

## FORMATION OF A SEQUENTIAL VISUAL NARRATIVE IN UZBEKISTAN

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### **Abstract:**

This article examines the process of formation of a sequential visual narrative in Uzbekistan. The creative experience and production mechanisms of the first comics are studied.

**Keywords:** narrative, comic books, visual narrative, "Neon and Red", Uzbekistan, narrating, narrator

In Uzbekistan, the problem of a consistent visual narrative in the media is considered a new direction not only in science but also in practice. In the theory of communication and linguistics, the study of narratives--visual, verbal, and other types--is also among the little-studied aspects. However, the audience increasingly prefers visual narrative and its forms. What is visual narrative? There are various ways to answer this question. For example, the English researcher Stuart James calls visual narrative "a graphic representation of events" [Stuart 2015: 2]. He characterized this phenomenon as "storyboarding a sequence of one or more actions in the form of a sketch, which together describe an event," but also adds that a single picture depicting an action can also be considered a visual narrative [Stuart 2015: 2]. The famous American comics artist Will Eisner uses the term "graphic narrative" as a general description of any story in which an image is used to convey an idea [Eisner 2008]. Russian researcher Maria Skaf defines visual narrative as a story "where text and image are in constant interaction and are meaningless without each other" [Skaf 2018]. In his studies, Skaf writes that under this term, Western researchers combine such genres as picture books, comics, visual poetry, photo essays, popular prints, and so on. But, according to the researcher, this does not seem particularly successful in connection with the existence of non-narrative visual literature "[Skaf 2016: 301]. M. Skaf herself uses the concepts of "visual-literary genres" and "visual literature" to designate the above visual narrative forms [Skaf 2016: 285-286] It is noteworthy that in almost all scientific and practical works on this phenomenon, there is an emphasis on the primacy of the visual series. In our opinion, this corresponds to the theoretical concept of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), who considered actions as texts. Based on this, we can conclude that in the visual narrative, the verbal series may be absent. The presence of action or dynamics is the main property of this phenomenon. Another important property is consistency, which is inherent in almost all forms of visual narrative. Some of them, such as comics and graphic novels, are even labeled as sequential art [Eisner 1985]. Sequential forms of visual narrative, in particular comics, are not something completely new to the practice of Uzbekistan. This form of narration can be found on the pages of children's publications. But these comics act as explanatory and didactic content, reference material, etc. For educational and educational purposes, comics are used by both international organizations and government agencies. But comic-

artistic works are a new phenomenon and are not yet widespread. In the practice of Uzbekistan, there was experience in printing - the comic book "Neon and Red" in 2018-2019. A group of enthusiasts, comic book lovers, the "Comics.uz" team, worked on it. In his address, quoted on the website of the Repost.uz online publication, Shahrukh Nizamiddinov stated, "Comics.uz is a project thanks to which Uzbekistan will have its own comics. We have already done a great job launching the first line of comics. The comic is called "Neon va Red." This is a story about two brothers who have gained superpowers. All actions will take place on the territory of our country. To our question—what inspired him to create these superheroes?—he said the following. I loved comics since childhood. I drew them at school, and my dream was to create our own folk comics with national heroes who would help strengthen values. Superheroes are always interesting for children. With our publication, we wanted to increase the number of children who read, to arouse in them an interest not only in reading but also in the visual "reading" of artistic graphics. After all, comics are entertaining stories in pictures. The comic "Neon and Red" was produced through crowdfunding, public funds. The fundraiser was announced in December 2018. Many creative people began to actively respond to this project, sending their stories, drawings, designs, themes. In May 2019, the first issue of the Neon and Red comic book was published. The heroes of the comic are brothers-schoolchildren, 12-year-old Mardon and 10-year-old Shahzod. One loves astronomy, the other loves football. And both were very interested in the mysterious sphere of alien origin, which their father showed them. The second storyline of the comic—the events that took place on the distant planet Tuunsa and explained the appearance of the sphere on Earth—was narrated as Mardon's dreams. We see that this theme resonates, on the one hand, with science fiction films, narratives about star wars (the alien sage resembles Master Yoda), and on the other hand, calls for unity. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties, this publication was suspended after the first release, but, it left a mark in the media space of Uzbekistan and laid the foundation for other visual practices. Speaking about the formation of a consistent visual narrative in Uzbekistan, one more team of comics should be noted. But, unlike "Comics.uz", it specializes in creating manga (Japanese comics). The first manga studio in Uzbekistan, the Tokyo Group team, began its activities in 2021. There are 3 published comics in the studio's portfolio. The main difference between this team and the others can be considered that they publish their work only on the Internet, on the website of the manga studio <https://tokyogroup.uz/>. In the Tokyo Group manga, cultural and historical foundations are clearly visible. So, if in "Neon and Red" the Marvel theme and a reference to "Star Wars" are striking, then, for example, in the manga "Chirchik Ghoul" [7], the mythical creature Albasty is mentioned, with which the mother of the main character scares her, and the image of a Kushan princess also appears on the last pages. Another feature is that the text base (story) is available for reading separately from the visual series.

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