NEW SERIES
Showcasing the richness and diversity of cultural expressions around the ECO Region
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ISSUE 32, NEW SERIES, VOLUME 10, SUMMER 2023

ISSN 2008-546X
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A magical journey into the sea Türkiye's underwater museum

The National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The Thrilling Shandur Polo Festival

Majid Majidi: Iranian director with the most Crystal Simorgh wins

Chinghiz Aitmatov; Kyrgyz modern writer
ECO Heritage is a cultural quarterly which has been diligently published by the Economic Cooperation Organization Cultural Institute for numerous years. Throughout its longstanding existence, this publication has provided a platform for informative articles, essays, and reviews, covering an extensive range of thought-provoking and enlightening topics within the domains of culture, arts, and literature.

The previous editions of our cultural quarterly journal have laid a solid foundation for the launch of our new series. The journal’s commitment to promoting diverse cultural expressions has made it a sought-after resource for researchers and students alike. In this newest installment of our cultural quarterly journal, we are pleased to announce the launch of a series that explores the intricate relationship between art, culture and society. Through in-depth features, compelling essays, and engaging interviews, readers will delve into the various ways in which artistic expressions have not only reflected but also shaped social and cultural landscapes throughout history. With contributions from scholars, artists, and thinkers, this series aims to enrich readers’ understanding of the transformative power of art and culture.

The newly launched series of our cultural quarterly journal offers a myriad of unique features. The first notable feature is its diverse range of content, encompassing articles on art, literature, cinema, music, sport, and more. Moreover, it incorporates exclusive interviews with renowned personalities, giving readers an inside look into their creative processes. Lastly, the series employs a visually appealing layout that enhances the reading experience, with stunning photography and illustrations accompanying the texts.

Launching the new series of our cultural quarterly serves several objectives. Firstly, it aims to showcase a diverse range of
emerging and established artists, writers, and scholars, thereby providing a platform to amplify their voices and contributions. Additionally, this launch seeks to engage a wider audience by offering intellectually stimulating content that explores various themes within contemporary culture.

In addition to showcasing the vibrant diversity of cultures from around the ECO region which share countless commonalities, our new series of the quarterly journal aims to foster a sense of unity and understanding among the ECO member states. By exploring various art forms, literature, and historical accounts, we hope to encourage dialogue and appreciation for different cultural perspectives. This initiative reflects our commitment to promoting inclusivity and cross-cultural exchanges in our region.

In addition to featuring a diverse range of contents from various authors, our cultural journal aims to establish collaborations and partnerships with renowned organizations and institutions in order to further enhance the quality and reach of our publication. By teaming up with respected bodies in the field, we hope to foster a vibrant intellectual community and promote valuable interdisciplinary conversations that will enrich the cultural landscape.

We invite scholars, experts in their respective fields, writers, and enthusiasts from all walks of life to contribute their valuable insights and perspectives and join us as we embark on this exciting journey towards promoting deeper cross-cultural understanding and addressing regional issues through our quarterly journal. Together, let us create a meaningful impact within our Region for generations to come.
CULTURAL AUTHORITIES OF ECO REGION

Dr. Mohammad Mahdi Esmaili
Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of I.R. Iran
Mohammad Mahdi Esmaili, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was born in Kaboudar Ahang, Iran in 1975. He received a bachelor’s degree in Law from Shahid Motahari University and a Master’s degree in International Relations from School of International Relations (SIR) of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies in Tehran University. H.E. Dr. Esmaili is currently a faculty member of Law and Political Sciences Department at Tehran University and Director of Political Sociology Department of the Institute of Social Studies and research at Tehran University. He has been involved in a variety of cultural areas. Having served as the Chairman of the Iranian Administration’s Culture and Media Committee, a member of the Overhaul Working Group in the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Vice President of Cultural and Social Affairs of the Center for Strategic Studies of the Iranian President’s Office, and the Chairman of the Cultural Working Group of Isfahan Development Planning Council, he has expertise in the field of cultural planning.

H.E. Dr. Esmaili has held a number of positions in the field of public culture, including the Director of the Opinion Survey Center of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the founder of Isfahan Province Culture Camp, Vice President of Isfahan Province Public Culture Council, and a member of the Academic Board of the People’s Culture Center. He has experience in the press as a judge for the press festival, a Member of the Policy Council of Iran Newspaper, Editor-in-Chief of the Quarterly Journal of Islamic Revolutionary Studies, Editor of the Weekly Payam-e-Pajuhest, Editor of Bardasht-e-Aval magazine of the Presidential Center for Strategic Studies.

H.E. Dr. Esmaili has written four specialized books and served as the Deputy Director of Research of the Islamic Revolution Documentation Center, the Senior Advisor of the Islamic Revolution Publishers Association, and a member of the Policy-Making Council of the Martyr Andarzgoo Literary Award.

He has represented IRIB at the Art Council, served on the IRIB Music Center’s Research Council, and is a member of Iran’s Art Research Council.

In the sphere of movies and series, H.E. Dr. Esmaili has been the director general of Evaluation of Produced Programs of the Deputy of IRIB and the founder of the Media Center of the IRIB. And finally, in the field of mosques, he has been a member and secretary of the scientific committee of the 15th national prayer meeting.
Adalet Ağaoğlu;

ONE OF THE MOST PRIZED NOVELISTS OF TÜRKİYE
Adalet Ağaoğlu, as an author, a playwright, and a human rights activist, is one of the most prized novelists in Türkiye. Considered to be one of the most important living authors in Türkiye, a revered intellectual, her tightly constructed prose is a balance between a milieu of Türkiye that she knows firsthand and the broader, more humanistic elements of social life.
She has been rewarded with numerous honors besides the literary awards she won in the fields of novels, short stories, and drama.
For her perception of subtle and overt changes in modern Turkish society and her writing entitled «Modernism and Social Change», Adalet Ağaoğlu received the «Turkish Presidency Merit Award» in 1995. In 1998, Ağaoğlu received Honorary Ph.D. from Anadolu University followed by a Ph.D. of Humane Letters from the Ohio State University.
Adalet Ağaoğlu, as a writer, has always been concerned about the westernization of Türkiye. Moreover, she prefers to focus on individuals among
Adalet Ağaoğlu worked for TRT from 1951 until 1970. During this time, she wrote her first official drama script, called “Aşk Şarkısı” (Love Song), a radio play. And also, she founded “Meydan Sahnesi” (Avenue Stage), which was the first private theater in Ankara, with four drama directors, Kartal Tibet, Üner İlsever, Çetin Koroğlu, and Nur Sabuncu. The group also published the “Meydan Sahne” journal.

Ağaoğlu visited Paris in 1953 in order to gain experience in the drama business. In the same year, “Bir Piyes Yazalım” (Let’s Write a Play) that she wrote together with Sevim Uzungören was staged in Ankara. Adalet Ağaoğlu married Halim Ağaoğlu in 1954. Halim was a civil engineer and during the years 1965 to 1985 was working in various responsibilities of city planning and construction of bridges and highways, including the general secretary of Fateh Sultan Mohammad Bridge Construction Company Consortium.

She continued writing plays until she began her long fiction career in 1973, writing a dozen plays so far.
PLAYWRIGHT GOES NOVELIST

1970 was a milestone in Adalet Ağaoğlu’s life and career, as, after this date, she only worked as a writer. She left her job at TRT and began her long fiction career. Ağaoğlu turned to writing political and social novels during this period of her life. She wrote her first novel “Ölmeye Yatmak” (Lying to Death) in 1973. This is the first book of a stream novel series. “Ölmeye Yatmak” is the dramatic story of the first generation of the Turkish Republic. The novel carries many autobiographic features, in particular, the main character and her environment come directly from the life of the novelist.

Adalet Ağaoğlu’s first novel “Ölmeye Yatmak,” can also be considered her best piece, thanks to the minimalist, elegant style. Besides, the content, which is not directly influenced by Kemalist ideology, but rather by the attitudes and relationships of an environment attached to the Kemalist ideological sphere, is convincing.

Her range of styles and topics and her ability to imagine the inner lives of people, seemingly totally unlike herself, are dazzling. One of her main characters is Bayram, an unprepossessing guest worker, on the road from Germany back to his village and bringing home a honey-colored Mercedes.

In another novel, Bir Düğün Gecesi (‘A Wedding Night’), she carries on elements of her first but does so through the eyes of three completely different characters,
intellectuals of the 1970s. A later book, Ruh Üşümesi ('A Chill on the Soul'), 1987, explores through a mixture of poetic and psychological techniques the minds of a nameless man and woman who meet by accident when given the same table in a restaurant. Ağaoğlu's style is sometimes compared to that of Virginia Woolf, whom she indeed greatly admired when she came to read her works.

Eventually Ağaoğlu, who received intensive care treatment, died on 14 July 2020 due to multiple organ failure. Her body was buried in Cebeci Asri Cemetery on 15 July. After her death, Agaoğlu inspired political and social writers in Türkiye.

**SOURCES:**
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https://www.dailysabah.com/portrait/2015/01/03/adalet-agaoglu-novelist-of-the-kemalist-elite
Chingiz Aitmatov is best known as Kyrgyzstan’s most beloved author, but he represents much more than that to the Kyrgyz people today. His more than thirty novels honestly represent the Soviet experiences and the social and moral dilemmas that Central Asian people endured. He wrote about love, heroism, friendship, nature, human rights, oppression, cultural traditions, and the importance of education.

Aitmatov was also a diplomat and political figure who worked to advance education, promote Kyrgyz culture, preserve the environment, and even brought international thinkers together to abate the risk of nuclear war. Described as a “magical socialist-realist” in the Russian press, he was able to combine elements of Kyrgyz folk tales and epics with formally traditional Russian realism. The recipient of numerous literary medals, awards, and honors, in 2008, right before his passing, he was nominated for the 2008 Nobel Prize for literature. Chingiz Aitmatov’s legacy can be
seen through his novels, and the many screenplays, films, and television series based on them as well as the museums dedicated to him. In Kyrgyzstan, there are many who consider him a hero of Central Asia. Aitmatov was honored in 1963 with the Lenin Prize for “Tales of Mountains and Steppes” (a collection including “Jamila”, “First Teacher” and “Farewell Gulsary”) and was later awarded a state prize for “Farewell Gulsary”. His works is mostly based on folklore which he used in his works to describe contemporary life. Additionally, to his literary work, Chinghiz Aitmatov served as ambassador to the EU, NATO, UNESCO, and the BeNeLux countries (three neighboring states in Western Europe: Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), first in the Soviet Union and later for Kyrgyzstan. He wrote in both Kyrgyz and Russian and his works have been translated into more than 150 languages and published in 128 countries around the world with sales of more than 100 million copies.

**AITMATOV’S BIOGRAPHY**

Chingiz Torekulovich Aitmatov was born on December 12, 1928, in the village of Sheker, Kara-Buurinsky (Kirovsky) district of the Talas, in the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. (There is a house museum in the Aitmatov house in Talas where one can see some of his work and other memorabilia.) After the birth of Chingiz, the family moved to Talas city, because his father, Torokul was promoted. In 1933, Torokul Aitmatov was already the second secretary of the Kyrgyz Regional Committee. His mother a Tatar nationality woman was an actress in a local theater. The father of the future writer was arrested in September 1937 on suspicion of anti-Soviet nationalist activity and was shot on November 5, 1938.

Aitmatov lived at a time when Kyrgyzstan was being transformed from one of the lands of the Russian Empire to a Republic of the USSR. The future author studied at a Soviet school in Sheker. He also worked from an early age. At fourteen, he was an assistant to the Secretary at the Village Soviet. During the Second World War, all adult men were mobilized, and the fourteen-
year-old Chingiz was one of the most literate people in the village and took the post of secretary of the village council. After the war, the young man was able to continue his studies. He graduated with honors from the Dzhambul Zootechnical College and in 1948 entered the Kyrgyz Agricultural Institute in Frunze. He later held jobs as a tax collector, a loader, and an engineer’s assistant and continued with many other types of work.

AITMATOV’S BIOGRAPHY

The writer’s writing journey began on April 6, 1952, with the story “The Judo’s Newspaper” published in the newspaper “Komsomolets Kirgizii”. The first literary text Aitmatov wrote in Russian – one of two of his native language. After graduating from the institute in 1953, Chingiz Aitmatov, senior livestock specialist of the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Livestock, continued to write stories in Russian and Kyrgyz, publishing texts in local publications. In 1956, he decided to develop his writing skills and moved to Moscow, where he entered the Higher Literary Courses. In June 1957, Ala-Too magazine published the first story of the young writer “Face to Face”. In the same year, “Jamila” was published. This story that made the writer famous was first published in French. The writer graduated from literary courses in 1958. By the time the diploma was received, two novels and stories were published in Russian. Aitmatov’s first novel was released only in 1980, the novel “And the day lasts longer than a century”, realistic events of the life of Buranny Edigey are intertwined with the fantastic line of contact between humanity and an alien civilization. One gets the impression that understanding aliens is easier for people than agreeing among themselves. His works touches on Kyrgyzstan’s transformation from the Russian empire to a republic of the USSR and the lives of its people through the transformation. It is displayed in one of his compositions “Farewell, Gulsary”. Besides, the short story touches on the idea of friendship and loyalty between a man and his stallion, it also shows a tragic allegory of the political and USSR government. It presents the loss and grief that many Kyrgyz faced through the hero characters in the short story. Aitmatov had a special talent for combining harsh reality and fantasy, for magical realism and the achievement is all the more arresting if one has it in mind. The official artistic faith of the day, Socialist Realism, with its insistence on clear-cut pro-Soviet moralizing and flesh-and-blood characters. Among Aytmatov’s most important works
are “Trudnaya pereprava” (1956; “A Difficult Passage”), “Litsom k litsu (1957; “Face to Face”), Jamila (1958; Eng. trans. Jamilia), Pervy uchitel (1967; “The First Teacher”), “Proshchay, Gulsary! (1967; Farewell, Gulsary!), and Bely parokhod (1970; The White Ship, also published as The White Steamship). Subsequent novels, written originally in Russian, include “I dolsha veka dlitsya den (1981; The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years), which blends Central Asian folklore traditions with science fiction, as well as Plakha (1986; The Place of the Skull) and Tavro Kassandry (1995; “The Mark of Cassandra”). He also co-wrote, with “Kaltai Mukhamedzhanov”, on the novel of “Voskhozhdenie na Fudziyamu (first performed in 1973; The Ascent of Mount Fuji), a play considered provocative during the Soviet era for its examination of the themes of authority and dissent. Many of Aytmatov’s stories appear in English translation in “Piebald Dog Running along the Shore”, and “Other Stories” (1989) and “Mother Earth”.

Aitmatov was the winner of numerous prizes in the Soviet Union and he always played an active part in public life. From 1964 to 1985 Aitmatov was Chairman of the Cinema Union of Kyrgyz SSR, and in 1985 he was named Chairman of the Kyrgyz Writers Union. From 1990 to 1991 he served as an advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev and in 1990 was appointed Soviet Ambassador to Luxemburg. He served as the Soviet and then Russian ambassador to Belgium from 1990 to 1993. During the 1990s, Chingiz Aitmatov was a member of Kyrgyzstan’s parliament. After independence in 1991, Aitmatov also worked as Kyrgyzstan’s ambassador to European countries Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, France, UNESCO, the European Union, and NATO.

AITMATOV’S AWARDS

Works by Aitmatov have received numerous awards, including Soviet-era accolades like “the Order of Lenin, “the Gold Olive Branch of the Mediterranean Culture Research Center”, “the Academy Award of the Japanese Institute of Oriental Philosophy”, and “the Austrian State Prize for European Literature”. He was also an academician of the “Kyrgyz National Academy” (1974) and the “Hero of Kyrgyzstan” (1997). In 2008, the writer was hospitalized from the set, where work was done on the film based on the novel “And the day lasts longer than a century”. Aitmatov was diagnosed with acute pneumonia. He was transferred to one of the clinics in Nuremberg. Chingiz Aitmatov died in Germany and is buried near the capital of Kyrgyzstan, in the historical and memorial complex of “Ata Beyit”. Aitmatov left behind a wife, three sons, and a daughter.

Chingiz Aitmatov, the writer, born December 12, 1928; died June 10, 2008

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Majid Majidi

MAJID MAJIDI IS AN IRANIAN FILM DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, AND SCREENWRITER AND ACTOR.

Born in an Iranian middle-class family, he grew up in Tehran and at the age of 14, he started acting in amateur theater groups. He then studied at the Institute of Dramatic Arts in Tehran and continued acting until 1989. In 1991, he began writing and directing. He made his first feature film in the same year and until today he has directed ten feature films, four short fiction films, three short documentaries, and one feature-length documentary.

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF MAJID MAJIDI’S ACTING
In 1983 and 1984, Majidi played in two films, “Este’aze” (Seeking Refuge) and “Do Cheshme Bisoo” (Two Blind Eyes), directed by Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Both films were released in 1985. “Este’aze” had about 100 thousand and “Two Blind Eyes” had almost 170 thousand spectators and were respectively ranked as the 53rd and 50th on the list of the most watched films of the year. In 1985, Majidi played a difficult and challenging role in the film “Boycott” directed by Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Although the film participated in the out-of-competition section of the 4th Fajr Film Festival, it was still successful in its general release in the year 1986 and could draw 2.2 million audiences to the cinema halls. The film was ranked third on the list of the most watched films of the year.

In 1986, Majid Majidi played the role of Martyr Andarzgoo in the movie “Teer baran” (volley) by Ali Asghar Shadravan, and again, because the movie was in the out-of-competition section of the 5th Fajr Film Festival, it was not judged, however, it was well received by the audience. Nearly 1.8 million spectators watched the movie and it was ranked seventh in the list of the most watched movies of the year. After a three-year hiatus, Majid Majidi acted in three movies in 1989, two of which were war movies: “Ta Marz-e Didar” (until border of meeting) directed by Hossein Ghasemi Jami, and “Dar Jostojooee Ghahreman” (In Search of a Hero) directed by Hamidreza Ashtianipour. The third film was the first and of course, the last feature film by Mohammad Kasebi, as a director called “Shena Dar Zemestan” (Swimming in Winter). All three films were...
screened in 1990, and the film “In Search of a Hero” could draw more than one million spectators to the cinemas and be ranked 15th in the list of the most watched movies of the year. “Ta Marz-e Didar” had nearly 300 thousand and “Swimming in Winter” had about 35 thousand spectators and ranked 56th and 127th respectively.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PATH

In 1991, Majid Majidi’s acting career ended and he continued to make short films and documentaries. In 1992, he made his first feature film called “Baduk” which was screened at the 10th Fajr Film Festival and was considerably admired. In fact, Majid Majidi’s first film received two honorary diplomas for the best screenplay in the main competition section and could win the Crystal Simorgh. In 1996, Majidi and Kasebi cooperated again; however, they changed roles this time. Kasebi played in Majidi’s second film called “Father” and also won the Crystal Simorgh for Best Actor at the 14th Fajr Film Festival.

The film “Father” won the Crystal Simorgh for the best film and the best supporting actress at the 14th Fajr Film Festival. In addition, Majid Majidi’s film won five international awards from Turin, Sao Paulo, San Sebastian, and Festroia film festivals. However, when the film was released in 1997, only around 70 thousand people watched it and the movie was ranked 89th in the list of the most watched films of the year. Majid Majidi’s third film, ‘Children of Heaven,’ is still considered his best after more than twenty-five years. Majid’s film was the main winner of the 15th Fajr Film Festival: “Children of Heaven” won the Crystal Simorgh for best editing and it was Majid Majidi’s 4th film award. The film won many international awards and honors, the most important of which was being among the five finalists for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film in 1998. Two years after “Children of Heaven”, Majid Majidi started making the film “The Color of Paradise”, a film centered on the blindness of a teenager and his father who was on the verge of marrying. Although “The Color of Paradise” was successful in the 17th Fajr Film Festival (1999), it could not achieve the honors similar to those of the film “Children of Heaven”. However, winning the Crystal Simorgh for Audience Choice of Best Film was the most important achievement for Majidi’s film. Majid Majidi’s film was released in 2000, drew nearly 690 thousand spectators to the cinema, and ranked 14th in the list of the most watched films of the year.
MAJIDI SHINES IN FESTIVALS

The film “Baran” by Majid Majidi was produced in 2001. It was a romantic movie with not-so-prominent actors and actresses. This time, the teenage boy and girl played the main roles. At the 19th Fajr Film Festival, “Baran” won six Crystal Simorghs and it was named the most honored film of the festival. “Baran” was displayed in cinemas in 2002 and was still not very successful. Only about 250 thousand viewers watched the movie, and it was ranked 23rd in the list of the most-watched movies of the year. Majidi did not make a feature film for four years after “Baran”. But in the meantime, he directed a documentary called “Barefoot to Herat” and also a short documentary called “Olympics in camp”. In 2013, Majidi changed his approach compared to his previous films and started making a film called “Bide Majnoon” (The Willow Tree) in which Parviz Parastui played the main role. It is about a blind middle-aged man who regains his sight and this is just the beginning of trouble for him.

“The Willow Tree” was screened at the 23rd Fajr Film Festival and was one of the most successful films of that time, along with the film “So Close, So Far” directed by Reza Mirkarimi. Majidi’s film was nominated in ten categories and could win four Crystal Simorghs, specifically for the best director and actor. “The Willow Tree” was released in Iran in the year 2006, and despite the brilliant performance of Parviz Parastui, it was not very successful in finding its audience. However, about 575 thousand spectators watched the film, and Majidi’s film ranked tenth place in the list of the most watched movies of the year. Three years later, Majid Majidi made the film “Song of the Sparrows” based on his early filmmaking experience, focusing on the role of a middle-aged man, which was again successful at the Fajr Film Festival. It was named one of the most admirable films of the 26th Fajr Film Festival, in competition with Reza Mirkarimi’s film called “As Simple as that”. Once again, Majid Majidi won the Crystal Simorgh for the best film director, and the film won the Crystal Simorgh for the best editing and soundtrack. But the most important achievement of the film “Song of the Sparrows” was at the Berlin Film Festival. Reza Naji was awarded the Silver Bear for Best Actor at the 2008 Berlin Film Festival for his role. The film was also nominated for the Silver Bear for Best Director. Reza Naji also won the best actor award from the Asia Pacific Screen Awards Ceremony and the Damascus International Film Festival for the movie “Song of the Sparrows”. The film was screened in Iranian cinemas in 2009. Nearly 300 thousand spectators watched the film “Song of the Sparrows”, and it ranked 15th place.
FINALLY, TIME TO CONQUER THE BOX OFFICE

After making the film "Song of the Sparrows", Majid Majidi was working on the film "Muhammad: The Messenger of God" for about six years from 2009. Famous and professional film crews were hired to produce the film which was finally screened in the out-of-competition section of the 33rd Fajr Film Festival on several occasions. It was the first time that a film by Majid Majidi failed to win the Simorgh. "Muhammad: The Messenger of God" was screened in Iranian cinemas on August 27, 2015, could attract more than 2.4 million spectators, and won the title of the most watched movie of the year. The film "Muhammad: The Messenger of God" was extremely successful and could find its audience. Vittorio Storaro, the cinematographer, and Majidi were nominated for awards from the Asia Pacific ceremony.

THE EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

In 2016, after producing the expensive film "Muhammad: The Messenger of God", Majid Majidi directed another teenage film, this time in India with almost prominent Indian actors and actresses: "Beyond the Clouds". "Beyond the Clouds" was his other film that produced in 2017. Majid Majidi’s return to award-winning time Majidi collaborated with Nima Javidi, who directed the acclaimed film ‘The Warden’ in 2018, to write the screenplay for the film ‘The Sun.’ It was produced in 2019 and featured participation of Ali Nassirian, Javad Ezzati, and Tannaz Tabatabaei. “The Sun” was
screened at the 38th Fajr Film Festival and Majidi’s happy memories of the festival awards came alive again. The film was nominated in ten categories and won the Crystal Simorgh for the best film, best screenplay, and best stage design.

Most importantly, Majidi’s film was among the early nominees for Oscar 2021. Since the release of the film “The Sun” coincided with the start of the coronavirus pandemic, accurate information on the number of spectators is not available. But apparently, nearly 90 thousand tickets have been sold in the online screening of the movie “The Sun”.

Majid Majidi holds the record for winning the Crystal Simorgh as the best director in Fajr Film Festival. So far, he has won Crystal Simorgh for Best Director for the films “Children of Heaven”, “Rain”, “The Willow Tree” and “Song of Sparrows”.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPRESENTING THOROUGHBRED IRANIAN AND ISLAMIC CULTURE IN CINEMA

Majidi considers Iranian cinema before the Iranian 1979 revolution to be a superficial and propaganda cinema that had no Iranian identity, culture and belief, and superficial and vulgar films that did not match Iranian culture were made in it.

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Shambala

A film on an Old Belief

DIRECTED BY
ARTYKPAI SUYUNDUKOV

Based on Chingiz Aitmatov’s novella “The White Ship”
Based on the novella ‘The White Ship’ by Chingiz Aitmatov in 1973 in the magazine ‘Noviy Mir’, when I was a second-year student at the Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. The story aroused in my empathy and emotions, as well as memories from my childhood, which somehow echo the fate of the boy. The film is thus somewhat autobiographical."

According to him, the film’s plot, compared to the book, has changed by almost 90%. The main theme – man and nature – has
been preserved, although new storylines and ideas symbolizing the spiritual conditions in Kyrgyz society have been introduced. For example, the making of a yurt is considered to be a sacred ritual of Kyrgyz culture and history. The upper frame of the yurt (tundyuk), through which the sky is visible, is a symbol of the national flag of Kyrgyzstan. The frame of the yurt is shown repeatedly during the film, making it an important symbol. It is the same with the hanging bridge over the river, where people used to walk to the mountain to make sacrifices and secret wishes.

About the lead actor, Artur Amanaliev, he commented that he was approved for the role during the auditions, just before they started filming. At his audition, he caught Suyundukov’s attention with a combination of non-childish seriousness and sadness in his eyes. What was most important for the director was the similarity between the fate of the main actor and the fate of the boy in the story itself. In real life, Artur doesn’t know his biological father and lives with his mother and stepfather. Since childhood, he has been asking his mother about his biological father. He also spent 4 years in boarding school.

Regarding Shambala’s belief in the myth of the Mother Deer, Suyundukov said: “The legend of the horned Mother Deer, who saved the last baby during the invasion of enemies and fed him with her milk, has been passed down throughout the generations. To this day, there are hundreds of thousands of descendants of the Deer People living in Kyrgyzstan. And the scene from the film where the grandfather and the boy perform a prayer
Suiundukov graduated in 1978 from the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) and worked as a film director at Kyrgyzfilm National Film Studio. He has made three feature films and over 15 documentaries. Artykpai Suiundukov also played the lead role in The Lake (2020) by Emil Atageldiev, which received a nomination for Best Film (Asian New Talent) at the Shanghai International Film Festival. Since 2000, he has been a faculty member at Kyrgyzstan Turkey University “Manas”.

Pointing out the message of the film Shambala, Suyundukov added: Every year humanity is getting poorer spiritually as people succumb to materialistic forces more and more each day. This leads to disharmony and disaster and the potential for a spiritual and physical apocalypse.

is not a set, but one of many real cemeteries with authentic deer antlers on the graves. We are extremely grateful to the world-famous American actor and philanthropist Leonardo DiCaprio who has helped to bring deer to Kyrgyzstan from other parts of the world."

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The Island

The Island Within is a 2020 Azerbaijani drama film directed by Ru Hasanov. Hasanov was born in 1987 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Works at Ministry of Culture Azerbaijan. Graduated from Bates College (USA) in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in Theater and continued his education at the Higher Courses for Screenwriters and Directors in Moscow. Edited over a dozen award-winning films. Made a full-length feature debut with “Chameleon” (co-directed with Elvin Adigozel), which competed at Locarno Film Festival’s Cineasti Del Presente section in 2013. Member of EAVE. Berlinale Talents Alumni. Co-founder of Coyote Cinema production company.

It won an award at the Festival Nouvelles Images Persanes in Vitré (France) and was selected as the Azerbaijani entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 94th Academy Awards.

Seymour Tahirbekov (Orkhan Ata) is an international chess grandmaster who wins a qualifying tournament in Paris and earns the right to challenge the reigning world champion. Trained and guided by his father Khanlar (Vidadi Hasanov), a man of grim ambition and the air of a KGB official, Seymour returns to Azerbaijan to intensify his practice for the big match, but also to be paraded around corrupt politicians for whom he is merely a tool for self-promotion. He also visits his beloved grandfather Anwar (Rafig Azimov), who tells him about a secret island where he had spent some of the best days of his life.

Opening with a black-and-white home video of a celebration of circumcision, which is instantly followed by
Seymour’s imaginary DIY ear piercing in the Paris hotel room, the film at first sets up an uncomfortable atmosphere, establishing the overarching theme of an ambitious father-intimidated son relationship within a particularly patriarchal culture. The digital home video footage shows the family gathering to celebrate the circumcision of the young Seymour. Khanlar gives a speech, hailing a “joyful day” then proceeds to oversee the procedure. “Stop crying!” he barks at the child. “Men don’t cry.” We rejoin Seymour as an adult, and it becomes clear that his father has brow-beaten pretty much everything resembling an emotion out of him. He pierces his own ear, gazing impassively at his throbbing lobe.

Seymour lets his chess playing and his father speak for him. Not that he has many choices in the matter. Tahirbekov senior (Khanlar to his friends, if he had any) is a hectoring, overbearing bully who dominates his son’s life. This study of a father-son relationship at snapping point is compellingly textured, up until the point where Seymour breaks out from under the yoke of parental expectation and hides out on a largely deserted island. There the character finds himself, but the film rather loses momentum.

A photoshoot to accompany a newspaper article titled “Seymour: A chess master for the post computer age” is temporarily derailed when Khanlar declares that the prop, a model knight chess piece, is too small and thus insufficiently masculine. Lit to deepen the displeasure that is etched into his face, Khanlar is all short fuse and self-important. A terrific shot later in the film of Khanlar scowling as he wrestles with the problem of his now missing son creates a teasing visual harmony between the geometric pattern of the sofa upholstery and Khanlar’s deeply carved frown lines.

Seymour, meanwhile, is disconnected from the world around him. His team assumes that his mind is on the game – he is a serious

The Island Within is a 2020 Azerbaijani drama film directed by Ru Hasanov. Hasanov was born in 1987 in Baku, Azerbaijan.
contender in a world chess tournament—but it's equally likely that he has just learned to tune out Khanlar's goading.

Hasanov uses color to a pleasing effect. A scene between Seymour and his elderly grandfather (Khanlar has stomped off to take care of business) drapes both in similar colored blankets, establishing kinship and explaining why his grandfather's story, of a peninsula which became an island, becomes the focus of Seymour's plans to escape. Anyway, as pressure from Khanlar and the public mounts, Seymour, who already is a shy, emotionally stunted, and repressed young man, to begin with, starts buckling under the psychological pressure. After Anwar dies, a dream-like sequence in which Seymour plays chess with a beautiful woman seems to mark a breaking point. He shaves his head, puts on a tracksuit, AC Milan jersey, and shades, and travels to the island his grandpa told him about. There, he gets close to the island's only inhabitant, an old and wise farmer, but also gets lost in his own head, his reality becoming fragmented and unreliable. Meanwhile, Khanlar and his powerful friends mount a search.

And escape he does, to a wilderness inhabited by wild horses, cows, and a man who is, if anything, even less talkative than he is. And while we cheer for Seymour's act of rebellion, the absence of the toxic frisson of Khanlar's sheer unpleasantness makes for an underpowered final act.

But not all is doom and gloom in the film: there is some of Corneliu Porumboiu's dryly humorous spirit in the hero's interactions with various side characters. On top of that, the cinematography by DoP and co-editor Orkhan Abbasoff is inviting, dominated by clean colors, including complex set-ups in interiors and beautifully capturing the wild nature of the island exteriors. In nocturnal scenes at the island, the camera reveals, to an extent, Seymour's confused inner world, while keeping his physical surroundings mysterious.

The second feature film from Azerbaijan-born Ru Hasanov (his first, Chameleon, was co-directed with Elvin Adigozel and premiered in Locarno 2013), The Island Within premiered in competition in the Sarajevo Film
The synth-heavy score by Farhad Farzali and Katya Yonder is sparsely used but remarkably evocative, and works especially well in the film’s epic closing scene, one of the strongest in this year’s fiction cinema.

Ata and Vidadi Hasanov make for an excellent tandem, with the latter initially leading the way and the former playing off of him, until their roles reverse and they eventually move into their separate paths, just like their characters do.

The Island Within is a co-production between Azerbaijan’s Coyote Cinema, Azerbaijan Film and Debut Film, and France’s Arizona Films Productions.
From Bakhshi to Modern Folk

Turkmen Folklore is most vibrantly expressed in the lively tradition of traveling orator-musicians known as bakhshi and in a variety of colorful folk songs used to recount the nuances of everyday culture in Turkmenistan.

Turkmen Bakhshi

One of the most beloved embodiments of Turkmen folklore are bakhshi, itinerant musicians and storytellers who for centuries have been revered in Turkmenistan. Bakhshis were popular among many Turkic peoples of historic medieval times, yet they played a huge role in preserving local epics and in popularizing Turkmen classical literature.

According to Islamic custom, a bakhshi wore special clothes, including a don (thick robe of cotton or wool), telpik (black or white wool hat), a white shirt, soft leather boots and wide trousers. Wherever they traveled, these orator-musicians obtained their water from wells and used their own utensils which they always carried with them. A bakhshi did not travel alone, however, but would be accompanied by an assistant who was familiar with his mentor’s habits and tastes.

A Bakhshi wandered from village to village, singing his melodies wherever he went. Before his arrival, the townspeople would prepare for their special guest by preparing food, designating a special meeting area, and considering topics of conversation for the gathering, which could attract up to two thousand people. A large carpet was unfurled, a bonfire kindled and a tablecloth spread out and laden with various sweets, fruits, chelpek (thinly sliced fried dough), and other treats. Upon arrival, the Bakhshi would begin singing at 5 or 6 in the evening and continue until 8 or 9 the next morning, taking 10-15 minutes break every two hours to drink tea and enjoy conversation with the people. Accompanied by the melodies of the double string lute called dutar that the bakhshi itself would play, its songs content with folklore legends, fairy tales and popular literary works.

The dutar is the most representative instrument of Turkmen folk music. It is used in many styles, ranging from the mukamlar...
and saltıklar to the kirklar and navoi. These are performed by professional musicians called sazanda.
The bakhshi are such important cultural figures in Turkmenistan that they are celebrated every year on Bakhshi Day, held on the second Sunday in September.

**TURKMEN FOLK SONGS**

Folk songs were once an integral part of Turkmenistan culture, with separate songs devoted to work and play. While many of these songs can still be heard, most have lost their original meaning. For example, centuries ago the Turkmen worshipped a god named Suyt Gazan, believed to provide protection and rain. Although celebratory songs which were sung to Suyt Gazan still exist, today they are played only as children’s melodies.

Turkmen folk songs are mainly comprised of romantic lyrics, with separate songs for men and women. Men’s songs include many figurative metaphors, comparisons, and epithets, while women’s songs, called lale, recount the personal feelings of women and often speak of the difficulties of being female.

One type of folk song which remains very popular in Turkmenistan is the aydimi, a common chant centered on everyday themes. There are aydimi songs dedicated to almost every aspect of life, including motherhood, rocking babies to sleep, children’s play, weddings, manual labor, carpet weaving, and milking camels, to name a few. It is through the Turkmen aydimi that many compositions of classical Turkmen poets have reached us today.

National epics called destan are lengthy musical compilations of poems, legends, fairy tales, and traditions. Chanted to the accompaniment of the stringed dutar, they remain popular in Turkmenistan even in modern times.

The originality of Turkmen music is also expressed in the local manner of singing with great tension of the vocal cords and a high-pitched voice. Echoing in sharp contrast with the quiet, gentle sound of the dutar, these booming songs tell marvelous stories of brave locals and beloved Turkmen folklore.

**TURKMEN MODERN FOLK**

In 1984, a young but talented and experienced musician and composer named Sabo Artykow toured Asia with the
republican music group Gunesh. After his trek, Sabo came back with a Roland VP-330 vocoder – a musical instrument that would have a crucial impact on the music history of Turkmenistan.

After leaving Gunesh, Sabo went solo and met Atabäy Çarygulyýew – a young and gifted singer who mostly performed traditional renditions of Turkmen songs. Both artists decided to assemble a duo: Atabäy would sing folk songs, while Sabo would arrange them. The mix of specific traditional vocal ornamentation and high-tempo synthesized rhythms created a unique musical phenomenon. It was an impressive and dramatic change. The younger generations of Turkmen – who usually paid no attention to folk music and believed it to be outdated – were now heavily drawn to this new way of playing traditional songs.

Wedding parties were the main venues for the duo's performances. People quickly spread the word and shared tapes with live recordings of these two young artists. Soon, the whole country got to know who Sabo Artykow and Atabäy Çarygulyýew were. By that time, Sabo had extended his synthesizer setup with instruments such as the Moog Prodigy, Yamaha PS6100, Yamaha DX27, Korg Poly-800, Hohner E7, Roland D20, and others.

The duo's collaboration lasted from 1986 to 1989. That year, they decided to split – both went solo and further developed their own careers. Sabo started performing solo, as well as promoting other young artists. In 1990, Atabäy’s performance at the international festival Voice of Asia caught the eye of Peter Gabriel. A few years later, he released “The City of Love”, an album made by the Turkmen super-group Ashgabat, in which Atabäy had the leading role. Ashgabat underwent successful tours in Europe, the USA, and Japan. Ashgabat was soon formed as a Muslim wedding music supergroup, naming itself after the capital of Turkmenistan.

After one of the band's shows was recorded at a studio in Germany and given a tour in Europe, Atabäy said that he owed all that he has to the then President of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Niyazov.

Such a huge international success inspired other Turkmen musicians to start their own careers. Weddings became the main venue for such synthesized local music, which can be named Turkmen modern folk.

Sabo Artykow was the musician who changed the sound of Turkmen music forever. He was the de facto inventor
of vocoder singing in Turkmen music, memorable for his intensive hi-tempo playing and emotional performances. He arranged about 500 songs and left a huge impact on future generations of Turkmen musicians. Nowadays it is impossible to imagine Turkmen music without a vocoder device involved.

Atabaý Çarygulyýew was arguably the most famous Turkmen singer. After starting out as a wedding singer, he later gained tremendous success inside and outside of Turkmenistan. Awarded with the title of People’s Artist of Turkmenistan, he was an iconic singer, often referred to as the “Teacher” among younger singers. Atabaý’s sons currently perform their father’s repertoire to great acclaim. Bally Hajyýew was another famous musician and singer from the city of Mary. His singing style, full of traditional vocal ornamentation, was a distinguishing feature.

INTERACTION WITH FOLK MUSIC OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Here, it is necessary to mention the ability to integrate and combine the local music of Turkmenistan with the music of its neighbors. Although firmly rooted in the traditional music of Turkmenistan (itself a mixture of Russian, Turkish and Iranian influences), Ashkhabad are also able to embrace a diverse variety of musical styles (e.g., jazz, rock, European classical) in their wild and joyfully romantic sound.

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He has been passionate about mugham since his early childhood, but did not pursue a career in music until the age of nineteen. Alim studied at the Asaf Zeynalli Music College (1978-1982) and the Azerbaijan University of Arts (1982-1989). His teacher was well-known mugham singer Aghakhan Abdullayev. He perceives and presents mugham not only as an ancient art and a part of musical and cultural heritage but also as a constantly developing tradition. His performing style is unique, combining deep knowledge of centuries-old rules of mugham with challenging innovations, willingly juxtaposing mugham with other music styles, such as jazz and contemporary composition. Alim was awarded the International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize in 1999 in recognition of his musical contributions to world peace. Alim's numerous awards also include the title of the People's Artist of Azerbaijan, the highest artistic rank in the country. On his 50th birthday in 2007, the President of Azerbaijan awarded him the Medal of Glory. Qasimov has recorded nine albums, three of which are mugham albums with his daughter, Farghana Qasimova. According to The New York Times, “Alim Qasimov is simply one of the greatest singers alive, with a searing spontaneity that conjures passion and devotion, contemplation and incantation.”
EARLY LIFE

Born in 1957, Qasimov grew up in Nabur of Shamakhi, Azerbaijan, a village 100 km north of the capital Baku. His family worked on a Soviet commune and Qasimov worked alongside his parents from a young age. He later reflected that growing up in poverty helped him to live modestly later in life and he never attempted to extricate himself from his peasant background. Qasimov’s father was an occasional singer with a good voice, but he was a humble man; he never pursued a professional career in singing. Qasimov on the other hand was a keen singer from a young age and his parents noticed his musical desire. Lacking the money to buy him an instrument, his father used a frame and a goat’s stomach lining to make a crude drum for his son.

He began singing at religious events and his parents suggested that he study music at school. The form proved difficult for him at times: once, while performing in a local music contest at the age of fourteen, the audience — thinking he did not grasp the correct traditional style—laughed him off the stage. Despite various setbacks, his parents urged him to persist and he did, enrolling in the state music school in Baku at the age of 21 years. The course consisted of four years of study, specializing in vocal technique and mugham — the repertoire of classical Azerbaijani song. It was here that Qasimov honed his voice and his teachers were so impressed that they encouraged him to take the final exams two years early. He refused, stating that he still needed time to perfect his abilities. He had realized that music was no longer a pastime for him, but rather a necessity, saying his sole talent and desire was for music. Over the final years of his study, he refined his vocal technique, easily passing the final exam, but he later reflected that he had placed too much emphasis on vocal perfection; he believed it was not until later that he fully understood the deeper content and emotion of mugham.

MUSICAL CAREER

Qasimov began singing professionally while Azerbaijan was still under Soviet rule. Qasimov’s growing popularity was accompanied by declining Soviet influence and in 1983 he won the national Jabbar Garyaghioghlu Singing Competition.

Qasimov has recorded nine albums, three of which are mugham albums with his daughter, Farghana Qasimova.
As his career progressed, he was recognized internationally, winning awards at the 1983 and 1987 UNESCO Symposia on Traditional and Modern Art of Central Asian and Asian Countries. His tours were very well received in his home country and abroad; as travel outside the Soviet Union was rare for citizens at the time, his tours and concerts garnered much press and many television announcements. As his career was blossoming, so was his personal life — Qasimov and his wife, Tamilla Aslanova, had their first child in 1980, Ferghana Qasimova, and later had two more children: a son, Gadir, and second daughter, Dilruba. Despite such changes, Qasimov's background continued to shape his personality and music, dismissing the foreign influences found in cities and television.

Over time, Qasimov's style had developed to include not only traditional Azerbaijani music and mugham, but also ashiq, a rural bardic tradition with roots in Turkey, Azerbaijan and the Azari region of Iran.

Aashiqi music as one of the classical music of Azerbaijani people has a defined and systematic form and components. The main basis for the formation of Ashiq music are stories and myths. This feature, i.e. singing a song based on a poetic story, is considered a fundamental pillar among all Iranian ethnic courtiers and is a national tradition in Iran's ethnic courtiers. In the tradition of Aashiqi courtship, there are many stories about characters who have heroic and heroic qualities. Chastity and chastity, philanthropy and philanthropy, truthfulness and love are other characteristics of the heroes of Ashiq stories. In addition, he was influenced by artists from other disciplines, placing particular importance on Qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan: "When I heard him in concert many doors were opened for me and many questions answered". His success was all the more impressive for he had broken from the traditional style of mugham and brought his own interpretation to the genre. He saw this as a way of showing mugham to a wider audience and making it relevant to contemporary society, saying: "The world in which we live changes daily. Music has to lend emotional expression to this vitality. I accommodate that by seeking out new paths and interpretations". Similarly
he revolutionized the strict mugham instrumentation, introducing his own improvisation and including new sounds such as the double-reeded balaban (also known as a duduk), the clarinet and the nagara, a metal-bodied drum. Additionally, he remained conscious of the need to modernise when choosing his ensemble; mixing older, experienced players with younger, more dynamic musicians.\[8\]

The 1990s saw Qasimov tour widely with concerts in Iran, Brazil, the United States and throughout Europe. His music gained more exposure in Europe and North America when a chance meeting with American musician Jeff Buckley at a classical music festival in France resulted in a collaboration. Buckley was a fan of Qasimov’s music and they performed a duet of “What Will You Say” which featured on Buckley’s Live à l’Olympia release.

Revitalised by Azerbaijan’s declaration of independence from the Soviet Union, the artistic importance of Azeri culture, including both Qasimov and mugham, began to be recognized internationally. Qasimov was named the “People’s Artist of Azerbaijan” in 1993 and earned the highest honor in his field in 1999 when he won the International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize — an award given to high caliber musicians such as Dmitri Shostakovich, Leonard Bernstein, Ravi Shankar and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Partly helped by Qasimov’s extensive touring and promotion of mugham, UNESCO proclaimed the mugham of Azerbaijan a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” in 2003, reassuring the preservation of a centuries-old classical tradition. Similarly, the preservation of Qasimov’s own music was assured as he recorded and internationally released his music for the first time, beginning with Classical Mugham, a 1996 collaboration with the Mansurov brothers, and following with Azerbaijan: Art of the Mugham and Legendary Art of Mugham in 1998.

INTRODUCING FERGHANA

Qasimov’s daughter, Ferghana Qasimova, had been informally practicing with her father since the age of sixteen and was an avid student of mugham. By the age of twenty she had become a fully-fledged singer in her own right and Qasimov chose to introduce his daughter into his ensemble. Ferghana first appeared on 1997’s The Legendary Art of Mugham on which the two shared the vocal tasks on the song Getme Getme. Their next album included a track, Bagishlamani, dedicated to his forebear; Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. The release marked a high point for Qasimov as it was his first widely available release to western audiences and it proved a critical success. His aim to reconnect younger generations with mugham began to pay dividends; not only was he appealing to traditional Islamic sections of the Azerbaijani population, but also to more modern audiences. The break through amongst the younger generations spurred him on: “Sometimes young people come up after a concert to thank me. That’s like giving me wings. I feel so elated when I can awaken such feelings in people while they are still young; mugham is not an easy genre for young people to understand”.

Qasimov recorded and released further works with The Art of Mugham in 1997 and
Central Asian Series, Vol. 6: Spiritual Music of Azerbaijan in 2007. He took the opportunity to perform in New York City in 2005 as part of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project. The concert aimed to promote multi-cultural artistic exchange between eastern and western cultures and The New York Times regarded Qasimov's performance, alongside Malik Mansurov and Rauf Islamov, as the highlight of the event. He toured throughout Europe, now bringing Ferghana along with him, and was in demand to appear at spiritual music festivals in countries such as France and Egypt. Their performances were often critically acclaimed, regardless of the location. Remarking upon a performance in London as part of “Voices of Central Asia”, Michael Church stated in The Independent that “initial shock turned to delight as we were drawn into his intimate, multicolored world”. The father and daughter duo paid dividends and, following their performance in Cairo in May 2008, Al-Ahram Weekly stressed the qualities of their powerful vocal unity and stage presence, describing Qasimov as “a master of mugham”. Their brand of mugham proved equally popular the following September, performing a collaboration with experimental classical group, the Kronos Quartet. Band leader David Harrington was keen to work with the Azerbaijani for the Ramadan Nights Festival, saying: “I realized his voice was as unique as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s, or the tenor John McCormack’s in Irish ballads, or Bessie Smith’s in St Louis Blues. There's a special quality to that voice, a connection between it and his inner life...he is up there in the top five of all time [singers]”. Despite initial problems involving the Kronos Quartet’s arrangements and Qasimov’s improvisation, the event received positive reviews. Robin Denselow of The Guardian opined that Qasimov “is certainly one of the most thrilling, unashamedly emotional performers on the planet, and the finest exponent of mugham”.
In 1995, Qasimov performed “What Will You Say” as a duet with Jeff Buckley at the Festival de la Musique Sacrée (Festival of Sacred Music) in France. In 2014, Qasimov performed at the Festival Internacional Cervantino, the largest international festival in Latin America. In 2015, Qasimov performed the opening act during the Opening Ceremony of the First European Games in Baku, as well as a further performance midway singing from a flying carpet.

INFLUENCE AND LEGACY

On 21 November 2009, he was included in the 500 most influential Muslims of world book. The Icelandic singer Björk complimented Qasimov, by naming him as her “favourite singer alive today”. In 2009, Turkish newspaper Zaman named him as “Central Asia’s Greatest Voice”.

HIS QUOTATIONS

• That music, which is derived from the history, culture, spirituality, literature, ethics and ancestors of a land, is known and obvious, and the nation and the government of every country should strive and spend money to preserve their cultural and artistic originality, therefore, original music will not be destroyed by any attack, so that It has reached us from previous centuries and will remain eternal for centuries after us.

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Torang Album by Masoud HAJI-HASSAN

The album falls under the genre of Persian traditional music and it consists of 16 songs, the idea of which came to Haji-Hassan’s mind after studying in recent Iranian music. After his investigations deep into Persian classical music, he decided to amalgamate improvisation with a more up-to-date expression.

The album “Torang” is in Isfahan’s Avaz and in the form of tar and tombak duets, respectively played by Haji-Hassan and Amirhossein Zolmajd. Although this album is based on one of the best aspects of Iranian music, i.e., improvisation, and centered on the radif, he tried to create an expression independent of the radif and in a newer language in the production of percussion and non-percussion melodies.

One of the other recent works by Haji-Hassan is the album “Avaye Meh” which was produced based on research on the Rubab instrument. This is one of the oldest stringed instruments available, of which various types are common in some areas of Iran and neighboring countries. Some have attributed the construction of this instrument to more than a thousand years ago. Abu Nasr Al-Farabi mentioned this instrument as an accompaniment to the stories and narratives of the gatherings of speakers and poets. In this album, the rubab instrument was used the same way as the old rubab, with a few changes in the musical tone and the place of strumming with a plectrum in order to adapt it to the current intervals of Iranian music and create a different sonority. Anyway, the purpose of this album was to introduce more of this instrument and its capabilities for use in Iranian intervals and scales, as well as its capabilities to be used by an accompanist in musical bands.

Masoud Haji-Hassan, born in 1983 in Tehran, plays the tar, setar, and rubab. He started learning music with a setar in 1992 at the Centre for the Preservation and Dissemination of the Iranian Traditional Music, being taught by Behdad Shahideh. There, he completed learning radifs of the Iranian music as well as the vocal radifs by Mahmoud Karimi. Then, he learned the seventh radif as well as the Musa Maroufi’s radif from Houshang Zarif. Also, he got acquainted with the old percussions and the style of ancient music, and during the same period, he studied the style of these masters. Moreover, he researched the theoretical foundations and the connection between poetry and music with Professor Hossein Dehlavi. During his musical career, Haji-Hassan accompanied and participated in various music bands and solo and ensemble performances, and founded the ‘Naqsh-e Ava’ music band in 2009.
TAR

The tar (from Persian: تار, lit. ‘string’) is a long-necked lute descended from the tanbur, used by many cultures and countries including Iran, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan (Iranian Plateau), Turkey, and others near the Caucasus and Central Asia regions. The older and more complete name of the tār is čāhārtār or čārtār, meaning in Persian “four-string”, (čāhār frequently being shorted to čār). This is in accordance with a practice common in Persian-speaking areas of distinguishing lutes on the basis of the number of strings originally employed. Beside the čārtār, these include the dotār (two-string), setār (three-string), pančtār (five-string), and šaštār or šeštāe (six-string). It was revised into its current sound range in the 18th century and has since remained one of the most important musical instruments in Iran and the Caucasus, particularly in Persian and Azerbaijani traditional music, and the favored instrument for radifs and mughams.

TOMBAK

The tombak (Persian: تمبک), tonbak (ُتَن‌بَک) or zarb (ُزَرب) is an Iranian goblet drum. It is considered the principal percussion instrument of Persian music. The tombak is normally positioned diagonally across the torso while the player uses one or more fingers and/or the palm(s) of the hand(s) on the drumhead, often (for a ringing timbre) near the drumhead’s edge. Sometimes, tombak players wear metal finger rings for an extra-percussive “click” on the drum’s shell. Tombak virtuosì often perform solos lasting ten minutes or more.

The tombak is about 43 inches in height with a 28-centimeter diameter head. Its shell is carved from a single block of (sometimes highly figured, knotted, or marbled) wood, maybe with a carved design or geometric pattern (such as furrows, flutes, diamonds, and/or spirals—it is often a costly, heirloom-type, or a vintage musical instrument). At the bottom, the shell is somewhat thicker than at the top for strength (since the drumhead adds to the strength at the top). The shell’s wall thickness is approximately 2 centimeters. The throat is nearly cylindrical and connects the top (body) cavity to the hollow base (the throat itself, the interior of which forms the small opening). A sheepskin or goatskin head is stretched and secured with glue, tacks, or both. The fairly wide top opening permits full bass tone as well as various treble tones. Tombaks with adjustable tuning have been produced experimentally but the head tension is normally fixed prior to the performance with careful attention to the temperature and humidity. The player may heat or cool or dampen or dry the membrane to reach a desired fundamental pitch. The pitch can be raised somewhat during a performance by applying finger pressure but a variety of tapping and clicking timbres reduce the overall focus on the drum’s pitch. Typically, two or three clearly contrasting timbres (through varying finger placement or clacking of a ring against the drum shell) are played in an antiphonal style.

Listening to this music album will help you become more familiar with Iranian traditional music and enjoy the various works produced centered on this genre.
A ceremony was held at the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) for Özkan Uğur, the reputed actor and member of the MFÖ group, who passed away on 8 July 2023 at 69 after a long battle with cancer.

Ersoy expressed his sadness in his speech at the ceremony, saying: “Today, together, we bid farewell to a legend of Turkish music, who has left for the eternal realm. Uğur, who amazed us with his music on the screen and cinema, was the main character of endless conversations with his naturalness and personality, no matter where we start.”

Following Ersoy’s speech, the other close friends and fans attended by the artist’s family, as well as the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy and artists Cem Yılmaz, Yılmaz Erdoğan and Demet Akbağ, among other artists.
two members of the MFÖ group, Mazhar Alanson and Fuat Güner, took the stage and gave emotional speeches. “Özkan has been our friend and business partner for 52 years. He is our spiritual brother, and no words or tears can relieve his pain from within us. Farewell, Özkan, until we meet again,” Fuat Güner said.

Tears were seen in the eyes of the artists in the hall. After a film screening, Uğur was given a standing applause. Following the funeral prayer held at Taksim Mosque after noon, Uğur’s body was buried in Istanbul’s Karacaahmet Cemetery.

SMILE THAT WILL NEVER FADE

Uğur was born on Oct.17, 1953, in Istanbul, Türkiye. He completed his primary education at Reşat Nuri Güntekin Elementary School, where he was introduced to the mandolin. While attending Fenerbahçe High School, his passion for music grew, and he formed an amateur group called the “Atomikler” (“Atomics”), where they performed popular songs of that time.

He began his professional music career in 1970 with the Şerif Yüzbaşioğlu Orchestra, where many famous musicians occasionally joined. In 1971, Uğur started playing bass guitar with his first band, “Kaygısızlar” (“Buyoants”), alongside Mazhar Alanson and Fuat Güner.

After the disbandment of “Kaygısızlar,” Uğur joined prominent rock singer Barış Manço’s rock band “Kurtalan Ekspres” in 1972 as part of the initial lineup formed to accompany Manço.

In 1974, after leaving the band, Uğur played bass guitar on a studio album he made with his old friends Mazhar Alanson and Fuat Güner. He also briefly played bass guitar in Kurtalan Ekspres in 1976 and served as a guitarist for the band’s Anatolian tour in
1978.

Üğur had a colorful profile as an artist with his unique personality, charisma, and lively performances. In the early 1980s, he collaborated with Mazhar Alanson and Fuat Güner, working with famous names in the industry. Between 1980 and 1983, Üğur and Fuat Güner worked as musicians and actors in famous actor Ferhan Şensoy’s plays.

As the trio of Mazhar, Fuat, and Özkan, MFÖ gained fame with their first album released in 1984. The group represented Türkiye twice in the Eurovision Song Contest, with the songs “Diday Diday Day” in 1985 and “Süfî” in 1988.

In 2019, MFÖ was awarded the “Culture and Arts Grand Award” in the field of “Music” at the Presidency of the Republic Culture and Arts Awards for their commitment to representing cultural identity in Turkish pop and rock music and their success and consistency in their music over the past 40 years.

Üğur played bass guitar in MFÖ and successfully performed challenging vocals with his tenor voice. He also had songs with lyrics that didn’t have any particular meaning.

Unlike the other group members, Üğur did not release a solo album. His first solo song was “Maksat Muhabbet Olsun,” the film’s soundtrack “Karışık Pizza.” The second song he released was “Olduramadım,” which he wrote for the comedy film “G.O.R.A.”

He had roles in many TV series and films throughout his career.

As an artist, Üğur maintained a balance between acting and music. In interviews, he expressed that music always had a prominent place in his life.

Although he was interested in music since childhood, Üğur initially wanted to become an actor. In an interview, he once said: “I begged my parents to enroll me in a conservatory, but I’m glad they didn’t. There wouldn’t have been MFÖ without that. I can’t imagine a life without MFÖ; I always say this. Music is the most important thing for me. Did acting take precedence over music or vice versa? Now, they go hand in hand, but the part where I can best express myself is music. But I also enjoy acting. I have to internalize that character. If I can get into that character, then I accept the role. But if I can’t, I don’t.”

Üğur married Aysun Aslan, a State Opera and Ballet artist, and they have a son named Alişan.

The esteemed artist successfully battled lymph cancer in 2013 but began receiving cancer treatment again in 2020. After being closely monitored and treated in the intensive care unit for about a month and a half, Üğur did not respond to treatments due to various problems in his lungs and passed away today.
An official commemoration ceremony for Özkan Uğur will be held on July 11 at the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM). Following the funeral prayer at Taksim Mosque on the same day, Uğur’s body will be laid to rest at Karacaahmet Cemetery. The artist is receiving accolades from every community. With his ability to leave wonderful memories in everyone's hearts and his exemplary personality that inspires others with a smile, he will never be forgotten.

Source:
Daily Sabah
Abylkhan Kasteev
Founder of the Professional Fine Arts of Kazakhstan

He was highly decorated, being awarded the title of National Artist of the Kazakh SSR, and was a Laureate of the Shoqan Walikhanov State Prize of the Kazakh SSR. He was awarded the “Order of the October Revolution, and two “Orders of the Red Banner of Labor”.

Kasteev was born in a small village in the Taldykorgan Region and studied at the Nadezhda Krupskaya art studio in Almaty. He painted more than a thousand paintings in oil and watercolors. Some of his works are on display in the State Tretyakov Gallery, the State Museum of East Nations Art, the Central Museum of USSR Revolution by Lenin Order in Moscow, and the State Museum of Fine Arts of Kazakhstan (which was renamed after Kasteev), and in the other museums of the country.

He went through a difficult journey from an ordinary person, who was secretly carving, to the People’s Artist of the Republic, and the author of thematic canvases dedicated to contemporary socialist reality. The work of Abylkhan Kasteev is a unique heritage of the national culture of Kazakhstan. Serious attention is deservedly paid to him at the level of the state cultural policy, the largest in the country, State Museum of Fine Arts of the Republic of Kazakhstan is named in his honor, and the Kasteev House-Museum in Almaty has also been opened in Almaty. Mukhtar Auezov published books and wrote articles about his works. We all understand that for Kazakhstan and the Kazakh culture careful and steady attention to the heritage of Abylkhan Kasteev is a matter of national
honor and pride. Abylkhan Kasteev is the first professional Kazakh artist who used oil painting on canvas. The first serious experiments of Abylkhan Kasteev in the visual arts belong to the 30s of the twentieth century. In the same period, talented Kazakh artists began to work. While highly appreciating and recognizing their merits in the art history of Kazakhstan, it should be mentioned that it was precisely Abylkhan Kasteev who established the role and place of the main founder of the professional fine arts of Kazakhstan. Abylkhan Kasteyev is considered the first professional Kazakh artist and the founder of the national art school of Kazakhstan.

Born in 1904 in the town of Chizhin near Jarkent, the artist grew up without a father. At the age of 8, he helped the family, working as a shepherd with a wealthy fellow villager. Spending long hours alone with the beautiful nature of southern Kazakhstan, absorbing the magnificence of its rivers and mountains, valleys and hills, A. Kasteyev from his childhood began to comprehend its greatness, strength, and primeval beauty. Even then, the artist’s natural gift began to cut through. Like his ancient ancestors, who created the unique graphic complexes Tamgaly, Mangystau, and Irtysh, the young Kasteev painted on stones. The first, but still not preserved, samples of his creativity were compositions on the materials such as stone, bark, and wood. Gifted by nature, the teenager at first did not find a direct response among his close circle. The old men sometimes even condemned his ‘sinful activities’, but the future artist did not agree with them, defending himself, he put forward a comparison of his drawings with the singing of the akyn. Abilkhan Kasteev’s artistic talent was destined to unfold in all its glory.

This is while the time of drastic changes dictated changes in the life of everyone. During the Soviet period in the history of Kazakhstan, thanks to new social attitudes, many people welcomed artists, actors, musicians, and other talented people. They
also had opportunities for self-realization and active participation in the creation of national schools and new types of art. It was truly a golden period in Kazakh culture, a time inspired by the ideal utopian dream. Creativity is filled with immense joyful inspiration. All the participants in this creative development have rightfully become pioneers of art, each in their own fields of creative activities. New cultural institutions were created, a new cultural stratum of Kazakh society was emerging, and new fields of previously unfamiliar creative expression were forming and developing professionally.

Studios and musical theaters were created, which later became the best and most famous scenes of the country (in 1926 the first national Kazakh theater opened, headed by Zhumat Shanin, in 1934 the musical theater, now the State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after Abai, was opened the same year, the Kurmangazy Orchestra, under the direction of Akhmet Zhubanov, was created, creative unions arose, art galleries opened.

Meanwhile, the fate of the young shepherd, Abilkhan, was shaped in the beautiful sceneries, far from the new social paths of the Kazakh aul. He was already a 21-year-old young man who first took a pencil in his hands. At the same time, he still painted in secret, still fearing the condemnation of the local people and relatives. But soon, having felt the inward feeling of drawing to the inner sense, he realized that he will no longer recede from this occupation, and believed that drawing was his life calling. Before firmly linking his life with art, the young Kasteyev had to walk along unknown paths. He tried various activities. In 1926, Abilkhan, for the first time, left his native village for Zharkent, the current Panfilov, where he worked as a laborer, but devoted all his free time to draw. It was the first time that he tried to paint with oil paints. A completely different life began to form around him. There were new and different people, different nationalities, characters, and habits of life, and their faces next to the faces of their relatives and fellow villagers gradually appeared in the careful sketches of the artist who was attentive to life.

The power of his gift turned out to be so great that, even though he didn’t have much idea of the reality of the profession and creative activities of the artists, young Abilkhan intuitively, but already firmly, connected his vital interests and...
aspirations with fine arts. He seemed to draw everything that he saw, as he felt, with little or no knowledge of professional literacy or the opportunity to learn.

The natural sense of color and scale and the ability to sense and convey figures and objects in space highlighted the earliest and most serious works of the artist. Being sensitive and careful to the beauty of traditional Kazakh life, he with love and meticulousness conveyed the color structure of tekemets and alash, tuskizas and baskures that adorn the interiors of the yurt, where Kazakh craftswomen work. Most often, he depicted his sisters or relatives as well as the features of their people.

In 1927, the Turksib railway was launched in Kazakhstan. A new reality and the opportunity to get new impressions attracted the attention of the future artist, and in 1928 he was sent to work on this famous construction site. It must be said that Kasteev’s desire to expand his horizons is not limited to drawing. Having settled in as a simple excavator on the construction of the railway, in 1928 the future artist graduated from an evening school for adults. Of course, the circle of his acquaintances expanded dramatically and his talent and craving for drawing could not go unnoticed by the people around him. Attentive friends and new acquaintances could not pass by such a noticeable gift with indifference. Having listened to the advice of new friends, who seemed to have guessed his inner purpose, Kasteev finally went to Almaty, started studying at the private art studio of Khludov and continued his career.

SOURCES:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abilkhan_Kasteev
https://arthive.com/exhibitions/1646
Architectural History in Afghanistan

Being located in the major network of ancient trade routes connecting India and China to Persia and beyond, Afghan architecture represents layers of history that are important for its development. The diversity in the history of Afghanistan has led to diverse architectural influences seen in its cities. The primary influences were seen in Buddhist architecture, Zoroastrian architecture, and Islamic architecture.

The many Islamic rulers concentrated on creating socially and culturally cohesive spaces in cities like Kabul. The highly orthodox lifestyle and residences were built by the people of the community. The archaeological excavations show the rich cultural and architectural values of the traditional architecture practiced by the Afghan people.

The varied climate experienced in the region is the main factor determining traditional Afghan architecture. The techniques and materials used were also locally sourced as the Afghan people built their communities.

Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan today, has evolved through history. The archaeological study shows that the city has been a strategically important commercial and pilgrim center. Later in 698 A.D., the Arabs invaded Kabul, and years later, the people like other part of Iran accepted Islam as their new religion. In the middle of the 7th century AD (642-870), the Muslims defeated the Sassanid Empire. The Muslims then went to the east of Iran and captured the city of Herat in 642 AD. In 667 AD, the eastern regions of Iran came under the rule of Muslims, and the city of Kabul, which was administered by the command of Sistan, completely fell apart in 683 AD, and then until 870 AD, all the eastern regions of Iran (including Afghanistan) were conquered by Muslims. In this period of time a new era of urban planning and architecture began in Afghanistan.
The reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1101-1151 AH/1134-1186 AH/1722-1773 AD) is a turning point in the history of Afghanistan. He was the founder of Durrani kingdom. Due to the creation of an independent country from Iran and India, Durrani is considered as the founder of the independent and modern state of Afghanistan. Timur Shah, son of Ahmed Shah, established Kabul as the capital city. During Durrani period, the city grew in prosperity.

Later in the year 1839 to 1845 A.D., the conflict with the British Army destroyed the architecture and urban fabric of traditional Afghan. Many bazaars and commercial centers were burnt in retaliation for their defeat. Commercial bazaars were the then hub of city life. During the 19th century, the city possessed characteristics of a traditional Islamic city. Bridges were constructed to access the city through the Kabul River.

During the 19th century, the sheer richness of the traditional urban Afghan architecture was transformed by modern urban development. Abdur Rahman brought a great physical transformation to the city. Bagh-e-Babur, Chilston palace, and Arg bazaar were some of the ornate mansions inside spacious gardens, which are typical characteristics of traditional Afghan architecture.

Such garden spaces with architectural and landscape schemes were developed during this period. The public water system was planned through a channeled underground tunnel system throughout the city. Habibullah, the successor during 1901-1919 A.D., introduced a piped water supply, he also commissioned lavish palaces and public buildings, and electricity was also introduced. Dilkusha Palace, Edigah mosque, and Habibia College were some of the public buildings constructed.

King Amanullah, during his reign from 1919-1929 A.D., was determined to modernize and bring reforms to the social and cultural aspects of the city. A modern project with French architects and German engineers to build a new city in the 18th-century style was commissioned. The plan included provision for necessary public buildings,
educational institutions, health centers, and commercial and residential centers with gardens and open spaces for leisure. Railway lines were introduced to connect people and trade; telephone lines were introduced to connect with the outer world. During the 1930s and 1940s, the city was developed into an industrial center. In 1960 the city was developed into a big cosmopolitan center.

In 1962 under the national economic development plan, a team of planners of the USSR was formed to plan a 25-year Master plan for the city. The plan classified the entire old city as a slum area which was then replaced with multi-storey apartments in the Soviet style.

1. AFGHANISTAN’S SETTLEMENT ARCHITECTURE

All types of architectural forms are used to provide the quality of human life and rapidly have to adjust themselves to any kind of changes from a cultural or social perspective. The vernacular architecture used by the local population is highly related to climate, meteorological culture and local materials. According to some scholars, vernacular architecture is growing up in society and gradually becomes a compatible architecture style with societal, climatic, and technological conditions of the environment.

Every urban tissue and architecture form is constituted through a slow and long process of change throughout many years considering the traditional and vernacular architecture styles. The buildings in Kabul city designed by traditional architecture is representing the various needs of social and cultural requirements and the housing
prototype is an introverted courtyard house that perfectly matches with cultural requirements of the Afghan lifestyle. Afghanistan because of its location on the trade route has been influenced by different neighboring civilizations and cultures. History of living style in Afghanistan (vernacular dwelling) can be identified in several types; Nomadic community and animal-breeders based on location and cultural effects, live in tent shelters, yurt, and huts and the peasant community lives in Qalas which has an inward-looking design and surrounded by strong walls and defense towers and urban community live in courtyards.

The history of Qala and courtyard houses in Kabul city is linked to the cultural, environmental, religious, and historical background. The rooms’ settlement around the courtyard is following the ancient dwelling prototype. Also, the traditional architecture style of Kabul city reflects the inward-looking and self-protecting family society. As stated, in Kabul city, traditional buildings are surrounded by mud walls “curtains” for being protected against the outside world characterized by the Afghan way of living in many respects.

In Kabul city, the urban community is living in courtyards, which can be the upgraded version of Qala. Traditional houses in Kabul city represent the difference in living conditions in the society. Considering the cultural effects and traditional architecture evolution in Kabul city, three types of houses are determined: Qall’a, courtyard house, and new or contemporary type of house.

1.1. KALA

One of the most prevalent of dwelling in Ancient Afghanistan is Qala which is built in the rural areas where peasant communities were living in. Qala as a type of buildings complex was developed during the Iron Age and (also an alternative term for village) has a common place for family living, worship or mosque, sheltering strangers, etc. Moreover, the traditional way to build an afghan farmhouse is called Qala. Usually, Qala is established by a landlord or tribal headman to provide accommodation for his family and his shareholders which also can be an alternative form of the village on a small scale.

Considering the general concept of Qala in Afghanistan, most architectural form of Qala contains a rectangular shape surrounded by massive mud walls with a single entrance door and several watchtowers in the corner and mid parts to protect habitats from outside attacks. The watchtowers are also used as storage for farm products. Basically, the interior space of Qala is subdivided by thinner mud walls into public and private spaces; public space includes a mosque, share guestrooms, and some other public areas while private spaces encompass several multi-single interior courtyards. Each courtyard house is followed by Afghan traditional culture and living style. Houses in each courtyard are composed of two or three floors containing living rooms, kitchens, toilets, storage rooms, stable, and guestrooms. Usually, two or three families can live within a courtyard.

Courtyard houses are usually attached together. The flat roofs of each courtyard house have a multi-function usage in summer for evening outdoor living, drying farm and garden products, and also laundry. The rooms are placed around the courtyards, and sometimes they are interconnected together. The winter rooms normally have small openings for light and the rooms used in summer have larger openings to provide a view and catch a fresh breeze. The kitchen is usually attached to storage. Inward-looking, self-protection family design, and division between private and public spaces in Qala are representing Afghan and Islamic culture.
1.2. COURTYARD HOUSES

One of the most famous types of housing in Afghanistan is considered as courtyard house, where more than 95% of people in the country live. Traditional courtyards in Afghanistan and Kabul city have three purposes; first, open interior spaces with full privacy and security for all family members, especially women and children; second, according to surrounding walls and rooms orientation, they have good condition in summer to provide shading and avoiding the wind to enter the rooms in winter; third, multiple families can live in the same courtyard based on afghan culture demands.

There are two types of Courtyard House. The inner, where the house surrounds the courtyard, and the outer, where the courtyard adjoins the house and forms a protected area adjacent to but not enclosed by the dwelling unit. Kabul city as a merge point of diverse cultures and ethnic groups in the country, includes both types of courtyards. Some scientists believe that old-type courtyard houses are the upgraded version of Qala courtyards in a single form. The second type that follows the exterior courtyard house form is known as a modern or new type of house which is distributed all around the city and is currently considered the most famous type of courtyard house in Kabul city.

2. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF KABUL CITY

In the sacred book of Hindus' Rig-Veda, 1500 BC, Kabuha is stated as representing the current Kabul River. Moreover, Kabul, during 675 AD had been an important strategic commercial and visiting center. Ptolemy in the middle of the second century mentioned Kabul city by the name of ‘Kabura’ and its residence as ‘Kabulitae’. so Afghanistan and especially the city of Kabul as the capital of contemporary Afghanistan is a city with a very long history. The buildings in Kabul are mostly designed following the traditional architecture representing the various needs of social and cultural requirements. The residential prototype is an introverted courtyard house that fits perfectly with the cultural demands of the Afghan lifestyle. The architectural style of the city of Kabul can be divided into two parts, based on the influence of civilization, in addition to traditional architecture, before and after the emerging Islam. It is worth mentioning that contemporary Afghanistan was also
part of these civilizations and represented an important role in the development of these civilizations.

2.1. BEFORE ISLAM

According to the historical studies of prominent scholars who research about Afghanistan, such as Nancy Dupree, there was an advanced degree of urban life culture around 3000 to 2000 years before Christ when immigrants entered the Iranian plateau in this land. Afghanistan, as one of the parts of the Achaemenid Empire, was the meeting place of the world’s great civilizations due to its location on the Silk Road and was considered one of the most important commercial centers of the ancient era. This important and sensitive geostrategic and geopolitical position of Afghanistan has played an important role in forming a rich mosaic of great cultures and civilizations such as Iranian, Greek, Mesopotamia and Indian in this country. The history of Kabul city is related to ancient times.

Before Islam, Kabul was situated in the southeast of the present town as it has been mentioned in the itinerary of Hsiuan Tsang. Architectural monuments belonging to that time are two columns (manars) and a “stupa” that are thought to be dated to the epoch of the Kushan empire (first to third centuries A.D.), although it has been suggested that they were built in the time of Asoka. Kabul city, during the reign of Hephalites in the 5th century, became as an administrative capital in a part of the Hepialids kingdom, it was the most prestigious economic and religious center. Some of the architectural monuments characterized by pre-Islamic civilizations between the 1st and 6th centuries are described below:

CHAKARI MINARETS

Minar-i Chakari, is located about 16km southeast of Kabul city with history belonging to the 1st century and symbolized 700 years of Hinayana Buddhism in this region. It is believed that the masonry in the diaper style (in which thin and flat stones are placed between large stone blocks) is suggesting that the monument was built in the Kushan Age. The minaret is composed of three major parts: the rectangular pedestal, the cylindrical column with the base, shaft, and capital, and an uppermost crowning of unknown shape. Total height, measured at the central axis, showed slightly more than 27 meters. Also, the column base of the Minars was related to Attic (classical Greek) order, very familiar to the Graeco-Bactrian (ancestors of the Irano-Greek Kingdom) and Gandharan art and architecture (a style of Buddhist visual
art developed in Pakistan and Afghanistan between 1st and 7th century), as also can be seen in Ai Khanum and Surkh Kotal. The building material was hewn stones or, to be more precise, quartz and green schist. During the country’s decades of civil war, the minaret was completely destroyed and only a few traces remain on the site, due to the lack of due consideration in terms of cultural heritage protection.

**BALA HISSAR**

Bala Hissar (known as “High Fort”) is located in the south of the old city of Kabul and is estimated around the 5th century AD by the Hephthalites times. Common materials used in the construction of Bala Hissar are stone, mud walls, ornamental tiles, and wood. Bala Hissar was designed with two distinct facilities; the lower fort contained stables, barracks, and three royal palaces; the upper fort housed the armory and the dungeon of Kabul or jail in ancient Buddhist architecture style (Woodburn, 2009). However, Afghanistan’s ancient traditional architecture as represented in the type of Qalas includes such familiar elements as inward-looking layouts, massive mud walls, single entry doors, watchtowers, carved and pressed stucco, and decorative brick masonry. Bala Hissar was used as a state development center for many kingdoms in Afghanistan, however, the fort was destroyed during the Afghan–British war. Consequently, the current presidential palace (Arg) in the center of Kabul city has been substituted. Currently, it is used for military purposes.

**TEPE NARENJ**

According to World’s Monuments Fund, “Tepe Narenj is a Buddhist monastery that was founded in the fifth or sixth centuries in the Zanburak Mountains south of Kabul”. In the excavations by the Afghanistan Institute of Archeology under the direction of Zafar Paiman since 2004, a series of artificial terraces including the stupas have brought archeological evidence of Buddhist religious concepts and rituals. The site is composed of one large and five small stupas, cells for individual meditation, and five chapels adorned with miniature stupas, statues of the Buddha, and standing Boddhisatva figures.

**AFTER ISLAM**

Kabul accepted Islam as the new religion in 698 A.D. So, Islam introduced new socio-cultural values and administration techniques. The conquest of Kabul city completely was realized in 870 A.D by Saffarid Iranian emperor and Islam culture dominated afterward. Kabul, due to its geographical location and
connectivity between Iran, India, Central Asia, and China has an important status for regional civilizations. Therefore, since ancient times, it has been a site of attraction to settle (Frye, 1946). Islamic architectural history in Afghanistan represents several architectural styles related to Islamic civilizations, such as the dynasties of the Samanids (9th c. AD), Ghaznavids (10-12th), Timurids (15th), Moghuls (16-17th) and etc. In the 16th century, Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur, the king of the Mughal empire who emphasized the importance of the Persian culture and language, as common language of the region, was very much attracted to Kabul city and decided to make it the capital. Also, Babur embellished Kabul with seven big gardens as Bagh-e Shahr-ara, Char Bagh, Bagh-e Jelaw-Khana, Orta Bagh, Bagh-e Soorat-Khana, Bagh-e Mahtab, and Bagh-e Ahoo-Khana, and three more small gardens around (Issa & Kohistani, 2007; Kazimee & Najimi, 2017; Kohzad, 2005). Some of these famous monuments of Islamic civilization in the city are described below:

**BAGH – E – BABUR (BABUR’S GARDEN)**

Bagh-e Babur was founded by Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, founder of Mughal dynasty in Kabul city in the early sixteenth century on the hillside of Sher Darwaza Mountains, southwest of the old city of Kabul. The garden is large of 11.5 ha and landscaped into 15 terraces along a central axis heading east-west. It is related to Islamic gardens category which follows particular principles in layout and design, function and meaning. The layout of the garden includes running water, flowers and fruit trees and architectural monuments such as Caravanserai complex, Swimming pool, Garden pavilion, Shah Jahan Mosque, Babur's tomb, Perimeter wall, Queen's Palace which are representing central Asia and Mughal Islamic architecture style. Also, the intricate wooden carving, carved and pressed stucco, decorative brick or stone masonry and surrounded massive mud walls of complex are reflections of the Afghanistan traditional architecture. Most parts of the garden and associated architectural monuments had been destroyed during the civil wars in the country, after the new government was established in 2001, it was restored. Currently, it is used as a recreational area for public visitors.

**TIMUR SHAH MAUSOLEUM**

Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah, who is the founder of modern and independent Afghanistan, established Kabul as the capital of this country. He died in 1793s, but his mausoleum was built 23 years before his death in central Kabul. Timur Shah's Mausoleum is composed of an octagonal structure with two intersecting cross-axes organized on six levels. Above a crypt in which the grave stands is a square central space surrounded by an octagonal structure, with four double-height iwans on the main elevations. There are sixteen brick- vaulted spaces of varied size on the first floor, encircling the central space, with a flat roof above, surrounding the sixteen-sided drum under the domes. Its features generally follow the central Asian tradition with decorative brick masonries.
and colorless appearance which could be identified with the local traditional architectural forms. The mausoleum has an external dome built on a high drum above an internal ribbed dome. The current view illustrated in Figure 7 is the restored form which had been damaged during the Afghanistan civil wars for the last several decades. The tomb itself is situated within a garden in the center of Kabul city which is open for public visitors.

**EID GAH MOSQUE**

Eid Gah is an open-ground place where Muslims gather during the two Muslim festivals, such as Eid- ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha to offer prayers in the form of a congregation. This mosque is considered to be the second largest mosque in Kabul where more than one million people could be conveniently accommodated for the Eid congregations at any one time. The Mosque was built sometime in the 16th century, but the exact year of construction is not known, when the Mughal empire Babar invaded India and ordered that mosque be built to propagate Islam in this part of the region. Babar ordered his men to bring valuable stones from Punjab, Sindh, and the adjoining areas and then called the Persian designers to draw plans to build a beautiful place where people would love to offer prayers on the occasion of the two Muslim festivals. In the general sense, decorative brick and stone masonry, multi-functional open space, and continuous porch in front of the mosque hall are in line with Afghanistan's traditional architectural forms.

Some parts of the mosque had been destroyed during the civil wars; it was reconstructed in its preliminary form. In 2018, it was completely reconstructed based on its real form. After Babur's death, Kabul lost its value as capital. In 1737, Nader Shah Afshar, the Iranian king invaded Kabul and this resulted in the destruction of lots of buildings and gardens. After the death of Nader Afshar, disorder arose in his large camp. Unsettled social situation and political developments in neighboring countries had prepared the ground for the formation of a central government in Afghanistan. Ahmad Durrani took advantage of the "power vacuum" created by Nader Shah's murder and with the support of the Pashtun tribes and the formation of the Loya Jirga, the capture of Nader Shah's treasury and the disorder of the Gurkan Kingdom of India, he had the opportunity to strengthen the nascent Durrani government. In 1747, Ahmad Shah, with the help of a council consisting of nine advisers from different Afghan tribes, advanced towards the Gorgani and Maratha empires of India, west towards the disintegrating Afsharia empire of Iran, and north towards the Bukhara Khanate of Turkestan. Within a few years, he extended
his control from Khorasan in the west to Kashmir and northern India in the east, and from the Amu Darya in the north to the Oman Sea in the south. For this reason, Ahmad Shah Durrani is considered as the founder of the modern state of Afghanistan. Ahmad Shah was appointed king of Afghanistan by a Loya Jirga in Kandahar and established Kandahar as capital city. After his death in 1773, his son Timur-Shah relocated the capital from Kandahar to Kabul. Since then, Kabul has been preserving its position as the capital and strategic city of Afghanistan.

With the establishment of Afghanistan by Ahmad Shah Durrani due to political unrest and an innate dislike of architectural designs, large-scale monumental buildings and projects ceased in Afghanistan. Therefore both public and domestic architecture exhibited the same forms for rich and poor people. Massive unadorned mud-plastered walls pierced by single doorways present blank faces to outsiders, in the countryside, and in the cities. It is stated that this architecture reflects an inward-looking, self-protecting, family/tribal society. The existing architectural condition continued up to the 1880s, King Amir Abdurrahman Khan was the first person to restart construction activities in their modern form and introduced foreign western architectural styles in Afghanistan. Also, during 1839–1842, due to the invasion of the British army, Kabul suffered a great deal of devastation and much of its fine architecture and the urban fabric were destroyed.

3. CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Traditional building techniques in Afghan architecture were developed to cope with extreme climatic conditions and frequent earthquakes, using naturally available materials. The Earth is dug for 60cm, and the foundation is laid with rubbles and stones. It is extended above ground level by 40cm to avoid damage caused by weather. The walls are then constructed with bricks and timber frames.

Timber frames act as the main skeleton of the building. Layers of bricks are laid diagonally, approximately 7-10 layers on each side, and plastered with mud. It helps the building to withstand earthquakes. This traditional construction technique is known as senj. The beam is layered with woven willow branches from Zabul and bamboo to provide greater stability. A thick layer of mud is then applied above the layered beam to finish the roof.

The traditional Afghan architecture had a conscious thought of energy-efficient and vernacular design strategies, which were destroyed during the various wars and modern developments with different rulers. For 25 years, war conditions in the country forced people to sell their traditional possessions and move to safer places. At the beginning of the 21st century, steps were taken to preserve and restore the heritage values of traditional Afghan architecture.

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SYED SADEQUAIN AHMED NAQVI (30 JUNE 1930 – 10 FEBRUARY 1987), OFTEN REFERRED TO AS SADEQUAIN NAQQASH (PAINTER), WAS A PAKISTANI ARTIST, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS SKILLS AS A CALLIGRAPHER AND A PAINTER.
He is considered one of the finest painters and calligraphers Pakistan has ever produced. He was also a poet, writing hundreds of rubaiyat in the style of Omar Khayyam and Sarmad Kashani. He still remains one of the most influential and important South Asian artists of the 20th century.

EARLY LIFE
Sadequain was born on 30 June 1930 in Amroha, into a family of calligraphers. In the late 1940s, he joined the Progressive Writers and Artists Movement. His true talent was discovered by Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy who brought Sadequain into the limelight. He also spent some time in Paris augmenting his skills.

Medium of work
CALLIGRAPHY
Sadequain was widely praised for his calligraphic style, which is considered iconic by many critics of South Asian art. Sadequain was part of a broader Islamic art movement that emerged independently across North Africa and parts of Asia in the 1950s and is known as the Hurufiyya movement. Hurufiyah refers to the attempt by artists to combine traditional art forms, notable calligraphy as a graphic element within a contemporary artwork. Hurufiyah artists rejected Western art concepts, and instead searched for new visual languages that reflected their own culture and heritage. These artists successfully transformed calligraphy into a modern aesthetic, which was both contemporary and indigenous. Prior to Sadeqain's work, only a few painters had experimented with the medium in Pakistan. Sadequain is a pioneer of the style, bringing calligraphy into a mainstream art form, and influencing subsequent generations of Pakistani artists.

Salahi carried the script with a flourish in all directions, giving it the 'power of space, vigor, and volume'.
Sadequain painted classical literature from the poetic verses of Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz. He belonged to the school of thought that enriched realism with lyricism. His work was essentially linear. He also illustrated French Nobel Prize-winning writer, Albert Camus. Nearly a thousand of the drawings he executed were given away to his admirers. He wrote and published hundreds of quartets.

Sadequain was the most prolific painter in the period following the independence of Pakistan in 1947. He was constantly at work and he worked on a large scale. He repeatedly stated that he was not interested in decorating drawing rooms for the rich and powerful. He worked on large murals for public buildings, symbolic of the collective labor of humanity, and his work was mostly donated to the public.

Sadequain in his own words was primarily a painter of figures with allegorical significance.

**MURALS**

Sadequain was a social commentator. His murals depict man’s endless quest to discover and develop the potentialities that lie within him. His murals are densely filled and tightly packed with images to render adequately the lofty subject. His monumental murals, in excess of thirty-five, adorn the halls of State Bank, Frere Hall Karachi; Lahore Museum; Punjab University; Mangla Dam; Aligarh Muslim University; Banaras Hindu University; Indian Institute of Geological Sciences; Islamic Institute in Delhi, and Abu Dhabi Power House, among others. His paintings and calligraphies in the building of the Islamic Institute in Delhi alone cover more than seven thousand square feet.

Sadequain painted his earliest murals at Jinnah Hospital and PIA headquarters in the 1950s. These murals have disappeared and their fate is unknown.

In 1961, he painted the huge mural (62’X10’) in the Head Office of the State Bank of Pakistan at Karachi, titled “Treasures of Time”, in which he showed the intellectual advance of man from the times of Socrates to that of Iqbal and Einstein. It
is a linear creation that shows a pageant of intellectuals and thinkers of the Greek era, mathematicians and chemists of the Middle East, scholars of the European Renaissance, and 20th-century laureates. This large mural has endured transportation from the State Bank to Mohatta Palace (for the exhibition The Holy Sinner), and back to State Bank.

Sadequain painted the ceiling of the Lahore Museum entrance hall, depicting Evolution of Mankind, and additional nine large panels of calligraphies for the Islamic Gallery. The ceiling spans approximately 100 x 35 feet (11 m). The Panjab government has recently allocated money for the restoration of the mural.

Punjab University houses the mural “Quest of Knowledge” in its library. The mural appropriately depicts the academic theme commensurate with the institution of learning where it is housed. Young men and women are shown holding high the key to learning that unleashes riches in their lives. The mural is mounted high up against the ceiling of the main library and appears to be in good condition.

The mural in the Punjab Library (adjacent to Lahore Museum) is mounted in the library hall located on the main floor. The ceiling of the Frere Hall, Karachi displays in bold, the words, Arz-o-Samawat (Earth and the Heavens) bears a historical significance since it represents the last piece of work by Sadequain. He died before he could complete it. Before he started painting the stupendous mural on the ceiling, he dedicated it to the citizens of the great city of Karachi. The mural is for the citizens to cherish and it should be treated...
as a national treasure. However, because of the security conditions, the citizens are deprived of entry into Frere Hall. The large mural is painted on dozens of individual panels that are put together like pieces of a puzzle.

The mural titled "Saga of Labor" by Sadequain at Mangla Dam is a glowing tribute to the working men and women of all times and places who form the backbone of any society. The mural hangs in the powerhouse of Mangla Dam.

Banaras Hindu University houses one large mural. It is kept in good condition because of the care provided to it by the authorities.

In addition to the murals mentioned above, Sadequain did many others, perhaps in the neighborhood of over thirty-five in all. However, the whereabouts of several of them are not certain. For example, one mural was done for the Naval Headquarters, but cannot be located. There was one done for the PIA's office in Paris, which does not exist at that location. There were murals dedicated to the War of 1965 that cannot be tracked.

Sadequain painted thousands of paintings, drawings, and murals in his lifetime. He hardly ever sold his work and mostly gave it away; sometimes his work was simply taken, and sometimes even stolen. In his lifetime, there were two galleries named after him by the authorities, but they no longer exist.

Renaissance of Islamic calligraphy

Sadequain was responsible for the renaissance of Islamic calligraphy in Pakistan. He was one of the greatest calligraphers of Pakistan and helped transform the art of calligraphy into serious expressionist paintings. He claimed that his transformation into a calligrapher was manifested by divine inspiration. He did not follow the established tradition and created his own style of script. His alphabets exude motion, and mood, and have vivid pictures of the message of the words of the Quran. Sadequain claimed that many of his paintings, especially after the seventies, had been based on calligraphic forms to portray images of cities, buildings, forests, men, and women.

In Pakistan, the art of calligraphy was relegated to a second-class status until Sadequain adapted this medium in the late nineteen sixties. Until then a few painters experimented with the medium but it remained just that, an experiment. After Sadequain transformed the art of calligraphy into a mainstream art form, most of the known Pakistani artists have followed Sadequain and calligraphic art now dominates the art scene.

TRUE ARTIST
In the 1960s, Sadequain was invited by the French authorities to illustrate the award-winning novel “The Stranger” by French writer Albert Camus. Sadequain also illustrated on canvas the poetry of Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz as an homage to their place in classical literature. Sadequain wrote thousands of quartets, which address a common theme of social and cultural dogmas, and published them. A special word is warranted about the large murals Sadequain painted, which are spread all over the subcontinent. His murals depict man’s struggle, achievements, and persistent thirst to discover his endless potential. His murals are full of activity, and ideas, and they read like an unfolding story about their particular theme. One of his most powerful works is the gigantic mural measuring 200×30 feet for the Power House of Mangla Dam. He completed it in an incredible period of three months during which he worked day and night. Aply so, the mural is titled “The Saga of Labor,” The mural, one of the largest in the world, portrays the history of mankind. Its pays homage to its characters, which are exclusively laborers and workers, facing and struggling against the powerful elements of nature. Sadequain was a social commentator. He crafted his message on canvas with the aid of powerful symbols and rich colors. Characteristically, he would address particular situations through a series of paintings, which would follow a common theme and yet maintain their individuality. His symbols transformed with time as he adapted to the changing conditions.

**HIS WORKS**

During the 1960s, he stayed in interior Sindh, in areas surrounded by desert, where nothing could grow except cactus which would break through the rugged sandy ground. The sight of the wild cactus growing in scorching heat and surviving the harshest of conditions left a lasting impression on Sadequain. He adapted this symbol to depict labor, struggle, and persistence against natural elements of resistance and triumph of hard work. Sadequain sketched numerous drawings titled Cobweb Series, Crow Series, Christ Series, Hope Series, and Sun Series during the sixties, which were commentaries on prevailing social and cultural conditions. Sadequain saw cobwebs engulfing our society, rendering it speechless and motionless. The Crow Series projected men as timid worshippers of scarecrows because they have lost self-respect and spirituality. Crows, however are not intimidated and gang up on humanity in flocks and pick on lifeless humans. In the Christ Series Sadequain showed the crime being committed in front of Christ while he was still alive on the Cross. Contrary to man’s images portrayed in Cobweb or Crow Series of drawings, Sadequain glorified the hard work and labor of ordinary workingmen by showing them struggling with primitive tools during the Stone Age, developing agricultural land, discovering scientific breakthroughs, and exploring the universe. He sometimes used Kufic script to form human images and carried that theme through vast canvases. One of the representative works of this genre is titled "The Last Supper," which was awarded the prestigious Biennale de Paris award in France. Sadequain was awarded first prize in the National Exhibition of Pakistan in the early sixties. He was bestowed with several awards and medals in Pakistan as well as foreign countries. But he seldom attended the award ceremonies or accepted the award money. Sadequain had a commanding knowledge of literature. He wrote thousands of "Rubaiyats," which he published in several
books. These verses have been adjudged unique and critically acclaimed by the literary elite. Like his paintings, the verses also address the topics of human nature, virtues, and weaknesses of society.

During his life, Sadequain exhibited his works on all continents. His exhibitions in foreign countries were sponsored at State levels and were attended by large audiences from all walks of life. A “faqir” at heart, he gave away most of his paintings to friends and foes, and painted gigantic murals in public buildings at no cost. He declared the giveaways as gifts to the citizens of the cities where the public buildings were situated.

Sadequain has been covered in the print and electronic media extensively such as the TV series "Mojeeza-e-Fun" which highlighted his work in a masterful documentary. "The Holy Sinner" is a book published in 2003, cataloging a number of his paintings, which were exhibited at Mohatta Palace, Karachi during the same year. The massive book is one of the largest and heaviest ever published in Pakistan and it also has a collection of articles about Sadequain published previously in magazines and papers over the course of years.

Great ideas are born in a beautiful and creative mind. Sadequain also had a lovely, fertile, and creative mind. He also had terrific eyesight who saw the beautiful universe with 'appreciative eyes', and his fingers painted beauty on the canvas. He has more than 15,000 works of art in paintings, impressions, calligraphy, and murals, but he has never sold his art pieces. Instead, this great man and great artist have always been generous in giving his works of art to various institutions and individuals. Sadequain always said that his artworks were not for sale; he did it only to give thanks for the blessings of Allah Almighty. In 1960, he was awarded the Tamgha E Imtiaz at the age of 30 in recognition of his art. The following year, he received France’s highest civilian honor. In 1962, he was awarded the Pride of Performance and in 1985, the Sitara E Imtiaz. The Australian Government also awarded him a Cultural Award.

Sadequain was an untraditional and self-made, self-taught painter and calligrapher who created a mysterious and mystic environment with his bold and uninhibited use of media and lines and had a cult-like following in his own lifetime. His unique style, whether pertaining to his paintings or calligraphy, was widely referred to as “Khat-e-Sadequain” which primarily evolved during his stay at a Karachi seaside desert called Gadani. The Holy Sinner: Sadequain contains over 400 of his series of drawings, paintings, and murals, each representing a different phase of his career and depicting his unique strokes, style, and color schemes. It was at Gadani
that Sadequain observed the wild growth of cactus in the scorching heat of the desert where water was scarce and conditions were harshest. Yet the cactus grew tall, shooting upwards in defiance of all odds. The powerful symbol of the defiant cactus transcends throughout Sadequain's work and creates a lasting impression on the observer.

One of his most important and final works is the book “Quranic Verse in Sadekain Letters” published in 2017 on the subject of “Quranic calligraphy”. This book is published by Art of Nisar Press. This work is considered to be an exceptional copy of the calligraphy of Quranic verses by Seyyed Sadequain.

Sadequain died on 10 February, 1987, in Karachi, Pakistan at the age of 57. He is buried in Sakhi Hassan's graveyard in Karachi.

**List of works:**

- 1955 Mural at Jinnah Hospital, exhibitions at Frere Hall
- 1963 Held several exhibitions while visiting the US
- 1964 Lithographic illustration of L'Étranger by Albert Camus
- 1967 Executed mural at Mangla Dam
- 1968 Executed mural at Punjab University Library
- 1969 Calligraphy of Sura-e-Rehman
- 1969 Crucifixion series - of which one painting was sold at GBP 118,750 during a 2017 auction at Bonhams in London.
- 1970 One-man show
- 1970 Produced a masterpiece collection of rubaiyat, which was adjudged for first prize by the Literary Society of Pakistan. Sadequain privately published book of rubaiyat, Rubaiyyat-e-Sadequain Naqqash.
- 1973 Murals in Lahore Museum
- 1974 Exhibitions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe
- 1976 T.V. Series Mojiza-e-Fun
- 1977 Illustrations of classical Urdu literature, especially the poetry of Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz on canvas.
- 1979 Mural in Abu Dhabi
- 1981 Tour of India, murals at Aligarh, Banaras, Hyderabad, Delhi
- 1985 Illustrated Faiz Ahmad Faiz
- 1986 Mural at Frere Hall

**QUOTATIONS**

In an interview, he said, "People ask why I don't paint flowers, butterflies, and landscapes. I tell them that I seek the truth and I am after the reality. I am not inspired by someone posing against the backdrop of roses in a vase or pink curtains. What inspires me is a person who has gone hungry for hours and is struggling for survival. The expression that lights his face at the end of the day when he has finally found some scraps, is what touches me. I am a painter of the expression of reality."

Self-proclaimed “Faqir”, Sadequain was outside society’s worldly greed or hypocrisy and called himself a “speaker of truth.”

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Interview

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan in Tehran
H.E. Nizomiddin Zohidi
1. AFTER THREE DECADES OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES BY THE ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE, HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE REGIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE AND THE ROLE OF TAJKISTAN?

**Ambassador:** We consider the regional activities of the ECO Culture Institute to be extremely positive. For centuries, we Asian peoples have lived in a common cultural area in the region. Meanwhile, we have embraced many cultural values from one another. Our customs and practices, cultural traditions and music are slightly different and share much in common. A striking example of this is the festival of Nowruz, which has been inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Twelve states - Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan - where Nowruz is celebrated - have applied for inclusion of Nowruz in the UNESCO list. The same applies to “Pelav”.

The role of Tajikistan as an ECO member state is greatly impressive in the promotion and implementation of cultural ideas of the ECO Institute of Culture. Our Embassy staff and I are very much involved in the meetings and events of this organization. We always try to provide valuable and sensible suggestions for the implementation of its cultural ideas.

2. CONSIDERING THE BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE AND TAJKISTAN, IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST OUTSTANDING JOINT ACTIVITIES SO FAR?

**Ambassador:** As I mentioned earlier, the bilateral cooperation between the ECO Institute of Culture and Tajikistan has always been very fruitful. Over the 30 years of cooperation, hundreds of events have been jointly organized. They include the publication of books by the elites of Tajik-Persian literature and contemporary language professors of Tajikistan, festivals of Tajik cinema, photo exhibitions, film screenings, meetings between the authorities of the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan and other Tajik cultural/relevant organizations with the President of the ECO Cultural Institute, of Tajik poetry and music nights in Iran and performances of Tajik artists in Iran.

The complete list of the events would take multiple pages, but I would like to name the most significant and unforgettable events, which mean much more to us. First of all, the magnificent performance of the artists of the State Philharmonic of Tajikistan to honor the international holiday of Nowruz in Iran at Vahdat Hall of Tehran, where, along with other Heads of ECO member states, the Founder of National Unity, the Leader of the Tajik Nation, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Emomali Rahmon was present. It was indeed a grandiose celebration filled with an amorous atmosphere of friendship among nations.

Next, on the initiative of the Embassy of Tajikistan and in cooperation with the ECO Cultural Institute, a series of academic and literary symposia and conferences were held during these years in honor of the heroes of Tajikistan - the father of Tajik modern literature Sadriddin Aini, a world-renowned scholar-historian, author of the famous book “Tajiks”, academician Babajan Gafurov, who was the political leader of our Republic in the 40-50s, as well as the
Head of the Institute of Oriental Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences for almost 30 years. Also, the great poet of our time, Mirzo Tursunzade, who for many years led the Tajikistan Writers Union and the Soviet Committee of Solidarity of Asia and Africa and was a member of the Soviet Committee for Peace. In addition to these events, the works of the above-mentioned figures of science and literature of Tajikistan were published in Persian and other languages. The works of the elites of Tajik-Persian literature, Rudaki and Kamol Khujandi, published more than once in different years, thanks to the cooperation between Tajikistan and the ECO Cultural Institute, were always received with enthusiasm by Iranian readers. Works by other contemporary famous poets and writers of Tajikistan, such as Mumin Canoat, Loiq Sherali, Gulrukhsor Safieva, Abdulhamid Samadov, Bahmanor, as well as translations into Persian and works by Timur Zulfikarov, a famous Russian-language poet and writer of Tajikistan and Russia must not be missed.

I would also like to note the significant theatrical event in 2022, dedicated to the 85th birth anniversary of the talented actor of Tajik theater and cinema, the People’s Artist of Tajikistan late Habibullo Abdurazzokov.

3. THESE DAYS, ANCIENT CULTURES OF NATIONS ARE FACING THE CONFRONTATIONS OF CIVILIZATION AND VALUES DUE TO GLOBALIZATION. WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE DONE TO PRESERVE THE TRADITIONS AND VALUES OF NATIONS?

Ambassador: Yes, whether we like it or not, globalization is a true phenomenon of our time. We can hear it breathing. This, of course, is primarily due to the advancement of information technology, other spheres of our modern life, the high competition of world powers for world markets, the integration of the economies of entire regions, and the ensuing consequences, such as the convergence of distances and the danger for small countries to be dissolved in this cycle. As a result, we are confronted with some of the downsides of globalization, especially the clash between civilizations. Many countries and peoples are not yet ready for such an influx of frenzied globalization processes. However, globalization has not yet reached its peak. It is just approaching, it is close, and many are afraid of it, calling it a danger and a challenge for many countries that are not players in the system of international relations.

It seems to me that humans will end up
finding the right place in the process of globalization. There are no other options. I’m an optimist in that regard. As a person who is not too far from science, I know that languages, traditions, customs, and other values are resilient; they will not simply disappear.

Now, on the manner of preserving traditions and values I think it is possible to preserve them. Of course, they will change; they will vary and eventually they will fade away. Apparently, we must be prepared for the fact that they are not eternal; their existence is dictated by life, the development of societies, and many other factors.

However, humans need to engage in a dialogue of civilizations. The cause of many disasters and conflicts in the modern world is the lack of dialogue among civilizations. This is the shortest way towards the preservation of traditions and values. Tolerance and multiculturalism should be our main quality in this endeavor.

4. FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW, WHICH HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGES OF TAJIKISTAN ARE LESS KNOWN IN THE REGION? WHAT IS PLANNED FOR RAISING INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS?

Ambassador: I would not say that the historical and cultural heritage of my country is little known. In the Soviet era, much was done to study them. Soviet and Tajik scholars have devoted much effort to studying and popularising them. This holds true primarily to the glorious ancient history of the ancient Tajik people, which has been fairly well researched. The father of this direction was an eminent Tajik and Soviet scholar, academican Bobojon Gafurov, who wrote a fundamental and voluminous work “The Tajiks”.

However, in the new era, the strongest impetus for the study and popularization of our history came from the Leader of our Nation, H.E. Emomali Rahmon. From the beginning of independence, the Head of our state has been tirelessly taking care of the protection and preservation of material and spiritual monuments of our great historical heritage, the revival of good ancestral traditions, and the popularization of the heritage of our ancestors. In one of his speeches, he says: “In today's world, particularly when the clash of civilizations and different cultural values is increasing, it is possible to resist the destructive influence of the globalization process only through deep study of history, popularization and presentation to the world of our rich historical and cultural heritage.

The monuments of grey antiquity in Tajikistan, such as Kuldara, Khonakoh, Sarazm, Takhti Sangin, Ajinatappaa, Penjikent, Hulbuk, Bujikat, Shahristan, Hisorak, Sanjarshoh, Karon, Yamchun and dozens of other monuments, as well as the ancient holidays of Nawruz, Tirgon, Mehrgon and Sada are part of the unique cultural phenomenon of human civilization. We believe that indeed, the centuries-old history of the Tajik people and the rich material and spiritual heritage of the ancestors, including historical monuments, for each member of society, especially adolescents and young people, is the greatest school of national consciousness and self-awareness.

It was during the years of independence that such tremendous cultural events were held in our country as: The Year of Aryan Civilization, the 2700th anniversary of the ancient city of Kulyab, the 600th anniversary of the great Oriental writer, scholar and thinker Mavlono Abdurahmon Jomi, the 3000th anniversary of Gissar, the 2500th anniversary of Istaravshan, the 5500th anniversary of Sarazm, International symposiums were held to mark the 1,000th
anniversary of Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh, the 1,100th anniversary of the Samanid state, the 3,000th anniversary of Zoroastrian culture, the 2,700th anniversary of Avasto, and the revival of Sarazm and Hulbuk. The days of veneration of professional art “Shashmaqom” and folk art “Falak” are established.

Thus, the above-mentioned activities and events have enabled many people from different parts of the world to learn the history, cultural heritage of our ancestors, national values, traditions and customs of our people.

We are always happy to cooperate with any international organization to learn more about our rich culture.

5. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY TAJIKISTAN IN PROMOTING CULTURAL TOURISM? IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ACTIONS CAN ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE TAKE IN THIS REGARD?

Ambassador: Much has been done to promote cultural tourism in Tajikistan. Tajikistan has all conditions for the development of cultural tourism. Thousands of tourists, getting visas under the simplified procedure, constantly from different parts of the world visit our geographical attractions, paradise-like corners of our mountainous nature in Badakhshan, Khatlon and Sughd and other areas, get acquainted with the traditions, culture and art of the people of our Republic. The organization of music, folklore festivals, especially during the celebration of Nowruz in Tajikistan is no less effective. I know that hundreds of tourists, particularly Iranians, want to come to Tajikistan right during the celebration of Nowruz, as it is the diversity, contrast, color and rich dastarkhan of hospitable Tajiks that strongly attracts them.

I would advise the ECO Cultural Institute to take more actions by organizing music festivals with the participation of representatives of ECO countries.

6. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW CAN ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROMOTION OF THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE, AS ONE OF THE COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE ECO REGION?

Ambassador: Farsi or Persian is a language with a rich, centuries-old literary tradition, including recognized masterpieces of world literature. The language is acknowledged as an official language in three countries: Tajikistan, Iran and Afghanistan. For a long time, since the X-XII centuries, Farsi has served as a language of international communication, a language of culture
and science in a large area of the Islamic world, from Central Asia, the Caucasus, India to Iraq, and in our time it fulfills this function in the countries of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and partially in the Middle East. Unfortunately, over the past 200 years, due to complex global political processes, the usage of this language has been significantly narrowed down. Therefore, it is very important that organizations such as the ECO Cultural Institute pay attention to the promotion of this language. What can we do? To hold more events, cultural activities, film and literature days, poetry evenings with the participation of prominent Farsi-speaking artists, writers and poets, wherever and whenever we can.
Bakhodir Jalolov wins his 11th fight in professional boxing by KO


PROFESSIONAL BOXING CAREER

Jalolov made his professional debut against Hugo Trujillo, on 5 May 2018. He won the fight by a third-round technical knockout. Jalolov scored another stoppage victory four months later, on 29 September 2018, when he knocked Eduardo Vitela out in the first round. Jalolov was next scheduled to face Tyrell Wright at the Madison Square Garden, on 27 October 2018. He won the fight by stoppage after Wright retired from the fight at the end of the fourth round. Jalolov was scheduled to fight Marquis Valentine on 8 December 2018, in his last
fight of the year. He scored the second first-round stoppage of his professional career, knocking Valentine out at the 2:29 minute mark of the opening round.

Jalolov was next scheduled to face Willie Harvey on 15 March 2019. He won the fight by a second-round technical knockout. Jalolov fought for his first professional title on 10 April 2019, when he took on Brendan Barrett for the vacant WBC-NABF Junior heavyweight title. He won the fight by a first-round knockout.

Jalolov returned on 12 December 2020, to fight Wilfredo Leal. Leal retired from the bout at the end of the first round. Jalolov fought in his native Uzbekistan on 3 April 2021, when he was scheduled to fight Kristaps Zutis. He beat Zutis by a second-round technical knockout. Jalolov knocked out Kamil Sokolowski in the fifth round, on 18 March 2022.

Olympic champion and world heavyweight boxing champion got into the ring on June 11 2022 in New York.

In the tournament organized by Showtime, the Uzbek boxer was opposed by Jack Mulowayi from Belgium (11-3-1, 7 Kos). It was an 8-round fight. Bakhodir dominated on points in almost all rounds, knocking down his opponent at the end of the 6th round, and at the beginning of the last round, the match arrived at the climax and the Uzbek boxer knocked out his opponent.
Jalolov took part in the 2017 Asian Amateur Boxing Championships, held in May 2017 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. He went on a perfect 4–0 run, beating Haipeng Mou and Do Hyeon Kim by technical knockout in the first two rounds, Mohamad Mulayes by technical knockout in the semifinals, and Kamshybek Kunkabayev by majority decision in the finals.

Jalolov went on another perfect run in the 2019 Asian Amateur Boxing Championships, and earned his place in the finals after beating Mohamad Mulayes by unanimous decision in the semifinals. Jalolov faced a familiar opponent in the finals, Kamshybek Kunkabayev, and won the fight by majority decision.

Jalolov took part in the 2021 Asian Amateur Boxing Championships as well and earned his place in the finals with a technical knockout of Abdulrahman Alanzi in the semifinals. He faced Kamshybek Kunkabayev in the tournament finals, and once again prevailed against Kunkabayev, winning by unanimous decision.

Bakhodir Jalolov participated in the 2015 AIBA World Boxing Championships, held in Doha, Qatar in October 2015. He earned his place in the semifinals with decision wins against Mohamed Grimes, Lenier Pero, and Hussein Iashaish. Jalolov lost his semifinal bout against Ivan Dychko by split decision. After an unsuccessful run in the 2017 AIBA World Boxing Championships, where he was eliminated in the second round by Kamshybek Kunkabayev, Jalolov next found success in the 2019 AIBA World Boxing Championships. After beating Tsotne Rogava by decision in the first round, Richard Torrez by knockout in the second
round, and Maxim Babanin by decision in the semifinals. Jalolov faced Kamshybek Kunkabayev in the finals and beat him by unanimous decision.

**OLYMPIC GAMES**

Jalolov reached the quarterfinals at the 2016 Summer Olympics, where he lost to the eventual silver medalist Joe Joyce. He placed in the 2020 Summer Olympics and was set to face Mahammad Abdullayev in the first round of the super heavyweight tournament. He thoroughly outboxed Abdullayev over three rounds and scored a standing eight count in round two, although he was unable to finish his opponent. Jalolov advanced to the tournament quarterfinals, where he faced Satish Kumar, whom he beat by unanimous decision. Advancing to the semifinals, Jalolov fought Frazer Clarke. Although Clarke was able to force a standing count, the fight was stopped in the third round due to a previously sustained cut above his eye which widened throughout his bout with Jalolov. Jalolov earned the gold medal after beating Richard Torrez by unanimous decision in the finals of the super heavyweight tournament.

**SOURCES:**
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My name is Shahrbanoo Mansourian. I was born on 28 January 1986 in Semirom County, Isfahan Province. I am an Iranian wushu (a Chinese martial art) athlete and I compete in the sanda division. I have won 10 gold medals, four of which are from world championships and three from Asian championships. I am also the most decorated female champion in Iran. In addition to wushu, I have also been practicing kung fu. My sisters, Elaheh and Soheila Mansourian are also athletes and world champions in wushu.

Actually, I became interested in martial arts from the age of 9 and a year later, I started practicing it. The martial art was not taught in the proximity of Semirom city in the central Iranian province of Isfahan, where wushu classes were held. Therefore, each day one of us could attend the class and share the lessons with the other one.

Like my other sisters, I could succeed in my professional career, earned a series of victories, and spent the cash prizes I had been given on training.
camps and on the path to achieving more victories.

Of course, *Mah-e Asal*, a daily television program broadcast by Channel 3 during Ramadan, and the documentary *Zero to Podium* made us more popular among the Iranians. *Zero to Podium* is a tale of determination and grit. The film follows how we compete to become international champions of wushu. This exciting story not only shows our dedicated training and practice, but also reflects our efforts to challenge traditional gender roles on the road to success.

Although my two sisters and I had bitter moments and regrets during our childhoods and in our professional lives, I believe that the goal was of utmost importance for us. There were days when I had to work at other people’s houses and gardens and . I filled large cubic tin cans with cement to use them as dumbbells or barbells. That is why we could overcome the challenges in life and step forward.

My best memory was when I was able to get my first gold medal in the Turkey world championship. In the year 2017, I was selected as the most ethical athlete in the country, and then I was elected as a member of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Iran. I emphasize now that I am a member of the NOC, I can support and help Iranian athletes.

I have been married to Omid Navabi, who is also a wrestler for about 9 years. I am now practicing wushu and working as a coach. I am also trying to earn some money from promoting my business on Instagram to spend on my professional training.

**SOURCES:**
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The Thrilling Shandur Polo Festival

A Celebration of Sports and Culture on the Roof of the World

THE SHANDUR POLO FESTIVAL IS A THREE-DAY ANNUAL EVENT HELD AT THE SHANDUR PASS, located in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan. The festival is a celebration of the traditional sport of polo, which is played on the highest polo ground in the world. The festival attracts visitors from all over the world and is a unique experience for both players and spectators.

HISTORY:

The Shandur Polo Festival has a long and fascinating history. The festival was first held in 1936, when the British built a polo ground at Shandur Pass. The polo ground was used by the British to play polo matches between their officers stationed in Gilgit and Chitral. The locals soon became interested in the game and started playing polo themselves. In 1947, after the partition of India, the polo ground was abandoned and fell into disrepair.
In 1978, the Government of Pakistan decided to revive the Shandur Polo Festival as a means of promoting tourism in the region. The festival was an instant success and has been held every year since then.

THE GAME OF POLO:

Polo is a traditional sport that has been played in the region for centuries. The game is played on horseback, with two teams of four players each. The objective of the game is to score goals by hitting a small wooden ball with a long-handled mallet. The game is fast-paced and requires a high level of skill and physical fitness.

THE SHANDUR POLO FESTIVAL:

The Shandur Polo Festival is held every year in July. The festival is a three-day event that includes polo matches, cultural shows, and handicraft exhibitions. The festival attracts visitors from all over Pakistan and abroad. The highlight of the festival is the polo match played between the teams of Chitral and Gilgit. The match is played on the highest polo ground in the world and is a unique experience for both players and spectators. The game is played in a traditional manner, with no protective gear worn by the players. The players ride their horses bareback and use traditional wooden mallets to hit the
ball. The festival also includes traditional music and dance performances, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region. Visitors can also explore the local handicraft markets, which offer a variety of handmade products, including carpets, shawls, and embroidered fabrics.

Shandur Polo Game Format and Rules: The Shandur Polo Festival is a unique and thrilling event held annually at Shandur Pass, Pakistan. The tournament follows a distinct format and set of rules that contribute to the excitement and competitiveness of the matches. Here is an overview of the tournament format and rules:

Teams: The Shandur Polo Festival features a friendly competition between two teams, representing the districts of Chitral and Gilgit. The teams are typically composed of six players each.

Polo Ground: The festival takes place on the Shandur Pass polo ground, which is known as the “highest polo ground on earth.” The ground is a vast open space surrounded by mountains and offers a challenging terrain for the players.

Game Duration: Each match consists of six periods, known as “chukkers,” with each chukker lasting approximately seven minutes. Therefore, the total playing time of a match is around 42 minutes.

Half-Time Change: At the end of the third chukker, there is a half-time break during which teams switch sides. This allows for a fair playing field considering the potential impact of wind and other environmental factors.

Horse Changes: After every chukker, players have the option to change their horses. This allows the teams to utilize fresh and energetic horses throughout the match.

Scoring: The scoring in polo is determined by the number of goals scored by each team. When a player successfully strikes the ball through the goalposts of the opposing team, one point is awarded to their team.

Handicaps: Polo handicaps are used to ensure balanced gameplay and provide equal opportunities for both teams. Handicaps are assigned to individual players based on their skill level and experience. A player’s handicap determines their contribution to the team’s overall handicap.

Equipment and Safety: Players use mallets to strike a small ball, aiming to score goals. They wear protective gear, including helmets and knee guards, for their safety. Horses also wear protective leg wraps. Umpires closely monitor the matches and enforce the rules to maintain fair play and prevent dangerous situations.

Spectator Participation: The Shandur Polo Festival encourages active spectator participation. Spectators are often invited to join the game during breaks and play a friendly polo match of their own. This engagement fosters a sense of community.
and adds to the festive atmosphere of the event.
It’s important to note that specific rules and variations may be implemented each year, and the tournament organizers have the authority to make adjustments as needed to ensure a fair and enjoyable competition.

ACCESSIBILITY:
Shandur Pass is located in a remote area of Gilgit-Baltistan and is only accessible by road. The road from Chitral to Shandur Pass is open from April to November, while the road from Gilgit is open from June to October. Visitors to the festival can either drive to the pass themselves or hire a jeep or bus from Chitral or Gilgit.

CONCLUSION:
The Shandur Polo Festival is a unique and fascinating event that showcases the traditional sport of polo and the rich cultural heritage of the Gilgit-Baltistan region. The festival attracts visitors from all over the world and is a must-visit destination for anyone interested in sports and culture. The festival is a celebration of the resilience and determination of the people of the region, who have preserved their traditions and way of life despite the challenges of modern times.

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Azerbaijan holds 1st Balloon Festival
The first Balloon Festival was held in Azerbaijan’s Shamakhi district on June 17-18.

As part of the festival, concert and entertainment programs were organized for the guests, as well as master classes on various topics. A presentation of the project was held for the participants, information about balloons and flight was given.

A demonstration flight took place on June 17, while the main flights of the festival with the participation of guests took place in the morning of June 18. This morning, the Shamakhi sky was strewn with balloons of various designs.

The project was implemented with the support of the State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan, the Executive Authority of Shamakhi district, the State Civil Aviation Agency, the Azer aeronation Air Traffic Control and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. Preparation for the balloon project in Azerbaijan lasted 2 years. Balloons at the festival were made in the UK and Türkiye, and attracted attention with an interesting design.

A concert program with the participation of famous performers was also organized as part of the festival. Folk artists Faq Agayev, Miri Yusif, Honored Artist Lala Mammadova, Dilara Kazimova, Eldar and Nigar and others performed hits in front of the audience.

As part of the entertainment program of the festival, master classes on various topics were also held for both children and adults. The participants had the opportunity to take part in workshops on making clay figures, painting, puppet theater, board games, weaving and other areas. Thus, the guests not only watched the flight of balloons, but also had a fun and interesting weekend.

The traditional international festival “Kyrgyz Shyrdagy – XIII” was held in Naryn town of Kyrgyzstan from June 28 to June 29, 2023.

More than 70 artisans came to the holiday, more than 300 shyrdaks were exhibited. More than 70 artisans from all the regions of Kyrgyzstan took part in the festival. Within the framework of the festival, various competitions, a scientific and practical conference on the history of Kyrgyz Shyrdak, and exhibitions of national dishes and crafts were held.

The purpose of the festival is to preserve cultural heritage, revive the continuity of traditional knowledge, develop crafts and industry based on cultural heritage, and turn Kyrgyzstan into an international zone of environmentally friendly cultural tourism. Shyrdak is a stitched, and often handmade colorful felt floor-covering. It is made using the mosaic technique, which is one of the most difficult, while one of the most important qualities of shyrdak is durability. The average service life of a shyrdak is about 100 years, sometimes even more. Making one shyrdak carpet is a laborious process, so it takes 2 to 6 months for craftswomen to make one carpet, provided that she only deals with this carpet, but most often Kyrgyz women work in groups, which mainly include representatives of the same family.
Among the Kyrgyz, the shyrdak carpet is one of the most valuable household items. The Shyrdagy Festival in Kyrgyzstan celebrates the art of making Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets, which has been passed down for many generations and is an important cultural component in the everyday life of nomadic families.

**HISTORY OF FELT PRODUCTS**

The history of felt production in Eurasia can be traced to the end of the Bronze Age when sheep herding was the main activity of the nomadic inhabitants of the region. It was, however, during the early Iron Age when nomadic culture acquired its specific character, producing mobile tents covered with felt, weaponry, horse harnesses, specific clothing, and items made of felt, hide, and wood. In the burial mounds of the mountainous Altai region, Eastern Kazakhstan and Mongolia, many household items were discovered, including felt carpets that utilized mosaic, applique, and quilting techniques, demonstrating a rich aesthetic and high level of skill.

Felt was among the products traded on the Great Silk Road. Texts, miniatures, engravings, drawings, and paintings of the 17th – 19th centuries serve as proof of the production of felt in the Middle Ages. In the 19th – 20th centuries felt was one of the main items providing the traditional livelihood of the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, and other nomadic, Turkic-speaking people of the Russian Empire.

Common artistic and technological features of felt production indicate deep contacts and links between Turkic and Turkic-Mongolian language-speaking people of Central Asia and the Caucasus, whose shared historical past was the nomadic lifestyle. In settled parts of Central Asia, the production of felt items was considered to be the craft of city dwellers: Uighur craftsmen decorated felt with vegetative ornaments and used camel wool as well.

The harsh climate of the mountainous areas where Kyrgyz people have historically settled, some more than 4.000 feet above sea level, led them to manufacture and use
felt, the most practical material for their lifestyle. The portable house of nomadic Kyrgyz tribes, the yurt, was covered with layers of felt, and its interior decoration included richly ornamented felt carpets, as well as household items, clothes, horse harnesses, and many other things. In traditional Kyrgyz culture, felt patterns and markings denoted the region or tribe of the maker and in general, symbolized home, prosperity, wellbeing, and peace. In addition, it had an aesthetic function as well. Felt also had a supernatural function and was sometimes thought to be an amulet as well, offering protection from evil sources. In ancient nomadic Kyrgyz society, the elected leader was lifted in the air by tribal members on a piece of white felt, symbolizing public acknowledgment of his power and authority. Ancient Kyrgyz believed that felt reduced aggressiveness and thus, women placed felt rugs under the feet of warriors returning home, assuming that it will help them return to a peaceful life. Felt was also used in traditional medicine. Afflicted parts of the body were wrapped with felt sheets that were initially soaked in salted water and dried in cases of flu or fractured or broken limbs. The ash of burnt felt was used as an antiseptic to treat open wounds. Felt was also used to wrap the body of a deceased person at the time of burial. Fleece that was sheared in the autumn was preferred for felt. The main techniques of felt production are simple felting, mosaic, and appliqué, each of which has variations. The most popular and widespread products are ala-kiyiz and shyrdak rugs. The process of felt production represents the tradition of men and women working together, accompanied by various customs and rituals (providing food, good wishes, etc.). The main work: preparation of the wool and felting, dyeing of felt, and production of the final felt product – is done by women. Since ancient times, the Kyrgyz used local vegetation as natural dyes: sorrel leaves, sand acacia, camel burr, scoring rush, wild black nightshade, pomegranate, walnut, and madder. Indigo and cochineal were brought to Central Asia by traders from Iran and India. As Russia started to produce comparatively cheap chemical dyes of various colors, they replaced natural dyes. The older female generation actively involved children in the cleaning of the wool, and teenagers are usually busy pressing or rolling the felt. Men's work consists of sheep shearing, preparation of wood for boiling water, participation in the process of felting (including pressing by foot or pulling behind a horse or donkey), and sale of the finished products at the market. Traditional Kyrgyz felt items can be divided into several types:

- Items for insulation and decoration of the dwelling: outside covers of the yurt, ground coverings kiyiz, rugs ala kiyiz and shyrdak, floor pillows jer jazdyk, wall hanging carpets,
tushtuk and tush kiyiz, etc.

- **Household items:** yurt details and furniture, uuuk kap, kerege kap, shelves for the hats and cups tekche, wall hanging bags for the kitchen items, ayak kap, chyny kap, mirror and cosmetics ainek kap, horse saddle bag kurjun, additional bags for other instances of nomadic life torbo, bashtykcha, etc.

- **Clothing items:** male and female hats kalpak, topu, takya, coats kementai, socks baipak etc.

- **Items for animals:** horse cloth - at jabdyk, horse cover for under the saddle tokum, protecting cover for the udder jelim kap, bag for food jem torbo etcs.

- **Items for rituals and religious events:** amulets tumar, prayer rug, jay namaz, carpet and cover for the body (at a funeral), and so on.

Traditional Kyrgyz felt is not just a physical object of aesthetic value but a part of a sacral environment, a model of the universe, each detail of which has a symbolic, ritual feature and special semantic.

Felts covering the exterior of the yurt tuurduk, uzuk, tunduk japkych are fringed by a black and white thread woven from yak hair as protection from the evil eye. The felt door cover eshik japkych that closes the entrance to the yurt, is also decorated with ornaments symbolizing power and prosperity.

**SHYRDAK: KYRGYZ MOST POPULAR TRADITIONAL FELT**

Shyrdak floor rug is the most popular traditional felt item in Kyrgyzstan. It is included in the list of necessary items of the bride's dowry, and up to the present day it is made in the countryside, almost in every home. The word shyrdak derives from the technical stitching process shyruu. The main feature of shyrdak is the balance between the foreground and the background, according to negative-positive principles of pattern building. The symmetry of the compositional parts of the shyrdak is very important. Production of shyrdak includes such techniques as mosaic, applique, cord decoration, and quilting. In addition to the above-mentioned techniques, craftsmen use mixed techniques where mosaic can be combined with appliqué, quilting, or embroidery.

Kyrgyz felt items have a specific artistic appearance and are noted for their softness of ornamental lines and particular color combinations that reflect the local landscape with motifs of flora and fauna.

Ornaments often expressed encoded messages from the creator of the item to the recipient, thus reflecting pre-Islamic, shamanistic beliefs of the Kyrgyz, who were very confident in the powers of nature and rituals. Ornamental motifs distinctive to felt are divided into the following groups: geometric, animalistic, floral, and less often – anthropomorphic and objects of everyday life. Straight, zigzag and wavy lines, triangles, rhombus, corners, and circles all belong to the most ancient patterns and are linked to archaic layers of art. As a rule, such motifs are connected to the environment and nature. Creators of these motifs reflected their understanding of the earth, water, mountains, stars, and the idea of fertility in very simple forms. As time passed, the meanings of the motifs were lost and they were transformed into decorative symbols that have universal rhythmic-compositional features.

Among the most popular animal motifs are the spiral and curl elements, symbolizing animal horns: sheep – kochkor myuz, deer - bugu muyuz, broken horn – syngan muyuz. A whole spectrum of good wishes is linked to the elements: prosperity, power, and courage. Other popular motifs that also act as amulets
and talismans are the crow's claw – karga tyrmak and dog's tail – it kuiruk.
Floral motifs are stylistically close to animal motifs. One of the most popular is the motif
of a tree darak which has many different variations. The foundation of this motif is a
pair of sheep or deer horns that are drawn with many symmetrical stems curling
away from a central line. There are also other, more realistic ways to denote a tree.

Anthropomorphic figures can be found in
many felt items except those which are used
to cover floors. Images of items used in the
household as well as dates and/or the names
of the person to whom the felt was dedicated
are sometimes inscribed on the felt.

There is not a big difference between
ornamental groups: geometric motifs can
depict both animal or plant (wavy lines –
wave or camel hump, rhombus - flower
or an eye); animal motifs can change
their meaning and be associated by
craftsmen with other objects (a horn can
be transformed to a hill, or tree branch; and
a more complicated version of the horn
design can become a bird, human and so
on). Thus, felt ornaments are characterized
by the transformation of elements, each
of which has huge graphic and figurative
potential, resulting in abundant variations.

Most of the motifs have sacral meanings.
The Kyrgyz have always worshipped nature:
sky, earth, and water. It is reflected in
felt patterns as well. Thus, the umai ene
pattern symbolizes the mother of all living
things and the patron of parturient women
and newborn babies; tenir ata – a symbol
of the blue sky is of male origin. Patterns
bugu muyuz (deer horn), it kuirik (dog's tale),
karga tyrmak (claw of the crow), boru kyoz
.eye of the wolf) – are considered to be
strong protective signs, probably because
in the past these animals have been the
totems of Kyrgyz tribes.

Even though there is a wide variety of
colors in felt products, the following color
combinations are the most popular and
most widespread: black and white, grey and
white, brown and white, yellow and brown, 
red and white, red and brown, blue and red,
green and red. A harmonious perception
of the surrounding environment, reflected
in ornament and color combinations, as
well as a striking sense of proportions,
peculiar to Kyrgyz women-craftsmen, has
transformed ordinary felt items used in
everyday nomadic life, into art objects with
high aesthetic value.

Felt art that has thousands of years of
history is a bright element of contemporary
Kyrgyz culture. Kyrgyz felt from the end of
the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century
absorbed both a traditional mentality and
modern consciousness, predetermined by
globalization processes. Today, felt items
such as felt rugs, interior items, clothing,
toys, and clothing produced by Kyrgyz
craftsmen are being exported to many
countries around the globe. Contemporary
Kyrgyz felt products can be divided into
two main groups. The first group includes
felt items that reflect the traditional culture
and are used in both everyday life, as well
as rituals, such as rugs, hats, outerwear, and
amulets. They are sold at local markets and
are mainly distributed in Kyrgyzstan and are
culturally close to neighboring Kazakhstan.
The second group includes utilitarian
items based on the design with the use of
traditional and innovative technologies and
materials. They are interior items, household
items, clothes, toys, and souvenirs. These
items are sold in both foreign and
domestic markets. Kyrgyz products are now
successfully competing with felt products
from India and Nepal internationally.
Professional Kyrgyz artists today are
inspired by ancient felt traditions as well,
and in their creativity refer to the experience
of their ancestors in the last half of the 20th
century. Thus, we can state that nowadays, felt production holds a very special place in the subjective and spiritual worlds of the Kyrgyz nation, a true cultural phenomenon.

**SHYRDAK; IN NEED OF URGENT SAFEGUARDING**

In 2012 Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdak, the art of Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets was inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Traditional felt carpets are one of the foremost arts of the Kyrgyz people and an integral part of their cultural heritage. The Kyrgyz traditionally produce two types of felt carpets: Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdaks. Knowledge, skills, diversity, the semantics of ornamentation, and the ceremonies of creating carpets are all important cultural components, providing Kyrgyz people with a sense of identity and continuity. The making of Kyrgyz felt carpets is inseparably linked to the everyday life of nomads, who used felt carpets to warm and decorate their homes. The creation of felt carpets demands unity among the community and fosters the transmission of traditional knowledge — as a rule by older women who are normally concentrated in rural and mountainous areas, to younger women within the family. The Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdak traditional arts are in danger of disappearing, however. The number of practitioners is diminishing, with most over forty years of age. The lack of governmental safeguarding, the disinterest of the younger generation, the dominance of inexpensive synthetic carpets, and the poor quality and low availability of raw materials are exacerbating the situation. As a result, Ala-kiyiz carpets have practically disappeared from Kyrgyz homes and Shyrdaks are under serious threat of being lost.

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DUSHANBE SMART CITY

BLOOMS OF THE CAPITAL

THE AWARDING CEREMONY
OF THE FESTIVAL
COMPETITION OF YOUNG
TALENTS OF THE CITY OF
DUSHANBE WAS HELD

In “Kohi Surush” of Dushanbe, a grand awarding ceremony was held for the winners of the Festival-competition of young talents of Dushanbe city “Blooms of the capital” and the competition sections of “Week of science, technology, innovation and invention of teenagers and young people of Dushanbe” under the title “Dushanbe - smart city” was held on May 31, 2023.

The ceremony was attended by the leadership of the Dushanbe State Executive Body, relevant republican and city structures, teachers, creative, talented and innovative children and teenagers of the capital.

This conference was organized on the initiative of the executive body of the city of Dushanbe by the head of education of the capital, within the framework of the events “Week of children and teenagers of Dushanbe city” and “Week of science, technology, innovation and invention of teenagers and young people of Dushanbe city”, according to the relevant decisions of the Chairman the city of Dushanbe, honored Rustam Emomali was announced, was held.

The leadership of the executive bodies of the city of Dushanbe expressed that in order to organize a series of events on the occasion of the International Day of Children's Protection at a high organizational, ideological, artistic, cultural and educational level, the decision of the Mayor of Dushanbe on May 12, 2023 “On the preparation and celebration of the International Day of Children's Protection” protection of children in Dushanbe” was signed. As part of the plan of activities approved by it, from May 26 to June 1, 2023, the “Week of Children and Adolescents of Dushanbe” has been announced in the capital.

“In addition, in order to increase the level and quality of education, to creativity and innovation, invention, in-depth study of exact sciences, formation of the level of
technical culture, promotion of the culture of using Internet information, introduction of modern innovative techniques and technologies in the education process, improvement of knowledge and skills and support young inventors and innovators from May 23 to 28, 2023, the week of science, technology, innovation and invention of teenagers and young people of the city of Dushanbe has been announced," it was said during the event.

It was noted that within the framework of the “Week of Science, Technology, Innovation and Invention of Dushanbe Youth” under the title “Dushanbe - Smart City”, various intellectual events and competitions, such as the “Programming” competition, the best drawing competition, the best essay competition, Forum teenagers and young people on information and communication technologies, taking into account the presentation of innovative programs and a scientific-creative conference of teachers of educational institutions of Dushanbe on the topic “Transition to digital education in Dushanbe” was organized and held, which involved a large number of students and teachers.

Festival-competition of young talents of Dushanbe city “Blooms of the capital” with the aim of finding and encouraging talented children and teenagers of Dushanbe city and in this context to assist in spiritual and intellectual development, to create conditions for improving taste and talent, cultural and aesthetic education, attracting the younger generation, creative and artistic works and their involvement in useful work during free time, and this year it was carried out in order to implement the action plan of the Dushanbe State Talent Acquisition and Development Program for the years 2021-2025.

It was said that this Festival will be held in February-May of this year in three periods among students of grades 1-9 of general secondary education institutions on the terms of “Storytellers”, “Solo Song”, “Solo Dance”, “Group Dance”, “Choir Singing”, “Music”, “Acting skills” and others were held.

The prize-giving ceremony to the winners of the Festival-competition of young talents of the city of Dushanbe “Blooms of the capital” and the competition sections of the “Week of science, technology, innovation and invention of teenagers and young people of the city of Dushanbe” was held in a grand manner, followed by a cultural program prepared by the participants of the Festival-competition of young talents. “Blossoms of the capital” city of Dushanbe was presented.

SOURCES:
National Information Agency Of Tajikistan “Khovar”
Architecture of the Arkadag Era is the theme of the exhibition

The exhibition “Arkadag eýýamynyň arhitekturasy” opened on June 10, 2023 at the exhibition center of the Union of Artists of Turkmenistan, organized by the Union of Architects of the country with the support of the Hyakimlik of Ashgabat and the Ministry of Construction and Architecture of Turkmenistan.

The exposition presented the best works of national architecture and urban planning created in recent years, as well as new architectural projects for the capital of the country, the city of Arkadag, and promising works by young and mature authors, reflecting their vision of the buildings of the near future. Overall, over 200 pieces were showcased for visitors to view.

The exhibition displayed the widest possible panorama of the creative searches of the architects of our country. It attracted not only professionals but also the general public to the discussion of modern trends in urbanism and architectural design, and also introduced regional experience and the latest bright premieres in the field of building culture, which were demonstrated by the new city of Arkadag.

As is known, the National Leader of the Turkmen people, Chairman of the Halk Maslakhaty Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who was awarded the honorary title of Honored Architect of Turkmenistan, makes great efforts to improve the quality of the country's cities and villages. Of course, special attention is paid to Ashgabat not only as an administrative, economic, and cultural center, but also as a city that, in a short historical period, has acquired a new international status for itself and has become an important factor in political life of the entire surrounding region.

Hero-Arkadag’s insistence on turning Ashgabat into an exemplary modern city with a highly developed infrastructure and world-class development not only mobilized local resources but also attracted significant foreign investment. As a result, we now see a completely unique, growing city, which is included in the Guinness Book of Records as the whitest marble in the world. But this, first of all, speaks of the stylistic unity of modern Ashgabat architecture, subordinated to a single...
artistic concept. The exhibition showed how, in the current historical era, Ashgabat has not only mastered new functions that it never had before but also managed to quickly transform into a qualitatively different city, making a rapid leap towards creating the most modern infrastructure and radically improving its appearance. A qualitatively different level of life and living environment is demonstrated by the city of Arkadag - a unique "smart city", the first stage of which was put into operation on June 29 this year. Architects and cultural figures speaking at the opening of the exhibition noted that the modern architecture of Turkmenistan is characterized by a wide urban planning scope, combining elements of world urbanism and local traditions. And at the exhibition, you could see the whole variety of approaches to solving professional problems, directions of creative searches, and real achievements of domestic architects. The practical usefulness of such exhibitions is indisputable, the speakers stressed, especially for students and young professionals who see the best works of their senior colleagues and mentors here with their own eyes. It would help them cultivate a taste in themselves, teach them to understand architecture more deeply, and create their own works worthy of our time.

SOURCES:
the Third-largest Mosque in Pakistan

Badshahi Mosque
As a country with a majority of Muslim population, Pakistan has the largest and most beautiful mosques in the Islamic world.

Most of the famous mosques of Pakistan have their roots in the history, culture and identity of the people of this country, and some others were built in the present age based on modern architecture. Some of the most famous mosques of Pakistan have special features, which are the reason why many tourists are interested. The Badshahi Mosque is a Mughal-era congregational mosque in Lahore, the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab. The Badshahi Mosque was constructed by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb between 1671 and 1673, and was the largest mosque in the world from 1673 to 1986. The mosque is an important example of Mughal architecture, with an exterior that is decorated with carved red sandstone with marble inlay. It remains the largest mosque of the Mughal era and is the third-largest mosque in Pakistan. After the fall of the Mughal Empire, the mosque was used as a garrison by the British Empire and is now one of Pakistan’s most iconic sights.

LOCATION

The mosque is located west of Lahore Fort along the outskirts of the Walled City of Lahore and is widely considered to be one of Lahore’s most iconic landmarks. The entrance to the mosque lies on the western side of the rectangular Hazuri Bagh and faces the famous Alamgiri Gate of the Lahore Fort, which is located on the eastern side of the Hazuri Bagh. The mosque is also located next to the Roshnai Gate, one of the original thirteen gates of Lahore, which is located on the southern side of the Hazuri Bagh.

Near the entrance of the mosque lies the Tomb of Allama Iqbal, a poet widely revered in Pakistan, as the founder of the Pakistan Movement which led to the creation of Pakistan as a homeland for the Muslims of British India. Also located near the mosque’s entrance is the tomb of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who is credited for playing a major role in the preservation and restoration of the mosque.

BACKGROUND

The sixth Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, chose Lahore as the site for his new imperial mosque. Aurangzeb, unlike the
previous emperors, was not a major patron of art and architecture and instead focused, during much of his reign, on various military conquests which added over 3 million square kilometers to the Mughal realm. The mosque was built to commemorate Aurangzeb's military campaigns in southern India, in particular against the Maratha king Shivaji. As a symbol of the mosque's importance, it was built directly across from the Lahore Fort and its Alamgiri Gate, which was concurrently built by Aurangzeb during the construction of the mosque.

HISTORY

CONSTRUCTION

The mosque was commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1671, with construction overseen by the Emperor's foster brother, and Governor of Lahore, Muzaffar Hussein - also known by the name Fidai Khan Koka. Aurangzeb had the mosque built in order to commemorate his military campaigns against the Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji. After only two years of construction, the mosque was opened in 1673.

SIKH ERA

On 7 July 1799, the Sikh army of Ranjit Singh took control of Lahore. After the capture of the city, Maharaja Ranjit Singh used its vast courtyard as a stable for his army horses, and its 80 Hujras (small study rooms surrounding the courtyard) as quarters for his soldiers and as magazines for military stores. In 1818, he built a marble edifice in the Hazuri Bagh facing the mosque, known as the Hazuri Bagh Baradari, which he used as his official royal court of audience. Marble slabs for the baradari may have been plundered by the Sikhs from other monuments in Lahore. In 1839, after his death, the construction of a samadhi in his memory was begun by his son and successor, Kharak Singh, at a site adjacent to the mosque. During the First Anglo-Sikh War in 1841, Ranjit Singh's son, Sher Singh, used the mosque's large minarets for the placement of zamburahs or light guns which were used to bombard the supporters of Chand Kaur, who had taken refuge in the besieged Lahore Fort. In one of these bombardments, the fort's Diwan-e-Aam (Hall of Public Audience) was destroyed but was subsequently rebuilt in the British era. During this time, Henri de La Rouche, a French cavalry officer employed in the army of Sher Singh, also used a tunnel connecting the Badshahi mosque to the Lahore fort to temporarily store gunpowder.

BRITISH RULE

In 1849, the British seized control of Lahore from the Sikh Empire. During the British Raj, the mosque and the adjoining fort continued to be used as a military garrison. The 80 cells built into the walls surrounding its vast courtyard were demolished by the British after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, so as to prevent them from being used for anti-British activities. The cells were replaced by open arcades known as dalans. Because of increasing Muslim resentment against the use of the mosque as a military garrison, the British set up the Badshahi Mosque Authority in 1852 to oversee the restoration and to re-establish it as a place of religious worship. From then onwards, piecemeal repairs were carried out under the supervision of the Badshahi Mosque Authority. The building was officially handed back to the Muslim community by John
Lawrence, who was the Viceroy of India. The building was then re-established as a mosque. In April 1919, after the Amritsar Massacre, a mixed Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim crowd of an estimated 25,000-35,000 gathered in the mosque's courtyard in protest. A speech by Gandhi was read at the event by Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din, who would later become Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. Extensive repairs commenced from 1939 onwards when Sikandar Hayat Khan began raising funds for this purpose. The renovation was supervised by the architect Nawab Alam Yar Jung Bahadur. As Khan was largely credited for extensive restorations of the mosque, he was buried adjacent to the mosque in the Hazuri Bagh.

**POST-INDEPENDENCE**

Restoration works begun in 1939 continued after the Independence of Pakistan, and were completed in 1960 at a total cost of 4.8 million Rupees. On the occasion of the 2nd Islamic Summit held at Lahore on 22 February 1974, thirty-nine heads of Muslim states offered their Friday prayers in the Badshahi Mosque, including, among others, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan, Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Muammar Gaddafi, Yasser Arafat, and Sabah III Al-Salim Al-Sabah of Kuwait. In 1993, the Badshahi Mosque was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In 2000, the marble inlay in the main prayer hall was repaired. In 2008, replacement work on the red sandstone tiles on the mosque’s large courtyard was begun using red sandstone imported from the original Mughal source near Jaipur, in the Indian state of Rajasthan.

**DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS**

In an effort to mirror the character of its founder, architects designed the mosque to exude boldness, vastness, and majesty. The interior has rich embellishment in stucco tracery and paneling with a fresco touch, all in bold relief, as well as marble inlay. Stone carving, as well as marble inlay on red sandstone, especially of loti form motifs in bold relief, decorates the exterior. Embellishments on the mosque display Indo-Greek, Central Asian, and Indian architectural influence in technique and motifs. Beautiful ornamental merlons, inlaid with marble lining, add grace to the perimeter of the mosque and beautify the skyline. In various architectural features, such as the vast square courtyard, the side aisles (dalans), the four corner minarets, the projecting central transept of the prayer chamber, and the grand entrance gate,
the history of the development of mosque architecture of the Muslim world over the thousand years prior to its construction in 1673 culminates. The north enclosure wall of the mosque had been laid close to the Ravi River bank, denying the building of a majestic gateway on that side. To ensure the symmetry of the gate, no majestic gate could be built on the south side, too. Thus a four-aiwan plan, like the earlier Delhi Jamia Masjid, had to be abandoned. The walls had been built with small kiln-burnt bricks laid in kankar, lime mortar (a kind of hydraulic lime) but have a veneer of red sandstone. The steps leading to the prayer chamber and its plinth have been constructed with variegated marble. The prayer chamber, exceptionally deep, divides into seven compartments by rich engraved arches carried on enormously heavy piers. Out of the seven compartments, three double domes finished in marble have artistically superb curvature, while the rest have curvilinear domes with a central rib in their interior and a flat roof above. In the eastern front aisle, the ceiling of the compartment runs flat (Qalamdani) with a curved border (ghalatan) at the cornice level. The prayer chamber, exceptionally deep, divides into seven compartments by rich engraved arches carried on enormously heavy piers. Out of the seven compartments, three double domes finished in marble have artistically superb curvature, while the rest have curvilinear domes with a central rib in their interior and a flat roof above. In the eastern front aisle, the ceiling of the compartment runs flat (Qalamdani) with a curved border (ghalatan) at the cornice level.

ARCHITECTURE

As a gateway to the west, and Persia in particular, Lahore had a strong regional style that was heavily influenced by Persian architectural styles. Earlier mosques, such as the Wazir Khan Mosque, were adorned in intricate kashi kari, or Kashan-style tile work, from which the Badshahi Mosque would depart. Aurangzeb chose an architectural plan similar to that of Shah Jehan's choice for the Jama Masjid in Delhi, though built the Badshahi Mosque on a much larger scale. Both mosques feature red sandstone with white marble inlay, which is a departure from typical mosque design in Lahore, in which decoration is done by means of intricate tile work.

THE ENTRYWAY OF THE COMPLEX

The entrance to the mosque complex is via a two-storey edifice built of red sandstone. The edifice features a muqarnas, an architectural feature from the Middle East that was first introduced into Mughal architecture with the construction of the nearby and ornate Wazir Khan Mosque. The mosque's full name “Masjid Abul Zafar Muhy-ud-Din Mohammad Alamgir Badshah Ghazi” is written in inlaid marble above the vaulted entrance. The mosque’s gateway faces east towards the Alamgiri Gate of the Lahore Fort, which was also commissioned by Aurangzeb. The massive entrance and mosque are situated on a plinth, which is ascended by a flight of 22 steps at the mosque's main gate. The gateway itself contains several chambers which are not accessible to the public. There is also a small gallery on the upper floor of the main entrance which contains relics attributed to the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad.
(PBUH), Hazrat Ali (AS), Hazrat Fatima (AS), Imam Hassan (AS), Imam Hussain (AS) as well as Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani (RA), the Iranian mystic, Sufi, Muhaddith, leader and poet of the 5th and 6th lunar centuries, and the founder of the Qadiriyya Sufism dynasty.

Courtyard
After passing through the massive gate, an expansive sandstone-paved courtyard spreads over an area of 276,000 square feet, which can accommodate 100,000 worshipers when functioning as an Idgah. The courtyard is enclosed by single-aisled arcades.

PRAYER HALL
The main edifice at the site was also built from red sandstone and is decorated with white marble inlay. The prayer chamber has a central arched niche with five niches flanking it which are about one-third the size of the central niche. The mosque has three marble domes, the largest of which is located in the center of the mosque and is flanked by two smaller domes.
Both the interior and exterior of the mosque are decorated with elaborate white marble carved with a floral design common to Mughal art. The carvings at Badshahi mosque are considered to be uniquely fine and unsurpassed works of Mughal architecture. The chambers on each side of the main chamber contain rooms that were used for religious instruction. The mosque can accommodate 10,000 worshippers in the prayer hall.

MINARETS
At each of the four corners of the mosque, there are octagonal, three-storey minarets made of red sandstone that are 196 feet (60 m) tall, with an outer circumference of 67 feet and an inner circumference is eight and a half feet. Each minaret is topped by a marble canopy. The main building of the mosque also features an additional four smaller minarets at each corner of the building.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badshahi_Mosque
https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Badshahi_Mosque
https://auqaf.punjab.gov.pk/badshahi-mosque
Bagh-e BABUR

Bagh-e BABUR IS LOCATED ON THE SLOPES OF KUH-E SHER DARWAZA, (SHER DARWAZA MOUNTAIN) SOUTHWEST OF THE OLD CITY OF KABUL.

The garden is arranged on 15 terraces along a central axis in the east-west direction. From the top terrace, the visitor has a magnificent vista over the garden and its perimeter wall, across the Kabul River towards the snow-covered mountains.

Created by the founder of the Mughal dynasty, Zaheeruddin Muhammad Babur (1483-1530), after his conquest of Kabul in 1504, Bagh-e Babur is one of the earliest surviving Mughal gardens. The king was a passionate gardener and personally designed and supervised at least 10 gardens in his capital, Kabul. They are described in the Baburnama, but the historical name of Bagh-e Babur is not known. Excavations revealed that Babur did not design his garden on an empty plot: ruins of a monumental building dating to the 3rd century BC and traces of a subsequent occupation to the 15th century made it necessary to clear the ground before a large terraced garden with a different orientation could be landscaped at this very spot.

For political reasons, Babur had to move east and conquered northern India in 1526; he died in Agra in 1530. Throughout his years in the flat, dusty plains of India, he missed his home country and thus wished to be buried in Kabul. His body was transferred to Bagh-e Babur by his widow around 1544.

The texts do not provide a reason...
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

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water channels and basins, trees, flowers, and, originally, a pavilion. Bagh-e Babur was designed as a pleasure garden but became a tomb garden after the death of its founder and, hence, a symbolic place for the Mughal dynasty. It is, therefore, the oldest imperial tomb and the westernmost Mughal garden, and within the borders of Afghanistan the only surviving testimony of a Timurid pleasure garden that was later adorned with Mughal architecture. The garden was adorned with decorative schemes developed in India during the Mughal Period, particularly under Shah Jahan. Features added to the garden until 1660 include a marble platform with latticework around the tomb, a headstone, a mosque, a perimeter wall, a gateway, a caravanserai, water pools with fountains on each terrace, and marble-lined water channels. Located far from the capitals of Pakistan and India, the embellishment of Bagh-e Babur emphasizes its symbolic and,

why out of all gardens, he chose this one. However, remains of older tombs with brick vaults and stone cists excavated underneath the tomb platform revealed that the area was already used as a cemetery, possibly by his Timurid kin.

As the tomb garden of the founder of the Mughal dynasty, Bagh-e Babur became a place of veneration, a symbol, and hence gained superior importance among Babur’s gardens. For nearly 150 years, his heirs, especially Jahangir (1605-1627), and Shah Jahan (1627-1658) paid their respects to his burial place and sponsored ambitious building programs to preserve and beautify the garden according to contemporary taste.

Bagh-e Babur is an outstanding example of an intentionally designed landscape garden. As a cultural and archaeological site, it encompasses the designed landscape and its built architecture, which together form a historic ensemble. It is the only landscape garden in the region that mirrors subsequent developmental stages and reflects shifts in function, style, and concept from the early 16th to the early 20th century: from a Timurid pleasure to a Mughal tomb garden, to a 19th-century representational garden and a 20th-century public park. These phases have left their marks on the garden and depict various stages of historical development, and their representation in the cultural heritage.

The original layout and essential architectural elements mirror the idealized form of the chahar bagh plan and are testimony to the spread of Persian and Timurid spiritual and aesthetic concepts. It is thus the latest surviving pre-Mughal garden designed in the original Persian Murid tradition east of Iran. Throughout its existence, Bagh-e Babur maintained the main conceptual features of this type of garden, such as the geometric layout with the typical vista, the perimeter wall, terraces, a central axis with
for a certain period, political significance. Although it lost much of its importance with the decline of Mughal power after Shah Jahan, one of his descendants was buried close to him in the 18th century. After a period of decay from the late 17th to the late 19th century, the garden was important enough to be restored 200 years later by the rulers of modern Afghanistan; it mirrors the beginning of a new era. After 1880, Bagh-e Babur was re-designed by Amir Abdur Rahman, ruler over Afghanistan and passionate builder.

Changes include landscaping, buildings, vista, and waterworks. The buildings and landscape works changed the appearance of the upper terraces, as they are a portrait of the architectural language typical for this ruler. The garden was used as an international guesthouse and thus, retained a representational character. In the 2nd quarter of the 20th century, Nadir Shah once more redesigned the garden in terms of landscaping and built architecture. He distanced himself from his predecessor, but although the more airy layout of the garden was closer to its original scheme than under Amir Abdur Rahman, Nadir Shah rather followed European design schemes; this is also reflected by the fact that it became a public park.

Thus, as in an intentionally created Islamic garden, Bagh-e Babur is an outstanding example of a cultural landscape since it is a unique testimony of a specific cultural tradition, displays metamorphoses, and reflects changing aesthetic concepts. Thus, within one cultural ensemble, different stages of human and cultural development are preserved and embedded into its original scheme. With the completion of the rehabilitation in 2006 and the implementation of the
institutional management plan within the framework of the MoU in 2008, Bagh-e Babur is the only carefully managed public space in Kabul that offers recreational facilities to the citizens.

According to the garden's officials, Bagh-e-Babur is a masterpiece of human ingenuity, a part of human values, an important historical and cultural site, and it has met all conditions of UNESCO as it has 500 years of history, better in terms of beauty, environment, and ecosystem; therefore, this garden should be registered as a cultural heritage.

SOURCES:
https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5469/
BEKET-ATA UNDERGROUND MOSQUE IS LOCATED IN THE OGLANDY COUNTRYSIDE, MANGYSTAU REGION IN KAZAKHSTAN.

This religious monument of the architecture dates back to the XVIII century. Beket-Ata is considered a holy place, as a burial of Khozha Ahmed Yassaui. Beket-Ata Underground Mosque is associated with the name of Beket Myrzagululy, an Islamic mystic who is revered as a saint by Sufi Muslims. Every year, hundreds of pilgrims visit this place to commemorate him. They all notice the miraculous energy prevailing within the walls of the mosque.

The mosque is an artificial multi-chamber cave built in chalk outcrops of rocks. It is carved out in the middle tier of a high rock, which slopes down into a deep hollow, densely overgrown with bushes. Narrow and steep steps lead to a small platform in front of the mosque entrance. The mosque has six chambers, and the main room of the mosque is round in plan, with a diameter of about 4.5 meters. The ceiling is shaped like a flat dome. In general, the interior imitates the Kazakh yurt. The section of the rock, in which the entrance opening -the manhole- was cut, is reinforced with a retaining wall. The first room is the vestibule, which is illuminated by a deep skylight pierced in the center of the domed ceiling.

A wooden pole is installed here. On the west side of the vestibule, there is a prayer room with a mihrab on the south wall, and on the southeast side, there are two rooms, in one
of them Beket Ata is buried. On the west side, it is adjoined by a semicircular room, in which, behind the corner pylons, the floor level is raised like a sofa. Obviously, this room was intended for the rest of the pilgrims. On the north side, the hall is connected by a wide passage to the third room, which is not inferior to it in size. The purpose of this room is not entirely clear. It could be either an additional area for a prayer hall or a storage room. The walls and ceiling of the latter collapsed, and fragments of tombstones were found on the floor. The walls of all rooms of the mosque are smoothly hewn and have no traces of decoration, with the exception of shallow niches for lamps.

The floors are leveled in two rooms. The strengthening of the entrance part of the retaining wall and the deep laying of the premises ensured the safety of this mosque, in contrast to other underground mosques. The neat content shows that the local population protects this monument. Beket Ata Underground Mosque is a place resplendent with grace, where everybody can feel peace and harmony. It is worth visiting at least once.

Beket-Ata

The name of Beket-Ata, spiritual enlightener, and philanthropist of the 18th century, shines brightly in the halo of saints of the Mangistau land. Beket-Ata has built four mosques, and after death, was buried in the
mosque carved out of the cretaceous rock of the Oglandy Mountains.

Born in 1750, Beket-Ata lived until 1813, and was one of the greatest religious teachers, scientists, and philosophers in the history of Central Asia. He was a great spiritual teacher of Sufism who became a famous figure throughout the Turkic world. He had enormous social influence and raised the souls of an entire generation. The mosques he built became popular havens where thousands of people sought and found spiritual peace and prayerful protection.

The sick, the suffering, and the weak came to him for healing. He was a fair judge in complex and controversial disputes. His life was an example of selfless service to God and people. He was also remembered as a brave soldier and a wise mystic who knew and taught many secrets and spiritual laws of life.

Beket-Ata was a highly educated man who knew the laws of physics, mathematics, and astronomy. Born in 1750 near the village of Kulsary in the Atyrau region, at the age of 14 he went to Khiva, which was the capital of the Khiva Khanate (now a town in Chorzm Province in Uzbekistan) to learn science.

After returning home, he built four mosques in the Mangistau lands, three of which are underground. Under the Oglandy mosque, which is cut into the rock, he founded a theological school, which also became a research center and observatory. There, he made an enormous contribution to the development of science in his native land.

In 1790, at the age of 40, Beket-Ata became a follower of Sufism, one of the major branches of Islam and one that was then gaining ground across Central Asia. He radiated hope to those around him, wherever he traveled. People came to him with various requests, from health to resolving quarrels and disputes. He always showed wisdom, patience, and tolerance toward human weaknesses. He was able to cure people and bring disputes to peaceful agreements in a remarkable manner. In his sermons, Beket-Ata always admonished believers to be fair and to live in truth.

He was revered as a holy man and admired for his heroic strength and courage. These qualities helped him win victories in battles with his enemies and to construct the mosques he built in the Mangistau territories. First, the Ak-mosque was built in his birthplace, Kulsary. Then he built a second one cut out of the chalk cliffs near the village of Beineu.

The third mosque was built in the Bayshatyr lands on the Ustyurt plateau. Finally, the fourth underground mosque, consisting of seven rooms with excellent acoustics, was carved out of the cretaceous rock of the Oglandy Mountains. There the holy man was buried. Today, the grave of Beket-Ata is a spiritual, historical, and architectural monument.

The human worldview has passed three stages in its development: mythological, religious, and philosophical. All spiritual values emerged earlier and last longer than material things. Therefore, the mythologizing of such great individuals as Beket-Ata in our modern age expresses the dialectical principle of the reawakening and renewal of the mythological consciousness through religious perception. The legends surrounding Beket-Ata should be considered from this viewpoint.

The modern human mental outlook goes back to its separation from nature and the individual’s desire to know his or her spiritual qualities. This explains why truly great spiritual leaders attract myths and legends around their lives. Therefore, all the legends about such individuals, are constantly amended and renewed. Only in recent years, we have realized that these myths contain profound spiritual truths.
Judging by the legends that have come down to us, the holiness of Beket-Ata was truly authentic. As a grown man, he was blessed by respectable and holy men, especially by his relative Tama Eset Batyr, who became famous as a brave defender of the steppe people. Beket-Ata learned to read from his grandfather and his local mullah. Then, in Khiva, he studied the Hadith and other religious books of the Islamic faith. Beket-Ata was thoroughly versed in Shariah, and Islamic religious law, and he led religious services. His sharp wit and shrewdness, and his fairness, care, and compassion for the needy won him the deep reverence and love of the people. At the age of 40, he was blessed by his spiritual mentor Bakirzhan Khodja, and from that time he was called Beket pіr – spiritual guide, or pastor in Kazakh. He died at the age of 63 and left a rich heritage of sermons and moral teachings that remain relevant today. 

Studying the life of such a righteous man as Beket-Ata lifts our spirits, deeply encourages us, and elevates our conception of the world around us. His teachings help us to better understand ourselves, regardless of our nationality, race, or faith. This is especially important today when our major challenges include maintaining peace and spiritual harmony in society and learning to appreciate the spiritual treasures of other religions, cultures, and peoples around the single world we share.

As a result of the institutionalization of the teachings of scholars like him, the construction of mosques has seen a significant growth since the independence of Kazakhstan, and people show their religious values by going to mosques and participating in collective worship programs such as religious ceremonies, holding congregational prayers, and Friday prayers.

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TURKMENISTAN
National Museum of History

On the 12th of November, 1990, the greatest museum complex in Turkmenistan opened its doors in Ashgabat, combining the collections of the former museums of history and ethnography, regional study, and the arts.

The National Museum of Turkmenistan is located only about a 20-minute drive from the ruins of the Parthian Fortress of Nisa, in the capital city of Ashgabat. Excavations of the ruins uncovered not only architectural findings but ancient artifacts as well that can be found at the museum. In front of the museum stands a large flagpole that was once the tallest in the world at 133 meters (436 feet).

About 500,000 exhibits are displayed in the new museum. It boasts a full collection of Turkmenistan’s most significant architectural finds of the XX century; a large number of ancient Turkmen carpets and rugs; examples of national dress and fabrics; traditional household equipment; musical instruments; weapons; jewelry; orders and medals, and historical documents. Its unique collection of paintings, drawings, and sculptures includes not only Turkmen fine arts but masterpieces of some Russian and...
Western European artists of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries. The collection includes early paintings, watercolors, and icons among its exhibits. Moreover, the museum reveals the variety of Turkmenistan’s landscape; its flora and fauna, fossils, and rare geological finds.

On the first floor, to the left of the center of the building, where a sculpture of the state emblem is installed on a high foundation, is the Hall of Independence, illustrating the modern development of the country, along with a range of costly presents given to Saparmurat Turkmenbashi – the former President of Turkmenistan, and donated by him to the museum.

The second floor is entirely dedicated to archeology and ethnography. The first three halls feature displays in chronological order. The Hall of Ancient History presents a collection of flint tools from the Mesolithic era (50,000 years B.C.), used by primitive people in Western Turkmenistan, along with Neolithic ceramics and ornaments from the first human settlements along the northern slopes of Kopet Dag. There are also objects made from clay and metal/semi-precious stones and bone, witnessing the high level of development of the early agricultural civilizations of Jeitun, Altyndepe, Namazg, Anau, etc. They represent the northern complex of the old-eastern most famous in Babylon and Assyria.

The place of honor in this hall is occupied by Margiana, a unique Bronze Age civilization discovered by archeologists in the Karakum desert to the north of the modern town of Bairamali, which was a fertile delta of the river Murgab about 3000 years ago. There was a set of settlements with mighty towers and monumental sanctuaries.

The Hall of Antiquity covers the eventful period of history from the Achaemenid to the Parthian period that dominated there and which became the largest empire of the East, competing with Rome itself.

A full collection of rhytons – special horn-like vessels, made of ivory featuring magnificent art – are represented alongside a number of exhibits. All of them were found in Ashgabat’s suburbs, at excavations...
of Old Nisa – the residence of Parthian kings from the Arsacid Dynasty. Marble sculptures and silver, gold, and bronze items from Parthian Nisa are outstanding examples of art closely connected with the Hellenistic tradition. In this hall, one can see exhibits from other regions of antique Turkmenistan – from Khwarazm (in the north), the Kushan empire (along the Amu-Darya river), and primarily from Merv, the largest archeological site in all Central Asia which has yielded a number of discoveries – from buildings to coins and tiny gems. The Hall of the Middle Ages tells about the Sassanid epoch which was linked to new growth in the culture of the ancient Central Asian oases. Several Buddha images and a wonderfully painted vase from Merv attract the eye in particular. Most of the exhibits in this hall date from the middle ages which came to Turkmenistan after the arrival of Islam in the YII century. The heyday of this culture came with the Seljuk empire (XI-XII century). Ethnography is represented in two halls on the second floor and in one hall on the first floor. Between them is the giant. Its 266 square meters of classical Tekin design was woven by a team of carpet-makers in just five months. Household objects, women’s, men’s, and children’s national costumes, examples of old Turkmen weapons, musical instruments, hand-written books, and displays of traditional life from the XYIII-beginning of XX centuries are displayed in the ethnographic halls. Turkmenistan’s famous handcrafted carpets of dyed sheep’s wool are the finest masterpieces of its national art. Dark red and brown shades dominate with ornaments and colors differing depending on the local traditions of Turkmen tribes and
regions: Tekin, Yomut, Kerki, Gyzylaýak, etc. The brightest examples of this tradition are embroidered fabrics and gilded silver jewelry featuring precious stones, stamping, and engraving.

The Hall of Nature completes the museum. Turkmenistan is very rich in mineral fossils and all their variety is represented in this hall of the museum. One can see fossils of the Paleozoic era and ammonite fossils which are millions of years old, mountain rock samples, and representatives of Turkmen flora and fauna only found in Turkmenistan.

But contrary to most people's idea of a museum as being concerned only with exhibitions, we should remember the displays are actually only a small part of the facility’s work.

The National Museum of History of Turkmenistan is a scientific research institute whose functions include the acquisition, storage, study, and popularization of important samples of natural history and physical and spiritual culture, entailing primary sources of knowledge about the development of nature and society.

It contains major treasures discovered in every part of the country. The most interesting exhibitions are represented by the archeology and ethnography departments. The archeological collection contains very rare works of art from ancient times to the middle ages which have been found on the territory of Turkmenistan.

**SOURCES:**

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https://visitworldheritage.com/en/eu/national-museum-of-turkmenistan/a5c80d1d-adf2-404a-9bcc-9be2e1f1db63
The National Museum of Kazakhstan

The museum was created within the framework of the State Program “Cultural Heritage” on behalf of the former President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev. On July 2, 2013, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan issued Resolution No. 675 on the establishment of the republican state institution “National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan” of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

National Museum opened its doors to visitors in July 2014 with the participation of the Kazakh President and harmoniously complemented the general view on the Independence Square, which combined the symbol of statehood – the monument «Kazakh Eli», the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, the National University of Arts and the mosque «Hazrat Sultan».

The museum is located on the main square of the country - Independence Square, harmoniously fitting into a single architectural ensemble with the “Kazakh
Eli monument, the Palace of Independence, the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, the “Khazret Sultan” cathedral mosque and the National University of Arts. Many values, revealed within the framework of the state program “Cultural Heritage”, make up the invaluable fund of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The building of the museum attracts the eye with its unusual external form. The largest unique museum complex has an area of 74,000 square meters and consists of seven blocks with a variable number of stories up to the ninth floor. The exposition area is occupied by 11 halls with a total area of over 14,000 sq.m. The National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan has the following halls: Hall of Astana, Hall of Independent Kazakhstan, Hall of Gold, Hall of Ancient and Medieval History, Hall of History, Hall of Ethnography, and Halls of Contemporary Art. The Hall of Nur-Sultan (Astana) is represented by materials placed in chronological order, which allows visitors to learn in order of the history of the city from ancient times to modern times. The exposition of the Hall of Nur-Sultan is of particular interest, which reveals the history of the young capital of Kazakhstan. Recent history is told by the language of photos, plans, diagrams, models, archival documents, and objects. In the hall of Nur-Sultan, the focus will be a unique dynamic layout of Nur-Sultan and media field, which together will make a colorful show with a large curved screen image. Trilingual media guide is the faithful guide, with whom the visitors can easily get around all the rooms of the museum. The Hall of History gives visitors the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the history of the Kazakh people, and to learn the fateful and historical moments that led to the current state of the country. It also shows the history of Kazakhstan in the XV-XX centuries and reveals the main stages of the history of formation and development of the Kazakh Khanate and the history of nationalist rebellions of the Kazakh people. The Hall of Gold is a treasure chest and a repository of unique valuable finds found throughout the country. The exposition of the hall every year becomes more and more, replenishing with artifacts made of gold and other precious metals. The exposition

Exhibits of the museum for the study of cultural heritage are the subjects of various excavations of the Research Institute.
of the Hall of Gold, moreover, demonstrates golden articles of the ancient nomads of Kazakhstan – the unique finds from archaeological excavations. “Golden Man” found on Issyk burial mound, Sarmatian warrior in Atyrau, as well as priceless finds from ancient settlements Chilikty and Berel, burial ground Taldy excite genuine admiration for the ancient nomadic culture.

The exposition of the Ancient and Medieval History Hall represents the tools and everyday objects of the Stone Age, archaeological objects of the Bronze and Iron Ages, as well as artifacts of the medieval history of Kazakhstan (ceramics, numismatics, tools), so there is a general idea of the ancient and medieval history of the country.

The Hall of Ethnography is devoted to the material and spiritual culture of the Kazakh people. Here are presented various musical instruments, the home of nomadic Kazakhs (kiiz ui), and much more. The exposition of the Ethnography hall provides a variety of jewelry, costumes, traditional Kazakh dwelling – yurt, as well as objects of everyday life of the Kazakh people. Also, the creation of the exchange fund based on the experience of Russia and other countries allows getting rare exhibits from abroad.

Exhibits of the museum for the study of cultural heritage are the subjects of various excavations of the Research Institute. Unique items that lure tourists from all over the world are represented in this museum, the cultural heritage of the Kazakh people, paraded in museums of different countries: the world-famous “Golden Man” is stored here, as well as the finds of the ancient cities of Otyrar, Turkestan, Taraz, etc.

Inside you can find a large number of rooms in various directions, both for amateurs and professionals: a children’s museum and children’s art center, restoration centers, a laboratory, fund storage, a library with a reading room, a conference room, and...
souvenir kiosks.
In addition to the exhibition halls, there are Research Institute "Ulttyk Miras – National Heritage", restoration workshops, laboratories, museums, places of temporary exhibitions, a library with reading rooms, a conference room equipped with simultaneous translation equipment.
The great interest of visitors is the story of the formation and development of independent Kazakhstan. In this context, the chronicle of a quarter-century, full of struggles for independence and search for new ways is clearly reflected in the halls of independent Kazakhstan and Nur-Sultan. The hall of Independent Kazakhstan widely and in a flexible manner presents the history, politics, economics, culture, and art of the country, which is the successor of the ancient Turks and found its way of development.
The structure of the museum for the study of the national heritage is represented by a research institute. There will also be premises for a children's museum, a children's creativity center, two exhibition halls, restoration workshops, laboratories, professional storage facilities, a scientific library with a reading room, a conference hall, and souvenir kiosks.
The museum is provided with equipment corresponding to world standards, modern exhibition technologies are used for expositions: a unique curved screen with special content, working in two halls, a media floor, a dynamic layout of the central part of modern Astana, numerous media screens, holograms, LED technology, touch-sensitive kiosks, and multimedia guide providing information in three languages.
The museum develops various types of excursions - overview and thematic, philosophical, and special programs in the form of interactive lessons and game excursions. The National Museum is intended to become a modern intellectual cultural institution, a place for analysis, comparison, reflection, discussion, statements, and assessment of the historical and cultural heritage of Kazakhstan. A contemporary museum is always an open dialogue with a visitor. Everything possible has been done in this museum to make its guests active participants in the conversation with history.

SOURCES:
A magical journey into the sea:

TÜRKIYE’S UNDERWATER MUSEUM

Türkiye’s first underwater museum takes scuba divers into a mystical journey with over 115 sculptures. Side Underwater Museum, located some 2.4 kilometers off the shores of Antalya’s Manavgat district, was opened eight years ago. Taking a pioneering step for both Türkiye and the European continent, cultural and Trade officials in Side district cut the ribbon for the museum on October 31, 2015.
Up until today, about 50,000 people have visited the museum. The museum displays some 117 sculptures located in different depths in the Mediterranean, with the furthest being 24 meters deep. The enchanting museum’s main objective is to tell the world of the abundance of ancient Anatolian civilizations.

**SOURCES:**
Hürriyet Daily News
Abdulla Oripov was born on 21 Mar 1941 in Nekuz village of Kashkadarya in Uzbekistan. After graduating with honors from high school in 1963, he studied journalism at Tashkent State University. During this time, Oripov started writing poetry, a passion that was with him for the whole of his life. His first collection was published in 1965, two years after graduating from university. This was “Mitti Yulduz” which translates in English to “The Little Star”. Oripov received many awards during his lifetime. In 1983, he was awarded the State Hamza Prize. In 1989, he became a National Poet of the Uzbek SSR. In 1992, he received the prestigious Alisher Navoiy State Prize. In 1998, he was awarded the title Hero of Uzbekistan, the highest honorary title that can be bestowed on a citizen by Uzbekistan.

Abdulla Oripov’s Career

Oripov started writing poetry during his student years. His first collection of poems, Mitti yulduz (The Little Star), was published in 1966. From 1963 to 1974, Oripov worked at the Yosh gvardiya (1963–1968) and Ga fur Gulom (1968–1974) publishing houses. Between 1974 and 1980, he worked for different periodicals, such as Sharq yulduzi (The Eastern Star) and Gulxan (Bonfire). In 1971, Oripov became a member of the...
Writers’ Union of Uzbekistan. From 1994 to 2009, he served as the head of the union. Oripov was also a statesman. He was a member of the Senate of Uzbekistan from 2005 until his death in 2016. He also served as the head of the Copyright Committee of Uzbekistan from 2000 until his death.

**LITERARY WORKS**

The power of Abdulla Oripov's poetry lies in its high level of art. However, in his poems, art is not created through artificial art, forcible analogies, and illogical animations. His every expression, every allegory is the same as the truth. Abdulla Oripov uses proverbs and sayings created by wise people very meticulously and artistically, as a result of which the poet begins his poetic life from the beginning. Every poem and every line written by Abdulla Oripov has its own melody, which cannot be told in any other tone. The peculiarity of the poet's poetry is that he is a unique poet. If he loves, he burns with love, if he hates, he hates with strong pain and desire. He burns in every subject, especially if it is the theme of Motherland.

Abdulla Oripov is a patriotic poet who has left a deep mark on the hearts of the Uzbek people with his meaningful poems, singing the love for the Motherland in his works. The poet’s poems are full of patriotism and devotion to the Motherland. The role and place of poetry in inculcating feelings of freedom and patriotism in the spirit of the people is incomparable. Poetry, through its peculiarities, symbols, metaphors, and melodies, evokes such great feelings in the human soul that they cannot be destroyed even by the power of swords and weapons. The poem "My Country" by the beloved Uzbek poet is a similar example. This poem is one of the great examples of creativity that embodies the great history, identity, and national pride of the people.

The following is a list of Oripov’s books of poetry:

- Mitti yulduz (The Little Star) (1965)
- Ko zlarim yo lingda (Waiting for You) (1966)
- Onajon (Dear Mother) (1969)
- Ruhim (My Spirit) (1971)
- O zbekiston (Uzbekistan) (1972)
- Qasida (The Ode) (1972)
Oripov translated the works of many famous foreign poets, such as Alexander Pushkin, Dante Alighieri, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Jenő Heltai, Kersti Merilaas, Khalil Rza Uluturk, Lesya Ukrainka, Nikola Vaptsarov, Nikolay Nekrasov, Nizami Ganjavi, Qaysin Quli, Sergey Baruzdin, Taras Shevchenko, Yeghishe Charents and others, into the Uzbek language. In particular, he translated Dante's Divine Comedy into Uzbek. Oripov's own works in Uzbek have been translated into Russian and many other languages. These works are classic examples of Uzbek national poetry and are distinguished by
their high artistic value, logical strength, enthusiasm, charm, and richness of lyrical sentiments.
Poet Abdulla Oripov was the first artist to be awarded the title of “Hero of Uzbekistan” in 1998 for his contribution to the development of spirituality and aesthetic thinking of the nation.

QUOTATION

(“National Anthem of Uzbekistan” by; Abdulla Oripov)
Stand tall, my free country, good fortune and salvation to you,
You yourself a companion to friends, Oh! Loving one!
Flourish, Oh! Creator of eternal knowledge and science,
May your fame for ever shine bright!
refrain:
These valleys are golden - my dear Uzbekistan,
Our forefathers’ manly spirits your companion!
Strength of great people in turbulent times
Made this land the world’s joy!
Oh! Generous Uzbek, your faith will not fade,
Free, young generations are your mighty wings!
The torch of independence, guardians of peace,
Oh! Worthy motherland, flourish and prosper eternally!
refrain

SOURCES:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdulla_Oripov_(poet)
https://www.countryreports.org/country/Uzbeki- stan/nationalsymbols.htm
HAKIM AHMAD SHUJA (4 NOVEMBER 1893 – 4 JANUARY 1969), WAS A FAMOUS URDU AND PERSIAN POET, PLAYWRIGHT, WRITER, FILM WRITER AND LYRICIST, SCHOLAR AND MYSTIC, FROM FORMER BRITISH INDIA, LATER PAKISTAN.

Background

Hakim Ahmad Shuja was born in an old and prominent family of mystics and Islamic religious scholars, who had migrated from Arabia, Afghanistan and Turkey to India between the 10th-12th centuries AD. From his paternal side, he was a direct descendant of Abdul Qadir Gilani, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari and Abdul Wahid bin Zaid, and from his maternal side, of the Sadozai tribe which at one time ruled Afghanistan. During the times of the Sultans of Delhi, the family came to prominence as religious divines and Hakims i.e. practitioners of the traditional Hikmat (the Unani, or Greek system of medicine) and by the time of the Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great (c.1542-1605) they were established as Court Physicians at Lahore, in the Bhati Gate area of the Old City. Later, family members served as Chief Qazis (or Qadis) at Lahore and Kashmir under Afghan (Durrani) rule, and a branch were ministers during Ranjit Singh’s Sikh rule. The Hakim family, or ‘Hakim-Khana’ of Old Lahore were mostly Sunni Muslims, but during the 18th and 19th centuries a branch, the ‘Fakir-Khana’ became Revered Pakistani writer

AHMAD SHUJA
QUOTATIONS
(one of Ahmad Shuja's poems about holy prophet)
O Messenger of Hashemi, O head of life
O that your essence is the cause of the universe
If it wasn't, then the meeting of who and the house was colorless If it was not, it was an incoherent creature
There was no taste in nature yet
Love was not yet the enemy of patience
Bitterness was still an unfamiliar conversation
Human reason was still in denial
The jaws of the exalted were not illuminated by prostration
There was beauty, but there was no such cheapness of love
There was still no wonder in human eyes
There was no midnight sigh in the human chest
There were no tears in the eyes, no tears in the head
There was no hot market in the heart of the believer
In the dream, there was the takbeer of Abraham
The fear of hitting Kaleem was an unrealized dream
Dawood's relationship was rusty for a while
There was wine, but it was very weak and low in color
You changed the calendar of life as soon as you came
The possibility of impossibility has become binding
The ray of life ran into the mold of being
Life has become cheap
Thus you have increased the value of self-awareness
Buria, throne in the eyes of a believer
In this way, the spell of vanity and greed was broken In the eyes of the Arabs, the appearance of the kasri, the itching
Life is a story of love and death for you
This unstable world is a caravan of love and death
The head of Tawheed was burned by Pekar-e-Gil
Hussain ibn Ali gave birth to dust
works in collaboration with Imtiaz Ali Taj, Agha Hashar Kashmiri and other theatrical producers, and, later on, screenplays and lyrics for the early Indo-Pakistan cinema. However, his fame today rests chiefly on these noted works: “Lahore ka Chelsea” (1967; 1989 reprint), a collection of memoirs of Old Lahore; “Khoon-Baha” (1962), some of his other personal memoirs; “Gard-i-Karvan” (1950s; reprint 1960), a collection of poems and essays in praise of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the “Ahl i Bayt” (members of the Prophet’s family) as exemplars of the ‘Ideal’ Muslim character; and his lovely, lyrical poems, some of which were later successfully adapted for film songs. These works reflect his idealism and humane and deeply mystical faith and a Romanticism which reflects both the typical Urdu and Persian poetic traditions, as well as the influence of Western writers such as Shelley, Thomas Carlyle, Goethe and Victor Hugo. His important works include: “The Sin of The Father”, “Red of India”, “The Last Pharaoh”, “The Dead”, “The Price of Beauty” and etc.

LATER LIFE AND LEGACY

Hakim Ahmad Shuja continued to write even until the time of his death in 1969. Between the 1950s and 1960s, he became especially interested in the potentialities of film-making and cinema. Perhaps because of the involvement of his son Anwar Kamal Pasha, one of South Asia’s early and most renowned film directors, in this genre. Many well-known lyrics and songs of his popular films, such as Tu Laakh Challay Ri Gori and Ham Bhi Parrhay Hain Rahon Mein, were in fact written originally as poems by Shuja and later adapted by him and his team of assistants for film.

Some of these songs/lyrics are at times wrongly ascribed to some of these assistants, such as poet Qateel Shifai. However, that Shuja had already been involved to a lesser extent in writing songs/lyrics and also stories for Urdu/Hindi cinema even earlier, is borne by his early lyrics for the song “Hairaat-e-Nazzaraa Aakir”, sung by the Kundan Lal Saigal, and also his writing of the storylines of the Indian Bollywood films like Behram Khan, Sheesh Mahal and Shahida, the early Pakistani film from 1949. In many ways, thus, he had a direct influence and bearing upon the development of both early Indian and Pakistani literature and cinema. In addition, he also made a significant contribution to the early development of Urdu language, linguistics and etymology as permanent secretary and one of the main compilers/editors of Pakistan’s Official Language Committee, 1949, responsible for the standardization of official and court terms,
Shuja was a contemporary of and associated with people like Agha Hashar Kashmiri, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Abul Kalam Azad, Allama Iqbal, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Sohrab Modi, and Muhammad Ali Jauhar.

Hakim Ahmad Shuja died in Lahore on January 4, 1969. He belonged to a school which has almost passed out of existence. Like Allama Iqbal, Hakim Sahib was a man who cared naught for worldly things. He was a “faqir” who believed in the truth of Allama Iqbal’s immortal verse: My way lies not in being rich but in being poor, your selfhood, do not sell, in poverty win renown. (Bal-e-Jibril, p. 198).

Hakim Ahmad Shuja was blessed with rare good looks, a personality whose magnetism was quite irresistible, a mind which was possessed of great clarity and depth, a power of speech which was almost miraculous, a soul which knew at the same time the greatest pride and the greatest humility.

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Tajik National Hero

Sadriddin Ayni
Sadriddin Saidmurodzoda, (Ayni was a pen name chosen by him later in his life, 15 April 1878 – 15 July 1954) was a Tajik intellectual who wrote poetry, fiction, history, and lexicography. He is regarded as Tajikistan's national poet and one of the most important writers in the country’s history.

He was born into a peasant family in the village of Soktare in the province of Ghijduvon in what was then the Emirate of Bukhara. He spent his youth between the two villages of Soktare and Mahallayi Bolo. Soktare was a village near the river Zarafshon with much fertile ground and a large mosque renowned for its exorcists and prayer healers, whereas Mahallayi Bolo was an unremarkable village that, during Ayni’s lifetime would become extremely poor and all but cease to exist.

Although Ayni attended the village school attached to the mosque in Soktare, as he describes in one of his autobiographical works, Мактаби кӯҳна, he did not learn anything during his time there, and learned only very basic literacy at the girls’ school he later attended. Everything of value that Ayni learned during his childhood from his father. According to Ayni, it was only in his adult life that he finally learned how to read properly.

After both of Ayni’s parents died of cholera in 1889, Ayni abandoned his childhood dream of studying in Bukhara and becoming a poet, forced instead to take over the family’s fields to provide for his younger brothers. 11-year-old Ayni’s incompetence at farming, as well as the large amount of debt incurred by his parents’ funerals, forced him to sell the family home at Mahallayi Bolo. While visiting an aunt,
Ayni was able to impress a great scholar visiting from Bukhara with his knowledge of spelling, and the scholar invited him to Bukhara to study, an invitation Ayni accepted gratefully, leaving his brothers behind with his aunt in Mahallayi Bolo.

In Bukhara, Ayni attended numerous madrasas but felt stifled and uninterested in their limited and impersonal religious teaching. He became involved with small, illicit student circles, which studied things like history, math, and current events—all things forbidden by the emir. Gradually, as the poetry that Ayni began to write became known in intellectual circles, Ayni was increasingly included in secret meetings of the literati to discuss topics ranging from literature to social injustice. Ultimately, Ayni became a staunch supporter of the Jadid movement (a Central Asian movement for the modernization of education), dedicating himself to what he deemed to be the solution to the problems that plagued Bukhara at the time: education reform.

After the establishment of the USSR in 1917, Ayni moved to Samarkand (then a part of Soviet Turkestan) after being beaten and imprisoned by the emir’s police in Bukhara. Shortly afterward, he began to write poetry and music criticizing the emir’s regime. Ayni was one of the principal contributors to the journal ‘Шуълай Икъилоб’ (“Flame of Revolution”), urging for a people’s revolution. Eventually, he began to favor prose over verse as a means of expression, writing novels instead of poetry describing the evils of the emir and the need for education reform. He began to advocate that intellectuals stop writing poetry, and focus on writing prose every man could understand.

In the early 1920s, Ayni helped to propagate the Russian Revolution in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In 1934, he attended the Soviet Congress of Writers as the Tajik representative. By purporting national identity in his writings, he was able to escape the Soviet censors in Central Asia. Ayni survived the Soviet Purges and even outlived Stalin by one year. He was a...
member of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan for 20 years, was awarded the Order of Lenin three times, and was the first president of the Academy of Sciences of Tajik SSR. After the fall of the emir and the establishment first of the Tajik ASSR in 1924, and then of the Tajik SSR in 1929, Ayni turned his attention away from politics and entirely focused on the issue that most concerned him, education. He devoted himself to the task of creating a new Tajik language. According to the Tajik press, “Until the Revolution, there was a great difference between the literary Tadzhik language and spoken Tadzhik.” Furthermore, students and even teachers, whose first language was Tajik, were unable to write grammatically. According to Маъсумӣ’s “Essays about the Development of the Tajik Literary Language”, “Ayni’s works of fiction winnowed out elaborate phraseology and obsolete vocabulary and spoke directly to the growing mass audience.” Furthermore, Ayni was well known for receiving a copy of all things published by the Tajik press and contacting their authors about “linguistic slips, unsuitable words, and word connections, [etc.] which all of them considered an honor.” Ayni gave indigenous Tajik literature in Tajikistan a boost in 1927 by writing Dokhunda, the first Tajikistani novel in the Tajik language. In 1934 and 1935, leading Russian director Lev Kuleshov worked for two years in Tajikistan on a movie based on Dokhunda but the project was regarded with suspicion by the authorities as possibly exciting Tajik nationalism and stopped. Ayni’s four-volume Yoddoshtho (Memoirs), completed 1949-54 are famous and widely read. In 1956, Tajik director Boris (Besion) Kimyagarov (1920–1979) was finally able to get approval for a movie version of Dokhunda.

Over the course of his lifetime, Sadriddin Ayni single-handedly standardized and created the Tajik language, published hundreds of works of almost every genre, and reformed the education system of the Uzbek and Tajik SSRs. When he died on July 15, 1954, in Dushanbe, he was canonized as one of Tajikistan’s National Heroes and has been awarded two Lenin awards among numerous other Soviet medals of distinction. Even today, his influence can be seen in anything published in Tajikistan, and numerous places and important buildings are named after him, including the famous Ayni Opera House in Dushanbe. Ayni died in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, where a mausoleum stands in his honor.

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The Art of “Askia” in Uzbekistan

Uzbek folklore has a multi-genre character. Its integral part and an inexhaustible source is “Askia” – wittiness, which can be defined as a satirical comic genre. Askia – reaction of quick wit and ingenuity, the ability of human impromptu eloquently and clearly express their thoughts, as well as match the gifted talents, the art of words and at the same time artistic controversy.

The term “Askia” is derived from the Arabic word “zakiy” in the singular i.e., shrewd, smart, capable. Askia – the plural of the word with the change of the letter “z” to “a” in the Uzbek language. Over time, it came to mean a contest of wits, which is usually organized in the presence of many people at weddings, festivals and mass popular festivities, which explains diversity of laughter caused by the specifics of the genre. The dialogue involves two people, or two groups of askia-masters. With the help of word games each party expressing
original thoughts, trying to get ahead of their “opponent” in the selection of targeted phrases and win the “battle”. Quickness of askia-master’s response is crucial. When he pauses, ponders what to say, searches for a word, the sharpness of his mind and temperament decline, losing the originality of the answer, as a rule, it means that he is not very knowledgeable in the chosen topic for debate or is not ready to be presented at such meetings. This in turn means that participants of such events should be mentally alert, comprehensively competent people, who can quickly and originally think and respond, using humor and jokes to great effect.

Life stories, images of other people and their daily dialogue taking place in society and the family, are transferred to the witty, playfully constructed sentences, rich in homonyms, phraseology, proverbs, aphorisms and idiomatic slang words, metaphors. Usually askia-masters widely use logical stress on words and syllables, which help to make their art understandable, unusually accessible to the masses. Attaching the words vitality, without which Askia would become a normal conversation, they use art as a means – a comparison, irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, that enriches their answers and questions, making them more powerful and caustic. Proposals are made in different ways, intonation of participants of battle of wits depends on their dialect too. An abstraction in askia plays an important role.

Askia has its artistic composition: its story and its elements – culmination and outcome. Peak of askia is achieved when entering the flow of consecutive thought, until the end of revealing a particular theme. Within mutual competition, each side strives to excel in wit, that it develops the meaning of mutual conversation. The moment of the deepest expressions of themes and content of a comprehensive disclosure is a culminating point of askia and its conclusion. A sign of victory is considered infinite, prolonged laughter of the audience. Askia is a stable, reassuring genre of folk art. At the same time, it is an integral part of the satire and humor that reveals shortcomings, exposes obscene and ugly phenomena, which eradicate all negative things.

This genre of oral creativity, which has already become a tradition exists among the Uzbek people for centuries. This is according to scientists, writers, confirming that Askia was transferred to India by lashkars (soldiers) of Babur. Along with this, the founder of Uzbek literature Alisher Navoi in his works “Leyli and Majnun” and “Farhad and Shirin” describes how to perform songs, music, clowning, wit during the festivities. Living in Herat, Navoi gathered around him more than twenty masters of wittiness, and he called Mohammed Badakhshi as the teacher (“pir”) of askia-masters.

Along with this, the famous Uzbek writer Abdulla Kadiri in his novel “Scorpion from the altar” also describes how askia-master – clown Zakir-gov exposed the hypocrisy of Khan and his nobles. These examples show
that for a long time Askia was common in the lives of the people. Especially, it has evolved in the Ferghana Valley – Kokand, Margilan, Andijan and Tashkent and Jizzakh. Such masters of words as Dehkan Yuzbashi Shernazarov, Erka kari Karimov, Yusufjan kizik Shakardjanov, Tursunbuva, Domla-aka, Alimdjan aka, Ismaildzhan aka, Mamayunus aka, Aka Bukhara, Mirshahid Mirakilov, Saidahmad-Askia, Domla aka Vakhobov, Nasir Mansurov, Mamarazyk Iskhakov, Ibragimdzjan Juraev, Rasulkari Mamadaliev, Shakasim Shadzhalirov, Akmalhan Tuichiev, Qayyum Mirzaakhmedov and others were very popular among the people, and have received great popularity in the late XIX and XX centuries. It should also be noted such askia-masters as Ganidjan Tashmatov, Jurakhon Sultanov, Arif Hatamov, Haliliila Hikmatillaev brothers Shaalim and Shaakbar Shadjalilovs, successfully performed in Tashkent in the second half of the twentieth century. It is noteworthy that in the late twentieth century, Askia, which was considered only a man’s sphere of activity and creativity, began to attract women. Thus, the Uzbek actress Lyutfihanum Sarimsakova, Tamarahanum Petrosyan, Mukarramah Turgunbaeva and others also competed in wittiness. Currently Askia, enriching its content in a more perfect forms, continues to live in the country. This is confirmed by the fact that among the people there are now hundreds of thousands of young askia-masters and their admirers. On November 27, 2014, the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the IX session in Paris included the Uzbek art wit Askia in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which will undoubtedly serve as its preservation and development. In June 2023 a Presidential resolution “On measures for the further development of the national art of Askiya and humor in the Republic of Uzbekistan” was adopted.
According to the resolution, the following are organized:
Republican Center for Askiya Art and Humor named after Yusufjon Kizik Shakarzhonov;
the annual Republican competition “Good mood” among masters-askiyachi and comedians;
once every two years - the International Festival of Laughter “Tabassum”.
Also, a state order is placed for the creation of at least 25 audiovisual works.
At the same time, the creators of 5 audiovisual works that have received the greatest popularity are awarded a one-time cash prize, which is fifty times the size of the BRV (16 million 650 thousand soums).
For the purpose of cultural and aesthetic leisure of their employees, state bodies, institutions and enterprises will establish the practice of organizing mass cultural and concert and entertainment events at least once a quarter.

**BESIDES:**

the activities of schools of skill of famous creative workers in the field of art of askiya and humor will be established;
creative workers who have created their own school of excellence in the manner prescribed by this Decree are additionally encouraged on a monthly basis at their main place of work in the 5-fold minimum wage (4 million 900 thousand soums);
schools of excellence are granted the right to use the facilities of the institutions in which they carry out their activities free of charge, while these institutions allocate separate premises to them.
From the 2024/2025 academic year, an opening will be organized at the Republican Variety and Circus College named after Karim Zaripov and the Ferghana Specialized School of Arts of the Art of Askiya and Humor direction.

**SOURCES:**
https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/81995
https://www.uzbekembassy.in/askia-in-uzbekistan/#:~:text=Uzbek%20folklore%20has%20a%20multi%20and%20satirical%20comic%20genre
Established in 1995, ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) is a specialized, international organization, located in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, which aims at fostering public awareness and preserving the rich cultural heritage of its member states.

Within the framework of its Charter, which has been approved by the member states, ECI has been entrusted with the key mandate to preserve and promote the common cultural heritage of the ECO region to encourage understanding among the nations of the region.

To this end, ECI has always organized a diverse range of art, cultural, literary, research, academic and sporting events and has published books and journals in English, Farsi, Russian and Urdu with the approach to strengthen cooperation and preserve the common cultural heritage of the member countries.

The ECO region is a vast territory with centuries-old history, rich civilization and culture which includes 10 member states, namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.