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## THE CONCEPT, HISTORY AND FORMATION OF UZBEK NATIONAL APPLIED ARTS

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**ABSTRACT:** Uzbek national applied arts represent a rich cultural legacy deeply rooted in centuries of craftsmanship, creativity, and tradition. This article examines the concept, historical development, and formation of Uzbek applied arts, exploring their cultural, social, and aesthetic significance. Beginning with the historical foundations of these arts, the article discusses the influence of various dynasties, regional styles, and trade routes on the evolution of ornamental and functional crafts. Furthermore, it highlights the role of Uzbek applied arts in preserving national identity, showcasing techniques and motifs passed down through generations. By examining traditional crafts such as ceramics, embroidery, wood carving, and metalwork, this study provides an insight into their enduring relevance and their contributions to global artistic heritage.

### KEYWORDS

Uzbek national applied arts, cultural heritage, traditional crafts, ornamental art, history of applied arts, ceramics, embroidery, wood carving, metalwork, Silk Road, craftsmanship.

### INTRODUCTION

Uzbek national applied arts are an integral part of the country's cultural and artistic identity. These arts encompass a diverse range of crafts, including ceramics, embroidery, wood carving, metalwork, and textile production. The unique aesthetic of Uzbek applied arts reflects the region's rich history, geographical diversity, and the blending of cultural influences along the Silk Road. This article explores the concept, historical evolution, and formation of Uzbek applied arts, shedding light on their significance as a cultural phenomenon.

Applied arts refer to the creation of functional objects that also possess aesthetic value. In Uzbekistan, this concept is deeply tied to the nation's cultural traditions, where artisans have historically combined utility with artistic expression. Uzbek applied arts are characterized by intricate ornamentation, symbolic motifs, and vibrant colors that reflect the natural, spiritual, and social aspects of life.

The primary forms of Uzbek applied arts include:

- Ceramics: Decorative pottery and glazed tiles with floral and geometric motifs.
- Embroidery (Suzani): Handcrafted textiles featuring elaborate designs symbolizing prosperity and protection.
- Wood Carving: Ornamental carvings used in architecture and furniture.

- **Metalwork:** Jewelry, utensils, and decorative objects showcasing fine craftsmanship.

These crafts not only serve practical purposes but also act as visual representations of Uzbek history and identity. The formation of Uzbek national applied arts is deeply rooted in the country's ancient history, shaped by various civilizations and cultural exchanges.

**Pre-Islamic Era.** In the pre-Islamic period, the region that is now Uzbekistan was home to advanced cultures such as Sogdiana and Bactria. These civilizations produced pottery, metalwork, and textiles featuring both utilitarian and ornamental designs. The craftsmanship of this era laid the groundwork for the artistic traditions that followed.

**Islamic Influence.** The arrival of Islam in the 7th century introduced new artistic styles and motifs. Geometric patterns, calligraphy, and arabesques became prominent in Uzbek applied arts, reflecting Islamic aesthetics and spirituality. Cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara emerged as cultural hubs, fostering the development of architecture and decorative arts.

**The Timurid Renaissance.** The Timurid dynasty (14th–15th centuries) marked a golden age for Uzbek applied arts. Under the patronage of rulers like Amir Timur (Tamerlane), artisans created masterpieces in ceramics, textiles, and woodwork. The iconic blue-and-turquoise tilework that adorns monuments in Samarkand and Bukhara became a hallmark of this period.

The Silk Road played a pivotal role in the evolution of Uzbek applied arts, facilitating cultural and artistic exchanges. Trade brought new materials, techniques, and motifs from China, Persia, and India, enriching the local artistic traditions. The distinct identity of Uzbek applied arts began to crystallize during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This period saw the consolidation of regional styles, as well as the influence of Russian and Soviet policies on traditional crafts.

Each region of Uzbekistan developed its own unique artistic style:

- **Samarkand:** Renowned for its intricate tilework and vibrant embroidery.
- **Bukhara:** Famous for gold embroidery, silk weaving, and metalwork.
- **Khiva:** Known for wood carving and polychrome ceramics.
- **Fergana Valley:** A hub for ikat textiles (adras and atlas) and pottery.

Artisans passed down their knowledge through generations, preserving traditional techniques while innovating within established frameworks.

**Soviet Influence.** During the Soviet era, traditional crafts were adapted to align with state policies. While this period introduced challenges, such as standardization and loss of artisanal individuality, it also facilitated the documentation and institutional support of Uzbek applied arts. Artisan cooperatives and cultural preservation programs helped sustain the crafts, ensuring their survival into the modern era. Uzbek applied arts serve as a repository of cultural memory and identity. Each craft embodies the values, beliefs, and aspirations of the community that created it. For example:

**Symbolism:** Motifs in embroidery and ceramics often carry symbolic meanings, such as fertility, protection, and harmony.

**Cultural Identity:** The vibrant colors and intricate designs of Uzbek applied arts are a source of national pride and a marker of cultural distinctiveness.

**Intergenerational Connection:** The transmission of skills and knowledge from master to apprentice preserves the continuity of artistic traditions.

Despite their cultural significance, Uzbek applied arts face challenges in the modern era, including globalization, urbanization, and the decline of traditional apprenticeship systems. However, efforts to revive and promote these arts are gaining momentum. Government initiatives, international exhibitions, and collaborations with contemporary designers are helping to reinvigorate traditional crafts.

**Conclusion.** Uzbek national applied arts are a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage and artistic ingenuity. From the intricate tilework of the Timurid era to the vibrant textiles of the Fergana Valley, these crafts reflect centuries of tradition and creativity. By preserving and promoting these arts, Uzbekistan continues to honor its past while inspiring future generations to appreciate and innovate within this remarkable legacy.

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