

## FLOW: Central Asian Video Art Programme

### Week Three Programme (2020s, part 1) 11-14 December 2025

#### Screening List:

- *The prayer of a thousand horse riders*, Said Atabekov, 2024, 38'02.
- *In order to see birds, it is necessary to become a part of the silence*, Gaisha Madanova, 2020, 16'21.
- *Bibi Seshanbe*, Saodat Ismailova, 2022, 53'29.

#### Additional Information/Artists Notes

**Said Atabekov** (b. 1965, Bes-Terek, Uzbekistan. Lives and works in Shymkent, Kazakhstan)

*The prayer of a thousand horse riders*, 2024

Atabekov's video turns to the symbolic universe of **Kokpar**, the traditional Kazakh equestrian game that crystallises the ethos of the steppe. Rather than focusing solely on the spectacle of the sport itself, the work centres the women who surround it - the wives of the riders - whose labour, care, and emotional endurance remain largely invisible in a male-dominated ritual. Attentive to their routines and unacknowledged responsibilities, the video opens up questions about the gendered structures that sustain cultural heritage and the intergenerational transmission of values. In doing so, Atabekov situates Kokpar within broader meditations on collective memory, shifting notions of national identity, and the negotiation between tradition and contemporary life. The work becomes a space for contemplation, asking viewers to consider how past, present, and future continue to shape one another in a community navigating change.

**Gaisha Madanova** (b. 1987, Alma-Ata, KazSSR. Lives and works Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Berlin (Germany))

*In order to see birds, it is necessary to become a part of the silence*, 2020

The starting point for this work was the 12th-century epic poem *The Conference of the Birds* by the Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar. The poem follows a group of birds on a mythical journey through seven valleys in search of knowledge and truth. Reflecting on its philosophical exploration of self-discovery, I created a two-chapter composition accompanied by a room intervention and the room installation with a video work. This room installation brings together my recurring motif of the bird with a video work created by returning to visual

materials recorded across different years. The footage in the video is treated not as archival material, but as a terrain shaped by shifting perceptions. Through displacement, interruption, and recombination, the images undergo a quiet transformation: they shed the weight of linear time and begin to function as charged particles, evolving into a kind of inner landscape where fragments detach from their original contexts and assume a symbolic, dreamlike logic. They acquire a presence that is neither fixed nor fully decipherable, creating a space where perception itself becomes an active, searching process. This transformation echoes the poem *The Conference of the Birds*, where the journey becomes a metaphor for dissolving the self and encountering new forms of meanings. The video work invites the viewer into a state of contemplative uncertainty, asking to linger in the thresholds where fragments loosen from their identities and gesture toward something more fluid and mutable. It becomes a space where perception slows down enough to let these changes register — a place where the familiar can become unfamiliar again, opening the way to a more attentive and reflective experience.

**Saodat Ismailova** (b. in 1981, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, works between Tashkent and Paris)

*Bibi Seshanbe, 2022*

Bibi Seshnabe Ona (uzb) “The Lady of Tuesday” – is a blessing ritual in Central Asia that venerates an ancient female goddess and protectoress. It incorporates elements of animalism, Zoroastrianism within a story comparable to European Cinderella. The film weaves together elements of fairytale, documentation of existing ritual and a presence of contemporary “Lady of Tuesday” who is portrayed through Bibisora Oripova a burn surgeon from Samarkand, who has founded a shelter to support women who lived domestic violence, a subject that stays unspoken in the country.