

Centrum

№4 | Autumn-Winter 2024-2025

Travel magazine

Welcome to Uzbekistan



Magical Holidays at *Hilton Tashkent City*

When winter knocks on your window, it brings a season of magic and wonder. New Year's and Christmas unite people around the globe, and we invite you to celebrate these special moments at Hilton Tashkent City, where every detail is designed to create unforgettable memories.

This December, Hilton Tashkent City will embrace you with the festive spirit. The elegant five-star hotel in the heart of the capital transforms into a winter wonderland: sparkling Christmas trees, enchanting reindeer, charming elves, and cheerful snowmen set the stage for a truly magical pre-holiday atmosphere.

Join us for an array of festive celebrations: a cozy Christmas Eve dinner, delightful children's holiday events, exciting New Year's corporate parties, a lavish New Year's brunch, and, of course, the unforgettable New Year's Gala Dinner.

Let the magic of the season create moments to treasure at Hilton Tashkent City.



December 24
Christmas Eve Dinner

December 31
New Year's Eve at City 21 Restaurant
New Year's Eve at Tumbler Bar & Lounge

December 22, 29 & January 5
Children's New Year Parties

January 1
New Year's Brunch

Booking Phone Numbers:

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WATCHES AND JEWELLERY

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Established in 2020, NRG Uzbekistan is one of the largest real estate developers in Tashkent. The company specializes in creating architectural projects across Comfort, Business, and Premium segments, emphasizing exceptional quality, safety, and comfort. At the heart of NRG's philosophy is innovation and advanced smart technologies, ensuring that every project is truly unique.

NRG doesn't just build structures; it develops comprehensive "comprehensive land development" concepts. Every detail in their projects is meticulously designed to maximize the comfort and well-being of their clients.

Investing in NRG Real Estate: Your Key to Stable Capital Growth

Investing in real estate is not just a secure way to preserve capital but also an excellent opportunity to grow it. NRG offers unique investment opportunities in both residential and commercial properties.

Why Choose Real Estate?

Over recent years, NRG properties have demonstrated consistent value growth. Residential properties have seen a 15.9% increase, while commercial properties have grown by 4.1%, outperforming many traditional investment tools.

Real estate's stability lies in its perpetual demand. People always seek comfortable homes, and businesses require functional offices and retail spaces. Even during economic turbulence, real estate retains its value and tends to appreciate over time.



By the Numbers:

217,376 m² of completed constructions

1,800+ families consider NRG residential complexes their homes

6 completed residential complexes

13 projects currently under construction

295,494 m² of ongoing development

NRG continues to forge ahead with new projects that meet the highest modern standards and preferences. The company doesn't just offer homes; it creates spaces where comfort and innovation blend seamlessly, providing clients with a lifestyle that fulfills their dreams.

Why Invest in NRG Projects?

1. Modern Construction Standards

NRG delivers projects that adhere to global quality standards. Their residential properties feature thoughtful designs, safe environments, and well-developed infrastructure, while commercial spaces are optimized for business convenience and customer appeal.

2. Prime Locations

NRG developments are situated in the most promising areas, ensuring high demand for rentals and strong liquidity for your investments.

3. Flexible Financial Solutions

Through partnerships with leading banks, NRG offers mortgage programs, making property ownership accessible even for first-time investors.

4. High Income Potential

NRG residential properties exhibit steady annual value growth, making them ideal for generating passive income. Renting out apartments or office spaces ensures consistent returns and financial independence.

Residential or Commercial Properties?

Your choice depends on your investment goals:

Residential Properties are perfect for long-term investors, offering constant demand and significant value appreciation.

Commercial Properties are suited for those seeking stable rental income, as they are less affected by seasonal demand fluctuations.

Why Invest Now?

The real estate market is dynamic, and prices continue to rise. Delaying your investment could mean higher costs. Early investments ensure maximum returns.

How to Get Started?

Simply reach out to NRG. Their team of specialists will guide you through every step, help you select the right property, and provide detailed information on purchase terms.

Investing with NRG is not just about financial security; it's about building a future you can count on. Start your journey today!

Flexible Financing with Partner Banks:

InfinBANK, Asaka, and Ipak Yo'li offer tailored financial solutions to suit your needs.



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Dear Travelers,
Welcome
to the Centrum Family!

This edition is particularly special for me and our entire team, as it is dedicated to our country—Uzbekistan. I travel a lot around the world, exploring different cultures, but whenever I have free time, I am always delighted to go on a trip to my native land, where I rediscover our cities: communicating with craftsmen, enjoying the morning sun, walking around the Shahi-Zinda complex, walking along the streets of Bukhara or just breathing the mountain air near Tashkent. Uzbekistan is a land with a rich history and culture, and I am pleased to announce that we are launching an inbound tourism program. This will allow travelers to experience our hospitality, taste national cuisine, and make friends, while giving locals the chance to know their country even more deeply and visit new cities. The pages of this magazine cannot fully capture the entire beauty and depth of Uzbekistan, but we will surely inspire you to explore its rich heritage.

You are at the center of Uzbekistan and the world.
You are at the center of Centrum!

With warm regards,
CEO of Centrum Holding
Abdulaziz Abdurakhmanov

TOP 5 CITIES IN UZBEKISTAN



TASHKENT



The capital of Uzbekistan is a city full of contrasts. Here, you can see state-of-the-art buildings alongside centuries-old mosques and madrasas, green parks, and fountains that create a unique atmosphere of tranquility. Tashkent attracts tourists with its cultural landmarks, bustling bazaars, and the hospitality of its residents. It's an ideal place for those who want to come into contact with the rich heritage



- Visit Hast-Imam Square, the spiritual omphalos of the capital
- Explore the old city, walking through narrow streets and the ancient Chorsu Bazaar
- Stroll down Broadway – a green oasis in the heart of Tashkent filled with cafés and street artists
- Drop by the Museum of Applied Arts, a place where you can learn about traditional handicrafts.
- Take photos of buildings showcasing Tashkent's seismic modernism
- Visit the Catholic church, German Kirche, and Buddhist temple: Tashkent welcomes all world religions
- Take the “Tashkent Speaks” tour to hear unique stories about the city.
- Go down to the subway to admire the unique stations
- Take a trip to Chimgan – breathtaking mountain views are so close to the big city

MUST-TRY DISHES

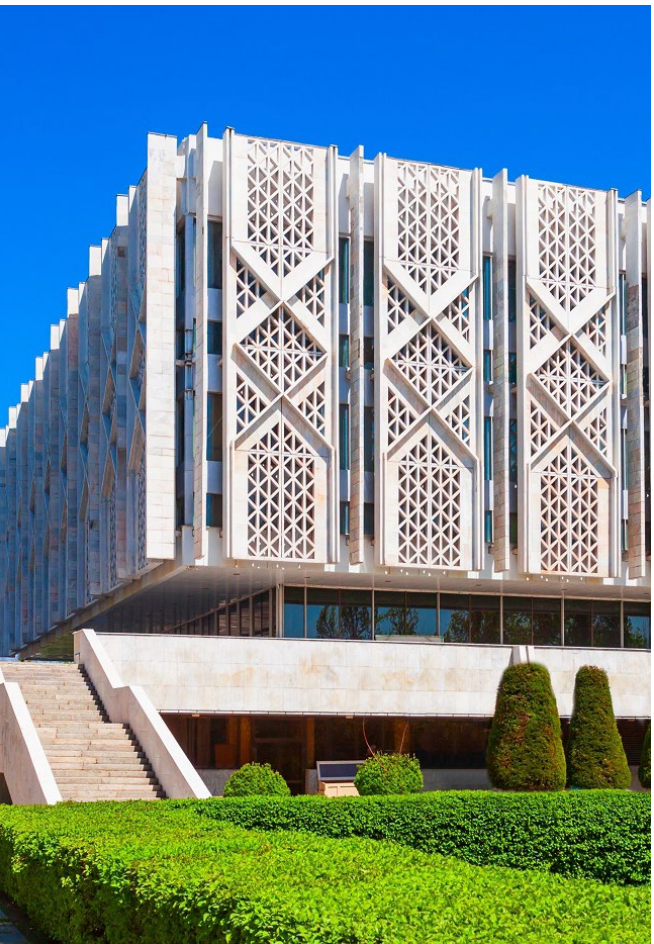
- Plov – the signature dish of Uzbek cuisine
- Lagman – a flavorful noodle dish with a rich broth
- Samsa – pastries filled with meat, potatoes, pumpkin, or seasonal greens
- Manti – traditional steamed dumplings
- Traditional flat bread (lepyoshka) made from soft dough

TAKE A PICTURE OF

- Kukeldash Madrasah – one of the largest educational institutions of the 16th century
- Independence Square
- Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan – home to unique works of art and crafts
- Hazrati Imam Complex – an important religious and cultural center where the Quran of Osman is kept.
- Grand Duke Romanov's Palace, the Center of Modern Art and other examples of Turkestan architecture
- Chorsu Bazaar – one of Tashkent's oldest markets, known for its vibrant Eastern character
- 'The Sun' heliocomplex in the Tashkent region

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

- Delicious dried fruits
- Traditional Uzbek carpets and handmade items
- Grapes



SAMARKAND



Samarkand is an ancient city in the heart of Uzbekistan, a true treasure trove of Eastern culture. A historical and cultural center of the Great Silk Road, Samarkand combines the grandeur of ancient empires and the comforts of the modern East. With over 2500 years of history, this city invites its visitors to experience the beauty of unique architecture, legends and traditions that create a wonderful blend of past and present



MUST-TRY DISHES

- Samarkand Plov – the signature dish of the region.
- Tandoor-kebab – meat with a delightful aroma of spices, cooked in a tandoor oven.
- Kazylyk – traditional Uzbek horsemeat sausage

TAKE A PICTURE OF

- Registan is the heart of Samarkand, a magnificent ensemble of madrasas showcasing the beauty of Eastern architecture. It is especially beautiful in the evening
- Gur-Emir Mausoleum is the tomb of the great Tamerlane, a masterpiece of medieval architecture
- Bibi-Khanyam Mosque is a grand structure built in honor of Tamerlane's wife
- Shakhi-Zinda Necropolis is a unique ensemble of mausoleums, where you can feel the spirit of ancient Samarkand

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

- Silk and handmade fabrics known for their exceptional quality
- Samarkand paper – famous handmade silk paper crafted using ancient techniques in workshops near the city
- Lyagan – unique painted ceramic dishes traditionally used to serve plov
- Samarkand bread
- Samarkand wine – the wineries of Samarkand produce wines with a rich history and tradition
- Halva
- Jewelry made from semi-precious stones – Samarkand is famous for a variety of jewelry crafted with local semi-precious stones

- Explore the old city and visit the Siab Bazaar. Enter not through the main entrance, but from the back side, where you'll see an authentic Eastern bazaar/market
- Visit Ulugbek's Observatory – once home to one of the largest observatories of its time
- Take an evening stroll through the historical and ethnographic park "Eternal City"
- Take a tour of the Meros paper factory



BUKHARA



Bukhara is one of the oldest cities in Uzbekistan, preserving the rich heritage of the Great Silk Road. Its centuries-old history, renowned architectural monuments, and unique atmosphere make Bukhara one of the most visited cultural centers in Central Asia. The city is imbued with the spirit of the East and invites everyone to delve into a fairy tale where every stone has its own story to tell



- Stroll through the narrow streets of the old city
- Experience the past at the Emir of Bukhara's summer residence
- Spend an evening at Lyabi-Hauz Square
- Climb to the viewing deck near the Ark Citadel
- Take some time to indulge yourself in Bukhara's medieval bathhouse
- Stay at a guesthouse located in the old city
- Admire the exhibits at the Bukhara Photo Gallery

MUST-TRY DISHES

- Shurpa – a popular regional hearty soup made with meat and vegetables
- Naryn – thinly sliced horse meat with homemade noodles, served with onions and spices
- Bukhara Samsa – traditional savoury pastries stuffed with meat, baked in a tandoor oven
- Oshi-Sofi – Bukhara-style plov

TAKE A PICTURE OF

- Ark – a majestic citadel, which served as the residence of Bukhara emirs
- Miri-Arab Madrasah - one of the most renowned Islamic educational institutions in the region, which remains in operation to this day.
- Kalyan Minaret - an ancient structure towering above the city, which once served as a landmark for caravans.
- Samanid Mausoleum - one of the oldest monuments of Muslim architecture, distinguished by its intricately patterned brick facade
- Lyabi-Hauz Square – the central square of Bukhara, surrounded by ancient buildings and a picturesque pond – an ideal place to relax. Snap a traditional photo of the monument of Khoja Nasreddin riding a donkey

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

- Suzani embroidery – traditional textiles with bright patterns
- Bukhara carpets – unique hand-woven carpets with distinctive patterns not found in other regions
- Copper miniature souvenirs – traditional Bukhara items such as miniature teapots, lamps, and dishes
- Ceramics – clay products with bright paintings and special patterns
- Bukhara skullcap – a traditional headwear often adorned with exquisite embroidery
- Pouch for tobacco or green tea – hand sewn with traditional patterns, considered one of the symbols of old Bukhara



FERGANA



Fergana is the pearl of the Fergana Valley, located in the east of Uzbekistan. This city boasts a rich history and culture where modern achievements harmonize with the traditions of the past. Fergana attracts tourists with its architecture, nature and hospitality of its residents. You should come here to explore the history of the region, enjoy the beauty of gardens and parks, learn about folk crafts and discover the true Eastern charm



MUST-TRY DISHES

- Mastava – a hearty soup with rice and meat, typical for the region
- Khanum – a steamed dough dish filled with potatoes or meat
- Plov made from devzira rice
- Naryn – a dish made of finely chopped boiled meat and noodles, especially popular during the cold season

TAKE A PICTURE OF

- The view of the Fergana Valley from surrounding hills, offering breathtaking panoramas
- Traditional patterns on Rishtan ceramics, still continued to be made using ancient techniques
- Fergana bazaars, where you can feel the true spirit of Eastern trade and purchase unique handmade items
- Local gardens and orchards, especially during the harvest season
- Khudayar Khan’s palace in neighboring Kokand

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

- Rishtan ceramics – beautifully decorated plates, jugs, and other handmade items
- Fergana silk – traditional Uzbek silk fabrics with unique patterns
- Local dried fruits – especially famous Fergana dried apricots and other dried fruits that retain their flavor year-round
- Wooden items crafted by local artisans – carved boxes and dishes

- Visit local workshops to learn about traditional crafts like carpet weaving and pottery making
- Marvel at the beauty of the Gissar Gorge, enjoying the picturesque views and unique nature of the region
- Take a tour of the surrounding villages to get to know the life of local people and learn more about Fergana culture.
- Visit the Fergana History Museum



KHIVA



Khiva is an ancient city on the western border of Uzbekistan, surrounded by deserts and steppes. Its old part, Itchan Kala, is an open-air museum and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Walking along the paved cobblestoned streets and palaces, immersing oneself into the atmosphere of the Eastern bazaar, each visitor feels as though he or she has traveled back in time a few centuries. The city seems to be frozen in time, having preserved its unique historical appearance. Khiva invites you to plunge into the world of ancient Khorezm and feel the living breath of history



MUST-TRY DISHES

- Fried fish
- Khiva-style gumma
- Shivit oshi - green lagman, where noodles are cooked with lots of dill and its juice added
- Khorezm plov – a special version of plov with various spices and local ingredients
- Tukhumbarak – dough filled with boiled eggs and greens/herbs, steamed to perfection
- Chuchvara – small dumplings with meat, served in a spicy broth

TAKE A PICTURE OF

- The massive walls of Itchan Kala against the backdrop of the vast boundless desert
- The Eastern bazaar, where you can see artisans at work and buy unique handmade items
- Tash-Khauuli Palace – the residence of Khivan khans with beautiful courtyards adorned with tiles and wood carvings
- The view from the Islam Khodja Minaret, offering a panorama of old Khiva
- Colorful patterns on the facades of ancient buildings and mosques
- Genre sculptures embedded into the Itchan-Kala landscape
- The stove-setter's carriage at the entrance to the Tash-Khauuli Palace
- The prayer room of Juma Mosque – a kind of museum showcasing Khivan wood carving styles from different times

- Climb the Kunya Ark watchtower to catch the sunset there
- Take a walk along the wall of Itchan-Kala
- Make a wish at the Pakhlavan Makhmud Mausoleum.
- Have a traditional Lazgi dance
- Visit a puppet shop on the main street of Itchan-Kala

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

- Khorezm carpets – unique handmade pieces with distinctive patterns and colors
- Leather goods – bags, belts, and shoes made by Khivan artisans
- Traditional eastern kerchiefs and silk fabrics, which can be found in local bazaars



Surprising sides of Uzbekistan

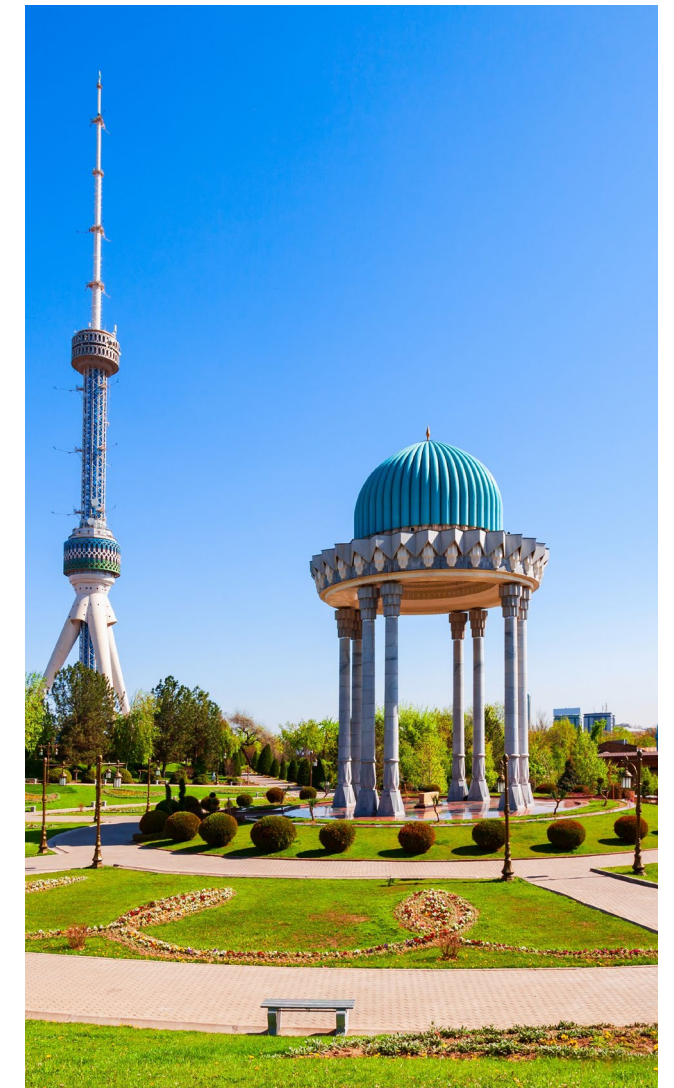


You can learn something unusual about every country, and Uzbekistan is no exception.

We invite you to dive deeper into the details that will help you see our amazing country from a new, surprising side



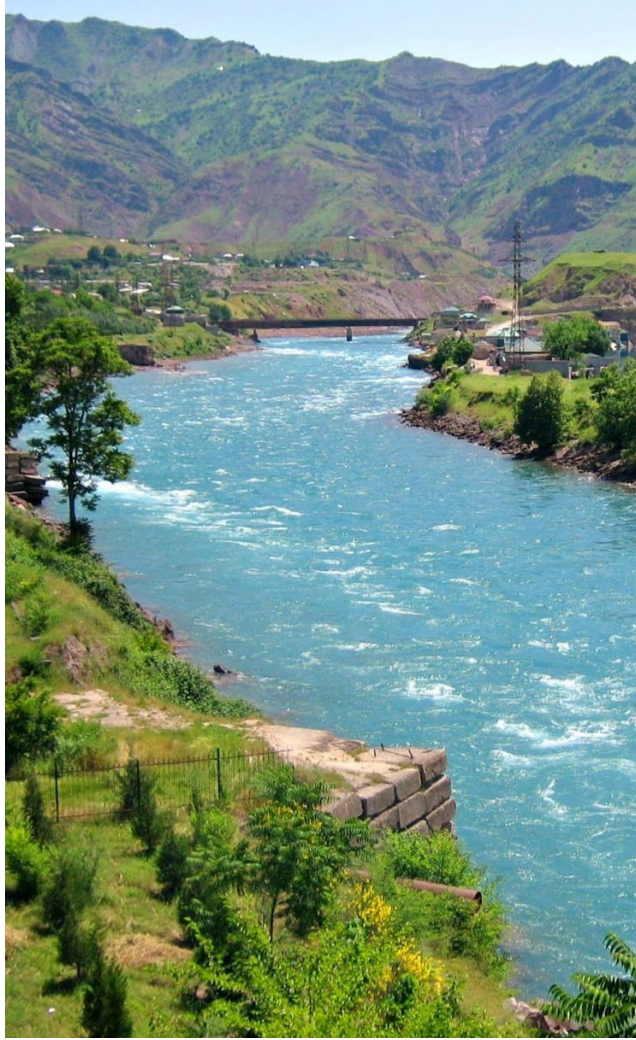
Tashkent, one of the oldest and largest cities in the region, is impressive not only for its history but also for its grandeur. Today its area amounts to 334 square kilometres and the population exceeds 3 million. The city ranks an honourable 4th among the CIS cities in terms of population. In 2009, Tashkent residents celebrated a round anniversary - the city turned 2200 years old, while 2750-year-old Samarkand is the same age as Rome.



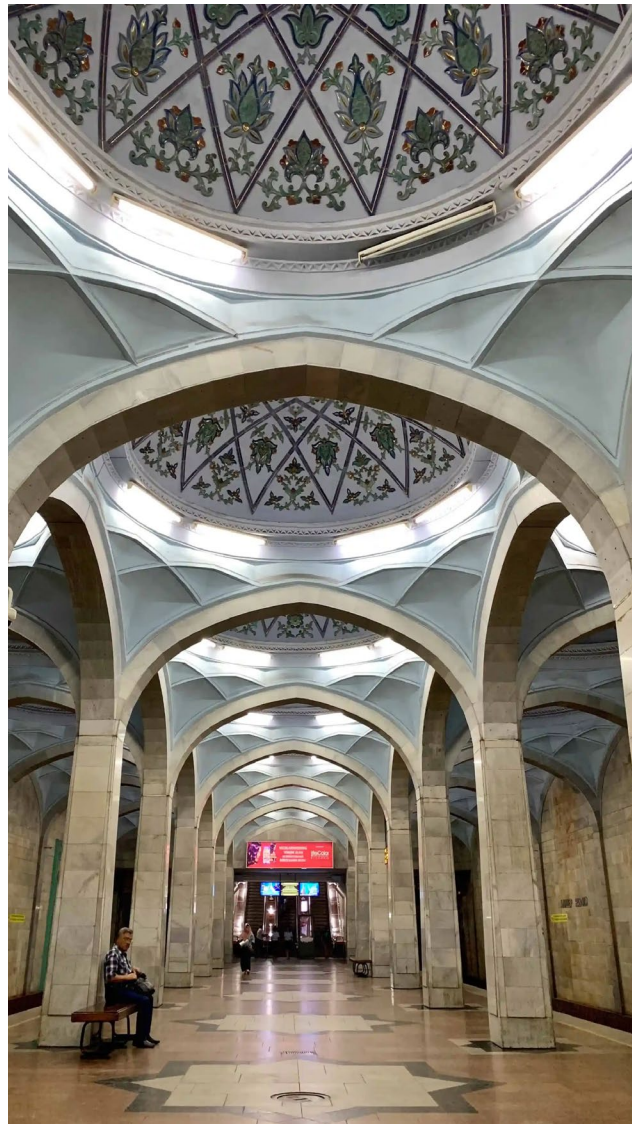
Traces of the oldest settlements have been found on the territory of Uzbekistan. They include, for example, Neanderthal man remains which are at least 50,000 years old, and the earliest discovered petroglyphs date back to the Mesolithic era (15,000–6000 BC).

Uzbekistan has industrial zones in Navoi, Jizzak and Angren, but it doesn't end there - new zones are on the horizon in Kokand, Urgut and Gijduvan.

Uzbekistan is a welcoming country: in 2023, more than 6.6 million tourists, mostly from CIS countries like Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia visited the republic, meanwhile the number of guests from Turkey, India, China and Europe tends to grow bigger.



The Syr Darya is the longest river in Central Asia, flowing through the territory of several countries: Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. This living artery stretches forth to more than 2200 kilometers.



The Tashkent Subway was opened in 1977 being the only one in Central Asia for a long time. The experience of six cities of the former USSR and Japan was considered in construction - due to the complex and unique seismotectonic, geological and climatic conditions. Nurata, Gazgan marble and Uzbek granite were used for decoration of many stations.



Chorsu Bazaar is not just a trading venue, but a living history that dates back to the 8th century, being considered one of the largest in Central Asia. The bazaar name was taken due to its structure peculiarity: "chor-su" is translated from Persian as four roads and four entrances which can lead you into the domed building.

The Gissar Range is the highest point of Uzbekistan. Mount Khazret-Sultan is located at the top of the range and its height reaches 4643 meters above sea level.



To the Southwest of the range we can find the Gissar State Reserve, where the following endangered species are protected: Tien Shan brown bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*), snow leopard, Turkestan lynx, Central Asian otter, Central Asian cobra, bearded vulture, Himalayan vulture, golden eagle, griffon vulture, black vulture, saker falcon, booted eagle and many others.



Uzbekistan is the birthplace of television. This is the place where the first remote image was transmitted on July 26, 1928.



One of the largest collections of medieval manuscripts in Arabic, Persian and Turkish comprising more than 25,000 copies is being kept in safe custody in the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies. It's a true library of treasures that allow you to take a glance deep into the ages past and gone.



The UzAuto Motors plant in Asaka is the leading automobile manufacturer in Central Asia, producing over 250,000 vehicles annually.



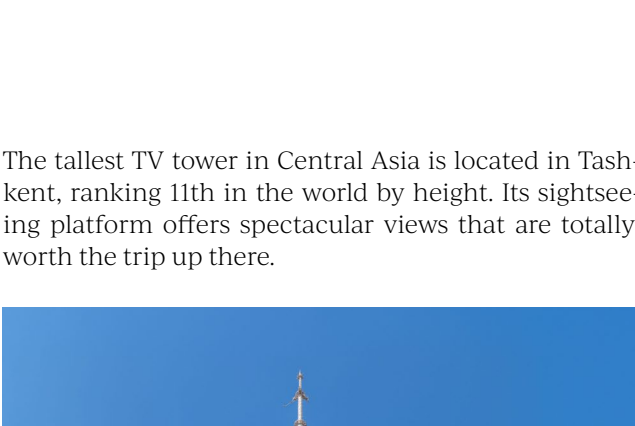
Uzbekistan has the longest high-speed rail network in Central Asia. "Afrosiab" trains connect the country's major cities and boast speeds that will let you forget about traffic jams and delays.



The Tuyamuin Reservoir is the largest artificial lake in Central Asia, lying on the border of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.



In terms of gold reserves, Uzbekistan ranks fourth in the world, leaving behind only South Africa, the USA and Russia, and it ranks second in terms of gold mining among the CIS countries following Russia. The Muruntau mine in the Kyzylkum desert is one of the largest mines on the planet.



The tallest TV tower in Central Asia is located in Tashkent, ranking 11th in the world by height. Its sightseeing platform offers spectacular views that are totally worth the trip up there.



Mountains cover about 20 percent of Uzbekistan, offering stunning views and opportunities for outdoor activities.

See firsthand: noteworthy events in Uzbekistan



GASTRONOMIC FESTIVAL “99 DISHES MADE FROM ARAL FISH”

Date: September 25

Venue: Muynak, Karakalpakstan

Are you ready for a gastronomic adventure? Welcome to Muynak! This festival held on the shores of the Aral Sea has won the hearts of gourmets from all over the world. Here you will have an opportunity to try dishes from Aral fish, which you may have never imagined



TASHKENT INTERNATIONAL BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Date: October 14-18

Venue: Exhibition Hall of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan, Tashkent

In October, Tashkent will become the hot spot of contemporary art once again. The Biennale will provide a unique opportunity to see how artists from all over the world reflect the creative processes taking place worldwide. This event is not only about art, but also about friendship, creativity and cultural exchange between nations. Join the creative interaction that brings people together!

GRAND FESTIVAL OF THE STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF UZBEKISTAN

Date: December 15 – 27

Venue: Tashkent

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the State Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan, and the celebration is on grand scale. For three months you will be in a whirl of classical music extravaganza – a large-scale program including masterpieces that will make your heart beat in time with the orchestra. World-class musicians recognized outside Uzbekistan will perform, and it will truly be a must-visit event.



ORGAN MUSIC CONCERT

Date: October 25

Venue: State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, Tashkent

This concert will be a real revelation for true music lovers and those wishing to discover new horizons. The “Soloists of Uzbekistan” Chamber Orchestra will present organ works by Japanese composer Hiro Fujikake. I bet you couldn’t even imagine that an organ can sound like it’s telling the story of nature, from the sounds of water to the changing seasons. This is a unique opportunity to hear the music that Uzbekistan will enjoy for the first time!



“KHOREZM FISH DISHES” FESTIVAL

Date: October 25–26

Venue: Khorezm region, Khiva district

Who is ready for a cooking battle? Two regions, Karakalpakstan and Khorezm, have a long-standing dispute over which one cooks the tastiest fish. Visit Muynak, and the tourist complex “Khiva Karakol” in particular, and you can be the judge in this delicious dispute. We promise you won’t be left hungry here - there will be fish to suit any taste!

THE WORLD OF HANS ZIMMER

Date: October 26

Venue: Turkiston Concert Hall, Tashkent

Once upon a time you heard these melodies in the movies, and now they will come to life on the Tashkent stage. We invite you to plunge in the world of music by Hans Zimmer and Howard Shore - the soundtracks to your favorite movies will gain new sound thanks to the symphony orchestra and chorus. More than a hundred performers, a grand multimedia show and special effects will make you experience cinematic masterpieces over again. Get ready for goosebumps and a acoustic immersion that will easily take your breath away.



“THE MASTER AND MARGARITA” STAGE PERFORMANCE

Date: October 29

Venue: Turkiston Concert Hall, Tashkent

“The Master and Margarita” is more than just a stage performance. It’s an immersion into Bulgakov’s world with great actors, laser show and stunning costumes. The performance has had full houses and received ovations for ten years - don’t miss the opportunity to watch it with your own eyes!



“ANJIR SAYLI” FESTIVAL

Date: October 30–31

Venue: Urgench district, Khorezm region

Do you like figs? If you do, this festival will be a pleasure for you! Urgench is known for its famous figs, and a real festival of this delicacy will take place here at the end of October. The festival will not only reveal the agricultural and touristic potential of the region, but will also show you how local farmers turn fig growing into a true art form.

FESTIVAL “KHOREZM NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF FOOD AND HANDICRAFTS”

Date: October 30–31

Venue: Khiva, Khorezm region

The best national dishes and unique products made by the region's craftsmen will be presented at the exhibition. Here you can not only enjoy culinary masterpieces, but also buy handmade products of marvelous beauty. This is a great opportunity to discover the tourism potential of Khorezm and take a piece of this amazing place with you.



ORGANIC FOOD FESTIVAL AND TASTE OF UZBEKISTAN

Date: November 2–3

Venue: Gulistan, Syrdarya region

Welcome to the festival for those who appreciate natural products and want to try genuine Uzbek cuisine! Delicious, organic, and most importantly, ecologically friendly food awaits you at this festival. You will be favorably impressed by the way gastronomic traditions can be combined with the latest global trends.



**INTERNATIONAL HALF MARATHON
“SAMARQAND MARATHON”**

Date: November 2–3

Venue: Samarkand

Time to lace up your sneakers and get ready for a run through the historic streets of Samarkand! Distances for any level of fitness - 21, 10 and 2 kilometers - will allow everyone to be a part of this sporting event. And if you don't enjoy running much, Nordic walking is a great alternative. After the finish you will watch the award ceremony and a rich entertainment program. Running around Samarkand is not only sport, but also meeting history at every step!



“ECO DRIFT SHOW” – INTERNATIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE FESTIVAL

Date: November 4–5

Venue: Tashkent region

In November, Tashkent region will be the scene for an impressive show of electric vehicles. Here you can watch exciting races and drift shows, and also witness that environmentally friendly vehicles are not the future anymore, they are already the present. Join the festival and support the environment with electric vehicle enthusiasts from all over the world!

INTERNATIONAL MOTOCROSS COMPETITION

Date: November 14–16

Venue: Fergana and Navoi regions

Do you enjoy adrenaline and speed? If you do, welcome to this competition! International motocross competitions will attract the attention of all those who crave for performance and extreme. The roar of engines, dust from the track and racing excitement - all this awaits you in two regions of Uzbekistan



TASHKENT INTERNATIONAL TOURISM FAIR “TOURISM ON THE SILK ROAD”

Date: November 21–23

Venue: Tashkent

This fair is a huge event in the world of tourism. You will be able to get acquainted with the best tourism offers in Uzbekistan and countries along the Great Silk Road. New acquaintances, cooperation and, certainly, bright impressions are guaranteed!



“RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR” GASTRONOMIC FESTIVAL

Date: December 10 – 11

Venue: Tashkent

This festival is a chance to experience the best restaurants in the country for anyone who appreciates good food and hospitality. You are welcome to taste the oriental hospitality and support your favorite places in the competition for the title of “Restaurant of the Year”!

PILGRIMAGE TOURISM FAIRS

Date: November 26–29

Venue: Bukhara, Samarkand, Khorezm

Pilgrimage is not only a way to spiritual enlightenment, but also an opportunity to learn more about the history of Uzbekistan. Pilgrimage fairs held in ancient cities will reveal to you the secrets of the past and allow you to get in touch with cultural and religious traditions.



ALESSANDRO SAFINA CONCERT

Date: December 13

Venue: International Forums Palace, Tashkent

Italian tenor Alessandro Safina is back on Tashkent stage! His unique style fusing academic and pop music has won millions of hearts around the world. This evening will be a true musical journey, from classic opera arias to well-known melodies crawling to the very heart.

SOGDIAN WINE FESTIVAL

Date: December 17 – 18

Venue: Samarkand region, Tailak district

Wine, Samarkand views and a warm atmosphere - what could be better? The festival will offer you to taste the best wines of the region and immerse yourself in the traditions of Uzbek winemaking. It is a true paradise for connoisseurs of this drink!



FLOYD UNIVERSE - SYMPHONY TRIBUTE SHOW

Date: December 24

Venue: Tashkent

An amazing surprise for Pink Floyd fans: symphonic show, special effects, light and sound - everything to accurately capture the atmosphere of the legendary concerts. Don't miss your chance if you have dreamed of getting in touch with this iconic band music!



Happy bird's treasure chest: HAPPY BIRD Art Gallery

In nearly every historic old city, there's always a shop – a sort of treasure chest – that feels timeless the moment you step inside. These places are usually decorated with antique mirrors and furniture, oriental carpets, paintings, and unique lamps. One wants to touch, smell and look at the contents of the “treasures” endlessly. The HAPPY BIRD Art Gallery in Samarkand's Craftsmen Center is just such a place. Only in addition to all of the above it is decorated with birds. Happy birds come in the form of garlands, plush toys, figurines, decorative pieces, and plates: seagulls, owls, jackdaws, roosters, peacocks, swans, and more.



The art gallery started its operation at the end of 2005, but its official opening took place only on June 4, 2006 with doves being released as part of the ceremony. HAPPY BIRD primarily sells women's outerwear made from both vintage and modern fabrics. When you purchase something here, you can be sure that no one else will have anything quite like it. The creator of this wonder, Elena Ladik, whose gallery ranks among the top ten must-see spots in Samarkand travel guides, shared her story with us. We invite you to dive into this enchanting world of birds, fabrics, and magical stories.

— May I start asking questions about the birds rather than the clothing? I read that the name of the gallery originated due to the movie “The Birds” (Le Peuple Migrateur, 2001. Literally, “Birds are a migrating population”. – editorial staff's note). Is that right?

— The name of the gallery was given not immediately, but a few years after the beginning of the work, besides, there was confusion with the name at first: sometimes “SCHASTLIVAYA PTITSA” appeared on the posters, sometimes - HAPPY BIRD.

The first birds in the gallery were live doves. According to the opening ceremony script, with the onset of twilight, we lit up lighting fixtures, which were made from woven birdcages. Inside each cage there were multicolored bulbs adding a vibrant touch to the festive flavor of the party. For added effect, we bought a few doves from a neighbor who raises them and released them as the lights came on. It was beautiful, though most guests missed the moment – by then, the champagne reserves were dwindling, and everyone was engaged in conversation and tasting the food. The birds returned home, and we got a beautiful picture from our photographer friend Nabi.

The subsequent birds stayed with us for much longer, once I brought them from numerous trips, and they were also given to us by children, friends and, most heartwarming, by returning guests. I fondly remember and thank everyone who has contributed to and continues to expand our bird flock. Magda from the Netherlands on one of her visits brought us a pot of blooming geranium and a family heirloom – a seagull from her mother's home. My dear friend Naima, while sheltering from the rain in an antique shop in Germany, bought a few charming little birds for us. There have been countless moments like these, and they don't just adorn the gallery's interior but also enrich my life.



The birds in the gallery aren't for sale, though many people want to buy them. Only once did I feel compelled to teach a guest a lesson in prudence when he wouldn't take no for an answer regarding a small wooden titmouse. With remarkable persistence, he kept raising his offer to an absurd amount. His companion seemed impressed by his perseverance and encouraged him with admiring looks. To put an end to this drawn-out bargaining, I finally said, "Let me wrap it up for you!" But that was the only time I engaged in "bird business." Occasionally, we present duplicates of gallery birds as a gift to especially dear guests, but we rather prefer them to "fly in" from all over.

Collecting anything requires a certain order/systematization, and since I don't know how to handle it and do not desire to do it due to my spontaneous nature, I can't tell you how many birds and what kind of birds we have in our gallery. Outside, however, our courtyard is home to bold, lively Indian mynas, while wild pigeons have settled in the vineyard, and in the spring, a small bird sings beautifully, praising the Creator.

— **The first thing you feel upon entering the gallery is genuine welcoming warmth. There's no "buy-buy-buy" pushiness; you sense this from the start. How did you create and fill this magical space?**

— Since we make clothes mostly from vintage fabrics, I wanted to create an intricate space with the feel of an antique shop - like the "nostalgic store" from Woody Allen's movie *Midnight in Paris*. Our flea markets still delight with some artifacts of the past, and 18 years ago there was an opportunity to buy an amazing collection of vintage and antique items. Friends also understood this vision and presented us with antique mirrors, chairs, and other elegant/luxury pieces. The gallery also features ceramics by renowned Uzbek artisans from Rishtan (Editorial staff's note: the center of ceramics and a famous brand located in the Fergana Valley).

Sharofiddin Yusupov and Alisher Nazirov. These items help shape the gallery's distinctive look, which guests remember as something unlike other venues of this kind.

I want to emphasize that we only sell clothing that we create. The robes from the chests of Bukhara Jews that I hung in the second room are part of the decor and are not for sale. Books can be browsed, felt hats can be tried on and photographed, but we don't sell them, nor do we sell brooches. Occasionally, we give items from this category as a gift. People often ask, "Do you live here?" That means we succeeded in creating a homey atmosphere, which is wonderful.

— **You recently opened a new space in the Eternal City, right?**

— Yes, we were given a gorgeous two-story "mansion." On the first floor, we've set up an exhibition of costumes from various gallery collections over the years. The interior has a museum feel with historical photos and ethnographic pieces. On the second level, I plan to open a coffee shop for friends, where we can enjoy the view over the pond and distant landscapes for intimate chats and themed meetings.

— **Let's move on to the clothing, which so closely resembles the plumage of exotic/overseas birds...**

— Our main range consists of women's outerwear: coat-robos, jackets, and coats. We also have a few headgear pieces that were initially made to accompany collection designs, though over time for various reasons, the ensembles/sets were separated.

These headgear pieces then became highly sought-after items for buyers who appreciate unique accessories.

For our designs, we mostly use high-quality vintage fabrics from a time when producers adhered to strict GOST standards. These are natural materials – silk, wool, cotton, and blends. They are carefully stored in chests as an investment in the household budget and as the primary gift reserve for various events. We also acquire handwoven fabrics from artisans in the ancient city of Margilan, located in the Fergana Valley. These are handcrafted using a traditional ancient technique where the patterns are dyed onto the threads before they're placed on the weaving loom, a technique known locally as "abro" and internationally as ikat.

Occasionally, we purchase modern, factory-made fabrics, but it's hard to be certain of their natural content, as today's technology often conceals the presence of synthetic fibers. We rarely use these, as we still have ample vintage stock. Vintage fabrics are stored in lengths, which prevents us from making standard designs, so each time we improvise based on what's available. This is why all our pieces are unique – no two are alike!

Where and how do we find these fabrics? Just as I was answering your questions, a friend and supplier made an unexpected visit, bringing two hefty bundles filled with precious textiles. How could I resist buying them? My home already holds more than enough of these treasures for a lifetime's work, yet storage remains a significant challenge... But goodness! Chiffon, crepe de chine, panne velvet, and other madapolams (editorial staff's note: madapolam is a very delicate yet strong cotton fabric) – how can I resist? My dear friends, those temptresses, know exactly how to tempt me, bringing me their findings first for inspection, knowing they are doing a good deed for me.

Sometimes we come across antique fabrics: such as traditional Uzbek hand-blocked prints from the late 19th to early 20th century. When Turkestan joined Russia, cheap Russian cotton began to flood the market, and this ancient, labor-intensive craft not withstanding the competition began to fade. About 25 years ago, an effort has been made on a state-level to revive this form of applied art/craft, and now some artisans work implementing this technique. If an antique print fabric is in poor condition, we extract intact pieces to create clothing. If a piece is exceptionally artistic, and I don't want to destroy the whole pattern, so I buy the best specimens with the hope of someday arranging a retrospective themed exhibition to showcase the rise, decline, and revival of this national craft.

— When you look at all the amazing creations people make, whether architectural wonders, technical marvels, clothing, or paintings, one might wonder: how are such ideas are conceived and come to life?

— I prepare the fabrics for the future items myself by washing, dyeing, selecting accessories, and decorative elements. I pin the general look/design on a mannequin, which our designer then finalizes in detail. All our staff work from home, not so much due to lack of workshop space but because it's more convenient, especially for those with children or household responsibilities. Sometimes five people work on one robe performing block-printing, applying batik patterns, embroidering by hand or machine, quilting – and only after all these have been done the bag with the cut pieces return to the designer, who assembles the final garment. If necessary, the finished robe is decorated with beads or hand embroidery. As one guest said, it's a piece of beauty that "could be passed down for generations as a heirloom."

It's a long process! But the more handcrafting is involved, the more interesting the result. Simple abayas (robes without lining) are sold all over town and snapped up by tourists. It's good business, but not attractive to us.

— What style would you say your clothing belongs to, and who is it suited for?

— We create designer clothes in an ethno-style. The cut of these robes is adapted to modern proportions, making them versatile enough to wear with everyday clothes and sneakers without appearing too ethnic. The decoration of robes also has a broadly Eastern feel, not tied to any specific ethnicity, although we draw inspiration from traditional lines. Now, we have the opportunity to explore Uzbekistan's national art, not only in local museums but also through collections of Uzbek material culture in museums around the world.

Our story is for young women who are inwardly free, open to communication, healthily curious, and skilled at mixing seemingly incompatible items. I admire the ladies who hold impromptu photoshoots in our gallery – there's so much to learn from them! Everything suits them, and they don't wait for advice on which hat would fit best; they confidently choose the one they like most – and it's always the perfect choice!

— We've noticed that men are also drawn to your treasures. Do you have a special men's collection?

We haven't fully developed a men's line yet, but many of our design/models can be seen as unisex. I think that in the near future we will develop the men's line in detail, because we do not want to miss such a promising category of customers as a man on vacation. After all, they want to change their style at least for a while, to take a break from the imposed stereotypes of social life. In addition, many men are creative when choosing unique items for their wardrobe and feel comfortable in designer attire.

— Elena, can we talk about the price of items sold in your gallery?

— I still feel uneasy about selling what we create – maybe due to a Soviet-era holdover complexes, when we looked down on trade/sales workers. Now, I pay for that attitude – I've become one myself (smiling). Remember the character in Alice in Wonderland who protested, "Please don't call me the executioner; I'm the headman!" Similarly, I feel uncomfortable pricing items, though, of course, without profit, we wouldn't be able to work creatively, nor would there have been a reason to start this business.

One reason I appreciate my assistant Madina so much is her complete lack of these hesitations.





She graduated from the Cooperative Vocational college in Samarkand, worked for a while as a sales clerk, and then for many years as an employee of one of the first art galleries in Samarkand. We have known each other since time immemorial, but that's all. Over almost 18 years, I've had many assistants for various reasons. The specifics of gallery work are unique: you must keep order, know how to greet guests, introduce them to our work without pushing sales, also need to look a certain way to match the overall style. One of my most valued assistants, Alinotchka, moved to the capital; the lovely and beautiful Nargiza got married, and at some point, I found myself without support.

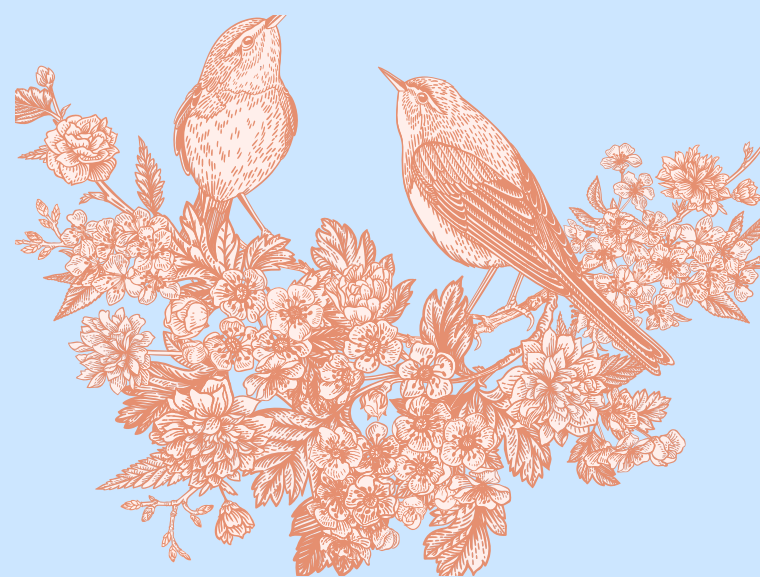


I was born in Ukraine, in the city of Kirovograd (now Kropyvnytskyi) in 1952. It's a charming little town, a central area of which was built up with Art Nouveau style architecture and streets often paved with cobblestones. Our home was on the outskirts, near the Ingul River, where we would swim until we were blue, play "Cops and Robbers," and the bravest among us managed to crawl through the barbed wire into the restricted area of a massive railway bridge over the river. The bridge was constructed from huge stone blocks and, in the evening light, looked like an ancient castle. Inside the fenced area, the grass grew thicker, the flowers bloomed brighter, and the added risk of getting caught made everything feel more exciting. I think the guards always noticed us, but only rarely did the bridge guard raise his rifle and shout a warning, and that's when even the boldest of us would flee, scratching ourselves on the wire.

Bringing my mother a bouquet from "the zone" was a particular thrill, and our parents had no idea what kind of risks their mischievous kids were taking. In winter, we would skate, sled, and cross the frozen river to the other bank to steal some sweet, sticky molasses from the tanks, which we'd wrap around sticks and savor under the moonlight for its unforgettable taste. Such were the simple pleasures of post-war childhood, for which I am eternally grateful.

I remember collecting low-quality reproductions of paintings, mainly from magazines like *Rabotnitsa* and *Krestyanka*, pasting them into notebooks, walking five kilometers to the library across a towering railway embankment, and attending a school that used to be a seminary. Unfortunately, my dream of studying an art history had to be postponed for a few years: at my parents' insistence, I had to enroll in a mechanical engineering technical school after eighth grade, and upon graduating, I chose to move to Tashkent.

The East seemed like an appealing place to live, and I have no regrets about my choice. Thus, fate forever tied me to Uzbekistan, where I was able to establish myself as an individual and pursue work that truly fascinates me. I studied art history extramurally at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts named after Ilya Repin in the Faculty of Art History. Later, I had an interesting experience working at the Ferghana Regional Museum of Local History, where I established the Arts Department and headed it for many years. And finally, in 2005, my *HAPPY BIRD* came along.



Divine help was disguised behind a fortunate coincidence: a couple of years ago, after a show of our collection at Gostiny Dvor in Moscow, I was on a flight back, and Madina happened to be sitting in the seat next to me.

So, the tricky puzzle was solved... Of course, with my spontaneous nature, I needed someone with a practical mindset—as they say, opposites attract. We try to learn from each other and adopt the qualities we each lack. I hope this partnership is solid and will be mutually beneficial.



The cost of HAPPY BIRD items ranges from \$100 to \$2,000. If an embroiderer from Shakhrisabz spends over a year creating a robe on canvas stitch by stitch (as it's easier to work from a pattern), then such an item naturally has a high value. Other times, we have a multi-stage process where five people work on a single piece. Everyone needs to earn, and a portion goes to the gallery fund. Our sales are seasonal, with few tourists in winter, yet the team needs stable income – this is how our pricing is formed. zarur – narx belgilash jarayoni mana shunga ko'ra shakllanadi.



— Could you tell us about one aspect of your work: participating in clothing/fashion festivals and exhibitions? For those who can't visit Samarkand, it's a chance to experience your collection.

One of our recent events abroad was the "Unique Russia" project at Gostiny Dvor in Moscow. Invited by the Eurasian Ethno-Designers Association, we showcased our "Under the Heavens" collection, inspired by a 7th-century fresco from the ancient city of Afrasiab. There was also a trip to the legendary International Folk Art Market (IFAM) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 2021, and a collection show at the international festival in Shakhrisabz.

Unfortunately, we have to turn down many projects. The main reason is the challenge of transporting our collections, which are quite heavy: an outfit includes a robe, dress, shoes, headgear, and jewelry. If the organizers do not cover the shipping costs, then given the current state of the art technologies, it is easier for us to showcase our collections online and save funds for creative work. The diplomas we've received as a result of our participation aren't displayed in our gallery; they're stored at home, and I hope one day my children and grandchildren will look at them.



— You mention your awards modestly, but let's still share with the readers that you've earned UNESCO Quality Certificates for your clothing collections..

— As I earlier mentioned that systematization isn't my strong point. We once received an invitation to participate in an exhibition for the UNESCO Quality Certificate. They sent us a form, we filled it out, sent photos of our "Eastern Roads" collection, which we'd prepared for a festival in China, and later brought the costumes to Margilan, where the event took place.

Natalia Konstantinovna Musina, who chaired the commission for awarding the certificates—restaurateur, gallery owner, and art historian—has always been supportive of our presence in Uzbekistan's fashion scene and loved visiting our gallery during her trips to Samarkand.

That's how we received this honorary award. In fact, I asked for the certificate to be issued in the name of HAPPY BIRD, not Elena Ladik, justifying this request by emphasizing that our work is a collective effort of the team I brought together, not solely my personal achievement. However, when the certificate was presented, they told me I was being overly modest, so I had to ask my husband to do a bit of photoshopping so that I wouldn't be embarrassed to show this valuable document to my colleagues.



— Which celebrities have visited your gallery?

— I don't collect celebrities; we warmly welcome and treat all guests equally, regardless of their social status. Opposite the door in the gallery is a photograph of the wonderful Lesley Lababidi. She's wearing one of our robes while receiving a cultural ambassador certificate from a Nigerian leader. Lesley made an amazing film about glassblowers from that country, writes travel guides, and hosts TV programs in Cairo.

She is American but has lived in Egypt for many years and I am proud to be friends with her.



— Stepping outside the gallery and the Craftsmen Center, where does Elena Ladik like to go in Samarkand?

— Thanks to visits from friends and guests, my usual "home-gallery-home" route expands into full cultural programs: visits to our famous architectural sites, holy places, and trips outside Samarkand to Urgut, with its bazaar and famous Upper Chinars nature reserve, where you can sit by a spring, watch the trout, and enjoy the coolness under thousand-year-old trees. On our last trip, my husband, archaeologist Gennady Ivanov served as a tour guide for our group. Many years ago, he was part of a research expedition in the mountainous area of Urgut, where they discovered a Christian temple abandoned by its inhabitants in the 13th century. It was fascinating to listen to his story while being in such a picturesque spot, where it's easy to sense the swift passage of time and realize how fragile all our values truly are..

HAPPY BIRD Gallery

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Website: www.h-b-art.com

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/hbartgallery>

Editorial staff's Note: Birds have always held a special place in Eastern mythology. The most famous is the Humo Bird, also known as Simurgh, queen of birds, an ancient symbol of wisdom, freedom, and happiness, depicted on the national emblem of Uzbekistan. While working on this article, we were amicably surprised by the number of birds appearing in our field. For instance, we were simultaneously working on another article about the Rakhimov family of hereditary ceramicists from Tashkent, whose workshop is also adorned with many winged creatures! Or another example: one biography of Lesley Lababidi, the American traveler and author whom Elena mentioned, notes her as a "bird and nature lover." Even our author, Marina Gulyaeva's last name could humorously derive from "gull, seagull." One could believe: nothing is a coincidence.

Editorial staff's tip: Allocate at least an hour for the Craftsmen Center; there is certainly plenty to explore here. On the second floor, next to HAPPY BIRD, you'll find the gallery of local artist Akhmad Umarov. On the first floor of the Craftsmen Center, you can buy suzani textiles, jewelry, leather goods, robes, ceramics, and even ceramic Christmas/New Year tree balls. The grapevine-covered courtyard makes it hard to leave—don't miss a chance to take photos on the staircase or gallery of the second floor.



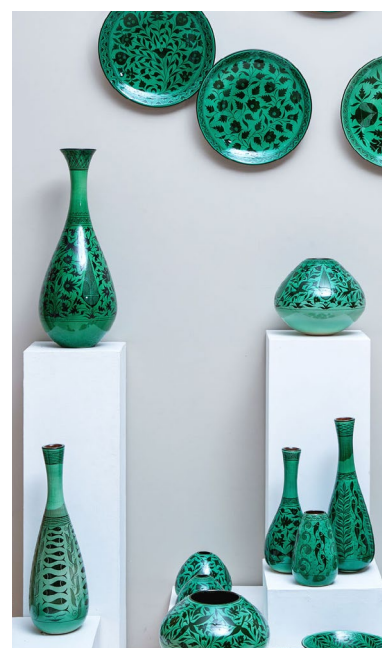
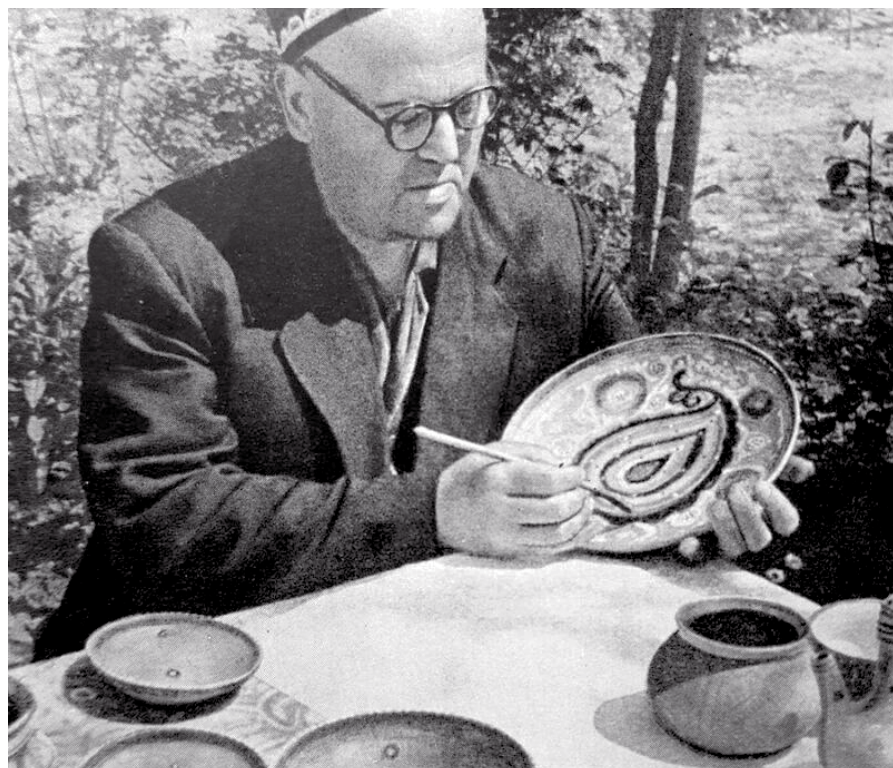
RAKHIMOV'S CERAMIC STUDIO

THE TREE OF LIFE



If one were to describe Uzbekistan in terms of associations, the top five would undoubtedly include plov, traditional robes (chapan), cotton, skullcaps (tubeteyka), and ceramics. Social media and airport staff have countless stories about overweight luggage full of tea and dinnerware sets, traveling from sunny Uzbekistan to all corners of the world! The history of local ceramics spans hundreds of years, where it's common to meet a ceramic artist who represents the fifth, seventh, or even tenth generation of their craft. The special mission of artisan families is to preserve their knowledge through the centuries, reinterpret the experiences of their ancestors, and remain relevant in today's tech-driven world.

To tell the story of the Rakhimovs, a family of hereditary ceramicists from Tashkent who continue Uzbekistan's ancient traditions, we spoke with its youngest member, 22-year-old Shokhrukh Rakhimov. He is a seventh-generation artisan, a participant in the 2nd International Biennale of Applied Arts Human/Environment/Art (2019), London Craft Week (2024), a graduate of the Ceramics Department at the Republican Art College named after P.P. Benkov. He is currently a student at the Kamoliddin Behzod National Institute of Arts. Shokhrukh has created his own collections and serves as a mentor in a social project at the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children. In 2023–2024, he participated in the Homo Faber Fellowship program and spent six months in Greece, collaborating with a local artisan to create new pieces. These works were showcased at the Venice Biennale in August of this year.



— Shokhrukh, first, we want to thank you for taking the time to speak with us. Second, what's your secret for achieving so many accomplishments and awards at such a young age?

— I don't remember when I first sat at the pottery wheel, but it was in early childhood, around the age of four or five. To become a true professional, I've devoted all my time to this craft. Currently, three generations—my father Alisher, my grandfather Akbar Rakhimov, who is already seventy-five and I—work with ceramics. My grandfather still creates clay masterpieces! In fact, by family tradition, the boy is always taught the art of ceramics by his grandfather, not his father.

— And how did you know you would continue the family business? Did you ever feel the urge to try something else?

— Of course, no one forced me to pursue ceramics: my grandfather Akbar has ten grandchildren, but I'm the only one continuing the family business; the others chose different paths. We have a doctor, an architect, an event manager, a teacher, an art historian, and a designer among us.



The main thing is that I was taught to love art from childhood. To preserve and enhance these traditions is a great honor for me. My great-grandfather, Mukhitdin Rakhimov, created a unique encyclopedia of Uzbek artistic ceramics and developed restoration techniques for mosaics and majolica on our country's architectural monuments. His works were sold in Paris, London, and other capitals around the world, and he was honored with many awards, including the title of People's Artist of Uzbekistan. He even passed away while working at the pottery wheel. Such a deep love for work and creativity has always been present in our home, and I felt how important it is to preserve our family's history and legacy for future generations.

— **Why is it that only men in your family continue the business?**

— Traditionally, men in the family handle the ceramic work because of the physical strength required, but women are certainly not restricted from participating. My mother, Dilbar Rakhimova, helps with painting pieces in her spare time, and my sister designs sketches and might one day become a designer herself.

— **When we hear phrases like 'ancient family secrets' and 'traditions passed down through generations,' we imagine a book of wisdom - Talmud locked away in a vault. How is knowledge actually passed down?**

— Of course, traditions are passed down through hands-on experience, as I mentioned, from grandfather to grandson. A love for clay is instilled from childhood, and we learn both traditional patterns and create our own designs/work of authorship. In our workshop, there's a wall decorated with patterned tiles that we call "The Wall of History." It features over eighteen different styles we work with and serves both as a studio decoration, a "board of honor" and a cheat sheet for beginners.

My great-grandfather Mukhitdin, as a scholar, studied patterns and dyes and compiled a book titled Artistic Ceramics of Uzbekistan, which was published in 1961. It was later republished in English with the help of UNESCO, and in September, a new edition was presented in Uzbek and Russian.

Our interview is taking place in the welcoming home and workshop of the Rakhimov family, located in the Aklan neighborhood on the outskirts of Tashkent. It's immediately clear that a creative family lives here: the house is decorated in classic colors—turquoise blue with warm yellow. The cozy and colorful courtyard, with a lush green garden, is adorned with wooden columns and ornaments, clay amphoras, ceramics on the walls, and drying items, such as young birds awaiting to be adorned with paint. Shokhrukh's father, Alisher Rakhimov, came out to greet us and wish us success.



— Shokhrukh, tell us more about your beautiful house. Is this just a workshop, or do you live here too?

— Our studio was built in 2006 and consists of three main parts: the workroom, where red clay items are created; the garden, which provides a lot of inspiration; and the exhibition hall, where we hold all our exhibitions.

This is our family house, with my grandfather (Akbar Rakhimov) and me living on the second floor. The rest of the family lives nearby, in the same neighborhood. Ceramists from all over the world such as Japan, Germany, France, and the U.S. often come here for cultural exchanges and to create joint collections and exhibitions. They also stay right here, on the second floor of the house, living and creating in the same place.

— What kind of ceramic items are made within the walls of your workshop?

— We make virtually everything: tea bowls, plates, jugs, vases, large collections for exhibitions, including installations, as well as special items like bird toys and even clay paintings. By the way, this was my first experience working with clay heated at temperatures above 1250°C (usually, the temperature doesn't exceed 900°C).





— If the price of factory-made ceramics at the market starts around a couple of dollars, how much do your works of authorship cost?

— The prices for our own design/authorship items start from ten dollars for a tea bowl, and from sixty dollars for plates. The highest price a collection was sold for was forty thousand dollars. We try to sell our work as complete collections because individual items are no longer as interesting on their own and don't create a cohesive, well-thought-out composition.

It's impossible to put a price on some collections: they're priceless, so we don't sell them and keep them in the family's museum. For example, the black clay collection with wooden elements, "Black Velvet Ceramics," or my installation "The Tragedy of Aral," which is dedicated to one of the major environmental issues of our time.

— What kind of clay do you use for your works, and how long does it take to create the items?

— We use clay from different regions of Uzbekistan, but mostly work with local Tashkent clay. On average, the process of making a single item takes anywhere from a couple of weeks to several months. For example, my collection of forty items, "The World Created by Dot," made using dot painting techniques, took four months to complete.

Each item is unique and requires a special approach and state of mind, so we don't rush and don't set deadlines. For the same reasons, we never take custom orders. Sometimes, we shape the form itself, and other times inspired by the moment we start painting various patterns right away. There are times when a clay piece is stored in the studio for decades, waiting for its moment and our inspiration. We take pride in each item we make, and we try to imbue every piece with a part of our soul and creative energy.



— We noticed some chipped and cracked dishes on the shelves...

— This is a separate part of our collection, along with artifacts from excavations. Items with chips and cracks cannot be sold or given as gifts, as they symbolize death according to folk beliefs. Nevertheless, we keep them due to their uniqueness and one-of-a-kind character.

— Do you use modern paints and colorants in painting, or is everything done the old-fashioned way?

— We make all our glazes and colorants ourselves using old family recipes, while also experimenting and improving their quality. The main minerals we use are quartz, kaolin, cobalt, lapis lazuli, copper, and various iron oxides. They're fired at a temperature of 1500 degrees.

— Do you create work pieces incorporating traditional Uzbek patterns, or does modernity/progress find its way into your painting?

— The patterns are traditional, but of course, ceramic art is developing, and we incorporate elements of original authorship works. For instance, our family created the Black Velvet Ceramics collection from black clay, which is seen as the future of 21st-century ceramics. These are entirely black vases decorated with bird images, covered in enamel of the same color, giving them the look of hieroglyphs. lardan foydalanaman.

My grandfather Akbar follows the traditional school, while my father and I often experiment - applying enamel only to certain elements rather than the whole piece, which creates a mix of matte and gloss. Another example: I use geometric elements in my works, which aren't typical of traditional Uzbek painting.





— We were captivated by the elegance and authenticity of the Time Tree series—we even chose its name for our article's title, as it was our first association with your dynasty: time, tree, traditions. Do your collections carry philosophical meaning?

— Absolutely! Each collection has its own deep meaning – they aren't just beautiful patterns but encoded messages. On one hand, Time Tree represents the flow of time, with vases shaped like hourglasses. On the other hand, the “Sunny Uzbekistan” painting style represents the warm weather and vibrant colors, with birds fluttering around. So, it comes together as: birds – tree – family – traditions, or the family tree.

In the collection I mentioned earlier, “The World Created by Dot,” I conveyed the idea that life and the universe emerged after the Big Bang when all matter and energy were concentrated in a single point and then expanded. The dot symbolizes the beginning of all existence and serves as a fundamental building block for creating more complex images and forms. This collection conveys the idea that the entire world and universe were created from small, seemingly insignificant fragments and events, which together form a complete picture of the world.

— It's fascinating to find close connections in the articles we work on. We recently spoke with Elena Ladik from the HAPPY BIRD gallery in Samarkand, where birds are a frequent motif, and we noted a similar recurring theme of birds in your work. Why birds?

— Yes, indeed, birds are one of our favorite motifs. In many cultures, birds signify messengers of higher powers and symbolize the meaning of life. Sailors look for birds to find land, and wanderers in the desert look for them to find water. Birds always guide you to where life exists.

The idea for an entire exhibition by my grandfather, Akbar Rakhimov, called The Soul of Birds, was inspired by a beloved and often-quoted Hadith from the Quran: People whose hearts are like the hearts of birds will enter Paradise. In our family museum, you can see works from this valuable collection, which combines various forms, patterns, techniques, and colors. Each item features fantastical sirins, peacocks, swallows, and nightingales, while the central art panel is adorned with the king of bird Humo, also known as Simurgh—a symbol of wisdom, freedom, happiness, and a sort of talisman for Uzbekistan.

My favorite bird-themed creation is a lamp called Dancing Birds, made in the shape of a ball from red Tashkent clay. Its black, textured surface depicts dozens of cranes flying toward the light.

— **You mentioned that you try to imbue each creation with a piece of your soul and creative energy. Nowadays, there's a lot of focus on energy—how to draw it, increase it, and conserve it. We'd love to hear your thoughts—do the mood and thoughts of the artist get transferred to the ceramics and then to its future owner? The water is said to retain information and transmit it, but what about the clay?**

Ceramics can indeed be receptive to the energy and emotions of a person. When we work with clay, our mood and thoughts can be absorbed by it and passed on to those who interact with it. If we engage in the process with positive emotions and inspiration, this can be reflected in the final item.

— **Looking at the works you create, we're curious where you draw inspiration and positive energy for your work from?**

First and foremost, traveling inspires me. Every month my father and grandfather and I take a few days to travel by car (we believe that traveling around Uzbekistan is best done by car) and head out to explore our homeland. We visit villages and neighborhoods, talk to locals, and always make a point to converse with elderly people, who are the keepers of stories and legends. Our favorite place is Fergana, where the history has been preserved in its pristine form.

Inspiration and new ideas also come from interacting with children in our studio. Their vision is fresh, their creative space is vast, and have no boundaries. Recently, a girl of about five or six years old came to our studio for the first time and decided to make a small teapot. When it went through firing, we discovered it couldn't actually be used because she forgot to make a hole in the spout for the water. She later fixed the design and made a functional teapot, but the first one is kept in the studio. It now looks like a little elephant and serves as a sweet reminder.

Music also helps me stay focused and find inspiration, so I often listen to it while working. Podcasts and audiobooks help expand my knowledge and spark new ideas. But sometimes, I prefer to work in silence to immerse myself fully in the process and focus on the task at hand. Either way, the atmosphere in the studio, especially when national music is playing, always inspires my creativity.

— **What other areas of activities does your studio focus on besides creating ceramics?**

There are many areas of activities, but the main ones are working with ceramics and holding exhibitions. So far, we've held about ten exhibitions: "A Thousand and One Candles," "Pomegranate – A Symbol of Paradise," "The Color of Almond," "Forty Beauties," "The Tree Connecting Heaven and Earth," and "Petroglyphic drawings of Modern Ceramics." Our workshop also has a school for children aged six to twelve and hosts masterclasses.

Five tips from the editorial staff on why one should consider ceramics made by artisan's work of authorship

1. *By purchasing such ceramics, you support the local centuries-old craftsmanship. This helps preserve and evolve traditional art forms into modern expressions of creativity. It's a way to show respect for yourself, others, and the culture of the region.*
2. *These are items with soul and positive energy, as Shokhrukh pointed out when working with the clay, the artisan's mood and state of mind are transferred to the clay and subsequently to the end user of the item. Wouldn't you like to know who made the plate you eat from or the cup you touch every day, and with what intent they were created?*
3. *You are purchasing thoughtfully made creations. These are not mass-produced items responding to fleeting trends; they are born out of the artist's soul, contemplation, and inspiration. Every item in an artisan's own work studio has a story of its creation. Do not hesitate to ask about it when buying.*
4. *This is an investment in your own education, as each time you learn something new about ceramics and its history.*
5. *Artisan designed unique patterns cannot be replicated with the same quality and detail. True creators, who design rather than replicate, are always in demand and second to none.*

Rakhimov Family Ceramic Studio

Address: Kukcha Darvoza str. 15, Shaykhontokhur district, Tashkent

Phone number: +998 90 987 20 63, +998 90 992 44 01

Website: www.ceramic.uz

Instagram: https://instagram.com/rakhimovs_studio

Visits to the workshop must be arranged in advance by phone. During the tour, you'll be shown the workshop where items are painted and masterclasses are held, Akbar Rakhimov's creative room, and the firing room. Outside there is a cozy garden where you can relax and take photos, and there is also a family museum there (no photos are allowed inside). On average, a tour of the workshop lasts about 30 minutes. Please note that the Rakhimov family's works can only be purchased at their workshop.





Uzbekistan cinematography: journey through the history of cinema



Uzbek cinematography is a fascinating journey through the time - from the formation of the national cinema school to present-day success. We invite you to plunge into its history: learn about the first movie screenings in Uzbekistan, meet the people who laid the foundation of the national cinematography, and discover the horizons of this rapidly developing industry. Together with Mr. Eldar Yuldashev, IFA academician and co-founder of Russian State University of Cinematography named after S. Gerasimov (VGIK) in Tashkent, we would like to talk about the key points that make Uzbek cinema unique.

How it all got started?

Historically, Uzbekistan is the cradleland of cinematography in Central Asia. In 1895 the Lumière Brothers threw the world first movie show on the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris, and just two years later - in 1897 - the cinema performance took place in Tashkent as well.

Furthermore, the first creative works in the region originated from here. Back in 1910, the cameraman Khudaibergan Devanov shot documentaries about the Khiva khan Asfandiyar's phaeton ride using a PATE No.593 camera. In 1924, the "Bukhkino" movie studio was established. According to documentary evidence, as far back as 1912, under the Emir of Bukhara Said Alim Khan, the first professional cinemas were opened in the emirate.

The "Shark Yulduzi" movie studio, later transformed into the legendary "Uzbekfilm", was also established in Tashkent. Significantly, this year witnesses the 90th anniversary of the Uzbek newsreel founded in 1934. Later on, Uzbek cinema showed rapid development under the leadership of the cinematographer, People's Artist of the USSR Malik Kayumov. He was not only a creator but also a constructor of cinema in the truest sense of the word, the initiator of construction of the legendary Film Center, the Documentary Film Studio, the "Melodiya" Recording Studio, the Creative Society of Film Artists, the "Durmen" Art Center and other landmark facilities for Uzbek cinema.



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Later, in 1945, the Tashkent State Institute of Theatre Arts named after A. N. Ostrovsky was opened, which became a talent incubator for the whole region. It was the place of birth of the legendary “Yalla” band created in 1968.

One of the benefits of that time period was the fact that only the masters were allowed into large-scale movie production. For example, the music for the movies was composed by People’s Artists of Uzbekistan Manas Li-viev and Ikram Akbarov, Honoured Artists of Uzbeki-stan Rumil Vildanov and Mirkhalil Makhmudov, and it was a long form, i.e. symphonic instrumentation. The selection procedure was rigorous and included several stages, just like for potential cosmonaut team mem-bers.

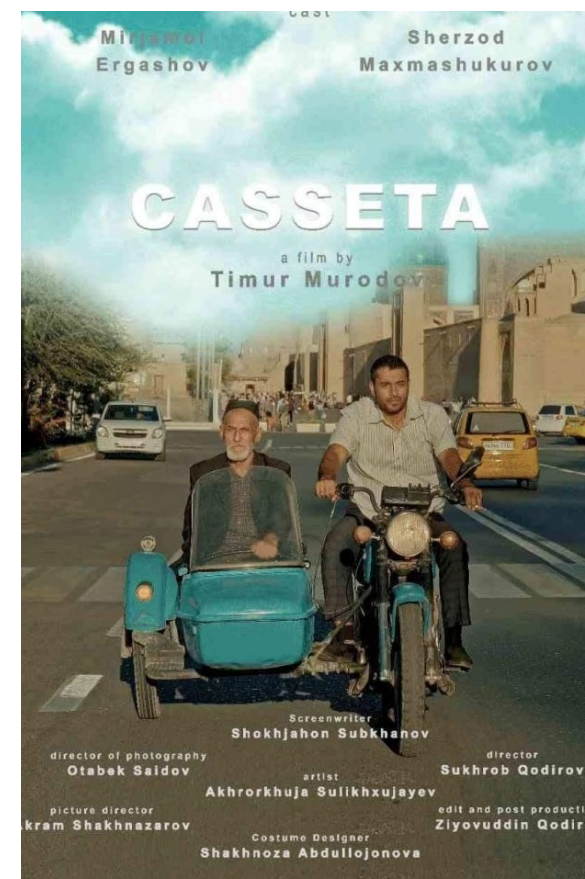
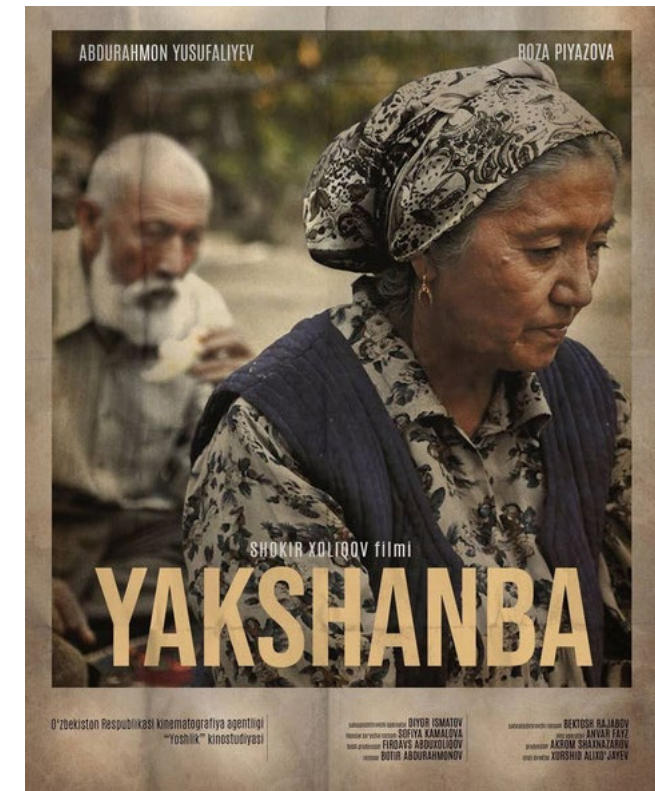
Nowadays such masters can be counted on one hand - Felix and Dmitry Yanov-Yanovskys, Oidyn Abdullaeva and Igor Pinkhasov. Such approach was applied to every stage in movie production. In order to become a master-level production director, a person was required to have at least higher professional education, work experience as a first-category production direc-tor for at least 5 years, and only after that a large-scaled elaborate feature film could be entrusted to them.

What makes Uzbek cinema special?

Mainly it is the authenticity – our unique mentality, cul-ture, history and lifestyle that distinguish us from the rest. If a Hollywood cliché is filmed, such movies tend not to succeed much.

For example, Shakir Khalikov's drama “Sunday” is, in my point of view, one of the best recent works of au-thorship in Uzbek cinema. Notwithstanding that the film had made its way through a vexatious path during its approval, the young director's debut finally won the worldwide recognition.

It premiered on June 13, 2023 as part of the twenty-fifth Shanghai International Film Festival, a pretty reputable venue, as the festival is accredited by FIAPF. The film won the “Gold Cup”. Film critic Anton Dolin included the “Sunday” in the list of “Five new mesmerizing films by young directors from Central Asia”.



I would like to mention one more young director - my student Timur Murodov and his short film “Cassette”. The film began its journey to success at the Tashkent In-ternational Film Festival, where it was awarded with the Grand Prix by Krzysztof Zanussi. Subsequently the film came to the notice of Emir Kusturica at the New York Film Festival who invited the author to his Kustendorf Film Festival, where the film also won the first prize. In total, Timur's debut short film traveled half-way round the world.

Whether it's a feature film or short film, if it describes our identity, our people, you and me, the film will cap-ture the attention. Just remain true to yourself and don't simulate. This is the key point.

Creators and directors of Uzbek cinema industry



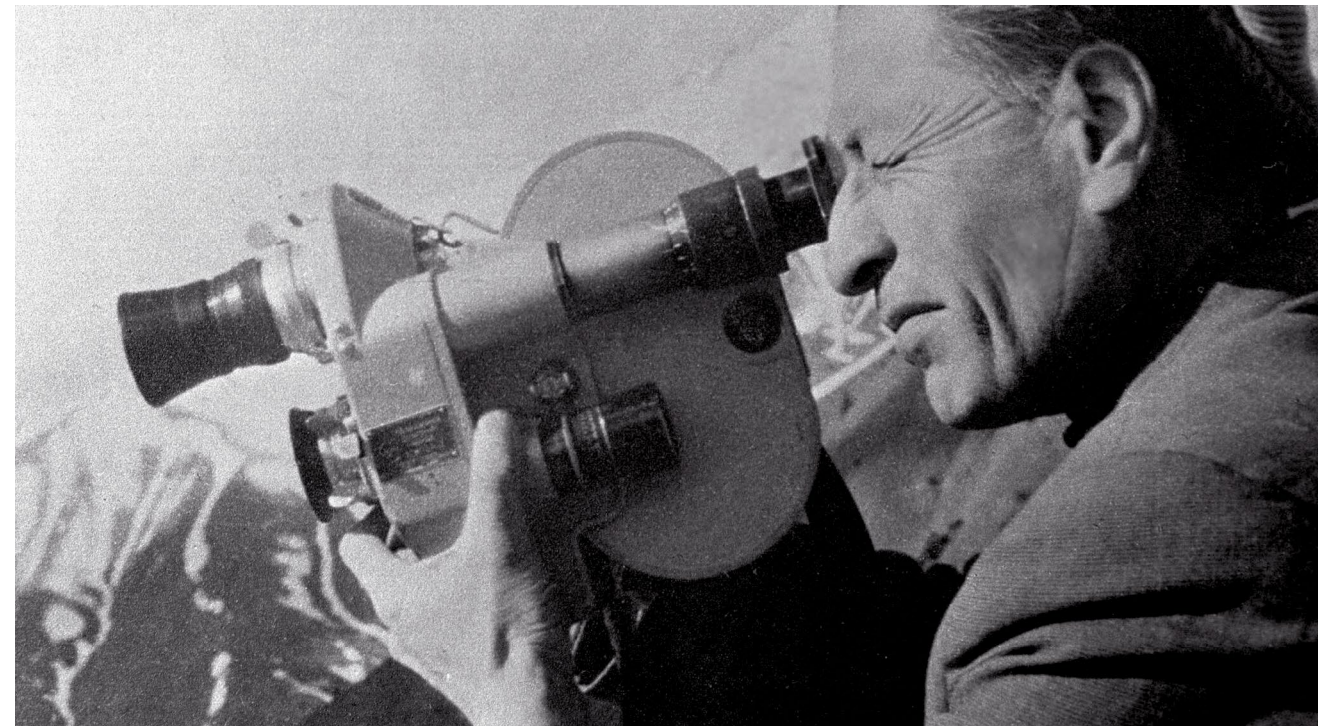
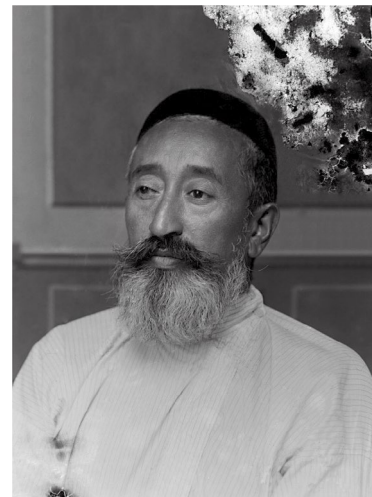
KHUDAIBERGEN DEVANOV
(1879–1940)

Khudaibergen Devanov (1879–1940) – the first person in our region to take a camera in his hands. Devanov's teacher was the German amateur cinematographer Wilhelm Penner, who acquainted him with photography and cinematography. In the environment of orthodox Islamic society, where the religion had prohibited depicting any animate being for centuries, Devanov managed to become the first photographer and then a cinematographer in the Khanate of Khiva. The year 1908 is considered to be the birth date of Uzbek cinema. Khudaibergen Devanov filmed historical landmarks, minarets, mosques and much more besides. Thanks to his work, residents of other countries got acquainted with the ancient original culture of Khorezm for the first time.



MALIK KAYUMOV
(1911–2010)

Malik Kayumov – director, cameraman, actor, battle-field cameraman during World War II, holder of the titles "People's Artist of Uzbekistan", "Hero of Labour" and the order "El-yurt khurmati", correspondent of "Soyuzkinokhronika" in Central Asia. He founded the genre of chronicle-documentary cinema and left behind a huge tangible and intangible legacy. The talented cameraman shot more than 200 documentary and popular-science films during his years-long creative activity, glorifying the history, culture, science and art of the Uzbek people. Upon becoming the founder of Uzbek documentary cinema, he enriched Uzbek cinematography with rare works and created a school in this genre.





KAMARA KAMALOVA
(1938)

Kamara Kamalova – the first female director and animator in the history of Uzbek cinematography and the founder of Uzbek animation. Born in Bukhara, in 1962 she graduated from the directing department of the production faculty of VGIK (G. Roshal course). Then she worked as a director of the editorial office in literary and dramatic broadcasting of the Tashkent Television Studio. She became the director of the “Uzbekfilm” studio in 1965. Ms. Kamalova directed more than ten puppet cartoons: "An Extraordinary Adventure" (1966), "Rakhim and the Beetle" (1967), "Who Made the Cloud?" (1967), "Sunbeam" (1971), "The Little Bicycle Ran Away" (1974) and others.



KHNO

6
1979



SHUKHRAT ABBASOV
(1931–2018)

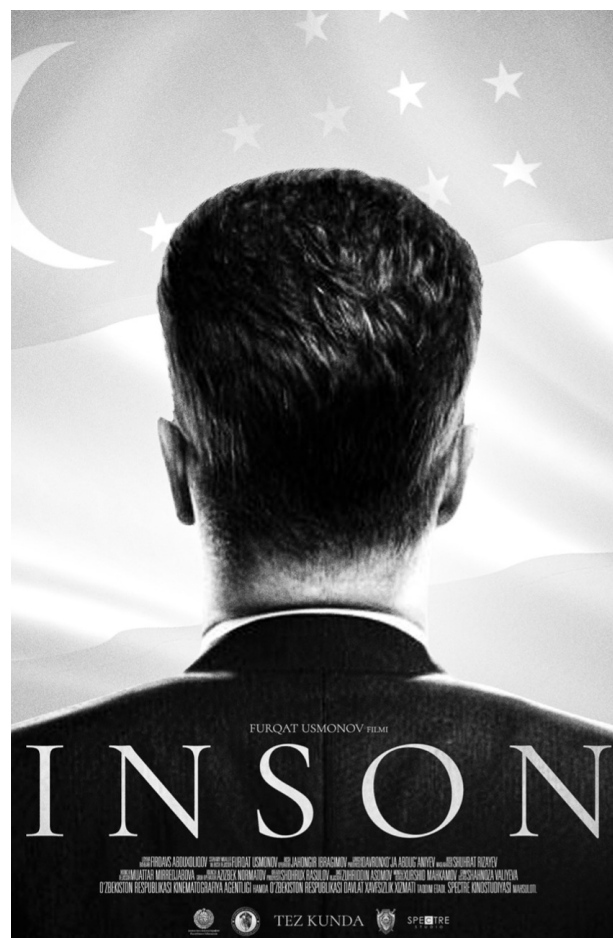
Shukhrat Abbasov – a film director and script writer, born in 1931 in Kokand. He is the master who has brought new insights, new taste and new way of thinking to cinema. He graduated from the Tashkent Secondary Medical School (1949), but the art turned the scale, and Mr. Abbasov entered the directing faculty of the Tashkent State Institute of Theatre Arts named after A.N. Ostrovsky, wherefrom he graduated in 1954, and in 1958 he completed the Higher Directing Courses under “Mosfilm”. He became the director of the “Uzbekfilm” studio in 1982. There are not so many tandems, but I would like to mention Elyor Ishmukhamedov and Odelsha Agishev - the pioneers of the romantic Uzbek cinema. We are deeply indebted to them for appearance of such films as "The Lovers", "Tenderness", and other equally important films for the history of cinema. Thus, for example, "The Lovers" was one of the leaders of the film distribution in the USSR, which by the way occupied 1/6 of the Earth land area.



Documentary and auteur cinema



It's worth mentioning the younger generation as well. **Furkat Usmanov** is one of the high-potential documentary filmmakers. Nowadays he heads the Centre for the Development of National Cinematography and is the director of the Tashkent International Film Festival at the same time. He has shot many documentary films that have been recognized on various international events.



Sherzod Nazarov is our another student, the only representative of Uzbekistan who has taken part in the pitching of the 77th Cannes International Film Festival this year. Many of his documentaries and short films, such as "My Grandfather is 90", "Along the Silk Road", "The Soldier is Alive", "Whose Are You, Old Folks?" have earned high praise at various film festivals. He has a promising future.

Some films that will introduce you to the history and culture of Uzbekistan in different time periods



*"The Entire Mahalla Is Talking
About It", 1960, directed by
Shukhrat Abbasov*



*"Mischievous Boy", 1977,
directed by Damir Salimov*



*"Tenderness", 1966,
directed by Elgor
Ishmukhamedov*



*"Abdullajan, or Tribute to Steven
Spielberg", 1991, directed by
Zulfikar Musakov.*



*"You Are Not An Orphan",
1996, directed by
Shukhrat Abbasov*



*"Delighted by You", 1958,
directed by Yuldash
Agzamov*

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Uzbek flat bread: from the cradle for a lifetime

Respect is probably the word that we have heard most often during our interview with chef and restaurateur Bakhriddin Najmiddinov, known in his motherland and beyond as Bakhriddin Chustiy. But how can we go without respect, if bread accompanies us from the very cradle, where it is put as protection from evil spirits, and throughout the whole life - first steps, seeing off to the army, matchmaking and marriage? We met Mr. Chustiy at his Tashkent restaurant Aksu and talked about kinds of flat breads existing in Uzbekistan and how to learn where they are made by the pattern alone, what is a must-try for visitors to the country and discussed numerous rituals associated with baking. We chose Bakhriddin mainly because he is the author of the book “Non”, which contains about 50 unique recipes of Uzbek bread.

Bakhriddin is celebrating his fortieth birthday this year. He started working as a cook's assistant at the age of fourteen. The pseudonym - Chustiy - was taken in honor of his native town Chust, located in Namangan region. Today the hero of our narration is a restaurateur, founder and brand-chef of several businesses both in Uzbekistan and beyond, author of books, blogger, participant of cooking shows, popularizer of national cuisine at home and abroad. Throughout his career, his dishes have been tasted by more than a dozen heads of various states. The fact that Chustiy has been compared to the famous British cook James Oliver also speaks well for his popularity.



—Bakhriddin, please tell us about the books you have written.

— I am the author of two books: “365 Days of Sun”, a kind of travel-book on gastronomic Uzbekistan, and “Non”, dedicated to flat breads only. Besides Tashkent, we presented the first one in London and sent it with an official letter to the library of Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain through the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. I hope it was deemed worthy to be kept on a shelf somewhere in London.

I've also worked on other books as part of team. “Uz-begin” is a big state project about the traditions and culture of our country, where I was in charge of the cuisine part. In 2017, as part of presentation of the project under my supervision, the largest portion of plov in the world weighing almost 7.5 tons was cooked, which entered the Guinness World Records! Another book was written at the request of the Ministry of Preschool Education: we tried to update the recipes and technologies of baby food, which saw no changes since 1973.

— **Our story is devoted to Uzbek bread. It is not currently included in the list of UNESCO Intangible Heritage, like, for example, Armenian lavash or French baguette, is it? Could you tell us?**

— We have already had the first discussions with UNESCO representatives on adding Uzbek flat bread to this list. In a broad sense, it is quite a long process: we should gather ethnographers, historians, flat bread makers, as well as record videos, organize discussions led by UNESCO representatives. But I think it will work out in time, because there are many interesting traditions associated with bread.

— **Let's talk about the traditions associated with bread in our culture.**

— Bread has accompanied a person from the cradle, where it was put under the baby's head as a guard against evil spirits. Howsoever, that's the way it used to be. Before joining the army or war, a man would bite off a piece of flat bread and it would be hung in the house so that the one who left would come back alive and finish it. Baked goods used to be a companion and amulet in travels, and bread was broken into halves during matchmaking ceremony as a sign of agreement - this ritual is called "non sindirish".

Traditions in Uzbek regions may be similar, while the variety of bread itself may be different. One can come across a soft-dough patir in Kokand and Fergana and taste special Samarkand flat breads in Samarkand. Meanwhile in Samarkand, large festive breads with the inscription "Tuyalar Muborak!" meaning "Happy Wedding Day!" will be served at the event. In Namangan, a festive table should definitely include a "shirmoy non". And there is no way that Namangan table has a Samarkand flat bread and vice versa.



— **It looks like bread is a sacred product in many ways. Are there any special rituals for a baker to observe prior to baking?**

— When I was a student in the 90s, we were not allowed near the dough and the tandoor without the ritual of ablution. This is not just about cleanliness, this is about respect for bread. I hope this tradition is still maintained.



— **Can you count how many bread recipes there are in Uzbekistan?**

— Not a chance. It is a “living” industry, flat bread makers work on the technology every day, bringing something new to the good old classics. A situation happened to me one day: the “Non” book was at the completion stage, but then I discovered such items in encyclopedias that I had not even heard of before! I was afraid that I would keep exploring further and not complete my work at all.

— **What kinds of flat breads are must-try for guests coming to Uzbekistan for the first time?**

— Try to find local bread in each region of Uzbekistan: soft dough bread in Tashkent, Kokand flat bread made of shortbread pastry, known as “biscuit-type-patir” in Kokand, Samarkand flat breads, which do not get moldy and preserve for a long time in Samarkand, “shirmoy non” in Namangan, sugarless flat breads for diabetics in Bukhara.

Khorezm region offers us the widest range of flat breads in Uzbekistan (aside from Tashkent, where flat bread makers from all over the country work): multi-colored ones with tomatoes, pumpkin, onions, greens/herbs, meat. These are entirely different flat breads, unlike any others.

Samarkand, Bukhara and Kashkadarya region are famous for the most delicious puff-paste flat breads. They are baked in an oven, but in Khorezm they use a tandoor: tandoor bread is thinner and much crunchier. In general, for me, “obi-non” is the best flat bread: just water, yeast and flour. Words cannot express the aroma of the freshly baked bread! And I highly recommend you to find ways to taste homemade bread made by housewives, mothers, rather than professional bakers. Everything made at home, in an ordinary kitchen, is always unique in flavour and technique.



Bakhriddin and I have intentionally compiled a glossary about bread. Stick the following in your memory!

Chekich

a stamp for embossing patterns on the flat bread, different in design and material depending on the region

Tandoor

a clay oven for baking flat breads, where dough pieces are placed directly onto the walls

Novvoy

a baker

Porkash

a person in charge of shaping the flat bread particularly

Khampotorosh

literally "cleaning, trimming", it is a spatula/scraper for dough. To be honest, I couldn't find such a word in the Uzbek dictionary, but bakers use this term in their daily work

Rapida

a round-shaped pad/tool whereon the flat bread is shaped and then transferred to the tandoor walls



— Could you list the types of national pastries that you would describe as the most unusual?

– The most unusual flat bread is “zogora-non”. It is probably the world-unique kind, made on the basis of sorghum (or joughara) in Khorezm region and Karakalpakstan. What could we add? In Gijduvan and Namangan only they add chickpea extract and fennel seeds to the starter dough - this makes it very flavory. The recipe is similar, except that the starter dough for Gijduvan flat breads should proof exclusively in copper ware - not plastic or ceramic, but copper only - so that certain chemical processes are triggered.

The third kind is “sardak-patir”. In the process of cooking of the head and legs of a sheep sacrificed in honour of a special day (marriage, circumcision, engagement), fat is formed, which together with the broth is added to the flat bread dough. “Sardak-patir” can be found in Fergana. One more kind is “jizza-non”, a puff-paste flat bread with cracklings, and “piyozli-non”, with onions.

— If the chekich patterns are different, they can tell us about the flat bread origin, can't they?

— They surely can! If a flat bread has a square large impression with big punctures - it is Bukhara, they use wooden stamps in work there. If you see a regular round flat bread with no patterns and having small punctures, it comes from Khorezm region, and the stamp is called "tikach". Fergana Valley bread usually has peculiar patterns, mostly flowers or petals, while in Tashkent they make classic flat breads, but recently decorations have become more common for them too.

— We have discussed the traditions and types of bread, but what rules shall be observed by guests at the table: for instance, you can't cut a flat bread - it should be torn with hands, you can't turn it over - it's a sign of disrespect. What could you add?

— It is not allowed to eat bread while on feet because the crumbs will scatter on the floor and can be stepped on - it is disrespect. Actually, there is an expression in this regard that can be translated as "A bread crumb is still bread."

Bread cannot be disposed of like garbage. The senior generation has always made dry toasts, which can be eaten with sweet tea or with soups. Or, for example, in the past, bazaars used to sell crumbled flat breads in bags, which were used as crumb coating and for making dessert for children by mixing them with sugar. It was "popcorn" of that time to some extent.

You can't throw away bread, but you are highly welcome to use it in dishes. My book "Non", contains about a dozen recipes for dishes with bread, in addition to baking. You can cook dymlyama, shurtak, as they do in Khorezm, or "malda non" in Surkhandarya.

— Could you advice, if a flat bread is used as a plate and plov or meat is served on it, for example, can/should it be eaten? Guests of the country often get confused at the table - they want to try it, but are afraid that it can be inappropriate.

— Yes, you can eat it, it's an old tradition. Flat breads were used for storage and transportation of food back in the past, before plastic containers or bags appeared.





— **Let's talk about traveling. What is your favorite country or city and why? What attracts you the most there?**

— I've visited about 30 countries and 100 cities, but I love two countries the most: England - as I am interested in their culture, and Turkey, as it is close to our mentality. I prefer London among the cities for its rainy weather and the fact that it is the capital of world culinary art, as much as Berlin, where you never have any problem with the choice of dishes - there is a lot of halal food there due to the large Turkish diaspora. You can find international unusual food and comforting familiar cuisine at the same time in both capitals. For example, in London, I've got "addicted" to wok: there is a Wok And Fire place near Piccadilly Circus with halal food, I can eat there three times a day!

— **How do you explore countries in terms of gastronomy?**

— When visiting a new city, I have three mandatory locations: A - a bazaar or market with local products, B - street food and C - a famous restaurant. Not long ago I brought ten kilos of fruit never seen by me before, from a trip to Qatar! The most attractive street food for me was in China due to its variety, and Indonesia offered the best seafood. I am interested in the cuisine of France because, whether we like it or not, it is the cuisine that is the global gastronomic leader today.

When traveling and socializing, I often notice that our compatriots are usually conservative in their choice of food, afraid to try something new. In terms of meat, it is justified by religious considerations, but fruits and greens should be tried with no doubt. I believe there is no such thing as bad food - there are just different tastes, habits and culture.



— **At conclusion, we'd like to ask you: what project are you working on now?**

— These days I've been working on my fifth book, which was inspired by the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. It will be released in a single copy being completely hand-made. I wish to do something no one has done before me: convey the traditions and beauty of Uzbek cuisine through miniatures! The artist has already started creating the pictures: the work has started in January and the deadline is September 2025.





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по всему миру**

7000+
40 футовых
контейнеров

350+
автоприцепов
и контейнеровозов

500+
железнодорожных
платформ



**Часть группы компаний
Centrum Holding,
специализирующаяся
на перевозке автомобилей
и автокомпонентов**

Закрытый склад
в Ташкенте
площадью
6600 м²

Контейнерный
терминал в Ангрене
площадью
8 га.

Склад в Ахтани
площадью
11 га.



**Туроператор
нового поколения,
который предоставляет
сервис 360 каждому
клиенту**



