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Protest posters as street art & political action as performance of urban creativity

At the beginning of December the rising tide of social discontent and protest public mood started to grow in Russia and especially in Moscow. It was inspired by the idea of the fair elections and improvement of political environment that could be implemented by coordinated actions of huge number of citizens. The protests which were arranged in the central part of the city became the most significant elements of this phenomenon. One of the key intrigue of the whole governmental and opposition discourse is related to the problem of peaceful or forcible ways of this situation further development. The citizens who come at these protest events try to do their best to demonstrate that their actions are legal and totally peaceful. Although some opposition leaders and officials attempt to represent the other scenarios.

Handmade posters plays a major role in marking the particular mode of their political position (protest but peaceful). Citizens produced the common genre of the protest posters that did not exist in such form before. This genre includes typical stylistic features. The aggressive slogans are replaced by ingenious satirical statements and playing on words of political figures. Statements are frequently supported by self-created humorous visual images and collages. These protest posters are deeply connected with the wide sphere of culture background and common knowledge. For instance, they contain many quotations from the soviet and contemporary American cartoons, Russian literature and classical philosophy, popular internet memes and street art. Protests participants create such unprofessional "art objects" and as a result the protest events turn into a kind of outdoor exhibitions devoted to these posters. Photographers immediately catalogue them and publish in the Internet. So after the protest they become a very widespread topic of discussions, almost equally with the content of political speeches that were presented. In my research I examine the protests as the performances of urban creativity. In this framework protest posters could be considered as a part of popular street art that overcomes its everyday context and becomes a part of the process of iconic symbols producing.