

## “DOMESTIC GROTESQUE IN THE WORKS OF ISOMIDDIN ESHONQULOV”



**Kh.P. Khayitboboyeva**

Scientific supervisor

**Guzal Bokiyeva**

Art History (fine and applied arts) education student of 3rd year

National Institute of Fine Arts and Design

named after Kamoliddin Bekhzod Faculty of Art History and

Museology

[guzalbokiyeva@gmail.com](mailto:guzalbokiyeva@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This article provides an analytical evaluation of the works of Isomiddin Eshonqulov, a prominent figure in contemporary Uzbek painting, through an artistic-theoretical approach. While analyzing the artist’s well-known pieces such as “Melancholy,” “The Roof,” “Pressure,” and “Zumrad’s Braid,” the article explores the meaning of artistic irony, its conceptual layers, and its connection to social life.

**Keywords:** Isomiddin Eshonqulov, contemporary art, ironic image, social critique, artistic metaphor, Uzbek painting.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье проводится аналитическая оценка творчества Исомиддина Эшонкулова, видного деятеля современного узбекского изобразительного искусства, через художественно-теоретический подход. При анализе известных работ художника, таких как «Меланхолия», «Крыша», «Давление» и «Коса Зумрад», исследуется значение художественной иронии, её концептуальные слои и связь с социальной жизнью.

**Ключевые слова:** Исомиддин Эшонкулов, современное искусство, иронический образ, социальная критика, художественная метафора, узбекская живопись.

**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada zamonaviy o‘zbek rassomligi sohasida mashhur shaxs bo‘lgan Isomiddin Eshonqulovning asarlari san’atnazariy yondashuv orqali tahlil qilinadi. San’atkorning “Melancholiya,” “Tom,” “Bosim” va “Zumrad sochlari” kabi mashhur asarlari tahlil qilinib, badiiy ironiyaning ma’nosi, uning kontseptual qatlamlari va ijtimoiy hayot bilan bog‘liqligi o‘rganiladi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** Isomiddin Eshonqulov, zamonaviy san’at, ironik obraz, ijtimoiy tanqid, badiiy metafora, o‘zbek rassomligi.

Contemporary art is becoming not only a means of depicting beauty but also a tool for analyzing, critiquing, and provoking thought about social life. One of the artists in Uzbek painting who has deeply embraced this function and translated it into artistic form is Isomiddin Eshonqulov. His works vividly and sharply depict ironic expression, social pressure, mental stereotypes, and psychological states through artistic imagery. In modern painting, Isomiddin Eshonqulov can be cited as an artist who has shaped his own direction by turning from metaphorical surrealism toward national imagery and ironic grotesque. As a collection of works created in 2023–2024, the exhibition “Reverse View” was presented to the public, in which the artist introduced his new creative dimensions from a professional perspective. Isomiddin Eshonqulov is one of the prominent figures of contemporary Uzbek visual art, and his work stands out for its rich symbolic meaning, irony, and social critique.



The artwork “Melancholy” by Isomiddin Eshonqulov was created in 2024. In this piece, a woman is depicted lying on a chest, covered with layers of colorful bedding. The woman appears exhausted, worn out, and burdened. The irony lies in the fact that these beddings symbolize neither comfort nor peace. Instead, they represent the heavy obligations and oppressive stereotypes imposed on the woman. The artist reveals the inner despair, fatigue, and loneliness hidden behind the external display of luxury. The title “Melancholy” is not accidental – in this work, the woman lives while concealing her inner torment.



In the painting “Taxmon”, the artist depicts a stack of traditional Uzbek bedding arranged one on top of another, with people squeezed in between them. Created in 2023, the work uses these figures to symbolically represent individuals oppressed by social pressure, customs, and traditions. The male figure positioned at the very top symbolizes the dominance of the patriarchal system. The artist critiques a system that, while appearing beautiful on the outside, actually suppresses personal freedom. The main irony of the artwork lies in its portrayal of mismanagement within the family, the pressure on women, and the lack of freedom for both wives and children.



In the painting “Zumrad’s Braid”, the door is presented as a symbolic metaphor—representing a girl’s transition from her own family to another, a process she is prepared for from birth. The stacked bedding above symbolizes her dowry being gathered, with the girl's head depicted at the very top, wrapped in a bundle. The irony in the artwork lies in how national traditions prepare a girl for her future marital home from an early age, paralleling the accumulation of her dowry. Her head is shown bound with a braid, which is entwined like a chain—symbolizing that this fate is tied to every girl, inescapably linked like a chain. As tools of irony, the artist uses the pillow and the girl's face to subtly critique this cultural expectation.



In his work titled “Pressure”, the artist not only presents artistic imagery but also reveals a harsh societal reality through irony. In the painting, we see colorful pillows stacked on top of each other. From between them, human faces emerge — their expressions show suffering; some appear as if they are barely breathing.



The irony lies in the fact that pillows are usually symbols of comfort, peace, and rest. However, Eshonqulov depicts them as instruments of pressure. The colorful fabrics and national patterns may look beautiful on the surface, but hidden beneath them is a weight — oppression so intense it can crush life itself. The people trapped among the pillows represent ordinary members of society — forced to live under social norms, traditions, and the unspoken “rules” of society. This is a metaphorical critique of the social stereotypes, obligations, and fears that are veiled under the guise of cultural identity.

In his work “Ending the Game,” Eshonqulov places men among quilted bedding that resembles a chessboard. Each figure appears rigid and forcibly posed, stacked one on top of another. Their faces show discontent, yet they seem compelled to submit. At the very top, a controlling hand is depicted, orchestrating the scene.

In this piece, the artist likens society to a game of chess — everyone is assigned a fixed role, unable to move freely, like puppets. The quilted bedding symbolizes more than just a place to live; the checkered pattern



represents limited thinking and predetermined rules. Each individual becomes a victim of this game, forced to “play” through life. The "end of the game" reflects their inner discontent, exhaustion, and a silent rebellion against the system.

The artwork "Kimoshdi To'y" was also created in 2024. Through this work, the artist criticizes the materialization of wedding and marriage ceremonies and the transformation of a woman's fate into a "kimoshdi" (bargain) sale. The bride is not portrayed as an individual but rather as a kind of "property," even placed alongside cattle. This reveals the woman's position in society,



her lack of rights, and the absence of personal freedom of choice. The main irony in the artwork is that the bride stands next to the cattle, and the wedding is held as a "kimoshdi" transaction. In other words, material interests take precedence over human relationships. The men are depicted at the lower part of the composition alongside bags of money — a critical interpretation that in society, monetary values have replaced human values.

In the painting titled "1+5 Kalla" by the artist, a unique form of irony is depicted. The artwork shows one body with five heads joined together. Each head has a different expression — one looks surprised, another angry, while another is portrayed with sarcasm. The heads are adorned with differently colored traditional caps (doppi), yet they share a single body. The varied facial expressions of the heads represent inner unrest, aimlessness, or the clash of social roles.

The hands are shown in a joined position, symbolizing a person who tries to appear calm and conciliatory outwardly but harbors great internal conflicts. The doppi and traditional coat (chopon) emphasize an Uzbek appearance but are used here in a satirical way.

This artwork ironically critiques the internal contradictions and hypocrisy present in society. For example, having many heads on one person symbolizes someone who lacks a personal opinion and tries to memorize and adapt to everyone else's views.



"1+5 Kalla" is not just an unusual image but carries a deep social critique. Through this work, Eshonqulov encourages the viewer to think critically and see the deeper problems in society.

In conclusion, it can be said that Isomiddin Eshonqulov is a creative artist who has established a unique school in contemporary Uzbek art. In his works, truth, irony, and artistic expression are powerfully intertwined. Through simple events, objects, and images, the artist manages to reveal complex social realities.

Through Eshonqulov's creativity, we see that art is not only an aesthetic pleasure but also a philosophical reflection, an understanding of society, and even a force that calls for change. Compared to the customs of other nations, the artist depicts, through national motifs and symbolism, how in Uzbek families women often bear heavier burdens or how men exert pressure on women, reflecting family problems.

Using ordinary household items, the artist conveys profound ideas and once again proves that irony is a powerful and effective means of art.

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