

FIVE STANS 18 – MONUMENTALISM

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Dear Reader (2024-03-09)

I was lured to the mountains for 3 days of skiing at Lake Louise and Sunshine. On the doors of the Chateau Lake Louise, where we did not stay, there are signs that say registered guests only. Surely, they don't mean me (in fact they do). That said, today's title image captured from inside the Chateau has nothing to do with the Stans, and much to do with Lake Louise, Canada.

Earlier on in this series I said I would keep the number of images to maximum of 24 per post. Saturday rules are in effect today, and therefore this one has 24 images plus a tangential title image.

Here is the next collection of images from Tajikistan (September 2023), Monumentalism. Yes, we are in the Stans, and that means massive symbols of identity are alive and well. In today's collection you and I will:

- Catch a fleeting glimpse of a monument that has seen better days through a bus window
- Drive by a small rugby stadium not particularly close to anything
- Visit Arbob Palace, a symbolic bridge between the history of Soviet Tajikistan and that of independent Tajikistan, and is an excellent example of Soviet neo-classical architecture. The palace was built in the 1950s by the president of the local collective farm, and it was modelled after the Peterhof Palace, in St. Petersburg, Russia [1]. In true Stans style the building is not nearly as well used as it could be.
- Visit the Statue of Ismoil Somoni, the 10th Century ruler who founded the Samanid dynasty and whose place in history was resurrected after the fall of the Soviet Russian. Location – Dushanbe
- Visit the State Emblem Monument also known as the Stele of Independence, which lies to the West of the Statue of Ismoil Somoni along a wide parkway. Location – Dushanbe
- Walk by another Stele of Independence. Location – Istaravshan
- Visit Rudaki Park named after the celebrated 9th / 10th poet, singer, and musician who is regarded as the first major poet to write in New Persian [2]. Our guide was completely enamoured with him. After our amazing guide in Kyrgyzstan, all others paled in comparison, and our Tajikistan guide was the palest. Location – Dushanbe
- Walk quickly by the well guarded Presidential Palace where our presence was not wanted. Location – Dushanbe
- Visit the Tajikistan Independence and Freedom Tower was constructed by the Chinese and opened in 2022. That same year is also the 30-year anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Tajikistan [3]. There is much irony in the monument's name and Tajikistan's relationship with China. Location – Dushanbe

Notes on Photos

- 3 to 12 – Arbob Palace

3 – The Palace

4 – I had visions of Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Po, and Laa-Laa appearing above the center façade, and I was not struck by lightning.

5 to 7 – Inside the palace's auditorium

8 – Now that is a phone

9 to 12 – Palace grounds

- 13 to 16 – The Statue of Ismoil Somoni

16 – Wonderful doors at the foot of the statue.

- 17, 18 – The State Emblem Monument

- 19 – Another Stele of Independence

- 20, 21 – Monument to Rudaki with detail

- 22 – Presidential Palace

- 23, 24 – The Tajikistan Independence and Freedom Tower



01



02



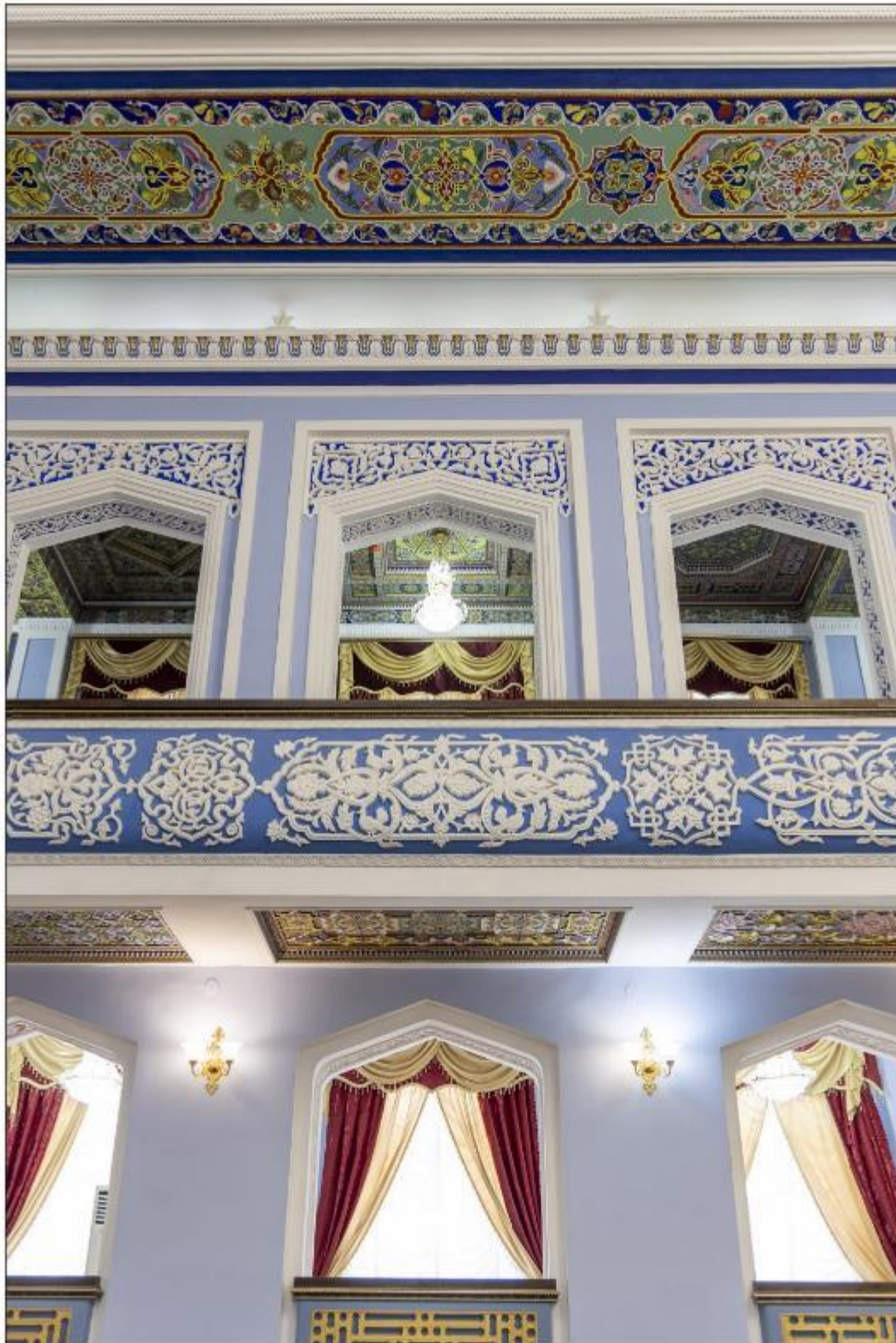
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Footnotes

[1] Adapted from <https://zenvoyageur.wordpress.com/khjuand/> and <http://www.suitcaseandworld.com/2015/04/khujand-arbob-palace.html>

[2] Adapted from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudaki>

[3] Adapted from an English language Chinese news article

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