Transmedial storytelling searching "The National idea of Russia"

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The formulation of the national idea for such a multinational country as Russia is a big issue. Its solution is not monopolized by the ideological institutions, art and popular mentality also contributes to the working out of the meaning for the unifying national idea. The author reconstructs those dominant meanings of the national idea (in art and popular consciousness) by the means of visual and textual analysis. The visual object for this reconstruction was realized by the sculpture that embodied the national idea of Russia at the International Art exhibition in Venice. The corpus of texts for the Russian contest that reflected the people's ideas about the national idea was used in narrative analysis. The author undertook stages of substantial coding of art ideas in the qualitative tradition of the grounded theory to summarize the thick description of various thematic fields. In the text body it was found five of the most widespread symbols, which cumulate in a traditional and archaic complex, – state symbols, family and children, Christian symbols, living images, anthropocentric images. These symbols nourish the national storyworld. Thus, it is better for Russians to live in the shadow of the state and Christianity and a pagan heritage, with family and children. This world of stories is subject to consolidation and translation into the visual language of sculpture, performance, the virtual document, becoming some kind of emblem for the national idea. But this world of stories in the programmatic expansion opens a subterranean national Imaginary, feeds the legitimate image which is the subject for an embodiment and a presentation both in a local context, and beyond its limits.

We found that the sculpture reflects an important condition in modern media presentation – an idea of conflict, a space of the ideological collision. The virtual outsourcing used for the organizing of the competition as media technology allowed the creators to be guided by the contours of the uniting national idea found in such a artistically-narrative way: on the transmedial platforms of the sculptural image and narratives of everyday consciousness. But the national unifying idea was visually aggressive, and substantially traditional, if not archaic.

The lesson of this research is that the empirical national specifics we found, push toward a strong national identity. The evidence of this follows from the results of the textual analysis of proposed (in competition) art conceptions, with a vanishingly small share of liberal values and a dominating etatistic-traditional complex. The collective identities in the strong sense develop through an ideological-political conflict, it is a result of extensive public deliberative discussion concerning valuable questions of the society. In this regard the use of any media platform for the narrativization of the questions exciting the citizens, instead of only social agents, is an essential element in the progress towards constructing a collective identity and public reflection about a unifying national idea.

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