

On the roads to Samarkand *Wonders of gold and silk*

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From 23 November 2022
to 4 June 2023



Victor Ivanovich Ufimstev (1899-1964),
Oriental motive, oil on plywood © Art
and Culture Development Foundation of
the Republic of Uzbekistan © The Kara-
khalpakstan State Museum of Art named
after I.V. Savitsky © Harald Gottschalk

From 23 November 2022 to 4 June 2023, the Arab World Institute and the Art and Culture Development Foundation under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan will present an exhibition that focuses on the heritage and ancestral knowledge of Uzbekistan from the late 19th to the early 20th century. It will showcase a series of unique works exhibited for the first time outside national museums for large international audiences.

With significant support from the Art and Culture Development Foundation under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, visitors will be able to discover around 300 unique pieces that represent remarkable treasures of Uzbekistan: sumptuous *chapans* (coats) and gold-embroidered accessories from the emir's court;



Chapan «daukhor» style, Boukhara, Bakhmal velvet and gold and silver embroidery, silk and shoi fabric, Tachkent, State museum of arts of Uzbekistan © Art and Culture Development Foundation of the Republic of Uzbekistan © Laziz Hamani

Temporal «koltuk tumors», late 19th–early 20th century, collection of the Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art, named after I. V. Savitsky, Nukus



hand painted wooden saddles; silver horse harnesses set with turquoise; magnificent suzanis (large pieces of embroidered fabrics); rugs; silk ikats; jewelry, and costumes from nomadic tribes, as well as around 20 avant-garde Orientalist paintings.

The exhibition showcases the renaissance of artisanal splendors of the 19th and early 20th centuries – being essential components of Uzbek identity. Textiles play an important role in the Islamic world: they distinguish, honor, and convey a strong image in society. Unique ornamented or fully embroidered with gold pieces bore witness to the importance of the social status and represented the court's splendors.

During the reign of the emir of Bukhara Mufazzar-Ed-Ein (1860-1885), gold embroidery reached its peak renowned for its technique, quality, and above all, creativity. A large number of splendid and magnificent productions– caftans, dresses, headdresses - reserved for the court and used as diplomatic gifts, were exclusively crafted in the emir's private workshop. These pieces bore witness to the wealth and the creativity of his master craftspeople.

In the intimate setting of households, the art of embroidery found its fully symbolic expression through astonishing *suzanis*, or silk embroidered fabrics, that decorated both urban and nomadic interiors. Women devoted themselves to

General curator :
Yaffa Assouline

Curators :
**Élodie Bouffard, Philippe
Castro, Iman Moinzadeh**

Museum and Exhibitions
Director : Nathalie Bondil

Oural Tansykbaïev (1904-1974),
Tumgan, 1935, Oil on canvas, Noulous, State
Museum of Arts of the Republic of Kara-
pakistan named after I.V. Stavitsky
© Art and Culture Development
Foundation of the Republic of Uzbekistan



sewing, particularly for the preparation of their daughters' dowries. The rich embroidered patterns of the *suzanis* gave evidence of their taste, their creativity, and the influence of their environment, as each region had its own aesthetic codes.

The carpet artwork bore witness to the importance of wool products crafted by the steppes and mountain population, while combining aesthetic and practical aspects. Moreover, the display of symbolism and colors, omnipresent in the country's cultural heritage, is particularly evident in the *abr-bandi* technique – or famous silk *ikats*. The extremely colored fabrics provide an abundance of symbolisms that can also be found in other crafts, such as goldsmithery.

The colors and the aesthetic of these creations prove to



Skullcaps, Bukhara 1940-1960, State Museum of Applied Arts of Uzbekistan, Tashkent © Art and Culture Development Foundation of the Republic of Uzbekistan © Laziz Hamani

Suzani, «Togora-palak», Beginning of the 20th century, Tachkent Cotton, Silk coloured threads. Tachkent, State museum of arts of Uzbekistan © Art and Culture Development Foundation of the Republic of Uzbekistan © Andrey Arakelyan



be a source of inspiration for many visual artists. At the turn of the 20th century, Turkestan was favored by the Russian avant-garde at its zenith between 1917 and 1932. When the Russian Empire disappeared to become the USSR, many Soviet artists rediscovered this territory, the current-day Republic of Uzbekistan. At the same time as Matisse's encounter with Morocco, the painters of the Russian School found great inspiration in the rich landscapes, shapes, colors, and peoples of Central Asia. In their work, each artist approached this "quest for exoticism" with the guidance of their respective Symbolist, Neo-Primitivist, Constructivist schools, to name a few. In turn, this saw the birth of the Uzbek School, introduced and led by the artist Alexander Volkov.

Situated in the heart of Central Asia, with a landscape of mountains, deserts, fertile plains, and oases, Uzbekistan boasts a rich history and culture. An independent republic since 1991, following the collapse of the USSR, Uzbekistan is the heir to a myriad of ancestral cultures and traditions. It was the repository of powerful kingdoms and empires thanks to its unique and strategic political and cultural position.

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Uzbekistan
Art and Culture
Foundation

**At the Louvre museum, the
exhibition *The Splendours of
Uzbekistan's Oases* from 23
November 2022 to 6 march
2023.**

The exhibition is organized by the Arab World Institute and the Art and Culture Development Foundation under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ACDF). The Foundation fosters international cooperation and promotes the culture of Uzbekistan on the international stage. Throughout its existence, ACDF has been working consistently to bring changes to national legislation – something that has made this project possible.