THE TRANSFORMATION OF VISUAL STYLE AND ARTISTIC IMAGERY IN UZBEK ANIMATION DURING THE INDEPENDENCE ERA

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Annotation: This article provides a theoretical and scholarly analysis of the evolution of visual means of expression, artistic and aesthetic characteristics, and historical stages in the development of Uzbek animation art. It examines the distinctive principles of character design in puppet and hand-drawn animation, as well as the aesthetic potential of composition, color, form, and movement. Particular attention is given to the integration of national visual traditions with modern digital technologies and the artistic interpretation of characters in animated films. Based on the analysis, the study identifies key directions for improving the visual language of Uzbek animation, preserving its national artistic identity, and developing it in accordance with contemporary aesthetic principles.

Keywords: animation, expression, evolution, aesthetics, composition, color, movement, imagery, tradition, technology.

Following Uzbekistan's attainment of independence, a process of distinct renewal—in terms of both content and form—emerged across various branches of national art, including the field of animation. During this period, shifts in the ideological and artistic content of animated films, their visual expressive means, the principles of character creation, and the available technological capabilities defined a new stage in the development of national animation. In particular, the synthesis of national cultural heritage, folklore, historical traditions, and contemporary artistic thought served to enrich the visual language of animated films. Consequently, the art of animation began to evolve not merely as screen content aimed at the moral and spiritual upbringing of children, but as an independent art form that expresses national aesthetic perspectives, artistic thinking, and creative exploration [1].

In analyzing the evolution of visual expressive means within Uzbek animation, it is essential to examine the process of its artistic formation, the transformation of its visual styles, and the relationship between traditional and modern technologies. This is because the aesthetic value of an animated film is determined not only by its subject matter or dramaturgical structure, but also through composition, color, line, form, movement, spatial arrangement, and the plastic expression of its characters. These components form a unified artistic system within an animated work, influencing how the audience perceives the events on an emotional and aesthetic level. In this sense, the visual expressive means in animation do more than merely reflect reality; they serve as vital tools for conveying the author's ideological intent, their attitude toward the characters, and their overall artistic concept.

During the early stages of the development of Uzbek animation, techniques based on puppets and hand-drawn imagery played a significant role. In puppet animation, in particular, a distinct artistic environment was created through the characters' external appearance, three-dimensional form, texture, costumes, and mechanisms of movement. In this genre, the individual traits of the characters were shaped through the collaboration of artists, sculptors, set designers, costume designers, and directors. The facial expressions of the puppets, along with the mechanisms controlling the movements of their eyes, eyebrows, limbs, and bodies, were crucial in revealing the characters' inner psychological states. At the

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same time, the alignment between stage sets, lighting systems, and camera angles has enhanced the aesthetic impact of the animated space.

The artistic essence of puppet animation manifests primarily through its material and plastic expressive potential. Because the characters are constructed with volume, texture, and realistic spatial relationships, the visual environment achieves a unique blend of naturalism and stylized convention. In particular, the dynamics of the puppets' movements, their capacity for facial expression, and their interaction with objects play a crucial role in revealing the nature of the characters. However, as this technology demands significant labor and specialized technical equipment, the production process relies on a complex organizational structure. The historical existence of dedicated studios, puppet-making workshops, and technical laboratories for the creation of animated films demonstrates that a robust material-technical infrastructure has played a vital role in the development of this art form.

In subsequent stages, the expansion of techniques in drawn animation provided greater freedom in the means of visual expression. Within this approach, the plastic potential of lines, the mutability of forms, the interplay of colors, and the stylized representation of movement became key factors in the creation of artistic imagery. Unlike puppet animation, drawn animation offers broader possibilities for altering a character's physical appearance, exaggerating their movements, and employing a stylized interpretation of space and time. This facilitates the effective use of artistic devices such as the grotesque, hyperbole, symbolism, and metaphor. Consequently, the visual language of animated films has evolved to incorporate not only realistic expression but also principles of decorative design, stylization, and stylized imagery.

A significant aspect defining the unique visual language of national animation lies in the integration of elements from traditional folk decorative arts, miniature painting, and broader artistic heritage. Specifically, national patterns, ornamental compositions, traditional attire, architectural settings, and color palettes can all be utilized to infuse the artistic design of characters and sets with distinct national characteristics. In this context, it is significant that the incorporation of traditional visual elements into an animated environment serves not merely as decoration, but as an aesthetic tool that reveals the historical and cultural substance of the work. From this perspective, harmonizing national visual traditions with the language of modern animation represents a key direction in shaping the distinct artistic identity of the Uzbek school of animation.

In animated films, the impact of an artistic character depends not only on its external appearance but also on the plasticity of its movement and its inherent personality traits. A character's physical look, facial expressions, body language, manner of speech, and interaction with the environment all manifest within a unified visual and dramaturgical system. Consequently, the seamless integration between the screenplay and the visual design is of paramount importance in animation. A character conceived by a screenwriter takes on a visual form through the interpretations of the director and the artist, and is then transformed into a living, moving protagonist through the creative skill of the animator. Thus, in animation, visual expressive means should be viewed as a primary artistic mechanism for bringing the dramaturgical content to the screen.

Particularly in animated films intended for a child audience, the clarity of characters, the emotional impact of color, the accessibility of compositional choices, and the consistency of movement dynamics are of vital importance. Since children often perceive the content of events through visual imagery, the expressiveness of characters' physical appearance and actions enhances the educational and aesthetic impact of a work. However, as the interests and aesthetic needs of today's young audiences evolve, animation creators are compelled to seek out new visual styles, original characters, and dynamic

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compositional solutions. Consequently, the reimagining of traditional fairy-tale characters through a contemporary artistic lens has become a significant creative priority within national animation.

In particular, when reinterpreting figures from folklore—such as Rustam or Khoja Nasreddin—through the medium of animation, it is possible to modernize their outward appearance, movement, and visual environment while preserving their essential national character. The goal here is not a mechanical reproduction of the characters' historical or folkloric traits, but rather an exploration of their artistic essence through the lens of contemporary aesthetic standards. For instance, the unique aspects of the national character embodied by Khoja Nasreddin can be conveyed through his humorous nature, facial expressions, and dynamic movement. Such an approach helps ensure that these national figures remain etched in the audience's memory and facilitates the creation of a consistent system of characters for animated series.

In the context of global animation, the popularity of works such as *Gena the Crocodile*, *Cheburashka*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Tom and Jerry*, and *Nu, pogodi!* (Well, Just You Wait!) stems primarily from the distinct visual design of the characters, the expressiveness of their movement, and the artistic precision with which their personalities are crafted. Specifically, in the animated series *Nu, pogodi!*, directed by Vyacheslav Kotyonochkin, the conflict between the characters is expressed primarily through action, facial expressions, comic situations, and visual rhythm. This experience demonstrates that in animation, visual action can hold greater significance than spoken words. Furthermore, in these works, the unique physical traits of the characters not only reveal their personalities but also establish a lasting visual impression in the minds of the audience.

The next evolutionary stage in the visual expressive tools of Uzbek animation is linked to the introduction of computer technology. The capabilities of digital graphics have simplified certain complex technical processes found in traditional animation, while expanding the possibilities for coloring images, creating backgrounds, integrating compositional layers, and utilizing lighting and special effects. Simultaneously, 2D and 3D animation technologies have given rise to new artistic solutions for depicting the spatial movement, volumetric form, and visual environment of characters. As a result, the expressive potential of color, light, texture, perspective, and the dynamics of motion within animated imagery has been significantly enriched.

However, the development of computer technologies does not negate the traditional artistic principles of animation. On the contrary, modern digital tools serve as a technical foundation that expands the possibilities for realizing the creative vision of artists and directors. Even when the movement of an animated character is generated via computer software, its alignment with the character’s personality, its emotional expression, and its dramaturgical function remain dependent on the creator’s artistic decisions. In this sense, the evolution of visual expressive means should be viewed not merely as a technological shift, but as an advancement in the conceptual approach to character creation, aesthetic perspectives, and methods of visual communication.

In the development of national animation, the availability of skilled personnel and production conditions have also directly influenced the evolution of visual expressive means. The decline in the operation of specialized production studios and puppet-making workshops, along with a shortage of experts in certain traditional techniques, has limited the potential to develop specific visual styles within animation. Simultaneously, the proliferation of digital technologies has introduced new professional requirements for animators. This has underscored the need to train specialists who have thoroughly mastered the foundations of traditional visual arts and are proficient in using computer graphics and modern animation software [2].

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The participation of Uzbek animation in international festivals and its achievement of notable artistic successes serve as indicators of the creative potential cultivated within the national school of animation. In particular, animated works such as *O‘t* (Fire), *Do‘st* (Friend), *Laskoviy dojd* (Gentle Rain), and Sergey Alibekov’s *Net* (No/Not) are noteworthy as examples that showcase the diverse artistic explorations of national animation. Analyzing these works—in terms of their visual style, compositional structure, color palette, the plasticity of movement, and the symbolic interpretation of characters—makes it possible to identify the developmental characteristics of artistic and aesthetic thought within Uzbek animation.

From this perspective, the evolution of visual expressive means in the art of Uzbek animation encompasses artistic and technological shifts: ranging from the traditional plastic possibilities inherent in puppet and hand-drawn animation to complex visual solutions based on digital technologies. In this process, alongside the formal renewal of visual means, there has been a refinement in the interpretation of national imagery, the expressiveness of character traits, the interplay of color and composition, and the dramaturgical function of movement. The aesthetic value of an animated work is determined not by the complexity of the technology employed, but by the extent to which its visual components are subordinated to a unified ideological and artistic concept.

In conclusion, the evolution of visual expressive means in Uzbek animation is a complex process shaped by the interplay of national artistic traditions, creative thought, and technological advancement. The three-dimensional, sculptural expression found in puppet animation, the stylized and decorative qualities of drawn animation, and the spatial and dynamic capabilities inherent in digital technologies have progressively enriched the artistic language of this medium. In this context, the harmonious integration of visual elements—such as color, line, form, composition, movement, and texture—serves as the primary factor ensuring the aesthetic impact of an animated character or image. Therefore, the future development of Uzbek animation hinges on preserving national visual traditions, synthesizing them with modern technologies, and cultivating distinct, unique artistic styles. This serves to strengthen the distinct aesthetic identity of national animation, expand its artistic potential, and further elevate its standing within the global art of animation.

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