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THEME OF KARABAKH IN FINE ARTS: MINOR TO MAJOR

Abstract. The theme of Karabakh is one of the most common themes in the contemporary fine arts of Azerbaijan. Paintings were painted by various artists – representatives of the older, middle and younger generations on this theme. The author singled out minor and major stages in the development of this theme. There is also a transitional period.

A minor, sad period is characteristic for works of an existential nature created in the 90s. They reflect people's pain and grief, the events of January 20, the Khojaly tragedy. The theme of heroism, which arose in the late 90s and early 2000s, can be considered an intermediate link from minor to major. The theme of grief caused by the war and its victims is increasingly infused with the theme of heroism during this period, which manifested in the unbroken spirit of the people, in their faith in a great and long-awaited victory. The best work of the theme of heroism should be considered the painting "Glorious People" by Vagif Ujatai.

The 44-Day Victorious War became the ideological and aesthetic basis of major moods in works devoted to the theme of Karabakh. Showing the victory of the glorious Azerbaijani army in the Patriotic War is a priority theme for the artists of the Republic. The works by Ashraf Heybatov, Jamaladdin Ismayilov, Elshan Hajizadeh, Rza Avsharov, Isa Mammadov, Vugar Ali, Fikret Ibrahimli and many others are interesting and exciting. Describing heroic scenes, the confidence of the Azerbaijani warrior, the joy of victory are the characteristic features of these works.

Key words: Azerbaijani fine arts, theme of Karabakh, Elshan Hajizadeh, Rza Avsharov, Fikret Ibrahimli.

Introduction. We have emphasized that one of the main themes of the fine arts was the theme of Karabakh during the period of independence. This theme began to be formed in Azerbaijani art even before independence – in 88-89 years of the last century. But, its content has changed significantly, this theme has acquired a number of breathtaking nuances, new form and content features over the years [2, p. 229]. It is possible to say boldly that the theme of Karabakh is one of the most changing and relevant themes in Azerbaijan's fine arts during the period of independence. This is also a theme that most artists, especially young people have addressed with great enthusiasm in recent years.

In a broad sense, the theme of Karabakh can be divided into three different plot types in fine arts:

- Plots depicting the pain of war;
- Heroic plots;
- Plots related to victorious battles, reflecting feelings of joy and happiness.

If we approach this division from the aspect of time, we can see that the paintings with a pessimistic mood depicting the pains of war belong to the 90s. This is completely natural, because the difficult economic situation, the decline of cultural values, and the unpleasant situation at the front created a moral crisis in society at that time. The existential mood that manifested in fine arts, including on the theme of Karabakh is related to this during those years. As part of this theme, it is worth remembering the works reflecting the tragedies of January 20, 1990. The most bitter pages of that pessimistic mood are the works dedicated to the Khojaly genocide. "Khojali" by Ashraf Heybatov, "Khojali Tragedy" by Rza Avsharov, "Burned Homeland" by Hamza Abdullayev, "Khojali. Small Victims of the Big Game" by Nizami Huseynov and many other works have a pessimistic, existential content and were created mainly in the 90s. We can also include works created by Nazim Mammadov, Agha Mehdiyev, Ayyub Mammadov, Hafiz Mammadov, Vagif Ujatai, Sara Manafova, Sayyad Bayramov and many others in this list. The painful scenes of the Karabakh theme are reflected in realistic, emotional and effective forms of expression in those works [1, p. 164].

The interpretation of the main material. Besides the motives of sadness on the theme of Karabakh, heroic plots also began to appear since the end of the 90s and the beginning of the 2000s. The development of national identity, national consciousness, determination to fight and victory

inspired artists to create works on the theme of heroism. The Great Leader Heydar Aliyev said rightly that the massacre of January 20 is not only a sadness and tragedy of the Azerbaijani people, but also a page of glorious heroism. This thought became the basis for idea of the second main plot line of the Karabakh theme – heroic motifs in fine arts. As a result of Heydar Aliyev's efforts, significant steps were taken in the army building, significant victories were won in the Beylagan-Fuzuli direction of the front, the people's faith in themselves and a victory increased, and people began to get to know the heroes of the Karabakh battles more closely during that period. We can remember the oil painting "Glorious People" (2001) by Vagif Ujatai as a general example of the heroic theme of that period [5]. The painting depicts a warrior who lost a leg in the First Karabakh War. This middle-aged man is standing proudly and looking steadily at the audience. His faithful life-long wife standing by his side puts her hand on his shoulder, as if trying to support him. The honest woman looking down is honored with her husband's heroism. A real Azerbaijani man's heroism and a real Azerbaijani woman's loyalty, devotion and honor are presented in a very clear manner, with full, realistic colors (Fig. 1).

As it has been mentioned above, the third main direction of the theme of Karabakh consists of optimistic plots overflowing with the joy of victory. These plots appeared in fine arts mainly after the successful 2016 April battles, and have become the main theme of Karabakh as a result of the 44-Day Victorious War in 2020. There are various works that reflect the feelings of victory and joy on the theme of Karabakh in fine arts. Heroism, the Azerbaijani soldier's courage, Azerbaijan-Turkey friendship, the joy of the country, the restoration of our liberated territories and other such plots prevail here. Many artists have addressed this last and literary topic of the Karabakh themes in fine arts. Ashraf Heybatov, Asif Azerelli, Elshan Hajizadeh, Jamaladdin Ismayilov, Vugar Ali, Zohrab Jabbarov and many other artists created memorable works on this theme.

The theme of victory manifests itself in many paintings by the talented artist Vugar Ali. His painting "Victory", which was created during the days of great victory in 2020, reflects the feelings of joy and heroism. A brave, slender and victorious Azerbaijani soldier on a white horse is depicted in the center of the composition. He turned his face aside, raised his left hand and clenched his strong fist. This gesture recalls the famous expression "Iron fist". The background of the composition consists of the colors

of the tricolor flag of Azerbaijan. This is not a whole flag, but it reflects the victory of Azerbaijan, the fact that the victory befits its flag through forms of visual artistic expression. The honored artist Elshan Hajizadeh's painting "Victory" dedicated to Azerbaijan-Turkey friendship and military cooperation stands out for its interesting compositional features. The walls of the ancient Shusha fortress are depicted in this work, and two figures – an Azerbaijani and a Turkish soldiers are depicted on the background of the blue sky. The flags of Azerbaijan and Turkey are waving proudly behind these two strong images, holding hands and supporting each other. The artist depicted a large number of fighter planes and helicopters against the background of a clear sky, which emphasizes the importance of developed aviation technology in modern war. One of the important and interesting nuances here is the reflection of some planes and helicopters flying side by side in the colors of the Azerbaijani flag. Blue, red and green skyhawks fly side by side as if waving the flag of Azerbaijan in the high skies. The work bears in mind for its symbolic theme, clear, laconic compositional features and bright color arrangement (Fig. 2).

Artist Jamaladdin Ismayilov is known mainly as a fight artist. He depicted the fateful battle scenes of Azerbaijan and the Turkic world in general on canvas. These are battle paintings with complex compositions related to ancient Turkic history and later periods.

One of Jamaladdin Ismayilov's main works on the theme of the Karabakh victory is a large-scale painting "The Liberation of Shusha" (2020). As the artist said, he started working on that painting in the first days of November 2020, and when he heard the news of the liberation of ancient Shusha, he worked with great enthusiasm and finished the work [3, p. 99].

The scene of the liberation of Shusha, one of the most difficult and glorious pages of the 44-Day War, is depicted in the composition. A deep mountain gorge is seen on the left. Azerbaijani brave sons climbed these precipitous rocks and attacked the enemy. This dramatic scene is exactly described in the work. Frightened enemy soldiers began to run, some of them raised their hands and begged for mercy. Some Azerbaijani soldiers stuck our tricolor flag to the high rock in the center of the composition. The idea-artistic basis of the composition is dominated by feelings of great enthusiasm, courage and determination, which originate from the resolve to win (Fig. 3).

The talented brush master Farhad Ibrahimli is one of the artists who addressed the theme of Karabakh. Like the artists representing the middle

and young generation, his work is dominated by victory plots, which are the last stage of the Karabakh theme. The theme of Victory found its artistic expression in a symbolic-philosophical harmony in the composition “Azerbaijan’s Revival”, which the artist worked with oil on canvas in 2021. A brave soldier holding the Azerbaijani tricolor is depicted in the center of the composition. As if he is standing on guard of the liberated lands. A small boy holding the lower part of the flag and another soldier holding his hand on one knee are depicted next to him. Broken barbed wires are seen on the right and left edges of the composition. This is a sign of the liberation of our lands, freedom from barbed wire and shackles. Heroic Azerbaijani horsemen are seen rushing forward in the background. But they have not a symbolic appearance, but realistic. The symbolic motifs increase even more towards the top of the painting: the imaginary images of our hero-martyrs are seen in the center on the background of the blue sky, angels dressed in the colors of the Azerbaijani flag on the edges, and white Karabakh horses in the sky. So, the compositional arrangement of the painting varies from realistic images in the lower part or foreground to imaginary images in the background and upper ground.

The color arrangement of the composition also has a symbolic meaning. The composition as a whole reflects the colors of the Azerbaijani tricolor. So, the lower part of the painting is green – the nature of Karabakh, the middle part is red –imaginary horsemen, the upper part is blue – the martyrs who rose to immortality and the angels surrounding them. It can be symbolically compared with the image of an Azerbaijani soldier sitting with pride on the back of a white horse by Vugar Ali. But, if the colors of the Azerbaijani flag reflect a neutral background in Vugar Ali’s painting, the colors in Fikret Ibrahimli’s work reflect concrete images.

Honored Artist Rza Avsharov is the author of several works on the theme of Karabakh. This theme is represented in detail in his works. As the name suggests, the composition “Victory” that the artist worked with oil on canvas on the eve of the one-year anniversary of the great Victory in 2021 is dedicated to victory. The composition is simple, but at the same time has a great effect. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the victorious commander-in-chief Ilham Aliyev is depicted in a large scale here. He raises his right hand in a victory gesture. He is wearing a military uniform. The magnificent fortress walls of the liberated Shusha, a large Azerbaijani flag hanging over the wall, which is an eyesore to the enemy, can be seen in the

background. Shades of blue are dominant in the color arrangement of the composition.

In general, it should be noted that the transformation of the theme of Karabakh in fine arts also manifested in the color. Red shades are dominant in the color arrangement in the first plot type. This is definitely a sign of blood color. Even the first and third types of the Karabakh theme vary according to the color arrangement in the works by the same artist. Black and red colors prevail in the first version – sadness version, and blue-green colors in the third – Victory version. For example, the red color associated with blood is dominant in “Khojali” painting by People’s Artist Ashraf Heybatov, but on the contrary, the blue-green color, which is a symbol of peace, is the basis of the color arrangement of the composition in the “Victory Celebration in Karabakh” triptych painted by the artist in 2020. Or, although the “Tragedy of Khojaly” painted by the Honored Artist Rza Avsharov in the 90s is composed of red and black colors, blue-green colors are dominant in the “Victory” painting by the artist, which we mentioned above. It is obvious that the transformations within the theme of Karabakh have a serious influence on the artists’ choice of colors.

The delicate blue and pink splatters of impressionist artists’ works are the main features of the well-known artist Isa Mammadov’s works. These delicate colors create a festive mood in the painting “Shusha. Victory Day” painted by the artist in 2021. The central part of Shusha is depicted in the composition. The lower Govhar Agha mosque is depicted in the background. A festive crowd is seen in the square in front of the mosque. The flags of Azerbaijan and Turkey are waving proudly. This painting can be valued as one of the most optimistic, major examples of the Victory plot on the theme of Karabakh.

Today, portraits of our martyrs and veterans form an important aspect of the Karabakh theme. Many works have been created on this theme. For example, the portrait of General Polad Hashimov painted by Ehtiram Mammadov. The familiar features of the smiling face of the martyred general are depicted with great skill and sincerity in this portrait, which is characterized by the realistic style (Fig. 4).

Conclusion. The theme of Karabakh is one of the priority themes of modern Azerbaijani fine arts. The moods of sadness and despair that used to be characteristic of this theme have already passed away. Artists, especially young people perceive this theme in a completely different context nowadays. The

theme of Karabakh is associated with victory, joy, festive song, celebration, determination to build and create [4, p. 179]. There is no doubt that as our liberated lands are restored, the theme of Victory will expand, acquires new shades and nuances. The basis for this is the great and eternal turn from minor to major.

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TƏSVİRİ SƏNƏTDƏ QARABAĞ MÖVZUSU: MİNORDAN MAJORA

Qarabağ mövzusu müasir Azərbaycan təsviri sənətində geniş yayılmış mövzulardan biridir. Bu mövzuda rəsmlər müxtəlif rəssamlar - həm yaşlı, həm orta, həm də gənc nəslin nümayəndələri tərəfindən çəkilmişdir. Müəllif bu mövzunun inkişafının minor və major mərhələlərini ayırmışdır. Aralıq dövr də var.

Minor, kədərli dövr 90-cı illərdə yaradılmış ekzistensial xarakterli əsərlər üçün xarakterik olmuşdur. Onlarda xalqın ağrı və kədəri, 20 Yanvar hadisələri, Xocalı faciəsi öz əksini tapıb. 90-cı illərin sonu - 2000-ci illərin əvvəllərində yaranan qəhrəmanlıq mövzusunu minordan mayora keçid dövrü hesab etmək olar. Bu dövrdə müharibənin və onun qurbanlarının yaratdığı kədər mövzusu xalqın sarsılmaz ruhunda, böyük və çoxdan gözlənilən qələbəyə inamında özünü göstərən qəhrəmanlıq mövzusu ilə getdikcə daha çox qarışır. Qəhrəmanlıq mövzusunda ən yaxşı əsərlərdən biri Vəqif Ucatayın “Şərəfli insanlar” tablosu hesab edilə bilər.

44 günlük müharibədə əldə edilən böyük zəfər Qarabağ mövzusuna həsr olunmuş əsərlərdə major əhvali-ruhiyyənin ideya-estetik əsasını təşkil edir. Şanlı Azərbaycan ordusunun Vətən müharibəsində qazandığı qələbənin əks etdirilməsi rəssamlar üçün prioritet mövzudur. Əsrəf Heybətov, Cəmaləddin İsmayılov, Elşən Hacızadə, Rza Avşarov, İsa Məmmədov, Vüqar Əli, Fikrət İbrahimli və bir çox başqalarının əsərləri maraqlı və yaddaqalandır. Qəhrəmanlıq səhnələrinin təcəssümü, Azərbaycan əsgərinin qəhrəmanlığı, qələbə sevinci bu əsərlərin səciyyəvi cəhətləridir.

Açar sözlər: Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti, Qarabağ mövzusu, Elşən Hacızadə, Rza Avşarov, Fikrət İbrahimli.

Севиндж Алиева (Азербайджан)

ТЕМА КАРАБАХА В ИЗОБРАЗИТЕЛЬНОМ ИСКУССТВЕ: ОТ МИНОРА К МАЖОРУ

Тема Карабаха является одной из распространенных тем в современном изобразительном искусстве Азербайджана. На эту тему писали картины разные художники – представители как старшего, так и среднего и младшего поколений. Автором выделены минорные и мажорные этапы в развитии этой темы. Есть и промежуточный период.

Минорный, печальный период характерен для произведений экзистенциального характера, созданных в 1990-х годах. В них отражены боль и горе народа, события 20 января, Ходжалинская трагедия. Промежуточным звеном от минора к мажору можно считать тему героизма, возникшую в конце 90-х – начале 2000-х годов. В этот период тема скорби, вызванной войной и ее жертвами, все чаще переплетается с темой героизма, который проявилось в несломленном духе народа, в его вере в великую и долгожданную победу. Лучшим произведением темы героизма следует считать живописное полотно «Славные люди» Вагифа Уджатая.

Победа в 44-дневной войне стала идейно-эстетической основой мажорных настроений в произведениях, посвященных теме Карабаха. Показ победы славной азербайджанской армии в Отечественной войне является приоритетной темой художников республики. Интересны и захватывающи произведения Ашрафа Гейбатова, Джамаледдина Исмаилова, Эльшана Гаджизаде, Рзы Авшарова, Исы Мамедова, Вугара Али, Фикрета Ибрагимли и многих других. Показ героических сцен, непо-

колебимость азербайджанского воина, радость победы – характерные черты этих произведений.

Ключевые слова: изобразительное искусство Азербайджана, тема Карабаха, Эльшан Гаджизаде, Рза Авшаров, Фикрет Ибрагимли.

FIGURES

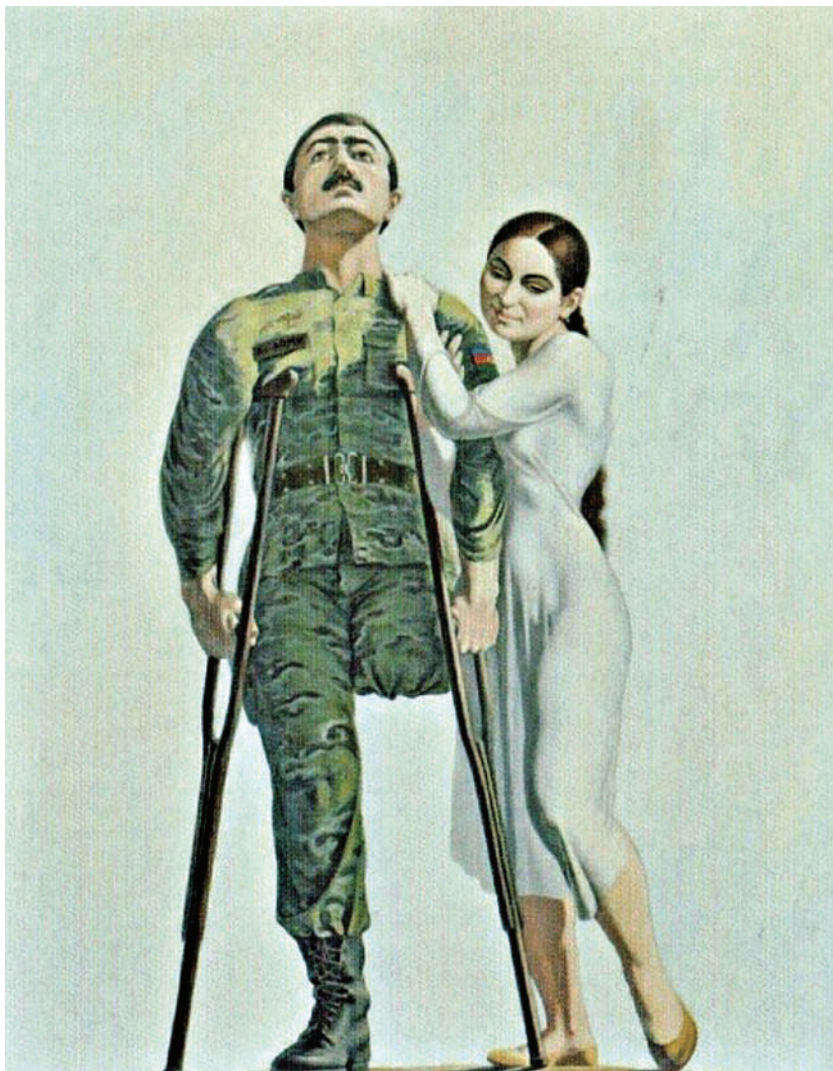


Fig. 1. Vagif Ujatai. "Honorable people". Canvas, oil paint. 2001.



Fig. 2. Elshan Hajizadeh. "Victory". Canvas, oil paint. 2021.



Fig. 4. Ehtiram Mammadov.
Portrait of General Polad Hashimov.
Paper, watercolor. 2020.



Fig. 3. Jamaladdin Ismayilov.
“Liberation of Shusha”.
Canvas, acrylic. 2020.