ОТ РЕДАКТОРА

Dear Readers!

The latest issue of The Art of Eurasia journal is now available, and we are hope you will find it being a valuable source of information.

In the section titled “Eurasian Heritage”, articles written by Chinese and Mongolian scholars delve into the topic of remarkable decorations of women’s costumes and about one of the central images of Chinese mythology — the lion. The section on “Art of the 20th-21st Centuries” is also noteworthy, featuring the work of Kazimir Zelenevsky, about the Egyptian artist of Chinese origin Ramses Yuan, as well as about how Russian artists expressively and poetically embodied the image of Mongolia in their art. The oeuvre of A. Kocharov, who skilfully blends the traditions of Buryat and Tibetan art, is likely to captivate many readers.

The issue turned out to be truly Eurasian, and not only in terms of geography, but also in essence. The poetic perception of Mongolia by Russian artists is striking, as is the fact that one of the leading masters of Buddhist iconography is also Russian. These topics are explored in our traditional sections, but we would like to focus on the main theme of this issue — mythology in contemporary art. We anticipated that myth and mythology would interest modern artists, but their approach to the topic exceeded our expectations, as seen in the publications presented in the “Forum” section. The articles in this section cover the theory and history of mythological research, the works of contemporary artists in this field, and how myth has been reflected in various forms of art and regions. It turned out that throughout the country, folklore, epic tales, symbols of mythological primitive culture in rock paintings and ornaments inspire artists to create extensive artistic series. One particularly successful exhibition on this topic was held at the end of last year at the Russian Academy of Arts. The audience was very interested, leaving heartfelt, sincere and admiring reviews, and art critics unexpectedly discovered in the work of one or another master an appeal to the images and myths of different times and peoples.

In the contemporary epoch of pure pragmatism and total digitalisation, we suddenly find ourselves turning to a seemingly forgotten and overturned page of history. The allure of myth for artists is multifaceted, encompassing its poetic qualities, the aesthetic appeal of its imagery, the dramatic tension it fosters, and its deep connection to a cultural tradition that spans millennia. This provides ample justification for an artist’s engagement with myth. However, this rationale extends beyond mere artistic interest. It is well known that the creative personality is the tense, exposed nerve of social consciousness which, at crucial times, rushes towards mythological horizons. It seems that there is something more behind this than the usual interest in history. Perhaps myth and the mythological perception of the world awaken in the human mind some forgotten signs and symbols that lead to areas other than the world of digitalisation and consumption.

Indeed, the capacity of artificial intelligence to generate images and musical compositions has garnered admiration from observers. However, it is important

to note that a live performance of a piece of music by a musician is in no way comparable to its digital, even very high-quality recording. Furthermore, any illustration is incapable of conveying the main aspect of painting: the thrill of life and the emotions of the artist. The spiritual state of the author is literally reflected in a work of art, and this is what we go to a concert hall and an exhibition for. If we are able to discern the vibration of the soul in a note and in a separate brushstroke, then Art becomes accessible to us, and the soul becomes attuned to it.

Modernity, however, forces us to see also the process of remythologisation in art. In this case, classical myths are transformed into constructs that are used in various fields, from politics to art, becoming a means of manipulating consciousness and a reflection of the morbid mythopoetics of our time. Three layers of mythology can be distinguished according to their value bases: the mythology of superior images, the mythology of everyday consciousness and the mythology of the inferno. All of these layers are forcefully intruding into the realm of art. In the epoch of change, myth, multifaceted and profound in its meanings, serves as an inspiring force of art. This was mentioned by F. Schelling, who argued that art is the 'depiction of prototypes', and mythology is the 'world of prototypes', from which follows the eternal presence of myth in art because it is "a necessary condition and primary material for all art."

Mikhail Shishin
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