HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE PHENOMENON OF KAMOLIDDIN BEHZOD. ESTHETIC PRINCIPLES AND DISCOURSE IN FINE ARTS

Eastern Miniature Schools of the 15th–16th Centuries and Conceptual Foundations of Kamoliddin Behzod's Creative Style

Jonibekova Sabrina Aktambek qizi
Second-year Master's student specializing in
Calligraphy and the Art of Miniature Painting, National Institute of Fine Art and
Design named after Kamoliddin Behzod
Academic Supervisor: **Behzod Khadjimetov**
Professor, PhD, Department of Miniature Painting and
Calligraphy, National Institute of Fine Art and Design named after Kamoliddin Behzod
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23792638

Abstract: This section examines the golden age of Eastern miniature painting during the 15th and 16th centuries, with a specific focus on the aesthetic interactions and stylistic evolution among the Herat, Tabriz, and Bukhara schools. It provides a theoretical basis for the conceptual foundations of Kamoliddin Behzod's creative style, analyzing his revolutionary innovations in draftsmanship, color harmony, and spatial composition.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL-ARTISTIC CONTEXT

The cultural and intellectual renaissance taking place in Mawarannahr and Khorasan during the second half of the 15th and early 16th centuries elevated Eastern miniature painting to its zenith of development. Under the Timurid Renaissance, manuscript art and illumination transcended the role of mere text illustration, rising to a sophisticated visual discourse endowed with independent philosophical, aesthetic, and artistic value. At the epicenter of this transformation stands the figure of the master painter Kamoliddin Behzod (c. 1455–1535/36), revered in historical sources as the "Raphael of the East." Comprehending the conceptual foundations of Behzod's masterworks requires a systematic analysis of the major miniature painting centers of the era and their reciprocal artistic mechanisms.

INTERRELATIONS AMONG THE HERAT, TABRIZ, AND BUKHARA MINIATURE SCHOOLS

During the 15th and 16th centuries, three dominant regional centers guided the artistic trajectory of the Near and Middle East: the Herat, Tabriz, and Bukhara schools of miniature. Far from operating in isolation, these schools evolved through continuous exchange, migration of master calligraphers and painters, and the integration of shared aesthetic traditions.

The Herat School achieved its peak of plastic and compositional perfection under the enlightened patronage of the Timurid court (particularly during the reign of Sultan Husayn Bayqara and the intellectual stewardship of Alisher Navoi). The defining hallmarks of Herat miniature art include exquisite delicacy of line, a balanced and harmonious chromatic palette, mathematical precision in spatial framing, and a pioneering movement toward rendering human psychological depth. Kamoliddin Behzod emerged as both the pinnacle and the key architect of this tradition.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

The Tabriz School acquired fresh momentum with the rise of the Safavid dynasty. Under Shah Ismail I and Shah Tahmasp I, masters invited from Herat to Tabriz—most notably Behzod himself and his prominent disciples (such as Sultan Muhammad and Mir Sayyid Ali)—fused the academic discipline of Herat with the dynamic, monumental, and expressive traits characteristic of early Safavid art. This synthesis inaugurated a vibrant new phase in Middle Eastern miniature painting.

The Bukhara School, developing in the 16th century under the Shaybanid rulers, served as a direct custodian of Timurid artistic heritage. The royal libraries (kitabhana) of Ubaydullah Khan and Abdulaziz Khan housed priceless manuscripts and masters brought directly from Herat. While retaining the stylistic purity and refined plastic language of the Herat tradition, Bukhara miniature art introduced distinct laconic and ornamental compositions.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEADING MINIATURE SCHOOLS

To clarify the interconnections and stylistic divergences among these regional centers, the following comparative framework outlines their essential aesthetic parameters:

Artistic Parameter	Herat School	Tabriz School	Bukhara School
Composition	Balanced, multi-figured, dynamically harmonious.	Expressive, monumental, fluid, and highly complex.	Compact, laconic, leaning toward classic statics.
Color Palette	Soft, harmonious; gold and lapis lazuli dominant.	Vibrant, high-contrast, emotionally charged.	Sober color schemes with local pigment emphasis.
Human Figure	Individualized, emotionally conscious, dynamic.	Dramatic, stylized, highly kinetic postures.	Classic archetypes with traditional poses and attire.
Spatial Structure	Rhythmic layering of architecture and natural scenery.	Panoramic, sprawling, cascading spatial planes.	Planar, structured against traditional architectural frames.

As demonstrated, these three centers formed a unified conceptual landscape for medieval Eastern book arts, with Behzod's stylistic innovations serving as the foundational catalyst across all three regions.

CONCEPTUAL REVOLUTION IN KAMOLIDDIN BEHZOD'S CREATIVE METHOD

The revolutionary significance of Kamoliddin Behzod in art history lies in his elevation of the miniature from a supplementary text illustration to an autonomous medium rich in philosophical, humanistic, and dramatic depth. Whereas pre-Behzodian miniatures relied heavily on formulaic and schematic representations, Behzod brought the inner psychological world of the individual and human interaction with environment to the center of artistic discourse.

INNOVATIONS IN LINE, COLOR, AND SPATIAL COMPOSITION

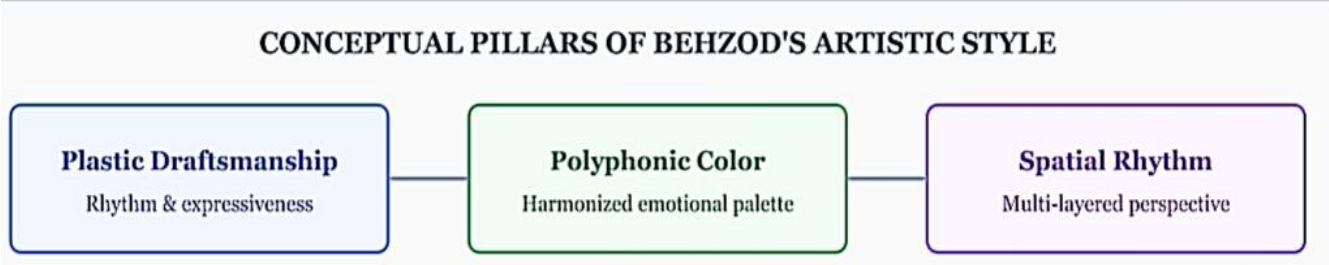
In Behzod's artistic practice, the three core elements of visual representation—line, color, and space— underwent a profound qualitative transformation:

1. Plastic and expressive line: Behzod imparted a musical rhythm and organic vitality to contour lines. In his works, a line does not merely delineate the boundary of an object; it serves as an

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

expressive instrument communicating direction of motion, weight of drapery, the age of a character, and subtle emotional states such as grief, joy, or wonder.

CONCEPTUAL PILLARS OF BEHZOD'S ARTISTIC STYLE



2. Polyphonic and local color harmony: The master utilized pure, saturated colors in striking contrast while maintaining seamless tonal equilibrium. Gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise, intricate tilework motifs, and natural hues achieve a symphonic resonance in his compositions, where color carries profound philosophical and emotional resonance.

3. Asymmetrical and dynamic spatial composition: Behzod broke away from the rigid, symmetrical layout formulas of earlier masters. By skillfully utilizing both vertical and horizontal axes, he constructed multi-layered spatial depth. Architectural elements (walls, archways, staircases, doorways) in Behzod's works cease to be static backdrops; they function as active narrative devices guiding the viewer's gaze and framing the dramatic action.

DOCUMENTARY REALISM AND GENRE ELEMENTS IN MINIATURES

Another major conceptual contribution of Behzod is his introduction of keen observational realism and everyday genre details into classical manuscripts. In his illustrations for Nizami's Khamseh and Saadi's Gulistan and Bustan, he moved beyond courtly idealization to depict common laborers, builders, dervishes, and lovers with convincing realism and human empathy.

A prime illustration is his famous miniature depicting the construction of a mosque in Samarkand, where every worker's gesture—bricklayers, mortar mixers, and master masons—is rendered with acute realism and vitality. Through such details, Behzod transformed medieval miniature art into a vivid, artistic chronicle of his contemporary world.

CONCLUSION

Scholarly Conclusion: Within the context of artistic integration among 15th- and 16th-century Eastern miniature schools, Kamoliddin Behzod established an aesthetic paradigm that fundamentally transformed fine arts in the Islamic world. His innovations in fluid line work, color synthesis, and dynamic spatial staging laid the groundwork for subsequent developments in Herat, Tabriz, and Bukhara. The conceptual pillars forged by Behzod remain a cornerstone of global artistic heritage.

REFERENCES

1. Ashrafi, M. M. Evolution of Persian Miniature Painting in XV Century. — Dushanbe, 1978.
2. Pugachenkova, G. A., & Rempel, L. I. History of Uzbek Fine Art. — Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1982.
3. Bahromov, A. Kamoliddin Behzod and the Eastern Miniature School. — Tashkent: San'at, 2000.
4. Welch, S. C. Persian Painting: Five Royal Manuscripts of the Sixteenth Century. — New York: George Braziller, 1976.
5. Hakimov, A. A. Tradition and Innovation in the Fine Arts of Uzbekistan. — Tashkent, 2015.