

| Highlights |

March 13, 18:00

"Mood" - Exhibition of  
Karim Najmiddinov

March 23-27

Francophone Week

March 28, 15:00

"Music from the Pamirs"  
Concert of Samo  
in Gurminj museum

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## Board message from Adrienn

Gurminj Museum. Have you heard about it? You might have...hopefully you have. If you have not, make sure you read what I'd like to share with you in this short paragraph. Last year in the May edition of our newsletter I wrote a long article about this small, hidden museum of Dushanbe. So why am I writing about it again? Well, I know this is the best kept secret in town and I just simply cannot hold it to myself...I MUST share the feeling of visiting this museum with as many people as I can.

Upon entering the courtyard, one immediately understands the lure of the place. It is cozy and inviting, a small island in the middle of all the demolitions that are going on around it. The tall, modern building of the VEFA Center towers over the private courtyard of the museum, but it does not threaten the intimacy of the yard. Besides the museum, a small studio, an open air stage and the private home of one of Gurminj Zavkibekov's sons are all elements of the place. The building was bought by the artist, Gurminj Zavkibekov himself and he turned it into a "museum". Of course to call the place a museum, in its traditional sense, is not quite correct. Gurminj never collected or preserved musical instruments systematically. Most of his collection was gifted to him or he purchased musical instruments in order to play them. The museum was his house and he lived among his instruments. Visiting the museum takes you to the world of this

man. You understand his devotion to music. Gurminj was from the Pamirs region and he brought the rich musical heritage of Badakhshani people with him, but the museum is most certainly not only for visitors from the Pamirs. The collection actually contains musical instruments from all parts of Tajikistan as well as from other Central Asian countries.

On my first visit to the museum I happened upon the rehearsal of one Pamiri band, SAMO, who uses the museum as their permanent place to practice. It is a real treat to visit the museum when they are there and look at the instruments accompanied by their music. I simply just sat there for several minutes and got lost in their music. Their performance of five daffs (handheld frame drums) carried me to a slight state of trance. And as I was sitting there holding onto my chair tightly, I suddenly noticed the painting on the wall behind the musicians that depicted the exact scene that was taking place right in front of me. Five men are playing on daffs. There was something eerie about this ... I'll never forget the moment. Since then of course I learned a lot about the band and the museum itself. And I can only recommend that you do the same. No matter if you lived your whole life in Dushanbe or you are just spending a short time here, the museum will reward you with a unique experience.

The museum will open its doors to the public at the end of March with a concert of SAMO. It is a chance for you to be enchanted by this museum as much as I was.

*Adrienn Hruska*



**SAMO's concert will take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March in Gurminj Museum.**

WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS PEOPLE

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## Jasur Khalilov: "Never try to earn a living by music"

On February 20<sup>th</sup> Bactria Cultural Centre presented its publications and web site as well as a concert by talented musician and composer Jasur Khalilov. In this issue we publish a cut version of his interview with Tahmina Goibnazarova, that was conducted one day before the concert..

He was offered to work abroad but he rejected it. His pieces are performed by the best musicians in Europe and Asia while only a few people really know him as a composer. He tried his luck in Russian show business but came back home. He combines working in "Avesto", writing his own music and teaching at the Tajik National Conservatoire.

*- Jasur, please tell us, how you position yourself. You playing in "Avesto" makes me think that you are a jazz musician.*

*- I never divide music into different genres. There is a concept of "World Music" which I tend to follow. I play everything. We combine classical music and jazz based on folk music.*

*- You are doing several different things which are still within the same sphere. But can I assume that you have to sacrifice some of them?*

*- To be frank I am a very lazy man. But I am also the one who gets easily carried away .... If I start doing something I do it all the way through, because I am totally absorbed by it.*

*- Jazz is said to be the most free and long-living music. Do you agree with this? Can you find more words to describe jazz?*

*- Jazz is unique and wonderful. It synthesized and brought classical and ethnic music closer and it still remains individual and*

*inimitable. I would say that jazz is a father of all contemporary music trends, such as rock for example.*

*- What are the peculiarities of contemporary jazz?*

*- Nowadays 70s free jazz and fusions found new development. Fusions of Indian and African jazz variations with European are of special interest....*

*- What is the difference between European jazz and "our" jazz?*

*- I'm afraid we don't have jazz here. This may sound very ambitious but I think that it is only "Avesto" that plays real jazz. No one else.*

*- Do you agree that today's jazz faces the domination of electronic instruments? Why do drummers leave jazz?*

*- All these new electric instruments are interesting and they find their audiences because they all have the same core – jazz.*

*- What is music? Please explain it as a professional musician and composer. What is it – a range of sounds... or is it a medium to render stories, images and feelings...?*

*- Hooo! ... I can't call myself a composer yet! Music is a highly artistic expression of one's sole! My sole...*

*- You said that you are not a composer yet. Why? You compose music which is performed all over the world....*

*- To entitle yourself as a composer you have to be like Bach or Beethoven. You have to do as much as they did. It is all about achievements.*

*- Who are you looking up to?*

*- They say "Thee any graven image!" But my ideals are List, Chopin and Miles Davis.*

*- Tell us about the upcoming concert.*

*-On 20<sup>th</sup> February in Bactria Cultural Centre I will perform my pieces. It will be a chamber concert "Classics and Jazz". It is primarily a concert of fortepiano music – pieces, nocturnes played in duet with a clarinetist. I'm quite nervous about this concert because my music may fail to impress the audience.*

*- I wish you never have this kind of experience. But let's imagine that you find yourself face to face with an audience hard to communicate with. What would you do in this situation?*

*- I would not give up the program. I would continue playing what I planned to. It is hard for me to establish a contact with the audience. No doubt that an artist should have a chance to SAY what he or she needs to say. Sometimes I just play but sometimes I explain my pieces to the audience, if they want me to.*

*- Is it important for you to see the audience?*

*- I try not to look at the audience. But it is important for me to see my friends and relatives at the concert.*

*- Whose appreciation do you value?*

*- First of all I treasure the appreciation of my parents and my band-mates.*

*The beginning on page 3*

- Are they the best critics for you?

- Yes, and the most competent. My mother is a musician and my father is a composer.

- What about the music critics, does their opinion matter to you?

- Of course critics are very important. They make you think. In my case, critics provoke a very strong reaction in me, which leads to new ideas. But I really care who criticizes me. I start analyzing who the critic is, study his or her works and achievements, and this is a good way of development.

- Who are the critics here?

- There many different people... and you have to react properly not to place yourself against all of them.

- Today the audience mostly attends SHOWS and real thought-provoking art is becoming less and less interesting for them. When you create your pieces, to whom do you address them?

- I will never give up real art to satisfy the demand of mass culture. Besides, I have to express my messages clearly, make them simple and interesting. But I will refuse to become dumb along with those who are getting dumb.

- You've just come back from Moscow. Did you try to work there?

- Yes, I had a chance to work with Elena Nekluydova and Nicolay Bascov....

- Why did you come back?

- To live and create there without losing your individuality you either need a lot of money or you have to be born there. There is a completely different market and you have to be in it from the very beginning. Everyone there starts anew. Besides, I am a patriot you know. I love my country and I want to work for it. There are enough opportunities.

*Interview was conducted by Takhmina Goibnazarova*

Source: [http://www.khovar.tj/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=6967&Itemid](http://www.khovar.tj/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6967&Itemid)

## "The Mood" of Karim Najmiddinov

Bactria\_Art Vision

Every artist today faces a hard choice - to create for money or to create from the soul and for the soul. Despite all opinions that claim "art is not a trade", it is a mission" and "a good artist should be poor", earning a living through arts is not a crime. Professional art implies that an artist makes his or her living through creativity.

The question is "what kind of creativity it is and whether it has anything to do with real art". Of course there is no answer to this question just because tastes differ and because today it is customers who decide... The taste of today's demand for diversity and preciseness of artworks leaves much to be desired. And you can witness it by visiting some of the few art saloons and studios in Dushanbe. Because all they offer are paintings with mountainous landscapes and national color. Let's leave it to their creators to decide if these are artworks or not because taste indeed differs.

Karim Najmiddinov also paints landscapes and frames them in fancy Chinese frames, but you won't see those at his personal exhibition "Mood". It is not because landscapes and realism in general is not relevant any more (we seemed to have agreed on this before) – tastes are just different. These artworks simply were created in a certain mood and for a certain mood, but not on somebody's order.

Karim's abstract paintings are filled with intimacy, sincerity, and youthful naivety. All of them render the feeling of quest and openness and, what is more important, they present a position. We can argue for hours, what the artist's actuality is – his or her media, concepts or anything else. The main thing that differentiates a quasi artist from the real artist is a position. And Karim Najmiddinov definitely has one.

Georgy Mamedov



Diptych «Love»

*The current status quo of course is a problem of many – on one hand it's BUSINESS evidently lacking creativity, on the other hand it's CREATIVITY which might "feed" itself and others but unfortunately lacks business skills.*

The arts industry is the most dynamically developing part of the European economy, embracing a wide range of fields including visual arts, performing arts, architecture, design, advertisement, fashion design, software, and mass media.

Arts industries are making a significant contribution to revitalizing many cities of the world and they are included in strategies of economic development of such cities as for example Berlin, Milan, Manchester, Helsinki, Frankfurt, Lyon, Barcelona, and Rotterdam. In developed countries art industries can support sustainability of art institutions and even become a leading industry in the economy of the country.

Economical crisis in the USA and Europe in the 30's resulted in the decline of once flourishing industrial and mining towns. They faced an increased level of unemployment and, as a consequence of it, more crime. **To tackle these problems extraordinary solutions were proposed. Specialized schools on visual arts, music, and design were opened in the most socially sensitive and neglected parts of towns.** After several years, these areas turned into centers of art industries with unique experience in this sphere. For example, in the late 1990s Helsinki authorities saw the potential benefits of this new sector of the economy and started supporting creative people and projects initiated by artists, musicians and small scale entrepreneurs. **One such project transformed closed or unprofitable plants and factories into galleries, concert venues and centers of contemporary art.** Today arts industry is the most dynamically developing trade of European countries. It is evident from the following economic indicators:

In 2003, the turnover of the cultural and creative sectors was more than **654 billion USD**,; these sectors contributed 2.6% of the EU's GDP,; and the value-added growth amounted to 19,7%. In 2004, art industries provided jobs for 5,8 million people, which is 3,3 % of all EU employees.

In Tajikistan with its unique historical experience, rich music culture, and professional artists, art industries cannot provide a proper income for artist and art professionals. There are many reasons for this, such as audio and video piracy, which prevents musicians from making their living through their creativity, the

lack of policy for arts and culture, and lack of art management, which is the most important element of creative industries.

Today it's the musicians and artists who try to do art management and negotiate on fees for playing at weddings, set prices for their paintings and so on. This approach however is not appropriate, because art management is a specific trade, which requires knowledge and training. One must learn how to work in this sphere and this kind of work takes a lot of effort and time. Art managers' task is to find opportunities for musicians to perform at real concerts and festivals and protect their interests by fighting against piracy. Art managers present art works to art critics and promote artists for various exhibitions and in galleries where the art works are "objectively" appraised.

**The arts industry cannot create itself; it is created by art managers with the initiative and support of state bodies.**

As of now in Tajikistan art industries are mostly represented by small enterprises or even individuals. They lack practical skills of running a business (marketing of products, financing, accounting), awareness of legal aspects (intellectual property legislation, patents and licensing) etc.

To successfully develop art industries in Tajikistan the joint efforts of governmental and international organizations, cultural institutions, and business structures is needed. It will require multiple activities like providing benefits and advantages for art industry enterprises, new educational systems at universities, new exchange programs for future art managers, consulting on legal and financial issues.

Once all of the above mentioned actions are taken, we can consider the arts industry as a solution to the current economic situation, which would make a significant contribution to the economy.

Faruh Kuziev – Program Assistant

**On 17<sup>th</sup> of March, at 10:00 am. Bactria Cultural Centre will host Cultural Coordination Meeting "Arts and Business – arts industry as a solution".**

## “Francophone as a phenomenon in political and cultural life ”

Starting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March the world celebrates the International Francophone Week, a festival for all who speak or learn French, for those who are interested in the culture of Francophone countries. In general, during the festival, scientific conferences, philological seminars, film screenings, presentations, discussions, and concerts take place.

Tajikistan has celebrated the Francophone Week since 2001, when Bactria Cultural Centre was opened in Dushanbe.

The term “francophone” was introduced by the French geographer Jacques Élisée Reclus in 1830 referring to territories populated by French speakers as well as to the French speaking population of the globe.

In 1960s the idea of francophone turns to a movement for promotion of French language. This movement was initiated by the leaders of Niger, Senegal, Cambodia, and Tunisia, who considered the French language in their countries as a way of ethnic consolidation, development of culture and education as well as access to new technologies.

It was on 20<sup>th</sup> of March in 1970 when the World Organization of Francophonie, embracing 63 countries, comprising 1/10 of the population of the globe was established. Among its member states are former Soviet republics – Armenia, Moldavia; European and North American states including France, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Canada. The influence of Francophonie has spread further over non-French speaking countries including Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, and Macedonia. The main mission of this organization is the promotion of the French language and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the Organization of Francophonie views the French language not just as a cultural vector but rather ascribes to it such political and economical notions as PROGRESS and MODERNIZATION. This understanding of the role of the French language led the Organization of Francophonie to

contribute to the debt remission and provide economic aid for the poorest countries. Solutions to the economic problems of African and Asian countries for Western member countries is linked to democratization and human rights protection issues. The member states strengthen their cooperation on international security issues as well, especially in such countries as Lebanon, Darfur in Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Chad. Most of the Francophone countries supported the official position of France on Iraq during Mr. Chirac's presidency.

Thus, we can clearly see how Francophone member states counteract Americanization, which today is a symbol of globalization and protects their political interests, and supports their culture and economy.

Of course the leading country of the organization is France, which strengthens its political influence through membership in Francophone organizational and informational structures, including the Conference of National Ministers of Education, the Association of Universities Teaching French, the Parliamentary Assembly of Francophone States, the Conference of Ministries of Youth and Sports, Francophone TV Channel TV-5, Francophone Business Forum etc.

The influence of Francophone in Tajikistan goes along with the partnership between Tajikistan and France on security issues related to Afghanistan. Bactria Cultural Centre cooperates with Francophone countries in educational and cultural aspects by hosting language courses, lectures on francophone literature and arts, film festivals, support to teaching French at Tajik schools and Universities. Bactria's team hopes that these activities will facilitate promotion of achievements of world culture, improve the capacity of writers and artists, and offer new events to its audience.

*Dmitry Egarmin*

## Michel Houellebecq - “Platform”

Bactria\_Book Shelf

What an obscene book! My friend blurted out when discovered that I picked this one to write about. The author is very popular but did he gain this popularity by writing about sex? The core of this story is sex tourism and Valerie, sex tourism and death.

With the first look at the story the plot is very clear – the main character is an extraordinary man, who lives, works and has sex. One must definitely notice that Michel Houellebecq pays a lot of attention to sex in this book. Perhaps this is the reason why he is often reproached for promoting sex tourism. But there is something else about the story – here sex tourism is just a veil covering something more important, namely degradation of spiritual world of today's man and criticism of consumer society. It seems to be the way that in order to make a book successful we need to fill it with sex. This attracts readers and makes them think about this world pose questions such as “Will our values today lead us to the ideal society?”

Is it possible for sex tourism to be a new platform for the society of the future? The characters of the story are escaping consumer society, running away from individualism and dash into the ersatz of Heaven. And here Valerie is killed by an Islam terrorist. This terrible situation becomes a symbol of utopia of such society.

The author's ideas, which are expressed through his character, an Arab businessman, are striking. He claims that one does not have to be a suicide bomber to get to Heaven awaited by various pleasures, all of these can be found here on Earth for a nice price.

The end of “The Platform” is marked by one of the character's words about this world and contemporary society which sounds more like a sentence. “I will stay the son of Europe till the end of days, I will stay a product of apprehension and shame, I won't say anything inspiring. I don't hate the West, I despise it. All I know is that we are the way we are- we stink with abomination for we are soaked through with egotism, masochism, and death. We created a system impossible to live within and, what is more terrible, we are trying to spread it all over the world”.

BCC Library, Monday – Saturday 9:00-18:00.

*Anna Basanova*