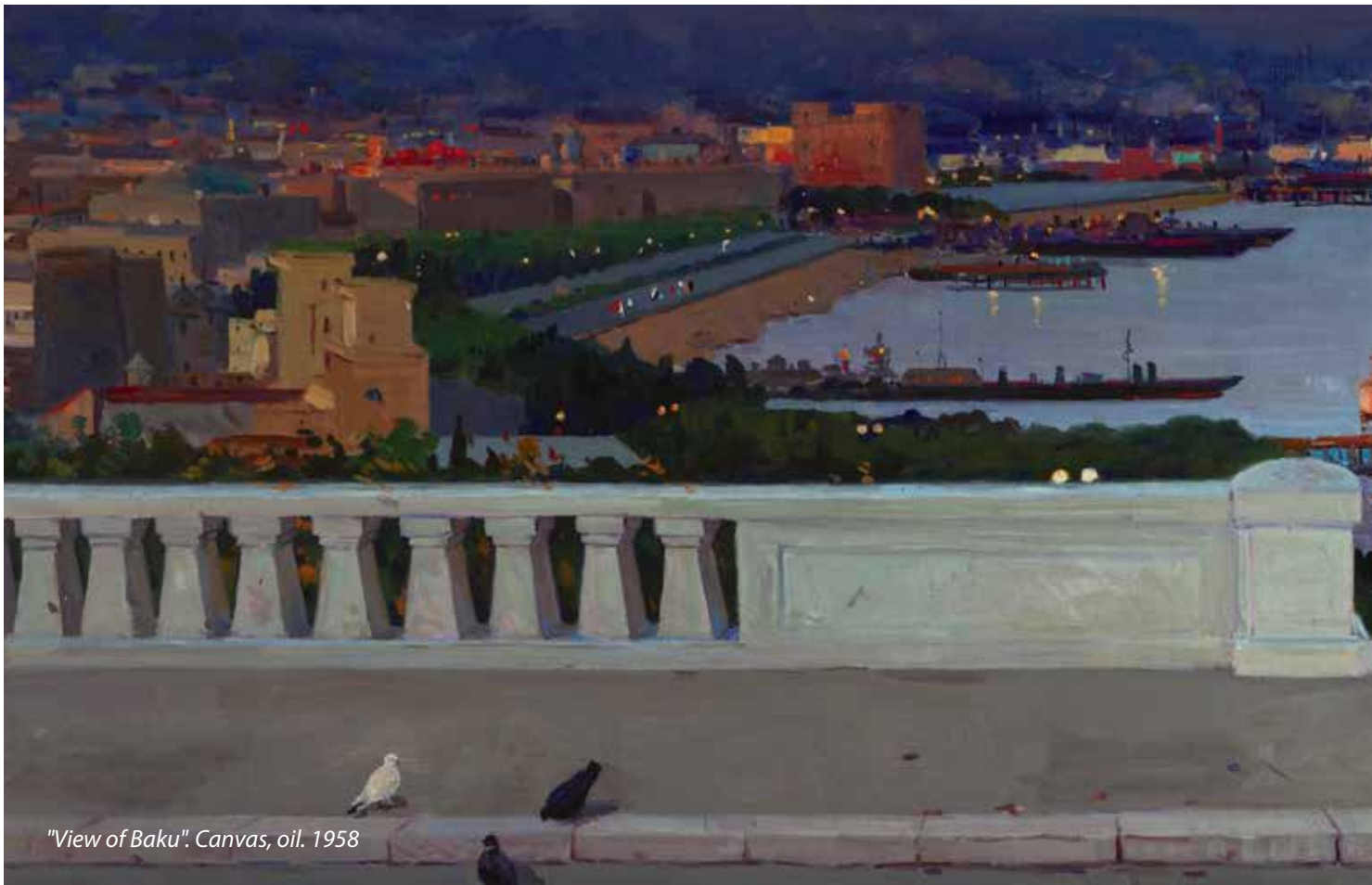




"View of Baku". Canvas, oil. 1958

By Yegana MOVSUMOVA

THE ARTIST'S WORLD

One of the prominent representatives of Azerbaijani fine art, Jahangir Rustamov has made a significant contribution to the development of painting and graphics, and, thus, inscribed his name in the history of national culture.

Jahangir Mahmud oglu Rustamov was born in the Azerbaijani city of Nukha (now Sheki) on March 5, 1926. After completing seven years of school, he went to Baku and entered the A. Azimzade Azerbaijan State Art School, the alma mater of the vast majority of prominent Azerbaijani masters of the brush. Within the walls

of the school, where his first mentors were such remarkable artists as Sattar Bahlulzada and Baba Aliyev, he acquired the basic skills of fine art. Later, J. Rustamov noted, *"I owe all my success in the field of artistic creativity to my first teachers... From them, I learned to see the world through the eyes of an artist, to plan the beginning and end of any work in advance, and to endure the hardships of difficult work."*

Having successfully graduated from college in 1944, the young Jahangir entered the Surikov Moscow State Art Institute. However, for reasons beyond his control,



he was forced to interrupt his studies and return to Baku: his brother was drafted into the army and sent to the front, leaving the family without support. Despite all the difficulties he faced during this period, Jahangir remained true to his passion for art and continued to create.

Rustamov's creative path was challenging, but the difficulties did not make him abandon his work. The young artist's early career was marked by a search for novelty, and this quest was often associated with great physical and mental strain. Over the course of thirty years of independent creative work, the artist produced works on a wide range of themes. Along with multi-figure compositions on historical and revolutionary themes, we see paintings depicting scenes of labor, celebration, leisure, and everyday life, as well as landscapes, still lifes, and portraits. In all the genres he explored, the artist remained true to his signature style and realism.

Jahangir Rustamov is a self-made artist. His creative path began during and largely under the influence of the Great Patriotic War (World War II). It was during this time that the young artist's individual style emerged, which is

evident in such works as "Meeting the Hero" (1946), "The Last German" (1948), "The Unveiling of the Statue of Nizami in Kirovabad" (1949), "Cotton Harvesting" (1949), "Heroes of Socialist Labor in a Cotton Field" (1949), "The Portrait of Oil Worker Yusif Agayev" (1949).

Rustamov's work is characterized by a heightened focus on women's labor. During his creative trips and visits to various parts of the republic, the artist paid particular attention to working women, and, based on these observations, created a series of paintings, including "The Vineyard", "Tea Pickers", "Field Workers", "Collective Farm Women", "In the Mountains", and "Baku", which are distinguished by their national flavor, lyricism, and emotionality. Also noteworthy is the triptych "In My Native Land". The painting "Tea Pickers", which is considered one of the artist's finest works, depicts young women walking with baskets full of tea. The key features of this work are its compositional simplicity and rhythmic flexibility. This work, like paintings such as "Field Workers" and "Collective Farm Women", is characterized by an extremely realistic depiction of female characters wearing brightly colored clothing, with pleasing facial

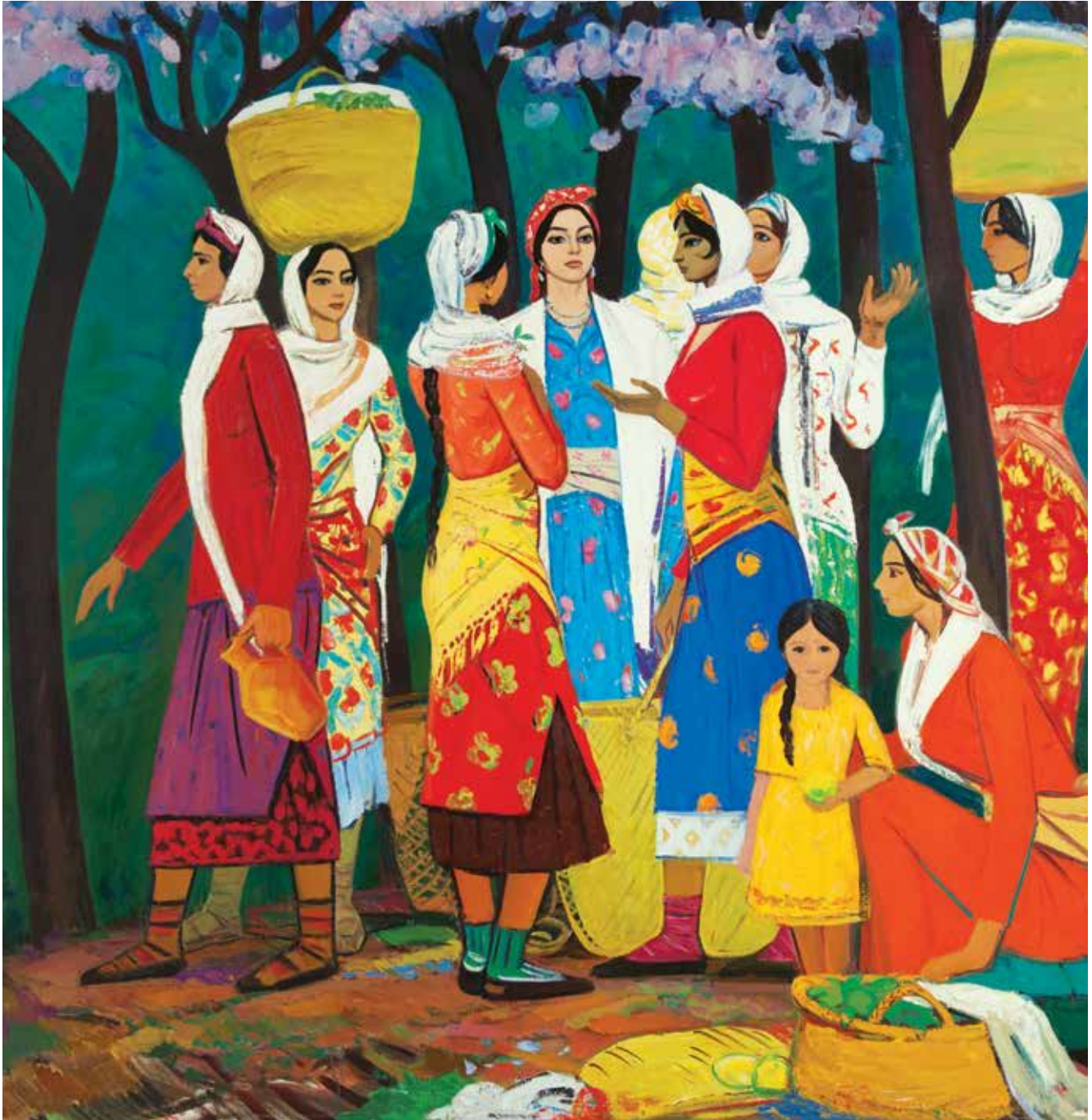


"A little helper". Canvas, oil. 1955



"Hero of Socialist Labor Zaki Shukurov". Canvas, oil. 1958

"Field workers". Canvas, oil. 1972



features, and set against a landscape of a picturesque plantation. In the painting "The Vineyard", the tired faces of female characters lend even more credibility to the labor-intensive subject matter, while the vibrant clothing adds a special touch. The cheerful colors, as well as the setting of the scene against a sunset, testify to the artist's expanding arsenal of artistic expression.

Among the artist's paintings on everyday themes, "Family Joy" (1958) and "First Poems" (1967) are consid-

ered to be the most successful. These works contain details that constitute the artist's unique signature. In his "First Poems", we see a grandfather sitting in the courtyard at the entrance to a house, before whom his granddaughter, standing upright on a chair, recites poetry. In the background, the author depicts the girl's father and mother, smiling at their daughter. The artist masterfully conveys the deep psychological bonds between the characters in the painting. "Family Joy" also has just a

"Vineyard". Canvas, oil. 1982

few characters, but there is a profound psychological subtext behind. This painting, along with a number of other works by the artist, was presented at an exhibition of Azerbaijani literature and art in Moscow in 1958.

In the 1950s, the genre of portraiture occupied an important place in J. Rustamov's work. His most successful works in this genre, including "Hero of Socialist

Labor Zeki Shukurov" (1958) and "Worker of the 'Astra' Subtropical State Farm Fatma Huseynova" (1959), were successfully displayed at an exhibition of Transcaucasian artists in Baku in 1959.

The 1960s saw a significant revival in Jahangir Rustamov's creative output, expanding the subject matter and diversity of his works. His travels to various

Jahangir Rustamov in his workshop. 1966



parts of Azerbaijan, as well as to neighboring republics and foreign countries, had a beneficial impact on his work. In 1961, as part of a group of Soviet artists, he traveled to France and Tunisia. In France, the artist observed the lifestyle of Paris and several other cities, visited the Louvre and other museums, and explored architec-

tural monuments. The creative fruits of his time in this country were the paintings "Students", "The Louvre", and others. The first, while simple in subject matter, is distinguished by its emotional imagery. A trip to Tunisia left a strong impression on the artist, where he was inspired by the enthusiasm of a people who had gained inde-



"Shahdag". Canvas, oil. 1970

"Years of war". Canvas, oil. 1978

pendence and were building a new free life. During this trip, the paintings "You Must Draw," "Girls from Kairouan", and "Near Carthage" appeared, in which the landscape, architectural monuments, everyday scenes, and individual characters are distinguished by their expressiveness.

Upon returning to his homeland, the artist began traveling throughout Azerbaijan, creating landscape paintings. In these works, he sought to convey the viewer's natural beauty through a harmony of colors. Among J. Rustamov's best works in the landscape genre are "Shahdag", "Pirshagi Dachas", "Awakening of the Earth", "Sunset Panorama", and "Agridag". In "Shahdag", depicting a mountain peak in northern Azerbaijan popular as a vacation spot, the somewhat cold mountain landscape is balanced by the warmth of the vibrant green alpine meadows, resulting in a composition that is truly pleasing to the eye. In his picture "Awakening of the Earth", the artist, through skillfully selected color, managed to convey the unique atmosphere of the arrival of spring.

Jahangir Rustamov frequently participated in exhibitions held both domestically and internationally. In

1945, he featured his painting "The Last Enemy Soldier" in the national art exhibition. In 1953, his final exhibition was held in Baku. In 1955, he was admitted into the USSR Union of Artists and awarded a diploma and a special Komsomol badge "For the best development of children's theme". In 1962, his exhibition "Paris – Tunisia" was held in Baku, and in 1973, a final exhibition was held at the Nizami collective farm in Astara district of Azerbaijan. In 1979, J. Rustamov's works were exhibited at international exhibitions of Azerbaijani artists. His paintings have also been successfully exhibited in a number of countries and are currently held in the collections of many museums and art galleries. In 1982, J. Rustamov was awarded the title of an Honored Artist of the Azerbaijan SSR, and in 2002 the title of People's Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the same year, his solo exhibition was held in Baku. In 2004, he was awarded a personal pension from the President of Azerbaijan.

The prominent representative of the realistic movement in Azerbaijani fine art, Jahangir Rustamov, died in 2007. 🌟