



Window

BACTRIA Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 8

NOVEMBER 2008

WHERE
CREATIVITY
MEETS PEOPLE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 24 November
Concert:
"Folk-Falak" (17:00)
- 27 November
Exhibition:
"Original
Copy" (17:00)

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Message on the Board from Marielle

Celebrating European Week in Tajikistan (November 21- 28) has already become a tradition. This week gives an opportunity to the representatives of European countries to demonstrate their arts and culture to the people of Tajikistan and to strengthen their diplomatic ties on the cultural sphere as well. One's culture, delivered through the universal language of artistic forms, such as music, visual arts, cinema, literature, becomes more accessible for those from another culture. Mutual understanding and tolerating each other's way of life and culture are necessary requirements of the constantly growing European Union. The accession of new members has always brought new challenges to the EU, where countries and nations with entirely different values and traditions come together. In order to further tolerance the EU declared the year of 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

- promote intercultural dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, in acquiring the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more open and more complex environment;
- raise the awareness of European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, of the importance of developing active European citizenship which is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values.

(http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/dialogue/2008_dial_en.htm)

Toleration and tolerance are terms used in social, cultural and religious contexts to describe attitudes and practices that prohibit discrimination against those practices or group memberships that may be disapproved of by those in the majority.

This year the Delegation of European Commission to in Tajikistan has turned to BACTRIA to cooperate in the development of an overall concept for the European Week. With BCC' team recommendation and aligned with the EU's cultural priority for 2008, the activities are focusing on the topic of experiencing tolerance.

BACTRIA has challenged visual artists, and musicians to engage closely with European culture and as a source for inspiration create something entirely original.

Music has been long acclaimed as a universal language. Listening to music from all over the world one can find that similarities in music from different cultures are more prevalent than we would expect. It is the result of the ancient long contacts between cultures and lately globalization has accelerated this process. Musicians from the Western part of the world are constantly seeking new melodies and combining with their own, they have created something we call today "world music". Even composers of European classical music have been amazed by the exotic sounds of cultures outside of their own and have been integrating these into their

music. In the program of this year's European Week, one will be able to experience this wonderful amalgam of musical culture.

European masterpieces are the foundation for our visual culture and art history. The most famous pieces are worshiped by common people and connoisseurs alike. They constantly inspire artists and art historians all over the world to interpret and reinterpret them. Within the framework of the European Week, a group of artists and students will be engaged in a workshop to better understand these wonders and reinterpret them in order to make them relevant for today's Tajik culture.

Films are always one of the best ways to address a broad range of ways of experiencing tolerance (gender differences, disabilities, etc) to cultural (religious traditions, etc.). During the European Week, we will be showing films on the topic "Tolerance" in the Mayakovski Theater, which is the main venue for all activities. Our regular CinemArt program in BACTRIA will also show a selection of movies by European directors.

Our November repertoire is full again with original and thought-provoking cultural events and we hope that everyone will find something new and engaging for themselves.

Marielle Dupont
BCC director

EUROPEAN WEEK IN TAJIKISTAN

November 24–28

CONCERT – FILMS – CONFERENCE – EXHIBITION

PARTNERS:

Delegation of European Commission to Tajikistan
French Embassy
German Embassy
British Embassy



Euro Exhibition: "Original Copy"

Bactria_ArtVision

The theme of the influence of European culture on other cultures remains relevant to any research and for the artistic minds it is a real creative exercise. The scale of masterworks demands a breath of thoughts and responsibility from those who try to interpret them. Besides, such work inadvertently leads to the question of self-identification and self-



realization, especially for those who have just started their journey in arts.

A transformation of looking at the so called "classical works of arts"; the opportunity to interpret any artwork from a contemporary view is assumed. A masterpiece is always about some "principle", but "principle" cannot have limits and always remains relevant, no matter how they are presented. These artworks have become texts, in which reinterpretation can take place.

In the interpretation it is important to find a "happy medium" to keep the correct relation to the artworks, while creating something new in the process of analysis. One of the responsibilities in reinterpreting a masterpiece is to pay close attention to details of the image and highlight elements to show the contemporary view of historical plots or to present additional socio-cultural context. The use of "ready-made" in the copy will be a unique experiment to analyze paintings and photos, where the element of "ready-made" will embody the focus of the contemporary views. Another possibility is the use of

"assemblage" as well as creation of media works. The use of computer technology gives a wide spectrum for creative interpretation.

Dana Safarova - curator, art historian from Kazakhstan

In November under the initiative of Bactria Cultural Centre, a group of art student and artists will make an attempt to reinterpret European masterpieces to mark the celebration of European Week in Tajikistan. To guide the process, Dana Safarova, a curator and art historian from Kazakhstan, has been invited. She conducts a month-long workshop for the participants and the results will be on view at the Mayakovski Theater on the 27th — 28th of November.

Art Dictionary

Bactria_ArtVision

Readymade is the term used by the French artist Marcel Duchamp to describe works of art he made from manufactured objects. In 1917 in New York, Duchamp made his most notorious readymade, Fountain, a men's urinal signed by the artist with a false name and exhibited placed on its back. The theory behind the readymade was explained in an article, anonymous but almost certainly by Duchamp himself, in the May 1917 issue of the avant-garde magazine *The Blind Man* run by Duchamp and two friends: 'Whether Mr. Mutz with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, and placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.' There are three important points here: first, that the choice of object is itself a crea-

tive act. Secondly, that by cancelling the 'useful' function of an object it becomes art. Thirdly, that the presentation and addition of a title to the object have given it 'a new thought', a new meaning. Duchamp's readymades also asserted the principle that what is art is defined by the artist.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=239>

Assemblage is an artistic process in which a three-dimensional artistic composition is made from putting together found objects. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblage_\(art\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblage_(art))

In the visual arts, the term **appropriation** often refers to the use of borrowed elements in the creation of new work. The borrowed elements may include images, forms or styles from art history or from popular culture, or materials and techniques from non-art contexts. Since the 1980s the term has also referred more specifically to quoting the work of an-

other artist to create a new work. The new work does not actually alter the original per se; the new work uses the original to create a new work. In most cases the original remains accessible as the original, without change.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appropriation_\(art\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appropriation_(art))



World Music

The term has been credited to ethnomusicologist Robert E Brown who coined it in the 1960s. The term became current in the 1980s as a marketing/classificatory device in the media and the music industry, and it is generally used to classify any kind of foreign (i.e. non-Western) music.

In musical terms, world music can be roughly defined as music that uses distinctive ethnic scales, modes and musical inflections, and which is usually (though not always) performed on or accompanied by distinctive traditional ethnic instruments.

The term also is taken as a classification of music that combines western popular music styles with one of many genres of non-Western music that were previously described as folk music or ethnic music. However, world music does not have to mean traditional folk music, it may refer to the indigenous classical forms of various regions of the world, and to modern, cutting edge pop-music styles as well. Succinctly, it can be described as "local music from out there", or "someone

else's local music".

Over the 20th century, the invention of sound recording, low-cost international air travel and common access to global communication among artists and the general public has given rise to a related phenomenon called "cross-over" music. Musicians from diverse cultures and locations could readily access recorded music from around the world, see and hear visiting musicians from other cultures and visit other countries to play their own music, creating a melting pot of stylistic influences.

While communication technology allows greater access to obscure forms of music, the pressures of commercialization also present the risk of increasing musical homogeneity, the blurring of regional identities, and the gradual extinction of traditional local music-making practices.

(Source: Wikipedia)

In Tajikistan today, there is only one band, MIZROB, who plays in this genre. MIZROB is a platform for pure artistic experiment established in



Bactria_Music

2007. They play local world music, based on elements of traditional Tajik music. All members of MIZROB are well-known professional musicians, playing both traditional and popular Tajik music in different bands. MIZROB takes its inspiration for instrumental compositions from the philosophical and poetic works of great eastern thinkers, like Jaloliddin Rumi, Hafiz Shirazi, Saadi Shirazi. MIZROB conveys the philosophy of Central Asia and its many Silk Road connection to the East by means of many instruments – Tajik, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and especially Afghani, Pakistani, Indian, and even Turkish.

Bactria_Bookshelf

'Lettres édifiantes et curieuses'

This new discovery will give our French readers an opportunity to loose themselves in a period of history dominated by colonization, when massive conversions of indigenous populations for whom the notion of tolerance was swept away in few decades.

Créées au début des années 1990 par un groupe d'anciens camarades de Normale Sup', les Editions Utz se sont consacrées jusqu'à ce jour à la réédition critique de textes fondateurs dans le domaine des sciences humaines (collection la Science des Autres, avec notamment la publication d'ouvrages du voyageur et scientifique allemand Alexandre de Humboldt et du fondateur de l'Ecole française de géographie Paul Vidal de la Blache) et dans celui des récits de voyage à dimension ethnographique, avec une région dominante, l'Amérique latine. Elles ont largement bénéficié du soutien de l'UNESCO et de celui du Centre National des Lettres.

Les Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses des Missionnaires Jésuites en Amérique méridionale font partie du second corpus de textes. Elles reprennent, avec une longue préface de Claude Reichler, un des

meilleurs spécialistes du mouvement des idées dans l'Europe moderne, des lettres émanant des missions jésuites disséminées dans le continent. Les pères les adressaient à leurs supérieurs en Europe, et les meilleures d'entre elles étaient éditées dans une série de petits ouvrages en 12°. C'est par ces lettres que la plupart des grands esprits du XVIIIe siècle connurent d'autres mondes, la Chine, le Levant, l'Amérique espagnole.

En Amérique espagnole, l'objectif des membres de la Compagnie était la conversion des Indiens à la foi catholique. Mais au-delà de cet enjeu les Jésuites voyaient dans le Nouveau Monde un Monde Nouveau, composé d'êtres proches de l'état de nature et dotés de cette pureté originelle sur laquelle au même moment Rousseau fondait son approche de l'homme. Cette conviction amena les Jésuites à la création de l'utopie "heureuse" des missions ou "réductions" du Paraguay. Dans ces missions, ils appliquèrent les principes d'un communisme presque intégral dans de grands domaines conquis sur la forêt amazonienne. Outre la production agricole, les Indiens guaranis

apprirent à leurs côtés l'art de fabriquer les objets les plus sophistiqués. Les violons d'Asuncion pouvaient alors rivaliser avec ceux d'Italie.

Mais la prospérité des Jésuites et leur formidable réseau d'information et d'influence indisposaient et les princes et la papauté. Celle-ci décida finalement de supprimer la Compagnie de Jésus, et les réductions furent livrées en pâture aux trafiquants d'esclaves portugais: à la place des somptueuses églises baroques où les Guaranis interprétaient naguère des oratoria indiens, dans une superbe symbiose entre deux cultures, il ne reste aujourd'hui que quelques ruines envahies par la forêt...

«Lettres édifiantes et curieuses des missions de l'Amérique méridionale» Utz, 1991

The book is of interest to those who are fond of historical subjects.

If you would like to read the book, please contact Nazarbek Nazarbekov, assistant to the library coordinator at 93 549 24 82 or in person in BACTRIA's resource library.

CinemArt

November 13th 18:00

"Chocolate"

Director: Lasse Hallstrom (Sweden)
Language: English with Russian subtitles

November 20th 18:00

"Ober"

Director: Alex van Warmerdam (Netherlands)

Language: Dutch with Russian subtitles

EURO FILM WEEK

November 25th 17:00

"Summer in Berlin"

Director: Andreas Dresen (Germany)

Language: German with Russian subtitles

November 26th 17:00

"Bad Faith"

Director: Roschdy Zem (France)

Language: French with Russian subtitles

November 27th 18:00

"All About My Mother"

Director: Pedro Almodovar (Spain)

Language: Spanish with Russian subtitles

November 28th 17:00

"Paris, I Love You"

Director: 21 directors

Language: French, English with Russian subtitles

It was not my first meeting with composer Tolib Shahidi. I was very much looking forward to it. Not only because the maestro is one of the most celebrated composers in Tajikistan, but also because he is a fascinating, refined and interesting company. Mr. Shahidi, as usual, was elegantly dressed, friendly and punctual. The meeting took place in one of the open-air cafes in Dushanbe.



Mr. Shahidi – this meeting is taking place not far from the Conservatoire, the music centre of the country. What does the Conservatoire nowadays mean to you?

The Conservatoire has a good hall, musical instruments and professional musicians. This is what makes it possible to host concerts of both local and overseas musicians here. One of the recent examples is a concert of an outstanding musician, my friend Valeriy Shkarupa. My music was also played at his concert. In addition to concerts I also teach composing. I teach out of the feeling of duty to art and younger generations. And I like teaching.

It is not a secret that many young talents leave Tajikistan. Does classical music have a chance for development in the near future?



You have touched upon a very sad issue. Concerts of classical music are rare now, as well as tours abroad. Musicians are in bad financial situation. Studying abroad for residents of Tajikistan has become problematic.

The spiritual atmosphere of the town is fading away and the country is losing its musical traditions. In many ways it is the inevitable meeting of circumstances. I was lucky, just by fate – I was born in the family of a renowned composer and my personality was formed among writers and musicians. I had brilliant teachers. Studies in Moscow and my first teacher Yurij Ter-



Osipof influenced my professional development the most. Among my teachers are Sergey Balasanyan, and Andrey Eshpay. In our society spiritual values were highly appreciated. But it does not mean that we have to be obedient to destiny. We need to have sturdy and consistent policy in the sphere of music. We need governmental grants to support talents, international agreements on provision of quotas for university studies abroad, and a state chamber orchestra. Only then, some musicians will stay in the country.

BACTRIA regularly organizes concerts and master classes for musicians and music students.

Only then, some musicians will stay in the country.

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But the government does make efforts to develop music, especially folklore. What is your opinion on this?

Folklore is witnessing quantitative development but not qualitative. Work in this direction often involves unprofessional choreographers, composers, directors....

Since we have mentioned folklore....It is clear that many of your pieces have a hint of folk. What makes Mr. Tolib Shahidi to actively use Tajik folk music?

Tajik folklore is something that exists only in Tajikistan and this is already a sufficient reason of being interesting for the whole world. A synthesis of folk, national and traditional classical music makes the Tajik people's heritage more comprehensible abroad and a part of the world's music treasure. But alas, some state officials try to ensure that Bach, Prokofyev, Chopin and other big names remain alien to us, forgetting their universal contribution to music.

Mr. Shahidi, which composer or writer impresses you most and influences your life and work?

My compositions are more or less associated with great masters like Hafiz, Firdausi, Omar Hayam, Rudaki, Pushkin, Aini, Paul Valery, and Goethe. In my life and in my musical quests, I try to follow the philosophy, values, expression, and mastery of these geniuses. Dramas of Nabokov are very close to me. The feeling of a lost world in which you were happy, which you felt like your own, and the feeling of the present, being fragile and alien.

Many artists will find it insulting if they are suspected of imitating someone, and you talk about it as if you were proud of this. You mentioning Nabokov, makes me feel that you are very much critical of the present time.

I don't think that because of this, my work will be less valuable. I dislike these time because of its profit-seeking nature, because of simplicity and alienation among people. More and more you can witness that you are treated according to your citizenship, nationality or status. But in the creative process, these differences break down and only professionalism remains.

You have three sons and as far as I know they are all well-known. Isn't there any generation gap caused by your attitude towards the present time?

No, we are very close spiritually. We understand each other very well.

Should art exist only for the sake of art or it has to have some concrete social mission?

Fellini said: "Art is a charming delusion". Theatre actors act love on the stage and hate each other behind the curtains. Music is true human feelings.

Do you think that the main goal of music is reflection and rendering of human feelings?

French writer Werber wrote that people should not research Space. It is difficult enough to understand man which is complex and huge. I agree with him.

What do you think about envy? Does it help in work or on the contrary, it ruins creativity?

I can't say anything....it is not my sin.

What is your attitude to death in art and in life?

Jokingly: the more recollections you have the nearer death is. I composed music for a film based on Hayam's poems which had death as the main motif. The leading female role was played by our great actress, Malika Sobirova. It was very hard both physically and morally. It exhausted us. Soon after the film was finished Malika Sobirova died.

At the end, what would you wish to Bactria Cultural Centre?

I've always thought of BACTRIA as an important centre of spiritual enlightenment. As a composer I wish you new concerts and festivals on big venues, with professionals involved. More interested visitors who are ready to cooperate with Bactria.

Dear Mr. Shahidi, let me express my huge gratitude for this interview and for the joy I had talking to you! I wish you all the success!

Thank you very much! Good bye!

(Interview was conducted by Dmitry Egarmin)

Coffee Hours

Bactria_Lingvo

Deutschklub

am 4. November 2008 um 16.00 Uhr
"Lichter"

Spielfilm, Deutschland 2003
Dauer: 105 Minuten
Regie: Hans-Christian Schmid
Sprache: Deutsch, Polnisch und Russisch
With English subtitles

Ein Film über das Zusammenleben der Menschen an der deutsch-polnischen Grenze

English Coffee Hour

November 5th - 4 p.m.

'France, a model of integration?'
Olivier Chatelais – French Embassy in Tajikistan
– First Counsellor

November 12th - 4 p.m.

Maria Melbing – Embassy of Sweden in Tajikistan
SIDA Programme Officer – Second Secretary

November 19th - 4 p.m.

'Islam and religious equality and tolerance in Germany'
Doris Hertrampf - Her Excellency Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Tajikistan

November 26th - 4 p.m.

'Conflicts in Europe'
Frederik Coene – Delegation of the European Commission in Tajikistan – Project Manager

Club Voltaire

Projections / Débats autour du thème de la tolérance

le 13 novembre à 16h00

'Quand tu descendras du ciel'
Réalisateur – Eric Guirado

le 20 novembre à 16h00

'Samia'
Réalisateur – Philippe Faucon

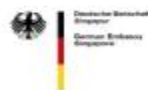
le 27 novembre à 16h00

'Zim and Co'
Réalisateur – Pierre Jolivet

«Je est un autre»
(« I is someone else »)

This legendary affirmation from Rimbaud has been the starting point for further reflections from different writers and philosophers on the complexity of 'co-existing' with each other. Since their integration into the European Union, the populations of the 27 member countries have had no choice but to get used to the idea of living in an increasingly diverse environment, especially since the creation of open borders following the Schengen Agreement.

The question is whether this new context of interaction has led to tolerant or intolerant behavior across the continent. It is this complex problem which will be illustrated by the European Union representatives' personal experiences and by a selection of French movies in their original languages.



Deutsch in Duschanbe

Bactria_Lingvo

Alle Deutschlerner sind herzlich eingeladen, an den Treffen des Deutschklubs teilzunehmen. Einmal in der Woche wollen wir uns treffen, um uns auf Deutsch zu unterhalten und über Aspekte der deutschen Kultur auszutauschen. Dabei stehen nicht etwa Unterricht oder Vorträge im Vordergrund, sondern das zwanglose Beieinandersein. Weitere Themenvorschläge oder Treffpunkte sind jederzeit willkommen.

Bei schlechtem Wetter gehen wir in ein Museum oder schauen einen Film im Bactria.
In case of bad weather, we'll visit a Museum or watch a film in Bactria.

Bei Fragen oder Anregungen:
Kontakt/ contact: David Runschke, mobile: 935 143 551, tadschikistan@boschlektoren.de

10.-16.11.

Treffpunkt: Ein Kaffee/ Bactria
Uhrzeit: 18:00
Thema: Gesellschaftsspiele: Karten und Würfel

17.-23.11.

Treffpunkt: Bactria
Uhrzeit: 18:00
Thema: Neuer deutscher Film: Diskussion und Filmschauen

24.-30.11.

Treffpunkt: Sporthalle der Schule 27
Uhrzeit: 16:00
Thema: Volleyball/ Basketball

Traditions and Neo-traditions in the Culture of Tajikistan

In Tajik contemporary art practically all artists' works are **deeply rooted in national artistic traditions**. Regardless of the field they work in, be it handicrafts, academic or contemporary arts, music composition or architectural projects, all masters use the classical heritage of Tajiks. Exceptions, while difficult to find, do exist, such as the composition of Tolib Shahidi on the theme of Buddha, where he interpreted Indian melodies. Iqbol Zavkibekov for example uses musical instruments of various nations, and Jamshed Kholikov fused French music with Eastern dance in his video work "Sigh". However these attempts are fragmented and do not characterize the general direction of contemporary culture.

Why is it, that while European and American arts and culture includes traditions of other cultures (Japanese, African, and even Soviet), Tajik artists make it their own responsibility to follow traditional values? **What are these reasons?** It seems to me that artists, musicians and architects of Tajikistan have strong ties to their ancestors and they love their country, their own culture. Besides, most of them have hardly ever had opportunities to travel outside of Tajikistan to **see other cultural and artistic environments**. But above all, the main reason could be what most post soviet, and post-socialist countries face - a challenge of recent times, the so called, "**ethno-renaissance**". Tajiks, who having received their own government only on the 20's and then their independence in the 90's, have a relatively short history of political unification as a titular nation. Closely connected to

this remains the problem of creating an internationally recognizable stereotype with the establishment of ethnic, social and cultural identity. What could be better **proof** of this than one's own **ancient traditions**? The outbreak of the "ethno-renaissance" coincided with the geopolitical processes of the 20-21st century when it became clear that the melting pot of all cultures and nations is not expected to be an alternative paradigm of globalization and anti-globalization. If globalization is considered as a contemporary civilization process, than anti-globalization is, for the first time in human's history, a movement against the progression of civilization.

The process of **constructing national traditions** is mainly characterized by the efforts of "urban intelligence to restore traditional fragments of ancient beliefs and rites with the goal to revive national spirituality" (V. Schnierelman), and for this different eras and **civilization layers** are researched. Tajikistan for example celebrated the year of Arian culture in 2005, as well as the 1100 years of the ethnic Tajik dynasty of Samanids in 1999, to which the establishment of Islam in Central Asia is closely connected. The country has also celebrated the 2500 years of existence of Kulyab, the cradle of ancient cults, beliefs and pagan ceremonies besides Islam, socialism etc. This means that **traditions are flexible** and they disappear and reappear with challenges of new eras.

In this context, the politics of creating a national image seems timely and the

mission of creative intelligentsia again is to make the picture of their homeland attractive. Basic demand exists for the creativity of "**airport -like, touristy culture**" which aims at the broadening of visitor's knowledge about the country, in their search for something exotic, brightly decorated objects, something non-western. A clear preference is given to landscapes and well-known mythological places decorated with minarets, holy shrines, waterfalls, and people wearing national dresses and carrying ethnographic objects. And then the image of "Happy Tajikistan" naturalizes the connection between the mud houses and "Tajikness".

Larisa Dodhudoeva — art historian



Jamshed Kholikov: "Sigh"

About Artistry

To build the legend of a rock band, every concert must be an event. Being good musicians is certainly not enough, because a concert is not about playing songs, but has to give a complete elaborated show to the public.

A show is a technical performance that includes multiple aspects, concerning sound and visuals. The sound must be, of course properly balanced before the concert, and stage monitors are mandatory, even for small pub gigs. An artist must know that the stress generated live will hamper roughly 30% of his musical capacities when the concert starts. Therefore, **optimum musical comfort is essential not to loose the gig right from the start**. The order of the songs can be set with a golden rule: three dancing tunes to build momentum, followed

by a more ambient song to let the audience relax a bit and go for a drink. **Long transitions have to be avoided**, it is much better to have one of the band members playing a long intro while other musicians are getting their acts together.

The show is also visuals: lights, costumes, make up, coordinated dance moves, photos or video projections require extra work but give significant stage support. They can be cheap as well: covering lights with scarves and adding a few candles are giving easily a bit of ambiance to an ice cold venue.

The truth lies in the fact that musicians that are having fun together while playing will automatically give a good concert. But there is more about building a band image, which is rock and roll attitude. Ever since Elvis suggestive dance moves, modern music has been flirting with transgression, up to the point that the whole rock and roll image of

bands is now carefully built up and managed by the record industry. The rock stars have always been incarnation of unspoken phantasms of the audience, representing excessive sexual behavior and self destruction through various means. While, of course, this way of life can't be advocated to young musicians, it is important for them to understand that managing their image, even if it does not reflect their day to day life, will help them to attract attention in a very competitive environment.

Dudes, playing good is not enough, you have to play rock.

T.A.F.N.A.A, White City.

He sought to avoid theatrics and sharpness. He has even managed to argue that art does not have to be beautiful. As a young and obviously gifted artist, Gairat Usmonov presented some of his photo works to the audience.

The exhibition "Light and Shadow", curated by BACTRIA's exhibition coordinator Jamshed Kholikov, allows each viewer to see the artworks through Gairat's eyes and at the same time with their own world-view. The exhibition title says everything and nothing, giving the viewer no direction of expectation. The works have no titles and this is undoubtedly an important part of the project, which shows the "dark side" of the global processes affecting society as a whole, segregating it, turning people into small cogs of the machine and assigning them fitting roles.

The untitled works, like a reference from Lewis Carroll's tale, gives one a feeling that things are as they appear but at the same time they are something totally different. This brings us to the question; "Who we are in this world behind the looking-glass"? The problem of self-identification in contemporary society is not comprehended by all its layers equally. Often we forget about those who would be happy living in a purely traditional society, which has been destroyed. Women become the symbol of contemporary traditional society in Gairat's works. A **young, unkempt girl**, a woman in a black paranja with bare ankles, and between them an empty basket, like stolen happiness, where there are only forms but no content.

In these works, we see loneliness and poverty shown through empti-

ness. It is everywhere: on the empty streets; among the many solitary fallen leaves, in their unique similarities; as if things are the same but then at the same time they are authentically different.



The most interesting fact about the exhibition is that all the objects pictured by the artist are easily recognizable, but if you look deeper you have to admit that you cannot define what you see – it seems like a street of a village, but absence of people and lifelessness makes one feel that it is an abandoned settlement, a graveyard of people's hopes; hunks of meat with more bones than flesh; and the leaves... another moment and they will all turn to acrid smoke and the spider web of veins will wane, trampled by heavy heels.

The artist in a series of experimental works presents his artistic plot as a precious stone with all its facets. Gairat Usmonov mainly uses classic media – film photography and light filters. In the project "Light Spots" he continues disclosing the social topic of the previous project. And again it all seems very simple – **moments of life – a car's windshield coated with rain**; a girl smiling. They

are black and white images with bright colored smears. The contrast between colorless and colorful is a tiny island of life in the sea of daily routine. This girl did not just pass by unseen in her daily schedule; she was seen and she was noticed.

Another interesting piece is the experimental work, "Minaret" - a beautiful stone structure with blue sky instead of a ceiling. And only the title reminds you that it is a minaret and not a prison. The **diptych "Kaleidoscope"** was done in the same technique. The artist used the image of a tree as the basic element for this work which repeats itself in a cycle form, painted in black and red. It is beautiful but seems a little bit unusual. Yes, it is an experiment, yes it is a tree but why black and red?

All the works presented are highly poetic. In Gairat's works it is the escape from tensions of social art that captures us. He seems to be waking us up and making us remember that life is going on but it will reach its end one day. This obvious truth in everyone's life that makes us look around maybe even encourage us to work hard to notice things that we took for granted before. Gamila Abdurafova journalist —Tajik Air



WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS PEOPLE

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Cultural Events in Dushanbe

In our newsletter, we provide information about cultural events that take place in Dushanbe organized by various cultural institutions.

If you are the representative of any cultural organization and you would like to have information published about your events, please contact us at bactria@acted.org

Mayakovski Theatre

8th Любовь Пери	15:00
9th Утешитель вдов	14:00
11th Богатая женщина	17:30
14th Исповедь	15:00
16th Пять Жён Ходжи Насреддина	12:00
23rd Любовь Пери	13:00

Lohuti Theatre

11th , 15th , 20th, 22th Rudaki	14:00
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National Conservatory

11th Shashmakom Concert	13:00
15th Classical Music Concert	15:00