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ARTISTIC DIALOGUES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: UZBEK PAINTING IN THE 1970s–1980s

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Abstract

Purpose of the research: This article examines the discourse of West-East interactions in Uzbek painting of the 1970s-1980s. It explores how national identity, modernist trends, and ideological influences shaped artistic expression during this period. The study highlights the synthesis of local traditions with Western modernism and its impact on the visual language of Uzbek artists.

Research methods: The research employs discourse analysis, drawing on the theories of M. M. Bakhtin and Michel Foucault. A comparative approach is used to investigate the intersection of Soviet artistic policies, national heritage, and global artistic movements. The study also includes visual analysis of selected works, archival materials, and artist interviews.

Research results: The study reveals that Uzbek painting of the 1970s-1980s was a dynamic field of cultural negotiation. Artists reinterpreted national artistic traditions while integrating elements of European modernism, creating a distinctive visual discourse. Their works reflected evolving notions of identity and responded to ideological constraints through metaphor and symbolism.

Practical applications: The findings contribute to the broader study of post-Soviet art history and discourse analysis in visual culture. Understanding the artistic dialogue of this period provides insights into contemporary artistic developments in Uzbekistan and Central Asia, informing curatorial practices, academic research, and cross-cultural artistic collaborations.

Keywords: *discourse, painting, heritage, national identity, modernism, artistic trends, ideological influence, cultural interaction*

Introduction

The term “discourse” in modern art history serves not only as a descriptor of artistic phenomena but also as an analytical tool for exploring the relationships between culture, politics, and society. In the mid-20th century,

the study of artistic discourse gained prominence, as seen in the works of M. M. Bakhtin and postmodernist philosopher Michel Foucault (Bakhtin, 1997).

In the context of Uzbek painting, the East-West discourse reflects the dynamic

interaction between traditional artistic values and modernist influences. During the 1970s–1980s, ideological shifts within the Soviet Union allowed artists to engage in more nuanced expressions of national identity. This period saw an increasing dialogue between European modernist styles and the deep-rooted artistic traditions of Central Asia, leading to a unique form of cultural synthesis. By examining these developments, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how cultural influences shaped Uzbek painting during the late Soviet period.

Methodology

This research employs discourse analysis, drawing upon the theoretical contributions of M. M. Bakhtin and Michel Foucault. Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and carnivalization, alongside Foucault's approach to discourse as a system of power-knowledge, provide a framework for interpreting the artistic developments in Uzbek painting of the 1970s–1980s.

Additionally, this study uses a comparative approach to examine how artistic movements in Uzbekistan corresponded to broader trends in Soviet and international art. The research relies on primary sources such as archival documents, artist interviews, and formal analyses of key artworks. By integrating these methods, the study offers a well-rounded perspective on the artistic and ideological transformations of the period.

Analysis and Discussion

Theoretical Framework: Bakhtin and Foucault on Discourse

M. M. Bakhtin played a crucial role in shaping the concept of artistic discourse, emphasizing its polyphonic and dialogical nature. His theories suggest that every artistic expression exists within an ongoing dialogue with past and contemporary artistic traditions, making art a space where diverse perspectives converge (Bakhtin, 1997).

In contrast, Michel Foucault defined discourse as a system that not only shapes knowledge but also structures social power. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he argues that discourse is composed of practices that determine what is accepted as truth in a given era (Foucault, 2004). This perspective is

particularly relevant in analyzing how Uzbek painting in the 1970s–1980s interacted with Soviet ideological frameworks, highlighting how artists either conformed to or resisted these influences.

Uzbek Painting in the 1970s–1980s: A New Artistic Discourse

During this period, key themes in Uzbek painting included national identity, the reconciliation of national traditions with modernism, and the questioning of Socialist Realist canons. Scholars such as A. I. Morozov (1979), A. A. Kamensky (1985), and A. T. Yagodovskaya (1985) have analyzed these evolving artistic trends.

As ideological control weakened, artists gained greater creative freedom, leading to a resurgence of interest in national heritage and self-expression. The works of D. Umarbekov, B. Jalalov, M. Tokhtaev, A. Mirzaev, and Sh. Abdurashidov illustrate this shift, as noted in N. Akhmedova's research (Akhmedova, 2003). These artists engaged with Western modernism while preserving elements of national traditions, reflected in their use of Expressionism, Post-Impressionism, and abstraction.

A defining characteristic of this period was a non-dogmatic approach to cultural heritage. Inspired by both Western and Eastern artistic traditions, artists sought to reinterpret, rather than replicate, their influences. The realization that world art forms an interconnected system, where diverse traditions interact and enrich one another, played a key role in this transformation (Yakimovich, 1980).

Additionally, artists of the 1970s and 1980s developed thematic narratives that explored social realities, existential concerns, and historical memory. Many works from this era contained metaphorical layers that subtly critiqued official Soviet discourse while simultaneously celebrating Uzbek cultural identity. This shift not only diversified the artistic landscape of Uzbekistan but also aligned it with global artistic movements.

Conclusion

The study of Uzbek painting in the 1970s–1980s through the lens of discourse analysis provides valuable insights into the interaction of diverse cultures and the factors shaping the artistic landscape of the period.

This analysis reveals the intricate relationships between artistic practices, ideological influences, and cultural dialogue. Understanding this period of Uzbek painting is crucial for situating it within broader discussions of cultural identity and artistic evolution in the late 20th century.

This research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of artistic

discourse in Uzbekistan, demonstrating how local artists navigated the complex interplay between Soviet ideology, Western modernist currents, and Eastern artistic traditions. By positioning Uzbek painting within an international framework, this study underscores the relevance of Central Asian art in the broader global discourse of the 20th century.

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