

UOT 7.03

Khazar Zeynalov
PhD (Art Study), Associate Professor
Institute of Architecture and Art of ANAS
(Azerbaijan)

khazar.zeynalov@yandex.ru

RUSSIAN THEME IN AZERBAIJANI ARTISTS' WORKS
(In the early 20th and 20–30s)

Abstract. The article deals with the Russian theme in Azerbaijani artists' works. Works that were created at the beginning and in the 20–30s of the last century are considered. The author notes that the Russian theme is reflected in portraits, landscapes, thematic compositions. The article considers and analyzes three prominent artists' paintings – Azim Azimzadeh, Bahruz Kangarli and Geysar Kashiyeva. It was noted that the realistic character of these works informs the rapid development of national fine arts in the early and 30s of the last century. The portrait of N.V. Gogol painted by G. Kashiyeva, B. Kangarli's realist portraits, of A. Azimzadeh's satirical characters show that this theme was widely spread during the formation and development of national realist art.

Key words: Azerbaijani fine arts, Russian theme, portrait, Azim Azimzadeh, Bahruz Kangarli.

Introduction. The beginning of the 20th century is a period of formation and development of realist art in Azerbaijan. The artists who worked at that time painted mainly realistic life and landscape paintings with watercolors and had a certain influence on the development of art. This process began to develop more rapidly in the 20s and 30s. The Russian theme was also reflected in the fine arts at that time.

Certain works on the Russian theme were created by Azerbaijani artists during the formation of realist fine arts at the beginning of the century. A. Azimzadeh, B. Kangarli, G. Kashiyeva and others' some works are associated with Russian culture and life. In fact, this should not seem surprising, so

that the formation of realist art was directly connected with the traditions of progressive Russian culture [4]. It is interesting that portraits of writers created by Azerbaijani artists at the beginning of the century and reflecting Russian culture are more widespread.

The interpretation of the main material. In general, artistic image of Russian writers and poets were created in all periods of 20th century Azerbaijani art. The first samples in this field are generally associated with the formation of the genre of realist portrait in Azerbaijani art. A.Azimzadeh painted portraits of M.Fuzuli, I.Nasimi, Abulula, M.S. Ordubadi and others back in the early 20th century. All this increased the interest in the creation of pictures of writers and poets in art. Well-known enlightener-intellectual, the first female artist of Azerbaijan Geysar Kashiyeva was one of the founders of the creation of portraits of Russian writers in the national fine arts. Two graphic paintings – portraits of N.V. Gogol and I.A. Goncharov by the artist long before the 1920 April coup are among the first works on this theme. Geysar khanim worked in the field of painting and graphics. She painted many paintings, portraits and landscapes with watercolors, black ink, pencils and charcoal in 1907–1915. Among them are “Azerbaijani intellectual”, “Lake shore”, “Intelligent woman”, “Old guard”, “Georgian girl”, “Hunter”, “Firefighter”, “Portrait of I. Goncharov”, “Portrait of Gogol” and other, which follow the traditions of realism and are distinguished by their unique craftsmanship” [5].

The portrait of N.V. Gogol (1909) has an educational character. The artist painted this portrait with a pencil. G. Kashiyeva was only 16 years old at that time and had just graduated from the art studio of the Caucasian Art Promotion Society (1907–1908) in her hometown Tbilisi. Young artists created mainly characters, plaster sculptures, various figures from nature here. It should be noted that B.Kangarli also had some educational drawings (“The head of the ancient monument”, etc.) that he worked with a pencil during his studies. G.Kashiyeva’s many graphic works belonging to that period have survived to the present day. One of them is the portrait of N.V. Gogol created with plaster cast. The work occupies an important place in the history of our national art. The young artist was able to draw the writer’s face correctly while working plaster cast with pencil and succeed to reflect the character of the writer, as well as his external similarity (Fig. 1).

The same can be said about the portrait of I.A. Goncharov worked with sanguine (1915). Despite being young, G.Kashiyeva was already known in the cultural environment during this period. Besides A.Azimzadeh, B.Kangarli,

A.Huseyni, N.Rasim, her works also attracted the attention of art lovers at that time.

Like N.V. Gogol, the portrait of I.A. Goncharov was not taken from live nature. The author took it from the photo. This was a great achievement for that period. In comparison with the portrait of Gogol, Goncharov's artistic image gives a more perfect impression of the development of the artist's art. Of course, the young woman artist's appeal to a popular Russian writer's image was due to the author's personal attitude to the writer at that time. The portrait of the writer was painted by famous Russian artists I.N. Kramskoy, I.P. Pozhalostin, N.A. Yaroshenko. In our opinion, this aspect is one of the main reasons for G.Kashiyeva's interest in the writer's artistic image. The impressive portrait of writer can be considered a success in the history of art. It was with this portrait that the portraits of Russian writers began to be painted in Azerbaijani art at a professional level, not at an amateur or educational level. From this point of view, we can accept the portrait of I.A. Goncharov as the first serious achievement.

The Russian theme manifested in the genre of landscape in the early 20th century. Paintings of Russian villages and Russian churches in Azerbaijan can prove it. In our opinion, the most interesting of them is B.Kangarli's landscape work "Russian Church in Nakhchivan". This watercolor work was created in 1920. A Russian church in Nakhchivan was described in the painting. The work has similar features with the view of many other historical and architectural monuments created by B.Kangarli. It is known that B. Kangarli created paintings of Nakhchivan tombs and mosques from nature. Apparently, the local Russian church also attracted the artist's attention. The church building is seen at a relatively close distance in the composition. The building consists of a circular domed church and a bell tower higher than it. The artist reflected all the main elements of church architecture – truss arches, entrance gates, the shape of the domes, crosses in a realistic way, which is typical of his work. Light color tones predominate in the color solution of this simple composition. Sparse pastures are seen in the foreground. The light green domes of the prayer hall and the bell tower give a more majestic impression against the background of white clouds in the sky (Fig. 2).

The outstanding, master artist A.Azimzadeh's name is written in golden letters in the history of Azerbaijani art as one of the creators of the realist artistic style. The thematic life boards, landscapes, caricature works created by him mainly with watercolors always give a topical effect [2, p. 68]. The satirical

characters, the various “characters” created by the artist attract attention with their realistic appearance and satirical harmony. Besides painting, he was also involved in social activities actively [1, p. 39].

We meet very interesting, colorful, revealing characters in A.Azimzadeh’s series “Old Baku characters”, “100 characters”. “Azim Azimzadeh loved his people with all his heart. He did not want them to be left behind other people, to look poor and miserable. He told each of his compatriots with his caricatures, “Enough, we must open our eyes to the world, not fall behind, hit a target like a fist”. He satirized the negative characters with sharp humor and soft irony in his works. He spoke out against deprived women’s rights and injustice by exposing the inner faces of different social classes in his works such as “Dog fight”, “A man beats his wife”, “Wedding in a rich house”, “Fight on the water” and “Old Baku people”. In this sense, the works “Old Baku characters” and “100 characters”, which reflect the social injustices of the society more vividly at that time, are especially estimable. Some of the caricatures published there were either unsigned or signed by Schimmerling. But Azim Azimzadeh’s handwriting and style showed itself. Later, the artist confirmed his authorship by writing “mine” under those caricatures” [3, p. 12].

It is interesting that besides mullahs, akhunds, parasites, traders, mourners, some Russian “characters” living in the city at that time also became the target of satire among the “heroes” of A.Azimzadeh’s “Old Baku characters” series. Most of the “government officials” among the gorodovoy (policeman), court, postal workers, etc. in Baku, who harassed the local population, looked down on them and could not stop procrastinating, were Russian at the beginning of the century. The artist has selected these characters, studied their inner world and even exposed officials to a killing, sarcastic laugh in his work. The irony, killing laughter directed at the reactionary Russian officials is no less powerful than the laughter against the akhunds, ruffians and intellectuals. One of such interesting characters is a haughty gorodovoy character from the series “Old Baku characters”.

Interesting gorodovoy characters were created with an enlightened-democratic spirit in Azerbaijani literature and drama in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. The “law guards”, who have become the target of satirical, ironic laughter and have an artistically meaningful, taking effect, have enriched our artistic culture significantly from M.F. Akhundzadeh to J.Mammadguluzadeh, U.Hajibeyli, A.B. Hagverdiyev. The character of the stupid, bribe-taker, chauvinist Russian gorodovoy, who looked down on the local people and called them “tuzemes” (“aborigines”), exposed himself with

a killing laugh and gave funny tones to our national treasure of laughter. The gorodovoy character created by A. Azimzadeh was “grown” on the basis of these traditions, filled with fatten as a character and presented to the people in a realistic style, in a mocking form by the artist.

The artist's character of the Russian gorodovoy is a typical example of law guard “serving” in Baku at the beginning of the century. The people of Baku called them “girdevoy”. The “girdevoy” in the picture wears a khaki jacket, a peaked cap on his head, braces on his shoulder, a sword called “shashka” on his back, blue “service trousers” with red purple and black long-necked boots on his feet. His blond hair and hanging blond mustache look ridiculous. The dull expression on his face, the red cheeks and nose and the vague smile indicate that the “law guards” were drunk as always (Fig. 3).

We also meet interesting, satirical Russian characters in the artist's paintings “Life characters of the Past” and “Fight over Water in Karabakh”. A self-satisfied nachalnik (officer-in-charge) and his wife were depicted in the painting “Life characters of the Past” (1935). The artist depicted a loyal official of the tsarist administration with realistic means by revealing the ugliness and moral imperfection of his inner world skillfully. From this point of view, this painting is close to the character of “Gorodovoy” and can be compared.

The character of a hypocritical Russian pristav (police-officer) attracts attention in the multi-figure composition “Fight over water in Karabakh” (1933) (Fig. 4). As its name suggests, the work reflects the theme of the villagers fighting over water. A large number of peasants were depicted in the work. A man with a wounded head is placed on a ditch, washed and bandaged his wounds. Even the water of the ditch was red from the blood. A Russian pristav standing in the distance is watching the event. In fact, quarreling between the villagers on various pretexts is due to his provocative actions. The pristav, who carries out the tsarist policy of “divide and rule” “in the regions” zealously, is actively pursuing this shameful policy by creating artificial discontent and panic among the peasants. Then he comes to the place of event and “regrets” and “gives instructions” to establish order. The artist tried to reveal the trait and inner world of the pristav, who at first sight seemed calm and sincere, and succeeded.

Conclusion. As can be seen, the Russian theme was reflected to some extent in the fine arts of Azerbaijan during the abovementioned period. Of course, this is not a big topic. On the contrary, this theme was fragmentary and is mainly expressed through thematic plots, satirical characters. However,

this theme also played a certain role in terms of the maturation of the artistic character in the national fine arts. This can be clearly seen in artists' works whose works are studied in the article.

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Xəzər Zeynalov (Azərbaycan)

AZƏRBAYCAN RƏSSAMLARININ ƏSƏRLƏRİNDƏ RUS MÖVZUSU

(XX əsrin əvvəllərində və 20–30-cu illərində)

Məqalədə Azərbaycan rəssamlarının yaradıcılığında rus mövzusunun danışıqları. Ötən əsrin əvvəllərində və 20–30-cu illərdə yaradılmış əsərlər nəzərdən keçirilir. Müəllif qeyd edir ki, rus mövzusu özünü portretlərdə, mənzərə rəsmlərində, tematik kompozisiyalarda büruzə vermişdir. Məqalədə üç görkəmli rəssamın – Əzim Əzimzadə, Bəhrüz Kəngərli və Qeysər Kaşiyevanın rəsmləri nəzərdən keçirilmiş və təhlil edilmişdir. Qeyd olunmuşdur ki, bu əsərlərin realist xarakteri ötən əsrin əvvəllərində və 30-cu illərində milli təsviri sənətin sürətli inkişafından xəbər verir. Q.Kaşiyevanın çəkdiyi N.V. Qoqolun portreti, B.Kəngərlinin realist portretləri, Ə.Əzimzadənin satirik tipajları bu mövzunun milli realist incəsənətin təşəkkülü və inkişafı dövründə xeyli yayıldığını göstərir.

Açar sözlər: Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti, rus mövzusu, portret, Əzim Əzimzadə, Bəhrüz Kəngərli.

Хазар Зейналов (Азербайджан)

РУССКАЯ ТЕМА В ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯХ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКИХ ХУДОЖНИКОВ

(в начале и в 20–30-х годах XX века)

В статье говорится о русской теме в творчестве азербайджанских художников. Рассматриваются произведения, созданные в начале и в

20–30-х годах прошлого столетия. Автор отмечает, что русская тема проявляла себя в портретах, пейзажах, тематических композициях. В статье рассматриваются и анализируются работы трех известных художников – Азима Азимзаде, Бахруза Кянгарли и Гейсар Кашиевой. Подчеркивается, что реалистический характер этих работ свидетельствует о быстром развитии национального изобразительного искусства в начале и в 30-х годах прошлого столетия. Портрет Гоголя работы Г.Кашиевой, реалистические пейзажи Б.Кянгарли, сатирические типажи А.Азимзаде свидетельствуют о некотором распространении этой темы в национальном реалистическом искусстве в период его становления и развития.

Ключевые слова: изобразительное искусство Азербайджана, русская тема, портрет, Азим Азимзаде, Бахруз Кянгарли.

FIGURES

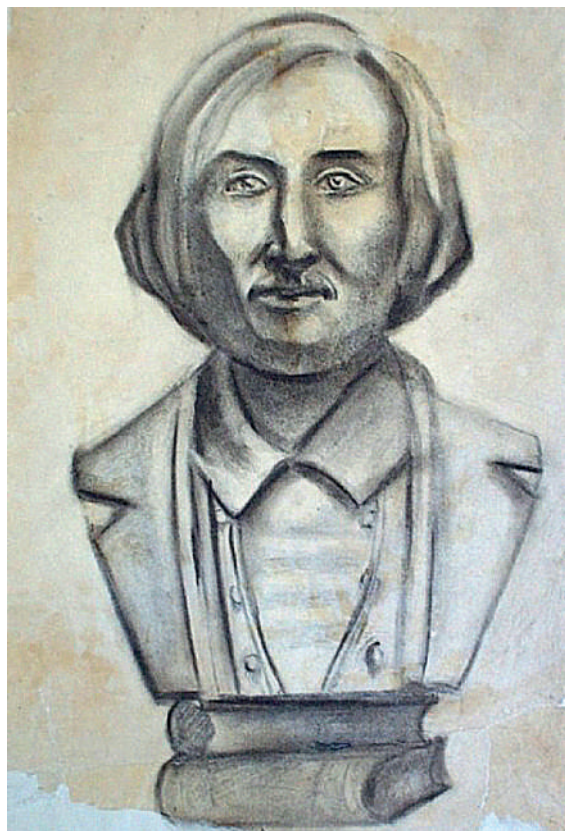


Fig. 1. G.Kashiyeva.
Portrait of N.V.Gogol.
Paper, pencil. 1909.



Fig. 2. B.Kangarli. Russian church in Nakhchivan.
Paper, watercolor. 1920.



**Fig. 3. A.Azimzadeh. Gorodovoy.
From the series “Old Baku characters”.
Paper, watercolor. The 30s.**



**Fig. 4. A. Azimzadeh. Fight over water in Karabakh (Fragment).
Paper, watercolor. 1933.**