Gerhard Richter's Creativity as a Transformation of Historical Genre in European Art of the Xx Century
La creatividad de Gerhard Richter como transformación del género histórico en el arte europeo del siglo XX

Authors
Olga Lvovna Panchenko[1], Ildar Almazovich Zinnatov[2], Flera Gabdulbarovna Mukhametzyanova[3], Bulat Rinatovich Khismatullin[4], Rita Rinatovna Aminova[5]

[1]Candidate of Sociological Sciences, Associate Professor of World Cultural Heritage, Institute of International Relations, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Email: kadri@bk.ru, ORCID: 0000-0003-4694-1298

[2]Student at the Kazan State Institute of Culture, Email: kadri@bk.ru, ORCID: 0000-0002-6958-0512

[3]Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Department of Historical and Civic Education, Institute of International Relations of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Email: florans955@mail.ru, ORCID: 0000-0001-9991-1549

[4]Candidate of History, Senior Lecturer, Department of Historical and Civic Education, Institute of International Relations of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Email: bulatbayer@mail.ru, ORCID: 0000-0002-1133-1935

[5]First-year Master student of International relations, the Department of International Relations, World Politics and Foreign Regional Studies, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, Email: riaminova@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-6348-4431

Abstract
The second half of the twentieth century is marked by a high rhythm of change, which is very clearly manifested in art as a reflection of real time. In the 1960s, a new genre - a photo-painting - got its life. This genre has actively declared itself in the work of Gerhard Richter. Synthesizing paintings and photographs symbolizes the beginning of the artist's creative path. Richter's work is multidimensional and specific. This led to an increase in interest in him from the art historians and cultural experts of our time. The purpose of this article is an art history and cultural analysis of Gerhard Richter's paintings as a reflection of the transformation of twentieth-century art. The article uses the methods of discursive analysis, immersion method. The authors analyzed photographs (screenshots from the monitor screen) of the artist's creative works, which are a synthesis of painting and photography. Based on the analysis, conclusions are drawn that Richter uses his own painting as a research motive, a tool. He seeks to identify and explain how the image captures reality and why it is often "less truthful and objective" than reality itself. The most common themes of Richter's work are aimed at identifying elements of chance, the game between realism and abstraction. The analysis showed that the transformation of art on the example of the work of Gerhard Richter can only be comprehended in the context of the dynamic sociocultural changes of that time.

Keywords: twentieth century art, Gerhard Richter, transformation, cultural change, photograph, historical genre.

Resumen

La segunda mitad del siglo XX está marcada por un alto ritmo de cambio, que se manifiesta muy claramente en el arte como reflejo del tiempo real. En la década de 1960, un nuevo género, la pintura fotográfica, cobró vida. Este género se ha declarado activamente en la obra de Gerhard Richter. Sintetizar pinturas y fotografías simboliza el inicio del camino creativo del artista. El trabajo de Richter es multidimensional y específico. Esto llevó a un aumento del interés por él por parte de los historiadores del arte y los expertos culturales de nuestro tiempo. El propósito de este artículo es una historia del arte y un análisis cultural de las pinturas de Gerhard Richter como reflejo de la transformación del arte del siglo XX. El artículo utiliza los métodos de análisis discursivo, método de inmersión. Los autores analizaron fotografías (capturas de pantalla de la pantalla del monitor) de las obras creativas del artista, que son una síntesis de pintura y fotografía. A partir del análisis, se extraen conclusiones de que Richter utiliza su propia pintura como motivo de investigación, como herramienta. Busca identificar y explicar cómo la imagen captura la realidad y por qué a menudo es "menos veraz y objetiva" que la realidad misma. Los temas más comunes de la obra de Richter tienen como objetivo identificar los elementos del azar, el juego entre el realismo y la abstracción. El análisis mostró que la transformación del arte en el ejemplo de la obra de Gerhard Richter solo puede comprenderse en el contexto de los cambios socioculturales dinámicos de esa época.

Palabras clave: arte del siglo XX, Gerhard Richter, transformación, cambio cultural, fotografía, género histórico.

Introduction

Any painting written on a plot from the Bible or ancient history, recreated in modern scenery, or dedicated to events relevant to the writing of a work was considered historical painting from the time of the Renaissance. For many centuries, such works were considered the highest level of artistic skill.

In the 20th century there were not so many paintings of the historical genre. For Western artists, the topics of modernity were urgent, which they tried to artistically comprehend. One of such examples is the famous "Guernica" (1937) by Pablo Picasso. The German artist Gerhard Richter, in a sense, revived the historical genre in European art and gave it a significance that no one else expected to see, since traditionally such a painting glorified the powers that be, pleasing the interests of those in power; it was the voice of power embodied in the picture.

Gerhard Richter (born 1932) is a German artist famous for the mysteriousness and stylistic variety of his works - from "postcard" landscapes to minimalist gratings, from tense or disturbing monochrome paintings to clear color tables, from pasty and even flashy abstractions to cold black-and-white images based on photographs" (Rethmann, 2010).

 The genre of photographs was widespread in the 1960s. In Richter's work, the photo becomes expressive, which gives reason to attribute this artist to the masters of the genre. In addition, the term "photo" itself was coined by Richter. The artist himself noted that the genre of photographs allows you to achieve completeness and expressiveness of any pictorial picture (Buchloh, 1993). The mastering of the genre of photographs by Richter takes place under the influence of the creative atmosphere of the art circles and salons of Düsseldorf and Cologne, which in the late 1950s were centers of experimental painting and photography. Richter initially seeks his own style, trying himself in various genres and forms. The transformation of art as a synthesis of painting and photography is embodied in the artist's works for the first time since 1962. This year can be considered the beginning of Gerhard Richter's peculiar creative path.

From the same period, Richter began work on a series of "Color Charts" as defined schematized images. The number of shades in them gradually increased and by the mid-1970s reached 4,000 tones and midtones. Art historians believe that in these images the artist expressed his irrational and rational principles (Kharitonova, 2013). In addition, Richter is dialogical in them, since he is using the "color charts" trying to conduct a dialogue with the works of P. Mondrian and S. LeWitt (Storr, 2002). Thus, the multidimensionality of Richter's works and the specificity of his genre of performance has become the subject of a number of studies and the interest of art critics from the post-modern era.

The purpose of this article is an art history and cultural analysis of Gerhard Richter's paintings as a reflection of the transformation of twentieth-century art.

Methods

The research methods were, firstly, discursive analysis, which involves a subjective interpretation by an art researcher. The authors analyzed photographs (screenshots from the monitor screen) of the artist's creative works, which are a synthesis of painting and photography.

Secondly, the immersion method was applied, which involves the photofixation (screenshot from the monitor screen) of the objects of analysis with a further generalization of the analysis results.

Cognitive orientation is used methodologically - "occupying a certain position in relation to the knowable". Its product is a specific position taken in relation to the knowable (Stein, 2017). The dominant in this study is the personality of the researcher (Epishin, 2017). The knowledge obtained is arbitrarily functionally and objectively determined, has significance, first of all, within the framework of a particular discourse.

Results and Discussion

According to E. Gombrich, "adherents of progress believe that art should keep up with the era, and those who prefer the saying about the "good old days" consider modernism a false trend. In fact, the situation is more complicated, because contemporary art, like any other, arose in response to the problems that confronted it" (Gombrich, 2017).

Richter uses his own painting as a means of exploring how an image that appears to capture the "truth" is often less objective or impartial in meaning than originally intended.

Other common themes in his works are elements of chance, as well as the game between realism and abstraction. Richter's work is difficult to unambiguously relate to one of the artistic movements of the late XX century, such as abstract expressionism, American / British pop art, minimalism and conceptualism, he recreated many of his ideas, remaining distantly related to all the artistic and philosophical creeds of that time.

The works of Gerhard Richter from the Baader-Meinhof series (ill. 1-3) express a similar idea. The paintings do not cater to the power of power, they praise the challenge of power, and, ultimately, the futility of this challenge, but at the same time depict its tragic aspects, that is, the clash of ideologies and their chilling consequences. Richter, to a certain extent, is a man of his time who has survived two regimes - first the Third Reich, then the communist

system. Therefore, his paintings have important social significance, since he uses history as the subject of an image, while not listening to the opinion of society, but drawing attention to controversial issues.

The painting "September" (ill. 13-14) is another example of expressing the history of his own life, consisting of several components. The most obvious is that Richter flew on September 11, 2001 to his gallery in New York, but his flight was redirected to Halifax, as the world he was heading for was suddenly destroyed by a terrorist attack.

In addition, Gerhard Richter was influenced by his own reflection on the topic of terrorism, as a political lever that was widely used by terrorist groups in the 1970s: hijacking, bank explosions were, in some ways, symbolic acts of struggle against the State.

Another of the main components is the recollections of his youth during the war. The bombing of Dresden, the artist's hometown, in February 1945, when the British bombers were aimed primarily at civilian targets, and the destruction caused by them exceeded the limits that could be explained from a military point of view, emotionally shocked him. Blaming someone - not in the spirit of Richter, as well as suggesting some solutions, discussing politics, interfering in ideology, he rather fixes the facts. "All visual practices today, Richter insisted, are determined by interaction with popular culture and are involved in global cultural production, which forms a model of post-national identity" (Hal Foster et al., 2015).

There are many references to the war in Richter's works, but in no case did he want to speak from the position of the voice of morality, towering above the opinions of everyone else. His father fought in the fields of World War II (ill. 4), his uncle was a soldier and died in the war, and Richter painted portraits of both of them.

In particular, the portrait depicting Uncle Rudy (ill. 5) shows us a young German soldier who is eager to go to the front as soon as possible. The prerequisites for creating this picture are very important: it was painted by Richter at the request of Rene Blok, who organized an exhibition in Czechoslovakia dedicated to the German massacre in Lidice, when the population of one of the Czech villages was destroyed. Naturally, the painting was donated to the museum, where it is now. But this is quite unexpected - a young German artist depicts his uncle, from whom, according to his mother, he should take an example; portray him in the image of a young, triumphant German officer - and present this painting to a country that was once

annexed by Hitler and which suffered terrible damage. Richter, of course, was aware of the whole irony of the situation and tried to show all the contradictions of modern history by creating these paintings.

A series of works devoted to aircraft used during the war years follows (ill. 6-7). Richter also depicted the weapons of the future, or those wars that could have occurred in the sixties, at the most intense moment of the Cold War. All this time, he realized that, like all Germans, he was directly on a possible battlefield, on the front line between the countries of the pro-Soviet bloc and the countries of NATO. All these works, paintings in a similar style, were a bit of a prediction of what could happen, of what seemed possible at that moment.

This was followed by a series of works "City landscapes", drawings of cities, mainly urban landscapes (ill. 8). Often, these paintings depicted the new architecture of the postwar era, rather neat, orderly. Much depends on what eyes we look at the picture. It is important to remember, looking at these canvases, how Europe rebuilt again, that now every new building stands in place of the ruins. Even portraying the future, you unwittingly bring the past there. "Art ... is a special way of our everyday relationships with the appearance in which we recognize ourselves and everything that surrounds us. Consequently, art is a desire to create appearances comparable to real ones, therefore they are more or less similar to them" (Richter et al., 2009).

This is followed by a series of works where, in the free-brush technique, Gerhard Richter in some sense embeds values and forms, but in such a way as if the building, which plays a key role in the picture, simply crumbles before our eyes. In the case of a picture depicting the Cathedral of Milan and the Victor-Emanuel II Gallery, which is made in stripes, so that the feeling is created that the buildings are shaking (ill. 9-10). What was the reason? There is no explanation for this. But the very idea that monumental, centuries-old, Gothic Europe, and modernist Europe of the 20th century is so fragile is a partial understanding that, indeed, it is so vulnerable and we have already seen its destruction.

For selection for the exhibition "48 portraits" (ill. 11 - 12), with which he participated in the Venice Biennale in 1972, he had 300 paintings. Among them were images of Mao and other famous politicians. Probably the most provocative picture in this series was the image of Hitler, which is believed to have been destroyed. In the picture, Hitler starts a crowd, shouting something in his rather recognizable manner. For Gerhard Richter,

thinking about a topic is part of the art process. Refusing a painting, searching for a plot for it, and then creating a painting and deciding to leave it are all different parts of the creative process.

Richter does not use the concept of "abstraction" in itself; it's definitely not "pointlessness," which is another key, if you will, to modernist painting. On the one hand, many of his abstractions are the reproduction of paintings of action paintings, but his paintings themselves are not action paintings. All this comes from the fact that he believes that the picture is visual, that we do not see just abstractions, we always try to associate what we see with something that really exists, with its image. People resist, or until recently, they resisted the idea that an object might not imitate anything at all, that the object in some sense refuses to be an image at all. "Content has no form (like a dress that you can change)," Richter said. "It is itself a form (which cannot be changed)" (Taylor, 2006).

In this particular case, in the case of the painting "September" (ill. 13-14), Gerhard Richter clearly bridges the gap between the abstract painting, behind which, in fact, there is no meaning or image in the head, and the painting, behind which that is, but on which the image becomes completely unreadable or begins to dissolve and crumbles right before your eyes. So, at a basic level, this destruction is portrayed literally. Here is a picture of you a second before the modernist building is literally atomized, as if terrorists and people who were passengers on this flight, and those people who were in the office buildings into which the plane crashed, were atomized. The feeling that encompasses us that the picture is breaking before your eyes is also part of the image. In general, the picture seems to be written, but not completed, like an unfinished building.

At the same time, this refers to a large number of abstract paintings (Ill. 15), which were relatively small rectangular shapes, "flat and frankly monochrome surfaces, not completely identical to one another, and there is something paradoxical in this" (Taylor, 2006). The paintings are not quite monochrome, rather in shades of gray, in the gray zone, when the very act of applying paint and then changing directions or any other actions that mixed paint on the surface led to this poor distinguishability, leadiness.

Another part of this phenomenon is the fact that historical painting is traditionally large-scale. She is higher than ordinary life. And this is part of the effect that these paintings brought down on the viewer, stunned him, throwing them into the very thick of any dramatic events, battle, or something like that. Today we are witnessing major world

events on a small television screen. In any case, this event was seen on TV by many people, and according to the idea of the organizers of the attack, millions and millions should have seen it on TV. Awareness of the fact that they are going to attack a place in which many television antennas are concentrated. The idea of doing this in such a way as to give the action maximum visualization in a natural way, we can say that not in a very natural way, but in the format we are used to. Choosing a scale, Richter, on the one hand, chose a scale that would be anti-dramatic, especially in order not to create a heroic canvas of the type that would have been created in the past. Secondly, he decided to put the picture in a frame of the size in which we see these pictures in ordinary life, so that this connection between the creation and the negation of the picture was deliberately combined with the way we usually see it - on TV.

An important fact in choosing just such a plot is, first of all, what Richter did not portray on it. He did not portray people jumping out of the building. But there are amazing paintings of this kind. It is painful to look at them, but in this case they are talking about the death of individuals, and not about the totality of deaths and not about anything more, but about a large-scale attack on civilians. He chose not ruins for the image. He chose the very moment in which everything happens. This, if you will, is the moment of destruction. This moment is already in some sense out of time. This is an image of violence, of those seconds when death is in the focus of many objects. Richter captured a moment or a very, very short period of time in which the plane crashes, but this moment remains incomplete, acquiring symbolism, and he focuses, as I said, not on individual deaths, but on death, which simultaneously overtakes terrorists, and people who came under their attack.

Summary

Thus, the alleged historical self-awareness and reflective ontology of Gerhard Richter's paintings are the basis not only of his art, but of postmodernism as a whole. Richter canvases are most often devoted to the intricate stories of the life and death of an individual person. Although his works do not seem so expressive, emotional, spiritual as the abstract painting of the mid-20th century, to which they are visually the most similar, but all of them are not so distant, alienated and impenetrable. Works that are stylistically connected sometimes convey or evoke very different ideas, answers and feelings.
The performed art and cultural analysis showed that the specificity of the performance genre of Gerhard

Richter testifies to the transformation of twentieth-century art. Of course, this transformation can only be comprehended in the context of the dynamic sociocultural changes of that time, and is itself a source of further evolutionary changes in art and creativity.

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, everyone, while studying the works of Richter, involuntarily asks the question: is the artist able to show all varieties of history that do not fit into the continuity of artistic and aesthetic narrations. It can be affirmatively answered that, being in a prostration between reality and the past, the paintings of Gerhard Richter indicate the transmissibility of historicity, the tangibility of frozen time.

Acknowledgements

References

Buchloh, B. (1993). *Interview with G. Richter.* Art in Theory. 1900-1990. Oxford: Blackwell,. 1190 p.
Epishin, A. (2017). Phenomenon of contemporary art. On the question of defini-tion. *Art and Literature Scientific and Analytical Journal TEXTS, 3,* 72–79.
Gombrich, E. (2017). *Art History.* M .: Art-XXI century, 668 p., Ill.
Hal Foster et al. (2015). Art since 1900: modernism, anti-modernism, postmodernism. under the editorship of A. Fomenko, A. Shestakova. M.: GARAGE x AdMarginem, 816 p.
Kharitonova, M.A. (2013). Genre of photographs in the painting of the twentieth century. Gerhard Richter. *Art History: Theory, History, Practice, 2*(6), 65-72.
Rethmann, P. (2010). Phantom memory. Commentary on the cycle of Gerhard Richter "October 18, 1977. *Siniy divan, 15,* 61-75.
Richter, G., Elger, D., & Obrist, H. U. (2009). *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007.* Distributed Art Pub Inc.
Stein S. Yu. (2017). *Methodology in art criticism.* Decorative art and object-spatial environment. *Gerald of the MGHPA, 1*(4), 32-46.
Storr, R. (2002). *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 340 p.
Taylor, B. (2006). *ART TODAY: Contemporary art 1970 – 2005.* Brandon Taylor; transl. from English E. D. Melenevskaya. M.: Slovo,. 256 p.

Application:
Ill. 1 – 3.

Confrontation 2
(Gegenüberstellung 2). 1988
Oil on canvas. 112x102
The Museum of Modern Art, (MoMA), New York, USA

Young Girl

(Jugendbildnis). 1988
Oil on canvas. 67x62
The Museum of Modern Art, (MoMA), New York, USA

Dead (Tote). 1988
Oil on canvas. 62x62
The Museum of Modern Art, (MoMA), New York, USA

Ill. 4.

Horst with dog (Horst mit Hund). 1965
Oil on canvas. 80x60

Ill. 5.

Uncle Rudi (Onkel Rudi). 1965
Oil on canvas. 87x50
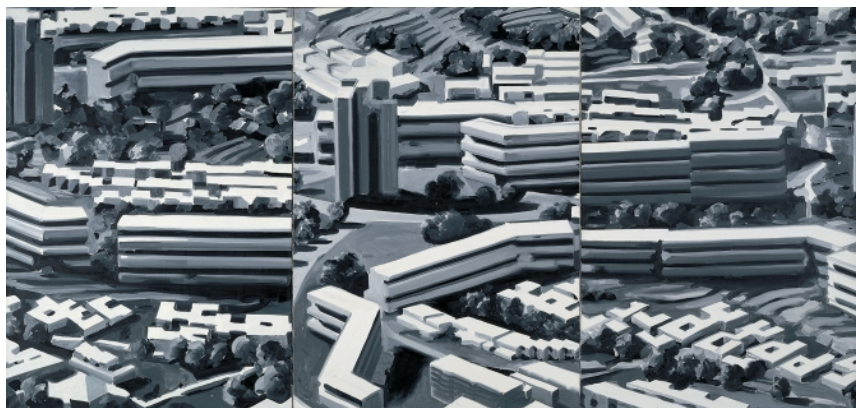The Lidice gallery Collection, Lidice, Czech Republic

Ill. 6 - 7.

Bomber. 1963
Oil on canvas. 130x180
City-Gallery, Wolfsburg, Germany

Jet Fighter (Düsenjäger). 1963
Oil on canvas. 30x200
Sold at Phillips Auction, New York, USA (2016)
Ill. 8.

Urban landscape (Stadtbild TR). 1969
Oil on canvas. 174x124
Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany

Ill. 9 - 10.

Mailand: Dom

Milan Cathedral (Mailand: Dom). 1964
Oil on canvas. 130x130

Cathedral Square, Milan (Domplatz, Mailand). 1968
Oil on canvas. 275x290

Ill. 11 – 12.

48 portraits (48 Porträt). 1971-1972
Oil on canvas. 70x55
Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany

Hitler. 1962
Oil on canvas. 110x130

Ill. 13 – 14.

Terrorist acts
on 11 September 2001
Source: ua.112.ua

September. 2005
Oil on canvas.52x72
The Museum of Modern Art, (MoMA), New York, USA
Ill. 15.

Abstract painting (Abstraktes Bild). 2000
Oil on canvas. 46x40