

**“FAUST” of Makum Kisamedinov: THE EXPERIENCE OF INTERPRETING GOETHE**

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the series of Makum Kisamedinov illustrations of “Faust” Goethe. Though the illustration is secondary related to the original literature the Kazakh artist managed to bring an innovation to interpret the mastership of the world famous literature expressing it in etching. The article grounds originality of Kisamedinov method of philosophical decision of the world famous literature, synthesis of East and West.

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**Introduction.**

Makum Mustafovich Kisamedinov (1939 – 1983) Lenin komsomol prize winner. Born in 1939, February, 10, village Voskresensk, Ikryan district of Volgograd region. In 1967 graduated from Moscow State Art Institute named after V.I.Surickov. The member of the Soviet Republics Union of Artists.

Makum Kisamedinov took place in the art history of Kazakhstan very young, he did not become old in it. The names of elder generation – Sarhee Romanov, Yevgenii Sidorkin, Andrey Dyachkin were starring among the famous Kazakhstan graphic artists. Makum started his first steps together with the contemporaries from the generation of “sixties” that gave the whole galaxy of talents in different spheres of creative works. A. Rahmanov, I.Isabaev, A.Guriev were distinguished by their brightest talent among the young, full of life, assured artists. But it was Makum whose name got the halo of glory immediately and forever.

Makum Kisamedinov applied twice to make illustrations to the immortal creation of Goethe “Faust”. The artist got involved in this at the end of 1960s when as the art director of the “Zhasushy Publishing House”, he began publishing books dedicated to European classical literature. The second time Faust theme sounded was in connection with the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Goethe, which the global community had pledged to grace in grand style. Towards this date, Kazakhstan had decided to make the first publication of “Faust” in the Kazakh language translated by Medeubay Kurmanov in “Zhasushy Publishing House”, 1982, Almaty. Makum Kisamedinov was chosen to the design work, he set to work on this order, considering it an important state and political assignment. The artist worked with illustrations for some years and created 19 linocuts, immediately planning the series not only in the illustrations, but also in the printed material [1, 12].

For Kisamedinov who had grown up in a different cultural background and who genetically bore in him its philosophical and aesthetic paradigms, it was paramount to read Goethe’s creations from the point of view of his own culture, the culture of a nomad wandering the steppes.

The book was awarded a diploma and a medal at the international Festival in Leipzig, while at the All – Union of the Soviet Union competition entitled “the Art of Book – Making”, it was awarded a diploma of distinction and the Union of Artists of the Soviet Union award [1, 13].

Except mentioned works the experience of the young talent in linocut and lithography were series “Movement” and “Steps of Baikonur”. It is in this work that the artist stayed away from the so called “socialist realism” that turned folk poetry and national traditions into a customary cliché. Even the first works of Kisamedinov can be marked by appearance of his individual firm sign – synthesis of East and West and active ruling the myth poetry. Kazakh art critic E.Kim wrote that Kisamedinov introduces elements of Turkish myth and culture into illustrations of European classical literature, more over he introduces his figure into the composition affirming in that way the author’s position and interpreted his work as injunction of East and West. So the world is unique for the artist, East and West are joined in it, ancient and contemporary [2, 11].

The title of series is a linocut-depicting doctor Faust (Abb.1) (43x30) [2, 122]. Conception of the idea that defines the whole series is interesting. Doctor Faust is described at the top of his megalomania – pretension to be equal to the Supreme – to the God. Competition mode is shown in doctor’s image. The way Bevel is described resembles that how God was shown in orthodox tradition, especially Savaof, sitting on clouds. Hands stretched sure that the world is open for him, open floors, confident steps. You may not consider doctor crazy but the idea

of imaginary power and defeat is depicted in illustration background – with the doctor in the past buried in the book and a girl probably - Gredhen. The opinion of art critic about synthesis East - West needs to be explained. Artist searches equal for poetic reproduction of the book main conflict more than collisions [3], [4]. This fact explains close to catholic world comprehension by strong ascetic lines, restraint emotional picture.

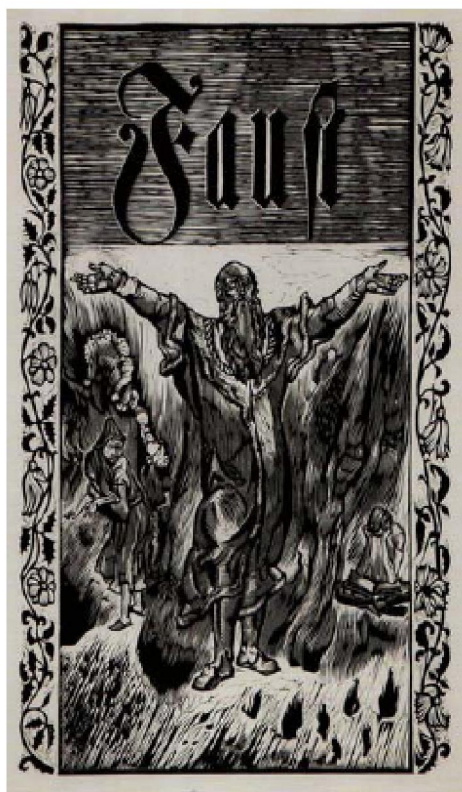


Abb.1. Doctor Bevel. Front page.  
*Paper, linocut, 43x30*

“Gredhen Room” is a linocut (43x30) (Abb.2) [2, 123] that disproves stereotype feeling of the theme. Room is not described in the style of environment, only a part of sleeping sofa is depicted at the lateral side, this remoral not only displaces narrating structure of the picture but also widens it, making the scene of Gredhen world.

Mephistopheles, the Faust and Gredhen are in the center of composition. The Faust is described as Mephistopheles’ victim. Victorious smile of Mephistopheles, his slacking pose demonstrate his assurance over the doctor. Her embracing is a desperate gesture, her raised figure and glance stumbled on the Faust stretched palm. The composition is full with the idea that the doctor’s retreat is a fact. The upper scene with the axe as a

weapon of punishment over the angel and somebody with a lamp strengthens drama of the picture. It is the mirror reproduction of searching and of Gredhen and the Faust souls that could take place. But the Faust went too far in search of truth betraying his angel. Reproduction of the plot in characters with the help of graphically punctual lines, depicted poses – awaiting and hope Gredhen, decision taken by the Faust, ironical smile of Mephistopheles coincides the plot of the tragedy.



Abb.2. Gredhen Room. *Paper, linocut, 43x30*

Tragic inspiration is the scene of linocut “Walpurgis night” – (43x30) (Abb.3) [2, 125]. Gloom, inconsolability, catastrophe, despair reflect the world condition. Tragedy is strengthened by images - there is an old woman, a bird, thickened clouds, ominous figures of wild sow... Apocalypse does not concern only two persons – Mephistopheles and the Faust. The Faust is in the power of dangerous chimera, Mephistopheles is talking. Verbal gesture – raised finger – is a sign of devil’s power over his respondent. The pose of the Faust with crossed legs is aloofness from the world absorbed in pleasant temptation. The author is not using fantasy introducing myth images of his native culture. He follows the plot of the illustrated tragedy. Reproducing main parts of the tragedy the artist looks for the ways to show spirit confusion so he uses contrasting figures, images, personification of opposition.





Abb.3. Walpurgis night. Paper, linocut, 43x30



Abb.4. Hiron and the Bevel. Paper, linocut, 43x30

In the illustration of "Hiron and the Faust" (1981) (Abb.4) [2, 130] you can see a man playing kobys in the lower corner. The artist might mean Korkyt ata [5], [6]. At the front there is a howling wolf, a snake with the bird on the tail. Far over you can see familiar petroglyph of the camel with little other things found in the place Tamgaly tars in the South Kazakhstan. One can see some elements of golden decoration of irbis excavated in Kazakhstan in the picture at the dialogue the Faust and Mephistopheles. At the final page of illustrations the artist describes himself. The technique of linocut shows the skill of the master. White lines alternated with elegant black create silver shade. The artist managed to create beautiful true to life compositions using pure black color turning into silver. There is no doubt concerning the opinion of S.Bekkulova saying: "Explosive temperament of Shakespear's force and Goethe romantics is seen in every personage depicted with belief in the might of human intelligence, pulsing lines of figure's outline, expression of gestures, contrast of white, electrified by the movement of space described with energetic touch of black create the atmosphere of exciting passions" [7, 135].

The spectator faced a painter with great temperament, endless fantasy and precise view [8], [9], [10]. The idea and plot of the illustrations to Goethe "Faust" enable us to consider the artist as an outstanding composer and thinking philosopher that made a contribution in creating the gallery of famous characters of this masterpiece of European classical literature.

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