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# **Classification of mythological and archetypal images in Kazakh art of painting**

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## **Abstract**

The article discusses one of the most significant changes in the fine arts during the period of independence - the basics of symbolism, symbolic painting, mythical and archetypal images via comparative qualitative research methods. As a result, the mythologization, which began with the compositions of B. Bapishev, became relevant in the first years of independence and was aimed at re-creating a myth on the basis of ancient beliefs and concepts. In conclusion, the main proposed basis of modern painting is to excite the viewer with personal thoughts and provide food for thought.

**Keywords:** Archetype, Umai, shaman, healer, deity.

# Clasificación de imágenes mitológicas y arquetípicas en el arte de la pintura kazaja

## Resumen

El artículo analiza uno de los cambios más significativos en las bellas artes durante el período de independencia: los conceptos básicos del simbolismo, la pintura simbólica, las imágenes míticas y arquetípicas a través de métodos comparativos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado, la mitologización, que comenzó con las composiciones de B. Bapishhev, se hizo relevante en los primeros años de independencia y tenía como objetivo recrear un mito sobre la base de creencias y conceptos antiguos. En conclusión, la base principal propuesta de la pintura moderna es entusiasmar al espectador con pensamientos personales y proporcionarle alimento para el pensamiento.

**Palabras clave:** Arquetipo, Umai, chamán, sanador, deidad.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the distinctive features of the formation of national identity and the awakening of national consciousness of Kazakhstan is the revival of ethnocultural symbols of the Kazakh people and the emphasis on their implementation. In this regard, the ethnocultural as a symbol of the history of Kazakhstan is of great importance. In his address to the Nation in 2019, the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev said, The basis of national identity is determined by the discovery of the national code. At the same time, the third spiritual revival of the Kazakh people opens a wide way to

history, to self-knowledge, he suggested the search for the national code in historical values as a source of urgency.

If we consider the relevance of the topic in the shadow of the channel Cultural Programs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, then a search in the directions of continuity and development of the past and present worldview, mythological features gives a lot of information about the ancestral cult, the history of the quarter Spiritual Revival. Besides, through the mythological plot, the artist shows the breadth of the artist's worldview through the depths of world ethnic knowledge with the emergence of national identity.

This national code, the mythical plot is ultimately determined by the study of archetypal images in the fine arts. Thus, despite the diversity of modern art in Kazakhstan, the diversity of creative concepts, artistic trends, there is a solid foundation that allows us to define the horizons of today's research. Such an approach to contemporary art helps to define its boundaries and structural significance in today's culture. In this regard, art critic Ergaliyeva R.A. stated: «At present, there are two tendencies in the art of Kazakhstan in the search for identity - the visible external extroverted appearance of the national idea and its internal introverted transformation. The first is stylistically reflected, first of all, in historical and ethnographic realism. By paying attention to the history, traditions, and way of life of the native people, it became possible to call the 1990s a new period, when the return to itself became the main feature of the independent art of Kazakhstan.

This tendency in the fine arts of Kazakhstan, associated with national identity and historical background, has developed rapidly in the revival of historical foundations and historical trends in the revival of Turkic trends in painting. There were times when painting, which was more ethnographic and national in style, confused and mixed genre features in the narration of historical events and even underwent decorativeness. This period of widespread adoption of mythology in the art of painting coincides with independence. The focus on myth as a separate science begins with the work of the eighteenth-century Italian philosopher **VICO (1994)**, published in 1725, Foundations of new science on the general nature of a nation. Myths in which special ways are shown to allow mythical creativity to adapt to the conditions of life of primitive people are shown as the first edition of the Dictionary of the Human Mind (**ORYNBEKOV, 1994**).

There are two main directions in the study of mythology in the second half of the XIX century. The first of them – a school started by scientists like J. Grimm, A. Kuhn, W. Schwartz, W. Manhardt, M. Muller, A. Afanasyev, A. Potebnya. It is based on the scientific achievements of Indo-European comparative and historical linguistics and the reconstruction and modernization of ancient Indo-European mythology through etymological comparisons in Indo-European languages. The second is the anthropological and evolutionary school. Its main representatives were such scientists as (**YUSUPOVA, 2009**). The main direction of this school is to consider comparative and ethnographic research in close connection with the scientific results of human development. At the beginning of the XX century, B.

Malinowski founded a functional school of ethnography. In this regard, he recognizes the myth not only as a legend, a story, which has a symbolic, allegorical, and other meanings but also as a truth that extends to the world and the human world.

French School of Sociology - **STEBLEVA (1972)** and other scientists considered the myth in conjunction with social psychology and presented totem mythology as the creator of the first model of the tribal community. Further research will focus on the cognitive features of mythological thinking, rather than the essence of the myth. In particular, while the creators of the psychoanalytic concept of the myth **JUNG (2001)** scientists associate the phenomena of the human psyche with archaic remnants or archetypes from the early social period, the French ethnologist C. Levi-Strauss, who proposed a structural theory of myth, based on the peculiarities of mythological thinking, prone to countless semantic transformations of myth (**ERGALIEVA, 2002**).

The common denominator of all types of mythological theories is the creative quality of myth. The scientist **WUNDT**, the founder of the German school of psychology, made it a priority to determine the essence of such a feature of mythical knowledge. This shows the vitality of mythical knowledge that this is an ongoing process that continues to change its form (**TRONSKY, 1934**). Through these concepts, we must emphasize that the transformation of traditional archetypal images into the proposed art of painting in mythological consciousness, the discovery of the importance of its form of delivery is one of the main problems today. Since myth and archetype, the symbol **is** twin concepts that give birth to each other.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Fine art, no matter how many centuries and epochs it has passed, has continued without losing its originality and meaning. If we look at the period from the formation and development of fine arts to the present day, we know from the history of art that significant changes have taken place.

The fine arts of our people date back to many centuries. Today, creativity plays an important role in understanding its artistic, cultural, spiritual, social history, laws, and features. Today it is very important to identify and recognize works of fine arts on the basis of an integral element of culture, to collect them in the best examples of art, to study them intelligently. We all know that the concepts of world culture, Turkic worldview are presented in today's art in the form of a permanent national traditional pattern or image. Therefore, this type of art can be associated with intellectual feelings. The problem is that the preparation of the spiritual consumer, that is, the viewer, must also meet these requirements arises from this situation. In general, it is worth noting a number of thematic quarters in the work of Kazakh masters of painting. These are, first of all, topics of a national character. This is determined by the fact that Kazakh artists of the 1920s and 1940s paid close attention to the national and ethnographic identity and were able to clarify the whole.

And the community of artists from 1950 to 1960, following in the footsteps of previous generations, are continuing representatives of this topic. However, Kazakh artists, who mastered the professional

language, revived their creativity in the genre of everyday life. However, national identity, mother, and child, the appearance of everyday life repeated.

Although the main themes of today's Kazakh artists are national, there are a lot of imaginative volunteers. Artists of the independent Kazakh state are trying to deepen national identity with various historical features, making the best use of freedom of style, rather than an everyday look or a special look. Starting with the history of the ancient Turks, they create figurative worlds in various motivational images from today. However, it is clear that this can be a proof of the sophistication and knowledge of our artists. The main feature of today is space and depth, in making every breath of life central to art. At first glance, in modern art, the artistic solution, although the subject matter is many and varied, the common feature is the expressive delivery of the artistic approach. Myth, symbol, the stream of thoughts, free exchange of time and area of events. Combine thinking and emotions with struggle, complicating and changing the way of describing, portraying, the transformation of imagination, patterns correspondence to the modern worldview and the sphere of thought.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In depicting the history of their ancestors, the artists made every effort to reveal the national costumes and ethnographic values,

as well as the worldview. The works of artists of this direction have both philosophical and mythological significance. Drawing on traditional archetypal images, artists promote worldview, mythology, as well as philosophy in the process of understanding it.

In the Kazakh art of painting, painters combine their work within the ideology of self-presentation. The works of Kazakh artists are complemented not only by traditional mythical images but also based on methodological features. The main features of the art of painting of the 90s are the organization of their compositional solutions, the basis of color, as well as the appearance of symbolic signs. When describing symbolic signs, artists began to refer to petroglyphs in the Tamgaly gorge and cave paintings found elsewhere. All of them emphasize the importance of the work and connect the viewer with the work. This is because each spectator tries to understand the work, which is full of different signs and symbols, to understand its depth and significance, as well as its philosophical conclusions.

One of the founders of the symbolic theory of myth is the German philosopher (CASSIRER, 2002). He sees myth as an independent symbolic form of culture, such as language and art. According to its mythical symbolism, the surrounding documentary-sensory objects are absorbed into consciousness only by turning into certain symbols, signs, documentary objects can be a symbol of other objects and phenomena without losing their originality, therefore mythology becomes a mystery with its own decision. Besides, these works have a special mystery in terms of the color scheme. If we

consider this based on the laws of art criticism, the need to clarify the ways and continuity of ancient art in Kazakhstan to modern artists, the impact of mythical consciousness on the worldview of artists are among the most important issues. Because this issue opens the way to the analysis of the permanent form and essence, image, and features of works of art, which have traditionally continued to this day.

The study of the continuous effect of mythical consciousness on the human worldview is further developed by the Swiss scientist **JUNG (2001)**, who laid the foundations of analytical psychology. His principle, which explains mythology through archetypal images, is very valuable: Archetypal images have always accompanied a person, they are a source of mythology, religion, art. Essentially, archetypes are unconscious content that changes, becoming conscious and perceived; it changes under the influence of the individual consciousness on the surface of which it arises.

Traditional archetypal images, which are widely recognized in the Kazakh fine arts, are:

1. Deity (Sky God)
2. Animals (gray wolf, leopard (Irbis), deer)
3. The Spirit (and the Soul)
4. Mother Umai
5. Balbal (stone image)

It is also widely used in images such as shaman, Korkyt, kobyz.

Through these archetypes, we can get acquainted with the mythology of Kazakh culture, delve deeper into its history. Each of these archetypes has become a traditional image of Kazakh painting, a

constant motive appearance. That is, each image has its own symbolic form and appearance in the picture.

The peculiarity of the form of art depicting reality is that it is an artistic image. The artistic image is the presentation of the most important, typical image through a personal image, or the depiction of general, important typical aspects of life in the form of an individual phenomenon, that is, in a concrete emotional form.

Therefore, the artistic image can not be equated with the concept and intuition. The peculiarity of the artistic image is that it is the recognition of the general through the individual. Artistic images in real works of art do not depict the outward signs of reality, but the important aspects. A remarkable event in the Kazakh fine arts was the desire to study the Kazakh, Turkic, and Eastern archaics in general. Visual myths formed based on deep penetration into the field of traditional worldview and figurative vision, have their own character, appeared in Kazakh art through the art of artistic transformation of the world, the works of young artists. The appeals to the spirit of our ancestors in the works of B. Bapishev, G. Madanov, A. Esdauletov are not limited only to attraction to ancient forms of consciousness, national initiatives, and spiritual sources, as well as national history and awareness, but are presented with an amazing way of striving to get acquainted with the path universal progress on Earth.

Focusing on ancient values can bring great joy to Kazakh art by giving it a positive direction, as well as initiating the basis of stabilization. Relying on the eternal worldview and spiritual symbols, it makes endless connections with the global and universal world of

this period. The history, mythology of mankind today is reflected in their visual works, this can be seen in the ancient rules of the steppe life. It is known that since 1990 is considered the year of independence, freedom was reflected in all areas of art and tried to define its freedom. At the same time, it is still developing at its own pace. The imagination in the minds of the man of the art of Soviet times is now tired of freedom and is headed into the abyss. In the Kazakh art of painting the basis of the historical genre, the national genre of life has risen. The contribution of this decade to the Kazakh fine arts is enormous.

In the Kazakh fine arts, which moved from a real image to a philosophical, symbolic language, figurative meaning began to take shape. It is also worth noting the works of V. Simakov, M. Narymbetov, S. Bayaliev, as well as S. Atabekov, performed in an avant-garde style on the theme of Turkic cognition. Artists of the 1980s and 1990s sought to trace the roots of antiquity through their work. The works of artists of this period require mythological and philosophical analysis. The only thing that unites the Kazakh fine arts is a deep look at these archetypes. Through the breadth of their thinking, the various phenomena and traditional motives of the great land, which they have imagined, become a world of unique value. It is up to the artist's imagination to go back to the past and depict some elements of the present.

Similarly, in the works of artists who have studied the worldview of life, many secrets are revealed about the holding power of Heaven and Earth in the Turkic world, about Umai, the goddess of

birth and motherhood, the Sky God, the tree of world life. Everyone tries to speak in their expressive pictorial language. According to the results of the study, **let us** consider some of the archetypal scenes, which are widely recognized in the Kazakh fine arts today and have become traditional images, in the works of Kazakh painters.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

By defining the meanings of mythological and archetypal images in the works of masters of Kazakh art of painting during the years of independence, we can clarify that they focus not only on a single topic but also on the concepts of universal knowledge. They had a special impact on the Kazakh art of painting, depicting the symbols and images of the Turkic peoples. This feature has helped to expand the development of painting and strengthen the connection between the audience and the work.

We are convinced that the importance of the mythologized archetypal images in the Kazakh painting considered in the study is very high. The main bases of archetypal images, which aroused interest in the ancestral cult, widely discussed in Kazakh painting, were grouped. It was clarified that they were balbal, Umai, Spirit, Korkyt, totem images, Grey Wolf, Sky God, and these archetypal images were analyzed in the works of Kazakh painters.

Mythologized archetypal images have a lot of information for today's Kazakh society. At the same time, the promotion of

national values encourages people to think, to understand the essence of the figurative world.

The main proposed basis of modern painting is to excite the viewer with personal thoughts and provide food for thought. The lately developed Kazakh professional painting has achieved great success in presenting in the language of painting, as well as in the ancient values of Kazakh history, acquiring valuable archetypes in the course of its development. This is because the presentation of the important aspects of the language of painting through the color bases, as well as the presentation of the history of the country and its values, demonstrates the unique skills of the artist. Today's reality is tomorrow's myth, today is today's myth, and our past will be tomorrow's myth, or more precisely, history.

While the presentation of the structural form and expressive approach of the works of Kazakh artists from 1990 to 2000 is based on traditional world knowledge, the life of the people has developed based on philosophy. Painters are now trying to discover the symbols of traditional art to reveal the semantic meaning of the signs. Artists seeking to reveal the mythological concept, considering the symbolic nature as a whole, turned to world philosophy, life mythology. In each quarter, they tried to create national things, adding some Kazakh elements. And this use has given great results in one of them and turned into a work of thoughtful content, while in another sense it has led to the withdrawal of the artist's work. When you look at the works of artists during the years of independence, you immediately realize that they carry a new ideology. As it coincides with the years of

independence, it is a great way to present it to future generations by promoting historical values, as well as the history of the Kazakh people through the Turkic worldview.

It is possible that the normal image of the mythological, archetypal images of this generation of artists, who turned national values into the philosophical world, replacing historical objects with modern trends, will become a valuable thing, replacing the historical relic for the next generation.

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## Illustrations



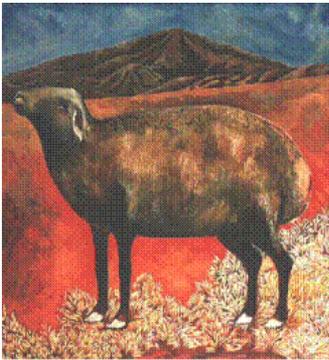
A. Sydykhanov. "Symbol of the Earth and the Moon" (1993)



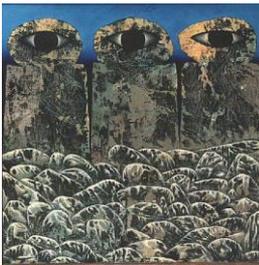
A. Sydykhanov. "The symbol of Korkyt Ata" (1992)



A. Esdauletov "Jealous" (2000)



B. Bapishev. "Symbol of fertility" (1990)



B. Bapishev "Four prophets" (1989)



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