

## *Interior Description*

Although there is no actual prohibition in the Koran against depicting human or animal forms, from the 8<sup>th</sup> century on the commandment against graven images was taken to mean that man should not create figural art. It was believed that because God, or Allah, had created the world, man and animals, it was forbidden to attempt to match God by creating artistic figural images. It was also believed that God is the only one who can create something perfect, and in order not to offend God, there should always be a small mistake made deliberately by the artist in decorative work. These design ideas persist to the present and are seen in rugs, pottery, wall hangings, paintings and building design.

The Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse was designed and built in a non-sectarian country, at the end of the Soviet Period, by artists and craftspeople who were diverse in their religious ideologies or lack of them.

Images of flowers or foliage and simplified repeating forms as well as stylized calligraphy are used as decorative elements in the design of the wood, plaster and tile features of the Teahouse.

### **Coffered Ceiling**

The intricate coffered ceiling of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse is much like ceilings found in Tajik teahouses today. The Isfara and Khujand Teahouses have features that are similar to those in the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse. In fact, some of the same workmen who built the Khujand ceiling also worked on the Boulder ceiling.



Fig.72 Khujand Teahouse Ceiling.

Roger Kovacs Photo, myopera.com

*Like the Isfara ceiling, the Khujand Teahouse ceiling has elements that were modified in the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse, such as the color scheme and the octagonal domed areas of the coffers. This color scheme is more pastel than Boulder's, which features more primary colors and appears to be brighter. In the Boulder ceiling, there are three coffers with octagonal domes.*

The ceiling of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse is composed of fourteen beautiful wooden ceiling coffers, and each one is a unique design. All the carving was done by hand. No electric power tools were used in the construction of the ceiling. The brilliant colored trim was painted by hand. Three coffers have an octagonal dome element (#3,#8, #10). They are not seen in this drawing as they are not structural but are purely ornamental.

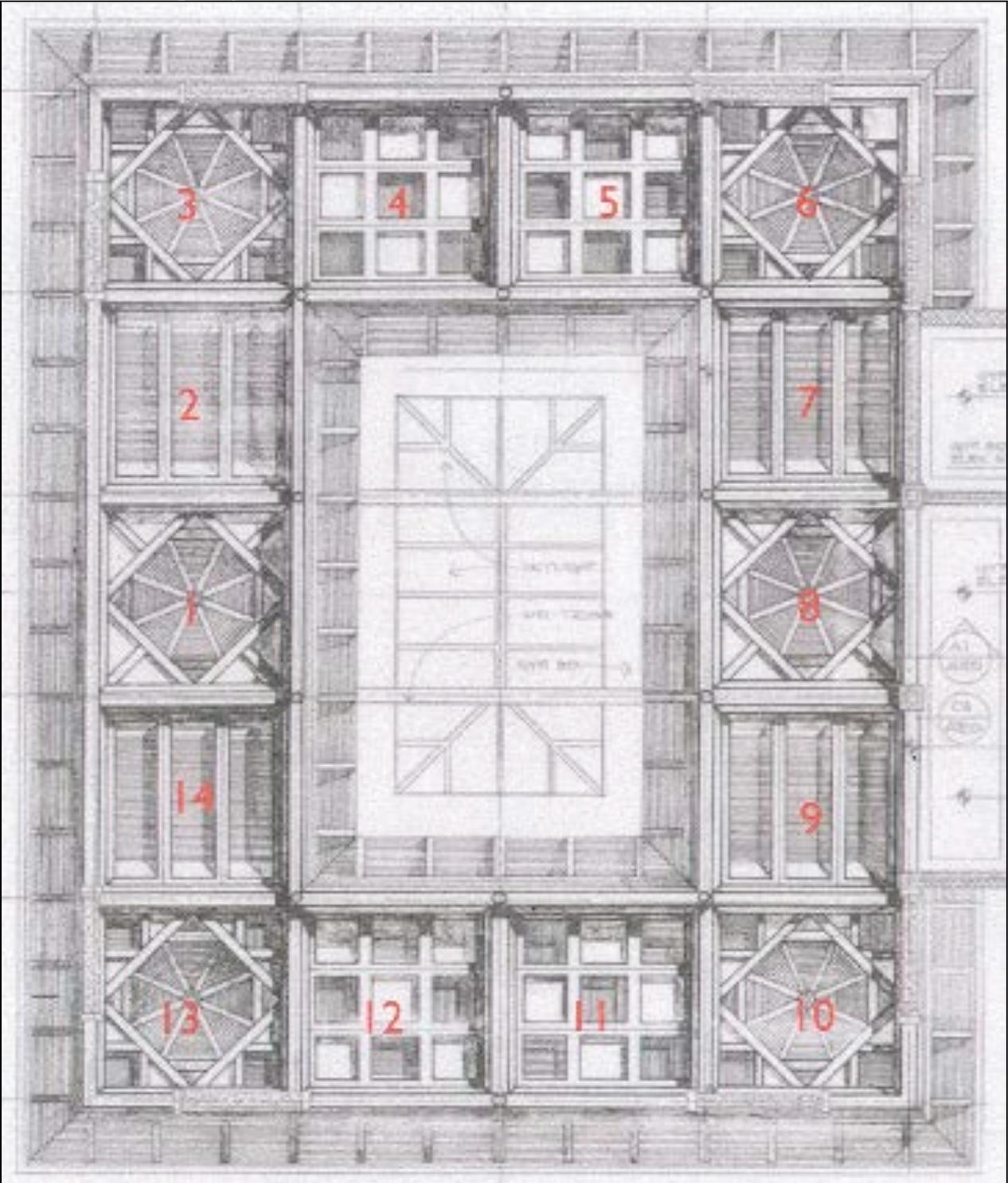


Fig.73 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse, Annotated Partial Plan A120, Reflected Ceiling Plan, Vern Seieroe, AIA, Architect (north is up on drawing)  
*The coffers are numbered clockwise from the entrance, #1, and fit together like one giant wooden puzzle. This plan also shows the position of the skylight.*

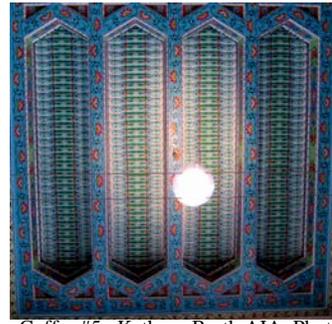
Coffer photos correspond to the above plan. North is up on both drawing and photo layout.



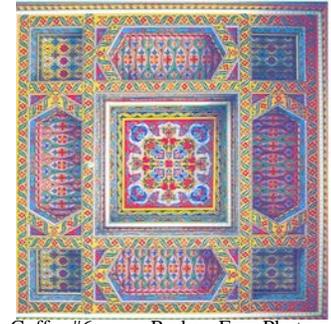
Coffer #3 Rodger Ewy Photo



Coffer #4 Rodger Ewy Photo



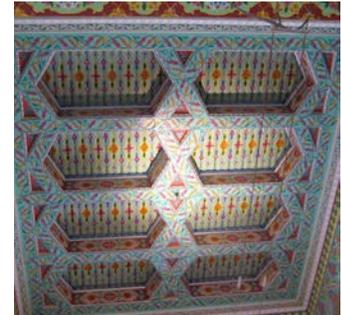
Coffer #5 Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo



Coffer #6 Rodger Ewy Photo



Coffer #2 Rodger Ewy Photo



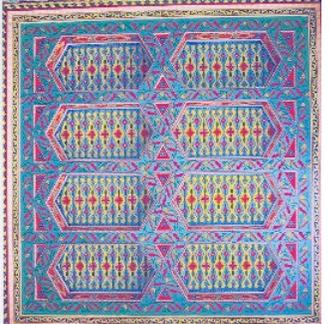
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Coffer #1 Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo



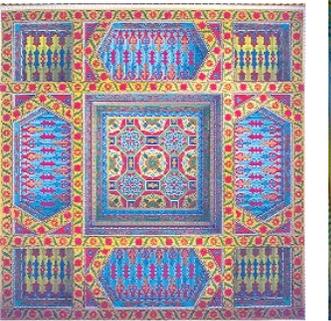
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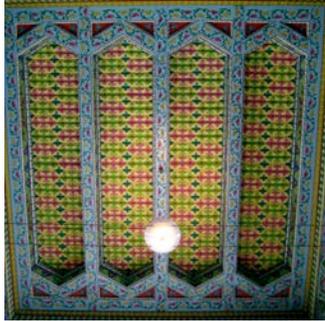
Coffer #14 Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo



Coffer #9 Rodger Ewy Photo



Coffer #13 Rodger Ewy Photo



Coffer #12 Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo



Coffer #11 Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo



Coffer #10 Rodger Ewy Photo

Fig.74 Photo layout of the Ceiling coffers

Rodger Ewy and Kathryn Barth Photos

*Uniquely designed, carved and painted coffers combine to make a stunning focus for the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.*

## Wood Columns

Throughout the long history of Central Asia, wood columns, while serving a structural function, have often been ornamental features of the indigenous architecture. Intricately carved slender columns, often from a single tree, are found in mosques and reach up towards the heavens, resembling a grove of trees.

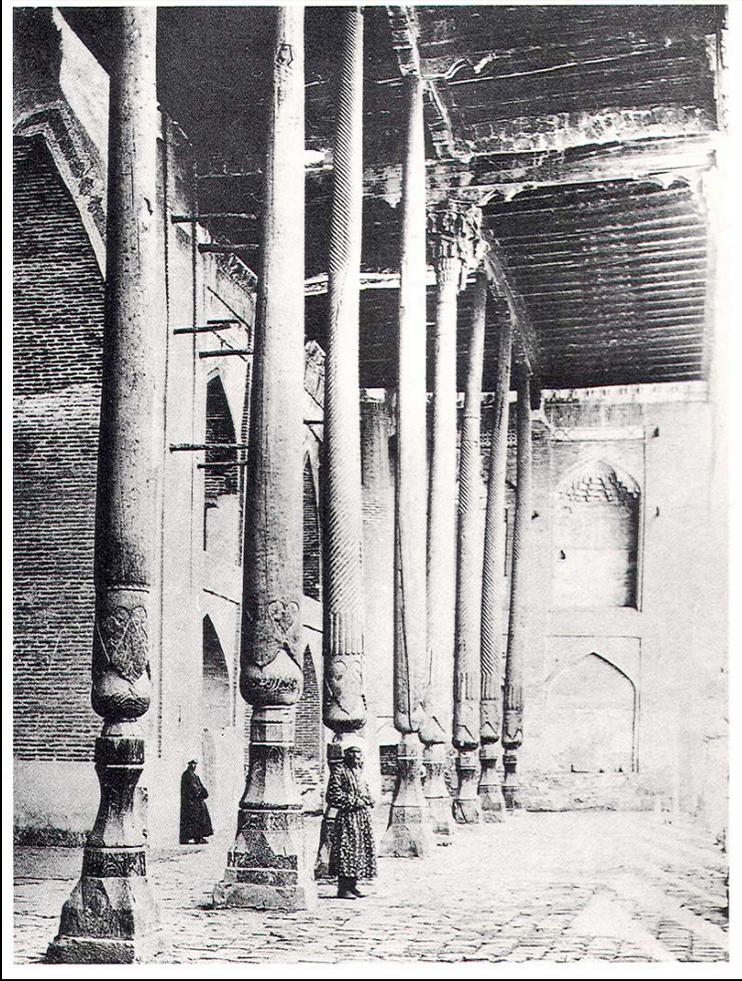


Fig.75 Slender Columns, Bukhara, 1900

Uzbekistan, Heirs to the Silk Road

*These very tall and slender monolith columns were carved from one perfect tree, at a time when there were more trees in the Tajikistan area. In the late 1980s, when trees for the columns of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse were procured, it was necessary to go to the Lake Baikal region in the USSR to find appropriate trees.*



Fig.76 Columns, of Mosque, 12<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> C

Uzbekistan, Heirs to the Silk Road

*This forest of columns reached to the heavens and signified Eternity. Slender columns similar to these are features of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.*

Design features similar to those found on historic Tajik columns are seen in the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse's fourteen hand-carved cedar columns. Because no cedar trees remained in Tajikistan in

the 1980s, an appeal was made to Moscow and a military “emergency” was declared and the trees were brought from Lake Baikal in Siberia to be carved into columns.<sup>59</sup>



Fig.77. View to North, Interior Columns K.Barth, AIA, Photo Fig.78 View to East, Interior Columns K.Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Intricately hand-carved columns divide the space of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse for tables and the fountain area.*



Fig.79 Columns and Skylight Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Slender columns support the interior fascia and cornice surrounding the skylight opening.*

The photos below show the delicate, hand-carved details of the column in the south bay window, including a mother bird feeding her baby. A similar detail of a Peacock is found in the north window.

<sup>59</sup> The Meaning of the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse, George Peknik, 2004, Hoopoe Publications, pg. 14.



Fig.80 The top of Column Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo



Fig.81 Upper Shaft of the Column Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo



Fig.82 Lower shaft of Column Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo



Fig.83 Column Base Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*A mother bird feeds her baby at the top of this column with vertical fluting leading to circles, ovals and leaf-like forms.*

*Carving these lovely, delicate details was done entirely by hand and without the aid of modern computer technology.*

## Ganch-Kori Plaster Panels

“The Dushanbe teahouse will hold more than 2,000 years of history when the plaster carvings of Abdoukodir Rakhimov grace the walls of the gift from Boulder’s Sister City.” “What separates Rakhimov from other plaster carvers is the time he takes to carve the intricate designs... by hand”.<sup>60</sup>



Fig.84 Kodir Rakimov designing and preparing decorative plaster panels. (Kodir with painting at top right) Vern Seieroe Photo  
*Plaster panels were poured in two layers and after Kodir designed and transferred the pattern to the plaster, he carved the panels entirely by hand with wood carving knives.*

In 1998 Kodir Rakhimov, a Master Tajik Carver, designed and created the Teahouse’s eight beautiful plaster panels, four of which frame his abstract expressionist paintings. First he drew a pattern of the overall design on a folded sheet of kraft paper with a pencil. When the design was complete he pierced the paper with tiny holes at about 3 centimeters apart along the lines of the design.

Molds were prepared for what was to become various panels to be joined to create the overall design composition. Wet plaster was poured into molds to a depth of about three centimeters. When the first layer was cured to a firm, but still damp condition, a second mold was placed on top of the first, and a second layer was poured to a depth of one centimeter.

Once the panel of plaster was cured to a dry, hard state and just before carving was to take place, the design was transferred to the panel. A cloth pouch, filled with powdered dry paint, was rubbed over the kraft paper and the powdered paint was forced through the holes. The resulting dots of paint marked the lines of the design. Kodir then used special wood carving knives that had been purchased in the United States to carve the outlined design into the first layer of plaster. When it was dry, the panel was polished. The designs of the panels conform in general to Islamic and Persian tradition and motifs with a modernist quality added into the creative expression.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Boulder Planet*, February 4, 1998

<sup>61</sup> Explanation of technique of ganch-kori plaster, Vern Seieroe, AIA, 2010



Fig.85 Pencil drawings by Kodir Rakhimov for Ganch-Kori panels Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Kodir Rakhimrov drew the intricate designs for all the white plaster panels in pencil on brown kraft paper. The design were based on leaves, flowers, and other natural forms.*



Fig. 86 Detail A Drawing with pin holes Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Closeup of drawing shows the pencil design and pin pricks.*

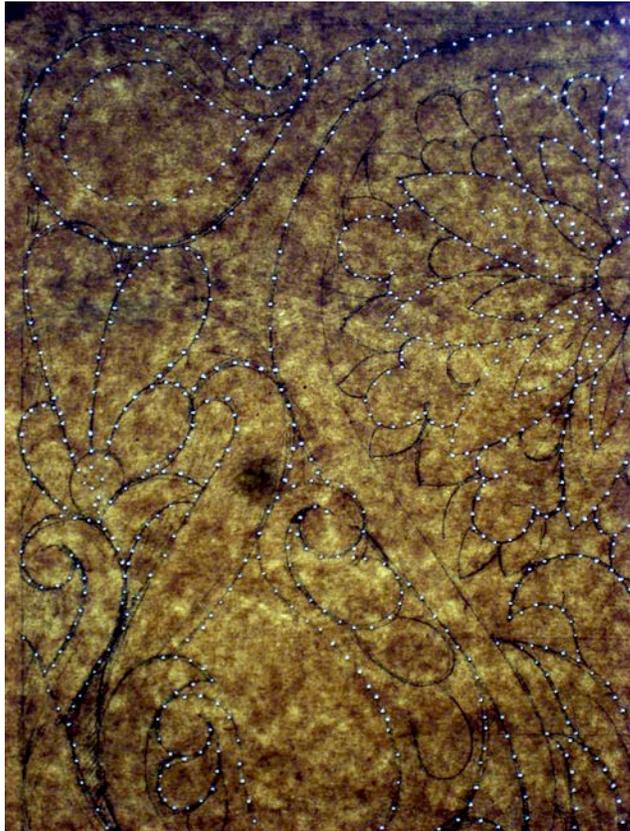


Fig.87 Detail A, light coming through holes Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Paint was forced through holes to mark design on the plaster.*

The plaster frames of the oil paintings and decorative carved plaster panels contain half hidden gazelles, lions, horses and various floral, arabesques and tree of life designs.

**Southwest Corner**



Fig.88 View to SW, Ganche-Kori frame for painting on left, Mirrored Kori-Ganche Panel on right Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo  
*A plaster framed painting and an intricate plaster panel with six mihrab shaped, mirrored arches and peacocks define this serene corner of the Teahouse.*



Fig.89 Detail, Ganche-Kori Frame of Painting Kathryn Barth,AIA  
*Words of wisdom are carved beneath each painting.*



Fig.90 Photo Detail of Dedication Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo  
*Honoring some of those who worked on the project.*

*Northwest Corner*



Fig.91 View to NW, Mirrored Ganche-Kori Panel on left, Ganche-Kori frame for painting on right  
 Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo  
*This plaster panel has more vertically proportioned upper arches than the SW corner. Both north corners have topchans.*



Fig.92 Detail of Dedication  
 Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Honoring some of those who worked on the project.*



Fig.93 Detail, Ganche-Kori Frame of Painting  
 Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo  
*Words of wisdom are carved beneath each painting.*

*Northeast Corner*



Fig.94 View to NE, Ganche-Kori frame for painting on left, Ganche-Kori Panel on right Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo  
*Compared to the SW and NW corners that have mirrored arches, this corner dining area seems more restrained or formal.*



Fig.95 Detail of Ganche-Kori Frame of Painting K.Barth,AIA, Photo  
*Words of wisdom are carved beneath each painting.*

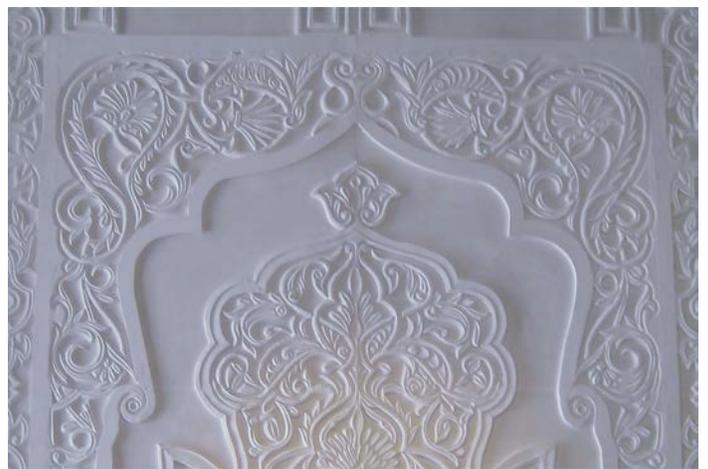


Fig.96 Detail of Ganche-Kori Plaster Design Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo  
*Kodir's master carving created an intricate design that invites contemplative viewing.*

## Southeast Corner



Fig.97 View to SE, Ganche-Kori Panel on left, Ganche-Kori frame for painting on right  
*This is the busiest corner of the Teahouse with all the activities of the bar.*

Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo



Fig.98 Detail of Ganche-Kori Plaster Design  
*Upon close examination, each of the flowers is slightly different.*

Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo



Fig.99 Detail, Ganche-Kori Frame  
*Words of wisdom are carved beneath each painting*

Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo

Because each panel and frame was uniquely designed and carved, they are very dynamic and invite careful viewing over and over.

## Oil Paintings

*“Rakhimov says that his abstract painting represents ‘Mother Earth’”*<sup>62</sup>

Kodir Rakhimov painted four abstract expressionist paintings of scenes of nature, with motifs of fish, fruit, and the sea. It was his intension, as well as that of Lado Shanidze, to combine traditional Tajik teahouse art forms with modern art.

When Kodir arrived in Boulder, Colorado in January 1998, he brought four oil paintings with him and presented the expressionistic paintings to the Sister Cities Committee and Vern Seieroe for their input. At the same time, he also presented potential designs for more traditional *suzani*, decorative colorful embroidered cloth panels, that alternatively could have been placed within the carved *ganche-kori* plaster panels. After much discussion, it was decided to use the expressionist paintings because Lado Shanidze’s overall design intent for the Teahouse was to create a gift that blended both the traditional and modern into one architecture.



Fig. 100 Suzaneh on display at Boulder Teahouse K.Barth,AIA Photo  
*A cheerful hand embroidered suzaneh brightens an area of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.*

Kodir’s paintings are “executed in an international style, rather than in a purely Tajik tradition. However, Kodir draws from several Tajik and Middle Eastern traditions in both his oil paintings and his carved plaster panels. . . Just as the Teahouse has allowed us to enter into the culture of a distant and sometimes exotic culture through the mystery and power of architecture, Kodir’s painting and carved plaster panels afford us a unique opportunity to explore Eastern culture through color, line, symbolism and even literature and poetry.”<sup>63</sup>

The paintings hang on the north and south walls, on the inside wall of the exterior tile panels.

<sup>62</sup> *Boulder Daily Camera*, January 14, 1998

<sup>63</sup> *The Meaning of the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse*. George Peknik, 2004, Hoopoe Publications, pg.24



Fig.101 Kodir Rakhimov painting, looking at the South wall, the East painting

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*This painting of purples with bright oranges and some pink, has abstract images of fish and the sea.*

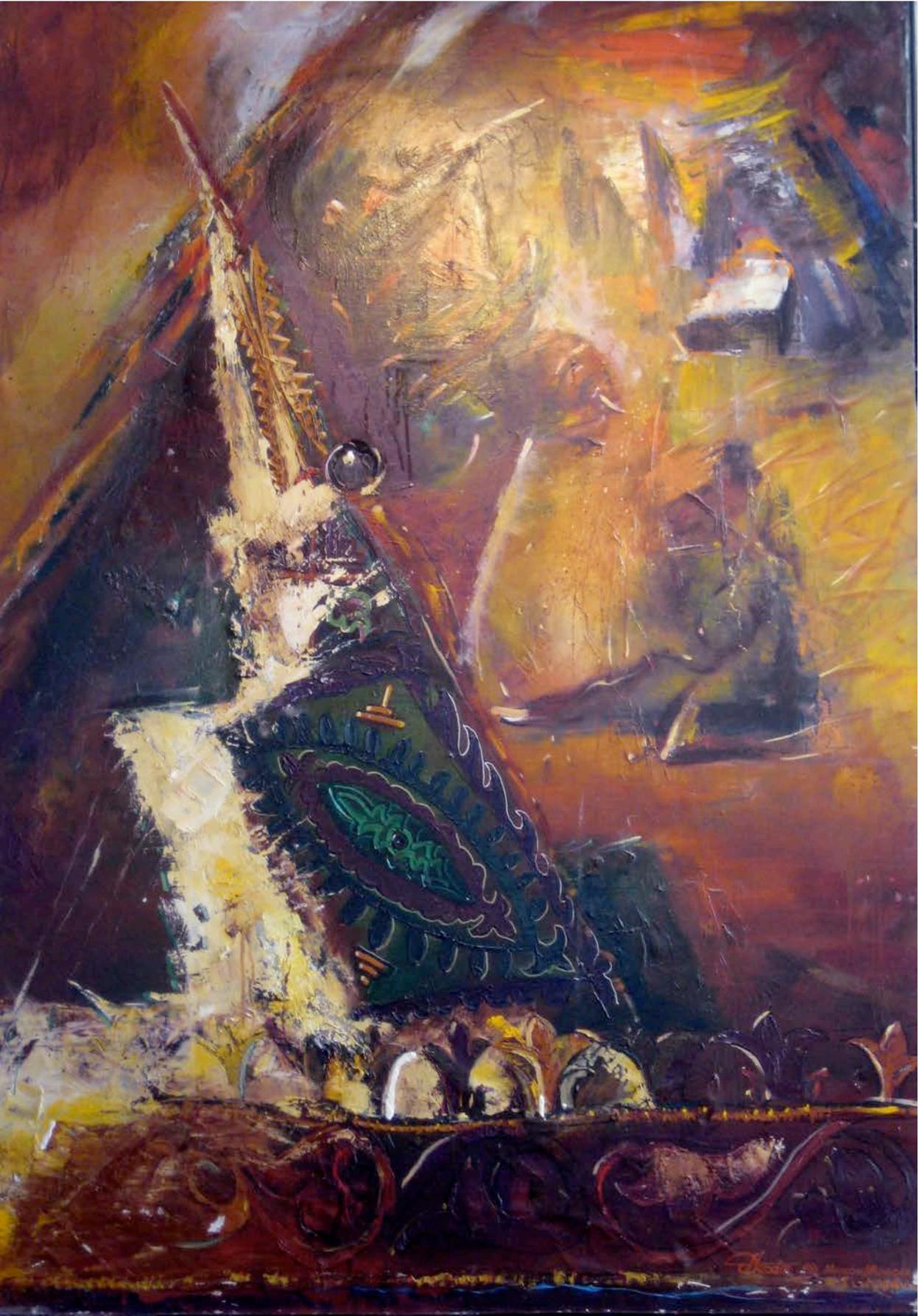


Fig.102 Kodir Rakhimov painting, looking at the South wall, the West painting

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*This painting, with green and bright splashes of yellows, has abstract images of the fish and the sea.*



Fig.103 Kodir Rakhimov painting, looking at the North wall, the West painting  
*This painting, with beautiful warm colors shades, has abstract images of the sea.*

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo



Fig.104 Kodir Rakhimov painting, looking at the North wall, the East painting

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*This painting, with beautiful pinks and green shades, has a watermelon as well as other abstract images.*

## Central Pool and Seven Beauties Sculptures



Fig.105 Sculpture grouping in central pool

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*A flowing, graceful composition of seven bronze sculptures fills the central pool (Hauz) of the Teahouse.*

Unlike pools in traditional Central Asian teahouses, Boulder's is not recessed into the floor for safety reasons. The pool is a raised hexagon with colorful tiles recessed in the corners. The tiles were designed and made in Boulder by Victor Zaboltikov who also designed and made the exterior tile panels.



Fig.106 Raised Concrete Pool K.Barth,AIA, Photo

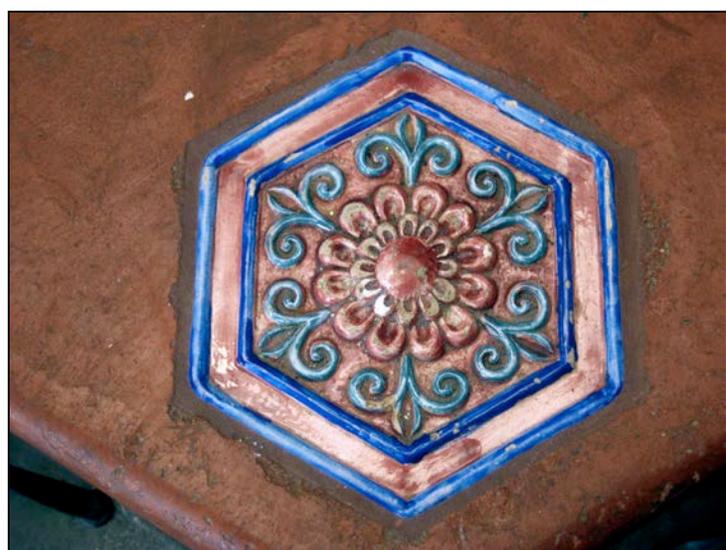


Fig.107 Detail of Corner Tile

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*Each corner of the pool is marked by a tile featuring a simple flower like those found in the exterior tile panels.*

Milan Milashevich created the "Seven Beauties" bronze sculpture, a composition of seven individual statues of beautiful young women playfully drawing water at a gurgling pool. The sculpture is based on a Persian poem, "Haft Paykar," written by Nazami Ganjavi, a native of Azerbaijan, in 1197AD.

The poem tells of seven princesses from the seven parts of the known world at that time that were brought to be brides of the pre-Islamic ruler, Bahram Gur. Each princess told Bahram Gur a story of love, morality, virtue or justice, which had lessons for life:

### **“The Seven Beauties Tales**

The tales are modern translations, and are not culturally Islamic. The following are summaries of the seven tales spun by the princesses....

#### **The Indian Beauty**

An Indian king hears of a town in China where everyone wears black. He visits it and meets the beautiful queen who withholds her love from him. The King returns to his land and then forevermore wears black as a symbol of his sadness due to unrequited love.

#### **The Greek Beauty**

A king, whose horoscope predicts danger in marriage, discards his concubines after one night. But the devoted service of one causes him to fall in love with her. She rejects him until he convinces her of his honesty and truthfulness. They marry.

#### **The Turkish Beauty**

A man falls in love with a woman whose veil is briefly lifted by the wind. Unbeknownst to him, she is the wife of an acquaintance, who soon dies. Impressed by his virtue when he brings her husband's belongings to her, she agrees to marry him.

#### **The Russian Beauty**

A beautiful and graceful artist feels no man is worthy of her. She shuts herself up in a fortress and declares that only he who finds a way to her will win her. A prince, after discovering the way, answers a set of riddles and wins her love.

#### **The Moroccan Beauty**

Several people promise to guide an Egyptian boy, who is lost in a demon-filled desert, to safety, but don't actually do it. Finally, he appeals to God, who does guide him to safety. The boy then only wears turquoise robes of mourning in renunciation of the world.

#### **The Chinese Beauty**

Good, traveling in the desert is robbed and blinded by his companion, Bad. The daughter of a Kurdish chieftain finds and cures him. They marry and Good then becomes king and pardons Bad, who is killed by a less-forgiving King of the Kurds.

#### **The Central Asian Beauty**

A young man hears music in a garden. He finds a group of maidens feasting and falls in love with one of them. His passion is returned, but their attempt at an affair is thwarted, so he decides to ask her to marry him. All ends well.”

“No one has been able to determine which of the seven beauties is which. This is one of the many mysteries of the Teahouse!”<sup>64</sup>

The following photos of the seven princesses start with the photo of the center statue. The other photos were taken moving clockwise around the fountain from the front door of the Teahouse.

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<sup>64</sup> The Meaning of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse, George Peknik, 2004, Hoopoe Publications, pg.11-13



Fig.108 (Number 1) Central Beauty

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo

*This beautiful princess in the central position under the skylight, is balancing a vessel of water on her head.*



Fig.109 (Number 2) Beauty Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Princess carrying a jug of water and twirling her skirt.*



Fig.110 (Number 3) Beauty Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Princess raising a vessel of water in her right hand.*



Fig.111 (Number 4) Beauty Kathryn Barth, AIA. Photo  
*The only princess who is not carrying water, with arms at her side.*



Fig.112 (Number 5) Beauty Kathryn Barth, AIA. Photo  
*Princess with her right arm raised, carrying a vessel in her left.*



Fig.113 (Number 6) Beauty Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Princess balancing vessel on her head, graceful extended arms.*



Fig.114 (Number 7) Beauty Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo  
*Princess holding vessel on shoulder.*