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SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THE WORLD OF OBJECTS IN ART

The world of objects in visual art as subject of semiotics can be regarded as integral system, with its own structure, hierarchy, laws of combination of parts, features and functions, as well as the ability to change and “to be transcoded”. In this context the “world of objects” is defined as a set of objects of the material world, depicted in works of art. Whereas the world of objects is a sign system, we can talk about the language of objects (representation) in art and its communicative function.

The semiotic approach makes distinction between the object in its usual meaning and the depicted object as part of the sign system.

The aim is to identify the range of issues in semiotic interpretation of the world of objects and to identify the features, functions and structure of the system, based on the semiotic studies of Yuri Lotman, Roland Barthes and other scholars.

The world of objects represents a subsystem in the system of visual arts. It can play a major or subordinated role in different genres and be of various relevance for the semantics of particular image. For example, the insignia and marks of honour depicted in a portrait indicate the status of the portrayed person. The set of objects may create a semantic field: skull, clock and fading flowers in a still life stay for vanitas, but in genre painting clock may not have memento mori meaning. Thus an important factor is the context, overlapping and interpenetrating elements of adjacent systems in terms of semiosphere.

According to Yuri Lotman, any part of the semiotic structure bears the mechanism of reconstruction of the entire system, therefore analysis of objects depicted in a particular case can produce a basis for understanding the general principles in representation of the world of objects. In our case study we will examine the world of objects in satiric graphics by William Hogarth, both in the context of Rococo and British Enlightenment.

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Поэтика названий в русской живописи. К постановке вопроса

Тема доклада касается области, которой уделялось очень мало внимания в русском искусствоведении. В нашей науке название картины осмыслялось только в связи с изучением отношений изображения и слова, но не как отдельная проблема. Статус названия в изобразительном искусстве остается неопределенным, его роль в интерпретации и восприятии не выяснена.

В докладе представлены разные подходы к изучению названия, существующие в литературоведении, а также в работах некоторых западных искусствоведов и теоретиков эстетики. Попытка автора обосновать значимость названия и закрепить его в статусе неотъемлемой составляющей произведения опирается на труды этих исследователей. Среди них французский литературовед Жерар Женетт и русский писатель Сигизмунд Кржижановский, чьи работы вводят название в поле зрения науки, а потому в первую очередь направлены на определение, таксономию и установление функций названия. В ряде статей «Американского журнала эстетики и арт-критики» освещен другой пласт проблем: что считать истинным названием? Как оценивать название? Какова роль авторства в этих вопросах? Что происходит, когда название меняется? Исследование обобщает разрозненные во времени и научных областях замечания о названиях и знакомит с идеями западных исследователей. Применимость методов упомянутых авторов к изучению названия в живописи проверяется на примерах из русского искусства.

Автор приходит к выводу, что название, признанное истинным, всегда влияет на восприятие. Чтобы продемонстрировать это, достаточно перечислить несколько наименований: «Пестрая жизнь», «Пустое пространство», «Последний каба́к у заставы», «Не ждали», «Мотив без слов». Но мы не всегда отдаем себе отчет в этом влиянии, поскольку не уделяем названию должного внимания. Потому так важно анализировать структуру названия, механизм отношений между картиной, названием и зрителем. Главной задачей исследования представляется обозначить основные вопросы и сделать первый шаг к созданию методов анализа названий.

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POETICS OF THE TITLE IN RUSSIAN PAINTING. STATING THE PROBLEM

This paper deals with titles in visual art, the subject mostly overlooked in Russian art studies, where titles are sometimes examined in the context of image-word relations, but never for their own sake. Titles have an uncertain status in visual art and their part in interpretation and perception is undefined.

Our thesis reviews the works and methods of literary critics and western art historians and aestheticians. On the basis of these studies, we try to prove the significance of titles and to establish them as an integral part of the work of art. We refer to such authors as French literary critic Gerard Genette and Russian writer Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky, whose primary purposes were to define a title, categorize it and describe its functions. A number of articles in the *American Journal of Aesthetics and Art Critics* raise other questions: what is a true title? How to qualify a title? What is the role of the author? What happens when a title changes? Our study summarizes sparse opinions stated in different disciplines and introduces the ideas of western authors to the Russian audience. To test the applicability of their methods in visual arts we use examples from Russian painting.

We came to a conclusion that a title, considered to be a true one, always has an impact on perception. This is easy to prove on several cases: “Empty Space”, “The Last Tavern at the City Gates”, “They did not Expect Him”, “A Motive with no Words”. However, this impact is not always recognized, since we do not consider the title a significant part of the work. Thus, it is essential to analyze the structure of the title and the title-artist-viewer relation. The main purpose of this study is to set out the basic questions related to title and to make the first step towards the formulation of study methods.

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CYBERNETICS AND SEMIOTICS: JUSTIFICATION OF ABSTRACTIONISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

The concept of information and other relevant concepts originating in information theory and cybernetics became increasingly popular in the Soviet humanities of the 1960s and 1970s. Without directly relying on the humanities, Slava Gerowich in his well-known book *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, regarded the spread of popular metaphors and ideas originating in cybernetics so overwhelming that they could be determined as one language uniting different fields.

In April 1959 the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union established an academic council of cybernetics. It was precisely the council that joined cybernetics, structuralism and semiotics on the official level. One of the most significant events was a joint symposium on 19–25 December 1962, organised by the Moscow Institute of Slavic Studies and the research council of cybernetics on the structural research of sign systems (so-called Semiotics Symposium). An impressive booklet of theses was published with the print run of one thousand, and that very publication later