

Research Article

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New Model of Contemporary Kazakh Cinema – Artstream: Trends and Paradigms

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Abstract: The study of the artstream cinema phenomenon is relevant because of its ability to synthesise national and international trends, contributing to the deep interaction of Kazakh cinema with the world cinematographic culture. The purpose of the study was to investigate the evolution of artstream cinema and its role in the emergence of a new audience that strives for deep content and author's vision, while remaining within the mainstream format. The research methodology includes an analysis of key artstream films of Kazakh production to identify their impact on the development of the artstream. Content analysis is also used to determine the characteristics of art cinema and mainstream cinema inherent in artstream films. The study documented the uniqueness of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan, and its ability to reflect the cultural characteristics of the region and influence the sociocultural specifics of the country. Artstream is presented as a platform for experimentation and innovation, expanding the boundaries of traditional cinema. The study revealed that artstream cinema in Kazakhstan has evolved into a distinctive form that successfully bridges artistic depth with commercial appeal, enabling the preservation of cultural identity while adapting to global influences and attracting new audiences. The research demonstrated how artstream's unique formal characteristics, including its blend of realism and modernism, self-reflection, and emphasis on internal conflicts, have contributed to enriching Kazakhstan's cinematic language and strengthening its position in international cinema.

Keywords: art-cinema, mainstream, Kazakh new wave, auteurism, artstream, Kazakh cinema

1 Introduction

In modern Kazakh cinematography, there is a growing interest in artstream cinema as a unique combination of art cinema and mainstream trends, which allows reflecting of the cultural characteristics and identity of the region, stimulating the development of the national film industry. Artstream cinema, often referred to as art cinema, represents a distinct genre within the broader cinematic landscape. This genre is characterised by its focus on artistic expression, experimental narratives, and a departure from mainstream filmmaking conventions. Below is an in-depth exploration of artstream cinema, its defining features, and its position within the film industry (Bordwell, 2016). Artstream cinema of the early–mid-1920s becomes a platform for experiments and innovations, helping to expand the boundaries of traditional cinema; contributes to the appearance of a new audience that strives for deeper content and author's vision (but is not ready to abandon the usual format

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of mainstream films); and allows preserving the sociocultural specifics of any countries and regions. This is an area in which the study of artstream cinema in the context of particular cultural spaces is beginning to be of increasing scholarly interest (Larionova, 2021).

Artstream cinema, which is a synthesis of art cinema and the mainstream, is a relatively new phenomenon in the film industry, and its scientific study is still in its initial stage. Nevertheless, in recent years, interest in this topic has been growing, which is reflected in an increase in the number of research papers, theses, and dissertations devoted to the analysis of the features of artstream films, their impact on modern culture, and audience perception. The main attention of researchers is focused on investigating the stylistic and thematic features of artstream cinema, its place in the modern cinematic landscape and interaction with the audience. As in the rest of the world, in Kazakhstan, the scientific development of the subject of artstream cinema is also at the initial stage. Kazakh cinema has traditionally been studied in the context of national cinema and its development, overcoming the postcolonial syndrome and creating its own specific film language, while artstream as a separate direction has received attention relatively recently (Baimukhanova *et al.*, 2024). Research in this field often focuses on the analysis of individual films or directors that can be attributed to the artstream, their stylistic features and themes.

Another important aspect is the study of the influence of international film festivals and global cinematic trends on the development of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan. In this context, it is worth mentioning such authors as Mukisheva (2018), who published a fundamental review study in 1998 on the development of Kazakh cinema and analysed important film productions that influenced the development of the national cinematic style, historical aspects of the development of Kazakh cinema from the beginning of the 20th century to the end of the 1990s (including the features of the development of film production in different historical periods, including during the Soviet era and the period of independence). And although the researcher does not use the term “artstream,” the analysis contains many examples of films that belong to the category of art cinema (auteurism), and which stood at the origins of the Kazakh artstream cinema. Abikeyeva (2001) carried out several more specialised studies of Kazakh cinema, including on the topic of Kazakh feature films and related screen folklore traditions, which also significantly influenced the development of modern Kazakh artstream cinema. Another study of Kazakh cinema by Abikeyeva (2006) included both an analysis of Central Asian cinema and specifically Kazakh cinema, also published an almost complete catalogue of films released in 1997 (the time of publication), and the research by Abikeyeva, devoted to the analysis of the influence of nation-building in Kazakhstan on Kazakh cinema deserves special mention (K. Salikov’s work., 2023). B.B. Nogerbek regularly publishes analytical reviews of specific Kazakh films, including those that have been recognised by the international community, and analyses trends in the use of Kazakh folklore traditions in the framework of art cinema (Mursalimova *et al.*, 2015). Jumabekov *et al.* (2017) studied topics such as the presentation of totalitarianism in various genres of cinema, focusing on the use of artistic trends in post-Soviet cinema in Kazakhstan. Nogerbek and Aidarova (2012) investigated the representation of two cultural levels of characters (urban and rural) in modern Kazakh cinema.

The study of artstream was beyond the attention of Kazakh researchers, and a comprehensive investigation of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan as a holistic phenomenon is yet to be conducted. The purpose of this study was to investigate the evolution of artstream cinema in the context of the Kazakh film industry, and to analyse the key films and directors that influenced the development of the artstream. While existing research has extensively studied Kazakh cinema through the lens of national identity and post-Soviet development, there is a notable gap in examining artstream cinema as a distinct phenomenon that bridges artistic and commercial elements in Kazakhstan’s film industry. This study investigates how artstream cinema has evolved in Kazakhstan as a synthesis of art-house and mainstream approaches, analysing its role in creating a new audience that desires deeper content while remaining accessible to general viewers. The objectives of the study include the following:

1. Analysis of the influence of Kazakh culture, traditions, and social processes on the development of artstream cinema.
2. Identification of the problems and challenges facing artstream cinema in Kazakhstan in 2020, including financing, distribution, promotion, and audience perception.
3. Assessment of the presence of Kazakh artstream cinema in the international arena, participation in international film festivals, and opportunities for cooperation with foreign film producers and directors.

4. Forecasting of future trends in the development of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan and its potential to strengthen the national film industry.

The hypothesis of the study is as follows: the modern model of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan is developed under the influence of globalisation processes, which leads to a mix of national and international cinematic trends but seeks to preserve and develop the country's cultural identity by integrating traditional Kazakh motifs and plots into modern cinematic forms.

2 Materials and Methods

The research devoted to analysing the new model of contemporary cinema – artstream – in the context of Kazakh cinematography was aimed at investigating the trends and paradigms that shape this trend. The purpose of the study was to identify the unique features of the artstream, and its influence on the development of Kazakh cinema. Films were chosen based on their ability to blend elements of both art cinema and mainstream cinema, as evidenced by factors like professional production quality, wide release potential, and inclusion of artistic elements such as unique visual styles and deep thematic exploration. The selection also prioritised films that achieved recognition through both commercial success and critical acclaim, including international festival awards and box office performances. Additionally, selected films demonstrated cultural significance in representing Kazakhstan's national identity while maintaining appeal for broader audiences. The distribution of selected films suggests an intentional effort to analyse the evolution of artstream cinema across different periods of Kazakhstan's film industry development.

The following steps have been taken to achieve this goal:

1. At the initial stage, the hypothesis was formulated that artstream as a synthesis of art cinema and mainstream plays a key role in the development of modern Kazakh cinema.
2. A methodology has been defined. The study was based on a comprehensive analysis of Kazakh films classified as artstream. In the framework of the study, in addition to standard methods, a content analysis was used, necessary to isolate the features of both art cinema and mainstream cinema, the combination of which creates the so-called artstream film, and a systematic interpretation of cinematic texts, in which special attention was paid to visual style, narrative structures, subject matter, and author's vision. This approach allowed gaining a deep understanding of the artstream as a phenomenon in Kazakh cinema, defining new areas in its development and influencing the establishment of the modern film culture of the country.
3. The material for the study was selected. A wide selection of films was used for the study, including both well-known Kazakh artstream pieces and lesser-known films. Artstream films, primarily of Kazakh production, such as "Needle" (1988), "Balcony" (1988), "Rebirth Island" (2004), "Lost" (2009), "Walnut tree" (2016), "The Old Man" (2012), Taybekuly (2023), "The Elevator" (2018). Critical reviews, interviews with directors, and other materials were also analysed, allowing a deeper understanding of the context of the creation and perception of these films. Based on the collected data, the specifics of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan were analysed, with an emphasis on thematic and stylistic features, and on the ways in which these films interact with the audience.
4. After a thorough analysis, the unique characteristics of the Kazakh artstream, its role in the cultural and social context of the country, and the potential for further development were evaluated. Based on the results obtained, specific recommendations were also formulated for further research in this area.

The study is a comprehensive analysis of the artstream in the context of Kazakh cinema, identifying trends and innovative approaches in this area. This allows proposing strategies for the further development of Kazakh cinematography, improving its perception both domestically and internationally, emphasising the importance of the artstream as a bridge between national identity and global cultural dynamics.

3 Results

3.1 Aspects of Artstream Determinologisation

In the context of globalisation and cultural exchange, artstream cinema in Kazakhstan is becoming an important phenomenon reflecting both the uniqueness of national culture and the influence of global cinematic trends. Understanding the dynamics and features of the development of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan can provide valuable insights for analysing the modern cinematic process and its impact on cultural diversity and industrial development in the region. To begin with, it is important to define the terminology of the study. “Artstream” in cinema is a synthesis of art cinema and the mainstream. The term “art cinema” was established in the 1950s, while “artstream” has not yet become an official part of scientific circulation, but was already used in the cinematic environment, including Kazakhstan. Artstream combines art cinema, focused on creating a cultural product, and mainstream cinema, known as commercial cinema, created for profit. Mainstream cinema in this context is defined based on the context of the phenomenon of “mainstream” as such, that is, a set of widely used, official cultural standards.

According to Galt and Schoonover (2010), art cinema is characterised as a combination of realism and modernism, representing an aesthetic practice based on the author’s presence and realism, which come into conflict and create ambiguity. Galt and Schoonover highlight the following features of art cinema: the connection with modernism, the study of subjectivity, the complexity of genre categorisation, national specificity, and the creation of a “special viewer”. They also point to the experimentation of art cinema, its focus on characters, openness, and thematic depth. According to Galt and Schoonover, these features highlight the complexity and uniqueness of art cinema as a hybrid practice.

The study by Neal (2002) focuses on the key role of art cinema in the cultural policy of European countries, where it serves as a tool for preserving national film culture and a means of countering the dominance of American cinema. Neal determines the development of art cinema as a response to the demands of the intellectual public, a mechanism of cultural self-identification. The main features of art cinema highlighted by Neal include an emphasis on visual style and individual point of view, a reduction in the role of action in favour of character development, and a different hierarchy between action and characters, and a desire for narrative associated with modernist authors. These elements distinguish art cinema from the mainstream, where most often visualisation and narration are standardised for the public.

The monograph by Andrews (2013) examines in detail the unique characteristics of art cinema that distinguish it from mainstream cinema. The main features on which he focuses can be classified into several key aspects, including the author’s position and the importance of the director as an author in the art cinema (often acting not only as a performer, but also as the main creative engine, whose personal vision and ideas have a decisive influence on the film); a specific narrative and style; appeal to a more limited, often more educated and intellectually minded audience. Andrews also points out that art cinema often touches on complex, controversial, or taboo topics, offering the viewer a space for reflection and introspection. The researcher fully admits the emergence of this new genre as a symbiosis between art cinema and the mainstream.

The article by Sarris (1963) is a key text in the development of the theory of auteurism. The researcher expands on the ideas of the French “politics of authors”, adapting them to American film criticism and argues that the real author of the film is its director, who gives the film their own individual style and vision, which makes it art. He introduces the concept of “inner meaning”, which arises from the personal style of the director, manifested through the technical aspects of cinema, such as editing, camerawork, and visuals. This idea had a significant impact on cinematography and film criticism, emphasising the role of the director as a key creator of the film.

The closest approach to the definition of artstream cinema (as a combination of art cinema and mainstream films) was voiced by Kovacs (2007). The researcher suggests that the art cinema became possible due to the approach to cinema, bringing it closer to other modernist arts. This was the beginning of the practice of creating commercial art cinema. Kovacs offers to analyse art films based on their visible characteristics and

techniques, rather than the intended goals or messages of the authors, which allows for an objective and comparable analysis in the category of commercial art cinema. This approach considers the complexity of the cinematic language and contributes to the assessment of the unique formal qualities of each film. Kovacs notes that the art cinema phenomenon began to take shape between 1950 and 1980, especially in European cinema, with the “French New Wave” playing a key role in the development of art cinema and subsequent commercial art cinema. Commercial art cinema, as described by Kovacs, is close to the artstream and has the following features:

1. An unconventional narrative that can maintain a linear structure with the addition of a unique author’s style and symbolism (for example, the films of Christopher Nolan).
2. The use of innovative visual techniques, experiments with the camera, and special attention to the composition of the frame, colour and lighting, creation of a unique visual atmosphere (“Babylon” by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, “The Grand Budapest Hotel” by Wes Anderson).
3. Editing features, rhythm, tempo, and the use of sound and music to create a special aesthetic (“La La Land” by Damien Chazelle, “The Gentlemen” by Guy Ritchie).
4. Abstraction, subjectivity, and reflexivity manifested in abstract images, the exploration of the inner world of characters and the reflective nature of the film (“Babylon” by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu).
5. An association with the author’s cinema, where a significant contribution to the film is made by a director or screenwriter reflecting a personal view of the world.

This paper does not present a full range of characteristic features of artstream cinema, but the definition and classification of commercial art cinema come closest to this. Karadogan (2010) argues that art cinema, both classical and commercial, occupies a central place in film culture and serves as a tool for cultural positioning in Western culture. The art cinema provides a platform for experimenting with form and content, representing a self-reflective approach to cinematography (Oleksy-Gebczyk & Bilianskyi, 2024). It emphasises the author’s vision, being associated with unique filmmakers and their ways of storytelling. Artstream also promotes reflection on important cultural and social issues, offering viewers not only entertainment, but also food for thought (Madmarova et al., 2023a). It plays a key role in the international cinematic dialogue, presenting diverse cultural perspectives and promoting cross-cultural exchange (Umirov, 2024). Thus, based on several studies devoted to mainstream and art cinema, it is possible to identify their characteristic features, which to one degree or another manifest themselves in artstream cinema. According to Hayward (2006), Coskun (2009), Lev (1993), the following characteristic features of mainstream films can be distinguished:

1. Big budget (films often have a significant budget for production and marketing).
2. Famous actors (famous and popular actors star in such films).
3. Commercial orientation (films are created to attract a wide audience and receive high box office receipts).
4. A standard set of genres and themes (most often such films refer to such popular genres as action films, comedies, romantic comedies, or thrillers, plots are often based on simple, universal themes that are easily perceived by a wide audience).
5. Plot formula (films often follow a proven plot formula with a clear structure and an expected solution).
6. Spectacular special effects, the use of advanced technologies, a large number of dynamic scenes and spectacular shots, expensive costumes and accessories (large budgets allow the use of advanced technologies, spectacular special effects, expensive visual elements, spectacular scenes, and entourage).
7. Wide release (films are usually widely released in cinemas around the world).
8. A massive advertising campaign (films are accompanied by an intensive advertising campaign in the media and social networks).
9. Reviews from critics (films often receive wide resonance in the media and discussions among film critics, even if they are not always positive).

In turn, according to Gaut (2010) and Wilinsky (2001), it is possible to formulate the following characteristic features of an art cinema and auteurism:

1. Low budget (art cinema often has a limited budget and is produced by independent film studios).

2. The author's approach (art cinema directors often have a unique style and express a personal vision in their films, remaining recognisable due to these characteristics).
3. Experimentation (films often experiment with form, structure, and content, departing from traditional cinematic norms).
4. Focus on characters (art cinema plots often focus on character development and inner experiences).
5. Deep themes (films often touch on complex, philosophical, or social topics that may not be "popular" among a wide audience).
6. Unconventional story (art cinema may have an unconventional plot structure, a non-linear story, or an open ending).
7. Original visual style (films often use original visual techniques and stylistics).
8. Limited release (art cinema is usually released in a limited box office, often in specialised cinemas or festivals).
9. Emphasis on atmosphere (art cinema puts emphasis on creating a unique atmosphere, important for understanding the film).
10. Critical acclaim (although films may not be commercially successful, they often receive critical acclaim and awards at film festivals).

The technical criteria of the art cinema include unique visual and sound techniques that distinguish it from the mainstream (Shtets & Melnyk, 2024). These can be unusual shooting angles, long-term plans, complex work with light, symbolic camera angles, experiments with sound and music, and non-linear narration and metaphorical plots. However, artstream films can combine elements of both art cinema and mainstream, varying in style depending on the director's idea and the subject of the work. This highlights that there are no universal criteria for the artstream genre (Young & Duncan, 2009); each film is unique in its combination of cinematic approaches. Thus, artstream films are films characterised by combining in one work the main elements of mainstream and art cinema trends, most often: commercial benefits, entertainment, author's style, intellectuality. Films created because of such an association are difficult to attribute either to the model of mainstream (commercial) cinema, or to the category of artistic (author's) cinema, in terms of content, artistic level, and general aesthetics (Hamlyn, 2003). In this regard, there is a need to distinguish artstream as a subgenre of art cinema in modern cinema.

Artstream films themselves have become widespread in world cinema, especially over the past 25 years. Among the famous representatives of the art direction: Quentin Tarantino ("Reservoir Dogs," "Pulp Fiction"), Steven Spielberg ("Schindler's List," "A.I. Artificial Intelligence"), Christopher Nolan ("Remember," "Inception"), Tom Tykwer ("Run, Lola, Run," "Paradise," and "Perfumer"), David Fincher ("Sam," and "Fight Club"), Michael Mann ("Ali," "Accomplice"), Martin Scorsese ("Taxi Driver," "Raging Bull", "The Last Temptation of Christ"), Spike Lee ("Malcolm X," "Do the Right Thing").

The main feature of artstream cinema is its ability to attract the attention of both critics and a wide audience. Films of this genre often experiment with form and content, exploring complex themes and psychological aspects of human life (Rieser & Zapp, 2002). They remain accessible and understandable to viewers who do not have a special education in the field of art.

3.2 Characteristic Features of Artstream Cinema in Historical and Cultural Contexts

Conventionally, the cinematic space is divided into American, European, Asian, and African (Finn, 2022), focusing on the characteristic features of cultural spaces in these regions, dictating the choice of topics and the concept of their disclosure, the thinking of filmmakers and audience requests, stable cinematic traditions and other important aspects that affect the specifics of cinema in general and the artstream in particular. For example, examples of key arthritic films and American directors include David Lynch and his films "Mulholland Drive" (2001) and "Blue Velvet" (1986), in which the director displays his famously unique style,

combining elements of surrealism, psychological thriller, and neo-noir, and often exploring the darker side of American life and psyche; Paul Thomas Anderson with his films “Magnolia” (1999) and “There Will Be Blood” (2007), characterised by the director’s signature sweeping and multifaceted narratives, deep characters, and mastery of visual direction; Sofia Coppola with “Lost in Translation” (2003), in which the director demonstrated her distinctive lyrical approach to directing and her ability to explore the subtle emotional states of her characters; Wes Anderson with his “The Grand Budapest Hotel” (2014) and recognisable stylistically unique and visually rich cinematography, use of irony and eccentric characters, and many other directors and individual films.

Cultural and social factors such as diversity, social movements, and political events significantly influence the subject matter and presentation of the American artstream, bringing depth and diversity to it. Digital technologies and social media open new opportunities for experimentation in cinema, while the economic aspects and technological superiority of the United States determine which projects will be implemented. Globalisation promotes the exchange of ideas between countries, making artstream cinema a carrier of universal themes and ideas (Sergeyeva & Bronin, 2024; Stadnik, 2024).

The European artstream is enriched by the works of many talented directors who combine artistic skill with deep themes. Examples include Lars von Trier (Denmark) with his films “Antichrist” and “Melancholia,” known for their provocative style; Pedro Almodovar (Spain), who is known for vivid, emotional works; Michael Haneke (Austria), who explores the themes of alienation and moral ambivalence; and Paolo Sorrentino (Italy), whose films are distinguished by their visually stunning beauty and poetic reflections on life (Fedorov et al., 2023). The development of artstream cinema in Europe depends on many cultural and social factors. The influence of history, including wars and colonialism, is directly reflected in cinema, which often explores historical events and their impact on modern society. Themes of social movements such as feminism and human rights are also actively addressed in artstream films, emphasising the active social position of directors (King, 2022). The cultural diversity of Europe emphasises the uniqueness of each culture instead of their integration.

Numerous European film festivals, such as Cannes, Berlin, and Venice, play a significant role in promoting artstream cinema. Government support in Europe is often more generous and less focused on commercial gain, which gives filmmakers the freedom to experiment with form and content (Andrew, 2020). The artstream trend also took place in the Kazakh art cinema. This trend has been particularly evident in recent years.

Artstream cinema in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan, reflects a unique cultural and historical context, focusing on themes of identity and traditions. Films often explore the interaction of traditional values and modernity, the impact of globalisation on local societies, historical and social changes, and personal stories and interpersonal relationships (Ware, 2025). The directors integrate the natural landscapes of the region and experiment with visual style, creating an atmosphere and conveying emotions (McGinity-Peebles, 2022).

The development of artstream cinema in the region depends on many factors, including the historical context, Soviet influence, and rethinking of history after independence (Chelpanova, 2022). The directors explore new topics related to national identity and Soviet heritage. The folklore, music, and literature of the region, reflected in the cinema, and limited resources and financing, stimulating savings and experiments, are important. The processes of globalisation and social change stimulate consideration of topics such as migration, gender equality, and social justice. Participation in international film festivals and recognition on the world stage also contribute to the development and promotion of artstream cinema in the region.

3.3 Specific Features of the Kazakh Artstream Cinema

The above-described features are typical for the entire region, and for Kazakhstan in particular. The study by Mursalimova et al. (2015) points to the profound changes in Kazakh cinema after the Soviet period and shows how cinema can serve as a means for research and criticism of social changes. The most significant aspects were changes in the ideological principles and styles of Kazakh cinema, which began during the period of

“perestroika” and “glasnost” and were characterised by a departure from the totalitarian ideological framework, which was reflected in a more free expression and innovative approach to film creation; the emergence of the “Kazakh New Wave,” whose films were distinguished by a new style and artistic principles critically interpreting the Soviet society; a different approach to reflecting the transition period, excluding the inherent censorship of complex and morally difficult topics (such as child drug addiction). Several specific characteristic features were mentioned in the study by Yang (2022). Thus, the researcher points out that Kazakh cinema has gone through several stages of development – from enlightenment and inception to prosperity, reflection, and independence, each of which is marked by its challenges and achievements. According to Yang, Kazakh cinematographers have maintained their desire for enlightenment even in the face of changing times, adapting to the needs of the era and resisting external geopolitical and ideological pressures in Kazakhstan using metaphors and artistic techniques to integrate cinematic creativity with national and regional culture. However, the researcher notes the significant differences between Kazakh cinema and Soviet cinema.

Kazakh cinema traditionally acts as a means of exploring national identity and cultural exchange (Madmarova *et al.*, 2023b). According to Abikeyeva and Sabitov (2020), the birth of national cinema in Kazakhstan began in the 1960s, the period when national cinematography started to emerge. Despite the strong ideological control of the Soviet government, the filmmakers of that time were able to present alternative ideological values and worldviews on the international stage. During this period, films reflecting the traditional way of life of Kazakhs, historical, and epic images of national heroes were released on the screens. The growth of the film industry was particularly noticeable during the “thaw” period, when films capable of critically examining Soviet ideology through allegorical methods began to appear, and such founders of the national Kazakh film industry showed their talents: Shaken Aimanov, Mazhit Begalin, Abdulla Karsakbayev, and Sultan Hodzhikov. This period paved the way for the further development of Kazakh cinema, and its influence is also visible in contemporary art cinema (Rollberg, 2021).

Alim Sabitov described the period 1980–1990 in Kazakh cinema as a “New Wave” characterised by active experiments in the creation of original and mainstream cinema, including films such as “Needle” by Rashid Nugmanov and “Balcony” by Kalykbek Salykov. The period 1991–1997, the first years of Kazakhstan’s independence, was marked by intense reflection and overcoming of the postcolonial syndrome and post-Soviet complexes. The period from 1998 to 2007 was marked by the search for cultural self-determination and a change of emphasis from negative to positive (the film “Aksuat” by Serik Aprymov). The period from 1998 to 2007 became very productive and gave rise to the emergence of a mainstream and commercial art cinema (for example, the super project “Nomad”), stimulated the emergence of many new independent production studios, attracting large investments and leading Western producers (films “Racketeer,” “Tulip,” “Mongol”).

From 2007 to the present, in the middle of 2020, a new stage began, which some researchers call the “Second Wave” (Kamza, 2021). This was especially true in 2022, which saw several very strong directorial debuts. Among them, for example, Aydin Sakhaman, who created the musical biopic “Dos Mukasan,” which was successful at the box office (2 months of screening in cinemas, box office receipts of KZT 503 million or USD 1.1 million), Aldiyar Bayrakimov with the social drama “Paralympian” (which collected USD 92 at the box office and received several prizes at international film festivals), Aisultan Seitov with the ethnohorror “Kash,” Aizhan Kasymbek with the family tragicomedy “Ot” (which collected awards at various festivals), Darkhan Tulegenov with the drama “Brothers” (which collected a substantial sum at the box office and won prizes at film festivals), Eldar Shibanov with the picture “Mountain Bow” (which debuted at the Venice Film Festival), Alisher Jadigenov with the dark family drama “Otau” (which also received several festival prizes), as well as Timur Dulatov, Darkhan Sarkenov, Madi Balazhanov.

New trends have been particularly pronounced since 2019, when the world began to change, first due to the coronavirus pandemic (which imposed certain restrictions on the film industry and film distribution), and then due to radical geopolitical changes, both domestically and in the international political arena (Alzhanov & Mashurova, 2024). This period was marked by an intensification of the search for their own identity and an increase in the willingness of local viewers to perceive and support a domestic product (not only comedies), the democratisation of cinema, the availability of new technologies and the opportunity to make a good film with a modest budget, state assistance (five of the above-mentioned debutants’ films were shot with funding from the State Centre for National Cinema Support) (Matkerim *et al.*, 2023). In the last time period, especially in

2020, two factors had the most significant impact on the development of Kazakhstan's artstream industry: successes at international festivals, which also led to increased interest in Kazakh films from selectors, international producers and buyers; and the cumulative effect of the development of the Kazakh film industry as a whole, which gave the world many full-length and short films, music videos, student films, and TV series.

From 2007 to 2020, Kazakh cinema was marked by the adaptation of Western influences and the pursuit of globalisation, which manifests itself in the "pro-Western" sentiments of filmmakers. A variety of topics, especially criticism of social and national issues, support the development of critical realism (Amangeldiyeva et al., 2020). Economic and political positioning is enhanced by private investment and government support (allocation of budget funds for film production, creation of film studios and film centres, development of tax incentives and other incentives for investors, support for national festivals and awards) (Ketners, 2024). Cinematography focuses on family values of national identity and stability, the beauty and importance of nature, the preservation and promotion of the language and culture of the people of Kazakhstan, the popularisation of traditions, customs and history, there is a critical rethinking of social and political problems (corruption, poverty, migration, and human rights). Participation in international festivals strengthens the global position of Kazakh cinema. The domestic film market is limited, as are budgets, but government support stimulates the development of film production and the preservation of national culture (Kaluzhynska & Miroshnichenko, 2024).

Many modern Kazakh films are created by small production studios and companies, both state-funded and fully autonomous. It is the young studios that create artstream films that combine both commercial (mainstream) success and authorial originality with patriotic messages (Salem Social Media company, which gave a ticket to the profession to many of the debutants listed above). These aspects show the dynamic development of modern Kazakh cinema, its readiness to integrate with the world cinematographic community, and its desire to reflect both deep individual and national values through the art of cinema.

3.4 Subject Analysis of the Artstream of Kazakh Cinema

Based on the above material, it is possible to draw a logical conclusion that artstream cinema in Kazakhstan has a somewhat heterogeneous structure, most often depending on the specific period of the creation of the film and the dominant trends at that time. To confirm this hypothesis, it makes sense to make a substantive analysis of several selected Kazakh artstream films. The films of the New Wave period (1980–1990) are the films "Needle" (1988) and "Balcony" (1988). In 1988, two films were released at the Kazakhfilm studio in the creative association Alem – "Needle" and "Balcony." "Needle," directed by Rashid Nugmanov, belongs to the thriller, drama, and arthouse genres. The film starred non-professional actors, including famous personalities Viktor Tsoi and Petro Mamonov. "Balcony," directed by Kalikbek Salikov, is a drama. Like "Needle," the film uses non-professional actors. Both films were created at the same studio within the framework of the same creative association.

Although both films officially have different classifications, both fully fall under the definition of artstream cinema. Table 1 presents the characteristic features of the mainstream and art cinema, which are found in the film "Needle," forming its artstream orientation.

Notably, the main characteristics of "Needle" are still closer to the art cinema, and its attribution to mainstream cinema may be due more to its popularity and influence on culture than typical mainstream features. "Needle" became the first full-length project directed by Rashid Nugmanov and was a student underground project created by carriers of an informal subculture, played by representatives of the same subculture and for the first time vividly manifested the trend of Westernisation of Kazakh cinema (Western motifs, hairstyles, and outfits). As Nugmanov stated, although the film was successful in terms of popularity, the director himself lost a lot of money on it and the project did not pay off at all (I lost a lot of money, 2022). Table 2 presents the characteristic features of the mainstream and art cinema, which are found in the film "Balcony" by Kalykbek Salykov, forming its artstream orientation.

Both films demonstrate the specific features of the New Wave period, including such characteristic features as documentary filming, the involvement of non-professional actors, the transformation of the

Table 1: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “Needle” by Rashid Nugmanov

Signs of art cinema	Signs of mainstream cinema
1. Unique author’s style (elements of neorealism and expressive visualisation, unusual editing for Soviet films) 2. Focus on deep topics (drug addiction, alienation, and the search for meaning in life) 3. Symbolism and metaphor (for example, the needle as a symbol of addiction and pain) 4. Experiments with form (including a non-linear plot and non-standard cinematic techniques) 5. Author’s viewpoint 6. The music of the band “Kino” and Viktor Tsoy plays a significant role in creating the atmosphere of the film and its emotional impact on the viewer 7. “Needle” has had a significant impact on culture and has become a cult film, which is also a sign of the auteurism 8. Most of the actors involved in the film played themselves. 9. Acute social problems	1. Popularity among a wide audience 2. Famous cultural figure in the title role. Victor Tsoi, the leader of the “Kino” band, played the main role in the film, which attracted the attention of his many fans 3. Genre elements (thriller and crime movie elements) 4. Professional production

Source: created by the authors.

hero (who remains Human despite the circumstances of the outside world), and the destruction of the Soviet mentality. The artstream films of the following time phases, 1991–1998 and 1998–2007, were embodied differently. In 2004, Rustem Abdrashev shot the drama “Rebirth Island” at the Kazakhfilm studio. The film featured professional actors. Five years later, in 2009, the Satayfilm studio released the film “The Lost” directed by Akan Satayev. This film combined the genres of detective, thriller, drama, and mysticism. The film starred professional and famous actors, including Russian actor Andrei Merzlikin.

Although both films belong to the same time, they differ significantly. “Rebirth Island” is almost entirely an auteur film, created for film festivals and a narrow audience, with minimal elements of the mainstream. In contrast, “Lost” combines the features of commercial cinema with elements of an art cinema, focusing on a wider audience. Tables 3 and 4 provide a more detailed representation of these parameters and characteristics.

As can be seen from Table 5, “Rebirth Island” in terms of its indicators really belongs to an art cinema to a much greater extent in its classical sense.

Table 2: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “Balcony” by Kalykbek Salykov

Signs of art cinema	Signs of mainstream cinema
1. It is based on the poetry of Olzhas Suleimenov and his poem “Balcony” 2. A unique author’s style and philosophy, different from Soviet cinema, with unusual editing and tempo 3. Deep topics: personality cult, night arrests, denunciations, fear of being an “enemy of the people” 4. Symbolism: Solntselov as a “real human being” living outside of time 5. Genre experiments, tolgau elements in the screenplay (Kakisheva, 2015) 6. Experiments with form and content 7. Pronounced author’s viewpoint 8. Acute social problems, criticism of the Soviet system 9. Partial documentary, emphasised realism	1. The plot is built in a clear structural integrity, consistent and easy for a wide audience to perceive 2. The chosen genre and thematic focus of the painting is suitable for a wide audience

Source: created by the authors.

Table 3: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “Rebirth Island” by Rustem Abdrashev

Signs of art cinema	Signs of mainstream cinema
1. It is based on the poetry of Zharaskan Abdrashev 2. The author's style and philosophy of the director using unusual editing, tempo, and colour correction 3. Focus on deep themes: first love, loyalty, moral maturity, violation of human rights 4. Strong symbolism and metaphors based on Abdrashev's poetry, with character symbols 5. Mixing genres and experimenting with form, including parallel plots 6. The severity of social problems: denunciations, violation of personal freedoms, discrimination, environmental disasters 7. The destruction of the Soviet mentality and emphasised realism with documentary elements 8. Multicultural composition of the characters, the difference between urban and rural Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians 9. Discussion of national culture and its infringement, the tragedy of the Aral Sea 10. Widely acclaimed at film festivals and critics	1. Plot is built in a clear structural integrity, consistent, and easy for a wide audience to perceive 2. The chosen genre and thematic focus of the picture (drama, romance) is also suitable for perception by a wide audience 3. Fictional film techniques are used extensively 4. Techniques of Western films are often noticeable 5. Roles are played by professional actors

Source: created by the authors.

The film “Lost” tends more towards the mainstream, although the experimentation of genres and the author's presentation still prove that this film should be considered artstream, and not purely commercial. Based on the induced examples and other samples of cinema of the same time, it becomes obvious that films of this time period demonstrate an increasing interest in elements of commercial and mainstream cinema, which was not so obvious during the New Wave period but becomes more expressive in later time intervals. Considering the identified characteristic features, it seems advisable to divide the period 2007–2020 into two subperiods, including films released from 2007 to 2018 and films released from 2019 and later. In 2012, Ernek Tursunov released the film “The Old Man” at the Kazakhfilm studio, which combined the genres of drama, historical film, thriller, and adventure film. The film starred non-professional actors. In 2016, the same Kazakhfilm studio released the dramatic comedy “Walnut Tree” directed by Yerlan Nurmakhanbetov, also with the participation of non-professional actors. The films demonstrate a combination of elements of mainstream and art cinema, judging by the number of awards – with some predominance of creative aspects. During this period, Kazakh directors often began to choose non-professional actors for the main roles. Most of

Table 4: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “Lost” by Akan Satayev

Signs of art cinema	Signs of mainstream cinema
1. Mixture of genres: a mystical thriller and a philosophical parable 2. Plot forces the viewer to be in suspense all the time. Ending is unpredictable and ambiguous 3. There are only nine actors involved in the film, and the whole action takes place in the Kazakh steppe 4. Special time frame 5. Using music as a tool to create suspense 6. Philosophical and metaphorical subtext and message of the whole film	1. Elements of widely popular genres of thriller, detective, and drama are used 2. Professional production 3. Professional and famous actors 4. Use of special effects and expensive spectacular technological techniques 5. Wide release 6. Targeting a mass audience 7. Good box office receipts 8. Big budget

Source: created by the authors.

Table 5: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “The Old Man” by Ermek Tursunov

Signs of art cinema	Signs of mainstream cinema
1. Inner world of the character 2. Slow pace and detailed study of the moments 3. Visual expressiveness: using the Kazakh steppe to create a visual series 4. Existential themes: loneliness, death, the search for meaning 5. Mixture of genres: drama, philosophy, historical epic 6. Critical acclaim, awards at festivals 7. Adaptation of Ernest Hemingway’s novel “The Old Man and the Sea.” 8. Part of the author’s trilogy 9. Non-professional actor in the title role 10. Unique style and novelty of the film language 11. Entourage and nature shots with a national flavour 12. “Humanisation” of nature, with the transformation of animals and even fog into characters	1. Inclusion of the events of the Great Patriotic War in the plot is aimed at attracting a wider audience due to historical interest 2. Charismatic main character 3. Presence of a conflict 4. Universal themes 5. Big budget 6. Wide release 7. Professional production, the use of expensive spectacular technological techniques

Source: created by the authors.

these films received government support and proved to be financially successful or at least not detrimental. They are also recognised as classics of Kazakh cinema, successfully representing the country in the international arena and in digital media, including streaming services, which indicates recognition and progress (Ormanli, 2019; Salvador *et al.*, 2019). Tables 5 and 6 present the characteristic features of the mainstream and art cinema in these films.

The film “The Old Man” represents a different form of using the mainstream of cinema, in which a beautiful picture, professional presentation, and a classic form of the plot are used to convey the author’s vision of the director to a wider audience. Such an approach to the creation of films will be increasingly and more clearly seen in later time periods of the development of Kazakh cinema.

The film “Walnut tree” stands out among the others listed, at least in that it departs from the Americanised style to the European one, demonstrating a story without sharp peaks and conflicts, close to the documentaries of reality (Gee, 2021), devoid of main characters (Elsaesser, 2021). However, the film combines elements of not only art cinema, but also mainstream cinema, offering the viewer both light and entertaining content, and

Table 6: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “Walnut tree” by Yerlan Nurmakhanbetov

Signs of art cinema	Signs of mainstream cinema
1. Non-linear plot without main characters, reflecting the director’s concept 2. Atmospheric: directorial work on immersion in the life of the village, typical for art cinema 3. Depth of the characters 4. Satire for the analysis of everyday life and social norms 5. Authentic casting, including actors from local theatres and villagers 6. Yerlan Nurmukhambetov’s unique visual style with an emphasis on camera work and details, reducing the role of acting 7. Absence of traditional conflicts and dramatic peaks, the narrative of everyday life	1. Comedy and drama with elements of adventure and romance aimed at a wide audience 2. Linear plot with a happy ending 3. The use of popular motifs, such as bride kidnapping, makes the film close and understandable to a wide range of viewers 4. Presence of humour and funny situations designed to entertain the audience 5. Participation and success at international film festivals

Source: created by the authors.

deep reflections on cultural traditions and social relations. The films of the first period of the modern history of Kazakh cinematography laid the foundation on which the directors of the 2020 generation were able to realise their potential. The second period is represented by films from 2020, which also included the film “Black, Black Man” by Adilkhan Yerzhanov, shot in 2019, but much more in line with the style and spirit of a later period. “The Elevator” was released in 2018 under the direction of Nurtas Adambay through Nurtas Production. The film falls into the psychological drama-thriller genre and features professional actors in its cast. “Kash,” released in 2022, was directed by Aisultan Seitov and produced by Qara Studios. This ethno-horror film also employed professional actors for its production. Both films represent different genres within Kazakhstani cinema, with “The Elevator” exploring psychological elements while “Kash” delves into horror with ethnic elements. These productions demonstrate the diversity of Kazakhstan’s contemporary film industry and its exploration of various genres.

Tables 7 and 8 reveal the characteristic features of mainstream and art-cinema that form the artstream nature of these films.

The movie “The Elevator” by Nurtas Adambay combines elements of both mainstream cinema and art cinema, addressing a wide audience while maintaining the depth of meaning and the author’s approach. In form and film language, it resembles Night Shyamalan’s film “The Devil”, but at the same time, it carries a completely different, not entertaining, but philosophical and social context, appealing to modern Kazakh reality and indicating problems that require the attention of a simple viewer (a resident of Kazakhstan).

The film “Kash” by Aisultan Seitov can be put on a par with such epic historical dramas as “The Old Man” by Ermek Tursunov, the film “Amanat” by Satybaldy Narymbetov, and more commercial projects like “Tamaris” by Akan Satayev or even the film “Survivor” by Alejandro G. Inarritu. This is a classic representative of mainstream cinema, using all the possibilities of mainstream cinema to create an author’s picture with a deep social, philosophical, and national context. Thus, the Kazakh artstream, although it has a few similar parameters and features with the American and European artstream in cinema, still offers a number of purely unique characteristics and parameters that sharply distinguish it from other cinematic works (Kulezic-Wilson, 2019). Among such features, it is worth highlighting the specific Kazakh mentality, which manifests itself in many aspects – from the choice of themes and the tempo of narration to the features of the author’s interpretation of eternal themes and familiar archetypes (Lir & Ayalon, 2022).

Artstream cinema in Kazakhstan often reflects the specifics of the Central Asian region, including its historical transitions and cultural traditions (Adiyet & Ayagan, 2020), while American and European cinema

Table 7: Characteristic features of the mainstream and art cinema in “The Elevator” by Nurtas Adambay

Features of art cinema	Features of mainstream cinema
1. Focus on the inner world of the characters. In-depth study of the personalities of the main characters and their relationships in a crisis	1. Exciting plot and dynamic development of events, unexpected twists, and tense situations. Events unfolding in a confined space (elevator), but with a high degree of dynamics and intensity
2. Limited space as a metaphor. The use of an elevator as an enclosed space for the study of social and psychological problems	2. Plot contains a lesson about the importance of human relationships and the impossibility of solving all problems with money
3. Non-linear storytelling, the use of monologues to reveal the characters’ past and their motivations	3. Presence of elements of a psychological thriller
4. The author’s approach. The personal vision of the director and the original script reflecting the unique style and philosophy of Adambay	4. Success of the film at Genrecelebration 2018 in Los Angeles testifies to the recognition by the mainstream audience
5. Psychological depth. Study of the psychological state of characters who have become hostages of an extreme situation	5. Professional and high-quality work
6. Social criticism. Criticism of social norms and values through the prism of conflict between characters of different social status	6. Big budget
	7. Wide release

Source: created by the authors.

Table 8: Characteristic signs of the mainstream and art cinema in the film “Kash” by Aisultan Seitov

Features of art cinema	Features of mainstream cinema
1. The debut film of the music video maker with an original visual and restrained colour correction, accentuating doom with patches of warm tones for comfort and safety 2. The plot is about overcoming the animal nature, permeated with abstraction and symbolism, reflecting the realism of the 1930s 3. The archetype of the main character is an ordinary man fighting for survival 4. An authentically created world evokes a strong emotional reaction from the audience 5. The 4 by 3 format enhances the atmosphere of limitation and lack of freedom, being associated with the Soviet past 6. Suspense in the scenes is emphasised by the original musical accompaniment 7. The film touches on the theme of mass starvation, emphasising the engagement of art cinema in understanding historical and social issues	1. Professional and high-quality work 2. Big budget 3. Wide release 4. Theme is close to many residents of the country and resonates with feelings, enhancing empathy for the characters 5. Highly professional approach to decorations, costumes, and other visual identity 6. Story of the struggle and overcoming of personal and social trials has massive attractive potential 7. The film is designed to have a strong emotional impact on the viewer 8. Plot dynamics and tension, built according to the laws of Hollywood films. The presence of disturbing suspense scenes and musical accompaniment that enhance the viewing experience

Source: created by the authors.

reflect their own unique cultural and historical contexts and are much more focused on new forms of context presentation (streaming, experimental films, virtual reality (Michaux, 2020)). In general, the similarities and differences between artstream cinema in Kazakhstan, USA, and Europe highlight the richness and diversity of modern cinema, and the ability of cinema to serve as a universal language for exploring deep themes and ideas. In addition, based on the analysis, it is possible to obtain visual confirmation that in recent years Kazakh artstream cinema has established itself as a bright and unique phenomenon on the international cinematic scene. Kazakh films regularly participate in prestigious international film festivals and receive awards and recognition from critics and audiences (Demeschenko, 2023). For example, they are widely represented at international film festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale), the Venice Film Festival, the Moscow International Film Festival, and many others. This participation contributes not only to the promotion of Kazakh cinema on the world market, but also to the exchange of cultural and cinematic experiences and increasing interest in Kazakh culture and history.

The future of artstream cinema in Kazakhstan promises to strengthen the national film industry through the exploration of new genres and themes such as social dramas, historical epics, and films on national themes. The growing interest in the artstream stimulates the development of infrastructure and educational programmes of cinematography (Mukhtarova *et al.*, 2024). Kazakhstan, with its unique cultural heritage, can integrate traditions with modern film techniques, providing new perspectives on culture. International successes strengthen the country’s reputation and attract foreign investment, and accessibility through online platforms strengthens the influence of Kazakh cinema on the global stage. Thus, it can be argued that artstream cinema in Kazakhstan has significant potential to strengthen the national film industry.

The analysis reveals that artstream cinema in Kazakhstan combines elements of both mainstream and art house films, characterised by its unique cultural identity and historical transitions. Kazakh artstream evolved through several distinct periods, from the New Wave of the 1980s-1990s to the contemporary era post-2019, with each period demonstrating different balances between commercial appeal and artistic expression. The research examined various films including “Needle” (1988) and “The Old Man” (2012), showing how Kazakh directors increasingly integrated Western influences while maintaining cultural authenticity and addressing social issues. These films consistently demonstrate key artstream characteristics: a combination of commercial elements (professional production, wide release) with artistic features (unique directorial vision, complex themes, and experimental techniques), while reflecting distinctly Kazakh perspectives on universal themes.

The development of Kazakh artstream cinema has been supported by government funding, international festival recognition, and a growing domestic audience, positioning it as a significant force in the global cinema while maintaining its cultural distinctiveness.

4 Discussion

The results obtained have significant theoretical and practical implications for the cinematography of Kazakhstan and represent an important step in understanding the transformation of modern cinema in the context of globalisation and changing cultural preferences of the audience. For example, the research contributes to a deep understanding of the artstream as a cultural phenomenon that synthesises art cinema and the mainstream, offering a new perspective on the development of cinema in the context of global and local cultural processes. This expands the theoretical framework of cinematic research, emphasising the importance of cross-cultural interaction and adaptation to the changing tastes of the audience. It also significantly complements the definitions of avant-garde and avant-garde commercial film noted in the monograph by Rees (2009), which are definitions of contemporary artstream cinema, adding to the collection of characteristic features of different national regions in the context of their historical development. In addition, this paper has revealed aspects that have not previously been emphasised in the context of analysing Kazakh cinema, such as those highlighted in the study by Parker and Schmitz (2022) of creative documentaries within art cinema.

This research opens new horizons for a deep understanding of the artstream in a variety of cultural and geographical contexts, offering a thorough study of its influence on the establishment of cinematic traditions, audience tastes, and film production methods in various countries. In addition, it presents an alternative method of analysing Kazakh cinema in the era of Soviet and post-Soviet cultural influence, complementing and expanding the existing analysis proposed by Michelson (2020) and Ranciere (2019). The study also highlights the importance of the artstream as a means of cultural self-identification and expression of national uniqueness, especially in the context of globalisation and cultural homogenisation. This allows for a fuller appreciation of cinema's role in preserving and transmitting cultural values across generations, maintaining the uniqueness of the national cinematic discourse.

The results of the study highlight the potential of artstream as a tool for strengthening the national film industry, contributing to the development of a unique cinematic style and strengthening the cultural identity of Kazakhstan, in practice confirming the claim that artstream films can attract a wider audience, promoting cultural exchange and international recognition of Kazakh cinema, and that artstream can play a key role in the development of modern film culture, enriching it with new forms and ideas. Particularly interesting in this context is the aspect of culture and art, touched upon rather in historical retrospect, and complementing the analysis of the art sphere of Kyrgyzstan as a culturally similar country, presented by Zimmermann (2023). However, it is worth noting the fact that the very issue of the relationship and mutual influence of cinema and national art has yet to be analysed and revealed in the example of Kazakhstan.

Although the study covers events starting in 2020, a full-fledged analysis of new trends in the film industry in Kazakhstan is still lacking. Even relatively recent research on the current era of post-art by Chateau and Moure (2020) does not fully reveal the picture with its fresh trends and original inventions of the directors who chose the artstream. Modern directors of Kazakhstan are actively exploring new forms and content, blurring the boundaries between traditional and experimental cinema. For example, they actively use new technologies to enhance visual expression and integrate interactive elements into film productions. This contributes to the emergence of new genres and approaches that could reflect complex sociocultural processes in the country and beyond. It is also important to note that the cinematography of Kazakhstan is influenced by global cinematic trends, such as the desire for content globalisation and an increase in interest in multicultural and multilingual projects. The directors try not only to reflect the unique national characteristics, but also to address universal human themes, which makes Kazakh cinema interesting for foreign viewers. Experiments with narrative deserve special attention in modern research, where the traditional linear plot structure gives way to fragmented and multi-perspective narratives. All these aspects point to the need for a deeper and more

systematic approach to analysing the current state of Kazakh cinema, which will allow for a better understanding of its contribution to world culture and cinematography.

A rational recommendation in this context may be the compilation of a detailed catalogue of Kazakh films, starting in 2020, with a detailed description of the features and nuances, and critical analysis from experts and film critics, such as what was carried out in the monograph by Rees (2009). However, it makes sense to release such a catalogue regularly, with a certain time interval (for example, once every 5 years), to keep up with new phenomena in the field of cinematographic art and changes in the characteristic trends of the cultural and social space of Kazakhstan. This approach will not only record the evolution of cinema in the region, but also provide an analytical base for researchers, students, cinematographers, and the public. The catalogue will become a kind of barometer displaying both global and local trends affecting Kazakh cinema. This will help researchers and practitioners to understand more deeply how external and internal factors affect the development of cinematography, and what changes are taking place in the reflection of national culture and identity through cinematographic art.

The creation of such a catalogue will also help to promote Kazakh cinema in the international arena, providing information about new talents and significant projects. This can help attract foreign investors and film producers interested in cooperating with Kazakh directors and studios. In addition, regular updating of the catalogue will keep the information up-to-date and promote continuous cultural exchange and dialogue between the Kazakh and world cinema communities. However, despite all these shortcomings, the results of the study can still serve as a basis for developing strategies for the promotion and distribution of Kazakh films, both inside and outside the country. Focusing on the unique features of the artstream can help Kazakh film producers and distributors to more effectively bring their works to an international audience, promote cultural diversity, and stimulate critical thinking and aesthetic development of the audience. This approach can also strengthen Kazakhstan's position on the world cinematographic map, allowing it not only to present films at international festivals but also to attract foreign partners to cooperate. Improving marketing and promotion strategies will help achieve greater visibility for Kazakh film projects, which may lead to increased investment in local cinema. The development of film production in Kazakhstan also contributes to the creation of new jobs, the development of related industries, and the strengthening of cultural exchange, enriching both the national and international film industries.

Thus, the results obtained not only reveal the unique aspects of the artstream in Kazakhstan, but also provide valuable recommendations for the development of the national film industry, contributing to a deep understanding of the relationship between cinema and culture. These data can be used to improve the policy in the field of cinematography aimed at promoting Kazakh cinema on international markets and integration into the world cultural sphere. The inclusion of aspects of the artstream contributes not only to the cultural enrichment of the audience, but also stimulates dialogue between different cultural traditions, which is important for the development of a global cinematic community. It also helps to identify the potential of the national film industry for further development and innovation.

5 Conclusions

The study included an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the artstream in the context of Kazakh cinema. During the study, the transformation of cinematographic processes in Kazakhstan under the influence of Soviet culture, decolonisation and postcolonial reflection, globalisation, and cultural characteristics of the region was considered. Artstream allows harmoniously combining deep content with commercial accessibility, which helps to expand the audience and strengthen the position of Kazakh cinema in the international arena. The most important qualitative indicator was the enrichment of the cinematic language, providing a broader expression of cultural identity and social reflections. The research has established important aspects in the development and influence of this phenomenon on Kazakh cinema. The focus was on investigating the evolution of the artstream and its role in attracting a new audience that is looking for in-depth content and the author's vision within an accessible mainstream format.

Artstream has been defined as a unique formal practice capable of combining realism and modernism in one text, creating ambiguity, and emphasising the author's presence through modernist tropes. This uniqueness allows it to serve as a place where tension between different artistic movements is eased, providing a variety of expressive ways. Key aspects of artstream cinema have been identified, such as the privilege of internal conflicts, self-reflection, extra-aesthetic gestures, and duration, which distinguish it from mainstream cinema. Special attention was paid to formal criteria of distinction, including narrative style, visual style, and general compositional principles. The study also highlighted the importance of the artstream for modern Kazakh cinema, emphasising its contribution to the appearance of a new audience and the strengthening of the national film industry, the preservation and development of cultural identity in the context of globalisation, allowing synthesising national and international cinematic trends.

The results open new prospects for the development of artstream cinema, emphasising its role in cultural exchange and interaction with world cinematographic culture. The study used a wide range of Kazakh artstream films and materials for analysis, including critical reviews and interviews with directors, which provided a deeper understanding of the context of the creation and perception of these films. The findings highlight the unique ability of artstream cinema to synthesise various cinematic traditions, enriching the modern cinema of Kazakhstan with new forms and ideas. The conclusions of the study emphasise the significant contribution of the artstream to the development of modern cinematography in Kazakhstan, its ability to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding. The findings open new perspectives for thinking about the future of cinema as an art and industry, emphasising the importance of continuing research in this area.

For further research, it is proposed to study the influence of digital technologies on the development of artstream, analyse the perception of artstream films by various social groups, and investigate the influence of international cinematic trends on Kazakh cinema. These areas will help to better understand the dynamics and potential of the artstream in the context of global and regional cultural processes. The limitations of the study are related to the limited availability of empirical data on the perception and interpretation of artstream films by a wide audience.

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