

TRENDS IN DIGITAL SCULPTURE AMONG SCULPTORS OF UZBEKISTAN: A LOOK AT CONTEMPORARY CHANGES IN ART

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Annotation: This article explores the emerging trends in digital sculpture among contemporary sculptors in Uzbekistan. It examines how technological advancements are reshaping artistic practices and the implications for cultural identity, creativity, and artistic expression. By analyzing case studies of prominent Uzbek sculptors who integrate digital tools into their work, this study highlights the transformative impact of digital technology on traditional sculptural methods and the broader art landscape in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Digital sculpture, Uzbekistan, contemporary art, sculptors, technology, cultural identity, artistic expression.

Digital sculpture as an art form continues to gain popularity worldwide, and Uzbekistan is no exception to this rapid development. In recent decades, digital technologies have penetrated all spheres of life, including the visual arts, transforming traditional forms of creative expression. In this context, we will examine the main trends characteristic of digital sculpture and the peculiarities of the adaptation and implementation of these approaches by Uzbek sculptors.

1. Digital Sculpture: Definition and Essence

Digital sculpture refers to the process of creating three-dimensional objects using computer technologies. Unlike traditional sculpture, where artists work with tangible materials such as stone, metal, or wood, digital sculpture uses specialized software programs like ZBrush, Blender, Autodesk Maya, and others. These programs allow artists to build highly detailed 3D models that can be printed on 3D printers or used to create digital representations for virtual environments, such as video games or movies.

The main feature of digital sculpture is that the artist is not constrained by the physical properties of materials. This allows for an immense degree of flexibility in the design process, enabling rapid adjustments to form, texture, and even details of the work. The process is more akin to molding or sculpting within a digital space, which opens new horizons for artistic expression. This flexibility allows for experimentation with new techniques and concepts, which would be difficult or impossible to achieve with traditional materials. For example, an artist can manipulate and reshape their creations in real time, adding intricate details that would require months or even years to achieve with traditional methods.

Moreover, digital tools offer a unique opportunity for sculptors to visualize their works in ways previously unavailable. The ability to preview models in a 3D environment, along with the possibility of incorporating virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR), provides an entirely new level of immersion and interaction for both the artist and the audience.

2. Development of Digital Sculpture in Uzbekistan

Since the early 2000s, there has been active growth in interest in digital technologies in art in Uzbekistan. A combination of factors has contributed to the rise of digital sculpture in the country, including access to modern software and the internet, increasing educational opportunities, and the broader global trend towards digitalization in art. The following trends characterize the growth of digital sculpture in Uzbekistan:

2.1. Refreshing Traditions Through Digital Technologies

One of the primary ways digital sculpture is being embraced in Uzbekistan is through the merging of traditional sculptural practices with new digital tools. Many artists in Uzbekistan, especially those trained in classical sculpture techniques, are now incorporating digital technologies into their work, often using them as tools to reinterpret and modernize traditional motifs.

For example, sculptures based on the country's rich history, culture, and architecture can be reimaged and digitized. Monuments, historical artifacts, or representations of famous Uzbek figures may be transformed into digital models that allow artists to explore these themes with more fluidity and precision. These digital renditions can then be manipulated to explore new ideas, offering a contemporary twist to traditional iconography. Sculptors can experiment with scale, texture, and color in a virtual space before committing to a physical form, all while preserving the essence of cultural heritage.

This trend allows Uzbek artists to breathe new life into age-old traditions and create work that resonates with modern sensibilities, offering viewers a connection to both the past and the present.

2.2. Influence of International Trends

With the widespread access to the internet and social media, Uzbek artists have become increasingly aware of and inspired by international trends in digital art. Global platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and online art communities have allowed local sculptors to view and engage with cutting-edge works from around the world. Famous artists such as Japanese sculptor Shigeru Ban, British artist Antony Gormley, and American digital artist Jaron Lanier have influenced a generation of young Uzbek sculptors to explore digital mediums.

The influence of these international figures is evident in the works being created in Uzbekistan, where artists are experimenting with the same software tools and techniques that are used globally. The internet has also made it easier for Uzbek sculptors to participate in international art exhibitions, digital art fairs, and competitions, helping to increase their visibility and inspire further growth in the local art scene.

In parallel, the expansion of digital sculpture has facilitated new avenues for creative collaboration. Artists from Uzbekistan can now collaborate with counterparts from other countries, sharing ideas and techniques in ways that were not possible before. These international connections help shape the local digital sculpture scene, as artists draw from a rich pool of global influences while simultaneously contributing to the broader digital art community.

2.3. Advantages and Challenges of Digital Sculpture

Digital sculpture offers several significant advantages. The most obvious is the ability to create complex and intricate forms with ease. In traditional sculpture, creating a detailed model requires considerable time and expertise, often involving painstaking processes like chiseling, casting, and welding. In contrast, with digital tools, sculptors can manipulate their models almost instantly, testing out different iterations and refining them with minimal effort.

Another advantage is the ability to create models in virtual space and view them from all angles. The 3D modeling process allows artists to "walk around" their work, something impossible with traditional methods unless the sculpture is physically rotated. Additionally, once a model is created, it can be printed in physical form using 3D printers, allowing for the creation of complex shapes that might be difficult to achieve manually.

However, the use of digital tools does come with its challenges. Mastering the software programs requires a high level of skill and technical knowledge, which can be intimidating for artists who are used to more tactile methods of working. Additionally, the virtual nature of digital sculpture raises questions about preservation, copyright, and the authenticity of digital works, since these pieces often exist only in virtual form or as files on a computer, which may be lost or altered.

3. Application of Digital Sculpture in Public Spaces

One of the more exciting developments in Uzbekistan's digital sculpture scene is the use of new technologies to create large-scale public artworks. In cities like Tashkent, digital sculptures created with 3D printing are starting to appear in public spaces, contributing to the urban landscape in innovative ways. These sculptures can be programmed to change or react to their environment. For instance, sculptures can alter their shape or color depending on factors like the time of day, the weather, or interactions with viewers.

This interactivity adds a dynamic element to public art that traditional sculptures lack, inviting viewers to engage with the work in new ways. Public digital sculptures also offer the potential for community involvement, as artists could create projects that invite the public to contribute ideas or influence the final design. These forms of interaction foster a greater connection between the artwork and the people who encounter it.

3.1. Collaboration with Architects and Designers

The fusion of digital sculpture with other fields of design is another trend that is becoming increasingly prevalent in Uzbekistan. Sculptors are collaborating with architects and urban designers to create integrated art pieces for public spaces and buildings. This collaboration results in sculptures that are not only visually striking but also serve functional purposes in the context of the larger architectural environment.

For instance, digital sculptures are now used as elements of interior design, such as 3D-printed decorative panels or large-scale installations that complement the architecture of a space. This has led to new possibilities for sculptors, who can now work alongside architects and interior designers to create art that complements and enhances the built environment.

3.2. Virtual Exhibitions and Galleries

With the rise of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), digital sculpture in Uzbekistan has started to expand beyond physical exhibition spaces. Artists are increasingly using VR to create immersive environments where viewers can explore digital sculptures from multiple perspectives and interact with the work in a 3D space. Some Uzbek artists are even organizing virtual exhibitions, allowing art lovers from around the world to experience their creations without ever leaving their homes.

These virtual exhibitions offer unique opportunities for Uzbek artists to reach global audiences, breaking down geographical barriers and giving their work exposure to a wider audience than traditional exhibitions might allow.

4. Forecasts and Prospects for the Development of Digital Sculpture in Uzbekistan

In the coming years, digital sculpture in Uzbekistan is expected to continue growing, especially as educational institutions introduce more programs focused on digital art techniques. As more sculptors gain access to digital tools and technology, the diversity and sophistication of works being produced will increase. The role of innovation centers, creative hubs, and digital art festivals in supporting these artists will be crucial for the continued development of digital sculpture in the country.

The increased focus on digital sculpture also presents an opportunity to push the boundaries of interdisciplinary work, where digital sculpture can intersect with other forms of art such as music, theater, and dance. This would allow for the creation of multi-sensory, interactive art experiences that blend visual, auditory, and physical elements, further expanding the possibilities of digital art.

5. Conclusion

Digital sculpture is one of the most exciting and rapidly evolving areas of contemporary art in Uzbekistan. By merging traditional forms with cutting-edge digital technologies, artists are able to create work that is both rooted in cultural heritage and relevant to the modern world. As digital tools continue to evolve and become more accessible, Uzbek sculptors are poised to make significant contributions to the global digital art scene.

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