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Successes of Azerbaijan cartoonists in international competitions and exhibitions

Abstract: The analysis and investigation of this topic, the involvement of current artists of the period in the research, the place, importance and connections of Azerbaijani caricature in the world caricature family determine the relevance of this topic. The purpose of the study is to investigate the recognition and promotion of Azerbaijani caricature in the international world, its successes, awards, as well as the variety and variety of caricatures presented in international caricature competitions and exhibitions. Research methods refer to the scientific methodical base. Researches in this field, a large number of developed monographs, scientific and artistic literature, teaching materials are the main research methods of research. In the article, which talks about the place and essence of “wordless” caricatures in the creativity of Azerbaijani artists, which is a new and modern trend, which speaks an international language, and is mainly intended for prepared readers, the steps taken by caricaturists in this direction are brought to attention. The success and achievements of Azerbaijani cartoonists, who benefited from the development prospects of modern caricature, can be evaluated as the success of modern Azerbaijani caricature in general. In the works of artists, who properly represent modern Azerbaijani caricature in the international world, the richness of conventional and laconic means of expression, the approach to metaphor, grotesque, satire and humor in terms of modern requirements is clearly manifested. The intensive development of Azerbaijani caricature in modern times has proven that it has deep artistic traditions in this field, and its ability to make worthy contributions to the development of world caricature art. Modern Azerbaijani caricature, which includes the principles of nationality, statehood, peoplehood, as well as modernity and internationalism, has become an integral part of world visual art. The results and provisions of the research expand the richness of Azerbaijani visual art, the range of variety and genre diversity, which shows the place, weight and influence of modern Azerbaijani caricature in the international caricature space in terms of theoretical and practical significance of the research.

Keywords: caricature, artist, grotesque, movement, satire, humour, graphics.

Introduction

Since the first years of independence, Azerbaijani artists who have rendered invaluable services to the recognition and development of caricature, which is the most flexible and combative field of fine art, have represented Azerbaijan in international competitions, exhibitions, and prestigious events. The graphic works of Azerbaijani artists, who approach the art they serve and the profession they have chosen with sensitivity and deep love, reflecting the events taking place in the international world, as well as in the socio-political and cultural life of

the country, are distinguished by their high artistic level and relevance of the subject, original artist's findings, modern approach draws attention.

Z. Aliyev (2018) notes that during the development of the caricature genre, which is mainly episodic in various periods and in the studies of several authors devoted to satirical graphics, it has acquired rich traditions, occupied an important place in the works of prominent artists and has maintained its relevance. Researching the Azerbaijani satirical graphics, which have gained new forms in the modern era, and analyzing the actual materials suggest that cartoonists-painters have created works covering various topics, carrying sarcasm, irony and irony, distinguished by their sharp satire. K. Mustafayeva (2024) notes that these cartoons were presented on an international scale, selected themes and content ideas were developed in terms of national interests, and these cartoons gained international importance. From this point of view, it is important to study the development of caricature in the article in terms of directing it in accordance with the modern era.

The degree to which the problem is developed. B. Hajizade (2019) noted that "European, Iranian, Turkish and other researchers have very valuable opinions and opinions about the Azerbaijani caricature, which developed in the conditions of interaction with the European press and satirical graphics at the beginning of the 20th century. The researchers noted the breadth and influence of the satire of the Azerbaijani caricature." K. Mustafayeva (2023) notes in her scientific research that cartoons with a new spirit and modern content, speaking in the "international language," which occupies one of the main places in the creativity of Azerbaijani artists, required high professionalism from Azerbaijani cartoonists and special preparation from the audience. In these paintings, which we call "wordless" caricatures, the target of criticism should be sought not in the visual image shown in the plot line, but in the logical conclusion based on it. This, in turn, allows artists to make maximum use of original and local means of expression, achieve the expression of two or more subtextual meanings with one visual image, convey more information to the audience, etc. he set such tasks. A. Guliyev, G. Idrisov, Y. Asadov, B. Hajizadeh, E. Mirzayev, V. Allahyarova, H. Nasiroglu are among the artists who adequately coped with these tasks, pleased the readers with their works with a new spirit and modern content, and created high taste in them. The creativity and activity of S. Nasirov, R. Sharif, K. Abdin, S. Soltanli, etc. are noteworthy. The works of cartoonists who are constantly in search of innovation, echoing with the modern era, with a new spirit, stand out for their high level of artistry as a result of high intelligence and are still relevant today. In these cartoons, the subject is presented in a clear and understandable manner, so no further explanation is needed.

The scientific novelty of the research is determined by the problem itself, and here, for the first time, the international scale of Azerbaijani caricature art is investigated and studied. The purpose of the research is to investigate and determine the international success of the works of modern representatives of caricature art, which has been little studied in Azerbaijani fine art. For this, the following tasks are planned:

- define and interpret the caricature's manifestations, content, form, style and artist's handwriting indicators;
- show the role of artists in the development of caricature art, to determine the arena and international importance of Azerbaijani satirical graphics;

- analyze the works of modern artists active in Azerbaijani satirical graphics, to show the scope of the works of these artists.

Materials and Methods

National and international artistic values, scientific-theoretical conclusions of art studies were used in the investigation of the problem considered in the research work, and the works corresponding to the formal characteristics of the caricature genre were analyzed. In the study of the problem, the principle of evaluation and chronological sequence was followed, mainly the methods of historical-comparative and art studies analysis were used. Considering that the caricature is a unique field of fine art, the unity between the image and the word was separately monitored. In the study and assessment of individual works, the indicators of “satirical image” are taken as the basis. The article refers to the researches of Professor Bayram Hajizadeh, Doctor of Philosophy in Art Studies, “European Caricature,” “World Caricature” and Ziyadkhan Aliyev, Doctor of Philosophy in Art Studies, “Art of Azerbaijan,” “Cartoonists of Azerbaijan – Bayram Hajizade” and other such authors. In the study of the researched topic, such various internet resources and caricature exhibitions as magazine “We and Caricature” (2006, No. 1; 2006, No. 3), catalog of the “Followers of Azimzade” exhibition (2008), catalog of the “Modern Azerbaijani Caricature” exhibition (2006), catalog of the “Molla Nasreddin – 100” cartoon exhibition (2007), catalog of the cartoon exhibition “Molla Nasreddin” and “mollanesreddinchilar” (2006) were also analysed.

Results

In the first years of independence (1991-2000), Azerbaijani artists participating in international caricature institutions, countries and were awarded special diplomas and prizes in competitions in the USA, China, Cuba, Syria, Israel, Europe, neighboring Turkey, Iran, and participated in these prestigious events. In 1998, Kirman Abdin was awarded the 3rd place in the international caricature competition held in Turkey, in 2000 he was awarded the “Ugur” award in the international caricature competition held in Iran, H. Nasiroglu was awarded a special prize in the “Aydin Dogan” international caricature competition in 2000, in 2001, S. Soltanli took first place in the “Fair Play” caricature competition held in Turkey, and was awarded the second place in the international caricature competition “EFRAS-1” held in Egypt. These events, the successes of Azerbaijani artists should be considered as the first steps taken in the direction of the caricature becoming a part of the world caricature family, acquiring international characteristics, equal to nationality (*Narimangizi, 2009*) (*Figure 1*).

In the 2000s, Azerbaijani cartoonists successfully participated in “Humos-Fest” in Italy, “Stuttgart Award” in Germany, “Bueno Salud” in Argentina, as well as in international caricature competitions held in the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, China, Korea, Israel, and Syria their works were included in the catalogs of the best cartoons of the competitions. “It is gratifying that Azerbaijani caricaturists are among the hundred best works selected from thousands of caricatures sent to international competitions. These events indicate that the art of national caricature is constantly developing and strengthening” (*We and Caricature, 2006, No. 1*). In 1999, including the cartoon authored by Rashid Sharif in the catalog of the best works of the “Aydin Dogan” international cartoon competition held in Turkey, which is considered the “Oscar” of

international caricature competitions, is one of the artist's first successes in this field. In this caricature, the author has depicted a person reading a newspaper with a mask on his face. In this work, the cartoonist-artist who opposes the "yellow" or "boulevard" press puts forward the idea of a reader who does not want to swallow the unclean smell of lies, slander and slander published in the press. In this work, distinguished by its well-designed compositional structure, R. Sharif expressed his position against negative situations such as illiteracy and the low level of printed materials in the field of press (*Figure 2*).

The well-known cartoonist-artist B. Hajizade won the gold medal at the "Leng-Mu" international caricature competition in China in 2005, the special prize at the 11th international caricature competition held in Israel, the 1st place in Cuba in 2007, the "Davenport" international competition in the USA in 2009, the 1st place in the caricature competition, the gold medal in Syria in 2015, the cartoon authored by E. Mirzayev won the special prize of UNESCO in the international caricature competition held in Israel in 2005, the silver medal of S. Jafarli in Cuba in 2008, in Brazil in 2009, the first place and bronze medal in Korea in 2011 and S. Soltanli's second place in Spain and bronze medal in Turkey in 2017 can be explained as an indicator of acceptance of Azerbaijani caricature art in the international caricature world (*Aliyev, 2011; Prizes, 2007*) (*Figure 3*).

In 2009, one of the most prestigious competitions in the world, "Davenport" international caricature competition held in the USA, according to the plot line of B. Hajizade's caricature, which was awarded a gold medal, a person who came from the injustices of life, people's hypocrisy, maybe poverty or betrayal decided to commit suicide. In this caricature, instead of a chair or any other object, the artist has depicted his faithful friend – his dog – at the feet of a man who is ready to hang himself with a rope around his throat. It is clear from the painting that the only thing that connects this world-weary person to life in every sense of the word is his dog. At the last moment of his life, in his last breath, perhaps with the aim of ending certain hesitations, the person who decides to check on his nephew friend throws the bone in his hand to the dog. The hero, who hoped that the dog, a symbol of loyalty and trust, the only villain who tied him to life, would not abandon his owner and run away with a bone, was wrong again... Seeing a piece of bone, the dog immediately left his owner and ran after the food, and of course, the rope was pulled, and the hero of the work dies. Perhaps, the artist added a bitter laugh to the theme of betrayal, which is often found in life, in modern times, and presented this scene to the audience in a very different situation, in an unexpected form (*Aliyev, 2018; Maharramli, 2009*) (*Figure 4*).

In one of his interviews, Bayram Hajizade, Chairman of the Union of Cartoonists of Azerbaijan, says about this: "In recent years, members of the Union of Cartoonists of Azerbaijan have been successful in international caricature competitions and represent our country well in these prestigious events. Their works are awarded with gold, silver, bronze medals, special prizes and diplomas. The works of our artists are included in the catalogs of selected best cartoons, which is actually a very high indicator. If an Azerbaijani cartoonist takes the first and second places in a prestigious international caricature competition organised in the USA, an Azerbaijani caricaturist wins the first place in a caricature festival held in Cuba and a special prize of the competition, if our artists are awarded silver and bronze places in an international caricature competition held in China, attended by thousands of artists from 80 countries, of course, this is

our success. This is the success of modern Azerbaijani cartoonists!” (*Mustafayeva, 2023; Azercartoon, 2007*).

Active participation of artists in international caricature competitions, festivals, biennials is directly related to the activities of the Azerbaijan Caricature Artists Public Union. This is a positive result of the effective activity of this institution, the introduction and promotion of Azerbaijani caricature art in the international world. Since the beginning of the activity of the Union of Cartoonists of Azerbaijan, important events have been organized in the direction of recognition and promotion of the art of caricature in the country and in the international world - round tables, meetings with well-known cartoonists, exhibitions and international exhibitions, competitions have been held. Scientific and artistic publications, books, albums and catalogs dedicated to the study, teaching and promotion of this rare and martial art have been prepared and printed. The Union of Cartoonists of Azerbaijan has established international relations based on the principles of mutual cooperation with caricature organisations of different countries in a short period of time, and was accepted as a full member of FECO (Federation of International Caricature Organizations). International exhibitions of the works of Azerbaijani artists were organised in many countries of the world under the organisation of the Union of Azerbaijani Cartoonists (*Aliyev, 2011; Hajizade, 2019; Hajizade, 2009*).

The Chairman of AKRB, B. Hajizade, writes about this in the book “Modern Azerbaijani Caricature”: “Our goal is to keep alive the national school of caricature, which is an integral part of Azerbaijani fine art, and to introduce and promote the art of Azerbaijani caricature in the international world. At a time when our enemies are writing our material and moral wealth in their name, it is our duty to our people to take care of our caricature art, which has a history of more than a hundred years, to protect it, to develop it and to introduce it to the world” (*Hajizade, 2009*).

On January 23, 2006, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, signed a decree on holding the 100th anniversary of “Molla Nasreddin” magazine at the state level (*We and Caricature, 2006, No. 3*). On this occasion, on April 7, 2006, in the central exhibition hall named after S. Bahlulzade, the Union of Azerbaijan Cartoonists dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the satirical magazine “Molla Nasreddin” and the 140th anniversary of the creator and editor-in-chief of the magazine, writer-populist Jalil Mammadguluzadeh and caricature was organised. Speaking at the exhibition organised by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan and the Union of Cartoonists of Azerbaijan, the speakers spoke about the importance of the “Molla Nasreddin” art school, the importance of this genre in society, and wished future creative success to cartoonists. The presentation of the first issue of the magazine “We and Caricature” was also held at the event. On the cover of “We and Caricature” magazine and on the poster of the exhibition of the same name, “Move forward with inspiration!” The poster-like cartoon is dedicated to the presidential elections held in Azerbaijan. In this work prepared by the famous artist Bayram Hajizade on the occasion of this significant event, sane people are depicted who clean the society from foreign elements – bribetakers, brokers, indifferent, procrastinating and irresponsible managers, slanderers, fraudsters and speculators. In the center of the work, you can see young people holding the tricolor national flag of Azerbaijan and slogans with the words “Forward with inspiration.” Depicting these young men, who are loyal soldiers of the head of the country, together with their comrades-in-arms

behind the excavator, the artist presented them as builders of a healthy society and a strong state. This work, in which the founders of New Azerbaijan and their comrades-in-arms are described as fighters, brave and determined citizens, has preserved its relevance even now. Even today, Azerbaijani caricaturists are fighting against the flaws in the society under the motto “Move forward with inspiration.” (*This Is Us, 2007*) E. Avalov, Y. Asadov, B. Hajizade, V. Allahyarova, E. Mirzayev, H. Nasiroglu, Y. Samadov, B. Gasimov, S. Soltanli, B. Yahyayev participated in the “We and Caricature” exhibition. The works of B. Gasimkhanli, N. Salmanova, K. Abdin, T. Mammadov and others have attracted great interest of the audience due to the breadth of the topic, depth of content, approach to the problem, satirical and humorous interpretation of the images, and the creative way of looking at the facts. At the exhibition, the cartoonist Hafiz Nasiroglu’s friendship quotes also attracted attention. The artist, who has successfully worked in the field of photography for many years, while creating his hero, brought to the fore the individual aspects of the person he painted and his unique creative and characteristic features, and tried to highlight them from a certain perspective. Chairman of the Union of Writers – Anar, Chairman of the Union of Artists – Farhad Khalilov, People’s Artists – Polad Bulbuloglu, Sayavush Aslan, Yashar Nuri, Ilham Namik Kamal, Javad Zeynalli, Professor Yashar Garayev, composer Khayyam Mirzazade, artists Aghali Ibrahimov, Bayram Hajizade, Arif Huseynov, psychiatrist Agabay Soltanov and others, in addition to the correct expression of the multifaceted and characteristic features of the images, the artist managed to show the subtle laughter-provoking aspects of these images (*Figure 5*).

Within the framework of “Molla Nasreddin” – 100” jubilee events, with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, “Molla Nasreddin and Mollanasreddinchilar” in the building of the National Library of Azerbaijan named after M.F. Akhundov, “Molla Nasreddin – 100” in the exhibition hall of the Union of Azerbaijan Artists named after V. Samadova, Social Republic of Azerbaijan together with the Defense Fund, caricature exhibitions called “Modern Azerbaijan Caricature” were organised in the main building of the fund (*Molla Nasreddin... , 2006; Molla Nasreddin – 100, 2007; Modern Azerbaijani Caricature, 2006*).

In the exhibition “Molla Nasreddin and Mollanesreddinchilar” by Bayram Hajizade under the title “We, 100 years ago and today,” “I melted and turned into dust from carrying the pain of the poor nation...,” “Why does this nation put a strange hat on its head,” “Schools in Karabakh district,” the series of cartoons entitled “Our Piers” and “Our Clothes Yesterday and Today” were shown. In these paintings, it is clear that the author is closely familiar with the national mentality of the people and knows its characteristics in depth. In these works, the artist criticizes ignorance, illiteracy, the indifference of the “fathers of the nation” to this state of the people with sharp and revealing satire. B. Hajizade, who illuminates the real truths of the era in his caricatures infused with bitter laughter, highlights the importance of removing these clothes and compares what has been lost and what has been gained in the last hundred years. The artist, who mainly creates plastic figures and forms by means of wide, black contour lines, is known as the author of caricatures distinguished by his artistic aesthetic level and high professionalism.

A series of caricatures by B. Hajizade under the title “New Year’s Wishes” were also shown at the exhibition. Among these cartoons are “Let All Grievances Be Reconciled,” “Let the Officials Solve All the Problems of the Citizens,” “Let the Salaries of Teachers and Doctors Increase So Much That They Don’t Even Think about Bribery,” “Since There Is No Crime, the

Police Officers Should Finally Start Reading,” “Let Us Have Gas, Water and Electricity Even in Winter,” “Let All Our Citizens Be Employed” and other such paintings, the author actually brought up the dreams with subtle humor. The plastic solution of contours typical of the artist’s graphics, the delicate processing of forms, and the achievement of an interesting light-shadow effect by hatching are revealed as a unique aspect of these caricatures, making the presented works attractive (*Molla Nasreddin...*, 2006).

At the exhibition, Vafa Allahyarova presented the cartoons “Sabir’s New Goals” and presented them in a new and original interpretation, approaching the famous verses of the famous poet. Among the paintings of V. Allahyarova displayed in this exhibition, the caricatures, whose theme is fed by folklore and classical literary sources, but presented by the artist in a modern interpretation, attract attention. The processing of the themes “Crow and Fox,” “Fitna,” “Mashadi Ibad,” “Rooster,” “Molla Nasreddin” from a new point of view and from an original point of view is particularly interesting in terms of the graphic style individuality of the artist, the resolution of images, and the expressive construction of the composition (*Special issue...*, 2005).

The caricatures of the artists participating in the “Molla Nasreddin – 100” exhibition, organized in the V. Samadova exhibition hall of the Union of Azerbaijan Artists, related to the jubilee theme, “Molla Nasreddin Today” stand out for their subtle humor and interesting interpretation. In these caricatures, the synthesis of oldness and modernity is presented in very subtle shades. E. Avalov’s “On the Bus,” “In the Hotel” and “Anna Karenina,” Y. Asadov’s “Ecology,” “Mugham Player” and “Thoughts,” H. Nasiroglu’s “In the Desert,” “Press,” “Police,” E. Mirzayev’s “Operation,” “Seller” and “Opening of the Exhibition,” “Molla in the Hospital” by V. Allahyarova, “The New Boss,” “Masks” and “Military Rules” by N. Salmanova, “On the Tribune”, “In Prison”, K. Abdin’s “In Front of the Mirror,” “Thief” and “Burial of the hammer,” Tofiq Mammadov’s “Driver,” “In Front of the Microphone” and “Toward the Top,” B. Gasimov’s “Dutiful,” “Girl with veil” and “Birth house” caricatures are also great was successfully demonstrated. In the caricature “Press” by the young artist R. Huseynli displayed at the exhibition, the tearing of the white angel mask of the black devil with the help of a pen with “Press” written on it is depicted. The author, who created an interesting composition on the contrast of two contrasting colors, managed to bring his original and expressive work to the attention of the audience using local colours.

It is worth noting that, in general, these exhibitions were a successful step in the direction of visual reflection of artists’ achievements. In the drawings of caricaturists displayed in these exhibitions, the development prospects of modern caricature, its adherence to national traditions, the wealth of conventional and laconic means of expression, the approach to metaphor, grotesque, satire, and humor in terms of modern requirements were professionally shown. At this event, “Bayram Hajizade, Yavar Asadov, Bulud Gasimov, Elman Mirzayev, Bayram Gasimkhanli and Vafa Allahyarova were awarded honorary diplomas by the Azerbaijan Union of Caricature Artists for their services in the promotion and development of Azerbaijani caricature art.”

Azerbaijan Ministry of Culture on April 7, 2007 at the Azerbaijan State Art Academy “Molla Nasreddin – 100”, on April 20 of the same year together with the satirical film-magazine “Mozalan,” “This Is Us” at the Museum Center, 2008 – “Followers of Azimzade” in the A. Azimzade house museum in 2009, “Azerbaijani Caricature Yesterday and Today” in the

exhibition hall named after S. Bahlulzade, “Oil and Caricature” dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the signing of the “Deal of the Century” oil contract in 2009, “Artist and Caricature” dedicated to the 130th anniversary of A. Azimzade’s birth in 2012, “No to Drugs!” with the support of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2012 named exhibitions were successfully held (*No to Drugs, 2012; Followers..., 2010; Aliyev, 2011*). Along with experienced artists, teachers and students of the Academy successfully performed at the “Molla Nasreddin – 100” caricature exhibition held in the building of the Azerbaijan State Art Academy. It was not by chance that political, social, household, especially ecology and press topics were widely covered in the exhibition. This trend was primarily related to the relevance of environmental pollution, freedom of speech and opinion and social problems in around the world. The exhibition includes S. Suleymanova’s “Singer” and “Diet,” S. Gasimov’s “Exhibition” and “Palma,” T. Aghayeva’s “Turtle and Sheath” an “Treatment,” I. Ismayilova’s “Artist” and “Pipe Sound,” E. Karimov’s “Ostrich” and “Themida,” G. Ahmadova’s “Fire Boiler” and “The Devil,” R. Guliyev’s “In the Metro” and “Rain,” A. Huseynov’s “The Situation in the Press” and “A Worker is Required,” R. Aliyev’s “Death Is Near” and “Help,” M. Aslanova’s “Traffic” and “New Buildings,” F. Ismayilov’s “Parrot” and “Fisherman,” L. Salamova’s “Taxi” and “North,” R. Hasanova’s “Friendly family” and “The Beggar,” E. Gasimov’s “Repair Closed” and “I’m Late,” N. Huseynov’s “Mine Searcher” and “SOS” and other cartoons are chosen for their approach to the problem from an interesting aspect. People’s artist of Azerbaijan, professor Yusif Huseynov writes about the exhibition: “Molla Nasreddin – 100” exhibition held at the Azerbaijan State Art Academy is of great importance for every caricature lover. Students and teachers of academy also participated in this exhibition. Happily, the cartoons shown here are remembered as serious works of art in the truest sense of the word. It should be said that each of these paintings is valuable as a result of the enthusiastic and diligent work of teachers and students. It is no coincidence that B. Hajizade’s book “Azerbaijani Caricature Yesterday and Today” was presented to the exhibition participants. The organiser of the exhibition, my former student Bayram Hajizade, is pleased with the goal-oriented activity and achievements in the direction of recognition and promotion of Azerbaijani caricature art. I wish Bayram Hajizade and all the artists who wish to revive this field new works of art with a topical theme and distinguished by their high professionalism (*Soltan Soltanli, 2018*).

These exhibitions, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the publication of “Molla Nasreddin” magazine, the first and only satirical magazine in the entire Muslim East, as well as the anniversaries of well-known personalities, historical and state-important events, naturally, first of all, the national respect for the “Molla Nasreddin” school, caricature traditions, these preserving traditions should be considered as an important step in the direction of promoting this art in modern times. Each organised exhibition is important in the recognition of this genre in society, especially among young people, and as a result, it serves to expand the creative possibilities of artists, the scope of activity, and the full opening of their potential. With the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan and the Federation of International Caricature Organizations, and the organisation of the Union of Cartoonists of Azerbaijan, the international caricature competition “Molla Nasreddin – Azerbaijan” is organised every year in Azerbaijan, which creates opportunities for artists to demonstrate their creative abilities. Hundreds of artists and well-known caricaturists

from about 60 countries participate in this competition every year it's tirak. "Molla Nasreddin – Azerbaijan" caricature competition, dedicated to important events and significant days in the socio-political and cultural life of the republic, received international status from the first day. "Molla Nasreddin – Azerbaijan" international caricature competition, which has gained great reputation in the world of caricature in a short time, was evaluated by FECO in 2008 with the biggest award – five stars due to the transparency and objectivity of voting, and the high level of organizational issues (*We and Caricature, 2006, No. 1; We and Caricature, 2006, No. 3*).

It is no coincidence that the "Molla Nasreddin – Azerbaijan" international caricature competition announced in 2013 "No to Separatism and Occupation!" held under the title Hundreds of artists who participated in this international competition expressed their "No!" to the occupation of lands, the injustice and injustice faced by people raised their voices. To promote and recognize modern Azerbaijani caricature, exhibitions, presentations of new publications, meetings with well-known caricaturists were held in different cities of Israel, Spain, Greece, Serbia, Belarus, Hungary, as well as Ukraine, Turkey, Iran. At these events, cartoons depicting the problems of the world and Azerbaijan, war, terrorism, aggression, the occupation of lands, the injustices faced by people, "End the occupation!", separatism and extremism were shown, and the right voice of people was conveyed to the international community. The words of the president of the International Federation of Cartoonists' Organizations, Mr. Peter Nieuwendijk, who got acquainted with the cartoons of Azerbaijani artists at these exhibitions, are also very valuable when expressing his opinion on the works of Azerbaijani cartoonists: "This is a collection of masterpieces! Caricatures of Azerbaijani artists are drawn in the "international language" style. None of the works need explanation. They themselves speak." (*Aliyev, 2018; Hajiżade, 2009*) The opinion of the famous cartoonist is clear and objective. Indeed, the creativity of caricaturists in the 21st century is marked by the variety of topics, the search for innovation, the use of the achievements of progressive world caricature, the development of classical style features based on national traditions, and the active participation and success of artists in international competitions and exhibitions.

Conclusions

In the 21st century, in the caricatures of Azerbaijani artists displayed in international contests and exhibitions, encounter the trend of renewing the topicality of the topic, the spirit of internationalism, and the approach to the problem.

Azerbaijani artists, who are constantly searching for creative expression, the inexhaustible perspectives of satirical graphics, the options for depicting images and the limit of the grotesque, the artistic aesthetic aspect of caricature and the description of its revealing effect, have worked successfully in the direction of the recognition and promotion of Azerbaijani caricature in the international world, and have been effective in achieving higher achievements have acted.

The successes and achievements of Azerbaijani artists-journalists, who have benefited from the development prospects of modern caricature, can be evaluated as the success of modern Azerbaijani caricature in general. In the creativity of Azerbaijani artists, who properly represent modern Azerbaijani caricature in the international world, the richness of conventional and laconic means of expression, the approach to metaphor, grotesque, satire and humor in terms of modern requirements is clearly manifested.

The intensive development of Azerbaijani caricature in modern times has proven that it has deep artistic traditions in this field, and its ability to make worthy contributions to the development of world caricature art. Modern Azerbaijani caricature, which includes the principles of nationality, statehood, peoplehood, as well as modernity and internationalism, has become an integral part of world visual art.

The success of the works of Azerbaijani artists shown in this scientific research work and their wide range of activities suggests that this topic will be an area that will be addressed and researched by art critics in the future.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Appendix



Figure 1. Hafız Nasiroğlu – “Aydin Dogan” international cartoon competition (17 *Aydn...*, 2016)



Figure 2. Rashid Sharif – “Aydin Dogan” international cartoon competition (16 *Aydn...*, 2016)



Figure 3. Bayram Hajizade – “Leng-Mu” international caricature competition – 2005 (*Prizes*, 2007)



Figure 4. Bayram Hajizade – “Davenport” international caricature competition – 2009 (*Prizes*, 2007)

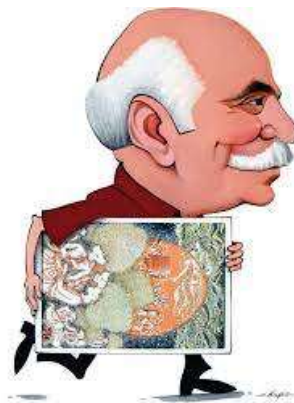


Figure 5. Hafız Nasiroğlu – “Arif Huseynov” (*World Art 2011, n.d.*)