

Dhikr

a film by Han Mengyun

PRESS KIT

COMMISSIONED BY: Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation for the inaugural Bukhara Biennial, Uzbekistan ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: ShanghART Gallery EDITOR: Han Mengyun, River Cao SOUND DESIGN & MIX: Cam Deas COLORGRADING: Priory Post LINE PRODUCER: Muzaffar Yusupov, Sherdor Naseem CINEMATOGRAPHY: Artem Ibatullin ASSISTANT CAMERA: Muslim Mardanov FOCUS PULLER: Tonya Solovyeva SOUND RECORDIST: George Rogov GAFFER: Vlad Museev SPARK: Zarifov Alisher, Sobirov Hamid PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: Yi Lu, Yingtong Lin DRIVER: Mikhail Minosyan FILMED AT: Hunarmandlar Markazi, Yodgorlik Silk Factory, Samarkand; Bukhara Silk Carpets Factory, Urgut Silk Fiber Company



Uzbekistan
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ShanghART
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SYNOPSIS



Conceived as a sound work, *Dhikr* transforms the layered acoustics of Uzbek textile workshops—mechanized looms, women’s voices, prayer, and industrial roar—into a cinematic meditation that juxtaposes Soviet machine devotion with Sufi remembrance, revealing maternal lineage, historical erasure, and the haunting rhythms of industrial modernity.

DETAILS AND CREW

Original Title: *Dhikr* **Year:** 2026 **Duration:** 21 min
Country of Origin: UK **Country of Filming:** Uzbekistan
Format: 4K Apple ProRes 4444/DCP, Stereo Sound
Aspect Ratio: 16:9 **Languages:** English, Persian **Subtitles:** English
Trailer: [Here](#)

Commissioned by Bukhara Biennial 2025, Uzbekistan
Curated by Diana Campbell
With the Support of Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation
With additional support of ShanghART Gallery

A film by: Han Mengyun
Editor: Han Mengyun, River Cao
Sound Design & Mix: Cam Deas
Color Grading: Priory Post
Line Producer: Muzaffar Yusupov, Sherdor Naseem
Cinematographer: Artem Ibatullin
Assistant Camera: Muslim Mardanov
Focus Puller: Tonya Solovyeva
Sound Recordist: George Rogov
Gaffer: Vlad Museev
Spark: Zarifov Alisher, Sobirov Hamid
Production Assistant: Yi Lu, Yingtong Lin
Driver: Mikhail Minosyan
Filmed at: Hunarmandlar Markazi, Yodgorlik Silk Factory, Samarkand; Bukhara Silk Carpets Factory, Urgut Silk Fiber Company

Special Thanks:

Gayane Umerova, Diana Campbell, Timur Zolotoev, Adam Ondak, Women weavers of Margilan and Samarkand, Hunarmandlar Markazi, Yodgorlik Silk Factory, Samarkand Bukhara Silk Carpets factory, Urgut Silk Fiber Company

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Commissioned by the inaugural Bukhara Biennale, *Dhikr* grew from my search for the folk songs that once accompanied carpet weaving and textile-making in Uzbekistan, rooted in my long-standing interest in textile as women's writing and embodied practice. Surveying workshops across the Fergana Valley and Samarkand—historic centers of textile trade—I discovered a profound absence of singing. Modernization played a role: weavers now wear earphones, listening to personal music or watching shows on their phones. Soviet industrialization further disrupted tradition, banning indigenous spiritual practices that underpinned the weaving episteme. No weaver recalled songs tied to their work.

Confronting this historical amnesia, I began to notice other forms of music—children crying, women chatting, the plucking of carpet strings, the creaking loom, moments of prayer, and the deafening roar of Soviet-era machines. These soundscapes reveal what escapes the eye: traditional textile's maternal lineage manifested in women's domestic lives enmeshed in workplace, the workers' daily sonic and physical overload, and mechanized looms as living archives of machine-worship. Layered cumulatively, the sonic score builds toward a climax reminiscent of the ecstatic experience of Sufi *dhikr*, the ritualized remembrance of God through repetitive invocation, juxtaposing Soviet devotion to machinery with Islamic devotion to God—two coexisting systems of rhythm shaping everyday life under industrialization

Sound in this film also serves as a prism, through which the audiences might encounter the lives of the Other by inhabiting their acoustic reality and multiplicity. If music heals, the jarring repetitions in *Dhikr* summons the ghosts of the past and shows what was broken and imposed, and what continues to haunt the living, while acknowledging what remains after systematic erasure—the enduring love of the mother, spiritual devotion, and the unfinished promise of socialist liberation.



stills



still



still



still



You immerse yourself in remembrance,



It's the return of the soul to its origin,



still

POSTER

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CREDIT SECTION: REFERENCE AND TRANSLATION

The credit section consists of footage selected from the films of Frank B. Gilbreth, an American engineer and advocate of scientific management, documenting his time-and-motion studies and work-efficiency experiments.

Layered over the archival footage are AI-generated audio of Russian poems by the Soviet poet Aleksej Gastev, selected from the *Proletarian Bard of the Machine Age*, by Kurt Johansson.

Poems in original Russian and Translation

1. К станкам. Встать. Пауза. Заряд внимания. Подача. Включить. Самоход.	To the machines. Stand up. Pause. Supply of attention. Feed. Contact. Shunt.	4. Вот он — спаситель, земли властелин, Владыка сил титанических, В шуме приводов, в блеске машин, В сиянии солнц электрических.	Here he is - the savior, the ruler of the earth, The ruler of titanic forces, In the noise of drives, in the shine of machines, In the radiance of electric suns.
2. И не давай опомниться. Бери её, безвольную. Меси её, как тесто.	Don't let it (her) come to its (her) senses. Take her, the listless Earth. Knead her, like a piece of dough.	5. Ёто песня будущего. Ёто утренний гимн единства!	It is the song of the future. It is the morning hymn of unity!
3. В железе есть ковкость, Проворность и ловкость, Есть в танцах мозолистых рук, Есть ток в наших жилах, В звенящих зубилах, В огранках спаянный круг.	There is malleability in iron, Agility and dexterity, There is in the dances of calloused hands, There is current in our veins, In ringing chisels, In a circle welded with cuts.	6. Весь кран слился, спаялся, насытился новой каленой металлической кровью, стал единым чудовищем... с глазами, с сердцем, с душой и помыслами.	The whole crane flowed and fused together, found in itself new red hot metallic blood, be- came one single monster... with eyes, with a heart, with a soul and thoughts.

BEHIND THE SCENE



BEHIND THE SCENE



BIO & FILMOGRAPHY



Biography:

Han Mengyun (b. 1989, China) is a visual artist and filmmaker based in London. Her practice is metaphorically divided into Day and Night, spanning themes from the decolonisation of Eurasian transcultural hybridities to intimate explorations of her emotional and psychological experiences as a woman and mother.

Her film practice emerged from the Night—a darkness that first compelled her to write poetry during episodes of postpartum depression. Moving fluidly between writing, filmmaking, painting, and textile installation—often merging these forms—her Night Practice examines women’s experiences, voices, and art forms across transgenerational, transcultural, transhistorical, and inter-religious contexts, probing the roots of subalternity and envisioning possibilities for liberation.

Her work has been commissioned and exhibited internationally, including the Bukhara Biennial (2025), Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile, Hong Kong (2025), Busan Biennale (2024), and Diriyah Biennale (2021), among others. Han was selected as one of the Artists of the Year by ArtAsiaPacific Almanac (2026) and is the recipient of Robb Report Young Artist Award (2024) and 30 Forbes Artists (2023) and was shortlisted for K11 Art Foundation Artist Prize (2023).

Filmography:

Dhikr (2026, short), 21 min

Gift (2025, short), 24 min

The Unbearable Purity: Three Stories (2025, installation), 11 min

Night Sutra (2024, installation), 46 min

Night (2022, installation), 5 min

Confession: Prologue (2018, short), 3 min

CONTACT

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