The works of ukrainian and lithuanian masters of the paper cutting art pieces of the 20th – early 21st centuries. Comparative analysis

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Abstract. A brief retrospective review of the development of art in Ukraine and Lithuania from the late 19th to the early 21st century is submitted in the article. A comparative analysis of the works of modern Ukrainian and Lithuanian artists, working in the technique of paper cutting, is carried out. The common features and distinctive artistic peculiarities typical for the paper cutting art pieces of Ukrainian and Lithuanian masters are described.

Keywords: the art of paper cutting pieces Lithuanian masters of the paper cutting art pieces Ukrainian masters of the paper cutting art pieces folk traditions innovations
The history of Lithuania and Ukraine is closely interrelated. Both countries' being parts of the former soviet union can be attributed to one of the last such unifying periods in the XXth century which led to holding joint cultural events: art exhibitions, conferences and other important events.

In particular, since the latter part of the XXth to early XXIst century, a considerable common practical experience between Ukrainian and Lithuanian artists has been gained in the realm of paper-cutting art. First of all, it is worth mentioning the activities of Oleksiy Maksymovych Petrychenko (1911–1996), a Ukrainian collector, a Honoured Worker of Science and Technology of Ukraine, a Sc.D., who since the late 1950s has become interested in collecting papercuts [1]. Ukrainian and Lithuanian masters sent paper-cutting art pieces to his collection as well. In our days, the activities of Oksana Horodynska have actively influenced the communication of creative personalities of the two countries. Keeping the tradition of holding the All-Ukrainian Papercut Festival¹, she has turned it into international one since 2011, which especially facilitated the exchange of experiences of Lithuanian and Ukrainian artists and intensified the establishment of personal friendly relations between them. From Lithuania to the fora in Mohyliv-Podilskyi, such paper-cutting masters as Laimutė Benešiūnaitė-Fedosejeva [2], Odeta Tumėnaitė-Bražienienė [3], Gita Juškienienė and Klaidas Navickas [4] have repeatedly come.

The Union of Folk Art Masters of Vilnius Region² and the National Union of Folk Art Masters of Ukraine³ now play a significant role in continuing the traditions of the paper-cutting art in, respectively, Lithuania and Ukraine. The heads

¹ The First All-Ukrainian Festival Ukrainian Papercuts in 1993 was organized by Mariya Hotsuliak, the then director of the House of Folk Art in Mohyliv-Podilskyi, nowadays a head of the Mariya Rudenko Museum of Ethnography and Folk Art in the same city.
² Ramutė Kraujalieienė is a chairman of the Union of Folk Art Masters of Vilnius Region.
³ Yevgen Shevchenko is a chairman of the National Union of Folk Art Masters of Ukraine.
of both creative guilds, Ramutė Kraujalienė and Yevgen Shevchenko, observantly care for the preservation of ethno-cultural heritage, especially in the modern period of globalization, constantly supporting the work of folk-based masters.

It is noteworthy that in Ukraine and Lithuania the paper-cutting art developed in waves. The period of the art’s significant prosperity and spread fell on the late XIXth to the first decades of the XXth century, after which a long period of its attenuation until the 1950s can be observed. This course was influenced by various historical events, primarily the aftermaths of the First and Second World Wars. The revival of paper-cutting art since the late 1950s has been facilitated by the rise of the economic level of the post-WWII USSR citizens and, above all, the emergence of paper in rural areas. Among the masters who have made significant efforts in the art’s revival in Ukraine were Oleksandr Saliuk (village of Sayinka, Vinnytsia Region) and Mariya Rudenko (village of Sloboda-Yaryshivska, Vinnytsia Region).

In Lithuania, the spouse Julija Daniliauskienė (1926–2009) and Antanas Daniliauskas (1926–1983) worked in an especially persistent manner to revive the art of paper cutting in the second half of the XXth century. Feliksas Marcinkas (1950–2010), an active organizer of international exhibitions in Vilnius in the last quarter of the XXth century, has also played an extremely prominent role.

While comparing the development of this kind of art and artistic features of individual works made by masters of both our countries, it should be noted that in Ukrainian papercuts and in Lithuanian popieriaus karpiniai, a number of common features are distinctly visible. They are determined not only by the same properties of the material, similar techniques and typical tools. Similar motifs, analogous ornamental compositions that have naturally passed from other types of domestic art, namely embroidery, ceramics, weaving, woodcarving, etc., play a significant role.

We especially clearly trace such tendencies in rosette-like and star-shaped papercuts cut out by folk masters of Ukraine and Lithuania. There is also a noticeable resemblance in applying common flowerpot and tree motifs, as well as in
a number of compositional patterns that occur when using central, mirror, or translational symmetries; in particular, we can see many similarities in traditional window decorations: "curtains", "curtains".

Examining authorial works of modern masters among the boundless variety of stylistics of new pieces of art, the authoress considers papercuts of professional artists and amateurs who consciously apply traditional patterns and motifs, as well as actively use original innovations, since simple recreation of even the best copies always leads to conveyor copying and eventually to the attenuation of source principles of creativity.

Among Lithuanian masters who have already crystallized their personal styles on the basis of folk traditions are Ryszard Kozubovskaja, Ramutė Krauvialene, Laimutė Benešiūnaitė-Fedosejeva, Odeta Tumėnaitė-Bražėnienė, Rasa Slesorūnienė, Roma Gudaitiene, Egle Vindašienė, Gita Kolosovienė, Ada Germanavičienė, Elvita Šeputaitė and others.

For Laimutė Benešiūnaitė-Fedosejeva, paper cutting has long ceased to be a hobby. Having started her first attempts in the early XXIst century following the samples of national ornamentation, the mistress discovered new artistic solutions, often changing symmetry to desymmetry or asymmetry and shifting fragments of white to black and vice versa. Among her acquisitions are the series My Čiurlionis (2004–2005), Angels (2009), Native Land (2009), which convey her own reflections, interpretations, personal connotations, as well as many other works.

The mistress very often cut outs the tree motif, which she skillfully demonstrates in various versions of real and fairy-tale images. Additionally, it should be noted that Laimutė Benešiūnaitė-Fedosejeva was invited to the jury at the All-Ukrainian Competition of Children’s Papercuts, held in Kryvyi Rih in 2019 and in 2021.

In the works of Odeta Tumėnaitė-Bražėnienė, a teacher, mother of four children, a winner of the Golden Crown (the

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4 The All-Ukrainian Competition of Children’s Papercuts was launched in 2015 and was also held in 2017. The organizers of the events were Mariana Liubas and Valeriy Liubas, the papercut masters, members of the National Union of Folk Art Masters of Ukraine.
highest award of Lithuanian folk masters\(^5\), there is a harmonious combination of spread motifs based on traditional compositions, being usually symmetrical (of mirror, central, and translational types). Anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and ornithomorphic silhouettes characteristic of her work, as well as architectural images, harmoniously combined with the surrounding floral ornamentation, impart distinct accents to her authorial papercuts.

For example, in the panels Singing Sunflowers (2014) and Morning (2013), the main accents of the papercuts are conveyed through bird images. In the work A Lithuanian Willow (2014), the principal is a geometrized symbolic image of this tree with two figures of girls among the decor with leaves, already similar to the natural. Exquisite proportions more and more clearly enliven the balance of the composition with the larger central and smaller surrounding elements in each papercut.

The vast majority of Odeta Tumėnaitė-Bražėnienė’s works are made in black and white, which gives them a special solemnity. At the same time, she likes to experiment with coloured paper as well. It is worth noting that the mistress extremely filigree cuts out white paper curtains for decorating windows, shelves and more.

The work of master Klaidas Navickas combines the traditions of Lithuanian paper-cutting art with the techniques of making paper clippings, typical of the silhouette cutouts of Germany, among which subject works dominate. This is primarily the use, in the formation of compositions, of several horizontal levels in works with one vertical axis.

Distinct innovations can be seen in works of Juventa Mudėnienė. In particular, she created illustrations for the album Will You Have Remember Me, Vilnius? [5], to which of black paper papercuts of silhouette nature were cut out, later not pasted, but only intertwined between the pages, which made it possible to instantly change the background while turning the work from the right page with a colour photo to

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\(^5\) In 2007, O. Tumėnaitė-Bražėnienė was titled the best Lithuanian folk master for a number of linocuts and was awarded the Golden Crown - the highest award of Lithuanian folk artists.
the left side of a blank sheet. This method permits immediately seeing the difference in an impact of the papercut, which lies on a background of colourful landscape and can be immediately turned over onto white paper, which makes it possible to quickly transfer a viewer from the contemporaneity having its colour illustrations back to the days of black and white photography, thereby naturally demonstrating one image in two temporal dimensions.

![Image of papercut art](image.png)

Figure 1
Odeta Tumėnaitė-Bražienė. Morning, 2014

Creative innovations also distinguish the work of Gita Juškėnienė, who makes papercuts of silhouette nature paper clippings on a fabric from flax, which endows a special play of different textures of two different materials: *Birds among...*
Flowers (2018). Small greeting cards are made by all Lithuanian masters. For this purpose, they use mainly coloured cardboard of different colours (green, red, blue, etc.), gluing white or colorful clippings on the appropriate half-finished products. Lithuanian craftsmen are constantly improving this type of paper products, and each of them has achieved his own success in it.

Among the Ukrainian masters who adhere to folk traditions, we can first of all name Oksana Horodynska (Mohyliv-Podilskyi, Vinnytsia Region), Mykola Telizhenko (Cherkasy), Dmytro Vlasijchuk (Chmilnyk, Vinnytsia Region), Valentyna Kozdrovskas (Sumy), Victoriiya Nesterova (Chasiv Yar in Donetsk Region), Tetiana Vatsenko (Poltava), Dmytro Korol (Kremenchuh), Iryna Mazurok-Pokydanets (Mykolayiv), Ludmyla Babich (Carychanka, Dnipropetrovsk Region), Olena Polovna-Vasylyeva (Dnipro), Natalia Stashkevych (Poltava), Zinaida Kosytska (Kyiv) and many other creative personalities.

The works of Olha Shynkarenko, which the mistress performs mainly in the technique of pulling out, are distinguished by interesting artistic solutions. In them, she conveys the festivity and song moods inherent in the Ukrainian folk art in general. The life-giving force of visual images, whose influence is strengthened by multi-colored bright combinations, seems to flow in each her work. Olga Shynkarenko chooses common motifs and at the same time adds new ones, such as traditional flowers, birds, and plant elements. Among the new ones are elephants, wolves, which are always very cute and gentle. All works of the mistress are juicy and spectacular.

Especially creative innovations can be seen in Dariya Alioshkina’s paper works. Apart from traditional papercuts intended to be demonstrated on a certain static background, she increasingly creates openwork that originates from curtain, which were traditionally placed in the interior without frames and a specific background. Such openwork hangs down with patterned edges from shelves, over windows or above doors. The mistress constantly improves this type of decor with original additions and a new content. It is important that it was her works that the Ukrainian stand in Paris was decorated with during the 2018 and 2019 Book Salons [6].
mistress is known by her successful exhibitions in South Korea (Seoul), Poland and other countries. One of her displays took place in Nice (France) (opened on May 20, 2021).

Polished approaches to the graphic art were demonstrated by Maryna Vashchenko in her monochromous paper works of considerable sizes (Dreamy, 2018; Herbal Maiden, 2019; Charms, 2019). We can also note the original series of works Birds by Iryna Mazurok-Pokydenets (Mykolayiv), made in the technique of pinching out of paper (with the paper being made by the authoress herself). Such an artistic solution adds the game of light and shadow, which enriches the common images with innovative details.

An attention is attracted by innovative techniques of the Dnipro female artist Yuliya Dunayeva, who stylizes traditional motifs, presenting them in original variations, which are filled with a new content (Tumbleweed, 2008; Women with Roses, 2016). She also creates ceramic works (f.e., Lion, 2021). Each new work of Liliya Tieptiayeva from the city of Kolomyia also captivates with bright coloured gamut and high professionalism (Tree as a Rug, 2012; Thoughts, 2020). Olesia Ishchuk from the city of Lutsk puts traditional plant motifs into unique authorial compositions, which gives them a modern sound (Lake, 2019).

The review of works by modern Lithuanian and Ukrainian leading masters allows concluding that even today in Ukraine and Lithuania, masters actively use ancient motifs, among which are geometrized or naturalistic plant images, as well as various types of crosses (ornamental, such as wooden roadside sacred structures, etc.). Anthropomorphic silhouette images in national clothes are also common, as well as architectural elements (huts, churches), etc. At the same time, it is clearly noticeable that the flowerpot motif widespread in Ukraine to this day is less common today in the works of Lithuanian masters. Recently, the tree motif has prevailed in their papercuts.

In the works of Ukrainian artists still popular are traditional compositions constituted from various elements, such as individual flowers, leaves, twigs, which is especially characteristic of papercuts by masters of the village of Petrykivka, Dnipropetrovsk Region. In particular, such
methods of making paper-cutting artpieces are used by Natalia Avdieyenko (*Tree of Life*, 2018). Instead, Lithuanian masters cut out their works mostly from one sheet. Among distinctive features of achievements by Lithuanian masters, the dominance of compositions with the use of black and white scale catches the eye. By contrast, Ukrainian masters, even in their monochromous works, more often choose, as a rule, colourful options for their papercuts or backgrounds.

![Figure 2](image_url)

*Natalia Avdieyenko. Tree of Life, 2018*
If we apply – in order to characterize the Lithuanian and Ukrainian papercuts – the classification system proposed by the English theorist and art historian John Ruskin 6 and which takes into account the relationship of line, light and, colour, we can dedicate that the Lithuanian works are dominated by the Greek-school line combined with light, while in Ukrainian ones – the Gothic school, whose line is combined with colour [7]. Each of these schools has its own techniques and accents of artistic influence, which give them a unique sound.

The analysis of the works by individual modern artists in Lithuania and Ukraine shows that the paper-cutting art has now gained considerable popularity in both countries. Due to the exploratory work of masters, the art is increasingly preferred by professional artists and amateurs. This type of creation, as many others, reflects the latest trends in visual arts in general and in decorative one, in particular. The latter demonstrates a considerable extension of techniques of the former traditional paper decorations. Nowadays, there are no any restrictions for them on the choice of theme or style.

References:


6 John Ruskin (1819–1900), an English theorist and art historian.