

# Mascarons in the Architecture of the Late Lviv Secession in 1908-1914 in Ukraine: Ideas and Manifestations

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## Abstract

This study explores the impact of leading European architectural trends on Lviv's architecture during the early 20th century. Lviv, as part of the Habsburg Empire, experienced the powerful influence of Vienna, which led to the emergence of a local variant of modernism known as Secession. The purpose of the study is to examine the changes that occurred in the plastic solution of Lviv mascarons after 1908 within the context of the Lviv Secession. The study aims to understand the impact of leading European architectural trends, particularly the Secession movement, on the architecture of Lviv during the early 20th century.

The research employed scientific methods of studying artistic phenomena. These are systematic analysis, iconological, semiotic, hermeneutics, comparative-historical methods, synthesis method, as well as iconographic, structural-typological, and formal methods. Lviv "rational" Secession changed the plastic language of the architectural decor and limited its use on the facade, which certainly influenced such an element of architectural-decorative plastic of Lviv as mascaron. Within the framework of the study, a comparative analysis of the figurative-plastic peculiarities of the main typological groups of mascarons "ornamental" and "rational" stages of the Lviv Secession are carried out.

It reveals that the search for originality has appeared in the formation of a new typological group of Lviv mascarons, which was not present in the architecture of the city of previous historical styles. This paper concludes that the masks (mascarons) found in Lviv architecture at the beginning of the 20th century were influenced by Western European styles, particularly the Secession movement. The sculptors in Lviv employed a new approach to forming plastic elements in the mascarons, imbuing them with human emotions and abstract concepts.

Keywords: mascaron, architectural decor, sculptural element, stylistic solution, plastic solution.

## Introduction

The Lviv Secession, also known as the Galician variant of Secession or Art Nouveau, is a regional adaptation of the broader European Secession movement that emerged in Lviv, a city in present-day Ukraine, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Lviv Secession incorporates elements of the international Art Nouveau style while incorporating local artistic and cultural influences. The buildings employ a diverse range of materials, including brick, stone, plaster, and ceramic tiles, creatively combined to enhance visual interest and texture. Lviv Secession buildings often have dynamic and asymmetrical forms, incorporating curved

lines, rounded corners, and irregular shapes that create a sense of movement and fluidity. Balconies, turrets, and projecting elements add depth and dimension to the structures.

Influenced by the local, folk and regional traditions, Lviv's Secession architecture reflects the cultural heritage of the region. Traditional folk patterns, motifs, and symbols are integrated into the decorative details, giving the buildings a distinctive local character. Additionally, Lviv Secession architecture strives to harmonize with Nature by incorporating elements that connect the structures with their surroundings. This includes balconies adorned with flowers and plants, as well as motifs inspired by natural forms like leaves, vines, and animals (Doszhan, 2023).

Symbolism and allegory play a significant role in Lviv Secession architecture, with sculptures, reliefs, and decorative elements often representing philosophical, national, and cultural themes. These can depict mythological figures, historical events, or local folklore (Ivashko et al., 2021; Adelchanov et al., 2016). The combination of these features creates a unique architectural style that is visually captivating and deeply rooted in the artistic and cultural traditions of Lviv. The facades of Lviv Secession buildings are highly ornamental, featuring intricate stucco work, sculpture, reliefs, and floral and geometric motifs. Masks or mascarons are a distinctive feature of architectural design.

Mascarons, in the context of Lviv Secession architecture are decorative elements typically found on the facades of buildings. They are sculptural representations of faces, often in the form of masks or grotesque figures. Mascarons serve both an aesthetic and symbolic purpose, adding ornamental details to architecture while also conveying meaning or evoking certain emotions. Recognizing the historical and artistic value of mascarons, efforts are being made to restore and preserve them (Romaniuk, 2019). Restoration projects aim to safeguard these architectural elements and prevent further deterioration. Additionally, photo fixation, or documenting mascarons through photography, is used to capture their original appearance and serve as a valuable resource for research and conservation purposes (Annenkov, 2022; Shults et al., 2023). The state of mascarons in Lviv's Secession architecture highlights the need for ongoing preservation efforts to protect these unique and culturally significant elements. By preserving and restoring mascarons, the architectural heritage of Lviv's Secession can be celebrated and appreciated for generations to come.

The Lviv Secession—is a Galician variant of the Viennese Secession—the sculptural element of mascarons, which is a thoughtful, active, information-rich emphasis on the architectural and decorative composition of the facade of a building. The figuratively-plastic solution of a mascarons can be based on what already exists in a wide and diverse typology of masks of historical styles, or can become a subject of new ideas and stylistics. Mascarons can convey a wide spectrum of emotions, but their important feature is mood. Through them, the architecture, which is usually devoid of decor, is addressed to the outside world; the detail addresses it to the person because in decor lays a whole layer of symbols, which are subject mostly to explanation (Kazantseva and Ponkalo, 2016; Yuilin et al., 2019).

Systematization and generalization of the results of analysis of literary sources show that the secessionary architecture of Lviv became the subject of research of many Ukrainian scientists of the last decades, but mascarons as an element of architectural and decorative plastics remain outside the frames of research and were limited by separate facts and references.

The relevance of this study is emphasized by the need for a comprehensive study of the mascarons of the Lviv Secession in 1908-1914. This paper aims to trace the changes that took place in the figurative-plastic language of the Lviv mascarons in 1908-1914. The analysis of the objects of architectural-decorative late secessionary (“rational”) plastic is carried out in comparison with the experience of previous style tendencies of the “ornamental” stage of the Lviv Secession. The analysis of scientific literature devoted to the architecture of Lviv Secession allows us to allocate works, which to a greater or lesser extent, raised questions of style in architectural and decorative plastics of Lviv in 1908-1914.

## Review of Literature

Biriulov (2005) has carried out complex research on the art of Lviv secession, in particular decor and architecture. He identifies the spatiality in the development of the secessionary architecture of Lviv and analyzes the philosophical-esthetic and ideological-stylistic peculiarities of each stage. This paper attaches importance to the synthesis of art as the main form-building principle of Lviv's secessionary architecture.

Kazantseva (2010) and Ponkalo (2017) offer separate information about principles of secessionary decor application on the facades of Lviv buildings and peculiarities of its plastic language. Being the emphasis of the facade, mascarones remain sculptural elements, the plastic features of which are often connected with new artistic techniques in the sculpture of that time. Significant research on Lviv sculpture early in the 20th century, in particular architectural and decorative aspects belongs to Biriulov (2007; 2015a), Nimenko (1963), Noha (2006), and Protas (2006). They find information about philosophical-aesthetic principles of style, peculiarities of forming, and external influences, as well as detailed information about separate Lviv artists who were engaged in architectural and decorative sculpture at the beginning of the XX century. There is also valuable information on the date and authorship of a significant part of the sculptural decor of Lviv secessionary buildings.

Similarly, Romaniuk (2019) considers the Ukrainian interpretation of Art Nouveau in a global context, of which, one of the inspirations is the architecture of Secession. She notes that this style has its own expressive and morphological system, covering a significant number of socially significant types of buildings. Thanks to the more modern development of architecture, examples of Lviv mascarones can acquire a more modern interpretation.

Kukil (2021) considers women's mascarons to be the more popular architecture of the Lviv Secession. However, certain vital factors have influenced the predominance of new female images in the mascarons. These include the dream of a harmonious world, conditioned by the results of technological progress and urbanization, the inspired ideas of women's emancipation in the early twentieth century, and the cyclical concept of the inexhaustibility of human life (Muhadiev et al., 2020).

Within the framework of the late Lviv Secession, there was a stylistic transformation of classical typological groups of mascarons, such as mythological images, anthropomorphic figures, grotesque forms, and zoomorphic representations. Moreover, a new layer of artistic images have emerged, distinct from the previous architectural styles (Ponkalo, 2017). Sculptors, with a fresh approach to forming plastic elements, incorporated human emotions and abstract concepts into the mascarons, giving them anthropomorphic features.

In general, secession in Ukraine was considered by Ivashko et al. (2021). In their opinion, this style penetrated Ukraine under the influence of Austria-Hungary (in the western regions) and Russia (in other centers). Being promising in the past, the style of Secession is still developing in Ukraine. For example, in Kyiv, based on the origins of Secession, a separate style was formed - "Secessionist Revival", which is characterized by mass spatial composition, light, color, elements of the synthesis of arts, etc.

The significance of mascarons in the architecture of the late Lviv Secession lies in their contribution to the overall artistic expression, visual appeal, and cultural identity of the city. They showcase the evolution and adaptation of European architectural influences at the local level, adding unique and expressive elements to the architectural "face" of Lviv during that time period. The study of mascarons in the late Lviv Secession provides valuable insights into the artistic developments, cultural influences, and historical significance of this distinctive architectural style in Lviv's history.

## Research Methods

To reveal this, the paper employs a documentary survey. It takes into account a number of writings of architecture, where one finds significant factual material on the date of individual samples of architectural objects in Ukraine. There are "Architecture of Lviv: Time and style. XIII-XXI century" by Biriulov (2008), "Architecture of Galicia XIX-XX centuries: Selected

materials of the international symposium” by Cherkes, Kubelik, Hofer (1996), researches by Silnyk (2008; 2010), as well as books Melnyk (2008, 2011, 2012) (Table 1).

**Table 1:** A documentary survey of the methodological basis of the study  
Source: Author

No.	Recourse	A documentary survey
1	Biriulov “Architecture of Lviv: Time and style. XIII-XXI century” (2008)	This book provided valuable insights into the architecture of Lviv throughout different time periods, including the Secession era. It likely contained information about the general characteristics and historical context of the late Lviv Secession architecture, which would be relevant to understanding the mascarons within that context.
2	Cherkes, Kubelik, Hofer “Architecture of Galicia XIX-XX centuries: Selected materials of the international symposium” (1996)	This publication offered selected materials from an international symposium, focusing on the architectural development in Galicia from the 19th to the 20th century. It likely provided information on the broader architectural trends and influences during the period of interest, which would contribute to the analysis of mascarons in Lviv Secession architecture.
3	Silnyk “Architecture of Galicia XIX-XX centuries: Selected materials of the international symposium” (2008); “Stylistic solutions of apartment buildings in Lviv of the XIX-XX centuries” (2010)	The studies conducted by Silnyk likely provided specific research and analysis related to the plastic solution of mascarons in Lviv Secession architecture. They may have explored the evolution of forms, the use of symbolism, or the contributions of specific sculptors, shedding light on the specific characteristics and developments of mascarons during the late Secession period.
4	Melnyk “Lviv streets and townhouses, walls, closets, suburbs and other features of the Royal capital city of Galicia” (2008); “Lviv City Center: all streets, squares, temples and townhouses” (2011); “Galician suburb” (2012)	The books authored by Melnyk likely contained relevant information about the architectural history and development of Lviv, potentially including details about the Secession era and its architectural features. These sources may have provided insights into the context and influences shaping the plastic solution of mascarons during that period.

These writings only touch on the topics of mascarons, emphasizing stylistic peculiarities of Lviv architecture and characteristics of separate buildings, architects, and sculptors. Among the Ukrainian research on the issue of typology and symbolism of sculptural architectural elements of Ukrainian cities, the important contributions come from the monographs Kadurina (2013; 2015), which examine the symbolism of the architectural decor of Odesa. Among various elements of the sculptural decor of Odesa facades, the paper identifies a group of mascarons and analyzes their symbolism and meaning.

The research examines mascarons on the facades of the buildings built in Lviv in the period 1908-1914. The research analyzed the plastic features of preserved Lviv secessionary masks and the photo materials of complex field research conducted by the author during 2014-2019. They were analyzed to reveal their role in the architectural compositions of the exterior. Due to the large volume of research material, transformations of figuratively-plastic solutions and symbolic loading of mascarons during different stages of development of the architecture of Lviv Secession could be mapped. The research employed scientific methods of studying the artistic phenomena. Systematic analysis involved breaking down complex elements into smaller components to understand their interrelationships and patterns. It facilitated a comprehensive examination of the artistic elements, including the plastic solution of Lviv mascarons. The iconological method focused on interpreting symbols and iconography to uncover underlying meanings and cultural contexts associated with the artistic elements under investigation.

The semiotical method studied signs, symbols, and their interpretation to analyze the visual language and symbolism used in the architectural decor, including mascarons. It aimed to understand their intended messages or representations. Hermeneutics employed an interpretive method to uncover the deeper meanings and intentions behind artistic works. It involved considering cultural, historical, and contextual factors to provide a holistic understanding of the artistic phenomena.

The comparative-historical method compared different historical periods and contexts to identify similarities, differences, and patterns. It allowed for exploring the influences and developments of Lviv Secession architecture within a broader historical and artistic framework. The synthesis method involved combining different sources and perspectives to create a comprehensive and coherent analysis. It integrated various aspects of the research, such as the evolution of forms, the influence of European trends, and the contributions of specific sculptors like Kurchynskyi.

The iconographic, structural-typological, and formal methods focused on analyzing visual elements, forms, and structures present in artistic works. They assisted in understanding the formal qualities, typological characteristics, and visual compositions of the mascarons and other architectural elements.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Appearance and characteristic features of the Lviv Secession from the late XIX to the early XX centuries**

The emergence of a new style—Secession—contributed to the considerable acceleration of economic and cultural development of Lviv at the change of the XIX-XX centuries. It was driven by the increase in population, urban processes, the emergence of new technologies, and reinforced concrete structures. They led to the revival of the artistic life of Lviv as a political and administrative center of the province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These factors became the basis for the appearance in Lviv architecture of a significant number of new buildings, made in secessionary styles. Being under imperial influence, Lviv's architecture mirrored close to the Vienna trend of art. However, according to sources studying the history of architecture of that time, the Lviv Secession brushed aside the “blind” investigation and declared itself to be a unique phenomenon (Noha, 2006; Silnyk, 2008). It was based not only on European trends but also on the local level, on the principles of formative and adapted the leading rationalistic ideas. This helped local architects, in particular graduates of the Lviv Polytechnic School, to create unique works of their own variant of modern (Biriulov, 2005; Bantsekova, 2007).

During its existence, Lviv's Secession passed several stages of its development. For the first “ornamental” stage of the new style (1897-1907), the variety of plant decor on the facade was characteristic, the great value was the ornamental beauty of functional useful details. Rethinking the heritage of neo-baroque, searching for inspiration in natural motives, and fascination with fairy-tale female mascarons is important components of sculptural plastics of “ornamental” Lviv Secession (Biriulov, 2005). Since then, the “floral” Secession began to lose its relevance and popularity as a style. In 1908-1914, there was a shift in architectural style from the richly detailed “ornamental” Secession to the clear geometric style of the late Secession—“rational”. Thus, after 1908, there is a relaxation of the ornament's fascination, but plastic emphasizes, in particular, such as mascarons, keep their relevance. The external forms of the buildings more clearly revealed tectonic, simple lines, clear contours, and clear geometrical volumes. The presence of sculptural inserts, in particular masks, significantly “softens” the architecture of this style. The decor of the buildings of 1908-1914 changed, and acquired angularity, geometry, and laconism (Biriulov, 2005; Bantsekova, 2008).

The architectural styles of the Lviv Secession include buildings made in the style of modernized late XIX century neo-styles or, so-called, “post-historicism” (Biriulov, 2005; Kazantseva, 2010). Free interpretation of architectural elements of neoclassical and neo-Gothic was often combined on the facades of Lviv buildings of 1910 with the characteristic plastic language of the masks of late Secession.

The sharp change of the figuratively-plastic solution of mascarons at different stages of development of Lviv Secession allows us to easily define styles of the architectural objects, even if it goes beyond the time frames of its style. The artists-innovators of the “rational” stage took as the basis the synthesis of art, and perception of the construction as an integral organism, but completely changed the approach to the plastic and symbolic solution of the artistic images of mascarons in 1908-1914. Synthesis of architecture and mascarons in the exteriors were agreed upon at the stage of the design of the buildings. It envisages not any combination, but an organic combination, the components of which, possessing a certain degree of relative independence, acquire a new, special artistic value, subordinated to the general idea of an architectural object (Oborska, 2009; Sabyrhanova and Bajzhanova, 2011).

Symbiosis of archaism and innovation, influences of the East, and Ancient Greece have created a new authentic style, not like all the previous ones. The stormy, restrained, and elegant architecture has varied and has completed the buildings of the central part of the city. This has largely influenced the figurative-plastic solutions of the mascarons. In Lviv, secessionary buildings, in the decor of which there are mascarons, occur even before the end of 1920. The desire to achieve a new style of expression by combining the classical tradition with the new (modern) in the buildings of 1908-1914 was the basis of the creative Art Deco style method, which received its final form after the First World War (Bantsekova, 2007). Due to the peculiarities of the plastic solution of the explored mascarons, it takes them to the styles of the early Art Deco (“proto Art Deco”) as one of the variants of late Secession.

The changes and transformations that took place in Lviv architecture after 1908 have significantly influenced the general characteristic of the mascarons. The stylization of plastic masses (decorative emphasises) has been combined with the area of composite solutions of the exterior. In the sculpture of the first third of the XX century with modern, was synthesized neoimpressionism, which has expanded the scale of plastic means of expression. Attention to decorative light-and-dark effects of the surface has grown (Protas, 2006). Techniques of the stylization of mascarons of the “rational” phase of Secession resemble an African sculpture, which is very different from the mascarons of the “ornamental” stage, with their physiologically accurate modeling of fairy women’s faces (Biriulov, 2005; Kazantseva, 2010). The mimic expression and mood of masks, which was reflected in theatrical performances of feelings, has increased. The Western European idea of creating a new style as a contraposition of the experience of all previous epochs mark not only the search for new architectural ideas but also the formation of new artistic images of mascarons, which did not occur in the architecture of previous styles (Skochylov, 2000). The architect, cares about the decorative composition of the exterior, has not only been concerned with the general perception of the architectural object but also about the beauty of each individual element of the facade. That is, the artistic-plastic solution of mascarons of different typological groups is consistent with the esthetic senses of the respective epoch, stylish directions in architecture.

At the beginning of the XX century, the catalyst was the artist’s mind. The emotional-image genesis of plastics in 1908-1914 was opened in symbolic meaning and in the relaxed, schematic modeling of the volumes of mascarons, which embody certain emotional states or abstract concepts. However, the rethinking in the spirit of the new style also received other typological groups of mascarons, which occur in the architecture of Lviv from Renaissance to Secession including.

The following typological groups of mascarons are typical for Lviv architectural and decorative plastics. There are images of gods and demigods of ancient mythology, anthropomorphic masquerades, various variants of the grotesque, including teratomorphic images and Greenman masquerades and zoomorphic masquerades. First of all, their figurative and plastic solution is marked by the architectural style to which the building belonged. The plot material of ancient legends and myths with their images turned out to be universal, international, timeless for the fine art of European countries of the New Age. This trend did not escape the architecture of Lviv at the beginning of the 20th century. New features, new aesthetics, the search for a new plastic expressiveness – in Lviv secession masquerades. If the masks of the “ornamental” stage are characterized by physiologically accurate modeling of the

face, combined with a fantastic (often supplemented with plant motifs) pictorial-plastic solution, then the typological group of mythological masquerades of the “rational” Secession is characterized by laconicism. and the simplification of forms characteristic of the plastic of Archaic Greece, Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1:** a) Faun Mascaroon of the “ornamental” stage of Lviv Secession, Svobody Ave., 29, arch. J-S. Kroch; b) Faun Mascaroon of the “rational” stage of Lviv Secession, 4 M. Starytskyi Str., arch. A. Zakharevych, sc. Z. Kurchynskyi, 1911  
Source: Author.

#### **Appearance and characteristic features of the Lviv Secession from the 1908-1914 years**

At the stage of late Secession, an anthropomorphic group of mascarons has also been also modified. The favorite motive of the “ornamental” stage of the Lviv Secession is women’s mascarons with wavy hair, which is often covered by the motives of local flora (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2:** Women’s mascaroon of the Lviv “ornamental” Secession, 34 Zamarstynivska Str., arch. A. Shlieien, 1909  
Source: Author.

As well fairy-tale images of the mermaid or the demonic modernized Gorgon – at the change of the secessionary style were limited to generalized, schematic plastic interpretations of human faces on the facade of architectural objects 1908-1914 (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3:** Women's mascaroon of the Lviv "rational" Secession, 26 J. Golovatskyi Str., 1910  
Source: created by the author.

The changes that took place in the plastic forming of mascarons of different stages of the new style are very well traced to the example of a group of teratomorphic masks. Expressive, fairy-tale masks of "ornamental" Secession, with active, dynamic plastic face, which often flanks flower-plant motives (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4:** Grotesque mascaroon of the "ornamental" stage of Lviv Secession, 89 I. Franko Str., arch. project of A. Bogokhval'skyi, 1905-1906  
Source: created by the author.



On the late “rational” stage of style, mascarons become geometrical and schematic plastic emphasizes of the facades (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5:** Teratomorphic mascaroon of the “rational” stage of Lviv Secession, 14 Brativ Rohatyntsiiv Str., 1910

Source: Author.

Symbolism and traditions have influenced the popularity of these or those animal images in Lviv architecture. Instead of the lions with plant motives of the above-mentioned “ornamental” stage, which hold in the teeth of the ring, come schematized, in the spirit of plastic art Archaic zoomorphic mascarons (Fig. 6).



**Fig. 6:** a) Mascaroon of lioness of the Lviv “ornamental” Secession, Gorodotska Street, 45, arch. I. Viniash, 1907; b) Mascaroon of lioness of the Lviv “rational” Sécession, 18A I. Ogienko Str., arch. company Z. Kendzersbkogo, sc. F.-T. Biernat, 1909

Source: Author.

### Comparative Analysis

Based on comparative analysis, it is possible to conclude changes in approaches to the plastic solution of different typological groups of mascarons. However, the period of “rational” secession also crystallized a typological group of masks, which did not occur in the architecture of Lviv of previous historical periods. A new approach to the interpretation of the grotesque in the form of a plastic mask is the main mass of the mascarons of the late Secession.

Most often mascarons of the period 1908-1914 are schematically interpreted faces, which show certain emotional states and are completely devoid of portrait traits; thus, they are similar to theatrical masks. In combination with another sculptural decor on the facade of their original interpretation is well synthesized with the characteristic features of the architecture of mature Modern in Lviv.

In general, symbolism and allegory are characteristic of mascarons. In Lviv's classical and eclectic architecture, mascarons acted mostly as symbols of the facade. The basis of their artistic images has been formed in the far past. In the first years of the XX century. They have been replenished with new fantasy female faces, which are rooted in folklore and legends. At the end of the first decade of the XX century, sculptors one more time transformed the plastic of mascarons and made the transition from the symbol to the allegory – an image of an abstract idea in the form of an artistic image.

That is, with the help of decorative masks began to depict (personalize) abstract concepts and human emotions. External manifestations and features of these masks borrow from the sense laid in these concepts. The sense of allegory, unlike the multi-meaning symbol, is unambiguous and separated from the image (Almazov, 2012). Rejection of history and traditions and the search for new artistic and symbolic means of mascarons in 1908-1914, led to the fact that a person with their vital needs, emotions, and perception becomes a turning point (Kadurina, 2013; Serubayeva et al., 2015). Thus, the plastic language of Lviv mascarons of the late Secession style and early Art Deco is based on the embodiment of human emotions. Disappears multiple duplications of the same mask on the facade. In this case, the mascarons remain expressive and original.

### **Creativity of Zigmund Kurchynskyi One of the brightest creators of plastic 1908-1914**

In the period from 1900 to 1914, the show of subjective creative start is increasing in Lviv sculpture. This stage of development of the architectural Modern of Lviv was connected and was based first of all on bright professional personalities, who mastered and realized in their creativity the newest esthetics. Among the Lviv sculptors who took part in the creation of mascarons in the stylist of the late Secession, were the following:

1. F.-T. Biernat (1879 - after 1939).
2. M. Makovych (1862-1920), S. Dets (1872 - after 1939).
3. Y. Delkevych (1874 - after 1931).
4. J. Raichert-Tot (1895 - 1986).

The courage of innovation with the acquisition of a new European language and the development of its own was distinguished by the creativity of Kurchynskyi (1886-1954). He was one of the first among the Lviv sculptors who applied to the stylistics of late Modern and Art Deco. During 1908-1914, the sculptor decorated with mascarons a large number of new buildings in Lviv, reaching harmony of the tectonic connection of their masks with architecture (Biriulov, 2005; 2015b).

Z. Kurchynskyi graduated from the Department of Decorative Sculpture of Lviv School of Art and Design of Krakow Academy. He was trained in P. Trubetskyi, and in the workshop O. Rodena worked as a stone mason. He spent a lot of time in the Louvre, especially drawing attention to the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Greek Archaic. According to Biriulov (2015b) in the period between 1908 and 1914, Kurchynskyi was under the influence of Modern, Symbolism and Impressionism, stylization of the Greek Archaic in the style of E.-A. Burdel. Later, he moved from a pictorial and decorative interpretation of sculptural material to laconism and structural form and neoclassicism. The author of plastic decor has organically combined his artistic idea with the objects of architecture, reaching the indissoluble combination of the two arts. His masks do not get lost on the facade due to sufficient height of relief, the silhouette's clarity, and the rough and smooth stroke. The sculptor made his recognizable manner. The plastic language of expressive, geometrical masks of Kurchynskyi is made by dynamic contour and is characterized by a picturesque processed texture with active light-dark effects.

In the plastic solution of mascarons, this paper focuses on the reflection of the human psyche. That is, his mascarons express human emotions, not “immortal” mythological symbols. The image of the human face is the best basis for the expression through this sculptural form of a wide spectrum of human feelings. Thus, the mascarons of Kurchynskyi authorship are different from the teratomorphic group of masks, which in their basis play the role of apotropees. Here the attention is paid to the person as an individual and to their internal world, emotions, and feelings, which the sculptor turns into physical expression. Each emotion is characterized by physiological qualities expressed in a mimic. That is, positive or negative reactions to external and internal irritants are manifested by expression, which in most cases can be transmitted using sculptural plastic. It is important that among all Lviv architects of the beginning of the XX century, only Kurchynskyi has chosen such an extraordinary theme for the display of his creative vision.

The group of masks in 1908-1914 can be seen as sharp exaggerated, and hyperbolic, which is one of the main features of the grotesque derived from theatrical mascarons. Theatrical mascarons, have been borrowed by architects from theatrical art, for centuries to decorate the facades of many European buildings. Unlike ancient faces of ancient gods, theatrical mascarons are not connected with ancient myths or complicated attributes. A bright example of this type of mask is a mascarons above the portal entrance to a residential house on 14 P. Doroshenko Str. (arch. project. H. Salver, sc. Z. Kurchynskyi, 1911-1912) (Fig. 7). For the decoration of this building Kurchynskyi created a classic tragic theatrical mask, which is symmetrically decorated with ribbons and garlands of flowers and fruits. Usually, mascarons reflecting emotions are found on the facades of Lviv buildings in 1908-1914 in the form of polyptych, which is a complex of masks of different emotional states, made in the same manner and completely devoid of portrait details.



**Fig. 7:** Theatrical mascarons, 14 P. Doroshenko Str., arch. project. H. Salver, sc. Z. Kurchynskyi, 1911-1912

Source: Author.

Among the buildings decorated with masks of the sculptor are a house on the 7 Valova Str. (arch. Zakharevych, 1908-1910) (Fig. 8).



**Fig. 8:** Mascarons which reflects the artistic image of “Satiety”, 7 Valova Str., arch. A. Zakharevych, sc. Z. Kurchynskyi, 1908-1910  
Source: created by the author.

Mascarons of Kurchynskyi here symbolize Satiety (raised upper lip of the mask in combination with wrinkled expression of the face) and Neglect (Pride) (raised the corner of lips on one side, crushed eyes) (Jackiw, 1910). Pride is symbolized neglect, satiety, despair, astonishment, and irony (Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9:** Mascarons which reflects the artistic image of “Pride”, 3 M. Copernic Str., arch. A. Zakharevych, sc. Z. Kurchynskyi, 1908-1910  
Source: created by the author.

Kurchynskyi also took part in the creation of grotesque, generalized images-mascarons (Fig. 10). Since there is no information about the author’s meaning laid in the images of these masks, by the peculiarities of the emotional-plastic solution it can be assumed that these are

symbolic artistic images of various emotional states of a person, such as harmony, astonishment, pride, irony, envy, etc.



**Fig. 10:** Mascaron, which reflects the artistic image of “Despair”, 33 I. Franko Str., arch. A. Opolskyi, 1913  
Source: Author

These anthropomorphic mascarons are close to grotesque interpretations of ornithomorphic mascarons, with expressed emotions and a picturesque game of light-dark (Fig. 11). In this architectural object Kurchynskyi stepped away from the anthropomorphic image of the physical expression of emotions and at the same time, they kept the key aspects of his approach to the figurative-plastic solution of mascarons.



**Fig. 11:** Mascaron, 13 Valova Str., arch. V. Minkevych and V. Derdatskiy, sc. S. Kurchynskyi, 1911-1912  
Source: Author

Summing up the analysis of the stylistics of mascarons performed by Kurchynskyi on the facades of houses from 1908-1914, one can confidently take them to the early Art Deco. This kind of plastic experiment is one of the leading sculptors of the beginning of the XX century ending the transition of architectural forms of late Secession to moderate functionalism. Today, the problem of the preservation of authentic Lviv session mascarons in the original integral architectural and decorative compositions of facades is topical. In order to determine

the state of preservation of the mascarons of Lviv during the investigation period, there were conducted on-site surveys of the buildings constructed in the period 1908-1914, as a result of which changes were revealed, which took place during the XX – beginning of XXI centuries. Despite the fact that these buildings create a background construction of the central part of the city, some of the mascarons are already lost, and others disappear together with the destruction of buildings (Fig. 12).



**Fig. 12.** Damaged mascaron, 20-22 acad. Hnatiuk Str., arch. R. Felinskyi, with the participation of F. Kessler, sc. Z. Kurchynskyi, 1910  
Source: created by the author.

### **The influence of the use of Lviv Secession mascarons**

Historically, mascarons have served several purposes. In ancient architecture, they were used as decorative elements, often depicting mythological figures or symbolic representations. They were believed to ward off evil spirits and bring good fortune to the building and its occupants. In medieval and Renaissance architecture, mascarons were incorporated into buildings as ornamental features, displaying a range of expressions and characters.

Culturally, mascarons reflect the artistic and aesthetic preferences of their time. They embody the evolving tastes, beliefs, and cultural values of the societies in which they were created. They provide insights into the symbolism, mythologies, and narratives that were significant to the people of that era. By studying mascarons, we can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which they were conceived.

Mascarons also reflect the artistic and stylistic trends of their respective time periods. In the context of European architectural history, they can be seen as markers of artistic expression, reflecting the prevailing aesthetic values and design principles of different eras. For instance, during the Renaissance, mascarons were influenced by classical motifs, while in the Baroque period, they became more elaborate and ornate.

Furthermore, mascarons contribute to the wider architectural history by showcasing the technical and artistic skills of craftsmen and sculptors. They represent the mastery of various sculptural techniques and highlight the creativity and innovation of architects and artists. The evolution of mascarons reflects the broader shifts in architectural styles, materials, and construction methods over time.

In summary, mascarons hold historical and cultural significance as they contribute to the visual narrative of European architectural history. They provide insights into the beliefs, aesthetics, and craftsmanship of different periods, serving as important cultural artifacts that connect us to the past and enrich our understanding of architectural traditions.

The status of preservation of facade decor of buildings of Lviv beginning in the XX century due to short-term construction materials, natural conditions, random rebuilding, and reconstruction is half-ruined. Damage to masks is the result of the systematic action of moisture, seasonal freezing, and melting, the weathering of surface (Linda and Pekarchuk, 2015; Babak et al., 2021). This is especially true for the secessionary heritage of Lviv. Destruction of the Lviv mascarons caused not only the loss of the original appearance and artistic idea of the facade of the architectural object, but also the disappearance of a part of the primary features of the previous epoch and architectural styles of the past. The rare beauty and uniqueness of these authentic elements of the Lviv architectural environment should be understood as non-ordinary value, as evidence of the city's involvement in the European cultural process (Skibitska, 2011; Habrel and Habrel, 2022).

In Lviv and the surrounding region, the incorporation of mascarons in the late Secession architecture contributed to the city's unique architectural identity. The expressive and dynamic nature of the mascarons, with their incorporation of human emotions and abstract concepts, introduced a new level of artistic expression. This innovative approach to forming plastic elements and the emphasis on emotional expression left a mark on the subsequent architectural styles that emerged in the region. The incorporation of mascarons in the late Lviv Secession period showcased the capacity for artistic experimentation and the reimagining of architectural ornamentation. The expressive and unique qualities of the mascarons became a source of inspiration for subsequent architectural styles, both in the Lviv region and in other parts of Europe.

Today, the legacy of the late Lviv Secession and its mascarons can still be observed in the architectural fabric of the region. The distinct artistic language and emphasis on expressive ornamentation continue to shape the architectural landscape of Lviv and serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary architects. Additionally, the influence of the late Lviv Secession and its mascarons can be seen in the preservation and the restoration efforts aimed at safeguarding the architectural heritage of the region. The lack of funds to finance restoration of all architectural objects of Lviv at the beginning of the XX century causes the primary necessity of detailed study, analysis, and photo fixation of the Lviv mascarons of the mentioned period, which in turn justifies this research.

## Conclusions

Therefore, this study concludes that the masks of Lviv from the early 20th century were created with a figuratively-plastic approach influenced by Western European styles. However, the artists in Lviv not only adopted these new tendencies but also reinterpreted them at the local level. Within the architectural styles of the late Lviv Secession, known as the "rational" stage, there was a transformation of the classical typological groups of masks, including mythological, anthropomorphic, grotesque, and zoomorphic mascarons. This led to the emergence of a new layer of artistic images that differed from previous styles. Through a fresh approach to forming plastic elements, sculptors infused the mascarons with human emotions and abstract concepts, imbuing them with anthropomorphic features. The "rational" Secession introduced new, expressive, and emotionally vibrant masks, thereby enhancing and diversifying the architectural aesthetic of Lviv.

Geometrization, simplification, and schematism are intrinsic characteristics of the plastic language observed in masks from the period 1908-1914. These masks display a distinct interplay of light and shadow, featuring both rough and smooth lines. They are positioned freely on the facade surface, forming an integral relationship with the overall architectural form. These notable features have been modified across all typological groups of mascarons found on the facades of Lviv buildings from previous architectural styles. The mascarons of the "rational" Lviv Secession largely exemplify the creative style of one of the most brilliant plastic creators,

Kurchynskiyi. He adorned numerous newly constructed houses in Lviv between 1908 and 1914 with these masks. Unlike mere stylizations, Kurchynskiyi's mascarons represent a novelty. They are characterized by expressive qualities, dynamic contours, and theatrical use of plastic language.

One avenue for further exploration is to conduct a comparative analysis that examines masks from different architectural styles and periods preceding the rational Lviv Secession. This analysis would provide a better understanding of the unique characteristics and innovations introduced by the rational Secession, as well as the influences it drew from previous architectural styles. Additionally, research can be undertaken to assess the current state of preservation and conservation of mascarons from the rational Lviv Secession. Identifying the challenges faced in preserving these architectural elements and proposing strategies for their protection and restoration would contribute to their long-term preservation and appreciation.

By conducting further research in these areas, a more comprehensive understanding of the figuratively-plastic solution of mascarons in the Lviv Secession can be achieved. This research would provide valuable insights into the artistic innovations, cultural influences, and historical significance of this architectural period.

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