M.A. Genendlis – forgotten decorator (from history of development of fine art in city of Khabarovsk 30-50s of the twentieth century)

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Abstract. The article is based on the study of a previously unknown archive of works and photographs of the artist M.A. Genendlis. Some facts from the biography of the artist are provided. The information on the history of the development of theatrical, decorative-design art of the Far East is being revealed. These facts are unknown not only to the general public, but also to specialists. The article substantiates the attribution of some works on the design of public buildings known in Khabarovsk and the region, the authorship of which was not documented and lost over time. The authors reveal a wide range of areas of work of M.A. Genendlis. All of his creative works are published for the first time.

1. Introduction
Artists-decorators do not occupy the first lines in the annals of the history of fine art. Their works, connected with the theater, with the decoration of the objects of architecture, are predominantly lost at the end of the life of the performance in the theater or in connection with the reconstruction, and, sometimes, with the destruction of the architectural object. Making theatrical props, in general, is considered a second-rate craft, although the master of this art must be an excellent stylist, possessing many abilities and skills in the manufacture of objects. In one person, an artist, a sculptor, a fashion designer, a moulder, a solder, a mechanic, etc. must be united. In the Far East, the list of names of theater artists is very few. Their work does not often appear at exhibitions. The history of the emergence of large stationary professional theaters on the far outskirts of the country is associated with Soviet times. The more interesting was the find an old album of drawings and sketches signed by: “Executed by M.A. Genendlis”. The album was discovered under random circumstances in Khabarovsk, in 2017. This article is dedicated to the study of this find.

2. Literature review
This study is conducted based on the available sources and materials on the history of the origin and development of artistic culture and fine arts of the Khabarovsk Territory, affecting some aspects of the problem studied in our research. Essay G.V. Gusak [1] and the book by V.G. Starikova "Artists of the Amur Region" [2] - the first works on the origin and development of the fine arts in the Khabarovsk Territory. Documents on the history of the development of professional art in the Khabarovsk Territory are contained in the collection of documents of the State Archive of the Khabarovsk Territory "Masters of the Brush and Cutter" [3]. Scientific works of the historian of architecture N.P.
Kradin [4,5] give a more complete picture of the formation of artistic life in the Far East in the period before the October Revolution. The biographical illustrated dictionary contains data on 440 artists whose life and work were somehow connected with the Far East. The book of Vladivostok’s art historian V.I. Kandyba [6] is devoted to the formation and development of the artistic life of the Far East in the period from 1958 to 1938. Trends in the development of fine art of the 70s and 2000s are reflected in the album “Artists of the Khabarovsk Territory”, released on the 70th anniversary of the Khabarovsk organization of the Union of Artists of Russia [7].

3. Materials and methods of research
The main method of this research is the direct study and description of the materials found in the archive of the artist. In addition, it is the study of archival documents containing information about the life and activities of the artist, as well as literature in order to create a complete picture of the time and events in the development of the artistic life of the region associated with the activities of the author under study. The method of studying Internet resources was used to obtain the necessary information. The method of describing the research results with the purpose of publication in scientific journals, as well as publications in cultural and educational publications with the goal of popularizing knowledge about the fine arts of the Khabarovsk Territory, was also used.

4. Results
The material found was very diverse. In the album the most significant place is occupied by sketches of theatrical scenery and costumes for performances. There are a lot of sketches of movie posters, stage design for houses of culture, and festive columns of demonstrations, performed in detail in the style of the Soviet times. Attracted the attention of numerous finely executed portrait sketches and drawings. Great interest was caused by sketches of architectural design of public buildings of cities of Khabarovsk and Komsomolsk-on-The Amur river. In addition, the album contains about three tens etudes, illustrations to a scientific publication on agriculture, only about two hundred works by the artist. 108 photos are pasted into the album from the personal archive of the artist. The vast majority of works are signed and dated by the author himself. These inscriptions allowed to establish the dates of the artist's life. The earliest work — the sketch “My Father” — was dated 1926. The latest - watercolor sketch "Lena Genendlis" - 1980 year. Some sketches, as well as photographs indicate the place where they are made. These inscriptions allowed to establish the geography of the author’s movement around the country. Until the mid-1930s, this was Ukraine (Odessa, Poltava, Armavir, etc.). After 1940, it was the Far East. Thus, we can talk about the discovery of the archive of the artist M.A. Genendlis, who worked in the field of theatrical-decorative, theatrical-properties, architectural-decorative and design art from the second half of the 20s to the early 80s of the last century in the western regions of the country and in the Far East.

The main problem of the research was that the artist’s name was unknown to the author of this article. Also the name of this artist is unknown among Khabarovsk artists and architects. This name could not be found in the sources on the visual arts of the Far East. In his famous work "Artists of the Amur Region" Khabarovsk art historian V.G. Starikov gives a list of 121 names of artists who worked in the Khabarovsk Territory. In the biographical illustrated dictionary by Doctor of Architecture, Professor N.P. Kradin "Artists of the Far East (XIX - mid XX centuries)" included 440 artists born before 1917. In these works, the name M.A. Genendlis not mentioned. There is no mention of this artist in the album “Artists of the Khabarovsk Territory” (author-comp.: T.A. Davydova, T.A. Davidova, V.A. Shishkina, E.V. Bykova, T.V. Lementovich), nor in the collection of documents of the State Archive of the Khabarovsk Territory about the history of the fine arts of the Khabarovsk Territory “Masters of the Brush and the Cutter” - the main sources of information on art of the Far East.

With several photos, the artist’s initials, Matvey Alexandrovich, were able to decipher. There are two self-portraits of the artist in the album: one sketch in oil and a large pencil drawing, size 57.5x41. In the drawing date: 4.02.44 “figure 1”. There are several sheets of portrait sketches of a boy with the
caption: “My son Aron” “figure 2”. They are dated: 20.02.37, 4.06.40, 1.05.44. The picture with the date of June 4, 40 was signed: “8 years of Aron”. So was established the year of birth of the son of the artist. Several similar female portraits, one of which was signed: “Lyuba”, gave grounds for assuming that this is the artist’s wife “figure 3”. Further research confirmed the correctness of this guess.

In the State Archive of the Khabarovsk Territory, a document was found on awarding “for long and conscientious work in the national economy” senior engineer of the Khabarovsk trust “Zhilstroy” Aron Matveevich Genendlis with the medal “Veteran of Labor” [8]. The oldest employees of the trust recognized their colleague from the above-mentioned portrait sketches and reported that the father of A.M. Genendlis was an artist, whom they also learned from photographs and self-portrait. They also reported that A.M. Genendlis in the late 90s emigrated to Israel along with two daughters and is currently lost to him.

In the course of further work, a connection was established with E. Genendlis, one of A.M. Genendlis Daughters (granddaughter of M.A. Genendlis). She reported that M.A. Genendlis was born in 1909 in Odessa. He studied there, in the art studio, later, during his work, he studied the craft of props and theater artists in Moscow theaters. In the 30s he started working in the “theater train” (obviously, the mobile theater Dorprofsozh) and when the train turned out to be on tour in Khabarovsk, MA Genendlis received a proposal to work as a property-man at the Khabarovsk Musical Comedy Theater. He accepted this offer, and since 1936 he lived in Khabarovsk with his wife Lyuba and son Aron. Theatrical sketches in the album, dated 30-40s of the last century. They mainly refer to the Khabarovsk period of the artist’s life. Earlier, such as a sketch of the scene for the play "King Harlequin" in 1933, were influenced by the constructivist decisions characteristic of the Russian avant-garde “figure 4". Later performances are decorated in the style of the Soviet theater, which was established from the end of the 30s: realistic, seeking to reliably reproduce the setting of the action (sketches for the opera “Faust” 1939, “Mother of Her Children” 1940, “Bayadere” “figure 5”, “Akulina” (1949). Among the sketches for theatrical productions stands out a whole series of works on the play "Akulina" based on the story of A.S. Pushkin "Lady-Peasant". These are sketches of scenery for each action and picture of the performance, and sketches of the costumes of all acting persons. Preserved author dating: 1949. On tens of sheets of M.A. Genendlis elaborated costumes, they not only fulfill their functional task, but also give an expressive characteristic of each personage “figure 6". In addition to sketches of costumes, the artist developed sketches of props. “Figure 7” shows a sketch of such a product. He worked as an artist in the theater until the end of the 40s.
In the early 50s, the artist transferred to work in the Khabarovsk art workshops, where he was engaged in artistic design work. By this time, the artist's work in the field of architectural decoration. The discovery of our study was the sketches of the architectural design of the House of Culture "Metalurg" of the Amurstal plant in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, which was once the largest club building of the “City of Youth”, and sketches of the sculptural decoration of the administrative building Khabarovsk branch of the Art Fund of the USSR on the Frunze str., 65. All these plans were carried out and the sculptural decoration has been preserved to the present. High reliefs on Frunze street - in good condition. House of Culture "Metalurg", put into operation in 1951, unfortunately, is in a ruined state, but the ceiling sockets and friezes of the dance hall, made according to the sketches of Genendlis, are still quite identifiable. The issue of the “Stalin’s Komsomolsk” newspaper, devoted to the opening of a new club of amurstal workers, states that “a team of Khabarovsk artists led by Makashin was engaged in interior decoration” [9]. In the course of the research, it was possible to establish that M.A. Makashin was at that time the director of the Khabarovsk Art Fund [3, p. 185], and M.A. Genendlis participated in this work.

In our time to use replicated faceless decor causes, the author's work M.A. Genendlis on the administrative building of the Khabarovsk branch of the USSR Artistic Fund is very interested. The relief decoration of the facade of the building is designed in the form of expressive stucco compositions enclosed in octagonal medallions framed by Ionics. Below the medallions are sculpted garlands in the form of palmettes with volutes, ending in leafy festoons. The plot of the relief medallion compositions is a traditional set of “attributes of the arts”: a bust of Apollo, a palette with brushes, a paper scroll, a classical capital, an oak branch “figure 8”. This motif was varied many times by different authors in all forms of visual art and continues to be used as an easily recognizable symbol by art classes very widely. Nevertheless, as our research has shown, we are dealing with an original work of authorship intended for a specific architectural object. In the album were found two sheets with sketches of stucco decoration, signed by the author and dated for 1958, the year of completion of the construction of the building of the Art Fund. On the first sheet (the order of
reviewing the sheets corresponds to their location in the archive) there are inscriptions made by hand: “A sketch of the emblem on the building of the 'artist's house' and below "performed Genendlis 5 / VI - 58 ”. Scale indicated: 5 cm = 1 m. At the top of the sheet is an inscription with a spelling error, obviously, of some leading person: “with a vegnette number 2.” On this sheet are two versions of the sketch “figure 9”. On both the composition from “art objects” varies: a capital, a palette with brushes, an expanded scroll and drawing instruments. On the second sheet, which was signed with a blue pencil, undoubtedly, with the author’s hand: “The sketch for the bas-relief on the building of the Art Fund and the author’s signature and date: 1958, Khabarovsk”, three versions of the sketch with the bust of Apollo were made “figure 10” [10].

According to the memoirs of E. Genendlis, in the 50s M.A. Genendlis collaborated with A.P. Milchin, a famous Khabarovsk sculptor “figure 11”, an apprentice of V.I. Mukhina. He was a member of the so-called “Milchin Group” during his work on the monument to E. Khabarov. The monument to E. Khabarov, a Russian explorer, became the main symbol of the city of Khabarovsk. In the 50s, M.A. Genendlis took an active part in the sculptural decoration of fountains in the square named after V.I. Lenin in Khabarovsk during its restructuring to the 100th anniversary of the city. These old fountains were lost during the reconstruction of the square in 1998. Also in the 50s, M.A. Genendlis performed a series of sculptural works.

![Figure 11. A.P. Milchin](image1)
![Figure 12. Bas-relief “Ballerinas”](image2)
![Figure 13. Red Army men](image3)
![Figure 14. Queue for “Tarsan”](image4)

The study of the album allowed to establish the authorship of decorative medallions with ballerinas decorating the auditorium of the former Khabarovsk Theater of Musical Comedy. Now it is a concert hall of the Khabarovsk Philharmonic. These decorative reliefs are already known to several generations of Khabarovsk spectators, but hardly anyone knows their authorship. The album contains several photographs of these bas-reliefs, depicting the process of working on them. On them we can see plasticine models of the figures of ballerinas and finished plaster casters “figure 12”. The fact that their author is M.A. Genendlis confirmed E. Genendlis.

Drawings and etudes of Genendlis are of considerable interest: finely executed portrait sketches, sketches of figures, and sketches on city streets. Sketches are mostly made with watercolor - these are landscapes, still lifes, portraits. They open up a whole world of characteristic personages and things from the everyday life of several decades of the past Soviet era. Vividly captured sketches of heads of Red Army men in Budennovka carry us to the beginning of the 30s of the last century “figure 13”. The queue at the Gigant cinema in Khabarovsk for tickets to the film “Tarzan” is obviously the very beginning of the 50s, it was then that the film taken as a trophy was shown in all cinemas of the USSR “figure 14”. Among the sketches and drawings of many female portraits. They are elegant in performance, sharply convey the characters of the models “figure 15”. Drawing from nature took a large place in the work of M.A. Genendlis. His granddaughter, E. Genendlis noted that “wherever he went, he always had a notebook and a pencil. Everywhere he made small sketches. He liked to draw people's faces.”
Picturesque sketches of the artist are chamber scenes, small in size. Sometimes, this is one thing that has been closely studied by the artist’s eye. For example, the still life "Kettle" “figure 16”. In the still life with a porcelain vase, the artist clearly manifests a desire for a fine elaboration of the form and texture of materials. Landscape etudes M.A. Genendlis unpretentious based on and very simple means of execution. Their main task is to fix the state, mood, interesting by the configuration of the object “figure 17”.

5. Conclusion
Artist M.A. Genendlis lived and worked in Khabarovsk for sixty years. At the end of the 90s, he and his relatives moved to permanent residence in Israel, where he died in 2001 at the age of 92 years. Made by the artist remained in Khabarovsk. His contribution to the development of theatrical-decorative art of the city has yet to be assessed. The surviving should not to sink into oblivion. According to the author of the article, the works of the artist M.A. Genendlis are of undoubted research interest as documentary and artistic evidence of their time, and they must take their place in the chronicle of the development of the artistic life of the Far East.

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