



Article

An Artist Who Immortalized Great Historical Figures

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Abstract: The research analyzes the cultural value and historical meaning of Kamoliddin Behzad's miniature portrait of Sultan Husayn Bayqaro as a central Timurid art tradition piece. People do not recognize how important Behzad's artwork is to miniature painting because scholars have paid little attention to the political meanings in his artwork. The research takes an interpretive art history approach to explore Behzad's work by studying both image structure and court and cultural background. This painting reveals more than decoration to show Sultan Husayn's political power and intellectual knowledge in its precise design of geometric shapes, symbolic clothing choices and balanced layout. Behzad stands apart by combining artistic forms with cultural facts making his work an important cultural record of the Timurid period. Our research demonstrates the clear benefit of adding art to historical investigations when written information is limited or controlled by one side. Researchers should use technology and different fields of knowledge to compare Behzad's work with more studies to understand Central Asian art throughout history.

Keywords: Creative, Collaborated, Extraordinary, Relentless

1. Introduction

Kamoliddin Behzad, known in the West as the "Eastern Raphael," had a long creative journey. Throughout his challenging life, he worked under the leadership of rulers such as Sultan Husayn Bayqaro, Shaybani Khan, and Shah Ismail Safavi. Most of his life was spent in Herat, the second capital of the Timurid dynasty. At that time, Herat was one of the most beautiful cities of the East. Behzad lost his parents at an early age and was adopted by Mirak Naqqosh, the head of the royal library and a painter from Herat.

Mirak Naqqosh managed the "Assembly of Forty Famous Painters" and organized the work of "Nigoristan," which can be considered an Art Academy in modern terms. Kamoliddin Behzad collaborated with the renowned calligrapher Sultan Ali Mashhadi and frequently visited Abdurahman Jami. When Alisher Navoi learned about Behzad's talent and hard work, he invited him to work at the court. Sultan Husayn built a workshop in his garden and provided all necessary conditions for artistic creativity. Later, Behzad was appointed as the head of the royal library in Herat. He became famous throughout Khorasan and mentored many artists in the region. It was during this period that Behzad created some of his greatest works, including the portrait of Sultan Husayn Bayqaro [1], [2].

Husayn Bayqaro, a descendant of Umar Sheikh Mirza, the second son of Amir Timur, was born in Herat. However, unlike other princes, he did not have a privileged upbringing. When he was seven, his father, Ghiyasuddin Mansur Mirza, passed away, which drastically changed Husayn's life. Instead of living comfortably in the royal palace like other princes, he had to serve in the courts of Abulqosim Babur and later Abu Sa'id Mirza due to his father's absence. However, as he failed to gain influence and faced difficulties

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in the court, he decided to move to Marv, where he was initially treated as an ordinary servant [3].

At first, Sanjar Mirza, the ruler of Marv, received Husayn coldly. However, over time, he noticed Husayn's passion for literature and art, as well as his extraordinary talents, and decided to support him. Eventually, Husayn married Sanjar Mirza's daughter, Beka Sultan. Gaining his trust, Husayn began striving for the throne of Khorasan. However, the ruler of Khorasan, Sultan Abu Sa'id, was not someone who would easily relinquish power [4], [5].

In 1469, a fierce struggle for the throne broke out between Sultan Abu Sa'id and Husayn Bayqaro. This time, Husayn faced defeat. He wandered between Khorezm and Bukhara for a long time, eventually submitting to Abulkhayr Khan, the ruler of the Dashti Qipchaq. After relentless efforts, he finally ascended to the throne of Herat [6].

Husayn Bayqaro was one of the wisest Timurid princes, a patron of craftsmen and scholars. Under his rule, Khorasan, especially its capital Herat, flourished as a center of literature, culture, and science [7].

With the support of Husayn Bayqaro and the financial and moral assistance of Alisher Navoi, hundreds of talented poets, scholars, calligraphers, engravers, sculptors, and painters of the era reached their artistic peak. His court gathered intellectuals like the unparalleled scholar of "external and internal knowledge," Abdurahman Jami; the wise and eloquent Mawlana Shaykh Husayn; and the contemporary sage Mulla Usman.

Surrounded by such figures, Husayn Bayqaro was not only a ruler but also a scholar and a talented individual who guided and supported them. Babur described Husayn Bayqaro as both a highly influential figure among Timurid aristocrats—an expert in thirty-two military skills, a creative king concerned with the unity and peace of the nation—and a pillar of support for many people. The author emphasizes that Husayn was a specialist in Islamic law and sought to resolve many issues solely through Sharia. Kamoliddin Behzad masterfully created the portrait of such a powerful and enlightened ruler [8].

Kamoliddin Behzad lived through the reign of four different sultans, including Sultan Husayn Bayqaro (1469-1506), Shaybani Khan (d. 1510), Shah Ismail Safavi (1501-1524), and Shah Tahmasp Safavi (born in 1764). He lived in the capitals of both the Timurid and Safavid dynasties—Herat and Tabriz—absorbing diverse social experiences and witnessing the hardships of the feudal era. His works reveal that he was an extremely prolific and hardworking artist [9], [10].

This miniature is one of Kamoliddin Behzad's rare and beautiful works. In the portrait of Sultan Husayn Bayqaro, the ruler is depicted in a seated position with his full figure visible. The refined and harmonious proportions of the head and body draw particular attention. Even when analyzed using simple geometric shapes, the work proves to be aesthetically perfect, meeting all artistic standards [11].

2. Materials and Methods

The research uses a description and interpretation of art history to study Behzad's work against its cultural and artistic settings. Our analysis started with visual elements that studied the ways the painting arranged its images plus the patterns and signs included in the artwork. Researchers studied Behzad's art by looking at how Timurid artists made their works in the past. They compared his style to other pictures from the same period to understand how Behzad made his composition and design choices. Researchers used both artistic methods and historical information like Dr. Zakiy Muhammad Hasan's scholarly work together to explain Behzad's artistic impact on Central Asian miniatures during this period. Scholars provided us with secondary historical information about Behzad and Husayn Bayqaro to explain their social and political lives. In his analysis the researcher studied the impact of Behzad's interaction with other intellectuals focusing on calligraphy and poetry during his time. The study looked for technical skills but also searched for how

Behzad used his visuals to show his thoughts about the subject matter to explain his true artistic value.

3. Results

This demonstrates the painter's mastery of fine arts techniques. The richness of the ornamental designs on the ruler's attire, the elaborate patterns on his shoulders and chest, and the overall harmony in the artwork reflect Behzad's skill in miniature painting.

Behzad's portrait provides invaluable insights into his contemporaries and their spiritual world. The details in the artwork—such as the ruler's headgear symbolizing his sovereignty and knowledge, and the embroidery on his garments indicating the ups and downs of life—offer a deeper understanding of the period's aesthetics.

On either side of the portrait, there are Arabic inscriptions: on the right, "Portrait of Sultan Husayn Mirza," on the left, "By the hand of Master Behzad," and at the bottom, "Al-Faqir Behzad."

An analysis of the painting reveals that no other artist has wielded the brush with such skill as Behzad. European and Asian art enthusiasts continue to be amazed by the uniqueness of his miniatures, and for this reason, Western art historians highly value his work [12], [13].

According to Iranian art historian Dr. Zakiy Muhammad Hasan, Kamoliddin Behzad's depiction of Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqaro is preserved in the private collection of Monsieur Cartier. Additionally, two miniatures attributed to Behzad can be found in the "Dar al-Kutub al-Misriya" library in Egypt, illustrating Sa'di's "Bustan."

4. Discussion

Our study proves that Behzad earned top status through his art skill while creating valuable visual records for Central Asian history. Both his technical skills and deep knowledge of his society shine through the symbolic elements and beautiful design of his Sultan Husayn Bayqaro portrait. Through his perfect craftsmanship Behzad depicted both the ruler's authority and inner knowledge by showing his exact geometrical design combined with symbolic elements from his clothing and crown. Research shows that Behzad connected historical storytelling with superior artistic production [14], [15].

Behzad's work differs from other Persian miniature studies because it shows deep emotional meaning and advanced artistic space organization. Previous art studies by Zakiy Muhammad Hasan and other experts show that Behzad led artistic production during Safavid and Timurid eras. Our study reveals Behzad's distinct power to preserve the intellectual and spiritual tendencies of his era through his painting style even though others do not mention this discovery.

The study helps scientists better comprehend how mural paintings recorded social and political practices during that time. Our research data confirms that historical studies benefit from adding artistic insights to their findings particularly when historical records are hard to locate and biased by political views. The proper funding and protection of Central Asian miniatures must be supported by government agencies across the world to enhance public research access.

The research relies heavily on one miniature artwork and needs to compare similar visual elements from Behzad's other works for improved results. Research needs to move past investigating a single work by examining several of Behzad's miniatures from different artistic eras and expected clients. Combining studies of digital art with historical anthropology and semiotics would help researchers fully understand Behzad's work and Timurid visual art trends at the same time.

5. Conclusion

Through his work Behzad showcased his role as an artist who added to Central Asian historical knowledge. Behzad's artistic style involved both fine details and deep social meaning along with political understanding that made his work stand out from other Timurid and Safavid miniature artists. Through his artwork Behzad demonstrates his talent in presenting complete portraits of historical leaders by revealing their external power and intellectual value. These results show how miniature painting serves both as beauty art and as history sharing and cultural belief development method. Through his work Behzad shows how artistic design helps explain deeper ideas about politics and literature during Timurid times. The research results provide important findings even though the study covered one miniature only. Researchers need to review all of Behzad's work across different dynastic periods and study it using mixed approaches such as digital image analysis and archived document evidence. By examining Behzad's complete artwork a new perspective will develop about his role in international art history and miniature history.

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