

THE FORMATION OF ETHNOCULTURAL IDENTITY IN UZBEK VISUAL ART IN THE 1960s–1980s**Mamatova Khurshida Mukhitdinovna**

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Abstract. The article analyzes the stages of development of Uzbek visual art during the 1960s–1980s, particularly the issues of searching for national identity, the dialectics of tradition and innovation, and the interaction between Eastern and Western aesthetic systems. The influence of ethnocultural dominants on artistic plastic language is examined through the works of such artists as N. Kashina, Ch. Akhmarov, R. Akhmedov, J. Umarbekov, and B. Jalolov. In addition, a comparative analysis with Kazakh, Turkmen, Tajik, and Kyrgyz schools reveals the common tendencies and distinctive features of Central Asian artists.

Keywords: Uzbek visual art, ethnocultural identity, tradition and innovation, East–West synthesis, decorativeness, monumentalism, “severe style,” miniature, portrait genre.

Introduction

The late 1950s and early 1960s became an important turning point in the history of Uzbek art. During these years, artists abandoned the rigid norms of socialist realism and increasingly turned toward national traditions and the experience of world modernism. The avant-garde explorations of the 1920s–1930s were re-actualized, and artists were faced with the task of renewing plastic language and expressing national identity. The establishment of the State Art Museum of Karakalpakstan in 1966 and the formation of its collection by I. V. Savitsky played an important role in this process. This article analyzes the stages of the formation of ethnocultural identity in Uzbek painting during the 1960s–1980s, as well as its stylistic and semantic aspects.

1. The 1960s: New Plastic Explorations and a Return to Tradition

The years 1953–1962 are characterized as the period of the “post-Stalin artistic rehabilitation.” During this period, artists gained independent creative freedom and established a relationship between national heritage and European modernism. In Uzbekistan, representatives of the older generation raised in the spirit of avant-garde aesthetics, such as O‘. Tansiqboev, N. Kashina, and N. Karakhan, warmly accepted innovations and abandoned certain stereotypes of the 1940s–1950s. In N. Kashina’s works of the 1960s, such as *Spring of Humanity* (1961), *Doppicha* (1960), and *Dance Lesson* (1958), the aspiration toward a decorative-monumental style became clearly evident. In the painting *Layli and Majnun* (1966), executed in the “Gluten” technique, the artist freely interpreted the traditions of Eastern miniature art.

Ch. Akhmarov created a distinctive style by synthesizing the traditions of Eastern miniature, monumental painting, and poetry. His works, including the portraits *Rahima* and the portrait of the poet *Zulfiya*, marked a new stage in artistic plastic expression. In R. Akhmedov’s portraits such as *Girl from Surkhandarya* and *Woman Deputy*, the use of pure local colors and the decorative interpretation of ethnographic details became important factors in revealing national character.

2. The Search for Ethnocultural Identity

The expression of ethnocultural identity in Uzbek painting proved to be more complex and multifaceted than in the Kazakh or Turkmen schools. This was due to the multilayered heritage of Uzbek art, which developed on the basis of miniature painting, folk applied art, and architectural traditions. Among the artists who turned to this heritage in the 1960s were R. Choriyev (*Bride*), B.

Babayev (Master from Rishtan), Yu. Taldikin (Bazaar), and V. Burmakin (Madonna of Boysun). In these works, flatness, local colors, and rhythmic composition expressed national characteristics in a new interpretation.

In Kazakh painting, the “artists of the sixties,” such as S. Aytbaev, A. Djusupov, and Sh. Sariev, adapted the plasticity of nomadic archaism to modern painting and created epic and mythopoetic images. In the Turkmen school, the monumental-decorative style became dominant in the works of I. Qilichev and A. Amangeldiev under the influence of carpet ornamentation and epic traditions. In Tajik painting, the works of H.

Khushvaktov, Z. Khabibullaev, and S. Qurbonov were distinguished by a lyrical-philosophical orientation and reliance on the traditions of miniature art. In the Kyrgyz school, the harmony of nature and humanity found poetic expression in the works of S. Chuykov, G. Aytiev, and A. Beyshenov.

3. The 1970s–1980s: The Synthesis of Eastern and Western Aesthetic Systems

By the 1970s, Central Asian painting had entered a new stage of development. The younger generation — B. Jalolov, J. Umarbekov, M. To‘xtayev, and A. Ikramjonov — combined elements of Renaissance European art, post-impressionism, fauvism, and cubism with local traditions in their creative work. J. Umarbekov’s works such as *Big Water* (1970) and *I Am Human* (1981) united spatial and temporal dimensions while developing the traditions of K. Petrov-Vodkin and P. Kuznetsov. In B. Jalolov’s works *We Want to Learn* and *Moment and Eternity*, the spiritual quests of humanity were reflected through monumental forms and symbolic imagery.

During this period, the works of Uzbek artists Sh. Abdurashidov, A. Mirzaev, and R. Shodiev presented traditional genre motifs (dwelling spaces, celebrations, and everyday actions) in symbolic-metaphorical interpretations concealing profound philosophical meanings. While the leading role of color was preserved, its decorative possibilities expanded further.

In Kazakh painting of these years, two tendencies emerged: the “Westernizers” (D. Aliev, E. Tulepbay, B. Tyulkiyev) and the “traditionalists” (B. Tabiev, K. Duysenbayev, T. Tog‘usbaev). The former raised issues of existential drama, urbanization, and ecological problems, whereas the latter defended ideals of traditional harmony and beauty. In Tajik painting, the connection with classical poetry and miniature poetics reached a new intellectual level in S. Qurbonov’s *In Memory of the Poet* and F. Negmatzade’s *Flight of Avicenna*.

In Kyrgyz painting, masters such as S. Aytiev (*Day, About My Father*) and A. Beyshenov (*Boy with a Bird*) offered a new interpretation of national mentality through philosophical metaphor and symbolic visual language. In their works, the “depersonalization” of forms, generalized character types, and appeal to eternal themes became a modern aesthetic expression of the nomadic worldview.

4. The Role and Evolution of the Landscape Genre

Uzbek landscape painting underwent significant changes during the 1960s–1980s. Masters such as R. Timurov, O‘. Tansiqboev, and N. Karakhan interpreted not only the beauty of nature, but also the relationship between humanity and the environment from a philosophical perspective. In the 1970s, two tendencies dominated landscape painting: the lyrical-contemplative tendency (R. Akhmedov, G. Abdurahmanov) and the narrative-contemporary tendency (Z. Inagomov, M. Saidov). The thematic range of landscape painting expanded to include views of ancient cities, industrial landscapes, and mountain and desert scenery. The decorative possibilities of color, the aspiration toward flat composition, and the use of elements of folk applied art also found expression in the landscape genre.

Conclusion

The search for ethnocultural identity in Uzbek visual art during the 1960s–1980s was a complex and multistage process. This process developed initially through the contradiction between tradition and innovation, and later through their synthesis. Uzbek artists, like their Central Asian counterparts, freely assimilated Eastern and Western aesthetic systems and harmonized them with local culture. As a result,



a distinctive artistic language of the national school was formed, combining decorativeness, monumental-epic foundations, and philosophical depth. In subsequent decades, these explorations became the basis of the art of independent Uzbekistan.

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