

Heritage and Innovation: A Jubilee Retrospective of Rashid Temurov

Shakhlo Barnaeva

Abstract: The artistic heritage of Samarkand is one of the most significant components of Central Asia's cultural wealth. The city has long been a unique crossroads of various creative traditions and styles. Throughout centuries, Samarkand held a strategically important position along a major trade and cultural route, allowing it to absorb influences from numerous artistic and cultural movements. This interplay of traditions is reflected in its architecture, decorative and applied arts, and painting, shaping a distinctive and multifaceted artistic legacy. Nevertheless, despite Samarkand's importance as a cultural hub, many aspects of its art-especially in painting-remain underexplored and require deeper analysis.



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In 2023, the Samarkand Museum of Friendship of Peoples and Religious Tolerance hosted a unique exhibition marking the 110th anniversary of the birth of the outstanding painter Rashid Temurov (1912–1991). The distinctiveness of this exhibition lay in the fact that it showcased not only works from museum collections but also from private collections—a rarity in our country. This gave visitors a unique opportunity to fully appreciate the depth and diversity of the artist's oeuvre. Temurov was one of the first students of the famous painter Pavel Benkov (1879–1949).

Rashid Temurov's Art: Originality and Innovation

Rashid Temurov is rightly considered the lyrical chronicler of his beloved city-Samarkand. With great affection and meticulous attention to detail, he depicted its majestic architecture, the atmosphere of its streets, and the vibrant lives of its citizens. Each canvas became a heartfelt tribute to this ancient yet eternally youthful city. His work combined the foundations of classical academic painting with a search for new forms of artistic expression. Even under the mentorship of Benkov, Temurov sought to develop his visual language—one grounded in tradition yet deeply personal and innovative.

Temurov possessed a keen sense of colour. His palette and compositional techniques always displayed balance and harmony, resulting in paintings rich in emotional and plastic nuance. He strove for a synthesis of traditional realism and modern experimentation, producing works that honored tradition while infusing it with personal perception and creative exploration.

Instance of his work: “Melon market in Samarkand”

Temurov's painting “Melon Market in Samarkand” (1981) vividly demonstrates his mastery in conveying colour harmony and compositional balance. A visual analysis of the painting reveals a rich palette of warm tones that captures the lively spirit of an Eastern market filled with vivid,

juicy hues. The dominant oranges, yellows, and reds draw the viewer's attention to the ripe melons, creating a visually saturated effect. These warm colours contrast integrally with the cooler background shades of blue and green, further enhancing the atmosphere of the Samarkand market (bazaar).

A prominent feature is the sketch-like painting technique typical of this period in Temurov's work. The loose and free brushwork emphasizes the dynamism and naturalness of the scenes. Brushstrokes with visible texture give the impression of immediacy and authenticity, a characteristic trait of his early works, where he aimed to capture spontaneous impressions of the world around him.

Composition and Perspective

Compositionally, the canvas is structured so that the viewer's focus rests on the foreground—where the market scene unfolds—and gradually extends into the spatial depth. Temurov confidently employs perspective to create a sense of volume and depth. Objects in the foreground, including the rows of melons, are more sharply defined and detailed, although the background gradually loses clarity, immersing the viewer in the vibrant and bustling market environment. This approach draws the viewer into the scene, allowing them to feel its rhythm and energy.

Diversity of genres in Temurov's art

The exhibition featured not only architectural landscapes but also works in various genres, showcasing the versatility of Temurov's talent. Portraits imbued with historical context, beyond genre scenes depicting everyday life and traditions, were also on display. These pieces revealed his capacity to convey not just architectural detail but also the emotional atmosphere of different eras and social settings. Each work is a story in itself, through which the artist explored not just external appearances but also the inner world of his subjects—their emotions, moments, and lives.

Conclusion

The jubilee exhibition marking Rashid Temurov's 110th birthday was a significant cultural event for Samarkand and Uzbekistan as a whole. It not only presented a uncommon opportunity to view the artist's lesser-known works but also played a vital role in preserving and promoting his legacy. Temurov left an indelible mark on the art and culture of Uzbekistan. His works remain relevant and continue to inspire new generations. His legacy stands as a unique phenomenon in the context of Uzbek realist painting—where tradition meets innovation, forming a distinctive artistic language that still resonates today.

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