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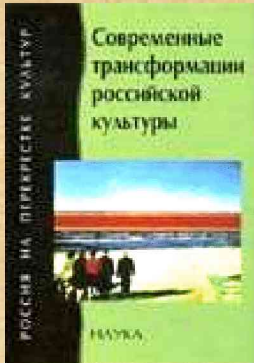
An audience of ethnofuturistic discourse in Russia.

Along with the discussion of symbolic representations of regional cultures and identities, considerable interest has been expressed in certain trends in contemporary ethno-national visual arts as forms of expressing regional self-consciousness.^[1]

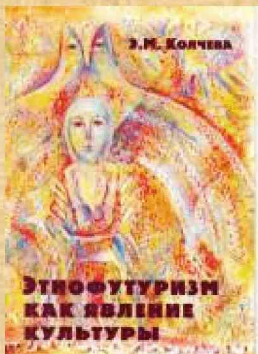
In particular, a discussion has evolved around the so-called ‘ethno-futurist’ movement that has spread widely across the post-Soviet space to the Finno-Ugrian regions of Russia.



[1] Червоная С.М. Все наши Боги с нами и за нас. Этническая идентичность и этническая мобилизация в современном искусстве народов России. Москва, Института этнологии и антропологии РАН, 1999. 298 с.



[2] Розенберг Н.А., Плеханова Е.О. Этнофутуризм и этническая идентификация в искусстве России конца XX — начала XXI в. // Современные трансформации российской культуры. М.: Наука, 2005 - С.280-302.



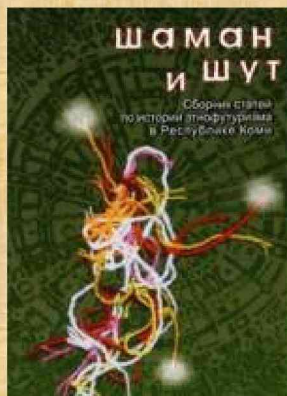
Колчева Э.М. Этнофутуризм как явление культуры. - Йошкар-Ола, 2008. - 164 с.

The aesthetics of ethno-futurism is orientated towards a contemporary comprehension of traditional ethnic symbolism and, at the same time, in its artistic constructivism on the *destruction and diffusion of the language of symbols typical for any given ethnic culture.*

This duality provides the very sources of ethno-futurism, which arise out of a conflicting intersection of ethnic, traditionalistic, (anti-)globalising and ideological discourses of the Finno-Ugrian space. Inherent in the contemporary visual arts, literatures, theatres and cinemas in the post-Soviet Finno-Ugrian republics are neo-mythological tendencies that can be characterised as manifestations of ‘peripherality’ in culture^[2].

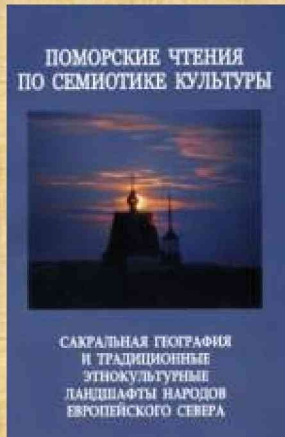


[3] **Ugriculture.**
Contemporary Art of
the Fenno-Ugrian
Peoples. The Gallen-
Kallela Museum. -
Helsinki, 2000, p.57-70



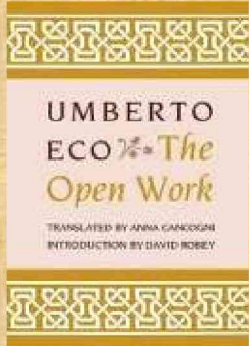
[4] **Котылев А.Ю.,
Котылева И.Ю. Шаман
и шут.** Сборник статей
по истории
этнофутуризма в
Республике Коми.
Сыктывкар, 2012. - 88 с.

The point of view of artistic circles is that ethno-futurism is an underground movement, which opposes everything ‘official’ in the arts.^[3] At the same time, ethno-futurist exhibitions and festivals are financed by the governments of the various Finno-Ugrian republics as events that reflect the development of ethno-national cultures. In fact, *ethno-futurism has become an institutionalised component of the regional authorities’ ideological propaganda.* However, ethno-futurist artists stress their political indifference to and non-participation in the various national movements of the Finno-Ugrian republics.^[4]

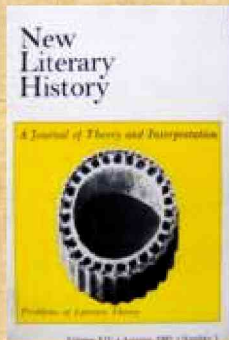


[5] Соловьева А.Н. *От этноландшафта к медиаландшафту: репрезентации этнокультуры в туристическом дискурсе* // Поморские чтения по семиотике культуры: Вып. 3: Сакральная география и традиционные этнокультурные ландшафты народов Европейского Севера: сб. научных статей / Архангельск: Поморский гос. ун-т, 2008. С. 246.

The reproduction of pseudo-archaisms is realized through the process of modern reconceptualizations of ethnocultural heritage. Ethnocultural experience develops into an aspect of simulative entertainment, adapting tradition to fit into a mould for a level of culture appealing to the average consumer. The heart of this process's significance is captured in the slogan of American Society for Creative Anachronism: We do not recreate the Middle Ages as they really were, but as they ought to have been.^[5] (Media) images of objects of pre-modern country life now serve as a specific channel for the transmission of conceptions about traditions that form on the basis of knowledge from museums and books.



[6] **Eco U. The Open Work** / Trans. Anna Cancogni. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989



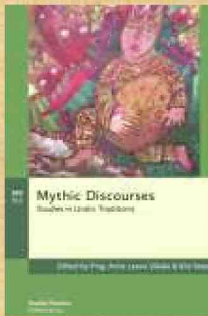
[7] **Lotman Y. M. The Text and the Structure of Its Audience** / Translated by Ann Shukman // *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, 1982. Vol. 14. №1. Pp. 81–87.

In the present day, traditional symbols, displaced from their natural contexts, play a dual (anti-)cultural role of “work in movement”^[6]: “...any text (and especially a literary one) contains in itself what we should like to term the *image of the audience* and that this image actively affects the real audience by becoming for it a kind of normatizing code. This is imposed on the consciousness of the audience and becomes the norm for its own image of itself, being transferred from the text into sphere of the real behavior of the cultural collective”.^[7]

It has become typical of the tourist industry to select and mobilize themes that are unconventional for the traditional handiwork and to interpret these as transformed ancient images and symbols.



[8] **Сурво В., Сурво А.**
Традиционные образы
декорат.-прикладного
искусства в современной
сувенирной продукции:
квазимиф деревни //
Пятые международные
Шегреневские чтения. СПб.,
2012



Survo V. Mythologems of
Embroideries (On Karelian
Sources) /
Mythic discourses: studies in
Uralic traditions / Ed.A. -
L. Siikala - Helsinki:
Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden
Seura, 2012 - S.328-352.

This process corresponds to the self-describing level of modern culture. Modern interpretations of traditional heritage reveal tendencies to the quasi-mythologization of the realities of everyday life of countryside and to transform ethnic culture into an object for consumption. Although they frequently lack any utilitarian function or connection to any pre-modern routine, such designer “lines” and “quotations” of traditional heritage are invested with artificial symbolic meaning within their new cultural environment. [8]

Objectively, ethno-futurism is not only a reflection of new creative expressions in literature, the visual arts and cinema, but also of the paradoxes of contemporary ethno-politic processes that are happening in the European Russian North,



[9] **Leete, Art; Shabayev, Yuri.**
**Notes about the Re-
identification of
Ethnographic Groups.** // *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 46, 2010. – Pp.169 – 176;



[10] **Ю.П. Шабает, А.М. Чарина.**
**Финно-угорский
национализм и
гражданская
консолидация в России.**
СПб.: Институт сервиса и
экономики; ИЭА РАН, 2010.
308 с.

just as they are occurring in the Baltic countries, Scandinavia and Finland. In particular, this is a matter of ethnic de-fragmentation and re-identification processes, which are witness to the appearance of so-called ‘new’ ethnos (e.g. Setu, Kven, Iz’vatas, Udorachy, Pomor)^[9], who are striving to gain special political and economic status within the Estonian, Finnish, Komi and Russian nations.^[10]

Translated by Paul Fryer.