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Kazymyr Sikhulskyi – Creator of *Hutsulian Modern.*

Annotation. The article considers development peculiarities of Polish modernism of the late 19th and early 20th century and a new quest in the painting of the period of Young Poland, which was forming under the influence of national culture and folk art of Hutsulshchyna. Many-sided creative work of K. Sikhulskyi with his romantic perception, the way he interprets folk images and motifs and principle decorativeness with modern traces of local character typical of him are taken as an example.

Key words. Modernism, cubism, futurism, stained-glass window, mosaic, inspiration, genre painting, ethnography.

The last quarter of the 19th century influenced both a man's consciousness and psychology, his way of thinking and imagination, and art under a rapid development of science and technology.

At the start of the 20th century, a certain type of culture, formed during the Victorian era, changed at the same time. Queen Victoria passed away in 1901, which had symbolic significance. However, the inception of new art trends dates considerably earlier, for example, Symbolism (Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh). Such trends as Cubism (Pablo Picasso, Jacques Braque, and Paul Cezanne), Fauvism (Henri Matisse) and Futurism (Filippo Marinetti) asserted themselves after 1900. The article of Filippo Marinetti, the poet, entitled The Manifesto of Futurism for young artists was published in the Le Figaro newspaper during that period. It proclaimed telegraph style,

rejection from traditional grammar, destruction pathos, cult of the future and discrimination of the past and present.

The period of Polish Modernism started in about 1890 and was bound with the creative work of S. Wyspianskyi, Yu. Megoffier and L. Vychulkovskyi. Since the first decade of the 20th century there had matured the second wave of Modernism with its inherent Avant guard trend, Expressionism [1, 7]. The representatives of that generation were greater optimists than their senior colleagues, artists and poets, with their Decadent principles.

Aesthetic tastes, developed by the salon-academic ideals, were eroded by sophisticated searches in painting, most of which originated from the national culture and folklore. Kazymyr Sikhulskyi was one of such artists of the period of Young Poland. Over the last few years, one can observe that his creative work is rediscovered and evokes a new interest among collectors, art critics and art admirers. This is proved by increased demand for the works of the Lviv painter at auctions and sale of his works at high prices. Undoubtedly, sense perception of works of art by the viewer is deeply subjective. Some enjoy naturalistic, three-dimensional recreation of reality and subtle mystery of Rembrandt; the classic balanced beauty by Leonardo attracts the others. Regardless of the way, one perceives the powerful and multifaceted talent of K. Sikhulskyi, whether his creative work excites, thrills and fills with enthusiasm, or seems something distant, strange, unapproachable and a bit violent, one thing is evident: everyone, who is familiar with his huge heritage, at least with its basic manifestations, admires, respects and is amazed at its undeniable excellence.

K. Sikhulskyi (1879-1942) was born in Lviv. He studied at Krakow Academy of Arts (1900-1908) and at School of Applied Arts of Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (1902). In 1904, he visited such European art centers as Vienna, Munich, Dresden, Rome, Venice and Florence, studied at Colarossi's Academy in Paris.

Unprecedented energy and intensity of Sikhulskyi's talent rank second to none in the field of art. No branch of painting was left unchallenged by the artist, and he covered crucial aspects within every.

He pursued folk art, portraiture and caricature, landscape painting, historical genre, mural painting, stained glass, fresco, mosaic, as well as tapestry and carpet, architectural designs and

decorative-applied art. Everything mentioned above has been represented in his heritage, it generates interest and stimulates to creative work with a true enthusiasm of an artist. Great creative agitation is essential to Sikhulskyi. It never lets him take a break and say to himself — enough! Further and Better! is his lifelong motto. This can be felt in any composition, even in the best-designed and mastered one. It seems that the artist tried to say considerably more than is perceived at the moment, that his creative energy in inexhaustible, it just bursts in fragmentary, nervous, spontaneous eruptions, leaving the rest of the molten rock in irrational depths of the spirit.

Creative anxiety keeps his artistic curiosity in constant tension and urges to renewed reinterpretation of styles of various ages and epochs. However, his individuality is so powerful that it always conquers the summit victoriously: whether it tends to monumental old Christian mosaic, or primitivism of Roman miniature, or is of Baroque magnitude or subtle Rococo or it is expressionistically deformed or aspires to Cubism or is of classic harmony — everything is always a single, unique and unparalleled creation by Sikhulskyi.

Trying to reveal the most important aspect of his creative work, one can characterize Sikhulskyi's painting as decorative.

Among all creative impulses, he got at Krakow Academy of Fine Arts, the highest aspiration of the student of Vychulkovskiyi, Megoffier and Vyspianskyi was to share energy and power that awaken those spontaneous, poetic in their wildness and romantic by nature Hutsuls, who have been staying synonymous with creative work of Sikhulskyi for a long time. Following the words of Eva Goushka, the curator of the monographic exhibition of K. Sikhulskyi and author of the catalogue, his Hutsuls are not mythical heroes but usually passive individuals merged into the rhythm of nature and subordinated to its pantheistic supremacy [2]. No one from Poland has ever depicted such powerful and truthful folk types and images on canvas, either single or in groups combined in the scenes of Hutsul wedding parties or driving cattle to the mountain pastures, etc. before K. Sikhulskyi. Scenes from everyday life of Hutsuls are predominant in the first phase of his creative work, namely in such paintings as Black Lamb (1904), Young Hutsul (1905), Hutsul with Sheep (1906), An Orphan (1906), Willow Sunday (1906) — a triptych. "That was a discovery as nobody had ever demonstrated such

impressive might, verve, explosive dynamics and contemptuous attitude towards meticulous correctness and everything that was sweet, smooth, flawless and academic,' V. Kozytskyi wrote [3].

In winter 1904-1905 K. Sikhulskyi, F. Pautsh and Yarotskyi travelled to Hutsulshchyna. Folk traditions, religious rituals and Hutsul dress fascinated the artist and became the main source of inspiration over the years. The rites of Greek Catholic church with the heathen tint, pagan spirit that wrapped the realm of Chornohora Mountain and everyday life of Hutsuls, everything inspired folklore trend in the author's creative work, thus influencing his personality. K. Sikhulskyi, who was hiding in the inaccessible solitary neighborhoods of the Carpathians moths long, studied colors of everyday existence of Hutsuls, creating unique gallery of Hutsulian types and genre scenes.

The early period is marked with the sound of a different principle soul string of the artist. The Indomitable, as they used to call K. Sikhulskyi in Lviv artistic environment, demonstrated subtle manner and sophistication, ability to express everything that is considered delicate, soft and lyrical about the human nature in pastel studios of flowers and women's portraits, in contrast to his fierce bravado and harshness with which he depicted Hutsuls. Anti-naturalistic way of using a choppy, nervous, autonomous line in those pastels, that draws an analogy between him and Vyspianskyi, is remarkable for the principle decorativeness of K. Sikhulskyi's art, which is widely spread in images and motifs of Hutsuls, for example in *Sunday* (1907), where three shepherdesses entertain themselves playing the reed pipe.

The element of decorativeness develops magnificently and takes center stage during the second period of creative work of K. Sikhulskyi that lasted from 1908 to the beginning of World War I. That is when the artist reaps the benefits of his learning from Mehoffer, and particularly from Vyspianskyi, proceeding his studies at Vienna Kunstgewerbemuseum where the system of art education was structured following the English model under the supervision of Alfred Boller, Koloman Maser, Josef Hoffmann and Adolf Loos, the architect. The artist creates his great ornamentally finished cardboards to *Spring* (1908), *Resurrection* (1909), *Annunciation* (1909), *The Shepherds' Bow* (1910) stained-glass windows, and cardboards to the mosaics *Madonna with Angels* (1909) later on,

and Three Kings' Bow (1912), one of the most spectacular and grandest K. Sikhulskyi's works depicting Hutsul figures that more often change their naturalistic relevance in favor of abstract pre-Slavonic fabulousness.

Ihor Khomyn, head of the department of Lviv Art Gallery, remarked that Hutsul Virgin Mary (1914) from the collection of Lviv Art Gallery is a perfect proof of the power of K. Sikhulskyi. The painter often addressed himself to the theme. The triptych Madonna with Angels (1909) was the first one among Hutsul Virgin Marys. It was bought in 1911 by Austrian Gallery in Vienna (Osterreichischen Galerie Wien). This composition was inspired by the same ideas of the author as the triptych Three Kings' Bow (1913), bought from K. Sikhulskyi by the National Museum in Warsaw in 1927 [4].

The third period in creative work of K. Sikhulskyi began after mid-1914. New revolutionary art trends influenced the painter. Although K. Sikhulskyi did not accept cubism and form convention, these trends influenced his painting in the form of geometric stylization and deliberate cubism manner of interpretation of figures. There emerge marks of expressionistic partition of form in favor of impression in some works such as Defense of Lviv and Napoleon after Berezina.

At the same time, the painter nourishes his imagination with retrospective view on artistic and aesthetic principles of the past epochs, namely Barocco and Rubens, its representative (Nymph with Fawns, Bacchanalia). He turns to Rococo and Vatto, its representative, in some works (In the Park, After the Ball), has something in common with Rafael and Leonardo (Madonna with a Child). However, this wave of innovation searches did not last long.

Soon, K. Sikhulskyi arrived at a peaceful neoclassical harbor, neo-renaissance to be exact, which, rejecting impressionistic symbolism, preserved accuracy of the drawing, harmony and rich color depth, built on the combination of local colors with domination of sensuous, lyrical, epic or dramatic sense. During this period, his earlier themes of naturalistic type lose their random character, acquiring the features of thoroughly balanced and harmonious composition. Such works as Hutsul Wedding (1924), Comeback of the Married Couple from the Church in Hutsulshchyna (1925),

Hiking to the Mountain Meadow (1925) and An Old Woman with a Rooster (1926) are evidence of this is.

Giving analysis of the three periods of creative work of the artist, one can trace a steady progress from initial naturalistic randomness toward precise and well thought out composition, more accurate image design based on the chosen geometric construction and mass balance that complies with the harmony of color chords.

In his great indomitable Hutsuls of the first period of creative work the artist represents how they feel the pulse of life rather than composes images; he captures the most characteristic folk characters reinforcing them with his own vitality and depicting them in bravura manner, flooding them with sunlight. Everything changed completely in the last period.

The works devoted to Hutsul theme of the third period of his creative work are rather fundamental in terms of their sculpturesque value. They are totally different than K. Sikhulskyi's work of the early period. You see the same theme of ethnographic exotics and flavor of primitive society: a Hutsul family is going to the mountain meadow; old mother is riding horseback, followed by the girl with a ram; a youth is playing the trembita (a traditional Hutsul musical wind instrument); a Hutsul wedding ceremony is returning from the church: a married couple is riding horseback wearing ancient dress, with ribbons in the hair and on the hats. The horses' heads are decorated with red yarn tassels; the bridesmaid has a light red hunia (antique Ukrainian mantle) on, a young best man is in front of her holding a loaf. There is musician playing the violin in the foreground on the right. Two lads with trembitas are leading the campaign. The wedding procession is following them. The traditional dress, its color and fairy tale forms radiate joy and are eye pleasing.

Everything was or could exist before, only now these motifs are rendered through a laconic and elaborate construction. As a result, a temporary fragment of life was artistically transposed expressing a painterly ideal. Symmetry, which is aesthetically subdued in Hiking to the Mountain Meadow by means of rearrangements and displacements, a big ellipse, in the form of which the figures of people and landscape are arranged in Hutsul Wedding, and a special triangular composition of the main group of the married couple, the bridesmaid and a village musician — these are geometric

schemes used by K. Sikhulskyi in his famous Hutsulshchyna. The constructive basis is complemented by knowledge of aspects in coloristic and ability to create artistic images. The colors are neither randomly scattered nor disintegrated divisionally, but combined into firm local complexes and resonant pulse beat.

Such construction of Hutsul images and motifs, concerning almost tectonic principles, dominates in the theme of genre painting and fills the content with heroic rhapsody.

K. Sikhulskyi, molded as a personality and an artist during the period of Young Poland, would live forever as a child of his epoch. In the 20s, he promoted romantic perception of Hutsulshchyna. The merit of the artist is that he popularized a picturesque myth: a colorful primitive country and Hutsuls, its inhabitants. Stanislaw Vincenz inherited the helm in literature: In the Remote Mountain Meadow, the most famous Hutsul epic.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Василь Дутка. Казимир Сіхульський — творець «гуцульського» модерну. Розглядаються особливості становлення польського модернізму кінця XIX — поч. XX ст. та новітні пошуки в малярстві періоду Молодої Польщі, які формувались під впливом національної культури і народного мистецтва Гуцульщини на прикладі багатогранної творчості К. Сіхульського з його романтичним сприйняттям, трактуванням народних образів і мотивів та з притаманною йому принциповою декоративністю з рисами сецесії локального забарвлення.

Ключові слова. Модернізм, кубізм, футуризм, вітраж, мозаїка, інспірації, жанровість, етнографія.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Василий Дутка. Казимир Сихульский — создатель «гуцульского» модерна. Рассматриваются особенности становления польского модернизма конца XIX — начала XX ст. и новейшие поиски в живописи периода Молодой Польши, которые формировались под влиянием национальной культуры и народного искусства Гуцульщины на примере многогранного творчества К. Сихульского с его романтическим восприятием, трактовкой народных образов и мотивов и с присущей ему принципиальной декоративностью с чертами сецессии локального окраску.

Ключевые слова. Модернизм, кубизм, футуризм, витраж, мозаика, вдохновения, жанровисть, этнография.