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FORMS OF EMBODIMENT OF NATIONAL AVANT-GARDE ART IN ZAKIR HUSEYNOV'S PAINTING

Abstract. The article is dedicated to the famous Azerbaijani avant-garde artist Zakir Huseynov's works. The author notes that the artist's unique artistic style enriched significantly the fine arts of modern Azerbaijan. His works, which reflect the native land of Absheron, oil-processing plants, animal images, are distinguished by their individuality and unique perception of the characteristics of the environment. Thematic compositions and still lifes created by the artist are also interesting. The deep philosophical meaning, which was included in the ideological and aesthetic content of these works and reflects the artist's views on life, acts as a unique reflection of his thoughts and understanding of the world. Z.Huseynov's "Buzovna" landscape lightened by bright sunlight, "Old Enterprise" thematic composition depicting oil refinery plants on the coast, still lifes and animalistic paintings, as well as thematic works depicting the artist's lone existential characters make a deep impression.

Key words: Azerbaijan fine arts, Zakir Huseynov, painting, landscape, still life.

Introduction. There is a generation called the "generation of the 60s" in the development of Azerbaijan's fine arts, many of whose representatives still live and work today. We do not need to mention their names because we know them well. According to popular belief, the main service of the "60s generation" in art was to break the canons of socialist realism, to create a new artistic style and school in painting, to create the embryos of national avant-garde art. The concept of "Absheron school", which was widespread in the 60s-80s, is also associated with this generation. All this leaves no

doubt. The contribution of that generation is obvious in the formation of modern art.

But life does not stop in one point, it is constantly moving forward. The development of modern Azerbaijani national avant-garde art is no longer associated with the “generation of the 60s”, but rather with the names of talented artists who came to life in the 60s and beyond. We are probably right in saying that those born in the 60s are worthy successors of the “60s generation”. These artists, who can no longer be called young today, representing the “second generation” (expression is ours – *auth.*) of the national avant-garde, brought new ideas, metaphors, existential thinking, composition and color diversity to modern art. Although it is early to say but the generation of these artists has already begun to shed leaves. One of such artists is Zakir Huseynov (1961–2010), who was a talented artist and developed the national avant-garde art on the theme of “New Absheron” (the expression is ours – *auth.*) and added different touches to it.

The interpretation of the mail material. His arrival in art coincides with an interesting, rich in ideas and works, as well as a difficult period of Azerbaijani art. Individualism, national-decorative style, even the tendency to avant-garde in art no longer surprised anyone in the mid-1980s. Fateful events took place in society only a few years later and the ideological and artistic content of art underwent radical changes. The national avant-garde art began to develop rapidly at this time. The creative research of the middle-aged and young generation of artists was at the basis of this development. The process of blind imitation of traditional Western avant-garde and abstract art was manifested in the early years. But, the national style came to the fore in modern avant-garde art soon, since the 2000s. This style manifested itself in national forms and attributes, meaning and content, in the colorful and warm shades peculiar to Azerbaijani painting. Aghaali Ibrahimov, Siruz Mirzazadeh, Gayyur Yunus, Kamal Ahmad, Nazim Mammadov, Altay Sadigzadeh, Rashad Mehdiyev, Rashad Alakbarov, Ilgar Akbarov, Yusif Mirza, Ilyas Alov, Teymur Daimi, Orkhan Huseynov and others from the middle-aged and young generation created works in this style and many continue to do so today. The artistic views of Zakir Huseynov, who was a worthy representative of the avant-garde school “New Absheron”, were formed in such an environment.

Z.Huseynov was born in one of the less pleasant corners of Absheron – Amirjan. In general, it is difficult to consider Absheron as a colorful

corner of nature – there are no forests, rivers, green meadows, mirror lakes, snow-capped mountains. The lyrics of Absheron are better understood and appreciated by those who were born and grown in this land. The beauty for them is the impetuous Caspian Sea, the rocks on its shores, the sandy shore, the white-gray gulls flying in the sky. Amirjan does not have any of these. But, this ancient village of Absheron is lucky anyway. Great personalities, including talented artists were born here. Undoubtedly, the first who comes to our mind is the great Sattar Bahlulzadeh. What about his followers? Gayyur Yunus, Eldar Mikayilzadeh, Anar Huseynzadeh and others... Zakir Huseynov is also on this list. He also developed the traditions of the “New Absheron” school, perhaps more than others. Although far from the seashore, most of his paintings feature the Caspian Sea, which is the visiting card of the “Absheron School”.

Zakir Huseynov is one of the artists who defined his style in art early. Maybe it was an intuition, he felt that he would not live long, he did not have time to look for his style in art for a long time, he did not have a chance. The works of art that he created in the late 80’s and 90’s do not differ significantly from the paintings he worked on in the last years of his life. Abstraction is strong in the early paintings, but national avant-garde in the later ones.

An interesting aspect of Z.Huseynov’s avant-garde art is its variety of themes and his appeal to different genres. Genres such as thematic portraits, landscapes and still life are widely represented in the artist’s work. Local plots and animalistic images are also fully expressed in his paintings.

Zakir Huseynov’s work can be divided into early and mature periods. The early period is from 1985 to the end of the 90s, when he graduated from the Department of “Weaving” of the Art School named after A.Azimzadeh and began his independent career. It is interesting that although the artist mastered in weaving, he almost did not work in this field. The art of painting attracted his attention since childhood. As we have mentioned above, abstract tendencies were stronger in the artist’s work in the early period. It is interesting that abstract compositions prevailed in works of artists such as Siruz Mirzazadeh, Anvar Askerov, Teymur Daimi, Rashad Mehdiyev, Ilyas Alov in those years. Perhaps this was a manifestation of the interest in Western abstractionism after the fall of the “Iron Curtain”. Abstract aspects prevail in Z.Huseynov’s works “Circle” (1992) and “Composition” (1989). It is interesting that the artist called most of the abstractions that he created in the 80s and 90s as “Composition”. Z.Huseynov’s tendency to

abstract thinking manifests itself here. The associative impression is strong in these paintings, in which “the sensations of excitement are paradoxically transformed into aesthetics” [1, p. 4]. We can see both the illogical symbols of Salvador Dali’s work and Jackson Pollock’s dripping motifs in Zakir Huseynov’s “compositions” in those years. However, the national character and avant-garde tendencies, which took place at the level of the “New Absheron” school, became soon his main art style and the artist remained faithful to his style until the end.

The mature period of Z.Huseynov’s creativity covers the 2000s. He matured in art, developed the traditions of the “New Absheron”, created optimistic landscapes with plenty of sunlight by using bright colors during this period. Undoubtedly, Buzovna landscapes distinguish among them. Flat-roofed white houses, clear, bright skies and the blue sea surrounding the horizon are the main compositional and color elements of these landscapes.

Zahir Huseynov’s work has been in the spotlight of his contemporaries. His close friends and colleagues valued him as a human and a master. Two aspects – sincerity and individuality are emphasized in the appreciation of his art. The artist’s works are as individual and unique as they are sincere - this is what makes his compositions remarkable. “It is not difficult to describe Zakir as an artist. He was very sincere in his work. Even not being aware of certain issues helped him to remain sincere in his work. Zakir did not deviate from his style all his life. The artist worked on several different paintings only in the last months of his life, when an incurable disease destroyed him from the inside. Had his life been faithful, perhaps Zakir would have been able to bring a more interesting, new style to the art world” [4]. This value given by art friends is the main features that complete the artist’s portrait.

Zakir Huseynov participated in many exhibitions. His works were repeatedly exhibited in prestigious exhibitions both in our country and abroad. Another exhibition of his was held at the Khatai Gallery of Miniature Art after his death, on December 7, 2011. This exhibition was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the artist’s untimely death [5].

Z.Huseynov called himself a “lone warrior of Azerbaijani art” [6]. This loneliness was not due to unsociability, he never ran away from communication. Those who know the artist well can confirm this. We accept this loneliness from a philosophical point of view. This loneliness arouse from the existential

loneliness that the artist appealed to. His style was unique and he developed his views on art in solitude. This is where the expression of lone warrior comes from. If we pay attention, we will see that the artist's characters were also depicted alone in his paintings. It is difficult to find two or more figures in his paintings. The lone figures are a kind of expressions of his "loneliness" in art. The artist saw himself in his characters – this is reflected in his existential views on art.

Popular art manager Rafael Gulmammadli said the following about Zakir Huseynov, whom he knew well and respected for his art: "Although Zakir graduated from the Department of "Weaving" of the Art School, he was a painter inwardly and he was the only student in the group who was able to show his painting potential to everyone" [3, p. 15]. The more you get acquainted with the artist's creative style and the more you learn the opinions and impressions of his colleagues about him, there is no doubt about the accuracy of these words.

As mentioned above, Z. Huseynov applied to various genres in his work. The genre of landscape distinguishes among them. "Zakir Huseynov, who was inseparable from the landscape genre throughout his career, achieved to create large-scale works in this field in the last ten and more productive years of his life. If we have to characterize them as a whole, first of all we have to say that such scenes may not exist in reality... They can be considered an expression of "Zakir's view"" [3, p. 82]. This is indeed so. The artist saw his beloved land of Absheron not in reality, but in a different way, as if in idealized form in his dream. It should also be noted that the artist reflected the genre of landscape in different thematic plots. He created interesting landscapes on the theme of oil, besides Absheron motifs, domed village houses, sandy seashore.

Undoubtedly, Absheron villages and sea views are more prominent among Z.Huseynov's landscapes. The bright rays of the sun, the transparency of the air and the optimistic mood were reflected here, which are typical of the plein air technique. From this point of view, the paintings on the theme of Buzovna by the brush master are more attractive. These landscapes can be considered the most optimistic works of the artist in terms of color and mood. Z.Huseynov's two landscapes "Buzovna", which were painted on canvas with oil paintings in 2004, reflect fully this optimism in terms of ideas, art and color. Flat-roofed white houses of the ancient village Buzovna are seen in both works. The composition is almost covered with these houses completely.

As if the small rectangular village houses move towards the sea by squeezing each other. A strip of blue sea stretches along the horizon in the distance. And the blue sky is above it.

The second work on the same theme and title has a similar compositional solution. But the symbolic content is stronger here. The artist depicted two large cypress trees in the foreground – they represent the variability of generations, the transmission of blood memory from generation to generation, the past and present of the village symbolically. The artist devoted more space to the sky in this painting – the sky is not in the form of a narrow strip as in the previous painting. However, the artist did it deliberately – there is a picture of another symbol, i.e. a half-moon, in the middle of the sky [Figure 1]. In general, the moon (half-moon) is an important symbolic means in Zakir Huseynov's work, which has a philosophical content, like other existentialist artists. Interestingly, each artist depicts the half-moon in his own way. For example, Siruz Mirzazadeh often prefers to reflect the half-moon with the sun, but also with two mouths. The half-moon is a symbol of the magical world, calm and magical silence for Kamal Ahmad [2, p. 10]. Zakir Huseynov depicted the half-moon in his various paintings, as well as in a unique way. Its half-moon is extremely elongated and has a stretched appearance. As if the yellow, stretched moon in the composition "Buzovna" is singing lullaby to the silent houses of the village in the evening, when the weather is still bright.

The industrial landscape, especially the theme of oil production occupies an important place in Z.Huseynov's work. "Neftchi", "Oil Is Transported" (both in 2007), "Old Enterprise" [Figure 2], "Oil-refining Institution" (both in 2008) and other thematic landscapes reflect this theme. Despite the bright color range, incomprehensible mental excitement, existential mood is clearly manifested in these works. Perhaps the reason is the inhumanity of those paintings or the depiction of a single person. No one is seen in the port, around oil rigs, pipes and tanks at noon, when work is in full swing. Only one person does not bring confidence and peace of mind to the work, on the contrary, he drags it into a whirlpool of incomprehensible mental excitement. Only one person ... Isn't he a "lone warrior"?

Another genre applied by Z.Huseynov is still life. The artist applied to still life at all stages of his career, including adulthood. His still lifes include pumpkins, pears, watermelons, melons, dried fish, etc. These still lifes are unique. The things here are disorderly, as if scattered. Warm colors prevail in

these works, but as a whole the color cannot be considered colorful. The still lifes have a more matte color solution.

Pictures of fish are often found in the artist's still lifes. The depiction of the living and the lifeless has a philosophical meaning and reflects the dilemma between life and death in simple artistic forms.

One of the main themes applied by the brush master was the animalistic genre. It is possible to see a bull, a cow, a camel, an elk, a giraffe, a bird, etc., which were drawn outside the plot on a neutral background in his works [Figure 3]. These animalistic figures differ from Mirjavad Javadov's beasts of draught drawn on a dark red background or the wolf-toothed dogs depicted by Kamal Ahmad. They are calmer and more free. As if reality doesn't irritate them. Even the animalistic figure in the painting "Burning Giraffe" (this can be compared to Salvador Dali's "Flaming Giraffe") has an unusual calm, despite the fact that it burns.

Z.Huseynov depicted only one figure in his portrait paintings. Even if a certain "dialogue" manifests itself in the work, it is not a dialogue between two people, but between an existential character and a symbol (tree, lamp, moon or bird). His characters are not mythical, but symbolic characters that flow from the intermediate position between mythological memory and folklore motifs. A typical representative of these characters is a dervish. The artist created several such characters. He wanted to express his thoughts through these dervishes' appearance and deeds. An existential character holds a glass of wine in his hand, stands in a boy's position as in Oriental miniatures and carries on a dialogue with a bird perched on a small tree on the right in the painting "Dervish's Dialogue" (2000s) [Figure 4]. He reflected the more characteristic features of the myth-folklore character in his works such as "The Thinking Dervish" and "The Dervish with a Lamp". A similar feature of the two paintings is the reddish-yellow spot of flowing patch on the upper right part of the composition, which attracts attention. This is the moon. But, this moon has a more existential, mythical effect than the long one seen on Buzovna. We can be bold to say that such a "generalized" and completely isolated moon has never been depicted in the Azerbaijani national avant-garde art...

It would be expedient to complete a short excursion into Zakir Huseynov's works with his voluminous compositions. The artist also worked in the field of papier-mâché, ceramics, artifacts. As if his composition "Water" (2006), which is in the form of an oval ceramic plate, quenches thirst with its eye-catching blue colors. The papier-mâché called "Fish" (2006) is not only in

the form of a fish, but also decorated with characteristic details of the artist's work and fragments of his works.

Conclusion. A lot can be said about Zakir Huseynov's art. His work is truly distinguished by its individuality, different sense of volume and color, unique direction and style in the national abstract art. There is no doubt that the artist's colorful work will take a worthy place in the history of modern national art.

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Sevinc Əliyeva (Azərbaycan)

ZAKİR HÜSEYNOVUN RƏNGKARLIĞINDA MİLLİ AVANQARD SƏNƏTİNİN TƏCƏSSÜM FORMALARI

Məqalə tanınmış Azərbaycan avanqardçı rəssamı Zakir Hüseynovun yaradıcılığına həsr edilmişdir. Müəllif qeyd edir ki, rəssamın özünəməxsus bədii üslubu müasir Azərbaycan təsviri sənətini xeyli zənginləşdirib. Onun doğma Abşeron torpağının, neft emalı qurğularının, heyvan təsvirlərinin əks olunduğu əsərləri fərdiliyi, ətraf mühitin xüsusiyyətlərinin özünəməxsus tərzdə qavranılması ilə seçilir. Rəssamın yaratdığı tematik kompozisiyalar və natürmortlar da maraq doğurur. Bu əsərlərin ideya-estetik mündəricəsinə daxil edilmiş, rəssamın həyat görüşlərini əks etdirən dərin fəlsəfi məna, onun düşüncələrinin və dünyanı dərk etməsinin özünəməxsus əksətdiricisi kimi çıxış edir. Z.Hüseynovun parlaq günəş şüaları ilə işıqlandırılmış “Buzovna” mənzərəsi, dəniz sahilində yerləşən neft emalı qurğularının təsvir edildiyi “Köhnə müəssisə” tematik kompozisiyası, natürmort və animalistik tablolar, həmçinin rəssamın tənha ekzistensial qəhrəmanlarının əks olunduğu tematik əsərlər dərin təəssürat yaradır.

Açar sözlər: Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti, Zakir Hüseynov, rəngkarlıq, mənzərə, natürmort.

Севиндж Алиева (Азербайджан)

ФОРМЫ ВОПЛОЩЕНИЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО АВАНГАРДНОГО ИСКУССТВА В ЖИВОПИСИ ЗАКИРА ГУСЕЙНОВА

Статья посвящена творчеству известного азербайджанского художника-авангардиста Закира Гусейнова. Автор отмечает, что своеобразный творческий стиль художника значительно обогатил современное изобразительное искусство Азербайджана. Его работы, в которых изображены пейзажи родной Апшеронской земли, нефтеперегонные установки, фигуры животных, отличаются индивидуализмом, своеобразным восприятием и отражением особенностей окружающей среды. Интересны также тематические композиции и натюрморты, созданные художником. Глубокий философский замысел, вложенный в идейно-эстетическую основу этих работ, отражает жизненные взгляды художника, выступает своеобразным передатчиком его мыслей и миропонимания. Впечатляют такие работы З.Гусейнова, как пейзаж «Бузовна», залитый яркими лучами солнца, тематическая композиция «Старый промысел», где изображены нефтеперегонные установки, расположенные на берегу моря, натюрморты и анималистические композиции, а также тематические работы, изображающие одиноких экзистенциальных героев художника.

Ключевые слова: изобразительное искусство Азербайджана, Закир Гусейнов, живопись, пейзаж, натюрморт.

FIGURES:



1. "Buzovna". Canvas, Oil paint. 2004



2. "Old Enterprise". Canvas, oil paint. 2008



3. "Water Carrier". Canvas, oil paint. 2004



4. "Dialogue of the Dervish". Canvas, oil paint. 2000s