**Aziz:** I am pleased to welcome another participant in our Oral history project. A very interesting speciality, interior stylist, Olga Shavrina. You are the creator of your own foundation, which has a very interesting name Creator, 22. Tell us about this foundation, what it does. And now I would like to tell you about the purpose of our project. Our project is called Oral Histories, which collects testimonies of people who can tell something important and interesting about themselves, about the time in which we all live and your attitude to this time. Together these stories will form a palette of different life stories, life circumstances, from which future researchers or a person who is interested in our time, our era, will be able to compile a general picture of our time. That is why you are now an important source. I would like to start our conversation traditionally, I would like to ask you about your family, where you grew up, how your family environment influenced your choice of life profession.

**Olga:** I thank you for the invitation. I am happy to share my life story. I was born in Moscow into a family of ordinary engineers. From childhood, I was instilled with a love of art, of theatres and museums. My grandfather was a famous yachtsman, he was the USSR champion, he travelled a lot, that is, we have a long family history. My grandmother was a surgeon. Head of the department and I spent part of my childhood in the hospital. I earned my first money when I was 5 years old, in the hospital I was folding sterilised napkins. Sometimes I spent my holidays at the hospital where my grandmother worked. My grandfather was a miner and our family was multi-ethnic. My grandmother was a Don Cossack and my grandfather was from the Ukraine. My parents are Muscovites, and I am a 6th generation Muscovite. Since there was no one to leave me with on holidays, our neighbours often took me with them to the theatre. And we went to the Chekhov Theatre for the most difficult performances. The most impressive was Days of the Turbins. With my dad I went to all the museums. We went skiing, skating, swimming. I studied music, piano. All this laid a foundation in me that I continue to develop.

**Aziz:** it's very interesting what you said about your family. Such a combination of professions, both a doctor and a miner - it's a character, these are people of a special breed. Yachtsman. That's also an adventurous kind of person. He must have brought you many things from all over the world. Before you moved to Tashkent, did you study somewhere after school?

**Olga:** I graduated from the Moscow Finance Academy. I have an economic education. I worked in an auditing company. After that, I moved into the construction sector. We were involved in healthcare facilities, building new clinics, and again I communicated with doctors and architects. These were interesting projects. We equipped large cardiology and endocrinology centres from scratch. I worked there as a top manager.

**Аziz:** How many years have you worked there? It's a big business.

**Olga:** 7 years

**Aziz:** yes, 7 years is a long time. What did you learn there?

**Olga**: I learnt to see what is in people's minds, then on paper, and then the result. Even now, when we talk to someone about an exhibition, about a situation, you can already see the end result.

**Aziz**: it's a very interesting skill. You have communicated with architects, you have seen the project and its realisation. You must have had a lot of satisfaction.

**Olga:** yes, it's a very different feeling.

**Aziz:** the material realisation of an idea, and even more so, as you say, if it is a hospital. An institution that will definitely benefit people. That's a good motivation. And you've been doing it quite successfully. How did it happen that you completely changed the vector of your life interests?

**Olga:** It so happened that after a big project, I went on holiday and met my husband. He turned out to be from Tashkent. Thanks to geography lessons at school, I knew roughly where it was. We knew Uzbeks who worked in the dachas. We knew that the pilaf was very tasty and the flatbread. But I had no acquaintances or relatives who were from Tashkent. It was very interesting for me to come to Uzbekistan. The people we met inspired me to do so. On 1 June 2012, I remember this day, I flew to Uzbekistan for the first time. In the heat of the day. It happened on the level of the soul. It was a kind of explosion. It's love. Such a hospitable nation. Such beautiful places. And the mountains and the cities. Then we managed to go to Samarkand, and I was surprised and amazed. But then it so happened that I returned to Moscow. And then we decided to move to Tashkent. My husband is an Uzbek and he has a very interesting family too. They lived outside of Uzbekistan for most of their lives. He was 2 years old when his parents moved to Moscow. Because of work. Then they were transferred to Pakistan, Malaysia. They worked in the diplomatic line. He himself came back to Tashkent and said: I'm not going anywhere else. In the end, the whole family gathered in Tashkent.

**Aziz:** what is your spouse's field of activity?

**Olga:** he works in private business.

**Aziz:** I absolutely believe what you say about the impression Uzbekistan has made on you. You moved here and have been living here for so many years. You have lived in Uzbekistan for a very long time. Has your integration into the Uzbek society been easy?

**Olga:** No, it's not easy. When I first met you, I always heard the same phrase, that everyone flies to Moscow, and you flew here from Moscow. I used to joke and say: This is a blow back to you. Uzbekistan, despite its hospitality, is quite traditional and closed.

**Aziz:** You know better from the outside.

**Olga:** the first three years were very difficult for me. After Moscow, with its developed infrastructure, and if you go back 11 years to Tashkent, it was completely different. Now it is a completely different city and a different country. Colossal large-scale changes not only in the economy, but also in people. It was difficult for me to move here. To understand and accept the situations that exist here.

**Aziz:** and do you feel comfortable now?

**Olga:** yes, my adaptation lasted 3 years. Thanks to Tashkent, I have acquaintances all over the world. Once we were in the Dominican Republic, on the Sanam Peninsula, we went whale watching, and we met a Russian guy who heard us talking about Tashkent and said: I am also from Uzbekistan, from Uchkuduk. His parents were archaeologists, lived here for a long time and he was born here. Then they came back to Moscow. He went to the Dominican Republic, married to a Dominican woman. And that's how you meet Tashkent, Uzbekistan, all over the world. And when I fly to Moscow, I realise how close I have become to the Uzbeks. Once I was standing at a bus stop and there were Uzbeks and Russians standing next to each other, and I stood closer to the Uzbeks.

**Aziz:** great story.

**Olga:** I only approach Uzbeks at the markets. When you greet him, say a few words in Uzbek and when they find out that I am from Tashkent, everything changes immediately. All over the world there is such support as soon as they hear the word Tashkent. The unity of the nation. It is so pleasant. Because Russians, on the contrary, try not to see or know each other. It's mostly like this. Uzbekistan amazes by the fact that there is mutual support, there is support. And the nice thing is that there is trust in people. In any shop or pharmacy, if you don't have enough money, there is no problem, everyone knows you here, everyone greets you, smiles, asks how you are doing, how your family is, how your daughter is, how your spouse is. It is very comfortable and you get used to it.

**Aziz:** so you feel like a guest in Moscow, despite the fact that you are already a 6th generation Muscovite?

**Olga:** yes, my dad, my brother and my nieces live in Moscow. All my friends and girlfriends are there, but I fly there really as a guest. If a person can have several homes, I have two homes. Both Moscow and Uzbekistan. When I leave, I always miss Tashkent.

**Aziz:** very interesting what you have shared. It's actually a wonderful experience. Apparently, you have excellent professional qualities? Have you been able to apply what you have learnt in Moscow here? Why did you change the vector of your studies?

**Olga:** it so happened that at first we rented a flat and in 5 years we changed about 7-8 flats. It was impossible to go into these flats. The fact that you are at home you want to relax and get visual comfort, it was all different from what we wanted. And when we built our house, my friends started coming to me.

**Aziz:** did they like the way you decorated the house?

**Olga**: yes, I decorated it myself.

**Aziz:** your husband didn't interfere?

**Olga:** No. We didn't have any quarrels about it. There were quarrels only about the sums. A house is a living organism, and it always needs a boost. You want new curtains or to complement something in the interior. And many people began to turn to me for advice. And what I recommended to them, they called and thanked, that how good that we listened to you. And everyone said that I should do it professionally.

**Aziz:** You were a financier, weren't you? Do you think it was instilled in you as a child? The atmosphere, going to the theatre. Or have you always been interested in it. How does one become an interior stylist? Do they even teach it? Did you study or are you self-taught?

**Olga:** the main thing here is observation and taste. Taste must be formed. You're not born with it. It is something that surrounds children from childhood. Our family had a lot of friends, and we travelled a lot to visit. I'm always interested in seeing how a person lives. I can tell a lot about a person by going into their home. It's an observation, I guess. And when you visit palaces, museums, theatres and see the decoration.

**Aziz:** Have you read, studied anything on this topic? Special literature?

**Olga**: I have completed online courses. I don't have the opportunity to go to Moscow for a year or 2 to study offline at the school I want. I thought that during the pandemic they would release an online course. But that didn't happen. So I am gathering information on my own. as my acquaintances told me Don't push yourself into limits. Certain knowledge is constraining.

**Aziz:** the fact that you were spontaneously formed may be a plus.

**Olga:** it's a lot of travelling to Europe, to Asia. In each country you see how people eat, how they invite people to visit, how their house is, there are a lot of details.

**Aziz:** please tell me Uzbek culture, Uzbek ornaments, style influenced you?

**Olga:** this is my separate love in general. When I first saw a madrasa in Samarkand, I had a collection of vintage chapans, burqas and carpets at home. I try to buy everything vintage. Those techniques and the way the masters did it at that time, that knowledge is lost. That is why it is all expensive for me. My husband is a serious collector. Now he and I are publishing a book at the international level. The book is about cold steel weapons of Central Asia. We have such knives that people are interested in, but these weapons cannot leave the country and they will be studied in books. My husband loves Tsarist Russia and we also have a large collection of very rare pieces.

**Aziz:** it turns out that your husband is engaged in research activities? This is already a publication. This is not just an interest to collect, but to show the world. Systematisation by school, by style.

**Olga**: because they lived in Moscow for a long time, he has a lot of munching there and all over the world. It's an interpenetration of cultures. For example, in the palace of the Emir of Bukhara, which the Emir built, wanting to create a likeness of Peterhof, and if you look at the interior items, there is both Russian and Chinese porcelain. The mirrors there are Venetian. It's all been preserved. It makes a lasting impression. Thanks to social media, many of my friends have seen my photos, and they have started flying to Uzbekistan.

**Aziz:** for Muscovites, Uzbekistan is like terra incognito?

**Olga:** yes, it was closer to the West, to Turkey. What we have here amazes and surprises me.

**Aziz:** Thank you very much, because you fulfil the function of propaganda, talking about local culture and this is very important for the current stage of development. It fits well into the context of the tasks that Uzbekistan is facing. Your hobbies and those of your spouse fit very harmoniously into this context. Do you share such interests at home?

**Olga:** my home is like an oriental box. I like to mix styles. I observe the following trend in the whole post-Soviet space: we all grew up in the Soviet Union, we all had carpets, GDR sets, crystal, identical sofas.

**Aziz:** a lot of things were monotonous.

**Olga:** everyone had it. And now I notice that people have started to strive for templates. And when they bring in projects, everywhere is neoclassical. They are not much different from each other.

**Aziz:** Do you connect later, when the house is already built?

**Olga:** yes. It's already a stage when people live in the house, when they realise what they need. It's all a living process. It's impossible to make repairs and stop. We change and the house changes too. I always direct my clients to invest in the home, to buy pieces of art that you can then pass on to your children. This has also been erased over the last 15 years. Because in Soviet times, our grandparents used to collect our dowry. But now it is all lost. They don't know how much expensive paintings cost. And nobody is interested in it.

**Aziz:** and you're trying to explain that?

**Olga:** my work led me to the point where I wanted to show people what they can add to their interiors. I met a representative of a French manufactory and in November we made the first exhibition from my foundation with the support of the French Alliance Française. The French embassy and some expats came.

**Aziz:** tell us about your foundation. Is the purpose of its creation what you described?

**Olga:** the foundation was registered last autumn, an official legal entity. The foundation's mission is to popularise art and people's lives. It's not the art that many people don't understand, it's art from the 19th century. classicism doesn't fit us anymore. This is holding exhibitions, lectures.

**Aziz:** do you give lectures?

**Olga:** Yes, I give lectures. I invite specialists from Moscow.

**Aziz:** Do they respond? Do they come?

**Olga:** they come. On 3 September we took part in the Open Hearts flash mob with the deputy of the Museum of Art. It is organised by the Turgenev Museum from Orel, in which museums from St Petersburg, Moscow and Baku take part. Now Tashkent has also joined in.

**Aziz:** is this your idea?

**Olga:** Turgenev Museum. This year we are celebrating 140 years since Turgenev's death. And we joined in by reading his work.

**Aziz:** do you employ many people? You attract them for various ideas, projects.

**Olga:** we have projects and people respond to these projects. At the beck and call of the soul. This is not a commercial goal. At the invitation of the State Museum of Art, we held an exhibition "From Raphael to Picasso". where we showed French tapestries to the public.

**Aziz:** I was introduced to you during this exhibition, I was there, I enjoyed it very much. Was it your idea to organise this exhibition?

**Olga:** Yes

**Aziz:** why tapestries? I have not seen a specialised exhibition on tapestries before.

**Olga**: tapestries are a European part of decor. Tapestries had a functional meaning in castles. It's to keep the heat in. Once I was looking for paintings for a project in Tashkent, I was looking for Kandinsky, Malevich.

**Aziz:** is there already such a term avant-garde classics?

**Olga:** I was looking for items I wanted to add to the project, and I couldn't find anything here. And on the internet I found compositions with Malevich and with Kandinsky. And when I received my order I was surprised at how they were made, I didn't want to let them out of my hands. These are cushions, tapestries. When you talk to people about tapestries, they say: And these are grandma's old rugs. They think of Belgian Dutch rugs.

**Aziz:** it's still a consumer product. But what you exhibited was a work of art. Did the museum support your idea?

**Olga:** the museum supported it. And we decided to join the French with masters from Uzbekistan.

**Aziz:** it turned out very well, I can say that as a viewer.

**Olga:** we added the artists.

**Aziz:** did you choose them?

**Olga:** yes.

**Aziz:** there was also an exhibition of chapanes. Was that your idea too?

**Olga:** yes. We have a professional who does this. Her work is bought by contemporary art museums abroad.

**Aziz:** I remember this exhibition. It was a very wonderful cultural event. There were tapestries, paintings, chapans and classical music. The exhibition was accompanied by opera music. A unique symbiosis.

**Olga:** it is interesting to do an event that immerses you in the atmosphere. You get a mood, emotions. It is very important how everything is presented. Anything, if it is presented correctly, will make a sensation.

**Aziz:** Did Jahongir Pulatovich give you support? He invited me to this exhibition.

**Olga:** Yes. On the part of the museum, he was the main inspirer of ideas.

**Aziz:** did you have any other similar actions after that?

**Olga:** we are still planning. We always want to show different things. In October we will start lectures on the history and art of etiquette, with Irina Alexina, a specialist from Moscow.

**Aziz:** is this offline or online?

**Olga:** she will come to us. There will be meetings. There are a lot of people who want to come. We have a lot of lost. People socialising in different walks of life, they want both to keep the conversation going and show their status and eat beautifully. Contribution to development. Art cannot exist in isolation and what I observe in museums there are few visitors from the local population. Only students. People don't know where the art museum of Uzbekistan is.

**Aziz:** Do you get a lot of requests for interior design? Is there a tendency for people to want to move away from established designs? Everything is made according to one template. You already know in advance what is there, how it all looks.

**Olga:** they do. But we do not bring it to the final stage. They don't like to pay for intellectual labour here. And you come to a client's house in the centre of Tashkent, a big plot and a big house and it seems that people have opportunities and when you tell them the cost of your participation, they start haggling at first, then they say that they will turn to others.

**Aziz:** an interior stylist is a one-off commodity.

**Olga:** and it's the experience and the details that you don't think about. When I was building my house, I realised that there are so many moments. Now I already want a different house. Thanks to my clients, I realise some of my desires, fantasies. But they like it.

**Aziz**: the most important thing.

**Olga:** muscovite. Russian puts suzane in the interiors.

**Aziz:** that's very interesting.

**Olga:** yes. That and meeting interesting people. Uzbekistan is rich in creative people. And these are the people who make masterpieces. Art cannot exist without an audience. Creative people cannot exist without a response.

**Aziz:** even opposition. That's also an incentive.

**Olga:** foreigners are grateful listeners. And they are interested, and they understand what they are paying money for.

**Aziz:** let's hope. That the work of your foundation, the projects of the campaign will continue. A drop sharpens a stone.

**Olga:** people ask me why do you do it?

**Olga:** if at least one person enjoys it, I'll be satisfied. To show it all to at least one person.

**Aziz:** this is already a goal. Tell us about museums in Uzbekistan. Can you mention those museums that are close to you, interesting to you? You must have seen a lot?

**Olga:** this is the Savitsky Museum. In Tashkent, of course, it's the Museum of Art. And the Museum of Decorative and Applied Arts. Although I like to go to the Amir Temur Museum with my daughters. It is architecturally very beautiful and inside too. It is very authentic, atmospheric.

**Aziz:** do you like going to museums?

**Olga:** we often fly to St. Petersburg and Moscow. And to Europe.

**Aziz:** for the sake of visiting some museums, exhibitions? Do you have any preferences in the development of eras, what do you like more? Avant-garde, classical, old masters, Renaissance, or a little bit of everything?

**Olga:** everything that has been preserved up to our time is admirable. But I must have grown up to the avant-garde. I used to not understand what Malevich's black square was? Or his peasants or athletes. Now I'm already interested in looking at more subtle plans and meanings.

**Aziz:** does that translate into the advice you give on stylistics? It must be hard to accept some avant-garde things? Hi-tech in our modern homes. Or is it making its way in?

**Olga:** pushing the way. By the mentality of the local population, people are afraid to be pioneers. And everyone copies each other. For example, I'm always looking for something that no one else has. It's about perfume, clothes. I mean, I buy things that I won't see on everyone I meet. And here everyone wants what he has.

**Aziz:** that's a very subtle remark. I agree with you.

**Olga:** and it's invincible. On the other hand, if you set a trend, then everyone starts to repeat it.

**Aziz:** ad infinitum. And it's getting old.

**Olga:** until people have had enough of one thing, they can't move on to the next. It's not bad or good, it's just the way it is.

I'm always in favour of comfort. People should be comfortable at home. And it doesn't matter that there are rules and styles. I try to keep things as comfortable as possible. And the house should tell about your interests, your status and the fact that you have a history.

**Aziz:** a house should show your individuality, not a copied look.

**Olga:** I teach my clients to think beyond what is there. We spend a long time collecting, searching. And I immediately say that it will not be in 2-3 months and I support them. Then with many we become friends. Because interests, directions converge. Because we travel together and exchange contacts. Uzbekistan is my Tibet

**Aziz:** beautiful analogy.

**Olga:** having gone through the school of Uzbekistan, it is now very easy for me to work with both Europeans and Russians. With an oriental twist.

**Aziz:** there are advantages and disadvantages.

**Olga**: like everywhere and in everything.

**Aziz:** it is very interesting to see these influences in your destiny. Absolutely wonderful. And the last question. are there plans for further co-operation with any institutions and to promote your vision of style?

**Olga:** it's like my hobby.

**Aziz:** I guess it's already become a profession?

**Olga**: I am interested in bringing interesting cultural events to the place where I live now, bringing specialists from different fields in which we are currently working. I think I will be able to thank the Uzbeks for their hospitality, for the fact that I can live here, feel comfortable and safe, and for their warmth and kindness I will be able to thank them with events and projects.

**Aziz**: thank you for your activity. We can wish you success in inviting world-class specialists, they will speak here, give lectures. This is absolutely wonderful and necessary. Uzbekistan is opening to the world and the world is entering Uzbekistan.

**Olga:** And this movement of exchange can only be welcomed and supported.

**Aziz:** the more people like you, the more successful your activity will be, the more fruitful, rich, promising, successful this process will be. Thank you for the kind words you have said to our Motherland. We continue to hope that there will be such a good mutual influence between you and Uzbekistan.

**Olga:** thank you.

**Aziz:** Thank you for the conversation**.**