

Atomization and/ or Metamodernistic Oscillation

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The formulated topic offers a double examination of the indicated paradigms. The text discusses basic positions between the contemporary atomistic model of art (CAMA) and metamodernism. "Double examination" means that the author seeks both the connection and the difference between them. The positions are brought together by "imposing" their heterogeneous, instead of dialectical opposition. This is the main purpose of the present text - to initiate a discussion that continues over time, without seeking comprehensiveness and depth of the examination. The parallel examination is achieved through intertextual citation. The approach is acceptable for both conceptual cores. According to Seth Abramson metamodernism is a particular lens for thinking about the self, language, culture, and meaning — really, about everything¹. In Abramson's words, *juxtaposition occurs when one thing is superimposed atop another thing from which it would normally be deemed entirely separate*². Metamodernism allows and strives for paradoxical juxtapositions. The contemporary atomistic model of art³ sees this and other similar positions, as a kind of abstract filters that mediate modes of thought and perception. These filters are mainly divided into two categories. The first category are the so-called "socio-culturological filters". It examines the acquisition of patterns, rules and norms, copying and transforming ideas. These include education, institutions, infrastructure, legal norms, money and economic norms, all tools, including the emerging technological works of culture. The second category of filters are the socio-biological. They are determined by the replication of genes - the cellular structure of our body (physical body), with its associated sensory apparatus and the genetically inherited instincts and reactions to signals. These filters mediate the biology and physiology of man, his interaction with the physical environment and the other individuals. In the unified field, we have a fusion of the various filters into a single whole associated with external and internal stimulation. Unlike the idea of CAMA of separation through abstract filtration, metamodernism encourages the unification of perspectives rather than their opposition and denial⁴. In both paradigms, seeking cooperation between competing ideas is allowed and desirable. Metamodernism falls among the many suggestions through which we seek to define the current modernity in culture, art and society as a whole. The list of alternatives to postmodernism is long. Competitors for this position include the *altermodern* and the *relational aesthetics* of Nicolas Bourriaud, as well as the *liquid modernity* of Zygmunt Bauman. CAMA

¹ Abramson, S. *Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, 2015

² Ibid. paragraph 6

³ Totlyakov, A. *A Contemporary Atomistic Model of Art (Part One)*, Visual Studies, Vol. 1 University Press "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", 2022, pp. 16-34

⁴ Abramson, S. *Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, 2015

recognizes and discusses these alternatives as theoretical supports. It agrees with N. Bourriaud's opinion that: "The elimination of the restrictions and the affirmation of the possibility of interpenetration between art and the social, political, physical, etc. reality, obliges the modern artist to create his own individual boundaries within the system of visual thinking⁵". Any restrictions on the type of interactions and mutual penetrations between ideas from different fields of knowledge are denied. Seth Abramson discusses interdisciplinarity in paragraph 10 of the basic ideas of metamodernism. It is a basic approach to dealing with crises, "*thoughtful and civic-minded interest in the radical reevaluation of structures with an eye toward progressive change*⁶". From this position, metamodernism supports the tendency of dismantlement and rearrangement of the existing structures. The similarity between the two views becomes even clearer when it is pointed out that the CAMA involves a process of merging and separating the ways of thinking about art⁷. This position is possible thanks to the adopted idea of Z. Bauman. CAMA is designed as a model that is able to function adequately in the liquid culture of modernity, characterized by the impermanence of connections. The attention is focused on the interactions of individual units that engage in ephemeral, dynamically transforming networks encompassing the individual intellectual and creative acts, and the contact zone between the individual and the environment. The formulation of fluid atomism is derived, where we observe the dynamics of interactions in an ever-changing structure that is itself composed of separated atomic units. The units are capable of merging briefly into more complex molecular formations, with all connections between them being fragile and temporary. In both views, interdisciplinarity and overcoming boundaries is essential. We find another similarity with regard to the subject and subjectivity. Metamodernism embraces the notion of multiple subjectivities. Abrams says that "we all find ourselves in numberless subjective categories all at once"⁸. At the same time, the possibility of temporarily occupying and sharing subjectivities that are at first glance distant or completely opposite is not excluded. To an outside observer, they look "very different from us". "Experiencing multiple subjectivities – says Abrams – means having the right to reject or deemphasize permanently a subjectivity... to switch subjective positions as feels emotionally and/or logistically appropriate..."⁹. Even the creation of a new subjectivity induced by specific circumstances, for example public discourse, is permissible. CAMA discusses the idea of a *multiple self*, influenced by the ideas of Michel Maffesoli. The *collective we* is connectedness—the Self that is thought of in interaction with others as a clan or a tribe. In order to achieve a reduction to "pure"

⁵ Totlyakov, A. *A Contemporary Atomistic Model of Art (Part One)*, Visual Studies, Vol. 1 University Press "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", 2022, p. 22

⁶ Abramson, S. *Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, 2015

⁷ Compare: Totlyakov, A. *A Contemporary Atomistic Model of Art (Part One)*, Visual Studies, Vol. 1 University Press "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", 2022, p. 27

⁸ Abramson, S. *Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, 2015

⁹ Ibid

individuality, the idea of depth is brought forth. "It projects itself in a direction starting from the *collective We* and reaching an autonomous unit, a unique Self, a personality that is independent of external influences... An abstract "pre-reflexive" Self. Elevation zero of the conducted regression, last and indivisible nucleus". CAMA states that "with constant technological connectedness, the withdrawal from the others is only temporary and increasingly difficult"¹⁰. For metamodernism in the conditions of the global Internet, we feel both connected and separated from the others. Seth Abramson calls this state the "*collapse of distance*". Metamodernism relies on the paradoxical relationship between the universal (modernism) and the contingent (postmodernism). This paradox is perceived as the basic state of thinking about the subject, group and society. Abramson says: "The paradox of something being "objectively true for me" simply means that each of us does, in fact, respond to guiding "metanarratives" ... which operate as absolutely true" in a specific situation¹¹. The paradox is that the local truth at the level of individual experience changes at the societal level. This condition causes the individual subject to constantly engage in paradoxical perceptions. We all knowingly participate in paradoxes¹². To overcome the difference as a negative affect, metamodernism promotes "dialogic thinking". It rejects the possibility of "poles" in situations, asserting a point of view where there is always a "middle ground" and means of negotiation¹³. Metamodernism brings forth simultaneity as the most important category, which gives rise to ambiguity. This is precisely the metamodernist oscillation, a kind of fluctuation, a swinging in the middle between opposite states of thought¹⁴. For CAMA, the main category is fluidity. It accepts as an axiom that the deconstructive postmodernist processes covering art, the social sphere and Western humanism are generally completed. At the same time, we can notice tendencies towards reconstruction. At the same time, we can notice tendencies towards reconstruction¹⁵. The subjects operate in a social environment that is diffusely blurred, and the dividing lines between the domains of knowledge have lost their categorical boundaries. "The idea of fluidity is defined as the interpenetration and blurring of boundaries between the intellectual essence of a work of art, and a work of knowledge, without ignoring the final results and differences in their material objectification (representation)"¹⁶. The very strategy of acting in the fluid environment requires interaction: "Instead of opposition and logical exclusion, we move towards 'shared' areas between competing

¹⁰ Totlyakov, A. *A Contemporary Atomistic Model of Art* (Part One), Visual Studies, Vol. 1 University Press "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", 2022, p. 30

¹¹ Abramson, S. *Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, 2015

¹² Ibid. paragraph 3

¹³ Ibid. paragraph 2

¹⁴ Ibid. paragraph 8

¹⁵ Totlyakov, A. *A Contemporary Atomistic Model of Art* (Part Two), Visual Studies, Vol. 2 University Press "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", 2022, p 113

¹⁶ Ibid. page 115

ideas”¹⁷. We can assume that precisely in a state of "simultaneity" (metamodernism), the individual perceives the shared area (CAMA) as a single, indivisible whole, a kind of abstract atom.

The parallel examination of major positions in metamodernism and the contemporary atomistic model of art shows many similarities in the views. The theorists of metamodernism adhere to the idea of open source and possible additions that are not tied to a centralized representation of authors. The modern atomistic model of art is a model of multiple connections, and as such can be seen (and used) as a metamodel of any major theory of art. The similarity between the two approaches to connection with the world gives us a definite reason to use the two ways of conscious perception of the relationship of the individual and the environment in the shared zone between art and life. The existence of oscillation requires existence of oscillating atom and environment where oscillation can take place.

¹ Ibid. page 117