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**Training of master artists in Nizhny Tagil decorative painting
within the system of secondary vocational education:
historical and pedagogical retrospective**

Abstract. The article analyzes the development of the pedagogical system for training craftsmen in Nizhny Tagil lacquer painting on trays from the 18th century to the present day. It traces the stages of transformation of the goals, methods and content of education: from informal apprenticeship within the family and artel to the creation of a centralized state system in the Soviet period. It explains how pedagogical approaches adapted to changing socio-economic conditions while preserving the uniqueness of Nizhny Tagil lacquer painting.

Keywords: Nizhny Tagil decorative painting, secondary vocational education, history, folk art crafts, continuity, brush writing.

Among the well-known traditional art crafts of the Urals, the Nizhny Tagil decorative painting holds a special place. The aim of the article is to analyze the historical and pedagogical retrospective of training artists in Nizhny Tagil decorative painting, identifying the key institutional stages in the development of the educational system.

Origins: family-based guild apprenticeship (18th –Mid-19th century)

The emergence of the educational system was inextricably linked to the utilitarian task of servicing the Demidovs' metallurgical industries, which required product marking and artistic processing. The first teachers were artists from serfs, such as representatives of the legendary Khudoyarovs dynasty. Training took place in family or guild workshops according to the principle of “do as I do”.

The teaching process was inseparable from production: starting with preparing paints, priming and varnishing trays, an apprentice gradually progressed to executing simple elements of decoration and ornamentation [10]. A key method involved copying the best works of the master or other products serving as standard examples of artistic motifs and compositions. The goal was to train craftsmen capable of replicating items decorated with distinctive Nizhny Tagil patterns.

Formalized education: factory school and artel apprenticeship (Mid-19th century – 1917)

The transition to more organized forms of education was driven by general modernization processes in Russia and increased demands for higher quality of artistic products [9]. In 1806, at the initiative of N.N. Demidov, owner of the Nizhny Tagil factories, a school of painting skills was opened at the Vysky factory vocational applied arts school, whose curriculum was based on local traditions of lacquer painting on metal.

In the school's workshops, the approach to learning acquired a more professional character: students had the opportunity to work under the guidance of one mentor or several mentors to master various techniques and methods of Nizhny Tagil decorative painting. This was the first attempt to systematize training, combining craft practice with basic literacy, drawing and even art history. The school, whose main task was to replicate painted products, existed until the 1820s. During this period, regional-historical features of Nizhny Tagil decorative painting emerged, including:

- painting techniques such as brush (“makhovoye”) writing and multi-layered technique;

- two-color stroke, characterized by simultaneously taking two colors onto the brush. One color is picked up on one edge of the brush, another on the opposite side. Then, a bicolor track is made on the palette – tilted from left to right and back – for uniform distribution of paint on the brush. Each flower petal is executed with separate strokes [3];

- multi-layered writing technique, performed by applying layers of paint to the surface followed by subsequent varnishing;

- compositions mainly consisting of floral, fruit-berry motifs and narrative scenes;

- principles of composition building on the mirror of a tray: “centrally-oriented”, “sectorial”, “wreath”, “half-wreath”.

Systematization: establishment of state educational system (1930s – 1980s)

During the Soviet period, the traditional art craft, preserved through the efforts of enthusiasts, was integrated into the planned economy via a system of artels (later transformed into the “Metal lavka” factory). The issue of systematic personnel training became acute. In 1945, the Nizhny Tagil art and industrial school (now a college) was established – a key educational institution in the history of the craft in the 20th century [5; 7]. For the first time, an educational program for secondary vocational education was introduced, which included not only the study of Nizhny Tagil decorative painting but also general and artistic disciplines such as drawing, painting, and composition [4].

In 1972, the Nizhny Tagil art and industrial school prepared the first experimental group of artists specializing in tray painting, all of whom were assigned to the Nizhny Tagil “Emalposuda” factory [4; 8]. “Many masters from the experimental group of the Nizhny Tagil enamelware plant <...> later taught at the Ural college of applied arts. Among them were T.D. Binas, A.N. Golubeva, N.P. Krupina, A.V. Ponomarev and V.P. Poleva. In 1984, on the initiative of A.V. Ponomarev and with the support of Ya.V. Polishchuk, director of the Ural college of applied arts, a new department – “Artistic painting” – was opened at the educational institution. Four years later, 16 diploma projects were defended. Graduates received diplomas in the specialty “artist-master of painting” at the level of secondary vocational education [6, p. 28].

Significant improvement in the teaching of Nizhny Tagil painting was achieved thanks to the efforts of such teacher-masters as A.V. Afanasyeva. Her methodology, grounded in deep mastery of traditional techniques, high standards of

execution and encouragement of creative exploration, nurtured a generation of talented artists.

As a result, a consistent system for teaching Nizhny Tagil decorative painting was established [1, 2], which includes the following stages:

- mastering painting techniques – performing training exercises to develop brushwork skills, particularly the brushstroke technique;
- copying works of Nizhny Tagil decorative painting from museum collections and catalogs;
- creating an original artistic piece that reflects the distinctive features of the Nizhny Tagil painted craft.

An analysis of works from this period allows us to identify two main themes: traditional floral painting and narrative compositions.

The curriculum for Nizhny Tagil painting included the history of the craft, techniques for composing and creating color palettes.

The goal of training was not merely to produce a craftsman, but to educate an artist of folk art crafts, capable of combining fidelity to tradition with individual creative expression.

Graduates of colleges and technical schools received the qualification of “artist-master” and could work at enterprises of folk art crafts, in art workshops and schools.

Current state of teaching Nizhny Tagil decorative painting in secondary vocational education (Late 20th – Early 21st centuries)

The collapse of the Soviet system of art crafts posed new challenges for pedagogy. The school (college) remained the core of professional training, but the focus of education shifted. Tasks related to preserving artistic identity amid commercialization and dialogue with contemporary art came to the fore. New educational formats appeared: author-led master classes, adult courses, tourist intensives, online lessons. The Gornozavodsky Ural museum reserve and the memorial-literary museum of A.P. Bondin (“Khudoyarov house”) became educational platforms emphasizing the historical-cultural context of the craft’s development.

Currently, the Ural college of applied arts and design, as a branch of the Moscow state academy of arts and industry named after S.G. Stroganov, specializes in training designers. We believe that traditional art crafts, such as Nizhny Tagil decorative painting, represent a fundamentally different type of art compared to design. Training artists-masters in Nizhny Tagil decorative painting, rather than designers, requires a qualitatively different educational content that aligns with the regional-historical, artistic-imagery and technical-technological specifics of this art form.

A unique experience in creating a system of continuous professional education in the field of Nizhny Tagil decorative painting has been implemented at the Russian university of traditional art crafts. This institution was the first to introduce specialized higher education in this area, initiated by the scientific and pedagogical activities of the outstanding specialist in Nizhny Tagil decorative painting,

A.N. Golubeva, a member of the Union of artists of Russia. She taught at the university for many years and headed the department of decorative painting [6].

Secondary vocational education in Nizhny Tagil decorative painting at the Russian university of traditional art crafts is understood as the foundation for specialized higher education. It ensures that graduates master the performing skills of this art form to perfection.

A comprehensive analysis of the current state of secondary vocational education in Nizhny Tagil decorative painting is required and represents a promising direction for our ongoing scientific research.

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