Plant-woven ornament as an ethno-cultural marker of the Orthodox community

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Abstract. The subject of scientific analysis in this research is the phenomenon of Russian woven ornament of the XI — XII centuries and its application in project design teaching. The objects of research are the monuments of decorative and applied art, book graphics, design, architectural decor and their using as sources for inspiration in the design. The characteristic features of the Russian wicker ornament were identified in the course of the design work and the basic element for further shaping was chosen as a prototype. On its basis the development of author's woven ornaments was carried out using the stylization method. The method of constructing an ornament is combinatory: placing the base element according to the rules of symmetry. The main role for creating ornamental compositions was assigned to the module - the thickness of the weaving line, the order of overlapping weaving lines and the placement of the same type of decorative elements when creating borders, corner joints, rosettes, mesh ornaments, on the periphery of the compositional construction. The result of the design was the creation of an identity and an integral ornamental system using Russian ethno-cultural motives for the Odigitrievsky women's monastery in Chelyabinsk.

1. Introduction

The scientific basis for the article are the works of the following authors: E.I. Kirichenko, A.B. Rybakova, E.N. Shulgina, I.A. Pronina, N.A. Ivanova, E.Y. Krichevsky, A.K. Elkina, I. Evina, G.V. Pavlova, A.I. Somova, L.P. Zhukovskaya, G.N. Bocharova. It is necessary to substantiate the relevance of the motives of the Russian ornament as a basis for the visual environment of the Orthodox community.

The history of the Chelyabinsk Odigitrievsky Monastery began in the middle of the XIX th century, it was the time when first women's community appeared. The founder of the monastery was Anna Maksimovna Polezhaeva (in monasticism - Agnia). She was the first abbess of the monastery, who began her activities to organize the monastery in 1848[1]. On the 5th of October in 1849 Anna petitioned the City Duma to allocate land for the organization of the women's community. By the decision of the City Duma in 1849 on December 13th was the following: to allocate 5 acres of land for the construction of a house for the women's community. The documents also said: "This site is located on land belonging to the city of Chelyabinsk on the right bank of the Miass River near the eastern side of the fence of the suburban cemetery church, which is five acres, covered with small birch growth" [2]. On February 23 in 1854 Emperor Nicholas I according to the report of the Holy Synod said that the women's community in Chelyabinsk was approved under the name Odigitrievskaya, Bogorodichnaya [2].
In 2016 the newly created monastery became the successor of the monastery of the same name which existed in the city from 1861 to 1921. In the same year at the Department of Design and Fine Arts of SUSU, a bachelor's student A.V. Arnold in her final qualification work “Visual-graphic complex of the female Odigitrievsky monastery in Chelyabinsk” developed the form style for the monastic community of the same name. The purpose is to create a design product stylistically oriented to the traditions of Russian visual culture. Ideological (Orthodox) and professional design problems had to be solved in parallel.

The former is associated with a conservative and stable system of spiritual values characteristic of Orthodoxy, including the cultural-historical and artistic-aesthetic contexts. From the beginning XXI th century the visual context is possible to adequately represent the Russian Orthodox Church, it’s identical to the Russian ethno-cultural tradition. It is unacceptable in society and cause dissonance of perception. A number of pronounced trends can be traced in modern design under Western European influence and are associated with Catholic-Protestant cultural traditions. This is minimalism. The ability to reconcile these trends has become the biggest challenge.

The term “stylization” is fundamental for modern aesthetics. It was introduced in Russia in the late 1890s by E. D. Polenova, who was looking for methods of aesthetic transformation of nature. The concepts of "stylization" and "stylization" should be considered as two qualitatively different stages in the development of the objective world, as two ways of interpreting an artistic form. “Stylization” according to the artist Polenova E. D. played a “synthesizing role in achieving the integrity of the plastic system of images” in the desire “to unite all types of spatial arts, the entire objective world surrounding a person with a common decorative motive, a wayward graphic line ...”[3].

Art critic Kirichenko E.I. pays his attention to the fact that in addition to the spontaneous, arbitrary, self-expression of the national spirit in art which is originally inherent in any time and people, the national aspect under the influence of circumstances. It can acquire a programmatic character of a deliberately formulated task [4]. In his book E.I. Kirichenko quotes Leo Tolstoy: "Art serves either good or beauty" opposing neoclassicism and avant-garde to the neo-Russian style. Aesthetics and philosophy of the neo-Russian style are inseparable from the Russian Religious Renaissance and the Russian religious philosophy. And religious art understands its purpose in serving good, reviving the moral ideals of Christianity [4].

Consequently, the search for a stylistic solution to the visual-graphic complex of the monastery is logically oriented towards the neo-Russian style of the early 20th century. Moreover, the renaissance of Russian religious art, Russian religious philosophy, and the flourishing of the neo-Russian style chronologically coincide in time with the flourishing and growth of the monastic community in Chelyabinsk at the turn of the XIX th - XX th centuries. As a result of rethinking artifacts of both ancient Russian art and neo-Russian style, the idea of using traditional Russian ornament was proposed.

2. Ornament as a cultural phenomenon

In the world, in the art industry until the beginning of the twentieth century ornament was considered as one of the few means capable of giving "perfection" to everyday objects. But at the beginning of the twentieth century the constructivist functionalist tendencies of modernism were replaced by the great styles of the XIXth - early XXth centuries which actively used ornament. These new formalistic tendencies accentuated the structure, space, form, geometry, functionality of the thing. Within the framework of such an assessment the ornament turned out to be excluded from consideration and application which was programmatically stated by the architect Adolf Loos in 1908 [5].

The era of postmodernism by the middle of the XXth century marked a departure from the extremism and nihilism of the avant-garde, a partial return to traditions. The decoration of the space is gaining a new force for which the ornamental repertoire is involved again [5]. The development of digital technologies and information exchange in the modern world contributes to the widespread use of cliparts (borrowed images) in the design of design products and the creation of patterns, their exchange as well as their using as material for graphic design [6].
Archaeologist E.Y. Krichevsky reveals the primary mechanism of the formation of ornamental art from a semantically significant image to its transformation into a decorative image. In his opinion the connection between the object and the ornament was semantic ideological. There was no need to emphasize it decoratively. Over time as these basic connections are forgotten, secondary decorative ones appeared and expressed by the formal unification of the object's construction and the nature of the decor [7].

Krichevsky E. Y. writes: “Changes are made to the extent that the initial semantic meaning of the ornament is weakened. The magical and religious symbolism is forgotten and it turns from an ideogram into a simple decoration” [7]. But at the moment of transition of an image from a semantic to a decorative one a transformation of a much deeper order occurs in it than a simple emasculation of the semantic content. The worldview baggage, accumulated over a long time by many generations and perceived as something vital, is now reincarnated into a new formation - an artistic image [8].

The peculiarity of the ornament is in originally closely associated with the object on which it was located. This fact makes it difficult to use the ornament outside the context of a specific object and to use its types borrowed from different sources on the designed object without the risk of causing visual dissonance. To solve this problem, it is necessary to create such a system that will allow it to be taken out of the context of a specific object assembled and broadcast on different surfaces.

The theory of ornament originates in mathematics and includes the classic types of symmetry: mirror, rotary, displacement (translation). But there are also non-classical types of symmetry: color, generalized, helical, physical phenomena, curvilinear (homology), linear, dynamic, electric and magnetic fields [9].

From a physical point of view, a composition with a pronounced compositional center is more unstable than a balanced composition evenly dispersed over the entire surface. It can be argued that art like all living nature, functions near an unstable, critical state. The principle of unstable balance is the fundamental principle of composition for art [10].

3. Wicker ornament
In the XI — XII centuries in Kiev and other cities of Ancient Russia wicker ornament replaces the geometric one. Braided ornament exists in two main inter-related varieties: knot and cord. The worldview idea underlying them - the concept of connection, unification, unity - was initially, in the cosmogonic sense, understood as the unity of Heaven and earth, the creator and the created. According to the researcher of wicker ornament Elkina A.K, the origins of wicker ornament should be sought in weaving - the oldest handicraft, the techniques of which were passed down from generation to generation, right up to the present day [11].

And the researcher of Slavic culture Rybakov B.A., noting the similarity of the types of ornament of the 12th century on silver wrist bracelets and in the stone carving of the Dmitrievsky Cathedral in Vladimir pays attention to the same style of decor [12] and comes to the conclusion that “the life of the ancient Slav was just as richly saturated with art - wood carving, colorful embroidery, intricate woven patterns - as the life of a Russian peasant of the 19th century, studied by ethnographers” [12]. Many researchers, comparing the ornamental decoration of Russian architecture, objects of applied art and book graphics of the Xth - XIVth centuries, speak of the solidity, unity of this art [13; 14].

Analyzing the manuscripts of ancient Novgorod, Bocharov G.N. notes that the artists of the book of the XI — XIIth centuries. “Consistently reproduced in the headpieces and initials the immediate realities inherent in urban life” [15]. N. Kamanin is the author of the early XXth century compared monastic crosses-paramands of the XI th century leather woven from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra with headpieces of Greek manuscripts [16]. And researcher Zhukovskaya L.P. considered the initials of Russian manuscripts of the XIIth century through the prism of real techniques of rope twisting and knotting [17].

In the end of the XIXth century artist Polenova E.D. in letters to art critic V.V. Stasov told about "low, not embossed carvings ... where the ornament is deeper than the background", which is common among the "Russian peasant population". She nevertheless writes listing the countries and continents
in which a similar ornament is found: Norway, Germany, Algeria ...: “In our Russian ornament I managed to notice one feature that I have not seen among other peoples, this is the use of not only geometric combinations always somewhat dry, but also more lively motives, inspired by the impressions of nature, that is the stylization of plants and animals ...” [18].

4. Design solution

The identity of the Odigitrievsky monastery for women and the entire ornamental system based on the module - this is the thickness of the weaving line and the form-building element - the heart-shaped krin. It was borrowed by us from the North Russian ornament of the XII — XIIIth centuries (Panteleimon's Gospel) (Figure 1 Stages of development of the ornamental system). Monuments of ancient Russian art also served as sources of inspiration: the Ostromirov Gospel, the Dmitrovsky Cathedral in Vladimir, the St. George Cathedral in Yuryev-Polsk, jewelry from northwestern Russia of the X — XIIIth centuries. The method of shaping that was used when working with sources is defined as styling. The masters of the neo-Russian style of the beginning of the last century worked most vividly in this direction. The design method is based on drawing elements of a wicker ornament using tracing paper, followed by processing the sketches in electronic graphic editors.

The reasons for the decision to use a wicker ornament as a design prototype were the following:

1. The spread of wicker ornament as a socio-cultural phenomenon coincides with the historical period, which in science is considered to be the boundary of the formation of ancient Russian art as an original one.

2. Ornament as an ethno-cultural phenomenon is not only an expression of a certain historical era but also acts as a so-called ethnic marker. Its history is associated with the formation and development of ethno-cultural and national traditions in art.

Figure 1. Stages of development of the ornamental system.

On the project basis of the work of Arnold A.V. (2016) in 2019 a master's student at the Department of Design and Fine Arts of SUSU, Prikhodko Y.A. as part of the theme of the final qualifying work "Project of a system of ornaments based on Russian ethnocultural motives", a modular ornamental system was developed based on the use of various types of symmetry.

The principle of modularity allows you to "build up" or "reduce" an ornament, place it around a circle, create a mesh ornament, build hierarchical links in it, effectively use decorative elements in general compositional shaping, broadcasting fragments of an ornamental composition on a variety of media.
Working only with motive it is not always possible to get the desired result. Sometimes it is necessary to make adjustments that make the ornament more expressive and solid, but at the same time the symbol of symmetry may change. In the future, connections may appear that unite motives, additional decorative elements that turn the border into a continuous structure [19].

On the basis of the developed basic element (heart-shaped crine) and module (thickness of the weaving line) and its various modifications, a set of all options for the formation of ornamental compositions has been created, which will reflect the ideological connection with ancient Russian art and will support and develop the identity of the Odigitrievsky monastery for women. According to V.B. Koshchev’s research the main idea of creative activity is the artistic integrity of the form, where its ensemble, compositional solution can be discussed in the structure of drama and artistic and aesthetic means of expression [20].

The following types of ornaments were developed for the full functioning of the ornamental system: rosette, border, corner ornament (intersection of 2 borders), circular ornament, individual ornamental elements, rapport ornament. But the largest number of options in ornamentation are borders (endless ornaments). Life in the monastery is regulated by the Christian calendar, and for these purposes three positions of the color-graphic solution were proposed: official, Lenten and festive.

5. Conclusion
Research works by Arnold A.V. (2016) and Prikhodko Y.A. (2019) were done and the project was completed in a single visual style. The unity of sources of inspiration and principles of shaping, the versatility of approaches to the use of the module and the uniformity of graphic elements in the ornament as well as the integrity of the worldview concept made it possible not only to create an identity but also to realize the combinatorial capabilities inherent in the corporate graphics, transforming the latter into an integral and flexible ornamental system...

This is successfully developed in line with stylistic unity revealing the full potential of the system. The resulting ornament can be transmitted to architectural decor, to a fabric base, to artistic processing of metals (forging, casting), to printing products as a painting in the interior, etc. Two ornaments №118736 and №118737 obtained Russian patents for an industrial design (drawing for sheet material).

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