

Formation and Activity of the Collection of the State Museum of Arts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan Named After I. V. Savitsky

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Annotation: This article writes about the formation of a unique collection of the Nukus Museum of Art by the founder, artist, archaeologist and ethnographer Igor Savitsky. The article also provides information about the folk arts and crafts of the Karakalpak, fine arts and archaeological objects of Ancient Khorezm.

Key words: Karakalpakstan, Savitsky, Museum of Art, Ancient Khorezm, avant-garde art.

56 years ago, on May 1, 1966, the State Museum of Arts was opened in the city of Nukus, the capital of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Initially, half of the lower floor of the local history museum was allocated for the museum, only 7 rooms and a corridor. Then, as the collection grew, the entire second floor was given to the museum.

Currently, the exposition halls of the museum are located in a new modern building, located almost in the center of the city.

The organizer, founder and director of the museum until 1984 was Igor Vitalyevich Savitsky. The personality of Igor Savitsky, a man of extraordinary thinking and worldview, played a big role in the formation of an extensive collection.

For the first time, I.V. Savitsky came to Central Asia during the Second World War, when the Surikov Institute, where he studied, was evacuated to Samarkand.

In 1950, as an artist, I. Savitsky came to Karakalpakstan, on the territory of which the Khorezm archaeological, ethnographic expedition, led by the scientist S.P. Tolstov, carried out archaeological work.

In the mid-1950s, Savitsky worked at the Karakalpak branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, and from that time he began to collect products of folk applied art of the Karakalpak people. In 1959, an applied art laboratory was established at the Karakalpak branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, where the richest collections of folk applied art were collected.

The role of I. Savitsky in the collection and preservation of folk applied art of the Karakalpak is definitely invaluable. He has assembled a huge collection, which currently has more than 9,000 items, which includes patterns of patterned weaving, pile carpet weaving, embroidery, jewelry, metal products, wood carving and inlay, clothing.

A unique exhibit of this collection is a wedding women's headdress - Saukele, which Savitsky acquired in very poor condition, took it to Moscow to restorers who restored the headdress. For 15 years this headdress was under restoration, and in 1984, in the year of Savitsky's death, Saukele was restored and brought to Nukus.

In the 1960s, Savitsky, with the idea of creating a museum, first organized exhibitions of folk arts and crafts in Nukus, then in Tashkent, then in Moscow. Exhibitions about the art of a small people are successful, and after the exhibitions, Savitsky raises a question before the Government of the Republic about opening an art museum. The collection of folk applied art laid the foundation for the formation of a unique museum and the creation of the museum in 1966.

In parallel with folk arts and crafts, the Department of Ancient Art was formed. The basis was the finds from the archaeological excavations of the monuments of Ancient Khorezm, which were transferred to the museum by the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition. Further, the museum, under the leadership of Savitsky, organized archaeological expeditions, as a result of which many unique exhibits multiplied in the department, which are presented in the museum's exposition. One of them is a sarcophagus, which was found in the necropolis of ancient Mizdakhan and dates back to the 3rd century AD. It is remarkable in that it has no analogies with other burial receptacles of this kind found in Central Asia, and it

is a continuation of the traditions of the shoe-shaped sarcophagus of Babylon. Currently, the collection of the department is more than 9,000 items.

The fine arts department was the most difficult to form. Before the war years (1940s), fine art did not exist in Karakalpakstan, and only in the 1950s did the first national cadres of artists appear. The opening of the Museum of Art in 1966 in many ways activated the artistic environment of Karakalpakstan. The museum, represented by Savitsky, supported them morally and financially. Savitsky understood that for the creative growth of local artists, a school, an example, a model is needed. Therefore, Savitsky set himself the goal of revealing the forgotten names and groups of artists who worked in the 1920s and 30s.

I.V. Savitsky, unlike other collectors, did not collect individual masterpieces, but brought to the museum, if possible, all the work of this or that artist. The collection was actively collected in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Thus, it is in the Savitsky Museum of Art that the creative heritage of artists is concentrated, which at one time were neglected by the largest museums of the Soviet Union, due to the fact that the content and form of objects sharply diverged from the accepted official art.

In 1966, Savitsky traveled to Tashkent to visit the workshops and homes of the oldest artists. The artists of Uzbekistan were people who came from different cities and countries, such as Siberia, the Caucasus, Moscow. These artists formed the Uzbek art school, which was highly appreciated as early as the 1930s.

A.N. Volkov, a painter, graphic artist and poet, who organized the Volkov Brigade in the 1930s, which included artists U. Tansykbayev, N. Karakhan, A. Podkovyrov and others, played a significant role in the fine arts of Uzbekistan. The main thing in the work of this group was the search for a national style through a synthesis of the experience of post-impressionists, the traditions of Central Asian miniatures and folk art.

I. Savitsky in a relatively short period of time (about 3 years) managed to collect works that are distinguished by a high artistic level. These works of artists of Uzbekistan, created in the 1920-30s, formed the basis of the department of fine arts.

The first works received by the museum in 1966 were 7 works of painting by A. Volkov – “Picking a tomato”, “Portrait of Khamza”, still life “Tomatoes”, landscape “At the pond”, “Carry water”, landscape “Old Town”, “Bedana”. The work of this master is quite fully represented in the museum's collection and shows different periods of his work. More than 100 works by A. Volkov are part of the collection.

The painter Ural Tansykbayev (278 works) is represented in the museum collection by the works of the 1930s and 40s, the artist in his own way perceived the traditions of the French school of post-impressionism, found his own painting style; decorativeness and brightness of his works comes from folk art.

The work of Nikolay Karakhan is most fully represented in the collection of museum (862 works). N. Karakhan, like A. Volkov and U. Tansykbayev, contributed to the creation of the fine arts of Uzbekistan with his work. In his works, there is a close proximity to folk art, an ardent love for color, a naive interpretation of what is depicted: “Waterman”, “Building a Road”, “Two Girls at the pond”, and many others.

The museum's collection contains unique works by the artist A.V. Nikolaev. Arriving in Uzbekistan, A. Nikolaev was drawn into the atmosphere of the medieval East, where he found many points of contact with his worldview. Once in Samarkand, he wandered around the city a lot, studied architecture, art, customs, language, and to top it all, he adopted Islam and the Muslim name Usto-Mumin, with which he began to sign his works. The museum owns the artist's works (89 paintings) made in the 1920s: “A boy in a fur hat”, “Portrait of a young Uzbek (Sufi)”, “Road of life”, which reflected the special state of his soul, and also surprisingly intertwined traditions art of the East, Italian Renaissance and Old Russian painting. Unfortunately, this period in the artist's work was short-lived and did not meet with the approval of critics. In 1925, Usto-Mumin moved to Tashkent, new searches appeared in his work.

The museum owns the works of Nadezhda Kashina, made in different years (541 works). Of great interest are the paintings made in 1928, painted under the first impression of a meeting with Uzbekistan, which not only became the main theme of her work, but also her second homeland. The works “Fortune telling for a child”, “Crossing the Syr-Darya”, “At the Shir-Dor” are romantic, made with a characteristic silhouette pattern. The works made in the 1940s are painted in bright colors with the finest light transitions.

The museum collection contains 118 works by artist Viktor Ufimtsev. He arrived in Uzbekistan in 1923. The 1920-30s were the most productive periods in the work of V. Ufimtsev. The artist used the most unexpected

artistic techniques in his paintings. For example, when creating the painting “To the train”, the author added natural sand to the paint to enhance the texture.

The museum is the owner of 228 works by the multi-talented artist Mikhail Ivanovich Kurzin. Unfortunately, it is difficult to fully imagine the work of this artist, since much of his heritage was destroyed. The museum owns a whole series of graphic works on topics from the life of Uzbekistan – “Old and New”, “Rich man Agitates” amaze with the sharpness of the image, the expressiveness of color. Still lifes of the last years of his life are “Dumplings”, “Pilaf”, “Lilac”, and others as a result of his life path. In them, M. Kurzin expressed his philosophy of a lover of life, not broken by the vicissitudes of fate.

Artists E. L. Korovay and V. Markova arrived in Uzbekistan together with M. Kurzin. In the paintings of the 1930s “Dyers”, “Tailors of Bukhara”, “In the former ghetto”, E. Korovay reflected the life of the Jewish quarters of Bukhara, where she herself lived for a long time. In her works, the artist strives for symbolism, poeticization and decorative expressiveness.

The museum collection contains 8 works by the artist V.A. Lysenko. Savitsky acquired them in 1971 from the artist's sister, Galina Aleksandrovna. The paintings were in poor condition, lying rolled up. The paintings were restored over time and presented on the permanent exhibition of the museum. Especially popular was his work called “The Bull”, which was written in 1928. Many museum visitors come to look only at this painting, which has become the hallmark of the museum because of the hidden symbolism in the painting. The work of this artist always arouses great interest, excitement. According to Savitsky, the life of this man was tragic and mysterious. Many of his works perished and the last years of his life are not known.

The work of the artist G. Nikitin “Alisher Navoiy”, which, according to art critics, is one of the best dedicated to this great poet, Igor Savitsky accidentally discovered in Samarkand. The artist's widow, from whom he saw this picture, covered a huge hole in the ceiling with this portrait. Savitsky took this painting away and restored it in Moscow. It is made in golden-brown colors; in the portrait, the artist managed to convey the spirit of a distant era.

More than 1000 works by the artist R.M. Mazel are part of the museum's collection. Savitsky acquired them in different years from the artist's widow, 423 works were donated to the museum. The work of R. Mazel was opened to connoisseurs of beauty, thanks to I. Savitsky. R. Mazel studied with the famous artist M. Chagall in Vitebsk under the master Y. Pen, and in 1915 he ended up in Ashgabat with the military regiment in which he served. R. Mazel is considered one of the founders of the fine arts of Turkmenistan.

The monographic method of completing the collection, developed by I.V.Savitsky, made it possible to see differently not only the work of individual artists, but also a whole important period in the development of the fine arts of Uzbekistan.

When most of the works of the artists of Tashkent and Samarkand were collected, Savitsky considered it necessary to turn to the artists of Moscow in order to show the artistic environment that significantly influenced the formation of the fine arts of Uzbekistan. Collections of works of those artists who worked in Central Asia or who influenced the formation of art with their creativity were started. The general picture of the development of art of those years is given by the works of artists A. Isupov, A. Podkovyrov, M. Gaydukovich, Yu. Razumovskaya, N. Ulyanov, A. Shevchenko, R. Falk, R. Rozhdestvensky, L. Kramarenko, K. Istomin, S. Nikritin.

The museum's collection contains works by the still little-known group of artists “Amaravella”, formed in the 1920s. 175 works by artists of this group are kept in the museum's funds. The history of this commonwealth arose in 1923. Artists P.Fateev, V.Pshesetskaya, A.Sardan, B.Smirnov-Rusetsky - formed the “Quadriga” group. Later they were joined by S.Shchigolev and V.Chernovolenko. In 1927, the group began to be called “Amaravella” – “The Abode of the Immortals”. These artists discovered in their paintings the amazing cosmic worlds inhabited by intelligent beings, the mysterious relationship between cosmic rhythms and the planet Earth. And, of course, the prototypes of a man of the future, who has overcome the fetters of geocentrism and comprehends other worlds. The artists of this group were inspired by the love of space. The artist N. Roerich supported this group in every possible way and helped arrange an exhibition for them in the USA.

In 1975, the museum's collection was replenished with a rich collection of sculptures. The museum was given 79 copies of the masterpieces of World Sculpture, located in the Louvre, Paris. These replicas of

excellent quality in bronze, plaster, and plastic were made in a special atelier in Paris. Most of the copies are made in full size, and others reach more than two and a half meters in size.

Thanks to such a unique collection in the 1950s, a team of Karakalpak artists was formed, their best works were acquired by I. Savitsky for the museum funds. Landscape painting of Karakalpakstan is represented by artists K. Saypov, A. Erimbetov, F. Madgazin, R. Matevosyan, M. Kudaybergenov. Historical painting is presented in the works of artists D. Bekanov, A. Kvon, B. Serekeyev, M. Ishanov, B. Aytmuratov. The opening of the museum and its collection had a huge impact on the development of Karakalpak sculpture. Zh.Kuttymuratov, A.Atabaev, D.Tureniyazov are talented representatives of Karakalpak sculpture, who created unique images with a bright national color. Basically, Karakalpak sculptors worked in wood, the original material, with which the production of household items was closely associated in the past.

I.V.Savitsky was a talented artist. From the first days of his stay in Karakalpak, he devoted a lot of time to creativity, working mainly in the landscape genre. He depicted motifs that were completely unremarkable at first glance and reliably conveyed the daily life of the Karakalpak people. The museum possesses 343 works by Savitsky. But having opened the museum, being engaged in collecting activities, I.Savitsky left painting.

I.V.Savitsky died in 1984. After his death, many owners of the works from whom he acquired works for the museum, as a sign of memory and as a sign of deep respect for the museum created by I.V. Savitsky, donated the works of their relatives to the museum funds.

Over the past decades, many publications have been published about the museum, about the person of Savitsky, documentaries about the museum have been shot, both in Uzbekistan and abroad. In 2010, the world premiere of the American documentary “Desert of forbidden art” took place. The film of Hollywood masters told the whole world the story of the museum, lost in the sands of Central Asia, which for almost half a century has kept the second most important (in the world!) collection of avant-garde paintings of the early twentieth century.

The real official recognition of the activities of I. Savitsky, the collection he collected came with new changes in the country, and the promotion of the museum began in 1991, when the road to Nukus opened for journalists and experts, employees of foreign embassies and international organizations. The phenomenon of the “museum in the desert” has been talked about all over the world, correspondents of the world's leading broadcasting corporations, journalists of well-known publications are beginning to “PR” paradoxical facts about the museum.

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