

PATRON & TRAGEDIAN

I am no stranger to sliders. I used one for the short version of the *Introductory Video* and two for the longer version. The aim was to create, with silence and tempo, a brisk contrast to the filmed scenes. First, film then photos or first, film then photo sequence 1, and then film again and photo sequence 2.

The earlier videos I made about my artworks were narratives with a structure based on a central theme, for instance *Breathing and Making Art* or *Cardinal Sins*. Editing was planned to connect linear sequences smoothly, so that they are easy to follow. This strategy served the film's main purpose: presenting artworks in various combinations and positions.

The title *Patron & Tragedian* probably evokes an historical fact or anecdotes; however, I was not inclined to tell a story. Hence the slider + video hybrid formula: intro and outro and a sequence of photographed scenes with or without sound. The *slidervid* combines elements of both media for a sharp visual experience that fosters a sense of beginning, development and end, more typical for a film than for a slider.

Old textile remnants from various sources, India, Central Asia, Persia and the Caucasus, were stitched together to shape sculptures that nevertheless look coherent (i.e. not like a random patchwork) and perhaps almost seamless. When I look at them, despite or because of their used condition, fresh thoughts come to my mind. Furthermore, the shamanic drum music from Tuva chosen for this *slidervid* and the Swiss industrial site, where we were allowed to take photographs, have absolutely nothing to do with the sculptures. Thus, they provide two striking cultural contrasts which, set against the slider's tempo, invite unusual associations and therefore new ideas, not familiar ones.

Already in my first videos, a troubling question arose. Does the lost quality of the old Miao (Hmong) fabric, still visible in the remnants I used to make sculptures, trigger a kind of nostalgic longing? Worldwide, the production of traditional costumes among this ethnic diaspora has been declining in significance since the 1980s. The loss of relevance of ancient customs for younger generations living under the influence of the global economy could hardly have been avoided. Consequently, social media have accelerated, not caused, the commercialisation of Miao culture.

The music for the slider comes from Siberia, where serious economic problems also make it impossible to maintain traditional culture as it once was. During the Soviet Union, the Tuvan people were forced to give up their nomadic lifestyle. After the Union's collapse, privatisation further hindered an adaptation to the labour market. These successive alienating circumstances remind me of the fate of the First Nation's people, the Native Americans. Predictable mass unemployment was met with depression that led to a low birth rate and to alcoholism. On a happier note, Tuva is said to experience a revival of shamanism, especially in musical education. Yet however positive this cultural recovery does sound, it can hardly improve the ailing Tuvan economy on its own. Besides, its authenticity is far from convincing. Shamanic practices are offered by self-styled therapists who invite gullible and confused customers to part with their cash.

In conclusion, there is a serious risk that Miao textiles and Siberian music end up reduced as tourist commodities. Ethnic groups forced to modernise without adequate preparation are survivors who, placed under much pressure, struggle to assert a cultural identity that has become more defensive than clearly defined.

Themes:

Textile sculpture, textile art, slidervids, multipositionism, contrasting film elements, contrasting textile sources, Lakai embroidery, Persian and Caucasian carpets and kilims, Siberian music, shamanism, Tuvan culture.

Date: 17th January 2026

Duration: 2 minutes and 17 seconds

Thumb

