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## **The National Visual Art in the Process of Formation and Preservation of the Ethnic Identity of Indigenous Peoples (by the Example of Khakass Visual Art)**

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*The article is devoted to the various research positions with respect to the understanding of the culture system. The place of culture of the ethnic groups in the modern pluralistic society is determined. The authors disclose the uniqueness of the culture of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East through the study of the Khakass visual art.*

*Most of the focus is on the specific visualization of the ethnic theme in the works of Khakass graphic artists and painters. Researching the tendency of artists' appealing to the ethnic theme, the authors cover the entire history of the Khakass art development from 1920s to 2000s. The article reveals the specific character of the so-called "Siberian avant-garde", the contemporary school of Khakass visual art, and its connection with visualization of the ethnic theme in works of various artists. Having found out the tendency of the Khakass artists to appeal to the archaic forms of ethnic culture in their works, the authors suggest a classification of the art works based on the nationally significant values of the Khakass ethnic group, the archaic-material and spiritual culture expressed in the paintings and graphic works. The authors distinguish three most important values of the Khakass (the Khakass' religious and mythological world outlook, the value of self-awareness as a representative of the Khakass ethnic group, the world of the ethnos) allowing to systematize the creations of the Khakass artists. Each of these blocks introduces a number of representational paintings and graphic works. Much attention is paid to the analysis of the visual potentials of art works, the artistic form of expressing archaic-material and spiritual traditions of the native population. The cave drawing of the ancient Khakass determined the world outlook of the ethnic group and became the basis for interpreting the content of the works of art. This enabled the researchers to identify the original ideals of the Khakass that could serve as a specific factor in ethnic self-identification in the multicultural system.*

*Keywords: pluralistic society, components of culture, archaic-material and spiritual culture of the Khakass, visual art of Khakassia, Siberian avant-garde, Khakass ethnos, Khakass artists, ethnic values.*

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## 1. Theoretical analysis of the culture system of the ethnos

Nowadays researchers studying ethnos mark out some types of ethnos' kernel which are ethno differentiating. There are territory, character, culture, thinking, psychic setup, mentality and self – consciousness.

Some researchers understand culture as a range of such categories as the type of management, religion, language, traditions, customs, art and perception of the world. They mean that culture is an ethno differentiating aspect in case of the unique combination of its separate components.

The others follow a selective approach. They compare components of cultures of different ethnos. In this case an isolated element can not identify the ethnos.

The majority of researchers agree that neuropsychological, emotional characteristics such as character, temperament, behavior and state of mind really distinguish ethnos from each other.

With such approach, it is difficult to correlate the “average” (“general”) indicators according to the above-mentioned characteristics of this or that ethnos with specific features of the person.

Most researchers strongly deny the factor of the territory as cementing ethnic group together.

A number of researchers (V.I. Kozlov, G.V. Shelepov) define self-consciousness as a striking identification factor. Moreover, the core of ethnos is precisely *transpersonal* self-consciousness even when private self-consciousness may have zero degree of identity.

The territory of Siberia and the Far East is about two-thirds of the territory of Russia. Siberia occupies 40% of Asia. What is more, a fifth of the population in our country lives in Siberia. Most of the population is Russian. They had developed the territories of Ural, Siberia and the Far East from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These are also

Ukrainians, Belarusians and representatives of other nations of the European part of Russia.

However, researchers use some different terms to call the peoples who lived here until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, long before the arrival of the peoples who lived earlier in the European part of Russia. There are “aborigines”, “native peoples”, “autochthonous peoples”, “indigenous peoples”.

We can single out two typical positions that are in the center of the modern cultural studies.

The first position: some cultures are the subject of the study. They are considered as “independent, consistent and stable”. Also they have fixed geographical location. What is more, the processes of globalization are not typical for such cultures. If a change is fixed inside of these cultures, it is associated with the process of interaction between the individuals within this culture, and not as a result of contact between cultures.

The second position: each ethnic group has its own culture, so it is impossible to say “minority culture”. At present there are no monocultural societies. Different cultural groups live together in one society. In today's world societies in which there would be one religion, one language, one culture, a unique identity characterizing the entire population, have almost disappeared. Modern society is a pluralistic society.

We choose the second position that is characteristic of John Berry and his colleagues. Thus, modern indigenous people do not interact only with one ethno-cultural group (monocultural society), but a pluralistic society which consists of a set of cultural groups.

There are two points of view regarding a pluralistic society.

The first point of view: there is a “melting pot”, only dominant society, and a society “mainstream” on the side of which there are minority groups. The fate of these minorities is twofold: they can dissolve in the society

“mainstream” or remain marginalized, rejected by the majority of this society.

The second point view was given by John Berry and his colleagues who named it multiculturalism. There is a colorful palette of ethnic and cultural groups that keep their sense of cultural uniqueness and occupy their own place in the social structure which is characterized by universal (conventional) rules such as economic, political, legal agreements that regulate life with different ethnic and cultural groups. Thus, multiculturalism is characterized by preservation of cultural uniqueness of all ethnic and cultural groups and participation of all groups in a large pluralistic society.

The cultural uniqueness of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is embodied in their art culture, including visual art which concentrates in itself the most revered, sacred ideals the ethnic identity of the indigenous peoples is based on.

## **2. The artistic modeling of the ethnic identity by means of visual art**

In the last twenty years (1990-2010s) the smaller indigenous peoples of Russia (Dolgans, Nenets, Selkups, Khakasses, Chulyms, Enets, Evenks, Yakuts and others) experience powerful assimilation. In most cases they are forced to accept and assimilate with the dominant culture of the population resident in the area where they live. As a result, the significance of their national ideals is levelled within the ethnic group although they still exist in-crowd. In the worst case some forms of the traditional culture of the ethnic group are lost as unclaimed by representatives of the nation in the modern life conditions. That happened with the national religion of the Khakass, shamanism, which had lost its original meaning and is not perceived as religion by the representatives of the nation.

Assimilation which has become a natural process for the multi-ethnic regions of Russia, as a result, redirects consciousness of the ethnos representatives to other cultural ideals that are, though not their “native”, still valuable in the environment of a different ethnic group. Awareness of the processes occurring within the ethnic group generates anxiety among the representatives of minor peoples. In its turn, the anxiety boosts the need to search the traditions that would revive the ethnic self-identification of the people and the ethnic culture in general. Therefore, the research of the artistic culture of a small ethnic group enables us to reveal the values that are relevant for the given ethnos and that serve as a specific factor in the identification of ethnic group members, as long as the artistic culture is the unique sphere of human life where the original and native ideals of the people are preserved. The work of art is the one of the main expression forms of the national culture which is understood in this study as a means of fixing the archaic-material and spiritual traditions of the people.

The object of this research is the artistic culture of the Khakass ethnic group, which is small national community of Siberia and the titular ethnos of Khakassia.

The subject of the study is pictorial and graphic works of art created by Khakass artists throughout the development of visual art in the Khakass Republic.

The researchers became interested in studying the artistic culture of the Khakass in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At this time the first works devoted to various aspects of the applied art and the earliest forms of artistic culture of the Khakass were published. This sphere of the artistic culture of the ethnos was a basic trade in the people’s life and therefore it has gone through the way of formation and development before painting and sculpture.

Among the authors who studied the decorative and applied arts of the Khakass in the 1930-1990s it is worth naming the following: Abrosimova A.A., Aloeva N.G., Ivanov S.V., Kaplan N.I., Kidieikova I.K., Korole G.G., Kyzlasov L.R., Mitlyanskaya T.B., Shibaeva Y.A., Patachakov K.M., Sunchugashev Y. I., Schneider E.R. and others (Abrosimova et al.).

Until the 1970s the Khakass art was considered by researchers along with the art of Siberia as a whole. No separate publications devoted to the art of Khakassia were developed until this time. Perhaps it can be explained with the fact that the Khakass art was still in its infancy and the material for the study has not been accumulated yet. Therefore, the first works devoted to the research of the Khakass art are only a few articles included in the ethnographic or encyclopedia publications. These are articles by S.V. Ivanov and S.M. Chervonnaya that considered the problem of studying sculpture in the framework of the Khakass art, like works of such sculptors as G.A. Atknina, V.F. Kidieikova, I.N. Karachakova along with the works by the leading artists of the 1960s like A.F. Kalinin, M.A. Burnakov and V.A. Todykov (Ivanov, 1961).

The first researches devoted to the Khakass art appeared in the 1970s. So, in 1972 I.K. Kidieikova in her article "Art in Khakassia" (Kidieikova, 1972) first considered the problem of the formation and development of visual arts in Khakassia and disclosed it through the review works of such individual artists as G.A. Atknin, M.A. Burnakov, D.P. Cherepanov, A.F. Kalinin, I.N. Karachakova, V.M. Novoselov, V.A. Todykov, V. Protopopov. In 1999 researchers referred to the study of the Khakass graphic arts. In the introduction to the album "Graphic works of Khakassia" by I.K. Kidieikova the origins of the Khakass graphics are briefly described, the works of the graphic artists like V.A. Todykov,

A.A. Tovoev, R.I. Subrakov, G.N. Sagalakov, G.S. Krasnov and A.E. Ulyanov are analyzed (Kidieikova, 1999).

In 2002 I.K. Kidieikova defended her thesis "Folk art in the traditional culture of Khakassia" (Kidieikova, 2002) where she explores the main types of folk art in the material and spiritual culture of the Khakass. According to the researcher, it is important to understand the ethnic history of the people, to find its place in the ethnic and cultural community and to identify the ethnic world outlook universals of the people.

As the accumulated material on the art of Khakassia needs systemizing in respect to some theoretic basis, the researcher M.P. Chebodaeva in her thesis "Formation and development of visual arts in Khakassia: 1920 – 2000s" (2004) (Chebodaeva, 2004) examines the history of formation and development of visual arts in Khakassia from the Paleolithic epoch to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The author first proposes a scheme of periodization of the history of art in the Republic according to which the Khakass art passed through three stages: formation (1920-1950s), development (1960-1980s) and contemporary art (1990 – 2000s). The work is accompanied by extensive illustrations of works of art that are valuable for studying the problem of visualization of the ethnic themes in the works of Khakass artists.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as a result of numerous archaeological and ethnographic expeditions, a lot of factual materials valuable for the analysis of works of art of the Khakass artists were published. So, cooperative work "Folk drawings of the Khakass" (Kyzlasov, 1988) by L.R. Kyzlasov and N.V. Leontiev is the systematization of the Khakass folk pictures found in the mountains of Oglahy on the Yenisei River and other points of Khakassia Autonomous Region. The authors describe the drawings (anthropomorphic images and images

of animals), reveal the plot of the drawings and their semantics.

Biography of the artists living in Khakassia and the works of the artists belonging to the Khakass ethnic group are represented in the work "Writers and artists of Khakassia" (Kyzlasov, 1997) by A.C. Kyzlasov and V.N. Tuguzhekova.

There are few researches covering the analysis of the ethnic theme in the works of the Khakass artists. Mostly, these works are written by contemporary researchers who study the Siberian artists' appeal to the national themes within the context of modern ethnic processes. In particular, a study of ethnic themes in contemporary art of Siberian artists is presented in the works by E.Y. Pavlov and E.P. Matochkin.

In the article "Ethnic theme in the contemporary art and folk crafts" (Pavlov, 2007) E.Y. Pavlov notes the growing interest of the contemporary artists in Western Siberia for ancient cultural traditions. As the basis of their artistic work the authors use mythological motifs and national traditions of their people along with ethnographic, archaeological and historical materials. The author examines the current state of Siberian art within the so-called "Ethnofuturism" tendency in art, which originated in the end of the 1980s. According to the author, this trend is the one that most discovers the essence of modern art. It determines the place of ethnos and its culture in the modern world by the use of the archaic forms. Nevertheless, the author does not attempt to establish any relation of this concept with the content of the works of art.

The specificity of "arheoart" as a special tendency in the visual arts in Siberia is considered in the article by E.P. Matochkin called "Archaeology, ancient heritage and arheoart of Siberia" (Matochkin, 2009). The author makes an attempt to detect the prerequisites of the origin of one of the most modern trends in Siberian art and also marks out its distinctive

features. The consideration of arheoart in its development is based on review of the works by some individual Siberian artists (in particular, the works by V.I. Surikov as "the forerunner of the Siberian arheoart", the works by G.I. Gurkin, N. Y. Tretyakov, V.F. Kapelko, I. I. Ortonulova, M.P. Chevalkova, S.P. Lazarev, V.N. Kyzlasov, etc.). The review of the works by Siberian artists includes the descriptions of individual paintings, mainly the storyline, which the author relates to the legacy of the past as its direct reflection. According to the researcher, the appeal to arheoart is "striving through the art of antiquity once again to contact with the maternal warmth of the Earth, with the myths that gave rise to the natural being" (Matochkin, 2009, p.10). In addition, the artists aspire to comprehend the cultural space of Siberia through the legacy of the past and arheoart becomes one of the means of its attainment. In this case the task of the artist is to create a new spiritual space of modernity after having looked into the past.

Thus, the visual art of the Khakass Republic is of particular interest for the researchers. The prerequisites of the national school origin, the work of the leading masters, their genre preferences, the work techniques and traditions taken up by the Khakass school are being researched. The contemporary scholars consider the national theme in the works of the Khakass masters along with the painter's work overview. Though, no holistic study devoted to the specificity of the ethnic themes visualization in the works of Khakass masters has been performed.

The purpose of this study is to identify important national landmarks of the Khakass ethnos through the research of the artistic means of visualization of the ethnic themes in the paintings and graphic works by the Khakass masters.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to complete the following tasks:

1. Research the trend of the Khakass painters' and graphic artists' appeal to visualization of ethnic themes;

2. Systematize the Khakass masters' works of art from the position of values that are expressed by means of visualization of the ethnic themes.

### *2.1. Ethnic theme in the history of the Khakass visual art development*

The study of the trend of the Khakass art to appeal to visualization of the ethnic theme is necessary for subsequent ordering of the works of art in order to express the concepts of values for the ethnic group.

The Khakass visual art has gone through a long way of formation and development. And all throughout its development, the artists' appeal to the ethnic themes can be observed.

According to the tendency of the Khakass artists to appeal to the ethnic theme, the first phase of the development of the national visual art in Khakassia falls on the **1920-1940s**. This is the initial period when the development of the Khakass language entailed the establishment of writing in 1924. At this time there was a need to develop visual arts. From 1924 textbooks, books and papers started to be published. This entailed the development of book graphics. In the 1930s local authors took part in the design of the first books along with the artists from Novosibirsk, Altai and Moscow. At this time, language book graphics became the leading art in Khakassia. It was a way to convey elementary Khakass literacy by means of illustrations accessible and clear to the reader. Mostly it was expressed by appealing of the graphic artists to the visualization of the heroes that have ethnic look and specific attributes. For example, women were usually portrayed wearing a national costume and a headdress. Khakass men were depicted with national instrument – chathan and other attributes.

Some of these works are P.S. Afanasyev's illustrations for "The book to read" by K.S. Todyshev (1928), G.A. Atknin's illustrations for "Mal-Khalari" by E.F. Ivanov (1935), as well as R.S. Ananyin's illustrations for "How the land changed into silver" (1958).

Thus, in the 1920-1940s the visual art of the Khakass ethnos had mainly applied nature. The leading role belonged to book graphics, which became the base for the artists' appeal to the ethnic theme and the realistic Khakass art in general. It is impossible to carry out a sufficient research of the specificity of the ethnic theme visualization in the works created in the 1920-1940s.

The second period of the Khakass visual art development and, therefore, the tendency of the artists' appeal to the ethnic theme covers the **1950-1980s**.

At this time the national school was formed. It was encouraged by a number of cultural events. Firstly, it is necessary to mention regular participation of Abakan artists in territorial exhibitions held in the 1940s. Among these participants there were A.M. Novoselov, P.P. Sarychev, K.T. Soldatov, I.I. Ryaskin, R.K. Ruyga, D.P. Cherepanov and others. Besides, in 1953 the Abakan branch of the Krasnoyarsk Territory cooperative society "Artist" was opened. By this time it included more than 20 members. In addition, in the 1950s easel painting technique appeared and occupied the leading position in the artistic culture of the Khakass. At this time the main genres emerged. Among these genres we can mention small landscape, topical painting, still life and portrait. In fact, it created the base for the further development of the work of the Khakass artists.

At the time the first pictorial pictures visualizing the ethnic motives were created, for example, "Khakass girl reading a book" (1952) by Aleksandr Mikhailovich Novoselov, "Khakass

warriors” (1958) by Pavel Ivanovich Sarychev and works by Andrey Topoev. In the paintings of the 1950s A.A. Topoev visualized the ethnic theme by depicting some of the Khakass celebrations (“Wedding in ulus”, 1957, “Carnival”, 1958) and the motives of national legends (“Hygeia’s song”, 1958, “Bais’ singer”, 1958). In the 1970-1980s the ethnic theme in the works by A.A. Topoev was expressed by means of some episodes from the Khakass history. In particular, these are episodes of the Civil and the Great Patriotic Wars (“Gaidar is in Khakassia”, 1976) and collective and political repressions (“Seeing off the shaman”, 1980, “Les outcasts”, 1980).

Subsequently, the ethnic theme in the works by Khakass masters began to occupy the leading position. Almost every genre of visual art could contain some national motifs, no matter whether it was a portrait, for example, works by M.A. Burnakov (1933-1977) or a still life like works by A. Z. Asochakova (born 1939).

Vladimir Aleksandrovich Todykov’s creations are no less significant for the formation of the national school in Khakassia. According to the researchers, he had performed great merit for the development of the national art style. His principal creations are illustrations for the Khakass heroic legends, like “Aydolay” (1963), “Oh Chibek Aryg” (1968), “Khan Mirgen” (1969), “Altyn Taichi” (1973), “Khara Khushun” (1977), “Altyn – Aryg” (1987) and “Khay Khuuchyn” (1991).

Thus, in the 1950-1980s the national school was formed. The easel painting became the leading genre that approved the national theme as a priority field of the artistic creative work.

The third stage of the visual arts development in Khakassia falls on the modern **1990-2000s**. Among the conditions that caused the rise of visual art in Khakassia are vast cultural and educational activities in the Republic. It is

manifested in the opening of various exhibition sites, like the Local Republican Museum of Regional Studies, N.G. Domozhakov National Library, Khakass State University, Abakan exhibition hall “Zharki”, Urban Art Galleries of Minusinsk, Chernogorsk, Shushenskoye Art Gallery and other facilities. Besides, in 2000 at the Artists’ Union (AU) conference the local authorities of Abakan approved a programme for holding competitive exhibitions called “Golden Brush” that would be open for artists all over Siberia. Upon the initiative of A.E. Ulyanov, the chairman of AU, starting from the year 2004 open air festivals for Siberian artists are being organized. As a result, a number of exhibitions was held in other Siberian cities. Such active cultural policy indicates the desire of the Khakass for integration into a wider cultural space and the wish to engage other representatives of the artistic life into the cultural space of their ethnic group. On the background of these events national culture gains the superior value in the life of the ethnos. It is confirmed by the active interest of the Khakass artists to paint their culture. Its connection with the past of the people is especially important. G.G. Kotozhekov determines the artists’ appeal to the legacy of the past as follows:

*“In modern visual art the original connections with the ancient earth, universal roots of the art, world of the spiritual experience of the people rise again and again. In the works by contemporary artists the most striking fact is not the play of colors and lines, but the skill of the artist “to get used” to the epoch, to see the prototypes of their heroes, to resurrect their psychological, spiritual outlook and to go a thousand, two thousand years back in their imagination. This striking phenomenon of peculiar vision of “the world view” is an expression of deep cultural memory of the Siberian peoples”.*

The author notes that the contemporary art appeals to expressing the cultural memory of the Siberian population. Undoubtedly, it is impossible to disagree with it. However, if we take into account the ethno-cultural situation that was in the country in the 1990s, when there was an awareness of the need to preserve and develop the culture of indigenous minor peoples not only in Siberia, but also in the Far East and the North, the appeal of the artists, the Khakass artists in particular, to the past of their people is explicable. Just an appeal to their “roots” was a definite means to self-identify themselves in the conditions of living among another dominant culture. It became a sort of a “saving bridge” for small Khakass ethnic group trying to preserve, support and consolidate their national ethnic traditions. Therefore, the appeal to the national theme becomes a priority trend in the artistic culture of the ethnic group, in the field of visual arts in particular.

Within the last two decades the traditional archaic culture of the ethnic group acquired so much significance that it started to play the main role in formation of the artistic style of the Khakass masters. It is no coincidence that today there is a large number of definitions of this modern art trend. Artistic criticism defines it as “mythical”, “historical and cultural”, “Siberian neomifologizm”, “Siberian arheovangard”, “ethnoarchaic”, “ethnofuturism”, “arheorat”, “Siberian avant-garde” (Vysotsky, 2009). In respect of the visual arts in Khakassia, “Siberian avant-garde” is the priority name of this modern trend. According to this tendency, the creative work of the Khakass artists is aimed at the visualization of the Khakass mythology, archaeological antiquities and shamanism, its national religion. In accordance with this tendency, the ethnic theme gets its further development in the works of the following

Khakass artists: M.A. Burnakov (1933-1977), V.F. Kapelko (1937 – 2000), A.V. Domozhakov (1955 – 1998), V.M. Novoselov (1924-2006), G.N. Sagalakov (born 1955), R.I. Subrakov (born 1941), A.L. Ulturgashev (born 1955) and V.N. Kyzlasov (born 1965) and others. More detailed research of specific ethnic themes visualization in the paintings by the Khakass artists working in the “Siberian avant-garde” mainstream is set forth later under systematization of the works of art.

Therefore, the 1990 – 2000s were the golden era of the artistic life in Khakassia. It can be interpreted as a response to the socio and cultural situation which took place in the country at that time. As a result of the fast assimilation process the ethnos’ ideals were being levelled and neglected. It promoted the awareness of the need to maintain ethnic and cultural values, and, therefore, the search of the way to revive the ethnic traditions. Therefore, in that period there were lots of trends in the artistic culture not only of Khakass people, but also other minor peoples of Russia. However, all these tendencies reflect the essence of one thing – an appeal to the archaic past that carries in itself the “purity”, that is not absorbed into any “foreign” culture. The most priority tendency in the Khakass art is “Siberian avant-garde”, which supposes an appeal to legacy of the past (archaeological antiquities, mythology, and religion). Thus, the ethnic issue is the main theme of the works of the Khakass artists in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. And that is the means of self-identification of the ethnos. An archaic material and spiritual traditions of the indigenous population becomes valuable for the artists. By systematizing and analysing the ethnic theme in the art works it becomes possible to retrace the specific character of the artistic means expressing these traditions.



*2.2. Systematization of the paintings and graphic works by the Khakass artists from the point of view of impressibility of nationally significant values of the Khakass ethnos' archaic-material and spiritual culture*

The further research of specificity of the ethnic theme visualization in the works by the Khakass artists is connected with the analysis of the works of art. The most important point for the analysis is not the time of creation of the work of art, but the visual way the masters appealed to while creating the work. That is an art form which is a “tool” (or set of tools) through which artistic content of the work “is formed”<sup>2</sup>.

Having studied the evolution of the appeal of the Khakass artists to the ethnic theme, we can conclude that the archaic character of their work plays the major role in works of art. The artist Grigory Gurkin, a representative of indigenous peoples of Siberia, Altaian from the family Choros, was one of the first professional artists working in this trend. Then the same line was carried on by the artist Nikolay Yakovlevich Tretyakov from Omsk. In his opinion, the appeal to visualization of archaic forms is the basis of art. He wrote: “... primary art, like life, – is the foundation” (Chebodaeva, 2004, p. 9). The

archaism is one of the principles of the ethnic theme imaging in the works of art by the Khakass artists as well.

In the works of art by the Khakass authors the archaic character is expressed by the visualization material and spiritual culture of the Khakass ethnos. It is achieved by the representation of a certain number of values.

The visualization of the **religious and mythological outlook of the Khakass** is the first most important value for the ethnos.

The basis of artistic creativity for many Khakass artists who visualized the religious and mythological outlook of the Khakass is the findings of archaeological excavations. One of such objects is a megalithic architecture which is the main character of pictorial canvases by the Khakass artists. For example, there are works by V.F. Kapelko “Uybatsky Chaa-tas” (1983), V.M. Novoselov “The steppe of Askiz” (1994), G.N. Sagalakov “Tepsey” (2002) and F.E. Pronskikh “Tashtyp” (2001).

It may be an image of mountains or some types of megalithic architecture like menhirs, single vertical stones (V.F. Kapelko “Uybatsky Chaa-tas”, V.M. Novoselov “The steppe of Askiz”) or cromlechs, stone slabs placed in a circle (V.M. Novoselov “The steppe of Askiz”,



Fig. 1 “Uybatsky Chaa-tas”, 1983 by V.F. Kapelko

F.E. Pronskikh “Tepsey”). The representation of the mountains and megalithic architecture accentuates the significance of the Khakass religious world outlook, namely the cult of the sacred rock (menhir / slab) which played an important role in the life of the ethnic group. Almost all the public prayers were called “tayyf” (the victim) and were accomplished on mountain tops or, in any other case, were connected with rocks. Most of them were accompanied by sacrifices of sheep or horses and shamanistic rituals. According to L.R. Kyzlasov and N.V. Leontiev, the Khakass researchers of the petroglyphs, medieval Khakass called the sacred rocks “Bengo hai”. It means “The eternal rock” (“The monument is left at the century”) (Kyzlasov, 1988, p. 65). There was faith in reverence and worship to the nature stone phenomenon as the original form of the national world outlook of the Khakass.

In addition to the reverence of the sacred rocks covered with petroglyphs, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and prerevolutionary period there was a widespread cult of the life-giving nature (sky, sun, moon, water, sacred trees and animals). The representation of the artistic space of the painting is an important component of expressing the religious outlook of the Khakass. Landscape was the leading genre throughout the development of visual arts in Khakassia. So an artistic space of the paintings by the Khakass artists is presented by landscape depicting some parts of the Khakass Republic, mostly the oldest settlements like such big villages as Askiz and Tashtyp. It is the idea of “small homeland” and “one’s own statehood” of the Khakass ethnos which is expressed by the visualization of the Khakass surroundings (Grosheva, 2010). The theme of nature is represented in the works of almost every artist. There are works by V.K. Ananyin (1942-2005), L.R. Baranowski (1938), V.P. Butanaev (1929-2003), M.A. Burnakov (1942-2005),

V.A. Valkova (1949-2007), K.G. Mamyshev (1941), G.V. Nikonenko (1930), V.M. Novoselov (1924-2006), F.E. Pronskikh (1927-2007), G.N. Sagalakov (1955), G.S. Khlebnikov (1922-1993), L.D. Chernobaev, A.I. Chekhlov and others.

The artists also use the motifs of the rock drawing found in Tagar and Okunev culture, runic inscriptions and shamanic rituals as a thematic basis. For example, there are the following characters found on the rock carvings and stone sculptures in the canvases by Khakass painters: ancient gods (e.g. the Sun God), the sacred horses – “yzykh”, a white she-wolf – “oh puur”, deer. These characters are also typical characters of the Khakass mythology. They are represented in the works by A.V. Domozhakov “The sacred deer” (1991) and A.L. Ulturgashev “Yzykh” (the sacred horse) (1999), “The face of the Old God” (2000), “The Turkic world. The ancient God of the Khakass” (2001).

So long as the cult of the sacred rock covered by ancient drawings had great importance for Khakass ethnos, the pictures borrowed from these petroglyphs carry the cult meaning. It is no coincidence that the animals revered by the Khakass are the characters of the pictures. For example, there is an image of “Yzykh» which is the personification of the Sun Deity according to the world outlook of the Khakass. The cult of the white horse or solar horse occupied an important place in religious conception of cattle-breeders. The purpose of initiation of the “yzykh” is to ask the Gods for prosperity and health of the livestock.

A deer is another most frequent character of the rock carvings. It becomes one of the main characters of the paintings by the Khakass artists. It was conceived as a sacral and sacred animal by the Khakass just like by many other ethnic groups. It was revered as the most valuable hunting prey. However, the deer cult had not only



Fig. 2, 3 “The face of the Old God”, 2000 and “The Turkic world. The ancient God of the Khakass”», 2001 by A.L.Ulturgashev

hunting and breeding importance in the life of the Khakass. Due to the annual change of the antlers, the deer became a symbol of renewal and rebirth. In that way, it symbolized fertility of the human and nature in general. Therefore, the appeal of the Khakass artists to the image of a sacred animal like deer has a symbolic meaning for the Khakass ethnos. It is no mere chance that the works “A horse-deer” (1990) and “The sacred deer” (1991) by A.V. Domozhakov were created during the period when the Khakass Republic declared its independence. It can be considered as the beginning of the Khakass national culture renaissance.

The plots borrowed from the Khakass heroic legends and also a direct appeal of the artists to the national religion – shamanism – is of great importance for the expression of the religious and mythological world outlook of the Khakass.

The mythological world outlook of the Khakass is mainly represented by the graphic works illustrating ancient *Khakass heroic legends*. First of all, there are series of works by

R.I. Subrakov “Kok Khan”, «Khan Mergen», “Khubal Aryg”, “Khakass myths and legends”, etc. and by V.A. Todykov “Aydolay”, “Ah Chibek Aryg”, “Altyn Taichi”, “Khara Khushun”, “Altyn – Aryg” and “Ay Khuuchyn”.

The hero Alyp pictured in the militant state is one of the main characters of the themed works imaging the Khakass epic. The character can be represented with horrent arms, holding a sword or galloping on horseback with a spear in his hand. It presents a struggle in which the hero is the main participant. In addition, a hero demonstrating his courage for the sake of his people can be a character as well. In particular, there are some series of xylograph illustrations by V.A. Todykov to the book by storyteller – hygeia S.P. Kadyshcheva “Ah Chibek Aryg”. These graphic works depict the Khakass girl, Ah Chibek Aryg, who was in the forefront of the struggle of her people to expel the enemies from their country. The military theme is also represented in the works by P.I. Sarychev, particularly in the painting called “The Khakass

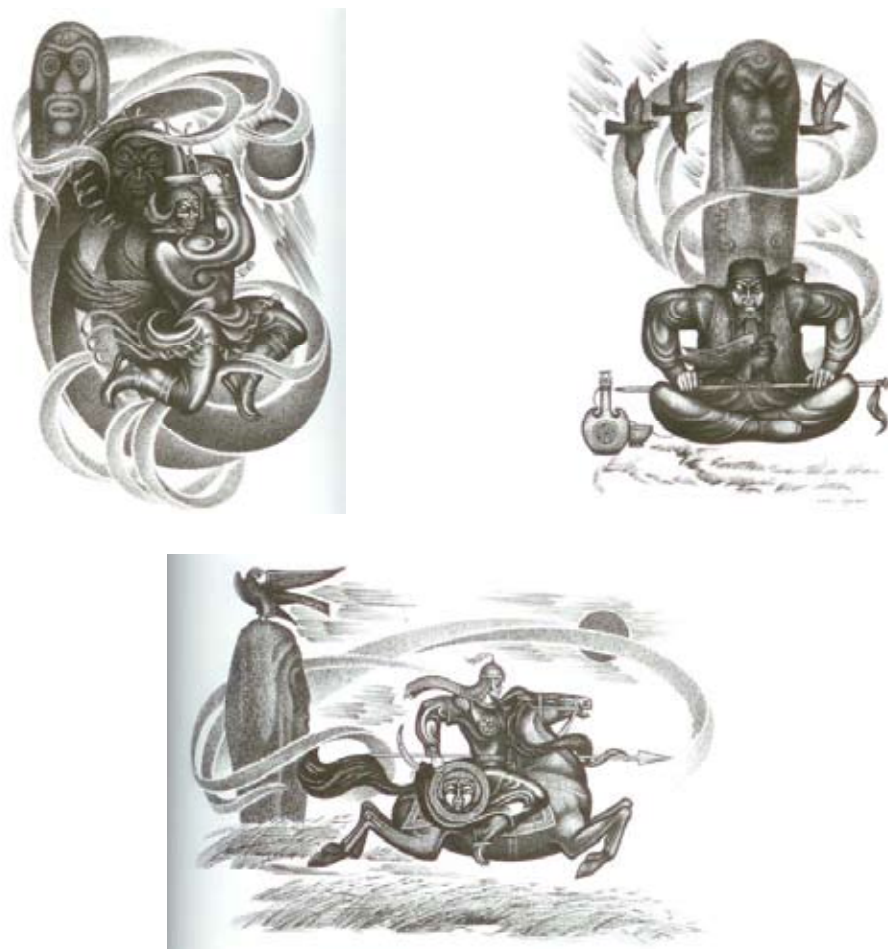


Fig. 4, 5, 6 Series of illustrations “Khakass myths and legends”, 1995 by R.I. Subrakov

warriors” (1958), and painting by G.N. Sagalakov “The ancient Turks” (2006).

The main feature of graphic works is that the line, which is the principal artistic technique, contributes to actualizing the national identity of the character that belongs to the Turkic ethnic group. For this reason, a warrior is endowed with description of a national hero who fought for the sake of his people. Therefore, the warrior embodies the national spirit of the ethnos. As an ideal representative of the ethnic group, he has the courage and bravery defending his people from foreign influence. This idea can be correlated with the current state of the Khakass people being under the pressure of Russian

culture. The works depicting the fight scene of the Khakass hero are intended to influence the viewer, each representative of the Khakass ethnic group. The objective of each of these works is to increase the hope and faith in the ability of self-preservation of the national and ethnic values.

A large group of works by the Khakass artists is associated with the visualization of *the shaman* and his activities as well as with the image of his surroundings, the spirits (“The tesi”, the word meaning “foundation”, “essence”) without which shamanism is impossible.

Among the selected works there are “The spirit of the black sun” (1990), “The shaman’s



Fig. 7, 8 Series of xylograph illustrations by V.A. Todykov to the book by storyteller – hygeia S.P. Kadysheva “Ah Chibek Aryg”, 1994

tambourine” (1990), “The secret relations of spirits” (1991), “The shaman” (1991) by A.V. Domozhakov, “Seeing off the shaman” (1954, 1984) by A. A. Topoev, “The dance of the shaman” (2006) by V.N. Kyzlasov and “The expulsion of the holy spirit” (1999) by A.L. Ulturgashev.

The spirits can be represented as zoomorphic and anthropomorphic. They are presented in the form of animals, birds, insects, snakes, vortex, fog, etc. It is an army that is invisible for humans, but it is the basis of shamanic power, the activities of the shaman. The shaman is painted with his tambourine that set him the rhythm of the entry into the state of shamanistic ritual.

The appeal of the painters to the subject of national religion, shamanism, indicates the importance of the religious in the world outlook of the Khakass ethnos. It is the national religion, which serves as one of the factors of the self-identification of the ethnos at the present stage of its development.

Thus, one of the ways of visualizing the archaic – material and spiritual traditions is to appeal to the religious and mythological world outlook of the Khakass. This theme is expressed

in the pictorial and graphic works by the Khakass artists by the use of the following images:

- stone monuments (mountains, megalithic architecture);
- some villages of Khakassia, so-called “small country”, “their own state”;
- the ancestors of the Khakass, militant Turks;
- the plots of the Khakass heroic legends;
- the characters from the Khakass mythology and shamanism.

The appeal to the archaic character of the Khakass ethnos in its various manifestations is intended to revive the national ideals such as self-affirmation of the Khakass ethnos representative as a hero possessing some moral courage. It is the renaissance and renewal of such ideological positions of the ethnos as the belief in the sacred meaning of animal, spirits, ancient deities and of course the belief in the shaman power.

**The value of self-awareness as a representative of Khakass ethnic group** is the second no less important ethical value visualized by means of the ethnic theme. This concept is largely expressed through the appeal of artists to



Fig. 9 “The dance of the shaman”, 2006 by V.N. Kyzlasov

the portrait genre. Portrait like no other genre is intended to focus on the value and significance of a person.

The Khakass artists paint both single and group portraits. The representatives of this genre are pictorial portrait works by A.Z. Asochakova, V.P. Butanaev, by M.A. Burnakov (1933-1977), the artist from Askiz. Among the works by M.A. Burnakov the following portraits can be mentioned: “The picture of a shepherd” (1975), “The Khakass old man” (1977), “The picture of the Khakass”. And also there are works by A.A. Topoev, “The picture of a shepherd” (1975) by G.S. Khlebnikova (1922-1993), “The song of Khakassia” (1987), “Khakass costumes” (2003) by N.Y. Kobyltsova (1958) and others.

The representatives of the Khakass ethnic group, both Khakass women and Khakass men, are the characters of the portrait images in most cases. There are no attributes indicating any particular person. It is the representative of the Khakass ethnic group who is so important. Therefore, the external distinctive features of the character are emphasized. Among these there

are the narrow shape of the eyes, the epicanthus, black hair, prominent cheekbones, diamond / oval shape of the face. Moreover, there are some attributes that indicate belonging to the Khakass ethnos. The Khakass woman is always painted wearing the national dress and a headdress, as a rule, it is a patterned kerchief tied around her head.

The Khakass man is usually depicted either with a horse whose cult took an important place in the religious ideas of cattle-breeders, or playing chathane. It is the most common national instrument without which it is impossible to do “hay”, so, without it the most important and leading genre of the Khakass folklore, so – called “alyptyh nymakha”- would not exist. The art space where the character is represented has a great importance for his identification. In most cases, there is the background of rocky landscape and megalithic architecture, menhirs. Representation of one character or a group of characters in the natural artistic space and the image of some ancient religious monuments emphasize the complicity of the Khakass to the



Fig. 10, 11 “The picture of a shepherd” and “The picture of the Khakass”, 1975 by M.A. Burnakov



Fig. 12 “The song of Khakassia”, 1987 by N.Y. Kobyltsova

cult of the sacred rock that exists in the religious world outlook of the ethnos.

Thus, there are no attributes that indicate the person depicted in the paintings. So, it is possible to conclude that the portraits by the Khakass artists are intended to focus on the value of the self-awareness of the people as representatives of the Khakass ethnic group. The significance of this idea is supported by artistic means, namely the specific composition of the art space. The character is always presented in the foreground. His or her figure occupies a large plane of the canvas. Thus, the figure of the character is dominant regarding the artistic space of the picture.

**The world of the ethnos life** is the third ethical value specifying the archaic – material and spiritual traditions of Khakass ethnos.

The everyday life is a powerful factor for the ethnos identification. It is represented by such kind of art as still life. Many Khakass artists worked in this genre, but the ethnic issue is mostly presented by Agrafena Zakharovna Asachakova. She is an artist from Khakassia (born 1939). We can mention such paintings as “Still life with an old pitcher” (1978), “Still life with ayran” (1980), “Still life with a jug” (1988), “Still life with a kettle” (1993) and others.

The objects of the Khakass household become the characters of the art space of her

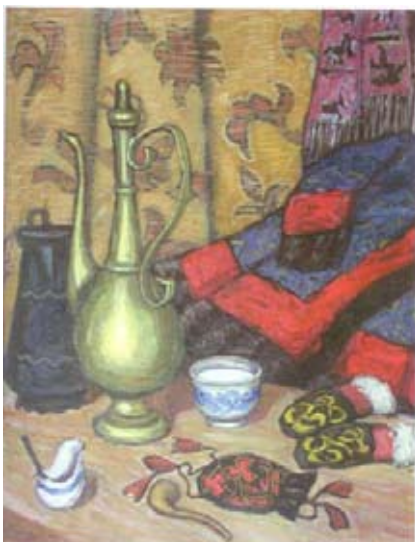


Fig. 13 “Still life with an old pitcher”, 1978 by A. Z. Asachakova

still lives. There are bronze and iron pots, trays, wooden spoons, cups and bowls, leather flasks, mittens, pouches, fur coats and fabrics decorated with national ornament, and tobacco pipes. The tablecloth with national embroidery covering the table is an indispensable attribute of all her still-lives.

In this case, for the reason of the specificity of the genre, the art space of a still life has the purpose to present to the viewer some certain objects of the everyday life of the Khakass ethnos. It is the image of the things, which are everyday for daily life of each Khakass. It enables the artist to represent the nationally significant ethnic ideals by means of the still life genre. The still life offers the viewer to see something familiar to him, the reflection of his culture, by means of the “language” most simple and accessible for the viewers. It affirms the value of the usual things and turns the people to the value of the things that surround them and that can serve as one of the factors for ethnic identification.

In the 2000s the archaic tendency is one of the priority trends in the visual art of Khakassia.

However, the archaic form undergoes some modification to symbolizing some artistic images. The art space of such painting is now filled with more symbols rather than specific archaic forms of megalithic architecture, for example, or pictures of animals, etc.

The work by Vitaly Nikolaevich Kyzlasov represents the future evolution of the ethnic theme in the works by the Khakass artists. Among his pictorial and graphic works we can mention “Altyn Aryg” (2004), “Three dimensions” (2005), “The eternity” (2005), “The dance of the shaman” (2006), “The ancient world” (2007). His appeal to the symbols and signs indicates the further tendency of development in the Khakass visual art. The artists’ continuous turning to national topics only using other artistic means is aimed at deeper comprehension of the processes occurring inside the Khakass ethnic group and society as a whole.

Thus, the classification of the works by the Khakass masters from the point of view of artistic forms’ expression of the Khakass ethnos enables us to identify the following significant national ideas of the ethnic group: the value of Khakasses’





Fig. 14, 15 “The eternity”, 2005 and “The ancient world”, 2007 by V. N. Kyzlasov

religious and mythological world outlook, the value of self-awareness as a representative of the Khakass ethnic group, and the value of the world of the ethnos’ life.

### 3. Conclusion

The present research is devoted to the study of the specificity of visualization of the ethnic theme in the works by the Khakass artists. The study is based on the research of the ethnic theme throughout the history of art in Khakassia. As a result of the study, it is possible to make the following conclusions.

1. There is a tendency of the Khakass artists to appeal to the ethnic theme throughout the development of visual arts in Khakassia. The most interest to the visualization of national motifs falls on the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries when the period of active self-determination of the ethnic group in the system of polycultures was on.

2. The archaic character of the Khakass ethnos is the most priority tenor to visualize the ethnic traditions. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> centuries this tendency was formed into a modern

trend of the visual arts of Khakassia called “Siberian avant-garde”. Herewith, the artistic creativity of local artists is aimed at rendering Khakass mythology, archaeological antiquities and shamanism, the national religion.

3. In the works by the Khakass artists the archaic – material and spiritual traditions of the ethnos are specified by the expression of a certain number of values. They are expressed through the visual potential of the paintings and graphic works. The analysis of the works by the Khakass artists enabled us to systematize the productions according to the expressibility of the ethical values.

4. Three blocks that correspond to the expression of the ethnic values can be marked out in the Khakass artists’ works. There are:

a) the religious and mythological world outlook of the Khakass as the value expressed in the paintings and graphic works by the Khakass artists through the following images:

- stone monuments (mountains, megalithic architecture);
- some settlements of Khakassia – “small country”, “their own state”;

The ethnic values of archaic-material and spiritual culture and the artistic means of their visualization in the works by the Khakass artists

Art tendency	SIBERIAN AVANT-GARDE						
<b>Ethnic values</b>	The religious and mythological world outlook of Khakass expressed by the use of the images:					The value of self-awareness as a representative of the Khakass ethnic group	The world of the ethnos' life
<b>Artistic means of the ethnic values visualization</b>	stone monuments	some villages of Khakassia (landscapes)	the ancestors of the Khakass	the stories from the Khakass heroic legends	characters from the Khakass mythology and shamanism	appeal to portrait genre	appeal to still life

- the ancestors of the Khakass, militant Turks;
  - the stories from the Khakass heroic legends;
  - the characters from the Khakass mythology and shamanism.
- b) The value of self-awareness as a representative of the Khakass ethnic group is expressed by means of the portrait genre.
- c) The world of the ethnos' life is represented by such genre as still life.

The ethnic values and artistic means of their visualizing identified in the course of the analysis of works are intended to focus

on the most important factors of ethnic self-identification of the Khakass living in a multicultural society.

The results of the study can be summarized in the following table.

5. The paintings representing the modification of archaic tendency can compose an independent block. Mostly, there are works created in the 1990s – 2000s. In these works the art space is filled rather by symbols than specific archaic forms of the ethnos. The trend of deviation from realistic image has a certain ethnocultural content associated with the modern processes taking place in the society and it demands a separate study.

<sup>1</sup> Kotozhkov G.G. Culture of the peoples of the Sayan-Altai plateau. – Abakan, 1992. – P.45.

<sup>2</sup> Philosophical dictionary / editor A.A. Ivina. – Gardariki, 2004. – 1072 p.

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**Национальное изобразительное искусство  
в процессе формирования  
и сохранения этнической идентичности  
коренных малочисленных народов  
(на примере хакасского  
изобразительного искусства)**

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*Статья посвящена рассмотрению различных исследовательских позиций относительно понимания такого феномена, как культура. Определяется место культуры этнических групп в современном плюралистическом обществе. Уникальность культуры коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока раскрывается посредством обращения к исследованию хакасского изобразительного искусства. Главное внимание при этом сосредоточено на специфике визуализации этнической темы в живописных и графических произведениях искусства хакасских мастеров. Исследуя тенденцию обращения художников к этнической теме, авторы охватывают всю историю развития изобразительного искусства в Хакасии с 1920-х по 2000-е годы. Раскрывается специфика современного направления хакасского изобразительного искусства «Сибирский авангард», его связь с визуализацией этнической темы в творчестве художников. Обнаружив в основе художественного творчества хакасских художников тенденцию обращения к архаическим формам культуры этноса, авторы предлагают систематизацию произведений искусства с позиции национально-значимых ценностей архаико-материальной и духовной культуры хакасского этноса, выраженных в живописных и графических работах.*

*Ключевые слова: плюралистическое общество, компоненты культуры, архаико-материальная и духовная культура хакасов, хакасское изобразительное искусство, Сибирский авангард, хакасский этнос, художники Хакасии, этнические ценности.*

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