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## Portraiture of Kharkov Region in works of the artists Kostyantyn Petrovych Pynyeyev and Ivan Mykytovych Svyatenko (the late XIX – the early XX century)

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### ABSTRACT

The article presents the research results of portrait works of Kharkiv artist-academics of late XIX - early XX century. The artists K.P. Pynyeyev and I.M. Svyatenko are considered to be the outstanding representatives of Petersburg Art Academy, who worked in the provincial town of Kharkiv and were among the first artists who replaced the craft masters, artists- amateurs and iconographers who had been functioning as portraitists by that time. The study results include the art studying analysis of the features of the artists' careers, art preferences development, and the change of creative periods of K.P. Pynyeyev and I.M. Svyatenko. There are results of stylistic analysis of the general ideological, personal stylistic, technical and technological preferences of the both painters. The role of Itinerantism philosophy is opposed to the aesthetics of modernism in the creativity of the provincial artist from the western provinces of the Russian Empire (now - the south-eastern Ukraine). The article presents an analysis of the use of Impressionism techniques and academicism in the works of the artists; the techniques are contrasted and described from the side of commercial or non-commercial targeting of the artist who worked during the studied period.

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## 1. Introduction

The dominant direction in the painting of the Russian Empire of the late XIX - early XX century was Itinerantism focused on the genre art. Portraits of the epoch can be characterized by philosophical, moralistic overtones or their task was limited by transmission of averaged realistic folk images. However, the range of a connoisseur and a customer of a ceremonial portrait in peripheral cities expanded. At the end of the century the number of merchants increased, the solvency of townspeople increased too, representatives of progressive intellectuals sought to satisfy the aesthetic thirst, having got their own portrait image.

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So, Kharkiv artists met the demands of those local authorities and customers with moderate means on yet desirable and popular portrait genre.

By the mid-XIX century a craft painter or an iconographer was a master of portrait in a provincial town. The second half of the century is characterized by the emergence of professional painters-academics in cities far from the capital. This is primarily due to the education policy aimed at the development of educational institutions in the peripheral areas of the empire and promotion of the academic excellence. After graduating from Petersburg Art Academy artists either were sent for pedagogical work in province or they returned to their home city for painting as well as knowledge transfer. At the same time the artistic societies were being formed so that it allowed artists to share experience, organize exhibitions, circles and clubs. K.P. Pynyeyev and I.M. Svyatenko were among the first professionals who worked in the genre of portraiture during Itinerantism in Kharkiv.

## **2. Statement of research objectives**

- to study and analyze the dominant trends in the portrait creativity of K.P. Pynyeyev and I.M. Svyatenko
- to conduct the comparative analysis of the artists' works
- to examine the influence of European culture and the culture of the Russian Empire on the provincial portrait art on the example of K.P. Pynyeyev and I.M. Svyatenko's art works

## **3. Results of the research**

The biographical data of the artist Kostyantyn Petrovych Pynyeyev (1868-1922 years) are presented in the work of V. Ruban (1986). Russian researchers S. and M. Holovitsyn, Z. Chornova, Ie. Usanova, S. Volkova studied the career of K. Pynyeyev in the context of his works in the collection of Alexanderskiy Art Museum (2010). Exhibition activities are reflected in the reference edition of D. Severyuhin, A. Leykynd (1992).

The artist was born in the village Karabanova near Aleksandrov; he studied at Trinity-Sergius Lavra, Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and at Petersburg Art Academy under guidance of V. Makovsky (2010). In 1898 he was sent to Europe for raising his artistic level and acquaintance with the masterpieces of the world art.

In 1900 he got a position of an art teacher at the non-classical secondary school of Kharkiv, where he had been working successfully for 22 years, devoting the most of his time to teaching. He continued to create genre, landscape and portrait paintings. During that period K. Pynyeyev joined a number of art organizations and participated in exhibitions, among which was "The circle of local artists. Kharkiv, 1900-1908". He took part in organizing the Society of Kharkiv Artists (1905-1918). In 1912 he became a member of Ukrainian Artistic and Architectural Department of Kharkiv Literary and Artistic Circle (Severyukhin 1992).

Educational role of realism, which is peculiar to Itinerantism, was emphasized in genre paintings of Kharkiv period. The portraits of that period differed from well-known genre art paintings "Lunch" ("Lonely") in 1904

(Kharkiv Art Museum, then - KAM) and “The genre scene” (“Old musicians”) in 1904 (KAM) not only by picturesque approach but also semantic content. We have studied two female portraits from Kharkov Art Museum – “Portrait of a Woman” and “Portrait of Lady in a Black Dress”. They both were performed in the realistic manner using impressionistic techniques. There the color is more important than austerity of forms, but still a painting remains accurate and truly professional. K. Pynyeyev uses the enhanced angle method, portraying women from underneath emphasizing the condescending glance that adds the significance to the depicted individuals. The painter moves away from the necessity to reflect the social status, truthfulness of life and focuses on natural ways of expressing romantic beauty with some share of theatricalization of images. Clothes of strangers in portraits also indicate changes of tastes and preferences of the epoch – a little Toque hat, rich in details high-necked dress and blouses with gigot sleeves that hardly entered the European fashion, bows and ornaments.

In our opinion, the portrait of “Unknown in Blue” dated January 5, 1915, (stored in Alexander Art Museum, then - AAM) is the apogee of modern vision of K.P. Pynyeyev including all the attributes of French Impressionism. The woman is depicted in a semitransparent blue kerchief under fluffy hairstyle - a static face of a romantic and independent woman. There are bold, small brushstrokes, almost grotesque cold color; the face is slightly whitewashed. The paint layer is available only on the informative part of the canvas, the development of background is completely absent and all attention is focused solely on the character. The psychological component of the portrait is subject to external undeniable beauty of the portrayed one. The details are absent; the main thing is a powerful general aesthetic character.

Children’s images were important in the creative life. Kostyantyn Petrovych portrayed his own children in various everyday situations as well as a separate artistic image. The difference of painting approach in symbolic and allegorical compositions and pictures of exclusively aesthetic message is interestingly traced in these works. For instance, the painting “Children” (1909, AAM) depicting the artist’s children Nicanor and Lyuba has no instructive or any other sense. This is a narrative motive without any deep semantic content, but they are only the amicably painted portraits of the beloved children, who are lively and interested in everything around. Here the artist gives a freedom to color and shape of a brushstroke, a lively composition and incompleteness of shapes. The surrounding is painted with the same ease as the portraits. “The boy with the map” (1916, AAM) is the opposite to a double portrait of kids. The painting depicts a boy holding a huge map; the room interior is as detailed as possible; the author has worked out every inch - books on the shelves, a newspaper and a lamp on the table. The boy’s glance goes beyond the image, he points out with his finger at the point of the map, and he must be asking an adult. The whole composition is focused on clear moral message - learning and curiosity is the foundation of education. This entirely Itinerantism motive is supported also by the technique of execution. There is a considered composition, attention to details, multi-color, clear accents and academic approach. At the turn of centuries the art creativity of K.P. Pynyeyev corresponded to two leading trends at once - he was both a painter-itinerant and a brilliant impressionist. But he clearly separated one from another and never combined an instant impression with a visible reality in a single work.

Contrary to Pynyeyev’s Impressionism and Itinerantism there is the creative work of Ivan Mykytovych Svyatenko. There is not much biographical information about him. The artist’s name was mentioned in the

paper of V. Tytar as one of the organizers and members of exhibitions of Itinerant Society in Kharkiv (2004), and also A. Sikorskyi (2008) mentioned it in his research of Lebedynskyi Museum's exposition. In the work of L. Melnychuk (2010) a portrait of Vasyl Oleksiyovych Kapnist by Svyatenko is mentioned. M. Shkurka gives a brief description of the portrait of Prince Kapnist in the "Village Mykhailivka of Lebedynsky district in Sumy region in the works of prominent Ukrainian and Russian artists"; he points out high professionalism of the artist (Shkurka 2011).

During the study a number of subscribed monumental memorials of the painter were found in Kharkiv, in particular paintings on religious themes performed in Blahovischynskyi Cathedral and the male gymnasium №2, as well as portraits of scientists at the Kharkov Polytechnical Institute, including Sadi Carnot, Robert Mayer and others. The works were performed according to graphical equivalents. Perhaps that is the reason why the artist applies grisaille technique using shades of gray in the portraits of scientists, the sacred paintings were performed in sepia.

Besides, the cause of creation of monumental works in monochromatic tones and easel works in color could be the accelerated pace of work on large objects due to the artist's desire to save time. Nevertheless, the artist meticulously and accurately performed all types of orders - sacred and secular ones, different in size, theme and manner of execution – all these allow us to characterize I. Svyatenko as an artist of commercial art.

The pictorial qualities of the artist are revealed in the portraits from Lebedynsk Art Museum (hereinafter - LAM) made in color. The portrait of O.V. Kapnist (1835 - 1915) in the ceremonial garb with numerous medals and orders is the portrait with deep psychological implications. There is the dynamics, the bend of the head aimed at reproducing external personality characteristics. In detail, a face with every wrinkle reveals a man of strong will, unbroken character; the posture demonstrates the noble blood. Obviously, the portrait has a ceremonial direction of orientation and all psychologism aimed at proving heroism and imperiousness of an individual. The comparison of artists' creativity showed that, unlike K. Pynyeyev, I. Svyatenko did not search for new methods or pursue the new trends in techniques and technology, using well studied academic realism in his artistic works. The artist used the semantic method for emphasizing the artistic expressiveness like a classical representative painting. There is a white glove in the left hand of Prince Kapnist aimed at indicating the belonging of the portrayed one to the ruling elite.

At the portrait of one of the prominent public figures of Kharkiv province, a member of the State Council on election of Kharkiv province municipality Yakov Volodymyrovych Kucherov (LAM) the presence of the interior details such as a table with pencils, paper and magazines are an indication of important social activities and education, and clothing of the portrayed people proves the belonging to a wealthy estate. High accuracy in anatomy and details, subtle realism reveal the good copyist and follower of the world heritage of techniques of pictorial knowledge that always seems to please a customer.

Thus, in addition to mainstream - Itinerantism we have to outline two more popular trends in this area in the late XIX - early XX century. They are the recently acquired modern and yet actual academic realism. It should be noted that both trends prospered in all other genres of painting presented in the province.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The research of these artists' creativity illustrates the state of the Kharkiv art and province painting of progressive cities in their own way of the European part in the Russian Empire. K.P. Pynyeyev and I.M. Svyatenko were the outstanding representatives of two trends - impressionism and academicism; they were among few portrait painters who worked in the period of the Itinerantism heyday in the area. The research of artists' careers has shown that portraiture of that period can be nominally divided into commercial and creative-searching ones. During the art study it was determined that works of K.P. Pynyeyev can be characterized by a radical change in views from Itinerantism to romantic Impressionism. In the painting of different periods of his career the artist used techniques, a color design, aesthetics of Impressionism, but also he fits well into itinerantation movement reflecting the symbolic philosophy of education in realistic manner.

Unlike K.P. Pynyeyev, the artist I.M. Svyatenko was one of those who efficiently and quickly satisfied the needs of the higher strata of the population, without searching for a new way of expression. He did not pay attention to either the Itinerantism - official trend in the Russian Empire - or to available western experience of Modern in Kharkiv. Being a master of the representative portrait I.M. Svyatenko followed the academic realism in all known memorias.

It should be noted that for quite a long period, more than a quarter of the century, both artists were almost only professional portrait artists in Kharkiv province. Nevertheless, their life and creative career in Ukrainian art were hardly studied before. This opens the prospect for the further study of Slobozhansky art phenomenon, when artists were able to choose the creative career, getting education in Petersburg and using the experience of modern Europe.

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