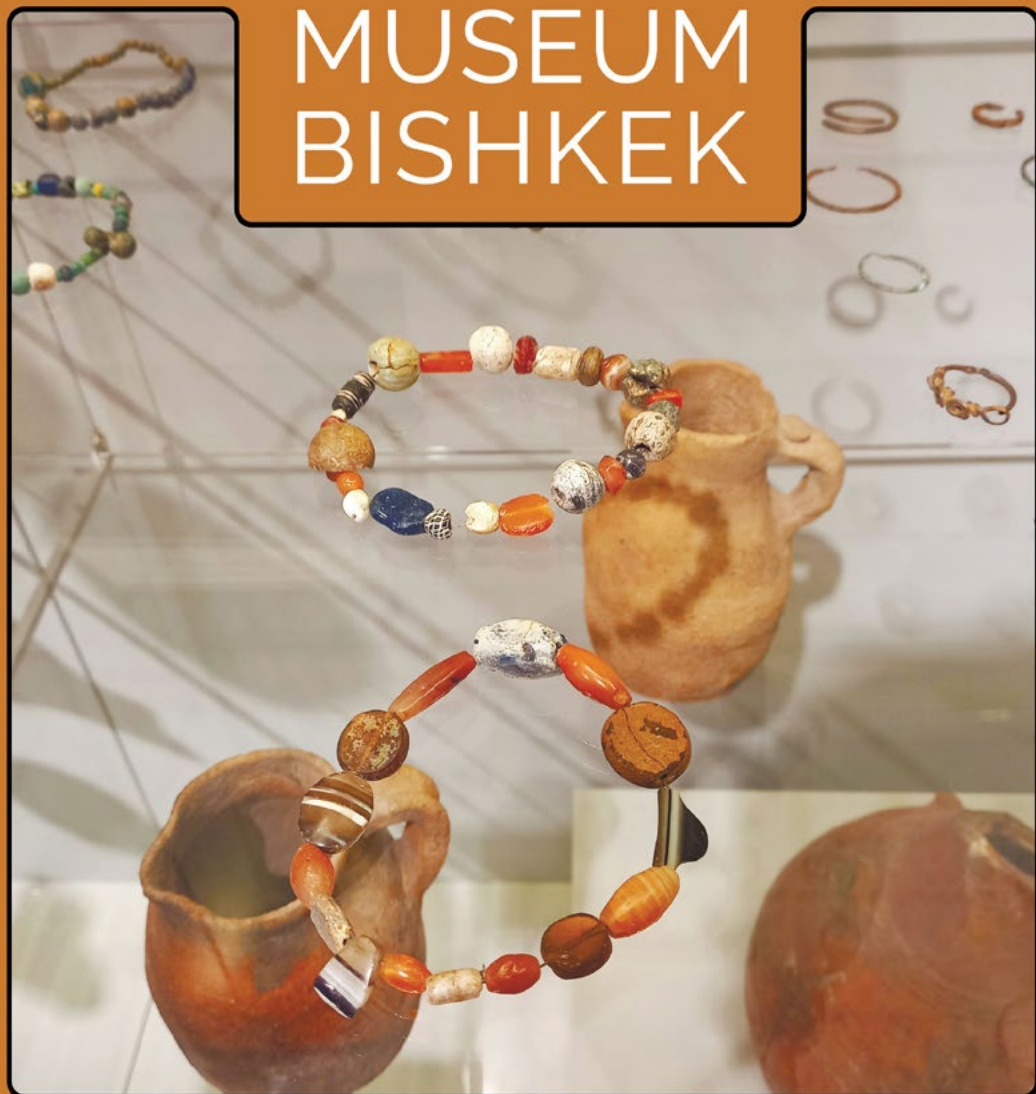


Guide to museums, galleries,  
exhibition halls of Bishkek

# MUSEUM BISHKEK



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT  
Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit



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Guide to  
museums,  
galleries,  
exhibition halls  
of Bishkek

Bishkek, 2024

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*Work "Mother's Milk" by the creative group "Shumduk."  
Exhibition "Women's Spaces" of the Museum of Feminist Art.*



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*Work "Personal Political" Zhazgul Madazimova, Emil Tilekov.  
Exhibition "Women's Spaces" of the Museum of Feminist Art.*

# MUSEUM BISHKEK

One hot summer day we decided to take a walk to the Olga Manuilova Memorial House Museum. We looked at her works and met a new employee of the museum, who shared several interesting facts about the artist. After enjoying cherries straight from the tree in the museum garden, we went to another memorial house on the next street. Our conversation about the city's museums – about how we have so many of them, how they are all interesting in their own way but at the same time not so well known among the city's residents and tourists – grew into the idea of creating this guidebook. Our idea was realized by the support of University of Central Asia's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit, which is now actively working with museums and cultural research.

In 1927, the first history museum opened in one of the rooms of Mikhail Frunze's house in Bishkek. It was then called the Central Museum of Kyrgyzstan. On January 1, 1935, the first art gallery opened in Oak Park. This is how the two largest museums in Kyrgyzstan appeared. Today, these are the National History Museum and the Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, respectively.

Since then, many museums of different foci and scale have appeared and disappeared in the city. Some of the museums that still exist today are drowned in city alleys among high-rise buildings, do not have pages on social networks, are not always marked on Google Maps, and may not have a large sign or a loud name. Often, such museums are built around some narrow topic or historical figure. We included historical information to help the reader understand the context of the creation of the museums where appropriate.

This guide includes a total of 30 denominations – museums, memorial houses, exhibition halls, galleries, laboratories, and private initiatives. Not all of them have the official status of a museum, but this does not reduce their value. According to the form of ownership, museums can be private, state or public museums. Some are structurally under the jurisdiction of larger institutions, some are united in a network, such as the United Directorate of Memorial House Museums. Our list also includes museum initiatives created by city residents and activists.

In our guide, museums are grouped by direction and themes: house museums, art museums, scientific-themed museums, and museum-initiatives. Most are scattered around the city. You may build different routes by theme or location, visiting several museums at once in a day. Entrance is mostly free, but you can donate some money or buy a brochure – all resources go to support the work of these museums.

A museum is not only its exhibits and information on stands. Rather, a museum is primarily its people, so communication with the "keepers" of these places was important to us. In many ways, the museums we want to talk about exist thanks to the enthusiasm and personal resources of employees who preserve memory, care for the space, create new exhibitions, and conduct excursions. They are always happy to see visitors, and ready to tell you everything they know if you show a little interest and curiosity.

Above all, we wanted to make the museums of Bishkek visible not only to its residents but also among the guests of the capital – tourists, researchers, and specialists. When we visit museums repeatedly, we notice something new each time, we get a new experience of communicating with the spaces and people. We think that city museums and city residents should meet more often and hope that we conveyed our love and interest in museums in this guidebook.

*Alima Tokmergenova, Alexandra Filatova*





*Fragment of embroidery from the exposition of the Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts*



# art museums



*named after Gapar Aitiev.*



*House on Toktogul Street.*



*Bust of Toktogul Satylganov (author Olga Manuilova).*

## Toktogul Museum of Literature and Art

*Address: 109 Toktogul St. (crossing Orozbekov St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 62 38 30.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00  
(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @odm\_museums*

Many people mistakenly believe that this is the house-museum of the akyn Toktogul Satylganov, but in fact there already exists a thematic museum in the south of the country. But the house does have an indirect relation to the *akyn*, as his daughter Gulsara once lived here. In 1989, a museum was opened here, dedicated to the history of literature, music, theater and cinema.

Of course, a separate stand is dedicated to Toktogul Satylganov, his biography and work: in the central hall there is a large plaster bust made by the sculptor Olga Manuilova, and in a glass box there is a komuz of the *akyn*-improviser (next to the *dombra* of Abdylas Maldybaev).

The three rooms on the stands in the exhibition have a little bit of everything, with a big emphasis on archival photographs and explanatory texts.



*Musical instruments on display  
at the museum.*

It is not so easy to figure it out without a guide. In our case, it was Temirlan Abdyl daev, the head of the museum, an artist-restorer who guided us. He told us in detail about each of the areas, placing a big emphasis on the history of literature in Kyrgyzstan, starting from the first written monuments of different periods to historical figures who made a great contribution to the development of the language.

First of all, these are Ishenaly Arabaev, the creator of the textbook "Alippe", as well as his student Kasym Tynystanov, who developed an alphabet based on Arabic spelling with the addition of the letters **Ө, Ү, Ң**. Both figures were arrested on charges of nationalism and died in the dungeons of the NKVD and were rehabilitated in 1958, thanks to Iskhak Razzakov. The artist Valery Ruppel expressed this in an installation using diary entries of the repressed symbolizing scientific and literary works.

In addition, the exhibition displays rare books – the first edition of the epic "Manas", written from the words of Sagynbai Orozbekov, unique editions of works by Kyrgyz writers and poets M. Elebaev, A. Tokombaev, K. Bayalinov, A. Osmonov and many others. In general, the merit of the museum and the guide is that after the visit, I wanted to go look for more information and open the pages of history or, at least, read one of the authors mentioned in the exhibition.

Events, conferences, thematic exhibitions, memorial evenings are often held here, because the museum is dedicated to more than one person or direction, so there are many reasons for events and memorial days. Follow the social networks of the ODDM.





*Entrance to the museum on Togolok Moldo Street.*



*Sculpture Chio Chio San by Turgunbai Sadykov.*

## Scientific and Methodological Museum of Fine Arts of the National Academy of Arts named after T. Sadykov

*Address: 50 Togolok Moldo St. (crossing Ryskulov St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 32 48 54.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00  
(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

If you have never been to this museum, you will most likely be surprised by how many times you have passed by and not noticed it. In the old building of the former military hospital near the Sports Palace, dozens, maybe hundreds of sculptures made of plaster, wood and other materials stand frozen in silence. These are the works of Turgunbai Sadykov, People's Artist of the USSR.

On the first floor you will be "greeted" by the Issyk-Kul Forum activists. If you call them loudly, a person will appear who will take you around all the halls. They will not be able to conduct an informative tour, but everything here is clear without words. The museum exhibits the works of Turgunbay Sadykov from different years, sketches of monumental compositions, portraits of outstanding people, and on the walls there is photo documentation of important events and meetings of the artist.



*Works of students and graduates of the Academy of Arts  
of the Kyrgyz Republic.*



Turgunbai Sadykov is the author of probably half of the monumental sculptures in the city. The most iconic ones are the Monument to the Fighters of the Revolution, Lenin, the Manas Architectural and Sculptural Complex near the Philharmonic, the monument to Bubu Sara Beishenalieva, and so on. He is also the founder of the Kyrgyz school of sculpture, thanks to him the material base for the development of sculpture in the country was raised at one time. And what is important, Turgunbai Sadykov is the current rector of the National Academy of Arts, so this scientific and methodological museum has the most important hall – the exhibition space of students and graduates of this educational institution.

The exhibition hall impressed us very much, firstly, by the variety of genres and techniques (painting, graphics, linocut, ceramics, sculpture), and, of course, by the quality of execution. It turns out that this is one of the few places where you can see the works of contemporary artists working in the field of monumental art in the academic style. The exhibition is updated twice a year – in the fall and spring.

There is also a sculptor's workshop here, but we never found out whether he visits it now.



*Legend.*  
D. Rustamov, 1986.



*Thirst.*  
D. Tugarikov, 1985.

## State Open-Air Sculpture Museum

*Address: Oak Park, Pushkin Street (Ch. Aitmatov Park).*

*Opening hours: 24 hours.*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @odm\_museums*

A unique museum, the entrance to which is available 24 hours a day – you can view the exhibits in any order, at any distance, from different sides and with different lighting and contrast. Taking into account the time of day, season, weather and the surrounding environment, the museum plays with new colors each time, nature acts as a co-author of these works.

The sculptures of this museum were created within the framework of an All-Union, international symposiums initiated by Turgunbai Sadykov, a monumental sculptor, the author of most of the monuments in Bishkek. The first the All-Union symposiums was held in 1984, and the following year an international gathering of sculptors was held (after which they were held almost annually).

The symposiums became creative laboratories where young and experienced masters from different countries exchanged experience, and the results of these "residencies" consistently replenished the Oak Park. To create the sculptures, marble, limestone, dolomite, sandstone, granite were used –



*Throne.*  
F. Papazov, 1989.



*Fossilized Rhinoceros.*  
W. Fritsch, 1985.

everything that the nature of Kyrgyzstan is rich in. All works were created directly in the open air.

In 1989, the sculpture park received the status of the State Open-Air Sculpture Museum. The museum has its own logic for organizing its space: the sculptures are grouped by year and topic. The 1984 works on the topic of "Peace and Labor" are located in the center of the park, at the top is the 1985 sculpture ( "Our Contemporary in Life and Labor"). Exhibits from the Second International Symposium on Labor are grouped near the gallery of the Union of Artists. The works

on the alley along Abdymomunov Street were created based on the results of the Seventh Republican Symposium of 1994 "Man and Ecology." Different years are marked by different stylistic solutions and the context of the works' creation. There are 97 works in the museum, the latest of which were created in 2017.

One of the most memorable sculptures is the "Gate of Peace" (made of sandstone) by Cuban artist Jose Antonio Diaz, which is somewhat reminiscent of the Gate of India or the Brandenburg Gate. There are only three marble sculptures in the park, one of which is the "Petrified Rhinoceros" by Polish sculptor Wladyslaw Frych. His initials are engraved on the sculpture itself. Walking through the park, you will find works by artists from Kyrgyzstan – Duysh Ōna Zholchuev ("At the Top", 1985), Viktor Shestopal ("Waiting", 1984), Zaur Khabibulin ("Interrupted Song", 1984), Aidarbek Usukeev ("The Last Cry of the Golden Eagle", 1989). Note that some of the sculptures are double-sided. If you go around the stone sculpture, you will see the continuation of the plot unfolding on the back side.

The idea of symposiums continued in the 1990s at the republican level, and open-air museums appeared in Talas (the village of Sheker), in Toktogul, in Batken, and in Cholpon-Ata (Rukh-Ordo).



*Entrance to the gallery.*



*Exhibition at the Oak Park Gallery.*



## Gallery "Dubovy Park" named after S. Chuikov / Exhibition Hall of the Union of Artists of the Kyrgyz Republic

*Address: 78A Pushkin St. (in the center of the park).*

*Contacts: 0312 66 23 43, 0707 18 94 97.*

*Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 to 17:00 .*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @dubovy\_gallery*

On January 1, 1935, on the site of the former Nikol Church, the first art gallery in Frunze was opened on the initiative of the artist Semyon Chuikov. The exhibition included paintings by I. Repin, V. Surikov, I. Aivazovsky, I. Shishkin, P. Konchalovsky and many others (72 works in total), allocated from the funds of the Tretyakov Gallery. In 1944, the gallery was renamed the Kyrgyz State Museum of Fine Arts. Repeatedly replenishing its funds, the museum expanded its space and is now located near Dubovy Park on Abdrakhmanov Street 196. The gallery itself has changed over the years, a second floor appeared, and now it hosts temporary exhibitions of members of the Union of Artists, among others. You can follow the announcements on social networks or on the stand next to the entrance. And on the first floor there is a souvenir shop with handicrafts made of felt, leather, wood.

By decree of the government of Kyrgyzstan, Oak Park, including the building of the exhibition hall of the Union of Artists and the open-air sculpture museum, have been included in the state list of historical and cultural monuments.



*Entrance to the museum on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the National Library.*



*Model of the house where Alykul Osmonov lived.*



## Alykul Osmonov Museum at the National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic

*Address: 208 Abdrakhmanov St. (crossing Frunze St.), 2nd floor.*

*Contacts: 0312 30 46 75, 0312 30 46 77.*

*Opening hours: daily from 9:00 to 18:00.*

*Entrance: with a one-time library pass – 10 soms or  
with a permanent library card.*

*Library website: [www.nlkr.gov.kg](http://www.nlkr.gov.kg)*

There are several house-museums dedicated to Alykul Osmonov in Kyrgyzstan, but it is not necessary to go far to get acquainted with his work. It is enough to come to the National Library (which, by the way, bears the poet's name). To get into this small museum, you need to buy a one-time library card (based on your passport). Most often, schoolchildren and students are taken to such museums as part of Kyrgyz literature lessons or for general development. But what is interesting is that when you come here "voluntarily" as an adult, you look at the exhibits differently and read more carefully at what is written on the stands.

The exhibition is mainly in Kyrgyz, some of the labels are in Russian, but everything is quite clear anyway: archival black-and-white photographs, unique editions of the poet's works, translations of children's books published in the 1930s (some in Latin). On the walls are copies of Alykul Osmonov's portraits



*Reconstruction of A. Osmonov's room.*



*Books with works by A. Osmonov.*

in painting (author G. Aitiev), in engraving (author A. Sgibnev). In the center of the exhibition are models of house-museums in Kaptal-Aryk and Cholpon-Ata, as well as a small house in Bishkek, where he lived in 1948-1950 (this house-museum was not available for communication at the time of the guide's creation). One corner is stylized as a room, in which everything is aesthetic and simple – a window, a table, a chair, an oil lamp, an inkwell and manuscripts, a bookcase with books.

On memorial days, thematic events are held, and on weekdays you can ask for a tour. It is clear that the exhibition is only of an introductory nature, and to delve into the poet's work, you need to read his books.



*Musical instruments on display at the museum.*

## Museum of the History of Music at the Kyrgyz National Conservatory named after K. Moldobasanov

*\*Visit by appointment..*

*Address: 115 Dzhantoshev St. (crossing Baitik Baatyr St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 57 02 25 (Conservatory reception).*

*Opening hours: Monday through Saturday from 10:00 to 17:00  
(break from 13:00 to 14:00).*

*Free admission.*

If you want to see what Toktogul Satylganov's komuz or an ancient Turkmen wind instrument look like, then you should definitely visit the museum at the Kyrgyz National Conservatory. A very small museum is integrated into a conference hall (or vice versa), which is most likely convenient for holding various events and receiving delegations. You can sign up for a visit in advance by calling the conservatory's reception at the number provided.

The museum was created in 2012 on the initiative of Maksat Begaliyev, the People's Artist of Kyrgyzstan, composer, rector of the conservatory. The exhibition mainly contains gifts and traditional musical instruments that delegations exchange as souvenirs. Have you ever seen the Turkmen wind instrument *tüdyuk* or the Uzbek, Tajik string instrument *chang*? Do you know what a *bandola* or *rubob* is?



*Musical instruments on display at the museum.*

In addition to getting acquainted with the instruments of different nations, the conveniently designed exhibition allows you to trace the genealogy of the musical folk instruments of Kyrgyzstan, which, according to the information on the stands, are divided into string and percussion, and those in turn into traditional and modernized. The traditional form is presented by the kyl kyyak of Murataly Kurenkeev, komuzes of Atay Ogombaev, Toktogul Satylganov, Korgool, Kalyk Akiyev. The old komuz is thinner than the modern one, because it was more convenient to hide it in the bosom under the chapman, mount the horse and set off. The exhibits are accompanied by archival photographs of our musical ancestors. Of the modernized instruments, of course, the double komuz kosh duldu or the crossed komuz with kyl kyyak are surprising. It is not entirely clear how it works in action, but it looks impressive.





*Gallery M.*



## Gallery M

*Address: 40 Manas St., 2nd floor; TSUM-2, 4th floor.*

*Contacts: 0557 55 50 25, 0550 55 12 93.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Saturday from 9:00 to 18:00.*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @gallerym.art*

A gallery where you can not only view works by contemporary artists, but also buy something for yourself or as a gift. The gallery is open to the public, and the branch of the new TSUM has an additional space where temporary exhibitions are held, for example, an exhibition with works by female artists opens every November. And it's great that visitors to the shopping center become casual spectators. In addition, on Saturdays, both branches host painting master classes.



*Museum tour.*



*Sculpture "To Help the Front" by O. Manuilova, 1942.*

## Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts named after Gapar Aitiev

*Address: 196 Abdрахmanov St.*

*(opposite the Opera and Ballet Theatre).*

*Contacts: 0312 62 16 41.*

*Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 to 18:00  
(last Friday of the month – Sunday).*

*Entrance: adult ticket – 80 soms, student – 40 soms,  
school – 20 soms.*

*Excursions: group sightseeing tour for adults – 100 soms,  
for students – 70 soms, for schoolchildren – 50 soms.*

*Website: [www.artmuseum.kg](http://www.artmuseum.kg)*

*Instagram: @aitievmuseum*

This is the largest and oldest museum of fine arts in Kyrgyzstan. For almost 90 years, the largest collection of masterpieces of Kyrgyz fine and decorative arts has been collected here. It is best to set aside two free hours for a visit, so that you can leisurely walk through the entire museum. But first of all, you will need to leave your outerwear, large bags and backpacks in the cloakroom on the first floor. The permanent exhibition begins with the vestibule on the second floor, where folk arts and crafts are exhibited – these are *ala-kiyiz*, *shyrdaks*, wood and leather goods, silver jewelry, clothing, and elements of yurt decoration.



*A fragment of a **shyrdak** from the permanent exhibition*

All exhibits were collected by museum staff during expeditions to the regions in Soviet times. The exhibition continues with arts and crafts created by professional artists who have rethought the functional significance of felt carpets. Now they do not just lie on the floor of the yurt, but hang on the walls as a monumental panel in the interior, instead of complex ornamental patterns – quite readable plots and compositions (people, animals, plants).

The exhibition in the halls with fine art is arranged in chronological order – from the founders of the Kyrgyz school of painting Vladimir Obrastsov, Semyon Chuikov, Gapar Aitiev to the representatives of the New Wave – Kadyr Bekov, Zhylykychy Zhakypov, Erkin Saliev and others. Sculpture is represented here by the works of Laszlo Meszaros, Olga Manuilova, Turgunbai Sadykov, Viktor Shestopal, Zaur Khabibulin and many other artists.

At the request of visitors, in 2022 the museum opened a hall of Russian painting – the exhibition includes works by Robert Falk, Pyotr Konchalovsky, Ivan Shishkin, Ivan Aivazovsky and many others. In this hall, pay attention to Mikhail Vrubel's majolica "The Swan Princess." The permanent exhibition ends with a hall of facsimile copies of world masterpieces of plastic art.

If you have enough attention and time, you can look into the halls with temporary exhibitions, they are updated very often. All announcements are published on social networks. On the opening day of the exhibitions, admission is free. In addition, the museum hosts lectures on the history of world art and the history of fashion every Saturday (entrance ticket: 300 soms). The museum offers overview and thematic excursions in Kyrgyz, Russian and English.



Hall  
with K. Shkurpel's  
personal exhibition.



Statue  
by M. Sheishenbayev.



## Tolon Museum of Modern Art

*\*Visiting (better) by prior arrangement*

*Address: Kuntuu village.*

*Contacts: 0771 40 94 07; 0312 62 32 27.*

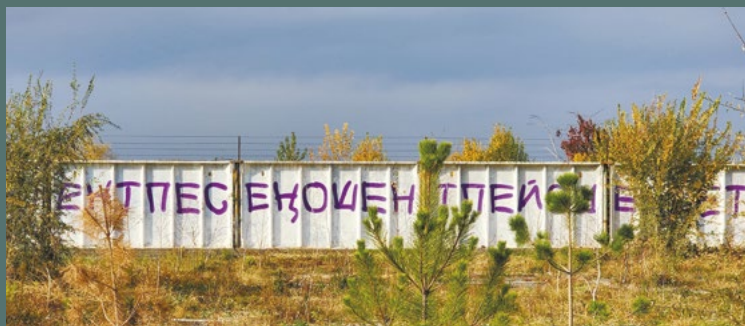
*Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday from 14:00 to 20:00.*

*Entrance: \$20.*

*Instagram: @tolonmuseum*

At the time of writing, the museum had just opened and acquired its place where its collection is exhibited. Until October 2023, the museum held its exhibitions in different locations. The museum's activities also include the regular publication of a magazine of the same name and the existence of a scholarship of the same name. Gamal Bokonbaev, the director of the museum and an honored cultural figure of the Kyrgyz Republic, is the driving force behind the museum and all its activities.

The museum is located in the buildings of a former wine production and packaging plant. The creators of the museum have big plans for the museum territory, and it is quite large. Today, the former plant houses art halls, each dedicated to a particular theme or artist. So, there is a hall of contemporary art, a hall of museum scholarship holders, a photo hall and a hall-museum of Konstantin Shkurpela, which I would like to dwell on in more detail. This is exactly the case when form and content act as a united front.



*Work by Rakhat Asangulova.*



*Exhibition "Myna Keldik" ("Here we are").*

The old plant was once a public good, a place of work, socialization of people, bringing some added value to the community living nearby. Over the years after the cessation of work, the place fell into disrepair. The process of destruction was not covered up and plastered, but rather preserved. Only for visitors it is not the disrepair after the collapse of the USSR, but the dilapidated USSR itself.

The museum building itself becomes an exhibit in these conditions. The content of K. Shkorpela's works cannot be read separately. Thanks to the curator's work, this content is read through the sense of place and surroundings. The curator works superbly with space. It is interesting that the exhibition can be viewed from different sides and levels, there are many bridges, stairs, passages and a feeling of a labyrinth appears. Alice in Wonderland, this is how you can describe the sensations. Lenin acts as a rabbit, who appears here and there in his image, and Noah's arks-basins float along the exhibition if you look at them from above. Each individual statuette in this museum can be a separate exhibit, but there they are part of K. Shkorpela's installations, which in turn are part of G. Bokonbaev's object (the entire building).

Multispatial perception appears. In addition, there is a feeling of presence of different eras and times. The 1920s of the last century, the early Soviet aesthetics of slogans on red fabrics intersects with the aesthetics of naked mannequins exhibited in the windows, reminiscent of the Red Light District. Perhaps this aesthetic is Soviet exoticism as interpreted by the museum.

We recommend that you arrange your visit in advance; discounts and excursions are available.



*Jewellery from the exhibition of the National Historical Museum of the Kyrgyz Republic.*

# scientific-themed museums





*Rock samples.*



## Educational laboratory of the Geological Museum of the Mining and Metallurgical Institute named after U. Asanaliev

*\*Visit by appointment only.*

*Address: 164 Chui Ave. (on the left side of the city hall building).*

*Contacts: 0312 61 05 97 (department).*

*Visitor reception hours: Wednesday, Friday 9:00 – 13:00.*

*Free admission.*

The educational laboratory, which contains a large number of rock and mineral samples, is open to visitors twice a week for those who want to refresh their memory of what they once learned in school or want to learn something new.

The laboratory is located in the educational building of the U. Asanaliev Mining and Metallurgical Institute on Chui Avenue. Passing by one of the seminars, you will find yourself in a huge hall filled with cabinets and chests of drawers, in which all the samples of rocks not only from Kyrgyzstan, but also gifts from other countries, collected over 70 years, are arranged and labeled behind glass. In the center of the hall is a large portrait of Academician Usengazy Asanaliev, Doctor of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, founder of the institute. Under the ceiling are portraits of outstanding geologists who stood at the origins of science in our country.



*Mammoth bones.*



*Rocks.*



*Rocks (malachite and dolomite).*

You will need quite a lot of time to carefully examine such a variety of forms and types of minerals, fossils. We were most impressed by the bones of a three-year-old baby mammoth. Everything is so fascinating that you wouldn't want to leave.

Before visiting, please call the number provided and make sure that you will not interfere with the educational process and the main work of the specialists.

## Numismatic Museum of the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic

*\*Visit by appointment only.*

*Address: 168 Chui Ave. (on the right side of the city hall building).*

*Contact information for excursions: 0312 66 90 08,*

*0312 61 24 14.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 10:00 to 16:00*

*(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

When we think about the functions that museums perform, we must not forget that one of the main functions is educational. We come to museums to learn something new, which includes the arrangement of the exhibition, which not only shows, but also speaks.

The Numismatic Museum speaks to its visitors in a targeted, very individual and accessible language. The museum is located in the building of the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic. You can get in by appointment and with a passport. When entering, you will be asked to leave your personal belongings in a storage cell. After going through all these stages, you will find yourself in several rooms of the bank, from which the museum was created. And here the most interesting part begins.

Your guide will be an employee who knows everything about the exhibits and even a little more. The exhibits are located in two halls. In one hall, you can see gifts from colleagues, the same national banks of other countries: coins and banknotes from all over the world, old coins of our region. The second hall is dedicated to the history of the national currency, namely, the Kyrgyz som and the small tyiyn. Here you can learn how the design of the banknotes and the history of their production changed, how this is connected with the methods and ways of printing and minting, security and how all this intertwined with the history and politics of Kyrgyzstan.

All this time you will have a guide to the history and present state of Kyrgyz numismatics. She has an interactive approach, and if you answer the questions correctly, you will receive candy and some other memorable gifts! You will definitely leave this museum with new knowledge, and become even a little more financially literate.

Unfortunately, you are not allowed to take photos in the Numismatic Museum.



*Entrance to the museum.*



*Exhibition hall.*



## Zoological Museum of the Institute of Biology of the National Academy of Sciences

*Address: 265A Chui Ave. (crossing Umetaliev St.) .*

*Contacts: 0312 64 19 80.*

*Opening hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 to 17:00  
(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Entrance: adult ticket – 30 soms, school ticket – 20 soms.*

The museum is located on the first floor of the Institute of Biology, the entrance is on the side of the building. It is easy to find if you navigate by the bus stop near the Academy of Sciences. At the entrance to the halls you will be greeted by a bust of Professor Sapash Kasiev, after whom the museum is named.

This unique repository will soon turn 100 years old. It dates back to the creation of the Central Museum of Local History in 1926 (later it was divided into a historical museum and a nature museum). With the assistance of academician Konstantin Skryabin, it was transformed into the Zoological Museum and transferred to the Kyrgyz branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1946). Having changed its location in the city several times, the Zoological Museum has occupied premises in the Institute of Biology for the past 20 years.

On the day we came, despite it being Saturday morning, there were already visitors in the museum – a tourist and a family with small children. However, according to museum employee Syrga Amanalieva, this is certainly not the case every day. The main visitors are schoolchildren and students, for whom she conducts group excursions. For 15 years now, Syrga Amanalieva, a junior research fellow, has been taking care of the museum, where she came to work immediately after graduating from the zoological faculty, and is now busy writing a PhD dissertation in the field of parasitology. Most of the museum, of course, is dedicated to the animal world – a total of about two thousand exhibits of mammals, reptiles, fish and insects. We definitely recommend looking at the colorful collection of butterflies in the first hall, which was donated to the museum by private collector S. Toropov.

The majority of exhibits were made by several generations of taxidermists during the Soviet era, some even in the 1920s. The oldest exhibit is a whooper swan created in 1926 by Nikolai Vasiliev. A taxidermist is an important specialist for such a museum, a person who creates stuffed animals that are anatomically and visually similar to the original. Syrga told how she made a stuffed gopher and that it required long preparatory work with chemicals, then complex, painstaking work with the sculpture, the skeleton of the animal, in a word,

to do this you need to be a scientist, a sculptor, and an artist at the same time. On the one hand, this is an opportunity to see what rare birds and animals listed in the Red Book look like, on the other hand, it is a relic of the past.

In order for the exhibits to be stored longer, they are treated with chemicals, so the museum is filled with specific smells. It is better to take photos without a flash, so as not to harm the condition of the exhibits. In general, the museum evokes mixed feelings. On the one hand, it is a unique storage facility where you can get acquainted with the biodiversity of the animal world of Kyrgyzstan, see a snow leopard, a mountain goose, a roe deer up close, and expand your knowledge of rare representatives of the Red Book. On the other hand, it is obvious that the space needs major repairs, replacement of display cases, updating of exhibits, and the introduction of interactive, modern approaches to the exposition.

The museum is open from 9:00 to 17:00, but we recommend visiting it before 15:00. The remaining two working hours are used by the staff for cleaning and caring for the exhibits.



*The museum corridor, designed as a grotto.*

## Museum of Water

*\*Visit by appointment..*

*Address: 68 Mederov St. (crossing Tynystanov St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 54 87 31 (Faculty of Hydrogeology).*

*Opening hours: visits by appointment.*

This is probably the most mysterious and difficult to find museum. But if you do get there, you won't regret it. The tours are mostly for groups of 10 people or more, it's ideal to come here with children.

The topic of water resources is very relevant for our country – this concerns not only its use and distribution, but also environmental sustainability. And the museum in this case is another way to inform about these issues and ways to solve them with the help of an interactive exhibition. The first and so far the only water museum in Central Asia was created in 2015 with the support of international donors. It took more than four years to create the exhibition.

The museum is located in the laboratory building of the hydrogeology department of the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K. Skryabin. This is one of the oldest and largest educational institutions in the country, where water resource specialists were once trained for the entire Central Asian region.



*An example of a city water supply system.*



*Interactive lesson area for children.*



The museum itself is very large. First of all, its shape is a long corridor stylized as a water grotto, in which various installations are located, accompanied by special sound effects. On both sides of this tunnel there are laboratories of melioration, water supply, chemical properties of water, etc. Here, in an interactive form, with the help of posters and models, you can explain to children the history of irrigation of cities, the properties of water, ways to save and economize it. For such lessons, the halls are equipped with desks, chairs, boards.

The exhibit developers also touched on topics related to the ecosystem as a whole. For example, we really liked the map with bird habitat zones in Kyrgyzstan. By clicking on the buttons above the images with useful data, you can hear the sounds that certain birds make.

The museum has very good potential both from an educational and artistic point of view. It feels like a lot of careful work has been invested in it, and the space itself, located in the university, makes you want to invite as many viewers and visitors as possible.



*Ceramic items on display at the National Historical Museum.*

## National Historical Museum of the Kyrgyz Republic

*Address: 112 Chui Ave., Ala-Too Square.*

*Contacts: 0312 62 61 05 (ticket office),*

*0312 62 60 90 (excursion department).*

*Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday from 9:00 to 18:00  
(last Friday of the month – Sunday).*

*Entrance: adult ticket – 200 som, student – 190 som,  
school – 110 som.*

*Excursions: group overview-thematic for adults - 310 soms,  
for students - 190 soms, for schoolchildren - 130 soms,  
for pensioners - 190 soms. Individual - from 300 to 550 soms.*

*Website: [www.historymuseum.kg](http://www.historymuseum.kg)*

*Instagram: [@historymuseum.kg](https://www.instagram.com/historymuseum.kg)*

Museums in the format that Kyrgyzstanis are accustomed to, historically, lead their traditions following the European museum culture. This is reflected in the collection, storage of artifacts, scientific work on the study of any ethno-geographical, discourse-constructed territory. In this regard, the National Historical Museum of the Kyrgyz Republic is a bright representative of this museum culture. Over its almost hundred-year history since its foundation in 1925, it has changed its name, buildings, exhibitions – everything, in accordance with the current socio-political discourse. It is difficult to imagine a more politicized museum in Kyrgyzstan.



*Balbal on display at the  
National Historical Museum.*

In the 1920-1930s, the ethnographic natural science collection was mainly completed, and at the same time, the archaeological collection. In the early 1940s, the first scientific exhibition dedicated to the history of Kyrgyzstan from the 2nd millennium BC to the present day was opened. In the 1950s, the exposition of socialist construction was actively formed. From 1991 to 2016, the museum exposition and the museum itself changed little. And from 2016 to 2021, it underwent further changes, reconstruction and a radical change in the exposition, which you can see today as part of museum excursions. The museum has three floors, and, climbing from the first to

the third, you seem to climb the stairs of history – from ancient archaeological artifacts to the history of Soviet Kyrgyzstan, moving on to the collections of the most beautiful *shyrdaks* and embroideries.

Each of the departments is worth attention, but in our opinion, the first floor of the museum contains many interesting exhibits, one of which is a stone sculpture of the deity *Umai* (Chui Valley 7-10 centuries AD). This sculpture is interesting because the well-known *Balbals* in Kyrgyzstan, which have become such a common attribute of not only museums but also everyday life, are acquiring new facets. A female *Balbal* is something that is rarely talked about and designated. This sculpture has several characteristics and symbols (a sign similar to a crown is a symbol of *Umai*), reminding us that history can be told from different points of view. And often, the omissions in ideologically formed expositions are precisely the lack of diversity of such positions. It is very joyful that the female *Balbal* is in the National History Museum.

*Entrance to the  
museum dedicated  
to the victims of 1937.*



*Monument  
to the victims of 1916.*



## National Historical and Memorial Complex Ata-Beyit

*Address: Tash Dobe village, Alamudun district*

*(30 km from Bishkek).*

*Contacts: 0772 32 40 43.*

*Opening hours: daily from 9:00 to 18:00.*

*Entrance: 50 som per person upon entering the complex.*

*Instagram: @ata\_beyit\_kompleks*

A trip to Ata Beyit is, in a way, a pilgrimage. This place has a past history with its own meaning and a present-day history with multi-layered attempts to understand it. The complex contains several sculptures, memorial compositions, burial sites and a small museum.

Museum exhibits may give a dry state history, but behind this statement lies the tragedy of specific people. This complex was built to return the names of people lost due to the repressions of the 1930s, because with the loss of life, their names were also lost from the archives, and accordingly, from the collective memory formed by public narratives.



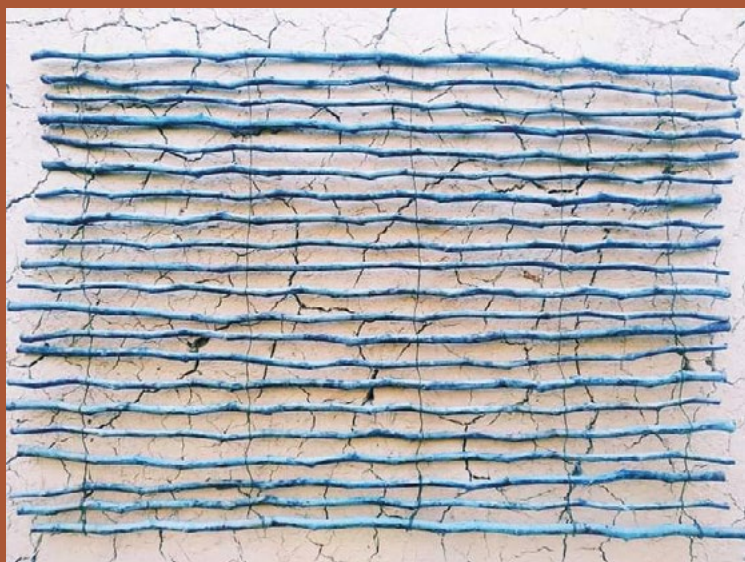
This place as a memorial began with the restoration of the memory of the victims of Stalin's repressions, secretly buried here. The place was tipped-off by Bubura Kydyralieva, a place about which her father told her, who witnessed the burials in the 1930s. You will find a monument on which the names of the buried are engraved. Later, a small museum was opened on the territory, which contains personal stories, things, photographs of the dead. Among the repressed are famous, prominent cultural and political figures of that time, such as Zhusup Abdrakhmanov, Kasym Tynystanov, Turokul Aitmatov. That is why Chyngyz Turokulovich Aitmatov is buried here.

With each turn of history, this place is overgrown with new monuments and symbols of memory. Thus, the victims of the April events in 2010 and the border guards who died during the military conflict in Batken in 2022 are buried here.

In many ways, this is a fairly formal place of remembrance, but there is one monument here that will definitely touch your feelings. This is the monument to the victims of the events of 1916. And we recommend walking through it and standing behind it for a while. This monument imitates horse stirrups, suspended at different heights, when a light breeze blows, they swing and jingle a little. The silence, the wind and the sound of an empty stirrup remind us of all those who died at that time.

At the time of writing this text, the Ata-Beyit complex is:

- a memorial monument to the victims of the repressions of 1937-1938;
- monument and tombstone to Aitmatov Ch. T.;
- a monument to those who died during the tragic events of 1916;
- memorial and museum to the victims of the April 2010 events;
- burial place of those killed during the military conflict in the Batken region in 2022.



*Exhibition of paintings in the Aktan Arym Kubat Museum.*

## Museum of Actan

*Address: 105 Imanaliev St., Kuntuu village.*

*Contacts: arymkubat@gmail.com*

*Opening hours: visits by prior arrangement only.*

*Entrance: free.*

*Facebook: aktanarymkubat*

A beautiful and cozy museum created in the house of Kyrgyz director Aktan Arym Kubat. Aktan used his house, where he lives with his wife Aichurok, to create the museum, and they converted their garage into a cinema. Museum items fill the yard, garden and house: a complete immersion in the history and aesthetics of "Aktan" cinema. Here you can see the props of the films "Beshkempir", "Maimyl", "Svet ake", which have become iconic in the history of Kyrgyz cinema: felt carpets, *toshok*, chests, telephones and more. It is impossible to list all the film artifacts that Aktan has been collecting since the 80s of the last century. Here you can also see household items of the director's parents, which he preserved with great care and love, and which are now part of the cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people, like many surviving items of that time. When you visit the museum, pay attention to Aktan's painting. Yes, he paints. On the door of his parents' house, which no longer exists, is a painting of this house. There are two museum exhibits, one historical, the other artistic. If you are lucky, like



*Exhibition of paintings in the Aktan Arym Kubat Museum.*



us, and Aktan is not away to receive his next film award, he will give you a tour during which he will tell you the history of the museum exhibits with humor and touching details, among which you will find a huge number of prestigious film awards of Aktan and his son, director Mirlan Abdykalykov.

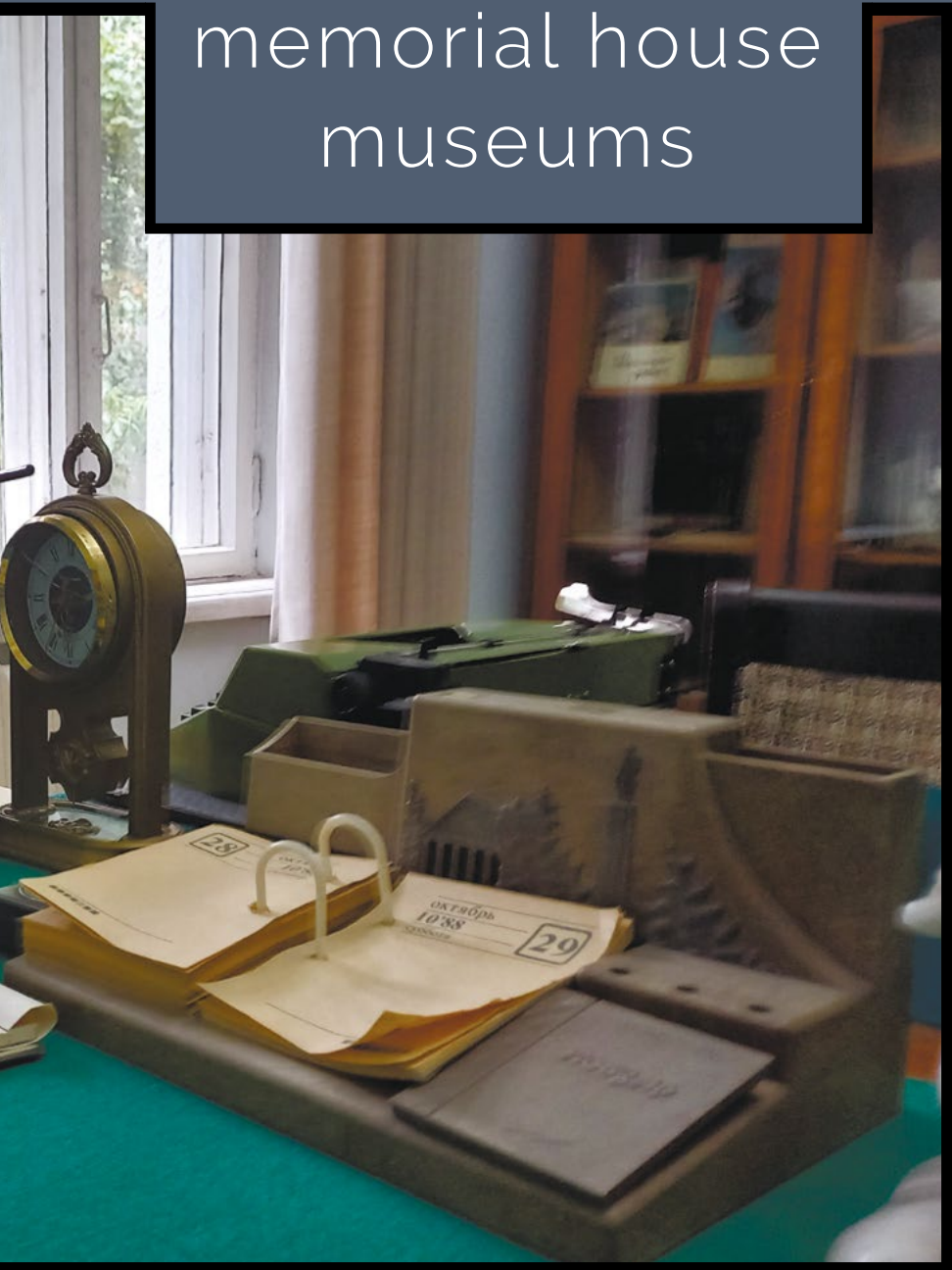
Before visiting, be sure to refresh your memory or watch the director's films, which are freely available on YouTube, otherwise, as the author of the museum himself says, you will not be interested.

*Text and photo: Altyn Kapalova.*



*Study in the house-museum of A. Tokombaev.*

# memorial house museums





*Entrance to the house-museum of Olga Manuilova.*

## Memorial House-Museum of Olga Manuilova

*Address: 108 Tynystanov St. (crossing Kyiv St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 66 11 74.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00*

*(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @odm\_museums*

The studio of sculptor Olga Manuilova was once called the House of Open Doors. Students from the neighboring school-gymnasium No. 24 came here, and they always had access to plasticine, clay, pencils and everything that could introduce a child to creativity. Models came to pose; colleagues, students came to ask for advice. The house has retained this openness and light to this day.

Olga Manuilova was one of the founders of sculpture in Kyrgyzstan, she came to Frunze in 1939 to fulfill an order for a monument to Toktogul Satylganov, and stayed here forever. In the following years, she made many monuments, decorative sculptures (the pediment of the Opera and Ballet Theater, etc.), which you can see in museums and on the streets of the city. She received this house by order of Iskhak Razzakov in 1948.





*Art therapy with collage, modeling, and DJ video session in the house-museum of Olga Manuilova during the creative workshop SYNERGY, Night at the Museum-2021.*



From the outside, the house is quite unremarkable, surrounded by a low fence, located between a school and a residential building. We enter the house and find ourselves right in the exhibition: in the corridor, you can begin to get acquainted with the life of the artist – here are stands with biographical data, personal belongings, the dress in which Olga was christened, as well as books in French from her personal library. On the left is an office in which furniture, a couch, work tools, a machine, as well as shelves with small sculptures have been preserved. In the room on the right, you can get acquainted with the main stages of Olga Maximilianovna's life – what she created and what she did before she moved to Frunze.

In total, the museum's collection contains about 200 sculptures and 500 photographs. The main exhibition with busts and decorative dishes is located in the large hall. When the museum hosts exhibitions of other artists, the sculptures are put away in a separate room, so if you decide to visit the museum, inquire in advance whether the permanent exhibition is open. The original bust of Zhoomart Bokonbaev is kept in the backyard, lilacs bloom here in spring, and cherry trees grow in summer.

The Olga Manuilova Memorial House Museum was opened in 2000. To do this, it was necessary to reconstruct the house itself a little. Today it is part of the network of the United Directorate of Memorial House Museums.



*Exhibition in the museum-workshop of Gapar Aitiev.*

## Gapar Aitiev Museum-Workshop

*Address: 78 Tynystanov St. (crossing Bokonbaev St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 62 31 66.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00  
(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

The minimalist two-story terracotta-colored building beckons you to come inside. The gate to the courtyard is often closed, but don't be shy, go in, knock on the door and they will open it for you, welcome you hospitably, and give you a tour if needed.

A person who had a great influence on the development of Kyrgyz fine art, People's Artist of the USSR, the first professional painter, sculptor and graphic artist Gapar Aitiev, worked in this workshop from 1976 to 1984. He began his work after returning from the war, where he was wounded, and wrote one of his most famous works, "Letter from the Front." He also supervised the design of the Opera and Ballet Theater, in which almost the entire staff of the Union of Artists participated.



*Gapar Altiev's office.*



*Entrance to Gapar Altiev's workshop.*

The studio is filled with the artist's personal belongings, furniture, photographs, posters of exhibitions from different years. On two floors in spacious and bright rooms, in the corridors, above the stairs – everything is filled with Gapar Aitiev's works, which you will not see anywhere else. You can even find sketches of Parisian streets made with felt-tip pens.

In the large hall there are landscape paintings along the perimeter, and in the center there is a sketchbook, which the group of artists gave to their friend and mentor, leaving autographs as a keepsake. Among the various handwritings and names, you can see the signatures of Lidiya Ilyina, I. Belevich, L. Truskovsky and many others.

It is pleasant to wander in silence through the floors and rooms, immersing yourself in the atmosphere. It is especially nice here on a clear day, when a lot of sun comes through the large windows. If you are lucky and meet the director of the museum, Satar Gaparovich Aitiev, perhaps he will answer your questions. On Saturdays, there are sometimes sightseeing tours, for this you need to call and clarify the time in advance.

## Memorial House-Museum of Semyon Chuikov

*Address: 87 Chuikov St.*

*Contacts: 0312 30 33 64.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00*

*(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @odm\_museums*

Although the museum is named after Semyon Chuikov, it is dedicated to three artists at once. From 1936 to 1938, Hungarian sculptor Laszlo Meszaros lived in this house, as a memorial plaque and information stand remind us. It was here that he founded the city's first studio for sculptors and created a series of bust portraits. After his arrest, the building housed the Art Department, and in 1949, the house was bought by artist Semyon Chuikov, who received the USSR State Prize for his "Kyrgyz Kolkhoz Suite."

The main part of the museum exhibition is dedicated to the life and work of Semyon Afanasyevich, who made a great contribution to the development of the school of painting in our country. The display cases contain photographs from different years, documents and letters, exhibition catalogues and books. In one of the rooms is the artist's favourite wicker chair, clothes, in another – a work corner with a palette, brushes



and paints. The museum stores sketches and paintings from different years, some of which can only be seen here – these are "Newlyweds from the Untouchable Caste" from the Indian series or "Paris, Rue du Faubourg - Montmartre" (1959). Semyon Chuikov painted mainly nature and preferred landscapes, but in the house-museum you will find his still life "Wild Flowers" (1961).

The farthest room is dedicated to the work of the Honored Artist of the RSFSR Evgenia Maleina (and the wife of Semyon Chuikov). In addition to photographs and documents, there are her paintings – still lifes and landscapes, for example, a view from the window of an apartment in the 8th microdistrict. But most of all, her ceramics attract attention: cups, jugs, dishes created in the 1960s-70s.

The museum exhibits many family items – ala-kiyiz, photographs, children's drawings of their sons. Semyon Chuikov and Evgenia Maleina used this workshop from 1949 to 1979, coming every spring and staying until autumn, and then returning to Moscow.

At the museum you will be met by the director Marina Zakrevskaya, who has been working here for over 30 years and was at the origins of its creation in 1987. Marina Evgenyevna takes care of the house-museum, in the warm season there are always fresh flowers here. She also conducts group

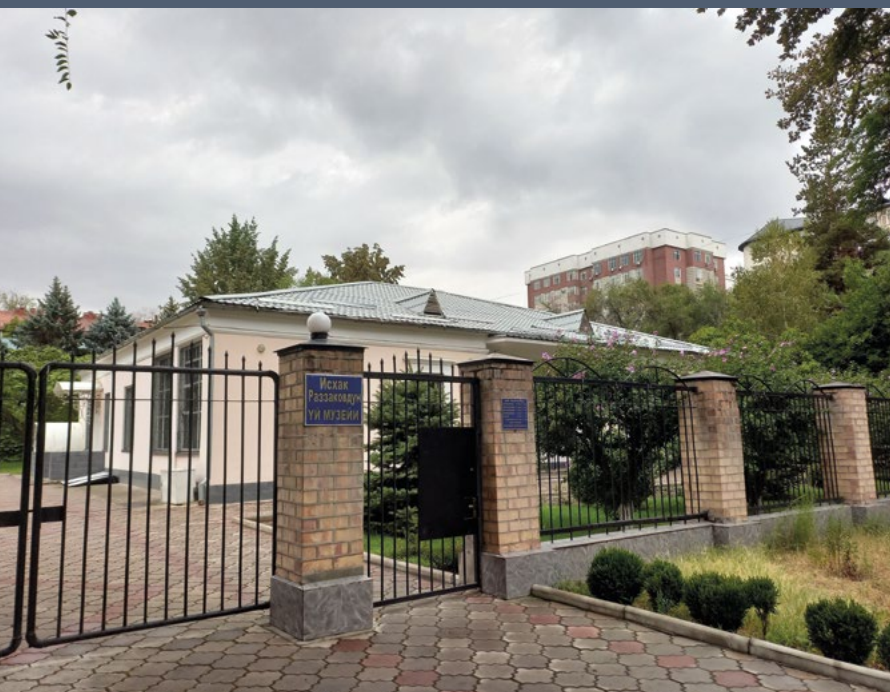


*Entrance to the memorial house-museum of Semyon Chuikov.*



excursions (from 10 people), is always ready to answer any questions regarding the work of artists.

The museum is located on the street of the same name, Chuikov, seeming very small and lost in the courtyards among tall multi-story buildings. There are two options for how to find the house: go from Tynystanov street through the courtyards towards Abdrakhmanov street, or vice versa, before reaching the railway bridge, turn from Abdrakhmanov and go down - in this square you will recognize the House-Museum by the old style of construction. If you call the museum in advance, the employees will very patiently explain how to get there.



*Entrance to the Iskhak Razzakov House Museum.*

## House-Museum of Iskhak Razzakov

*Address: 90 Chuikov St. (crosses Erkindik Blvd.).*

*Contacts: 0312 30 00 23.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00  
(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @odm\_museums*

If you walk from the railway station along Erkindik Boulevard and turn left at the first alley, here on a quiet small street named after Chuikov you will find a one-story house, very modest by the standards of modern buildings. It was built at one time specifically for the top officials of the state: since 1938, the first secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan lived here. From the point of view of an architectural monument, the museum itself already attracts attention. To get to the museum, enter through the gate into the courtyard, even if it seems that there is not a soul around, you will definitely be noticed, met and taken into the house, and if you ask, they will give you a tour.

In 1950, Iskhak Razzakov moved into this house, taking up his duties as the first secretary, and lived here for 11 years.



The subsequent top officials of the state lived elsewhere, so the building housed a kindergarten for a long time, then an office of international organizations, and in 2005, on the 95th anniversary of the politician's birth, a memorial house-museum was opened.

The museum has five rooms, an entryway and a large hall with columns, where there used to be a winter garden. The exhibition includes personal belongings of Iskhak Razzakov, clothes he wore during parades (suit, hat, astrakhan hat), books from his personal library, notebooks filled with notes, photographs from the family archive (even images of Razzakov



as a teenager have been preserved) and other documents testifying to the events of his era. Having headed the republic in the difficult post-war period, Iskhak Razzakov put a lot of effort into the formation and development of agriculture, industry, culture, science and education. During his reign, the Academy of Sciences of the Kirghiz SSR was opened, a state university and several higher educational institutions appeared in Frunze, Osh and Przhevalsk, a railway was built, the Frunze (Bishkek)-Osh highway, the Ortotokoy reservoir, the Toktogul hydroelectric power station and much more.

In the large hall there is a plaster portrait of Razzakov, a piano from 1913, and an antique sofa. In one of the rooms the interior of his study has been recreated: an impressive desk with a set of writing utensils, a lamp, glasses, a telephone with a direct line.

Taking photos in the museum is strictly prohibited, but this ban may allow you to focus more on the tour and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the house. There are practically no photos from this museum on the Internet, so you simply must come and see it in person.





*Entrance to the A. Tokombaev House-Museum.*



*Clay products and books by A. Tokombaev.*

## House-Museum of Aaly Tokombaev

*Address: 109 Chuikov St. (crossing Razzakov St.)*

*Contacts: 0312 30 03 57*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00  
(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

Opposite the memorial house-museum of Iskhak Razzakov there is another museum, its building was constructed in 1939. The museum brochure, which can be purchased here, says that at different times the writers Tugölbay Sydykbekov, Alykul Osmonov, Kasymaly Bayalinov, Ayim Aitbayeva and many others lived here. In 1944, Aaly Tokombayev exchanged his apartment with amenities for an apartment without amenities in this building, and years later the house passed into the complete disposal of the writer. He lived here for 44 years until his death.

From the outside, the museum looks impressive: a two-story building, a large well-kept garden with fir trees planted by the owner of the house. And although, as it turned out, part of the building is an extension that belongs to another organization, the museum itself takes up a lot of space: in six rooms on two floors, you will have something to study and look at carefully.



*The interior of Aala Tokombaev's living room, where he received guests.*

Aaly Tokombaev was a people's writer of Soviet Kirghizia, stood at the origins of professional Kyrgyz literature, and was elected chairman of the Writers' Union.

On the first floor in the exhibition rooms among the books and important documents, you can find small sculptures, ceramics – it turned out that the writer was fond of sculpture and made a bust of his wife and grandchildren. Another unique hand-made object is a sheet on which, as the guides say, in the dungeons of the NKVD in 1937-39, the writer embroidered verses of A. Pushkin and his portrait using a match and threads from unraveled socks.

On the second floor there is a living room with a typical interior of the Frunze intelligentsia of that time: a dining table, a cabinet with the writer's personal library (about 1700 books), in the corner a table with a chessboard. In the study, all the furniture has also been preserved: a radio, a tear-off calendar with notes, a typewriter, a table clock, as well as a photograph in which Aaly Tokombaev and the artist Semyon Chuikov are captured on horseback.



*Entrance to S. Chokmorov's workshop.*

## Museum-workshop of Suimonkul Chokmorov

*Address: 170 Toktogul St. (between Isanov St. and Manas Ave.).*

*Contacts: 0312 88 46 11.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 17:00*

*(break from 12:00 to 13:00).*

*Free admission.*

*Instagram: @odm\_museums*

The workshop of Suimonkul Chokmorov is just one large hall, but the exhibition is conveniently divided into zones by stands. Here, as in any memorial museum, there are all the important documentary evidence and photographs from the life of the People's Artist of the KSSR and People's Artist of the USSR. Employee Sulum Akchalova will definitely give you a tour in Russian or in Kyrgyz, tell you about the path of Chokmorov's development as an artist and actor. The exhibition includes photographs from the family archive, frames from films in which Chokmorov starred ("Jamilya", "Scarlet Poppies of Issyk-Kul", etc.), and souvenirs from different countries and furniture used by the artist. Everything is preserved in very good condition. Sometimes they arrange screenings of feature films with the participation of the artist, as well as documentaries in which Suimonkul Chokmorov talks about himself.





*Paintings by S. Chokmorov in permanent exhibition of  
Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts named after G. Aitiev*

Unfortunately, on the walls are hung only copies of the artist's works, since the conditions of the studio do not allow the originals to be displayed. They are stored in a safer place for storage (in terms of temperature conditions) – in the museum collection.



The museum-workshop is located on Toktogul Street at the intersection with Isanov Street in the depths of the courtyard. When they built a house for the employees of the Ministry of Transport, they also built a workshop specifically for the artist. In the last years of his life, he could no longer draw on his own and invited students to work and use his workshop. When Chokmorov passed away, part of the workshop was privatized by his students, part was saved. The artist's wife, art historian Salima Shabazova, opened a memorial museum in 1993, which existed for only 2 years before her death. And just recently in 2017, the museum reopened thanks to the efforts of Arman Kerimkulovna Momakhanova, head of the United Directorate of Memorial House Museums.

The main audience is students of art schools and fans of the work of Suimonkul Chokmorov. Entrance to the museum is free, but you can always support the work by making a donation in a special box or buying a book or brochure.



*Entrance to the Ch. Aitmatov House-Museum.*



*Interior of Ch. Aitmatov's office.*

## House-Museum of Chyngyz Aitmatov

*\*Visit by appointment..*

*Address: 305 Aitmatov (state residence Ala-Archa).*

*Contacts: 0500 12 12 28.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Saturday from 10:00 to 17:00.*

*Entrance: 200 som (including excursion).*

*Instagram: @aitmatov.kg*

The house where the writer Chyngyz Aitmatov once lived is located on the outskirts of the city: you can get to the village of Chong-Aryk by public transport (bus #8 or minibus #265), from there it's a five-minute walk to the Ala-Archa state residence, and then follow the signs to the museum. Entry and exit to the territory is regulated, so we recommend that you sign up for a visit in advance, especially since the house is small and can accommodate a group of no more than 15 people at a time. The tour is conducted by Aigerym Kerimkanova, an employee, and as we called her, the keeper of the museum.

Upon entering, you will be asked to put on shoe covers and leave your personal belongings in the glassed-in veranda. There are seven rooms on two floors, most of which have retained their interiors as they were under Aitmatov – a living room with a large table, where guests were often received, a study and a library. Among his personal belongings two things stand out, an old radio (the writer took it with him on trips) and

roller skates given to him by friends (they say he used to skate on them).

Two rooms were converted into exhibition halls. Here, awards, medals and documents are displayed in glass boxes, as well as the writer's favorite tweed jacket and the uniform of the Soviet ambassador. Manuscripts with notes for the last unfinished work "Oimo" are displayed on the walls. Another room has been completely converted into a gallery with photo chronicles revealing the personality of the writer as a public figure and diplomat.

It is worth mentioning the collection of works of fine art, harmoniously integrated into the interior of the house-museum – these are paintings by Kyrgyz artists Suimonkul Chokmorov, Jumabay Umetov, Damir Kongurbaev and many others, as well as paintings brought as souvenirs from other countries (China, Uzbekistan, Germany, Azerbaijan, etc.). For lovers of porcelain and ceramics there will be something to see, and fans of carved furniture will even want to touch them. But you shouldn't do this – as in all museums, touching the exhibits with your hands is prohibited. But taking photos and filming on video, on the contrary, is allowed.

The house is very bright, some objects have special lighting, and a semi-homey, hospitable atmosphere reigns. "The house is alive and has preserved the spirit that was under Chyngyz Turokulovich. Nothing was changed here, he lived here, worked, received guests, played with children, told them fairy tales. Sometimes it seems that he is still alive and is about to leave some room," says Aigerim Kerimkanova.

The house is surrounded by a small courtyard, you can even take a walk – there is a swimming pool, a playground, small landscape sculptures. In 1986, Chyngyz Aitmatov bought a building that was used for some maintenance works and reconstructed it into a house, where he lived until his death, and in 2014, the writer's family opened a private museum. His son Eldar Aitmatov lives in the second half of the house, and the International Chingiz Aitmatov Foundation is also located here. Today, this museum is visited not only by residents of Bishkek, but also by foreign delegations, guests from different countries, and admirers of Chyngyz Aitmatov's work.



*Reconstruction of the interior of the clay house  
of Mikhail Frunze's parents.*



## Memorial House-Museum named after M. Frunze

*Address: 364 Frunze St. (crossing Razzakov St.).*

*Contacts: 0312 62 50 31, 0312 66 06 07.*

*Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 to 18:00.*

*Entrance: adult ticket – 80 soms, student – 50 soms,  
school – 30 soms, foreign citizens – 150 soms.*

*Excursions: sightseeing (45 minutes) – 120 soms,  
thematic (1 hour) – 160 soms.*

*The opportunity to take a photo costs 150 soms.*

*Website: [www.domfrunze.kg](http://www.domfrunze.kg)*

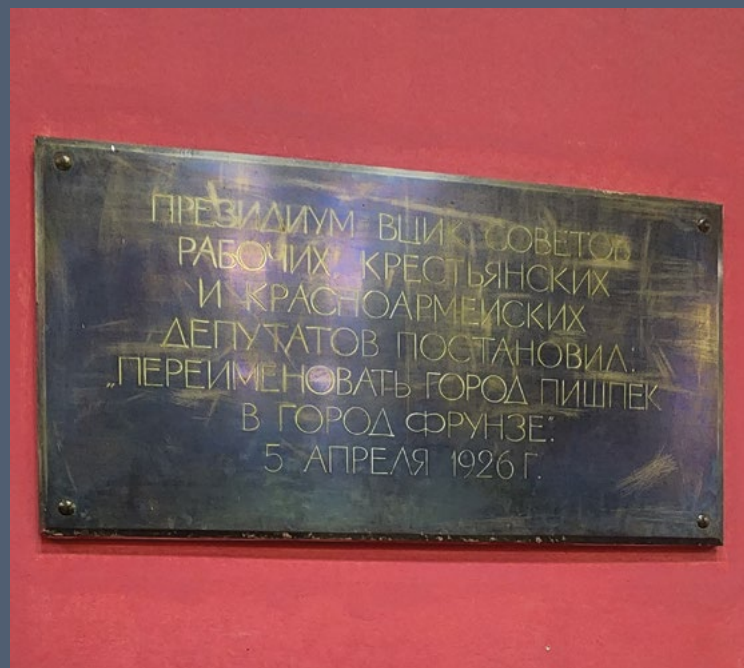
*Instagram: [@frunzemuseum\\_kg](https://www.instagram.com/frunzemuseum_kg)*

Frunze. For us, Bishkek-born women, this is the name of our city in a previous era. All places of memory and historical museums definitely bear the stamp of official discourse. And the memorial house-museum named after Mikhail Frunze is a good example of this.

The museum has four permanent exhibitions that have not changed since its foundation. In essence, it is a historical museum, preserved in the historical discourse of 50 years ago. Time passes, one discourse replaces another, but by turning to the exhibition, we can see how the 1917 revolution was spoken about in the 1970s.



*Museum exhibition.*



*Historical plaque.*

In recent years, the museum has been trying to rethink itself in the new socio-political reality. The museum hosts lectures on historical topics, book presentations and patriotic meetings. At the same time, the three-story museum building is part of architectural modernist tours of Bishkek and is one of the main representatives of this architectural movement (built in 1968, architects – Y. Kariikh, G. Kutateladze). This is doubly humorous, because inside this monument of modernist architecture, there is a clay house with a reed roof built in 1885 – the main exhibit of the museum. The house has the furnishings and utensils of those times. Although urban legends say that this is a reconstruction, according to tour guides, everything has been preserved as in the days when Frunze's parents lived here – a bed, a cradle, tables, chairs, a stove, a spindle, toys.

It is interesting to see the life of a city family and a city house more than a hundred years old, located inside a building that is more than 50 years old. The museum will not show all the layers of Bishkek, but will definitely immerse you in some part of its history.



*From the exhibition of the Museum of Applied Arts of the Peoples of Central Asia.*

# museum initiatives







*Entrance to the Exhibition Hall named after N. Roerich.*



## Exhibition Hall named after Nicholas Roerich

*Address: 41 Yunusaliev St. (crossing Mederov St.).*

*Contacts: 0550 58 0938.*

*Opening hours: Monday through Sunday*

*from 11:00 to 19:00 (in summer), from 11:00 to 18:00 (in winter).*

*Daily sightseeing tours: at 12:00 and 16:00.*

*Free admission.*

This is a museum-initiative. And like most museum-initiatives, it is a meeting place for the community that is interested in this initiative. The exhibition mainly includes books, brochures and copies of paintings, there are exhibits that you can touch, for example, singing Tibetan bowls. But the main part in the exhibition is not the material, the main part is the philosophy of the place and the philosophy of N. Roerich. And this is, first of all, the philosophical school of "living ethics." The Roerich Society in Bishkek organizes educational seminars, meetings, discussions. And, truly, the museum is filled with life.

It will be interesting for everyone, regardless of the degree of involvement in the topic of the teachings and works of Nicholas Roerich – you can come once to broaden your horizons, or you can return again and again, visiting various events that are held here often. Therefore, we recommend following the

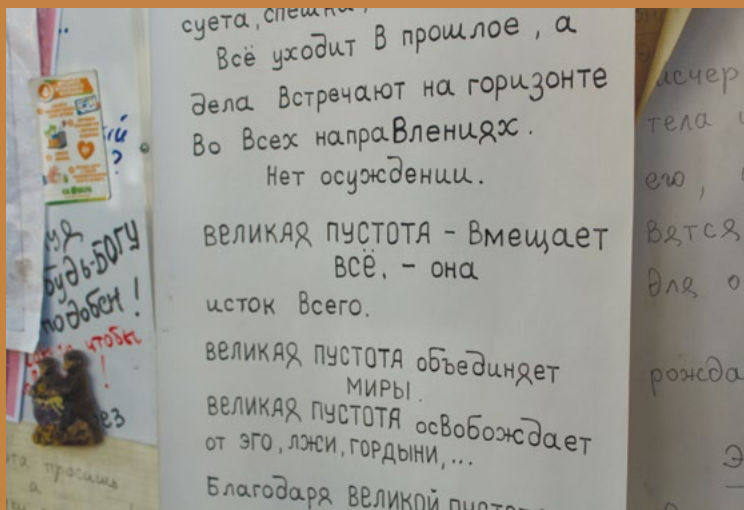


Exposition of the exhibition hall named after N. Roerich (Tibetan bowls, statues of Buddhist deities and reproductions of paintings).

calendar of events of the museum on social networks. Be sure to attend yoga classes, poetry and literature readings held here. And most importantly, immerse yourself in the philosophical movement, the basis of which is the slogan "Peace through culture." Agreed, this is exactly what we lack today.



*Public meeting hall.*



*Welcome sign at the entrance to the museum.*



*Entrance to the museum.*

## Museum of the Great Void

*\*Visiting (better) by prior arrangement.*

*Address: 31 Ormokoev St., Orto-Sai village.*

*Contacts: 0312 55 03 11.*

*Opening hours: Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 to 18:00.*

*Entry: voluntary donations or a tube of oil paint.*

*Instagram: @velikoja\_pustota*

The very name of the museum creates intrigue. What to see in a place of emptiness, and can a museum be empty? We came to the museum with these questions. This is a house in the village of Orto-Sai. You walk along a country road, on the right side there are hills, on the left there is a village and a view of Bishkek. You already begin to be imbued with some idea of the path. Despite the fact that the museum is one of the same rural houses, you will not confuse its doors (gates) with others. Right from the threshold you are greeted by inscriptions-slogans, setting a good mood.

This museum is the brainchild of an artist and, dare we say it, a philosopher, Alexey Skriplev. He will greet you at the entrance and tell you the story of how he turned his house into a museum. Each room has its own atmosphere and works that complement Alexey's story. The first thing that catches your eye is the variety of textures. This is where you can come for ideas for a design project. A wall with a hidden chair that





*A floating chair that you can sit on to take photos.*



*Museum exhibit:  
paintings (left) and  
golden pyramid (top).*



you definitely have to climb on and take a photo of. How you can create a golden pyramid that has a pool is as mysterious a question as the creation of the Egyptian pyramids. By the way, in the summer the pyramid is filled with cold water, so don't forget to bring your swimsuit.

You can go up to the roof-veranda, the design of which many modern art museums would envy: mirrored walls, crystal reflectors and a panoramic view of Bishkek. There are many different rooms with paintings and installations made of various materials. As Alexey says: "You can enter any door, the more doors you find and open, the better." And if you are tired, you can drink tea and chat with the author of the museum or just sit in silence.

This museum often hosts open events, such as yoga classes and brass and percussion instrument sessions. We recommend checking the museum's Instagram page for up-to-date information and calling for details before visiting. Admission is by donation (the artist is very happy to receive art supplies, namely oil paints).



*Workshop of MoFA+.*



*Work "Point of Connectivity" by Chynar Niyazova  
at the exhibition of the Museum of Feminist Art.*

## MoFA+ (Museum of Feminist Art)

*Opening hours: online with temporary exhibitions  
in different locations.*

*Website: [www.femmuseum.org](http://www.femmuseum.org)*

*Instagram: [@femmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/femmuseum)*

What museum doesn't dream of its own space? A room where it can share its art collection, hold meetings between artists and visitors, and conduct educational events. MoFA+ does all of this on a regular basis online and in different exhibition locations throughout Kyrgyzstan. It is a museum initiative, and, like many museums of this format, MOFA+ wants to remain independent and open to different groups of visitors.

The museum has several directions. The first is activism. The history of the museum itself is connected with the desire to speak and make important problems and groups of artists visible. Silence is the first step to normalizing injustice. Therefore, the very fact of the museum's existence is a form of activism. The form which the museum speaks about are human rights and freedoms.



*Exposition of the exhibition "Freedom of Speech," 2023.*

The second matter that is important for MoFA+ is the awareness of subjectivity. The creators, artists, and collaborators of the museum are subjects of change! This means that their work first and foremost liberates them. It allows them to declare themselves, make them visible, and give a platform to female artists. The museum does this through exhibitions and publications. Thirdly, MoFA+ is a living archive and works with traditional techniques. MoFA+ activists know the history of art, rely on it, and appropriate techniques that are considered feminine in the traditional hierarchy. Craft practices for feminist art are an important part of the work and make up a significant part of the museum's collection.

Fourth, MoFA+ supports the artistic community. MoFA+ is mostly comprised of women who are connected by support. In this direction, there are scholarship programs set up so that female artists can create. Additionally, there are programs and events that support and create connections between activists, artists and viewers. Fifth, there is a research focus that the museum conducts through art expeditions, work with the collection of works, and other practices.

Keep an eye out for museum activity announcements online to find out how and where you can experience them offline.



*Exhibition of the Museum of Ethnic Culture.*



## Interactive Museum of Ethnic Culture in the Supara Ethno-Complex

*Address: 1A Karagul Akmat St., Kok Zhar village ,*

*Contacts: 0555 46 50 51.*

*Opening hours: daily from 10:00 to 22:00.*

*Entrance: adult ticket – 100 som, child ticket – 50 som.*

*Instagram: @suparamuseum*

The museum is located in the Supara ethno-complex. The complex itself is largely a culinary and aesthetic experience. Here you can taste national dishes, walk between the yurt-styled houses. This place is popular with Bishkek residents and tourists. We love going to Supara on Nooruz, the day of the spring equinox, when it is full of people in traditional and stylized clothes, there is a crafts fair, the *shoro* flows like a river and you can try *sumolek* with fresh *boorsoks*.

The museum fully reflects the mood of this place. It is compact, not large, but full of exhibits that you can touch, twist, and play with. This was the original philosophy of the museum - to be interactive. That is why visitors to the museum are charged with excitement, throwing *alchiks* or playing *toguz korgool*. Having spun the old mill, you will feel how hard the work is, but how magical it is to see its results. The work of the craftswomen is visible in the collection of old *tush-kiyiz*, and the tools for creating embroidery will tell you how they were created.



*Women's traditional jewelry.*



*Composition simulating the migration of the Kyrgyz.*

The museum also has a cute and interesting exhibit that brings the exhibition together – a miniature settlement made of polymer clay. You can look at it for a long time, come up with stories about the relationships between the little people, watch them go about their business, observe their miniature life: making something, shoeing a horse, cooking. This museum promises to give you a warm feeling of comfort and home.

At the museum you can ask for a tour, it is advisable to arrange this in advance.

*Photo provided by the administration of  
the Supara Ethno-Complex Museum.*



*Installation at the entrance to the museum.*



*One of the museum exhibits.*

## Museum of Garbage

*\*By prior arrangement*

*Address: m/m Altyn Kazyk.*

*Contacts: 0500 52 74 84.*

*Excursion schedule: once a month.*

*Free admission.*

One of the newest museums was created in 2023 as an art project by American artist Sto Len and presented as part of the large-scale environmental art festival TRESH-5 "Understanding the History of Pollution". This is a joint project of the Bishkek School of Contemporary Art and Tazar with the support of the Bishkek City Hall and the Bishkek Sanitary Landfill Municipal Enterprise. The museum displays "artifacts" created and collected by city residents living near the landfill, which has received more than 100 million tons of garbage since its existence in 1976. The museum also presents the history of the Krasny Stroitel brick factory, in whose quarry the landfill was formed.

The museum is open to visitors once a month by appointment for groups of 10 people or more. The tour is conducted by the museum's co-curator and employee of the Bishkek Sanitary Polygon Samat Marsov.





*Museum exposition.*



## Museum of Applied Arts of the Peoples of Central Asia

*\*Visit by appointment only.*

*Address: Raritet bookstore (entrance on Razzakov street),  
Ala-Too square.*

*Contacts: 0312 66 08 30.*

*Store opening hours: weekdays from 9:00 to 19:00,  
weekends from 10:00 to 17:00.*

*Entrance to the museum: free.*

It would seem that we have been to one of the oldest bookstores in the city so many times, looked at all the rooms, and perhaps missed the most interesting part. In the central branch of "Raritet" there is a hidden treasure – a museum of applied art of the peoples of Central Asia, the collection of which was collected by the founder of the store, traveler and writer Viktor Kadyrov.

Instead of a door, there are wooden yurt doors. The entire exhibition fits into one large hall, in the center of which wooden chests are gathered in several rows – examples of carved art of nomadic peoples (they stored flatbreads, sugar, cereals). Along the perimeter are household items (a washbasin, a butter churn, leather vessels), women's and men's clothing of different nations (a Kyrgyz *chapan*, an Uzbek dress, a Turkmen hat, Chinese leather shoes). The collection of Kyrgyz jewelry



*Balbal, stone millstones, mortars on display at the museum.*



*The central part of the exhibition.*

attracts attention – *tumars* (amulets), earrings with coral inserts, traditional open bracelets for adults and children. Everything is made of silver, which the nomads considered sacred and protected from the evil eye. Wooden items include adult and children's saddles, *toguz korgool*, dishes and cases for bowls. In addition, the exhibition includes a collection of household items of Russian settlers – spindles, irons, samovars and much more.

The tour is conducted by a store employee, who tells in great detail about each group of exhibits, about the traditions and customs of nomads, even showing how they used this or that household item. These are mainly group tours for children, sometimes for entire classes, after which a creative hour is held.

And what is interesting is that the museum is located in one of the first buildings in Bishkek built in the 20s of the last century. The museum can be a great option if you want to introduce the applied art of Kyrgyzstan to your children, friends, foreign guests, and there is no time to go to large museums.

