



PAINTING: CENTURY TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

In the formation of the national school of painting of Uzbekistan the painting of the 1920s-1930s served as a kind of Foundation determining the trends of its development. A characteristic feature of the creative process of this time was the coexistence of various artistic styles and trends — both realistic and avant-garde. Although the study of fine art of this period is a topical problem of art criticism, many aspects of this phenomenon have not received proper coverage. An important source for studying the creative processes of that time are poorly researched or unpublished works of artists stored in museums in Uzbekistan but not introduced into scientific use.

Key words: Museum of Arts, art criticism, Oriental art, Artists of Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the State Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan stores a large number of poorly studied works by Alexander Volkov (about 50 paintings, 90 graphics), UstoMumin (more than 20), Oganestatevosyan (more than 500), Nikolai Karakhan (more than 30) and Ural Tansykbayev (more than 60 works).

Painting of the 1920s and 1930s is important in understanding the origins of the formation of the national identity of modern fine art in Uzbekistan. The unusual interpretation of the national heritage of the East the mutual influence of the traditions of the East and the West in the art of this period make it consonant with the artistic processes of our time.

In 1934, the State Museum of Oriental art (Moscow) hosted a major exhibition called "Artists of Uzbekistan". Some of the works on display at the exhibition surprised Moscow experts as the color and General artistic features were signs of the Eastern rather than Western avant-garde. "The paintings showed the influence of the European avant-garde including the Cubo-futurists — but at the same time the medieval culture of Central Asia with its monumental architecture, ornaments and the Asian sun breathed on the canvases, refracted by all the avant-garde colors" (1, p.5).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As a result of the Russian colonization of Central Asia Western culture began to penetrate the States of the region beginning in the middle of the XIX century. The first Russian artists who came here mainly painted pictures of an ethnographic everyday nature. This situation was observed at the very beginning of the twentieth century. But already in the painting of the 1920s and 1930s, we can distinguish several groups of artists who differ in style principles.

The group of A. Volkov included artists such as U. Tansykbayev, N. Karakhan, A. Podkovyrov, P. Shchegolev. Their creativity was formed on the basis of a combination of avant-garde with national traditions.

They saw the rhythm and flatness characteristic of the avant-garde in the samples of local applied art: carpets, embroidery products, colored silk fabrics.

The second group included artists N. Kashina, M. Kurzin, E. Korovai, V. Ufimtsev who chose the directions of futurism and supremacism. These trends were close to the Russian art of the 1920s. Futurists did not recognize the past and in their work did not refer to the traditions of the East. The artists of this group reflected the realities of modern Uzbekistan.

MAIN PART

There was another group of artists consisting of followers of P. Benkov who brought the trends of impressionism to the painting of Uzbekistan.

Since the mid-1920s the pressure of the Communist ideology has been increasing and artists have had to change their creative principles and approaches by checking with the authorities. The state's policy in the field of art was aimed at establishing such postulates as partisanship, collectivity and nationality. Repression began against artists who adhere to freedom of creativity. Two years before the opening of the exhibition "Artists of Uzbekistan" in Moscow on April 23, 1932 "the Decree on the restructuring of literary and artistic organizations" was adopted and the process of liquidation of various art groups, primarily avant-garde ones began. The fight against formalism was launched in the country and the above-mentioned exhibition was the last of its kind. Some of the paintings displayed at the exhibition "Artists of Uzbekistan" were left in the collection of the Moscow State Museum of the peoples of the East. These works were kept in the secondary scientific and auxiliary Fund of the Museum for many years were not exposed to the public.

Violent disputes over various trends of traditions and schools (avant-garde, impressionism, realism) which unfolded in the 1920s by the mid-1930s weakened under the ideological pressure of social realism. Due to its distance from the center Uzbekistan has become a kind of reserve for such trends and trends in the fine arts as the avant-garde and impressionism. But when the wave of struggle against formalism swept over Uzbekistan artists were forced to comply with the requirements set. And yet although they moved to the position of social realism in their works there are not only features that meet the requirements of social realism but also some features of avant-garde. The subject matter in the fine arts has changed: it has appeared story compositions related to modern times such as multi-figure works reflecting field work (cotton picking) holidays, portraits of workers and dehkans. In the genre of portraiture attention was paid not so much to the person portrayed as to the creation of a generalized image of a contemporary. In the works of many artists forced to work in line with social realism their inner sense of discontent is noticeable. In the works of A. Volkov and U. Tansykbaev tried to paint pictures in accordance with the artistic method of social realism the closeness of their work to the avant-garde in artistic form and color is noticeable.

Such paintings by Alexander Volkov as "Self-Portrait", "Mountain landscape", "Factory workers", "construction of a brick factory", "Foundry work at the Selmash plant", "Blue day" created in the 1920s-1930s but not shown until now can serve to reveal the originality of his work and deserve a separate study. The artist has been searching for his creative path for many years. In his paintings "The sound of camel bells" (1917-1924), "Camel Caravan" (1920) in the guise of heroes — Eastern people in the movement of carts and camels, the rhythm of life is clearly felt. In the composition of A. Volkov's paintings the harmonious arrangement of details (caravan, carts, musicians, etc.) is particularly highlighted. The artist working on the form and color scheme of

paintings first wrote sketches for each cycle of works again and again referring to the chosen topic. The result of creative search was the creation of such paintings as "Pomegranate teahouse" (State Tretyakov gallery Moscow, Russia), "Dance", "Evening in Bukhara" (state Museum of art of Uzbekistan). Summing up the many years of creative search that preceded the creation of these paintings A. Volkov wrote in his article that these searches laid the Foundation for achieving the individuality of his painting of artistic skill (2, p. 18).

Decorative Convention serves as the basis for Ural Tansykbayev's paintings. His works ranging from small sketches to large paintings have taken their rightful place among the exhibits of various museums. His works are considered examples of a kind of national art school of the early twentieth century. The artist's works created in the late 1920s and early 1930s indicate that he reached creative maturity and inner potential that served as the basis for further creative development of the artist. A. Tansykbayev found his own unique writing style and showed incredible creative activity. Due to many internal and external factors U. Tansykbayev quickly learned the basics of avant-garde art.

Such paintings as "Foundry works", "Factory workers" are radically different from his other works. Despite the socialist theme in these works the former painting techniques of A. Volkov are felt: bright juicy colors, flatness of style and static compositional solutions. Still Life of U. Tansykbayev "Kumgan" (1935) which is stored in the Nukus state Museum of art named after I. Savitsky belongs to a number of unique works in terms of color and artistic solutions. Although this still life resembles the works of A. Matisse, its Eastern colorfulness and symbolism is marked by the seal of the unique and incomparable style of U. Tansykbayev. The alternation in the arrangement of the opposite: a warm fire and the cold blue tones — gives it a brightness. The background is multi-colored embroidery. This kind of image is almost never found in the future of his work. The plot of "Streets of Tashkent" by U. Tansykbayev (1935) is made in two versions one of which is stored in the State Museum of arts of Uzbekistan and the second — in the Nukus state Museum of arts named After I. Savitsky. In the paintings, the street appears in different angles. The first work shows trees along the road and shows the end of the street while the second shows only part of the same street. These works are similar in color scheme: they have a common gray scale and are written in an impressionist manner.

In his works Alexander Nikolaev (UstoMumin) whose work is distinguished by a special grace harmoniously combined the features of the art of the European Renaissance of Russian iconography and Eastern philosophical views. UstoMumin drew on the deep foundations of fine art and created new traditions based on the legacy of the past. UstoMumin's work "Rowers" (from the Fund of the State Museum of arts of Uzbekistan) is painted in unusual style for his work and differs from his other works. The work is done with bright colors applied with a brush in separate broad strokes. The work is fragmentary and not fully depicted. At the bow of the boat is one standing man in a boat—three bare-chested rower. Water is shown by horizontal lines consisting of immiscible paint strokes from blue to turquoise shades. The picture is supplemented with an image of mountains and the sky. The figures of the rowers are not written graphically in the manner typical for UstoMumin but in broad spots of color. However, the arrangement of images and color scheme shows that this work belongs to the brush of UstoMumin.

Comparing the works of the above-mentioned masters makes it possible to determine the goals of creative searches of artists of that time and show the originality of their styles. These searches serve as a vivid example for contemporary artists. And Museum collections give an opportunity to take a fresh look at the work of artists of the 1920s and 1930s and understand how wide the traditions of Uzbek fine art are. But the main

thing is that these artists managed to harmoniously combine the traditions of the East and the West in their works which is very important for modern art.

Although the heyday of fine art at the beginning of the last century takes a very short period, it also has a fruitful influence on modern art. The political system of the 1930s affected not only the fine arts but also other areas of art. Despite the fact that a lot of time has passed since then the art of the beginning of the last century has changed to a certain extent its philosophical artistic, ideological, formal and other features continues to live in the work of modern artists. The appeal to the art of the beginning of the last century can be observed in the fine arts of the 1980s that is after the change of several generations.

In 1988 at the initiative of a group of artists who expressed in their works the public mood caused by the processes of reconstruction the "Association 23" was created. The members of the organization were B. Zhalolov, Zh. Umarbekov, A. Mirzaev, A. Nur, V. Akhunov, A. Turdiev, A. Sharzhanov, K. Yusupov, E. Mansurov, M. Tokhtaev, N. Shin, B. Boboiev, G. Kodirov, B. Makhkamov (Tashkent), U. Boltaboyev, Sh. Toshboev, S. Alibekov (Ferghana), A. Krikis, A. Isaev (Samarkand), M. Abdullayev, Z. Saidzhonov, R. Shodiev (Bukhara). Later the members of the Association joined by M. Smith and F. Ahmadaliev. In the Declaration adopted by the Association it was declared that schematism is a superficial reflection of the truth, etc. The text of the Declaration also noted the need to pay special attention to the creative development of the fine arts of Uzbekistan in the 1920s and 1930s. "Association 23" continued to operate until 1992. During this time, he organized and held about ten exhibitions in Tashkent and Samarkand. The works created during this period make it possible to trace the formation of plastic traditions in the fine arts. These works marked the beginning of the development of fine art in the years of independence (3, p. 14-16).

Since the 1990s, changing socio-economic conditions have led to a renewal of not only society but also the consciousness of artists. New trends in the fine arts of Uzbekistan were expressed on the one hand in the rejection of the principles of social realism, on the other hand, in increased attention to the cultural heritage and traditional culture of Uzbekistan and their interpretation. The influence of works created at the beginning of the last century on modern fine art and their connection can be seen in addition to the works of the above-mentioned painters and in the works of such artists as H. Mirzaakhmedov A. Ikromzhonov, H. Zagonov, M. Karabayev, T. Karimov, B. Ismoilov, D. Rahmankova.

Painting by A. Mirzaev " Connection of times. Images" (2004) was undoubtedly influenced by the image of a teenager in UstoMumin's "Quail lover" (1928). Next to the teenager is a modern woman. Zh. Umarbekov's painting "The Youth of Tahir and Zuhra "(2005) shows a stylistic affinity with the work of UstoMumin "The Boy in the fur hat". And in the characters of the work of Zh. Umarbekova's "Teenagers" (2005) also shows a stylistic affinity. The painting shows three teenagers holding birds in the lap of nature. The similarity of this work is most noticeable in the compositional structure and the image of the characters in this work the artist used brighter colors. In the landscapes of Zh. Umarbekov written at the beginning of his creative activity the compositional structure characteristic of the work of U. Tansykbayev and in further works-compositions characteristic of the work of A. Volkov. The stylistic and semantic meanings inherent in the works of the beginning of the last century are clearly visible in the works of today's artists. They create unique paintings through the use of new artistic means. But in the works of modern artists there are almost no paintings close to the technical skill of UstoMumin that there are no works written on paper in tempera and resembling miniature works.

An artist of any era based on his own vision and the requirements of the time is searching for the appropriate form and style. The interest in the philosophy of art in the work of artists of that time testifies to the harmony of the work of today's generation of artists with the art of the 1920s and 1930s. In the process of understanding historical and political changes and gaining national identity, artists turn to the trends of the avant-garde in the fine arts and to the aesthetics of the East in order to study the artistic heritage.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that many works created in the 1920s and 1930s and still remain unknown to the public are important evidence that in the fine arts of Uzbekistan in the 1920s, under the influence of Western modernism, Russian avant-garde, Eastern decorative art and many other trends a peculiar phenomenon called "Uzbek avant-garde" was born. The fine arts of Uzbekistan in the 1920s and 1930s, along with a harmonious combination of Western and Eastern art traditions, were influenced by the trends of realism and impressionism. On this basis a kind of local painting appeared in Uzbekistan. Due to the remoteness of Uzbekistan from the center in the 20s of the last centuries the traditions of the avant-garde and other trends continued to live in the fine arts. Despite the triumph of the canons of social realism in 1928-1929 the art of avant-garde and impressionism continued to exist almost until 1935. The traditions of the "Uzbek avant-garde" have not died out after almost a century and still have a fruitful influence on painting and graphics. They are clearly manifested in the rapidly developing process of modern art.

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