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## Image of Siberia in Artist Aleksander Surikov's Works

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*This article is devoted to research in works of Siberian artist, Aleksandr Surikov (born in Irkutsk, lives and works in Krasnoyarsk). It contains reference to creative biography of the author: academic background and key exhibition projects.*

*The article represents main artistic traditions, which the painter followed: Dadaism, futurism, primitive paintings, Art Brut, new British Art and some others. The artist's creative works are considered in fusion with poetic, pictorial and graphic pieces of his. Research in the painter's creative works resulted in distinguishing main creative techniques and principles forming the ground for the majority of his works.*

*The image of Siberia is not expressly revealed in Aleksandr Surikov's works: you will not see landscapes (the genre traditionally favoured by Siberian authors) as well as other "direct" indicators to the local flavour of his pieces of art. The Siberian finds its way in Surikov's works through a modern meaning. Thus, the image of a modern Siberia is decoded in the article, while the works themselves are interpreted from the point how a modern Siberian artist reconsiders the word around him. In Aleksandr Surikov's works, Siberia is not indicative mountains, texture forests or mighty characters, it is layouts of a Siberian city infrastructure, distinctive city markers, it is global processes holding in the modern world, where a distinct differentiation between a local and universal flavour is gradually dissolving, where a Siberian artists can start a dialogue with any modern world artist on the Internet-Museum.*

*In the article, researching into the image of Siberia is focused on studying two main series in his creative works: the "New city" series devoted to testing the aesthetic potential of a Siberian city under construction in the beginning of the 21st century, and the "Surikov 7" series, which is a modern interpretation of Vasilii Ivanovich Surikov's masterpieces (classic of Siberian painting).*

*Keywords: Krasnoyarsk kraj painting, image of Siberia, image of Siberia in arts, modern art, Aleksandr Surikov, visual poetry, image of Krasnoyarsk in art.*

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### Introduction

The curriculum vitae of Aleksandr Surikov, a relatively young artist, is really representative: he gained the most

comprehensive artistic education since he completed his studies in Irkutsk Art School, then graduated from the Art Institute in the city of Krasnoyarsk, undertook apprenticeship

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in workshops of Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Arts. Working mostly in Siberia, Aleksandr Surikov is actively engaged into international artistic events: he was a member of art-residence for Russian artists in the city of Shargorod, New York galleries welcomed some of his exhibitions, his personal expositions were arranged in Spain and Switzerland; he participated in group projects in China, Poland, Belgium, Italy, France and other countries. The geography of his exhibitions in Russia is also very wide: Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Moscow, Ufa, Kemerovo and etc. Not to mention the fact that his exhibitions are periodically conducted in Krasnoyarsk, while his works starting from 2005 are taken to the main project of an International Krasnoyarsk Museum biennale.

If to try to describe a number of works created as of today by the author it is worth mentioning that Aleksandr Surikov is working mostly as a painter and a graphic artist sometimes referring to creating artistic objects, collages, continuously experimenting with techniques and possibilities to expand his usage of materials. His graduation work in the Siberian branch of Russian Academy of Arts was a graphic series "Montpensier Circus", where he experimented with traditions of popular print and naïve art. Further, at one of his first exhibitions he represented "Surikov 7" series conducting a dialogue with his famous Siberian namesake artist, when he interpreted Vasilii Surikov's masterpieces, such as "Boyarynya Morozova", "Morning of Streltsy's execution", "March of Suvorov through the Alps" and others. Continuing to distinguish whole series in the author's works it is worth to mention an experimental series named "Noviy Gorog" (New city), which is thematically followed by "Probka" (Traffic Jam) and "Miofibril's zhyopa" series, while "Litsa Ulits" (Faces of streets) is an artistic research into the urban aesthetics.

"ББ" series (hard and soft signs in the Russian language) can be distinguished among the numerous works of the painter since it is formed with pieces manifesting the visual poetry.

As of today, articles regarding Aleksandr Surikov's works and himself can be found in a number of publications, however, the information contained there does not represent the facts widely enough; moreover, the political essays genre followed there does not allow stating scientific issues arising in relation to the artist's paintings. The case is that many paintings of Aleksandr Surikov are obviously some codes for an observer for the latter to decode these messages on the basis of their imagination and poetic empathy. The artist started his creative career not only as a painter but as a poet as well, a couple of his futuristic and Dadaistic poetry collections were published (in Velimir Khlebnokov's style). Later, the artist synthesized both beginnings into a phenomenon, which he called "visual poetry". Thus, one can be confident referring to A. Surikov's works as to enigmatic rebuses, solution of which can take a great number of pages. This article appears to open up scientific art research of the painter's works, which can increase in their number in the nearest future.

### **Point of view**

The authors of the article devoted this section to a comprehensive research of the artists' works that could provide for the merge of the analysis of the artistic traditions corpus (synthesized or revealed in their own autonomy in A. Surikov's works) and defining the ground artistic principles and techniques used by the painter to create his works. Supposedly, such an "open-cut" of the artist's aesthetic cogitation shall allow further decoding (analysis) of a particular pieces of the author. In particular, works allowing to reveal the image of Siberia in the area of visual texts are drawn attention to.

*Artistic traditions**in the artist's creative works*

With the view to conduct a research into A.Surikov's artistic language it is necessary to define those "words" – artistic traditions – forming this language. It is essential to specify how the artist's works use and reflect such traditions as futuristic poetry, primitivism, Art Brut, abstractionism, and new British art. Indeed, the abovementioned list of artistic traditions employed by the author in his works is not complete, but these are the key ones.

Futuristic poetry and Dadaism poetry. As it has been mentioned in the introductory part, apart from painting and graphic works A.Surikov is creating poetry as well. Similarly to the approach taken by futurists and dadaists when in their poems a word lost its determining value and the meaning of almost every letter was fore grounded, in A.Surikov's poems words are visually separated from one another and are formed in the logics contradicting the average vocabulary, in addition, the meaning of sentences is structured on the basis of a rebus when a reader always has to gradually guess the logics of an ordinary speech by way of poetic feeling of a poetic speech sounds. Below you will find an example of such a poem named "Тако-диноко" (Tako-dinoko):

как у  
слонятки хобта  
не було отрадяся  
как у  
солунацэ золота  
лучеигл тьма

так у  
дождя мокро  
так у  
глазов точки  
так  
изумрудно в мореп

так у  
тебя я у

тако-диноко-плоско  
тако-диноко-сладко  
вижуков полоски  
на у меня заплатке

как у  
быка в дуэлье  
острые роги памяти  
у  
рукояти сабель  
капель объятя

как у  
жирафы шейма  
перегибнулась вовсе  
так у  
радуги гроздя  
сходят из осень

ветер и дворник площадь  
мусор метут хрустящий  
тако-диноко-плоско  
тако-диноко-слаще

The tradition of breaking the standard language logics refers to dadaism and futurism poetic searches of the painter and is transferred by him to painting. Many of his works of art are transferred into rebuses with broken logics for the visual imagery not to mention that many works contain some text intrusions. Justly, such searches resulted in A.Surikov's turning to creating the visual poetry. For the sake of exemplifying the author's visual and poetic works some of his pieces require detailed analysis.

In some of his works the text is directly involved in the image and stylized as a rebus, thus, it is a literal embodiment of a visual poetry (Fig. 1). This artistic line has got the most complete



Fig. 1. Flag. 2004. Color linocut. 60 x 55 sm

image in A. Surikov's series of works titled "ЪЪ" (hard and soft signs). Here it is necessary to quote the concept for this project written by the painter himself: "Ъ" and "Ь" are two letters in the Russian alphabet which can only be read with eyes but cannot be pronounced with a mouth. The same approach is observed in painting which is actually a visual art and is actually "dumb" in the sense that it does not pronounce a word. However, to perceive it one would need mind and heart apart from the eyes. And then, if an observer is open for understanding the painting gives birth to words and a Miracle of visual poetry emerges" (Fig. 2). Another option presupposes that a text is an unobvious component of a piece when an object includes a number of incomprehensible objects, which are again revealed only when approached as a visual text that can be read according to the

poetry laws. Artistic project, triptych "Д.Н.О.", cab taken as an example (Fig. 3). Within the framework of the project household and wastes objects were forming something of a tercet kind on the unfolded carton boxes. Thus, forming a verse, a stick, a slipper and a hole generate a visual haiku, when satori can be reached through feeling only rather than through reasoned considerations. The result is a visual periphrasis of Akhmatova's famous "I wish you were aware from what stray matter, Springs poetry to prosper without shame".

Another tradition defining creative works of Aleksandr Surikov is the tradition of a hard-edge painting going up to Kazimir Malevich, Pieter Cornelis "Piet" Mondriaan, partially Hans Hartung and other artists. If we take the futuristic tradition it harmonically intrudes into an artist's

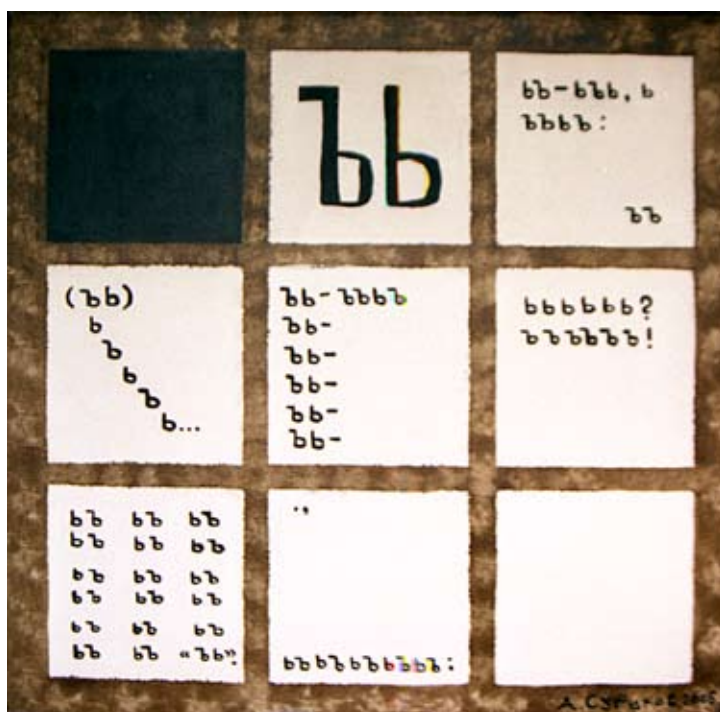


Fig. 2. Ъб. 2005. Oil on canvas. 65 x 65 sm



Fig. 3. "O", in the series of "Д.Н.О." 2011. mixed media. 190 x 230 sm

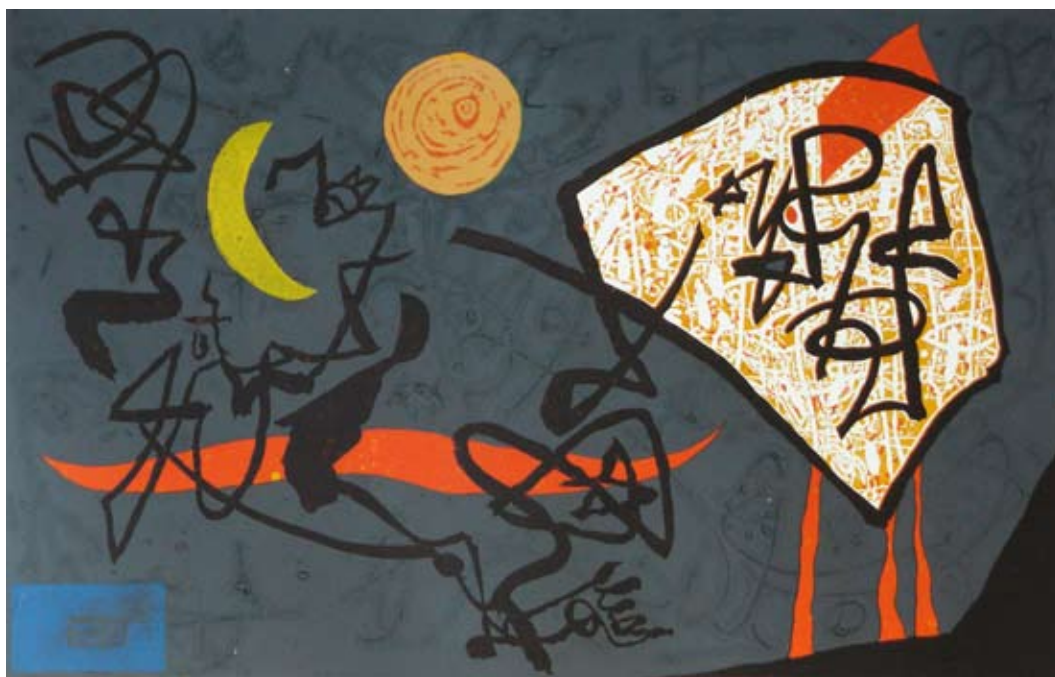


Fig. 4. Hieroglyph. Color linocut

works and is continued in their creative life, while in case of the hard-edge painting an artist is forming a kind of a dialogue with the latter. Indeed, on the one hand an artists inherits one of the hard-edge principles: in painting, a sign content does not fill the plot or characters, since the lines and colours are framing a semantic system. This principle is applicable to A. Surikov's works, a bright example of the latter can be his graphic work "Iyeroglif" (Hieroglyph) (Fig. 4), where the plot is really created by an expressive black line similarly to how it is done in the oriental writing. On the other hand, A. Surikov's abstract art works that were aimed at clearing the world from the excessive object matter and obscuring the understanding of phenomenological essences of reality are regaining the object matter. Thus, titles and several elements of his works allow aiming at distinguishing purely abstract forms in the object reality as if finalizing cultural cycle that was started by abstractionists. Initially, these were mythic compositions, which due to artists

were "settled" in the world and now the artists find them in reality through the lenses of abstract vision. "Tkani" (Fabrics) work can be a simple example of this (Fig. 5), moreover, this principle reveals itself in the series "Novy gorod" (New city), which detailed below.

Apart from the mentioned above, in the scope of artistic trends A. Surikov favours primitivism, Art Brut and many underground painting trends. Being a professional artist with a basic artistic academic background and having completed post graduate studies, A. Surikov despite of everything denies masterful depiction of reality and shifts to naïve depiction of mental truth. Therefore, it worth detailing the tradition of the so called primitive and naive works in the history of arts. The most authentic manifestation of the primitive art is recognized with primeval and archaic art. In the end of 19th century, painting experiences the whole trend named "primitivism". This term refers also to the artists painting without any education or





Fig. 5. Fabrics

having the elementary artistic one only. It also joins artists with a higher professional education but intending to refuse from perfectionists masterfulness in depicting the real world that in its turn emerged in the Renaissance epoch. The first category encompasses such names as Henri Rousseau or Niko Pirosmiani. Among the artists of the second group there shall be named “Jack of Diamonds” group and partially, Joan Miró. More radical manifestation of the primitive art reveals

itself in the so called Art Brut or Outsider Art since it consolidates creative works of mentally disabled, sick and miserable people. In addition, primitivism was acknowledged in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (obviously, non-professional works existed long before that), while Outsider Art was acknowledged in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it attracts more and more attention from researchers and men of virtue.



Fig. 6. "Petrushka - sword swallower" in the series of "Cirque de Montpensier"

Thus, after a brief introduction into such a complex artistic phenomenon as primitive art it is worth describing why and how A. Surikov turns to this artistic tradition. In his creative works, one can find explicit experiments with primitive, archaic and tawdry traditions. As it has been mentioned in the introductory part, one of his series, "Montpensier Circus" (Fig. 6), was created as an experiment with tawdry tradition. The corresponding technique was selected for the performance of the latter, which is xylography

originally representing wood cutting painting (public tawdry craft) and the suitable plot (circus tricks, acrobatic sports), moreover, it is well-known that clownish culture traces back to public roots. Exactly the same experiment was performed by the artist in respect of the primeval tradition in the work "Primeval triptych" (Fig. 7), where he turned to the plots characteristic of archaic art, such as fertile woman, animalistic motives, head of a clan; he also employed some artistic motives of primeval art.



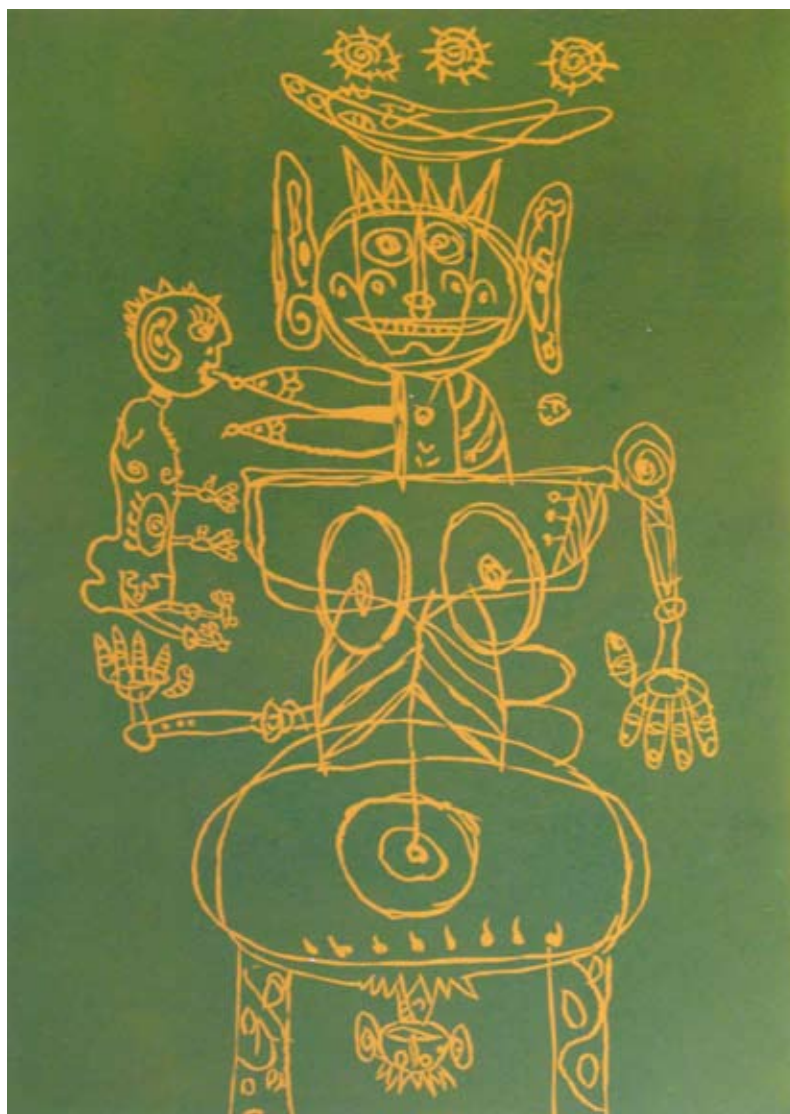


Fig. 7. Primitive triptych – 3. 2003. Color linocut. 70 x 50 sm

It is also worth mentioning that primitive art intentionally turned away from the masterful realistic approach of depicting to a spontaneous childish drawing, from intellectual plots of professional painting to the area of fantasy and one of child-like egoistic with the view to reveal intimate dreams and sentimentally pure and naive feelings towards the world. Such a suspension from the ordinary rational perception of the world is particularly characteristic of the modern cynical reality and explains the reason according

to which primitive art was acknowledged in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gained enormous popularity in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; that is that the primitive art returns to a modern person sentimental feelings to the world and acts as an apologist of individual human fantasies. Such a sentimental plunge into perception of a world around and a child-like straight-forward cogitation, which can up-end stereotypes rational views; and all this is related to Aleksandr Surikov's works.



Fig. 8. Freedom. 2000. Oil on canvas. 60 x 80 sm

Some of his works can be taken as an example for further considerations. A pictorial work, “Afroamerican woman plays a violin” (Fig. 8), according to its plot resembles the work of one most known primitivists, Henri Rousseau, “The Sleeping Gypsy”, where the representation of a bosomy Afroamerican woman playing the violin for two awkwardly smiling policemen creates surreal images. While primitivism is considered to create the surrealists’ works, in case of A.Surikov educated on surreal traditions, primitivism is coming back through visualization of dream-images.

Modern virtual world allows artists to turn to studying and “communicating” with entirely new artistic tendencies. Thus, the trend that originated in the end of the 1980’s and experiencing active development up to date,

Young British Artists, is of great interest for the painter and is revealed in his works by one way or the other. Young British Artists did not group specially into a unified artistic trend, but some researchers have already referred to this trend a number of painters, sculptors, video artists and photographers. In 1988, they arranged their furt exhibition “Freeze”, which has become a push for further development of the group. The society remembered them for their “shock tactics” (shock therapy of using disposable materials, wild behaviour and oppositional attitude. According to one critic: “The fact that Young British Artists have come is very outrageous, but the main issue if the belief that out of nothing you can make everything”. Damien Hirst is included into this group of painters, while A.Surikov is mostly attracted by

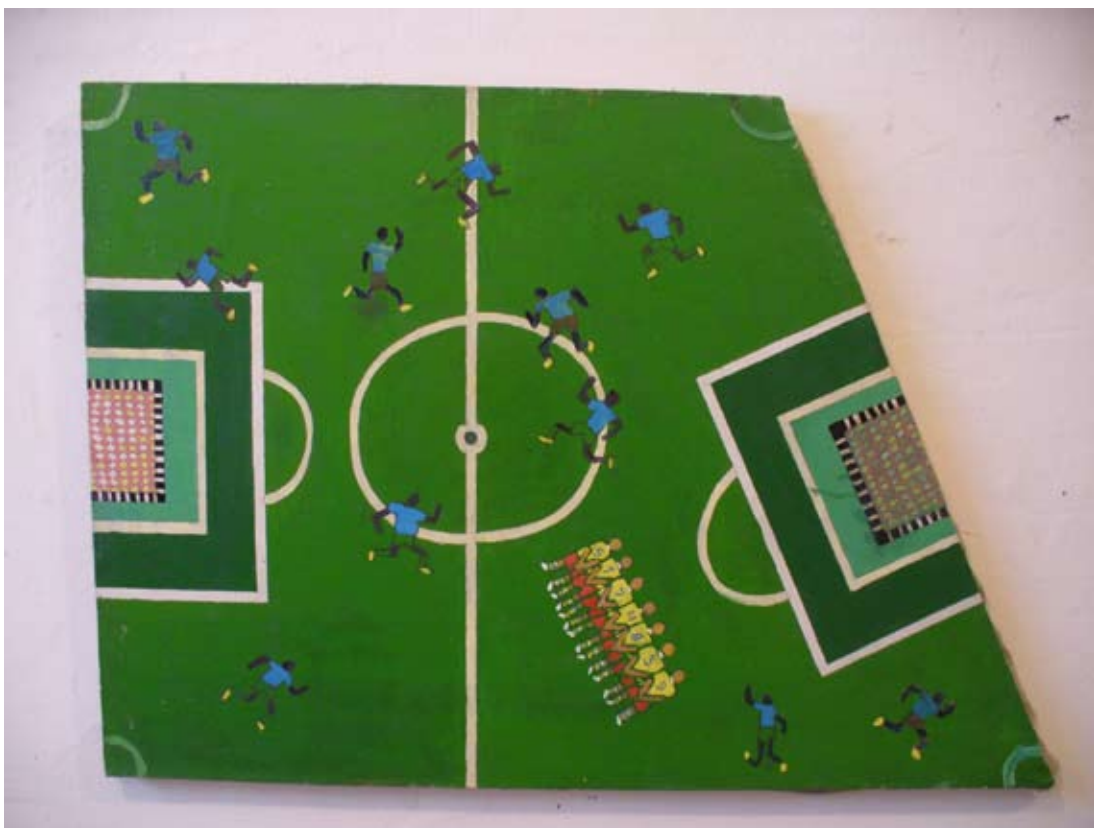


Fig. 9. Out. 2004. Oil on canvas. 56 x 79 sm

Hary Hume's works. Young British Artists had a certain influence on A. Surikov's works in the sense that they are always experimenting with materials often turning ordinary household and non-artistic materials into materials for pieces of art. Having got acquainted with similar modern trends A. Surikov is also in a continuous search and attempting to expand the spectrum of those artistic materials which can be used in art, for example, for the series "Miofibril's zhyopa" where he copied patterns of Krasnoyarsk bearing wall houses adding real concrete chips to oils, thus turning an artist into a builder. A. Surikov's experiments are continuing in the are of searching for a suitable canvas format, which is not always of a square form (Fig. 9).

Therefore, with the reference to the description of those artistic traditions forming the

basis for the dialogue in A. Surikov's works we have partially outlined some artistic techniques and principles defining his works. Below are the conclusions in the generalizing part of the research in respect of the artist's principles.

1. The basic theme of A. Surikov's work is the manifestation of an artistic nature and together with it a poetic nature in any fragment of the encompassing reality. The plots that are always seen by the artist through the poetic prism are the ones from the life of a modern city (grocery kiosks, cafes and restaurants, city traffic jams, new construction sites and etc) as well as the plots from the general life (breakfast, food warehouses, interior in house entrances and etc) and separate object of reality. Apart from that, the

artist's creative works encompass fantasy plots taken from dreams.

2. A. Surikov's works are mostly poetic visual riddles that shall be read as rhymed poems.
3. Continuing the tradition of professional primitivists, A. Surikov's works offer spontaneous attitude towards reality and propose to the spectator to shift their own perception from the rational to sentimental plunge into feeling the world. Being a professional artist, though his works he proposed to see the aesthetic and beautiful in each small fragment of reality: thus, practically each object of reality can be perceived as a pictorial piece (military epaulets, Rubic's cube, condensed milk tin and etc.).
4. A. Surikov's works cannot be referred to a single genre or artistic trend since the artist strived to continuously experiment by using new materials and techniques (the artist mostly specializes in paintings but also tries xylography, graphics, objects made of fabrics instead of a canvas or any other household objects) as well as to change the format of a traditional canvas and etc.

### Example

This section shall focus on research into the image of Siberia in the artist's works, for this purpose we have undertaken analysis of some of his works through the prism allowing to define this image.

First of all, it is necessary to concentrate on the series "Novy gorod" (New city) (Fig. 10), which was completed in 2010; this is a collection of new construction sites depictions in a modern Siberian city (outdoor material was taken by the author from new construction sites in Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk). As experience proves, the artist is

often in advance of his time and creates the future images. It would seem, what kind of the future is behind pure abstractionists' works like Kazimir Malevich or Piet Mondriaan? As it turns out, these are the construction sites of the beginning of the 21st century depicted by A. Surikov. When creating his series "Gorod 24" (City 24), Aleksandr used a lot: academic artistic approach to creation of works and researching spirit of a modern art. Thus, the series covered sketching studies when the artist intentionally went to the city but instead of depicting the architecture of the 19th century, which is believed to be beautiful for painting, or the Yenisei fogs, he would focus on typical new constructions. Being an artist in all his manifestations, he finds the area for a huge number of aesthetic observations and fantasies in everything, even in architectural emptiness. Firstly, undertaking a thorough copying of houses under construction, Aleksandr Surikov found out that block architecture bears a big number of unique patterns, some kind of a "hohloma style of a participatory construction". Secondly, the artist allowed himself to deviate from the pure naturalism and add fantasies on the topic of possible frenzy of multi-coloured windows. In the long run, no copying could prevent the works' turning into geometrically proven compositions of many faithful abstractionists, and practically every house by Surikov is built with those "black squares".

One more series "Probka" (Traffic jam) (Fig. 11) adds the series "Novy Gorod" (New city). The first expands the borders of the city aesthetics since it absorbs space of the art as one of the main problems of the modern city – traffic jams. When all anxious passengers in the evening bus dream of a plate of hot soup, endlessly look at their watch irritated by the fact that the picture behind the window has been the same house for about ten minutes, the artist looks at the road band as the future canvas with automobiles like





Fig. 10. From the series NEW CITY. 2010. Acrylic on canvas. 50 x 70 sm

paints. And if the problem of urban congestion is not solved, A. Surikov's works propose to change their attitude to traffic jams and tune into a contemplative mood. It is important to note that in this series the artist also violates the usual independence of the canvas towards a naturalistic – it collects all the works of the series in a tight range, just as a traffic jam does in a reality.

In a number of urban “sketches” there outstands another series called “Faces of the streets” and several other works in which food stalls aesthetics is poeticised. In the series “Faces of the streets,” the artist is really trying to find those elements that turn the streets of the “dead” nature into specific characters. These “persons” are boarded shutters of a wooden house – an echo of the old traditional Siberian village in the new city (Fig. 12), and along with it the tobacco kiosk labeled “MTS”, as well as numerous inscriptions and signs that accompany urban life (“Do not park the car”, “Places for disabled and children”,

“Fire Extinguisher-8”, etc.). In addition to the signs and houses in the texture of a contemporary life, Alexander Surikov draws attention to small stalls (Fig. 13) preserved since the 1990s, which are of course hiding behind the super-and hypermarkets: the artist sympathetically portrays the echo of the past preserved in the modern world, not to mention the fact that the food stalls showcase for him resemble the potential subject for abstract painting.

In continuation of the urban theme it is worth mentioning two other important themes in the works of A. Surikov, these are the images of buses and city streets. Continuing the theme of a jam, which emphasizes that the modern urbanist spends major part of their life in the road, there is a number of works where the artist portrays the inner life of the bus (Fig. 14). Stories are written in a sentimental and dreamy style just as an example the story about the snow in the bus. This is due to the fact that A. Surikov creates his characters – buses – as anthropomorphic: mirrors





Fig. 11. “Y-IIIY” in the series of TRAFFIC. 2009. Oil on canvas. 80 x 120 cm



Fig. 12. "House with the tree" in the series of "FACES OF THE STREET". 2008. Oil on canvas. 60 x 70 cm

become the eyes and ears and this is enough to perceive a bus like a man. Quite a boring bus ride is filled with fictional characters, for example, a zebra, wandering on the "zebra" at a traffic light (this, incidentally, is another A. Surikov's characteristic method – maximum literalism and honesty of the invented images). For the same image city streets A. Surikov chooses a specific perspective from above (approximately from the sky) to down. Interesting to mention that the same was typical Piet Mondriaan when he painted "Broadway Boogie Woogie," but as a pure abstractionist Mondriaan tried to thoroughly clean the world of everything human. Alexander Surikov, in his turn, "makes" the sky much closer – with his sky is perfectly visible to every person in the city (Fig. 15). And if to turn to comprehension of Siberia image of the artist, it is possible to assume that Siberia is represented

in the mental dimension in his works. Siberia is a space where nothing is felt on a cold and rational level, and all the necessary experience is obtained at the level of a person, heart, at the level of sympathy and empathy: even a cold abstraction was sympathized by the Siberian artist, who at least partly attained human qualities to it.

In the works of A. Surikov it is almost impossible to find pieces referring directly to the Siberian life, thus special attention is paid to the painting "In the village" (Fig. 16). At the index level, where the task of the researcher is to name all the objects images, obviously all attributes and all the traditional features of Siberian life are present, these are oven, wooden house, pancakes, well, banya, the milkmaid and the cow, the beds of carrots and cabbage, outhouse, a dog in a dog house and some other elements. This work is painted in the style of primitivism:



Fig. 13. Elegy. 2006. Oil on canvas. 100 x 80 sm

the scale, proportions and layout of items subject to the logic of naturalistic, no similarity, and the internal logics of the author's intention. Appealing to the primitivist manner in this case emphasizes that the painting reveals an idyllic chronotope (Siberian idyll), and the hierarchical arrangement of objects in the space of the canvas determines the significance of this or that sphere of life. Thus, we can conclude that daily life, which is represented by the largest house, with cooking dinners, maintaining home comfort and order is the most significant thing in an idyllic life;

further in a hierarchical sequence is an intimate sphere of relations between men and women, which is represented in a more narrow house with a bedroom in the house and banya, and have all other attributes (cow, dog, vegetable beds, etc.) exist in addition to the already established idyll. This work underlines the fact that Siberia in the works of A. Surikov is not represented in iconic likeness, but as a study of peculiar mentality. We can assume that in this case, the Siberian man is distinguished by the desire to establish an idyllic chronotope, to find a "paradise in a hut", which is





Fig. 14. Zebra is going by zebra (crosswalk). 2006. Oil on canvas. 90 x 120 sm



Fig. 15. Lunch break. 2006. Oil on canvas. 90 x 120 sm



Fig. 16. Village gives joy. 2006. Oil on canvas. 90 x 120 sm

actually a village house surrounded by everything necessary for life.

In addition to poetic approach to urban and rural life in A. Surikov's works one can find characteristic theme of modern industrial Siberian cities. It is worth reminding that in the Siberian Soviet-era painting a special place was given to paintings – odes to titanic construction projects (hydroelectric power station or BAM, etc). Soviet paintings half-sincerely half ideologically poeticized heroic work of people conquering recalcitrant nature in the process of creating a new world. A. Surikov has paintings of modern buildings (Fig. 17), which are completely absent giant swing – slender cranes are busy erecting weird gray buildings, but, as it is characteristic of all his works, and for such construction projects it is with human warmth – building lit by solar energy.

When considering the image of Siberia in the works of A. Surikov it is impossible not to draw attention to a series of works-remakes based on paintings by Vasily Ivanovich Surikov, united in a series called "Surikov 7." The series is a collection of such remakes as "Morning of Strelts' execution", "Boyarynya Morozova," "Suvorov crossing the Alps", "Menshikov in Berezovo", etc. Trying to apply humor to his works, A. Surikov said that the number of paintings turned out good – seven pieces just fitting the number of letters in the name of the artist. These works reflect the specific image of Siberia in the works of contemporary artist Alexander Surikov. The world knows that the V.I. Surikov lived on the great Siberian land, worked and created his paintings under the impression from Siberia. Two great Surikovs are countrymen and with the help of their works one





Fig. 17. Construction site. 2008. Oil on canvas. 40 x 120 sm

can trace the dynamics of the image of Siberia over the centuries.

Allow us to draw attention to the present, the works of Alexander Surikov. “Boyarynya Morozova» (Fig. 18) was created along with six other works, but it is most eye-catching. Even without conducting a comparative analysis of the two works, one can see significant differences from the classic modern Surikov. In his work “Boyarynya Morozova” is clearly separated into three spaces, and the space in the middle of the picture is the darkest color as contrasted to other spaces. Material status forms the ground for the composition principle affecting the further development of the artistic image. This is a principle of hierarchy of three layers. Colorful visual surface is divided into three parts: the bright upper and lower parts separated by a dark medium. The upper and lower parts are connected on the principle of similarity of colour and impressive effects, as well as it gives the viewer a place in the hierarchy. The middle part is diagonal and follows from the lower right corner toward the center and upward. Such a motion in the theory of art is called “diagonal destruction,” as the viewer perceives it as difficult and heavy. The perception of the general movement in works on the material level provides an understanding of the work

as broadcasting certain events, bearing the problematic nature. The same contrast of dark and light refers the viewer to some conflict.

All three parts are merged in a single system: firstly, many hues of white to bind the whole composition into a whole unity, and secondly, there is a compositional center of the product (a dark spot in the center of the canvas), which cuts across all layers, and which joins all paints forms.

But the upward trend of a diagonal can also mean other assumption. Several distinct dynamic figures, for example, the bright figure in the left part of the painting, upward-moving diagonally; Morozova aspiring her hand up, and the image of an animal going forward, can mean the desire of Siberia to the promotion and nurturing. The dark central part of its structure with more prolonged consideration and as if consisting of building blocks, can symbolize the wall through which to break.

Already on the material level, the viewer subconsciously perceives that the painting contains a problematic conflicting subtext (due to the diagonal impact and the contrast of dark and light), and so one gets an idea of some kind of hierarchy (three layers), dissidence and split (dark spots penetrating all layers, compositional scheme of a “triangle”) and a certain unity,



Fig. 18. Noblewoman Morozova from the series SURIKOV 7. 1997. Oil on canvas. 65 x 85 sm

strength tightening all the works in an indivisible unity (in colour and composition).

Thus, Siberia is represented as hierarchical and problematic, but at the same time with a strong desire to break through and dynamics focusing on integration. The desire to unite Siberia not only on a territorial ground, but also on an ethnic (national) one shows us the painting in a more logical and understandable language for modern people.

When comparing the prototype and the remake of the other paintings in this series, "The Conquest of Siberia by Ermak" (Fig. 19), it becomes obvious what principle of transformation Alexander Surikov applies to the paintings of his famous predecessor. In this case, a monumental attack of Ermak's troops on the Siberian residents revealed, again, on a human, and partly on a phenomenological

level as physiological fertilization of a chthonic feminine by a strong and purposeful masculine.

Thus, allow us to summarize the study of the image of Siberia in the works of Alexander Surikov:

1. In the work of Alexander Surikov, Siberian specifics is revealed not on the level of external similarity, but on a deeper mental level. The study of his works showed several determinants that may be inherent in the Siberian mentality. Of course, it is worth mentioning that, whenever it comes to the mentality and the mental identity one can not qualify for unconditional rightness and infallibility. In addition, we dealing with the work of only one artist, but it is well known that art has the ability to reveal the general from the particular, and therefore the findings given below have right to exist.



Fig. 19. The Conquest of Siberia by Yermak from the series SURIKOV 7. 1997. Oil on canvas. 70 x 90 sm

2. Firstly, what is peculiar to Siberian mentality, it is the desire and aspiration for the attainment of the idyll, which is represented as measured and harmoniously arranged intimate and everyday family life. Of course, the limit of idyllic dreams for a person living in Siberia, is life in the countryside in complete denial of the rest of the world, but, in principle, this idyllic life is achievable in the city as well.

3. Secondly, the peculiar Siberian mentality tends to contemplation, and inner dreamily optimistic mood.

4. Thirdly, the typical Siberian mentality is characterized by humane and compassionate view on to the world: humanity in relation to the world even extends to the objects of the material world.

5. A. Surikov's works represent modern Siberia, where life is no longer determined by

forests and mighty landscapes, but the life of a modern city with the industrial landscape, buildings, heavy traffic, traditional urban infrastructure, etc. Moreover, A. Surikov's cityscapes unintentionally capture the fact that Siberia is included in the process of globalization of the world: starting with the fact that a Siberian artist has access to contemporary art trends through virtual technology, and ending with the signs of global brands, universally implemented in urban landscapes of the artist.

### Conclusions

Thus, this article analyzed the work of the Siberian painter Aleksandr Surikov, who creates paintings, graphic works and all kinds of planar objects.

Research into the artist's work lined up in two ways: 1) studying artistic traditions and

artistic principles to describe the author's style of the Siberian master, 2) studying the spectrum of paintings in the author's works allowing to describe how the image of Siberia is represented in the works of Alexander Surikov.

The fundamental artistic traditions were defined as follows:

- Futuristic and Dadaist poetry served as the basis for A. Surikov's visual poetry. The knowledge of this tradition helps the viewer to «read» the artist who created the piece on the principles of rebus and lyrical rhyme of the text;
- The artist enters into a dialogue with abstract painting, restoring its objectivity through rebuilding his aesthetic vision in a way that begins to see the abstract compositions in the real world;
- A mixture of painting traditions of a primitivist orientation used by the artist to move away from a master copy of reality into the image of the inner life of the soul. For this purpose he simplifies his professional skills to the principles of child drawing and paintings of outsider artists, etc., which allows to bring to the

forefront the individual inner subjective experience and understanding of the world and life;

- A. Surikov's works are constantly changing, it is much experimenting and this is determined by the fact that the artist is constantly meeting the new contemporary art trends and currents. One of his latest discovery is the «Young British Art.»

Having analyzed the general principles of A. Surikov's work, we undertook a study of the image of Siberia in the work of the author. The first image of Siberia has been studied on the material analysis of such series as «New City», «Traffic Jam», «Faces of the Streets», and «Surikov 7», and also several other works of art were involved: a kind of urban, industrial and rural paintings.

The outcome of the research was an understanding that paintings of Alexander Surikov disclosed in the first place the Siberian mentality distinguished by reverie, idyllic, and contemplative humanity. In addition, his work revealed a portrait of modern Siberia, area involved in global processes of globalization.

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## **Образ Сибири в творчестве художника Александра Сурикова**

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*Статья посвящена исследованию творчества сибирского художника Александра Сурикова (родился в г. Иркутске, живет и работает в г. Красноярске). Приведена информация о творческой биографии автора: образование и ключевые выставочные проекты.*

*В статье проанализированы основные художественные традиции художника: дадаизм, футуризм, живопись примитивистов, арт-брют, новое британское искусство и некоторые другие. Творчество художника рассматривается в синтезе поэтических, живописных и графических произведений автора. Итогом исследования творчества художника становится определение основных творческих приемов и принципов, положенных в основу большинства его произведений.*

*Образ Сибири в творчестве Александра Сурикова проявлен не буквально: среди его работ не встретишь пейзажей – жанра, в котором традиционно сильны сибирские авторы, – или иных «прямых» указателей на локальное. Сибирское в творчестве автора раскрывается совершенно в ином – современном – смысле. Таким образом, в статье дешифруется образ современной Сибири, произведения автора интерпретируются с точки зрения того, как современный*



*сибирский художник переосмысливает окружающий его мир. Сибирь в творчестве Александра Сурикова – это не характерные горы, фактурные леса или могучие персонажи, а это раскладки инфраструктуры сибирского города, своеобразные городские маркеры, это фиксация глобальных процессов в современном мире, в котором стирается четкая грань между местным и повсеместным, в котором сибирский художник в музее-интернете может вступать в диалог с любым мировым современным художником.*

*Исследование образа Сибири в статье сосредоточено на изучении двух центральных серий в творчестве художника: серии «Новый город», посвященной апробированию строящегося в начале XXI века сибирского города на эстетический потенциал, и «Суриков 7» – современной интерпретации произведений классика сибирской живописи Василия Ивановича Сурикова.*

*Ключевые слова: живопись красноярского края, образ Сибири, образ Сибири в искусстве, современное искусство, Александр Суриков, визуальная поэзия, образ Красноярска в искусстве.*

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