

EASTERN ARTISTIC INDIVIDUALITY: ON THE CULTURAL SPECIFICITY OF UZBEK ART

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Abstract

This article examines the characteristics of Eastern, particularly Uzbek, artistic thought in comparison to Western traditions. Drawing on personal experience, the author analyzes the origins of Eastern poetic expression, its manifestations in literature, theater, and cinema, as well as the specific perception of drama and imagery. Particular attention is paid to how Eastern culture maintains its individuality in the face of globalization and interaction with Western art forms.

Keywords: Eastern culture, Uzbek art, individuality, poetry, drama, cinema, folklore, Navoi, Hamza, Kiarostami.

As an Uzbek born and raised in Tashkent, I'd like to share my understanding of Eastern individuality, and in particular, Uzbek artistic culture. The desire to share this insight was heightened after my first foray beyond my native cultural code, into something completely different, yet of course, in some ways identical, since people remain human everywhere.

As a creative professional, I'll be discussing the artistic characteristics of the East and its tendencies. Generally, when analyzing the artistic component of the East, I believe it's necessary to begin with its poetry, language, and folklore, which already exhibit visible differences in approach compared to classical Western trends, a fluidity, melody, and vagueness, ranging from the poetry of Alisher Navoi to the Uzbek prose of the 1960s. It's very difficult

E- Global Congress

Hosted online from Dubai, U. A. E., E - Conference.

Date: 30th November 2025

Website: <https://eglobalcongress.com/index.php/egc>

ISSN (E): 2836-3612

for me to formulate such concepts; I find it easier to cite examples in the form of works, films, and books. Uzbekistan, a literature-centric country by nature, has maintained this tendency since ancient times, though today, like all literature, it has weakened. Compared to the West, where new art forms are emerging, Uzbekistan long maintained a strong affinity for writing. Cinema emerged in France and permeated all layers of culture, while at the same time, theatrical language in its canonical form was born, thanks to Hamza Hakimzade Niyazi, Mukimiy, and Behbudi, and was gaining popularity among its people. The approach to theater was and remains different, with a melodic narrative, metaphors steeped in Eastern folklore, and sharp social commentary well-hidden behind folk satire and mentality. Today, theater and literature have deep roots in this region, unlike, say, cinema, which emerged with the advent of Soviet power. The first movie camera was brought to Uzbekistan from the Russian Empire by Khudoybergan Devonov, a documentary filmmaker who captured old cities like Samarkand and Bukhara before they were restored. Following this, the first Uzbek feature film, "Minaret of Death," was shot, launching a new cultural movement in the region in the form of cinematography that retained Eastern artistic tendencies.

What, then, are the differences between the artistic approaches of the West and the East? We can begin with the laws of drama, which are fundamentally identical, but the approach to revealing these aspects differs. In the West, as elsewhere, the tripartite structure predominates: there is a hero who faces a problem, solves it, and changes. Their approach to this structure is extremely understandable to the masses, and they convey this through equally understandable images: a single person who faces a clear problem, talks about it at length, we see them take action, and we believe them. In the traditions of Eastern cinema, the hero's surrounding atmosphere often predominates, its very existence becoming a tool for creating meaning. For example, in Kurosawa and Abbas Kiarostami, nature is a distinct character that moves the hero through a tripartite structure. Through it, we can see the actions the hero takes to transform himself, the conflict he faces, and, most importantly, how this environment conveys this conflict or meaning. For example, among recent Uzbek films, I would like to cite "Two Thousand Songs for Farida," which is built on details and visual metaphors: the bride

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who surrounds herself with stones, conveying her alienation from her new family; the expressive dance of one of the characters to the doira, which through this demonstrates her resentment toward the groom; and so on. Another striking example for me is the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, whose films are built on the visual melody of village landscapes, plants, and everyday details, all while preserving the core dramatic principles of hero, conflict, and change. When I first traveled abroad, I felt this difference in approach. While interacting with young directors, I saw how they approached film, what they focused on, and I realized the uniqueness of what I was being taught. My directing mentor tries to guide us along this path, preserving this individuality, offering us different ways of thinking, and developing this approach to filmmaking within us. I personally believe this is the right thing to do, as it still remains unique on the global stage. I wanted to share these feelings and opinions in this article, and I hope I've conveyed my thoughts clearly enough. I recommend exploring the differences and other methods of creating works from different countries and cultures, as I believe that each of them offers something unique and can be used to create something even more unique. After all, that's what history and art are for.

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