of the color richness of the world. It is determined by the era, style, individuality of the artist, the features of his color vision, and the general idea of the work. Color can be warm (mainly red, yellow, orange), cold (primarily blue, green, purple tones), calm and intense, bright and faded. Lighting, including its color, plays a significant role in this (Блюміна, 1973).

There are systems of color based on local color, its symbolic meaning, and systems based on the desire to convey the fidelity of the color picture of the world – space, light, and shadow, the materiality of the object in its relationship with the environment: for this purpose, tone, reflex, valence, unity of color, and chiaroscuro serve.

Fidelity of color is achieved by a particular relationship in the work of all color tones, comprehension and generalization of the color system (correlation) in accordance with the idea of the design, the mood of the work, the laws of harmony, the complement and contrast of colors, the features of the form of art, the material and function of the works (Білецький, 1973).

An essential factor in graphics is tone (fr. ton, from the Greek tonos – emphasis, tension), which has several meanings. It is interpreted as the initial, simple element of chiaroscuro in nature and in a work of art: a measure of lightness, light saturation of a separate visible area – an aspect of form, a shadow or illuminated part of an object. Since the range of light and shadow of coloring materials is incomparably smaller than natural, it is impossible to reproduce tones in painting and graphics by their exact copying from nature. In the work, a proportional scale is created, not as in nature, but rich in shades, in which the choice of chiaroscuro tone is determined by the system of relationships between tones, which creates the expressiveness of chiaroscuro as a whole (Балута, 2019).

Tone can be understood as an element of color or color in works of art: the quality of each color shade corresponding to a separate area of nature or an image in relation to the basic colors of the spectrum, which expresses its specificity (e.g., lemon yellow, fiery red, blue-blue). In painting, the expressiveness of a color tone (as well as a chiaroscuro) is determined by its relationship with other tones (Білецький, 1973).

In the system of painting that depicts the surrounding world, the system of color tones coincides with

the corresponding system of chiaroscuro tones. The general tone of a work of art generalizes and subordinates all the colors of the picture, giving unity to the colors. The paints in such a «tonal» are united by a general tone (e.g., silver, golden, warm, cold, etc.). In this sense, the meaning of the term "tone" approaches the concepts of tonality and color gamut (Сотська, 2016).

Valor (French valeur, literally value, dignity) is an exceptional quality of a color tone in painting and graphics, a shade of tone that contains a certain amount of light and shadow compared to other shades. The system of values in color creates a consistent, rich, and complex gradation of light and shadow within the same color, allowing you to achieve subtlety and softness of color relationships and transitions, enhancing the feeling of the materiality of the world, the depth of space, the interaction of objects, and the light-air environment. The ability to use valor to depict figures and objects connected with light and air was inherent in such colorists as D. Velázquez, J. Vermeer, J. B. Chardin, C. Corot, and V. Surikov.

Conclusions. Still life, as a genre of fine art, has a multifaceted history, encompassing various artistic stages and styles. Its evolution reflects changes in social priorities, aesthetic views, and conceptual approaches to the depiction of objects. Modern understanding of still life requires a clear theoretical justification and systematization of terms. Understanding its essential characteristics, symbolic meanings, and various ways of expression through color and chiaroscuro is crucial. The study showed that still life has developed from a decorative genre to a complex conceptual form, where the depiction of objects acquires a deep symbolic load, including through the color palette and chiaroscuro effects.

Color in still life is a means of expression and essential to creating an emotional atmosphere: painting techniques and color model volume, space depth, and objects' interaction with the environment. The use of mixed media in still life painting opens up new possibilities for the artist's creative expression, combining different materials and techniques to achieve the maximum effect of a realistic or conceptual image. A straightforward interpretation of terms such as color, tone, and light allows you to create deeper artistic images that actively interact with the viewer, increasing the emotional expressiveness of the work and its ability to convey complex concepts and symbols.

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