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Bronze Myths Formation. Krasnoyarsk Period of Dashi Namdakov's Creative Path

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Abstract. The studies of Dashi Namdakov's phenomenon being numerous, most of them do not concern the period of the sculptor's professional development in Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts. This article analyzes how compositional, plastic, and figurative techniques associated with the Russian academic school and integrated with deep Buryat traditions formed the basis of Dashi's artistic language in the course of his professional training. It traces the formation of the unique creative environment of the master's ideological worldview. Dashi highly appreciates the professional skills he got at the institute, emphasizes the role of such masters as academicians Lev Nikolaevich Golovnitsky (1929-1994) and Yuri Pavlovich Ishkhanov (1929-2009) and young sculptors Azat Mambetovich Bayarlin (born in 1952, Kazakhstan) and Eduard Innokent'evich Pakhomov (1951-2015, Yakutia).

Keywords: Dashi Namdakov, sculpture, academic school, national traditions, professional development, plastic language specificity.

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Research area: fine and decorative arts and architecture.

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Introduction

Dashi Namdakov, a sculptor who graduated from Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts, is globally recognized. His works are kept in leading museums in Russia and abroad; more than twenty monumental ensembles are erected around the world. The figurative and plastic language of the Buryat master, educated in the traditions of the Russian art school, is clearly grasped and in demand by the global community. Thus, a comprehensive study of Dashi's phenomenon is important for understanding the basic processes of contemporary art. The prospects of this scientific problem fully meet the challenges of modern humanitarian knowledge, systematized and generalized in the introduction to the thematic issue of *Journal of Siberian Federal University* "Topical research in the field of modern social sciences, culture studies and art history" (Koptseva, 2019).

Dashi's work attracts the attention of a wide range of researchers and publicists, the volume of publications being quite extensive. At the same time we come across a very brief mention or complete lack of information about the sculptor's student years. This often causes some inconsistencies that prevent from an objective evaluation of his achievements. We claim that the analysis of the master's worldview positions and professional language formation is in demand for two reasons. On the one hand, the growth of Dashi's fame and the success of his creative projects cause the need for a comprehensive study of the sculptor's creative biography. On the other hand, the issues of contemporary art, which do not always meet high standards of content and quality, require the attention to universally recognized successful examples, Namdakov's heritage being an example.

Theoretical framework

Regarding Russian scholars analyzing Dashi's creative path, it is worth while mentioning Nadezhda Komarova and Lyudmila Marts's publication (Komarova, Marts, Ulanova, 2010). It is considered to be leading and most in-depth. Interesting interpretations of the master's creative heritage are also giv-

en by many foreign researchers, for example, Christine Acidini (Acidini, 2015), Mail-Katriin Tuominen (Tuominen, 2012), Taina Myllyharju (Myllyharju, 2013) etc. The issue of Krasnoyarsk art school formation has been repeatedly raised in the works by Marina Moskalyuk (*Moskalyuk, 2010*) and Tatyana Lomanova (Lomanova, 2007).

The interdisciplinary approach, the complex use of the analytical apparatus of art studies, history and cultural studies helped to create an objective picture of the future master's artistic language evolution. The features of the early period of Dashi Namdakov's professional development and the conditions favouring his individual plastic language formation are considered through the principles of the cultural and historical method, which is widely applied in art studies. Biography, according to Ortega y Gasset's apt definition, is the dialectic of a thread by which one can pull out the whole tangle. A piece of art is a fragment of human life in which personal experiences and objective circumstances, originality of creative talent and criteria of style are intertwined. Being a part of cultural and historical memory, biography allows us to see the trace of life's vicissitudes of the artist in his work" (Musina, 2008: 83). A particular method of research in our case was detailing that made it possible to highlight the moments, reveal the influence and independent search in the general process.

It should be noted that these are personal observations of the author of this article that form the basis of her analytical thoughts. Working in 1987-2000s in Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts and in "The Urals, Siberia and Far East" Department of the Russian Academy of Arts, the author got personally acquainted with the masters who taught Dashi. The author was personally involved in the artistic processes taking place during the future sculptor's formation in Krasnoyarsk. Subsequent meetings with the artist, preparation and organization of his personal exhibition in the Krasnoyarsk Art Museum named after V.I. Surikov served the basis of the phenomena under the analysis. To clarify certain provisions we also interviewed Dashi Namdakov.

Discussion

The formation of the structure of art education was completed in Krasnoyarsk in 1987 with the opening of the Institute of Arts and creative studios of the Russian Academy of Arts. The positions of the “Siberian school” strengthened, and its functions became more multifaceted.

Dashi Namdakov entered Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts in 1988 at the age of 21. It was not easy for him to choose a career of a sculptor. His training began at Novosibirsk State Academy of Architecture and Art, but Dashi quickly realized that the career of an architect is not his due to a growing thirst for plastic embodiment of the surrounding and personal inner world. With neither special training nor graduation from either art school or art college, Dashinima (the master's full name means “a lucky sun” in the Buryat language) accumulated a rich experience of artistic impressions from his childhood. Dashi's artistic flair was to a large extent formed by the primeval nature of Buryatia – the Sayan Mountains, steppes, and clear rivers. Fantastic beauty of Lake Baikal opened the unfathomable cosmos of the universe to an inquisitive young man. The future master's origin is also unique. Dashi belongs to an ancient, particularly distinguished kin of the Darhans. These were the families that gave birth to the best artists, jewelers, sculptors, and masters of decorative folk art. Fire was a sacred symbol of the Darhans who passed higher spiritual knowledge from generation to generation. Bal'zhan Namdakov, Dashi's father, was a famous folk artist. He was a blacksmith and an artist. He also created Buddhist tangki (icons), did sculpture and wood carving, and weaved carpets.

In Krasnoyarsk, when looking through the semester works of the students who studied sculpture, Lev Golovnitsky who became Dashi's artistic supervisor at his third academic year and took him under personal custody, immediately noticed Dashi's special talent. When Dashi was a fourth year student, Golovnitsky, the head of the Siberian-and-Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Arts at that time, violated all administrative rules and gave him an individual studio there, thus, almost granting Dashi an individual training. Thanks

to such intensive immersion, or “brainstorming” as they call it now, it took Dashi four years (instead of six years required) to graduate from the university. The importance of professional lessons and the influence of Golovnitsky's personality in Dashi's further development cannot be overestimated.

Lev Nikolaevich Golovnitsky (1929-1994), academician, national artist of the Russian Federation, professor. Golovnitsky's masterpieces are kept in the funds of the State Tretyakov Gallery, the Russian Museum, in the galleries and museums of Novosibirsk, Saratov, Volgograd, Smolensk, Kurgan, Arkhangelsk, and Chelyabinsk, as well as in foreign collections. The master's easel creative work is full of expressive plastic findings, keen observation, sometimes increased drama, and sometimes irony. Lev Nikolaevich came to Krasnoyarsk to head the Siberian-and-Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Arts from the Urals. By that time he was already famous for having created a monumental sculpture; his works became the golden pages of Russian monumentalism. Golovnitsky had the brightest talent: he was not even thirty when his composition “Orlionok” (“Eaglet”) was sent to the international exhibitions in Brussels and Toronto (that was a rare thing in the Soviet years!). Later, the Lenin Komsomol prize-winning monument of the same name was erected in Chelyabinsk, its miniature copies were cast in Kasli as souvenirs. The imagery of the monument “Tyl – Frontu” (“To the Front from Behind the Enemy Lines”), erected in Magnitogorsk, is comparable with Evgeny Vuchetich's unique sculptural ensembles in Volgograd and Berlin.

The sculptural bust of Alexander Pushkin was truly inspired by the high poetry. This chamber composition was created by the master in collaboration with his wife **Enrika Emil'evna Golovnitskaya-Eckert (born in 1931)**, a talented sculptor, surprisingly subtle and intelligent woman. Enrika Emil'evna was a unique person. With her appearance and manners she was an icon

of the highest traditions of the previous generations' artistic environment. Her father Emil Oscar Friedrich Eckert was also a sculptor. He studied in VKhUTEMAS. During the war years, in 1944, together with his wife Elena Georgievna Morozova he was one of the initiators of the children's art school in Saratov. The fate of Elena Morozova, Enrika's mother, was amazing. Being a sculptor-animalist and a talented graphic artist, she worked with Samuil Yakovlevich Marshak at the publication of children's books, one of the books about Mexico being written especially for her. Lev Nikolaevich's special erudition and artistry are also worth while mentioning. He was broadly educated and had especially deep knowledge in the history of art. When he spoke, it was impossible to tear oneself away from his words and gestures... (Fig. 1, 2).

Dashi's communication with Lev Nikolaevich and Enrika Emil'evna went far beyond

an academic process. The student visited their home, used their unique library. This family helped young Dashi come across the best artistic traditions of Russia, pass from one artistic dynasty to another. In fact, they helped Dashi enter the limitless universe of the world's artistic heritage and find clear guidelines in it. Dashi recalls that together with Lev Nikolaevich he mastered the entire history of art: "... together with the Teacher we were members of the crew of chariots reproduced on the famous reliefs of Assyria". The knowledge was not a dry theory; it was passed through a great artist's mind and heart and became a living context of creativity, an inexhaustible source of search for Dashi's whole life.

In his youth, Lev Golovnitsky mastered professional skills and the world's artistic heritage with leaps and bounds thanks to his unique talent. It is this experience that probably allowed him to feel receptivity and unique potential in Dashi's talent. He did his best to teach Dashi to achieve impressive results in



Fig. 1. L.N. Golovnitsky



Fig. 2. L.N. Golovnitsky. Tyl-Frontu (To the Front from Behind the Enemy Lines) (monument). 1979. Magnitogorsk



Fig. 3. E.E. Golovnitskaya-Eckert



Fig. 4. L.N. Golovnitskii.
E.E. Golovnitskaya-Eckert. The Monument
to Alexander Pushkin. 1983. Chelyabinsk

the artistic conception, to devotedly indulge in creativity. Respect for the emerging personality was unprecedented. At the very beginning of Dashi's work at the diploma the teacher did not accept the proposed stylization of the figure of the horse with its too round body and thin legs. An academic variant with more correct proportions was closer to him. But in the end, watching the work in progress, Golovnitsky supported the young sculptor's decision.

Convincing stylization, which Dashi mastered later, is possible only on the basis of a solid professional foundation. Dashi would not have achieved the heights of creativity, if he hadn't mastered the perfectly balanced composition, purity of silhouette, expressive modeling, and fine pattern in the beginning of his creative work. Besides Lev Golovnitsky, several other unique masters were Dashi's teachers. Yuri Pavlovich Ishkhanov, a sculptor with high professionalism and wide range of skills, stood at the origins of teaching sculpture at Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts. At that time he was the head of the sculptural direction at the

Institute. Ishkhanov managed to create a truly creative atmosphere in the artistic environment of Krasnoyarsk.

Yuri Pavlovich Ishkhanov (1929-2009), national artist of the Russian Federation, honorary citizen of Krasnoyarsk, academician, professor. While studying in the creative studios of the Academy of Arts of the USSR in Leningrad (St. Petersburg at present), the Armenian sculptor decides to link his fate with the city on the Yenisei, and, in fact, becomes a real Siberian. Ishkhanov-monumentalist's clear and concise style manifested itself in various works with their vast geography. Ishkhanov's most significant multi-figure composition "Kandal'nyi put'" ("Shackle way") (architect A.S. Demirkhanov, 1979, Krasnoyarsk) still preserve the epic depth of its artistic imagery even after a radical change in ideological attitudes. Ishkhanov is the author of a number of unique memorial compositions, which are the best examples of

memorial plastics in Siberia nowadays. The monuments to M.S. Godenko, the founder of the world famous dance company of Siberia (1994), academician B.Ia. Riauzov, a national artist of Russia (1998), are among them. The monument to academician A.N. Liberov, a national artist of Russia, in Omsk (2004) is one of the most expressive ones. Over the years, the sculptor created more than fifty highly artistic portrait compositions. Many qualities are organically intertwined in the master's sculptural compositions. These are inner significance, expressive beauty of plastic and clarity of silhouette, architectonics, precision of scale and delicacy of details, richness of textures, and beauty of material.

At that time Golovnitsky and Ishkhanov were inaccessible masters for Dashi. He was shown all professional basic skills in details, given much time and attention by **Azat Bayarlin (born in 1952, Kazakhstan) and Eduard Pakhomov (1951-2015, Yakutia)**, interns of the creative sculpture studio of the Russian Academy of Arts in Krasnoyarsk. Having arrived in Golovnitsky's creative studios, Azat and Eduard immediately began teaching at the Institute of Arts and both soon received the title of associate professors. In Dashi's first and second academic years, these were they who taught him to comprehend the basics and secrets of sculptural language, to learn to understand the expressiveness of form and silhouette, to appreciate the integrity of composition and the beauty of details.

Azat Bayarlin is a well-known artist, a member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan and the Sculpture Society of Canada. The peculiar features of Bayarlin's works are perfect lines, precise shapes, and firmness of the plastic language. He masterfully uses the best qualities of various materials: metal, stone. He is equally successful in both easel and monumental sculpture.

Eduard Pakhomov died early, unfortunately. Yet, in the history of Russian and

Yakut art he is known as a versatile master, who left a rich artistic heritage in easel and monumental sculpture behind. Pakhomov's depth, kindness, and lyricism of the inner world imbue his creations with deep philosophical content and sometimes symbolism. His plastic art is a matter of freedom and impressionistic subtlety.

This was the case of informal relations between a pupil and his teachers. Dashi liked to come to Azat and Eduard in their studios, he closely watched them work, and they talked a lot. At the first stage of his training Dashi was weaker than his classmates, as he did not have even an art school education. But he eagerly absorbed the basics of professional skill, was surprised by firmness and inner fullness of Azat Bayarlin's sculptural forms, and grasped Eduard Pakhomov's spirituality and the poetic of artistic image.

Conclusion / Results

At his meeting with the students majoring in sculpture in Krasnoyarsk in 2017 Dashi said that he could not imagine how his creative life would have developed, if he had fallen under a strict, centuries-old system of academic art education of the capital schools of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The young Krasnoyarsk art school that formed Namdakov's talent by the will of fate was in the stage of formation and experiment. The atmosphere of creative enthusiasm and artistic freedom in the artist's professional development is crucial. We argue that subsequent flexibility of the artistic method and bold versatility of searches inherent in Dashi are largely due to the fact that, having received strong professional knowledge and skills, he remained internally free and did not have to overcome the "school", consciously go beyond the academic system.

Dashi's teachers were outstanding personalities, each with their own style and unique works of art in their creative baggage. Yet, Ishkhanov, Bayarlin and Pakhomov got their professional skills at I.E. Repin Leningrad Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, the best Russian school of that period. At the Institute, that traces its history back to the

Imperial Academy of Arts, high academic culture, developing over time, carefully preserved the invaluable experience of professional skills. Learning from them, Dashi Namdakov has been fully preserving the best experience of Russian classical sculpture. The artist undoubtedly enriches it with his national understanding of plastic art, the depth of rethinking the national and global culture.

Dashi's phenomenon is in his artistic language that is in demand all over the world. His bronze myths began to emerge in the early period of creativity, his graduation work "Geser" being an eloquent example of this. Geser is the son of heaven, the heavenly rider, the winner of demons, the patron of warriors, the giver of good fortune, the hero of the Buryat, Mongolian and many other Asian eposes... The theme of the horse and the rider is still one of Dashi's work priorities today. The sculptor recalls how difficult it was in the student period to find a feeling of flight and soaring for quite a heavy horse and a rider regarding their weight and proportions. But in the final version the base in the form of swirling clouds was found. This supports the meaning of the composition both decoratively and in the aspect of the image conveyed. The artistic image of powerful, dynam-

ic and flying between heaven and earth Geser that completed Dashi's student period to some extent concentrates the creative energy and the spirit of freedom and experiment which were inherent in the Siberian sculpture school at the time of its formation (Fig. 5, 6).

In the current period of ethnic revival and ethnic consolidation Dashi is an example of deep preservation of national identity. At the same time, he gives a convincing example of active life in the global process of creative development and rapprochement of cultures. A Russian, an Armenian, a Kazakh and a Yakut were among Dashi's immediate teachers, thus, creating a cauldron of world cultures, a weave of Buryat, Kazakh, Yakut and Russian national traditions. Hence, Dashi's ability to transform Buryat myths to their universal understanding, to enrich them with unexpected lines, to operate with the entire arsenal of the global culture from ancient worlds and antiquity to actual modern searches. The peculiar feature of education, individual approach to the young master in Krasnoyarsk in the newly established Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts favoured a successful link between ethnic cultural traditions and modern artistic means of expression in the future.



Fig. 5. Dashi Namdakov



Fig. 6. Dashi Namdakov. Geser. 1992. Bronze. From the collection of Siberian State Institute of Arts named after Dmitry Khvorostovsky

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Становление бронзовых мифов. Красноярский период творческого пути Даши Намдакова

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Аннотация. Существует множество исследований феномена скульптора Даши Намдакова, но большинство из них не касается периода его профессионального становления в Красноярском государственном художественном институте. В данной статье анализируется, как в результате профессионального обучения композиционные, пластические, образные приемы, связанные с российской академической школой наряду с глубинными бурятскими традициями, легли в основу художественного языка Даши. Прослеживается сложение уникальной творческой среды, в которой происходило мировоззренческое становление мастера. Сам Даши высоко оценивает пройденную им профессиональную школу, подчеркивает роль таких мастеров, как академики Лев Николаевич Головницкий (1929–1994) и Юрий Павлович Ишханов (1929–2009), а также молодых тогда скульпторов Азата Хамбетовича Баярлина (р. 1952, Казахстан) и Эдуарда Иннокентьевича Пахомова (1951–2015, Якутия).

Ключевые слова: Даши Намдаков, скульптура, академическая школа, национальные традиции, профессиональное становление, специфика пластического языка.

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