

Practices and Methods for Actualization of the Scientific Information in Art Excursions (Excursions and Cultural Heritage in the Contemporary World)

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with various practices and methods for actualization of the scientific information in art excursions. The modern society is characterized by commitment to information richness. The range of cultural and historical materials used as the basis for art excursions is really immense. However if to consider the number of excursions with elaborated structure, then the excursions devoted to art will certainly be in the minority. And after such excursions the excursionists are left with many questions in their minds. The objects of art have their own criteria, specifics and peculiarities. To realize them and to comprehend them scientifically - at the theoretical level - is the relevant task of the art experts and critics.

KEYWORDS

Practices and methods for actualization; art excursion; excursion site; preparatory stages; scientific knowledge.

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Introduction

The excursion study of art in its development made attempts to elaborate expressive capacities which, to some extent, are analogical and used in the historical excursion programs. However, live practice of the contemporary art is constantly delivering new unconventional genres and techniques in creation of artistic images, newly synthesizing and interpreting the traits of already established fine and expressive forms habitual for a viewer (Emel'janov, 1986).

The talk about works of pictorial art, sculpture and architecture is often theoretically limited by their narrative side, which decreases the professional content-related analysis. The excursion deprived of informational origin is just a sightseeing, the effective influence of which on the excursionists' minds will be minimal. There is a growing contradiction between the need of the guide to acquire a new content, to give it a new form and the ability of the excursionists to understand it. The imperfection of the culture of aesthetic perception, incomprehension of specifics of new directions in art lead to the loss of criteria to all the fine art works regardless of their kind, genre and style, while the uniform standard measures are applied to them (Stolyarov, 2004; Emel'janov, 1986; 2004).

Methodological Framework

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It defines the main goal of the present paper, which is concluded in understanding of the core of problems, which the modern excursion practice faces. The tasks consist in revelation of possible methods of actualization of scientific information in art excursions; they are considered at all the preparatory stages of the excursion from the definition of the excursion theme to its implementation. Perhaps, the term 'scientific information' is not proper by itself if it relates to the works of art. It denotes the acquaintance and study of the objects applied to the actual documentary material. "The advantages of a museum excursion over the other educational forms are concluded in the fact that the objects of perception are the originals, and their range is very wide – from natural monument to piece of art. They have a great cognitive capacity being the reflection of the processes of development of nature and civilization, certain epoch, the destiny of author or the whole folk", B. A. Stolyarov (2004) noted. Thus, the analytical and exploratory functions of the excursion activities grow. Excursion practice shows that even a small amount of information becomes richer due to the scientific character of the narrative, which organizes the listeners' attention and helps to make its generalizations and conclusions as well as to estimate the artistic objects in-depth. The scientific worldview is in fact the view of the world where the world is interpreted in a certain way. Tight connection exists between the contemporary art and the science, and surprisingly it is exactly the art innovators among which we most often reveal the correspondence of their art tendencies to the scientific commitments of the modernity. Today we need such form of scientific knowledge transfer which may make the scientific truth available, explicable and clear without deforming it. And here the guides may come to help, who acquire a special power of imagination and are able to include the scientific model, the scientific notion into the range of the imaginative associations, into the symbolical fabric of an art object.

We got used, speaking about the scientific principles in the study of art, to the special terminology, the reference apparatus, new discoveries and researches in the sphere of the content of museum and private collections, activities on revelation of artistic values in the regions of different countries, on nationalization of large private collections and creation of the museum funds, expository and restoration works, deep scientific analysis of the masters' creative work, cataloguing the pieces of art etc. forming the infinity of interlocks, the aggregate picture of art studies which denotes the direction of its development to the growing interpenetration of the science and art (Portnova, 2013).

In the excursion work the cognitive theory may be considered not from the perspective of acquisition by the excursionists of the pieces of art included into the excursion, but also from the perspective of the cognitive forms themselves, used by the guide regardless the conception content of the pieces of art; such consideration suggests a certain procedure between the categories as a certain standard. The cognitive ability of the listeners depends on the professionalism and the narrative skills of the guide. First, imaginative impression from excursion is formed at a certain level of information. Its deficiency does not give the entire image of the object, while the overload may destroy the image. Combination of scientific and imaginative origins is important here not only because every piece of art comes laden with a 'solid sense', but also due to the fact that 'solid artistic work' should have a certain extent of 'lightness' in order to maximally influence the audience. A. N. Romanov (1916), speaking about the mission of the guide at demonstration and narrative of the artistic objects noted that he or she should "introduce the viewers into the aesthetical experience and provide them with the in-depth analysis of the

famous piece of art.” It seems that the audience success is the indicator of accuracy of this combination, organically connected with the personality of the guide. The motion of the guide’s thought includes: unexpected associations, bold comparisons, and the skill of understanding the inner contradictions peculiar to the information material about the objects. Besides, the motion of thought is the ability to get a view of the dynamics of the program material in historical perspective and in time. The amazing combination of seemingly incompatible traits – it contains not less aesthetic advantages than any piece of art, sculpture or architecture. Then the contact between the guide and the excursionists is based on the feeling of their community where moral and spiritual affinity is expressed.

The methods of actualization of the scientific material may begin with the preparation of the excursion. It is known that general excursion methods consist of two parts – the methods of excursion preparation and the methods of its conduction.

Results and Discussion

The preparation to excursion may also be considered in two directions: development of new theme for the excursion and preparation of the guide for a new theme. The preparation of excursion is implemented gradually by the stages. It begins from the choice of the theme and the aim of the excursion. Correct statement of the aims and tasks is very important, because everything which will be shown and said in the course of the excursion is subordinated to them. So, in the chosen theme ‘Mansions of Moscow’ architecturally diverse buildings of the Art Nouveau period are one of the integral peculiarities of the historic development of the old Moscow. Having formulated the aims and tasks, the guide should be very well aware that the principle of the material selection and its conceptual organization is a challenge. Then there is the selection of the object for the excursion. They are selected according to their cognitive value, significance and location. The preferable focus only on the popularity of the piece of art may make the excursion material lighter and more entertaining. The number of the selected objects is also a significant criterion (if it is small, the excursion will be deficient, while if it is too big, then it will turn into amateurism). Any excursion program should not be a static set of showpieces and objects; it should be characterized by variability of the composition, i.e. addition, removal and renewal of the suggested materials. Any group of excursions has its own classification of the objects. So, in the sight-seeing excursions it is accepted to distinguish the architectural monuments and ensembles, modern buildings etc. In the excursions of the gardens, parks and country estates the viewers will see pavilions, statues, grottos and pieces of water. The museum excursion will be devoted to acquaintance and analysis of the pieces of art.

After the selection of the excursion objects they are attentively studied, which includes live inspection and the literature searches. The work on selection and study of the excursion object is completed by the composition of the excursion route, which can be built on the chronological, thematic or complex principle. After development of the route the guide goes the round of it, elaborating the route, location of the objects, their accessibility, the parking points, and developing the main and additional (reserve) showing points. In the process of the going the round the timing (of the route) from one object to another is considered for precise calculation of the excursion time. Only after the route is completed the work on the composition of the excursion text begins. “Excursion text includes introduction and conclusion, consists of the characteristics of the objects and certain material

connected with this object, conclusions and generalizations, and logical transfers to the next sub-themes. The control text contains all the precise quotations, facts, numbers, examples and moreover the obligatory references. Individual text of the guide is built in accordance with the methodical development and exactly reflects the real structure of the excursion with the consideration of the time factor. It has the introduction, body and conclusion”, as noted by V. A. Sichinayeva (1981) in the ‘Excursion Work’ publication.

Finally the preparation of a thematic excursion is completed with the composition of a guidance paper with the excursion route, the places of interest, stops, duration, procedure of the demonstration and the narrative. The excursion text and the guidance paper can be peer-reviewed. There is a direct analogy with the methods of scientific work. Although the above said is just the initial stage of the scientific formation of the principles, which are not composed as a finished system which might serve as the indicator of scientificity in general. The methods of preparation to the new excursion themes or the reconstruction of the old by themselves (which is quite natural if to mind the thoroughness, with which the excursion is being prepared) are not scientific discovery or research.

The approach to the material and the interpretation of it is another significant problem which should be primarily solved by the author of the forthcoming excursion. The method for actualization of the scientific information suggests first of all total correspondence of the excursion content to the categories of originality. Scientific knowledge is characterized by the objective truthfulness; it is based on the theoretical or experimentally proved facts and information. Scientific knowledge is also characterized by generality when chaotic and, from the first sight, accidental facts and phenomena hide general and significant regularities of objective world. Notably, the practice of the world art provides us with numerous examples of rapprochement of science and art, which last for centuries. They have numerous guises. Today they are perceived by far not at the forgotten semantic background. From the mighty force of the abstraction of the Ancient Egyptian pyramids, elaborated structure of the Greek temple’s ‘golden section’, beautiful proportions of ‘Doryphoros’ by sculptor Polykleitos, perfect shapes of the dome of Pantheon, to the rise of the engineering thought in the structure of the Gothic cathedral, Renaissance acquisition of anatomy and linear perspective, optical techniques in the Western Europe painting in the 17th century and to the rational substantiation of functionalism in the architecture by Le Corbusier – there are the stages of scientific and creative achievements.

The requirement of the scientificity principle covers not only the content of the material. It should be strictly observed also in the process of its narrative: scientific interpretation of the excursion facts, phenomena and concepts is an integral part of every excursion. Not to describe but to explore the pieces of architecture, painting, sculpture on the basis of a certain artistic and historical or contemporary material. The conceptual and artistic potential of the guide’s narrative will be sharply reduced if the audience perceives it only at the level of the plot of a book, not comprehending the content of the second, third and fourth layers. However in the archive of the excursion study there is a series of the qualities peculiar only to it.

The first and the most simple is visual expression which is not equal to demonstrativeness; it may rise to some complete vision unavailable without natural overlook. The visual basis of any excursion is the excursion objects, serving mostly the center of the guide’s narrative. The excursion objects are the monuments of

architecture and sculpture, memorial sites, natural sites, expositions of museums, art galleries and exhibitions. Memorial sites can be squares, streets and whole cities. The visible image of the demonstrated objects and phenomena is transferred through fine and graphical arts, which have an opportunity to imprint the reality in an especially spectacular and convincing manner.

The acutest problem for the guides is the achievement of audial and visual image. In the conducted excursions visual images often illustrate the guide's text. The result is the illustrating lectures. However on the way of eliminating this disadvantage we more often face another extreme – isolation of the text from the narrative. The text does not only comment, but even does not supplement the seen. It just indirectly relates to the images passing over the listener's eyes. Here it is important to achieve the principle of connection of visual and observed with the information and audible origins.

Scientific excursion is not only logics, but also the source of complicated emotions. In the conscience of a scientist and any other person having rather high level of emotional culture, scientific concepts and philosophical truths are colored with emotions which are hard to describe. Often not only the information contained in the scientific or philosophical truth, but also the feelings that we experience in connection with this information allow us appreciate the thoughts and to comprehend their depth and significance. That's why a miraculous ability of creative transformation is important, which provides the author-guide with the opportunity not only to 'depict' and describe the object, but also to think in it figuratively. The engine of the sensuous process can drive the viewer-excursionist to his or her own discovery of the fundamental philosophical concepts.

Another quality of scientific excursion is spiritual community. Any excursion unites audience, provokes the necessity of communication, discussion of the heard and seen. Preparation of a new excursion now requires complex and systematic approach to studying the audience, conduction of certain sociological researches. The deeper the material is comprehended, the acuter the necessity in its discussion is. The guide applying in his or her analysis to the history recalls the past, where not only the historical fact is interesting by itself, but its correlation with the present, which allows achieving more level of generalization.

The pieces of art are perceived not just as a date with the past, but as the dialogue with the present and future, whether it is connected with acquisition of new structures and technologies in architecture, new painting methods or sculptural forms. It seems that such scheme has nothing in common with the number of traditionally built pale narratives penetrating in the bulk of the usual excursions. Scientific way of thinking is generally characterized by a unique ability of mediating time with a great degree of credibility, because the science usually outruns the reality by several years. And if our excursion practice is attentive to the spiritual illumination of the scientific world, then it may manage to foresee the intellectual and moral appearance of the future humanity before the other spheres of activities. Penetration into the scientific and creative thought of architectural and other artistic masterpieces may play an important role in it.

The category of wholeness in the structure of excursion is a not less important fact and by its nature is close to the reflection and cognition of the world in its completeness. Even if the excursion has a narrow focus on a certain theme, it nevertheless cannot do without touching the issues of interrelation of an art work and a human, the memorial of art and nature. The guide telling about and showing

the memorials of art should illuminate the listeners by the touch with philosophical continuity of the world, the feeling of its penetration in all things existent. Then the excursionists will transfer into the thinkers themselves, into the discoverers, become aware of their involvement into the dynamical unity of the world, into the organics of nature and the stream of the history. Excursions can help establishing the modern way of thinking which is concluded in the ability to simultaneously see and consider the spiritual, psychological, moral, ecological and economic aspects.

At last – heuristics, which is the quality peculiar to the best scientifically built solid excursions. They tune to creative perception of the scientific information concluded in them, develop imagination and suggest not only the ready conclusions, but also the questions, stimulating the audience's own search.

It is not simple to organize a good excursion. It requires perfect skill of the art study speaking, wide associative way of thinking, smart and skillful combination of sober mind with bright emotionality, i.e. requires high professionalism. It is obvious that the “Conclusions of the excursionists are based on not only the seen, but also on the heard” (Portnova, 2013). In-depth analysis of the demonstrated object concept and art core will manifold increase the scientific level of excursion. According to B. Emel'janov (1986; 2004), “Professionalism of the guide is a special kind of art, which is built on the active interpretation and smart combination of show and narrative, participation in the perception process of interaction of such components as the guide, the excursionists, and the excursion objects...” The skill to add his or her own role by the guide to the harmonic correspondence with the system of the emerging unity is also necessary. The guide is at the same time both the actor and the director of his or her own play and role – he should be equally analyzing, reporting organizer of the entire concept and the program as whole.

Conclusion

So, correct solution of the problems connected with the methods for actualization of scientific information in the art excursions has not only a great cognitive, but also great methodological value. It is like a focus where such key issues and categories for excursion and art study gather as objective and subjective, emotional and intellectual, reality and imagination.

Thus, the methods for actualization of scientific material in the structure of excursion and art study program, their key components and the mechanisms of interaction with aesthetic, social and cultural, and ideological context – is the necessary condition not only for studying the history of cultural monuments and art works, but also for solution of practical tasks of efficient application of it in the excursion process as the whole. Integration of science and art is provoked by the persistent live necessity of creating the united and entire scientific picture of the world, correspondent to the modern level of the accumulated knowledge.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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