



Andriy Khir, from the project Superstitions, 2014, fragment, mixed media on canvas

Superstitions

14.01 - 09.02.15
Andriy Khir

Day by day the left-overs of ancient beliefs are being wiped out, forced to retreat, leaving a track for a new rational understanding of the world and all natural power.
V. Gnatiuk

Superstitions have their roots in ancestors' beliefs and chimerically interlace with modern outlook.

Superstitions are flexible and amorphous, they are able to invade our everyday life in a very imperceptible way, changing not their forms, but their essence.

The most important element of the project "Superstitions" is the research of textual symbols. As I started to work on the project, I looked through a certain amount of ethnographic materials, the main of them were works by V. Gnatiuk "Ukrainian demonology" (1912), A. Onyshchuk "Materials for Ukrainian ethnology" (1909), V. Shukhevych "Hutsulshchyna" (1899). They managed to collect the most authentic facts – short stories written down directly as they were heard from natives – without waste scientific analysis and explanations.

I decided to limit myself with the region of the Ukrainian Carpathians, since it is closer and more native to me. I somehow shortened and adapted textual phrases taken from the ethnographic works, got rid of unnecessary material in order to concentrate on distinct and informative plot. The project's goal is a peculiar representation of Carpathian Ukrainians' outlook through the interpretation of plots and images based on the materials which were collected by previously mentioned authors in the beginning of the 20th century. Logic of these stories often differs from realistic and rational one. Even though researchers try to interpret all these myths from the position of common sense, such stories and beliefs have no clear border between real and unreal things, between the world of people and the world of ghosts.

This project balances at the edge of science, art and folk mysticism. The term "folk metaphysics" can also be appropriate here since often illogical irrational stories and narrations are whole cosmogonic conceptions that specifically explain the universe, have a clear structure, complicated hierarchy and classification of mythical creatures.

An artistic approach to the chosen problem gives an opportunity to use notions and methods out of the scientific field of knowledge. Comprehension of abstract notions as an artistic practice can be considered as a logical continuation, complementary to the ethnographic research. The use of associative narrative visualization of textual materials is my artistic method for this project.

Its graphic language was chosen according to the character of explored texts. Dark monochrome palette and geometric compositions sometimes resemble charts or schemes while golden elements and embroidery have both graphic and symbolic meaning. These techniques aim to make spectators' impression from texts more intense.

It is not about the revival of partly or completely forgotten beliefs and rites. Probably, our understanding of ourselves directly connected with the conservation of folk collective memory.

Finally, I would like to quote Volodymyr Shukhevych: "The end of the world will happen when lights, pysanky and chorals, there three things are over. Then Herod will be released from his chains" ("Hutsulshchyna").

Andriy Khir

Andriy Khir was born in Uzhgorod in 1988. He lives and works in Lviv.

Graduated from the Department of Architecture of National University Lviv Polytechnic in 2010.

He does art, architecture and design.

Since 2005 – author and participant in personal and group projects, active participant of the annual street art festival Black Circle.

According to the artist's own words, in his works "a text is much more important than a picture".

Cooperation with Ya Gallery art center began in 2011 from a personal project "Khir – zvir z gir". Khir's works were involved into art center collective projects under Pavlo Gudimov's supervision – "Neofolk project" (visual art program at GOGOLFEST'2012), special project "Warhol's Rodychi. Western Ukrainian Contemporary Art" (within ART MOSCOW 2012) and "Pulse of Africa" (Ya Gallery, 2014). In 2013 the author was shortlisted for PinchukArt-Centre Prize, and also presented his second Ya Gallery's personal project "Proverbs" which investigated philosophic components of Ukrainian folklore.