

ASKHAT AKHMEDIYAROV

1. PROFILE

<i>Sex</i>	male
<i>Address</i>	Syrdariya Street 36, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan tel. 8 300 351 9483
<i>Date and place of birth</i>	13 March 1965, West-Kazakhstan oblast, Kastalovsky rayon, Altay village
<i>Education</i>	Kasteyev Shymkent College of Arts, faculty of painting
<i>Membership in creative associations</i>	Member of the Artists' Union of Kazakhstan from 1998

2. PERSONAL EXHIBITIONS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exhibition</i>	<i>Artworks exhibited</i>
Nov. 1992	"09", Museum of Regional Studies, Shymkent, Republic of Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>The Cycle</i>, 1992, diameter 100 cm, mixed technique▪ <i>Brown Displacement</i>, 1992, diameter 100 cm, mixed technique▪ <i>Light Year</i>, 1992, 55×150, mixed technique▪ <i>Lunar Soil</i>, 1992, from <i>Lunar Soil</i> series, papier-mâché▪ <i>Blue Nefertiti</i>, 1992, oil on canvas▪ <i>Composition with Circles</i>, 1992, series of four works▪ <i>Two Circles</i>, 1992, 100×100, mixed technique▪ <i>A Wheel</i>, 1992, kinetic object▪ <i>Olly I</i>, from <i>Lunar Soil</i> series, 1992, mixed technique▪ <i>Olly II</i>, from <i>Lunar Soil</i> series, 1992, mixed technique

It's hard to overestimate what is the first personal exhibition for an artist; "09" was very important for Akhmediyarov's career. The artist started embodying his projects after he had returned from Moscow having an excess of information, creativeness and enthusiasm. Akhmediyarov exhibited artworks paying much attention to the form and the space that could not be limited by the canvas. For the first time Askhat demonstrated kinetic objects, installation sculptures and changed the views of spectators on the lighting of halls.

3. GROUP EXHIBITIONS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exhibition</i>	<i>Artworks exhibited</i>
March 1989	<i>Annual Youth Exhibition, Exhibition Hall of the Artists' Union of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Asia</i>, 1989, oil on canvas, 45×66 ▪ <i>Soviet Industry</i>, 1989, oil on canvas, 43×57
1990	<i>Moscow Palette, Central House of Artists, Moscow, Russia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A Violin. Requiem for Paganini</i>, 1989, oil on canvas, 42×63
1995	<i>Teslimtash, Exhibition of Shymkent Artists, Historical Museum, Turkestan, Kazakhstan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Blue Room</i>, 1994, oil on canvas, 65×43 ▪ <i>Composition with Circles</i> ▪ <i>The Mystery of Sairam Clocks</i>, 1994, oil on canvas, 64×60 ▪ <i>A Dream Jug</i>, 1994, oil on canvas, 98×98.5
1996	<i>Blue Pepper, Tengri-Umai Gallery, Almaty, Kazakhstan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Installation with Sooshkas</i>, bags with sooshkas (ring-shaped cracknels), 200×250 ▪ <i>White Hymn</i>, 1996, mixed technique on canvas, 100×80 ▪ <i>Blue Room</i>, 1994, oil on canvas, 65×43 ▪ <i>A Bone</i>, 1995, oil on canvas, 60×100 ▪ <i>Revolt</i>, 1996, mixed technique, 150×150 ▪ <i>Brown Displacement</i>, 1992, mixed technique, diameter 100 cm ▪ <i>Light Year</i>, 1992, mixed technique, 55×150 ▪ <i>Sirius's Autumn</i>, 1996, mixed technique, 139×139

The Blue Pepper exhibition was very important for the artist. Askhat Akhmediyarov took active part in the exhibition and showed, together with his previous paintings, two new artworks created in the same year: Light Year and Sirius's Autumn. Akhmediyarov has destroyed traditional principles of structuring the space on the plane and exhibited objects – reliefs on canvas and an installation. The exhibition allowed the artist to see his artworks in the whole structure of the exposition.

1996	<i>Magnate-Portrait, Museum of Regional Studies, Shymkent, Republic of Kazakhstan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Group Portrait against the Trees</i>, 1996, oil on canvas
1997	<i>Exhibition on the occasion of the Independence Day, Oblast Theatre, Shymkent, Kazakhstan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Composition with a Cross</i>, 1997, oil on canvas, 60×85 ▪ <i>Akkoily Mosque</i>, 1997, oil on canvas, 60×85 ▪ <i>Composition with Apples</i>, 1997, oil on canvas, 60×85 ▪ <i>Khodja Akhmed Yasawi Mausoleum</i>, 1997, oil on canvas, 70×110

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exhibition</i>	<i>Artworks exhibited</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A Shaman, Telling Fortunes at the Bed of a Dying Woman</i>, 1997, water-colour on paper
2000	<i>Communications: Experience of Interaction</i> , Atakent Exhibition Centre, Almaty, Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Mess</i>, video installation
2001	<i>Kazak Eli, exhibition of Shymkent artists</i> , Congress Hall, Astana, Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>If You Want to Live</i>, 2001, oil on canvas
March-June 2002	<i>No Mad's Land</i> , The House of World Cultures, Berlin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Mess</i>, video installation
May 2002	<i>Inventory Video Art Festival</i> , Deutsch Theatre, Almaty, Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Mess</i>, video film

4. PERFORMANCES

<i>Date</i>	22 January 1999
<i>Name of the performance</i>	Trans-Dialogue with Vincent Van Gogh
<i>Location</i>	In front of the Central Shopping Centre in Shymkent, Kazakhstan
<i>Participants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Askhat Akhmediyarov ▪ Abubakir Atabekov, assistant ▪ Zhaksylyk Medeshev, opponent ▪ Vitaly Simakov, chief scientific adviser ▪ Vadim Korostelev, technical adviser ▪ Said Atabekov, technical adviser
<i>Notes</i>	There is a 10-minute video film of the performance kept by Askhat Akhmediyarov, the author is Zhaksylyk Medeshev
<i>Date</i>	2002
<i>Name of the performance</i>	The Autumn Wind (Colours of the Music)
<i>Location</i>	International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Khodja Akhmed Yasawi, Turkestan, Kazakhstan
<i>Participants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vitaly Simakov ▪ Askhat Akhmediyarov ▪ Zhaksylyk Medeshev ▪ A. Karsybayeva ▪ Aidar Niyazov
<i>Notes</i>	Photos of the performance are attached.

5. VIDEO FILMS

2000- <i>Mess</i>	10 min.
2002	Co-author: Zhaksylyk Medeshev Property of the artist

6. IMPORTANT TRIPS ABROAD

28 May 2001 – 25 August 2001	Turkey: Istanbul, Antalia, Kermer <i>Askhat Akhmediyarov painted seascapes, his painting technique evolved significantly due to work on the plein air.</i>
March 2002	Germany: Berlin <i>Invited by the House of World Cultures in Berlin, Askhat Akhmediyarov took part in the festival of Central Asia arts named Outside the Silk Way. He participated in No Mad's Land exhibition where about twenty five artists from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan presented their artworks. Akhmediyarov showed his video installation Mess, consisting of a video film and one hundred pairs of shoes.</i>

7. ARTWORKS IN COLLECTIONS

<i>Name of the collector</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Artworks in collection</i>
Vadim Korostelev	Almaty, Kazakhstan	▪ <i>Light Year</i> , 1992, mixed technique, 55×150
Sultan Alikulov	Rodnikovaya Street 36, Shymkent, Kazakhstan	▪ <i>Composition with Fishes</i> , 1992, oil on canvas, 85×90
Zhebe Advertising Agency	Shymkent, Kazakhstan	▪ <i>Tamerlan's Triumph</i> , 2001, oil on canvas, 150×200 ▪ <i>White Horse</i> , 2001, oil on canvas, 75×100

8. ACTIVITY OF THE ARTIST

In the beginning of his career, guided by Vitaly Simakov, Askhat Akhmediyarov studied the history of arts, and in particular cubism, suprematism and analytical painting of Pavel Filonov. In this period he painted vivid, tense, decorative works with a magical sense inherent in metaphysical paintings of De Chirico and futurism of Carlo Carrà. His interest to natural forms of objects, unreality of subjects and the wide palette set his artworks of this period apart from the posterior creations. The artist began to take part in group exhibitions from 1989.

In early 90s, Askhat, influenced by German painters Günter Uccer and Joseph Beuys, changed his views on painting and diverged from the concept of picturesque painting. He communicated closely with the artists of "C" structural school headed by Vitaly Simakov.

After a short trip to Moscow, Akhmediyarov splashed out his new impressions in new projects. "09", his personal exhibition in Shymkent, presented kinetic objects, installations and new artworks – objects made of sawdust. The artist has got a new attitude towards the space; he started using new techniques, in particular, collage and assemblage and search for new correlations between the colour and the form both on canvas and outside the same.

The period of vivid decorativeness has passed and the "from image to sign" principle of Malevich has become of a special sense for the artist. In that time, Askhat created a number of

“geometrical” works where he stepped aside from studying the colour and picturesqueness and focused on compositional and spatial tasks. Later on, Akhmediyarov became interested more and more in hyperrealism, so he commenced his experiments with photo-reconstruction.

Akhmediyarov joined the Artists’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1998.

In 1999, he tried himself for the first time in performances. *Trans-Dialogue with Vincent Van Gogh*, a scandal, spectacular and shocking performance, was made by the artist in front of the central shopping centre in Shymkent in 1999.

In May 2001, Askhat went to Turkey where he worked until August on *plein air* painting seascapes that was a new genre for him.

As Askhat Akhmediyarov says about himself, despite his numerous experiments he always returns to surrealistic-metaphysical dream-paintings with their tense vividness, static plastics, magical variety of subjects and strange relations between objects and images. Having been attached to many styles in different years of his life, Askhat Akhmediyarov adheres to surrealism.

9. LIST OF WORKS SELECTED FOR DESCRIPTION

a) *Paintings and Art Objects*

- *Composition with Fishes*, 1992, oil on canvas, 85×90
- *A Dream Jug*, 1994, oil on canvas, 98×98.5
- *A 1907 Photo of Khodja Akhmed Yasawi Mausoleum*, 1996, oil on canvas, 53×78
- *Brown Displacement*, 1992, mixed technique, diameter 100 cm
- *The Cycle*, 1992, mixed technique, diameter 100 cm
- *Tamerlan’s Triumph*, 2001, oil on canvas, 150×200
- *If You Want to Live*, 2001, oil on canvas
- *Sirius’s Autumn*, 1996, mixed technique, 139×139
- *My World*, 1997, oil on canvas, 30×45

b) *Video Installation*

- *Mess*, 400×400, composition made of one hundred pairs of footwear standing at the entrance; a TV-set with *Mess* video film on it inside a white box.

c) *Performances*

- *Trans-Dialogue with Vincent Van Gogh*, 1999, in front of the central shopping centre in Shymkent, Kazakhstan
- *The Autumn Wind (Colours of the Music)*, 2002, International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Khodja Akhmed Yasawi, Shymkent, Kazakhstan

10. DESCRIPTION OF EASEL WORKS

Composition with Fishes

1992

oil on canvas

85×90

no inscriptions

property of Sultan Alikulov

In the centre of the composition, there is a shoal of silvery-green fishes with red fins. They are grouped in the limited space formed by the rock. A light red rock takes almost all space of the canvas; there are several stones of various tints and sizes at its foot. At the bottom, on hot ochre sand one might see a human's head made in the metaphysical style of painting influenced by Giorgio de Chirico and his characters. Far off, behind another rock there is a narrow sea band. The sky and the emerald-umber sea, the composition of green fishes, the chlorine boulder laying aloof the silent head, and some tints in the shadowy part of the rocks are cold accents destroying the warm spectrum of the painting.

Intense red and green contrast colouring of the canvas is an expressive evidence of the southern school of painting of the artist who lived in southern Kazakhstan for many years.

Composition with Fishes is obviously influenced by surrealistic dream-paintings of Salvador Dali. There is also a strong influence of René Magritte, a Belgian surrealist, who adverted to metaphysical painting as well in his artistic explorations. As Magritte, Askhat tries not to distort forms of the objects he paints but to change their interrelations and to deform ties between objects and images. Playing with contradictions, the artist finds incredible combinations: the stone of the red rock and small slippery fishes stark inside (being the symbol of the "blind society" in this artwork) and the head with no mouth personifying silence.

By contrasts of colours, the light, the composition and the meanings, the artist aims to tell of the silent tension and deep watchful immersion in the self.

A Dream Jug

1994

oil on canvas

98×98.5

inscription on the face at the bottom: A. Akhmediyarov, 1994

Sapar Hotel, Shymkent

The square canvas shows a beautiful antique jug of unreal dimensions with a thick solid handle. The narrow neck of the jug is covered by abundant muddy black stains – the dye that was filled inside figulines in old days to treat them and splashes of which dropped on the outside. Flowing down, paint drops have left long black furrows on the right side of the jug and splashes on the left one. The monochrome background is more intensive towards the object's base: the jug's shape dissolves and its clear silhouette disappears in the dark. The jug, placed in the square, attracts all attention of a looker with its spotlight side, and its base is not included in the composition.

The alight part of the figuline, taking almost all space of the canvas, is highlighted out of the dark softly, without flare spots. The big size of the jug, much bigger than it should be, evokes strange associations with a planet.

The round shabby side of the jug is painted thoroughly, highlighting all the details and nuances of tints made by the time. The texture of the earthenware vessel is revealed by means of painting and graphics: the structure of the ancient clay is painted with thin glaze, linear silhouette of shabby, scratched texture of the jug's side was used to reach the effect of antiquity. The narrow neck with intense stains is picturesque and graphically fascinating. Paying great attention to details of the jug, the painter wanted to underline its significance, as the jug keeps the dreams and is the symbol of the eastern life.

A 1907 Photo of Khodja Akhmed Yasawi Mausoleum

1996

oil on canvas

53×78

Inscription on the reverse side: Akhmediyarov A. The Mosque from a photo of 1907.

Reconstruction-1. Dimensions 53cm×78cm, 1996.

Property of Sultan Alikulov

The painting is in the style of hyperrealism and was made from a photograph made in 1907. The main motive is the front of Khodja Akhmed Yasawi mausoleum closed by rocky ruins on one of its sides. Alongside, one might see a framework of a ruined tower. In the foreground, there is a man on the horse with a silhouette of another man behind. To the right, there is a group of an old man in white clothes astride a donkey and a small burro leaning against his legs.

The colours are brought to the radical minimum: the artist uses grisaille technique making just gentle hints at colours. Thus, the sky is whity-grey with a light blue tint, and the mass of dry coarse grass that can be seen under the ruins preserves the relations between warm and cold tints.

Growing accustomed to the depicted environment, the artist feels and expresses his nostalgia for the beginning of the century. He wanted to tell on the canvas his impressions of the old photograph made in the beginning of the 20th century, and to do it from the point of view of a today's man in the light of past decades. The end was absolutely contradictory: to communicate the impression of the old photograph through the texture of the dub in combination with fine glazes, i.e. to underline the archaism of photographic technologies of those years through even greater technologically archaic painting that may be justified just by a tendency towards direct emotional reconstruction of the landscape with motives of everyday life.

Brown Displacement

1992

mixed technique, sawdust, glue

diameter 100 cm

no inscriptions

The geometrical composition seems to illustrate Chopin's words: "The simplicity is the most complicated, it's the crown of everything". The conceptual construction predominates in the artwork, as it was supposed by the author who was fond of Zen Buddhism at the moment of its creation.

On the left side of the object one might see wide horizontal lines; their images reach the border of the object that itself is a circle of 100cm diameter.

Ten regular, equally dark stripes, laying horizontal on the plane, symbolise invasion of a state, unfamiliar for a human's mind, interference from without.

The texture surface of the sawdust structure of the circle, deep-brown stripes with light colour nuances create an austere colour spectrum.

The Cycle

1992

mixed technique, sawdust, glue

diameter 100 cm

no inscriptions

The Cycle is one of the artist's works presented at "09" exhibition in Shymkent. Having been influenced by G. Uccer, Akhmediyarov used mixed technique (sawdust, shavings, glue) for the first time in his creative work that allowed him to diverge from the picturesqueness and to turn to the object.

There are seven thick taupe circles, one inside another, in the plane of the object and one monochrome circle in the very centre of it. Wide intermittent stripes of circles with torn edges snap just beneath the centre and last further; in the bottom of the object one can see a scrap of a page from the Koran. The edges of the narrow sheet are uneven, as if having been scorched here and there and there are small abrupt Arabic characters on it.

The artist searches for a deep sense in the glimmering plane, scanty in colours. He tries to show the infinity of the space in distances measured by the light. By introducing a part of the Koran's page, he offers a delicate implication at the philosophy of religion.

Tamerlan's Triumph

2001

oil on canvas

150×200

inscription on the reverse side at the bottom: ASKHAT 2001

Zhebe Advertising Agency

This is a historical painting and, as the author says, it is the triumph of Tamerlan, i.e. he means that this is an exaggeratedly representative artwork made in the genre known in the history of arts since Assyria and Egypt and rather typical of the official art of Central Asia at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries – the first decade of the sovereignty. The main and central figure in the canvas is Tamerlan astride a black brilliant horse. Having arrived to view the construction of Khodja Akhmed Yasawi mausoleum, Tamerlan with his majestic bearing, strong constitution and gorgeous garb stands out against the crowd of his loyal subjects. White head-dresses of people inhabiting neighbouring areas, who came to see the important event, can be seen to the very horizon.

On the ground, there is a ruby carpet, setting off Tamerlan's figure abreast the sleek racer.

The guards in medieval clothes are astride Tamerlan. The soil on the foreground is painted deeply. The unfinished mausoleum looks amazing in the clear sunny day, the blue sky with white fleecy clouds is glaring and emphasising blue cupolas and shadows on the ground.

The majestic bearing and the highly raised head of the grand commander looking at the bright picturesque appearance of the sacred building, as if it lived in the clouds, express the concept of the painting, i.e. the triumph of the leader.

If You Want to Live

2001

oil on canvas

In the foreground, one might see Chingis Khan, the great conqueror and a world-known figure, acknowledged the most famous character of the second millennium. He is sitting at the table looking at the screen of a grey notebook, his right hand touching the mouse. In the screen, there is a horrifying scene of explosion of two towers of the World Trade Centre in the United States. Beyond the bounds of the table, the chaotic environment of the war is beginning. Cyborgs go out of the walls of Otrar, a parachutist is falling down; at the foot of the walls there is the battle of Otrar, turning gradually into the present-day war: tanks, smoke, scorched ruins and a military helicopter in the pitch-dark acrid smoke. Khan Tengri on the chariot is looking at everything happening from a height on the horizon.

The battle scene in the canvas is beyond the time. It is the chaos of war. The big plane of the table, covered with a scarlet table-cloth, emphasises tension and tragic nature of what is happening. Well-cared for hand of Chingis Khan with a massive bracelet on it, his rich brocade attire, a row of black plaits, a helmet with a fur list, a thick leather belt with silver insets represent the influence of the great commander. As opposed to this calm splendid composition, we see the global war in the background. Battles of all ages are mixed in the canvas; there are bullets flying towards onlookers in the centre of the composition.

Akhmediyarov created the painting having been influenced by the events of 11 September 2001 in the USA. The work has its political aspect, however we feel keen feeling towards the fellow creature. Askhat tries to show the horror, the gloom and the chaos of war in his painting. Delicate heart of the artist responds strongly to what is happening in different places in the world: explosions, terrorism, wars, aggression cannot leave the artist indifferent. Feeling disturbing dangerous possibility of the global catastrophe – the third world war – Askhat Akhmediyarov has created the painting telling of presentiment of the tragedy.

Sirius's Autumn

1996

mixed technique, acryl, sawdust, glue

139×139

inscription on the reverse side: Akhmediyarov, born in 1965,

"Sirius's Autumn", dim. 139×139, 1996

Zhebe Advertising Agency

Sirius's Autumn, as the artist says, was slightly influenced by Günter Uccer, a German artist, and also by the philosophy of Zen Buddhism.

Shimmering circles of various sizes are grouped in the absolute square of dark texture. Luminous emanating circles branch from the first ones. In the core of the largest circles, there are truncated thin hazel trunks of trees. The work has been performed in the mixed technique with use of sawdust and shavings fastened with glue and added with white acryl, dropped on the images of some round spherical objects with careless dabs, so to reach the effect of the soft glow.

Devoting himself to meditation and pure forms, deviating from the reality, the artist finds the intensity of the emanation in his work, as well as absolute cosmic political indifference.

My World

1997

oil on canvas

30×45

Inscription

A man is sitting half-turned, almost his back to the onlooker, in a slack, tranquil pose, suggesting the image of the artist himself. Leaning against a muddy white wall, he is looking

at Khodja Akhmed Yasawi mausoleum in the top of the painting. The wall that Askhat is leaning on hides a part of the mausoleum from the onlooker and takes a half of the canvas. The painting of the same artist, Akhmediyarov, named *The Mystery of Sairam Clock* is resting on the dilapidated wall with muddy yellow and grey stains and spots. The painting depicts the dark monolithic circle with three jugs and three teacups on the upper shelf symbolising the insides of the clock where the jugs fill the place of the mechanism. The clock face with arbitrarily placed big figures is flowing down from the circle by a big footstep. That is how the artist tells of the concept of transience of the time and the eternity of traditions.

The image of the mausoleum in the photographic reconstruction is traditional – the building is depicted three-quarter (a usual foreshortening). The painting almost lacks colours, just nominal relations of warm and cold hues are kept in the black and white spectrum of the painting, and all attention is focused on the play of light and texture of the antiques. The mausoleum in the painting implies ancient pilgrimage monuments, and the square canvas of *The Mystery of Sairam Clock* contains the symbols of transience of the time. The man, sitting on the ground, is a commoner with his special outlook, having close ties with ancient customs and traditions.

Video Installation: Mess

2002

400×400, video 20 min.

100 pairs of footwear, a box, video equipment

The idea of the project emerged after the author's trip to Atyrau in 1999.

One can see traditional footwear of present-day's countrymen: about one hundred fifty pairs of boots, shoes and heaps of galoshes brought by the artist from Shymkent. The footwear is placed arbitrarily and is beautiful in its spontaneous mess.

The footwear produces a throng in the small space of a model of an ordinary room. There is video equipment inside the box displaying a video performance on the monitor with moving people who takes their footwear off and then put it on again.

The footwear is an integral part of a human's life, accompanying him at all times; it's a necessary thing for a today's man. It is not customary to take off the shoes when entering a house in Europe – this is a traditional prerogative of the East. They take off footwear when entering a house, a mosque, a mausoleum, sitting down on a *supa*.

From of old, there is a tradition in the East to leave the footwear on the doorstep. It is a symbolic border between the outside world and the sacred abode, be it a mausoleum, a mosque or a common house – a dwelling of a man. Taking off shoes, a man throws away the tension he accumulated during the day and the fatigue from the way he has traversed. Releasing himself from the footwear, a man gains some freedom and easiness. The cult, appeared due to religious motives, is alive today in harmony with aesthetic and hygienic concepts.

11. DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCES

Trans-Dialogue with Vincent Van Gogh

22 January 1999

In front of the central shopping centre in Shymkent, Kazakhstan

Participants:

- Askhat Akhmediyarov
- Abubakir Atabekov, assistant
- Zhaksylyk Medeshev, opponent
- Vitaly Simakov, chief scientific adviser
- Vadim Korostelev and Said Atabekov, technical advisers

The performance was held in winter 1999 in Shymkent. In the afternoon, in a crowded place – in front of the central shopping centre – a throng of spectators gathered to see an unprecedented sight. There was a rectangular area in front of the onlookers, bestrewed with white sunflower seeds. In the background, there was a big 4-metre stand with ten repeated black and white reproductions of *The Sunflowers*, the famous painting of Van Gogh, placed in two horizontal rows. The diagonal was taken by black and white photos of Van Gogh's self-portrait.

The artist, closely cropped and with bristly face, undresses to the skin and turns to the audience – with his right hand clasped to his bosom and his left hand closing the groin. The audience is at a loss: undressing to the skin in January and in the centre of the city shocks the uninitiated, women start leaving the square.

A monotonous recorded sound accompaniment repeats: "Vincent, Vincent..."

Beside the rectangular area there are two yellow sacks subscribed "Vincent" and filled up to the top with black sunflower seeds and white envelopes.

Standing in front of the audience, the artist bows and starts plastering himself with a thick coat of pastry from foot to head. Then he lays facedown in the circle bestrewed with seeds in the centre of the plot spreading his arms and legs. Said Atabekov strews the artist with black seeds. Then the artist rises. He transforms into seeds, he is not a man anymore, just a living heap of seeds, a sculpture, a monument to the seeds. His assistants take white envelopes out of sacks and give them to the spectators (the number of which reaches almost a hundred and a half) saying: "This is the letter for you from Van Gogh". On the envelopes' faces, there are reproductions of sunflowers and black seeds are inside – a thin line alluding to the tie between the subject and the grand master.

The final gesture of the performance is the same bow as in the beginning, with the right hand at the bosom and the left hand at the groin. Punch-drunk spectators do not break up for another hour.

Askhat finds a direct notional parallel in the performance: Van Gogh lived in the south of France, in Arles, Akhmediyarov lives in Shymkent, in the south of Kazakhstan. The peak of Van Gogh's creativity is the 90s of the 19th century, the performance dedicated to him is held one hundred years later. Van Gogh was a person with bare nerves, unbalanced and defenceless. Getting undressed, Akhmediyarov denudes himself of signs of civilisation, conveniences, elementary warmth, finally (it's January!). Gaining a thick "protective" coat of seeds, similar to corpuscular painting of Van Gogh, Akhmediyarov assimilates himself with the canvases of the former. The trans-dialogue has been completed.

The Autumn Wind (Colours of the Music)

2002

International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Khodja Akhmed Yasawi, Turkestan, Kazakhstan

Participants:

- Askhat Akhmediyarov
- Vitaly Simakov
- Zhaksylyk Medeshev
- A. Karsybayeva
- Aidar Niyazov

The spectators found themselves in a room with a small rectangular table in the centre. The table on low legs is standing on the round plane made of dry steppe grass. Astride the table, on the floor there are velvet *kurak-korpes* with geometrical pattern. A still life of two traditional attributes of the life in the East – a milk jug and a tea bowl – is on the table. A miniature girl in light common clothes is sitting on the *korpa* beside the table with a *kobyz* in her hands. The action begins. Zhaksylyk Medeshev and Askhat Akhmediyarov evenly cover with newspapers all visible planes, windings and circularities; they visually create some kind of rough garb of newspapers on the girl. The performance continues with the ancient rite of ablution with *adyraspan**.

The young musician-girl holds the *kobyz* and the bow in her hands. She slightly touches the strings, and music floats in the hall with a stream of ancient tones of the Kazakh steppe. We hear a mournful song of the wind in the steppe expanses.

The artists take vessels with dyes and flat paint brushes and start coating the space, covered with newspapers, with broad straight ray-strokes. Pure colours – blue, pink, yellow, green, and red – attune the mood making the spontaneous theatrical action to create the sensation of waft of the autumn wind. White drapery, fastened with white ropes at four gores at the ends, is suspended over the rainbow composition.

The performance tells about the past and the last that we keep in our hearts.

The volatility of existence and the eternity... The firmness of foundations... The steadiness of ancient traditions... The music... The colourful melody of the steppe...

CONTENT

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* A species of grass (Kazakh name).