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Vision and strategies for researching the history of fine arts in 30 years of independence in Central Asia

La visión y las estrategias para investigar la historia de las bellas artes durante los 30 años de independencia en Asia Central

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the history of Soviet art should be rewritten. Analysis and historical narration should be carried out by the cultural field of the country, in accordance with the real process – this is the persistent study of the academic circles of Central Asia over the past 30 years of independence. One of the important issues is to find the source of contemporary art in Central Asia and reshape the history of contemporary art in Central Asia. **Materials and Methods:** The authors outlined the general context of the history of art in Central Asia in the article. In addition, it was considered as part of the history of the art development of the Silk Road, which itself violated the boundaries of the regionalization of cultural identity, as well as necessary to change the knowledge of the history of contemporary art in Central Asia from the “Eurocentric approach” to correspond to historical fact. **Results and Discussion:** Central Asia has ethnic groups living across borders and has a long history of exchanges along the ancient Silk Road and cultural factors shaped by two-way feedback. **Conclusions:** The study of the history of contemporary art in Central Asia is of strategic importance with a global historical perspective.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The peculiarity of the geographical position of Central Asia has always made it at the crossroads connecting the Chinese, Indian, Persian and Byzantine civilizations. World religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, Turkic-Mongolian and Indo-European gather here. Nations living in Central Asia have a common historical destiny, geographical conditions and a common cultural process, forming a relatively integral and unique cultural and historical space, making a complete historical highway. Kazakhs, kyrgyz, uzbeks, turkmens, tajiks living in Central Asia, by ethnographic origin belong to a mixed blood group between the Mongolian-Siberian, European-Indian and Pamir type, that is, to the Turanian race. Therefore, the field of study of Central Asia history is pretty wide and multifaceted, including the concept of nomadism, nomadic cultural studies, turkology, kypchak knowledge (kuman studies) and other humanities, which inevitably cover the ancient and medieval Eurasian nomadic empires of the huns, culture and art which were left over by the mongols, Mongolian Empire and Empire of Timur. All major world religions, cultures and arts have existed in Central Asia, and all of them have certain qualifications and influences ⁽¹⁾.

There have always been disputes about the attributes and attributions of Central Asian culture and art, and it would be more correct to attribute the characteristics of a “Turkic-Asian-European” civilization and get a mainstream consensus in academic circles ⁽²⁾. This feature not only has a historical coloring of the intersection of different civilizations of the world, but also retains the originality of its artistic image. For a long time, people of Central Asia have developed a special cultural mentality, their own cultural concept and ethnic tradition, as well as multi-ethnic and poly-confessional characteristics, whose artistic language is at the same time part of the Turkic and, possibly, part of the Eurasian.

In the process of national culture development, worldview and national formation, Central Asia played an exceptionally important role in the social progress of the ancient, medieval and modern people of the Eurasian continent, largely determined the fate of the people of the entire continent in the history of Eurasia. Before the advent of ancient navigation technologies, the Silk Road was one of the most convenient and safe roads in Asia and Europe, as well as an important cultural platform for the exchange and dissemination of information of human civilization and progress ⁽³⁾.

The question of whether the primitive culture of Central Asia can be called or has the right to claim the status of civilization remains unresolved in the academic world today. Some Central Asian scholars believe that the Central Asian cultural community meets the basic requirements of the category of civilization, such as territory, socio-political structure, cultural community, rich literature, art, religious beliefs, etc. meet the clear requirements of the concept of civilization.

2. THE BASIS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF THE HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asian art is passed down from generation to generation, relying on the form of transmission of traditional original culture, which determines the theme, language and style of the artist work, and not the economy and strength, which was the basis for the development of contemporary art in Central Asia. Continuous maturation of Central Asian smelting technology from the 8th century BC to the 3rd century BC “In 1914, the “Andronov culture” was discovered in the Andronovo village of Pavlodar in Kazakhstan.

One of the greatest achievements of Bronze Age archeology is the complete collection of Bronze Age cultural artifacts” ⁽⁴⁾. Rich deposits of copper and tin in Central Asia are an important reason for the development of the bronze industry. Rich deposits of tin are located in the easternmost part of the Andronov territory. The nearby Altai has been a huge mining and smelting industry since ancient times. In the center of copper-tin alloy technology during this period, various jewelry, household items, weapons, production tools, clothing and horse equipment were made from gold, silver, copper and other non-ferrous metals and materials.

In Central Asia, there are more than 30 types of architectural and artistic relics associated with Buddhism, which are the basis for the characteristics of the history and art of Central Asia. Buddhism spread from Kashmir to Khotan, China, and gradually spread throughout China. Existing Central Asian statues “Guishuang Art” in the Kyzyl caves, thousand Buddhas in Xinjiang and Dunhuang, plastic arts, as well as images of the “Dragon King” in Chinese Buddhist modeling is widespread in Qian, dharani and Central Asian Buddhist art, images of elephant heads and human figures are also found in Indian and Central Asian artistic archeology; the beaded fringe reminds us of Iran and Sogdia – all these are of interest in the 244 caves of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Sui Dynasty ⁽⁵⁾.

Archaeological relics have confirmed that the ancient Silk Road contributed to the two-way feedback of human culture and art. At present, a large amount of academic literature is devoted or focused on the iconographic fixation of

Buddhist monuments and sorting, and the analysis of technical and technological characteristics (materials, manufacturing techniques), but systematic studies of Central Asian Buddhist monuments of course is not enough.

Central Asia was captured by the Arab Empire in the 7th century BC, and the army of the Arab Caliphate occupied most of the Central Asia territory at the beginning of the 8th century BC. The invasion of the Arab Empire slowed down the gradual process of social development in Central Asia. On the one hand, the invasion and spread of Islam greatly shook the ancient cultural traditions of the peoples of Central Asia, and religious extremists destroyed many Buddhist temples and frescoes. On the other hand, the spread of Islam contributed to the rapid development of Islamic arts such as traditional handicrafts, and also contributed to the rapid growth of Islamic architecture, as well as applied and fine arts.

In the ninth and tenth centuries BC, Central Asian scholars contributed to world medicine, mathematics, astronomy. The cultural, artistic productions of Central Asia are full of rationalism and materialistic elements and have become a part of the world's cultural treasury ⁽⁶⁾. In the 10th century in Central Asia, the technology of firing bricks for laying the vault of the building was used, and a domed and associated arched triple structure was developed, which contributed to the transition of a square building into a spherical dome.

Meanwhile, each city of Central Asia was famous for its crafts and Central Asian architectural decoration of the fourteenth-seventeenth centuries. All this can be seen as a revival of post-Mongolian art, with more mature architectural irrigation techniques, carvings, reliefs and mosaics, using marble carvings, gilded paintings, tiles, paintings (frescoes, landscapes and patterns), interiors, patterned structures, walls and domes etc. Architects have accumulated building techniques and decorative craftsmanship over hundreds of years, all in the spirit of established traditions. In the middle of the 19th century, Central Asia was incorporated to the Russian Empire, and the massive influx of Russian art opened the door for contemporary art in Central Asia.

3. ELEMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY ART HISTORY IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Central Asian feudal era from about the sixth century BC to the end of incorporation to Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century AD has about one and a half thousand years. Since the nineteenth century, Central Asian cities have flourished, literature, culture, art and science have developed. European art brought by Russia opened the prelude to modern art in Central Asia. The academic community as a whole believes that “in the social development of Central Asia, joining Russia objectively played a huge and progressive role ... it got European cultural achievements, primarily the emergence and widespread dissemination of Russian democratic ideology and educational ideology” ⁽¹⁾. Kazakhstan is creating a new Soviet society and the education system has faced many difficulties, such as lack of new generation textbooks, teaching and didactic manuals in the Kazakh language, poor logistics and equipment, etc. The arrival of the October Socialist Revolution marked the beginning of a new socio-economic system, such as education, especially in vocational education and training of future specialists, there have been great changes in both art special institutions and in general culture, science, art and literature ⁽⁷⁾.

With the gradual advancement of the socialist revolution and construction in Central Asia, the first professional artists became members of collective creative groups, forcing many artists to give up some or even all of their basic rights to free creativity, leading to new Soviet political entities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan with parties of the political elites of the three main Central Asian republics, who “waged a fierce struggle with the authorities, in cultural, artistic and other terms, for identity and the right to exist” ⁽⁸⁾, for which they even gave their lives. To meet the need for artistic talents for the socialist revolution and socialist construction, the Soviet government of Central Asia did a great job and trained national personnel, such as Abylkhan Kasteev, the founder of the Kazakh National School of Painting (Kasteev Abylkhan, 1904-1974), Nation's Artist Ural Tansykbaev and others.

In the early 1930s, the Almaty Art College, Almaty Pedagogical Institute, Samarkand Art Institute and Tashkent Art Institute were established for intake of students, which strengthened the foundation of modern art education in Central Asia. Thanks to the huge influence of contemporary art, this contributed to the rapid development of contemporary art in Central Asia. On the one hand, Central Asian artists objected to “art becoming an important tool for Moscow to control the surrounding territories” ⁽⁸⁾, and on the other hand, art education should have been based on artists from Russia and local artists who returned from studies from Russia.

Thus, Russian art played an important role in the process of contemporary art development in Central Asia, especially avant-garde art, such as Kazimir Malevich “Domination” in Russia in the early twentieth century, had a great influence on the birth of contemporary art in Central Asia. Mikhail Kurzin, Mikhail Geydukevich, Alexander Nikolaev and Kazakh artist Ural Tansykbaev, Turkmen artist Biashim Nurali who were students of K. Malevich, were all representatives of the avant-garde in Central Asia in the 1930s.

The world-famous trend in the visual arts well-known as “cubism” by the talented artist Alexander Volkov, combining elements of Central Asian and Islamic art in his artistic work, creating a different Central Asian modernist form, different from socialist realism. Being at the crossroads of Asian and European civilizations, the traditional art of Central Asia experienced many cultural changes during the human civilization development, and influenced world culture, especially the medieval culture of Western Europe. Long before the Arabs came to Central Asia to spread Islam, the people of Central Asia had a magnificent cultural heritage. Sako-Scythian art, Kushuan art, Gandhara art had a great influence on the development of Eastern and Western art.

In the early 1960s, the Central Asian academic community generally believed that “research by Russian scholars in recent decades has proved the high level of Central Asian visual art in the feudal era and the main role of Central Asia as one of the most important centers of Eastern medieval culture and art”⁽⁹⁾. This point of view has been gradually recognized by modern Central Asian scholars since the independence of Central Asia.

Everyone knows that the spread of culture and art is a long and gradual process that cannot be completed immediately. Therefore, Central Asia is a national community with a long history, it has a common history, culture, language process, has a single spiritual space and attracts each other to reflect the national society and national cultural memory. It is undeniable that Russian art played a leading role in the development of contemporary art in Central Asia, but modern art as the avant-garde in Islamic art and the ancient art of the Silk Road (West and Russia) supported the development of contemporary art in Central Asia as well. Since the independence of Central Asia, a large number of research results have further revealed the artistic phenomenon, the new artistic direction and the historical background of the artistic works presented in the development of contemporary art in Central Asia.

“Culture is a concentrated reflection of the soul, wisdom and noble spirit of the nation. People can be proud of making a certain contribution to the historical process, cultural development, accumulation of human thought and artistic achievements in this civilized country. Only through culture and tradition can a nation be made great”⁽¹⁰⁾. Undoubtedly, Russian and Soviet art expanded the vision of the development of Central Asian art, giving Central Asian art, built on the ancient Silk Road, a more tenacious life consciousness.

At present, some views on the history of contemporary art in Central Asia have not been reached by academia. The process of differentiation and evolution of the social system in the previously nomadic society of Central Asia was rooted in tribal relations and the entire social structure of the nomads and ultimately determined the way of thinking of the nomads within the concept of historicism. “In fact, there are huge factual gaps and gaps in cultural continuity in the history of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, giving a place for many assumptions, especially regarding the place of nomadic societies in various theories and classifications”⁽¹¹⁾.

Due to the vast territory of Central Asia, sparsely populated and scattered residential areas, although Central Asian society was fully integrated into the muslim world before the conquest of Central Asia by the Russian Empire, muslim aesthetics and aesthetics strongly influenced by Islam developed in the local culture. “Talking about the ethical thought... we can say that the extent of this influence varies by region and group, and in many places, especially among rural, mountainous and nomadic populations, supports local forms of cultural production, sometimes quite different from the general muslim model”⁽²⁾. Faced with the influx of Russian culture and art, Central Asian islamic culture and art were not theoretically and technically ready to resist the expansion of external cultures. Widespread contacts and exchanges between a large number of Russian-speaking immigrants and local residents contributed to the emergence of secular and European culture, non-religious literature, modern education and art forms, thanks to which the new fashionable culture and art continued to spread and infiltrate the Central Asian cultural society.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY CENTRAL ASIAN ART

The process of Soviet culture development in Central Asia became radical and dramatic, and many traditional arts, religion and customs in Central Asia were abandoned, and the large-scale introduction of forms of secular and European culture, especially the socialist realism movement, brought Central Asian art history into the stage of development of socialist art. At this time, a new generation of Central Asian Soviet intelligence completed the transition from religious art to modern art, creating an identical Kazakh national school of painting, cubism and avant-garde art in the “socialist realism” art movement. Moreover, a relatively complete system of ancient art was made in Central Asia, which withstood the test of changes in the world order, the progress made and received during the flourishing of Soviet socialist realism, the period of “thaw”, “stagnation” and “new thinking”.

Since independence in Central Asia, academia has been constantly considering the history of the development of contemporary art from the perspective of history and culture. They have been actively seeking and pursuing national identity and restoring historical justice in the process of nation-building, constantly looking for ways of sustainable

development in the history of Central Asian contemporary art and its development factors. During the flourishing period of the artistic movement of Soviet socialist realism from the 1930s to the 1950s, there was a lot of ideological and artistic content worthy of consideration and study in the work of Central Asian artists.

It is necessary to study and think about the Abylkhan Kasteev works, the founder of the professional National School of Painting in Kazakhstan, during the period of the socialist revolution and construction. "With his own brush and style of painting, he was able to convey his endless love for his native land, he did not agree with the prescribed principles, he used his own artistic language of painting in his canvases and created a unique creation" (12). His paintings reflect peaceful meadows and the aesthetic concept of real life, there are few grandiose, fantasy productions and life scenes, there are no condescending leaders and heroic figures.

In the innovation of reception and integration, the contemporary art history of Central Asia got rid of the "islamization" of the language of art form in terms of thought and aesthetics in order to test the complexity and purpose of Central Asian art in front of an uncertain modern world, emphasizing the geopolitical and economic significance of human civilization. We can make a definite judgment about the history of contemporary art in Central Asia only by deeply understanding the path of the contemporary fine art history development in Central Asia.

At the same time, it is necessary to capture the general context of the history of art in Central Asia and consider it as part of the history of the development of the Silk Road art, which itself violated the boundaries of the regionalization of cultural identity, as well as necessary to change the knowledge of the history of contemporary art in Central Asia from the "Eurocentric approach" to correspond to the historical fact. Central Asian art is a meeting place for Asian and European cultures. Although the history of contemporary art development in Central Asia is in the chaos of modern world history, it is believed that it can withstand the changes of time and continue developing dynamically.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The history of contemporary art in Central Asia has experienced three important social changes and artistic trends: firstly, during the period of the Russian Empire, the artistic movement of realism influenced the strict rules and regulations of Islamic art; secondly, their own artistic style and their own cultural characteristics gradually formed; thirdly, the direction of contemporary art constantly breaks down barriers, "patterns and rules", realizing artistic aesthetics and artistic ideals in integration.

During the thirty years of Central Asian independence, open borders, free external exchanges and cooperation gradually emerged from the shadow of the vast haze of Soviet art history, lifted the mysterious curtain of Central Asian contemporary art, and gradually dispelled the interest of the academic community in Central Asian art, cognitive flaws and misunderstandings. However, people's understanding of the history of contemporary art in Central Asia cannot be achieved overnight, and its inherent shackles still influence the way the academic world thinks.

An objective narrative about the history of contemporary art in Central Asia is the restoration of honesty and justice in the history of the development of mankind, the assertion of the historical status of Central Asia as a bridge and link connecting the Chinese, Indian, Persian and Byzantine civilizations. From the point of view of world historiography, it is indisputable that the history of contemporary art in Central Asia is an important part of the ancient Silk Road. And art moved from tradition to modernity, which formed a style with typical characteristics and unique aesthetics, and paid tribute to Russian and Soviet art in both directions.

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