

THE CURRENT ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSE MUSEUMS IN TASHKENT

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Abstract

This article examines the current activity and development of house museums in Tashkent, highlighting their cultural, historical, and educational significance. It provides a detailed overview of several prominent house museums dedicated to outstanding representatives of Uzbek literature, art, and music, including Gafur Ghulam, Abdulla Qahkhor, Mukhtar Ashrafi, Ural Tansikbaev, Yunus Rajabi, Tamarakhonim, Oybek, Sergey Yesenin, and Sergey Borodin. The study analyzes the structure of these museums, their collections, memorial sections, and exhibition practices. Special attention is given to the preservation of historical authenticity alongside the introduction of modern museum approaches. The article concludes that house museums in Tashkent play an essential role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting national identity, and adapting to contemporary cultural demands.

Keywords: House museum, memorial museum, Tashkent museums, cultural heritage, museum studies, Uzbekistan culture, literary museums, art museums, historical preservation, exhibition activity, Gafur Ghulam, Abdulla Qahkhor, Mukhtar Ashrafi, Ural Tansikbaev, Yunus Rajabi, Tamarakhonim, Oybek, Sergey Yesenin, Sergey Borodin.

Introduction

Memorial museums are institutions dedicated to significant historical events, as well as to statesmen, political figures, public and military leaders, and representatives of science, literature, and art. Such museums are usually established on the basis of protected historical memorial complexes. Memorial museums can take different forms: some preserve their historical appearance entirely, while others are scientifically reconstructed or created based on specific collections. These museums preserve, study, and promote rare material, visual, and written sources, and carry out cultural, educational, and scientific activities [1].

Main part

In the history of Uzbekistan, honoring the memory of renowned creators-poets, writers, statesmen, and figures of culture and art-who have left an indelible mark, and establishing house museums in the places where they lived and worked, is both a duty and an honor. Our people have always taken pride in the intellectual potential, talent, and exemplary life paths of their ancestors. The immortal works of creators and outstanding works of art have always been cherished by the public. The establishment of house museums is also a sign of the enduring legacy of great individuals, reflecting how firmly their contributions are embedded in the



collective consciousness of the people, and demonstrating continuous respect and reverence for their memory. In Uzbekistan, a number of house museums dedicated to such great individuals are actively functioning.

In honor of the 70th anniversary of the birth of the prominent Uzbek writer and poet, People's Artist of Uzbekistan Gafur Ghulam, a house museum was established on June 16, 1981, by a government resolution in the house where he lived and worked from 1944 to 1966. The museum officially began its activity in October 1983.

From 1988 to 1998, the museum's collections were continuously updated and enriched. The first floor of the museum consists of three halls, where the exhibits reflect the writer's daily life and the main stages of his creative development. The first and second halls present Gafur Ghulam's childhood and youth, as well as his early poems and stories inspired by his first creative impulses. In the third hall, visitors can observe the poet's creative works, numerous exhibition stands, and materials related to anniversaries. The second floor represents the memorial part of the house museum, which includes a guest room, a rest room, a library, and a study room. Household items used by the poet are preserved here, while the library contains his books and works presented to him as gifts.

The documents and objects in the house museum are displayed according to a thematic exposition plan approved by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan [2]. The memorial section of the museum begins with the "Children's Room." Gafur Ghulam was a kind father of many children, and his children grew up mainly in these rooms. All the items in this room are associated with them. In the bedroom, one can see belongings that belonged to Gafur Ghulam and his wife, Mukharram Aya Ghulamova. All the items in this room have been preserved exactly as they were during the writer's lifetime. Next to the bedroom is the "Small Study," where the poet created his works. On the small desk, one can find a pen, blank paper, manuscripts, an ashtray, an inkwell, notebooks, cigarettes, a traditional skullcap (doppi), a telephone, and books on the shelves, including masterpieces of world literature.

On the second floor of the building are located the poet's main study and library. On the wall hangs a portrait of Gafur Ghulam, embroidered on silk by the artist Fazilat Saydalieva. Taking into account the great significance of the literary and scholarly heritage left by Academician of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan Gafur Ghulam, as well as the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth, restoration work, the creation of a new exposition, and landscaping of the house museum were carried out. In this regard, a new building for the house museum was constructed in 2003 [3]. On May 10, 2004, the new building was officially opened in celebration of the 101st anniversary of Gafur Ghulam's birth. The fund of the Gafur Ghulam House Museum consists of main and auxiliary collections. The main exhibits are items directly related to Gafur Ghulam. In 2004, the number of exhibits increased by 270 due to donations from his relatives, and by 2005 their total number reached 12,601 [4].

The Abdulla Qahhor House Museum was established on May 6, 1987, by a government resolution, at the initiative of his wife Kibriyo Qahhorova, in the house where the writer lived and worked during the last ten years of his life. The fact that the museum was founded by Kibriyo Qahhorova can be considered a great achievement for true admirers of Abdulla Qahhor's творчество, as she was not only the writer's spouse but also his close confidante, companion, secretary, and advisor. The museum displays include the Resolution of the President of the



Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 8, 2007, “On Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of the People’s Writer of Uzbekistan Abdulla Qahhor,” as well as the certificate of the “For Great Services” order awarded to him by the Presidential Decree of August 25, 2000, and copies of the decree.

Unlike many other museums, the Abdulla Qahhor House Museum contains two memorial rooms. The first part of the memorial section is the guest room, where various household items, furniture, and decorations have been preserved exactly as they were during the writer’s lifetime. The second memorial room is the writer’s study. Among more than three thousand books kept there are masterpieces of Uzbek literature alongside works by world classical authors. Visitors to the museum, especially, are deeply impressed by the writer’s invaluable library. This is not surprising, as the museum’s library holds more than five hundred journals and nearly three thousand books. These constitute the rich literary treasure collected by the writer throughout his life. The library also contains rare copies of Uzbek and Persian-Tajik classical literature, as well as books published in Moscow and Saint Petersburg in the second quarter of the 19th century [5]. Editions of Abdulla Qahhor’s works published in different years from his earliest books to the present day - as well as translations into fraternal languages and foreign languages, scholarly and critical works about his life and творчество, and memoirs are preserved on a separate shelf in the library [6].

In Uzbekistan, a number of measures have been undertaken to perpetuate the writer’s name. His 60th, 80th, and 100th anniversaries were widely celebrated. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Abdulla Qahhor, celebrated in September 2007, a selected collection of his works was published, his house museum was enriched with unique exhibits and renovated, and a monument in his honor was unveiled in the National Park of Uzbekistan.

In recognition of his contribution to the development of musical culture, the house museum of composer, People’s Artist of the USSR, one of the founders of national opera, and conductor Mukhtar Ashrafi was established on June 11, 1982, in the house where he lived and worked from 1965 to 1975, on the occasion of his 70th anniversary. The museum consists of six exhibition halls dedicated to his life and creativity.

The museum preserves Mukhtar Ashrafi’s personal archive from the 1930s to the 1970s. In addition, it houses rare manuscripts, photographs, documents, posters, theater programs, books, musical recordings, gramophone records, and a collection of Uzbek musical instruments.

The museum features a music hall where small exhibitions and chamber concerts are held. Visitors can also listen to audio recordings of M. Ashrafi’s works here. The memorial hall of the museum contains exhibits reflecting M. Ashrafi’s life and creative activity from 1912 to 1945. The second and third halls present his organizational and conducting activities, as well as repertoire plans related to the performance of operas at the opera studio of the Leningrad State Conservatory [7].

In the fourth hall, visitors can ознакомиться with the opera and ballet productions created by M. Ashrafi, composer and conductor of the Alisher Navoi State Academic Bolshoi Theatre, during the 1960s and 1970s. The fifth hall introduces the composer’s pedagogical and social activities, which were devoted to training professional musicians for the republic over a period of 30 years.



The sixth hall is the composer's study, which has remained unchanged to this day. It preserves the multifaceted creative working environment of the composer. There is also a special chamber music room located on the lower level of the museum courtyard. Here, Uzbek folk musical instruments made of wood and decorated with precious stones are displayed. These instruments were gifted to the composer during his lifetime by master craftsman A. Abdullaev.

M. Ashrafi, who was the organizer of the opera theater established in Samarkand in 1964, devoted his entire life to the development of a new musical culture. Even today, his remarkable music composed for opera and ballet performances continues to be performed on stages both within the republic and abroad.

The People's Artist Ural Tansykbayev was also active as a public figure throughout his career. His diverse works, including "Chirchik Valley" (1940) and "Morning at the Kayrakkum Hydroelectric Station" (1957), are preserved in the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow. His works "Mother Earth" and "Evening at Issik-Kul" (1951) are kept in the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, while "Mountain Landscape" (1963) and "Spring Plowing" (1965) are housed in the A. Kasteyev State Museum of Arts in Almaty. In addition, more than 500 of his works are preserved in the State Art Museum of Karakalpakstan in Nukus.

The house, which has now been turned into a museum, was the residence of U. Tansikbaev and his wife Yelizaveta Yakovlevna from 1967 onward, and the furnishings and artworks have been preserved there to this day. Although the house began functioning as a memorial museum on January 16, 1981, the artist's studio had already been declared a memorial building in 1978 [8]. The U. Tansikbaev Memorial House Museum is aimed at preserving, studying, and promoting his life and творчество. The memorial section of the museum reflects the last seven years of the artist's life (1967-1974), with all items preserved in their original state. The gallery section was opened in 1994 on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the artist's birth. Since 2021, the museum has been operating under the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan [9].

The main collections of the museum's memorial section include various books belonging to the artist, photographs related to his life, household items, as well as unique examples of ethnography, applied arts, painting, graphics, and sculpture. Albums displayed in his studio contain more than 2,500 photographs and documents illustrating the life and creative path of the distinguished artist.

Currently, work is underway at the museum on compiling a comprehensive catalog covering all periods of Ural Tansykbayev's творчество. In addition, a young researcher, L. Mirzabaeva, is conducting a study on the geographical aspects of the artist's creative development. The reprocessing of the museum archive is one of the significant scientific activities being carried out at the museum. This process is important because it may reveal previously unexplored aspects of the artist's life and work, uncover unique information, and provide new insights for researchers.

On September 13, 1989, the house where the great composer and singer, the of an immense and invaluable musical heritage, Yunus Rajabi, lived and worked from 1956 to 1976 was transformed into a house museum. The museum houses more than a thousand songs, dances, instrumental melodies, and maqoms. These musical works were performed live by the composer himself and



his students. Today, visitors to the museum can listen to live performances by famous singers and musicians, as well as purchase recordings on discs.

Yunus Rajabi made a significant contribution to the collection and preservation of Uzbek musical heritage. The museum's scientific inventory includes a total of 2,717 items. The museum has a separate hall dedicated to Uzbek music and maqoms, where rare documents, books, photographs, musical instruments, and other relevant materials are displayed.

The museum consists of six exhibition rooms, each dedicated to a specific theme: "Childhood and Adolescence," "Memorial Room," "Uzbek Folk Music," "Shashmaqom," "Eternity," and "Listening to Music and Watching Films." The museum preserves nearly 6,000 exhibits, of which 847 are displayed in the exhibitions. Among them are manuscripts of Yunus Rajabi's 12-volume work, his musical instruments (dutor, nay, tanbur), clothing, concert costumes, a collection of Uzbek folk musical instruments, oil portraits of his family members, teachers, students, and contemporaries, as well as photographs and other materials. In 2008, approximately 5,000 visitors toured the museum [10].

The museum also has a large hall adapted for musical art, mainly dedicated to the unforgettable maqoms of Uzbek culture. This hall contains various scientific and auxiliary exhibits related to the history of music.

While visiting the museum halls, soft and lively melodies-Uzbek, Tajik, and Uyghur maqoms, as well as Azerbaijani maqoms, Armenian and Arab tunes, and Indian ragas-are played in harmony with the guide's narration. These emotionally rich musical sounds create a strong impression on visitors. The exhibits displayed in the museum, including musical instruments such as the piano, setar, dutor, and rubab, not only create a festive atmosphere but also reflect the spirit of the composer's era.

The third room features a model of the house in the Chaqar neighborhood of Tashkent where Rajabi was born and raised, photographs of the neighborhood, household items used in that house, a portrait of his mother, suzani embroidery, and photographs of the artist's contemporaries.

Regarding the second floor of the museum, a painting by the artist S. Rakhmetov is displayed at the entrance, enhancing the museum's atmosphere. The first room on the second floor presents photographs and materials related to the childhood and later years of Yunus Rajabi, as well as his family members. The second room contains the composer's library, which includes a collection of books related to music. Notably, the composer's study has been preserved in its original state, reflecting the spirit of the period in which he lived.

Today, this museum stands out among house museums in Tashkent for its well-organized environment and the professionalism of its staff. In addition, the services and excursion offered to visitors are carried out at a high level.

In the center of Tashkent, the house where the "Pearl of the East," Tamarakhonim Artyomovna (Tamara Petrosyan), lived and worked now functions as a house museum dedicated to her memory. Since June 14, 1994, a permanent costume exhibition has been established there. Tamarakhonim devoted her entire life to studying and promoting Uzbek folk dance traditions.

Her unique talent was expressed through the melodious quality of her voice, her charming smile, and the vibrant colors of her costumes, which captivated audiences and elevated each performance to the level of artistic discovery.



The main part of the museum's collection consists of Tamarakhonim's costumes and photographic materials reflecting her life and творчество. It also includes musical instruments she used, household items, and decorative and applied art objects brought or gifted from other countries.

The museum displays a wide variety of costumes representing different regional styles - Fergana, Bukhara, Margilan, and Khorezm as well as costumes from neighboring cultures such as Tajik, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Turkmen, and Uyghur, along with unique costumes from various peoples of the world. These garments, made of silk, atlas, and velvet by skilled craftsmen, are richly decorated by hand and complemented with jewelry. Each detail represents a masterpiece of art and holds significant artistic value.

In 2008, the Tamarakhonim House Museum received a grant of 34,000 US dollars from the Cultural Heritage Preservation Fund through Ambassador Spratlen to restore and revitalize a unique exhibition dedicated to the life of this pioneering dancer who was among the first to abandon the traditional paranji.

The house museum of Muso Toshmuhammad ogli Oybek, the great Uzbek writer and public figure, who lived and worked in this residence from 1940 until 1968 the final moments of his life was established in 1980 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of his birth [11].

His wife, Zarifa Saidnosirova recognized as the first Uzbek female artist and the first Uzbek female chemist not only collected these manuscripts over many years but also preserved them with great care. In the mid-1970s, she undertook the honorable yet challenging task of creating the writer's memorial house museum.

The museum consists of two parts, including an exposition reflecting the writer's life and creative path. In the building located on the northern side of the courtyard are the memorial rooms: the guest room and study (on the first floor), as well as the children's room and bedroom (on the second floor). Visitors reach the second floor via wooden stairs in the hallway, where they can also view engravings created by A. Tsiglintsev displayed on the walls.

The five-room building, constructed between 1940 and 1941, houses exhibitions reflecting the writer's life and creative activity. These exhibitions include various scientific, ethnographic, visual, and applied art materials related to Oybek's life and творчество. A literary exposition covering all periods of the writer's life and literary career is located in this building. The fourth hall, titled "Oybek's Eternity," displays multi-volume editions of the writer's works in Uzbek and Russian, as well as editions of some of his works published abroad in recent years [12].

In Tashkent, the State Literary House Museum named after Sergey Yesenin was established about 40 years ago. In 1975, amateur artist Vadim Nikolyuk organized a personal exhibition, supplementing it with annotations from Yesenin's books. The numerous comments left in the books reflected the strong interest of visitors. The poet's daughter, Tatyana Sergeevna Yesenina, also visited the exhibition [13].

Although the exhibition was temporary and short-lived, it inspired like-minded individuals to unite and establish a museum dedicated to the Russian poet in the capital of Uzbekistan.

The public museum of Sergey Yesenin was founded in 1981 and contains more than 3,000 exhibits. Today, the museum consists of several rooms. The central part of the exposition is dedicated to the poet's visit to Uzbekistan in 1921.



The main hall of the museum features materials related to Sergey Yesenin's stay in Tashkent, including photographs and memoirs of his contemporaries. The second hall is dedicated to the poet's creative connection with the East, where his works translated into the languages of Central Asian peoples are displayed. The third hall presents rare exhibits related to the poet's life, death, and the publication of his works.

In addition to regular and roundtable discussions about Yesenin's творчество, the museum frequently hosts poetry readings, literary and musical events, concerts, and screenings of the slide film "S. Yesenin and the East." It has also become a tradition at the museum to organize presentations of debut books by young authors. The museum is also a favorite place for many artists.

With the support of the Russian Embassy in Uzbekistan, it has become a tradition to hold the Tashkent Open Poetry Festival at the Sergey Yesenin Museum, with participation not only from Uzbek poets but also from representatives of foreign countries.

The museum fund includes more than 3,000 rare books and hundreds of photographs. The museum does not possess video recordings of the poet; however, it preserves a one-and-a-half-minute audio recording of him reciting poetry among the people during his time in Tashkent. This is because, under the political regime of his time, the poet was considered an "enemy of the people," and such recordings were destroyed. Moreover, his family members, including his children, were forced to live under constant threat. Only many years later did people learn that his daughter, Tatyana Sergeyevna Yesenina, had been living in the capital of Uzbekistan with her children and grandchildren since 1942.

Sergey Petrovich Borodin, a People's Writer of Uzbekistan, entered both Russian and Uzbek literature as a prominent representative of historical prose and devoted a quarter of his life to Uzbekistan.

Despite being a citizen of Russia, he conducted extensive scholarly research on the history, culture, art, and values of Uzbekistan and the peoples of Central Asia. In particular, he studied the history and ethnography of Bukhara and also participated in the excavations of the Afrasiyab site in Samarkand. As a result, he created the work "The Last Bukhara" ("Poslednyaya Bukhara"). In 1950, S. P. Borodin moved from Moscow to Tashkent.

The writer's contributions were highly appreciated by the government, and after his death, a house museum was opened on March 19, 1981, in the residence where he had lived.

This house museum is considered one of the richest among the small museums of Uzbekistan in terms of its collection of cultural and spiritual exhibits. The museum's exposition and memorial rooms preserve not only the personal belongings used by the writer during his lifetime but also valuable works of art that were either purchased or presented as gifts by his close associates, as well as a collection of about 2,000 autographed books.

The S. P. Borodin House Museum also features a small painting gallery, where works such as S. Ayni's "Slaves" and "Bukhara," Sh. Rashidov's "Kashmir Song," and Oybek's "Winds from the Golden Valley," all translated into Russian by S. P. Borodin, are displayed. In conclusion, house museums today continue to preserve their historical authenticity while also reflecting modern interpretations.



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