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**TÍTULO:** Tendencias de desarrollo del mercado artístico en Rusia en la década de 1990.

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**RESUMEN:** El mercado del arte es uno de los mecanismos más importantes que facilitan la integración de las obras de arte en el espacio sociocultural. Podemos decir que se ha convertido en un nuevo motor de la civilización, cada vez más entrelazado con la esfera de la cultura, generando nuevas formas de interacción. Este documento revela el concepto del mercado del arte como un fenómeno sociocultural a través del reflejo de las principales tendencias en el desarrollo del mercado del arte en Rusia durante el período de la reestructuración de la sociedad en los años noventa.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Mercado de arte, inversiones en arte, infraestructura de mercado de arte, cultura rusa en la década de 1990, activismo de Moscú.

**TITLE:** Art-Market's development tendencies in Russia in The 1990s

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**ABSTRACT:** The art market is one of the most important mechanisms that facilitate the integration of works of art in the sociocultural space. We can say that it has become a new engine of civilization, increasingly interwoven with the sphere of culture, generating new forms of interaction. This document reveals the concept of the art market as a sociocultural phenomenon by reflecting the main trends in the development of the art market in Russia during the period of the restructuring of society in the nineties.

**KEY WORDS:** Art market, investments in art, art market infrastructure, Russian culture in the 1990s, Moscow actionism.

**INTRODUCTION.**

The domestic art market, due to its historically developed specifics, has always demanded special treatment from both the state and the patrons of art.

At the initial stage, state support to the cultural sphere, despite the different approaches of the 19th century emperors in government, positively affects the development of the art market, which eventually separated from the state, and started forming its infrastructure. Probably, thanks to the joint efforts of patrons and the state aimed at supporting art, it became possible to achieve a stable development of the art market in Russia. However, the ascent of Soviet power in 1917 became a destructive force against the art market.

The sudden change of regime completely eradicated all the institutions that contributed to the development of the free art market in the country, thus discarding it for many years. Since that moment, the state has made every effort to completely subordinate the sphere of art to itself, having become the only official customer and collector. And only since the 1960s, a new stage in the artistic life of the country began with building a relationship between the artist and the collector, which lasted until the 1980s, albeit on an illegal basis.

### **DEVELOPMENT.**

The beginning of the formation of the modern stage of the domestic art market in the late 1980s - 1990s is, in our view, the most significant period in terms of cultural understanding. Russian society has undergone radical changes in the political and socio - economic spheres, which could not but affect the culture. It is important to note that they lead to the transformation of aesthetic values, due to the active commercialization of society. During this period, a special impulse for development was given to the art market, which formerly, because of political isolation, did not possess extensive opportunities in the field of international cooperation and was deprived of institutional support.

The emergence of free competition, the proclamation of new thinking, the blurring of boundaries between official and unofficial art, and increased attention from foreign collectors create all visible conditions for the favorable functioning of the art market. However, this is not enough. The lack of professional staff, and most importantly, the lack of a trained spectator and the institution of criticism make the artistic space of the country adapt to existing realities. In this regard, new trends in the development of the art market have emerged for Russian society. It should be noted that the period under consideration is marked by the close attention of the Western world to Russian art, as a result of which there is a sharp revival of market processes on the art scene.

Nowadays, we may note too that exactly 30 years have passed since the brightest event in the art market in the country - the 1988 Sotheby's auction in Moscow, which mark the initial stage of changes in artistic life in Russia, which were in 1990s. This event was the point after which the realization comes that avant-garde and contemporary Russian art is interesting to collectors outside the country, it costs a lot of money and is quoted internationally.

### **Methods.**

The study of the art market as a sociocultural phenomenon is of considerable research interest from the point of view of sociology, history, economics and culturology. The most controversial issue in this sphere of the relationship between the value and cost of works of art in the art market at the beginning of the 20th century is raised by the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel. Later, this problem was reflected in the work by the German philosopher, cultural theorist, representative of the Frankfurt School Walter Benjamin.

To date, research in this area is carried out by the cultural theorist, mentor Diedrich Diederichse, who published the book "On Surplus Value in Art" in 2008; the German historian of art, art critic Isabel Grav can also be designated as modern researcher. All this suggests that the scientific interest in studying the specifics of the art market is quite high.

In terms of historiography, a full description and analysis of market structures in the field of artistic culture, forms of self-organization of artists from the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century in St. Petersburg are presented in the work by the historian Dmitrii Severiukhin. The sociological approach in the study of the domestic art market in modern conditions was applied by N.A. Fateeva. Cultural experts T.V. Badinova, E.A. Kartseva, as a result of the research, presented stages of the development of the art market in Russia before the beginning of the 21st century.

## **Results and Discussion.**

Despite the rather lively artistic life since the second half of the 1980s, only in 1993 the law on the import and export of cultural property was adopted, and in 1994 a general legal concept of antiquities was introduced, where antiques were understood to mean cultural values created more than 50 years ago. These changes in the legislation helped to strengthen control over art objects, paying special attention to the preservation of the country's cultural heritage.

The introduction of a law that legalizes entrepreneurial activity became an occasion for the opening of private galleries in Russia. And the main reason that prompted the artists to do this is that "The Russian Wave" on the western art scene, which began in the second half of the 1980s, by 1990 was already at a standstill, and by this time, it is clear that a fruitful dialogue with the Western art community requires creating a domestic institutional system of contemporary art" [Arutiunova A.G. 2017. p. 43].

Indeed, after the decline of interest of Western collectors in Russian art, there was a perceptible lack of internal interest in contemporary art, which needed to be stimulated. In 1989, young artists – graduates of Surikov School – Aidan Salakhova, Eugene Mitta, and Aleksandr Iakut opened the First Gallery. It can be noted that the most famous galleries of the time, forming the artistic appearance of Moscow, where new trends arose, are the gallery of Marat Gelman, Regina, 1.0, Dar, a gallery in Trekhprudny lane, Laboratory and XL.

In total, in the early 1990s, several dozen galleries were opened in Moscow, specializing in contemporary art, and each of them tries to adhere to a certain concept. However, by the middle of the decade most of them are closed due to financial difficulties, since their activities was not of a commercial nature.

In the early 1990s, the most common direction was actionism [Badinova T.V. 2004, p.76]. The most vivid representatives of Moscow actionism are the movement "E.T.I", led by A. Osmolovskii; A. Brener, who stepped into history with his actions "Rendezvous" (1994), "The First Glove" on Red Square (1994). It is also necessary to highlight Oleg Kulik, who in 1994 carried out the action "Mad dog, or the last taboo, guarded by a lonely cerber", which celebrated him as a dog man.

Speaking about the reasons for this trend, prior to 1991, such street actions were impossible, according to researchers, but from that moment the artist discovered the opportunity to be introduced into the urban environment, which became loose and pliable [Severiukhin D.Ia. 2008, p.24]. Thus, at that time, on the wave of democratization of society, the status of the artist provided a certain privilege that exempted from punishment. A large number of media invited to performances and actions add these events a status and recognize them as art.

Speaking about institutional support from the state, it is worth mentioning the opening of the State Center for Contemporary Arts in 1994 by the Ministry of Culture. It is important to emphasize the fact that the center's activities were concentrated not only in the capital, but also contributed to the promotion of contemporary art in the regions, and Leonid Bazhanov, who has been its art director since the very establishment, has made a big contribution thereto.

In 1999, the Moscow Museum of Modern Art opened, the basis of which was a personal collection of works by Russian and foreign artists, formed by the artist, sculptor Zurab Tsereteli. 1990 was marked by the first international art fair ART MIF (Moscow international fair). This event was often called "a brave attempt to simulate the presence of the art market in Russia" [Bakshtein I. M. 1997, p.6]. Indeed, this event carries with it an attempt to embed art in market realities at a time when institutional support for the art market was just beginning to gain momentum.

During the decline in the interest of foreign collectors in Russian contemporary art, the commercial viability of these fairs was provided by replenishment of corporate collections that became the main buyers at the second and third fairs.

Despite the fact, that the main buyers of contemporary art in this period were foreigners, the domestic firms started intensively act in the artistic stage and decided to collect their collections of works of art. Thus, since the early 1990s, the formation of corporate collections has begun, and a number of banks have hired special supervisors therefor. In particular, Inkombank appeals to experts of the art fair "ART MIF", held in Moscow from 1990 to 1993 [Grav I. 2016, p.79]. Despite the fact that each bank tries to work out a specific policy with respect to its collection, emphasizing the chronological division, nevertheless most collections include both works of old masters and modern ones. The most striking example is the collection of Tolichny Bank of Savings, which in total contains about three thousand works of art.

Corporate collections indeed mainly contain not the most expensive works of the art market, which, in our opinion, suggests that the psychological factor did not allow at that time purchasing works above a certain price. Nevertheless, it can be noted that the mid-1990s became the golden period of corporate collecting in Russia, but only a few years later, in 2002, the collection of Inkombank, which was declared bankrupt in 1998, was sold by Gelos auction. In other words, by the end of the 1990s, corporate collecting begins to experience a number of difficulties caused by the financial crisis, besides, the law on tax benefits for organizations engaged in collecting works of art that could stimulate the development of patronage activities has not yet been adopted.

This period was also marked by the opening of such auction houses as "Gelos" (1993) and "Alpha-Art" (1991), which dealt only with antiques. The activity of the Alfa-Art auction house in the 1990s can be called successful [Sarkisian O.R. 2007], however, after studying the archive of Kommersant, we see that in 1991 the organization incurred significant losses for its time due to the fact that the

Ministry of Culture postponed the antiquarian and art auction planned for June 1, 1991 in Moscow, "frightened of the high quality of the works presented, unprecedented starting prices for the USSR and the non-state status of the auction itself" [Kompridis, Nikolas, 2010; p.24].

As a result of these trades, held on January 25, 1992, an article was published stating that only 10 of 65 lots were sold at the auction, and 9 of them – at the starting price [Kompridis, 2006; p.28]. We can assume that such a low volume of sold lots is due to the fact that buyers were not allowed to export the purchased objects abroad. Accordingly, foreign collectors were not interested in these trades, and the range of Russian buyers by that time had not yet been formed.

In summary, we arrive to the following:

1. Sociocultural transformation of Russia in the 1990s had a significant impact not only on the state system, but also on the model of social thinking, which entailed a partial change in the minds of the population and representatives of the artistic environment. We can talk about the disintegration of former spiritual values and the search for a new identity, which is an indicator of the crisis of collective consciousness [Heinrich M. 2004; p.12].
2. Since the late 1980's, artists open in Moscow the first galleries of contemporary art. This suggests that the creation of the art market infrastructure was not stimulated by the state, but was initiative. Thus, at the initial stage of the functioning of the first galleries we observe the process of "re-qualification" of artists in the gallery owners, mentors. They serve as the educational basis for eminent mentors, art scientists and art critics of modern Russia.
3. Despite a sharp jump in the popularity of contemporary Russian art in the art market, buyers still tend to buy more works by old masters [Duret-Robert F. 2010; p.64]. This is due not only to the fact that they are more commercially sustainable, but also because the artistic taste of the population of the country by this period was brought up in the familiar classical art.



4. The demand of foreign collectors for unofficial modern Russian art declines precisely at the moment when it becomes legitimate. And this suggests that the "boom" for this art, first of all, was caused by the political situation of the country, and not only by the artistic value of the works. Therefore, by the mid-1990s, prices for the work of Russian artists dropped sharply; respectively, the art market slows down its development.

5. By the mid-1990s, there was a trend of corporate collecting, caused by the fact that works of art are becoming a subject of investment and an indicator of status in society, and this indicates a turn to Western culture at this stage of the country's development. However, due to the fact that the institution of criticism as such has not yet been built, many companies suffered financial losses.

6. The profession of the artist becomes prestigious and quite profitable in commercial terms. Accordingly, their number is growing, which leads to the filling of the art market with mediocre works. This factor, in our opinion, hinders the qualitative development of the art market, discrediting all contemporary art.

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

Thus, proceeding from all of the above, we can note that the art market in the 1990s developed chaotically due to deep social, economic and cultural upheavals; we observe the lack of structuredness in its functioning.

At the initial stage, there were neither institutions of criticism, nor museums, and the later established galleries could not correct this situation. Nevertheless, we can say that this period was the time when the creation of infrastructure began, which laid the foundation for today's development of this sphere. We also understand that the art market is always integrated into the sociocultural space.

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