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# STILISTINIS UKRAINOS AVANGARDINIO TEATRINIO KOSTIUMO PAVELDAS

## Stylistic Heritage of Ukrainian Avant-Garde Theatrical Costume

### SUMMARY

The article offers a comprehensive analysis of the evolution and significance of avant-garde theatrical costumes in Ukrainian art during the early 20th century. Distinctly emphasizing the shift of stage costume from mere functional apparel to a symbolic imagery, the study investigates the blending of local Ukrainian traditions with external avant-garde influences from Western Europe and Russia. It underscores the significant roles of artists like Malevich and Exter in the fusion of futurism and cubism within theatrical designs. The avant-garde movement in Ukraine transformed theatrical costume design by introducing non-standard shaping methods, innovative materials, and techniques that prioritize symbolic over aesthetic values. The article concludes with the avant-garde's revolutionary impact on scenographic approaches, accentuating its role in the artistic synthesis of performance, stage design, and costuming. This study serves as a crucial reference for scholars exploring avant-garde influences in theatrical design and its implications in art history and theatre studies.

### SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje išsamiai analizuojama XX a. pradžios avangardinių teatro kostiumų raida ir reikšmė Ukrainos mene. Atliekant tyrimą nagrinėjama, kaip vietinės ukrainietiškos tradicijos susilieja su Vakarų Europos ir Rusijos avangardo tendencijomis, pabrėžiant, kad sceninis kostiumas iš paprasto, tam tikrą funkciją atliekančio drabužio virsta simboliu jvaizdžiu. Straipsnyje akcentuojama, kad teatro dizaino srityje sujungiant futurizmą ir kubizmą svarbų vaidmenį atliko tokie menininkai kaip Malevičius ir Exteris. Ukrainos avangardinis judėjimas, pradėjęs taikyti nestandartinius modeliavimo būdus, naujoviškas medžiagas ir technikas, kuriose pirmenybė teikiama simbolinėms, o ne estetinėms vertybėms, pakeitė teatrinio kostiumo dizainą. Straipsnio pabaigoje aptariama revoliucinė avangardo įtaka scenografijai, pabrėžiant jos vaidmenį meninei spektaklio, scenos ir kostiumų sintezei. Šis tyrimas yra labai svarbus šaltinis mokslininkams, tyrinėjantiems avangardo poveikį teatro dizainui ir jo reikšmę meno istorijai bei teatro studijoms.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: avangardinis performansas, avangardinio teatrinio kostiumo semiotika, liaudies menas.

KEY WORDS: avant-garde performance, semiotics of the avant-garde theatrical costume, folk art.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern Russian researchers have long argued that the term “avant-garde” is not ideal for use in art history because of its inflexibility, military-political origins, and historically belated origins (Sarabyanov 2000). Considering this, some researchers suggested using the dichotomy of “modernism” and “avant-gardism” notions. Being not devoid of artistic essence, fauvism, cubism, and expressionism had been ascribed to the former; while futurism, dadaism and surrealism had been attributed to the latter. Problems of the study on avant-garde theatrical costume in Ukraine run through a sequence of stages: structuring the morphology of movements and trends included in the concept of avant-garde, their colorful embodiment in theatrical art, its scenography, and costumes, spreading of the acquired insights into the national stage models. Creating a new face of an avant-garde performance, among other issues, required answers to questions about its design and costume, which in their formation would embody the radical theoretical concepts of the left-wing artists. This article suggests the answers to the questions about stylistic expression of the first avant-garde theatre projects in Russia, their costumes, the ways, and methods of their transition into Ukrainian theatrical practices. Modern encyclopedic publications tend to interpret “left” art with reference to this division (Vlasov 2004). The theory behind such a gradation is based on fundamentally different ways to perform the creative act:

such as personal-intellectual in modernism, and collective in avant-garde.

The difficulty behind the suggested gradation also lies within the idea that the art critics define origins of all the phenomena of “left art” to be derived from symbolism, thus combining sensuality of the symbol in its constructivist embodiment and new possibilities of formation. However, the symbolist source in various European countries had many different representations and expressions. Therefore, symbolism, having synthesized itself with the modern and modernist context, created a significant variability of artistic phenomena in the 1910s (Kovalenko 2003).

Having thoroughly studied the general characteristics of the Ukrainian avant-garde, art critic Oleksandr Fedoruk defined its national components, emphasizing, in particular, the important role of educational factor, merely related to art schools formed in different regions of Ukraine, and partly outside it; peculiar stylistic devices derived from theoretical generalisations of different artists in new art; as well as the folklore art as a source of the numerous mythologemes, folklore motifs, peculiar and specific colour palette and figurable geometrism of compositional structures of the new painting art (Fedoruk 2006). Central Ukrainian cities have become the hubs for sharing ideas of European avant-garde. Thus, Michael Semenko and Pavlo Kovzhun created a futuristic communion in 1913. Oleksandr Zakrzhevsky immediately published his work titled

“Knights of Madness (Futurists)” in 1914, where he interpreted such notions as “Futurism” and “Cubism” as synonyms, suggesting the description of the literary works with the former, and the painting art with the latter one (Zakrzhevsky 1914).

It was soon that the experimental nature of avant-garde led its followers to the theatre. Changes into theatre systems were evolving in the 1910s; namely, naturalism of the performance gave way to the model of conditional aesthetic modern theatre. This peculiar change in the development of theatre could be observed both in countries of Western Europe and in Russia. Considering this background, left artists demonstrated interest in creating the performance of a new type. Therefore, performance practices of avant-garde artists appeared and developed concurrently. They aimed at breaking away from the methods formerly used to create the scenography and costumes and focused more on transforming them into the imagery driven by the subconscious and irrational genius of the artists.

Nowadays, study of the theatrical avant-garde in Ukrainian art discourse is being actively carried out and is on the rise. As most modern national art critics and scientists acknowledge, it originates from the activities of the acting troupe under the direction of Les Kurbas who created his own system, defined as the theatre of accentuated “influence” and “manifestation”, in which ensemble features expressed by the collective work of director, artist, actors were of paramount importance (Klekovkin 1999). Concurrently, other ex-

perimental theatres that appeared in big industrial cities of Ukraine on the wave of new trends were also honing methods and practices used in expressionism, cubism, and constructivism in their theatrical processes (Veselovska 2010).

The matter of avant-garde theatrical costume takes not the least part in the above-mentioned subject of scientific research. However, the range of publications of general content devoted to the problems of theatrical and decorative expression of avant-garde performance and costume as integral components of artistic synthesis is limited. Most of the publications on the subject matter are devoted to the personalities of the most famous theatre artists, such as Anatoliy Petrytskyi (1895-1964) (Khmuryi 1929; Lozynsky and Rudenko 2012), Vadym Meller (1884-1962) (Rudenko 2020), Oleksandr Khvostenko-Khvostov (1895-1967) (Gorbachev 1987), who worked for a long period of time within the casts of different national theatres such as drama, music, ballet theatres, which does not provide a holistic view on the methods applied to the artistic design of a performance in the theatrical avant-garde.

The article comprehensively analyses the ways of origin and spreading of theatrical avant-garde ideas in Ukraine in the context of developing new methods of creating a stage costume. As a result of the imposition of historical-comparative, formal and semiotic methods on the factual basis of the study, important patterns in the development of avant-garde theatrical costume were established. Cultural contacts of artists who were the drivers of the ideas of “left” art in Western Europe, Russia and Ukraine in the

early 20th century created a prolific atmosphere for the emergence of new forms of artistic creativity, which formed a wide range of unique artist's techniques. In this process, the artists were given the opportunity to radically update the traditions of making a stage costume, changed its meaning and methods of its framing. The costume became a sign that encoded the course of the play and the characters, and therefore, needed semantic interpretation. The uniqueness of a set of costumes made by one or the other artist for a particular theatrical project at the same time fostered the overall process of development of the theatrical avant-garde of the decorative art as part of the theatrical avant-garde. On this path in the theatrical avant-garde costume of Ukraine, there evolved the process of synthesis of local traditions and new approaches brought from the outside. The origins of architectonic models of stage costumes used by artists in the 1920s are still not fully analysed today.

As a separate category, the "avant-garde theatrical attire" contains an excessively large variety of features. This feature complicates the analysis of its stylistic expression and requires special

structuring according to the characteristics of a particular movement or trend. In our opinion, the fundamentals of the Ukrainian theatrical avant-garde costume should be sought both in Ukraine and abroad, since the 1910s were the time of active contacts between artists of various origins, whose destinies and life paths intersected based on art education and exhibition projects that took place in large cities. It was just in this way that the artists associated with Ukraine in the early 20th century gained their experience and acquaintance with the ideas of "left art", while migrating between Paris, Moscow, St. Petersburg. This became an important impetus for the development of the theatrical avant-garde in Russia and Ukraine. Kazimir Malevich and Alexandra Exter appeared to be among those "pioneers" who left Ukraine in search of new forms of art. A genuine manifestation of futuristic and partly cubist concepts evolved in their work. These artists became pillars of new art not only thanks to their easel works, but also owing to the extraordinary theatrical projects carried out in the 1910s on the wave of fascination with the concepts of futurism and cubism.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experience of insight into the basics of futurism at the initial stage of K. Malevich and O. Exter's artistry appeared to be of great importance for the creation of art compositions of a new type. Experimenting with the colour and the form, they aimed at discovering new forms and images, emancipated from the classic traditions, which would be perceived as

independently existing motifs. In this search, it became necessary to combine the art, exhibition, and cognitive activities. The artists painted, arranged exhibitions, and travelled a lot. O. Exter shared then her experience with Kyiv art environment. In 1908 and in partnership with Davyd Burliuk, she curated here an exhibition of modern art, called "Lanka".

The search for new painting techniques led artists to theatrical projects that gave rise to the concept of “avant-garde performance”. The opera “Victory over the Sun”, which was first staged in St. Petersburg in December 1913, was one of the first performances of the futuristic theatre in Russia, called “Budetlyany” created by members of the group “Youth Union”. The theatre promoted the concept of “alogism” as a method of creating the new art. Thus, the opera, created by Alexei Kruchenykh, Mikhail Matyushin and K. Malevich, became a visual instance of the program guidelines of futurism. Let us merely recall the invocation of its famous representative F.-T. Marinetti (1914) “to kill the moonlight”.

The costumes created by K. Malevich became a vivid embodiment of the ideas of Italian futurism integrated into French cubism. They portrayed extraordinary chimera characters, marked with the names-codes, such as: “bully”, “malicious”, “old-timer”, “attentive worker”, “aviator”, “mortician”, “athlete” and many others. Each of them had their own meaning and behaviour that by means of gestures either depicted the breakthrough of a man into the future through the use of technical devices and scientific advances, or, conversely, inhibited these intentions. In his imagery solutions K. Malevich resorted to the camouflage technique, replacing the face with a generalization of the head within the author’s geometry of forms, divided into colour segments. Some other characters, though, still had a make-up face. The colour range of all characters was correlated with text remarks.

The silhouettes of costumes, devoid of object characteristics, were made of

large geometric cardboard figures on wire mounts, in which the triangles and quadrilaterals of the torsos, combined with circles that formed the shapes of heads, clearly dominated. The architectonics of individual costumes figuratively revealed to the viewer the personality traits of the character, incidentally, the strongmen had extremely developed shoulders pulled up to the lower half of the face; barefoot athlete; bulging breasts of a bully; conspicuous belly to depict a fat man. In this regard, each form turned out to be a sign or symbol. Another way to highlight the characters’ identities was to apply the signs of occupations and professions on their clothes; thus, the singer had a music note; and the “attentive worker” was identified with a tool. Previous researchers have also observed such a radicalization of the shape of the dress, which changed the function of the stage costume from clothing to more figurative and symbolic expression.

Cubistic nature of shape forming was clearly manifested in theatrical action and costumes. These approaches provide evidence of K. Malevich’s familiarity with the French art of modernism which was largely based on P. Cezanne’s formative concepts. K. Malevich and the artists of his circle, who were supporters of Cezanneism, closely followed the emergence of the Cubism manifestos and sought to apply and promote their postulates in their own national artistic environment. Therefore, it is quite natural that the first publication of a kind appeared in Russia in 1913 and preceded the staging of the opera “Victory over the Sun”. The issue was edited by the composer of the opera M. Matyushin (Glez and Metzenge, 1913). The text of

the publication emphasized that French artists had an “artistic form” as one of the cornerstones for the creation of works of a new type: “Cubist artists... tirelessly study the artistic form and the specific spatial relationships it creates. ... The forms located in this space have a dynamic nature that we must be able to subdue” (Glez and Metzenge, 1913). Defined by the French Cubists, two ways of dividing the form on the canvas referred to its merging with color, and emphasized the importance of the artist’s mastery of taste. Drawing in his artistic and theatrical practices on the instruction of the French Cubists that Cubism is not a system, but a living method, K. Malevich continued his own theoretical study of the principles of Cubism and Futurism. He foresaw the future in the intuitive creativity devoid of object characteristics. It was merely this kind of creativity that he associated with the artistic form. In futurism, the artist considered the dynamics of colour to be one of the most important discoveries, although he also beheld its limited possibilities. He wrote: “The movement, running of a horse, steam of the locomotive, can be conveyed with a monophonic drawing of a pencil, but it is impossible to depict the movement of red, green, and blue masses” (Malevich 1929). Regarding this, the accomplishments and scope of cubism, which, according to the artist, destroyed the object/thing, suggesting pure painting, were of much greater importance to him. Overlapping of the futurism methods with the ones of the cubism led him to supremacism.

Using the triad of “light” – “air” – “movement”, K. Malevich managed to create on stage a hugely popular among

the futurists sculptural dynamics technique. His characters lost their natural entirety, acquiring, instead, the new object quality, in which the artist believed the “energy of dissonance” to be the most essential (Malevich 1929). He accurately calculated the perception of costumes and scenery from the near and far rows by all spectators, noting that this requires “colour painting”, when the whole space is covered with colour. This approach, in his opinion, provided the viewer’s perception of one colour point, and therefore clearly structured spatial plans (Griber 2021).

The costumes created by K. Malevich became an integral part of the new theatre that was evolving by means of modernism and avant-gardism in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stylistically they were perceived as a continuum of the scenography settings, free from decorative features, but instead full of new symbolic meaning expressed and supported by pantomime underlying the performance. All the visual components of the opera melted into a complex system of traditional and modern universals, among which the most important were – the Universe, the future, the people of Budetyany. Working in a cubist manner gave a creative impetus to the subsequent search and transition from the space of earthly objects to the space of the world.

After the premiere performance of the “Victory over the Sun” in 1914, the artist F.-T. Marinetti visited Moscow; during his lectures he made the public aware of the ideas of Italian futurists and their manifestations. Unlike Russian futurists such as Natalia Goncharova and Mykhailo Larionov, K. Malevich supported the ideas of Italian artist. A few years later,

in 1917, K. Malevich would present his thoughts on what the new theater, performance, scenography should be in a separate article, specifying the task of a new synthesis of arts as follows: "A stage is a place that in terms of its imagery, as well as the sound should be under control either of the artist-colourist or the actor. This is the most difficult part, to find a point where the intuition would touch upon all of them" (Malevich 1917).

Three early theatrical projects of O. Exter related to Kyiv and Ukraine, carried out at the Alexander Tairov Chamber Theatre in Moscow, such as: "Famira Kifared" (1916), "Salome" (1917) and "Romeo and Juliet" (1921) were extremely important for the Ukrainian theatrical avant-garde costume. They highlighted the search for the methods of modelling of new silhouettes, the development of the shape and architectonics of stage costumes. Having been studying the sketches and costumes designed by O. Exter for decades, the art critics and scientists defined her style quite differently, emphasising the uniqueness of the author's style of the artist, which combines the signs of neo-impressionism, modernism, and cubist-futurism (Tugenhold 1934).

In the mentioned performances of the artist, it is important to single out and comprehend a few approaches and features as the ones that provided the scenographic ensemble. Work on colour; work on the form; and work on the composition were in the vanguard. These factors worked as components of artistic synthesis. G. Kovalenko was the researcher who most thoroughly studied the broad sculptural thinking of O. Exter, its range, and the theatricals of figurative space. His report on the character and

their image being an independent participant in the performing arts, not lost in the scenery, was important for understanding the architectural patterns of the theatrical costumes made by O. Exter (Kovalenko 1993).

Shaping of all elements of O. Exter's stage costume was based on structuring the space with simple geometric segments, which gradually revealed its integrity. The feeling of heterogeneity of the dress was enhanced by the combination of different textures of fabrics, which in motion created the effect of colour variability. This was the way how emotionality of the outfit and its attribute soul was born. The costume, created on such principles, was designed to draw the pattern of movements in the performance, either stormy or slow, or eurythmic. Sketches for the play "Famira Kifared" show that the technique of clothing segmentation used by the artist had a clearly expressed style of antique clothing in the latest interpretations. In "Salome", the same approach was based on creating a model of clothing from simple rectangles assembled into strips. In "Romeo and Juliet" we see a combination of techniques of fan modelling from straight fragments-strips either hanging or three-dimensionally folded. This arrangement of the parts into a single shape provided the form with a complex division into verticals, horizontals, and diagonals. The dynamics of the silhouettes was enhanced by a specially built colour structure formed by chromatic bands, in which the colour was decomposed into dark and light tones. It seemed that in each of the costumes the colour was laid in wide longitudinal stripes, the transitions between which gave the silhouette

graphicness, incidentally, linearly clear in "Salome" and plastically artistic in "Romeo and Juliet". Hence, in the costumes of each of the performances there was a specific colour approach, either colour contrast (as in "Salome"), tonal saturation of a particular colour (as in "Famira Kifared"), or an elegant combination of a pair of coordinated and muted shades (as in "Romeo and Juliet"). An additional factor in the emotional sound of colours on stage was a well-thought-out lighting system. In the play "Famira Kifared", it agreed with the lines of the make-up graphics of the actors' posture, apparently inspired by O. Exter's samples of ancient red-figure ceramics. This is evidenced by the manner of the artist to mark the decor on the sketches in groups or rows of spots of the Corinthian style. This approach to the make-up of the character complemented the function of the mask and expanded its capabilities. All these techniques formed the ensemble of stage costumes, the composition of the action, its connection with the scenography, and gave birth to the beauty of emotions and experiences.

The dynamism of the artist's costumes was brought to life by various factors that have not been fully studied yet. The early 20th century led to the emergence of theatrical sketches of costumes in motion in the development of modern aesthetics. We see Leon Bakst and Konstantin Korovin among their most prominent creators. This style of sketching was associated with ballet dance and embodied the ballet movement. The dynamism of the sketches made by O. Exter for the theatre of O. Tairov partly bears an imprint of modernism. At the same time, in our opinion,

one of the significant impetuses for the artist's creative experiment here were some of the specific instructions from the manifestos of Italian futurists, whose collection was printed in Moscow in 1914, shortly before the production of drama "Famira Kifared". It was the futurism, which was discovering and spreading the laws of avant-garde art at the time, that emphasized the possibility of an infinite number of transformations of human body, in which the ability to have wings, and thus dynamism, was hidden (Marinetti 1914). Exploring this context of corporeality, painters from the futurist camp defined "dynamic feeling" as an independent category: "... everything moves, everything runs, everything is quickly transformed. The profile never remains motionless in front of us, but constantly appears and disappears. Once the preservation of the image on the retina is given, moving objects multiply, deform, continuing like accelerated vibrations in the space they pass. Thus, a running horse has not four legs, but twenty, and their movements are triangular" (Marinetti 1914). In her techniques of modelling shapes and silhouettes, O. Exter obviously turned to these guidelines, turning them into theatrical images of characters. The symbolism here intersected with futurism, while the dynamics of the painting spot overlapped with the linear graphics of segmentation of the costume and the stage composition in general.

The futurism, which, for the embodiment of its ideas, recognized the paramount importance of a single theatrical project, introduced the idea of techniques for designing models that would have the nature of movement and multiplicity



of silhouette in architectonics of theatrical costumes by O. Exter. Here again we find a parallel between O. Exter's methods of shaping and the notion of the "power line" as the core of the delineation declared by Boccioni. This technique, according to the artist, provided each subject with physical transcendence and infinity: "These *lines of power* must capture and captivate the viewer, who will somehow have to fight with the characters of the painting. We need to draw these mere *lines of power* to bring the work of art back to true painting. We interpret nature, giving these objects on the canvas, as the beginnings and continuations of the rhythms that are communicated to our sensitivity by these objects themselves" (Marinetti 1914). O. Exter considered interest in the artistic experiment to be the basis of her work in the future. In 1915 she became a member of the group "Supremus", which arose around the concept of a new method of K. Malevich, which under the name of supremacism became a combination of techniques akin to those of futurism and cubism. Relying on the symbiosis of her own extraordinary talent, and huge intellectual and artistic background, O. Exter developed an innovative system of creating a stage costume, distinguished by the new graphic and artistic dynamics, the system of embodiment, and thus the technology of performing. It was a new symbolism of "left art", a new way of attributing the soul to the costume, which embraced lyricism, decorativeness, musicality, meaningfulness, and generalized historicity.

Exter's theatrical projects at the O. Tairov Chamber Theatre opened a new European art scene for Ukrainian artists;

they became crucial for the formation of the principles of creating a costume for performances, distinguished by the dynamic plasticity of movements, dance and a new theatrical imagery: "Exter was kind of an agent who connected the traditions and inquiries of French art with the local creative ground" (Fedoruk 2006). Having returned to Kyiv during the Ukrainian Revolution (1917–1921), O. Exter found herself in a theatrical environment ready for the perception of new forms of theatrical and decorative art. After all, based on the activities of young actors and directors of M. Sadvovsky's theatre, some experimental theatres started to stand out at the time, the first among which is L. Kurbas with his "Young Theatre" that mastered modern methods through expressionist performance. In 1918, the workshop created by O. Exter quickly turned into a school, which would raise many national theatrical artists famous in the future, among them were: V. Meller, A. Petritsky, O. Khvostenko-Khvostov, Nisson Shifrin, Alexander Tishler, Isaac Rabinovych, Mark Epstein, Pavlo Kovzhun, Nadiya Khazina and others. Some of them, with their classical art education, were directly connected with the school of Mykola Murashko. Therefore, some of the above-mentioned artists ran away from the lessons of this school for their first artistic practices for futuristic performances. In particular, it goes about their participation in setting of a scene of "Chateau de Fleur" theatre for the performances of Vladimir Mayakovsky, D. Burlyuk and Vasily Kamensky, who arrived to Kiev with lectures on left art in 1914. Their "smart and meaningful" stories gave rise to new ideas about the

possibilities of painting: "Awakened thought made the movement of forms pretty clear to me. I studied nature more precisely, more strictly, more dynamically," N. Shifrin recalled (Syrkina 1973).

In the first stage projects carried out by the school, the "Tairov's" manner of sketch formation of stage costumes by O. Exter found relevance for its use in performing musical compositions, it became a method that allowed to materialize new dynamic features of eurhythmy in the costume, with its techniques introduced by Bronislava Nizhynska and Konstantin Mardjanov (Veselovskaya, p. 33) in Kiev of that time. Students of O. Exter's school made sketches of costumes for their projects in 1919; thus, Vadim Meller made sketches for plastic figures called "Assyrian Dances", I. Rabinovych with younger students (including N. Khazina) contributed to the play "Fuente Ovejuna" by Lope de Vega.

The period of the 1919–1920s became the initial period in I. Rabinovych's work, when the artist created a few theatrical projects one after another. In addition to the already mentioned play "Fuente Ovejuna", which was performed in Kyiv at the Second State Drama Theatre named after Lenin, he almost simultaneously created sketches and costumes for the play "Salome" by O. Wilde (Second State Drama Theatre named after Lenin) and "Shinkarka" by K. Goldoni (Kharkiv Drama Theatre) for the request of K. Marjanov in 1920. In a few sketches for different performances that have survived up to nowadays, it gets obvious that from his early performances the artist aspired to break free from symmetry in their constructive design and to model the shapes with segments of the simplest forms,

complementing the system with the stripes of coloured fabric that would wrap around the hands and feet of actors.

Previous researchers have already noted that V. Meller was an artist who was significantly influenced by the method of O. Exter, developed for the formation of clothing. This feature can be seen in his sketches to the "Assyrian Dances" (Kovalenko 2014). Modelled as replicas of O. Exter's costumes, they are at the same time have their own independent artistic imagery, which is manifested in the creation of a generalized character type, endowed with a frontal static stiff posture, in a simple white tunic dress, spirally girdled with coloured stripes. The artist has developed a new approach in the colour design of the strip. In it, the saturation of the tone gradually increases or decreases in the longitudinal direction. This technique in the material can be performed only by colour tinting of white fabric. The sketch of the line at the back is complemented by a cape created by a combination of the same colour stripes. Thus, the figures of the characters of the "Assyrian Dances" had a colour-graphic division, which in motion was perceived as a plurality of textures of the silhouette inherent in a futuristic theatrical costume. The created type was thought over by Meller in several colour variants collected from two or four chromatic colours. A generalization of the image, namely the conditional geometry of the coloured head that almost levelled the face, a few strokes marking the eyes and nose, was Meller's distinctive feature in these sketches. The conciseness of the figure was enhanced by the hands, expressed in general with the repetition of the colours of clothing. The main feeling in this figure

was the colour contrast between the white clothes that fit the body and the tonal stripes that wrapping around it in the flight of the dance, smothering the statics of the depicted figure.

All sketches of V. Meller, created for the ballet "Masks" by F. Chopin in 1919, are stylistically close to the ones of the "Assyrian Dances". In some samples, we see how the clothes are thought out in two layers of the silhouette, with the one that closely fits the body, and the other with attached structural details that emphasize the movement in the dance and enrich it. There is a noticeable contrast of an individual image in "Masks", created by the conflict between the dynamic posture and the cubist masked head, between the smoothness of the silhouette and the rigid geometry of the head (Sarybaeva et al. 2015; Toktagazin et al. 2016; Almagambetovna et al. 2023; Pohranychyna 2023). The evolution of the same manner is observed in a new project made by the artist in sketches for the ballet "Mephisto Waltz" by Firenze Liszt performed by students of the B. Nizhynska's school in 1920. Each body, bent in a semicircle or hook, has coloured stripes wrapping up the main light-coloured underwear. And again the artist summarizes the image through a single style of colour of the dress and body in the sketches. V. Meller turned to this method of developing the image of the costume in the subsequent years. This is evidenced by his sketches for play "Mazepa" in 1921. However, they already have a noticeable transition from modelling with colour stripes and their spiral wrapping of the body to more classical methods of shaping the outfit (Talaspayeva et al. 2017).

The artist's imitation of the methods of creating a theatrical costume, developed by O. Exter, is natural, because of their creative closeness. Instead, A. Petritsky was formed as an artist with a clear historical basis in the style of clothing for performances. Along the way, he became one of the pioneers among the artists of the young Ukrainian theatre. His genuine style in creating costumes was based on three whales, adopted from creative collaboration with the artist Vasyl Krychevsky, which are the monumental interpretation of the costume image in the sketch, historicism of the silhouette, and the techniques selected from the national folk art. Therefore, his path to the creation of the avant-garde system had its own peculiar trajectories of fate.

The work with Les Kurbas on costumes for the play "King Oedipus" staged at "Young Theatre" in 1918 for the first time turns the artist to the search for his own methods of stylisation of ancient costumes. He solves these problems succinctly, using a common module of the late type of the ancient Greek chiton for modelling. The artist complemented the design features of the costumes with several types of ancient Greek ornaments, such as: meander, palmettos, successfully combining them with other geometric motifs (Tashpulatov et al. 2018). The fact that in his work on the images A. Petritsky was inspired by the Exter's style of costumes for "Famira Kifared" is noticeable in the preserved photographs of the scenes. In the scenes of the Kyiv performance, that was expressed by the general solemnity of the action, the drawing of gestures, the feeling of applying the method of

dance eurhythmy. A. Petritsky allowed himself much less nakedness of the body of his characters than those of O. Exter's, combining the costume with the active use of makeup on the faces of actors.

After artistic internships at the school of O. Exter and collaboration with O. Kurbas, in 1922, A. Petritsky went to Moscow, where he worked until 1924. This short period in the work of the artist became a time of his rapid creative transformations. This is evidenced by three projects performed to produce ballets of three theatrical institutions: "Eccentric Dances" by Isaac Dunaevsky in the Moscow Chamber Ballet under the direction of Kasyan Goleyzovsky; "Prelude" by Alexander Scriabin for the "Studio of Free Ballet" directed by Lev Lukin; "Nur and Anitra" for the "Mikhail Mordkin's Ballet" theatre staged by M. Mordkin, performed in New York.

Sketches of costumes for "Eccentric Dances", which mastered new approaches to dance kinaesthesia in ballet, show us a whole new look at the imagery of the costume, which corresponded to the objectives of the performance, where classical sculpture was combined with the circus. As a visual embodiment of this concept, A. Petritsky created the theatrical equivalents of supremacism compositions by K. Malevich and his students. Henceforth, after the first experiences of cubist creation of dimensions from elementary geometric shapes (squares, circles, and triangles), having formulated the concept of complete "objectlessness" of supremacist composition, K. Malevich, moved to the composition "from nothing" in terms of nature. Supremacist compositions in their essence are the dynamics of colours of elementary geometric shapes, which

are the lines, collected in bundles, circles, quadrilaterals (Sabyrhanova and Bajzhanova 2011; Bayzhanova et al. 2013; Kataeva et al. 2019): "And Supremacism is a purely figurative art of paints, whose independence cannot be reduced to one. Horse running can be conveyed with a plain pencil. But the movement of red, green, and blue masses cannot be conveyed with a pencil" (Malevich 1929).

This mere approach found its expression in A. Petritsky's sketches for "Eccentric Dances". A pair of dancers on a white background of the sheet emerges from diagonally directed lines and narrow stripes and elementary geometric shapes, united by grids or parallels of hatching lines. In one of the sketches, black elements form a male figure, and the red ones are used for a female. This two-colour feature is dominant in the sketches. Only in some samples the artist uses the third colour, which is yellow. In the ratio of the bodies of couples there is the dynamics of a dance, imbued with sharp movement. The artist sets this sharpness of dynamics variably: the main curvilinear direction of the diagonal direction is set by the male body; or there is either a contrast in location of the elements of the pair; or a diagonal overlapping of the elements of a pair on each other. The circles-heads are the only elements to point to the anthropomorphism of the images.

In the ballet "Nur and Anitra" A. Petritsky consciously turns to the Exter's method of clothes modelling with hanging straight stripes or triangular fragments of mostly four colors, which are white, yellow, blue, orange. In some sketches, black and gray are sometimes added. On the dark bodies of the char-

acters, they are perceived as a bright graphic decor. A. Petritsky also uses both of these techniques in "Prelude" directed by L. Lukin.

Later, in one of his letters, A. Petritsky would write that he was the first theatre art director creating costumes for ballet and opera in Ukraine (Bowlt et al. 1974; Povelikhina 1995). The universal scheme of dance is felt in his sketches for musical performances. The new aesthetics of ballet gave impetus to the formation of avant-garde tradition and showed the way to modern dance (Nurtazina and Toktushakov 2017; Yensenov et al. 2022). A. Petritsky was always focused on the use of innovative techniques in the development of sketches since his early theatrical projects in applications, and he newly developed the use of makeup in the images of characters.

Reminiscences of futuristic concepts in the 1920's were also found their expression in some theatrical projects by O. Khvostenko-Khvostov. The ideas of "left art" attracted the artist, while he was studying in Moscow at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and got acquainted with K. Malevich, O. Exter, V. Mayakovsky, V. Meller. After moving to Ukraine and studying in the workshop of O. Exter, he made his first theatrical and decorative projects. These include his costumes for "The Mystery Buff", staged at the Heroic

Theatre of Kharkiv in 1921, and the sketch design for Sergei Prokofiev's opera "Love to Three Oranges" in 1926. Unfortunately, sketches of costumes for "The Mystery Buff" have now been lost. One must think that O. Khvostenko-Khvostov developed them in the Mayakovsky-defined opposition of images, those of "pure" and "impure" ones based on agitation art, which he admired in his early work. However, a few sketches of his stage scenery show that in terms of stylistics of shaping, the artist used the techniques of cubo-futurism, developing conditionally generalized geometrized images.

Meanwhile, the sketches of O. Khvostenko-Khvostov's costumes for the play "Love to Three Oranges", which had never been staged, remain to be preserved. According to the stylistics of the images, all the characters are made in two characteristics, which are either domestic-satirical (tragedians, comedians, lyrics) or fantastic (most of the characters of this fairy-tale plot). The last group is the most interesting from the point of view of artistic creativity. All the characters of the modern fairy tale, the Minister Lenotre, the magician, the glutton, the watchman and others have geometrised enlarged postures, executed in a cubist generalisation. Each of the images is complemented by various details, elements that reveal the essence of the character.

## CONCLUSIONS

Having spread into the theatre, the evolution of avant-garde gave impetus to the appearance of a new concept of stage costume that moved away from its

garment function to the function of an image with multiple codes. Significance of the new stage costume replaced its decorative features, created new meta-

phoric expression; determined non-standard ways of its shaping, use of the materials and techniques for its creation and allowed for the experimental nature of methods. The avant-garde theatrical costume quite often changed the body plastic, ignoring human anatomy, and revealed in its specific way the sculptural or mechanical dynamics of an action. These features make it close to the ritual or carnival clothes of the previous history epochs.

In this way, the national theatre became an important centre for the assimilation and further independent development of concepts of a few well-known movements of "left art", such as futurism, cubism and supremacism. Inspired by the projects of K. Malevich and O. Exter, which proved the possibilities of creative application of avant-garde techniques in the theatrical design of the play, Ukrainian artists began their own independent progress in creating qualitatively new artistry of theatrical costume. Each of the famous artists of the Ukrainian theatre stage developed their own techniques and imagery, by using

the possibilities of constructing dimensions of clothes from elementary geometric fragments of fabric (stripes, triangles, quadrilaterals) or its more rigid substitutes as leverage in the process of their creative search.

New constructive approaches to architectonic solutions in the practices of evolution of theatrical costume were formed, namely, the techniques of collage, applique, painting; they now served not the factors of clothes aesthetics but were included in the arsenal of means used to transform clothing into a symbol or sign with a complex semantic field of meanings. In this aspect, among other things, the avant-garde changed the scenography approaches, opening the way to spatial models of the new stage imagery, where there was an artistic synthesis of action, stage design and costumed actor. This article can be useful in further research on the development and stylistic features of theatrical costume in general and Ukrainian in particular. The factual base presented in it will be useful for academic disciplines related to the fields of art history, theatre studies, and culture science.

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