

## The technology of “flexible chee” in the art of modern Kazakh tapestry

The article deals with consideration of the artistic-figurative and technical aspects of application of the technologies of “flexible chee” in the art of modern Kazakh tapestry. This technology was developed and called by the artist Mukanov Malik Floberovich, who attracts it in his author’s tapestries. He is also one of the co-authors of this article. Based upon example of the fine arts study of his tapestries the conclusion is made that the modern masters of the artistic textile must constantly search for the new figurative forms and means of the creative self-expression. At that the technological aspects of such searches must not become the end in itself of the creative expression, submitting to the main task on construction of the remembering national-original artistic image.

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## La tecnología de “chi flexible” en el arte de la tapicería moderna de Kazajstán

### Resumen

El artículo hace referencia a los aspectos artísticos figurativos y técnicos de la aplicación de las tecnologías de “chi flexible” en el arte de la tapicería moderna de Kazajstán. Esta tecnología fue desarrollada y denominada así por el artista Mukanov Floberovich Malik, quien los incluye en tapices de su autoría. También es uno de los co-autores de este artículo. Con base en ejemplos de los estudios de bellas artes aplicados a sus tapices, la conclusión a que se llega señala que los maestros modernos de la industria textil artística deben buscar constantemente nuevas formas figurativas y medios de la autoexpresión creative; que los aspectos tecnológicos de tales búsquedas no deben convertirse en un fin en sí mismo de la expresión creativa, sometiéndose a la tarea principal en la construcción de lo nacional-original, recordando lo que significa una imagen artística.

Palabras clave:

The technologies of “flexible chee”, modern Kazakh tapestry, the art, artistic textile.

The art of modern tapestry for the masters of artistic textile always represented the experimental field on the search and implementation of the new figurative forms of expression. First of all, it was connected with the variety of technologies of its production. The combination of the classical weaving with other techniques, including application, collage, embroidery of different types, which allow giving the internal movement to the tapestry texture and display more freedom in composition, is enough typical for plastic language of tapestries during last years. You can become acquainted with that, familiarizing yourselves with the author’s works, represented in the illustrated catalogue of the First Russian Triennial of the modern tapestry “Square meter”, conducted in Autumn in 2011 in the state reserve museum “Tsaritsyno” in Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

The richness of different author’s methods of textural and fleecy hand weaving is also typical for the art of Kazakh tapestry. The sources of this phenomenon are founded in the rich traditions of applied culture of Kazakh nation. Relying on them, the artists create interesting works in the modern figurative aesthetics, filling them with the elements of design made in hand. The recent works of the famous master of the artistic textile national school Saule Bapanova are weaved in this direction.

The weaving itself and the whole structure of the tapestry for her are the bearers of the figurative content of work. Bapanova creates the very substance and this activity is of completely other nature than the painting, for example. In her works the expression of theme is achieved not due to stylization of the figurative forms, but due to very system of weaving, “behaviour” and properties of the material. She feels well as the material itself and weaving techniques run the creative process, affecting it the most actively. Analyzing this period of creativity of the artist, the famous Kazakhstan fine art expert Bayan Barmankulova writes: “In her works Bapanova... praises the steppe, beauty of its reliefs, dynamics of spaces and grass diversity, but restricts herself with their symbolic notation” (Barmankulova, 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> In catalogue: The first Russian triennial of modern tapestry in “Tsaritsyno”. Orel city: New Time. 2012. pp. 1-448.

The incrustation of tapestries with semiprecious stones became the interesting artistic solution of Bapanova. Sized from 1 to 4 cm in diameter and fastened according to the peculiar technology, they restrictedly interact with the texture of woven fiber, preventing tapestries in the modern works with aesthetic characteristics of the author's design-concept. This figurative know-how became the specific visiting card of Saule Bapanova in the art of modern Kazakh artistic textile.

The other visiting card in the art of modern tapestry is the author's technology of "flexible chee". This name was given to it by Malik Mukanov (one of co-authors of the published article) – the muralist, who devoted his creative activity to the development of works in tapestry techniques. He was the first one and still is the only artist, who involved "flexible chee" in his tapestries for playing with artistic images. The final of his work was creation of the whole series of works, combining aesthetics of the modern figurative culture. Mukanov's tapestries, balancing on the edge of art of the artistic textile and art-design are filled with the deep figurative-philosophical content. Stage-by-stage consideration of the figurative-artistic and technological aspects of the artist's creativity in this direction will become the basic task of this article.

In order to trace the way of birth of "flexible chee" technology, it will be necessary to return to the very sources and the time, when neophyte-artist received the first lessons of weaving in the artistic workshop of Alibui and Saule Bapanova. Here he assimilated not only the very technique of the hand weaving, but also get himself acquainted with the number of ways on the decorative shaping of the woven product. One of them lies in that the lower edge of tapestry is ennobled by the freely hanging ends of yarns (usually of carpet thickness per 3-4 threads in one tail), which basis is fastened through the woven fiber by the special knot. In order that the decorative tails look as harmonious continuation of the ready product, their colour gamma is selected according in tone to the general colouring.

Such fringe, sufficiently varied according to the length and thickness, promotes to the thin variation of physical parameters of already finished work. For example, the long fringe gives the vertical format to the square tapestry. Also the decorative tails visually give archaism to the tapestries, and provide them with the national tint, peculiar to the Kazakh carpets.

In our days the similar approach in decoration of the works of hand weaving is a big rarity. It is connected both with changes of aesthetic norms of design of modern interiors, and with the circumstance that the majority of tapestries are drawn on the stretchers similar to the tail, and the edges are ennobled by the picture frame similar to the picture manner.

In one of her tapestries Bapanova, using the traditional way of chee production, over the decorative fringe at the bottom of their fastening approximately from 5 to 10 cm, not all tails were processed with such approach, but only each 5-6<sup>th</sup> bunch from the general sequence. Similarly, synthesizing the decorative-figurative ways of decoration of the textile works with elements of author's design, the artists found one more beautiful decision, which allow visual enrichment of the tapestry, hang on the wall plane.

In spring in 1996 when being a student of 5-graduate course of the Kazakh National Academy of Arts on the speciality "Monumental painting", M. Mukanov for defending his diploma project, went to production of the series of works from there tapestries under the general name "The Nomads". Finishing of the work over one of these decorative pictures with name same to triptych "The Nomads" (1996, size 110 x 200 cm) led the author to the dead end. The problem lied in that the author decided to fasten the created work, which according to the initial idea had square compositional format, on the bearing rack in not ordinary way. Thinking that even such detail as a typical peculiarity of fastening the flags and banners to the wooden rod, which was used by the ancient Turks (Gorelik, 1993), can give

picture to the additional ethnic colouring, Mukanov fixes on the horizontal rack five upper woven ends of tapestry almost 20 cm long each. However, having hanged the work for observation on the wall, the artist understood that the choice of format was not very successful, as the work didn't look finished. Only visual enlargement of the tapestry length vertically could save the situation. Then he came to solution not only to decorate tapestry with 60-centimeter tails, but also to apply yarn stud on them, which he earlier saw on Bapanovs' work. However, instead of their way, Mukanov processed each tail study separately. Totally, the hand technology of this process, took time no less, than weaving of the very tapestry. However, the efforts made by the artist, was not spent in vain. After all, in the really finished form, the work represented unordinary decorative picture, which bears the spirit of traditional Kazakh applied culture of the artistic decision in the modern abstract-visual figurative manner.



Figure 1. The tapestry "The Nomad", 1996, size 110 x 200 cm.

The compositional system of the work consists from the abstract spots, which in some cases flow into each other and in some cases are overlapped over each other. Moreover, for the first view in this seemingly figurative chaos, at the attentive consideration it is possible to see silhouettes of the moon and sun, stylized the figures of people or something else, looking like wings of mythical birds. All they are located around the central image –a horse with upcoming mane that is the supreme symbol of the nomad way of life.

The abstractness of images with minimalistic silhouette nature of the figures, viscosity of the colour transits with simultaneous abruptness in the tonal correlations, causes feeling of “dèjà vu”. It looks like you contemplate some irrational mobile substance –completely other physical measurement, living by his secret life and being echo of the nomad civilization of the epochs gone.

The general colour gamma of the work is substantially dark and according to the general colouring reminds the old Kazakh carpets. In spite of the presence of a variety of colours, the complex combination of scarlet, red-brown and dark-vinous tints dominate in composition.

We know from the above-said that the decorative fringe, adorning the analyzed tapestry, was not thought by the author initially. However, creatively developed the situation formed, the artist found solution how to improve the figurative qualities of tapestry. Thus, the tail studs taken according to the tone are in n-th order darker than the general colouring of the work, serve as specific foundation that balances the colouring dynamics of the whole composition. The band of the uninterrupted system of the studs on tails, taking turns according to the tone and colour and reminding the molecular building of the human genetic code by its figurative structure, also makes it contribution in the construction of the figurative conception of tapestry. It reminds to the modern city viewer about that on the level of genetics there exist the correlation between figurative images, appearing in his

consciousness at contemplation of this tapestry and his historical past, when his ancestors conduct the nomad way of life.

Next, creation of this tapestry namely became the starting point for the artist, from which he began to work over the development of “flexible chee” technology in the further works.

Firstly, he involves “flexible chee” at creation of tapestry “Spiral”, 2003 (size 110 x 110 cm). The idea struck Mukanov to use the technological advantages of “flexible chee” before his “brother”, executed in a traditional way. In the classical way, chee (in Kazakh language – “shym shy”) are mats, used in the decorative appointments of the Kazakh nomad’s tent. As many subjects of appointments of the Kazakh nomad’s tents, they simultaneously had utilitarian and decorative meaning (Margulan, 1986, p. 91). “Shym shy” consists of the number of solid dry straws bounded between each other into the single canvas, taken from the stem of the plant with the same name (reed family). The own pattern is put on each of them by the method of turning the stained natural yarn. The principle of image construction in it is very similar to the method of bitmap building of the picture in the computer programmes for painting.

The stem itself is the weak chain of traditional technology. It is very fragile and can be used only in the directly lying position, as it is easily broken on the curve. In order to avoid it, the artist uses capron thread 4 mm thick as a basis. They wind tinted mixture of the necessary colour made of the woolen and synthetic threads instead of the sheep yarn on it. The places of beginning and finishing of winding are glued with PVA glue, which after drying becomes transparent, as a result of which stitches don’t strike the eyes strongly.





Figure 2. The working process of creation of “flexible chee” straws.

As a result the chee straw looking like a traditional one in appearance is produced, but it is thicker in diameter approximately in twice. Moreover, without destroying of its structure, it can curve under the angle 90 degrees and below. It can be given with almost any configuration and, dependently on circumstances, cut in any area with previous treatment of the dissection place with PVA glue. Finally, as at production of the traditional “shym shy” on all stages of production of “flexible chee”, only hand work is applied that implies big quantity of time and labour spending.

Generally, the very process of opening new technological way is not quite characterized by the spontaneity of the moment, in which the idea comes to the master in the form of irradiation in relation how use in a new way, for example, the yarn at weaving the tapestry. The gradual character is more imposed to him, when the trial-and-error method from the first to following works the new technological way is polished and, finally, becomes the equal figurative instrument in the construction of composition.

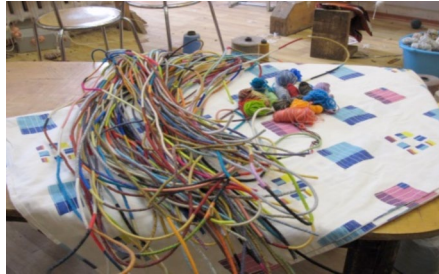


Figure 3. The working process of creation of “flexible chee” straws.

It is necessary to remind briefly about another technological peculiarity of working with “flexible chee”, which stems represent enough rigid framework. During its sewing to the freely hang tapestry as a result of its elasticity, it considerably deforms the fiber figurative surface. Finally, the work receives untidy appearance and the false sensation appears that people work with it untidily. In order to avoid it, the tapestry should be firstly drawn on the picture frame similar to canvas, and only then chee should be fastened on it.

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Mukanov divides the square form of tapestry composition “Spiral” by thick black lines, going from the center to edges on the unequal segments. They, in its turn, are divided into multi-coloured geometric figures of different size. The decorative picture obtained that is sub-basis for the further work according by its figurative style reminds the works of Dutch artist Piet Mondrian, which together with Kandinsky and Malevich is considered to be a founder of the abstract painting (Polevoi, 1989, p. 24).

The author lays on the stems of “flexible chee” over the fiber basis, which primary curl is located on the center of equilateral rectangular canvas. Then, in turn, first

thickening, then thinning it, or sometimes even briefly interrupting the spiral line, develops its movement until it almost approaches to the end of tapestry. As a result the viewer sees allegoric image of the Universe in the picture of spiral.

From the figurative point of view, two most important principles of existence collide: spiral, as a basic of world system and spiral as a human private life (individual). It appears that the human destiny and destiny of the Absolute – Universe are in the indissoluble unity. Both have the certain programme of development (spiral) and everything in the world is penetrated with the single beginning.

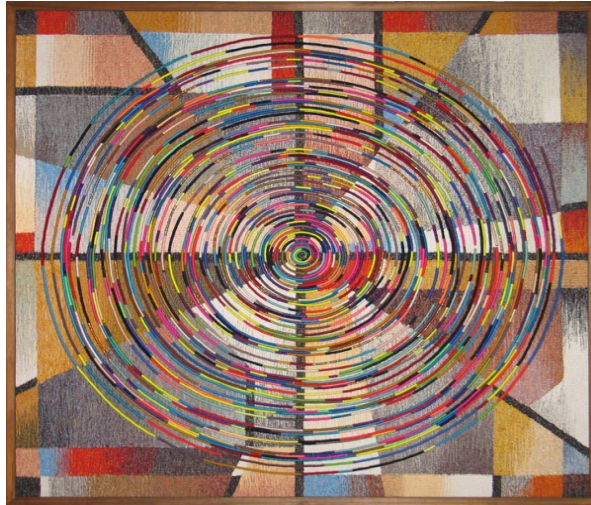


Figure 4. The tapestry “Spiral”, 2003, size 110 x 110 cm.

Contemplation of the spiral like image by the human gives its perception more frequently psychedelic character, and here it is necessary to mention that the symbol is a peculiar sign that speaks about multiply meaning of the image. The

visual subject image and secret deep sense serves in the symbol structure as two poles, unthinkable one without other, as the sense loses its patency outside the image, and the image outside the sense is scattered into isolated components. Thus, at least, we like to show the philosophical hidden motif of this work.

It is notable that figurative components, created by the complex visual structure of “flexible chee” in the modern tapestry can be perceived as some coded message from the author to viewer. Finally, in order to understand such coded text with the binary basis of narration, the viewer must possess certain decoded key. Otherwise, he will be unable to decode what was seen. However, the appearance of similar artistic phenomena in the modern art was foretold by the fine art expert, specialized on the German expressionism and abstractionism – Will Grohmann (1887-1968). He stated that in the works of fine art of future the word and word-combinations can become the full-fledged members of construction of certain artistic image or idea, expressed in the text equivalent (Chametzky, 2013).

However, the artist doesn't satisfy himself by the achieved result. The reason lies in that in the modern fine arts (including in the art of tapestry), at creation of the works the authors often feel interest in searching only the technological aspects, putting them into the top of the corner. Further, creatively speculating, they transform them into author's design “zests”. At such approach, the external effective works are received, which artistic-figurative advantages cause the doubt. They more frequently are well masked under the modern art by the technological elements of design in the interior, and don't bear the figurative and plot content.

At the classical approach, the solution of the set artistic task, the plot and intention must dictate and determine the form of any work of art, including the pictures. It can be without plot and even more ugly (emphasize on the second syllable). The idea, plot, conception, artistic thought and image – independently how we name these notions, but namely they are foundation, on which the composition must be

built. Further, for the development of its figurative structure the plot and stylistics are attracted. The art is incapable to exist without plot and artistic image, as there are creative search without finding, generalization and selection of the details, which create the artistic form filled and true.

If to determine the underlying beginning in the essence of creativity, then it will be expressed in two notions: “what” and “how”. All secrets of birth of the artistic thought in images happen in the soul of artist. In the form of art – as E. Ilyenkov writes–, the most valuable ability, which makes the necessary moment of creative-human relation to the environment, i.e. creative imagination or fantasy, developed and is developing now. Sometimes, it is also called “the thought in images” as opposed to “the thought in notions”, or property “thinking” (Ilyenkov, 1964, p. 50). If the creator is in bits and pieces, and there are no image and content, and what he wants to express or tell the viewer, then the most incredible or keen forms of search – “as” – will remain the only coverage of the creative emptiness, absence of fantasy or ambitious turns of the artist’s “self-expression”, i.e. everything that characterizing its spiritual immaturity.

A little period later after creation of “Spiral” M. Mukanov rethought his relation to the technology of “flexible chee” developed by him. He came to conclusion that if the elements of chee in his compositions would not represent any subject or figurative symbol, then they would be perceived only as external tapestry decoration –already mentioned designer’s zests. The similar approach, based upon the technological aspects of innovation, excluding in its beginning the search of artistic image, is not really creative for the artist.

In 2007 the artist works over the new author’s variant of “Triunity” (size 110 x 200 cm). He creates the first variant of this tapestry in 1999 yet and appeals to complex social-cultural problems of tribalism in it, secretly present in the modern Kazakh society.



Figure 5. The tapestry “Triunity”, 2007, size 110 x 200 cm.

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The notion of “tribalism” (English tribalism, tribal – clan, patrimonial) is decoded as intertribal and more frequently intergeneric discord inside one single people and aspiration one of the clans to separation, isolation, and eminence over other clans. As it is known, the Kazakh people consist of the united clans. They, in its turn, enter into the content of three zhuzhs – Senior, Intermediary and Junior. Thus, in tapestry the images of zhuzhs are represented by three circles in the center of artistic canvass. They form the general figure of equilateral triangle. In the first variant of tapestry around this figure, the embroidered image of clan signs – tamga or tambagoes as uninterrupted ligature in the form of squares (in other variants in the form of circle). They represent the basic Kazakh clans. The author’s idea, put in this work is expressed in the thought about that each representative of the Kazakh nation must know himself as the part of single and inseparable Kazakh nation.

The symbols are not invented by the author, but are artistically redeveloped in the context of revealing the image of Kazakh nation unity. This symbol is three equal circles, which form the unified form of the equilateral triangle, known from the ancient times. For example, in the ornamental motives of ancient Turkic applied culture. Also this symbol was used by the Central Asian ruler Mukhammedshakh on his banner in the form of three black circles, forming the triangle in the center of dark-blue flag in the rectangular form. In later period of time SviatoslavRerikh used own transcription of this symbol at creation of the “Banner of the World”. Three red-coloured circles are located in the center of white cloth in his flag. They are framed by the ring of red colour.

The visual image of three equal circles, forming the general form of equilateral triangle, also has the philosophical meaning. This image is “eternally changing constancy”, i. e. peculiar form of outlook, where it is necessary to be flexible (able to change), but not lose the essence (basis) at that. It is equilaterally applied both for one human, or community of people, so as for whole peoples and nations.

The new author’s variant of “Triunity” as opposed to his forerunner has more developed and complicated figurative structure. Thus, the central image is three circles, forming the triangle, already located inside the square of scarlet colour, from which beams disperse along the central lines in all four parts to the very end of tapestry, dividing it into equal parts. Forming the equilateral cross, they simultaneously visually intensify attention on the center of composition and balance it. At the same time they form one more figurative step, as their cross-like figurative scheme is associated with the cross-lines of shanyrak in the traditional Kazakh nomad’s tent. The stems of “flexible chee” are put as the wide band, which have no beginning or end, along the perimeter of the central square with three circles inside. Owing to the endless flow of super-matting elements they symbolize the Kazakh nation, in which each segment is the clan, big or small, makes it contribution to the unity and integrity of the ethnic group.

In spite of the complexity of the theme chosen, the author could achieve the true fusion of the figurative form and figurative content. “Flexible chee” is not simply and restrictedly entered into the figurative structure of the work, but is the inseparable part of composition, and generally works for appearance of the non-trivial artistic image.

The important moment that should be mentioned, is the fact of tapestry performance in the minimalism aesthetics. This relatively new artistic direction represented the cultural phenomenon, developed in the art of modern Kazakh tapestry. It is characterized by that the compositions of works are built with assistance of exactly found images and symbols with usage of minimal, laconically measured figurative means. The sources of its origin derived from the original creativity of the founder of Kazakh national school of tapestry – Kurasbek Tynybekov. The period of flourishing falls into the creative activity of famous masters of the Kazakh artistic textile – Alibui and Saule Bapanova. Many of their apprentices, and also other young artists of Kazakhstan, who work in the hand weaving technique, relate the creativity namely to this innovation artistic direction. Malik Mukanov didn't become exclusion of that as he created the series of tapestries “Triunity” in the figurative aesthetics of minimalism.

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The same situation happened with the next tapestry, in which Mukanov uses the “flexible chee” similar earlier with creation of “Triunity”. In 2011 together with Samal Usentaeva the artist works over the tapestry composition “Tort bajterek” (“Four poplars” in translation from Kazakh language), size 100 x 110 cm. Primarily, the authors didn't intend to draw the elements of “flexible chee” into its figurative structure. The solution appeared later, already after creation of the initial variant of tapestry, when suddenly the artist understood that “flexible chee” can help not only to enrich the compositional system, but also to fill the vivid-figurative conception of the work with new sense content. The new variant of work appeared in such a way.



In ordinary situations working at the brief sketch of composition of the future work, the artist relies on the earlier thought figurative image, and builds it in his imagination as a complex of any symbols or signs. However, in this case, all happened a little differently, as co-authors put the creative aim to develop a tapestry that with its figurative language would reveal the essence of Kazakh wishful thinking – "Tort koblatstugelbolsyn!". This is well-known "bata" (the form of verbal wishful thinking in the Kazakh traditional culture) that is the wishful thinking to the human, family and family hearth, expressed in the laconic verbal form. Its translation into the Russian language in the figurative equivalent sounds as follows: "Let's all Your four sides would be fill flushed!".

The philosophical-sense content of this wishing is built on that in culture of the Kazakh nation, similar as in many other nations of the world, the human is considered to be harmoniously integrate individual, if the following things are developed in it – "flushed", four basic life aspects of existence: spiritual, physical (the health and force for providing next generation are meant), material and creative. The same 4 criteria of harmonious perfection are identified with the image of family and family hearth, as the existence of human as the social units is imaginable without these notions.

So, namely these four aspects – spiritual, physical, material and creative are the basis, on which the figurative-sense subtext to all composition of tapestry "Four poplars is built. The four silhouettes of this tree sacred for the Kazakh people take all the space of the background of composition. They are represented by the artists in the stylized manner, in full height from the bottom to the top and are solved by the graphic-linear figurative key.

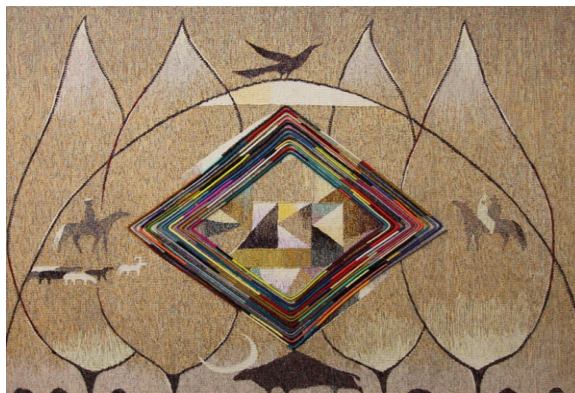


Figure 6. The tapestry "Four poplars", 2011, size 100 x 110 cm.

Wishing to express the artistic idea by the minimal means, the authors build the composition by means of crossed lines and forms of elementary geometric figures – square, semisphere and four ellipsoids. We can surely say that the artists borrowed this figurative conception from tapestry Alibui and Saule Bapanova "The World Mountain" (red-coloured tapestry", 1999, size 130 x 180 cm. The silhouette of the World Mountain, the shapes of pre-mountain hills and bed of the river flowing pass are reflected with assistance of miserly linear image. However, in spite of the external similarity of the figurative stylistics, tapestry made by Mukanov and Usentaeva is radically differed from the work of Bapanovs. As opposed to "The World Mountain", it has the evident symmetric composition, more exactly, symmetrically-equilateral. On the authors' will the lines of non-uniformly scaled geometrical figures are overlapped on each other, literally create the additional fourth physical measurement for the full expression of the figurative-sense content of the work (Harle, 2014).

The main artistic image of tapestry is represented by the diamond-shaped square, located in the very center of composition. Its four angles are oriented along the central axes of upper, lower, right and left sides of the work, and it consists from the non-uniformly scaled and differently coloured super-matting elements, which remind the traditional Kazakh “bolly cotton” – in many respects “corporate style” of Malik Mukanov’s tapestries. Over the central square of rhombus as if outlining the vault of heaven, the black line of the silhouette of the Kazakh nomad’s tent goes through. The stylized figure Kumai, a sacred bird that brings happiness and luckiness to the family hearth, set itself on its roof-shaped cover – shanyrak almost on the top of poplar tops. The small black figure of the going bull, on which back the lower angle of the rhombus is leaned, visually balance all composition. Without its presence the figurative image of rhombus as embodiment of the family hearth would become ephemeral, and hang in space without point of support that radically oppose to the general artistic-sense canvas of the work.

The small figures of people – sheep man on horseback dragging in the steep with the herd of sheep and man with woman, travelling on the horse, are located on the right and on the left from the central rhombus, saturate the figurative structure of tapestry with the found details.

The bright-contrasting coloured combination fills only the central part of the work. The rest space is represented in the soft colouring of the subdued coral, gently-pink and white-creamy colour combination, subdued to the main colour of composition – black. It is also dominating one in the second variant of this tapestry, in which the technology of “flexible chee” is used. However, the general paint colouring becomes more monochrome. This circumstance derives from the fact that co-authors consciously minimize the colour gamma in order that the “flexible chee” as the figurative element would look more successfully and visually insoluble in the general figurative gamma of a tapestry.

In this variant of tapestry “Tortbaiterek” the straws of “flexible chee” are sown upon as the integral 4-centimeter band along the edge of whole perimeter of the central rhombus. Due to their complex super-matting structure they are harmoniously written in the central figurative symbol, as it also consist of “bolly cotton” rag segments. The “flexible chee” in this composition not only support the idea that a human is perfect upon condition when his four main aspects of existence are “flushed, but also symbolized the whole specter of personal qualities, emotions and skills, accompanying the individual, which lives full-fledged and full-blooded life.

His following work with usage of the technology of “flexible chee” under name “Noyon”, 2012, size 110 x 110 cm., also the artist figurative solve the aesthetic of minimalism according to the canons.



Figure 7. The tapestry “Noyon”, 2012, size 110 x 110 cm.

Almost all figurative space of tapestry is taken by the figure of huge black bull with tossed up head and horns, stylized in the form of moon. Visually heterogeneous, coloured and numbered elements, united by the artist’s fantasy in the silhouette of growing moon, symbolize the community of people, who are in the direct effect of the main personage of composition, whose figurative image is evident to the viewer in the form of small human figure – Noyon. He sits in the tent, which balances on the very top of the mountain that represents the bull’s back. In this case, the powerful animal, carrying the main character of composition and having the symbolic meaning in many world cultures (Golan, 1992), is represented by the author in the double sense perspective. He represents the haughty mountain as something inaccessible for subjugation by the ordinary human and at the same time some transporting object, as the internal space of its horns is filled by the super-matting segments of “flexible chee”.



Figure 8. The working moment of fastening of straws of “flexible chee” to the tapestry.

Noyon is the position in military-applied hierarchy of Mongolian army of Chyngyz Khan’s time. The thousand of warriors, which were divided into hundreds and

tens, as well as members of their families were under its subordination. His duties included not only the military management over people entrusted to it, but the solution of administrative-legal issues, such as control of observance of the code of laws – “Yasak”, legal proceeding and execution of punishments. Such wide circle of obligation, concentrated in the hands of one human, derived from that more frequently in the military campaigns the army of Great Kagan accompanied the families of warriors. Noyon was responsible only before Chyngyz Khan for the community of people, which were under his power.

Noah – the famous biblical character, son of Adam, who following the order of the Most High saved the representatives of the animal and plant world of the Earth during the Deluge. He built the big chip known as “Hoah’s Ark” for this purpose.

In the represented work the artist not simply combined personal qualities of the above-mentioned characters gifted with power and responsibility in a very interesting way, as well as to play with similarity of names. He built the multi-sided and simultaneously integral image of a human – a leader, tutor and mentor, who himself knows what way he goes and able to lead other. Such interrelationships are met in daily life of people in different displays: leader – subordinate, tutor – apprentice, trainer – wards and etc.

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The variations of black-brown, grey-steel, white and coral colours are selected in the elegant *mélange* combinations dominate in the tapestry colouring.

The artist draws the same colouring and images are small figure of a human, bull-mountain-ark, but solved in some other figurative key during the work over author’s interpretation of theme “Noyon” in the other tapestry. This work “Noyon. Spiral”, 2012, size 110 x 170 cm, created that year is differed from the first variant not only by the rectangular size. Although, the “flexible chee” in it also symbolizes the group of people, united under the guidance of one man. However, it is done not in the

form of moon, but in the quality of two spirals, winded towards each other on the figure of evenly going bull.



Figure 9. The tapestry “Noyon. Spiral” 2012, size 110 x 170 cm.

There is nothing negative in that the author made specific “doublet”, using the similar figurative means for solution of the artistic image. It turned out to be that the art of tapestry is generally characterized by the presence of numbered author’s variants of interpretations of one and the same theme. Frequently they make whole series of works, united by the single figurative style and themes. In his creativity Mukanov often draws similar approach, for example at creation of the series of tapestries “Triunity”, “Labyrinth”, “Renktidala” – in co-authorship with A. Zhamkhan, “Tort Buiterek” – in co-authorship with S. Usentaeva and etc.

Another circumstance, which justifies the multi-variance one and the same theme is the fact that in the series of tapestries “Noyon”, as in the above-listed ones, the artistic image found by the author is so monumental and multi-sided that it requires different variants of its universal figurative expression from the creator. That is what properly pushed him to the range of works under one name and with one

main character, and enough probably that in the next works he would many times appeal to the specified themes, meaning and understanding that he only touched the inexhaustible source.

In conclusion, tracing the way of birth and development of “flexible chee” technology on the example of Malik Mukanov’s creativity, it is necessary to notice that there is always possibility to find new figurative solutions for embodiment of the author’s artistic ideas before the artist who searches. At that it is necessary to remember and not forget that what was said by the great master Jan Lurse, the French artist and reformer, who revived the European art of tapestry in the second half of XX century: “The problem is not connected with technology, as the technology is only an instrument, but by no means is the starting point” (Batkin, 1978, p. 94).

Each great artist is first of all an innovator. Namely he as no one before him in a new way expresses his understanding of the secret, beauty and environment harmony, his position in relation to the forces of good and evil, his understanding of the internal essence of human interrelationships between each other and Creator. However, the innovation is impossible without tradition. Similar to the “Ariadne’s thread” it doesn’t allow losing the way in labyrinth of multi-faces, constantly rebuilding and changing world. As a result, the innovation is traditions felt, thought and embodied in a new way. Having relied on them in the creativity and opening new technological ways, the authors of tapestries are able to create non-ordinary innovation works, which express the all-measured development of modern culture of Kazakh people. As it is that:

[...] the spiritual life of Kazakh nation received in the inheritance from the previous generations the unique culture able not only to restore the surrounding world by own artistic means in accordance with the own world perception, but also enrich and develop itself in the process of interaction with cultures of other people, imparting its high aesthetic quality to them. (Akataev, 1993, p. 31)



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