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INTERVIEW ANALYTICS GALLERY

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CULTURE

Posted 21-06-2010 “Motherhood brings us together”



Images hanging from the wall that forces us to look up where God is with the name of Mother...

U.S.-based Susan Dessel has brought a Middle Age Jewish cemetery located in Yeghegis. The artist, who is in Armenia at the invitation of the Laboratory for Art and Cultural Studies, has discovered the surprising similarity of the idea of motherhood for both nations and has presented it through the language of art.

The results of an investigation of the Orbelyan family cemetery located in Yeghegis show that the tombstones of these noblemen are very similar to the Jewish tombstones in form and patterns and it is clear to see the association of Jewish religious, cultural traditions and the Armenian cultural traditions.

In the 13-14th centuries, Jewish women were obliged to breastfeed their babies for at least 24 months (according to some sources, that was written in the Ketubot, which was their marriage contract). Once when child deaths were a usual thing, this had to guarantee a child's health. In the cases when Jewish and Christian women were unable to breastfeed for 24 months, they would hire nursing mothers to breastfeed and the nursing mothers could be Jewish or Christian. The awareness of each individual's sacred life was expressed in practice.

Susan Dessel's work contains 365 forms each of which is composed of bodies of nursing mothers sitting with their backs to each other. It represents the minimum 24-month period of breastfeeding. On the one side is a gold-patted, Armenian cross-stone and on the other the Jewish six-wing star of David which peacefully call on positive elements of cooperation between “others”.

The use of figures reminds one of women's certain commonalities. In the meantime, the existing differences symbolize their individuality. It is not a coincidence that there are 365 forms and 365 bits of pomegranate,. Just as Middle Age Jews were the “others” among Christian Armenians, that's how Armenians have had the experience of being “others” in the Diaspora throughout history.

The opening of Susan Dessel's personal exhibition of profound and interesting work was held at Narekatsi Art Union and is open to everyone until June 26.