

TUSKIIZ IN CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC PRACTICE: BETWEEN TRADITION AND CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION

Laura Yeskozhdina¹, Zhazira Zhukenova²

^{1,2}Kulyash Bayseyitova Kazakh National University of Arts
(Astana, Kazakhstan)

Abstract. The article examines the transformation of the traditional Kazakh wall hanging tuskiiz within the context of contemporary artistic practice in Kazakhstan. The relevance of the study lies in the fact that, in the post-Soviet period, textile forms acquire new significance: they transcend ethnographic and decorative and applied frameworks to become a medium of cultural memory and critical reflection. Despite the existence of ethnographic and historical research, the potential of tuskiiz as a conceptual artistic instrument remains insufficiently explored, which determines the scholarly novelty of this investigation. The *aim* of the study is to analyze strategies of reinterpreting tuskiiz in contemporary artistic practice in Kazakhstan. The research *tasks* include: considering tuskiiz as a phenomenon of nomadic material culture and identifying semantic and symbolic transformation of traditional motifs. Drawing on the projects of Gulnur Mukazhanova and Fatima Omir, the article analyzes various strategies of engaging with cultural memory and identity through textile art. Both visual and semantic transformations of traditional forms are examined as they unfold under the influence of globalization, post-Soviet identities, and metamodernist worldviews. Special attention is given to the shifting sacred and symbolic codes within contemporary art.

Keywords: tuskiiz, textile tradition, Kazakh contemporary art, cultural memory, identity, metamodernism.

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Introduction

The traditional Kazakh wall hanging tuskiiz has for centuries held an important place within the structure of nomadic culture, serving not only as an interior decoration of the yurt but also as a sacred mediator between humans and the surrounding world. Through its ornamental system, the tuskiiz conveyed cosmogonic, zoomorphic, and natural motifs, encoded within a complex visual grammar that shaped collective cultural memory (Zhukenova, Portisch).

In contemporary artistic practices of Kazakhstan, the tuskiiz has become a site for new interpretations, where issues of identity, historical memory, and globalization intersect. Within the post-Soviet cultural field, traditional forms and symbols are actively reinterpreted by artists who employ textiles as a medium for critical and conceptual dialogue with both past and present.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the transformation of the tuskiiz as an artistic phenomenon in contemporary Kazakh art through two distinct authorial strategies that of Gulnur Mukazhanova and that of Fatima Omir. Special attention is given to how the textile tradition adapts to new semantic, visual, and conceptual contexts. In contemporary Kazakh artistic practice, the tuskiiz has lost its exclusively utilitarian and sacred functions, transforming instead into a dynamic conceptual platform, where textiles become carriers of current cultural and social codes in the dialogue between tradition and global contemporaneity.

Accordingly, this study sets out the following objectives:

- to undertake a historical and visual analysis of the tuskiiz;
- to trace its historical and cultural significance within the system of nomadic material culture, including its symbolic functions and social meanings;

- to examine the reinterpretation of the tuskiiz in the artistic practices of Gulnur Mukazhanova and Fatima Omir, with particular attention to the ways each artist employs textile tradition as a medium of conceptual reflection;

- to analyze the semantic and visual transformations of tuskiiz motifs within the broader discourses of cultural transformation, globalization, and metamodernist aesthetics;

- to determine the role of textile traditions in contemporary Kazakh art as agents of continuity and innovation, linking heritage with current artistic practices.

Methods

This study employs an interdisciplinary approach that brings together ethnography, art history, cultural studies, and contemporary art theory. The complexity of the tuskiiz- which functions both as a traditional artifact and as a contemporary artistic medium- requires an analytical framework capable of addressing its material, symbolic, and conceptual dimensions.

A historical-visual analysis is used to trace the genesis and transformation of tuskiiz production techniques across different historical periods. This method makes it possible to identify characteristic visual codes-ornamental motifs, color palettes, and compositional schemes- and to demonstrate how textile art was integrated into the broader cultural and everyday contexts of Kazakh society. Particular attention is given to formal characteristics: the structure of ornamental fields, principles of symmetry, and the arrangement of decorative elements that together generate compositional integrity.

Equally significant is the examination of the symbolic level. Interpreting ornamental motifs as a sign system allows for the identification of images that retained stable meanings and continued to transmit cultural values related to kinship identity,

cosmogonic myths, and the worldview of nomadic culture.

The research material includes exhibition projects, scholarly publications, oral testimonies, and direct visual analysis of artworks. Taken together, these sources provide a comprehensive and multifaceted basis for the study.

Discussion

A substantial body of scholarship has addressed Kazakh embroidery and wall hangings, primarily through ethnographic, art historical, and visual-semiotic approaches. One of the most conceptually rigorous studies is the article by Shaygozova, Naurzbayeva, and Nekhvyadovich, which analyzes the *tuskiiz* as a visual-semiotic and iconographic phenomenon of traditional culture. The authors conceptualize the *tuskiiz* as an “artistic text” encoding notions of sacred space, as well as the social and cosmological organization of Kazakh society (Shaygozova et al. 154-172). This semiotic framework foregrounds embroidery as a symbolic system embedded within nomadic worldviews rather than as a purely decorative artifact.

A complementary art historical and cultural-documentary perspective is offered by Eraly Ospanuly in his illustrated album *Kazakhs: Art of Nomads* (2021). Drawing on museum collections in Kazakhstan and abroad, as well as archival photographs, the publication surveys a wide range of national handicrafts, including carpets (*tekemet*, *symak*, *tuskeste*), hand and machine embroidery, gold embroidery, and carpet weaving. Although the album does not pursue an explicitly analytical methodology, it plays an important role in visualizing the material world of nomadic culture and situating textile production within a broader historical continuum (Ospanuly).

Ethnographic and functional approaches are further developed in Kargabekova’s study *Keste: Kazakhstan Embroidery*

that Celebrates Nature, which examines traditional Kazakh embroidery (*keste*) through its techniques, areas of application, and stylistic diversity. The author outlines embroidery’s use in wall hangings, floor coverings, clothing, and accessories, emphasizing its close relationship with natural motifs and everyday practices. This work reinforces an understanding of textile as an integral component of vernacular culture, though it remains largely descriptive in scope.

Field-based ethnographic research is also represented in Zhukenova’s article “Artistic Embroidery of the Kazakh,” which focuses on *tuskiiz* from Eastern Kazakhstan found in private collections. Based on expeditionary research, the study documents techniques of execution, ornamental features, compositional structures, and color palettes. While providing valuable empirical material, the article primarily frames embroidery as an object of applied art rather than as a site of contemporary cultural negotiation (Zhukenova).

Several scholars adopt a mythological and cosmological lens. Ageleuova demonstrates how ornamentation in carpet weaving reflects nomadic cosmogonic beliefs. While the article *Mythological Images in the Embroidery of Turkic Peoples* explores archetypal motifs such as *Tengri* (Sky Father), *Umai* (Mother Goddess), and various zoomorphic and astral symbols across Turkic textile traditions, including Kazakh embroidery (Shaygozova 74). These studies foreground embroidery as a medium of mythological knowledge and symbolic continuity.

International scholarship extends this discussion to diasporic Kazakh communities. British anthropologist Anna Portisch, based on year-long fieldwork in Bayan-Ölgii (Mongolia), examines women’s craft practices and the transmission of felt-making and embroidery skills across generations. Emphasizing embodied learning, collective

labor, and sensory engagement, Portisch conceptualizes craft as a form of social and cultural formation rather than merely a technical skill (Portisch 2010). Japanese researcher Chieko Hiroto, in *Central Asian Nomadic Crafts: Kazakh Embroidery – Traditional Patterns and How to Make Them* (2019), documents embroidery practices among Kazakhs in Mongolia, combining ethnographic description with visual documentation and practical instruction.

More recent studies from China, such as *Analysis and Application of Basic Elements in Kazakh Embroidery Patterns*, examine Kazakh embroidery in the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture from a design-oriented perspective, focusing on the adaptation of traditional motifs for contemporary interior and fashion contexts (Li et al.). These works highlight processes of stylization and transformation but remain oriented toward applied design rather than artistic practice.

However, despite the breadth of existing scholarship, the majority of studies treat tuskiiz primarily as an ethnographic artifact, a bearer of symbolic tradition, or a design resource. Its potential as a medium for conceptual and contemporary artistic practice remains largely unexplored. Addressing this gap, the present study examines how tuskiiz is reinterpreted in the works of Gulnur Mukazhanova and Fatima Omir. By focusing on distinct artistic strategies material, semantic, and participatory the article demonstrates how textile tradition adapts to new visual, conceptual, and theoretical contexts. Situating these practices within broader discussions of cultural transformation, globalization, and metamodernist aesthetics, the study contributes to an understanding of traditional textile forms not only as carriers of heritage but as active agents within contemporary artistic discourse.

Historical-Visual Analysis of Tuskiiz as a Textile Phenomenon

The tuskiiz is a traditional wall-hanging textile of Kazakh culture, originally conceived as an element of domestic interior decoration while simultaneously serving protective, status-related, and sacred functions. Its artistic character is revealed through historical-visual analysis, which allows us to trace how the visual language of the tuskiiz developed on the basis of a complex system of ornamental motifs incorporating the symbolism of nature, animals, and mythological elements (Zhukenova, Portisch). This worldview- encoded system persisted up to the beginning of the Soviet period.

During the Soviet era, interest in decorative and applied art was supported within the framework of the ideology of “folk creativity”. Traditional art was presented as evidence of the unity of the multinational Soviet people. This was a more “official” and regulated form of creativity, in which traditions were preserved but reframed within state-sanctioned boundaries. Accordingly, research on Kazakh decorative and applied art of that period was focused primarily on ethnographic aspects (Shaygozova). Emphasis was placed on “folk” and “internationalist” qualities, while “religious” and “archaic” meanings were deliberately excluded.

Ethnographic studies of the first half of the twentieth century identify several types of tuskiiz:

- Carpets made using felt-based applique techniques;
- Carpets made using fabric-based applique techniques;
- Embroidered carpets.

Particular importance is attached to tuskiiz created in the applique technique. Formal analysis demonstrates that wall hangings from Central Kazakhstan are stylistically and compositionally close to felt floor coverings (syрмаq), in which ornamental patterns are constructed on the principle of positive and negative symmetry.

In certain examples (fig.1), one observes densely filled ornamental fields, strict

bilateral symmetry, monumentality of scale, and a restrained color palette, which together give the carpet a distinctive decorative expressiveness.

A notable technological feature is the applique method of production: an ornamental composition of contrasting material — differing in texture and color — is applied onto a neutral cotton background. The elements are secured with corder thread or braid, which not only reinforces the structure but also provides visual completeness to the piece.



Figure 1. Tuskiiz (appliqué on fabric base), 1960. 141 × 178 cm. Rakhia Zhumabaeva. Central Kazakhstan, Karaganda Region, Myrzhyk village.

The compositions of tuskiiz were constructed in such a way that the carpet was perceived as a unified decorative canvas. The richness of natural materials, combined with the experimental spirit and imaginative vision of the craftswomen, extended beyond the use of customary resources in the making of traditional wall hangings. Artisans engaged in a continual search for original solutions, both in the aesthetic design of the tuskiiz and in its technical execution. As decorative elements, wild animal hides, horse manes, and other natural materials could be incorporated, underscoring the owner's social status and enhancing the symbolic significance of the object.

In contemporary versions, felt is often employed as the base material, while preserving the same design principles (fig.2). It should be noted, however, that among nomads, felt was traditionally the



Figure 2. Tuskiiz (appliqué on felt base), 1960. 141 × 168 cm. Rakhia Zhumabaeva. Central Kazakhstan, Karaganda Region, Myrzhyk village.

principal material used in the production of tuskiiz.

The ornamental compositions of applied tuskiiz are not characterized by great variety, nevertheless, certain particularly expressive and enduring patterns can be distinguished. One of the most popular motifs (fig.3) is a grid-like structure incorporating a diamond shape within which the qoshqar muiyiz (ram's horn) is placed. This element, extensively documented in Alkey Margulan's album (1987), symbolizes fertility, vital energy, and protection. More than thirty recorded examples testify to the prevalence and cultural significance of this composition, which developed with particular intensity during the second half of the twentieth century.

The tuskiiz can be regarded as a kind of "textile text", in which each ornamental element carries symbolic weight. In Soviet-



Figure 3. Tuskiiz (felt, fabric, appliqué), 1982. Atbasar Museum of History and Local Studies, Akmola Region. (Field research materials).

era research, however, the semantics of the ornamental spiral qoshqar muiyz was typically reduced to a single meaning – the literal image of a ram's horn. Such a simplified interpretation reflected the broader tendency of that period to reduce the complex symbolic layers of traditional art to external, formal characteristics.

At the same time, the ram as a symbol of wealth, fertility, and prosperity remains one of the most enduring zoomorphic motifs of Kazakh ornament and continues to hold significance in popular perception.

Contemporary scholarship places greater emphasis on the multilayered symbolic system of nomadic culture, where ornament is understood not merely as a decorative element but as a reflection of spatial orientation, temporal experience, and kinship identity. Within this framework, the qoshqar muiyz motif is interpreted within a broader symbolic field, connected to the mythopoetic worldview of the nomads.

A distinct category of tuskiiz includes those executed in the technique of chain stitch embroidery. Ethnographic studies confirm that chain stitch (*biz keste*) was among the most favored and widely employed techniques in Kazakh traditional needlework. Striking examples of highly artistic Kazakh textiles with embroidered elements are generally dated to the early and mid-twentieth century, while specimens from the late nineteenth century are extremely rare.

A characteristic feature of embroidered carpets is the construction of ornament according to a U-shaped principle, whereby decorative elements are arranged along three sides of the piece. In the classification proposed by M. Mukanov (1979), several compositional solutions are distinguished:

1. The ornament decorates only the border, while the central field is made of variegated fabric and differs from it in color;
2. The central field and border are made of fabrics of different colors, but both are covered with continuous ornamentation;

3. The ornamental composition consists of nested U-shaped patterned bands applied to a solid-colored ground;

4. The central field and the border contain independent motifs that differ in design (fig.4);

5. The central field is decorated with alternating patterned bands, while the full richness of ornamentation is concentrated in the border designs.



Figure 4. Folk artisan, 1960. Carpet from the private collection of S. Bashirov (photo by the author).

A distinctive feature of embroidered carpets is their unfinished lower edge. Scholars have proposed several explanations for this phenomenon. From a practical perspective, the tuskiiz was traditionally used as a wall hanging, with its lower portion typically concealed by furniture. In such circumstances, additional finishing was unnecessary, as it did not affect the overall aesthetic perception. Moreover, within the constraints of nomadic life, where resources were limited, finishing the lower edge would have required extra materials and labor, which could be considered an unjustified expenditure. Such an understanding of functionality and rationality in the design of domestic objects aligned with the aesthetic and ideological frameworks of the Soviet period, which emphasized practicality and the character of folk art.

At the same time, a deeper, mythological explanation also exists. In the traditional worldview of the Kazakhs

and other nomadic peoples, the cosmos was perceived as an integrated structure in which the earthly and celestial realms were intimately connected. The sky symbolized the higher, spiritual dimension, while the earth embodied the material world. The unfinished lower edge of the tuskiiz could thus be understood as a material reflection of this cosmological concept, emphasizing the sacred bond between the two spheres of existence.

In the everyday life of the Kazakhs, the carpet functioned not only as a utilitarian object but also as a symbolic mediator between the earthly and celestial worlds. Its upper part fulfilled protective and decorative functions, whereas the unfinished lower edge retained the meaning of a liminal space through which, according to mythological belief, divine blessings were transmitted from the heavens. It was thought that through this edge forces of goodness, light, and purity descended into the human world. The unprocessed border of the carpet, therefore, created an opening or channel that allowed these forces to enter the dwelling, filling it with prosperity and harmony.

Thus, the mythological interpretation of this design feature reflects notions of the interaction between the cosmos and the earthly realm. It underscores the distinctive way in which Kazakh culture conceives its relationship to nature and the spiritual dimension, where even seemingly marginal details-such as the unfinished edge of a carpet-are imbued with profound symbolic meaning.

The transition to post-Soviet cultural dynamics opened new possibilities for artistic self-expression. Within this context, textile practices have come to be viewed not only as a form of cultural heritage but also as a means of rethinking national identity, historical memory, and globalization processes. In this way, textile art assumes the role of a social and cultural mediator within a rapidly shifting cultural environment.

Gulnur Mukazhanova: Tactile Abstraction of Memory

Gulnur Mukazhanova (b.1984) works with materials traditional to Central Asia, such as felt and brocade. Her solo exhibition *The Space of Silence* at Aspan Gallery (Almaty, 2021) presented 18 works, including photographs, video, and paintings, among them the ongoing series *Post- Nomadic Reality* (begun in 2016). These abstract panels, made of hand-dyed felt and silk, demonstrate a subtle engagement with memory and tradition. The series was inspired by traditional Kazakh wall hangings- tuskiiz.

Mukazhanova retains the compositional model of the tuskiiz: rectangular fields of color echo the U- shaped structure of traditional compositions but lack rigid contours. Wool fibers overlap and dissolve into one another, creating soft, watercolor-like transitions. This dissolution of boundaries evokes associations with haze, vision, or immersion in another reality. The Kazakh word *tus* itself is multivalent, signifying both “color” and “dream”, thereby intensifying the effect of perceptual ambiguity.

Rather than offering a literal reconstruction of tradition, the artist proposes a philosophical metaphor- a yearning for the lost organicity of nomadic life within the anxieties of contemporary identity. The choice of felt is deliberate: as a tactile material it carries the memory of nomadic life, introducing physical sensibility into abstraction and returning the viewer to an embodied experience.

Visually, Mukazhanova’s works resonate with the tradition of Abstract Expressionism (Rothko, Albers). Yet her “post-nomadic” abstraction is rooted in a local cultural ground, embedding the Kazakh cultural code into a universal artistic language. Post- nomadism in Mukazhanova’s practice emerges as a strategy of dialogue between nomadic memory and the global context of the contemporary world.

Each work in the Post- Nomadic Reality series (fig. 5, 6) eschews decorative elements: there is no embroidery or ornament. Whereas the traditional tuskiiz abounds in ornamental compositions, varied color palettes, and the use of multiple materials, Mukazhanova deliberately refrains from ornament. She argues that the meanings of many ornaments have been lost, opting instead for abstraction. As she notes: “Abstraction for me is an “empty space” that requires rethinking through such meditative, dream-like artistic practice. The basic shape of such carpets resembles a portal, and it symbolizes the door to an otherworldly space, an entry point to the world of dreams and the space of the unconscious. Conceptually, this represents how we unconsciously accept other people’s cultural values without having truly understood our own” (97)

Through this strategy, Mukazhanova critically illuminates the tension between post- nomadic identity and the sense of alienation introduced into contemporary Kazakh life by global information systems and the media society.

The rejection of ornament in Mukazhanova’s works is conceptually aligned with the ideas of the Austrian architect Adolf Loos articulated in his essay *Ornament and Crime* (1908). Loos understands ornament as a form of cultural anachronism, arguing that its disappearance constitutes a sign of a culture’s spiritual maturity (41). His assertion that modern ornament has lost its connection to both the human subject and the broader order of the world proves unexpectedly relevant in the context of Kazakh textile traditions, where ornamental motifs are frequently employed without an understanding of their original symbolic meanings. In this sense, Mukazhanova does not merely abandon ornament, rather, she exposes a crisis of its semantic function, transforming emptiness and materiality into primary carriers of memory.

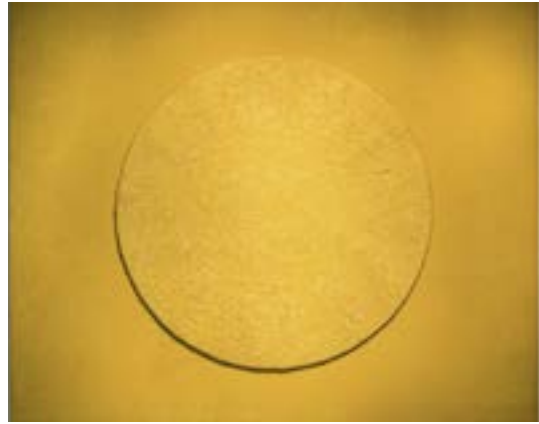


Figure 5. Gulnur Mukazhanova “Post Nomadic Reality” #8, fine merino wool, felted by hand, 140x170 cm., 2016 (photo <https://aspangallery.com/ru/artists/gulnur-mukazhanova>)



Figure 6. Gulnur Mukazhanova “Post Nomadic Reality” #40, fine merino wool, felted by hand, 140x170 cm., 2021 (photo <https://aspangallery.com/ru/artists/gulnur-mukazhanova>)

In Gulnur Mukazhanova’s work, the tuskiiz emerges as a metaphor for “lost heritage”, functioning as a critical commentary on the current state of cultural memory. The artist draws attention to the fact that the original meanings of many ornamental motifs have been lost, and their use in design and artistic practice often occurs without knowledge of their symbolic content. One of the most widespread motifs- the qoshqar muiyiz — appears almost everywhere: in clothing, theatrical decorations, interior design, household objects, and even in urban spaces. Such processes of secondary mythologization and the mechanical reproduction of traditional

forms ultimately lead to the devaluation of their original semantics, reducing a rich symbolic stratum to a mere decorative cliché.

Fatima Omir: Sacral Irony of Meta-Tuskiiz.

Fatima Omir (b. 1974) offers a radically different strategy for reinterpreting the tuskiiz, positioning it as a dynamic platform of contemporaneity. In her project Meta-Tuskiiz (initiated in 2020), the artist retains the formal elements of the traditional wall hanging (velvet field, rectangular format), while radically transforming its semantic content.

Ornaments of past epochs are replaced by symbols of today's anxious reality: signs of oil, the coronavirus, the dollar, and political indicators of the global world (fig.7). "New times- new signs," Omir states, formulating the central concept of her work. The carpet thus becomes a visual projection of current fears and aspirations, losing its archaic sacrality while acquiring new layers of critical reflection.

The first work in the series, *Tuskiiz 2020 (1)*, was exhibited at the April Fools' competition in Bishkek (Dubovy Park Gallery). Initially conceived as small-scale sketches in oil on paper, the composition was digitized, further developed through digital painting, and ultimately printed on fabric.

In traditional Kazakh culture, the embroidered wall hanging tuskiiz functioned not merely as a decorative element of the domestic interior, but as a carrier of encoded knowledge ornamental signs imbued with sacral meaning. Through the study of these motifs, it is possible to reconstruct the worldview, value systems, and symbolic orientations of past generations. However, shifts in historical epochs inevitably entail the transformation of cultural codes. Conceptions of desire and fear evolve, and with them the visual metaphors through which societies articulate their collective experiences. While attempts may be made "revive" a

sacral relationship to ancient ornament, it is no longer possible to invest these forms with the same meaning they once held organically for their original cultural context. For the artist, this realization necessitates a different strategy: rather than reiterating inherited myths, she seeks to extend the tradition through the creation of new signs- ones that correspond to the conditions and sensibilities of the contemporary moment.



Figure 7. Fatima Omir. *Tuskiiz 2020 (1)* (Photo courtesy of the artist).

Another key work, *I Look at Dark Matter, Dark Matter Looks at Me (2025)*, was presented in Astana at the group exhibition *Magic All Around* (curated Zhanar Kair). The show explored the role of magical thinking in everyday life, and Omir's interactive textile piece proved to be an ideal articulation of the theme. Viewers were invited to make a wish by placing their own symbol onto the surface of the tuskiiz and documenting the act on video (figs. 8, 9). Over time, the symbols layered upon one another, producing a living, stratified structure of collective memory. Here, Omir constructs a new form of secular ritual that combines irony and sincerity- a hallmark of metamodernist sensibility.

In the aesthetics of metamodernism (Vermeulen & van der Akker), textile art occupies a liminal position between tradition and innovation. It earnestly engages with heritage while simultaneously reinterpreting it in the context of contemporary realities. Omir's practice exemplifies this oscillation: her

textiles operate within the logic of “post-traditional” art, fluctuating between past and future, irony and seriousness, the local and the global.

After audience interaction, Omir’s work became a palimpsest of meanings: while cotton wadding pieced with diverse symbols, inscriptions, and drawings, contrasted with orange ivy, black velvet, and the hand-embroidered phrase “Мен қараңғы материяға қараймын; қараңғы материя маған қарайды” (I Look at Dark Matter, Dark Matter Looks at Me).

Thus, Omir’s project reconceptualizes the tuskiiz as a flexible, open system that reflects the landscape of contemporary collective psychology. What is preserved is not the mechanical reproduction of sacred images from the past, but the adaptive logic of tradition itself- a visual system continuously transformed in dialogue with a changing world.



Figure 8. Fatima Omir. I Look at Dark Matter, Dark Matter Looks at Me, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the artist).



Figure 9. Fatima Omir. I Look at Dark Matter, Dark Matter Looks at Me, 2025. After audience interaction at the exhibition, Astana. (Photo by the author).

Basic provisions

The analysis of the artistic strategies of these two contemporary artists highlights several key patterns in the transformation of the Kazakh tuskiiz:

- The tuskiiz moves beyond its ethnographic status to become a field for contemporary visual and conceptual practices;

- Two distinct approaches emerge: the plastic (material and visual) transformation represented by Gulnur Mukazhanova, and the semantic (symbolic and conceptual) reinterpretation by Fatima Omir;

- Both projects demonstrate the living dynamics of cultural memory, in which tradition is not preserved as fixed structure but unfolds as an open system of reinterpretation.

- Both projects are united by a deliberate rejection of traditional ornament. In the post- Nomadic Reality series, Gulnur Mukazhanova eliminates ornament entirely, retaining only the structural form of the tuskiiz, which she physically cuts apart and reassembles. Fatima Omir, by contrast, replaces ornamental motifs with symbols that are immediately legible and recognizable to contemporary audiences.

Conclusion

At the present stage, the production of classical tuskiiz is carried out primarily by Kazakh artisans who have resettled from Mongolia and China. These bearers of tradition create tuskiiz according to canonical models, and their works retain a distinctly decorative and applied character.

Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in textile heritage across Central Asia. In addition to popular-scientific posts on social media platforms such as Instagram, museums and galleries have increasingly staged textile exhibitions. Notable examples include the National Museum of Kazakhstan’s exhibition “Kieli Kimeshek” by ethno-designer and collector

Sultan Tilek (2024), which featured a runway show of nationally inspired costumes, a lecture on the symbolism and ornamentation of traditional clothing, and a workshop on the wearing of the kimeshek and its headscarf covering (shylauysh). In 2025, the exhibition *Konenin ornegi* (Patterns of the Past) was held, with a master class by Bulbul Kapkyzy. That same year, an international exhibition *Heritage in Stitches* showcased Uzbek sewing and embroidery traditions. At the Forte Kulanshi Art Space gallery, the group exhibition *Jana Kun* (2023) included a collection of tuskiiz and suzani from Natalia Kravet's collection.

Artists from Central Asia have also presented their distinctive textile culture in contemporary interpretations on the international stage- for instance, in the exhibition *Ornaments, Clouds & Power* (Hong Kong, China) and at the art fair *Parcours/ Bagdar* (Paris, France).

Collaborative interdisciplinary research, seminars, and workshops on textile art were conducted in Astana and Tashkent in 2018-2019 within the framework of an international project led by Dortmund University (Germany). The Kasteyev Museum of Art's regularly published volumes dedicated to textile heritage, while the National Museum hosted a conference with Chinese scholars devoted to the Great Silk Road.

Collectors such as Serzhan Bashirov, Berik Alibai, Natalia Krivets also play a vital role in preserving and popularizing folk art. Their collections include tuskiiz from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some of which have been displayed in exhibitions. These authentic examples of traditional Kazakh textile art continue to inspire contemporary artists. The works of Gulnur Mukazhanova and Fatima Omir exemplify new ways of envisioning the place of Kazakh textile within today's cultural environment.

Thus, traditional Kazakh art remains an inexhaustible source for creative inquiry and reinterpretation, generating new visions both within digital environments and in the emerging era of artificial intelligence. Originally a utilitarian textile adorned with richly embroidered ornamental motifs, the tuskiiz has come to be valued as an ethnographic object of collection and is frequently displayed in contemporary interiors, where it introduces elements of an "ethnic" aesthetic. By contrast, contemporary artistic practices shift the focus away from decorative textuality toward the conceptual potential of the textile. Liberated from its immanent aesthetic and informational functions, textile operates as an autonomous signifying system, pointing to a fundamental reconfiguration of the symbolic order.

Contribution of authors

L.B.Yeskozhiba – defining the research concept, working with sources, analyzing and systematizing the material, and carrying out the practical part of the research.

Z.D.Zhukenova – identification of the range of tasks, development of research methodology. Scientific editing of the main text, abstract text, consulting and scientific supervision.

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Лаура Есқожина, Жазира Жукенова

Күләш Байсейітова атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер университеті (Астана, Қазақстан)

ҚАЗІРГІ КӨРКЕМДІК ТӘЖІРИБЕДЕГІ ТҰСКИІЗ: ДӘСТҮР МЕН КОНЦЕПТУАЛДЫҚ ІЗДЕНІСТІҢ ТОҒЫСЫНДА

Аңдатпа. Мақалада қазақ дәстүрлі кілемі – тұскиіздің Қазақстандағы заманауи көркемдік тәжірибе контексіндегі трансформациясы қарастырылады. Зерттеудің өзектілігі посткеңестік кезеңде тоқыма өнері түрлерінің жаңа мәнге ие болуымен байланысты: этнографиялық және сәндік қолданбалы шеңберден шығып, мәдени жад пен сыни рефлексияның медиумына айналды. Этнографиялық және өнертанымдық еңбектер болғанына қарамастан, тұскиіздің концептуалды көркем құрал ретіндегі әлеуеті жеткілікті дәрежеде зерделенбеген, бұл зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығын айқындайды.

Жұмыстың мақсаты Қазақстандағы заманауи көркемдік тәжірибе аясында тұскиізді қайта пайымдау стратегияларын талдау болып табылады. Зерттеу міндеттеріне тұскиізді көшпелі материалдық мәдениеттің феномені ретінде қарастыру, сондай-ақ, дәстүрлі ою-өрнектердің семантикалық және символдық трансформацияларын анықтау кіреді. Гүлнұр Мұқажанова мен Фатима Өмірдің жобалары мысалында тоқыма өнері арқылы мәдени жады мен бірегейлікті пайымдаудың түрлі стратегиялары сараланады. Дәстүрлі формалардың жаһандану, посткеңестік бірегейліктер және метамодернистік дүниетаным ықпалымен жүзеге асатын визуалдық әрі мазмұндық трансформациялары зерттеледі. Заманауи өнердегі сакралдық және символдық кодтардың өзгеруіне ерекше назар аударылады.

Кілт сөздер: тұскиіз, тоқыма дәстүрі, қазақ заманауи өнері, мәдени жад, бірегейлік, метамодернизм

Дәйексөз үшін: Есқожина, Лаура және Жазира Жукенова «Қазіргі көркемдік тәжірибедегі тұскиіз: дәстүр мен концептуалдық ізденістің тоғысында». *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies*, т.10, №4, 2025, 269–284 б., DOI: 10.47940/cajas.v10i4.1106

Алғыс: Авторлар «Central Asian Journal of Art Studies» журналының редакторларына мақаланы баспаға дайындауға көмектескені үшін және анонимді рецензенттерге зерттеуге назар аударып, қызығушылық танытқаны үшін алғысын білдіреді.

Авторлар қолжазбаның соңғы нұсқасын оқып, мақұлдады және мүдделер қайшылығы жоқ екендігін мәлімдейді.

Лаура Ескожина, Жазира Жукенова

Казахский национальный университет искусств имени Куляш Байсеитовой (Астана, Казахстан)

ТҰСКИІЗ В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ ПРАКТИКЕ: МЕЖДУ ТРАДИЦИЕЙ И КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНЫМ ПОИСКОМ

Аннотация. В статье исследуется процесс трансформации казахского традиционного настенного ковра тұскиіз в контексте современной художественной практики Казахстана. Актуальность исследования обусловлена тем, что в постсоветский период текстильные формы приобретают новое значение: они выходят за пределы этнографического и декоративно-прикладного видения, становясь медиумом культурной памяти и критической рефлексии. Несмотря на наличие этнографических и искусствоведческих работ, потенциал тұскиіз как концептуального художественного инструмента остается недостаточно изученным, что и определяет научную новизну исследования. *Целью* работы является анализ стратегий переосмысления тұскиіз в современной художественной практике Казахстана. В задачи исследования входит: рассмотрение тұскиіз как феномена кочевой материальной культуры и выявление семантических и символических трансформаций традиционных мотивов. На примере проектов Гульнур Мукажановой и Фатимы Омир анализируются различные стратегии осмысления культурной памяти и идентичности через текстильное искусство. Исследуются как визуальные, так и содержательные преобразования традиционных форм, происходящие под влиянием глобализации, постсоветских идентичностей и метамодернистского мировоззрения. Особое внимание уделено изменению сакральных и символических кодов в актуальном искусстве.

Ключевые слова: тұскиіз, текстильная традиция, казахское современное искусство, культурная память, идентичность, метамодернизм.

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Авторлар туралы мәлімет:**Сведения об авторах:****Information about the authors:**

Есқожина Лаура Болатқызы
— «Сценография және сәндік өнер» кафедрасының оқытушысы, «Өнертану» кафедрасының докторанты, Күләш Байсейітова атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер университеті (Астана қ., Қазақстан).

Есқожина Лаура Болатовна
— преподаватель кафедры «Сценография и декоративное искусство», докторант кафедры «Искусствоведение», Казахский национальный университет искусств имени Куляш Байсеитовой (Астана, Казахстан)

Yeskozhiba Laura Bolatovna
— Lecturer at the Department of Scenography and Decorative Art, doctoral student of the Department of Art History, Kulyash Bayseyitova Kazakh National University of Arts (Astana, Kazakhstan)

ORCID ID: 0009-0007-1178-6984
E-mail: Laura8879@gmail.com

Жукенова Жазира Дюсембаевна — Күләш Байсейітова атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер университетінің «Кескіндеме және мүсін» кафедрасының доценті, PhD доктор (Астана қ., Қазақстан)

Жукенова Жазира Дюсембаевна — Доктор PhD, доцент кафедры «Живопись и скульптура», Казахский национальный университет искусств имени Куляш Байсеитовой (Астана, Казахстан)

Zhukenova Zhazira Dusembaeva
— Ph D. in Art History, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Kulyash Bayseyitova Kazakh National University of Arts (Astana, Kazakhstan)

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9178-678X
E-mail: jazira_zhukenova@mail.ru