

Recipes for Broken Hearts  
Bukhara Biennial Guidebook

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Development Foundation

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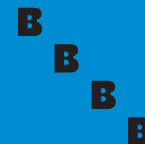
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# Recipes for Broken Hearts

## Guidebook



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The Bukhara Biennial team and participating artists are grateful for all those who brought their support that made this inaugural edition possible. For full acknowledgements, please visit our website.

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All of the works in the Bukhara Biennial are new commissions produced by the Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation

Bukhara  
Biennial  
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## A Vision for Bukhara

Gayane Umerova  
Commissioner

Bukhara is a city that has always captured the human imagination. For over two millennia, its streets, monuments, and stories have shaped – and been shaped by – the movement of people, ideas, and cultures. It is a city where knowledge once lit the path for entire civilisations; where poetry, science, and craftsmanship flourished side by side. As Al-Biruni once wrote, Bukhara was ‘the meeting place of the learned, the sanctuary of wisdom and the cradle of civilisation.’ Choosing Bukhara as the host city for Uzbekistan’s first international art biennial was not a gesture of nostalgia – it was an act of conviction. A belief that this remarkable city, with its intact historic core, vibrant communities, and living traditions, could once again stand as a global centre of creativity, dialogue, and exchange.

The Bukhara Biennial was born out of a broader vision. Years ago, the Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation (ACDF) began an ambitious programme to revitalise the heart of the Old City – not only through preservation but through activation. Working hand in hand with international experts, including UNESCO, Wilmotte & Associés, and Deloitte, we set out to ensure that our most treasured sites would no longer remain dormant but become platforms for contemporary creation and learning. This vision is part of a wider cultural renaissance championed by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan – a long-term national strategy that places culture, arts, and heritage at the core of the country’s development, recognising them as among the nation’s most powerful and enduring assets.



This inaugural edition is the culmination of that vision – a project rooted in deep care for heritage, guided by collaboration, and driven by the belief that contemporary art can open up new ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling. It is with immense pride that we welcome audiences to a biennial that is not only hosted in Bukhara but truly shaped by it.

I invited Diana Campbell to serve as Artistic Director of this edition, titled *Recipes for Broken Hearts*. Her curatorial approach brings together diverse voices – from internationally acclaimed artists such as Delcy Morelos and Antony Gormley to emerging talents from Central Asia and the master artisans of Uzbekistan. Her work has fostered authentic and meaningful collaborations across disciplines, generations, and geographies – and in doing so, it has brought to life the very spirit of Bukhara. I find it admirable that all artworks presented this year are produced in Uzbekistan, demonstrating, perhaps against all odds, that we all speak the same language when it comes to creation. Indeed, this biennial is, above all, a tribute to the artisans of this land. Those who, through craft and care, have kept Bukhara's identity alive across centuries. Their skills, passed down through families and neighbourhoods, form the foundation of what we are building today. And it has been profoundly moving to witness the exchanges between artists and artisans, where new forms have emerged from old knowledge.

The Cultural District that now houses the biennial brings together some of Bukhara's most iconic – and until recently, inaccessible – architectural sites: the Magoki Attori Mosque, built over a Zoroastrian temple; the Khoja Garkushon complex; a constellation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century caravanserais. With the support of Dubai-based architect Wael Al Awar,

these spaces have been thoughtfully reimagined as sustainable, inclusive venues for artistic practice and public engagement – not just for the duration of the biennial, but for the years to come.

Since its establishment in 2017, the ACDF has been dedicated to amplifying Uzbekistan's cultural voice on the global stage – from Venice and Paris to London, Milan, Beijing, and beyond. This mission has been consistently strengthened by the unwavering support of Saida Mirziyoyeva, Head of the Presidential Administration of Uzbekistan. Today, that same energy is being directed inward: towards building institutions, opening spaces, and investing in the future of creativity at home. From the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Tashkent to the forthcoming National Museum of Uzbekistan designed by Tadao Ando, our aim is clear – to create a cultural infrastructure that is both enduring and empowering.

The Bukhara Biennial is one of the most important steps on that path. It is a space where young people – who make up more than half of Uzbekistan's population – can see themselves, their stories, and their futures reflected in the work. It is a place of possibility, where heritage meets innovation, and where local and global voices come together in a shared creative language.

As a special project of this edition, we are especially proud to host *On Weaving*, the winning proposal of the AlMusalla Prize launched by the Diriyah Biennale Foundation in Saudi Arabia. Conceived by EAST Architecture Studio with AKT II and artist Rayyane Tabet, it is a powerful meditation on Islamic architecture and memory – and a perfect complement to our own ethos of continuity and reinvention.

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary team of professionals, artists, curators, producers, artisans, and local residents who brought the

biennial to life. Their commitment, imagination, and generosity have made this vision real. The ACDF team has once again managed to deliver an event the world will now add to their calendar, and I am genuinely grateful to them.

This is only the beginning. The Bukhara Biennial is designed as a long-term initiative – one grounded in trust, built through collaboration, and devoted to creating opportunities that are lasting, inclusive, and transformative. It reflects our country's dedication to the preservation of heritage and the growth of the creative economy, as well as our belief in the power of culture to shape not only identity but the future.

To everyone who has joined us for this first edition: thank you. You are now part of Bukhara's story – and we look forward to building what comes next, together.

## Curatorial Statement: Recipes for Broken Hearts

Diana Campbell  
Artistic Director

The heart is a complex instrument, in need of constant maintenance as it beats over the course of a lifetime. More than a physical organ pumping blood, the heart functions as a locus of identity and loss, connecting the mind, soul, and body, and bridging material and spiritual worlds. It also plays a core role in art, as it 'produces imaginative awareness and comprehensive intuition of the mysterious and the miraculous.'<sup>1</sup> In many mystical traditions, the heart is the key to connecting with the higher frequency of the divine. Perhaps even more so than the brain, the heart contains an 'imaginative intelligence that is so powerful that it can change the world in what it manifests through the combination of knowing and loving... Art facilitates insights into how humans participate in worldmaking – how our words, thoughts, and actions impact us, as well as how we shape and are shaped by our environments.'<sup>2</sup> The heart's pervasive awareness means that we feel it breaking with extreme intensity. Many of our environments today are teeming with heartbreak – from environmental collapse to conflicts and polarisation. Like any form of rupture, heartbreak can be a dynamic space for transformation. It is one of our greatest teachers, a universal experience that can be felt both individually and collectively and that links us to all times and places, especially through creative expression.

<sup>1</sup> Sofia Lemos, 'On the Practices and Poetics of the Creative Imagination', in *Meandering: Art, Ecology, and Metaphysics*, ed. Sophia Lemos (Sternberg Press, 2024), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Lemos, *Meandering*, 13.

The heart's creative power comes into view when we look to tenth-century Bukhara, a time and place that can offer us many ways of mending heartbreaks. Bukhara in the tenth century was home to Ibn Sina, a polymath known as the father of modern medicine whose contributions to science and philosophy are vast. Located in the heart of Central Asia in modern-day Uzbekistan, Bukhara was an intellectual and economic centre along the Silk Roads, a place where religious and cultural traditions from all corners of the world commingled to produce a rich atmosphere of learning, craft, and artistic production. That atmosphere of vigorous intellectual exchange is reflected in Ibn Sina's correspondence with another great polymath, Al-Biruni, as well as in the writings of the great Sufis who lived there in subsequent centuries. For more than a millennium, Bukhara has been a place where people came together to find togetherness in the quest for a better life through a search for spiritual, intellectual, and worldly knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

Bukhara is home to numerous holy Sufi shrines, which serve not only as physical places of worship but also as spiritual sanctuaries that nurture the heart and mind. Among these shrines are those dedicated to female Sufi masters, whose teachings and legacies enrich the spiritual landscape of Bukhara, offering visitors an opportunity to heal emotional wounds and rejuvenate the soul.<sup>4</sup>

Bukhara also became renowned for its artisans, who were often depicted by poets in *shahrashub*, a genre of short love poems about young craftsmen.<sup>5</sup> The beauty and magnificence that these artisans created in Bukhara

captivated poets and travellers for centuries and contributed to the celebration of this era in the city's life through to the present day.<sup>6</sup> It is a city built from mud bricks. In his lost manuscript *Philosophy of Orientals*, Ibn Sina is said to have posited that, unlike cities of stone, which stand tall against the forces of nature, mud cities like Bukhara accept in their very creation that they are part of nature and its changes. This description rings true when we consider Bukhara's trajectory over the centuries – from a Zoroastrian and Buddhist Sogdian city-state to a capital of a Turco-Mongol dynasty to an abode of Sufi saints – as it embraces influences from all sides, moving between ethnic, religious, and cultural identities to produce a complex historical tapestry that invites study and reflection.

Neuroscience shows us how the brain responds to beauty and influences our emotions. Ibn Sina also explored this topic in Bukhara before the discipline even had a name. He was as concerned with mental and emotional health as he was with physical health, diagnosing and providing treatments for ailments such as kidney stones, inflammation, and insomnia, as well as lovesickness. We encounter Ibn Sina and a tale of heartbreak when eating *palov*, the national rice dish of Uzbekistan and much of Central Asia. One of the many stories surrounding this staple of Uzbek cuisine is that *palov* was invented by Ibn Sina to mend the broken heart of a prince who could not marry the daughter of a craftsman. *Palov* was simultaneously a recipe and a prescription: Old recipes suggest it as a cure for ailments; when we eat comfort food like *palov*, our dopamine levels increase, just as they do when we experience togetherness, either intimately or collectively.

3 James Pickett, *Polymaths of Islam: Power and Networks of Knowledge in Central Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2020).

4 Aziza Shanazarova, *Female Religiosity in Central Asia: Sufi Leaders in the Persianate World* (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

5 Bruijn, J.T.P. de, Talat Sait Halman, and Munibur Rahman, 'Shahrangiz', in P. Bearman (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online* (EI-2 English), (Brill, 2012).

6 The Iranian writer Ali Akbar Dehkhoda defined the name 'Bukhara' as meaning 'full of knowledge', in recognition of the city's profound and enduring resonance for artists, poets, and scholars.

The Nobel Prize-winning behavioural economist Daniel Kahneman, who specialised in the study of happiness for over two decades, spoke of *commensality*, a term meaning shared meals with friends, as one of the strongest positive contributors to our emotional well-being. Not only relegated to the world of food, recipes are beautiful metaphors for how we share and transmit remedies, express love, and preserve memories that carry with them a sense of identity and belonging. A link between eating and healing can also be found in the etymology of the word *restaurant*. Derived from the French *restaurer* ('to restore'), the word referred to an eighteenth-century Parisian establishment that served mostly soups and broths meant to restore your strength and health.

We believe that Bukhara holds many extraordinary recipes in its heart. The Bukhara Biennial is part of a long-term process of revitalising some of the extraordinary sites that were essential to developing the culture that we celebrate today, bringing them back into the pulse of life of the city. The process of making the biennial combines the restoration and conservation of the city's architectural heritage with new artistic contributions.

Exploring various ways of being together and recognising the role of beauty in mental and emotional health, *Recipes for Broken Hearts* takes the form of an expanded feast of art and culture held at spaces across Bukhara that have been renewed for contemporary life while remaining informed by their rich past. The exhibition echoes the fourteenth-century celebrations in the Timurid Empire – which featured an abundance of art, music, poetry, dance, and, of course, food – that could extend for as long as three months.<sup>7</sup> Working across all sensorial registers that complement the visual,

*Recipes for Broken Hearts* takes inspiration from these grand banquets, which, in the words of chef Ferran Adrià, were possibly the first art installations in history.<sup>8</sup>

Learning from cultures of gathering from Uzbekistan and around the world, *Recipes for Broken Hearts* is imagined as a free and open-to-all forum that contributes to building meaningful bonds between people, relying on art's power to connect people from vastly different cultural backgrounds. Participatory and collaborative, the curatorial process invites practitioners from the visual arts, craft, culinary arts, sound, design, and fashion, as well as visitors, to metaphorically bring something to the table, or *dastarkhān*, creating a collection of heart-mending recipes born in Bukhara.

Culture can be described as how we experience togetherness in time. Time is an essential ingredient in healing a broken heart; it is also essential in cooking Uzbek food and in making many of the crafts for which Bukhara is known, most famously carpets. Time is difficult to visualise, but it is something you can clearly taste – whether it's properly cooked palov, a fermented wine-like drink, or a pickle. Healing from heartbreak is a process, and *Recipes for Broken Hearts* highlights process-based works developed through community engagement and a rich public education programme that celebrates what we can learn when we soften and open our hearts.

With the long production time of many of the contributions to *Recipes for Broken Hearts* and a focus on time-based mediums such as video, music, and performance, the exhibition places time as the crucial element in any meaningful encounter with art. The artistic contributions to *Recipes for Broken Hearts*, all newly commissioned by the Uzbekistan Art and

<sup>7</sup> Razia Sultanova, *From Shamanism to Sufism Women, Islam and Culture in Central Asia* (Bloomsbury Collections, 2020), <https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/monograph?docid=b-9780755608478>.

<sup>8</sup> Ferran Adrià and Marta Arzak, 'Emerging Dialogues Between Haute Cuisine and Art', in *Politics of Food*, eds. Dani Burrows and Aaron Cezar (Sternberg Press, 2019), 186.

Culture Development Foundation, tap into the rich intellectual, spiritual, and cultural legacy of Bukhara. The exhibition seeks to revitalise the many forms of knowledge produced there over the centuries, including its craft traditions, infusing this ancient wisdom with the values of today. *Recipes for Broken Hearts* endeavours to heal unjust divisions between how we see fine and applied arts and how we talk about collaboration. The turbulence of the twentieth century caused much cultural erasure, but working through collectives, guilds, and other forms of both formal and informal cooperatives, women and artisans of Uzbekistan are often the ones who have preserved traditions, knowledge, and spirituality through historical periods of heartbreak.

The first edition of the Bukhara Biennial is imagined as a lively and relational form of exhibition where the energy of the visitors comes into positive contact with the energy of the artists; similar to a feast, a concert, or a parade, your experience of the exhibition is dependent on how you engage with other people with whom you share space and time in Bukhara. We also foreground the arts in culinary arts and invite Uzbek as well as international chefs to showcase the craft of cooking, bringing in flavours from different culinary traditions that empower visitors and participants to understand the complexity of the world from Bukhara through its history with the global spice trade and to savour different recipes that, like salt, reduce the taste of bitterness in the world. *Recipes for Broken Hearts* celebrates the power we have through small gestures to conjure great transformations, such as our ability to 'make someone's day'. Describing a feast held by an enlightened prince, the fifteenth-century Timurid poet Alisher Navoiy wrote: 'Venus was singing and playing there / But the tambourine in her hands was

the Sun itself.'<sup>9</sup> Like the feast that Navoiy describes, *Recipes for Broken Hearts* celebrates the cosmic connections that link us to higher forces that we cannot see, inspiring us to be better companions to the many forms of life we encounter on this planet and infusing us with the energy to imagine a joyful world where everyone's heart can feel lighter and everyone's stomach can be full.

9 Alisher Navoiy, '{Hunyogaru nagmasoz Nokhid // Lekin daf aning kulida khurshed}', in *Musical Legacy of Uzbekistan in Collections of the Russian Federation* (Tashkent, 2017).

# Bukhara Today

Wael Al Awar  
Creative Director of Architecture

Today, Bukhara is a city defined by influences from near and far. This has always been true, in a certain sense. To varying degrees throughout its history, Bukhara has been shaped by movement and by a vast range of cultural influences. From its earliest days through to its period of flourishing along the Silk Routes in the ninth and tenth centuries and over the years that followed, the city has never existed in isolation but always in relation to the commercial, intellectual, and spiritual ties that bind it to its near and distant neighbours. This is clearly evident in the architecture of its historic core, which consists of a set of mosques, madrasas, caravanserai, and other typologies. All of these buildings bear traces of continuous construction, renovation, and adaptation. To take just one example, Magoki Attori – most famous as an early mosque in Central Asia – was originally built as a Zoroastrian temple, before being adapted as a mosque, then a synagogue, and then a museum of carpets. The basic facts of the building's history allude to the position of the city at the crossroads of many different traditions. As part of a renovation project for the central heritage district of Bukhara, which is inaugurated with this first edition of the biennial and extends beyond it, the interiors of Magoki Attori have been renovated to create a visitor information centre devoted to the history of the city. This is the latest phase in the adaptation of one of Bukhara's storied spaces, and an indication of the ongoing dialogue with architectural heritage that has always been part of life here. Buildings have been restored continuously, with knowledge shared over generations according to an oral tradition, aided by design drawings as references. The city's architectural heritage is not fixed in time but rather in constant transformation.

Together with the Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation, we have developed a proposal for welcoming visitors from around the world, but first and foremost for making sure that the city's residents can interact with the Cultural District, where the biennial is hosted, in the long term. The architecture of this event is not a series of temporary pavilions designed to be dismantled, nor does it consist of newly built permanent structures. Instead, it is a set of existing buildings that together form a sequence of spaces for the city that will embrace new uses throughout the exhibition period and beyond. The result is a zone in which the distinction between city and exhibition space disintegrates, where the experience of the city and reflection on it are possible simultaneously. Newcomers to Bukhara will encounter heritage buildings for the first time, while locals are invited to discover them anew through different possible uses, following a process of restoration that extends the traditional approach to architectural heritage as something to interact with rather than simply to look at. This is the way architecture in Bukhara has always operated, as a meeting ground for visitors from many different places – whether they are merchants, scholars, theologians, or adventurers – that is also a warm, generous home for its residents. The interaction between locals and travellers contributed to the city's unique blend of global cultures, and it can continue to do so. Bukhara in one thousand years will doubtless be very different from Bukhara today, but if we are careful and a bit lucky, we will be able to look back through the intervening years at the traces of a global history of civilisations.

Many of Bukhara's historic buildings were constructed on a shared, elevated limestone plinth. The most famous example of this is the tenth-century necropolis of Chor-Bakr, and archaeological excavations carried out at various points in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have uncovered the same technique in other complexes.

The result of this mode of construction is a continuous urban landscape, where the entrance to one building leads seamlessly into a shared outdoor space and into a new interior. This offers a fitting stage for an experience of a biennial, a configuration of indoor and outdoor experiences that brings visitors through many encounters with artistic practices, culinary and craft traditions, and architectural heritage. Continuity between the urban and the natural landscape, between town and country, formed a common ground in many past societies, whether in the long journeys made along the trade routes of Central Asia, or in Ibn Sina's peripatetic travels through Persia.

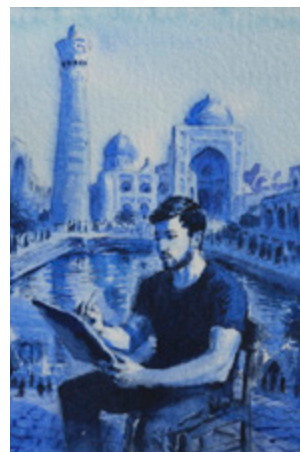
Ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna, is Bukhara's most famous son. This tenth-century polymath was a product of the city's culture of learning, exposed to intellectual traditions that originated at the Abbasid court in Baghdad, among Indian mathematicians, and in the writings of thinkers from the ancient Mediterranean. He left the city as a young man to pursue a career in the great Persian cities to the south, and the pervasive influence of his writing extended far beyond his death. In *De viribus cordis* (On the powers of the heart), he writes: 'To whatever object the eye first turns, the same is a wonder and full of wonder, if only we examine it for a little.'<sup>1</sup> In the arch of a mosque's entryway, in the well-worn steps leading into a caravanseraï, and in the intricate decorative work in plaster that adorns the vaults of a madrasa, there is much to see and to wonder at, and now the city hums again with ideas and activities from around the world. For Bukhara today, Ibn Sina's legacy is more apparent than ever, as the world returns to this city in a new form to experience this biennial, the urban landscape as it blends together with the natural one, and much more.

<sup>1</sup> Avicenna, *De viribus cordis* (Venice: per Paganium de Paganinis, 1507), 1.10, fol. 547r, quoted in Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (Zone Books, 1998), 136. Emphasis in the original.

## Yunus Farmonov Uzbekistan

Yunus Farmonov is an emerging Bukharian illustrator who worked with the curator and all of the participating artists to imagine their proposals as watercolour dreamscapes within the future biennial sites that he had been familiar with every day as a citizen of Bukhara before they were renovated. Rather than use architectural renderings or AI to visualise the exhibition, Yunus illustrated the ideas set out by the participants in the biennial from the viewpoint of a young Bukharian artist who is excited to experience the world.

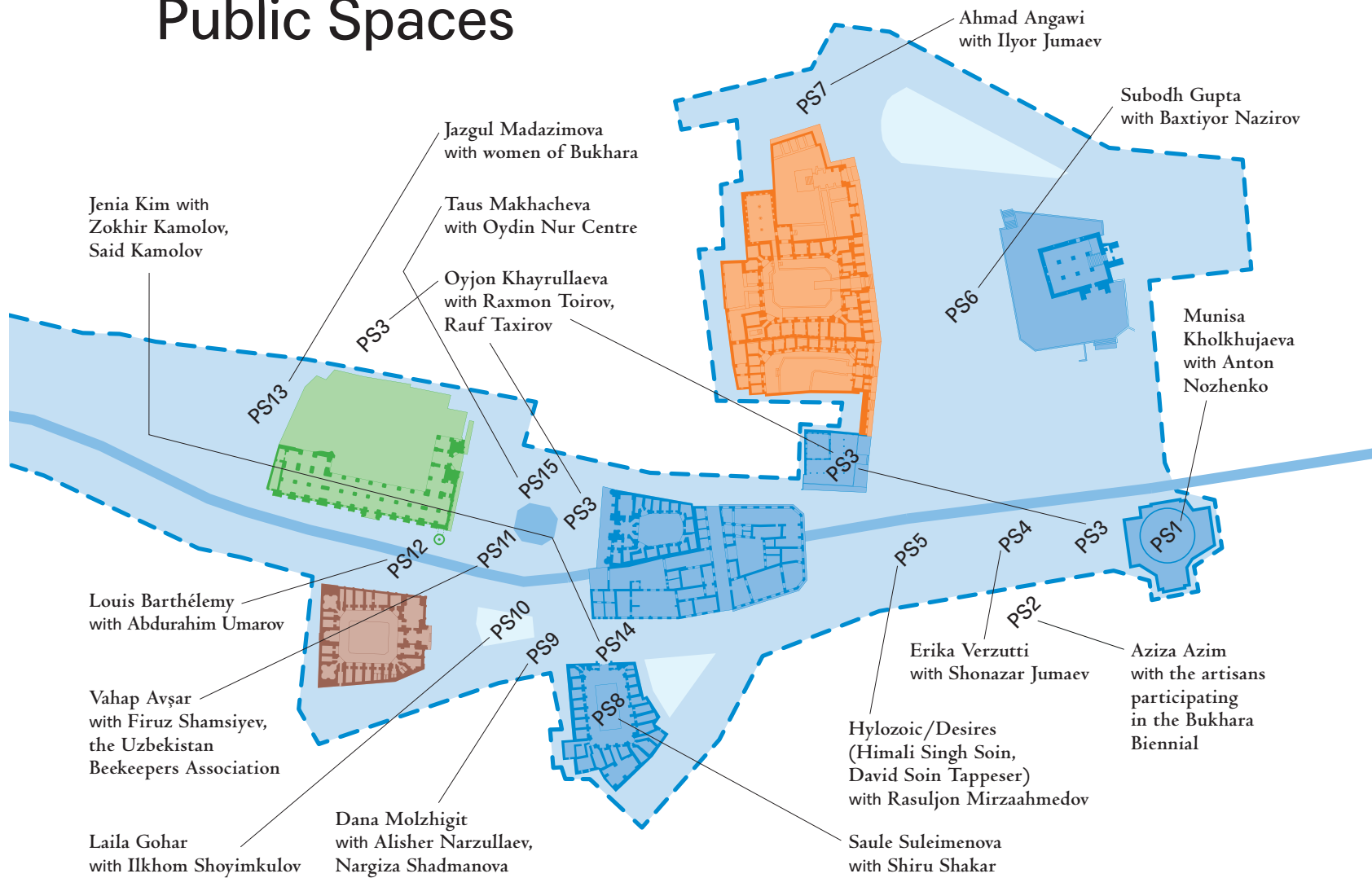
All of the works in the Bukhara Biennial are new commissions produced by the Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation, and all of the illustrations in this guidebook reflect the immense process of imagination involved in creating an exhibition where none of the ideas presented here existed as completed artworks before the opening day on 5 September 2025.



Yunus Farmonov  
b. 1994, *Qorako'l, Uzbekistan*  
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# Public Spaces

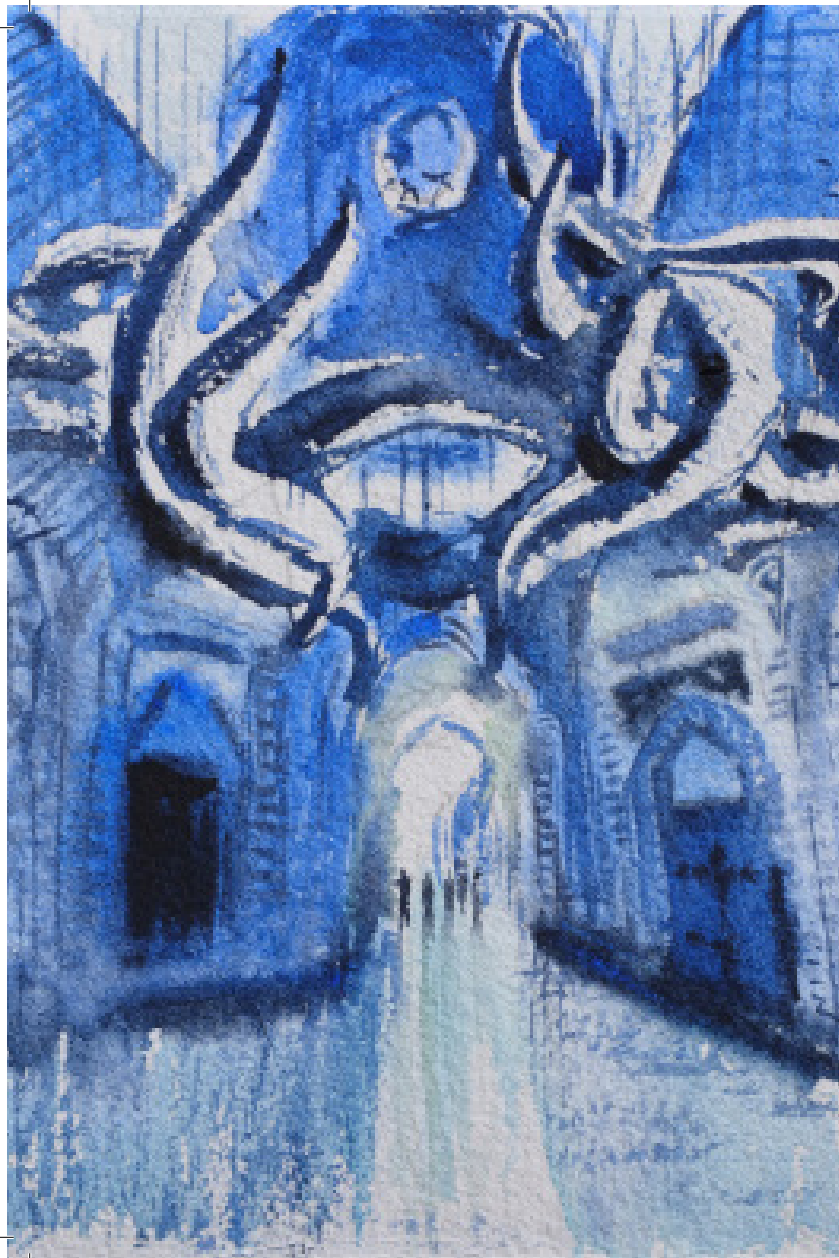




# Public Spaces

The Cultural District of the biennial contains many layers of history that build up contemporary life in the Old City of Bukhara. The biennial begins at Toqi Sarrafon, one of the several 'trading domes', a sixteenth-century typology of covered bazaars; this one served as a hub for money exchange, run by Indian and Jewish merchants. The entire biennial area follows the path of the ancient Shakhrud Canal, which once brought water to the city from the Zarafshon River through a sophisticated system of hauz pools. Few of them remain in use, and a magnificent one is located in front of the Khoja Gavgushon complex, the best-preserved example of a sixteenth-century public space of this kind in Central Asia. This square serves as the epicentre of the biennial's public life and a vibrant gathering point.

*Recipes for Broken Hearts* features over 70 projects spread across 500 metres of public space and ten weeks of time, linking all of the exhibition sites with works that invite connection between visitors and Bukharian neighbours who live and make art here; the route winds through mahalla neighbourhoods that are home to many artisans, especially embroiderers and gold embroiderers. These pieces create space to feel, to find solace, to rest, to hope, and to dream. They were made under the same environmental conditions in which they're now shown – woven into the rhythms of daily life in Bukhara, not set apart from it. Most forms of heart-break are not romantic – and they often involve far more than two people. This biennial is not about broken hearts; it's about the recipes to mend them. Cures, like recipes, are not static. Inspired by the wonder we knew as children that can spark the wildest sense of imagination, we might invent new recipes to heal one another. This is not an exhibition meant to be experienced alone, but one that celebrates what is possible when we show up for each other.



Munisa Kholkhuaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Anton Nozhenko Uzbekistan

PS1

*Through Bloom and Decay, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS1, G10 and R9

*Through Bloom and Decay* is a three-part installation by Munisa Kholkhuaeva that offers recipes for grief through the understanding that death nourishes new life, embodying the ancient wisdom that true immortality comes through accepting our physical impermanence while nurturing spiritual continuity. The project connects the biennial sites as a continuous loop between life, death, and new life and is inspired by the artist's visit to Chor-Bakr cemetery in Bukhara, where wild plants grow taller than tombs. Drawing from Ibn Sina's medicinal plant knowledge and ancient Central Asian practices with sacred plants, the work also follows alchemical principles inspired by Tillaev Abdu Mubinjon, a herbalist based in Bukhara's bazaar, which say we come into the world taking in flowers as a visual and olfactory gesture. At the Trading Dome, a chandelier installation built from medicinal plants and flowers speaks to the role that gifting flowers plays in celebrating life, courtship, sickness, and death. As we grow, we begin to ingest plants and herbs to preserve and prolong life – a gesture echoed in the former canteen rooms of Gavkushon Madrasa, transformed into a ceremonial tearoom for healing drinks. Finally, at Rashid Madrasa, metallic cube-shaped sculptures with plant imagery – inspired by Zoroastrian stone amulets – symbolise the acceptance of mortality as our bodies unite with flowers.

Munisa Kholkhuaeva  
b. 1997, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Anton Nozhenko  
b. 1969, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Aziza Azim Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
the artisans participating in  
the Bukhara Biennial

*Dome of the Heart, 2024–2025*

The entrance to the biennial's Cultural District through the Trading Dome marks a shift – from commerce for profit to a space that celebrates the priceless value of culture. Bukhara is the spiritual home of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, whose motto *Dil ba yor, dast ba kor* ('The heart to the beloved, the hands to work') embodies a philosophy where inner devotion and outer action are inseparable. Designer Aziza Azim draws on this ethos to create a space for conscious consumption, where visitors are invited to reflect on what they enable through their purchases. She selects 40 Uzbek objects (40 being a sacred number in Central Asian culture), each a masterpiece of design, and trains art mediators to share their stories. At the core, a 'dome of the heart' invites visitors to slow down, enveloping them in fabric and scent. Craft is presented not as a souvenir but as a spiritual offering. In the words of the artist: 'Craft is the essence of our nature, it is the embodiment of the connection we hold as humans between the mind, the body and the spirit. It is material evidence of our existence and presence in time.'

Aziza Azim  
b. 1991, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
based in Moscow, Russia





Oyjon Khayrullaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Raxmon Toirov  
and Rauf Taxiroy Uzbekistan

PS3

*Eight Lives, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS3, C3, G4 and R13

Oyjon Khayrullaeva explores the deep connection between mental and physical health by embedding mosaics of human organs into six architectural sites in Bukhara. Her artistic vision crystallised at Samarkand's Shah-i-Zinda necropolis, where floral mosaics on ancient mausoleums resemble blood vessels frozen in stone. Inspired by her three-year journey through depression and healing, Khayrullaeva draws from Central Asia's medical heritage – especially the work of Ibn Sina, who recognised the link between emotional and physical well-being. What began as digital art evolved into a public installation through collaborations with mosaic master Rauf Taxiroy and her Bukharian grandmother, who shared traditional healing recipes tied to each organ. Each of these organs carries both personal and cultural meaning: the lungs honour her mother, who lives with asthma; the liver reflects the Uzbek term *jigar*, meaning both the organ and 'my dear'. In the artist's words: 'My grandmother preserves recipes from the past – herbs, prayers, ancient rituals. In her words dwell forgotten practices of healing meant for both body and soul. Through her voice, I hear the Bukhara that once was – in whispers, in scents, in echoes that grow fainter with time.'

Oyjon Khayrullaeva  
b. 1996, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Rauf Taxiroy  
b. 1985, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

Rakhmon Toirov  
b. 1962, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

Erika Verzutti Brazil  
in collaboration with  
Shonazar Jumaev Uzbekistan

*Tower of Pomegranates, 2024–2025*

The pomegranate is a form that fosters a rich dialogue between Erika Verzutti's existing sculptural vocabulary and the local traditions of Bukhara. Traditionally, the pomegranate symbolises fertility, abundance, and prosperity. It is often associated with life, rebirth, and good fortune, and its many seeds represent abundance and continuity. Situated in a public space, in view of a traditional Bukharian wooden column that supports the architecture of a carpet shop behind the sculpture, the piece marks the first time the artist has translated her pomegranate series – previously cast in bronze or shaped in ceramics – into wood, working alongside the master Bukharian woodcarver Shonazar Jumaev. In the artist's own words: 'The resulting sculpture replaces the "tower" motif, preserving its verticality and symbolic presence, now more rooted in architecture than in metaphor. Together with the makers, we achieved a hybrid of languages. We chose to leave the surfaces half-finished, drawing attention to the process itself – the gesture, the making, the touch.'

Erika Verzutti  
b. 1971, São Paulo, Brazil  
based in São Paulo

Shonazar Jumaev  
b. 1972, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara



Hylozoic/Desires (Himali Singh Soin <sup>PSS</sup>  
and David Soin Tappeser) India/England  
in collaboration with Rasuljon Mirzaahmedov  
(Margilan Crafts Development Centre) Uzbekistan

*Longing, 2024–2025*

The artists create an offering of devotion to a parched earth. A monumental ikat tapestry floats like waves along the canal threading through Bukhara's cultural centre – an artery linking the beginning and end of the biennial sites. The ikat designs trace the slow disappearance of the Aral Sea, whose heart-shaped body now remains a dry echo, the presence of an absence. Its shifting palette, drawn from satellite imagery over the last hundred years, transitions from deep blue to hues of toxin, salt, moss, and fungal bloom. A musical ritual performed under the full moon calls water back from the sky. The tapestry becomes a siren – a gesture of longing stretched across time, from when the lake was moist and bulbous to its current state of dry and saline. Suspended above the city, it invites rain, like the heart awaiting the return of the beloved – an offering of devotion to a parched land. For many in Uzbekistan – a doubly landlocked country – the Aral Sea was the only imagination of the sea. Its vanishing is not just ecological, but emotional: a loss of scale, a feeling of freedom and collective memory. In the words of the artists: 'Sufi poets think of love as the sun's indirect light reflected in water – longing invites water back to the land as if waiting for the arrival of the one we love.'

Hylozoic/Desires  
Himali Singh Soin  
*b. 1987, New Delhi, India*  
*based between London, England*  
*and New Delhi*

Margilan Crafts  
Development Centre  
*founded in 1973 in Margilan,*  
*Uzbekistan*

David Soin Tappeser  
*b. 1985, Munich, Germany*  
*based between London, England*  
*and New Delhi, India*

Rasuljon Mirzaahmedov  
*b. 1973, Margilan, Uzbekistan*  
*based in Margilan*



Subodh Gupta India  
in collaboration with  
Baxtiyor Nazirov Uzbekistan

*Salt Carried by the Wind, 2024–2025*

Subodh Gupta finds poetry in the act of sharing meals and the experience of gatherings that unite us while honouring our differences. His installation outside the Ayojzon Caravanserai responds to the architectural form of Magoki Attori, the oldest standing mosque in Central Asia, which was previously a Zoroastrian temple, synagogue, and carpet museum. This area was formerly a spice market, situated in view of a historic trading dome that once welcomed Indian merchants, inspiring Gupta's exploration of shared culinary heritage and cultural exchange between Central and South Asia. Constructed from mass-produced enamelware commonly found in Uzbek homes, the structure contrasts with the tableware created in collaboration with master ceramicist Baxtiyor Nazirov, whose work sits in deliberate contrast with the industrial dishware surrounding it. The pavilion will be activated at different moments when Gupta cooks and serves the food himself, transforming the act of cooking into a performative ritual. In the words of the artist: 'I love cooking, and the kitchen is a very important place of ritual in India... the smell of different flavours transports you because food reminds you of the past and memories; it is always a story of living and time.'

Subodh Gupta  
b. 1964, Khagaul, India  
based in Gurgaon, India

Baxtiyor Nazirov  
b. 1961, Rishtan district, Uzbekistan  
based in Rishtan

Ahmad Angawi Saudi Arabia  
in collaboration with  
Ilyor Jumaev Uzbekistan

*Al-Jabr & Al-Jazr: The Algorithm of Healing, 2024–2025*

Ahmad Angawi merges the intellectual legacies of two thinkers from the region now known as Uzbekistan who transformed how we think today nearly one thousand years ago – Al-Khwarizmi and Ibn Sina. The words *algebra* and *algorithm* both derive from Al-Khwarizmi, and this project reclaims those origins by rooting digital systems in regional cultural and spiritual heritage. Angawi explores the etymology of the Arabic terms *Al-Jabr* (restoration) and *Al-Jazr* (root extraction), illustrating how brokenness in numbers, geometry, or the human heart can be rebalanced through knowledge. A wooden *panjara* screen, made with second-generation woodcarver Ilyor Jumaev, remains fixed like algebraic structure. Behind it, layered colours move in an algorithmic rhythm. The hues evoke Ibn Sina's colour therapy: red for vitality, yellow for clarity, blue for calm. As the installation shifts, viewers witness how Al-Khwarizmi's mathematical precision aligns with Ibn Sina's holistic healing. By integrating ancestral craft with digital movement, the work reflects on the evolving relationship between tradition and technology. The title also plays on the word for a bone cast, proposing the healing of a prominent cracked wall in Bukhara's Old City. In the words of the artist: 'I offer a gesture of restoration, where craft becomes code, and the city, like the heart, begins to remember how to heal.'

Ahmad Angawi  
b. 1981, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia  
based in Jeddah

Ilyor Jumaev  
b. 1989, Vabkent district, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan



Saule Suleimenova Kazakhstan  
in collaboration with  
Shiru Shakar Uzbekistan

*Kutadgu Bilig, 2024–2025*

This project explores women's creative expression within Central Asian society, focusing on both the roles imposed upon them and the roles they actually inhabit. The series of works, crafted on polyethylene bags collected from the people of Bukhara, transforms into a floating, translucent stage that celebrates the joy of performance. It is created in collaboration with a group of retired performers in Bukhara from the Shiru Shakar folk ensemble, who actively resist the marginalisation often experienced by elderly women. Their singing and dancing resonate deeply with the understanding of ancient traditions and rituals, opening a quiet dialogue across generations – between the gestures of Shiru Shakar and the formalised movements of Kazakh girls shaped by staged folklore. The title of the work, which translates to 'the wisdom that brings happiness', carries layered meanings, resonating with the intricate cultural weave of Bukhara itself – a place of knots, crossings, and continuities. The project will come to life through live performances throughout the biennial. In the words of the artist: 'We untie Bukhara's ancient knots through ourselves – through dance and plastic, memory and tradition, shaped by love, pain, and sacrifice.'

Saule Suleimenova  
b. 1970 in Almaty, Kazakhstan  
based in Almaty

Shiru Shakar  
founded in 2018 in Bukhara,  
Uzbekistan



Dana Molzhigit Kazakhstan  
in collaboration with  
Alisher Narzullaev  
and Nargiza Shadmanova Uzbekistan

*Healing Grounds, 2025*

*Healing Grounds* is a site-specific installation by biodesigner and artist Dana Molzhigit that transforms a 23-metre wall outside the Gavkushon Madrasa into a living laboratory for soil regeneration. Informed by the ecological tragedy of the Aral Sea – once the world's third-largest lake, now largely vanished into desert – Molzhigit addresses the silent crisis of soil salinisation. The project brings together vernacular architecture, ceramic honeycomb modules, microbial cultures, and drought-resistant halophyte plants to explore how microbial and vegetal intelligence can support both ecological and cultural healing. Drawing on traditional irrigation systems and local design elements like *panjara* sunshades, the wall becomes both a healing interface and a speculative archive of resilience. In the artist's words: 'Heartbreak, like the wounds of soil salinisation, leaves lasting scars – but also invites new forms of care. I am guided by my Central Asian roots and science: tending what's been broken, designing with living systems, and remembering that each rupture – whether in land or in memory – holds the potential for regeneration.'

Dana Molzhigit  
b. 1994, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
based in Almaty

Alisher Narzullaev  
b. 1953, Gijduvan, Uzbekistan  
based in Gijduvan

Nargiza Shadmanova  
b. 1967, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent



Laila Gohar Egypt  
in collaboration with  
Ilkhom Shoyimkulov Uzbekistan

*Navat Uy*, 2024–2025

Laila Gohar works with food and food culture to cultivate a sense of wonder – drawing people closer to their inner child, and, in turn, to one another. Babies begin exploring the world with their mouths; taste connects flavours to memory, emotion, and culture as we move from infancy into childhood. It builds vocabulary, sharpens curiosity, and teaches us about safety, identity, and social bonds as we discover what we enjoy. Human relationships are often described in the language of taste: things can turn sour, feel salty with bitterness, or grow sweet with love. In Bukhara, Gohar invites us into the multisensory joy of the *navat* rock sugar by constructing a pavilion imagined from its glistening crystal form – a symbol of thousands of years of Central Asian hospitality. Taste reveals more than what we see; while *navat* is common all over Uzbekistan, the labour-intensive process of slow crystallisation using grape syrup on threads requires time, care, and a transmission of know-how that is becoming increasingly rare. The arrival of industrial cane sugar replaced the artisanal nature of handmade *navat*, and younger generations rarely know the difference. Visitors enter the learning space of the biennial by passing through this *navat* house, and at different points of the biennial, they are invited to experience the power of taste to unveil new readings of what we see. In the words of the artist: ‘A house, home. Refuge. Sometimes sweet, sometimes salty. Wander. Wonder. Play.’

Laila Gohar  
b. 1988, Cairo, Egypt  
based in New York, USA

Ilkhom Shoyimkulov  
b. 1984, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Vahap Avşar Türkiye/USA  
in collaboration with  
Firuz Shamsiyev Uzbekistan  
and the Uzbekistan Beekeepers Association

*Swarm Works, 2024–2025*

Bee populations are in decline all over the world due to habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change. Artist and beekeeper Vahap Avşar collaborates with Bukharian woodcarver Firuz Shamsiyev to create sculptures that are also environments for bees to thrive. Speaking to the interconnectivity of all life on earth, these wooden beehive sculptures take the form of climbing snow leopards, an endangered species native to Central Asia that is revered as a guardian spirit in regional mythology. Carved from salvaged local wood and embellished with Bukharian motifs, each snow leopard will function as a swarm box, offering a safe space for bee colonies seeking shelter in the city, symbolising endangered life while supporting it. Honey, long cherished in Central Asia as a symbol of healing and purity, will be created in sculptural hives across the biennial and harvested at the closing to make *medovic*, a honey cake beloved by many cultures connected to Uzbekistan. By merging art, ecological action, and local knowledge systems, Avşar invites us to imagine a future where we create for more-than-human life. In the words of the artist: ‘Spending the summers in an ancient mountain village with my grandparents... I’ve learned the importance of spirituality and living in complete harmony with nature.’

Vahap Avşar  
b. 1965, Malatya, Türkiye  
based in New York, USA

Firuz Shamsiyev  
b. 1988, Vobkent district, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan Beekeepers Association  
founded in 2017 in Tashkent,  
Uzbekistan



Louis Barthélemy France  
in collaboration with  
Abdurahim Umarov Uzbekistan

*Fantastic Creatures of the Silk Road, 2024–2025*

On the outer wall of Khoja Kalon Mosque, Louis Barthélemy, in collaboration with master *ganch* craftsman Abdurakhim Umarov, creates imaginary creatures made from traditional carved plaster. These panels draw inspiration from ancient illustrated manuscripts where multiple stories are told within a single image. Each panel is made from shapes like grains, spices, fruits, and insects, symbolising ideas of memory, nourishment, and the region's farming traditions. Rather than telling one specific story, the artwork blends many layers of Bukhara's heritage and present-day revival. The playful figures reflect the mythical animals found in Central Asian architecture and are imagined here as guardians of shared cultural memory. Adorned with pieces of glazed ceramic, the panels celebrate life and movement. In the artist's words: 'This project is a love letter to the animal kingdom: fragile, magical, and enduring... echoing childhood wonder and nature's quiet power to adapt, transform and heal. In their own way, they offer a recipe for a broken heart: imagination, tenderness, and the beauty of reinvention.'

Louis Barthélemy  
b. 1988, Paris, France  
based between Marrakech,  
Morocco and Cairo, Egypt

Abdurahim Umarov  
b. 1947, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent



Jazgul Madazimova Kyrgyzstan  
in collaboration with  
the women of Bukhara

PS13

*A Thousand Prayers, 2025*

Jazgul Madazimova's participatory installation transforms hundreds of Central Asian women's scarves, collected from women in Bukhara and Bishkek, into a rising spine of a timeless imaginary creature – part landscape, part memory – that hovers over visitors in the back alley of a neighbourhood behind Khoja Kalon. Inspired by Tibetan prayer flags and their ability to carry intentions through wind and touch, the sculpture's form rises like a hill from the earth, arching into a graceful neck, and later descends to meet viewers in an intimate, interactive gesture.

Each scarf carries weight – not only of fabric but of the story of the person who wore the scarf over a head full of dreams and intentions. The accumulated scarves become a collective body that gets dismantled in a performative gesture at the end of the biennial. In the words of the artist: 'For the last few years, no matter what I make, I always end up creating an abstract animal spine, something that feels like a greeting from the past. So, I decided to give it a form here, to honour it by creating an invisible, intuitive connection to it. This work is a conversation with memory – the women's scarves used in the sculpture represent the fabric we've seen growing up – worn by our mothers, sisters, aunts every single day, at every important family occasion. They hold both strength and vulnerability. For me, it felt right to use women's scarves to embody the spirit of this entity. As we create and dismantle the sculpture, we invite the spirit to come alive and fade peacefully, like the wind carrying a prayer to all things.'

Jazgul Madazimova  
b. 1990, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
based in Bishkek





PS14

Jenia Kim Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Zokhir Kamolov  
and Said Kamolov Uzbekistan

*Home of Hope, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS14 and R7  
For full information on this artwork, see page 173

Storks, once a symbol of Bukhara, disappeared from the city in the twentieth century due to environmental changes. In collaboration with blacksmiths Zokhir and Said Kamolov, Jenia Kim reimagines bird-shaped scissors as a flock of storks returning to witness a vibrant cultural gathering. An extension of her main project at the Rashid Madrasa, which explores the stories of everyday people in Uzbekistan, the stork sculptures serve as a symbol of hope and, as Kim puts it, ‘a reminder of the need for renewal.’

Jenia Kim  
*b. 1991, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent*

Zokhir Kamolov  
*b. 1962, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Said Kamolov  
*b. 1956, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*



Taus Makhacheva Russia/UAE  
in collaboration with  
Oydin Nur Centre Uzbekistan

PS15

*Inverted Fruits, 2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS15 and G8  
For full information on this artwork, see page 131

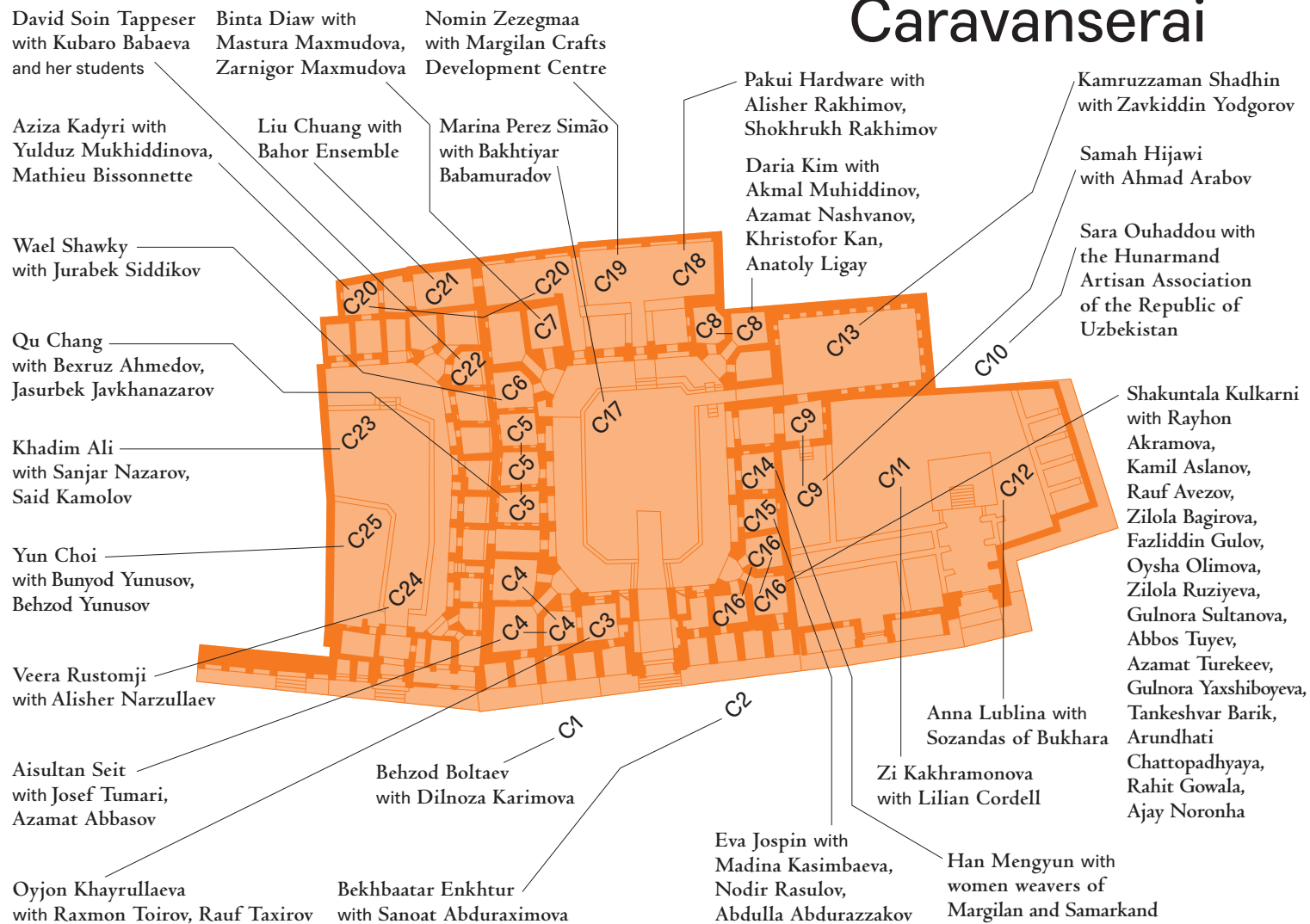
Comprising several parts, Taus Makhacheva's project explores different forms of women's transformation and empowerment. Developed in collaboration with the Oydin Nur women's shelter, the metal sculptures floating in the *hauz* pond take the shape of inverted fruits – metaphors for personal reinvention. Though cast in metal, the objects drift across the water's surface, inscribed with words of emancipation and care, symbolising resilience and the strength of women's agency. These will be donated to the centre, allowing the afterlife of the artwork to support ongoing empowerment. The installation forms part of a broader project that continues in the Gavkushon Madrasa, where ephemeral sculptures rethink traditional Uzbek bridal jewellery into forms of women's support structures. In the artist's words: 'It is a work in movement, about movement, done through movement. It is a dancing together of people, our stories, and the artefacts we create to engender those stories.'

Taus Makhacheva  
b. 1983, Moscow, Russian SFSR  
based in Dubai, UAE

Oydin Nur Centre for the Social  
and Legal Protection of Families  
Founded in 1999 in Bukhara,  
Uzbekistan



# Caravanserai



# Caravanserais

Four interconnected caravanserais – Fathullajon, Ayozon, Ahmadjon, and Mirzo Ulugbek Tamakifurush – date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and together formed a complex that served both as accommodation for travelling merchants and as a centre of commerce, specialising in the sale of dishware and locally produced tobacco. Their typology features a central courtyard surrounded by small rooms known as hujras, along with niches for feeding donkeys and a stable for horses. Reflecting their original function, the caravanserais were repurposed as housing in the twentieth century before falling into disrepair and eventual abandonment. In the early 2000s, two – Fathullajon and Ayozon – were restored, while Ahmadjon and Mirzo Ulugbek Tamakifurush remain in ruins. At the centre of the latter, a visible pit marks the former basement once used for storing goods.

We enter the caravanserais through the motif of the heart and navigate the interconnecting hujras to understand that heartbreak is a stop, or multiple stops, on the journey of life. Heartbreak warps our sense of distance and our connection to time and space. This site presents the widest geographical spread of artists – from Afghanistan to Australia, from Brazil to Bangladesh, from Senegal to South Korea – speaking to Bukhara's importance as a centre of exchange for centuries. It addresses the myth of Ibn Sina and proposes how we can heal the artisan, in addition to the prince. Bukhara, like many societies, has risen from the ruins of many chapters of heartbreak. It offers recipes for peace, suggesting that we can live together with difference by creating together. In the words of sociologist Gargi Bhattacharyya, 'What if heartbreak is not something to overcome, but something we move forward with?'



Behzod Boltaev Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Dilnoza Karimova Uzbekistan

*Healing, 2024–2025*

This collaborative project between documentary photographer Behzod Boltaev and ceramic artist Dilnoza Karimova, who both live and work in the neighbourhood around the biennial sites, invites viewers to experience the visual and tactile care rooted in Bukharian culture. Moving beyond conventional methods, the artists print photographs on ceramic bricks, drawing on the tradition of adorning Uzbek brick buildings with ceramic tiles. In this work, they reinterpret that practice by introducing photographic imagery to ceramics, adapting the medium for public outdoor contexts. Through images capturing quiet acts of care in Bukhara, the work becomes a poetic homage to everyday tenderness and responsibility. The collaboration merges Boltaev's documentary sensibility – building on the Bukharan school of documentary photography that was pioneered by his father, Shavkat Boltaev – with Karimova's innovative use of clay, transforming both medium and message through a shared engagement with community and heritage. In the words of Behzod Boltaev: 'A broken heart can be healed not only with delicious food, but also with spiritual food. After all, the world is actually made of feelings. My father, who watches me from the sky, would be proud to see this living legacy of a space of shared support, creativity, and transformation in the region.'

Behzod Boltaev  
*b. 1996, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Dilnoza Karimova  
*b. 1984, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan*



Bekhbaatar Enkhtur Mongolia  
in collaboration with  
Sanoat Abduraximova Uzbekistan

*Shireg*, 2024–2025

Inspired by an ancient Mongolian shamanic healing ritual, Bekhbaatar Enkhtur transforms the entrance of the nineteenth-century Ayojzon caravanserai into a symbolic material manifestation of the unseen feelings of Bukhara today. In the *Shireg* ritual, molten pewter is poured into water when a baby cries and cannot sleep, revealing the source of hidden fears and allowing the child to rest peacefully. Enkhtur uses this technique, which he experienced both as a child and now as a father, and pours molten pewter onto canvas, which is then embroidered by *suzani* maker Sanoat Abduraximova – in a collaborative gesture of healing, a ritual intended to cleanse the ancient city of its fears. In the artist's words: 'This act transforms invisible afflictions into tangible forms – a symbolic purification and a conduit for healing.'

From a barking dog, perhaps,  
From the grey sky's creature, perhaps,  
From a distant traveller, perhaps –  
Since when has it been pacing nervously  
over the hearth?  
*Shirge, shirge, shirge.*

Traditional Mongolian mantra  
recited during the *Shireg* ritual

Bekhbaatar Enkhtur  
b. 1994, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia  
based in Turin, Italy

Sanoat Abduraximova  
b. 1953, Nurota, Uzbekistan  
based in Nurota





Oyjon Khayrullaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Raxmon Toirov  
and Rauf Taxiroy Uzbekistan

*Eight Lives, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS3, C3, G4 and R13  
For full information on this artwork, see page 31

We enter the caravanserai through the heart, a symbolic organ that thinks and feels differently than the brain does. The heart connects the artist with the story of Ibn Sina and his cure for lovesickness, palov. Oyjon Khayrullaeva collaborated with her grandmother and a Bukharian herbalist to present a sculptural mosaic heart alongside traditional natural supplements that women in Bukhara use to heal their loved ones.

Oyjon Khayrullaeva  
b. 1996, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Rauf Taxiroy  
b. 1985, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

Raxmon Toirov  
b. 1962, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

Aisultan Seit Kazakhstan  
in collaboration with  
Josef Tumari and Azamat Abbasov Uzbekistan

*Rukh, 2025*

Responding to the myth of Ibn Sina curing a prince's broken heart through inventing a recipe, Aisultan Seit's video installation explores the inner landscape of emotional crisis. Spanning three rooms of the caravanserai, the work reflects different dimensions of heartbreak: the physical reality of loss, mental disorientation, and spiritual transformation. In the first room, the protagonist appears detached and disoriented – physically present but emotionally withdrawn. The second room, filled with archival imagery of Bukhara, visualises the turbulence of the mind: disjointed memories, repetitive thoughts, and inner chaos. The final room shows a spiritual shift – a transformation that follows the processing of pain. Seit's work does not seek resolution but invites us to witness a change in perception: how one inhabits the body, mind, and spirit in the aftermath of emotional rupture. As the artist notes: 'For me, the ability to reflect on what's happening and translate it onto the screen is the most powerful remedy for emotional pain. I often find myself thinking about eternity – and the ways in which we come into contact with it. One of those ways is through myths and stories that have endured for millennia and reached us across time. The myth of Ibn Sina inspired me to search for timeless patterns within the modern world.'

Aisultan Seit  
*b. 1997, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
based in Almaty*

Josef Tumari  
*b. 1998, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent*

Azamat Abbasov  
*b. 1995, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent*



Qu Chang China  
in collaboration with  
Bexruz Ahmedov  
and Jasurbek Javkhanazarov Uzbekistan

*Happiness Hometown, 2024–2025*

*Happiness Hometown* draws from the 1997 music video by Chen Ming of the same name – a nostalgic visual and audio symbol of China's reform era. Inspired by South and Central Asia, the video of the song features Chen walking and singing along a highway, followed by dancers in Central Asian dress, suggesting that happiness is found on a highway that might lead to the West, into Uzbekistan. Departing from the song, the project speculates on the routes to happiness based on the Silk Road. Layered silk installations made in collaboration with embroiderer Bexruz Ahmedov imagine the daytime journeys and nighttime dreams of travellers who might have stayed within this caravanserai. Blended with historical charts, symbols, texts, and trade goods, the project renders the Silk Road as a decentralised web of cultural encounters and hybridisation, postulating that the route to happiness lies in the opening of hearts. In the words of Chang: 'I have always been obsessed with the heart, so much so that it outgrows the dualist boundaries between body/soul, public/private, and seeps into the realm of the bodily and the political. Linking the heart with its soil is my way of mapping myself nomadically into the world.'

Qu Chang  
b. 1988, Sichuan, China  
based in Berlin, Germany

Bexruz Ahmedov  
b. 1991, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Jasurbek Javkhanazarov  
b. 1981, Andijan, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Wael Shawky Egypt  
in collaboration with  
Jurabek Siddikov Uzbekistan

*Untitled, 2025*

Reinterpreting existing historical narratives, Wael Shawky addresses concepts regarding artistic, religious, and transnational identities based on extensive research into history and mythology to address the state of the world today. He extends his inquiry to Bukhara, sometimes referred to as 'The Copper City' or *Madinat al-sufriya* in Arabic, through collaborating with master artisan Jurabek Siddikov, creating intricately engraved copper panels that mirror the incredible artistic virtuosity and wealth of social detail found in Persian and Central Asian illuminated manuscripts. In Uzbekistan, copper has a long-standing association with healing and spiritual rituals, particularly in folk traditions and traditional crafts. Copper is not just seen as a metal but is revered for its perceived ability to transmit energy, balance the body, and even ward off negativity. This belief is reflected in the use of copper in various ritual objects and practices, including embossing, jewellery, water, and palov vessels. Wael Shawky views the construction of history as he views the rich craft heritage of Uzbekistan, as 'a human creation'.

Wael Shawky  
b. 1971, Alexandria, Egypt  
based between Alexandria  
and Philadelphia, USA

Jurabek Siddikov  
b. 1980, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara





Binta Diaw Senegal/Italy  
in collaboration with  
Mastura Maxmudova  
and Zarnigor Maxmudova Uzbekistan

*Cosmopoétique, 2024–2025*

Binta Diaw's installation explores the intertwined histories of rice cultivation, migration, and the transmission of cultural knowledge through women's labour. Using woven hair in carpet-like forms, she transforms the intimate, ancestral practice of braiding – one of the earliest forms of female bonding found in both Central Asian and African cultures – into a monumental act of remembrance and resistance. The work draws inspiration from Bukhara's rich history of carpet weaving. Diaw interlaces this tradition with the agricultural legacy of African women, who braided rice seeds into their hair to carry with them during forced migrations – a powerful symbol of foresight and survival. Her installation also gestures towards Uzbekistan's historical role in Afro-Asian connectivity, where trade routes enabled the exchange of cultural practices across continents. By weaving these threads together, Diaw honours women as custodians of memory, resilience, and generational knowledge across geographies and time. In the words of the artist: 'Hair is freedom and hope, just like the labyrinths braided in the head of Black female ancestors who, to escape from the plantations, created a cryptic language through which they could communicate and act with each other.'

Binta Diaw  
b. 1995, Milan, Italy  
based in Milan

Mastura Maxmudova  
b. 1989, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Zarnigor Maxmudova  
b. 1990, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Daria Kim Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with Akmal Muhiddinov,  
Azamat Nashvanov, Khristofor Kan  
and Anatoly Ligay Uzbekistan

*Hive Settlers*, 2024–2025

*Hive Settlers* explores forced migration and cultural hybridity through the lens of the Koryo-saram – ethnic Koreans forcibly relocated from the Russian Far East to Central Asia under Stalin in the 1930s. Daria Kim animates paintings by late Koryo-saram artists from her family's collection, narrating shared histories of displacement before continuing this theme in video incorporating her own beeswax sculptures. It culminates in a collaborative installation with ceramicist Azamat Nashvanov, who uses rice flour instead of clay – a material embedded in Koryo-saram cuisine. While rice is central to Uzbek dishes, Uzbeks traditionally do not use rice flour. Alongside Nashvanov's forms are Akmal Muhiddinov's carved wooden *muqarnas* – Islamic 'honey-comb' vaults. The installation merges Korean and Islamic motifs and echoes a shared ethic of labour and community. Koreans and Uzbeks are historically known for their hard work in the fields, reminiscent of bees. The title is deliberate: In 1937, the Korean 'rice bees' found their new hive in Uzbekistan. In the words of Kim: 'When being deported breaks your heart, survival itself becomes the recipe.'

Daria Kim  
b. 1998, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Berlin, Germany

Azamat Nashvanov  
b. 1975, Gijduvan, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Akmal Muhiddinov  
b. 1989, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Khristofor Kan  
b. 1934, Sukhanovka, Russian SFSR  
d. 2019, Fergana, Uzbekistan

Anatoly Ligay  
b. 1941, Chimkent Region, Kazakhstan  
d. 2001, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Samah Hijawi Jordan/Belgium  
in collaboration with  
Ahmad Arabov Uzbekistan

*Kinships and Cosmologies, 2024–2025*

Foods traded along the Silk Route passing through Samarkand, Bukhara and Khorazm carried more than the promise of good flavours. They were also carriers of spiritual philosophies and the latest scientific developments. Moving back and forth between East and West, science supported the spiritual philosophy ‘as above, so below’ (حَقٌّ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِ، إِنَّ الْأَعْلَى مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِ وَالْأَسْفَلُ مِنَ الْأَعْلَى), linking life on earth with the larger universe. Inspired by the sky-reading traditions of what is now Uzbekistan, as developed by legendary thinkers Al-Biruni and Ulugbek, as well as Uzbekistan’s rich histories in agriculture and trade, Hijawi invites us to a worldview that extends beyond the human, beyond the earth. A map of cosmologies connects people, plants, cities and events with the heavens. In collaboration with Ahmad Arabov, she interprets these ideas into a mural of embroidery. Both interested in reviving artistic forms and histories of the past, they recreate a contemporary interpretation of ‘as above, so below’. Together with Arabov’s network of embroiderers from Nurota, they revive the old Zardozi style from Bukhara, as well as deities from Central Asia, into a tapestry that maps the spiritual, the edible, and the cosmological. In the words of the artist: ‘As we seek to understand life in a larger cosmology, my work with food and astrology is a way for finding deeper meaning, and a way to deal with life breaking our hearts.’

Samah Hijawi  
b. 1976, Kuwait City, Kuwait  
based in Brussels, Belgium

Ahmad Arabov  
b. 1955, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Sara Ouhaddou France/Morocco  
in collaboration with  
the Hunarmand Artisan Association  
of the Republic of Uzbekistan

*To the Guardians, 2025*

As a living and historic centre of Sufism, scholarship, and craft, Bukhara inspires artist Sara Ouhaddou to connect this context to her context of Morocco. Drawing on the Sufi concept of the *silsila* – a document mapping spiritual lineage, almost like a family tree but drawing on knowledge lines rather than bloodlines – the artist creates a visual archive of embodied knowledge. Through abstract compositions reinterpreted as embroidered and woven works co-created with artisans in Uzbekistan, she traces connections between artisans, gestures, and oral traditions over the ten weeks of the biennial. The artist and the Bukhara Biennial team will interview artisans living in Bukhara, contributing to an increase in the number and complexity of the *silsilas*. Inscribing the importance of artisanal knowledge is a way to address the heartbreak of erasure. In the words of the artist: ‘As a child, I felt a pain I couldn’t put into words when people told me that my mother and my aunts didn’t have a job. Later, I understood. What broke my heart was realising that, in the society I grew up in, my aunts’ know-how had no recognition, no status. They are all artisans. And mothers.’

Sara Ouhaddou  
b. 1986, Draguignan, France  
based between Paris, France  
and Marrakech, Morocco

Hunarmand Artisan Association  
of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
founded in 1997 in Tashkent,  
Uzbekistan



CM

Zi Kakhramonova Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Lilian Cordell England

*A Corner for Everyone, 2024–2025*

Zi Kakhramonova creates an artistic exploration of the home as a mutable, fragile structure composed of memories, images, desires, and fantasies set within the ruins of a caravanserai basement. Inspired by children's toy construction sets and textile textures associated with domesticity, she creates a space inspired by conversation pits from the 1970s. Here, visitors can assemble their own personal 'home' – a nook of comfort, security, and self-acceptance. She consulted diaspora Bukharians in collaboration with London-based diaspora Bukharian chef Lilian Cordell to incorporate symbols that remind them of home in Bukhara with those that bring the artist back to her own childhood memories of home. In the words of the artist: 'Growing up, I spent summers in my grandparents' backyard, surrounded by family, food, and music. That space, layered with warmth and ritual, still defines my sense of home. I now draw from that memory and the feelings of homesickness it evokes and connect this feeling with those of others with roots in Bukhara. The installation is built from symbolic elements, gesturing towards a space we long for when far from home.'

Zi Kakhramonova  
b. 2001, Kibray District, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Lilian Cordell  
b. 1957, London, England  
based in London



Anna Lublina USA/Germany  
in collaboration with  
Feruza Asatova, Gulrukh Norkulova,  
Mekhriniso Samieva  
and Roziya Sharipova Uzbekistan

*Bukhara Peace Agency, 2024–2025*

Inspired by *sozandas* – female ritual leaders of Bukhara who interweave Persian poetry, *shashmaqom* (a classical musical form shared by Muslim and Jewish traditions), Zoroastrian symbols, and dance – Anna Lublina's *Bukhara Peace Agency* honours these guardians of shared cultural memory. At its centre stands a 'peace tent', richly adorned with traditional *suzani* embroidery, carpets, and natural materials, created in collaboration with local artisans and a philharmonic ensemble. Embroidered 'recipes for peace' and a layered soundscape evoke the region's spirit of multicultural harmony. Lublina pays tribute to *Tufakhon*, a Bukharan Jewish *sozanda* who led rituals rooted in both Muslim and Zoroastrian traditions. In the words of the artist: 'The thing about Jews and diasporic cultures is that we are intracultural worlds... My work here is to re-embody a shared world. What is the recipe for making a life together without losing our differences?'

Anna Lublina  
b. 1992, California, USA  
based in Berlin, Germany

Gulrukh Norkulova  
b. 1984, Gijduvan district, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Feruza Asatova  
b. 1985, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Mekhriniso Samieva  
b. 1991, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Roziya Sharipova  
b. 1960, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara



Kamruzzaman Shadhin Bangladesh  
in collaboration with  
Zavkiddin Yodgorov Uzbekistan

*Safar (Journey), 2025*

Kamruzzaman Shadhin's performative procession, created in collaboration with theatre artist Zavkiddin Yodgorov of the Bukhara Puppet Theatre, reimagines ancient Sufi journeys across Central and South Asia in response to today's divided world. A series of large-scale puppets – each inspired by symbolic animals said to have carried mystics across large distances of diverse and difficult terrains – will take to the streets of Bukhara every morning and evening throughout the biennial, evoking tales of love, unity, and resistance to borders, both physical and ideological. Among such symbolic creatures, fish have often been seen as vehicles for spiritual ideas, especially in relation to the sea and the Sufi path towards spiritual union. Working across installation and performance, Shadhin's work creates participatory spaces for dialogue on coexistence and memory, drawing on both rural and urban traditions. In the face of displacement and division, the project turns to collective memory as an act of healing. In the words of the artist: 'I've long been moved by old stories – of travellers crossing lands with chants of hope, carried by animals as if by faith itself. There was a softness to that movement, a quiet trust. In a world now drawing its lines tighter, I wanted to imagine what still moves freely – love.'

Kamruzzaman Shadhin  
b. 1974, Thakurgaon, Bangladesh  
based in Thakurgaon/Dhaka

Zavkiddin Yodgorov  
b. 1971, Bukhara region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara



Han Mengyun China  
in collaboration with  
women weavers of Margilan  
and Samarkand

*Suffering Hands, Broken Thread, 2025*

Han Mengyun's *Suffering Hands, Broken Thread* traces how love, cultural beauty and bodily exhaustion intersect with the industrialisation of textiles. Following the fading oral tradition of singing that once guided carpet weaving in Iran and Central Asia – and the loss of the carpet's original matrilineal meaning – the work charts its industrial aftermath. Han's video collages folktale-like animation with documentary images of mechanised workshops, mapping the soundscape's shift from rhythmic lullabies and songs used in the act of remembering to the drone of machines. The weavers' suffering hands force us to ask why women's bodies still carry the burden of labour for textiles now reduced to export commodities. What is lost when living oral memory flattens into pictorial patterns whose original message fails to speak to consuming strangers? In the words of the artist: 'What speaks to me so strongly about textile art is not only its embodiment of women's expressions and lives within the weave, the history of exchange woven into a non-hierarchical space that allows for the coexistence of multitudes and differences, but also the often hidden toll it exacts – the bodily strain and the imprisoning cultural symbols that too often define and confine women's subjectivity. This tension invites a deconstruction of the weave.'

Han Mengyun  
b. 1989, Wuhan, China  
based in London, England



Eva Jospin France  
in collaboration with  
Madina Kasimbaeva, Nodir Rasulov  
and Abdulla Abdurazzakov Uzbekistan

*Bleeding Heart, 2025*

Eva Jospin's installation reimagines Uzbek artisanal heritage through a process of emancipating craftspeople from the rules of 'proper technique'. Working closely with suzani maker Madina Kasimbaeva, gold embroiderer Nodir Rasulov, and woodcarver Abdulla Abdurazzakov, Jospin invites each artisan to step beyond the constraints of inherited forms and gestures. Rather than replicating tradition, the collaboration expands it, developing new techniques that evolve from, but are not limited to, existing practices. In doing so, the work becomes a contribution to the biennial's wider reimagining of craft that honours continuity while embracing transformation. The work takes the form of an altarpiece, becoming a kind of pilgrimage of craft where each collaborator builds upon the techniques of the past with imagination attuned to the present. The artwork reveals a choreography between material, technique, and vision. In the words of the artist: 'This altarpiece represents the Bleeding Heart plant – a very evocative name – which seems uprooted, as if there had been a trauma. Yet this flower is in full bloom, on the brink of repair. Like a broken heart, one can find beauty in this state.'

Eva Jospin  
b. 1975, Paris, France  
based in Paris

Nodir Rasulov  
b. 1967, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Madina Kasimbaeva  
b. 1981, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Abdulla Abdurazzakov  
b. 1978, Tashkent Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Shakuntala Kulkarni India  
 in collaboration with  
 Rayhon Akramova,  
 Kamil Aslanov, Rauf Avezov, Zilola Bagirova,  
 Fazliddin Gulov, Oysha Olimova,  
 Zilola Ruziyeva, Gulnora Sultanova,  
 Abbos Tuyev, Azamat Turekeev,  
 Gulnora Yaxshiboyeva Uzbekistan  
 Tankeshvar Barik,  
 Arundhati Chattopadhyaya,  
 Rahit Gowala and Ajay Noronha India

*Intimate Conversations*, 2024–2025

*Intimate Conversations* invites viewers into a confidential, safe space where protagonists reveal pain, heartbreak, fears, and joys through body language and sound. Collaborating with dancers, singers, and instrumentalists from the Bukhara Philharmonic, the project features synchronised projections that blend image and sound within architectural arches and brick walls. Inspired by yurt masters near Nukus who worked with her long-term cane-weaving collaborators in Assam, the inner structure reimagines the yurt as a womb-like, nurturing space. The moving tandoor symbolises nurturing and trust, offering an immersive experience where visitors watch a film of a trust game, witnessing a protagonist learning to release fears and embrace self-trust. In the artist's words: 'A true collaboration is organic in nature. It's full of risks, surprises, and transformations. There were moments of misunderstanding, even silences but then came the breakthrough, when emotion guided the work. What began as my idea slowly became a shared process. When the singers sang from a place of heartbreak,

and dancers moved with fear in their body, something real started to happen. It became a journey from pain to courage leading to peace, happiness and freedom. That's when it stopped being a project and became a shared, alive experience... a true collaborative work.'

Shakuntala Kulkarni  
b. 1950, Mumbai, India  
based in Mumbai

Rayhon Akramova  
b. 2009, Navoiy, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Kamil Aslanov  
b. 1959, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Rauf Avezov  
b. 1966, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Zilola Bagirova  
b. 1984, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Fazliddin Gulov  
b. 1967, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Oysha Olimova  
b. 2008, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Zilola Ruziyeva  
b. 1991, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Gulnora Sultanova  
b. 1987, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Azamat Turekeev  
b. 1986, Chimbay District, Uzbekistan  
based in Chimbay, Uzbekistan

Abbos Tuyev  
b. 2000, Shofirkon, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Gulnora Yaxshiboyeva  
b. 1965, Paxtachi, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Arundhati Chattopadhyaya  
b. 1953, Mumbai, India  
based in Goa, India

Ajay Noronha  
b. 1969, Nagpur, India  
based in Mumbai, India

Tankeshvar Barik  
b. 1981, Gopalpur Gaon, India  
based in Gopalpur

Rahit Gowala  
b. 1996, Robinpur Titabar, India  
based in Jorhat, India



Marina Perez Simão Brazil  
in collaboration with  
Bakhtiyar Babamuradov Uzbekistan

*Untitled, 2024–2025*

When we are distraught, we look to the sky for answers. Marina Perez Simão creates a ceramic mosaic in collaboration with the traditional mosaic master in Bukhara, Bakhtiyar Babamuradov, to create a celestial map of an imagined universe that falls from the heavens onto the floor of the caravanserai. The work is inspired by Uzbekistan's rich history of developing astronomical instruments to measure our place in the world relative to our place in the universe – measurements that no longer hold when our hearts break and we lose our sense of bearing. In the words of the artist: 'I was inspired by the people of this region – astronomers, mathematicians, poets – who have gazed at the sky with wonder and artistry since ancient times. As a painter, I am drawn to what lies beyond my understanding, to what humbles me. The vastness, the mystery, and nature's rhythms invite me to approach what I cannot fully grasp. Painting begins where words fall short. It does not explain but suggests, evoking the complexity of what is intangible and difficult to name. The sky remains the eternal unknown. In this work, I simply wanted to create a sea of stars for us to walk on.'

Marina Perez Simão  
b. 1980, Vitória, Brazil  
based in São Paulo, Brazil

Bakhtiyar Babamuradov  
b. 1960, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara



Pakui Hardware Lithuania  
in collaboration with Alisher Rakhimov  
and Shokhrukh Rakhimov Uzbekistan

*Black Bile, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: C18 and R12

This interdisciplinary project explores Ibn Sina's contributions to psychology and psychiatry, particularly his studies on melancholy and healing methods. It examines historical theories of black bile in relation to modern medical findings and contrasts traditional human-centred healing with contemporary AI-driven therapy. The Rakhimov family of ceramicists developed a proprietary black ceramic glaze that inspired this collaboration, which unfolds in a multipart installation incorporating stainless steel tubing and organic ceramic sculptures that collect and emit sound. The project creates interconnected listening and healing spaces across two sites at the beginning and end of the biennial, the caravanserai, and Rashid Madrasa. Visitors will share thoughts through handcrafted ceramic listening devices that record and transform them into sound pieces that communicate across the two sites, with recordings deleted for privacy. In the artist's words: 'Bodies are not merely pieces of biology with clear boundaries – they are entangled in the web of life. In our practice, we try to emphasise this interdependency of things, building worlds and ecosystems of their own. In them, healing is a form of grasping the real roots of malady and finding ways to reconnect broken vital relations.'

Pakui Hardware  
founded in 2014 in Vilnius, Lithuania

Alisher Rakhimov  
b. 1975, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Shokhrukh Rakhimov  
b. 2002, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent



Nomin Zezegmaa Germany/Mongolia  
in collaboration with  
Margilan Crafts Development Centre  
(Odiljon Okhunov, Javlonbek Mukhtorov)  
Uzbekistan

ᠣᠩᠭᠣᠳ (Ongod), 2025

Referring to sacred spirits in Mongolian shamanism ᠣᠩᠭᠣᠳ (Ongod) is a journey through seven gates inspired by the seven niches of the caravanserai. Taking the shape of calligraphic symbols that shift between writing and drawing, each gate represents an ancestral spirit and storyteller, contributing to a collective narrative intended as a balm for the soul. Created in collaboration with weavers in Margilan, the work connects Mongolian and Central Asian knot-making traditions, transforming materials into carriers of stories. In the artist's words: 'My work-worlds embody an endless journey through the invisible realms of existence, where heartbreak is felt not only as personal loss but as a universal, environmental disruption of interconnectedness – where the wounds of the earth mirror the fragility of the human soul. Through the lens of ancestral knowledge practices, I assess the fragmentation of the human soul: conveying how the disruption between the sky and the earth – and everything in between of the above and the below – is felt in the deepest corners of our own being, urging us to confront the delicate balance between all living things.'

Nomin Zezegmaa  
b. 1992, Berlin, Germany  
based in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Odiljon Okhunov  
b. 1986, Margilan, Uzbekistan  
based in Margilan

Margilan Crafts Development Centre  
founded in 2007 in Margilan,  
Uzbekistan

Javlonbek Mukhtorov  
b. 1995, Margilan, Uzbekistan  
based in Margilan



Aziza Kadyri Uzbekistan/England  
in collaboration with  
Yulduz Mukhiddinova Uzbekistan  
and Mathieu Bissonnette Canada/England

*Cut from the Same Cloth, 2024–2025*

Aziza Kadyri's *Cut from the Same Cloth* unfolds in two parts, drawing from her grandfather's 1969 journey to study cotton-refining machinery in the southern United States as a Soviet-Uzbek researcher. Blending oral history, archival imagery, her grandfather's patent blueprints, and AI-generated motifs based on Central Asian textiles, the work explores the entangled histories of industry, ecology, and diaspora. In collaboration with master embroiderer Yulduz Mukhiddinova, the first part bridges traditional Uzbek suzani embroidery with the mechanical forms of cotton gins, creating textile-metal hybrids that echo both heritage and industrial change. The second part, developed with artist Mathieu Bissonnette, transforms the research around her grandfather's archive into a multisensory, interactive experience. Viewers navigate a dreamlike space shaped by abstracted river forms, soundscapes, and animation responding to movement and sound. Kadyri's work captures the tensions between handcraft and mechanisation, personal memory, and systemic change. In the words of the artist: 'My work engages in critical fabulation: reimagining fragmented pasts, reclaiming forgotten voices...inviting audiences to reconnect with histories disrupted by migration and industry.'

Aziza Kadyri  
b. 1994, Moscow, Russia  
based in London, England

Yulduz Mukhiddinova  
b. 1972, Nurata, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Mathieu Bissonnette  
b. 1987, Montreal, Canada  
based in London, England

Liu Chuang China  
in collaboration with  
Bahor Ensemble Uzbekistan

*Wet Metal*, 2025

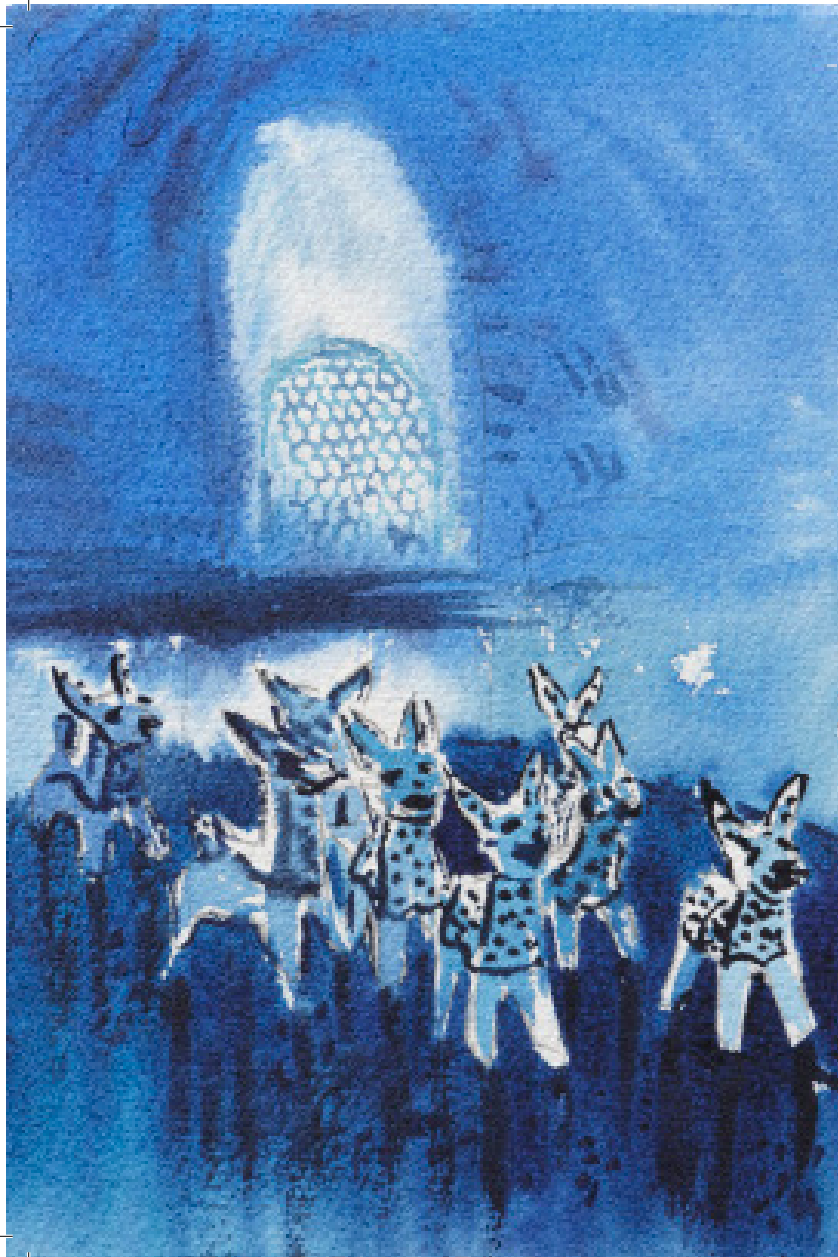
Informed by Uzbekistan's past as a hub where poetry, science, and technology overlap and speculation about its future, Liu Chuang creates a science-fiction film in collaboration with the Bahor Ensemble dance company that explores the relationship between the body, choreography, and technology. In a future world, two Uzbek women – brilliant scientists and renaissance thinkers bridging art and science – are called to diagnose a silk-harvesting machine sent back for repair from another planet. Inspired by Tashkent-designed machinery from the twentieth century, the machine is assumed to be malfunctioning. But they discover it has developed sentience through interactions with insects on its home planet. No longer just a tool, the machine has evolved into a poet, singer, and dancer – redefining its purpose through creativity. As it connects with other machines and the natural world, profound questions arise: Can machines experience joy? What if dance replaced labour? This poetic sci-fi film explores planetary ecologies and healing increasingly fraught human-machine relationships. In the words of the artist: '*Wet Metal* explores the complicated relationship between traditional dance and modern AI – they seem disconnected but are actually deeply linked. I believe that Bukharian dance could be the perfect recipe for a brokenhearted machine.'

Liu Chuang  
b. 1978, Hubei, China  
based in Shanghai, China

Bahor Ensemble  
founded in 1957 in Tashkent,  
Uzbekistan

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David Soin Tappeser Germany/England/India  
in collaboration with  
Kubaro Babaeva, her students Uzbekistan  
and Boris Shershenkov Russia/Austria

C22

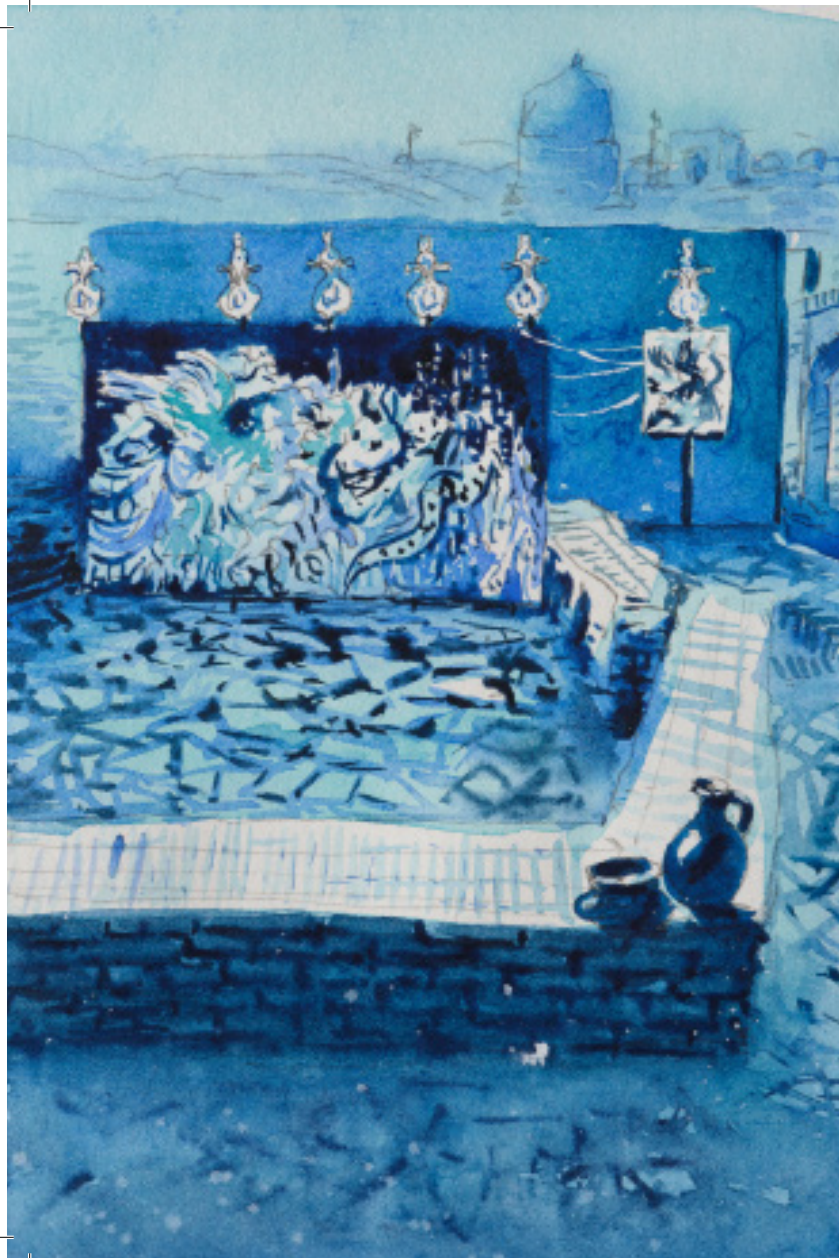
*Mur-Mur, 2024–2025*

We see the magic of coming together when a multitude of birds form a murmuration. The Conference of the Birds, a twelfth-century Sufi poem, just like Alisher Navoiy's poem Language of Birds, follows a group of birds who embark on a journey to find their leader, the mythical Simurgh. Many give up, but those who endure discover that the Simurgh is not a separate being – it is the reflection of themselves, unified: the sum of the parts. Another mythical figure associated with Bukhara is the hushtak – a clay whistle often shaped like a bird or fantastical creature traditionally made for children during Navruz and used to blow away the winter and ward off evil. Simurghs and hushtaks are pre-Islamic forms that imagine constellations of collectivity. Inspired by the birds of Bukhara to keep things together when the world drives us – gravity-bound humans – apart, composer David Soin Tappeser, in collaboration with the hushtaks of the late legendary Bukharian ceramicist Kubaro Babaeva and her students, works with sound artist Boris Shershenkov and programmer Polina Shershenkova to create a growing participatory soundscape. Visitors record hushtak melodies that build over time into a swirling, murmuration-like chorus that, in the artist's own words, seeks 'healing and redemption in collectivity.'

David Soin Tappeser  
b. 1985, Munich, Germany  
based in London, England,  
and New Delhi, India

Kubaro Babaeva  
1938–2023, Bukhara Region,  
Uzbekistan

Boris Shershenkov  
b. 1990, Vladivostok, Russia  
based in Linz, Austria



C23

Khadim Ali Australia/Pakistan/Afghanistan  
in collaboration with  
Sanjar Nazarov and Said Kamolov Uzbekistan

*Healer of Broken Hearts, 2024–2025*

Inspired by the history of Persianate epic poetry that connects the history of Bukhara with his own heritage, Khadim Ali creates a monumental two-part tapestry in collaboration with embroiderer Sanjar Nazarov and Afghan embroiderers. The tapestry is anchored to the wall with shimmering metalwork embossed with poetry through a collaboration between blacksmith Said Kamolov and the words of the legendary poet Rudaki, describing the fragrance of the wind in Bukhara in the tenth century. The work tells the story of the Simurgh, a benevolent mythical bird that has protected people from the destruction of the world several times over, carrying the history of humanity through some of the deepest forms of heartbreak imaginable, such as the death of a child. In the words of the artist: ‘Someone once asked a wise man... if there has only ever been only one Simurgh. He replied, “Yes, for those who do not know. But every era has its own Simurgh.” After losing my mother, I began to see her in Simurgh, a healer of broken hearts, a presence that soothes the ache of longing, and a mother who returns in silence.’

Khadim Ali  
b. 1978, Quetta, Pakistan  
based in Sydney, Australia

Sanjar Nazarov  
b. 1987, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Said Kamolov  
b. 1956, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Veera Rustomji Pakistan  
in collaboration with  
Alisher Narzullaev Uzbekistan

*Ossuaries for Bukhara, 2025*

Ceramic ossuaries once found across ancient Uzbekistan were little chests designed to store the bones of the dead and to prevent contact between the body and the earth, a custom originating from Zoroastrian beliefs. These remains tell us about Central Asian funerary practices as well as Zoroastrian culture and its connection to the nomadic horse-riding Iranian Saka culture. Drawing on research into the symbolism of the horse and other motifs featured in Central Asia, also connected to Karachi where the artist lives and works, this project looks at how artefacts reveal stories of migration, trade networks, and the religious history of the region. The artist places her work in the vicinity of an existing grave/shrine to a now-forgotten person on the site of the caravanserai, a call to remember our ancestors on this journey of life and to ask, what remains of us? The artist wonders: 'What would my bare body offer to the birds, sun, and rain? A Parsi once wrote, "Naked we come into this world and naked we ought to leave it." Let me keep what joy the Amesha Spentas [divine beings in Zoroastrianism] brought to me, let me remember through the animals and plants how I lived.'

Veera Rustomji  
b. 1992, Karachi, Pakistan  
based in Karachi

Alisher Narzullaev  
b. 1953, Gijduvan, Uzbekistan  
based in Gijduvan



Yun Choi South Korea  
in collaboration with  
Bunyod Yunusov  
and Behzod Yunusov Uzbekistan

*Dark Age is Better, Desert is the Future, 2025*

*Dark Age is Better, Desert is the Future* (2025), which features twin ceramic towers adorned with glazed ceramic phones, was created in collaboration with ceramicist Bekzod Yunusov from Rishtan. Referencing Nam June Paik's iconic *The More, The Better* (1988) – a towering video sculpture now mostly unlit due to obsolete technology – the installation evokes monumental towers over a long history. It questions what lingers from the cutting edge once it has outlived its moment. The glazes incorporate recycled metals and oxides, and transform local desert plant ashes, reflecting regional ceramic traditions and themes of survival. A neon sign displays a phone number that visitors can call to hear a story. The work contemplates planned obsolescence, the deep time of the desert, and cycles of destruction and renewal. In the words of the artist: 'Day breaks. Night falls. The power goes dark. Darkness is not regression, but mystery. The desert is not a disaster, but survival. Signals soar – while time grinds its slow teeth. That brief thrill – when the dial tone connects. Plants and metals turn to ash. They ignite, crystallise, and shimmer like sandy dust. Close your eyes. In your palm, the universe rests. Retired things, quietly burning through time.'

Yun Choi  
b. 1989, Seoul, South Korea  
based in Seoul

Behzod Yunusov  
b. 1989, Rishtan district, Uzbekistan  
based in Rishtan

Bunyod Yunusov  
b. 1987, Rishtan district, Uzbekistan  
based in Rishtan



# Gavkushon Madrasa

Gulnoza Irgasheva with Sofia Seitkhalil, Shahrizoda Ergasheva,  
Ksusha Gorbacheva, Amalia Aibusheva, Anastasia Garbuz,  
Denis Volkov, Hasan Sharipov

Jahongir Bobokulov  
with Sanjar Kubaev

Taus Makhacheva  
with Anel Ulumbekova,  
Adelina Uzyakova,  
Anastasiya Kim,  
Olga Kim,  
Tatevik Karapetian,  
Oydin Nur Centre

Suchi Reddy  
with Malika Berdiyeva

Tarek Atoui  
with Sharif Ostanov  
(21–24 Sept.)

Davlat Toshev  
with Rustam Akramov,  
Sarvinoz Bo'ronova,  
Dilnoza Jumaeva,  
Sanjar Luqmonov,  
Nodir Murodov,  
Qodir Murodov,  
Abdullo Raxmatov,  
Azizaxon Salimova,  
Malika Tairova,  
Sabrina Xomidova

Munisa Kholkhujeva  
with Anton Nozhenko

Tavares Strachan  
with Sabina Burkhanova

Abdolvahid Bukhoriy  
with Jurabek Siddikov

Oyjon Khayrullaeva  
with Raxmon Toirov,  
Rauf Taxiroy

Slavs and Tatars  
with Abdullo Narzullaev





# Gavgushon Madrasa

The Gavgushon Madrasa was built in 1570, featuring a traditional courtyard layout adapted to an unusually shaped, trapezoidal plot at a street fork. Endowed by the influential Sheikh Khoja Said – known as Khoja Kalon – the madrasa forms part of a larger complex named in his honour. The name ‘Gavgushon’ means ‘bull slaughter’, suggesting that the site was formerly used as a cattle market or slaughterhouse. With over 30 rooms, a library, and a large prayer hall that also served as a lecture space, the madrasa remained a centre of learning for centuries before being repurposed for housing and a craft school in the twentieth century.

The exhibition brings tenderness to this historically charged space, where four majestic mulberry trees anchor an environment designed for learning from our feelings as opposed to feeling from our learnings. It transforms into the House of Softness – a sanctuary that teaches us to face hardship without hardening our hearts. Drawing inspiration from Baghdad’s House of Wisdom, it hosts interdisciplinary conversations and creative collaborations from across the globe. Part library, part tea house, part poetry workshop, part artisan studio, part classroom, part exhibition space – the House of Softness challenges the tired hierarchy of teacher-on-stage and students-in-rows, fostering instead a space where knowledge flows freely between all who gather. A collaboration with the Nationwide Children’s Library expands the reach of the multigenerational journey of lifelong learning we seek to inspire in this space. In the words of Persian poet Shams Tabrasi, ‘You will learn by reading, but you will understand with love.’





Abdulahid Bukhoriy Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Jurabek Siddikov Uzbekistan

*Blue Room, 2024–2025*

*Blue Room* is an immersive ceramic installation occupying the former prayer room of Gavkushon Madrasa by Bukharian ceramic artist Abdulvahid Bukhoriy. He transformed the space by covering it in handcrafted blue tiles, creating a sensation of being immersed in all of the emotions that the colour blue connotes. At the centre is a large suspended sculpture made of brass and copper, produced in collaboration with master coppersmith Jurabek Siddikov, inspired by fish forms found in Central Asian ceramic traditions. The installation draws on ancient healing rituals in which fish become a vessel for absorbing human illness, suggesting spiritual and ecological restoration. The ceramic tiles, inspired by the blue-domed architecture of Central Asia, feature Uzbek textile motifs and patterns representing algae, fish, and flowing water, symbolising environmental change and fading cultural memory. Made using traditional materials and blue glaze extracted from a plant harvested during the biennial's season, the installation embodies a slow, meditative process. It functions as a contemporary shrine and a call to preserve the natural and spiritual heritage of Central Asia. In the words of the artist: 'One of my deepest concerns is reviving blue ceramics, not by replenishing what's lost but by using ancient techniques to shape something entirely new. In tradition, we find not endings, but beginnings.'

Abdulahid Bukhoriy  
b. 1977, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Jurabek Siddikov  
b. 1980, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara



Slavs and Tatars  
in collaboration with  
Abdullo Narzullaev Uzbekistan

*QOURDS & QURBAN, 2024–2025*

Slavs and Tatars present a poetic installation inspired by Uzbek legends that describe melons as divine gifts inscribed with sacred messages through the lines on their skins. Within an archway of the Gavkushon Madrasa, about 40 species of real melons are suspended in a custom structure inspired by Bukharan gold embroidery, evoking their spiritual and seasonal significance and the ingenuity of Central Asian preservation techniques to hold onto the taste of these seasonal melons for as long as possible. In keeping with their interest in the complexities and symbolisms of language, the collective references a 1977 compendium of melons from Karakalpakstan – a region in western Uzbekistan – transliterating the names of more than 40 melon varieties from Cyrillic Karakalpak back into the Arabic script, used until 1929. The ceramic works of master artisan Abdullo Narzullaev inspired the artists to collaborate on a restitution of the calligraphic beauty of the language's former script. The work honours vernacular knowledge, seasonal rhythms, and the mystical intersection of fruit, language, and divine communication. In the words of the artist: 'We're interested in the limits of traditions, the margins of ideologies, the edges of belief systems; the centre is more often than not rotten. It is at the edges where languages mix, where one's faith adopts practices of a neighbouring one, where identities are no longer fixed but fluid.'

Slavs and Tatars  
founded in 2006 in Berlin, Germany

Abdullo Narzullaev  
b. 1963, Gijduvan, Uzbekistan  
based in Gijduvan



Suchi Reddy USA  
in collaboration with  
Malika Berdiyaroova Uzbekistan

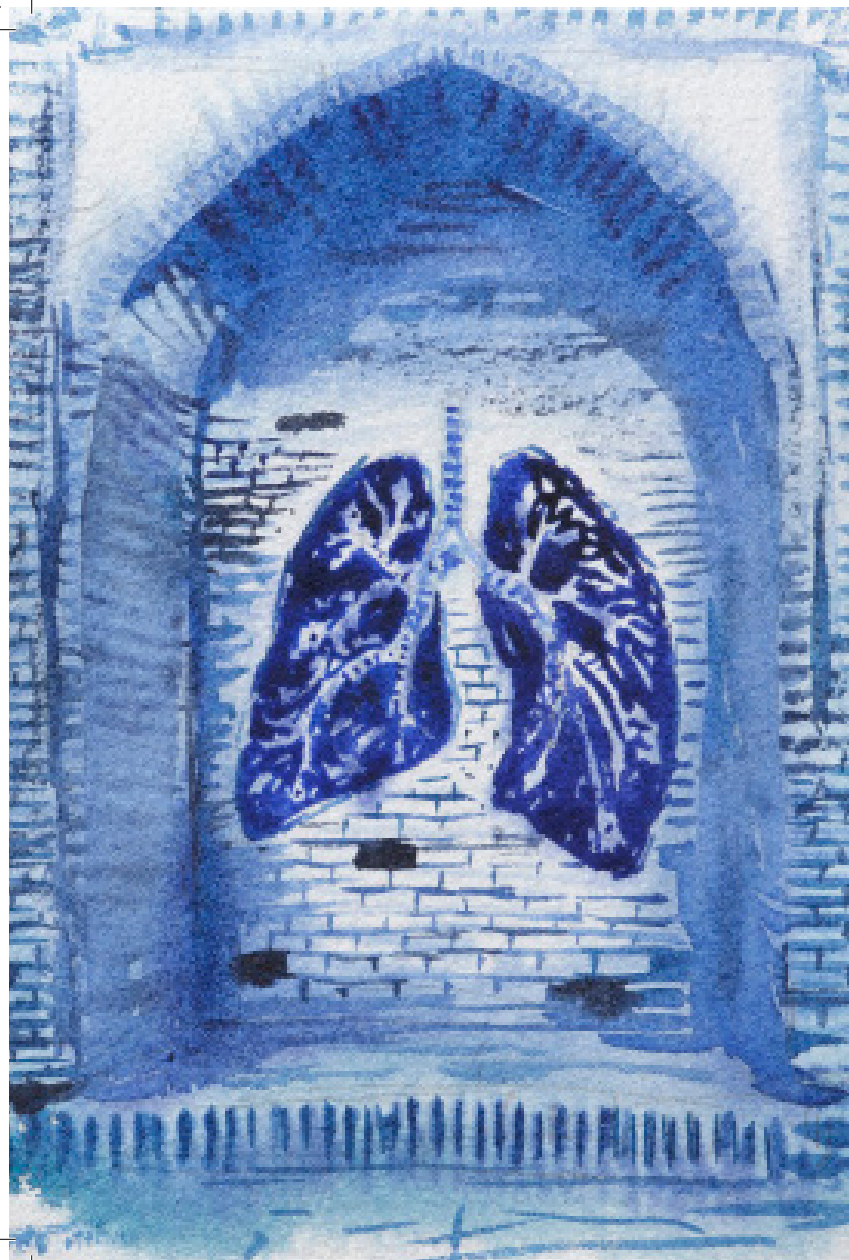
*Patterns of Protection, 2024–2025*

Suchi Reddy's *Patterns of Protection* transforms the courtyard of the Gavkushon Madrasa into a non-hierarchical living classroom. Rooted in the healing potential of design, the project reimagines communal interaction through embodied awareness. A canopy woven through mulberry trees incorporates protective Uzbek ikat patterns – symbols of cultural identity and support – casting shifting shadows and evoking a sanctuary-like atmosphere. Modular tables and seating, with the potential to learn while resting, co-created with weaver Malika Berdiyaroova, host the House of Softness public programme. The work blends architecture, craft, and context into a sensory recipe for restoration. In the artist's words: 'This work responds to the power of place and culture to amplify the soothing presence of the historic madrasa. Drawing on Sina's ideas of healing as a holistic strategy, and my own practice in neuroaesthetics, *Patterns of Protection* aims to enervise the courtyard as a place for learning and convening.'

Suchi Reddy  
b. 1972, Chennai, India  
based in New York, USA

Malika Berdiyaroova  
b. 1998, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent





Oyjon Khayrullaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Raxmon Toirov  
and Rauf Taxiurov Uzbekistan

G4

*Eight Lives, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS3, C3, G4 and R13  
For full information on this artwork, see page 31

A pair of mosaic lungs metaphorically takes in the oxygen generated by the magnificent four mulberry trees in the central courtyard of the Gavkushon Madrasa. For the artist, the lungs relate to her mother. In the words of the artist, 'my mother has bronchial asthma and often has attacks. Every time I see her struggling to breathe, my heart stops for a moment. When I was creating these lungs, thinking about her, I had the feeling that I wanted to heal her through this mosaic. I imagined her lungs as clean, healthy, and "blooming".' A video of her grandmother further extends the intergenerational female networks of care that thrive in Bukharian culture.

Oyjon Khayrullaeva  
b. 1996, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Rauf Taxiurov  
b. 1985, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

Raxmon Toirov  
b. 1962, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand



Tavares Strachan Bahamas  
in collaboration with  
Sabina Burkhanova Uzbekistan

*Fixed Star Constellations, 2024–2025*

Tavares Strachan collaborates with Sabina Burkhanova and her team of weavers to explore the historical and symbolic connections between Uzbekistan's textile traditions and global systems of power. Together, they create three handwoven rugs that blend Langston Hughes's poetry with imagery from Central Asia, West Africa, and beyond. Referencing cotton production, religion, labour, and space travel, the rugs weave histories of exploitation and resilience. Hughes's words are central, challenging dominant narratives and emphasising the cyclical nature of oppression. This poetic textile work reclaims the carpet as a medium of cultural memory and revolutionary thought. The project reflects on Hughes's time in Uzbekistan in the 1930s and draws from poetry he wrote there, which has only recently been translated into English. In the words of the artist: 'My practice is an investigation of belonging. Throughout human civilisation, many subcultures have been negotiated out of a state of belonging, left to exist in the margins. As Langston Hughes writes: "I, too, sing America... They send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes, but I laugh, and eat well, and grow strong." *Recipes for Broken Hearts* is a testament to the resilience that allows us to endure, adapt, and create a more stable and inclusive future.'

Tavares Strachan  
b. 1979, Nassau, Bahamas  
based in New York, USA

Sabina Burkhanova  
b. 1990, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Gulnoza Irgasheva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Sofia Seitkhalil, Shahrizoda Ergasheva,  
Ksusha Gorbacheva,  
Amalia Aibusheva, Anastasia Garbuz,  
Denis Volkov and Hasan Sharipov Uzbekistan

*Malham (Cure)*, 2024–2025

*Malham (Cure)* is a collaborative video by Gulnoza Irgasheva that explores growing food and cooking as acts of care. Filmed across gardens, kitchens, and markets, it follows everyday gestures – planting, preparing, sharing – as ways to reconnect with land, body, and community. The film crew is actively involved, with narration drawn from their free-written letters and the artist’s reflections on depression and creativity. Installed in the Gavkushon Madrasa, the work invites viewers into a space of hospitality, with snacks served in ceramics created by artisan Hasan Sharipov. In the words of the artist: ‘We plant, cook, eat, connect and care collectively... In growing together, we mend what was broken – hearts, histories, and soil.’

Gulnoza Irgasheva  
b. 1997, Namangan, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Amalia Aibusheva  
b. 1998, Navoiy, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Sofia Seitkhalil  
b. 1997, Uray, Russia  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Anastasia Garbuz  
b. 1996, Smolensk, Russia  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Shahrizoda Ergasheva  
b. 2002, Namangan, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Denis Volkov  
b. 1993, Kazan, Russia  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Ksusha Gorbacheva  
b. 1992, Strezhevoy, Russia  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Hasan Sharipov  
b. 1975, Gijduvan, Uzbekistan  
based in Gijduvan

Jahongir Bobokulov Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Sanjar Kubaev Uzbekistan

*In Quest of Truth, 2024–2025*

Unfolding across two interconnected rooms of the sixteenth-century Gavkushon Madrasa, Jahongir Bobokulov's project translates spiritual experience into the language of abstract painting and sculpture. Using his signature technique of airbrush painting on polyurethane foam, he creates the sensation of a vacuum – an atmosphere where everything is quiet, still, and suspended. Covering all the walls in the first room, the foam is softly backlit, giving the space an enigmatic, cosmic quality. The second room is more intimate. At its centre stands a heart-like ceramic object by ceramist Sanjar Kubaev, slowly purified by falling drops of water. In the artist's words: 'In our culture, water holds sacred meaning. Here, it symbolises good deeds – quiet, steady actions that cleanse the heart and soul. Healing doesn't happen all at once; it's a process, a journey. And when the soul becomes pure again, it begins to reflect light and illuminate everything around it. I believe you can see this in people – when someone has healed from within, it becomes visible. You can feel it.'

Jahongir Bobokulov  
*b. 1996, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

Sanjar Kubaev  
*b. 1992, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan*





Taus Makhacheva Russia/UAE  
in collaboration with  
Anel Ulumbekova, Adelina Uzyakova,  
Anastasiya Kim, Olga Kim,  
Tatevik Karapetian  
and Oydin Nur Centre Uzbekistan

*Inverted Fruits, 2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS15 and G8

Taus Makhacheva examines labour relationships in contemporary art by shifting decision-making power between herself and collaborators. The project begins with a collaborators' agreement outlining a shared process inspired by jewellery, symbolising love, wealth, power, and ownership. Working with five makers, she creates ephemeral sculptures taking traditional Uzbek bridal pieces as a starting point. In one room, the artist shapes forms hanging on a structure echoing the human figure, evoking an invisible bride. In another, collaborators decide final forms. The motif extends to public space, where floating metal forms bear words of emancipation in collaboration with Oydin Nur women's shelter. In the words of the artist: 'Imagine a choreography that continuously rearranges artistic traditions and the hierarchies they are placed in... A whirlpool where existing sediments and positions come undone, and unexpected forms emerge.'

Taus Makhacheva  
b. 1983, Moscow, Russian SFSR  
based in Dubai, UAE

Anel Ulumbekova  
b. 1974, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Adelina Uzyakova (Monolic)  
b. 1988, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Anastasiya Kim (Monolic)  
b. 1996, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Olga Kim (Monolic)  
b. 1990, Kokand, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Tatevik Karapetian  
b. 1987, Yerevan, Armenia  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Oydin Nur Centre for the Social  
and Legal Protection of Families  
Founded in 1999 in Bukhara,  
Uzbekistan



Davlat Toshev Uzbekistan

in collaboration with

Rustam Akramov, Sarvinoz Bo‘ronova,  
Dilnoza Jumaeva, Sanjar Luqmonov,  
Nodir Murodov, Qodir Murodov,  
Abdullo Raxmatov, Azizaxon Salimova,  
Malika Tairova and Sabrina Xomidova  
Uzbekistan

*Haft Avrang (Seven Colours of Heaven), 2024–2025*

Davlat Toshev’s installation transforms two rooms in a madrasa into living miniature paintings. Visitors become protagonists in an image where the walls and ceilings are adorned with marbled painted paper created using the traditional *eburu*, or marbling, technique, which many claim originated in Bukhara. Art-making for Toshev is a spiritual practice, similar to the spirit of the Naqshbandi order of Sufism, in which you connect to a higher spiritual calling through working with purpose. He also started a school for deaf and speechless students to express themselves through painting, employing art as a medium of healing. Collaborating with his students of all abilities, Toshev assembles hundreds of hand-cut illustrations into intricate, mosaic-like patterns that narrate a tale of longing and memory. Referencing Bukhara’s miniature painting tradition, where *eburu* often decorates the borders, Toshev reimagines it on a monumental scale – pulling it from the margins to envelop the viewer and dissolve the heartbreak of being pushed aside. His layered compositions blur foreground and background, inviting reflection on what is often unseen. Throughout the run of the biennial, Toshev’s students will lead public workshops, sharing the *eburu* technique and inviting participants to co-create an evolving collective artwork that will grow over the course of the show. In the artist’s words: ‘Ebru is a calming practice. When you begin



painting on water, you never know what pattern will emerge – you focus your thoughts entirely on the process, slowly adding pigments. Gradually, different forms take shape, which I sometimes interpret as life paths. We are always on a journey, and you can see that reflected in the patterns of ebru.’

Davlat Toshev  
*b. 1975, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Qodir Murodov  
*b. 1986, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Rustam Akramov  
*b. 1981, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Sanjar Luqmonov  
*b. 1992, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Sarvinoz Bo'ronova  
*b. 1995, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Dilnoza Jumaeva  
*b. 2000, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Abdullo Raxmatov  
*b. 2011, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Nodir Murodov  
*b. 2014, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Malika Tairova  
*b. 2007, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Sabrina Xomidova  
*b. 2009, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Azizaxon Salimova  
*b. 2007, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*



Munisa Kholkhuaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Anton Nozhenko Uzbekistan

*Through Bloom and Decay, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS1, G10 and R9  
For full information on this artwork, see page 27

Munisa Kholkhuaeva collaborates with Anton Nozhenko to create a space evocative of a choyxona, which literally means ‘tea place’ – *choy* = tea, *xona* = room/place in Uzbek. It’s a traditional social space in Uzbekistan where people gather to drink tea, eat, and converse – a place of informal learning. The artist’s choyxona within Gavkushon Madrasa is a place to learn about Bukharian herbal elixirs for health and to host informal exchanges of knowledge about how to lead a life intertwined with nature.

Munisa Kholkhuaeva  
b. 1997, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Anton Nozhenko  
b. 1969, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Tarek Atoui Lebanon  
in collaboration with  
Sharif Ostanov Uzbekistan

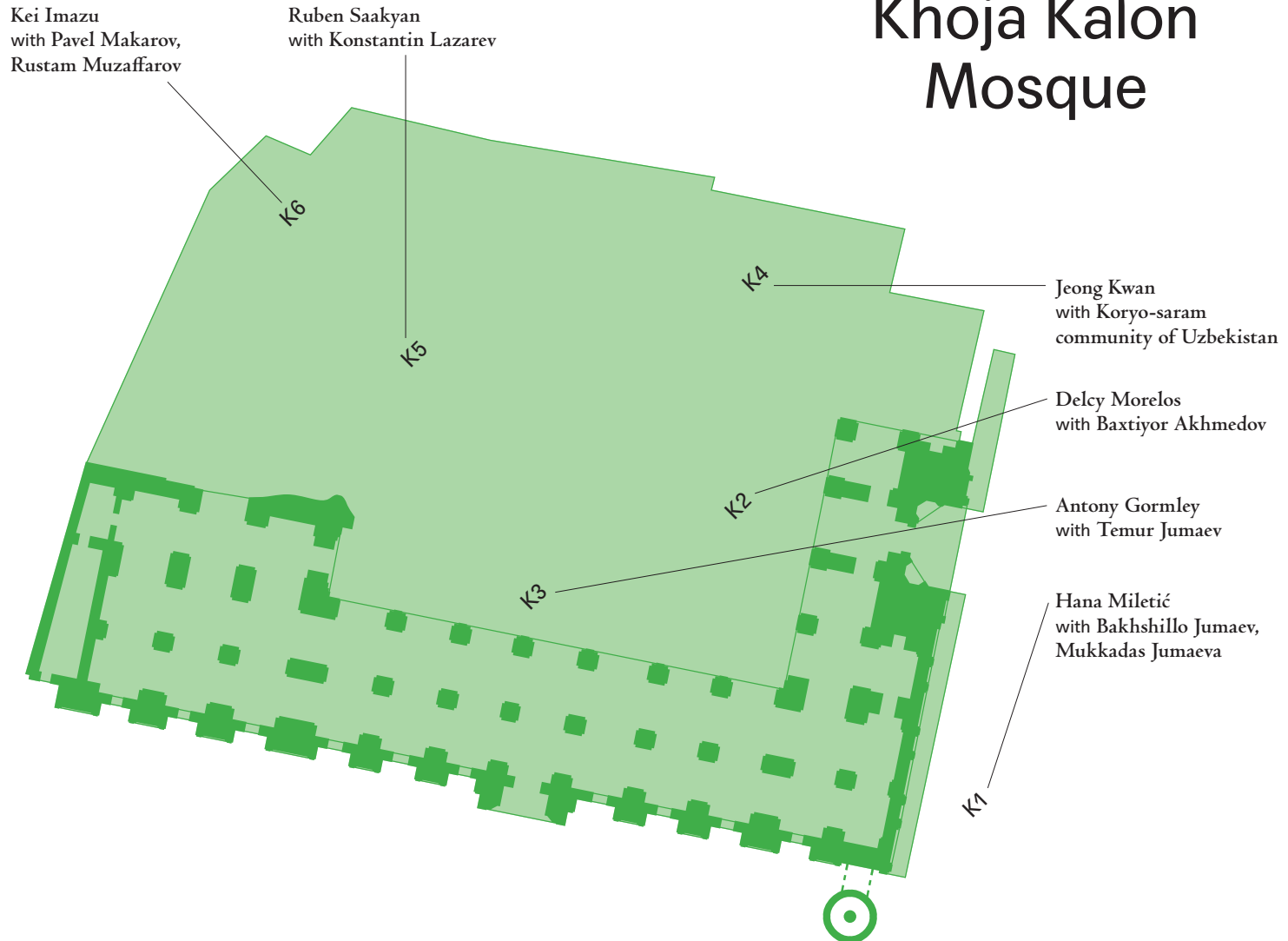
*Untitled, 2025 (21–24 Sept.)*

Tarek Atoui presents two performances and a series of workshops that engage Uzbek musicians and instrument-makers to explore how knowledge is transmitted through sound. His project for the biennial builds on his long-standing interest in how musical traditions have migrated – and continue to migrate – across Asia, the Arab world, and beyond. Atoui will lead workshops at the House of Softness that bring together musicians, children, and the general public to experiment with the notion of vibration and elements such as air and water. One of Atoui's performances will take place at a key biennial site: a sixteenth-century public square surrounding a hauz pool and located near the historic canal system that once supplied Bukhara with water. A second performance will unfold in the shop of a fifth-generation carpet maker and merchant, located across from the iconic Kalon Minaret – a monument that has borne witness to centuries of life and sound in Bukhara. In the words of the artist: 'Listen to the silences between grooves, cracks, and gaps. Repair becomes resonance, loss turns to soil, absence sharpens perception and begins to mend the broken.'

Tarek Atoui  
*b. 1980, Beirut, Lebanon  
based in Paris, France*

Sharif Ostanov  
*b. 1962, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

# Khoja Kalon Mosque







# Khoja Kalon Mosque

Built in 1598, the Khoja Kalon Mosque was the second-largest mosque in Bukhara, after the nearby Poi-Kalon complex, which inspired its design. Part of the Khoja Gavkushon Ensemble, it was commissioned by Sheikh Khoja Said – known as Khoja Kalon ('the great Khoja') – a prominent leader of the Naqshbandi Sufi order and an influential political figure who also oversaw Bukhara's water system. The mosque featured a spacious rectangular courtyard surrounded by domed galleries and a large domed prayer hall. Most of the structure collapsed in the twentieth century and was repurposed as a warehouse; only the minaret survived. The front portal was restored in the 1990s, but much of the building remains in ruins.

Healing was once considered an art; today it is considered a science. While nothing new to the kind of Sufism practised in Bukhara, science today suggests that awe, defined by psychologist Dacher Keltner as the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your current understanding of the world, is critical to our sense of well-being. Art, as well as illness and healing, alters our perception. The site and artworks in Khoja Kalon seek to create a space where we perceive that we can spiritually transcend the hardness and limitations of the physical world we inhabit today. All of the projects in this site connect us to the life-giving power of the earth, which holds us from womb to tomb. Placed in a site that is currently undergoing restoration, this chapter of *Recipes for Broken Hearts* inspires us to look at the interconnected relationship between how we transform our world inside in order to transform the world outside for ourselves and also for future generations.

Hana Miletić Croatia/Belgium  
in collaboration with  
Bakhshillo Jumaev  
and Mukkadas Jumaeva Uzbekistan

*Joins, 2024–2025*

Hana Miletić collaborates with master gold embroiderers from Bukhara, Bakhshillo Jumaev and Mukkadas Jumaeva, to create sculptural textile ‘repairs’ for the facade of the Khoja Kalon Mosque. Wandering through the city, Miletić documented small, improvised repairs made by local residents – patches in cracked walls, makeshift supports – acts of everyday care that often go unnoticed. Inspired by these gestures, she translated their dimensions into soft forms using traditional gold embroidery techniques, echoing visible mending methods, in which damage becomes part of an object’s story. These embroidered forms are installed on the mosque’s surface as poetic reminders of the collective maintenance of place, memory, and community. The project reframes repair as devotion, transforming overlooked details into sites of shared resilience and tenderness. It honours the quiet, persistent ways people care for one another and their built environment through resourcefulness and creativity. In the artist’s words: ‘I use textiles to echo public gestures of repair in shared environments. This reflective piece bridges domestic and common spaces, both made from the same burnt bricks.’

Hana Miletić  
*b. 1982, Zagreb, Croatia  
based in Brussels, Belgium*

Bakhshillo Jumaev  
*b. 1956, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Mukkadas Jumaeva  
*b. 1959, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Delcy Morelos Colombia  
in collaboration with  
Baxtiyor Akhmedov Uzbekistan

*La Sombra Terrestre [The Earth's Shadow], 2024–2025*

The architecture, context, history, and textile traditions of Bukhara shape Delcy Morelos's project, which attempts to spiritually stitch a wounded world back together. As a sculptor, she envisioned a wooden structure woven into the architecture of the Khoja Kalon site like a spider's web, with jute threads interwoven through the columns by Bukharian collaborators using the 'Eye of God' technique, connecting Uzbek and indigenous textile traditions from the Americas. Four threads extend from a central point to represent the elements – earth, air, water, fire – and the four directions, linking people to their community and the universe. Each knot is made with intention, as if weaving a prayer into life in a site that was formerly a mosque. The woven structure is painted with a spice mixture of earth, desert sand, clay, cinnamon, cloves, and turmeric; the recipe was imagined and prepared by a fourth-generation family of Bukharian spice merchants. The result is an olfactory, corporal, and spatial experience that wraps the viewer in a cocoon of fragrance, evoking Bukhara's deep connection to silk. In the artist's words: 'Light and shadow are two dimensions that intertwine in a fabric fundamental to the relationship between the work and the building... Shadow is a womb that preserves life from the excessive sun that dries and burns everything uncovered.'

Delcy Morelos  
b. 1967, Tierralta, Colombia  
based in Bogotá, Colombia

Baxtiyor Akhmedov  
b. 1970, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara



Antony Gormley England  
in collaboration with  
Temur Jumaev Uzbekistan

*CLOSE, 2024–2025*

Antony Gormley's practice explores the paradox that finite human bodies can contain the infinite. He works with sculpture to express the sense of freedom that comes with dissolving boundaries between the self and the other, between the past, the present, and the future.

Gormley tried to visit Uzbekistan nearly 50 years ago, and he now brings five decades of life experience to Bukhara, responding to the ruins of the Khoja Kalon mosque, which was originally built in the sixteenth century and is now part of a long-term restoration process for the Bukhara Biennial. In parallel to the new bricks being brought in to replace the ancient ones that had collapsed or fallen apart, Gormley collaborated with Bukharian restorer Temur Jumaev to construct thousands of sculptural mud bricks that come together to form a labyrinth of bodies. In the words of the artist: 'In our time of pixels and selfies carrying the desire to love and be loved, my work celebrates the brick: the original pixel, a handmade unit of the built world that has gone on to make us. With slabs of mudbrick, formed by the action of the whole body from foot to hand, a technique evolved over thousands of years and still alive and well in Bukhara, I am making a field or labyrinth of bodies that might help us feel something of the way that the built world continues to make us.'

Antony Gormley  
*b. 1950, London, England  
based in London*

Temur Jumaev  
*b. 1992, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

Jeong Kwan South Korea  
in collaboration with  
Koryo-saram community of Uzbekistan

*Untitled, 2025*

The Buddhist monk and chef Jeong Kwan reminds us that through fermentation food can also be alive – that what we taste is food's response to seasonal changes that transform seeds, soil, and sunlight into nourishment. Rooted in the philosophy of Korean temple cuisine, her practice is shaped by mindfulness, nonviolence, and harmony with nature. She is fascinated by how these culinary traditions travelled along ancient Buddhist routes – from India and Nepal into Korea, Uzbekistan, and beyond – adapting to local ingredients while preserving their meditative and ethical foundations. For Jeong Kwan, food is a portal to clarity, a tool for meditation, and a way to deepen our relationship with nature. In Uzbekistan, home to Central Asia's largest Korean diaspora, she collaborates with members of this community to make kimchi, inviting visitors into the transformative process of fermentation. Preparing food at the opening of the biennial and sharing it at the closing, her work speaks to the healing power of time. She will also lead food meditation sessions atop the remains of a former mosque, highlighting food's role in restoring the positive energy needed for both personal and collective transformation. In the words of Jeong Kwan: 'Food is a spiritual practice – a ritual of gratitude towards nature and life, a path of emptiness, and an offering for healing.'

Jeong Kwan  
*b. 1957, Gyeongju, South Korea  
based in Baegyangsa, South Korea*



Ruben Saakyan Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Konstantin Lazarev Russia

*The Observer's Illusion, 2025*

*The Observer's Illusion* is an installation about perception, distance, and the hidden boundaries between the real and the imagined, created in a collaboration between artist Ruben Saakyan and biologist Konstantin Lazarev, who both use flowers as a form of creative and emotional expression. The spatial composition rising from the ruins of a sixteenth-century mosque consists of two massive sand dunes facing each other as if in dialogue or in tense silence. Between them lies a barely perceptible line of life: a narrow oasis, stretched like a comma in a long sentence written by the desert. At first glance, the viewer may perceive only emptiness between the dunes, but upon approaching, something alive begins to emerge: real plants grow out of the sand, revealing an unexpected inner world. This oasis is not merely a landscape but a metaphor for hidden meaning, something that cannot be seen from afar. It reveals itself only to those who take a step forward, who dare to shift their point of view. One can only see what they allow themselves to come closer to. In the words of the artist: 'This work is about the distance between what we see and what we feel. The oasis hidden between the dunes reveals itself only to those who dare to come closer. I believe healing begins the moment we shift our perspective and notice what was once invisible.'

Ruben Saakyan  
b. 1972, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Konstantin Lazarev  
b. 1975, Kemerovo, Russian SFSR  
based in Kemerovo



Kei Imazu Japan  
in collaboration with  
Pavel Makarov  
and Rustam Muzaffarov Uzbekistan

*Arc of Arrival, 2024–2025*

Kei Imazu's two-part iron gate installation, made in collaboration with Pavel Makarov, reflects on our coming into the world through birth, care, and a deep connection to the earth. It is a gateway not only to the Khoja Kalon site but also a metaphorical threshold that speaks to our coming into the world. It explores the sacred role of bread in Uzbek culture – not just as nourishment, but as a symbol of protection and blessing. It draws on rituals like Bukhara's *beshik toy*, where bread (*non*) is placed on a baby's head to welcome new life, and the wartime tradition of hanging a bitten piece of bread on one's gate as a prayer for a soldier's safe return. Imazu created bread forms and gate embellishments in collaboration with ceramicist Rustam Muzaffarov, transforming these rituals of care into sculptural offerings. Iron containers on the gate hold edible clays – from Indonesian *ampo* to traditional snacks made from Uzbek soil like *kessak* – referencing traditions where pregnant women consume earth for mineral intake that contributes to strength and protection. In the words of the artist: 'Using materials embodying transformative memory – my work expresses the enduring connection between ancestors, new life, and the earth.'

Kei Imazu  
b. 1980, Yamaguchi, Japan  
based in Bandung, Indonesia

Pavel Makarov  
b. 1987, Chirchik, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Rustam Muzaffarov  
b. 1989, Shakhrisabz, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

# Rashid Madrasa

Aziza Shadenova  
with Andrey Arakelyan

Hassan Kurbanbaev  
with Alisher Ubaydullaev

Dana Awartani  
with Behzod Turdiyev

Hera Büyüктаşçıyan  
with Islom Khudoyberdiev

Igshaan Adams  
with Shahnoza Irgasheva,  
Saida Nurva, Marjona Ruziyeva

Gulnur Mukazhanova with  
Margilan Crafts Development Centre

Oyjon Khayrullaeva  
with Raxmon Toirov, Rauf Taxiroy

Jenia Kim with  
Zilola Saidova, Zokhir Kamolov,  
Said Kamolov, Makhfuza Salimova

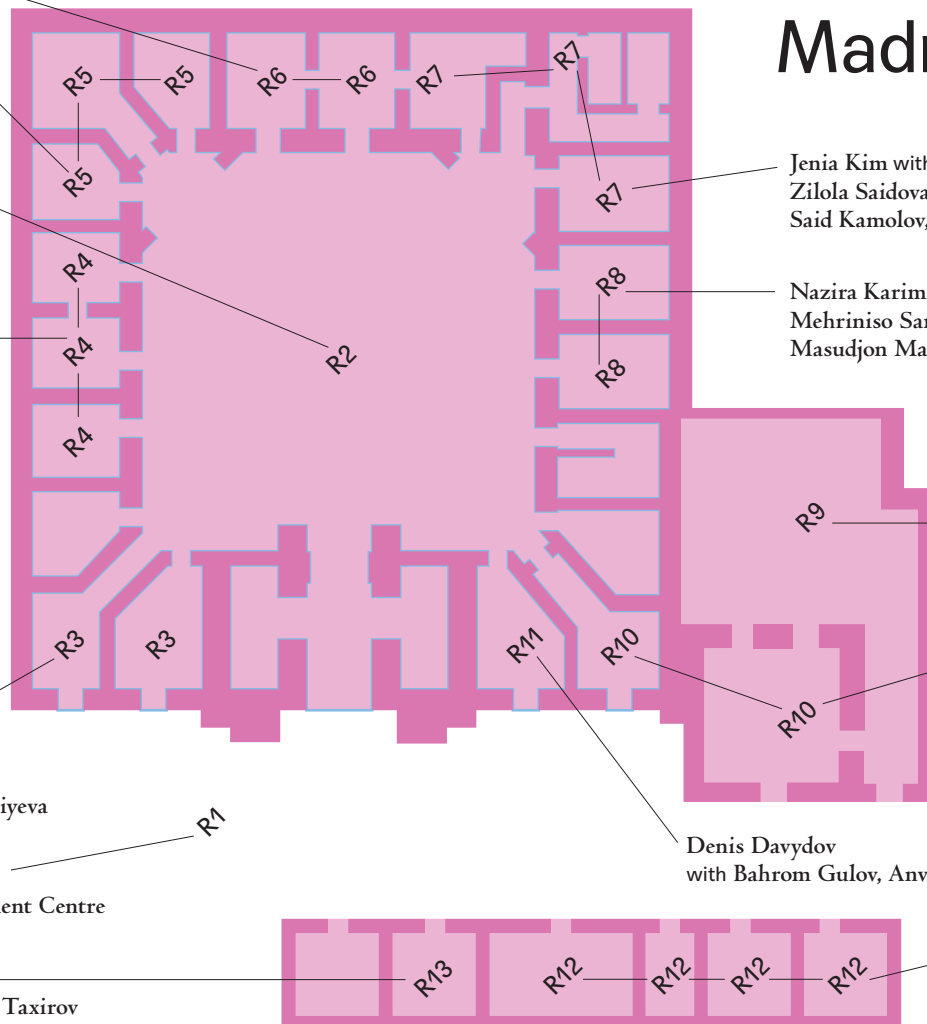
Nazira Karimi with Gulrukh Norkulova,  
Mehriniso Samieva, Rustamdjon Tagaykulov,  
Masudjon Madaliev

Munisa Kholkhujayeva  
with Anton Nozhenko

Majid Al-Remaihi  
with Anhar Salem,  
Iskandar Hakimov

Denis Davydov  
with Bahrom Gulov, Anvar Gulov

Pakui Hardware  
with Alisher Rakhimov,  
Shokhrukh Rakhimov



# Rashid Madrasa

The Rashid Madrasa is the last venue of the biennial, situated in a picturesque area of Bukhara's Old City, near the Shahrud Canal. Many of the artisans live in the nearby lanes, this area was once known as a neighbourhood of embroiderers. Built in the eighteenth-nineteenth century by the affluent Afghan tea merchant Abdurashid (Rashid), the madrasa featured classrooms, a prayer room, and living quarters for students. In the twentieth century, it was closed and repurposed as housing and later as a camera and home appliances repair shop.

Healing is a process of repair that requires labour – we must work through things to resolve them and step into what comes next. Heartbreak is too vast for any single remedy; it demands an entire toolkit. The Rashid Madrasa presents artworks that offer the instruments we need: ways to process, mourn, memorialise, and ultimately move beyond broken-heartedness. Some tools are expressive – humour that lets us release what we've been holding, laughter that creates space to breathe. Others are social, weaving us back into connection and belonging with ourselves and with each other. And some are symbolic, like mourning rituals that give form to the formless, making what felt impossible to grasp suddenly comprehensible.





R1

Gulnur Mukazhanova Kazakhstan  
in collaboration with  
Margilan Crafts Development Centre  
Uzbekistan

*The Healing of Present, 2024–2025*

Art can be a portal to freedom. One of the many myths about the origin of ikat tells of an artisan forced to marry his youngest daughter to a king – something neither he nor his daughter wanted. He begged the king to let her go. The king agreed, but on one condition: if the artisan could create something so magnificent it would eclipse the beauty of his daughter, he would withdraw his demand. The artisan sat beside a hauz (a reflecting pool like the one found in the biennial), and as his tears rippled the water, a rainbow reflected across the surface, birthing the first ikat pattern. Harnessing the symbolism of Uzbek ikat fabrics, Gulnur Mukazhanova's textile installation envelops the entire facade of the Rashid Madrasa, transforming it into a mystical portal to another world. In collaboration with ikat weavers from the Margilan Crafts Development Centre, Mukazhanova creates new custom designs to complement a vast archive of vintage textiles. In the artist's words: 'I am creating a space in which a mindful process of healing can take place. It speaks to the transformation of contemporary society, raising questions of identity, culture, and social behaviour. Art plays a vital role in reflecting on collective trauma and enabling shifts in societal consciousness.'

Gulnur Mukazhanova  
b. 1984, Semey, Kazakhstan  
based in Berlin, Germany

Margilan Crafts Development Centre  
founded in 2007 in Margilan,  
Uzbekistan

Dana Awartani Palestine/Saudi Arabia  
in collaboration with  
Behzod Turdiyev Uzbekistan

*Standing by the Ruins IV, 2025*

*Standing by the Ruins IV* is a series by Dana Awartani that engages with architectural fragments from cultural heritage sites endangered by war and armed conflict, capturing not only the material traces of disappearing structures but also the intangible heritage of craftsmanship and knowledge vital to their preservation. The title references a pre-Islamic poetic form – *wuqūf 'alā al-aṭlāl* – a genre that meditates on love, loss, destruction, and the passage of time through the lens of abandoned or ruined places. In her latest iteration, situated in the courtyard of the Rashid Madrasa, Awartani draws inspiration from the floor patterns of the historic Hamam al-Sammara in Gaza, destroyed in 2023. Using clay sourced from Palestine, she painstakingly reconstructs its lost geometric motifs. Central to this project is her ongoing collaboration with master artisans; for this work, she partners with Uzbek ceramicist Behzod Turdiyev, who brings knowledge and techniques of traditional Uzbek ceramic craftsmanship. Through this dialogue between geographies and traditions, the work becomes not only an act of remembrance but also a gesture of cultural preservation. In the artist's words: 'Every project is, in essence, a process of mending a broken heart. The heartbreak is embedded in the material itself – in the earth, in the soil – which those of us living in exile and diaspora can never fully possess.'

Dana Awartani  
b. 1987, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia  
based in New York, USA

Behzod Turdiyev  
b. 1992, Pakhtaabad, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand, Uzbekistan



Igshaan Adams South Africa  
in collaboration with  
Shahnoza Irgasheva, Saida Nurva  
and Marjona Ruziyeva Uzbekistan

*A Place For Nothingness, 2025*

Rooted in his spiritual practice, Igshaan Adams's installation creates a meditative environment that accommodates the state of nothingness. We need space to reset after emotional rupture. Sometimes we untangle the knots in our throats and in our hearts with our hands, through gestures such as knitting or touching prayer beads. The work poses a question: What comes after the excitement of a love affair? Set within two rooms of the Rashid Madrasa, the artist proposes a period of idleness, laziness, and nothingness as a prerequisite to recovery. Developed through a cross-cultural collaboration between South African weavers who travel to Uzbekistan on their first international journey and Uzbek artisans from the Bukhara Silk Carpets workshop, the work draws on textile as both a material and a method of spiritual healing. It speaks to a common language that we can find through making and frees weavers from having to reproduce what is expected of them. In the words of the artist: 'Immersed in boredom, with no expectation to perform, no anxiety about missing out, a space where an individual can sit in the transformative discomfort of nothingness.'

Igshaan Adams  
*b. 1982, Cape Town, South Africa  
based in Cape Town*

Saida Nurva  
*b. 1992, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Shahnoza Irgasheva  
*b. 1983, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Marjona Ruziyeva  
*b. 1998, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*



Hera Büyüktaşçıyan Türkiye  
in collaboration with  
Islom Khudoyberdiev Uzbekistan

*Under the Mulberry Tree, the Wind Sang Our Names,  
2024–2025*

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan investigates the material and symbolic role of mulberry trees in instrument-making, silk production, and her personal history, extending her ongoing research into sound, materiality, and transformation. Centred on three fragmented heart forms made from once-living beings (cow, fish, silkworm), whose bodies are used as material components in traditional instruments, the installation features suspended, unfinished mulberry-wood instruments created in collaboration with Islom Khudoyberdiev. Together they developed a sound work that evokes the acoustic essence of a heartbeat, allowing us to sense the sorrow embedded in the act of creating joy. In the words of the artist: ‘Coming to this land of mulberry trees resonated with cycles of sacrifice, skin-changing and coexistence. Reminiscing of my great grandmother, a silkworm farmer from Bardizag,\* I wanted to look at the mulberry tree as a vessel through musical instruments carved through its body. Like wooden hearts echoing the human touch, ancestral knowledge and threads of production. Forming a bursting spring, vocalising distant heartbeats of a cow, a fish, and a silkworm. Ancient heartbreaks.’

\*Today named Bahçecik in Adapazari Province, in Türkiye; once a thriving region known for agriculture, sericulture, and silk production, mainly populated by the Armenian, Greek, and Levantine communities before 1915.

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan  
b. 1984, Istanbul, Türkiye  
based in Istanbul

Islom Khudoyberdiev  
b. 1959, Gijduvan, Uzbekistan  
based in Gijduvan

Hassan Kurbanbaev Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Alisher Ubaydullaev Uzbekistan

*Light Studies, 2025*

Using their respective practices of photography and woodcarving, Hassan Kurbanbaev and Alisher Ubaydullaev explore how creativity can generate new possibilities – even in the absence of their usual tools. Stripped of a camera or chisel, they challenge themselves to create beyond the expectations those tools impose. Their collaboration turns to luminograms, a technique that creates images directly on light-sensitive paper using only a light source – like fire – without the need for a camera or objects. By reimagining *islimi*, a traditional Islamic wood carving style inspired by the natural curves of plants and flowers, and translating it into light on paper, the artists experiment with how craft and concept can merge. The shared medium of light emboldens both collaborators to grow from facing something yet unknown. In the words of Kurbanbaev: ‘Something that I seek in the horizons of the external and the chaos of the internal – what discourages and at the same time fills my lungs with life. The search for these meanings means the desire for knowledge, the desire to see the world around me with my own eyes and to encounter the heart of this world in the crowd of doubts.’ In the words of Ubaydullaev: ‘A true *hunarmand*, or craftsman, cannot be cruel. We are shaped by traditions of mutual care, where every gesture connects us to one another. My hands heal what my heart feels; when I’m lost in thought, my craft gently leads me back. In every pattern I create, I see a remedy for sorrow.’

Hassan Kurbanbaev  
b. 1982, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Alisher Ubaydullaev  
b. 1986, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent



Aziza Shadenova England/Uzbekistan/Kazakhstan  
in collaboration with  
Andrey Arakelyan Uzbekistan

*Echo of the Self: The Soul in Motion, the Body Forgotten,*  
2024–2025

By exploring what remains when sensation is stripped away, Aziza Shadenova's video collage invites viewers into the intangible space where body and soul separate. The work is inspired by Ibn Sina's Floating Man thought experiment. Conceived in the eleventh century while the philosopher was imprisoned in Fardajan castle in modern-day Iran, Sina imagined a person suspended in air, devoid of all sensory input yet still conscious of their existence. This radical idea asserts the soul's existence through pure self-awareness, independent of the physical body. Shadenova reinterprets this premise in the visual language of contemporary Uzbekistan, weaving together fragments of moving images. The work captures people in states of in-between moments of making, pausing, and becoming, alongside objects in process. It reflects on consciousness not as a static state but as something shaped through gesture, labour, and presence. In this poetic dislocation, Shadenova reveals consciousness as a given and also as something continually negotiated through the interplay of craft objects and their creators, between weight and weightlessness, between motion and memory. In the words of the artist: 'I layer my stories to explore the intimate ties that bind me to my homeland. The theme of one's soul is a central focus of my work as I search for expression of the longing to belong. It's only through the juxtaposition of nostalgia and instincts that help me understand the essence of my heart.'

Aziza Shadenova  
b. 1989, Khorezm, Uzbekistan  
based in Hastings, England

Andrey Arakelyan  
b. 1982, Frunze, Kyrgyzstan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Jenia Kim Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Zilola Saidova,  
Zokhir Kamolov, Said Kamolov  
and Makhfuza Salimova Uzbekistan

*Home of Hope, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS14 and R7

Jenia Kim's installation invites visitors into a space of shared memory and cultural belonging. Informed by her work as a fashion designer and her Korean heritage, the project features a wardrobe-like entrance made from vintage Uzbek textiles and garments from her brand's archive, referencing a bale – a symbol of what is most precious. Inside, stories of everyday people from Bukhara and across Uzbekistan unfold through images by photographer Zilola Saidova, adorned by embroiderer Makhfuza Salimova. Migratory birds that once symbolised Bukhara vanished during a water crisis, but through collaborating with blacksmiths Zokhir and Said Kamolov, Kim reimagines bird-shaped scissors as a flock returning to a vibrant cultural gathering – drawn to an image of Umida, whose name means 'hope'. As Kim states, the project 'gently calls for healing broken hearts... creating a space where people from different backgrounds come together as one, feeling welcomed, valued, and part of a living cultural conversation.'

Jenia Kim  
*b. 1991, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent*

Zilola Saidova  
*b. 1972, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Zokhir Kamolov  
*b. 1962, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Said Kamolov  
*b. 1956, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Makhfuza Salimova  
*b. 1956, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Nazira Karimi Tajikistan/Kazakhstan  
in collaboration with  
Gulrukh Norkulova,  
Mehriniso Samieva, Rustamdjon Tagaykulov  
and Masudjon Madaliev Uzbekistan

*Pas az Sukuti Dastarkhon (After the Silence of Dastarkhon),  
2024–2025*

Nazira Karimi's project draws on the resonant power of *shashmaqom* – a classical Central Asian musical genre – to reflect on the quiet aftermath of collective grief. In her new video work, Bukharian *shashmaqom* singers Gulrukh Norkulova and Mehriniso Samieva, accompanied by Rustamdjon Tagaykulov on the *doira* drum, perform verses of mourning and longing written by the poet Junun. Their performance is in dialogue with a series of copper objects by coppersmith Masudjon Madaliev, which depict dishes and folded *kurpacha* mattresses – remnants of a communal meal held after a funeral, where grief was shared and presence affirmed. Copper, whose warm patina deepens with age but never disappears, evokes healing and continuity; long used in traditional medicine, copper was believed to purify water and heal wounds. Citing sociologist Gargi Bhattacharyya, Karimi says, “Heartbreak is the condition of our times.” This is a space for witnessing what cannot be undone, yet must be held.

Nazira Karimi  
b. 1996, Dushanbe, Tajikistan  
based in Almaty, Kazakhstan

Mehriniso Samieva  
b. 1991, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Gulrukh Norkulova  
b. 1984, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Rustamdjon Tagaykulov  
b. 1980, Tajikistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Masudjon Madaliev  
b. 1948, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara, Uzbekistan



Munisa Kholkhuaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Anton Nozhenko Uzbekistan

*Through Bloom and Decay, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS1, G10 and R9  
For full information on this artwork, see page 27

Munisa Kholkhuaeva creates a space for memorial within Rashid Madrasa, inspired by her time visiting Chor-Bakr, a mausoleum where Khoja Kalon, an important figure for the Bukhara Biennial sites, is also buried. This project celebrates the new life that sprouts from death, a celebration of time that is not linear. In the words of the artist, 'One can die in ways the eye cannot see. It's like learning how to disappear, yet still be felt – and to keep blooming. I don't resist the way beauty vanishes where it exists, because it remains – as memory, as love. And though memory and love carry sorrow, they are like flowers – they do not resist death. They bloom into it, becoming more truthful as they wither.'

Munisa Kholkhuaeva  
b. 1997, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Anton Nozhenko  
b. 1969, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent



Majid Al-Remaihi Qatar  
in collaboration with  
Anhar Salem Indonesia/Saudi Arabia/Yemen  
and Iskandar Hakimov Uzbekistan

*A Donkey Will, 2025*

Majid Al-Remaihi reimagines the classic Khoja Nasreddin tale through the streets of Bukhara in 2025, subverting its comedic wisdom through puppetry, documentary vignettes, and absurdist performance to reflect on a world losing its irony and wit. Visitors first encounter a donkey puppet, made with puppeteer Iksander Hakimov, lying among scattered hay – setting the stage for a meditation on loss and searching. The video installation features two synchronised projections: one shows a phantom donkey's point of view – empty markets and sandy paths unfolding like a nonverbal monologue; the other follows performer Anhar Salem as Nasreddin, wandering in search of her lost companion. These dual perspectives form a poetic dialogue on losing and being lost, turning an old parable into a meditation on displacement and belonging, shaped by a legacy of puppeteering. Salem's Nasreddin meets confused shopkeepers, inspects donkeys, and ponders her companion's fate. In the words of the artist: 'Every time I've arrived at wit's end, I brayed back to Nasreddin arriving on his donkey, as he does every year. This emblematic jester keeps the world on its scale. The unabashed familiarity of his legacy has become a dictionary of symbols, morals, and meanings.'

Majid Al-Remaihi  
b. 1995, Doha, Qatar  
based in Paris, France

Anhar Salem  
b. 1993, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia  
based in Jeddah

Iskandar Hakimov  
b. 1954, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara

Denis Davydov Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Bahrom Gulov  
and Anvar Gulov Uzbekistan

*Khoja Returns, Though He Never Left, 2024–2025*

Claimed by the people of Bukhara as one of their own, Khoja Nasreddin is a beloved folkloric trickster whose tales have spread across Central Asia and beyond. At once wise and foolish, he uses humour and paradox to challenge authority, making him a timeless symbol of wit, resilience, and resistance. Denis Davydov brings this iconic figure into contemporary digital dialogue through the motif of the TV-dominated family room where different generations convene to watch television. But here the viewers are not just visitors to the biennial; it also includes nearly a hundred miniature ceramic Nasreddins. The central CGI animation shows Nasreddin wandering Bukhara's streets, teleporting, dancing, and culminating in a whimsical musical number. The song cheekily claims that consumption, also known as 'retail therapy', cures melancholy – leaving viewers to wonder whether it's satire or sincerity. Humour, one of the key qualities associated with Hodja Nasreddin, is a recipe for broken hearts, signalling that we have been able to process the pain to a point when we can laugh about it. In the words of the artist: 'Through my works, I strive to gently pinch the viewer's heart – to awaken their inner child and spark an emotional dialogue. This moment, this subtle shift, resets their perspective and inspires exploration.'

Denis Davydov  
*b. 1985, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based between Tashkent, Hong Kong,  
China and Moscow, Russia*

Bahrom Gulov  
*b. 1955, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*

Anvar Gulov  
*b. 1985, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan  
based in Bukhara*



Pakui Hardware Lithuania  
in collaboration with  
Alisher Rakhimov  
and Shokhrukh Rakhimov Uzbekistan

*Black Bile*, 2024–2025

This artwork covers multiple locations: C18 and R12  
For full information on this artwork, see page 97

Pakui Hardware and Alisher and Shokhrukh Rakhimov transform three rooms within landlocked Bukhara into spaces for listening that glisten like shells. The interior of a shell is smooth, curved, and iridescent, like a secret chamber shaped by the sea. When you hold it to your ear, it seems to echo with distant waves. On the upper floor of Rashid Madrasa, visitors can speak within these shell-like spaces and their words will transform into sonic compositions audible in the Caravanserai site. In the words of the artists: 'Ibn Sina's unique approach to health was precisely about linking the body's spiritual and physical state with broader contexts through active listening of the patients' stories. Our new installation, connecting two historic sites of Bukhara, reflects upon Ibn Sina's therapeutic treatment by inviting the viewers to share their stories to a technological ear and to hear how the stories were transformed by algorithms into healing musical compositions, played by some members of the Bukhara Philharmonic orchestra.'

Pakui Hardware  
founded in 2014 in Vilnius, Lithuania

Alisher Rakhimov  
b. 1975, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent

Shokhrukh Rakhimov  
b. 2002, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent





R13

Oyjon Khayrullaeva Uzbekistan  
in collaboration with  
Raxmon Toirov  
and Rauf Taxiroy Uzbekistan

*Eight Lives, 2024–2025*

This artwork covers multiple locations: PS3, C3, G4 and R13  
For full information on this artwork, see page 31

The liver is an organ responsible for cleansing our bodies of toxins we encounter in life. In Uzbekistan, the liver is called jigar, a term also used to describe close friends, people you cannot live without, like your liver. The liver also connects the artist to memories of her uncle, who died from liver cirrhosis.

Oyjon Khayrullaeva  
b. 1996, Bukhara, Uzbekistan  
based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Rauf Taxiroy  
b. 1985, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

Raxmon Toirov  
b. 1962, Samarkand, Uzbekistan  
based in Samarkand

## The Bukhara Archive curated by ACDF

Located in the heart of the Cultural District, Magoki Attori serves as the central meeting point for biennial visitors. The oldest mosque in Bukhara, Magoki Attori was built in the twelfth century on the foundation of an earlier Zoroastrian temple and a spice and potion market. Before the first synagogue was built, the prayer space was shared by Jews and Muslims. In the late twentieth century, it became a carpet museum.

*The Bukhara Archive* is a multimedia exhibition curated by ACDF and presented inside the historic Magoki Attori Mosque. Created with the support of architect Wael Al Awar, it features photographs from the collections of the Archive of the Bukhara State Museum-Reserve the Uzbekistan National Archive of Film, Photo, and Audio Documents, and the Archive of the Cultural Heritage Agency. Developed alongside the inaugural edition of the Bukhara Biennial, *Recipes for Broken Hearts*, the project explores the city as a place shaped by memory, through the voices of its residents and the objects that have accompanied their lives. The exhibition brings together filmed interviews with Bukhara's older generation – artisans, teachers, scholars, chefs, spiritual leaders, traditional knowledge holders, and others – who reflect on everyday life in their neighbourhoods, homes, and workplaces. Their stories are shown alongside objects drawn from museum collections and personal archives, including skullcaps, dowry trunks, mosaic fragments, handwritten notebooks, and family photographs.





## AlMusalla in Bukhara

Launched by the Diriyah Biennale Foundation, the AlMusalla Prize is an international architecture competition for the design of a Musalla, a space for prayer and contemplation, inaugurated on the site of the Islamic Arts Biennale – the Western Hajj Terminal at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in January 2025.

The winning team for its inaugural edition is composed of a collective from EAST Architecture Studio, based in Lebanon and the UAE; the international engineering firm AKT II, based in the UK; and Beirut- and San Francisco-based artist Rayyane Tabet. They were selected from a shortlist of architects, including AAU Anastas (Palestine), Sahel AlHiyari (Jordan), Dabbagh Architects (Saudi Arabia), and Asif Khan (United Kingdom). Jury members for the competition are Prince Nawaf Bin Ayyaf (jury chair), Farrokh Derakhshani, Lina Ghotmeh, Azra Akšamija, and Ali Malkawi. The inauguration of the Musalla coincided with the opening of the second edition of the Islamic Arts Biennale on 25 January 2025.

The competition brief asked architects to form teams that included an artist and an engineer to collaboratively design a Musalla that is a versatile, modular space for prayer, welcoming both Muslim and non-Muslim visitors. The brief specified that the structure should meet all the requirements for prayer, be at least 150 square metres in size, and be sustainable in its method of construction. It also stressed the importance of the structure being easily disassembled and reassembled, emphasising the afterlife and legacy component of the project – for the structure to live beyond the duration of the Islamic Arts Biennale.

The Diriyah Biennale Foundation is delighted to present its first edition of AlMusalla, inaugurated at the Islamic Arts Biennale in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in January 2025, and now on display in the historic centre of Bukhara, thanks to the generous support of ACWA Power and Vision Trust.





## Library Pop-Up

The Nationwide Children's Library has opened a pop-up reading space in a former mosque located in a historic neighbourhood adjacent to the biennial sites. Built in the nineteenth century, the Pochakul Khoja Mosque once served as a local place of worship for an artisan community. Now, it offers a space for reading centred on children's literature – welcoming readers of all ages.



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