



"Carpet Weavers". Khalida Safarova. 1954. Canvas, Oil

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CHEERFUL ORNAMENT

The history of carpet making in Azerbaijan goes back to the depths of centuries. It has been a favorite theme of poets, artists and all creative people throughout history. Carpets have been described in poems, told in stories, fairy tales and bayats and, of course, depicted on canvas by brushes of our immortal artists.

One of such extremely rare examples is Khalida Safarova's painting "Carpet weavers" created in 1954. It was a period when measures were taken in different re-

gions of Azerbaijan to revive the art of carpet weaving. In particular, in 1953-1954, a carpet weaving workshop was established in Shabran (Davachi) district. In the same period of time, two-year courses were opened in Guba to develop (in fact, to restore the tradition) of carpet weaving in workshops and families.

Khalida Safarova holds a special place in the Azerbaijani school of painting of the Soviet period. She is known to art lovers, first of all, for her bright and diverse floral compositions – either landscape views of

blooming meadows stretching to the horizon or tapestry “portraits” of flowers. Another purely specific theme in the work of this artist is sport and sporting events represented in various forms and often shown in the dynamics of movement. It is noteworthy that both of these themes, with a few exceptions, almost completely filled the artist’s attention. At the same time, each of them was interpreted by the author in a completely individual manner: a generous diversity of colors imbued with either lyricism or open admiration for the beauty of nature, somewhat abstracted, flat and graphic representation characterized by transparent silhouette drawing, contrasting, of dynamic nature character, which is always inherent in a variety of sports.

It is well known that the young couple, Khalida Safarova and Mahmud Tagiyev, traveled extensively throughout Azerbaijan, endlessly admiring the beauties of nature.

Not a single summer, including vacations during the period of the young artists’ studies in Moscow (both of them, Mahmud from 1949 to 1953 and Khalida from 1949 to 1955, studied at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, Faculty of Painting) would pass without the young artists visiting one or another district.

Perhaps on one of such trips they visited a carpet making workshop in one of the districts of the republic, as in the year of the painting’s creation, 1954, Khalida Safarova was still a student.

The composition strikes with the freshness of its images. In its coloristic solution, as well as the situation described in general, the picture certainly differs from the usual creative image of Khalida Safarova. Free dynamic strokes seem to mold the form arbitrarily, the painting literally shines with open and pure colors and texture vibrating and shimmering with various shades. The composition is arranged in such a way that, despite its obvi-



ous sketchy nature, it resembles a kind of stop-frame, a snapshot. The artist brilliantly succeeded in conveying a light atmosphere of spontaneity, friendly communication between the girls who seem to be bantering with each other. With the obvious spontaneous nature of the work, it is noteworthy that the smallest details – like clothes on the girls or earrings in their ears, handkerchiefs, finally, a plate with peaches nestled right next to the bench with the masters – were not left without the author’s attention. It is surprising how in this dynamic pictorial texture we can easily distinguish such details as traditional “shebeke-sebet” earrings in the ears of one of the craftswomen and those with turquoise in the ears of another.

Similarly, shawls, as an obligatory attribute of women’s clothing in rural areas, attract our attention by the precision of the patterns and even the nature of the fabric from which they are made – the fine wool of the Pavloposad shawl covering the head of the first girl, or the light silk of the kalaghayi on the other two. As we know, these both types of headdresses belong to long-standing folk traditions in Russia and Azerbaijan. In both cases, we are faced not just with the arbitrary fantasy of masters, but with a slender, well thought-out system in which all the features of the product are provided for and have deep significance: the basic color of the cloth, the nature and distribution of patterns, the size.

A bright yellow Pavlovposad shawl generously decorated with bouquets of roses, a white one with a floral pattern and a lilac one with a traditional pattern, a kalaghayi, a sparkling earring “shebeke-sebet”, variegated



"Freedom". Khalida Safarova. 1980. Canvas, Oil



skirts and blouses on the girls, and finally multicolored balls of threads from which a complex pattern, also provided by tradition, will be recreated – all this gives the picture an open, joyful and festive character. In fact, in front of us are the same colors of nature, which will later turn into blooming meadows and bouquets full of freshness in Khalida Safarova's paintings.

At first glance, an ordinary scene from the life of villagers from the distant 1950s does not lose its relevance today, already in the third decade of the 21st century, reminding us that carpet weavers, the guardians of our cultural identity and artistic heritage, even in the conditions of widespread machine production of carpets

continue to use ancient techniques and materials, creating unique samples. In today's world, handmade carpets remain a symbol of exclusivity and individuality.

The carpet schools of Azerbaijan are not only a rich heritage, but also a living art that continues to develop and attract the attention of people all over the world. Each carpet made by the hands of masters in the traditions of these schools is not just an interior item but a work of art, which keeps the history, people's spirit and cultural wealth. And it is our duty to remember, know and be proud not only of the masterpieces of Azerbaijani carpet art, but also of those by whose hands they are created. 🌟