
Factors of Improving the Socio-Cultural Function of Museums in the Twentieth Century (On the Example of Museums in Uzbekistan)

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Annotation: The article describes the factors of improving the socio-cultural function of museums in the twentieth century on the basis of an analytical approach using the example of museums in Uzbekistan. The structure of the exposition, the concept and development of museology of the newly created museums of Uzbekistan are analyzed.

Keywords: Museology, concept, exposition, labeling, education, fund, museum pedagogy, museography.

Today museums play the role of institutions for the preservation of cultural heritage. In the process of fulfilling their social functions, museums are able to preserve the religious and cultural unity of mankind, relying on interethnic relations, various cultural traditions and peoples.

The concept of a museum is an institute or institution, a special space intended for collecting, studying, exposing material and non-material objects of a person and his environment. Over the centuries, the appearance and functions of museums have changed significantly.

By the twentieth century, the emphasis on the ability of people to gain knowledge as equals, worship reason and spread knowledge also led to a new interpretation of the museum. The revolutionary events of the early twentieth century changed all spheres of public life. Initially, museums will be open only to "sensitive people", but then they will be equally open to all segments of the population.

The first international museum organization, the International Bureau of Museums, began operations in 1926 in Paris as part of the International Institute of Intellectual Property under the auspices of the League of Nations. This organization operated under occupation during the Second World War. Although there has been some revival in the work of the bureau since 1944, it has not yet fully recovered.

When the United Nations was created in 1945, UNESCO was founded on November 16. The

structure of the organization in the field of education, science and culture on a global scale allowed the creation of an international office of museums. In the same year, President of the American Museum Association Chauncey Hamlin (1881-1963) met with Georges Salle, director of the French Museums of Oriental Art in France, to discuss the creation of a new international museum organization. As a result, on November 16, 1946, a meeting of representatives of museum organizations from 14 countries began in the Louvre. On the first day of the meeting, Ch. Hamlen will be appointed secretary of the new organization and will soon take over as president. On November 18, the organization was renamed the International Council of Museums (ICOM) [1].

In 1947, the first formal agreement between ICOM and UNESCO was signed. According to him, ICOM has been appointed as the chief adviser to UNESCO on museums and heritage. This allowed ICOM to obtain consultative status of the highest category "A" at the UN Economic and Social Council. In November of this year, Mexico hosted the first ICOM preparatory conference, which discussed issues such as the publication of periodicals of the Council, the international exchange of museum items, exhibition activities, and the organization of an international library. In the summer of 1948, the first full-fledged ICOM conference was held in Paris. Since 1950, the conference has been held every three years. The General Assembly will also be convened within its framework.

In 1977, the General Assembly of ICOM in Moscow decided to celebrate the International Day of Museums. According to the decree, International Museum Day is celebrated annually since May 18, 1977, and on this day, access to museums and galleries around the world will be free. Festive events can last from one day to a week [2]. First of all, their point of view should correspond to the following essence: "Museums are the most important means of cultural communication in the development of peace and cooperation, enrichment of culture and harmony between people."

On this day, all museums will host events related to the main theme of the holiday. International Museum Day is a great opportunity for museum staff to meet regular visitors in an unconventional setting and attract new audiences. As a result, museums will take their place in public life.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, ICOM began to pay more attention to people with disabilities. In 1988, in France, in cooperation with the UNESCO Foundation, the first international conference "Museums and the Disabled" was organized. There is a separate museum for rooms equipped for wheelchair users, for visitors with disabilities, a passenger elevator for going upstairs, specially staffed staff for people with various disabilities, such as deaf and hard of hearing visitors, guided tours with signs and actions, items for blind application and presentation of information in braille, and the creation of a number of similar conveniences.

In 1992, for the first time, "Museums and the Environment" became the common theme of the International Day of Museums. In 1997, for the first time on the International Day of Museums, an official poster was created to combat illicit trafficking in cultural heritage [3]. Now he regularly lists 100 lost items and a red sheet.

In 1997, as a result of joint efforts of the Ministry of Culture, the Academy of Sciences, the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO and museum staff, the Council of Museums of Uzbekistan was established. On June 17, 1997, he became a full member of the International Museum Association by the Executive Committee of the International Council of Museums, which is a member of UNESCO [4].

In fact, it was accepted that the museum should serve the society and contribute to its development. According to foreign experts, a museum is an extremely complex concept, and it is difficult to give it a complete, indisputable and satisfactory definition [5].

Many states have established the concept of museums through legislation or their national organizations. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Museums” defines a museum as follows: “A museum is a permanent non-profit cultural institution created by the owner for the storage, study and public display of museum items and museum collections” [6].

The concept of a professional museum, which has gained wider acceptance today, is defined in the 2007 International Council of Museums (ICOM) Statutes: a non-profit institution open to the public and operating on a permanent basis for society and society its development”. The charter, approved 30 years ago in 1974, states: a non-profit institution that conducts research and propaganda is open to the public and operates on a permanent basis for society and its development” [7].

At first glance, it is difficult to understand the difference between the two descriptions of this museum. The definition of “intangible heritage” was added to the definition in the 2007 Charter. The concept of intangible cultural heritage reflects traditions, expressions, knowledge and skills, as well as related equipment, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces, which, in turn, are communities, groups and, in some cases, part of the cultural heritage of a particular person. ... Means it is recognized as. Such intangible cultural heritage, passed down from generation to generation, is always created by certain communities and groups in accordance with their environment, nature and their own history, which instills in them a sense of identity, heredity and thus respect for human creativity and cultural heritage [8].

According to historical sources, in 1913 the number of museums in Uzbekistan was 3, in 1924 - 8, in 1940 - 17, in 1978 - 27 [9], in 1984 - 415 [10], in the first years of independence, the number of museums was more than 1200 [11]. According to the Information Service of the State Statistics Committee, in 2020 there will be 105 museums in the country [12].

Of course, analyzing these numbers, it is natural to ask why the number of museums has dropped dramatically in recent years. The reason is that, in accordance with the current legislation, the museum must be organized in the form of a non-profit cultural institution and duly registered as a legal entity [13]. Unfortunately, many non-state museums, university museums, corporate museums are not registered in the prescribed manner, so the number of institutions with museum status is 105.

According to the current legislation, museums in Uzbekistan are divided into state and non-state according to the form of ownership [14]. State museums include museums created by decrees and decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, decrees and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers, as well as museums financed from the state budget in ministries and departments, territorial administrations. According to his specialization, the main activity is the preservation, study, public display of museum objects and museum collections, as well as the preservation and study of objects of cultural and natural heritage, as well as museum objects and museum collections. And reserve museums, which consist of public displays.

The Uzbekistan museums have gone through several development stages that reflect social, political and ideological changes in the evolution of society. The country’s museums boast extensive assets that constitute the cultural heritage of the nation. Exhibits require careful handling, conservation, study and promotion. Museum work related to the preservation of the cultural heritage, collection contemporary art specimen and passinh them on the next generations has never been as relevant as it is today.

To preserve study and pass historical heritage on to the new generationi is one of the top priorities of the government policy. This becomes even more important in the context of the globalization and ‘mass culture’ that pose a challenge to human identity and put traditional values at risk of extinction.

Over the past three to four years, a number of new museums have been created in Uzbeksitan

with an aim to preserve cultural and spiritual heritage and introduce local public to the finest specimen of national and world culture. These are, in particular, the Muynak Environmental, the Museum of Maqom Music in Shakhrisabz, the Erkin Vakhidov Memorial Museum, the Mutal Burkhanov House-Museum, the Khazini House-Museum, the Abdulla qadiri Memorial and House Museum, the Ergash Jumanbulbul oglu Memorial Museum and the Museum of Glory[15].

The city of Tashkent located at the crossroads of the world cultures has been a science, cultural and education hub for many centuries. Today, the nation's capital is a fast developing and one of the most beautiful cities. Until recently, however, there was no museums dedicated to the city itself. In May 2020, on the initiative of the country's president, the Museum of the Tashkent city situated in the Writers' Alley was opened.

The building of the museum operating as a branch of the State Museums of the History of Uzbekistan was redesigned and refurbished in keeping with local architectural traditions, on the site of the former Uzbekistan Cultural and Art Exhibition Hall. The exposition design of the museum was developed by Discover Invest following the concept proposed by designer Anvar Yuldashev, while the academic concept was developed by Jannat Ismailova, Director of the State Museum of Uzbekistan History, archeologist Otabek Aripjanov, and other experts.

The museum exposition covers the period from ancient times to the second half of the 19th century. The museum's primary objective is to show the milestones in the political, commercial, cultural and handicraft development of the first large urban centres that have evolved over two thousand years on the territory of modern-day Tashkent. The show-room has been designed as an integral complex of a unique look.

Not only historians, but also artists were involved in the making of the expositions to make sure it facilitates the process of introducing the public to the exhibits in the most effective way.

According to the experts, setting up a permanent exhibition is a complex process where colour and light have in an important function as these can help harmonize the exposition elements, highlight key exhibits and compositions, and trigger an emotional response from the audience.

Once of the museums with a concept well-presented through the expositions design is the Maqom Music Museum opened in the city of Shakhrisabz in 2018. The museum was founded with an aim to create an asset of classical and modern specimens of the Uzbek maqom art, and to enable research using the museum exhibits and collections with subsequent publication of the research findings.

The museum displays items related to the Fergana-Tashkent maqom pieces and the Bukhara-Samarkand shashmakom (video, photos, performers' costumes) historical musical instruments from the Khorezm Province, as well as ethnographic exhibits from the Kahkadarya and Surkhandarya Provinces. The exposition design was developed by the City Size Design Production, and the academic concept – by art critic Shakhlo Abdullaeva. The exposition is set in a relatively small space where the use of installations takes visitor into the world of maqom music art. Listening to the recordings of the famous Uzbek performing artists the audience feels taken away by the flow of music[15].

The Victory Park and the Museum of Glory, now added to the list of the Uzbekistan museums visited by local residents and foreign guests, have been created at the initiative of the head of state to demonstrate the contribution of the Uzbek people to the victory in World War II.

The art and architecture concept for the Victory Park and the Museum of Glory was

developed with an input from the academic and artistic communities, as well as on the basis of international practice experience. The Almazar District of Tashkent allocated more than twelve hectares of land to accommodate the museum sites, with a major construction and landscaping effort invested. In the Victory Park one can see monumental statues, military hardware, memorials, and the Museum of Glory building.

The Museum of Glory exposition opens with a twenty-two meters wide panel entitled “*Frontga*” (“To the Front Lines”) authored by Alisher Alikulov, People’s Artist of Uzbekistan. The exposition created with the help of modern technologies and interactive methods tells about the fate of more than a million people from Uzbekistan, those fighting at the war frontier and those who stayed behind to work heroically in the home front.

With many a highlight, the Victory Park still has things that could be improved. It would be nice to put a schematic map in the entrance area to help visitors navigate and to guide their tour. There is no mentioning of the statue titles or their author’s names, date of creation or the making technique. The design of the museum display windows makes it difficult to see objects in the background, especially for young children. Many of the military uniform specimens are folded inside a vertical display window rather than being displayed unfolded and flat or on mannequins.

The cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List and popular among tourists, are the open-air sanctuary museums – the status they have enjoyed since the Soviet times. After the attainment of independence, it was only in 2019 when the “Sarmishsoy”, “Shakhrisabz”, “Termez” and “Kokand” sanctuary museums were created to protect the material and cultural heritage in the Navoi, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, and Fergana Provinces, along with its historical environment, and to ensure its rational use[16].

Over the last three years, about a dozen museum buildings have been redesigned and repaired. A newly constructed building was given to the State Museums of History and Culture of the Surkhandarya Province; the Great Thinkers Museum in Kokand, the Sadridin Aini Memorial House-Museum in Samarkand, and the Chirchik Municipal Museum of Local Lore were renovated.

The State Art Museum of Uzbekistan founded in 1974 by the group of young architects is one of the most prominent monuments of modernist architecture in Tashkent. There has been no recent infrastructure upgrade or renewal in the museum, and the experimental materials used in the 2000s for the building façade ornamentation were not compatible with the local climates, also failing to meet the requirements for a museum building.

The Cultural and Art Development Foundation under the Ministry of Culture invited an international competitive bidding for the museum reconstruction project to be implemented in keeping with international standards. The project was awarded to a Japanese architect Tadao Ando, the winner of the Pritzker Prize. According to the reconstruction plan, the total museum meters, including the exposition space of seven thousand square meters. This will enable the museum to revise its exposition and increase the number of assets to more than a hundred thousand unique artefacts.

For the first time in the history of Uzbekistan museums, the Culture and Art Development Foundation ran an open international competition for the director’s position at the State Art Museum of the Republic of Karakalpakstan named for Igor Savitsky. Applicants were required to have a degree in a art history, museum science, archeology and museum anthropology or other relevant field, along with at least four years of professional experience in administration and management in a culture-related institution. After the first competitive round, six candidates made their presentations and were interviewed. The winner of the competitive selection was Tigran Mkrtchyan, director of the Roerich Museum in Moscow

(the branch of the State Oriental Museum)/

To intensify training of qualified professionals in the field, host organizations have to open branches of the corresponding university departments or schools. For the purpose, the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan and the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan opened branches of the Museum Studies Department of the National Institute of Arts and Design named for Kamoliddin Bekhzod. Currently, subjects such as “physical and chemical examination of art works”, “museum touring”, “museum interior”, “museology” and “photography” are thought as practical sessions in museums showrooms and storerooms. This has helped to improve teaching quality and encouraged students' interest in the subjects of their specialist field.

Starting from September 2020, the first Sunday of every month has been declared an Open Door Day in the public museums. Meanwhile, as part of the Live Museum project, the country's museums are to set up interactive zones, install electronic monitors enabling text translation for foreign tourists, as well as create positions of translator-guide, a marketing expert, and a museum services monetization officer. Comprehensive marketing and service measures include the development of museum websites, QR codes and software applications, as well as making the information about cultural sites available in airports, public places, railway stations, advertising sites and kiosks, on board air and rail transport.

It has been long time since the mankind faced a major global challenge such as the COVID-19 crisis. In the environment of the pandemic-induced lockdown, the scope of museum work is getting broader everywhere in the world as museums get more active in the social media and closer to the audience. However, experts from UNESCO and the International Council of Museums express concern that one in eight museums in Uzbekistan, the government has been providing museums with financial support to keep them in operation.

Museums are not only a repository of our shared human heritage, but also a source of knowledge and inspiration, a place for social communication...Museums mirror the nation's history; they push the boundaries of our imagination and teach us to look at the world differently, to value ourselves and our surroundings, to expose our hidden talents. Museums also show the connection between culture and sustainable development and produce an effective impact on the development of culture, tourism and urban planning.

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