

Documentary Films of Uzbekistan. Historical Experience, Traditions and Creative Heritage

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Abstract: The article addresses the development of documentary cinema in Uzbekistan within the framework of strategic objectives in the field of cinematography, focusing on the creation of the programmatic film series "Living History" through the means of feature and documentary films. Historical experience, traditions, and the continuity of creative heritage by the younger generation of documentarians are examined using films about prominent figures of the Jadidism movement as an example. Particular emphasis is placed by the author on the analysis of the film "Armon".

Keywords: documentary cinema, heritage, cinema art, history, enlightenment, spirituality, identity, historical memory, Jadidism, cinematic language, image, genre.

Modern art criticism in the context of integration and transformation processes and the diversity of the path and its development, based on the richest historical experience, has the opportunity to analyze in a new way, conceptually to stand the goals and objectives of science and art in their broad understanding. In this vein, two unprecedented personalities, two large-scale figures, whose work has been repeatedly addressed by film critics, art historians of more than one generation, can be considered in Uzbek art culture and, I think, this will continue. These are Mamadzhan Rakhmanov and Malik Kayumov. They are contemporaries of each other, this is one generation. Documentary and theater studies, cinema and theater. These are the spheres of art where these cultural figures have worked fruitfully for many years. Why are these names linked in this article? Are the associations with her chosen topic appropriate? Studying the documentary films of Uzbekistan of the latest period, analyzing the films of a given article, it is possible and necessary to rely on the very historical experience of art criticism and cinema, crystallizing everything new from this experience.

Malik Kayumov stood at the very origins of the documentary cinema of Uzbekistan, his films are anthems of the country in which the master lived and created. He left to the next generation not only his films, but also excellent skill lessons, educated numerous students, who, in turn, have now trained documentary filmmakers of a new generation. These young, brave filmmakers take on a difficult topic, covering the history of the educational movement – Jadidism. Mamadjon Rakhmanov, a well-known theater critic, scientist, organizer of theatrical business, who wrote more than three hundred articles, multi-volume publications on the history of the Uzbek theater, who educated numerous art critics, of course, could not pass by the personalities of the educational movement and, already being an old man, he, as Mukhsin Kadirov writes:

"The scientist has created a history of the Uzbek State Academic Drama Theater named after Hamza, consisting of two volumes. In his fundamental research covering the years 1918-1959, many issues are covered in a new way, and the works and creativity of theatrical figures of this period are considered from a new point of view. Now the study presents not only Hamza, but also the multifaceted creative activity of Mannon Uygur, who actively worked during the formation of the Uzbek theater, in addition, creative portraits of such figures as Chulpan, Fitrat, Ghulam Zafari, Khurshid and Gazi Yunus are considered along with him..."¹ (translated from Uzbek by S.A. Khaitmatova).

¹ Kadirov Mukhsin – Tomosha sanatlari otmishda va bugun: Volume 3 (2013) page 197.

In an article prepared for the conference dedicated to the 110th anniversary of Mamadjon Rakhmanov, it would be appropriate to recall this fact, which proves that the famous scientist was engaged in the problems of the educational movement, his concepts of the development of theatrical art in Uzbekistan, were outlined in his studies of Behbudiy's creativity. Now, documentary films in their best samples have turned today to the unique images of the color of the Uzbek nation.

In the renovated Uzbekistan, an unprecedented transformation has been taking place in all areas of public life over the past thirty years. These transformations are of particular importance in the national culture. The modern history of the country is actively captured and reflected in the media space: modern media, TV, Internet platforms and, of course, in cinema, in documentaries. His history in Uzbekistan is rich in achievements, the search for expressive means, genre palette, images of certain historical periods, and, most importantly, the image of the Uzbek people, its brightest representatives.

The acquisition of Independence in 1991 radically changed the direction of the content of documentaries. The theme also determined the genre component. The characters and images in the documentary films of independent Uzbekistan revealed the now accessible theme of their national identity. It has become a priority in the work of many documentary filmmakers, who have the opportunity to talk from the screen about many things that have been censored for many years. And such documentarians as D.Salimov, B. Muzaffarov, Sh. Mahmudov, Sh. Kurbanbayev, A. Akbarkhodjaev, H. Valiev, E.Khachaturov, T. Yunus et al., in their films, deeply and soulfully revealed the selected topics ("The Red Drummer", "Valaam Island", "Dreams", "They studied in Germany", "Paper House", "Uzbekistan on the threshold of the XXI century", "The Future begins today", "The Story of a Miracle", "Thirst").

Documentaries dedicated to cinema and its outstanding representatives are particularly distinguished, they use the richest archival material, recreate the screen images of cinematographers, those who were at the origins of this art and those who made a creative contribution to the history of cinema. The truly rich creative heritage of cinematographers who have made a worthy contribution to the development of Uzbek cinema has served as a huge resource for the creation of the above-mentioned film portraits and artistic and educational paintings.

Most of these films tend towards the genre of portrait film. It dominates all other genres. At the same time, these are peculiar documentary biopics that arouse the interest of the modern viewer. It is noticeable that the artistic aesthetic quality is changing due to the use of the latest technologies. They are especially used by young documentary filmmakers, whose range of creative publications has the opportunity to expand: cinema, television, Internet platforms. It should be noted that the historical theme in documentary films is the most difficult and time-consuming in this type of screen art, where the fascination with reconstructing historical events requires strengthening the dramaturgy of narrative material, realism of pictorial solutions, accuracy and truthfulness in the author's and director's interpretations of the theme.

This idea is confirmed in the large innovative project "Adiblar Hieboni" (Narrow Chronicle and a number of universities in the country) was a tribute to the perpetuation of the memory of historical figures whose contribution to the culture of the nation, the self-consciousness of the people, its identification is difficult to overestimate, and most importantly, these are pages of a kind of chronicle of cultural memory, important for preserving their own identity in the era of processes globalization.

More than 20 films in this series of almost the same genre are documentary biopics with elements of documentary drama. They recreate historical and personal drama. The narrative of most films is complemented and illustrated by reconstructed events of a bygone time, epoch, the life of the chosen hero of the film, his activities and personal characteristics. Often, the hero of the selected films is an outstanding personality, her complex contradictory path, doubts, aspirations, and sometimes tragic fate arouses genuine interest among most viewers.

In the Uzbek feature film in the last ten to fifteen years, the theme of historical memory has also been widely used. "Imom Abu Iso Muhammad Termiziy" (directed by A.Mignorov), "Avlony" (directed by M.Erkinov), "Ibrat" (directed by D.Kasymov), "Ilkhak" (D.Akhmedov), "Kukon sha-moli" (directed by D.Masaidov), "Said bilan Saida" (directed by N. Abbasov). They recreate images of national historical figures and a cross-section of events related to socio-political situations that the country and the people experienced in different historical periods. The films are ambiguous in their artistic expressiveness, but the authors of these films present the viewer with artistic interpretations of certain historical events and the characters acting in them. The films are ambiguous in their artistic parameters, but the authors of these films present the viewer with artistic interpretations of certain historical events and the characters acting in them. In documentary films, the cycle "Adiblar hieboni" is valuable, first of all, for its educational potential and deep ideological meaning. At the same time, the topic of memory, both historical and cultural, which is now particularly acute and relevant, occupies a prominent place in various fields of knowledge. The screen images of the films of the "Adiblar hiye-boni" cycle have a huge impact on people's ideas about historical events. Abdullah Kadyri in the film of the same name (scenes by I. Kushaeva, directed by U.Hamdakov), Chulpan "Chilpon. Kush esdaligi" (scenes by E.Bozorov, directed by H.Rashidov).

This project is interesting from the perspective of the topic of this article. Special attention is drawn to films whose heroes are famous representatives of the educational movement at the beginning of the twentieth century – "Abdullah Kadiri" (Scenes by I.Kushaeva, directed by U.Khamdamov), "Chulpon "Kush esdaligi" (Scenes by E.Bozorov, directed by H.Rashidov).

It should be noted that with the acquisition of independence in Uzbek documentary cinema, a number of films were created earlier, where the characters were Chulpon in the film of the same name (scenes by N.Karimov, directed by Sh.Mahmudov), Abdullah Kadiri in the film "Rukh" (scenes by E.Khodjaev, directed by B.Muzzafarov), Khudoibergan Devonov in in the film "Kafasdagi kardyrqoch" (scenes by H.Akbarov, directed by Sh.Kurbanbaeyev), Muso Saijonov in the film "Marifatga bakhshida umr" (directed by scenes by H.Rashidov), Obidjon Mahmudov in the film of the same name (directed by FMirzaev, scenes by N.Karimov), as well as Munnavarkori Abdurashidov (directed by G.Shadmanov. scenes. N. Karimov) and Mahmudhoja Behbudiy (scenes. D.Rashidova, directed by G.Shadmanov.), whose difficult, tragic destinies excite the minds and hearts of modern viewers.

«...A distinctive feature of these paintings was the participation of young filmmakers in this project. Their fresh, creative look, bold, sometimes daring, use of expressive means of modern world documentary cinema, author's position allowed modern documentary cinema of Uzbekistan to rise to a different, non-traditional level ...".²

In recent years, Uzbek cinema has become diverse due to the mixing of different styles and new forms of artistic expression. Attention to the means of art and dramatic techniques has become important to attract viewers. It can be argued that this was the beginning of a new stage in the development of documentary films.

During the years of independence, the search for new opportunities and solutions in the development of historical themes in documentary films began in new conditions. In his speech at a meeting with the creative intelligentsia on August 4, 2017, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized the importance of cinematography in the study of our history.³

² Haitmatova S. "The role of historical cultural memory in the cinema art of Uzbekistan". UzDSMI xabarlari, 2023 No. 1(24), 20 p.

³ Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, statement dated August 4, 2017 <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/856>.

When determining the facets of the genre range of modern documentary, it follows that films on the themes of history, revealing images of historical figures, portrait films of outstanding figures of science, culture, art, ethnographic films, portrait films about the creative path of prominent figures of science and art, documentaries on military subjects and the role of the Uzbek people in the victory in the Second World War The World War is becoming more and more relevant.

At the same time, it is important to use the modern language of the documentary, the use of visualization, imagery, and metaphoricity of the historical theme revealed in the films.

If earlier the prerogative of these topics was the state studio "Uzkinochronika", now the historical topic is also interesting for private studios. So, the films shot at the studio "BWG" ("Blue white and green") with the support of Saber, "Legends of Uzbek dance" and "Dreamers" ("Armon") directed by R.Saliev attracted great interest not only from Internet users (the films were shown on the YouTube channel), but also from the entire cultural and scientific community of the Republic and beyond. These films were shown and received a number of awards at the International Film Festival in Barcelona, Cannes, New York, Paris. Researchers of the issues of modern cinema cannot ignore these works. "Legends of Uzbek Dance" is a bright, dynamic, masterfully shot documentary, it adequately presented Uzbek art. The full-length documentary is made according to all the canons of modern documentary cinema. It uses unique footage chronicles of different years, concert performances, interviews with professionals of Uzbek dance art, author's text, unobtrusively telling about the ways of national dance and its various facets. The film by R.Saliev is distinguished by her personal mood, which is transmitted to the viewer, who can experience pride and joy from what he sees on the screen. A musical film in a historical context. But it is so modern!

The images of outstanding dancers, truly legends, are presented in the film R.Saliev as an image of a people whose art is original, unique, and not repeatable. This idea was conveyed to the viewer very clearly, so this film sounded loudly on the screens of foreign countries and its importance can hardly be overestimated.

The film "Dreamers" ("Armon") is a full-length documentary work on the most burning topic of modern documentary cinema in Uzbekistan – the history of Djididism, an educational movement in the late XIX – early XX century. In recent years, special attention has been paid in historical science to the research of the Jadidism movement and educational ideas of the twentieth century. An attempt is being made to comprehensively and objectively analyze the essence of this movement and its influence and significance in the history of the Uzbek people and the peoples of Central Asia. This topic also attracts the attention of literary critics, sociologists, cultural scientists, and art historians for its uniqueness and the tragic fate of its representatives. The cinema has repeatedly turned to the images of the Jadids in its works, both documentary and artistic. Thus, the images of Avloni, Kadiri, and Ibrat were revealed by means of feature films, and a number of films were shot in documentaries of the independent period, the heroes of which were representatives of this movement. This was discussed above. The appeal of the studio "BWG" ("Blue white and green") to this topic was more ambitious, the authors managed to recreate the picture and images of the Jadids of that time by expressive means of modern documentary cinema. In addition to the author's text, consulted by leading historians of the country directly dealing with this issue, the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan⁴, the State Museum of Memory of Victims of Repression, the public fund "Memorial of the Shahids", the richest archival materials, film and photographic documents, interviews of a number of historians. Director R.Saliev uses visual figurative language, computer graphics, poetry and music, revealing the tragedy of the fate of the enlighteners who gave their lives for the freedom of their people. The film recreates the image of the progressive-minded, spiritually rich, educated elite of the nation at the

⁴ D.A.Alimova "History as history, history as science in two volumes. Volume 2 The phenomenon of Jadidism. Tashkent "Uzbekistan"2009"

beginning of the twentieth century (Chulpon, Fayzullo Khojaev, Mahmudhoja Behbudi, Abdullah Kadiri, Musa Saidzhanov, Munavvar Kara Abdurashidkhanov, etc.). The film is spectacular, modern, addressed to thinking youth who should know the history of their culture, because "it is necessary to have an idea about during the history of their country, its culture, mentality, rich traditions... "Mentality, in turn, relies on memory mechanisms.

The film by R.Salieva "Armon", by the power of artistic expression, sets this problem as its task and this is its meaning. It deserves to be distributed on National television channels, as well as "Legends of Uzbek Dance". Both in terms of genre and in the typologization of images, it seems that these films are the most revealing.

Summarizing, it can be confidently stated that at this stage modern documentary cinema has built a line of development in the development of a historical theme, while not forgetting the actual social problems of modern society with its heroes, bright events in the life of the country, its achievements, creating the image of an independent country. At the same time, cinematographers face urgent tasks of recreating the cycle of films "Living History" ("Tirik Tarikh"), which will become a strategy for the development of cinema in the 2024-2030s.

"In recent years, our national cinema has really "woken up." High-quality, modern films have appeared, and for this I want to express my gratitude. However, I am concerned about the question: what else do we need to do to develop cinematography? If we want to glorify our history and raise the national pride of our people, it must be done primarily through cinema..." President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev said at a meeting with cinematographers.

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