


ORNAMIKA • LIVE

LIVE.ORNAMIKA.COM

RESEARCH EXHIBITION ORGANIZED
BY THE PATTERN LABORATORY
ORNAMIKA.COM

ORNAMIKA

 ЦИФРОВАЯ
ЛАБОРАТОРИЯ [2.5]

TECHNOLOGICAL
PARTNER

AliExpress Россия

21—27 MAY

ORNAMIKA.LIVE EXHIBITION AS A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

The mission of Ornamika.Live exhibit and Ornamika.com platform is to preserve and publicize the authentic ornamental styles of various regions and peoples of Russia using the contemporary digital technology methods.

The project falls within the sphere of Digital Humanities that encompasses research, education and creation at the junction of computer science and humanities. This is a new and actively growing branch of knowledge that enables preservation, restoration and investigation of cultural heritage using the latest technological and analytical instruments.

In the case of Ornamika.Live exhibition, such instrument is an industrial robot. The experimental problem of converting the age-old ornaments to the language of algorithms that a robot would understand required precise multi-layered reconstructions of 150 fragments of ancient ornaments and research into the methods of machine reading and graphical analysis of the ornaments that would then be translated into the routes traced by the robot. The results of this work go beyond the framework of the exhibit and enable us to continue the process of reconstructing our country's ornamental heritage with a new degree of quality.

The exhibit also kicks off an experimental research project to collect contemporary associations that come to mind when people see these old ornaments. As civilization develops, the ornaments and their symbols invariably lose their inherent meaning. On the one hand, we strive to study and record the original meanings of the symbols, but on the other hand, in order to bring the ornaments back into the relevant context, we need to understand how they are perceived by the modern audiences. As part of the exhibition, we are launching the process of collecting associations that come to mind in connection with separate fragments of the ornaments, and in the future this work will continue as independent research using a wide range of ornaments.

"The diversity and relevance of research problems that we discover in the process of preserving and updating our country's ornamental heritage are truly amazing. Ornamika.Live exhibition focuses on one of these tasks, the task of reconstructing the ancient ornaments. Our goal is not just to draw the ornaments again, but to develop a unique format of their segmentation that will allow us to use the ornaments and their fragments in building technological solutions," says Maria Loleyt, creator of Ornamika project and co-author of Ornamika.Live exhibition.

ORNAMIKA.LIVE EXHIBITION AS A CONTEMPORARY ART EXPERIMENT

Ornamika.Live exhibition is organized with technological support from AliExpress Russia. The project's organizers would like to express their gratitude to AliExpress Russia team for their enthusiasm for the exhibit's idea, active assistance in the project's implementation and high ethical standards of partnership. AliExpress Russia supports local cultural projects and producers.

While the exhibit's content has a scientific component, its actual format transports us to the sphere of contemporary robotic art, specifically, a robotic performance whose principal protagonist is an industrial robot.

In its former life, the robot called Maxim used to build cars and today it presents the diversity of Russia's ornaments to people all around the world. Its physical likeness of a human arm, a slightly tremulous handwriting and unavoidable imperfections in performance help to accentuate the original handcrafting of the ornaments even in the process of their technological rendition. Working as a human, the robot creates each ornament using its own logic, drawing out separate color layers or elements of the pattern and gradually combining them into a single composition.

Another interesting aspect is the exhibit's mixed format, devised from the very start for online audiences and online interaction with the installation. The detailed information on reconstructed ornaments, integration of the creative vision of our guest curators — actors, artists and journalists — and convenient observation points to watch the robot's work as well as other elements of engagement were all developed specifically for the online format. In this way, Ornamika.Live is a new type of an exhibition, a truly online experience built around an offline performance.

The website's generative design is a unique aspect that deserves a separate consideration. Its color scheme is an equalizer of sorts, synchronized to the robot's sounds so as to provide an artistic mode of conveying the machine's "pulse" to the viewers.

"In a certain sense, the ornaments are like immersive technologies of the past. A well-known art historian Yuri Gerchuk explained that the ornaments were used in ancient times as a powerful instrument of emotional engagement. In today's world, the methods of contemporary communications are so powerful that the ornaments found on age-old objects lose their original function. This is why it is very interesting from an artistic point of view to combine antiquity in the form of the old ornaments with the new technologies that are capable of emotionally affecting people today. It's as if we are bringing the ornaments back to life in a new form and for new people," says the founder of the Digital Laboratory 2.5 and co-author of Ornamika.Live exhibition Dmitry Masaidov.