

MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE OF KAZAKHSTAN WITHIN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SYSTEM: AESTHETICS, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL EFFECTS

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Abstract. This study analyses the transformation of monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan within the context of the development of the creative industries. The relevance of the research is determined by the need to reconsider the role of public art in the implementation of state cultural development programmes. *The aim* of the study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the potential of monumental sculpture by analyzing its aesthetic, economic, and social functions. *The methodological* framework is based on an interdisciplinary synthesis of approaches, including a case analysis of selected sites in Astana and Almaty, a comparative-historical analysis of the evolution of artistic forms, and a socio-cultural analysis of multiplicative effects. *The findings* reveal two stylistic tendencies: the 'classical canon', oriented towards a national-historical narrative, and the 'new wave', characterised by interactivity and an experimental approach. The empirical data confirm the impact of contemporary sculptural projects on tourism attractiveness and urban branding. The key role of sculpture in structuring public space and activating social interaction has been established. The practical significance of the research lies in developing mechanisms to advance public art, including methods of civic engagement and models of public-private partnership. Its scholarly value for the international community consists in presenting the experience of harmonising traditional culture and contemporary creative practices in the post-Soviet context.

Keywords: monumental sculpture, public art, creative industries, urban space, architectural-artistic environment, historical memory, tourism, public-private partnership.

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Introduction

Monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan, historically serving representational and ideological functions, has the potential to transform into an asset of the creative economy in the contemporary period. This evolution, situated at the intersection of art, ideology, and economics, constitutes the central scholarly problem of the present study. The relevance of the research lies in the implementation of the state programmes Rukhani Zhangyru and Ulttyq Kod, aimed at shaping national identity, as well as in strategic objectives for the development of the tourism sector and the creation of an attractive urban environment.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan through the prism of aesthetic, economic, and social dimensions, followed by a substantiation of its significance within the national system of creative industries. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been formulated:

- to identify the principal stylistic tendencies;
- to assess its economic potential in the spheres of tourism and place branding;
- to analyse social effects related to identity formation and educational function;
- to determine the prospects for integrating monumental sculpture into Kazakhstan's creative industries.

The methodological foundation consists of a synthesis of approaches, including case studies of key objects, a comparative-historical analysis of the evolution of artistic forms, and a socio-cultural analysis of multiplicative effects. The initial hypothesis suggests that contemporary monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan, having overcome its narrowly ideological function, is transforming into a multifunctional public asset capable of generating synergistic aesthetic, economic, and social benefits. Within this framework, monumental sculpture is regarded not as

a static monument but as a dynamic asset within the creative industries, where value is generated through symbolic content and multiplicative effects.

The practical significance of the topic is reinforced by the state's course towards the development of the creative economy, as confirmed by high-level strategic initiatives and the adoption of the relevant Concept for 2021–2025, in which the creative industries are defined as priority 'growth points' capable of stimulating economic development and expanding employment.

In March 2021, during discussions on Almaty's development prospects, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, publicly articulated for the first time the strategic importance of the creative economy. Following a presidential decree, in November 2021, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan approved the Concept for the Development of Creative Industries for 2021–2025. This governmental document was a direct consequence of the President's declared course of systematic support for the sector. In his Address to the Nation, The Economic Course of a Just Kazakhstan, the Head of State devoted particular attention to the creative industries and the IT sector: 'We must create all necessary conditions for the large-scale development of the creative economy in our country, including through legal instruments to protect intellectual property' (Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

Methods

The research is grounded in a comprehensive methodology that integrates art-historical, economic, and sociological approaches to analyse monumental sculpture as an element of the creative industries. The principal method employed was a comparative case study of key sites in Astana and Almaty, including the Baiterek, the Kazakh Eli Monument, the sculpture

Nadès by Jaume Plensa, and the art objects created for Expo 2017.

The art-historical analysis applied a formal-stylistic method and an iconological approach to identify the works' plastic characteristics and symbolic codes. The economic assessment of sculptural potential was conducted through the analysis of tourism statistics and expert reports, with particular attention to the multiplicative effect across related sectors. The sociological dimension included structured observation of visitor behaviour and content analysis of social media discussions.

To examine spatial impact, an urban syntax analysis was employed, enabling an assessment of the integration of sculptures into the urban context and their influence on pedestrian flows. The theoretical framework of the research draws upon the concepts of the 'creative city', 'cultural capital' developed by David Throsby, the theory of cultural production formulated by Pierre Bourdieu, and visual culture studies associated with Nicholas Mirzoeff.

The research was implemented in three stages: case selection, data collection and analysis, and synthesis of results. Such an approach ensured a systematic examination of the multifaceted nature of monumental sculpture within the creative industries.

Discussion

The study proposes reconsidering the role of monumental sculpture in contemporary Kazakhstan, engaging in a productive dialogue with existing academic theories while identifying the specificity of the local context. The key findings demonstrate that the Kazakhstani case represents a distinctive hybrid model that cannot be reduced to dominant regional trends.

Engaging with creative industries theory (as developed by David Throsby and David Hesmondhalgh), the study demonstrates how sculpture has transformed from an ideological instrument

into a multifunctional asset. However, the Kazakhstani case complicates the classical model of 'cultural capital', revealing not a linear accumulation but rather a circulation of capital within a closed ecosystem. Social effects (civic engagement) are directly converted into economic outcomes (tourism and the development of local businesses), forming a networked structure of mutual sectoral stimulation rather than a conventional value chain.

The concept of 'cultural capital' proposed by David Throsby was applied in the analysis of the economic parameters of the Baiterek monument. According to Throsby, cultural goods possess a dual nature, combining economic and cultural value. In the present case study, the economic value of Baiterek is reflected in direct ticket revenues (exceeding 500 million tenge annually) and its multiplicative effect on tourism infrastructure. Its cultural value is expressed in its symbolic status as a national emblem and a visualisation of the archetype of the 'World Tree'. Throsby's model of concentric circles makes it possible to position monumental sculpture at the core of the creative industries, around which adjacent sectors—tourism, hospitality, and souvenir production—are formed.

This observation refines the theory of the 'creative city' associated with Charles Landry and Richard Florida. While the research confirms the role of public art in structuring the environment and attracting the creative class, it identifies a defining feature of Kazakhstan: the initiation of this process 'from above', within the framework of state programmes. A hybrid configuration thus emerges, in which official strategic vision does not suppress but, paradoxically, generates conditions for bottom-up demand. The example of Nadès is illustrative: initially embedded within an official strategy, it was actively appropriated by citizens, endowed with new meanings, and transformed into a locus of authentic

social life. This case provides valuable material for understanding the mechanisms of authenticity formation under conditions of accelerated modernisation.

According to Landry, a creative city must cultivate an environment that stimulates innovation and cultural diversity. If the projects in Astana (Baiterek and the Expo-2017 sites) were initiated 'from above' and primarily serve the representation of state power, then the objects in Almaty (Nadès, Mergen, and the monument to The Beatles) more strongly reflect bottom-up demand for a high-quality urban environment. Florida's concept of the 'creative class' is further supported by the opening of the Almaty Museum of Arts, whose collection of internationally recognised contemporary artists contributes to the infrastructure needed to attract creative professionals.

From the perspective of national identity studies and the theory of 'sites of memory' developed by Benedict Anderson and Pierre Nora, the research reveals the dynamic character of this process. The national canon appears not as a fixed narrative but as a field of continuous dialogue. The study identifies a functional bifurcation within monumental art: the 'classical' works (Baiterek, Kazakh Eli) operate at the level of macro-identity and state representation, whereas the 'new wave' addresses micro-identity and the everyday experience of the urban resident. This functional differentiation constitutes a key contribution to understanding the country's cultural dynamics.

From the standpoint of public space sociology, the research traces the evolution of sculpture's role: from a monologue of power to a dialogue with the citizen and further towards a platform for multiple, unpredictable scenarios of use—a polylogue. This transition confirms the concepts of 'social triangulation' developed by William H. Whyte and 'new genre public art' theory by Suzanne Lacy, in which art produces not merely objects but social

relations. Lacy emphasises that the key feature of contemporary public art is the transformation of the viewer from a passive observer into an active participant.

Nadès, with its closed eyes and meditative image, invites citizens into an intimate dialogue with themselves, creating a space for reflection. Mergen, executed in a steampunk aesthetic and assembled from automobile parts, provokes surprise, discussion, and photography, functioning as a generator of social activity. In both cases, the viewer becomes involved in the co-creation of meaning, fully corresponding to Lacy's criteria.



Figure 1. Nadès. Jaume Plensa. Photograph by Alexey Poptsov and Miras Abdukhan.

Situating the Kazakhstani model within the broader context of post-Soviet transformations enables us to address its uniqueness. A comparison with the experiences of Baku, Tbilisi, Tashkent, and Bishkek demonstrates that the phenomenon under study combines elements of 'authoritarian urbanism' and a 'postcolonial search for identity', yet cannot be reduced to either.

The Azerbaijani model—often described as 'oil-funded Guggenheimisation'—is characterised by comprehensive state support for public art as an instrument of soft power and capital rebranding. The involvement of Western 'stars', such as Zaha Hadid, demonstrates openness and a European orientation, closely aligned with official policy. Unlike the Kazakhstani 'new wave', which balances between commerce and the underground, Baku's public art largely represents a top-down image-

construction strategy, leaving limited space for grassroots initiative.

The Tbilisi model of the Saakashvili era reflects neoliberal urbanism oriented towards a service economy and the creation of a tourist-friendly 'European' environment through small-scale forms and installations. However, critical perspectives note that this approach often results in decorative superficiality and the commercialisation of the historic centre ('tourist colonialism'), sacrificing connections with local identity in favour of economic efficiency.

Against this background, Kazakhstan's specificity becomes particularly evident. Uzbekistan demonstrates a model close to the 'classical canon', yet more homogeneous and marked by strict state control and heroised academic sculpture, leaving minimal space for universal, non-ideological public art. Kyrgyzstan, by contrast, offers an example of bottom-up development through street art and temporary interventions by independent artists—an approach diametrically opposed to Kazakhstani state patronage.

The uniqueness of the Kazakhstani model lies in the coexistence and complex dialogue of two paradigms. The state simultaneously finances heroic monuments within the post-Soviet tradition and projects by invited Western artists such as Jaume Plensa. This generates a multilayered environment in which, unlike in Baku or Tbilisi, objects initiated 'from above' (such as Nadès) can be organically appropriated 'from below', transforming into genuine social assets. Furthermore, the visual language of the 'classical canon' in Kazakhstan frequently inherits the Soviet monumental tradition while infusing it with new content (including Saka motifs), thereby forming a complex 'post-imperial synthesis' rather than a simple substitution of symbols, as observed in several other post-Soviet republics.

Thus, the Kazakhstani case is neither a straightforward manifestation

of authoritarian urbanism (although certain elements are present) nor a mere postcolonial replacement of symbols. It represents a distinctive hybrid model in which state patronage coexists with an emerging grassroots demand for a high-quality urban environment and authentic sociality. This model simultaneously responds to global trends in creative industries and reflects the local specificity of the gradual, evolutionary transformation of post-Soviet society.

Results

Monumental sculpture is increasingly understood within the framework of the creative industries, a concept that emerged in the late 1990s in the United Kingdom, where creativity, talent, and intellectual property were recognized as key economic assets. This model, later adapted in Kazakhstan through Government Resolution No. 448 (2023), includes architecture, visual arts, design, IT, and crafts, thereby creating legal grounds for incorporating monumental sculpture into the creative industries system.

Unlike purely economic interpretations, international organizations such as UNESCO emphasize the broader concept of cultural industries, focusing on cultural value and social impact. Within this framework, visual arts—particularly public art—play a significant role due to their accessibility and interaction with urban space and communities. As noted by Malcolm Miles, public art contributes to "social architecture" by strengthening social cohesion and supporting the formation of collective identity.

Monumental sculpture, as a major form of public art, creates multidimensional value: cultural (symbolic meaning), social (identity formation and public engagement), and economic (tourism and territorial attractiveness). Its placement in public space transforms it from a decorative object into a socially transformative

element that stimulates dialogue and community interaction.

Unlike easel art, which is confined to museums and private collections, monumental sculpture is integrated into the urban environment and accessible to a broad audience. As observed by Harriet Senie, public art exists in spaces that are legally public but psychologically belong to no one, giving monumental sculpture a unique social and political significance.

Monumental sculpture in public space functions as a powerful communicative medium addressed to a broad and unprepared audience. Its large scale and visual dominance enable an immediate emotional impact, making it an effective tool for visualizing power, preserving historical memory, and expressing collective ideals.

The creation of monumental sculpture is inherently interdisciplinary, involving artists, architects, engineers, and urban planners, and requiring significant financial investment. As a result, it operates at the intersection of art, urban planning, politics, and economics, positioning it as a synthetic phenomenon within the creative industries that generates cultural, social, and economic value.

Theoretical support for this perspective is provided by David Throsby's concentric circles model, which emphasizes the interaction between cultural and economic value. Within this framework, monumental sculpture can be understood as cultural capital capable of enhancing tourism, strengthening urban branding, and increasing property value.

A sociological perspective based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory highlights sculpture as a symbolic arena where the interests of governments, artists, communities, and media intersect. Monuments may reinforce collective identity and power, while also serving as platforms for public dialogue and debate.

Additionally, the concept of "optical ideology" proposed by Nicholas Mirzoeff

helps explain how monumental sculpture shapes urban visual culture and communicates cultural meanings.

Thus, the study of monumental sculpture within the creative industries requires an interdisciplinary methodology combining art-historical, economic, and sociological approaches. This integrated analysis allows monumental sculpture to be understood as a holistic phenomenon where aesthetic, social, and economic functions are closely interconnected.

During the period of state sovereignty formation in Kazakhstan, a 'classical' canon of monumental sculpture emerged as an important instrument for the visual construction of national identity. Key objects of this period include the Baiterek, the Kazakh Eli Monument, and monuments to Abylai Khan and Kenesary Khan. These works functioned as means of constructing a nationwide narrative rooted in historical heritage and mythopoetic representations.

Interpreting these monuments through the theory of 'imagined communities' developed by Benedict Anderson allows them to be identified as significant 'sites of memory'. Their fundamental task is to visualise the idea of a continuous historical process that demonstrates the continuity between the era of nomadic civilisations and contemporary statehood.

The Baiterek monument serves not only as an architectural dominant but also as a complex symbol that synthesises the archetype of the World Tree from Turkic mythology with the concept of a new politico-cultural centre. The structure's specific aesthetic, combining futuristic solutions with archaic prototypes, forms a unique visual code simultaneously oriented towards the past and the future.

Sculptural representations of historical rulers such as Abylai Khan and Kenesary Khan fulfil, within the Kazakh monumental tradition, the function of visually legitimising national history. As noted in scholarship, the equestrian

sculpture of Kenesary Khan created by N. Dalbay articulates the ‘assertion of the idea of independence’ through the heroised image of the ruler ‘proudly mounted on horseback’. These monuments appeal to archetypes of sovereignty and state wisdom, and their artistic solution—executed in a heroised realist manner—emphasises the grandeur and strength of will of the depicted figures. While maintaining a connection with the academic and Soviet tradition, this stylistic approach acquires a new resonance in the context of national revival.



Figure 2. Kenesary Khan. Nurlan Dalbay.

In the post-Soviet space, monumental art has become an arena of symbolic struggle over historical heritage, and Kazakhstani monuments are actively involved in this process. They visually replace former ideological constructions, shaping a new pantheon of national heroes. The strategic placement of these objects at key points within the urban fabric—central squares and main thoroughfares—marks these spaces as centres of national identity and sovereign statehood.

Against the background of the established ‘classical’ canon, an alternative

tendency has emerged in Kazakhstan—the ‘new wave’ of monumental sculpture. Its distinguishing feature lies in a fundamentally different understanding of the role of public art: the emphasis shifts from the representation of state power to the creation of interactive environments oriented towards human scale and everyday practices.

To verify the identified stylistic tendencies, an extensive range of monumental sculpture objects from various cities in Kazakhstan was analysed. This made it possible not only to confirm the existence of two principal directions but also to reveal the internal diversity of the ‘new wave’, which is not confined to isolated examples but constitutes a multifaceted phenomenon. During the research, all analysed objects were classified into two main categories. The table below presents representatives of each direction and their key characteristics.

As the table demonstrates, the “new wave” is internally heterogeneous and comprises several distinct trajectories:

- International stars. This group includes works created by globally renowned artists. *Nadès* by Jaume Plensa (Spain) and *Seated Woman with Fruit* by Fernando Botero (Colombia) represent Kazakhstan’s integration into the global art mainstream. These works do not carry a specific local ideological agenda; rather, they appeal to universal themes – inner tranquillity, corporeality, and the play of form.

- Local experiment. This trajectory is represented by Kazakhstani artists working in innovative styles. The sculpture *Hunter* by Zulkhainar Kozhamkulov, executed in a steampunk style from automotive parts, raises questions about industrialism and ecological recycling. The abstract composition *Sazger* by Rustem Alzhanov in Kyzylorda offers a polysemantic image associated with music and nature. These works demonstrate that experimental practices are developing not only in the capital but also in the regions.

Table 1. Main Directions of Monumental Sculpture in Kazakhstan

Direction	Objects	Authors	Characteristics	Ideology/Function
Classical Canon New Wave	Baiterek, Kazakh Eli Monument, monuments to Abylai Khan and Kenesary Khan	Kazakhstani sculptors (Nurlan Dalbay and others)	Academic tradition, realist style, heroic pathos, bronze and granite.	National identity, statehood and historical continuity.
	Nadès (Almaty)	Jaume Plensa (Spain)	Height: 12 metres; contemporary materials (fibreglas); closed eyes; meditative image.	Inner tranquillity, reflection and the universal language of art.
	Seated Woman with Fruit (Almaty)	Fernando Botero (Colombia)	Hypertrophied forms; a work by a world-renowned artist.	Aesthetics of the body, playfulness and a global context.
	Mergen (Almaty)	Zulkhaynar Kozhamkulov (Kazakhstan)	Steampunk aesthetic; automotive parts; scrap metal; height: 4 metres.	Industrialism, ecology and recycling.
	Monuments to The Beatles and Viktor Tsoi (Almaty)	Eduard Kazaryan; Matvei Makushkin	Figures of popular culture; tourist appeal.	Fandom, cultural connections and urban legends.
	Tobol Thinker (Kostanay)	A replica of an archaeological artefact.	Granite; height: 3 metres; image of an ancient epoch.	Historical memory and local identity.
	Sazger (Kyzylorda)	Rustem Alzhanov (Kazakhstan)	Abstract composition; height: 3.3 metres; bronze.	Music, unity with nature and semantic multiplicity.

– Pop culture. The monuments to The Beatles and Viktor Tsoi in Almaty are oriented towards a mass audience and perform an important tourist function. They become sites of fan pilgrimage, locations for photo sessions, and elements of urban folklore. Their aesthetic is far removed from the heroic pathos of classical monuments and is instead addressed to the everyday culture of city dwellers.

– Reinterpretation of archaism. The Tobolsk Thinker in Kostanay is an enlarged copy of an ancient artefact discovered during archaeological excavations. The object is significant in that it connects deep historical memory with contemporary modes of representation. It is neither a classical monument in the academic sense nor a purely experimental work; rather, it occupies an intermediate position, actualising ancient heritage within modern urban space.

The empirical expansion of the research base enables several important conclusions. First, the “new wave” in Kazakhstani monumental sculpture is not a singular phenomenon (not limited to Nadès), but a sustained tendency represented by numerous works in different cities. Second, within this tendency, there is clear differentiation by origin (international vs local), by stylistics (abstraction, steampunk, pop art), and by function (aesthetic, tourist, memorial). Third, the development of the “new wave” is supported by institutional changes – notably the emergence of museums of contemporary art and cultural centres – which create a favourable environment for the further evolution of public art in Kazakhstan.

Objects of the “new wave”, such as the sculpture Nadès in Almaty, function not as didactic symbols but as art objects that provoke viewer participation. This

transformation corresponds to a global tendency in which the static monument evolves into a dynamic “meeting place” requiring physical and emotional engagement.

A particularly illustrative example of the “new wave” is *Nadès* – a 12-metre sculpture of a female head with closed eyes and traditional braids, executed in polyester resin, fibreglass, and stainless steel. The work of the Spanish master Jaume Plensa, installed in Almaty in 2025, constitutes a complex artistic symbol. As Natalia Goryacheva observes, Plensa describes such works as “portraits of the soul” (Goryacheva 49), conceiving them as symbols of silence and inner calm that invite citizens to slow down and engage in self-reflection.

The sculpture embodies the image of a girl immersed in introspection, forming a radical contrast to traditional heroised representations. The closed eyes and serene expression convey ideas of purity and inner harmony, shifting the focus from the representation of power to the depth of the inner world.

Having become the central exhibit of the Almaty Museum of Arts, the work marks a turn in Kazakhstani monumental plastic art – from large-scale historical narratives to an intimate dialogue with spiritual values. The white colour and meditative pose create a space for contemplation, democratising monumental art through the intimacy of perception.

The aesthetic of the “new wave” is characterised by a radical rethinking of artistic language through experiments with plastic form, innovative materials, and conceptual content. Artists deliberately distance themselves from figurative tradition and heroic pathos, turning instead to the languages of abstraction, minimalism, and situational irony. However, the rejection of direct representation and narrative does not entail a retreat into autonomous aesthetic isolation; on the contrary, such

“neutral” forms often possess the greatest potential for active interaction with the urban environment and its spontaneous transformation.

This pattern is most clearly manifested in the phenomenon of spontaneous commercialisation observed around *Nadès* in Almaty. Since its installation in 2025, at least five new food and souvenir outlets have opened within a 200-metre radius of the sculpture, incorporating it into their branding and customer-attraction strategies. Although precise revenue data are unavailable, qualitative observations confirm that it is precisely this abstract, open-ended object that has become a powerful generator of pedestrian traffic and, consequently, commercial activity. By contrast, traditional figurative sculpture with its unambiguous ideological message rarely provokes such organic urban development.

A vivid illustration of this tendency can be found in the works created for Expo 2017, where futuristic, often kinetic compositions visualising the theme of future energy predominated. The use of contemporary materials – composite structures, glass, and polished metal – accentuated the semantic break with classical materials, symbolising technological progress. *Coral* by Marc Fornes and *Expanding Energy* by Andrew Rogers became visual manifestos of modernisation and the country’s global positioning.

This artistic practice finds theoretical grounding in Suzanne Lacy’s concept of the “new genre public art”, which prioritises processuality, dynamic form, and dialogue with the surrounding environment, since “public art seeks to find a ‘democratic’ model of communication based on participation and collaboration among audience members in the creation of artworks” (Kartseva 66). For example, Andrew Rogers’s kinetic sculpture *Expanding Energy* functions not as a static monument but as a visual

metaphor for continuous movement and transformation. As the art theorist Malcolm Miles emphasises, such works constitute “open artworks” whose semantic content is actively constructed by the viewer in the process of perception.

These objects predictably gain popularity on social media, transforming into informal symbols of urban identity. Thus, the “new wave” does not merely renew the visual code but fundamentally transforms the social function of the monument: from an instrument of ideological representation, it becomes a mechanism for shaping a contemporary creative urban environment, in line with the strategic objectives for the development of the creative industries in Kazakhstan.

Contemporary monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan plays a key role in shaping the visual code of national identity, which exists in constant dialogue between historical heritage and global cultural processes. The visual language of Kazakhstani plastic art constitutes a complex semiotic system in which archetypal images of nomadic civilisation acquire renewed relevance through contemporary art. As Yergaliyeva rightly notes, “the turn towards national archaism, prompted by the search for novelty, acuity, and breadth of vision, has produced powerful and expressive works, contributing to the disclosure of existential aspects of human being” (Yergaliyeva 125).

Within the Kazakhstani visual paradigm, several key symbolic complexes have taken shape:

- plastic motifs of the animal style, deriving from the model of the Golden Man;
- the architectonic image of the Shanyrak as a universal model of the cosmos;
- the archetype of the World Tree, adapted to an urban context;
- traditional ornamental systems integrated into contemporary design.

In Kazakhstan, monumental sculpture has moved beyond its traditional aesthetic function, becoming an effective tool for

attracting tourists. The phenomenon of “sculptural tourism”, as part of a global trend, demonstrates how public art objects become independent destinations in their own right.



Figure 3. Baiterek. Akmurza Rustembekov.

The demands of contemporary tourists, particularly younger visitors, have shifted toward seeking unique experiences and creating social media content. The Baiterek Tower monument in Astana has evolved from an abstract symbol into a universally visited destination. Its interactive elements – the observation deck and associated symbolic rituals – offer a multifaceted experience combining cognitive, visual, and entertainment dimensions. As G. Vyatkina observes, “The large park areas surrounding the Baiterek monument in the heart of the metropolis are constantly used for hosting extraordinary events, which enhances its tourist attractiveness. In 2010, at the invitation of the akimat, the international exhibition United Buddy Bears was organised here. As a result, 125 exceptional works of art, created by artists from various countries around the world, were displayed in peaceful proximity to one another” (Vyatkina 25).

More recent art objects, such as the sculpture *Nadès*, operate according to a different model, spontaneously transforming into centres of urban attraction. They foster social interaction and sustain a steady pedestrian flow, acting as catalysts for the transformation of the surrounding environment. This, in turn, stimulates the development of related infrastructure – the opening of new cafés and souvenir shops, as well as increased demand for thematic excursions.

In contemporary urbanism, monumental sculpture is regarded as a strategic asset for territorial branding and for enhancing investment attractiveness. It contributes to the formation of symbolic capital, which is subsequently converted into tangible economic dividends. As K. Sultanova notes, “...a crucial component of territorial branding is the ‘sale’ of landmarks, natural conditions, and the services associated with them” (Sultanova 67).

Within the framework of the “creative city” concept, unique public art objects and a developed cultural ecosystem function as magnets for the creative class – highly qualified professionals, entrepreneurs, and innovative companies who act as drivers of economic growth. Dominant landmarks such as Baiterek Tower and the sculptural complex of Expo 2017 serve as visual markers, shaping Astana’s image as a dynamic and progressive capital.

The Baiterek monument itself remains the most visited paid attraction in Astana. According to open-source data, annual attendance exceeds 500,000, with up to 3,000 visitors per day during the peak tourist season. The adult ticket price is 1,500 tenge (concessionary rate – 700 tenge), generating a direct revenue stream of at least 500–600 million tenge annually from ticket sales alone. However, the actual economic effect is considerably higher due to the multiplier of tourist expenditure (transport, accommodation, catering, souvenirs).

Large-scale projects such as the Qazaq Eli Monument demonstrate state stability and ambition, which is significant for attracting foreign capital. At the same time, камерные yet artistically significant works such as *Nadès* in Almaty reinforce the city’s reputation as a centre of creativity, attractive to the high-technology sector and the cultural industries.



Figure 4. *Seated Woman with Fruit*. Fernando Botero.

Thus, monumental sculpture initiates a positive chain reaction of development:

- the creation of a unique art object;
- the formation of a recognisable territorial brand;
- the influx of creative professionals and investment resources;
- the stimulation of the economy and the development of the urban environment.

For Kazakhstan, the strategic development of monumental art becomes an instrument of soft power, positioning the country and its cities as competitive global actors and accelerating the transition towards a knowledge-based economy.

The creation and maintenance of monumental sculpture exert a comprehensive impact on the real sector of the economy, extending far beyond artistic

value. This process forms a multi-level value chain integrating a wide range of industries and specialists.

The launch of a large-scale art project serves as a catalyst for economic activity. At the initial stage, alongside sculptors, architects, design engineers, and technologists, demand for highly qualified labour is generated. At the production stage, orders are placed with enterprises in related sectors – metalworking, foundries, stone-cutting workshops, and construction companies – ensuring capacity utilisation for small and medium-sized businesses.

After installation, the economic cycle enters a long-term phase, including:

- maintenance, security, and landscaping services, creating stable employment;
- the development of the souvenir industry (production of miniature replicas and branded merchandise), providing additional income for local entrepreneurs;
- increased employment in adjacent sectors (hospitality and catering, transport services, retail trade) due to enhanced tourist attractiveness.

Initial investment in monumental art cascades into a series of economic benefits. It does not merely materialise in an art object but initiates sustained economic activity, creates jobs, supports local industry, and increases tax revenues. This converts sculpture from a cultural expenditure item into a strategic investment in the sustainable development of a territory. As Danilov notes, “Cultural heritage, being an integral part of a territory, represents the most effective basis for shaping its brand, becoming an important resource for development” (Danilov 120).

An important characteristic is geographical concentration: more than 50% of all creative industry entities are located in Almaty and Astana. This explains why the principal examples of the “new wave” in monumental sculpture emerge precisely in these two metropolises, where

the necessary infrastructure and solvent demand have been formed. In terms of organisational structure, 70% of entities are individual entrepreneurs, indicating the small-business character of the creative industries. In February 2024, a special tax regime for creative industry entities was introduced. The result was impressive: within a year, the number of entities increased by 17%, reaching 46,667. This constitutes direct evidence of the effectiveness of state support.

Monumental sculpture plays a key role in shaping public spaces and the city’s unique image, directly influencing its social dynamics. Unlike museum exhibits, street art objects are integrated into everyday life, transforming behavioural patterns and residents’ perceptions of the urban environment.

According to William H. Whyte’s concept of “social triangulation”, public art objects stimulate communication among strangers. His work “focused on promoting the importance of lively districts and the comfort of public places” (Zlotnikova 245). A vivid illustration of this phenomenon is the sculpture *Nadès* in Almaty, which has spontaneously become a focal point for photography and live interaction, transforming an anonymous urban space into a form of public living room.

The navigational function of sculptures serves as a visual landmark, facilitating the perception of the urban landscape. This role corresponds to Kevin Lynch’s concept of “imageability”, according to which memorable elements (such as dominant landmarks) enable residents to construct cognitive maps. The navigational function extends beyond utilitarian orientation, forming an emotional attachment to place. As Lynch noted, “human sensations of spatial and temporal structures, combined in a ‘sense of region’, should be taken into account in planning decisions” (Lynch 7). Art in the urban environment thus becomes a planning instrument, transforming anonymous space into a meaningful place

where residents experience a sense of belonging.

Monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan performs not only an aesthetic but also a socio-cultural function. Such objects as Baiterek and the Golden Man serve as psychological landmarks and form an emotional connection between residents and urban space, creating a unique “spirit of place.”

Modern sculptural projects are increasingly oriented toward the principles of tactile urbanism and interactivity, transforming the viewer into an active participant in the urban environment. This contributes to the formation of inclusive public spaces and expands the function of art from symbolic representation to social service.

Contemporary sculptural complexes increasingly combine memorial and educational functions by incorporating informational panels, QR codes, and guided tour programs. Thus, monumental sculpture becomes an important tool for preserving historical memory, shaping civic identity, and transmitting cultural values between generations.

Basic Provisions

The present study offers a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of monumental sculpture in Kazakhstan. Its scholarly novelty and principal conclusions may be summarised as follows.

First, the research identifies and substantiates, for the first time, a specific model for the development of monumental sculpture based on the simultaneous coexistence of two distinct trajectories. On the one hand, there is the “classical canon”, which serves to articulate national and state identity. On the other hand, there is the “new wave”, oriented towards creating interactive public spaces. Their continuous interaction and dialogue refute linear theories of cultural development and demonstrate the uniqueness of the

formation of a contemporary artistic environment in a post-Soviet country.

Second, the study develops and tests an original methodology for assessing the комплексное impact of monumental sculpture, combining art-historical, economic, and sociological approaches. It is demonstrated that sculpture functions as a synthetic resource that directly reinforces economic outcomes, including tourism growth and local business development, by strengthening identity and enhancing the comfort of the urban environment. A concrete mechanism of this transformation is established: the art object creates a territorial brand, which in turn increases investment attractiveness.

Third, the phenomenon of the “hybrid subjectivity” of sculpture in Kazakhstani cities is theoretically conceptualised and empirically confirmed. This implies that public art objects, initially created within the framework of state cultural policy, are subsequently actively appropriated by urban residents. Citizens endow these objects with new, often unintended meanings, transforming them from static symbols into dynamic elements of social life.

Fourth, for the first time in relation to Kazakhstani material, a comprehensive criterion for evaluating the success of public art objects is applied. This criterion encompasses not only artistic value but also social effectiveness — the capacity to revitalise public spaces — and economic feasibility. On this basis, a typology of the functions of contemporary monumental sculpture is proposed: navigational, socio-catalytic, brand-forming, economic-stimulating, and memorial-educational.

Fifth, the study substantiates the concept that monumental sculpture constitutes a strategic asset of Kazakhstan’s creative economy, capable of generating symbolic, social, and economic value simultaneously. To realise this potential, practical mechanisms are proposed, including models of public—

private partnerships and participatory design involving local communities, which have significant application in urban development and cultural policy.

Overall, the research opens new perspectives for examining the role of public art in transforming societies and offers a methodological toolkit for analysing synergistic effects within the creative industries.

Conclusion

The conducted research makes it possible to assert that Kazakhstan's monumental sculpture represents a complex socio-cultural phenomenon integrated into the system of the creative economy and making a substantial contribution to the country's aesthetic, economic, and social development.

The stylistic evolution of monumental sculpture demonstrates a dialectic of development: from the "classical canon", consolidating the national-historical narrative, to the "new wave", characterised by an experimental language and an orientation towards interactivity.

New objects are marked by the search for non-trivial plastic solutions, the active use of interactive elements, and a focus on the creation of vibrant public spaces. Such a synthesis of respect for tradition and bold innovation makes it possible to construct a multifaceted image of the country, demonstrating its capacity for dialogue between national heritage and the language of global art.

Monumental sculpture has proven its viability as a multifunctional asset generating a synergistic effect. In economic terms, it acts as a catalyst for tourism growth, strengthens territorial branding, and forms extensive production and

service chains. In the social dimension, it structures public spaces, reinforces local identity, and serves as an instrument of historical education. Importantly, these objects increasingly become platforms for public discussion, reflecting the growing maturity of civil society.

To realise the potential of sculpture as a driver of the creative economy, systemic measures are required. Among the priorities is the creation of a comprehensive state programme to support public art, based on transparent competitive procedures and participatory design involving citizens. A promising direction is also the development of large-scale land art projects in the regions, capable of creating new tourist attractions and revealing the uniqueness of each Kazakhstani city.

The development of public art is supported by institutional changes: the opening of ALMA Museum and the Tselinny Center of Contemporary Culture in 2025 has created contemporary art infrastructure. The macroeconomic context is likewise favourable, as evidenced by a 17% increase in the number of creative industry entities following the introduction of tax incentives.

Geographical specificity is expressed in the concentration of innovative objects in Almaty (71%), associated with developed infrastructure and active private enterprise. In the regions, innovative objects remain isolated; however, their emergence (Kyzylorda, Kostanay) indicates the potential for decentralisation.

Thus, Kazakhstan's monumental sculpture has established itself as an asset of the creative economy, generating measurable economic, social, and symbolic effects. The "new wave" represents a sustainable trend with internal diversity, supported by institutional change and favourable economic policy.

Authors' contribution:

Abdildayev T. – development of a general concept and methodology of research, conducting a comparative historical analysis of the evolution of artistic forms, interpretation of data within the framework of a theoretical framework (concepts of «creative city», «cultural capital», «places of memory»), formulation of conclusions and scientific guidance of the work.

Mukanov M.F. – collection and systematization of empirical material, case analysis of objects in the cities of Astana and Almaty, socio-cultural analysis of multiplicative effects, preparation of the initial version of the manuscript, data visualization and bibliography design.

Вклад авторов:

Абдилдаев Т. – разработка общей концепции и методологии исследования, проведение сравнительно-исторического анализа эволюции художественных форм, интерпретация данных в рамках теоретического аппарата (концепции «креативного города», «культурного капитала», «мест памяти»), формулировка выводов и научное руководство работой.

Муканов М.Ф. – сбор и систематизация эмпирического материала, проведение кейс-анализа объектов в городах Астана и Алматы, осуществление социокультурного анализа мультипликативных эффектов, подготовка первоначального варианта рукописи, визуализация данных и оформление библиографии.

Авторлардың үлесі:

Әбділдаев Т. – зерттеудің жалпы тұжырымдамасы мен әдіснамасын әзірлеу, көркемдік формалардың эволюциясына салыстырмалы-тарихи талдау жүргізу, теориялық аппарат шеңберіндегі деректерді түсіндіру («креативті қала», «мәдени капитал», «еске алатын орындар» тұжырымдамалары), тұжырымдарды тұжырымдау және жұмысқа ғылыми жетекшілік ету.

Мұқанов М.Ф. – эмпирикалық материалдарды жинау және жүйелеу, Астана және Алматы қалаларындағы объектілерге кейс-талдау жүргізу, мультипликативтік әсерлерге әлеуметтік-мәдени талдауды жүзеге асыру, қолжазбаның бастапқы нұсқасын дайындау, деректерді визуализациялау және библиографияны рәсімдеу.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ КРЕАТИВТІ ИНДУСТРИЯ ЖҮЙЕСİNДЕГІ МОНУМЕНТАЛДЫ МҮСІН ӨНЕРІ: ЭСТЕТИКА, ЭКОНОМИКА ЖӘНЕ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК ӘСЕРЛЕР

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеу креативті индустрияларды дамыту аясында Қазақстанның монументалды мүсін өнеріндегі өзгерістерді талдауға бағытталған. Жұмыстың өзектілігі мәдени дамудың мемлекеттік бағдарламаларын іске асыру процесінде қоғамдық өнердің рөлін қайта қарастыру қажеттілігімен байланысты. Зерттеудің мақсаты – монументалды мүсін өнерінің әлеуетін оның эстетикалық, экономикалық және әлеуметтік функцияларын талдау арқылы жан-жақты бағалау. Зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізін Астана және Алматыдағы өнер объектілерін зерттеу, көркемдік нысандар эволюциясын салыстырмалы-тарихи әдіспен талдау және олардың мультипликативтік әсерлерін әлеуметтік-мәдени тұрғыдан бағалау құрайды. Нәтижесінде ұлттық-тарихи нарративке бағытталған «классикалық үлгі» мен интерактивтілік пен эксперименттік тәсілмен сипатталатын «инновациялық тәсіл» сияқты екі стилистикалық үрдіс анықталды. Заманауи мүсін жобаларының туристік тартымдылық пен қала брендингіне әсері эмпирикалық түрде дәлелденді. Қоғамдық кеңістікті құрылымдауда және әлеуметтік өзара әрекеттесуді жандандыруда мүсіннің негізгі рөлі анықталды. Жұмыстың тәжірибелік мәні қоғамдық өнерді дамытудың, оның ішінде азаматтарды қоғамдық өнерді көркейту жұмысына тарту әдістері мен мемлекеттік-жекеменшік серіктестік модельдерін қамтитын тетіктерін әзірлеуде жатыр. Халықаралық ғылыми орта үшін зерттеудің құндылығы посткеңестік кеңістіктегі дәстүрлі мәдениет пен заманауи креативтік тәжірибені сәтті үйлестіру тәжірибесін ұсынуынан тұрады.

Түйін сөздер: монументалды мүсін, қоғамдық өнер, шығармашылық индустриялар, қалалық кеңістік, сәулеттік-көркемдік орта, тарихи жады, туризм, мемлекеттік-жеке әріптестік.

Дәйексөз үшін: Талғат, Әбділдаев және Мұқанов Мәлік «Қазақстанның креативті индустрия жүйесіндегі монументалды мүсін өнері: эстетика, экономика және әлеуметтік әсерлер». *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies*, т.11, №1, 2026, 228–247 б., DOI:10.47940/cajas.v11i1.1140

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МОНУМЕНТАЛЬНАЯ СКУЛЬПТУРА КАЗАХСТАНА В СИСТЕМЕ КРЕАТИВНОЙ ИНДУСТРИИ: ЭСТЕТИКА, ЭКОНОМИКА И СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ЭФФЕКТЫ

Аннотация. Настоящее исследование анализирует трансформацию монументальной скульптуры Казахстана в контексте развития креативных индустрий. Актуальность работы обусловлена необходимостью переосмысления роли публичного искусства в реализации государственных программ культурного развития. *Цель исследования* – комплексная оценка потенциала монументальной скульптуры через анализ её эстетических, экономических и социальных функций. *Методологическую* основу составляет междисциплинарный синтез подходов, включающий кейс-анализ объектов в Астане и Алматы, сравнительно-исторический анализ эволюции художественных форм и социокультурный анализ мультипликативных эффектов. *В результате* выявлены две стилистические тенденции: «классический канон», ориентированный на национально-исторический нарратив, и «новая волна», характеризующаяся интерактивностью и экспериментальным подходом. Эмпирически подтверждено влияние современных скульптурных проектов на туристическую привлекательность и брендинг городов. Установлена ключевая роль скульптуры в структурировании публичного пространства и активизации социальных взаимодействий. Практическая значимость работы заключается в разработке механизмов развития паблик-арта, включая методы вовлечения граждан и модели государственно-частного партнерства. Научная ценность для международного сообщества состоит в представлении опыта гармонизации традиционной культуры и современных креативных практик в постсоветском контексте.

Ключевые слова: монументальная скульптура, общественное искусство, творческие индустрии, городское пространство, архитектурно-художественная среда, историческая память, туризм, государственно-частное партнерство.

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