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CONTENTS / ЗМІСТ

N. Udris-Borodavko

Artistic heritage as a foundation of cultural identity in contemporary typographic design in Ukraine 6

Н. Удріс-Бородавко

Мистецька спадщина як фундамент культурної ідентичності в сучасному типографічному дизайні України 6

A. Maiovets

The architectural arrangement of the 18th-century Uniate church: Tradition and Western borrowings 17

А. Майовець

Архітектурне облаштування унійної церкви XVIII століття:

традиція і західні запозичення..... 17

O. Liseienko, Ye. Borinstein, Z. Atamaniuk

Immersive exhibition as a cultural phenomenon and an innovative form of event management..... 31

О. Лісєнко, Є. Борінштейн, З. Атаманюк

Імерсивна виставка як культурний феномен та інноваційна форма організації подій..... 31

A. Tatarnikova

Creative economy and socio-cultural projects: The role of the art manager in creating sustainable development..... 39

А. Татарнікова

Креативна економіка та соціокультурні проєкти: роль арт-менеджера в створенні сталого розвитку..... 39

D.M. Kelkay

Transformation of the urban environment into mini-public multifunctional spaces by organising an innovative architectural form – parklets 49

Д.М. Келкай

Трансформація міського середовища у мініпублічні багатофункціональні простори шляхом організації інноваційної архітектурної форми – парклета..... 49

M. Demydenko

The hero archetype and the semiotics of liberation struggle in Oles Sanin's film "Dovbush":

Between historical allusion and visual narrative 58

М. Демиденко

Архетип героя та семіотика визвольної боротьби у фільмі «Довбуш» Олеся Саніна:

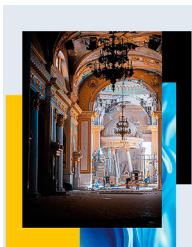
між історичною алюзією та візуальним наративом..... 58

V. Bulatov

Features of aesthetics in the development of ergonomic web products for users with disabilities 66

В. Булатов

Особливості естетики при розробці ергономічних вебпродуктів для користувачів з інвалідністю..... 66



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Artistic heritage as a foundation of cultural identity in contemporary typographic design in Ukraine

Abstract. A prominent thematic focus in the humanities and design fields in the 21st century has been the exploration of cultural identity in the context of globalisation, the promotion of unity in diversity, the recognition of the value of local cultures, and the development of methods to influence graphic design processes. This article aimed to analyse typographic design with Ukrainian identity from 2014 to 2024 and to investigate the sources of Ukraine's cultural heritage that 21st-century designers have drawn upon in the creation of typefaces and lettering. The findings confirmed that typographic design was a vital element in expressing cultural identity within the work of Ukrainian designers, aligning closely with international practice. It was established that the reflection of Ukrainian identity in typefaces and typography was achieved by referring to four groups of cultural heritage sources: traditional Ukrainian writing systems, the synthesised experience of early 20th-century typographic art, the work of specific 20th-century graphic artists, and selected typographic artefacts (handwriting of cultural figures, archival photographs of urban shop signs, book and magazine graphics from the first half of the 20th century, and archival documents). Two distinct stages in the development of digital typeface content reflecting Ukrainian identity over the period 2000–2024 have been identified: 1) the creation of typeface families that made historical developments accessible (including cursive scripts, as well as the work of Heorhii Narbut and his followers); 2) the rise of Ukrainian fonts characterised by glocal design, along with the expansion of the source base referencing cultural heritage. The study identified both implemented approaches and existing gaps in the engagement with Ukrainian cultural heritage. It demonstrated the research-driven, synthetic, and experimental nature of typographic design in Ukraine during 2014–2024. It has been shown that Ukrainian designers approached the development of fonts with distinctly Ukrainian visual features in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, actively promoting their use through social communication. The findings are of value to both Ukrainian and international scholars, as they reveal the particularities of Ukraine's engagement with a broader international trend in graphic design in the 2020s

Keywords: graphic design; cultural heritage; Ukrainian identity; font; typography

INTRODUCTION

Socio-cultural identity is one of the pressing issues of 21st-century society, as well as of contemporary humanities and design practice. Visual communication and graphic design play a significant role in addressing the crisis of

identity, conceptualising the notion of cultural hybridity, and promoting the values of unity in diversity and of glocal cultures – issues explored in depth across various studies. Linda Kudrnovská, co-author of the documentary research

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project “Identity”, which focused on Czech graphic design, observed that graphic designers create visual identities for individual brands, public figures, communities, and events. Collectively, this contributed to shaping the visual identity of the environment, which, in turn, influenced the identity of those who inhabit it (With Aleš Najbrt in the footsteps..., 2023). Visual production thus became a complex platform for interpretation: through the decoding of embedded visual messages, recipients form a sense of themselves as members of a particular society. Graphic design thereby participates in the shaping of a society's identity as a community of recipients.

The issue of cultural identity embedded in graphic design projects and conveyed through them in the information and communication space has become the subject of academic research across various countries. A. Yeo & F. Cao (2021) developed a design methodology aimed at creating graphic design with African identity, specifically that of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Drawing on theories of culture and cultural identity, the authors explored the visual language of traditional African culture and concluded that effective outcomes were achieved through the use of graphic symbols, traditional colours, writing systems, and other elements of the cultural framework. E. Tunstall & E. Agi (2023) focused on decolonising design and the rejection of the European modernist paradigm in favour of positioning the local cultures of Indigenous peoples of the Americas – both in the organisation of everyday life and in the visual concepts of design projects. T.H. Nguyen (2024) emphasised the importance of preserving and promoting cultural identity under globalisation, using Vietnam as a case study. The research addressed the challenges faced by Vietnamese graphic design students studying in international programmes, which lacked dedicated courses on national history and cultural traditions. S.M. Hassan & T.A. Al-Dajani (2025) explored the significance of design in preserving culture and reinterpreting the cultural experience of Saudi Arabia within the framework of the national Vision 2030 programme. They identified the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of Saudi heritage that can be represented through bold and contemporary visual design solutions and reflected on the creation of a cultural brand that resonates with both local and global audiences. As representatives of local cultures, the authors provided a scholarly rationale for the need to preserve cultural diversity in the context of globalisation. They regarded graphic design as a powerful communicative tool for sustaining diversity and conveying it to the international arena. The studies cited above highlight a shared concern: the development of a distinctive aesthetic and semantic language in design projects grounded in cultural heritage. They identified mechanisms for integrating traditional forms into contemporary design and offered predictions regarding the effectiveness of such approaches.

In addition to comprehensive studies that have addressed the broader issues of cultural identity, the

examination of more specific aspects of graphic design has become increasingly important in academic research. Within the context of cultural identity and the search for its sources in local artistic heritage, typeface and typographic design have emerged as key areas of focus. For instance, S. Elbardawil (2022) investigated cultural heritage in Arab countries through the lens of Arabic typography. The author examined the use of Naskh-style fonts in navigation systems and signage as part of the visual urban heritage of the United Arab Emirates and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The study demonstrated that typographic design contributed a unique character to the visual urban landscape in the Arab context. Scientist advocated for the preservation and documentation of Arabic typographic heritage in urban spaces, including its history, methods, processes, and artefacts. In doctoral research, W. Wang (2024) classified modern Chinese characters and analysed both traditional and contemporary forms of hieroglyphs using various graphic design projects as case studies. As a result of her research, the author raised the issue of the interrelation between the morphology and imagery of Chinese characters, questioning how the use of more pronounced artistic techniques and the enhancement of a character's visual-expressive qualities might affect the perception of the symbol as a whole. D. Maisuradze (2024) examined the typographic heritage of Sakartvelo and explored the prospects for its digitalisation in graphic design during the third decade of the 21st century. Meanwhile, M. Ling (2021), in the study of calligraphic heritage and the development of innovative typeface content based on it, introduced a cross-cultural approach. In the context of Ukrainian typography and typographic heritage, significant academic and journalistic attention has been devoted to the Ruthenia project by V. Chebanyk *et al.* (2024), which presented the full trajectory of the project's development, along with a rationale for the underlying concepts and typeface designs.

This study aimed to analyse the development of typographic design that reflected Ukrainian cultural identity and to identify the layers of Ukraine's cultural heritage that were readily accessible and capable of broadening the creative horizons of contemporary graphic designers. It was worth noting that, in Ukraine, international design trends were being intensified by the social upheaval of war – an assault aimed at the eradication of Ukrainian identity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was carried out through two parallel processes: the collection of a source base and the analysis of design projects. The source material consisted of two categories of design work from the period 2014–2024. The first group comprised completed graphic design projects, whose artistic expression was based on the use of distinctive typographic elements with Ukrainian identity. The collection of this group was conducted in two stages: 1) empirical observation of sites, where the projects were in use (bookshops, grocery stores, street

signage, public events), which confirmed the real-world presence of the identified trends; 2) examination of the context, in which the collected projects were created, as outlined in annotations posted on the social media pages and websites of the designers or design studios responsible. In the first stage, the selected projects were compared with others that had already been recognised by the professional community as containing elements of Ukrainian identity. The comparison focused on key typographic features – such as the character of letterforms and the presence of elements developed throughout the historical evolution of Ukrainian typographic culture. In the second stage, a textual analysis of annotations was carried out to identify the sources of Ukrainian typographic identity referenced by the designers and to assess the extent to which they reinterpreted historical cultural heritage. All data obtained during the analysis were synthesised into a table.

The second group of source material consisted of functional digital typeface families, available for purchase or free download and use in projects, created between 2000 and 2024. The selection criterion for inclusion in the core sample was that the designers explicitly identified their typefaces as containing Ukrainian identity. The study of this category involved the collection, systematisation, and analysis of descriptions of developed typeface families. Based on this analysis, the types of cultural heritage objects referenced by designers were identified. Key resources for this group included the websites and pages of type designer Dmytro Rastvortsev (Rastvortsev & Bulanov, 2020; Rastvortsev, 2021a; 2021b), specialised platforms such as the Rentafont blog (2025), the Alfabravo (2025) design studio, UKRfonts.com (n.d.), and the site of designer Bohdan Hdal (Fonts, n.d.).

By applying the method of abstraction, the data enabled conclusions to be drawn regarding the stages of type culture development in the period 2000–2024. Additionally, online interviews with Ukrainian designers Oleksii Chekal, Oleksandra Korchevska, and Kyrylo Tkachov were analysed, focusing on their personal experiences and design approaches as discussed during the presentation of the book *Graphic Design with a Ukrainian Face (How to make Ukrainian..., 2023a; 2023b)*. Further insights for both research processes were drawn from review publications by Ukrainian journalists featured on specialised media platforms such as Projector (*Identities of Ukrainian..., 2021*) and Suspilne Media (Kuzmenko, 2023). Analytical input also included an expert publication by K. Tkachov (2020), which, based on practical experience, addressed key themes relevant to the analysis of contemporary type design in Ukraine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Between 2014 and 2024, Ukrainian graphic design saw significant enrichment – both through projects in which typographic elements became the central expression of national cultural identity, and through the creation of new

typefaces imbued with distinctively Ukrainian character. This process became particularly prominent against the backdrop of the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian war, which began in 2014 and escalated dramatically with the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation in February 2022. In the context of attempts to erase national identity, cultural forms have emerged as vital tools for asserting uniqueness and maintaining visibility on the global map of cultural diversity. Graphic design has become one of Ukraine's most powerful instruments of soft power in positioning the country and its heritage internationally.

Among the most notable and expressive design projects of the 2014–2024 period were visual identity systems, packaging, labels, and covers. A significant portion of modern territorial branding (for cities and regions) has been based on the adaptation and reinterpretation of historical type heritage and the works of Ukrainian graphic artists. Examples included the typographic components of the identities of Lutsk, Kyiv, Kyiv Region, Cherkasy Region, Vorokhta, and Chernivtsi (Fig. 1). In project descriptions, designers often justified their creative decisions by referencing the legacies of Vasyl Krychevskiy, Pavlo Kovzhun, and Vasyl Yermilov. For example, the identity of the Rivne Region (Fig. 1, c) features a distinctive font executed in small caps, drawing on the styles of Heorhii Narbut, Yakov Hnizdovskiy, and Robert Lisovskiy. A now-classic yet still highly relevant example in Ukrainian design was the limited-edition release of Chernihivske beer. In 2015, metal cans were decorated with refined calligraphic lettering in the style of Ukrainian “skoropys” (fast-writing style), created by the Lopukhina sisters. The label design for Umanske beer featured a distinctive inscription based on the aesthetic of Narbut-inspired typefaces and patterns incorporating geometric elements derived from the natural floral motifs of the Ukrainian landscape. The minimalistic and simple layout highlighted the inscription itself, successfully combining modernity with elements of cultural and artistic heritage. A particularly striking example of rebranding in favour of stylised typographic composition can be seen in the redesign of the Volia energy drink can. At the beginning of 2023, the can's defining visual element was a vertical composition built from traditional Ukrainian embroidery patterns, which contributed to a structured layout and enhanced the emotional tone of the character depicted. However, following a consumer feedback analysis, the design team revised their approach at the end of 2023 (Updated “Volia” from..., 2023). The selected word “nezlamna” (unbreakable), chosen to express the essence of the brand and the core values of Ukrainian resilience, was reimaged as a typographic composition inspired by the layout of titles and headings in Gospels printed in Ukrainian printing houses of the 15th–16th centuries (Fig. 2). As a result, they can retain high recognisability in fast-paced visual contexts among competitors, while gaining originality and conceptual depth through the reinterpretation of Ukrainian typographic and lettering heritage.



Figure 1. Typographic elements in the visual identities of Ukrainian cities and regions

Note: a – Kyrylo Tkachov. Font Lutsk for the city’s identity; b – Dmytro Rastvortsev. Typeface compilation for the identity of Kyiv Region; c – Oleksandra Korchevska. Typographic component of Rivne Region’s identity; d – Dmytro Rastvortsev. Typographic component of Cherkasy Region’s identity; e – White Studio Design. Logo for the city of Vorokhta; f – OCB Agency. Logo for the city of Chernivtsi

Source: K. Tkachov (2017); D. Rastvortsev & D. Bulanov (2020); D. Rastvortsev (2021a); D. Rastvortsev (2021b); Identities of Ukrainian regions worth seeing (2021); The city of Chernivtsi has received a new branding (2024)

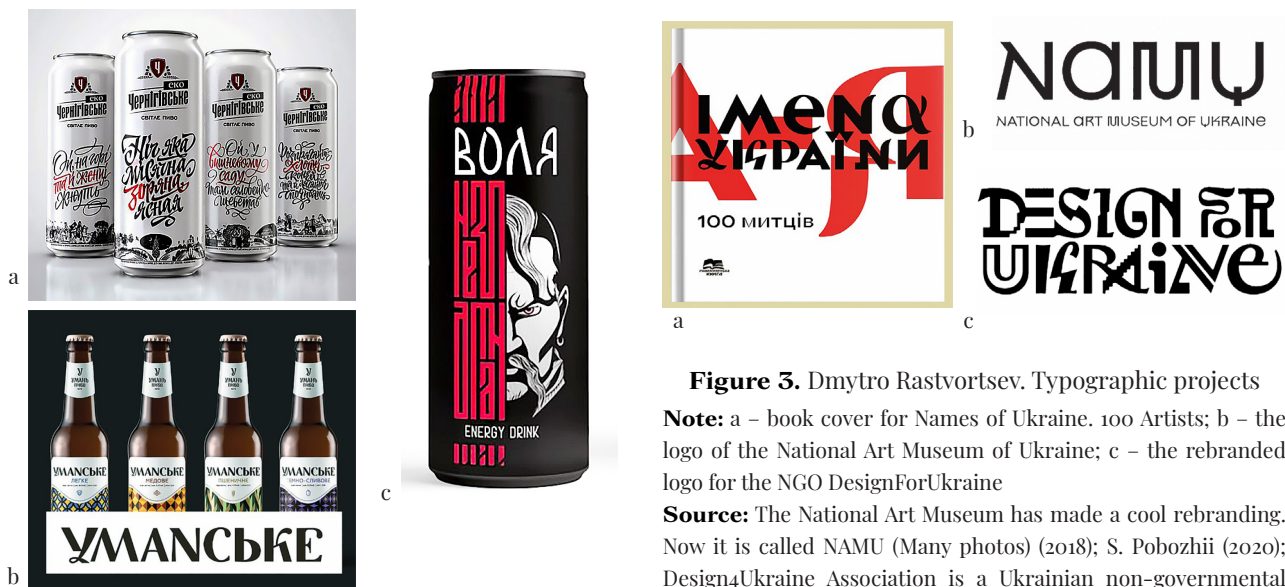


Figure 2. Beer packaging design

Note: a – metal cans from the limited-edition Chernihivske beer series; b – label design for Umanske beer; c – can design for the Volia energy drink

Source: BBDO studio – Ukrainian songs (2015); Updated “Volia” from “Morshynska” (2023); Umanske. Exquisite mild taste (2025)

A large-scale typographic project was developed by designer Dmytro Rastvortsev as part of the visual identity for the National Art Museum of Ukraine. While the logo appeared visually minimal – consisting of only four letters – it was supported by a comprehensive type system comprising nine typeface families. The foundation of the project was archival material from the museum, spanning from early printed books to works from the early 20th century. This type of system has since been adapted for various applications, including the aforementioned identity for the Kyiv Region, book covers, and the redesigned logo for the public organisation DesignForUkraine (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Dmytro Rastvortsev. Typographic projects

Note: a – book cover for Names of Ukraine. 100 Artists; b – the logo of the National Art Museum of Ukraine; c – the rebranded logo for the NGO DesignForUkraine

Source: The National Art Museum has made a cool rebranding. Now it is called NAMU (Many photos) (2018); S. Pobozhii (2020); Design4Ukraine Association is a Ukrainian non-governmental organisation that aims to shape a holistic society (n.d.)

A synthesised Ukrainian typographic identity also underpins the visual style of the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts, developed to mark its 100th anniversary. The variable typographic compositions, created by Oleksii Chekal, were based on a fusion of lettering styles by Borys Kosarev, Sviatoslav Hordynskyi, Vasyl Yermilov, and Vasyl Krychevskyi (Chekal, 2021). Logotypes for the magazine “The Ukrainian” and the KyivDesignWeek project (Fig. 4) were developed from a combination of calligraphic flourishes and digital grotesques that also reference various cultural periods in Ukrainian visual history. The covers and overall design of printed publications featuring cultural references typically draw on adapted and compiled calligraphy inspired by “skoropys”, the titles of early printed books, inscriptions on the walls of religious buildings, works by 20th-century Ukrainian graphic artists, and even the handwriting of prominent figures.



Figure 4. Oleksii Chekal. Typographic projects

Note: a – lettering and graphic symbolism of the visual identity of the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts; b – covers of The Ukrainian magazine; c – logo for the KyivDesignWeek project

Source: Ya. Trehubova (2020); O. Chekal (2022); O. Kmelyovska (2023)

A notable area of application for a typographic design featuring Ukrainian visual identity has been the creation of film logos for Ukrainian cinema. One of the most active contributors in this field is designer Bohdan Hdal. The logo for “Hutsulka Ksenia” was developed using his Old Kharkiv font, enhanced with decorative elements. For the film “Black Raven”, Hdal’s Vernyhora typeface was used in both the logo and visual identity. The logo for “Dovbush” (Fig. 5) underwent several design phases, evolving from sketches referencing the angular, carved Hutsul aesthetic to a more modern look – yet retaining a distinctive Ukrainian character, especially in the stylised letter “V” based on the ligature “OV”.

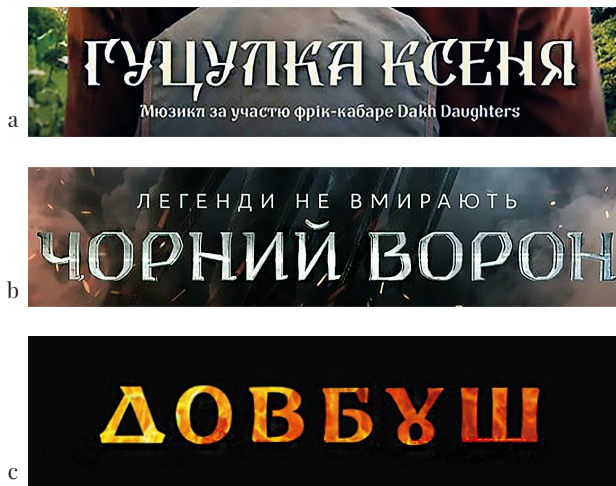


Figure 5. Bohdan Hdal. Logos for Ukrainian films

Note: a – logo for the film “Hutsulka Ksenia”; b – logo for the film “Black Raven”; c – logo for the film “Dovbush”

Source: Logotypes for the films Dovbush, Hutsulka Ksenya and The Stranger (2021)

Among the most prominent authors of widely used typefaces and typographic concepts are Vasyl Chebanyk, Henadii Zarechniuk, Viktor Kharyk, Kyrlo Tkachov, Bohdan Hdal, Andrii Shevchenko, Dmytro Ras-tvortsev, Oleksii Chekal, and Marchela Mozhyna. In his article, K. Tkachov (2020) highlighted the rapid emergence of new names in the field of type design and the active development of the discipline between 2020 and 2022. The design work of individual creators has also been explored in publications by A. Dubrivna & S. Doronina (2021), I. Cherkesova (2023), and A. Koliesnikova & O. Pasko (2023). However, these articles do not offer an in-depth analysis of cultural heritage as a foundational source of identity – an area of increasing importance in defining future directions for the development of typographic culture in Ukraine.

The study also examined 50 of the most widely known and used typeface families that, according to their designers, embody Ukrainian identity. The selected typefaces were created to a high professional standard and feature full functionality, including complete character sets, case systems, and at least four styles or weights. Most also support multilingual usage: approximately 75% of the typefaces are suitable for use in 80 to 100 languages, while the remainder support three languages. The analysis focused on reviewing and organising the design concepts and approaches presented in the typeface descriptions provided by the designers. The primary aim was to identify patterns in the references to Ukrainian cultural heritage objects that serve as the conceptual basis for these contemporary typeface projects. The source analysis of 50 typeface families produced the following data (Table 1).

Table 1. Sources of Ukrainian cultural heritage in the design of contemporary typefaces

Number typefaces	Type of cultural heritage serving as a conceptual source	Typeface names
10	Traditional Ukrainian writing systems (uncial, semi-uncial, Kyiv-style vyaz, skoropys, graffiti on the walls of ancient churches)	Ancient Kyiv, Hajdamaka, Ukrainian Barokko 2D, Bravestone, Palitura, Kyiv Region Type, Kyiv, Kudriavchenko, Ascetic 2D, Veles
6	General experience of type design from the early 20 th century in Ukraine	Irpina Type, Zlam, Almaz, e-Ukraine Head, Aleksa, Kyiv Region Type

Table 1. Continued

Number typefaces	Type of cultural heritage serving as a conceptual source	Typeface names
20	Work of a specific 20 th -century Ukrainian graphic artist or designer	Narbut Abetka, Narbut Classic, Narbut Narrow Contrast, Narbut Extra Wide, Narbut Whirl, Abetka Kirnarskoho, Yakutovych, Kyiv Region, Ukrainka, Repyakh, Zluka, Homenko, Zahar, Yurchi, Hordyi, Holos, Volja, KSADA, Vernyhora, Kalyna
14	Some cultural artefacts, including:	
	handwriting of prominent cultural figures	KobzarkS, Bairak Script, Kudriavchenko, Іван Гончар
	shop signage from the first half of the 20 th century (retro photographs)	Old Kharkiv, Lviv Towers, Konfekt, Univermag
	book and magazine graphics from the early 20 th century	Lutsk Type
	archival documents	NAMU Old Style, Koziyar
	urban street graffiti	Kharkiv Tone
	posters from the 1930s and credits from silent films of the all-Ukrainian Photo and Cinema Administration	ReImagineUA Dziga
	contemporary Ukrainian music	Mak

Source: compiled by the author

The integration of cultural motifs and patterns into typography adds meaning and establishes a deeper connection with the audience (Karahana, 2024). The identification and classification of Ukrainian cultural heritage objects that served as sources for contemporary typeface design revealed trends and patterns within the creative practices of Ukrainian type designers. Overall, the experience of Ukrainian designers is shaped in alignment with international design trends. For instance, among young African designers, a group of followers of Saki Mafundikwa has emerged – developing projects based on adapted ethnic scripts that he helped to revive (Johanet & Fesson, 2016). Designer and researcher S. Mafundikwa (2004) published a book in which was explored the ancient writing traditions of Africa in detail, comparing writing systems from Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, the Congo, Angola, and other countries across the continent. As noted by W.M. Aleshawie (2019), in Saudi Arabia, 95% of surveyed designers used typography to express visual identity, reproducing traditional forms of writing in their projects. A similar trend was observed in Lebanon, where researchers M.P. Khoury & T.E. Khoury (2017) proposed a development strategy for design and design education based on integrating distinctive cultural features into design projects. Their approach was rooted in authentic typography, yet emphasised the importance of modernisation and a synthesis of local and global influences. D. Maisuradze (2024) described typefaces created by contemporary Georgian designers – including his own – that were based on palaeographic scripts drawn from historical documents, ancient manuscripts, and the handwriting of various Georgian public figures from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Engaging with the cultural heritage of a particular ethnic group or nation may involve more than reproducing or reinterpreting entire traditional writing systems or typefaces created by professional artists. It can also include modelling letterforms based on specific artefacts – such

as shop signs, slogans on posters, the graphic elements of iconic household items, or architectural structures. For example, N. Noordyanto *et al.* (2022) analysed the semantics and morphology of the sickle used by the Madurese ethnic group in Pamekasan Regency, Indonesia, and developed a typeface based on its visual characteristics, integrating these into the structural foundation of the typeface design. In Ukrainian type design, such an approach has appeared in conceptual proposals and has mostly been realised through student experiments involving decorative typefaces. Another interdisciplinary study by J. Burns & D. Jarratt (2022), which focused on typography in tourist destinations at an English seaside resort, demonstrated that “inscribed, painted, or fabricated letterforms play a significant role in constructing the recognised “image” and our experience of the seaside”. Thus, in certain areas of local community life, the cultural heritage of the everyday was created through design – and specifically through typography – which in turn became a source of identity. According to the authors, “interpretation of the value of typography provide depth to a design proposal, but it would emphasise the heritage/traditions associated with these distinctive places”. These traditions form a conceptual foundation for contemporary typographic design.

At the same time, Table 2 revealed that the majority of typefaces have been developed based on references to the work of specific Ukrainian graphic artists and designers of the 20th century, or through the synthesis of selected elements from their works. This reflected a significant and distinctive feature of Ukrainian culture – artistic and historical continuity – characterised by the transmission of visual methodologies and identity-forming approaches from earlier generations of artists to newer ones. This finding led to the next stage of the study: an analysis of how the heritage of individual artists was represented in a sample of 20 typefaces from Table 1, to identify the most influential figures.

Table 2. Representation of Ukrainian artists' heritage in contemporary typefaces

Ukrainian graphic artist (20 th century)	Contemporary Ukrainian designer	Typeface name	Year
Heorhii Narbut	Henadii Zarechniuk	Narbut Abetka, Narbut Classic, Narbut Narrow Contrast, Narbut Extra Wide, Narbut Whirl, Abetka Kirnarskoho	2000–2003
	Oleksandra Aleksandrova, Lukian Turetskyi	Kalyna	2014
	Bohdan Hdal	Vernyhora	2017
	Dmytro Rastvortsev	Ukrainka	2018
		Kyiv Region	2021
	Oleksii Chekal	KSADA	2021
Vasyl Krychevskiy	Bohdan Hdal	Vernyhora	2017
	Dmytro Rastvortsev	Ukrainka	2018
		Kyiv Region	2021
	Oleksii Chekal	KSADA	2021
Vasyl Khomenko	Henadii Zarechniuk, Viktor Kharyk, Kostiantyn Holovchenko	Homenko	2010, 2020
Volodymyr Yurchyshyn	Henadii Zarechniuk, Viktor Kharyk	Yurchi	2017
Vasyl Yermilov	Dmytro Rastvortsev	Ukrainka	2018
	Oleksii Chekal	KSADA	2021
Petro Kholodnyi	Henadii Zarechniuk, Viktor Kharyk	Zluka	2018
Heorhii Yakutovych	Henadii Zarechniuk	Yakutovych	2000–2003
	Henadii Zarechniuk, Viktor Kharyk	Zahar	2019
Borys Kosariev	Oleksii Chekal	KSADA	2021
Nil Khasevych	Marchela Mozhyna	Volja	2022
Sviatoslav Hordynskiy	Hanna Kovalenko	Hordyi	2023
Pavlo Kovzhun	Alona Korysta	Holos	2023
Mykola Butovych	Dmytro Rastvortsev in collaboration with LevType studio	Repyakh	2024

Source: compiled by the author

It was important to note that Table 2 included only those typefaces, whose accompanying annotations explicitly name the artists, whose work served as the visual and structural foundation for the design. In the annotations for such typefaces as Kyiv Region Type, e-Ukraine Head, Almaz, Zlam, and Irpin Type, designers referenced the general aesthetic of Ukrainian 20th-century avant-garde and modernism. These stylistic movements were embodied in the works of many of the artists listed in Table 2. Designers most frequently referred to the legacy of Heorhii Narbut, who laid a robust foundation for the aesthetics of Ukrainian identity and established a methodological framework for reinterpreting typographic heritage. These contributions were supported by an in-depth analysis in the article by S. Fedorenko *et al.* (2025), which provided new evidence of Narbut's lasting significance – both for his contemporaries and for his successors in the 21st century.

Therefore, based on the analysis of typefaces and inscriptions, two distinct stages in the development of digital typographic content with Ukrainian identity were identified over the period 2000–2024. The first stage involved the creation of typeface families that made the historical context accessible to a wide range of users. Fully functional and widely available fonts such as Narbut Abetka, Narbut Classic, Narbut Narrow Contrast, Narbut Extra Wide,

Narbut Whirl (2000–2003), Abetka Kirnarskoho (2000–2003), Homenko (2010), Ascetic 2D (2010), Ukrainian Barokko 2D (2010), Yakutovych (2000–2003), Ruthenia, Kalyna (2014), and Skoropys17 (2016–2017) became digital versions of typefaces – either fully or partially reconstructed – that reflected historical scripts or were originally created in the 20th century as products of Ukrainian cultural expression. This process of practical digitisation was carried out in parallel with theoretical research and the public dissemination of information concerning earlier periods of Ukraine's typographic heritage. Notable in this context were numerous academic publications and the doctoral research of I. Dudnyk (2019). This stage made it possible to enrich a wide variety of design projects with Ukrainian fonts that carried cultural significance and opened up opportunities for a new generation of designers to engage in a creative dialogue with the typographic legacy of the past.

The second stage, spanning predominantly from 2018 to 2025, was characterised, firstly, by a significant expansion of the source base of cultural references (including newly acknowledged names within Ukraine's artistic heritage), and secondly, by a marked increase in the number of Ukrainian typefaces that can be classified as examples of glocal design (Udris-Borodavko, 2024). Designers of the late 2010s and early 2020s demonstrated a predominantly synthetic mode

of thinking, expressed through the simultaneous application of citation, graphemic interpretation, and heuristic combination. This approach enabled the creation of variable compositions of typographic graphemes that reflected Ukrainian identity, while remaining contemporary and aligned with global design trends. This development was likely influenced, at least in part, by Ukraine's intensified integration into the European context following 2014, the growing participation of Ukrainian designers in professional competitions and festivals, and their increasingly prominent presence within the international design community.

Each contemporary Ukrainian designer developed a personal approach to typeface design, crafting individual project concepts. For example, Dmytro Rastvortsev's design philosophy centres on experimenting with the fusion of authenticity and modern forms, based on the belief that harmonious combinations will prove viable, while eclectic ones were unlikely to take root. In an interview, Dmytro Rastvortsev also emphasised the importance of harmony and gradual progression in typographic innovation, noting that the acceptance of new typefaces by professionals and audiences alike required time for adaptation. According to Marchela Mozhyna, a modern type designer must study authentic type traditions – such as early printed books and manuscripts. However, in contemporary typeface design, it was no longer sufficient to simply replicate original sources: “One should extract ideas or isolate a single parameter and blend it into a modern typeface” (Kuzmenko, 2023). For Bohdan Hdal, the primary aim of a project was not the perfection of letterforms or strict historical accuracy, but the ability to convey spirit and meaning – to communicate mood and emotion to the viewer (Kapustynska, 2024).

In a 2023 interview, O. Chekal, when addressing historical typographic heritage, also advised against designing in a way that would make the historical prototype overtly recognisable. Artist stressed that, for Ukrainian design, it was crucial to consider both context and appropriateness. O. Chekal highlighted the importance of selecting a particular style suited to a specific theme, carefully and thoughtfully choosing historical references, reworking them, and incorporating modern features (How to make Ukrainian..., 2023a). For example, master adapted a technique used by Ukrainian graphic artist S. Kosarev – imitating the appearance of letters cut by glass – for a contemporary poster design using a modern typeface (Chekal, 2021). Additionally, in research, O. Chekal (2023) provided a theoretical rationale for drawing upon the handwriting of H. Skovoroda as a foundation for contemporary typeface design. In everyday design practice, Chekal frequently experiments with combining elements from different historical periods – for instance, integrating “skoropys” with Ukrainian avantgarde aesthetics. Artist often referred to his projects as post-historical – works grounded in historical context, but contemporary and relevant in their overall expression. In projects, the designer conveyed the importance of defending national distinctiveness and embracing a humanistic approach in art, as

well as skilfully referencing artistic imagery. According to K. Tkachov, the call to recognise “Ukrainianness” in graphic design first emerged in the early 20th century, with H. Narbut and V. Krychevskyi laying the foundations for a design methodology that drew on primary sources of folk motifs. Both artists began shaping a direction that was later continued following Ukraine's independence in 1991 – namely, the quest to reflect the uniqueness of Ukrainian culture. The key approach identified by K. Tkachov in his own experience was to avoid direct copying and instead create new design products informed by previous developments. Moreover, a designer's pursuit of a distinctive style should not follow a linear path, but rather be branching and constantly evolving. A designer must demonstrate individuality not only in their creative solutions, but also in their choice of source material (How to make Ukrainian..., 2023b).

The conducted study has demonstrated, firstly, that font and typographic design serve as vital components in expressing cultural identity and, secondly, that leading Ukrainian type designers approach the creation of fonts with a distinct “Ukrainian character” in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, drawing on a diverse range of historical sources. This aligned with the design practices in other countries, where the question of identity was also brought to the fore by wider social developments. Between 2000 and 2024 – particularly since 2014 – a considerable number of typefaces have been developed in Ukraine, enabling other designers to incorporate Ukrainian identity into a broad spectrum of visual communication projects, across various functions and audiences. The reproduction of Ukrainian identity in fonts and typography has relied on references to objects of Ukrainian cultural heritage, which can be broadly categorised into four distinct groups. Ukrainian type designers have not only mastered the craft of digital font creation, but have also established it as an online business model that supported the continued growth of the field by: a) ensuring access to fonts for all users on varying financial terms; b) motivating type designers to create new work; c) offering a coherent representation of the overall quality of type design in the country. In addition, the practice of distributing newly developed fonts for free public use has contributed significantly to raising the overall standard of graphic design.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the study, it was established that the active use of the expressive potential of typography to present cultural identity has become a general trend globally and in Ukraine in particular. Furthermore, during the post-independence period, a significant part of the development of Ukraine's typographic culture has involved the creation of fonts or unique branded lettering that reflect Ukrainian identity. It was found that such design work has been grounded in Ukraine's cultural heritage – especially traditional Ukrainian scripts, the overall experience of typographic art in early 20th-century Ukraine, the work

of specific Ukrainian graphic artists and designers of the 20th century, and a range of cultural artefacts (such as the handwriting of cultural figures, retro photographs of shop signs from the first half of the 20th century, book and magazine graphics from the same period, and archival documents). The study also revealed that the development of digital typographic content with Ukrainian identity between 2000 and 2024 has already gone through two distinct stages. The first stage involved the creation of typefaces that made historical heritage widely accessible to the general public (such as fonts based on the cursive script and the work of H. Narbut and his followers). The second stage has been marked by the spread of Ukrainian fonts within the context of glocal design and a deepening engagement with sources of cultural heritage. While the first stage was characterised by the adaptation of existing fonts to digital design environments – often involving a degree of authorial reinterpretation and supplementation dictated by technical requirements – the second stage was associated with innovation. This included the simultaneous application of citation, graphemic interpretation,

and heuristic combination to achieve distinctive results in type design. It has been established that the leading figures of the new generation of Ukrainian typographers agree that engaging with cultural heritage should take a research-oriented, synthetic, and experimental approach. The result should be a unique product that represents the identity and at the same time meets modern global trends. Future research should focus on identifying and substantiating new sources of cultural heritage that embody Ukrainian identity and can serve as a foundation for font and typographic projects, as well as on assessing their impact on Ukrainian audiences.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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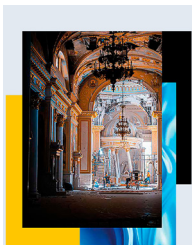
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Мистецька спадщина як фундамент культурної ідентичності в сучасному типографічному дизайні України

Анотація. Актуальним тематичним напрямом гуманітарної сфери і проєктної діяльності в XXI столітті стало вивчення культурної ідентичності в умовах глобалізації, втілення ідеї єдності розмаїття та цінності локальних культур та формування методів впливу на процеси графічного дизайну. Мета статті полягала в аналізі типографічного дизайну з українською ідентичністю впродовж 2014–2024 років та дослідженні джерел культурної спадщини України, до яких зверталися дизайнери XXI століття у розробці шрифтів і літерацій. Результати підтвердили, що типографічний дизайн – важливий компонент відтворення культурної ідентичності в проєктах українських дизайнерів, що цілком узгоджувалося з міжнародною практикою. З’ясовано, що відтворення української ідентичності в шрифтах і типографії здійснювалося зверненням до джерел культурної спадщини України 4-х груп: традиційна українська писемність, синтезований досвід шрифтового мистецтва початку XX століття, творчість конкретних художників-графіків XX століття, окремі типографічні артефакти (почерки культурних діячів, ретросвітлина вивісок міських крамниць, книжкова і журнальна графіка першої половини XX століття, архівні документи). Було виявлено два етапи розвитку цифрового шрифтового контенту з українською ідентичністю в період 2000–2024 років: 1) створення шрифтових сімейств, що зробили доступними історичні напрацювання (шрифти скоропису, Георгія Нарбута та його послідовників); 2) зростання українських шрифтів глобального дизайну і розширення джерельної бази звернень до культурної спадщини. Визначено реалізовані підходи та незаповнені лакуни у зверненні до культурної української спадщини, доведено дослідницький, синтетичний і експериментальний характер проєктування в типографічному дизайні України 2014–2024 років. Показано, що українські дизайнери свідомо ставилися до розробки шрифтів з українською візуальністю та просували ідею необхідності їхнього використання за допомогою соціальної комунікації. Результати є корисними для вивчення теми українськими та зарубіжними науковцями, оскільки вони відкрили особливість українського досвіду поширеної міжнародної тенденції в графічному дизайні 2020-х років

Ключові слова: графічний дизайн; культурна спадщина; українська ідентичність; шрифт; типографія



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The architectural arrangement of the 18th-century Uniate church: Tradition and Western borrowings

Abstract. The aim of this study was to identify the architectural characteristics of the 18th-century Uniate church in Right-Bank Ukraine, with a focus on its confessional, spatial, and structural specificity. The research employed a comprehensive interdisciplinary methodology, combining historical-architectural, spatial-analytical, typological and comparative-stylistic methods. The source base included historical maps, ecclesiastical-administrative descriptions, graphic representations and aggregated statistical data on the confessional structure of 18th-century of Right-Bank Ukraine. The findings demonstrated that the architectural landscape of the Uniate church evolved within a complex confessional environment, wherein the Uniate tradition functioned as a synthetic phenomenon, integrating elements of the Byzantine rite, vernacular timber construction and Baroque influences drawn from the Latin sacred heritage. This interplay fostered the emergence of a distinctive spatial-visual model that affirmed the Uniate church's confessional identity in a region marked by intense religious competition. The Kyiv Uniate Metropolis encompassed the regions of Volhynia, Podillia, Kyiv and Bratslav, where the presence of Uniate churches varied considerably: the highest concentration was recorded in Volhynia and Podillia and the lowest in Kyiv and Bratslav, reflecting political changes and jurisdictional shifts. In the middle of the 18th century, the number of Uniate churches reached approximately 1,500–1,700, decreasing to 1,200–1,300 by the end of the 18th century. The analysis of single-nave, tripartite, and triconch architectural types revealed that Uniate church interiors were characterised by multi-tiered iconostases with carving and gilding, wall reliefs, frescoes and decorative motifs blending sacred symbolism with local ornamental traditions. Baroque elements – such as vine scrolls, palmettes, and acanthus leaves – played a prominent role in enhancing the ceremonial visual expressiveness of the sacred space. The practical value of the study lies in its potential application to the reconstruction of the 18th-century sacred environment, the preservation of the architectural heritage and the development of scientifically grounded restoration approaches

Keywords: sacred space; church typology; confessional dynamics; iconostasis; Baroque stylistics; spatial zoning; log construction technique

INTRODUCTION

The architectural configuration of the 18th-century Uniate church in Right-Bank Ukraine reflected a multi-layered process of cultural transformation, shaped by confessional coexistence and the aesthetic influence of broader

European trends. The Uniate architecture not only assimilated traditional Byzantine-Slavic forms, but also remained open to Western borrowings – most notably from the Baroque style. However, the scholarly discourse has lacked

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a comprehensive examination of Uniate church design through the lens of this symbiosis between the local and Western, traditional and innovative elements. This gap underscored the relevance of a study aimed at elucidating the distinctive features of the architectural landscape of Uniate churches within the regional framework of Right-Bank Ukraine, based on the analysis of the 18th-century sources and the mechanisms of external architectural model integration. The core problem addressed by this research was the limited representation of the 18th-century Uniate ecclesiastical architecture in contemporary interdisciplinary studies. While numerous scholarly works have examined the Baroque style in the broader Ukrainian context, they often neglected Uniate churches and their specific forms of sacred architecture. Moreover, statistical and visitation materials – offering descriptive insights into church buildings – remain only partially explored. This situation necessitated an investigation of the Uniate church's architecture as a distinct phenomenon in terms of spatial planning, decoration, materials used and its role within the administrative framework of the Kyiv Uniate Metropolis.

The iconographic and decorative components shaping the artistic language of Basilian sacred art in the 18th century have been explored by M. Levytska (2021), who demonstrated how the activities of Basilian monasteries contributed to the formation of a coherent aesthetic environment combining traditional forms with the stylistics of European Baroque. The author's findings confirmed that Basilian art was closely linked to the religious identity and the confessional politics of the 18th century. A. Urakina (2022) systematised the evolution of spatial-compositional solutions in the church architecture from the 10th to the 18th century, tracing transformations in volumetric-spatial structures, including changes in plans, vaulting systems and church terminations. Researcher's work highlighted the development of a synthetic approach to church design by the 18th century, harmonising the structural functionality with the stylistic expressiveness. The preservation, loss and reconstruction of Baroque-era decorative elements in Kyiv's architectural monuments were the focus of K. Tretiak (2024), who analysed authentic sources and proposed reconstructions of lost details – such as façade décor, bell towers and pediments – emphasising the role of architectural memory in the national identity.

Scientist J. Casanova (2022) analysed models of Christian sacred geography in Kyiv by examining three major churches through the theological concept of Kyiv as the "Third Rome". The author's study illustrated, how the architecture symbolised a continuity linking Rome, Constantinople and Kyiv, thus constructing a sacred topography of strategic and symbolic significance. The role of natural landscape in the perception of sacred architecture was explored by D. Chernyshev *et al.* (2020), who demonstrated that topography, elevation and panoramic positioning were crucial to the visual dominance and symbolic resonance of churches within the sacralised space. O. Gorbukh (2024) examined the fusion of European architectural

forms with vernacular building traditions in Baroque sacred architecture, revealing that Baroque elements were adapted to local conditions and technical capacities – evident in plans, façades and construction techniques that combined professional and folk practices. The iconographic system of the Ukrainian Baroque sacred book was studied by O. Kurhanova (2023), who investigated visual metaphors, compositional solutions and the symbolism of book design, underlining the importance of graphic language as a medium of spiritual communication reflecting the Baroque worldview and the church's visual culture.

S. Olianina (2023) addressed the functional organisation of monastic church spaces and the iconostasis as an architectural-liturgical element, showing that the iconostasis served both decorative and spatial-semantic purposes by structuring the liturgical space and marking the sacred hierarchy within the interior. L. Miliayeva (2023) analysed the historical and stylistic development of the Ukrainian icon from its Byzantine origins to the Baroque period, examining changes in composition, colour schemes, themes and linking iconography to the architectural context – especially the placement of iconostases, mural paintings and interior aesthetics. The interpretations of Ukrainian Baroque in the national art of the historical discourse were discussed by I. Levchenko (2024), who explored how Baroque style was incorporated into historiographical narratives and became the part of the national artistic canon, integrating architecture, visual art, and liturgical space into representations of national identity. Thus, the research in the field of the 18th-century sacred art and architecture has addressed a wide range of issues, including stylistic transformations, the iconographic language, spatial semiotics, the landscape interaction and the historiographical interpretation. These works provided a theoretical foundation for the further analysis of Uniate Church architecture as a distinctive phenomenon that synthesised traditional sacred architectural models with elements of Western European origin.

The aim of the study was to identify the architectural characteristics of the 18th-century Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine by analysing the regional architectural landscape, statistical records, general visitation reports and the incorporation of both traditional and Western architectural elements. The objectives included: examining the architectural landscape of the 18th-century Uniate churches within the territorial structure of the Kyiv Uniate Metropolis; analysing statistical data on the number of Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine throughout the 18th century; identifying traditional architectural elements specific to the Uniate context.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study of the architectural configuration of the 18th-century Uniate church in Right-Bank Ukraine was conducted using the comprehensive methodological approach, grounded in historical-architectural, source-based and spatial-analytical analyses. The material basis included

archival sources, historical-confessional descriptions, illustrative and cartographic materials, as well as the contemporary academic literature on early modern Ukrainian sacred architecture. The territorial structure of the Kyiv Uniate Metropolis was examined using the historical-geographical method, which enabled the reconstruction of the regional scope of the Uniate network across the main ecclesiastical-administrative zones – Volhynia, Podillia, Kyiv and Bratslav. This involved the use of historical maps obtained through the analysis of the source Kyiv Metropolis and Other Orthodox Churches before 1686 (MAPS) (Mayorov, 2018) and analytical data from the works of I. Skochilyas (2004; 2009), which facilitated the correlation between parish distribution and the geography of local cultural centres. The spatial characteristics of the network were recorded with consideration of settlement structures, local patronage and administrative divisions.

To reconstruct the number of Uniate churches and the dynamics of their changes throughout the 18th century, the quantitative-descriptive approach was employed. Data on the number of churches and their distribution among parishes, monastic centres and missions were drawn from aggregated ecclesiastical descriptions, inventories and general visitation protocols, available via the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine (n.d.). The study also utilised the work of Yu. Legun (2004), which analysed the 18th–19th-century ecclesiastical visitations as a source for examining the number of parishes, clergy, material provision and jurisdictional affiliation of churches. A comparison of quantitative data from the mid- and late 18th century allowed for the identification of general trends and the consequences of political and confessional transformations.

The comparative-stylistic method was used to trace borrowings from the Latin tradition and to identify Baroque and Rococo stylistic elements in the architecture of Uniate churches. Observations on façade compositions,

portal forms, symmetry, decorative finishes and the use of Western European motifs were made through the correlation of textual descriptions with the visual repertoire of preserved buildings, were also discussed in the works of I. Skochilyas (2004; 2009). The research included the comparative analysis with analogous structures in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic contexts. The contextual analysis method allowed for the consideration of political and cultural factors influencing the confessional and architectural transformation. It was applied in studying changes in confessional jurisdiction that affected the operation of parishes, the transformation of the architectural landscape and the adaptation of churches to new conditions. This ensured the alignment of historical processes with architectural changes, examined in their dynamic and regional specificity.

RESULTS

Throughout the 18th century, the architectural image of the Uniate Church in Right-Bank Ukraine was shaped within the context of political instability, inter-confessional tension and sociocultural polyphony, all of which determined the spatial and stylistic specificities of sacred construction. The coexistence of Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Uniate traditions produced the distinctive religious environment in which the architecture served as a key medium for expressing the confessional identity. The Kyiv Uniate Metropolis, established the following of the Union of Brest, gradually consolidated its structure from the early 17th century, encompassing a significant portion of Right-Bank Ukraine, including Volhynia, Podillia, Kyiv and Bratslav. Its development was closely linked to local conditions – such as the social composition of parishes, the cultural policy of the nobility, the activities of monastic institutions and educational centres – which collectively contributed to the diversity of architectural manifestations (Fig. 1).

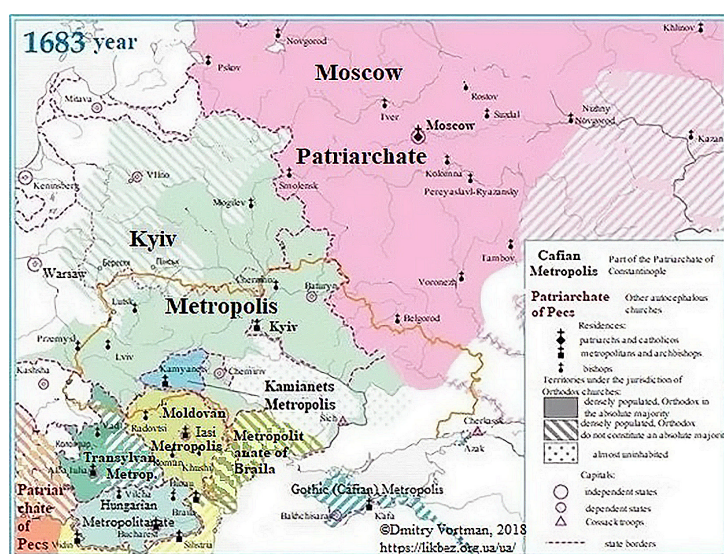


Figure 1. Map of the territorial coverage of the Kyiv Uniate Metropolis in the 17th–18th century

Source: based on M. Mayorov (2018)

Its architectural landscape simultaneously reflected the enduring influence of the ancient Eastern Christian tradition and the transformative processes shaped by the confessional status of the Uniate Church as a mediator between East and West. Archival data, including acts of general visitations, indicated that the highest concentration of Uniate parishes in the 18th century was found in Volhynia and Podillia, whereas in Kyiv and Bratslav regions, the influence of the Union declined due to political changes and the growing dominance of Orthodox and Catholic factors (Skochilyas, 2004). In Volhynia, which encompassed the Lutsk and partly the Kremenets districts, the developed network of Uniate churches was recorded, particularly within Basilian monasteries.

Their architecture preserved constructive features of the Eastern tradition, notably the tripartite layout, while simultaneously displaying Baroque influences in the decorative design of façades and rooflines. In Podillia, covering the Kamianets and Bratslav dioceses, the architectural environment evolved under the influence of Latin Baroque, especially in parishes closely linked to Catholic educational and monastic centres. Uniate churches in this region were often built of masonry, featured with more complex spatial layouts and exhibited symmetrical façade compositions. In Kyiv and Bratslav regions, the Uniate architecture in the 18th century was developed less intensively, which can be attributed to administrative changes resulting from the policies of the Russian Empire, as well as the return of many parishes to Orthodox jurisdiction. Nonetheless, certain sites in this region retained architectural continuity, particularly through the preservation of log-constructed wooden churches that maintained early modern features typical of Ukrainian sacred architecture (Skochilyas, 2004).

In the context of political transformations following the Union of Brest in 1596, the architectural development of the Uniate Church acquired a new significance (Full text of..., n.d.). The Union, which officially recognised the primacy of the Pope, while retaining the Byzantine rite, created conditions for the emergence of a hybrid architectural language. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the Uniate Church underwent the institutional consolidation, accompanied by the extensive construction of churches, monasteries and episcopal residences. The architecture of Uniate churches reflected not only their liturgical function, but also served as a visual marker of the Union's presence in the local landscape. The political climate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century – including reformist initiatives, the influence of Catholic orders and educational policy – fostered the integration of European architectural trends into the ecclesiastical construction. This was particularly evident in Basilian monasteries, which served as key centres for the dissemination of Baroque stylistics adapted to local traditions. At the same time, adherence to the liturgical structure of the Byzantine rite was maintained, requiring the inclusion of a narthex, nave and sanctuary, as well as the iconostasis as a spatial separator of the sacred interior.

The Uniate ecclesiastical architecture of Right-Bank Ukraine emerged under the conditions of inter-confessional competition, which was reflected not only in the religious discourse, but also in visual representation. On the one hand, the architectural presence of the Union underscored its autonomy from the Latin rite; on the other hand, the stylistic proximity to Roman Catholic models reinforced a sense of unity within the religious space of the Commonwealth. Certain elements of Uniate church planning – such as symmetrical façades, towers and portals with semicircular arches – testified to the influence of Western European building traditions. A widespread type of Uniate church in the region remained the triconch plan with a dominant nave and log construction, particularly evident in wooden architecture (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Holy Trinity Cathedral in Radomyshl (1730)

Source: Echoes of the past: Radomyshl as a center of Uniate traditions (2025)

In more urbanised centres, Uniate churches were constructed in masonry, featuring a composite structure that combined a Basilican layout with Baroque decorative elements. An important role in this process was played by educated architects and monastic builders, many of whom had studied in Jesuit schools and possessed experience in realising Latin-rite ecclesiastical projects. As a result, the architecture of the Uniate Church acquired features intelligible to both Orthodox and Catholic communities, thus fulfilling a communicative function within the multi-confessional environment. Special attention in the 18th-century architectural landscape of Right-Bank Ukraine was warranted by Uniate monasteries – particularly Basilian ones – which played not only a spiritual, but also a significant cultural, educational and social role. They served as centres of enlightenment, spiritual formation and clerical training, as well as hubs of book production, religious polemics and schooling. Basilian monastic complexes were designed with long-term functioning in mind and their architecture was characterised by a high degree of planning sophistication, compositional coherence and functional zoning. The key architectural dominant of the monastic ensemble remained the church, around which the entire complex was organised – comprising residential quarters, refectories, utility buildings, schools, libraries, printing houses and hospitals (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Basilian Monastery of St. Nicholas in Krekhiv village

Source: Basilian Monastery of St. Nicholas (n.d.)

Monasteries were often designed in the form of enclosed courtyards, a layout borrowed from the Latin tradition of organising cloisters. At the same time, the internal structure of the churches and the organisation of the liturgical space remained faithful to the Byzantine canon, as evidenced by the preservation of ritual zones, iconostases and the eastward orientation of the altar. This interaction between architectural and liturgical models shaped a distinct typology of Uniate monastic complexes, combining functionality, stylistic representativeness and ritual integrity. In the context of the 18th century, the Uniate Church gradually acquired the features of a formally institutionalised confessional system, complete with its own theological doctrine, administrative structure and spatial organisation. This development manifested itself not only in the church governance, but also in the emergence of a recognisable architectural style. The distribution of Uniate churches across Right-Bank Ukraine was uneven, shaped by geopolitical conditions and the extent of support from the local nobility. The presence of Basilian monasteries, which served as centres of religious, cultural, and educational life, played a crucial role. As a result, the local architectural landscape consisted of a combination of major sacral centres and numerous rural wooden churches with tripartite layouts.

Thus, the architectural landscape of the Uniate Church in the 18th-century of Right-Bank Ukraine was defined by the territorial structure of the Kyiv Metropolis, politico-confessional factors and adaptation to local architectural practices. Uniate churches constituted a distinct type of sacred architecture, blending elements of the Eastern rite with formal features of Western European style. Through this synthesis of building traditions, functional planning and visual codes, the architecture of the Uniate Church asserted its presence within the religious and cultural space of the region, leaving a significant imprint on the sacred image of the 18th-century Right-Bank Ukraine. During the 18th century, the number of Uniate churches in Right-Bank

Ukraine underwent considerable transformations, driven both by internal confessional dynamics and broader political changes within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The quantitative analysis of the development of the Uniate ecclesiastical infrastructure was based on a comprehensive study of archival sources, including general visitation records, church inventories, and descriptive documents (Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, n.d.). These documents provided detailed information about parish conditions, clergy numbers, the material state of churches and their confessional affiliation. Particularly valuable were the general visitation protocols of the Lviv Eparchy, which served as sources of information on the pastoral activity, internal parish organisation, liturgical function distribution and the degree of institutional integration of the Uniate Church into the local context. Yu. Legun (2004) analysed inventories and descriptions documenting the number of parishes, clergy and the material condition of churches in Volhynia, thus enabling the reconstruction of spatial dynamics in the development of the Uniate presence. A synthesis of these data revealed a growth in the number of Uniate parishes during the first half of the 18th century, particularly in the Volhynian and Podilian eparchies and the regression in the second half, caused by political transformations – especially the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the transfer of territories under Russian imperial jurisdiction. As a result, the Uniate infrastructure suffered significant reductions, particularly in Kyiv and Bratslav regions, where the number of functioning churches declined, many parishes were lost, and their confessional affiliation was changed.

According to archival descriptions and general visitation records covering a significant portion of the Kyiv Uniate Metropolis, there were approximately 1,500–1,700 Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine by the mid-18th century. These sources, thoroughly documented in the research of I. Skochilyas (2009), included numerous visitation records of parishes in Volhynia, Podillia, Kyiv and Bratslav. The highest concentration was recorded in the Volhynian Eparchy, with over 600 active parishes, representing around 35–40% of the total number within the Metropolis. In Podillia, visitation data from the Kamianets Eparchy indicated that the number of Uniate churches reached 400–450, the majority being parish churches, with fewer monastic churches, mostly under the Basilian jurisdiction. The situation in Kyiv and Bratslav regions was less stable, with visitation records noting 300–350 active churches, some of which were partially ruined or lacked a full clerical staff. Many parishes suffered from a shortage of clergy, limiting regular liturgical services. In numerous cases, Basilian missions served as replacements (Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, n.d.).

In general, the mid-18th century was marked by the stable functioning of the Uniate church network, which comprised not only churches, but also schools, monastic cells and printing houses, thereby forming a fully developed cultural environment. After the 1760s, the confessional

landscape of Right-Bank Ukraine began to change gradually due to several factors: the political weakening of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, increasing Russian imperial influence and the intensification of Orthodox reaction, including the forced transfer of parishes to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. Following the First Partition of Poland in 1772 and the Second in 1793, much of Right-Bank Ukraine was incorporated into the Russian Empire, profoundly affecting the functioning of the Uniate Church. Visitation records from the late 18th century note a decrease in the number of Uniate churches in the region to 1,200–1,300, of which only 900–1,000 remained fully operational; the rest were either non-functioning or had been transferred to other confessions (Shlikhta, 2025).

The decline of the Uniate presence was particularly acute in the Kyiv region, where the number of active churches had halved by the 1790s. In some cases, local communities – lacking administrative support – chose to convert to Orthodoxy or the Latin rite. Greater stability was maintained in Volhynia and Podillia, partly due to the support of Uniate nobility and the network of Basilian monasteries, which assumed responsibility for clergy provision and material support. Alongside the Uniate Church, Latin (Catholic) and Orthodox structures remained active in Right-Bank Ukraine. According to consolidated statistics

from the second half of the 18th century, the number of Latin churches (including monastic ones) was approximately 1,000–1,100, with over 70% under the patronage of religious orders (Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans), primarily concentrated in towns and noble estates. The Orthodox network experienced revitalisation in the latter half of the century due to the policies of the Russian Empire. By the 1790s, there were around 900–1,000 Orthodox churches in Right-Bank Ukraine, many of them either re-registered Uniate churches or newly constructed with state support, particularly in Kyiv and Bratslav regions. Consequently, while the Uniate Church outnumbered both Orthodox and Latin structures in the mid-18th century, by the end of the century it had been surpassed in some areas due to political circumstances (Ketola, 2023).

The official ecclesiastical documentation of the 18th century – including general visitation acts, church descriptions, inventories, and statistical reports of Basilian structures – provided invaluable data on the number, condition, functioning and typological characteristics of Uniate church architecture in Right-Bank Ukraine. These documents served not only an administrative and supervisory role, but also preserved a wealth of empirical evidence, enabling a reconstruction of the confessional and spatial structure of the sacred landscape of the time (Fig. 4).

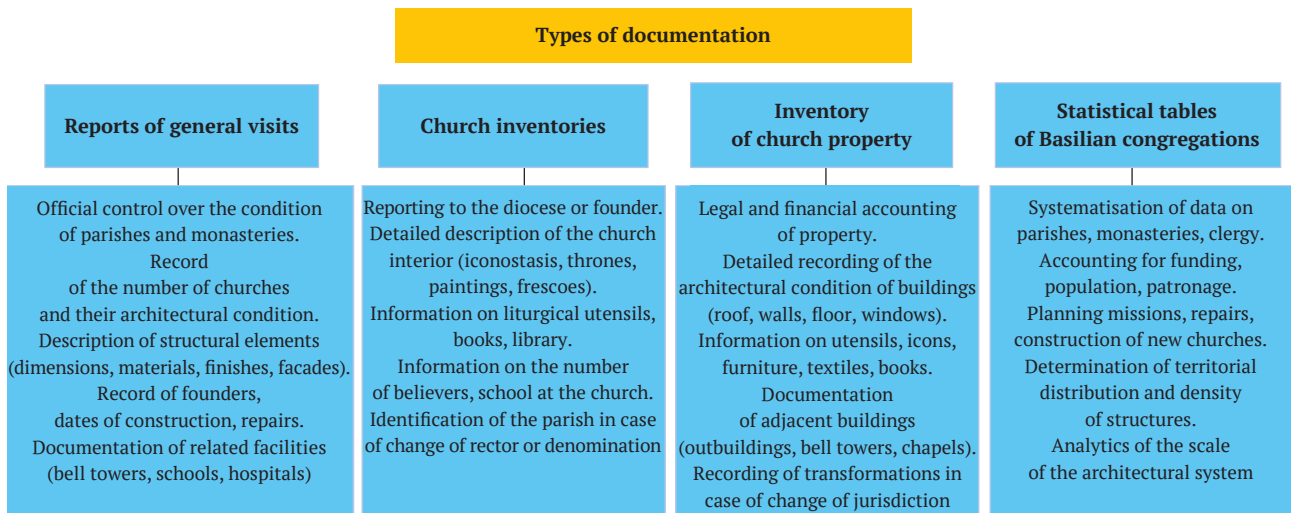


Figure 4. Types of documents and their functions in the context of 18th century Uniate architecture

Source: based on A. Upart (2021), G. Guidarelli (2024)

These documents, taken together, not only outlined the quantitative structure of the Uniate ecclesiastical network, but also enabled the tracing of the functional logic of architectural development – from the ritual core (altar, sanctuaries, iconostasis) to spatial organisation (zones for prayer, schoolchildren, women and men) and further to the complex of ancillary buildings surrounding the church. Thanks to such documentation, it was possible not only to reconstruct the number of structures, but also to identify regional features of church construction, the degree of Baroque influence, the extent to which traditional forms

were preserved, and the transformations that occurred due to political and confessional pressures. In this way, the official ecclesiastical documentation of the 18th century served as a unique source not only for analysing the demographic or confessional situation, but also for studying the architectural dynamics of Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine. It captured the material, spatial and cultural dimensions of the functioning of the Uniate sacred environment during the Late Baroque period (1730–1790).

The architectural specificity of Uniate churches in the 18th-century Right-Bank Ukraine was shaped by the

influence of long-standing regional building traditions that integrated elements of the Byzantine-Christian heritage, local artisanal techniques, and typical constructive and decorative features of vernacular wooden architecture. Despite the gradual penetration of European styles – in particular, the Baroque – the majority of Uniate churches retained traditional construction solutions, typological models and ornamentation in their structure, reflecting the continuity of national architectural forms. The overwhelming majority of Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine in the 18th century were built according to a single-nave or tripartite layout, reflecting continuity with the traditional Eastern Christian architectural model. One of the most striking examples of the tripartite structural organisation of sacred space in Ukrainian 18th-century ecclesiastical architecture was the Church of St. Nicholas in Buchach, Ternopil region (Fig. 5).

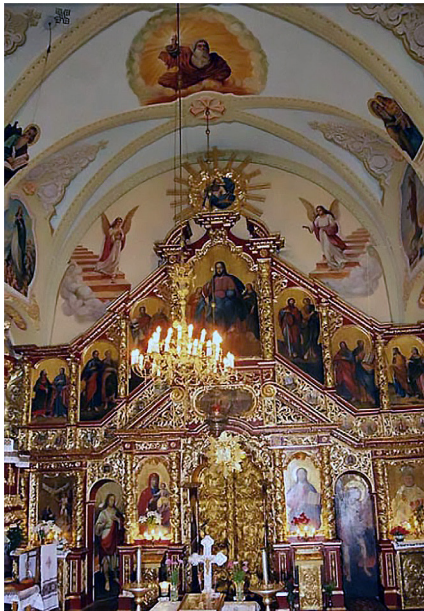


Figure 5. Modern photo of St. Nicholas Church

Source: St. Nicholas Church (2008)

The Church of St. Nicholas is the oldest surviving masonry church in Buchach, erected in 1610 with the patronage of Maria Amalia Mohylianka and Stefan Potocki. Its architecture combined the Ukrainian tripartite layout with Moldavian conch elements: the nave was flanked by an altar section and two semicircular lateral apses. Above the narthex once stood a defensive tower with loopholes, which, unfortunately, has not survived. The church was enclosed by a stone wall that served to protect local inhabitants during attacks. A particular treasure of the church was its 18th-century iconostasis, presumably created by masters of the Zhovkva school of wood carving and painting. Executed in the Baroque style, it was adorned with elaborate vine-motif carvings and gilding. The iconostasis was installed in 1743 under the patronage of Mykola Potocki. This church was a vivid example

of Uniate ecclesiastical architecture in the 18th-century Right-Bank Ukraine, combining the traditional Eastern Christian architecture with elements of Western European style. Its tripartite layout and the decorative richness of the iconostasis reflected the influences of Ukrainian Baroque and Western architectural traditions. Typologically, the dominant form in church architecture was the rectangular log structure, serving as the core constructive unit. Its main components – the base (walls), roof and superstructure – conformed to the canons of traditional wooden architecture (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. A chapel in the city of Slavuta, Zaslav district

Source: based on B. Voron (2021)

The single-nave structure of Uniate churches in the 18th century was characterised by compact proportions and an overall symmetry of volumes, which allowed for a balanced interplay between the horizontal layout and vertical organisation of space. This composition ensured not only the aesthetic coherence of the building, but also enhanced the functionality of liturgical practices, with the central axis directing focus towards the altar and iconostasis. In the case of tripartite variants, a clear vertical hierarchy was evident: the central nave typically rose above the narthex and sanctuary, creating a visual dominant and enabling the placement of a lantern or skylight for the natural illumination. Some examples also employed structures with light towers or an opening in the roof ridge, thereby enhancing the dramatic quality of the church interior (Fig. 7).

The roofs of the churches typically featured gable, broken-gable or multi-broken forms, often characterised by distinctive angular outlines that created a pyramidal silhouette. This design was functionally justified: such shapes ensured efficient drainage of rainwater and melting snow, suited to the climatic conditions of the region. The gable ends, usually triangular, were decorated with wooden ornamental boards, carved cornices, sunburst rosettes and other elements serving both artistic and symbolic purposes. In masonry churches, these same forms were interpreted through stone or brickwork techniques:

architectural belts, stucco mouldings, applied pilasters and plaster decoration echoed stylistic motifs drawn from wooden prototypes. The framework structures, built from locally sourced timber species (oak, pine, larch), were constructed using traditional joinery methods – “lap joints” or “dovetail joints” – which ensured the strength and durability of the log constructions (Fig. 8).



Figure 7. Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Drukhiv

Source: Wooden temples of Ukraine: The most interesting, most beautiful, oldest, largest (n.d.)



Figure 8. Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Pechera

Source: Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Pechera village, Vinnytsia region): Map, photo, description (n.d.)

Such a technical solution allowed for the creation of an open interior space without numerous supports, thereby promoting good acoustics for worship. An integral element of the external appearance of many churches was the bell

tower – either two-tiered or three-tiered – constructed in the same structural style. It could be a separate structure positioned adjacent to the main volume or integrated into the composition through a vestibule or gallery. Bell towers not only served the function of sound signalling, but also acted as vertical accents in the church’s silhouette, reflecting the architectural tradition of Cossack Baroque. Their presence emphasised the solemnity of the sacred building and strengthened its visual prominence within the settlement’s landscape. The Uniate church architecture maintained the continuity with the vernacular wooden architecture of Central and Western Ukraine, which had developed over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. This was evident in the methods of log construction, roof organisation, the shape of the domes, the lighting system and the composition of the church interior (Fig. 9).

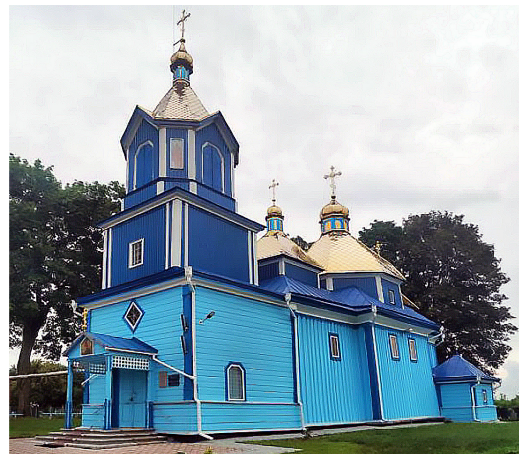


Figure 9. St. George’s Church in Hrabiv village

Source: Church of Saint George (2025)

The Volhynia and Podillia zones were characterised by the presence of wooden churches with a three-log (three-part) composition, which essentially reproduced models known from the era of medieval architecture (14th–16th centuries). These churches were distinguished by their compactness, proportionality and restraint in detail. A distinctive feature was the complex multi-tiered roof, which combined decorative qualities with functionality, ensuring effective water runoff and acoustic insulation. The folk tradition also widely employed the technique of shingle roofing, which persisted in Uniate churches until the early 19th century. In some cases, the roof was double-layered: the first layer made of boards, the second of shingles. Such structural solutions ensured durability and were suited to the climatic conditions of the region. Particular mention should be made of the use of ventilation openings, light apertures and roof breaks, which had both practical significance and an aesthetic function. The windows were arranged symmetrically, often in a single row, and featured simple rectangular or arched shapes, sometimes with carved surrounds. They were framed with wooden casings painted in natural colours – ochre, dark brown or lime

white. In later examples of Uniate architecture, specifically between 1760 and 1790, the influence of Polish and Lithuanian Baroque was felt, particularly in the expansion of the transept, the inclusion of side chapels, and the appearance of internal vaulting in masonry churches. All these elements were integrated into the preserved traditional form, creating a synthetic model of the sacred building (Kuryliak *et al.*, 2022).

The decoration of the 18th-century Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine was shaped by a deeply rooted icon-painting tradition, skilled woodcarving and local ornamental motifs, which simultaneously carried sacred, didactic and aesthetic meanings. These elements functioned as a visual mediator between the faithful and theological truths, especially important in rural communities with low literacy levels. The central compositional element of the interior was the iconostasis – a four-tiered structure combining an iconographic programme with an architectural sculpture. In most cases, it was created by local carvers, who adapted Baroque symmetry to the canonical structure of the Eastern rite, emphasising the hierarchy of sacred images and the sacred perspective of the church interior. The carving was done by hand, featuring geometric and floral motifs (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. The iconostasis of the Trinity Gate Church

Source: Iconostasis of the Trinity Gate Church (n.d.)

The main subjects depicted were scenes from the Holy Scripture, lives of the saints, as well as themes of Uniate apologetics (such as scenes of Church unification and images of hierarchs like Basil the Great, Josaphat Kuntsevych and others). The backgrounds of the icons were executed using the traditional technique of tempera painting on gesso. In some churches, gilding and silvering were employed, particularly for halos, icon covers and decorative insets. The colour palette remained

within a restrained Baroque range: warm ochre tones, blue, dark green and red. In the interiors of the 18th-century Uniate churches, carved elements and the technique of inlay were widely used, covering not only the main architectural structures, but also numerous decorative objects. Wall carvings adorned the inner surfaces of doors, arched openings, choir lofts, altar railings and elements of the iconostasis (Fig. 11).



Figure 11. Decoration of the Trinity Gate Church in the Kyiv Cave Monastery

Source: based on A. Kondratyuk (2020)

Traditional ornamentation was dominated by stylised floral compositions, grapevines, acanthus leaves, palmettes and geometric elements imbued with deep symbolic meaning. These motifs were associated with the Garden of Eden, spiritual fertility, the unity of the faithful and the continuity of church tradition. The symbolic content of the visual decoration was directly linked to the dogmatic aspects of faith and the liturgical function of the church. Floors were generally made from solid wooden planks, while in masonry buildings ceramic or stone tiles were used, sometimes featuring simple patterns. The altar area was raised by several steps, emphasising its sacred status. Textile elements were actively employed in the decoration – embroidered coverings, towels and woven icon frames crafted by women of the community, thereby preserving the continuity of local artisanal traditions. Thus, the architectural and decorative environment of the Uniate church not only fulfilled a sacred function, but also visually and ritually affirmed confessional identity within the Right-Bank Ukraine region. The study of the architectural arrangement of the 18th-century Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine revealed a complex structural dynamic of the church network, spatial planning features and stylistic transformations of sacred buildings.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrated that the architectural language of Uniate churches was formed as a synthesis of Byzantine tradition, local building practices and Baroque stylistics. Similar trends were observed in the work of S. DeLouche (2021), who emphasised that the architecture of 18th-century sacred buildings in Europe generally reflected a rethinking of stylistic codes to strengthen confessional identity. According to this study, Uniate churches served as carriers of the symbolic presence of the Union, which aligns with the author's conclusions about the symbolic function of architecture in the religiously fragmented space. The study also established that the highest concentration of Uniate parishes in the 18th century was found in the Volyn and Podillia dioceses. This correlated with the results of M. Jakubowski (2024), who examined the architectural mechanisms of Uniate presence in the Polish-Lithuanian context. Researcher emphasised that patronage strategies of the local nobility played a decisive role in supporting the Uniate infrastructure. This research confirmed that the support of noble families was pivotal for the preservation and functioning of Uniate churches in these regions.

The typological analysis of single-nave and three-part churches conducted in the study demonstrated a correspondence between the architectural form of Uniate buildings and the functional level of parish organisation. This differentiation directly aligns with the conclusions of A. Buczyło (2025), who argued that the architectural forms of 18th-century Uniate churches were not only expressions of stylistic preferences or technical capabilities, but also reflected the internal structure of diocesan administration. Specifically, the researcher noted that larger, architecturally complex churches functioned as institutional markers of deanery or protopresbyterate levels, whereas smaller parish churches tended to have simplified forms, indicating their peripheral role in the confessional landscape.

The statistical decrease in the number of Uniate churches during the second half of the 18th century, documented in this study, confirmed the broader trend of the Uniate Church losing its institutional positions in Right-Bank Ukraine. This coincided with the findings of F.E. Sysyn (2021), who investigated the consequences of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for the Uniate Church. Scientist pointed out that the incorporation of Ukrainian territories into the Russian Empire led to the systematic dismantling of Uniate structures, forced transfer of parishes to Orthodox jurisdiction, restrictions on Basilian monasteries' activities and destruction of sacred infrastructure. The study evidenced similar phenomena, notably in the Kyiv and Bratslav regions, where between 1770 and 1790 the number of active Uniate churches nearly halved and many communities lost their clergy or were compelled to transfer to different confessional oversight. In the context of continuity with Byzantine architectural tradition and gradual Baroque influence on churches, a comparison with the work of F.E. Sysyn (2023) was appropriate, as researcher highlighted the difficulties

in accepting the Union and the related architectural compromise strategies. The Uniate architecture, according to this research, indeed exhibited mixed features – on the one hand preserving the Eastern liturgical space and on the other presenting a Baroque façade embodying the idea of integration into the religious space of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This fully accords with researcher's assertion about the Uniate identity's striving to balance fidelity to tradition with the adaptation to new conditions.

Within the symbolic design of sacred space, special attention in the study was given to architectural and decorative elements that shaped the visual identity of the Uniate church within the confessional environment of Right-Bank Ukraine. The analysis confirmed the leading role of Baroque decoration, iconostases, elaborate wood-carving and iconography not only as aesthetic, but also theologically charged elements. This interpretation aligns with the conclusions of P. Goyret (2022), who emphasised the importance of Eucharistic unity as the main ecclesiological idea of Eastern Catholicism. According to author's observations, the iconostasis in Eastern Catholic churches served as a material embodiment of the synthesis between Latin universality and Byzantine sacred heritage, visually and performatively modelling communion.

Jurisdictional tensions between Eastern Catholics and Orthodox, as well as their architectural manifestations found in this study, correspond with the findings of A. Kap-tijn (2020), who analysed the legal foundations of Eastern Catholic churches' functioning in the context of ecumenical dialogue. The Uniate churches recorded in the research combined adherence to Eastern liturgical discipline (zonal division, orientation, iconostasis) with openness to visual borrowings from Latin architecture (Baroque façades, symmetry, portals). This confirmed the hybrid nature of Uniate architecture, which operated at the intersection of confessional and canonical systems, forming a spatial model capable of adapting to a multiconfessional environment and the political challenges of the 18th century. The reconstruction of the typology of monastic complexes conducted in the study revealed the systematic planning of Basilian monasteries with inner courtyards and clear functional zoning. This approach was supported by the work of D. Bains (2021), who examined the secularisation of sacred space and the transformation of its functions. Uniate monasteries, like their Latin counterparts, stood at the intersection of sacred and educational spaces, as evidenced by the presence of educational buildings, printing houses and utility structures described in the study.

Within the scope of the study of the architectural arrangement of the 18th-century Uniate Church, one of the key aspects was the examination of the spatial integrity of the sacred landscape amid political instability and confessional pressure. The spatial transformations recorded in the Uniate churches of Right-Bank Ukraine were associated with the need to preserve the sacred order against external challenges, particularly from Orthodox and Latin jurisdictions. These observations align with the conclusions of M. van der Tol &

P. Gorski (2022), who interpreted the fragmentation of sacred space as a symptom of modernisation and secularisation shifts occurring in the European religious landscape of the 18th century. They argued that under conditions of weakening institutional stability of the Church, the sacred space began to lose its unity, splitting into separate symbolic and functional zones. Thus, a parallel was revealed between the findings of this authors concerning changes in the sacred landscape of Europe and the transformative tendencies observed in the Uniate architecture of Right-Bank Ukraine.

Another important line of discussion was the issue of confessional syncretism, which defined the architectural identity of Uniate churches. The study noted that typical architectural solutions – particularly the combination of Baroque symmetry of façades with Byzantine internal zoning, the use of vernacular construction techniques alongside elements of European decoration – formed a distinctive visual code of the Union, understandable to communities with diverse cultural and ritual affiliations. This corresponded with the analysis by Ž. Buržinskas (2021), who described the Uniate architecture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a product of confessional synthesis functioning within a milieu of religious polyphony. Scientist emphasised that the architectural form of Uniate churches served not only a cultic, but also a symbolic function – demonstrating the possibility of visual reconciliation between the canonical heritage of Byzantium and the cultural tradition of the West. The results of the study traced similar processes in the architectural environment of Volhynia and Podillia, where wooden churches with Baroque elements combined the symbolism of Eastern Christianity with the representativeness of the Latin style.

Regarding the decoration and iconographic content of Uniate churches, the study highlighted the preservation of the organisation of iconostases, traditional carving techniques, and the use of local ornamental motifs. These observations resonate with the conclusions of R. Kosiv (2022), who investigated the iconography of wooden churches in Central Europe. The author stressed the importance of interaction between regional artistic traditions and pan-European styles, manifested in decorative practices, adaptation of Baroque schemes to local materials and the preservation of the national iconographic canon. The study confirmed that decorative solutions in Uniate churches of Right-Bank Ukraine did not copy the Latin model, but interpreted it through the prism of local technical and aesthetic traditions. The use of colours, compositional rhythms, ornaments, and carving techniques demonstrated a synthesis within the material space, reflecting the identity of the Union as a ritual and cultural system.

The conclusions of W. Zielecka-Mikołajczyk (2022) regarding the archives of the Greek Catholic episcopate confirmed the high informational value of visitation acts, descriptions, and inventories for analysing both quantitative and spatial-functional characteristics of the church network. This corresponded with the approach of the present study, which utilised generalised data from

historical-church documentation, including indirect references to visitation practices. Such an approach allowed the reconstruction of parish population dynamics, the identification of typical church planning models and the detection of features of sacred environment organisation of the Uniate Church at various levels of its functioning. In the study by G. Pidgrushnyi *et al.* (2021), it was established that the spatial structure of the Kyiv metropolitan region was determined by historical factors, socio-economic ties and cultural heterogeneity. The authors emphasised that the lack of unified criteria for defining the boundaries of the agglomeration complicated its functional planning and certain territories remained outside institutional integration due to weak administrative linkage. The results of this study confirmed a similar tendency: the Uniate church network in Right-Bank Ukraine was also characterised by unevenness, caused by political influence, patronage and monastic presence. In both cases, spatial organisation was shaped not only by geographical factors, but also by a complex network of functional and cultural-historical connections. The obtained results correlated with theoretical approaches and empirical observations presented in the analysed sources, attesting to the appropriateness of the chosen methodology, the validity of the analytical conclusions and the significance of the architectural heritage as a tool for representing religious identity in the multi-confessional environment of the 18th-century Right-Bank Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the study of the architectural arrangement of the 18th-century Uniate Church in Right-Bank Ukraine, key features of its territorial structure, quantitative dynamics and spatial-constructive characteristics have been established. It was determined that the architectural landscape of the Uniate Church was formed in a complex religious-political environment, within which the Uniate tradition combined elements of the Byzantine rite with local construction forms and certain features of the Western European style. Geographically, the jurisdiction of the Kyiv Uniate Metropolis in the 18th century included four regions – Volhynia, Podillia, Kyiv region and Bratslav region – with uneven intensity of Uniate presence. The highest concentration of parishes was observed in Volhynia and Podillia, accompanied by the development of an extensive church-monastic infrastructure. In Kyiv and Bratslav regions, a gradual decline in Uniate influence was observed due to political pressure and jurisdictional changes.

Statistical review established that the number of Uniate churches in Right-Bank Ukraine reached 1,500–1,700 units by the mid-18th century, most of which were parish churches. The largest number of churches was recorded in the Volhynian and Podolian dioceses. In the second half of the 18th century, a gradual decrease in the number of active churches to 1,200–1,300 was noted, caused by the transition of some parishes to Orthodox or Latin jurisdiction. Comparison with data on Catholic and Orthodox structures showed that by the mid-18th century, the Uniate Church held a quantitative

advantage, which gradually diminished by the end of the 18th century. It was found that the traditional architectural arrangement of Uniate churches was based on the continuity with Ukrainian wooden church architecture and adapted forms of the Eastern rite. The most common types were single-nave and three-part churches using log construction, gable and multi-sloped roofs, triangular pediments, and symmetrical façades. The interior preserved the classic structure – narthex, nave and altar, often with a Baroque iconostasis. The decoration was dominated by wooden carving, local ornaments and icon painting, ensuring visual and theological integrity of the sacred space. The study outlined the specifics of Uniate architecture as a synthetic phenomenon formed at the intersection of tradition, style and identity.

Among the limitations of the study, the fragmentary nature of source material should be noted, which complicated the accurate reconstruction of the quantitative dynamics of the Uniate network and the full reconstruction

of individual architectural objects in the absence of visual documentation. Prospective directions for further research include archival cataloguing and digital processing of general visitation acts, church descriptions, and inventories to create databases of the 18th-century Uniate church network. Field architectural and ethnographic expeditions documenting preserved Uniate heritage objects, particularly wooden churches, are also advisable to refine typological models and regional features.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Аспірант

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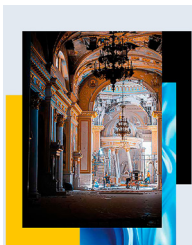
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Архітектурне облаштування унійної церкви XVIII століття: традиція і західні запозичення

Анотація. Метою дослідження було виявити архітектурні особливості унійної церкви XVIII століття на Правобережній Україні в контексті її конфесійної, просторової та конструктивної специфіки. У роботі застосовано комплексний міждисциплінарний підхід, що поєднував методи історико-архітектурного, просторово-аналітичного, типологічного та порівняльно-стилістичного аналізу. Джерельну базу склали історичні карти, церковно-адміністративні описи, графічні зображення, а також узагальнені статистичні дані щодо конфесійної структури Правобережної України у XVIII столітті. У ході дослідження було встановлено, що архітектурний ландшафт унійної церкви сформувався в умовах складного конфесійного середовища, в якому унійна традиція виступала синтетичним явищем, поєднуючи елементи візантійського обряду, народної дерев'яної архітектури та барокових впливів латинської сакральної спадщини. Така взаємодія забезпечувала формування виразної просторово-візуальної моделі, що утверджувала конфесійну ідентичність унії в регіоні з високим рівнем релігійної конкуренції. Київська унійна митрополія охоплювала території Волині, Поділля, Київщини та Брацлавщини, де унійна присутність була нерівномірною: найбільше храмів зафіксовано на Волині й Поділлі, найменше – на Київщині та Брацлавщині, що було зумовлено політичними змінами та юрисдикційними зрушеннями. У середині XVIII століття кількість унійних церков сягала 1500–1700, однак до кінця XVIII століття зменшилася до 1200–1300. У межах аналізу однонавових, тридільних та триконхових архітектурних типів храмів було встановлено, що інтер'єри унійних храмів оформлювалися багатоярусними іконостасами з різьбленням і позолотою, стінною різьбою, фресками та декоративними мотивами, які поєднували сакральну символіку з локальними орнаментальними традиціями. Особливу роль відігравали барокові елементи – виноградна лоза, пальмети, акантове листя – що підсилювали візуальну урочистість храмового простору. Практичне значення дослідження полягає в можливості використання його результатів для реконструкції сакрального середовища XVIII століття, збереження архітектурної спадщини та формування науково обґрунтованих реставраційних підходів.

Ключові слова: сакральний простір; типологія храмів; конфесійна динаміка; іконостас; барокова стилістика; просторове зонування; зрубна техніка



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Immersive exhibition as a cultural phenomenon and an innovative form of event management

Abstract. The purpose of the study was to examine the immersive exhibition as a cultural phenomenon within the socio-cultural paradigm and explore the characteristics of immersive cultural practices as an innovative form of event management. The use of the immersive effect in cultural practices helped to gain new practical experiences through immersion, altered behaviour or thinking through reconsideration, and evoked unique and unforgettable emotions. In the era of globalisation and increasing cultural interaction, immersive exhibitions served not only as an innovative tool for event management, but also as a platform for the expression and interpretation of cultural codes. The use of immersive technologies in cultural practices fosters emotional engagement, provided new experiential learning opportunities through immersion, and influenced human behaviour and thinking through reinterpretation. The concept of “immersive cultural practices” defined as a special type of cultural practice that possessed the unique ability to create the effect of deep immersion in artistic or historical topics, interactivity, and emotional involvement. Besides, the immersive format of cultural practices, due to its unique capabilities and methods of information presentation, was highly appealing to audiences. Therefore, it was an effective means of showcasing Ukrainian culture to a global audience. In contemporary context, the creation and presentation of immersive exhibitions contributed to developing and implementing innovative approaches to exhibition activities. It also played a crucial role in promoting Ukraine’s cultural image on the global stage, positioning Ukraine as a hub of world-class cultural heritage that successfully integrated cutting-edge digital formats for artistic presentation

Keywords: culture; cultural practice; immersive cultural practice; mentality; cultural code; socio-cultural activities

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INTRODUCTION

The growing influence of globalisation, and information and communication processes on the cultural development of 21st century society has led to the emergence of innovative forms of socio-cultural practices. As the information society evolved, cultural and leisure practices were expanding and transforming, shifting towards individualisation, intellectualisation, and creativity. One of the key innovative cultural phenomena resulting from the development of cultural and creative industries in contemporary information and communication-driven society was the immersive exhibition.

The relevance of studying immersive exhibitions as an innovative form of event management was determined by several key factors. First, the demand for interactive and immersive experiences among audiences was steadily increasing, making immersive formats particularly appealing. Second, immersive technologies created a deeper emotional connection between art and viewers, enhancing information retention and engagement. Third, the organisation of immersive exhibitions offered new opportunities for monetisation, including increased ticket prices and sponsorship from companies interested in collaborating with innovative art projects. As a result, immersive exhibitions were gaining significant attention from researchers and professionals in the event industry.

O. Kopievska (2019) presented a scholarly reflection on methodological approaches to understanding the concept of cultural practices within cultural studies. The researcher described it as “a set of methodologically and disciplinarily heterogeneous yet thematically interconnected conceptual discourses through which contemporary culture is examined, characterised by mosaicism, fragmentation, diversity, and hybridity”. The author analysed the role of cultural practices in applied research. Researcher L. Skokova (2018) suggested using the concept of cultural omnivorousness and the concept of a culturally omnivorous individual, when studying cultural practices. According to the researcher, the concept of “cultural omnivorousness” reflected the process of destruction of the traditional classical disposition – high culture and low culture, hybridising culture and may mean “rejection of snobbery, exclusivity of tastes in favour of their “inclusiveness”, inclusion, and therefore democracy, cultural openness, tolerance”. V. Sudakova (2021) explored the characteristics of cultural practices as phenomena within the cultural space of a globalised social world. Researcher’s study examined their role in the transformation of everyday communication and grassroots initiatives. Scientist noted that “in the real cultural space, cultural practices change in accordance with historical, economic, and socio-cultural changes and, at the same time, retain their basic essential properties, that is, they have a transcultural nature and semantic predictive projections”.

The authors Ya. Antonyuk & I. Shindyrovskiy (2015) investigated the organisation of exhibition activities, focusing on managerial and organisational aspects that

ensured the effectiveness of cultural event implementation. L. Zelenska (2018) examined the sociocultural aspects of exhibition activities, emphasising their role in shaping the cultural space and interaction among participants in the cultural process. Scientists T. Povaliy & N. Svitaylo (2021) explored event management with consideration of the specifics of organising events in contemporary sociocultural conditions, highlighting the importance of innovative approaches in cultural practices. The exploration of immersive cultural practices and immersive art was greatly enriched by other researchers. For example, M. Beck (2023) considered immersive multisensorial art exhibitions as a new kind of “not that cheap images”, emphasising the experiential dimension formed during interaction with such art. The author H. Cecotti (2022) investigated the preservation of cultural heritage in fully immersive virtual reality, analysing the potential of technologies for cultural learning. M.K. Bekele & E. Champion (2019) compared different forms of immersive reality and interaction methods, underlining their significance for cultural learning in virtual heritage.

However, the Ukrainian scientific discourse lacked comprehensive studies on the transformation of innovative cultural practices, the organisation and development of immersive exhibitions, and their role as an innovative form of event management. Understanding immersive cultural practices was essential for designing and implementing effective management strategies for immersive exhibitions in contemporary Ukrainian society. This included refining artistic objectives and integrating advanced technologies into event management. The purpose of the study was to provide a theoretical analysis of immersive exhibitions as a cultural phenomenon within the socio-cultural paradigm and to examine the features of immersive cultural practices as an innovative approach to event management. The scientific originality of the study lied in the identification of specific features of immersive cultural practices as an innovative form of event management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Throughout this study, several theoretical methods were applied, such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, and the generalisation of scholarly perspectives from various countries on different aspects of the problem in question. The method of analysis was employed to examine the phenomenon of immersive exhibitions as an innovative form of event management. This allowed for the clarification of the essence of the concepts of “cultural code” and “immersivity”, enabling the investigation of cultural practice as immersive, the identification of internal interrelations between the substantive and technical components of the exhibition environment, and the determination of key factors contributing to the effect of deep immersion of the subject. The method of synthesis was applied to integrate the results of the analytical review into a coherent conceptual model of the immersive exhibition as a specific cultural practice, where in artistic techniques, innovative

technologies, and the sociocultural context appeared as interrelated elements of a unified system of influence on the audience. The method of generalisation provided the opportunity to isolate universal principles for constructing immersive space, and used to reveal the general properties and connections between the understanding of immersivity, immersive technologies, and the influence of sociocultural factors on them.

The purpose and objectives of this study have necessitated the use of a socio-cultural method. It facilitated an understanding of the distinctive features of immersive cultural practices and immersive exhibitions as both a cultural phenomenon and an innovative form of event management. Within the framework of the socio-cultural method, the semantic parameters of the concept of “cultural practices” can be defined as a special type of cultural practice that possessed the unique ability to create the effect of deep immersion in artistic or historical topics, interactivity, and emotional involvement. For this study of immersive cultural practices, using immersive exhibitions as an example, socio-cultural approach held particular significance. It addressed key aspects such as the generation of meanings, images, myths, and rituals that shape both individual and collective experiences within culture. The study analysed successful examples of the practice of organising and conducting immersive exhibitions as an innovative form of event management created by the First Charitable Theatre Foundation: the immersive exhibition “The Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko” created in 2021 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Ukraine’s Independence Day, and the immersive exhibition about the war in Ukraine, “Ukraine Land of the Brave”, created in 2022.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An immersive exhibition was not only an innovative form of event management that transformed traditional approaches to organising events and engaging audiences. It also served as a platform for expressing and interpreting cultural codes. The cultural code, as a set of deeply embedded values, symbols, beliefs, and historical narratives within a particular society or group, permeated all aspects of an immersive exhibition – from the conceptual idea to the choice of technologies and the design of interactive elements. In immersive exhibitions, the cultural code manifested on multiple levels, including visual, auditory, textual, and interactive elements, creating a multilayered experience that resonated with visitors’ cultural memory and identity.

One of the key areas of cultural research in contemporary socio-humanitarian discourse involved the study of socio-cultural phenomena through the new cultural theory. J.C. Alexander (2003) introduced a new theoretical framework for studying culture and cultural practices, which the researcher termed «cultural theory». The scholar offered examples of a new broad understanding of culture, and also analysed the process of creating cultural codes, the most important mechanism of which, according to the researcher, was performativity.

At the visual level, the cultural code was reflected through specific colours, patterns, architectural motifs, and imagery that held historical or symbolic significance for a particular culture. For example, an exhibition dedicated to Ukrainian culture might incorporate traditional embroidery, Easter eggs (pysanky), or folk instruments, visually encoding national identity and cultural values. The auditory code in immersive exhibitions may include traditional music, folk songs, natural sounds, or recordings of historical figures, fostering an atmosphere of deep cultural immersion. The textual code can be presented through quotes from literary works, historical documents, folktales, or legends that convey cultural narratives and values. Thus, immersive exhibitions acted as a powerful tool for expressing and interpreting cultural codes, enabling the creation of profound and emotionally resonant connections with audiences.

Despite the existence of scientific research on various aspects of cultural practices, the concept of “immersiveness” in the context of cultural practices and their inherent characteristics remained insufficiently defined and needs further clarification and supplementation. The concept of “immersiveness” referred to a special means of perception that created the effect of “immersion” in an artificially created environment or space. Immersiveness, as a property of certain types of cultural practices (such as performances and installations), was characterised by the intensity of the viewer’s involvement in the art project.

Immersive cultural practice created an immersive effect through the use of special technologies, including light and sound installations, video installations of varying complexity, and virtual/augmented reality. An immersive exhibition, based on the integration of virtual and augmented reality technologies, 3D projections, interactive installations, and multimedia elements, provided deep immersion for the visitor in an interactive environment, stimulating sensory perception and emotional involvement. Unlike traditional exhibition formats, where information was mostly presented statically, immersive formats engage all the senses, creating an unforgettable, personalised experience that was deeply imprinted in memory. Moreover, immersive exhibitions offered endless possibilities for creative expression and the realisation of non-standard concepts, allowing for the creation of unique events (Nesen, 2024).

A characteristic feature of immersiveness was taking the viewer in a new, virtual environment forced the viewer to concentrate as much as possible on the situation. Advanced media and information technologies helped to create virtual realities that would be unattainable in real social contexts. In creating the immersive effect, the impact on the peripheral anatomical and physiological system, particularly sight and hearing, was of primary importance. G. Calleja (2011) proposed two types of immersiveness based on the depth of the immersion experience: immersion in the environment (referred to as “immersion as absorption”), which required physical presence; immersion

in another reality (referred to as “immersion as transfer”), which requires mental presence. The technologies used in immersive cultural practices were continuously improving and actively developing due to the latest software (e.g., AI-driven programmes). As immersive cultural practices, including immersive exhibitions, evolved, there was a growing demand for immersive technologies that allowed for deeper engagement with the information and cultural context of an art project. The primary immersive technologies used in cultural activities included:

- augmented reality (AR). Also known as added reality, this technology added elements (such as animation, virtual images, effects, or titles) to real-world environments to enhance perception;
- virtual reality (VR). A fully simulated reality experienced through a helmet or glasses, created not only with 3D scenes, but also with sound, tactile sensations;
- mixed reality (MR). Also known as hybrid reality, this term emerged with the launch of Windows Mixed Reality and referred to both a specific type of device and methods for blending real and virtual worlds;
- extended reality (XR). A demonstration combining elements of augmented, virtual, and other realities.

360-degree photos and VR 180 videos referred to the content consisting of single or multiple combined 360-degree photos or videos, presented in monoscopic or stereoscopic formats. This content can be projected onto walls or other surfaces and was also available through “interactive computer displays, helmets, and virtual reality glasses” (Othman *et al.*, 2022). These technologies simulated full or partial immersion in an alternative, artificially created environment, altering the interaction with the subject and elevating the process of gaining practical experience in specific cultural or historical topics.

In the context of this study, the concept of “immersive cultural practices” can be defined as a special type of cultural practice that possessed the unique ability to create the effect of deep immersion in artistic or historical topics, interactivity, and emotional involvement. The use of the immersive effect in cultural practices helped to gain new practical experiences through immersion, altered behaviour or thinking through rethinking, and evoked unique and unforgettable emotions. Meanwhile, in the contemporary cultural and artistic context, immersiveness was often perceived as interactivity. However, these phenomena were not identical. The notion of interactivity implied active participation in cultural practices, whereas in immersive cultural practices, active participation was not mandatory. Viewers can interact with exhibits, which made the exhibition more dynamic and engaging, contributing to a deeper understanding and better retention of the experience. To achieve this, such technologies as virtual/augmented reality, 3D projections, interactive installations, and multimedia elements were used. Immersion in the atmosphere can trigger strong emotional reactions, thereby fostering a more personal connection between viewers and the art.

The most common immersive cultural practices included immersive exhibitions, immersive films, immersive tours, museum immersive exhibitions, and more. One of the key advantages of immersive exhibitions was their appeal to a diverse range of audiences, including young people, for whom the digital environment was a comfortable way to engage with cultural or historical topics. Immersive exhibitions can attract a broad audience due to their versatility and interactivity. Enhancing the emotional and intellectual involvement of visitors or viewers during an immersive exhibition created the conditions for internal cultural, axiological, and other transformations. The relevance of creating immersive exhibitions was driven by several factors. These involved: a) their growing popularity among a wide audience seeking unique and emotionally engaging experiences; b) the innovative approach to presenting information, which increased the effectiveness of communication and content retention; c) their significant economic potential due to the ability to implement premium pricing policies and attract additional funding sources through sponsorship and the sale of related products.

In the late 2010s, Ukrainian society was transforming traditional cultural practices and developing innovative, immersive cultural practices. A detailed analysis of Ukrainian cultural and artistic projects created with the help of immersive technologies, specifically multimedia exhibitions, can be found in the paper by S. Leontiev *et al.* (2021). The researchers noted that in the late 2010s, immersive technologies were gradually developing and gaining popularity in Ukraine as “a rather new and complex phenomenon that has influenced almost all cultural industries”. They also provided illustrative examples of their use in the museum environment, including the multimedia exhibition of the People’s Artist of Ukraine and laureate of Taras Shevchenko National Prize of Ukraine, I. Marchuk (2019, ARTAREA digital gallery), and the multimedia exhibition “The Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko” (2021, Vira Kholodna Art Centre, Odesa). A successful example of immersive exhibitions as an innovative form of event management was the immersive exhibitions created by the First Charitable Theatre Foundation (President – Natalia Deliyeva). As the experience of immersive exhibitions organised by the First Charitable Theatre Foundation around the world demonstrated, immersive exhibitions can play a significant role in supporting and promoting Ukraine’s cultural heritage worldwide (Deliyeva, 2023).

In 2021, the First Charitable Theatre Foundation, in partnership with Kostyuk Productions, RockNLight Multimedia, and Starvox Entertainment, formed a Ukrainian-Canadian partnership, which resulted in the exhibition “The Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko”. The exhibition premiered in 2021, on the 30th anniversary of Ukraine’s Independence Day, at the Odesa Film Studio. “The Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko” combined Ukrainian cultural traditions with cutting-edge art technologies. An important aspect of managing socio-cultural activities during the organisation of the exhibition was that the

funds needed to launch the project were raised in a short time via the Spilnokosht crowdfunding platform. The exhibition leaves a powerful impression on every visitor, as

it unveils the fascinating and unfamiliar world of Taras Shevchenko as an artist. Shevchenko's paintings appeared to come to life, acquiring new meanings (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Immersive exhibition “The Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko”

Source: The Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko (2021)

The exhibition's musical design was also unique: the organisers analysed musical compositions from 1814 to 1861 to create an original musical accompaniment that links Shevchenko's time with the present (Riznykova, 2021). After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the exhibition was shown in Canada, the United States, and the European Union, where it helped to raise funds to support Ukraine. In 2022, the team of the First Charitable Theatre Foundation, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, created a new immersive exhibition about the war in Ukraine, titled “Ukraine Land of the Brave”. This exhibition was created to convey truthful information about the events in Ukraine to audiences around the world. To produce the 32-minute immersive exhibition, many photos and videos from leading news agencies, photographers, and journalists were reviewed, documenting the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people for their homeland. In the exhibition “Ukraine Land of the Brave”, visitors can witness the stories of Ukrainian defenders, view footage of the destruction of Ukrainian cities, learn about the tragedies experienced by children of war, and observe the farewells to fallen Ukrainian compatriots (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Immersive exhibition “Ukraine Land of the Brave”

Source: Immersive exhibit, which shook the world. Ukraine Land of the Brave. The whole truth about the war in Ukraine (n.d.)

Since immersive exhibitions were artistic and emotional works, this cultural product was understandable and accessible even to foreigners, who, due to this exhibition, can connect with Ukrainian culture through modern art forms. The exhibition “Ukraine Land of the Brave” was intended not only to provide the international community with reliable, truthful information about the war in Ukraine, but also to offer an opportunity to experience it emotionally through the eyes of the participants in these events.

Thus, research on innovative forms of cultural practices in the context of leisure and cultural consumption was gaining increasing significance. To explore the relationship between culture and society, scholars examined cultural practices as fundamental to individual self-identification, the shaping of lifestyles, and the regulation of behaviour in both private and public spaces (Giddens, 1991). Understanding the role of cultural practices in society and their impact on the socio-humanitarian landscape was impossible without considering their moral dimension. Therefore, it was crucial to highlight the moral interpretation of culture, as presented in the paper of Ye. Borinshtein *et al.* (2023): “Culture is the process of creating Homo Moralis in the course of social and spiritual life”. J. Fiske (2002) noted that the concept of a cultural code can be understood as “a system of signs governed by certain rules that are common among members of a particular culture and intended to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture”. The author S. Eckert (2021) explored the concept of immersive theater, analysing contemporary practices and their impact on audience experience, and examining the specifics of organising such performances within the context of contemporary performance art. J.J. Cummings & J.N. Bailenson (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of the effects of immersive technologies on user presence, identifying levels of immersivity that most effectively facilitated deep engagement within virtual environments. Researcher A. Stevens (2021) analysed how virtual reality (VR) and

augmented reality (AR) technologies were transforming the world of immersive theatre, emphasising their influence on creating new forms of artistic interaction and cultural event management.

This study defined a cultural code as a system of ideas about culture, values, symbols, traditions, stereotypes, and behavioural norms. In this context, such concepts as “mentality”, “worldview”, and “perception of the world” were closely related to the notion of a cultural code. While a worldview existed as a conscious representation, mentality and cultural codes were more often reflected in specific behaviours and experienced on an emotional level. Similar to mentality, a cultural code integrated both rational and intuitive elements, and conscious and unconscious aspects. However, in the case of the Ukrainian mentality, despite the transformation of its structural elements under the influence of social and socio-cultural factors, the core components of the Ukrainian cultural code remain unchanged. These foundational elements, rooted in both the conscious and subconscious, and in logic and emotion, serve as a deep source of national identity and thought (Liseienko, 2022). The cultural code not only defined national mentality, but also had practical applications in the cultural sphere, shaping cultural practices.

CONCLUSIONS

An immersive exhibition is an innovative form of event management that can transform traditional approaches to organising cultural events and engaging audiences. The use of immersive technologies in cultural practices enhanced emotional expression, facilitated new experiential learning through immersion, and influenced human behaviour and thinking by encouraging reinterpretation. Immersive exhibitions created new meanings, evoked strong emotional responses in viewers, and prompted reflection, often bringing forgotten information to the forefront.

In the era of globalisation and increasing cultural interaction, immersive exhibitions served not only as an innovative event management tool, but also as a platform for

expressing and interpreting cultural codes. These cultural codes within immersive exhibitions can foster intercultural dialogue and promote mutual understanding between different cultures. By presenting diverse cultural contexts and narratives, immersive exhibitions helped visitors to broaden their perspectives and gain a deeper appreciation of other cultures. This study defined the semantic parameters of the concept of “immersive cultural practices”, referring to a unique category of cultural practices characterised by deep environmental immersion in artistic or historical themes, interactivity, and emotional engagement. In the contemporary context, the development and display of immersive exhibitions foster the adoption of innovative methods in exhibition practices. They have also been instrumental in enhancing Ukraine’s cultural image internationally, showcasing the country as a centre of world-class cultural heritage that effectively incorporated advanced digital technologies for artistic expression. Additionally, immersive exhibitions acted as an effective tool for cultural diplomacy, particularly in conveying authentic and emotionally resonant narratives about the war in Ukraine to the international community. Due to their ability to present information compellingly and engagingly, immersive cultural practices were highly relevant for showcasing Ukrainian culture to a global audience and facilitating participation in international projects. Further research in this area may focus on the impact of immersive exhibitions on the establishment of cultural identity, the development of intercultural dialogue, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

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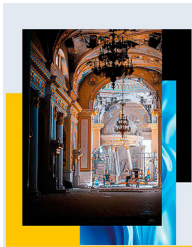
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Імерсивна виставка як культурний феномен та інноваційна форма організації подій

Анотація. Метою дослідження було розглянути імерсивну виставку як культурний феномен у межах соціокультурної парадигми та дослідити характеристики імерсивних культурних практик як інноваційної форми івент-менеджменту. Використання ефекту занурення у культурних практиках допомогло отримати новий практичний досвід, змінити поведінку чи мислення шляхом переосмислення та викликати унікальні й незабутні емоції. В епоху глобалізації та зростаючої культурної взаємодії імерсивні виставки слугували не лише інноваційним інструментом івент-менеджменту, але й платформою для вираження та інтерпретації культурних кодів. Використання імерсивних технологій у культурних практиках сприяло емоційній залученості, забезпечувало нові можливості досвіду навчання через занурення та впливало на людську поведінку і мислення через переінтерпретацію. Поняття «імерсивні культурні практики» було визначено як особливий тип культурної практики, що має унікальну здатність створювати ефект глибокого занурення в художні чи історичні теми, інтерактивність та емоційну включеність. Крім того, імерсивний формат культурних практик завдяки своїм унікальним можливостям і методам подання інформації був привабливим для аудиторії. Тому він став ефективним засобом представлення української культури світовій спільноті. У сучасному контексті створення та презентація імерсивних виставок сприяли розробці й упровадженню інноваційних підходів до виставкової діяльності. Вони також відігравали важливу роль у просуванні культурного іміджу України на світовій арені, позиціонуючи Україну як центр світової культурної спадщини, що успішно інтегрував передові цифрові формати для художньої презентації

Ключові слова: культура; культурна практика; імерсивна культурна практика; ментальність; культурний код; соціокультурна діяльність



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Creative economy and socio-cultural projects: The role of the art manager in creating sustainable development

Abstract. The significance of the study was defined by the growing role of the creative economy in ensuring sustainable development in the context of globalisation and digital transformation. This article aimed to identify and substantiate contemporary directions for the sustainable development of the creative economy and socio-cultural initiatives, with an emphasis on the role of the art manager. The study adopted an institutional approach to analyse the legal environment of the creative economy, a systematisation method to structure management practices in art management, and modelling to design an effective management structure. This enabled the assessment of state support, the classification of management models, and the proposal of tools for resource mobilisation. The proposed development scenarios support the sustainable growth of creative industries, taking into account digital technologies and marketing approaches. The leading factors influencing the effectiveness of integrated management in national creative industries were carefully analysed, including the use of applied marketing strategies, business modelling methods, modern information and communication technologies, and financial instruments necessary to ensure the sustainable development of the cultural sector. It was argued that the effectiveness of socio-cultural initiatives depended on the integration of modern management technologies, including lateral marketing and design thinking, which facilitated the development of competitive models for national artistic initiatives within the framework of globalisation and digitalisation. A conceptual model for professional activity in art management was developed as the main tool for strategic management in the creative industries. This included interdisciplinary approaches to artistic project management, strengthening public-private partnerships, and attracting investment. Mechanisms for integrating creative entrepreneurship into the economic system were also proposed, aimed at creating new jobs, enhancing innovation potential, and promoting sustainable development in the cultural sector

Keywords: creative ecosystem; management strategy; cultural space; business model; art management

INTRODUCTION

The growing importance of the creative economy in the context of globalisation and digital transformation underscored the need to study its role in sustainable development. Socio-cultural projects, as a key component of this process, required effective management approaches to ensure their viability and long-term impact. The analysis of scientific literature confirmed that the creative

economy was conceptualised as a dynamic and transformative sector, capable of shaping innovative processes and influencing socio-economic development at multiple levels. As E. Dundon (2002) argued, the creative economy should be viewed as a new economic paradigm grounded in intellectual capital, knowledge, and creativity, which form the basis for alternative economic systems. Empirical

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research by N. Boccella & I. Salerno (2016) highlighted the significance of creative industries in generating localised value, stimulating entrepreneurship, and fostering innovation through cultural production, with a particular emphasis on their role in regional development. Similarly, the study by H. Rodríguez-Insuasti *et al.* (2022) situated the creative economy in a global framework, underscoring its rising importance in business, management, and accounting, and demonstrating the integration of cultural, social, and economic dimensions.

The notion of cultural capital also occupied an important place in academic discourse. K. Farinya (2017) demonstrated that culture was an economic resource with significant implications for competitiveness at both regional and national levels. In a complementary way, M. Komorowski & J. Lewis (2023) emphasised sustainability and recovery, linking creative industries to inclusive growth, employment diversification, and the integration of digital technologies into cultural production. The author L.A.R.M. Al-Faisal (2024) highlighted the integration of business strategies, marketing planning, and financial analysis into art management, demonstrating that these tools were essential for building resilient and competitive cultural projects within the creative economy. In contrast, T. Stritiyevych (2023) offered a conceptual exploration of art management, providing definitions, classifications, and developmental perspectives. The scholar emphasised interdisciplinary methods and the crucial role of public-private partnerships, underscoring that sustainable cultural initiatives required both theoretical clarity and practical collaboration.

Researchers I. Shalinskyi & A. Zabuzhko (2023) showed the correlation between investment in the creative sector and the sustainability, adaptability, and innovativeness of regions. Their findings align with the conclusions of the World Economic Forum (n.d.), which recognised the creative economy as a strategic vector of global growth. Overall, the comparison of this research with the results of other studies demonstrated strong complementarity. While international scholars tend to focus on general conceptual frameworks and global tendencies, the novelty of this research lies in contextualising these approaches within the Ukrainian cultural environment, particularly in relation to post-war reconstruction, digitalisation, and socio-cultural resilience. Therefore, this study not only confirmed established scientific positions, but also expanded them by integrating the role of the art manager as a decisive factor in ensuring competitiveness, sustainability, and innovation in the creative economy. This study aimed to identify the modern directions of sustainable development in the creative economy and socio-cultural initiatives, with a special emphasis on defining the role of the art manager as a key factor in strategic management in the cultural and artistic sphere, ensuring the integration of economic, social, and technological components into a coherent model of sustainable growth.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological framework of this research was based on a combination of institutional, systematisation, and modelling approaches, which provided a comprehensive basis for analysing the functioning of the creative economy and socio-cultural projects in the context of digitalisation and sustainable development. At the first stage, the institutional support method was applied to analyse the legal and regulatory frameworks at both the national and international levels. Particular attention was given to the provisions of the Law of Ukraine No. 2778-VI (2010) and the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 293-r (2025). These documents formed the foundation for assessing the institutional context, in which creative industries operate and for determining the extent of state support for socio-cultural initiatives. At the international level, the study also examined the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), as well as the World Economic Forum (n.d.) reports on the creative economy and cultural resilience. This enabled a comparison of national regulatory frameworks with global strategies of cultural policy and sustainable development.

At the second stage, the systematisation method was employed to identify and classify key management practices in art management. For this purpose, empirical data and scientific publications were analysed; the systematisation of these materials enabled the structuring of management processes, the evaluation of organisational models, and the identification of the most effective mechanisms of resource mobilisation, such as public-private partnerships and crowdfunding initiatives. The third stage involved the modelling method, which was used to construct and validate a structural model of effective art management. This model integrated economic, technological, and social dimensions and was tested against various scenarios for the development of the creative economy. The approach enabled the exploration of strategies for incorporating digital tools (for example, digital marketing and online art platforms), lateral management methods, and innovative financing mechanisms. The analysis of a number of academic sources was crucial, particularly H. Rodríguez-Insuasti *et al.* (2022), whose global bibliometric study provided insights into long-term trends in cultural and creative sectors, and M. Komorowski & J. Lewis (2023), who examined sustainability and recovery in creative industries. This multi-stage approach ensured comprehensive research and allowed for the integration of legal, managerial, and technological aspects into a coherent analytical framework that clarified the role of art managers in shaping the sustainable development of creative industries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Creativity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses a wide range of applications and can serve not only as the basis of creative activity but also as a method of social perception of the world, enabling adaptation to its challenges, changes, and new opportunities. On the one hand,

creativity can be considered a tool for the formation of non-standard thinking, which contributes to the effective management of social, economic, and cultural processes; on the other hand, it has become a key component of professional self-realisation, because the use of a creative approach in any activity not only differentiates work, but also makes it unique and competitive. For this reason, professions grounded in creativity acquire particular significance in the modern economy, as they have become a driving force in creating new markets, cultural products, and socio-cultural initiatives that directly influence economic development and the sustainability of social transformation (Avanesova *et al.*, 2021).

In contemporary conditions, the institutionalisation of creative activity has led to the formation of the so-called “creative industries”, which, despite their diversity, are subject to the general principles of economic organisation and operate on the basis of market regulation. This involves both the production of mass cultural products and the monetisation of intellectual property. The term “creative industries” captures the process of the industrialisation of creativity, as it involves structuring, production

standardisation, and the use of effective management mechanisms that ensure the sustainability of economic processes in the cultural and artistic spheres. At the same time, discussions continue in the scientific community regarding the exact definition of this concept, as it covers a wide range of activities, ranging from traditional art to high-tech digital products that combine aesthetic and commercial value (Law of Ukraine No. 2778-VI, 2010).

Creative industries can be viewed from several perspectives, as they perform different functions in the socio-economic environment. First, they represent unique socio-cultural practices based on creativity, cultural innovation, and the integration of artistic ideas into everyday life. Second, they constitute an important element of the economic structure, as enterprises and entrepreneurs in this sector not only generate new jobs, but also create added value through intellectual products and copyrights. Third, creative industries play a significant role in the sustainable development of territories, as they synthesise economic, political, social, and cultural factors, contributing to the growth of innovative activity and the formation of a new level of urban development (Table 1).

Table 1. Main functions of creative industries

Function	Economic dimension	Social dimension	Cultural dimension	Technological dimension
Innovation	Creation of new business models	Promotion of creative thinking	Combination of traditions and modernity	Use of digital technologies
Market stimulation	Generation of new jobs	Employment opportunities for youth	Demand for cultural products	Development of online platforms
Social integration	Support of local enterprises	Strengthening of social cohesion	Preservation of cultural heritage	Application of interactive tools
Educational role	Growth of a knowledge-based economy	Development of “4C” competencies	Cultural education of society	Digital literacy and elearning
Global competitiveness	Attraction of investments	International cooperation	Promotion of national identity	Integration into global networks

Source: based on D. Kalfas *et al.* (2024)

In the context of sustainable development of the creative economy, which is increasingly integrated into global economic and socio-cultural processes, the role of the art manager extends beyond a purely administrative or organisational function and becomes a strategic component of the effective functioning of the art market. L. Lipych & T. Radishchuk (2024) noted that the art manager is not merely an intermediary between the artist, the viewer, and the consumer of a cultural product, but also a key figure who shapes the economic value of creative activity, promotes its commercialisation, and ensures the sustainable development of the socio-cultural space through the integration of modern management approaches, marketing strategies, and financial and economic mechanisms. In this paradigm, art is no longer considered only an aesthetic phenomenon, but is instead recognised as part of a large economic ecosystem that requires effective resource management, adaptation to changing market conditions, and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development (Convention on the..., 2005).

An important role in this process is played by the formation of an artistic environment in which a cultural product is not only created, but also actively promoted in the market and integrated into the global system of creative industries. One of the main factors contributing to the successful functioning of this environment is the development of creative industries, which have become an important mechanism not only for cultural expression but also for economic growth. In the modern world, where post-industrial economic models emphasise knowledge, information, and intellectual capital, creative industries are increasingly important, as they combine socio-cultural, economic, political, and informational processes that determine the prospects for the development of modern societies. This is because, unlike traditional sectors of the economy, creative industries are not limited by material resources, but instead are based on human intelligence, creative potential, cultural innovation, and modern technologies, which enable them not only to adapt to change but also to actively shape the future (Bezuhla & Lazakovich, 2024).

For a deeper understanding of the essence of the art manager profession as a manager in the field of culture, it is necessary to refer to the general definition of management, according to which management involves not the direct creation of a product, but the organisation of all necessary conditions for its effective production, distribution, and consumption (Dundon, 2002). According to this concept, an art manager is not the author of works of art in the traditional sense, but plays a crucial role in ensuring their viability in the market, creating a favourable environment for the implementation of artistic projects, the development of creative entrepreneurship, and the formation of sustainable business models in the field of culture. The manager's activities include strategic planning, conducting market research, establishing effective interaction with investors, patrons, and consumers of cultural products, as well as ensuring the legal and financial aspects of the functioning of artistic initiatives (Chen, 2023).

One of the main components of the professional activity of an art manager is the development and conclusion of contracts that regulate the process of creation, performance, and distribution of artistic products, as well as ensure the legal protection of artists' intellectual property. V. Makedon *et al.* (2024a) emphasised that the role of the art manager applies both to traditional agreements between artists and customers and to modern copyright management mechanisms, which are becoming increasingly relevant in the digital era, when creative industries are being integrated into global technological processes. In this context, an art manager acts not only as a director of art projects or an organiser of cultural events, but also as a strategic agent of change, determining trends in the development of the creative economy, forming business models

for promoting cultural products, and ensuring their accessibility to a wide audience. A modern art manager is not merely an administrator, but an educated and creative professional, able to work in conditions of rapid change, predict cultural trends, and adapt traditional approaches to new challenges of the digital age. Not only the success of individual cultural projects, but also the development of entire institutions that form a global creative ecosystem depend on the manager's professional activities (Kovaitė *et al.*, 2022; Makedon *et al.*, 2025).

In addition, effective art management requires the use of modern technologies and innovative approaches that optimise management processes, enhance communication efficiency between artists, consumers, and businesses, as well as strengthen the financial sustainability of the creative sector. An important component of this process is the digitalisation of the cultural space, which entails the active use of information and communication technologies (ICT), the digitisation of works of art, the development of digital marketing, and the integration of cultural products into digital platforms, which significantly expand their audience and create new opportunities for the monetisation of creative activities. For instance, leading museums in Ukraine and Europe have launched large-scale projects to create high-resolution digital copies of paintings, sculptures, and archival collections. The National Art Museum of Ukraine, in cooperation with international partners, has implemented initiatives to scan and digitise its most valuable exhibits, enabling researchers and the general public to view them online. Such projects contribute to the development of virtual galleries and interactive educational platforms, where digital artworks are combined with expert commentary, 3D visualisation, and multimedia technologies (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Virtual exhibition Masterpieces of NAMU at the National Art Museum of Ukraine

Source: Masterpieces of NAMU (2025)

Digitisation has reduced the risk of physical deterioration of masterpieces, while at the same time promoting their global accessibility, fostering cultural diplomacy, and stimulating innovative forms of art consumption in the digital era (Posnova, 2024). In the context of a globalised world and its trends, characterised by instability, rapid

technological change, and the need to adapt to new economic and socio-cultural challenges, art managers must demonstrate a high level of professional flexibility, analytical thinking, and the ability to innovate (Akimov, 2023). For this reason, their activities are increasingly based on modern management concepts such as lateral marketing,

design thinking, CRAFT, and other technologies that enable the effective management of creative processes and the creation of sustainable business models for the development of cultural products.

Art management, as a key component of the effective functioning of the creative economy and socio-cultural projects, is grounded in the application of innovative approaches that not only optimise management processes but also facilitate the creation of qualitatively new business models that meet the requirements of the digital age and the principles of sustainable development. One such effective approach is lateral thinking, which, unlike traditional methods of analysing market opportunities, offers an alternative way of finding solutions by going beyond the boundaries of familiar concepts and standard economic models. H. Andrews & A. Hawcroft (2024) noted that in the field of creative industries, this method contributes to the development of unique products and services, the creation of new market niches and, consequently, ensures the sustainable growth of enterprises operating in the cultural and artistic sectors.

Another effective tool in the field of creative management is the CRAFT methodology (Creative Algorithm Framework & Tools), which is based on the systematisation of the creative thinking process and its application to solving specific business tasks in the field of socio-cultural development. A practical example of applying the CRAFT methodology can be found in the development of a digital platform for promoting local cultural heritage in small Ukrainian communities. Within this project, art managers and IT specialists used CRAFT to systematise the creative thinking process and transform abstract cultural ideas into structured business tasks. At the first stage, the team applied algorithmic tools to identify key needs of the community: preservation of folklore, promotion of traditional crafts, and attraction of tourism. Then, through CRAFT modelling, these needs were translated into concrete digital solutions, such as an online marketplace for handmade products, virtual tours of cultural sites, and interactive storytelling applications (Fig. 2).

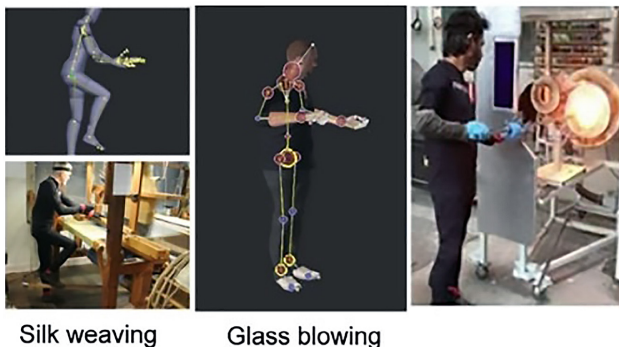


Figure 2. Application of the CRAFT methodology to traditional crafts: motion capture and digital structuring of silk weaving and glass-blowing processes

Source: based on N. Cadi Yazli *et al.* (2022)

The methodology facilitated iterative testing of ideas, optimises user experience, and supported the creation of a scalable business model that ensured both cultural sustainability and economic benefits. Thus, CRAFT has proved effective in bridging creativity with entrepreneurship. The use of this technology not only structured creative processes, but also developed effective mechanisms for integrating artistic ideas into market systems, which was extremely important for the development of the creative economy. For example, the Kiricard marketplace, which specialised in the production and wholesale supply of greeting cards, has also expressed interest in applying the CRAFT methodology and has described the main folk crafts of different countries around the world (Fig. 3).

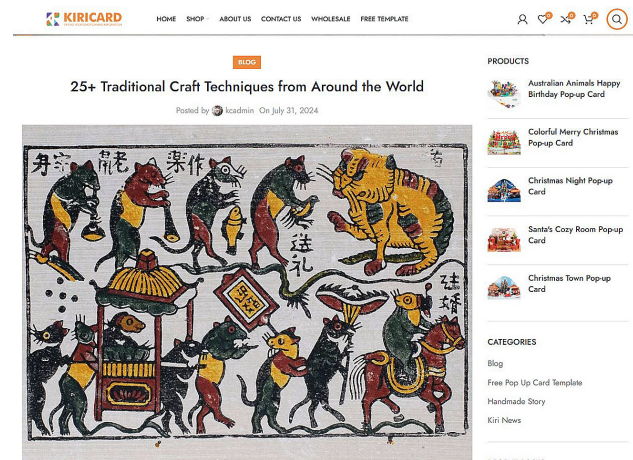


Figure 3. Demonstration of contemporary works of traditional crafts

Source: Kiricard (n.d.)

Art managers, who apply this approach gain the opportunity to streamline their activities, simplify the process of implementing cultural projects, and increase their economic efficiency by using algorithmic methods in creative activities (Blyzniuk, 2024). Design thinking deserves special attention, being one of the defining practices of modern art management, which was gaining particular importance in the context of the so-called “fourth industrial revolution”, characterised by the close integration of technology, innovation, and socio-cultural processes. The approach itself elevated the management of cultural projects to a fundamentally new level, as it drawn on collective intelligence, creative cooperation, flexible management strategies, and a deep understanding of consumer needs. I. Moiseienko *et al.* (2024) pointed out that, thanks to design thinking, art managers have acquired tools for developing solutions that not only align with modern market trends but also contribute to solving global social problems through the use of aesthetic, cultural, and economic mechanisms.

Design thinking can be considered a “free art of technological culture”, as it combines the rationality of scientific analysis with an intuitive and artistic approach to

solving problems, which is particularly relevant for modern art management. Its roots can be traced back to the Renaissance, when humanistic education provided a wide range of knowledge in various fields of science and art, enabling the creation of harmonious socio-cultural systems. A similar approach has emerged in 2022–2024, as it has contributed to the formation of universal solutions based on a deep understanding of social needs, technological capabilities, and economic realities, which has not only increased the efficiency of creative industries but also ensured their sustainability in the long term (Yatsko, 2020).

Contemporary design thinking is not only a technology that contributes to the development of effective management strategies in the creative economy, but also reflects a holistic concept of a creative manager, capable of combining an innovative project management style with a people-centred and problem-oriented approach to business development in the socio-cultural sphere. The use of this method in the activities of an art manager makes it possible to integrate a systemic, interdisciplinary, and iterative approach to management, which constitutes an important element of the effective implementation of cultural and artistic initiatives. Design thinking involves a sequential cycle of actions that correspond to the PDCA concept (Planning – Implementation – Check – Adjustment), which supports the continuous improvement of decision-making processes and optimisation of business models in the creative industries. V. Makedon *et al.* (2024b) argued that applying this

approach to managing artistic projects enables not only the identification of the main problems and requests of consumers, but also the creation of an appropriate prototype of a product or service, which subsequently undergoes testing, analysis, and necessary refinement before large-scale implementation on the market.

Another important element of management in the creative economy is business modelling, which plays a key role in the development of small and medium-sized businesses within the framework of creative entrepreneurship. Using this approach makes it possible to create unique, competitive products and services that hold high value for consumers and contribute to the development of the socio-cultural space. In a modern economy driven by creativity, cooperation, and innovation, an art manager needs to have a wide range of competencies that ensure the effectiveness of managing creative projects. Especially important in this context are skills that correspond to the concept of “4C” (critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration), as they help address complex, non-standard tasks that arise in the process of developing and implementing socio-cultural initiatives. It should be noted that, in order to function successfully in a modern post-industrial society, under the conditions of rapid changes in the knowledge economy and the so-called “orange economy”, an art manager must reformat their thinking, using a comprehensive approach based on key principles (Table 2).

Table 2. Key principles of art managers' thinking in the orange economy

Principle	Core meaning	Practical application	Expected outcome
Emergence	Spontaneous development of systems	Encouraging self-organisation in creative teams	Generation of innovative project ideas
Compasses	Strategic orientation	Setting long-term cultural development goals	Clear vision and sustainable strategies
Risk	Readiness for innovation	Implementing experimental art projects	Competitive advantage through novelty
Diversity	Integration of multifaceted experience	Engaging experts from different fields	Broader perspectives and inclusive growth
Critical thinking	Evaluation of decisions' effectiveness	Regular analysis of project outcomes	Improved quality and accountability

Source: based on H. Kapinos & K. Larionova (2024), I. Moiseienko *et al.* (2024)

The modern structure of the art market recognises the art manager as an entrepreneur who not only organises activities in the field of art but also actively influences the formation of demand, tastes, and cultural expectations of the audience, broadening the boundaries of perception of works of art and art products. In view of this, a modern art manager must not only be well-versed in various types of art, but also deeply understand the specifics of the creative process, the mechanisms of organisation and production of cultural products, technological aspects of their implementation, documentation, management practices, marketing, and information strategies, all of which are essential for the effective functioning of the art industry (Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 293-r, 2025). It is also important to recognise that art is

not only a commercial industry, but also part of the general cultural heritage of humanity, an important element of spiritual heritage, which plays a significant role in the moral, social, and cultural development of society. The use of marketing tools, such as fundraising, advertising, PR campaigns, promotion, digital marketing, and other mechanisms for attracting an audience, ensures the effectiveness of the creative sector, supports the expansion of its influence, and facilitates its integration into global economic processes (Tatarnikova, 2022; Loots, 2023).

An individual art manager is not just a manager in the traditional sense, but a multifunctional specialist who performs various roles depending on the level of the organisational structure in which they work. An art manager can act as a producer involved in financing and organising

artistic projects, an entrepreneur creating and promoting new artistic initiatives, an impresario managing the careers of artists, or an art director who shapes cultural concepts and implements strategic plans for the development of artistic organisations. N. Bolkvadze & S. Shmanko (2022) emphasised that, regardless of the specific specialisation, the activities of an art manager are aimed at achieving an end result that has both cultural and economic value, which makes them a key actor in the processes of developing the creative economy. Management methods in the art industry, art business, and sociocultural space draw on different approaches to the organisation of activities, which are founded on modern concepts of management, marketing promotion, financial management, and the integration of digital technologies into the cultural sector. In view of this, a modern art manager must possess not only traditional management competencies but also understand the principles governing the creative process, be able to balance artistic and commercial aspects of activity, and be flexible in decision-making, adapting to new economic and cultural challenges (Ericsson *et al.*, 2024).

The creative economy has already become one of the defining sectors of the modern global services market, shaping new employment models, expanding opportunities for the self-realisation of creative individuals, and promoting economic growth through the production of cultural and artistic products. In this context, art management plays an important role in building effective strategies for the development of creative industries that combine economic benefit, social responsibility, and cultural mission. Through the activities of art managers, creative projects receive proper support, maintain sustainability, and adapt to the rapidly changing market environment, which is an important factor in their long-term success. J. O'Connor (2024) noted that one of the main tasks of state policy in this context is not only the production of new cultural products and services but also the creation of innovative mechanisms for the active use of existing cultural resources of territories, involving the implementation of project-oriented strategies aimed at the development of the creative environment, the transformation of social institutions, and the formation of new approaches to cultural policy.

In this approach to the implementation of cultural policy, where the territory, its infrastructure, human capital, and social environment become the main objects of strategic management, art management serves as one of the key mechanisms for integrating culture into the economic system. Thanks to effective management and the involvement of entrepreneurial initiatives in the field of art, opportunities emerge for the development of public-private partnerships, the creation of target investment funds, and the formation of cluster associations, within which synergy occurs between business structures, creative entrepreneurs, cultural institutions, and state institutions. H. Nikolić & F. Mikuša (2023) pointed out that this approach activates the mechanisms of cultural production, supports innovative art projects, and fosters the

creation of economically profitable cultural products that have high social and spiritual value. In the space of modern post-industrial and postmodern society, all processes in the field of culture and art acquire a commercial character, which necessitates the development of competencies in creative management and entrepreneurship.

Art management, as a separate discipline and management practice, was one of the key tools for the development of an innovative creative economy. In this context, the art manager became not just a coordinator of projects in the field of art, but also a driving force of creative development, ensuring the transformation of cultural policy and contributing to the expansion of regional economic opportunities by integrating culture into sustainable development strategies. As an important element of human capital and an intellectual resource of the creative economy, the art manager combined the competencies of an entrepreneur, marketer, strategist, and cultural diplomat, shaping new approaches to the organisation of cultural business and the promotion of art projects. They were specialists engaged in discovering new talents, organising art festivals, developing new segments of the art market, popularising modern artistic trends, and ensuring the integration of creative products into the global cultural space.

CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrated that creative industries served as a powerful factor of economic growth, integrating social, economic, political, and informational aspects. This stimulated the emergence of new markets and the generation of intellectual property and cultural products that combined artistic value with a commercial component. It was shown that the regulation of creative activity shaped innovative business models, where creativity functions as the main source of added value, driving job creation, innovation, and economic enrichment. Modern art management was regarded as a key element of the creative economy, as it synthesised managerial, entrepreneurial, marketing, financial, and cultural mechanisms. The art manager acted not only as a coordinator of artistic processes, but also as a strategic initiator of transformation, introducing modern methods of managing the cultural sector and promoting its globalisation and monetisation. Their functions included the development of business strategies, management of creative teams, attraction of investment, implementation of digital marketing solutions, and financial analysis, all of which supported the long-term stability of cultural initiatives.

A conceptual model of effective art management was proposed, based on a combination of artistic and commercial thinking, the integration of technologies into cultural processes, and cross-sectoral cooperation. The model envisioned the formation of an ecosystem of creative entrepreneurship through cooperation between the state, business, and civil society, thereby ensuring sustainable development and sectoral competitiveness. To improve the management of socio-cultural projects, the following

measures were proposed: the development of public-private partnerships, attracting investment in culture, and the advancement of digital transformation within the national art market. Future studies should focus on the development of quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing the effectiveness of art management in creative industries, with special attention to measuring cultural capital and its impact on regional competitiveness.

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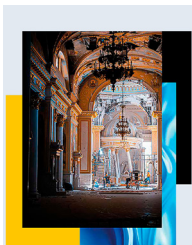
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Креативна економіка та соціокультурні проекти: роль арт-менеджера в створенні сталого розвитку

Анотація. Значущість дослідження визначена зростаючою роллю креативної економіки у забезпеченні сталого розвитку в умовах глобалізації та цифрової трансформації. Метою статті було визначити й обґрунтувати сучасні напрями сталого розвитку креативної економіки та соціокультурних ініціатив з акцентом на роль арт-менеджера. У дослідженні застосовано інституційний підхід для аналізу правового середовища креативної економіки, метод систематизації для структурування управлінських практик в арт-менеджменті та моделювання для проектування ефективної управлінської структури. Це дало змогу здійснити оцінку державної підтримки, класифікацію управлінських моделей і запропонувати інструменти мобілізації ресурсів. Запропоновані сценарії розвитку підтримували стале зростання креативних індустрій із урахуванням цифрових технологій та маркетингових підходів. Було ретельно проаналізовано провідні фактори, що впливали на ефективність інтегрованого управління національними креативними індустріями, зокрема використання прикладних маркетингових стратегій, методів бізнес-моделювання, сучасних інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій та фінансових інструментів, необхідних для забезпечення сталого розвитку культурної сфери. Обґрунтовано, що результативність соціокультурних ініціатив залежить від інтеграції сучасних управлінських технологій, зокрема латерального маркетингу та дизайн-мислення, які сприяють формуванню конкурентних моделей національних мистецьких ініціатив у межах глобалізації та цифровізації. Розроблено концептуальну модель професійної діяльності в галузі арт-менеджменту як основний інструмент стратегічного управління в креативних індустріях. Вона включала міждисциплінарні підходи до управління мистецькими проектами, посилення державно-приватного партнерства та залучення інвестицій. Також було запропоновано механізми інтеграції креативного підприємництва в економічну систему, спрямовані на створення нових робочих місць, підвищення інноваційного потенціалу та сприяння сталому розвитку культурної сфери

Ключові слова: креативна екосистема; стратегія управління; культурний простір; бізнес-модель; арт-менеджмент



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Transformation of the urban environment into mini-public multifunctional spaces by organising an innovative architectural form – parklets

Abstract. The search for alternative solutions to the problem of organising public space, without the implementation of large-scale projects or substantial capital investment under the constraints of dense urban development, is a pressing issue. The purpose of the study was to assess the condition of existing public spaces through a population survey and formulate recommendations for the design and integration of parklets within architectural and urban planning infrastructures. Based on the findings, the design principles, main components, formal design approaches, fundamental requirements, and usage scenarios of parklets in the urban environment were defined within the framework of the “parklets – public space – citizens” system. Methodological recommendations necessary for the construction of parklets that considered residents’ interests and aligned with contemporary urban development trends were outlined. A survey demonstrated that the vector of development, planning, and operation of public space ought to be revised according to residents’ needs. 53% of respondents indicated a shortage of public spaces for urban recreation, highlighting the necessity of alternative solutions to address this issue. 42% of participants observed a low standard in the quality of organisation of existing public spaces, suggesting a requirement not merely for reconstruction, but for redesign. 91% of respondents supported the creation of additional public mini-spaces in the form of parklets to address the shortage of recreational zones. 38% of respondents expressed willingness to take an active role in enhancing the quality of public spaces, from idea generation through to project implementation, indicating a readiness among citizens to collaboratively address issues of urban improvement. The findings may be utilised by designers and architects in the development of public space projects, and by local governments during implementation

Keywords: components of parklets; parklet use scenarios; parklets design principles; structure of parklets; effectiveness of parklets; requirements for parklets

INTRODUCTION

Public spaces increasingly play a central role in the lives of urban residents and can serve as the primary catalyst for urban transformation and renewal, enhancing quality of life, fostering local entrepreneurship and, consequently, facilitating the integrated development of urban infrastructure. The creation of a comfortable and safe urban environment constitutes the principal focus in the design of public spaces.

Parks and other public spaces confer evident health benefits on citizens and communities, and financial value on cities. K. Herman & M. Rodgers (2020) stated that many cities experience difficulty in providing adequate levels of open space for residents, particularly in densely built-up neighbourhoods. In this context, many settlements found it challenging for architects, designers, and municipal authorities to create a comfortable, social and safe urban

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environment that was resident-oriented and adapted to local needs, without resorting to large-scale projects and substantial capital investments amidst the constraints of dense urban development. Simultaneously, uncontrolled parking of vehicles frequently occurred on pavements, streets, plazas, and vacant yard areas. Specialists recognised the need for novel approaches to the creation of public spaces, such as squares, streets, and other publicly accessible areas, since public space was an integral component of urban infrastructure.

H.M. Shokry (2020) noted that public space development should incorporate the latest technological advancements to ensure citizen well-being and comfort. As populations grow and urban development density intensified, existing open spaces were diminishing; hence, the establishment of parklets (miniature public spaces) may offer a viable solution to public space deficits. A parklet was a small public recreational area, a miniature public space or mini-square, comprising a specially designed structure with seating and landscaping. It extended from the pavement to offer additional space and convenience for individuals to meet, socialise, and relax. As A. Holovatiuk (2022) indicated, historical analyses of public space development demonstrated that parklets represented a recent instrument for addressing the challenges of organising recreational areas in contemporary cities.

Parklets aimed to increase space and convenience for people to relax, meet, and socialise by extending the pavement, as explained by K. Zhykhareva & S. Rogovsky (2021). Parklets simultaneously help to reduce unauthorised vehicle parking on pavements and in squares, while also organising new recreational areas for citizens. Parklets were publicly accessible and open to all. J.L. Muller (2021) emphasised that architects and designers had a critical role in shaping the image of future public spaces and integrating them into the overall urban fabric. E. Korkmaz (2024) noted that parklet structures, which can be installed modularly in one or more parking spaces, were employed to regulate traffic, ensure pedestrian safety and create public spaces. G.F.Y. Caymaz & M.A. Zerriouh (2022) indicated that the parklet concept was initially introduced in San Francisco (USA), a city overloaded with car parks, and that the idea of creating parklets was now spreading widely, enjoying popularity in many countries as a means to address the lack of recreational areas in cities.

In Ukraine, the idea of transforming parts of parking areas into mini-oases (parklets) started relatively recently, in 2015, in Ivano-Frankivsk. N. Sosnova (2021) emphasised that this initiative could serve as one potential solution to contemporary urban planning challenges in Ukraine. Parklets represented a form of artistic expression in public spaces and contributed to shaping the image of the architectural and urban environment from the perspective of artistic design (Praslova, 2021).

Since their inception, the concept of mini-parks (parklets) has evolved into a global experiment aimed at

revitalising and reshaping urban spaces for social interaction, recreation, and artistic expression. N. Jarman & E. Stratford (2023) observed that a global movement in urban design and planning, encompassing small experimental parklets, held promise as a strategy for addressing the organisational challenges of contemporary cities. Modern trends in urban planning and policy suggested an increasing focus on sustainable urban mobility and improved living conditions for urban residents (Comi *et al.*, 2022). According to Q. Stevens & M. Morley (2024), the innovativeness and creativity evident in the design and components of parklets served as key criteria in evaluating the quality of street-level urban spaces, features that were consistently appreciated by the public. Based on the analysis of various sources, including theoretical literature and practical case studies, the creation of comfortable and inclusive public spaces was as a pressing priority for urban environments. The purpose of this study was to identify innovative solutions to the challenges of public space organisation and to address related social issues.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological framework of the study was:

- Literature review and conceptual analysis. Papers, abstracts, and monographs were analysed to explore the research subject. This approach enabled the systematisation of existing theoretical knowledge and the integration of new information.
- Interviewing and data collection. Practical data collection was conducted via oral and written surveys to evaluate the quality of existing public spaces.
- Monitoring. Observation of the condition of existing objects of public spaces allowed systematising the facts and giving an assessment of their qualitative and quantitative condition.
- Systematisation and generalisation. The diverse data obtained were systematised and generalised into a coherent scientific framework, forming the basis for the conclusions of the study.

This study was conducted in 2024 to assess the condition of public spaces in Ukrainian cities. Observations and surveys were conducted among residents and visitors of Cherkasy (Ukraine). Semi-structured surveys were conducted among 488 respondents. Two groups of people were selected for the surveys – citizens and visitors of the city. 351 citizens and 137 visitors took part in the survey, among them were 54 teachers, 144 students, 45 civil servants, 119 business employees, 126 representatives of other professions (Table 1). Respondents, both male and female, ranged in age from 16 to 70 years and voluntarily disclosed their occupation and age. The geographical scope of the respondents included Cherkasy, Kyiv, and Kharkiv oblasts, represented through students and guests of Cherkasy city. Moreover, students of Cherkasy State Technological University participated in the survey. The survey was conducted in organisations among employees and on the streets of the city.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by occupation

Respondents	Educators	Students	Government employees	Business employees	Others	Total
Residents	45	112	34	91	69	351
City visitors	9	32	11	28	57	137
Total	54	144	45	119	126	488

Source: developed by author

The criterion for selecting respondents among those working in organisations and local public bodies was targeted, while on the streets of the city, it was random. This approach allowed for the inclusion of opinions from professionals and the general public. In line with the objectives of the study, respondents were asked to answer six open-ended

questions (Table 2). Respondents were informed about the aim of the survey and of the study in general. The ethical aspects of the study adhered to the principles of The Declaration of Helsinki (2013). Following the completion of the primary analysis of the survey results, statistical processing and summarisation of the obtained data were conducted.

Table 2. List of survey questions

No.	Questions	Response options
1	In your opinion, is there a deficit of public spaces for citizens' recreation in the city (district, neighbourhood)?	A. Enough B. Not enough C. I would like more
2	How do you assess the quality of public spaces in the city?	A. Excellent B. Good C. Satisfactory D. Poor
3	How do you feel about the idea of creating additional mini-public spaces in the city?	A. Positively B. Negatively C. Difficult to answer
4	What would you suggest to increase the number of recreational areas in the city?	A. Demolish some structures B. Eliminate unauthorised parking spaces C. Utilise vacant land D. Difficult to answer
5	Which type of public space is more realistic in a cramped urban environment?	A. Parks B. Squares C. Parklets D. Difficult to answer
6	Would you participate in programmes to improve public recreational areas in the city (from idea to implementation)?	A. Yes B. No C. It's a concern of the city government

Source: developed by author

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A parklet is a stylish and practical element of the urban landscape, which is a cosy place for relaxation and is distinguished by its functionality. The main purpose of organising parklets is to increase available space and create a zone for relaxation for both citizens and visitors, offering a place to rest, meet, and engage in social interaction, while observing city life.

Typologically, parklets may be classified as small architectural forms, structures used to organise mini-public spaces that complement the architectural, urban planning, garden, and park composition of the city (Jain, 2019). Parklets were often installed in place of one or more authorised

or unauthorised car parking spaces along streets, in alleys, squares, or near cafés and shopping centres. Their purpose was to demonstrate, how many people can simultaneously use the space occupied by a single parking spot (Jarman & Stratford, 2023). Parklets created mini-functional public spaces. In addition to garden benches and landscaping elements, they may include chairs, tables, bicycle parking racks, exercise equipment, and modern amenities. The design of parklets represented a new approach that responds to the needs of the present and anticipated future challenges. Parklets served as catalysts for the transformation of the urban environment. Their design must consider the needs of a diverse range of users,

such as holidaymakers, pedestrians, drivers, cyclists, and public transport passengers, within a limited urban space. M. Husiev (2024) noted that the successful implementation of parklets contributed to business and service development and enhanced the quality of recreational spaces. The basic principles of parklet design were:

- Compositional unity of the object-spatial environment.
- Creation of connections between places and people by widening pavements and adding seating areas.
- Optimisation of the carriageway and increased safety.
- Improved accessibility by installing additional elements such as benches, bins, flowerbeds, lighting features, and green spaces.
- Enhancement of public spaces by increasing recreational areas.

The following parklet components should be included in the design to better organise the seating area (Fig. 1).

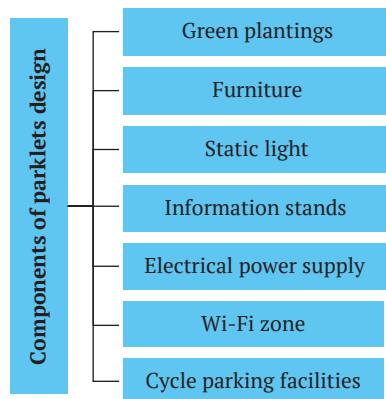


Figure 1. Object-spatial components of parklets

Source: developed by author

The components of parklets may include natural and artificial materials that were environmentally sustainable. Design elements that reflected the historical context and modern trends were advantageous, when creating parklets. The incorporation of innovative content allowed for improved organisation of recreational areas and contributed to the development of the urban environment. The inclusion of an information stand and a Wi-Fi zone within the parklet enhanced convenience for users.

Parklets contributed to inclusive green infrastructure, enhancing the urban environment and raising ecological standards. They symbolised a healthy, pleasant, and vibrant public environment. Parklets improved quality of life, expand recreational areas, eliminate unauthorised parking, addressed the lack of rest areas for residents, enhanced the aesthetic appeal of streets, increased landscaping, and mitigated traffic imbalances in urban areas (Baster & Pohranychna, 2024). The implementation of parklets in contemporary cities was an effective and rational approach to addressing numerous challenges associated with shaping public spaces in modern metropolises. Among the primary issues addressed through the use of parklets were the following (Fig. 2).

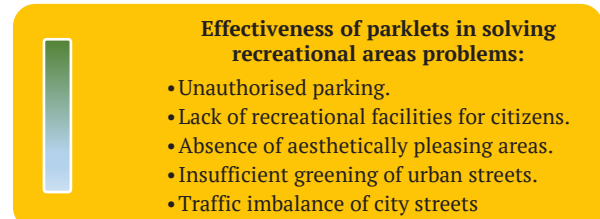


Figure 2. The role of parklets in mitigating challenges faced by recreational areas

Source: developed by author

Innovative solutions in the form of parklets provided increased space for pedestrians, improved the comfort and aesthetics of streets through targeted landscaping, contributed to air purification, and created comfortable conditions for short-term recreation. The development of such mini-parks within urban areas was a relevant and timely task. This approach represented a new and engaging urban experience for Ukraine. These public spaces offered an effective means of locally transforming the urban landscape, revitalising, and enhancing the built environment. Parklets were designed to highlight alternative uses of urban space, with potential usage scenarios including: public (freely accessible to all); commercial (repurposed for business activity); and public-commercial (a combination of public and commercial use). According to their structural design, parklets can be classified as follows (Fig. 3).

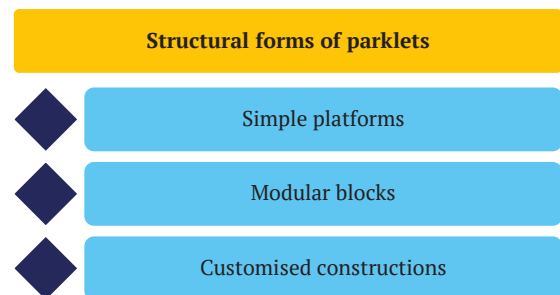


Figure 3. Constructional forms of parklets

Source: developed by author

The choice of constructional forms of parklets depended on the site of installation and the compositional resolution of the surrounding object-spatial context. Studies demonstrated that the installation of parklets brought numerous functional and emotional benefits to residents, in particular by helping to:

- Create additional dynamic public spaces and support social interaction.
- Ensure pavements remain accessible for pedestrians rather than being occupied by vehicles.
- Provide opportunities for effective advertising and increase footfall for local businesses.
- Mitigate the effects of pollution through landscaping.
- Establish new and vibrant public areas.
- Improve perceptions of the urban streetscape.
- Contribute to the city's distinctive character.

Based on the results of the study, it was recommended that the following requirements be considered, when designing and installing parklets in urban spaces (Fig. 4).

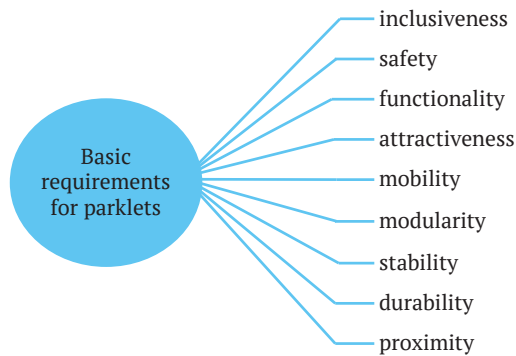


Figure 4. Basic requirements for parklets

Source: developed by author

Considering these recommended requirements, when designing and installing parklets enhanced their functional and aesthetic quality, along with their popularity and appeal among residents. The second stage of the study involved conducting surveys among residents and visitors of the city. The objective was to assess the condition and quality of existing public spaces. The following findings were obtained through a sociological study using a survey, which aimed to gauge public opinion regarding the availability of recreational public spaces in the urban environment. In response to the question, “In your opinion, is there a deficit of public spaces for citizens’ recreation in the city (district, neighbourhood)?”, responses were distributed as follows: “Enough” – 16%, “Not enough” – 53%, and “I would like more” – 31% (Fig. 5).

1. In your opinion, is there a deficit of public spaces for citizens’ recreation in the city (district, neighbourhood)?

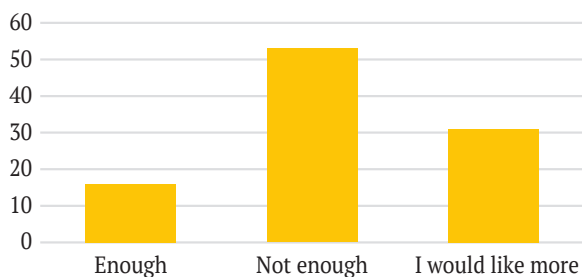


Figure 5. Assessment of sufficiency of public spaces in the city, %

Source: developed by author

The survey results indicated that residents experience a shortage of small-scale recreational spaces near their homes and workplaces. This suggested that urban development has not adequately addressed the needs of citizens and other users. The creation of additional public spaces in the form of parklets should address these real and

pressing demands. When assessing the quality of public spaces in the city, the distribution of responses was as follows: “Excellent” – 7%, “Good” – 21%, “Satisfactory” – 30%, and “Poor” – 42% (Fig. 6). Survey participants highlighted the generally low quality of the organisation of existing public spaces, noting that these areas require not only reconstruction but also comprehensive redesign.

2. How do you assess the quality of public spaces in the city?

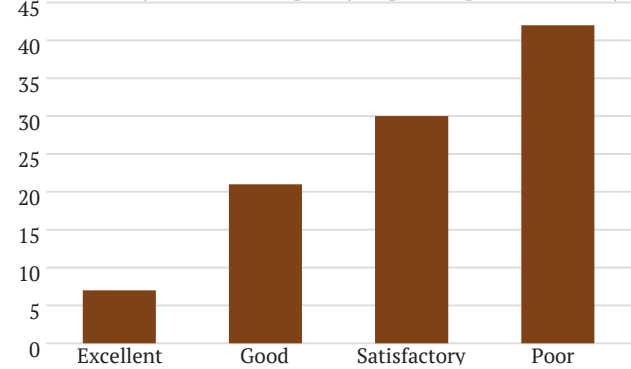


Figure 6. Assessment of the quality of public spaces in the city, %

Source: developed by author

The survey and the territorial analysis demonstrated that many public spaces in urban areas suffered from inadequate spatial organisation and required comprehensive improvement. This issue necessitated the development and implementation of an overarching concept and an innovative design approach that aligned with contemporary quality standards for public space design. When respondents were asked about the potential creation of additional public mini-spaces in the city, their answers were as follows: “Positively” – 91%, “Negatively” – 2%, and “Difficult to answer” – 7% (Fig. 7). The overwhelming support (91%) for the creation of additional mini public spaces in the form of parklets highlighted a strong public demand. This should be addressed through the development of more small-scale public spaces within urban areas.

3. How do you feel about the idea of creating additional mini-public spaces in the city?

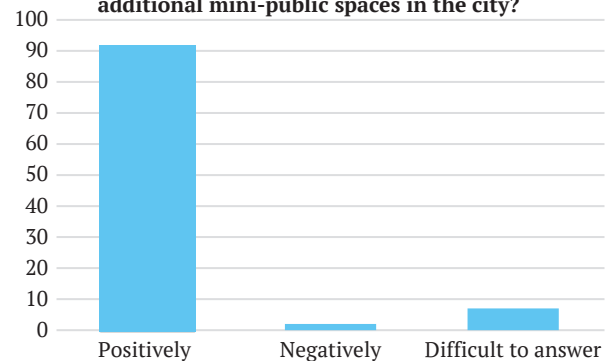


Figure 7. Public support for the creation of mini public spaces, %

Source: developed by author

The study showed that the urban population welcomes the expansion of recreational space in the city; moreover, there was a considerable need for the creation of additional public mini-spaces in various areas. Two-thirds of respondents supported the development of new public mini-spaces. When selecting locations for the creation of additional recreational areas in the city, the respondents' suggestions were distributed as follows: "Demolish some structures" – 18%, "Eliminate unauthorised parking spaces" – 53%, "Utilise vacant land" – 26%, and "Difficult to answer" – 3% (Fig. 8). The findings indicated that unauthorised parking spaces were a source of irritation for many urban residents. Cities should prioritise increasing the number of compact public spaces integrated into the existing urban fabric to address this strong community demand.

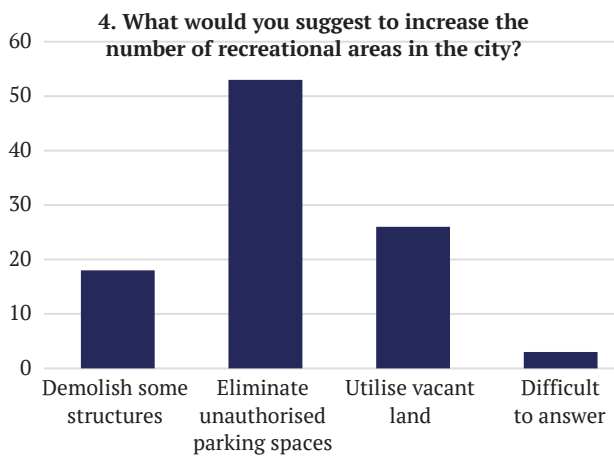


Figure 8. Options for increasing the number of public spaces in the city, %

Source: developed by author

The survey showed that a majority (53%) of respondents proposed creating public mini-spaces (parklets) by removing unauthorised parking areas. Observations of urban environments also confirmed the widespread presence of such parking practices. In response to the question, "Which type of public space is more realistic in a cramped urban environment?", the distribution of answers was as follows: "Parks" – 14%, "Squares" – 30%, "Parklets" – 54%, and "Difficult to answer" – 2% (Fig. 9). The results demonstrated that city residents recognised the creation of mini-public spaces in the form of parklets as the most realistic solution in the context of spatially constrained urban areas. According to 54% of respondents, this approach could be the most effective in addressing the need for recreational zones for residents and visitors. Moreover, 30% of respondents expressed support for more conventional solutions, such as the development of recreational zones in the form of public gardens. Residents acknowledged that urban space was constrained by existing buildings and therefore proposed more feasible solutions, favouring the creation of parklets. This illustrated the growing popularity of parklets as a means of establishing open, comfortable, and innovative environments within compact urban settings. These

spaces served as hubs for gathering, recreation, socialising, and community activity. Regarding participation in programmes aimed at improving public recreational areas in the city, respondents answered as follows: "Yes" – 38%, "No" – 20%, and "It's a concern of the city government" – 42% (Fig. 10). Among those surveyed, 42% considered the development and organisation of public spaces to be the exclusive responsibility of municipal authorities. This finding highlighted a lack of public awareness and guidance concerning the role of citizens in shaping public spaces. No considerable effort was made to engage citizens in discussions about the challenges of public space development or possible solutions. If city authorities were to conduct explanatory and participatory initiatives, this misconception could be effectively addressed.

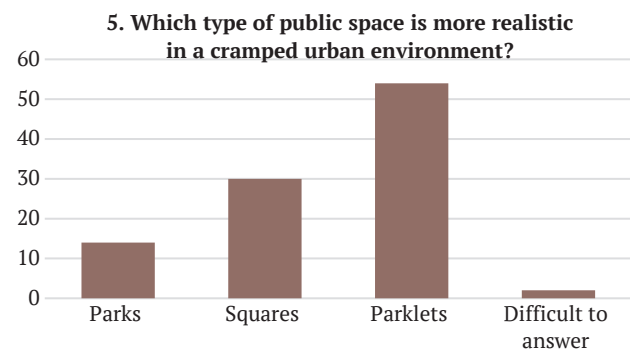


Figure 9. Types of public space, %

Source: developed by author

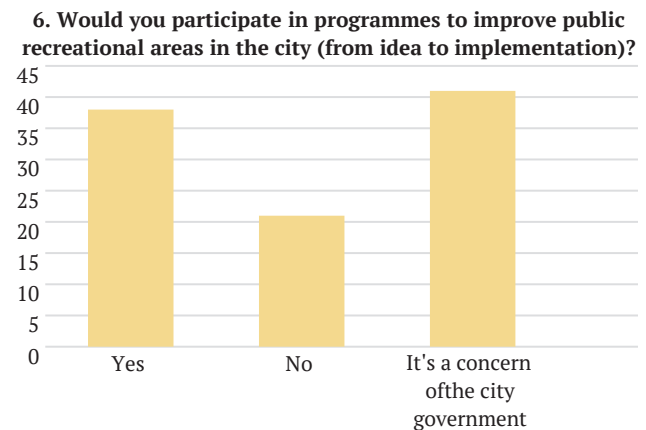


Figure 10. Willingness to participate in public space improvement programmes, %

Source: developed by author

The survey showed that more than a third of respondents were willing to take an active role in improving public recreational areas in the city, from generating ideas to implementing projects. This figure could increase, if city authorities were to undertake promotional and organisational initiatives. Such efforts would also provide citizens with opportunities to participate, allowing each individual to propose their own solutions to urban development challenges. A. Wojnarowska (2016) emphasised that the model for assessing the quality of public spaces and the

landscape organisation of recreational areas should reflect the contemporary needs of the population. These criteria were confirmed in this study through population survey results. According to O. Oliynyk (2021), elements of open urban space, as part of the city's cultural heritage, should reflect public life. The author noted that the components of parklets should not only follow contemporary trends, but also respect the cultural and historical characteristics of the local community. Recommendations by C. Neugebauer (2021) regarding the planning and renewal of the urban environment in German cities may prove valuable for Ukrainian cities. As a solution to the issue of organising public spaces, this study proposed the creation of mini-public spaces in the form of parklets.

Researchers J.G. Vargas-Hernández & J.A. Zdunek-Wielgołaska (2019) summarised modern trends in urban planning and their practical applications. Despite general trends and shared developmental areas, this study demonstrated that it was essential to consider the unique cultural context of each society, necessitating an individualised approach. The conventional approach to the landscape organisation of public spaces, as a method of urban adaptation proposed by I. Ustinova & A. Matsokha (2024), may be suitable, where there was no shortage of free space. However, in densely built-up urban environments, the use of parklets was preferable. M. Diomin & O. Oliynyk (2022) proposed the principle of functional recombination in the organisation of the urban environment. This study built on their work by introducing the principle of parklet polyfunctionality, which enhanced their aesthetic qualities, popularity, and attractiveness among citizens. N. Voiko & O. Dobrovolskaya (2019) outlined a typology of urban public open spaces. Based on the results of this study, the inclusion of parklets as a distinct type of public space was found to be both feasible and beneficial. C. Garau & V.M. Pavan (2018) argued that the quality of urban life depends on numerous objective and subjective indicators, including: accessibility, flexibility and functionality, minimum services available, emotional well-being, quality of life, social well-being, environmental characteristics, built environment features, the efficiency of primary services, soil pollution, security systems, smart crime prevention, and the risk of natural disasters. The combined values of these indicators formed, what they termed the Indicator of Smart Urban Quality (ISUQ). The authors emphasised that the index of urban environmental quality can be calculated as the average of the summed ratings of each sub-indicator. As urban populations grow and building density increases, existing public spaces were becoming increasingly limited. Therefore, as this study confirmed, the development of parklets (mini-public spaces) represents a viable solution to this issue.

CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrated that parklets may serve as an innovative solution to the challenge of developing municipal

public spaces within densely built urban areas. The vast majority of respondents (91%) recognised the need to create additional public mini-spaces in cities. In addition, the majority of respondents (53%) stated that there was an insufficient number of public spaces available for citizens to relax within the urban environment. 54% of respondents supported the creation of mini-public spaces in the form of parklets as a more realistic option to address the need for more recreational areas in conditions of limited urban development. Furthermore, 42% of respondents reported the poor quality of existing public spaces in cities, which required immediate intervention to improve their condition.

The study recommended considering the fundamental principles of parklet design in urban spaces, namely: multifunctionality, inclusiveness, and barrier-free accessibility. The survey showed that the majority of respondents believed that unauthorised car parking hinders residents' ability to enjoy urban spaces. Moreover, they advocated for the removal of unorganised parking areas and the creation of additional mini-public spaces for recreation in their place. With regard to participation in programmes aimed at improving the quality of recreational areas in the city, 38% of respondents expressed a desire to be involved. However, analysis of the survey results indicated that 41% of residents were reluctant to participate in such programmes, believing that responsibility for improving and maintaining the urban environment lay solely with the city authorities. This demonstrated a lack of public awareness and ineffective communication channels for involving citizens in the development of recreational spaces.

This study confirmed that innovative thematic elements in the design of parklets enhance the attractiveness of public spaces. The integration of smart technologies into parklets provided additional convenience for city residents. The design of parklets must account for the needs of various users, including holidaymakers, pedestrians, drivers, cyclists, and public transport passengers, particularly in areas with limited space. The task of designers and architects in creating parklet projects should be to harmonise and optimise the compositional unity of the spatial environment. The development of parklets in Ukrainian cities may offer an optimal solution to the challenges of organising public spaces in conditions of constrained urban density. Narrative detailing, the infill components of parklets, and a tailored approach for each city, considering local history and community traditions, represent a promising area for further exploration.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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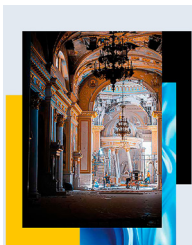
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**Трансформація міського середовища
у мініпублічні багатофункціональні простори
шляхом організації інноваційної архітектурної форми – парклета**

Анотація. Пошук альтернативних рішень проблеми організації громадського простору без реалізації масштабних проектів або значних капіталовкладень в умовах щільної міської забудови є актуальним завданням. Метою дослідження стала оцінка стану наявних громадських просторів шляхом анкетування населення та формулювання рекомендацій щодо проектування та інтеграції парклета в архітектурно-містобудівні структури. На основі отриманих результатів визначено принципи проектування, основні компоненти, підходи до формального вирішення, базові вимоги та сценарії використання парклета в міському середовищі в межах системи «парклет – громадський простір – мешканці». Сформульовано методичні рекомендації, необхідні для створення парклета з урахуванням інтересів мешканців відповідно до сучасних тенденцій розвитку міського середовища. Результати опитування засвідчили про необхідність перегляду вектору розвитку, планування та експлуатації громадського простору з орієнтацією на потреби мешканців. Зокрема, 53 % респондентів вказали на нестачу громадських просторів для міського відпочинку, що підкреслило актуальність пошуку альтернативних рішень. 42 % учасників опитування відзначили низький рівень якості організації наявних просторів, що вимагало не просто реконструкції, а перепроєктування. 91 % опитаних підтримали створення додаткових громадських мініпросторів у формі парклета для подолання дефіциту рекреаційних зон. При цьому 38 % респондентів виявили готовність брати активну участь у процесі покращення якості громадських просторів – від формування ідеї до реалізації проекту, що свідчило про наявність потенціалу до спільного вирішення питань міського благоустрою. Отримані результати можуть бути використані проєктувальниками та архітекторами при розробці громадських просторів, а також органами місцевого самоврядування під час реалізації відповідних проєктів

Ключові слова: компоненти парклета; сценарії використання парклета; принципи проектування парклета; структура парклета; ефективність парклета; вимоги до парклета



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The hero archetype and the semiotics of liberation struggle in Oles Sanin's film "Dovbush": Between historical allusion and visual narrative

Abstract. The actualisation of the image of the national hero in times of war, under conditions of informational pressure and cultural decolonisation, is one of the key challenges for contemporary Ukrainian visual culture. The aim of this study was to conduct an interdisciplinary analysis of Oles Sanin's film "Dovbush" as a cultural text, in which new models of heroism were shaped through semiotic, aesthetic, and mythological means. Cinema increasingly functions as an instrument in the formation of collective identity, where the figure of the hero acquired significance not only as an artistic image, but also as an archetypal marker of historical transformation. The article traced, how the film's visual language created a complex system of signs and symbols, in particular: the hero's body, blood, earth, the cross, water, and the Carpathian landscape were presented not merely as elements of artistic composition, but as bearers of traumatic experience, collective memory, and ritual structures. The Carpathian space in the film appeared not as a picturesque backdrop, but as a sacred chronotope, shaping the spiritual topography of the narrative and acting as an active participant in the hero's ritual transformation. It was revealed that the film's structure followed the ritual logic of initiation: betrayal, flight, dedication, sacrifice, death, and resurrection, forming a sacred formula of the narrative of resistance. The image of Oleksa Dovbush emerged as an archetypal figure of the leader, integrating the motifs of avenger, martyr, and cultural mediator between the trauma of the past and the nation-building perspective of the present. The study also included a comparative analysis of the film with other examples of Ukrainian historical cinema, which made it possible to discern a shared patterned model in the formation of the visual narrative of national resistance. Particular attention was paid to the figure of the woman in the film as the bearer of sacred knowledge and collective intuition. The film's public reception confirmed its status as a national screen myth. The practical value of the research lies in the proposed model of film analysis as a ritual narrative, which may be applied in the fields of cultural studies, film analysis, memory studies, and the study of national identity in wartime conditions

Keywords: national myth; ritual narrative; visual language; Ukrainian cinema; cultural memory; spatial symbolism; postcolonial discourse

INTRODUCTION

In the context of full-scale war and active decolonisation, the formation of the image of a national hero in Ukrainian cinema becomes a leading tool of visual influence on the politics of memory and cultural identity. The image of the hero in the visual space emerges as a key means of

symbolic construction of national identity, acquiring functions not only of historical representation, but also of ritual coding of collective memory within the postcolonial context. That is why the analysis of the latest representations of archetypes, in particular in the 2023 film "Dovbush" by

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director Oles Sanin, is necessary both from the point of view of cultural memory and from the perspective of semiotics, ritualistics and the postcolonial approach.

Contemporary research has confirmed the growing role of cinema in transmitting national values and forming a new canon of heroism. V. Griza *et al.* (2023) noted a shift in emphasis from the traditional historical hero to the multidimensional figure of the avenger hero, who functions as a symbol of resistance. M. Sachleben (2024) analysed trends in post-Maidan period films, emphasising the new emotional density of screen myths. T. Zhurzhenko (2022) examined cinema as a component of memory politics, particularly in the processes of derussification and decommunisation. The author also detailed the relationship between cinema and the legislative construction of historical memory in Ukraine. The study by D. Khlevniuk & B. Noordenbos (2024) highlighted the temporality and tension between the past and the future in the visual culture of memory. Visual media have become a field for visualising trauma and recovery, which was particularly evident in the work of B. Shumylovych (2023), who analysed digital visuality and graphic narratives as a form of resistance. A separate layer of contemporary research concerned the mobilising role of Ukrainian cinema in wartime. E. Olzacka (2023) analysed cinema as an instrument of cultural mobilisation and solidarity that contributed to the formation of national unity in times of crisis. P. Castello Branco & M. Lihus (2023) emphasised the construction of identity through screen images that combined the narrative of trauma with the narrative of resilience. In the works of S. Marchenko (2023), the emphasis was on documentary cinema, but his observations on the formation of new genre strategies can also be applied to feature films, in particular in connection with “Dovbush”. These approaches emphasised that Ukrainian cinema functions not only as an artistic, but also as a sociocultural act, in which visual myth acquired direct political action. Archaic symbolism, as noted by S. Binbin *et al.* (2022), retained its power in cinematic images, especially, when it came to cultural memory associated with folklore, the body, and the land. In the work of M. Demydenko (2022), interest in the themes of archetypes, mythological heroes, body narratives and cultural memory in Ukrainian films was consistently traced, with the author emphasising the interpretation of cinematic language as a carrier of symbolic meaning. M. Demydenko & N. Markhaichuk (2024) examined chronotope, body, sacred geography, and intertextuality as key parameters of national visual historiography. Despite active public reception, no comprehensive cultural analysis of the film “Dovbush” has been carried out. The reviews available in the media (in particular, in *Ukrainska Pravda*, on *Suspilne*, and in *Plomyn* magazine) focused mainly on the genre and entertainment aspects of the film, ignoring its semiotic, folkloric, and postcolonial potential. In this regard, there was a need for a cultural reading of the film, in which it appeared not simply as historical action, but as a visual manifesto of an era of resistance. The semiotic

aspects of the film “Dovbush” and its ritual structure remain understudied in contemporary cultural discourse.

The aim of the study was to comprehensively identify the archetypes, ritual structures, and visual-semiotic mechanisms in the film “Dovbush” that shaped the contemporary model of the national hero in Ukraine’s cultural memory. The objective was to identify the semiotic mechanisms of constructing a visual narrative of resistance, the ritual logic of character development, and a comparative analysis with similar national film practices. The scientific novelty lay in the proposed interpretation of the film as a ritual text with a clear symbolic structure that fit into the contemporary postcolonial, hermeneutic, and cultural discourse.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Within the scope of the study, the film “Dovbush” (directed by Oles Sanin, 2023) was examined as a complex cultural text that combined elements of historical epic, national myth, folkloric visuality, and ritual cinema. The source material was the full version of the film, which was analysed as a single semiotic object, taking into account not only the plot, but also the visual language, cinematographic decisions, the symbolic meaning of space, colour, body, ritual, costume and chronotope. The research was based on a comprehensive interdisciplinary methodology, within which semiotic, hermeneutic, mythocritical, ritualistic, intertextual, and comparative approaches were applied.

Semiotic analysis made it possible to identify the key visual codes of the film: blood, earth, stones, the cross, weapons, and the hero’s body as structuring elements that function in the film as signs of collective memory. It was analysed how these signs work within the visual series, acquiring sacred or ritual significance depending on the context. The hermeneutic method made it possible to interpret the complex multi-level structure of the narrative, in particular the transformation of the hero, his physicality, suffering and sacrifice as elements of a ritual act. Particular attention was paid to the moments of initiation, isolation, betrayal, death, and rebirth as symbolic milestones of the mythological cycle. A mythocritical approach was applied to the analysis of the archetypes represented in the film: the avenging hero, the traitor, the guide, the sacrificial mother, and the enemy as the forces of evil. These archetypes were viewed as instruments of collective imagination, referring both to folklore and to the modern image of a defender in wartime. Ritualistic analysis made it possible to comprehend the structure of the film as a visual ritual, where each scene appeared as part of a transition: from chaos to sacred order, from namelessness to a heroic name. The plot was divided into phases corresponding to the logic of initiation: the hero leaves his familiar world, undergoes trials, suffers losses, and emerges transformed into a new role – a symbol of national resistance. Intertextual analysis allowed to identify visual and plot parallels with other cultural texts, from folklore to Ukrainian historical cinema, and to contemporary media images

of defenders. In this way, the film was read as a cultural matrix that synthesised previous experiences of visual myth. A comparative analysis was carried out by comparing it with other historical films: “Kruty” 1918 (directed by O. Shaparev), “Black Raven” (directed by T. Tkachenko), and “The Guide” (directed by O. Sanin). It was established that the film “Dovbush” demonstrated a qualitatively new model of heroisation, not as a representation of the past, but as a projection of the contemporary experience of war, where the hero appeared not only as a historical character, but as an archetype of victim and avenger.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The film “Dovbush” (directed by Oles Sanin, 2023) was not just a historical reconstruction, but a multi-layered cultural text that used visual language and symbolism to create an archetype of a chosen hero undergoing an initiation rite in the context of national resistance. The central figure of Oleksa Dovbush was presented not as a flawless avenger, but as a personality, who experiences trauma, loss, internal conflict, and transformation (Griza *et al.*, 2023). His path resonated with the classic model of the “heroic journey” (Campbell, 2004), but in the film, this path was transformed in accordance with the rhythm of the modern narrative. Already in the first scenes (Fig. 1), the hero appeared as a leader and defender of the oppressed: in the scene with the bandit attack, Dovbush was presented as majestic, similar to a folk avenger like Robin Hood, and in the dinner scene with his brothers, as the central figure, compositionally inscribed in a visual reference to “The Last Supper”. These images were important for research because they symbolise the two poles of the heroic archetype: the warrior-defender and the sacred leader of the community. It was this duality that determined the dynamics of his further initiation throughout the film.



Figure 1. Initial images of the leader Oleksa Dovbush

Note: a – scene of an attack with a knife; b – “The Last Supper” with his brothers-in-arms in the mountains

Source: Dovbush (2023)

The frames symbolised the warrior and sacred functions of the hero as a guide of the community. The hero’s image was both corporeal and emotional: the body was wounded yet alive; blood and scars not only display physical pain, but become themes of memory and symbols of sacrifice. In the scene, where the hero, bent and injured, barely crawls to a stream to wash away the traces of battle, the camera slowly closes in – not to elicit the viewer’s pity, but to allow the body to be read as a bearer of historical experience. In this same episode, Marichka appeared beside Dovbush, helping the exhausted and bloodied hero (Fig. 2). Marichka’s presence not only accentuates Dovbush’s corporeality and mortality, but also symbolised the feminine principle as the bearer of memory and intuition, supporting the hero at the moment of transition between life and death. The importance of this frame for the study lay in its visualisation of the concept of “postmemory” (Hirsch, 2012), where the traumatised body became a communicative form of memory, and the female figure functions as a symbolic bridge between past and future.



Figure 2. Frame of the scene the wounded Dovbush and Marichka as a symbol of the combination of physical sacrifice and female support

Source: Dovbush (2023)

The frame emphasised the heroes as bearers of national trauma and the female figure as the keeper of memory. The key plot dynamic was the conflict between the brothers Oleksa and Ivan. Ivan embodied the archetype of the shadow – the choice of betrayal, power, and bribery. In contrast, Oleksa was the bearer of sacrificial meaning. However, Sanin does not show betrayal as a banal evil: the camera lingers on Ivan’s face, conveying his inner conflict and division. In the scene of their direct confrontation (Fig. 3), close-ups of the two brothers’ faces capture the maximum tension: Oleksa and Ivan’s gazes meet like a mirror reflection of light and shadow, the choice between dignity and conformity. Thus, the shadow here was not only an antagonist, but also a mirror of the hero, and therefore their conflict took on a deeply symbolic character. A similar dichotomy can be seen in the film “Cyborgs” (directed by Akhtem Seitablaev), where the opposition between characters with different worldviews defined the moral boundary between cynicism and ethical resistance (Cyborgs: Heroes Never Die, 2017). In this film, as in “Dovbush”, the conflict was brought to the level of a symbolic choice: to remain within the bounds of personal pragmatism or to become part of the collective myth of struggle.



Figure 3. Close-up frame of the confrontation between the brothers (Oleksa and Ivan)

Source: Dovbush (2023)

This frame symbolised the archetypal conflict between the hero and his shadow, where the choice between dignity and conformity takes shape. The ritual structure of the film manifested itself in the repetition of the initial plot phases: escape, initiation, death, rebirth. In the scene, where Dovbush touches the ground before the battle, the gesture has a ritual meaning: the ground was not a backdrop, but a subject that accepts the sacrifice (Binbin *et al.*, 2022). Water in the film functions ambivalently: it purified and at the same time separated the living from the dead, becoming a boundary between worlds. The cross, in turn, was presented not as a religious detail, but as a code of national mourning, a visualisation of a shared experience of loss. These motifs were particularly clearly articulated in the frame with Dovbush near the cross, where the sacred space took on the meaning of a collective altar, and in the flashback frames of the ritual, in which the boy was buried under a rose, coins were placed on his eyes, and then he comes back to life (Fig. 4). This episode recreated the archaic motifs of funeral and initiation rites: the coins symbolise payment for the passage to the afterlife, and the boy's rebirth symbolises purification and the continuation of life. Thus, the ritual in the film functions not only as an individual event, but as a collective formula of national initiation, in which death opens the way for a new generation. According to V.W. Turner (1969), this scene demonstrated a liminal state – an intermediate space between death and rebirth, where the hero and the viewer experience a shared transformation. These frames symbolised the sacred dimension of his struggle and collective memory as a sacrificial altar, visualising the transition to the afterlife according to archaic tradition. It showed the burial site, the boy's body in the ground, and a woman performing a ritual symbolising death and subsequent rebirth. The space in the film functions not as a background decoration, but as an active player in the myth, shaping the spiritual topography of the narrative. In this logic, space acted not as a backdrop, but as a full-fledged participant in the ritual that transforms both the hero and the viewer, in which the hero was born and undergoes initiation. They were not depicted as a picturesque landscape, but as living matter: dark, damp, chthonic. In the night scenes, the forest sounds: the camera was silent to let the space speak. This was an element of the viewer's deep immersion in the space of initiation. In the escape scene, when the hero

moves along a night forest path, only the sounds of breathing, the crackling of branches and the rustling of grass can be heard (Khlevniuk & Noordenbos, 2024). This was how the transition to the hero's inner world was formed: the scene became a cinematic visualisation of loneliness, fear, and the need to make a choice (Sachleben, 2024). In this, the film echoed Sanin's "Mamai", where the landscape also became a condition for the hero's metaphysical journey.



Figure 4. Ritual symbols in the film

Note: a – Dovbush on the mountain near the cross; b – close-up of a boy with coins on his eyes; c – general view of the ritual

Source: Dovbush (2023)

The female characters in the film function as spiritual guides. The heroine Marichka appeared on the border between sleep and reality, between life and death. Marichka's role in the film was to embody the image of memory and love, reminding the hero of his origins and supporting him in moments of inner crisis. Her appearance was accompanied by a slow rhythm, darkness, and warm light. The camera seems to "glide" over her image, capturing not her physical presence, but her aura. Particularly revealing was the flashback scene (Fig. 5), where Marichka appeared in a wedding dress, as if from another time. This flashback transformed her image into a symbol of lost opportunity, a memory of love, and at the same time a sacred sign that returned the hero to his essence. Marichka was the voice of traumatic memory, the one thing that prevented the hero from forgetting, who he is. It was the woman in the film, who marked the boundary between the past and the future, between the physical and the prophetic. Thus, the female characters in the film do not simply accompany the protagonist, but actively shape the

mythology of the film, embodying the functions of memory transmission, initiation, prophecy, and sacred connection between generations. This interpretation of women corresponded to the observations of B. Shumylovych (2023), who seen the female figure in the visual culture of war as a bridge between collective memory and moral intuition.



Figure 5. Frame of Marichka's image in the wedding flashback

Source: *Dovbush* (2023)

The frame symbolised the combination of individual memory and collective archetype, where the female figure functioned as a guide between the past and the future. Thus, the results obtained allowed for a deeper understanding of the place of the film *"Dovbush"* (directed by Oles Sanin, 2023) in contemporary Ukrainian cinema and cultural memory. Central to this was the question of the ritual structure and archetypal symbols that organised the film's narrative. As V.W. Turner (1969) emphasised, ritual functions as a mechanism of transition, where the individual and the community pass through liminality to obtain a new status. In *"Dovbush"*, this mechanism was applied not only to the hero, but also to the viewer: the film was structured as an initiation rite in which death and rebirth were not metaphors, but central formulas. Water, earth, blood, and the cross act as semiotic nodes that shape the logic of transition and give events a supra-individual meaning.

In the broader context of cultural memory, *"Dovbush"* came out during a period of intensified derussification and decolonisation of public space. As O. Betlii (2022) noted, the processes of memory politics in Ukraine take place not only at the level of historiography, but also in culture and visual media. A similar idea was developed by A. Wylegała & M. Glowacka-Grajper (2020), who emphasised that collective memory in a postcolonial context functions through symbols that replace official narratives with new forms of historical continuity. In this sense, *"Dovbush"* can be interpreted as a cinematic analogue of such processes: it represented not academic history, but ritualised memory, where the hero became the body of the nation. It was also important to pay attention to the gender aspect of collective memory. B. Törnquist-Plewa & Yu. Yurchuk (2017) noted that visual representations often reinforced new forms of identity through female images as carriers of moral intuition. In *"Dovbush"*, this trend was realised through the character of Marichka: she functioned as the "voice of memory" that supported the hero and at the same time articulates the national continuity between the past and the present.

Modern Ukrainian cinema was increasingly seen as a tool for shaping national identity. O. Bezrucho & N. Stepanenko (2024) argued that screen images become means of constructing an imagined community, where collective traumas and victories were artistically embodied. In this context, *"Dovbush"* was no exception: the film integrated folkloric archetypes, historical traumas, and contemporary political codes into a single system. A similar idea was put forward by P. Castello Branco & M. Lihus (2023), who emphasised that Ukrainian cinema shaped cultural resilience through visual images, combining narratives of trauma and resilience. In *"Dovbush"*, these approaches were synthesised: the archetype of the hero undergoing initiation appeared not only as a folkloric or historical character, but as a contemporary cultural code aimed at mobilising the community. The film also contributed to the language policy of Ukrainian cinema (Demeshchenko, 2023). A. Vidaud (2024) emphasised that language in films was not only a tool for communication, but also a means of marking identity. In the case of *"Dovbush"*, the use of the Ukrainian language and dialectal forms reinforced authenticity and at the same time affirmed the rejection of colonial cultural influence. The symbolic structure of the film correlated with the analysis of V. Zaporozhchenko & M. Ishchenko (2024), who viewed contemporary Ukrainian cinema as a space for the creation of new national myths. Unlike the traditional heroic narrative, *"Dovbush"* not only recreated the historical struggle, but also offered a model of cultural revival, where the hero undergone a rite of passage that became a metaphor for national renewal.

Another important element in the film was the conflict between the brothers Oleksa and Ivan. This motif can be explained by the contrast between the archetypes of the hero and the antihero, which was also analysed by N. Sas (2023). Ivan embodied the archetype of the shadow, the choice of power and betrayal, while Oleksa represented sacrifice and dignity. This contrast goes beyond personal drama and becomes a cultural code symbolising the national dilemma between adaptation and resistance. To better understand the place of the film *"Dovbush"* in Ukrainian cinema, it was worth comparing it with other iconic Ukrainian films. For example, in the film *"The Guide"* (directed by Oles Sanin, 2014), music functions as a conduit for trauma: a blind kobzar and his art became a metaphor for collective memory, which the totalitarian regime was trying to destroy. Thus, music acted as a kind of code for survival, allowing history to be preserved through song. In *"Dovbush"*, the Carpathian space and ritual symbols performed a similar function: they became carriers of memory and myth that cannot be destroyed. *"Cyborgs"* (directed by Akhtem Seitablaiev) presented a modern hero, who created himself through responsibility and moral choices in a war situation (*Cyborgs: Heroes Never Die*, 2017). In this respect, Seitablaiev's film echoed the image of *Dovbush*: his path was also a story of choosing between adaptation and dignity. However, while the heroes in *"Cyborgs"* remained within the confines of modernity, *"Dovbush"* took this conflict to an archetypal

level, transforming an individual biography into a cultural myth. "The Inglorious Serfs" (directed by Roman Perfiliev) works in the genre of postmodern irony, where historical images were deconstructed and intertwined with motifs of mass culture (The Inglorious Serfs, 2020). This film offered a playful model for working with the national past, but at the same time showed that Ukrainian viewers were ready to re-think the heroic canon. In contrast, "Dovbush" returned to the serious, sacred logic of myth, where the past was interpreted not as parody, but as ritual. In the films "Kruty" 1918 (directed by Oleksiy Shaparev) (Kruty 1918, 2019) focused on the sacrifice of youth as a symbol of national awakening, while "Black Raven" (directed by Taras Tkachenko) offered an individualised image of struggle, focused on the figure of a Cossack chieftain (Black Raven, 2019). Both films operated within the paradigm of historical heroism, but remained closer to genre clichés. "Dovbush", on the other hand, departed from classical reconstruction and created a ritual drama, where history became not an event, but a sacred initiation. An important context was also the comparison of "Dovbush" with documentary filmmaking. S. Marchenko (2023) analysed non-fiction cinema as a form of preserving memory and comprehending trauma. Unlike this genre, Sanin's film works with artistic and mythological means, but pursues a similar goal: to actualise collective experience and transform it into part of contemporary identity.

The public reception of "Dovbush" showed that viewers were impressed by the film's spectacular nature, complex staging, and acting. At the same time, critics noted that the discussion was mostly limited to evaluating technical and genre characteristics. Less attention was paid to the ritual structure, symbolism, and archetypal codes of the film. This created space for scientific analysis, as research can show that Sanin's film not only recreated a historical plot, but also formed a cultural ritual, in which the viewer became a participant in a collective experience. Thus, "Dovbush" can be considered one of the key films of modern Ukrainian cinema, combining elements of historical reconstruction, folkloric archetypes, and postcolonial thinking. The use of the concept of ritual (Turner, 1969) allowed to interpret the film as a drama of transition, where death and rebirth function as a model of cultural transformation. Compared to other Ukrainian films, from "The Guide" to "Cyborgs" and "The Inglorious Serfs", Sanin's film represented a synthetic level of visual coding of myth, where the archetype of the hero became the body of history, and history became a ritual on screen. This was what made it an important text in the formation of new national ideas and collective memory.

CONCLUSIONS

The film "Dovbush" was not just a historical action movie or a spectacular film, but a complex ritual text in which aesthetics, myth and symbolism form a multi-layered narrative of national self-affirmation. It was based on a complex ritual, mythological, and semiotic structure, which was realised as a visual scenario of the initiation of the hero and the viewer. The image of Oleksa Dovbush

was presented not simply as a legendary leader, but as a symbolic figure of cultural transformation, combining elements of pain, physicality, sacrifice, and spiritual growth. It was through physical vulnerability, wounds, gestures, and physical suffering that a new type of screen hero was built, personifying the nation in times of loss and struggle.

The film was structured according to the logic of ritual: the plot stages were not just a sequence of events, but components of a cultural formula for the transition from anonymity to a national name. The cinematic structure of "Dovbush" was ritualistic in nature: the plot composition, visual repetitions, bodily gestures, and editing rhythm form a coherent rite of transformation of the hero, which at the same time initiated the viewer into the myth of collective experience. Visual codes function not as scenery, but as active signs that included the viewer in a shared memory. The space of the film functions as a mythologised space of the Carpathians, where each natural element became an initial agent of the ritual: the earth accepted the sacrifice, the water purifies, and the forest and caves became border zones between life and death. It does not illustrate history, but experiences it together with the protagonist, creating a new geography of national memory. Female images function as moral and emotional landmarks; their actions and presence initiate profound transformations in the protagonist and activate the sacred dimension of the narrative.

Thus, the film formed a holistic ritual structure, in which the physical, sacred, national, and personal were combined in a common act of visual resistance. It was not just a visualisation of history, but an initiation through images, an initiation into collective memory. The film "Dovbush" served both as a form of aesthetic gesture and an act of collective initiation: it transformed history into ritual, folklore, and cinematic myth, and the viewer into a participant in the symbolic transformation of the nation. Its cultural significance also lied in the fact that the film combined different levels of symbolism: the physicality of the hero, the archetypes of sacrifice and betrayal, female images as guides, and the space of the Carpathians, which models the geography of national memory, acting as a mediator between the past and the present. This approach opened up a new plane of understanding Ukrainian cinema not as a genre product, but as a visual action aimed at constructing postcolonial identity through the body, space, gesture, and symbol. Prospects for further research lie in a deeper analysis of visual corporeality, ritual structure, and archetypal narratives in contemporary Ukrainian cinema in the context of war.

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None.

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Максим Демиденко

Аспірант

Харківська державна академія культури

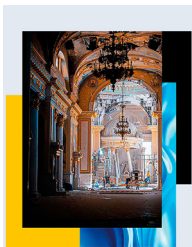
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**Архетип героя та семіотика визвольної боротьби у фільмі «Довбуш»
Олеся Саніна: між історичною алюзією та візуальним наративом**

Анотація. Актуалізація образу національного героя в умовах воєнного часу, інформаційного тиску та культурної деколонізації є одним із ключових викликів для сучасної української візуальної культури. Метою дослідження стало здійснення міждисциплінарного аналізу фільму «Довбуш» Олеся Саніна як культурного тексту, в якому формувалися нові моделі героїзму через семіотичні, естетичні та міфологічні засоби. Кінематограф дедалі частіше виступав як інструмент формування колективної ідентичності, де постать героя набувала значення не лише художнього образу, а й архетипічного маркера історичної трансформації. У статті було простежено, як візуальна мова фільму створювала складну систему знаків і символів, зокрема: тіло героя, кров, земля, хрест, вода та простір Карпат презентовано не лише як елементи художньої композиції, а як носії травматичного досвіду, колективної пам'яті та обрядових структур. Простір Карпат у фільмі постав не мальовничим тлом, а сакральним хронотопом, що формував духовну топографію оповіді й виступав активним учасником ритуальної трансформації героя. Розкрито, що структура фільму відповідала ритуальній логіці ініціації: зрада, втеча, посвята, жертва, смерть і воскресіння та формувала сакральну формулу наративу спротиву. Образ Олекси Довбуша постав як архетипічна фігура провідника, що інтегрував мотиви месника, мученика та культурного медіатора між травмою минулого і націєтворчою перспективою сучасності. Робота включала компаративний аналіз стрічки з іншими прикладами українського історичного кіно, що дозволило побачити спільну патерновану модель формування візуального наративу національного спротиву. Окремо розглянуто фігуру жінки у фільмі як носія сакрального знання та колективної інтуїції. Публічна рецепція стрічки підтвердила її статус як національного екранного міфу. Практична цінність дослідження полягає у запропонованій моделі аналізу фільму як ритуального наративу, що може бути застосована у сфері культурології, кіноаналізу, memory studies та досліджень національної ідентичності в умовах війни

Ключові слова: національний міф; ритуальний наратив; візуальна мова; українське кіно; культурна пам'ять; символіка простору; постколоніальний дискурс



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Features of aesthetics in the development of ergonomic web products for users with disabilities

Abstract. The study discussed the need to create an inclusive digital environment, where web products should provide equal access for people with different abilities, combining visual appeal, ergonomics, and accessibility for a full user experience. The purpose of the study was to analyse key aesthetic principles and design solutions that ensured visual appeal, comfort, and full accessibility of web products for users with various types of disabilities. The main research findings indicated that the aesthetics of inclusive web products were shaped by a harmonious blend of visual appeal, functionality, and accessibility. The study emphasised the importance of utilising a clear structure, logical navigation, and understandable interface elements to facilitate interaction for users with diverse disabilities. Key aesthetic and ergonomic principles and techniques have been identified, the application of which ensured the creation of accessible content within the context of inclusive web design. The necessity of ensuring sufficient colour contrast, design adaptability to various devices, and support for alternative information perception methods had been established. It was determined that consideration of the needs of users with disabilities contributed to a positive aesthetic experience and enhanced the overall quality of the web product. It was found that the impact of emotional response and social inclusion were important criteria for evaluating inclusive web products. Research has shown that design that made users with disabilities feel respected and included significantly improved their overall interaction and perception experience. The practical significance lie in demonstrating how integrating aesthetics is ensuring accessibility and delivering high-quality user experiences, thereby shifting web development from mere technical compliance to an inclusive design approach

Keywords: inclusive design; harmony; digital products; visual-design solutions; ergonomic principles

INTRODUCTION

Web products are important for equal access, yet many remain inaccessible to users with disabilities. True inclusivity goes beyond technical standards, requiring attention to aesthetics and ergonomic design for a positive user experience. Implementation of ergonomic principles through a systematic approach from design to testing is essential for accessible web design. While adhering to standards such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (2025), was a good starting point, true ergonomics went beyond formal requirements and required a deep understanding

of user needs. The standard emphasised that aesthetics and ergonomics were complementary aspects, and discussed key principles that had aesthetic manifestations, such as simplicity and clarity.

Researchers V. Klym & Yu. Tarasenko (2022) conducted an analysis of requirements effective in both European countries and Ukraine regarding the creation of informational web portals with ensured accessibility for people with disabilities. The authors presented key aspects of major international documents that established

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standards and recommendations for website accessibility for individuals with limited capabilities. The problem of web accessibility shortcomings for people with disabilities was investigated by S. Saripalli (2019), where the researcher emphasised not only the importance of applying the best standards, but also the necessity of ensuring accessibility for everyone, regardless of moral considerations. J. Pihavaara (2020) presented an analysis of the problem of implementing accessibility products in the digital design environment. The researcher examined accessibility integration processes as a system, identified factors that facilitated or hindered the implementation of accessibility among designers in Germany, and analysed how these factors can interact with each other. J. Chmal *et al.* (2022) conducted a study on the application of ergonomic principles to e-commerce web applications, noting that their implementation significantly improved user experience, increased conversion, and ensured accessibility for a wider range of consumers, including people with special needs.

N. Alajarmeh (2022) focused on the accessibility of a number of public health websites represented in 25 different countries, with the aim of identifying common trends and unique challenges in this field. Researcher examined how various types of disabilities (visual, hearing, motor, cognitive) affected the perception of and interaction with digital interfaces, and identified the main principles of accessible design as a foundation for creating ergonomic and user-friendly web products. A. Miller (2024) analysed the impact of accessibility on the emotional perception and comfort of users with disabilities. It was emphasised that inclusive design not only expanded the product's audience, but also contributed to increased loyalty, self-esteem, and user satisfaction, demonstrating the social responsibility and high level of professionalism of developers. B. Arias-Badia *et al.* (2022) presented key stages of the development, implementation, and evaluation of accessible products and services, focusing on inclusive design, emphasising the importance of considering the needs of people with limited ability from the very beginning of the design process.

Scientists M.V.R. Leite *et al.* (2021) provided an analysis of the state of mobile accessibility from the perspective of developers and companies. Researchers focused on five key aspects, such as: awareness; level of knowledge about standards and tools for creating accessible interfaces; frequency and methods of integrating accessibility principles into development processes; main reasons that motivate or do not motivate developers to create accessible products; barriers. H. Afuzova (2021) analysed the place of higher education in the context of European values of diversity and inclusion. The researcher examined how the principles of inclusion were integrated into the educational policies and practices of European countries, focusing on the need to transform education systems to ensure equal opportunities for all learners. I. Radionova (2025) analysed inclusive digital transformation from the perspective of its political dimension. The researcher outlined how public policy and governance influence digitalisation processes to make them

accessible and consider the needs of all population groups. The research focused on the role of government in creating a legislative and institutional framework for inclusive digital services. The purpose of this study was to identify the features of aesthetics in the development of ergonomic web products for users with disabilities by analysing the relationship between aesthetics, ergonomics, and accessibility.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of the research was based on a comprehensive approach, encompassing the following methods: systemic, analytical, cultural and historical, biographical, and generalising. Systemic method allowed considering aesthetics and ergonomics not as static phenomena, but as dynamic, interconnected categories in constant development and interaction, especially in the context of changing needs of web users with disabilities and technological progress. This approach enabled the analysis of contradictions between conventional notions of aesthetics and accessibility requirements, identifying ways to harmoniously combine them. Through the integration of the presented methods, the research topic was defined, its conceptual framework was clarified, and the exposition of the material was logically structured.

Applying synthesis, key European biographical principles were combined with Ukrainian studies in the field of aesthetics. These approaches were adapted to the academic requirements of both Ukraine and Europe, and their concepts were applied within the discourse of art history (Web Content Accessibility..., 2025; International Disability Alliance, n.d.). This method allowed the research to become holistic and to integrate into the established system of humanities. The generalisation stage included a brief description of the results, main conclusions, and plans for future research. The study was based on leading approaches. The hermeneutical approach was applied in the investigation of meanings and significances that users with disabilities ascribe to the aesthetics and ergonomics of web products. This allowed moving beyond superficial analysis and delving into the subjective experience of interacting with digital space.

Interdisciplinarity allowed for the combination of scientific principles of ergonomics with artistic aspects in the development of web products for users with disabilities. This was not merely a merger of two different fields, but a synergistic approach that enabled the creation of solutions that were not only functional, but also aesthetically appealing and intuitively understandable. This was because ergonomics traditionally focuses on optimising the human-system interaction, ensuring convenience, efficiency, and safety. The analytical approach was based on a vast number of literary sources, including the most promising research on this topic. This allowed not only to gain a comprehensive understanding of the modern state of the problem, but also to identify key trends and gaps in existing knowledge. According to a systemic approach, the topic was investigated and the combination of various methods allowed reaching

innovative conclusions. This integrated approach helped to identify patterns, develop unique solutions, and formulate recommendations that hold not only scientific value, but also practical significance for the development of inclusive and aesthetically appealing web products.

The paper analysed the design projects of websites, such as: 1) Top disability websites. From the focus on disability team (n.d.); 2) Remember the milk (n.d.); 3) Mobile app for people with disabilities (Svirya, 2018); 4) International Disability Alliance (n.d.); 5) Disability Gateway (n.d.); 6) Asean Disability Forum (n.d.). These examples served as models for identifying and analysing key principles of inclusive design that combine aesthetic appeal with ergonomic functionality and accessibility for users with various types of disabilities. The analysis helped to: identify common features in visual design, such as high contrast, clear typography, and minimalist design, which contributed to easy perception of information; formulate practical recommendations for creating interfaces that were not only visually appealing, but also intuitive and convenient for everyone; confirm the importance of adhering to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (2025) standards as a basis for developing advanced and socially responsible web products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contemporary web environments are increasingly populated by products designed with integrated accessibility for people with disabilities. This process transformed cyberspace from a source of frustration and exclusion into an inclusive environment, opening new opportunities for education, employment, communication, and self-realisation. But excessive visual complexity can become an obstacle to conversion. When a page is overloaded with elements, the user experiences cognitive overload, which leads to confusion, loss of interest, and ultimately, to closing the site. Conversely, excessive simplicity can create the impression of insufficient information or low quality (Matveieva, 2022). Through the purposeful integration of accessibility, digital platforms became more than just tools; they serve as bridges that overcome physical and sensory barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all (Berdynskykh *et al.*, 2025). Design developed considering the needs of people with disabilities demonstrated respect and empathy. Research into

the theoretical and methodological foundations of digital accessibility was extremely relevant, as advanced technologies perform universal functions, which contributes to the development of an inclusive society (Davydenko, 2023). The application of aesthetic and ergonomic principles in contemporary web product development is becoming an indispensable part of creating a high-quality and universal digital experience that catered to the needs of every user. A. Pakki (2024) noted that modern digital transformations largely depend on the development of AI technologies and Internet services, which contribute to the development of an inclusive intellectual space for a wide range of users. The development of software focused on the needs of users with various types of disabilities is a key tool for reducing the digital divide. Touch screens, voice interfaces and other inclusive technologies play a key role in ensuring the accessibility of the Internet for users with various types of disabilities. J. Pihavaara (2020) stated that digital products developed with inclusive design in mind included: websites, web applications, mobile applications, software, games, and other digital tools. These can be further categorised based on their aesthetic principles as:

- visual harmony, which includes: colour palette, typography, composition and layout, shapes and lines, iconography and illustrations, space;
- interactive aesthetics, comprising: animations and transitions, microinteractions (small, but noticeable visual or auditory reactions to user actions, such as a button colour change on hover, or a confirmation sound), feedback (how quickly and smoothly the interface responded to user actions, creating a sense of control and connection);
- auditory aesthetics, including: sound effects, background music (if present);
- emotional aesthetics, encompassing: identity and personality, mood and atmosphere, symbolism;
- unique style and branding (reflecting the product's individuality through unique visual solutions that enhanced recognition and user trust).

One of the key aesthetic characteristics in the development of ergonomic web products for users with disabilities is clarity and simplicity. An aesthetically appealing interface for users with disabilities is often minimalist, free from unnecessary "visual clutter" (Fig. 1).

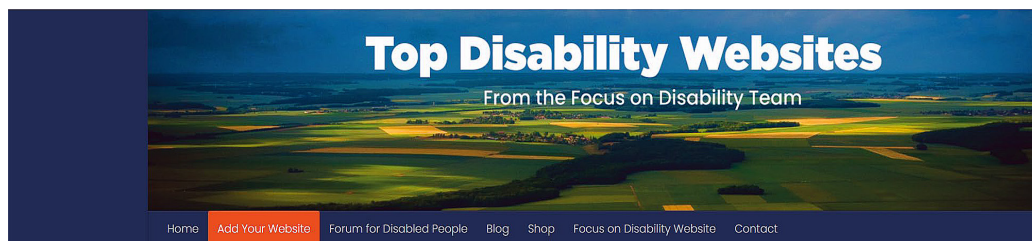


Figure 1. Website for people with disabilities

Source: Top disability websites. From the focus on disability team (n.d.)

A.J. King *et al.* (2019) emphasised that users form their first impressions of a web page almost immediately. This

first impression determines whether users will stay on the site and whether they will want to visit it again. There were

gaps in the study of how objective design characteristics (e.g., visual complexity) affected the subjective perception of a website and users' first impressions. This implied clearly delineated elements, a coherent information hierarchy, large and easily readable fonts, and sufficient contrast between text and background. For individuals with visual impairments, for instance, aesthetic contrast is not merely visually pleasing, but is vitally necessary for element distinction. The deliberate use of a balanced yet visually harmonious colour palette, compliant with accessibility standards Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (2025), transformed a technical requirement into an aesthetic component. Users' expectations of web design vary depending on the category of the site: they intuitively understand, what an online store, news portal, or educational platform should look like. Compared to university websites, which were often text-centric, e-commerce websites have a different visual structure. They display products in a grid format, contain minimal descriptive text, and offer users advanced search, filtering, and personalised recommendations. The web page's compliance with the user's desires regarding its visual style and structure make it highly prototypical, which positively influences perception and improved the user experience (Miniukovich & Figl, 2023). Furthermore, functional beauty served as another key element. Every design element, from buttons to navigation menus, must not only appear appealing, but also be intuitively understandable and convenient to use. For users with motor impairments, large interactive areas, ample spacing between elements, and predictable interface behaviour create an aesthetic of ease of interaction. This beauty manifested as convenience and the absence of frustration, enabling the user to achieve their desired goal effortlessly.

According to S. Saripalli (2019), the aesthetics of adaptability and flexibility are critically important. A web product must adapt to various assistive technologies (screen readers, magnifiers, voice control) without losing its visual or functional integrity. This implies that aesthetics are not limited to the visual layer alone, but extend to the semantic structure of the code, the application of ARIA attributes, and the ability to customise the interface to individual user needs (e.g., font size adjustment, colour scheme modification). When an interface empowers the user to control their experience, it fosters a sense of comfort and personal

belonging, which constitutes a deeply aesthetic experience. The combination of ergonomic and aesthetic principles in the creation of contemporary web products has endowed them with the ability to be not only visually appealing, but also maximally user-friendly and intuitive. The main ergonomic principles in developing web products for users with disabilities include: perceivability, operability, understandability, robustness, and adaptability (Chmal *et al.*, 2022).

During 2015–2025, a distinguishing feature of aesthetic solutions in web design has been the integration of artistic style elements such as minimalism, modern, retro, flash, and elegant, which enriched the user's visual experience, imbuing the web space with unique character and depth. For instance, the website presented in Figure 2 (a), exhibits a minimalist design. Ergonomic ease of information readability for visually impaired individuals was achieved through the use of humanist typefaces with low-contrast letter elements. The absence of excessive details in the designed website provided elegance and modernity, emphasising purity and functionality. The generous amount of “white space” surrounding all elements created a sense of “airiness”, making the page visually lighter, reducing cognitive load, and allowing the eye to rest. This underscored a focus on content rather than decorative elements. Furthermore, the lack of unnecessary details on the page, specifically complex background images, shadows, gradients, or excessive visual effects, indicated that all elements served a specific function. Figure 2 (b) also showcased the design of an inclusive mobile application utilising elements in a modern style, which possessed a vibrant visual identity. One can observe the dominant saturated, contrasting colours – fuchsia and blue – which created an energetic, dynamic mood and attract attention. The choice of colours also contributed to better visibility of elements for users with visual impairments. Large, clear fonts, with an emphasis on the word “ABLE”, highlighted the product's main idea and ensured easy information comprehension. The use of varying font sizes and colours created hierarchy and visual emphasis. The visual solutions accommodated the needs of people with disabilities – contrast, large elements, clear hierarchy, and a positive mood – contributing to broader audience engagement. Ergonomic aspects included clear information hierarchy, readability and contrast, and simplicity of navigation.



Figure 2. Design of digital products for people with disabilities

Note: a – minimalist design of the application “Remember the milk” by the company “37signals”; b – design of a mobile inclusive application using elements of the modern style

Source: A. Svirya (2018), Remember the milk (n.d.)

The next example is the identity design developed for the Asean Disability Forum (n.d.), which featured elements derived from Modernist and Postmodernist design principles, specifically characterised by abstraction and symbolism. The developed identity is not a realistic representation but uses abstract forms to convey an idea. The elements employed are characteristic of Futurism, where movement is a central idea of the works. Thus, as can be seen in Figure 3 (a), the use of repetitive lines and blurred forms emphasised a sense of motion and speed. Simplified, abstract human forms make the identity understandable and ergonomic for a broad audience, regardless of cultural differences. This avoided specific depictions that might be exclusive. Furthermore, Figure 3 (b) presented the logo for

a disability portal, designed with elements characteristic of geometric abstraction. Its abstract form avoided literalism, allowing it to be universal and not tied to a specific image. The use of contrasting combinations (red-green, blue-red) is often associated with positive emotions, hope, and cheerfulness. The contrast between the geometric shapes of the emblem and the softer, more rounded font in the “Disability Gateway” name creates an interesting visual dialogue. Ergonomic features include the use of a clear, modern sans-serif font. Such fonts are typically easy to read on screens and at small sizes. The absence of excessive decorative elements facilitates quick word recognition. The logo contains no small, complex details that could be lost, when scaled down, which is a crucial ergonomic requirement for digital media.



Figure 3. Interface designed with web accessibility in mind

Note: a – website design developed using elements of the artistic style “Futurism”; b – webpage is designed using elements of the artistic style inherent in geometric abstractionism

Source: International Disability Alliance (n.d.), Disability Gateway (n.d.), Asean Disability Forum (n.d.)

According to S. Kurt (2018), despite its transformative potential, the web space primarily serves those, who were already integrated into it, thereby creating significant barriers, especially in the realm of online education, for segments of the population facing various obstacles. In exploring this issue, the systemic causes hindering accessibility and outlined pathways for implementing effective solutions were identified. To achieve a complete and enjoyable user experience, researchers K. Fernandes *et al.* (2023) pointed out the need to integrate inclusive aesthetics into contemporary digital products and services. This involved not only functional accessibility, but also visual appeal and ergonomics, ensuring equal usability for all users, including people with permanent, temporary or situational limitations. It concerns creating visually appealing and intuitive interfaces that are pleasant to use, not just functional. Aesthetic decisions, such as font choices, colours, and layout, should consider the needs of different user groups without sacrificing beauty and contemporary design.

Y. Inal *et al.* (2019) analysed the awareness of user experience professionals (UX professionals) in Turkey regarding the concept of web accessibility. Integrating aesthetics and cognitive comfort into technical accessibility is the next logical step for UX professionals. Instead of viewing accessibility as a burdensome list of technical requirements, it should be perceived as an important component of overall ergonomics and design quality. Such an approach will help to move from perceiving accessibility as a mandatory, but burdensome set of rules to understanding it as an integral part of a comprehensive and enjoyable user experience. Accessible design required

clear visual elements, and this is the basis of aesthetics that facilitated effective communication. For example, using sufficient colour contrast not only helped people with visual impairments, but also made the design more professional and legible for all users, especially on mobile devices or in bright lighting. On the other hand, good, intuitive design minimised cognitive load. If the site navigation was logical, the icons were clear, and the information was well-structured, users do not have to spend unnecessary effort to find the information they need. This approach made the experience comfortable not only for people with cognitive impairments, but also for any user, who values their time.

The study by M. Skierniewska & K. Skroban (2018) was a significant external research in the problem of software accessibility. However, analysis, which was based mainly on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (2025) standards, can be expanded to integrate ergonomic approaches, allowing to move from purely technical aspects to a greater understanding of usability and efficiency. The study of how product design affected the user's cognitive processes, such as perception, memory, and decision-making. An accessible interface should minimise cognitive load. For example, overly complex navigation, illogical structure, or confusing terminology can create significant difficulties for the elderly or people with cognitive impairments, even if they technically meet the WCAG requirements. Assessing how the design interacted with the user's physical capabilities was especially important for users with motor impairments. Software should provide the possibility of effective use using various assistive

technologies and alternative input methods. B. Vollenwyder *et al.* (2019) examined key beliefs and perceptions that influenced developers and designers' willingness to consider web accessibility in their work. The researchers used the Theory of Reasoned Action to examine the attitudes, social norms, and behavioural controls that determined the intention to adhere to accessibility principles.

The conducted analysis of key aesthetic principles and solutions determined that the implementation of various aesthetic approaches in the development of ergonomic web products for people with disabilities significantly enhanced their effectiveness and memorability. The application of elements of artistic styles in creating the interface of web products was not a direct copying or imitation, but rather an interpretation of the key principles, aesthetic directions, and visual motifs inherent in certain art movements. This was explained by the fact that a visually well-thought-out and pleasant interface was not only better remembered, but also encourages repeated use, creating a positive user experience. Therefore, aesthetics in the development of ergonomic web products for users with disabilities extended beyond the traditional understanding of visual appeal. It encompassed clarity, simplicity, functional beauty, adaptability, and emotional satisfaction. This was design that combined visual harmony with impeccable accessibility, creating not just a convenient, but also an aesthetically perfect experience that allowed every user to fully interact with the digital world. This is a true manifestation of inclusive and humane design.

CONCLUSIONS

Aesthetics in design for people with disabilities was not secondary, but an integral part of ergonomics and accessibility. Well-thought-out aesthetics (colours, typography, composition) directly influenced the ease of perception, navigation, and overall comfort of use, which formed the basis of ergonomic design. In the course of the study, the specific influence of aesthetic practices used in creating a contemporary ergonomic web environment for users with disabilities was identified. The study revealed that

aesthetic and ergonomic principles were closely interconnected, forming a coherent foundation for effective design. Their combined application ensured an optimal balance between functionality and visual appeal, which directly influenced the quality of user experience and enhanced the efficiency of developed solutions.

As a result of the study, it was determined that aesthetic decisions must be subordinated to the goal of maximum readability and clarity. This included a well-thought-out high contrast between text and background, colour combinations that considered the various impairments of users with disabilities. It also involved the use of humanist sans-serif fonts, adequate text size, and the minimisation of visual "noise". Aesthetics should not hinder functionality, but enhance it. Bright, yet not overly aggressive colours can create a positive impression and be associated with inclusivity. Aesthetic decisions must be adaptive, so that the product looks good and functions properly on various devices (desktops, tablets, smartphones) and with different assistive technologies. Well-thought-out aesthetics, combined with ergonomics complemented by functionality, was the key to creating effective, attractive, and user-friendly solutions. Key promising areas for further research are the development of quantitative metrics and models that will provide an objective assessment of the relationship between accessibility, aesthetics, and ergonomics. The proposed models, which will include specialised scales and questionnaires, will allow not only measuring technical compliance with standards, but also assessing visual appeal and overall user satisfaction, helping to identify the most effective design solutions.

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Особливості естетики при розробці ергономічних вебпродуктів для користувачів з інвалідністю

Анотація. У дослідженні розглянуто необхідність створення інклюзивного цифрового середовища, у якому вебпродукти мають забезпечувати рівний доступ для людей з різними можливостями, поєднуючи візуальну привабливість, ергономіку та доступність для повного користувацького досвіду. Метою дослідження було проаналізувати ключові естетичні принципи та дизайнерські рішення, які забезпечують візуальну привабливість, комфорт і повну доступність вебпродуктів для користувачів із різними типами інвалідності. Основні результати дослідження засвідчили, що естетика інклюзивних вебпродуктів формується гармонійним поєднанням візуальної привабливості, функціональності та доступності. У дослідженні наголошено на важливості використання чіткої структури, логічної навігації та зрозумілих інтерфейсних елементів для полегшення взаємодії користувачів із різними видами інвалідності. Визначено ключові естетичні та ергономічні принципи й прийоми, застосування яких забезпечує створення доступного контенту в контексті інклюзивного вебдизайну. Встановлено необхідність забезпечення достатнього контрасту кольорів, адаптивності дизайну до різних пристроїв і підтримки альтернативних способів сприйняття інформації. З'ясовано, що врахування потреб користувачів з інвалідністю сприяє позитивному естетичному досвіду та підвищує загальну якість вебпродукту. Виявлено, що вплив емоційної реакції та соціальної інклюзії є важливими критеріями оцінювання інклюзивних вебпродуктів. Дослідження показало, що дизайн, який змушує користувачів з інвалідністю відчувати повагу й залученість, суттєво покращує їхню загальну взаємодію та сприйняття. Практичне значення полягає у демонстрації того, як інтеграція естетики забезпечує доступність і надає високоякісний користувацький досвід, зміщуючи веброзробку від суто технічної відповідності до інклюзивного дизайнерського підходу.

Ключові слова: інклюзивний дизайн; гармонія; цифрові продукти; візуально-дизайнерські рішення; ергономічні принципи

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