**ANNOTATION**

**to the text of doctoral dissertation by Baimukhanova Snezhana Zainulovna**

 **on topic “Methodology of Visual Solutions in the Cinematographic Art**

**of Kazakhstan (1930–2020), submitted for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty**

**6D041600 - Art Studies**

**Relevance of the Research Topic**

The relevance of this research is determined by both theoretical and practical considerations, underscoring the significance of the topic within the contemporary discourse of film studies. First and foremost, the study of the conceptual and methodological foundations of visual imagery – as a central component of a film’s visual composition—is essential to a deeper understanding of the aesthetic and semiotic processes at play in national cinema. In the context of dynamic shifts in worldview and technological paradigms, the analysis of expressive means and visual techniques employed in feature films gains particular importance, as it allows for tracing the evolution of visual impact tools and their correlation with socio-cultural transformations.

The examination of visual methodologies in Kazakh cinematographic art from the 1930s to the 2020s reflects both the development of national identity and the adoption of new technological paradigms. This necessitates a variety of approaches to the construction of visual language in the historical trajectory of Kazakh cinema. The influence of Soviet film traditions, the transformations of the perestroika era, and the subsequent incorporation of global visual and technological practices have led to the emergence of a distinctive cinematic aesthetic, combining Kazakh cultural codes, symbolic systems, and diverse principles of visual narration. Analyzing these developments through the lens of cinematographic practice enables the identification of key methodological strategies and their influence on the evolution of Kazakh cinematography – an area previously underexplored in national film scholarship.

**Object of the Study**

Visual solutions in cinematographic art.

**Subject of the Study**

Methodological approaches to visual solutions in the works of Kazakh cinematographers.

**Aim of the Research –** to identify and theoretically substantiate the evolution of visual methodologies in Kazakh cinematographic art between 1930 and 2020 by analyzing the artistic, stylistic, and technological transformations in visual practices within the broader socio-cultural context.

**Research Objectives**

- to examine the formation of visual methodologies in the cinematographic practices of Kazakhstan cinema during the 1930s–1960s;

- to investigate the evolution of visual imagery in Kazakh cinematography throughout the 1960s–1980s, with particular emphasis on artistic transformations;

- to analyze the transformation of the visual language of cinema in the films of the Kazakh New Wave (1980-2001) within the context of aesthetic shifts and socio-cultural discourse;

- to identify the distinctive features of visual composition in contemporary Kazakh feature films produced between 2001 and 2010, in relation to stylistic and thematic developments;

- to assess the influence of digital technologies on the development of cinematographic style in Kazakh feature films during the period from 2010 to 2020;

- to reveal emerging trends and innovative approaches in the evolution of national cinematographic art within the framework of the postmodern era (from 2020 to the present).

**State of Research on the Topic**

The present doctoral research addresses a range of interconnected areas, including: the theoretical conceptualization of the image within the visual arts; the identification and analysis of expressive means within the structure of narrative cinema; the historical development and artistic evolution of visual techniques in global film practice; and the aesthetic specificities of cinematographic work in Kazakhstani cinema.

Within the broader field of visual culture, a number of scholars have produced influential studies relevant to the subject, including Abraham Moles, Jean Mitry, André Bazin, Rudolf Arnheim, Mikhail Yampolsky, Christian Metz, Berys Gaut, Peter Wollen, Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, Kirill Razlogov, Sergei Freilikh, Andrei Plakhov, Sergei Eisenstein, Vladimir Nilsen, Anatoly Golovnya, Marina Goldovskaya, Andrei Tarkovsky, Yuri Arabov, Murat Auezov, Kabysh Siranov, Kamal Smailov, Bauyrzhan Nogerbek, Kulshara Aynagulova, Mark Berkovich, Gulnara Abikeyeva, Inna Smailova, Nazira Mukusheva, Baubek Nogerbek, Alma Aidar, Georgy Novozhilov, Aida Mashurova, Serik Abishev, and Sharipa Urazbayeva.

While these scholars have, to varying extents, addressed the role and contribution of cinematographers in the filmmaking process, the visual strategies, compositional methods, and aesthetic decisions employed specifically by cinematographers have not been the primary focus of their analyses. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in the scholarly literature regarding the cinematographer’s authorship and visual language, particularly within the context of Kazakhstan cinema, which this dissertation seeks to address.

**The methodological framework** of this study is based on the conceptual works of Marcel Martin and Bruce Block. The credibility of the research is ensured through a comprehensive analysis of the visual expressive means in narrative cinema, rigorous archival investigation, and the extensive use of scholarly literature in art history and film studies related to the subject matter. The examination of the key issues addressed in the dissertation is carried out primarily on a theoretical level.

**Scientific Novelty of the Research**

The scientific novelty of the dissertation lies in a comprehensive and systematic study of the conceptual and methodological foundations of visual solutions in cinematic art.

- The conceptual and methodological framework for visual solutions in cinematography is substantiated, and an interdisciplinary model for analyzing the visual image is developed. This model integrates film language theory and visual arts theory, enabling the consideration of visual solutions as a universal mechanism of screen-based communication. The structure of expressive means in narrative cinema is systematized, and their role in shaping a coherent visual composition is defined, broadening the understanding of cinematic expressiveness;

- Artistic and visual techniques are analyzed as an independent tool of social communication in narrative cinema, facilitating the transmission of values and ideological meanings through visual language. The role and functions of visual decisions in the construction of cinematic meaning are also identified, revealing their impact on audience perception of narrative structure and offering a reinterpretation of cinematography within a sociocultural paradigm;

- A comprehensive analysis of the formation of visual methods in the cinematographic art of Kazakh cinema from the 1930s to the 1960s is conducted, revealing stylistic and expressive characteristics of the early stage in the development of a national visual film language, thereby deepening the understanding of the origins and artistic principles of Kazakh cinema;

- The evolution of visual imagery in Kazakh cinematography from the 1960s to the 1980s is identified and systematized, with a focus on artistic transformations. This expands the understanding of the development of the national film language and its reflection of sociocultural changes in the visual aesthetics of the period;

- The transformation of visual film language in Kazakh New Wave cinema (1980-2001) is analyzed, with emphasis on aesthetic innovations and shifts in social discourse. The study also examines experimental approaches to visual storytelling, allowing for the identification of new forms of cinematic expression and their role in reflecting sociocultural processes in Kazakh cinema of this era;

- The specific features of visual solutions in Kazakh feature films of the 2001-2010 period are examined in the context of stylistic and thematic transformations. The adaptation of traditional visual techniques to the conditions of the global film market and digital environment is analyzed, enabling the identification of the influence of national cultural codes on the development of a contemporary visual style and artistic models of cinematic expression in the post-Soviet space;

- The influence of contemporary digital technologies on the development of cinematographic style in Kazakh feature films of the 2010-2020 period is analyzed. The transformation of visual strategies and the emergence of new aesthetic and technical approaches are revealed. The integration of digital cinematography and computer technologies, including artificial intelligence, is explored, along with their impact on the modification of traditional cinematographic techniques and artistic decisions in film production;

- New trends and approaches in the development of Kazakh cinematographic art from 2020 to the present are identified through a systematic analysis of current concepts and experimental forms. The study also defines the role of interdisciplinary processes that foster the synthesis of traditional and innovative visual practices, opening up new perspectives for rethinking cinematography in the postmodern context.

**Chronological Framework of the Research**

The research spans the period from 1930 to 2020, providing a comprehensive overview of the evolution of visual methodologies in Kazakh cinematographic art across historical epochs.

**Key Provisions for Defense:**

1. The visual image in narrative cinema represents a complex semiotic system in which cinematographic techniques (composition, lighting, color, camera movement) perform not only aesthetic but also semantic functions. Its formation follows the logic of visual language, revealed through methods of structural analysis, semiotics, and hermeneutics. In contemporary cinematic practice, there is a clear tendency toward synthesizing traditional expressive cinematographic techniques with new digital technologies, enhancing the emotional impact on the viewer, emphasizing dramaturgical nodes, and shaping the stylistic integrity of the film.
2. The artistic and visual techniques in narrative cinema, implemented through cinematography, perform a multilayered socio-communicative function: they structure the narrative, reflect the psychological states of the characters, and influence audience perception. Visual solutions become an integral part of the film’s artistic concept, ensuring its genre identification and authorial style. They also play a key role in conveying national color, cultural codes, and artistic traditions through choices in lighting, composition, and visual motifs.
3. From the 1930s to the 1960s, visual canons in Kazakh cinematography were shaped under the influence of Soviet ideology and the aesthetics of socialist realism. This was manifested in a chronicle-documentary style, a predominance of wide and panoramic shots, static cameras, and classical compositional approaches. Composition, lighting, symmetry, and color symbolism were based on the traditions of painting and theater, contributing to the creation of an ideologized visual language. These features are clearly evident in such films as “*Amangeldy”*, “*Botagoz”*, “*Poem about Love”*, “*Girl-Jigit”*, “*Our Dear Doctor”*, and “*His Time Will Come”*, where the screen image is constructed as a collectivist model reflecting the dominant political discourse of the era.
4. From the 1960s to the 1980s, Kazakh cinematography saw the emergence of a visual model of national identity, shaped under the influence of the Soviet film school and combining ideological principles with poetic imagery. This period is characterized by static cameras, an emphasis on faces and objects of national significance, the use of metaphors, panoramic shots, and in-frame editing. These features are notably present in films such as “*The Story about Mother”*, “*My Name is Kozha”*, “*Traces Leave the Horizon”*, “*The Beardless Trickster”(“Aldar Kose”)*, “*Land of the Fathers”*, “*The Angel in a Skullcap”*, and “*Kyz-Zhibek”*, where cinematographic decisions lay the foundation for a visual language aimed at expressing national identity under ideological pressure.
5. From the 1980s to the 2000s, Kazakh cinematography experienced a transition from Soviet visual canons toward the development of new expressive tools reflecting a search for national identity and adaptation to the post-Soviet reality. This stage is marked by the transformation of visual approaches: dominant features include static cameras, long takes, in-frame editing, slow rhythmic construction, visual metaphors, and the use of shot/reverse shot techniques. Such strategies are distinctly observed in films like “*The Balcony”*, “*The Needle”*, “*The Woman of the Day”*, “*The Life of a Young Accordionist”*, “*Cardiogram”*, and “*Zaman-ai”*, where the visual language becomes a tool for artistic reflection on cultural and social transformation.
6. From the 1990s to the 2010s, visual approaches in Kazakh cinematography underwent significant changes under the influence of technological advancement and Western cinema. The transition from film to digital formats, the introduction of high-tech equipment (light-sensitive cameras, drones, stabilizers), and the emphasis on close-up and medium shots fostered the development of new visual strategies and the search for a cinematic identity. These trends are evident in films such as “*Layla’s Prayer”*, “*Little People”*, “*Tulpan”*, “*The Gift to Stalin”*, and “*Oy-pyrmai, or My Dear Children”* where cinematographic decisions reflect a stage of rethinking visual language in the context of digitalization and global artistic influences.
7. In the 2010s, the cinematography of Kazakh narrative cinema came under the notable influence of international cinematic trends, resulting in the development of a unique visual style that blends global artistic practices with national cultural codes. The incorporation of techniques such as handheld cameras, static long takes with in-frame action, unconventional lighting, symbolic color usage, and panoramic shots led to a synthesis of the traditional and the contemporary. These features are traceable in films such as *Tale of the Pink Hare*, *Harmony Lessons*, *Barrier*, *The Book of Legends*, *The Road to Mother*, *The Mysterious Forest*, *The Scheme*, *Horse Thieves: Roads of Time*, and *Yellow Cat*, where cinematographic choices support the emergence of a new stage of visual expressiveness in Kazakhstan’s mainstream cinema.
8. Since 2020, visual approaches in Kazakh feature cinema have increasingly taken on the role of expressing national identity by integrating cultural symbols, folkloric motifs, and ethnic visuality with the universal expressive tools of contemporary cinematic language. Distinct features of the cinematographic style include static cameras, deep frame composition, the use of handheld cameras and steadicams to convey natural perception, as well as visual metaphor and a restrained color palette. These trends, evident in films such as *Qash*, *Veloshah*, *Swallow*, *Steppe Wolf*, and *Evacuation*, are shaping a new visual aesthetic that reflects a synthesis of the traditional and the global, thereby strengthening national identity and its international representation.

**Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research**

The results of this research can be applied in the development of educational and methodological materials for training cinematographers, film scholars, directors, and specialists in other cinematographic professions, as well as in the practice of film and television production.

**Approbation of the Research**

The main concepts of the dissertation have been presented in three articles published in journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. One article has been published in an international scientific journal indexed in the Scopus database with a non-zero impact factor.

The doctoral dissertation was reviewed and recommended for defense at an extended meeting of the Department of Film History and Theory of the Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation consists of an introduction, three sections (each containing three subsections), a conclusion, a list of references, and an appendix.