

# TRADITION AND MODERNITY: APPLIED ARTS GENERAL EXHIBITIONS AT “RAKOVSKI” 125 GALLERY (1955 – 1972)

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**Abstract:** The gallery at 125 Rakovski Str. in Sofia is the oldest still functioning art gallery in Bulgaria that has never changed its intended purpose from as far back as 1940 when it all began, to date, despite the numerous social, political and economic twists and turns Bulgaria went through. Besides the display of various kinds and genres of the fine arts, during the 1955–1972 period, 7 general applied arts exhibitions were organized outlining the dynamics of the art processes. The theme is focusing on the general applied arts exhibitions organized mainly through this period in the gallery, and follow up, in this study with the participation of major authors and works displayed. The aim is to analyze the development of applied arts in Bulgaria and outline the distinction between these and also the folk crafts as individual creative activity, on the one hand, and the work of design artists in industry; to identify the main trends and relatedness to tradition, and the impact of the new aesthetics. As the result tracing the general applied arts exhibitions make it possible to follow the evolution of these arts in Bulgaria and make comparisons between tradition and innovation; reach conclusions concerning the dominating stylistic tendencies; identify important specifics about forms that belong to the border area between creating unique pieces and producing a certain number of copies. Also, scientific significance is historical reconstruction of the exhibitions of applied arts by published archival document for the first time.

**Keywords:** tradition, modernity, exhibitions, applied arts, gallery

The history of the art gallery at 125 Rakovski Str., in Sofia, is emblematic for contemporary Bulgarian art, and the longevity of this institution is a historical fact. This was exhibition space in Bulgaria built by union of artists and dedicated specifically to display works of art. The oldest Bulgarian art gallery has never changed its function since its founding, in 1940, despite the numerous social and political perturbations and the radical economic changes that swept through this country shortly after that. Besides regularly displaying various kinds and genres of fine arts, three general art exhibitions were hosted there between 1964 – 1972, that trace the dynamics of the art processes – and the transformations Bulgarian art life went through, born of both internal evolutionary trends, and of factors that were external to the system.

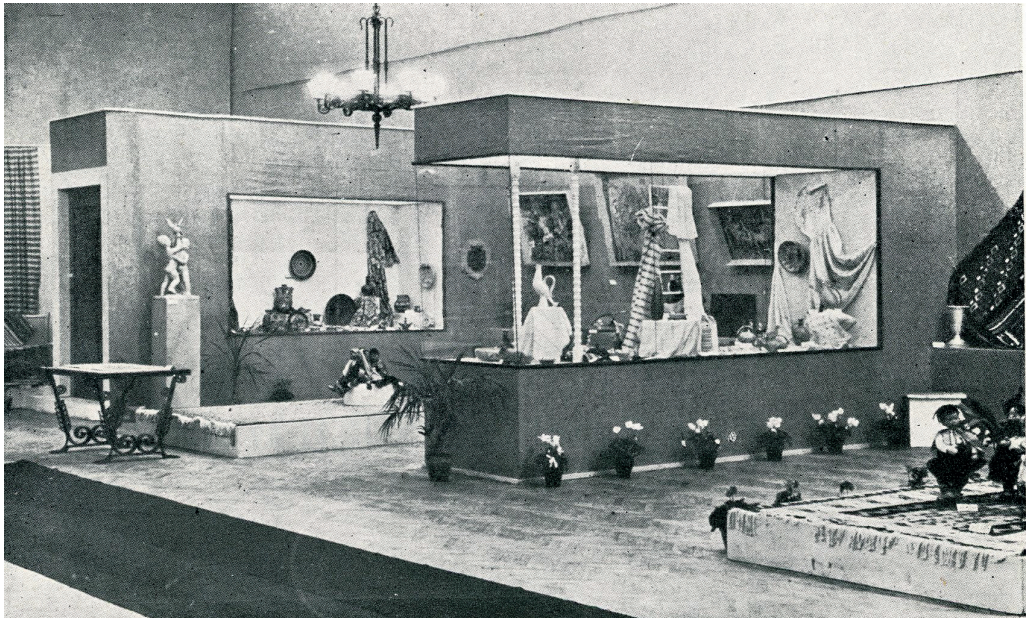


Fig. 1

In Bulgaria, general art exhibitions (GAE) came into being with the founding of the first artistic societies, after the Liberation from Ottoman rule. In 1931, the Union of the Art Societies in Bulgaria (UASB) was established to represent artists' interests before the institutions of the state. Such general art exhibitions were held annually by the UASB, in Sofia. Following the coup of September 9, 1944, and the imposition of Soviet-style communist government in the country, GAE were not discontinued, but turned into ideological tools instead, especially during the 1950's. Due to the nature of applied arts, the principles of socialist realism and the support for the communist party line through art could not quite reach them and these were considerably freer than fine arts. This brought applied arts closer to the experimenting with forms popular in Western art at the time. Yet, there were regional peculiarities which I will attempt to outline, focusing on the general applied arts exhibitions organized during the 1964 – 1972 period at the 125 Rakovski Str. gallery<sup>1</sup> in Sofia and trace the participation of major authors and their works. I will attempt to analyze, through these, the development of applied arts in Bulgaria and set them apart as a sphere of individual creative effort from artisanship and applied artists' work in industrial production, outline the main tendencies, their links to tradition and the introduction of new aesthetic features – the direction characteristic of the other genres of contemporary Bulgarian art as well. A review of the applied art exhibitions would allow outlining the evolution that took place in the field, compare tradition and

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<sup>1</sup> The scientific topic covers the time since the opening of the first general exhibition of the applied arts in this gallery since 1964 until 1972, when the building on 6 Shipka Street was opened in Sofia and became a major exhibition center. Before 1964 in this gallery general, individual, and group exhibitions of Fine Arts solely were organized. The history of the gallery at 125 Rakovski Street is significant in the history of contemporary art in terms of the transformations that art has undergone. They can be traced, identified and analyzed through organized exhibitions in its spaces, both fine and applied arts.

innovation, draw conclusions about dominant stylistic trends, note important specifics of the borderline cases between unique works and limited edition works.<sup>2</sup>

During the 1955 – 1972 period, a total of seven general applied art exhibitions were produced at the 125 Rakovski Str. and 1 Gourko Str. galleries in Sofia (in 1955, 1958, 1960, 1964, 1967, 1968, 1972). Between 1964 and 1972, four exhibitions were produced (3 at the 125 Rakovski Str. gallery). Several months prior to the fourth exhibition (1964), discussions were held with a number of the artists, the main topic being the synthetic – applied forms. These discussions were published in the *Izkustvo* magazine, no 9, 3–13, and are of interest to researchers, as these tackled issues of aesthetic and practical value such as the nature of applied arts and the trends in their future development: where the borderline should be drawn, if such a borderline existed at all, between a work of applied art as a product of a pure act of creation, and a product intended to be implemented for industrial production (design).

Prior to the detailed review and study of the applied arts exhibitions of the 1964 – 1972 period, I should examine the First applied arts exhibition held in 1955 (Figure 1), at the 1 Gourko Str. gallery, where 119 authors participated (86 UBA members and 33 guests). This exhibition marked the beginning of the regular sequence of applied art events and it was the first decisive step towards differentiation between applied and fine arts. In previous years, applied arts had been allotted only limited space in the GAO's that took place, and these were dominated by painting, graphic art and sculpture.<sup>3</sup> In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., the perceived task of applied arts was to translate the richness of folk crafts into inspiration and implement it into manufacture.<sup>4</sup> Due to a number of economic reasons, this process was slowed down and almost disrupted. This was why the general applied art exhibition of 1955 was a very important step towards completion of that task. The exposition presented artifacts of “direct applicability in everyday life that were suitable for mass production”.<sup>5</sup> This exhibition called for attention on several main aspects of applied arts, namely: 1) Suitability for industrial production; 2) Solid links between applied artists and production workers; 3) Mastering of the manufacturing process; 4) Improved cultural competency; 5) Founding of specialized and well-equipped institutions, faculties, schools and training courses in applied arts. The question of the specific national form of applied art and the relations between applied and folk arts were brought under the limelight. These topics were still of interest through the following years.

In 1958, the Second general applied art exhibition took place, arranged in the 1 Gourko Str. hall and, in contrast to the first one, this presented house and kindergarten furniture, toys and dolls, interior architectural elements such as ceramic grilles, balusters, coatings, sockets, cornices, and facade details, window frames etc. Dominant were printed textile, carpets, rugs and embroidery, impressive for their colors and for their

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2 For the purposes of the study, archival units were studied from the funds of the State Archives Agency, National Library “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”, Union of Bulgarian Artists, museums and galleries, periodical press documents and articles; personal archives of artists and critics, private collections, etc.

3 The catalog accompanying the exhibition notes: “... a wide-ranging general exhibition of applied arts. Is this accidental? Was this possible before 9 September 1944? [...] This is explained by the rapid development of our new socialist culture, which is expanding to such an extent that it places greater and more responsible tasks on Bulgarian artists, which are difficult to catch up and solve.” – *Каталог на обща художествена изложба на приложните изкуства*, София, 1955, 1.

4 One of these questions is about the place and importance of applied arts in the new socialist reality and is related to the “general cultural ascent of the country”. Because of purely political and economic reasons, the cheap goods of the Western European industry entering Bulgaria at the end of the XIX century dealt a heavy blow on the artistic crafts and industry, saturating the market. Thus, beautiful Bulgarian folk costumes, embroidery, aprons, Chiprovtsi and Kotlen carpets, ceramics, forged copper vessels, Bulgarian woodcarving and etc. are replaced quickly by more competitive imported items.

5 *Ibid.*

patterns recalling elements of folk embroidery, mural paintings and folk textile. The ceramics was represented by several well-established authors who once again demonstrated top artistic level. It is important to note here that only unique copies were displayed. Applied arts were isolated from art manufacturing and architecture, there was no interest on the part of either the Ministry of Education and Culture or the Ministry of the Light Industry in any activities that would build a bridge between applied arts and the cultural development of the country. For instance, the indifference shown by the Building Committee and similar institutions cut short the initiative to use ceramics and similar art genres in the architectural design of public buildings from the very start.<sup>6</sup> Applied arts used to be allotted but insignificant government contracts and this impacted the results as shown by the exhibition in review. However, this situation did not last long.

Of great significance for applied arts and artists was the issuance of Decree No 142 of the Council of Ministers, of June 29, 1959<sup>7</sup>, titled: “Measures to Support of the Development of Visual Arts”, which regulated the funding of arts.<sup>8</sup> The important considerations addressed by the Decree as well as the larger tasks formulated therein, led to the much wider representation of decorative and monumental arts in the third general applied art exhibition, which took place in 1960 (of December 27)<sup>9</sup>, at the 1 Gourko str. gallery. This coincided with an important stage in the development of decorative and monumental arts. The preparation for the exhibition took two years – the period when the causes prompting the deliberation and issuance of the Decree No 142 became apparent. The Decree swayed the general attitude towards decorative – applied arts and this, in turn, was reflected in the number of participants, the scale and quality of the exhibits shown, and also in the problems voiced that needed solutions. This applied art exhibition was a great success – it was visited by more than 250 000 people<sup>10</sup> and also a number of requests and orders were placed by private persons for quite a number of the displayed items. In previous applied art exhibitions, decorative and monumental arts were represented only partially and small-scale, while in this one they dominated.

In their exploration of new materials to enhance the artistic implementation of their concepts, a number of monumental artists experimented technologically and thus the exhibition saw works where traditional materials were complemented or substituted for materials characteristic of other genres. For instance, Lyubomir Dalchev used smalt mosaic pieces for the decorative sculpture he presented at the exhibition<sup>11</sup>; Stoyo Todorov used ceramic material for the depiction of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in a facade mural, implemented in the village of Novo Selo; Neva and Anna Tuzsuzovs and Stefan Peytchev

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6 Вж. Д. Друмев, „Общата изложба на приложните изкуства – 1958”, *Изкуство* (София), 1958, № 7, 7–11.

7 „Постановление 142 на Министерски съвет”. – *Държавен вестник* (София), брой 62 от 4.08.1959, 5; сп. *Изкуство* (София), 1961, № 2, 3–11.

8 This decree put in place new conditions – the decorative and monumental works were viewed as the result of the creative will of the artist, and implemented by virtue of a public necessity, which is reflected in a legislative document. The Ministry of Education and Culture, the Union of Bulgarian Artists support the efforts of a number of artists through contracting, business trips, consultations, providing a material support for the preparation of exhibitions. – Вж. „Постановление 142”, т. 2. *Държавен вестник*, брой 62 от 4. 08. 1959, 5.

9 “Каталог на Юбилейна изложба на приложните изкуства 1960” (София), 1960, 1–21; „Повече красота в живота! Юбилейна изложба на приложните изкуства” – в. *Работническо дело* (София), бр. 360 от 25.12.1960, 2.; Архив СБХ, Досие на Димитър Станков, Личен формуляр на художника.

10 Вж. „Нашите приложни изкуства пред нови задачи”. *Изкуство*, 1963, София, № 9, 11.

11 „Повече красота в живота! Юбилейна изложба на приложните изкуства” – в. *Работническо дело* (София), бр. 360 от 25. 12. 1960, 2.

produced the figural ornamentation of a water fountain using ceramic materials etc. The search for new substances of suitable technological and decorative properties to broaden the range of materials used in the decorative and monumental design of buildings and their environment, brought about a number of experiments in ceramics. The ceramicists themselves were looking for new opportunities in this respect. The 1959 Communist Party plenary session on building and the decisions adopted thereby for the introduction of new materials and designs to construction works affected also visual and applied arts. The resolution to implement new materials and designs in construction works opened new vistas for the development of ceramic arts. In its function of both structural and decorative component, subject to the requirements of architecture, ceramics became organically linked with it. Example for this in the exhibitions were the colorful tiles (ceramic samples by Zdravko Manolov, Ivan Nenov, Jova Raevska, Dimitar Angelov, Evgeny Tchenshirov). Various decorative options were presented as well. e.g., decorative wall-panels. Pepa Daskalova, Boris Kotsev, Venko Kolev, Sasha Baleva, Bozhana Atanasova, Mariana Zabunova and their works were illustrative of strong folk traditions, large forms, rhythmically repetitive ornamental motifs, human and animal figures, inspired by the primeval beauty of folk traditions. They created decorative and monumental compositions anticipating their suitable architectural environment.

The Decree No 65 of the Council of Ministers published in 1963, entitled "For the Resolving of the Problems in Industrial Aesthetics, Artistic Design, Assembly and Construction of Industrial Products" set forth the beginning of the reforms in Bulgarian industry<sup>12</sup>. Design, referred to at the time as "industrial aesthetics" became to be viewed as a tool to overcome the evident socialist industries' lagging behind their western counterparts.<sup>13</sup> To meet that end, the Decree identified the task to organize, at the Center for Industrial Aesthetics,<sup>14</sup> an expert artistic/technical council involving prominent scientists and artists, technical experts and representatives of industrial and trade enterprises, painters, sculptors, engineers, architects, technicians, economists etc., as well as the need of specialized education in industrial aesthetics. People were sent abroad to obtain the necessary qualifications (item 7)<sup>15</sup> and the Industrial Aesthetics major was introduced pursuant to item 8.<sup>16</sup>

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12 „Постановление 65”, *Държавен вестник*, брой 44, от 7.06. 1963, 1; Н. Иванова, *В:120 години българско изкуство*, ред. Мариела Янакиева, СБХ, София, 2016, Т. 3, 53.

13 В. Василчина, „От приложните изкуства към дизайн”, *В: 120 години българско изкуство*, ред. Мариела Янакиева, Фондация Поддържане на изкуството в България и Съюз на българските художници, София, 2016, Т. 3, с. 43.

14 Item 2 of the Decree reads: "To establish, as of 1 July 1963, at the Committee on Mechanical Engineering, a Center for Industrial Aesthetics, Artistic Design and Construction, employing experienced production staff, to address the following tasks: to coordinate and control the activities of enterprises, research and design institutes and technical development bases with regard to aesthetics and the artistic design and construction of industrial production [...] to maintain close relation with similar institutes and organizations abroad for issues of industrial aesthetics and artistic design, construction and design and carry out research in this area..." – *Постановление 65*. – *Държавен вестник*, брой 44, от 7. 06. 1963, 1.

15 Item 7: The Ministry of Education, together with the Union of Bulgarian Artists and interested institutions, must take swift steps to educate artists/constructors. For this purpose, in the framework of cultural agreements and the currency plan and budget of the Ministry, as early as 1963, to send abroad: students from the initial courses of the *N. Pavlovich* Higher Institute of Fine Arts to complete their education with a profile in industrial aesthetics; final year students from the higher institutes and from some higher education institutions to complete and specialize in industrial aesthetics. The Union of Bulgarian Artists to offer some of its members for business trips and specialization abroad... – *Държавен вестник* 1963, брой 44, от 7.06. 1963, 2.

16 „Постановление на Министерски съвет 65”, *Държавен вестник* 1963, бр. 44, от 7. 06. 1963, 2.



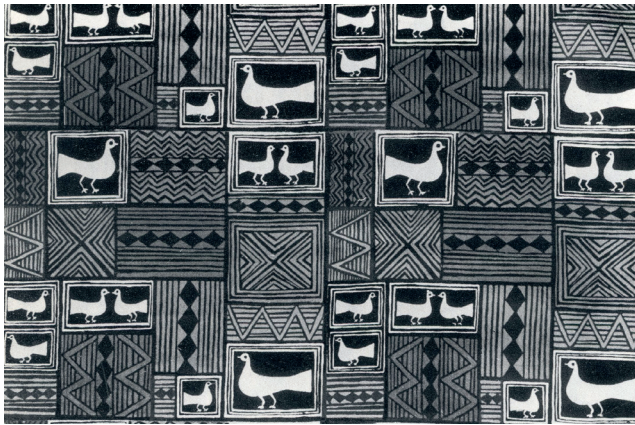


Fig. 2

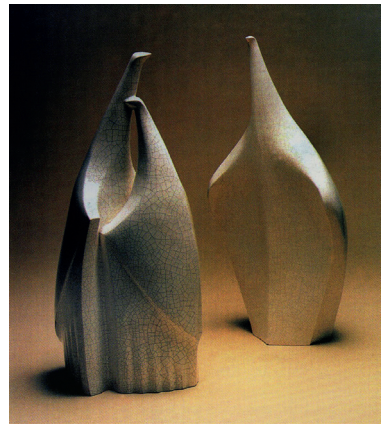


Fig. 3

In the spring of 1964, the National Exhibition of Applied Arts was displayed at the 125 Rakovski Str.,<sup>17</sup> 1 Gourko Str. and 3 Stambolijski Blvd.<sup>18</sup> The sheer scale of this exhibition led to the organizing of a theoretical conference on important topics such as: the tasks facing applied arts, industrial aesthetics and the role of artists, Bulgarian applied graphics and poster art, fighting tastelessness etc.<sup>19</sup> The applied arts section of the exhibition, featuring woodcarving, textile, ceramics, mosaics etc. included also samples intended for industrial production. One of the important requirements for the prototypes of contemporary industrial products would be their meeting the limitations of mass production – the prototypes should be appropriately adjusted for such use. The analysis of the related phenomena would provide significant opportunities for conclusions about the development of applied arts in Bulgaria. On the one hand, applied artists were creating works of unique exquisiteness, sense of shape and color, and design, turning these into individual, one-of-a-kind achievements, and, on the other, they were facing the challenge of creating a new aesthetics for everyday, household use. The works in a number of the sections of the exhibition suggested that Bulgarian applied artists, even though they were starting work in a new – for them – field, were at that stage already fully capable of significant contributions to the improvement of the artistic value of the industrial products in some branches. Good achievements in glass and porcelain were shown at the exhibition by Ekaterina Zolotova, Zdravko Manolov, Georgy Kolarov, Pepa Daskalova, Sashka Baleva, Dimitar Valtev, Fgalina Kotseva, Jova Raevska, Dimitar Popov, Ely Kitanova, Veneta Atanassova and these evidenced the enhanced quality of the products intended for industrial production. It should be noted that at the previous applied art exhibition, some of these artists had already produced quality porcelain pieces, but these failed to be noticed and implemented by industrial enterprises. At the later exhibition, these same artists showed quite convincingly that, being masters in ceramics, glass and porcelain, they were also quite capable to address and deal with specific practical tasks at a high artistic level and this would by all means improve the products for the market and be very beneficial to Bulgarian economy in general. The interior furniture section of the exhibition was quite impressive (Cyril Bossev (architect), Boris Kitanov, Dimitar Mechandzhiyski, Sammy Bijerano, Elka Nenova (architect), Liliana Boseva (architect)

<sup>17</sup> This is the first general applied art exhibition for the period 1955–1972 in the 125 Rakovski str. gallery.

<sup>18</sup> Фотоархив СБХ, „Каталог на Национална изложба на приложните изкуства“, София, 1964.

<sup>19</sup> ЦДА, ф. 133, оп. 11, а.е. 91, л. 2–196

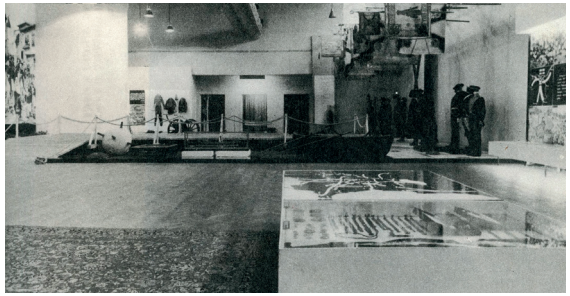


Fig. 4

Kantcho Tsanev etc.) whose pieces answered to some degree the contemporary requirements vis-à-vis style and functionality. In carpets and wall-carpets, the direct references to folk art were evident; designs from folk art, legends and proverbs were used and, at the same time, a certain tendency to experiment with colors and color combinations was also present. Items of indisputable quantitative were displayed by Marin Varbanov, Georgi Bogdanov, Anna Tuzsuzova. Numerous authors turned to brighter coloring and larger motifs in their patterned textiles. (Figure 2) The achievements of applied graphics, poster art and book design, too, were notable. One of the first Cyrillic font variants actually produced was shown at the exhibition by Milka Peykova and Georgi Kovatchev.

In 1967, the next regular general applied art exhibition was arranged at 1 Gourko Str., with common agreement to open similar exhibition at the 125 Rakovski Str. exhibition hall. As quantitative indicator, 145 authors participated there showing 340 works. Carpeting and floor textile were most widely represented and these were based on folk tradition and use of wool of natural colors, which ensured tonal softness and primeval warmth of the textile, which, due to the decorative effect, could be categorized as wall carpets as well. Works in ceramics were also numerous: bowl by Georgy Bakardzhiev, featuring characteristic elements of Bulgarian Eneolith, and patinated vase with Thracian/Skittish animal reliefs; stoneware candle-holder with zoomorphic stylization by Margarira Mishlyakova and numerous others. Folk tradition was upheld in Stoyan Raynov's (black vessel with three handles and vase in gray), Anastasiya Kamenova's (*Kukery* ceramic wall-panel), Jova Raevska's (kuker-shaped vase) works. Evgenia Racheva showed a skillfully sculpted representation of a fairy-tale folk motif in zoomorphic decorative form: "Singing tree" etc.<sup>20</sup> The exhibited woodcarving, too, followed folk designs and practices, drawing on "shepherds' carving", showing variations of the already known achievements in the "barbarian primitive" line, e.g. Ivan Bubev's cabinet of Renaissance proportions and fairytale/poetic design in relief carvings and enamel.

Indicative was the general applied art exhibition dedicated to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the socialist revolution, opened on December 20, 1968, which was intended, at that stage of their development, to differentiate applied arts as an individual act of creativity and the products of artisanship, and those intended for industrial production. In his address at the opening of the exhibition, Pavel Matev, Chair of the Art and Culture Council, noted that the categorization referring to applied arts as "small" and to fine arts as "big" had long been forgotten in art criticism and artistic practice.<sup>21</sup> This exhibition was impressive in terms of scale – the huge number of exhibits presented. It was hosted in the halls of two galleries: 1 Gourko Str.

20 К. Кръстев, „Юбилейна приложна изложба”, в: *Изкуство* (София), 1967, № 6, 12–17.

21 Фотоархив СБХ, „Каталог на Обща художествена изложба на приложните изкуства – 1968”, София, 1968.



Fig. 5

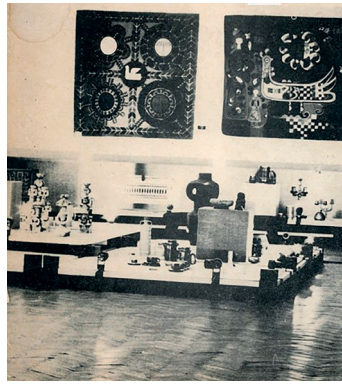


Fig. 6

(ceramics, porcelain, glass, mosaics, decorative panels, metal art, textile, furniture, woodcarving, wrought iron, leather toys, jewelry) and 125 Rakovski Str. (posters, trademarks, trade advertisements, TV rubrics, packaging postal stamps, spatial arrangement) in Sofia. Specific for this exhibition was the huge space dedicated to wall-carpets, decorative wall-panels, decorative textile, samples of stone and small mosaics etc. In large number of the fabrics, the artists drew yet again on folk creativity using certain motifs and elements – *Rhodope Motifs* wall-carpet by Dimitar Balev; *Springtime*, by Marin Varbanov; *Bird and Horseman*, by Mara Josifova; *Rest*, by Nikola Nikolov; *Celebration*, *Survaknitsa* and *Joy*, by Ruska Popvasileva, where the connection between folk tradition and composition based on ornamental folk motifs was especially tangible, upholding the continuity between new and old, between traditional and current. (Figure 3) Names like those of Zdravko Mavrodiev, Radka Zhekova, Josif Josifov, Todorka Josifova, Dimitar Mehandzhiyski, Cvetana Stancheva, Sofia Kamburova, Rositsa Tchukanova should also be quoted.

Applied graphics and spatial arrangement were displayed in the 125 Rakovski Str. exhibition hall. Somewhat better represented were the spatial arrangements of trade fair pavilions, exhibitions and museums. (Figure 4) These were shown in photographs of several different museums in the country: The Museum of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom in V. Tarnovo, by Ivan Radev; the Geo Milev museum in Stara Zagora, the “Rila Monastery” and “90 Years since Bulgaria’s Liberation” by Zlatko Tchalakov; the Archaeological museum in Silistra, by Georgy Petrov. All of these, besides exquisite aesthetics, also featured new, fully modern concepts of museum space composition. The spatial/graphic solutions for the Bulgarian pavilions and stalls design at various international trade fairs categorically confirmed their authors’ focus on native tradition and culture, but also their contemporary views and outlook.

On January 19, 1972, the 7<sup>th</sup> General Applied Arts Exhibition was opened at the 125 Rakovski Str. and 1 Gourko Str. galleries. The participation of 165 authors with 457 works was respectable as a quantitative indicator and was of great impact, as was the very fact of their arrangement in two galleries. Behind those numbers stood the efforts and achievements of artists in genres like wall- and floor carpeting, woodcarving, mosaic, glass, wrought iron and copper, jewelry, furniture, leather etc. The management of the Applied Arts section at the Union of Bulgarian Artists (UBA) in coordination with the leaders of the Union decided to organize the exhibition mostly on their own, with the cooperation of some industrial enterprises. The greatest support and cooperation in this respect was provided by the Art Fund at the UBA since a large number of the exhibits were produced in its workshops and ateliers. In contrast to the previous exhibition, applied graphics and spatial arrangements were now less represented. This was due



to a decision by the leadership of the Union and its Applied Arts Section to organize another exhibition of design, in order to mark the setting up of a separate Design Section at the UBA, open for all artists working in the field of industrial aesthetics to participate. A considerable diversity of genre was noticeable. Besides wall-carpeting, and floor fabrics, textile, furniture and woodcarving, metal works, ceramics, glass vessels and leather products in their traditional forms, now for the first time ever a variety of modern decorative panels and grilles produced from natural materials and in natural colors were put on display.

The issue about traditionalism and the native look of contemporary Bulgarian decorative art was illustrated by an increased interest in the history, folklore and everyday life of the people wherefrom artists took themes, subjects and motifs. More unique samples were shown. Most of the works, except those in glass, the ceramic table-sets and carpeting were not in compliance with the requirements for mass production.

The wall carpets presented were impressive indeed: Ana Tuzsuzova, *The Balkan Singing*; Mara Josifova (Figure 5), *Fairy tale*; Marin Varbanov, *Wall-Carpet*; Dimitar Stankov, *Sun* (Figure 6); Josif Josifov, *Tree of Life*; Vassil Ovtcharov, *Tapestry*. All these works, even quite different in their interpretations and plasticity, bore marks of folk traditions and love for folk art. In handmade textile prints and floor carpeting, prominent were the works by Ralitsa Stanoeva, Todorka Josifova, Sofia Kamburova, Anastasia Velichkova, Elena Marincheva etc. One of the main genres in ceramics was the architectural/monumental and decorative art. Real achievers in that genre were Ivan Nenov, Zdravko Manolov, Venko Kolev, Nevena Tuzsuzova, Georgy Kolarov, Pepa Ikonomova, Lyubomir Dalchev, Maria Stoyanova, Anastasia Konzova, Jova Raevska, Chavdar Manolov etc. Prominent in the exposition were Ivan Bubev's woodcarving entitled *Sun* and Anton Donchev's *Fertility*. In mosaic and sculpture one should note the names of E. Kitanova, Cvetana Tosheva, Ilija Iliev, Sanda Protich. In the glass section prominent were Ekaterina Zolotova, Dimiter Baltev, Georgi Shanov, Emilia Panayotova, Margarita Genova, Ekaterina Getsova, Vera Kirova-Manolova. Jewels drawing on traditions, history and cultural heritage were presented by Pepa Dimitrova, Violeta Dunin, Rositsa Todorova, Anna Otsetova. Works in interior design were also presented.

Reviews of the exhibition were published, with titles such as "Rendezvous of Centuries-Old Tradition with Contemporary Authors", "For the Practical Implementation of Our Applied Arts"<sup>22</sup>, "The way of Our Applied Art"<sup>23</sup>, "Problems Facing Our Young Ceramicists"<sup>24</sup> etc., which brought forward the issues the applied artists had to deal with and also the fields where they were realizing their creative potential.

The 1960's and 70's provided a turning point in the development of Bulgarian arts and visual arts in particular. The dynamics of the processes accelerated: art life moved towards democratization, artists were addressing more complex issues of contents and plasticity, the number of exhibitions, both joint and individual, went up, in line with the political and social phenomena in the countries from the Eastern Bloc. In the 1960–1972 period, the general applied art exhibitions became more frequent and of much better quality, in terms of genre and style diversity, and they also saw the emancipation of design from applied arts, and the somewhat belated acceptance of western modernism through preservation of historical traditions and folk art. Looking back and resorting to the national roots was deemed more and more acceptable and was increasingly tolerated during that time of the communist period.

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22 З. Манолов, „За внедряване на нашите приложни изкуства в живота“, в: *Изкуство*, (София), 1972, № 5, 8–9.

23 А. Славов, „Пътят на нашето приложно изкуство в светлината на тазгодишната изложба“, в: *Изкуство*, (София), 1972, № 5, 10–15.

24 В. Ивановна, „Проблеми на младия керамик“, в: *Изкуство*, (София), 1972, № 5, 30–31.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1: Interior from Applied Arts General Exhibitions 1955, Photo-archive of Union of Bulgarian Artists, Sofia (Union of Bulgarian Artists. Applied Arts General Exhibitions 1955. Catalogue, Sofia, 1955, pict. 1)  
Ентеријер Опште изложбе примењене уметности 1955, Фото-архива Удружења бугарских уметника, Софија (Удружење бугарских уметника. Опште изложбе примењене уметности 1955. Каталог, Софија, 1955, сл. 1)
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- 3: Georgi Kolarov, *Birds*, 1968, porcelain, 58×27 cm, National Art Gallery, Sofia (Vasilchina, Violeta. “Ceramic”, in: *120 years Bulgarian art*, T. 2, UBA, Sofia, 2016, 86)  
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Ентеријер Опште изложбе примењене уметности 1968, Фото-архива Удружења бугарских уметника, Софија, негатив UBA A/002, 4–5 cm
- 5: Mara Yosifova, *Project of hand wall carpet* in the interior from Applied Arts General Exhibitions 1972, Photo-archive of Union of Bulgarian Artists, Sofia, 1972, negative UBA A/003, 4–5 cm  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

UBA – Union of Bulgarian Artists

UASB – Union of the Art Societies in Bulgaria

GAE – General Art Exhibitions

Наташа М. Ноева

### ТРАДИЦИЈА И МОДЕРНОСТ: ОПШТЕ ИЗЛОЖБЕ ПРИМЕЊЕНЕ УМЕТНОСТИ У ГАЛЕРИЈИ „РАКОВСКИ“ 125 (1955–1972)

**Резиме:** Изложбена дворана у улици Раковски 125 у Софији најстарија је и још увек активна уметничка галерија у Бугарској. Од далеке 1940. године, када је све почело, до данас, никада није мењала намену, упркос бројним друштвеним, политичким и економским превирањима кроз које је Бугарска пролазила. Током осамдесет година, ова галерија приказује различите жанрове и врсте ликовне и примењене уметности, изложбе које оцртавају динамику уметничких процеса и трансформација у уметничком животу. Тежиште истраживања усмерено је на праћење и систематизацију радова представљених на општим изложбама примењених уметности, које је галерија организовала у периоду 1964–1972. Такође, био је то покушај да се анализира диференцијација примењених уметности као интимне сфере индивидуалног креативног рада, у односу на предмете уметничких заната и дела примењених уметника и индустријских дизајнера произведених серијски у различитим фабрикама; да се мапирају главне тенденције и однос традиције и иновације, који је обележио целокупну бугарску уметност датог периода. Општа изложба примењене уметности први пут је одржана 1964. године. У периоду 1964–1972. одржане су још 4 опште изложбе примењене уметности, а од 1964. године изложбе прати конференција о синтетичким формама уметности. Установљени су нови циљеви и постављена нова питања, углавном практичне и естетске природе. Била су то питања о самој суштини примењене уметности, будућим трендовима, њиховом даљем развоју, као што је оно: где је граница између примењене уметности проистекле из чистог чина уметничког стварања и дела намењених за производњу у индустрији? Поновни осврт на изложбе примењених уметности из прошлости омогућава праћење еволуције жанра, упоређивање традиције и иновација, детектовање доминантних стилских трендова, уочавање важних специфичности на граници између јединствених уметничких остварења и дела ограничене серијске производње.

**Кључне речи:** традиција, модерност, изложбе примењене уметности, галерија