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## HISTORICAL SUPPOSITIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL THEMES IN ARTISTIC CULTURE

**Abstract.** The fine arts of Azerbaijan have a rich and substantial prehistory with various artistic styles. Economic, trade and cultural relations emerged in the country, which grew into international relations quickly even in the period of the early Middle Ages. The advantageous geographical position of Azerbaijan, its location at the crossroads of East and West, as well as important caravan routes led to the formation of various artistic styles. These artistic styles have evolved, mixed with each other and formed new forms over the centuries, which influenced the development of artistic culture as a whole in their turn [4, p. 70-71].

Samples of national symbols already began to take shape in Azerbaijan in the period of the early Middle Ages, which covered various areas of public life and reflected in artistic culture. These symbols became more and more over time. Symbolic features acquired rock paintings, astral signs, patterns on carpets and schematics on ceramic products. Many of them formed the basis of the emerging images of national symbols over time and ultimately, led to the formation and artistic enrichment of national themes in the artistic culture of Azerbaijan.

New styles formed in art and gave rise to new artistic traditions later, during the period of the mature Middle Ages and especially on the eve of modern times. The importance of the Tabriz school of miniature grew and developed its own artistic style [7, p. 11-14]. Other styles emerged under the influence of this school, which reflected the canons of the Tabriz school. One of these styles is the so-called “Kajar style”, which embodied elements of medieval miniature and European figurative art of a later time. Such a

“synthesis” took root well and probably, acquired the status of national art until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Key words:** The fine arts of Azerbaijan, postmodern art, Tabriz school of miniature, “Kajar style”.

**Introduction.** Fundamental changes took place in the themes and most importantly, in the ideological and aesthetic perception of secular realistic art during the Soviet period. Meanwhile, some classical canons were accepted by the new realistic art. So, in particular, decorativeness and diminutiveness formed the basis of some artists’ works. The beginnings of a new style appeared, which could be described as postmodern in the domestic fine arts a few decades later. Appearing as an imitation of Western art, the Azerbaijani postmodern acquired features soon that could be qualified as a manifestation of the national character. The national character of abstractionism was still weakly manifested in the early works by Goyur Yunus, Sirius Mirzazadeh, Ismail Mammadov, Enver Asgerov, Mir Teimur, Yusif Mirza, Gunay Mehdiyeva and others, but soon (as their creative style and artistic outlook develop), national modernism acquired a special scope, as if heralding the beginning of a new period in the development of avant-garde art. Thus, the end of the 80s-90s can be considered the beginning of the formation of national postmodern art. A group of young artists, such as Zakir Huseynov, Elchin Aliyev, Faig Ahmed, Teimur Daimi and some others joined the national postmodern style in the 2000s. The contemporary postmodern art of Azerbaijan is represented by the work of these and other artists.

The interpretation of the main material. The modern postmodern fine arts of Azerbaijan have roots dating back to the artistic culture of the Middle Ages. It was the stylistic features of medieval art that determined the essence of native postmodernism largely in the context of the manifestation of the national character. So, an important feature of modern postmodernism is the manifestation of the national character and themes reflected in the composition of the work. They manifest themselves more often in specific artistic symbols. These symbols form the visual basis of genetic memory and are the ideological and artistic basis of the works. In our opinion, these symbols consist of several basic elements in the work of artists, which include:

- Natural monuments;
- Historical and architectural monuments;
- Musical instruments;

- Artistic works and products;
- Stylized artistic motifs;
- Household items;
- Pictures of national heroes (fictional or historical);
- Pictures of living beings (real and mythological) taken from folklore.

Each of these elements has its own significance in forming the structural and compositional solution of works of art created by Azerbaijani artists over the past decades. It is also important to note that some features of national themes – decoration, miniature, painterliness – can also appear in realistic art in stylistic terms [6, p. 35]. Moreover, the abovementioned forms manifested themselves in the work of a number of Azerbaijani artists, such as Gazanfar Khalykov, Ismail Akhundov, Taghi Tagiyev, Asaf Jafarov, Rasim Babayev, Kamal Ahmed, Javad Mirjavadov and others from the 20s to the 80s. In particular, the famous painting “The Funeral of Ferdowsi” by G. Khalilov was painted in a miniature style, where the artist introduced elements characteristic of the construction of medieval miniature plots into the extensional-dimensional solution of the composition. The motives of national life also manifested themselves in the famous painter T. Tagiyev’s work, the author of the painting “The Carpet Seller”, in which, according to some ideas, the artist depicted himself. There are many such examples. From this it is clear that motifs of decorativeness in terms of national themes existed in the fine arts of Azerbaijan throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Later, already at the turn of the 80s-90s, when some artists were actively involved in the search for new abstract forms to embody their ideas, the motifs of national themes also entered postmodern art. These motives were actively used by representatives of the so-called “generation of the 60s”, among which were Kamal Ahmed, Tofiq Javadov, Farhad Khalilov, Altai Hajiyev, Rasim Babayev, Fazil Najafov and some others. Summarizing the plot with motifs, which is characteristic of national themes, these artists achieved the emergence and dissemination of new creative principles. Gradually, these artists formed their own creative worldview, different ideas and views on life and art arose. Their worldview was not a reflection of classical postmodernism (although the constructive and ideological principles were borrowed from Western art), but went back to the origins of national self-consciousness. This is how the modern historical suppositions for the national postmodern fine arts of Azerbaijan, which are represented primarily by artists of the middle and young generation, have developed.

One of the basic principles of any art is the definition of style. Style is an important component of the compositional and ideological-aesthetic content of the work. The same applies to contemporary art as well. Moreover, when the importance of conceptual art is growing in modern conditions, style performs the function of a fixer, as if outlining the descriptive language of the work and explaining its ideological and artistic content. “Artistic style is formed on the basis of various iconic media as an informational, semiotic system. In the case of correct code translation, each time we get a chance to reconstruct the artistic picture of the world, which is fixed by style” [1, p. 192-193].

It is also important to note that symbolic signs, which go back to the ancient Turkic tradition, also actively participate in the formation of the ideological and aesthetic foundations of modern postmodern thinking. There are many signed interpretations that have not only artistic, but also semiotic significance in Teimur Daimi’s work, who is one of the most advanced conceptualists of contemporary art. Such are the astral signs – the moon, the sun, the stars in particular, which are found in one interpretation or another in the compositions of various artists. The stretched crescent is a very characteristic symbolic image of the Absheron landscapes by Zakir Huseynov (“Buzovna”, 2004, “Sunny Day”, 2000s). The same can be said about the conceptual landscapes by Kamal Ahmed, where the moon-ghost acts as a fixer of the psychological impact on the viewer (“Goradil”, 1980s, “Artist and Life”, 1980). Sometimes the sun performs the same function. One way or another, astral signs influence the formation of associations by carrying a subconscious semantic predestination, as if “directing” the artist’s work. “The Altai tradition caught the divine emanation sensitively and structured itself in accordance with it. Traditionalists claim that the Sun with eight rays and the eight-pointed star are the oldest symbols of the divinity. Eight is also associated with a burning bush – a tree that burns, but does not perish” [11, p. 116].

It is clear from the above mentioned that the motives of the national tradition are closely related to the work of artists who use them in their compositions not only to give national themes, but also a certain philosophical content to the works. For example, such are the compositions by Mir Teimur, Teimur Daimi, Rashad Mehdiyev and a number of others.

Contemporary postmodern art manifests itself in all types of fine arts. At the same time, the “leader” is considered to be painting, in which the

characteristic features, as well as the visuality and figurativeness of contemporary postmodern art are especially manifested clearly and vividly. It is interesting that there have been more supporters of “national conceptualism” in recent years, while the priorities of Western abstraction are noticeably degrading in native art and unlike the 90s art, have already been pushed into the background.

One of the interesting features of the national postmodern is the myth, a fictional image, which are brightly endowed with a national character and color. Moreover, this is already happening on the eve of the formation of the national postmodern and manifests itself in the artists’ works of the classical generation. “There was a tendency to myth-thinking, symbolism, ambivalence and polysemantic signs and images in modern Azerbaijani painting, as well as in the art of other post-Soviet republics in the 80-90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to some researchers, even earlier, starting from the end of the 60s, the time, which is considered to be the beginning of modern art itself, this tendency towards mythological and symbolic significance and imagery was revealed in the works by Rasim Babayev and Javad Mirjavadov” [9, p. 156].

The contemporary postmodern fine arts of Azerbaijan are represented by many names. There are both young artists and masters of the brush of the middle and even older generation among the artists who adhere to postmodernist views. These artists are Enver Asgerov, Mir Teimur, Aida Mahmudova, Ashraf Geybat, Zakir Huseynov, Faig Ahmed, Orkhan Huseynov, Rashad Mehdiyev and many others. Each of them has developed his own creative style, which are different from the others. Everyone has their own outlook. However, they are united by something in common – the desire to convey the world as they see it, exactly in the context of unrealistic perception. An equally important common feature of their work is the national theme, which usually manifests itself in characteristic symbolic details. The national theme often makes itself felt in the selection of colors – the brighter they are, the more national color in traditional perception. The art of the East has attracted with its bright and colorful palette since ancient times, which is clearly manifested, for example, in the Tabriz miniatures. Many modern artists have adopted this tradition and create paintings that distinguish for their color.

“Avant-gardism is an aesthetic concept that expresses the essence of the “age of the atom”, the “age of automation and cybernetics”, the “space age” by means of art; at the same time, artists use the achievements of modern

science and technology in their work” - [10, p. 64] wrote the well-known Soviet art theorist I. Matsa. About half a century has passed since these lines were written, but their main principle has remained unchanged. Today, representatives of the native avant-garde style apply the innovations of technology successfully to saturate their compositions with diverse artistic elements. In particular, the artist Rashad Mehdiyev uses laser illumination with great success, which gives the effect of spatial perception to his planar compositions.

Modern conceptual art is clearly manifested in the famous artist Farhad Khalilov's work. His conceptualism is reflected in the linear landscape, where the horizontal construction of the composition consists of at least three parallel divisions - earth, sea and sky. But at the same time, the artist's portraits are also endowed with conceptual components, although he is more known as a landscape artist. A portrait for Khalilov is a human, and a human is a part of nature. A human returns to his original position by closing the circle, becomes a part of nature and accordingly, of the landscape, a “portrait of nature”. “The portrait genre in the artist's work is not dominant, since the artist is known as a landscape artist both in the world and in Azerbaijani art, who is glorifying his native Absheron and a representative of new modernism. But, nevertheless, portraits and his characters, landscape compositions with figures of people, paintings with figures against the background of nature in the process of labor are among the best works of the master, who perceives human as part of nature” [2, p. 21].

Characteristic details of the national landscape can also be found in Enver Asgerov's works, who is a recognized master of the brush, a representative of avant-garde art. Parks and alleys, sands and rocks, sea and sky – all this is characteristic of the artist's work that gravitates either to a realistic or to an abstract perception of the Absheron landscapes, which is native to him [3, p. 1].

**Conclusion.** It must be said that color continued to be of great importance for many Azerbaijani artists' work. Some researchers associate this with genetic memory that pops up and manifests itself in the paintings of the artists of the classical generation. “Azerbaijanis ... have completely sophisticated senses of rhythm and color. The color palette of our artists is very variegated, to match the diversity of the mountain meadow pastures of our semi-nomadic ancestors. It is sufficient to recall the diversity of the paintings by Toghrul Narimanbeyov, Rasim Babayev and Nadir Abdurahmanov” [5, p. 105].

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### *Leyla İsayeva (Azərbaycan)*

## **BƏDİİ MƏDƏNİYYƏTDƏ MİLLİ MÖVZULARIN FORMALAŞMASININ TARİXİ ŞƏRTLƏRİ**

Məqalədə qeyd olunur ki, Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti, çoxçalarlı və rəngarəng bədii üslublarla zəngin olan keçmişə malikdir. Erkən orta əsrlərdən başlayaraq ölkəmizdə iqtisadi, ticarət və mədəni münasibətlər qurulmuşdur. Onlar çox tez bir zamanda beynəlxalq əlaqələrə çevrilmişlər. Azərbaycanın Şərqi və Qərbi, eləcə də, karvan yollarının kəsişdiyi bir məkanda yerləşməsi bir çox sahələrdə müxtəlif bədii üslubların formalaşmasına da gətirib çıxarmışdır. Yüzdəliklərlə boyu bu bədii üslublar bir-birilə qovuşmuş, yeni

formalar yaratmış və, öz növbəsində, bütövlükdə, mədəniyyətin inkişafına təkan vermişdir. Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti müxtəlif inkişaf mərhələlərindən keçərək postmodernizm mərhələsinə qədəm qoymuş və bu istiqamətdə dünya əhəmiyyətli bədii əsərlərə imza atmışdır.

*Açar sözlər:* Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti, çağdaş postmodernizm, Təbriz miniatür məktəbi, Qacar üslubu, milli mövzular.

*Исаева Лейла (Азербайджан)*

### **ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ПРЕДПОСЫЛКИ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ ТЕМАТИКИ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ КУЛЬТУРЕ**

Изобразительное искусство Азербайджана насчитывает богатую и насыщенную разнообразными художественными стилями предысторию. Еще в период раннего средневековья в стране сложились экономические, торговые и культурные взаимоотношения, быстро переросшие в международные взаимосвязи. Выгодное географическое положение Азербайджана, его расположение на стыке Востока и Запада, а также важных караванных путей, привели к формированию различных художественных стилей. В течение столетий эти художественные стили развивались, перемешиваясь между собой и образуя новые формы, которые, в свою очередь, повлияли на развитие художественной культуры в целом.

*Ключевые слова:* изобразительное искусство Азербайджана, современный постмодернизм, Тебризская школа миниатюры, Каджарский стиль, национальная тематика.