

REPRESENTATION OF CONTEMPORARY UZBEK SCULPTURE IN SYMPOSIUMS, BIENNALES, AND EXHIBITIONS DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20627835>

Abstract. The article analyzes the manifestation of contemporary Uzbek sculpture during the years of independence through symposiums, biennales, and exhibitions. The development of sculpture is examined in connection with national artistic memory, the representation of historical figures, contemporary plastic explorations, innovations in materials and forms, and the integration into the international art arena. The establishment of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan, the Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art, and national and international exhibitions are substantiated as important institutional platforms for the development of contemporary sculpture.

Keywords: contemporary Uzbek sculpture, period of independence, symposium, biennale, exhibition, plastic arts.

INTRODUCTION

During the years of independence, Uzbek sculpture entered a new stage in terms of content, form, artistic interpretation, and social function. Whereas in the previous period sculpture was mainly associated with ideological commissions, historical-political images, and monumental decorative purposes, the post-independence era witnessed a broader representation of national history, collective memory, aesthetic thinking, cultural heritage, the image of modern humanity, and free plastic experimentation. Opportunities for sculptors expanded in the selection of themes, use of materials, compositional solutions, interpretation of images, and exhibition communication.

Symposiums, biennales, and exhibitions have played a special role in the development of contemporary sculpture. These platforms present sculpture not merely as a finished work of art but as a process of artistic thinking, experimentation with materials, professional interaction, critical evaluation, and communication with audiences. The establishment of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan in 1997 created an important institutional foundation for the visual arts, including sculpture [1]. Official documents define the Academy as a creative, scientific, educational, and production institution in the field of fine arts.

MAIN PART

In the period of independence, the issues of historical memory and national identity became leading directions in Uzbek sculpture. The images of historical figures such as Amir Temur, Jalaliddin Manguberdi, Alisher Navoi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Beruni, Ibn Sina, and Mirzo Ulughbek were interpreted not only through portrait resemblance but also as plastic expressions of the spirit of their era, moral strength, statehood, and national pride. Such works demonstrated renewed approaches to historical themes in exhibitions and competitions. Sculptors sought to reveal historical personalities not merely through external appearance but through their spiritual status, their connection with their historical epoch, and their place in the collective memory of the nation.

Symposiums constitute an important form of creative exchange in sculpture. Unlike ordinary exhibitions, sculpture symposiums often involve the creation of artworks in open spaces within a specified period and using predetermined materials. The process of working with stone,



wood, metal, chamotte, gypsum, bronze, or mixed media itself becomes a creative event. In such an environment, national plastic thinking encounters international experience. For Uzbek sculptors, symposiums have provided opportunities to liberate composition, generalize forms, strengthen symbolic solutions, and translate traditional images into the language of contemporary art.

During the years of independence, exhibitions have served as a means of presenting sculptural works to a wider audience, introducing artists, and creating sources for art historical analysis. National exhibitions, personal creative exhibitions, displays of young painters and sculptors, and academic expositions have demonstrated the thematic and stylistic diversity of contemporary sculpture. Exhibition spaces have featured monumental sculpture models, examples of easel sculpture, portrait compositions, decorative plastic art, small-scale sculptures, and experimental objects. In his analysis of the types of visual arts, N. Abdullayev particularly emphasizes the characteristics of sculpture as an art directly concerned with space, volume, material, and form [3]. The exhibitions of the independence period successfully connected these possibilities with national content.

The Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art has served as an important international platform for the presentation of contemporary art, including plastic arts, during the years of independence. According to information provided by the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan, the Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art has been held every two years since 2001 and functions as an open forum for discussing issues of contemporary art and promoting cultural exchange [6]. It was announced that the 10th Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art would be held in 2024 under the theme “Art and the World.” The biennale format has expanded the possibilities of sculpture beyond the boundaries of traditional gallery art, enabling it to be presented through contemporary objects, installations, conceptual plastic forms, interaction with space, and audience participation.

The issue of materials has also been significant in the representation of contemporary Uzbek sculpture at biennales and exhibitions. Although the use of bronze and marble has continued during the years of independence, the application of wood, ceramics, iron, mixed media, ready-made objects, decorative elements, and constructive forms has increased considerably. This development has made it possible to interpret sculpture not merely as a form of monumental memory but also as a free plastic expression of contemporary artistic thought. A. Hakimov identifies the relationship between tradition and innovation as an important theoretical issue in the development of contemporary art in Uzbekistan [4]. Similarly, in sculpture, national ornaments, historical images, rhythms of folk applied arts, and modern minimalist forms have entered into dialogue with one another.

The formation of a new generation of young sculptors has also become evident through exhibition activities. The creative environment of the independence period provided young artists with opportunities to engage not only with the academic school but also with contemporary artistic styles, international exhibition standards, conceptual thinking, and plastic experimentation. Biennales, group exhibitions, and creative competitions served as professional schools for emerging sculptors. Alongside portraiture and historical compositions, young artists sought to express themes such as the individual, society, memory, nature, urban space, environmental issues, and spiritual exploration through three-dimensional forms.

The representation of sculpture in symposiums and exhibitions is closely linked with the process of introducing national art to the international arena. At international exhibitions, the works of Uzbek sculptors are perceived as a dialogue between Eastern and Western artistic thought, between traditional forms and contemporary concepts, and between national symbols and the global language of art. The Tashkent Biennale and other contemporary art events have enabled Uzbek sculpture to establish connections not only with local audiences but also with foreign art historians, curators, and artists. This process has also influenced the content of



artworks: national imagery is no longer expressed solely through closed ethnographic symbols but through broader philosophical, symbolic, and aesthetic solutions.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

During the years of independence, contemporary Uzbek sculpture reached a new stage of development in terms of both content and form through symposiums, biennales, and exhibitions. The activities of the Academy of Arts, national exhibitions, the Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art, exhibitions of young artists, and international creative cooperation have provided an institutional and aesthetic foundation for the advancement of sculpture.

Within this process, historical memory, national identity, the image of modern humanity, plastic experimentation, diversity of materials, and integration into the international art world have emerged as the principal trends. Symposiums have given sculptors the opportunity to work freely with materials and space, biennales have intensified dialogue with contemporary artistic concepts, and exhibitions have brought the internal creative explorations of national sculpture to the attention of the public. Therefore, studying Uzbek sculpture of the independence period within the context of symposiums, biennales, and exhibitions constitutes one of the important scholarly directions in the history of national art.

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