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CHALLENGES, PROSPECTS AND THE FUTURE OF KAZAKH CONTEMPORARY ART

Annotation

This paper discusses contemporary Kazakh art within the frame of its functions/roles in today's art community. This paper also considers general terms, the achievements/failures of contemporary art within its existence and the prospects of it. The article concludes with ideas that may help form the basis for the dynamic integration of Kazakhstani artists in the global process.

Key words: *contemporary art, artists, modern society, exhibition.*

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ВЫЗОВЫ, ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ И БУДУЩЕЕ СОВРЕМЕННОГО КАЗАХСТАНСКОГО ИСКУССТВА

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается современное казахстанское искусство в рамках своих функций/ролей в современном арт-сообществе. Автор рассуждает о достижениях и/или недостатках современного искусства в его временных рамках и с учетом перспектив развития. В заключении сформированы предложения, которые, возможно, помогут сформировать основу для более яркой представленности и динамичной интеграции казахстанских художников в мировой процесс.

Ключевые слова: *современное искусство, художники, современное общество, выставка.*

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ҚАЗІРГІ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ӨНЕРДІҢ СЫН-ҚАТЕРЛЕРІ, ПЕР-СПЕКТИВАЛАРЫ ЖӘНЕ БОЛАШАҒЫ

Аннотация

Бұл мақалада заманауи арт-қоғамдастықтағы оның функциялары/рөлдері аясында қазіргі қазақстандық өнер қарастырылады. Қазіргі заманғы өнердің жалпы шарттары, жетістіктері/сәтсіздігі және оның болашағы қарастырылады. Қорытындыда қазақстандық суретшілердің әлемдік үдеріске неғұрлым жарқын ұсынылуы мен серпінді ықпалдасуы үшін негіз қалыптастыруға мүмкіндік беретін ұсыныстар көрсетілген.

Түйінді сөздер: заманауи өнері, суретшілер, қазіргі заманғы қоғам, көрме.

The honoring of event of such great size usually allows writers with contrasting views to introduce their independent perspective on a given frame of discussion. Now it is left for readers to either agree or disagree with writers based on the treatment of specific issues contained in the body of discussion. On this note, the writer intends to present a personal viewpoint of contemporary Kazakh art within the frame of its functions/roles in the modern art society. Hence the discussion should begin by briefly tracing the path of contemporary Kazakh art history to understand the circumstances that led to the creation of the platform where portfolios, publications, archival materials of contemporary Kazakh artists and articles on art are published. It will be followed by analyzing the meaning of current art in the context of visual art as well as concerning the different professional backgrounds of practicing artists in Kazakhstan. It will also consider general conditions, the achievements/failures of modern art within its existence and prospects.

The meaning of the “contemporary Kazakh art” can be viewed in two separate ways. First, it can be considered as an “art work” and secondly as a “time period”. As the art work, the phrase is often used to describe any work of art (painting, sculpture, drawing, etc.) to be done or created within the current period of human existence; as oppose to the ancient Turkic sculptures, late nomadic monuments, "stone women" as well as any other works produced in traditional Kazakh setting which were used for the of religion purpose long before the influx of foreign influences.

As a time period, contemporary Kazakh art is generally used to mean the period, which witnessed new forms of artistic expression. The period started in 1990s with the efforts of pioneer artists who went through difficult stages in their practicing career to set firmly the foundation of what is known today as contemporary art. The newest art of Kazakhstan is the same age its independence. By the end of the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country had witnessed the strongest outburst of artistic energy restrained for decades by restrictions of both censorship

and corporate order. Artists, most of whom were not members of the state professional association - the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan, made an aesthetic and technological revolution, the consequences of which were not only the creation of a new type of art for the country but also the destruction of the centuries-old system of cultural isolation. The academic triad - painting, sculpture, graphics, as fully imported in the steppe of Kazakhstan art, intuitively felt the form of colonialism, and new technologies - a sign of freedom and unbiased. The first steps taken to destroy the frozen system of socialist realism and search for new ideas were a movement - the dead pictorial form replaced by the living action of the artist. Defending the right for freedom of creativity, the artists of the late '90s not only destroyed the usual Soviet principles of representation of art but also felt new vectors of its development [1].

They are all so different and unique with their style and different goals, but striving, energy and a common contribution to the modern cultural background of the country unite them. Perhaps some works are not easy to interpret, but in the end, isn't art about subjective experiences?

Noted for his bright individuality and rebellious charisma, Moldakul Narymbetov (1946-2012) was a key figure in the Kazakh art-group "Kyzyl Tractor" (1990). Narymbetov made great contributions to the development and popularization of contemporary art not only in Kazakhstan but also in the Central Asian region. His shamanistic myth-making is archaic in form compared to modern content but allows to speak and express his identity clearly. While Narymbetov's sculptures of old rubber auto-tires are some of his most iconic works, his paintings are intense, bold, and conceptual. Narymbetov's color strokes often correspond with the dynamics of natural life, corresponding with the sonorous colors of the Fauvists. Many times taking the forms of abstract and landscape paintings of rural and tiny settlements, he uses the victim as a theme in many of works and often comments on consumer culture, technology, and existential problems. Narymbetov was a member of the arts academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a member of the artists' union of Kazakhstan, and a winner of the Zhiger reward. He has represented the Republic of Kazakhstan in many events over the countries such as Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic, the USA, Italy, and Russia. He opened the school of Modern Art in Almaty, and participated in such festivals of contemporary art as Art Bat Fest in 2010 and in 2011.

Bakhyt Bubikanova came to modern art after having met with the leader of the art group "Kyzyl Tractor" Moldakul Narybetov. Bakhyt represented Kazakhstan at the Vienna Fair in Austria, Ukraine, Russia, St. Petersburg, Kyrgyzstan, and Korea. In January 2014, Bakhyt Bubikanova awarded the prize of the Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan "For Contribution to Contemporary Art", devoted to people

under 40 years of age in the field of science and culture. In 2019, Bahyt was chosen to represent Kazakhstan's national pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Tolkyn Sakbayeva was born in 1990 in Almaty. She currently lives and works in Madrid and is a permanent resident of the Espronceda Art and Culture Centre in Barcelona. She graduated from the College of Decorative and Applied Arts named after O. Tansykbaev and the Faculty of Easel Painting at the Zhurgenov Academy of Arts. Her teacher and mentor was Professor Kenzhebai Duisenbayev, to whom she dedicated her diploma work. In Tolkyn's work, the issue of freedom is central - both in the literal sense of the physical conclusion and in the sense of limited human perception. The main questions are: What makes a person truly free? What is freedom and how is it formed? Where does it begin and where does it end? [2].

Amidst the challenges, contemporary Kazakh art has made considerable achievements. One of the most intense of these achievements presentation of the illustrated catalogue "Artists of modern Kazakhstan", which included 60 authors and 180 works selected within the framework of the project "Modern Kazakh Culture in the global world". More than 500 works by 254 authors were presented to the court by the International Expert Group, which included professionals in the field of evaluation and examination of art works of the national-international scale. Initially, it was planned to select 50 authors, but seeing the genuine interest in the project the quantitative criteria have changed, which only added value to this meeting of the elected [3].

Furthermore, in march 2019, the British-Kazakh Society and the Committee of Art Collectors held an exhibition of contemporary art from Central Asia entitled "Light of the Other. Presentation of Central Asian Art". The exhibition, that was held at the London Gallery of Modern Art, was featured original works by leading artists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Kazakh art was represented by eminent artists, like Almagul Menlibayeva, Vladimir Tverdohlebov, Yerbolat Tolepbay, Marat Bekeev, Saule Suleimenova, Uriya Zurek and others. The purpose of the exhibition was to try to creatively reflect on the past and present, history and modernity, as well as to reveal the inner world of Central Asia, unexplored by the West through the language of art. The organizers spoke about the recognition of Central Asia's invaluable contribution and role in world history through such leading innovators of the region as Al-Khorezmi, Al-Farabi, Al-Biruni, Avicenna and Ulugbek, as well as the ancient trade route, which is now gaining a new life - the Great Silk Road. The works presented at the exhibition created a bright and original image of Central Asia inspired by the history, traditions, and values of this ancient region. Visitors to the exhibition had a unique opportunity to get

acquainted with the culture and life of Central Asia through the individual interpretation of each artist [4].

Another achievement worth mentioning is the project "Focus Kazakhstan" consisted of four foreign exhibitions held in London (Great Britain), Berlin (Germany), Jersey City (USA), Suwon (South Korea) and the art residence of young artists in Berlin. The organizers of the project approached the idea in an integrated manner, by dividing the event into two parts - a presentation and a professional educational program for the artists. The exhibitions showcased over 400 works, including archival documents from 94 artists. The project involved 14 Kazakhstani and international curators and specialists. The London based international PR agency Pelham Communications worked on the project [5].

However, yet Kazakhstan is not sufficiently represented at major international art venues: in world-class museums, at exhibitions and fairs of contemporary art, as well as in auction houses. To rectify the situation, a dialogue with the leading foreign museums and exhibition spaces, long-term planning of exhibition events is necessary to held.

Today's contemporary art has real opportunities to make considerable steps forward. In the writer's opinion, the most profound step is participation at the Venice Biennale, the World Contemporary Art Show, which takes place in the Italian city on the water once every two years.

Kazakhstan, in the history of the Biennale, has never had a national pavilion in Venice, this year is supposed to be represented by two projects – a group exhibition of graphics "Rhythms of the Kazakh steppe" and a joint project of Artmeken Gallery and mobile application ARIAPP.IO. Kazakh artists were supposed to present their works for the first time at the Venice Biennale within the walls of their pavilion from May 11 to November 24. Before that, they were exhibited in the so-called Central Asian Pavilion, which was funded by private foundations and sponsors. However, unfortunately, the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan did not manage to allocate the necessary funds from the budget for participation in the exhibition in a short time, the press service of the department said. The organizers of our masters' exhibitions should be sure that their planned budget project would be funded on time and in full.

As the international practice shows, the preparation for the demonstration of world masterpieces is carried out for 3-5 years. The same can be said about exhibitions of our artists at the leading art venues. Therefore, it is important to invite foreign specialists to cooperate as art directors and curators for art projects. The international advisory council on promotion of Kazakh art abroad could become an effective tool for organizing exhibitions.

To attract the attention of the world art society to domestic art, it is necessary to effectively use the potential of the National Museum, which

can act as the largest art site not only in our country but also throughout the Central Asia. Today, there is not a single museum that would fully popularize and collect contemporary art in this region.

To implement this task, it is possible to organize the Central Asian Biennale in Nur-Sultan. It could become one of the main events of the cultural life of the capital, that would make Nur-Sultan city a center for innovative art projects, experiments, and exchange of ideas. Holding an international festival of contemporary art in Nur-Sultan will help form the basis for the dynamic integration of Kazakhstani artists in the global process and identify new talents.

There are high expectations associated with the organization of a large-scale forum of contemporary art in Kazakhstan; its idea is long overdue and waiting for the support of the state.

Contemporary art as a form of cultural communication can become an unifying factor throughout the Central Asia, which can increase interest among the world community. Let us hope that the creation of a museum of modern art in Kazakhstan is also a matter of the near future.

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