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### **Academic sculpture as the basis of decorative plastic of small forms**

**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the specifics of teaching academic sculpture and decorative plastics of small shapes to future artists of traditional applied art. The article provides a detailed review of academic assignments in the disciplines «Academic sculpture and plastic modeling» and «Decorative plastic of small shapes». Special attention is paid to the interrelation of these disciplines, the need for consistent development of the stages of transformation of academic sculptural form into decorative is justified. Logical consistency in the interrelation of such disciplines as «Academic drawing», «Plastic Anatomy» and «Decorative drawing». Separately, such an important section of learning as composition is considered, the main algorithms by which it is built, the rules by which the elements are formed into an integral rhythmically composed structure are revealed. The article examines in detail the problem of selecting existing professional tools with which to conduct a compositional search in order to achieve the most expressive, decorative plastic solutions in the design and manufacture of jewelry

**Keywords:** traditional applied art, sculpture, the specifics of training, decorative small plastic, shape, volume, relief, ornament, composition, transformation, stylization, still life, sculptural images of animals and birds.

The process of becoming an artist of traditional applied art is associated with the development of the most important key knowledge of such disciplines as "Academic drawing", "Academic painting", "Plastic anatomy", "Decorative drawing", "Academic sculpture and plastic modeling".

The discipline "Decorative plastic of small shapes" is part of the training of the future artist. At the Institute of traditional applied arts – the Moscow branch of the Higher school of folk arts (academy) it is mastered by students studying at the Department of Jewelry Art since the work of jewelers is associated with three-dimensional and relief images [8, p. 7] (fig. 1<sup>50</sup>).

Almost all tasks on decorative fine plastics are based on sculptural formations that develop spatial and decorative thinking combined with the practice of mastering the knowledge gained while performing academic sculpture and plastic modeling training tasks.

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<sup>50</sup> Fig. 1-18. – photo of the author of the article.

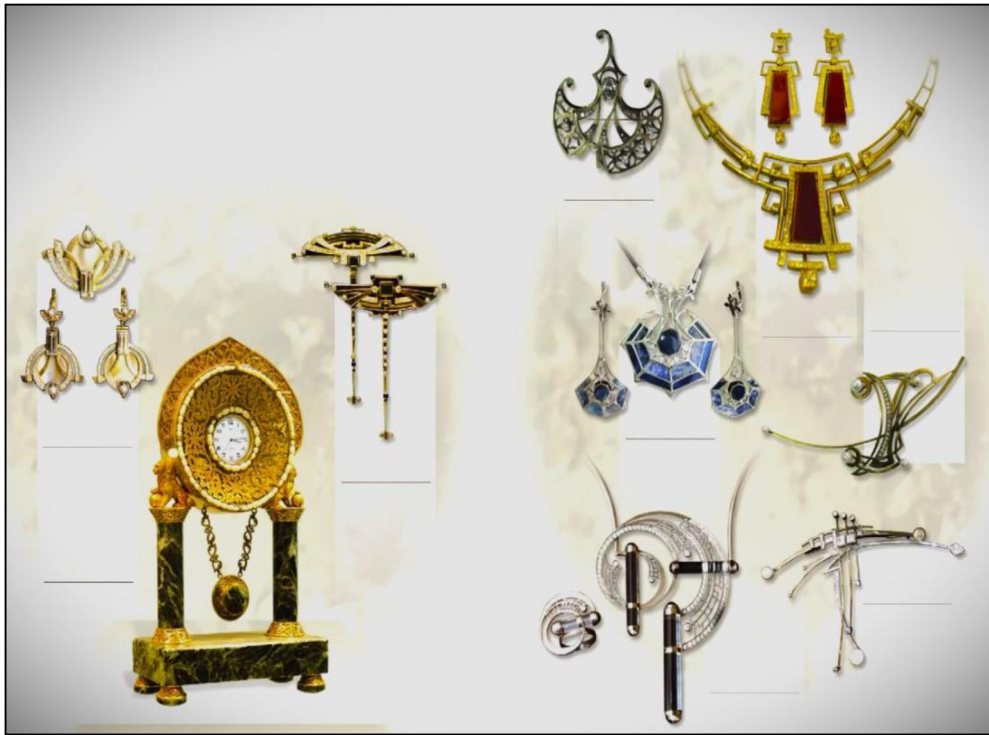


Fig.1. Final qualifying works of students of the Institute of Traditional Applied Arts, profile – artistic metal (jewelry art)

Mastering the program of the discipline "Academic Sculpture and plastic modeling" lays the fundamental foundation for the formation of an artist of traditional applied art.

The main disciplines are in mastering the methods of sculpting and modeling studying, the stages of sculptural work from creating a frame to applying decorative textures mastering techniques and methods of constructive construction of relief (fig. 2) and three-dimensional images (fig. 3).

Academic sculpture provides students with most of their professional knowledge. Practical exercises with natural objects form three-dimensional spatial thinking make it possible to escape from the flat perception of the surrounding world. Performing three-dimensional images helps to analyze the structure and character features of the model's shape, teaches to identify and emphasize its individual design features.



Fig. 2. Solopova A. I course. Relief image of flowers



Fig. 3. Myltsyn N. I course. Three-dimensional image of an animal

To study sculpture you need basic knowledge based on the ability to depict real objects by exploring their interaction in space. Knowledge about the features of materials, their plastic and decorative properties is of great importance for future artists who use three-dimensional images in their works. For example, techniques for comparing mirror-smooth and matte surfaces of planes used in sculpture can be used in the art of jewelry making. And the formation of knowledge of the transmission of aerial perspective in reliefs and the features of its construction through the plans of the depicted objects will prepare

students to create three-dimensional objects.

A special emphasis in teaching academic sculpture is placed on the ability to depict plant and floral motifs (fig. 5, 6) since these themes are among the most common and often used in jewelry art (fig. 7).



Fig. 5. A. Gatieva. I course. A copy of the plaster plant rosette



Fig. 6. I. Bolkisev I course. Modeling plants from nature



a)



b)

Fig. 7. Tegethoff Yu. Final qualifying work in 2012: a. – bracelet, b. – brooch

Equally important are the professional skills of depicting humans and animals (fig. 8, 9) which are often included in decorative plastic volumetric and relief compositions of varying degrees of complexity.

In practical classes students master the features of the artistic language of academic sculpture which includes the specifics of constructing a relief circular sculpture and various techniques for performing work in various materials [5, p. 196].



Fig. 8. Zosimov A. I course.  
Three-dimensional image of an animal

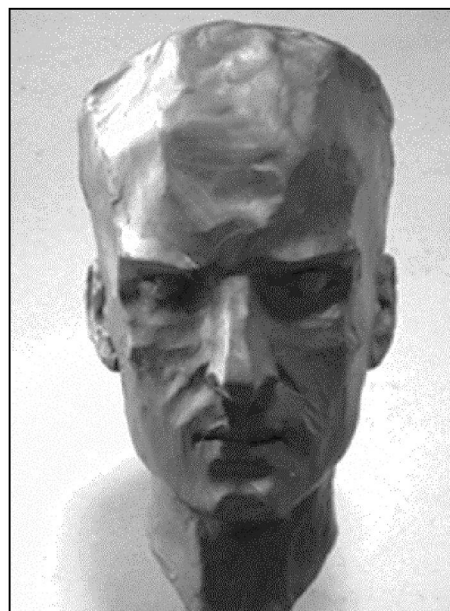


Fig. 9. Orekhova E. III course.  
Three-dimensional image of the model's head

Students perform a copy of the classic socket in the first year. The rosette is a plaster flattened decorative image and is a type of relief in order to acquire theoretical knowledge about the construction of a relief and in practice master the techniques and skills of its creation. The composition in the work is built from a central point. This assignment is the very first in the academic sculpture and plastic modeling program. It is an introductory stage in the formation of an understanding of the difference between a graphic image and a relief image. In a step-by-step process the basic principles of constructing a three-dimensional relief with a plant form are studied. Skills and abilities are being developed through the form and its character to convey the features of the image as a result of working with the model.

The practice and knowledge acquired in the process of working on academic assignments become an example of a professional approach to solving complex artistic problems with the correct practical use of acquired knowledge in plastic modeling. This experience contributes to the application of techniques in the creation of plastic and decorative works. Figures 10-11 show the creative works of students performed in classes on decorative plastics of small shapes in which decorative tasks are solved based on the principles of constructing academic relief giving the compositional design the conventionality inherent in works of decorative art.

The unifying principle of academic sculpture and decorative plastics of small forms is the use of volume with the use of constructive spatial form as well as work with an objective tangible environment. The environment includes figures of people, animals, birds, various species of flora architectural objects. They are closely connected by the use of professional shape modeling and a set of weights in accordance with the required number of design plans the location of the depicted objects in real and conditional spaces. The basis of academic disciplines is the analysis of shaping which develops three-dimensional thinking [2, p. 8]. It becomes possible to create multifaceted creative works rich in plastic and artistic solutions as a result of the unification of the academic and decorative approach.



Fig. 10. Burova V. I course. Decorative relief image of a plant composition



Fig. 11. E. Orekhova. II course. Decorative relief image of a still life

Professional drawing is the basis of academic sculptural representation as with any kind of fine art. It serves as the same basis in decorative sculpture of small forms for which it is important to observe proportions the ratio of the magnitudes of the elements of the composition with the work as a whole. Building certain relationships of objects is understanding movement, scale and rhythm.

It is necessary to adhere to the proportionality of the whole and individual parts of the whole in building a harmonious composition both in academic sculpture and decoration. It is important to understand the scale proportionality of the form and its elements in relation to the surrounding space and other forms [3, p. 7]. Observance of proportions scale, special rhythmic organization and interrelation of visual elements play an important role in achieving the expressiveness of a decorative composition (fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Shavyrin I. I course. Decorative relief image of a plant composition



Fig. 13. Efremov E. Brooch "Cherry orchard". Final qualifying work. 2017

The experience of developing compositions and creating them in classes on decorative plastics of small shapes becomes one of the main sources of concentration of ideas that allow them to be used in the design of jewelry of diverse themes and purpose [6, p. 63]. For example, the final qualifying work of E. Efremov is the brooch

"Cherry Orchard" (fig. 13). The brooch is a traditional women's jewelry which embodies the image of a cherry orchard in a miniature form. The theme is revealed expressively and precisely through the play of smooth lines of stylized plant elements, their combination with colored stones and mother-of-pearl inserts. Each stone is well positioned at the base of the nickel, silver elements creating a beautiful composition. The plastic of a special artistic form was able to be formed and developed by the author in the process of completing tasks on academic sculpture and plastic modeling where the techniques of classical modeling were comprehended. Moreover, the basic principles of constructing a relief with plant and animal themes were studied. The ability and understanding of how to convey the features of the image by plastic means and create new creative products using these means comes as a result of long-term analytical work with nature.

An example of the use of expressive means of decorative plastics can be the final qualifying work of E. Rybalko "Bows" (fig. 14, 15). Ornately organized rows of faceted shimmering stones are harmoniously woven into the exquisite plastic of the bends of the ribbons. A successful combination of the expressive silhouette line of the bows with elegant floral elements has been found. The work shows how the methods of stylization studied and used in classes on decorative plastics. Conventionality, generality, symbolism, ornamentation, rejection of unnecessary secondary in shaping are used to realize the idea and reveal the theme.

The key to the successful execution of decorative jewelry is the development of a method for converting two-dimensional space into three-dimensional space. It requires the performance of practical training tasks which are combined in a certain logical sequence.

The formation of three-dimensional thinking has its beginning in the practice of performing tasks in academic sculpture based on the idea of three dimensions of space.

Thus, the problem of perceiving the relief as a real volume with the characteristics of a round sculpture is solved in constructing the relief of a bird on a plane by sculptural techniques of flattening and sequential distribution of constructive plans. This creates the illusion of a space located outside the sculptural image by building plans parallel to the background plane and maintaining the height of the relief along the entire contour of the bird silhouette. To enhance the effect of

volume the sections of the object's near-field plan are worked out in more detail in subsequent plans (fig. 16).



Fig. 14, 15. Rybalko E. Brooches "Bows". Final qualifying work. 2019

This technique is used in the creation of jewelry where the perception of the height of the relief is also enhanced by contrasting relief textures with mirror-polished matte background textures. Often sculptural techniques are combined with techniques for decorating the surface of jewelry. For example, products are treated with a special composition the main ingredient of which is sulfur. As a result of this



Fig. 16. Relief of the bird. Stages of the work

processing the material acquires an unusual play of color transitions of varying intensity. After polishing the protruding elements become lighter. Thereby the height of the relief on a darkened background visually increases which makes it much more expressive in its decorative properties.

The experience is gained in the process of completing the tasks set in academic sculpture plastic modeling and decorative plastic of small shapes. It becomes valuable material for practical application in the manufacture of jewelry.

The experience of developing plant and floral motifs served as the material for the design and creation of semester papers is presented in figures 17-18. The stylized solution uses the main expressive means of relief, i.e. the deployment of the

composition on a plane; in this case the plane of the background is conditional. At the same time the image itself is constructed with the transmission of spatial plans. Flowers are in the foreground leaf elements made in an openwork; through technique they are placed on the second and the artfully stylized branches and finally become the final third plan. The elements of the image are consistently perceived which creates a sense of unity structural orderliness and integrity of the product due to this grouping of the parts of the composition arranged in a certain ornamental rhythm.



Fig. 17. G. Golitsyno. Brooch "Flower". Semester work. 2020 y.



Fig. 18. A. Om. Earrings. Semester work. 2020

The modern period of jewelry art development is a period of design beginnings and the application of modern technologies. Modern jewelers have access to technical innovations that allow them to embody any formative structures in the material. No matter what topics the artist addresses, no matter what materials he uses in his products, they gain artistic value through the use of professional experience. The experience is based on the knowledge gained in solving problems, set in classes on academic sculpture plastic modeling and decorative plastic of small shapes.

An important component of acquiring qualified knowledge is the need to study the experience of artists of previous generations [7, p. 16] in order to rethink information and experience in the formation of an individual approach to plastic language. In the created products the authors rely on working with nature on impressions from bringing compositional and decorative schemes mastered and applied in the learning process.

Thus, a pronounced continuous interdisciplinary connection is obvious contributing to the accumulation of professional skills of future artists of traditional art [1, p. 6]. At the same time technical skills are being mastered with a variety of expressive means of plastic language for creating jewelry which will subsequently contribute to firm confidence in the independent individual activities of graduates.



One cannot do without a serious study of historical cultural heritage working from nature for a full understanding of the nature of plastic art [4, p. 7].

It becomes obvious that academic sculpture and plastic modeling reasonably occupy a place among the most important artistic and general education disciplines since the three-dimensional form is the initial basis for most of the products of traditional applied art.

There is an obvious need for a continuous interdisciplinary connection of the disciplines "Academic Drawing", "Academic Sculpture and plastic Modeling", "Academic Painting", "Plastic Anatomy", "Decorative Drawing" in order for the process of future artists training of traditional applied art to provide an opportunity to fully reveal all the variety of professional skills in further creative individual work. As a result, the volume of professional knowledge and extensive experience in practical educational work reveal the prospects for the development of the artist's ideas, increase the range of expressive means in the author's works, inspire further independent activity.

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