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- ▶ **SIRANUSH - 150.**
- ▶ **THE WONDERFUL PROJECT: FOLK SINGER.**
- ▶ **A UNESCO INVESTIGATOR MR. PREPIS' VISIT TO THE SACRED PLACES OF HISTORICAL ATRPATAKAN.**
- ▶ **PUBLICATION PROJECT: "ARMENIAN ARTISTS" CATALOG ABOUT THE ARMENIAN ARTISTS AND SCULPTORS OF THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY LIVING ABROAD.**

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Cover pictures:
Gevorg Bashinjaghyan
Village in the night, 1910
(personal collection).

editorial

The Great



2008 is a year of anniversaries: the 100th anniversaries of birth of the Catholicos Vazgen I, Academician Viktor Hambardzumyan and writer William Saroyan -- the nobles of the Armenian spirit, mind and heart. The three belong to us, as well as to the world. They have left permanent values in the history, as well as in the memories of older and middle-age generation.

Due to the uniqueness of the Armenian destiny, all three were born outside Armenia, but thanks to their natural endowments and



diligence, each of them accomplished the summit in his sphere. There can be written books about their work and patriotic heritage, and obviously we will not provide biographical details or professional assessment, especially that there will be appropriate celebrations in the coming year and many things will be said.

However, there is an issue we want to address. Commemoration and appraisal of the great Armenians is not simply a matter of honor, but also a stimulus for progress. The great people's lives and work are inseparably tied together and certainly full of divine love.

The great differ from us-mortals by the fact that they stay with us after their death, remaining not only our "advocates in heaven", but also our guides on earth. And even if the new generation does not learn lessons from



the great, their existence is already a lesson. And the motto of this lesson is clear: the path and purpose of Armenia and Armenians is the spiritual and intellectual development. The great H. Tumanyan ingeniously formulated this:

"We have a pledge -
Always to light".

This light is seen far away, on the top of Aragats, or on another sacred peak. But it is also reflected in the heart of every person. And so, the difference of our great people is also in their capacity to make that reflection into fire, which gives enlivening warmth to those who follow it.

Karen Matevosyan

SIRANUSH



devotion to her art or successful combination of circumstances?

Yes, from the beginning Siranush manifested absolute and unmistakable artistic endowments: appealing temperament, ideal manners, nice voice, expressive mimics, ability to wholeheartedly grasp and with identical tenderness express the most sensitive vibrations of a human spirit. As one of her contemporaries witnesses, "Siranujsh... is a portrait, almost always in peace, without any worries. But there is a suppressed passion in her speech, abundant and ample feelings in her action, which are simple, pure and enormous. And her voice -- it's like music of female charm and eternal brilliance".

She was not a beauty, but her appearance used to attract people at once, unfolding her magic influence from the stage.

The circumstances themselves (not her personal life,

Her mission was obviously great in the Armenian culture. After Petros Adamyan, she bridged the eastern and western stages with her art and became a single-rooted but double-branched tree of the Armenian theatre.

Siranush was often criticized for not completely refraining from her Polis roles and performing style. However, with that she not only preserved the ties with her sources, but also promoted her unique art. There was also an argument whether Siranush was right to often select classical roles and relatively few national daily characters to perform. In this case too, the actress' classical performances were always and unexceptionally closely and directly connected with the reality. The true art cannot omit national elements, but it should also carry vital, human and artistic truth to be called art. Siranush was primarily

THE QUEEN OF THE ARMENIAN STAGE

On May 25, 1857, in the Bera district of Polis, in a family of a Van carpenter, a little girl was born, destined to gain national fame and acknowledgement. Merope Gantargyan, who had only primary education, had yet to become "the bright star of the Armenian stage", "a pride of the Armenian nation". She would become Siranujsh. And she did so.

How? In what way?

With her abundant natural endowment and talent? Her appearance or inner gifts? Voice? Her rare spiritual-moral, human character and tenderness? Exceptional diligence and

full of losses and sorrow) were supportive from the beginning: she was the famous actress Azniv Hrachya's cousin. Her elder sister Astghik was an actress too, and with their help Siranujsh got bound to the theatre. As a teenager she entered into Maghakyan's and then Vardovyan's theatrical groups, passed through the school of these talented masters and got inspired by their gained success...

But Siranush became the Siranush according to the law of great people, when the society needs them, and when they carry on a significant mission...

determined for the latter. It was a criterion for evaluating herself and others. Here comes her ability of convincing characters, power to inspire faith and insight not only for Armenian, but also for foreign audience.

With her above common but not abstract art, perfect performance, incomparable "temperament" and sincere tragic style Siranush enlivened many roles. She was able to inflame those with her passion, bringing fire on the stage and excitement to her audience.

This fire of course was more blazing during performing roles

like Medea, Hovhanna, Margaret Gotie, Zeynab, Ruzan, Hamlet...

"Medea -- this is the summit of Siranujsh's fame: here she was outstanding, exceptional, perfect, and unreachable."

"Madam Siranujsh can undoubtedly consider Hovhanna's role as the best one in her repertoire."

In Margaret Gotie's role Siranujsh's "performance was exceptionally good; her art reached utmost perfection... When it was over, the audience was still under the influence and kept silence for a while. Only when the curtain was dropped, everyone realized to be in a theatre, and the storm of applause and bravos followed."

"With the character of Ruzan, Siranujsh intended to promote truthful and sincere feelings within the Armenian youth ... and she was a complete success."

Siranujsh's Hamlet had "both aspirations of justice and truth, and determination of fearsome revenge; a sharp protest against political immoralities, poisonous obsequiousness, betrayal and blasphemy. It was a reason for spiritual hesitancy and agonizing thoughts."

So, the contemporaries and researchers of Siranujsh's life and work unanimously confess the perfection of the actress' art, its universality and genuineness. She was a discovery in not only all-Armenian, but also in the world theatre. Siranujsh was often compared with Sara Bernar, Eleanora Duze, Fedotova and others. She was considered as an "Armenian Sara Bernar", "Armenian Duze", "Armenian Fedotova" etc. But she herself was Siranujsh, whose name does not accept any other definition than an Armenian great actress. "Complicated problems, hopeless mental state, indispensability of struggle, inevitability of failure, obsession by passion,

protest, suffering, extreme pace", - this is Siranujsh's striving, according to D. Demirjyan.

With this striving on the stage she performed not only the lives of her role-characters and her own suffering life, but also of her nation -- expressing its worries, stamina and dreams, its expectations and pain, its urge towards freedom and happiness, and will to fight for those. Yes, Siranujsh was never in desperate peace with the cruel reality. Truth, justice, kindness, honesty -- the essence of her characters could lose and fail, but never vanish forever. Sooner or later their moral victory would bring a real victory. With this faith Siranujsh performed even those characters of hers, who fell and committed a suicide.

In the complicated and controversial reality of the 20th century, Siranujsh's art was like a special compass to lead the advanced Armenian intelligentsia, youth and the whole society towards positive impulses, give lessons of honesty and aspirations of justice. That's why the audience had unbiased and fervent love and excitement for her, which has remained alive after many decades. Even today, the glaring image of the Armenian stage queen -- Siranujsh is resurrected in the gratifying hearts of our people.

Siranujsh (as well as the other great people of our theatre) proved that an actor's art does not die. No! The true, great, majestic, humane and really people's histrionic art does not vanish, but remains in the blood of generations, forming a character, nature, and becoming everlasting and eternal...

Siranujsh's unique art remains everlasting and eternal.

Khachatur Avagyan





Hakob Gyurjyan

In December of 2006, at the National Gallery of Armenia there was an exhibition dedicated to the 125th anniversary of Hakob Gyurjyan's birth (1881-1948). Gyurjyan was the brightest representative of the Armenian sculpture in the first half of the 20th century. The author's 20 graphical works made with color pencils, watercolor and ink, and representing pagan and biblical themes and drafts of monuments were exhibited for the first time.

Hakob Gyurjyan's birthplace was Shushi, where he first demonstrated interest towards sculpture. The family wanted to see him as a doctor, but after studying at the Medical Department of the Moscow University, he left it. "I like one thing -- making sculptures. Dirt and stone must be my life..." he said afterwards.

The Power of Passionate Talent



H. Gyurjyan used to live and work in different countries and for different social-cultural environments. Having lived in Paris for about 40 years, Gyurjyan

remained as a patriot, faithful to his roots. Nowadays, his works are the property of the Armenian people as a true value. In his lifetime, the National Gallery

of Armenia hosted his early-period works. After his death in 1958, the remaining works were sent to Armenia from the Paris workshop (more than 400).

In 1899-1904 Hakob Gyurjyan lived and studied at Fidler's private college in Moscow. During that time he related with a group of famous sculptors – Trubetskoi, Andreev, Arnson, and others, who had the most positive influence upon the artist.

H. Gyurjyan's "heroes" were lyrical characters. He made those with a profound feeling, harmonizing the visible and the sensual. He mastered all sculptural techniques and materials: granite processing, tender marble refinement, perfect bronze melting, fine clay working, etc. By mastering the perfect technique, he achieved original styles, creating delicate and high-valued works of "new archaism".

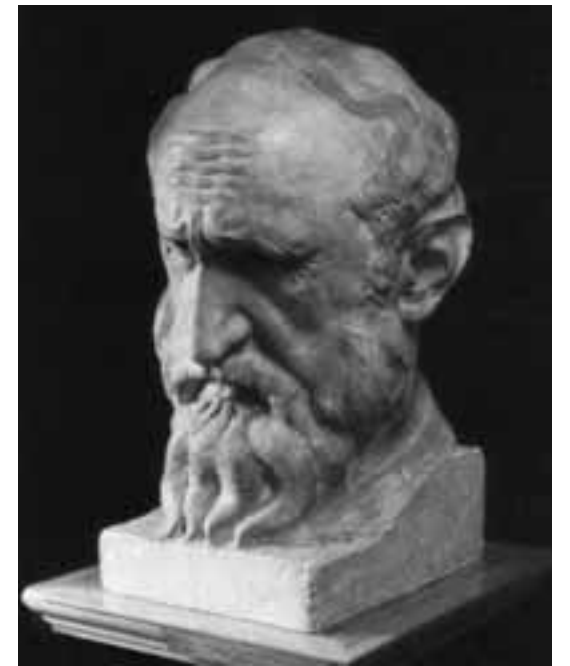
Gyurjyan had a key when making his works (like in music), but it was different for each work. From the old cultural traditions he reached the art of the new times -- impressionism and cubism, always remaining faithful

to his unique style. "He was under different influences, but he digested those all, and now it is difficult to assign some "ism" to him", Yervand Kochar wrote about the artist. In the questionnaire of the Slavonic Institute in Prague, Gyurjyan himself wrote: "My art is versatile. I was inspired with the ideas by forms themselves. All those "isms" are products of the era, and the artists

of the best times did not have any idea about those. They used to create art, and now they make "isms". A sculpture has to be made according to the three rules of sculpture: ornamentality, monumentality and composition." Hakob Gyurjyan used to cooperate with "Ani" Association of the Armenian Artists. He participated in exhibitions organized by the association and had a great input in promoting Armenian Artists.

In 1927, the "George Petit" hall in Paris held the first exhibition of "Ani", which introduced a whole constellation of talents. The cultural France that knew just a few representatives of the Armenian art, was shaken, surprised and afterwards admired by the fact that a nation surviving the 1915 Genocide had such spiritual power and ability to feel and reproduce beauty. Francois Paul Reynal writes about Armenians with admiration, introducing Narekatsi, Peshiktashyan, Jivani, his contemporaries Arshak Chobanyan, Edgar Shahin and "a very talented sculptor Hakob Gyurjyan".

In 1928, during the second exhibition of "Ani" at the Brussels Palace of Fine Arts in Belgium, Gyurjyan received words of appreciation from the King Albert



Garegin Hovsepian's bust

I and the Queen. The King said: "Our artists now use more tender material, while the foreigners "gnaw" Belgian granite. They will survive longer." The Belgian government bought Gyurjyan's "White Cat". The founder of the Brussels Palace of Fine Arts Henri le Boeuf and the Prince of Denmark Haag ordered the artist to make their bust:

Since 1910 to his last days, H. Gyurjyan had numerous exhibitions in Paris, Brussels, New York, Tokyo, Belgrade, Prague, Luxembourg, Antwerp, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tbilisi. The lively artist's heart stopped beating during a walk. On December 27, 1948, at the Armenian church of Jean Goujon street, Paris said the last goodbye to the artist. Gyurjyan's personality and work are eternal, as he dedicated his whole life and creative work to people. The "Gyurjyan" school, which was created during his lifetime, continues to exist and has its impression on all generations of the Armenian sculptors.

Anahit Margaryan
NGA Researcher

Salome



THERE ARE TIMES, WHEN CULTURE MUST BECOME A COMPULSION

says the Director of the National Gallery of Armenia Paravon Mirzoyan, who has been leading this huge museum institution with the richest art collection

With more than 25000 items in its collection, after renovation and reopening, the Gallery solved the vital problem of heating, increased the number of showrooms and the volume of permanent exhibition.

In recent years people have been visiting the Gallery more frequently.

- Can we say that during the five years of your leadership the Gallery mindset has changed?

- The working style has changed; it all has become more reasonable. When I became a director, the first thing I wanted was to make the Gallery into a national museum and entirely engage it into the cultural

life of the country. We want it to become a unique cultural and educational center. All exhibitions at the Gallery have also an educational purpose. Egyptian, Greek and Italian art must help visitors be acquainted with history and understand the value of artworks. In this sense, the opening of the Egyptian and Greek showrooms was absolutely essential. Currently, there can be organized lectures and classes in those rooms. With a great satisfaction I observe how Fine Arts Academy and University students study in those rooms. The Gallery admission for children under 7, senior citizens, students of cultural institutions and veterans of war is free.

- What changes have been implemented in the Gallery's work plans?

- Armenian fine art that forms the majority of the collection is now represented by time periods and artists.

The opening of the showroom for the East was a new initiative. We have a rich collection in that topic, and people have not seen its major part. The works of Chinese, Japanese, Persian and Indian applied art are very valuable. Now we have also two wonderful showrooms specifically adjusted to exhibit graphical works. In future we must think of having showrooms for sculptures. Soon there is going to be an



exhibition of Hakob Gyurjyan's sculptures. These works were in the Gallery's storage and were never exhibited in whole.

- The number of visitors has increased. What can be the reason?

- We were able to attract "outsiders" into the Gallery. The movie presentations (constantly played on the 9th floor) played a major role too. Those are exclusively about art. Music was also introduced into the Gallery. This year the third international musical festival "National Gallery" took place. The attempt to present music and fine art together was very successful.

- How do you estimate the scientific work?

- It has also been improved. There have been published many catalogs, albums, brochures. Among the recent ones I can recall "Russian Avant-garde", "Hakob Gyurjyan" and "Hovnatanyans' Art", "Eghishe Tadevosyan", and "Vano Khojabekyan" albums. Our researchers publish scientific articles. I can't help also mentioning about the "Armenian Art" printed in Armenian and English, which receives support from the National Gallery. Our website (www.gallery.am) also has an efficient role.

- Has the number of thematic and individual exhibitions increased?

- It has not only increased in number, but has also become more organized. We organize exhibitions of international art: Max Ernst, George Braque, Tonino Guerra, Gros, etc.

We also cooperate with embassies and invite foreign organizations to our events. The Gallery also gets international reputation by presenting the masterpieces of its collection in many countries' international exhibitions.

With Japanese artists we organized the exhibition "Ararat and Fujiyama". The Gallery took



part in the events of the Year of Armenia in France. Aivazovsky's "Sea Poem" was exhibited at the Sea Museum of Paris, and the exhibition "Fine Art in Armenia 1830-1930" was at Petit Ballet, etc.

- It is noticeable that the Gallery staff is quite young today.

- I am sure that the change of generation has to be in time, and the important thing here is not the issue of age, but age links. When I became a director, I noticed that the scientific workers were people mostly above 50. In a short period of time we reinforced the staff with young professionals. A gallery employee has to grow professionally in years, interacting with specialists of older generation.

- Have you made attempts to send them to study abroad?

- The main learning process is within the Gallery itself. For several years we have been sending our Restoration Department employees to Moscow. We have an agreement with Japanese, who will soon provide us with new restoration equipment and train our staff to use it.

- Is the Gallery capable to purchase new works or it only accepts gifts?

- Museums must certainly receive state support and be under state control. When I came to work here, the Gallery had no money to buy even paper.

Thanks God, today we are able to buy all necessary stationery, as well as new artworks. In five years we bought 100 works and received about 800 gifts from Armenians and foreigners.

- What is the Gallery's number one problem today?

- The air conditioning is of utmost importance. The first three floors have it, but the structure of the Gallery building makes to have a complete renovation for the air conditioning system. I think this problem will be resolved in 2008.

- As a rule, responsible authorities do not visit museums with their families frequently. Why is that?

- Museum visiting comes from a unique culture and upbringing. It must be in a person's blood. Some time is required to make museum visiting into a tradition.

Finalizing, I want to say that the basic mission of the Gallery is the preservation of our national cultural values, and exhibiting those according to contemporary demands. There are also parallel objectives of collection study and enrichment, organizing events and advertising our exhibitions and art, realizing publications, etc.

The interview was taken by Nune Hakhverdyan

THE ARMENIAN WOMEN'S ART EXHIBITION IN NEW YORK CITY



Hilda Ekmekciyan Witherspoon's,
Tamar Gasparian-Chester

On October 4th the works of 23 Armenian female artists were gathered under one roof in Manhattan at the Village Quill. Many Armenians and foreigners were present at the opening reception. The goal of this exhibition was to bring emerging and well established Armenian artists together and raise the awareness and the appreciation of their art. Co-curator Anet Abnous and I were eager to find out how many contemporary artists were out there. Through my research I discovered established artists Nina Katchadourian, Barbara Yeterian, Nora Chavoosian. I also knew artist Sonia Balassanian, the founder of the Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art in Yerevan (NPAK). In hopes of finding new artists we announced an open call. From many submitted applications only 32 works of 23 artists were selected for the exhibition.

This show is unique for the diversity of the backgrounds that the artists are coming from. With shared Armenian roots they were all born in various countries, including the United States.

The works presented at the exhibition are very diverse, too. The exhibit includes oil painting, watercolor, drawing, sculpture, photography, collage, and assemblage. Despite the variety of the mediums and subjects there is something common in these works. It is the conscious or unconscious reference to the Armenian culture, history, and traditional forms of Art.

In her painting Lessons from History from Palimpsests Series, Marsha Nouritza Odabashian, a Boston based artist, juxtaposes characters inspired by the medieval Armenian manuscripts and modern children's book illustrations. The painting is rich with color, texture, and detailed elements. In order to notice all the characters, which sometimes are hidden in the layers of tincture, the viewer needs to take time and carefully examine the surface of the canvas. "In this series of oil paintings, I have sought to express a metaphors of transformation and memory", says the artist.

Talin Megherian's own hair braids from her childhood inspired her to make the series of paintings with braids. For her the braids are a symbol of Armenian women. "I believe images of hair have a lot of power, and braids are woven hair which makes them stronger," says the artist. Through her painting, done with gouache and ink on paper, Talin tells the stories of what happened to women during the Armenian Genocide.

The shapes and patterns that exist in the natural world and the forms of letters are things that inspire artist Arpie Gennetian Najarian. Penelope is a unique mixed media piece that the artist made using pencil, ink, red thread, and pages from an old book on

Vatican sculptures. "I usually have a plan before starting out the work, but then the drawings evolve into themselves eventually and I like this natural process they take." The background plays a big role in Arpie's works. The white space and its interaction with the drawing is as important to her as the drawing itself. "I try to really understand my subject," says the artist, "and by the end of the session I actually draw with my eyes closed, just letting my mind connect through the pencil to the paper. In the end the drawings feel much more natural to me."

Some other works that raised interest among the viewers were Nora Chavoosian's The Many of Us, Taleen Berberian's shoe sculptures, Suzzane Anoushian's July in Twin Lakes and Barbara Yeterian's Two from her Genocide series. Other works also drew special attention, such as Hilda Ekmekciyan Witherspoon's Life of a Model, Eileen Karakashian's In the Horizon, Lucy Kalian's Hanging-on, and Lynne Gulezian's Four Women of Pongola.

On Friday, October 5, contemporary Armenian and American writers read their poetry at the same venue. The event was organized by the producer of the Armenian Poetry Project, Lola Koundakjian, whose watercolors were also included in the exhibition.

On Saturday, October 6, the artists gathered at The Village Quill to discuss the artworks in the exhibition and talk about art in general. Many of the artists were pleased that through this exhibition they discovered new colleagues whose works they have never seen before.

Tamar Gasparian-Chester
Art Historian Co-curator of the exhibition



Մարշա Նուրիցա Օդաբաշյան
Marsha Nourica Odabashian

Լին Գուլեզյան
Lynne Dian Gulezian

Նորա Չավուշյան
Nora Chavoosian



Թալին Մեղերյան
Talin Megherian

ԳԵՎՈՐԳ ԲԱՇԻՆՋԱԴՅԱՆ

ՉՈՒՇԱՀԱՆԴԵՍ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ՊԱՏԿԵՐԱՍՐԱՀՈՒՄ



Օճկային տեսարան (Սբ. Ղազար), 1892 թ. / Seascape (St. Lazar), 1892

Բնանկար (նասնավոր հավաքածու) / Landscape (personal collection)



GEVORG BASHINJAGHIAN
Exhibition in National Gallery of Armenia

To appraise art and make it appraised...



Mr. and Mrs. Raffi and Shoghak (Viki) Hovhannisians are well-known both in Armenia and Diaspora, especially among art-loving communities. By their sponsorship there have been organized many local and international exhibitions, published albums and realized different charitable events.

Born in the Near East (Raffi was born in Jerusalem and Shoghak in Beirut), they grew up in an Armenian atmosphere, becoming the meritorious successors and carriers of our native traditions and golden mother tongue. After their marriage in 1965, they relocated in Chicago, newly inspiring the local community and extending an Armenian atmosphere around. Patriotism was never a behavior for this family, but rather an essence, a real way of life. They greatly contributed in the establishment of the AGBU local center in Chicago in 1987, "Sisak Varjapetyan" National Saturday College and "St. Hovakim and Anna" Church.

Raffi Hovhannisian dedicated himself to the Medical Science, but remaining as an art admirer, supported Shoghak in all her art-related

initiatives, encouraging and inspiring her. They both had a belief that culture had been our national face, shaping our identity and leading towards eternity. So, the right action of benevolence was art, and the "target" was talented artists. Supporting Armenian artists is more a spiritual duty than simple benevolence.

The art critic, collector and social worker Shoghak Hovhannisian's attention is especially concentrated on the modern art workers. As the president and active member of the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art and the Modern Art Council of the Institute of Art, she invests her experience and means to promote Armenian artists internationally. "My purpose is to help the Armenian talented artists work in Armenia and be appraised, so that we do not lose them in foreign lands", she says.

Mrs. Shoghak firstly appraises the work of our artists living in Yerevan and Gyumri herself, and then makes the foreigners appraise it. When she came to Armenia for the first time in the difficult days of 1994, she was surprised to see

the radiating light and warmth from the works of Armenian artists. It took her a lot of hard work to bring international recognition to those works. Along with introducing those in her Chicago private showroom, she also organized exhibitions of contemporary Armenian art in a number of American cities, securing the participation of Armenian artists in ArtExpo shows as well. The international acknowledgement gave our artists a high rating and also financial support. As a result, their living in Armenia became easier, and new works were introduced to the public.

Shoghak Hovhannisian is very happy with the success of our contemporary artists and their praiseworthy achievements. She believes that young artists should not be neglected in the shadow of classic masters. "Life changes fast", Mrs. Shoghak likes to repeat, "In the course of time the past is always present: we must look forward". With this principle Mr. and Mrs. Hovhannisians live and foresee a beautiful future for our motherland.



The Armenian Spiritual Center in Lion

There are about 80 000 Armenians in the central France (Ron-Alps region). Their ancestors came here after the nightmarish 1915, establishing themselves in the wonderful vale of the river Ron and building powerful communities over decades.

By their united efforts, in 2006 it became possible to erect a monument of the Armenian Genocide in the second largest city of France – Lion. Equal to the number of the Armenian alphabet letters, it has 36 gravestones with the immortal names of notorious Armenians.

The Armenian Apostolic Church, particularly the spiritual leader of the Armenian community in Lion and Ron-Alps region Bishop Norvan Zakaryan had a significant role in this process. We met him at the Lion Museum of Decorative Art and Tapestry. In the showrooms of the museum, as well as Fourviere Sanctuary, within the program of the Year of Armenia in France there was an exhibition "Armenian Gold and Treasures". We walked along the street "Armenia" to the St. Hakob Cathedral. The latter is an example of discreet national architecture, built by people's financial contributions. The liturgy is chanted by the "Komitas" choir lead by Perperian. The mother church is a place of meeting and gathering together for elders, and most importantly for young people. There are frequent courses of the Armenian language and culture.

"Our communities do not have future without Armenian schools." Following this principle, in 1988 Fr. Narvan initiated and established the "Margaryan-Papazyan" collage. It was founded at the Lion church, by the sponsorship of Arpik and Margar Margaryans and cooperation with the National Union Board. It also includes a kindergarten and has all conditions for the Armenian education of the new generation. The college is also sponsored by "Galust Gyulbenkian" and "Napoleon and Lea Piulukian" foundations. The good news is that every year the number of students increases, reaching 190.

Fortunately, there are Armenian churches and colleges in other cities of central France – Valance, Desin, Vien, St. Etienne, Roman, Grenoble, etc. Fr. Norvan has a unique

perception in respect of the future of the Armenian Diaspora. "We will get stronger", - he says, considering the unification of efforts and endeavors of all Armenian institutions around the Armenian Church as the main prerequisite. "All institutions in the Diaspora except for the Armenian Church will eventually speak a foreign language. The Armenian letters were found in diaspora", - he reminds and highly appreciates the successful program of the Year of Armenia in France. He finds that the centuries-old history of the France-Armenia relationship has to be divided into two parts: before 2007 and later.

On June 22, 2007, after the elections in the St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Paris, Bishop Norvan Zakaryan became the primate of the newly created Armenian diocese in Paris. We congratulate him on this occasion and wish successful years of spiritual leadership.

Levon Lachikyan
Lion-Yerevan



Drawing by L. Lachikyan

Last year, in the city of Landsberg in Germany, there was an exhibition organized by "Kenats Toun" cultural association. On this occasion, the journalist **Hratschui Bostanchjan** took an interview from the President of the Association **Vano Dadoyan** for the Bavarian Radio. Hereby we present its edited version.

- What was your main criterion when selecting works to exhibit?

- I wanted to introduce the Armenian culture in different

- In general I am very happy with the exhibition. It was well advertised. I consider the number of visitors satisfactory; they were all interesting people and were very interested in the exhibited works.

- The works made by "Kenats Toun" students were quite interesting. What is the mission of "Kenats Toun"?

- "Kenats Toun" is a cultural public organization. It was established in 1997 with the

the exhibition framework?

- During the exhibition we presented our goals and objectives. The singer Anahit Abgaryan introduced Armenian sacred songs. The Germans admired Armenian music, through which they more profoundly grasped the meaning of the Armenian high-class art. During the exhibition, German Sonia Virt gave lessons of



Kenats Toun



Armenian dances, and German Shoshana Hayn-Aqsenqoff read an Armenian fairy tale. The visitors also tasted Armenian cookies, vine, tea and of course - lavash. It was a very warm and lively atmosphere.

- Did you have any proposals of cooperation?

- A woman offered her support to organize a similar exhibition in Switzerland. There is also a proposal related to woodworking, which can develop home-based business in Armenia. We think towards strengthening cooperation between two our countries: by not only presenting Armenia to Germany, but also Germany to Armenia. During this exhibition, a number of visitors expressed interest in visiting Armenia, and asked for our help in locating sightseeing places, cultural institutions, and museums. This is a new way to make Armenia acknowledged as a spiritual and cultural center.

ways. We selected the works of six artists, also applied art and works made of stone. The authors were the architect of the State Museum of Wood Carving Henrik Salokhyan and the museum masters. Some of my own works and the ones of the "Kenats Toun" students were also included. I had also introduced the graphical works of the artist Harutyun Hovhannisyan.

- How did the exhibition attract German people? Are you happy with the result?

purpose to revive the Armenian folk art. Nowadays, traditional art is in crisis, and our aim is to restore it -- I mean the traditional ways of creating and working. Thanks to my German friends we already own a place in Armenia to establish a learning center, which will serve for cultural, spiritual and educational purposes. Many Germans wish to visit Armenia and get acquainted with our activities locally.

- What kind of cultural program did you have within

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Perj Ashtaraketsi

Perj Proshyan as a Photographer



The famous teacher and novelist Perj Proshyan (1837-1907) was once a well-known photographer. He used to sign his photos as "Perj Ashtaraketsi". Few people know that Perj Proshyan had his place in the history of the Armenian photography. In 1860 he was invited to work in the newly opened "Krunk" periodical. The publisher Hambardzum Enfiayyan (1824-1896) wanted to illustrate the periodical with photos of the Armenian old treasures and also other ones. For this purpose, in 1863, by his own means he helped Proshyan to study photography and bought necessary materials and equipment. Shortly after, the periodical

stopped functioning because of bankruptcy. Proshyan was left with his newly acquired profession, which became a mean to earn for his life.

As Proshyan recalls in his memoirs, he used to travel with his photographs around Kekhetia for several months. In autumn of 1865 he stayed in Yerevan for a few months. Then he stayed in Agulis, Ashnakh, Tabriz, Old Nakhijevan, Ordubat, and as he recalls, "the Persian khans and begs of those cities loved photographic images." In addition to earning for his living, Proshyan created interesting permanent works and continued to grow professionally. He was proud to remember



about his own business -- photography, and intended to go to Istanbul for professional development at Abdullahyan brothers. They were known as the most famous and professional photographers.

Perj married Anna Dolgyan in 1869, who was a descendant from Sayat Nova's dynasty. There have been preserved several of Anna's photos made by Proshyan.

In 1872 Proshyan worked in Alexandropol (now Gyumri), taking photos of pilgrims, teachers and the Harij Monastery. He sent the photo of the latter to the Catholicos. In 1874 he went to Astrakhan, then Tbilisi, Yerevan, Echmiatsin and Baku. Everywhere, along with the teacher's work he also did photography and made interesting works.

Perj Proshyan's inseparable

heritage is of course his photographs, stored in different museums and archives. Those are of a great historical and cognitive value both in their genre varieties, as well as in subject matter.

At the Charents Museum of Literature and Art in Yerevan, there is bright evidence of Perj Proshyan's photographic works. Among those, the most valuable ones are the photos of Sherini and Jivani -- the founders of the Armenian goosan art (dated 1850 and 1871, according to Garegin Levonyan).

Ani Kirakosyan
Student
The Teachers Training University
after Kh. Abovyan,
Department of Artistic
Photography



FOR LOVING AZNAVOUR EVEN MORE FRENCH SINGING IN ARMENIAN

Our compatriot Alex Eramyan, who lives in Paris, is very proud of his last name (its root means flock; and his ancestors are from Ani). For his beautiful Armenian language he firstly owes to his family, particularly to his grandfather, and then to his teachers at the Mkhitarian college in Set. He still remembers his first visit to the motherland, to participate in all-Armenian student assembly in the summer of 1967. He discovered both the world of ancestors and himself. "I had only interacted with Armenians in Diaspora. I needed to know the local ones." The established relationship grew stronger every year, which resulted on

his frequent visits to Armenia.

Since his childhood, the Armenian songs of his grandfather were quite abstract for Alex. Only after getting to know Armenia, the Armenian music became a live and conceivable reality. Nowadays he has such a collection of Armenian CDs that can compete with any CD store.

Within the program of the Year of Armenia in France, Alex got acquainted with the singer-song writer, poet-translator Perj Turabian. He listened to the Armenian versions of the songs by Charles Aznavour and other French songsters. Then he questioned his Armenian friends and many other people about Aznavour, finding out

that they all consider the great chanter as a "good, worthy Armenian and singer, without even understanding the concept of his songs." And an idea was born to introduce both Charles Aznavour and other famous people -- Jorge Brasans, Jacques Brel, Leo Fere and Charlez Trene in Armenian, by organizing big honoring concerts in Yerevan, Paris, Los Angeles, Montreal and Moscow. "In this way they are going to love Aznavour even more", - Alex Eramyan is convinced. Through these songs he wants to gather the Armenians together from different parts of the world. "Why shouldn't we help our people to enjoy foreign songs?", - he says. The project will have a title "France, Mon Amour" (France, My Love). It will become a gratitude to our friend France, which had the slogan "Armenie, Mon Amie" (Armenia, My Friend) for one year. Alex thinks that the Year of Armenia in France has only been officially completed. It will carry a long and everlasting character, as is the friendship of French and Armenian people.

To discuss the project details and the first concert (next spring), Alex was again in Yerevan lately. He met with the producer Arthur Grigoryan, sound editor Armen Martirosyan and the singers, who will be performing the French songs in Armenian -- opening a new page in the history of our art of singing. Among the participants there will also be Armenian singers from abroad, including Aznavour's elder daughter Seda.

L. Lachikian

THE WONDERFUL PROJECT FOLK SINGER



In July, 2007 the "Shant" TV started the musical project "Folk Singer", which had a quite different quality compared to former similar "contests". There were about 400 applicants, but only 14 people reached the final. They were Lusine Gasparyan, Edgar Martirosyan, Gohar Balyan, Nelli Eghiazaryan, Armine Hovhannisyan, Anahit Iskanyan, Gohar Asatryan, Lusine Abrahamyan, Smbat Khalatyan, Tatev Qocharyan, Edgar Avetisyan, Narek Poghosyan, Armen Davtyan and Sevak Amroyan.

In the period of four-month competition, wonderful goosan and folk songs with wonderful performances were broadcast. The jury, professional musicians and singers, who trained the participants, did a wonderful and educational job too. In short, this project can be considered as the most successful one among other musical projects of the Armenian TV broadcast.

Sevak Amroyan was selected as the Folk Singer, but more importantly he received this high award not merely as a winner of the "contest" as it is in sports, but rather became a team leader among wonderful young people eager to represent the Armenian singing art. In our opinion this is one of the best accomplishments of the project, and we hope this is just a beginning of good work.

The editorship of the Armenian Art assigned its part-time journalist Ruzanna Movsisyan, a senior student at the Department of Journalism of the Yerevan State University to take interviews from the project producer, jury members and honorary guests, as well as from Sevak Amroyan. Hereby we present it.



Hakob Rubinyan

Producer of the "Folk Singer" Project

The "Folk Singer" project was the initiative of "Shant" TV. It had several purposes.

Our goal was to discover young people with high vocal and voice qualities, introduce them to the public and try to affirm them in folk singing.

As any other TV station, "Shant" was also eager to have a project acceptable to broad audience, and apparently it was successful.

The "Armenian Superstar" and "Folk Singer" projects are different. Of course there are similarities, as both are musical project-contests, but there are also a few differences. For example, in the first project the winners or losers were selected by the voting of audience, while in the second one, it is the professional jury's opinion that plays a major role.

The winner and the best participants were given pleasant surprises. The "Folk Singer" Sevak Amroyan received 1 million drams. The other 13

participants will be giving two concerts in Gyumri on November 27, and in Aram Khachatryan Big Concert Hall on December 1 and 2.

Leyla Saribekyan

Jury Member

As an art worker I am very fond of the "Folk Singer" project and congratulate the "Shant" TV for such initiative. Every kind of work needs to have a purpose, and I think the purpose of this project was to propagate Armenian goosan and folk singing. This project shows that there are young people who like, appreciate and sing folk songs. Today the project has the highest rating, which proves that our people need our songs, the Armenian songs.

Jury's decision is very important for each participant. We grade them with confidence that the most talented person will not be excluded, since we cherish each participant. In this project both singing and jury's approach are quite honest.

Arsen Grigoryan

Jury Member

I think the project "Folk Singer" came to fill in something missing in our cultural life; missing, since for many years folk songs and singers have been kind of neglected. There are people, whose concern has always been the national and folk singing, and the "Shant" TV managed to be the pioneer in that initiative. This project came to prove that national songs will remain forever, despite the fact that many people listen to contemporary music and think that it is Armenian.

As an art worker I would wish all our participants to win, since they are very talented and diligent. However, as a jury member I will say that we were very honest, objective and dedicated. The idea of our grading was very good in the professional sense, and we will certainly make a better selection than the audience.

Gevorg Dabaghyan

Jury Member

The project "Folk Singer" was like a national festivity, which our people wanted so much. I am sure that thousands of children watched the project, and thus, the next project will be even more popular. The idea came a little late, but it was never late.

Unfortunately, very few Armenian TV stations broadcast pure Armenian songs, which is not quite logical. One can listen to everything except for Armenian folk songs. I think all genres of music must be presented, so that the Armenian youth can have a choice.

Azat Gasparyan

Jury Member

I would like to speak not as a jury member, but as a part of audience. At that I do not want to put pressure on participants and myself. I used to say this several times, and will repeat for the "Armenian Art" that this project was a discovery in our cultural life. As an honor to "Shant" TV, both the producer Hakob Rubinyan, the musical producer Artem Khachatryan and ourselves (the jury) demonstrated a fair approach, to be able to recognize the patrons of the Armenian melody and select the best ones smartly. Perhaps this is the first contest in Armenia without any pressure from anyone.

I think the jury made a correct decision, as our people have slightly lost their perception of the good, and because of that the most talented people could have left out. And we are to help that similar participants stay and continue their participation in the project. My request through



the "Armenian Art" magazine is that we nationally acknowledge and appreciate our art.

Anna Mayilyan

Honorable Guest of the Project

Each time when I watch the "Folk Singer", I get excited, and it is not because I love and perform folk music, but because a TV station broadcasts such pure and chaste music. I am totally impressed by the performance of all 14 participants. Of course they are still young and have a long

way to go, but I am surprised of their skills to master such a great art in such a short time.

Long live their parents, who brought up these children that love vocal and national music. By the way I was not that inclined towards goosan-vocal music, since we do not have a chance to listen to it and do not know what is out there. Our predecessors, who used to sing those songs, are not alive, and their performances are not broadcast any longer. So, folk music was also forgotten. Now I have discovered for myself that sacred and vocal music have great connections. If we take Narekatsi's lyrics, we will see a direct line to Jivani, Sheram, etc.

I think that the project "Folk Singer" is not a show, but rather a big school. In other words there is a learning curve to shape and perfect their natural endowments with the skillful professionals' help.

Robert Amirkhanyan

Honorable Guest of the Project

With its main idea the project "Folk Singer" is essentially separated and distinguished from other popular TV programs. In the



recent years, when Armenia gained her independence, people tried to find the new, the unknown. And for us, the concept of folk song was replaced with a direction of different style and genre, which had to be the least Armenian, the least national, and the least related to folk singing. The project "Folk Singer" was like the first initiative to stop that backward move, since the song itself became dear to us like a pure tear. I welcome this project, because it also forms a new national mentality.

Sevak Amroyan The "Folk Singer"

Sevak was born in Yerevan, in 1990. He now lives in Proshyan village of Kotayk Region. Sevak studies at the State Musical College after Romanos Melikyan. Before participating in this project, he studied at a vocal school for two years.

I am very glad that Mr. Sedrak initiated the "Folk Singer" project. I give thanks to the "Shant" TV and the organizers, who made an opportunity for us-young people to perform. From the merely professional perspective, I had many accomplishments, gaining a lot of knowledge from real professionals. And in personal relationships I got a lot of good friends, who are always with me.

fine arts

ASILVA

AN ARTIST

SCULPTOR

ENGRAVER

Was born in Constantinople. Has had many exhibitions in different countries (France, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Monaco, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, Denmark, Russia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey):

Museum shows:

Armenia

The National Gallery of Armenia
The Museum-Institute of Genocide
The Parajanov Museum

France

The Ministry of Culture of France, the
Department of Culture of the Avignon
City Hall
"Shamalie" Museum of Engraving
The Avignon City Center

Germany

Stuttgart City Museum

Bosnia-Herzegovina

International Portrait Gallery in Tuzla



1



2



3



4



5



6

Photos: the artist is with the First Lady Bella Kocharyan (1), the ROA Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan (2), the President of the Artists' Union Karen Aghamyan (3), the Director of the Genocide Museum Hayk Demoyan (4), the Director of the Parajanov Museum Zaven Sargsyan (5), the Head of the Exhibition Department of the National Gallery of Armenia Hasmik Ginoyan (6), with her daughter Fimi Arakelyan and relatives (7).



7

fine arts



Opening the exhibition; from the left - art critics Shahan Khachatryan, Henrik Igityan, Asilva, the ROA Deputy Minister of Culture Gagik Gyurjyan, the Director of the National Gallery Paravon Mirzoyan.

learnt about yourself, leave well along with all that is buried at the bottom of your conscience and go forwards in life".

But

As an artist, I have never chosen the easy path. It is the energy contained in the research of the art of painting that has given me the strenght to continue and not to give up my retroactive biofeedback journey.

This proress is endless, I have realized the impossibility to reach the endpoint. All the feelings and thoughts that I discovered were alive and related to the moments of my life.

The mirror in front of us projects our physical image throught which we can also discover our inner image.

One wants to see what he would like to be and appears to be.

I understood the difference between physical and inner beauty. The criterion for physical beauty changes from one culture to another. But inner beauty is universal; it is based on respect for diversity of other people, on love and altruism, and is rich in sensitivity.

The inner beauty of a human being is visible during his life and beyond, thanks to the marks left by works of art. After my retroaction, I had a feeling of being reborn, and I belive that my painting has also followed this transformation.

Asilva

The exhibition "Voyage from the outside to the inside of oneself with shapes and colours" at the National Gallery of Armenia is the presentation of my work in an atmosphere that little resembles my previous exhibitions.

In this proposition of a journey throught the world of art, you will discover the adventure of a new creation throught the union or juxtapositon of my compositions with your own reflection and sometimes with the reflection of others at the same time.

One in other, one with other, for the pleasure of the discoveries that one can make about oneself and modern art.

Before realising this exhibition with mirrors and my paintings, I wanted to know myself better.

My retroactive "biofeedback" journey was to be full of surprises. It is not easy to accept the

weaknesses, the jealousies, the mistakes that have long been embedded in one's mind.

The domain of consciousness is complex. At each step I found myself in front of a door that I had to open and behind each open door that I had to force open in order to get past the traps that I lay waiting for me, piled up in the depths of my inner self.

I would have preferred the facts, the feelings that I found, to have been dead, lost, flown away, forgotten for ever, but unfortunately they were there and very much alive, like dragons I had to slaughter in order to continue my journey, otherwise I would have abandoned the path towards the undrstanding of myself.

Often, I was tempted to take the easy way out and run away and I would say to myself: "you did what you could, be satisfited with what you have already



Tender, Aristocratic, Melodious

The greatest purpose of every artist is perhaps the discovery of the depths and limits of his own self. It is the vision and reproduction of his divine reflection in the natural phenomena.

Harutyun Harutyunyan was born in Echmiatsin, in 1948. He received his primary professional education at the P. Terlemezyan College of Painting, then studied at the Yerevan Institute of Fine Art (1972). Since the late 70s, Harutyun regularly participated in republican and inner-state exhibitions. He has been a member of the Artists' Union of Armenia since 1977.

The environment of childhood and youth plays a very important and specific role in the formation of an artist's creative individualism, artistic world perception and handwriting. The Ararat Valley's fruitful gardens, blossoming flowers and the sacred music of the Holy Echmiatsin made a deep impression in Harutyun's soul and predetermined the basic trend of his creative inspiration – tender, aristocratic and melodious lyricism.

The mysterious atmosphere



of his images, vibrant and colorful scenes that have been made by an inner vision make one feel the centuries-old and always lively breath of the native soil.

The same breath exists not only in Harutyun's landscapes and still-lives, but also in his recent works on religious subject.

Regardless of the variety of topics and images, the artist

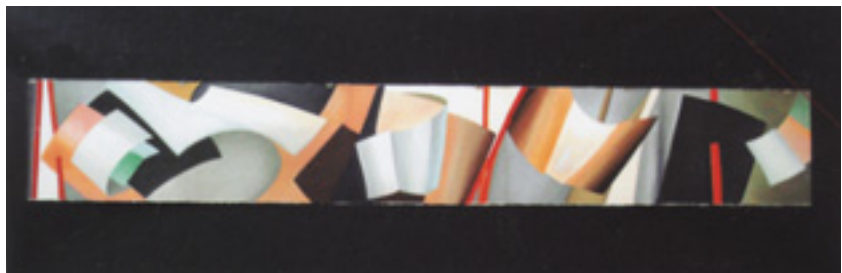
always remains faithful to his perceptions and feelings. For this reason, his exhibitions in Armenia, Russia, Bulgaria, France and Canada have always been welcomed warmly.

Even today, Harutyun Harutyunyan experiences a prosperous and fruitful artistic period.

Shahen Khachatryan

Հարություն Հարությունյան Harutyun Harutyunyan



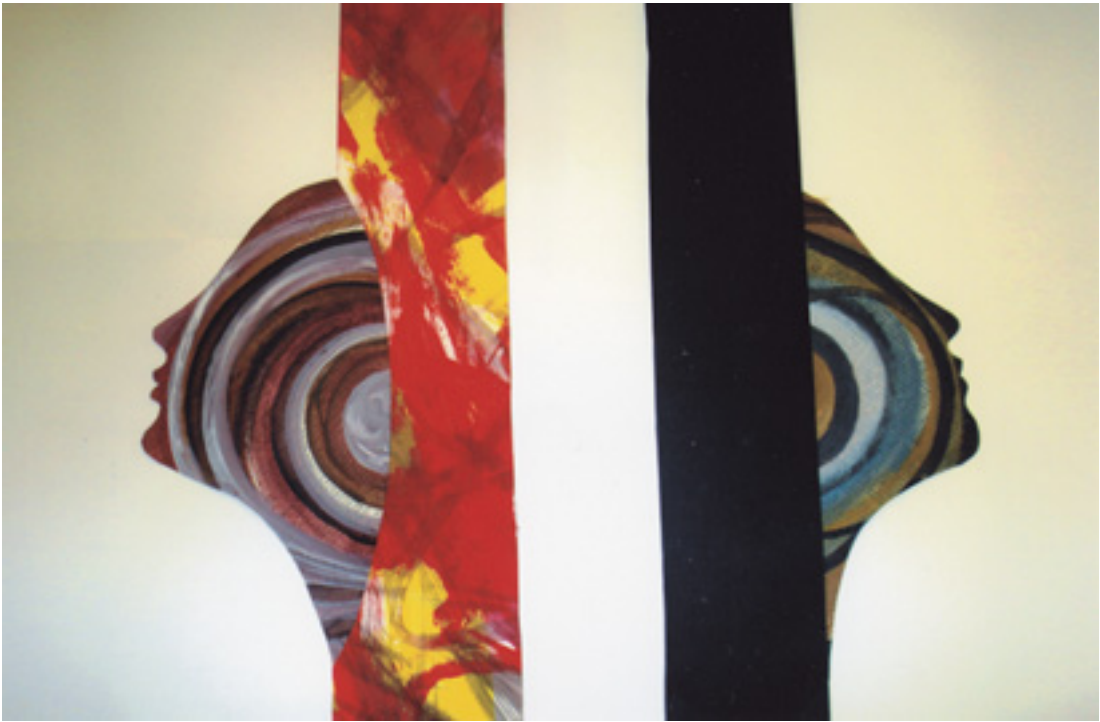


Ասիլվայի «Ուղեւորություն արտաքինից դեպի ներս»-ի ցուցահանդեսը Հայաստանի ֆորմաներով եւ գույներով» սնկսական ցուցահանդեսը Հայաստանի սպասարհն Պակետստահուն 2007 թ. սեպտեմբերի 12-ից հոստեմբերի 4:

Ցուցադրված աշխատանքները թղթի վրա ոսկե հսնունով Պասրսսված յուղսներկ գործեր էին, որոնցից մի քանիսի քաճարությունը հսսնուն էր 6 մետրի:

Asilva's individual exhibition "A Journey from the Outer into the Inner World by Forms and Colors" at the National Gallery of Armenia; September 12 - October 4, 2007.

The exhibited works were gold-cut paintings on paper. Some were about 6 meters in height.



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Գագիկ Պարսամյան



Gagik Parsamyan



fine arts

Gagik Parsamyan was born in Echmiatsin in 1957. In 1977 he graduated from the Fine Art College after P. Terlemezyan, then continued studies at the Yerevan Institute of Art and Theatre. Since 1988 has been a member of the Artists' Union of Armenia. 1989-94 led the M. Abeghyan branch of the National Gallery of Armenia. Since 1994 has been living in Gdansk, Poland.

Has had the following individual exhibitions:

1989 – Moscow, Holland
1990 – Belgrade
1991 – Paris, Moscow, Rouen
1993 – Echmiatsin
1994 – Gdansk
1998, 2001 – Warsaw
2004 – Kaliningrad
2007 – Echmiatsin

Hereby we present an extract from the Pole art critic Valentina Pokladova's article about Gagik Parsamyan's art.



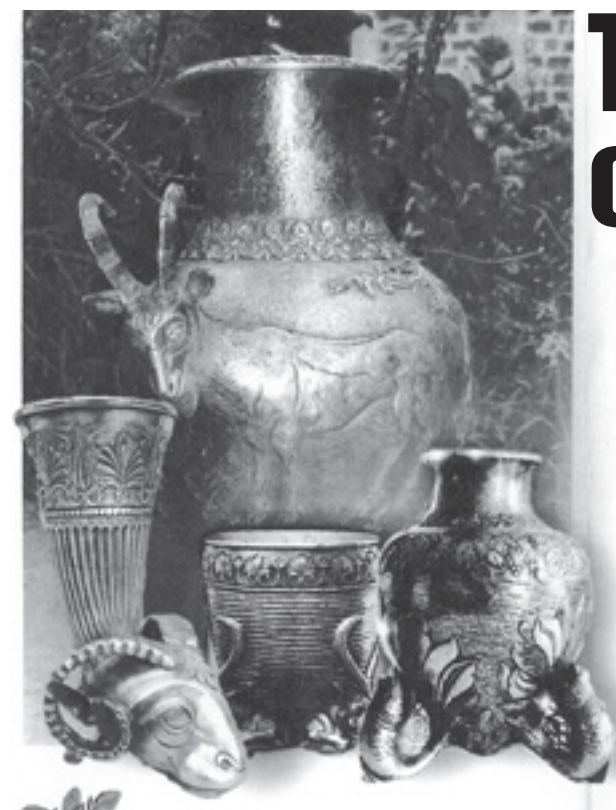
"Gagik Parsamyan likes combinations of blue, red, yellow, pink and purple, which are rare in the reality, and thus lead us towards the unknown. The total expression of his canvases makes a conditional linkage, where only celestial spirits can exist.

G. Parsamyan's canvases can perhaps be made into beautiful and tender music, where the

Armenian duduk plays and Lusine Zakaryan's divine voice sounds.

The artist wants to present to the world his treasures: talent, kindness and beauty".

The small world of art in Kond



There is a particular house in the Kond district of Yerevan city. It was built by an artist and master of silver Mamikon Mkhitarian. He built the house during 10 years, putting in it his soul and art, and named it Mkhitarian Studio. Mkhitarian studio provides all the conditions for painting, artistic treatment of metals and carpet - weaving. The 60 square meter area on the first floor of the studio serves as a showroom. The studio was founded by Mamikon Mkhitarian and Paitsar Avetisyan, members of the Artists' Union of Armenia. The founders, together with their sons (artists Hayk and Vardan) and numerous apprentices serve to preserve the soul of Armenia in the arts and craft by passing on their experience and craftsmanship to new generations.

A UNESCO Investigator Mr. Prepis' Visit To the Sacred Places of Historical Atrpatakan

***"We saw and touched these historical sacred places:
We will make our organization's official statement soon"-
Mr. Prepis announced at St. Thaddeus Church***



On September 6-9, 2007, one of the general responsible officers of UNESCO Dr. Alkiviates Prepis with the accompaniment of his wife, who is an investigator at the same organization, had a business visit to the historical sacred places of the Atrpatakan Diocese, to officially register those in UNESCO. Among the participants were also responsible officers from the Cultural Heritage of Iran (from Tehran, Tabriz and Urmia), the architect Varujan Arakelyan and the responsible officer of protecting the churches in Iran Sherli Avetyan.

On September 6 (Thursday)

the investigators' group traveled to St. Stephen Church. Earlier, on the way to the Church they visited the Herder's Chapel. It was entirely renovated during the last months, but its twin – the Andevordi Chapel, located on the other bank of the river Araks in the territory of Azerbaijan, was totally exploded in December of 2005.

At the time of the group's arrival, there was a Liturgical

Divine Liturgy. The officiating priest passed on to the guests the greetings of the Primate of the Diocese Bishop Nshan Topuzyan. He explained that the Primate and members of the Diocesan Council not only visit the churches, but also temporarily settle on special days and participate in different religious ceremonies with people.

The delegacy also visited



Service at St. Stephen Church, lead by the spiritual leader of Urmia Fr. Anania Gujanian. The guests participated in the

the St. Astvatsatsin Church in Darashamb and the historical village located right on the bank of Araks.



On Friday they arrived in St. Thaddeus Church, where the Primate of the Diocese Bishop Nshan Topuzyan was serving the Divine Liturgy. The Komitas four-part choir of Tabriz lead by Vardan Vahramian chanted at the service. During the ceremony, the bishop greeted the guests and said: "Here the remains of the first martyr of the Armenian Apostolic Church St. Sandukht virgin are stored. The grave of the Christ's disciple and one of the first illuminators of Armenia St. Thaddeus is also located here. As the St. Stephan Church

of the historical cemetery in Old Jugha... Some countries committed a political suicide by destroying these holy places..."

On Saturday, the delegacy arrived in Paron village of Makvi, the St. Astvatsatsin Church of Tsor Tsor. During the four-hour investigating visit, the above mentioned responsible officers were given a comprehensive report about the relocation, sanctification and basic renovation of the Church.

In the same morning and on Sunday, the Primate gave a comprehensive interview on the Western and Eastern



is dedicated to the memory of the first Christian martyr, so is this divine and holy heritage under our responsibility, and it is our anticipation that you will observe these holy places from this perspective."

After the ceremony, the Holy Father presented the guests precious souvenirs on behalf of the Kilikian Catholicos Aram I. Responding to the Father's question, Mr. Prepis said: "We had a great frustration, when observing the scenes of total destruction

Atrpatakan TV and Radio (it can be viewed at www.irna.ir website).

Before leaving the Diocese, the UNESCO officer announced: "During the upcoming UNESCO Assembly in February, 2008, 42 specialists will vote on the issue of registering the diocesan churches, and I hope for the positive result."

*The article was written
based on the information received
from the Eparchy of the
Atrpatakan Diocese*





Partial views of the cemetery. Photo by Rafayel Abgaryan, 1986 (Courtesy of RAA)

Sacred Stones Silenced in Azerbaijan

Simon Maghakyan describes the destruction of a vital part of the heritage and early history of Armenians.

When, in the summer of 2005, Scottish researcher Steven Sim visited the region of Nakhichevan, an exclave of the South Caucasus republic of Azerbaijan, in order to study medieval Armenian monuments, he found out his trip was in vain – there was nothing there for him to research. After being detained and questioned by security police, Sim was asked why he expected Armenian Christian churches in a region where only Muslims lived. A villager, too, told him Armenians had never lived in Nakhichevan. When the researcher explained that a book had directed him to the ancient Armenian church in the village, an old man blasted out

words in what Sim thought was German. The translator explained that the man was talking to him in Armenian, apparently to see if Sim was an Armenian spy. Knowing Armenian in a place where no Armenians ever lived seemed too awkward.

But Sim did not confront Azeris in Nakhichevan about history. Neither did he resist orders to put his camera away in a military zone at the Azerbaijani-Iranian border when his train was passing by world's largest surviving Armenian medieval cemetery – Djulfa (Jugha in Armenian). Sim might have done otherwise if he knew back then he was going to be the last known outsider in this remote area – on the border with Iran – to glance at the thousands of sacred and beautifully handcrafted khachkars (literally, cross-stones)

– up to eight feet tall burial monuments with intricately carved surfaces – before they were going to be reduced to dust in less than half a year.

More than 350 years ago, a foreign traveller to Djulfa estimated 10,000 khachkars in the cemetery. By 1998, less than eight decades after a Soviet agreement with Turkey placed Nakhichevan under Azerbaijan, there were only 2,000 remaining. Still, the surviving stones were stunning and irreplaceable, and a screaming statement to the aged presence of the Armenian people in Nakhichevan who were forced to leave their ancestral homes as Azerbaijan took over. Archaeology Magazine writes, 'The oldest burials in the Djulfa cemetery ... date to the sixth century ad, but most of the famed khachkars are from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.'

According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites, the Azeri authorities destroyed much of the cemetery in 1998 and in 2002 followed by limited international protest. But as late as August 2005, as Sim witnessed, Djulfa was not entirely wiped out. He says that 'most of the stones were still there and had only been toppled'.

On December 15th, 2005, Russia's Regnum News Agency was the first international outlet to quote reports of approximately '100 Azerbaijani servicemen ... crush[ing] Armenian graves and crosses ...'. An Armenian film crew in northern Iran, where the cemetery was visible from, had videotaped dozens of men in uniforms in the Azerbaijani border hacking the khachkars down with sledgehammers, using a crane to remove some of the largest monuments from the ground, breaking the stones into small pieces, and dumping them into the River Araxes by a large truck. The destruction, which also amounted to desecration of Armenian remains beneath the stones, had reportedly started on

December 14th and lasted for a few days giving the world media enough time to report it as it was happening. But it was not until April 2006 when Azeri journalists from the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting confirmed that the cemetery had vanished. The Times reflected on April 21st, '[a] medieval cemetery regarded as one of the wonders of the Caucasus has been erased from the Earth in an act of cultural vandalism likened to the Taliban blowing up the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan in 2001.'

While the bombing of the Bamiyan Buddhas had received worldwide coverage at the eve of the war on terror, the destruction of Djulfa was barely noticed. The only Associated Press article quoted Azerbaijan's president Ilham Aliyev as denying the demolition report as 'an absolute lie, slanderous information, a provocation' and accusing Armenia of destroying Azeri monuments. The US administration's response to the vandalism came only after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her assistants were

asked about America's reaction. While in her reply to a US legislator Rice urged Azerbaijan to 'take appropriate measures to prevent any desecration of cultural monuments,' her assistant Matthew Bryza said at a news conference it was 'not really up to the United States to take steps to stop it' because it was 'happening in a foreign country'. Thomas de Waal, an expert on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations says, 'Foreign investors and diplomats in Azerbaijan are very sensitive towards anything that touches on the Armenian-Azerbaijani issue and the peace process and are therefore very timid about raising the issue of the destruction of cultural monuments.'

Although, today, Armenia's victory in the war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh in the early 1990s is understood generally to be the reason for Djulfa's destruction, the concern for Azerbaijan's Armenian heritage has its roots in the beginning of the unresolved conflict itself. One reason for Karabakh's breakaway from

The Azeri soldiers breaking the khachkars to pieces with heavy hammers.
Photo by Arthur Gevorgian, December 2005
(Courtesy of RAA)





The crushed pieces of khachkars emptied into the Arax-facing side of the railway.
Photo by Arthur Gevorgian, december 2005
(Courtesy of RAA)

Azerbaijan, writes security analyst Emmanuel Karagiannis, was the fear 'that the Armenian character of Karabakh would disappear as it had in Nakhichevan over the decades. The Armenian population in Nakhichevan had all but disappeared and Armenian monuments there were systematically removed and reportedly destroyed by the Azerbaijani authorities.' The assertion that Nakhichevan's native Armenian heritage has been completely cleansed is indirectly affirmed by Azeri officials. Hasan Zeinalov from Nakhichevan, for instance, has told the BBC, 'Armenians have never lived in Nakhichevan, which has been Azerbaijani land from time immemorial, and that's why there are no Armenian cemeteries and monuments and have never been any.'

Azerbaijan's denial of Djulfa's destruction followed by refusal to allow international observers to visit the cemetery site questions the effectiveness of a number of international laws. While a February 16th,

2006, European Parliament resolution condemning Djulfa's demolition provided a list of international conventions violated by Azerbaijan, the vandalism was not mentioned in the US State Department's 2006 International Religious Freedom Report on Azerbaijan released on September 15th, 2006. Identical to the wording of at least five-year-old reports, the State Department proclaimed that 'all Armenian churches, many of which were damaged in ethnic riots that took place more than a decade ago, remained closed.' Even outside Nakhichevan the statement did not reflect actuality. A church in central Azerbaijan's Nizh village, for instance, was reopened in early 2006 for the Udi Christian minority after a publicized restoration eliminated the Armenian letters on church walls and nearby tombstones.

When Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin coined the term 'genocide' to describe the crime of the crimes, he argued that 'genocide' was not a synonym for

'mass murder' because the latter did 'not convey the specific losses to civilization in the form of cultural contributions'. But culture was excluded from the UN genocide convention's adopted version. And despite the growing academic use of the term 'cultural genocide', the crime is still not formalized in international law. When sacred material heritage is deliberately destroyed to prove that the destroyed culture never existed or to make sure that it doesn't exist (and especially when the act is committed by a party in trust), the crime is not simply a violation of the monument, but a genocidal act against the collective identity that the monument represents.

Call it 'cultural genocide' or 'vandalism,' the destruction of Djulfa demands rethinking of cultural rights. Such a process could start with the US State Department condemning the Djulfa destruction in its next International Religious Freedom Report on Azerbaijan and concluding for a need to readdress cultural genocide. The screamers to Djulfa's lost treasure are the handful of surviving sacred stones that are scattered around the world similar to the forgotten Armenian exiles of Nakhichevan. These few khachkars were transferred from the cemetery before the 1990s and are found today in the yard of Armenia's St Etchmiadzin Holy See, at the Hermitage Museum of St Petersburg and other places. Once medieval Armenia's largest cemetery and rich with thousands of khachkars only years ago, the sacred graveyard of Djulfa has been erased and replaced, as March 2006 and later photographs testify, with a military rifle range.

Simon Maghakyan
"History Today"
November 2007

Two Newly Discovered Castles in Tsakhkadzor

The Deputy Director of the RA NAS Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography
Gagik Sargsyan
Head of the Department of Medieval Archaeology
Husik Melkonyan

Tsakhkadzor is one of the famous resorts in Armenia. In the middle ages it was under the reign of Prince Varajnun. In the 9th century it was transferred to the Apiratyans Dynasty, and in the time of its power the Kecharis Monastery was founded. One of the significant figures of the mentioned dynasty Grigor Apirat Magostros built the St. Gregory Church of the Monastery in 1003. Under the patronage of the Apiratyans, the monastery



developed rapidly, turning into the largest religious and educational-cultural center of the medieval Armenia.

In August, 2007, the archaeological group of the RA NAS Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography did preliminary excavations at an ancient place "Khacher" in Tsakhkadzor city. "Khacher" is located on the south-western hills of the city. It has a strategic position and takes about 1500 square meters. Excavations externally revealed some 37 meters of walls, lasting from east to west. It was built with large basalt stones. There are also

two rectangular towers with 10 meters distance from each other. The wall is 3,2 m. in width, and the preserved height is 1 m.

The excavations also revealed separate parts of three rooms, which will be completely dug out in 2008. The archeological findings are of the Middle Ages (11-14th centuries). In the eastern side of the place there was found a basalt cross-stone of 10-11th centuries. The preliminary investigation of the monument gives a ground to think that we deal with an ancient castle, which was actively functional during Apiratyans and Proshyans' reign, serving as the Kecharis residency for these dynasties.

Towards 2-3 kilometers east from "Khacher" there are the remains of "Berdi Glukh". It is quite a powerful castle with walls of up to 3 m. in width and of preserved 1,5 m. in height. In the north-western part of the castle there are the remains of a big tower, similar to the early medieval Armenian monuments (Vardenut, Kosh, Ernjatap, etc.).

More information about the newly discovered two castles in Tsakhkadzor will be available as excavation works continue in coming years.



Live Wire, Lifeblood: Radio journalist Tania Ketenjian enlightens and nourishes, one interview at a time



By Lucine Kasbarian

- A financier is provoked to discover himself, his life, and the world anew when he awakes one morning lost, bewildered and alone, having contracted retrograde amnesia through the night.
- A photo assistant scribbles his phone number on a chalkboard prop photographed for a "Crate & Barrel" catalog, only to receive 15,000 phone calls from around the country. He organizes a "National Dinner Tour" to interview his

newfound friends and make art from these encounters.

- An "accent elimination course" spurs a New York woman to produce a sound-art pastiche and social commentary about cultural preservation and assimilation by trying to acquire her Lebanese-Armenian father's and Finnish-Swedish mother's foreign accents, while they unsuccessfully try to lose theirs.
- In response to rampant shoplifting and gross consumerism, an artist collective leaves behind hand-crafted objects on grocery shelves to make political statements known as "shop dropping" and "culture jamming."

These are some of the eclectic, eccentric, and enigmatic stories heard on Tania Ketenjian's provocative programs airing on radio stations around the country and the globe. Many of her storylines emerge from the depths of creative expression—from the lives of visual artists, actors, writers or musicians. Other interviewees are not artists at all. The common thread throughout is that the voices, ideas and emotions brought to the airwaves—and facilitated by Tania's own discernment, aptitude and finesse—serve to tell stories that often are not, and to spotlight or question prevailing standards, preconceptions and realities held and presented in our increasingly pre-packaged and sanitized world.

Raised in San Francisco by Lebanese-Armenian parents, Tania's entry into radio was not immediate. She moved east to study poetry and creative writing at Bard College in New York, and later moved to New York City, where she lived for five years, first designing and editing for Seven Stories Press—a radical and independent book publisher. Her genuine interest in people and inherent curiosity about the world led her to interview authors and artists for "City in Exile"—a local arts program on listener-sponsored WBAI Radio in NYC. Working at WBAI cemented her appetite for radio. And yet, with such deep ties to family, Tania heeded her mother's call to return home to San Francisco, where Tania now lives with her husband Philip Wood, a British furniture designer and curator and manufacturer of conceptual art and design objects.

Today, Tania's radio work takes many forms: As an independent journalist and producer, her segments can be heard on "Studio 360," a quirky arts program nationally syndicated through Public Radio International; on the popular and nationally syndicated "Weekend America" on American Public Media; and on National Public Radio's "Day to Day." Tania also hosts and produces a weekly arts program called "Sight Unseen" that airs on KALX in Berkeley, California, and on Resonance FM in London, England. The program asks interviewees and

listeners to consider how the ideas put forth affect the way we view the world and ourselves. In addition, she is the West Coast Correspondent for "WPS1 Art Radio"—established by the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the world's first Internet art station. Her programs also air on stations abroad such as ABC in Australia, BBC in England, and CBC in Canada. If this were not enough, Tania is also the co-executive producer of Thin Air Media, an independently run company producing audio documentaries. Yet still, Tania teaches audio production at the California College of the Arts, and also participates in a San Francisco-based artist's collective called Quorum. Much like French journalist Bernard Pivot's Proustian "Ten Questions," Tania asks us to consider questions about our common existence—as a participatory exercise, a starting point of unity, and a springboard for dialogue. Most recently at an open studios event in which her studio participated, she asked those gathered to discuss their first encounter with art.

Though Tania does not consider herself a sound artist, her work defines her as a portraitist of a different sort. Tania once produced a program about the love affair between visionary opposites, portrait and landscape photographer Edward Weston and radical activist-photographer Tina Modotti. Tania's own contributions to radio and society seem to embody both aspects of their natures. On one hand and like the aesthetically inclined Weston, Tania explores what life, beauty and essence means to herself and to others through the subjects she spotlights. On the other hand, and like the politically motivated Modotti, Tania's work causes us to think about how art manifests in social movements, compels us to question and find meaning in everything, and then act upon

those impulses. Perhaps the most compelling and precise of all descriptions of Tania came from her former employer, Dan Simon, publisher of Seven Stories Press, when he called her "hemoglobin," the protein in the human body that transports oxygen from the lungs to the tissues, and carbon dioxide from the tissues to the lungs. What hemoglobin does for oxygen and those who subsist by it is what Tania does for (radio) air and those who are nourished by it. Indeed, Tania the conduit is as vital a substance as the life-giving content she transports.

Most recently, Tania and radio partner Ahri Golden, both executive producers of Thin Air Media, completed a documentary called BIRTH, a one-hour public radio and audio journey through the practices and perceptions of birth in this country. BIRTH's intention is to ask, "What is the birth experience in America today, and how does it reflect on our culture?" A companion project in progress, called THE BIRTH TOUR, is a series of national events that gather people to talk about birth. Could it be any more fitting that the woman described as a life-sustaining agent should labor to produce a documentary about the life-giving process itself?

In a telephone interview, Tania Ketenjian discussed her work, her ideas, and her Armenian identity.

Lucine Kasbarian — *It is an honor to speak with you, Tania. Thank you for doing what you do, and in the way that you do it. Would you explain why you do what you do, and how you feel it affects the world around you?*

Tania Ketenjian — Thank you for asking me these questions. I'm so used to being the questioner, it's exciting to be on the receiving end and think about and discuss these things. As a journalist, I seek to shed light on the fundamental truths of

human experience. To do this, I most often choose to feature art-makers as a force for change because the creation of art is such a private process, and yet it is something that is publicly displayed. This contradiction is fascinating, and I enjoy the intersection of the two. What I love about art is that something so personal is left to the eyes and perceptions of the outside world. With the people I interview, I try to dig deeper, beyond the art, and try to see what their work reflects about human nature, tendencies, needs, fears. How are these artists challenged by their work and changed by it? How are they finding and expressing love or politics through it? Life can be difficult and being a professional artist is a huge challenge. One must be so committed to become an artist, and unfortunately it's rare to come across people who are passionate about what they do. In this way, I can come across those people every day. This work inspires me because I get to be around those who are inspired, who are committed to doing what they believe in and who want to make some sort of change, a shift in people's awareness, an interrupt. Seeing them makes me want to do the same. And I love people. Just hearing their words and their insights confirms my belief in the magic of life. I feel blessed and privileged to have the opportunity to do this. I couldn't without the support of my extended family and the opportunities they've given me in life. They sacrificed so that I could have a chance. I also do this because I feel a lot of people don't get heard. I try to interview those who aren't normally brought on the air. These are people with beautiful, interesting, powerful things to say. Paradoxical as it may sound, radio interviews give them the opportunity to be "seen"—and appreciated for what they do. If I didn't become a radio journalist,



Tania Ketenjian on the other side of the microphone, being interviewed about her "Happiness" audio documentary

I think I would have become a therapist. It's amazing how much can happen when you are silent. My Grandpa used to always encourage me to do this, to truly listen. When someone is being listened to, it's amazing what will come out of him or her. In that process, the interviewees have a chance to learn about themselves, their work, and the change they make in their communities and environment.

L.K. — *How have your personal politics and views of the world influenced the stories you've sought to cover? You feature Armenian artists now and then, and the ones you choose appear to be fully in line with your work, which highlights the seemingly offbeat things that marginalized people can do. How does your Armenianness affect the stories you cover, and under what circumstances do you feature Armenians on the air?*

T.K. — It's inevitable that one interjects his or her views, interests, and personal experiences into what they're attracted to—consciously or unconsciously. The issues that appeal to me often revolve

around a sense of place. I have interviewed a variety of artists that deal with this—the filmmaker Wim Wenders, Atom Egoyan, artists living in Cuba, and of course lesser-known names. Sometimes the names we haven't heard as often are more original. They aren't used to being interviewed, so their answers are unique. Perhaps I gravitate to these people because of my own background and culture, as well as my own nature. I have great reverence for family and people that came here not knowing anything about the culture or language, and yet integrated in a way that allowed them to be prosperous. The struggle of being an outsider and yet integrating the self with a new identity and how these lines cross interests me. I can't deny my respect for family, familial closeness, and the collective Armenian sense of determination. We Armenians are a passionate people. This respect carries over into an interest I have for all sorts of cultures. Though I was not forced out of my native land as others were, Atom Egoyan, in his films *Ararat* and *Calendar*, discusses what people adopt, even if they

didn't experience certain things personally. Understanding a sense of place allows one to gain a better understanding of themselves and why they make certain choices, and hopefully sets the groundwork for a clearer future. This idea is particularly strong with the Armenians, especially in our Diasporan culture. These aspects, and a natural curiosity, are all parts of being a journalist. This is how my Armenian identity shows itself in my work. And inevitably, my Armenianness does affect the stories I choose to cover because it's part of who I am. I am interested in language and history, in obligation and choice, in conforming and not conforming, and so much of this comes up in Armenian culture. Because Armenians have had to remain united, they have had to stick to traditions. It's important to question those traditions, and artists are often doing that. They are in a constant process of questioning. It's that process that is of value, not so much the answers you come up with. I recently became a reporter for "The Armenian Reporter" newspaper, and I am now immersed in the ways Armenians are exploring identity and history. This gives me yet another avenue in which to express what I encounter among the Armenians.

L.K. — *What is it about the Armenian culture that makes you feel you grew up with a strong Armenian identity?*

T.K. — First and foremost, the language. And it's not just the spoken word and how that is different from English, but its intonations and even idiomatic phrases that have affected me. I become another person when I speak a different language, at least another part of who I am already. I think that's very true about those who speak several languages, it calls upon a different voice, way of thinking, connection. There are

so many small things that are reminders—it's all-pervasive in a strangely innocuous way. Phone calls from Lebanon were a staple as I was growing up. Picking up my grandparents from the international arrivals section of the airport was always an interesting experience. Smells, food, and of course, certain codes of manners and politeness we practiced, right down to how we'd stand by the curb when company drove away, or how my Mom opened her eyes wide when I'd say something inappropriate. But having said all this, I didn't grow up going to church or belonging to Armenian organizations. I can't make sweeping generalizations, but Armenians can have a particular way of viewing the world and notions about how one should be. It's like I was saying before, it's one of the perils of tradition. We are expected to choose practical professions and remain bonded to family and sometimes this can be difficult for Armenians, and for Armenian creatives, in particular. I find that a lot of Armenians can feel alienated because of the choices they've made in their lives. There's a warmth and a joviality that I find in Armenian culture and at the same time there's a slight rigidity and that can easily be eradicated. It's about sharing ideas and coming together in an authentic way that simultaneously speaks to both one's Armenian identity and personal endeavor. My Armenianness is a contradiction, I hold true to certain values but in some ways I have picked an unconventional profession. However, the values that I have make that profession possible. I think that's often overlooked in Armenian culture, image becomes more important than intention. That's something that I think we can be more aware of.

L.K. — *Regarding how Armenian creatives can feel like outsiders or outcasts within*

our Diasporan communities for holding unconventional views or lifestyles, how might the Armenian community better embrace or welcome Armenian creatives? Is there a way for such marginalization to be turned into an asset?

T.K. — Firstly, most people in the world feel marginalized. They do not feel connected or represented, and that's why people join groups or create clear identities for themselves, so that they can feel less alone. The good thing about being slightly alienated is that it offers you a chance to observe and expose things in a way that you couldn't if you were on the inside. Marginalization allows you to see in a deeper way. You are already marginalized, so what have you got to lose? Artists are often marginalized so through their work they can be blunt and take risks. Hopefully a marginalized person's attitudes, views and beliefs will resonate with others, and then like-minded people can meet, join in, create community and grow together. Also, when you are marginalized, you have to understand yourself better because the environment that you exist in does not reflect back to you who you are. That level of self-awareness will hopefully increase the value of what you are putting out into the world in a conscious way. And being marginalized goes hand in hand with taking risks. And risk is a great way to accomplish your dreams. Filmmaker Atom Egoyan holds values that may be considered traditionally Armenian and yet, in his work, he doesn't hide the darker side of the human experience, whether it is about love, loss, passion, identity, falsehoods or truths. That's risky and it's real. The whole point of journalism is to communicate, connect, to talk about the things that most people don't (even if they think it), and then to grow. That's why communication is so important;

it's the greatest stepping-stone to change. These are some of the assets of marginalization but I think it can be very difficult for Armenian creatives. There are many misconceptions out there: [that] creatives are non-traditionals, not hard working, and maybe even not very moral, and all of these are inaccurate. What would be ideal would be for there to be a place or more places for Armenian creativity to shine, for Armenian creatives to come together, whether they are visual artists, musicians or filmmakers. They are out there, making documentaries, music, books, expressing themselves through and through. If these communities came together across America and the world for that matter, they could be stronger as one group and they could feel recognized and they could be heard. It is the change that happens when someone expresses what they believe in and then follows it through that is profound. Some of the most important people in history who have instigated change worked against the grain and it is those whom we remember now. So it's important to value difference and to bring that to the surface so that we can learn from it.

L.K. — *Why haven't these sorts of groups formed, in your opinion?*

T.K. — I think we often hope someone else will do it! And Armenians aren't the only ones who have this tendency. Life gets busy. Organizing is time-consuming. Sometimes we doubt ourselves and we think, who will care. This sort of work and commitment needs to be a priority in life, and that's an enormous investment. Armenians are inherently welcoming people and as a community, we want what's best for our people. I think such artist cells or organizations, once formed, would thrive amongst our own.

The Armenian Claveciniste in Germany



The editorship has received an interesting interview from Germany, conducted by Armine Zeyteghyan-Babayan with the claveciniste Varvara Manukyan (in Russian). Not being able to print the whole material, hereby we present some extracted information about our young compatriot.

Born in Yerevan, Varvara studied at the Piano Division of the Musical School after Sayat-Nova. She continued her studies at the Gnesins' College in Moscow. Afterwards, she graduated from the Conservatory and Post-graduate Faculty of Historical and Contemporary Performance, which was founded by the world-famous pianist Aleksei Ljubimov. She also studied at the Munich Graduate School. During her studies, Varvara learned about the traditions of playing clavecin, hammer-claves and clavichord.

These instruments of 16-18th century became popular again in the 20th century. At that not only museum exhibits were used, but also new instruments

were developed on the basis of those. The purpose of this all was the revival of the spirit of those times. Before that clavier music was performed on the piano, which, however in its richness did not make a proper impression of the past.

To the question whether today's young generation raptured in rock, jazz, pop and electronic music is interested in ancient music, Varvara responded: "...It is not only an interest, but also a natural demand, which is conditioned by the aspiration of lost harmony that ancient music expresses and extends..."

Speaking about Armenia, the claveciniste noted: "... I am hopeful that there will be musical bands in Armenia, which will focus on this type of art, and students will not have to travel to Europe to study ancient musical instruments".

In the end, Varvara told of her interests: she likes reading Herman Hesse and the philosopher Jose Ortega. Her motto is: "perfection has no limits" and "spread light and kindness".

Tender and Alluring Figures

Karine Atshemyan's sculptures represent a chain of tender and alluring figures. This 30-year old woman is from Yerevan, inspired with lyricism of ancient songs and eposes. Armenia has accumulated aspiration of harmony within Karine's soul, which is expressed in the passionate dance of her sculptures.

These figures are like dancing with mountain winds, which are touching human bodies. A group of young girls at the foot of a mountain show us the incomparable beauty of their nudity. They are slender, beautiful and attractive, always remaining sensible and cautious - despite their nakedness. In the whole variety of their charm: in front of a mirror, modest, a desperate virgin waiting for her lover, - these bronze sculptures are singing the hymn of beauty.

But Karine's work "Praying Nun" is really distinguished among the others. Here the whole formation of the sculpture is like an ascension to God. Through the way of purity and chastity Karine shows us that if art, which does not have any limits is a harmony of forms and figures, then it is also a way towards perfect spiritual harmony.

Christian Germak
"Nouvelles d'Arménie"

Հայտնի / Armenian woman



Karine Atshemyan



Աղբյուր / Akhtamar



Աղբյուր / Preyer



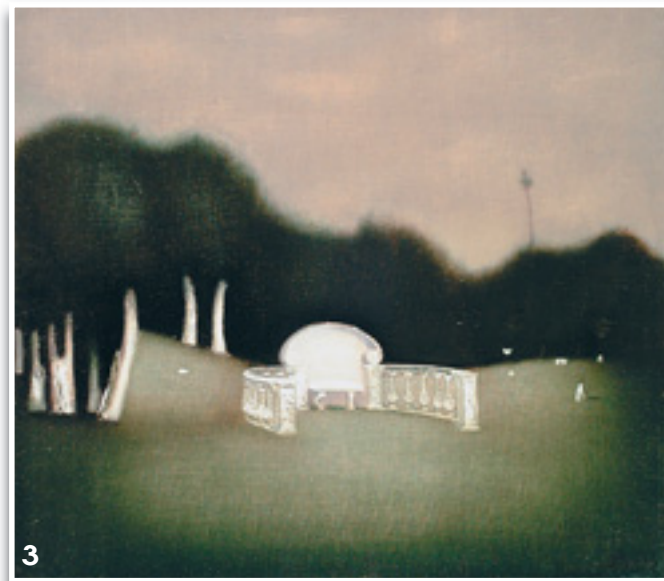
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Սամվել Չիբուխչյան

Samvel Chibukhchyan



1. Չքուսյոյի, 2006 թ.
Park, 2006
2. Երկնային տարրեր, 2000 թ.
Heavenly Gift, 2000
3. Հանգրվան, 2000 թ.
Terminus, 2000
4. Թռիչք, 1999 թ.
Flight, 1999
5. Կանաչ բացուս, 1999 թ.
Green Valley, 1999

fine arts

SAMVEL CHIBUKHCHYAN was born in 1956, Yerevan, Armenia. In 1977 he graduated from Yerevan College of Art, in 1985 from Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts. He has been member of the Artist's Union of Armenia since 1990

EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 "Evening", Republic Youth Exhibition "Peace to the world", Yerevan
 1987 Exhibition with participation of graduates of the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts, Beirut, Lebanon
 1987 "White Mountains", All-Union Exhibition, Moscow, Russia
 1987 "An Old Landscape", Republican Exhibition, "The Youth of the Country", Yerevan
 1988 "Silence", "The Man and the Nature", Republican Exhibition, Yerevan
 1988 Republican Youth Exhibition, Yerevan
 1991 Days of Armenian Culture in Tallinn, Estonia
 1992 Contemporary Art from Armenia with Participation of a group of Armenian artists, Paris, France
 1994 "Yerevan Landscape", Gallery of Russian art, Yerevan
 1995 Days of Armenian Culture in Bochum, Germany
 1995 "Landscape", Republican Exhibition devoted to the 80th Anniversary of Genocide, Yerevan
 1998 Presentation- Exhibition of the NJR Art Gallery, Yerevan
 1999 Contemporary Art from Armenia with participation of a group of Armenian artists, Moscow, Embassy of Armenia
 2000 Presentation-Exhibition of the concern "Daimler Chrysler", Moscow, "Heavenly Gift"
 2001 Presentation-Exhibition of the group "Crossroad", Yerevan
 2001 Exhibition dedicated to the 1700th Anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in Armenia, Yerevan, "Spring"
 2001 Exhibition "Dante in Armenian Imitative Arts", Ravenna, Italy
 2004 Exhibition of the group "Crossroad", Yerevan
 2005 Art Caucasus, Tbilisi
 2006 Personal Exhibition, Yerevan
 2007 Year of Armenian Culture in France, Tours

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS:

The Fund of the Ministry of Culture of Armenia. The Armenian fund of Art, Yerevan. The works are also in private collections in the United States, Germany, France, Holland, Greece, Norway, Poland, Russia, Armenia.



Samvel Chibukhchian as a person was recognized later than as an artist. For many years at different exhibitions his pictures have attracted a special attention, have interested a great many amateurs, specialists, but the author has remained unknown. Even in the case, when four years ago at the Republican Exhibition of "one work" his canvas "Heavenly Gift" was unanimously admitted by artists of various generations and professing different directions, to be presented the first prize by the Artist's Union of Armenia. In such cases usually self-confident pretensions of artists having already gained great acceptance go up, and this was the only case, perhaps, when everyone, as it is said, laid down arms, and it is appropriate to remember the opinion of one of the specialists, "On the palette of this artist there is something more than colors, which is impossible not to see: fascinating honesty". For a professional artist such qualification isn't mere an expression, but an initial point of principle, indicative of the image of the artist.

Secluded in the studio, built in the yard of the paternal ancestral family house, separated by a small fence, as though he avoids the violent whirl of the artists indicative of "the modern spirit" of art, Samvel does pretentious experimentations of self-acknowledgement. His innate penetrating mind continuously prompts that the secret of creative phenomenon must be sought within limits of reserved feelings, where from the medley of love,

Art of Samvel Chibukhchyan

light and belief raises and is created a word, which hasn't been articulated before, and a picture which hasn't been painted yet. In this meditative perspective deep into his heart of hearts he seeks his real image, re-interpreting the conception of spiritual connection of everlasting motifs and constant forms of nature. So, the motif of tree penetrated into his art. The motif, and not the picture because in the artist's idea it is a peculiar archetype, a thoroughly semantic form, which, existing from above in the unknown layers of our inward, is not mere subject of image, but a radical impulse of creative phenomenon. And it is not a mere chance that the series of pictures "Tree" created by the artist, obviously differs from other artists' works of art of the same type. Then this tree will appear with white and red lines painted on the trunk in his landscapes, in its mysterious solitude, covering the picture with the immaterial veil of deep meditation. What is this? A metaphor? Of course, in as much as in the artist's inward it is a state individualized with its lively emotions and a state deeply survived. In Chibukhchian's art a metaphor is just the nature, in the sense of pictography, his landscapes, which are surprisingly simple and sensible: the forest eternally slumbering under the gaze of the white cloud petrified against the bluish-grey background of the sky; the silent dream of the sparkling mountains having the sacrament of a piece of wheat field in their palms; the agonizing effort of the stretching up mountains having mounted the stony trouble on the slopes; the hopeless silence of the thirsty sun-burnt fields round a patch



of land emanating with life-giving light like green oasis; the deserted mud-houses bent under the burden of the years of recollection. And the picture "My Danaë" with the fascinating cleanliness of harmonious connection of nature with the sleeping beauty, for a long time will stir up not only Armenian but also the English amateur who, having obtained this picture in one of foreign auctions, didn't hide his gratitude. Each of these pictures is pure, innocent reflection of poetic unalloyed emotions, indeed survived states, and just from emotional medley of these feelings arises that very secluded sphere, where each scene of nature, so much usual and real form in our eyes, acquires the live spirit of its existence. And just here is hidden perhaps the greatest phenomenon indicative of the artist's creative originality: the colouring. Usually it is qualified

as "warm" or "cold", and only naturally talented artists know that it is not made, but created within the incomprehensible limits of inscrutability, that it isn't even sense of color, but a strange medley of substance of soul – incomprehensible, inexplicable. And only poetized souls are able to catch in that medley the bright rays of non-private, as the greatest gift of benevolent will of the Highest. And clear was the emotion of the foreigner who had visited the artist's studio from Moscow, and in the above-mentioned picture "Heavenly Gift", among the boundless folds of the white tablecloth spreading from the abandoned table of the apostles towards the Earth, was silently "listening to" the universal sounds of Bach's masses. Chibukhchian's studio is the abode of the man of belief – silent and secluded in his fascinating solitude.

Saro Sarukhanian

The Wonderful World of Stamps

On October 9-13, at the "Citadel" new center in Yerevan, there was a big exhibition of philately, dedicated to 15th anniversary of the first stamp issued in newly independent Armenia. There were many participants-collectors at the exhibition, and this article is about one of them.



Vladimir Grigori Petrosyan – a quite interesting person and lawyer by profession, was born in Yerevan in 1948, in a military family. Since his childhood he has been collecting stamps and envelopes, which later became a major aspect of his life along with his profession.

Vladimir Petrosyan is a Candidate of Law. He has worked in the RA Government, banking system, as well has been lecturing at institutions of higher education in Yerevan and Moscow. V. Petrosyan has been participating in exhibitions of philately in Armenia and Moscow, always receiving highest awards.

V. Petrosyan has presented a nice surprise to Armenian and foreign philatelists. Based on his collection, he has prepared for publication (in Russian) "The Story of Parliaments in Philately" – a very rich and

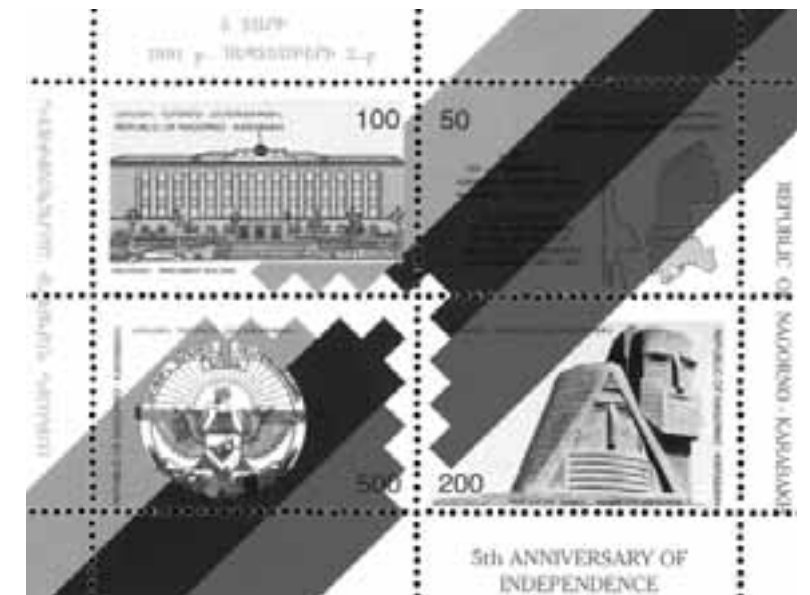
unique in its kind album. It has a solid encyclopedic structure. In the "language" of stamps, the book presents political and parliamentary histories (since 1840) of ancient Rome, Greece, Great Britain, France, U.S.A., Tsarist Russia, USSR, Russian Federation, Armenia and other countries. It has also short explanations (including the 1915 Genocide and the Karabakh issue). The book has received appreciative comments from the Doctor of Historical Sciences Vrej Vardanyan, Candidate of Historical Sciences Gagik Hovakimyan, and the lawyer Henrik Adamyan. In the near future the Armenian section of the book will also be published by the state order,

but we think that the book must be published in whole.

The Queen of the Great Britain Elizabeth II is one of the great collectors of stamps and envelopes. Knowing this, Vladimir Petrosyan has sent her one copy of his book, published as an advertising example.

Stamps and envelopes are a unique trend in the world culture, having both cognitive and artistic significance. It is good that Armenia as a country, and our compatriots as collectors participate in this relatively new phenomenon of civilization.

Michael Harutyunyan
Vice President of the Armenian
Society for Preservation of
Historical Monuments



L.K. — *Speaking of journalists talking about elephants in the room, how serious are competitive jealousies among Armenians and Armenian creatives, and how can Armenians—creatives or not—cope with this?*

T.K. — Competition is such an unhealthy characteristic, in my opinion, and I say this as a very competitive backgammon player! Sharing and learning, on the other hand, is a community act. It is better to learn from each other and help one another than to compete. I've learned a lot from my mother's example on this point. She's a strong Armenian woman, a lawyer, a professor, a writer, a broker and she's not competitive at all! She has modeled for me that you can move forward in life and pursue your dreams from a place of passion and belief. She has shown me that accomplishment and competitiveness don't have to go hand in hand. Her life has been about doing what's better for someone else. Ultimately, we want to be inspired by the people around us. We all have something that we do better than others, just as others possess something they can do better than we do. In my opinion, the cure for competition is solidarity. We are all in this together. It's not about each one for him- or herself. It's about everything for the betterment of all—whether we're talking family, community, or the world-at-large.

L.K. — *Your website describes how institutions and individuals can purchase the "BIRTH" documentary and "BIRTH in the classroom," a companion program that introduces students to the birthing process—from conception all the way to delivery. How can the Armenian community support you?*

T.K. — Supporting "BIRTH in the Classroom" would be extraordinary. It's unconventional, and I'd be curious to see how the

Armenian community reacts to it. However, the kind of support from Armenians that I'd welcome would be their belief in me...that I could help represent them in a way that would make a positive impact in their lives and the lives of others. I would be nourished and touched by that. At the end of my career, I would be gratified if interviewees felt that their stories were told in a way they would want them to be told. When all is said and done, we journalists enter people's homes and talk of things that have great meaning for them. I'm honored that these people place their trust in me and believe that their words won't be manipulated. Journalism is a lot like psychology. We ask questions, we do lots of listening, we learn a lot about the personal lives of others. Time and again, the interviews strengthen my belief in humanity and that there are people out there supporting each other and hoping to make a change in their environment. So to support me, I'd say, "Approach me with your stories." The best I can do is give people the opportunity to express themselves and to be a conduit for their stories to be told.

L.K. — *How do you think art can be "political?"*

T.K. — Art is an exchange between viewer and creator. Its effect is in that communication, and that communication is constantly evolving. So firstly, art can only be political when the observer is willing to look at a piece through that lens. Contemporary art has a huge political bent, almost at the risk of abnegating beauty. There can be value in this because it increases awareness, engages discussion and has the ultimate affect of changing perspective. At the same time, I find that work such as landscapes or fiction, seemingly more traditional work that doesn't have an overt political statement, is sometimes

the most political. It offers a moment of reflection, of quiet, of solitary experience between a work of art and yourself. That can be very political. It also depends on the definition of political and what political means for you. Art is a private expression in a very public sphere and that in and of itself is political. The most important thing however is to be authentic—regardless of your views and the exact way you choose to express them. As long as you're true to what you believe, then some message will come across.

L.K. — *What would your dream assignment be?*

T.K. — I could say interviewing the leading artists of the world, or being sent to an exotic location to cover a story, but that's not the case. The quirky stories are my bread and butter, but the stories that touch on universal themes are my dream assignments. When I returned to California from New York, I took a three-month-long road trip and interviewed people along the way. At the time, there were lots of people complaining about not being happy, and psychoactive pharmaceutical drugs seemed to be manufacturing happiness in America. In light of this, I wanted to ask everyday people what the pursuit of happiness was all about. Was it about chasing a dream? Did they already have it? I asked people to name five things that made them happy, and what their definition of happiness was. I hoped this segment would allow interviewees and listeners to think about the question and their own notions of happiness. One woman said, "To see, hear, taste, smell, and touch." As it turned out, this woman was expected to die of a fatal illness six months prior, but miraculously didn't. Since then, every day for her has been a gift. Her outlook and reply put so much into perspective. But

ultimately, it's very difficult to say what a dream assignment would be. I don't think I'll recognize a dream assignment until it's right in front of me. Sometimes you're shooting for one story and some other magical thing happens from it. I have interviewed famous people, which would seem like a dream, and have been disappointed and then I have spoken to lay people who changed my way of seeing. Much like life, you never know what you're going to find. So I could try and say what my dream assignment would be, but it is most likely inaccurate. Every assignment has the potential to be a dream assignment. It all depends on what you make of it.

L.K. — *What are your plans for the future?*

T.K. — There are lots of projects coming up in the future, but there's one that I am really excited about. I just received a grant from an arts organization to produce an "audio quilt" that gathers stories about the Armenian Genocide. I encourage Armenians, whether they are genocide survivors or descendants, to contact me with their narratives. I would like to capture this fading history and explore the ways in which it affects where we are today.

To learn more about Tania Ketenjian and her work, visit: www.radiotania.org www.thinairmedia.org Tania Ketenjian may be contacted at Tania@radiotania.org

Lucine Kasbarian is an Armenian-American writer, editor and book publicist, and the author of "Armenia: A Rugged Land, an Enduring People" (Simon & Schuster). She is also a contributor to "The Armenian Weekly" newspaper (www.armenianweekly.com), where this article first appeared.

ARMENIA COMES SECOND AT JUNIOR EUROVISION SONG CONTEST



YEREVAN, DECEMBER 10, ARMENPRESS: Armenia has scored the second highest average of points of a runner-up with 8.50 at the Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2007 in Rotterdam, Netherlands. For the second time Belarus won the contest with Alexey Zhigalkovich and his song "Sdruzyami".

Armenia was also the most successful debuting country ever reaching the second place. The other debutants -- Georgia and Bulgaria did quite well too, finishing the fourth and the seventh

respectively, while Lithuania finished only the thirteenth.

The Armenian team received twelve points - seven times, ten points - twice, once eight, seven and five, and four times -- not a single vote.

Although during the competition with 17 countries, it was very likely that each would receive points from all others (since every country had to give points to 10 out of 16 other ones), however, only Russia and Serbia managed to do so. They finished the third and the sixth respectively.



The Cafesjian Museum Foundation Announces Michael De Marsche

as New Executive Director of the Gerard L. Cafesjian Center for the Arts and Museum of Art

The Cafesjian Museum Foundation is pleased to announce that Michael De Marsche has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Gerard L. Cafesjian Center for the Arts and Museum of Art, currently under construction in Yerevan, Armenia.

"I couldn't be happier with the hiring of Mr. De Marsche," said Gerard L. Cafesjian, businessman, philanthropist and museum founder. "He is an experienced professional with the talent, skills, experience and enthusiasm to lead this project to success."

As President and CEO of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, De Marsche established a new vision and led the campaign to fund and construct a new, 48,000 square-foot building that opened last week. During his four-year tenure; annual attendance rose from 20,000 to over 120,000; membership increased from 3,000 to over 10,000; and \$1.2 million was raised to construct FAC MODERN, an 8,000 square-foot gallery in downtown Colorado Springs.



De Marsche previously served as the founding Director of the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Art at Auburn University where he oversaw a \$14 million project culminating in the construction of a 40,000 square foot museum building.

The Cafesjian Center for the Arts and Museum of Art "will be a monumental achievement, not only for Armenia," De Marsche told the Colorado Springs Gazette.

"It will be one of the great museums of Eastern Europe."

The Cafesjian Museum Foundation of Armenia was co-founded in April of 2002 by the Republic of Armenia and the Cafesjian Museum Foundation of America for the purpose of developing a world class international museum of art and a cultural center in Yerevan, Armenia.

www.cmf.am



CHOREOGRAPHY REQUIRES GREAT EXPENSES



"Although we have talented ballet dancers in Armenia and overseas, I don't find the general picture of choreography satisfactory," says Vilen Galstyan, a renowned ballet-master and head of the Choreography College.

He was lucky enough to get higher education in Moscow University (Faculty of Ballet-mastery) and master the skills of ballet.

"Today, the youth is deprived of this chance, as education is an expensive pleasure; students must pay 10 000 USD a year. Besides, they cannot afford housing expenses in Moscow," he adds.

But let's ignore the financial facet. Today's generation has a higher potential. "The change is obvious; nowadays girls are taller and well-built. I see a great progress."

The most interesting is the fact that students of the Classical Department of the Choreography College get free education. In Mr. Galstyan's words, this is determined by the fact that only gifted children are admitted, and their number is relatively small. One needs both skills and diligence in order to become an excellent dancer.

"A ballet dancer must have beautiful heels and

a flexible body. Boys must be physically strong to lift girls," Mr. Galstyan says.

We have classes comprising of 10-12 boys. In case they all enter the Theatre of Opera and Ballet, our college will meet the demands of folk ballet," adds the ballet-master.

He finds the current migration of young generation a normal phenomenon as the salary is higher overseas and they can get 3000€.

The ballet master applied to the RA Ministry of Defense in respect of the recruitment problem for college students. "The matter was partially settled. Serge Sargsyan granted them deferment. Besides, 5-6 boys have got a chance to perfect their skills. We welcome this positive and warm attitude. I hope this progressive approach will be continuous."

THE SCREAMERS

The most awful of all tragedies in the thousands of years of human history is genocide. The documentary film "Screamers" is a manifestation of protest against this hideous crime. Yesterday, an interview took place with the director of the film Karla Karapetian. Her ancestors were from Van region of the Western Armenia and found refuge in the U.S.A. after the 1915 Genocide.

The "Screamers" is the first documentary about the Armenian Genocide, where it is linked with the next most terrifying human tragedies –



the Holocaust, the genocides of Rwanda, Bosnia and Cambodia.

The film was a success worldwide. The famous Armenian-American rock band System of a Down from LA, Pulitzer laureate Samantha Power, former editor of "Agos"

Hrant Dink, FBI interpreter Sybil Edmonds, head of the Armenian National Committee of America Aram Hambarian and other prominent people took active participation in the film making.

By *Melania Badalian*

PUBLICATION PROJECT

The editors of the “Armenian Art” have initiated the design and publication of the “Armenian Artists” bilingual (Armenian-English) catalog (about the Armenian artists and sculptors of the early 21st century living abroad). We intend to publish it by the end of 2008.

All Armenian artists and sculptors that live abroad and HAVE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION are invited to fill in the questionnaire below.

The catalog will have a dedicated page for each artist, where two color reprints and the artist's photo will be inserted.

The biographical information will be in Armenian and in English, in the second part of the book.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Last name, first name, date of birth, year, place of birth. | 7. What museums have exhibited your works? |
| 2. Professional education. | 8. Your membership in cultural organizations (please specify). |
| 3. Biographical data (in what countries you have lived; when you settled in your current place of residence; professional background). | 9. Your awards and prizes. |
| 4. Your first exhibition. | 10. Your address, telephone, email, website. |
| 5. Your participation in authoritative group exhibitions. | Please also attach: |
| 6. Your individual exhibitions (if there are more than 5, please indicate the most important ones). Please specify the locations and dates. | 1. Your color photo; |
| | 2. Two color photos of your works (preferably on a CD, in high resolution). |

The English and Armenian versions of the questionnaire have also been published on the website of the “Armenian Art”. www.armenianart.am

The Editorship Organizes

SUBSCRIPTION to the “Armenian Artists” Catalog (Armenian artists and sculptors of the early 21st century living abroad).

Our address: 32 Hanrapetutian St., Yerevan, Armenia • Tel. (374 10) 523501 • E-mail: hayart02@hotmail.com

THIS PROJECT HAS 3 ADVANTAGES and 1 SHORTCOMING

The first advantage is the informative character of this publication:

For the first time contemporary Armenian professional artists and sculptors living outside of Armenia will be represented in one publication with their accomplishments and contact details.

The second advantage is the format of the catalog:

From Iran to Russia, France to Canada, Argentine to Australia and other unexpected countries, the carriers of the Armenian centuries-old culture also express the impact of particular countries and cultural environment in their art. Reprints of their works in this catalog will open an exceptionally broad vision of art in the contemporary world.

The third advantage is the national character of the publication:

It is impossible to locate “Diaspora” on the world map. With this publication the “Diaspora” becomes visible with the best appearance. An Armenian outside of Armenia will be represented as a creative individual -- an artist, who has received acknowledgement in his country, but has not lost connections with national roots.

And the only shortcoming of the project is that there are no sponsors or supporters yet, who would help in its realization, considering the above mentioned advantages.

We think that this shortcoming will be corrected, and do hope it will happen shortly after the current publication.

The “Armenian Art” Editorship



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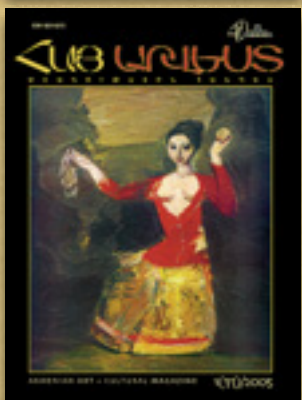
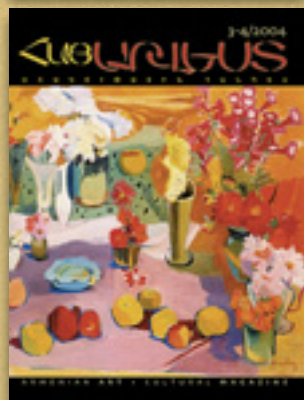
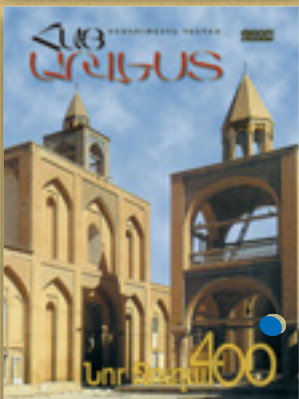
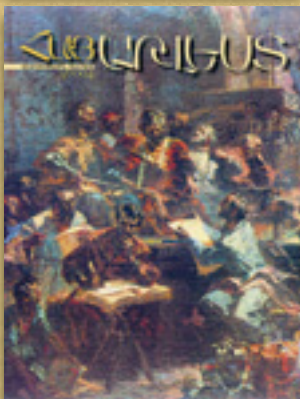
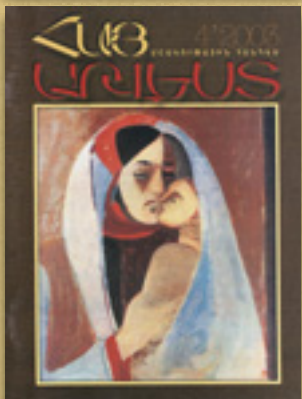
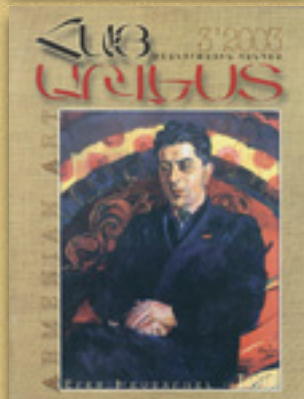
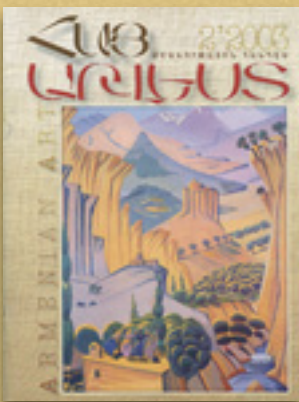
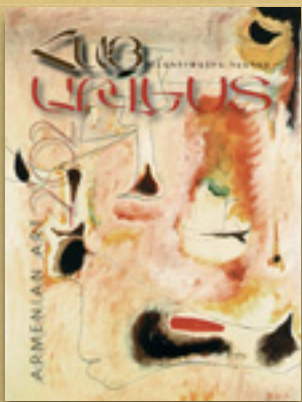
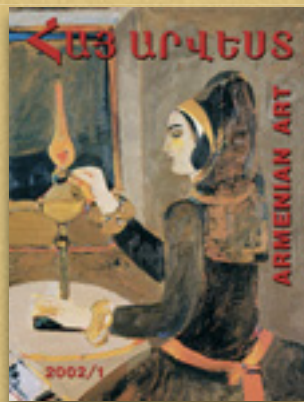


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1. YUROZ (USA)
Toast to Love
2. ELIZABETH ROMHILD (Thailand)
Temptress
3. ASHOT KHACHATRIAN (Russia)
Portret of the sculptor Levon Lazarev



www.ArmenianArt.am