

## SCULPTURE OF PLASTIC ASSOCIATIONS IN THE WORK OF MYKHAILO DZYNDRA OF THE LATE 1960S – 1970S

**Roman Kykta**

Lecturer at the Department of Sculpture,  
Ivan Trush Lviv State College of Decorative and Applied Arts, Ukraine  
e-mail: [sculptorromankykta@gmail.com](mailto:sculptorromankykta@gmail.com), [orcid.org/0009-0003-1166-5462](https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1166-5462)

### Summary

The conceptual foundations of M. Dzyndra's creative pursuits during the period of “sculpture of plastic associations” (1967/68–1974) are revealed. Based on the criterion of the relationship between the “basic semantic text”, “subject motifs” and the formal solution, the sculptural works created within this framework are typologized and their semantic-imagery and formal-plastic characteristics are identified.

It is argued that the formal-plastic features of “sculpture of plastic associations” in M. Dzyndra's work include the reduction of the empirical to the essential; generalization and conciseness; expressiveness of silhouettes and rhythm; monumental stasis or expression; inclusion of spatial caesuras in the imagery-plastic structure of the work; contrast of stasis and dynamics, scales, volumes, and forms; the image-forming significance of the interaction between form and surrounding space; and the appeal to modernist artistic experience and the form-making of archaic cultures. The features of M. Dzyndra's reception of the creative findings of O. Archypenko, C. Brancusi, J. Lipchitz, H. Moore, J. Miró, and P. Picasso are analyzed. Interdisciplinary artistic influences in certain works of the artist and their orientation towards exhibition in a natural environment are highlighted. The delineation within the “plastic-associative” period in M. Dzyndra's work of geometrizing forms inspired by Cubism and “bionic” types of form-making, which will later develop into “abstract form plasticity” and “architectural form plasticity” in the master's oeuvre, is emphasized.

**Key words:** M. Dzyndra's oeuvre, “plastic associations”, typological groups, Cubist form-making.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23856/6408>

### 1. Introduction

The creative legacy of Mykhailo Dzyndra (1921–2006) – sculptor, painter, graphic artist, architect, graduate of the Lviv Art and Industrial School, attendee of the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, disciple of Andriy Koverko, Bohdan Mukhin, Ivan Severa – stands as one of the most distinctive phenomena in both world and Ukrainian visual arts from the late 1960s to the 1990s.

The master's unique and multifaceted creative pursuits have a differentiated “root system,” composed of the semiotic and iconosphere of folk culture, nurtured by the master in his native village of Demnia in Lviv region, the artistic and educational environment of inter-war Lviv, formal-plastic explorations in post-war Germany, the artistic milieu of the USA and Ukrainian emigration, the artist's own understanding of creativity and sense of form, and the originality of the artist's talent.

Commencing with the assimilation of academic artistic principles and the exploration of various stylistic systems, by the end of the 1960s, the sculptor's professional path led him to abandon mimetic principles in favor of creating associative, open-to-interpretation sculptural works.

Following a tradition, possibly originating from the authorial definition by M. Dzyndra himself of periods in his own creativity, the artist's oeuvre distinguishes “sculpture of plastic associations”, “plastic of abstract form”, and “plastic of architectural form” without clear definitions of concepts.

An analysis of M. Dzyndra's oeuvre allows us to assert that the period characterized as “sculpture of plastic associations” spans from 1967/68 to 1974, marked by the unity of form creation and a wide spectrum of motifs and themes. The basis of Dzyndra's “plastic-associative” works lies in the associative discovery of plastic counterparts of certain phenomena, cultural concepts, ideas, or the reflection of their potential associative semantic connections in sculptural forms.

The formal-artistic features of “sculpture of plastic associations” include cubist representation of essence through geometrization of volumes; conciseness and generality; architectonics; expressiveness; incorporation of spatial caesuras into the imaginative-plastic structure of works; active interaction between images and surrounding space; clear rhythm; plastic contrasts; appeal to the formative processes of archaic cultures. Since 1971, suggestive color juxtapositions and restrained ornamentation of forms serve as elements of artistic expressiveness. The peculiarity of the works lies in the “deviation” from the usual and the presence of essence, content, and aesthetic novelty. Characteristic of the master's work at the end of the 1960s is the adoption of new techniques and technologies to embody innovative artistic ideas.

The lower chronological boundary of the period is defined by M. Dzyndra's statement about creating “sculptures in the style of 'contemporary'” after 1968 (Dzyndra, 2021: 21). The upper boundary is marked by the emergence of “abstract form plastic” dominance in the master's work in the mid-1970s. Reminiscences of “sculpture of plastic associations” can be found in M. Dzyndra's works from the late 1970s to the 1990s.

Given the artistic significance of Mikhaylo Dzyndra's oeuvre, it seems paradoxical that, apart from reviews in art-critical essays (B. Boichuk, Yu. Voloshchak, S. Dzyndra, N. Kosmolinska, A. Nemet, Yu. Solovii, I. Fedyshyn, Ye. Shymchuk), introductory articles to catalogs (B. Mysiuha, Ye. Shymchuk), mentions in comprehensive scientific publications (O. Holubets; H. Novozhenets), the artist's work has not become the subject of comprehensive scientific study regarding the conceptual characteristics of each period and the semantic-imagistic and formal-plastic features of the sculptures created within their framework.

**The aim of the article** is to reveal the conceptual principles of M. Dzyndra's creative searches during the period of “sculpture of plastic associations”, to typologize and identify the semantic-imagistic and formal-plastic features of the sculptural works created within its framework.

**The methodological basis of the research** consists of general scientific and specialized approaches and methods. Thus, the principles of the systemic-synergetic approach serve as the methodological basis for studying M. Dzyndra's creative work in correlation with the trends in the development of Ukrainian and world visual arts of the second half of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century. The evolution of M. Dzyndra's creative work is examined using the comparative-historical method. The reconstruction of the artist's life circumstances in terms of their influence on the formation of the imaginative-plastic concept of creativity employs the historical-biographical method. The thematic-semantic analysis of the artist's works is facilitated by the principles of hermeneutic and semiotic approaches. The revelation of the artistic features of M. Dzyndra's sculptural, pictorial, and graphic works is ensured by the method of stylistic art historical analysis.

## 2. “Plastic-associative artworks of sacred themes”

Based on the correlation of the “basic semantic text”, “subject motifs”, and the formal solution of the “plastically associative” oeuvre of M. Dzyndra is divided into several typological groups.

The first group includes artworks of sacred content, characterized by an unconventional dialogue with the religious tradition on the semantic level, personal experience of it, expression of the traditional through innovative formal means, warm irony, play, and grotesque.



**Ill. 1. M. Dzyndra “The Figure” (“The Prophet”), 1971. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 248x123x65. Photo by R. Kykta**

Thus, in the sculpture “The Prophet” (“The Figure”) (1971) (Ill. 1), the connection to beginnings and ends, transcendence, titanism, messianism, and strength are depicted through the active interaction of form with space, the tense inclination of the geometricized figure, contrasting with oppositely directed lines of the base, and raised arms, as if opened into the infinity of worlds. A particular feature of the depiction is the development of semantics and plasticity upon circular observation: from a static appeal to the sky to a desperate resistance against the pressure of elements.



**Ill. 2. M. Dzyndra “The Apostle”, 1971. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 230x85x45. Photo by R. Kykta**

Associativity, conciseness of artistic means, and the inclusion of space into the visual-plastic structure are characteristic of the fluid-lyrical “The Apostle” (1971) (Ill. 2), in which the connection with the divine is visualized by the swift verticality of the figure, while the spiritual path is represented by the staff in hand.



**III. 3. M. Dzyndra “Hosanna”, 1976. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 178x74x65. Photo by R. Kykta**

Among the later reminiscences of “plastically-associative” artistic solutions, which coexist with the abstract and absorb their experience, stands the elevated and grand “Hosanna” (1976) (Ill. 3), which refers to the archetype of the Mother and the iconography of the Eleusa Mother of God. According to the classification proposed by O. Osadcha, the work is a “paradigmatic image” of Motherhood (*Osadcha, 2020: 165–168*), which, with its iconographic prototype, unites the frontality resembling covers, reproduced by the negative form of solemn halos and faces. The connection of the image with the icon is emphasized by golden acrylic. As a symbol of purity and sanctity, the visualization of the transcendent is perceived through the whiteness of thin vertical structures. The characteristics of the work are the rare epic solemnity of the author's expression in M. Dzyndra's oeuvre and the conciseness of forms.



**III. 4. M. Dzyndra “Fantasies of the Believers”, 1977. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 158.5x90x43. Photo by R. Kykta**

A similar imaginative solution is characteristic of “Fantasies of the Believers” (1977) (Ill. 4), which is a variation of the “paradigmatic image” of Motherhood and refers to the iconography of the “Pieta”. Integrating the experience of organic abstraction, the master creates an elevated composition in which the Mother of God with the dead Savior on her knees is associatively depicted diagonally and with the curved mass of fluid form. Maternal tenderness resonates in the musical softness of outlines, restrained pain in majestic stillness, purity and sanctity in white color and internal cavities that fill the sculpture with air and light and connect it to transcendental worlds. Based on M. Dzyndra's memories of Madonna figures in the Demnya cemetery, the work absorbed modernist inspirations, including Oleksandr Arkhymenko's

“Religious Motif” (1948), with which it shares a common plasticity, the monumental delineation of the Virgin Mary, and the formative significance of spatial caesuras.

A prominent place in M. Dzyndra's oeuvre is occupied by the *ironic images* constructed through the introduction of the sacred into personal emotional realms, its perception through the prism of folk religiosity, in the tonality of fairy tales and folklore, combining the mundane with the supernatural.



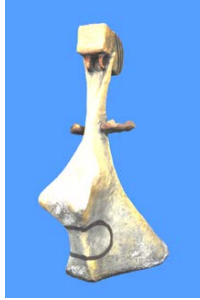
**Ill. 5. M. Dzyndra “The Angel”, 1971. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 248.5x136x65. Photo by R. Kykta**

Indeed, consonant with folk imagination is the depiction of an angel (1971) (Ill. 5) – suffused with warm, gentle irony, grotesque, with capricious form destruction. Founded on echoes of Trypillian plasticity, it allures with its “handcrafted” quality, the lively pulsation of volumes, lines, and sinuous planes. The dialogue with traditional culture is accentuated by the color of ancient terracotta. At the same time, inheriting from cubism, the sculpture is related to maintaining a clear geometric foundation, despite the softness and “fluidity” of forms. Characteristic of M. Dzyndra's “plastically-associative” period are internal spatial caesuras and the “activation” of the surrounding space by the outstretched arms forming a cross.

Even more pronounced than in “The Angel” from the collection “Museum of Modern Sculpture by Mykhailo Dzyndra”, the connection with the natural universe is evident in the replica of the work (1972), situated against a landscape backdrop. Indeed, the irregular forms of the figure resonate with the treetops, spatial caesuras seem to imbue the air and light, and the elliptical space outlined by the wings forms a protective mantle for the amusing, defenseless angel on what appears to be newly created earth.

Overall, we have grounds to argue that the combination of elements from the mundane and the mythical, the depiction of the supernatural as if it were real, in the sculpture “Angel” (1971) and its replica from 1972, resonate with “magical realism”, based on appeals to the mythopoetic worldview of ancient cultures. We speculate that the direct inspiration for the work may have been the story “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1968), the English translation of which was published in 1972 by *Harper and Row* in New York.

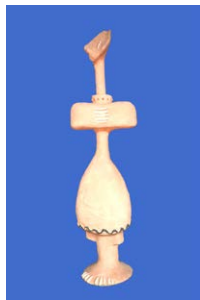
In resonance with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's story, “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”, is the “Old Angel” (1973) (Ill. 6), where an associative, grotesque image is created through hyperbolization and deformation of forms. A distinctive feature of the depiction is engaging the viewer in an absorbing game of reception, with the possibility of its “double reading” as either a face with a funny gigantic nose or a comical, tenderly defenseless figure with a rectangular head and helpless small wings. Similar to the angel figure of 1971, associations with the sacred are evoked through the dimly golden acrylic.



**Ill. 6. M. Dzyndra “Old Angel”, 1973. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 169x102x69. Photo by R. Kykta**

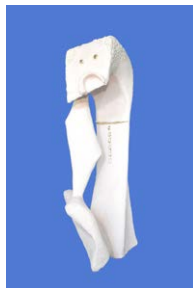
### **3. The ethnocultural inspirations of the master’s “plastically-associative” explorations**

Another group consists of compositions where the “semantic base text” is the semiosphere of traditional Ukrainian culture, the subject plane is folk customs, rituals, national archetype figures, and the plastic plane comprises a spectrum of highly innovative forms.



**Ill. 7. M. Dzyndra “Ukrainian Woman”, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 208.5x53x49. Photo by R. Kykta**

An example of this is the “Ukrainian Woman” (1972) (Ill. 7): with the color of ancient terracotta, monumental, static, featuring an associated contrast of vertical and horizontal elements reminiscent of a cross, and conventionally depicted folk costume decoration, transformed into an ethnocultural symbol.



**Ill. 8. M. Dzyndra “Little Cossack”, 1974. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 160x63x70. Photo by R. Kykta**

Belonging to the works localized on the border between figurativeness and abstraction is the “Little Cossack” (1974) (Ill. 8), characterized by a curved form with a bent top featuring conventionally depicted slender hair, half-moon-shaped mustache, and dots for eyes. The lyrical character of the depiction is enhanced by the inclined “head”, soft silhouette, and rhythm associated with the flow of Cossack songs. The semantic field of the work expands through association with the image of the Cossack musician (banduryst) – a symbol of Ukrainian identity, lyrical-poetic folk worldview, strength, courage, peacefulness, hero of folk paintings and legends.



**Ill. 9. M. Dzyndra “Bandurist”, n/d. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 189x65x42. Photo by R. Kykta**

Among the ethno-inspired images is the “Bandurist” (undated) (Ill. 9), constructed on the Cubist unity and contrast of two triangular forms. The semantic base level of the depiction is formed by associations with the “kobzar” text of Ukrainian culture. The spiritualization of the bandura in the texts of epics and songs reflects the unity of the figure and the musical instrument, and their successive acquisition of triangle outlines when perceived in profile and frontally.



**Ill. 10. M. Dzyndra “Carolers”, 1973. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 163x50x40. Photo by R. Kykta**

A separate subgroup consists of visualizations of *Ukrainian rituals and customs*, marked by a balance on the border between figurativeness and abstraction, modernist plastic solutions, and accents on the collective, “choral” aspect of folk life. Such an imaginative-plastic solution is encountered in the “Carolers” (1973) (Ill. 10), where the joyfully secretive atmosphere of the ancient custom of visiting neighbors' homes with the performance of celebratory songs (carols) and the recitation of formulaic greetings (wishes) for peace, goodness, and harmony

is reproduced by the rhythm of rectangular heads, conventional lines of hair, and open mouths signifying singing. The pre-Christmas winter evening is associated with the rough, shimmering surface and the gray-blue acrylic.



**Ill. 11. M. Dzyndra “Dancers”, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 174.5x72x52. Photo by R. Kykta**

M. Dzyndra's reference to ethnocultural traditions is evidenced by images of dance, which refer to rituals of family and calendar cycles, occasional and household rituals – expressions of the “choral” element of folk life (*“Dancers”, 1972*) (Ill. 11).

M. Dzyndra's actualization of the national cultural code is confirmed by his reference to *images from Ukrainian folklore, national consciousness, and fantasy*, which in the spectrum of figurative (*“Bull”, 1970; “Bird”, 1972; “Owl”, 1999*) or abstract (*“Demon”, 1967; “Scarecrow”, 1973*) representations reproduce the folklore-fairytale cultural text.

#### **4. Interpretations of archetypes within the paradigm of actualizing the formative processes of archaic cultures**

A separate group in M. Dzyndra's “plastic-associative” oeuvre consists of works whose semantic basis is cultural archetypes – “a priori structural forms of the instinctual foundation of consciousness, patterns of the collective unconscious” (*Pularia, 2011: 8*), with the subject matter depicting women, families, male protectors, and characterized by an appeal to the formative processes of archaic cultures.



**Ill. 12. M. Dzyndra “The Cave Man”, 1968. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 252x53x52. Photo by R. Kykta**



Thus, in the sculpture “The Cave Man” (1968) (Ill. 12), which, according to M. Dzyndra's assertion, marked the beginning of a new “plastic-associative” stage in his work (*Dzyndra, 2021: 21*), the Cubist, disproportionately rectangular torso, awkward, uncertain posture of column-like legs, a flat head on a thin vulnerable neck, and hands pressed against the body with seven fingers, create an impression of formation, growth, of a still unsure human presence in the world's cultural genesis, aesthesis, and semiosis. An artistic feature of the image is its perception in comparison with embodiments of the perfection of human physical forms in art history.

Echoes of one of the oldest cultural archetypes – the Mother Goddess, the Great Mother – are noticeable in “Woman” (1971), “Seated Woman” (1973), and “Female Figure” (date not provided). A distinctive feature of M. Dzyndra's actualization of the ambivalent archetype of the maternal code is the actualization of its positive aspects: strength, tenderness, wisdom, fertility, the source of life.



**Ill. 13. M. Dzyndra “Sedentary”, 1973. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 165.5x100x57. Photo by R. Kykta.**

Accordingly, inspirations from Trypillian sculpture are evident in the “Sedentary” (1973) (Ill. 13), based on the contrast between the cylindrical body and the semi-circles of folded legs and arms. Characteristic features of the work include clear architectonics and the extreme conciseness of artistic expression, geometricization of the visible by reducing it to the essential, and the effortless bionic quality of forms. The defining plastic “collision” of the artwork is the combination of primal brutality and aesthetic sophistication, primarily in the depiction of the face, which references portraits by P. Picasso.

The gradual transition of M. Dzyndra from plastic-associative to abstract form creation is evidenced by the work “Mother and Child” (1973), in which the figurative component is the outline of a female bust, delineated by curved volume. The tenderness and maternal love, the



**Ill. 14. M. Dzyndra “The Family”, 1970. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 148x119x103. Photo by R. Kykta**

unity of mother and child, are reproduced through the musical fluidity of lines and the enclosed nature of the image. The strength, purity, and joy of maternal feelings are reflected in the combination of white, red, and black colors.

The prominent position in the analyzed group is occupied by the image of the family – the Ukrainian national social *sacrum*, the center of lineage continuation, nurturing of traditions, and generational heritage. In “The Family” (1970) (Ill. 14), abstract figures of father and mother are combined with the depiction of a child, which completes the composition and focuses attention on the inner space perceived as a universe of love, joy, and life. The use of Archypenko’s counterform is of significant importance in rendering the child’s head, as if complemented by the tenderly inclined figures of the parents. The most exemplary, “realistic” interpretation in the sculptural group of the child’s image compared to the conventionality of those who gave life. The connections of “The Family” (1970) with ethnocultural tradition are indicated by the similarity of the child’s figure to the depictions of angels and the grotesque mustache on the father, reminiscent of folk images. It is noteworthy that similar figurative-plastic conceptual foundations are found in Henry Moore’s “Family” (1950), where, like in M. Dzyndra’s work, the depiction of the child – the fruit of love – gives meaning to the family union and unites the figures of the parents.



**Ill. 15. M. Dzyndra “Family to the Deceased”, 1982. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 54x17x20. Photo by R. Kykta**

Among the reminiscences of plastic-associative solutions in Mykhailo Dzyndra’s later works is “Family to the Deceased” (1982) (Ill. 15), where rectangular male, female, and child figures are associated with ancient menhirs, signs of the family tree, which unite the world of ancestors, the earthly and heavenly worlds. Solemn memorial intonations resonate in the laconicism, geometricity, monumental statics, and clear rhythm of geometrized figures. Interpretations of the family as the foundation of human life are manifested in the reduction of forms to a circle, sphere, rectangle, formed by the heads-spheres of an imaginary triangle as a manifestation of the primordial, essential in the flow of things and events.

The appeal to the archetypal image of a warrior and the archaic visual code of petroglyphs is characteristic of the sculpture “Warrior” (1983), with its diverse rhythm of lines and the planes outlined by them.



**Ill. 16. M. Dzyndra “Journey through Space”, 1991. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 43x35x14. Photo by R. Kykta**

The images, based on the actualization of the formative processes of archaic cultures, includes “Journey through Space” (1991) (Ill. 16) with figures resembling Scythian idols, male and female. The particularity of the work lies in the emphasis on universal semantic oppositions of “up-down”, “right-left”, where spatial relationships receive an axiological interpretation from the perspective of customs, moral-ethical, and religious systems. An important element of imaginative expressiveness is the identification of the surrounding space of the composition with the *world as a whole*. The symbolism of the circle, representing the Sun, Moon, Infinity, and Eternity, contributes to the expansion of the semantic field, reflecting the notion of the cyclical nature of life. The visual center of the composition is a rectangle resembling an ancient megalith. Color adds artistic expressiveness to the depiction: gray-blue with touches of ochre, associated with the patina of centuries.

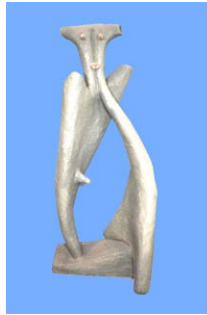
##### **5. “Plastic-associative” interpretations of the theme “He and She”**

Among Mykhailo Dzyndra's works from the “plastic-associative” period with a differentiated “semantic base text”, there are depictions of male and female figures within the spectrum of cubist or biotic forms (“He and She”, 1970; “The Lovers”, 1971; “Two”, no date; “The Kiss”, no date; “The Kiss”, 1974). Common to these works are their figuratively expressive statics, the hermeticism of the sculptural group, and the expression of its unity with a smooth contour, connected to the surrounding environment through the rhythm of spatial pauses.



**Ill. 17. M. Dzyndra “The Lovers”, 1971. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 195x85x46. Photo by R. Kykta**

Thus, the feelings preceding the continuation of the lineage are reflected in “The Lovers” (1971) (Ill. 17), where the merging and interpenetration of figures mirror the unity of thoughts and hearts. With its Cubist formation, the sculpture is akin to “The Cave Man” and is perceived as the culmination of his plasticity, the next act of anthropo- and culture-formation. The figurative-plastic development of the theme, with further harmonization, bionization, differentiation of forms, and complication of interaction with the external space through internal spatial cesuras, is encountered in “The Family” (1969–1972), with which the specified works form a complete cycle, delineating a distinct axial axis in the artist's oeuvre.



**Ill. 18. M. Dzyndra “The Kiss”, n/d. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 201x84x78. Photo by R. Kykta**

In the sculpture “The Kiss” (no date) (Ill. 18), the unity of souls, bodies, and hearts is reproduced by the similar petals of the male and female figures and the intimate merging of heads. The complementarity and indivisibility of the lovers are emphasized by the formation of a new existential reality with one pair of lips for two outlines, representing both male and female profiles. Built on references to “The Kiss” (1907–1908) by K. Brancusi, unlike the hermetic work of the French sculptor, the depiction maintains a connection with the surrounding environment thanks to a spatial caesura that fills it with growing emotional and physical vibrations, resembling the flame of a candle. The inner space of the work gains particular expressiveness when exhibited against a landscape backdrop, where the outlines of flexible bodies are perceived as a portal to a new reality, created by the union of lovers in a self-sufficient world.

## **6. The solitary figures in the sculptor's “plastic-associative” oeuvre**

A significant group in Mykhailo Dzyndra's artistic output from 1967/68 to 1974 consists of female and male figures based on associative interpretations of geometric or biomorphic body forms, involving a plastic “exploration” of its perspectives beyond correlation with a structured semantic field, with an emphasis on resolving plastic tasks.

Hence, plastic analogues of relaxation and tranquility are found in a series of seated figures. One of the most artistically expressive among the analyzed group is “Sedentary” (1971) (Ill. 19), characterized by the delicacy of its dynamically sharpened silhouette, lines, and shapes. The formal foundation of the depiction consists of contrasts between geometrically stylized, slightly inclined rectangular frames, diagonal legs, and semi-oval arms. The expressive element in the work lies in the juxtaposition of the lines' expression and the “silence” of the planes. A particular feature of the piece is the “visibility” through the geometric constructs



**Ill. 19. M. Dzyndra “Sedentary”, 1971. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 199x100x65. Photo by R. Kykta**

of real bodily forms. Also noteworthy are the intersections of Dzyndra's formal principles with the aesthetic studies of the female model in the works of O. Arkhyenko, such as “Leaning Figure” (1949) and “Woman in a Chair” (1963).



**Ill. 20. M. Dzyndra “The Girl”, 1974. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 188x54x41. Photo by R. Kykta**

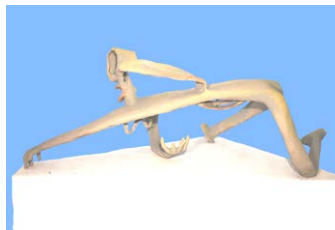
The representation of a standing female figure, associated with a differentiated semantic field, includes “The Girl” (1974) (Ill. 20) with a cone-shaped body and an exquisite, decorative, lacy outline of the head. Indeed, the correlation of the depiction with an apple tree is facilitated by the sunny yellow-green color, elongated, growth-associated torso, and yellow-red balls resembling ripe fruits. Further “interpretative expansion” refers to the semantics of the apple tree – a symbol of newlyweds, fertility, growth, health, happiness, love, and beauty.

The aesthetic foundation of a series of female figures is a soft, warm humor, irony, and grotesque. For instance, in the sculpture “The Sitting Woman” (1972) (Ill. 21), the hyperbolization and deformation of the head, likening it to a pot, the defenseless, disproportionate arch-shaped body, and thin stick-like legs are perceived as the quintessence of the everyday manifestation of feminine essence, with warmly tender irony deliberately contemplated by the artist. Both amusing and touching, with the deformation of bodily forms and hyperbolized feet, the depiction resonates with the surrealist portraits of P. Picasso. It is noteworthy that in this and



**Ill. 21. M. Dzyndra “The Sitting Woman”, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 174.5x100x57. Photo by R. Kykta**

other works of M. Dzyndra inspired by the surrealist legacy of the Spanish-French artist, there are no echoes of pain from the disharmony of the world inherent to him, the images retain a positive tonality, and the surrealist illogicality is perceived as an aesthetic game.



**Ill. 22. M. Dzyndra “Crawling”, n/d. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 80.5x212x110. Photo by R. Kykta**

The connections in the interpretation of the female body with surrealist canvases by P. Picasso, such as “Dance” (1925), “Reclining Woman” (1929), and “Large Nude in a Red Armchair” (1929), can be traced in “Crawling” (undated) (Ill. 22), resembling a giant spider. The mainstay of the sculpture's plasticity is the rapid line of the torso, complemented by round curves and small red details, creating a differentiated internal rhythm. The factor shaping the form is the dominance of internal voids and artistically organized surrounding space over the slender, elongated, stem-like body forms, creating whimsical lacework. The active interaction of form with space, the narrowing and widening of flexible planes, encourages circular viewing of the sculpture, during which “aesthetic registers” change and soft irony turns into sharp sarcasm. It is worth noting a certain affinity of M. Dzyndra's “Crawling” with H. Moore's “Semi-Reclining Female Figure” (1951), particularly in the interpretation of space-subordinate fluid forms.

The human body as a self-sufficient, self-organizing, coordinated organic system with structurally harmonious parts is a plastic theme in the sculpture “The Athlete” (1972) (Ill. 23). The means of embodying the artistic idea is through the active interaction with the space of the dynamically curved torso and the legs arranged in a stable triangular form. The elliptical inner space is filled with energy accumulated before the rapid movement. The contrast between the clear three-part structure and the expressive contour adds to the figurative expressiveness of the work, visualizing willpower and strength.



**Ill. 23. M. Dzyndra “The Athlete”, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 152.5x80x35. Photo by R. Kykta**



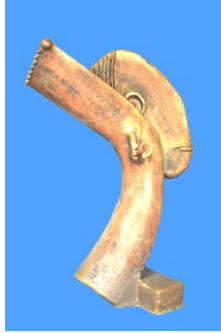
**Ill. 24. M. Dzyndra “Rest”, 1973. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 174.6x110x48. Photo by R. Kykta**

In the sculpture “Rest” (1973) (Ill. 24), serenity, tranquility, and unity of the human with the environment are depicted through the diagonal elongation, wave-like deformation of the sculptural form, and flexible flowing contours.

### **7. A portrait within the spectrum of “plastic-associative” interpretations**

An important component of Mykola Dzyndra's creativity is the plastic-associative interpretation of human characters and types: in various aesthetic modalities, within the spectrum of cubist and bionic forms. The beginning of the master's portrait explorations and their greatest intensity occurred in 1972–1973 when, experimenting with various creative solutions, he created over a dozen such sculptures. The distinctive feature of Mykola Dzyndra's portrait studies became bold formative experiments, embodied in both plastic-complex or naively figurative depictions, and in voluminous associative images that entered the best part of the artist's oeuvre.

One of the first in the mentioned group was the “The Portrait” (1972) – with whimsical shell-like shoulders, a long curved neck, marked by the characteristic baroque fullness and dynamism of sculptural masses typical of the early work of M. Dzyndra. A notable feature



**Ill. 25. M. Dzyndra “ Head of the Indian “, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 165x110x76. Photo by R. Kykta**

of the depiction is the “duck-like” small decorative head, typical in the context of the artist's characteristic “zoomorphism” of human figures.

The group of portraits where, despite the actualization of plastic experience of modernism, an excessive lifelikeness of facial features is preserved (“Portrait”, 1972; “Dictator”, 1972, etc.), is significantly less successful. In a series of portrait images from the 1970s, the sculptor did not avoid naive literalness in characterizing psychological types and the fragmentation of abstracted forms (“*Girl with a Braid*”, 1973; “*Portrait with Ribbons*”, 1976).



**Ill. 26. M. Dzyndra “Gypsy”, 1974. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 160x88x70. Photo by R. Kykta**

At the same time, in certain works by M. Dzyndra, he achieved plastic laconism and associative expressiveness, “plastic harmony, the basis of which is simplicity of form”, as noted in one of the artist's interviews. A step towards embodying the creative ideal was “Head of the Indian” (1972) (Ill. 25), in which the ethnic type is reproduced by a combination of a resilient semi-oval curve reminiscent of a natural shape, a small rectangular base, and an oval head. Associations with the scorching vastness of the Great Plains are formed by the bronze-gold acrylic used for toning.

The creation of a composite associative image based on geometric abstraction and volume generalization is characteristic of the sculpture “Gypsy” (1974) (Ill. 26). Founded on juxtaposed verticals of the neck and sturdy black rectangular blocks, the sculpture evokes



confidence, liveliness, and a sense of unity with the environment, typical of the ethnic group, along with a rejection of encroachments on personal freedom. The characteristic “biotization” by M. Dzyndra of geometric masses with irregular “living” contours and the association of the rough surface with untreated stone liken the sculpture to megaliths – witnesses of centuries past. A distinctive feature of the work is its appeal to the interpretation of the Gypsy image in Ukrainian folklore through the prism of the triad “own – other – stranger” (*Zakalska, 2022: 88, 90, 92*).



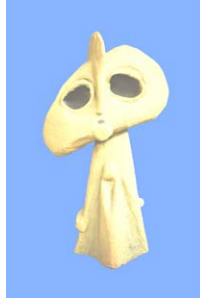
**Ill. 27. M. Dzyndra “The Frightened Soldier”, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 131x100x76. Photo by R. Kykta**

Complex cultural and philosophical reflections on the archetypal image of the warrior are encountered in one of the finest works by M. Dzyndra, “The Frightened Soldier” (1972) (Ill. 27). The sculpture's uniqueness lies in the ambivalence of the image, based on an understanding of war as tragedy, pain, and suffering, and the interpretation of heroism not as the absence of fear but as the overcoming of it. The implicit semantic layer of the sculpture shapes an understanding of war as an anomalous chronotope and the status of the soldier as a detachment from the normal flow of life events.

Conceptual analogies with the sculptural work can be found in 20th-century literature, particularly in the works of Erich Maria Remarque, Ernest Hemingway, and Kurt Vonnegut, whose most famous novel, “Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade” (1969), was adapted into a film by director George Roy Hill in the same year Dzyndra created the sculpture.

The embodiment of the author's intent lies in finding a plastic formula of fear, reflected on the oval face with a ridge-like nose, furrows on the forehead, and eyes filled with horror. The peculiarity of the “Frightened Soldier” lies in the active interaction with the disharmonious external space and the inclusion of an imaginary wind into the figurative-plastic structure of the work, which scatters the hair and seems to absorb the horrors and sufferings of war. An important aspect of the image is the contemplation of war as a terrifying force that subordinates and nullifies individual lives. The expression of the most essential aspect is facilitated by the geometrization of forms, reduced to cylinders, ovals, and semicircles. Additionally, we note the consonance of Dzyndra's interpretation with O. Arkhyenko's sculpture “Soldier Walking” (1917), which reflects the fatigue and pain of war.

In an ironic aesthetic modality, one of the most atmospheric portrait works of M. Dzyndra, “Vertical Head” (1972) (Ill. 28), is executed. The formative basis of the work is the geometrization of volumes aimed at emphasizing the characteristic and essential, creating a humorous and sorrowful depiction with an exaggerated pancake-like head, a cone-shaped neck, and the hollows of thoughtful, moving eyes. The receptive contexts that complete the artistic



**III. 28. M. Dzyndra “Vertical Head”, 1972. Reinforced mesh, cement mixture, toning – acrylic, 137x83x49. Photo by R. Kykta**

image are formed by the conflict between the humorous and empathetic responses to the fantastical creature created by the sculptor, vulnerable in the expanses of endless worlds. Significant resonances of Dzyndra's figurative-plastic solution can be found in the works of the Catalan master Juan Miró (*“Figure”, 1970*).

Incidentally, it should be noted that M. Dzyndra's interest in character and type portraits, embodied in rounded sculpture, fully manifested in a series of bas-relief portraits from the second half of the 1980s to the 1990s.

## 8. Conclusions

Therefore, we can conclude that the period of M. Dzyndra's creativity, characterized as “sculpture of plastic associations”, spans from 1967/68 to 1974. Its conceptual basis is the associative finding of figurative-abstract plastic counterparts of certain phenomena, cultural concepts, ideas, or the reflection in form of their potential associative connections.

The formal-plastic features of “sculpture of plastic associations” include cubist geometrization of volumes or their resemblance to natural forms; reduction of empirical to essential; generality and conciseness; expressive silhouettes and rhythm; monumental statics or expression; contrast of static and dynamic, scales, volumes and forms; incorporation of spatial caesuras into the imaginative-plastic structure of the work; image-forming significance of the interaction between form and surrounding space; appeal to the formative processes of archaic cultures. Since 1971, suggestive color juxtapositions and restrained ornamentation of forms serve as means of associative expressiveness. The characteristic features of the works include “deviation” from the ordinary and, as a result, the presence of essence, content, and aesthetic novelty. Soft irony and grotesque are distinctive features of some of the author's decisions. The particularity of individual works is the “receptive play”, during which, when viewed from different positions, various figures are visually outlined.

In terms of the relationship between the “basic semantic text”, “subject motifs”, and formal solution, the “plastic-associative” oeuvre of M. Dzyndra is divided into several main groups.

The first group consists of works of sacred content characterized by a dialogue with tradition on a semantic level, its intimate lyrical experience, the use of sacred themes as a “gateway to the plane of the national”, the expression of tradition through innovative formal means, warm irony, and play (*“The Prophet”, 1971; “The Apostle”, 1971; “Saint Basil”, 1970–1971, etc.*).

The second group comprises compositions where the “semantic basic text” is the semi-sphere of traditional Ukrainian culture, the subject plan includes traditionality, ritualism, national archetypal figures, images of Ukrainian folklore, and national consciousness, and the plastic features encompass a spectrum of highly innovative forms (“Ukrainian Woman”, 1972; “Cossack”, 1974; “Carolers”, 1972, 1973, etc.). Dzyndra’s work combines aspects of national cultural tradition, mentality, worldview, reflected in the interest in prehistory, emotionality, lyricism. M. Dzyndra's oeuvre is intertwined with characteristics of the Ukrainian spiritual and artistic expression, humor, and a subtle, gentle, balanced grotesque.

A separate group includes works whose semantic basis is cultural archetypes, the subject plan features the depiction of women, families, male protectors, and the plastic feature involves the appeal to the formative processes of archaic cultures (“Cave Man”, 1968; “Mother”, 1972; “Family”, 1970, 1969–1972, etc.).

Visually expressive statics, the merging or interpenetration of male and female figures, the representation of their unity with smooth contours, the hermeticism of the plastic structure are characteristic of works dedicated to the theme of “He and She”, visualized in a spectrum of cubist or bionic forms (“He and She”, 1970; “The Lovers”, 1971, etc.).

A significant group in M. Dzyndra's creative work comprises male and female figures based on associative interpretation of geometric or bionic body forms, plastic “exploration” of its various positions beyond correlation with a structured semantic field, with an emphasis on solving plastic tasks (“Woman with Long Hair”, 1971; “Seated”, 1971; “Sportsman”, 1972; “Rest”, 1973, etc.).

A significant component of M. Dzyndra's work is the portrait “plastic-associative” interpretations of human characters and types: in various aesthetic modalities, a range of cubist and bionic forms, most intensively in 1972–1973.

The combination of individual works into cycles, marked by the sequential development of themes, and the elaboration of masterful semantic-axial connections (such as “Cave Man” – “Lovers” – “Family”) draws attention. Significant are the “invocations” by Dzyndra's “plastic-associative” sculptures of the natural environment and the completeness of revealing aspects of the images within it.

Dominant in the master's work from 1967/68 to 1974 are inspirations from O. Arkhypenko, reflected in the generality of forms, their artistically motivated deformation, the combination of two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality, the application of “negative space”, forms of empty space, synesthesia of plastic and color. The creative interpretations of surrealist findings by P. Picasso play a significant role in shaping the artistic solution of many works. Expressive parallels can be traced between the works of M. Dzyndra and K. Brancusi, J. Lipschitz, H. Moore, J. Miró. Interdisciplinary artistic influences are evident in “The Angel” (1971), “The Old Angel” (1973), “The Bandurist” (n.d.), “The Frightened Soldier” (1972). Demonstrative later variations of some thematic motifs of the “plastic-associative” period are seen in the “abstract form plastic”.

Important in the context of M. Dzyndra's creative evolution is the delineation in the creative work of the “plastic-associative” period of geometrizing, inspired by Cubism, and “bionic” types of form creation, which later develop in the “abstract form plastic” and “architectural form plastic” in the artist's work.

**The prospects for further academic studies** lie in the comprehensive exploration of Mykhailo Dzyndra's artistic oeuvre within the context of Ukrainian and global visual arts from the second half of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century.

## References

1. Boichuk. B. (1973). *Lis skulptur Mykhaila Dzyndry*. [Forest of sculptures of Mykhailo Dzyndra]. Svoboda. No 192. [in Ukrainian].
2. Dzyndra S. (2021). *Dovha doroha dodomu* [Long way home]. Lviv : Prostir-M, Ill. 84. [in Ukrainian].
3. Zakalska Ya. O. (2022). *Obraz tsyhana v ukrainskomu folklori : konstantnist plastychnist* [The portrayal of the Gypsy in Ukrainian folklore : constancy plasticity]. Akademichni studii. Serii «Humanitarni nauky», Edit. 2. [in Ukrainian].
4. Mysiuha B. (2001). *Skulptura Mykhaila Dzyndry : katalog-monohrafiia* [Sculpture of Mykhailo Dzyndra : catalog-monography]. Lviv : Vyd-vo «Lileia-NV». [in Ukrainian].
5. Novozhenets H. (2015). *Obrazotvorche mystetstvo ukrainskoi diaspory 1940–1970 rokiv : polivariantnist khudozhnoho dosvidu* [Fine arts of the Ukrainian diaspora 1940–1970 : the diversity of artistic experience]. Lviv : Vyd-vo «Kalvariia». [in Ukrainian].
6. Osadcha O. A. (2020). *Reprezentatsiia khrystianskoi tradytsii v ukrainskomu mystetstvi druhoi polovyny XX – pochatku XXI stolittia* [Representation of the Christian tradition in Ukrainian art from the 2nd half of 20th to beginning of 21st century] : dys. ... kand. mystetstvovoznavstva. 17.00.05 – «Obrazotvorche mystetstvo». Lvivska natsionalna akademiia mystetstv MON Ukrainy. Lviv. [in Ukrainian].
7. Pulariia T.V. (2011). *Zhinochyi arkhetyv u mifopoetychnii tradytsii ukrainskoi kultury* [The female archetype in the mythopoetic tradition of Ukrainian culture] : avtoref. dys. ... kand. kulturolohii. 26.00.01 – teoriia ta istoriia kultury. Tavriiskyi natsionalnyi universytet imeni V. I. Vernadskoho. Simferopol. [in Ukrainian].
8. Solovii Yu. (1983). *Budte znaiomi : Mykhailo Dzyndra. Pro rechi bilshi, nizh zori* [Be acquainted : Mykhailo Dzyndra. About things bigger than the stars]. Suchasnist. Munich. [in Ukrainian].
9. Fedyshyn I. (1972). *Skulptor Mykhailo Dzyndra* [Sculptor Mykhailo Dzyndra]. Suchasnist [in Ukrainian].
10. Shymchuk Ye. (1995). *Skulptura Mykhaila Dzyndry : katalog tvoriv vystavky v Lvivskii kartynnii halerei* [The sculpture of Mykhailo Dzyndra : catalog of works exhibited at the Lviv Art Gallery (April – May 1995)]. Vydavnytstvo «Shliakh Peremohy». Florida – Lviv. [in Ukrainian].