

FINE ARTS HIGHER EDUCATION IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Abstract: The paper tells the current development of the fine arts higher education in Russian Federation from the authors' own experiences, from which we can get a brief view and learn the situation on it. It has a comparative value in the field.

Keywords: fine arts; higher education in Russia; comparative study

Russia, a land of great scholars, has been a leading center of culture, science, and education in Europe and Asia for centuries. The higher education system in Russia has a distinguished reputation around the world. The standard of higher education in Russia is considered to be one of the best in the world with advanced and sophisticated teaching methods and scientific approaches. One of the peculiarities of the Russian education system is that much attention is paid to both students' basic theoretical preparation and extensive practical studies.

The Russian School of Fine Arts is famous for its preservation of realistic classical art traditions, in spite of the rapid extension of avant-garde in the beginning of the 20th century and postmodernism at the end of 20th century. Unlike many other art schools, its strict

rules on following academic traditions allow students to get a very strong base for their future artistic development. The painters were always in great demand in Russia; they worked for the governmental authorities, community, and industry. Additionally, since that time they are in demand by private business circles as well. Thus, a great number of activities are in need of specialists in graphics and fine arts. These are the animators, painters, illustrators, designers, architects and art critics - all of them require the basic special fine arts training.

Since the economical reforms started, higher education in Russia has experienced great changes. The problems of higher education are more often discussed on the official, administrative and social levels. Obviously such actuality is determined by extrinsic and

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intrinsic causes: attempts to standardize Russian education in accordance with European and world measures; the rise of quality requirements of education; stimulating the activity of teachers and students and raising the prestige of regional colleges and universities.

The national standards of higher art education briefly define and describe disciplines in a pictorial course of studies. This explains the variety of curriculum of different art majors. On the base of primary and secondary school education, it is impossible to prepare a child for the entrance exams to the University. This is due to the fact that the curriculum of such preparatory education includes studies appropriate to those with average ability at painting. Thus, in addition to this, there is a system of extended education for gifted children including private schools and studio schools. Here the students can get lessons in drawing (oil colors painting, water colors painting, design and composition; develop their skills to build simple forms and the reproduction of illusion of depth of space by the method of linear perspective). Those who graduated from such schools (children 11-12 years old) can be accepted at the Fine Arts School after passing exams in painting (oil colors painting, still-life), drawing (geometrical shapes), and composition. Education in such schools lasts 4 years. On graduation the students receive their certificates, which are to be produced at the entrance examination for the fine art universities and colleges.

On enrolling into the higher institutions, serious consideration is paid to the skills of painting and drawing. To prepare the students for the entrance exams, the universities orga-

nize paid preparatory courses (studies). Usually, the entry to fine arts higher education institutions is quite competitive. Presently there are dozens of applicants for one prospective student's position. For instance, to be admitted to the State Academy of Fine Arts named after Surikov V. I. in Moscow, the candidate has to pass a series of exams which include drawing (portraits); painting (portrait); and a composition (sketch). The majors in this Academy are as follows: easel painting, monumental painting, theatrical - scenery painting; graphic techniques (etching, lithography, linocut, woodcut), sculpture, theory and history of art and art criticism. In the first two years of study, the students take lessons in the studios. This is followed by 3 years of special training. The education in the universities is based upon the study of the professional disciplines which are themselves based upon longstanding teaching experience of predecessors beginning from the 19th century. The secret of classical painting teaching is that the teaching process is based on teaching about complex subjects, but not instructing them separately. In a week's period, the students attend lectures and practical studies as well.

The classical academism keeps the balance of intuitive and rational perceptions. The unity of training and teaching methods lies exactly in this. The main genres of academic art are: monumental painting; easel painting; sculpture and architecture. According to this, the main curriculum includes drawing, painting, sculpture, graphics, color instruction, plastic arts, and composition. These subdivisions of academic art have not only external relations, but also internal. For this and other rea-

sons mentioned above, the principles of classical methods of teaching painting, drawing, composition, etc. lie right in the parallel teaching of these disciplines. This gives students a metrics of interrelated experience, knowledge, and skills. Unlike the exceptionally artistic branches of study (graphics, painting, sculpture) and in the teaching of applied arts (architecture, design, applied and decorative art, design of costume, and etc.), the courses in theoretical and practical technological disciplines is broadened to include human engineering, building physics, resistance of materials, topography, materials science, computer graphics, perspective and shadow projections, manufacturing technology and engineering design. Art oriented institutions have more disciplines within drawing, painting, composition, history and theory of art, planning, color font design, applied graphics, restoration and surface anatomy.

Here is the example of Moscow State Teacher Training University's curricula for 5 years of study.

1st year: painting (still life in water colors); drawing (geometrical forms, ornaments); decorative - applied art (batik, fresco painting, glass mastery; jewelry art; mosaics) and sculpture (area composition)

2nd year: painting (still life, portrait in gouaches); drawing (portrait); composition (book illustration, cover picture) and sculpture (head sculpture - gypsum)

3d year: painting (portrait taken from the life in oils); drawing (body portrait); surface

anatomy and sculpture (head sculpture taken from the life in gypsum)

4th year: painting (half-length portrait in oils) and drawing (bust portrait)

5th year: painting (full-length portrait in oils, studies from the nude) and drawing (whole-length portrait)

As you can see, the plan during all 5 years of study includes both painting and drawing. According to traditions of Russian Fine Arts School, painting and drawing are INTERRELATED and drawing is an important BASE to study an oil painting. Thus, the particular goal of education is to become proficient in drawing, followed by proficiency in painting. Just harmony and symbioses of these two beginnings can show us a fascinating way to the creative work.

After 5-years of education, 1 year is given for preparing graduation work. After graduation students can go to postgraduate studies for 3 years, following by submitting a thesis.

One of the tasks of institutions of higher education is to train skilled specialists in order to meet the often vague and dubious requirements of the world market. The system of art education in Russia is established to prepare the specialists who can accurately present the Russian culture on the international level; and who can be demanded on the national and international market of art production (art galleries, auctions and antiquarian saloons). It allows students to find a well-paid job and start climbing the career ladder immediately after graduation.