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The Oeuvre of Serhiy Savchenko in the Configuration of Rhizome

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The expositions of Serhiy Savchenko, painter from the city of Lvov, who was born in 1972, always burst with flashes, spontaneous and vivid as a firework. Rarely can they be completely disastrous but any artist has got a right for a fail. But at most Savchenko`s displays are energetic, they intrigue with their sculpturesque solution, original logic or antilogism. In this author`s oeuvre is impossible to find any stable program or over-worked favorite artistic technique. To create each new exhibit as a suddenness – this Savchenko`s position can be marked as an artistic principle. According to the proper impulsive and even a choleric temperament, to the ability of being taken over by new ideas and fall under unexpected excitors, Savchenko`s works over the last twenty years period show us the existence of artistic ego, which blooms in the aura of completely creative freedom and actually is fed by it. As the artist says, his work ‘is based on the classic principium, is nourished with it, but does not reject contemporary handling of planes, stains, etc’[1]. What about the subject of following ‘classic principium’, it can be doubted, because borrowing of the image of Michelangelo`s ‘Pieta’ (2013) or ‘Saturn Devouring His Son’ (on the motives of Francisco de Goya) on the display ‘Intimacy’ (2014); ‘Triptych Art’ or feminine characters or still-life paintings on the expositions during the previous years are actually quotations of B. Burak`s canvases is liberate usage of someone else`s product, is a postmodern game with heritage and insights of others.

Savchenko is convinced that a task to ‘do something new in art is a complete nonsense because everything actually has already been done. What I mean is a totally new approach: the new in art is a type of a singular absurd. And it is very wrong to try to create something new for art or for people. You can do something new for yourself. When I discover something new for myself my heart fills with joy as this means a new step in my own development...All of the people are so different so to make something innovative... It also carries an element of absurd... For me the process of work itself is interesting from the point of the individual artistic reflections’ [2].

During the practical activity of twenty years Savchenko hasn`t worked out his own authorial style, which would be easy to indicate (unlike other painters who take care scrupulously about sculpturesque individualism – B. Burak, L. Vedmid, M. Shimchuk, A. Krivolap, O. Roitburd and etc.). For Savchenko this task is not vital. And even though in the conversations with fine art experts artist insists that ‘now and then, always find some time to think about strategy and tactic of creative process’ practical result of the works testifies on the contrary an improvisational unexpectedness.

The floods of paints on his canvases ‘Summer’ (2011), ‘Apples’ (2012), ‘Landscape 1, 2, 3’ (2012) and others, flashings of vivid colors or contrasts of light and shadow in an expressive series ‘Intimacy’ (2014), where all of the artistic ‘syntaxes’ and ‘orthography’ signalize about author`s ecstasy, even of creative hysteria and incoherence in performing of figurative language. ‘The last 5 years have emphasized my mode on the side of experiment’ – author says [3]. ‘Previously I have always been looking for something. I used to make out different things. The wideness of the step was simply different according to the less dynamic society’[4]. We can see a similarity in author`s reaction to the world just like ‘than’ so it is ‘today’. If try to make a conclusion about typical characteristics of Savchenko, we can fix impulsiveness, spontaneity as a mode of individual reaction to the occurrence of the world, people and things. ‘Sometimes there are moments of enlightening – says Savchenko – though all of these concepts are already so floated. There are times when a thought appears and it flies off like shell... That`s how a display ‘Axonometric’ appeared. Simply one day I got an image of a plaster head flying in the open space in my mind. Such micro-enlightening can even happen during the working process. For example I was walking in Paris, I watched those gums, smashed on the asphalt and those plasters, they all combined in my subconscious at once...’ [5].

Enlightening, spontaneity, multidirectional activity and reverse firmness in the process of artist's creativity are lineaments that accompany us to the conception of rhizome, a comprehension, that withstands to unchangeable, lineal, unidirectional, structural pieces of art. As a biological structure, rhizome represents decentralized system, a plexus of differently directed outgrowths of the root in soil. Starting its growth from the grain (structured centre), the root system transforms into chaotically scattered labyrinth of smaller races. The idea of rhizome in the esthetic of XX-XXI century undertook the idea of metaphor, visual thinking of modernism as a creative method with its citationality, labyrinthicity and transitional state from chaos to cosmos (chaos – mos). Rhizomatic level of creative work development fixates unlined organization of wholeness (of work as a product, of creativity as a process). Phenomena of Savchenko's artistic reactions allows to insist on his rhizomatic way of thinking. "These processes are interior – underlines the artist – they are complicated, they are hard to count, so the sense of those works from 'Axonometric' is that there are also some things which are impossible to count up. They are not given for analyzing – you just create random absurd pieces because they cannot be count" [6]. Illogic in the different ways of artistic thinking, unpredictability of impulsive artistic action, multiple of senses in Serhiy Savchenko's works – all of this is closely connected to the postmodernist method (and to rhizome as its symbol). 'Principle of rhizome multiple is rejection of the core, that stimulates unity, wholeness,' - writes Oleg Barma, the researcher. [7, c. 18].

This crucially rhizomorph characteristic of Serhiy Savchenko creative method convincingly illustrates author by himself not only in painting, but also in self-reflections, given in interview. 'In Ukrainian village Novitsia on the Poland territory in the mountains the artistic festivals take place... Very modern preacher Pipka holds different displays in the church... I was proposed to do something alike with 'Eruption'... I was pulled into abstract something. I started to spill the paint. Even though I always had this question of paint fluctuation, I started to amplify it in the theme of 'Eruption'. I had an indefinite image. At the end nothing came out of this. I simply covered everything with one local white color, then with black one... I was walking around, thinking about something... Than I placed all of the canvases in one line. I glanced at them...there was a display. Before, there were only random blot. Well, ok, I thought, and added more... Finally Polishes said that they were modern icons' [8].

Free transition of S. Savchenko from abstract painting to figurative one, from spontaneous improvisations towards the program cycles of canvases – those movements are determined only with unexplainable even for author himself subconscious impulses, signalize vividly about rhizomatic way of reflecting on existence. To Master's credit I want to emphasis his sincerity in the reaction on the events of contemporary. The exposition 'Intimacy' (2014) was created very expressively as a feedback to the occurrences of Kiev rebel winter of 2014 on the Independence Square (Maydan). Collective ecstasy of Ukrainians on the Maydan and on numerous veches in the Savchenko's canvases are embodied with expressionistic energy with natural for the last tricks of deformation and struggle between enlightened and black areas on the works with rich spill of dark paint. There is a teasing contradiction (which adds bitterness and energy) between the name of exposition 'Intimacy' and publicity of citizen activity, that took place on Maydan and provoked an artist for work. Savchenko wasn't a distanced watchman and collective will of Maydan ordered him to paint. The publicity of Maydan became artist's intimacy, his personal pain and complication. His conscious as a citizen motivated him to say his own word as a willful Ukrainian. In order to find moral and artistic support Savchenko addressed to the most humming images of Michelangelo and Goya. His 'Pieta' (after the Michelangelo's masterpiece) Savchenko presented on the squared ring surrounded by screaming crowd. In my point of view it was a metaphor to the loss of 'Celestial Hundred'.

In the dialogue with 'Saturn ...' from the canvases of 'black Goya' Savchenko created a paraphrase 'Saturn Devouring his Children'. Hard expression of the work sends everyone to the image of a subhuman, political villain Yanukovich (я правда не уверена, нужно ли тут вставлять его фамилию. Возможно обойтись и без неё). 'Intimate portrait at 4 o'clock in the morning' is an image, that astonishes with its huge amount of suffer, just like on the canvases of over expressive E. Munch.

Even in this one work series and furthermore in the space of the whole masterpiece of Savchenko it can be revealed that there is no unity. All creativity is structureless, moving because it is performed under the huge pressure of emotion toughness and eristic flashes. The inner creativity of author was always unpredictable not only for viewer but also for painter himself High diversity of stylish, thematically, formally-technical self representation of an artist always stays innovatively - impulsive. Artistic conscious of Serhiy Savchenko isn't programmed to solve just one subject (speaking of series or cycle of canvases), which with the help of creative will has to be kept and beard for a long time just until gaining a desired result. Constant for Savchenko's type of nervous and accordingly artistic organization is a motion by itself, the search for character images in their diversity, variety, rhizomatic indefiniteness and innovation as a finish result of artistic work. The pieces of art (without exceptions) of Savchenko stay an open informative environment, where there is a permanent exchange of excitors, skirmish and plexus of artistic ideas. For the viewer Serhiy Savchenko's works are a 'bank' of sharp impulses, unpredictable interpretations and eternal plastic intrigue.

1. From Serhiy Savchenko's interview in 2012. All of the further artist's quotes are used from the interview with painter, undertaken by Renata Nalisnik (2012).
2. The same.
3. The same.
4. The same.
5. The same.
6. The same.
7. Barma O. Conception of Rhizomorph labyrinth in the culture of postmodernism// Artistic Culture. Essential Problems: Scientific Messenger—Kiev, 2013.— Edition 9.
8. From S. Savchenko's interview.

Summary. this essay analyzes creative legacy of Serhiy Savchenko. This essay summarizes that the artist is a postmodernist painter who is using rhizome system.

Keywords: Serhiy Savchenko, rhizome, expressivity, spontaneity.