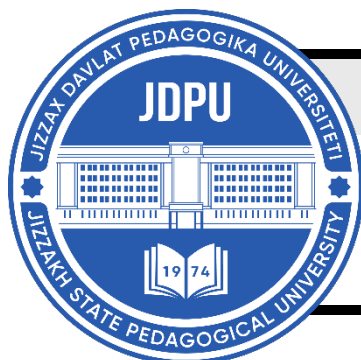


## MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC – METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL



### MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC – METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL

<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>



## HISTORY OF TASHKENT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS

**Fania Avzalovna Akhmedshina**

*Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor*

*Jizzakh State Pedagogical University*

*Jizzakh, Uzbekistan*

### ABOUT ARTICLE

**Key words:** Tashkent International Film Festivals, cinematography of Asia, Africa and Latin America, cultural diplomacy of the Soviet Union, cultural exchange, international prestige, positive image of Uzbekistan, political and economic ties, cultural events of Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

**Received:** 17.08.24

**Accepted:** 19.08.24

**Published:** 21.08.24

**Abstract:** The article highlights the history of Tashkent International Film Festivals as the world's largest cinematography forums in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which turned into an important component of the cultural diplomacy of the Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century. They played an important role in the cultural exchange of these regions, becoming one of the first platforms for the demonstration of film products, the creative exchange of ideas and the establishment of contacts between filmmakers. They enjoyed international prestige and contributed to the formation of a positive image of Uzbekistan in the international arena, strengthening political and economic ties with foreign partners. Having turned into one of the most important cultural events in Uzbekistan and Central Asia, they have a rich history and significant achievements, the study of which is devoted to this article.

### INTRODUCTION

The history of the Tashkent Film Festivals of Asian and African countries (from 1968 to 1976), and since 1976, of Asian, African and Latin American countries, during the years of independence of Uzbekistan (in 1992 and 1997) shows that this largest forum enjoyed authority in the world, and the composition of participants, nominees and laureates of the festivals was representative and authoritative. Holding the Tashkent Film Festivals of Asian, African and Latin American countries in the context of the emergence of new independent

states in these regions was of great importance in providing them with an international platform for demonstrating their films, establishing contacts between filmmakers from different countries. Throughout its history, the Tashkent Film Festival, held every two years under the motto "For Peace, Social Progress and Freedom of Nations", has received recognition in the international arena, contributed to strengthening the positions of the USSR and Uzbekistan in international cultural relations, integration into the international cultural space, and the creation of a more favorable international image of the country. In the Soviet foreign policy doctrine of the 50-60s, great importance was attached to developing states of the "third world" that had embarked on the path of independent development. With the help of the Soviet Union, enterprises of key importance for their further industrial development were built in developing countries: energy facilities, irrigation systems, mechanical engineering enterprises, etc. Much attention was paid to the African continent, where 17 states of the continent gained independence in 1960 [15].

During this period, positive experience of economic, scientific, cultural and other relations of Uzbekistan with foreign countries within the USSR was accumulated. The idea of holding international film festivals in Tashkent arose in the late 1960s, in the context of the active foreign policy of the Soviet Union aimed at establishing and strengthening ties with developing countries. An important role in this process was played by Sharaf Rashidov, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, who became the initiator and main organizer of the first festival. A historiographical study of the literature available on this issue shows a virtual absence of special works devoted to international film festivals that have been held.

### **Analysis and results of the research.**

The Tashkent International Film Festival was first held on October 21-31, 1968. It was attended by 49 representatives from 22 Asian and African countries. The opening of the festival began with the screening of the film "Storm over Asia" by director Kamil Yarmatov. In 1970, the film festival did not take place. The second film festival (1972) was attended by 500 representatives from 62 foreign countries, as well as delegations of the USSR and the UN. More than 120 feature and documentary films of the festival were shown in Tashkent cinemas [6]. Forty-six countries of Asia and Africa, eight from Latin America (Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and Peru), European socialist countries, the UN and UNESCO, the USA, England, Italy, France, and nine Soviet republics took part in the III Tashkent International Film Festival (1974). Laos, Burundi and the Palestine Liberation Organization were represented for the first time. About 70 correspondents of foreign newspapers and magazines

from 33 countries of the world covered the work of the festival [6]. In 1976, representatives of Latin America also took part in the festival under the motto "For Peace, Social Development and Freedom of Nations". As part of the 4th (1978) film festival, more than 70 creative meetings were organized, in which directors took part, and at the fifth (1980) film festival, a film market was organized, in which films shot in all Soviet republics were shown [22]. In subsequent years, the festival continued to develop, expanding its program and increasing the number of participants. New nominations and special screenings were introduced, which contributed to the growth of its popularity and significance. Famous stars of world and Russian cinema became honorary guests of the festival. Participants of the film festival were awarded diplomas; the best films were noted with prizes from public organizations.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, it was held only twice (in 1992 and 1997) under the name Tashkent International Film Festival. Raj Kapoor, Mithun Chakraborty, Amitabh Bachchan, Nikita Mikhalkov, Chingiz Aitmatov, Angela Davis, Elizabeth Aguilar Gonzalez, Sergei Gerasimov, Tamara Makarova, Nonna Mordyukova, Irina Miroshnichenko, the President of the Cannes Film Festival, the Ministers of Cinema of African countries, Latin America and many others performed at the festival. During the festival, along with the screening of new films, retrospective films were also held. The film festival was covered by over 100 journalists [19].

The program of the Tashkent International Film Festival in 1997 included a retrospective screening of films by director Nabi Ganiev, one of the founders of Uzbek cinema, and Khudoybergen Devonov, the first Uzbek filmmaker. The festival included a competitive screening of feature films from Russia, Transcaucasia, Moldova, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, India, Malaysia, South Korea, Pakistan, Turkey and other countries. A film market was held, attended by film studios, producers, exporters, distributors, cinema owners and film companies. Guests of the film festival included outstanding cultural and artistic figures, public and political figures, journalists, famous directors and actors [20].

The Film Festival was revived in 2021 in accordance with the decree of the President of Uzbekistan "On the revival and holding of the Tashkent International Film Festival" as the annual Tashkent International Film Festival "Pearl of the Silk Road". The main goals of the revival of the famous Tashkent International Film Festival were: preserving and developing the centuries-old traditions of national cinema, further developing cultural and educational activities in the Republic of Uzbekistan and strengthening cultural ties at the international level, fostering patriotism, friendship and brotherhood between peoples, expanding the scale of creative cooperation between different countries [14]. The initiative to revive the film festival was received positively by representatives of the world film industry. Thus, at the Berlin

International Film Festival (February 27, 2020), Director of the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) Benoi Ginisti said: "The initiative to revive the once beloved Tashkent Film Festival after almost three decades can be called a real feat. This means restoring a once destroyed bridge that will connect the chain of times and entire generations" [11]. Film critic Sergei Lavrentiev noted that the launch of the film festival will demonstrate Uzbekistan's openness to the world. Program Director of the Cottbus Film Festival Berndt Buder said that the Tashkent festival will be interesting as a platform for creative exploration. This is necessary not only for Uzbekistan, but for the world of cinema as a whole" [4]. The official representative of the Berlinale, program selector Barbara Wurm, director of the GoEast IFF Heleen Gerritsen, head of the UNIFRANCE department for cinema of Central and Eastern European countries, film critic Joel Chapron, film scholar, founder of the branch of the Chingiz Aitmatov Foundation in Germany Svetlana Slapke and other film experts, with whom the delegation of "Uzbekkino" held meetings, also spoke in support of the revival of the international Tashkent Film Festival [11].

The Tashkent festival is very well remembered and its revival was also welcomed by many residents of the republic. For example, (Mila Pak, June 19, 2021): "Great news, congratulations to all Uzbeks on this. I remember this international film festival of Asian, African and Latin American countries very well, it was held once every two years. At work, they gave out a subscription... for all 10 days of the film festival. It was great: the films were excellent, film directors, actors, etc. spoke before the films. I kept a postcard with autographs of the film festival artists for a long time, for example, I took an autograph from Raja Kapoor, Shamim Ara - she played the main role in the film "Saikha", Sergei Gerasimov, Irina Miroshnichenko and another film director from Japan (I don't remember the last name)." (Turdibek Bobobekov, June 19, 2021): "At one time I wrote that the international film festival should be restored. This is a good sign for us, it is nostalgia, a memory of the past... Thank you very much." (Nadira Shah, June 19, 2021): "Truly, good news! The Tashkent International Film Festival of Asian, African and Latin American Countries was a bright, kind and interesting event" [18]. The XIII Tashkent International Film Festival "Pearl of the Silk Road" was held from September 28 to October 3, 2021. More than 300 masters of art, world cinema stars from almost 50 countries of the world took part in it. Nikita Mikhalkov, Timur Bekmambetov, Pavel Priluchny, Luc Besson, Mithun Chakraborty, Steven Seagal and other famous film figures were invited to the festival as honorary guests. "The Tashkent Film Festival has been resurrected," Polish director Krzysztof Zanussi said with delight. "I haven't traveled abroad for a long time, but I made an exception for the Tashkent Film Festival," said the great Japanese director and actor Takeshi Kitano [8].

As part of the XIII International Film Festival, awards for outstanding contribution to the development of world cinema were received by Russian film director Nikita Mikhalkov, Nuri Bilge Ceylan (a film director from Turkey), Aiturgan Temirova (People's Artist of the Kyrgyz Republic), Sairam Isayeva (People's Artist of Tajikistan, theater director), Raj Kapoor (famous actor, director and producer from India, posthumously). Raj Kapoor's award was received by his son, film actor Randhir Kapoor. He presented a bust of his father, noting that this gift was presented as a sign of respect of the Kapoor dynasty to the Uzbek people [1].

The Grand Prix of the XIII Tashkent International Film Festival was awarded to the film "Along the Silk Road" by Sherzod Nazarov, the opening of the festival - the film by Park Su Min "Repeating Memories", the Special Jury Prize - the film by Saidali Masudkhonov "Objective". The winners in various nominations of the "Cinema in 5 Days" competition were representatives of Germany, Estonia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Switzerland and Mexico [12].

The festival included Cinema Days of 14 countries, creative meetings throughout the country, lectures, master classes, the opening of a branch of the famous All-Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) and six cinemas, screenings of documentaries and a competition of young filmmakers "Cinema in 5 Days" from 22 countries of the world, who shot short films about Uzbekistan, on the theme "The Great Silk Road". Participants of the XIII Tashkent International Film Festival adopted an appeal to the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev: "The 13th International Film Festival "Pearl of the Silk Road", revived on your initiative after almost a quarter of a century of interruption, brought together filmmakers from almost fifty countries of the world. During the week, the best works of world cinema of recent years were shown on the screens of Uzbekistan, an exchange of opinions on changes in world cinema was held, and master classes for young people were organized. We are pleased to note that this grandiose film festival has absorbed all the traditions of the Tashkent International Film Festival of Asian, African and Latin American countries and was held at a high level based on international requirements and standards" [22].

The next XIV Tashkent International Film Festival was held from September 14 to September 19, 2022, with the participation of more than 400 filmmakers from 40 foreign countries and more than 1.5 thousand students. The opening ceremony was preceded by a red carpet. About 800 stars of Uzbek and world cinema walked along it. The red carpet ceremony was also attended by foreign partners of the Cinematography Agency of Uzbekistan on co-production, as well as heads of cinematography departments from dozens of countries around the world who are planning to cooperate with the Cinematography Agency of Uzbekistan. At the ceremony, a welcoming address sent to the festival participants by the President of

Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev was read out: "The Tashkent International Film Festival, which has more than half a century of history, today, in the conditions of the New Uzbekistan, is acquiring new meaning and significance, its prestige in the world is growing." Afterwards, the award ceremony took place for the winners of the prize "For Contribution to the Development of World Cinema" Armand Assante, Elyor Ishmukhamedov, Takeshi Kitano, Krzysztof Zanussi, and Indian actors Umesh Mehre and Zeenat Aman [5].

The closing ceremony included an award ceremony for the winners of the international competition "Cinema in 5 Days". First place was awarded to the creative team led by Temur Murodov for the film "Cassette" (Uzbekistan), second place to the creative team of Nariman Taktakulova (Kyrgyzstan) for the film "Soil". And third place to Felix Kalmenson and his creative team for the film "Song to the Sun" (Canada). In total, more than 1,500 young filmmakers, representatives of 19 film schools around the world, took part in the competition. Viewers were able to see 150 feature, documentary and short films. Numerous creative meetings and master classes were held with fans and students of the VGIK branch in Tashkent [2]. In 2023, the XV Film Festival was attended by over 300 cultural figures from 52 countries, including the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, Turkey, India, China, Japan and others. Among the famous guests were Oscar, Golden Globe and Bafta winner Kevin Spacey, Cannes and Venice Film Festival winner Krzysztof Zanussi, Cannes, Berlin and Venice Film Festival winner Emir Kusturica, Venice Film Festival, Nika and TEFI award winner Alexander Sokurov, Nika and TEFI winner Vladimir Khotinenko, French actors Frederic Diefenthal and Samy Naceri [24]. As the famous Polish director Krzysztof Zanussi, who headed the international jury, told a Euronews correspondent: "I consider this festival to be one of the best, because it allows you to discover films that you can't see anywhere else. Central Asian films are not available in Europe, we don't see them, and at the festival we have the opportunity to get to know the authors and their works." "This is a very good festival and important, because it gathers and presents to the audience not only films, but also meetings with directors, actors, and the opportunity to ask them questions," Hungarian film director and CEO of Műpa Budapes Csaba Kael told the publication's correspondent. [25].

From 1 to 5 October 2023, the eighth European Film Festival was held as part of the Tashkent and Bukhara Film Festival. The festival program included 15 films produced in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine [7]. For the first time, a delegation of filmmakers from China visited the film festival, presenting the sci-fi action film *The Wandering Earth 2* and the drama *The Thread of Life* [16]. The educational part of the film festival included about 50

master classes for six thousand admirers of the art of cinema. The film festival program included exhibitions dedicated to the anniversaries of the luminaries of Russian cinema - Nabi Ganiev, Kamil Yarmatov, Malik Kayumov, Baken Kedikeeva, as well as the opening of the Khudaibergen Divanov Cinema in Urgench. The winners of the competition programs "Cinema in 5 Days" for students of film schools of different countries, "Competition of Central Asian Countries" and "Competition of National Films" were recognized. Free film screenings were held in 50 cinemas of the country, as well as Days of Cinema of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Hungary, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and other countries. A forum of filmmakers of the member countries of the International Organization (TURKSOY) was held, screenings of films of the Turkic peoples were organized, a forum of leaders and creators of film organizations of the CIS countries, within the framework of which a business program for film producers and film studios was held. More than 10 memorandums on the implementation of joint projects were signed, creative cooperation with nine film studios was established, [24] a Board of Directors of Film Studios of the CIS countries was created [10].

In total, the events of the Tashkent International Film Festival were covered by more than 30 media representatives from 16 foreign publications [9]. Important points of the program were the "Film Caravan" in the regions of Uzbekistan (screening of films in the most remote corners of the republic using specially equipped buses) [16]. Film directors Alexander Sokurov (Russia), Irakli Kvirikadze (Georgia) and Pietro Marcello (Italy) were awarded for their contribution to the development of world cinema [3]. The Grand Prix of the XV Tashkent Film Festival was awarded to Shakir Khalikov (Uzbekistan) for the film "Yakshanba" ("Sunday"). The Tajik film "Fortuna" was awarded the Special Prize of the Festival Directorate, and "Desert" by Kazakh director Maxim Akbarov received the award for best debut. Dastan Aibek was named the best actor (The Smell of Wormwood), Taalaikan Abazova (I Remember) was named the best actress, and Darkhan Tulegenov (Brothers) was named the best director.

"Here there is a huge concentration of thought on family problems, on problems between people, very little thought about civil problems, broader ones. Everything is limited to a small circle of the family," noted director (Poland) Krzysztof Zanussi [3].

In the special nomination of the "Cinema 5 Days" competition for foreign participants, first place was won by Shirin Akhmedov from Azerbaijan for the film "One Hundred Steps", second place was awarded to Edisa Tektorova from Kyrgyzstan for the film "City of Dreams", and third place was awarded to Russian Yakov Podkustov for his work "Connection". The film "Grapes" by Dilshod Usmanov won in the nomination "Best National Short Film". Khilol Abdurasulov for the film "Uzbekistan is My Dream" and Nuriya Safarova for the film "Omonat" in the nomination

"Best National Short Film" [23]. "This is the largest festival in Central Asia, and it is very important that three years ago you began the process of its revival," said Vladimir Karachevsky, coordinator of the "Pearl of the Silk Road". - It is also necessary to note: this year marks its 65th anniversary. This is a significant event. The festival has already become a topic of conversation in the world community. Attention is focused on him and Uzbekistan itself everywhere. I am sure that this event will open new doors, opportunities and prospects for the cinema of the republic" [17].

Also, participants of the XV Tashkent International Film Festival "Pearl of the Silk Road" traditionally adopted an appeal to the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. In it, the filmmakers expressed gratitude to the country's leader for hospitality and the conditions created, and expressed their readiness to continue to contribute to the development of the film industry.

### **Conclusions. Prospects for further research.**

The Tashkent International Film Festival, despite all the challenges, continues to be an important form of cultural diplomacy and soft power in strengthening international ties and mutual understanding. Its history and achievements testify to the importance of cultural exchange and international cooperation. Tashkent International Film Festivals were of great importance, firstly, for anti-colonial movements, expansion and strengthening of cultural interaction, ties between the Soviet Union and the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, secondly, establishing personal contacts and strengthening bilateral relations with foreign leaders and filmmakers from different countries and, thirdly, increasing the prestige of Uzbekistan in the international arena.

It is important to continue supporting and developing the festival, taking into account modern trends in digitalization and globalization as both a challenge and an opportunity for further expansion of participants, strengthening partnerships with other international festivals and organizations, and promoting Uzbek cinema on the world stage. In our opinion, one of the key areas of growth should be continuing to support young talents and providing them with an international platform for premiering their works, discovering new talented directors and actors.

### **REFERENCES:**

1. In Tashkent, awards were presented for contributions to world cinema <https://fergana.media/news/123213/>
2. In Tashkent, the closing ceremony of the international film festival was held — video <https://news.mail.ru/society/53113083/>



3. In Uzbekistan, the Tashkent International Film Festival ended  
<https://smotrim.ru/article/3584361>

In Uzbekistan, the Tashkent International Film Festival ended  
<https://smotrim.ru/article/3584361>

4. In Berlin, they supported the revival of the Tashkent Film Festival  
<https://sport.rambler.ru/other/43752790-v-berline-podderzhali-vozrozhdenie-tashkentskogo-kinofestivalya/>

5. The opening of the Tashkent International Film Festival took place in the House of Cinematographers  
<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2022/09/17/film-festival/>

6. The revived Tashkent International Film Festival on the pages of history  
<https://tiffest.uz/news/news-list/30-vozrozhdennyij-tashkentskij-mezhdunarodnyij-kinofestival-na-stranitsah-istorii>

7. The European Film Festival will present 15 films in Tashkent and Bukhara  
<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2023/09/22/festival/>

The European Film Festival will present 15 films in Tashkent and Bukhara  
<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2023/09/22/festival/>

8. From the history of the Tashkent Film Festival  
<https://tiffest.uz/news/news-list/none-iz-istorii-tashkentskogo-kinofestivalya>

9. How international and national media covered the 15th Tashkent International Film Festival "Pearl of the Silk Road"  
<https://nuz.uz/2023/10/12/kak-mezhdunarodnye-i-naczionalnye-smi-osveshhali-xv-tashkentskij-mezhdunarodnyj-kinofestival-zhemchuzhina-shelkovogo-puti/>

10. Filmmakers from the CIS discussed development prospects at the Tashkent Film Festival  
<https://dzen.ru/a/ZRp10E4ZHkpfjHB>

11. International experts supported the revival of the Tashkent International Film Festival  
<https://news.myseldon.com/ru/news/index/224676798>

12. World stars and an incredible show: how the closing ceremony of the largest film festival in Tashkent went  
<https://peoplenews.uz/mirovye-zvezdy-neveroyatnoe-shou-i-priz-v-15-000-kak-proshla-czeremoniya-zakrytiya-samogo-masshtabnogo-kinofestivalya-v-tashkente>

13. The Tashkent festival hosted a presentation of Russian-Uzbek co-production projects  
<https://moviestart.ru/2023/10/06/na-tashkentskom-festivale-proshla-prezentacziya-koprodukcziionnyh-rossijsko-uzbekskih-proektov/>

14. On the revival and holding of the Tashkent International Film Festival  
[https://uza.uz/ru/posts/o-vozhrozhdenii-i-provedenii-tashkentskogo-mezhdunarodnogo-kinofestivalya\\_278089](https://uza.uz/ru/posts/o-vozhrozhdenii-i-provedenii-tashkentskogo-mezhdunarodnogo-kinofestivalya_278089)

15. Modern international relations and foreign policy of the USSR. M., 1983, p.227.

16. Tashkent - the star of the East, the capital of friendship and cinema  
[https://dzen.ru/a/ZUBLues\\_QEY-OmO](https://dzen.ru/a/ZUBLues_QEY-OmO)

17. Tashkent Film Festival: in the language of high art  
<https://yuz.uz/ru/news/tashkentskiy-kinofestival-na-yazke-vsokogo-iskusstva>

18. Tashkent International Film Festival will be restored  
<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2021/06/19/cinema/>

19. Tashkent International Film Festival-XI <https://tiffest.uz/history/1992>

20. Tashkent International Film Festival-XII <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/178365>

21. III International Film Festival of Asian and African Countries in Tashkent. Television and Cinema of Kyrgyzstan in the 70s - early 80s. Part-8 <https://open.kg/about-kyrgyzstan/art/cinema/34684-ocherki-razvitiya-televideniya-i-kinematografa-kirgizii-70-nachala-80-h-godov-chast-8.html>

22. Participants of the Tashkent International Film Festival appealed to the President of Uzbekistan <https://xabar.uz/ru/uzlx>

23. Film by a young Azerbaijani director recognized as the best in Tashkent  
<https://1news.az/news/20231002120337868-Film-molodogo-azerbaidzhanskogo-rezhissera-priznan-luchshim-v-Tashkente>

24. What will be remembered about the Tashkent International Film Festival?  
<https://uz24.uz/ru/articles/kinofest-2023-itog>

25. XV Tashkent Film Festival: bright works from Central Asia and support for young people <https://ru.euronews.com/culture/2023/10/11/cu-13-tachkent-film->