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ART DECO IN THE GRAPHICS OF UKRAINIAN PERIODICALS OF LVIV AND EUROPE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD OF THE 20TH CENTURY: ZOOMORPHIC MOTIFS

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Abstract. The article provides a typology of zoomorphic motifs in the graphics of Ukrainian periodicals published in Lviv during the interwar period and analyzes their common and distinctive features in comparison with magazine covers and advertising graphics of French and other European periodicals within the stylistic framework of Art Deco.

It has been established that compositions dominated by zoomorphic motifs are characterized by asymmetry, diagonal directions, and dynamic movement, in contrast to static and symmetrical compositions in which floromorphic motifs prevail.

The study reveals the significance of stylization techniques in shaping the aesthetic and emotional expressiveness of periodical graphics. This article elucidates the specific characteristics of engaging anthropomorphism and zoomorphism within an anthropocentric context through artistic techniques and figurative means in graphic. It is substantiated that the professional and structured application of compositional tools, pictorial techniques, and stylistic innovations contributed to the creation of a new artistic image grounded in national traditions, distinguished by new aesthetic value and capable of generating new emotional responses in the viewer.

The research demonstrates that during the interwar period Ukrainian graphic art experienced a significant rise due to the activities of scholarly societies, public organizations, clergy, and cultural figures. In particular, the active engagement of the Lviv artistic milieu facilitated the integration of ethnic tradition into everyday visual culture through the aesthetics of periodical graphics. Owing to their contribution, the graphics of interwar Ukrainian magazines and newspapers, marked by national and modern features, became an important factor of cultural expression and the formation of visual identity of the era.

Key words: periodicals, zoomorphic motifs, graphics, Art Deco, stylization, Ukrainian magazines and newspapers, magazine cover, Ukrainian visual art.

Introduction. Among the numerous studies devoted to Ukrainian periodicals of interwar Lviv in the twentieth century, the issue of pictorial motifs – particularly zoomorphic ones – remains insufficiently theoretically substantiated. The identification of shared features and regularities in image-formation and form-generation in the Ukrainian visual art tradition and the stylistics of Art Deco, in comparison with Western European tendencies in newspaper and magazine graphic work of the period, substantiates the place and role of Ukrainian graphic art within the European cultural space.

The aim of the article is to examine zoomorphic motifs in the graphics of Lviv periodicals of the interwar decades in order to identify, typologize, and analyze approaches to their stylization. In addition, the study considers key compositional solutions within the context of Art Deco stylistics and their stylistic affinity with contemporary Western European examples of magazine covers.

Materials and Methods. The research employs a systemic approach that ensures the collection of factual data and specialized scholarly materials related to the field under study, as well as their systematization for analyzing the use of zoomorphic motifs in visual art and, in particular, in graphic art. The method of semantic analysis is applied to identify the symbolic aspects of zoomorphic motifs

in periodical graphics. Analytical methods are also used to determine principal stylization techniques and compositional features.

Results of the Study. The primary sources for this study include archival examples of Ukrainian and Western European periodicals, as well as scholarly research describing approaches to the stylization of biomorphic and, specifically, zoomorphic forms.

V. Mykhailenko and S. Pryshchenko identify the following methods of stylizing natural forms in graphic art and advertising: the search for analogies, transformation, the search for associations, combination, and formalization (Mykhailenko & Pryshchenko, 2012, p. 124).

Within the stylistic framework of Art Deco, zoomorphic motifs more often perform not merely a decorative function – as is the case with floromorphic motifs – but act as symbolic images that enhance the expressiveness of the composition.

Authors who analyze biomorphic and zoomorphic forms emphasize that “the animal often becomes the object of social projections: human vices, virtues, capacities, and characteristically human traits are attributed to it in the form of symbolization, enabling humans to observe themselves through that which differs from themselves” (Terenzi & Mecca, 2017, p. 205). This technique of analogy can frequently be traced in the advertising graphics of Lviv periodicals of the early twentieth century, most notably in the works of Edward Kozak and Roman Chornii.

Although floromorphic motifs are more widespread in Art Deco stylistics than zoomorphic ones, the graphics of Lviv periodicals of the interwar period offer a sufficient number of examples for art-historical analysis. The most common zoomorphic motifs (a category that also includes ornithomorphic and insectomorphic motifs) comprise graphic representations of horses (Fig. 1), birds, cats, dogs, snakes, bees, butterflies, tigers, lions, as well as domestic animals and poultry (cows, pigs, ducks, geese, chickens), among others.



Fig. 1. Stylization of horses by Sviatoslav Hordynskyi (1), 1931, and Roman Chornii (2–3), 1934

Within the internal structure of periodicals, advertising graphics demonstrate the effective use of characteristic Art Deco stylistic features. Figure 2 shows a fragment of advertising graphics: in the character of forms in Fig. (a), there is a tendency toward the typical Art Deco stylizations of eye shapes and the use of sharp-tipped and rounded contrast spots. In its pragmatic aspect, the image of a cat serves as an indicator of product quality and as an embodiment of coziness and warmth.



Fig. 2. a) Fragment of advertising graphics. Komar magazine, 1936, No. 30, p. 7. Author: Yakiv Hnizdovskyi; b) Fragment of advertising graphics. Komar magazine, 1939, No. 26, p. 7. Author's signature: «F» (Fama)

In the pictographic representation (Fig. 2.b), the zoomorphic motif is geometrized and reduced to simple geometric forms that clearly emphasize the characteristic features of the depicted animal (a pig) and the shape of meat products.

A separate type of zoomorphic motif includes trademarks and emblems of periodicals, particularly title graphic headers of newspapers, as well as logos used in advertising graphics (Yakovlev, 2012). Such images often possess a pictographic character; the figures are silhouetted, depicted in profile, and primarily decorative, frequently employing symmetrical composition (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Graphics of logos for the periodical Vistnyk, Lviv, 1933. Authors: Vasyl Dyadyniuk and Mykola Butovych – (1–2). Advertising graphics with trademarks from the publications Nova Khata, 1939, and Historical Calendar-Almanac of Chervona Kalyna, 1937 – (3–4). Author unknown

<https://archive.org/details/Nova-xata--1939--15-16/page/n17/mode/2up?view=theater>
<https://dontsov-nic.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Visnyk-1933-03.pdf>
<https://dontsov-nic.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Visnyk-1934-03.pdf>
https://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis_ir/cgiirbis_64.exe?Z21ID=&I21DBN=ELIB&P21DBN=ELIB&S21STN=1&S21REF=10&S21FMT=online_book&C21COM=S&S21CNR=20&S21P01=0&S21P02=0&S21P03=FF=&S21STR=00008347

Subsequent examples of advertising graphics also demonstrate a common stylization technique in which the silhouette is reduced to a solid monochrome shape or constructed with a single line while preserving realistic proportions and contours. The use of a solid black silhouette with emphasized details rendered by a thin contrasting line originates in ancient Greek archaic art and is reinterpreted in simplified, geometrized form within Art Deco stylistics.

At a time when the world was fascinated by the discoveries of Egyptian tombs and a wide range of exotic ethnic motifs, the Art Deco style developed in parallel with modernist movements, combining progressive modernity with the refined decorative aesthetics of previous epochs and frequently drawing on classical traditions in compositional construction. All these tendencies were also reflected in the Ukrainian press of Lviv (for example, in the graphic header of the magazine «Svit» [World]).



Fig. 4. a) Advertisement for the Lviv factory «Fortuna Nova» in the newspaper Dilo. Author: Sviatoslav Hordynskyi; b) Title graphic header of the newspaper Ridna Shkola, Lviv, 1932

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https://www.instagram.com/p/DTbOFbjj5m/?img_index=6

However, in Ukraine there existed its own rich ethnic tradition, toward which interest increased at the beginning of the 20th century due to the risk of assimilation and the threat of “blurring” and oblivion. Owing to the activities of scholarly societies, public organizations, the clergy, and cultural figures – particularly representatives of the artistic milieu of interwar Lviv such as Sviatoslav Hordynskyi, Pavlo Kovzhun, Olena Kulchytska, Mykola Holubets, and others – this tradition was not only systematized in academic literature and preserved in museum collections, but also integrated into everyday visual culture, notably through the aesthetics of periodical graphics.

Within the diverse stylistic environment of the time, Ukrainian artists actively experimented with forms, compositions, and symbolism, combining contemporary stylistic innovations with national imagery in the graphics of printed periodicals.

Such explorations are also evident in the graphic solutions of Mykola Butovych, where, alongside masterfully stylized floromorphic forms, a zoomorphic motif – a bird – appears on the cover of Nova Khata (1929, no. 1). The laconic, geometricized graphics of the cover are at the same time imbued with decorativeness and the richness of linear and dot elements that form the image of the bird.



Fig. 5. Stylization of a bird and floromorph motifs on the cover of the magazine Nova Khata.

Author: Mykola Butovych. Lviv, 1929.

<https://archive.org/details/Nova-xata--1929--12/mode/2up?view=theater>

In the advertising graphics of periodicals, animals were often likened to humans through the expression of emotions (laughter, sadness, fear, pleasure) or by being depicted in a bipedal stance and in clothing – following the principle of anthropomorphism – as well as through the attribution of human habits (for example, smoking) as metaphorical images.



Fig. 6. Caricature stylization of a rabbit, horses, and a cat in advertising graphics from the magazine Zhinka, issues 13–14, August 1935, as well as from the periodicals Nash Lemko and Ukrainski Visti. 2–3: Author: Roman Chornii. Lviv, 1935–1939.

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[https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Nash_lemko/1935_Chyslo_21_45.pdf?](https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Nash_lemko/1935_Chyslo_21_45.pdf)
[https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Nash_lemko/1935_Chyslo_12_36.pdf?](https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Nash_lemko/1935_Chyslo_12_36.pdf)
<https://polona.pl/item-view/7a93c1a0-884d-4add-a122-cf0a25e70e19?page=7>

In a substantial portion of the graphics of sections, advertisements, and illustrations within the internal structure of the publications, zoomorphic motifs retain recognizable forms and proportions, but overall their treatment is simplified, and the images are, for the most part, realistic, and less frequently metaphorical (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. a) Advertising graphics in the periodical Ukrainski Visti, Vol. 5, No. 20, 1939.

Author unknown.

b) Ukrainski Visti, No. 25, 1939. Author: Edward Kozak (Ek, Eko).

c) Narodna Sprava, Vol. 2, No. 11, 1929. Author: Edward Kozak.

<https://polona.pl/item-view/54be0a7e-ffb2-4a91-8f38-0c2a6cf09d54?page=7>

<https://polona.pl/item-view/fa8112f7-b647-4b10-8efc-0faa039857de?page=2>

<https://polona.pl/item-view/35bd7c08-9a5b-4cd8-9725-679ae2346ded?page=0>

It should be noted that for graphic compositions within the internal structure of periodicals, adaptability to scaling was essential, along with maximum informativeness and visual impact within a limited format (often very small scale) and, due to the specifics of printing processes and their cost, the use of restricted graphic means (application of a single ink layer). In the graphics of covers of Ukrainian periodicals published in Lviv, the predominant use was a single achromatic or chromatic color (often also serving as the background), less frequently two spot chromatic colors; multicolored covers were most often characteristic of yearbooks and calendars.

A photograph published in the magazine «Na Slidi» (Fig. 8) shows that Ukrainian periodicals (in the photograph one can discern such publications as *Novyi Chas*, *Narodnia Sprava*, *Ukrainski Visty*, *Silskyi Hospodar*, *Dilo*, *Litopys Chervonoi Kalyny*, *Komar*, *Ukrainsky Invalid*, and many others) were represented at exhibitions in Paris alongside those of other European countries, which testifies to the diversity of types and thematic directions of the periodicals, as well as to the high quality of their graphic treatment.



Вистава української преси на світовій виставі в Парижі. На знімці бачимо примірники «На Сліді»

Fig. 8. Na Slidi, magazine of Plast youth, December 1937, No. 12.

URL: <http://old.avr.org.ua/index.php/viewDoc/21567/>

Examples of foreign magazine covers with compositions featuring zoomorphic motifs, just like the Ukrainian publications of interwar Lviv, demonstrate devices such as the use of asymmetry and both simple and more complex rhythmic structures. European examples of covers predominantly employ more than two chromatic tones and tonal gradients (Fig. 9). General tendencies of Art Deco stylistic devices, such as a monochrome silhouette combined with a contrasting thin line or the construction of form with a single line, were actively employed by European artists.

The most frequently used zoomorphic motif is the image of the horse, symbolizing speed and strength, endurance, freedom, and independence, most often positioned hierarchically in relation to an anthropomorphic motif (Marchesini & Bussolini, 2016). In the internal graphics of foreign periodicals, the image of the horse was used in advertising automobiles, motor oils, and competitions. A comparative analysis of Ukrainian and European approaches to the stylization of the horse image demonstrates a significant number of shared features and the absence of substantial differences (Figs. 1, 10). The common element is the use of symbolism. Researchers of artistic devices note that «symbols and metaphors often reflect powerful cultural norms and values; therefore, their use can also serve as a means of preserving and transforming cultural perceptions» (Sosnytskyi, 2024, p. 146).

On the covers of the journals «Art et Industrie» and «Miroir du Monde» (fig. 11), the authors employed a characteristic Art Deco stylistic technique: a flat depiction of zoomorphic motifs with realistic proportions, interpreted through the contrast of a monochrome silhouette and a thin line. Another characteristic device is the rhythm of silhouettes.



Fig. 9. Cover of the magazine Emporium. Author: Diego Santambrogio. 1929. Italy.

Cover of Harper's Bazaar. Author: Erte. 1935. New York–Paris.

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Fig. 10. a) Cover of a catalog. Author: Jean Carlu, 1930. France.

b) Cover of the magazine Advertising Arts, 1934. Author: Joseph Binder. Austria.

c) Advertising illustration “Antar”. Author: L. Gadoud.

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/d4/b7/b9/d4b7b9f4ca584af7019badd1c0d8ea39.jpg>

<https://img.leboncoin.fr/api/v1/lbcpb1/images/f3/7d/87/f37d877cd5b94f5626d5bf4826f27520365a21d2.jpg?rule=ad-large>

<https://hprints.com/en/item/60197/Antar-1928-L-Gadoud-Art-deco-poster-art>

Subsequent graphic compositions on the covers of «Art et Industrie» by the renowned Art Deco master Charles Loupot (Fig. 12), as well as examples of advertising graphics within the structure of periodicals (Figs. 13–14), demonstrate the construction of a zoomorphic silhouette using a thin line of constant thickness.

Compared to foreign examples, Ukrainian graphics do not display the homogeneous refinement characteristic of European periodicals and Art Deco stylistics; more realistic forms are noticeably predominant. It is also worth noting that floromorphic motifs exhibit a higher degree of stylization, which is обусловлено the nature of folk ornamentation, in which plant forms dominate and which served as a source of inspiration for Ukrainian artists.

Conclusion. Zoomorphic motifs in the graphics of Lviv periodicals can be divided into two categories:

- decorative symbolic zoomorphic motifs (cover graphics), as well as decorative motifs executed in an authorial manner (advertising graphics, vignettes, section headers);

- zoomorphic motifs of illustrative, realistic character (visual illustrations accompanying sections, literary works, and advertising).



Fig. 11. a–b) Covers of the magazine Art et Industrie. Author: Paule Max-Ingrand, 1933. France. c) Cover of the magazine Miroir du Monde. Author: Leonetto Cappiello, 1937. France.

https://hprints.com/s_img/ng_md/61/61832-paule-max-ingrand-1933-art-et-industrie-cover-9d63a98ba36b-hprints-com.webp

<https://img.leboncoin.fr/api/v1/lbcpb1/images/f3/7d/87/f37d877cd5b94f5626d5bf4826f27520365a21d2.jpg?rule=ad-large>

https://www.thevintageposter.com/Art_Images/Medium/20082.jpg



Fig. 12. Covers of the magazine Art et Industrie. Author: Charles Loupot, 1932. France.

<https://hprints.com/en/search?q=ART+INDUSTRIE&p=1&met=syn>



Fig. 13. a) Advertising illustration «Fly-Tox». Author: Albert Pouprou (Alprou), 1930. France. b) Advertising illustration «Campari». Author: Orsi, 1939. France. c) Advertising illustration «Guerlain». Author: Darcy. France.

Images sourced from: hprints.com



**Fig. 14. Advertisement for «Gévelot» cartridges, 1928–1931.
Author: Francis Bernard. France. Image sourced from: picclick.fr**

In the compositional structure dominated by zoomorphic motifs, greater asymmetry, diagonal directions, and dynamism are consistently observed, in contrast to static and symmetrical compositions dominated by floromorphic motifs.

Among stylization techniques, the hyperbolization of certain parts of the animal figure predominates, as well as the assimilation of animals to anthropomorphic human forms, character traits, and habits; symbolic imagery is widely used, while metaphorical images occur less frequently. In contrast, European examples more often demonstrate metaphorical representations of zoomorphic imagery and hyperbolization in the treatment of silhouettes.

Zoomorphic motifs in periodical graphics were used to establish an emotional connection through symbolism and anthropomorphism.

From a pragmatic perspective, the use of zoomorphic motifs played an important communicative role through the assimilation of zoomorphic imagery to human qualities (such as emotionality, habitual behavior, or everyday scenes).

Taking into account the functional and thematic typology of periodical graphics, the predominant artistic devices include:

- hyperbole in all types of periodical graphics;
- metaphor in advertising graphics and graphic headers / decorative vignettes;
- symbol in cover design;
- allegory in narrative humorous illustrations.

In Ukrainian publications, symbols were employed as one of the artistic devices to emphasize the significance of themes such as freedom (bird), strength and speed (horse), diligence (bee), and so forth, as well as to reinforce the notion of identity (national symbols).

The symbolism of zoomorphic motifs was most strikingly manifested in the design of magazine covers.

It is important to note that symbols and metaphors frequently reflect powerful cultural norms and value orientations; therefore, their use by artists and designers can serve as a means of preserving and transforming cultural perceptions and values.

As a result of the artist's professional and structured use of compositional and artistic techniques, visual means, and distinctive methods of stylization – particularly in the graphics of periodical publications – a new artistic image was formed that drew on national traditions, acquired new aesthetic value, and evoked new emotional responses.

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