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ARTICLE

EXPERIMENTAL METHODS IN KAZAKHSTANI ANIMATION: THE NATIONAL AS A STRUCTURAL VARIABLE

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KEYWORDS

Experimental method, Kazakhstani animation, experimental animation, auteur animation, laboratory pedagogy, *Qazaqanimation*, visual language, national representation, animation education.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

In preparing this article, the following tools of generative artificial intelligence were used only as auxiliary tools for working with text: 1) ChatGPT, OpenAI, GPT-5.5 Thinking model. It was used to discuss the structure of the text, clarify the wording, edit individual fragments, check the logic of the presentation and prepare draft versions of auxiliary text blocks; 2) Claude, the Anthropic, the Claude Opus 4.8 model was used for alternative editorial review, reformulation of individual sentences, stylistic improvement of the text and clarification of argumentation. AI tools were not used as independent authors of the study, did not make research decisions and did not replace the author's interpretation of the material. All fragments generated or edited by these tools were checked, selected and, if necessary, reworked. The author is solely responsible for the content of the article, the accuracy of the information provided, the conclusions and the compliance of the text with the publication requirements.

ABSTRACT. This article examines the problem of experimental methods in contemporary Kazakhstani animation. Two widespread journalistic formulas — equating the experimental character of animation with the instability of the national animation industry's production infrastructure, or, conversely, claiming the near-total absence of experimental animation in Kazakhstan — are assessed as methodologically insufficient. The study advances the hypothesis that what Kazakhstani animation lacks is not experiment as such, but two linked conditions for its development: a stable system for the description, pedagogical transmission, and institutional consolidation of experimental methods, and the critical reworking of borrowed visual models — from anime code to the festival-oriented format — into its own artistic language. The question of the national occupies a special place: the national is treated not as thematic "local colour" applied to a ready-made animated form, but as an experimental variable — material whose alteration can restructure the work itself. To examine this hypothesis, the article introduces an analytical distinction among three levels: experimental device, experimental practice, and experimental method. It also formulates an operational threshold test based on eight criteria. On this basis, the article analyses the institutional field of contemporary Kazakhstani animation and discusses several *Qazaqanimation* projects as instances of localised artistic inquiry. It concludes that Kazakhstan has developed production, educational, and festival preconditions for an experimental direction; however, the key deficit persists not only at the level of the institutionalisation of experimental methods, but also at the level of the critical reworking of external aesthetic and industrial influences. It is at the level of the institutionalisation of experimental methods that it becomes possible to determine whether the national becomes an experimental variable, is consciously weakened and used as a frame for another theme, or remains a decorative marker.

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МАҚАЛА

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ АНИМАЦИЯДАҒЫ ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТТІК ӘДІСТЕМЕЛЕР: ҰЛТТЫҚ БОЛМЫС ҚҰРЫЛЫМДЫҚ АЙНЫМАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕ

Автор қолжазбаның соңғы нұсқасын оқып, мақұлдады және мүдделер қақтығысы жоқ деп мәлімдейді.

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Дәйексөз үшін

Ардашов, Иван. «Қазақстандық анимациядағы эксперименттік әдістемелер: ұлттық болмыс құрылымдық айнымалы ретінде». *Saryn*, т. 14, № 2, 2026, 80–107 б., DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59850/SARYN.2.14.2026.366>. (Ағылшынша)

Тірек сөздер

Эксперименттік анимация, қазақстандық анимация, эксперименттік әдістеме, авторлық анимация, зертханалық педагогика, «Қазақанимация», визуалды тіл, ұлттық репрезентация, анимациялық білім беру.

Жасанды интеллект құралдарын пайдалану туралы мәлімдеме

Осы мақаланы дайындау барысында автор мәтінмен жұмыс істеудің қосалқы құралы ретінде генеративті жасанды интеллект құралдарын пайдаланды.

Келесі құралдар мен модельдер қолданылды:

1. ChatGPT, OpenAI, GPT-5.5 Thinking моделі

Мәтін құрылымын талқылау, тұжырымдарды нақтылау, жекелеген фрагменттерді редакциялау, баяндау логикасын тексеру және көмекші мәтіндік блоктардың бастапқы нұсқаларын дайындау мақсатында пайдаланылды.

2. Claude, Anthropic, Claude Opus 4.8 моделі

Балама редакторлық тексеру жүргізу, жекелеген сөйлемдерді қайта тұжырымдау, мәтіннің стильдік сапасын жетілдіру және аргументацияны нақтылау мақсатында пайдаланылды.

Жасанды интеллект құралдары зерттеудің дербес авторлары ретінде қолданылған жоқ, зерттеушілік шешімдер қабылдамады және материалды авторлық интерпретациялауды алмастырмады.

Олардың көмегімен жасалған немесе өңделген барлық мәтіндік фрагменттер автор тарапынан тексеріліп, іріктеліп, қажет болған жағдайда қайта өңделді.

Мақаланың мазмұнына, келтірілген мәліметтердің дәлдігіне, жасалған қорытындыларға және мәтіннің жарияланым талаптарына сәйкестігіне толық жауапкершілікті автор өз мойнына алады.

Аңдатпа. Мақалада қазіргі қазақстандық анимациядағы эксперименттік әдістемелер мәселесі қарастырылады. Кең таралған публицистикалық тұжырымдар – эксперименттілікті ұлттық анимацияның өндірістік инфрақұрылымының тұрақсыздығымен теңестіру немесе, керісінше, Қазақстанда эксперименттік анимация мүлде дерлік жоқ деген пікір – әдіснамалық тұрғыдан жеткіліксіз деп бағаланады. Мақалада қазақстандық анимацияда эксперименттің өзі емес, оны сипаттаудың, педагогикалық тұрғыдан жеткізудің және институционалдық деңгейде орнықтырудың тұрақты жүйесі, сондай-ақ сыртқы визуалды модельдерді – аниме-кодтан фестивальдік форматқа дейін – өзіндік көркемдік тілге сын тұрғысынан игеру жетіспейді деген гипотеза ұсынылады. Бұл тұрғыда ұлттық болмыс мәселесі ерекше орын алады: ұлттық болмысты дайын анимациялық формаға қосылатын тақырыптық «колорит» ретінде емес, эксперименттің айнымалысы ретінде, яғни өзгеруі шығарманың құрылымын қайта құра алатын материал ретінде қарастыру ұсынылады. Аталған гипотезаны талдау үшін үш деңгейдің аналитикалық ара-жігі ажыратылады: эксперименттік тәсіл, практика және әдістеме. Сонымен қатар сегіз критерийден тұратын операциялдық шекті тест тұжырымдалады. Осы негізде қазіргі қазақстандық анимацияның институционалдық өрісі талданып, «Қазақанимация» жобалары жергіліктендірілген көркемдік ізденістің мысалдары ретінде қарастырылады. Зерттеу нәтижесінде Қазақстанда эксперименттік бағытты дамытуға қажетті өндірістік, білім беру және фестивальдік алғышарттар қалыптасқаны анықталады. Алайда негізгі тапшылық тек әдістемелік институционалдандыру деңгейінде ғана емес, сыртқы эстетикалық және индустриялық ықпалдарды сын тұрғысынан игеру деңгейінде де сақталып отыр. Дәл осы әдістемелік институционалдандыру деңгейінде ұлттық болмыстың эксперимент айнымалысына айналуы, саналы түрде әлсіретілуі, өзге проблематиканы ашудың көркемдік құралы ретінде қолданылуы немесе декоративтік белгі ретінде ғана қалуы шешіледі.

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СТАТЬЯ

ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНЫЕ МЕТОДИКИ В КАЗАХСТАНСКОЙ АНИМАЦИИ: НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ КАК ПЕРЕМЕННАЯ ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТА

Автор прочитал и одобрил окончательный вариант рукописи и заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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Ключевые слова

Экспериментальная анимация, казахстанская анимация, экспериментальная методика, авторская анимация, лабораторная педагогика, «Қазақанимация», визуальный язык, национальная репрезентация, анимационное образование.

Заявление об использовании инструментов искусственного интеллекта

При подготовке данной статьи автор использовал инструменты генеративного искусственного интеллекта в качестве вспомогательных средств для работы с текстом. Были использованы следующие инструменты и модели:

1. ChatGPT, OpenAI, модель GPT-5.5 Thinking
Использовался для обсуждения структуры текста, уточнения формулировок, редактирования отдельных фрагментов, проверки логики изложения и подготовки черновых вариантов вспомогательных текстовых блоков.
2. Claude, Anthropic, модель Claude Opus 4.8
Использовался для альтернативной редакторской проверки, переформулирования отдельных предложений, стилистического улучшения текста и уточнения аргументации.

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается проблема экспериментальных методик в современной казахстанской анимации. Распространенные публицистические формулы – отождествление экспериментальности с нестабильностью производственной инфраструктуры национальной анимации либо, напротив, утверждение о почти полном отсутствии экспериментальной анимации в Казахстане – оцениваются как методологически недостаточные. Выдвигается гипотеза, согласно которой в казахстанской анимации отсутствует не эксперимент как таковой, а два связанных условия его развития – устойчивая система описания, педагогической передачи и институционального закрепления экспериментальных методик и критическое освоение заимствованных визуальных моделей – от аниме-кода до фестивального формата – в собственный художественный язык. Особое место занимает вопрос национального: национальное предлагается рассматривать не как тематический «колорит», прилагаемый к готовой анимационной форме, а как переменную эксперимента – материал, изменение которого может перестраивать структуру произведения. Для анализа гипотезы вводится аналитическое разграничение трех уровней (экспериментальный прием, практика, методика) и формулируется операциональный пороговый тест из восьми критериев. На основе этой рамки анализируется институциональное поле современной казахстанской анимации, а также рассматриваются анимационные проекты «Қазақанимация» как примеры локализованного художественного поиска. Делается вывод о том, что в Казахстане сложились производственные, образовательные и фестивальные предпосылки для развития экспериментального направления, однако ключевой дефицит сохраняется не только на уровне методической институционализации, но и на уровне критического освоения внешних эстетических и индустриальных влияний. Именно на уровне методической институционализации решается, становится ли национальное переменной эксперимента, сознательно ослабляется и используется как рамка для иной темы или остается декоративной маркировкой.

1. Introduction

Over the years of its development, animation has formed a complex of artistic, technological, and production practices that define its current state, and it continues to develop through experimental methods — non-standard approaches to narration, visual expression, and the use of technical means. In the Kazakhstani context, discussion of experimental animation is complicated by two journalistic extremes: the notion that any national project is already experimental by virtue of the industry's youth, and the opposite thesis of the near-total absence of experiment. Both formulas are methodologically insufficient, since they substitute evaluation for analysis.

The problem, as a survey of the industry shows, lies not in a total absence of infrastructure, but in the weak formalisation of experimental method within an already existing professional field. Contemporary Kazakhstani animation develops at the intersection of studio practices, educational programmes, creative associations, the festival movement, technological training, and external audiovisual influences. Animators are affected not only by local conditions of production, but also by the global animation market, international festival criteria, the spread of digital tools, and borrowed visual languages — from anime aesthetics to Western auteur and commercial animation (Bendazzi; Lamarre; Manovich; "Mifa Presentation", *Annecy Festival*). Yet experimental approaches most often remain at the level of individual authorial experience, an isolated production decision, or a festival selection. They are rarely documented as reproducible methods that can be described, analysed, transmitted in teaching, and incorporated into a stable professional tradition.

The research question is formulated as follows: how does a situation in which the experimental character is distributed among separate projects, technological trials, external stylistic influences, and festival practices differ from one in which it is formalised as a reproducible pedagogical and artistic method within a stable school? Accordingly, the aim of the study is to identify the nature of the deficit of experimental methods in Kazakhstani animation. The working hypothesis of the study is twofold: the deficit of experimental methods in Kazakhstani animation is connected, first, with the insufficient institutionalisation of experimental methods — the description, pedagogical transmission, and institutional consolidation of already existing practices — and, second, with the insufficient critical reworking of external aesthetic and industrial influences into a local artistic language. At the same time, the study does not assert the absence of artistic experiment and does not deny traditional forms of transmitting experience; what is at issue is a deficit of publicly described and reproducible methodological models. Process documentation is treated not as an end in itself, but as one element within a broader system — the description, pedagogical transmission, and institutional consolidation of experiment. Experiment, in turn, is understood not as a random deviation from the norm and not as a mere marker of novelty, but as a conscious system of artistic, technological, and pedagogical actions. The question of the national occupies a special place: it is regarded not as decorative "local colour", but as an experimental variable — material whose alteration is capable of restructuring the work itself; here the variable is the very mode of presence of the national, from structure-forming to deliberately weakened.

Methodologically, the study relies on a qualitative theoretical and analytical approach and is built according to a hypothesis-driven analytical logic: the hypothesis formulated in the introduction is examined consecutively against theoretical, historical, institutional, industrial-contextual, and case material. It employs theoretical and methodological analysis of the literature, comparative-historical and institutional analysis, comparative juxtaposition with foreign ecosystems, the case-study method, and contextual analysis of external aesthetic and technological influences; the principal analytical instrument is a criteria-based analysis resting on an operational threshold test of eight criteria, which makes it possible to distinguish the experimental device, the practice, and the method. The conceptual support is the tradition of research through artistic practice (practice-based research) (Candy and Edmonds 63–69; Gray and Malins; Sullivan). A detailed description of the material and the analytical procedure is given in the section “Materials and Methods”.

2. State of Scholarship

The problem of experimental animation has been elaborated to differing degrees in the foreign, Russian-language, and Kazakhstani traditions. In foreign scholarship, a stable corpus of works has taken shape that describes experimental animation through the rejection of illusionism, attention to material, and an exploration of the boundaries of the medium (Furniss; Wells, *Understanding Animation*; Taberham 17–36), as well as through the history of abstract and non-objective animation (Moritz; Leslie; Smith and Hamlyn 1). In the Russian-language tradition, auteur and poetic animation has been conceptualised primarily in the reflections of practitioners and historians (Norshtein; Krivulya, *Labirinty*; Malyukova; Popov 12–15). These works form a rich theoretical and historical base, yet they focus predominantly on the artistic result and less often on the reproducible method of attaining it. Also important for the present study are works that consider animation within a broader media and technological field: the analysis of anime as a distinct technique and visual system (Lamarre), and the theory of software as an environment that shapes contemporary visual culture and the tools of image production (Manovich).

Kazakhstani animation has been studied chiefly in a historical-cultural key: the formation of the national school and its turn to folklore, mythology, and ornament are described in works on the history of the industry (Nogerbek; Ardashov 44–47). At the same time, the very problem of the relationship between the national and form was already reflected upon within Kazakhstani material itself: Bauyrzhan Nogerbek posed the question — “how can one preserve the folk colour of the fairy tale being adapted to the screen and at the same time make the film modern in its cinematic language?” (90). In the global historiography of animation, Kazakhstani and Central Asian material can be correlated with the regional sections of Giannalberto Bendazzi’s world history of animation, where the development of national schools is considered within the broader context of the Soviet, post-Soviet, and Asian film process (*Animation: A World History*, vols. 2–3). In the present article, however, this historical context is used not as an independent object of reconstruction, but as a background for analysing how experimental practices become consolidated in the profession as method.

Meanwhile, the experimental methods of Kazakhstani animation as an independent subject have received almost no systematic description. Adjacent fields of knowledge provide the necessary instruments for this: the tradition of research through artistic practice (Candy and Edmonds 63–69; Gray and Malins; Sullivan), theoretical works on animation as a form of knowledge production (Pikkov), and studies of experimental animation as a pedagogical practice (Gingrich et al. 146–55; Hagler and Rauscher 178–94). Thus the state of scholarship is characterised by a gap: alongside a developed theory of experiment, a history of national animation, and studies of global media influences, it is precisely the level of method that remains poorly described — how experimental experience is formed under the impact of local and external factors, documented, transmitted, and consolidated institutionally. The present article aims to fill this gap.

3. Theoretical Framework

The concept of experimental animation occupies an ambiguous position in theory: it is widely used in research, festival, and educational discourses, but does not always possess stable criteria of application. In the foreign tradition, experimental animation is described through the rejection of illusionist narrative, attention to material and process, and the exploration of the boundaries of the medium (Furniss; Wells, *Understanding Animation*; Taberham 17–36). Thus Maureen Furniss describes the pole of “abstraction” as “the use of pure form – a suggestion of a concept rather than an attempt to explicate it in real life terms” (6); while Paul Taberham proposes that it “need not be understood as a ‘genre’ with its own set of iconographies... Rather, it may be understood as a general approach with a number of underlying premises” (17–18). The history of abstract and non-objective animation — from Oskar Fischinger to Norman McLaren — shows that experiment here is connected not with the exoticism of a device, but with the systematic investigation of the expressive possibilities of movement, colour, and sound (Moritz; Leslie). The poetic and auteur tradition, in which form becomes the bearer of meaning, has also been described in the Russian-language reflections of practitioners and researchers (Norshtein; Krivulya, Labirinty). A separate line of theory links experiment with the problem of authorship and genre (Wells, *Animation*; Krivulya, *Evolyutsiya*; Popov 14). At the same time, in a substantial part of the discourse, the experimental character remains an evaluative compliment paid to an “unusual” work rather than an analytical category. This distinction corresponds to the approach of Natalya Krivulya, who proposes that animated forms be regarded not as a random set of features, but as a model — “a whole formed of components possessing a set of invariant parameters, characteristics, and features that nonetheless do not preclude the development of the model as a whole, or the alteration and evolution of its individual elements” (*Evolyutsiya* 34).

To avoid this vagueness, the article proposes to distinguish three levels. The experimental device is a single non-standard solution (texture, technique, an editing move, a violation of normative animation convention, recourse to an external stylistic code). The experimental practice is an author’s or studio’s sustained recourse to such devices, coalescing into a recognisable line of inquiry. The experimental method is a practice developed into a documented, transmissible, and reproducible system:

with a defined problem, a traceable process, documented results, and an understanding of which local and borrowed stylistic sources participate in shaping the artistic solution (Pikkov; Gray and Malins). This understanding rests on the tradition of practice-based and practice-as research, where the artistic work itself produces knowledge subject to description and verification (Candy and Edmonds 63–69; Sullivan; Smith and Hamlyn 2). The distinction is fundamental: a device may be accidental, a practice may be individual and non-transferable, and only a method possesses pedagogical and institutional potential (Gingrich et al. 146–55). Experimental thinking is formed not by a separate discipline, but by the overall organisation of artistic education — the presence of workshops, pedagogical schools, conditions for creative inquiry, and the critical reflection in which experiment is recognised and described (Hagler and Rauscher 178–94).

For Kazakhstani material it is especially important to take into account that the experimental character does not arise in a vacuum of the national school. The contemporary animator works within a global field of images, technologies, and production expectations: digital packages and compositing change the very logic of the medium (Manovich), while the spread of anime and its associated visual conventions shows that a borrowed style is not merely a set of external features, but a particular way of organising movement, space, and viewer perception (Lamarre). Thomas Lamarre describes anime as movement “not about movement into depth, but movement on and between surfaces... the animetic interval” (7). The question of experiment must therefore be posed more broadly than the question of documenting the authorial process: it is necessary to analyse how borrowed industrial and stylistic models are either mechanically copied or reworked into one’s own artistic language.

For the analysis of Kazakhstani material, an operational threshold test of eight criteria is proposed. The first is the presence of a research problem: an artistic, technological, cultural, or pedagogical problem at which the inquiry is directed, rather than a mere desire to do something “unusual”. The second is a deliberately modified variable: the author consciously varies a particular parameter (material, technique, narrative structure, rhythm, relation to the national code, an external stylistic source, or an industrial constraint) and observes the consequences of this change. The third is a departure from the normative solution: the chosen path differs from the standard one for the given context, and this difference is substantive rather than accidental. The fourth is systematic character: the experiment is built into the logic of the work, rather than reduced to a single striking move.

The fifth criterion is an iterative process: the method presupposes trials, variants, errors, and corrections; it is precisely the series of trials that shows how knowledge about the material and the expressive principle is formed. The sixth is the documentation of results: the experiment must produce not only a finished work, but also knowledge about what was tested and what results and limitations were revealed; documentation is possible in the form of authorial commentary, production materials, teaching assignments, methodological descriptions, analytical articles, festival analyses, or interviews. The seventh is reproducibility: this concerns not the mechanical repetition of the artistic result, but the possibility of transmitting the working principle — the posing of the problem, the sequence of actions, the conditions of the trials,

the methods of analysis, and the limits of applicability; this is what distinguishes a method from a unique authorial gesture. The eighth is reflexivity: the capacity of the author, teacher, or institution to explain in what precisely the experiment consists and why the chosen means are necessary for the posed problem; reflexivity protects the analysis from arbitrary interpretations.

Within the proposed test, individual criteria have different statuses.

For an experimental device it is sufficient to identify a non-standard solution and a substantive departure from the normative solution. For an experimental practice it is necessary that this departure be connected with a deliberately modified variable and possess a certain systematic character. For an experimental method the decisive criteria become the research problem, the iterative process, the documentation of results, reproducibility, and reflexivity. It is precisely these last criteria that make it possible to distinguish a stable method from a single authorial gesture or an expressive stylistic solution. Such an approach makes it possible to avoid three extremes: regarding any Kazakhstani project as experimental merely because it was created under the conditions of an unstable industry; denying the presence of experiment on the grounds that it has not been formalised into a school; and automatically taking any borrowing of an external visual language — anime, Western auteur animation, the clip-style digital aesthetic, or the genre models of the global market — for experiment. A more accurate intermediate position is this: experimental practices in Kazakhstani animation do exist, but often do not attain the level of methodological documentation, pedagogical transmission, and institutional consolidation.

4. Materials and Methods

The study is qualitative in character and is realised as a theoretical and analytical work in which the advanced hypothesis is assessed by means of an analytical framework rather than empirical measurement; the general logic of the exposition is hypothesis-driven and analytical. A set of complementary methods is applied, each responsible for a particular level of analysis. The theoretical and methodological analysis of scholarly literature (Section 3) serves to reconstruct existing approaches to experimental animation and to elaborate working concepts. Comparative-historical analysis (Section 5) is used to reconstruct the institutional formation of Kazakhstani animation. Institutional analysis (Section 6) describes the studio, educational, state, and festival segments as a single professional field, while comparative analysis juxtaposes this field with foreign ecosystems (France, Estonia, Canada, the USA), where experimental animation is institutionally consolidated; contextual-industrial analysis, in turn, makes it possible to take into account the influence of international festival mechanisms, global visual languages, digital tools, and production expectations on local forms of experiment. The case-study method with elements of formal-interpretive analysis (Section 7) is applied to individual Qazaqanimation projects, regarded as instances of localised forms of artistic inquiry. At the same time, these projects are considered not as a representation of all Kazakhstani animation, but as a revealing institutional case: its single-operator status and the state-commission framework make it possible to observe under what conditions experiment does or does not acquire a methodological framework. Independent, student,

and commercial animation are deliberately left outside the case corpus — their systematic analysis would require a different empirical base and a separate study.

The principal analytical instrument is criteria-based analysis: the operational threshold test of eight criteria developed in the article (a research problem; a deliberately modified variable; a departure from the normative solution; systematic character; an iterative process; the documentation of results; reproducibility; reflexivity) makes it possible to distinguish the experimental device, the practice, and the method. The second criterion here encompasses external stylistic sources and industrial constraints as possible variables of experiment, provided they are consciously reworked by the author rather than mechanically copied. The conceptual framework that defines the understanding of an experimental method as a form of knowledge production is the tradition of research through artistic practice (practice-based and practice-as-research), in which the artistic work itself produces knowledge subject to description and verification (Candy and Edmonds 63–69; Gray and Malins; Sullivan); the method of the present study, however, is not practice-based, but a qualitative analysis of documents, publicly available sources, and cases that describes practice from the outside. This distinction is fundamental: “If a creative artifact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based. If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led” (Candy and Edmonds 64–65). The empirical base of the study, examined through the analysis of documents and publicly available sources, comprised: normative and industry materials on state support for cinema (*Kazakhcinema*; “128 proektov”, *PRO Production*); the educational programmes of specialised universities (*KazNAI*; *KazNUI*) and their foreign counterparts (*CalArts*; *National Film Board of Canada*); materials of the festival infrastructure (“Animatsionnyy festival”, *PRO Production*; *Annecy Festival*); and publicly available information about the *Qazaqanimation* projects (*Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]). The analysis of the cases relies on viewing the films themselves, which are publicly available on the Kinopoisk platform, and on their juxtaposition with publicly available information about the *Qazaqanimation* projects. Since production materials (working versions, trials, internal documentation) are not publicly available, the study does not claim a full reconstruction of the production process: the formal-interpretive analysis is confined to features identifiable at the level of the image, editing, genre structure, visual code, and the available information about the project. The combination of the listed methods and materials ensures the analytical grounding of the central thesis and makes it possible to move from evaluative judgements about the experimental character to its analytical description. Since the analysis relies on publicly available materials, conclusions about the stability or deficit of methodological documentation pertain to the publicly recorded field and do not claim to be an exhaustive characterisation of non-public studio practice.

5. Historical Background

Kazakhstani animation has not only a production base but also a cultural-historical one, although its institutional development proceeded discontinuously and unevenly. The formation of national animation in the Soviet period is connected with studio production and the work of the first authors; the first Kazakh animated film is

conventionally held to be *Why Does the Swallow Have a Forked Tail?* (director Amen Khaidarov, Kazakhfilm, 1967), which already drew on a folkloric plot. In the global historiography of animation, Bendazzi connects the early stage of Kazakhstani animation above all with the figure of Khaidarov and the film *Why Does the Swallow Have a Forked Tail?* (*Animation: A World History*, vol. 2). Already at the early stage, a turn to folklore, mythology, ornament, and fairy-tale material as a source of imagery takes shape (Nogerbek; Ardashov 44–45). Nogerbek formulated the requirement for working with folkloric and ornamental material: “the task of the animation director lay not in stylising the film after the miniature or the ornament, but in the artistic development of the plastic elements of the Eastern miniature and the Kazakh ornament... ‘documentalism’ is not organic to the figurative nature of the animated film” (49–50). This stratum is important for understanding the national as a resource: petroglyphs, ornamental systems, balbal stelae, and folkloric plots enter the visual language of animation not as an alien adornment, but as part of cultural memory (Ardashov 46–47).

The collapse of the USSR in 1991 substantially changed the situation of the industry: economic crisis, the destruction of former production mechanisms, and the opening of the market to foreign content led to a sharp reduction in film output. According to the testimony cited by Bendazzi, in the post-Soviet period the production of animation contracted sharply, and the industry entered a prolonged stagnation (*Animation: A World History*, vol. 3). Production largely lost its systematic character and came to depend on individual studio initiatives, authorial projects, and episodic support. In recent years, attempts at revival have been noticeable — professional associations, festival platforms, educational programmes, technological initiatives. A juxtaposition with the post-Soviet Russian experience, where a developed critical and scholarly reflection on auteur animation has taken shape (Malyukova), shows that the presence of individual institutional elements does not yet mean the formation of a stable methodological base for experimental animation.

Discussion of a school in this context requires terminological caution and a distinction among three different meanings. Khaidarov is a foundational figure of national animation, and an aesthetic tradition and pedagogical succession took shape around him: in the historiography, the subsequent generations of Kazakhstani animators are regarded as continuers of this line (Nogerbek). Khaidarov himself connected a school precisely with an institution and with succession: “for our animation to take shape as a school, we need a school in the literal sense of the word as well — that is, an educational institution in which we could transmit the accumulated experience to the next generation... A school is, above all, a tradition... the labour of generations of artists” (qtd. in Nogerbek 150). However, the presence of a foundational authorial figure and of succession is not yet identical to a school as a reproducible methodological system — with explicitly described principles of work, a documented archive of production decisions, and formalised mechanisms for transmitting the method to subsequent generations. According to the publicly available sources, no such codified methodological framework can be traced; this accords with the central thesis of the article: the deficit pertains not to authorial experiment as a fact, but to its methodological description, transmission, and institutional consolidation.

6. The Institutional Field of Contemporary Kazakhstani Animation

Qazaqfilm JSC remains the basic production institution, with a historical heritage and professional capacity, but animation within the studio structure exists primarily as a production area rather than as a laboratory for methodological experimentation. The creative association *Qazaqanimation*, officially opened on 28 October 2022 (“*Tvorcheskoe ob"edinenie*”, *Kazinform*), is positioned, following its 2025 relaunch, as a structure that creates original projects and shapes the visual language of contemporary Kazakhstani culture for a young audience (“*New Team*”, *Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]). Its slate is formed largely through open pitching (“*Pitching Call*”, *Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]), and individual pilots are subsequently approved for development into series — for example, *Uyim qaida?* [I Want to Go Home], selected as a pilot at the 2025 pitching and approved for development into a series in 2026 (“*2025 Pitching Results*”, *Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]; *Uyim qaida?*, *Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]). The thematic orientation of these works — national values, respect for parents, Kazakh fairy tales, friendship, sport — together with the studio’s published priority themes for new pilots (“*Priority Themes*”, *Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]), points to a cultural and educational and representational function, significant for forming a viewer base but not in itself a marker of an experimental method.

A similar logic characterises the “Kazakhcinema” State Center for Support of National Cinema (SCSNC) — the single institutional operator for state support, oriented toward the production and promotion of national films, participation in international festivals, and the professional development of industry personnel. In 2024, more than 400 applications were submitted to the centre’s competition (“*Bolee 400 zayavok*”, *Kazinform*; *Kazakhcinema*). In 2025 the scale grew: 444 screenplays and screenplay outlines were submitted, 357 were passed to the expert council, including 32 animation projects, and 128 projects were admitted to the second stage (“*128 proektov*”, *PRO Production*). Thematically, the animation slate still gravitates toward family values, cultural heritage, and mythology, which characterises it as cultural and educational: the SCSNC strengthens the production base of the industry without being a specialised mechanism for the development of experimental animation. For authors this forms a clear signal: it is the finished national product, not experiment with form, that is systematically in demand. The SCSNC is regarded here not as an institution for the transmission of artistic methods, but as an element of the production-and-financing field that sets the conditions for the selection and support of projects.

The educational segment is represented above all by the Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (*KazNAI*) and the Kazakh National University of Arts (*KazNUI*). *KazNAI* trains directors of animated film using traditional and computer technologies (*KazNAI*); the learning outcomes are connected with the conception, the script, command of 2D and 3D programmes, editing, character work, and composition, yet experimental animation is not singled out as an independent methodological component. *KazNUI* runs the programme 6B02168 “*Animation Film Directing*” (*KazNUI*). Both venues form a predominantly production-technological rather than laboratory-experimental model: students master the profession and dramaturgy, but the experimental method is not singled out as a separate object of teaching and transmission (Hagler and Rauscher 179).

In analysing the educational segment, it is necessary to take into account not only the presence of specialised programmes, but also the type of educational organisation into which they are embedded. Since 2010, Kazakhstan has been a participant in the Bologna Process (*ENIC-Kazakhstan*), which presupposes a three-tier structure of higher education, a credit-based modular structure of study, an orientation toward programme learning outcomes, and the comparability of educational trajectories. For artistic education, such a system is not in itself an obstacle: a workshop, a laboratory, or an auteur school can exist within the credit model as well. In that case, however, they must be institutionally formalised as an independent educational framework, rather than dissolving into a list of disciplines, competencies, and production assignments.

It is precisely here that one of the professional barriers to the transmission of experimental experience arises. In the publicly available descriptions of specialised programmes, the emphasis is placed predominantly on training qualified specialists, command of traditional and modern computer technologies, the creation of animated content for digital platforms, and the integration of education, science, and industry. These tasks are fundamentally important for forming the profession, but they are not identical to a laboratory-and-workshop model, in which experiment becomes the subject of the regular posing of problems, a series of trials, critical analysis, authorial reflection, and methodological description. The problem should therefore be seen not in the absence of training in animation as such, but in the insufficient articulation of the experimental workshop as a stable form of artistic education.

Consequently, the transmission of experimental methods in contemporary Kazakhstani animation is hindered not by a single factor, but by a combination of several circumstances: the credit-based modular structure of the educational process, the orientation of programmes toward production-technological competencies, the absence of a publicly designated laboratory framework for experimental animation, the weak publication of production notes and methodological analyses, and the non-obvious professional trajectory for an author who works not with an applied or commercially legible product, but with an experimental form.

International experience is instructive. The Experimental Animation programme at the California Institute of the Arts defines its task through the investigation, experimentation, and redefinition of what animation can be (*CalArts*; Taberham 19; Suleymanova 162). In the case of McLaren, experimental animation was institutionally consolidated: in January 1943 he created and headed the first animation studio (Studio A) at the National Film Board of Canada (*National Film Board of Canada*). Against this background, the Kazakhstani programmes possess a substantial technological and professional potential, but require a more explicit singling-out of experimental method as a separate educational framework.

Foreign ecosystems show how experimental and auteur animation becomes institutionally consolidated — through the linkage of production, education, and festival. In France this is the Folimage studio and the La Poudrière school (*Folimage*; *La Poudrière*), as well as the largest international festival and industry market at Annecy ("Festival Presentation", *Annecy Festival*; "Mifa Presentation", *Annecy Festival*). In Estonia, a stable methodological tradition is formed by the animation programme of the Estonian

Academy of Arts and the PÖFF Shorts festival platform (*Estonian Academy of Arts; PÖFF Shorts*). These examples show that experimental animation is consolidated not by means of individual talented works, but through an infrastructure in which method is described, taught, and presented publicly.

The festival framework provides yet another indicator. The Almaty Animation Festival is gradually forming a space for the public presentation of independent, studio, student, and experimental animation; the second festival took place on 26–28 July 2024 and included a separate category, “Best Experimental Animation” (“Animatsionnyi festival”, *PRO Production*). The appearance of such a category is important: experimental work acquires a direct institutional name within the Kazakhstani infrastructure. However, the results of the selection show the limited national presence in the experimental segment: the competition gathered more than 250 projects from 52 countries; from Kazakhstan, three student films and one music video entered the 2024 programme, and the experimental category was represented predominantly by foreign works; the winner was *Simple Forms* by the director Natalia Ryss (Israel) (“Animatsionnyi festival”, *PRO Production*). This does not prove the absence of experiment in the country, but points to a gap between individual authorial and educational inquiries and their public festival articulation. And even where experiment already has an institutional name, the demand for it on the part of the milieu itself is so far slight.

7. The Qazaqanimation Case: The National as an Experimental Variable

The national in the projects under consideration appears not as an obligatory local colour, but as a variable with a varying mode of presence — from structure-forming to deliberately weakened. Here, the national is understood not as a stable “eternal essence”, but a historically mobile aggregate of cultural codes, mythological motifs, visual and ornamental traditions, institutional expectations, and contemporary modes of representation. The variable of experiment therefore becomes not the very presence of the national, but the manner and degree of its participation in the construction of form: the national may restructure the composition, the narrative, or the genre; it may be preserved only as a residual layer; it may enter a mixture of stylistic sources; or it may serve as a framing device for a different problematic. This analytical perspective has a direct precedent in Kazakhstani reflection: Bolat Omarov already insisted that “national distinctiveness is expressed not only in the characters of the heroes... what matters most is a distinctiveness of thinking... [when] the national is conveyed through attributes, costume, language, and music, this leads to pseudo-nationality... whereas national thinking is conveyed through the overall structure of the film, through its tempo-rhythmic, light- and colour-tonal solution, and its choice of camera angle” (qtd. in Nogerbek 142–143). In the terms of the test, this means that the national is recognised as a variable not only when its code is intensified and restructures form, but also when it is consciously weakened or reduced to a shell: what changes is precisely the mode of presence, not the fact of the presence or absence of a motif. *Qazaqanimation* is of interest here not because it automatically represents national animation as a whole, but as an institutional platform on which this range becomes observable: within it, the institutional task of producing national content collides with authorial attempts

to go beyond obligatory national marking, to hybridise it, or to use it as a frame for other themes. The platform is also indicative in its shift in generational perspective — a young cohort of directors, students, and graduates of specialised universities works on the projects, and it is precisely here that different strategies of working with the national code, global visual influences, and genre models are especially noticeable. All four projects examined below were selected as winning pilots of the same 2025 *Qazaqanimation* pitching (“2025 Pitching Results”, *Qazaqanimation* [*@qazaqanimasia*]), which makes them an institutionally comparable set rather than a random selection. Below, four projects are examined, arranged along this spectrum of modes of presence of the national, and then a body of works in which the national remains a thematic marker under an unchanged form.

Each of the projects analysed below is read through one and the same threshold test, rather than through the impression made by the work: for each, it is established at what level the path from device to method breaks off. At the same time, the criteria that specifically constitute a method — the iterative process, the documentation of results, reproducibility, and reflexivity — require traceable evidence of the process: production materials, trials, teaching descriptions, authorial or institutional reflection. No such traces are publicly available for the projects under consideration; therefore their non-confirmation is not a gap in the analysis, but the diagnosed result itself: it records that experiment here exists at the level of the device and the practice, but is not developed into a method. So that the test remains uniform for all the cases, the deliberately modified variable is taken to be not a separate motif, but the very mode of presence of the national in the construction of form; the cases analysed below are therefore not different tests, but different values of one variable. In this sense the case analysis tests the hypothesis on concrete material with the same rigour with which the theoretical framework sets it.

The film *Shanyraq* (director Madina Tazhbagambetova, 2025) is a visual-symbolic experiment (see Fig. 1). In terms of plot, the stubborn Murat tries to set up a yurt in the steppe single-handedly, fails, and — having accepted Inzhu’s help — attains harmony in the process of the work; on this uncomplicated narrative frame, the main expressive load falls on the visual-symbolic structure. Its experimental character is connected not with the complexity of the narration, but with the way the system of imagery is organised: the ornament is not reduced to a decorative function but is incorporated into the composition, the plasticity, and the symbolic structure of the image, partly restructuring the very form of the frame. With a comparatively simple plot, the emphasis shifts to rhythm and symbolic saturation, and the national motif is not placed within a ready-made form — it changes that form. This is precisely the case in which the national functions as a variable: a change in the ornamental structure entails a change in the visual composition of the frame. However, recognition as a method requires documentation of the process — how the motifs were selected and translated into animated movement and form, what trials were conducted and rejected; without such documentation, the film remains a strong artistic achievement but not a reproducible model. In the terms of the threshold test, *Shanyraq* clearly satisfies the criteria of a deliberately modified variable (the ornamental structure)

and of a departure from the normative solution, and partly the criteria of a research problem and systematic character; the criteria of the documentation of results, reproducibility, and reflexivity are not confirmed by the publicly available materials, which keeps the work at the level of a practice rather than a method.



Figure 1. A frame from *Shanyraq* (director Madina Tazhbagambetova, *Qazaqanimation*, 2025) as an example of visual-symbolic experiment: the ornamental motif organises not only the decorative surface of the frame but also its compositional structure.

Unison (director Mansur Aimbetov, 2025) is of interest for its opposite movement: it consciously weakens the national marking (see Fig. 2). The plot is built not on folkloric material and a recognisable ethnocultural local colour, but on a universally legible story: during a raid, a barbarian meets a warrior maiden, saves her, betrays his own army, and himself begins to change. Instead of relying on a folkloric plot, classical imagery, and recognisable ethnocultural local colour, the film constructs a contemporary statement about love and inner experience, legible outside the local context. Individual recognisable cultural elements are still discernible in it, but they do not organise the meaning and the form — the national shifts from a structuring principle to a background layer. The experimental position here is the very possibility of making contemporary, emotional, and internationally legible animation without an obligatory ethnocultural support; in a milieu where national colour is expected almost by default, this is work not with a motif, but with the very expectation of the national. At the same time, this concerns an observable result rather than a reconstruction of the conception: the publicly available materials show that the national does not carry a meaning-making function, but they do not show by what procedure exactly the author arrived at this and how such a move would be reproduced in other works. In the terms of the threshold test, *Unison* satisfies the criteria of a deliberately modified variable (the mode of presence of the national, reduced to a residual layer) and of a departure from the norm; the research problem and systematic character are expressed more weakly, while the documentation of results, reproducibility, and reflexivity cannot be traced from the publicly available materials — and so the work remains at the level of a single authorial solution rather than a formalised method.



Figure 2. A frame from *Unison* (director Mansur Aimbetov, *Qazaqanimation*, 2025) as an example of the weakening of national marking: a contemporary emotional statement is built through the colour environment, the character's movement and bodily expression, and the tonality of the frame, and is legible outside the local context.

Kolenke [The Shadow] (director Maksat Ayapov, 2025) is the most pronounced genre shift among the projects under consideration (see Fig. 3). The national-mythological stratum here performs a narrative-structural function: the encounter with the hag Zhalmayuz Kempir, the curse, the transformation of the heroes, and the goal connected with a forest spirit and a sacred spring form not only the sequence of imagery but also the very logic of the action. The national is not reduced to a decorative marking, since the mythological code motivates the conflict, the transformation of the characters, and the quest structure of the plot. However, this code operates within a genre hybridisation that combines a crime-based premise, horror motifs, a quest model, and visual conventions oriented toward anime aesthetics. As a result, the mythological material becomes an important structural element of the film, but, based on the publicly available materials, does not function as a consistently investigated variable. *Kolenke* can therefore be regarded as an example of an expressive



Figure 3. A frame from *Kolenke* (director Maksat Ayapov, *Qazaqanimation*, 2025) as an example of genre hybridisation: elements of anime aesthetics, the crime film, horror, and Kazakh mythological imagery are combined within a single visual construction.

genre practice in which the national partly acquires an experimental status: it organises the genre situation and the motivation of the action, but does not reach the level of a documented method. In the terms of the threshold test, the film demonstrates a pronounced departure from the norm, work with several stylistic sources, and a partial systematic character; however, the criteria of the documentation of results, reproducibility, and authorial or institutional reflection are not confirmed by the publicly available materials. It is precisely the pedagogical potential of such a genre experiment that remains one of the least developed resources (Gingrich et al. 146–55).

Su perisi [The Water Spirit] (directors Linara and Renata Mirgaliyevs, 2025) shows a fourth mode — national framing as an outer shell (see Fig. 4). Formally, the film draws on the image of a mythological water creature, but the story unfolds not around the national theme: a poacher wounds a Caspian seal pup and disrupts the marine equilibrium, after which a fog draws him into the dark waters of the Caspian, where an enchanting female voice lures him deeper, and the man, through a sequence of metamorphic and phantasmatic images, takes on a fish-like nature and loses his own form. The semantic centre here is an ecological parable about human violence against nature, poaching, and greed, while the mythological image works not as a structural variable, but as an entry point and a triggering mechanism for a different statement. The visual series, too, does not look classically Kazakh: it is closer to the eclecticism of a mystical thriller, digital painterliness, the clip-style alternation of states, and metamorphic imagery. The novelty of the device is evident, but it stumbles over a weak dramaturgical organisation: the cause-and-effect connections are not always traceable, since the visual dimension dominates the construction of action. In the terms of the threshold test, “*Su perisi*” satisfies the criterion of a departure from the norm and — unstably — the criterion of a modified variable (the instrumental use of the mythological image); however, the systematic character is lowered by the very dramaturgical looseness, while the research problem, the documentation of results, reproducibility, and reflexivity are not confirmed by the publicly available materials; the case therefore meets fewer criteria than the others — at the level of an experimental device that does not attain even a stable practice.



Figure 4. A frame from *Su perisi* (directors Linara and Renata Mirgaliyevs, Qazaqanimation, 2025) as an example of presenting a mythological image outside ethnographic stylisation.

The main body of the remaining *Qazaqanimation* projects consists of works in which the national is present as content and thematic marking: folkloric plots, recognisable images, value-laden motifs. Such are, for example, *Qupiya Nauryz* [The Ghostly Nauryz] (director Bauyrzhan Salzhanov) and *Umaidyn koz jasy* [The Tears of Umai] (director Zhansaya Bekisheva), and, in the earlier feature-length mythological line, *Er Tostik zhane Aydahar* [Yer Tostik and the Dragon] (2013). These works are important for forming a viewer base and national content, but the national in them does not become a variable whose alteration would restructure the form. The difference between the four cases analysed and this body is precisely the boundary between experiment and representation: in the analysed projects, the very mode of presence of the national changes — it reorganises form, is deliberately weakened, enters a genre mixture, or serves as a shell for a different theme — whereas in the body it remains a decorative marker under an unchanged form.

8. Discussion

A juxtaposition of the institutional field and the specific projects shows that the main problem is not that Kazakhstani animation fails to produce new images or does not turn to contemporary forms. The problem is that the process of creating these images rarely becomes a subject of analysis: the artistic result is visible, but the method of obtaining it is not. It is precisely this that impedes the pedagogical transmission of experimental experience and its institutional consolidation. Several systemic reasons can be identified for which an experimental method does not consolidate; some of them coincide with the more general problems of the industry — the instability of financing and of the systematic organisation of production, discussed in industry journalism as well (Laubayeva). The transmission of experience is traditionally carried out through the “master–apprentice” relationship, specialised universities, and creative associations. However, in the publicly available descriptions of specialised educational programmes an independent laboratory-and-workshop framework for experimental animation is not articulated, and the transmission of experimental experience remains predominantly informal and fragmentary; the deficit concerns not transmission itself as a fact, but its publicly described, verifiable, and reproducible methodological models. First, there is no dedicated laboratory framework in education — experiment is not separated from general production training. Second, a practice of documentation has not taken shape: production notes, methodological descriptions, and analyses of the process are almost never published. Third, support is oriented toward finished national content rather than research engagement with form. Fourth, the festival category gives experimental work a name but does not produce a description of it. Fifth, the national is more often used as a thematic marking than as a structural variable, which lowers the need for reflection on method. Sixth, borrowed stylistic models are often perceived as ready-made solutions rather than as material for critical reworking.

No less important is the second level of analysis — the pressure of the external audiovisual and industrial environment. The contemporary Kazakhstani animator works not in an isolated national space, but within a global field of images, software tools, festival expectations, commercial formats, and genre conventions. The animator is shaped

by anime aesthetics, Western auteur and commercial animation, digital production standards, international festival criteria, and notions of which project can be professionally and visually “legible”.

In this sense, many contemporary inquiries turn out to be ambivalent. On the one hand, they do indeed expand the local visual language and allow Kazakhstani animation to enter into a dialogue with global tendencies. On the other hand, the striving to be conventionally acceptable for a festival, a market, a platform, or a future employer can limit the risk and radicality of an experiment. This also applies to the strategy of deliberately weakening the national: moving away from ethnocultural marking expands international legibility, but may coincide with the market demand for universality and thereby blunt the edge of the experiment itself. The external style in such a case is used as a ready-made code of recognisability, rather than as material that the author critically restructures within their own artistic task.

Experiment should therefore be understood neither as recourse to a ready-made recognisable form nor as the mechanical transfer of external visual conventions into local material. Experiment arises when the external code becomes a modified variable: the author consciously tests how a borrowed language changes the rhythm, the editing, the plasticity, the composition, the genre structure, the image of the national material, or the mode of viewer perception. If there is no such testing, the external influence remains a stylisation; if there is, it can become a full-fledged artistic experiment.

It is also essential that a borrowed language (anime, Western auteur animation, digital techniques) does not in itself make a work experimental. This dependency is described theoretically by Krivulya: “existing models do not disappear but are transformed... an orientation toward particular proto-forms prevailing in national types of culture shapes the dominant models and forms of animation, whose evolution determines the specific features and character of the development of particular animation traditions” (*Evolyuetsiya* 454). Outside a constructed national artistic system, it risks remaining an external device unconnected with the inner logic of the work.

It is also important to distinguish the absence of published authorial reflection from the absence of artistic experiment. In many cases, the experimental character is revealed retrospectively through film-studies analysis: through the study of form, rhythm, plasticity, genre structure, visual code, and production context. However, without authorial, pedagogical, or institutional materials such analysis remains less verifiable, and the practice itself is more difficult to turn into a method. In this connection, creative diaries, production notes, interviews, and analyses of the process are regarded here not as a self-sufficient condition of artistic development; they are important as an instrument for translating individual authorial experience into an analysable and potentially transmissible form.

Behind the listed barriers stands one further circumstance that may be mistakenly perceived as the absence of experiment itself: experimental work has not yet formed a stable institutional place where it would receive professional recognition, support, and subsequent documentation of experimental methods. The mechanisms of state support are oriented predominantly toward projects with a clearly articulated cultural and representational function, whereas research engagement with form

and the methodological description of experiment are not singled out as an independent focus of support; the festival category designates experimental work as a distinct rubric of selection, but does not presuppose an obligatory analysis of the method; industrial and platform mechanisms, in turn, more often encourage the visual recognisability and conventional legibility of a project. As a result, the author is left with few external incentives to bring an individual artistic device to the level of a reproducible method: experiment remains possible, but does not acquire a stable applied and institutional framework. What is at issue, therefore, is not the absence of experiment nor its artistic insignificance, but the weak formation of an environment in which experiment could be described, verified, transmitted, and recognised as a professional norm. The task therefore consists not only in the documentation and pedagogical transmission of the method, but also in the creation of situations in which experiment becomes functionally necessary: in a teaching laboratory, in a festival analysis of process, in a research publication, and in professional discussion.

9. Conclusion and Practical Recommendations

The analysis confirms the hypothesis: in Kazakhstani animation, production, educational, and festival preconditions for the development of an experimental direction have taken shape; however, the key deficit persists not only at the level of the public description and pedagogical transmission of the method, but also at the level of the critical reworking of external visual and industrial models. Experiment exists as a device and as a practice, but rarely attains the level of a documented, transmissible, and reproducible method. It is precisely in the process of methodological reflection that it becomes visible how the national code functions: whether it becomes a structural variable of experiment, is consciously weakened, or is used as a frame for a different problematic, or remains a decorative marker. Experiment itself is formed not in isolation, but in the field of interaction of national tradition, global visual languages, digital tools, festival selection, and production constraints. Four practical recommendations follow from the analysis carried out.

The first concerns the educational framework. It is advisable to include in the curricula of specialised universities a module or laboratory course, "Experimental Animation" ("The Animation Experiment Laboratory"). Its task is to teach not only the creation of unusual works, but the very logic of experiment: the formulation of a hypothesis, the choice of a variable, the conduct of a series of trials, the documentation of errors, the analysis of the result, and the preparation of a methodological description. The outcome of the course should be not only a film, but documented knowledge about the way it was created. The experience of foreign workshops confirms such a logic: "Experimental workshops are process-led and participatory in nature, in that students are able to co-author their own experimental approaches" (Gingrich et al. 146–55). A similar model has already been realised in international practice, in particular in the Experimental Animation programmes at the California Institute of the Arts (*CalArts*; Hagler and Rauscher 191; Suleymanova 162), and can be adapted to Kazakhstani conditions, taking into account the local cultural and linguistic context.

The second recommendation concerns publication and research. A teaching manual or an edited collection on the experimental and auteur animation of Kazakhstan

is needed, prepared in collaboration with directors, teachers, researchers, representatives of Qazaqanimation, the festival community, and specialised universities. Such a work could document local practices, introduce working concepts, describe cases, propose teaching assignments, and form a terminological apparatus for analysing experimental animation. Without such a conceptual framework, the experimental character remains predominantly an evaluative characteristic of an “unusual” work, rather than an analytical category and a transmissible professional principle.

The third recommendation concerns the festival infrastructure: the Almaty Animation Festival can perform not only the function of a competitive screening, but also the function of a laboratory platform — through residencies, workshops, open analyses, pitching sessions for experimental projects, the publication of production notes, and a discussion of the process rather than only of finished films.

The fourth recommendation concerns the analysis of industrial and global influences. In educational and festival programmes it is advisable to include separate analyses of how anime aesthetics, digital production tools, international festival criteria, and market expectations affect the local animation language. Such work will make it possible to distinguish productive artistic borrowing from external stylisation and to regard the global industry not only as a source of pressure or imitation, but also as material for conscious experiment.

The prospects for further research are connected with archival work on the holdings of Qazaqfilm and the private archives of authors of the late Soviet period; with the empirical description of the production processes of contemporary projects; with the systematic analysis of the independent, student, and commercial segments that remained outside the present case corpus; and with the development and piloting of a laboratory method in the teaching environment. A separate direction of further analysis is the influence of international festival and market mechanisms on local animation practice. The ability to describe, transmit, and sustain experiment as a method thus turns out to be not a technical addition to creative work, but the very condition under which individual artistic breakthroughs — including in work with national material — are turned into a stable and transmissible professional tradition.

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