

Марына Юр Марина Юр

Doctor of art studies, senior scientist employee, leading  
Research Fellow, Modern Art Research Institute of the  
National Academy of Arts of Ukraine

Доктор мистецтвознавства, старший науковий  
співробітник, провідний науковий співробітник,  
Інститут проблем сучасного мистецтва Національної  
академії мистецтв України України

e-mail: yur\_marina@ukr.net | orcid.org/0000-0003-3487-1480

# Art Experiment as an Implementation of Innovations

## Художній експеримент як проведення інновацій

**Abstract.** Art is an integral, functional and impact model for the iterations of the artists, their creative intentions, self-cognition, and self-realization. Within this process, the artistic self-cognition is linked to the empiric experience, experiments, and searching for the new artistic methods of revealing the idea and context of the art object. Experimental modeling and implementation of innovations define the direction of changes in art that include the plot, form or image, aesthetic reception, and general tendencies. On the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fundamental changes took place in the understanding of art. During this period, the range of art practices expanded essentially. Experimental spirit prevailed in the modernist practices; this fact prompted the genesis of new art systems and caused the heuristic process of understanding, interpretation, development, and functioning of art.

The art principles and approaches of the postmodern era were characterized with the variety of multiple interpretations of the phenomena of past and present. By the means of experiment, the artists widened the boundaries of art, appealed to the new technologies, used different media or their synthesis that eventually caused the annihilation of the type specifics of the art objects. The aim of the article is to investigate the new approaches to modeling the experiments in Ukrainian painting of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as the implementation of innovations. The research methodology is based on the systemic, structural and functional, comparative and historical, and hermeneutic methods.

**Keywords:** art experiment, modeling, innovations, art practices, art, painting.

**Problem statement.** The cognitive power of art is determined by its historical, cultural, and artistic context and to a certain extent is a reflection of life. In this sense, the experiment causes transformation of the authentic reality into the artistic one, because art is a special form of the social experiment and a specific form of presentation of the social changes in the historical perspective. Therefore, the cognitive potential of art is defined by art experiment as a method of “unveiling probable, because the goal of art is to expose the maximal quantity of the potential capacities, which exist in each moment of human history and human conduct” (Medvedev, 2013, p. 190).

**Literature review.** The issue of art experiment in the context of studying the artists’ creative activity was covered by O. Avramenko, N. Asieeva, N. Veligotska, G. Vysheslavsky, O. Holub, O. Holubets, T. Yemelyanova, T. Kara-Vasylyeva, Y. Kravchenko, O. Petrova, and others. O. Benyuk undertook theoretical research in his dissertation “The notion of the experiment in the logic of art events in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries” (Benyuk, 2004), in the articles “Aesthetic study of positivists as the basis of the art

experiment” (Benyuk, 2017a), “Art experiment in the aesthetic discourse” (Benyuk, 2018), “Technical innovations and art experiment in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (Benyuk, 2017b). O. Katsion questioned the problem in the article “Historical dynamics of the ‘experimental’ experience in the artistic creative activity” (Katsion, 2008).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the new approaches in Ukrainian painting of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as an implementation of innovations.

**Results and Discussion.** Art has an unlimited potential to analyze the variety of chances and to study the impossible (Medvedev, 2013, p. 190). Therefore, art is a freedom zone for an artist, who constructs the situation, models the discourse field, exposes the signs, forms, and images to the level of self-cognition. In such a way the cognitive potential of art is expressed, it enables perception, understanding, and critical evaluation of the objective and subjective reality, which is created in the unique symbols.

Experimental art is directly linked to the mental experiment, perception, perceptive consciousness, imagination, abstract thinking, and imaginative creation. Abovementioned

levels highlight the creative process grounded in the visual, psychological, and physiological functions of the artist. That is why the art experiment unites the processes of perception, logical conclusions, and reflection of the objective or subjective world. This determines the methods of its development as a system, and the specifics of its types. In this context, the empirical and theoretical levels may be viewed, and, correspondingly, their scientific methods that are adjusted to the artistic specifics of the creative process: i. e. modeling, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, reconstruction, abstraction and generalization, fixation and reflection, generalization.

The artist is constantly guided by the empirical research of the object, memories, facts, archive materials for the formation of the idea and its artistic realization: artistic modeling of the idealized image, the composition of several figures or an abstract one. Modeling is a main category of cognition; artists actively apply it for the reconstruction of the historical events, important personalities, their life episodes, biographic milestones. The construction of such models serves for apprehension of the laws of being, gives ground for their various interpretations in art, thus, exposes its aesthetic, cognitive, didactic, and artistic functions. In the process of the object cognition, an artist obtains the knowledge, builds the creative concept, interprets and represents it, saves and transmits the experience to the new generations. Natural phenomena, society, human relations, human being, psychological and physiological features (memory, consciousness, feelings, perception, activity) all are the objects of cognition. In this sense, the notions, categories, concepts, theories, components of the art system, methodology, and technologies are the instruments of cognition. The generalized experience, embodied in the certain form, is a result of cognition. That is why the experiment is necessary for art development. Artists used it in the past centuries, and it stays topical at the present, because it allows the realization of the various creative ideas in artworks. It should be noted that the experiments come close to the tradition in the long historical trajectory of art development, sometimes they even determine the main trends of the art process.

The art innovations are often created by the integration of scientific methods, which was essential in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. As O. Benyuk noted, from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and up till now the innovative technologies have actively participated in the processes of art creation, especially in the experiments (Benyuk, 2017b, p. 255). Innovations in modernism were present on all levels of creative process and formation of the constructive idea, where the actualized essence of contemporary prevailed, and its perception of the new aims of art differed from the mythology of the art of the past centuries. A special attention should be paid to the system of techniques and tools of artistic realization of the idea, which was based on the changed perceptual optics—its linear character compositionally centered on the motion dynamics. This fact prompted the emergence of such notions as simultaneity, kinetics, multi vectors, multiplicity. The artists studied the expressive means

of different types of painting, graphics, sculpture, new media and instruments, and digitalization that helped to form a new knowledge and expand its possibilities in creating the innovative concepts that were a synthesis of essential and formal structure of an artwork. It was an innovative individualistic model of art experiments; the radicalism of them was expressed in the expansion of the field of themes and motives towards the social, cultural, historical and political segments. These changes happened in the social culture and were based on the rational approach and synthetic thinking of the artists, their creative manifestations, and reflections on the changes in historical, political, economic, and social spheres.

The radicalism of art was obvious in synchronistic processes that is important for the integrity of society.

The programmatic nature of the experiment is a feature of modernism (Medvedev, 2013, p. 190). It was characterized by style pluralism and pluralism of senses, tendencies, ideas, and means of their expressions. Pointed prerequisites defined the art practices in the contemporary times, when the search for a new knowledge was initial. In art, the methodology targets uncovering its essence through the creative activity of the artist, for whom the rules and laws are imagination and perfect techniques of practices in any sphere. In fact, the artist undertakes the investigation applying a new knowledge in the traditional genres that leads to expanding the boundaries, but in certain cases annihilation of the visible creative process. That is why the experiment is an indispensable part of art development, of its ideals, canons, new artistic means of expression and new media. Experimental art made an impact on the emergence of its new concept, and hence the art system, different from the previous one. O. Benyuk stated that “Detailed interpretation of the experiment as checking of the obtained facts, as a method of retrieving the knowledge and as a main artistic method at the same time is present in aesthetic art conception by Emile Zola, who realized the positivist ideas in his practice” (Benyuk, 2017a, p. 55).

For the artists, the dichotomy “experiment—research” was defining in approbation of various ideas, methods, technologies; the material for it was taken from the actual reality and at the same time from the art of the past eras, styles, and trends. Asserting the modeling function of art and its unlimited abilities to generate new ideas, art concepts and practices, the important role of art experiment is recognized. It expands the spectrum of innovations, value dimensions of culture, having both art and technological components. The variety of art types and genres causes the variability of experiments; each artwork represents its inner world, art space, and time, as well as original art concept. The art experiment by Marcel Duchamp played a significant role in it; it shifted the accent from the creative process to the perception of work by associations, verification, and new reception of the ready-made object in the new (museum, gallery, exhibition hall) environment. So, “his creative personality is viewed as one of the vivid embodiments of the modernist spirit that is an essential part of the postmodernist aesthetics” (Domaratskaya, 2004, p. 188). In this trend, the experiments by M. Duchamp

use the “game category”, they model the situation on the basis of irony and self-irony, annihilating such characteristics as senses, emotional tonality, and aesthetic feelings.

In the contemporary art discourse, the experiment expresses itself in radical pluralism, which gives birth to the multiple styles, eclectics, conscious denial of the traditions (Katsion, 2008, p. 312). The experimental approach is realized in the new representation of art by such artists as M. Storozhenko, L. Medvid, O. Bermus, O. Petrenko, O. Bohomazov, S. Volnin, Y. Makarenko, K. Nikolenko, O. Pronkina in the new forms, images and technologies.

During the period of modernism, F. Kupka, M. Churlionis, and A. Kandinsky conducted the experiments, where different types of art were combined. These artists studied the influence of music on painting. A number of Ukrainian artists undertook a similar experiment. In this context, O. Petrenko realized the idea in her painting *Music* (triptych, 2010), aiming to reflect musical sounds. Her concept consisted of interweaving images, ornament motives, abstract forms, and spatial textures as an expression of musical sounds. The search for the form to express musical sounds was not so simple. As a result, the artist shifted to abstraction, which was organically interwoven with elements that had a national context: old symbols meant birds, signs meant dots, and the lines spotted in dynamically modelled “musical sound.” The unity of the composition was reached by the principle of symmetry and harmonic interaction between images, forms and texture, groups of elements, combination of details, ornament motives in the larger part of artwork or as a unit of the ornament. All this mosaics of forms and their interaction strengthened the melody and sound of the musical composition. The rhythmic forms expressed the variety of the tonality.

*The Invented World* painting by S. Volnin demonstrates the combination of art and science; it represents human understanding of the principles of existence in this world and in the Universe in general. In this context, the author aimed to create the concentrated artistic image that would illustrate the development of human worldviews enabled by science. In the painting, the human being and science are united and occupy a space niche, where the prototype of Adam and Eve became an essential center as a symbol of birth of human civilization on Earth. The composition is built on the contrast between two Materia—space and earth—it is a contradiction and unity, and at the same time the extrapolarized symbols of a woman and a man. These personalities have their own sense and take part in cyclical historical development of civilization, which is presented by the thin ray of light that embraces the Earth. An apple is a symbol of changes in the human existential paradigm, an apprehension of the evolutionary processes on Earth and the question of the existence beyond it. The philosophical context of the composition, its metaphor echoes the approaches, methods, stylistic of creative manner of M. Storozhenko and his school. The reception of the past art experience and contemporary tendencies is a logical direction in the formation of the new tasks, where traditions

and innovations are naturally combined in the representation of the new senses and essences in art. As O. Solovey noted, M. Storozhenko used the method of multiple views for the perception of the object (Solovey, 2021, p. 153), for formulating a number of creative rules that he applied in his teaching practice: the metaphysics of space, the number, pauses-intervals, texture, philosophy of layer, axonometric, contra form, and the spot (Solovey, 2021, p. 155). The experimental approach has become the foundation of art education in the creative workshop of the academician, artist and a philosopher M. Storozhenko in the National Academy of Fine Art and Architecture. Unity of theoretical and practical approaches in education enhanced the new vision of Ukrainian art.

The metaphoric character of art language gives broad opportunities for the interpretations of the traditional motives in the contemporary modernist expressions that is vividly seen in the artworks by L. Medvid. He summarizes the certain model of behavior, life sense through the matrix that took many centuries to construct (Medvid, 2015, p. 6). As O. Musiy stresses, L. Medvid as an artist from Lviv is well-known for his intellectual experiments in painting, for his indispensable connection between constructing the senses and the formal structure of the composition, for his original interpretation of world art tendencies and national traditions (Musiy, 2006, p. 103). Analyzing his artworks, H. Ostrovsky underlines Medvid’s striving for “depicted paradoxes of the imagination” (Ostrovsky, 1986, p. 3), which marked the art expression of symbols, their specific meditation, the combination of the real and the unreal, eternal and routine, application of the contrast between forms, and high emotional tonality. The special focus point of the reality captures artist’s innovations in modeling the space and symbolic order of the picture.

O. Bermus contemplates on human life in the fast moving world in the painting *The Image of a Woman (Don't Stand!)* (2010). For the artist, to be free means to be conscious and this is a high culture. For the creation of this picture diptych, the painter used the dialogue between many genres, where we could feel the era of classicism but adapted to the contemporary aesthetic ideals of the celebration portrait and the allegoric genre scene of changing life periods. This is a dialogue between I (Who am I? What am I in this world? How do others look at me?) and We—people, who do not know and do not see who I am, they live their own life. Thus, a dialogue turns into a monologue, as there is no audience for answers and a man finds the answers by himself. The artist develops this philosophical topic through the generalization of symbols and images and the interpretation of their being.

Social and cultural aspects of art play an important role in the formation of social value orientations. The problems of nature, ecology, preservation of culture, authentic experience are always in the focus of the Ukrainian artists.

In his painting *The Evolution of Nature* Y. Makarenko concentrated on studying the mutual dependence between man and nature that was intensively discussed during past decades. The diminishing of natural resources

is critical and the attempts to replace them with rebewable energy lead to new problems with waste utilization, regulation of industrial capacities. In 1986 in Ukraine the human error on Chornobyl power station lead to the vast tragedy for the Ukrainian people and for the whole world. The territory of the city and its 20 km neighborhood were covered with radioactive dust and are since closed, but flora and fauna live on. The author revised the context of the natural revival and the hope for the preservation of the Earth after encountering the similar artworks *The Landscape of the Third Millennium (Man and Ecology series)*, *Modern Golgotha (ecological catastrophe)*, by M. Larsky, *Chornobyl Maria* (1994) by Y. Nikitina, and *Chornobyl* by A. Kreminsky. The composition is built upon important cultural codes of Ukraine: symbols of Oranta, petroglyphs, “the tree of life,” and the bird that was a symbol of wisdom and changing landscapes in old cultures. All of them, as well as a nuclear reactor of Chornobyl power station, cracked wood and darkened sun above it, demonstrate the negative human impact. The composition is created in the decorative stylistic, that causes the generalized nature of the monumental forms, the attention concentrated on the main theme, the rhythm of decorative space shows a motion of reviving nature. The decorative art language depicts crooked nature, interwoven tree roots, transformation of the landscape into the pictograph writings, hunters, and the monumental symbol of Virgin Mary above the industrialized landscape. This is a Manifesto, a call to save the life of mankind and nature. The innovative character of the painting is evident. Y. Makarenko points out that for the people the technologies are not only the elements of progress, but also the element of regress.

K. Nikolenko elaborates this theme in the picture *A Man and a Nature in Space and Time* (2013), following an idea of coexistence of a man and nature in the past, present, and future. Applying the stylistics of the spatial decorative forms, the artist formulates a narrative of human dwelling at the early period of civilization, when nature was a living and sacred space. Civilizational progress leads to the distinction in the spheres of human activity. Technological progress drew people far from nature: building cities, development of transportation, mechanization of agriculture receives an interpretation in the central part of the triptych. This life circle was dictated by time that entered the human life. This mosaic of a life circle, thoughts and dreams is depicted in multiple colors. The desire of people to reign the nature resulted in the creation of “clever machines” that helped with the routine, yet occupied the life space. In the future, signs of which we experience today, the loss of human existential harmony and a dialogue of people and nature as a principal part of life is possible. The strong argumentation of symbols was achieved by appealing to the artworks by K. Malevich, F. Gumenyuk, and G. Seurat.

The *Evolutional Space and the Man* (2013) painting by O. Pronkina is connected to the human cognition of the world in the context of the development of activity spheres. People acquired knowledge, mastered techniques, and passed them on to future generations. In the early

periods of the social development, they coded them in certain signs creating a special informational field. With the invention of technology, these processes acquired new impulses and realization. In the painting, the artist showed key moments of development of the informational space, uniting them in one plot—various spheres of human being, with the central figure of Nikola Tesla above them. He holds his inventions: the lightning that represent electricity, fluorescent light, and wireless transmission of energy. Tesla foresaw the development of the civilizational achievements (radio, television, internet, mobile phones), although back then they were considered science fiction. In the left part of the painting, Adam holds an apple, a symbol of cognition. In the right side, the young man enters life, holding the device to transmit information, a computer, and the world comes closer to him: territorial and time borders are erased while obtaining the knowledge about different countries, specifics of life and culture. In order to illustrate the informational space, O. Pronkina uses the palette of green, blue, brown, violet colors with an accent on white, which creates the light and electric impulses that serve people in various spheres of activity and in the formation of the informational space.

The artworks by O. Dubovik depict the thorough combination of science and art, of historical and contemporary context, of classic methods and new technologies, of concentrating on the research and interpretation of human beings in the context of their self-identification. His formula is going beyond time, in the transcendental dimension of space, where different cultures, values, worldviews co-exist. The artist stresses, that “without the cultural expansion, economics and politics cannot exist. Therefore, the role of the artist is very important in this process, the coming out of the globalization begins, when he has own conceptions and symbols. There are millions of artists in the world, but it is almost impossible to create the original concept in the conditions of globalization. For twenty years, I had time to contemplate on my concept and to make it deep and variable. I call it Meta realism. It is not the postmodernism, it a view of culture, its trends and directions in general. It is a multiplicity of worlds around one center, it is a unity of contradictory styles, views, images, which are born in diffusion, mutual penetration, metaphor forms beyond the time” (*Oleksandr Dubovyk*, 2017, February 23.).

The artist demonstrated his deep personality not just in the innovative experiments, synthesis of avant-garde and classical art, but in his theoretical papers, philosophical researches, and Manifesto on the art system. In art dialogue, O. Dubovik compared individual and ideal, moments and transcendence, using abstract language and Biblical themes in his artworks.

O. Bohomazov gave a specific interpretation of Biblical motives in his painting *Celebration. Apple Spas* (2012). The artist shows his view and interpretation of Christian Fiest of the Transfiguration. He combined the scene of picking the apples as spiritual and earthy and presented it through the so-called boundary in the painting. The stylistics of the image appeals to the works by M. Boychuk and his

school: T. Boychuk, I. Padalka, M. Rokytsky and to the works of contemporary artists: O. Dubovyk, I. Melnychuk, and others. Having overthought the creative achievements of these artists, O. Bohomazov constructed the synthetic symbols combining abstract and figurative painting, unity and sense organization. In the right part of the image there is the Earth, the iconography of which echoed to artworks by Tymko Boychuk; in the left part—the cosmic, planetary world, with the signature creative concept by O. Dubovyk.

The digital aesthetics is another innovative and experimental trend in art. It is rooted in modernism and avant-garde, in the variably textured collages by cubists, avant-garde photomontages, cinema montages and assemblages. The combination of different media allowed to gain the new effects for the depiction of reality; therefore, it defined the trend for experiments in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The arsenal of media expanded: photo, TV, video, media formats were added, images diffused and changed. So-called researches and experiments on the motion of the visual objects, forms and images started; that was defined as environment. The art specifics

of painting acquired new features, opportunities for applications, expression of the new senses, ideas, and concepts. An experimenting artist is a researcher, who finds certain artistic forms for the dialogue with his audience in a certain social and cultural context. The mix of images, symbols; techniques, and media could unveil the issues of the global scale, or otherwise create so called “noise” that does not bring any aesthetic pleasure to the viewer. Experimental investigations with unlimited variety of forms developed the art system. As O. Benyuk stated: “The reality of the contemporary art, philosophy and other spheres of human activity is characterized by the multiplicity of models, the contest of paradigms and the impossibility of only one or unified decision” (Benyuk, 2016, p. 205).

**Conclusions.** After conducting the literature review and analysing the facts, the conclusion could be the following: development of art is caused by the innovative processes, which are linked to the change in the art paradigms, in historical and cultural context, in the technological development. Each of these factors gave an impetus for the innovations in art that enabled experimental art practices.

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**Юр М.**

#### **Художній експеримент як проведення інновацій**

**Анотація.** Мистецтво є цілісною, прогресивною, функціональною та впливовою моделлю для ітерацій художника, його творчих інтенцій, самопізнання і самореалізації. У цьому процесі самопізнання художника прямо пов’язане з емпіричним досвідом, експериментуванням, пошуком нових художніх засобів вираження ідеї, контексту твору. Показано, що моделювання експерименту, а отже і проведення інновацій, визначає спрямування змін у мистецтві, які стосуються змісту, форми чи образу, естетичної рецепції, функцій, тенденцій. Фундаментальні зміни у розумінні мистецтва припадають на межу XIX–XX століть: у цей час суттєво розширюється спектр художніх практик, в яких виражене авторське бачення. Зауважимо, що у модерністських практиках перевалював експериментальний дух, це сприяло генезі нових художніх систем і окреслило евристичний процес розуміння, інтерпретації, розвитку та функціонування мистецтва. Охарактеризовано принципи і підходи у художньому експерименті в епоху постмодернізму із властивим йому різноманіттям і множинністю інтерпретацій явищ минулого і сучасності. Показано, що художники через експеримент розширювали межі мистецтва, апелюючи до найновіших технологій, матеріалів, їхнього синтезу, що впливало на нівелювання видової специфіки творів. Метою роботи є дослідження нових підходів до моделювання художнього експерименту в українському живописі XX — початку XXI століття як інновації. Методологія дослідження базується на системному, структурно-функціональному, порівняльно-історичному, герменевтичному методах.

**Ключові слова:** художній експеримент, моделювання, інновації, художні практики, мистецтво, живопис.

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