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Features of the Technique of “Multilayered Painting” Based on a Comparative Analysis of the Qualifying Works of Students of the Department of Decorative Painting of the Higher School of Folk Arts

Abstract: The appearance of lacquer painting on metal, the birthplace of which is Nizhny Tagil, refers to the conditional date of 1746. This type of traditional arts and crafts originated in the Urals. Mining painting acquired stable features of the established craft. Houses and their interior decoration, wooden dishes and other kitchen utensils, chests and tin things were decorated with elegant paintings. Since the mid-18th century, lacquer saucers and trays have been in demand. Later, there is a division into complex multilayered and simple swoop painting. The article analyses the qualifying works performed by students studied under higher education programmes in the technique of Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting. The focus is on the system of traditional and innovative artistic and technical techniques for the decorative design of works, mainly furniture items. The research uses methods of descriptive and formal stylistic analysis of works of art. The characteristic artistic-stylistic, compositional and technological features of the Nizhny Tagil painting are considered. An attempt is made to identify the common features inherent in the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting, as well as the distinctive features of the works of artists. To achieve this purpose, monographic publications and scientific articles of Russian researchers in folk art were used.

Keywords: Nizhny Tagil, multilayered painting, traditional solution, innovative approach, furniture, decorative painting student, qualifying work.

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Особенности техники «многослойного письма» на основе сравнительного анализ выпускных квалификационных работ студентов кафедры декоративной росписи Высшей школы народных искусств

Аннотация: Появление лаковой росписи по металлу, родиной которой считается Нижний Тагил, относится к условной дате 1746 году. Этот вид традиционных художественных промыслов зародился на Урале. Горнозаводская живопись приобрела устойчивые черты сформировавшегося промысла. Нарядной росписью украшали дома и их внутреннее убранство, деревянную посуду и другую кухонную утварь, сундуки и жестяные вещи. С середины XVIII века появляются пользующиеся спросом лаковые блюда и подносы. Позднее происходит разделение на сложную многослойную и простую маховую живопись. В статье анализируются выпускные квалификационные работы, выполненные студентами, обучавшимися по программам высшего образования в технике нижнетагильского многослойного письма. В центре внимания – система

традиционных и инновационных художественно-технических приемов декоративного оформления произведений, в основном предметов мебели. В исследовании применены методы описательного и формально-стилистического анализа произведений искусства. Рассмотрены характерные художественно-стилистические, композиционные и технологические особенности нижнетагильской росписи. Делается попытка выявить общие черты, присущие нижнетагильской многослойной росписи, а также отличительные особенности произведений художников.

Ключевые слова: нижнетагильское многослойное письмо, традиционное решение, инновационный подход, мебель, студент, декоративная роспись, выпускная квалификационная работа.

Introduction

The appearance of lacquer painting on metal, the birthplace of which is Nizhny Tagil, refers to the conditional date of 1746. This type of traditional arts and crafts originated in the Urals. Mining painting acquired stable features of the established craft. Houses and their interior decoration, wooden dishes and other kitchen utensils, chests and tin things were decorated with elegant paintings. Since the mid-18th century, lacquer saucers and trays have been in demand ([Baradulin, 1990, p. 64](#)). Later, there was a division into complex multi-layered and simple swoop painting.

So, in the Nizhny Tagil painting, two techniques of painting products have developed—multilayered and swoop painting, each of which has its personal technological features. Multilayered painting is the execution of artistic painting in several colourful layers, in which each intermediate layer is dried and covered with a varnish layer. Multilayered painting is very close to classical painting. Painting in this technique looks very complex, through a complex technical execution, a picturesque and rather realistic execution of decorative painting is obtained. It allows to achieve a sense of volume and versatility. The technique of swoop painting is characterised by free brush painting with a predominance of graphic elements. In turn, two-colour swoop painting is more decorative and is performed in one step, all forms of painting are stylised and are performed using a two-colour brushstroke.

The most difficult of the two techniques of Nizhny Tagil painting is the technique of multilayered painting. This technique is distinguished by the subtlety of working out plant motifs, the beauty of silhouettes and the realism of images.

The study object was the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting.

The study subject was traditional and innovative artistic-stylistic, compositional, and technological techniques of Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting.

The purpose of the study was to analyse the qualifying works performed by students enrolled in higher education programmes in the technique of Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting.

Based on the purpose of the study, the following tasks were developed:

- briefly describe the history of the emergence of decorative lacquer painting on metal and wood origin.
- analyse the artistic, stylistic and compositional features of the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting;
- analyse the peculiarity of the execution of the painting in the technique of multilayered painting;

- identify the common features inherent in the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting, as well as the distinctive features of the qualifying works of students of the Department of Decorative Painting of the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy).

In the course of the study, such methods as comparative analysis, synthesis, and observation were applied.

To achieve this purpose, monographic publications and scientific articles of Russian researchers in folk art were used.

Materials

Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting is the execution of artistic painting in several stages (under-painting, drawing shadow areas, light, performing colour reflexes, refining and clarifying the basic forms according to the heat-coldness ratio), in which each intermediate layer is covered with a varnish layer. This painting is distinguished by the subtlety of working out plant motifs, the beauty of silhouettes, the realism of images. The Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting has existed for three centuries. It is developing and acquiring new features. The traditional basis for Nizhny Tagil painting—an iron tray—is one of the most beautiful products of traditional applied art. In the conditions of technological progress, the material, the methods of its processing and the tools used in the fishery have changed.

There is an increasing interest in painted furniture. It is important for an artist of traditional crafts to understand the system of artistic and technical techniques of decorative furniture design, including the motifs of painting and the elements they consist of, composition, colour, rhythm, and plasticity. All parts of the image should be harmonised and subordinated to each other. The main pictorial task of the artist is to create an expressive artistic image, reduced to a certain stylistic unity. In the depicted object, both the natural shape and colour, as well as the characteristics of a specific type of applied art characteristic of a traditional image, should be used (*Golubeva, 2004, p. 44*).

Flower garlands and bouquets are the most common motifs in Nizhny Tagil painting. Bouquets should fit seamlessly into the plane of the furniture, emphasise the shape. The ornament is no less important in the composition. It is connected with the surface, which it decorates and visually organises, revealing and accentuating the architectonics of the form (*Golubeva, 2004, p. 30*). To create it, gold or silver paste is most often used. In the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting, the absence of ornament is allowed.

The development of technological capabilities to create a product executed in the technique of Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting allows to contribute to the further development of this type of traditional applied art. The opening of the Department of Decorative painting at the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy) in which metal painting is studied has become one of the main steps in the revival, preservation, and development of this type of craft (*Grigorieva, 2013, p. 86*). The Department of Decorative Painting is conducting experimental work on the design of new unique samples made in the technique of Nizhny Tagil lacquer painting, which will meet modern trends.

One of the first complex and promising qualifying works performed at the Department of Decorative Painting is the furniture set of *Tenderness* by A. Yagovkina (*Figure 1*). The work is the result of a creative experiment of the teaching staff under the leadership of V.F. Maksimovich,

the President of the Higher School of Folk Arts. During it, the traditional Nizhny Tagil flower composition made in multilayered technique develops and is updated ([Golubeva, 2015, p. 48](#)).

The work *Tenderness* includes a three-leaf screen, a wall panel, a dressing table and a stool. Of particular interest in terms of compositional and colouristic solutions is the front side of the three-leaf screen and the dressing table. The furniture set is painted white ([Golubeva, 2015, p. 48](#)), and on such a neutral background, the bright floral motifs of the painting look even more expressive. The ornate golden ornament framing the central floral motifs, taken from the St. Petersburg painting, complements the overall composition.

The set for the living room *Flowers of Summer* by E. Kapizova ([Figure 2](#)) is one of the most complex artistic and creative projects, in terms of constructing complicated composition schemes. The set includes a bench, two armchairs, and a panel. The main colour of the bench product is scarlet, with golden sectors and a burgundy frame. The combination of red and gold is associated with greatness, luxury, and wealth.

It is worth noting the successful solution of the horizontally elongated composition, the creation of which became possible thanks to a deep study of the preserved historical samples of lacquer painting. The central composition on the backs of the bench and chairs is a vase with a lush bouquet of various flowers. On the front and side parts of the seat back, the composition is supported by flower garlands made in golden sectors, and framed, like the central compositions of the back, with a burgundy stripe. The main flower in the composition is a rose. The rose is a traditional flower in the Nizhny Tagil swoop and multilayered painting. Roses symbolise beauty, royalty, spirituality and are often present on the artistic products of this type of traditional craft. Various fruits, berries, and nuts are a feature of the compositional solution and a reference to the works of 17th-century Dutch and Flemish artists. The floral composition of the bench is harmonious and balanced. The ornament is made of gold paste, its elements (acanthus leaf, curl, lily) refer to the Renaissance.

An innovative technological solution for the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting is observed in the project of painting the casket ([Figure 3](#)) by student K. Grigorieva (supervisor A.N. Golubeva). The composite solution uses a sector and a combination of metallic and dark olive backgrounds with a red ornamental stripe framing the central composition and made in the shape of a casket by “mesh” pattern. To create the central floral composition, the image from the 19th-century casket by I.F. Khudoyarov is taken as a basis.

Compositionally, floral and ornamental motifs are constructed fully according to the traditional Nizhny Tagil craft canon ([Baradulin, 1990, p. 89](#)). However, the technological solution opens up new opportunities for traditional Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting.

In the central floral motif, there is a new technological solution—there is no first stage of painting—under-painting (the local colour of plant forms). Instead, there is a golden background, according to which the shape of the flower is prescribed with the help of shadow and light inscriptions that create a special glow. With such a seemingly unconventional solution, multi-layer painting is performed with oil paints, following the technological features, in which the intermediate layers are covered with a varnish layer.

In the qualifying work bench *Inspiration* ([Figure 4](#)), student A. Ivanova continues using the traditional technological and artistic-stylistic features of the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting, but with a new compositional solution. The main feature of the artistic solution is the non-

standard combination of active backgrounds. Usually, in the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting, the junction of the backgrounds is out-stamped, or smoked, connected with an ornament or stripe. In the product, the author has a large bouquet at the junction of two contrasting colours—red and milk. This arrangement visually changes the shape of the bench. A light background visually gives lightness to the product, red one focuses attention on the painting. The elements of asymmetry bring lightness and variety to the composition. It worth notes that the floral bouquet is massive. It occupies the entire surface of the front part of the backrest. The mass of flowers is diluted with leaves, which not only balance the bouquet, but also are an additional colour for an active scarlet background. It worth notes that the author does not decorate the product with an ornament, instead there is a flower garland around the perimeter of the seat. The peculiarity of this garland is it is not interrupted at the corners of the connection of the side parts with the back of the seat. The garland also connects the two backgrounds.

In general, the colour of the product is very bright. It is typical for products with Nizhny Tagil painting.

At the Department of Decorative Painting of the Higher School of Folk Arts (Academy), St. Petersburg painting, which incorporates elements of multilayered painting with lush peonies and roses in the center and elegant gilded rocaille curls, with so-called “rain” on the sides, enhancing the overall decorativeness of their composition, has been introduced into the learning process.

Student P. Voloshchuk studied the artistic features of St. Petersburg painted trays and made copies of fragments of St. Petersburg products with a characteristic ornate ornament. Such tasks contributed to the further improvement of the student’s professional skills and helped to effectively apply traditional pictorial motifs when creating the qualifying work *Celebration*, consisting of two chairs (*Figure 5*).

The main colour of the chairs is burgundy, the central composition is made in a warm colour. It is a complex bouquet of lush roses, peonies, and irises. The flowers in the foreground of the composition center burn with warm light and shimmer with various shades. The leaves in the background are practically not spelled out, their main colour is dark green. The artist uses this technique to highlight the compositional center in order to achieve a “glow” from the depth of the chair back. The central part of the chair is complemented by an elegant ornament, the elements of which are taken from the St. Petersburg painting. The ornament frames the central composition, the golden curls are complemented by small flower bouquets consisting of rosebuds and rosehip flowers. The product is elegant and elegant. A thin gold ornament emphasizes the jewellery of the painting.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of individual works of traditional applied art contributes to a more accurate definition of the specific features of the use of traditional motifs and technological solutions and to identify the reasons for their use. In their works, students of the Higher School of Folk Arts not only turn to traditional compositional and colouristic solutions, analysing them and creatively rethinking them, but also try to discover and develop new possibilities of Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting.

In the course of the study, the purpose was achieved, namely, to analyse the qualifying works performed by students studied under higher education programmes in the technique of Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting. The purpose was achieved with the help of the assigned tasks. The history of the Nizhny Tagil painting was briefly studied. The artistic-stylistic and compositional features and peculiarities of the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting were analysed. The common features inherent in the Nizhny Tagil multilayered painting, as well as the distinctive features of the qualifying works of students of the Department of Decorative Painting of the Higher School of Folk Arts are revealed.

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Appendix



Figure 1. A. Yagovkina. Furniture set *Tenderness*. 2009



Figure 2. E. Kapizova. Furniture set *Flowers of Summer*. 2015



Figure 3. K. Grigorieva. The project of painting the casket. 2009



Figure 4. A. Ivanova. Bench *Inspiration*. 2018



Figure 5. P. Voloshchuk. Furniture set
Celebration. 2019