

Natalia Shestakova works in a direction close to symbolism, realizing the possibility of revealing ideas at several levels of interpretation. Her work also includes humanistic ideas regarding the existence of mankind and its relationship with the outside world.

In art, a symbol is interpreted as a universal aesthetic category, revealed through comparison with adjacent categories of the artistic image on the one hand, and sign and allegory on the other. In a broad sense, it can be said that a symbol is an image taken in the aspect of its significance and that it is a sign endowed with all the organic and inexhaustible polysemy of the image.

Each symbol is an image. But the category of the symbol indicates the image appearance beyond its limit, the presence of some meaning inseparably merged with the image. The objective image and the deep meaning appear in the symbol structure as two poles, while unthinkable however one without the other, they are yet "split" from each other so that the symbol is revealed in the tension between them. The principal difference between a symbol and an artistic image is the polysemy of the symbol. The symbol cannot be deciphered by the efforts of rational reasoning: at the deepest level it is dark and not accessible for the complete interpretation.

The symbol is a window to infinity. The movement and the semantic nuances create the incomprehension and mystery of the symbol. When the image expresses a single phenomenon, then the symbol is fraught with a number of meanings - sometimes multidirectional.

With respect to the attribution of meaning, many cognitive processes play a role, such as interpretation, retrieval from memory, and associations. In a symbolist artwork, there is always a single, coherent idea that ties up all the strange symbols in one painting.

The multiplicity of the symbol goes back to the idea of the interpenetration of several plans of being. The multi-layered symbol and its unlocked polysemy based on the mythological, religious, philosophical and aesthetic ideas about surrealism, incomprehensible in its essence. As the symbolist poet Jean Moréas wrote, the pictures of nature, human behavior, and all the phenomena of life are significant for the art of symbols not by themselves, but only as intangible reflections of the original ideas

pointing to their secret affinity with them.