Vanyushkina L.M., doctor of pedagogical sciences, associate professor, head of the department of art history at the Russian university of traditional art crafts, 191186, St. Petersburg, Griboyedov canal embankment, 2, lit. A, e-mail: tpiovshni@yandex.ru

Tikhomirov S.A., candidate of culturology, associate professor, vice-rector for research, associate professor of the department of art history at the Russian university of traditional art crafts, 191186, St. Petersburg, Griboyedov canal embankment, 2, lit. A, e-mail: nauka_vshni@mail.ru

Museum and exhibition spaces of the Russian university of traditional art crafts: cultural realities and educational opportunities

Abstract. The article is devoted to the problem of understanding the role and place of the modern museum and exhibition space in the professional training of future artists of traditional art crafts in accordance with the challenges of the time, changing ideas about the educational, cultural and educational potential of the museum and its new mission in the educational process.

Keywords: museum and exhibition space, traditional art crafts, professional education, research activities of students, educational practice, exhibition, educational activities.

One of the essential characteristics of modern educational space is its plasticity, the ability to expand the boundaries of its sphere and include adjacent spaces that were previously not involved in implementing educational practices. The postmodern paradigm with its multilayeredness and variability of perception has contributed to the emergence of new interdisciplinary fields such as museum pedagogy, theater activity pedagogy, etc. The trend towards integration of educational and museum activities provides new educational opportunities for personal and professional development of students.

The Russian university of traditional art crafts is the only university in Russia and the world offering training programs in 23 types of traditional art crafts: artistic lacemaking, artistic embroidery, lacquer miniature painting (Palekh, Mstyora, Kholuy), decorative painting (Nizhny Tagil, Zhostovo, "Moscow letter", Ural-Siberian style), Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving, Kholmogory bone carving art, among others.

The uniqueness of the university lies in its unparalleled profile [7] and distinctive cluster structure – it has eight branches across Russia, including the Art and pedagogical toy museum named after N.D. Bartram and the Gallery of traditional art crafts (Sergiyev Posad city), as well as a core department of Zhostovo decorative painting at the LLC "Zhostovo enterprise".

The uniqueness of the institutes within the Russian university of traditional art crafts stems from their focus on preparing artists specifically in those forms of art that have emerged and continue to evolve in particular regional-historical centers where each branch is located: Fedoskino institute of lacquer miniature painting trains professionals in Fedoskino miniatures, Rostov enamel work and Zhostovo decorative painting; Mstyora institute of lacquer miniature painting named after F.A. Modorov specializes in Mstyora lacquer miniatures, Mstyora decorative painting, iconography and artistic embroidery, among other disciplines.

Since the history of the university's branches spans several decades or even over a hundred years, unique collections have been formed during this time, which include, on one hand, academic and graduation qualification works by students of different years in specific types of traditional art crafts, and on the other hand, museum level works that historically constituted part of the methodological fund supporting teaching activities [6].

At the same time, the total collection of all gathered works – units of storage of the auxiliary methodological fund – possesses invaluable and unique artistic and exhibition potential, leading logically to the creation of own museum-exhibition spaces within the Russian university of traditional art crafts and all its branches.

Simply having exhibits and a specially designated room does not make a space into a museum-exhibition area. A museum space differs from a repository of valuables because it is structured according to the tasks it aims to address.

Firstly, this involves developing a concept for the museum-exhibition space, whose core element is utilizing the collection's potential for cultural-enlightenment and educational activities aimed at students. This educational component is an integral part of the professional training of future artists in traditional art crafts.

The starting point for exploring the conceptual foundations of the museumexhibition spaces of the Russian university of traditional art crafts are the ideas presented by N.F. Fyodorov in his work "Philosophy of common cause". The main idea expressed by the philosopher is that a museum is not just a collection of objects but rather a congregation of individuals: "its activity consists not in accumulating dead things, but in restoring life to the remains of what has passed away" [10]. Following this logic, a museum-exhibition space is not merely a place of collective memory but also a living sociocultural institution, growing through new functions and meanings, among which education and upbringing stand out as particularly important.

A compelling example illustrating this thesis can be found in the museumexhibition space of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving, whose collection preserves historical memories about the evolution of Bogorodskoye wood carving and vocational education from the early twentieth century until today. Simultaneously, it actively contributes to the professional training of current students (Fig. 1⁹¹).

N.F. Fyodorov believed that "a museum is research conducted by younger generations under the guidance of older ones. It can be open to everyone only through learning; entry to it leads through educational institutions, through which alone collecting can take place" [10]. According to the philosopher, properly

⁹¹ Figs. 1-4. Photos from the archives of the branches of the Russian university of traditional art crafts.

organized educational and research activities in a museum-exhibition space serve as excellent support for university education.



Fig. 19. Museum-exhibition space of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

It is no coincidence that precisely now, under the Ministry of science and higher education of the Russian Federation, an interdepartmental working group has been established to improve the legal status of museums functioning as scientific organizations and structural units of higher education institutions and scientific organizations, along with the Association of leading universities [8], which includes representatives of the Russian university of traditional art crafts. This interdepartmental working group focuses on updating understandings regarding exactly what these museums and museum-exhibition spaces represent when associated with universities and scientific organizations, clarifying their legal status and identifying regulatory documents governing their operations. Additionally, the group seeks effective methods for organizing and implementing scientific, educational, and outreach activities within these museums and museum-exhibition spaces.



Fig. 2. Fragment of the museum-exhibition space "Lukutin traditions" at the Fedoskino institute of lacquer miniature painting We took these considerations into account when defining the conceptual framework for the operation of the university's museumexhibition spaces. Let us outline the key areas for utilizing the potential of the museum-exhibition spaces of the Russian university of traditional art crafts in the professional training of students:

• An "assortment cabinet", which gathers the best student creations representing various types of traditional art crafts. These museum samples serve as inspiration for

creating academic and final qualifying projects, acting as a data bank that collects information on stylistic and technological solutions used in artworks (Fig. 2). Furthermore, the pieces in the "assortment cabinet" are utilized for copying exercises during practical skill development courses;

• Visualization of the genesis and stages of historical development of types of traditional art crafts. For instance, the museumexhibition space "Lukutin traditions" [3] at the Fedoskino institute of lacquer miniature painting features an unprecedentedly collection extensive of Fedoskino miniature paintings from the 19th century [2];



Fig. 3. Creative expedition of students from the department of lacquer painting at the Russian university of traditional art crafts



Fig. 4. "Art beyond time": exhibition of Mstyora lacquer miniature painting by three generations of the Molodkin dynasty at the museumexhibition space of the Mstyora institute of lacquer miniature painting named after F.A. Modorov

• Research work carried out by both students [4] and academic staff members [6], resulting in renovation of traditional art craftworks, scholarly reports and articles;

• Conducting educational and industrial internships, as well as creative expeditions (Fig. 3) [1];

• Creating situations of professional success for students who have the opportunity to hold their first solo exhibitions [9];

• Educational outreach for broad audiences – lectures, workshops and exhibitions featuring recognized craftsmen (Fig. 4) [5].

In 2025, the university was renamed from the Higher school of folk arts (academy) to the Russian university of traditional art crafts. This renaming gave a fresh impetus to the interpretation, conceptualization and improvement of the university's primary policies, including the activities of its museum-exhibition spaces, which play a crucial role in training highly qualified artists in traditional art crafts.

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