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### **CREATIVE UNIONS OF ARTISTS IN UKRAINIAN DANUBE REGION**

*The author presents the level of personal achievements of artists of the Izmail City Organization of the National Union of Artists and the Union of Artists in Izmail, their public activity, provides information about the exhibition all-Ukrainian and international activities, personal exhibitions and personal awards of artists. The analysis allows us to conclude that regional identity and multiculturalism are the leading signs of the creativity of Bessarabian artists, which feeds on the sources of their diverse ethnic roots, because the representatives of the union are descendants of the Bessarabian colonists of Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Moldavian, Greek, Albanian, German origin.*

**Key words:** fine arts, creative associations, artist, painting, regional, technique, genre, identity.

Fine art as a cultural phenomenon and a universal means of human communication concentrates the main semantic ideas of a certain social environment, reflects the spirit of its time. Ukrainian Prydunav'ye (Budzhak region or Southern Bessarabia) as an original multi-ethnic region in the field of culture is a little-studied territorial unit and today remains the object of humanitarian research mainly for local specialists. The unique mosaic of regional identity is based on the processes of active mutual enrichment of the

peoples living here compactly (Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Gagauzs, Armenians, Albanians, Greeks, etc.), forming their own unique artistic flavor in the creative practice of artists.

Monographic attempts to understand the vectors of regional painting development were the studios of Tetyana Shevchuk «Creative portraits of Bulgarian artists of Budzhak» (*Shevchuk, 2018: 12-65*) and «Cultural code of modern fine art of Budzhak» (*Shevchuk, 2018: 477-501*), Ivan Pastyр «Fine art in the Ukrainian Danube region» (*Pastyр, 2015: 146-165*), placed as sections in the collective monographs «Cultural space of Bessarabian Bulgarians» (2018), «Istorie și civilizatie de-a lungul Dunarii de Jos» (2018), «Ukrainian Prydunav'ye in the light of humanitarian studies» (2015). Certain aspects of the development of modern painting in the Ukrainian Danube region are considered in the articles of Tetyana Shevchuk (*Shevchuk, 2017; 2018; 2019*), Elena Kolmykova (*Kolmykova, 2017; 2019*), Olexander Kara (*Kara, 2016; 2018; 2019*), Ivan Shishman (*Shishman, 2017; 2018*). The scientific novelty of this work is a panoramic overview of collective creativity in the field of fine arts, presented through the prism of the activities of creative associations registered in the region.

The fruitful creative activity of artists of Ukrainian Bessarabia, their professional growth due to participation in all – Ukrainian and international plein – airs and the entry of a significant part into the National Union of Artists of Ukraine (NUAU) contributed to the creation in 2008 of its regional representative office – Izmail city organization NUAU (hereinafter – ICO NUAU). The Izmail city organization NUAU has twenty-nine artists from the cities of Southern Bessarabia: Izmail, Artsiz, Kilia, Reni, etc. These are figures in the field of painting, watercolors, graphics, decorative and applied arts, restoration and conservation of paintings, including church. Regional identity and multiculturalism are the leading features of their creativity, which is fed by the sources of their diverse ethnic roots, because the representatives of the Union are descendants of the colonists of Bessarabia of Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Moldavian, Greek, Albanian, German origin. Artistic achievements of members of the Izmail city organization of the National Union of artists of Ukraine are presented in the English-language electronic publication «Illustrated Guide of Izmail Municipal Organization of National Union of Ukrainian Artists» (*Illustrated Guide, 2016*).

The NUAU ICO is headed by Honored artists of Ukraine Olexander Kara (Chairman) and Ivan Shishman (Deputy). The sacralization of life and rural labor of Bulgarian immigrants, whose descendant is Olexander Kara, became the main feature of his work. The plot of the artist's creative compositions, written in encaustic technique, is based on Bulgarian folklore («First furrow», «Bessarabian dream»), history («Settlers», «Magyar horseman»), knowledge and respect for the cultural traditions of their ethnic group («Horo», «Golden vine», «Communion», «Heaven guests at Christmas»). The language of Olexander Kara's painting is simple and evokes a sense of admiration. The author tries to write his grievances flatly, reaching the symbolism and locality of color spots, where there is simultaneously musicality and plasticity of the line, which allows him to create harmonious images. It is no accident that women's images of O. Kara received the definition of «Bessarabian Madonnas» from fans of his work. Art critic Olga Tarasenko noted «O. D. Kara is a gifted painter, author of expressive compositions on the theme of the South of Ukraine-Bessarabia. In his work, the traditions of the ancient Orthodox art of Kiev Rus and Bulgaria, are combined with modern trends. Olexander Kara's painting is characterized by great imagery and poetry. He manages to find concise, almost iconic means that are at the same time vitally convincing. His work carries the positive potential of folk culture and energy» (*Kara, 2008: 5*).

Olexander Kara has over ten awards in painting, including: medal of the winner of the

award named after Tatyana Yablonskaya (2018), the Honorary diploma of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2019) and others. Personal exhibitions were held in the National art gallery of the Republic of Bulgaria (2005), the national assemblies of the Republic of Bulgaria (2005), Crimean Republican establishment «Livadia Palace-Museum» (Yalta, 2007), the Consulate General of the Republic of Bulgaria (Odessa, 2008); Kiev Museum of history (2012), etc.

I. Shishman's artistic achievements are inextricably linked with the spiritual space of the Orthodox Church. The artist's artistic heritage consists of exquisite creative compositions, sacred paintings, murals of monumental Christian structures, and iconography. Consequently, the attraction to the monumental solution of compositional issues of painting permeates the secular works of the artist («Rus», «Phenomenon in Vlaherny», «Boat», «White Stone Rus»), in a number of paintings, he makes an artistic attempt to depict eternity («Mystery», «Golden song of Orpheus», etc.), using archetypal images of the Tree of Life, royal birds peacocks, the theme of Tabor light and so on.

Since 1983, I. Shishman has participated in many exhibitions and plein-air of various levels, held more than 10 personal exhibitions, both in Ukraine and abroad. In 1996, he became the first Bessarabian Bulgarian to open in the halls of the Union of architects of Bulgaria (Sofia) his first foreign solo exhibition with the telling name «*Българско послание от Бесарабия*», which consisted of 58 creative compositions. As a cultural event, the exhibition became part of the world Congress of the intellectual elite in Sofia. Other personal exhibitions were held at the Ukrainian House (Kiev); Museum of Western and Eastern Art (Odessa); Archaeological Museum (Odessa); Museums of Foreign Art (Sofia); Museum of the Book (Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, Kiev); Kiev joint-Stock Bank «Kiev Rus»; law firm «Salkom» (Kiev); Izmail picture gallery and so on. The most important distinctions of the secular level were: the diploma and the medal «for contribution to the development of fine arts» (2005) as the highest award of the Minister of Culture of Bulgaria and the medal of the Vice-President of Bulgaria «Paisii Hilendarsky» (2006). He has implemented a number of monumental projects, including: restoration and conservation of the painting of the Church «St. Konstantin and Elena» (Izmail, 1993-2003); design and painting of the Churches of «Venerable Paraskeva» (Zhelyava village, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1997), «Holy Trinity» (Rzhishchev, Kiev region, 2005-2010), the Temple of Simeon Stovpnyk (Kiev, 2013-2019). Other members of the ICO NUAU took part in the painting of these churches: Pavlo Makedonsky, Sergey Kostov, Valentin Bely and others. For their services to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the artists were awarded the orders of the UOC of the Holy Prince Yaroslav the Wise (2014). Ivan Shishman's work is an example of spiritual service, loyalty to the canons of the Christian Church and the desire to convey the eternal truths, the commandments of love, faith and hope for salvation to his audience by means available to him as an artist.

Members of the Union are representatives of the Chakir dynasty. In the history of regional art, Petro Chakir (1931-2012) was a member of the Union of artists of the USSR (1980), Honored artist of Ukraine (2009). His works conquer a variety of genres (natural and industrial landscape, portrait, still life) and techniques (watercolor, oil painting, hot enamel). From 1987-2007, P. Chakir participated in international symposiums on hot enamel in Kecskemet (Hungary). The list and illustrations of his works are contained in the annual «Zománc» catalogues based on the results of the events. Stories from the traditional culture of the Bessarabian Gagauz (everyday scenes, weddings, holidays and memorial days, characters of folk legends, etc.) on the enamels of P. Chakir reflect the richness of the spiritual world of the Gagauz people.

Petro Chakir has done a lot for the development of fine arts in the city and the region: for many years he managed a free art studio for gifted children. He was a wise and sensitive

teacher, mentor by vocation and brought up more than one generation of students, now known not only in Ukraine, but also abroad. In 2012 Petro Chakir was posthumously awarded the title of «Honorary citizen of Izmail». Since 2014, under the leadership of Ivan Shishman, an annual plein air named after Petro Chakir has been held in the villages of Bessarabia (Kotlovina, Olexandrivka, Staraya Nekrasivka, Nagorne) with students, which ends with a summer express exhibition of etudes in the Izmail art gallery. In 2016 one of the streets was named after Petro Chakir in Izmail. On one of the houses on avenue Mir Izmail people can still see an eleven-meter mosaic made by P. Chakir with the image of a girl who sees off a sailor.

Many paintings by Alla Chakir-Gritsenko have a deep religious, spiritual and philosophical meaning. Their stories make you think about the categories of soul and body, earthly and heavenly, holy and sinful («The Joy of flight and the sadness of presence», «Blagovest», «Bouquet to Klimt»). Thanks to the depth of ideas and the significance of images, Alla Petrovna's painting is remembered for a long time. She also owns a portrait of his Beatitude Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Ukraine, who was in his residence. The artist dedicated a separate series of works to the original Gagauz culture that was formed in Bessarabia. Alla Chakir-Gritsenko organizes solo exhibitions held in Ukraine and abroad: in Kiev, Vancouver (Canada), Nice (France), takes part in prestigious collective exhibitions in the Kiev-Pechersk historical and cultural reserve («... And the white cheek was powdered by May...», 2009), «Bulgarian spring» (gallery «Mitets», Kiev, 2018) and so on.

Larisa Chakir-Uzun's creative compositions are imbued with a deep philosophical meaning and carry a positive emotional charge due to the symbolic artistic interpretation of eternal values. The artist often encrypts information on the canvas and against the background of the dominant plot, when carefully examined, various secondary images are read: the outlines of people, groves, fields, etc., which, when «deciphered» and complex perception, give new impulses and meanings. The rich nature of Bessarabia in the aesthetic perception of Larisa Chakir-Uzun is endowed with romantic features. Autumn compositions are admired by a sophisticated selection of images: wild flowers on the background of exquisite old jugs and modern dishes, dried decorative pumpkins create an atmosphere of generational connection, as well as antiquity, comfort, and noble simplicity (the cycle «My Bessarabia»). In still lifes with quince, grapes, cherries, apples, viburnum, etc., the fruits are depicted so mature that it seems that juice is now spurting out of them; they are admired for the richness and abundance of the region, in which nature is so fertile («Still Life with grapes», 2011 and others). A characteristic feature of Larisa Chakir's paintings, in particular the «Taste of pomegranate» series, is a palpable taste of the far, fabulous East with its subtleties, secrets, and treasures. It is recalled by exquisite jugs, as well as placed in fantastic landscapes of carefully painted compositional perspective hidden images that evoke the heroes of Persian fairy tales and lyrical songs about Leila and Majnun. The image of the pomegranate in the interpretation of L. Chakir-Uzun becomes not just a symbol of love, it acquires signs of hot Eastern passion.

A dynasty of artists in Chakir family was continued by son Alli – Roman Nedopako (born in 1986). He graduated from the Kiev Art school (2002) and Kiev Art Academy named after T. G. Shevchenko (2010) and is a participant of all-Ukrainian and foreign exhibitions. Family exhibitions have become a tradition of Chakir family. One of them took place in 2007 in the Center of National cultures (Odessa) under the elegant name «PARLE», which sounds like fr. «parlez» – «you say», but in fact it is an abbreviation of the names of the participants: Peter, Alla, Roman, Larisa, Elizabeth. The last participant – Liza Chakir was three years old at the time of opening of the exhibition. A touching drawing called «My family» was presented from the great-grand daughter of Peter Petrovich (Larisa's

granddaughter). The code of the Chakiriv dynasty, according to the critic Elizaveta Siletsky, is that «art begins in each of its new generations in a new way, new individuals are born with their own special view of the world» (*Silets'ka, 2007: 6*).

Outstanding artists of modern visual art have Bulgarian (Alexander Kara, Ivan Shishman) and Gagauz ethnic roots (Petro Chakir, Alla and Larisa Chakir). Ivan Shishman in the article «Aesthetic paradigm of Bessarabian artists-Bulgarians» notes about their genetic connection with Bulgarian culture and capricious symbiosis in their creative practice of artistic experience of Ukrainian, Russian and Moldavian art: «In the formation of the creative method of Bessarabian painters, a great role was played by live communication with the luminaries of Ukrainian, Russian and Moldovan art, and, without a doubt, the genetic connection with the soul of their people through folk art, songs, fairy tales and legends. Looking at their works, you can see a common feature: they depict an ideal world that lives beyond space and time. It reaches its symbolic meaning and generalized overexpressive form. Images of this ideal world are devoid of naturalistic details and are very similar to the language of the icon. Some authors have a reverse perspective, that is, the visual bridge, which, in contrast to the direct perspective, does not absorb the paintings into space, but, on the contrary, brings us closer to these amazing pure poetic images, which remind us of a distant spiritual, sometimes fabulous historical Homeland, which lives in the hearts of Bulgarian artists from old songs, fairy tales, legends and all the dear things that we heard from the mouths of our gray-haired grandparents. <...> Along with this, artists of Bulgarian origin actively turn to folk holidays, which are so colorful and interesting in Bessarabia. The amazing nature of Budjak was also noticed: the scorched steppes filled with the scent of wormwood, the shimmering air of the black sea, the smell of quince, the boats and bridges of the Danube Venice, as well as portraits of amazing people like ancient sculptures, but, unlike them, they are filled with warmth and love. All this has become the life-giving source to which the greedy, inquisitive hearts of Bessarabian artists, such as Mikhail Todorov, Peter Chakir, Dimitar Peychev, Vladimir and Vadim Palamarchuk, Pavel Balamadzhi, Olexander Kara, Pavel Makedonsky, Anatoly Trufkin, Ivan Shishman and others have clung» (*Shishman, 2017: 195*).

Vladimir Dudnik is a well-known representative of the art world of Ukrainian Bessarabia. The artist works in the techniques of oil painting, as well as pastels, acrylics, and watercolors, having a large range of technical means – from detailed study to an expressive, wide, body brushstroke or palette knife, from a smooth painting surface to a textured mass on a single picture plane. Landscape painting is the main fund of Vladimir Dudnik's works. Dialogue with nature is at the heart of the artist's artistic perception. «Nature does not have bad weather» – under this motto, hundreds of Bessarabian landscapes have been created, which embody the riot of southern summer colors, the color richness of autumn, the fascinating beauty of snow covers, and the timid spring awakening of nature. The majestic Danube, Vilkivsky small straits, Bessarabian lakes Yalpug and Kugurlui, the grandeur of the natural landscape of the Old Orhei, steppes of Budzhak come alive on the canvases of the artist, and provincial motifs from the life of towns and villages of Bessarabia (Ismail, Bolgrad, Vilkovo and others) evoke a sense of calm, peace, sanctity of the Patriarchal order. Realistic landscapes organically complement the motives of the path, contemplation and search for eternal values.

Vladimir Dudnik is the Creator of a series of philosophical works written, according to the author's definition, in the style of «realistic philosophical symbolism». On the basis of harping on symbolism of geometrical figures (circle, square, cube, pyramid) with realistic images, the artist creatively interprets the thesis of unity and struggle of opposites in his works. In his opinion, the circle (ball) as a geometric figure is perfect, has a natural shape (Earth, Sun, Moon, drop, circles on water). A cube, a square, or a pyramid are artificial

objects and, as a result of intelligent human creativity, are evidence of human intervention, since such forms do not exist in their natural form. The artist believes that a person is born as a ball – a perfect form, one with nature and God, but over time, society begins to carve the ball, make a cube-brick out of this sphere, because it is easier to build a pyramid (state, society) out of bricks. But inside the socialized person there is still a small ball-the soul that languishes, knowing something more than the mind knows. Vladimir Dudnik's philosophical paintings are one of the ways to learn the spiritual secrets of the universe.

Vladimir Dudnik is always at the center of the city's cultural life, making a lot of efforts to create a positive image of southern Bessarabia as a region with high cultural potential. In 2009, he organized the first international Artbat open air «Bessarabian palette», and since 2011, he has held an annual Artbat festival of artists of Pridunavye (ART-BAT fest) to promote the beauty and diversity of regional creativity, which is actively joined by artists of Ukraine, Moldova and Romania. The festival has become a bright event in the life of the region: it is held annually at the picturesque tourist recreation center «Tataru» on the Danube. Its program includes an exhibition of works by leading artists of the Danube region and masters of decorative and applied art with a lottery drawing of one of the paintings; performances by folk groups and modern rock bands; a costume show of festival participants dressed in national or carnival costumes, which creates an atmosphere of celebration, improvisation and creativity.

Ivan Kotsoflyak has his own unique handwriting, which has created a palette of wonderful images full of romance and grandeur, mystery and soulful simplicity. The artist's works are executed in various techniques (oil painting, watercolor), in particular in a specific author's technique («First leaves», «Retired» and others). Love to the beauty of the Bessarabian region is shown in his numerous landscapes, where the illusion of form and depth is achieved by the virtuosic use of variously directed textured strokes. A distinctive feature of I. Kotsoflyak's creativity is a subtle sense of humor that permeates his artistic works, creates an atmosphere of intellectual communication between the author and the viewer.

The creative work of Tatiana Mitaki, a member of the ICO NUAU, the Chairman of the Greek national cultural society «Hellas», stands out for its attraction to understanding its ethnic roots. The triptych «Through the years», «God's roads of the Hellenes», «The Banks of Antiphila»; the diptych «The Island of this Holy Ponta» represent the artistic concept of the ancient past of Ukrainian Bessarabia, which was a strategically important center of Greco-Roman culture. Landscape compositions of the author differ in refined taste, impressionist color, evoke the gentle sounds of musical instruments («Strings of the soul»).

The author's vision of the world of the artist Olena Andreyeva-Sycheva is represented by a panorama of exquisite images, illuminated by spirituality and inner beauty. Some of them are so fragile that they visually crumble into particles. The characters of her paintings are romantic female images, harlequins, cats, colorful local music, and the leading motifs are associated with the Christmas theme and the rich nature of Bessarabia. The Central image of the creative composition «Bessarabian autumn» is a woman-housewife, whose outfit and hairstyle are formed from small multicolored geometric shapes of the main background with elements of ornamental style. The concept of the painting consists of a collage of conventional stained glass components, in which the images of pears, plums, flowers and butterflies clearly appear as the personification of the unity of man and nature. Elegant fragile hands and iconic eyes, a subtle smile on the sensual outlined lips of a woman forms the image of a charming self-sufficient hostess who enjoys life, lives in harmony with the natural world and enjoys its generous gifts. The artistic images of this canvas are perceived as a hymn to the Bessarabian land, the beauty and hard work of its people. Rich

tones of colors in which shades of blue-turquoise, yellow-orange and red shimmer form a unique life-affirming configuration of images.

The artist Valeria Leventsova, a teacher of the Art Department of the children's music school in Kilia, is not only a brilliant specialist in oil painting, graphics, collage, but also the author of works on orgalit, enamel, silk, batik. Her creative compositions present a panorama of artistic images with etniko-cubic motifs («Rhythms of Pysanka») and a layer of spiritualized animal images, the most expressive of which are horses in their majestic movement and the play of powerful muscles («Sunny cat», «Winter horse», «Scythian horses»). Students of the art Department of the CMS in Kilia, where V. Levintova works are the winners of international competitions in Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Japan.

The artistic images of the painter Nikolay Fedyaev are full of subtle shades of mood. As a subtle master of emotion, the author masterfully conveys the brilliance of the eyes («Ukrainochka», «Girl in a harlequin costume»), children's delight («Forgotten attic», «Canary», «Kitten», «Sly seller» and others), the energy rise of lovers («Lovers of the Murzs tribe»). The gallery of his artistic images presents a fascinating panorama of landscape, circus and exotic motifs.

A striking figure of modern fine art of Budzhak is Ekaterina Lemesheva, the winner of the prestigious award «Creative youth of Odessa region» in the category «The Artist of the year», in particular, a member of the world Academy of arts (Mondial Art Academy). The artist's paintings carry a great charge of positive emotions, romantic expression, and fairy-tale charm. Leading in her work were the motives of miracle, sleep, love, patronage of angels and angel-like creatures (bereginya, keeper of dreams, goddess of balance, winter and so on). The model of Ekaterina Lemesheva's art space is full of archetypes of wood, moon, bird, winged horse, winter patterns, pomegranate and pears. The author has the technique of encaustics.

The works of Pavel Makedonsky are full of impressionistic coloring, which certifies the openness of the composition and its unusual angles, textural strokes, emphasis on light techniques for transmitting forms, the illusion of movement, small details and so on. The bright colors of his paintings break away from everyday life, invite you to plunge into the optimistic color world of landscapes and creative compositions, to see beauty in prosaic things. Colorful subjects of paintings by Galina Sapunzhi are saturated with bright colors of the Bessarabian land, its generous gifts, inspiring landscapes. In the work of Nonna Patenko, there is a clear attempt to capture a certain moment, to express the emotions and feelings of the characters in their creative compositions. Olga Drumova's watercolour still lifes are full of romantic expression and pleasantly impress with their lightness, tenderness and fullness of color.

Mikhail Peikov works in various techniques: watercolor, ink-pen, linocut, lithography, wood carving. The artist's artistic heritage includes urban and rural landscapes; creative compositions of philosophical content; portraits of prominent people in the technique of flat-relief wood carving; a series of drawings based on the events of the Tatarbunar uprising. The local history cycle of watercolors is dedicated to the life of the Bulgarian colonists of Bessarabia, created on the basis of documents of the era: the yard and houses; labor in the fields and recreation of workers; clothing and ethnotypes of migrants; wine making, weaving training, family dinner, holiday horo, matchmaking, bride's dowry, weddings, Sunday gatherings, folk singers and other.

The landscape has a special place in the paintings of local artists. Master of realistic landscape V. Korinyok on his canvases usually visualizes the nature of Bessarabia, sincerely referring to this part of the cultural space of the Ukrainian Prydnub'ya as a «Paradise on Earth». Comfort, love for the Patriarchal rural life and simple everyday things are transmitted on the canvases of Dmitro Skulinets («Blossom», «Evening», «Geese»), Dmitro

Deshin («Ploughmen», «View of the mound», «Lighthouse», «Old Artsiz»), Viktor Korinyok («May evening», «Crimson autumn in Nagirny»), Sergey Kostov and many other artists.

The works of artsizky artists Vladimir Afanasiev, Tamara Tkach, Dmitro Deshin Dmitro Skulinets, Irina Dimitrova have an original face, their stories capture the local flavor. V. Afanasiev's paintings represent a wide panorama of the life of rural Bessarabians in symbolic images: pruning of grapes and trees, plowing, weaving, fishing and preparatory work of fishermen, harvesting grapes and crops of all types, yard arrangement, bathing and cleaning, rural fair, music in various manifestations and hypostases, recreation and communication of farmers. The wedding theme in his work can be distinguished in a cycle with the motives of a festive ride on a britzka, the last preparations, a feast, unity in the national Bulgarian tank horo, the love of the young. The plots of T. Tkach's creative compositions demonstrate the importance of traditional values in the mentality of the region's inhabitants, the dominance of community principles and collective ethics in the region's culture. The inconspicuous landscape of the budzhaksky steppe on the canvases of Dmitro Deshin, Dmitro Skulinets turns into attractive expanses of steppes, courtyards become the signs of culture, prosaic figures of inhabitants become bearers of traditional values of local residents, and nostalgic roads and trails become archetypes of their life path.

Some of the members of the Union work as restorers and specialists in the field of decorative and applied arts. Anatoly Gusakov made king's gate of Constantine and Helena monastery (Ismail, 1995), the icon cases for Svyatotoitskiy temple (Rzhyschiv, Kyiv region, 2005), participated in the restoration of the Church of the Nativity of the blessed virgin Mary (Ismail, 2008), has renewed the iconostasis of the Holy monastery of the Nativity of Mary, the tomb (2010) and others. The restorer Valentin Bely restored several thousand old icons, among which there are unique from the point of view of art history samples that incorporated mixed ornamental traditions of the region, in particular the old believers icon of the XVII century. «The Lord Almighty» (Museum of Prydunav'ya, Izmail), which combines elements of Ukrainian and Moldovan ornaments; the icon of Simeon Stovpnyk with inscriptions in Greek, Russian and Romanian (Regional Museum of local history, Reni).

Since 2007, a children's circle «Potteries» has been opened in Izmail, which is led by a member of the ICO NUAU, a professional in the field of decorative and applied arts, Nadezhda Ilyina. By her ethnic origin, she is a descendant of the German colonists of Bessarabia. Her artistic activity is related to the production of ceramic sculptures (terracotta, angoba). Nadezhda Genrikhivna is the author of collections of household items and amulet dolls made of colored clay, which do not require additional coloring. The leading motives of creativity are philosophical problems (compositions «Big fees», «Tree of life»), and the main character is a simple person in everyday, ethnographic, Christmas and Easter stories. The author was inspired to use a specific technique by the artifacts of the Trypillya-Kukuten culture, found in the area between the Danube and the Dniester. In addition, she creates compositions of ceramics covered with acrylic.

A member of the ICO NUAU is a bright representative of the art world of Ukraine and Russia, a painter, designer, photographer, doctor of art history, Professor Nikolay Sednin, a native of Izmail. He is the general manager of the Professional Union of artists of Russia (since 2013), a member of the International Federation of artists (IFA UNESCO); International Association of graphics (ADOGI), the founder of the laboratory of art studio at the Moscow psycho-neurological treatment facility (1994); the developer of the «Art as therapy» (1998-1999) for the rehabilitation of the psyche through the creative process (DI-ART). M. Sednin is the winner of many prestigious Russian and international professional awards, including: the winner of the prize Interforum «Man of the future» (2004), the

winner of the medal «The Person of the Millennium» (Russia, 2009), international medal of public recognition of the Encyclopedia «Who is Who» (Switzerland, 2010); medal of Yaroslav the Wise (Russia, 2010); medals of the highest public recognition of «The Great citizen of Russia» (Russia, 2011); international medal of saints Cyril and Methodius (Russia, 2011) and many others. Nikolay Sednin is the honorary President of the International Academy of contemporary art, whose activities are represented by the implementation of numerous international projects in the field of architecture and construction, art and expert evaluation of works, competition programs, museum and so on. Since 2015, the Academy has been organizing the international competition «Art. Perfection. Recognition» (Art. Excellence. Awards), which presents the nominations for all major types of art: painting, literature, music, photography and others.

The exhibition activities of the members of the ICO NUAU in the art gallery of Izmail are coordinated by art critic Irina Fedorova, who is the Director of the Regional center for aesthetic education (since 2012), the Chairman of the humanitarian Commission of the public Council under the Executive Committee of the Izmail city Council (since 2013), the author of more than 70 films and TV shows dedicated to the work of artists of Bessarabia and foreign brush masters. A short documentary I. Fedorov's «Bessarabian Madonna», dedicated to the work of Olexander Kara, was highly appreciated by the competent jury, and its author became the winner of the contest of the international Fund «Ukraine 3000» (2001). In 1990s, Irina Fedorova was at the beginning of the foundation of Izmail television, which today has a professional format, and its founder since 2012 is a member of the Ukrainian Television Academy and the national jury of the award in the field of television «Teletriumf». She also has the idea of creating international art projects: festivals «Friendship can change the world through art», «Children of Bessarabia», «The Danube – the river of friendship», art projects «New year's extravaganza», «Night in the Museum» and others.

The second most important creative Union of artists of the Ukrainian Prydnub'ya is the Union of Artists of Izmail (further – UAI) – public creative organization of professional leaders in the South of Odessa region in the field of various arts. It was registered in 1991 in Izmail after Ukraine gained independence. At the request of Peter Chakir, on September 21, 1991, the city Executive Committee allocated an artist's House for brush masters who United in the UAI. Today, the organization has more than seventy members, and its activities are led by an experienced specialist in the field of decorative and applied arts Anatoly Gusakov (among the predecessors – Vladimir Dudnik, Olexander Kara).

Among the artists of the Union of Artists of Ismail there are many outstanding masters of the brush. Bright and creative personalities of the Izmail city Union of artists are Sergey Sukhinin, Andriy Tsypa, Nadiya Korolenko. Working in the genre of mystical realism, Sergey Sukhinin recreates the fantasy world in the smallest details on his canvases: a pre-Slavic civilization with a Pantheon of pagan gods; intergalactic wars of alien invaders-reptilians and Earthmen; cultural space of the legendary lost Atlantis and others («Karna», «Lemuria», «Triad of Darkness», «Invasion», «Mirror reality», «Ant's Shooter», «Gate between the worlds», «Sublunary world», «Retribution of Nia», «Lights of Antlan» and others. Andriy Tsypa is a multi – talented artist who created a collection of multi-genre works: Bessarabian landscapes, abstractions, still lifes, household sketches of humorous content. Master Nadiya Korolenko is the author of Orthodox icons made of natural pebbles, created in the tradition of Byzantine mosaic art, which are stored in the churches of Izmail and the monumental panel «The Protection of the Holy mother of God» above the entrance to the Izmail Holy Pokrovsy Cathedral.

The theme of the beauty of the Bessarabian land has become a leading one in the works of Ivan Pastyр, his paintings are characterized by detail and internal dynamics of images. Tatyana Sokolova exquisitely conveys not only the forms of flowers (lilacs, peonies, irises, etc.), but also their energy; marine cycles of paintings by Sergei Ushakov, filled with air and peace, capture the dynamics of movement and color. Natalia Fufayeva's painting is characterized by romanticizing Bessarabian landscapes, its Danube subjects are usually emotionally colored and saturated with colors («Quiet Harbor», «Kalyniv Bridge», «Boats»); the image of shadows forms a mysterious melancholy mood in the painting «At sunset»; the bright colors and poetics of the «Autumn Etude» reminds of the swirl of days and eternity. In the creative compositions of Natalia Fufayeva, romance also prevails: transparent curtains that wave in the wind form a kind of fleur in the perspective of the road to the endless Bessarabian steppe. A pitcher with a towel and a bowl of strawberries that stands on the windowsill symbolizes the generosity and hospitality of this land.

Modern art in Ukrainian Bessarabia is much more widely recognized for the activities of the above-mentioned professional unions of artists in the region. Anna Konstantinova, Director of the Gorodne local history Museum (Bolgradsky district), is an outstanding master of decorative and applied art in the field of painted clay toys, and her achievements have been included in numerous profile albums. Galina Zgurskaya, Director of the Centralized library system in the Reni district is a bright personality, known for her public activities and huge creative potential. She is the Chairman of the regional public organization «Our heritage», the author of the ethnographic collection «Let the world know Ukraine! », consisting of souvenir dolls dressed in national Bujak costumes.

Decorative and applied arts of the region are represented by exquisite works of embroidery specialists of the Izmail women's club «Masteritsa» (paintings, napkins, pillows, towels, folk costumes, clothes for dolls, panels, tapestries, tablecloths), made in various techniques: smooth, cross-stitch, beading. Izmail author of hand-made masterpieces of textile decor Olena Paliy (Sahara Skazka) creates author's dolls, toys, textile ornaments, pillows, home decor made of paper and sisal, other products of decorative and applied value from environmentally friendly materials.

The activities of Bessarabian artists are well known in Ukraine and abroad. They are active participants in national and international exhibitions and plein-airs, where they take pride of place and receive recognition and high awards. The house of artist in Izmail houses creative workshops and presents a permanent exhibition of their art works, where you can buy paintings by Bessarabian masters. They are active in educational activities, organizing thematic art exhibitions and vernissages at the ART-BAT gallery of artists in Izmail, Izmail art gallery, Izmail historical Museum of Prydunav'ya («Seasons», «Beauty created by woman», «Budzhak palette», etc.), which have regional status, it includes works by masters of Kiliya, Reni, Artsyz. The cities and villages of Bessarabia are decorated with numerous sculptures by a member of NUAU Mikhail Nedopaki (1920-2005): General S. Tuchkov (Izmail), Bulgarian prosvitnik Hristo Botev (Izmail), T. Shevchenko (v. Shevchenkove Kiliysky district of Odessa region), composition of the memory of the heroes of the Tatarbunar uprising (Tatarbunary, Odessa region), composition of the fallen heroes of World War II (v. Broska, Izmail district of Odessa region), etc.

Thus, the cultural space of the Ukrainian Prydunav'ya is vividly represented in modern visual art by subjects of everyday, landscape and historical themes; it is reflected in original decorative and applied art; it has its own face in a specific sacred painting.

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