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ASPECTS OF MUSICAL CULTURE OF THE TWENTIETH – TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES



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ART DECORATION OF THE MASS CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION IN THE HISTORY OF PARTICIPATORY ART

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The article discusses some questions of the art decoration of the official celebrations of the first years of Soviet power. The main purpose of the article is to trace the specifics of the process of formation of participatory art in the context of the development of Soviet mass celebrations. Exploring the art decoration of the celebration dedicated to the first anniversary of the October Revolution, the author emphasizes the value problem of constructing the space of a revolutionary holiday, which was put forward by futurist artists. Considering the time and space of the October Revolution celebrations, the author traces the experience of decorating entire buildings and squares, held in 1918. The concept of Uritsky Square design by N. I. Altman is considered as the central one. It is noted that the artist, developing a new concept of festive culture, completely rethinks the Baroque and classical architecture of F. Rastrelli and K. I. Rossi of the Palace Square buildings. Having "disguised" the buildings around the square in the style of cubism and futurism, he in-

stalled a dynamic futuristic structure in its center, thus changing the appearance of the architectural dominant of the city.

During the research the author uses numerous materials kept in various forms: videos, photos, documenting the main stages of introducing new forms of entertainment culture of the first Soviet celebrations. It is noted that the artists' need to create a new space of festive activities, which was free from the traditions of "old art" and which was able to reflect the revolutionary ideas of the new state, was expressed in an innovative approach to the organization of the official celebration. In this regard, the author pays special attention to the issue of creating a special sound space of the city, as part of the experimental projects of futurists that could help to form a new community while reconstructing some significant historical events.

Keywords: performative practices, history of participatory art, artistic space of the holiday.

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ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЕ ОФОРМЛЕНИЕ МАССОВОГО ПРАЗДНОВАНИЯ ПЕРВОЙ ГОДОВЩИНЫ ОКТЯБРЬСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ В ИСТОРИИ ПАРТИЦИПАТОРНОГО ИСКУССТВА

Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке Российского фонда фундаментальных исследований, грант РФФИ № 20-012-00366 А «Перформативные формы музыкального искусства как феномен современной культуры»

В статье рассматриваются некоторые вопросы художественного оформления официальных торжеств первых лет советской власти. Основная цель статьи состоит в том, чтобы проследить специфику процесса становления партиципаторного искусства в контексте развития советских массовых празднеств. Исследуя художественное оформление торжества, посвященного первой годовщине Октября, автор акцентирует внимание на ценностной проблеме конструирования пространства революционного праздника – проблеме, выдвинутой художниками-футуристами. Анализируя время и пространство проведения данных торжеств, автор статьи прослеживает опыт декорирования целых зданий и скверов, характерный для 1918 года. В качестве центральной рассматривается концепция оформления Н. И. Альтманом площади Урицкого. Отмечается, что художник, развивая новую концепцию праздничной культуры, полностью переосмысливает барочную и классическую архитектуру зданий Дворцовой площади, авторами которых выступили Ф. Растрелли и К. И. Росси. «Замаскировав» данные строения под стиль кубизма и футуризма, Н. И. Альтман установил

в центре площади динамичное футуристическое сооружение и тем самым изменил облик архитектурной доминанты города.

Для данного исследования автором статьи были привлечены многочисленные видео- и фотоматериалы, документирующие основные этапы проведения первых советских торжеств как новых форм зрелищной культуры. Отмечается, что потребность художников в создании нового пространства праздничного действия, свободного от традиций «старого искусства» и способного отразить революционные идеи только что созданного государства, выразилась в инновационном подходе к организации официального торжества. В связи с этим автор статьи уделяет особое внимание вопросу создания особого звукового пространства города как части экспериментальных проектов футуристов, способных послужить формированию нового сообщества в условиях реконструкции значимых событий истории.

Ключевые слова: перформативные практики, история партиципаторного искусства, художественное пространство праздника.

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In the history of participatory art, the Revolutionary celebrations of the first years of Soviet power, including demonstrations and mass theatrical reconstructions, occupy a special place. Noting the importance of innovations of Russian futurists in the field of decoration of Revolutionary holidays of the first years of Soviet power, Claire Bishop writes in her work “Artificial Hell: the art of participation and the politics of spectator-

ship”: “...Enthusiasm for theatre extended to pageants and demonstrations; the Austrian writer René Fülöp-Miller offers an amusing account of these events, which included allegorical scenes about labor and industry, public trials to enlighten the people (about health, illiteracy, the murderers of Rosa Luxemburg, and so on), and a very creative pageant involving diagrams of factory output, and a funeral and cremation of old farm machinery, with partici-

pants dressed up as turnips and cucumbers. Characteristically, Fülöp-Miller also dismisses the message of these events as politically simplistic and naive – but it was only a short step from these parades and pageants to the open-air mass spectacle, a craze that reached its peak in St. Petersburg in 1920” [1, p. 57]. Such festive mass processions and theatrical productions are also particularly important in the history of performance. Roselee Goldberg writes in her study “Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present”: “A mass demonstration was organized by Nathan Altman and other Futurists for the first anniversary of the October Revolution, in 1918. It took place in the street and on the square of the Winter Palace in Petrograd; yards of Futurist paintings covered the buildings and a mobile Futurist construction was attached to the obelisk in the square. This and other extraordinary spectacles culminated two years later, on 7 November 1920, in the third anniversary celebrations” [2, p. 28].

Erica Fischer-Lichte also notes in her research the specifics of the holiday as a special form of culture which allowed the participants to reach a special emotional state that is important in the formation of performance art: “An unusual emotional state, a sense of merging with the crowd, as well as a paradoxical combination of a certain structure and excess characteristic of both sports and mass holidays plunges all participants into a pronounced liminal state” [3, p. 360].

Innovations in the field of holiday decoration were caused by the need to create a new concept of the Soviet mass celebration. The formation of festive Soviet culture in the early years of Soviet power was based on the change of the system of sacred centers (topos) and the time frames of celebration (chronos). In 1918, a special decree established new public holidays, which were the first version of the new system capable of implementing the ideology of Soviet power. The calendar cycle included the following celebrations: “Anniversary of Bloody Sunday” – January 22, “Anniversary of the Fall of the Autocracy” – March 12, “Memorial Day of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg” – January 17; “Anniversary of the Moscow Uprising” – December 22; “Anniversary of Lenin’s arrival in Petrograd” – April 16, “Anniversary of the Revolution” – November 7. The 1919 calendar indicated new Soviet holidays (“new calendar style holidays”) – March 12 (“February Revolution”), March 18 (“Paris Commune”), etc. and traditional (“old style”) – December 25 and 26 (“Christmas”), April 7, 8 and 9 (“Easter”), etc. By 1919, a new system of holidays with two central dates had been established – May 1 and November 7 [4, p. 56; 5]. The main celebrations dedicated to the

“October Revolution” (1918) were held in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The following things were also important for the formation of Soviet festive culture: the transfer of cultural life to Moscow; the establishment of new holidays, in particular, the First of May, as the main holiday of the Soviet calendar, which retained its significance until the 90s of the XX century; the replacement of previously existing rites with new Soviet (“red”) rituals; the introduction of new symbols of the Soviet State power, which replaced Christian symbols and emblems of monarchical power; the language of arts as a consequence of the formation of Soviet mass art (the formation of the official state concept of art – forms of mass culture – song musical genres, types of industrial Soviet design, plastic mass art). The first Soviet holidays seemed to be a completely new phenomenon. The newspaper “Pravda” reported the order of the upcoming Moscow celebrations: on November 6, after the horn, all work had to stop, then people from all the city areas had to march to the Red Square. The whole area from the Metropolis to Red Square had to be a fabulous “Red Town”. Columns of people from all over the city had to pass through the Red Square. New monuments had to be opened in the city. On November 7, rallies and entertainment were planned. There was also a special warning “against the triumph of futurist artists who, with their decadence, can prevent the spiritual power of processions from being revealed” [6, p. 3]. The article “Holiday” discussed the concept of “the first worker-peasant holiday in thousands of years!”. It read: “It should be celebrated in some special way, so that it does not look at all like the previous festivities” [7, p. 2].

The celebration of the October Revolution in Moscow also included the following things: a rally, a parade on the Red Square, a workers’ demonstration and a nationwide ceremony of burning the symbols of the old system (rag and straw effigies of the tsar, bourgeois, landowners, kulaks, etc. were burned on eleven metropolitan squares). The incredible scale of Moscow’s decoration for the first anniversary of the October Revolution is recorded in the memoirs of the artist S. V. Gerasimov: “Everyone was preparing for the first anniversary of the October Revolution with great excitement... I was commissioned to make a panel on the building of the former City Duma... the topic was “the peasant is the owner of the land” ... It was difficult to find a room to complete large-sized and large-scale works. We were given a meter-long canvas that needed to be sewn on a typewriter. The kind neighbors in my apartment on Yakimanka were horrified when I asked them to sew the canvas, since, unfolded and sewn, it took up their entire small room, and yet the canvas was ready on time” [8, pp. 44–45]. The artistic design of the Theater

Square was also significant in his opinion. On the building of the Metropol there was a huge panel "Worker" by I. I. Zakharov, on the Maly Theater there was a panel "Stepan Razin" by P. V. Kuznetsov, on the New Theater there were panels by A. V. Kuprin and A. A. Osmerkin. The Bolshoi Theater was decorated with portraits of K. Marx and V. I. Lenin, banners and slogans [8, p. 45].

The celebration of the first anniversary of the October Revolution in Petrograd seems to be one of the most ambitious artistic projects of the new government. In addition to the Petrograd Department of the People's Commissariat of Education, its preparation was handled by the Central Bureau for the Organization of October Celebrations, created in mid-September by the Department of Theaters and Spectacles at the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Communes of the Northern Region and the working commission at the Gubprofsovet [9, p. 41]. Just like in Moscow, Petrograd celebrations were to last for several days. According to the plan, on the first day (November 7), columns of demonstrators with banners had to move to the Field of Mars, and then to Smolny, where a large rally was supposed to be held on Lafonskaya Square and a monument to Karl Marx, designed by A. T. Matveev, was unveiled. On the second day (November 8), it was planned to hold the opening ceremonies of the Palace of Labor, the monument of Ferdinand Lassalle by V. A. Sinaisky and the statue of Labor by M. F. Bloch [9, p. 41]. The plan developed by the commission revealed a new interpretation of the structure of the urban landscape, including innovative design of squares and streets of Petrograd. More than one hundred and seventy artists were involved in this work.

One of the most important roles in the process of changing the paradigms of festive culture in Russia belonged to the futurists. Despite the criticism, the futurists supported the ideas of the Bolshevik Revolution. N. I. Altman defines futurist art in his article "Futurism and Proletarian Art" as the art of the proletariat in the following way: "Like everything that the proletariat creates, proletarian art will be collectivistic... We understand this not in the sense that one work will be made by many artists, but in the sense that the work itself, created by one creator, is built on collectivistic foundations" [10, p. 2]. Altman gives interesting arguments related to the specific interpretation of the nature of futuristic art, noting that "every part of a futuristic painting receives meaning only from the community of all other parts; only together with them it receives the meaning that the artist gave to it" [10, p. 2]. In conclusion, he notes: "Like the old world, the capitalist world, the works of old art lead individualistic lives. Only futuristic art is

built on collective foundations. Only futuristic art is currently the art of the proletariat" [10, p. 2].

The artists' need to create a new space of festive activities, which was free from the traditions of "old art" and which was able to reflect the Revolutionary ideas of the new state, was expressed in an innovative approach to the organization of the official celebration. So, for the first anniversary of the celebration of the October Revolution, futurists staged mass demonstrations and theatrical performances. Their innovative aspirations acquired special significance in the artistic design of the urban space of the October 1918 festivities. The central streets of Petrograd were decorated by futurist artists: N. I. Altman designed the decoration of the Palace Square, D. P. Shtenberg designed the Palace Embankment and the Winter Palace from the Neva side, V. V. Lebedev – the Police Bridge, I. A. Puni and K. L. Boguslavskaya – Liteyny Avenue and partially Okhta, Y. M. Guminer – Znamenskaya Square [9, p. 42].

In the history of the Soviet festive culture young artists were never again given so much freedom in solving the urban space of an official celebration. When designing the key streets for the festive activities, the futurists relied on the most important thesis which was put forward by V. V. Mayakovsky regarding the art of the new era of the country's development: "We do not need a dead temple of art, where dead works languish, but a living factory of the human spirit... The art of the present day is worthless. All the old objects and landscapes speak only about the gossip of the rich and the bourgeois... Art should be concentrated not in dead temples – museums, but everywhere – on the streets, in trams, in factories, in workshops and in workers' apartments" [11, p. 4].

The space of the festival decorated by the futurists seems to be a kind of theatrical scene where the historical triumph of the Revolution was reconstructed, where city streets and squares were incredible decorations of a mass spectacle that united its participants in the emerging community of a new country. In this aspect, it seems significant to consider the specifics of Altman's design of Uritsky Square (Palace Square). Palace Square was a symbol of autocracy, and it was in front of the Winter Palace that festive theatrical performances were held during the official celebrations. For example, during the reign of Anna Ioannovna, in 1732, in honor of her birthday, a performance was staged in front of the Winter Palace on the ice of the Neva: first, three regiments, divided into two "armies", fired at each other, retreating and starting, playing out a military battle. Then they all went together to storm the snow fortification built across the river from the Admiralty to the Spit of Vasilievsky Island and

defended by a small detachment with twelve guns. At the end of the “assault”, the participants of the “battle” made a complex construction in the form of the monogram of the empress – the letter “A” under the crown. At the conclusion of the performance, the troops fired from cannons and small arms [12, p. 6].

Altman, developing a new concept of festive culture, completely rethinks the Baroque and classical architecture of F. Rastrelli and K. I. Rossi of the Palace Square buildings facing the square and the boulevard. Ignoring their architecture, he “destroys” the compositional idea of the urban dominant, introducing a new concept of Revolutionary decoration. Decorating the main architectural complex of the square, Altman experiments by applying a variety of spectacular techniques and using elements of decorative and monumental origin. Having “disguised” the buildings around the square in the style of cubism and futurism, he installed a dynamic futuristic structure in its center (at the base of the column). The use of bright colors untypical of the architecture of the city (primarily red, as a symbol of a jubilant Revolutionary-rebellious mood) seems to be significant. Twenty thousand “yards” of canvas were used to decorate the square! Thus, going against the established classical traditions of St. Petersburg architecture, recreating the concept of a new artistic aesthetics opposed to the norms of traditional art, the artist covered the complex planes of buildings with red structures that served as a background for all the festive decorations of Petrograd.

The Revolutionary decorations, which were opposed to the palace architecture of the square, served as a place for the unique reconstruction of the main stage of the birth of the new state – the assault on the Winter Palace. “The realism was provided by a whole borrowed battalion and their equipment, and thousands of good Petrograd citizens, the whole dramatized by giant arc-lights –

obtained in a desperate last-minute smash-and-grab from an electrician's shop – which threw up against the sky Altman's abstract designs behind the hastily erected stage” [13, pp. 221–223]. The sound space of the holidays of the first years of Soviet power was also constructed in a special way. The introduction of mass demonstrations and productions reconstructing Revolutionary events created a unique sound atmosphere recreating bygone landmark events. In the process of constructing a new official culture, the use of performative means created a unique phenomenon of festive activities. Their introduction “expanded” the space and time of the holiday and contributed to the unification of the masses of people in the chronotope of the celebration. In such ways, the sacred chronotope of the Soviet holiday was created: the traditional space of the central cities received an innovative interpretation through the introduction of symbols which were significant for the formation of the state.

Despite such significant reinterpretations of the traditions of the country's centuries-old festive culture, the artistic space of the holiday seemed insufficiently innovative. N. N. Punin, commenting on the festive decoration of the city on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution, noted: “It would be better... if the fabrics, as such, were simply given to workers. The proletariat had to admire these decorations. It's a glimpse of the old world. It's not about decoration, but about creating new artistic things. The art of the proletariat is not a sacred temple where people only contemplate lazily, but labor, a factory that produces artistic objects for everyone” [11, p. 4].

The considered experience of creating a new artistic space, which was criticized later, has become a unique example of the use of art tools that can lead to the formation of a new community experiencing a special state (liminality) while reconstructing some significant historical events.

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