

DOI:10.29013/EJA-24-4-101-105



COSTUME AS VISUAL EXPRESSION IN UZBEK CINEMA (1920–1980)

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Cite: *Mirraximova Sh.R. (2024). Costume as Visual Expression in Uzbek Cinema (1920–1980). European Journal of Arts 2024, No 4. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJA-24-4-101-105>*

Abstract

This article specifically examines the role of costume in the development of Uzbek cinema from 1920 to 1980. Initially, costumes borrowed elements from traditional clothing. Under socialist ideology's influence, they became more unified. Later, the history of costume in Uzbek cinema saw a return to traditional elements, now mixed with innovative design solutions. The article emphasizes that costume is not merely an element of clothing but a powerful storytelling tool capable of conveying history, traditions, and national identity. Studying costumes in Uzbek cinema opens promising areas for exploring cultural heritage and cinematography evolution.

Keywords: *Uzbek cinema, costume, film image, cultural values, social changes, traditions, identity, national heritage*

Introduction

Costume is crucial in creating cinematic images, helping actors embody characters and convey emotions, traits, and status. In the context of Uzbek cinema, the role of costume becomes especially significant, given the richness of cultural traditions and historical aspects of Uzbekistan, as well as the numerous social and cultural changes occurring within a relatively short period. Analyzing costume evolution in cinema reveals transformations in social norms, fashion trends, gender roles, and other life aspects. The study of costumes in cinematography intersects various disciplines such as fashion history, art history, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, cinematography, and contributes to each field's development (Ganieva E. R., 2021).

A costume in a movie is not just the clothes actors wear on set. It serves as a powerful tool for creating images, helping to convey the temporal and socio-cultural identity of the character, his characteristic features, status in society, and even mood. The costume can be used to enhance the drama of the scene, emphasize the film's theme, or even to create the atmosphere of a certain era or place.

Uzbek cinema is a unique phenomenon reflecting the rich heritage of culture and history of this country. The desire to preserve and promote traditional values, combined with innovations and modern trends, make Uzbek films interesting and significant for the cinematic world.

The cultural context plays a key role in the formation of Uzbek cinema. Uzbekistan, with its ancient history, rich culture, and national

traditions, is a source of inspiration for many Uzbek directors and screenwriters. The influence of traditional Uzbek art, such as folk tales, music, dance, and crafts, is evident in various aspects of Uzbek cinema, including the choice of plots, the characters, and, of course, their costumes.

The first steps: films of the 1920s and 1930s

The history of Uzbek cinematography begins on February 13, 1924, with the establishment of the Russian-Bukharian partnership “Bukhino” (“Bukhfilm”) in Bukhara,

enabling the staging of a number of oriental legends. The first film released by the partnership, “The Minaret of Death”, was shot on a grand scale – featuring luxurious props, rich interiors, traditional oriental clothes, and jewelry (Figure 1). The film divided society into furious critics and those who enjoyed watching the film at the box office. Despite the ambiguous reception of the first film in early Soviet society, in 1926, the film was sold to Finland. This was followed by a series of equally ambiguous feature films such as “Bandit”, “Duel of the Gods”, “House of Hate”, “Muslim Woman” (Figure 2).

Figure 1. *A frame from the film “The Minaret of Death”*



Figure 2. *A frame from the movie “Muslim Woman”*



In 1925, the “Uzbekgoskino” (“Uzbek state film”) trust was organized, and the “Sharq Yulduzi” (“The Star of the East”) film factory was opened, which later in 1958 became the “Uzbekfilm” film studio (Krasina O. 2020). The first films of the “Uzbekgoskino” trust were documentary, popular science-oriented, and covered the problems of the region, such as “Pakhta-Aral”, “Chadra”, “Second Wife” (Khan O. V., 2021).

From 1920 to 1930, Uzbek cinema was just emerging, and the costumes in early films often reflected traditional elements of the national Uzbek costume. These costumes were inspired by folk clothes that had deep

roots in the culture and history of Uzbekistan. They were distinguished by bright colors, embroidery, and patterns characteristic of the national style.

Early Uzbek film directors and costume designers carefully studied and adapted traditional costume elements for use in cinema. They sought to preserve authenticity and national character while adapting them to the demands of the cinematic environment. This made it possible to create costumes that were not only colorful and unique but also effectively conveyed the characters’ personalities and moods.

Socialist Realism and costumes of the 1930s and 1950s

With the advent of Soviet power in Uzbekistan, a period began when costumes in Uzbek cinema began to reflect the ideology of communism and socialist realism. The costumes became more unified and restrained, reflecting the ideals of equality and collectivism promoted by the Soviet regime.

As can be seen from the footage in the film “Klych” (“Saber”) (1934) in Figure 3,

the costumes of the characters have become an obvious tool for conveying socio-political changes. At this time, cinema became a means of propaganda, and costumes were often used to emphasize the ideological attitudes of the characters. For example, the costumes of workers and peasants symbolized labor activity and a call to collectivism, while the costumes of government representatives reflected their status and authority.



Figure 3. Footage from the feature film “Klych”

Modernization period: 1960–1970

In the 1960s and 1970s, Uzbek cinema began to reflect changes in society and fashion trends (Melikuziev I. M., 2022). The costumes of the characters have become more

modern and stylish, reflecting the influence of Western fashion and new technologies in the textile industry. Clothing has become more Europeanized, using new materials and sewing techniques (Figure 4).



Figure 4. A frame from the film “The whole mahalla is talking about it” (“Mahallada duv duv gap”, 1960)

During this period, there were significant innovations in costume design, which played an important role in creating images. Directors and costume designers began experimenting with shapes, colors, and textures to emphasize the characters' personalities and convey the emotional depth of their images. This is

especially evident in the comedy "Where are you, my Zulfiya?" ("Yor-Yor", 1964), in which the main character had to travel all over Uzbekistan before he found the girl who struck his heart. The different characters of the numerous characters are subtly played out by costumes and accessories (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Footage from the movie "Where are you, my Zulfiya?"



The Search for identity: the 1980s

In the 1980s, Uzbek cinema was going through a period of searching for identity, and costumes in films began to reflect this desire to take root in traditional values. Traditional elements of Uzbek national costume appeared in the characters' clothes, such as

embroidery, national patterns and color combinations, which helped to create authentic images. A striking example of such a return to tradition is the clothes of the characters in the film "Grandma the General" ("Suyunchi", 1982), Figure 6.

Figure 6. A frame from the movie "Grandma the General"



Simultaneously with the return to traditional costume elements, experiments with new styles and shapes also took place in the 1980s. Directors and designers used bold colors, non-standard styles and innovative tailoring techniques to create modern and original images that reflected the spirit of the times and the desire for innovation.

In modern Uzbek cinema, costumes continue to evolve and adapt to the changing demands and tastes of the audience. Development trends include a deeper study of the traditions and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, as well as experiments with new materials, styles and forms (Mirrakhimova Sh. R., 2022).

Conclusions

Costume plays a pivotal role in Uzbek cinema's evolution, reflecting cultural and fashion trends, as well as social changes. From the first steps in cinema to modern experiments, the characters' clothes helped

to create images that not only reflected the characters' personalities but also conveyed the cultural values and identity of the Uzbek people. As a means of visual expression in creating images and conveying cultural values, the costume of a film character is a key element that helps the viewer immerse themselves in the world of the film and understand its context, emotions, and message.

There are many promising areas in the field of costume and cinematography research. This includes analyzing the influence of costume on the perception of characters and plots, studying the evolution of costume throughout the history of Uzbek cinema, and examining the role of costume in the formation of cultural identity and national pride. We believe that it is necessary to continue research in these areas, as their understanding serves as a powerful means of preserving history, traditions, and national identity.

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submitted 01.06.2024;

accepted for publication 15.06.2024;

published 28.10.2024

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