



Window

BACTRIA Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

MAY 2008

WHERE
CREATIVITY
MEETS PEOPLE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 2 May
JAZZ Concert (18:00)
- 3 May
Classical Concert
(15:00)
- 10 May
Concert in
Gurminj Museum
(17:00)
- 17 May
Concert in
Gurminj Museum
(17:00)
- 24 May
German Theatre Festi-
val (18:00)
- 31 May
Zerafshan festival

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Message on the Board from Marielle

Like any young generation nowadays, the youth of Tajikistan has opened up for globalisation, but at the same time it strives to find and understand its own identity; an identity which is rooted in history, but is also in constant evolution and redefinition.

Trying to understand one's own identity not only implies looking back to the past – historic facts, conflicts, influences – but also analysing the complexity of the society in which one is living – the social groups that make up society such as women, children, elderly as well as the acceptance of cultural diversity both at national, regional and international levels.

The co-operation between the international community and local NGOs has broadened the scope of social research and increased the number of specialists with expertise on various social issues.

In the Tajik educational sphere, BACTRIA aims to be pro-active by going beyond the scope of simply providing information. It offers an open communication space for dialogue, creativity and exchange of ideas in order to better understand Tajik society and its evolution. The cultural centre considers both academic and artistic ways of expression as valuable tools approaching complex social issues. Public lectures, conversation clubs with French, English and German

native speakers offering comparative analysis; cinematographic works picturing social topics; exhibitions organized by local NGOs...all of these catalysts for debate will be part of our Main program.

Marielle Dupont
BCC director

JAZZ in TOWN

On May 2nd in Mayakovski Theatre Bactria Cultural Centre organized a concert of Swiss trio ZOOM with the participation of local Tajik band MIZROB supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Zoom plays jazz not in its traditional form, but a more contemporary approach. This type of music is not always easy to accept immediately to the untrained ears, therefore during the performance we, organizers sat with sinking hearts and listened to every breath of the audience. But listeners did not disappoint us – the performance was very well received. Following the Swiss band, MIZROB played couple of their own recent compositions in the style of world music. The success of this group was doubtless, since their music is based on traditional Tajik music; a blend of wisdom and philosophy of the East and freedom and zeal of the West.

The concert continued with a jam session among the two bands and an outstanding drum rave at the end, in which band members demonstrated their talent in improvisation, their ability to lead and follow and their capability to create spontaneously something spectacular.

MIZROB

MIZROB brings musicians together who are well-known in the whole Tajikistan. Davlat Nazri, playing on national instruments is an honored artist of Tajikistan and leader of the music group Navoi Darvoz; Ikbol Zavkibekov and Zarif Pulodov are

both members of Shams, a popular music band. They came together to form the experimental group MIZROB, which gives them an opportunity to express their artistic talent, free of commitments and the limitations of the already existing bands.

MIZROB also proved its soundness as a band in the Third International Jazz Festival in Bishkek that took place 25-27th April, where they performed their new repertoire specifically created for the event. Without any exaggeration, we must admit that they were one of the best received bands among all the participants (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Switzerland, Germany, France, Hungary). Members of the group gathered at Museum Gurminj, where they first performed together and gave the idea of establishing MIZROB. In September 2008 their disc is expected to be released.

ZOOM

Lucas Niggli's ZOOM is the union of the improvisational core of Jazz with the esthetical sound-culture of contemporary music. This small and agile group with two tenor instruments and drums speeds through the highs and lows of today's music. The group makes a bow to tradition here and jumps into the unknown there. The compositions are very delicately crafted, especially with regard to sound. A wide range of dramaturgies and energies come into play as their compositions are both relaxed and simultaneously highly powerful.

Bactria_Sound

The trio of the Swiss drummer Lucas Niggli unifies three strong willed musicians of the young generation who have been influenced by the most varied style of music and who simultaneously blaze their own path through a new obscurity that the Postmodern and current tendencies have triggered. With ZOOM, Lucas Niggli can unify his numerous likings for Jazz (the drive, the energy, and the idiomatic improvisational freedom) as well as that for new music (tonal and interpretational culture). The joy of playing embedded in a beautiful "group chemistry" allows the pieces to ring out freshly again and again. Lightness is a central point in Lucas Niggli's music. Via this "filigreed" grouping with two tenor instruments (trombone and guitar) and drums, as well as with the excellent musicians Schaufelberger (a great tonal aesthete and Wogram (the complete trombonist), complex, even abstract passages sound light as a feather

Sergey Chutkov
Adrienn Hruska
<http://www.lucasniggli.com>

CinemaArt

Social Issues on the screen

May's CinemaArt program will highlight social issues discussed at BACTRIA's conversation clubs and induce further debates following each movie screening.

May 1st 18:00

"Le Bal"

Director: Ettore Scola, France

Language: no dialogue

May 8th 18:00

"Schindler's List"

Director: Steven Spielberg, USA

Language: English dubbed in Russian

May 15th 18:00

"Osama"

Director: Siddiq Barmak

Language: Persian, English subtitles

May 22nd 18:00

"Persepolis"

Directors: Vincent Paronnaud, Marjane Satrapi, France

Language: French, dubbed in Russian with English subtitles

May 29th 18:00

Short movies from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan

Language: Kyrgyz, Tajik, Russian

Heavily poetic (contemporary art in Tajikistan)

Arts in Tajikistan are the youngest in Central Asia. In the 90's, while other post-soviet countries were trying to place themselves in the international context, Tajikistan was engaged in civil war. And even though memories of the war is still dissolved in reality and outside the city one can still find destroyed remains of tanks, in the arts, war is hardly addressed. This traumatic reality cannot be conveyed through symbols. War has to be at a distance in time to be able to be discussed. Art is understood by Tajik artists as something incompatible with war, as a phenomenon of peace, though with numerous problems. The world reflected in art, is a comfortless and unfair world, but a poetic one. Powerful poetic traditions, founded by Hafiz and Hayam (the Tajik language belongs to the Iranian language group), is widely spread and rooted in everyday life (for example, according to tradition, people at feasts "leave some vine for Hayam".)

New media art with its strong narrative component is rather a "visual poetry" then a continuation of a plastic tradition. On the other hand, "literary potential" of new media discloses in a poetic (symbolic, image-bearing), and not in a narrative, journalistic way. Tajik art lacks pieces of "pure journalism" – a direct conviction of reality. Subjects rather seem "to be stolen" from this world, presented as metaphors – like in his photo series "Bus Stops", Jamshed Kholikov re-

corded different bus stops appearing along country roads like illuminated entities, aiming to brighten up one's travel and the whole reality. Tajikistan is a country that provides cheap labor to other post-soviet countries due to unemployment and hardships. However in the arts of Tajikistan we do not witness direct references to these "heroes" of our times seeking better lives on foreign lands. Rather, we see the video work "Falak" (song of sorrow) by Jamshed Kholikov with its streets in the "town of women" from where men are missing. We cannot encounter direct illustrations of poverty, troubles and hard work, but poetic video sketches like the one of Gandjina Sharipova "Angel", where girls collecting brushwood in the mountains in golden halo like some winged beings. Or the video work by Naimdjon Muminov "Trip to Sochi", a lyrical-humorous "trip" in the rusty skeleton of a bus – all young people dreamt about traveling to the Russian resort Sochi, a symbol of happy holidays during Soviet times – even nowadays it has the certain inaccessible "heaven-like" expression. Or the ironic video of Surayo Tuichieva "Golden People" – medically corrected golden-teethed smiles – a parallel between this "symbol of prestige" and the cult of gold in the ancient East in the Middle Ages – the work does not restrain from the use of poetic parallelism.

Of course being poetic does not necessary mean serenity and

being without conflicts – the expression can be quite harsh (video work of Bahrom Ismatov – "Scotch –speech".) Poetry is a synonym for ambivalence and poli-semantism. The careful eastern preference of allegory for expression here is composed with mistrust toward synonym not leaving room for multiple interpretation.

In the photos of Jamshed Kholikov "Morning Ride", "Goalkeeper" and "Girl on a Ball" genre scenes turned from three-dimensional space to flatness. This is a "fallen", pinned-to-the-ground, "motionless", "slithering" reality. A sharp criticism of the world the author lives in. The works evoke distinct feelings that the idea behind their creation does not exhaust critical intentions.

Similarly, the work "Stone Rain" by Nodira Madjidova, is also not only the symbol of danger, but also a great spectacle of moment of lightness and weightlessness.

Oxana Shatalova
(art critic from Kazakhstan)

Meet the Team—Sergey's monologue

I have been working at Bactria Cultural Centre, as music projects coordinator since January 2008. I started my professional development in 2006 with the non-profit organization "Restorers Without Borders – Tajikistan." There I was already involved with projects connected to music, especially through the project that took place in Gurminj Museum. Within the framework of this project we organized both traditional and contemporary musical events, excursions and seminars. Now in Bactria I continue working with music

but in a much broader context. Working two years already with musicians had a definite effect on my taste of music. Earlier I only listened to rap and rock; not understanding other types of music. As a consequence of working with musicians of traditional genre I fell in love with their music, with their beauty, melody, sadness, happiness, expressions, trance, fiery and clarity. In the future I see myself continuing to work in this sphere. Unfortunately I do not play on any instrument, but working with artistic people gives great pleasure to me – pleasure to converse with musi-

cians, pleasure from a successfully organized event, concert, festival, trip or presentation.



Zerafshan Valley Festival

Although Tajikistan is not a big country, its provinces have distinguished traditions, culture, historical background and landscape. Often even within the same province different districts have their special features.

Through a day long festival at Bactria Cultural Center, Zerafshan valley has the opportunity to present its wide cultural variety. The festival will enable cultural exchange between participants representing different fields of arts from

Penjikent, Ayni and Gorno Matcha districts.

Activities at the festival will combine elements of traditions with modernity, ranging from the demonstration of old techniques of handicrafts production and imitation of an orient bazaar to modern communication elements, like slide shows, photo exhibitions, movies screenings and etc. Through these events, visitors, both Tajiks and internationals, will get a chance to discover and learn more about

Zerafshan and the people living there.

Zerafshan Festival will be not only a pioneer for such initiatives from the region, but it will be the first time for most participants coming from remote areas, to be able to represent their region and show their products, arts and crafts of their native village.

The day-long festival will take place on the 31st of May.

EDUCATIONAL CORNER

GERMAN COURSES FOR ADVANCED LEVEL

In May, a new group will be opened for students with advanced level in German. This course will focus essentially on conversation and will be conducted by a German native-speaker.

REGISTRATION DATES FOR ALL COURSES

May 1st-9th, from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m.

The classes will start on the 12th of May.

For any further information concerning courses, please contact Yulduz : 227 02 57 / 227 03 69

bactria.education@acted.org

DELFDALF EXAMS

Dates d'examens : du 5 au 24 mai 2008

Les jours exacts d'examen pour chaque niveau seront affichés à Bactria début mai.

Pour plus d'informations sur le DELF et ses dernières réformes, vous pouvez consulter le site du Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques <http://www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/>

Universal language of arts

As the human mind continuously receives a flow of information, in arts as well various events take place forcing constant changes. With time ideas, beliefs, the character of society and people's opinion are gradually changing. In society we put stamps and clichés on layered constancy and newspaper articles rely on these stamps entirely. However this practice is a deeply incorrect one, because it does not take time into consideration. History remains an obvious experience; present has no similarities with the past; past experiences are absolutely worthless; ahead is always something unknown and we need to improvise quickly. Improvisation gives humanity new ideas and features which could express modernity in each epoch. Contemporary art is a clear example of this. If classical art is eternity then contemporary art is first of all timeliness. Social problems and aspirations are galloping from the past to the future, clashing with problems like morality and borders between East and West. All of these appear in contemporary art expressed through video art, photography, in installations.

At present Tajik audience knows little about contemporary art. Journalists, who happened upon art exhibitions encountering abstract creative timeliness, have difficulty valuing the works, because they have never seen anything similar before. Contemporary art which has become part of culture in the whole world, both East and West, for many in Tajikistan is still unknown and strange.

The idea to make contemporary art more accessible to people in Tajikistan was the main goal of the seminar on art criticism and curatorial

process that took place from the 7-15 of April in Bactria Cultural Centre with the support of Open Society Institute and SDC. The lectures were conducted by specialists from Kazakhstan – journalist, art critic and artist, Oksana Shatalova and art historian and curator of contemporary art Dastan Khojakhmetov. The participants - journalists and art historians - had the chance not only to familiarize themselves and learn about art history from modernism to postmodernism, but also to acquire skills to evaluate works from professional and artistic point of views. Besides lectures, the seminar also consisted of a practical approach, where the participants wrote articles, discussed contemporary art pieces and gained practice in art journalism. On the final meeting, as a sum up the seminar, questions of contemporary art in Central Asia were discussed including its support by various organizations and educational institutions. One of the participants, Victoria Petrushkova, associate professor at Slavonic University recommended conducting a seminar to journalists who wish to further develop their skills.

Due to the lack of the art critics in the country, presently art projects coverage in the mass media is quite poor which entails insufficient professional dealing of the issues. "We hope that after completing this seminar we will see your articles evaluating contemporary art in newspapers and magazines" – expressed his hope Georgy Mamedov, director of programs at Bactria Centre in his welcome speech at the beginning of the seminar. Today BACTRIA successfully supports arts and culture. It is a place

Bactria_ArtEdu

where youth and representatives of various social groups interested in arts, culture and education can express themselves, their talents and opinion.

Individual approach is necessary for the development of arts and it is an integral part of cultural heritage. It also influences originality, views and values of the community, and it should demand constant support from society. By saving the arts we further the unity of our national idea.

Anisa Abidova
(seminar participant)



UPCOMING EVENTS IN GURMINJ

May 10th (17:00)
**Concert of Khotam
Pulodov**

May 17th (17:00)
Gurguli Concert

GURMINJ LIVE

Gurminj Museum, this small private museum is a real gem in Dushanbe's cultural life, both in terms of its collection and its public activities. Unlike other museums in town, this place is very much ALIVE. It offers concerts in the summers, educational programs for school groups and in general a gathering place for everyone who enjoys playing on instruments or just listening to music.

The Museum of Musical Instruments, better known as the Gurminj Museum, was established in 1990 by Gurminj Zavkibekov (1929-2003), National artist of Tajikistan, laureate of the Rudaki state prize. He was born in a small village in the Bartang area of the Pamirs and although he became an orphan very early, he never lost his sense of humor and life's courage that always helped him to overcome ob-



stacles in life and hardships of the civil war in Tajikistan (1992-1997). G. Zavkibekov was noticed by an outstanding Soviet musical pedagogue D. Smirnov and was selected to participate in a Pamiri children's company in Moscow in 1941. Since then Gurminj never quit playing his ghijak, honed his skills of playing this instrument and developed aspirations for collecting articles of amateur and folk arts.

Gurminj Zavkibekov graduated from



the Ostrovsky Drama and Arts Institute in Tashkent. He acted in numerous films produced by Soviet directors; played hundreds of roles of foreign and Russian classical and Soviet drama. He was a cultural worker and a public figure; for many years he was a Head of the Lohuti Tajik Drama Theater. Friends often gathered in his house to listen to Pamiri tunes, dance and sing together with well-known artists. The idea of establishing an independent institution for the development of amateur and folk arts evolved because musical instruments in the East were always a means of communication of poetry. Such genres as falak (a cry from the heart), lailaik, madohi, darghilik and others were very often accompanied by music. Instruments personify humans' emotional experience, be it joy or sorrow. They talk about constant struggle of good and bad in a person's soul; and help to survive in difficult conditions.

There are about 80 musical instruments in the Museum collection. Among the stringed instruments one can find a Kashgar setor, Afghan-Badakhshani setor, Qumri tanbur, Shoh-setor, Pamiri rubob, haftor and other rubobs and tanburs. Once in the early 1960s Gurminj Zavkibekov, during his trip to the Pamirs, witnessed the destruction of an old house. He asked for one of the wooden poles with the idea of making an instrument out of it. Instrument maker Usto Nazar made 2 setors, one of which (Shoh-setor) is now part of the museum's collection.

GURMINJ LIVE. During the past ten years, several international organizations helped the operations of this museum. Among them "Restorers Without Borders", who through grants from "The Christensen Fund (TCF)" and in collaboration with Lu Edmonds (also a TCF grantee) initiated an overall capacity building project "Tusovki" in 2006, which involved the support of museum management, development of a venue for musicians and in general promotion of the museum. A series of concerts took place in the summers of 2006 and 2007 with huge success. Organizers were striving to provide a venue for free-expression, to enhance the importance of folk, world and rock music, and to encourage musicians to perform their own compositions. In addition to the concert series, educational programs were developed for school groups and the museum hosted 20 classes last

Bactria_Sound

year. Classes were conducted by local musicians and they focused on learning about Tajik musical traditions and musical instruments. This year the educational programs continue, with extended focus on learning about history, arts and culture by observing traditional instruments.

Recently the museum's exhibition is being revitalized through reorganization of the objects and by adding explanatory text panels for more interpretation. Objects are being catalogued and categorized, probably for the first time.

In 2008 Bactria Cultural Centre took the responsibility of organizing events at the museum.

GURMINJ LIVE. The museum is a place for musicians to gather, to practice and to record their music. It is often visited by musicians from around the world to pay tribute to Gurminj's heritage and to play with Iqbol Zavkibekov, Gurminj's son, who is also well-known in the music world, as the artistic director of the music band "Shams" and he is the director of the museum. The latest project with Bactria Cultural Centre and Lu Edmonds, music manager and musician from Great Britain, provided assistance to local groups like "Samo" and "Mizrob" to record their music. Both of these groups were born out of the "GURMINJ LIVE" initiative to promote folk and world music. "Samo" is a Pamiri band playing mostly traditional folk music and some of their own compositions, based on Tajik musical traditions.

"Mizrob" is an experimental platform for its members to challenge themselves in the genre of world music, mixing traditional music from Central Asia, with contemporary musical elements.

In this article we would also like to express our gratitude to Tamara, widow of Gurminj Zavkibekov, who with her positive and good personality contributed to the soul and essence of Gurminj Museum.

Adrienn Hruska

Language and Coffee

This month's Language Coffee Hours will be dedicated to various social problems prevalent in Tajikistan. Researchers and social workers specializing in social issues will lead debates among the Language Coffee Hours' participants.

Deutschklub

am 6. Mai 2008 um 16.00 Uhr

16.30 - 18.00
Anlässlich des 63. Jahrestages des Sieges über den Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus zeigen wir den Film " Sophie Scholl" über die Münchner Widerstandskämpfergruppe "Weiße Rose" Regie: Marc Rothemund (Deutschland 2005)

English Coffee Hour

May 7th 16:00

'The holocaust during 2nd World War'
Paul W. Neville - Economic Officer
U.S. Embassy Dushanbe

May 14th 16:00

"Children's rights in Tajikistan"
Chris Rees - Executive Director of
Children Rights Center NGO

May 21st 16:00

"Women's rights observance in Tajikistan"

May 28th 16:00

'Cultural diversity in the United States'
Edgar Leon - U.S. Embassy Dushanbe

Club Voltaire

le 8 mai à 15h15

Visite de la base militaire française à Douchanbé pour les étudiants du Club Voltaire et présentation sur 'Le rôle de l'armée de l'air française pendant la

Seconde Guerre Mondiale'

le 15 mai à 16h00

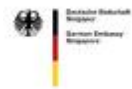
'Le respect des droits des enfants au Tadjikistan'
Max Baldwin - Chargé de Projet au
Children's Legal Centre

le 22 mai à 16h00

'Le respect des droits des femmes au Tadjikistan'
Anna Sobko - Chercheuse en droit sur la thématique des genres masculin et féminin.

le 29 mai à 16h00

'La notion de diversité culturelle'
Marc Fumagalli - Conseiller
Politique à la Commission
Européenne



Bactria_Lingvo

Volunteering in BACTRIA

"Those who doesn't do something for someone else, doesn't do anything for themselves."
Goethe

Regarding volunteers one often hears:

with scorn: "Do they play you at least?"

with reverent perplexity: "imagine, they don't even get a fig (nothing) for this!"

Volunteers deem their work in such ways:

with pride: "If you knew how much new and interesting we learn!"
with embarrassment about unselfishness: "So, this is what I do in my free time. So far they don't pay me."

Now in Bactria Cultural Centre we offer you a fresh look at volunteer activities. Our motto is: "Those few who do something are envied by the majority of those who only watches." (Jim Ron)

It turns out that volunteering is trendy and fascinating. And this wave swept the whole world. There is nothing that paid employees can, and volunteers cannot do.

However not everyone knows who volunteers are. We are the same as others, only we've had enough of waiting for others to change the world for us, make it cleaner, better and brighter. Our time is the time of action. We know that volunteers take active part in an organization's operations. If you look it up in the dictionary, you'll find that volunteers are people participating

(without any payment) in different socially meaningful events; distribute necessary information, prepare and conduct public events. Volunteers do not demand payment for their participation; their motivation is not financial encouragement but the satisfaction of social and spiritual demands.

Have you noticed that more and more frequently one can hear talk of volunteers and volunteer organizations? Many of us don't know who these people are and what these organizations do. In this article we, volunteers of Bactria Cultural Centre make an attempt to explain the gist of our work.

"A very important goal of our work is to satisfy the needs of students. We don't work for certificates and marks; everything we are doing... we are doing it for you." Therefore, dear students, who had difficulty in finding and choosing work, we are here to listen and help! Our volunteer program is a good way to acquire various work related skills, find friends of similar interest and gain valuable work experience. Volunteers of BACTRIA support the activities of language clubs, participate in the organization of presentations, and other programs and events taking place in the centre.

According to research on volunteerism in the USA immaterial stimuli can be divided in three categories: practical, informational, and privileged. The first category gives opportunity to volunteers to acquire skills in various fields; the second gives the chance to volunteers to access information (latest technol-

ogy, scientific research etc); the third category allows volunteers to have free access to services and events. For volunteers at BACTRIA we offer training and free participation in the language classes.

Our work at BACTRIA is based on seven principles:

1. *Volunteerism* (we are here because we want to)
2. *Independence* (the chance to make your own decisions)
3. *Unity* (we have many ideas, but one is the best)
4. *Universality* (we give equal chance to everyone)
5. *Unordinary* (fantasy is limitless)
6. *Interest* (there is no need for monetary compensation because volunteerism itself carries rewards)
7. *Group spirit* (it is better to say "let's do it" instead of "go and do it")

Volunteers working for free are not necessary altruistic; they work to learn, to gain experience, and to develop contacts. And very often volunteer jobs can lead to paid positions. Volunteerism gives a chance to try new areas and prove yourself that you are capable of doing something special.

Shabnam Shermatova

If you interested in volunteering at Bactria Cultural Centre, stop by or call the main number 227-02-57; 227-03-69 and ask for Shabnam Shermatova, volunteer coordinator.

VI. GERMAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

Am 24. Mai findet im Kulturzentrum Bactria erneut ein deutsches Theaterfestival statt!
Anfang um 15.00

Шестой немецкий театральный фестиваль

24 мая в культурном центре Бактрия состоится очередной немецкий театральный фестиваль.
Начало в 15.00

It Rocked!

For the joy of the Rock-&-Roll community of Dushanbe and much to the chagrin of BCC neighbors, Bactria Cultural Center celebrated the International Rock-&-Roll Day in April. According to my knowledge no one in town has ever held such a festivity. Probably that is why the event drew so many people ranging from students rocking in the very first row in front of the bands, to 50 year olds reflecting on the times when they themselves were dancing to "She's got it". This event was a remarkable show,



mainly because all the bands participating were so different in style and manner. The first one to start was "Zapadny kvartal" with their light, romantic and moderately philosophical pieces. Something in them reminded us of DDT (famous Russian rock band), but also of the good old Dushanbe. Yes, this band was ideal for creating the right atmosphere and getting the audience warmed up.

After that a heavier rock took the stage. "28 dney do zavtra" almost rocked our heads off. The whole crowd was bobbing and screaming. Even though some of the pieces were not theirs (which alarmed the organizers) in general the performance was very good. To crown this part of the festival the band "Zlo" (Evil) with their faces embellished in KISS-like style sang something... however I failed to understand what. A princess-of-death-like girl was offering their latest CD called "Suicide" – a very optimistic beginning for a music career. In general people liked the band very much – I saw some of them climbing up on their friends' shoulders, tearing their t-shirts off and bobbing their heads.

The music of Parem, cooled off the audience with their soft alternative rock com-

positions. Fans descended from each other's shoulders, pulled their t-shirts down and began enjoying this soft and tender stream of sound. As the highlight of the whole festival "Shams" showed the best ethnic rock ever performed in Tajikistan. It was mostly rock but people could indulge in a good bit of national dance.

All in all, the event presented the diversity and unexpectedness of Rock-&-Roll. It included presentation of a book by Kostya Kyde "Gorod ponedelnik" about Dushanbe of the late 1980s and screening of the movie Assa. The festival has not only proved that Rock-&-Roll in Tajikistan is alive but also that Rock-&-Roll is freedom from everything including your own self.

Faruh Kuziev
(BCC program assistant)

Why Lenin? - the unforgotten old and the unknown new

Bactria_Artvision

Why did BACTRIA decided to mark the birthday of the 20th century's cult politician Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin with an exhibition named after the well-known "April Theses"? This was an attempt to return to an historical epoch that is sinking into oblivion and to find out how much this hero is alive among the living of the 20th century. At the same time, representatives of contemporary art, who are distanced from those times, when creativity belonged to the political sphere, were given full freedom to express their own vision of the main ideologies of Soviets. In the exhibition "coexisted" the elevated spirit and styles of epic, eulogy and zeal of proclaimed art as well as ironical and at times playful works. The only thing that combined works of these two different approaches regardless of style, technique, size and genre is the main character that is recognized everywhere, even in an abstract expression, in the form of a lightbulb wearing a cap (inventive and powerful video work "Ilyich's bulb" by Aleksey Rumjantseva.)

There is no point being deluded and thinking that only socialist and authoritative governments generated such propaganda and culture. The concept of heroes as moral and

living examples for their own citizens came about already in the antiquities, has been successfully used in all eras and is perfectly "working" in our times as well. Canonical expression always consists of two basic functions – the first one gives an individual and earthly existence while the other one gives a "public face", a more symbolic form to its heroes. Symbolism allowed drawing, sculpting, embroidering, carving and printing canonical expressions in various materials, continuously picturing those poses, acts and costumes that were carefully thought out by government entities.

In the applied art works surrounded by plant-like decorations, similar to a "heavenly feast", the builder of peace poses as someone equal with gods, while in the monumental statues in "spiritual and inaccessible scale" he towers over people. In one word, these totalitarian and academic works are nothing less than political messages to the people, circulated to every place they managed to penetrate.

In the past, material substance of the leader with his strictly regulated portraiture served as a model of cultural identity in the Soviet era. Nowadays it has lost its previous meaning but continues to be recognized by everyone. This phenomenon allows contemporary artists to interpret normative expressions while break-

ing down the frames of law. In contemporary art "unlikeness" of works of arts and the expression of their own vision is most important. In this context the exhibition presented completely unexpected solutions. Here the witty replacement of faces of heroes in the iconographic format of Soviet monuments (photography of Muroda Sharipova), there modest in value, charming but cheap badges showing Volodja in childhood and Ilijich in maturity (interesting photo series of Jamshed Kholikov) and a parallel shown between the traditional finger pointing leaders and Tajik police carrying their rods (large scale banners of Aziza Rustamova.)

This small exhibition with the traditional title "April Theses" turned out to be rare, intriguing, instructive and to a certain extent shocking. Curators found a successful means of realizing their ideas, accompanied by songs performed by the ensemble of Tajik-Russian Slavonic University. Symbolically, at the opening nature showed its power. Pouring rain like a revolutionary riot became an accompaniment to the collapse of ideas.

Larisa Dodhudoeva
(art historian)

Cultural Coordination Meetings

April's Cultural Coordination Meeting focused on the topic of contemporary art and its existence or lack of it in Tajikistan. Following a short lecture by Oxana Shatalova, art critic from Kazakhstan, on contemporary art in Central Asia, participants determined the factors leading to a low level of activity in arts in Tajikistan. The most significant problem is that at present art schools, colleges and institutions do not even include contemporary art in their curriculum. Students have little access and exposure to view arts being made in other countries, due to technical or language limitations. There are some initiatives of course, but they are mostly generated by internationals, like Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's Starter program. Contemporary art is also an unknown territory for journalists and art

critics, whose reluctance to present it to the public ultimately leads to further delineation of this field from the arts. Bactria's effort to change this situation formulated a week-long seminar on curatorship and art criticism on contemporary art. The Cultural Coordination Meeting coincided with the final day of this seminar and its certificate ceremony and gave a chance to the seminar participants to meet actors of the cultural field. The meeting was concluded by a short presentation of video art works by Tajik artists.

Next meeting is in June 2008.

Topic: Art and Mass Media. Problems of art criticism and art journalism



Student exhibition in BACTRIA

Bactria_Artvision

On the 26th of April, Bactria Cultural Centre presented works by students of the painting faculty from the Art Institute. Only on the day of the exhibition did I find out that all the selected artworks were of first year students, which was a pleasant surprise as they were mature and could have easily belonged to graduating students. All the works are interesting for one reason or other. For example "Little Boy" by Abdullo Ubayduleva wrinkles his pug nose and thinking about something very important. Or maybe only his teeth hurt? One can only guess.

These young artists are not afraid to address social problems. Here is the work of Abdullo "Winter Night" – members of a family without electricity and gas want to gather and talk about the events of their day, so they burn sandal wood and share their stories. Even under such circumstances where basic conditions are missing, people cannot exist without conversation. Another of his work "Queue" is also very interesting. Viewers can see a line of feet wearing, slippers,

cheap shoes, expensive shoes. Regardless of one's social status queues make people equal. In the painting "Winter Evening" next to a trash container, on which written "trash is disposed between 19:00 and 21:00", a homeless is sitting and thoughtfully looking toward the dark window of a home. Who knows him? Where are his thoughts taking him about his not-long-ago-existing family under the roof of his own house? Now he no longer has a family, work, and his fate is to root through trash to find something to eat.

The work "Old Man" is an application of pieces of scrap paper, through which Abdullo managed to create a very interesting portrait: the eyes of the old man filled with wise life experience express a lot. He could contemplate on his past comparing it with today's world that became so difficult for him. "Sangtuda" is a hope for many Tajiks for a normal situation in life. But there are only mud houses and nothing more. In the picture "Fall" we see bright colors of fall scene with yellow and red leaves of different trees. The work "Half

Day" radiates intense heat. Heat and colors are beginning to play. All of the paintings of this artist are interesting, full of thoughts and life philosophy.

Also intriguing are the works of Zemfira Satuchinoy "Cricus" and "Lines of Life." In the painting "Ladders" the steppes are visually narrowing and leading somewhere up to some kind of peak. It is possible that these are the ladders to a professional carrier?

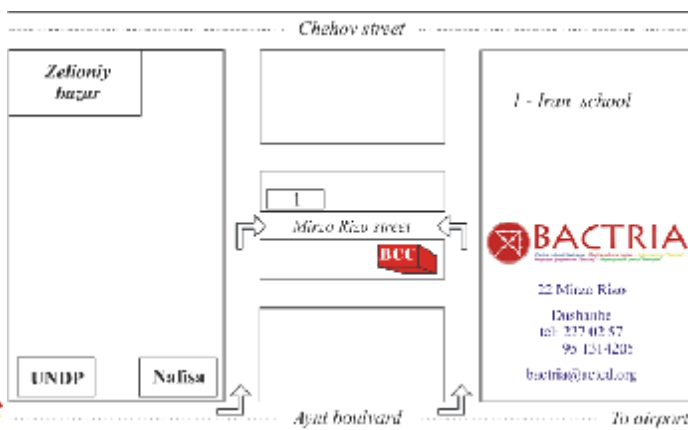
Vera Karnauhova is a fan of flowers. Branches of lilacs are graciously hanging from the vase. "Field flowers" do not succumb to the lilacs with their unpretentious beauty and their expressive simplicity. On the third picture, "Chamomiles" are showing off. Each of these painting has their own beauty and charm and difficult to prefer one to the other. These young talents a great but difficult future awaits...I'd like to wish them all the success.

Amal Khanum Gadjeva

Works are on view till the 15th of May.

WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS PEOPLE

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