



DURDY BAYRAMOV
ART FOUNDATION

Exhibition Overview

THROUGH THE EYES OF DURDY BAYRAMOV TURKMEN VILLAGE LIFE, 1960s-80s

Born in Turkmenistan in 1938, Durdy Bayramov enjoyed a prolific career as a professional painter for over 55 years, during which he created over 5,000 artistic works. He was a recipient of numerous prestigious awards and distinctions, including the honorary title of People's Artist of Turkmenistan (1991), Academician of the National Academy of Arts of Kyrgyzstan (1998), and the "For the Love of the Motherland" medal, presented by the President of Turkmenistan in 2008. In addition to being represented in all of the main museums in the capital city of Ashgabat and in museums in virtually every other city in Turkmenistan, Bayramov's paintings can be found in many private collections, museums and galleries around the world.



The artistic vision of Durdy Bayramov conveys a powerful sense of the universal human condition—love, curiosity, hope—expressed through his own truly unique style. This singular aesthetic was shaped by his personal struggles and triumphs, his humility, positive spirit, and inspiration, but also by the land and people of the country he was born in and dearly loved, Turkmenistan. This exhibition sheds light on what motivated and inspired this gifted artist. His deep respect for Turkmen cultural heritage is distinctly revealed in the images featured in *Through the Eyes of Durdy Bayramov: Turkmen Village Life, 1960s-80s*. Bayramov did not consider his photographs to be artistic productions in the same vein as his paintings and drawings; therefore these images offer a contrasting or supplemental perspective on what attracted his eye as an artist. It is as though we are given the opportunity to view the world as Bayramov himself felt it should be seen.

The black-and-white photographs featured in this exhibition are thematically organized so as to highlight the universal aspects of what might otherwise seem exotic and unfamiliar. Although the landscapes and people are distinctly Turkmen, in *Villagers at Home and at Play* we experience the warmth of the domestic sphere and the exuberance and vitality of youth, while the pride and satisfaction of a community laboring together is evident in *Villagers at Work*. Bayramov's *Portraits of Turkmen Villagers* demonstrate the artist's tender approach and evoke the special character and qualities within each of his subjects, with whom he shared a deep rapport.



Villagers at Home and at Play

In portraying villagers at leisure in and around their homes, Durdy Bayramov offers an intriguing glimpse of Turkmen clothing, shelter, family life, landscape, and traditions. He expertly and lovingly captured the powerful feelings of comradeship and community that radiate from these scenes.

Villagers at Work

Durdy Bayramov's ability to recognize and portray the determined resilience of the Turkmen people is revealed in these images. Despite challenging conditions and difficult work, a profound sense of pride is evident on the faces of the men and women pictured. These photographs serve as a reminder of how work can bind communities together through mutual effort and shared accomplishment.



Portraits of Turkmen Villagers

Each of Durdy Bayramov's portraits reveals the inner worlds of his subjects and also provides insight on this period of history. Through these poignant images, Bayramov transforms everyday villagers into iconic representations of Turkmenistan's culture and history, never predicting that they would one day be displayed and appreciated in other countries by people unfamiliar with Turkmen culture.



Through the Eyes of Durdy Bayramov: Turkmen Village Life, 1960s-80s was originally displayed in 2015 at the Bayramov Museum in Toronto, Ontario. The exhibition was viewed by hundreds of people from over a dozen countries and received overwhelmingly positive reviews, including the following:

... (Durdy Bayramov's) paintings and photographs have made a heartfelt and lasting impression, especially on all of us here who have visited or worked in Turkmenistan. His artworks are not only profoundly beautiful, but also rich in cultural history; grounded in the aesthetics and history of that remarkable place, yet of universal appeal.

—**Dr. Paul M. Taylor**, Director, Asian Cultural History Program and Curator of Asian, Middle Eastern, and European Ethnology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

...haunting, beautiful, and compelling. As a professional photographer, I was struck by how Bayramov was able to capture his love of his country and subjects so deftly on film.

—**John Madden**, photographer

The images were extraordinary. It was clear Bayramov was as gifted in one form as he was in another. I've never been to Turkmenistan. Yet I was drawn to the photographs...

—**Marilyn Powell**, Writer and Broadcaster, CBC Radio

*I had the opportunity to view the Foundation's remarkable inaugural exhibition at the Bayramov Museum, *Through the Eyes of Durdy Bayramov: Turkmen Village Life, 1960s-80s*, and to attend and participate in several of the well-attended events and programs associated with this exhibition... I sincerely recommend this institution for its compelling vision, exceptional collections, and internationally recognized programs and exhibitions.*

—**Natalia Nekrassova**, Curator, Textile Museum of Canada

Durdy Bayramov was truly a people's artist and a patriot of Turkmenistan. In his art one witnesses both the soul of the artist and the spirit of his homeland. The feedback we have received from our staff and visitors about this solo exhibition has been overwhelmingly positive. This speaks to the appeal of Durdy Bayramov's art among people of diverse ages and backgrounds.

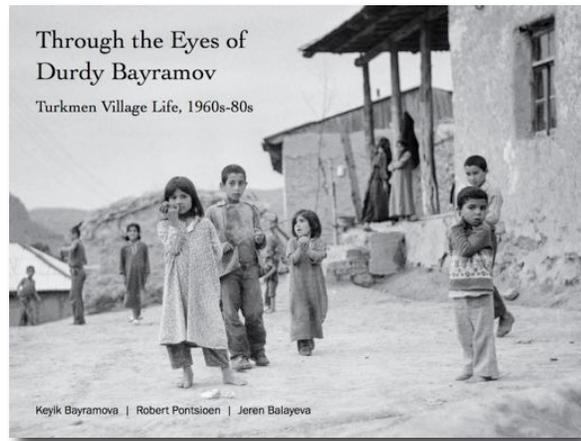
—**Marina Galvani**, Art Curator, The World Bank Art Program

(Durdy Bayramov) represented our country well at numerous international events, and his paintings were always held in high regard not only in our home country, but also abroad... I highly recommend that Durdy Bayramov's paintings and photographs be shown in any museum and/or gallery around the world.

— **The Honorable Meret Orazov**, Ambassador from Turkmenistan to the United States and Mexico

Exhibition Catalogue

Through the Eyes of Durdy Bayramov: Turkmen Village Life, 1960s-80s is accompanied by a fully illustrated, 127 page exhibition catalogue written by Keyik Bayramova, Robert Pontsioen, and Jeren Balayeva, and includes an introduction by Dr. Paul Taylor, Director of the Asian Cultural History Program and Curator of Asian, Middle Eastern, and European Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution.



This beautiful catalogue provides in-depth analysis of the historical and artistic significance of Durdy Bayramov's photographs, and features 102 black-and-white plates from the exhibition. Through insightful interpretive essays, the catalogue explains how the photographs in this exhibition convey Bayramov's deep respect for Turkmen culture and shed light on what motivated and inspired this gifted artist.

According to WorldCat, the world's largest library catalogue, this book has been accessioned in more than 85 public, academic, and museum libraries around the world. It was published in 2015 by the Durdy Bayramov Art Foundation, in association with the Asian Cultural History Program, Smithsonian Institution.



***Through the Eyes of Durdy Bayramov: Turkmen Village Life, 1960s-80s* provides a way for one of Turkmenistan's greatest artists to introduce a broad audience to that country's rich cultural heritage.**

The Durdy Bayramov Art Foundation is a non-profit organization located in the York Region of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Foundation is dedicated to expanding knowledge and art appreciation through collections-based research, publication, exhibition, and facilitating access for scholars to the collections, library, and archives of the Bayramov Museum. The Foundation's mission is to celebrate the life and legacy of Durdy Bayramov by educating and inspiring through the beauty of art. In carrying out this mission, the Foundation nourishes the dreams of young and aspiring artists through education outreach programs and scholarship awards.

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