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Study of the works from the museum collection of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving at the Russian university of traditional art crafts as a factor in developing students' professional competence

Abstract. The article analyzes the role of the museum collection of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving in the professional training of bachelors in the field of Bogorodskoye woodcarving. The museum fund, which includes exemplary works by Bogorodskoye carvers, serves as the foundation for the development of key professional competencies of students. Particular attention is paid to the study of original works, which contributes to the development of technological skills, improvement of compositional thinking and the formation of students' aesthetic perception. The museum collection is not only an archive of cultural heritage but also an active educational environment that ensures the continuity of traditions and the preservation of a high level of performing skill.

Keywords: Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving, museum collection, professional competencies, students, higher education, traditional applied art, Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving.

The museum collection of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving, which is a branch of the Russian university of traditional art crafts, holds unique artistic and scientific significance. It represents a retrospective assembly of works by Bogorodskoye wood carvers spanning an extensive time frame – from classical examples dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through contemporary masterpieces.

The origins of this collection are intrinsically linked with the history of professional education within the institute itself. The foundation was laid in 1913 when the first educational classes were established, thus initiating what would become its future museum holdings [2, p. 56].

This period's museum fund is particularly valuable because it includes pieces created by eminent masters who founded renowned dynasties and pioneered the professional school of Bogorodskoye wood carving artistry. Among these notable figures are I.K. Stulov, F.D. Eroshkin, A.Ya. Chushkin, A.N. Zinin and Ya.P. Boblovkin. Their work exemplifies both the plastic language and technical mastery characteristic of traditional Bogorodskoye wood carving techniques.

Studying the works from the museum collection that date back to the beginning stages of the craft helps students gain deeper insights into its origins and evolution. This process allows them to explore traditional wood carving techniques

and styles, ensuring the preservation of the artistic tradition's purity amidst modern developments in traditional art crafts.

Although certain exhibits have been recognized as foundational models, the vast potential of the Bogorodskoye institute's museum collection remains underutilized today. There is an objective need for greater integration of authentic museum artifacts into the educational curriculum, especially through expanded practice sessions involving systematic copying and analysis of reference works on specialized courses such as:

- "Artistic woodcarving technique" – basic instrument handling skills and form reproduction are developed, followed by gradual transition to complex plasticity and deep detailing;
- "Academic drawing" – fundamentals of linear-constructive construction, light-and-shade modeling, composition, and perspective are studied (Fig. 1¹¹³);
- "Academic sculpture and plastic modeling of complex forms" – understanding of form, constructive analytical capability and fitting into space are formed (Fig. 2);
- "Design in artistic wood processing" – knowledge gained regarding Bogorodskoye wood carving and research skills are applied, promoting development of compositional thinking.



Fig. 1. E.V. Podkina. Academic drawing of the hunter figure from sculpture by I.K. Stulov "Hunter with blackcock"



Fig. 2. E.S. Evdokimova. Educational work: clay sculpture of the hunter figure based on I.K. Stulov's sculpture "Hunter with blackcock"

A vivid example of continuity in teaching is Ivan Konstantinovich Stulov's work "Hunter with blackcock" (1936) (Fig. 5). This piece serves as a benchmark in terms of compositional structure and technological execution typical of Bogorodskoye wood carving art. During practical lessons on the subject "Artistic woodcarving technique", while making copies of this sample (Fig. 6), students learn:

¹¹³ Figs. 1-7. Photo by the author of the article

- to convey distinctive movement and anatomical accuracy in their representation;
- to combine different types of textured cuts made using chisels and the traditional Bogorodskoye knife (depicting bird feathers, fabric texture and fur);
- to work with volumetric plasticity while maintaining conciseness and expressiveness characteristic of the Bogorodskoye style;
- to focus separately on details before meticulously assembling the final product.



Fig. 3. I.K. Stulov. Sculpture
“Hunter with blackcock”. 1936



Fig. 4. D.V. Muravyev.
“Hunter with blackcock”,
copy of I.K. Stulov's sculpture “Hunter with
blackcock” (1936)

Thus, museum exhibits – works by Bogorodskoye wood carving masters – serve as visual aids contributing to the formation of high-level professional competency and aesthetic taste among aspiring artists.

The training process involves thorough study of the fundamentals of Bogorodskoye wood carving, encompassing not only proficiency in unique technical and technological methods but also comprehension of the artistic and symbolic nature of products: specific stylistic features, techniques for depicting dynamics and motion in sculptural forms, as well as immersion in traditional narrative lines imbued with characteristic folk humor.

Role of the museum collection in developing student's professional competencies

The museum collection of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving implements the educational potential of an art museum within the framework of vocational training. It acts as “a kind of ‘second school’ where continuous learning takes place and educational activities are built upon a ‘subject dialogue’ between visitors and artworks. This implies direct emotional and intellectual interaction with original pieces” [7]. Systematic study of works from the museum fund serves as a foundation for achieving high levels of qualification for

students enrolled in the program “Traditional applied art” (specialization: Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving), enabling the acquisition of key professional competencies (PC):

PC-1: Artistic-sculptural plasticity and academic foundation.

Examining original museum specimens enables students to accomplish tasks in academic and decorative sculpture while taking into account the specific characteristics of Bogorodskoye wood carving. By analyzing works from different eras, students learn to use the “Bogorodskoye knife technique” not merely as a mechanical procedure but rather as a means of profoundly comprehending plastic anatomy and form in woodwork. The museum specimen serves as a clear demonstration of technological precision and mastery in “swinging” carving, allowing students to achieve flawless quality in the physical realization of objects.

PC-2: Design and compositional modelling.

The museum collection offers invaluable preparatory material for designing new creations. Visual analysis of the “architectonics” of Bogorodskoye toys assists in the creation of authorial graphic projects and prototypes. Using examples from old masters, students learn how to incorporate dynamic multi-figure scenes within the limited volume of lime tree logs. This develops the ability to find optimal balance between details and overall volume, avoiding compositional errors already at the design stage.

PC-3: Research activity and tradition development.

Working in the museum environment enables students to apply scientific research methods (attribution, stylistic and comparative analyses), cultivating a “stylistic immunity” – the ability to distinguish genuine tradition from kitsch or alien borrowings. An investigative approach to museum collections allows students to justify the novelty of their own artistic solutions, grounded in comprehensive knowledge of canonical forms. Only by grasping the logic behind the transformation of the craft throughout history can students create contemporary works that preserve the unique traditions of Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving.

PC-4: Pedagogical continuity and methodological work.

Developing a student's standard perception of stylistic features inherent to Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving based on museum-authentic items forms the basis for his/her future pedagogical activity. Possessing profound knowledge of primary sources, a graduate will be able to plan the educational process effectively and develop curricula appropriately. Experience working with the museum collection empowers prospective teachers to pass down not just technical skills but also the living legacy and culture of Bogorodskoye craftsmanship, thereby sustaining the high level of performance schooling. As noted, the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving is that space where “the tradition lives as long as there exists the process of passing it from master to students” [5].

Historically established social institutions, including museums, “preserve a unique educational potential, remaining channels for cultural initiation”. In this regard, their “unity is perceived and viewed by contemporary pedagogy as a new open educational space” [1, p. 8]. Within this context, the museum collection of the

institute does not function solely as an archive of cultural heritage but actively contributes to intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

Systematic work with museum originals not only shapes students' professional competencies but also creates a talent pool capable of implementing large-scale strategies aimed at expanding the museum space of the institution. V.M. Naumov argues for transforming the museum methodological fund into a full-fledged museum space across three dimensions: storage, research and popularization [4]. Crucially, successful implementation of this strategy hinges on the preparation of specialists in traditional applied arts equipped to engage with the museum fund at the levels of attribution, restoration and scholarly investigation.

Forms of students' interaction with the museum collection

The *method of replicating* model works from the museum collection constitutes a systematically organized system of professional training. According to A.M. Novikov and D.A. Novikov, methodology is defined as “a doctrine concerning the structure, logical organization, methods and means of activity” [6, p. 15]. In this context, three distinct levels emerge: method as a “way of organizing activity”, methodology as a “system of principles and approaches” and technique as a “set of methods” [6, pp. 23-25]. Following this structure, replication serves as a method for reproducing form, the technological cycle from raw log to finished product acts as a technique and integrating museum exhibits into the educational process becomes a methodology for forming professional competencies. This systemic approach is implemented within the discipline “Artistic wood carving technique” through sequential study of animal representations, human figures and genre scenes, considered as interconnected elements in the exploration of Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving.

First stage – acquiring basic techniques. At the initial phase, students begin by exploring simple museum artifacts, honing elementary skills in wielding the Bogorodskoye knife. Throughout the copying process, they master classic cutting techniques:

- cutting away from oneself and underscoring;
- alternating cuts: moving outward then inward toward oneself;
- wrist roll (plastic turning of the blade).

On the second stage, the complexity of objects increases: from animalistic plots to multigure compositions, the sequence of execution of which remains unchanged.

Animalistic plots: copying birds and animals allows students to understand the principles of transmitting anatomical forms in wooden sculptures.

Human figure: studying proportions and static/dynamics of the human body.

Genre scenes: establishing plot connection between several characters in a single sculptural composition.

During the copying process, the learner reproduces the movements of the master's hands, which facilitates the formation and development of professional competencies. This method finds theoretical justification in the concept of reconstructing historical models of extracurricular education. According to L.M. Vanyushkina, “restoring a multichannel model of access to cultural values

makes it possible to practically address the goals and objectives of modern education” [1, p. 19], ensuring the transition from the formation of an “educated person” to the cultivation of a “culturally aware individual”.

Third stage – technological cycle of replication (work phases). Special emphasis is placed on strictly adhering to the sequence of steps involved in creating a piece “from raw log to finished item”:

- “zarubka” – initial rough removal of excess wood to define the main shape of the future figure (Fig. 5a).
- “zadolbka” – refining major volumes and establishing correct proportions (Fig. 5b).
- “na faskakh” – precise definition of volumes through plane modeling (flat surfaces or facets), a hallmark feature of the Bogorodskoye style (Fig. 5c).
- “opiska” – final touches, including application of textures (fur, feathers, clothing pattern, etc.) and detailed refinement of the image (Fig. 5d).



Fig. 5. Stages of execution for the sculpture “Singing bear”:
a) “Zarubka”, б) “Zadolbka”, c) Faceting “Na faskakh”, d) “Opiska”

An important aspect in studying Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving is the educational journey, functioning here as a pedagogical method. According to E.N. Korobkova, an educational journey is a “unique way of immersing oneself in culture, serving as a means to comprehend cultural meanings and regularities”. It consists of three interrelated phases: preparation, route-based work and conclusion-drawing [3, pp. 91-95].

Applied specifically to Bogorodskoye wood carving, preparation entails studying the original artwork and conducting a linear-constructural analysis. Route-based work involves direct copying and completing the entire technological cycle, including “zarubka”, “zadolbka”, faceting “na faskakh”, “opiska”. Conclusion-drawing encompasses comparing the copy with the original and reflecting on the phenomenon of “stylistic immunity”.

Crucial is the transformation of museum samples from mere research objects into “tools for personal development” through “observation of authentic objects in their natural surroundings” and acknowledgment of the “primacy of personal experience” [3].



Fig. 6. D.V. Muravyev. Graduation qualifying work “After hunting”. 2025.
Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

learn to recognize the signature style of such prominent masters as I.K. Stulov, F.D. Eroshkin, V.S. Zinin, N.I. Maksimov, S.A. Pautov, O.I. Mikhailov, et al., analyzing their cutting mannerisms and compositional innovations. Emphasis is placed on how individual creativity harmoniously coexists with canonical requirements of the Bogorodskoye craft without violating its stylistic boundaries.

- integration of experience into project activities: analytical insights gleaned from studying the museum collection are put into practical use in the course “Designing in artistic wood carving”. Here, students shift from analyzing others' works to substantiating their own creative decisions. Professional competence lies in the student's ability to articulate and describe their rationale clearly and persuasively:

- artistic concept: includes the idea, storyline, and choice of imagery;

- technical parameters: justification of chosen materials, tools and specific carving techniques intended for project implementation;

- stylistic continuity: argumentation demonstrating how the new project aligns with the traditions established by great masters whose works were studied in the museum collection.

Working with the museum collection promotes not only the development of practical skills but also the cultivation of art-historical acumen among students. While examining original works, students tackle a range of challenging analytical problems, including:

- attribution and stylistic analysis: students learn to identify temporal periods of artifact creation by recognizing distinguishing traits characteristic of Bogorodskoye wood carving across different epochs (from guild works of the early 20th century to Soviet and contemporary pieces).

- identification of individual style within tradition: a vital professional skill is verbally describing the unique techniques employed by particular authors. Students



Fig. 7. P.A. Zub. Graduation qualifying work «Peace». 2025.
Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

Continuous engagement with the museum collection of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving is not merely supplementary but a foundational component of training future artists specializing in traditional applied arts. Functioning within the educational space of the institute, the museum establishes a unique cultural-educational environment wherein students actively partake in safeguarding cultural heritage (Figs. 6, 7).

The exceptional importance of this educational format lies in the fact that the museum collection serves as a unique factor not only in developing professional competencies of future bachelors but also in acquiring exclusive knowledge accumulated over a century during the formation of the collection. This repository of professional experience has been painstakingly gathered by many generations of educators, masters and outstanding practitioners who played pivotal roles in establishing the educational system for Bogorodskoye wood carving. Studying original museum pieces enables contemporary students to connect with profound technological and artistic traditions, transforming the learning process into a deep exploration of the heritage of Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving. Consequently, the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving stands as a unique educational platform producing experts in traditional applied arts who create distinctive graduation qualifying works rooted in the continuation of technological and artistic traditions.

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