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O. Olenina

O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy, Kharkiv, Ukraine

O. Protsenko

M. Ye. Zhukovskiy National Aerospace University "Kharkiv Aviation Institute", Kharkiv, Ukraine

Yu. Pichuhina

O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy, Kharkiv, Ukraine

THE STATUS OF ART IN THE MODERN DIGITAL SPACE

O. Olenina, O. Protsenko, Yu. Pichuhina. The status of art in the modern digital space

The article examines the status of art in the digital space that is based on the study of technologically determined changes in the three main vectors of the system: production, consumption and circulation of art. In this context, the research task related to the definition of aspects of transformation and diversification of the art system in the formation of digital culture of modern society is relevant and scientifically determined, which ultimately gives us an understanding of the status of art in modern digital space. The multifaceted nature of the proposed research topic foresees the use of approaches of a number of humanities disciplines, first of all art history, culturology, social communications and philosophy. The authors found out how the process of artistic creation, the nature of artistic communication, the means of presentation and promotion of an artistic product, and the mechanisms of its consumption are changing in the conditions of society digitalization.

Keywords: *art and technology, art communication, network creativity, digital art, virtual reality, blockchain, art market.*

O. Оленіна, О. Проценко, Ю. Пічугіна. Статус мистецтва в сучасному цифровому просторі

Мета статті — визначити статус мистецтва в контексті формування сучасного цифрового простору. Об'єктом дослідження є візуальне мистецтво. Предмет — трансформація та диверсифікація системи образотворчого мистецтва на тлі впровадження в неї сучасних цифрових технологій. Актуальність статті полягає в необхідності осмислення змін, які відбулися в системі образотворчого мистецтва в умовах формування діджитальної культури сучасного суспільства, що в кінцевому результаті надасть нам розуміння статусу мистецтва в сучасному цифровому просторі.

Методологія теоретичного аналізу базується на використанні підходів цілого ряду гуманітарних дисциплін, перш за все мистецтвознавства, культурології, соціальних комунікацій і філософії. Задіяно:

- інформаційний підхід, цінність якого полягає в тому, що він реалізує метод наукового пізнання об'єктів та процесів. Згідно з ним виявляються і аналізуються найбільш характерні інформаційні аспекти, що визначають їх функціонування і розвиток, як-от у нашому дослідженні система мистецтва актуалізується в контексті викликів цифрового суспільства;
- структуралізм, установки якого з виявлення та аналізу структур — символічних цілісностей, що зберігають стійкість при перетвореннях і трансформаціях, якнайкраще можуть бути застосовані в дослідженні цифрового мистецтва;
- соціокультурний підхід, що дозволив уникнути фактографічного опису на користь багатofакторного підходу до вивчення предмету дослідження, обґрунтувати закономірності становлення і функціонування цифрового простору в аспекті його соціальної й культурної складових, підкреслити значення явища, що вивчається, у процесі збереження й трансляції сучасної культури.

Результати. Дослідження статусу мистецтва в цифровому просторі ґрунтується на вивченні технологічно детермінованих змін за трьома основними векторами діяльності системи: виробництво, споживання та обіг мистецтва. У статті проаналізовано більше десяти прикладів синергії мистецтва і сучасних технологій, що допомогло вивчити предмет дослідження в різних об'єктивних аспектах. Визначено зміни, що спостерігаються в процесі художнього виробництва, котрі охарактеризовано як творчий експеримент аматорів

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та професіоналів на тлі розвитку цифрових технологій. Описано нові споживацькі можливості та переваги цифрових технологій у культурному секторі. Розглянуто приклади, які демонструють реакцію традиційного артринку на технологічні впровадження та засвідчують, що з появою блокчейну починається новий виток в історії художнього ринку.

Наукова новизна дослідження полягає в тому, що вперше висвітлюється питання визначення статусу мистецтва в сучасному цифровому просторі в контексті аналізу змін, які відбулися в системі образотворчого мистецтва на трьох ключових рівнях – виробництво, споживання та обіг.

Практичне значення статті полягає в тому, що проведений науковий аналіз дозволяє виявити актуальні тенденції у світовій галузі образотворчого мистецтва.

Ключові слова: *мистецтво та технології, арткомунікація, мережева творчість, цифрове мистецтво, віртуальна реальність, блокчейн, артринок.*

Introduction. Contemporary art as a result of the historical development of society, due to cultural and civilizational processes, is characterized by a wide range of innovations that change its specificity. In the Postmodern era, such innovations were the processes of art culture virtualization, which not only change all the basic elements of the normative complex of classical art, but simulate the basic components of artistic practices of Modern, such as work, style, aesthetic value and others. Thus, instead of the traditional categories of “mimesis” and “reflection”, which were used in classical aesthetics to analyze artistic processes, the category “simulacra” (from the French simulacra – resemblance, appearance) appears as a phantom substitution of reality and the creation of a virtual image. The subject is not used under the proposed circumstances through fantasy or memories of personal experience, evoking certain emotions and feelings to create an image. In this context, art does not imitate reality (according to the mimetic principle), but is forged under it (simulates). In contrast to the imitation that supports the belief in the existence of a pre-existing “organic” reality, the simulation in reverse order “denaturalizes” the reality itself, revealing the mechanism responsible for its generation

(Zizek, 1997). A new cultural paradigm begins the search for new art forms. Virtual reality forms not only a new aesthetic (i.e., sensory) experience, which is based on the real human’s experience of fictional, simulated actions or events, but also a new institutional space – artistic styles and schools, art presentation and art organization (for example, there are virtual museums, exhibitions, theaters, etc.), the art market is transformed.

The purpose of the paper. In this context, the research task related to the definition of aspects of transformation and diversification of the art system in the formation of digital culture of modern society is relevant and scientifically determined, which will ultimately give us an understanding of the status of art in modern digital space. In this case, the digital space, that is an open Oecumene (the term introduced into culturological use by U. Hannerz (1989), thus defining the space of constant cultural interactions, interpenetration of cultures and exchange of cultural experiences), penetrates into the real dimension, where there is a cross-cultural dialogue, in the context of which new cultural universals are born, which characterize the spiritual state of modern society. In this case, the creative works of digital origin are a large semiotic complex, each of the studies of which brings us closer to the scientific statement of the culture of the new era.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The research hypothesis is based on the fact that digital space is the result of productive activities of the information society, and therefore, trying to include it in cultural and art discourses, takes into account the social foundations of its formation, which are fundamentally represented in the works of theorists N. Luhmann (2000), A. Toffler (1984), D. Bell (1976), M. McLuhan (1962), M. Castells (2002), A. Touraine (1971), U. Eco (1996) and many others. Basing on their concepts, the first key features of the culture of the new era are outlined: demassification, globalization, syncretism, clip art and mosaicism.

One of the fundamental works in which all modern digital experience in art is systematized is “Digital art” by Christiane Paul (2015). Here the author presents the history of digital art from its appearance in the 1980s to the present day,

and predicts future changes; considers the impact of digital space on traditional art forms, as well as explores the possibility of digital art to gain official status. The work of Melissa Gronlund is devoted to the issues of contemporary art in the context of the formation of digital culture of society (Gronlund, 2017). Oliver Grau considers the problems of collecting, storing and exhibiting works of digital art in museums in his work (Grau, 2017). L. Machulin studies the role of NFT in the development of digital art and its significance for art in general (Machulin, 2022). The article by Melnyk Y.V. (2018) comprehensively outlines the possibilities of blockchain in the art market. The article by Pichuhina Yu. (2021) *determines the effectiveness of blockchain technologies in relation to economic and managerial processes in the modern art industry*. In general, the issue of the deployment of digital space in all spheres of public life is now widely discussed in scientific and professional circles. Our study, in its turn, is focused on tracking how art is generally manifested in the digital space (Fig. 1).

The methodology. The multifaceted nature of the proposed research topic presupposes the use of approaches of a number of humanities disciplines, first of all art history, culturology, social communications and philosophy. Among them we note the information approach. Its value lies in the fact that it implements the method of scientific knowledge of objects and processes, according to which, first of all, the most characteristic information aspects are identified and analyzed that determine their functioning and development, as in our study, the art system is updated in context challenges of the digital society. Important for the study is structuralism, the settings of which for the

identification and analysis of structures – symbolic entities that remain stable in transformations and transformations, can in the best way be used in the study of digital art. Socio-cultural approach avoids factual description in favor of a multifactorial approach to the study of the subject, to justify the formation and functioning of the digital space in terms of its social and cultural components, emphasize the importance of the phenomenon under study in the preservation and translation of modern culture.

The results

2.1 Deployment of digital space in the landscape of culture and art

The relationship between culture and technology is increasingly becoming the subject of humanitarian research, which is quite natural, because technology is part of culture, the concept of which is broader. Moreover, in the analysis of these relations it is impossible to avoid considering the information-communicative evolution, because information and communication are the driving force of technological development of society, during which more and more conditions for their functioning – the so called “media”. Thus, the fundamental changes in society are inextricably linked with those historical types of communication that gradually dominate the concrete-historical space-time continuum. Modern information and communication society opens the prospect of cognition on the basis of information technology, interactive rules, communicative rationality and will. Of particular interest in this regard is the problem of determining the status of art in the context of digital space, which is currently an indicator of a new type of culture.

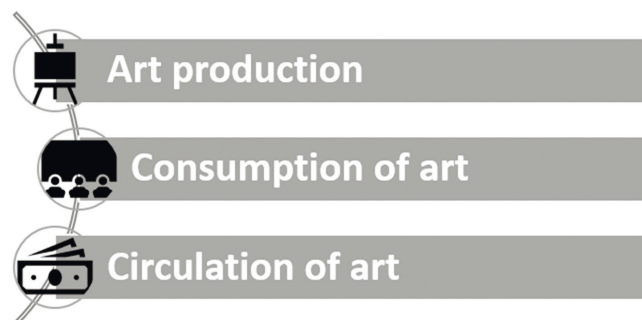


Fig. 1. The digital transformation of the art sphere

Recently, there have been radical changes in the attitude to art and understanding of its status, which is due to the fundamental and essential transformations that have taken place in society under the influence of acceleration and communication revolutions. As a result, a new information-communicative digital space was formed, which, in contrast to the material, can be considered figurative and symbolic (Olenina, 2010).

Modern communication is, first of all, the exchange of symbols and the continuous process of creating images. Art, as the most important channel of image transmission, along with other cultural phenomena, is in line with globalization processes and is transformed in this new reality.

On the one hand, as noted by E. Toffler (1984), the various artifacts that are replicated in the mass media are not unique, they are inherently short-lived, they appear in response to the same fleeting needs and with them disappear, and they are replaced by new “disposable” art schools, styles, methods.

On the other hand, in our opinion, the desire to accelerate the flow of information and its compression leads not only to the increased use of symbolic methods of art to create a variety of messages, but also to the fact that in this new reality art plays the role of “signal amplifier” which distinguishes a particular information product from the general set of many other messages and draws attention to it through a variety of means of expression.

A qualitatively new component of the modern digital information and communication space is virtual reality. Communication, which has always been symbolic, because it was mediated by various signs and symbols, at the level of virtual reality is a single sign-symbolic system, filled with models and simulations of objective reality – “simulacra”. If traditional mass media influence the mass consciousness, then virtual reality influences the individual, forming new communicative-artistic practices and new techniques of art representation. In cyberspace, art plays, above all, the role of “tool”, the primary task of which is to attract attention in the communicative process, and only the secondary one – the disclosure of the creative potential

of a personality. This type of communication is characterized by aesthetic (sensual), but not artistic component. Artistic quality is inferior to temporary (one-time) emotions and feelings that cause, for example, mass works of network amateurs. In fact, virtual reality has revived folk art at a new technological level.

In a general sense, creativity is a human activity aimed at creating fundamentally new spiritual or material values. Since creative self-realization is one of the key needs of a human, which distinguishes him from other living beings, there is a constant search for new forms of its embodiment. Today’s Internet technologies, offering an alternative territory for creative experiment, have formed a new socio-cultural type of person: active, initiative, not indifferent, sincere, bold and creative. Responding to important events, wanting to share their thoughts, impressions or witty remarks, thus constructing their media image, regular users of the network produce new content every day in the form of photos, videos, comments, memes, etc., the totality of which testifies to the cultural phenomenon (Olenina, Pichuhina, 2018). Basing on the basic definition of creativity, we will try to specify the concept of network creativity, which we propose to understand as a new way of creative realization of a human, based on the use of digital technologies, focused on creating new spiritual or material values, fixed as a creator and constructing his image on the Internet. In a certain sense, network art has become the forefront of modern culture.

In a virtual environment, a person is constantly in the process of communication, including artistic one, but in contrast to traditional artistic communication, which is mediated by the screen, stage, exposition plane and provides distance, spatial-temporal constraints, where the viewer is the subject who perceives aesthetic information from the object – a work of art, virtual reality eliminates the distance and spatial-temporal constraints, requiring full immersion and turning a person into an active participant, i.e. the object of communication, which is involved in creating a work and becomes an integral part of it anywhere and anytime (Olenina, 2016).

In virtual space, art not only becomes dialogical (as opposed to the usual monologue), but also becomes a collective action, involving in the artistic process of creating a “different reality”, a large number of people from artists to computer technocrats, etc. In addition, virtual reality allows the simultaneous impact on almost all human senses (sight, hearing, touch), using the language of different arts.

Artistic communication, which has always been not just a transfer of information or exchange of it, but, above all, the establishment of spiritual connections, in virtual reality becomes a mean of expanding the communicative field, a mean of obtaining new emotional states and gaining new aesthetic experience, i.e. art begins to perform a new role of “stimulus” as a “food supplement”, which enhances the taste of the information product, makes it attractive, easy to perceive and encourages further consumption.

Analysis of the features of the virtual type of communication and its impact on art, allows us to say that if an industrial society with its mass culture, replicated through traditional mass media, turned an artistic product into a mass consumption, which in the past was a privilege of intellectually and culturally developed elite, the information society with its computer-network communication channels, digital technologies, virtual potentials and cultural globalization has made the art product the subject of mass production, which in the past was the privilege of professionals. Thus, a new type of information and communication relations has become a factor in the transformation of consumer culture, changing it from a culture of passive consumption in favor of a culture of active participation (participatory culture), characterized by conscious user involvement in socio-cultural production, the results of which are amateur art products. At the same time, the quality of an artistic product not only deteriorates significantly, but does not matter at all, which is facilitated by the postmodernist tendency to abandon the understanding of art as a higher level of skill.

In the digital space, the role of the artist is changing, which is not to create and present ideas, experiences, values, meanings, but to provoke the

feelings of consumers of the artistic product, which often becomes a participant in the creative act. The object of modern art is a stimulus, an initiator of aesthetic experiences, rather than a repository of aesthetic information. Moreover, in modern conditions, the artist’s creative results are expected to have the highest level of “manufacturability” in their implementation, which significantly distinguishes them from the achievements of network folklore.

2.2 Art production in the digital space

Actual artists often give their audience the opportunity to come into direct contact with art objects or to participate directly in their art projects, where the main role is played by the “spectator”, if it can still be called like that. As an example, let’s recall the famous ambitious project of German artist Adam Bartholl called “Dead Drops”. He walled up flash drives in the walls of houses around the world, which originally contained a single file with a description of the project. The point was that anyone could attach their laptop to a flash drive and download or upload any file. What people actually exchanged remains unknown, but it is known that the artist managed to implement the idea of creating an offline network of free exchange of information between strangers. By the way, Adam Bartholl is famous for such creative experiments on the border of digital and physical spaces.

When it comes to various forms of digital art, it should be noted that the final art product is often completely devoid of any physical forms. Its realization takes place exclusively in the digital space, which at the same time indicates the dematerialization of digital art outside it. A clear demonstration of this statement is the recent case of the public destruction of the painting by British street artist Banksy “Morons (White)”. In March 2021, “Injective Protocol” blockchain company went live on Twitter, and a company representative burned the satirical work of Banksy, that ridicules collectors who spend a lot of money on art auctions. But this was not an act of vandalism. Seconds later, Banksy’s work was converted into a Non-Fungible Token (NFT), which was auctioned the same day and sold four times more expensive than the previous price. Thus, one of the 500 copies of

the original stopped to exist physically, becoming a purely virtual asset in the form of a unique digital code that identifies the work.

In addition, today in art practice there are many examples using virtual, augmented or mixed reality, the functioning of which is also outlined within the digital space. Thus, in 2018, Ukrainian artist Roman Minin for the birthday of Kharkiv developed a virtual sculpture “Love”, which users can see over the famous building of the city, an industrial monument, through a special application “Minin Art” (developer – Dev-Pro), pointing the camera of his smartphone at it. In 2020, the American artist KAWS thus created the project “Expanded holiday”, which consists of 12 huge virtual sculptures, which can be seen through a special application Acute Art on a smartphone in some of the largest cities in the world.

In general, today thousands of artists around the world are experimenting with new technologies, above we have listed only some well-known projects. An important theoretical question is how the process of artistic production is currently taking place. Returning to the above examples, we can see that in each of them, in addition to the artist’s personality, there is another participant – the technical implementer. In the case of Banksy, although the artist did not personally initiate it, it is Injective Protocol that did it, Roman Minin collaborated with Dev-Pro, and KAWS – with Acute Art. In the context of digital space, an artistic idea is embodied through complex computer functions and algorithms, but a rare artist has sufficient knowledge and experience to do so. That is, the artistic process, which until recently has been mostly an individual matter, IT specialists are involved, and now we can say that art production acquires a design nature of work. Exceptions may be computer graphics created with 2D and 3D graphics editors, such as Adobe Photoshop, Paint, Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, and more. Today, the majority of young artists are fluent in these programs, so do not need any mediators, working in this direction.

2.3 Consumption of art in the digital space

Today we are already witnessing the active emergence of virtual art museums and exhibitions, virtual conservatories, theaters and more. The

COVID-19 pandemic was the impetus for the mass virtual representation of cultural institutions and events. This difficult period became, in a certain sense, a bifurcation point on the trajectory of the unfolding of the digital institutional space of art.

Thus, in 2020, due to the global quarantine, the Louvre launched a virtual section on its official website (<https://www.louvre.fr/en/online-tours#tabs>), which presents most of the exhibits in the collection, even those stored in archives. The exhibits are mainly presented in the form of digitized illustrations with a corresponding description of them. But there are also several halls of the museum, which can be visited virtually. This is a three-dimensional reproduction of the museum’s exhibition space, which is immersed by the online user, having the opportunity to see the exhibition from the first person: he can move freely around the hall, approach the exhibits, view them in 360 degrees, open information about them, i.e., simulate a full museum visit.

In this context, we find particularly interesting the example of an international project from Google called “Google Arts & Culture”, which was launched on February 1, 2011. It is an online platform through which the public can access high-definition images of works of art stored in the museums – partners of the initiative, including 1200 world famous museums, including 7 Ukrainian ones. “Google Arts & Culture” allows users to take virtual tours of museum galleries, learn about physical and contextual information about artwork, and create their own virtual collections (*Google Arts & Culture*). The possibilities of the virtual platform are not limited to the exposition of museum collections. In 2016, a new unique Art Selfie feature was added to the Google Arts & Culture mobile application, making it one of the most popular free apps in Google Android and Apple stores. Art Selfie allows users to compare selfies with 70 000 works by artists and sculptors, using face recognition algorithms (*Dodatok Arts & Culture znaide vash portret v muzei. Chy ni*, 2018). In order to find your twin among the world’s masterpieces, you need to go to the application and take a selfie. After processing, the application produces several versions of pictures, the image of which may resemble a user’s selfie, and offers to

read them in more detail. In 2020, the “Google Arts & Culture” project launched the Virtual Reality Tours section, which offers 3D tours of the halls of world-famous museums and galleries, as well as virtual tours of world travel routes. And if the user has a VR-headset for smartphones from Google, he gets an additional opportunity to visit the simulated art space. In 2021, the “Google Arts & Culture” platform introduced another extension – an interactive game “Puzzle Party”, during which the player is invited to choose an online puzzle with the image of one of the world-famous paintings. The game features about 100 puzzle pictures, along with detailed information about them.

Of course, in most of these forms, virtual reality as an original aesthetic phenomenon does not yet arise in its entirety, but is already actively preparing the recipient for the transition to a new aesthetic experience, which is realized in another, different from real life, environment. This is an experience that a person has never encountered before, and it is natural that he will strive for completely new adequate methods of its study, comprehension, description. Unlike classical art, which is based on the mimetic principle, in virtual reality a person does not depict, express or contemplate anything, he actually lives and acts according to certain rules of the game. Virtual reality claims the role of reality itself; it can be even more real than the one in which the recipient is materially. In fact, virtual reality becomes for a person of the XXI century a special quasi-spiritual environment in which he feels himself a fully material being in the material world.

For example, the VR project of the sculptor Christian Lemmerz’s “La Apparizione” with the participation of “Khora Contemporary” company, which debuted at the Venice Biennale in 2017, recreated the author’s sculpture of Jesus Christ. But this is not just a repetition of a physical art object in virtual reality. This project symbolizes a personal meeting of the viewer with the Son of God, without unnecessary attendance and a sense of the material world. It should be noted that the idea of the project is not a spiritual encounter between the viewer and Jesus, but aimed at revealing his physical suffering during the crucifixion. Under the cover of the starry sky, which forms a common

space for the viewer and the object of observation, the Golden Jesus suffers from pain, breathes heavily, his veins swell and burst, his wounds rupture, and he flows in gold (Indrisek, 2017). The terrified spectator, in his turn, has the opportunity to get as close as possible to Jesus, to go around him, to look in detail from all sides, and most importantly – to gain experience, the materialization of which is impossible in the physical world.

Artistic and aesthetic culture of the XX century (avant-garde, modernism, postmodernism) was already characterized by swaying and destruction of traditional means of artistic language of the classics and classical aesthetic consciousness, an attempt to find and form new principles, techniques, methods of non-utilitarian art based on fundamentally polysemantic settings of some suggestive activity-reality, the formation of fundamentally new paradigms of creativity and perception on the basis of a new “changed” consciousness, in which the dominant position is occupied by polysemantic audiovisual, tactile-haptic (from the Greek. *“hapto”* – grasp, touch) structures (e.g., VR-gloves, which give the skin of the fingers a very realistic feeling of the surfaces that a person touches in the virtual world, and objects), focused on the functioning of the “new corporeality”, including the virtual one. Thus, today the digital space forms new communicative and artistic practices and new techniques of representation, which already today largely determine our aesthetic experience.

2.4 Circulation of art in the digital space

In the context of this topic, it is interesting to trace how the art market, after all, thanks to modern digital technologies, has acquired clear and transparent mechanisms for the implementation of its functionality. One such technology that has expanded the possibilities of modern art is a blockchain. The key innovative qualities of the blockchain register are the way it is stored – in different, independent places, as well as free access to it, which ensures absolute transparency of any transactions recorded in the register. It would seem what can be in common between such a complex technological system and art, but art itself was one of the first to use the blockchain to its advantage.

Currently, the largest art markets (Western Europe, the USA, China) fully enjoy the benefits of blockchain, including: transparent formation of provenance, i.e. in the blockchain register can be entered confirmed information about the entire history of the work – from the first purchase to each resale, participation in exhibitions, trade fairs, catalogs, publications, private and public collections; “virtual notary”, which provides confirmation of decisions regarding property rights and other rights online; “digital recorder” of copyright – allows you to record in the blockchain the time of creation, copyright and ownership of the artist for his work; guarantee of authenticity through “smart labeling” and “synthetic DNA”, i.e. works of art authorized by the artist after completion can be appropriately labeled, and data on this labeling will be recorded in the blockchain and will follow the work throughout its existence; “smart contracts” between the seller and the buyer (the seller receives the funds only after the buyer receives the purchased product by automating the transaction in the blockchain system); “smart contracts” are integrated into the auctions (after the auction can automatically take effect several conditions: writing off of funds from the buyer, the accrual of commissions to the auction house and other payments), etc. (Melnik, 2018, 49–56).

Of particular importance is the potential of blockchain technology for digital art, in which it was previously impossible to create a shortage of work, as the Internet allowed to copy any image instantly and for free, which caused much controversy over the authorship and use. Let's return to the example with Banksy's painting “Morons (White)”. The work of art was converted to NFT after its destruction. This is a unique non-interchangeable entry in the blockchain registry that cannot be forged, split or replaced. This technology creates the ideal conditions for modern art forms: it is the fixation of ownership of any unique digital object, while the capabilities of the blockchain are not limited to the field of visual art. So, in March 2021, American DJ 3LAU converted his music album to NFT and sold it in limited editions.

If the conducting of such “transactions” became widely known only this year, then we know about

the interpenetration of NFT and art since 2017. The result of this collaboration was the first blockchain game CryptoKitties, which was released on November 28, 2017 thanks to the developers of the Canadian company “AxiomZen”. The essence of the game is to buy, breed, collect and sell virtual kittens, each of which has its own unique 256-bit genome, which in the offspring gives 4 billion possible genetic variations, so each born kitten is unique. In this case, each participant in the game receives an NFT, which confirms ownership of the virtual kitten. The first crypto kittens were painted by a team of artists who tried to make the product attractive to a wide audience, so kittens have a wide range of emotions and characters – from the cutest (smiling and fluffy) to freaks (with crazy eyes and clicks). And the value of subsequent offspring, as in the fine arts, is determined by their rarity, social relevance, personal values and aesthetic preferences.

In February 2021, a digital work of art was exhibited at Christie's auction for the first time in the history of the traditional art market. The digital collage by artist Mike Winkelmann “Everydays: The first 5000 Days” sold for \$ 69.3 million (Beeple's opus, 2021). The buyer, as in the previous examples, received a unique NFT with an encrypted signature of the artist. The history of Christie's Auction House dates back to 1766, it is an organization with a long tradition of work in the art market, and today we have the opportunity to observe how modern digital space, creating conditions for new artistic directions, offers new solutions for the full functioning of these directions, even within such canonical structures as auction houses.

An equally significant event in the art market was the sale of a mixed reality art object at Christie's auction. This is a digital performance of “The Life” by artist Marina Abramovic, which premiered in 2019 at the Serpentine Gallery (London). This is a 19-minute recording with a 3D hologram of the artist, which can be seen through a special device – “Magic Leap One” VR glasses. Unlike virtual reality, a mixed reality art project allows the viewer to stay in physical space, which in the context of gallery space creates the illusion of a real performance, the viewer sees each other

and the room in which the action takes place. In this case, the buyer receives a record of the performance and equipment for its reproduction, personally certified by the author.

At the art market there are also other ways to sell digital works. Some digital artists are looking for individual models of interaction with customers. For example, the world-famous net-art artist Rafael Rozendaal sells his art sites by selling the domain name that houses the artist's work. At the same time, the new owner, along with the domain name, receives a contractual obligation to update the domain annually and constantly maintain the availability of work online.

In the context of the circulation of art in the digital space, it is also important to note the emergence of a large number of online art market places. First of all, these are auction houses, the online conducting of which during quarantine has become quite a common thing. But even before quarantine, auction houses were represented in the digital space, offering on the pages of their sites full information about future auctions and lots for sale, which potential buyers can see in digital format and evaluate before the auction.

In addition, there are specialized Internet platforms and mobile applications. Typically, such art marketplaces support several features: exhibition, trade and creation of virtual art collections of users. One such example is the online platform V-Art (<https://v-art.digital/>), focused on the popularization and promotion of digital art. Here you are invited to sign up as an artist, gallery owner, dealer, curator or collector for a clear future interaction. The artist creates digital art assets and demonstrates them in his account, art connoisseurs get acquainted with their works, galleries and dealers create digital galleries or virtual halls for exhibitions and sales, and investors receive price confirmation, sales history and purchase guarantee (*We boost digital art market*, 2020). Thus, the advantages of such digital platforms are, firstly, the possible coverage of all subjects of the art market within the narrow framework of a well-structured space of the platform, and secondly, it is an easy and mostly free access to such type of resources.

There is also another aspect of the functioning of the art system in the digital space, related to the

rethinking of information and management roles in the modern art market. We are talking about the potential of network social media in the formation of the information field around the artist's work, its promotion, the formation of the artist's brand.

Many of the famous figures in the art field maintain their pages on social networks. From the point of view of the artist's promotion, a page on a social network is an optimal opportunity to tell about himself, his creativity, to communicate with users who are interested in art, to find fans. This can be especially relevant for young artists. Effective promotion of the artist through social networks occurs only when the content is constantly updated, new texts, photos and videos are added, outrageous actions or regular polls are conducted, which would attract the attention of the audience that agrees or disagrees with the artist's thoughts or actions. Usually, artists have profiles in all key social networks – Twitter, Instagram, Facebook. On Twitter, where the maximum number of characters in a message is limited to 280 printed characters, artists are more likely to post information related to exhibition announcements, news about themselves, as well as their observations and philosophical reflections. In Instagram, the specifics of which determine the visual range of messages, artists often post photos of their work, workflow in the workshop, events, as well as private photos. Facebook, in its turn, allows you to publish more detailed material, for example, it can be comments on the latest exhibition with attached images or videos, or a repost of a TV report with the artist, and so on. The principle of promotion on social networks is quite simple – if the account is not updated with new records for a long period of time, it is considered forgotten. Thus, an artist who aims to become visible in today's aggressive competitive environment of the art market should appear in the feed of his subscribers almost every day. The digital paradigm of modern society today dictates new laws and rules of functioning in its conditions, the main of which proclaims: "if you are not on the Internet, then you do not exist."

3 Concluding Remarks

The study of the potential of digital space and its integration into the art system brought us closer

to finding changes in the status of art in modern conditions, which were recorded at three levels of the system: art production, art consumption and art circulation. The study analyzed more than ten examples of the synergy of art and modern technologies, which helped to characterize the subject of research in various objective aspects (Fig. 2 & Fig. 3).

First of all, in the context of digital convergence, there are changes in the process of artistic production. The first wave of change is the emergence of a new, widely available alternative territory for creative experimentation. During the deployment of the digital space, the culture of mass consumption grew into a culture of mass production, against which the phenomenon of

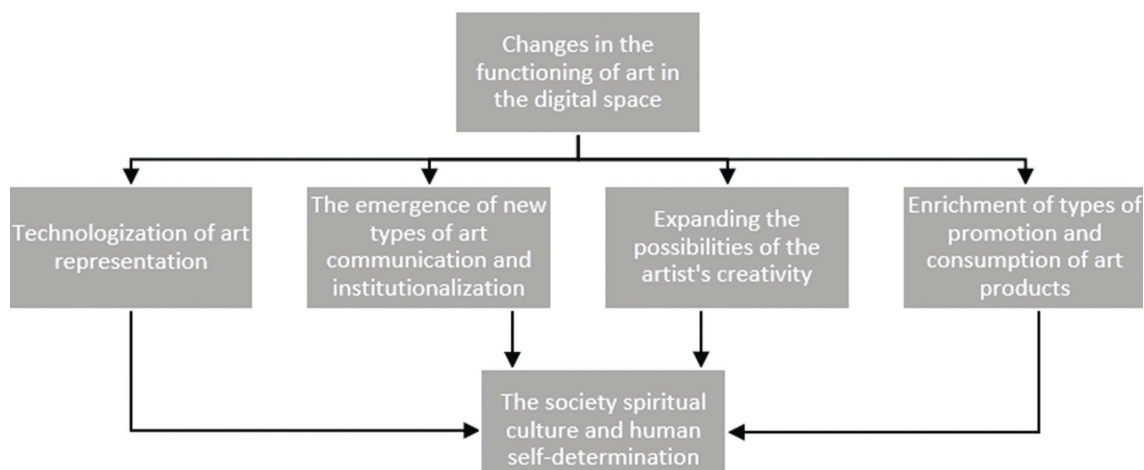


Fig. 2. Functions of art in the digital space



Fig. 3. Features of digital art

network folklore was formed. The second wave is determined by the rapidly growing interest in digital technology in professional art circles. Digital space creates unique working conditions for the artist. Being not limited by time, space or materials, he is able to realize any of his fantasies in virtual reality. But in this case, the process of artistic production is joined by another participant – a team of IT specialists, whose task is to provide technical support in the implementation of artistic design. Thus, in digital art production there are changes in the nature of work – from individual to project one.

The consumer of art also felt significant digital transformations. Digital museum collections, virtual tours of exhibition halls, online platforms and mobile applications, combining exhibitions of all the most famous museums and galleries in the world, online art market places with the ability to create and replenish their virtual collections and much more – all this made art tremendously accessible and convenient for the consumer. Currently, in parallel with the canonical institutional structure of art, its virtual counterpart is growing, which with its unique advantages conquers new consumer audiences of art. Moreover, speaking of digital art, but not about digitized one, we state the formation of a new aesthetic paradigm of virtual reality, joining which the consumer becomes a participant in the events of the work of visual art.

It was especially interesting to see how the art market reacted to new social challenges. Digital art in all its manifestations for a long time remained outside the market relations, due to the lack of mechanisms to regulate its implementation and confirmation of authorship. But with the emergence of blockchain technology a new round in the history of the art market begins. Blockchain has created the conditions for transparent and secure operations in the traditional art market, and at the same time, by converting works of digital art into NFT, has made dematerialized art an object of investment attractiveness.

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