



## “OYBEK ISLAMOV — THE ETERNAL STAGE”

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**Annotation:** *The Eternal Stage* by Oybek Islamov is a monumental mural (39.37 × 16.4 feet) (12.7 × 5.6 m) that unites Uzbek cultural heritage with universal themes of philosophy, art, and human destiny. Inspired by Raphael's *School of Athens*, the composition brings together figures from Ancient Greece and Rome, Shakespeare, and national theatrical traditions, weaving them into a dynamic narrative of knowledge, sacrifice, and inspiration. Created as the winning project of a national competition for the Art Institute, the work demonstrates Islamov's mastery of academic realism, architectural imagination, and monumental scale. It stands as both homage to classical tradition and a unique contribution to contemporary Uzbek mural art, earning recognition on national and international levels.

**Keywords:** The Eternal Stage. Oybek Islamov. Monumental painting.

### Introduction.

Academic realism. National heritage. Raphael's influence. The School of Athens. Sistine Madonna. Ancient Greece and Rome. Theatre and drama. Philosophy and knowledge. Cultural continuity. Renaissance inspiration. Large-scale composition. State commission.

### *The Eternal Stage*

The monumental composition *The Eternal Stage* envelops the viewer in its circular rhythm, recalling the embrace of a theatre itself. Standing before the six-by-twelve-meter painting, the spectator is no longer a passive onlooker but becomes part of a grand performance where epochs of philosophy, art, and human destiny are staged together.



The School of Athens. Raphael



The Eternal Stage. O. Islamov

The mural is structured in three interconnected parts. On the **left**, Islamov traces the evolution of Uzbek art, theatre, and cinema — a tribute to the nation's cultural achievements and continuity. On the **right**, the story moves back into the prehistoric and classical eras. Here we see the world of Ancient Greece and Rome, where open-air theatres shaped Western dramaturgy. Figures of **Socrates, Aristotle, and Homer** descend a staircase, embodying the timeless pursuit of knowledge.



Above them rises the dramatic image of **Laocoön and His Sons**, symbolizing suffering and sacrifice. An angel leans toward Homer, whispering inspiration, while a Roman gladiator debates with a jester about the fairness of fate. **Watching this exchange is William Shakespeare, observing the debates and making his own notes, as though transforming the moment into material for future drama.** Nearby, a woman cradles her newborn child — a symbol of life’s duality, offering both beauty and uncertainty. This motif deliberately recalls Raphael’s *Sistine Madonna*, a reminder that theatre, like life itself, is always staged between hope and fragility.



The Sistine Madonna. Raphael.



Fragment. The Eternal Stage. O.Islamov.

At the **center**, a puppet theatre stretches upward into the horizon, producing a strong perspective that unifies the composition. This sense of depth, combined with the intellectual dialogue of figures, recalls Raphael’s *School of Athens* — one of the enduring influences on Islamov’s artistic formation.

### Academic Foundation and Exceptional Experience

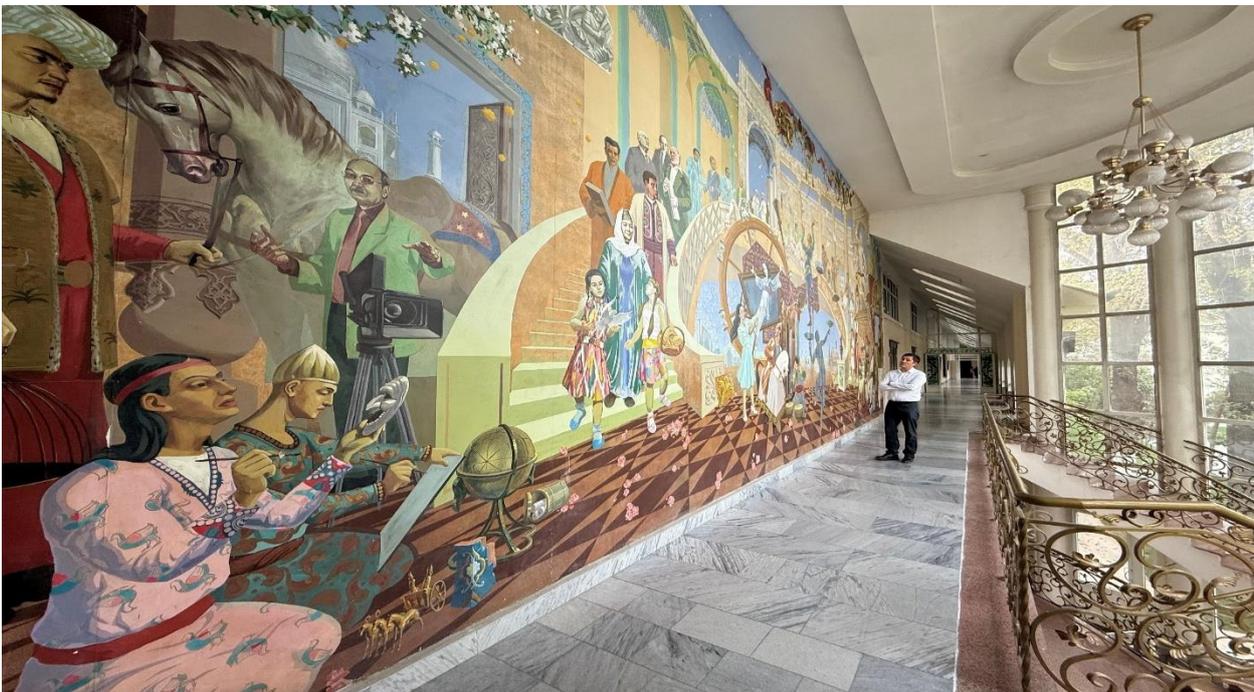
It is evident that academic art provides the foundation of Islamov's work. His mastery of proportion, composition, and color harmony reflects a discipline rarely seen in contemporary mural painting. To design and execute a canvas of this monumental scale requires not only painterly skill but also architectural imagination — proof of his exceptional experience and expertise in the discipline. Islamov often acknowledges the influence of his teacher Vladimir Burmakin, Bakhadir Djalal who gave him tremendous confidence in working on high-scale compositions and instilled the discipline required for monumental art.

Islamov's achievements with *The Eternal Stage* represent original contributions of major significance to the field of monumental painting in Uzbekistan. The work demonstrates both a technical command of Renaissance-inspired realism and a unique cultural vision that connects national heritage with universal human themes.

### Selection Through Competition

The creation of *The Eternal Stage* was itself the result of a **prestigious national competition** for the foyer of the Art Institute, a building commissioned by Uzbekistan's first president, Islam Karimov. More than ten monumental painters submitted proposals, yet Islamov's sketch was selected after a rigorous review process — recognition of his ability to serve in a **leading and critical capacity** on projects of national importance.

This commission stands as evidence of Islamov's **outstanding achievements**, not only as a painter but also as a cultural figure entrusted with shaping the visual identity of state institutions.



The Eternal Stage. Size 39.37 x 16.4 Feet. 12,7 x 5,6 meter

### Legacy and Recognition

*The Eternal Stage* is both homage and innovation. It pays tribute to the classical tradition while asserting Islamov's own voice as an artist of stature. The work confirms his reputation as an **expert in his discipline**, whose contributions have been acknowledged both nationally and internationally.

Ultimately, this monumental painting transforms architecture into a living narrative, where antiquity, the Renaissance, and Uzbekistan's cultural history converge on a single surface. It is not a decorative wall, but an **enduring statement of artistic excellence** — a stage where humanity itself is cast in eternal dialogue.

### References:

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