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**DECORATIVE PAINTING AS A MEANS OF TRANSLATING CULTURAL SEMANTIC NARRATIVE**

**Purpose.** The research involves analyzing folk decorative painting and transferring its most typical compositional techniques and characteristics into souvenir items.

**Methodology.** To achieve the research goal, a comprehensive approach was employed, utilizing general scientific methods of literature analysis and visual examination of historical materials and contemporary souvenir products.

**Results.** During the research, the features of decorative painting, its techniques, and methods were studied; the morphological components of decorative painting and the ways of interpreting its elements were analyzed.

**Scientific novelty.** The study highlights the cultural and historical significance of decorative painting in the design of souvenir products. A comparative analysis of various types of decorative painting has been conducted and systematized; the compositional elements employed in the creation of souvenir product designs have been analyzed.

**Practical significance.** The research focuses on assessing the feasibility of incorporating elements of decorative painting into souvenir product design and highlights the issue of transmitting semantic narratives that contribute to enhancing the cultural value and aesthetic appeal of contemporary souvenir items.

**Keywords:** decorative painting, design, souvenir production, folk art, symbolism.

**Introduction.** Decorative painting and the ornamentation of objects are integral aspects of national culture. They convey information about the historical, social, and religious dimensions of our ancestors' lives. As a form of folk art, decorative painting plays a crucial role in preserving and reviving cultural traditions. Its universality and adaptability allow for the incorporation of traditional elements into contemporary design and manufacturing, imbuing products with unique significance and depth. The adaptation of traditional techniques in modern design facilitates the creation of innovative products with distinctive aesthetic characteristics, expanding creative possibilities and promoting the dissemination of cultural heritage.

Analysis of previous research. The research presented in O. Koshel's article [9] highlights the deep integration of traditional Petrykivka painting into various domains of the artistic industry. The author examines the application of this folk art through the works of M. Tymchenko and other prominent graduates of the decorative painting school. The

achievements of masters such as T. Pata, N. Bilokin, I. Pylypenko, and H. Prudnikova are discussed, demonstrating each individual's contribution to the development and popularization of folk painting. An important place in the study of Ukrainian decorative painting is occupied by the scientific achievements of B.S. Butnik-Siversky [2] and Y. Smolii [19]. Scholarly works by O. Telizhenko [6], N. Studinets [20] and other researchers emphasize the significance of folk art in Ukraine's cultural life, highlighting its deep roots and continuity of tradition. Their studies particularly focus on the artistic uniqueness of decorative paintings on wooden household items, which reflect the richness and diversity of Ukrainian decorative applied art. The fourth volume of "History of Decorative Art of Ukraine", edited by G. Skrypyk [19], describes the work of folk masters, the history of folk art of the 20th century. This scientific work covers a significant chronological period, carrying out a comprehensive analysis of traditions and stylistic directions of art that were formed in different regions of Ukraine. The

study is based on an extensive array of archival materials and the results of field research, which ensures its weight and scientific validity in the study of culture and art in the context of decorative paintings.

Another group of researchers, including M. Kyrychenko [8] and A. Chudnivets [12], concentrates on the challenges of teaching and mastering artistic painting techniques and their symbolic meanings. Their work aims to identify effective methods for transmitting skills that ensure the preservation and development of this unique technique. Research by O. Vakulenko, T. Vakulenko, O. Myronovych, O. Skrypka, and other scholars is dedicated to exploring ways to apply folk painting in the modern cultural space. These studies open new perspectives for integrating folk art into contemporary design environments, including fashion, interior design, and visual media, thus promoting its relevance and innovative use.

Overall, the reviewed research collectively underscores not only the cultural and historical value of folk painting but also its significance in the context of contemporary artistic and cultural development in Ukraine.

**Task statement.** The objective is to analyze the significance of folk decorative painting as an integral component of Ukrainian cultural identity and its role in conveying the spiritual and moral values of the nation. This includes identifying the characteristics and researching the symbolism of decorative painting to apply its elements in the design of souvenir products. Additionally, the study aims to highlight the impact of folk art on the tourist attractiveness of regions through souvenir products, which support cultural identity and preserve traditional crafts.

**Research results and discussion.** The material and spiritual wealth of each nation is reflected in its unique folk art, which is shaped by its culture, providing the context and conditions for its emergence and development. Art, in turn, serves as a means of shaping and enriching culture, conveying its content and values. Over time, art transmits the moral and

value ideals of our culture while accumulating the experience of both collective and individual artistic creativity. Folk crafts are one of the historically determined organizational forms of art, representing the production of artistic products through mandatory creative manual labor [21].

National stylistics and artistic imagery have evolved to high standards of artistic quality, absorbing the best traditions and tastes of the Ukrainian people and transforming them into cultural and spiritual values. Over time, each locality developed its own methods and technical means for decorating rural buildings, interiors, and household items. This led to the formation of unique ornamental motifs in each of these localities.

**Kosiv painting** is a traditional painting style from the Ivano-Frankivsk region, specifically from Kosiv (Tab. 1.1). On objects adorned with this style, which is characterized by folk primitivism, one can distinguish botanical, anthropomorphic, and ornithomorphic motifs. The characteristic colors are white, green, and ochre. The most popular item of applied art featuring Kosiv painting is candlesticks, which also carry a sacred significance as they are used in both residential and public interiors and traditional Hutsul rituals. However, Kosiv painting is also found on other items: goblets, plates, bowls, jugs, and tiles (Tab. 1.1-a). Sometimes a single motif might be spread across several tiles (e.g., Hutsul stoves of the mid-19th century in the works of O. Bakhmatiuk and the Baraniuk brothers, such as "The Chariot with the Emperor" and "Austrian Army" [5]).

Petrykivka painting is a traditional wall painting style originating from the village of Petrykivka in the Dnipropetrovsk region (Tab. 1.2). Its primary elements include floral ornaments, occasionally complemented by zoomorphic and ornithomorphic motifs. Traditionally, the painting is executed on a white background and covers almost the entire surface of the object. A distinctive feature of Petrykivka painting is its vibrant color palette, based on three primary colors: red, blue, and

yellow [15]. By the end of the 19th century, Petrykivka painting adorned various types of pottery, interior decorations, and later began to spread to numerous practical household items:

- Decorative items (boxes, vases, candlesticks, clocks);
- Utility items (plates, cutting boards, spoons, forks);
- Souvenirs (magnets; clay figurines and miniatures, keychains);
- Jewelry (costume jewelry);
- Clothing (denim jackets, t-shirts, hats);
- Printed materials (postcards, brochures, posters, etc.).

Leading masters of Petrykivka painting include V. Klymenko-Zhukov, M. Tymchenko, and H. Pavlenko. These artists, predominantly from the Kyiv school, infused traditional techniques with distinctiveness, originality, and new interpretations of established motifs [11]. In 2013, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine included Petrykivka painting in the list of intangible cultural heritage of Ukraine.

Opishnya painting is a traditional style from the Poltava region, specifically from the town of Opishnya (Tab. 1.3). Opishnya ornaments feature simple motifs, primarily floral elements such as flowers, clusters, and branches, which have been prevalent since the 17th century. Characteristic of this type of decorative painting are light yellow, reddish-brown colors with contrasting blue and black elements. A key feature is the enclosing line that connects all decorative elements. Finished items are covered with an engobe (a special clay layer), and the technique used for painting bowls is called "flandrirovka" (applying colors to the bisque with subsequent stretching using a special wire hook). The item is dipped in red clay, placed on a potter's wheel, and painted while "stretching" lines with a copper hook. The paint flows in thin lines, creating painterly effects and unique patterns. This technique requires considerable skill, speed, and precision, as each painting is executed in the "a-la prima" technique, where corrections are not possible [15].

Ceramic items decorated with Opishnya decorative painting include:

- Glazed painted ware – including pots, jugs, bowls, pitchers, and small barrels decorated with engobes in carving or flandrirovka techniques, mostly featuring floral motifs;
- Figurative ceramics – reflecting stylized animal images such as lions, rams, and bulls, assembled from pottery parts and then decorated with textured clay adornments and colored glazes;
- Toys and small sculptures – handmade and painted in the same style as the pottery, adorned with glazes.









Opishnya painting was included in the list of intangible cultural heritage of Ukraine in 2018.

Bubnivka painting, also known as "Bubnivka ceramics," is prevalent in the Vinnytsia region (Tab. 1.4). Its primary elements are floral images with a color scheme that includes yellow-brown, white, blue, and gray shades. The tradition of Bubnivka ceramics is attributed to Andrii Honchar, who trained leading masters, the Herasimenko brothers. The Bubnivka ceramics collection is preserved in the Herasimenko Museum-Estate located in the village of Novoselivka, Vinnytsia region, which supports the preservation and revival of this valuable art. Bubnivka artisans produce bowls, jugs, small pitchers, vases, and service sets. Bubnivka painting was included in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ukraine in 2018.

Yavoriv painting originated in the 18th century and has long-standing traditions (Tab. 1.5). It was most commonly used to decorate chests and was also applied to wooden toys such as rocking horses, butterflies, birds, and carts, crafted from wood with original mechanisms for each toy. These designs were intended to be simple, realistic, and attractive. Typically, the ornamentation included floral and geometric motifs, with predominant colors being green, yellow, and red.

Table 1

**Examples of Original Folk Painting in Modern Interpretations**

Examples of original decorative folk painting	Examples of modern stylization of decorative folk painting
<b>Kosiv painting</b>	
<p>1</p> 	
<p>a – Kosiv painting tiles from the Trots' family</p>	<p>b – stylization of Kosiv painting on hand-crafted gingerbread</p>
<b>Petrykivka painting</b>	
<p>2</p> 	
<p>a – Petrykivka painting by Tetyana Patia. Panel titled "Two Peacocks"</p>	<p>b – stylization of Petrykivka painting on magnets by UkrGifts.com</p>
<b>Opishnya painting</b>	
<p>3</p> 	
<p>a – original Opishnya painting</p>	<p>b – modern souvenir incorporating elements of Opishnya painting</p>
<b>Bubnivka painting</b>	
<p>4</p> 	
<p>a – Bubnivka ceramics.</p>	<p>b – clay figurines decorated with Bubnivka painting by contemporary artisans</p>



Continuation of Table 1

<b>Yavoriv painting</b>	
5	 
a – Yavoriv painting on a wooden toy	b – Yavoriv painting, a design on glass by N. Dyuh
<b>Samchykivka painting</b>	
6	 
a – original Samchykivka painting	b – stylization of Samchykivka painting, postcard by V. Rakovski
<b>Polissya painting</b>	
7	 
a – element of Polissya painting on embroidery	b – stylization of Polissya painting based on a design by A. Voloshina

**Samchykivka painting** derives its name from the village where it originated in the late 19th century and is characterized by its narrative zigzag patterns (Tab. 1.6). The color palette has a traditional sacred significance, based on Slavic beliefs and ethnic culture. The primary colors used are red, blue, green, and yellow, with additional use of black, brown,

pink, and purple. The composition consists of a flat ornament, with elements in the design not exceeding seven in number. It is always clear, consisting of a base, middle, peak, and conclusion. Larger elements are placed at the bottom and become progressively smaller towards the top, creating a rhythmic organization and balance in the composition.

The most characteristic features of Samchykivka painting include floral elements, complemented by images of animals and birds [17]. The most typical application of this painting was on the walls of houses, where it served not only a decorative purpose but also held symbolic protective significance. With the help of the UAmaze artistic project, which promoted Samchykivka painting, calendars, posters, and postcards featuring illustrations were published (Tab. 1.6-b), workshops were conducted, and exhibitions were organized [3].

**Polissya painting** spread throughout the Polissya region from the 19th century (Tab. 1.7). The colors used are pure and bright, without mixing or gradients, with red, green, blue, orange, and yellow being the most common. Occasionally, black is used for decoration and emphasis. The most typical applications of Polissya painting were on porcelain and embroidery, with the background usually left white to highlight the brightness and purity of the colors. Key elements of Polissya painting include floral motifs-berries, leaves, tendrils, and plant shoots, as well as an ornamented "vase" and a central flower made from patterned semi-circles and petals (sometimes with a central petal featuring a so-called "tassel") [3].

Polissya painting elements can be found on:

- Walls of houses (Tab. 1.7-b);
- Porcelain items;
- Decorative objects (chests);
- Souvenirs (clay figurines and miniatures, motanka dolls);
- Textile products (t-shirts, towels);
- Murals;
- Printed materials (posters, brochures).

The phenomenon of decorative painting can be examined through the lens of a complex symbolic system that reflects the unique worldview and philosophy of its creators, tracing their historical roots.

The semantic significance of decorative elements within folk art has developed through the use of painting as a form of "informational

communication." A certain semantic narrative in the context of folk decorative painting can be understood as the interpretation of symbols, images, and ornaments used in folk art to convey specific ideas, values, and stories. For example, Ukrainian folk painting often incorporates elements with deep cultural meanings, such as symbols of life, fertility, protection, and eternity.

These narratives may be based on historical events, mythology, religious beliefs, or social norms, passed down through generations via the art of decorative painting. Ukrainian wall art exhibits regional characteristics with a distinct stylistic imagery that reflects the cultural and historical peculiarities of the region. They play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural identity and heritage.

This symbolic system gives rise to a profound semantic narrative, manifested in the motifs and elements of the painting, each carrying specific meanings. For example:

- **Periwinkle** symbolizes youth, health, prosperity, the infinity of life, and eternal memory [1].

- **Oak leaf** represents strength, bravery, longevity, and happiness [18].

- **Grapes**, along with their clusters and vines, symbolize fertility, abundance, and wealth [18].

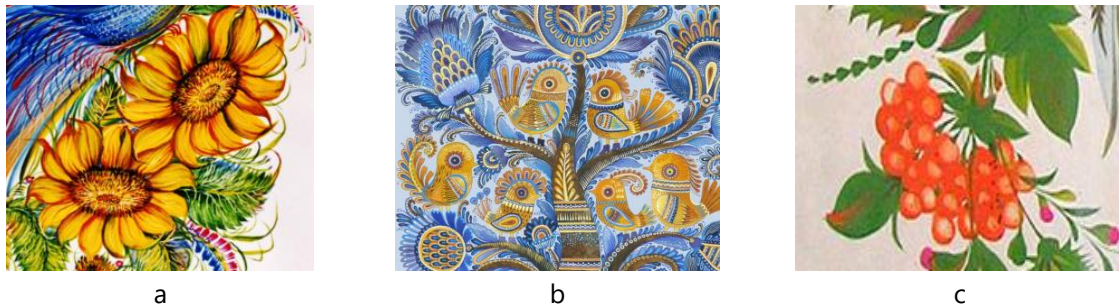
- **Rose** signifies love and beauty [22], while the **white lily** reflects purity, innocence, and chastity [13].

- **Viburnum** is associated with maidenhood, beauty, and happiness [7] (Fig. 1, c).

- **Sunflower** symbolizes the sun, health, energy, constancy, and resilience [22] (Fig.1, a).

- **Bird** represents the birth of life, fertility, offspring, and prosperity [10] (Fig. 1, b).





The rich symbolism of decorative painting reflects a profound reverence for nature, a characteristic of Ukrainian culture with roots traceable back to the Paleolithic era. Ornamentation from that period was intended to ward off evil spirits and attract happiness and abundance, and its significance remains relevant in contemporary Ukrainian rituals.



**Fig. 1.** Examples of the use of original botanical elements in artworks:  
 a – Sunflowers by A. Pikush; b – "Golden birds" by O. Vakulenko; c – Viburnum by V. Sokolenko

Table 2

**Examples of original folk painting interpretation in modern souvenirs**

Typical souvenirs featuring decorative painting elements	
1	 <p>a – handmade magnet from UkrGifts.com</p>
	 <p>b – Easter postcard from Gifty</p>
Decorative paintings on clay products by A. Voloshyna	
2	 <p>a – white clay horse, unglazed decoration</p>
	 <p>b – glazed "Spring Kittens"</p>

The application of historical decorative painting spans a wide range of industries, including light industry, porcelain, and textiles, among others [10]. Academic research highlights that decorative painting represents a significant segment of Ukrainian folk cultural heritage, characterized by a deeply rooted philosophy based on principles of naturalism. The thematic foundation of decorative painting arises from the richness of the local flora and fauna, as well as historically established traditions. Over time, decorative

painting has become a key element of national identity and cultural code. The tradition of decorating the walls of homes, stoves, and chests with floral motifs, which originated in ancient times, has found extensive application in various fields, including souvenir design. This process has evolved from tangible items produced using traditional crafts to stylized miniatures or other small-scale representations that retain the character and national color.

Common souvenirs featuring elements of decorative painting include keychains, magnets, postcards (Tab. 2,1), T-shirts, towels, and more. Today, it is also used in print media, interior design, and souvenir decoration. Given the ethnic motifs, natural materials such as wood, linen, and clay are used for making souvenirs. Products featuring regional symbolism, created by local artists and traditional craftsmen, contribute to the creation of a unique regional image and its recognition. Typically, tourists spend about 25% of their money on local crafts, including souvenirs. The motives for purchasing souvenirs and local products can vary widely. However, it is clear that such products often enhance the tourism appeal of a region. Thus, the issue of regional tourism identification through souvenir products and exploring opportunities for their rational implementation remains relevant [14].

Simplified or stylized decor in modern ceramic products is characterized by light linear and pointillistic decoration. Souvenirs are created to be functional and useful, impressing with their everyday nature and simplicity. Despite this, each piece of handcrafted pottery is a unique work of art. Potters use traditional forms and decorative motifs, giving each item its own character and adding personal interpretations.

Decorative treatment of ceramic products involves a wide range of techniques, including the application of glazes, unglazed finishes (Tab. 2,2), slip decoration, relief patterns, painting, and cold crystallization techniques. Decorative methods include creating reliefs and relief painting, carving techniques, glazing, surface pulling, and smoking. Painting is considered the dominant decoration method, particularly the use of slips – molten clay masses. In the context of "cold" painting, oil or tempera paints may be used. The diversity of painting styles encompasses decorative, narrative, and calligraphic techniques, with the color palette of the

products showing significant variation. Painting elements form decorative compositions depending on the author's intention. The color scheme of a composition usually does not exceed the use of five colors, though the number is not fixed and depends on the artist's decision and the area being painted.

Paintings are applied to pre-prepared surfaces and, if necessary, fixed additionally.

Tourist engagement in workshops extends beyond merely observing the crafting process; it also enhances interest in souvenir products. Consequently, souvenir products often feature decorative folk painting on various commemorative items—souvenirs that play a crucial role in shaping local image and serve as effective marketing and distribution tools. The use of paintings in souvenirs aids in the dissemination, preservation, and popularization of folk traditions among tourists.

**Conclusions.** Decorative painting has always been more than a means of decoration; it is a method of conveying the semantic narrative of cultural heritage and traditions. Today, preserving the uniqueness and originality of these paintings amid mass production is crucial. The growth of technological capabilities introduces new avenues for replication and series production, which can jeopardize the exclusivity and individuality of handcrafted items. However, employing authentic methods and materials, involving artisans skilled in traditional techniques, and focusing on cultural value can help producers distinguish their products in the market and attract consumers who appreciate originality and symbolism in objects. By adapting decorative painting techniques to contemporary use, designers can create cohesive, well-composed, and culturally rich souvenirs that enhance tourist appeal, integrate into modern design, and convey cultural and semantic narratives.



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**ДЕКОРАТИВНИЙ РОЗПИС ЯК ЗАСІБ ТРАНСЛЮВАННЯ КУЛЬТУРНОГО СЕМАНТИЧНОГО НАРАТИВУ**

**Мета** дослідження полягає у аналізі народного декоративного розпису та перенесення його найтиповіших композиційних прийомів та характеристик у предмети сувенірної продукції.

**Методологія.** Для досягнення поставленої в дослідженні мети було застосовано комплексний підхід у використанні загальнонаукових методів літературного аналізу та візуального дослідження історичних матеріалів та сучасних виробів сувенірної продукції.

**Результати.** В ході дослідження було вивчено особливості декоративного розпису, його прийоми та засоби; проаналізовано морфологічні складові декоративного розпису та шляхи інтерпретації його елементів.

**Наукова новизна.** В роботі підкреслено культурну та історичну цінність декоративного розпису в дизайні сувенірної продукції. Досліджено та систематизовано порівняльну характеристику різних типів декоративних розписів; проаналізовано композиційні елементи що використовуються при створенні дизайну сувенірної продукції.

**Практична значущість.** Дослідження полягає в виявленні доцільності використання елементів декоративного розпису при створенні дизайну сувенірної продукції та актуалізує питання транслявання семантичного наративу, що сприяє підвищенню культурної цінності та естетичної привабливості сучасних сувенірних виробів.

**Ключові слова:** декоративний розпис, дизайн, сувенірна продукція, народне мистецтво, символіка.

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