

**COLOR SYMBOLISM AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE
WORKS OF KAMOLIDDIN BEHZOD.**

Abjalilova Gulmira Maxmmudjonovna

Namdu "San'at va sport" fakulteti

Grafika (xattotlik miniatyura) yo'nalishi talabasi

Tel: +95 376 11 22

gulmiraabdjalilova@gmail.com

Abstract: This research is dedicated to analyzing the artistic-philosophical and semiotic essence of the color system within the creative legacy of the great master of Eastern miniature art, Kamoliddin Behzod. In Behzod's miniatures, color is explored not merely as a decorative tool enhancing the image, but as a complex symbolic system reflecting the human inner world, divine light, and the philosophical content of existence. The study scientifically substantiates the artist's mastery in using mineral pigments (lapis lazuli, gold, cinnabar, herbal green), their symbolic meanings, and their role in establishing compositional balance.

The paper examines the mechanisms of revealing human character and the moral-ethical layers of events through color rhythm and the play of light and shadow in Behzod's miniatures for Saadi Shirazi's "Bustan". Furthermore, the author analyzes the philosophy of color in miniature art in connection with medieval Sufi worldview and Eastern aesthetics. According to the research findings, Kamoliddin Behzod transformed color into a "living" and "philosophical" medium, elevating miniature art from mere book ornamentation to the level of high-art philosophical contemplation. This work is intended for researchers of miniature art history, art theory, and cultural studies, as well as for students and art enthusiasts.

Keywords: Kamoliddin Behzod, miniature art, color symbolism, philosophical interpretation, visual aesthetics, semiotics, Eastern school of miniature, mineral pigments, compositional rhythm, spiritual values.

**KOMOLIDDIN BEHZOD IJODIDA RANGLAR SIMVOLIKA VA FALSAFIY
TALQINI.**

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot sharq miniatyura san'atining buyuk namoyandasi Kamoliddin Behzod ijodiy merosidagi ranglar tizimining badiiy-falsafiy va semiotik mohiyatini yoritishga qaratilgan. Behzod miniatyuralarida ranglar faqatgina tasvirni to'ldiruvchi dekorativ vosita bo'lmay, balki inson ruhiy dunyosi, ilohiy nur va borliqning falsafiy mazmunini ifodalovchi murakkab ramziy tizim sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot doirasida rassomning mineral bo'yoqlardan (lazzhvard, oltin, zanjifra, islmiy yashil) foydalanishdagi o'ziga xos mahorati, ularning ramziy ma'nolari hamda kompozitsion muvozanatni yaratishdagi o'rni ilmiy jihatdan asoslab beriladi.

Ishda Behzodning "Bo'ston" (Sa'diy Sheroziy) asariga ishlangan miniatyuralaridagi ranglar ritmi va yorug'lik-soya o'yinlari orqali inson xarakterini hamda voqea-hodisalarning ma'naviy-axloqiy qatlamlarini ochib berish mexanizmlari o'rganiladi. Shuningdek, muallif miniatyura san'atidagi ranglar falsafasini o'rta asrlar tasavvufona dunyoqarashi va sharqona estetik did bilan bog'liqlikda tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot xulosalariga ko'ra, Kamoliddin Behzod o'z ijodida ranglarni "jonli" va "falsafiy" vositaga aylantirib, miniatyura san'atini shunchaki kitob bezagi darajasidan



yuksak falsafiy mushohada san'ati darajasiga olib chiqqanligi isbotlanadi. Mazkur ish miniatyura san'ati tarixi, tasviriy san'at nazariyasi va madaniyatshunoslik bo'yicha tadqiqotchilar, talabalar hamda san'at ixlosmandlari uchun mo'ljallangan.

Kalit so'zlar: Kamoliddin Behzod, miniatyura san'ati, ranglar simbolikasi, falsafiy talqin, vizual estetika, semiotika, sharqona miniatyura maktabi, mineral bo'yoqlar, kompozitsion ritm, ma'naviy qadriyatlar.

Ushbu annotatsiyani rus va ingliz tillariga ilmiy uslubda, terminologik jihatdan aniq qilib tarjima qildim.

СИМВОЛИКА ЦВЕТА И ФИЛОСОФСКАЯ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ В ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ КАМОЛИДДИНА БЕХЗОДА

Аннотация: Данное исследование посвящено анализу художественно-философской и семиотической сущности системы цвета в творческом наследии великого мастера восточной миниатюры Камолитдина Бехзода. В миниатюрах Бехзода цвет рассматривается не просто как декоративное средство, дополняющее изображение, а как сложная символическая система, отражающая внутренний мир человека, божественный свет и философское содержание бытия. В рамках исследования научно обосновано мастерство художника в использовании минеральных красок (лазурит, золото, киноварь, растительный зеленый), их символическое значение и роль в создании композиционного равновесия.

В работе изучаются механизмы раскрытия человеческого характера и духовно-нравственных аспектов событий через ритм цвета и игру света и тени в миниатюрах Бехзода к произведению Саади Ширази «Бустан». Также автор анализирует философию цвета в миниатюрном искусстве в контексте средневекового суфийского мировоззрения и восточной эстетики. Согласно результатам исследования, Камолитдин Бехзод, превратив цвет в «живой» и «философский» инструмент, возвел искусство миниатюры с уровня простого книжного оформления до уровня высокого искусства философского созерцания. Данная работа предназначена для исследователей истории миниатюры, теории изобразительного искусства и культурологии, а также для студентов и ценителей искусства.

Ключевые слова: Камолитдин Бехзод, искусство миниатюры, символика цвета, философская интерпретация, визуальная эстетика, семиотика, восточная школа миниатюры, минеральные краски, композиционный ритм, духовные ценности.

Introduction: The art of the Eastern miniature represents one of the most sophisticated chapters in the history of global visual culture, serving as a profound intersection of literature, philosophy, and aesthetic mastery¹. At the center of this tradition stands Kamoliddin Behzod, whose transformative contributions during the late 15th and early 16th centuries fundamentally altered the trajectory of miniature painting². Unlike his predecessors, who often viewed color primarily as a decorative instrument, Behzod elevated the palette to an instrument of philosophical inquiry, allowing it to become a silent language capable of expressing the complexities of the human soul and the nuances of Sufi mysticism.

¹ Axmedova, N. (2015). *Modern Uzbek Miniature: Tradition and Innovation*. Tashkent: San'at.

² Akimushkin, O. F. (2008). *The Art of Eastern Miniature: Catalog and Analysis*. St. Petersburg: Vostochnaya Literatura.



The significance of this research lies in the urgent need to decipher the semiotic structures inherent in Behzod's compositions³. His work is not merely a reflection of Timurid court life; it is a meticulously constructed metaphysical map. By examining how Behzod utilized mineral-based pigments—such as the deep azure of lapis lazuli to denote the infinite sky and divine wisdom, or the brilliance of gold to represent the essence of truth—we can better understand the ideological framework of his era. Each choice of pigment and brushstroke in his manuscripts, particularly in his illustrations for Saadi Shirazi's *Bustan*, functions as a deliberate signifier, bridge-building between the physical world of the observer and the spiritual realm of the enlightened.

This study aims to investigate the dialectical relationship between color symbolism and the thematic content in Behzod's oeuvre. While many art historians have focused on the technical composition and historical context of his miniatures, this research emphasizes the philosophical interpretative layer—analyzing how the interplay of color rhythms and light-shadow mechanics served to unveil the inner psyche of his subjects. We argue that Behzod's mastery enabled the miniature to evolve from an artisanal "book illustration" into a profound vehicle for existential contemplation⁴.

Through a qualitative analysis of key manuscripts and secondary art-historical literature, this paper will explore how Behzod's color theory mirrors the medieval Sufi worldview, where the "visible" is interpreted as a metaphor for the "invisible." By providing a systematic breakdown of these visual codes, we intend to illuminate the timeless relevance of Behzod's aesthetic legacy, demonstrating why his work continues to challenge and inspire contemporary artistic interpretations within the framework of national and global heritage.

Main body:

The philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of behzod's color system

The Metaphysics of Pigments in Behzod's Miniature Art:

In the 15th-century Timurid miniature tradition, the selection of pigments was governed by both artisanal necessity and spiritual symbolism⁵. Behzod, however, transcended the conventional application of colors by imbuing them with ontological significance. For Behzod, the process of grinding minerals such as lapis lazuli (azure) and cinnabar (mercury sulfide) was not merely a preparation for painting; it was an act of distilling the essence of the natural world.

✓ The Azure Spectrum: Behzod's extensive use of "Lazzhvard" (lapis lazuli) serves as a visual metaphor for the transcendence of the human spirit. In his illustrations for the *Bustan*, this deep blue acts as a cosmic boundary between the terrestrial struggles of the subjects and the infinite nature of the divine.

✓ The Solar Gold: Gold in Behzod's palette is rarely used as a decorative flourish. Instead, it functions as a representation of "Nur" (divine light). It creates a contrast with the material world, indicating that the enlightened figures within the miniature exist in a state of eternal grace.

Color Rhythm as a Narrative Mechanism: One of Behzod's most significant innovations was the concept of "Color Rhythm." He understood that the human eye follows a specific path across a two-dimensional surface. By placing vibrant, saturated colors (such as deep vermilion or intense saffron) at specific structural intersections, Behzod guided the viewer's gaze through the narrative flow of the story.

³ Boyle, J. A. (2010). *Persian Miniature Painting*. New York: Dover Publications.

⁴ Fayzullayev, T. (2022). *Philosophical Symbols and Their Interpretation in Eastern Miniature*. Tashkent: Akademnashr.

⁵ Galorkina, O. (2005). *Uzbek Miniature: Traditions and Modernity*. Moscow: Iskusstvo.



Dramaturgy of Shadows: While medieval miniatures often ignored light and shadow, Behzod utilized subtle shifts in pigment density to create depth. This is particularly evident in his portrayals of urban landscapes and courtly debates, where the play of light defines the "inner space" of the architecture, reflecting the inner psychological states of the protagonists⁶.

Symbolic Contrast: By juxtaposing cool tones against warm, glowing hues, Behzod could visually represent the conflict between material desire and ascetic wisdom, a core theme in Sufi literature⁷.

The Psychological Portraiture through Chromatics: Behzod moved away from the standardized faces of his predecessors and introduced individualistic portraiture. His mastery of color enabled him to depict the "mood" of a character.

Case Study (The Bustan Manuscript): In his illustrations for Saadi, Behzod uses muted, earthy tones for subjects involved in worldly tasks, whereas figures in meditation or prayer are surrounded by vibrant, harmonious colors that signify spiritual alignment. This deliberate contrast demonstrates that Behzod viewed color not as an arbitrary choice, but as a semiotic tool to communicate the ethical weight of the scene.

Synthesis: The Sufi Worldview and Visual Language:

The brilliance of Behzod's color theory lies in its alignment with medieval Sufi cosmology. In this worldview, the physical world is a reflection of a higher reality. Behzod's miniatures function as a visual manifestation of this philosophy; the saturated colors are intended to remind the observer that the beauty of the world is a sign (ayat) of a greater, hidden truth. His ability to synthesize high technical execution with deep mystical reflection is what elevated the status of the miniature from a mere decorative art to a profound vehicle for philosophical contemplation.

This section provides a rigorous academic foundation for your research. By focusing on the interplay between the technical application of pigments and the broader Sufi philosophical framework, you establish Behzod not just as a painter, but as a visual philosopher⁸.

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⁶ Gray, B. (1995). *Persian Painting*. Geneva: Skira.

⁷ Hillenbrand, R. (2004). *Islamic Art and Architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson.

⁸ Hakimov, A. (2010). *Fine Arts of Uzbekistan: History and Modernity*. Tashkent: Fan.

⁹ Karimov, R. (2021). *National Codes in the Works of Modern Uzbek Artists*. Tashkent: Ijod.



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Conclusion: The comprehensive analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that Kamoliddin Behzod's approach to color is not merely a technical endeavor but a sophisticated "Visual Metaphysics." His body of work serves as a testament to the idea that the miniature is not just a form of illustration, but a powerful vehicle for intellectual and spiritual discourse¹². The following conclusions are drawn from this research:

The Ontological Status of Color: Behzod transitioned the role of color from a secondary decorative element to a primary instrument of metaphysical expression. His intentional use of mineral pigments, such as Lazzhvard (lapis lazuli) and gold leaf, functions as a semiotic bridge between the transient material world and the immutable divine realm. This confirms that Behzod viewed the physical canvas as a reflection of a deeper, hidden reality (Al-Ghaib), consistent with the Sufi philosophical frameworks of the Timurid era¹³.

Color Rhythm as Narrative Orchestration: This study highlights Behzod's pioneering use of "color rhythm" as a revolutionary narrative technique. By strategically distributing saturated hues across the pictorial plane, Behzod successfully directed the viewer's psychological journey through the manuscript. This mastery effectively transformed the static two-dimensional surface into a dynamic space where time and narrative unfold in a rhythmic, cohesive sequence.

Ethical Characterization through Chromatics: Behzod's innovation in psychological portraiture relies heavily on his command of color. The differentiation in palette—using earthy tones for worldly affairs versus harmonious, vibrant hues for spiritual states—serves as an

¹⁰ Mirtojyev, J. (2022). *Modern Miniature: Technical and Methodological Research*. Namangan: NamSU Press.

¹¹ Mirtojyev, J. (2022). *Modern Miniature: Technical and Methodological Research*. Namangan: NamSU Press.

¹² Pugachenkova, G. A. (1990). *Miniature and Book Art: Schools of Eastern Miniature*. Tashkent: Fan.

¹³ Qodirov, M. (2019). *Miniature and Calligraphy School in Uzbek National Fine Arts*. Tashkent: O'qituvchi.



"ethical indicator" for the subjects. His work reveals that Behzod regarded color as an essential tool for communicating the internal moral gravity of his protagonists, thus introducing a form of "chromatic realism" long before its time.

Synthesis of Tradition and Mystical Aesthetics: The synthesis of traditional Eastern aesthetics with deep Sufi reflection (specifically the concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud*) defines Behzod's enduring legacy. His ability to fuse technical precision with mystical contemplation elevated the status of miniature painting to the highest echelons of philosophical art.

Final Reflection: Kamoliddin Behzod's legacy is fundamentally that of a visionary who perceived the universe through a chromatic lens¹⁴. His work remains an indispensable resource for contemporary artists and scholars, offering a profound lesson on how to bridge the gap between national heritage and universal human values. By treating color as both a physical material and a symbolic language, Behzod ensured that his miniatures would transcend the limitations of their time, continuing to serve as a beacon of intellectual and aesthetic excellence for generations of artists to come.

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¹⁴ Sultanova, N. (2016). *The Philosophy of Color and Composition in Miniature Art*. Tashkent: San'at.

