



## Russian Ballet Poetics in Plastic of Minor Forms in Late 19th – First Third of 20th Century (to the Problem of World Heritage)

Tatiana Portnova\*

Professor, GBOU HPE Institute of Slavonic culture, Moscow State University of Design and Technology, Moscow, Russia

\*Corresponding author: Tatiana Portnova, Professor, Department of Choreography and Art Criticism, Moscow State University of Design and Technology, Moscow, Russia, Tel: 8 903 761 26 69; E-mail: tatianaportnova@bk.ru

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### Abstract

Urgency of the synthesis and interaction of Plastic Arts in late 19th – first third of 20th century is due to rise of the ballet theatre, wide public and especially people of art's interest, who had strove to lodge the dance in different forms and genres of Arts. The aspects of dance interpretation in means of small sculptures, substantially in porcelain, as the most spectacular in image building, considered in the article. Analyzing trends in the development of ballet and sculptural plasticity of this period, the author shows them in deep mutual integration of artistic and creativity. For the first time a row of the pieces of art, identified and gathered, has been fully analyzed being in central museums of Moscow and Sankt-Petersburg and in foreign private collections. The main attention is paid to the peculiarities of figurative plastic arts and features of individual products; there are highlighted their individual typical stylistic and technical features unique for different masters, mainly the Imperial Porcelain Factory. In the article provides new data on many works, resulting from the author's long-term research.

**Keywords:** Balletvisualization; Decorativeness; Figurative dance aesthetics; Integration; Plastic arts

### Introduction

One of the most significant aspects of the Russian artistic life in early 20th century became energization of arts interaction, which had led to enrichment of each single field of artistic endeavor and at the same time to appearance of new aesthetic phenomenon [1,2]. This article is an experience of problematic approach to analysis of difficult artistic phenomenon related to the ballet theatre in early 20th century with forming of new figurative dance aesthetics. Due to that fact many of the staginess aspects, which at first glance could be deemed as sufficiently local, achieve significant general theoretic and practical importance [3]. Stage reincarnation, transformation – special condition of character's artistic otherness is interesting in respect of

inclusion in poetic convention [4]. Herein is obviously possible not only talk shop of ballet and sculpture, but also find by filling the ways of much more significant aspects of new synthesis of the arts development.

### Methodology

The methodology basis of the article area unit general aesthetic and cultural-historical principles of fabric structuring, permitting to hide the most problems with formation of 2 styles of fine art since their introduction within the late XIX century. what is more, the chosen approach permits organizing the sequence of ballet images' look in sculptural fine art, light the precise options of every performance, the worth of various artistic ways of each masters of sculpture and shown performers happiness to the 2 main national colleges of Russian ballet (St. Petersburg Campaign and Moscow). The chosen approach additionally permits evaluating the contribution of Russian ceramic ware art within the world culture. The principle of a rhetorical dominant is key in specific monuments' choice of sculptural fine art and makes it doable to beat the tendency to listing them, to target a holistic coverage of the inventive culture. additionally, a private methodology of study relies on modeling totally different systems of figurative perception of dance. The accents of art analysis made on specific works of small plastic art or works of one master give the opportunity to immerse themselves in the era of the late XIX – the first third of the twentieth century. They allows to experience its specificity, the uniqueness of the national school, driving style as a kind of single image system, understand the common means and techniques of artistic expression due to the ideological content unity associated with Russian ballet poetics.

### Results

There are different systems of visual thinking in world of art. Penetration of "decorativism" (ornamentation) into easel forms became distinctive feature in early 20th century. On the other hand, small plastic amalgamating with arts and crafts is gravitating toward easel sculpture [5]. Porcelain plastic art in late 19th – the first third of the 20th century devoted to ballet not so much interesting in respect of the certain details' quality, as completeness and total aesthetic of inherent worth.

I apprehend it as a unity of these factors, as statement of culture and characteristic phenomenon of the wide attention of the fine arts to the Russian ballet at the turn of the century [6-9]. The ballet subject is reflected by many kinds of art as if it has aspired to perpetuate itself in different techniques, materials vary in figurative capabilities.

Small sculpture became the most prominent incarnation of such art's qualities as naturalness, internal grace and freedom of plastic expression.

However, what is the measure for contact, another words "communicative" component of the system of plastic thinking, which is adhered by the artists? This is a key point, as it's a question about work of art, refined, exquisite "elite" figurativeness.

Appeal to ceramic ware for ballet image creation is conveyable. It's a strict material, having astonishing achromatic color, fragility and explicit chime that each one may transmit essential ballet qualities – snowy purity of image, unheard music of the motion. The artists dependably reproduce "emotional field" of the time and will specific their connections to the ballet image via minor sculptural plastic. Peculiar means of emotional feeling consonant to retrospectives sculpturing expresses the cult of beauty, thus as ballet art will. Thus, there appears fortunate accordance with mutual treatment of both arts' qualities. Scilicet images of porcelain plastic of minor forms and ballet both besteeded to open up such particular relation that has a secret of synthesis of these arts. Therefore, that enabled to master it with the greater fineness and emotional persuasiveness [6].

The ballet statuettes created by the masters of the Petersburg Porcelain Factory: Danko, Sydbin, Ivanov, Glebova-Sudeykina, have been expressively established in respect of plastique, so they live in ambient space and sounds as a nocturne, therefore they are interesting and attractive [7-9]. They possess liability inherent in ballet – intimacy. An artist working with porcelain on a dance image is able to shorten utterly the distance between original and spectators. Such confidential contact is similar with perception of live ballet image on the stage. Conformable intercourse occurs with ballet motive of indoor sculpture, although the artists working with minor porcelain plastics have an ability to create sculptured figure as a sociable companion. Such ability is not a feature, but the main principle of an image content disclosure. There is sometimes could be seemed a shade of sugariness and candy-box beauty, but either or another image, designed by sculpture in minor form gains full range of artistic expression in this very dimension. Surely, the artists had not embodied only external beauty of dance in porcelain plastics. They can incarnate poetics and spirituality of the Russian ballet, the nature of Pavlova, Krasavina, Nizhinskiy images in small statuette [10]. Each ballet dancer could be accurately recognized by the figure, portrait features and imprinted dance manner. Neither embellishing their characters, the artists personify their measure of projected character's conception and its moral appeal. It seemed to me the key to the visual image is a material plastic – expressive with rich sense and subtlety of the shades. It discovers essence,

meaning and content of the image. Visual image for artist is a final phase of dance-world's non-verbal comprehension. Thus, speechless visual origin leads to the scenic plastique.

General line of master's art direction in respect of ballet image does not interfere to explore personal artistic achievements of each one. Each master meets the same challenges and has its own way of development and maintain creative individuality [11].

Porcelain plastic of Sudbinin is distinguished by manifestation of ballet image and precision of psychological characteristics. He created such statuettes, as "Krasavina – ballerina in a ballet "Petrushka" (s.z.), "Krasavina – "Giselle" (1914, State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin), "Pavlova – "Giselle" (1913, State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin, Kuskovo Museum Estate, Craft and Folk Art Museum, The State Hermitage Museum, The State Russian Museum) which exist precise characteristic of each ballerina's role [Sudbinin, Moch].

The most famous of aforesaid-Giselle statuettes danced both by Pavlova (1908-1913) and Krasavina (1913). Those inviting statuettes show two time layer of the heroine's live – in first and second acts, each one provide its own melody. The Giselle theme require artist to be emotionally responsive, having predisposition to association thinking and understanding of character's moral imperative. Though intonation defines very specific style of Giselle image of Pavlova from first act, guessing on a chamomile. It fulfilled in a equable and restrained manner, without betraying of exceptional qualities of her nature. Its neutral-white scale might be turned strict. That as if undertone soul motion: frozen in expectation eyes and hands underlining romantic tune. Sudbin succeed in realization of light sense and unpretentious simple soul of peasant girl Giselle, and in the same time he had noticed outstanding appearance of the ballerina. Sudbin's works have combination of charming, visual and sensitive image of simple human with fine fiber poetic and complicated sensation of actor's personality – altogether it makes him unique and the one and only artist [12].

Another statuette "Krasavina – "Giselle" – is the most interesting work of Sudbinin, which he presented to Krasavina in 1914. Well known, that "Giselle" production was to recall the Parisians old time of Carlotta Grisi – the first performer of that role. Sculpture impress inspired Giselle's dance, it is deprived of silhouette. The artist had created guiding by his train of thought, by his sometimes-vague fillings. Thus, Giselle became as if she does not belong to herself, but acting by will of incredible power. Her look it turned inside, motions reduced, as in dream. Flexible musical line is forming figure outline with portended and crossed Giselle's hands contain a shade of religion detachment specific for second act of the ballet. Her *recherché* silhouette is literally drawn in cold moonlight. Biscuit (i.e. unglazed white porcelain) dissolves sculptured figure in air, enforce sensation of phantasmal vacillation, non-material being. All happening here is literally occurs on a swinging plane. Colorless, light and sterile clean surface of the work been treated tenderly and subtly. Porcelain is apparently rippling in time with high Giselle's jump. Imponderable, pearly chiaroscuro impart "moonlight" to plastic,

which could be compared to poetic gauze of reminiscence, though which Giselle's entreaty dance continued until daylight becomes faintly visible [7]. Besides these statuettes, Sudbinin made Pavlova in "Bacchanalia" and "Swan". The sculpture "Swan" was lost and "Bacchanalia" was impossible to be done in porcelain.

S. Sudbinin's innovation – is broadening of a poetic subject in aspect of its infinite and tireless composition's complication. Sculptor's technical solution was truly sensational – it's difficult to understand how the statuette is supported if it touch pedestal in one point by toe, as it defy decree of nature. It was told that the statuette as light and elusive as motion of dance. Sudbinin created another model of the same statuette with cupids holding ballerina's leg that looked less impressive than the previous one (State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin) [13].

In the statuette "Krasavina – ballerina in the ballet "Petrushka" the artist pays attention to body plastique and technical peculiarities of role. Portraying ballerina sur les points second position, which is well-known by Krasavina's photography, sculptor is providing almost photographic image of motion, filigreed minor finger technique. We face work of art dedicated to external subject, but not "sensual soul". As if stopped and frozen pose express doll essence of soullessly adorable ballerina Krasavina.

Works of Ivanov and Danko in contrast to Sudbinin, who succeed in creation of ballet image's monumentality, more focused on intimacy and arts and crafts. The widespread use of color, less detailed portrait likeness, features delineated by brush – altogether introduce doll involution and smartness. Works of Ivanov "Karsavina in the ballet "The Firebird" (1923, The State Russian Museum, Kuskovo Museum Estate, Craft and Folk Art Museum), "Fokin as Ivan Tsarevich in the ballet "The Firebird" (1923, The State Russian Museum, Kuskovo Museum Estate, The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre, Craft and Folk Art Museum), works of Danko: "Pavlova "The Dying Swan" (1923, State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin, Kuskovo Museum Estate, The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre, Craft and Folk Art Museum), "Nizhinsky in the ballet "Spectre de la Rose" (1920, State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin), "Karsavina – "La Bayadere" (State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin, Kuskovo Museum Estate, The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre, Craft and Folk Art Museum), three figures: Giray, Mary, Zarema from the triptych "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" (1923, Kuskovo Museum Estate), perhaps other than "Fedorova the 2nd in Spanish dance" (1921, The State Russian Museum, State Central Theatre Museum of Bahrushin, Kuskovo Museum Estate, The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre), as opposed to Sudbinin's compositions are built on smooth motions that provide image with non-ballet aspects. Among them: pastiche pattern, movement extravagancy, affectation, some sort of sugariness inherent in this works.

In the sculpture cluster "Krasavina and Fokin within the ballet "Firebird" of Lev Ivanov mentioned options considerably distinguished than in works of Danko. However, to some extent they supported the Fokin terribly ballet normalisation. That ballet was found on fairy-tale, folks basis having roots in

Russian epos, from the terribly ballet-master's experiments, UN agency had reworked by solely power of his fantasy the Firebird character into human look in purpose of placing exotic performance. Hence, the intense painting, colourful conviviality, fine outlining of the "Firebird's" plume and folk's costume of "Tsarevitch Ivan". Notwithstanding the self-dependence of each thing, these both statuettes achieve consonance in unity just as, inseparable as in very ballet. Plastic solution for Danko ballet images demonstrates various figures configuration, based upon actor's role character. "I've been visiting the ballet almost every week. Keeping eyes glued on the stage I've had keeping on sculpturing small figures, sketches" [14]. The phenomenon of decorative effect outlined in painting and graphic arts in early 20th century had also appeared in Danko's works. Here is the dominant of the artistic image.

Among compositions crated by Danko, such as "Nizhinky in the ballet "A Vision of a Rose", "Pavlova – Dying Swan", "Krasavina in "La Bayadere" and "Fedorova the 2nd in Spanish dance" the last one is the most felicitous composition, as inspired scenic image is expressed along with plastique characteristics, the nature of Fedorova's talent. Fanciful line emphasizes ballerina's silhouette exposed in energetic character dance. Beautifully worked out color specter made up of red, black and green sounds with Spanish music of this charming dance. Thus, just in character dances Federava had found herself as a gifted dancer. Looking at Danko work, I recall Markov's words: "her small beautiful figure, speaking eyes, great temperament had filled entire stage of the Bolshoi Theater. There was nothing of ordinary tastelessness Spanish ballet dance, hardly having common with true Spain. Her dance was apprehended as a self-immolation". The artist rendered a very good likeness of the national folklore, realized different spheres of national art culture via opportunity of synthesis in minor forms. The sculptures "Nizhinky in the ballet "A Vision of a Rose" and "Pavlova – Dying Swan" the key sense of both roles has been perfectly indicated - an image of perishing beauty ("Pavlova – Dying Swan"), image of magic and seductive aroma of a rose ("Nizhinsky in the ballet "A Vision of a Rose") both exposed by astonishing porcelain qualities – material fragility with light patches on its surface. Yet, slightly exaggerated figure's massiveness stops motion and makes ossification of the images. Statues do not provide with sensation of Nizhinsky's high air jump and Pavlova's refined grace. Moderately selected color solution, based on two colors inserts lyric tone in cold porcelain.

It's to be noticed that style and artistic thinking of Glebova-Sudeykina and Friedman-Klüzel is distinctive. Their ballet image forms under strong influence of "art world" artist's traditions. Artistic language of "art-worlders" with features mentioned before was not their individual feature. Nevertheless, Glebova-Sudeykina's and Friedman-Klüzel's minor porcelain plastics had achieved its typological purity. That illustrates artist's disposition to theatrical action typical of the turn of the century. It is natural, that theatricality depends on the very image motif, which based on refined image of Schumann's "Carnaval" ballet, inspired by the German romanticism style. The same way as "art-worlders", these

masters are turned to beautiful world of Harlequins and Columbines, which personify pleasant past and happy future. A fatal beauty theme, or better, dream about it, as we know, was usual art motif and ideal ballet theme.

Elegant and graceful postures of Friedman-Klüzel and Glebova-Sudeykina's plastics reminiscent of refine aspects of "harlequinades" by Benoit, Somov, Bobishev, of "Harlequins" and "Columbines" by Bourdelle, Kainer, Segonzac altogether its aesthetics sounds alike, as in harmony with Blok poesy. Yet, it seems that external manifestation of witty sense's sentimentalism, smiles, elegant costumes and fragile whiteness of flashing porcelain hides an idea of illusiveness and the very phantasmal side of being, where Friedman-Klüzel and Glebova-Sudeykina's heroes are trying to conceal their pipe-dreams. Represented action is dramatized, relative. It is seems to be founded on initial delusion. Silence is not necessarily signify voicelessness. Duality of the artist's poetic themes – is an artistic expression of critical moment's ambivalence, when each thing demonstrates its seamy side and everything could turn one way or another.

Analyzing ballet searching at the turn of the century Krasovskaya has written following: "That is only dream of a beauty has been remained, but the beauty itself. Therefore, the beauty is rarely effective... it has lured and tempted passively, since it hadn't been embodied the destiny, but the destiny's orders" [15].

The ballet images by Friedman-Klüzel and Glebova-Sudeykina are literally encircled with the spirit of the age, as the artists keep on trying to find a spiritual quest and age's necessity. All aforesaid could be completely attributed to the issue of ballet representation by the "art-worlders", however the porcelain image could be easily, or effortlessly transformed in smart and novelty manner.

Friedman-Klüzel's tendency to pantomime side of a dance and white range of mimic movements and gesticulation makes up distinctness of his porcelain works. Thus, if his earlier statuettes made of bronze could be said inspired by motion, his porcelain works have other accents. Motion became secondary or punched out of site. In the statuettes: "Eduardova in the ballet "Carnaval", "Fokina – "Carnaval", "Novicov – "Carnaval", "Krasavina, Nizhinsky – "Carnaval" (all in foreign collections) artist have found in character's comedy frame sudden mood transition, semitones and nuances of mimic play and the melody characters' languishing speech. In that works Friedman-Klüzel appears as subtle psychologist. Psychological origin prevails over plastique. Feelings predominate and override motions. A motion springs up spontaneously or incidentally. It's inseparable from characters' innermost thoughts. Motion is not an independent part of the artistic figure, but belongs to style and inflexion of the speechless narration. Such emotional spontaneity of the scenic "speech" leaves a mark on the entire composition style, their construction, internal dynamics and dialog rhythm. Speaking of the most successful and significant in the artist's work should be noticed skillful sight of images' partnership. The mean of this term, as is well known, does not limited by character's "pronunciation" his line or motions within bounds

of mise en scene. Dance steps of Harlequin and Columbine are apprehended as artificial posing. Their flexible bodies plexus in various poses, from work to work their motion accents easily shifted, they seem to be a repository of mysterious spirit [16].

Friedman-Klüzel had exposed different actors in the same dance of the "Carnaval" ballet. Nevertheless, inherent sculpture's lightness, natural improvisation had pained those images with many small, but colourless godsend, that allowed to provide the statuettes with permanent natural connections with the Fokin's ballet.

The ballet images of Blebova-Sudeykina are reminiscent of Sudeykin's compositions. In the works: "Columbina" (The State Russian Museum), "Dancer" (1924, The State Russian Museum) pose and motion character truly represented, but comparing with Friedman-Klüzel the image is more stylized for truthiness and decorative effect's sake. Refinement grace of figure position, their gestures, which demonstrates their qualities, altogether imparts peculiar charm.

The only publication (thesis) about Glebova-Sudeykina says: "This statuette witnesses about great artistic gift of professional technique. Many admirers deem them as little masterpiece". "Romantic or folk's imagination, novelty of the forms – are special features of her style, which is competitive with the works of her famous husband" [17].

Deliberate affectation does not create an impression of something unnatural. The artist had imprinted grace-felled movement of a dance [16]. Glebova-Sudeykin worked on ballet theme not only in porcelain. She painted the pictures in oil – "Dance" (1936) and watercolor on ballet motifs (coll Mme Kuill Paris.). She also created stuffed dancers in traditional costumes: "Columbine", "Pierrot", "Die Puppenfee", "Desdemona", "Hamlet" etc. (coll Mme Kuill Paris).

Concluding review of the artist's achievements in the plastic of minor forms, it should be said, that the other masters had dedicated their skills to the ballet theme. For instance, Brusketti-Mitrohina had created the following works: "A ballerina" (1930, Kuskovo Museum Estate), "Krasavina" (1980), "Puare" (1930), "Spesivceva" (1930) etc.

In the porcelain plastics, as in works of "art-worlders" are encountered scenes of various subjects, with pronounced choreographic aspect, enriched with folklore and national motives, such as: "Russian dance", "Dancers", "Harlequinade", "Ballet dancers" etc.

As an example of such arts could be mention following: "Accordion Player and Dancer Girl" (1920, Kuskovo Museum Estate) by Kustodiev, "Danced Girl" – three figures (1920, Kuskovo Museum Estate, Craft and Folk Art Museum), "A Dance of The East" (1921, Kuskovo Museum Estate) Danko [18].

The ballet scenes are realized not only in statues, but china also contains theme paintings: "Plate "Harlequin" (1922, museum PFZ), "Plate "Columbine" (1922, The Museum of the Imperial Porcelain Factory), both by Chekhonin; "Dish "Harlequinade" (1922, Kuskovo Museum Estate) by Masyagin. The last one's refined color scheme has been skillfully put



down about the character in a manner of terse painting, with watted ornamental pattern, which altogether provide dish with elegant charm [19].

In this article, it is impossible to cover all masters' works examining each of them separately in detail. Basing on examined works of porcelain plastic, it could be concluded, that the ballet images made of porcelain has various incarnations, different creation findings – from “characters” of cast images (Sudbinin, Danko, Ivanov) to the ballet motives (Glebova-Sudeykina, Brusketi-Mitrohina, Chekhonin, Masiagin), from psychological capacious images to intimate and lyrical works. There can be seen the influence of historical changes of the late 19th and early 20th century on ballet development. There is a change of style, new performances are more emotional and reflect the realities of the time.

## Discussion

The material presented in the article in terms of a detailed Russian Ballet poetics analysis in the plastic art of small forms of the late XIX – early XX centuries makes it possible to see the priority of the artistic and aesthetic taste, broaden horizons of masters of sculpture, the development of imaginative, associative and critical thinking unconditional for them. Synthesizing concept of the object of our study is based on the discovery of the general laws of formation, development and cooperation between the two plastic arts as an integrated system, not allowed to reveal the potential of open art – figurative sense in porcelain. Refined poetics of this material contained in the small chamber forms of sculpture made the audience look closer to the subject of the ballet. Directive-choreographic practice has made it possible to touch disappeared ballet roles as an important source of their stage reconstruction. Small masterpieces, collected together and included in the content of the article, will be useful in the organization of thematic exhibitions in the museum's theater and the exposure; the researchers and creative workers can be acquainted with the originals of works, according to the locations mentioned above in the article. In terms of the content, the activity and practice-oriented guidelines provide the most interdisciplinary nature of plastic arts, its naturally connection to a system of interdisciplinary integration. The subsequent development of the subject can move in the direction of a supplement information about Russian ballet and dance masters embodied in plastic part of porcelain from the museum and private collections in different countries and the creation of publication-catalog with scholarly apparatus that characterizes each product. This can be an exemplary edition with an annotated list of published works. Porcelain sculptures' finding has become the imitation of ideals, stage roles' images, performed by famous ballet dancers, who participated in S. Diaghilev "Russian Seasons" and received refraction in the works of Russian masters. Statues depicting the famous Ballet dancers were replicated and exhibited on frequently organized fairs and were sold at Sotheby's, spreading around the world [20,21]. Therefore, despite the fact that the author is limited by the topic of Russian ballet and Russian sculptors, the material is considerable and occupies a

leading position among national searches that enables Russian traditions and experience in this area in the overall system of the world's art treasures.

## Conclusion

The whole circle of works, considered in the article has continuous speechless dialogue between “characters” themselves, artist, statue and master's consciousness. Most works have inherent high artistic level, outstanding plastic craft and maturity of thinking. This is not just a reproduction of a character in a series of "crinoline groups" of the late XIX – the first third of XX century, the artists gave special attitude to the era, their love at that time, and at the same time, they pointed out the ironic understanding of what was possible in the plastic art of small forms.

The research on porcelain plastic art in the context of studying ballet images expanded the boundaries of the integrated presentation of thematic search of small sculptures bordering on arts and crafts. Creative synthesis of the sculpture and the ballet – long-live and fruitful tradition – got a new impetus in the corner of the age. Porcelain and faience factories were in many regions of Russia and Europe; they created fashion in terms of artistic and stylistic findings. Ballet motives become harmonious expression of Art Nouveau and Symbolism of the Silver Age, formed as a complex synthetic style, even more as a fusion of different styles with the fundamental openness to cultural heritage of all time. The proposed method of studying porcelain plastic art, including related forms of art, can be seen as a significant addition to the adoption and dissemination of art criticism in the approach to monuments' study of small sculptures.

Studying ballet images in porcelain plastic art with basic information on the products allows realizing and comprehending the subject, as a form of thinking, plentiful source of inspiration. The ballet sculpture gives the audience an idea of the art culture tendencies in late 19th – first third 20th century. Much attention was paid to plastic art of human body (plastique) development. That allowed developing the artistically expressive plastic language as a part of figurative dance aesthetics. It also provided an opportunity to develop new choreographic movements.

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