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CONTEMPORARY URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY AS A SUBJECT OF STUDY OF THE DISCIPLINE «ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY» (BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF ICITD IAPM)

Abstract. The purpose of the article is to analyze samples of photographs of 2020–2025 of an urban nature created by students in the process of mastering the discipline «Art of Photography». **Research methods.** The article uses a comprehensive approach that includes traditional general scientific – analytical, historiographical, comparative, as well as art history and cultural methods, special – figurative-stylistic and compositional analysis. A comprehensive research approach allows us to determine the main iconographic and iconological features of photographs created in the conditions of urban expeditions, as well as to analyze in detail the genre of urban photography, which allows us to clarify the creative approaches of the young student audience to its creation. **Research results.** The analysis shows that photographs of an urban nature created by students have a fairly wide range of content areas, various compositional and figurative solutions. Some of them focus on architectural motifs, others on scenes of urban life, on fragments of everyday events of the ordinary course of life. Different interpretations of the theme of urban photography are a manifestation of the students' individual perception of both the educational task and the surrounding world. In this sequence, the young person's desire for independent creativity as an awareness of himself as an individual, a member of the community, and Ukrainian society as a whole is traced. Stylistically, student photographs of 2020–2025 demonstrate a connection with the repertoire of screen arts. **Conclusions.** Based on the analyzed photographic works of student youth, it has been proven that the interpretation of images in photographs is closely related to the creative understanding and disclosure of the theme of the city in its socio-historical progress. The results obtained contribute to the further study of this genre of photographs, including the analysis of the sources of their origin and the specifics that distinguish them from photographs of other genres.

Key words: urban studies, urban space, photography as an art form, Ukrainian photography, academic discipline, creative practice.

СУЧАСНА УРБАНІСТИЧНА ФОТОГРАФІЯ ЯК ПРЕДМЕТ ВИВЧЕННЯ ДИСЦИПЛІНИ «МИСТЕЦТВО ФОТОГРАФІЇ» (НА ПРИКЛАДІ ІКІТД МАУП)

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Анотація. *Мета статті* – проаналізувати візріці фотографій 2020–2025 рр. урбаністичного характеру, створені студентами у процесі опанування дисципліни «Мистецтво фотографії». *Методи дослідження.* У статті використано комплексний підхід, який охоплює традиційні загальнонаукові методи – аналітичний, історіографічний, компаративний, а також мистецтвознавчий

та культурологічний, спеціальні — образно-стилістичний та композиційного аналізу. Комплексний дослідницький підхід дає змогу визначити головні іконографічні та іконологічні особливості фотографій, створені в умовах міських експедицій, а також детально проаналізувати жанр урбаністичної фотографії, що допомагає з'ясувати творчі підходи молодшої студентської аудиторії до її створення.

Результати дослідження. Проведений аналіз свідчить, що фотографії урбаністичного характеру, створені студентами, мають досить широке коло змістовних спрямувань, різноманітні композиційні та образні вирішення. Деякі з них зосереджені на архітектурних мотивах, інші — на сценах міського життя, на побутових фрагментах. Різні інтерпретації тематики урбаністичної фотографії є виявом індивідуального сприйняття студентами як навчального завдання, так і навколишнього світу. У такій послідовності простежується прагнення молодшої людини до самостійної творчості як усвідомлення себе особистістю, членом громади, українського суспільства загалом. Стилістично студентські фотографії 2020–2025 рр. демонструють зв'язок з репертуаром екранних мистецтв. **Висновки.** На основі проаналізованих студентських фототворів доведено, що інтерпретація зображень на світлинах тісно пов'язана з творчим осмисленням та розкриттям теми міста у її суспільно-історичному поступі. Отримані результати сприяють подальшому вивченню даного жанру фотографій, включно з аналізом джерел їхнього виникнення та специфікою, відмінною від фотографій інших жанрів.

Ключові слова: урбаністика, міський простір, фотографія як вид мистецтва, українська фотографія, навчальна дисципліна, творча практика.

Problem statement. Modern urban photography, which is the art of reflecting urban space and its structures, is able to reproduce the whole variety of public, political, military and life events, which makes it especially popular and widespread in our time. Being one of the important parts of the academic discipline «Art of Photography», which is taught in a number of Ukrainian universities, urban photography arouses considerable interest among students and encourages them to active practice. A fairly significant number of urban photographs created by modern students is the basis for studying and analyzing such photographs from the point of view of interpreting urban space, forming a certain worldview, developing ideas about the surrounding world, which outlines the range of issues in the specified field of research.

Analysis of recent publications. In recent decades, when Ukrainian photography has increasingly become a topic of scientific consideration, the topic of urban photography has become particularly relevant.

Certain issues on this issue, in particular, were the subject of analysis by art historian T. Pavlova, who carried it out on a combination of theoretical foundations with a detailed subject review, having begun the practice of studying modern photography back in the 90s of the 20th century.

Urban photography was also addressed by K. Radchenko, the founder of the international festival Odessa//Batumi Photo Days, who explores current Ukrainian photography in the context of visual identity [1, p. 4–6].

Samples of urban photography were also analyzed by H. Safronova, the author of the dissertation «Photobook as an Object of Art Design: History, Typology, Design Technologies» (2021),

dedicated to the consideration of documentary and artistic photography. H. Safronova also paid attention to techniques, among which she considered the effect of amateur photography, which is currently actively involved in both foreign and domestic photographers [2, p. 44–46].

The system of artistic techniques of photography using the example of the work of the American photographer Philip Halsman was examined by art critic R. Mykhaylov [3], which focused on portraits of prominent figures in science, art, and business, recognized as unsurpassed examples. Some of them have an urbanistic interpretation.

Examples of urban photography in Ukraine are provided by the publication «Photography in Ukraine. 1991–2021», which covers the history of Ukrainian photography in the last thirty years [4], and «Ukrainian Photography» (2022), which is a catalog of contemporary photography created to present the country at international events in Paris and Berlin [5].

A significant role in collecting the base of urban photography is played by the work of Borys Mykhaylov from Kharkiv, whose series Case History, «Unfinished Dissertation», and «Yesterday's Sandwich» recreate post-Soviet reality, collections of his photographs in the collections of MoMA, Tate, and Centre Pompidou, and Yevgeny Pavlov, whose works are characterized by irony, social criticism, and experiment (Total Photography series) [6]; Kyiv documentarian Viktor Marushchenko [7], teacher, founder of the School of Photography, author of series about the Chernobyl zone and Donbas; Sasha Kurmaz, whose photographs, often combined with forms of contemporary art, reflect life in the 2000s in urban space [8].

These sources form an idea of Ukrainian urban photography, part of which is also student

photography, the study of which contributes to a deeper understanding of the visual urbanism of Ukraine.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the artistic features of modern urban photography in the reproduction of students, participants of the course «Art of Photography» of the ICITD IAPM; in particular, the formation of their ideas about the urban landscape, its fixation in various artistic ways and techniques.

Presentation of the main material. Urban photography is a genre of photography that is able to convey not only the views of the city, but also human life through them. Urban photography, which is based on the image of architectural structures or city streets, captures the pulse of urban life, capturing its atmosphere, mood, rhythm. In the 21st century, this genre of photography, which reflects the complex transformations of cities and the impact of urbanization on humans, is gaining global popularity due to its special relevance. Starting with architectural photography, photographers gradually began to capture not only structures, but also social phenomena: gentrification, depressive phenomena, life on the margins, urban loneliness. The works of Andreas Gursky, Juan Cardon, Lorenzo Victor, the French author known as JR, expanded the boundaries of the genre of urban photography, enriching it compositionally, for example, by moving away from classical symmetry, and giving it extra-new forms, including as performative interventions [9, p. 12–13].

Significant changes occurred with the advent of digital technologies. For example, drones equipped with cameras made it possible to observe the city from a height; computer technology provided the effect of seeing through filters; interfaces transport the viewer into augmented reality. Social networks, which are a product of the computerization of our lives, in particular Instagram, gave impetus to the emergence of a new wave of urban photographers, forming the visual language of a new generation.

In Ukraine, urban photography began to develop actively after the Revolution of Dignity. In cities that became a space for change, photographers took a new look at the Soviet legacy, abandoned industrial buildings, modernism and brutalism of architecture, which began to be perceived not only as a visual background, but also as a political and cultural text. Since 2014, and especially after 2022, the documentation of destruction, bomb shelters, street graffiti that appeared in response to the war have become part of the visual language. Photos of Mariupol, Bucha,

Irpin, Kharkiv have become a document of time, evidence of tragedy and the power of recovery. Modern urban photography often plays the role of criticism. It raises topics of spatial injustice, inequality, homelessness, pollution, transport chaos. Through the lens, artists convey the essence of a city that can be hostile or friendly to humans, viable, growing, or unviable, collapsing. In this context, photography becomes a tool of activism: through exhibitions, photo books, projects in street space, it involves the viewer in discussions, calls for change.

One of the important indicators of urbanistic photography is the interest in it from young people, in particular students of creative higher education institutions, students of the discipline «Art of Photography». Despite its small distribution in the programs of universities and educational institutions, this subject is information content that significantly broadens the worldview, adds professional training to any profession, and ensures comprehensive development.

To complete the tasks, ICITD students in the process of presenting a course of lectures on photography as a type of visual art are offered to master an illustrated glossary in the system of basic terminology and genres of photographic art, and practical tasks with the application of technical and aesthetic principles based on the understanding of exposure, focus, composition, genre diversity of photography, including social, military, performance, nude, selfie, topography; shooting techniques (daguerreotype, albumen prints), as well as modern digital methods, software (through a brief overview of the most widely used modern mobile and PC versions of photo editors) [10].

The results of students mastering practical skills through awareness of the concepts of composition, genre, style were photographs of an urban nature of 2nd year students. The tasks were performed in several stages, with practical skills of finding light, composition, and placement of the main accents aimed at reflecting «street life».

According to the results of the work, the photographs of Kotkova Tetyana (2nd year of ICITD), Tymoshenko Polina (2nd year of ICITD), Samsonov Nazar (2nd year of ICITD) were successful.

Thus, the photo work by Kotkova Tetyana (Fig. 1) is a shot of an architectural object in perspective, the composition of which is built on increasing the emphasis on architectural elements «distorted» in perspective. The chosen angle is not accidental – the author of the photo aimed to show the scale and grandeur of the architectural

object — a building in the center of Kyiv near the courtyard on Chykalenko Street. In the post-processing of the photo, the technique of monochrome coloring was used to emphasize contrasts and make the image more «graphic». On the other hand, the work, interesting in terms of image and composition, would have benefited significantly if it had received such an element as dynamics: it lacks a «breath of urbanism», which, to a certain extent, deprives the photo of life.

Dynamics as a photographic technique is used in the following work. The photo by Tymoshenko Polina (Fig. 2) shows one of the streets of the



Fig. 1. T. Kotkova. Second year student. IAPM. 2024.
[Author's photo]



Fig. 2. P. Tymoshenko. Second year student. IAPM. 2024.
[Author's photo]

center of Kyiv, where cars and people are actively moving during the day. The usual everyday motif is composed in an interesting sequence of conventional and real actions. At the same time, the main compositional and semantic accent, which gives the photo the main contrasts and makes it special, is the road signs, which compositionally «move» across the frame from the left to the right, changing the scale and showing planning. The work is successful and to a greater extent corresponds to the tasks set by the teacher.

Other techniques — rhythm and contrast — were used by student Nazar Samsonov (Fig. 3). The figurative and compositional basis of the work here is residential buildings, namely the balconies of high-rise buildings, which are «seeded» with satellite dishes. The obvious rhythm, built by the repetition of cymbals, successfully emphasizes the «vibe» of our everyday life in contrast. The author, having chosen the title for the photo «Hearing Everyone», puts a touch of irony in it, which gives additional expressiveness to the plot.

In general, the analysis of student photographs reflects the prevalence of the following compositional techniques: accentuation of individual



Fig. 3. N. Samsonov. Second year student. IAPM. 2024.
[Author's photo]

elements to highlight the central plot; choice of black and white for greater contrast and delimitation of forms in the composition. As shortcomings, it is worth noting the rather monotonous angles, which, in our opinion, are due to the lack of experience of the young artist and will be overcome in most cases in the future.

Conclusions. The importance of analyzing the works of young photo artists is due to their role as «catalysts» of the renewal of Ukrainian photography: through the «optics» of the perception of modernity, it is possible to predict the future of Ukrainian photography. In the conditions of the turbulent reality that Ukraine is experiencing, it is the youth who are the first to react to the changes that they capture with their cameras. Their approach to photography, free from the burden of «canonical aesthetics», demonstrates personal sincerity, creativity, digital intuition, and photographs – an understanding of their own identity.

The works of students and young artists are a kind of visual markers of the era, in which the personal and the collective are combined. Witnesses and fixers of meanings, their photographs shape the future of the visual history of Ukraine.

The analysis of the artistic and compositional features of photographs by students, authors of modern urban photography, has shown the fact of mastering, through the discipline «Art of Photography», the skills of creating urban photography, urban landscape through traditional and new artistic techniques and techniques.

The results of the study are important for improving the curriculum of photography in creative educational institutions, where the discipline «Art of Photography» contributes to the development of creative thinking of students. The results of the study are important for the development of cultural initiatives and projects related to photourbanism.

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