

**Розділ VI. ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЛАСТИКИ ІВАНА КАВАЛЕРІДЗЕ  
В КОНТЕКСТІ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО МИСТЕЦТВА АВАНГАРДУ  
ПЕРШОЇ ТРЕТИНИ XX СТОЛІТТЯ**

**Part VI. IVAN KAVALERIDZE'S MONUMENTAL PLASTICS  
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EARLY XX-TH CENTURY EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE**

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**IVAN KAVALERIDZE'S MONUMENTAL PLASTICS IN THE CONTEXT  
OF THE EARLY XX-TH CENTURY EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE**

**Prokopchuk Inna** – PhD of Arts, Associate Professor  
Department of Design, National Forestry University of Ukraine,  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9353-2169>

DOI  
[inna.prokopchuk@ukr.net](mailto:inna.prokopchuk@ukr.net)

Establishment of stability of forms of plastic arts, their determination by universal natural formations is at the heart of aesthetics of one of the famous sculptors, the founder of Ukrainian avant-garde in monumental sculpture, film director, playwright – Ivan Kavalieridze (1887–1978).

Admiration by French cubist sculpture formed its own artistic trends. It was I. Kavalieridze who tried to bring Ukrainian monumental sculpture to the level of development corresponding to Parisian avant-garde. Cubism in accordance with the general trends of the time seems to free sculpture from salon layers, exposing structure, rhythm and dynamics, refining qualities peculiar to sculpture of the beginning of the XX century.

I. Kavalieridze expanded the Cubist doctrines, granting them the powerful national principle, drew attention to the important and special problems of sculpture in large urban and natural spaces of his time. The original vision of sculpture as an architectural structure, the adoption of constructivist ideas – the use of reinforced concrete as a material, the perfect mastery of its modifying abilities. I. Kavalieridze offers original monumental works where the Cubist and Constructivist principles of form creation are manifested, which correspond to the most current trends in the plastic arts on a world scale. Since the second half of the 1920 s, the social and artistic life in Ukraine has been influenced by politics. After a few years, it becomes the main criterion in the social and artistic assessment of the artist. The compromise in the artist's relationship with the Soviet ideology is reflected in the sculpture, which was the first to assume the role of the propagandist of the Soviet state. The value of the plastic experiments of modernism begins to give way to the pompous and political meaning. In a very short time, it is this characteristic that will unite the trends belonging to different styles into a social and artistic phenomenon that goes beyond the goals of the plastic and visual arts.

The sculptor's work is part of the phenomena of Ukrainian art that go beyond purely aesthetic dimensions and reflect the image of the era. The artist's creations reveal the major events of his time, changes in art, culture, social consciousness that have defined the features of artistic development. The era of impetuous changes and social upheavals – the world war, revolutions, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the national revival of the 1920s, the years of totalitarianism and Soviet liberalization have forever left an expressive mark on the genius's work.

*Key words:* art, avant-garde, art monument, sculpture, artist.

*Introduction.* The search for means of poetic, figurative generalization of historical time is a complexly developing process. These means cannot be comprehended outside the connection with historical stages of the dramatic changes of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the era of destruction was being replaced by periods of restoration, stabilization and conservation, which had a revolutionary impact on the world's fate and on the world art in general. During the 1917–1920 s Ukraine experienced several revolutions – the overthrow of the tsarist rule, the social revolution and proletarian dictatorship, the national liberation movement which proclaimed Ukrainian state independence (albeit for a short time). It is in these conditions that one of the tendencies significant for the understanding of fundamental changes in the ideological and figurative structure of avant-garde art was born. On this basis there is a growing need for artistic interpretation of the problems of socio-cultural, historical and ideological range.

Creative practice of avant-garde artists demonstrates complex structure of the image and plastic forms not only with the technical dynamism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also with its major socio-ethical problems. Aesthetic ideals are formed and plastic peculiarities of art, particularly sculpture, are established only in the interaction of the whole complex of characteristic features of the new era.

Energetic, powerful plastic asceticism of I. Kavalieridze's monuments may well be perceived as a part of the fundamental system of the latest research into sculpture of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike European artists, for whom the avant-garde was not only a language, but above all a new conception reinterpreting both the shaping principles and the principles of figurativeness, the Ukrainian sculptor used its

plastic generalizations as means of artistic expression, a source of artistic language renewal, to which the features of cubist and constructivist sculpture were added, the latter being new artistic trends at the time, including all kinds of art in their issues. However, despite the fundamental formal plastic innovation in its ideological-figurative and semantic principles, the works of Ivan Kavalieridze retained a high pathos which manifested itself in relation to the model, the concept of human personality itself, affirming human dignity, great creative abilities. Being far from naive optimism these features developed humanistic traditions of art and carried the theme of courage and human spiritual strength. The basis of I. Kavalieridze's sculptural monuments, whatever their styles, has always been determined by high professional culture and the strength of the plastic volume construction which is the basis of the spatial image.

In connection with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the issues of national cultural policy regarding cultural and artistic artefacts of different political eras and ideological orientations have become significantly more relevant and acute. The avant-garde plastic solutions of some of I. Kavalieridze's monuments are currently controversial because they have a strong political colouring.

*The scientific novelty* of the chosen topic is primarily characterized by the research problem. The proposed study assimilates both cultural, historical, and artistic and aesthetic issues, the coverage of which allows us to formulate general principles of the formation of Ukrainian monumental sculpture in the context of European avant-garde art of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*The purpose of the article* is to analyze the peculiarities of I. Kavalieridze's monumental sculpture in the context of European avant-garde art of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*The methodological basis* is a systemic historical approach to the study of the research subject in the context of those phenomena and processes that had the greatest impact on its development. The paper uses traditional research methods and approaches: the method of historicism ( for the analysis of the artistic process as a developing phenomenon, the identification of periods in the evolution of art and for the identification of the origins, tendencies, historical and cultural parallels of the phenomenon under study ); integrated interdisciplinary approach ( in the analysis of artistic conceptions that reflect the complex value characteristics of avant-garde ); method of critical figurative-stylistic analysis and analogies ( in the study of artistic works ).

*Literature review.* In the focus of the outlined issues, there was a need to study the subject of research in a broad theoretical context: a scientific and substantial body of literature on the analysis of various aspects of the ideological and figurative structure of avant-garde art was conducted by Ukrainian researcher L. Buriak [2], O. Holubets [5], D. Horbachov [6], I. Prokopchuk [18; 23], P. Yatsiv, Y. Kravchenko [24], O. Fedoruk [25]. The works of these scholars highlight the changes in worldview that led to the emergence of the figurative language of avant-garde art in Ukraine.

The issue of national and European trends in avant-garde art was raised in the scientific research of Ukrainian scholars, in particular Y. Babunych [1], H. Lymar [13], V. Lychkovakh [14], T. Pavlova [16], V. Susak [23]. The works of these scholars characterize the avant-garde of Ukraine as an innovative and revolutionary art, and highly appreciate its creative potential. The Ukrainian avant-garde is seen as an inseparable whole of the European artistic phenomenon, marked by certain national differences and peculiarities.

The theoretical analysis of the formation and development of professional humanities and art education in Ukraine is revealed in the works of S. Vytkaľov [3], I. Prokopchuk [20].

Researchers N. Kubrysh [12], I. Prokopchuk [17; 19], H. Skliarenko [22]. In his monograph *The Magic of the Third Dimension: Sculptural Plasticity of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twenty-first Centuries*, O. Holubets [5] reveals the changes in three-dimensional sculptural plasticity in the era of modernism, paradoxical attempts to return to the principles of mimetic art during the domination of totalitarian regimes in Europe.

Among the monographs, essays, memoirs, and articles devoted to the work and key moments of I. Kavalieridze's biography, the works of N. Kapelhorodska [9-11] and U. Samchuk [21] are noteworthy, as they attempt to understand what exactly the master's innovation is. The participants of the conference «Art and war in the history of the avant-garde (1909-2019)» (April 3 to 6, 2019 in Paris, Saint-Denis and Franval (Normandy)) were very interested in the report of the author of this article on the topic of modernist manifestations in sculptural plasticity by I. Kavalieridze [31].

In April 2007, an outstanding international conference was held at Harvard University called «Ukrainian Modernism in Context: 1910-1930» [28], which for the first time brought together the most famous researchers from Ukraine, the USA, Canada, France, and the Czech Republic; in 2019, the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* was published under the general title «Ukrainian Modernism». Interest in the Ukrainian avant-garde and, in particular, in the work of I. Kavalieridze exists not only among Ukrainian researchers but also among foreign art historians, and this interest has not waned for several decades. Obviously, this interest is due to the diversity of historical processes that took place in Ukraine during the first third of the twentieth century and their impact on the work of Ukrainian avant-garde artists. Many Western researchers also became historians of the Ukrainian

avant-garde and conducted a parallel line of objective research on Ukrainian art of the 1910 and 1930 s, namely: S. Menzelevskiy [30], M. Fowler [27], M. Shkandriy [32], K. Císař [26]. All of them emphasize the vivid national character of art history studies and unanimously testify to the uniqueness and originality of Ukrainian avant-garde art and Ukrainian culture of this period in general.

The issues of preservation, restoration (revitalization), or liquidation of cultural heritage sites that have become more important for Ukrainians today as a result of the military invasion of Ukraine by Russian invaders with the aim of destroying the country are highlighted in the article by A. Markovskiy and O. Lagutenko [29]. The authors provide examples of complex debatable aspects regarding artifacts of architecture and art from different political eras, their practical significance and material value in the context of transforming society's attitude to them and the prospects for future post-war reconstruction.

The review of printed sources showed the lack of theoretical studies that objectively analyze the problems of monumental sculptural plasticity, in particular the work of the famous Ukrainian sculptor Ivan Kavalieridze in the context of the development of European avant-garde art of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Results and discussion.* The development of the avant-garde movement in Ukraine took place under the influence of various historical factors, one of which was the collapse of the empire and the cultural and spiritual rise of the Ukrainian people during the national democratic revolution of 1917–1920.

This short historical period of state formation is an example of the closest parallel movement of reforms in the state and art education spheres. Therefore, the coexistence of the most extremist artistic and pedagogical doctrines with the following absolutely illustrative propaganda of state and later totalitarian ideas became possible. In other cases, as the futurist movement in Italy or the example of K. Malevich's revolutionary individualism prove, the new trend in art was not perceived otherwise than as anti-government. Most avant-garde artists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century actively opposed state interference in art.

In June 1920 Bolshevik troops took control of Kyiv. However, the foundation for the development of art education, laid by the Ukrainian Central Council and the initiatives of the creative intelligentsia, continued to develop in the chaos of the civil war. There was a breakthrough of peripheral hermeticism in the Ukrainian fine arts. The young artists' desire to join modern Western aesthetic artistic conceptions showed that a generation of masters appeared who were ready to accept the innovative achievements of Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse and their followers in search of non-traditional methods of painting. The emergence of avant

-garde artists in Ukraine was caused by impulses which prepared a historical and cultural environment that directed the consciousness of a new generation from canonical artistic schemes to experiments with color, space and form.

The period of *Ukrainization* in the 1920s became a significant cultural phenomenon which has no analogues in Europe of that time and the role of which is difficult to overestimate. In Ukrainian higher art institutions – institutions of avant-garde art culture – there were masters who already in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century accumulated theoretical and practical material and experience which in the 1920 s was framed in the conceptions of modernism – the world's 'new movement' for modern art, for modern artistic culture and decisive renewal of society on its fundamentals.

The avant-garde art had to meet the requirements of revolutionary reality in new political conditions. The victorious revolution needed posters, agit-trains, theaters, and mass rallies' designs in a fundamentally new style, not borrowed from the past. Communist culture had to acquire distinctly different structural features in order to truly become new. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first post-revolutionary years are considered an unprecedented triumph of the avant-garde.

Avant-garde artists understood in a rather peculiar way the conditions and responsibilities arising from the conditions on the basis of which the alliance between art and the proletarian revolution was formed. The revolution wanted art to subordinate its interests to its tasks which were by no means equated with the slogan *revolution in art*.

*Revolutionism* in art at that time was exercised with the help of the Decree № I (1920) «On the democratization of art (wall painting)» proclaimed by the futurists. In full accordance with the spirit of Decree № I the avant-garde art then took to the streets and flooded Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, and other Ukrainian cities, thus beginning a new, agitational period [20; 84–85].

Ivan Kavalieridze's work reflects a wide range of problems including the formation of the modernism era in Ukrainian art of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of revolutionary ideas on the work of the 1920 s and the reinterpretation of new art movements through their visions, the influence of political order on the artistic-figurative language of art.

The era of rapid change and social upheavals – two world wars, revolutions, proletarian dictatorship, the national upsurge of the 1920 s, the years of totalitarian regime and Soviet liberalization – forever coloured the works of the genius artist with expressive symbols.

Several periods of creativity can be defined in the biography of Kavaleridze as a sculptor. The first period covers the years of formation and study at Kyiv Art School at the sculpture department in Fedir Balavenskyi's studio (his pupils also were Olexandr Arkhypenko and Mark Epstein); studies at St. Petersburg Academy of Arts in Ilya Ginzburg's studio as well as acquaintance with the cinematic intelligentsia [11; 11–12]. The artistic environment proved to be a fruitful impulse and support of creative potential determining the further path to art.

The second period is associated with experiments in plastic arts which made I. Kavaleridze the founder of Ukrainian avant-garde in sculpture. And the third period is rich in monuments, projects and indoor sculptures which aroused not only admiration, but also party leaders' condemnation owing to the fact that they did not correspond to the stereotypes of socialist realism.

In the context of the issues of the outlined topic the sculptor's creative work of the first two periods will be taken into consideration and briefly dwelt on. A short but extremely intense Parisian experience of 1910–1911, classes in the studio of his favorite teacher Naum Aranson, communication with Auguste Rodin and other prominent artists of the time, acquaintance with Parisian rich museum collections played an important role in the sculptor's development. In Paris the young artist met his childhood friend Oleksandr Arkhypenko, who was already a well-known avant-garde sculptor at that time, as well as a sculptor Stepan Erzia (real surname Nefedov) and a first-class experimenter and Amazon of the Ukrainian avant-garde Oleksandra Ekster. Kavaleridze also communicated with members of the Ukrainian Community (1909–1914) – the first association of the Ukrainians in Paris, over the years among its members there were Mykhailo Boychuk, Mykola Kasperovych, Sofia Segno, Mykhailo Parashchuk and many other artists [23; 47–51]. All this instilled attention to work from nature, *subject* thinking, important for the sculptor, and feeling of the material. His ideological-semantic and aesthetic-figurative features were formed. In the future they will develop and become the basis of the artist's sculptural artistic and figurative searches.

Recalling his impressions of Auguste Rodin's sculptures I. Kavaleridze wrote: «*At that time Paris for me is Hugo, Rodin, Aranson [...]. Hugo in Rodin's marble and bronze is looking at me [...]. I experienced and felt every stroke – the touch of Rodin's fingers on bronze, I studied and perceived every muscle being full of thought, real, similar to anatomical, but extremely expressive*» [7; 35–36]. The artist always appreciated Rodin's generosity in the way how to convey the play of light, his impulsiveness, deep psychology. He strived to adopt genius artist's generalization of images, expression of instantaneous movement reflecting eternity. This style of sculpturing was much closer to him than the refined style of N. Aranson.

It is here in Paris that modern sculpture is being developed. In accordance with the general trends of the time cubism seems to free the sculpture from salon layers, exposing the structure, rhythm, dynamics, sharpening the qualities generally peculiar to the sculptures of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mighty sculpturing, being rooted in Hellenic antiquity, but modern, rigid, striving for a synthesis with early constructivism architecture, interested ambitious sculptors like Olexandr Arkhypenko, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Henri Laurent, Jacques Lipchitz, Chana Orloff, Ossip Zadkine who gave credit to Auguste Rodin works, the latter seeming almost a conservative then.

The particular impact of the geometric form of sculpture by Henri Laurent, Jacques Lipchitz, Raymond Duchamp-Villon on the creative work of I. Kavaleridze should be noted. It demonstrates the cubist division of energetic volumes penetrating each other and is close to abstraction (in the relation that this term may have to sculpture). Methods of their sculptural shaping combine the architectonics of mass and emptiness, thus converging with the forms of architectural space. In general, the architectonic language was developed jointly and individually by a diverse array of sculptors, among whom there were Constantin Brancusi, Aristide Maillol, Naum Gabo, and Antoine Pevsner. Fascination with French cubist sculpture evolved into a reliable school, the basis for I. Kavaleridze's own creative searches. Under the influence of cubism I. Kavaleridze will find himself operating large constructive masses [18].

After the October Revolution political situation in Ukraine unfolded according to a different scenario than in Russia. Thus, during 1917 and later the majority of the Ukrainian intelligentsia associated their hopes for Ukrainian national revival with the activities of the Central Council. At least in the first period of its activity it concentrated the Ukrainian people's will to historical existence. After the proclamation of Ukrainian People's Republic (November 20, 1917) its governments engaged in the development of national culture despite changes in party composition and their general political orientation. During the reign of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi and his state support and assertion of the originality of the ways of development (1910–1920) Ukrainian art was a part of European art. It combined quality issues with mastery of the technical achievements of Western European culture.

Taking an active part in the revival of national culture and having close contacts with the Ukrainian progressive intelligentsia I. Kavaleridze could not avoid the above-mentioned political circumstances. In May 1917 at the instruction of Provisional Government I. Kavaleridze went to the All-Ukrainian Military Congress convened by the Central Council. After the meeting with Symon Petliura, who advised him to engage not in politics but in art, he returned to his hometown of Romny, Sumy region [9].

In Romny the sculptor was sent to the local department of public education to build a monument to Taras Shevchenko<sup>1</sup>. A new era, an era of victorious revolution, required a new image of Kobzar. The first full-figure monument to Taras Shevchenko was unveiled during the rule of the Directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic at public expense on October 27, 1918. The monument was ordered by Romny railwaymen who asked their compatriot I. Kavaleridze.

The sculptor worked side by side with the scientist Hryhoriy Vashkevych, who knew T. Shevchenko personally and participated in the publication of «Kobzar», and Stepan Shkurat, who performed concrete work. I. Kavaleridze worked on the creation of the monument during the revival of national culture despite the fact that it was put up after the October Revolution in the process of implementing Lenin's plan of monumental propaganda. The work was carried out in difficult conditions in the shop converted into the workshop without a roof, therefore when it rained, the artist was forced to cover the sculpture with tarpaulin, there were rats on the ground [24; 424]. Afterwards I. Kavaleridze fondly recalled those times: *«I am going back to the summer of 1918 when a monument to Shevchenko was being erected. From a young age I have been fascinated by monumental sculpture – the eternal art of eternal images. I have dreamed of creating a series of monuments to prominent historical figures. Among them there was Shevchenko»* [7; 68].

The appearance and composition of the monument were influenced by the ideas of cubism and constructivism. The outline of the monument resembles a Cossack grave-mound marked by the plasticity of contours, the absence of household details, the generalization of the volumes of the figure, which is merged with the mighty mountain pedestal growing just out of the ground. The poet is sitting in deep bitter contemplation with his head bowed. The author wanted the monument to excite the idea of Shevchenko's now liberated, unfettered, immortal revolutionary word.



Picture 1. Ivan Kavaleridze. Monument to Taras Shevchenko. 1918. Reinforced concrete. Romny.

In the monument the sculptor uses architectural techniques, turns to geometrized, planar forms, skillfully shifts the scales, a relatively small figure of the poet with a huge pedestal. There is a commonality of the author's techniques built on the use of intentionally violated volumes with the works of O. Arkhypenko, who also repeatedly addressed the topic of T. Shevchenko. O. Arkhypenko's sculptures «Taras Shevchenko» (1933) and «Shevchenko the Prophet» (1936) are meant here. But while O. Arkhypenko, a well-known sculptor then, tirelessly experimented in indoor sculpture, I. Kavaleridze offered original monumental works with broken cubist lines prevailing.

In the same year I. Kavaleridze created a monument to the «Victims of the Revolution» in Romny (later it was renamed «Heroes of the Revolution»).

According to the plan the memorial complex was supposed to be a sculptural and spatial ensemble of the necropolis, and the monument itself had to be a tribune for speeches. But the author managed to complete only a part of the project – two obelisks with sculptural figures of the Prometheus Bound and Unbound. In this monument the sculptor turns to figurative allegory interpreting the theme of heroic death through neoclassical stylistics. He emphasized the allegorical nature of the images he created: *«The language of allegory, the language of symbols was the most common at that time, understood by everyone. Warriors in red-star helmets who struck the hydra of capitalism with spears or amiable workers who broke the shackles encircling the globe with hammers were watching you from the walls of houses, from the cars of agit-trains, from newspapers and leaflets.*



*Fiery, light-bearing Prometheus emerged from the depths of the centuries in the turbulent times of the world's first socialist revolution» [15; 56].*

Prometheus Unbound is a worker in a broad emotional movement. Prometheus is an image closely connected with the ideas of revolutionary romanticism. The subject of sacrifice during revolutions and civil wars is always relevant. In this monument the sculptor recreates the destruction of the old world and the birth of a new one through the *atonement sacrifice*. The image of the liberated Prometheus is a symbol of the liberated creative force, the eternal energy of life. Breaking the age-old shackles of slavery Prometheus is a symbol of people's struggle for their social and national liberation. The lack of external decoration of the monument is spiritually related to Michelangelo's titanic images and Antoine Bourdelle's monument «The Dead of Montauban».

The pedestal of the obelisk is made in the form of a stepped structure which symbolically spoke of the struggle stages and its apotheosis. Generally, such geometric, abstract in shape pedestal constructions were widespread not only because of the simplicity of execution, but also because of their eccentricity and universalism. Reinterpretation and usage of archaic forms such as the obelisk, pylon, pyramid became the solution to many revolutionary monuments. Symbolist passeism and futurism were brought together in the pursuit of simplicity.

Offering new stylistic devices, the artist did not stun the viewers, but encouraged them to think. Defending an innovative search in creativity, opposing the unification, simplification and standardization of art, the fetishization of the inviolability of its laws, I. Kavaleridze found the means that met the requirements of the time. The sculptor always demonstrated a connection with the national culture which largely determined the peculiarities of his authorial achievements which are not characterized by academicism and external decoration.

In 1923 I. Kavaleridze received the second prize (the 1st was not awarded) for the design of the monument to Artem<sup>2</sup> at the All-Soviet competition announced by Donetsk Political Executive Committee. Along with I. Kavaleridze the leading sculptors of that time – Serhiy Merkulov, Oleksiy Shchusev and others – took part in the competition.

The majestic figure of Artem in simple soldier's clothes and in foot cloths showed a stocky strong-willed man with a high-raised left hand, who appeared in the center of the city – the city of Artemivsk since then. Afterwards a burning red star appeared in Artem's left hand and a miner's lamp in his right hand.

The sculptor built the figure of Artem *as an architectural structure* – in planes. He explained his idea saying that the light burns brighter, the shadow is deeper on the flat plane. And the monument begins not from the green grass, but from the rough cobblestones, in a spiral way developing from below: the spiral in the pedestal, the spiral in the foot cloths on the legs, on the rolled-up sleeves. The whole monument is one continuous giant faceted block [10; 13]. The monument was destroyed during World War II.



Picture 2. Ivan Kavaleridze. Monument to Artem. 1927. Reinforced concrete. Slavyanogirsk.

The ideas of the monument in Bakhmut were continued in another monument to Artem in Svyatogorsk (now Slovyanogirsk, Donetsk region)<sup>3</sup>. Artem's sculpture was erected in 1927 at the workers' request. The aim of unveiling such monuments was not only to play an important role in educating and deepening the worldview of the broadest masses of workers, but also to change the appearance of cities, to add elements of the revolutionary era to their images. It is one of the few surviving monuments of Ukrainian cubism, a pearl of the Executed Renaissance era.

Here the worker's figure is located on top of a chalk mountain, this giant figure seems to be carved from reinforced concrete blocks. I. Kavaleridze experiments with planar sculptural form, originally uses specific artistic samples of the past, particularly old Ukrainian wooden architecture.

I. Kavaleridze pays special attention to the contrast of light and shadow to which he attaches crucial importance. He is not interested in monuments looking like enlarged statuettes. The artist builds a giant faceted figure which embodies the awakening of human strength and will. His typical means are used to represent this. Art critic O. Shumov rightly emphasized the connection between the artist's search and the works of O. Archypenko, the commonality of their authorial techniques built on the use of deliberately violated volumes [Quote by 10; 15–16]. This is a peculiar appeal to the counterform. Analyzing the monument to Artem in Slovyanogirsk the back of the head geometrically close to the cube enables one to imagine a haircut called 'mushroom cut'. Cubism in sculpture is more powerful, even more aggressive, in accordance with the very nature of cubism. But, on the other hand, moving towards geometric simplification, the essence of sculpture rebelled against the disintegration of form. In painting this disintegration precedes the subsequent reproduction of another plastic structure, which is completely artistic and independent of reality.

The monument evokes a lot of controversial opinions. The very idea of erecting a monument to diminish the dominance of the famous church and monastery complex of the Holy Dormition Sviatohirsk Lavra, which has existed since ancient times on the neighboring hills of the Siversky Donets River Coast, is certainly negative. The assertive aggressiveness of the giant figure is quite obvious, but outside of the specific ideological context, the author's skill in achieving artistic expressiveness of the complex compositional structure of geometrized forms and their diverse rhythmicity is striking [4; 26].

Since the late 1990 s, the monks of the monastery settlement that has existed on these hills since the thirteenth century have called the monument a pagan idol that towers over the Lavra and have been actively advocating for its elimination. Against the backdrop of decommunization in the 2010 s and especially decolonization in the 2020 s, the question arose of how to view the monument to Artem: should it be considered an object of art, one of the best examples of cubist sculpture not only in Ukraine but also in the world, or should we take into account its political component and classify it as a monument of Soviet propaganda that has no right to continue to exist in our country?

In the midst of decommunization in Ukraine the question arose – how should the monument to Artem be regarded: as an object of art or as a monument of Soviet propaganda? Today the monument is recognized as a monument of monumental art of national importance [29; 191–192].

Kavaleridze strived to build his monuments as architectural structures. The artist stated the following: *«Cubism is the simplification of living form to established geometric volumes: cubes, prisms, spheres. I wanted something else: to build a figure the way an architectural structure is erected – in planes. The advantage over the shape created by rounded volumes is that the light is reflected brighter and deeper on the plane. And most importantly, while interpreting the sculptural form with the help of planes it is possible to achieve external and internal affinity with architecture. And without this there is no and cannot be a real monumental sculpture»* [Quote by 24; 427].

The next stage of I. Kavaleridze's creative experiment with the artistic possibilities of the plastic language of planes was the monuments to Kobzar (Taras Shevchenko) for Poltava (1925) and Sumy (1926). The sculptor chose reinforced concrete as a material for monuments, perfectly mastering the form-shaping possibilities of this material.

In the monuments in Poltava and Sumy the pyramidal composition of the monument in Romny is partially repeated, but the latter versions with more faceted pedestals are more expressive despite the rigidity and conciseness of the form. Researcher Natalia Kubrysh rightly noted that these pedestals clearly show a connection with the crystalline mountain peak in Caucasus – the motherland of the sculptor's great-grandfather. Intuitively feeling the 'geological' time of the stone I. Kavaleridze combined it with the spatial structure of the man-mountain [12; 73].

The powerful figure of Taras, seeming to be carved out of a rock, is full of spiritual dramatism and expresses determination and irresistibility, hyperbolized monumentalism is enhanced by a simplified, cubist generalization of form. According to the researcher Nonna Kapelgorodskaya these monuments were ahead of their time, dissonant with the unpretentious, sometimes miserable buildings of provincial cities [10, 15]. Ulas Samchuk stated: *«It is a lonely architectural object in Poltava, standing here isolated and unsuitable for the environment. Poltava, where the 19<sup>th</sup> century still prevailed, was not ready for such demonstrative modernism»* [21; 93].

A monument to T. Shevchenko is erected in the picturesque square of Poltava, opposite the secession building of the Ukrainian Zemstvo. With clear constructive asymmetrical volumes of pyramids, cubes, parallelepipeds it reminds of an iceberg, a crystal inside of which there is superpowerful energy waiting for its time. The words from Shevchenko's «Testament» *«And water with the tyrants' blood the freedom you have*

gained» [translated by John Weir <https://taras-shevchenko.storinka.org/my-testament-poem-of-taras-shevchenko-translated-by-john-weir.html>] were carved on the side of the pedestal. The strict conciseness of the monument's shape creates an image of an eternal freedom fighter. The sculptor's imagination depicted the image of Taras Shevchenko with his own strokes and colours which acquired more and more perfection and artistic power during his life. I. Kavaleridze sought to show Kobzar to the world in all his Promethean greatness.

The monument to Taras Shevchenko in Sumy suffered a tragic fate, in 1963 it was dismantled in the wake of the struggle against formalism<sup>4</sup>. The monument was smashed to pieces overnight (to destroy is easier than to create): only a fragment survived (a head), which was buried in the ground. In the 1990s near the monument to Shevchenko while digging a trench the builders came across a part of a sculptural figure. These were the remains of a monument to Kobzar erected in 1926 [19; 189–190].



Picture 3. Ivan Kavaleridze. Monument to Taras Shevchenko. 1925. Poltava.

Over time the art of the 1920 s, which was defined as new, revolutionary, modern, began to be replaced by the proletarian art. Proletarian art had a negative attitude towards 'bourgeois', i.e. Western, culture (cubism, futurism, abstractionism and other trends). The national part in art was also rejected as the one that 'erases class differences', offers 'class peace' and, in general, is a danger to the class. I. Kavaleridze recalled: «Just at this time Joseph Stalin sent a memorable 'Letter to Comrade Kaganovych and other members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine dated April 26, 1926' drawing attention to the hostile speeches of Ukrainian nationalists» [8; 14].

The unbuilt monument to Taras Shevchenko's Tomb in Kaniv (1926) was supposed to become the culmination of the realization of monumental sculpture built on the principles of cubism.

According to the sculptor's plan Chervna Hora (Taras Hill) itself had to become a natural giant pyramidal pedestal for the half-lying poet's figure, the unconquered giant observing Ukraine. Explaining the idea of the project the author wrote: «I embody in wax what I have been nurturing for years. I want to convey the inseparability of the poet with his native land, the scale of his genius. A mound over the gray Dnipro should be a pedestal. There is a giant figure of a thinker deep in thought built in a planar manner. All together it resembles a great pyramid – grander and more majestic than the Golden Temple of the Aztecs and the Egyptian Sphinx» [Quote by 24; 427]. The sculptor places Shevchenko's rising figure on a giant mountain-mound which was revered by Kobzar as the Cossacks' graves, and accordingly – sacred places for Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian consciousness in general. The author successfully combines the features of modern sculpture with archeology which inspired the new art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For Kavaleridze the mound is not only a burial place, but also a sacred sign of Ukrainian culture. Researcher S. Verhovskiy urged to use the artist's proposed project, which, in his opinion, is an unsurpassed work of monumentalism in solving the Kobzar's image, calling it an anthropomorphic tomb, the top of the mighty Shevchenko studies [9; 16].

However, this plan of I. Kavaleridze, as well as many others in monumental sculpture, was not destined to come true. «The project was not successful, a sculptor M. Manizer is known to have won. I do not hide it, I painfully perceived the need to give up my dream. It was during this period that I turned to cinema again» [7; 88]. In addition, with the beginning of the campaign against formalism the sculptor was declared a



supporter of cubist-constructive forms which deprived him of the opportunity to participate in any competitions [17; 40].

The equestrian monument «Perekop» is perceived through the cubist form (the project also remained unrealized). In this monument not only sculptural masses, but also openings, voids and a counterform that dynamically connected volume with space were quite expressive.

In cubist-constructive forms the sculptor creates decorative figures on the facade of the Coal House in Kharkiv. This house can be attributed to the art deco style (rare for that time in Soviet Ukraine) which combines elements of constructivism and stylized classics. The combination of architectural forms with sculptures in the form of two monumental figures of miners<sup>5</sup> is of particular interest.

I. Kavaleridze strived for harmonious construction of volumetric relations choosing only those proportions that show monolithicity forming an original compositional unity. In the monuments there is a union of sculpture with elements of architecture. Features typical of I. Kavaleridze were formed – the ability to identify national characteristics, his aesthetic and stylistic sources – which bring his work to the forefront of European art.

Reinforced concrete was used as the material for all those monuments, which contains a deep symbolic meaning. The sculptor emphasizes here constructive and formative possibilities of the material – expressiveness of faceted planes, remnants of the framework, roughness of the texture. Reinforced concrete is treated as a full-fledged artistic material that opens up opportunities for a new – constructivist aesthetics.

In I. Kavaleridze's creative work there was an unfortunate situation – the paradox was that most of the works were initiated by the program of «Lenin's Plan of Monumental Propaganda» which established new and destroyed old works. The master himself suffered from this program: in 1923 his monument to «Knyaginya Olga» was dismantled in Kyiv for the reason that it did not correspond to the revolutionary ideology. Avant-garde manifestations became the object of ideological criticism as examples of *formalism* already in the late 1920s and in the following years of the establishment of socialist realism. Therefore, it is no coincidence that in his memoirs, written in more liberal, but still Soviet times, the artist tried, as it is said, to 'shift the emphasis', rejecting cubism as a component of the artistic language of his works, particularly emphasizing the following: *«Not once have I heard or read with bitterness that I had once paid tribute to the fascination with cubism. Naturally I did not have anything like this in mind and did not try to change what Olexandr Arkhpenko, for instance, had already done... By interpreting the sculptural form with the help of planes it is possible to achieve external and internal connection with architecture. Without this real monumental sculpture does not exist. I moved not from 'nothing', but from very specific artistic monuments of the past, in particular – not surprisingly for some – from the old Ukrainian wooden architecture»* [9; 53]. In these reflections of the artist we see a penetrating understanding of the Ukrainian artistic and cultural process in which innovative ideas of art of the 1920s were formed.

Along with the above-mentioned works in the late 1920s I. Kavaleridze created a relief «Health» on the facade of a workers' polyclinic in Kharkiv (1928), worked on busts of Ostap Vyshnya, Mykhailo Semenko, Mykola Kulish, a project of a tombstone for the actress Vira Kholodna and other sculptures and monuments [11; 57].

Later the avant-garde features of the sculptor's works became the reason for his inclusion in the ranks of *formalists*. Transition to cinema saved I. Kavaleridze from political purges. That was perhaps the best period in the sculptor's creative work. Now one can only guess what other creative ideas and monumental projects he could have realized if he had not been prevented from working.

The 1920s were the most fruitful period not only in I. Kavaleridze's creative work, but also in the artistic work of Mark Epstein and Joseph Chaikov who worked in accordance with the requirements of the Soviet era, with propaganda purposes as well, but did not leave the fascination with cubist forms. Ironically and because of the ruthless logic of tragic events that shaped the history of art in Ukraine none of the artists' plastic works have survived. Only some sculptures by M. Epstein and J. Chaikov are known to us from small black-and-white photographs. However, this only increases the temptation to restore the lost world from archival materials, photographs, memories.

From 1922 the sculpture of M. Epstein was influenced by constructivism. The sculptor actively worked to create a gallery of Soviet workers. In the sculptures «Worker» and «Unknown Figure» he interprets the male figure as a combination of abstract, geometrically simplified volumes, mounted in a single monumental form. He seeks to outline the image of the man in the crowd, this unit of measurement of faceless masses, which the Bolsheviks used to operate. M. Epstein's proletarian is stereotypical, automatic, he is one of the crowd, like everyone else.

The *supporter of avant-garde sculpture* – Joseph Chaikov – also worked on visual agitation in Kyiv. A sculptor, a pupil of N. Aranson's studio in Paris, like I. Kavaleridze he was fascinated by experiments with

form, worked on the book «Sculpture» in which he formulated in detail the avant-garde approach to the tasks of modern sculpture [18].

According to the Plan of Monumental Propaganda the sculptor erects a monument to Karl Marx in a cubist-constructivist style. The pedestal in the monument is built from five strong isometric cubes forming a pyramid, but in 1933 the monument was dismantled, since cubist and constructivist ideas in sculpture quickly began to be eradicated and any innovative search was classified as alien to proletarian art.

Analyzing the situation in the art of that time we should keep in mind the gradual political offensive, the narrowing of the creative space, which eventually ended with the canons of socialist realism. In the early 1930s the revolutionary pathos was finally exhausted, the government no longer needed revolutionary art, and a period of repression began to loom being the government's response to the pro-independence sentiments of avant-garde artists and Ukrainian intelligentsia.

Soviet art critics of those years accused avant-garde artists of unhealthy subjectivism and mysticism, of choosing vulgarizing methods. According to the ideological task the art of social realism was supposed to become the creator of a new utopia, and due to this a phantom of joyful and heroic Soviet life was introduced into the mass consciousness, as a result of which a large number of Ukrainian avant-garde art works were destroyed.

*Conclusions.* Thus, in the self-interpretation of the avant-garde its artistic radicalism found equivalence with the radicalism of social change, which caused a desire to establish contacts with the new government and give this correspondence a material form. However, the integration of avant-garde artists in the new society was not limited to their purely practical participation in the activities of the Soviet government, but touched the areas of creative beliefs, their correction and adaptation to new social conditions was carried out according to two main methodological principles. The first was the transposition of artistic ideas, which were to sound in the tone of the revolution while remaining true to the general principles of avant-garde art. The second, related to the understanding of the artist's role in the new society, consisted in a specific interpretation of the revolution with the help of the conceptual apparatus introduced by avant-garde aesthetics.

The usage of avant-garde pictorial means in Ukrainian art had its own specifics. It was caused by the fact that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian artists were actively involved in the process of reforming academic art (consciously formed European artists' idea), but their works were based not only on the achievements of contemporary science but also on national traditions and were not copies of Western models. This original synthesis was the historical and genetic foundation for exploratory experiments and constructions of the Ukrainian avant-garde, the basis for its significant achievements.

The analysis of Ivan Kavaleridze's creative legacy of the 1920s clearly demonstrates the metamorphoses that took place with avant-garde art. As a result of its involvement with Soviet ideologists the artistic concepts of cubism, suprematism, and constructivism, formed in the depths of modernist culture, began to be monopolized in the propaganda sphere. Avant-garde art received almost official status under Soviet rule for a certain time. Soviet ideologists entrusted avant-garde art, in particular futurism, suprematism, and constructivism, with an important destructive-constructive function. Soviet and directly Ukrainian avant-garde became a starting point for the formation of a socialist-realist style. The socio-utopian character of the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s was transformed into a politically engaged type of Soviet art.

The experience of Ukrainian avant-garde culture and art of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows that the dialectic of development was never determined by a single straight or ascending line: each stage of the historical movement did not necessarily become 'higher' than the previous one. Invaluable, decades-old artistic heritage of the Ukrainian avant-garde art has concentrated enormous formative possibilities, so today it should honorably enter the treasury of the world culture.

#### Примітки

<sup>1</sup> Taras Shevchenko (also known as Kobzar) (1814–1861) – Ukrainian writer, thinker, artist, national hero and symbol.

<sup>2</sup> Artem is a historical figure – a revolutionary named Fyodor Sergeyev. Artem's name was considered a cult during the Soviet era. After spending almost seven years in Australia, where there were no revolutionary upheavals, he founded the Socialist Party of Australia. After Artem's death (July 24, 1921) in an accident it was decided to build a monument in his honour.

<sup>3</sup> The monument to Artem is the highest sculpture in the style of cubism in Europe. The height of the monument is 22 meters, with a pedestal being 28 meters. At the same time it is also the most massive concrete sculpture in the world weighing more than 800 tons.

<sup>4</sup> On March 8, 1963 in Moscow in a speech during his meeting with the creative intelligentsia Nikita Khrushchev subjected Ivan Kavaleridze's work to devastating criticism calling him a cubist sculptor and almost accusing him of collaborationism.

<sup>5</sup> One of the miner's figures collapsed in 1980 and was dismantled, restored at the Kharkiv sculpture factory and returned to its place in 1981.

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### Illustrations

*Picture 1.* Ivan Kavalieridze. Monument to Taras Shevchenko. 1918. Reinforced concrete. Romney. The author of the photo is Eugene Sagittarius. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:..JPG>

*Picture 2.* Ivan Kavalieridze. Monument to Artem. 1927. Reinforced concrete. Slavyanogirsk. Author of the photo SGIAZ Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/.jpg>

*Picture 3.* Ivan Kavalieridze. Monument to Taras Shevchenko. 1925. Poltava. Photo by Turzh. Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/uk/.JPG>

## LES PARTICULARITÉS DE LA SCULPTURE D'IVAN KAVALERIDZE DANS LE CONTEXTE DE L'AVANT-GARDE EUROPÉENNE DU PREMIER TIERS DU XX SIÈCLE

**Prokopchuk Inna** – PhD ès arts, professeure agrégée

Département de design, Université nationale de foresterie d'Ukraine,

L'établissement de la stabilité des formes des arts plastiques, leur détermination par les formations naturelles universelles est au cœur de l'esthétique d'un des sculpteurs célèbres, le fondateur de l'avant-garde ukrainienne dans la sculpture monumentale, le réalisateur, le dramaturge – Ivan Kavalieridze (1887–1978).

L'admiration par la sculpture cubiste française a formé ses propres tendances artistiques. C'était I. Kavalieridze qui tentait de faire sortir la sculpture monumentale ukrainienne sur le niveau du développement correspondant à l'avant-garde parisienne. Le cubisme conformément aux tendances générales de l'époque semble libérer la sculpture des couches de salon, en exposant la structure, la rythmique et la dynamique, en affinant les qualités propres à la sculpture du début du XX-ième siècle.

I. Kavalieridze a étoffé les doctrines cubistes, en les accordant le principe national puissant, a attiré l'attention sur les problèmes importants et particuliers de la sculpture dans de grands espaces urbains et naturels de son temps. La vision originale de la sculpture comme de la structure architecturale, l'adoption des idées constructivistes – l'utilisation du béton armé comme matériau, la maîtrise parfaite de ses capacités modificatrices. I. Kavalieridze propose les œuvres monumentales originales où se manifestent les principes cubistes et constructivistes de la création de forme qui correspondent aux tendances les plus actuelles des arts plastiques à l'échelle mondiale.

Dès la deuxième moitié des années 1920 la vie sociale et artistique en Ukraine subit l'influence de la politique. Après quelques années, cela devient le critère principal dans l'évaluation sociale et artistique de l'artiste. Le compromis dans la relation de l'artiste avec l'idéologie soviétique est reflété dans la sculpture qui était la première à assumer le rôle du propagandiste de l'État soviétique. La valeur des expériences plastiques du modernisme commence à céder la place au sens pompeux et politique. En très peu de temps, c'est cette caractéristique qui va réunir les courants appartenant aux différents styles dans un phénomène social et artistique qui déborde les objectifs des arts plastiques et visuels.

L'œuvre du sculpteur s'inscrit dans les phénomènes de l'art ukrainien qui débordent les dimensions purement esthétiques et reflètent l'image de l'époque. Les créations de l'artiste révèlent les événements majeurs de ses temps, les changements dans l'art, la culture, la conscience sociale qui ont défini les traits de l'évolution artistique. L'époque des changements impétueux et des perturbations sociales – la guerre mondiale, des révolutions, la dictature du prolétariat, la renaissance nationale des années 1920, les années du totalitarisme et la libéralisation soviétique ont laissé pour toujours une marque expressive dans l'œuvre du génie.

*Key words:* art, avant-garde, monument d'art, sculpture, artiste.

## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЛАСТИКИ ІВАНА КАВАЛЕРІДЗЕ В КОНТЕКСТІ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО МИСТЕЦТВА АВАНГАРДУ ПЕРШОЇ ТРЕТИНИ XX СТОЛІТТЯ

**Прокопчук І.** – кандидат мистецтвознавства, доцент кафедри дизайну

Національний лісотехнічний університет України, Львів, Україна

Ствердження незмінності форм пластичного мистецтва, їх обумовленості природними універсальними утвореннями становить основу естетики одного з видатних скульпторів, засновника українського авангарду в монументальній пластиці, кінорежисера, драматурга – Івана Кавалерідзе (1887–1978 рр.). Захоплення французькою кубістичною пластикою стало підґрунтям для власних творчих спрямувань. Саме І. Кавалерідзе намагався вивести українську монументальну скульптуру на рівень досягнень паризького авангарду. Кубізм, у згоді із загальними тенденціями часу, ніби звільняє скульптуру від салонних нашарувань, оголюючи конструкцію, ритміку та динаміку, загострюючи якості, що загалом властиві пластиці початку XX ст.

І. Кавалерідзе наповнив кубістичні доктрини могутнім національним началом, висунув важливі і специфічні для свого часу проблеми скульптури у великих просторах, урбаністичних і природніх. Оригінальне розуміння скульптури як архітектурної споруди, відкритість до конструктивістських ідей – використання в якості матеріалу залізобетону, досконало опановуючи формотворчі можливості цього матеріалу. І. Кавалерідзе пропонує оригінальні за творчим задумом монументальні твори, у яких найповніше втілені кубістичні та конструктивістські принципи формотворення, що відповідали в той час найактуальнішим тенденціям світової пластики.

Від другої половини 1920-х років в Україні посилюється вплив політики на культурно-мистецьке життя. Протягом кількох років це стає визначальним критерієм у творчому та соціальному оцінюванні художника. Компроміс у взаємовідносинах художника і радянської ідеології виразно проявився в скульптурі, яка першою взяла на себе роль агітаційного пропагандиста радянської держави. Самоцінність образотворчих експериментів модернізму починає поступатися мітингово-пафосному змістові. За досить короткий час саме ця ознака об'єднує різностильові напрями в мистецько-соціальний феномен, який концептуально виходить за межі образотворчих і пластичних завдань.

Творчість скульптора належить до тих явищ українського мистецтва, які виходять за межі суто естетичних вимірів і віддзеркалюють образ доби. Твори митця говорять про головні події доби, ті зміни у мистецтві, культурі, суспільній свідомості, що визначили особливості мистецького розвитку. Доба бурхливих змін та соціальних потрясінь – світова війна, революції, пролетарська диктатура, національне піднесення 1920-х років, роки тоталітарного режиму та радянської лібералізації – назавжди забарвили виразними символами творчість геніального митця.

*Ключові слова: мистецтво, авангард, пам'ятка мистецтва, скульптура, художник.*

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