

Scientists: Chinese art and mass audience in the 21st century

Krasnoyarsk art historians have analysed the ways in which contemporary Chinese artists popularized national fine art and made it accessible to the world public in the postmodern era.



The researchers studied *Odyssey* by Cai Guoqiang, *Coloured Vases* by Ai Weiwei, and *Last Supper* by Zeng Fanzhi and identified artistic methods which reveal Chinese cultural secrets to global community and help fit Chinese art into the global artistic paradigm.

'I proceeded from the hypothesis that modern postmodern art of the late 20th — early 21st centuries and the language of the visual arts of this period saturated with conventional universal symbols, contributed to the situation when the previously mysterious and incomprehensible foundations of the national culture of the East became lucid at the international level. This trend is plainly manifested in Chinese art which used to be regarded as mysterious and exotic to the representatives of Western culture for centuries,' said **Aleksandra Sitnikova**, assistant professor at the Department of Culturology and Art History, SibFU.



From the 90s of the twentieth century to the present, Asian art, in particular Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, has been taking leading positions on the global art scene. South Korea is in the van of cinematography (for example, in 2019, *Parasite* by Bong Joon-ho won the Golden Palm award). Japan is known as the birthplace of manga, Japanese comics popular all around the world, as well as for its artists and writers. Yayoi Kusama, one of the most expensive artists in the world, became well-known to the general public in the 2000s when the largest museums in the world sought to get her artworks. Takashi Murakami made a pop-brand out of the community tragedy when the atomic bombs had fallen on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. China, in turn, boasts of a significant number of art masters who are the elite of the contemporary fine arts, with Cai Guoqiang, Ai Weiwei, and Zeng Fanzhi standing out.

'Having analysed the artistic images of three artworks by these postmodern artists, I can elicit the main artistic methods by which they make the unique cultural codes of China understandable to the global world and the mass audience. The first method implies the effectiveness, flamboyancy and immensity of the art pieces. A painting should captivate the audience. The second method is using unique artistic techniques and materials (i. e. gunpowder). Each artist has their own trick. The third method is a provocation (for example, destruction) conjuring the emotional reaction of the viewer (resent the act of vandalism committed by the artist or support their revolutionary gesture). All the three artworks represent the synthesis of the traditional culture and modern cultural technologies and the combination of two national and cultural codes (for example, mixing Western and Eastern visual images). Thanks to these means, a person of one culture is able to understand a person of the other culture, because the unknown and incomprehensible has been translated into their visual language,' summed up **Ms Sitnikova**.

Top photo: Coca-Cola Vase by Ai Weiwei, 2014. Painted Han dynasty vase (06 BC-220 AD). Private Collection

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